Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru

LONDON, 1911.

Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Volume One

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Memorial Fund

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FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps, outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling — these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles, both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming

contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the "third world" as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.

Indira Gandhi

New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

EDITORIAL NOTE

The first volume of the Selected Works, which is a project of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, includes the correspondence, speeches and writings of Jawaharlal Nehru during the formative years which determined his life and outlook. It covers his school and college days in England and his years at the Allahabad Bar; and we then see the impact on him of events in India, the sufferings of the kisans and the influence of Mahatma Gandhi so that he takes the plunge into nationalist activity and courts imprisonment. The documents in this volume are of interest in that they both portray the development of Jawaharlal Nehru's mind and personality and, in the broader context, cast fresh light on India's struggle for freedom. They are a contribution to personal as well as to national history.

In editing these documents the method, whereby the footnotes are tied to the document and not to the page, has been followed. This has the advantage that the pagination can be altered, if necessary, in later editions without any inconvenience.

Most of the documents included in this volume are in English. Where, however, the original is in Hindi or any other language, a translation has been given; and this has been indicated in a footnote.

In the first section, covering the early years, only those letters, or extracts from them, which add to our understanding of Jawaharlal Nehru have been included. The rest of the correspondence of these years is available for consultation in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

Where any part of a document is missing, this has been made clear by astensks. If a portion was deleted by the official censor when Jawaharlal Nehru was in prison, this is shown by crosses. Editorial omissions are indicated by dots. Where a document is incomplete, this is mentioned in a footnote.

Biographical and explanatory footnotes have been provided where it was thought that they would be helpful to the reader. In deciding whether such footnotes were required, the Indian reader has been borne specially in mind. There is, for example, no footnote on Mahatma Gandhi, any such footnote would have been clearly pedantic.

The current spelling of Indian place names is given in the footnotes, but the spelling of the time has been retained in the text.

The task of preparing the Selected Works for publication is greatly facilitated by the care Jawaharlal Nehru himself took to maintain his papers in a methodical manner. It was a life packed with work and

contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

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incident, and, at least till 1947, it was an unsettled and disturbed life. He was rarely at home and often in prison. Yet he kept and generally arranged his papers with a sharp sense of order and significance.

This project has been made possible only by the generosity of Shrimati Indira Gandhi, who has granted unrestricted access to the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru and permitted the publication in the Selected Works of his letters, diaries and other writings.

We are most grateful to Shrimati Padmaja Naidu, Vice Chairman, and Dr Karan Singh, Secretary, of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund for the guidance and support they have given at every stage.

Acknowledgement is due to the National Archives of India, the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya and the Uttar Pradesh Government for permission to include material. The late Dr. Syed Mahmud and Shri Jamal Khwaja were good enough to authorise us to include a number of letters in their possession. Permission has been granted to us to reproduce material from the *Aaj*, *The Bombay Chronicle*, *The Leader* and *The Tribune*. Asia Publishing House kindly allowed us to reprint three letters already published in *A Bunch of Old Letters*.

The Director and staff of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library have given us the fullest cooperation.

We express our thanks to the very many who have assisted us in preparing the footnotes.

CONTENTS

1. Early Years

1	To Mother	25 February	1903	1
2	To Mother	15 September	1903	1
3	To Mother	1 July	1905	2
4	To Father	25 July	1905	2
5	To Father	20 October	1905	3
6	To Mother	24 November	1905	5
7	To Father	11 December	1905	6
8	To Father	16 December	1905	8
9	To Father	3 January	1906	10
10	To Mother	7 March	1906	12
11	To Father	4 May	1906	13
12	To Father	6 December	1906	14
13	To Father	18 January	1907	15
14	To Father	30 January	1907	16
15	To Father	8 February	1907	19
16	To Father	14 February	1907	21
17	To Father	28 March	1907	22
18	To Father	19 April	1907	23
19	To Father	17 May	1907	24
20	To Father	7 June	1907	26
21	To Father	5 July	1907	28
22	To Father	12 July	1907	28
23	To Father	19 July	1907	29
24	To Father	25 July	1907	29
25	To Father	1 August	1907	30
26	To Father	22 August	1907	30
27	To Father	29 August	1907	31
28	To Father	12 September	1907	32
29	To Father	19 September	1907	33
30	To Father	20 September	1907	33
31	To Father	27 September	1907	34
32	To Father	17 October	1907	34
33	To Father	24 October	1907	35
34	To Father	31 October	1907	36
35	To Father	7 November	1907	37

36	To Father	15 November	1907	39
37	To Father	20 December	1907	39
38	To Father	2 January	1908	40
39	To Father	10 January	1908	42
40	To Father	16 January	1908	42
41	To Father	23 January	1908	43
42	To Father	30 January	1908	44
43	To Mother	7 February	1908	45
44	To Father	20 February	1908	45
45	To Father	5 March	1908	46
46	To Father	13 March	1908	47
47	To Father	3 April	1908	48
48	To Mother	5 April	1908	48
49	To Father	10 April	1908	50
50	To Father	7 May	1908	51
51	To Father	14 May	1908	53
52	To Father	21 May	1908	54
53	To Father	28 May	1908	56
54	To Father	4 June	1908	57
55	To Father	29 October	1908	58
56	To Father	19 November	1908	59
57	To Father	27 November	1908	61
58	To Father	3 December	1908	61
59	To Mother	4 December	1908	63
60	To Father	18 December	1908	63
61	To Father	22 January	1909	64
62	To Father	4 March	1909	64
63	To Father	12 March	1909	65
64	To Father	18 March	1909	65
65	To Father	29 April	1909	66
66	To Mother	7 May	1909	67
67	To Father	14 May	1909	68
68	To Father	3 February	1910	69
69	To Father	11 February	1910	70
70	To Father	1 April	1910	70
71	To Father	12 May	1910	71
72	To Father	27 May	1910	72
73	To Father	3 June	1910	73
74	To Father	17 June	1910	74
75	To Father	24 June	1910	74
76	To Mother	24 June	1910	75
77	To Father	15 July	1910	76
78	To Father	5 August	1910	77

79	To Father	19 August	1910	78
80	To Father	22 September	1910	79
81	To Father	4 November	1910	81
82	To Father	11 November	1910	81
83	To Father	2 December	1910	82
84	To Father	10 February	1911	83
85	To Father	17 March	1911	84
86	To Father	21 April	1911	85
87	To Father	12 May	1911	86
88	To Father	26 May	1911	86
89	To Father	2 June	1911	87
90	To Father	16 June	1911	88
91	To Father	23 June	1911	89
92	To Father	10 August	1911	90
93	To Father	18 August	1911	91
94	To Father	22 September	1911	92
95	To Father	22 December	1911	92
96	To Father	29 December	1911	93
97	To Father	11 January	1912	94
98	To Father	19 January	1912	95
99	To Mother	14 March	1912	96
100	To Father	21 June	1912	97

2. The Young Lawyer and Nationalist

1	To Sir Sitaram	25 June	1914	103
2	The First Public Speech	20 June	1916	104
3	A Notice regarding Indian Defence Force	13 June	1917	105
4	Second Notice regarding Indian Defence Force	20 June	1917	106
5	The Internment of Mrs. Annie Besant	21 June	1917	106
6	The Home Rule League	6 September	1917	108
7	A Notice to citizens of Allahabad	16 September	1917	109

8	To A. M Khwaja	12 December	1917	109
9	The Raja of Pratapner's Disclaimer	1 April	1918	110
10	To Tej Narain	13 August	1918	111
11	On Deputations to England	16 October	1918	112
12	The Kotla Case			114
13	To Father	19 August	1919	127
14	Notes on the occurrences in the Punjab			130
15	Roads to Freedom			140
16	Corruption among the Police Officers	2 October	1919	145
17	The Crawling Order	6 October	1919	149
18	Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi	31 October	1919	150
19	To Ramji Dar	29 January	1920	151
20	The Kanpur Case			152
21	To Sir Sitaram	11 May	1920	160
22	To Father	14 May	1920	161
23	To Father	14 May	1920	162
24	To Mr. M. L. Oakes	14 May	1920	164
25	To Mr. C. F. Adams	15 May	1920	165
26	The U P. Congress Committee and Noncooperation	4 September	1920	165
27	The Swaraj Sabha—Facts about changes in the constitution of the All India Home Rule League	18 October	1920	167
28	Notice to Volunteers	14 November	1920	170
29	To Syed Mahmud	9 April	1921	170
30	On the Allahabad District Conference	25 April	1921	171
31	Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi	9 May	1921	173
32	Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi	17 May	1921	173
33	The Kopaganj Affair			174
34	Presidential Address at the Second Session of the Bundelkhand Conference	13 June	1921	177
35	To G. B. Lambert	4 July	1921	194
36	To The Secretary, District Congress Committee, Aligarh	10 August	1921	196
37	Repression in the United Provinces	24 August	1921	196

38	To General Secretary, A.I.C.C.	19 October	1921	200
39	Note to Mahatma Gandhi	8 December	1921	201

3. Among the Kisans

1	Vicarious Charity	3 July	1920	205
2	Agrarian Unrest in Partabgarh	25 September	1920	206
3	"Babas" on the Brain! Facts about the Kisan Crisis	21 January	1921	208
4	The Rai Bareli Tragedy	22 January	1921	210
5	The Rai Bareli Tragedy—Truth about Sirdar's firing	23 January	1921	212
6	The New Offensive	30 April	1921	214
7	Statement in the Pratap Case	6 July	1921	217

4. Noncooperation

1	Prison Diary	December	1921	229
2	Message on occasion of first arrest	8 December	1921	235
3	Message to the United Provinces	18 December	1921	236
4	A Note on the organisation of the Noncooperation movement	19 December	1921	236
5	Message on his release from prison	10 March	1922	239
6	Instructions to Workers of U P Congress Committee	March	1922	240
7	Terrorism in Sitapur District	27 April	1922	242
8	Circular to Secretaries of all District, Town and Tehsil Congress Committees	April	1922	248

9	To Secretaries of District Congress Committees and Members of the United Provinces Congress Committee	5 May	1922	249
10	Where are You?	6 May	1922	250
11	Allahabad Businessmen and Boycott of Foreign cloth	6 May	1922	251
12	Statetment at Trial	17 May	1922	252
13	The Second Trip			258
14	Prison Note books			309
15	To Father	13 July	1922	317
16	To Father	17 August	1922	325
17	To Father	1 September	1922	332
18	To Father	30 September	1922	340
19	To Father	17 October	1922	344
20	To Father	15 November	1922	348
21	Speech at Allahabad	5 February	1923	351
22	Speech at Bareilly District Conference	24 February	1923	353
23	To Shamlal Nehru	2 March	1923	354
24	On the Shuddhi Movement			356
25	To A. M. Khwaja	6 June	1923	358
26	Interview in Aaj	19 June	1923	360
27	To Mahadeva Desai	August	1923	364
28	The Nagpur Satyagraha	6 September	1923	365

5. The Nabha Trial

1	Draft statement to be read in Court			369
2	Statement in Court	25 September	1923	375
3	To Father	30 September	1923	381
4	To Kapil Deva Malaviya and Mahadeva Desai			382
5	The Release	6 October	1923	383
6	To K. M. Panikkar	2 April	1924	384
7	Correspondence with the Nabha Administration			386

ILLUSTRATIONS

London, 1911. *frontispiece*

Postcards sent to his mother 25 February and 15 September 1903.
Swarup Rani Nehru. *facing page* 1

In England, 1906.
Motilal Nehru at the Delhi Durbar, 1911. *between pp.* 16—17

Harrow and Harrow School.
At Harrow. 32—33

Cambridge, 1907.
Cambridge, 1910. 64—65

Photostat copy of the last page of letter dated 21 June 1912 to his father.
Called to the Bar, 1912. 96—97

At the Allahabad Bar, 1912.
Family group, 1918. 112—13

Amritsar Congress, December 1919.
Barrack No. 4, District Jail, Lucknow. 208—09

Photostat Copy of the first page of Jawaharlal's Prison Diary "The Second Trip".
Photostat Copy of the first page of Jawaharlal's books of Notes and Quotations. 272—73

EARLY YEARS

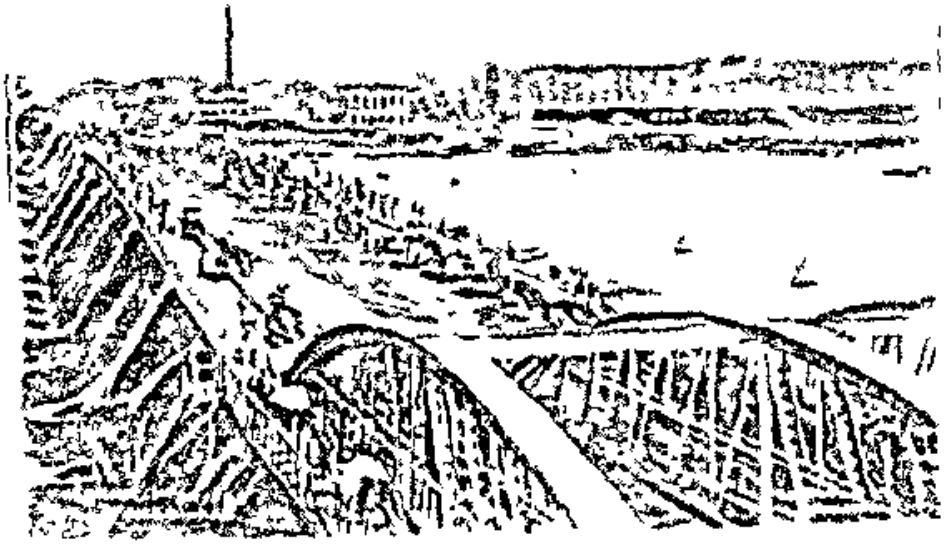

देवीस्वरूप लक्ष्मीजी को बाहुत नमस्कार व प्यार कहना तुम्हारे
मेरा प्रेम जताना। पत्र सभी कहकर तेरे पुलकी है। नमस्कार

नन्ही बीबी को प्यार।

२५-९-०

देवीस्वरूप लक्ष्मी
स्वरूप श्री दिलाम
नजी को बाहुत नम
स्कार व प्यार के
मालुम होता
है तुम सब अच्छे
अच्छे हैं। उम्मीद
है के आप भी
अच्छी होंगी।
इस नन्ही को
नन्ही बीबी को
दिसम्बर में।
फकत आपका प्यारा
बेटा नवाज।

H MOUNTAIN COTTAGE ... R

POSTCARDS SENT TO HIS MOTHER ... RY AND 15 SEPTEMBER 1903

sw

A ph 1912

1. To Mother[1]

Allahabad
25.2.1903

My dear and respected mother,[2]
Thank you very much for your letter.
With namaskars and love,

Jawahar

P.S. This picture[3] is of Calcutta bridge.

1. Original in Hindi.
   This and all the other letters in this section are from the Jawaharlal Nehru Correspondence in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi — referred to hereafter as NMML.
2. Swarup Rani Nehru (1868 1938); wife of Motilal Nehru She also took part in the noncooperation movement and was the victim of a lathi charge in 1932.
3. This picture postcard is the first letter written by Jawaharlal which has survived. He was then 14. The picture was that of Howrah Bridge.

2. To Mother[1]

Srinagar
15.9.03

My dear Mother,
This is to inform you that we are all well here. Hope you are well too. Please show this picture to Nanni[2] and give her my love.

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Original in Hindi.
2. Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit (b. 1900); sister of Jawaharlal, m. R. S Pandit (d. 1944); imprisoned several times in the noncooperation movement; Minister, U P Government, 1937-39 and 1946; Ambassador in Moscow, 1947-49; Ambassador in Washington, 1949 52; President, U N. General Assembly, 1953 54, High Commissioner in London, 1954-61; Governor of Maharashtra, 1962 64.

3. To Mother[1]

Highgate
July 1, 1905

My dear Mother,
I was happy to receive your letter. I am quite well. You need not worry about me at all. I have not yet met Birju Bhai,[2] but I shall see him in a day or two. He should have finished his examinations today. He will come here day after tomorrow. He has taken rooms which are quite near our place. Here the weather these days is very fine, neither too cold nor too hot.

I received a postcard from Nanni. Her photograph is very much like her. Love and kisses to her from me.

Namaskars and love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Original in Hindi. Extracts.
2. Brijlal Nehru (1884-1965); son of Nandlal Nehru and first cousin of Jawaharlal. At this time he was a student at Oxford. Brijlal Nehru served in the Indian Finance Department till his retirement in 1939. His wife Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru was a well-known social worker and received the Lenin Peace Prize in 1961.

4. To Father[1]

July 25, 1905

Your lovely postcards[2] to hand. I like them very much. I hope you will keep any postcards you receive and give them to me when you come here. Nothing fresh has happened.

Love to all.

Yours affly.
Jawahar

1. This postcard to his father, Motilal Nehru, was posted in London. Motilal Nehru (1861-1931); leading advocate of Allahabad High Court; president of the Congress 1919 and 1928, joined the noncooperation movement 1920 and served several terms of imprisonment; founder, with C. R. Das, of the Swaraj Party and leader of the Swaraj Party in the Central Assembly 1924-26.
2. Jawaharlal is referring to a series of picture postcards of Congress leaders sent by Motilal. Among them was one of Romesh Chandra Dutt. Motilal captioned it, 'future Jawaharlal Nehru'.

5. To Father

The Head Master's
Harrow
20th Oct, 1905

My dear Father,
According to your instructions I begin this letter now and shall continue it throughout the week. I wrote a very short letter to you this morning and sent it. But I had forgotten to write the date and suddenly remembered it at the last moment. As I was very anxious that something should reach you at Port Said, I scribbled through the letter as fast as I could. Besides, nothing worth noting had happened within the last two days. I hope the letter caught the mail and you received it.

Your wire from Marseilles came this morning. My name had been mis-spelt and it went round some part of the house before I got it.

There were matches again today between the houses and I played no footer[1].

A big lecture was given here tonight on Trafalgar, but unfortunately I missed it. I knew that there was to be something but when or where it was to be I had not the least idea. The consequence was that I went on working whilst all the others went away to the lecture.

21st Oct.

I discovered today that my not attending the lecture last night was quite a serious affair and that it might lead to unpleasant results. Nothing has yet happened, however, and I hope my absence was overlooked. We had the same number of classes today as we had on Founder's day and were free for the rest of the day.

I played, or at least tried to play footer today. I had another shave this morning and had myself photographed. I ought not to have shaved so soon but I wanted to look quite clean shaven to be photographed. It will be some time before I shave next.

22nd Oct.

I received your loving letter from Marseilles this morning. I had begun to fear that you hadn't written from there but I was amply satisfied with your dear letter. Harrow agrees with me quite well and I would get on swimmingly with it, but for your not being here. This puts a jarring note to my every work and enjoyment. My dear father, how I wish to be near you again. I wish the days would pass quicker and bring the happy day when I shall see you again.

1 Football

The group has been repaired and is, at present, hanging in front of me. I like everybody's picture in it except my own. My moustache is all awry and it spoils the whole look of the face. I have put yours, Biju Bhai's and dear mother's picture on the table too. Besides I have got several nice pictures, an electric table lamp and several other articles. My room is beginning to look quite nice and cosy. It is quite large enough for me and, really, I don't know what I would do with a larger one.

We are allowed to have fires in the daytime now and they make the rooms nice and warm. The only difficult part is lighting it but once that is done it burns on till it is put out. My fireplace is better than most others and draws in beautifully. The only defect with this room is that the window does not close well and there is a constant draught. But I don't mind it when the room is warm.

We had to pay our subscriptions today. They all amounted to a little over ******* I could have easily paid them but the head of the house told me that it was the custom for boys to go up to Pope[2] and ask him for an order for the amount. I thought I might as well conform to the custom and went up to him, but he told me that you had given him no authorisation to pay me. So I went up and paid the subs myself.

I have been very busy for the last two or three days and have had no time to write. I was 'boy'[3] again day before-yesterday. Besides lighting fires and carrying messages I had to turn on toshes[4] for sixth formers after footer. My fagging finished last Saturday and except for the day when I was 'boy' I was free for the rest of the week. ******* bill in hall a couple of days ago. I haven't got used to it yet and I quite forgot about it. I went up immediately after to Pope but was told that I had to learn 20 lines of poetry by heart.

I have been playing footer on half-holidays only and on the other days there have been matches.

My uniform came in time for Wednesday. I was expecting to have a brand new one but they have sent me a second, third, fourth or which hand one I don't know. The trowsers [sic] and a few other small things are new and all the rest has been well used. Everybody else has got one like that and so I thought it was useless to make objections. I am getting on well with my work. I have been sent up from my drawing division though this was more through the fault of a boy who was sent down and whose place I took than from any

2. Presumably one of the masters.
3. Fag
4. School slang meaning a bath or a foot pan

brilliancy on my part. We had a sort of exam on the period of History we had gone through and on my being successful in it I had an extra three quarters of an hour free. On Saturday we will have an exam in mathematics.

I have joined the Chess Club here. I hope you won't mind this as it is really no waste of time. We only play chess on Saturday nights and it will be a diversion from the other things.

It is getting late now and I have my work for tomorrow morning to do. I was almost forgetting to write that we had singing again yesterday. It was much the same as it was the first time. I was fortunate enough to get nothing to sing though I nearly got one. Goodbye now till next week.

With love,

from your ever loving son
Jawahar

I am enclosing a letter which must have been sent to me by mistake.

6. To Mother[1]

The Head Master's
Harrow
Nov. 24, 1905

My dear Mother,

Many days ago I received your letter from Bombay. I hope you reached Allahabad safely and have written to me in detail about it. On my birthday[2] I carried out as far as possible the instructions you had given me verbally or in your letter. Fortunately, I received just the previous afternoon all the clothes which father got made for me and wore them on my birthday.

It is very cold here and getting colder everyday. Two days ago, when I went for a walk, I found a few ponds frozen. Now hardly a month is left before the vacation starts.

I do not remember anything else worth mentioning.

Love to dear Nanni.

With much love and respect,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Original in Hindi
2. 14 November.

7. To Father

The Head Master's
Harrow
11th Dec. 1905

My dear Father,
Your letter with the joyful news of a new arrival[1] in the family. I didn't expect to hear it till another month or so and it came quite as a surprise. It is a curious coincidence, perhaps something more, that he was born on my birthday. I little thought then that an addition had been made to our family. You ask me to suggest a name for him. My vocabulary of Indian names is very limited and I can't think of any appropriate one. I am sure your choice will be the best one. Birju Bhai tells me that Hiralal is a probable one. I don't like this at all and I hope you don't either.

I thought I explained to you the difference between divisions and forms some weeks ago. Divisions are quite independent of, and separate from, forms. There are divisions in Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, French Prose, Drawing and several other things in the Higher School. Now if some new boy is specially good in Mathematics but doesn't know much Latin or French, he gets in a high Arithmetic division but in a low form. If, again, he is sent to a higher div. in the same Term he remains in the same form. Of course at the end of the term this counts in his favour and may enable him to go into a higher form.

There are no German divs in the lower schools. We have only one hour a week for it and even then we do very little. In the higher school we can either take up German or Science and I think you would prefer me to take the latter. However I am not going to get in the Fifth Form for a long time yet and I needn't be in a hurry to make a choice.

Our trials have been on for several days and I have done fairly well in most papers. The only two, so far, which I have done badly in are Scripture and Latin Composition. I had over a hundred pages of the former to learn and inspite of my exertions I could know very little of them. All the others have got an advantage over me in this as I never did Scripture before. They do so very little Latin here that I forgot even what I knew. I could have easily done the paper at the beginning of the term when I came fresh from my Latin coach,

1. A boy was born on 14 November 1905 and died on 2 December 1905.

but now it was with difficulty that I did a part of it. The other subjects in which we have been examined are Algebra, French translation, Geometry and English. All of these I have done fairly well, some better than all the others in our Form. The Trials finish on Saturday morning and from then to Tuesday we have nothing to do.

Birju Bhai again came here last Saturday and spent the afternoon with me. Shridhar's[2] term ended several days ago and I think he is now in London, staying with Birju Bhai.

It is rather strange and I am myself astonished at my not having had a "real" fight yet. Of course skirmishes we have about everyday. As for friendship I have as yet failed to find a Desmond and see no indications pointing to it.

14 Dec.

Only four days left of this term but practically less than two days of work. The other subjects in which we have been examined are Latin translation, French composition, Arithmetic, Geography, German and History. In these too I have done pretty well.

I first thought that I might get a double remove and so be in the Upper Shell next term but I have changed my opinion now. It will be by the merest chance that I get there. I shall probably be sent to the Modern Lower Shell.

One of the masters died a day or two ago and his funeral took place today. The service took place in chapel and attendance to it was voluntary.

We had a heat wave some days ago and it was almost warm but now it is again cold.

With best wishes for a happy New Year and love.

Your loving son
Jawahar

2 Shridhar Nehru (1886-1967); son of Bansidhar Nehru and first cousin of Jawaharlal. Educated at Cambridge and Heidelburg, he joined the Indian Civil Service in 1913 and served in the United Provinces He was a noted linguist, writer and scholar.

8. To Father[1]

The Head Master's
Harrow
16-12-1905

My dear Father,
I was much surprised at not receiving your letter this morning. I would have thought that the mails had come late but for the fact that I got a letter from India. The only conclusion I could draw was that your letter had been posted too late. It never occurred to me that you might have sent it to Highgate. And so I had quite given up hope when I got it this evening.

The news about baby's health was most distressing to hear. I am very glad he is getting better and hope the improvement will continue. Still I am very anxious and am eagerly waiting for your next for better news of mother and baby.

I have no objection to the names chosen by you for baby, in fact they are rather nice ones. I never really seem to like Indian names till I get used to them.

Today the "Cock house"[1] match took place. It was hotly contested and the description in the Hill[2] might almost apply to it. It is such a pity to think that we have not been cock-house for over a dozen years. Before that time it was a practical certainty every year that we would win. And now in about every game we are behind the other houses and even in studies we make a poor show. In the other houses you can leave anything you like without any danger of its being taken whilst here nothing is safe. Some houses won't take any one in unless he has already distinguished himself in either studies or sports and consequently they are always first in everything.

17-12-05

Our marks and order were read out in form today. I was first in Trials and also in the Term's work.

I have been packing all the afternoon and evening as the boxes go tomorrow morning. We are alowed to leave Harrow in our ordinary clothes and so I am leaving my etons behind.

1. Contest between the various houses in the school. The victorious house was known as the 'cock house'.
2. Presumably a story about public schools.

18th Dec. 05

We went to Speecher this morning and our final order, that is add- in the trials to the term's work, was read out by Dr. Wood.[3] I was of course top of my form and I am told that a prize will be given to me. I had never thought of this happening and am rather nervous about it. The most that occurred to me was that I might get a small prize in the headmaster's study privately, but not in Speech Room in the midst of all the people.

Tomorrow morning we can go at any time after 7 but I don't think I shall go so early. Our holiday task is a historical novel—"Holmby House"—dealing with the Civil War, the period of history we have been studying.

I have been to Speecher and have received a prize. I wasn't quite sure whether I would get it to the very end and when Dr. Wood called out my name I felt very confused. He gave me the book with the usual formula of congratulation. The prize is Lamb's "Essays of Elia" very nicely bound together.

Out of the two boys who tried for scholarships at Oxford only one succeeded and so we won't have an extra week's holiday.

There was a house supper tonight at which Dr. Wood, Mrs. Wood and Miss Wood were present.

Highgate
22nd Dec. 1905

The holidays have commenced and I am back again here. It is very dull here having nothing to do and I wish more than ever to be in old Anand Bhawan again. During my first stay here it was different as I was working hard and had little time to think about India and our home. At Harrow too the same thing was the case. It takes over an hour to go to Birju Bhai's place by train. I went to him day before yesterday and had lunch with him.

Great preparations are being made for Christmas here.

With love,

from your ever loving son
Jawahar

The next term begins on the 24th January.

3 Rev. Joseph Wood (1842-1921); Headmaster of Harrow, 1899-1911. Jawahar was in his house.

9. To Father

Highgate
3rd Jan. 1906

My dear Father,

The year 1905 did not pass away mildly without having any real cold weather. On its last day, the 31st December, we experienced the coldest day we have had this winter. The fickleness of the English climate was strongly brought forward as the night before had been warm and comfortable. The day broke drearily with a fog enveloping us and occasional showers of rain. As I went out in the morning the cutting winds went right through me, in spite of my warm clothing, and almost paralysed me. Specially my hands and feet were quite frozen and I could hardly move them about. Still the sensation was not altogether unpleasant. The first day of the New Year was also cold, though not as much as the day before. But there was another sudden change on the next day and it became warm and damp. Today it was cold in the morning but now it is again warm. And so, I suppose, it will go on, no one knowing what will come next.

I was delighted to receive your new year cards and thank you very much for them. I too would have sent some to you but I had little time then at Harrow and my choice was very limited there. Thanks too for the £20. I was badly in need of them.

I am very glad to know that mother is progressing and hope she was well enough to go to Benares and see the exhibition.[1]

I didn't see any school calendar at Harrow but there is sure to be something corresponding to it. I shall look for it next term.

You didn't write to me before about the Bernards[2] and Mr. Chakravarti's[3] children going to France. I am sure I would be very pleased to go with Mr. Keightley[4] to their place. Besides the pleasure of their company it would much improve my French.

1. Opened on 25 December 1905 to demonstrate the variety and quality of swadeshi (indigenous) goods.
2. It has not been possible to identify this family.
3. Dr Gyanendranath Chakravarti (d. 1936); was from a Bengalee family settled in U.P. After holding the chair of mathematics at Allahabad University, he was Vice Chancellor of Lucknow University from 1920 to 1926. He was a theosophist and a friend of Mrs. Besant. His children were educated in France.
4. Bertram Keightley (1860-1944); a devoted English follower of Madame Blavatsky.

As I found that all my letters sent to Harrow were being redirected to 18 Southwell Gardens, I wrote to Dr. Wood's Secretary and told him my address. A day or two later I was much surprised to get my report and my bill for the last term. I am rather glad they made this mistake and sent them here as I can look through them now and you needn't take the trouble of sending the report to me. The only thing worth noting in my report is that I was second in form work alone, excluding mathematics. The boy who was first had the same marks, or even less, than me in most subjects but in Scripture he got many more and just managed to get ahead of me, in the total, by one mark. I had 99 to his 100.

In the bill the one thing which struck me most was the doctor's charge. He only saw my leg once and then twice asked me how it was getting along. The chief things in the tailor's bill are footer clothes and pieces of my uniform. His charges are as great as those of any good London tailor. There are some other small charges which ought not to be made. For instance, no one is going to bathe in ducker[5] in mid-winter, when perhaps the surface of the water would be frozen, and we are not allowed to go into the Vaughan library, though they charge for it in the bill.

I was very surprised to read in the *Times* a few days ago that the "Swadeshi" movement[6] had spread to Kashmir and that the Kashmiris had bought up, by public subscription, all the English sugar and burnt it. The movement must be strong indeed if it has reached even the Kashmiris. I would never have thought of it.

I have asked several people and every one told me that it was impossible to practise cricket now. Even in the next holiday the ground would not be good enough. So in the absence of other exercise I occasionally go to skate in a rink here.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

5 The swimming pool

6 The Swadeshi movement for the promotion of indigenous industries gained prominence in the agitation against the partition of Bengal and later was adopted by the Congress under Mahatma Gandhi

10. To Mother[1]

Headmaster's House
Harrow
March 7, 1906

My dear Mother,

Last week things turned out as I had hoped. I received two letters each from you and father. One of them should have come earlier but was posted late. I was extremely sorry to learn that Nanni started crying on not getting my letter. In future, I shall send her three postcards every week. Why is she getting weaker? Is she taking care of herself? Since I came to know about it from your letter, I have been rather worried. Write to me about it in detail soon. She should be looked after properly, as she is not very strong. Give my love to her.

I learned that Swamiji[2] is coming here but I don't think Jivan Bhai[3] is also coming.

I was very happy to learn that you had met Bua[4]. You remember that before I came here, father had sent me to see her. Misunderstandings in a family are troublesome and lead us nowhere.

I am sending you my photograph in uniform. I hope you will like it.

I was very sorry to learn that Anand Bhawan is going to be sold. Having stayed there for such a long time, I had grown attached to it and now I would not like to shift to some other house.[5]

So far I have not received Nukl[6] etc. I hope to get it next week. Thank you very much for sending me all these things.

As regards Nanni's money about which you have asked, I do not remember much. It was deposited along with my money in the Savings Bank. And later all the money was withdrawn, and was then either deposited in some other bank along with mine or was spent.

The little spot on my head has disappeared.

It is not so cold here. The weather is fine.

1. Original in Hindi
2. A saintly person, highly esteemed by Shrimati Swarup Rani Nehru's family.
3. Jivanlal Katju (1888-1966); son of Ratanlal Katju and cousin of Jawaharlal.
4. Shrimati Nandrani Nehru, wife of Nandlal Nehru.
5. In 1906 Motilal Nehru received an offer for Anand Bhawan. He was willing to negotiate a sale and build a smaller house, but his wife and son were opposed to the idea, and nothing came of it.
6. A kind of sweet.

You say that I have not replied about Nirdhar Nath Ji[7], about whom you had written. I do not remember what you wrote about him.

Love to dear Nanni.

From your loving son
Jawahar

7 Raja Narendra Nath, a Kashmiri resident in Lahore and father of Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru

11. To Father

Headmaster's House,
Harrow
May 4th, 1906

My dear Father,

I didn't remember that today was mail-day or I would have written to you last night. I have got very little time now and can only write a few lines.

I came back day before yesterday and found that I had got the same room again. At the end of last term I was told that I would most probably have another room and so I hadn't given any instructions for its being re-papered.

This morning the headmaster read out the forms. As I thought I was put in *MR*-2. No one has ever had, as far as I know, a double from *MS*-1 to *MR*-1. There are special forms from which doubles can be got and among these are *MIV*-1, *MS*-2, *MR*-2. It is more likely that I may get into *MV*-3 next term than my getting into *MR*-1 this term was.[1]

I was much amused to hear about the letter which Birju Bhabi sent to Master Joe. I remember Wood asking if I was called Joe at home. I wish you would send me the letter which shocked him so much.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. MR 2, MS 1, M IV, etc., represent terms of gradation which were used at Harrow school, meaning 'Middle Remove', 'Middle Senior 1', 'Middle Four', etc.

12. To Father

Headmaster's House,
Harrow
Dec. 6, 1906

My dear Father,
We have just had a fire alarm, although it wasn't a real one for we were informed beforehand when it was going to take place. It was just to see if the escapes worked well and to familiarise everyone with them. Almost everyone seemed to like the idea and came down repeatedly by them. One of these escapes was from a window of the top storey and the sensation when one came down from there was almost exactly like that of the latter end of a water-chute. I went down it quite a number of times with the result that I got a slight pain all over my body and a headache too from bumps received whilst coming down.

The Trials have begun in right earnest. I had two of them today, Trigonometry and Practical Chemistry, and in neither of them did I do very well. In the former perhaps I did as well as was to be expected as ours is the lowest division doing the papers. This was my first term at Trigonometry here and my absence for a fortnight handicapped me very much. For that was about the only time they did Trig., afterwards Algebra and Arithmetic took up most of the time. In Mathematics there are two papers set, one for the first five divisions and the other for the rest. Upthl now I had to do the second one and of course it was a very easy one. This term I shall get the other. I wonder how I shall fare with it.

I am glad you are learning to handle and drive a car. I think the most enjoyable part of motoring must be the driving the car oneself. I wish I had seen your car when I was in Paris. As it is I may not have a chance for years. However, I hope you will send me a photo of yourself in the car. By the by you haven't got it all too soon. What with the *Daily Mail* prize of £10,000 and dozens of other prizes, everyone seems to be cocksure that aeroplanes will be as common in a few years, as motorcars are now. I actually saw, the other day, an advertisement of a firm who undertook to build aeroplanes for people! I hope you will have time to use your car before the aeroplane craze sets in. And then perhaps when I am at the Varsity, it is too much to hope for it before then, I may have the pleasure of seeing you on weekends.

Everything seems at last settled about our arrangements for the hols. I am of course to stay in Paris and Mr. Chatterji[1] had arranged for Birju Bhai to go to Rouen but he doesn't approve of this very much, as the place is too far from Paris. Shridhar too is going to France for his vac. He will probably go to Dieppe. I know nothing as yet about Jivan. Nor do I think that he himself knows anything about it. At least he was quite undecided a short time ago, wavering between Grantham and Paris.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Jagdish Chatterji, the son in law of Dr C N. Chakravarti.

13. To Father

London
18.1.07

My dear Father,

Your letter from Calcutta. I was very sorry to hear that the Congress wasn't success.[1] I am impatiently waiting for your next to know the result of the proceedings. I do hope the different parties worked smoothly together and there were no dissensions among the delegates. A most foolish thing this seems to me, for, not only do they do no good to themselves but they do harm to the country they both pretend to serve. There couldn't have been any great difference or disagreement among the delegates, as our friends the Anglo-Indians would hardly have failed to wire the fact over here.

There isn't much news to give you this week. I go back to Harrow next Wednesday and you will get my next from there.

We have been going to a number of theatres since I came back from Paris. Two of the plays were Shakespeare's. "Antony & Cleopatra" at His Majesty's was not at all a success, in my opinion at least. Other people didn't seem to find it so for it was quite full. "Macbeth" at the Garrick was better. In France I went to see a French translation of "Julius Caesar" and it was more amusing than anything else. I don't think the actors were quite sure whether it was a pantomime or a tragedy.

1. The Calcutta Congress of 1906 achieved little because the Moderates and Extremists could reach no agreement on a boycott of British goods.

I suppose you must have heard about the Edalji case[2] and the new phase it has taken here. Whole pages are being devoted to it in some of the papers—and you know what a page of a newspaper is here. The poor chap must have been quite innocent and I am sure he was convicted simply and solely because he was an Indian. Conan Doyle has stepped into the ranks now and his pardon is fairly certain.

The weather here is very mild compared to the days we had about Christmas and the New Year. A pretty dense fog is surrounding us at present. It is almost the first good fog we have had for months. I have got to sally forth into it in a short time to meet Birju Bhai at a place in town.

With love,

from your ever loving son
Jawahar

2 George Edalji of Birmingham, solicitor and son of an Anglican clergyman of Parsi descent, was sentenced to penal servitude on the charge of maiming cattle. There was an agitation in Britain and in India to procure a free pardon for him, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle undertook a minute examination of the case in the *Daily Telegraph*. Edalji was released in 1906 but without exoneration or compensation, so the agitation continued.

14. To Father

Harrow
30-1-07

My dear Father,

I have been here for a whole week now and still I haven't had a single lesson in the Caesar. Such is luck! I arranged about my specials as soon as I could and if nothing untoward had happened I would have had at least two lessons by this time. The first time the house was locked and I couldn't get an exeat to be let out of the house—for you know the house is kept locked up during the evenings. I couldn't go to Dr. Wood at the time as he was having dinner and the result of all this was that I had to cut my specials. The second time it wasn't my fault. I went up to the house of the person with whom I take specials but found to my disappointment that he had been obliged to go out. Tomorrow I go again. I wonder what will happen then. I am only having three lessons a week. There is not time at all left for any more. Last night I got a letter from Fletcher,[1] the Trinity tutor. It was just like the letter you had brought. I think I shall see Wood soon about it.

1. Sir Walter Fletcher (1873-1933); Senior tutor and lecturer in natural sciences at Trinity College, Cambridge.

IN ENGLAND, 1906.

Standing (Left to right)

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, JIVAN LAL KATJU, SHRIDHAR NEHRU

Sitting (Left to right)

BRIJLAL NEHRU, MOTILAL NEHRU, KRISHANLAL NEHRU

I didn't have any doubts about my getting a remove this term as the combined place is always taken and I was 3rd in that. As a matter of fact even my form place would have done for seven got their remove.

In the school report the only subject in which I am supposed to be bad in, excepting of course the Old Testament, is Latin. I suppose this means Latin Composition for I did rather well in the translations. Even the form master remarked that I had done well in them. But I am quite hopeless at Latin composition and I do not see any chance of improving at it whilst I am here. We do it for about three quarters of an hour every week and then we just have to translate some English into Latin. Sometimes one gets one's paper back with the mistakes underlined. As for the German it was not difficult last term and I was easily top of my div.

My divs. in various subjects are good this term. In Trig I am in the 4th div, one above last term's and in Geometry I am in the 3rd div., four divs above last term's. I think I wrote to you last time that we have got divs for French too now, that is not only for French Prose but for all other French things we do too. They are rather curiously numbered, mine being 2a. I think it is the third or fourth from top. In the new system I am about 3 divs above many who were as many divs above me last term in French Prose. So I suppose I must have done well.

I am glad you have cancelled your order for the motor car though I am afraid it is too late for that now. They said that they would deliver the car by the 10th of February when I was there. The best plan is after all to get a ready made one and take it with you to India.

The weather has been mild this week. We had heavy frost for some days and many people were going to get their skates. Even I was thinking of writing for them but the very next day the thaw set in.

Our zealous footer captain has formulated a new rule about Torpids. Every one who has not been here two Easter terms, excluding this one, will be counted as a Torpid and will have to play throughout the term. He won't be allowed to play in the matches as that would be a breach of school rules. I strongly objected to this and so did several others. We went up to the housemaster about it but he only said that he would think about it. He always does this and never seems to come to a decision. In the meantime I have bowed to fate and play every day. I rather enjoy the games but the idea that I have got to play whether I want to or not makes me dislike them. And sometimes I want to go out for runs instead.

Now I think I have written to you all about our doings here. The

only remaining thing is that wretched marriage business.[2] I had purposely left it till the end as I wanted to get rid of the other things first. At present I have no time but there is still a day and a half before the mail goes and I shall find time to write before that.

I have now got to prepare some work for my French div, which is, by the way, the third.

1-2-07

Last night I went to my Latin specials and did some satisfactory work. I have now arranged for another hour, bringing up the number of lessons to four times a week.

Now as to my future happiness. I must have expressed myself very clumsily and given you quite wrong notions of my attitude which I never meant to. This is all I can make out by your last letter. First of all I must tell you that I was influenced by no person on that occasion. Birju Bhabi[3] has not written to me for months and even in her letters the subject is hardly ever mentioned. Of course I often see Birju Bhai and we sometimes talk about it. And then I get many letters from India in which the subject is discussed and the writer gives his or her opinion on it. I do not pretend to say that all those have no effect on me whatever. It would be foolish to say so. I suppose every one of them influences me very slightly in one direction or the other. But this kind of "influencing" is hardly perceptible and it is difficult to know exactly when it comes. So I except this when I say that I was biased by no one.

The first thing which strikes me is the underlined part in your letter, that "it is most tiring and annoying not to know what is going to happen etc" and "I cannot rest till something is done." By this I did not mean that I wanted to be engaged as soon as possible. On the contrary I had a vague dread that I might suddenly hear that this had happened. I didn't like this at all and it made me feel rather uncomfortable. Now that I have your assurance that this won't happen I am perfectly satisfied. I am very sorry to have given you the impression that I didn't completely rely on your judgment in the matter. You of course know much more about the persons concerned than I do and are far better qualified to make a choice. I only gave you my opinion because you asked me for it. I knew hardly any more about them than what you had written and it was on those facts alone that I gave my opinion. You know more about both sides and can improve upon it.

I wasn't aware of the fact that there was a large field of selection.

2 His marriage took place on 8 February 1916.
3. Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru.

I have been repeatedly told that there were only two and I think you yourself said so in one of your letters. However it is all the better that it is so and I wish you all success in your endeavours to find a "real gem".

As for looks, who can help not feeling keen enjoyment at the sight of a beautiful creature? And I think you are quite right in saying that the outer features generally take after the inner person. And yet sometimes this is not the case. Beauty is after all skin-deep and without certain other qualities would be more harmful than beneficial.

There is very little time left now and I have to write at least two more letters. This has been written at odd moments snatched from work now and then. I hope you will not find it too scrappy. I got off footer today specially to write this.

With love,

from your ever loving son
Jawahar

15. To Father

Harrow
Feb. 8, 1907

My dear Father,

I am so very glad to hear that you are going to be the president of the Provincial Conference,[1] for I am sure you must have accepted the offer. I can think of no possible reason for your not doing so. However much you disagree with the details of the Congress programme you cannot but agree with its general aim. I do not see why you dislike the "oily" babus[2] Their erratic methods have made me respect them far more than I ever did. Of course they are often wrong and do things which they ought not to do but the very fact that they have the courage to do them is something far better than the inert condition

1 Presiding over the first Provincial Conference of the United Provinces on 28 March 1907, Motilal said "I firmly believe that he (John Bull) means well, it is not in his nature to mean ill." He also opposed the policy of boycott

2 Motilal Nehru had in his letter to Jawaharlal of 27 December 1906, referred to the Bengali nationalists at the Calcutta Congress of 1906, as "oily" babus. 'The real tug of war is to come this evening at the Subjects Committee where the extremists are going to give formal notice to the British Government to quit and hand over the reins of Government to the "oily" babus. If this resolution is agreed to be adopted I have prepared the United Provinces to disclaim it publicly. Madras will vote solid against it. Bombay is in overwhelming majority and the Central Provinces and the Punjab in decent majorities But there are so many of the Bengal people that they outnumber all of us put together.'

of our province. It is practically owing to them that the people here have begun to take some interest in India. It is not very much, I know, but still it is better than nothing. The papers gave a fairly prominent place to the proceedings of the Congress and some of them had leaders on it. Your address is certain to be a very brilliant one in every respect, only I hope it will not be too moderate. Indians are as a rule too much so and require a little stirring up. You may not agree with the ways of the new Extremist Party[3] but I do not think you are *such a slow and steady sort of person as you make yourself out to be.* At least that is the impression you gave me from what you said at Mussoorie.

We have been having a good deal of frost and there has been a lot of skating. About a week ago we had heavy frost after comparatively mild weather. Another day's frost would have made the ice perfect for skating and in anticipation of this a competition was arranged and prizes were to be given for skating. But on the following night it thawed and made matters worse. So it has been going on since then, the frost and thaw coming by turns. Yesterday the ice was in fairly good condition and in addition to its being a half holiday we got off an hour and a half's work for skating. Most of the people went to Ruislip, a place nearby, with a beautiful stretch of water. I didn't *feel inclined to go so far and besides this I thought it would be too* crowded there and I didn't want to make an exhibition of my fine skating. Instead, I went with two other boys for a run and we took our skates with us. After some time we came across a large pond and we had a delightful time over it. It was rather a risky business as the ice was not thick enough at places but we went on it all the same. The ice cracked like anything and gave way completely at places but we managed to return unharmed. By the time we had done with the pond it was full of large cracks and holes. Even if any one of us had gone completely in, he would only have had a cold bath.

Today there is skating in ducker for the Upper School only. I should rather have liked to go but then I wouldn't have had any time for this letter. If the frost holds, there is a chance of our having a whole holiday *tomorrow. Unfortunately I cannot skate very well.* You saw me trying to do so at the rink at Mussoorie and know how good I am. But on ice I can skate somewhat better.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

3 The group in the Congress under the leadership of Lajpat Rai, Tilak and Bepin Pal, which preferred self reliant methods to representations.

16. To Father

Harrow
Feb. 14, 1907

My dear Father,

I was almost sure that you would accept the offer of the presidentship but still I was glad to be made quite certain about it by your last letter. I am sure you will be as successful in the "new line" you are taking up, as you have been in other fields. You have already kept away from it too long but that I hope will only add a new zest to it. I do not think the students of Allahabad will be disappointed in you. I am sorry to hear that they are getting rowdy. Rowdyism of course is a most undesirable thing and yet it smacks of the West and shows a certain amount of independence.

I wonder what the reference to India in the King's speech[1] means. The Unionist press views it with dislike, and that is a hopeful sign.

On the very day I got your last letter I went to Wood and talked to him about my going to Cambridge. He simply expressed surprise that I could manage to get into a 'Varsity so soon. He gave me the certificate of character without any difficulty. When I pointed out to him that he had not known me for quite two years yet, he said that it didn't matter much. The same day I sent all the forms duly filled up with a cheque of £20 to Fletcher, the Trinity tutor. I received a receipt for the money some days ago but haven't heard anything about the rest. So I conclude that I was quite in time in sending the application.

I have to do no French in Part I or Part II of the Little Go.[2] In the Additional Subjects there is a choice of three: Mechanics, French and German. Of these German is out of the question for me and so the choice lies between the two former ones. I can appear for either of the two in June next with Part II but it isn't necessary to do so. I can study for them and appear for them later on after joining the 'Varsity. It would be better if I got through them beforehand and I have half a mind to try to do so. At any rate there is not much harm in trying for it. It wouldn't affect my entering the college even if I did not succeed in the Additional Subject. I haven't as yet decided which to take. Mechanics, I think, would be the easier for me.

1. The Liberal Government, in the King's speech from the throne, on 12 February 1907, referred to India, "while firmly guarding the strength and unity of executive power uninjured, I look forward to a steadfast effort to provide means of widening the base of peace, order and good government by the vast population committed to my charge."
2. The first public examination at Cambridge.

In French, there are two set books and besides I would have to polish up my French generally. I shan't decide anything about this till I hear from you There is no hurry as I have to get through Part I first.

No importance is attached to the fortnightly placings but they serve to show approximately the place during the rest of the term. I have not at all been exerting myself in the form work or the other subjects here and yet I am not so low as one would expect. I was third in form and my tique[3] div. and first in the geometry div. French counts a lot and in that I was rather low. But the fact of my being in a high div. pulled me up. In form I beat both the chaps who were above me last term. This was solely due to my French.

I have had a double change in tutors this term. My last term's tutor has left the school and I was consequently transferred to another person. This gentleman went to Uganda during the holidays and has returned from there with some sort of disease. He is at present dangerously ill. So there was another change of tutor.

A few days' rain has put an end to all prospects of skating this winter.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

3 Trigonometry.

17. To Father

London
28. 3. 07

My dear Father,

The conference will probably have begun by this time and you must be very busy. I am eagerly awaiting your inaugural address. Your last letter was a short one but I need no apology for it. I know how busy you must be and how very little time you must have for letters. And I wouldn't like you to spend too much time in writing to me to the detriment of your address.

I came from Harrow day before yesterday and am staying with the Tanners[1] — where else could I stay? This afternoon I go to Bourne-

1. The family of a clergyman with whom Motilal Nehru had arranged for his son to spend the vacation.

mouth, where I shall meet Birju Bhai and Jivan. There, or some other place, I shall spend the greater part of my vac. I am determined not to be in London longer than is absolutely necessary. Neither Shridhar nor Kishan Bhai[2] could join us and it seemed at first that we would have to be a party of two. At length we persuaded Jivan to come with us. I have not met him since he came over with you to Harrow and I rather wanted to see him.

I haven't heard the result of the Little Go yet. It is near the end of the week now and Fletcher said the result would be out sometime in the beginning of this week. I have little doubt of my not getting through but still I should like to make sure.

I got your cheque for £25 long ago and thought that I had acknowledged it. Sorry to have forgotten to do so. I only cashed it some time before going to Cambridge. Summer seems to have set in here too in earnest. There has not been an unpleasant day for some time excepting day before yesterday when there was an awful fog. Tomorrow is Good Friday and there being only one collection I have to post this today. Last year I remember I didn't do so but still the letters reached you in time. In case I hear about the Little Go tonight or tomorrow morning I shall drop you a line.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

2 Krishanlal Nehru (1881-1951), son of Nandlal Nehru and first cousin of Jawaharlal. A medical graduate of Edinburgh University, he served as an official in the United Provinces till his resignation during the noncooperation movement.

18. To Father

Harrow
19. 4. 07

My dear Father,

I didn't expect to receive your presidential address till this week and was surprised to get it by the last mail. I was sure yours would be a good address and my expectations have been fully realised. I specially like the manner you have handled the Hindu-Mohammadan problem. You are still very moderate but I hardly expected you to become an extremist. I personally like to see the Government blamed and censured as much as possible, but perhaps it is better to be temperate. As regards John Bull's good faith I have not have as much confidence in him as you have. I wonder how your address was received. It could hardly have pleased the Extremists and specially the students.

From Oxford I went to Eastbourne, as I wrote to you last week, for the week-end. I had a very pleasant time there, so much so that I stayed for another day in spite of my week-end ticket. I would have stayed on for some more days if the term didn't begin here so soon.

I have got my remove and am in the second fifth now. The first fifth is taken with our form and both do exactly the same work. So that practically the sixth is the only form above ours.

I have got nearly eight weeks before Part II of the Little Go and the Additional Subject. I am trying to arrange for private lessons in Mechanics but it is rather hard to do so in the Summer term as most people want to have as little to do as possible now. But I think I shall succeed in getting them.

I am taking up cricket this term but in a form in which I shan't have to play every day. The weather at Bournemouth and Eastbourne was very mild, sometimes quite hot. But still we had fires there. Here it is far colder and yet no fires are allowed.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

19. To Father

Harrow
17. 5. 07

My dear Father,

Yesterday was a whole field-day and we had to do a lot of running about and marching. I have not recovered yet and feel very stiff and tired. There were three small schools on our side and on the other side was Oxford University with some schools. The Oxford people had mounted infantry with them and a maxim gun but in spite of these we licked them hollow. This was mainly due to our scouts and I am glad to say I was among them. In the morning the scouts were sent out in pairs to reconnoitre and bring in reports as to the state of the country round us. After this we had to wait till the time came when we were supposed to start. As soon as it was time the scouts, about twenty in number, ran as fast as they could for about a mile and a half over hilly country. This was to get possession of an important hill before the enemy reached there. We got there in the nick of time just when the enemy were marching up it from all sides. Even then they might have driven us back if they had shown any dash but they were so surprised to see us reach the place in such a short time that they promptly retired. We easily held the hill till reinforcements came up. After that it was plain

sailing. At the end of the fighting all the corps had tea at the country house of an old Harrovian. There was corps supper here when we came back.

Just after I wrote to you last week I saw the paper and was astounded to read the news from India. It was surprising enough as it was but the *Daily Mail* exaggeration made it even more so. Since then I have been well supplied with information concerning India but it is hard to know what is true and what is false. I do not yet know what caused all this trouble, unless it be the prosecution of the *Punjabee*[1]. I fail to see what good this can do.

This morning I read that Bipin Pal, who I presume is Bipin Chandra Pal,[2] had decided to retire from public life. Has his zeal for his mother country worn out so soon?

After some correspondence Fletcher wrote to me that I could do an English Essay instead of the Greek. There are just over three weeks left before the Exam. and I have got a lot to do. I have given up the idea of appearing for the Additional Subject in June. I have got quite enough to do without appearing for it. For the Previous, I have got Logic, which I have only begun as yet, and Mathematics. The latter are very easy and I did all that is required long ago. But that is just the difficulty. I have hardly done any Arithmetic and Algebra for a long time and would probably make absurd blunders. So I think I shall do some of the old papers beforehand. The third subject is the essay. This is not set beforehand as you seem to think. But a book is set from which a subject for an essay will be chosen. This book is for 1907 — Thackeray's[3] *Esmond*. I read this some time ago just for the sake of reading it but since then I have not opened it. For the entrance it is merely a question of revision of the Latin book and grammar.

Shakespeare is not among the Additional Subjects. The only three are French, German and Mechanics. I might have taken the first one

1. An Indian-owned English biweekly, was prosecuted for reporting that a British police officer had shot dead an Indian constable. Both the owner and the editor were sentenced to imprisonment Lajpat Rai conducted the defence.
2. Bepin Chandra Pal (1858-1932); born in Sylhet now in East Pakistan. After studying theology at Manchester College, Oxford, he returned to India to become a schoolmaster, and later turned to journalism and politics. He took a prominent part in the agitation against the partition of Bengal in 1905, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment in 1907 for contempt of court and again for sedition in 1911. He was regarded as one of the Extremist leaders. He served for a short while in 1920 as editor of Motilal Nehru's newspaper *The Independent*, but severed his connection with it and with the Congress because he was opposed to Gandhi's noncooperation programme.
3. William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-63); English novelist.

but I chose the Mechanics as being the most useful. I am going to continue my specials in them all through this term and I ought to be able to know something about them by that time. Besides I do them in my Tique div. too.

I am very sorry to hear of mother's ill-health. I do hope she will soon get better. I know you cannot leave her in that state of health and I do not wish you to do so. There are still quite two months before you can come here and I am almost sure she will be well enough to come over by then. Your bringing her over here is attended with many difficulties but money need not be one of these — unless you want to stay for months at the Hotel Cecil.

I have already spent too long a time over this letter and have only got about twelve minutes left for the rest of mail. So that my other letters will be short and sweet.

With *love*,

from your loving son
Jawahar

20. To Father

Harrow
June 7, 1907

My dear Father,

Your letter gave me the first true account of the recent disturbances[1] and it turned out to be as I had expected. Really these sorts of occurrences make one despair of ever seeing a free and united India in spite of all one's enthusiasm for it. I do not blame Morley[2] at all for what he

1. The agrarian unrest in Punjab and the consequent deportation of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, and certain other measures adopted by the government to prohibit public meetings in East Bengal and Assam led to serious agitation in the country.
2. John Morley (1838-1923); a leading Liberal intellectual, protagonist of Irish Home Rule and biographer of Gladstone; became Secretary of State for India in 1905 and much was expected of him. He and the Viceroy, Lord Minto, secured the enactment in 1909 of the Councils Act which provided for non-official majorities in the legislative councils but linked with the creation of separate electorates; otherwise his presence made little change to the policy of repression.

has done, except for Lajpat Rai's[3] deportation. I can quite appreciate his position and don't see what else he could well have done. But I am very sorry for Lajpat Rai.

I need hardly write to you of the half term placings as you will see them in the reports. I saw some of the latter and think they are as good as I could expect them to be. In form of course my Latin prose is par excellence the most notable.

Next week you shall hear how I have fared at the Trinity Entrance. I have literally not touched a book for it and all depends on what I did for Part I of the Little Go.

For Part II of the Previous I have had to prepare Logic and *Esmond*. I have just managed, with great difficulty, to read through for the first time the book on Logic. I had read less than half of it till a few days; but then I resolved to finish it and finished it the same day. I have been doing Logic with my tutor since I began it here. But he knows very little about it and he said so himself. So I have arranged to have a few lessons with a person who does know something about it, before I go up.

As for the *Esmond*, you told me to write a lot of essays on it, but as yet I have not even read it properly. I shall probably go through it once more before going to Cambridge. I could fairly easily write four or five pages on any subject related to it but I suppose they want much more.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

3. Lala Lajpat Rai (1865-1928); a leading politician of Punjab, began his career as a lawyer at Hissar, and later moved to Lahore He was a prominent member of the Arya Samaj. He attended the fourth Congress session at Allahabad in 1888, and in 1905 toured Britain with Gokhale to propagate the Indian nationalist viewpoint In the split between the Moderates and the Extremists in 1907 he sided with the latter He was deported to Mandalay Released after six months, he was active in politics till 1914 when he visited Britain and then proceeded to the United States, where he stayed for five years. On his return, he presided over the Congress session at Calcutta in 1920. Joining the Swarajist Party, he was elected to the Central Assembly, but soon broke with Motilal Nehru and was one of the founders of the Nationalist Party He led the demonstration in Lahore against the Simon Commission, was severely beaten by the police, and died a few days later.

You wrote to me sometime ago about my giving a leaving Lunch or Dinner. A Lunch or Dinner is hardly ever given here but leaving breckers or breakfasts are generally given by those who have been in the school for about five or six years. Specially is this the case among the members of the cricket and footer elevens who give breckers to their brother olympians. It would look rather absurd and funny if I gave a brecker and so I am not going to give one.

J.

25. To Father[1]

Highgate
August 1st 1907

My dear Father,
I have left Harrow at last and left it for good. And strange as it may seem I was quite sorry to do so. I would not have believed this myself a few days before, yet such was the case. I did not know, till my last day at Harrow, how attached I had grown to the place.....

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Extracts

26. To Father[1]

Dublin
Aug 22nd 1907

My dear Father,
....You wrote to me something about my keeping a horse at Cambridge sometime ago. I should of course rather like to keep a horse in certain respects but still I don't like the idea half so much as I used to. In the first place it will be expensive, specially so at Cambridge, and secondly it would take up too much of my time. I intend to take up rowing, and rowing takes up more time than any other sport. I don't believe in taking up several sports in a half hearted sort of way. If I am to take up anything I might as well do it thoroughly. You must not think that I want to do a good deal of rowing because I want to get into the Trinity boat. I am too light to be anything but cox, and I shouldn't like to be cox.[2]....

1. Extracts.
2. In fact, that is what he did become.

ıner appeared to be rather disappointed when I told her that ıot coming to England this year. She doubtless hoped to ther arrangement for the next year. This is of course out stion but I should like you to write to her that I shall be ɔ stay with them off and on during my visits to London. ;es are, as you know, exorbitant, yet I may feel like going h them sometimes. It has cost me less to come over here ɔn and stay here for a week than a week's stay alone would ·e at the Tanners.

member at all how many weeks I have spent at the vicarage should think I was there for at least six weeks.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

Dublin
Aug 29th 1907

ıer,

ıing I went to hear Father Bernard Vaughan[2] lecture on the Irish." I expect you have heard of his famous sermons of society. We arrived there about an hour before the ıt and found a great crowd of people struggling with one through a narrow door-way which led to the lecture-room. ɔld he has on the people. He gave a beautiful and logical c can employ logic to prove the necessity of faith — lecture. ellent speaker and not for a moment did any one lose lecture. He dragged in of course his favourite subject — ɔciety — and told some very good stories of the modern fashionable fop...

Vith love,

from your ever loving son
Jawahar

21. To Father[1]

Harrow
July 5th 1907

My dear Father,

.....Yesterday was Speech Day and I had a rather dismal time. Everyone had some people come to see him and I was the only exception. However I succeeded in getting a ticket for the speeches and thus whiled away a couple of hours or so. Another hour was spent in listening to the school songs and the rest of the time was spent in my room.

Next week is Lord's[2] and I don't know yet whether I shall have to go there alone or not. I may go with Birju Bhai on one of the days, if he chooses to have a relaxation from his work, and on the other day I may go with a Harrow boy, or rather an old Harrovian for he left last term.....

Your loving son
Jawahar

1. Extracts.
2. The annual Eton v Harrow cricket match played at Lord's cricket ground.

22. To Father[1]

Harrow
12.7.07

My dear Father,

.....Your last letter contains an exciting account of the doings of the "40 brave Rajputs."[2] I was much amused to read about them [illegible] don't think there is much to fear from them. Still I can't help [illegible] slightly anxious.....

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

band of dacoits who had given themselves this name. Their practice was to [illegible] payment and to commit robbery if this were refused. Motilal, however, refused to yield to threats, and was left unharmed.

23. To Father[1]

Harrow
July 19th 1907

My dear Father,

.....You have well named Morley as *Jan Marli*.[2] I used to quite admire him at first and even after Lajpat Rai's deportation, I thought that he must have been misled by others and would soon rectify his mistake. Now I detest him[3].....

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Extracts.
2. A pun in Hindi phrase, implying that he has sorely troubled us.
3. In his budget speech in June 1907 Morley had severely criticized the educated classes in India and had observed that government machinery could not be entrusted to them even for a week.

24. To Father[1]

Harrow
July 25th 1907

My dear Father,

My Harrow career is rapidly drawing to a close and in another four days will be a thing of the past for me. I can't say I feel sorry for this. I would have liked to have stayed on for another year if I had been younger but under the circumstances it is undoubtedly the best thing for me to leave. This then will be the last letter I shall write to you from Harrow, at least as a member of the School.

An association — the Harrow Association — has just been formed here for old Harrovians. Until lately there had been old Harrovian cricket and footer clubs but no general club for all old Harrovians. The entrance fee is £2.2.0 and that makes one a life member with nothing more to pay. The chief advantage in joining it is the use of its colours. But unfortunately the colours have turned out to be a wretched mixture of blue and white. However I am going to have a coat made of them soon. Besides these colours there are other colours which have come to be regarded as O.H. colours without any formal adoption. I like these much better and have ordered a coat in these too. I have of course joined the Harrow Association.....

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Extracts.

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Harrow
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Your loving son
Jawahar

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2. A band of dacoits who had given themselves this name. Their practice was to demand payment and to commit robbery if this were refused. Motilal, however, refused to yield to threats, and was left unharmed.

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With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1 Extracts.

Mrs. Tanner appeared to be rather disappointed when I told her that you were not coming to England this year. She doubtless hoped to make a further arrangement for the next year. This is of course out of the question but I should like you to write to her that I shall be delighted to stay with them off and on during my visits to London. Their charges are, as you know, exorbitant, yet I may feel like going to stay with them sometimes. It has cost me less to come over here from London and stay here for a week than a week's stay alone would have cost me at the Tanners.

I don't remember at all how many weeks I have spent at the vicarage this year. I should think I was there for at least six weeks.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

27. To Father[1]

Dublin
Aug 29th 1907

My dear Father,

. . .Last evening I went to hear Father Bernard Vaughan[2] lecture on the "Faith of the Irish." I expect you have heard of his famous sermons on the sins of society. We arrived there about an hour before the commencement and found a great crowd of people struggling with one another to get through a narrow door-way which led to the lecture-room. Such is the hold he has on the people. He gave a beautiful and logical —as far as one can employ logic to prove the necessity of faith—lecture. He is an excellent speaker and not for a moment did any one lose interest in the lecture. He dragged in of course his favourite subject—the sins of society—and told some very good stories of the modern sportsmen and fashionable fop...

With love,

from your ever loving son
Jawahar

1. Extracts
2. A popular Jesuit preacher

28. To Father

Dublin
Sept 12th 1907

My dear Father,

Your letter this week too was very short. I haven't had a long one from you for ever so long. Your last was written just before your going to Calcutta to see the Kaviraj[1]. I do hope his treatment did you a lot of good.

We are still in Dublin, lingering on for lack of having any better place to go to. But the probability is that before next week we shall have either gone back to England or to some other place in Ireland.

Birju Bhai and Jagmohan Nath[2] are staying with us, so that we are a party of six altogether here. There is hardly room for us all in this house but we preferred this to staying in different places.

A couple of days ago I received a bunch of letters from Harrow, which had been sent to some one else by mistake. They were all Indian letters which ought to have reached me three weeks ago.

In your last letter you asked me not to go near Belfast on account of riots[3], but I would have dearly liked to have been there for them. About a fortnight ago there was a chance of our having similar scenes here but to my mortification the whole thing ended in a fiasco. The tramway employees were on the point of striking, and if they had done so, there would have been a little fighting in the streets of Dublin.

There is nothing else to write about.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Kaviraj Shyamadas Vachaspati, well known Ayurvedic physician of Calcutta.
2. Jagmohan Nath Chak studied law in London and was later dean of the law faculty at Lucknow University.
3. Labour disputes and disaffection among the police caused riots in Belfast on 11 and 12 August 1907, and the army opened fire.

These two photographs of Harrow were preserved by Jawaharlal and stuck on the first page of his prison diary, 1930.

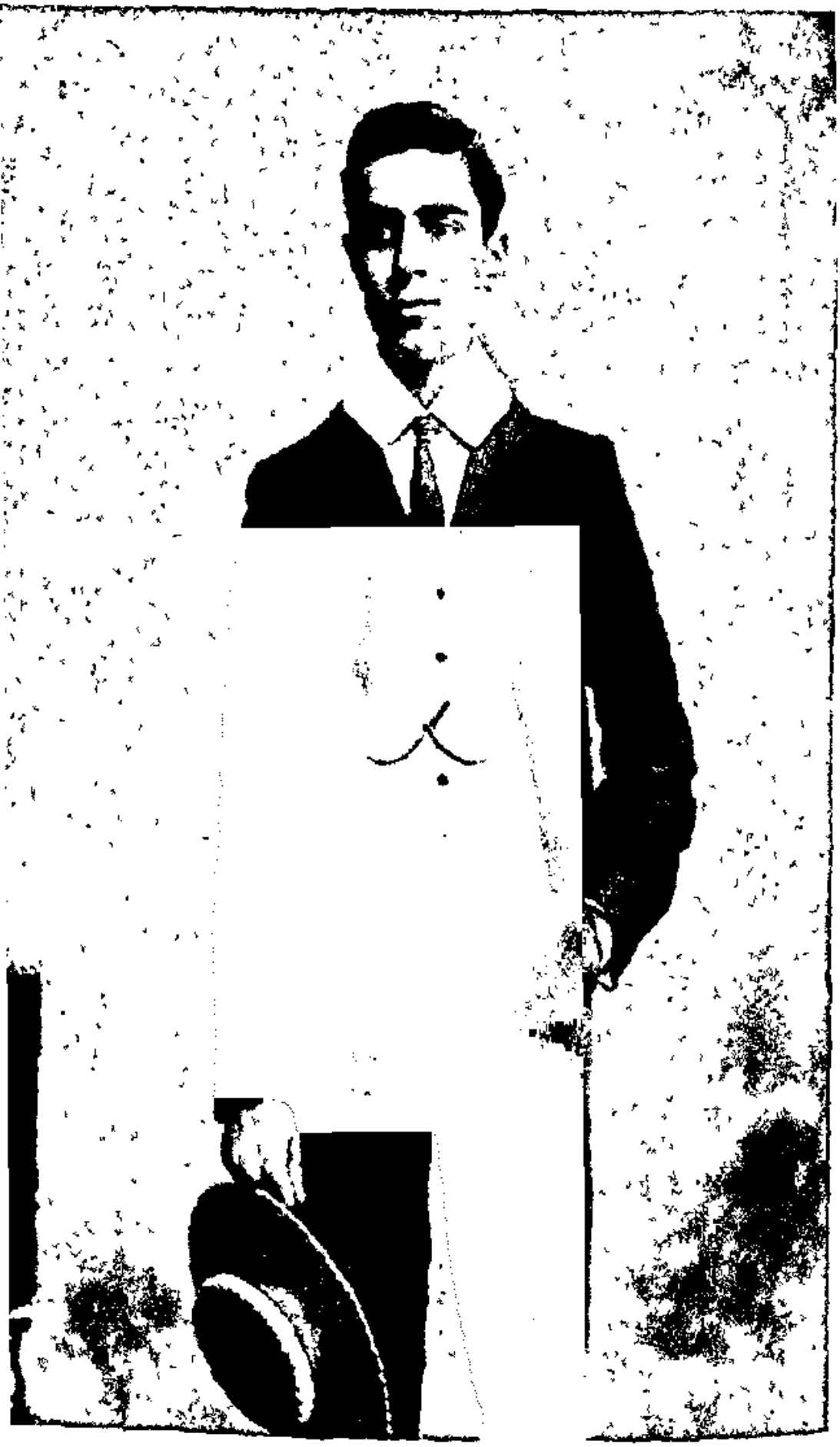

AT HARROW

29. To Father[1]

Llandudno
Sept 19th 1907

My dear Father,

.... I think I wrote to you some time ago that I had sent in my name for the exam. in the Additional Subject to be held in October. I have not prepared at all for it yet and only a fortnight is left now. It was perfectly impossible to do any work in Ireland and it is still more so here. That is why I am going to London soon. That will give me just ten days for preparation and you can judge what the result will be. A Harrow master told me that it would take me six months to do it. ....

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1 Extracts.

30. To Father[1]

Llandudno
Sept 20th 1907

My dear Father,

.... There is nothing else in your letter except your reference[2] to the council of notables. Why call them noodles when their name itself, not—ables, suits them?. .

With love,

from
Jawahar

1 Extract

2 "Morley's long promised reforms have at last been published They are as was expected from an old imbecile like Morley just the opposite of reforms. The Advisory Council of noodles (I beg his pardon—I mean Notables) will be a huge farce and the enlarged Legislative Councils will be no more than a collection of *Ji hazoors* little better than District Boards where the opinion of the Chairman (who is always the Collector of the District) is dittoed by every member The avowed object of the so called reforms is to destroy the influence of the educated classes but the law of the survival of the fittest is too strong even for Morley."

31. To Father[1]

68 Elgin Crescent,
Holland Park W.
Sept 27th 1907

My dear Father,

... I forgot to write to you about Bepin Chandra Pal. What say you about his courage now?[2] You can hardly accuse him of cowardice. He may be mistaken in his ideas and theories but there is no question left of his acting up to them...

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Extracts.
2. See letters dated 7 and 15 November, 1907.

32. To Father[1]

The Union Society,
Cambridge
Oct. 17th 1907

My dear Father,

... You wrote to me sometime ago to have a group taken and also to have myself photographed in my cap and gown when I came here. I tried as hard as I could to induce the others to consent to the former but something or other was always cropping up to put it off till I had to come here. As for the cap and gown one I am surprised that you want one. I look simply awful in it. It is bad enough as it is without the cap and bells — I mean the gown — but with them it is infinitely worse. I am sure I shouldn't have the courage to show the photo to any one I know here. I shall, however, have myself photographed in ordinary costume sometime this term and if you really want to see how foolish I look in academical dress I shall ask Birju Bhai to photograph me.

Your advice about my not keeping too much aloof from the Indians here is perfectly right and just what I myself thought. There are some disreputable Indians here but then there are also some respectable ones and it would be silly of me, if not worse, to keep away from the latter ones just from fear of meeting the former. As a matter of fact the

1. Extracts

Indians here as a whole are a better lot now than they were sometime ago but they have got a bad reputation and it is hard to get rid of it.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

33. To Father

Trinity College,
Cambridge
Oct. 24, 1907

My dear Father,

I have just come back from a lecture on "Socialism and the University man", which lasted quite two hours and consequently it is somewhat late now. The lecturer was George Bernard Shaw[1], about whom you must have heard a good deal. I was more interested in the man than in the subject of the lecture, and that was the reason of my going there. G.B.S. is a very able speaker and he gave a very interesting and instructive lecture.

The novelty of the life here has practically worn off now and I am getting used to Cambridge. The days are even getting somewhat monotonous with their same routine repeated again and again. And so there is not very much to be written except an account of my doings on the river. I put my name down on the tubbing list last Monday and went down to the boat house. But I could not be tubbed then or on any subsequent day. They weighed me the very first day and, I think, I was found to be the lightest person of the lot. I was immediately made a cox of a practise eight with a coach sitting behind me. The coach accompanied me the first two times, but since then I have been going out alone. Yesterday — my first time alone — I nearly ran the boat into the banks and into other boats. The river is so narrow and there are so many boats of all shapes and sizes going up and down it, that it is by no means easy for a beginner to keep clear of all obstacles. To add to one's worries the 'Varsity boat always appears at awkward corners tearing down the river at breakneck speed. Every other boat has to make way for it and, if by any chance it can't, it not only has to pay a fine for it but there is also a danger of its being run down. Coxing

1 George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950); leading British dramatist and Fabian. Long after this letter was written, in 1948, as Prime Minister, Jawaharlal wrote to Shaw, "like many of my generation, we have grown up in company with your writings and books. I suppose a part of myself, such as I am today, has been moulded by that reading." The two men met later that year.

does not give one much exercise and that is why I don't like it very much. But it is much better than staying in one's rooms all the time. Before I went down to the river I used to do practical physics every other day in the afternoons. This I can't do now as I don't generally come back till tea time. I tried to arrange some other times but that too could not be done and so now I do not do the subject at all! A pretty prospect for my taking the trip[2] year after next!

Matriculation took place last Monday. It consisted of our signing our names to a declaration about obeying the 'Varsity rules. It was a most tedious process as there are over 200 freshers at Trinity and my turn came rather late. I had to miss two lectures on account of it.

I hope you have a pleasant time on the rivers in your new motor boat.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

2. The tripos—, the final honours examination at Cambridge.

34. To Father[1]

Trinity College,
Cambridge
Oct 31st 1907

My dear Father,

...I went the other day to a meeting of the "majlis"[2] here just to see if they were as bad as they were painted; but I am glad to say I failed to discover anything very reprehensible in it. It is curious how the Cambridge Indians have got a bad name on account of the doings of a very small number of gentlemen.

I heard a good deal, sometime ago, about a "native" club having been started here by Indians. I suppose you must have heard about it too from your allusions to it. There appears to have been no such thing, at any rate in the sense I understood it. For there is a "Native" club here but it is meant for eating "natives"[3]!...

With love,

from your ever loving son
Jawahar

1. Extracts.
2. Association of Indian undergraduates. The word 'Majlis' means gathering.
3. Oysters.

35. To Father[1]

Trinity College,
Cambridge
Nov 7th 1907

My dear Father,

Your last letter was full of politics—or at any rate of the doings of Mr. B. C. Pal—and as I have little better to write about I shall begin with the same subject.

Your letter was not the first to suggest to me that B. C. P. had refused to give evidence[2] simply to make a hero of himself. The idea had occurred to me but for aught I knew it might have been quite wrong and I had no justification at all for holding that view. Your letter, of course, puts a somewhat different complexion on the matter. But supposing he had had no "conscientious scruples" and had given evidence before the court, would it not have been said, and rightly too, that he was a coward and dare not live up to his beliefs? For he has been preaching the boycott of everything English, even the courts of law, and it was only natural and consistent for him to do himself what he wants others to do. His views may or may not be right but I can see no inconsistency in his conduct. Of course you know much more about him than I do and are far better qualified to form an opinion. I have to rely mainly on Reuter's short, and at times misleading, accounts, and the Keir Hardie affair[3] has shown how trustworthy these are.

Have you heard of the Sinn Fein[4] in Ireland? It is a most interesting movement and resembles very closely the so-called extremist movement in India. Their policy is not to beg for favours but to wrest them. They do not want to fight England by arms but "to ignore her, boycott her, and quietly assume the administration of Irish affairs."[5] They have nothing to do with the Nationalists, in fact they would even have a boycott of the House of Commons and this does

1. Extracts.
2. Bepin Chandra Pal refused to give evidence in August 1907 in a case against Aurobindo Ghosh because he thought his evidence might go against the interests of the country.
3. James Keir Hardie (1856 1915), a Scottish coal miner who became prominent in the British Labour Party and its leader in the House of Commons, visited India in 1907. His speeches were misrepresented in the British Press He was accused of making inflammatory speeches and stirring up sedition, but the Indian newspapers felt that he had been misrepresented.
4. The Irish nationalist movement
5. The quotation is from "The New Ireland" by Brooks, referred to later in the letter.

not commend itself to Mr. Redmond[6] and his followers. When I was at Dublin a big Nationalist meeting was held at the Mansion House there and Redmond and other prominent people spoke in it. Admission to it was by ticket only—this reminds me of the U.P. Conference—and the Sinn Feiners could not get in. But they were not to be so easily put off. They held a meeting in the open outside the Mansion House which was much larger than the one inside the House.

Among people who ought to know, this movement is causing much more consternation than the Nationalists ever did. They say that if its policy is adopted by the bulk of the country, English rule will be a thing of the past before long.

A little booklet, entitled "The New Ireland", by Sydney Brooks came out a few months ago. I wonder if you have read it. If not, I hope you will do so. It is a most interesting book and I am sure you will like it.

This week the debate at the Union was about India. The motion was a very mild one to the effect that Indians should be associated with the management of their own affairs and was passed by a not very big majority. Only a couple of years ago a much stronger motion was passed by a huge majority but then Gokhale[7] came down to speak. It was unfortunate that the debate was on Guy Fawkes' day[8] as most people paraded about the streets in search of a rag. They were disappointed, however, but there are rumours of one going to take place tomorrow as it is the King's birthday[9]. Monday is a likely day, too, as the King of Spain[10] comes down then to visit his cousin Prince

6 John Edward Redmond (1856-1918); Irish nationalist leader who was a member of the British Parliament.

7. Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915), the most outstanding of the Moderate leaders. Educated at Poona and Bombay, he started his career as a school teacher and then, for 18 years, taught at Fergusson College in Poona He attended the Congress session at Allahabad in 1888 and thereafter, as a member of the Bombay Legislative Council and then the Central Legislative Assembly, attained a leading position in Indian public life by his carefully documented and analytical speeches on political and economic subjects. In 1905 he presided over the Congress and the same year he founded the Servants of India Society He died at the early age of 49. Mahatma Gandhi referred to him as his political guru.

8 The anniversary of 5 November 1605 when Guy Fawkes was seized for an attempt to blow up the House of Lords

9. King Edward VII (b. 9 November 1841) was King of England from 1901 to 1910

10. Alphonso XIII (1886-1941); King of Spain, 1886-1931.

Leopold of Battenburg[11] at Magdalene...
With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

11. *Lord Leopold Mountbatten (1889-1922).*

36. To Father[1]

Trinity College,
Cambridge
Nov 15th 1907

My dear Father,
I wrote a lot to you last week in a sort of justification of Bepin Chandra Pal's conduct. This morning's telegrams show how wrong were my calculations. I am certain now that your view of the case is the right one. If B. C. Pal had "conscientious scruples" against giving evidence in court, surely these same scruples ought to prevent him from appealing to a court for a mitigation of his sentence....
With love,

from your ever loving son
Jawahar

1. Extracts.

37. To Father[1]

London
Dec 20th 1907

My dear Father,
...I have read your article in the *Pioneer*[2] and must say that I do not like it at all. I had till now an idea that you were not so very moderate as you would have me believe. But the article almost makes me think that you are "immoderately moderate." I would have said that the article had been written by a person with strong "loyalist" tendencies if I had not known you better.

The object of your article is, as far as I can gather, a defence of the behaviour of the "moderate" leaders of the U.P. Even if I had condemned the action of the extremists at the last U.P. conference

1. Extracts.
2. A British owned newspaper of Allahabad. Winston Churchill was for some time its correspondent.

and before, I would hardly have thought your line of defence a very suitable one. You must have read Gokhale's recent speech,[3] on the same subject, in which he effectively silenced the Viceroy and the other members of the council. I do not think there could have been a better answer, from the moderate point of view, than his comparison between the C.M.G.[4] and the extremists...

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

3. *Speech opposing the bill for the prevention of seditious meetings.*
4. *Civil and Military Gazette*, a British owned newspaper of Lahore. Rudyard Kipling was for some years its assistant editor.

38. To Father

The Cairn Hydro,
Harrogate
Jan. 2, 1908

My dear Father,

You will be somewhat surprised to see that I am still at Harrogate. We had decided to go back to London to-day but were unable to do so at the last moment. We had asked the officials here whether they would take a cheque in payment of our account and they had consented to do so. When the cheque was going to be presented [to] them, however, they objected to it. We then wired to Jagmohan Nath, who is in London, to wire us the required amount. He did not grasp the situation at all and wired back that he was sending a cheque. We received his wire only a short time ago and have just replied to it.

We have had a lot of entertainments here during the past week, mostly consisting of dances. There was one fancy dress ball and some Cinderellas. But the most interesting of the lot was the staff ball last night. All the servants of our hydro and some from other hydros took part in this and danced with the visitors. There was an interval between the dances and during this supper was served. All the waiters and waitresses etc. sat down to it under the august presidency of the Head Waiter, whilst we, poor visitors! waited on them. Both the ladies and gentlemen waited on them and it was most amusing to see about half a dozen persons trying to forestall each other in getting something for the "guests". I was most industrious and waited on the girl who serves us at table. She was the best dressed and the prettiest of the lot and quite a number of people wanted to serve her.

I wished to dance with her too but her programme was full up. I didn't feel like dancing much last night, and I hardly danced at all, but I was rather keen on dancing with one of the waitresses just to know what she would talk about. I had no opportunity of doing this, however, except with another person's partner in Lancers, and she happened to be our own waitress. Birju Bhai asked one of them for a dance and she answered "Yes, Sir." It was so funny, her saying "Sir".

If we get the money from Jagmohan Nath by tomorrow afternoon we shall go to London in the evening. In the morning we are going to visit the ruins of Fountains Abbey. This is about fifteen miles from here in the Marquess of Ripon's[1] estate.

We expected lively things at the Surat Congress[2] and our expectations were more than fulfilled. It is, of course, a great pity that such a split should have occurred. But it was sure to come and the sooner we have it the better. You will most probably throw all the blame on Tilak[3] and the extremists. They may have been to blame for it but the moderates had certainly a lot to do with it. I do not at all object to R. B. Ghose being President; but the manner in which he was declared President in the face of opposition can hardly be defended from any point of view. The moderates may represent part of the country but they seem to think, or at any rate try to make others believe, that they are the "natural leaders" and representatives of the whole country. The manner in which some of them try to ignore

1. Lord Ripon, best known for his Indian Viceroyalty (1880-1884), when his very mild efforts to introduce a measure of equality between senior British and Indian officials roused the intense wrath of the British community in India.
2. The differences within the Congress between the Moderates and the Extremists, which had been growing since 1905, came to a head at the Surat session in December 1907. Surat was chosen because it was a Moderate stronghold, and Rashbehari Ghose, a Moderate lawyer from Bengal, was installed as President. The Extremists agreed to accept his election if he deleted from his presidential address any offensive passages and if the earlier decisions on swaraj, boycott and national education were reaffirmed. The session broke up in confusion, and the Extremists kept away from the Congress till 1916.
3. Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), the outstanding nationalist leader, was educated at Poona and taught at Fergusson College. He edited journals in English and Marathi and was sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. He was also the author of scholarly works on Indian history and philosophy. In a message on Tilak's birth centenary on 18 June 1956, Jawaharlal wrote: "I remember that in my boyhood and youth, when I had not personally met him, how powerfully I was influenced by him. He seemed to be the embodiment of Indian nationalism struggling for freedom."

and belittle all those who differ from them would be annoying if it was not ridiculous. I firmly believe that there will hardly be any so called "moderates" left in a very few years' time. By the methods they are following at present they are simply hastening the doom of their party.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

39. To Father[1]

London
Jan. 10th 1908

My dear Father,

...Last evening Birju Bhai and I went to a meeting held in the Caxton Hall to protest against the treatment accorded to the Transvaal Indians. Lord Ampthill[2] was Chairman. I expect you must have heard of the meeting from other sources and so I need not dilate on it here. It was most interesting and at times even exciting...

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1 Extracts
2. Lord Ampthill (1869 1935); had been Governor of Madras from 1900-1906 and officiated as Viceroy for a few months in 1904.

40. To Father[1]

Trinity College,
Cambridge
Jan. 16th 1908

My dear Father,

I received the cutting you sent me about the Congress last week. The account of the proceedings is much the same as Reuter's was. And you can infer from this what a long account he sent. But you say that the account of the *Times of India* is not free from party colouring. So I presume that Reuter was not as fair and unbiased as he might have been.

I noticed in one of the accounts that you spoke immediately before Tilak rose. This means that you must have been in the midst of the fray and I hope you will send me a good account of it.

1. Extracts.

The would be presidential speech of Dr. Ghose[2] does not strike me as being very brilliant or original. The beginning of his address is rather pathetic with its thanks for an honour which was not conferred on him and his allusion to the fate of Phaeton,[3] which turned out to be true in his own case. At times he begins to talk almost like an Anglo-Indian. I don't see why he should talk about the chaos and anarchy that would result if the English left India, at any rate in the strain he does.

I came here from London day before yesterday. I have arranged to take almost the same lectures as I did last term. The only change is my dropping one of the chemistry lectures. I had to do this to find time to do practical physics. The lectures start for me to-morrow morning...

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

2. Dr. Ghose was not allowed by the Extremists to deliver his address.
3. A character in Greek mythology. Son of Sun, he tried to drive his father's chariot but could not control the horses, and Zeus had to kill him with a thunderbolt before he destroyed the earth.

41. To Father[1]

Trinity College,
Cambridge
Jan. 23rd. 1908

My dear Father,

I was eagerly looking forward to your last letter and hoping that it contained an account of the proceedings at Surat. But I was greatly disappointed to find that there was no mention of them in it. I have read many accounts about the last Congress but still I want to know what you think about it. I do hope you will not forget to write about it to me...

Before the end of this term we have the Lent[2] races. First Trinity have six boats in for these. I am now coxing the fourth of these.

1 Extracts.
2 The period of forty weekdays from Ash Wednesday to Easter, when Christians are expected to fast. The college boat races at Cambridge were held during this period.

I was much dismayed to get a note from the College office today saying that if my bill was not paid within a week's time, I shall not be allowed to remain in residence. The bill is for £36 and a few odd shillings & pence. All the money I have left in the bank is about £2 or £3. Shridhar is unable to lend me all that I require and so, I believe, is Birju Bhai. I thought at first of wiring to you but then decided to wait till day after tomorrow and see whether your next contains a cheque. If it doesn't and if I cannot get the money anywhere else, you will probably hear from me before you get this.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

42. *To Father*

Trinity College,
Cambridge
Jan. 30th 1908

My dear Father,

Little of importance has happened here since I wrote to you last and I have consequently not much to write about. I have paid my college bill although I didn't receive anything from you by the last mail. Kishan Bhai sent me the required amount just in time.

I am sorry you don't approve of my opinions[1] but really I can hardly help holding them in the present state of affairs. They are the only inferences I can draw from my extremely limited supply of facts. Perhaps the fact that I have mostly heard one side of the case may have something to do with it. Anyhow I have not the presumption of imagining that my opinions are infallible.

The government must be feeling very pleased with you at your attitude. I wonder if the insulting offer of a Rai Bahadurship, or something equivalent to it, would make you less of a moderate than you are.

Jagmohan Nath must have left London today and will probably go home in the same boat as this letter. He came here last Sunday to bid us good bye.

With love,

from your ever loving son
Jawahar

1 "You know me and my views well enough to understand that I do not approve of the opinions expressed by you, but boys must be boys and I do not blame you for them" Motilal to Jawaharlal, 10 January 1908.

43. To Mother[1]

Trinity College,
Cambridge
Feb. 7, 1908

My dear Mother,
Last week, for the second time I made the mistake of posting the letters late. I had written all my letters and thought that I would take them all together and post them when I went across to the boat house. But when I set out, I forgot all about them. That is why none of my letters reached India. I am really very sorry for being so forgetful.

I was very amused by what you wrote about the Rani of Partabgarh in your letter. Ask her what business is it of hers whether a son or a daughter is born. If she likes boys, why should she expect others to do so too? She ordered a dozen suits at Trevelyans. Did she think that the boy would start wearing them as soon as he was born?

I do not know whether the kites have reached London or not. It is quite possible that they have, and Birju Bhai has not written to me about it.

So you are having winter there. For the last few days it has not been very cold here.

Lots of love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Original in Hindi.

44. To Father[1]

Trinity College,
Cambridge
Feb. 20th 1908

My dear Father,
Thanks awfully for the cheque for £100. I shall now be able to pay Kishan Bhai back the money he lent me to pay my last college bill. That with my landlady's account for this term will probably come up to nearly £60. So that I shall have about £40 left. With this I shall pay some of my small bills here, but I shan't be able to settle my account with Foster.[2] His bill, by the by, is only for my things. It consists of a small balance from the 1906 account, which

1. Extracts.
2. Jawaharlal's tailor in London

you must have paid yourself, and the rest is for things made for me since then. The latter chiefly consist of a dress suit and various old Harrovian knick knacks I had made there.

The Lents commence in another four or five days' time and we are out practising on the river every day. I have never even seen a bumping race and I don't quite understand yet the method of rowing. Our boat is not a bad one on the whole and ought to make some bumps, unless I make some howlers in the steering. And I am quite likely to do so. In spite of a month's practice this term my steering is worse now than it was last term. I don't know why this is so, but it certainly is so. I don't think you have seen the part of the river here where the races are rowed. It is an absurdly narrow strip with the sharpest of corners. In the straight bits there is of course no difficulty but taking a bad corner may mean the loss of a length or so. I should be glad, in a way, if they got some one else to cox the boat.

I discovered, a few days ago, that hiring a horse was not a difficult thing to do here. There is a good riding school here, where all the selected C.S.[3] candidates take lessons, and I can easily get horses there. So I promptly ordered some riding apparel and intend going out riding next term if not this...

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

3 Civil Service

45. To Father

Trinity College,
Cambridge
March 5th 1908

My dear Father,

The Lents are over at last and little remains to be done before the end of this term. In the races two of our boats did well, one not badly, and the rest were not much good. In the first lot was the boat I had coxed for the greater part of this term, but which I did not cox during the races. This boat made four bumps, that is, it made a bump every day. In such cases the crew get an oar each to hang it up in their rooms and display it to admiring friends, the cox getting the rudder. Isn't it hard luck on me not to have coxed the boat in the races and got the rudder?

The boat I did cox, however, did, on paper, almost as badly as it could have done. It rowed over the first day and got bumped the next three. But as a matter of fact we had splendid races and that is, after all, the end in view. My coxing, I am glad to say, was fairly good. Once a boat gained on us a great deal at first and was almost overlapping at a certain corner, but I took such a lovely corner that we got away from them. In the straight bit they came up to us again and at the next corner we got away again. After that there were no sudden corners and they bumped us not very far from the end of the course. I was greatly congratulated on my steering and perhaps that was better than the rudder.

As it happened the cox of the other boat did not do well and the coach was not very pleased at changing line for him. However they made their four bumps in spite of this and so it didn't matter.

With love,

from your ever loving son
Jawahar

46. To Father[1]

Trinity College,
Cambridge
March 13th 1908

My dear Father,

Your last letter brought one of the most surprising bits of news I have had for sometime. I knew that Jagmohan Nath was hardly the sort of person to undergo anything for the sake of a principle, specially if in doing so his views clashed with those of his parents, but still to perform a five or six days *praschit* is, to use a rather vulgar phrase, the limit. I would hardly have thought it possible of him, and so soon after his return too! His brother Manmohan[2] appears to be greatly annoyed at it and vows that he will never do such a thing. But I should be mightily surprised if that was the case...

With love,

from your ever loving son
Jawahar

1. Extracts.
2. Manmohan Nath Chak, a barrister, and second son of Prithinath Chak

47. To Father[1]

London
3.4.08

My dear Father,
We arrived here from Paris this morning after having travelled all night in a famishing condition. We had intended leaving Paris by the morning train and reaching London last night but a slight dispute arose over our hotel account and we missed the train. Our week's stay in Paris proved rather expensive and we had very little money left at the end of it. Still we thought we would be able to pay the hotel account and tip the various persons concerned. The hotel bill however somewhat staggered us. It was just about 50 frs. more than we had expected it to be and just 6 frs. more than all we had put together. The mistake arose from our not having included a day in our estimation. This of course was entirely our fault and we had to suffer for it. But there were some other items on the bill which the hotel people took off. We could then pay the bill and have about 8 or 9 frs. left over. Out of this we had to pay the porters, tip some persons and get lunch, dinner and tea. We had to leave out the tipping and the rest of the day we lived on coffee and bread. So that we did not have a substantial meal from dinner time day before yesterday till this morning. I am going to send the tips by post...

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1 Extracts

48. To Mother[1]

London
April 5, 1908

My dear Mother,
Only day before yesterday, I wrote a letter to you. I am writing to you again today because it is quite possible that if I wait for the mailing day I may not find enough time to write. So I would have written my letters earlier than necessary.

I was glad to learn from father's letter yesterday that he has decided that I should come to India this year. At first, as I wrote to you, I did not like the idea of my coming to India, but when I learnt that

1. Original in Hindi.

even if father came to London, you and Nanni would not accompany him, I liked the idea of leaving London. Anyhow, now everything is settled about my trip. Birju Bhai is starting his final examination three days from now. If he gets through, our trip will be certain. The summer vacation lasts for four months. This means I can spend about three months in India. We think that this time, if father approves, we should not go back by a P&O vessel and shall travel by some other company's vessel. In this way, we will spend less, even though on the whole this journey will probably take a few days more.

I came to know about young Nanni's *Kheer Chattai*. You have not written to me so far what name has been given to her.

You have written that I may not be able to see the exhibition.[2] I am not greatly interested in it. It will open two days before my departure. I may go and see it.

I am very sorry to learn that father is unwell. I am particularly distressed to hear that he is depressed and might not have liked something I wrote to him in my letter a few weeks ago.[3] What I wrote to him was written purely in fun and it never occurred to me that it could offend him. I was surprised to know that he did not like it and felt very angry with myself for having written such a silly thing. I shall apologise to him in my next letter.[4]

So father thinks that I have changed in Cambridge. I cannot understand this. Well, everyone slightly changes when he is a student and I think I am no exception. But I do not think I have changed more than that. Anyhow, you can judge for yourself in a few days as to how far I have changed.

You have written that I am more interested in games and do not pay enough attention to my studies. To some extent, this is no doubt true. I did not study much during the last two terms, but I did not have enough time then. I used to spend a lot of my time every day on the river. I did this only because father desired it. This term I shall try not to do so. But I may play tennis occasionally.

You misunderstand about my dancing. I do not go to dances every day. Only once in two or three months I get an opportunity. I do not waste much time on it nor do I spend a lot of money on it. Father himself wanted me to learn it.

What you have written to me about Shridhar is undoubtedly true. He studies hard. But to be exactly like him is rather difficult for me,

2 The Franco British Exhibition which was to open at London on 14 May 1908.
3. See letter to his father dated 30 January 1908.
4 See letter to his father dated 10 April 1908.

even if I had wanted to. It was father who had desired that, besides studies, I should participate in games. This is what I tried to do during my last two terms and this is what Shridhar never does.

Jivan and some others are here.

from your loving son
Jawahar

49. To Father[1]

London
Apr. 10th 1908

My dear Father,

I am so very sorry to hear that you were unwell and had the tooth-ache again. I suppose from the general drift of your letters that you have been overworking yourself as usual. I know well that you can hardly help working hard and yet I think that you ought to take better care of your health and have the right amount of exercise every day. You may recover from these repeated breakdowns but they must have some permanent effect on you. And I shudder to think what the consequences would be if you had a breakdown more serious than the last. One of my reasons for not wishing to go to India was the thought that your coming here would do you a deal of good. As it is you will probably play us the same trick as you did when I went to India last. But I am determined to have you with me for by far the greater part of my stay in India, if not the whole of it...

...I have been told that you did not like something I wrote to you a few weeks ago.[2] I was rather surprised to know this as what I wrote to you was written purely in fun and it never dawned on me that it could offend you. All the same I was right sorry I ever wrote that or thought it. But what amazes me is that you should have ever thought me capable of being guilty of such a thing. I do hope this will put an end to the incident. I have heard quite enough about it. I am sure you will pardon me for an offence which I did not intend to commit...

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Extracts
2. See letter of 30 January 1908

50. To Father

Cambridge
7.5.08

My dear Father,
This evening I went to my tutor about my lectures and it occurred to me that I might ask him if I could go down a few days before the end of the term. I had not done so before as I was fairly certain about his allowing me to do so. But he refused to let me go down a single hour before the end of full term, unless of course I did not want this term to count, that is, didn't want to take the trip in the usual course. This being out of the question, I have to stay here till June 11. So I can't possibly think of going to India in the first week of June. I could not have done that in any case as I have my Mays[1] on then. The second week too seems a bit doubtful. June 11 is a Thursday and the P & O express leaves Victoria at 10, if I am not mistaken, for Marseilles. If this is the case I cannot go by it as the earliest train to town does not get there in time for it. If the train leaves Victoria at 11, I may by the skin of my teeth catch it. Assuming that it leaves at 10, and that I cannot go by it, the only thing remaining if I want to go by that week's steamer is for me to go via Brindisi I don't know if you would like me to do that. Anyhow I don't like the idea of rushing off without even spending a day in London as I have tons of things there which I want to take If I had had time I should have liked to go to Oxford for a day too.

I really cannot make out what is going to happen. Birju Bhai has not written to me a single thing about what he proposes to do. He may perhaps have not decided yet. I asked him about the advisability of wiring to you but he has not answered yet. It will be somewhat hard to explain the situation in a telegram — and a trifle costly too. A few long telegrams to India would leave little behind.

My Mays will be held, as I have already written to you, in the beginning of June. They will be in all the three subjects I have taken up. In Chemistry I know little, but let that pass; in Geology I know less, but I am expected to know little. The Geol. Practical I have only just started and I have to know the names and be able to recognise by the end of the month over 100 fossils with most weird names and scores of rocks and minerals. Still this does not trouble me half so much as Physics. I have attended several lectures on various parts of it since I came up but hardly one of them has been comprehensible. I

1 The annual examinations

have been heartily regretting having taken up the subject at all. I wish I had taken Botany instead. But it is better to stick to it now.

I came up this term with great resolves about doing a huge lot of work daily. I have of course been unable to do as much as I intended but I have done a fair amount, more than I did during the last two terms put together. I hope I shall be able to get through the first year Mays as, if I don't, it will be highly annoying.

I have dropped off a lecture on Geol. mapping which was quite useless to me at present. It is really meant for people going up for their trip this year or the next. Shridhar induced me to attend it probably labouring under the impression that I had my trip looming in front of me. I can now get about a couple of hours in the afternoon to myself on Mondays, Wednesdays etc. I tried the dodge of attending lectures or labs from 9 to 7 with one hour off for lunch and no interval for tea, but one day of it was quite enough for me. I could not possibly do any work in the evening after that and I think I got up too late for a lecture next morning. Now I get two hours during those afternoons and practically all the other afternoons for either work or play. I thought I might as well take some exercise and not slack all the time and so I, with a couple of others, have engaged a tennis court for the rest of the term. I have not joined the college T.C. as, firstly, I was too late for it now, and secondly I didn't want to join it. I would have had to rush about trying to get a court early in the morning as there is a huge demand for them. Now we can go and play on our court any time before 5.30 we like. And this does not come very expensive either.

The "May Week"[2] here is going to be celebrated with more than usual eclat this year. This will be due to the installation of the new Chancellor and the Darwin centenary. In connection with the latter it is rather interesting to know that Darwin's grandson[3] or great grandson is at Trinity at present. He is going to appear in the Math. trip next year and most people think that he will be a Sr. W. If so, he will be the last of the senior wranglers.

The "May Week" is, as you probably know, a fortnight in June. It begins just a day or two before the end of the term and I shall miss it if I leave then. I should have rather liked to have seen it but I shan't be sorry to miss it. Everyone has his people down and, as at Harrow on Speech Day, I shall probably feel very lonely amidst the crowds of people. Balls are given right and left and I could easily go to several, but unaccompanied by anyone else. Few people go to them without

2. The last week of the summer term.
3. Sir Charles Galton Darwin (1887 1962); the distinguished physicist.

some lady friends and I should not like to do so. The races however may be interesting.

The great Franco-British exhibition will open in a few days in Shepherd's Bush. The daily papers, specially the half penny ones, are chanting its praises every day. It will be one of the finest ever held on earth, if one were to believe them. There is, by the by, going to be a "Typical Indian Village" in it. I shudder to think what that will be like. A congregation of half naked people, I should imagine. I don't think I shall be able to see the exhibition.

The weather after last week's cold has been delightful. The day after I wrote to you the temperature suddenly rose until it was about 70° in the shade! It has been fairly warm and occasionally wet since then.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

I am sorry I have written on two kinds of note paper. I couldn't help it as I ran out of the other kind.

51. To Father[1]

Trinity College,
Cambridge
May 14th 1908

My dear Father,

... A day or two ago I was looking through some papers which had been set for the last three or four Mays. To my surprise and disgust I found that they were far harder than I had expected. I might have done a question here and there out of the chemistry and the geology papers, but I could hardly do a single question satisfactorily in Physics. Really, the extent of my ignorance in the last named subject amazes me...

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1 Fatheth

52. To Father

Trinity College,
Cambridge
May 21, 1908

My dear Father,

I was delighted to get such a nice long letter from you, and yet the account of the attack of lumbago has made me very anxious about you. I am glad you have decided not to do any work during the vacation, though I wish you would extend the rest cure to some of the time when the High Court is sitting. Overworking yourself when you are unwell is a fatal mistake.

My information about your being "morose" is, I am glad to know, partially inaccurate. I wish the other part was also incorrect. It is you who ought to influence other people, and not be influenced by them. Yours must be the stronger personality — I doubt if you meet many people who have the advantage of you in that commodity — and I should have thought that you would bring others up to your state of mind, rather than lower yourself to theirs.

I told my tutor at the beginning of this term that I should like to have rooms in college next year, and, as a result of this he has allotted to me probably the rottenest rooms in the whole college. This is of course entirely my own fault. Choice of rooms goes by precedence of entry in the tutor's books. This list is the same as that given in the Cambridge Calendar, and you will see in the latter that I am very nearly the last on the list. The rooms are not too small, but what I object to is the absence of light. A tiny window looks out into the court and admits a wee bit of daylight. A point in favour of the rooms is that they are in Whewell's Court and so near the college baths. I can thus pop in and out of the baths in any dress. I should have of course preferred rooms in Great Court but there was no chance of my having any there in my second year. I may possibly get them next year. Of the other courts I liked Whewell's best. The rooms in Great Court are rather better ones but the chief merits attaching to them are their antiquity and connection with various famous personages.

I received a letter from Mr. Chakravarti this afternoon. He is in Paris at present but will soon be coming over here.

Haldane[1] came here a few nights ago and spoke on the new Officers Training Corps. He delivered an excellent speech and thoroughly con-

1. Richard, first viscount Haldane (1856-1928); lawyer, politician and philosopher. Secretary for War in the Liberal Government, 1905-12, Lord Chancellor, 1912-15 and in the Labour Government, 1924

vinced me of the worth of his scheme. If I were an Englishman I should certainly take advantage of it. The only fault I can find in it is that it makes life too easy for those who want to join it. At the end of his speech he was asked a number of questions, among them being one concerning Indians. The question was whether Indians could join the Officers Training Corps and at the end of their 'Varsity life go out to India as officers. His answer to this was rather evasive. He said that it was an excellent idea and that he would be glad if it could take place, but, as the Indian army was quite separate from the English army, he could not say anything definite about it. The Corps here, as you know, does not take Indians in.

I rather wished to join the Mounted Infantry last term just to have some riding in an inexpensive manner. I knew they wouldn't take me but I thought that possibly they might do so as I was in the Harrow Corps. So I wrote to the man in charge and asked him for particulars. He answered that there was no vacancy till the summer term. After that I forgot all about it till I received a letter from that man this term, saying that there were two vacancies in the M.I. and that the riding test would be held in a few days' time. I do not suppose he knew that I was an Indian when he wrote that, in spite of my un-English name. I was totally unprepared for the riding test and could not go up on the required date. In the test one has to jump a five foot wall and I did not feel quite capable of doing that without any practice, specially as I had never seriously done any jumping before. Another, and a far more important reason, was that I did not have any riding things with me, and could not get them in time. I obviously couldn't go up in flannels. So I did not go up for the test. I yet think that the man is labouring under the impression that I am not an Indian. I shall write to him and disillusion him about it and then ask him if I can join the M.I.

Shridhar's trip begins next Monday. He has had very little time to prepare his subjects and I don't think he will get a first. He may, however, do so if he is lucky. The result will come out on or before the 19th June.

The weather here is lovely and it is delightful on the river. I had the pleasure of going on the Cam today in a punt.

This morning I went out for a ride with a friend. I intend going out again on Sunday.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

53. To Father[1]

The Union Society,
Cambridge
May 28th 1908

My dear Father,

...I am enclosing a cutting from a review published here, which came out a couple of weeks ago. It is rather an interesting letter about next year's Senior Wranglership. The letter is regarded by some as a joke, and it certainly is partially so, but then the authorities of the two colleges concerned would not have been annoyed at it. Most of the facts in it are true, some of course being fabrications. Johns' have got a person from the East End and also a clever American. The latter, I am told, is run by an American Syndicate who want America to possess the last Senior Wrangler. The Brahmin boy,[2] who is alluded to in such complimentary terms, is the brother of the Rau who just failed to get through the I.C.S. last year. He came here the same term as I did and is going to take the maths trip next year. I did not know before reading this letter that he was so frightfully clever. He certainly works hard enough. The only times I ever see him is in hall or going to hall or lectures. I believe he works all the rest of the time.

Arabindo[3] Ghose's name has been struck off the King's lists. This fact is not generally known here yet. A don of King's told a friend of mine about it.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

By the by I was not aware of the fact that the snows were anywhere near Moradabad. Can you see them from "Snow View"?

If you write to me to Port Said just after receiving this I think I shall get your letter. In any case I ought to get a letter from you at Suez. Don't forget to write to both places.

1. Extracts.
2. The reference is to B. Rama Rau, brother of B. N. Rau. He joined the Indian Civil Service and served in later years as Ambassador in Japan and the United States and also as Governor of the Reserve Bank.
3. Aurobindo Ghosh (1872-1950); after his education at Cambridge returned to India in 1893 and started his career as a teacher at Baroda College. He soon took an active part in Indian politics and was one of the extremist leaders in the Congress. He was one of the accused in the Alipore Bomb Case but was acquitted after a prolonged trial. However, he was imprisoned for alleged terroristic activities. In 1910 he retired to Pondicherry and established an Ashram there.

54. To Father

Trinity College,
Cambridge
June 4, 1908

My dear Father,

I was somewhat surprised to know from your last letter that you expected me to start by this week's steamer. I could only have done this by not keeping this term. Even next week, as I subsequently discovered, would have meant my cutting the Mays. These go on for me till the 12th. For some other people they go on till a much later date but my three subjects are over tomorrow week. I have six papers altogether, a theoretical and a practical in each subject, and every paper is on a separate day. I have already had the first two—Chemistry and Geology. The latter was meant for both first and second year men and I do not know what standard I was expected to attain in it. But I do know that I did very badly in it. I have attended a course of lectures in it which was meant for first, second and third year men. Shridhar and a number of trip men were attending the same. The lecturer gave us a huge mass of details which were enough to get any one a first in the trip if he knew them. I could not possibly know any considerable part of them. And then they had the audacity to ask questions from these very details!

In Chemistry the fault, I must confess, lay entirely with me and not with others. The paper was an easy one and I could have done a considerable part of it at Harrow. Here, however, I made a mess of the whole thing.

These two subjects were the ones which I expected to do well in —and you see the result. Tomorrow is the Physics paper and I do not expect to do brilliantly in it. I wonder what the result of that will be.

I sent you a wire last Monday and informed you about the date of my departure from here. I thought you might like to know as soon as possible.

Everything has been arranged now about my passage. I have been allotted a cabin on the hurricane deck. It is in a rather bad position, as it does not look out on the sea, and it is a two-berthed one. The other berth has not yet been engaged. I could not get a better cabin as I applied so late for it.

I am glad Nanni has started riding. I hope she will be good enough by the time I reach Naini Tal to come out riding with me. I went out once again last week for a ride. I had thought that I wouldn't feel very much at home on horse back after not having ridden for several years. But I seemed to get along fairly well. Perhaps that

was due to the horse. He was from the riding school here and was a well trained one.

I shall be up here for another week as the Mays go on till the 12th. I shall probably go down on the day the Mays are over. So that you will get my next, and last, letter from here.

Before I knew that the Mays would extend till Friday week, I invited a Harrow chap to spend a few days with me, from Saturday to Wednesday. He will now be here just in the middle of my exam and I can't do very much work whilst he is here. But I have only got two more papers after next Saturday — pract. Chemistry and pract. Physics; the former is easy, for the Physics I shall have two or three clear days.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

The other day I saw in an evening paper that Indians were called "invertebrates". Rather good that, isn't it? The *Saturday Review*, by the by, made a very wise remark a few weeks ago. It said that Indians were bound to have self-government but, — and herein lies the difficulty — not before a few aeons of geological time! This may mean anything between a few million years and a wholly incomprehensible period. The chief difficulty was the want of education, and some million generations will be required to educate them up to the colonial standard!!!

55. To Father

Trinity College,
Cambridge
Oct. 29, 1908

My dear Father,

I had been eagerly looking forward to last week's mail for days and yet when it came it took me by surprise. It was just a little bit earlier than usual. It consisted of the usual three letters—yours, mother's and Nanni's—which almost invariably constitute the whole of my weekly home mail. Yours gave me great pleasure, and yet it is not pleasant for me to think that you are unhappy. I, too, felt very lonely after I left you and missed you very much. Still I think I should prefer to go away, rather than be left behind. I remember how miserable I was weeks after you left me at Harrow both times. I do not

think I have ever felt so lonely as I did then. Here it is not nearly so bad, perhaps owing to the many more people I know. And yet at times I am almost over-powered by the sense of my solitary condition.

When I arrived in England I had a feeling almost akin to that of a homecoming. The familiar sights and sounds had quite an exhilarating effect on me. And what a strange homecoming it was with no one to welcome us after our long voyage! For every one else there was a friend or relation to bid him welcome, and I stood there with a heavy heart thinking that that was not for such as us. It is strange but in spite of the homelike feeling I am constantly reminded of the fact that I am a foreigner, an intruder here.

The weather here has been very dismal. Every other person seems to have got a cold, and I, of course, did not long remain immune from it. With it I had a rather troublesome sore throat. This is much better now and I think the cold will soon disappear.

I forget if I wrote to you anything about my taking up Botany as a fourth subject last week. My director of studies did not seem to think this desirable and so I gave up the idea. I will, however, try to do a little of it by myself if I can. This is rather hard unless I do practical Botany.

The packing case arrived safely a few days ago. I was surprised to find several things in it which I had not told anyone to put in. The chutney somehow managed to ooze through the cork and stained some books.

Hope you have written a long letter by the mail coming in day after tomorrow as you promised in your last.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

56. To Father

Cambridge
Nov. 19, 1908

My dear Father,

As I expected I got two letters from you last week. I am very sorry to hear of your illness and the motor car adventure. The latter in itself would not have been so bad but after your ill-health it must have been trying for you. I hope you allowed yourself several days' rest before you started work again.

I have been twice to the riding school this week and shall go again on Saturday. I intend going every other day in future. I have taken a book of 100 tickets as that comes much less expensive in the end compared to paying each time. It cost me £15. This is a fairly big sum but, when you come to think of it, not too much for 100 rides.

The riding master is a splendid horseman and teaches well. He generally makes us ride without stirrups or reins. This may be a very good method for learning horsemanship but at the same time it is frightfully uncomfortable. Cantering is not so bad but trotting on a big horse without any stirrups or reins and with the arms stretched upwards is really too bad. Apart from the pain I am not at all sure of my seat and will probably have a few falls in the course of the next few days. There is no danger of anyone hurting himself by falling. I know a person who regularly has two falls a day and is no worse for them.

If I continue having these lessons for some time I believe I might become quite a passable horseman.

I saw my tutor today about my joining the Inner Temple, and got an introduction from him to the Trinity law lecturer who is a barrister. This man will find another barrister for me to sign my application form.

On Sunday next Lajpat Rai is going to address the "Indian Majlis" here and the Sunday after Bepin Pal and Khaparde[1] will come. Gokhale was too busy to come. I am told that Morley has shown him a draft of the reform proposals and asked him to criticise them. He has been busy doing this for the last month. He thinks that they are fairly liberal. This evidently is not the opinion of the Government of India who think that they are far and away too liberal. Great pressure is being brought to bear on Lord Morley and Gokhale seems to think that he may yet succumb to Anglo-India and drop the more drastic proposals. But you will probably have read all about the projected reforms when you get this.

The chief topics of interest here at present are the rugger matches between the 'Varsities and the Australians but I doubt if you will feel very interested in them.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

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1. G. S. Khaparde (1854-1938), the principal lieutenant of Tilak.

57. To Father[1]

Trin. College,
Cambridge
27-11-1908

My dear Father,
....Lajpat Rai came here, as I wrote to you, last Sunday & read a most interesting paper. He didn't at all like the idea of Indians going into the C.S. or the bar. He told me that as I had taken Science I might go in for manufacturing various things.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Extracts

58. To Father

Trin. College,
Cambridge
Dec. 3, 1908

My dear Father,
I was much amused to learn that the C.I.D. had interested themselves in such an unimportant person as I am. If this was due to a letter being opened, I am very curious to know who wrote that letter and what he wrote.

I have often written to you how I do not feel very interested in Physics and cannot get along well with it. If I had known enough Mathematics all might have been well but as it is I would have to do a good deal of maths before I could proceed with Physics. Under the circumstances I thought it would be best to part company with Physics, even though I have only five more terms before the trip. I thought Fletcher would object to this but he at once suggested my taking one other science instead of it. Botany was the one we agreed upon. I do not know a word of Botany so far. I shall try to read something about it in the vac. and I might coach in it next term.

As regards my joining the Inner Temple I did not think it necessary to trouble Mr. Ford[1]. Besides that would have meant more trouble for me too as I would have had to go about from place to place. I was introduced by my tutor to two barrister fellows of Trinity and they signed the certificates. I sent the admission form duly filled up only this morning. When I go to town next I shall go to the Inner Temple and sign and do the various other things I am expected to do.

Fletcher did not say anything to me at all on my coming up late this term. All I have to do is to remain in Cambridge till the 17th Dec. instead of going down on the 11th.

Bepin Chandra Pal spoke at the Indian Majlis last Sunday. Khaparde was to have come too but was detained at the last moment on account of the Tilak case[2]. I am told that Rufus Isaacs is going to appear for Tilak.

I did not nearly like Bepin Pal's speech as much as I did Lajpat Rai's. He is not accustomed to addressing small gatherings and the way he thundered nearly made me deaf. Sometimes he grew very eloquent. But I objected greatly to his not taking the Mohammadans into consideration. Once or twice he did refer to them but then he was not very complimentary. Another thing which annoyed me was his repeated references to the spiritual mission of India. India, he said, was "God's chosen country" and the Indians the "chosen race"—a phrase which reminded me of Israel. The Mohammadans here were, naturally, not very pleased with him.

He is going to address a public meeting here day after tomorrow.

Please don't send me any more money to pay Foster with. I have already paid him.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. A friend of Motilal. "Ford belongs to that most respectable class of Englishmen called the middle class and is at present perhaps the only man in England on whose assistance and advice you can always rely in case of need". Motilal to Jawaharlal, 13 December 1908.
2. In June 1908 Tilak was prosecuted in Bombay on the charge of exciting disaffection towards Government and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. There is no clear evidence that Isaacs (later Lord Reading) considered appearing for the defence.

59. To Mother[1]

Trin. College,
Cambridge
4. 12. 1908

My dear Mother,
I am glad to learn from your letter that you are feeling better and happier now and do not worry too much.

You have written to me that you are going to read *Anand Math*[2]. Do read it. Although I have not read the book myself, yet I think it is a good book.

Bhola[3] asked me if he could have an old coat of mine. Kindly get him such a coat.

I shall see Jivan after two weeks.

It has been very cold here for the last two days. Do not worry about my catching cold. I take good care of myself.

About ten days back, Lajpat Rai came here.

From your loving son
Jawahar

1 Original in Hindi
2 The well known novel by Bankim Chandra Chatterji. It contained the famous song *Bande Mataram* which was sung by Bengalees widely during the partition agitation and became popular throughout India.
3. Bholanath Gwal Bans, an old servant of Motilal Nehru

60. To Father

London
18. 12. 08

My dear Father,
I have just come down from Cambridge for the vac. and am staying here with Jivan. We intend going to Harrogate soon for a few days. Kishan Bhai will join us there. I expect you have heard of Kishan Bhai's success by this time. He took his degree the other day and is now an M.B. I do not know what he is going to do now.

Hope you will not mind my writing this very scrappy letter to you. I have got chilblains for the first time since I came here and besides it is much colder here than it was in Cambridge.

Lord Morley's famous reforms came out last evening. Do you not think he has got a strange sense of humour?

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

61. To Father[1]

Cambridge
22. 1. 09

My dear Father,

You distress me greatly by confidently expecting me to get a first. It is very very improbable that I shall do so, specially as I have just started Botany. Next term I have my second year Mays, which are almost as hard as the trip. How I am to get through with my Botany is more than I can tell. Still I am not sorry I took it. With Physics I would have done worse.

I do not say that a first for me is an utter impossibility, or that I shall give up all idea of working for anything above a third. I shall, of course, try to do as well as possible. But when I see some other people knowing their subjects much more thoroughly than I am likely to know, and then getting seconds & thirds, really I almost think that there is absolutely no hope for me. If you would not be so sure of seeing me get a first it would be all right. As it is, if I do badly in the trip, as I am more than likely to do, you will be very disappointed...

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Extracts.

62. To Father[1]

Cambridge
March 4th '09

My dear Father,

...Sven Hedin[2] came here this afternoon to get an honorary degree, and he afterwards delivered a lecture on his travels. There was somewhat of a rush for this and it was with difficulty that I got a ticket for it. The lecture was very interesting although there was nothing very novel about it. I had already read about his travels in the papers and he practically said the same thing again. It was interesting, however, to hear him say it...

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Extracts.
2. The famous Swedish explorer.

CAMBRIDGE 1907

63. To Father

Trinity College,
Cambridge
12. 3. 09

My dear Father,
Shridhar and I have at last come to an understanding and I shall go to Heidelberg soon after going down. Jivan will probably accompany me. You may get my next letter from there.

Morley is coming up to Cambridge today presumably to confer with the dons on the Indian question. There was a meeting here a few days ago of masters of colleges and others concerned to discuss the same question. Various resolutions were passed among which, I am told, was one to the effect that no other college should take in an Indian who had been forcibly made to leave his college. The Master of Downing was the only person who objected to this. He told them plainly that if an Indian was expelled through spite and without sufficient reason, from his college, he would take him in.

Morley was asked to come to the Indian Majlis dinner here, which takes place tonight. His answer, of course, was that he was too busy.

It has just struck me that your party to Mrs. Aikman[1] will be on tonight.

I hope the variety performance will be a successful one. Nanni's invitation card to the children's party was a sweet little thing.

I am having the Cambridge calendar for 1909 sent to you.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Wife of Robert Aikman, a member of the I C S and judge of the Allahabad High Court.

64. To Father

60 Elgin Crescent,
London W.
18. 3. 09

My dear Father,
Jivan and I will be going to Heidelberg tonight or tomorrow. It will be too late for the Indian mail when we get there so we have to write our home letters now.

Lord Morley visited Cambridge on Friday last, as I wrote to you, and with the dons came to the conclusion that the number of Indians at Cambridge should be limited. The proceedings of course were private and I can only give you second or rather third hand information. But I am inclined to think that it is very near the truth.

The number settled upon for each college was three. So that as there are 18 colleges, there will not be more than 54 Indians in Cambridge. Christ's mildly protested against this and Downing refused to have anything to do with it. The other colleges then retaliated by agreeing to take even fewer Indians if Downing took more than three, so that the final total should not exceed 54. At present there are about 90 Indians in Cambridge and over thirty of these are in Downing. I do not know how they propose to reduce these numbers.

Another thing I was told they were going to do was the appointment of a sort of guardian who would take a sort of fatherly interest in the Indians and keep an eye on their accounts etc. A certificate of loyalty would also be necessary.

I suppose all this would simply make Indian students go to Continental and other countries and to my mind this wdl be a good thing. They will then be more fit for doing something than if they had been to Oxford or Cambridge.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

65. To Father

Trin. College,
Cambridge
April 29, 1909

My dear Father,

Thanks for the copy of the address you delivered at the Social Conference.[1] I am glad you gave them a bit of your mind and did not try to minimise matters. It is absolutely futile passing tame resolutions year after year and not trying to live up to them.

I suppose a good number of people were not very pleased with your address, although some of them may not have said so.

1 Presiding over the third United Provinces Social Conference in April 1909, Motilal Nehru attacked social reactionaries. "Social reform, in my opinion, is the much despised parent of political reform and not merely its humble sister."

There has been no mention of your visit to Europe this year in your last few letters. I hope you will decide early and come before the summer is very old. As regards the steamship line I should suggest a change this time. Why not try Austrian Lloyds'? Their service to Trieste is I am told quite good.

I have been playing a good deal of tennis lately. I shall continue playing it fairly regularly all through the term. I also go out for rides occasionally, so that I do not suffer from lack of exercise.

We have been having very fine weather this week. Today a change for the worse has taken place and it is rainy and much colder. Fires have had to be resumed.

I was alarmed to read in mother's last letter that Nanni had got chicken pox. I hope she soon recovers from it.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

66. To Mother[1]

Trin. College,
Cambridge
7. 5. 09

My dear Mother,

I am very happy to learn that Nanni has recovered now. I hope that all the spots have disappeared.

You and father are unnecessarily worried about my marriage. In my opinion, it is not essential for me that I should marry a Kashmiri. I have thought over this question time and again and every time I am more and more convinced of this. It is obvious that many people would not like my marrying outside the Kashmiri community. But people do not like many things which one ought to do. In my opinion, everyone in India should marry outside his or her community. Then why should not I act according to my beliefs? When one feels that something is right, then he ought to do it. He should not be afraid simply because a few persons are not in favour of it.

Today I shall go to London for two days and shall return day after tomorrow night. Jwan is not there now. He has gone to Edinburgh. I shall see Manmohan there.

These days it is quite warm here.

From your loving son
Jawahar

1. Original in Hindi.

67. To Father

Trinity College,
Cambridge
14. 5. 09

My dear Father,

I was overjoyed to learn from your last that your coming here this summer is almost certain now. I had been expecting this news for some time and so was hardly surprised at it, but what did surprise me was the probability of your being here in a short time. I had given up all hopes of seeing you till another eight or nine weeks. Nothing could suit me better than your coming here four or five weeks from now, which means your starting immediately after getting this. I shall be free to go down in just a month's time and after that the sooner you come the better.

I am so sorry for all the trouble I am giving you over such a detail as marriage. Personally, and I mean it, I am not violently looking forward to the prospect of being married to anybody. The joys of matrimony appear to me wholly imaginary, and do not at all appeal to me. Of marriage, in the abstract, I have a very high opinion; so much so that the practise of it is sure to disappoint me. This sounds like the saying of the Irishman who declared that he had such a great regard for truth that he refused to drag it into his own petty affairs, but really there is some sense in it. You, doubtless, will object to my remaining in the unblessed ranks of the unmarried and that settles it. But still I hope you will take this side of the question into consideration.

As regards the girl—if marriage it is to be—I am, on the whole, in favour of your latest choice. My opinions, of course, will coincide with yours, because I have to rely on your letters for all the information I possess. In any case my own opinions are of secondary importance. You are the man on the spot and are best able to judge.

There is just one point which I should like to remind you of and that is the possibility of my marrying outside the Kashmiri community. If you ever consider this practicable you will find me strongly in favour of it.

Since I wrote to you last time about the scheme for the restriction of Indians at Cambridge I have had no further news about it. In the current number of an influential Review[1] here there is an article advocating this, so there was some truth in the report after all.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. The Cambridge Review, the journal of the senior members of the University.

68. To Father

Cambridge
Feb. 3, 10

My dear Father,

Your first letter from home came last week. I am glad you found nearly everybody there well. I hope Chandar[1] too recovered soon.

We are having a somewhat quiet time here now that the elections are over. The advent of the new comet—the Miners' comet[2] as it is called—proved mildly exciting, but even that is rapidly leaving us. Cambridge is particularly well placed for observing it, so say the astronomers and others who have seen it. Nearly every other person here has seen it. I have ventured out on several occasions and searched the heavens for it but it has eluded me so far. However, it matters little. Old Halley[3] is coming soon and I shall reserve my energies for it.

I was mightily surprised the other day to read in an Indian paper that this year's Allahabad exhibition[4] would have an aerial section! And that airship and aeroplane flights will be attempted!! Who would have thought Allahabad capable of it?

There has been no more skating since I wrote to you last—or, to be more accurate, there was a little skating but I did not indulge in it. It is warm again now.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1 Chandar Handoo (d. 1963), daughter of Lada Prasad Zutshi, a cousin of Jawaharlal

2 So known because it was first seen by miners in Transvaal on 12 January 1910. It was visible in Europe from about 20 January to 7 February

3 The famous comet which can be seen once every seventy-five years and is popularly believed to portend the death of a king

4 The Industrial Exhibition was opened on 1 December 1910. For the first time in India, aeroplanes were on display

69. To Father

Cambridge
Feb. 11, 10

My dear Father,

I am sending you Keir Hardie's *India*, which you say was not included in the packing case. *The Daily News Year Book* is out of print and cannot be obtained. Instead of it I am sending you Hazell's *Annual* which is a most useful publication.

Nanni wrote to me a Hindi letter last week. It was a most queer and formal epistle. I suppose the pandit had a hand in it.

I hope Prithinathji[1] is getting better.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1 *Prithinath Chak (1858-1910), a leading lawyer of Kanpur.* Motilal Nehru had first set up practice with him.

70. To Father[1]

Cambridge
April 1st 1910

My dear Father,

...I am extremely glad to hear that you and the cough have parted company at last. I did not have a very high opinion of homoeopathy till now, but henceforth I shall treat it with greater respect.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1 Extracts

71. To Father

Trinity College,
Cambridge
May 12, 1910

My dear Father,

The past week has not been a very cheerful one. Black is the colour that one meets at every turn. Even the shop windows do not contain any glaring things, and generally have a dark and sombre look. The King's[1] death has upset most functions, the tripos unhappily remains unaffected. Nothing connected with it has suffered any change. Even the lectures proceeded as usual on the very day the King's death became known. I am sure all schools & colleges in India must have been closed for some time.

It was on Friday last—the day I wrote to you—that we first heard of the King's illness And that night he died. Newsboys were yelling out the news all over England soon after midnight. I was sorry to hear of it for he was not a bad fellow. And the suddenness of his death had an element of the tragic about it. He had an amazing knack of making himself popular and that in itself is no small thing.

On Tuesday last the new King[2] was proclaimed here. The Vice-Chancellor read out the communication from his "dearly beloved" brethren of the Privy Council, and then the proclamation itself: "Whereas it has pleased Almighty God" etc. A couple of gorgeously attired trumpeters were present but unhappily their command of the trumpets was of the most limited kind and consequently the result was not of as dignified a character as the occasion merited.

The King was separately proclaimed for the town. The old Mayor went about from place to place, with a huge gilt mace, and proclaimed to all and sundry at various street corners "that the High and Mighty Prince George, Frederick, Albert" etc. had rightfully succeeded to the throne of his forefathers.

One of the saddest consequences of the death of Edward the VII of Blessed and Glorious memory has been, from my point of view, the loss of several days' work The black borders in the newspapers have had a curious fascination for me and much of the time that I might have more usefully employed has been spent in perusing the papers. It was such an inconvenient time for him to die, just when my trip was going to come off, and, as the New York papers said, just when

1 Edward VII, died on 6 May 1910
2 George V, 1865 1936

Mr. Roosevelt[3] was going to visit England! However, if even Mr. Roosevelt's forthcoming visit was not sufficient to put off the sad event, I have little cause to complain about my trip.

The weather here has been most changeable, and apparently not to my liking. I have had a bit of a cold for a day or so, and am not enjoying it at the present moment. I am paying the penalty for having remained immune from colds during the winter. But I hope to recover from it soon unless Halley's comet puts an end to this distressful world, an event which is confidently expected to take place on the 18th of this month. If you ever get this letter, you can conclude that the Earth is going to have another seventy years of life at least.

I am glad the house at Mussoorie is a satisfactory one. Mother writes to me that she is already feeling better. I hope she will make up there all the ground she lost during her last illness.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

3 Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1918); President of the United States, 1901-09.

72. To Father

Trinity College,
Cambridge
27. 5. 10

My dear Father,

In your last letter you say that you are already expecting the telegram announcing my success. I am afraid there is practically no chance of your ever seeing that desired telegram. A third of the trip is over and I have done very badly in it. My only chance now lies in doing something wonderful in the remaining papers. This is not probable and so I am afraid the cable will remain unsent.

I have had five papers so far. The first was an Essay paper and in this I did not excel. The idea of the essay apparently is to test the candidate's capability of writing a scientific paper. Fortunately it does not carry many marks. The next two papers were in Chemistry. I rather fancied myself at that subject and hoped to do a good paper. I lived to learn how extremely little I really know. It was a bad beginning but far worse was to follow. The Botany papers came next and thoroughly damped my ardour. Apart from my knowledge or want of knowledge of the subject I was in such a bad mood on the day that I could hardly understand the questions. A headache is hardly cal-

culated to help one in an exam. You will understand my state of mind when I tell you that in one question I actually went to the length of describing a totally different family of plants from the one asked for! And all this due to a slight misapprehension of the question. The result was that I did a perfectly vile paper which could not have been worse by any manner of means. Unless I do something to redeem myself in Geology and in the practicals, my doom is sealed.

Roosevelt came here yesterday and I managed to hear his address at the Union. It consisted of his usual platitudes, according to his own confession. But he certainly spoke in an interesting manner, and favoured us many times with his pretty smile. He looks a most energetic person. No one could possibly mistake him for a quiet sort of individual.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

73. To Father

Trinity College,
Cambridge
June 3rd 1910

My dear Father,

In my last letter I expressed the pious hope that I might be able to give you better news of my trip this week. I am afraid that is not to be. I have not done a single paper in a satisfactory manner. I have not done the Geology papers as badly as I did the Botany ones. But then it was hardly possible to sink so low again. I have now finished with Geology altogether, and that is some consolation. The only subjects left are the practicals in Chemistry & Botany. These come off early next week. The Chemistry one is in the nature of a trial of endurance. It lasts continuously from 9 in the morning to 4—a period of seven hours. Personally I feel very tired after three hours practical, and so I am not exactly looking forward to Tuesday next. I think I shall have to arm myself with various cordials & stimulants to carry me successfully through the day.

It will be excessively distressing if I do not even get a third in the trip, but I really fail to see how I can get that on the choice papers I have done. Nothing wonderful is likely to happen in the remaining papers and so I suppose the position will remain unaltered, unless, indeed, it is changed for the worse.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

74. To Father[1]

60, Elgin Crescent,
Holland Park, W.
June 17th 1910

My dear Father,

The result of my trip was to come out yesterday and I had asked the college porter to wire it to me. But no wire came and so I was led to believe that I must have sunk to the lowest depths. The reason however was not this. I had forgotten to tip the porter and he revenged himself by not wiring till today. I thus knew of my result first from the Times. I fully expected to see my name somewhere very low down the list and therefore I just scanned the pass men and the third class batch. My heart sank within me when I found that my name was not there. The sorrow however was short-lived and I rejoiced to see myself included in the second class people. I do not know if you expected me to get a first. I certainly did not deserve it, and if I had managed to reach those Olympian heights — a contingency which was not wholly impossible — it would have been mostly due to extreme good luck. As a matter of fact luck was certainly not on my side in the exam. Under the circumstances I would have been very content with a third, and I should be much surprised if I was not very near it as it was . .

The degree day is sometime early next week. I am much exercised as to what to wear on the occasion. A perfectly black suit is required and I do not possess such an article. . .

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1 Extracts

75. To Father[1]

London
June 24th 1910

My dear Father,

I was extremely pleased to know from the cable you sent me that you were satisfied with the result of my trip. After all that was the chief end in view and if that is accomplished no one else has any cause to grumble.

1. Extracts

I went to Cambridge last Sunday and came back last evening. The degree ceremony took place on Tuesday. After much thought I had come to the conclusion that evening attire would be most suitable for the occasion. I knew that very few people in our College were going to wear it but that did not shake me from my resolve. As it happened there was only one other person in the Trinity batch, which was not far short of 100, who shared the honour with me of wearing evening dress. The ceremony itself was a commendably short one. Each person knelt before the Vice-Chancellor with his hands joined together in front, in the Indian fashion. The V. C. muttered something about the grace of God in Latin and lo and behold! he was a graduate of Cambridge University ...

With love,

your loving son
Jawahar

76. To Mother[1]

London
June 24, 1910

My dear Mother,

I went to Cambridge last Sunday. There I took my B.A. degree. After getting all my things packed, I returned here yesterday.

You asked me in your previous letter if I would treat you with respect after my return to India. I was really very surprised to read that. What do you think of me that you ask me such a question? If an illiterate man does not respect his mother, people have a very low opinion of him. So if I, who have a little education, behave so badly, it would be still worse. What is the use of a man being educated if he does not know how to behave towards his parents? I am sorry I cannot write more just now. More next week.

From your loving son
Jawahar

1. Original in Hindi.

77. To Father

60 Elgin Cres.
London W.
July 15, 1910

My dear Father,

In your last letter you indulge in an alluring and comforting forecast of my future career. I will not spoil the picture by any disparaging remarks of my own, but I will at least correct certain impressions of yours about Cambridge degrees. Even if I succeed in getting through the Law Trip and get the LL.B. it does not follow that the LL.D. will automatically descend on me. Before that happy event I should have to get through two exams or at any rate write 2 original theses on legal topics. The first thesis if accepted would result in my getting the LL.M. degree. The second thesis, written many years after taking my ordinary degree, might result in the LL.D.

I think I wrote to you some time ago about the advisability of my spending the next year or so at Oxford instead of Cambridge. I have been weighing the pros & cons and have come to the conclusion that it would be a very desirable idea, provided of course I could enter a decent Oxford College. I am getting rather bored with Cambridge and would like a change very much. If I went up to Oxford I should have to read for the ordinary law exam which confers the B.A. degree. The B.C.L. is hardly possible as it is a very hard exam. If I got through the former exam I would be a B.A. or rather an M.A. of both Cambridge and Oxford. I can afford to spend a year or even two years at Oxford without any material alteration in my plans. I shall only finish eating my Bar dinners in Easter 1912, that is, if I do not miss any intervening terms. And spending two years at Oxford would mean my being there till June 1912, which is a matter of two months more. However, this is not the point at issue just at present. What must be first decided is whether the next year is to be spent at Oxford or Cambridge. Even if you think that I had better spend only one more year at the 'Varsity, I am all for spending that year at Oxford If later on you wish me to spend the next year too at Oxford, that is the year 1911-12, and if I find that I am making sufficient progress, I might have a shot at the B.C.L. However, this, as I said before, can be decided later on. In the meantime I shall write to some Oxford Colleges and make suitable inquiries. I don't suppose I shall do much before my return from Norway. If you could send a cable to me to signify your assent or otherwise to my proposal it would reach me just about that time and would give me more time to arrange matters.

My chief reason for wishing to go to Oxford is not any ardent desire on my part to get an Oxford degree. Cambridge is becoming too full of Indians, in spite of the fact that the position of Indians is becoming more and more impossible every year. Oxford is still supposed to be a better place in that respect. Besides I really feel so tired of Cambridge.

If no decent college at Oxford will take me, I fall back on Cambridge. I shall have no difficulty about that. All I have to do is to go up there next term.

I shall sail tomorrow for Norway.

With love,

your loving son
Jawahar

78. To Father

St. Ives,
Private Family Hydro,
Maidenhead
August 5, 1910

My dear Father,

I came here yesterday from London with the intention of spending a pleasant week near the river. There is little chance however of the wish being realised. It has been raining since last night and there are no indications of its clearing up in the near future. We have been rash enough to hire an electric launch for the week, but the investment is hardly likely to prove profitable if this sort of weather continues.

I have been expecting a cable from you about my joining Oxford since Monday last. I hope you will send one soon. In the meantime I am corresponding with my tutor about it.

It is rather late now to write to you about Norway and my adventures during the cruise. I will therefore just refer to a few incidents which might interest you

At a place called Visnes we left the boat for an overland excursion. We saw some most magnificent scenery on our way and eventually spent the night at a primitive kind of hotel about four or five thousand feet above sea level. I being one of the most energetic members of the party arrived at this place with another some time before the others. Both of us felt so hot after our tedious climb that we decided to have a bath immediately. The hotel people were much surprised

by this strange request. Nobody there apparently indulged in such a luxury. After some thought, however, they informed us that some times, when people wanted to wash themselves, they went down to the river. We therefore went to the rushing mountain torrent, which was called the river, and plunged in. The stream came from a glacier nearby and the water was of course icy cold. We were both quite numbed on entering. After a while my foot slipped and I completely lost control of myself. I was being merrily borne along the current when my companion stopped me. The exciting part of it lies in the fact that there was a mighty waterfall of about 400 ft. quite near. I am sure I could not have stopped myself before I reached the bottom of the fall.

I am afraid I cannot write more now as the time is limited.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

79. To Father

London W.
Aug. 19, 1910

My dear Father,

I was much saddened to learn of the deaths of Ajudhia Nath and Mr. Shamsuddin[1] by cholera. I am anxiously waiting for tomorrow's mail to satisfy myself that all others are safe. It is very lucky that many of our family are away from Allahabad at the present moment. Otherwise I would have been in an awful state of anxiety. I hope you took the first opportunity to depart from Allahabad.

We came back from Maidenhead on Monday last. I would have gone to France on my return, but for the difficulty of arranging about my joining an Oxford college. My efforts in this direction have not met with any success so far. I have applied to three colleges, Oriel, Trinity and New, and from none of these have I got a satisfactory answer. Oriel is the one I should best like to join. The head of Oriel is away from Oxford at present and so I have had no definite answer from him yet. Trinity, the next most suitable college, refused to commit itself. They said they might possibly take me at the last moment if some changes were made. But I can hardly wait till term

1. Close friends of Motilal Nehru.

on the off chance of being taken into Trinity. New College definitely says it cannot take me. I shall apply to a few other colleges and let you know the result next week. The most convenient thing for me to do would have been to go up to Oxford and interview the various heads of colleges. I thought of doing this but then I found that this course would have a serious drawback. As it is I write to the head of the college and give him a list of my qualifications without mentioning the fact that I am an Indian. If he once promised to take me, it will be hard for him to get out of his promise when he found out that I am an Indian. If, however, I went to see him first he might refuse point blank to take me.

In one of your recent letters you suggest my giving up the idea of going to a 'Varsity at all and instead making London my headquarters. I think I should far prefer going to Oxford, if that is possible. If I find that no good Oxford college will take me, I might then think of giving London a chance.

I am going to Buxton tomorrow for a week or so. After that the long-thought-of project of going to the continent might possibly come off.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

80. To Father

Casino de Dieppe
22. 9. 1910

My dear Father,

We came here from Paris yesterday and intend stopping here for about four days. On Sunday next I hope to go back to London and thus to end my wanderings for the summer of 1910. I have done quite a vast lot of travelling during the last few months and shall be quite pleased to settle down and do some work. This continual moving about is, as you well know, far from inexpensive and I was in a bad state when your welcome cheque arrived on the scene.

There is hardly any necessity for me to reply to your arguments for and against the advisability of my going to Oxford. I have already decided to remain in London and so a discussion on the subject can

have no practical interest. I intend doing Law, and law alone, for the next few months. I shall see what progress I make in it and, if I think I can spare the time, I shall join the School of Economics. However that can be seen to later on. In the meantime I shall attend the usual courses of lectures, and might possibly have a shot at one of the exams. in December. This will probably be Criminal Law, as that appears to be the easiest and the most interesting.

As regards my devilling for some one, I shall make the enquiries you suggest. I don't think there is any rule about the applicant passing a certain number of exams. before he is taken. Of course it would be futile my going into chambers without any previous knowledge of law. It will also be scarcely profitable for me to visit the Law Courts frequently unless I can follow the procedure with ease. I hope you will be able to get a good K.C. to take me. I think a person who has an English practice will be far preferable to a Privy Council one.

This is hardly the place for a long letter and so I shall not say anything about my marriage question — about which you write at length in your last. Hope to write something about it next week.

Dieppe is quite deserted at present. The season officially ends in a few days time and most people are rapidly going away.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

P. S. You were needlessly scared about my Norwegian bathing adventure. There was no danger in my bathing in the cold water as I am in the habit of taking cold baths even in winter here. And that was by no means the first time that I had taken a cold bath in the open. As regards the choice of such an unsafe position, that was not intentional. We did not know that the waterfall was so near till after the bath. I can assure you that I was highly pleased with my adventure and would not have missed it for a lot. The after effects were nothing so terrible as you seem to imagine. There is nothing like a cold plunge after a weary climb and I distinctly remember how particularly fit I felt after the plunge. I did not weigh myself before & after the trip to Norway but I am sure I did not lose any weight by it. At one time over fifty of our fellow passengers were unwell, some owing to the rough sea. I need hardly say that I was not one of these unhappy people. You need never have any anxiety about my health. I am one of the most violently healthy persons I have come across Nothing seems to upset my state of equilibrium.

Jawahar

81. To Father[1]

60, Elgin Crescent,
Holland Park, W.
Nov. 4th 1910

My dear Father,

... Some of us here are going to give the Gaikwar[2] an At Home in a fortnight's time. It is going to be on a fairly large scale and so we have to labour greatly in order to make it a success.

With love,

your loving son
Jawahar

1 Extracts
2 Sayaji Rao Gaekwar of Baroda (1863-1939).

82. To Father

London
11. 11. 10

My dear Father,

I was very pleased to know by your last that mother is making satisfactory progress. I have not had a letter from her for ever so long. *I hope she will be well enough to write to me soon.*

I have not made any arrangements with the School of Economics yet, but I intend doing so soon. The chief difficulty is, as I wrote to you, the want of the requisite time. The Economics course is a full year's one, and consists of numerous lectures a week. If I join the school next term and attend the lectures assiduously, it would mean less time for my legal studies. Personally I am convinced that the time spent in Economics will be highly useful to me. I was very glad to learn that you agree with me in this. As a matter of fact my chief reason for desiring to go to Oxford or Cambridge for another year was that I might be able to devote some time to Economics and the allied subjects. *I did not know at the time that I would have greater facilities* for that study in London. I think it would be a great pity if I failed to take advantage of the opportunity offered me, merely to have some extra time for law. I shall go and interview the Secretary of the School some time next week and shall let you know what decision we arrive at As the course begins in the October term, I shall have to start in *Medias Res*, if I joined next term. But on the other hand if I put off joining the school, I may have even less time next year.

We are still very busy about the Gaikwar At Home. The *piece de resistance* on our programme will be a series of tableaux from Omar Khayyam. They will be taken from Dulac's illustrations to Omar.[1] I believe you have got that book and so you can form some idea of what guys we are going to make ourselves. Unfortunately we only decided about it a few days ago and so have got very little time left. We have to be rehearsing most of the time and the spare time is filled up by visiting Mr. Clarkson[2] to arrange about the wigs & make-ups. There was a great scarcity of men willing to take part in the tableaux and so I had to offer myself most unwillingly.

It is very cold here now. The rain and the fog have also started.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Edmund Dulac published his illustrations to *The Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam in 1909.
2. Well known couturier of London.

83. To Father

60, Elgin Crescent,
Holland Park, W.
Dec. 2nd 1910

My dear Father,

We are again in the midst of a General Election and the excitement on both sides is great. The party moves are most interesting to watch for an outsider. The betting was, I think, 5 to 1 in favour of the Liberals a few days ago. Since Mr. Balfour's[1] declaration about the Referendum it has practically become level. The first results will be announced tomorrow evening and I hope to be in Fleet Street or near it at the time.

I went to the School of Economics a short time ago to enquire about the feasibility of my joining it. They told me, as I fully expected, that it would be hard for me to start off in the middle of the course, specially as my knowledge of economics is limited. Under the circumstances it would be hardly worth while for me to join next term. I think the best course for me would be to join next October term.

1. Arthur James Balfour, Conservative politician, Prime Minister of Britain, 1902 05, offered to submit the principles of tariff reforms to a referendum.

Last year when you were in England you wished to get a number of gramophone records, I hope you succeeded in getting them in India. There are some very fine ones just out and I hope you will get them if they are available in India. "The Chocolate Soldier" waltz is a most enchanting tune and another good one is the "Quaker Girl" waltz.

Various people have written to me that you are likely to come here next summer. I was very pleased to hear this and I hope the news will turn out to be true.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

84. To Father

38 Gloucester Terrace
Lancaster Gate
10. 2. 11

My dear Father,

I have at last changed my rooms. I moved to my new abode on Monday last and am on the whole satisfied with my choice. The rooms are not at all bad and are very conveniently situated for me. The food too is good and so, unfortunately, is the price.

I have been in great need of money lately and so I wired the magic word to you on Saturday night. For once however it failed to evoke the usual response. I suppose the unhappy thing went astray. It is not the first time that the cable has proved a false friend. I hope tomorrow's mail will bring some relief, otherwise I am sorely afraid I shall have to fall back on the good offices of the Eastern Telegraph Company again, with, I trust, better results.

I wrote to Mr. Leslie Porter[1] soon after getting your letter, and expressed a wish to see him. I have had no answer from him yet.

As I wrote to you before, I am thinking of appearing for the Constitutional exam this term. I do not know whether you expect me to do so or not. But the more I think of it the better I am convinced that it is futile lingering over the bar exams. I wish I had got through some already. After all, however well one may do in the exams it does not nearly help one so much as some practical experience.

1 Sir Leslie Porter (1854-1932), a member of the Indian Civil Service who served in the United Provinces.

I find that my removal to my new quarters has had a marked effect on my capacity for work. Or possibly this is due to the fact that the exams are not far off. The proximity of an exam does act as a wonderful stimulant. I am also pleased to say that Jivan, who is all by himself at 60 Elgin Cres, is working hard now.

I have nothing else to say except that winter is still with us and spring is a long time in coming. I am getting bored with the dismal weather.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

85. To Father

38 Gloucester Terrace W.
17. 3. 11

My dear Father,

I am sorry to learn that there is no chance of your coming here next summer. I should have much liked to have you here, but as it is I suppose I shall have to shift for myself.

I was pleased to get your letters by the aerial post last week. You may not have forgotten yet that I used to collect stamps in the days of my infancy. The passion for doing so has not wholly died out of me and I shall treasure up the souvenirs of the first aerial post.

The photos have at last come from Lafayettes.[1] I shall send them off today but you may not get them till next week. I have been extravagant enough to go in for some pencil drawings. But sad to say they do not please me at all. The *carte de visite* photos are not good either. It is curious how Lafayette insists on spoiling all the photos he takes of me. The proofs he sent me were quite good, but in his efforts to improve on them he has spoilt them.

I am sending you half a dozen of each kind. I hope you will distribute them amongst the various people who are desirous of possessing a copy of my photograph.

With love,

your loving son
Jawahar

1. A famous photographer in London

86. To Father

38 Gloucester Terrace
Hyde Park W.
April 21st 1911

My dear Father,

I hope you will forgive me for my missing last week's mail, although I must say it was an inexcusable offence. Year after year I fall into the same error, and experience fails to teach me that a Good Friday is as good or bad a day here as Sunday. I did not write my letters on Thursday and on the day after I discovered that there would be no collection. I don't suppose I shall have many more Good Fridays in England but in case I am here for another I shall take good care not to repeat my previous errors.

I am afraid you misunderstood me about the proposals I made about the advisability of your opening an account with the Times Book Club. *It was only a mere suggestion and as it does not meet with your approval* it of course remains in its embryo state. But I wish to explain that I never meant you to give me, as you put it, "a *carte blanche* to buy up the Times Book Club library." The Times library would take a lot of buying and even if it could be easily bought I doubt if many persons would be foolish enough to invest in it. I think I have outgrown the desire for possessing a lot of gilt bound books simply for the sake of their fine appearance. A book which I would like to buy will probably have something in it which is likely to possess a permanent interest for me. And books like these cannot be bought wholesale. That is why I am all against buying a large quantity of books at a time. A library should in my opinion be built up gradually and with care, and it was in order to do this that I asked you to have an account with the Book Club.

It is not worth while my going away from London now as I am going to appear for Roman Law in a month's time. After that I shall of course be away from London for the whole summer. I hope to come back here towards the end of September in order to join the School of Economics. I gave you my reasons for not joining it last term some time ago. I would not have been able to derive much benefit from the course if I started in the middle of it.

I think I shall finish keeping my terms in April or at the latest June of next year.

We have had the most delightful weather imaginable for the last ten days.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

87. To Father

38 Gloucester Terrace W.
12. 5. 11

My dear Father,
Thank you very much for the £100. I got them about a fortnight ago but forgot to write to you about them.

You asked me sometime ago to send you some stationery. I am sorry it has not been sent to you yet. I visited several stationers but could not decide which kind of note paper to send you. To simplify matters I am now having several kinds sent. Some are rather fancy and you may possibly not like them. In that case I hope the ladies there will not take unkindly to them. In case you like any kind and wish to have some more of it, please send me a specimen sheet. I have not had all the envelopes stamped at the back, as you wished. I did not think some would look nice with the address. The paper I am writing on is the best the Times Book Club can supply. Do you care for it at all?

I have been greatly troubled lately by various people asking me to take a part in the pageant which is going to take place in the Crystal Palace this summer. In a foolish moment I even gave my consent to this, but I am now trying to back out of it.

I have been playing a fair amount of tennis lately and feel much better for it.

With love,

your loving son
Jawahar

88. To Father

38 Gloucester Terrace W.
26. 5. 11

My dear Father,
I am sorry to have caused you so much anxiety by not writing to you on that wretched Good Friday. Mother seems to be very keen on getting letters from me, but is not equally fond of writing herself. It is over a month and a half now since I heard from her last. I have a good mind to cable to you about her and Nanni, unless I get a letter from them tomorrow.

I am in the midst of the musical festival now. I have had to go there everyday this week and am going again today & tomorrow. It has fallen at a most unfortunate time as I have my exam on Tuesday next.

I did not know the date of the exam when I got the tickets for it. And it would be a pity to waste them now, specially as I paid a goodly price for them.

It has been excessively warm here lately.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

89. To Father

38 Gloucester Terrace
2. 6. 11

My dear Father,

Your letters have been singularly short lately and I was wondering why this was so. I am sorry to hear that it was due to your eyes giving you trouble. I hope you will take better care of them whilst motoring in future.

I had as usual no letter from mother and Nanni last week. I thought the situation demanded strong measures and so I wired to you about her health. I was very pleased to get your answer the next morning. But I am still at a loss to know why she should refrain from writing to me.

I went up for Criminal Law last Tuesday and I am sorry to say that I did a vile paper. It was much worse than my Constitutional Law paper and according to that standard I ought not to get through. This eventuality will of course be very annoying but I think it will do me a lot of good. Or, rather, the mere prospect of it has been most beneficial to me. In case I do not get through, as seems probable, I shall appear for the remaining prelims, that is Criminal Law, Roman Law and Real Property in September or October next whenever the next exam is. I hope to do better than I have done so far. If I manage to get through the lot I shall have only the final left. This I can take either in December or April. The former will I think be too near but, if you wish it, I could try then. April would suit me better. In that very month I shall finish my dinners.

I have not been out of London since Xmas last and am sick unto death of it. This afternoon I am going to St. Leonards for a few days. After that I shall go to Cambridge and then somewhere far away from London for the summer. I would go away for good very soon but something or other keeps me here and I have to stay. The Indian Pageant idea has, I am thankful to say, fallen through. But there are so many other things besides it which I cannot very well cut.

I wrote to Sir John Stanley[1] a few days ago and in his reply he asked me to see him on Sunday next. Unfortunately I shan't be here then. I hope to see him on my return from St. Leonards.

I am awfully sorry to trouble you again for money. I might go away to France in a short time and I should like to have some before departing. I have been, I am afraid, very extravagant lately. This could have been partly avoided, but part of it was quite involuntary and hardly to be helped. I was foolish enough to run up some bills and these have been the bane of my existence since. Most of these have been paid off but some still remain and I want to be rid of these as soon as I can. Could you please send me £150? I could then pay off all these outstanding debts and, what is more important, leave you in peace for some time after. You must have felt very bored at my incessant demands during the last few months. Please send me part of it at least by wire.

The fine weather continues here. We had a terrific thunderstorm yesterday but that has hardly improved the situation. It is even warmer now than it was before and it is very hard to go out in the day time.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court, 1901-11.

90. To Father

The Union Society
Cambridge
16. 6. 11

My dear Father,

I got two letters from you last week, which accounted for your silence the week before.

I came here last Tuesday with the intention of spending a couple of days here. But as I had nothing to do in town I prolonged my stay here. I hope to go down tomorrow or the day after.

One of the reasons why I came here was to see the Indians' match against Cambridge. *As usual, their performance was as feeble as it could well be.*[1] I think the best thing they can do is to pack off and go back to India with great speed.

1. Cambridge won by an innings and 71 runs.

There was a convocation here a day or two ago in which degrees were conferred on distinguished visitors. Among these were the Maharaja of Bikanir[2] and the Aga Khan[3]. It is the custom to cheer the recipients of these degrees and everyone was cheered except the afore-mentioned two gentlemen. Besides the Chancellor did not deign to get up for them when giving the degree, although he got up for every one else, even for such a villain as Lee-Warner[4].

I have had my photograph taken in hood and gown and hope to send it to you in two or three weeks' time.

I have managed to get through Criminal Law. I shall take the two remaining prelims — Roman Law and Real Property — in October. In case I get through both then, would you like me to take my final in December? I can either take it then or in March next. I shall finish eating my dinners in March or April next. Have you decided anything about my going into Chambers?

I am so sorry to hear that you have been unwell. I am afraid you are not very careful nowadays about your health. It is absolutely essential for you to take proper exercise and rest, considering the amount of work you do.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

2. Maharaja Ganga Singh (1880-1943); a leading Indian prince
3. The Aga Khan (1875-1957); spiritual head of the Ismaili Muslims, was active in Indian politics till 1947.
4. Sir William Lee Warner (1846-1914); a member of the Indian Civil Service, and a specialist in British relations with the Indian princes.

91. To Father

38 Gloucester Terrace W.
23. 6. 11

My dear Father,

The coronation is at last over and one can have some rest now. I have been foolish enough to waste some time over the various processions. I did not see much of yesterday's, but this morning I had a fine view, although we went very late. Contrary to all expectations the streets were not very crowded, and many seats in the stands were unoccupied. The warnings in the newspapers frightened away a lot

of people. Special barriers had been erected to prevent over-crowding but they were hardly ever used. We did not intend seeing the processions this morning, it was more or less forced on us. We were wandering about the neighbourhood when the procession started and so we stopped to see it.

I wired to you about mother's health because I had not had a letter from her for the preceding seven weeks. I got one from her last week after a long interval. She says that she has been writing to me every week. I suppose her letters were not properly addressed.

The Indian Union Society was founded a few years ago with the object of promoting social intercourse amongst the Indian men & women in London. Ladies are thus members of the Society—in fact the present president is a lady. Some English people are also members of the Society.

I have not yet decided when to leave London.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

92. To Father

26 Oswald Rd,
Oswestry
10. 8. 11

My dear Father,

I have had great difficulty in getting my letters this week. They have followed me from place to place, and those from India have only just reached me. Yours was not among them. It might not have been forwarded to me to the right address, but it is more likely that you missed the mail. Mother's and Nan's letters reached me all right.

We have been to several places since I wrote to you last from Dolgelly. They are all very near each other, often within easy walking distance. I am now staying with Kunwar Parshad Dar[1] who has attached himself to the Cambrian Railway, which runs in this part of the world.

1 Kunwar Prasad Dar (1887 1918); brother in law of Mohanlal Nehru, Jawaharlal's cousin. He went to Wales for training in railway management; and on his return served in the Oudh and Rohilkhand railways till his death.

I have not yet succeeded in finding the place I hoped to find where we could make a fairly lengthy stay. Tomorrow we intend going to Brecon in South Wales, from where we shall probably go on to Bath or some other place in the neighbourhood. I hope to have better luck there. In any case I am determined not to go back to London for another four or five weeks at least.

The term of the London School of Economics begins I think towards the end of September. I hope to be in town then to join the School. I am afraid I shall be unable to attend their full course as that would involve my spending about 6 or seven hours a day on Economics and kindred subjects. I can hardly afford to do that as long as law remains my principal subject. But I am sure I shall derive a lot of benefit from it even if I spend much less time over it than is customary. That would not seriously interfere with my legal work either. I forget if I ever sent you a syllabus of the School. In any case I shall send you a new one when I get it and mark the lectures in it I hope to attend.

I do not know how Shridhar and Jivan are doing in their exam. The former has written to me that he has not done satisfactory papers, but of course that does not signify much. He has probably written much more to you.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

I shall probably want some money towards the end of September as I expect to have to pay various fees at the School of Economics.

93. To Father[1]

London
18th Aug. 1911

My dear Father,

...You alarm me by saying that Shamji[2] has not yet got over his shyness in speaking. I am afraid I am not less shy than he ever was. I have been consoling myself with the thought that I would soon get over it. At the present moment I can imagine nothing more terrifying than having to speak in public...

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1 Extracts.
2. Shamji Madhan, one of Motilal Nehru's juniors at the bar

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1 Kunwar Prasad Dar (1857-1918); brother-in-law of Mohanlal Nehru, Jawaharlal's cousin. He went to Wales for training in railway management; and on his return served in the Oudh and Rohilkhand railways till his death.

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With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

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With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1. Extracts.
2. Shamji Mushran, one of Motilal Nehru's juniors at the bar.

94. To Father[1]

30 Gloucester Terrace W.
22. 9. 11

My dear Father,

. . The state of my head has certainly not improved lately. I think it is a little worse. I have been to the specialist twice and hope to go again in a short time. I don't suppose there is any chance of my getting back any of my lost hair. I may possibly be able to retain what little I have left. You need not trouble to send me any kind of oil. I detest using too much oil and I do not think it does much good. Nothing in the world will make hair grow if there are no roots left. All that the lotions can do is to keep the hair clean and prepare the way for any future growth. Kishan Bhai made me undergo his own particular treatment for a fortnight but it did not do me much good. I am getting rather fed up with my hair. The amount of time and money I have spent on it might have been utilised in a much better manner. ..

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

1 Extracts

95. To Father[1]

30 Gloucester Terrace W.
Dec. 22nd 1911

My dear Father,

...As regards my marriage, you know my views well enough and it is hardly necessary for me to repeat them here. I do not, and cannot possibly, look forward with relish to the idea of marrying a girl whom I do not know. At the same time I acknowledge that your solution of the difficulty is the only one, if it is taken for granted that I am to marry a Kashmiri girl. And on the whole, I think, it would not be particularly pleasing to most people concerned if I married a non-Kashmiri. If she was the Blue Bird you were in search of it would be a different matter, but Blue Birds are as rare in the non-Kashmiris as in the Kashmiris. If you are intent on my getting engaged to the girl you mention I have no objection to offer. Only I should like you

1. Extracts.

to put it off till I have seen her. That ought not to disarrange matters very much as I expect to be back in India before long. If you think you cannot manage this then you are welcome to do as you wish and I shall abide by your decision ..

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

96. To Father

30 Gloucester Terrace W.
29. 12. 11

My dear Father,

Your last letter came from Delhi and contained an account of the State entry. Your next I hope will be about the Durbar[1] itself, and will contain all about the Gaekwar incident[2]. The papers here have said a lot about it but none of them has given a complete account. I think it was silly of the Gaekwar to do as he did, and sillier still to humbly apologise for it after he had done it. But silliest of all was his justification to the *Times*.

I have made up my mind to leave London for a few days at least and am going to Matlock in Derbyshire tomorrow I may stay there for a week or more. In any case I shall be back by the 15th when the bar lectures begin. I wanted to go for Christmas but I have been rather hard up lately and could not make up my mind to go. The result was I had a perfectly sickening Christmas here and resolved to go out of town for the New Year at any cost. I have borrowed money for the purpose and thereby again increased my debts which were gradually lessening themselves. At the present moment, you will be surprised to hear, I believe I owe about £150! I am afraid I have no money sense. The more I attempt to economise the less I succeed in doing so. I do not know how much I have spent in the course of this year, but I know it must be far more than I have ever done before. And yet I have never been flush and have always been trying to economise for the last 12 or 14 months! It is a jolly good thing that I am returning home soon, otherwise I might conceivably get into trouble.

1. The Delhi Durbar of George V was held on 12 December 1911.
2. It was alleged that at the Durbar the Gaekwar had not been appropriately dressed and had behaved with discourtesy towards the King

I wonder if you went to the Congress at Calcutta. It seems to have been a fairly tame affair.[3]

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

3 The Congress of 1911, while thanking the British Government for annulment of the partition of Bengal, did not press for the annulment of the Seditious Meetings Act, the Press Act of 1908, and the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1910 under which Tilak and other political prisoners were imprisoned

97. To Father

30 Gloucester Terrace W.
January 11, 1912

My dear Father,

I was very pleased to get your last letter and read the long account in it of the Durbar and specially the Gaekwar incident. None of the papers had given a satisfactory account of the latter and so I was all the more pleased to read about it in your letter. Since then I have seen it in several cinematograph shows, which abound in London now. The incident seldom fails to provoke hissing. I wonder if the Gaekwar's action had any connection with the Statham affair.[1] The King and Queen are well known to be very strict about mixing with divorcees or anyone else connected with a divorce case, and possibly a hint to the effect that the Gaekwar was not a *persona grata* to them may have been conveyed to him. This might have had the effect of putting his back up.

As regards the Statham case itself I think the Gaekwar could hardly have consented to appear as a party in the case. It would have created a bad precedent. Of course the alternative to this is bad enough. Most people are bound to think now that he was to blame.

The result of the bar exams came out this evening. I did not go to listen to them but I have been told that I got through Real Property. This hardly seems conceivable and I shall not be satisfied till I see my name in tomorrow's *Times*. Pran[2] has passed the same exam too.

1 A case in which the Gaekwar was accused of being the co respondent, but could not be cited in court because of his status as an Indian prince

2 Pran Nath Agha, a friend of Jawaharlal who later retired as District and Sessions Judge

I am going down to Brighton tomorrow morning for a day and a night to take the taste of Matlock away. I shall be back on Saturday. On Monday the lectures start and I hope to attend them regularly.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

I am so sorry to hear that Miss Rice[3] is again seriously ill. From what you write about her there does not seem to be much chance of her recovery in the near future. In any case it would be silly to count upon her as Nan's future governess. Even if she got well soon the best thing for her would be to come back to England. I am glad you have already arranged for Nan's teaching. She is almost old enough now to do without a governess, and outside teaching will probably be better than what she is likely to get from a governess. Personally I should like you to send her to school for a short time—an English girls school or even a French one. I don't suppose she will learn very much there, but I am certain six months of it would do her a vast lot of good.

I am all in favour of having Miss Hooper[4] back to look after Beti[5] and Nan.

3 The governess chosen by Jawaharlal for his sister.
4 The former governess of the Nehru sisters. She was with the Nehru family from 1905 to 1919
5 Krishna Hutheesing (1907-1967), Jawaharlal's younger sister

98. To Father

30 Gloucester Terrace W.
Jan. 19, '12

My dear Father,

I came back from Brighton after a couple of days' stay there in time for the bar term. I am trying to attend the final lectures now, though it is not at all easy to do so. They have lectures every morning from 10 to 12, every evening from 5 to 6 and sometimes in the afternoons too. This means that I have to get up at an extremely early hour and spend the greater part of the day at the Temple. This leaves hardly any time for work at home and I shall have to do a good bit of that before I think of appearing for the final. I did not think the final was as hard as it really is. The number of dull looking books I have to read is not at all pleasant to think of. Besides these books are most expensive. I have only got a few of them and they have cost me about £10!

I heard from Miss Hooper yesterday about her going back to Allahabad. She is coming to town soon and I hope to see her then.

I have already written to you on the subject of my marriage and have left the matter entirely in your hands. You have not told me yet who the girl in question is. I might possibly have seen her or heard of her in the days of my infancy.

It is good of Sir Robert Aikman to be so impressed by my manners. Personally I do not think that is a very great compliment to me. It shows that I must be a particularly inane person if there is nothing more striking about me than my manners. Even as regards the latter some people differ from Sir Robert. I happened to come across Mrs. Kazim Hussein[1] at some function or other last summer. I had not seen her for years and of course did not recognise her. She apparently thought that I had intentionally cut her, and she told some people afterwards that I was a conceited prig and wanted taking down a peg or two. Her husband, whom I had previously met and spoken to, fortunately had a different opinion of me, and stood up for me. Poor Mrs. Kazim Hussein is not quite all there since the death of her daughter.

I suddenly developed a violent cough last week which prevented me from sleeping for a night or two. I don't know what it was due to, but I have hardly smoked since then and it is very much better now.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

I hope you had yourself photographed in your court dress. I should like to have a copy of it.

1. The English wife of a barrister of Allahabad.

99. To Mother[1]

The Beacon Hotel,
Crowborough,
Sussex
March 14, 1912.

My dear Mother,

I have received your letter. I was worried to know about Nanni and baby. I hope both are now better.

1 Original in Hindi.

London tonight. I hope to see him too in a day or two. Colonel Hutchinson is here too. I called on him yesterday but he was not in.

With love from your loving son
Jonathan

If you come to see some of my cheap books you are welcome to have them.

PHOTOSTAT COPY OF LAST PAGE OF LETTER DATED 21 JUNE 1912 TO HIS FATHER

You are unnecessarily annoyed with me about this matter of my marriage. My only fault is that I do not wish to marry a total stranger. Would you like me to marry a girl who I may not like for the rest of my life or who may not like me? Rather than marry in that way it would be better for me not to marry at all. After all, I have to spend my whole life with my wife. Is it surprising, then, if I wish to marry a girl whom I like? I am not obliged to like a girl of a noble family, nor is it to be taken for granted that every educated girl would come up to my expectations. I accept that any girl selected by you and father would be good in many respects, but still, I may not be able to get along well with her. In my opinion, unless there is a degree of mutual understanding, marriage should not take place. I think it is unjust and cruel that a life should be wasted merely in producing children. I do not wish to annoy either you or father in any way. It is precisely for this reason that I wrote to both of you a few months ago that if you like you may fix up my marriage. But I had no desire for marriage then, nor am I so inclined now.

Should you feel that after marriage my whole future life may be changed, please think about it carefully.

Tomorrow I shall go to London for two days. There I have to look for new rooms for my stay. After my return, I shall stay here for about 10 to 12 days.

From your loving son
Jawahar

100. To Father

60 Elgin Crescent
Holland Park W.
June 21st, 1912

My dear Father,

Your last letter[1] pained and surprised me very much. I am fully aware of the fact that I have lately spent far too much money and have not given the attention to my studies which I should or might have given. The latter did not have as disastrous results as it might have had; the former I could not very well help doing after I had

1 Motilal, after writing the letter dated 30 May 1912 referred to by Jawaharlal, expressed remorse in his next letter. "I would have given anything in the world to recall the letter and destroy it."

decided to live in such expensive quarters as King Street. Of course I should have left the place at once and moved to cheaper rooms, but the proximity of my examinations appeared to me to be a sufficient excuse for not doing so. Besides this, as you yourself have suggested, I have got to know some people who could afford to spend much more than I could, with the result that I too occasionally was rash enough to go beyond my limit. I am extremely sorry to have caused you so much inconvenience and distress of mind, and I can assure you that I would have never left the neighbourhood of Bayswater if I had known that you would be pained thereby.

As regards the £40 I lost the fault was hardly mine. Of course it is easy to be wise after the event and I repented of my folly in lending soon after doing so. At the time however I had no idea that the money would not be returned to me and I could not very well refuse. I suffered enough for my folly later on. I was driven to such straits that, for the first time in my life, I had to pawn my watch and chain.

You ask me to send you an account of my expenditure during the last six months. You have yourself suggested the answer to this in your letter. My reputation for veracity appears to be a thing of the past, and you will no doubt think my answer to be a mere excuse. But the fact remains that not only have I not kept any accounts but I have never done so and I fail to see how I am going to keep them without great difficulty. May I know if I am supposed to keep you informed of every penny I spend on a bus fare or a stamp?

I suppose you have ceased to trust me altogether if you ask me for details of my expenditure. If that is the case you may even think me capable of cooking up the accounts so as to deceive you. Either you trust me or you do not. If you do, then surely no accounts are necessary. If you do not then the accounts I send you are not to be relied upon. However the very idea of furnishing accounts is anathema and suggests of my being on ticket of leave. I am not desirous of staying in England or anywhere else a single day under these conditions. Fortunately I have done with my work and there is nothing to detain me here any longer. Under the circumstances I think it would be best for me to return home at once. You will then have greater peace of mind and I too would prefer it to remaining here in a hide bound condition. As I wrote to you some time ago, I particularly wish to stay here a little longer, but I would cheerfully give up the idea altogether than stop here in the way you have suggested in your letter.

You will probably think that I have some horrible secrets which I do not wish you to know. If you ever adopt that frame of mind, I can do nothing. My word would count for nothing and the logical result of it would be for you to have a detective after me.

I was called day before yesterday and am apparently a barrister now. The call fees amounted to £70, after deducting my £50 deposit, and this added to certain other expenses incidental to the call made me spend about £80. I did not think the fees would be so much and barely possessed the sum. In fact I had to borrow a few pounds from Shridhar to pay them. My wig and gown will cost me nearly £12. I have not got them yet as I cannot pay for them.

I believe you wish me to have myself photographed in the wig etc., and in a B.A. hood and gown. These two photos will cost me about 6 guineas. I am waiting for your next week's letter to know when I am supposed to sail. In the meantime I shall try to give you some idea of how much money I shall require. In addition to the above mentioned sums, I shall want about £35 for my fare to Bombay. This is I think the second class fare. It would be a waste of money for me to go first class. If you add another £15 to this, that would include my expenses on board and for overland journey to Marseilles or any other port.

As regards my expenses in London or wherever else I may live before going home, you are a better judge than I am. Unfortunately owing to the fact that I shall be going home in the near future, I shall have certain expenses which are usually considered unavoidable. I shall however try to avoid them and live as economically as possible.

I should like to get certain knick-knacks and other things before going home but they are not absolutely necessary. I have had practically no clothes made for over a year and at the present moment I have not got a single decent suit. My evening dress is several years old and is going to pieces. As for my morning suit it is not fit to be seen. I would have also liked to have ***** but that is neither here nor there.

But whatever sum you may choose to send me for my other expenses, I should be very thankful if you will please send me £100 over and above it to pay off my debts. The £40 I lost a couple of months ago has again swelled this sum up and I am at my wits' ends and do not know what to do.

Mr. Chakravarti is coming to London tonight. I hope to see him in a day or two. Colonel Haksar[1] is here too. I called on him yesterday but he was not in.

With love,

from your loving son
Jawahar

If you care to see some of my old cheque books you are welcome to have them.

1. Col. Kailash Narain Haksar (1878-1953); served in a number of Indian princely states and was Prime Minister, Jammu and Kashmir, 1943-44.

2

THE YOUNG LAWYER AND NATIONALIST

1. To Sir Sita Ram[1]

Anand Bhawan,
Allahabad
25. 6. 14

Dear Sir,

At a meeting of the U.P. South Africa Committee held on the 17th of May 1914 it was resolved to inform the donors that the money contributed by them to the U.P. South Africa Relief Fund[2] after December 22, 1913, being not required now for the relief of passive resisters in South Africa, was held by the Committee in their hands subject to the instructions of the donors The Committee would recommend that the amount subscribed by you be made over to the Non-Official Famine Relief Fund[3] or to the Hume Memorial Fund[4], according as you wish. But of course this is a mere recommendation. Your money will be disposed of entirely according to your wishes which the Committee hope you will communicate to me within a fortnight of the receipt of this letter.

I may add that where the money has been collected from a number of persons the consent in writing of each and every individual donor will be necessary The Committee have no power to divert or otherwise dispose of the money without such consent. The Committee hope that the collectors will be kind enough to ascertain the wishes of the individual donors and inform me of them.

I enclose a stamped post card for your reply. Please fill it in and return it to me at your early convenience.

Yours truly,
J. Nehru
Joint Secretary,
U.P. South Africa Committee

1 Sita Ram Papers, National Archives of India
Sir Sita Ram (b 1885), a moderate politician from Meerut, President, U P *Legislative Council, 1925 1937, High Commissioner for India in Pakistan,* 1949 1950

2 A relief fund started by the Congress in 1909, at Gokhale's instance, in aid of Gandhi's passive resistance campaign in South Africa In 1913 Jawaharlal became Joint Secretary of the U P branch.

3 A fund organised by the Servants of India Society to mitigate famine conditions in Allahabad District and the eastern districts of U P.

4 Started in 1912 to establish a memorial in honour of A O Hume, the British civil servant who had been sympathetic to Indian nationalist aspirations.

2. The First Public Speech[1]

Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, who also spoke in favour of the resolution, remarked that the previous speakers had told them the genesis of the mischievous Act[2] and how promises and pledges were disregarded by the Government. The poisonous Press Act was growing in strength and that was the time when every one felt that he should demand its total repeal. There was no hope in this world for those Indians who thought otherwise. If they were convinced that that Act must go, they must try hard to achieve that object and they should not rest until they had succeeded. The speaker hoped with Carlyle[3] that there could be no compromise with the devil. They considered the Press Act to be a foster child of that evil one. They were on their trial; their sincerity was being tested. Was there any one of them who would not rise up to the mark? In conclusion Mr. Nehru said that they should ever keep in mind that great and noble lady[4] who was the indirect cause of that meeting. "Don't fail at this moment; follow her faithfully and let it not be said that you flinched when you ought to have supported her."

1. *The Leader*, 23 June 1916.
   This is an account of the first public speech made by Jawaharlal. On 20 June 1916, prominent citizens of Allahabad gathered in Hardinge Theatre to protest against the Indian Press Act, 1910 and against the demand of security from Mrs Annie Besant. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru presided over the meeting. Jawaharlal mentions this speech in his *Autobiography* but is uncertain about the date. See J. Nehru, *Autobiography* (Indian Edition, 1962), p. 33.
2. The Press Act of 1910 authorized the Government to demand securities from new printing presses and newspapers upto Rs 2000 and from established ones upto Rs 5,000.
3. Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881); English author.
4. Annie Besant (1847-1933); came to India in 1893 after a varied record of activity in Britain, to serve the Theosophical Society, of which she later became the President. During the First World War she founded the Home Rule League and was interned for a while by the Government of India. In 1917 she was elected President of the Indian National Congress. She did much to awaken Indians to a knowledge of their past and to the need to achieve freedom.

3. A Notice Regarding the Indian Defence Force[1]

Allahabad
June 13th 1917

Dear Sir,

On the 4th of June a small informal meeting was held at Mahmudabad House, Lucknow, to consider what steps should be taken with regard to the Indian Defence Force.[2] Those present at this meeting were of opinion that it was desirable to make every effort to make this scheme a success and to urge our young men to join the Force. They were also of opinion that endeavours should be made to bring about certain alterations in the rules and regulations relating to the Force. It was suggested that committees should be formed in the principal towns of these provinces for the purpose of carrying on this work. It is therefore proposed to form a strong and representative committee at Allahabad and we shall be pleased if you will join the committee and collaborate with us in this work.

We hope you will be good enough to let us know at your early convenience whether you are willing to act on this committee. Your reply should be addressed to J. M. Banerji[3], Esqr., 12, Church Road, Allahabad.

The first meeting of the committee will be held at 7 p.m. on Saturday the 23rd June, at Anand Bhawan (No. 1, Church Road).

Yours faithfully,
MOTILAL NEHRU,
TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU,[4]
RANJIT SINGH,[5]
ISWAR SARAN,[6]
J. M. BANERJI,
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

1 *The Leader*, 22 June 1917.
2 With the outbreak of the First World War, the Government of India was willing to consider favourably the recruitment of Indians in a Volunteer Corps, and the Indian Defence Force Act of 1917 provided for this Congress had already been demanding this.
3 A leading lawyer of Allahabad.
4. (1875 1949); a leading lawyer of Allahabad and the best known of the Indian Liberal leaders He was Law Member of the Government of India, 1920 23
5 Major D. R. Ranjit Singh; Secretary of the Home Rule League, Allahabad, and of the Agra Province Zamindars' Association.
6 Munshi Iswar Saran (1874-1947); advocate of Allahabad High Court, President, Allahabad Swadeshi League.

4. Second Notice Regarding the Indian Defence Force[1]

Allahabad
June 20th 1917

Dear Sir,

On the 13th of June we addressed a letter to you requesting you to join a committee which was to be formed for the purpose of encouraging recruitment to the Indian Defence Force. The first meeting of this committee was fixed for Saturday the 23rd June. Events have since happened which make it clear that the Government is bent on pursuing a policy of repression. Under these circumstances we find ourselves unable to work on behalf of this movement. The meeting fixed for the 23rd June is therefore cancelled.[2]

Yours faithfully,
MOTILAL NEHRU,
TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU,
RANJIT SINGH,
ISWAR SARAN,
J. M. BANERJI,
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

1 *The Leader*, 22 June 1917
2 Because of resentment at the internment of Mrs Besant and her colleagues by the Madras Government, the idea of helping in the Indian defence efforts was given up

5. The Internment of Mrs. Annie Besant[1]

Sir,

Qui Deus vult perdere prius dementat[2]—so said the wise men of old and we are seeing the proverb justify itself in our ancient land. You, Sir, have expressed yourself strongly, and rightly so, against the recent orders[3] of the Government of Madras. But with my sorrow at the treatment accorded to Mrs. Besant is mingled joy and gladness that this day has come. For madness has fallen on the bureaucracy and that is the surest presage of their coming fall. Home Rule has come and we have but to take it if we stand up like men and falter not.

The usual meetings of protest against Mrs. Besant's internment are being announced and our city of Allahabad is going to express its condemnation tomorrow. We shall no doubt have a demonstration worthy

1 Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 21 June 1917.
2. Those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad
3. In 1917 the Madras Government interned Mrs Besant, G. S. Arundale and B. P. Wadia in Ootacamund, prohibited them from speaking, writing and publishing, and censored their correspondence.

of the occasion, eloquent and moving speeches will be made and resolutions will be passed. But will that be all? Are we going to indulge in mere protests and representations as we have done for so many weary years? We have had enough of protest meetings, Allahabad is used to them, and no doubt our benign Government is also getting accustomed to them Ours have been the politics of cowards and opium-eaters long enough and it is time we thought and acted like live men and women who place the honour and interests of their country above the frowns and smiles of every Tom, Dick and Harry who has I.C.S. attached to his name. Let us make it clear to the powers that be that we will not tolerate this highhandedness, and as long as and until they do not retrace their steps, there shall be no cooperation between the people and the Government. Every one of us who holds an honorary position under the Government should resign it and refuse to have anything to do with the bureaucracy I am aware that many will not be prepared to do this, that they would sooner go to the devil than offend the collector. Of the likes of such we have no need, we want no faint hearts or wobblers in the Home Rule League. Let them, even though they be Knights or C.I.Es or Rai Bahadurs or even Vice-Chancellors of Universities, let them part company with us and continue to kow-tow before and worship at the feet of our masters from across the seas. The wheat will be all the purer when the chaff is removed.

We have Indians as members of the Viceroy's Council and the Madras Executive Council. What have they done to prevent this infamous order, and what are they doing now? If Sir Sankaran Nair[4] and Mr. Rajagopalacharyar[5] are not merely hirelings of the bureaucracy but are true servants of the public and self respecting Indians, they must sever all connection with the Government. What business have they at Simla or Ooty if they cannot even prevent an outrage of this character?

I was one of those who was firmly convinced that Indians should avail themselves of the opportunity of acquiring military training off-

4 Sir C Sankaran Nair (1857 1934), Judge of the Madras High Court and later member of the Viceroy's Council He resigned in protest against the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar in 1919 He presided over the Indian National Congress at Amraoti in 1897.

5 Sir P Rajagopalacharyar (1862 1927), at this time member of the Madras Executive Council

ered by the Defence of India Force Act, in spite of the many invidious distinctions. About a fortnight ago I filled in my application form and sent it to the Magistrate. Mrs. Besant's internment has however convinced me that we ought not to join the Force and I have therefore asked for the return of the application.

Anand Bhawan
June 21st, 1917

I am etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. The Home Rule League[1]

Sir,

Will you be good enough to allow me to make a request, through the columns of *The Leader*, to the secretaries of the various branches of the Home Rule League in these provinces?

A large number of Home Rulers in Allahabad and elsewhere have felt that the existing constitution of the League is not conducive to the speedy development of the League and to a proper co-ordination of our work. The formation of a Provincial League has therefore been suggested and steps are being taken with this object in view. A sub-committee appointed for this purpose has prepared a tentative constitution, and this is being sent for approval to all the branches of the League in the U.P. Unfortunately we are not in possession of full particulars of many of the district branches, and I shall be obliged if the secretaries of all those branches in these provinces which have not already done so, will let us know the names of their office bearers and the number of members on their rolls. It is particularly requested that this information may be sent to us by the 15th of September. All communications should be addressed to :—

The Secretaries, Home Rule League, 3, City Road, Allahabad.

I may mention that we have opened a public reading room at our office, No. 3, City Road. A well stocked book depot is also kept at the same address.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Jawaharlal Nehru,
Joint Secretary, Home Rule League,
Allahabad

Home Rule League Office,
3, City Road,
Allahabad, September 4, 1917

1 Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 6 September 1917.
Home Rule Leagues were started by Tilak and Mrs. Besant in April 1916 and September 1916 respectively.

7. A Notice to the Citizens of Allahabad[1]

A Public Meeting of the citizens of Allahabad will be held at 6 p.m. on September 27 under the auspices of the Home Rule League at 3, City Road, to demand the immediate release of Messrs. Mohamed Ali[2] and Shaukat Ali[3]. You are cordially invited to attend.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

1. *The Leader*, 26 September 1917
2. Maulana Mohamed Ali (1878-1931), educated at Aligarh and Oxford, editor of the *Comrade*, interned 1915-1919, one of the Muslim leaders of the Khilafat agitation, in jail for sedition 1921-1923, President of the Congress 1923, thereafter dissociated himself from the Congress and attended the first Round Table Conference.
3. Maulana Shaukat Ali (1873-1938), elder brother of Maulana Mohamed Ali, was interned throughout the First World War, and on his release became one of the leading organisers of the Khilafat campaign. In later years he drifted away from the Congress.

8. To A.M. Khwaja[1]

Anand Bhawan,
Allahabad
12. 12. 17

My dear Khwaja[2],
The forces of reaction are at work and are trying their level best to keep out Home Rulers and other advanced politicians from the Congress. In the other provinces they have ignominiously failed but they still venture to repeat their tactics here. The All India Congress Committee will be elected—as far as the U.P. is concerned—at Calcutta during the Congress week.[3] The whole body of the delegates from our province will take part in the election. It is most important that

1. Khwaja Papers, NMML
2. Abdul Majid Khwaja (1885-1962), a contemporary of Jawaharlal at Cambridge and a lawyer of Aligarh. He joined the Congress in 1915, and in 1920 he gave up his legal practice. Six years later, however, he retired from active politics.
3. The 32nd session was divided between the Moderates and the new Home Rulers and Nationalists. Mrs. Besant was elected easily as President despite strong local opposition. Although the Extremists exercised considerable influence at this session, yet a resolution of loyalty to the Crown was passed.

our best men should get in. For instance we are very keen on Ansari[4] being there. We must therefore see to it that as large a number of Home Rulers as possible go as delegates to the Congress. You will of course come but I hope you will come with a very strong contingent from Aligarh. It will be most sad if next year's All India Committee is not a thoroughly go-ahead body. But that will not happen. Only we must work for it. Please do try your best.

Have you ever attended the Congress as a delegate? If so you ought to join the Provincial Congress Committee. We want some fresh blood in it badly.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4 Dr M A Ansari (1880 1936), a leading doctor and Congressman of Delhi He took a leading part in the Home Rule and Khilafat campaigns, and led a medical mission to Turkey. He presided over the Congress session at Madras in 1927 He was a close friend of the Nehru family

9. The Raja of Pratapner's Disclaimer[1]

1.4.18

Sir,

I have read with much pain and sorrow the letter of the Raja of Pratapner[2] in your issue of today's date. Soon after the H. R. meeting at Etawah, referred to by the Raja Saheb, I heard a rumour that sinister influences were at work to make him recant, but rumour is often a lying jade and I paid little heed to it, specially as I did not expect a scion of an ancient house, famous in Indian history, to be false to his trust and his country. I had the honour of attending the meeting and the pleasure of listening to the eloquent and moving speech of Pandit Neki Ram[3]. The Raja of Pratapner came to that meeting—was this too forced on him?—and he was elected the chairman in the usual way. I do not know when and to whom he clearly expressed his wishes against his election or against a "movement which tolerates" such people as P. Neki Ram and my humble self. I do know that *immediately after his election he took the chair and not a word* of protest escaped his lips then or later. I sat next to him and we occasionally conversed with each other but at no stage of the meeting

1 J N Correspondence, NMML
2 Hukm Tej Pratap Singh from Etawah (1893 1925), member of U P. Legislative Council from 1920 until his death.
3 A leading Home Ruler of Punjab, arrested in July 1918.

did I gather that the honour had been thrust upon an unwilling person. He asked me to address the meeting after Pandit Neki Ram but I excused myself as the hour was very late—it was nearly 11 p.m. then. The Raja was then requested to speak and the sole reason he gave for not doing so was his not having prepared his speech. Not a word of disapproval, not a hint of displeasure escaped him. At the close of the meeting another H. R. meeting for a couple of days later was announced and I gathered the impression that the Raja intended coming to that meeting also But of course my impression may have been wrong. And now the Raja tells us that he "was jockeyed into this position" and that he "listened with disgust to the uncalled for utterances of P. Neki Ram"! A Raja's ways of expressing "disgust" are strange indeed! I am not concerned much with his opinions, or want of them, but I do protest against his description of his election to the chairmanship and the misleading idea that is likely to give people who were not present. Allow me to assure him that although we gladly welcome recruits to our Home Rule Army we want no faint hearts and wobblers in it Let those who prefer the smiles of collectors and magistrates and the like to the honour and interests of their country bask in the sunshine of official favour. We have no need for them. The cause will not suffer for the Raja Saheb's defection But I grieve that a Chohan Rajput, a descendant of the great Prithvi Raj[4] should exhibit such weakness and irresolution. Did his brave ancestors show the white feather when they were attacked?

I have &c
Jawaharlal Nehru

4 Prithviraj Chauhan was the king of Sambhal, Ajmer and Delhi in the 12th century He first defeated Mohammed Ghori but was vanquished and killed the next year His deeds are recorded by Chand Bardai in *Prithvi Raj Raso*

10. To Tej Narain[1]

Anand Bhawan,
Alld.
13/8/18

My dear Tej Narain[2],
I returned from Lucknow today with a heavy heart for I had come to realise, much as I struggled against it, that politics in India demand

1 J N Correspondence NMML
2 Tej Naram Mulla (1887 1950), son of Jagat Naram Mulla, later became a High Court judge

sacrifices of a kind I had not dreamt of. I knew full well public life of a nation under alien domination is very differ that of a free country. Feelings are intenser, more exaspera sions are quickly aroused and smoulder away for want of a outlet. But I had hoped—vainly as it now appears—that fri would not be affected, faith in a comrade and a colleague wo totally disappear at the first whisper of a lying tongue. But th not to be, and I am a sadder if perhaps a wiser man. "And wroth with one we love doth work like madness in the brai write these few lines only to beg of you and of *Chacha*[3] not to credence to every idle rumour about me that may reach you. I assure you—I know not what value will be attached to this assura that I have never felt anything but respect for *Chacha*. As you k I have strong convictions and feel deeply on public questions. things have pained me so much as the attitude *Chacha* has taken in politics, for to my poor way of thinking it has done immense ha to the cause we all have at heart. But never by thought or deed, I cast the slightest reflection on *Chacha*. What matter? For "whi pering tongues can poison truth" and little that I can do now can un the mischief that has been done.

Yours affl
Jawaharla

3 Jagat Narain Mulla (1864-1938), whom Jawaharlal addressed as *Chacha*. Th misunderstanding was due to Jawaharlal's strong views on Mulla's 'moderate' politics

11. On Deputations To England[1]

Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru proposed:

"This conference places on record its emphatic protest against the announcement made by the Home Member that no deputations will be allowed to proceed to England until the reports of the Committee

1 *The Leader*, 16 October 1918
Resolution at the U.P. Political Conference held in Lucknow under the presidentship of Motilal Nehru

AT THE ALLAHABAD BAR 1912.
Jawaharlal is standing first from the left in the third row.

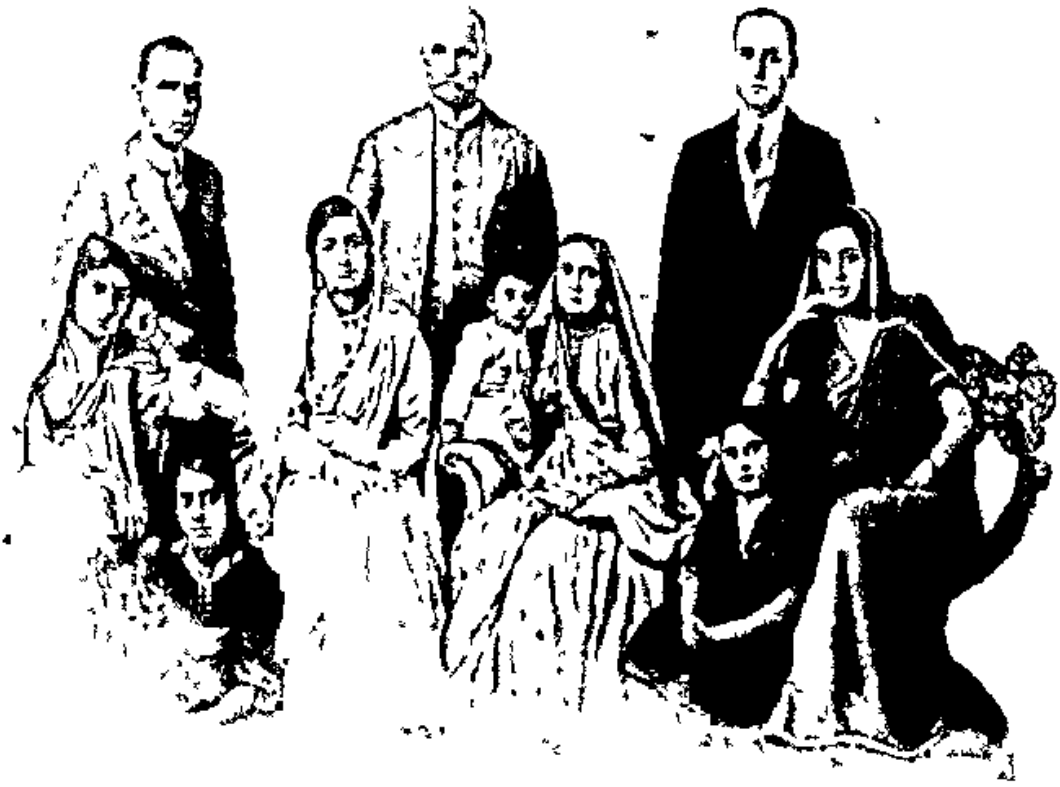

FAMILY GROUP, 1918.

Standing (Left to right) :

JAWAHARLAL, MOTILAL, KRISHANLAL

Sitting (Left to right)

SARUP KUMARI NEHRU (SHRIMATI VIJAYALAKSHMI PANDIT), KAMALA NEHRU, SWARUP RANI NEHRU WITH INDIRA NEHRU, SHIVARAJVATI NEHRU

On the floor (Left to right) :

KRISHNA KUMARI NEHRU, VIDYA NEHRU (DAUGHTER OF KRISHANLAL NEHRU)

are published. Such a decision, while it deprives the Indians of the freedom to exercise their rights of citizenship in placing their own views with regard to the Reform Scheme[2] before the British public, is contrary to the clear promise given by his Excellency the Viceroy last year that every facility shall be given to Indians to proceed to England in connection with Constitutional Reforms. This Conference earnestly urges upon the Government of India the necessity and justice of granting forthwith the necessary passports to the delegates of the Indian National Congress and other political bodies who may be willing to proceed to England."

In moving the resolution, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru referred to the two deputations which had to return from Ceylon and Gibraltar respectively. He pointed out the injustice done to those deputations. Dr. Nair[3] was allowed to proceed to England on the ground of illness but as soon as he was in England, the embargo placed on him was removed and he had begun to spread venom against home rule.

Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer[4] and Mr. Hassan Imam[5] had interviewed the Viceroy in that connection, but in vain. A week ago, the Home Member[6] said that no occasion had as yet risen for any deputations to go to England and that they would be allowed to go after the publication of the reports of the two committees. By that time, the speaker said, the bill and reports relating to the constitutional reforms must have been completed. It was necessary for the deputations to go to England at the present moment and to place their views before the British public.

2. The declaration of 20 August 1917, which laid down the policy of the British Government as being the gradual development of self governing institutions in India with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government.
3. Dr. T. Madhavan Nair (1868-1919); one of the leaders of the non Brahmin movement in Madras.
4. C P Ramaswami Aiyar (1879 1966): Secretary, Indian National Congress, 1917-18, Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1942; Dewan of Travancore, 1936-47; Vice Chancellor, Banaras Hindu University, 1954 56, and of Annamalai University, 1953-55 and again 1962 66.
5. (1871-1933), eminent lawyer; appointed Judge of the Calcutta High Court in 1912, presided over the special session of the Congress in Bombay, 1918
6. Sir William Vincent.

12. The Kotla Case[1]

Aligarh
For 24/3/19

I appear for Raja Kushalpal Singh—Deft 1—to oppose the application for amendment of plaint which has been made by the Pffs[2]

Preliminary Remarks

Labouring under a disability in having to answer argument wh. I did not have advantage to hear—should have liked to hear it personally and know on what grounds such an amazing appln cd be supported. Colleagues supplied me with notes—poor sub. divorced from delivery & wealth of gesture. Perusal only deepened regret at having missed forensic eloquence—D as is his wont argued with ardour & zeal of a crusader worthy of better cause. Extraordinary propositions of law advanced & still more extraordinary statements of fact made. Shall deal with them later but cannot help expressing regret that D shd have permitted himself to make these statements. Endeavour to answer him—feel confident that I shall satisfy ct.—absolutely no force in appln not bonafide, made it harass & delay justice etc confuse issues etc.

Indulgence of ct. if inadvertently I miss out any point D. has laid stress on & request that ct will point out if I fail to make myself clear. Also request D to follow me & to correct me—some of his remarks require explanation & justification.

1. Jawaharlal practised as a lawyer for about eight years, from his return to India in 1912 till 1920, when he plunged into the noncooperation movement. We reprint here from Jawaharlal's case book, as illustrative of his approach, the notes, written in his own hand, of two cases in which he appeared.
The above selection covers pages 73 to 97 of a notebook entitled "Notes from Cases" (now in NMML.) which he began in 1916 For the second case, see No. 20.
Shri M C. Chagla has commented on these two cases: "The cases by them selves are not important, but they disclose the extraordinary industry and love of research of the young lawyer."
2. The plaintiff in the case had moved the court for amendment of the plaint Jawaharlal as counsel for the defendant opposed it.

Frequent reference to Dumraon—C. R. Das & Chakerburty. I cannot lay such claims—greatness not thrust upon me by working with legal lights like D & C. Limited Exp. in this Prov.

Circumstances under which appln made

Trace history of suit so far.

21.5 05 Deed of gift by Lalli Jus K elegantly called by D "rubbish!" in favour of Kushalpal.

[*16.9.10* Lalli Jus K died]

14.4.17 Alleged sale deed by Tilok Pal in favour of Pffs.

19.5.17 Plaint presented just within 12 years of gift.

D assures us that plaint on most approved lines—Dumraon—C R D etc

Briefly analyse plaint with small pedigree

Pff's allegations: Pffs next reversioners of Chaturbhuj last *male holder—only way they become so is by saying*

1. adopt of Chaturbhuj to Sundar Singh in Raja Ram's branch.
2. Adopt of Harnarain to Bhagwan Singh —do—
3. Sital Shah had only 2 sons Harkishan & Raja Ram and *not* Hans Ram & Sada Ram.
4. Harkishan Das had only 2 sons Mandhata & Pohap S. and *not* Pahar Singh & Mokkam Singh.
5. Lachmi Naram Pff's ancestor was son of Mandhata.

(1) Thus if both adopts proved pffs & Chaturbhuj both members of Raja Ram's branch—Pff sole surviving members of that branch & hence next reversioners of Chaturbhuj. Plaint para 24

(2) If no adopts pff must prove Pahar not son of Harkishan & Lachmi N. son of Mandhata. No one else in Harkishan's branch left

(3) If however only Chaturbhuj's adoption proved then in addition to (2) they have to prove that Sital had only 2 sons Harkishan & Raja Ram—& Hans Ram & Sada Ram did not exist. For if Hans Ram & Sada Ram brothers of Harkishan then their issue wd exclude Pffs. [Tilok Pal slightly nearer in degree—His assignment He has previously admitted deed of gift]

Eng law Privy to these parties Very stiff task before the Pff 2 Jts of High.Ct to get over in both Pff's father a party—Megh S—the grandfather of the present youthful transferers—the Pff in one.

Refer to Jt in Megh Singh's suit last page for findings. *These are the findings wh. the Pff has to get over!* acknowledge courage & audacity of Pff. How has he tried to do so? By indiscriminate abuse & charges of perjury, forgery and other sweet things of this kind. If 1/100th part of the charges are true then we or our predecessors wd have done credit to the great German Secret Service system. Waiting anxiously to know how charges justified —Mr. D. in opening again in his eloquent language abused Umrao Singh—Perhaps he believes in the good old way of throwing a lot of mud as some sure to stick. Or is it the Dumraon way?

Then come a succession of delays in spite of years of preparation before suit. D in his generosity will not credit for them, full responsibility on us. We appreciate his courtesy but will rather have none of it. Let us examine the true facts.

1. 7n of Lokendra Singh's guardianship.
   (a) Pff first suggested Deft 2 Th. Jogendra Pal Singh Dy Collector at Gorakhpur. He said he was too busy in service—too far etc. suggested Dhian Pal S. but Pff wd have none of him for obvious reasons!
   (b) Then suggested Th. Mahendra Pal Dy Coll at Basti—same result.
3. Then Kushalpal S. who naturally said defence diff. etc.

   By that time minor became major.

Jan 1918 Suit numbered etc.

18.3.18 Deft 1 applies to High Ct for transfer from Aligarh for reasons of convenience etc.

Notice cd nt be served on Pff. 3 attempts made all unsuccessful—apparently avoiding service.

May '18 Eventually counsel filed appearance in May.

D. accuses us of wasting time, not keeping our word and trying to get case before a particular judge of the High Ct! These are serious allegations and I take it they are meant to apply to my learned senior M. N. who was in charge of the appln. challenge to substantiate & justify or withdraw them & express his regret.

18 6 18 Appln. rejected——month after appearance filed on behalf of Pffs. May be M. N. had asked for a short postponement. *He has other work to attend to* besides the

Kotla case. His health not good for some days—absence at Lucknow etc. Do not wish to employ strong language but insinuations are disgraceful agst a leader of the bar etc. Weak case—abuse opp party's counsel in his absence! Courtesy & camaraderie of the bar!! Wish he had done so in his presence—ample opportunity—he was here for a week. Of a piece with the rest of the Pff's case & the conduct thereof.

68.18 *Written statement filed*—a bombshell in the Pff's camp. Mr. D. much disconcerted. Deft had the temerity to adopt a line of defence wh. did not suit D! & wh. was not in accordance with the hallowed traditions of the Dumraon case & was not perhaps what Dar's friends & sponsors C R D and C wd have done. What temerity!!

D says "If defence had been on lines indicating deed of gift case wd have been over before now! No occasion for proposed amendment!!" Follow this line

We shd have gone to D for advice in the matter & abided by his directions—We might have confessed it! Most thoughtless of us to put him out & upset all his nicely laid schemes to overreach Defts. But the best laid schemes of mice & men gang aft agley and D is after all a mere mortal in spite of his close assn with the luminaries of the Cal. bar

All this commotion due to fact that Pffs advisers realised that they hadn't a shadow or vestige of case.

D says: "extremely unfair to us to have a *pedigree* of 1200 names hurled at us!" I agree that is unfortunate & distressing, but unhappily the Malthusian doctrine has not spread in India. I trust people will be more careful in future for the benefit of D's successors in the profession!

D goes on to say: "Litigation has got laws of honour"! Does D realise the meaning of what he says? I trust not or he wd not make such reckless statements. Does he mean to imply that the Deft's advisers have transgressed any of the canons written or unwritten of honour? Fair & unfair!!!

D knows well that this identical pedigree was put in in the previous suits barring the addition of names of newly born people? Has he not seen this pedigree? Challenge him etc.

Did he expect us to make up new pedigree?

Refer: Writ Stat para 24(c)

2nd shock

Our *conditional admission* of Chaturbhuj's adopt-apparently this form of pleading not known to D! Very common & well recognised form both in England & India. Pff's appln!!

{ Perhaps no such conditional admission in Dumraon Hence D's ignorance

R.S.C. appendix B No 12 p 1540 (Vol. II white bk)
C.P.C. app C. No. 11 p 990 (Agarwala)
Identical words.

Means just what it says. It is not our case that Chaturbhuj was adopted but in present case we did not wish to lengthen trial—It did not affect our case as agst Pff and so we admitted it conditionally. No one else in the world can take advantage of that admission.

We stick to it as it is and will not be bullied or cajoled by D into changing it or altering it in any sense. D had better realise that Deft case is going to be conducted as his counsel advise him and not acc to D's whims & caprices.

Effect of our admission Megh Raja's descendants acquire additional importance

(3) another surprise our "caricature!" pleading Justifie Pff advisors naivete wd be charming if it was not distressing

search begins

Refer Marked passages in Das's notes p 3—6

Further delays to recover from shock and to find some more & stronger strings to bow
search begins

Roman Cath Mission made a party. Poor Revd. gentlemen dragged from their cloisters & made a pawn in Pff's game. Wholly unnecessary. Pff themselves are not keen on them. Don't want notice of this appln served on them. A mere device to gain time.

15.8.18

Issues struck Non-joinders—No such plea in defence. Appln made by D (after MN's consent) to get 18th Nov. fixed for trial. After some discussion S.J. fixed 11th Nov. 1918.

10.9.18 Dar applies to S.J. for postponement. Refused.

21 9 D applies to H. Ct during vacation. We oppose appln urge speedy trial but Pff continue to delay apparently still trying to find some one to help them in their straits. High Ct postponed. No date fixed.

Pff tried to get further delays—referred to Sapru's membership of Reforms Committee! Where is Sapru now —Dodge to gain time.

4 12.18 S J. fixed 17.2.19 for trial—witnesses summoned for that date. D stated in ct that he would not open case and lead evidence straight off.

17 2.19 Deft gets M.N. to attend ct thinking evidence will begin. But no such luck. D starts off—opens flood-gates of oratory—10 days of it—M.N. returns after a few days. *On this day* also Karanpal's sale deed executed. D must have known but not a word of it, not a whisper till 3rd March.

1.3 19 Phul Singh sale deed executed.

3 3 19 Present appln filed after M N goes. 2 sale deeds Property worth 30 lacs sold for 100/- p.m. to both vendors!! Both deeds ex m the Awagarh estate. Karanpal spirited away to Awagarh! Poor mother distrait—wiring to Collector—informing police. Karanpal acc to us a minor —affidavit filed.

Karanpal & Co's predecessor—grandfather—Megh Singh. His antecedents & conduct—consistent behaviour throughout life. See *affidavit*. Three sons of Megh S left out in the cold.

Read appln for amendment and our answer to it—Comment. How does proposed amendment affect ?es in controversy between the parties—What are these ?es issues.

Amend. does not touch present issues or help in consideration of any ?n involved in suit.

Instead of elucidating or simplifying positions [illegible] culties & complications. Confusion worse confounded.

New issues—

Karanpal & Co's position—antagonistic to [illegible] posed amendment opens up an interminable [illegible] endments—a dreary prospect.

Deft will have to meet new case [illegible] fresh doc & oral evid.

Many special ?ns peculiar to Meghraj's descendants. Contest betwn defendants—always undesirable.
Really rival suits.
Inconsistency in Pff's case—each part destructive of the other. Claims to be Megh S's representative & yet denies that Megh Singh reversioner at all.
Effect of Megh Singh's previous conduct.
Estoppel, Limitation.

Fresh pedigree on wh pedigree does Karnapal rely?

Until a satisfactory explanation of this is forthcoming Karanpal & Co have no locus standi.
Chaturbhuj's adopt admission provisional. Admission agst one party, denial as agst another! Absurd—Difficulties of oral evidence.
Megh S's 3 sons alive—left in the cold by Pff or perhaps they are also being bamboozled by Pff's agents. Sale deeds ex by 3 grandsons—2 of them minors—Karanpal & Ospal—this ?n also to be determined. Are the sons & grandsons joint?

Law

Indian Law same as English Law.
D has strange notions of English trials etc. Because there are juries in England ∴ law as to amendment is different! Similarly because there are English Judges in England etc Interested to know where these remarkable ideas have come from.
R. S Ct O 16 R 11=C.P.C. O 1 R 10 addition of fresh parties— "all ?n involved in the suit"
RSC. O 28 R 1=C.P.C. O 6 R 17
amendment of pleadings.
"real ?ns in controversy between the parties"
Only such ?ns as have arisen at date of suit can be ?ns involved in the suit—similarly ?ns in controversy. This is apart from the ?ns of merits.
?n Competence of Court to grant amendment when cause of action has arisen after institution of suit.
Dicta of eminent JJ
Tottenham Local Board V Lea Conservancy
2 T.L.R. 410
If this is good law as we must presume it to be then Pff out of court if we show that cause of action has arisen after institution of suit. On Pffs own showing this so. Sale deed 1-3/4 years after.

For 25/3/19 Yesterday dealt with facts & circumstances leading up to present appln = Traced history of suit so far—showed how the drama proceeded & developed; how the Pffs in an attempt to escape or at any rate delay the nemesis wh is awaiting them have made their case undergo a kaleidoscopic change in a barren hope born of despair.

Without discussing the merits of case have shown at any rate that all presumptions of law & fact are against Pffs—Jts of the highest Ct in the land are agst them. They come to Ct on some allegations and it will take a brave man to say that they will succeed where their ancestors failed. Inspite of all this the Pffs have ventured into the field. But it will be more correct to say that they are the nominal Pffs only, mere pawns in the great game, which is really being played by a powerful & wealthy lady to satisfy some grudge or for other reasons of her own.

Have shown that we have consistently acted in a straightforward manner—have not caused any avoidable *delay or in any other way impeded the* proper trial of the suit. On the contrary we have done utmost to speed the trial. But we have again & again been check-mated by the Pffs who in their endeavours to strengthen their bogus claims have taken time. D repeatedly spoken ill of Deft & his father. Welcome to it. Facts speak for themselves. Ill becomes any one on Pffs side to ride the high horse—glass houses—It is not so long ago that Pffs employed an agent to inspect records—a man who had been dismissed from the collectorate for forgery—needless to say he was given short shrift by authorities & pff had to part company with him.

abuse of process of court

Such has been Pffs conduct—last and most audacious —of a piece with the rest of their methods—Comes the episode of the Karanpal & Co's sale deeds—Young boys & minors are spirited away and inveigled into the domains of the lady of Awagarh. Poor indigent people lured no doubt by fair promises—*sell a vast property for the beg*garly sum of 100/- p m. Even the biblical case of a mess of pottage not in it! And all for what? To enable the Pffs to have some plausible excuse for proceeding with a case wh was in imminent danger of collapse. A drowning man they say clutches at a straw, so the Pffs career about in search of fresh causes of action and *fish*

L. J. Simile of Omnibus

out these poor boys and carry them away in triumph to Awagarh.

And who are these boys? The grandsons of a person who all through his life consistently proclaimed & adhered to certain statements. Who bound himself hand & foot in the eyes of the law; and they claim through him!

The whole transaction is clearly champertous. The law of England calls such transactions "obnoxious to the law & void in equity & law."

AP. p 2046

Here in India the law permits but it looks upon them with a jealous eye and will not grant them any grace or stretch a point in their favour—No ct. of equity will permit a party to take advantage of them unless no discretion is left to it in the matter. Where there is discretion it will always be exercised agst a champertous arrangement.

XX Does Pff acknowledge HR Pff says no Hans Ram's branch =yes! Double headed 2 faced hydrat

Have pointed out the disastrous consequences if the amendment is granted.

It will not touch or help the elucidation of a single issue as framed—"real ?ns in controversy between parties" ?ns of limitation, estoppel, etc wd arise. Lalli Juo openly proclaimed adv possession by deed of gift 21/5/05—Megh Singh agreed ∴ as against him & his successors it began to run then—expired 20/5/17—Revival of time barred claim.

Can Karanpal sue without first setting aside deed? Another ?n of limitation.

X Election

XXX Walsh. J — Obiter Dictum

14 ALJ 464

Estoppel Bajrangi's Case 30Al followed 7 ALJ 121 at 123

It will raise difficulties innumerable, fresh issues, fresh w.ss, fresh evid & hopeless confusion.

No doubt it may save Pff's purpose by delaying matters and harassing Defts—Injustice to Defts—not possible to recoup their Costs.

And what is the prospect before us if amendment allowed? An interminable vista of amendments—dreary outlook! Pffs whenever they see their case tottering will forthwith get hold of another reversioner and get a sale deed! Every argument wh D has addressed now will equally apply to every subsequent amendment!

No end to case

All facts show utter lack of *bonafides*

Abuse of process of court

They show that case is such that under no conceivable circumstances must amendment be allowed—unless the law is imperative and leaves no discretion. If law leaves slightest discretion then this must be rejected. What is the law?[3]

Law

Of reported cases there is no end. Ever since I.C. no getting away from them—Like the poor always with us. Some JJ refuse to look at them—sympathise with them. Reported decisions as Haldane said only cited for principle they lay down. Shall refer to some cases to get at the principle and then briefly comment on D's cases. He read some and left you to read others. Leaves comments etc.

I Indian Law on subject identical with English Law—Borrowed—Same words. In every case of the kind English decisions referred to.

What is cause of action?

D's peculiar conception of the Law
Suit based on rt of inheritance
violation or infringement of rt
wrongful possession of Deft
Relief same
∴ Cause of action precisely same! Q. E. D.
annual practise p 318

3. Amendment of plaint—In a civil suit, pleadings of the parties constitute plaint and written statement A party can seek an amendment of his own pleading, with the leave of the Court, at any stage of the proceedings, if such amendment is necessary for the purpose of determining the real question in controversy between the parties An amendment which does not change the nature of the suit or in appropriate cases, even if it introduces a new ground of claim or an allegation of fact inconsistent with the original pleading, or where it seeks to substitute one ground of exemption from limitation for another, can be allowed by the Court, when the Court thinks it just and necessary, on such terms as the Court might think proper. The courts do not refuse leave to a party to amend his pleading on technical grounds However, an amendment of pleading can be successfully objected to by the opposite party when amendment is not necessary for the purpose of determining the real questions in controversy between the parties or where the plaintiff's suit would be *wholly* displaced by the proposed amendment or where the amendment would convert the suit into another of a different and inconsistent character or where the effect of amendment will be to take away from the defendant a legal right which has accrued to him by lapse of time or where the application for amendment is mala fide.

C. P. C. O7 R1
12 A. L. J. 955 Richards C.J.
16 Cal 98 at 102 P.C. IMPT

III Our case at lowest.

Apart from ?n of competence of court shd Pff be allowed to take advantage of a cause of action which has arisen since suit?

25 I.C. 863 (Sind) !
12 M 136 at 138

Tests 21 M 288 at 290

IV Can pff who has no rt to sue subsequently join as co-pff a person who has a right to sue? No

(SJ) Walcott vs Lyons 29 Ch. Div 584
c.f. 18 IC, 212 IMPT

V Could proposed new defts apply suo motu & be made parties? No, there wd be misjoinder of causes of action Rival claim antagonistic to both parties.

26 All 218 Knox & Aikman JJ

Pff can have no higher rt than that of his transferor
XX 1896 W N . 72

VI (a) Premature suit—subsequent maturity. Does that help Pff?

(b) Distinguish between alternative claims; rival suits

VII *Edevain v Cohen* 43 Ch Div 187 at 190 Principle (appeal from 41 Ch Div 563 at 566)

Raleigh v Goschen 1898 I Ch 73

Facts & then p 81—case of Lords of Admiralty—our much stronger case

Ellis v Manchester Carriage Co 2 C.P.D. 13 at 16

II M.I.A 7 *at* 20 followed 8 C 871 *at* 875
36 I.C. 5 Burma

8 A.L.J. 636 at 638 Richards CJ Tudball J referred to
12 A.L.J. 635 Rafiq & Piggott J.J. (limitation—new cause of action)

4 I.C. 652 at 657—Bearman J General law discussed

15 Cal 684 at 692 P.C. Inconsistent issues.

Macnaughten

DAR'S CASES Has hurled a number.

Directly applicable

1. 43 I.C. 560 Madras at 562 marked
   1. Formal defect in title cured
   2. All members family all along supported Pffs title
   3. addit stat by Pff—no *objection raised*—amendment allowed—in appeal ct did nt interfere.
   4. Obiter resubsequent cause of action—but see *facts* —all authorities not cited 2 T.L.R.
2. 31 I.C. 7 Sind—most instructive case!
   Extraordinary view of law—Both statute law and reported decisions misunderstood!
   See C.P.C. 07 R 11 (old code See 53)
   Relies on 25 I.C. 863 also Sind case difft judges
   Hard cases bad law—Heaven born service
   Macnaughten's story—when the gods err!
3. 11 I.C. 827 Burma
   (1) English & Indian rules same. Poor Mulla!
   see p 827, 828—in favour
4. 11 I.C. 856 Burma
   Pure error—in favour.
5. 11 A.L.J. 423 Banerji J
   Pffs & Deft agreed to joint market etc. Deft set up rival market. Suit for rescission of contract or in alternative for injunction to restrain Deft from setting up rival market. After inst of suit deft removed market to another path.

P 427 Amendment. *Ancillary* cause of action. real ?n a dispute.

Principles Laid Down

6. 13 I.C. 128 Cal

W.s. subsequently, amended inconsistent defences.

Principles laid down: 1. real ?n in controversy
2. bona fides
3. Injury to opp party

refers to 14 A.C. 318 at 320

7. 47 I.C. 129 Cal = 45 Cal 305 at 316, 317-8
   Suit on Mtge. Pff omitted by attorney's mistake a previous charge—See p 130 bottom, 131, 132 *IMPT*
8. 45 I.C. 649 Mad—General Principles
9. 33 B 644 = 4 I.C. 726 Read at 655 & specially Beaman J's tests *IMPT.*

Principles illustrated

10. 13 I.C. 268 Mad.
    marked passages—ancillary relief
11. 26 I.C. 443 Mad. Suit to declare Mtge deed invalid. Finding partly valid, ct allowed Pff to amend relief for redemption of valid part.
12. 27 I.C. 465 Cal at 469—No bearing suit for partition—Pff claimed to be in possession. High ct held he was n't & so suit not maintainable. Pff contended he was in constructive possession. High Ct held No. Pff then applied for amendment of plaint to add possession. Allowed on payment of full cost to date. Fresh w.s. etc.
13. 3 I.C. 765 Bom
    Property claimed on basis of will
    Z constructions etc.
    p. 766 marked.
14. 25 I.C. 136 Burma—Principal v agent original plaint asked for act amended—included damages for negligence
15. 22 Cal 692 at 711, 712

What does all this authority amount to? Same principles laid down. Occasional variation in application.

These principles are:

I. Competence of ct—subsequent cause of action

II. 1. Necessary for determining Real ?n in controversy or points involved in suit.

(a) Subsequent cause of action
(b) Other points
(c) Addition of fresh person with fresh rt
(d) Convenience

III. No injustice—disadvantage compensated for by crts.
IV. Suit must not be materially changed
V. Bona fides.

Bowen L.J. "Can you put parties in the same position for purposes of justice that they were in when slip was made."

If *all* these answered in affirmative then amendment may be allowed. If any in negative then No. Unhesitatingly answer all in negative.

Answer Dar 4 points.

Repeat—Challenge—any case in wh Pff having failed to substantiate claim buys up rts of 3rd party and wants to take advantage of them in this manner!

D says this amendment means no harm to either party! Is it for fun that we have been opposing it?

Result = Pff has not a leg to stand on in fact merits or law; on every ground—justice or expediency he fails & appln must be rejected.

Thank court etc.

13. To Father[1]

Anand Bhawan,
Allahabad
19.8.19

My dear Father,

Murlidhar[2] goes today by the mail with this letter. I hope Purushottam[3] will also go by the same train. I have not heard from him again definitely, hence my doubts. Krishna Kant[4] has managed to get fever. He will start as soon as he is well which I hope will be in a day or two. Of Malaviyaji[5] there is no definite news.

I have already sent you all your dak with Ramji[6]. There is no more to be sent.

1 J N Correspondence, NMML.

2 A clerk in Motilal Nehru's office.

3 Purushottam Das Tandon (1882 1962), a leading figure in the U P. Congress, Speaker, U.P Legislative Assembly 1937 1939 and 1946 1950, President of the Congress 1950, but resigned soon after owing to differences with Jawaharlal

4 Krishna Kant Malaviya (1881 1941); editor of Hindi weekly *Abhyudaya* and monthly *Maryada*.

5 *Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861 1946); President of the Indian National Congress* 1909, 1918, Member, Imperial Legislative Council 1910 1919 and of Indian Legislative Assembly 1924 30, President Hindu Mahasabha 1916, 1917, 1923, 1924, 1926, 1935, Founder of Banaras Hindu University and Vice-Chancellor, 1919-39 He was well known for his devout orthodoxy

6 Ram Nath Dar (b 1894), son of Har Prasad Dar and brother of Krishna Prasad Dar He served as a reporter in *The Leader* of Allahabad, and as Sub Editor of *Allahabad Law Journal*. He worked with Jawaharlal in collecting information about the massacre at Amritsar

We have definitely decided to start for Solon on the 22nd arriving there the next day. I suppose I shall have to stay there two or three [days] at least, to see Nanavati[7] and to make other arrangements. After that I shall go direct to Lahore, if you wish it, or go to Lucknow in case you are there at the time. Please let me know what I am to do. I suppose Solon does not want much of an address. However, to prevent delay, a letter or telegram may be sent c/o Mr. Roshan Lal, whose house is, I understand, next door to the one he has taken for us I have had a letter from him and he tells me that the house is furnished and very commodious. It has been occupied by healthy people for some years past.

The Independent[8] is giving me some trouble. Neogee[9], of *Bengalee*[10] etc., has not turned up or answered. I sent him a wire on the 15th but that too has remained unanswered. I am wiring again. If he does not come before I leave for Solon, then I shall have to leave him to interview some one else here, presumably Mohan Bhai[11]. If he does not come at all, our position will be worse still. As you know, Hriday Nath Sapru [12] wants to leave soon, at the latest the 30th of this month.

Ranga Iyer[13] has been speaking to me about his name sake, Gopi, in connection with the managerial dept. You have already decided against him and I wholly agree with you. He does not appear to be a very reliable person, nor does he know Urdu. The points in his favour are that he is a very hard worker, has a fair amount of experience of managerial work and is likely to do his best to please. I mention this not becaure I am keen on having him but because I see no other way out.

7. A doctor at Solon.
8. A daily newspaper started by Motilal Nehru at Allahabad in 1919. It closed down in 1923.
9. Upendranath Neogee worked as assistant editor of *Bengalee* and later on of *Forward* of Calcutta.
10. A weekly journal in English published from Calcutta, and converted into a daily newspaper in 1878. It was started by Surendra Nath Banerjea.
11. Mohanlal Nehru (1877 1959); son of Nandlal Nehru and first cousin of Jawaharlal
12. Hriday Nath Sapru, son of Pandit Parameshwar Nath Sapru, a lawyer of Fyzabad At this time he was assistant manager of *The Independent.*
13. C. S Ranga Iyer (1895 1963); a journalist engaged by Motilal Nehru as Editor of *The Independent* on the resignation of the first editor, Syed Hussain He later broke with Motilal Nehru, and in 1929 was expelled from the Congress

With regard to Kali Nath Ray[14], I am told that he is not only a staunch moderate but somewhat partisan; that he ridiculed *The Independent* when it came out and refused to have anything to do with it, and also that he steered a middle course in the *Tribune*[15] not so much because of his own inclination but because of the pressure brought to bear on him by the trustees of the paper. I do not know how far this is true. I hope you find out from him what his feelings are before you definitely engage him.

Ranga Iyer will probably go on leave shortly. Venkat Ram[16] has been here for some time past but I do not know his exact position.

The double feeder machine is working in a way. So far the machine man has not attempted to take too much work out of it. In the absence of a competent machine man or mechanic, there is always a danger of a collapse. If Neogee comes, this difficulty ought not to trouble us.

The photographer sent from Bombay has most mysteriously disappeared. I made arrangements for him to be met at the Lucknow station but no one arrived Even the hotels in Lucknow have been searched in vain. I have wired to Umar Sobhani.[17] Mistry,[18] for various reasons of his own, will not go. I would request your trying to get hold of a local man, even an amateur would do. The Bombay man of course will be sent as soon as he is traced.

I do not know what your plans are. I hope you will send me a wire.

With love,

your loving son
Jawahar

Purushottam's departure today appears to be doubtful I understand Malaviyaji is coming to Allahabad today.

14 Kali Nath Ray was on the editorial staff of the *Bengalee*, and later became editor of the *Tribune*.

15 An Indian-owned newspaper, published in English, from Lahore.

16 V S Venkat Rama Iyer; on the editorial staff of *The Independent* for some time; in 1922, arrested with Jawaharlal and others for picketing or threatening to picket and sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 50.

17. (1888 1926), a leading businessman of Bombay, and a close friend of Jawaharlal. He took a prominent part in the Home Rule League, and later was one of the first to join Gandhi's noncooperation campaign.

18 A photographer in Allahabad

14. Notes on the Occurrences in the Punjab[1]

August 31st Sunday

Arrived at Amritsar from Solon at 8.30 a.m. Met by Girdharilal[2] at station.

Spent morning with father and hide merchant? & Radhakrishna of Chartered Bank.

Instructions from father about future work.

Father left for Lucknow by mail at 3.30 p.m. Saw him off at station.

Drove through city with Girdharilal. Saw ruins of National Bank, Town Hall & Post Office.

Visited Jallian Wala Bagh[3]—walked round and saw numerous bullet marks—Counted 67 on one part of one wall—There must have been at least 200 on the walls I saw (I need not examine all walls). Changes being made in the garden—Walls raised—Wooden planks put up—A lot of earth being thrown up etc—Many bullet marks very high up—One bullet mark on a balcony just outside the bagh facing lane over canal—Most peculiar—Could only have been fired at from the lane or else the bullet bounced off.

Visited the lane[4] where people were made to crawl[5] on their bellies. Told that one respectable woman raped in a neighbouring house. General misbehaviour of tommies.

Passed footbridge, carriage bridge over railway line, telegraph office etc where firing took place.

1. Jawaharlal went to Amritsar in August 1919 to collect first hand information regarding the Jallianwala Bagh incidents.
   These notes are reproduced from one of his diaries in NMML.
2. (1883 1946), a businessman from Amritsar. He was also an active Congress man in the Punjab
3. The garden enclosed by high walls at Amritsar where General Dyer opened fire without warning on an unarmed crowd that had inadequate means of dispersal, and continued to fire till his ammunition was exhausted.
4. The Durga Koti Lane
5. Frances Sherwood was a missionary doctor and superintendent of the mission schools in Amritsar She had lived in that town for many years and was highly respected. But on 10 April 1919 she was attacked by a mob which had failed to recognise her and suffered severe injuries To avenge this fact, General Dyer, who was administering martial law in the Punjab, ordered that Indians could only crawl on their stomachs along that street.

September 1st

Girdhari Lal to call for me at 7.30. Waited for him till 9.45—Then started, met him on the way. Moved to his home.

Took down 2 depositions—

Went to Tarn Taran at 12.30 with Purushottam, Girdhari Lal & Maqbul Mohamad[6]. Took down several statements.

Interview Hari Chand, pleader now at Amritsar about agreement ex. by over 200 people in Tarn Taran not to participate in public meetings etc.

Took W. Ss[7] from L. Ralla Ram[8] & L. Amin Chand[9]—pleaders. Both in a funk and afraid of publicity.

Visited Golden Temple at Tarn Taran.

Maqbul Mohamad's account of an incident at Amritsar on the 10th April:

"On the 10th just after the firing stopped at the carriage overbridge[10] I went to the hospital and brought Dr. Dhanpat Rai[11] there. Mr G. S. Salaria[12], Dr. Dhanpat Rai and I first came to dress a stout young lad of about 18 who lay badly wounded with his intestines and abdominal viscera turned out and lying in the dusty road. He made signs for water. I brought it in my cap and poured some into his mouth. He revived a little and could then blurt out a few words. Dr. Dhanpat Rai then came to attend on him. The young man with faltering accents said. *"meri koi ummeed naheen, mere nal ke bhai ka intizam karo."*[13] He stopped, then gasped brokenly: *"Hindu-Musulman ki jai"* and expired."

6 A pleader in the High Court and a resident of Amritsar.

7. Written statements

8 A pleader, land-owner and, at the time of the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, a Municipal Commissioner in Tarn Taran in Amritsar district. On 22 April 1919, he was arrested without warrant and brought to Tarn Taran. He was *released when some people gave a bond by way of security, but was dismissed* from the post of Municipal Commissioner.

9 A pleader in Tarn Taran, Amritsar district He along with others was asked to execute a bond to the effect that they would not take part in politics

10 Now known as the Padam Bhandari bridge It was the most frequented route from the Civil Lines to the town

11. A medical practitioner and a Congressman of Amritsar.

12 A barrister of Amritsar; arrested on the charge that he had taken a leading *part in the Satyagraha Day meeting held on 6 April 1919.* He was released after six weeks as nothing could be proved against him.

13 "There is no hope of my survival, take care of the brother who is lying by my side"

Chief incidents at Tarn Taran :

1. Agreement wh. about 200 people were made to sign pledging themselves not to participate in public meetings &c for 3 years on pain of paying 5000/- severally and individually—Plenty of evidence of this—e g. Amin Chand, and many others in Mandi. But see Hari Chand.
2. Arrest without warrant of L. Ralla Ram.

Returned from Tarn Taran at 6 p.m. Before leaving the place were treated to sweatmeats &c by owners of Mandi who insisted on our partaking of them. Tried to get out of it at first as cholera prevalent but eventually gave in.

Nothing more done today—

To go to Jallianwala tomorrow 7.30 a.m.

September 2nd

1. Lussu, Tobacco Merchant, Lakar Mandi, Katra Jallianwala.
2. Maula Baksh, mason, was present in the House on 13th April.
3. Jhandoo, hand cart puller
4. Deenu —do—
5. Barkat Ali —do—
6. Mian Mohd Baksh, Havildar, pensioner, Police
7. Mian Ibrahim, Darner

Houses of all these persons are in Baghwali Gali or Biwi Gali at a corner.

Bullet marks in adjoining joints

The tall high house (owner Jhanda Singh) behind Murad Baksh's house in Baghwali Gali (adjoining Jallean wala Bagh) shows two distinct marks of bullets about 30—35 feet high.

Another mark on an adjoining house. 5 or 6 marks of bullets in backwall of Mana Singh's house (on rent) about 25—30 ft. high. We saw them from inside the house of Mrs. Begi, widow of Fateh Din, Bagh Wali Gali.

One mark in Iswar Singh's house adjoining Mrs. Begi's house 25 ft.

One mark in latrine wall on roof of Mohamad Bakshi's house, 25 ft. (House now occupied by Nanak Pahalwan on rent).

3 marks on Siddhu's house wall.

7 marks Md Bakshi Havildar's house—roof wall—(exclusive of marks outside wall facing garden which contains 11 marks—These have photographed)

's house facing gali—2 marks

Mir Wali Ullah—relative of Mir Riaz-ul-Hasan[14] resident of red house opp J. W. Bagh—is a military officer [and] was present near troops—made to hand bullets to soldiers.

Clerk in 1st Sappers & Miners. Brother of Mir Abdulla Sub-inspector.

Ahmad Husain, son-in-law of Nizam Din, Hony. Magistrate—he has a bullet.

Bullet mark on roof of Riaz-ul-Hasan's house—facing garden—Another mark in wall.

3 or 4 (?) marks on roof of Chaudhri Hakim Singh's house, and 2 marks in Mehr Dina's house—both houses opposite Mir Riaz-ul-Hasan's house.

Note: We visited roof of Riaz-ul Hasan's house—Noticed that it was not possible for him to see on the *Hansli* side of the entrance.

Husain Shah, his nephew (policeman) and another—most important witnesses. Will come tomorrow September 3rd at 2 p.m.

Kallu Pahalwan intimidated by police and prevented from giving evidence in favour of Chaga.

Went with Girdharilal, P.D. Tandon, & Ramji Dar, to Jallian Wala Bagh at 8 a.m. Examined the inside closely specially noticing bullet marks &c. Then jumped over wall into Bagh Wali Gali. People very reticent—would not give us any information at first. Gradually we inspired a little confidence—Took down several statements. The gali said to have contained about 250 corpses after the firing! Examined all the neighbouring roofs of houses for bullet marks. Found many of them—some very high up.

Remarkable case of little boy aged 5 or so who remained on open roof right through firing and escaped unhurt! Thought they were fireworks! Walls round about him riddled with bullets.

Visited other houses in neighbourhood. Some important statements recorded. Riaz ul-Hasan's house (red)

Returned at 12.30

Some more statements recorded—

Husain Shah & Co—Impt witnesses. Had a long talk with them. Did not record their statements—Asked them to come tomorrow—

Kallu Pahalwan &c &c.

14 A resident in one of the houses which abutted on the Jalianwala Bagh, in his evidence before the sub-committee of the Indian National Congress, he said that a bullet had struck the roof of his house on 13 April 1919 when General Dyer ordered firing

Note: Conflicting testimony about presence of a machine gun or a "Lewis" gun. Also as to exact position taken up by firing parties. One person gives very circumstantial acct of some quick firing gun with a large bore being used. Others deny having seen it.

Sent a short letter to father.

Took a drive in the evening.

September 3rd

Jalli Wallian Well [sic]—Water level from surface of ground—10 ft 3 in (taken on 21st August 1919)
Depth of water—17 ft 4 in.

Total number of arrests in Tarn Taran case in which some prominent lawyers are also included, is 120

Of this

20	acquitted
82	sentenced to 2 years
18	" to minor terms 1½ to 6 months
120	

Most Impt
Kasur Case[15]

Chama or Cham Das and another.

These two are among the 18 who have been executed. It is said that their sentences have been subsequently reduced!! VERIFY.

September 3rd

Took few statements—Day partially wasted owing to misapprehension and people not keeping appointment.

September 4th

To be done

1. Get exact figures from H.O. of casualties
2. Photos of Jalnawala Bagh

September 5th

See Puckle[16] between 3—4

15. The confinement of two pleaders for a long period, and the flogging of six schoolboys
16. Sir Frederick Puckle, member of the I.C.S serving in the Punjab.

Bhagmul Lakriwala &s and others died at J.L. B.
Killed at J.W. Bagh.
Phumman age 55
Katra Ram Garin
Bazar Do Do
Near Akhara Brahmshub Akhara
Died five days later.

September 6th

Husain Shah
Firozdin | Impt witnesses
Ghulam Md

Bagh wali Gali

| April 6th
| April 10th

Husain Shah

Bhagwan hit on 10th
Policemen with 2nd drum beat on 13th
B. Kanhaiya Lal.[17]

Find boy — Arrangements for meeting on 13th. Cleaning of garden—a boy came. Husain Shah knows him.
Troops passed round garden.
C.I.D. people depart to Riaz-ul Hasan's house—
Immediate firing — no interval.

September 6th

Left Amritsar by Calcutta mail 3.18 p.m.

September 7th

arrived Solon	10.45
left Solon	12.30
arrived Simla	3.30

Stopped at Shant Kutir

September 7th to 13th Simla
September 10th, 11th, 12th—attended Council meetings
September 13th went Solon
September 15th Returned Simla
Daulat Ram Bali
IV Year
C/o Prof. S. N. Das Gupta Mission College
Lahore

17. A senior pleader of Amritsar.

Father of above was assist. Station Master at Kasur. He and B. Matan Chand, also Assist. Stat. Master, arrested by police 2 days after riot.

Father transferred to Lahore Jail. Daulat Ram walks to Lahore and sees father in jail.

B. Matan Chand's son (Jagannath) & a stranger come to Daulat Ram and suggest engaging counsel. Stranger sings praises of R. B. Niranjan Das, formerly public prosecutor of Lahore. Eventually all go to Niranjan Das's house. He wants 1000/-. On stranger's intervention agrees to 500/- which was paid to him on the spot. 500/- paid to Munshi—Stamped receipt taken.

Next day Daulat Ram heard that his father had been taken to Kasur. He went there and found that father had been released. After 2 or 3 days Daulat Ram went to Lahore and he and Jagannath asked Niranjan Das for his money back. He refused to give it.

Later both Daulat Ram's father and Matan Chand dismissed from Ry service. Straitened circumstances now.

Jagannath is a student in the Khalsa College Amritsar.

For *Ambala*

Statement from

Mr Duni Chand B.A. LL.B.
Vakil
Ambala

Thompson's speech[18]

Date of D.Cs[19] proclamation asked for particulars—casualties[20] in J.W. Bagh.
See old files CMG for Gujranwala incident[21]—
Hindus & Muslims together
Racket court incident[22] in Amritsar
Manoharlal—family

18 J. P. Thompson (1873-1935); member, I.C.S., Chief Secretary, Punjab, (1916-21); in his speech in the Indian Legislative Council on 19 September 1919 had called the description by Pandit Malaviya of the incidents in the Punjab as a *distortion or an exaggeration* or a *misunderstanding of the facts* and said only 291 persons had been killed

19. Sir Miles Irving, I.C.S, Deputy Commissioner in Amritsar, 1919.

20 The Seva Samiti estimated the number of deaths in Amritsar as at least 500. Though the Government at first rejected this figure as an over estimate, it later virtually accepted them.

21 The police had opened fire on an excited crowd, and this led to some acts of hooliganism.

22 Several lawyers, doctors, bankers and others had been kept handcuffed for days in an open racket court.

Swimming club notes of evidence &c
Salaaming[23] together
2nd offence — Ramnagar — King's effigy[24]
Corpse in J.W. Bagh—Verify story narrated by T[hompson].
Shastri's last speech[25]—Revolutionary activities
Horniman[26]—Gandhi—Jalna Bagh—Crawling—Ganpat's telegram—Ali Gauhar[27]
cf. L.C.C. p. 76 p.w. 46—Porters &c in Lahore

Well incident[28]

Police visited well 5 days after Malaviyaji's letter
1. Lowndes[29] reference to Rampal's[30] speech being written by some one else—
   Addresses[31] presented to O'Dwyer—Challenge Umar Hayat[32], who has said to Malaviyaji that he has copy corrected by Thompson.
2. Ambulance arrangements at Jalna Bagh
   cf. Father's speech

23. In Lyallpur, every Indian passing a European was required to salute him, and in some other places Indians were required to descend from carriages if a European passed by.
24. The Martial Law authorities in Ramnagar had fabricated a story that the effigy of King George had been burnt and had arrested 28 persons on this charge.
25. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri (1869-1946); a Liberal leader and friend of Mahatma Gandhi, High Commissioner for India in South Africa, 1927-29. The speech referred to here was a condemnation of the Rowlatt Act.
26. Benjamin Guy Horniman (1873-1948); a British journalist and author who was committed to the Indian freedom movement, founded, with Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, *The Bombay Chronicle* in 1913; a leader of the Home Rule League; deported to England in 1919, founder and editor of *Indian National Herald*, 1926-29; Editor in Chief, *Bombay Sentinel*, 1933-45.
27. A C.I.D. inspector who was believed to have excited the wrath of a crowd by certain derogatory remarks.
28. The presence of corpses in the well, denied by the Government but testified to by many eye-witnesses.
29. Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council in 1919.
30. Raja Rampal Singh (1879-1937); a leading taluqdar and member of U.P. Legislative Council, 1909-1916, of the Imperial Legislative Council, 1916-20, and of the Council of State, 1920-36. He was also a member of the Hindu Mahasabha and the British Indian Association.
31. Farewell addresses presented to Sir Michael O'Dwyer (1864-1940), Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, 1913-19, and a declared imperialist. He authorised the imposition of martial law in the Punjab in 1919, when the massacre at Amritsar occurred.
32. Sir Umar Hayat Tiwana (1874-1944); a [illegible] of the Punjab.

3 Bombing from aeroplanes! Comparison to war conditions
Anti air craft guns! *lathis*!
What was distance of aeroplanes from ground—estimate 50 ft! (Statement of Master Inder Singh, Supt. Hostel Gujranwala). On 15th bombing in suburbs of Gujranwala, e.g. Gharjakh, Bhagwanpura, Dulle-villages.
4. Ganpat Rai's telegram.
5 Casualties at Jalna Bagh
My conversation with Puckle—Number of shots fired 1700
Dhulan Dass's information 2500 (from Dyer). Puckle's proclamation 2nd week August—Govt. wakes up 4 months after perhaps owing to presence of S.C.[33] of U.P.—Callousness for human life.
6 *Crawling!*
Assert as a fact that people forced by butt end of rifles.
7. *Salaaming* refer to figures in statements.
8. Corpse in well incident—Correspondence—Take strong attitude—Challenge Thompson to stick to his statements in public.
9. Challenge other official members to repeat slander statements in public.
10. Jalna Wala corpses near exits
11. Racket Court incident. Thompson's denial that handcuffed together a he! "Similar inconveniences"![34]
12. In Jalna Bagh boy at Khalsa College—killed—age 14. Father died on active service. Sohan Singh—son's name died in Dhulan Dass's home next morning.
Sardar Chandur Singh (father) killed in war.
13 Copies refused—cf. father's speech.
14 Malaviyaji's ?n—Wounded in Lahore taken to Thana (far) not hospital (near) although doctors offered to attend to them.
cf. Father's speech.
15. Smith's C. S. refusal to attend wounded. Refers to Gandhi.
16. Ask how many were admitted to hospital after J.B. Was there one? (Note People wounded at bridge were admitted to Hospital)
17. Lyallpur Bhoora case
?? Enquiry after conviction held accidental fire. What happened to people convicted by Military Court—acquitted in appeal. Ask Tek Chand.

33. Special Commissioners
34 Thompson had said that while respectable Indians had been kept in the racket court, several Englishwomen and children were exposed to not dissimilar inconveniences within a few yards of the racket court

18. Quote Gandhi's reference & Viceroy's speech and refer to his analysis of Military law cases. Commend them to Govt.
19. Govt's reliance on military law.
    Judgment. Begging the ?n
20. P.C. appeals *in summary cases.*

Solon, October 2nd

1. Cable to England—Neville[35]
   Come as early as possible
   Also about journalist.
2. *Send money to Neville by cable from xxx fund.*
3. Malaviyaji to write to Govt of India (Secretary Home Deptt) asking for copy of terms of reference of Enquiry Committee, a programme of its sitting and the procedure to be adopted.
4. Write to C. R. Das[36] & Jehangir Petit[37] re counsel and solicitors.
   Mr Andrews[38]
   C/o Byramji
   Gujranwala

Original of map of Amritsar Kaurianwala Khuh & Bridge side to be obtained from the man who made them. (Abdul Aziz) Ask Jewanlal G.

Recruiting in Shahpur Dist.

1. Get copy of judgment and other papers in the Mitha Lal case (1918)
   Fazl-i-Husain[39] appeared for defence.
2. Case of murder of Nadir Husain, Tahsildar of Bhera (1918) judgment & evidence &c.
3. A third case about 1918.

35. A solicitor who, on the invitation of the Congress Enquiry Committee, came from England to the Punjab in the winter of 1919.
36. Chitta Ranjan Das (1870-1925); leading barrister of the Calcutta High Court, joined the Indian National Congress 1906; formed with Motilal Nehru the Swaraj Party, 1922, President of the Congress, 1922. Das was a legendary figure in Bengal where he won the triple crown—leader of the Swaraj Party, Mayor of Calcutta, and President of the Bengal Congress Committee—and his generosity was fabulous. The whole of India knew him as Deshbandhu, 'friend of the country'
37. (1879-1946); merchant and mill-owner, agent for the Petit group of mills.
38. Charles Freer Andrews (1871-1940); came out to India in 1904 as a member of the Cambridge Brotherhood but left the mission nine years later; a friend of Mahatma Gandhi and Tagore and closely identified with the nationalist movement.
39. (1877-1936); a lawyer of the Punjab who later was the chief organiser of the Unionist Party and Member of the Governor-General's Executive Council.

4. Get figures of 107 and 110 cases
   (i) for one year before Delhi Conference
   (ii) Do Do after Do Do
5 Other cases in the courts in which pressure was brought to bear.
6 Instances of oppression, outrage &c on women
   (N.B. Tewana[40] is a resident of Shahpur & he took a prominent part in recruiting)
7 Gujranwala, Kasur, Rohtak &c R.R.[41] to go first to Shahpur—Then Andrews etc.

Students in Lahore

RR *to prepare their cases*

Criminal administration Report for 4 years 1914-1918

Allegation of conspiracy[42]—Did anyone in Lahore or Amritsar on 11th or 12th, when no police present in city, try to get fire arms from licence holders?

40 Apart from having helped in the recruitment of soldiers during the First World War, Sir Umar Hayat Khan Tewana also helped at the time of the Punjab disorders in April 1919 in raising within a day three hundred horse men to look after a long railway line in his district.

41. This person can not be identified; possibly Lala Ralla Ram.

42 According to the Hunter Committee· "on the evidence before us there is nothing to show that the outbreak in the Punjab was a part of pre arranged conspiracy to overthrow the British Government in India by force...."

15. Roads to Freedom[1]

"A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of Communism." So wrote Marx[2] in his famous Communist manifesto[3] over seventy years ago. And today the spectre has materialised and is holding the western

1 J N. Miscellaneous Papers, NMML.
This incomplete review of Bertrand Russell's book, *Roads to Freedom*, first published in 1918, was written sometime after April 1919.

2 Karl Marx (1818 1883); German social philosopher and author of Capital

3 The Communist Manifesto, drafted by Marx and Engels and first published in German in London in February 1848, remains the basic document of International Communism

world in its grip. Russia and Hungary have ended the age-long domination of the capitalist and the owner of property; Germany and Austria, finding no hope in the peace imposed upon them, are openly flirting with Bolshevism; and ominous murmurs are heard even in the realms of the Big Four[4] who are fashioning the world in the *Salle d'Horloge* in Paris. And the statesmen and the diplomats like the kings of old, fearful lest the spirit might put an end to their power and authority, are marshalling their hosts to exorcise this spectre. What is this spectre, this new spirit which is conquering the peoples of Europe and America and yet is so bitterly opposed and maligned by the men in authority? Few people in India have apparently given a thought to it, although on the high authority of H.E. the Viceroy,[5] not to mention the oracles of the Anglo-Indian press, the recent disturbances in the Punjab and elsewhere were due to the poisonous influence of Bolshevism. To most of us Bolshevism has come to mean the most degraded and the most cruel tyranny it is possible to imagine, just as Anarchism to the average man means the throwing of bombs on innocent people. Horrible excesses are ascribed to the Bolshevists in Russia and we naturally judge of the theory by its exponents. But if this is so then it is difficult to imagine how millions of human beings should prefer this tyranny and degradation and should voluntarily labour to bring it into existence. Europe must either be "rattling back into barbarism" or else there must be something deeper, something more worth having in these various *isms* than the newspaper accounts would lead us to believe. In either event a dispassionate and critical study of the ideas underlying the world movements of the day cannot but be of help to us in solving the problems which affect our own country.

It is for this reason amongst others that we welcome Mr. Bertrand Russell's[6] *Roads to Freedom* (Grant Allen). Mr. Russell, who has been described as "the ablest and most unpopular figure in contemporary England", belongs to no definite party, nor is he a blind follower of any *ism*. His sympathies and inclinations are well known

4 Woodrow Wilson, Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Orlando.

5. Lord Chelmsford, Viceroy 1916-21

6. (1872-1970); British philosopher, mathematician and essayist whose writings had a profound influence on his generation. Never a cloistered philosopher, he was imprisoned for a brief period during the First World War because of an anti-war publication, and after the Second World War was an energetic campaigner for nuclear disarmament. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1950

but he cannot be accused of being an orthodox socialist or an unyielding anarchist like Kropotkin.[7] In his book he has critically examined Marxian Socialism with its later variations, Anarchism and Syndicalism, and having taken the good points of each has suggested his own scheme for the fashioning of a happier and a better world.

The search for freedom and the attempt to better the lot of humanity is no new thing. In India it has for ages past taken the spiritual form of the search for the Ultimate Reality, and the old Indian reformers have laid little stress on the physical side of existence. But as modern life has grown more complex it has become impossible, even if it were possible in the dim and distant past, to ignore the material side of human life. True salvation may or may not be obtained by means of religion alone, but how is a poor starving and oppressed wretch who can hardly keep body and soul together and whose entire being is centred in his empty stomach, think of religion and of eternity? So it was that modern thinkers in India laboured to better the material condition of the people, but at every turn they were checkmated, not so much by the superstitions and the ignorance of the masses, but by the inherent difficulty of progress in a country under alien domination. All effort was then concentrated on gaining political freedom for the country and we looked to representative institutions as the panacea for all ills. Some sort of representative institutions and a toy responsible government have now been promised us under the new Reform Bill but it is doubtful if anyone besides Mr. Montagu[8] is enamoured of them. Full responsible government would no doubt be a great step in advance for us, but let us not forget that representative institutions and democracy as prevalent in Western countries at present have proved failures. Much was expected of the war. It was to have revolutionised the fabric of human affairs, but it has ended without bringing any solace or hope of permanent peace or betterment. President Wilson's[9] brave words have

7. Prince Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), a Russian anarchist thinker.
8. Edwin Samuel Montagu (1879-1924); Secretary of State for India, 1917-1922. In 1918, after a visit to India, he, along with the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, made proposals which formed the basis of the Reforms of 1919, introducing dyarchy in the provinces.
9. Thomas Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924); President of the United States, 1913-21.

remained but words, and the "fourteen points",[10] where are they? We have sorrowfully to recognise that "the Millennium is not for our time. The great moment has passed and for ourselves it is again the distant hope that must inspire us, not the immediate breathless looking for deliverance."

Present-day democracy, manipulated by the unholy alliance of capital, property, militarism and an over-grown bureaucracy, and assisted by a capitalist press, has proved a delusion and a snare. It is as overbearing, as militant, as chauvinistic as the autocracy or plutocracy which preceded it. But this is not the fault of democracy. Rather it is due to the many-sided influences which capitalists, aided and abetted by a host of others who fatten under the present regime, have exercised over the governments of the West. The problem before us is to free democracy from their malign influences. The task is not easy, for the entrenched hosts of what has been happily called the "interestocracy" will fight to the last and use all the devices they are past masters of to delude and defeat the people. But let us at least fix upon our ideal and labour for its realisation. The rest lies with the gods.

Orthodox Socialism does not give us much hope. The war has shown that an all powerful state is no lover of individual liberty. It is the breeding ground for the bureaucrat, who in the West as in the East, is most intolerant of criticism and is seldom enamoured of progress. Life under Socialism would be a joyless and a soulless thing, regulated to the minutest detail by rules and orders framed by the all-powerful official Cortes.

Syndicalism and Guild Socialism were both revolts against orthodox socialism and against parliamentary action. They pin their faith on the General Strike whereby they hope to attain their end. They would retain the state but would at the same time make all the industries autonomous, each industry having its National Guild. The

10. President Wilson's plan for peace, put forward on 8 January 1918, renunciation of secret diplomacy, freedom of the seas, removal of economic barriers between nations, reduction of armaments, adjustment of colonial claims with concern for the wishes and interests of the inhabitants as well as for the titles of rival claimants, general restoration of conquered territories in Russia, preservation of Belgian sovereignty, settlement of the Alsace-Lorraine question, redrawing of the Italian frontiers according to nationalities, division of Austria-Hungary in conformance with its nationalities, redrawing of the Balkan boundaries with reference to historically established allegiance and nationalities, Turkish control only of their own people and freedom of navigation through the Dardanelles, establishment of an independent Poland with access to the sea and provision for a general association of nations under specific covenants

various National Guilds will elect a Guild Congress which will be the final authority in all matters concerning the producers. Parliament will represent the consumers and will be co-equal in its power with the Guild Congress. In matters of dispute a joint committee of Parliament and the Guild Congress will be the ultimate sovereign body. Thus under this form of socialism there will be a kind of dyarchy after Mr. Montagu's own heart.

Anarchism—we do not of course refer to the throwing of bombs by lunatics and criminals — would place the liberty of the individual above everything. It would not allow any State to interfere with it, in fact it would have no central authority whatever. To us, born and bred in a world so utterly different from the Anarchist's Utopia, it is most difficult to appreciate practicability of his principles. Pure Anarchism postulates a community of saints and few of us, if any, with the exception of Mr. Gandhi, have any claims to sainthood.

Mr. Russell approves of Anarchism as the ultimate ideal but considers its adoption for some time to come impossible. For the present he suggests a judicious mixture of Guild Socialism and Anarchism. He discusses and meets the various difficulties and doubts which arise and produces a scheme which on the face of it is certainly not a wholly impracticable one. Doubts remain and many problems still await solution but what scheme or system of Government is free from them? Indian politicians would do well to spend some of the time they give to the blue books, which a benevolent Government hurl at them every few days, to Mr. Russell's able and illuminating work.

We in India have yet to travel over the long road of representative government before we can proceed on different lines. But we are a communal people and when the time comes perhaps some form of communism will be found to suit the genius of the people better than majority rule. Let us prepare for that time and let our leaders give thought to it. For representative Government by itself will not bring full satisfaction to the tortured soul of India even as it has failed to solve the problems of the West. It will not give us the world we are looking for. For in the words of Mr. Russell " .....

18. Corruption Among the Police Officers[1]

Sir,—I have just noticed in the papers that Mr. Thompson, the Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government, made the following statement in the Imperial Council in the course of the debate on the Indemnity Bill[2] on September 25th :—

"He (Pandit Malaviya) had been trying to prove quite unreasonably that police officers had been bribed. Such an attack could hardly contribute to cooperation which the Pandit so heartily desired. Moreover the Punjab Government had written two letters, one to the Pandit and the other to Mr. Motilal Nehru inviting their assistance to scrutinize the case. There was no answer from the Hon. Pandit and the answer from the Hon. Mr. Motilal Nehru gave them no assistance."

Mr. Thompson has already gained an unenviable notoriety for his methods of controversy and his offensive behaviour in Council and his statements will be taken with more than the proverbial grain of salt. It would be weariness to the flesh to controvert all the mis statements which Mr. Thompson managed to compress in his two speeches in Council. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya has already dealt with many of them most effectively, and Mr. Thompson is not likely to forget for many a day the severe castigation he received from the Pandit. But, unrepentant and unabashed, he rose again and perpetrated a few more—blunders, shall I say?

As the statement above quoted is likely to create an incorrect impression of what actually transpired, I crave the hospitality of your columns for the following account.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya has already denied in Council the truth of Mr. Thompson's statement as far as it concerned him. Pandit Motilal Nehru has so far received no communication from the Punjab Government on the subject. He did receive a letter from the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar on the 14th August. This letter ran as follows :—

> Dear Sir,—I understand that you are in possession of certain evidence regarding bribery at Amritsar. Similar allegations against the police have come to my ears. If any of these allegations can be substantiated, Government will be only too glad to prosecute,

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Bombay Chronicle*, 2 October 1919.
2. A Bill introduced in September 1919 to indemnify officers of Government and other persons in respect of certain acts done under martial law imposed in the Punjab.

but up to the present, except in two cases, in which convictions have already been obtained, the allegations have not been sufficiently definite to take action on.

If you feel you can place me in possession of such information as you have I shall be glad to pursue the matter further.

I am
Yours truly,
F. H. Puckle,
Offg. Deputy Commissioner

Amritsar
August 11, 1919.

The following reply was sent by Pandit Motilal Nehru on the same day :—

Dear Sir,—Your letter of the 11th August forwarded from Allahabad has just reached me here.

During my short visit to the Punjab at the end of June last, I was occupied with much graver matters than the defection of the Police. Instances of bribery were brought to my notice and though I casually noted them, I did not pay particular heed to them in face of what I actually saw on the spot revealing a far sadder state of things than mere corruption of the Police. I shall, however, be pleased to give you such information as I possess before long as I intend going to Amritsar shortly.

Lucknow
August 14, 1919.

Yours truly,
Motilal Nehru

The very next day Pandit Motilal Nehru was able to go to the Punjab and on arrival at Lahore he wrote to the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar the letter, an extract from which was read by Pandit Malaviya in the course of his speech in Council on the 25th. This letter ended with a request to be informed of a suitable time for an interview. Unfortunately the interview could not take place owing to the Deputy Commissioner being absent on tour when Pandit Motilal Nehru went to Amritsar. On the 31st August, Mr. Nehru had to leave Amritsar and return to Lucknow. As Pandit Malaviya had previously left Amritsar, Mr. Nehru asked me to see the Deputy Commissioner and discuss the question of police bribery with him

On the 5th September, I had an interview with Mr. Puckle, the offg D C. [Deputy Commissioner]. I told him that Pandit Motilal Nehru was in possession of certain data with regard to police bribery. This information had been supplied to him in the strictest confidence and he

was unable to part with it unless the Government gave certain assurances. I informed him, and he appeared to be well aware of this, that the vast majority of the people were living in mortal terror of the police and would not dare to say anything against them unless definite assurances were given to them that they would not get into trouble. Many of them were under the impression that they had committed a crime by giving money to the police, although as I pointed out, this was extorted under various threats and could not be considered to be bribery. I suggested that the only way to inspire some confidence in the people was for Government to issue a proclamation announcing an amnesty to such persons as had given money to the police. I also reminded the D. C. that such an amnesty had previously been granted by Sir Michael O'Dwyer in the case of a subordinate judge who was prosecuted for receiving bribes. Mr. Puckle, however, did not consider the idea feasible and doubted if Government would agree to it. He said that as a matter of fact Government did not intend taking any action against any informer and he was willing to give this assurance to individuals who came to him with information. I told him that in view of the temper of the people, few would be satisfied with a private undertaking of this kind and would probably not come to him at all. As Mr. Puckle would not agree to a general amnesty, as suggested by me, I promised to inform Pandit Motilal Nehru of our conversation and to do my best to induce people to give the requisite information. As I expected, I found people very unwilling to divulge anything to the authorities on the strength of a private understanding. Soon after, I had to go to Simla at Pandit Malaviya's bidding and I have been unable to return to Amritsar since.

Mr. Thompson affects to be horrified at the idea of the police having taken bribes. I take it he has spent a considerable part of his life in India and I can only conclude that he is singularly incapable of learning anything. What the police could do and did do during the reign of terror which prevailed in some parts of the Punjab, I leave your readers to imagine. As far as Amritsar is concerned, I would only refer Mr. Thompson to the local authorities, who, I have reason to believe, consider it highly probable that a very large sum of money found its way to the pockets of the local police force during the Martial Law period. Some police officers have, in fact, already been convicted, as mentioned in Mr. Puckle's letter quoted above.

Mr. Thompson has told the Council that the official figure of 291 killed in the Jallianwala Bagh is the only reliable figure, that the Punjab Government did all it could to get at the true facts and figures and even went so far as to appoint sub-registrars to report every month. Mr. Thompson and the Government he represents appear to have pre-

uliar ideas of doing all in their power. On the 11th of August—four months after the tragedy—the D.C. of Amritsar issued a proclamation asking people to communicate to him by the 20th August the names of those who had died in the Jallianwala Bagh. What did the Government do during these four months? How many, if any, wounded persons were removed by the authorities from the Bagh on or after the fateful 13th of April and taken to hospital? Were any, and if so how many, dead bodies removed from the place by the authorities on or after that date? Were any steps whatever taken by them to ascertain the number of casualties before the D.C.'s proclamation of 11th August? Why was it that the strong and efficient Punjab Government refrained from taking any action for so long and then suddenly woke up? Was it because the presence of the "self-constituted special commissioners from the United Provinces" ruffled the calm waters of officialdom and forced them to action? Or was it because of the coming enquiry?

It is no business of mine to consider here what, if any, was the justification for the firing in the Jallianwala Bagh. I am only concerned here with the subsequent conduct of the Punjab authorities. Under what code of morality or even necessity can they justify the total lack of medical arrangements on the spot before and after that most terrible of tragedies? Evidence shows that after killing people by the hundreds they left the dead and dying unattended and uncared for, to be carted away by sorrowing relatives and members of the local *Sewa Samiti*[3], who had the courage to stir out in those dark days. General Hudson[4] was the special apologist of the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy in Council. He is a high officer in an honourable and gallant service and I put it to him if he would have treated even a vanquished foe in this manner.

Mr. Thompson tells us that sub-registrars were appointed to register deaths. Who are these persons who have been glorified by the name of sub-registrar? Are they not mere *patwaris* whose word requires considerable corroboration before a court of law? Again, Mr. Thompson must know or ought to know that April 13 was the great *Vaisakhi* day at Amritsar when thousands of visitors came from all parts of the Punjab and some even from Sind and Afghanistan. What did these so-called sub-registrars do to find out the names of the dead

3. A social welfare organisation.
4. General Sir Havelock Hudson (1862-1944); Adjutant General of India, 1917-1920.

from other districts? Does Mr. Thompson know how many hundreds of bullets were fired at the Jallianwala Bagh? If not, let him inquire. Does he know how many persons one regulation bullet will pierce if fired at short range into a dense crowd? If not, let him seek the information from a military friend. And when Mr. Thompson has added to his stock of knowledge, he will perhaps realise that the casualty figures given by the *Sewa Samiti* are nearer the mark than the official figure. He may be painfully surprised to learn that even the *Sewa Samiti* figures are far from complete and are being added to as fresh information comes in.

As for cooperation between officials and non-officials in a manner of this kind, it is not for me to venture an opinion. I shall only say that few Indians whatever their opinions may be—saving of course Sir Umar Hayat Tewana and his like—will care to cooperate with Mr. Thompson after the manner in which he has behaved in Council.

Solon,
Sept. 28.

Yours etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17. The Crawling Order[1]

Sir,—There appears to be some misapprehension as to the crawling order which was enforced in the Kauriyanwala Khuh in Amritsar. Mr. Gandhi refers to it in the issue of *Young India* of the 27th September as the "hands and knees" order. The evidence of respectable citizens of Amritsar shows that people were made to crawl not on their hands and knees but on their bellies after the manner of snakes and worms. I need hardly add that General Hudson's amazing supposition that people indulged in this pleasant pastime voluntarily and for the sake of gaining notoriety and martyrdom is not borne out by the statements of those who were forced to do it by the military.

May I also refer you to the question relating to this incident of which Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya gave notice but which was disallowed by the Viceroy? The question ran as follows :—

(a) Will the Government be pleased to state if it is a fact that in the lane known as the Duggalan-ki-gali in the quarter known as Kauriyanwala Khuh, where Miss Sherwood was assaulted, every Indian

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Bombay Chronicle*, 6 October 1919.

irrespective of age and position in life, wishing to pass through the lane, was made to crawl on his belly through the whole length of the lane and British soldiers were posted from morning to 8 p.m. to enforce the observance of this order?

(b) Whether as a consequence of the enforcement of this order, houses in the lane remained unscavenged for many days?

Solon,
October 1.

Yours etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Lahore

31 Oct 1919

Mahatma Gandhi
C/o Principal Rudra[2] St Stephens College
Delhi

Government communique[3] vague and unsatisfactory (.)
Kindly inform us of situation and prospects (.)
Father writes he is ill ( ) Has Das arrived

Jawaharlal

1 Gandhi—Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 6968

2 Sushil K Rudra (1861 1925), was principal of St. Stephen's College in Delhi from 1906 and a friend of Andrews, Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi

3 The Government Communique referred to was issued by the Secretary of the Disorders Inquiry Committee :—
"The Committee has been appointed to investigate the recent disturbances in Bombay, Delhi and the Punjab, their causes and the measures taken to cope with them.. In view of the fact that the proceedings of the Committee are of the nature of an inquiry and not litigation between defined parties to settle disputes, the Committee propose to adopt the following course :— (A) The enquiry will be conducted primarily by the Members of the Committee themselves (B) Counsels appearing by leave for particular persons or bodies will at all times be permitted to draw the attention of the Committee to any points that might otherwise be overlooked and may by leave of the Committee cross examine as to any specific matters arising upon the statement lodged by their clients"

Mahatma Gandhi and Andrews had come from Lahore to Delhi to place the demands of the Congress sub committee before the Inquiry Committee.

19. To Ramji Dar[1]

29/1/20

My dear Ramji,

You will forgive me, I am sure, if I do not accept the burden of choosing books for you It would have been a pleasurable burden if I had not been up to my eyes in work. As it is I would request you to make the choice yourself. I shall of course be delighted to make suggestions. I enclose a small cheque for the books. They will I trust be of the kind which one reads and reads again, which one treasures, and which console one in the ups and downs of life. Your friends who know you have already seen and appreciated your earnestness of spirit and your capacity for sacrifice. It is thus somewhat superfluous for me to venture to give good advice. I shall only express the fervent hope that you and your partner in life will ever follow the path of truth whatever may be the consequences. Be a satyagrahi in body, in mind and in soul and your people and your country will glory in you.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

[1] J N Correspondence, N M M L Written on the occasion of Ramji Dar's marriage.

20. The Kanpur Case.[1]

F.A. 336 of 1917 (Cawnpore)
Lalta Prasad ...Pff–Apelt
vs
1. Mahadevji
2. Shiam Singh
3. Jwala Pd ...Defts Respdts
4. Janki Das
5. Bhagwan Das

Pff's appeal–I appear for all respdts.
Suit to declare that a will dt 22/11/14 is null & void[2]

==

[R 7] 22.11.14 Will ex by Gajadhar Lal (grandfather of Pff) almost entire property left to Pff–except Half share in a shop fetching a rent of Rs. 6/8 per month which left to Thakurji (idol)–Pff made manager of this temple.

==

Pff not given the right to alienate–value of entire property over Rs. 38000/-

==

1 "Notes of Cases" pp. 111 121. This case is the last entry in Jawaharlal's case book and was the last case in which he appeared in the Allahabad High Court
The facts of the case were that Gajadhar Lal, in a will made a few days before his death on 25 November 1914, had desired that after his death a part of the joint ancestral property be transferred to the family idol This was challenged by his grandson, Lalta Prasad, and his mother. Lalta Prasad being only seventeen, his mother had filed a suit on his behalf on 18 November 1914 for partition of the property. The subordinate judge at Kanpur gave the verdict against him. Lalta Prasad appealed to the High Court, and a full bench upheld his appeal and decreed that Gajadhar Lal had no power to bequeath the joint ancestral property to the idol. Jawaharlal appeared for the respondents [A L J. Vol. XVIII, 1920, pp 503 12]

2 Under Hindu Law, till 1956, the Mitakshara law did not allow a father or a grandfather to bequeath his undivided coparcenary interest, unless he was the sole surviving coparcener The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 permits a Mitakshara coparcener to dispose by will his individual interest in the coparcenary property. The right of a coparcener under the Dayabhagha law to dispose by will his interest in joint family property remains unchanged Till 1870, a Hindu will could be oral or in unattested writing Now, with the Hindu Wills Act of 1870 and the Indian Succession Act of 1925 as amended in 1926, every will has to be signed and attested.

25.11.14 Gajadhar Lal died.

Pff brings suit on allegation that family joint—grandfather not entitled to make the will. Undue pressure on him—collusions of defts—grandfather not in his proper senses at time etc.

All sorts of charges made agst Defts—but as no one except idol & Pff benefit under will—the presence of other defts immaterial.

Idol subsequently made deft.

Points for decision.

1. Was will validly & legally executed? Was Gajadhar fully in possession of senses etc?
2. Was property ancestral?
3. Even if property ancestral, was not Gajadhar competent to alienate a part of it for a pious purpose?

==

All points decided Defts favour by S.J. & suit dismissed.

==

Point 3. Alienation of part of ancestral property for a pious purpose—

Mayne—8th ed. p 595 Ghose I p 466-67

I.L.R. 8 All 76 Ghose II p 927 p 610 S

(Mitakshara Ch. I S. 1 para 28) 29

(approved & extended in 24 Bom. 547

6 W R. 71 ? Contra See also 11 M.L.J. 310 ? Dist 8 All—Gift must be to family idol

7 M. 357

11 M 246

Only a very small portion given to idol—about 1/35th—Rest given to the grandson (Pff)—Eminently reasonable.

==

Clear that joint property can be alienated in this manner even though the idol may not be a famly idol.

Here it is a family idol—see description in will

Also dep(osition)s of Brindaban Damman Lal, Anandi & Ram Prasad.

first cousin o' ar

Point 2

Even if property originally ancestral—Pff's filing suit for partition enough for separation from date of suit.

[A 23] 18.11.1914 Suit for partition filed

22.11. 14 Gajadhar's will

43 I.A. 151 Girja Bai v Sadashiv

= 43 Cal 1031

39 A 496 P.C. Kamal Nain v Budh Singh

Intention to separate enough—mere volition.

In H.C. "partition" does not mean simply division of property into specific shares.

The decision to sever must be unequivocally expressed —etc

Minor bringing suit for partition

Clear that minor can bring such a suit under certain circumstances. Either malversation or *other circumstances which* make it for his interest that his share shd be partitioned

Mayne. p.

Ghosh I p. 563

Contra 41 Mad 442

8 Cal 537

29 All 373

Qn. Is it for benefit of minor?

Here minor on verge of majority. Knew his own mind

Next friend—mother

In present plaint accuses his father of wasting property—alienations etc.

Mears CJ | Part Heard
Piggott J | 1/4/20

For 6th April (Satyagraha Day!)

Two points only to be dealt with by me:

1) Whether on date of will Gajadhar & his grandson were joint or separate.

2) Whether even if joint ancestral property, Gajadhar was competent to give a small part of it for a pious purpose.

If either of these decided in my favour, Pff's suit fails

===

R 7 Will dt 22/11/14

Certain remarks made by K.N.K[3] not accurate—

3 Dr Kailash Nath Katju, the opposing counsel.

"Cut his grandson out from performing funeral ceremonies". Not so. Specially said grandson was to perform them, failing him other relatives.

References to Shyam Singh—He does not benefit. Inference drawn that he might do so if he performed *Shradh ceremonies* etc. No relief sought against him

Consider will.

Declaration of separation—No motive for it as in effect only grandson benefits under will.

1. Almost whole property goes to Lalta Din
2. Half a shop to Mahadeoji but even of this Lalta Din appointed manager—*family idols*—no motive for lying specially as Lalta appointed Manager
3. Lalta to perform funeral ceremonies. Only if he refuses then other relatives step in.
4. Gaya ceremonies.

Eminently reasonable will—any Hindu might have made it.

K.N.K. criticised provisions relating to Shama Singh. My case that this is a perfectly valid clause (pious purpose) but not necessary for me to go into question as no relief sought. This part of will not challenged in appeal. Appeal *only* relates to the small gift to Mahadeoji. It is not sought to set aside the whole will. In effect it may amount to this but still what is wanted by Pff is a declaration that this particular clause in will is invalid & shd not be given effect to. As a whole the will may be perfectly valid and yet a particular clause may not be so. e.g. clause about alienation.

How beating brothers & cousins quarrels & make ups.

Original suit valued at over 38000—reliefs etc. Now deliberately valuation & reliefs changed. Pff must abide by this.

==

We *admit that there* may not have been a formal separation between Gajadhar & his grandson before the filing of the partition suit, although in effect they were separate as stated in Gajadhar's will. No sufficient evidence of this however.

So in resolves itself into this What was effect of filing *partition suit* by Lalta Din.

Pff's age—Stated to be 17 in partition plaint. This was in 18.11.1914.

Present suit filed

On 17.3.16 (1 year & 4 months after the partition case) Pff's age given as 19—It may be over 19. So that in any event his age in Nov. 1914 when partition suit filed must have been 17 yrs 8 months at least. He was technically a minor but he cannot be called a person of very tender age who was incapable of judging for himself. Verge of majority. Wd have attained majority during pendency of suit.

Admittedly, separation takes place by the mere declaration of intention by an adult member of the family, provided this is clear and unequivocal. The bringing of a partition suit is such a declaration.

O 32 R 12, 14

Also clear that a minor can bring such a suit for a partition when it is to his interest that his share shd be partitioned.

No diff between proceedings taken by adult or minor through next friend except that minor may set aside

[Lalta Din's partition suit must have been decreed if Gajadhar had not died. Lalta wd have become a major during pendency and he could demand as of right partition His intentions & frame of mind can be judged from his allegations in present suit agst his grandfather. Waste, unjustified alienations, harassment of Pff etc. In the event of his suit having been decreed, the partition wd have taken effect from date of suit. Made profits from them etc]

Argued that any one at liberty to act on behalf of minor—minor interests may be prejudiced etc.

Minor fully represented by guardian—Suits brought compromises

Partitions do take place during minority of members of family. A minor can get these set aside on proof that his interests have been injuriously affected.

Both cases same—no difference in principle and no reason why a difference shd be imported.

41 Mad 442 cited by K.N.K.

Tendency of Madras decisions to hold that partition cd not be effected by a unilateral declaration even though made by an adult—Regular course of Madras decisions. Then came.

35 All 80 (P.C.) *Suraj Narain* v *Iqbal Narain*

Even after this Madras High Ct hesitated to apply this rule—eventually referred matter to F.B.

39 *Mad* 159 F.B. J.J. express disagreement with P.C. ruling and follow it reluctantly. In this case as a matter of fact Pff was a minor and yet the ct *held that filing* of partition suit was enough to effect separation. But this question was not raised

29 A 373 minor can bring suit

Then came 2 P.C. Cases | 43 Cal 1031 Girja Bai v Sadashiv
| 39 All 496 P.C. Kamal Nain v Budh Singh (Alld case)

In the 39a All case the partition suit had actually been dismissed yet the P.C. held that family had separated from date of suit.

==

In 41 Mad 442—the real ground for decision is that the person exercising the discretion to separate must be of an age capable of exercising such a discretion. see p 444

J.J. say clearly that even if he be a minor he must at least be capable of this.

At the lowest my case is, on the basis of this reasoning, that if the minor *Pff* is of an age when he can exercise such discretion, then his suit shd be treated as that of an adult.

Here facts very strong—age—subsequent conduct etc. 2. Even if family joint—Gajadhar competent to give away a portion of property for a pious purpose & Pff cannot challenge this.

At Pff's own valuation the capital value of property gifted is 1300/-. Half a shop fetching 6/8 per month rent.

Whole of immovable property valued by Pff at over 38000/-

Thus a very small portion is given to temples—about *1/30th — and even* of this Pff made manager—absolutely no ?n of spite or malice

==

If no temples then no Mahadevji— no Respdt No 1—who does Pff seek relief from?

K.N.K. argument self contradictory. either temples have been provided for or they do not exist!! Clear from our evidence that temples *do* exist & contain family idols.

1. Statement in will—no object in lying
2. R2 Anandi—priest woman—why not?
3. Brindaban R1

R 3 Damman Lal
A 2 Ram Prasad—priest

==

As against this Pff's statement that he does not know. Does not carry us very far. Lived apart from his father. Not clear how he was examined—No X Exm.

What was object of this gift, with Pff as manager, if temples did not exist? Why does Pff sue?

Law

K.N.K. refers to Bhup Singh's case—39 A 437 P.C. absolutely no bearing—Do not know if K.N.K. seriously relied on it. Case refers to the mortgage of jt family property by father and the son's liability in a suit to enforce this mortgage—?n of antecedent debts is discussed Law laid down & general remarks in judgment apply only to the point in issue. There was never any ?n of this kind raised before P.C, nor was there any necessity for it

Law quite clear and consistent—

Mitakshara Ch 1 S 1 paras 28, 29 Setlur p 610 commentaries, translations, & textbook writers & judges have consistently interpreted it in one way. Solitary exception, if it is an exception, is the un-reported case cited by K.N.K.

S A 1672 of 1917 dt 13/1/20 Knox J

Original text=see specially *explanation in text*. Can only have one meaning. Meaningless for *apatkale* to govern *dharmarthe*

"आपत्काले कुटुम्बार्थे धर्मार्थे च विशेषत ·"

Translations etc

Colebrook—(ed 1869) p 19
Ghose Vol 2 p 92

Textbooks

Mayne p 595 Ramkrishna II p 44
Ghosh Vol I p 466
West & Buhler p 203

Col Dig Bk III Ch iv (3) a promise to give for religious purpose must be kept—Even son compelled if father dies.

14 M.I.A. at 301, 302 (citing with approval Norton's Leading Cases on H L of Inheritance Pt II p 406)

8 All 76

approved & extended in 24 Bom 547 (Ranade J)

In Mad—11 M.L.J. 310—8 All dist—gift must be to family idol.

Long course of decisions for the last 50 years—stare decisis. only Knox's jt!

COSTS

Objection only taken to 1st 3 sets of fees

K.N.K. says that only Deft Respt 1—Mahadeoji is interested. Yet Pff left him out when suit filed. Main defts there were Defts 2—5. Mahadeoji added 3 months later.

Practically only 1 set of pleaders' fees allowed (excepting for one item of 50/-) Probably B Anand Sarup appeared for D.R. 1-5

Mears C.J. | referred to Full Bench
Piggott J | 6/4/20

Trevelyan p 272
8 All 76 Raghunath v Govind
5 Cal S.D.A. 24 (29) Gopal Chand v Babu Kunwar
=5 S.D. 24 (1843)=5 Ben Sel R.
24 Bom 547 Ranade J. approves 8 All
11 M.L.J. 310
29 B 51 Gift to daughter valid
=31 B 373 P.C. ?
Con 16 Mad 353
(7 Mad 357 F.B.
(11 Mad 246
(6 W.R. 71
(11 W.R. 343
(27 M 162 8 M. High Ct Reports—6
(16 M. 84 5 Cal 148 at 165
(30 M 452 5 B 48 at 61
(22 B 825
(2 A. 635 Mears C J | Allowed
(14 M I.A 301, 302 Banerji J | appeal
Piggott J | 7/4/20

Norton's Leading Cases Pt II p 406
Gift—will
Originally only gifts Mayne p 568—same power to make wills & gift

21. To Sir Sita Ram[1]

Savoy Hotel,
Mussoorie
11.5.20

My dear Pt. Sita Ramji,

I owe you a thousand apologies for the delay in answering your letter which I received over a month ago. This, I need hardly say, was not due to any lack of desire on my part to write to you. Circumstances conspired with my indifferent health to prevent me from doing many things I wanted to do. I trust you will forgive me.

I was delighted to see in the papers how successful your conference was I wish it had been given to me to attend it and to have the pleasure of a talk with you on the various points you have touched in your letter.

I entirely agree with you in your suggestion that pamphlets should be issued in Hindi & Urdu to explain the Reforms Act, to show what it gives us and what it does not give us, and to point out how we can utilise it for approaching nearer to our ideals and aims. I would suggest not one pamphlet but several dealing with various aspects of the question. The difficulty is, who is to write them? I am utterly incapable of doing so in Hindi or Urdu. I shall write to a few friends in Allahabad and ask them to take the matter in hand. Can you suggest a suitable person?

I do not think there can be two opinions as to the desirability of the Village *Panchayats*[2] being elected and not nominated. In fact in drawing up a tentative programme for the constituencies we had laid stress on this point. I am a great believer in devolution and would have as little centralisation as possible. I would give the Village *Panchayats* considerable powers over civil and criminal matters. The matter should certainly be agitated in the public press. I wish you would kindly write on the subject and send your contribution to *The Independent*. The Editor, who as you no doubt know, is now Babu Bepin Chandra Pal, would then take it up and comment on it.

I expect to remain here for a month or so.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 Sita Ram Papers, National Archives of India.
2 Village council traditionally consisting of 5 wise elders.

22. To Father[1]

Savoy Hotel,
Mussoorie
14.5.20

My dear Father,
Greatness is being thrust on me. I have just had a visit from the Superintendent of Police. He showed me a letter from Government addressed to him in which he was asked to take a "positive undertaking" from me to the effect that I would refrain from seeing or having any communication with the Afghan delegates[2]. In case I refused to give this undertaking an externment order was to be served on me. I told him that as a matter of fact I had no intention of having anything to do with the Afghan delegation. I had not even seen any of them from a distance so far. He said this was so. He knew it perhaps from various C.I.D. sources But I told him that on principle I was opposed to giving any undertaking. He was very courteous and advised me to give an undertaking. Eventually I told him that I would send a definite answer this evening. I have no doubt in my mind as to what this answer is going to be The result will be that I shall be asked to leave Mussoorie. I do not know how much time will be allowed me. I shall wire to you when I have to leave. I shall go to Allahabad. I shall write more fully this evening.

Your loving son
Jawahar

1 J. N Correspondence, N M M L.
2 An Afghan peace delegation had come to India for talks with officials of the Government of India. Jawaharlal, his wife and mother were staying at the same hotel, and the Government directed Jawaharlal either to give an undertaking not to meet the Afghans or to leave Mussoorie Though Jawaharlal had no intention of meeting the Afghans, he refused to give any undertaking and left Mussoorie On hearing of his mother's ill health, he was planning to defy the externment order and return to Mussoorie, when the order was withdrawn.

23. To Father[1]

Savoy Hotel,
Mussoorie
14.5.20

My dear Father,

I wrote a short note to you this morning soon after seeing the Superintendent of Police. He had shown me a letter addressed to one Adams,[2] perhaps the Collector here. I forgot to notice the name of the sender but I suppose it was a Secretary to Government. The letter said something to the effect that I was to be asked to give a "positive undertaking", to the effect that I would not try to see or have any communication with the Afghan delegates. In case I did not give such an undertaking I was to be externed. I told the Superintendent that I had come up here with my family for the sake of my wife's health. He said he was aware of this. I also told him that I had not made the slightest effort to see the delegates, in fact I had not even had a glimpse of them He said he knew this too. I then told him that it went against the grain to give any undertaking and I would refuse to do so although I had no intention of going anywhere near the Afghans. He said that he could well appreciate my scruples but after all it was a small matter; nobody would know; some persons had already given the undertaking etc He also said that he was merely an agent and had to carry out the orders of Government He strongly advised me to agree to an undertaking I asked him if I had to give a definite answer then and there or if he could give me some time. He answered that I could send an answer by this evening. I also asked him what would happen if I refused to give any undertaking. He said that he would then have to carry out the orders of Government, and extern me. And so we parted with mutual apologies.

I had no doubt in my mind then or later as to what my answer should be It would have been counter to all my principles and professions to give any undertaking. I feel sure you will agree with and approve of my attitude. I am glad to say that the members of the family thought it the only possible attitude under the circumstances

This evening I sent my answer to the Superintendent. A copy of this is enclosed No reply has come yet.

1 J N Correspondence, NMML.
2. District Magistrate, Dehra Dun

I suppose it is certain now that they will serve an order on me externing me from Mussoorie. I may be given 24 hours' time or perhaps 48. In that event I shall wire to you and inform you of my movements. I shall probably go to Allahabad direct and after a day's stay there I should like to come to Arrah to see you. Or if you prefer, and wire to me in time, I shall go straight to Arrah.

I wish I had known a week ago of what was going to happen. I could have made my arrangements accordingly and not have taken matters in a leisurely fashion. However, I shall do my best and if our benign Government could give me another 3 days here I would be almost content.

Kamala[3] is progressing satisfactorily If a nurse could come I would have no anxiety left. As it is I shall leave full and detailed directions for her treatment etc.

I have arranged for Betty to go to Hampton Court School from Monday next The school is a good one and has a very good record in examinations. It is situated a little under Fitche's shop[4]

For the rest there is little to be done. We have been living a very quiet life here and I suppose this will continue after I go down. Mother has enough money for current expenses. She cannot of course pay the hotel bill. This will probably come at the end of the month and some arrangement will have to be made about it.

With love,

Your loving son
Jawahar

3 Kamala Nehru (1899 1936), b Kamala Kaul, and married to Jawaharlal Nehru in February 1916, she took an active part in the national movement and in 1930 was for some time a member of the Congress Working Committee and the "dictator" of Allahabad She was arrested on 1 January 1931 and released along with other Congress leaders at the end of the month For many years she suffered from poor health and died in Switzerland in February 1936

4 A general merchandise shop in Mussoorie

24. To Mr. M. L. Oakes[1]

Mussoorie
May 14, 1920

Dear Mr Oakes,

I have carefully thought over the conversation we had this morning and the question of my giving a "Positive undertaking", as required by Government, not to see or have any communication with the Afghan delegates now at Mussoorie. I regret I am unable to change my opinion on the subject.

As you are aware, I came to Mussoorie with my mother, wife and sisters solely on account of my wife's ill health. It was my intention to stay here with my family till such time as my father was free to come up. I have no concern with the Afghan delegation and it was an accident that we both happened to be in the same hotel. As a matter of fact their presence here has put me out to a certain extent as I was looking forward to taking possession of the rooms at present occupied by them. I am of course interested in the delegation, as every intelligent person must be, but I had or have not the slightest intention of going out of my way to meet them. We have been here now for the last seventeen days and during this period I have not seen a single member of the delegation even from a distance. You are yourself aware of this fact as you told me this morning.

But, although I have no intention whatever of seeing the Afghans or having any communication with them, I utterly dislike the idea of binding myself down to any course of action at the instance of the Government, even though such action may not prove irksome. It is really a question of principle or conscience. You will, I feel sure, appreciate my position. I am therefore unable, I am sorry to say, to accept your courteous advice and give an undertaking to Government.

If the Government chooses to serve any order on me, I am, for the present, prepared to obey it. It will be a great inconvenience to me to have to go down suddenly and leave my family by themselves here. The condition of my wife's health requires the most careful attention and my mother is a confirmed invalid, and it is most difficult to leave them uncared for. My sudden departure will upset my father's and my plans entirely and cause us any amount of trouble and anxiety. But I suppose individual conveniences cannot be considered in high matters of state.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J N Correspondence, NMML.
First published in *A Bunch of Old Letters* (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1958), pp. 7 8.

25. To C. F. Adams[1]

Savoy Hotel,
Mussoorie
May 15, 1920

Dear Mr. Adams,

I have again fully considered the matter and I regret that I am unable to give the undertaking required by Government. Under the circumstances I am prepared to go down from Mussoorie if the Government orders me to do so. I was at first inclined to accept your suggestion and go down of my own accord without any written order from Government, but on further consideration, I do not think it will be right for me to do so. I shall, therefore await the formal notice.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J N Correspondence, NMML.
First published in *A Bunch of Old Letters*, p 9.

26. The U.P. Congress Committee and Noncooperation[1]

Sir, — The resolutions passed by the U.P. Congress Committee at its last meeting have apparently perturbed a number of gentlemen who have sought to show, by means of lengthy communications to the press, that these resolutions are utterly futile and contemptible. Reference has further been made to certain details of the proceedings which were not published in the official report. As these veiled allusions may create a false impression of what transpired, I crave your courtesy to give fuller account of the proceedings. I trust I shall not thereby betray the confidence of the members of the Committee.

The first resolution, dealing with the insufficiency of the old methods of agitation and supporting the principle of noncooperation, was discussed for a considerable time. Several amendments were moved, but eventually the resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority — not more than two or perhaps three members voting against it.

The second resolution, dealing with the steps in the first stage of noncooperation, was originally moved as an amendment. As moved, it contained a clause about the boycott of councils. It further advocated the suspension of practice by lawyers and the withdrawal of

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 4 September 1920.

students from Government schools and colleges. There was no mention in it of the boycott of British goods. Two or three amendments were also moved and there was a prolonged discussion. Eventually the clauses relating to the suspension of practice by lawyers and the withdrawal of students from Government institutions were altered by the supporters of the principal amendment in order to meet the wishes of many members present. The amendment as it then stood, with the exception of one clause, was acceptable to almost everyone. This clause was the one which dealt with the boycott of councils. I suggested that this clause should be separated from the other clauses and the more or less non controversial part of the amendment be separately voted on. This was agreed to. A member then suggested that a clause recommending boycott of British goods be added and as the majority of members approved of it, a clause to this effect was added. The amendment, as altered, was then put to the vote and passed with only one or two dissenters

The question of boycotting the councils was then considered. Three courses of action were urged before the Committee: (1) that people should not stand for election or vote; (2) that people should offer themselves for election, and having succeeded in getting elected, should not enter the council chamber, after the manner of Sinn Feiners; and (3) that people should enter the councils with the sole object of obstructing work and making the position of Government impossible. No one, so far as I can remember, suggested that we should cooperate with the Government inside the councils. I made it clear to the Committee what the principal supporters of the clause understood by the phrase 'boycott of the councils'. To them it meant neither of the first two courses mentioned above. The one thing it did not or could not mean was going inside the councils for the purpose of either obstruction or cooperation. I expressed my own preference for the boycotting of even the elections, but the resolution as framed admitted of utilizing the machinery of elections and then boycotting the councils. The real question of principle, to my mind, was that we should not enter the councils and take the oath of allegiance. The rest was a matter of tactics We offered to change the word 'boycott' to 'non participation' provided our meaning, as above explained, was clearly brought out. The proposed change was not enough to satisfy some members and we, therefore, decided to retain 'boycott' which is a more virile word and meant an active policy. The resolution was then put to the vote and passed, I think by a majority of two.

It has been said that the meeting of the Committee was unrepresentative and was attended by irresponsible persons. Some of our prominent members were undoubtedly absent. We sorely missed the counsel

and guidance of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Pandit Motilal Nehru. Munshi Iswar Saran and Pandit Gokaran Nath Misra[2] were also not present. But of the many meetings of the Provincial Congress Committee, which it has been my privilege to attend, I have *not often seen a better or more representative gathering.* Perhaps I am a poor judge and take a partisan view. Being myself not too much endowed with the element of 'responsibility' I do not miss it greatly in others of my kind.

I shall not endeavour to say anything here on the merits of the resolutions. Personally, I wish they had gone much further on the lines laid down by Mahatma Gandhi I am an ardent believer in noncooperation with all that it implies and I am firmly convinced that noncooperation and no other course will bring us victory. That victory may not come in a day or a year, but come it will and must, *ruat coelum.*[3]

I am etc,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 (1872 1929), a leading lawyer of Lucknow, who was the General Secretary of Congress in 1918 1920 Later he joined the Liberals and served as Judge of the Oudh Chief Court

3 Even though the heavens fall.

27. The Swaraj Sabha—Facts about changes in the constitution of the All-India Home Rule League[1]

Sir, — As the validity of the recent changes in the constitution of the Swaraj Sabha (till lately the All India Home Rule League) has been questioned by some gentlemen, may I crave the hospitality of your columns to state the facts relating to these changes?

According to the rules of the All-India Home Rule League, the Central Council of the League could, by a majority of three-fourths, make alterations in the constitution This constitution was adopted in Calcutta in December, 1917. The general body of the members, with whom the ultimate decision lay, delegated their undoubted power to change the constitution to the Central Council, but restricted its use by that Council to such cases only where there was a three fourth majority.

1 *Letter to The Editor, The Bombay Chronicle, 18 October 1920.*

The members of the League did not and could not thereby abdicate all authority over the constitution of the League. Nor had the three-fourth majority any reference to them. This constitution was subsequently altered and the changes were recorded in the minute book. They were not printed and the minute book was lost during a fire which occurred at the office of the Bombay Branch of the League. We have thus unfortunately no authentic record of the latest constitution and have to fall back upon the Calcutta constitution. So far as I remember, however, the rule about the change in the constitution had remained unchanged.

A meeting of the Central Council of the League was held in Bombay on the 28th July last. Among the items on the agenda was the revision of the constitution. The Council considered this and appointed a sub committee consisting of Mr. M. A. Jinnah[2], Mr. M. R. Jayakar[3] and the General Secretaries to draw up a draft constitution. The Council further directed that a general meeting of the members of the League be held in Calcutta, about the time the Congress held its special sessions, for the express purpose of considering the report of the sub-committee and of revising the constitution. This general meeting was convened for the 4th September and the only item on the agenda was the revision of the constitution. Unfortunately, the sub-committee appointed to revise the constitution could not meet prior to the general meeting As one of the Secretaries, however, I circulated a draft constitution amongst the members of the sub-committee a few days before the meeting The general meeting was held in Calcutta on the 4th September and this draft was considered. The name of the League was altered and the objects were changed Mr. Jinnah was not present at the meeting. At a subsequent adjourned meeting held in Calcutta Mr. Jinnah was present and he raised a number of objections. The President, Mr. M. K Gandhi, over-ruled his objections and held that the meeting was properly constituted and was fully competent to change the constitution. He further held that the changes in the name and the objects were perfectly valid. The rest of the constitution could not be considered by the meeting owing to lack of time. Mr. M. A. Jinnah

2 Mohamed Ali Jinnah (1876 1948), a barrister of the Bombay High Court, president of the Moslem League 1916, 1920 and from 1934 to his death; Governor General of Pakistan, 1947-1948 For many years Jinnah was an ardent nationalist free from communalism, but later became the champion of Muslim separatism, and successfully demanded the creation of Pakistan.

3 (1873 1959), a barrister and judge, and, along with Tej Bahadur Sapru, the best known of the Indian Liberal leaders.

suggested that it would be desirable if the whole constitution was referred back to the sub-committee previously appointed and the sub-committee's report was considered at another general meeting of the members to be held in Bombay, when the necessary changes in the constitution could be made. Mr. Jinnah's suggestion was eventually adopted. The sub-committee considered the matter and submitted a report which was unanimous except for the proposed change in the objects. This report was published in some newspapers and was considered at the general meeting of the members held on the 3rd October in Bombay. After prolonged discussion the objects, as recommended by a majority of the sub committee, were adopted by a two-thirds majority.

In the course of this discussion and after, two objections were raised by Mr. Jinnah. He first repeated his objection, taken and over-ruled in Calcutta, that the general body of members had no power to change the constitution and that only the Central Council could do so. Apart from the merits of this point, I may mention that the Central Council itself had referred the matter to the general meeting in Calcutta. I may also draw attention to the fact that the subsequent general meeting called in Bombay was held at Mr. Jinnah's own suggestion for the express purpose of revising the constitution. But, in any event, the general body of the members of the League is the paramount authority in all matters concerning the League and its constitution and it could not divest itself of that authority by delegating its power, in a restricted form, to the Central Council. The second objection raised was with reference to the size of the majority. It was stated that there must be a three fourths majority for any change in the existing constitution. The rule about a three fourths majority applied only to the Central Council and there was no warrant for applying it to the general meeting. Even a bare majority of members, the President held, was sufficient. As a matter of fact, there was a very substantial majority.

Yours etc,
Jawaharlal Nehru
Joint General Secretary
Swaraj Sabha.

Allahabad,
Oct. 14.

28. Notice to Volunteers[1]

All volunteers are requested to attend at the Swaraj Sabha Office, (3 City Road, Allahabad) on Sunday 14th November at 3.30 p.m. when there will be company drill and instructions will be issued.

Volunteers who have so far not been enrolled in any of the College squads should also attend at the Swaraj Sabha Office on Saturday the 13th November at 3.30 p.m.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

1 *The Independent*, 14 November 1920

29. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Allahabad
Apr. 9th 1921

My dear Doctor[2],

You must be wondering why I am so churlish as not to acknowledge your gift to me. The gift was very welcome but the inscription on it offended against my modesty and hence the delay in thanking you. I am not aware of having been accused of brilliance on any previous occasion. You will thus understand my discomfiture.

So the final tussle has come. What is Behar going to do? Behar, the darling of our leaders. I am afraid all we can do is to try to carry on. The conditions of the experiment are such that it is exceedingly difficult for the U.P. to fulfil them.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.
2 Syed Mahmud (1889-1971); a contemporary of Jawaharlal at Cambridge and a barrister of the Patna High Court, joined noncooperation movement in 1921, General Secretary, Khilafat movement and Indian National Congress, Minister in Bihar, 1937-1939 and 1946-1952, Minister in the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi 1954-1957.

30. On the Allahabad District Conference[1]

Sir,—Syt. Triveni Sahai Sinha[2] has done me the honour of putting some questions to me in your issue of the 21st April. He has evidently been considerably put out by my appeal for volunteers for the Allahabad district conference. In this appeal I had stated that students who were still in Government schools or colleges need not apply and I had further announced that all volunteers would be expected to wear pure swadeshi (*garha*) clothes. Syt. Sinha has scented villainy in this simple appeal and it has reminded him of the German hymn of hate. But I can assure him that I had not the remotest intention of offering a 'wanton and gratuitous insult' to anyone even though he may be misguided enough to remain in educational institutions controlled by the Government. Syt. Sinha has apparently missed some of Mahatma Gandhi's speeches and writings or else he could have spared himself the trouble of writing to the press. I shall only give him one reference: *Young India* dated 23rd February, 1921, column 1, page 1, — in the course of an editorial note on lawyers and students, Mahatmaji says:—'Volunteering is a privilege and a student who has not been able to withdraw from Government schools cannot receive privileges from the nation. They too must be content to be unambitious servants of the nation.'

I shall answer the questions framed by Syt. Sinha briefly :—

(1) Every person who has signed the Congress creed and joined the Congress organisation will be entitled to become a delegate to the conference. All others can become visitors on payment of the requisite fees. Cooperators and officials will be welcome in either of the above categories.

(2) (3) and (4). I have already referred to Mahatmaji's views on the subject. The All India Congress Committee has not, so far as I am aware, pronounced any opinion.

(5) Syt. Sinha has done himself an injustice by using words in a foreign language of which he does not understand the full import.

1 The Leader, 25 April 1921
2 At this time a student at D.A.V. College, Kanpur. A letter written in his name had attacked the noncooperation and volunteer movements.

I presume he means to enquire whether social service is a monopoly of noncooperators. I hasten to assure him that the service of the nation, political or social, is the monopoly of no individual or party. It is the bounden duty of every person and he may not postpone the performance of this duty for any personal motive. Unhappily, many of our friends appear to put examinations and college studies above the performance of this duty. We have ventured to appeal to them to put aside these studies for a while at least and devote themselves to the service of the nation. Duty calls today from the villages and fields of Partabgarh and Sultanpur and Rae Bareli and Fyzabad — the four districts where to preserve law and order the Seditious Meetings Act has been proclaimed with the concurrence of our ministers, where to preserve law and order thousands are being harassed and put to indignity and hundreds are in jail, where terrorism reigns and no man is safe, where to be a *Panch* has become a crime and to settle disputes privately a sin. The kisans of these regions are going through an ordeal of suffering such as few outsiders realise; but by God's help they are bearing up. That is where duty calls. Many of our colleagues are there sharing the burdens of the kisans and bringing some solace to them. They too were carrying on their studies in government colleges not so long ago. But they discarded the lordly buildings, gave up their worldly prospects and made the peasant's hut their home. They tramp in the hot sun, bear with a smiling face the indignities and abuse heaped upon them by the minions of the law and carry a ray of hope into many a despairing home. This service is the monopoly of no man. All who wish it can enter it.

But if the flesh is weak and the conditions appear hard, then there is one service which all can do — the turning of the spinning wheel. And if Syt. Sinha desires to perform this sovereign service, I shall gladly present him with a *charkha*.

(6) I don't know if Syt. Sinha requires an answer to this question. I fancy not..

Jawaharlal Nehru

31. Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
9 May 1921

Das wires from Chandpur impossible leaving. Chandpur situation[2] ethical having important bearing on all India movement. Case of general unemployment and not labour strike. Matter not settling soon. Must be placed before working committee meeting. Pray adjourn or hold another extraordinary meeting about twentyfirst June Calcutta. If meeting working committee inconvenient have small sub committee appointed to meet Calcutta. Pray no big question should be settled in ignorance of situation here. Have important proposals to make. Father unwell in Almora. Unable to go Bombay.

Jawaharlal

1. Gandhi-Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 7521 (a).
2. In 1919, a very large number of agricultural labourers from Gorakhpur and other districts of eastern U.P. had migrated to the tea gardens of Lower Assam due to scarcity conditions in their own districts. However, the employment situation in the tea gardens deteriorated with the depression immediately after the First World War, and many retrenched workers began to return home in 1921. So by May 1921 they were to be found in large numbers at Chandpur, a transit point near the borders of Assam. The plantation owners, worried by this great exodus, sought to enlist both official and non-official assistance to prevent this large-scale migration. Das, Andrews and other leaders, who had gone to Chandpur to help the workers, were accused of instigating labour strikes. The local authorities tried to prevent these labourers from leaving Assam and even ordered troops to prevent them from boarding the steamers.

32. Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
17 May 1921

Chittaranjandas wires coolie difficulty[2] matter of finance. Provincial congress committee ruled Tilak fund cant be spent for this. Wire advice Calcutta. Have accordingly wired Bengal committee suggesting advance necessary funds subject to working committees decision about allocation. Wire further instructions if necessary.

Nehru

1. Gandhi-Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 7524.
2. In 1921 the coolies struck for higher wages.

33. The Kopaganj Affair

I[1]

A somewhat fanciful account of my visit to Kopaganj has appeared in the press. The account is incorrect in many particulars.[2]

Maulana Shaukat Ali and I arrived in Azamgarh on the 19th. It was our intention to motor to Kopaganj, a distance of 28 miles, early in the morning of the 20th and to spend the best part of the day there, catching the Ballia train in the afternoon. On the evening of the 20th there was to be a public meeting at Ballia and on the 21st we were to be in Yusufpur and Ghazipur. We requested the local bodies at Azamgarh to arrange for a car for the Kopaganj visit. They failed in their endeavour. I then suggested carriages and eventually *ekkas* to take us to Kopaganj early in the morning. We were very anxious to go and the only way of doing so, without upsetting our Ballia and Ghazipur programme, was to precede the railway train and go by road. Maulana Shaukat Ali was fasting and a 28 mile road journey in the heat of the sun would have been a great trial to him. He agreed readily, however, to go by road if a suitable vehicle was found. No conveyance of any kind was forthcoming and consequently we took the Ballia train at 10.30 a.m. At 12.30 we arrived at Mau. I again expressed a desire to go to Kopaganj, if it could possibly be arranged. The train makes a lengthy stay at Mau and I had 3½ hours. An *ekka* was found. It was physically impossible for Maulana Shaukat Ali to go by the *ekka*. I therefore proceeded to Kopaganj with a Hindu friend, a resident of Mau. On arrival at Kopaganj I expressed a desire to see the girl in question. I was taken to her and I had half an hour's talk with her. My Hindu friend was with me as well as two or three Mohamedan gentlemen. There were many other people outside the room. I was sitting inside. After my conversation with the girl I saw the boy, who is said to have abducted her, and had a short talk with him. I then came out and addressed a few words to a small crowd which had assembled outside. After this, I left Kopaganj on my *ekka* for Indara, the next station after Mau. There was no proper road and we had practically to go across the fields. There being very little time left and the rate of the *ekka's* progress being excessively moderate, I tried to run for a considerable part of the way. In spite of my exertions, however, I missed the train

1. *Statement published in The Leader*, 28 May 1921.
2. The Kopaganj affair centred round the alleged abduction of a Bengali Hindu widow, her conversion to Islam and her marriage to a Muslim.

at Indara. I do not presume to have performed a miracle by my visit to Kopaganj nor could I possibly hold a regular enquiry even if I wished to do so in the short time at my disposal. I went there mainly to see the girl and to try to find out what her present feelings were. She told me definitely and repeatedly that she wished to remain in her present abode. She refused to go back to her old home even though her people might be willing to take her back. I may add that she is in an advanced state of pregnancy.

The boy who accompanied her from Calcutta appears to be younger than the girl. He looks 16 to 17 years of age and is a very unintelligent country yokel.

II[3]

Sir,—May I, by your courtesy, deal briefly with one or two points raised by the communication on the Kopaganj affair which appears in your issue of today? Of much that the letter contains I have no personal knowledge I have read Prof. Ram Gaur's[4] article in *The Independent* of the 19th May, but beyond that I know nothing about his visit. I have not seen him or discussed the matter with him Regarding my visit to Kopaganj I have already sent a note to *The Independent* and you have been good enough to reproduce it in your issue of the 28th. I have little to add to this and it is really not very material as to what I did and how I did it when I went to Kopaganj. I would not have troubled you on the subject if I did not feel that an injustice had been done to Maulana Shaukat Ali by your correspondent. The Maulana never 'changed his mind and refused to go to Kopaganj,' nor did he express his inability as a Muslim to do anything in the matter, in the manner suggested He and I had gone there at Mr. Gandhi's suggestion and we were anxious to visit Kopaganj. I have already stated in my previous letter how our arrangements fell through and eventually I had to go from Mau on an *ekka* in the middle of the day. Anyone who knows the Maulana needs no telling that it was hardly possible for him to mount the *ekka* or to ride it for any distance. His stopping at Mau *would have necessitated his giving up his Ballia and Ghazipur programme.*

The statement attributed to Maulana Shaukat Ali is partly correct, so far as I remember, but it conveys a different impression from what was actually said and meant. He said that it was really for the girl to

3 Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 8 June 1921.

4 A Congressman from Banaras, deputed by the Congress to investigate this affair He reported that the girl had willingly married the Muslim and been converted to Islam.

decide what to do, that it appeared from Prof. Gaur's statement that she had made up her mind to remain where she was and that under the circumstances nothing further could be done. If the girl did not wish to go, he could not tell her to do so, nor could he as a Muslim induce her to leave Islam.

Your correspondent evidently feels deeply on the question. He has written his long letter to you in some anger and has said many hard things about me and a number of others. Whether I have a 'perverse mentality' or not, I do not know. I am naturally a partial judge. It is my misfortune that I could not stay long enough at Kopaganj. I tried to utilise my short stay to the best advantage and formed certain impressions. A longer enquiry may confirm these first impressions or alter them. I do not claim any finality for them, but for the present I believe in them.

Your correspondent has analysed my previous letter as if he was construing the pleadings in a case. He draws inferences from my silence on a particular point or from my not contradicting it specifically. I did not write the previous letter, nor am I writing the present one, in this spirit. There are several matters mentioned in your correspondent's letter which are not accurate but I have not thought it worth while to deal with them. They are details which make no difference unless, of course, the object is to discredit a party!

I have read your correspondent's long letter with considerable pain, not because of the personal references made to me—for they matter not at all and I am sure the writer himself will not approve of them in his cooler moments—but because I feel that this is not the right method to gain one's object. He and I perhaps desire the same thing. May I, in all humility, suggest to him that the cause which we have at heart will not be furthered by personal recriminations?

I am etc.,
June, 5. Jawaharlal Nehru

III[5]

Sir,—In the course of a letter appearing in your issue of the 9th April, Mr. Ganga Prasad has referred to Maulana Shaukat Ali refusing to accompany me to Kopaganj. This is wholly incorrect. A similar statement appeared in your columns at the time of our visit two years ago and was categorically denied by me in the course of a letter to you. I am pained to see a repetition of a statement which I have clearly stated to be untrue, specially when the object of the criticism, the brave and chivalrous Shaukat Ali, lies in a British jail.

Allahabad, April 10. Jawaharlal Nehru

5 Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 14 April 1923.

34. Presidential address at the Bundhelkhand Conference[1]

Revered Jagat Guru[2], brothers and sisters :—

Eight months ago, the largest panchayat of our country, i.e. the Indian National Congress, had decided that without Swaraj we cannot live in India. The big leaders of our country unitedly waved the flag of Swaraj at first in Calcutta. Taking into consideration the hardships and sufferings that we are or have been put to in this country, and the ways in which our country is impoverished and we are humbled, so much so that we cannot save our lives and religions, our leaders have decided that there is no remedy for these evils, except that of winning Swaraj.

Brothers — it was so decided eight months ago. It was decided because we have been awakened to the situation at length and our leaders have clearly demonstrated that to live in this country means to live in utter slavery, to lead the life of beasts and to denounce our faith and religion. This means that Indians, living in India itself, will crawl on their bellies and will rub their noses against the ground, will be humbled and will give up their faith and religion as we were made to do in Amritsar[3].

Brothers — it was decided in Calcutta[4] that we will get justice done to the wrongs of the Punjab and the Khilafat and will attain Swaraj.

Afterwards our leaders considered the question again at Nagpur[5] and, with the exception of two men, a gathering of twenty thousand decided that Swaraj, and only Swaraj, is the remedy for these evils. These evils cannot be removed without Swaraj. Our leaders made a promise that we would get Swaraj. As long as we do not get Swaraj, we will not

1. Government of India, Home (Political), F. No. 112 of 1922, National Archives of India
The only report available of this address, delivered in Hindi, is the English version prepared by police reporters for the Criminal Investigation Department It is that report which is reproduced here, but it is probably distorted in places. The address was delivered at the second session at Jhansi on *13 June 1921.*
2. Swami Shankaracharya of Puri.
3. The reference is to the Crawling Order.
4. The Special Session of the Congress which met at Calcutta from 4 to 9 September 1920 was presided over by Lala Lajpat Rai. It approved the policy of noncooperation.
5. The 35th Session in December 1920, which was a personal triumph for Mahatma Gandhi.

cease to agitate. We will neither have rest nor will we allow others, who stand in the way of our Swaraj, to rest. Five months have passed and the sixth month is passing since our leaders voted for this at Nagpur. You remember that in the beginning, when the Congress decided this matter in Calcutta, our enemies were laughing at us and were thinking that we were only boasting. They knew that Indians indulge in tall talk, and have not got it in them to do practical work. Therefore they were laughing at us and ridiculing us. Even our friends who sympathize with our cause were afraid that we were only talking of impossibilities. But in a very short time India underwent a transformation. Today neither our friends nor our enemies are laughing at us. They can say that we shall not be able to achieve as much as we desire but there is no official, from the highest to the lowest rank in India, not even the Viceroy, who can laugh at us or put us to ridicule. They have seen that modern India is now determined on one thing and to reach only one goal, the goal of Swaraj. The new generation of India has resolved to shake off the slavery that she has been undergoing for a hundred and fifty years, I mean the slavery to the British nation and the British Government.

I do not want here to describe the stories of the Punjab and the Khilafat, for which we preached noncooperation and raised the flag of Swaraj. You know these events. These have been related a thousand times to you. You know that in the beginning much emphasis was laid on the Khilafat and the Punjab. You also know that now the country has come to the decision that the wrongs of the Khilafat and the Punjab can only be settled by winning Swaraj. If the Khilafat questions are settled without your obtaining Swaraj, then it would not be a settlement of your Khilafat questions. If the matters in the Punjab are decided according to your desire, but you do not go any further, you should not be satisfied. If today you terrify them to rectify the matters in the Punjab, but you do not get the real power, they would be left with the power to do the same thing that they did in the Punjab two years ago. Perhaps they might repeat the same thing in Bundhelkhand. Therefore, the settlement of the Punjab and the Khilafat question can only be arrived at through obtaining such powers by us, Indians, that no foreign country in future would be able to commit excesses against us. No foreign nation should possess the capacity to oppress us or attack our honour and religion. Therefore, you should always keep Swaraj before you. You should know that Swaraj embodies the Khilafat and the Punjab. If you cannot win Swaraj you cannot be said to have attained anything. For this reason we are laying much emphasis on Swaraj. As long as we do not get Swaraj, we should continue our struggle

I have told you that I do not want to say anything about the Punjab and the Khilafat, but now I will say one thing to our Hindu brethren, that the question of the Khilafat does not concern the Muslims only. Therefore, as you know, the Hindus are helping the cause of the Khilafat. This is why Mahatma Gandhi has become the leader of the movement and is helping this cause. He has said that if need be he is ready to give his life in the settlement of this question. Therefore, I wish that my Hindu brethren should not entertain the idea that it is not their duty or religion to help the Mussalmans at this time. I do not want to lay any emphasis on this. The Hindu religion itself will compel them to do so, will compel them to help their neighbours. Those who know religion will consider it their duty, as I have heard our respected religious leader say, that they should always speak truth and help their brethren who are in trouble. I shall not say more about this; I only want to say that it is the duty of the Hindus to help the Muslims at this time if they want to save their religion. Because if the English succeeded in destroying the Muslim religion, they will try to destroy your religion, our religion, the Hindu religion. Therefore, it is the duty of the Hindus, if they want to defend their religion, to enlist with their whole heart and soul in this struggle for the Khilafat, to help the Mohammadans and to defend their religion. You know the English. They love neither the Hindus nor Muslims nor any creed or religion. What is dear to them is something else. They will not, therefore, let you, the Hindus off in any way. *It would be quite a different thing if they* are not on good terms with the Mussalmans.

A remarkable thing has happened in connection with the Khilafat question. The Turks were not independent until Mustafa Kamal Pasha[6], a great leader, refused to accept the Anglo-Turkish treaty[7] and taking a large portion of Turkey into his possession became an independent ruler. The Turks were independent and free from the interference of the British or any other power. The English, seeing them independent, are now trying to attack them. They are attacking and destroying all the countries one by one. They have made up their minds to destroy these kingdoms, to destroy these Mussalman kingdoms, to destroy all the large and small Mussalman kingdoms in Asia. They wish that there should be only three or four large territories, which they should divide among themselves.

6 Kamal Pasha Ataturk (1881 1938); leader and founder of modern Turkey.
7 The treaty of Sevres concluded with Turkey in 1920 provided for the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. The terms of the treaty caused great resentment in Turkey and subsequently, as a result of the resistance led by Kamal Pasha, a new and milder settlement had to be made by the Treaty of Lausanne

Brothers, you must remember that if the English are successful, they will make slaves of all the countries in our neighbourhood and will fetter them with a powerful chain, so much so that we will be tightly held while they ride on our backs and it will be very difficult to get rid of them.

This struggle is for the Khilafat. This struggle is for the independence of our country. This struggle is for our own liberty and the liberty of those countries that are in our neighbourhood.

I have told you that the questions of the Khilafat and the Punjab are included in Swaraj. Therefore, you should always keep Swaraj before you. You should always keep in view our own liberty. You should know that as long as our country is not free and we do not take part in the Government of our own country, we should not give up the struggle. Swaraj means peace in these days. Perhaps you did not think over the question of Swaraj. I want to let you know what I mean by Swaraj.

You know the literal meaning of Swaraj is self government. But there are various kinds of self government. There can also be a self-government where three or four men of the country are made Rajas and Maharajas to rule over others. But I do not want such a kind of self-government, where three or four Indians or Englishmen are made our rulers to oppress us. In my opinion, in self-government, not one Indian or a thousand Indians should be made a raja or rajas, but every Indian, every Hindu, Mussalman, Sikh or Christian, who lives in India and who is proud of calling it his motherland should be free and should have a right to take part in the government of the country. This I consider to be self government. What does it mean? You should think over it. It does not mean the government of one sect or one religion. If the Hindus establish their rule in the country, it would be a Hindu *raj*. That will not be self-government. If Muslims are able to establish their rule, that will not be self government. That would be Muslim *raj*. Suppose the Sikhs establish their rule in the Punjab, that would be Sikh *raj* but not Swaraj. Therefore, you should understand clearly that the Swaraj that I seek is the *raj* of the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs etc. That cannot be the *raj* of one sect, one creed or one religion. It will not be a *raj* of the rich or of the poor, of the farmers or of the zamindars. The rich and poor will have equal rights. That is Swaraj.

In a Swaraj there can be only panchayats, therefore, Swaraj means panchayat. Panchayat Raj had been prevalent in our country for thousands of years. During the short time since the English began to rule India, these panchayats were abolished one by one. Now when the non-cooperation agitation began, these panchayats again came into existence. They will be similar to those established by the Government in tahsils,

districts and provinces. *Do you think the rule of the Government can* be as beneficent as that of your *panchayats*, for the latter will consist of men chosen by yourself, by the rich and the poor of the country? These men will be under your control. If they do not work properly, they can be set aside and others can be made *Panch* in their places. I know such a form of government will come. As long as there is not such a *raj* in our country our troubles cannot be removed. With two or three men of our country raised to high offices our troubles cannot come to an end. Now one man of our province is a high official. He gets a good salary but he could not remove our troubles. In spite of a number of high officers in our country being Indians the people of our province are being put to such troubles and miseries and are oppressed in such ways as they had not experienced for a number of years. There are some Indians who were working with us, were taking part in the Congress and were helping us in every way, but, I am sorry to say, now they have leagued themselves with the other party. They have leagued themselves with those who are our enemies. Brothers, we cannot gain anything if you are given high posts under this Government. If we are made Governors, even then it cannot be called Swaraj; nor would *our troubles be removed. In the province next to ours, i.e. in* Bihar, there is an Indian Governor[8] but the lot of the province is not improved by his becoming a Governor, it has rather become worse. The people are put to more hardships than before.

The meaning of Swaraj is what I told you just now. I want that kind of Swaraj. In my opinion, only that is Swaraj. Our elders know this and the Congress is trying to get this kind of Swaraj. They have resolved to get this kind of Swaraj. You should know that there can be no real understanding between us and the British Government, between us and any other nation. In my opinion, we should continue the agitation of noncooperation as long as *we do not get Swaraj or do* not become perfect masters of this country. The leaders of our country have indicated the way to Swaraj. You know that other countries had waged wars to get their independence, you also know that some nations had to unsheathe their swords to get their independence. They have killed others and have been killed by others to win the independence of their country. You also know men in this country who drew their swords for their country and their religion and have

8 Lord Sinha of Raipur (1864 1928), after having served as President of the Congress, member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and Under Secretary for India in the British Government, he was appointed Governor of Bihar in 1920 He resigned the next year due to ill health

killed others and have been killed by others. They can be called neither wicked men nor cowards. Though it is possible that some men may say that they were not good, none can say that they were not brave. But the present condition of our country is such that the people have not even touched a sword for a long time. You have not as much as seen any weapon. You have become incapacitated. How can you fight and how can you get your independence? In these days men fight with guns. Even if you had swords, you could not have done anything; even if you could manipulate guns, you would not have been successful. In modern warfare, bombs are thrown from airships. If you have swords and guns they are useless. Thousands of you can be killed by one bomb. Therefore, we cannot fight with the English in any way. If I fight the English with a sword, then I think I would be defeated. Besides this, Mahatma Gandhi, who is our leader at this time, is of the opinion that we should not draw swords under any circumstances. He is of the opinion that we should always follow non-violence. It is our duty, therefore, to follow non-violence. There is no other course open to us. If we follow any other course the independence of our country would be very far from us. We should, therefore, keep away from the sword and give up the intention of drawing it. The other course has been shown to us by our leaders and Congressmen. That is the course of noncooperation.

It is such a course that, if we follow it, we can win our country's independence and can remove our troubles in a very short time without killing anybody and doing any violence or sin, and at the same time following what is right and preserving what is our faith. Much has been said about noncooperation. You have been told clearly what are the principles of noncooperation. There are some men who ask what should be done for noncooperation and what they should do for it now and in the future. In future will come a time when we will ask the men of the Police and the Army to give up their services, when I will ask every Indian to stop paying taxes to this British Government. It is possible that the occasion may come; but I think it will never come. Before such a time comes, we shall be successful in our mission and will get Swaraj. Those who have taken up the cause of noncooperation and Swaraj have not taken it up with the intention of retracing four steps back while they advance two steps forward. They have made up their minds to move forward as long as they do not reach their goal. We should be ready and should make the country prepared to follow it to the last stage. The last stage is very far away. The other stages are short and easy. I do not want to repeat these stages of noncooperation, nor do I want to say anything about vakils and students. It is not necessary to say anything about vakils and students. We have said

whatever we had to say about them and they have heard whatever they had to hear. But I want to lay emphasis on two points in particular, which, in my opinion, form the roots of noncooperation because without them noncooperation cannot progress; because if you do not do those things, whatever else you may do about noncooperation will be useless and of no purpose. You know there is a word which has always been used with noncooperation, we used the word 'peaceful' or non-violent. That is noncooperation of which the foundation is laid on peace. If there is anybody who unsheathes his sword to save his country or his religion, you cannot call him a coward. You praise him, though he may draw the sword through his own folly. But I want to say that the two cannot go together. It is possible that on the one hand you draw your sword and on the other you follow noncooperation. If you are a noncooperator, if you want to tread its course, you must always bear in mind as long as you are a noncooperator that noncooperation is based on non-violence. Where there is an end of non-violence, there is an end of noncooperation.

I would like to lay stress on this point. I want to explain the thing and to bring home to you its importance. For I have found some time back at many places that it was not being sufficiently emphasized. People have been led to think that the cry of peacefulness and non-violence is merely intended to deceive others, while we are preparing ourselves for the contrary behind the curtain. The first thing which we ought to know is that a noncooperator will never act in an underhand way. Whatever is contained in his heart will come out in the midst of thousands. He will do what he has to do in a straightforward manner, he would do nothing stealthily in corners. It is the creed, as it were, of a noncooperator to believe that truth need not be concealed. He will speak out everything with a free heart. If there comes a time to adopt a course I would not do so in a secret way but I would declare my intention beforehand. I want you to bear in mind that you are under no circumstances permitted to commit excesses in the course of your noncooperation. An excess may be verbal or it may relate to physical force, but you are allowed to practise neither.

You know that in this province particularly and also in other parts of the homeland a movement has been started which you call by the name of *Aman Sabha*[9] or *Ghulam Sabha*.[10] This is a recent movement. The

9 In 1921, to counter the influence of the Congress and the Kisan Sabhas among the peasants, the United Provinces Government organised *Aman Sabhas*, whose members were mostly landlords and supporters of the *raj*. Their purpose was to carry on propaganda in the villages in favour of British rule

10. Slave Sabha.

business of an *Aman Sabha*, as they suppose, is to maintain peace. They have been led to think that there have grown up parties in the country which propose to subvert law and order, and it is to checkmate them that the *Aman Sabhas* have been brought into existence. But on further thought it will be easy for you to tell who is to be benefited by the maintenance of peace and who by the creation of riots and disturbances. You will find and, on a little consideration, you will understand, that if there is any class of people who will benefit by the maintenance of peace it is the noncooperators. Peace is advantageous to the Indians and disadvantageous to the British Government and to its officials. For if you maintain perfect order and if you carry into practice noncooperation with all its details, there is no power on earth which can retard your progress or which can snatch away Swaraj from your hands. But if you initiate violence, if you bring into play your *lathis* and swords you must know that the Englishmen will not be slow to reply to you in the same terms. They have nothing with which they can respond to the swords and guns of noncooperation but they can reply to your own *lathis* and swords. They like to have riots and disturbances so that they may knock one against another and thus find the opportunity to wipe you out, to shoot you in thousands and send you down to jails.

Brothers, the Englishmen want at this moment to raise up dissensions among you. They want you to come to blows; they want to bring about conflict between the kisans and the zamindars, between the Hindus and the Mussalmans. It has been brought to my knowledge they have gone so far in many places as to incite quarrels between Indians and Indians and to bring them to actual blows. They succeeded in it to a certain extent; you may see then that your *Aman Sabhas* have been established merely to deceive you. They are not meant to establish peace. This latter forms a part of your duty and of ours. It is certainly not a function of theirs. You do not know perhaps how order is being maintained in the *Aman Sabhas*. I have got papers with me at this moment telling us how the signatures and thumb impressions are being obtained and how people are being enlisted as members of the *Aman Sabha*. They give an account of the people on whom the misfortune has fallen. The policeman goes about carrying his *lathi* and forcibly makes them members of the *Aman Sabha*. The business of the *Aman Sabha* is to frighten people with *lathis*, to coerce and thus to make them into members. Do you know how far this would maintain the nature of the *Aman Sabha?* Its real purpose is to create quarrels and dissensions among you while the maintenance of peace is a business of ours.

The other thing which requires to be emphasized is the meaning

of noncooperation. It means to refuse to help, and to withdraw your support from, the British administration. It may raise the question: how can you succeed if you withdraw your support from the British administration? It is possible only when you have full cooperation amongst yourselves. Those among you who have studied history and are aware of what is happening in the world must know that history teaches a lesson, namely the people who are disunited must fall down, while those who are united have been victorious. You can learn this lesson from history in various ways; you may read the history of our own country. If you read the annals of the last hundred and fifty years you will come to know that the calamities that have befallen you and that have reduced you to the present position of mere beasts have been due to mutual disunion. The Indians cut the throats of Indians and serve the cause of the enemy. You must be aware of the fact that the Englishmen who are ruling and tyrannising over us, have not got possession of the country by dint of their swords. They did not overcome us with their bravery. They got admission into India by means of treachery. They came to India by inflicting misery on us and by fomenting quarrels among us, by knocking Indian against Indian. While we were busy in cutting the throats of one another, they came here and took possession of the country. This is how the English have come here. This is the way by which the English maintained their possession for the last 150 years. For these 150 years they have been trying to prevent the union of Indians. In a thousand ways they have tried to sow the seed of disunion and to create differences between the Hindus and the Mussalmans. Every year you know, at one place or the other, the Hindus and the Mussalmans quarrel. Just consider that such quarrels do not take place in Indian States. How is it that it does not take place there? Such occurrences are every year repeated in places where there is British administration or the British Indian Government

Brethren, the English have maintained their rule in this country for the last 150 years by creating disunion here, by making Indians quarrel with each other. If you know the history of India there is no need to give proof. If you read the history of different countries you will reach the same conclusion. Thus it is your duty, if you have a mind to free India then it is your foremost duty, to bring about union among yourselves, both of you putting aside all your differences. If we want to quarrel, we shall do so against our enemy who is oppressing us. Fight with him who has made a slave of you. It is your duty as a noncooperator, to foster perfect cooperation among yourselves.

At present we are fighting against a very wise and brave nation. The English are the rulers, they are by no means fools or cowards. They

are our enemies and so we fight against them. It is only when we rise higher than them in points of virtue that we can defeat them. If they are brave we should be more so, if they are wise, we should be wiser. It is only when we too raise up a powerful army that we can defeat the English and their co-workers. Raise up an army and place it against the bravest of the soldiers. We must regulate our actions by the consideration that as long as we are cutting the throats of one another we cannot defeat them. We cannot attain Swaraj.

In my opinion, these two are the roots of noncooperation. Firstly, we must maintain perfect peace. Secondly, we must have a perfect union among ourselves. If we come to realize and to act upon these two principles, we have travelled more than half the distance. There are a few more things which we have to learn. Maintain peace. Every Hindu and Mussalman has to do it. In this very connection I want to tell you one or two things more. The first thing is this. Those who are our enemies, who are afraid of the union of the Hindus and the Mussalmans or of the Hindus and the Sikhs, are at present trying their best to create differences amongst us. They will exert their best efforts to create dissensions between brother and brother. You well know that they tried their best to foment quarrels between the Sikhs and the Hindus. You know that at present the English officials want to terrorize the Hindus by saying that the Mussalmans will invite the Amir of Kabul[11] and that a Muslim rule shall be established over the Hindus. Brethren, I do not know how far the residents of Jhansi and Bundhelkhand have been influenced by it. When I heard it, I could not resist laughing at them. When I found that it has had its effect on some persons, I was a bit disturbed. When we are confounded even by such absurdities, how shall we gain Swaraj?

Firstly, I want you to ponder a bit over the situation. The Amir of Kabul would be the greatest fool if he tries to rule here and if he invades our country. Secondly, all the great Muslim leaders of this

11 Amanullah Khan (1892-1960); King of Afghanistan from 1919 to 1929; the third son of Amir Habibullah Khan He declared Afghanistan independent in both internal and external affairs, and demanded recognition of this status by the Government of India. The resulting negotiations led to war with the British on 3 May 1919 A peace treaty was signed at Rawalpindi on 8 August 1919 by which Britain recognised Afghanistan's independence. Amanullah assumed the title of King His attempt to introduce social reforms on western lines roused strong opposition and he abdicated in January 1929.

country have explicitly declared that they do not want to have a foreign government. I have told you in the very beginning that we want self-government, we do not want the rule of any alien nation. At present, we are fighting with the English. We want to turn them out of the country. This would, by no means, indicate that we want the Japanese, the Russians, the Bolsheviks or the Afghans, to take possession of our country. If any other nation attacks India and tries to make a slave of us we shall fight against it as strenuously as we are fighting today against the English. We shall free India. We shall attain Swaraj. If there arises a necessity, we shall fight against even the whole world and shall attain Swaraj They are trying to set up the Amir of Kabul as a scarecrow and thereby they mean to terrorize you and to deceive you. I am prepared to define with Maulana Mohamed Ali the attitude which the Hindus should adopt as noncooperators if the Amir of Kabul were to attack the English. We say, you, the Government, are sinful, you violate our religion. We consider it a sin to help you, by no means is it our duty to help you. When the Amir of Kabul comes would you help this sinful Government? Would you participate in such iniquity? We would not tolerate the presence of the Afghans or of any other nation. If you withdraw yourselves silently and let us have Swaraj then we shall ourselves get rid of the Afghans. When we are free we shall deal with the Afghans. War or whatever else may come, we shall deal with it. But if the English do not give us Swaraj and if they say that they would not give it to us then we shall tell them plainly "if you like you may fight with them; we shall not help you even with a pice or a soldier".

I am not afraid of the Afghans. I do not fear anything whatsoever of this world. There is only one thing before us. The English Government is the obstacle between us and freedom. We want to get rid of it. We fear neither the Afghans, the Russians, the Germans nor the Bolsheviks. That which is suppressing us, that which is keeping us in slavery, is the British Government. We have to defeat it by means of noncooperation. By defeating it we have to attain Swaraj. If we have power enough to defeat and to bring to its knees the British Government, which is very powerful and which extends all over the world, remember there is not another which can successfully withstand us. It is not at all possible for Afghans to fight against us. The enemy which we have to fight at present is a powerful nation and Empire. We have to fight it to the finish. We ought to show no consideration to any other nation.

The second thing which disturbs our peace of mind is an old question. It is concerning cow-killing. You know that the Hindus and the Mussalmans have been fighting about it for a considerable number

of years. We lose our lives. You know that for a Hindu the cow is a very sacred animal; it is a holy animal. The Hindu is very much grieved when a cow is slaughtered. Every Hindu wishes that cow-killing be stopped. You also know that according to Islam the killing of cows is permitted. In spite of it I would not say anything whatsoever to the Mussalmans. I would repeat what the Muslim *Ulemas* and leaders have already said and that which I have heard *from them. They have said "cow-killing is religiously allowed* but it is not enjoined on the Mussalmans". That is to say every Mohammedan is at perfect liberty to perform the sacrifice of a cow or to act otherwise. In what way would it be possible for the Hindus to stop cow-killing? Just think of it. What would happen if you go to stop Mohammedans with your *lathis* or by threatening them? Just think what would be the result of such a proceeding. If you go to a person who is not a coward and who possesses some courage and try to get your own way by threatening him, what would be the result? He would not yield, on the other hand he would say "as they consider me a coward I will not yield to what they say". Surely he would perform the sacrifice. It is an impossibility to put a stop to cow-killing in this way. This cow-slaughter would only lead to manslaughter. The Hindus would kill the Mussalmans and the Mussalmans in their turn would kill the Hindus. There is only one solution to it. It can be done only by the united efforts of the Hindus and the Mussalmans. The Hindus ought to leave it to the Mussalmans and they should tell them in a conciliatory tone, "Brethren, we are pained by cow-slaughter. You know how deeply we love a cow. We trust that since we are your brothers you would not like to cause pain to your brothers. We leave it to you. We have full confidence that you will not deceive us and will do nothing which might pain us." But the Hindus have to leave this question to the Mussalmans. If the Hindus do not resort to violence or threats, then their humanity would compel them to show the friendly attitude which you show to them. It would become their duty to treat you as brothers.

It is the duty of the Hindus to help the Mussalmans in the matter of the Khilafat whether or not the Mussalmans stop the cow-killing. It is your duty to act according to your faith whether or not others act in the similar way. We shall, out of our love for the Mussalmans, exert our best to help them and will by no means resort to any oppression or excess whatsoever. Then it would be binding on the Mussalmans too to have regard for your welfare and to abstain from doing anything which may grieve you. There is an instance of it in last year's *Bakr-Id*. You know that cows are sacrificed on the occasion of the *Bakr-Id* festival. *Last year in Delhi and Bombay where, in previous years,*

thousands of cows were killed, the Muslim leaders advised the Mussalmans not to make these sacrifices, with the result that in Delhi, where about ten or twelve hundred used to be killed every year, only 40 or 50 were sacrificed last year. Even those forty were killed by the Government servants—either policemen or some of their friends. They killed simply to cause friction between the Hindus and the Mussalmans. They did so in order that it may be said to the Hindus that the Mussalmans killed the cows and the Hindus should not, therefore, make friends with them. Similarly, in Bombay only a few cows were slain instead of hundreds as in previous years and those few also owing to the pressure of the Government.

Brothers, rest assured that if you want to fulfil your duty then you must not provoke the Mussalmans. If you show the least highhandedness then you will not be able to achieve what you desire. I am laying stress upon this because I have heard that the Hindus have perpetrated some atrocities in Bundhelkhand and have taken a vow to put an end to cow-slaughter, failing which they would resort to force. I am also a Hindu and dislike cow-slaughter. I want that not a single cow should be killed. I see only one way of stopping the slaughter of cows and that is by cooperation. I hope that you will also strive to achieve this end, which can be done only by mutual love and goodwill. What I want to tell you is that much of the cow-slaughter is due to the English army. You are ready to fight with the Mussalmans and quarrel with them with *lathis*. Do you not know that if the Mussalmans kill 10, 20, 50 or 100 cows, lakhs of cows are slain for European soldiers? Do you not remember what happened in the Central Provinces? I have only heard, I do not know how far it is true. I do not know the exact number, but this much I know, that thousands of cows are killed for the Englishmen in the Central Provinces. It seems that the European soldiers cannot live without beef. On the one hand, they enslave you, on the other, they kill thousands of cows and destroy your religion, and you tolerate all this patiently.

You must pay attention to the question of cow killing and see what a large number of them are being slaughtered. You have at present no consideration for your *dharma* and so the country is being ruined. You do not get pure milk in your country. In thousands of ways the agricultural work is suffering. Cows are being killed every day. Even the best of them are butchered and the meat sent for consumption in the army. They are sent from one place to another. They are sent to Basra and other far off places. If you really want to do something, do stop this. How can you stop it? There is one way to do it. Hindus and Muslims unitedly and with love should first try to stop the slaughter of the lakhs of cows for the English army. We should have nothing to do

times. The same is the condition of the districts of Rai Bareli, Partabgarh, Sultanpur and Fyzabad.[12]

Now I ask, what courage have you shown? What has happened here which gives you cause for anxiety? Look at the district of Bijnor; security was demanded from 10 to 15 men who were the young men of the Khilafat Committee. They preferred to go to jail and they did go. Others are also inclined to go to prison rather than to furnish security to the British Government and thus aggravate their disgrace. What is happening in Partabgarh? Thousands are being sent to jail, but even that is not sufficient. If you want to fight the battle of freedom then you ought to be prepared for things such as happened in the Punjab. You ought to be fully prepared for martial law. You should realize that the time has come when you will be shot at. Your children will be shot at. Attempts will be made to dishonour your women. You will be oppressed in every way. You should know it for certain that unless you are prepared for this, you are not fit to be free. What do you think of freedom? Will you get it merely by shouting *Gandhi ki jai* without doing any *tapasya*? So long as the fear from your hearts is not removed you will not be successful.

Brethren, now cast away the fear of these *tahsildars*. Tahsildars are really insignificant. Cast off the fear of your officers. If you fear, fear only one and that one is God. Do not fear anybody else. Be firm in your *dharma* and faith. You know the fight that is going on is called a fight of *dharma*. Ours is the holy fight. Our revered Jagat Guru has said in English what some of you might not have understood, that this was the fight of *dharma* and for that reason he had taken part in it. For that reason he thought it his duty to put aside all other things and participate fully in the battle of Swaraj. Because Hindu *dharma* does not mean that on one side you worship God and bathe in the Ganges and on the other go and talk against *dharma*. The major part of Hindu religion is full of *dharma*. This has been said by the Jagat Guru. Mahatmaji says that this is the fight of *dharma*. Therefore, our duty is to go on with our work honestly keeping this in view. We must fight this battle in this way.

I have come to know that here in Jhansi a split had taken place among the residents. The residents of this city had turned against someone because he voted for the introduction of some new municipal tax. I do not know the facts in detail. I do not know what he did. Therefore it is possible you might be justified in getting angry with him. It is possible that what he did was wrong. Afterwards I heard

12. For the Kisan agitation, see Section 3, post

with the British army which is kept on our heads and which is sucking our blood. We will get Swaraj when the British army is isolated.

So I respectfully ask you again to be always united. Efforts are being made to disunite the Hindus and the Mussalmans. The Police and C.I.D. people will come to you in various forms. Amongst the Hindus they will come in the garb of great Pandits and Sadhus and among the Muslims they will assume the guise of great Maulanas and as such instigate you to quarrel. I wish to tell you that he who will do such things and try to create disunion and quarrel amongst you, whether he be a Hindu or a Muslim, is the enemy of the Hindus and of the Mussalmans and is the enemy of the country. You should consider him to be a man from the camp of your enemies. He is sent by them, and so must be turned out.

These two things which I have said are the roots of noncooperation. I hope you will fully act upon these two things. I hear that the people of Jhansi and Bundhelkhand are in fear. I am simply astonished to hear this. What has happened here which has frightened you? What repression has been resorted to here and how many thousands of you have been sent into jails? What Jallianwala Bagh has occurred here? What triangle has been erected here to whip your naked children? I was told that here are *tahsildars* and *thanadars* of whom you are afraid.

Brethren, you are afraid of *tahsildars* and *thanadars*. What is then your remedy? How can Mahatmaji encourage you? You know what is the condition of our province. Today in the districts of Oudh thousands of kisans are in jail. From each district five to seven hundred kisans are in prison. Perhaps from the district of Fyzabad alone, there are about 600 prisoners. Besides these another five to seven hundred men were already in custody; their trials have not taken place nor their cases heard. Bad food and water was supplied to them, and this spread diseases amongst them that killed many. Moreover, in the districts of Fyzabad, Partabgarh, and Sultanpur, the kisans have been sent to jail in hundreds. Now policemen and government servants go to the houses of kisans to threaten them. From morning to evening they do trouble the kisans. This has made their life intolerable. Remember that the trouble that one feels under such circumstances is far greater than that felt in the prison house. If the police are at your doors from morning to evening and trouble you the whole time then that is the real trouble. This is the state to which the Government servants have reduced those three or four districts which took part in the organisation of Kisan Sabhas. Even *panch* and every president of the *panchayat* is being threatened. They have been prosecuted and security for good behaviour was demanded. If they did not furnish it, they were locked up in jails. You must be knowing that in Rai Bareli alone fire was opened three

prison because I had given them notices to distribute. Their fault was that they did distribute these handbills. They committed no other crime. On that they were required to give securities. They had learnt their lessons well. They were no cowards. They were noncooperators. They declined to furnish security and preferred to go to the jail. The Collector went to jail and said, "If you say that you will do nothing in my district — if you like you may do so in other districts — I will release you". But they did not consent to it. They preferred to stay in jail and uptil now they are there. It was only a matter of speaking a few words, but they did not say that. In this way, your young men are fighting today while you are sitting at your homes. Men of your calibre fear the *tahsildar* and *thanadar*! For some time you have been crying out "Jai", but now the testing time has come. Do what you are now asked to do. Enlist yourselves in the army of Swaraj like soldiers and carry out the orders of your superiors like soldiers. Become members of the Congress, give subscriptions and work at the spinning wheel.

You know that Mahatma Gandhi has said that he is impatient for Swaraj It is my wish that this impatience for Swaraj should be shared by a great number of men. You must take to your heart the facts that the prevailing condition of the country and the existing government are equally unworthy of us. We cannot under any condition put up with it. We shall not take rest till we have removed the British Government and attained Swaraj. It is my wish that you people might take this on yourselves — that you shall not dissociate yourselves from noncooperation till you have got Swaraj. You shall stand by noncooperation and you shall be fighting whatever the consequences. I hope that after you have thought over the matter you will fear nobody but God. It is only then that Bundhelkhand and the Jhansi district would be in the forefront of this battle of Swaraj. And after you have helped us fully and Swaraj is attained you shall be entitled to say that it has been achieved through your efforts.

that you boycotted him in your dining parties and refused to see him. He could not get food or water. The sweepers too did not go to clean his house. Everything was stopped. Brethren, as I have said, I do not know the amount of wrong he has committed. I want to tell you humbly that noncooperators should not behave in this way. This is against the principle of the noncooperation movement and that of humanity. You must not stop the supply of food even to your enemy. Do you know that this is the fight of Indians? In a battle, if the enemy is wounded, then the duty of another enemy is to look after him and give him food and water. If we accord such treatment to our enemies, then we must know the way in which we ought to behave with our brethren who are against us. No doubt you have the right of boycotting the man who deceives you or goes over to the side of your enemy. You have the right of not contracting any friendship with him. You may not take part in a feast at his house. But you have not the right of depriving a hungry man of food or a thirsty man of water. Therefore, I am grieved to hear when I find that we commit such excesses. Now we must not repeat such harsh things.

I wish that we win this battle without resorting to such harsh treatment. I say that these Englishmen are tyrants and treat others harshly. The Englishmen have tyrannized the Mohammedans. Then will we too do the same? How will we say to others that they are tyrants and we are not? We have to win this war without committing any excess and strictly following the path of truth and *dharma*.

Brethren, I have taken about an hour of yours. Now I am coming to an end. My friends have come here from a long distance and they will tell you about the principle of noncooperation. I did not tell you one thing which, in my opinion, is necessary. A resolution will be moved that every one of you should be a member of the Congress and pay one rupee and work at the spinning wheel. These three things are before you. It is the *dharma* of every one of you to do all these things. If you strictly act up to this then you will proceed in the path of Swaraj. I wish that you yourselves go on further along the path of Swaraj and be ready to bear all the misfortunes that may befall you. Small boys are going to jails. I am not relating a story. Perhaps you have read it in papers. Six boys[13] were sent to jail at Partabgarh. They went to

13 Radha Raman, headmaster of the Daraganj Rashtriya Vidyalaya, Mangla Prasad, of the Gandhi Ashram, Banaras, and Bans Naram Singh, Murli Dhar, Jwala Prasad and Ram Harsh Singh, students of the Tilak Vidyalaya, Allahabad, were sentenced on 28 April 1921 to six months' simple imprisonment for distributing a leaflet *Kisanon ko Sandesh* issued by the U.P. Kisan Sabha above the signature of Motilal Nehru, the President of the Sabha.

have suffered from bad reporting and "mistranslation". Qualifying words and phrases are wanting in places and many gaps occur. The Sultanpur report is, on the face of it, a very brief summary of what I am supposed to have said. A speech lasting nearly an hour has been given in two typewritten pages. The Daira Shah Ajmal report is most disjointed and credits me with giving utterance to some ridiculous statements. I am reported to have said that "Jallianwala Bagh had been perpetrated all over India" I must have either said that Jallianwala Bagh had been perpetrated in India or that Jallianwala Bagh *may* be perpetrated all over India. The statement about Kabul is somewhat contradictory I certainly do not "like" the idea of an Afghan army marching into India and could not have said so. What I clearly must have said was that I was not afraid of an Afghan invasion and was prepared to oppose it if occasion arose. I have repeatedly stated that I do not want strangers as rulers in this country, whether they be Englishmen, Afghans, Bolsheviks or Japanese.

I need not however go into the question of the wording of the reports. It is clear to me that there has been some distortion of what I said. But I certainly have used strong language which is in places very bitter. The Daira Shah Ajmal speech dealt with the treatment meted out to the African negroes for several hundred years by the English. The figures I mention were taken from a book on the subject by a well known English writer (Morel's *Black Man's Burden*[3]) which I had read a short while before. My language is undoubtedly harsh and bitter but the subject was an unpleasant one and I felt strongly on it. I tried to make it clear that my words did not refer to Englishmen as such. If, however, I produced the impression that I was condemning the whole English people, among whom I number some valued and respected friends, I shall certainly be prepared to express regret to the public for unconsciously misleading it.

I have carefully considered these speeches and I can find no incitement to violence or untrue statement in any of them. I have, therefore, no occasion to express my regret. Truth and non-violence are the very foundations of my creed They have been enjoined upon me by the National Congress In all humility but with all the strength that is in me I have endeavoured to live up to these high ideals and I trust I shall ever continue to do so. But I give no undertakings to a Government with which I have noncooperated.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3 First published in 1920, it gave a vivid account of the atrocities committed by European imperialists in Africa

35. To G. B. Lambert[1]

Ramgarh
July 4, 1921

Sir,

Your letter No. 1339 dated the 16th June, 1921 together with some extracts was delivered to me by the Collector of Allahabad on the 22nd June[2]. I was also provided the same evening with what purported to be full reports taken by the C.I.D. of the three speeches made by me from which these extracts are said to have been taken.

The question whether the speeches I have delivered are or are not actionable under the general provisions of the existing law, has no practical importance in view of the special terms of the undertaking I am called upon to give, and in any case is one to which I am wholly indifferent. It is immaterial to me whether the Government does or does not proceed against me and I am not prepared to treat with it in any manner or to give it any undertaking to avoid such proceedings. What I am concerned with, however, is whether I have in my speeches been guilty of any deviation from truth or any incitement to violence. Noncooperation is to me a sacred thing and its very basis is truth and non violence. If in the excitement of the moment I have used any words or phrases which offend against these principles, then I have erred and it is my duty to acknowledge my error and to express my regret to the public, regardless of the doings or intentions of Government. But even if I have so erred I could not apologize to Government to secure my own immunity from a prosecution.

The three speeches to which my attention has been drawn were delivered many months ago — the Allahabad speeches as long ago as November, 1920 and the Sultanpur speech four months ago. I have no exact recollection of what I said then, but after a careful perusal of the reports you have sent me, I am inclined to think that the speeches

1 J N Correspondence, N M M L.
George Bancroft Lambert (1873 1945); Chief Secretary to Government of United Provinces, 1921-27 and Governor, October 1930 April 1931.

2 Jawaharlal received the following letter dated 16 June 1921 from Lambert :-
"I am directed to invite your attention to the speeches made by you which are attached to this letter. The Government is advised that these are actionable under the law Before taking action, however, it has decided to give you a *locus poenitentiae* if you will express regret and undertake not to deliver in future speeches directly or indirectly inciting to violence or calculated to create an atmosphere of readiness for violence In the event of your making such a statement, no proceedings will be taken in regard to speeches already delivered, nor will action be taken in regard to subsequent speeches as long as you observe the undertaking made"

1. In its relation to the kisan movement.
2. The trial and conviction of young workers.
3. The use of Security Sections and Section 144.

A very determined and persistent effort has been made by Government to kill this movement. Early in February, Ramchandra,[2] Kidarnath[3] and Deo Narain[4] were arrested. There was no disturbance of any kind and Government was emboldened to take concerted action to crush the kisans. Columns of cavalry, artillery and infantry were marched through the principal districts and people were forced to supply *rasad* etc. to the troops In one place schoolboys were made to salute the European troops.

In Rai Bareli and Fyzabad large numbers of kisans were arrested ostensibly for the part they took in the looting in January. Most of these kisans were innocent and their sole offence was that they were *panches*. Hundreds were kept in jail and then released without trial. Hundreds are still in jail awaiting trial. Some weeks ago there were nearly 700 kisans in the Fyzabad jail. They had been there for three months without trial. Prisoners who have been released say that the men in jail are given such bad food that cholera has broken out and they are dying in numbers.

In Sultanpur and Partabgarh districts there was no disturbance of any kind. But even here hundreds of *panches* and *sarpanches* are in jail or have been made to give security. The usual offence charged against them is *"Tum Sabha Ke sarghana ho aur logon ko Sabha men shank honepar majbur karte ho."*[5] Sometimes it is added that *"Nau aur dhobi band kar diye gai hain"*.[6] There was some truth in these allegations in December last and in January. But since then there had hardly been a single case of social boycott in these districts. False cases are started on these allegations and conviction almost invariably follows. Most of these cases are instituted by private parties at the instigation of the local police or zamindar.

2 Pandit Ramchandra Sharma (1875-1950), popularly known as Baba Ramchandra, was a leader of the Kisan movement in U P. after the First World War. Earlier he had worked for a number of years in Fiji On his return to U P he organised the Kisan movement in the districts of Pratapgarh, Sultanpur and Jaunpur, and enlisted the support of Congressmen such as Tandon and Jawaharlal He then parted company with the Congress movement.

3 A kisan worker of Fyzabad.

4 General Secretary of the Oudh Kisan Congress, who was sentenced in 1921 to two years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 200.

5 "You are leaders of the Sabha and you compel people to attend it"

6 "Even barbers and washermen have not been spared."

36. To the Secretary, District Congress Committee, Aligarh[1]

Allahabad
10 Aug. 1921

Dear Sir,

Sometime ago I wired to you suggesting that Pandit Bhu Dev Sharma[2] should withdraw the undertaking he had given to Government and should, in view of this undertaking, resign from his secretaryship of the District Committee. The Provincial Congress Committee has since laid it down that no person who has given an undertaking to Government can be an office bearer of a Congress Committee. Kindly let me know whether Bhu Devji has resigned or not. Has he withdrawn his undertaking? If he has then there is no rule to prevent him from continuing to remain Secretary but it will be proper for him to resign and seek re election I think that Bhu Devji realizes that the undertaking which he gave was a grievous error on his part and that the P.C.C. has no alternative course before it than the one it is following. If he withdraws his undertaking and takes the consequences, he will to some extent remove the effect of his lapse. There has been a great deal of indiscipline lately and this cannot go on without prejudice to our movement.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Copy of the foregoing forwarded to Maulvi A. M. Khwaja, Aligarh, for favour of information.

J. N.
Secretary

1 Khwaja Papers, N.M.M.L.
2 A Congressman from Aligarh

37. Repression in the United Provinces[1]

Repression in the U.P. has on the whole not been of the flashy type — the arrest of prominent leaders etc. — but it has been very thorough and there are few who have not felt the force of it. It may be considered under three heads:

1. Note prepared by Jawaharlal for Mahatma Gandhi sometime in June 1921 *The Independent*, 24 August 1921.

property. His offence was having made a speech in which, after enjoining non-violence for the present, he said that if noncooperation failed, Muslims would resort to the sword.

A number of Congress officials in the districts have also been sentenced under Section 108 or 124A.

Some volunteers have been sent to jail in connection with the anti-drink campaign.

There has been an extraordinarily wide use of the Sections and there is hardly a prominent worker who has not been served with a notice under Section 144. Even Maulana Mahomed Ali has received such a notice. I have a list of over a hundred with me and this is very incomplete.

Section 144 has also been used to proclaim whole districts and prohibit meetings. It has been made to serve the purpose of the Seditious Meetings Act.

In one case at least a notice under Section 144 ordered that the Khilafat receipts should be sold and the person concerned should not belong to any such organisation.

Security Sections are also taking the place of the Press Act. Securities amounting to Rs. 3,000 were demanded from the Editor and Printer of the *Pratap*[10] for certain articles written therein. The securities have been given.

Many gun licences have been confiscated. Government servants have been threatened with dismissal because their relatives were non-cooperators. Orders have been issued prohibiting the use of the Gandhi cap.[11] Notices have been issued threatening those who collect and those who pay subscriptions to the Swaraj Fund.

Congress and Kisan Sabha offices have been raided by the police.

In Benares some students and others were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

10. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi and Sheo Narayan Misra respectively.
11. The khaddar cap, modelled on the convict's headgear worn by Mahatma Gandhi in prison in South Africa.

The Seditious Meetings Act[7] has been in force in Fyzabad, Partabgarh, Sultanpur and Rai Bareli. Before this Act was applied, all meetings were prohibited under Section 144 in some of these districts. This order was obeyed and no meetings were held. In spite of this the Seditious Meetings Act was enforced. Our workers in these districts are harassed in a variety of ways. A host of C.I.D. men and uniformed policemen follow them and precede them. Villagers are threatened lest they join the Congress or help us in any other way. They have been told orally that to use a *charkha* is against the law, to shout "Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai" is a heinous offence, to sign the Congress form is illegal, etc, etc. Men who have signed are threatened with legal proceedings and bribes are extorted to hush matters up. Six young student workers in Partabgarh were sent to jail for distributing leaflets. They were asked to give security but they refused to do so. A similar case was started against six others at Sultanpur but it has been withdrawn. Two workers have been sentenced to 6 months' rigorous imprisonment on a false charge of breaking the provisions of the Seditious Meetings Act. One of these was beaten and kicked by a policeman.

It is difficult to give a proper idea of the hundred and one methods by which Government has tried to crush the kisans. The zamindars and the few local persons who call themselves Moderates have allied themselves with the Government and have succeeded in making the life of the average kisan a burden almost too great to be borne.

In the other districts of the U.P. a similar attempt, but on a much smaller scale, has been made to put an end to the kisan movement.

A considerable number of Congress and Khilafat workers have been proceeded against and sentenced. None of the leaders of the movement have so far been touched but many of their efficient lieutenants have gone. Among the more prominent persons against whom sedition cases have been started may be mentioned Pandit Dev Ratan Sharma[8] of Dehra Dun.

Hamid Ahmad,[9] a Khilafat worker in Allahabad, has just been sentenced under Section 121A to transportation for life and forfeiture of

7. According to the Act, all public meetings were banned and any person taking part or organising such meetings was liable to arrest without warrant.
8. Was convicted in June 1921 to 18 months' rigorous imprisonment for participation in the noncooperation movement.
9. Member of the Allahabad District Conference and of the Khilafat Committee, was sentenced in May 1921 to three years' rigorous imprisonment

39. Note to Mahatma Gandhi[1]

I spoke on three occasions at the Provincial Conference at Agra. I cannot repeat the language I used but I am very clear as to what I meant. On the first occasion I protested against some veiled references to violence. Hasrat Mohani[2] was our President and in his presidential address he expressed his dissatisfaction with the creed of non-violence. Several other speakers used violent language and apparently looked forward to a time when violence would have full play. All this took place on the Karachi Resolution.[3]. I laid stress on the non violent character of the struggle and said that swadeshi was our only hope

On the second day, I proposed the swadeshi resolution. Notice of an amendment involving a boycott of British goods had been given It was on this occasion that I probably used the phrases and words which have been misunderstood by Mr. Gandhi's questioner. My whole argument was that so far no way but that of swadeshi had been shown to us to achieve our freedom. I dealt with violence and disposed of it. I then dealt with various other objections. I stated that I desired most earnestly to rid India of English domination and the *charkha* and swadeshi were apparently the only means to bring this about.

I spoke a third time in answer to the amendment about boycott of British goods. I had opposed this amendment, and a very heated debate had taken place, about a score of speakers having spoken on either side. The amendment was put to the vote and lost.

1. This was Jawaharlal's reply to an inquiry made by Mahatma Gandhi regarding the charge that he had extended his condemnation of the existing system of government to its British authors and administrators Written sometime in November 1921, it appeared in *Young India*, 8 December 1921, and has been reprinted in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol, XXI, pp. 535 537
2. Maulana Hasrat Mohani (1875-1951), poet, scholar and ardent nationalist who founded an Urdu paper called *Urdu-e Mualla* In 1909 he was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 500. On his refusal to pay the fine, the police raided his library and confiscated books worth thousands of rupees After his release he started a quarterly journal, *Tazakra Shuara*, and was again imprisoned On his release he again joined politics and in 1921 became President of the Muslim League Was a member of the Constituent Assembly
3. The All India Khilafat Conference held at Karachi in July 1921 resolved that every Muslim should owe allegiance to the Khilafat and that the Indian Muslims should spare no sacrifice in upholding the integrity and prestige of the Khilafat and in liberating Muslim territories from non Muslim control.

38. To the General Secretary, A.I.C.C.[1]

19.10.21

Dear Sir,

The Hathras Congress Committee informs us that they have collected Rs. 16400/- for the Tilak Swaraj Fund but that all this is earmarked for Hathras work and must only be spent there. They have however out of their abundance sent us 25% of this, i.e. Rs. 4100/-. If their contention is correct the All India Committee is not entitled to 25% of their collections nor are we entitled to any part thereof. May I know your views as to what we should do with the amount they have sent? Should we retain it in toto or send you a part of it? I would suggest that under the peculiar circumstances of the case we should retain Rs. 2050/- and send you Rs. 2050/-.

2 A question has arisen in some districts as to the distribution of the collections made by means of *Muthia*, *Chutki* or *Khaliani*[2] systems between the Tilak Swaraj Fund and the Khilafat Fund. It is obviously impossible for two rival organisations to arrange *Muthia* etc. collections in the same place. The Congress and Khilafat Committees have therefore arranged that only one such collection should be made and this should be divided usually in the ratio of -/12/- to the Tilak Swaraj Fund and -/4/- to the Khilafat Fund. I understand that this arrangement is working in Behar also. The sanction of our Committee has been asked for this arrangement but our Council feels some hesitation in agreeing to this proposal. If you consider it necessary, kindly refer the matter to the Working Committee. A question of principle is involved and any decision is likely to have far-reaching consequences.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru
Secretary

1. J N Correspondence, N M M L.
2. At this time collections were also being made in kind *Muthia* was the quantity of grain which could be held in the palm of the hand and *Chutki* the quantity which could be lifted with three fingers *Khaliani* was the collection made at threshing places.

3

AMONG THE KISANS

It is evident that I have been misreported by some papers. I have not so far seen any report of my speeches and do not know which paper can have done so. My references to "English domination" or the "English Government" have been made to apply to the English people. I may have used the words अंग्रेजों को हिन्दुस्तान से अलग करना[4] or some such language, and the reporter may have seized hold of this without reference to the context. As a matter of fact, the very circumstance that I proposed to expel "the English" by swadeshi ought to have convinced the listener that I referred to the system and not to individuals. It would be absurd to try to expel a single Englishman by the *charkha*.

I cannot of course say that my feeling towards Englishmen as such is entirely impersonal. I hate the system but sometimes, in spite of myself, I cannot help feeling illwill towards a certain individual for some time at least, and sometimes the illwill is transferred to the English people as a whole. But the feeling is always momentary. I am really surprised at the general absence of illwill against the English.

It is somewhat curious that the sentence to which exception has been taken occurred in a speech opposing a boycott of British goods. I opposed this on the ground, *inter alia*, that it was opposed to the basic principle of noncooperation, that it was based on hate and not love and so on. No one who heard me and who understood Urdu could have gone away with the impression that I was taking part in a crusade against individual Englishmen.

It is always difficult to differentiate between a man and his action. I can well believe that if an Englishman insulted me, I would flare up and hit him. But I think this would be weakness on my part. I have not enough control over myself. I am apt to lose my temper at the slightest provocation. I am occasionally very angry with Englishmen. But I have never experienced the desire to "expel" Englishmen as such. In spite of everything I am a great admirer of the English, and in many things I feel even now that an Englishman can understand me better than the average Indian.

4 To expel the English from India

1. Vicarious Charity[1]

Sir,

The Independent announced a few days ago that a number of donations have been promised for the proposed Lucknow University. In the list of donors appeared the names of "Sessendi Estate[2] Rs. 1,00,000", and "The tenants of Sessendi Estate, Rs. 50,000". The cause of education is dear to us all, and every one in this province wishes the brightest of future to the new University. It is pleasing to see that the appeal for funds for the proposed University has been so nobly responded to. But there is another aspect of the question which is not so pleasing. The collection of funds for public objects by, or on behalf of the Government has, in the hands of underlings, become a method of extortion and oppression and it is high time that an effective stop was put to it. Many of us have some knowledge of the methods which were adopted to swell the numerous War Funds and War Loans. Are these methods going to be repeated in Oudh? The Sessendi Estate is at present under the Court of Wards, the taluqdar being considered, for some reason or another, unfit to manage his own estate. What right has the Court of Wards under these circumstances to part with large sums of their ward's money even for such a laudable object as the Lucknow University? I do not know if any consent was taken from the taluqdar in question. But such consent, even if taken, can count for little. If the taluqdar is not competent to manage his own estate he is hardly competent to exercise a wise discretion in the matter of large donations.

But far more important questions arise out of the announcement of the tenants' donation. The lot of the tenants in Oudh is not an enviable one. At this moment the relations between the tenants and the taluqdars in some parts of Oudh are far from happy. And yet a sum of fifty thousand is promised on behalf of the tenantry of one estate. It is difficult to understand how this round sum was arrived at. Was a plebiscite of the tenants taken? In what manner were they consulted and how many of them were consulted? Were the methods of the War Loan meetings repeated here and a small gathering got up to pass a mock resolution promising this lordly sum to the proposed University? Did the tenants *suo motu* and out of their generosity offer this donation or was there any pressure exercised?

1 Letter to the Editor, *The Independent*, 3 July 1920.
2 Sessendi was the largest village in the Pargana of Nigohan in Mohanlalganj Tahsil, Lucknow District

sympathy for the poor, can be in the wrong. *It is still less conceivable* that the officials who are always displaying 'unusual tact, cool-headedness and forbearance' can deviate from the straight and narrow path of virtue. And so the poor misguided tenant, led away from the path of mutual cooperation by irresponsible agitators from outside, must be in the wrong.

Your correspondent has, under the cloak of an alleged report, ventured to say that Pandit Ramchandra Sharma has been openly preaching violence to the tenantry. He has had the hardihood to repeat the allegations which the prosecution has made in various cases against Pandit Ramchandra, although most of these cases are still pending. Two cases have so far been disposed of. In one of them—a riot case—Pandit Ramchandra has been acquitted and the evidence for the prosecution relating to him has been disbelieved. The other case—under Section 107 Cr. P.C.—has had an extraordinary career and a still more extraordinary termination. An order has been passed in it binding down Pandit Ramchandra to keep the peace but I may inform you that an application has already been put in challenging the validity of this order and pointing out numerous illegalities and irregularities.

I have personally had occasion to investigate the nature of some of the cases which have been started against the kisans in Partabgarh, but *I do not wish to say much on this point till the cases are disposed of.*

Your correspondent refers to the Deputy Magistrate 'naturally' refusing bail to 31 accused in the Section 379 I.P.C. case. How natural this refusal was will soon appear when all the facts are known. Meanwhile I may inform you that all but one of the accused are actually on bail now.

I need say little about the 'Kisan Hitkarini Sabha'[2] to which your correspondent refers with great satisfaction. It has been sufficiently exposed in the public press already. *In spite of the blessings of the* aristocratic ones and the officials this 'Sabha' has failed to do any wonders or to evoke any response amongst the tenantry. Its sole function appears to be to collect a few taluqdars and their dependents and then to curse with bell, book and candle the irresponsible agitators who have the effrontery to visit the tenantry. I have little doubt that this must be a comforting, though somewhat fruitless, operation. Unhappily *the agitators are little affected by it.* They continue to flourish.

I am etc,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Allahabad, Sept 22

2 A society sponsored by some officials and taluqdars and a few Congressmen whose objective was to persuade the kisans not to agitate and to await more reforms and improvements effected in the taluqdars.

How is this sum to be rateably distributed over the tenantry and how will it be collected? Will it take the form of a tax like the well-known *Hathauna* or the modern *Motorauna*[3] taxes indulged in by many taluqdars? Will the payment of this be voluntary or enforced?

These are a few of the questions which arise and which demand an answer. It is bad enough for illegal exactions and oppression to take place in the domains of illiterate and self-seeking taluqdars who manage their own estates. It is far worse for the Government as represented by the Court of Wards to encourage such practices.

Yours etc.
Jawaharlal Nehru

Mussoorie, June 27, 1920

3 Exactions made in the form of ostensible gifts from the peasantry on the occasion of purchase of an elephant or a car by taluqdars.

2. Agrarian Unrest in Partabgarh[1]

Sir,

I have read with interest, not unmixed with admiration, the account of your correspondent of the 'agrarian unrest in Partabgarh' which appears in your issue dated the 23rd September. My interest is naturally aroused in a matter with which I have been connected for some time past; my admiration is extorted by the dexterity with which your correspondent has strung together a number of truths, half truths, untruths, opinions, surmise and pious hopes and called them 'a brief narrative of facts'. I do not wish to deal with your correspondent's opinions or hopes for the future. He is welcome to them, and may they give him joy! It is evident that in our views of men and things he and I are as the poles apart. But I do protest against his presenting an ill assorted jumble of his own fashioning and calling it 'facts'.

It is difficult for me to correct all the misstatements which abound in your correspondent's narrative within the limits of a letter to you. That would be presuming too much on your indulgence. The real facts will soon see the light of day. Meanwhile I would point out that your correspondent's respect and admiration for the 'territorial magnates and other aristocrats' and his love and devotion for the official hierarchy from top to bottom has greatly coloured his vision and restricted his view. For him it is difficult to imagine that the taluqdars who have it in them to rise to the full height of forbearance, charitableness, generosity and

1 Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 25 September 1920

AMRITSAR CONGRESS, DECEMBER 1919.

3. "Babas" on the Brain!

Facts about the Kisan Crisis[1]

I have read with considerable interest the communication of the special correspondent of *The Leader* on the "Agrarian disturbances in Rai Bareli" in its issue of the 20th. Some of the statements made by him almost take one's breath away. The correspondent has shown remarkable perspicacity in tracing the causes of the suffering of the kisans, but a little knowledge would have saved him from many pitfalls. An ounce of fact, it is said, is worth a ton of theory. Evidently strange stories of the *Babas*[2] have paralysed his judgment and made him lose all perspective and sense of proportion. Perhaps he is young in his trade. Has he met any of these wicked *Babas* in the flesh? May I assure him that the kisans have some very real grievances and that the *Babas* are not the root of all trouble? I was within easy reach of *The Leader's* correspondent at Rai Bareli and I would gladly have enlightened him on any point within my knowledge. But he chose to go to others for his facts. I would have told him that the kisan movement is older even than the present noncooperation campaign I would have told him what magnificent work Pandit Ramchandra Sharma—one of the dreaded *Babas*—has done amongst the kisans. I would have told him also the methods of his work which are very unlike the fanciful picture drawn by *The Leader's* correspondent. I would have advised him not to write such silly sentences as: "The whole teaching becomes easily acceptable when the first creed of the Mahatmic faith is laid down that the Congress of which the Kisans form a component part governs the land", a sentence which I have read and re-read in a spirit of awe and reverence. I would have further told him that no responsible worker amongst the kisans, including Baba Ramchandra, has ever asked the kisans not to pay their *lagan* or *pote*. I would have further advised him that the path of wisdom lay in not making comprehensive statements like: "The mistake is never corrected". The mistake where it has been made by an ignorant villager has immediately been corrected by our responsible workers In fact, it is because of Pandit Ramchandra's insistence that

1 *The Independent*, 21 January 1921
2 A general term for religious leaders

the *lagan* has been paid by a large number of people in spite of the failure of the rains and the consequent scarcity. All this I would have told him and much more.

The correspondent refers to the Unchahar meeting[3]. A very little investigation would have given him the true fact of the meeting. On the 20th and 21st December the Oudh Kisan Congress was held at Fyzabad and was attended by nearly 100,000 kisans. At this Congress a number of persons were chosen to represent the kisans at the National Congress at Nagpur. It was then announced to the kisans that a meeting would be held at Unchahar on the 15th January to give them the message of the Nagpur Congress. At this meeting the kisan delegates to Nagpur were expected to speak. Pandit Ramchandra never announced by word of mouth or writing that Mahatma Gandhi would preside or even attend the meeting. It is true, however, that some irresponsible or evil-disposed person issued anonymous notices that Gandhiji would attend.

The correspondent refers to a 'Babaji' "whose whereabout are at present unknown". From the context it appears that Pandit Ramchandra is meant. I am surprised at the manner in which such a positive statement of fact is made without any proper enquiry. Others are not as ignorant as the correspondent. A word to me would have enlightened him. Pandit Ramchandra has been addressing mass meetings in Bara Banki district. He went to Lucknow from there and desired to proceed to Rai Bareli but some of his friends, including me, advised him not to go there as his presence was sure to attract large numbers of people, and we wished to avoid big meetings. He is at present stopping with me at Anand Bhawan and will be happy to give an interview to the special correspondent of *The Leader*.

I have already written at some length and do not wish to take up more of your space. But much still remains uncorrected in *The Leader* version. I have never heard of the *Thakurain*[4] story, nor strange to say, has the Babaji.

3. A meeting of kisans, announced to be held at Unchahar in Rae Bareli district on 15 January 1921, had to be cancelled because of the order of the Deputy Commissioner.

4. *The Leader* (20 January 1921) alleged that Pandit Ramchandra had a *Thakurain* (a rich land-owning high-caste woman) from Pratapgarh as his disciple but later he fell out with her and incited his men to destroy her mango crop.

BARRACK NO. 4, DISTRICT JAIL, LUCKNOW.
Jawaharlal was in this Barrack from 16 June to 4 October 1922.

lie upon lie is piled up. Cunningly worded communiques are issued by Government and by dint of sheer repetition it is made to appear that the blame largely rests with the kisans. Even the redoubtable Sirdar Birpal Singh has ventured to deny the charges brought against him by a host of people. A little labour and some common sense will show the absurdity of many of the allegations made against the kisans. To those who know the kisans the allegations of the wrong doings must have sounded almost incredible. I have had the privilege of working for them, of mixing with them, of living in their mud-huts and partaking in all reverence of their lowly fare. And I, who for long believed in the doctrine of the sword, have been converted by the kisans to the doctrine of non violence. I have come to believe that non-violence is ingrained in them and is part of their very nature. For long they have been too peaceful, even to the extent of submitting to evil, but now the fear of consequences is fast disappearing and their long lost courage is coming back. But they hold fast to non violence. It is not the masses but we, nurtured in an atmosphere of the West, who talk glibly of the inefficiency of peaceful methods. The masses know the power of *Ahimsa*.

The kisans were shot at Munshiganj because they would not go away at the bidding of the Deputy Commissioner or even of Sirdar Birpal Singh. They sat there patiently regardless of threats, not fearing the serried ranks of the armed police. They offered no violence, neither were they over-awed by fear of death. They had come to help a comrade and they would not desert him. Some were cooking. The mounted police charged into the crowd and trampled many and then it is said that some threw stones. And Sirdar Birpal Singh had to fire in self-defence and the police had to fire though no one ordered it to do so. A strange story which grows stranger as the days go by.

It is easy to blame the kisans. I would beg of their critics to transplant themselves from their armchairs for a while to the banks of the river Sai and imagine what I saw on the afternoon of the 7th January. Thousands of kisans were gathered there. The police and military were near them, armed and ready for all contingencies, and on the other side of the little river blood was being shed, the blood *of their kith and kin, bone of* their bone and flesh of their flesh. What must they have thought at the time? How behaved? Cowards would have run away. The rash and the violent would have lost their head and charged the police and the military. And who, according to the ethics of the modern world, would have blamed them if they had sought to rescue their brethren under fire? How would their critics have behaved?

4. The Rai Bareli Tragedy[1]

History, they say, repeats itself. In the month of April, in the ever memorable year 1919, the heart of Amritsar City was soaked with the blood of Indians, slain most wantonly and cruelly, and a day or two later Sir Michael O'Dwyer blessed the deed. A year and eight months have gone by, twenty fateful months in the history of India and the British Empire. Britain still holds India even though that hold may be slackening. The British Empire still continues its iniquitous career even though it be on the brink of a precipice. Sir Michael O'Dwyer has gone but Sir Harcourt Butler,[2] the just, the wise, the sympathetic, remains to carry on the traditions of British rule and British justice. And so it is that Indian blood is again shed and the Governor hastens, without respite, without enquiry, without thought, to offer his congratulations to all concerned "and specially Sirdar Birpal Singh".[3] And the Commissioner says ditto and the Deputy Commissioner says Amen

And what of the kisans? Poor, miserable, downtrodden men and women, ever in want, ever suffering, seldom complaining. What of them? Their blood lies on the banks of the Sai river,[4] their bodies rot under a thin layer of sand or in the open, a prey to the beasts who feast on the dead. And the living have a worse fate reserved for them They have the police and the minions of the taluqdars torturing them and beating them and imprisoning them. Yet not a word of sympathy came from the Governor. He sat in his palace well looked after, well fed. What did he wreak of the hungry millions? What did he care for the sorrowing widows and orphans? They were but the victims of law and order. The Pax Britannica must be preserved even though the peace it gives is the peace of the grave.

I have read with amazement many of the accounts and comments on the Rai Bareli tragedy. A fresh version appears almost daily and

1 *The Independent*, 22 January 1921
This article deals with the police firing at Fursatganj bazar in Munshiganj, Rae Bareli on 6 and 7 January 1921, when 13 kisans were killed.

2 Member of the Indian Civil Service, at that time Lieutenant Governor of the United Provinces, known to be partial to the taluqdars.

3 A Sikh taluqdar of Rae Bareli whose ancestors had migrated from the Punjab to U P In the Rae Bareli tragedy of 7 January 1921, he was generally believed to have fired the first shot After the firing he was specially congratulated by the Lieutenant Governor

4 A river flowing through Unao, Rae Bareli and Pratapgarh districts in Uttar Pradesh

must have been swiftly carried to the D.C. for he sent me a message immediately requesting me to depart by the next train. I sent a reply assuring him that I would do no such thing unless a proper order was served on me. Firing could not have taken place then. I proceeded but unhappily I arrived just too late. The news of my approach apparently galvanised the twins and brought on the crisis. And, ever since, the thought has haunted me that perhaps I was the immediate cause of the firing. Perhaps if I had not gone there, the firing would have been delayed at least. Was it, I wonder, my approach that induced Sirdar Birpal Singh to fire "in self-defence"? But I forget the fact that the firing order was not ordered by any one. The officer-in-charge of the military expressly ordered his men not to fire. The Superintendent of Police disclaims all responsibility, the Deputy Commissioner did not do so. He says he was too confused. Was it then the Sirdar who gave the word of command or was it a case of spontaneous combustion? But whatever it was and whoever did it, it was well done. It was thoroughly justified and great credit is due to all concerned, for so say all our masters.

Truly it is an amazing thing even in this land where bureaucrats may do as they like. Incompetents may misgovern us and may shoot us down but their actions are sure to be justified and they gain the plaudits of their superiors even though the price of their folly be the lives of the innocents. The greater the folly the swifter comes the applause. The Deputy Commissioner knew that I was coming; he knew that I would probably succeed in dispersing the crowd, but he would not hold his hand, he would not wait a few minutes.

By beat of drum a red-capped chaprasi has announced that Sirdar Birpal Singh is guiltless of shedding blood. The Deputy Commissioner stands by his friend and proclaims his innocence. He was not so sure a few days ago. Soon after the firing I spoke to Birpal Singh and he gave me a short account of the firing. There was no mention there of the crowd attacking No reference to the necessity to take offence. The D C. said nothing on the point. Later when all Rai Bareli people were saying that Birpal Singh was guilty of the deed, he denied it utterly. Even then there was no mention of the shot fired in self-defence. The D.C. when asked stated that he could not swear whether Birpal Singh had fired or not. But the plot developed. Seeing the impossibility of a total denial, the Sirdar took refuge in "self-defence". And memory returned to the Deputy Commissioner and he proclaimed to all and said that Birpal Singh had not fired. Do they imagine that anyone believes their effusions? Do they think that by drumbeat they will instil affection for Birpal Singh in the minds of his tenantry? He has ventured to deny the charges brought against

I know not what they thought but I saw and marvelled at their demeanour. They behaved as brave men, calm and unruffled in the face of danger. I do not know how they felt but I know what my feelings were For a moment my blood was up, non-violence was almost forgotten—but for a moment only. The thought of the great leader, who by God's goodness has been sent to lead us to victory, came to me, and I saw the kisans seated and standing near me, less excited, more peaceful than I was—and the moment of weakness passed I spoke to them in all humility on non violence—I, who needed the lesson more than they—and they heeded me and peacefully dispersed. On the other side of the river, however, men lay dead and dying. It was a similar crowd with a similar object. Yet they poured their hearts' blood before they would disperse.

5. The Rai Bareli Tragedy—Truth About Sirdar's Firing[1]

Pandit Martand Dutt Vaidya[2] has been arrested and charged with having looted vegetables and lemons and damaged and removed furniture. So runs the latest message. A gentle and harmless individual, not over venturesome, not daring too much. Yet he has been arrested and charged with a paltry theft. And his complainant is a Sirdar, not the hero of the Munshiganj firing, but a worthy cousin of his. It was Pandit Martand Dutt who sent me an urgent message to go to Rai Bareli, it was at his house that I stayed. That was crime enough. Why should the vegetables and lemons be dragged in?

The descent on Rai Bareli was ill starred; it interfered with the well-laid plans of the powers that be. It upset the composure of the Deputy Commissioner, and his friend and companion Sirdar Birpal Singh. An officious person told the D C. [Deputy Commissioner] that I was expected by the mail and suggested that I should be allowed to address the kisans and disperse them if possible. But the twins would have none of it. Was an agitator, a firebrand, to play the part of peacemaker where Government and taluqdar had jointly failed? As a limb of the law told me, they were not there to increase my prestige or to see my influence over the kisans. I arrived at the station and news of it

1 The Independent, 23 January 1921

2 Martand Dutt Vaidya (1885 1957); a leading Ayurvedic doctor of Rae Bareli

anger they may have given some slight cause, some nominal excuse. I was much put out by this idea. One of the first lessons that our workers have to learn is that they must not come in conflict with the authorities. *Their business is to work quietly and steadily and* not to land themselves unnecessarily in jail. And so I was sorry when I received the telegram from Partapgarh, fearing the cause.

But my fears were ill-founded. On arrival at Partabgarh on Thursday morning I found that their sole offence was that they had acted as messengers. They had at the bidding of their leaders taken a large number of notices and were distributing them. They were not responsible even for the wording of the leaflet.

I was glad. I rejoiced that our young colleagues had in no way erred. I asked them what they proposed doing and there was but one answer. I warned them of the consequences. I painted the life in jail in as dark colours as possible butt they did not falter. Fresh from school and colleges, life offered much to them but they did not heed the call. The playing fields beckoned to them in vain, for they had realised that there was only one game in India today worth playing, one adventure worth having—the great game with Swaraj for goal, the high adventure which leads to freedom. And so they laughed at the prospect of jail and of suffering. Gallant young fellows unused to the law, knowing nothing of courts and their ways, they stood up in the dock, where many an elder might have been afraid, and flinched not. Right bravely they answered the questions put to them and gave their final refusals to execute bonds. They put on their handcuffs and marched barefoot on the hot metalled road, but there was a smile on their lips and a song in their hearts.

Four of them are young lads of the Tilak Vidyalaya[2], Allahabad, worthy sons of a school which bears the *honoured name* of the Lokamanya. The fifth, Radha Raman, was one of the first students who noncooperated in Allahabad. He came to me soon after the Calcutta Special Congress and left the Law College where he was studying A hard and enthusiastic worker, he has been one of our most valued colleagues in Allahabad. He served as a teacher in the Tilak Vidyalaya for a while and then opened a national school in Daraganj, of which he became the headmaster.

2. A national high school in Allahabad, started in 1921 for the benefit of those who had boycotted the existing educational institutions. It was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi Motilal Nehru was the president of its managing committee.

him But he has to answer for much more than that incident at Munshiganj. He has to answer for the suffering he has caused to his poor tenantry. He has to answer for long continued oppression, for the turning out of many kisans from their hearths and homes. Is it any wonder that there is no love for him in the hearts of his tenantry? Is it any wonder that the sight of him is anathema to them?

Yet he is their liege and he is their representative in the Provincial Council. He has gone to the Council of H.E. the Governor to fight for the rights and liberties of the constituents! I wonder if there is one person in a thousand of his constituents who trusts him or who does not bitterly dislike him.

Backed by the D.C, basking in the sunshine of the Governor's smile, he grows bold and venturous. It was not so when I saw him on the 7th of this month. He was meek and mild as a lamb. With folded hands he begged and beseeched me to leave Rai Bareli. I did not know then of his part in the affair. I had not heard of his misdeeds. I realise now why he was so desirous to have me return.

And terrorism reigns in Rai Bareli. No man is safe who has offended the taluqdar No voter, who refrained from voting in obedience to the country's mandate, can escape the wrath of Birpal Singh or his underlings. It is but another stage in the long agony of the people. Too long have they suffered and put up with the tyranny. But the time for reckoning has come, deliverance is near. The kisans have awakened from their long slumber and all the King's horses and all the King's men will not frighten them or keep them back from their goal.

6. The New Offensive[1]

Sir,

Late on Wednesday night I received a telegram from Partabgarh, informing me that Radha Raman, Mangla Prasad and four others were being proceeded against under Section 108. Only the day before they had gone and I wondered what could have happened in 24 hours in the Partabgarh district to threaten the stability of the British *Raj*. For a while I almost feared that perhaps in a moment of excitement or

1 *The Independent*, 30 April 1921.

7. Statement in Pratap Case[1]

I came to Rai Bareli on the day when firing at Munshiganj took place. I am not positive of the date, but I think it was the 7th January 1921. When I returned from the Nagpur Congress, it was 5th January 21. Some kisans came to me at Allahabad from Rai Bareli district. They wanted me to go with them. I excused myself then, but the next day, that is the 6th January 1921, I received a telegram from Pandit Martand Vaidya stating that the situation was serious and he wanted me to go immediately. I went the next day by mail. I sent a wire to Martand Vaidya informing him that I would be coming by the mail. At the Rai Bareli station I was met by a considerable number of persons, (say three dozens of persons). I was taken to a house from the station, which I subsequently came to know was Dr. Awantika Prasad's.[2] When I got there I asked why I was summoned and what the position was, and I was told of the Fursatganj firing which had taken place a day before. I think I was also impressed that a large crowd of kisans had assembled at Munshiganj; and the Deputy Commissioner was trying to disperse them. I suggested that we should go to Munshiganj and so we proceeded. As I was leaving Pandit Awantika's, a crowd of one hundred or two hundred persons surrounded my carriage. I stood up and addressed them requesting them to be peaceful and non violent, and not to be frightened at any display of force. As far as I remember I asked them to disperse or to go home, but I may have asked some of them to follow me.

When I proceeded to Munshiganj, I had no idea that the situation was so serious as to result in firing. I met them with an idea of holding a meeting and asking the kisans to disperse. I saw on the way to Munshiganj bridge near the jail 2 or 3 groups of kisans. They started following me, but were stopped by the sentries in front of the jail. I told them to obey the order of the sentries and to go by another road. On my way I received a small note from the Deputy Commissioner. This note asked me to leave Rai Bareli by the next train. I scribbled a reply on the back of the same paper to the effect that I

1 *The Independent*, 6 July 1921
Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, editor, and Sheo Narain Mishra, publisher, of the Hindi daily *Pratap* were accused of defamation. On 24 and 25 June 1921, Jawaharlal appeared as a defence witness in this case. Vidyarthi later died while trying to prevent the Hindu-Muslim riots in 1931 in Kanpur.

2 Secretary of the Rae Bareli District Congress Committee.

Mangla Prasad also came to me in the early days of noncooperation. Since then he has worked with me and has not spared himself in any task which has been entrusted to him. He stood by me on the banks of the Sai River near Munshiganj when the firing took place on the other side. He then spent some time in the Rai Bareli district and brought much comfort to the poor afflicted kisans. On the opening of the Vidyapith at Benaras he joined it as well as the Gandhi Ashram there. For the last month he has been working in Partabgarh district.

These are the persons who are confined in Partabgarh jail today, *clad probably in convict's garb, herded together with criminals* and rogues. They suffer for no fault of theirs. For if fault there is, it is my father's, Pandit Motilal Nehru's, above whose signature the leaflet was issued, and it is partly mine for my share in its production. Not theirs who but did our bidding. But we are not proceeded against, only the young and inexperienced are made to pay the penalty. The Germans, it was said during the war, had a special liking for killing babes and children. Has the Government of India also a *penchant* for youth? There are plenty of men still left in India in spite of a hundred and fifty years or more of British rule and they await with interest and an eagerness difficult to curb any action which the Government may take against them. I have ventured to do exactly what my young comrades did and for which they have been sent to jail. I have done the same, only more ostentatiously and after due notice to the learned judge. I know not what the result will be. I have no desire to go to jail yet, though sometimes I yearn for the rest it might give. But I have no intention of leaving my comrades in the lurch. To us, who labour, it is no pleasant thing to see our comrades removed one by one to jail and yet to remain ourselves, the favoured ones, in the comparative comfort of our houses. God grant us the strength and courage to continue on the way pointed out for us by our leaders, calmly and dispassionately, with but one goal—Swaraj within the year.

Yours etc.

Jawaharlal Nehru

I had this talk with the Deputy Commissioner. The Deputy Commissioner at first would not allow me to go back to the audience. He said he was afraid I might excite them. He permitted me to go when I pointed to him that it was in his own interest that people should be made to understand what his order was. I am not sure whether Sirdar Birpal Singh said anything to me on this first occasion; but I think he said something to me to the effect that I should accede to the Deputy Commissioner's request and leave Rai Bareli. I went back to the audience and requested them to go back home. I imagine I spoke for about four or five minutes I went back to the Deputy Commissioner and he told me that my little address of four or five minutes had produced a good impression on the kisans. He said he wanted to have a talk with me and suggested that I should get in his car. To begin with he did not mention his house but I got into the car and it started. I asked him where we were going, and he said he was taking me to his house. In the motor the Deputy Commissioner, Sirdar Birpal Singh, and I carried on a somewhat disjointed conversation. Sirdar Birpal Singh was laying stress on the desirability of my leaving Rai Bareli; and so did the Deputy Commissioner. We went straight to the Deputy Commissioner's house. The Deputy Commissioner left me in his office room with Sirdar Birpal Singh and a senior Deputy Collector whose name I do not remember. The Deputy Collector was a Mohamadan. The Deputy Commissioner went to take his tea.

When I first saw the Deputy Commissioner near the bridge, his right hand was covered with blood. I do not think there was any blood stain on the hands of Sirdar Birpal Singh. The Deputy Commissioner and I hardly spoke to each other during the time I was at his house. I mean there was no connected conversation between us. Sirdar Birpal Singh and I exchanged a few sentences in the Deputy Commissioner's office room. The first sentence referred to the fact that we had met before; when and how I do not remember. Reference was then made to Sirdar Nihal Singh who, I believe, was a relation of Sirdar Birpal Singh and who was my contemporary at Cambridge. As far as I remember Sirdar Birpal Singh laid some stress on the aggressive attitude of the kisans at Munshiganj On my way from Munshiganj bridge in the Deputy Commissioner's car, the Deputy Commissioner and Sirdar Birpal Singh told me that every effort had been made to disperse the kisans but they had failed to do so. I ventured to say, perhaps had I arrived in time I might have succeeded where they failed. Sirdar Birpal Singh said what could I have done when the Deputy Commissioner and others had failed. I said that I would have appealed to their heart while the Deputy Commissioner probably appealed to force.

might be prepared to obey a formal order, but I would not go away if a request was made. Therefore I asked whether it was an order or a request. I proceeded on my way.

When I was some distance from the bridge on this side (the Rai Bareli side) of the bridge perhaps 150 yards from the bridge, some men came running up to me. They were in an excited state and they told me that firing was taking place on the other side of the bridge. I alighted from my carriage and walked towards the bridge. At the bridge head I was stopped by some sentries who referred me to the European officer. The officer told me that he could not allow any body to go across the bridge, as firing was taking place. I went to a plot of land, on the right hand side of the road to Munshiganj; and then I asked all the men that had come with me and all the kisans to gather there. My purpose was to calm them and to tell them to go home. These persons gathered round, and the audience requested us to address them as batch after batch came from Rai Bareli side. There must have been about 2,000 men there.

In addressing them I laid stress on non violence and I also impressed upon them that on no account should they be frightened. I told them that this was an hour of trial and they should control themselves. I am not sure whether I referred to the grievances of the kisans or to All India grievances, but I must have referred to some grievances; and I asked them to continue their struggle for redress. Those men were, as far as I remember, absolutely peaceful. I remember one or two interruptions during my speech; and the news of the firing on the other side of the bridge had affected them. I had no idea at the time as to how firing had started nor did I know who started it, and I did not say anything as to the origin of the firing. I merely told the audience that firing was taking place on the other side of the bridge upon the kisans I may have drawn this moral from firing that Government held Indian life cheap. I think I addressed them for about twenty minutes.

A man came to me and said that the Deputy Commissioner wanted to see me. I told the audience that I was going to the Deputy Commissioner and specially appealed to them to be peaceful even if I were arrested I then went to the Deputy Commissioner who was sitting in a motor car on the road. The Deputy Commissioner told me that he had issued an order forbidding all meetings. Therefore, he said, I was of no use at the place and should go away. I told him that if a formal order to that effect had been issued I would obey it. I also suggested that I should go back and tell the assembled kisans of the new order prohibiting meetings. Sardar Birpal Singh was sitting with the Deputy Commissioner in the same motor with him when

what the people told me about the casualties, but undoubtedly I gathered an impression from their talk that there had been a large number of casualties as the result of the general firing. So much so, that I expressed the desire to visit the wounded the next day. As far as I remember two or three persons stated that they were on the other side of the bridge with the kisans when the firing took place and that the information they gave me was first-hand information. From Pandit Awantika Prashad's house I went to Babu Kismat Rai's house and spent the night there.

The next morning Pandit Gauri Shankar[4] and I motored down to Munshiganj and beyond for several miles. My first purpose was to see how the firing had taken place, and secondly to see the wounded whom I might come across in the neighbouring villages. Beyond the bridge we came across two wounded men in a bullock cart coming towards Rai Bareli. We spoke to them, saw their wounds and asked them about the firing. They told us that they had been fired at by Sirdar Birpal Singh They said that he fired at them from a motor. They referred to the Munshiganj firing. We visited one or two villages some distance from the road side. I certainly saw one wounded man in one of these villages. This man certainly gave me some account as to how he had been hit, but I do not remember it in detail clearly. In every village I visited, I came across a large number of men who were full of the story of the firing. They were all very indignant at the firing and many of them accused Sirdar Birpal Singh of having started the firing. I met another wounded man on my way back to Rae Bareli who was being brought in a *doli*. He was probably not in a fit condition to converse. I do not think I enquired of him about the firing. I directed the men who were carrying him to take him to hospital.

The far end of the Munshiganj bridge had been partially blocked by a bullock cart, and a number of sentries were guarding it, on the morning of the 8th January. Sentries were also stationed on the road beyond the bridge. A sentry on horse-back stopped the men accompanying the *doli* from going towards Rae Bareli. The wounded and their attendants could go but no one who had no special business was allowed to go. On my way back I noticed a number of bodies piled up unceremoniously on a *tonga* near the Munshiganj bridge. The *tonga* was then standing without a horse by the side of the road. They

4 (1857-1955), a lawyer of Allahabad who worked as a junior of Motilal Nehru till he joined the noncooperation movement in 1921. He was also active in the kisan movement and was arrested in 1922 and sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment

As I have stated, I had no connected conversation with the Deputy Commissioner at his house, and I exchanged a few sentences with Sirdar Birpal Singh. No reference was made by either to their own part in the firing. It was repeatedly stated to me by the Deputy Commissioner and Sirdar Birpal Singh that the kisans would not disperse and so firing was resorted to.

Q.—Did Sirdar Birpal Singh tell you that he had been attacked by the kisans and consequently he had to fire in his self-defence and fired one shot or not?

A.—Sirdar Birpal Singh did not tell me that he had personally been attacked by the kisans, nor was any reference made to his firing at all.

I must have stayed at the Deputy Commissioner's at least for about 2 hours. The Deputy Commissioner left the house with Sirdar Birpal Singh about an hour after our arrival there. Just before leaving he asked me to remain there and to excuse him for half an hour. I protested and said that I had been there long enough. He went on insisting and thereupon I asked whether I was under arrest. He said no, and asked me to stay there, and on his return to leave the station. Sirdar Birpal Singh made the same request.

I must have stayed at the Deputy Commissioner's at least for about an hour but he did not return. Then I went away in the motor car, which the Deputy Collector who was keeping me company provided me with. In the office room, Sirdar Birpal Singh was with me on the first occasion, and perhaps he came in and out later on.

On leaving the Deputy Commissioner's house I intended going to Awantika Prashad's house. On my way I met Mr. Kismat Rai[3], who was coming towards the Deputy Commissioner's house. I stopped to speak to him and he told me he was going to the Deputy Commissioner's to see me. He added there was a rumour that I was arrested and he was going to find out if that was true and to see me if possible.

I went to Pandit Awantika Prashad and Babu Kismat Rai followed me on a bicycle. At Pandit Awantika Prashad's house I found a large number of persons, in a somewhat excited state. They were under the impression that I had been arrested. I informed them briefly of what had happened from the time I left with the Deputy Commissioner. We then discussed the day's incidents and especially the firing at Munshiganj. I was told by some persons present that the firing had been begun by Sirdar Birpal Singh. I cannot say definitely

3. A lawyer of Rae Bareli who appeared for the kisans.

As far as I recollect, Pandit Mata Prashad[5], Dr. Awantika Prashad and Babu Kismat Rai were there. I cannot recollect the name of any other man. I have no recollection of anybody telling me of the firing by Sirdar Birpal Singh at Babu Kismat Rai's house in the same evening. I did not take down the names and addresses of my informants about Sirdar Birpal Singh's firing at Dr. Awantika Prashad's house, nor did I take down any notes of their statements. I am not aware of anybody taking any notes that night. Very likely, while I was at Dr. Awantika Prashad's house that night, I may have expressed my intention of going to Munshiganj next morning and to visit the wounded in the village nearby. Besides me and Pandit Gaun Shankar, there was Pandit Mata Prashad with me when I went to Munshiganj in the morning but there was no conveyance accompanying me. I took down the names and addresses of the two wounded in the bullock cart whom I met on the way out (on the morning of the 8th). I did not make any record, so far as I remember, of their statements regarding the firing. I attached considerable importance to the allegation that Sirdar Birpal Singh had fired. At that time, and in fact till the morning of the 9th January 1921, it never struck me that the question of Sirdar Birpal Singh's firing was open to doubt, as no news of denial reached me; and therefore I took no special pains to record anybody's statement.

Q.—What was your impression on the 7th or 8th January 1921 as to whether Sirdar Birpal Singh had fired under orders or without orders?

A.—I had no definite impression on this point. My general impression was that Sirdar Birpal Singh had taken part in the firing and had probably been the first to fire. On the morning of the 7th and 8th January 1921 I had no definite impression as to whether firing in general had taken place under orders or not, but there was a vague idea in my mind, based on reports made to me, that proper orders had not been given for firing.

Q.—Would it have made any difference to you, had the firing taken place under proper orders or without order?

A.—The question of firing by military or police on the civil population depends on the circumstances attending the particular firing. The fact that the order to fire was or was not given is one of the circumstances in the case. In a properly regulated state the presumption is that the firing is only resorted to when it is absolutely necessary That

5 Vice President of the Rae Bareli District Congress Committee

looked like dead bodies. There was a cloth covering the bodies, but their legs were sticking out. I think about a dozen legs were sticking out, there may have been ten or fourteen. We returned to Rai Bareli, to Babu Kismat Rai's house.

I sent a letter by a messenger, on the 8th January 1921 to my father Pandit Motilal Nehru, informing him of what had occurred, but I did not ask him to come here. He motored to Rai Bareli and arrived here on the night of the 8th January 1921. I went to the hospital with Pandit Motilal Nehru and others in the forenoon of the 9th January 1921. We interrogated the wounded men in the hospital and saw their injuries. Some of them stated that Sirdar Birpal Singh had fired at them I saw among these wounded the two men whom I had met coming in a bullock cart near Munshiganj bridge on the previous day. Probably I also saw the third wounded man whom I had seen in the *doli*, but I am not certain. There was quite a large crowd in the hospital, but I may mention that after our arrival, Raja Rampal Singh also came and saw the wounded. He came when we were still there. Raja Rampal Singh was especially taken to the wounded and he heard them repeat the story, namely that Sirdar Birpal Singh had fired at them. I cannot remember the details as to whether they told him that Sirdar Birpal Singh fired on them on foot or from a motor.

I went away from Rai Bareli on the night of the 9th January with Pandit Motilal Nehru.

I came to Rai Bareli again within a few days. This time I accompanied Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. I now recall that I came on the 14th January 1921. I went with Malaviyaji straight from the station to Munshiganj bridge. He walked all over the area where the firing had taken place.

I wrote the article appearing in *The Independent* of the 23rd January 1921 headed "The Rai Bareli Tragedy". That article must represent my feelings and impressions at the time I wrote.

I was educated at Harrow and after that at Trinity College, Cambridge. I took my degree at Cambridge. I qualified for the Bar from the Inner Temple I practised for some years in the Allahabad High Court.

CROSS EXAMINATION

Cross examined, witness said :—

I can give the names of some persons who were present probably at the house of Dr. Awantika Prashad on my return from the Deputy Commissioner's house but I cannot say the name of the person who informed me of the fact that Sirdar Birpal Singh had started the firing.

My general propaganda is for noncooperation. On the morning of the 8th January 1921 I merely motored through and did not alight from the motor until I had to walk over the scene of the firing. A Labour Corps man came up to Pandit Malaviya during our visit to the scene of the firing on the 14th January 1921. I remember that he came to us and told us as to where Birpal Singh stood when he fired. I think he told us that Birpal Singh left the Deputy Commissioner in or near the car and marching ahead a few paces fired into the crowd.

Questioned regarding his adherence to noncooperation witness said, "I want every resident of India to join the noncooperation movement."

RE-EXAMINATION

In re examination, witness said :—

On the 9th January 1921, as a matter of fact Pandit Gauri Shankar took down very brief statements of the wounded in the hospital, especially as to whether Birpal Singh fired or did not fire.

presumption does not apply to firing in India at present. Therefore the fact that the order to fire had or had not been given would not have weighed with me much.

Q.—Since you were inquiring into the matter, what was there to prevent you from seeing Birpal Singh and asking him to tell you his version of the incident of the firing?

A—I was rather chary of going near any of the officials in order to make inquiries and as, to my knowledge, Sirdar Birpal Singh was mostly with the Deputy Commissioner, I did not think it worth while to go to him I knew he was so closely connected with the Deputy Commissioner that he was half an official himself. My object in making such inquiry as I was making was to encourage the kisans and to drive out any fear that may have been instilled in them by firing. I did not intend the punishment of any culprits. The process that I adopted then and subsequently was to interview the kisans individually and collectively and by means of personal conversation strengthen them.

Q.—Was it or was it not the object of your inquiry to find out how and by whom the firing was started and whether it was under orders or not?

A—I did not hold any proper inquiry on the 8th of January 1921. My object then was simply to give relief to the wounded and to hearten them. On the 9th, when I heard that Sirdar Birpal Singh had denied the allegation made against him, I had to inquire into the matter as to who started the firing or not. I met both the wounded in the hospital and the people outside on the 9th. From the wounded and the people I inquired as to whether the firing was under orders or not.

At the time of our visit to hospital on 9th January 1921, Pandit Gauri Shankar was asked by Pandit Motilal Nehru to note down the names and addresses of the wounded there. We went probably at about 11 a.m. Large number of persons came to see Pandit Motilal Nehru on the morning of the 9th January 1921.

I cannot give definitely the names of the persons who came to see Pandit Motilal Nehru on the morning of 9th January 1921. We must have decided to visit the hospital probably in the morning of the 9th January 1921. People who came to see Pandit Motilal Nehru must have heard that we were going to the hospital.

I presume that Dr. Awantika Prashad and Mata Prashad must have been frequent visitors to Pandit Motilal Nehru during our stay at Rai Bareli, but I cannot definitely say so from memory. When I returned from Munshiganj on the 8th January 1921, I heard that Martand Dutta Vaidya had gone from Rai Bareli. He may have come back by the evening of the 8th January 1921, but I am not positive.

4

NONCOOPERATION

1. Prison Diary[1]

जवाहरलाल नेहरू

Jawaharlal Nehru

District Jail

Lucknow

From Dec. 3rd 1921

1 NMML.
Mahatma Gandhi began his first non violent noncooperation campaign on 1 August 1920. Jawaharlal played an important part in organising the campaign in his home province, and he and his father were arrested on 6 December 1921.
The full text of the diary maintained by Jawaharlal during his first term in prison is reproduced

came of Kapil Deo's arrest. Thus began the new chapter in Allahabad. I was surprised to note how little this news affected me. Months of expectation and preparation had removed all element of surprise. As father said the net was closing and our turn was next. My mind was full of the work of the office which I should do before I was removed to jail I calculated that another 48 hours would be ample for me to finish my work. I therefore decided to go to Lucknow as promised on the night of the 7th. I expected arrest then.

December 6th Tuesday

Got up very early—about 4 a.m. Wound up Jallianwala actts. and Swaraj Sabha accounts. Wrote some other important letters. Proceeded to city—saw Purushottam and others. Spent some time in office —went to District Court to attend Kapil Deo's trial. Many of us went on *ekkas towards Curzon bridge and met Kapil Deva there.* Kapil was of course most cheerful but I was surprised to note the good spirits of the others arrested with Kapil Deva—A good omen.

The trial was marred by some members of the public indulging in boisterousness—an unseemly exhibition in court. The poor judge in a bad way He appeared to be the convict and the prisoners the judges. All the prisoners presented a brave attitude—one or two erring on the side of bravado. Sentence not pronounced.

I proceeded to office with the intention of remaining there till late in the evening. Disposed of some correspondence. Addressed a number of volunteers from Tilak Vidyalaya. Started drafting rules of volunteer corps[8]. News came that the police had come to search the office. The office people began to get excited and to crowd together. Told them to carry on their work without paying any attention to searches or other interruptions. On interviewing police officer found that he had a warrant for searching Tilak Ashram. Told him to proceed with his business. Kamaluddin accompanied him. Evidently some mistake had been made by the police. They were under the impression that the whole building, including the P.C.C. office, was styled the Tilak Ashram As it was, under the warrant they could search only two living rooms which had a few *charkhas*, a carpet and little else Meanwhile I proceeded with my work in the P.C.C. office.

8 The volunteer corps was in November 1921 declared an illegal association under the Criminal Law Amendment Act and Jawaharlal was convicted for organising it in U.P.

This diary was begun on December 9th 1921—the great hartal day in Lucknow—at 8.30 a.m. The book is a present from Dr. Asharfi Lal the sub-assistant surgeon of the jail. I begin this diary from Dec. 3rd.

On the 3rd December I visited Lucknow—attended the Council meeting and the Volunteer Board meeting. In the evening Khaliquzzaman[2] & I and some others motored all over the city distributing hartal notices—created quite a sensation in the town. Returned to Allahabad by the night train.

Dec. 4th—a busy day—went to the Provincial office early—found it locked as it was Sunday. Got it opened and with the help of Kamaluddin,[3] Jia Ram[4] & Sitla Sahai,[5] prepared some urgent circulars for District Congress Committees etc. Drafted communique on behalf of Council about Volunteer Corps. A challenge to Govt. which it has at last taken up. Father and Purushottam made some changes and then it was sent late at night to *The Independent*. A weight was taken off my mind We had openly taken up the gage of battle thrown by Govt The way was straight and clear now.

Dec 5th Monday

The "Ind" with its brave head line over our communique and the list of names delighted the heart. Kapil Deo[6] came in the morning with Chand Mal[7] of Agra. He saw the communique and said that I had made the way to jail clear for the 75. Perhaps he did not realise how soon his words would come true.

The whole day in office—feverish activity to finish off as much work as possible before the jail opened its gates for us. Returned late in evening very tired. Was reading in bed at about 9 p.m. when news

2 Choudhry Khaliquzzaman (b. 1889); a leading Congressman of the United Provinces till 1937, when he joined the Muslim League, author of *Pathway to Pakistan*.

3 Moulvi Kamaluddin Jafri, prominent Congress leader from Allahabad.

4 Jia Ram Saxena (b. 1891); a barrister and leading Congressman of Bareilly; general secretary of U.P. Provincial Congress Committee 1921; interned December 1921 to January 1923.

5 A kisan worker and Congressman of Rae Bareli district He took a leading part in the no rent agitation of the thirties.

6 Kapildev Malaviya, nephew of Pandit M M. Malaviya; a leading criminal lawyer from Allahabad, he played a leading part in the noncooperation movement He was Chairman, Allahabad Municipal Board in 1925.

7 A prominent lawyer of Ajmer, and, in his early days, a Congressman

crowd gathered outside. Father addressed it and so did I. Eventually father & I accompanied by the *Kotwal* went by motor to the District Jail, Allahabad. On the way the *Kotwal* mentioned that I would *probably have to go to Lucknow the same night as my warrant came* from Lucknow. At the District Jail I parted from father. The *Kotwal* & I then proceeded to the S. P.'s house. I was kept waiting in the car outside for half an hour. Then a European inspector came with me and took me to Phaphamow station arriving there at about 9.30 p.m. Waited there till 11.15 p.m. Then travelled to Lucknow by the night train in a 1st class compartment accompanied by the European inspector and 5 policemen.

Dec. 7th

At Lucknow station the S P met us. An offensive person Came in a prison motor van accompanied by 12 policemen to District Jail, Lucknow. Arrived here at 7 a m. Was kept waiting in hall for 2 hours because, I was told, a warrant for me had not come.

At about 9 Khaliq and many others came out to interview Hakim Abdul Qavi[15] and others. They saw me and carried me back with them to their barrack.

Shauna[16] came to see me a little later

I found the following inside the barrack:

1. Khalquzzaman
2. Hakim Abdul Wali[17]
3. Balmukund Bajpai[18]
4. Mohan Lal Saxena[19]
5. M. Salamatulla[20]

Under trial

15 A noncooperator from Allahabad.

16 Shrimati Shivrajvati Nehru, wife of Krishanlal Nehru

17 Joint Secretary of the Muslim League and *Oudh Khilafat* Committee and in charge of the National Volunteer Corps, was sentenced in December 1921 for distributing pamphlets calling for a hartal

18. Member of the Lucknow District Congress Committee; was sentenced in December 1921 to six months' simple imprisonment and ordered to pay a fine of Rs. 100

19. (1896 1965), joined the noncooperation movement in 1920, member, U P. Legislative Council and chief whip, Swaraj Party, *1924 26; General Secretary,* U P. Provincial Congress Committee, 1928-35, took a leading part in organising the boycott of the Simon Commission in Lucknow in December 1928, Minister for Rehabilitation, Government of India, 1948 50.

20 Moulvi Salimatullah; member of Lucknow Town Congress Executive Committee, and of U P. Provincial Congress Committee, President, Oudh Khilafat Committee; sentenced in December 1921 to one year's simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 200

Ranendranath Basu[9] then turned up and informed us that his turn had come and that he was under arrest. Rather unexpected. I was writing to Khaliquzzaman at the time informing him that I would arrive in Lucknow on the morning of the 8th. I finished the letter and had it despatched and then had a short talk with Ranu. It did not dawn on me even then that there was going to be a general round up. Just then Kamaluddin said that he had heard that all the 75 P.C.C. signatories of the Volunteer manifesto were being arrested. News also brought that Purushottam Das arrested. Some one also said that Anand Bhawan was being searched. I then realised that my turn had also come. I addressed a few words to a small crowd which had gathered round Ranu's car and requested Sitla Sahai to look after the Provincial Office. The police were waiting outside evidently expecting a new search warrant for the P.C.C. office. Kamaluddin went off to the Khilafat office as he heard that it was being searched. Just then Bechu arrived from Anand Bhawan. He had been sent by father with the news that the house was being searched & that I should return. I motored back with Rabindranath Banerji[10] in his car. Even he, confirmed moderate as he is, was somewhat put out by the happenings.

Arrived at Anand Bhawan at about 6.30 p.m. Found the family gathered together in father's room. Father having his evening bread & milk and giving general directions for the future. I heard that Mohan Bhai[11], Shama Bhai[12] & Joseph[13] had been arrested. On the whole every one was taking matters very cheerfully. Only mother had a lost expression Kamala behaved admirably. Indira[14] made quite a nuisance of herself objecting to her food and generally getting on people's nerves.

The *Kotwal* was searching the All I.C.C. office. This lasted some time. Father and I dictated some messages to the public. Quite a

9 A lawyer of Allahabad and a leading Congressman, was imprisoned in December 1921.

10 A doctor at Allahabad and a member of the Municipal Board.

11 Mohanlal Nehru.

12 Shamlal Nehru (1879 1934); son of Nandlal Nehru and Jawaharlal's cousin. He took part in the protests that followed the arrest of Annie Besant in 1917 In later years, however, he parted company with his uncle and cousin

13 George Joseph (1887 1938), a barrister of Madurai who served for a time as editor of *Young India* and of *The Independent*; took a leading part in the Vaikom Satyagraha, left the Congress in 1924 and returned to it in 1935.

14 Shrimati Indira Gandhi (b 1917); organised *vanara sena* (monkey brigade), a children's organisation sponsored by the Congress in the thirties, took an active interest in student movement in 1937, married Feroze Gandhi (d 1960); was imprisoned in 1942, Congress President, 1959 60, Minister for Information and Broadcasting, 1964 66, Prime Minister of India since January 1966.

2. Message on Occasion of First Arrest[1]

To my colleagues of the U.P. Congress Committee:
Some days ago you did me the high honour of appointing me the General Secretary of the Committee. I have not been able to serve you in that capacity for long. Today a higher honour and a greater service await me and I welcome it with the conviction that you will carry on the work of the Committee more vigorously and successfully than my co-secretaries and I were able to do. It has pleased Providence to give this province a chance of leading the fight for liberty. May you, the representatives of the people, prove worthy of this high trust. The work of the Provincial Committee must on no account suffer, workers from the districts must come to the headquarters and keep the flag flying at the citadel. I trust that there will be a full attendance of members at the General Meeting on the 13th in Allahabad.

Theirs will be a great responsibility. May God guide their deliberations and give them strength and wisdom. One thing I would have you remember. There can be no compromise or parleying with evil This struggle must and can only end in complete victory for the people. Any weakening, any giving up of principles will be a betrayal of the thousands who have given of their best for the cause.

Au Revoir! We meet again, I hope, as free men.

MESSAGE TO THE CITIZENS OF ALLAHABAD

Friends,—I go to jail with the greatest pleasure, and with the fullest conviction that therein lies the achievement of our goal. Forget not that there is a complete hartal on the 12th instant, and that it is the duty of every man to enrol himself as a volunteer. The most important thing is to preserve complete peace and an atmosphere of non violence. In your hands is the honour of Allahabad, and I hope it is quite safe therein. I trust you will always be in the firing line in the battle of Swaraj and make the name of our city immortal in our annals,—I am, your friend,

Jawaharlal Nehru

1 *The Independent*, 5 December 1921.

6. Shaikh Shaukat Ali[21]
7. Dr. Lakshmi Sahai[22]
8. Dr. Shivaraj Narain Saxena[23]
9. Lal Bahadur Tripathi[24]

and the following convicts:

1. Dr. Ibrahim Hai of Pilibhit[25]
   (1 year Sec 108
   since 19/3/21)
2. Radha Krishna Bhargava of Muttra[26]
   (1 year Sec 108
   since 7/10/21)
3. Madan Mohan Chaturvedi of Muttra[27]
   (Sec 124.
   since July 1921)
4. Maqsud Alum of Pilibhit[28]
   (1 year Sec 108
   since 7/11/21)
5. L. Sri Gopal of Lucknow[29]
   (Sec. 124 & 153
   1½ years & fine
   since June, 21)

21 Shaikh Mohammad Shaukat Ali, President, Lucknow District Congress Committee, Secretary, Oudh Khilafat Committee; sentenced in December 1921 to six months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 100.

22 Manager of the National School at Lucknow and Vice-President of the Town Congress Committee, sentenced in December 1921 to six months' simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs 100

23 Joint Secretary of the Lucknow Town Congress Committee; sentenced in December 1921 to six months' simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs 100.

24 Manager of the Khadi Ashram at Lucknow and member of the Congress Volunteer Corps, sentenced in December 1921 to six months' simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs 100

25 A noncooperator of Pilibhit, imprisoned on 19 March 1921 on his refusal to execute a bond for good behaviour.

26 President, District Congress Committee, Mathura, arrested in October 1921

27 Sentenced in June 1921 to one year's rigorous imprisonment including two months' solitary confinement

28 Member, United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee; sentenced in November 1921 to one year's simple imprisonment.

29 Sentenced in June 1921 to 18 months' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 100

2. Office-bearers should be elected in jail vacancies. Men in jail should be considered to be on leave and on their release those appointed in their stead should automatically revert. A rule to this effect should be passed.

3. There is a possibility that all 73 signatories to the volunteer pledge[2] may be arrested. As in that case all office holders, except Prof. Kripalani[3], will be imprisoned, the Provincial Committee must draw on the District Congress Committees for workers. If Murari Lal[4] and Jia Ram are still at large the responsibility of the work of the Provincial Committee will fall on them Raj Bahadur[5] and Kripalani are also suggested as likely Secretaries. Mela Ram[6] of Saharanpur is also recommended for secretary-ship as being a man of experience with powers of organization Other suggestions are Jhuman Lal[7] of Saharanpur and Beni Madho[8] of Hardoi. The names of Khwaja Abdul Majid and Maulana Masud Ali[9] are not suggested owing to the excellent work which they are doing in Aligarh, and Azamgarh. They should be left there to organise.

3. (A) A treasurer should be elected. Mrs. Mohan Lal Nehru is suggested for this post and arrangements are said to have already been

2. The pledge, as formulated by the Congress Working Committee in November 1921, read as follows

"So long as I remain in any volunteer organization I shall faithfully and diligently carry out all the instructions received from my superiors I shall observe the pledge of non violence in words and in deed, and shall inculcate the spirit of non violence amongst others I shall regard the pledge as binding upon me so long as the policy of non violence is continued by the nation I shall run all risks attendant upon the performance of my duty"

3 Acharya J B Kripalani (b 1888), General Secretary of the Indian National Congress 1934 46 and President, 1946 He later resigned from the Congress and was one of the founders of the Congress Democratic Front and later of the Praja Socialist Party.

4 Dr. Murari Lal Rohatgi, a leading doctor of Kanpur, who in 1905 resigned from Government service and started private practice He became the chief organiser of Congress activities in Kanpur and the neighbouring districts Was imprisoned five times in connection with the national movement and was chairman of the reception committee at the Kanpur session of the Congress in 1925.

5 An advocate of Etah district who had been a loyalist but renounced all his titles and joined the noncooperation movement in 1920

6 (1875 1967), a leading lawyer of Saharanpur

7 An advocate of Saharanpur

8 A wealthy merchant

9 Maulana Masud Ali Nadvi, a member of the Shibli Academy, Azamgarh, from its foundation in 1915 till his death in 1967 A supporter of the Congress and the Khilafat movement

3. Message to the United Provinces[1]

Men and women of the United Provinces:

We are in jail, but we are most happy for we know that you are carrying on the great fight. We know that you have responded to the great call. The great cities of Lucknow, Allahabad and Benares, have demonstrated your determination. You are today making history which your children and your children's children, freed for ever from a foreign yoke, will glory in and unborn generations will bless your name. We pray for you. May the Lord bless you and give you strength to fight on and on till victory crowns your sacrifices.

To our own city of Allahabad what shall we say? How shall we who are of it, congratulate it or its brave citizens? The great and peaceful hartal, the march of hundreds of its children to jail and the enrolment of thousands in the army of Swaraj fill us with joy and hope. Our hearts are too full for many words. We can but offer our prayerful thanks to the Giver of all strength. May the flag of freedom that Allahabad has unfurled ever fly and the sons and daughters of our city come forward in an unending stream to sacrifice themselves at the altar of Swaraj.

1 Given to the representative of *The Independent* by Jawaharlal on behalf of Motilal Nehru, Purushottamdas Tandon, Syed Kamaluddin Ahmad Jaffri, Ranendra Nath Basu and himself. Published on 18 December 1921.

4. A Note on the Organization of the Noncooperation Movement[1]

1. The meeting of the Provincial Congress Committee convened for December 13 must be held in spite of Government prohibitions. Only members should be admitted.

1 Govt of India, Home (Political) Proceeding No 767 of 1922, National Archives of India

A confidential C I D. report of 19.12.21 states that "an interesting note of 6½ typewritten pages has been recovered during a search of the Provincial Congress Office at Allahabad It must have been written by Jawaharlal Nehru in the jail lock up between December 9 and 12, and is addressed to members of the Provincial Congress Committee A pencil note on the top of the letter states that the imprisoned leaders agree with the views expressed'.

volunteers Section 144 may be disobeyed in so far as small gatherings are concerned. No disobedience should occur when there is a danger of breach of the peace. The decision regarding disobedience of orders under Section 144 should be left to District Committees and in the case of towns of over 50000 inhabitants to Town Committees. A start should be made at Allahabad and Lucknow which have become the two storm centres. Other likely places are Azamgarh, described as a "Congress Stronghold", and Dehra Dun "which also promises well". Only persons who have signed the volunteer pledge will be allowed to offer Civil Disobedience

12. Other activities must recede into the background but still be carried on. Success must be measured by the number of volunteers and by the number in jail.

13. Police duties should be entrusted to volunteers but only when there is a large supply. To begin with picked men should be stationed at street corners in couples They should assist the public in every way, give information, get conveyances and afford protection They must on no account provoke a conflict with the police If arrested they must march quietly away This work should begin on a small scale and then be extended.

The note concludes with a remark that there was difference of opinion amongst leaders regarding the publication of the names of all volunteers but Motilal Nehru and the majority agree that full publicity should be given. All the above should be considered by the Council on the morning of December 13 and detailed directions on the points raised in the note should be sent to all District and *Tahsil* Congress Committees. Only the main resolutions and not the full directions should be sent to the press.

5. Message on his Release from Prison[1]

I do not know why I have been released My father, who is suffering from asthma, and many hundreds of my comrades are still in jail. I have only this to say—keep on fighting, keep on working for independent India and do not rest. Do not forsake your ideals. Do not go in for false compromises. Continue to follow our great leader Mahatma Gandhi and remain loyal to the Congress Be active, be organised and remember above all, the *Charkha* and *Ahimsa*.

1 *Aaj*, 10 March 1922 Original in Hindi
Jawaharlal was released on technical grounds, after serving only 87 days, which was less than half his sentence

made to transfer the balance of U.P. Provincial Congress funds to her name A sum of Rs 50,000/- sanctioned by Pandit Motilal Nehru for payment to Provincial Committees should be obtained from Seth Jamna Lal[10], treasurer of the All-India Committee. It is pointed out as desirable that some of the Congress funds should be kept elsewhere than at the Allahabad Bank.

4 District and Town Committees should elect representatives for the Provincial Congress Committee in jail vacancies without delay.

5 The Provincial Congress Committee should arrange for the council to discharge its functions in case of need. The possibility that Martial Law may be introduced is suggested, even then the work must be carried on without hitch.

6 Delegates must be elected for the Ahmedabad Congress both by the Provincial Committee and by District Committees. As delegates are arrested their places should be filled. The province must be strongly represented The test of quality is the signing of the volunteer pledge. Let those who sign this be elected delegates.

7. All the old members of the Volunteer Board being in jail, a new Provincial Volunteer Board will have to be appointed by the Committee as the fight is centering on the question of volunteers. The best workers should be appointed to this Board.

8 Lucknow is to be congratulated on its magnificent hartal on December 9 in spite of police intimidation and horse whipping of workers by police sergeants Equal success is expected in Allahabad. Both cities should be congratulated by the Provincial Committee.

9 Lucknow and Allahabad should be congratulated on their response to the call for volunteers Allahabad is said to have given a thousand and more are said to be daily coming forward. Malihabad is noted as having specially distinguished itself and the figure there on December 8 is said to have been 2160.

10 All Congress workers should devote their energies to the enrolling of volunteers and the filling of jails by this means. They should enrol volunteers and their names should be published in the press. The law regarding volunteer associations must be broken as openly and as often as possible. The idea that men should be kept out of jail to carry on work outside should be discarded.

11 So far as the enrolling of volunteers is concerned, Section 144 should be disobeyed. Large gatherings should be avoided if forbidden, as violence may occur then but where there is a sufficient number of

10 Seth Jamnalal Bajaj (1889 1942), a wealthy financier who became a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi and was for many years treasurer of the Congress

3. Village Congress circles should elect an executive committee or *Panchayat*. This *Panchayat* should be responsible for:
   1. Settlement of disputes in the village.
   2. Primary education of every child—male or female.
   3. Introduction of spinning wheels in every home.
   4. Hygiene and sanitation of the village.
   5. Promotion of Hindu Muslim unity.
   6. The raising of the suppressed classes and the infusion of democratic and brotherly ideas amongst the people.
   7. Carrying out of all other items of noncooperation resolution and other resolutions of the Congress so far as they apply to the village.
4. Each village *panchayat* shall as far as possible consist of representatives of each important caste in the village.
5. Volunteers or workers from outside should not accept the office of President, Secretary or Treasurer, in any village or *tahsil* Congress Committees. They should act as advisers and give all possible help to the local leaders or *panches*.
6. Congress Committees or circles should work in harmony with the branches of the Kisan Sabha. In many villages a *panchayat* has already been established by the kisan sabha, and the same *panchayat* will probably serve as the Congress executive for the village.
7* Workers should always consult the *panches* and other leaders of the various castes in the village before starting work there.
8. Workers must remember that the collection of money for the Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund[2] is an essential part of our work. They must therefore make every effort to raise funds but the greatest care must be taken about these monies. Complaints are frequently made of the mishandling of public funds and many unscrupulous persons are deluding the villagers and making collections in the name of the Congress. It is therefore necessary that only those persons who are thoroughly reliable and known should personally collect money. As a rule donations should be sent direct to the secretary or treasurer of the Provincial or District Committee—small sums may be deposited with the treasurer or mahajan of the village *panchayat*. Volunteers should as far as possible not handle funds Receipts should be issued for all sums received and proper accounts kept.

2 The All India Tilak Memorial Swarajya Fund was started in 1920 in memory of Lokamanya Tilak who died that year, for financing the National Service and the noncooperation movement. The Fund was administered by the various Provincial Congress Committees and the All India Congress Committee.

6. Instructions to Workers of U.P. Congress Committee[1]

1 The attention of all workers is drawn to the following instructions issued by Mahatma Gandhi :—

(i) The cornerstone of noncooperation being non-violence, workers are expected to refrain from violence alike in word and deed.

(ii) Workers should not countenance violence in word or deed among those with whom they come in contact.

(iii) Propaganda consists not in pointing out the defects of British rule but in pointing out the means of remedying those defects.

(iv) Emphasis should therefore be placed more upon what the people should do than on why they should do it.

(v) Social boycott in the shape of stopping the service of barbers, dhobis, medical help, conveyances should be discouraged.

(vi) Big meetings should be avoided.

(vii) People should be advised to observe perfect silence at meetings and to refrain from pressing towards the centre.

(viii) Workers should rely more upon personal canvassing than upon speeches.

(ix) Personal canvassing should consist merely in placing the argument in favour of particular items of noncooperation.

(x) Cooperators should be approached in a friendly spirit.

(xi) All police orders should be scrupulously obeyed. It should be remembered that civil disobedience remains suspended.

(xii) People should be told clearly that suspension of payment of taxes or resignation on a national scale of Government service whether military or civil has not yet been commenced and should not be resorted to.

(xiii) In the event of disputes between zemindars and ryots, they should be settled by friendly discussion or intervention. Pending establishment of Swaraj we must bear out our disabilities as far as possible.

2 The strengthening of the Indian National Congress organization is the most important work before us. Workers should, therefore, study carefully the new constitution and the new rules framed by the Provincial Committee and concentrate on enrolling members of Congress Committees.

1 This incomplete note, in Jawaharlal's handwriting, now in the Allahabad Municipal Museum (Ms No 138b), was clearly written sometime after his release in March 1922.

Saxena, remained there for two days. During this short time however we succeeded in visiting a considerable number of villages and of satisfying ourselves of the truth of many of the allegations made We were assisted in our work by the President and some members of the District Congress Committee of Sitapur.

A quarter of the area we visited is under the Court of Wards and most of the allegations of ill-treatment made were against the employees of the Court of Wards. The police also came in for their share of blame and many complaints were made to us of wholesale bribery and extortion. A column of Sikh troops was also marched through the district but we received no complaints of their behaviour. Their conduct was generally approved and appreciated by the people and contrasts were made between their attitude and that of the Court of Wards employees and the police. The contrasts were very much to the disadvantage of the latter two.

In some villages we had difficulty in getting the residents to give evidence. The women were thoroughly frightened and the men were in fear of the Court of Wards officials and employees. Some men indeed had left their villages and wandered about in the neighbourhood not daring to return One man, from the statement we possess, had been badly beaten and had fled from his village lest worse should befall him. He had left his wife and family nearly a month before and they had had no news of him since.

We saw marks of *lathi* blows on men; and boxes and trunks, which had been forcibly broken open were produced before us. One of us, Mohanlal Saxena, personally saw the remains of houses and huts which had been burnt down.

The usual complaint was that a large number of persons varying from 200 to 500 and more would come to a village. These would consist of some Court of Wards employees, a few policemen and probably a number of the hooligans and bad characters of the district. The special manager of the Court of Wards, Mr. Dunne, would sometimes accompany this motley assembly. At first sight of this approaching throng, many villagers would take fright and run away from their huts. Some villages were thus wholly deserted and the dacoits in the crowd had an easy time of it in breaking open boxes and removing such articles as they took a fancy for. Under the circumstances it is not possible to fix upon the actual persons who indulged in this looting. No proper identification can take place and we cannot fix responsibility.

In some large villages the villagers stuck to their posts and decided to defend their homes in case of attack. This attitude impressed the dacoits sufficiently and they turned away without any conflict.

We were told of a number of *criminal proceedings started against*

9. Workers should refrain as far as possible from making regular speeches. There is too great a tendency for speechifying. We must talk less and do more.
10 Workers should send frequent (at least once a week) reports of the work done to their respective committees.
11 Above all each volunteer and worker must remember that he can do more for the cause by his personal example and behaviour than by any number of brave speeches and processions. He must be utterly non violent in word and deed. He must be disciplined and brave, he must wear pure Swadeshi *khaddar*[3] or *garha*, he must discard luxuries and all evil habits. He must learn humility and toleration. He must not excite people by frenzied oratory or unreserved denunciation of opponents; rather must he inspire hope and confidence by his own faith and strength And if, in the performance of his duty, he has to suffer or go to jail he should meet his fate smilingly—not afraid and yet not melodramatically posing as a martyr.

7(a)* In towns also workers should approach the heads of each caste or class of people and through them the rank & file. *Panchayat* ....

3 Home spun cloth Mahatma Gandhi made hand spinning an integral part of the Congress programme The primary object of this programme was to provide employment in rural India, but it had wider political implications The spinning wheel became the symbol of India's aspiration to free herself from British domination, and *khaddar*, in Jawaharlal's phrase, 'the livery of freedom'

7. Terrorism in Sitapur District[1]

We visited the district of Sitapur on behalf of the Provincial Congress Committee on the 11th April. One of us, Jawaharlal Nehru, could only spend one day in the interior of the district; the other, Mohanlal

1. A I C C. File No. 5/1922, N M M L.
Report of Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohanlal Saxena after a preliminary enquiry into the allegations of excesses committed by employees of the Court of Wards, the police and others in Sitapur district on 27 April 1922.

From a tailor :—	18 pieces of cloth for sale	..	30/-/-
	12 .. .. (personal)	.	36/-/-
	Cash. ..	..	100/-/-
	Ornaments.	..	49/-/-
	One *handi* of *ghi*.	..	5/-/-
	Spectacles, Scissors etc.	..	2/-/-
			222/-/-
From a weaver :—	3 *thans*.	.. ..	14/-/-
	Cash.	.. ..	13/-/-
	Dohar.	.. ..	6/-/-
	Lahanga.	.. ..	5/-/-
	Coat.	.. ..	4/-/-
	Dhoti.	.. ..	2/8/-
			44/8/-
From another :—	½ *than Tanzeb*.	..	5/14/6
	18 *than Garha*.	..	55/-/-
			60/14/6

(The valuations given are those of the owners).

Chuchia — 2 miles from Kauraiya, also visited by Mr. Dunne and several hundred men. Looting of houses and general maltreatment of inhabitants. One man who admitted being a volunteer had a *Salooka* of *garha* torn from his back and was beaten with a stick. The marks of the beating still are visible. People were afraid of making statements.

Manoopur—People were forcibly collected and told not to form *Panchayats* and not to become volunteers. The villagers refused to permit outsiders to enter their huts and by their bold attitude saved themselves.

Rossipur (Kalan)—Four miles from Laharpur—visited by employees of the Court of Wards, policemen and others in April. Most villagers fled from the area. Broken boxes were produced before us. Injuries were shown on the persons of women. A *karinda* of the village was present at the time of our enquiry and was questioned and said that there had been looting in the village. Soon after the looting, on the same day, he had been asked by the *Sarbarakar* to return a few clothes, which had been looted, to their owner, which he did.

volunteers and *panches*. These charges had no foundation in fact and the sole crime of the men concerned was that they were volunteers or members of *panchayats*.

We give below a short summary of the reported excesses in the villages visited by us.

It is merely intended to give a sample of what occurred on a larger scale in many villages in Sitapur. The list of property stolen or looted is also approximate. Many of the owners had left their villages and were too afraid to give us a detailed statement. But it is clear from even our short survey that most of the allegations made by the people of Sitapur were based on facts and that the terrorism in parts of the district was of a particularly objectionable kind. The proclamation and application of Martial Law could not have made the conditions prevailing in these villages any worse than they were. A deliberate war has been waged against the Congress and Khilafat movement and special efforts have been made to stamp out the use of *khaddar*. We cannot say, with the evidence at our disposal, as to who was the originator or director of this attack. It is clear however that the bad characters of the district took full advantage of the situation and under cover of fighting noncooperation, indulged in wholesale looting confident in the belief, justified by after events, that the authorities would not interfere or take any action against them.

We have endeavoured to confine ourselves to such facts as have been ascertained personally by one of us. Our enquiry has been necessarily incomplete and we would respectfully recommend to the Provincial Congress Committee to take steps to complete this enquiry. It has come to our knowledge that even our two days' visit to the affected area has brought some relief to the much harassed and long suffering villagers. In some cases, it is said that the bribes which had been previously extorted have been returned.

Kauraiya — A village in Katesar *Ilaqa* under the management of the Court of Wards. The special manager accompanied by a large number of persons including policemen, employees of the Court of Wards and others visited this village in April. The villagers were brought just outside the village where the special manager and the police had stationed themselves. The villagers were told of the many and various ills they were reported to be guilty of, and if they did not reform themselves and leave, they would be punished. Meanwhile, a part of the crowd entered the houses breaking open locks and boxes and carried on looting on a large scale. Any person who protested was repeatedly ducked in a pond. A few articles stolen were :—

Urad . 22½ seers
2 silver rings; *Banka*
1 *mirzai*, 1 shirt, 2 turbans, 2 *dhotis*, 1 coat, 1 towel, *Gur*,
2 *lotas* also stolen but subsequently returned.
2 *hanslis*
1 pair *taria*
1 turban
Cash 7/-
Wheat 37 seers
1 *hansli*, 1 towel.
1 *lahanga*, 1 *dhoti*.

Kishanpur—People were terrified There was no looting as in other villages but volunteers and *panches* had been compelled to pay money. Some were severely beaten. One person had his ankle and collar bone fractured. Even at the time of our enquiry he could not walk and his collar bone was disjointed.

A Congress volunteer who had been making collections in a box was also severely beaten and the box with its contents taken away.

Mahadeva—A big village in Hargaon *perganna*. There was no wholesale looting here but money was extorted and people subjected to most humiliating treatment. A special effort was made to produce friction between the Hindus and Musalmans of the village, and some village people were thus utilised to harass others of the same village. On or about the 3rd April a *ziladar* accompanied by employees of the Court of Wards and other officials came to the village. One person, the son of a *havildar* of volunteers, was beaten by shoes etc. and then completely stripped and told to go naked into the village. Volunteers were forced to beat each other with shoes and to abuse well known Congress workers and sometimes their own mothers and sisters.

A father and son, both volunteers, were asked to pay Rs. 25/- as a penalty for being volunteers. On refusal the son was beaten again. The father entreated and begged the *ziladar* to spare his son and beat him instead. This request annoyed the *ziladar* who made the father get on his son's back and remain there. The father and son were let off on paying Rs. 17/-.

One woman was ravished. She was told that this was done because her husband was a volunteer. Most of the women had run away from the village and concealed themselves in the wheat fields in order to escape a like fate.

Jawaharlal Nehru

27th April 1922

Mohanlal Saxena

Some of the articles stolen were :—

Three *hanslis* (ornament)	..	
Three pairs of *tarias* (ornament)		
Cash	..	Rs. 94/8/-
2 *Karanphool* (ornament)		
Kangan (ornament)	.. ..	50/-
Hamail. Do	.. ..	24/-
Paizeb Do	.. ..	40/-
Chara Do	.. ..	60/-
Nagrahi Do	.. ..	10/-
Some opium.		
Clothes		
Urad.	..	7 *seers* 8 *chataks.*

Bijaisipur—We did not visit this village but we took down statements of residents who came to us. The usual motley crowd consisting of Court of Wards employees, policemen and others visited the village. Money was demanded otherwise plunder was threatened. No money was given on the first day. The next day summons under Sec. 160 of Act V of 1898 were served on some persons. Others were told that summons would come for them also unless they gave money. Various threats were used and eventually money was extorted from many persons.

Chinsura—Two men of this village had been beaten and deprived of *khaddar salukas* and caps because they were volunteers. Their crops had been cut down and removed by others. They had been threatened with all kinds of penalties if they continued to reside in their village. In consequence they had not gone back to their village for over a month.

Birjabasika purwa—A small village—Court of Wards employees and others visited the village on or about* * * * On learning of the impending visit, most of the inhabitants, the women specially, were sent away to another village Evidence of looting and maltreatment of those who had remained. Jewels were removed from the body of a girl.

Some of the articles stolen :—

One pair *karanphool*

One pair *Jhumak*

One pair *tana*

One *Lahanga, angarkha, anga, chadra,* 3 *tobazia,* one kerchief.

I blanket, 1 *lathi;* 1 shirt; 1 *dhoti,* 2 kerchiefs; 1 turban; I pair new shoes, 1 *mirzai.*

Cash	..	52/-
Sessamum	..	17½ seers

I trust you will realise that this is no time for slacking. Remember Mahatma Gandhi's words when he was arrested "Work on, tire not". Are we going to rest and retire from the field when our leader is being treated almost like a common criminal in the Yeravada jail[2]?

Your co-worker,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Mahatma Gandhi had been arrested on 10 March 1922 and sentenced on 18 March to six years' imprisonment. He was released unconditionally on 5 February 1924 because of ill health

9. Circular to Secretaries of District Congress Committees and Members of the United Provinces Congress Committee[1]

I again write a circular letter to you almost in the shadow of the police. The police are searching our provincial office. They have also searched or are searching our house, Anand Bhawan, and several other offices. As in December last perhaps these searches may precede arrest and I hope the depth of my desire for *Swaraj* will this time be rewarded by a heavy sentence.

A joint meeting is going to be held in Allahabad on May 20. I trust that workers will muster strong and show to the province and to the country that such arrests and the policy of official terrorism have only put fresh vigour and strength into our movement.

We know we have enthusiasm and courage. Only one thing more is necessary to achieve success—organisation. Let us concentrate on organisation, on *panchayats* and village circles and *mohalla* centres, and each doing its allotted work regardless of searches and arrests. That work for the present must be *khaddar* work above everything else With organisation our speedy success is assured. Some doubters and quibblers try to make out that we have failed to gain complete freedom by the end of 1921, but we did something which is only a little less. We demonstrated to India and to the world that we had shaken off the sloth and inertia of centuries; that we understood the value of freedom; that we could fight for it and above all that we could sacrifice for it. Is this a little achievement? What country has offered 23,000 or more of its loved ones for the jail as India did in the ever-memorable months of December and January? Today India is honoured and India is respected where yesterday we were treated as coolies

1. This circular letter dated 5 May 1922, was attached to U P C C. Circular No 51/419 dated 4 May 1922, the text of which is not available See U P. Govt Secret Police Abstract of Intelligence, Vol. XL No. 21, 3 June 1922, p 427.

8. Circular to all Secretaries of District, Town and Tahsil Congress Committees[1]

Dear Comrade,

The time is rapidly drawing near when we shall again have to march forward and take a great step towards our goal. We have been concentrating on constructive work for the past few weeks Soon we may have to start individual civil disobedience again of some kind. In some places it is almost impossible to carry on constructive work on account of the repression and terrorism of Government. We cannot permit this to continue. The Council is therefore meeting on the 1st May to consider this question. I would request you to hold yourself in readiness for any offensive or defensive civil disobedience which may ultimately be decided upon. Readiness means organisation and discipline. Please impress all our workers to put in all their strength and energy in the perfection of our organization—Congress members, Tilak Swaraj Fund, *Khaddar* and Volunteers. The greater and sounder the organization the more chance there will be of the district or *tahsil* being allowed to start civil disobedience. You should organize tours in your district and try to visit all important parts of it and generally rouse the people.

You must remember that there is very little likelihood of your receiving further financial help from the P.C.C. You must rely on your own resources and collect enough money to carry on all your activities. It is possible that if you are successful in *Khaddar* work the All India Committee may assist you in that work.

We must also take up the question of picketing now. The P.C.C. at its last meeting favoured the approaching of purchasers. This of course must be done, but this is not enough. Where necessary we must start picketing of shopkeepers who have taken their pledge or who refuse to take pledges to refrain from dealing in foreign cloth. But picketing can only be resorted to where there is no danger at all of violence. The picketers must be chosen men. The district committee or the town committee must carefully consider the pros and cons before deciding on picketing. Once decided upon it should be carried on with full vigour but with all humility.

You have been repeatedly requested to supply us regularly with information regarding your work, repression etc but few districts respond. Please do not fail in this matter, as it affects all our work. Kindly also remember that 40% of the Tilak Swaraj collection should be sent to us immediately.

1 Records for 1922 in the Office of the District Magistrate, Allahabad. Clearly written sometime after March 1922.

11. Allahabad Businessmen and Boycott of Foreign Cloth[1]

Dear residents of Allahabad,

About ten months back the cloth dealers of our city had signed an agreement. In the name of God they had promised that till December 31 they would not procure any foreign goods and also that in case of procurement they would pay a fine of ten per cent for several months Our brothers in business acted according to the agreement but then some persons, in their greed for money, forgot their promise and duty, broke the agreement and procured foreign cloth—and for this ill deed they chose an opportunity when our guide and thousands of brothers had courted arrest for the sake of the country, when Mahatma Gandhi was facing hardships in jail, when the entire country was busy fighting for swaraj and independence and was specially boycotting foreign cloth At such a moment some of our weak draper brothers violated the agreement. The Congress Committee did not approve of this method of breaking the agreement. We, therefore, picketed some shops. At this, our comrade businessmen signed a new agreement in which they said that they were very sorry to have broken the first pledge and that they were ready to undergo some hardships for that and to pay a fine on the foreign cloth they had procured. They had promised to fulfil this by May 6

Today, on 6 May, I hear that some of our draper brothers are intending to violate this second agreement also. Like the British Government they are not bothered by their promises and agreements. They are prepared to break the agreement at the first chance of making some profit. We started defiance of the British Government when it violated many promises. Now we do not want our fellow businessmen to follow that path of deception. If, therefore, any of them breaks his promise now, we shall picket his shop. Some of our young men may probably be caught picketing and may be imprisoned. In the Naini jail, nearby, it is said that young boys are made to grind corn. The fighters for freedom will court imprisonment gladly but I want everybody to know that in reality I am the person responsible for the picketing and not the boys who sit in front of the shops. If, therefore, any occasion demands I shall do the picketing myself and if arrests are made, I hope I shall be the first person to be arrested

1. Original in Urdu Records for 1922 in the Office of the District Magistrate, Allahabad

and despised as slaves. We have gained a new status in the eyes of the world. That has been the achievement of a few months. Truly a wonderful record for which let us, in all humility, thank the Giver of all.

All Committees should concentrate their attention on the boycott of foreign cloth. Picketing can be started, but the condition of non-violence and non intimidation should be always kept in view. If this cannot be done then picketing should not be indulged in.

I hope that you will come on the 20th and that you will proclaim your faith again at the meeting in the noncooperation programme and policy as inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress.

10. Where are You?[1]

A big war is on these days in our country. There are two big groups. On one side is Mahatma Gandhi with the peaceful group of the Congress and Khilafat and on the other is the English Government with its armies, guns and cannons.

To which group do you belong?
Where are you?
With freedom or slavery?
With self rule or foreign rule?
With indigenous things or foreign goods?
With *Khaddar* or Foreign cloth?
With *Charkha* or British mills?
In Khilafat should there be justice or injustice?
In Punjab should there be justice or oppression?
You side with religion or irreligion?
Our poor folks should improve or remain as they are?
Should Indians remain united or disunited?
Wines etc., should go or continue?
Untouchables' lot be improved or not?
Do you side with those brave leaders and brothers of ours that are in jail or not?

Think it over and if your integrity, religion and spirit urge, then join Mahatma Gandhiji's Swarajya party and be prepared to face all sorts of troubles for the country and for the religion—and its recognition is that you don *Khaddar* spun by the *Charkha*.

1 Printed pamphlet published by Jawaharlal, Vishwambhar Nath Bajpaye and Raghunath Prasad Kapur for the Publicity Department, Provincial Congress Committee, Allahabad Original in Hindi.
Records for 1922 in the Office of the District Magistrate, Allahabad

bridge and in my likes and dislikes I was perhaps more an Englishman than an Indian. I looked upon the world almost from an Englishman's stand-point. And so I returned to India as much prejudiced in favour of England and the English as it was possible for an Indian to be.

Today, ten years later, I stand here in the dock charged with two offences and with a third hovering in the background—an ex convict who has been to jail once already for a political offence, and a rebel against the present system of Government in India. That is the change which the years have wrought in me. It is not necessary for me to recite the reasons for this change. Every Indian knows them, every Indian has felt them and has hung his head in shame for them. And if he has retained a spark of the old fire in him, he has taken a solemn pledge to strive unceasingly for India's freedom, so that his countrymen may never again be subjected to the miseries and humiliations that are the lot of a subject race. Today sedition against the present Government in India has become the creed of the Indian people, to preach and practice disaffection against the evil which it represents has become their chief occupation.

I am charged with criminal intimidation, and attempted extortion. I have wondered if these charges were seriously meant. The sections of the code which have been applied bear no relation to the facts even as disclosed by the prosecution evidence. I presume that the signal success that has attended our efforts in Allahabad has induced the authorities to take some action against the picketers. If peaceful picketing for a lawful object is a crime then indeed I am guilty of having advised it and helped in it. But I have yet to learn that peaceful picketing has become an offence even under the laws of British India. Our object in picketing was to make the cloth dealers adhere to the pledges they had jointly taken. Does anyone believe that we could achieve success in this by criminal intimidation and extortion? All the world knows that our strength lies in the support of our people and the goodwill of our countrymen. Our weapons are not the old time ones of force and coercion. The weapons which our great leader has put in our hands are those of love and self sacrifice. We suffer ourselves, and by our suffering seek to convert our adversary.

Criminal intimidation involves a threat of injury to a person or his property, and injury denotes harm 'illegally' caused. So also extortion must include the putting of any person in fear of 'injury' and thereby 'dishonestly' inducing him to part with property. I have listened to the prosecution evidence with interest in order to find out on what ground these novel charges are based. What was the injury to any person or property that was threatened? What was the harm 'illegally' caused? Wherein lay the dishonesty of any of us? I have not

If we are imprisoned, I am confident that many more will be ready to picket in our place and no resident of Allahabad will go to these shops to make purchases.

Finally, I request you to definitely boycott foreign cloth and wear *khaddar*. If you do this small service to the country the businessmen also will not be lured into procuring foreign cloth.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6 May 1922

12. Statement at Trial[1]

I am making this statement not in order to defend myself against the various charges brought against me but to define my position and to state the motives which have induced me to act in the manner I have done. I have refused to plead guilty or not guilty and I have declined to participate in this trial by cross examination of witnesses or otherwise. I have done so because I do not recognise this court as a court where justice is administered. I mean no disrespect to the presiding officer when I say that so far as political offences are concerned, the courts in India merely register the decrees of the executive. They are being used today even more than ever before to prop up the fabric of a Government which has misgoverned India long enough and of which the prestige is gone for ever.

I stand here charged with criminal intimidation and abetment of an attempt to extort. The warrant of my arrest bears also the familiar Section 124 A, although I am not being tried for it today. I propose however to make a comprehensive statement. I cannot divide myself up into various compartments, one for picketing, another for sedition and yet another perhaps for volunteering. All my activities have but one end in view and that end I have striven to attain with all the strength and energy that is in me.

Less than ten years ago I returned from England after a lengthy stay there. I had passed through the usual course of public school and university. I had imbibed most of the prejudices of Harrow and Cam-

1 *The Leader*, 19 May 1922.
On 17 May 1922 Jawaharlal was tried by K. N. Knox, District Magistrate of Allahabad, on a charge of intimidating cloth merchants by organising the picketing of the sale of foreign cloth.

this province. Here in this very city of Allahabad we have repeatedly resorted to it. And yet Government took no action against it as such. They knew well that in India as in England peaceful picketing is no crime. Of course, it is open to them by a stroke of the pen to make even peaceful picketing illegal But whether they do so or not, we shall not give it up. To entreat and exhort and advise others to follow a certain line of action or to abstain from doing something, is a right which we will not abandon, whatever the Government may do. We have few rights and privileges left in this country and even these are sought to be taken away. We have shown to the world how we value the right of free association, and we have continued our recruitment of volunteers in spite of thousands of arrests and all Government notifications to the contrary. We will not and we cannot submit to any restriction of our right of free speech. A quarter of a century ago, a great English judge stated in the House of Lords with reference to this right of free speech, that a man has a right to say what he pleases, to induce, to exhort, to command, provided he does not slander or deceive or commit any other of the wrongs known to the law of which speech may be the medium Unless he is thus shown to have abused his right why is he to be called upon to excuse or justify himself because his words may interfere with someone else and his calling? This right of free speech we shall cling to, whatever the cost.

I am glad for many reasons that I am being tried for picketing. My trial will bring the question of the boycott of foreign cloth even more to the front; and I am confident that when the people of Allahabad and the province realise the full significance of the boycott they will discard all foreign cloth, treat it as unholy and the touch of it almost as a pollution. If they pondered over the evils and the misery and the poverty that foreign cloth has brought to this long suffering country, perhaps they would feel some of the horror I feel at the thought of wearing it. They will not bring forth arguments that old clothes have to be worn out or that festivities require fine clothing. They would know that the salvation of India and of her hungry millions demanded the use of the *charkha* and the wearing of *khaddar*, and they would cast out all foreign clothes and consign them to the flames or to the dustbin. I pray that the cloth merchants of Allahabad will adhere to their sacred pledge twice taken, and do their utmost to bring about a complete boycott of foreign cloth in this ancient and holy city. Some of these cloth dealers have given evidence for the prosecution in this case. I have no grievance against them I shall suffer most gladly any imprisonment that may be awarded me if I know that thereby I have touched their hearts and won them over to the great cause. And I would appeal to the public of this city and province and earnestly

heard a single allegation yet made, much less proved, which suggests that we have caused injury to any person or property, caused any harm illegally or acted dishonestly. Not a single prosecution witness including the police and the C.I.D. has made such an allegation. In the whole of Allahabad there was found no person of the thousands who must have witnessed the picketing, who could bring the charge of any intimidation against us, or even a harsh word uttered by one of our picketers No greater proof of our triumph can be given than this unsought testimony of the police and the C.I.D. Our picketing has been, I make bold to say, a model of its kind, perfectly peaceful, perfectly courteous, relying on entreaties and exhortations and not even hinting at any force or intimidation. The cloth dealers, who are alleged to have been intimidated by us, are presumably the aggrieved party But not one of them has complained.

Ten months ago, the cloth dealers of Allahabad took a solemn pledge to refrain from purchasing foreign cloth till the end of 1922. All the signatories to the pledge, and they included almost every cloth merchant in the city, constituted themselves into an association styled the *Viyapar Mandal* and elected office-bearers and a committee. The first business of the *mandal* was to lay down that every member who broke his pledge and purchased foreign cloth would have to pay a certain penalty and in case he refused to do this, picketing would be resorted to. The committee of the *mandal* was to determine in each individual case how much foreign cloth had been bought and what the penalty was to be On several occasions during the past year the *mandal* committee considered such breaches of the pledge and imposed and recovered fines in accordance with their rules. Occasionally at their request picketing was also resorted to. Two months ago a large quantity of foreign cloth was purchased by some of the cloth dealers in Allahabad. This was in contravention of the pledge and the shops of some of these cloth dealers were picketed. Later a committee of the *Viyapar Mandal* newly reconstituted, assessed the fines on the merchants who had broken their pledges and themselves collected this money, which lies at the disposal of the *Mandal*. To the best of my knowledge two of the gentlemen who have given evidence for the prosecution in this case are members of the committee of the *Mandal*, and as such they must have themselves helped in the assessment and collection of the fines These are the facts relating to picketing in Allahabad. It is clear beyond doubt that there was neither any intimidation nor any attempt at extortion. The present prosecution is really an attempt to suppress lawful and peaceful picketing under cover of charges of intimidation and extortion. Picketing has been going on all over India for many months. It has taken place in many cities and bazaars in

of freedom and they will not rest or turn away till they have achieved their heart's desire. England is a mighty country with her armies and her navies; but today she is confronted with something that is mightier. Her armies and her navies have to face the suffering and the self-sacrifice of a nation determined to be free, and no man can doubt what the issue of such a struggle must be. We are fighting for our freedom, for the freedom of our country and faith. We desire to injure no nation or people. We wish to have no domination over others. But we must be perfectly free in our own country. England has wronged us cruelly during the past 150 years or more. And even yet she has not repented or mended her ways. India gave her a chance a year and a half ago but in the pride and arrogance of her physical might she has not taken it. The people of India have tried her and they have passed judgment and from that decree there is no turning back. India will be free; of that there is no doubt, but if England seeks the friendship of a free India she must repent and purge herself of her many sins, so that she may be worthy of a place in the coming order of things.

I shall go to jail again most willingly and joyfully. Jail has indeed become a heaven for us, a holy place of pilgrimage since our saintly and beloved leader was sentenced. Big-bodied, great-hearted Shaukat Ali, bravest of the brave, and his gallant brother are there and so are thousands of our co-workers. One feels almost lonely outside the jail, and selfishness prompts a quick return. Perhaps I shall be awarded a long term of imprisonment this time. Whether this is so or not, I shall go with the conviction that I shall come out to greet Swaraj in India.

I have said many hard things about the British Government. For one thing however I must offer it my grateful thanks. It has given us a chance of fighting in this most glorious of struggles. Surely few people have had such an opportunity given them. And the greater our suffering, the more difficult the test we have to pass, the more splendid will be the future of India. India has not survived through thousands of years to go down now. India has not sent twenty-five thousand of her noblest and best sons to the jails to give up the struggle. India's future is assured. Some of us, men and women of little faith, doubt and hesitate occasionally. But those who have vision can almost see the glory that is to be India.

I marvel at my good fortune. To serve India in the battle of freedom is honour enough. To serve her under a leader like Mahatma Gandhi is doubly fortunate. But to suffer for the dear country; what greater good fortune could befall an Indian unless it be death for the cause or the full realisation of our glorious dream.

request them to do this much for their country—wear *khaddar* and ply the *charkha*.

My co-accused and I are charged with intimidation and extortion. I should like the police and Government officials to examine their own consciences, to search deep down into their hearts and say what many of them have done during the past year and a half. Intimidation and terrorism, bribery and extortion have been going on over the length and breadth of the province. And the persons guilty of them have not been Congressmen or our volunteers but the underlings of Government who have indulged in them frequently with the knowledge and approval of their superiors. Yet they are not tried or punished. They are patted on the back and praised and promoted.

My colleagues and I have seen, and personally investigated, acts of terrorism and inhumanity. We have seen how men and women have been subjected to uttermost humiliation. We have seen how terror reigns in Sitapur[2]. We have investigated the brutalities of Shohratganj, and we know how hundreds of Ballia's gallant workers have been sent to jail for the sole offence of being Congress office-bearers or other principal workers of the Congress. And the poor downtrodden kisans with the haunted hopeless look in their eyes, working away like the beasts of the field from morning to nightfall, so that others may enjoy the fruits of their labour—we have seen them harrassed and made utterly miserable till life became a burden almost too heavy to be borne. I need not refer to individual districts. Almost every one of them has the same sad and splendid tale to tell.

Intimidation and terrorism have become the chief instruments of Government. By these methods they seek to keep down a people and to suppress their disaffection. Do they imagine that they will thus instil affection for themselves in the people or make them loyal instruments of their Imperialism? Affection and loyalty are of the heart. They cannot be purchased in the market place, much less can they be extorted at the point of the bayonet. Loyalty is a fine thing. But in India some words have lost their meaning and loyalty has come to be almost a synonym for treason to the Motherland, and a loyalist is he who is not loyal to his God or his country but merely hangs on to the coat-tails of his alien master. Today, however, we have rescued the word from the depths and in almost every jail in India will be found true loyalists who have put their cause and their faith and their country above everything else and have been true to them despite all consequences. To them has come the great call, they have seen the vision

2. There were reports of police and official atrocities in this district. See ante, No. 7.

Index

How to calculate the count of yarn	p. 120
My Spinning Record	p. 121 and p. 91
Books returned	p. 131
My weight in jail	p. 137
List of books with me in jail	139
Books read in jail	147
Letters received	151
Letters sent	153
Record of Interviews	115

13. The Second Trip[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru
District Jail Lucknow
The Second Trip

My Jail Number : 4126

11th May 1922 to

12th to 20th May—District Jail Allahabad

21st May to 16th June—Barrack No. 5—Dist. Jail Lucknow

16th June to 4th October— „ 4 „ „ „

4th October to 30th Jan 23—Civil Ward „ „ „

1. NMML
This diary was maintained by Jawaharlal during his second term in prison. The whole text is reproduced with the omission only of certain personal details. These omissions are indicated by dots.

June 1st — Informal interview with Kishan Bhai in office—15 minutes —Jailer present.

June 2nd — Sent letter to father (Naini Tal Jail).

June 7th — Interview with mother, Lado Bhabi[6], Kishan Bhai, Manmohini[7] & Sham Mohini[8]? & Betty? Just half an hour. Kamala ill in Allahabad—So could not come—Neither could Indu. Heard that father's fine realised by attachment and sale.

Jailer informed me in evening that a telegram had come from father announcing his release on evening of 6th.

June 8th — Learnt that Father arrived in Lucknow and had great reception.

10th — Informal (?) interview with father, Hakim Ajmal Khan,[9] Mrs. Gandhi,[10] Mrs. Naidu,[11] Shuaib,[12] Habib,[13] Moazzam Ali,[14] Ram Das Gandhi,[15] Pyare Lal,[16] Malaviyaji &c.

12th — Received letter from Kamala dated 30th May.

13th — Yusuf Imam[17] produced before Supdt for having used

6 Laddo Rani Zutshi (1880-1968); wife of Ladli Prasad Zutshi

7. Shrimati Manmohini Sahgal (b 1909); daughter of Ladli Prasad Zutshi.

8 Shyam Mohini (1910-1953); younger daughter of Ladli Prasad Zutshi.

9. (1865-1927); leading Unani physician of Delhi, President, Indian National Congress, 1921. He was a great friend of the Nehru family Of a shy and retiring disposition, he commanded great respect among his fellow countrymen, and his association with the national movement was prestigious

10 Kasturba Gandhi (1869-1944).

11 Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949); poet and politician, president of the Kanpur session of the Indian National Congress, 1925; Governor of Uttar Pradesh, 1947-49.

12. Shuaib Qureshi, started his career as a Congressman; General Secretary, A I C.C., 1924 25; son in law of Maulana Mahomed Ali, after 1947, served for a short while as High Commissioner for Pakistan in India.

13 Professor Mohammad Habib (1889-1971), a well known historian and an authority on medieval Indian history.

14 Secretary, Central Khilafat Committee; member, A I C C.

15 (1896 1969); son of Mahatma Gandhi; arrested during the Champaran Satyagraha, edited Navjivan weekly; later became manager of the Bardoli Ashram started by Sardar Patel

16 (b. 1899); joined the noncooperation movement when still a student, worked with Mahatma Gandhi, on the death of Mahadeva Desai in 1942, became private secretary to Mahatma Gandhi

17. A barrister of Mirzapur, member of the District Congress Committee and Chairman of the District Board; sentenced in 1921 to 15 months' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 150.

11th May 1922	Arrested in Lucknow District Jail whilst on a visit to father. Removed the same night to Allahabad travelling 3rd class.
12th May	In District Jail Allahabad—met Devadas[2] there—his trial and conviction (18 m) Keshavdev Malaviya[3] and others arrested just outside jail.
14th May	1 and 15th—our joint trial.
17th	We file our statements.
19th	Sentences passed on us.
20th	night—removed by train to Lucknow. Was taken early to Prayag Station and spent 2 or 3 hours with friends &c. Malaviyaji visited us in jail in the evening.
21st May	Sunday—arrived Lucknow District Jail morning. Taken to Barrack 5—Strict orders that I should not be allowed to mix with people in other barracks. Just had a glimpse of Mohan Bhai and Shamabhai in barrack 1. Had dinner with them as no other arrangement.
22nd	Had interview with Tasadduq Sherwani[4] who was released from Naini Jail on 20th.
25th	Sent letter to Kamala (This letter was objected to—However it was posted on 27th).
26th Sunday	Ramnath Gurtu[5] sought interview with me. Jailer allowed it but I declined as I expected mother and others soon. Received letter from father from Naini Tal Jail dated 24th May.
28th	Last day of Ramazan—Fasted.
29th	Khaliq and a large number of others visited our barrack being *Id* day. We were not allowed to go out of our barrack.

2. Devadas Gandhi (1900-1957); youngest son of Mahatma Gandhi and editor of *The Hindustan Times* from 1939 till his death.
3. Keshava Deva Malaviya (b. 1903); joined the Congress in 1921; secretary of Allahabad City Congress Committee and General Secretary, U.P. Provincial Congress Committee for many years, Minister for Mines and Oil, Government of India, 1957-63.
4. Tasadduq Ahmad Khan Sherwani, belonged to a zemindar family of U.P. and practised as a barrister at Aligarh before joining the nationalist movement. A close associate of Jawaharlal, President U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, 1931, arrested along with Jawaharlal in December 1931. He died in 1935.
5. A resident of Allahabad.

21st Started living according to programme. Gita class in the morning. *Urdu class.*

24th Wired to mother not to come for interview.

27th Letter received from Kamala dated 22/6/22.

29th June Clements[19] showed me telegram from mother enquiring after my health. Said it would take the place of a letter if he delivered it to me or if I answered it. I would thus be debarred from writing for another fortnight. I refused to send a reply by telegram on these conditions.
Special prayers this morning for Pt. Ramraksha[20] (Prakash?) who is said to have died in the Andamans after 90 days fast. He refused to take any food as his sacred thread had been removed. Also for Moulvi Bunyad Husain, a political prisoner who died in Bahraich jail recently.

30th Wrote long letter to Kamala and sent it to jailer. Long list of books given in it.

1st July Two postcards brought for me. I took neither as both unimportant.
Letter from H.S. Polak[21] to Supt shown to us. He wished to interview Devadas,[22] me, and "the Malaviyas" on the 4th or 7th. Letter had been written from Calcutta. I expressed regret and refused.
Govind[23] & Krishnakant Malaviya *discharged this morning.*
My letter to Kamala dated 30/6 apparently posted on 1st July.

July 3rd Most of Mainpuri people discharged today.
Bhawani Shankar[24] of Fatehpur, fellow prisoner in barrack No. 4, celebrated his *Upanayana* ceremony inside the barrack today. Age 22. Arya Samajists officiated—others attended.

19. Colonel Clements, Superintendent, District Jail Hospital, Lucknow.
20. Pandit Ramraksha; was convicted to life imprisonment in the *Burma Conspiracy Case.* As a protest against harsh treatment by the jail authorities he went on a hunger strike and died after fasting for 90 days in Port Blair jail.
21. British solicitor; companion of Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa.
22. Devadas Gandhi.
23. Pandit Govind Malaviya (1902 1961); youngest son of Pandit M M. Malaviya, imprisoned several times during the noncooperation movement; served for a term as Vice Chancellor, Banaras Hindu University.
24. A noncooperator and member of Fatehpur District Congress Committee.

violent language to jailer and interfered with latter. Sent to Central Jail.

We held a meeting of the residents of our barrack and were unanimously of opinion that apart from question of language used by Yusuf Imam he was thoroughly justified in speaking for a friend who had been unjustly attacked. As Yusuf Imam had been sentenced for this we resolved to inform Supdt that we were all prepared to do so if opportunity arose and to invite him to inflict the punishment for this offence on us. Formal letter to this effect sent to Supdt signed by 31 persons (only one person being absent did not sign)

Also decided not to take rations the next day and to observe 24 hours fast.

14th — Fasted (35 hours). All barracks refused rations excepting one person in barrack 4. Bade good bye to Mohan Bhai & Shama Bhai in evening.

15th — Mohan Bhai & Shama Bhai released.

Weight 118 lbs. Yusuf Imam returned from Central Jail.

16th June — Yusuf Imam and other Mirzapur people released. Wrote letter to Kamala.

Kishan Bhai came for interview but I declined to see him saying that the indignities etc., were such that I was not prepared for the present to interview any one. Thereupon jailer brought a letter from father addressed to K. B. in which he asked my opinions about Kamala's programme, visit to Hills &c. Jailer asked me to answer it which I did.

Removed to Barrack No. 4 in evening.

17th — Letter dated received from Kamala.

Kishan Bhai phoned in the evening if he could come and see me the next day. I declined.

18th — Gandhi Day[18]—observed semi-fast.

Meeting of residents of barrack at midday to consider question of interviews. Discussion for 3 hours. Majority of opinion that interviews should not be held till conditions changed. Eventually decided that for one month interviews should not take place.

Large number of articles arrived from Allahabad.

18 Observed every month to recall Mahatma Gandhi's sentence to imprisonment on 18 March 1922.

July 6th — Some of the Agra people—Sitla Sahai, Raghupati Sahai,[25] Bindbasni Prasad[26] &c—arrive in the jail and are placed in barrack No. 8—Bal Krishna Kaul[27] also with them. Is sent to No. 11.

Jia Ram, Dwarka Prasad[28] & Zafar Husain[29] from barracks No. 1 and 2 visited us in the evening.

7th — Bindbasni Prasad visited us in evening.

8th — Received a bagful of cotton from Beni Prasad Singh[30]—also mangoes &c from Kamala from Delhi—She was to have gone to Allahabad on the 7th. Weight 115 lbs. Jailer visited me and said that he had spoken to Supdt. regarding the question of interview—Supt. refused to do anything or give any assurance.

Raghupati Sahai, Mata Prasad[31] from No. 8 & Balkrishna Kaul from No. 11 visited us. Also Sitla Sahai.

25. Congress worker of Gorakhpur and Vice President of the Town Congress Committee, 1921; served for many years at Allahabad University; better known as the Urdu poet, Firaq Gorakhpuri.
26. A lawyer of Ballia; sentenced in December 1921 to 18 months' simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500.
27. (b. 1903); worked in the Congress organisations in U.P., the Punjab and Ajmer till 1947; Minister in Ajmer State 1952-56 and in Rajasthan Government 1962-67.
28. A zamindar of Bareilly and Secretary of the Town Congress Committee; sentenced in December 1921 to 18 months' simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500.
29. Member, U.P. Legislative Council and Secretary, District Khilafat Committee, Moradabad.
30. Member of Lucknow Town Congress Committee; sentenced in December 1921 to 6 months' simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 100.
31. Mata Prasad Misra, Munsarim, Vice-President of Rae Bareli District Congress Committee.

On Ist July I wrote to the Jailer and asked him to send me my cheque book as I wished to draw a cheque. The cheque book had previously been deposited in the office at the instance of the Supt & the Jailer who said that the rules did not permit of my keeping the cheque book with me (although I could keep cash!) No answer came from the jailer and so I sent a reminder to him on the morning of the 3rd. In the afternoon a circle inspector (Ram Nath Pande) came and said that the Supt wanted to know in whose favour I would draw the cheque, for what amount it would be and how I would spend it—I answered that so far as the first two points were concerned he would find out when he saw the cheque. I wanted some cash and it might be convenient to draw the cheque in favour of self. I was not prepared to impart any further information and I would certainly not tell him as to how I would spend the money—

July 4th Weight 114 lbs.

Jailer came and showed me a letter he had received from father in which an enquiry had been made regarding our interviews. The question of interviews having cropped up I discussed it with the jailer at length. I told him that assurances must be given to us that political prisoners in this jail would be treated in a decent manner during interviews. He said that he would speak to Clements and let me have an answer early the next day.

Rain—no volley ball.

July 5th I wrote to jailer regarding my cheque book, repeating the oral answer I had previously given to Pande. The cheque book was sent to me in the afternoon.

The jailer did not come to me as promised. A slip however came from him asking me whether I would see my mother and wife this week. I replied that I desired no interviews so long [as] assurances &c were not given to me.

On the jailer asking me to do it, I wrote a few lines for father which the jailer had said he would enclose with his reply to father. (Jailer sent a messenger. He did not come himself.)

Rain—practically no exercise.

July 9th Received cotton *punis*, mangoes, *chatais* &c from Allahabad. Some 13 books are also said to have come but they have been detained in office for inspection.

July 10th Monday —*Fasted*—

Received letter from father — Allahabad dt. 8/7 — also a note in same cover from Kamala. Six or seven lines from father's letter cut off by jail authorities.

July 11th Remaining Agra people brought to our *jail* — (*Joseph*, Mahadeva Desai,[32] Ram Naresh Tripathi[33] and 11 others) Put in barracks 1 and 2. Joseph, Mahadeva & Ram Naresh paid us a visit in the evening.

Father's letter to jailer informing him of his programme.

July 12th Swami Raghavananda[34] of Barhaj (Gorakhpur) discharged on completion of sentence. Also some Benares people discharged from other barracks.

Jailer came in afternoon and again discussed the question of interviews. Repeated his former assurances. I suggested that I should see Khaliq — He agreed and brought Khaliq with whom I had long talk. We agreed entirely on the attitude to be taken up by us.

July 13th Sent 25 page letter to Father to Bombay (or rather sent it to the jailer)

Khaliq came again in the evening and discussed the question of interviews. Informed me of the decision of his barrack. They had left the matter to Khaliq and me. (Meeting of residents of our barrack re: interviews)

July 14th All barracks have decided in favour of resuming interviews on conditions agreed upon. The jailer brought intimation to me from other barracks. Thereupon I wrote to all barracks informing them of the unanimous decision. These notes sent through jailer.

July 15th *New Programme from today.*

July 16th (Sunday) Arsenic 1000 taken in morning according to father's written directions. New Govt. rule regarding interviews enforced from today. Only *one* outsider to interview a political prisoner at a time!

32. (1892-1942); secretary for many years of Mahatma Gandhi, died a prisoner in the Aga Khan Palace at Poona
33. (1886-1962); Hindi writer
34. Member, Gorakhpur District Congress Committee.

Copy
Barrack No 18
Register No. 4126

History Ticket
Allahabad Jail
Class III

Name	P. Jawahar Lall Nehru	Father's name	Pt Motilal Nehru
Sentencing *Officer*	*K. N Knox*	Place of abode	Allahabad
Crime	Criminal intimidation and attempted extortion.	Profession or trade	Congress volunteer
		Caste	Brahman
Section	*117/506, 506, 385/116 I.P.C.*	Age	32
Sentence	18 months R I. fine Rs 100 in lieu 3 months additional R. I.	Education	...
		Previous conviction	X
Date of sentence	19.5.22		
Date of release	18 2 24		
Date of check	...		

First class misdemeanant

Date	Employment or History in Jail	Initials	Date	Appeal &c	Initials
	Health G Labour II Task			... ...	
20/5/22	Transferred to *Lucknow D J. being* 1st class misdemeanant	XX	27/5/22	Letter sent	XX
21/5/22	Received from Allahabad District Jail H. Good L nil		4/6/22 12/6/22	Letter sent Lettter given	XX XX

(In form of graph)

* Weight on admission	115 lbs
" " 1st June	118 lbs
" " *15th June*	115 lbs
" " 1st July	115 lbs

* My weight was not taken on admission to Lucknow D J. Perhaps this weight was taken at Allahabad D J. The weighing machine was different and hence the apparant gain in weight on 1st June.

History ticket copied on 8th July 1922. J. N.

Most of the ordinary prisoners made to work in our barrack are really politicals. One aged gentleman — a *qazi* — was the president of a Khilafat Committee in Lakhimpur District.

He was sent to a Mohammadan mess in our barrack to serve as cook.

Most others come from Gorakhpur. They have been run in under Sec. 110. Wholesale convictions — probably thousands—under this Section since Chauri Chaura.[37] They appear to be quite pleased at seeing us here. They are classed & treated as "habituals" although this is their first conviction. Apparently the Cr P.C. specially allows this in cases under Sec. 110.

24th Monday — Semi-fast.

Jailer showed me a telegram addressed to him by father in which he said that Kamala was well & that he had received my letter (of the 13th which was posted on the 17th).

26th Little toe continues to give trouble. The whole leg slightly painful.

29th Toe improving for last 2 days. Took Ars. 200.

Father's registered letter came today but was not delivered to me.

30th Kishan Bhai telephoned to ask if he could interview me. I sent answer that I was willing.

Devadas returned from hospital this evening. Mahadeva also came with him & remained for some time with us.

31st Kishan Bhai came to see me. Had an interview with him for just half an hour when I was informed that time was up. I gave him lists of English & Hindi books required by me. Also returned some books to him.

August 1st Tuesday — Death anniversary of Lok. Tilak & 2nd anniversary of N.C.O. — Complete fast 36 hours. Special prayers in morning. Meeting at 11. Collection for Tilak Swaraj Fund Father's letter dt. 22-25th July from Madras delivered to me.

August 2nd Broke fast this morning after full 36 hours. Not feeling

37. At Chauri Chaura, a village in Gorakhpur district in U.P., in February 1922 an angry mob set fire to a police station and 22 constables lost their lives. This influenced Mahatma Gandhi in calling off the civil disobedience movement

Abdul Wadood Khan [35] & Jia Ram came to our barrack in evening. Also Bal Krishna Kaul.

July 17th Devadas unwell. Suffering from boils for last few days. Gland in groin very painful. Doctor suggested lancing but it opened of its own accord at night.

Joseph & Mahadev came in evening.

My letter to father returned to me for address. The Supt had posted it without any alterations although the jailer informed me in the morning that certain passages had been taken exception to by the Supt. Apparently part of my letter had been translated for his benefit. (The letter was written in Hindi). I addressed the envelope and added a small note to the letter regarding the new rule about interview.

This letter was posted (registered) at the R.M.S. office this evening.

July 18th Gandhi Day. Full 24 hours fast. Spun for 3½ hours. Gita 1½ hours. Devadas went over to hospital this evening.

July 19th I did not feel very well — Slight return of old trouble — Jailer informed me that he had received a letter from Kishan Bhai from Naini Tal (where he had gone from Almora to attend on *chacha*[36] who was ill) enquiring after my health. At his suggestion I wrote a few lines to Kishan Bhai.

July 20th morning — took Ars. 200 (30 not being with me) trouble continues — feeling of lassitude and weakness. Felt better in evening — Read Havell till late at night.

July 21st Fit again — Took Ars. 200 again in morning.

One of little toes swollen — Went to Hospital to have it dressed. Saw Joseph there abed with fever. Devadas practically well. Jailer showed me telegram which he had received from father from Bombay saying that an operation had been performed on Kamala and she was well.

23rd Sunday Took Ars. 200

35. Of Muzaffarpur; member, Provincial Congress Committee, Bihar; sentenced in December 1921 to one year's imprisonment.
36 Jagat Narain Mulla.

August 6th (Sunday) ..... Very heavy rain during night. A corner of the roof of our barrack collapsed.
Heavy rain for practically whole day — Played volley ball in rain.

August 7th *Raksha Bandhan*
Permission to Hindus to visit other barracks. Went to Nos. 8 and 9 where the *Shrawani* ceremonies were performed by about 20. These included many baths &c. A *yagna* also performed.
Spent several hours in 8 and 9 and fed there. Then went to Nos. 10 & 11 where we remained till night. Fed, played volley ball &c there,
Was quite fit.
My letter to Kamala dated 2/8 was posted today.
Specification of our barrack (No. 4)
(Copied from paper in barrack)

No 4	
L	196 Ft
B	18 Ft
H	15 Ft
AT/	43 S „
	648 C „
For	81 prs.

This represents area and space for each prisoner. (This is the largest barrack in the jail — no others are larger)

August 9th Weight 114 lbs at 10 a m. before midday meal. Supt. sent note to me asking me if there was a meeting of all political prisoners at which I presided and where a resolution bidding farewell to Moulvi Abdul Wadood was passed. I replied saying that I was not aware of such a meeting and I had neither attended nor presided at any such meeting.
Devadas was called to the office and the same question was put to him. He gave same answer.
Received 7 books from Allahabad.

August 10th Interview with Masud Ali Nadvi in the shed in passage. After 21 minutes word was sent to me from office that

well—lassitude. Felt weak and tired in evening....Hirday Nath Kunzru[38] visited jail this morning as member Council. Supdt with him. Had a fairly lengthy conversation with him — and passage at arms with the Supdt regarding the behaviour of jail officials. New light thrown on question of interviews. Supt said that although Govt. had ordered that interviews should only be allowed with one person, he had not applied the order to women. So that several women — preferably not exceeding three-should come. Children not included in reckoning.
Wrote a long letter to Kamala (Bombay) answering points raised in father's letter and sent it to jailer.
Joseph & Mahadeva visited us in evening.

August 3rd Felt better in morning — .....
A meeting of residents of our barrack held at noon, went on till 4.30. We discussed N.C.O. programme &c. Meeting adjourned till tomorrow.
Khaliq & Rafi Ahmed[39] came in evening.

August 4th Barrack meeting at noon — lasted with intervals till 8.30 p.m.
Didn't feel quite well — irritation &c. Received parcel of apples & pears from Shamji Mushran (Simla) through Kishan Bhai.

August 5th *Bakr Id* day — number of visitors from other barracks. Mohamadans allowed to go to all barracks. Some Hindus accompanied them.
In evening had a game of volley ball with some people from No. 11.
Received parcels of fruits & vegetables from Kamala (Bombay)
For last few days it has been raining very heavily and we are confined to barrack for most of time.
.....

38 (B 1887); President of the Servants of India Society since 1936, and of the Indian Council of World Affairs since 1948.

39 Rafi Ahmad Kidwai (1894-1954); a Congressman from Bara Banki; joined the noncooperation movement in 1921; chief whip of the Swaraj Party in the Central Assembly after the 1926 election, worked among the kisans in Oudh districts and helped to organise the no rent campaign in 1931-32, Minister for Revenue, Home and Jails in U.P. in 1937-39 and 1946-47, Minister in the Government of India from 1947 till his death. Kidwai was an imaginative administrator, who is best known for his introduction of the night air mail service.

Jawaharlal Nehru

District Jail Lucknow

The Second Trip

My Jail Number : 4126

11th May 1922 to

[illegible] May – Barrack Jail Allahabad

[illegible] May & 16th June – Barrack No 5 – Dist. Jail Lucknow

[illegible] June & 4th [illegible] – No 4 – – – –

[illegible] & 31st June 22 Civil Court – –

FACSIMILE COPY OF THE FIRST PAGE OF JAWAHARLAL'S PRISON DIARY, "THE SECOND TRIP"

half hour was up. I told Muzaffar[40] that only about 20 minutes had elapsed. Still I came away after another 2 minutes.

Received a parcel of apples from Somerford orchard, Ramgarh.

August 11th — A parcel of books from Allahabad. Books have been kept *in office for inspection.*

I G. visited jail this evening. Walked through our barrack — did not speak to anyone. A great deal of shouting & cleaning & hullabaloo previous to his arrival.

August 12th — Devadas had an interview with Chandrakant[41] &c. He was taken out of the jail also to the tent where interviews with ladies take place. He remained away for nearly 1-1/2 hours. He spoke of the delightful greenery &c outside the jail.

August 13th Sunday — Took Ars. 1000 in morning—was quite well. Received Duplex razor &c from Kishan Bhai. Devadas received books from Shiva Prasad Gupta[42].

August 14th — Received books from Allahabad.

Was somewhat unwell — irritation &c. This continued (& slightly increased) till night. Thereupon I took Ars. 200 at bed time.

Spinning Committee for barrack formed.

August 15th — *Janam Ashtimi*—Semi fast.

At night special birth celebration took place in our barrack — *hindola* &c — a number of persons from other barracks were also allowed to come for a few minutes to our barrack at mid night.

.....

Telegram from Kamala from Bombay to Jailer enquiring about my health.

August 16th — Barrack 11 proposed to celebrate *Janam Ashtimi* today — Got permission for others to visit their barrack in the afternoon. At last moment strange limitations put on our going. We do not go. Some limitations then removed and we all congregated in 10 & 11 from 8 to 9 P.M.

40 A jail official.

41. Chandrakant Malaviya, nephew of Pandit M M Malaviya and elder brother of Krishnakant Malaviya, a loyalist and liberal in his early days, he later became a noncooperator.

42 (1883 1944); a rich landowner of Banaras who worked wholeheartedly for the Congress and was for some time its treasurer. He represented the Congress at the Second Conference of the League against Imperialism.

Telegram from father to jailer from Patna giving his programme to 19th (back to Calcutta, then Gaya & Allahabad on 20th)

.....

August 17th Thursday — Received letter from Mother & Kamala from Bombay dated 12/8. Read 7 Hindi books from Shiva Prasad, Benares ..

Wrote long letter to father at night — didn't finish it.

August 18th — Gandhi Day

Finished letter to father adding note on my treatment and sent it to office in a registered cover at 9.40 a.m.

..

Recd. parcel of apples from Ramgarh.

Couldn't spin much owing to lassitude &c.

17th — .. ..

19th — ... lassitude also in morning—better in forenoon.

August 21st (Monday) — Kishan Bhai came to see me and Devadas. We had the interview in the office. It lasted for 45 minutes and even then there was no hurrying. Ultimately I came away without any reminder. Evidently a '*prayasheitta*' on the part of the jail staff for their behaviour during my last interview which was cut short after 20 mins.

Kishan Bhai told me of the birth of a daughter to Shanna.

Money collected on 1st August in our barrack for T.S.F. 37/10 — Have told Kishan Bhai to ask father to pay 40/- to T.S.F.

My letter to father dated 17/18 posted today.

August 22nd — Jailer showed me a letter he had received from father from Allahabad where he had just returned. He was well. At jailer's request I wrote a small note for father.

.....

August 23rd — .. ..

August 24th — . ..

Jailer shows me another letter to him from father regarding my treatment.

Started taking milk from warder from today (3/4th seer daily)

August 26th — Letter from Sarup to Supdt shown to me wherein she expresses a desire to see me on Sept. 3rd. Jailer suggested that I might write to her and to father suggesting Sept. 4th etc. I follow his suggestion.

Jawaharlal Nehru
[illegible]

Prisoner No 4126

July 1942.

Notes and Quotations

Volume I

Indian History and Miscellaneous

Certified that this book contains 181 pages.

Superintendent, Dehra Dun Jail

PHOTOSTAT COPY OF THE FIRST PAGE OF JAWAHARLAL'S BOOK OF NOTES AND QUOTATIONS.

Clements and I also photographed together with the big fan behind!
Visited No. 11 in connection with these photos &c. Interview with Nan & Ranjit[45]. Devadas also saw them.

September 5th Took Collinsonia 30

6th —do— Kapil Deo Malaviya discharged today. He was not permitted to see me or any one else in another barrack before he left.
Splendid news! Kamal Pasha's complete victory. Greeks evacuating Asia Minor. Have decided to hold a barrack meeting on Friday 8th at 7.15 a m. to offer thanks giving and congratulation.

7th Took Collinsonia 30.
Weight 115 lbs taken at 5 p m.

8th (Friday) Barrack meeting at 7.30 a.m. *Bande Mataram*, poems and prayers. Resolved to send a telegram of congratulation through the Superintendent to the Khilafat Committee Bombay to be forwarded to Angora.

Angora Day[46]

Akhtar Ali[47] arrives from Aligarh—a new addition to our barrack He has been sentenced to 1 year under 124A. Later he went over to No. 11.

11th Sept. (Monday) *Akali Day*—Day specially observed in honour of the Akalis[48] in every barrack. In our barrack 24 hours fast (without water). *Havan and Gita path* in the morning and special prayers in the evening.
Khaliq came in the afternoon and spent some time with us.

13th Khaliq came again in afternoon.

14th Slightly unwell—took Paconia 3X at night.

45 Ranjit Sitaram Pandit (1893-1944); a barrister of Rajkot, married Shrimati Vijayalakshmi, Jawaharlal's sister, in 1921; joined the noncooperation movement and served several terms of imprisonment, translated *Rajatarangini, Mudra-rakshasa and Ritusamhara into English.*

46 Was observed in honour of the Turkish victory over Greece in 1922.

47. A pleader of Allahabad and Secretary of the Congress Committee

48 Between 1919 and 1920 there was widespread restlessness and dissatisfaction with the management of shrines and gurdwaras in the Punjab The Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee was set up in November 1920 to take over the gurdwaras from the hereditary managers, the Mahants The *Akali* movement for reform soon came into conflict with the Government and coalesced with the noncooperation movement.

Received parcel of apples from Ramgarh—also a parcel from Kamala (Bombay) containing pistachios.

.....

August 26th Telegram from father to jailer saying that Bombay party coming to Lucknow direct on Monday for interview.

.....

.....

August 27th .....

Received articles from father from Allahabad. Also saw his letter dater 25/27th.

August 28th (Monday) .....From today have given up use of shivaram oil.

Interview with mother, Kamala, Bibi,[43] Betty & Indu. Devadas also saw them. After 35 mins. I was told by jailer that interview should terminate in another 5 mins.

Aug 29th Some slight irritation today but no other trouble. Nand Kishore of Lucknow discharged from our barrack today after completion of sentence.

August 30th .....

August 31st .....

Father's letter dated 25th/27th formally delivered to me. Received homoeopathic medicine &c from father. Also received cotton slivers "through Srimati Urmila Devi."[44] Received parcel of apples from Ramgarh.

SEPTEMBER 1922

September 1st (Friday) Took Collinsonia 30 in morning. Wrote long letter to father and sent it to office at 1.30 p.m.....

2nd Took Collinsonia 30....

Barracks 8 & 9 emptied and their political prisoners sent to other barracks. We have got about ten of them and our barrack is again somewhat crowded.

3rd Took Collinsonia 30....

4th —do—

Clements brought an American named Vaze (?) representing the "International News". He took a number of cinematograph films and photos. At Clements' suggestion he also photographed me separately for father.

43. Shrimati Padmaja Naidu; daughter of Sarojini Naidu; Governor of West Bengal 1956-66.

44 (1883-1956); sister of C. R. Das; imprisoned several times in connection with the nationalist movement.

Before and after the proceedings loud and lusty shouts of Allah O Akbar, Vande Mataram, *Mahatma Gandhi ki* jai."—"Sat Sri Akal—jo bole so nehal"—Shaukat Mohamed ki jai, &c. And so ended this day strange and unique in the annals of the Jail.

A similar programme was followed in other barracks but they were not ambitious enough or enterprising enough to go in for decorations or illuminations.

And whilst we celebrated the victory of the Turks—England prepared for war! Or at any rate threatened war with them!!

18th (Monday) 6th Gandhi Day

Interview with Kishan Bhai—Abul Hasan[51] brought a number of things from Allahabad. Learnt that father *had gone to Amritsar. Beti much better.* Kishan Bhai not allowed to interview Devadas as latter's interviews are said to be stopped because of the letter he wrote to Brelvi[52] which was published in *The Bombay Chronicle.* No formal intimation, however, given to Devadas yet.

18th Took Eupatorium Aya — once at night. My letter to Kamala dated 15th given to Abul Hasan to be taken to Allahabad.

19th Raining most of the day—& night

20th Weight (in the morning at 9.30 a.m.) 117 lb—an increase of 2 lbs in the last 13 days! Still raining.

21st Devadas informed by Superintendent that his interviews and letters stopped for the rest of his term! He sympathised and said that the punishment was unjust—Not his fault. Evidently under orders of Govt. Said he would try to get the order varied. Devadas slightly taken aback, but he took it very bravely.

21st (cont) Eclipse of the Sun between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. Visible in spite of clouds—

23rd Allah Bande & Kanhaiya Lal[53] (Pt) discharged from our barrack.

51 *Servant of Motilal Nehru; was with the Nehru family for over forty years*

52. Syed Abdullah Brelvi (1891 1949), editor of *The Bombay Chronicle,* and a leading Congressman of Bombay.

53 Pandit Kanhaiyalal Trivedi, Secretary, Pilibhit District Congress Committee, imprisoned on 29 January 1922 for six months.

15th Took Eupatorium Aya three times. Letter from Kamala dated 10/9 delivered to me. Wrote to Kamala and sent letter to office.

16th Eupatorium 3 times

17th Eupatorium Aya once in morning.

Angora Celebration Day

Maulana Sharif in our barrack in afternoon—In evening illuminations (!) decorations &c of part of the barrack compound. Bunting & Swaraj flags and lanterns manufactured out of some coloured paper. A few mosquito net poles wrapped up in coloured paper. The tri-colour swaraj flag mounted on an imitation rock, made of baskets covered with moss, looked very effective. The *charkha* had been very carefully and well worked out on the coloured paper of the flag.

Two paper lanterns—a green and a red—bore inscriptions which shone out on the lanterns being lighted up from inside—"Victory to Kamal"

"कमाल की जै" "मो"—a crescent etc.

"Allah-O-Akbar" was another inscription beautifully lighted up in this way.

About a hundred *chirags* were placed over the barrack grounds, mostly near the buntings and the flag. There was not enough oil and a request for oil in the earlier part of the day had met with a blank refusal on the part of the jail authorities. They would not even give any for payment. Hence recourse was had to ghee.

Altogether a pleasing and delightful scene—such as the Lucknow District Jail had not seen before.

At 8.30 p.m. proceedings started with *nazms*. Then *Vande Mataram* & *Hindustan Hamara Hai* of Iqbal. Exactly at 9 p.m. *prarthna* commenced. Swami Sahjanand[49] of Ghazipur began and he was followed by Shah Mohammad Shafi[50] of Tanda. At the conclusion of the *prarthna—nazms* again.

49 Swami Sahjanand Saraswati of Ghazipur, an active member of the Congress and sentenced in 1922 to one year's rigorous imprisonment. He had also been President of the All India Kisan Sabha, and in 1936 was president of the first All India Kisan Congress.

50. President of the District Congress Committee; sentenced in December 1921 to one year's rigorous imprisonment.

had no interview for the preceding four weeks. In my letter I had merely quoted the printed rule and said that it was being given effect to now although it had been in existence for months past. The second passage related to the restrictions imposed on Devadas and dealt at some slight length with my arrival in the District Jail Allahabad after my 2nd arrest, my meeting Devadas there and finding him very excited and happy at having been arrested, and writing letter to various friends. I mentioned how he had probably given one of these letters to some interviewer in all innocence and with no idea at having broken a jail rule.

I informed the jail official who brought my letter that I would not make any alterations in it. The Superintendent was free to do what he chose with it. And I returned the letter.

3rd October We are informed in the evening that we would have to leave our barracks next day. Persons belonging to our mess would have to go after the midday meal—all others in barracks 3 & 4 would go early in the morning.

In order to celebrate our last night together in barracks 3 & 4 we played volley ball by moon light (it was the 13th day of the bright fortnight.) We played a very successful game for nearly two hours!

4th October I learn that my letter to father was posted yesterday after heavy censoring.

We see off the people leaving our barracks. They are being sent to No 8 & 9—excepting some Mohamadans who go to No 11. An affecting parting. Tears in the eyes of many. Murli Manohar[57] & Shah Mohammad Shafi much affected. All depart except the eleven of our mess. In the afternoon we are told to march away with our goods and chattels. Three divisions made of our party. Manni Lal[58] sent all by himself to Nos. 1 & 2; Devadas, Balkrishna, Venkatram & I allotted to the Civil Ward and the others sent to Nos. 8 & 9. The parting rather sad after many months of close companionship. Keshodeva

57. Of Sagarpali, Ballia; joined the noncooperation movement when only sixteen years old, Member of Parliament 1952-57 and 1962-67.

58 Mannilal Pande; a noncooperator from Jalaun, prosecuted on 13 December 1922 for organising the Congress volunteers and sentenced to 18 months' rigorous imprisonment.

23rd & 24th	Spent wholly in spinning & in putting right the *charkha*.
25th (*Monday*)	Interview with mother, Bibi, Krishna & Indu. A glimpse of Ranjit at end.
28th	Murari Sharma[54] discharged.
29th	Took Paconia 3x twice.
30th	*Vijai Dashmi*
	Daya Krishna Ganjoor[55] discharged from barrack No. 2. Mir Wajid Ali[56] of Rae Bareli was discharged a day or two ago. Both are of the company of the "55" and have been discharged for some occult reason before their time.
30th contd	Letter from Kamala dated 28/9 delivered to me in the afternoon. Contained notes from father & mother.

OCTOBER

1st	Took Collinsonia 30 in morning. Sent letter for father with a note on my health to the office at 7.40 a.m.
2nd (*Monday*)	53rd anniversary of Gandhiji's birth; we had a spinning competition of barracks 3 & 4. I was one of the judges. A very successful competition in which good results were obtained. Only 12 competed owing to lack of good *charkhas*.
	At midday a common feed in which nearly all—Hindus & Muslims—took part.
	In afternoon special volley ball match—teams selected by lot.
	In evening special *prarthna* followed later by a short dramatic entertainment. Illumination &c at night.
	In the evening my letter to father which I had sent to the office the day before was brought back to me with certain parts blue pencilled across. I was told that the Supdt. objected to the marked passages and if I would remove them or rewrite the letter without them the letter would be sent. The marked passages were two. One related to the application of the rule whereby persons other than "immediate relatives" are not granted interviews with prisoners unless the prisoner in question has

54. Of Ballia, U.P.; sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment in September 1921.
55. President of the Fyzabad District Congress Committee; imprisoned in several noncooperation campaigns
56. (1862-1947), lawyer of Rae Bareli, arrested in 1920 for helping to organise the boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales

on the subject of the enquiry regarding the death of Oudh Narain Lal[53]. The Enquiry Committee had specially authorised them to do so. They came again at night at 11.15 p.m. Dr. Jawaharlal[54] taking Joti Prasad's place.

11th — Joseph, Joti Prasad & Harnam Sundarlal[55] came in the morning in continuation of the previous night's talk.

Bad news about Indu's health for last few days. Today a telegram to jailer announced welcome news of her recovery.

I took Eupatorium Aya this morning.

Our newspapers stopped for last two days—neither the Leader nor the Englishman delivered on the 11th or 12th. The I.D.T.[56] also did not come on 12th. It had also been stopped last Saturday. The Hamdam has not put in an appearance for over a week. Apparently there have been news or comments relating to the jail. Probably there have been references to the Enquiry Committee which has been sitting for the last few days to enquire into the case of Oudh Narain Lal. The Committee consists of Kumar Parmanand—President, Nasrullah and Hunter the Civil Surgeon of Lucknow. They finished their sittings this evening.

13th October — Yesterday's Leader & the Englishman given to us in the evening. The day before's and today's not given

14th October (Saturday) — The Hamdam appears after over a week!

The Correspondent of The Manchester Guardian—Gwynne[57] by name—came with Supdt and has a long talk with me on the political situation &c.

15th October — Mahadeva Desai is removed to our barrack.

16th October — Interview with Kamala—Had a glimpse of Anand and

53. Avadh Narain Lal (1893-1922), of Deoria, sentenced in December 1921 to 18 months' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 100. He died in prison.

54. Jawaharlal Rohtagi (b. 1883), a doctor and active Congressman of Kanpur, often imprisoned in connection with the nationalist movement; elected Member of U.P. Legislative Assembly several times since 1937 and was also for some time after 1947 a minister in the U.P. Government.

55. Member, U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, sentenced in December 1921 to 18 months' simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 100.

56. The Indian Daily Telegraph.

57. J. T. Gwynne, after a short spell in the Indian Civil Service, served as the correspondent of The Manchester Guardian in India.

goes about with red eyes & tears glistening in them Radha Krishna Tewari[59] breaks down absolutely and blubbers. In fact every one of us felt sad. Most of us were under the impression that we might not see each other again for the rest of our terms of imprisonment. The Civil Ward is indeed an isolation ward and there is little chance of our seeing any of the present residents of the *chakkar* before our discharge. So that Devadas, who cannot even have outside interviews or letters, will have to put up with our sole company for a year and more!

We are told that Purushottam Das Tandon & Dr. Murari Lal will follow us to the civil barrack. We find on arrival Ananda Swami[60] of Jhansi or thereabouts already installed in one of the little buildings. He appears to be a most eccentric individual.

6th October We are put in the very same barrack in which I slept during my first night in jail—December 7th.

Purushottam Das & Parmatma Nand Singh[61] are sent to our barrack. We are now six.

The jailer informs me of a 'phone message from Allahabad to the effect that father is unwell and Indu has fever. Mother will come for the Monday interview but Kamala may not.'

7th I take Nux vomica 30 in morning. We start reading the Gita—a chapter a day—from this evening.

8th (Sunday) Nux Vomica 30 taken in morning. Jailer informs me that Kishan Bhai & Shauna came to interview me yesterday. He told them that I was expecting mother & others from Allahabad next Monday and I could not have two interviews within a week.

Started doing geometry, geography and English literature with Devadas.

9th October (Monday) Took Nux Vomica 30 in morning.

Interview with mother in the early morning.

10th Received some books (Shakespeare &c) from Allahabad —brought by Abul Hasan—Khaliq, Joseph & Joti Pershad[62] visited us in the evening at 7 for a consultation

59 A volunteer from Saran, in Bihar

60 Swami Anand Dev Swami, a noncooperator from Jhansi, originally imprisoned in Agra

61 Member, Balia District Congress Committee, sentenced in December 1921 to 18 months' simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs 500.

62 Secretary, Meerut Congress

30th October (Monday) Interview with mother, Shauna & Beti.
Took Nux Vomica 30 in morning.
Started reading Tulsidas's Ramayana at *Prarthana*, in addition to an *adhyaya* of the Gita from last evening.
Weight at 4.30 p m. (just after afternoon refreshments) on grain weighing machine 1 md 17 *seers* 3 *ch.*=117¼ lbs. The weighing machine is different from the one used before.

31st Took Nux Vomica 30 in morning.
Devadas is informed by Supdt. that the punishment awarded him for sending an unauthorised letter &c has been reduced by Govt to 3 months. So that Devadas can begin interviews & correspondence again from the 10th December.
Received letter from Kamala dated 27/10.

NOVEMBER

My birthday on 11th

2nd Nov. (Thursday) We are given a copy of the new rules for political prisoners. More restrictions—less food—interviews and letters once a month only—books only with the permission of the District Magistrate—no Gandhi cap &c! We gather, informally, that these rules will come into force on the 15th.
I sent a letter for Kamala yesterday to the office. This was posted today. She is in Dehra Dun with father.

3rd Nov. I am given to understand that Kamala will come and see me on the 8th. Received a lot of fruit &c from Dehra Dun.

5th (Sunday) Took Nux Vomica 200 in morning

6th Not well. Took Nux Vomica 30 at night.

9th November Interview with Kamala & Birju Bhabi. With them came Indu, Vidya,[71] Birju[72] & Ballo.[73] They had all come from Lahore this day.
Yesterday the Superintendent asked me about the new rules. I made our position fairly clear to him. Specially as regards the non-wearing of the Gandhi Cap. I told him that this was a question of principle—as indeed

71. Shrimati Vidyavati Dutt (b. 1913); daughter of Krishanlal Nehru
72. Brij Kumar Nehru (b. 1909); son of Brijlal Nehru, cousin of Jawaharlal. Joined I.C.S. 1934, at present Governor of Assam.
73. Balwant Kumar Nehru; son of Brijlal Nehru.

Haribhai Desai[68] & Basumati Ben[69] & Mrs. Joseph. Received letter from father 11/10. Devadas called to the office. Had a long talk with Gwynne. Nearly two hours!

18th — Raj[70] came to see me early in the morning on her way down from Almora. Interview not allowed as it was not due.

On 17th and 18th took Eupatorium twice—morning & evening.

19th (Thursday) — My letter to father posted.

Took Nux Vomica 30 at night.

Newspapers have been coming to us most irregularly during last few days. They are usually mutilated.

20th October — *Deepawali*

In evening lit a few *chirags* (the jailer only sent us 10 tiny ones!)

Took Nux Vomica 30 in forenoon.

23rd October — Monday interview with mother, Kamala & Indu—Indu very thin & weak-looking after her severe illness, but cheerful.

I took Nux Vomica 30 in morning.

Since the 8th October I have been giving three to four hours daily to Devadas. We have been doing Indian History, English literature, Geometry & Geography. This has taken the whole of my afternoons and I have had to stop spinning for the time being. Another reason for this is the bad condition of my *charkha*. It is giving a lot of trouble.

25th October — Weight at 11 a.m. before midday meal 117 lbs.

No change!

We finished our first reading of the Gita at *prarthna* time last evening—From today a second reading begun.

26th — My measurements taken today.

Chest	35	and	29¾ in
Waist	26	and	24¼ in

Biceps & triceps arm extended 10¾ in; bent 11 in

Forearm " 9¼ in

Calf 12 in thigh (where mark) 17½

68 Father of Mahadeva Desai.

69. Vasumati Behn; social worker of Surat and an associate of Mahatma Gandhi

70 Shrimati Raj Dulari Nehru, wife of Shridhar Nehru.

20th (Monday) Murli Manohar & Deokinandan[74] discharged today from their barrack. Ganpat Sahai[75] & Bhagwan Das Halna[76] were discharged a day or two ago on ground of ill health.

Abstract of Regulations amplifying rules.

1. No money to be kept by prisoners. To be deposited in office.
2. No cooked food accepted from visitors for prisoners This includes sweets.
3. Interviews for Civil Ward on 4th Sunday every month.
4. Letters for Civil Ward 2nd week of each month.
5. Drilling of all kinds forbidden.
6. Prisoners not to retain possession of any instrument for the production of noise or music.
7. No noise to be created which is audible beyond the limit of the particular barrack.

In answer to a query the jailer informed me that the rule relating to interviews with ex prisoners still subsisted. So that father cannot see me. Three visitors—men or women—can now interview at a time.

Nov 20th (contd) Interview with mother & Ranjit.

Nov. 22nd (Wednesday) Saw Khaliq

I asked the Supdt. yesterday about the rule relating to interviews with ex-prisoners Unlike the jailer, he was doubtful about the matter and promised to enquire from higher quarters. He gave it as his opinion that there was no necessity for the rule now as it practically applied to me only.

Devadas examined in the Hindu Period of Indian History. He did a good paper.

Nov 23rd Supdt. informed me that he did not think the rule about ex prisoners not having interviews applied now. He said that he did not think it worthwhile to refer the

74 Secretary, District Congress Committee, Rae Bareli, arrested for participating in the noncooperation movement.
75. President, Sultanpur District Congress Committee.
76. A journalist of Aligarh; member of the U P Provincial Congress Committee, sentenced in December 1921 to 18 months' simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs 500.

the Govt. had admitted by issuing such a silly order—and we could not willingly obey the rules.

Ramdas Gandhi had an interview today with Mahadeva.

I took Nux Vomica 30 on the mornings of the 7th and 8th November.

11th November Saturday — My 33rd birthday! according to the *Samvat* calendar. Otherwise it comes on the 14th November. Mother's instructions carried out. Mahadeva, Devadas & Parmatmanand Singh prepare a regular feast!

Supt told me this morning that under the new rules the books we already possess will not be taken away from us. I ventured to suggest as much on the 8th when the Supdt. spoke to me on the subject but he would not agree to this interpretation then. Today he calmly takes up this position and says that the rules are ambiguous on the point. Besides, he says, it is too troublesome to collect all the books from the political prisoners! Anyway, for this relief many thanks.

Purushottam Das sends for sweets in honour of my birthday—In the evening grand (!) illuminations under the direction of Balkrishna & Parmatmanand!

13th Nov. (Monday) I.G. visits our barrack.

14th Letter from father & Kamala received. We finish 2nd reading of Gita at *prarthna* time.

15th New rules enforced from this date. But I am informed by jailer that another interview will be allowed this week to all politicals. Also that I am entitled to send a letter home today.

16th I send a letter for father to the office. The letter is addressed to Allahabad, but it is to be forwarded to Calcutta where father is likely to be. A note on my treatment is attached.

New Regulations given to us. Interviews for us only on 4th Sundays of every month. Letters also in a particular week every month. No drilling of any kind, no noise &c.

17th Nov. My weight today at 5 p.m. 119 lbs—a gain of 2 lbs in 2½ weeks!

18th 8th Gandhi Day—

Venkat Ram discharged on completing his six months. I also complete 6 months today—

My letter to father dated 16th posted today.

18th 9th Gandhi Day—Fasted.

20th Mahadeva's birthday—Completes 31st year. He reminded us of it only in the evening. So we celebrated it next day on the 21st. (According to English date Mahadev was born on 1st January 1892)

Dec. 23rd Took Sulphur 500.
Devadas examined in Physical Geography and Elementary Geology. He did well.

Dec. 28th I was unwell for some days and felt uneasy and restless. The damp and rainy weather contributed to the general discomfort. For a day or two I was feverish. Am quite fit again.
I was weighed on the 26th evening. I was just over 117 lbs which is 2 lbs less than I was on the last occasion a fortnight ago.
A letter from father addressed to me came to the office about the 15th December. This has not yet been delivered to me as my month is not yet up. The letter must have been written under some misapprehension so soon after Kamala's of the 8th.
A.P. Sen[78] visited our barrack as an official visitor some days ago.

1923

January 3rd Weight at 11 a.m. 120 lbs Have again gone up! We are having a cold wave. Minimum temperature last night was 38°F.

January 5th Interview with father, Kamala, Indu & Nikku[79]. Devadas had an interview with Ba and others.

January 18th Tenth Gandhi Day—Fasted. Received letter dated 13/1 from father. A very short one.
Harnam Sundarlal has been sent to our barrack because he was considered to be an agitator and rather troublesome in the circle. He came on the 15th.
Mohd. Nawab[80] was released on the 16th.
We have gone through the Gita 5 times at *prarthna* time. We are now reading some pages of Lok. Tilak's Gita Rahasya every evening and not a chapter of the Gita.

78 A barrister of Lucknow.
79. Kunwar Lal Katju, younger brother of Jwan Lal Katju
80. Nawab Mohammad, member, Lucknow Town Congress Committee

matter to Govt. but it was open to him to apply the rule or not and he was not going to apply it. He was not prepared to say that the rule had been abrogated but—& so on and so forth. I asked him if my father could see me. He said he could and agreed to my informing my people accordingly. It was obvious that the Supdt. had consulted some high official in the matter but, as usual, he wanted to make out that the initiative came from himself! A little later the jailer came to me and hinted that the Sahib had seen the Raja Sahab about it! So the cat was out of the bag. The jailer agreed to write to father—At his suggestion I sent a few lines to mother informing her of the new interpretation.

Joseph moved to our barrack this *evening*.

Nov. 24th — The new D.C. (Routledge) visited our barrack.

Nov. 29th — Am informed that father will have an interview with me today. Later a telegram comes to jailer from father saying that he was unavoidably detained and would come the next day.

Nov. 30th (Thursday) — Interview with father, mother, Kamala & Indu. · Took Hep. Sulph 6.

DECEMBER

6th — Anniversary of our arrest! Only five of those who were arrested on the 6th Dec. 1921 remain in this jail today —Purushottam Das Tandon, Khaliq, Wali[77], Joseph & I. Of course I have had an outing since and have come back again.

7th — Took Sulphur 30.

We finished our third reading of the Gita at *Prarthna* time on the 4th.

December 10th — Weight at 11 a.m. 119 lbs—no change.

December 15th — Took Sulphur 200 in morning. Khaliq & Wali came to say goodbye.

16th — Khaliq & Wali discharged after completing their term of a year.

17th — Anniversary of my first conviction (under the Criminal Law Amendment Act).

77. Hakim Abdul Wali, Joint Secretary of the Muslim League and Oudh Khilafat Committee; in charge of National Volunteer Corps, arrested in December 1921 for distributing leaflets calling for a hartal

news very calmly and somewhat incredulously. The jailer however insists that we are going to be discharged. If so, I suppose we shall have to put up with it, although the last volume of Gibbon has still to be read!

In the evening the jailer tells us that Crim Law Amendment Act prisoners will be released—No orders as to the rest. At about 8 p m the Supdt came and said that all of us are going to be discharged Gives us the option to go immediately or the next morning. Only Ch. Raghubir Narain[83] of Meerut & Saidur Rahman Kidwai[84] remain of all the Special Div prisoners in the jail. We have decided to go tomorrow morning—on the 30th.

RECORD OF INTERVIEWS

22nd May 1922 Interview with Tasadduq A. Sherwani who had been released 2 or 3 days before from Naini Jail.

(1st June) Informal interview with Kishan Bhai—Jailer present, for about 15 mins only in office.

7th June Interview with mother, Lado Bhabi, Kishan Bhai, Manmohini, Sham Mohini & Betty. Just 30 mins. Jailer present throughout—took notes.

10th June Informal interview in office with father, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Mrs. Gandhi, Mrs. Naidu, Ansari, Shuaib, Habib, Moazzam Ali, Ramdas Gandhi, Malaviyaji, Pyarelal &c &c for a few minutes in office.

INTERVIEWS STOPPED BY US

(Declined interviews with Kishan Bhai, Polak &c because of this decision)

INTERVIEWS STARTED AGAIN

31st July Interview with Kishan Bhai—just ½ hour in office.

10th August Interview with Masud Ali Nadvi in shed. Only 21 minutes allowed.

21st August (Monday) Interview with Kishan Bhai (Devadas also accompanied me)—in office—45 mins—no hurry.

83 Chaudhri Raghubir Narain Singh, member of the United Provinces Congress Committee

84 Belonged to a family of taluqdars of U P, imprisoned in Bara Banki for a speech on 17 November 1921, member, A I C.C.

I learnt yesterday from a telegram sent by father to the jailer of the birth of a daughter to Sarup on the morning of the 16th.

19th — Wrote letter to Kamala last night—Sent it to office early this morning. Soon after learnt that father may interview me tomorrow or the day after.

Shafi Mohamad Shafi (of Tanda) came to bid us farewell in evening. He is being released tomorrow after serving out his full term of one year.

Swami Anand Deva discharged from our neighbouring barrack today.

22nd (*Basant Pancham*) — Expected father on the 20th and 21st but he did not come. No news either.

Took Sulphur 1000 on morning 20th. Dharmvir[81] & Shah Sahab discharged on the 20th. For many days past there have been strong rumours about the impending discharge of political prisoners—specially those convicted under the Criminal Law Amendment Act. These rumours gained force by the news of the repeal of the Act.

Weight today in afternoon—after unusually heavy meal —121 lbs.

January 23rd — Mahadeva departs.

25th — I begin taking Kuhne's[82] hip baths in the morning.

27th — Learnt of very serious illness of Sarup. She has got over crisis and is slowly improving. Father's visit to me could not take place on this account. He may come and see me on the 29th or 30th.

29th — The Jailer dashes in at about 1.30 in an excited state and announces that we are all going to be released. On being questioned he says that he has no official intimation. Kishan Bhai has telephoned, and some one else has confirmed this that the Governor announced in Council today that all p ps will be released. We take the

81 Professor of mathematics at Kashi Vidyapith, a noncooperator, established an *ashram* at Shivapur to popularise the use of *khaddar*, arrested in July 1922.

82 William Kuhne (1837-1900), a physiologist who developed methods of nature cure, particularly hydrotherapy.

MY SPINNING RECORD

From 16th August onwards :

So far · I *Kukri* on 24/6 & 25/6 about 1½ *tola* before 16th August
II *Kukri* June „ 29/32 *tola*
III „ 453 yds, 1¼ *tola*=17¼ *counts* dt. 9/7/22
IV „ on 20/7; 602 yds, weight 1-5/16 tola=21¾ counts
V „ on 15/8, 740 yds; 2 *tolas*=17¾ counts
(Also some more in common *Kukris*) Total nearly 7 *tolas*
Time roughly 44 hours

August

	Time spent on *charkha* &c (cleaning, repairing, spinning &c)	Actual spinning time	No: *punis* used
16th	2 hrs	1 hr 50m	5¾
17th	2¾ hrs	2½ hrs	6

(Extraordinarily slow progress as I have been trying to spin fine yarn).

18th	50 mins	¾ hr	1

(Intended spinning a lot on this day—Was unwell. Besides dark & raining).

19th	2 hours 10 mins	2 hours	4

Total time 7 hours 5 mins Weight : 6 annas—3/8th *tola*
VI *Kukri* taken out. No punis 16¾ Length=269 yds
∴ Count 34.1

New *Kukri*	Spinning time	*Punis*
20th August	2 hours 5 mins	12
21st	1½ hours	8½
22nd	1 hr 10 min	8
	4¾ hrs	28½

VII *Kukri* taken out Time 4¾ hrs Punis 28½ Weight 14 as=7/8 *tola*
Length 377 yds ∴ Count 20½

23rd	3 hrs 10 mins	2 hrs 40 mins	17
24th		1 5 mins	10
		(raining and very dark)	27

28th August (Monday)	Interview with mother, Kamala, Bibi, Betty & Indu. 40 mins. in office.
4th Sept. (Monday)	Interview with Nan & Ranjit in office about 33 mins.—Devadas also interviewed them.
18th Sept. (Monday)	Interview with Kishan Bhai in office. Just half an hour —Interview with Devadas not allowed to K.B.
25th Sept. (Monday)	Interview with Mother, Bibi, Beti & Indu in office—just half an hour—Had a glimpse of Ranjit at the end.
9th October (Monday)	Interview with mother in office. Just half an hour.
16th October (Monday)	Interview with Kamala in office. A glimpse of Anand.
23rd October (Monday)	Interview with mother, Kamala & Indu in office.
30th October (Monday)	Interview with mother, Shauna & Beti.
9th November (Thursday)	Interview with Kamala, Birju Bhabi, Indu, Braj Kumar, Ballo & Vidya.

(From now onwards new rules apply—Next interview can only take place after a month). An extra interview allowed to all prisoners. Henceforth each barrack to have a special Sunday in the month for interviews. For the civil barrack, the 4th Sunday has been fixed.

20th November (Monday)	Interview with mother & Ranjit.
30th Nov (Thursday)	Interview with father, mother Kamala & Indu. (This interview took place so soon after the 20th as according to regulations we in the Civil Ward were entitled to an interview on the 4th Sunday).
5th January 1923	Interview with father, Kamala, Indu & Nikku. (This was really the December interview)

September

XI	1st	No spinning	—Wrote letter to father	
	2nd	3½ hours	21 *punis*	
	3rd	1 hr 40 min	9½	12½
		20 min 2 hours	3	
	4th	1 hr 15 min	9	
		6¾ hrs	43	

Kukri taken out Total time 6¾ hours *punis* 43
Lenth 713 yds Weight 1-9/16 *tolas* Count 21-3/4

XII	5th	No spinning	—Read Amir Ali for most of the day	
	6th	3 hours 7 mins	24 *punis*	
	7th	2 hours 43 mins	32 *punis*	
		5 hours 50 mms	56 *punis*	

Kukri taken out Total time : 5 hrs 50 m. *punis* : 56
Length : 744 yds
Weight 2-1/32 *tola* Count 17½

XIII	8th	3 hrs 2 mins	28 *punis*	
	9th	2 hrs 39 mins	23 „	
	10th	2 hrs 13 mins	21 „	
	11th	1 hr 34 mins 2 hrs	16 p.	27 p.
		1 hr 2 mins 36 mins	11	
		10½ hrs	99	

XIII (Cont) *Kukri* taken out Total time 10½ hrs *Punis* 99
Length : 1122¾ yds; Weight : 3-7/32 *tolas* Count 16.6

From 1st Sept.
(Upto and inclusive 11th total time given to spinning alone : 23 hrs 5 mins i.e. 1 hr 5 mins in excess of schedule—not including time spent on cleaning *charkhas*, taking off yarn &c &c)

XIV	12 Sept.	1 hrs 3 mins	10 *punis*
	13th	2 hrs 3 mins	18 „
	14th	1 hrs 6 mins	10 „
		4 hrs 12 mins	38 *punis*

Kukri taken out Total time 4 hrs 12 mins—*Punis* 38
Length : 528 yards Weight : 1-5/16 *tola* Count : 19.1

(Upto 14th—43 mins)

VIII *Kukri* taken out

Time 3¾ hrs *Punis* 27 Length 269 yds Weight=14 as=7/8 *tolas*

∴ Count 14¾

25th	3 hrs	2½ hrs		13 *punis*
26th		2¾ hrs		15 „
		1¼ hrs	4 hrs	5 „
27th		2 hrs 35 mins	3½ hrs	9¼ *Punis*
		55 mins		3¼ „
28th	4¾ hrs	3½ hrs		14½ „
		13½ hrs		60 *punis*

IX *Kukri* taken out: Length 1097 yds Weight 1 *tola* 11 *masha* 5 *ratti* Time 13½ hrs *Punis* 60

∴ Count 28

29th	Did no spinning			
30		1 hr 25 mins	3 hrs 5 mins	16¼ *Punis*
		1 hr 40 mins		13¾ 30
31st		about an hour or less		10
		about 4 hours		40

X *Kukri* taken out

Length 496 yds Weight 1 *tola* 5 *masha* 2 *rattis*

Time about 4 hours *Punis*—40

∴ Count 16.3

Analysis of spinning &c for second half of August

Time : 16 days —

Total time spent in spinning 33 hours 5 minutes

Total time spent over *charkhas & cognate occupations* 36 hours

Total weight of yarn spun —5 *tolas* 6 *mashas* 3 *rattis*

Total length of yarn spun 2508 yards

Total weight of yarn spun since June 24th. 12 *tolas* 6 *mashas* 3 *rattis*

Total length „ „ „ „ 4900 yards

Total time spent in spinning alone „ „ roughly 80 hrs

Average count 18½

J. N.
31/8/22

XVIII	25th	2¼	2 hrs	12 p.
(+2 hr 14 m)	26th		3 hrs 20 min	27
	27th		2 hrs	12
(+3 hr 14 mins)	28th		3 hrs 7 mins.	26½
			10—27	77½

Kukri taken out Time 10 hrs 27 mins. *Puns* 77½

Length 1173 yds Weight 2-55/96 *tola* =2/9/6

Count 22

* Note :

Yarn sent to Allahabad : 17 hanks
Total weight . 27 *tolas* 8 *mashas* 1 *ratti*
Highest Count 34.1 Lowest Count 14¾
Average count about 18¼
Total length 10570 yards
Date 25th September 1922

XIX	29th	No spinning—not quite well		
(+ 31 mins)	30th	1 hr 40 mins	1 hr 10 mins	17 p

Totals for September · Time *60½ hours* actual spinning time besides many hours spent on putting *charkha* right, *mal* &c.

Does not include yarn spun on 30th | Total Weight yarn spun in Sept. 17 *tolas* 9 *mashas* 1 *ratti*
" length " " " 6886 yards
Highest count 22¼ Lowest Count 16
Average Count 18½ roughly

Total from 16th August to 28th September

Total weight of yarn spun 23 *tolas* 3 *mashas* 4 *rattis*
Total length " " " 9394 yards
Total time of spinning alone 92 hours 25 mins.
Highest Count 34.1 Lowest 14-3/4 Average 19.1

October

XIX	(30th Sept.	1 hr 40 m	1 hr 10 m	17 p.)
	1st Oct.	1 hr 37 min		22 p.

2nd " Did no spinning—Occupied for most of the day in judging in spinning competition of our barracks.

3rd " Did no spinning—Felt somewhat tired and disinclined.

Kukri taken out : Weight 1-1/3 *tola* Length : 365 yards
Time 2 hrs 47 mins. Count 13.

4th No spinning—Occupied in changing barracks

5th & 6th "

XV	15th	No Spinning—Letter to Kamala written			
	16th		1 hr 50 mins	2 hrs	20 *punis* 21½ p.
			10 mins		1½
	17th		1 hr 25 mins		13 p.
	18th	an hour on cleaning *charkha* &c &c	1 hr 2 mins	2 hrs 5 m	10 p.
			1 hr 3		9
			5½ hrs.		53½ p.

Kukri taken out Total time 5½ hrs *Punis* 53½ Length 636 yards
Weight Rs. 1/14/6 Count 16

(Upto 18th—3 hrs 13 m)=1-29/32 *tola*

XVI 19th No spinning—raining &c—but spent nearly an
(—5 hrs 13ms) hour on improving the *charkha*—
20th Still raining—Spent some time over cleaning &c *charkha*
—Found spindle hopelessly crooked.
(—7 hrs 13 mins) Had to take it out and send it to be straightened and was thus forced to refrain from spinning.
21st Spindle is returned to me at noon—I spin in the afternoon.
(—6 hrs 23 mins) 2 hrs 50 mins 27 *punis*
(First Friday when no hank shown by me)
22nd Spent morning (over 2 hours) in fixing up *charkha* &c
6 hrs 3 hrs 33 mins 3 hrs 32 34 p.
12 mins 45 mins 2
(—4 hrs 38 min) (Altogether spent nearly 6 hours on *charkha* today)
23rd (morning) 3hrs 3min 2 hrs 3 min 18¼ p.
Kukri taken out · Total time 8 hrs 38 min 79¼ p.
Length · 1102 yards Weight : 2-37/48 *tola* Count : 18-3/4

XVII 23rd (cont) afternoon 2½ hrs 2 hrs 9 mins 18 *punis*
(—2 hrs 26 mins) (12 *punis* wt ½ tola 1 *ratti*—time 1½ hrs—Wastage collected 1 *ratti*)
17 p. wt 11/28t 2r time 2 hrs 5 m Wastage 2 *rattis*
24th 6¼ hrs 1 hr 26 min 5 hrs 20m. 11 *punis*
3 hr 54 min 33 p.
(+54 min) 44
Kukri taken out Total time 7 hours 29 min—62 *punis*
Length 825 yards Weight 2-11/32 *tola* Count 16-3/4=2/5/6
*Given all my yarn spun so far to mother to be taken to Allahabad.

XXIII

Nov. 12th		1 hr 50 m
13th	about 1 hr 55 m	
14th-17th	No spinning	
18th		15 min
		4 hrs

Kukri taken out on 23/11
Length 648 yds—rate 162 yds per hour
Time 4 hours Weight : 2 *tolas* 2 *mashas*
Count 14¼

December

XXIV December 3rd		1 hr 37 min.
4th		1 hr 5 min.
		19 min.
5th		1 hr 2 min.
6th		40 mins.
7th		47 mins.
		5 hrs 30 mins

Kukri taken out Time : 5½ hrs.
Length : 274 yards Rate 132 yds per hour (bad!)
(Cotton not very good)
Weight : 2 *tolas* 7 *rattis* Count 16½

XXV Dec 28th, 29th, & 30th and a little some days before. Was unwell in 3rd week and could not spin for many days.
Total time about 5 hrs 35 mins
Length 1004 yards Rate about 180 per hour
Weight 2 *tolas* 7 *mashas* 3 *rattis*=2·59/96 *tolas*
Count about 18¼
31.12.22

January 1923
XXVI (In 5 days) Total time about 6 hours
Length 960 yards Rate c. 160 per hour
Weight 2 *tolas* 9 *mashas* 5 *rattis* (2¾+5 *r*)=2·77/96 *tolas*
Count about 16
Date of taking off 11/1/23

XX	7th	45 mins
	8th	1 hr
	9th	40 mins (on Devadas's *charkha*)
10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th		No spinning
	18th	1½ hours
	19th	½ hr
	20th-22nd	No spinning
	23rd	About 1 hour
		4¾ hours (+ 40 on diff. *charkha*)

Kukri taken out on 23/10
Time : about 4¾ hours Length : 528½ yards Rate : 111 yds per hour
Weight : 1-2/3 *tola* 1 r. Count : 15.1

XXI No spinning on 24th to 28th

29th on Sabarmati *Charkha*	2 hrs
30th " " "	½ hr
Kukri taken out. Time 2½ hrs	Length 318 yards
	Rate : 127 yds per hour
Weight 14 as 4r=11/12th *tola*	Count 16½

November

XXII No spinning on 31st October or on 1-4 Nov.

5th Nov. (Sunday)	2 hrs 35 m on Sabarmati *Charkha*
	1 hrs 40 m "
	4 hrs 15 m.

Kukri taken out
Time 4¼ hrs Length 735 yards Rate 173 yds per hr.
Weight 2¼ *tola* 1 r Count 15½

Analysis for October

Total weight		3-7/8 *tolas* 5 r
Total length		1211 yds
Total time		9½ hours (of this 40 mins on another *charkha*)
Highest Count	16½	Lowest count 13
Average 14 6		(Above includes yarn spun on 30/9 for 1 hr 10 m)

BOOKS RETURNED

1—6	Symonds' Renaissance in Italy 6 vols	Given to Kishanbhai on 31st July 1922 to be returned to Allahabad
7.	Keynes' Economic Consequences of the Peace	
8.	Bevan's German Social Democracy during War	
9.	Klein's Science and the Infinite	
10.	Letters from John Chinaman	
11.	Three pamphlets on Sikhism	
12.	Kingsley's Hereward the Wake	
13.	Barnett's "Antiquities of India"	Given to Abul Hasan on 31st August 1922 to be taken to Allahabad
14.	Narendranath Law's "Ancient Indian Polity"	
15.	Mukerjea's "Fundamental Unity of India"	
16.	Pater's "Renaissance"	
17.	Tennyson's "Idylls of the King"	
18.	मेवाड पतन	
19.	Bryce's "Holy Roman Empire"—old edition	
20—21.	Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina" 2 vols. Yusuf Imam's. To be forwarded to him.	
22.	Gautier's "Capt Fracasse"	Given to Ranjit on 4/9/22
23.	Mukerjea's "History of Indian Shipping"	
24.	सम्राट अशोक Devadas's Principles of Sociology by Spencer 3 vols Fabian Tract A Hindi play—not allowed in	6 vols given to Kishan Bhai on 18/9 to be returned to Shiva Prasad Gupta

25—30 Kaye & Malleson's History of Indian Mutiny 6 Vols. —Given to Abul Hasan on 18/9

31. Trilingual Dictionary—Given to mother &c on 25/9
A large number of Devadas's books which were not allowed in by the Supdt.

32. वैज्ञानिक अद्वैतवाद —Returned to office as book probably not meant for me 18/10

XXVII In 5 days—Total time 6 hours
Length : 1060 yards Rate c. 177 *per hour*
Weight 2 *tolas* 8 *m* 6 r (=2¾—2 r=2·70/96 *tolas*)
Count : 18½
Date 19/1/23

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10 hanks—Nos : XVIII to XXVII
Total length 7515 yards Weight 21 *tolas* 2 *mashas* 5 *rattis*
Total time spent 41¾ hours Highest Count 22—Lowest 13
average 17

Rate : highest 180 of 18½ count
Spun from 25th Sept 1922 to 19th January 1923

My spinning record in jail to 19th January 1923. (From June 25th 1922)

27 hanks : total weight 48 *tolas* 10¾ *mashas*
Total length 18085 yards
Total time in spinning alone 167 hours
(A great many hours also spent on cognate occupations e.g. cleaning & setting right *charkha*—taking off yarn from spindle &c)
Highest Count 34.1 Lowest 13. Average between 17 & 18 (17½)
Highest rate—on Sabarmati *charkha* 180 yards per hour of 18½ count

LIST OF BOOKS WITH ME IN JAIL

	1.	The Koran (Mohamad Ali's translation)
	2.	The Bible
	3.	The Bhagawad Gita (Annie Besant & Bhagwan Das)
	4.	Do text only (F.T. B's)
	5-6.	Do 2 pocket editions
Retd.	7-12.	Symonds' Italian Renaissance 6 Vols—1 to 7 (3 missing)
	13.	Arnold's Light of Asia
	14-17.	Manucci's Storia do Mogor 4 vols
	18.	Bernier's Travels
	19.	Sarkar's Shivaji
	20.	Vincent Smith's Akbar
	21.	Havell's Aryan Rule in India (with Khaliq)
	22.	Memoirs of Babar
	23.	Edgar Allan Poe's Tales (with Nawab)
Retd.	24-29.	Kaye & Malleson's Indian Mutiny 6 vols
	30.	F.W. Bain's Heifer of the Dawn (with Nawab)
Retd.	31.	Kingsley's Hereward the Wake
Retd.	32.	Bryce's Holy Roman Empire—old edition
Retd.	33.	Tennyson's Idylls of the King
	34.	Keats' Poems G.T.S.
	35.	Shelley's Poems G.T.S
	36.	Ram Charit Manas
Retd.	37.	Bevan's German Social Democracy
Retd.	38.	Keynes' Economic Consequences of the Peace
Retd.	39.	Sydney Klein's Science & the Infinite
Retd.	40.	Three Sikh tracts
	41.	*Tarke Mamelat dusre mulkon men* (Urdu)
	42.	Graham Wallas—Human Nature in Politics.
	43.	Lawrie's Epitome of Domestic Medicine.
Yusuf Imam's	44.	Tolstoy's Master & Man &c Also Retd; Ivan Karenina [Sic] (two vols.) & Capt. Fracasse — Retd, Retd
	45.	—do— Childhood Youth &c
	46.	Turgenev's Liza
	47.	Wordsworth's Sonnets (Temple Classics)
	48.	Trine's In Tune with the Infinite
Retd.	49.	Walter Pater's Renaissance
	50.	*Kaunuk i-Urdu*

MY WEIGHT IN JAIL

(As noted by me on the jail weighing machine)

1922		
June 15th	118 lbs	
(? July 1st	116 lbs)	
July 4th	114 lbs	(I was fasting on this day)
July 8th	115 lbs	
August 9th	114 lbs	Weighed at 10 a.m. before midday meal.
September 7th	115 lbs	„ 5 p.m. just after having some bread & butter
September 20th	117 lbs	„ 9.30 a.m. before midday meal but after morning bread & milk &c
October 25th	117 lbs	„ „ 11 a.m. before midday meal
October 30th	1 *md* 17 S 3 *ch.*	=117¼ lbs on a new weighing machine (the one used for grain &c) at 4.30 p m. just after evening refreshments.
Nov. 17th	119 lbs	on old weighing machine (hanging one) at 5 p m. in evening
Dec. 10th	119 lbs	Do Do Do at 11 a m. (before meal)
Dec. 26th	117½ lbs	Do Do Do at 5 p m.
Jan. 3rd	120 lbs	Do Do at 11 a.m. (before midday meal)
January 22nd	121 lbs	Do Do at about 3 p.m. (after unusually heavy meal)

86.	शाहजहाँ–द्विजेन्द्रलाल राय	S. P. Gupta's personal copy on 17/9
87-88.	Trans-Himalaya by Sven Hedin 2 vols	on 18/9
89.	Sherring's Western Tibet & the British Borderland	
90.	Vincent Smith's Early History of India	
91.	Early Travels in India 1583-1619 edited by W. Foster	
92.	Aspects of Ancient Hindu Polity by N. Law	Received on 25/9
93.	Beal's Buddhist Records of the Ancient World	
94.	Modern Review for October & November	
95.	"Hindu Images" by Bhattacharya	Received on 4/10/22
96.	Gita—Bhagwan Das & Besant —2nd copy—for Devadas	
97.	Elementary Algebra	
98.	Shakespeare's King John, Twelfth Night,	Received on 10/10/22 brought by Abul Hasan
to 108.	Taming of the Shrew, Merry Wives of Windsor, Troilus & Cressida, Winter's Tale, Macbeth, Measure for Measure, Merchant of Venice, Julius Caesar—Sonnets	
109.	कविता कौमुदी – पहला भाग	Received by me on 14/10
110.	पथिक	
111.	Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam	
112.	Chardenal's First French Course	
Retd. 113.	वैज्ञानिक अद्वैतवाद (by Ramdas Gaur)	(why has this book come and from whom?)
114.	Tennyson's Idylls of the King	Recd. from office on 19/10
115.	Tolstoy's Essays	
116.	Gita Rahasya in Hindi	" " 30/10
117.	Humorous Anthology	Recd. on 14/11
118.	Harrow Association Record	

	51.	Second Book of Urdu	
Retd.	52.	Letters from John Chinaman	
	53.	Wells' Outline of History with P.D.T.	
	54.	Light of Asia—2nd copy—? with Nawab?	
Retd	55.	Trilingual Dictionary	
Retd.	56.	Barnett's Antiquities of India	Received 9/8/22
	57.	Amir Ali's History of Saracens	
	58.	Selections from Lamb—L.M.	
	59.	Garibaldi & the Thousand by Trevelyan	
	60.	Hindustani English Dictionary	
	61.	Gutka Hindi Kosh	
	62.	Wilde's Ballad of Reading Gaol	
Retd	63.	Radha Kumud Mukerjea's History of Indian Shipping	Received by me from office 14/8/22
Retd	64.	—do— Fundamental Unity of India	
Retd	65.	Narendranath Law's Studies in Ancient Hindu Polity	
	66.	श्रीधर भाषा कोष	
	67 to 73.	Gibbon's Decline & Fall of Roman Empire 7 vols	

Retd.		(Shiva Prasad's personal copy)		Received from Shiva Prasad Gupta on 17/8/22
	74.	सम्राट अशोक		
	75.	दुर्गादास	– द्विजेन्द्रलाल राय	
	76.	मेवाड़ पतन	– ,,	
	77.	फूलों का गुच्छा	– नाथूराम प्रेमी	
	78.	छत्रसाल	– रामचन्द्र वर्मा	Received from S.P.G. on 17.8.22 7 vols.
	79.	करुणा	– राखलदास बंदोपाध्याय	
	80.	शशांक	– ,,	

81. आश्रम भजनावली (6 Copies) (Given to Mannilal, Radhakant and Murari, Prem Narain, Vishwamitra)

82. Bryce's Holy Roman Empire—new edition—recd. by me on 6/9/22.

83. Modern Review—6 numbers—June to September (2 nos for July August September)—received by me on 6/9/22

84 85. Tod's Rajasthan—translated into Hindi—2 vols recd on 13/9 probably from S. P. Gupta

BOOKS READ IN JAIL

From 21st May 1922

1.	Kingsley's "Hereward the Wake"	21. 5. to 29. 5.
2.	Theophile Gautier—"Capt Fracasse"	
3.	Turgenev's "Rudin"	
4.	Kaye & Malleson's Indian Mutiny Vol. II	
5.	Report of American Commission on Ireland	
6.	Turgenev's "Virgin Soil" 29/5	
7.	Malleson's Indian Mutiny Vol. IV	June 22
8.	Blunt's "Secret History of English Occupation in Egypt"	June
9.	Malleson's Ind Mutiny Vol. V	June
10	Do Do Vol. VI	June
11.	A novel	June
12.	Symond's Italian Renaissance Vol. I Age of Despots and part of Vol II	June
13.	Digby's "Prosperous British India (Skipping latter portion)	
14	Athalye's "Life of Lokamanya Tilak"	11/7
15.	Bain's "Heifer of the Dawn" (for the 5th or 6th time)	
16.	Urdu Reader II	
17.	Do Do for III & IV classes	
18.	Turgenev's "Liza"	26/7/22
19.	Havell's "Aryan Rule in India" (took copious notes)	10/8/22
20.	Victor Hugo's "Les Miserables" 2 vols.	12/8/22
21.	Some of Edgar Allan Poe's Tales — (July)	
22.	Tried to read a book on Einstein's Theory — rather heavy — mathematics too difficult for me — Had to return it then without making much progress (June)	
23.	"Antiquities of India" by Dr. Barnett	15/8/22
24.	R. K. Mukherjea's "Fundamental Unity of India"	15/8/22
25	Narendra Nath Law's "Ancient Hindu Polity"	18/8/22
26	Rabindra Nath Tagore's "The Wreck"	20/8/
27.	मेवाड़ पतन—द्विजेन्द्र लाल राय	23/8/

119.	Shelley's Complete Poetical Works	Brought by Kamala on 30/11 — delivered to me after being passed by Magte, on 14/12/22
120.	Byron's Complete Poetical Works	
121.	D. G. Rosetti's —do— —do—	
122.	Christina Rosetti's —do—	
123.	Swinburne's Poems—Vol. I	
124.	Mill's Liberty	
125.	J. E. Carpenter's Comparative Religion (Home Univ.)	Left with me by Mahadeva Desai on his discharge on 23.1.23
126.	Ruskin's "Sesame & Lilies" &c	
127.	„ „ "Time & Tide," „ "Crown of Wild Olive"	
128.	„ "Unto this Last", Munera Pulveris	
129-130.	Carlyle's French Rev. 2 vols.	
131.	Wells' Mr. Britling Sees it Through	

LETTERS RECEIVED

Date of receipt		
1.	28th May	Letter from father (Naini Tal Jail) dt. 24/5/
2.	12th June	Letter from Kamala dated 30/5
3.	17th June	Letter from Kamala dt. ?
4.	27th June	„ „ „ dt. 22/6
5.	10th July	Letter from father dt. 8/7 from Allahabad (with note from Kamala)
6.	1st August	Letter from father dated 25/7 from Madras (begun on 22/7 at Bombay)
		(8th Aug. a Hindi letter from a lady in Bharatpur sent to me. I returned it saying that I would not accept it as my fortnightly letter.)
7.	17th August	Letter from Kamala & mother dated 12/8 from Bombay. (sent on receipt of my letter No. 6 dt. 2/8
8.	31st August	Letter from father (Allahabad) dt. 25th-27th August.
9.	15th Sept.	Letter from Kamala (Allahabad) dt. 10/9
10.	30th Sept.	„ „ „ „ dt. 28/9
11.	16th October	„ „ Father „ dt. 11/10
12.	31st October	„ „ Kamala (Dehra Dun & train) dt. 27th
13.	14th Nov.	Jt. Letter from father & Kamala dated 12.14.11 from Allahabad by messenger.
14.	13th Dec.	Letter from Kamala dated 8/9-12 from Allahabad.
15.	18th January 1923	Letter from father dated 13/15-1 from Allahabad.

LETTERS SENT

1.	27th May	Letter to Kamala dated 25th posted 27th.
2.	2nd June	Letter to father, Naini Tal Jail.
3.	16th June	„ to Kamala
4.	1st July	„ „ dt. 30/6 — posted 1/7
5.	13th July	Sent letter (25 pages) for father to jailer — held up for several days.
	17th	Letter to father (Bombay) posted — dt. 13th postscript dt. 17th added Regtd.

28.	Radhakumud Mukerjea's "History of Indian Shipping"	24/8/
29.	Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina" 2 vols.	29/8/
30.	Walter Pater's "The Renaissance"	30/8/
31.	Oscar Wilde's Ballad of Reading Gaol (a re-reading)	2/9/22
32.	सम्राट अशोक—मराठी से अनुवादक—पं० हरिभाऊ उपाध्याय	8/9/22
33.	प्रेमाश्रम—प्रेमचन्द	7/10/22
34.	*Kumuk-i-Urdu* (except last few pages)	7/10/22
35.	Ameer Ali's History of Saracens — (took copious notes)	21/10/22
36.	Tolstoy's "Master & Man & other Parables & Tales" (Everyman)	26/10/
37.	Romain Rolland's "The Fourteenth of July" and "Danton" translated by Bennett H. Clark (Allen and Unwin 1919)	31/10/22
38.	Arnold's "Preaching of Islam" (full notes)	2/11/22
39.	J. B. Bury's "History of Freedom of Thought" Home University Library (notes)	10/11/22
40.	Shakespeare's "Macbeth" with Devadas &c	10/11/22
41.	Victor Hugo's "Ninety-three"	12/11/22
42.	Morley's "Studies in Literature"	19/11/22
43.	Tagore's "Waterfall" (in May 22, Modern Rev)	20/11/
44	Dickens' "Tale of Two Cities"	22/11/
45	Bernard Shaw's "Back to Methuselah" — Preface & Play	30/11/
46.	H. G. Wells' "The Outline of History"	15/12/22
47.	Gibbon's "Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire" Vol. I	20/12/22
48.	Gibbon's Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire Vol. II	26/12/
49.	" " " " " III	1/1/23
50.	" " " " " IV	10/1/23
51.	" " " " " V	18/1/23
52.	With Devadas: Tennyson's "Idylls of the King", Science Primers: Physical Geography & Geology	17/1/
53.	J. N. Carpenter's "Theology of Tulsi Dass" (C.L.S.I.)	22/1/
54.	Gibbon's "Decline & Fall" Vol. VI	28/1/23
55.	Ruskin's Sesame & Lilies (with Devadas)	29/1/23

14. Prison Note Books[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru
District Jail, Lucknow
July 1922

Prisoner No : 4126

NOTES AND QUOTATIONS
Volume I
INDIAN HISTORY AND MISCELLANEOUS

Index

		Pages
Notes on Havell's "Aryan Rule in India"		3 to 101
„ „ Barnett's "Antiquities of India"	..	103 to 105
Quotations from Meredith &c	..	107 to 109
Notes on Radhakumud Mukerjea's "Fundamental Unity of India"	..	111 to 116
Notes on Radhakumud Mukerjea's "History of Indian Shipping"		117 to 138
Notes on Narendra Nath Law's "Studies in Ancient Hindu Polity" Vol. I	.	140 to 143
Quotations from Walter Pater's "The Renaissance"	.	146 to 153
Quotations from Oscar Wilde's "Ballad of Reading Gaol"	...	156 to 159
Miscellaneous Quotations (Suckling &c)	. .	160 to 161
Notes on Bury's "History of Freedom of Thought"	..	162 to 176
Quotations from Victor Hugo's "Ninety-Three" (and Morley's Essay thereon)	...	177 to 179

1. NMML
In prison, Jawaharlal started, in notebooks bound specially for him in *khadi*, a series of what he called "Notes and Quotations" Here are reproduced the lists drawn up by him of the books he read, his own comments on them and other matters and the quotations taken down by him Only the detailed summaries made by him of the books he read have been omitted For the extracts included, page references to the prison notebooks have been given

6.	2nd August	Letter to Kamala sent to Jailer —
	7th August	" " posted registered A/D (*to Bombay*)
7.	18th August	Letter to father (in English) sent to office dt. 17th/18th Aug.
	21st August	" " posted registered to Allahabad.
8.	1st September	Letter to father (in English) sent to office *dated 1/9/22.*
	4th September	Letter to father posted registered to Allahabad
9.	15th Sept.	Letter to Kamala in Hindi — sent to office dated 15/9 at 3 p m.
	18th Sept.	Letter to Kamala given to Abul Hasan to be taken to Allahabad.
10.	1st October	Letter to father (with note on health) dated 30th September/1st October sent to office at 7 40 a m.
	3rd October	Letter to father (with note on health) dt. 30 Sept./1st October posted registered to Allahabad after heavy censoring in office.
11.	17th October	Letter to father dated 17th October — sent to office at 11.30 a.m
	19th October	Letter to father posted registered to Allahabad.
12.	1st Nov.	Letter to Kamala (Dehra Dun) dt. 1/11 sent to office at 11 a m.
	2nd Nov.	Letter to Kamala (Dehra Dun) posted registered to Dehra Dun.

(From now onwards new rules. Letters once a month) (Am informed that I can send another fortnightly letter before rules apply.)

13.	16th Nov.	Sent Letter to father (with note on health) dt. 15th/16th Nov. at 10 a.m. (to be forwarded from Allahabad to Calcutta)
	18th	-do- posted registered.
14.	9th Dec.	(2nd week for our barrack henceforth) Letter to Kamala (Allahabad) sent to office in morning dt. 8/12/22
	11th Dec.	" " posted registered
15	19th January 1923	Letter to Kamala to Allahabad dt. 18/19-1-23 sent to office at 8 a.m.
	22nd	" " " posted registered.

[*Page 107*]

George Meredith — For the Centenary of Garibaldi
(*Times July 1 07*)

"We who have seen Italia in the throes,
Half risen but to be hurled to the ground, and now,
Like a ripe field of wheat where once drove plough,
All bounteous as she is fair, we think of those
Who blew the breath of life into her frame:
Cavour, Mazzini, Garibaldi. Three:
Her Brain, her Soul, her Sword; and set her free
From ruinous discords, with one lustrous arm ..."

(From Trevelyan's Garibaldi & the Thousand p. 8.)

"O miseri, O Codardi
Figlivoli avrai, misen eleggi."

Leopardi to his Sister on her marriage, 1821.

"Thou shalt have children either cowards or
unhappy; choose then the unhappy."

(From Trevelyan G. & the T. p. 38)

[*Page 108*]

Byron: *Marino Faliero* Act II Sc 2.

"Such ties are not
For those who are called to the high destinies
Which purify corrupted commonwealths;
We must forget all feelings save the one,
We must resign all passions save our purpose,
We must behold no object save our country,
And only look on death as beautiful,
So that the sacrifice ascend to heaven,
And draw down freedom on her evermore."

Montrose

"He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
That dares not put it to the touch,
To gain or lose it all."

[Page 101][2]

August 10th 1922

An excellent sketch of early Indian history. Avoids too many details and yet gives a connected and interesting narrative. The author has entered into the spirit of Hindu India and has written in a thoroughly sympathetic and appreciative vein. He is somewhat bitter at places against Mohammadans. Perhaps this is largely due to anger at the destruction by the early invaders of many noble buildings in India. His criticisms appear to be justified — on the whole a well balanced book which every Indian should read. It brings out something of the glory of ancient India.

J. Nehru

In barrack No. 4 of the District Jail, Lucknow.

2 A comment on Havell's *Aryan Rule in India*.

[Pages 104—105]

This book — Barnett's "Antiquities of India" — is an extraordinary example of labour without understanding, of perspiration without any inspiration. This is often found in books on Oriental subjects by European scholars. They start with a presumption of superiority and never really understand their subject in spite of great industry. Barnett must have read a vast number of books on India and the East and yet he is utterly ignorant of his subject, or rather he is in a worse position, he has gone off on the wrong track. With great labour he has collected together oddities, absurdities, obscenities and the many crudities which have grown round the religion and social customs of Ancient India and he judges of old times by these and piously holds up his hands in horror! As if these are the sum total of social life in India. Books of this kind are very misleading and must do a lot of mischief. Barnett is sure to be quoted as an authority on the subject; although he knows as much about it as Macaulay's schoolboy.

J. Nehru

Janam Ashtimi

August 15th 1922

For each man kills the thing he loves,
Yet each man does not die.

....

For oak and elm have pleasant leaves
That in the springtime shoot
But grim to see is the gallows-tree,
With its adder-bitten root,
And green or dry, a man must die
Before it bears its fruit!

.....

With slouch and swing around the ring
We trod the Fools' Parade!
We did not care: we knew we were
The Devil's Own Brigade:
And shaven head and feet of lead
Make a merry masquerade

.....

"Oho!" they cried, "The world is wide,
But fettered limbs go lame!
And once or twice to throw the dice
Is a gentlemanly game,
But he does not win who plays with Sin
In the Secret House of Shame."

.....

For he who lives more lives than one
More deaths than one must die.

....

For his mourners will be outcast men
And outcasts always mourn.

....

The vilest deeds like poison weeds
Bloom well in prison-air:
It is only what is good in Man
That wastes and withers there:
Pale Anguish keeps the heavy gate,
And the Warder is Despair.

.....

For they starve the little frightened child
Till it weeps both night and day:
And they scourge the weak, and flog the fool
And gibe the old and gray,
And some grow mad, and all grow bad,
And none a word may say

[Page 109]
Carlyle *Cromwell* iii 30
"In the dark perils of war, in the high places of the field, hope shone in him like a pillar of fire, when it had gone out in all the others."

Swinburne *Halt Before Rome* (Songs before Sunrise)

"Surely the day is on our side,
And heaven and the sacred sun;
Surely the stars, and the bright
Immemorial inscrutable night;
Yea, the darkness, because of our light,
Is no darkness, but blooms as a bower-side,
When the winter is over and done."

[Pages 156—159]
The Ballad of Reading Gaol — by Oscar Wilde.

I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky,
And at every drifting cloud that went
With sails of silver by.

Yet each man kills the thing he loves
By each let this be heard,
Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word,
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword!

Some kill their love when they are young,
And some when they are old;
Some strangle with the hands of Lust,
Some with the hands of Gold:
The kindest use a knife, because
The dead so soon grow cold.

Some love too little, some too long,
Some sell, and others buy;
Some do the deed with many tears,
And some without a sigh:

"The liberty of each citizen ends where the liberty of another citizen commences." (axiom promulgated by the Convention—p. 197)

"All good luck—even successes which are in themselves terrible — go to youth. Victory is feminine." (p. 246)

"The bronze mask of civil war has two profiles, the one turned toward the past, the other set toward the future, but both equally tragic. Lantenac was the first of these profiles, Cimourdain the second; only the bitter sneer of Lantenac was full of shadow and night, and on the fatal brow of Cimourdain shone a gleam from the morning." (p. 302)

*Quoted by Morley who gives different translation.

"The waking of children is like the unclosing of flowers: a perfume seems to exhale from those fresh young souls." (p. 314)

"If God had meant man to go backwards, he would have placed an eye in the back of his head." (Gauvain speaking of progress in his dungeon to Cimourdain just prior to death — p. 456)

"The deformity of human laws is forced to exhibit itself naked amid the dazzling rays of eternal beauty. Man breaks and destroys; man lays waste; man kills: but the summer remains summer; the lily remains the lily; the star remains the star." (p. 463)

12 November 1922

"Cimourdain had the blind certitude of the arrow, which only sees the mark and makes for it. In revolution, nothing so formidable as the straight line. Cimourdain strode forward with fatality in his step. He believed that in social genesis the very extreme point must always be solid ground, an error peculiar to minds that for reason substitute logic."

"Reasoning counselled one thing; sentiment another; the two counsels were contradictory. Reasoning is only reason; sentiment is often conscience; the one comes from man, the other from a loftier source. That is why sentiment has less distinctness, and more might. Yet what strength in the severity of reason! Gauvain hesitated. His perplexity was so fierce."

(Quoted by Morley in his essay on "Ninety-Three")

"Such work is always open to criticism and it is always above it." (Newman's remark about something—quoted by Morley about V.H's 93)

13.11.22

For only blood can wipe out blood,
And only tears can heal.

In barrack number four of the District Jail, Lucknow 3rd September 1922.

[Pages 160—161]

"When, dearest, I but think of thee,
Methinks all things that lovely be
Are present, and my soul delighted....."

Sir John Suckling

"Fair one, you did on me bestow
Comparisons too sweet to owe....."

King

"If men be judged wise by their beards and their girth,
Then goats were the wisest of creatures on earth"
Quoted in the 'New Statesman' — 12th August, 1922

"When order is injustice, disorder is the beginning of justice" (Hoche in Romain Rolland's "Fourteenth of July")

"The world is taking little heed;
It plods from day to day,
The vulgar flourish like a weed,
The learned pass away."

[Pages 177—179]
Ninety three by Victor Hugo —English Translation

"Curiosity is one of the forms of feminine bravery." (p. 12)
"Thus it is that Paris sways back and forth; it is the enormous pendulum of civilisation; it touches either pole in turn, Thermopylae and Gomorrah." (p. 127)

[Pages 151–152]
India in World Politics by Tarak Nath Das

(Huebsch 1923)

Report of what Enver Pasha told author

"The best way an Indian can aid Turkey and the World is by concentrating all efforts on the freedom of India, because without a free India it will be hard for Turkey to maintain her national independence Above all every Indian Mohammadan should learn that they have to cooperate with the Hindus as Indians, and that religious fanaticism must be banished from the field of national and international politics, unless the world is to go back to the darkness of Middle Ages" (p. 44)

"The question of Imperialism, therefore . is peculiarly a question of India, and the freedom of India is thus essentially an interest of the World." (R. M Lovell's introduction)

General Lea – "The 3 countries that possess pre-eminent strategic positions are : Great Britain, Japan & India." (p 9).

Peter the Great's will –

Art viii. "Bear in mind that the commerce of India is the commerce of the world, and that he who can exclusively command it is dictator of Europe." (p 20)

Political control of trade routes between Asia and Europe had a great deal to do with crusades against Islam. (p. 33)

Not continued.

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15. To Father[1]

District Jail,
Lucknow
July 13, 1922

My dear Father,
I have received your kind letter. I was greatly pleased to see and read it. This is your first letter in Hindi to me. Your letter, before I got it, was censored and some seven lines were cut out with scissors. As

1 J N Correspondence, N M M L Original in Hindi

Jawaharlal Nehru
= District Jail = Lucknow =
Volume II

Notes of Books — Quotations & c.
Islamic History & c.

Begun on September 5th 1922.

CONTENTS

		Pages
Notes from Amir Ali's "History of the Saracens	..	5 to 110
" " Arnold's "Preaching of Islam"	..	113 to 150
" " Tarak Nath Das's "India in World Politics" (unfinished)	..	151 to 152
" " Beal's "Buddhist Records of the Western World" — Huien Tsang etc.	..	153 to 176
" " D. Lloyd George's Speeches	..	177 to 178

I have not as yet got the almirah for books. The earlier it comes the better, otherwise the books may be damaged. The almirah should be small and fitted with a lock. Kishan Bhai is probably not in Lucknow these days, for otherwise he would have arranged for this. It will be difficult for Govind Malaviya to send the almirah from Allahabad. Please ask Shiv Raj Narayan, Mohanlal Saxena or Ram Chandra[2] (if any of these be in Lucknow) and they will procure it for me.

I had heard about *The Independent* and Upson[3]. You did very well by making over all the responsibility to others. Upson's salary seems to be a bit high, but sitting here I can't say anything. I hope the new manager will be better. Economy should be fully observed.

I have received your detailed programme and so am sending this letter to Bombay to the address of Shankarlal[4]. After Bombay and Poona, I think, mother and Kamala should come back to Allahabad and rest for a few days. It does not seem necessary just yet for Kamala to go to Calcutta. There will be many other chances later to see the city. The weather also is not good there these days and her going will cause inconvenience to you.

Please meet Grimwood Mears[5]. I hear he is very cross with me and he also gave his opinion against me in my case. Had it come up before him, he would have extended the term of imprisonment. I have for a long time been expecting him to take action against me and to debar me from the courts. I would like to give him a bit of my mind.

I had asked for the statement and accounts from the Allahabad Bank, Calcutta, for income tax purposes and to consult Birju Bhai. You would have done whatever was necessary regarding the income tax. As for the shares, please do consult Jamna Lalji. Send a copy of the statements to Birju Bhai also. There is hardly any scope for dividing the shares or changing the ownership. I do not remember whether we got the money from the British India Corporation Ltd. Please enquire from the bank, and if we have not got the money, then write to the Corporation.

2. (1863-1932); practised law in Lucknow and after 1919 was a devoted follower of Motilal Nehru
3. G D Upson, a journalist recommended by B G. Horniman for the editorship of *The Independent*
4. Shankarlal Banker (b 1889); participated in the Home Rule movement in Bombay, a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi, was very active in the All India Spinners Association
5. Sir Grimwood Mears (1869-1932); at this time Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court, tried to persuade Jawaharlal to give up his opposition to British rule.

the letter was written only on one side of the paper this could be easily done Before the part cut out was this sentence "By 20th August I hope to reach Allahabad, provided before then I am not sent to Lucknow Jail". Some lines then are missing and then comes this sentence, "I do not mind all this, but when I think that for the rest of my life I may not be able to see you, then of course I am upset and do get a shock". Between these two sentences, you may have written something about the rumours of your arrest. Anyway, I am lucky that the rest of the letter is complete and it has not been shown any special favour by the jail authorities.

You need not worry at all about my health. I am looking after it carefully and I think jail life will do it some good. It is not so hot now, and the heat affected me very little. At Allahabad you may remember, I did not have a fan in my office. When I had got used to that heat and could stand it easily, this is nothing. The nights are pretty cold and during the day also there is often a pleasant breeze. Sometimes, of course, it is humid, but I am not worried about that. So please do not send me any kind of fan. A fan, if it arrived, would disturb me. Jost fans I do not like and small electric fans too are no good But even if there be any good fan, I do not want it. I find the accumulation of luggage in the barrack a nuisance.

I received the books sent by you. I have now got the following:

1. Memoirs of Babar
2. Sarkar's Shivaji
3. Bernier's Travels
4. Vincent Smith's Akbar
5. Manucci's Storia do Mogor — 4 vols.
6. Bryce's Holy Roman Empire
7. Poems of Keats
8. Poems of Shelley
9. Tennyson's Idylls of the King
10. Arnold's Light of Asia
11. Havell's Aryan Rule in India (this came separately)
12. Pater's Renaissance (received yesterday)

I had asked for many other books which are in Anand Bhawan but have not yet been sent. Perhaps nobody could find them, but please look for them again. I do not want these books to be bought again. I am certain that the books whose names I have written are in Anand Bhawan. Please tell Nand Kishore to look for them carefully once more The names are given in my previous letter, so there is no need to list them again.

A day after my arrest there was to be an attachment of goods at Anand Bhawan to realise my fine. What happened to that? Have Rs. 100 been realised?

I had asked for a few notebooks, but I no longer need them I am getting good notebooks made in the jail itself.

Our *charkhas* are working well but still I want to have the new style *charkha* from the Sabarmati Ashram I asked Maganlal Bhai[8] last March to send me one, but he has not done so. Please write to him to send me a *charkha* direct to the jail address. Particular care should be taken of the spindle. He should also send one of the carding machines made in the Ashram.

You were planning to retain Ram Chandra Is he working as your Secretary?

I am learning Urdu these days, and hope to write to you soon in Urdu. Please send me an Urdu dictionary. Ram Narain Lal[9] published one, and it should be in Anand Bhawan.

I am worried to know that Nanni is not improving in health. You wrote that she may not be able to go to Bombay. If she cannot go to Bombay from Ahmedabad, how will she return to Allahabad?

All the political prisoners from Agra have now come here — Joseph, Mahadev, Bal Krishna Kaul and others. Bal Krishna is to be released in a few days.

I am so pleased to read about you in the newspapers. We are all very attentively following your programme and been greatly impressed with the whole-heartedness of your efforts. I am only worried about your health. If you looked after it, then you could work better than many young men.

Polak was here a couple of days back to see me and Devadas but as we had stopped interviews, we refused to see him. I do not know what was reported to him and how he took it. He is an extreme moderate these days, and perhaps could not understand our principle. I do not want him to think that we were annoyed with him and so did not meet him.

The news that you have received about the interviews is incomplete, and also incorrect. You can understand that we would not stop meeting our friends and dear ones unless there was some adequate and strong reason. No one relishes refusing interviews. You know well all the persons here, so there is no need to write more. What we specially

8 Maganlal Gandhi, son of Mahatma Gandhi's cousin
9 A popular bookseller in Allahabad.

Can you recollect Malloo? He used to work for you here and you liked him. He has now been released and told me that he would go straight to you. The problem of servants that you are facing these days will to some extent be lessened by his arrival. He has served as an orderly to Col. Bhola Nath[6] and knows the work.

Have you taken any decision regarding the law books? My opinion is that if they are not disposed of quickly they will be damaged and become useless. You, me or anyone else like us cannot check the lists or ascertain their price. Give this job to some bookseller. I think, when you go to Calcutta, you should talk to Cambray[7] to correct the lists, ascertain their price and, better still, buy the books. He may not pay much. But still, it will be better if we get rid of these law books Cambray may pay a thousand or two less. But, if you do not sell them off immediately to him, the loss incurred would be ten times more and the problem would be with us all the time. But please keep any law books which have literary or political significance, such as political and State trials, books on constitutional law, etc.

If a man from Cambray comes, please ask him to make a list of the other books also and arrange them properly. They are in a very bad state these days as there is no one to look after them. The books are scattered in every room. My room is full of them. If you or I need any book it is found with great difficulty or is not traceable at all. Many books which I had asked for, it seems, are not traceable, though I am positive that they are there I have been sent here an extremely old edition (1887) of Bryce's Holy Roman Empire, but the new edition must be somewhere in the house. If lists are properly prepared and the books arranged in some order on the shelves, it will be convenient and you too would be able to find them easily.

I used to get from abroad the *Nation* and the *New Statesman* every week. I do not know if they are still received. If they do come, then please send them to me. I do not think the superintendent will have any objection. If they are not being received from abroad, then do not please renew the subscription. Please keep sending the *Modern Review*. I want to see the issues of both June and July.

All the things sent by Kamala from Delhi to me as well as the rolls of cotton, two mats, etc., have reached me.

I do not need any money. I can cash a cheque whenever I want. I do not know the state of my bank account; perhaps I have an overdraft. I have asked Kamala, but she has not answered this question.

6 Civil Surgeon at Allahabad
7. Cambray and Co (Calcutta), a well known publisher of law books

horizon is my barrack wall. From there the sun rises and there it sets. I am very happy all the same. I have gained a lot during this month. So long as the sky, the stars and the moon are visible there is no reason why I should be idle. These days, in particular, the beauty of the rains is seen almost every day, and it is delightful to watch the multi-coloured clouds. The superintendent says that no beautiful or good thing should be allowed inside the jail (by accident he has said something very true — very few of the nobler things of the world can enter here — truth, mercy, love etc., are stopped at the gate!). But it is a consolation that the jail authorities have not the power to keep God and His nature out of jail.

What you have written about our not meeting each other has made me sad. I am confident that I shall see you and see you soon. What are a few months in the life of a person? And you have yet to complete your second half century. This idea (of not seeing me again) you have been thinking about for long. After gaining Swaraj we have much to do and Swaraj is now, I am sure, very close at hand. The progress made by us in the last year and a half surprises me. We have put life into a dead body. What is left now? There may probably not be another example of such stupendous progress in the whole world. We, who are engaged in the struggle, cannot see it clearly; but the rest of the world sees it and is amazed. I for one am very confident.

What use is it to see you for a short while? I don't feel satisfied seeing you for a few minutes, nor can we talk much. But you are always before my mind's eye.

I have just come to know that some of our books are with Mahadeva Desai and Purshottam. I will enquire. But as far as I know Mahadeva has very few books. He is in another barrack. Ranga Iyer is in Fyzabad. He may now soon be released. What are you going to do about him?

Love to all. Give my love to Umar Sobhani. Indira must be very happy at Bombay.

This letter goes care of the address of Shankarlal. To what address should I send the next letter? You may be somewhere near Madras at that time. I intend writing to Kamala this time and if no other address is sent to me, then to her also I will write care of Shankarlal. Writing letters from here reminds me of writing from abroad. From there I had to write every week and from here once every two weeks. I had had this habit of regular letter-writing for seven to eight years, so now I do not mind this.

Adab to Hakim Sahib. I still have a desire to serve him. He told me that he would call me to Delhi but he has not done so. Instead of Delhi I have reached the District Jail, Lucknow!

objected to was not any particular regulation — although the regulations as a whole are very bad — but the behaviour of the jail authorities All, from top to bottom, behave in the same way. Many things occurred during interviews which we strongly disliked. There is no need to write about them in detail. The worst aspect was the manner of letting us have our interviews. Whenever I had an interview, there had always been an officer present. When Mother, Betty, Lado Bhabhi and others had come we met in the office and the jailer was sitting there with pen and ink to note down everything we said. You can understand that this was not a pleasant business. But I neither complained then nor do I do so now. Jail officials have the right to frame such rules and abide by them. The superintendent had probably directed the jailer to behave in this way. But our complaints were *about searches and the way the searches were carried out.* Every warder is ready to rebuke us and the visitors who come to see us. We realised that all these actions of the jail authorities were specially intended to tease and humiliate us. We did not wish to give them further opportunities of doing this and so we decided to refuse all interviews. Otherwise every day there was a fear that some such thing might happen which might enrage us and lead us to do something which we might regret. During the last few weeks, however, the jail authorities have changed their behaviour, and with those few who had interviews, they behaved in a better way. I hope this improvement continues. It is then possible that we may resume our interviews. If they are resumed, I shall let you know. Otherwise you can take it that we are not meeting any visitors. If, after resuming the interviews, something disagreeable *again happens, then we may have to stop them again.*

In my last letter to Kamala I had written that I am happy that we got a sound reason for stopping the interviews, and had referred to Bapuji and others. This, I hear, the jail authorities have interpreted and declared to others as meaning that I have no complaint in jail, and it is only out of consideration for Gandhiji that I do not want to have interviews. This is completely wrong. It is, of course, my opinion that the greater the hardship imposed upon us, the greater the benefit, for it will make us stronger. For this reason I liked the hardship of having no interviews. I also thought that we should curb our becoming much too social. It is better to remain prepared for all eventualities in the future. In jail everyone has a chance of acquiring sound self discipline. But even if I had wanted to stop interviews, I would not have done it unless forced to do so. Just because of my whims I do not wish Mother and others to be put to hardship. It is now more than a month since I saw anyone from outside. I have not been to any other barrack even during this period. My

16. To Father[1]

District Jail
Lucknow
August 17, 1922

My dear Father,

I received a letter from Kamala (dated 12th), together with a note from mother, this afternoon and I hasten to write my allotted letter. It is already more than two weeks since I wrote my last letter, although it was not sent till much later. I do not know if the two weeks will be computed from the date of my sending the letter to the office or from the date of despatch. On the last occasion it took five days for the letter to be finally posted. I wonder what transpired during those five days. Was the poor letter lying unheeded and uncared for in a pigeon-hole of the office or in a file on the Superintendent's table? Or was it carefully and anxiously scanned and scrutinised, and perhaps translated, by the official hierarchy in this jail, lest a word or sentence should offend against His Majesty's Regulations or bring into contempt the King Emperor's representatives even down to the *Naibs* and the apprentices who have been supplied for our behoof and betterment by a benign government? And how did it ultimately emerge from this scrutiny? Was it cut up and censored and sent to you in this truncated form? That at least you must know. Unhappily, I have to remain in the dark and hence may err again. It would be more sensible to enlighten me and point out the offending passages. But who am I to teach sense to the powers that be? I can but continue to behave as of old and write whatever suggests itself to me regardless of the blue pencil or the scissors of the office. And so I proceed. I can certainly propose, even though the disposal may be in the hands of the worthy Superintendent. For a change, I am writing in English. Incidentally, this may suit the Superintendent also and save the trouble of translations etc.

I am sending this letter to you and to Allahabad as I do not know definitely the programme of mother and Kamala. Apparently they are not clear about it themselves. Kamala says they might return to Allahabad about the 25th or early in September with Nan.

So you will be back again in Allahabad in two or three days after your grand tour[2]. It has been a splendid tour. Even Bapu & Shaukat Ali did not equal it in the given time. You must be tired. I do hope you will take some rest. The physical feeling of fatigue passes off soon

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. This was the tour of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee.

It appears from your letter that you may also again be coming here. But at this point the letter has been cut, so nothing more can be known. Anyhow, if you come, I shall be very happy; and if you do not come, then it would be better still. Coming to jail again is to be doubly blessed. I say so perhaps because in the terminology of jail I am a 'second timer'. I am very proud when I think of my good fortune. In my statement I referred to this. But one very significant aspect I had not thought it proper to mention in that statement because that was my personal affair and I did not like to state it to strangers. The reason for my being happy and being amazed at my good fortune was this, that I have got a father and mother who always placed a lofty ideal before me and always added to my strength and spirit. And my other near relations also have, according to the same ideals, tried to serve the nation. How many persons are there with such good fortune in the whole world? You have written something about renouncing the world. In a way it is correct; but in another, and probably in the real sense, I have seen the real world now and I am enjoying it fully. The earlier world now seems absolutely insignificant and useless. Now I understand a little what Jesus meant when he asked us to forsake the world and save the soul.

Do not conclude from all this that I am lost in metaphysical and philosophical matters and am running away from the ordinary, worldly, state. Reading your letter some such ideas cropped up for a while and I have written them down. Ordinarily the time here is passed in children's games.

This letter has now become too long. The superintendent will be hard put to it to read it all. I have come to know that he has some special interest in my letters. This time he may get a bit tired!

With very much love,

Your loving son
Jawahar
(Prisoner No. 4126)

What are Jivan and Nikkoo doing these days?

starry canopy. An hour ago it was almost a cloudless night — a beautiful sight and doubly welcome after so many days and nights of mist and cloud. Now the clouds have crept up and try in vain to hide the stars which peep through them and twinkle away for all they are worth.

I should like your advice regarding my treatment. I am in doubt as to what I should do. In my last letter I wrote in detail as to what steps I had taken till then. I attach a note to this letter in continuation of that account. I was weighed a week ago. My weight then was 114 lbs. This is just a pound less than my weight a month before — early in January. The difference is trifling and may be due to many causes, including a wrong reading of the weighing machine. It simply means that my weight is more or less stationary.

I have received many additional books from Allahabad since I wrote last. Shiva Prasad has also sent some of the Hindi books I wanted I give separately lists of books I have received for convenience of checking etc. Kindly have my thanks and love conveyed to Shiva Prasad Gupta. I cannot write to him separately. Shiva Prasad has also sent a number of books to Devadas. They include some very heavy volumes on sociology. No one knows why they were sent to Devadas. I doubt if anyone here can wade through all of them.

Devadas's & my books combined make a brave show. In fact we have a very wilderness of books now, enough to last us for many months to come. I do a fair amount of reading daily although much of my time is taken up with spinning & Urdu. I am not making as much progress in Urdu as I would wish, chiefly because I have been somewhat irregular. Joseph, by the way, is learning Urdu with tremendous energy and he has done very well so far.

I received a copy each of the *Nation* and the *New Statesman* some days ago. They bore marks in blue pencil and a marginal note. From the context I gather that these were made for our behoof by the Superintendent. His interest is touching. He is evidently bent on improving our minds and, like the missionary, would save us from the wrath to come, in spite of ourselves.

I do not want the *Nation* or the *New Statesman* to be sent to me if thereby Upson is deprived of them. Kindly see that he gets them. They can be sent to me afterwards if this can be easily arranged. If there is any difficulty, please do not bother. They are really of little use to me here. I should certainly like to see them as they bring a breath of the wide world to us and, what is even more soothing, some articles in good English. Our daily literature here is confined to *The Leader* and *The Englishman*. The latter seldom has any article worth reading, unless it be Bepin Babu's, and even that is becoming very tiresome. *The Leader* is more ambitious and writes on current topics.

enough when work has to be done. It is inaction that oppresses one. Fortunately there is plenty of action for any Indian who chooses to bestir himself. The fray beckons. And I have a feeling that we who are in gaol need certainly not be inactive. During the last three months in gaol I have been active enough and cannot complain of ennui.

Your Committee's tour will long be remembered. It has been a delight to us to follow its wanderings. In the golden days to come when the history of our times and our country comes to be written the present will occupy a glorious chapter. And shall we not think of the good old days? Shall we not remember the great men who showed us the way and filled us with the fire of faith? In the words of Meredith[3] (changing but one word 'Italia' for 'India'):

> We who have seen India in the throes,
> Half risen but to be hurled to the ground, and now,
> Like a ripe field of wheat, where once drove plough,
> All bounteous as she is fair, we think of those
> Who blew the breath of life into her frame.

You must have read in the papers of the plight of Lucknow during the last fortnight. For several days there was continuous rain. Rain & rain from morning to evening and evening to morning till one longed to have a sight of the blue sky and the good old sun. Even that "little tent of blue, that prisoners call the sky" was hidden from us and we crouched about in our barrack, damp and cheerless and full of wet clothes that would not dry. A corner of our barrack collapsed. There was no danger to anyone but it was exciting enough to hear in the night large bits of the roof coming down with a crash. So passed several days. And then the God of rain took pity on us and withdrew his thunderbolt and bade the clouds to hold on to the waters they carried. And as a recompense, he further told the clouds to protect us from the noonday sun and he sent down to us from time to time a gentle breeze which played about with the *neem* trees and made them wave their arms for joy. It has been very pleasant during these few days and I have spent nearly all my time in the open. All day I sit or lie under the *neem* trees spinning or reading or it may be writing. And at night I move out from under the trees so as to have an unrestricted view of the stars and the moon. As I write this letter I am sitting under the

3 The quotation is from *Vittoria*, Ch. 21. Jawaharlal had read it in Trevelyan's *Garibaldi and the Thousand* and written it down in his prison note books See ante, No 14.

clothes and tried to look their smartest; and the high officials and the low officials of the jail put on their uniforms and tried, in vain, to look comfortable in them. And so in the evening at about 5 p.m. the grande finale took place. The great one came and walked across and went. So far as I know he did not speak to any prisoner in our barrack

There was a ship that went to Spain.
When it got there it came back again.

On the *Raksha Bandhan* day — August 7 — we were allowed to visit each other's barracks. That was the first occasion of my visiting some barracks, at any rate during my second imprisonment. I saw Purushotam Das and many others for the first time also since the day of my re-arrest. On that day elaborate *pujas* & *havans* took place.

On the *Janamashtmi* day — day before yesterday — some special ceremonies took place in our barrack We also went for a short while to another barrack where most Hindus had congregated.

On the *Janamashtmi* I remembered specially Nan, whose birthday it was. Some pandits say that she was born on the *Naumi*, but I think that it was on the *Ashtmi*. Anyway, it was the 18th August and that is tomorrow. My love to her. I need hardly send her any special wishes. My heart is full of them. It does not wait for the annual birthday. I wish I could write to her, but that cannot be. The other day I came across an interesting passage. An Italian, Leopardi, wrote to his sister on her marriage, just a century ago in 1821 : "Thou shalt have children either cowards or unhappy; choose then the unhappy". An unpleasant choice for a mother! But Leopardi was not right, for the seeming unhappy are sometimes doubly blessed and doubly happy. But however that may be, no Indian mother need be forced to make a choice for the future now. The future is bright with promise and the coming generation is secure.

Kamala writes to me that she is not wholly free from pain yet. I do hope that this is merely an after-effect of the operation and that it will pass off soon, and not return.

In my last letter sent to Kamala there was much meant for you. Kamala naturally could not deal with it or answer it. I hope that you have received the letter.

Please let me know in good time when mother and Kamala propose to see me. The information may be sent to Kishan Bhai with the

Its views on politics are a joy to us. They are so childlike, so innocent, so sweetly reasonable. In this hard world it is touching to see such an example of faith. Like Peter Pan it refuses to grow up. All this is very delightful, though at times a trifle monotonous. But the English of *The Leader* does not improve with age and a daily dose of it gets on one's nerves. Any writing on current topics in good English is thus very welcome. It is for this reason that I would like the Nation and the *New Statesman*.

Sometime ago I wrote to you about the *Modern Review*. It has not come yet. Kindly have it sent.

I have received parcels of bananas, apples, and cabbages from Bombay. They were in good condition. Shamji Mushran also sent me a parcel of pears and apples from the Olympian heights. Another parcel of apples came from the Somerford orchards, Ramgarh.

More than two months ago I wrote to Kamala and asked her to send an order for the Cambridge History of India to a bookseller in Cambridge. I should like to know if this was done. Was any answer received? This book was ordered by me originally in 1914 before the war. The war delayed it. It is now being issued and the old subscribers are getting it at a much reduced price. Hence the necessity to write to Cambridge for it.

Kindly ask Kamala to send me as soon as convenient three *kurtas* and three *dhoties*. Most of my clothes — and specially the *kurtas* — are in pieces. I do not know why they should have succumbed so soon, unless it be the ceaseless washing. The few days' continuous rain brought home the necessity of a somewhat bigger wardrobe to me. The *kurtas* should specially be sent soon. The *dhoties* need not be full pieces I would prefer them to be made out of two pieces — 4 yards long.

On the 10th of August I had an interview with Masud Ali Nadvi of Azamgarh. He gave me some outside news. I was interviewing him in a shed which has been made in the passage leading to the front gate, when word was brought to me that my time was up. My watch said that only 20 minutes and some seconds (nearly 21 minutes) had elapsed but the office clock decided otherwise. But perhaps I am ungenerous to the office clock. It was not the clock that erred. Anyway, my interview abruptly terminated.

We have had the honour of a visit from the Inspector-General. He came on the 11th. There was a deal of rubbing and scrubbing and soaping and washing, screaming & cursing — in short a tremendous hullaballoo. And the *pakkas* and the *katchas*[4] put on their newly washed

4 Unofficial grading of prisoners Pakkas are those serving sentences and *katchas* those awaiting trial

Tara Chand[6], who used to be principal of the Kayastha Pathshala, and has recently returned from England after taking his Doc. Phil. degree, has written a thesis on the Influence of Islam on India or some such subject. I presume it has been printed & issued in book form. If so, I should like to have it. Kindly send word to him to send a copy to me direct.

I have finished my allotted say. I have but to send you all my love. That, however, does not wait for a fortnightly letter. It goes to you all every morning and evening and many times a day. Betty must prefer Bombay to returning to Allahabad Kamala says she is tired of the place and wants to be back. And Indu. Tomorrow it will be three months since I saw her last. She must have grown in height and wisdom since then.

Today is the 18th and I must devote a goodly portion of my time to spinning in memory of the chief, as Shaukat called him.

Your loving son
Jawahar

Enclosures :
1. Note
2. List of books received by me.

I have run short of cotton for spinning. We have tried to arrange with people in Lucknow for a weekly supply but it is not good and besides they are irregular. In any case, I should like to have some special cotton *punis* for my own use. Kindly ask Kamala or Betty to send them soon. Also please ask Kishan Bhai to see to it that a weekly supply of good cotton is sent to us. The last lot was not over good. We are waiting for the next lot but it has not come yet. This delay upsets our spinning arrangements. I am writing this to you as I have no other means of communication with Kishan Bhai, unless he comes to see me.

Please ask Kamala to mark my names on the clothes she sends me. They get mixed up otherwise. Also they should be well & strongly sewn. The last *kurtas* were not at all well sewn.

Jawahar

6. (B. 1888); Vice Chancellor Allahabad University, 1947-48, Educational Adviser, Government of India 1948-51; Ambassador in Iran, 1951-56, Member of Parliament, 1957-67. A well-known historian, he later published under the title *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* the thesis referred to above.

request that he may send word to me. I should like to know some days ahead.

Could you kindly send me a small balance in which we could weigh our yarn? We can then calculate the count of our yarn and find out the progress we are making. The balance should be fairly accurate and should weigh upto about 5 *tolas*. Weights in *tolas* & *mashas* (oz are no good) should also be sent. Please do not send any expensive article. Could you also kindly let me know the exact equivalent of a rupee in *tolas*? There is some controversy here on the point.

I have had absolutely no news of Shridhar since I came to jail. How is he and where is he? Birju Bhai, I suppose, is still in the north — either at Dalhousie or Lahore.

It is late now — I have run into the 18th — and I must desist. Tomorrow morning I shall add the note on my treatment and then send this letter to the office. May it meet with a better fate than its predecessor which languished for five days before being posted and was heavily censored.

18/8

I have just finished the note[5] regarding my treatment and I attach it to this letter.

Inspite of all the good things I said about the rain god, he has played us false today. It is cloudy and dismal and drizzling. A little hard honest rain would be preferable.

I was grieved to see in the papers that Mr. C.R. Das has developed a beard in jail. This reversion to the old days is to my humble thinking unfortunate. It is bad enough for the Maulanas to insist on beards. I hope Hindu-Muslim unity does not mean that we should also grow beards to match. I hope Mr. Das will have himself shaved. If you see him kindly convey my regards to him.

I hope mother is not worrying about me. I was very pleased to get her note from Bombay. She is bearing up so splendidly and bravely and it does my heart good to think of it. She must have had a busy time in Bombay. Like all mothers she perhaps exaggerates my ailments and so, I am afraid, needlessly alarms herself. I am as well as I have been for many months if not a year or two. The long note I am sending you with this letter is merely meant to give you a detailed idea of my condition to help you in prescribing. It is not sent because my condition is radically worse. Please see that mother does not draw all kinds of unwarranted assumptions from it.

5 Not printed

cough left. Please try to get some rest after the Bombay meeting of the Inquiry Committee. I can well realise the enormous amount of work that must await you but it must be disregarded for a while. I commend Mr. Das's example to you. And Darjeeling is as good a place as any for you to spend two or three weeks It will be a change from the hackneyed hill stations of these provinces. But perhaps there will be more rain there.

Our weight has not been taken since I wrote to you last and so I cannot give you any accurate information on the point. I feel, however, that a change, if any, cannot be for the worse.

Books — I have already written to you that I have an abundance of books with me and they will keep me occupied for many weeks. For the present, therefore, you need not trouble to send any except the ones you have specially ordered. Jamnalalji or Jamnadas Gandhi[3] have sent me none and I do not even remember what list I sent to you which you handed over to them. It does not matter. My mind is full of the books I ought to read and it is with great difficulty that I refrain from sending you even longer lists than I have done so far. I wonder often how I shall be able to compress so much reading, spinning, writing etc. as I desire to do before my discharge! Already three and a half months have gone by and I am not so very much wiser than I was before. Certainly the Govt. have failed to reform me or to convince me of the error of my ways. However, one must make the best of a situation which has its drawbacks. We should not criticise or look too closely at the gifts that the Gods send us.

Ever since my return from England I have done little reading and I shudder to think what I was gradually becoming before politics & N.C.O. snatched me away from the doom that befalls many of us. Freedom in many of its aspects is denied us but the freedom and the glory of thought is ours and none can deprive us of it. But the life I led and that so many of us lead, the atmosphere of the law courts, the uninspiring conversation of bar libraries, the continuous contact with the sordid side of human nature — all this and the absence of any organised intellectual life gradually kill this power of free thought. We dare not think or follow up the consequences of our thought. We remain in the ruts and the valleys, incapable almost of looking up towards the mountain tops. And the finer side of life escapes us, we cannot even appreciate art or beauty, for everything that is outside the ruts and the valleys terrifies us We cling to our physical comfort, and

3 Son of Khushal Chand Gandhi, a cousin of Mahatma Gandhi

17. To Father[1]

District Jail
Lucknow
September 1st, 1922
6 a.m.

My dear Father,
Your letter of the 25th/27th August was delivered to me yesterday. My reply is due today as it is just two weeks since I wrote my last letter on the 18th. I hope this letter will be despatched soon so as to catch you before your departure from Allahabad for Bombay.

It was a pleasure to read your long letter. I was beginning to feel guilty at sending you lengthy epistles every fortnight and taking up much of your over-burdened time. A great deal of what I wrote was not necessary from any utilitarian point of view. I wrote on because I had plenty of time at my disposal and it pleased me to let my fancy run. Also I consoled myself with the thought that perhaps a long letter would not be unwelcome to you.

I received Dr. Ray's[2] directions, the homoeopathic medicines etc. yesterday and from today I hope to begin his course of treatment. I have been fairly well during the last two weeks and have only had very mild attacks which have not troubled me much. I shall keep in mind the three points you mention. I have taken no medicine for the last ten days or more and have also given up the use of the Shivaram oil. I was under the impression that you told me once in the civil barrack here that I might continue to use this oil even during homoeopathic treatment. Hence my mistake.

You must have had a full report from mother and the others about me and my flourishing condition. I hope they have satisfied you about my health and have removed all anxiety. The long note I sent you on the last occasion was sent to you in your capacity as my physician.

I found Kamala, Betty & Indu looking fairly well & healthy but mother was not so. I hope that rest in Allahabad and Hakim Ajmal Khan's medicine will tone her up and free her from her ailments.

I rejoice to learn of your freedom from asthma. I hope the effect of the drenching in Calcutta has passed off and you have no cold or

1. J N Correspondence. N.M.M.L.
2. A homoeopath of Calcutta.

known to each other by repute more than three years ago, long before N.C.O. swept down upon us. And so I have to get ready for our grand tour lest Swaraj should come suddenly and find us unprepared for it!

Many thanks for the clothes you sent me. I have an abundance of them now. I was at first inclined to return the Andhra dhoties as they were too fine. On second thoughts I kept them. They are not as fine as some Andhra stuff. Kripalani used to wear a much finer *dhoti*. The *dhoties* you have sent are just right as regards weight. The length too suits me but there is no superfluous bit left. I have no difficulty in tying them or keeping them on without a belt. If necessary, however, I shall try your advice. I have returned the sari you sent. It was not wanted by us and besides it was of an awkward length.

The fine Andhra yarn you sent has been very much appreciated, specially the yarn in the garland. We have counted the threads and weighed it and calculated the count of the yarn. It was 120. I shall return the garland to you in a few days, probably with Nan. It is worth preserving.

Spinning is going strong in our barrack. We have organised it and put an element of competition in it. In spite of defective and insufficient *charkhas*, our barrack is turning out about 1½ *seer* of yarn weekly. One *charkha* has to be shared by as many as three persons sometimes. One of our companions here has spun fine yarn of 47½ counts. I have succeeded in spinning upto 34 counts. This was the average of a hank which varied from 20 to 50 counts. It will give you some idea of this when I tell you that the Andhra *dhoties* you sent us were made of about 35 count yarn — certainly less than 40 counts. It is not difficult to spin fine yarn provided good cotton is forthcoming. But it takes a terribly long time.

I have received the cotton slivers you sent. I wonder who the lady was who brought them. The slip of paper which I signed and returned mentioned Shrimati Urmila Devi. Was she Mr. Das' sister? If so, how did she manage to come here?

Thanks for the photographs. I do not particularly like your photo. It is very amateurish. The group is good. I am glad Mr. Das has parted with his beard. I am afraid there is little chance of my being photographed. But what does it matter? You have enough likenesses of mine.

Income Tax — I am sorry I cannot be of help to you in preparing these statements. If you have got the annual return from the bank in Calcutta it should not be very difficult to get at the facts. But it is next to impossible to be very accurate in the matter of dividends etc. In past years I used to spend many hours in preparing your state-

a very second rate, bourgeois comfort at that. We do not even know how to live well or to enjoy ourselves. Few of us have any *joie de vivre* left. And so we live out our lives with little said or little done that beautifies existence for us or for others, or that will be remembered by any one after we are dead and gone. That was the fate reserved for us also till the high gods took us in hand and removed us from the ruts and placed us on the mountain side. We may not reach the top yet awhile but the glory of wider vision is ours. We can see the stars better and sometimes the rays of the morning sun reach us sooner than those in the valleys.

Many years ago Col. Haksar told me that after he had finished his academical course he gave a year or two to reading and thinking and did nothing else during that period. I envied him that year or two. And now that chance has been given to me. Shall I not rejoice?

I have said that I have enough books and do not require any more. And yet I am going to sin again and ask for some more! I should like you to send me Sven Hedin's *Trans Himalaya* and a book on *Western Tibet and the Borderland* (or some such title). Both of these books are or should be in my rooms. I do not know if we have Sven Hedin's *Overland to India*. I have developed a desire to pay a visit, by thought and fancy, if not otherwise, to the glaciers and bleak mountain ranges of our homelands, to breathe the fine crystal-clear air again, to march along the high valleys of Ladakh and see the glaciers creeping upto them, to rouse the snow leopard from his den or meet the lordly brown bear. It will be a pleasant change from the constraints of Barrack No. 4. Besides, Khaliq and I came to an agreement long ago to undertake a long pilgrimage as soon as Swaraj is attained. We have chalked out a beautiful itinerary. We go to Kashmir and Ladakh and then Tibet. We pay a visit to the lovely Manasarovar lake and Mt. Kailasa. And thence we go through the famous cities of Central Asia, to may be Afghanistan and Iran and Arabia, and go to the West. I doubt not that we shall find a warm welcome in Afghanistan. The Raja[4] who is the finance minister — I forget his name — ought to prove a worthy host and I cannot be an utter stranger, thanks to our benign Government, to many others in that remote country. A formal introduction may be lacking but the Government was good enough to make us

4 Diwan Niranjan Das was head of the treasury in Afghanistan in King Amanullah's time. He was one of the King's trusted advisers and a popular figure in Afghanistan. His only daughter, Radha, was famous for her beauty, and many songs were composed in honour of Radho Jan. Niranjan Das was a member of the Afghan delegation at Mussoorie and Jawaharlal probably heard of him there.

indeed a surprise. But even the "profound body", as you put it, can hardly go beyond this. There is nothing in the case. And perhaps it is better for Betiji[11] that the question will be settled by the Privy Council rather than it should be left to the tender mercies of a future bench of the High Court when Narsingh Rao[12] presents a new application, as the Chief Justice recommended to him. I am afraid there will be no peace for you till you go to England for the case. The Beti Sahiba's men will surround you and not leave you till you agree. I presume the case cannot come off for a year or two.

The decision in Venkatram's case is a surprise and yet it should not be so. An opportunity of this kind does not often come and probably the bright specimen, who presides over the Allahabad Sub-Judge's court, had the advantage of his superior's advice in the matter. He would not have dared otherwise. However, it is a small matter and only shows the miserable condition of our judiciary. I think an appeal should be preferred. The matter should be considered purely from the legal and business aspect of the question. It is likely that the District Judge will support his subordinate but that does not matter. I do not think it will be right to leave the matter, without appealing, from the point of view of the company.

I was very sorry to learn of Shridhar's ill-health from your letter. I should have liked to see him when I was out but I had no chance. If he happens to come to Lucknow & if there is no objection to a civilian paying me a visit in jail, I shall be very happy to see him. Meanwhile, I hope you will send my love to him.

Please tell Tara Chand not to send his thesis in manuscript or type to me. I only want it if and when it is printed. A manuscript essay will probably be stopped by the authorities who will smell sedition in it.

Kamala wanted to know what to pay Chatterji who comes to coach her & Beti. I think Rs. 45/- a month should be paid to him. He used to get Rs. 25/- when he came for an hour or more for Beti. Now he comes for two hours and takes two pupils. He should not feel dissatisfied with what he is given. I suggested Rs. 40/- at first but he did not think this enough. Hence my new suggestion of Rs. 45/-.

Thanks for the balance and weights etc. They are very useful. The balance is rather delicate and I am afraid of its breaking. I should have preferred a more solid article.

Cambray's estimate of the value of your law library is under the mark, but it is not ridiculously so. I think the library should be worth

11. The daughter of Motilal Nehru's client.
12. The opposite party.

ment and yet I had to mention there that it was a rough one and I was unable to improve upon it. I doubt if any one, similarly placed, could do better. I wonder if I can be permitted to help in the drawing up of the statement. If the bank returns can be sent to me together with a list of your investments and other connected papers, I might be able to do something. But the difficulty is that all the books and papers will not come here and I shall not have sufficient material. But even so I shall be able to give some help. If you think it necessary you might send the papers here through the Superintendent. He may allow them You will probably find last year's statements in some drawer of my room upstairs. Personally I do not very much care if I am assessed on last year's figures That will not make any difference in my case I do not think it will affect very much your assessment either — but I may be mistaken about that as the year before includes a short period when you practised.

I was very much interested in what you wrote about the old connection between Hakimji's family and ours. I should like to read Bhaijanji's[5] note on our family history. If it is not too much trouble kindly have it copied and sent.

Dijon, where Ratan[6] was spending his vacation, is a big town in the heart of France. I believe it is on the main line between Marseilles and Paris. Just after Lyon. You must have passed it many times. I hope Mohan Bhai will keep himself better informed of Ratan's where abouts An atlas will help him

I am very pleased to learn about the Bara compromise[7]. My congratulations to all the parties concerned. This will probably mean an additional burden for you, but undoubtedly, as you put it, it is a splendid piece of work.

I heard about B. Badri Narain's success[8] in the Privy Council during my trial in Knox's Court[9]. I was delighted. I have still faint traces of the lawyer left in me and I should like to see how far the Privy Council has adopted your argument. The Lakhna[10] special leave is

5 Bansi Dhar Nehru, eldest brother of Motilal Nehru.

6 Ratan Kumar Nehru (b 1902); son of Mohan Lal Nehru, joined the ICS 1925, Secretary General, Ministry of External Affairs, 1960 63.

7 A compromise effected by Motilal Nehru between the claimants to the estate of the Raja of Bara However, the compromise was short lived, and the claimants in 1922 again resorted to the courts

8 This related to the Mehal Tajpur estate in Oudh Badri Narain was successful in the Privy Council after having lost the case in the Indian courts.

9 The trial in May 1922

10 This case, concerning the succession to the Lakhna estate in Etawah district, engaged Motilal Nehru's attention for over thirty years from 1894.

please make it 50/- now. I do not require any money. I have just cashed a cheque for Rs. 50/-.

Devadas and our other friends are well. If you happen to go for some rest to the hills, may I suggest a book for holiday reading? It is Havell's *Aryan Rule in India*. It is an excellent book and I think you will like it. I have a copy here but I cannot return it as many wish to read it. So please get another copy for yourself.

I enclose a small note on how to calculate the count of yarn. I promised Kamala and Beti to send this during our last interview.

I have returned a number of books with Abul Hasan, who, I was told, brought the homoeopathic medicines etc. yesterday.

Dr. Ray's directions are in places rather vague. He says that I am to take Collinsonia 30 "for some time". What is this "some time"? I have taken a dose this morning and I propose taking a dose every morning for a week unless circumstances necessitate my taking any of the other medicines indicated by him.

Please do not imagine that I am not taking enough rest or sleep. I have more than 7 hours sleep and I also take quite enough rest.

We have not yet received the *charkha* or the carding machine from Sabarmati. Kindly have a reminder sent if this has not already gone.

I am in no great hurry for the travel books I have mentioned above. You can send them whenever any one comes this way. Please also include a copy of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khaiyyam (preferably Golden Treasury edition).

With love,

Your loving son
Jawahar

The length of yarn can be easily ascertained by winding it round a measured length e.g. in the Sabarmati *charkha* there is an arrangement for taking off yarn and making hanks. This is, I believe, 4 ft. long. A similar arrangement can be fixed to any *charkha*, with a smaller length.

I find that Shrimati Urmila Devi came to see Mahadeva. I should like some marking ink for clothes.

How to calculate the count of cotton yarn
One *tola* cotton stretched to 21 yards is
1 count yarn

$$\therefore \text{Count} = \frac{\text{length of yarn in yards}}{\text{weight of yarn in } \textit{tolas} \times 21}$$

nearly 50,000/- but many of the text books lose all their value when new editions come out. I think Rs. 40,000/- would not be an unfair price taking everything into consideration. However, Mohan Bhai & Baldeoramji[13] will be better judges of this. I do feel that the library can not be properly looked after and will deteriorate rapidly. Therefore I want it to go even at a smaller price than it is worth. You may if you prefer only part for the present with some books which are utterly useless, e.g. the American reports etc. That will lighten the burden on the book shelves. Norton's[14] sale to Nabha[15] is of course no fit comparison. The Nabhas and their like do not require appraisers or valuers.

I have been receiving apples from Ramgarh regularly. I think I have had four parcels so far.

I am looking forward to seeing Nan on Monday next. The quotation I sent you from Leopardi was hardly meant as a message to her. I do not suppose that even Leopardi meant it to be taken in its wider sense. I agree with you, as indeed I said in my last letter, that the choice put forward is not a correct one, unless by unhappiness is meant some slight physical discomfort.

Your account of the trip on the Brahmaputra makes one wish to go there. I do wish you would take the whole family there during the coming winter. My absence should make no difference. It seems to me that I am getting far too much sympathy from others and I do not deserve it. It is those who work and labour outside who deserve sympathy, not we who laze and eat and sleep. Soon the pleasant autumn days will come and it will be delightful to lie under the trees. And what can be pleasanter than freedom from worry? We have no appointments to keep, no piling up of work with which we cannot cope, no speechifying, no hurry. Time almost ceases to have significance and life moves on like a gently flowing river. We might, with a stretch of imagination, think ourselves in the South Sea islands or in Tennyson's island in the Western Sea where it is always afternoon and the lotus eaters dwell. Barrack No. 4 is not such a bad place as outsiders imagine.

Kishan Bhai evidently made a mistake when he told you that 100/- have to be given to the T.S.F.[16] I only mentioned 40/- to him. But

13 Pandit Baldev Ram Dave (1863-1942); Secretary of the Allahabad Advocates Association.
14 Eardley Norton, a leading British barrister in India.
15 The Maharaja of Nabha.
16. Tilak Swaraj Fund

As for myself, I flourish as usual — in fact better than usual as I have gained 2 lbs. in weight during the last three weeks. I attach a note to this which will give you more detailed information on the subject.

Many thanks for the various books and articles which have been sent to us. We have received 5 *seers* of cotton and the *asans*, spirit lamp etc. which Harkaran Nath[2] brought over. The *charkhas* from Sabarmati have also come. I feel ashamed to trouble you again with requests for articles. But I know you will forgive me. Among the books I asked for I have not received Omar Khayyam (any number of copies of which can surely be found in Anand Bhawan), *A Humorous Anthology of English Verse* (also in my room), Chardenal's *First Book of French* (used to be in Anand Bhawan and in any case easily obtainable in Allahabad) and a French Grammar for a friend. There is one other book for which I wrote you many months ago — *The Koran in Everyman's Library*. I have a copy of the Koran with me but it is too sumptuous an edition for close study. Hence I want Everyman's edition which I can mark and underline as much as I like.

I find that many of the books that are sent to me from our library are partly moth-eaten or at any rate have been attacked by various insects. Appatently they require a thorough cleansing and airing. I have a recollection that, apart from the books in my rooms upstairs, book cases full of books (non-legal) are lying about in at least five or six different parts of the house. This is not a very happy way of keeping books. I would suggest that all of them should be put together in any one room. This will facilitate reference. At present there appears to be considerable difficulty in finding a book.

I wonder if any communication has been received from Bowes & Bowes, booksellers of Cambridge, about the Cambridge History of India. Kamala told me that she had written to them several months ago. If no letter has been received from them a reminder might be sent. I am in no hurry for the book but I should like a copy to be procured soon at the original subscriber's rates.

The cotton that Harkaran Nath has brought is in the form of slivers. It is hardly necessary to take the trouble to make these slivers. We would prefer it in the original condition. Making it into slivers increases the price and that is not desirable, specially as we can ourselves easily make the slivers. The cotton sent is [of] fairly good quality but it is not at all clean. Any number of foreign articles are mixed up with

2. Pandit Harkaran Nath Misra (1890-1963); a prominent Congressman of Lucknow and a leading member of the Awadh Bar.

Hanks should be so twisted as to keep the yarn fairly tight and not loose.

(I do not know if in the above calculation a *tola* is taken to be a Bombay *tola* or a northern India *tola*.)

Jawaharlal Nehru
1.9.22

18. To Father[1]

District Jail,
Lucknow
30/9/22
(Vijaya Dashmi)

My dear Father,

My home letter is over due. It is usually delivered to me on Thursdays but today is Saturday and it has not come yet. I hope it will reach me some time today. In anticipation of this I am beginning this letter so as not to delay my answer.

I was very pleased to see Beti looking well though much thinner than before. The somewhat cryptic news of her ill-health contained in the *Leader* had caused me considerable anxiety and I had no means of satisfying myself about her health. An interview with Kishan Bhai on the 18th September brought some relief but again a telegram in the *Leader* announcing your sudden return from Amritsar gave rise to apprehensions. Last Monday's interview with her was thus an especial pleasure.

Kamala's little relapses are not very comforting. I only hope that they are trivial and are merely the last spasms of a passing trouble.

Mother's account of your incessant work is anything but reassuring from the point of view of your health. How can I induce you to leave everything for a while and take an absolute rest? Even a fortnight will do you a great deal of good.

1. J. N Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
Certain portions of this letter, indicated by crosses, were censored by the jail authorities.

I am sorry to hear of Ranjit's mother's death. It must have been a shock to Ranjit. The old lady was advanced in years and her passing away cannot be surprising but suddenness always has a tragic element about it. X X X X

Kamala wishes to appear at some examinations of the Prayag Mahila Vidya Pitha.[5] She wants to ask your permission but apparently she has not been able to muster enough courage for the purpose. I see no harm in her appearing. In fact I think they will do her good. She will give you particulars.

It is pleasant here now. There is no rain and the nights are slightly chilly. I have plenty of covering but Devadas is short of it. Kindly have three blankets sent to us. Please tell Kamala that the pillow she has sent me suits me and I require no other.

I am glad you have bought a Willys Knight. The want of a suitable conveyance was a great nuisance. How does the Ford run now? Is it impossible to get rid of the Lancia?

Kamala writes to say that Indu is becoming more and more intractable and pays no heed to any kind of study. I wish some arrangement could be made for her lessons. I am confident I could have managed her easily — but I am in barrack No. 4. So some other arrangement must be thought of. I do not suppose that she will acquire much knowledge just yet but she must begin to acquire the habit of doing lessons. The longer this is delayed the more difficult it will be for her and for others. As it is she is past the age when she should have begun seriously.

Have you heard anything about my fine? Have the various beds etc. which the police carried off been sold?

Kindly tell mother that I have received the Lucknow sweets and the *Nauratan chutney*. The latter, however, was most difficult for me to tackle owing to the presence of garlic. The *chutney* mother brought with her was excellent.

Two of our friends have been recently discharged from this jail. Daya Krishna Ganjoo of Fyzabad went this morning and Mir Wajid Ali of Rae Bareli was released a day or two ago.

I have been receiving two copies of the *Modern Review* — one from Calcutta direct and the other forwarded from Allahabad. Please have

5 The Prayag Mahila Vidyapitha was founded in February 1922 to promote women's education in northern and central India. Jawaharlal was its Chancellor from 1923 to 1928.

it. If the time and energy spent in making slivers had been spent in cleaning, the result would have been more appreciated. We have not been informed of the price of the yarn. This ignorance affects our arrangements here. Kindly ask Harkaran to be more careful about these matters in sending future consignments.

So far as I am personally concerned I have got enough slivers to last me till December. But this does not apply to others and the fortnightly supply of cotton should be kept up for them. I do not want Kamala or any one else in the house to bother about these consignments. Harkaran or Bajpaiji[3] should arrange. I am writing to you about them as I can write no other letters.

I sent the yarn I had spun with mother last Monday. I hope it will be carefully preserved. There is not much of it so far but it took me a considerable time to spin, chiefly because I tried to spin fine yarn. Spinning coarse yarn doesn't interest me at all. I could have spun nearly three times as much if I had spun coarser yarn. I am sending you with this letter a short slip giving details about the yarn sent. Kindly hand it over to Kamala who will preserve it with the yarn. When there is enough yarn — mine or any one's in Anand Bhawan — a *julaha* should be got at and made to fix up his pit loom in our grounds. This is no easy matter. Kishan Prasad Dar[4] will probably be able to get a suitable man.

Kamala's letter of the 28th has been delivered to me now. I had been looking forward to seeing her next Monday but I find from her letter that probably she will not come. The reason given for this is somewhat surprising. She is under the impression that I do not want to have an interview with her or any one else so soon. There has evidently been some misapprehension. An interview with any one from home can never be anything but most pleasing to me and about Monday next I thought that everything had been arranged. However, it does not matter. X X X X

Kamala's reference [to] her health is not reassuring. Evidently the operation does not seem to have put an end to her troubles. I am worried a little but that does not help matters much. It is comforting to know that Colonel Bhola Nath is treating her.

I am glad you intend taking a few days off after the Delhi meeting. It is high time you took rest.

3 Pandit Bishambar Nath Bajpai, Secretary of the U.P.C.C. 1922.
4 [B. 1893]; brother-in-law of Mohanlal Nehru; Manager of Allahabad Law Journal Press which printed some of Jawaharlal's books.

I am interested to learn of the fate of my last letter to you. I had written it in all innocence without any desire to offend against any jail rules or to divulge any of the secrets of this little world of the condemned and their watchers. I considered myself entitled to write what I had written and expected it to be passed by the censor. The Superintendent, however, was of a different opinion, and, needless to say, the Noes had it. It matters little.

You will notice from the address given above that I am no longer in barrack 4. After over three and a half months in that delectable place we have left it and been installed in another part of the dominions of the Superintendent of the Lucknow District Jail. We have come back to the Civil Ward — the ward where I came more than ten months ago in the old, old days when I was a mere casual. In this barrack I spent my first night in jail and in this barrack you were first installed on your arrival in Lucknow last December. In summer, I believe, it was converted into an isolation ward for cholera patients. Perhaps it continues to serve a similar purpose, only the disease it tries to combat is of the mind more than of the body. And it was in the fitness of things that a habitual victim of the fell disease should undergo treatment in this ward. We were four originally here. Now we are seven: Purushottam Das, Mahadeva, Devadas, Venkat Ram and two others. We miss our volleyball here as seven are hardly enough to form one side for the game, and there is not over-much room here either. Another loss to me is the discontinuation of Urdu lessons. All the seven of us put together possess a negligible knowledge of Urdu. We have more peace and quiet here of course than it is possible to have in the *chakkar*. I hope it will bear fruit in profitable study.

I have given up running owing to lack of a proper place. Instead, I have taken to a strenuous course of Muller[1] in the morning. In the evening we are allowed to pull out water from the well in the adjoining barrack, and this is good exercise. There is thus no lack of exercise. On the whole, perhaps, I am exercising myself more here than I did in the other barracks. We have been told by the Superintendent that he intends opening a door through the wall between this barrack and the barrack where the *chirla khana* is situated, to enable us to take exercise etc. there. We await this. Meanwhile we have to be content with a glimpse of the top of the building which sheltered you for five months or so — the WEAVING shed with the inverted N. Perhaps we may have a full view of it one of these days. But I should not complain of our barrack. It has its good points and they are many. It

1. Breathing exercises developed by a German physician, Johannes Muller.

the Allahabad copy stopped. I do not want it and there must be many persons there who would like to read it.

Oct. 1 7 a.m.

I wrote till late last night and I have little to add. I hope all are well at home. There seems to me almost an epidemic of the fevers during this season. My love to mother. I appreciated her note very much. She must not worry about me. During her last visit I made her confess that I was looking better. Love to Nan.

I hope my next home letter will bring the news that you are in the hills.

With love,

Your loving son
Jawahar

Kindly ask Kamala to send me Ram Naresh Tripathi's *Kavita Kaumudi* and *Pathik*.

19. To Father[1]

Civil Ward,
District Jail,
Lucknow
17th October, 1922

My dear Father,

Your letter of the 11th was delivered to me yesterday after a detention of several days in the office. Unlike my last letter to you, it arrived whole and unmutilated. I saw Kamala yesterday morning and she gave me later news which was somewhat more reassuring. Indu's illness has caused me considerable anxiety. I do hope however that she is out of the wood and will rapidly gain strength and not permit any illness to approach her again. She has had more than her share of physical suffering already. She must be so reduced and thin.

We live almost in a charmed world nowadays. Newspapers seldom reach us. Occasionally an odd copy of the *Leader* or *Englishman* or it may be the I.D.T. drops as it were from heaven and tells us something of the outside world. More often we live in blissful ignorance. It is well, and I for one am well content with this To read and think and worry and yet not to act is not an enviable state of affairs. It is better to live far from the madding crowd absorbed in books and in one's immediate surroundings.

I am interested to learn that my fine has been realised by the sale of the steads. So I have only 13 months left in jail now!

We are all well. This is the shortest letter I have so far sent you I hope its brevity will help in its quick despatch.

I am writing a few lines for Indu below.[3] I wonder if this is an offence against the rules!

With love to all,

Your loving son
Jawahar

Purshottam and others send their *pranams* to you.

Kindly tell Kamala that I do *not* want any more *takuas*. I want a pair of *chappals*.

Lots of love to dear daughter Indu from her Papu. Get well soon and write to Papu. Also come and see me in jail. I long very much to see you. Did you ply the new *charkha* that Dadu has given you? Send me some of the yarn you have woven. Do you say your prayers every day with your Mummie?

Yours
Papu

3. The lines to his daughter were in Hindi.

doesn't seem to have recovered however from the rains yet and is very damp

Thanks for the additional directions for my treatment. I shall endeavour to follow them. I have been fairly well lately but the trouble has been continuously, though slightly, in evidence. I have not been taking any medicine for some days in expectation of fresh directions. This morning I have started the course again. I feel fit and by no means depressed or weak as I used to some weeks ago during an attack. My weight has not been taken again since I wrote last. I presume I have not lost any thing. Probably I have gained.

I am glad you have disposed of the tremendous amount of useless furniture and lumber that had accumulated during the past twenty years or so. The guns and rifles and revolvers too are well rid of. They were never used and no one looked after them. The Dresden china and Bohemian glass is very valuable stuff and I imagine it is almost unobtainable at present. Central Europe is not in a very prosperous condition at present and I doubt if these dainties are being manufactured there as of old. Bohemia and Carlsbad are, I believe, now part of the Czechoslovakian state — it is difficult to remember the names of these mushroom states. Saxony, in common with the rest of Germany, is in a bad way. I have little idea of the original price of the sets you possess although I was with you when you purchased them. Perhaps it would be as well to have them valued in Bombay. An advertisement in the Calcutta and Bombay papers might be worthwhile.

I feel that it will not be very desirable for the family to shift to Lucknow for a few months. There is undoubtedly a lack of decent doctors in Allahabad but even from Nan's point of view home comforts count for a great deal. Some suitable arrangements could be made for medical help there.

Some weeks ago I wrote to you that Devadas had received a number of heavy books on sociology from Shivaprasad Gupta. None of us could make out why these particular books were sent to him. It now transpires that Purushottam Das asked for them and they were really meant for him! But I suppose the office bungled and sent them to the wrong person and but for the fact that Purushottam and I are in the same barrack we would never have found out the true fact. As it is, I have already returned some of the books to Shiva Prasad as Devadas or I did not need them.

The other day the correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* — Gwynne by name — came here. I had a talk with him. I understand he is a Madras civilian who retired after only a few years service. He mentioned that he had a letter of introduction from Tej Bahadurji for you. So perhaps you will meet him.

an unalloyed blessing, specially to a person of fairly active habits. It disturbs one's peace of mind and even introduces an element of worry, which should have no place in jail, or else jail would be much worse than the madding crowd outside! Inaction and worry do not make a happy combination and so being forcibly wedded to the former for a year and a half, I have attempted to desert the latter, with no little success. It was the newspaper which repeatedly intervened and interfered with my scheme of life here. It will not be allowed to do so any longer and I am hopefully looking forward to a period of quiet reading and contemplation.

The withdrawal of books was another matter. I suppose we would have got used to that also if necessary. Fortunately, however, we have been spared. All our books remain with us.

So that we are really not affected over-much by the rules as newly framed. The monthly interviews will be more appreciated than the weekly ones. And the months will go by till another November comes round again and then it may be I shall have another interview for which I shall have waited for nearly eighteen months.

I am glad you have taken Kamala and Indu to Calcutta. Indu was looking pale and weak when I saw her last. She looked even more pulled down than she was just prior to her visit to Dehra Dun. I hope that homoeopathic treatment will cure her completely.

I observed my birthday on the 11th in accordance with mother's directions. I did everything that she wished me to do. I have even kept 5/- by for the poor. I shall hand these to her when she comes.

One of our number, Venkat Ram, will be discharged in a few days on completing his term of six months — which reminds me that I also am completing a third of my period. I have seen a good deal of him here and I have been favourably impressed by him. He has ability and good sense and I think he will improve greatly. You may perhaps remember that he and I were tried together.

The homoeopathic medicine case you gave me — the one in 2 volumes — has partly ceased to exist. Of the 1st volume only some tattered remnants remain — the rest has been swallowed by the white ants! They have eaten the leather and the corks and the pillules. The glass is about the only thing they have left. I am fairly careful about the cleanliness of my barrack and specially my little corner in it. Every third or fourth day the whole place is thoroughly cleaned and every article of furniture is removed. As it happened I did not touch the medicine case for 3 days and this morning when I picked it up I found thousands of white ants creeping & crawling inside it. They are a regular plague here. We have been battling valiantly with them but on the whole they have had the advantage over us.

20. To Father[1]

Civil Ward
District Jail, Lucknow
November 15, 1922

My dear Father,

It was a pleasure to have a letter from you after so many weeks. It is short but nonetheless comforting. I realise that I cannot expect long letters from you so long as I remain in my present delectable surroundings. And indeed I would feel guilty of taking up too much of your precious time if you wrote me a long letter. That time belongs to a vast number of others besides, and even more than me, and I have no doubt that it can be much more usefully employed than in writing lengthy letters to me. I would that I was in a position to assist you & to lighten, even by a little, the heavy burden you carry. That is denied to me for the present. At any rate I do not wish to add to your worries and burdens.

The new rules are being enforced from today. I wonder who is the genius responsible for them. Evidently they come from on high. But in spite of this, they are sadly lacking in clarity. I suppose, however, that we shall soon get to know them and flourish under them. I have been in doubt as to when to write to you — only this morning I was informed that as over a fortnight has elapsed since I wrote last, and the new rules only come into force today, I am entitled to write a letter today. I hasten to take the opportunity. I am also informed that interviews will be allowed this week as usual to all of us. I understand that Abul Hasan has been told so and that as a consequence of this, mother may come to see me in a day or two.

Henceforth of course interviews & letters will have monthly intervals. Probably definite days will be fixed for them and little choice will be left in the matter. If any such days are fixed, as is likely, you will be informed of them.

The other principal changes in the rules refer to food, newspapers and books. As regards food, there is nothing to worry about and you can rest assured that I shall continue to have enough wholesome food. Newspapers will be stopped. This morning's *Leader* bore the legend in red ink: "The last paper"! For this relief, I am almost thankful. I can well do without the daily papers and devote the time so far spent in reading them to better purpose. A newspaper in jail is certainly not

1. J N. Correspondence, NMML.

I am writing a few lines for Indu on the other side of this sheet. I hope she will be able to read them.

With love,

Your loving son,
Jawahar

Thanks for the Rs. 100/- which Nihal Babu sent me. I appear to be spending more money in jail than I did outside!

(In case this letter is opened in Allahabad during father's absence, kindly have it forwarded immediately to him to Calcutta.)

My dear Indu[5],

How do you like Calcutta? Which do you like better — Bombay or Calcutta? Have you seen the zoo there? What kinds of animals are there? There is a very big old tree. See that also. Be sure you are quite fit when you return.

Your loving father
Papu

5 This letter to his daughter is in Hindi

21. Speech at Allahabad[1]

I do not know what I should say to you Purshottamdasji has already spoken and on my behalf also. I had joined the noncooperation movement after considerable thought, but once I had joined I had no occasion to give it a second thought. In jail I got an opportunity to

1 Delivered on 1 February 1923, the day after his release Extracts were printed in *Aaj* of 5 February 1923 Original in Hindi

I shall return the remains of the medicine case to mother. Please do not send me another. All the medicine I may require for myself are in a separate wooden box and are in good condition. The two volumes were of no use to me whatever.

One of our diversions here is a study of the heavens every night. We do not know much about them but still we have succeeded in making friends with a number of constellations. Every evening we watch the Pleiades heralding the approach of Orion. And nightly we see the Little Bear go round the Polar Star, and its elder brother the Great Bear informs me every morning of the coming of dawn. They are wonderfully comforting, these stars and constellations. I wish I knew more about them. The *Pioneer* and the *Englishman* usually give a chart of the night sky every month. If you could kindly have these charts taken out of the papers and sent to us, they would be of great help.

Kamala writes to me that she wants to do some Muller's exercises but she does not understand them. I am sure they will do her a lot of good — specially the rubbing ones. Please tell her what she should do and what she should not do.

Mahadeva has got a large supply of *Zamingand* from Surat and he gives it to me daily. The Surat variety is vastly superior to our local product. It is more tasty and does not produce any irritation. It is cooked in the ordinary way.

I enclose a note[2] about my treatment. My last one I think was dated the 1st October. You will notice that I am fairly fit. Indeed I wish I could convince you how well I am here and how pleasantly my days pass Selfishness would hardly favour a quick discharge but I do feel sorrow when I think of you labouring away and I, basking in the sun, wrapped up in my reading and spinning.

Many of our friends must be in Calcutta. Kindly give my regards to Hakim Saheb & Mr. Das and my love to Mrs. Naidu, Ansari, Rajagopalachari[3], Syed Mahmud, Santanam[4] and specially to Umar Sobhani.

2 Not printed

3 (B 1878), gave up legal practice at Salem and joined the noncooperation movement in 1919, member of the Congress Working Committee 1922-42, 1946-47 and 1951-54, Chief Minister of Madras 1937-39 and 1952-54, Governor of West Bengal 1947-48, Governor General of India 1948-50, one of the founders of the Swatantra Party.

4 (B 1895), lawyer of Madras who joined the noncooperation movement in 1920, arrested with Jawaharlal at Nabha in 1923, Joint Editor, *Hindustan Times* 1943-48, Minister of State for Railways and Transport 1948-52; Lieutenant Governor, Vindhya Pradesh 1952-56.

22. Speech at the Bareilly District Conference[1]

On my release from jail, when I was asked by people to which group I would belong, I felt sad that the leaders should be taking this 'do as they like' attitude. So seventy of us have taken a vow that our first duty would be to bring about unity among the leaders. I am glad to say that thanks to the efforts of Maulana Azad[2] you will very soon find the two groups of leaders working together.

Swaraj can be achieved only by joint action and I want to achieve Swaraj as quickly as possible. We can never progress without Swaraj. But we cannot achieve Swaraj by abusing others. I cannot blame the English for our condition. At heart I have very great respect for them as a brave nation. If I criticise them, it is for their misdeeds. They regard religion as a personal affair, and I have nothing but praise for their discipline. We should not under-rate the bravery of the enemy, but we can achieve success by boldly facing him. We can attain freedom only by being prepared for greater sacrifices than they are. Without unity nothing is possible. Disunity leads to ruin. We shall have to build up an army of freedom fighters. The only way to attain freedom is the way shown by Mahatma Gandhi. I would seek freedom by all means; but at this time there is no other method better than the one laid down by Mahatmaji. Freedom from slavery is only possible by obeying the commands of Mahatma Gandhi.

People say noncooperation has declined. The truth is very different. It is true that noncooperation does not appear to be as intensive as before; but apart from that, real work is going on.

The incidents at Bareilly[3] last year took place because of your lapses. You had not followed the real implications of the teachings of Mahatma

1 18 February 1923 Extract printed in *Aaj*, 24 February 1923. Original in Hindi.

2 Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888 1958); a scholar and writer of outstanding distinction and a patriot who served long terms of imprisonment, President of the Congress 1923 and 1940 46, Minister for Education in the Government of India, 1947-58.

3 On 5 February 1922 the dispersal of a Congress procession and seizure of flags led to mob violence The police opened fire and arrested several Congress leaders.

think about it again. After considering it again and again, I felt that I had taken the right decision and *what I had been doing* was equally correct, and if I get an opportunity again I shall do it again.

I am not in touch with the present situation. I only know this, that the objective we had placed before ourselves two years ago is still there. The country is as much in agony today as it was then. Our struggle still continues. The course that we have adopted is the only one which can bring us success. I do not know if you are all prepared to follow that path. May be you have become tired. *I do not know.* Having just come out of jail, I do not know how far the assertion of the new Governor[2] that the people have now no faith in the noncooperators is correct. But for me the way is clear; and if a large number of people do not follow this course at least a few of us will. For me it is the only way.

Out of your great affection for me, you have praised me too much. *This is bad. In future you should shower praise with some restraint.*

Everywhere people ask me, where are we? But in jail I had no means of knowing what was happening outside. So what can I say about it? You should follow the way which appears to you right. We are all on the same road; only you may ride on whatever means of transport you like best. If we have noncooperated with Government we *should* certainly cooperate amongst ourselves. If we fight amongst ourselves then we shall establish that we *are unworthy of Swaraj.* The struggle that was launched in our country has not ended as yet. The release of seventy prisoners does not imply the end of the battle. Thousands of our brethren are still in jail. This struggle will continue till we hoist the Swaraj flag on the citadel of freedom. I think going to jail *is an easy affair.* We *shall have to sacrifice our lives for freedom.*

I have nothing to add about the use of *khaddar.* This time I had been convicted only on this count. I apologise to those to whom I have given trouble in the matter of *khadi.* But I am convinced that what I did was correct and if I get another opportunity I shall do the same again.

2. Sir William Marris, joined I.C.S., 1895.

In your requisition you desire that a meeting of the full Committee should be held on the 2nd March. It has been pointed out to me that no such meeting should be held without at least a week's clear notice. Our members are spread out all over the city and it is difficult to reach them suddenly. The rules of the Provincial Congress Committee have made careful provision for the giving of sufficient notice. The objection thus of shortness of notice was a very strong one. Another objection was based on the undesirability of holding any meeting during Holi festivities. This too had considerable force.

The Town Committee has no special set of rules to meet a situation of the kind that has arisen. No rule relates to meetings being requisitioned. It is by no means clear what the procedure should be or what the powers of the Executive and the general body are. These and many other questions arise and I mention them only to point out some of the difficulties raised by your requisition at this juncture. Such questions should only be considered and decided at a meeting of the general body which has been convened after the fullest notice to which no one can take exception. No meeting which is held within the next few days can be said to have been held after full notice. I would therefore ordinarily have been averse to holding such a meeting. But I understand that according to you and your co-signatories the meeting must be held prior to the 5th March or else there will be little point in it. I desire to give every facility to the signatories of the requisition and have decided to accede to their request in spite of the objections that have been raised. I have therefore convened a meeting of the general body of the members for the 4th March 1923 at 5.30 p.m. The place of meeting is the office of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, 107 Hewett Road.

I have also called a meeting of the Executive Council of the Town Committee for this evening at 6 p.m. at the office of the District Congress Committee in Hewett Road to consider the situation that has arisen by the sending of the requisition. I trust you will attend this meeting.

Kindly let me know what you propose to do at the meeting of the general body. I should like to have a copy of the resolution or resolutions you or any fellow signatory of yours intends to propose at the meeting. So far all the information that you have given me is that election affairs will be considered. This is not enough. A requisition for a meeting must state in some detail the purpose of the meeting and the exact business to be brought forward. In order to save time I

Gandhi and the Ali brothers. You forgot their instructions even at the time of taking out a flag procession. The incident was a punishment for your lapses. We can achieve freedom only by hard work and not by discussions. Those who want to achieve freedom by entering the legislatures cannot assure us of success, because battles cannot be won by debates. There is no instance in world history where people have attained victory by only sitting in a debating assembly. The councils of today are no more than debating assemblies.

Today is that auspicious day when eleven months ago Mahatmaji read his written statement in court before he was taken to prison to undergo a sentence of six years. I was present then. That scene is imprinted on my heart and I can never forget it. His farewell instructions — "*Khaddar, Khaddar, Khaddar*" — are still echoing in my ears. I pray to God to give me such strength as will enable me to continue as a fighter for freedom. If you are eager for freedom and work persistently then nothing is impossible. India will be able to achieve freedom if we all work unitedly.

23. To Shamlal Nehru[1]

Allahabad
2.3.23

Dear Sir,

The requisition for a meeting of the general body of the Town Congress Committee signed by you and a number of members of the Committee reached me about midday on the 27th February. I have since given the most careful attention to the matter and have consulted a number of members of the Committee whose opinion carries weight. Your requisition raised a number of questions of constitutional and practical importance and I did not wish to decide any of these in a hurry and without the fullest consideration. The meeting of the All India Congress Committee and the presence in Allahabad of a large number of leaders from other parts of the country were also instrumental in my not answering you earlier. I crave your pardon for the delay.

1. J.N Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

interest of our opponents to create friction between various communities and we must not be misled by these intrigues of theirs. Any person who deliberately created disunion in the country was helping our opponents and was injuring the national cause. I stated all this without any reference to or thought of the Malkanas.

I then referred briefly to the Shuddhi question. I prefaced my remarks by saying that I did not know the exact facts and so I could only deal with the matter generally and without going into any detail. One thing, I said, was very clear. Every person had the indefensible right to convert by peaceful means another to his views or to his religion. We must allow perfect freedom in the matter. Any man who is in earnest and believes in a cause wants others to adopt his view and help his cause. I believe in the true missionary spirit and in men with a mission. I myself am a bit of a missionary in my own way. Then I stated that I could not help noticing that the Shuddhi movement had aroused keen controversy and our national workers were distracted on account of it. I expressed a desire that it would have been better for this question not to have been taken up then. I had been asked what Congress workers should do in the matter. It was of course open to every Hindu and every Muslim to act according to his convictions, but it was clear that the Congress could not take any part on either side. The Congress was meant for every Indian and as such it could not identify itself with a controversial religious matter. I recommended that the principal workers and office-bearers of Congress Committees should not take an active part in the movement as otherwise people would be justified in thinking that the Congress was helping behind the scenes. Besides, I thought that any one, Hindu or Muslim, taking an active part in the Shuddhi movement on either side, could not remain a very effective national worker. He would have little time to spare for national activities and he would be suspected by the other community. I do feel that those gentlemen, both Hindus and Muslims, who have actively worked amongst the Malkanas have lessened their utility from a national point of view.

Personally I would rejoice if all the outsiders left the Malkanas in peace for a while and permitted them to work along their own lines.

Jawaharlal Nehru

have already convened the meeting without waiting for this information. I trust however that this information will be forthcoming by tomorrow.

I would add that the meeting of the general body has been convened without my having finally decided any constitutional question. Such questions, if any, will be dealt with at the meeting itself.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru
President, Town Congress Committee
Allahabad

24. On the Shuddhi Movement[1]

I

Sir, — Nearly six weeks ago I delivered a speech in Gorakhpur. No report of it, so far as I am aware, appeared for a month or more after. My attention has now been drawn to strange and perverted versions of it appearing in various Hindi and Urdu newspapers. I have endeavoured to contradict some of these but I cannot keep pace with the misrepresentation. May I, therefore, request you to allow me some space to repudiate the various statements made in regard to this speech?

I am alleged to have attacked in most unseemly language every one connected with the Shuddhi movement at present going on amongst the Malkana Rajputs[2] and to have called every such person an enemy of his country. Various other extraordinary statements are put in my mouth which I never uttered. All these are wholly wrong. I said little about the Malkana Rajputs. I spoke at some length on unity and laid stress on the impossibility of our making much progress if we were always quarrelling with each other. I stated that it was in the

1. The first part of this item is Jawaharlal's letter to the editor, *The Leader*, 13 May 1923, the second part is a translation from a report in *Aaj* of the same date.
The aim of the Shuddhi movement was to reconvert those who had left the Hindu fold. The Arya Samaj leaders lent their support to this movement. The Congress, as a political organisation, with persons of various religions as its members, avoided a partisan approach to the problem.
2. A sect of Rajputs converted to Islam; they retained many Hindu customs.

I read in the *Leader* that you have resigned from the Secretaryship of the Congress. It is not quite clear whether you have also resigned from the membership of the Working Committee. As a matter of fact you were not elected a Secretary. Your name was proposed for this office but it was withdrawn when it was pointed out that you could not spare the time. *Prakasam*[2], *Mahmud and I were elected Secretaries.* You have been elected a member of the Working Committee. The newspapers have evidently given a wrong report and hence you have been misled. The fault is partly mine also for not sending you formal intimation immediately. Owing to the transfer of the office of the All I.C.C. from Patna to Allahabad papers have got mixed up and delay has been caused. Please forgive me.

Why did you not come to Bombay? We all expected you to come and lighten our burden. I wish I could tell you all that happened there but a letter is hardly a fit medium for that. If we could but meet.

The reports that have appeared in the papers are so very inadequate that it is really difficult for a person who was not present to understand what happened at Bombay. The result is so different from what I expected that I can very well understand the difficulties of others who were not present.

There is going to be a meeting of the Working Committee in about a fortnight's time, probably in Allahabad. I do hope you will come. We shall then have a chance of discussing the whole situation. Please do not resign from the Committee. There is no reason why your *membership of the Committee should interfere with your educational* work. Even from the educational standpoint you should be in the Committee. Education surely must be represented in the Working Committee. But even if you happen to disagree with me in this matter, I would beg of you not to resign or take any other action till you have seen us and discussed the matter fully. We have a tremendous burden to carry. Please do not desert us in this fashion. I am told that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who is also a member of the Working Committee, intends sailing to England within a few days. I do not know what he is going for.

I am developing into a kind of "Pooh-Bah".[3] *They forced me to* take up the Working Secretaryship of the A.I.C.C. at Bombay. When

2. T. Prakasam (1869 1957); a lawyer and prominent member of the Congress in Andhra, who was a leading figure in the politics of that area from the early twenties till his death. Chief Minister of Madras, 1946 7; Chief Minister of Andhra, 1953-4.
3. A character in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*, who held many offices.

II

Jawaharlal Nehru has written a letter to Swami Shraddhanand[3]. In that letter he has said: "My speech at Gorakhpur was published in the newspapers in a completely distorted form. I had said that those who work for 'Shuddhi' have every right to do so. Only it pains me that it unnecessarily promotes ill-will and this hampers our work for Swaraj. I have also given my personal views that I would like the Congress officials not to take much interest in the propagation of the 'Shuddhi' movement. I believe that if prominent workers of the Congress take part in 'Shuddhi', people might think that it is a part of the Congress programme. In this manner the Congress would become an institution of a particular caste or religion. So if presidents and secretaries of Congress committees wish to work for 'Shuddhi', it would be better if they resigned from their official positions. This is my opinion about those who work for 'Shuddhi' as well as those who work against it. I never said that workers for 'Shuddhi' are traitors to the country or that they should be treated as enemies. I had used these words in another context which had nothing to do with 'Shuddhi'. Some listeners might have mixed up the two statements".

3 (1860 1926), originally known as Lala Munshiram, he was one of the leaders of the Arya Samaj, but no bigot, and preached on one occasion in the Jama Masjid in Delhi He also participated in the Satyagraha movement of 1919. He was assassinated in Delhi on 23 December 1926 by a Muslim fanatic.

25. To A. M. Khwaja[1]

107, Hewett Road,
Allahabad
6 6.23

My dear Khwaja,
So you have issued your ultimatum. I feared as much and I therefore wanted to write to you as soon as I came back from Bombay. But an abundance of work kept me more than occupied for the last 3 or 4 days.

1. J N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Q. In your opinion, will not this conduct of Shri Rajagopalachari add to the dissatisfaction in the Swarajya Party and the bad blood between the two wings of the Congress?

JN : Of course, it will increase ill-will and the two parties, instead of coming together, will drift apart all the more. Although the Swarajya Party started this disagreement after the Gaya Congress, it is proper that it should be now ended instead of being intensified.

Q. How far, in your opinion, are the activities of Shri Rajagopalachari's party justified and proper?

JN : How can I say they are proper? I myself seconded the resolution at Bombay for a compromise.

Q. The Congress has not permitted Council entry and Shri Rajagopalachari is organising a special movement against Council entry. Don't you think that in such circumstances the Swarajya Party's success in elections is impossible?

JN : I cannot answer this question. I do not at this time know much about the whole of India. I can only speak about the United Provinces. If the boycott by the Congress had not been postponed even a minor success for the Swarajya Party was not possible. Had Congress allowed Council entry, then success was certain. In view of all this, the success of the Swarajya Party is doubtful. The Congress has quite a considerable influence with the public. This is clear from the municipal elections in the province.

Q. But in the district board elections the Congress has not succeeded; and the district board voters are also the voters for the Council. In such circumstances, how can you say that had Congress permitted Council entry, the Swarajya Party would have definitely succeeded?

JN : We should not draw any conclusions from the failure in district board elections. The fact is that during the district board elections the Congress did not make any private effort. This election was left to look after itself. Had the Congress tried, it would have succeeded.

Q. I think you are not in favour of contesting the Council elections. Then, what do you think is the best programme for the Congress at the present moment?

JN : I myself am not in favour of entering the Councils but I do not want to prevent those who want to oppose the Government by

I say that I am going to resign from the Municipal Chairmanship, there is a howl and I am told that it might almost result in a petty riot. Meanwhile I must carry on the Provincial Congress work and of course I cannot desert the Allahabad Town Congress Committee of which I am president! A pleasant outlook! I am thoroughly distressed and troubled.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

26. Interview with Aaj[1]

Q. What is your opinion about the Congress compromise?[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru: In my opinion you cannot call it a compromise in full. According to Shrimati Sarojini Naidu this is a reciprocal arrangement for convenience.

Q. Do you think this compromise will bring about the desired effect, that is, the reunion of the two wings of Congress, while persons like Shri Rajagopalachari are opposing it?

JN: As circumstances change the success or failure of this compromise also will be known. Of course I am sorry and sad about the behaviour of Shri Rajagopalachari. I had never thought that he would thus disregard and defy the decision of the All India Congress Committee. I had felt that he would, at the most, express his opposition to the Bombay decision only as a matter of principle, but abide by it in practice. I had never thought he would actively organise strong opposition to it.

1 Published on 19 June 1923. Original in Hindi.
2 The Gaya Congress resolution (December 1922) in favour of a programme of noncooperation was a triumph for the 'No-changers'; so the 'Pro-changers' formed the Swaraj Party. At Bombay in May 1923, the A.I.C.C. decided, as a compromise, that the 'No-changers' should desist from propaganda among the voters.

Q. In your opinion, can mass civil disobedience be started at the moment?

JN: No, the country at the moment is not prepared for it.

Q. In your opinion, can Nagpur[3] at the moment be made the centre for an all-India Satyagraha struggle?

JN: I definitely want some volunteers from other provinces to be sent to Nagpur — not because Nagpur should get our support, but just as a gesture of sympathy. I never desired that volunteers should be sent to Nagpur because they have not got enough of them there. They should not offer satyagraha with the help of volunteers of other provinces. I want other provinces too to fly the national flag as a point of honour, as Nagpur has done.

Q. Do you think the Nagpur Satyagraha will affect the Government in any way?

JN: It has nothing to do with influencing the Government — this is being done solely for maintaining the honour of the national flag.

Q. Do you think this satyagraha can be continued for long?

JN: I cannot say. Only the leaders of the Central Provinces will be able to say how much strength they have and for how many days they would be able to keep up the struggle.

3 The movement started in Nagpur when the police objected on 1 May 1923 to a procession carrying the national flag since there was a prohibitory order under Sec 144. The volunteers who insisted on their right to carry the flag were arrested The Satyagraha movement was authorised by the Congress Working Committee and the A I C C The authorities eventually gave way.

entering the Councils. Nor do I say that the members of the Swarajya Party will not be able to do anything by entering the Councils. I believe, in principle, that to put pressure on the Government one has to sever relations with Government, remain aloof from it and work independently. The Swarajya Party's policy of obstructing and opposing the measures of Government may gain something for us, but nothing substantial or of importance can be gained in this way until the Council members themselves support real work and direct action. This is the difference between my opinions and those of Deshbandhu Das. His direct action and my direct action are very different. He says we are not noncooperating as yet. We are noncooperating with the Government in very minor matters only and this is a preparation for that time when we shall noncooperate with Government in all matters. My opinion about the Congress programme is that it should be fully organised I believe in firm, fearless, serious and courageous work. Mere enthusiasm is not effective. Enthusiasm is no doubt necessary but one who depends on that alone does not last long. So I want the Congress to be fully and well organised and workers trained and drilled to work regularly. Training and discipline alone can ensure success in the movement. The only way to obtain Swaraj is to paralyse the Government; and this is possible by two methods only — violent armed rebellion or non-violent noncooperation. I am opposed to the first way. The other method is the only solution for the salvation of India. Government too can be paralysed in two forms — mental and practical. Mentally the Government is already considerably crippled. In some practical form we have to paralyse it fully. The most important work for us is to make the masses accept the idea of defiance and disrespect towards the Government's authority and its rules and laws. The people should stop caring for the rules, laws and intentions of the Government and be quite indifferent to its prestige. In addition, there should be a group of sufficient size ready to break the laws when the time comes. We should also have the sympathy of our fellow countrymen who may assist us at the time of need in other ways if not physically. We shall have, after all, to break the law one day or the other; and for that a countrywide sense of disobedience to the Government must be spread.

Q. Do you want to use all the strength which the Congress commands for constructive work?

JN : I want constructive work to be performed in the best possible way; at the same time, as I have stated above, we should spread the idea of disobedience.

had borne such rich fruit. You distress yourself needlessly. The lesson of service you learnt from your father you have carried to the outer world and have doubtless influenced many by your personal example. Your father could not have grudged this or preferred a narrow domestic sphere for you to the wider service of your country.

I am weary and sick at heart. Nagpur has been a most painful experience for me. I came here with the intention of wandering about in the interior for a while, away from the haunts of man. But I have been unable to do so owing to my father's relapse. Contrary to habit I managed to develop a fever myself but I have now got rid of it.

Jawaharlal

28. The Nagpur Satyagraha[1]

Sir,—In your issue of the 1st September, a report of a part of a speech of mine dealing with Nagpur Satyagraha is given. There are a number of errors in this report and I would beg of you to permit me to correct them. I do not propose to weary you or your readers by dealing with all the petty errors, i.e., the statement that a copy of the notice was 'sent in an envelope' to the police station. I have no idea how the notice was sent, in an envelope or otherwise. I may have stated that perhaps it was sent in an envelope. I am reported to have said that 'when the procession reached the bridge some arrests were made'. To my knowledge no arrests were made there. What I said at the meeting was that the procession reached the bridge where arrests had previously been made. I am also reported to have said that 'the volunteers for the procession were enlisted after being definitely warned that they should be prepared for death'. No special enlistment, so far as I know, took place. Volunteers were carefully chosen after due warning that the police might change their tactics and take to beating them instead of arresting. I hope I did not say anything about being 'prepared for death'. There was no question of death. Perhaps in connection with Guru-ka-Bagh[2] I may have referred to readiness to face death. I then

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 6 September 1923.
2. Guru ka Bagh, a small Sikh gurdwara about 13 miles from Amritsar, which was the centre of Akali satyagraha and police lathi charges in 1921.

27. To Mahadeva Desai[1]

August, 1923.

My dear Mahadeva,

It is curious that the letters we desire to write most should often get delayed. The casual note, the routine letter is sent off and yet the letter which we are thinking of most remains unwritten. I have thought of you, and of the feeling note you sent me, every day since the 6th or 7th of August when it was delivered to me in Nagpur. The news[2] came to me as I descended from the train at Nagpur station. Ramdas was my informant. My heart went out to you in your sorrow for I knew well how you must be suffering. Some of us who have erred and sinned enough have grown hard in the ways of the world. But you in your innocence must find them more difficult and I can well understand your agony and your mood of self-condemnation.

I have also the good fortune of having experienced to the full the depths of a father's love and many times I have wondered if I was repaying in any way the love and care that had been lavished upon me from the day of my birth. I have had to face that question often and every time I have felt shame at my own record. Sometimes wider issues intervened and I was troubled and torn asunder and knew not what to do. I shall never forget the advice that Bapu gave me in those far off days of the Satyagraha Sabha when the conflict in my mind was almost too great for me to bear. His healing words lessened my difficulties and I had some peace. Do you remember those days in March 1919 when you and I first met at Delhi in Principal Rudra's house? We travelled, Bapu and you and I and the little doctor to Allahabad, and then a day or [two] later you went to Lucknow or perhaps Benares; anyway I accompanied you at B's suggestion to Partabgarh and on our way he and I had our talk. It was the first serious and fairly lengthy talk that I had with him. Four years ago and how terribly long ago it seems!

I did not have the privilege of meeting your father, but you spoke to me about him in our little garden in the Civil Ward. I can well imagine him proud of his son and fully satisfied that all his trouble and labour

1. J N Correspondence, N.M.M.L; first published in *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp 27-28
2. Of the death of Mahadeva's father.

5

THE NABHA TRIAL

referred to some prisoners who had been released marching through the prohibited area with flags without let or hindrance. There has been no general gaol delivery yet. The last sentence of the report refers to the possibility of an order being endorsed at the back of the printed notice sent to the authorities. I have no knowledge if this was done or if any other course was adopted by the authorities. I merely suggested that if they choose to inscribe such an order I had no quarrel with them and they were welcome to it.

I have no inside or special information of what happened at Nagpur on and about the 18th August. I based my speech on the bulletins issued by the Congress Publicity Department at Nagpur and on conversations with some volunteers who had actually taken part in the procession on the 18th.

Allahabad, September 1 Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Draft statement to be read in Court at Nabha[1]

I do not desire to defend myself in this proceeding, which has been started against me, or in any other proceeding which the present administration of Nabha may take against me. I write this statement to inform the Court of the facts as I know them and to correct some incorrect statements that have been made. I further wish to make clear the object of my visit to Nabha.[2]

I have had every courtesy from this Court and I have no grievance against it. Indeed there is little room for any grievance or complaint where the Court has merely acted as a post office to convey the orders of some one else who has kept in the background. When at Jaito I read in the order served on me that a certain Mr. J. Wilson Johnston[3] purported to be the present "Administrator of Nabha State". I had never heard of this gentleman before. I had read in the papers that the administration of Nabha has been changed, the Maharaja made to retire and some other arrangement had been made. But I am not aware under what law this change in the administration had been made and an "administrator" appointed. Nor do I know that any mention is made in the Criminal Procedure Code or Indian Penal Code of the "administrator" or of his right to issue orders under Sec. 144 Cr. P. Code. Ever since my arrival at Jaito however I have been repeatedly confronted with the name or designation of the present "administrator" of Nabha. To almost every question that I have asked

1 Miscellaneous Prison Papers, J. N. Collection, NMML.
This draft, prepared by Jawaharlal, was later drastically revised by him on the advice of his father.

2 The rulers of the two Sikh states, Nabha and Patiala, had a bitter personal quarrel which resulted ultimately in the deposition of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha by the Government of India and the appointment of a British Administrator to rule the state. This deposition led to a fresh agitation by the Sikh community. Batches of volunteers (*Jathas*) came to Jaito in Nabha state. These *Jathas* were beaten up by the police, arrested, and later left in remote places in the jungle.
After attending the special Congress session in Delhi, Jawaharlal went to Nabha on 19 September 1923 to witness this agitation. He was promptly arrested, handcuffed to one of his companions, Santanam, and taken in chains to Nabha for trial.

3 J. Wilson Johnston (1876-1933); a member of the I.C.S.

or three miles from Jaito we caught up a *Jatha* and discarding our bullock cart and horse we decided to walk along in their wake. Thus we arrived at Jaito. When the *Jatha* was stopped at Jaito we stood by to see what was happening We were asked by the police or military who we were and what our object was. We told them that we were obviously not Akalis or members of the *Jatha*. We had come along with them to note developments We continued watching from the roadside. The statement of the Superintendent of Police of Jaito to the effect that we were forcibly kept back from proceeding further — *hath phatla ke roke gai*[5] — is, like many other statements made by the worthy member of the police force in this and in another proceeding, a lie. There was no object in our trying to force our way. We had come to watch and we stood aside to see the *Jatha* and the police. Just then the Superintendent of Police came and showed me an order under Sec. 144 signed by Mr. Wilson Johnston as "administrator" of Nabha State. I accepted the service of this order and informed the Superintendent that I did not intend leaving Nabha territory. My companions and I then went to a small building near by — I think it is called the *Dharamshala* — and sat down in the verandah as the sun was hot outside. A little later the Superintendent of Police returned with some others, one of whom we were told was the District Magistrate of the place We were formally arrested under Sec. 188. My companions pointed out that no order had been served on them so far but this difficulty was got over by the District Magistrate pronouncing an *oral* order against them under Sec. 144 Cr. P.C. As my friends are dealing with their part of the case I need not say more about it. I may mention however that the statement of the Superintendent of Police of Jaito that my companions refused to sign the order under Sec. 144 is an untruth. They were never asked to sign. I am sure that they would have willingly signed if they had been asked to do so.

These are the facts leading up to our arrest. I do not desire to take advantage of any technicalities but I wish to make it clear that the order under Sec. 144 was not a bona fide order. There was not the slightest danger of our visit resulting in a breach of public tranquillity and I make bold to say that the "administrator" knew this. Indeed, our entry into Nabha territory, our stay there for some hours and eventually our arrest, did not as a matter of fact result in any disturbance of the public peace. The only peace that it probably disturbed was the peace of mind of the "administrator". The issuing of this order under Sec. 144 is a prostitution of legal process. It was not

5 Stopped with linked hands.

the reply has been given that the "administrator" will decide. Even the most trivial matters which have been provided for in the jail manual have been referred to him. Under-trial prisoners are supposed to possess certain rights — to consult their relatives and advisers, to write letters through the jail authorities etc. I have been prevented from seeing or communicating with any person outside and have been informed that such is the order of the "administrator". The Court informed me on one occasion that we would be allowed to write letters home if the jail rules so allowed but immediately after came the orders of the "administrator" that this would not be permitted. Even a request for a change of clothes had to be referred to the "administrator" and it took two full days before I was allowed to take out a change from my luggage. Yesterday morning I presented an application to the Court insisting on my right, as an under trial prisoner, to interview my relatives and advisers and also to write letters. A second sitting of the Court took place in the afternoon and I was informed that my application had been sent to the "administrator" who had passed certain orders on it. Thus on the admission of the Court, it is the "administrator" who takes upon himself the business of deciding on our applications, and the Court has merely the pleasant function of transmitting his orders to us. The whole trial becomes a farce if the Court is relegated to this position We are not being tried in a Court of law but in a feeble parody of it with the "administrator" sitting in the background somewhere behind the *purdah*, issuing orders to his marionettes who have to carry out his bidding without thought or reason. Indeed the "administrator" is like Pooh-Bah of the Mikado, the Lord High Everything, and interferes in every matter, judicial or executive.

I am informed that my father was in Nabha yesterday. He had come all the way from Allahabad to see me and advise me but we have not been permitted to see each other. I merely point this out as an instance of the ways in which the Nabha State is administered at present.

My companions[4] and I had read in the papers about strange doings in Nabha and Jaito. We decided to come here for a couple of days to see what was happening. We also wanted to see in what manner the Akali Sikhs were meeting the situation. We therefore proceeded to Muktsar and from there we went by road on horseback and bullock cart towards Jaito. On our way we passed Akali *Jathas*. About two

4 K Santhanam and A. T. Gidwani.
Gidwani (1891 1935) was for many years principal of the Gujarat Vidyapith

They were stopped outside in spite of my drawing the attention of the Court repeatedly to this fact. To all our protests the answer is given: such is the way in Nabha State. It has not taken us long to discover the way in Nabha State under the present "administrator".

We have also come across in jail respected members of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee[7] treated as ordinary felons although they have not even been sentenced yet. Many Akalis in the jail have been on hunger strike for some time.

I should also like to state here as an instance of Nabha justice certain proceedings taken against us yesterday. Late in the evening, after dusk and after we had already had two sittings of this Court, we were taken to a room and made to sit there. There were others present there including our old acquaintance the Superintendent of Police of Jaito and the Court Inspector. With us was placed another prisoner in chains. Suddenly the Court Inspector started questioning the Superintendent of Police. I enquired what was happening and was told that a fresh proceeding had started against us. We were being charged under Sec. 145 I.P.C. for being members or leaders of an unlawful assembly. No notice or warrant or any kind of information had been given to us of this proceeding. I told the Court that this was the most extraordinary procedure I had heard of outside a stage and it was utterly opposed to all law and procedure. The proceedings however continued, the farce was gone through. The Superintendent of Police of Jaito excelled himself and drew upon his imagination to a remarkable extent. He improved upon his old story as stated in this Court and gave utterance to more lies in a few minutes than I can remember. We were charged with refusal to disperse after we had been ordered to do so. I was not aware till I came to Nabha under arrest that any *Jatha* had been declared to be an unlawful assembly. Nor was any one, in my hearing, asked to disperse. The *Jatha* was asked to go back and not to proceed further. They refused to turn back and sat down on the road. My companions and I were not asked to go away or disperse. I was shown the order under Sec. 144 which I refused to obey and then, as I have stated above, we went and sat in the verandah of the *Dharamshala*. There we were arrested. It is somewhat difficult for me to understand how persons under arrest can disperse.

7 A committee set up by the Sikhs in 1920 for supervising the management of the gurdwaras.

meant to serve an object contemplated by the law but merely to prevent outsiders from entering Nabha State. The State has apparently become sacred territory where none may enter who is not prepared to bow down to the "administrator".

The order refers to our membership of the All India Congress Committee and gives as a reason for the fear of a breach of peace the recent resolutions of the Congress Committee. I take it that the "administrator" is not well up in what is happening outside Nabha State and in his ignorance has referred to the resolutions of the Special Congress held at Delhi as resolutions of the "Congress Committee". I have thus been arrested in my capacity as a member of the All India Congress Committee. The "administrator's" references to the Congress and the Committee are unbecoming and insulting and as a humble member of that national body I cannot tolerate any such impertinence.

I have stated above that my object in visiting Nabha State was to find out the truth of various allegations made against the present administration. That object has been largely served and I have to thank the "administrator" and his underlings for the speedy discovery of the true state of affairs in Nabha. Our arrest soon after we enter [ed] Nabha territory on a peaceful mission of enquiry, our subsequent treatment, our seclusion from all outside contact, the refusal to permit us to see our advisers and relatives, the refusal to allow us to send any letters or other communications even as under-trial prisoners and lastly the farce of a trial which we are undergoing, are eloquent testimony of the present state of Nabha. I have no personal knowledge of the conditions prevailing in the State during Maharaja Ripudaman Singh's rule but I can say from personal knowledge that the present conditions are scandalous and shocking. No man who values his honour and refuses to bow down to the "administrator" is apparently safe. High officials of the old Nabha administration are at present in the jail with us, their crime being apparently their loyalty to their old chief. They are not tried, nor is a charge brought against them. The old system of *lettres de cachet*[6] evidently finds favour with the "administrator" of Nabha State. Others who have been tried are little better off. Their trials are farcical and monstrous sentences are awarded to them. Trials are practically conducted in camera and outsiders are seldom if ever admitted. Even in our case when there was some inducement to the authorities to observe the forms of law, people were seldom allowed to enter.

6 Summary warrant for arrest and detention without trial which was widely used in France before 1789.

the charge. *But the ways of the Nabha administration are not straight.* They are crooked.

I rejoice that I am being tried for a cause which the Sikhs have made their own. I was in jail when the Guru Ka Bagh struggle was gallantly fought and won by the Sikhs. I marvelled at the courage and sacrifice of the Akalis and wished that I could be given an opportunity of showing my deep admiration of them by some form of service. That opportunity has now been given to me and I earnestly hope that I shall prove worthy of their high tradition and fine courage. *Sat Sri Akal.*

Jawaharlal Nehru
25 September 1923
10.30 a.m.

Central Jail
Nabha

2. Statement in Court[1]

I do not wish to defend myself in the proceedings, as it is not our practice to produce any witness or offer defence in proceedings taken against us by the British Government. As a noncooperator I merely wish to inform the court of the facts as I know them and to correct some wrong statements that have been made. I also wish to point out a number of illegalities and irregularities which have occurred in this case. Before I proceed further in my statement, I desire to thank the court for the uniform courtesy that has been extended to me.

2. I realise that it is difficult for this court to act independently or to dissociate itself from the executive which has taken the initiative in starting the case against us. Indeed I learnt with some surprise that even applications made by us to the court were being referred to the 'Administrator' of the state for orders. On the morning of the 24th September I presented an application to the court insisting on my right as an undertrial prisoner to interview my relatives and advisers and also to write letters. A second sitting of the court took place

1 25 September 1923 *The Bombay Chronicle*, 5 October 1923.

Our co-accused in this proceeding was one Darbara Singh[8]. He was stated by the imaginative Superintendent of Police to have been the leader of the *Jatha* and to have contumaciously refused to disperse his *Jatha*. This is an absolute lie and I can speak from personal knowledge of it. Darbara Singh was never with the *Jatha*. Every member of the *Jatha* wore a black turban. Darbara had a saffron coloured turban on and so could easily be recognised. Darbara Singh met my companions and me when we were riding quite separated from the *Jatha* some miles from Jaito. As we did not know the way he was good enough to guide us. When we started walking, Darbara Singh took my pony and marched with my luggage and with my luggage he went to Jaito station. He was nowhere near the *Jatha* when the police or the military stopped it, nor was he arrested there. He was probably arrested at the station where he happened to be with my luggage. The whole story of Darbara Singh as stated by the Jaito Superintendent of Police is a lie and is clearly an after-thought.

This is the justice of the present administration of Nabha. The *Jatha* which came to jail has, I believe, been released but Darbara Singh, a man who had nothing to do with it, has been run in for leading that *Jatha*. Darbara Singh has suffered for his country for many years. He has suffered internment in jail and has been shot at by British troops ever since he came back on the *Komagata Maru*.[9] I am proud to be put in the same dock with him and trust that I shall exhibit the same courage as he has shown on numerous occasions.

Various proceedings are being taken against us in Nabha Courts. I have pointed out how utterly illegal and groundless they are. My friend and co-accused Mr. Santanam has dealt with the law and I do not desire to say anything more about it. We do not desire to take advantage of any technical or legal plea. I merely point them out to show how unscrupulous the proceedings are. It is my business to combat the British Government in India and all its works and I shall continue to do so till we have achieved success. The straight thing to do is to run me in for sedition and I shall gladly and joyfully admit

8. (1890-1955); of Bhatinda district, one of the survivors of the *Komagata Maru* and a participant in the Akali agitation.
9. A Japanese vessel, chartered by Baba Gurdit Singh of Amritsar in 1914 for carrying a large number of Punjabis to Canada. As they were not allowed to land in Canada, the vessel returned to Calcutta. The Government regarded these Sikhs as revolutionaries, and ordered them to leave immediately for the Punjab in a special train. Only 60 passengers agreed, and soldiers opened fire on the rest. Eighteen Sikhs were killed, and many arrested.

of days to this state to see for ourselves what was happening. We knew very little of the facts at the time. We were told that Mukhtsar was the Sikh centre from which Akali *Jathas* were sent to Jaito. We went there to make enquiries as to what the Sikh version was and how they were meeting the situation. We then proceeded by road on horseback and bullock cart towards Jaito. There was no Akali *Jatha* with us but we passed some *Jathas* on the way. About two miles from Jaito within the Nabha territory we caught up a *Jatha* and, discarding our bullock cart and horse, we decided to walk along in their wake so as to be able to watch closely what happened to them. Thus we arrived at Jaito. We sent the bullock cart containing our luggage straight to the station, as it was our intention to leave by the evening train. When the *Jatha* was stopped by the police we stood by to see what was happening. We were asked by a policeman if we were accompanying the *Jatha*. I told him that we were obviously not Akalis or members of the *Jatha* which consisted of Akalis only in their distinctive black turbans and clothes. We had come along with the *Jatha* to see what happened to them. We continued watching from the road side the *Jatha* occupying the middle of the road and confronting the police. The public prosecutor has referred to a statement said to have been made by the Superintendent of Police of Jaito to the effect that we were forcibly kept back by the police from proceeding further. I do not know if any such statement has been made by the Superintendent of Police. In any event the statement is wholly wrong and untrue. There was no object in our trying to force our way. We had come to watch and we stood aside to see the *Jatha* and the police.

6. Just then the Superintendent of Police of Jaito came and showed me an order under Section 144 Cr. P.C. signed by Mr. Johnston. The order prohibited me from entering Nabha State. As a matter of fact I had entered Nabha territory some hours before on my way to Jaito. It did not thus apply to the circumstances of the case. I accepted service of the order and further informed the Superintendent that I did not intend leaving Nabha territory immediately. My companions and I then went to a small building nearby—I think it is called a *Dharamshala*—and sat down in the verandah as the sun was hot outside. A little later the Superintendent of Police returned with *some others, one of whom, we were told, was the District Magistrate* of the place. We were formally arrested under Section 188. I endeavoured to point out some irregularities and read part of the order under Section 144, but none of the officials present knew English and *so could not understand the order. My companions* laid stress on the fact that no order had been served on them and the order served on

the same afternoon and I was then informed that my application had been sent to the Administrator who had passed certain orders on it. Thus on the admission of the court it is the Administrator who decides on some of the applications presented to this court and the court merely transmits his orders to us. The gentleman who initiated the proceedings against us thus becomes our judge. It is because of our conviction that it is not possible to obtain justice in matters to which the Government is a party that we refrain from offering defence.

3. I do not know under what authority the present court is functioning. I take it that the court derived its jurisdiction from the will of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh the rightful ruler of Nabha State and could only continue to exercise it during his pleasure. He has now been dispossessed and is not at liberty to impose his will on the people of Nabha. No attempt has been made to show that the present Administration has either been appointed by him or under a voluntary and valid power of appointment conferred by him. The British Government cannot, without an express authority freely given in this behalf by the Maharaja, be entitled to interfere in the internal administration of the state. No such authority has been proved and no circumstances can be or have, in fact, been shown to exist which would render such authority unnecessary. These facts must be proved in the court as any other facts and the court cannot merely take judicial notice of the change of administration.

4. When I arrived at Jaito and an order purporting to be under Section 144 Cr. P.C. was shown to me, I read in it that Mr. Wilson Johnston was the present Administrator of Nabha State. I did not then know and I do not yet know under what law Mr. Johnston has been appointed the Administrator and what his position and powers are. I am not aware of any mention in the Cr. P.C. or I.P.C. of the Administrator or his power to issue orders under Section 144 Cr. P.C. Even according to law as administered in British India, to which repeated reference has been made here, only such persons as are authorised to do so can issue these orders. No attempt whatever has been made to show that the Administrator has been empowered by competent authority to exercise either generally or specially the jurisdiction vested in any one of the classes of magistrates mentioned in the Section.

5. My companions and I had read in the papers about strange happenings in Nabha and Jaito. We decided that on our way back from Delhi after the Congress we should pay a short visit of a couple

being complied with. The act which it prohibited had already been done.

10. The order was not a bonafide one or meant for the purpose provided for by the Section. To issue an order under Section 144 Cr. P.C. merely to prevent outsiders entering Nabha is a misuse of the Section. There was not the slightest chance of our visit resulting in a breach in public tranquillity. Indeed our entry into Nabha territory, our stay there for some hours, and eventually our arrest did not as a matter of fact result in any disturbance or likelihood of disturbance of the public peace. Our mission was one of peaceful enquiry and no attempt has been made even to allege that it might have affected the public tranquillity. It is evident from the brief outline of the case given by the Administrator in a letter to Pandit Motilal Nehru that he considered the presence of the accused under the present circumstances most inadvisable in Jaito. The fact that a certain thing is inadvisable from the viewpoint of the Administrator does not make it something which will disturb the public tranquillity. The use of the Section under these circumstances is wholly against law. It cannot be used to cut off all entry into Nabha State and make it a quarantined area where none may enter to find out what is happening. The reference in the notice to certain resolutions of the Congress, which have nothing to do with any apprehension of a disturbance of public tranquillity in Nabha, makes it clear that the object aimed at was the Congress. The Section has not only been used against us but also against people who desired to come to Nabha to see us and advise us in jail.

11. After service of the order under Section 144 we remained in the immediate neighbourhood till our arrest. I do not know what the Superintendent of Police expected us to do after serving the order. We could not vanish. The act forbidden by the order had already taken place before it had been served. On seeing the order I informed the Superintendent of Police that it was not my intention to leave the place then. But I fail to understand how my remaining at the place at the time became an offence or constituted any disobedience. I could not have acted differently whatever my intention might have been. Mere intention to disobey is not disobedience of an order. During the few minutes that elapsed between the service of the order and our arrest we were resting in the verandah of the *Dharamshala* after our long journey and we could not do anything else if we wanted to carry out the order.

me certainly did not forbid them from doing anything. The difficulty was got over by the District Magistrate pronouncing an oral order against them under Section 144 Cr. P.C. On a further protest being made that the order could not be oral, we were informed that in Nabha State it could be so. I may mention that the statement of the Superintendent of Police of Jaito that my companions refused to sign the order under Section 144 is an untruth. They were never asked to sign. I am sure they would have willingly signed if they had been asked to do so.

7. Another statement made, I think, by the Superintendent of Police to the effect that the Akah *Jatha* and we were asked to disperse is also not true. No such request was made in my hearing. Some people in the *Jatha* were asked to go back but they refused to do so and sat down in the middle of the road. I asked the Superintendent of Police what he wanted to do with the *Jatha*. He replied that they were needlessly sitting in the hot sun and he merely wanted them to go under a tree a little away from the road. No mention of an unlawful assembly was made to my knowledge. Indeed, I knew nothing about it till proceedings were started against us at Nabha. All I was told then was that people were not permitted to enter a gurdwara and its immediate neighbourhood where a *Diwan* had been held. But both these places were, so I was informed, several hundred yards away from the places where the *Jatha* stopped. So far as we were concerned, it is somewhat difficult to understand how persons under arrest could disperse.

8 After our arrest and search we were led away to the police station. The *Jatha* was still sitting at the time in the middle of the road. We were kept at the police station till 10 p.m. when we were handcuffed, one of the hands being left free, and chained and so taken to the station and put in a crowded 3rd class carriage. After changing at Bhatinda we arrived at Nabha in the small hours of the morning of the 22nd and were marched to a police *chowkie*. Later in the day we were made to march to the central jail. All this time our handcuffs had not been taken off. They were eventually removed in the central jail.

9. These are the facts leading up to our arrival under arrest at Nabha. I do not desire to take advantage of any technicalities, but I do wish to make it quite clear that the proceedings against us are wholly illegal and irregular. The order served on me prohibited my entry into Nabha territory. As framed the order was incapable of

3. To Father[1]

Central Jail
Nabha
30/9/23

My dear Father,
Kapil Deva gave me your little note. It was most generous and loving of you to write it and I feel that I am not worthy of it. I confess that the idea of causing you any pain is most distressing to me and I am haunted by the thought. It is a dearly cherished desire of mine to serve you and to lighten, if possible, the heavy burden you carry.

Kapil Deva must have told you of the proceedings here. I have little to add. I am afraid the progress is slow. To us it is immaterial when the case ends, though undoubtedly it would be preferable to have it ended and to know exactly where we stand. I suppose you have gone to Allahabad or are going today. We shall expect Kapil Deva tomorrow. I am not in need of anything.

With love,

Your loving son
Jawahar

1 J N Correspondence, NMML.

12. The disobedience of an order under Section 144 is not by itself an offence. Even if there is such disobedience it must be shown that such disobedience has actually resulted in breach of public tranquillity. Not the slightest attempt has been made to show this.

13. I would add that the arrest under the circumstances was not in accordance with law. A case under Section 188 is a summons case and no warrant should be issued. Our being handcuffed and chained and then kept under restraint amounted to assault and unlawful restraint. The fact that subsequently a false case under Section 145 I.P.C. has been started against us does not justify the original arrest. I mention this not because I complain of being handcuffed but to show that the whole proceedings have not been bona fide or in accordance with any law.

14. We have been told that our trial is a public trial. But in spite of this assurance the public is not admitted and even friends who came long distances to attend the trial are kept out.

15. I have given the facts in some detail and have pointed out some illegalities and irregularities to show the methods and procedure adopted in Nabha under the present regime. I do not know what the state of Nabha was during the previous administration. But the present administration has certainly shown in our case a remarkable disregard of all rules of law and procedure. It seems to me very strange that any straightforward administration should seek to keep out all outsiders and be afraid of an exposure. Something must be radically wrong for an administration to have recourse to the preventive Sections of the Code in order to stifle all legitimate enquiry.

16. I know little about the facts relating to the Nabha agitation now being carried on by the Sikhs or about the administration of the Maharaja who has been made to retire. If the action taken by the Government of India was bona fide in the interests of the state I would imagine that they welcome enquiry and outside investigation. We came with open minds, but we were met by an order restricting our liberty of movement. As a matter of fact it was our previous intention to leave Jaito by the next train but nevertheless I could be no consenting party to an illegal and immoral order. I do feel that the restrictions imposed by the present administration in Nabha on our undoubted rights are indefensible and raise a wider issue. On that issue my duty is clear. If that results in a conviction and sentence I shall gladly welcome it.

5. The Release[1]

Sir,—In an Associated Press message dated Lahore, the 4th October, appearing in *The Leader* of the 6th October, there is a passage about our release from jail in Nabha which might convey a wrong impression. I understand that the Associated Press correspondent in Nabha is the new Administrator himself and so I presume that this message has emanated from him. Considerable pains were apparently taken to ensure that the official message should appear before any other message had a chance. Even my private telegrams which were express and on one of which a special late fee was paid were held up for 12 hours or more.

The Associated Press message says that "the Administrator suspended the execution of the sentence and ordered all the three accused to leave the State forthwith, otherwise they will have to undergo the sentence." What actually happened is given correctly in the Ambala message, which has been passed by the censor, appearing in the same issue of your paper. There was no question of "otherwise" or any alternative being mentioned. In one order the Administrator suspended the sentence without reference to anything else. In another piece of writing which was subsequently read to us, he said that we were to leave Nabha and not to return without his permission. An enquiry by the Superintendent as to what was our intention met with the response from us that this was not the affair of the Nabha authorities and that we would act in the manner we thought fit and proper. We left Nabha by the early morning train as this suited our convenience. Laws and consciences in Nabha are remarkably elastic and I have little doubt that if we return to Nabha we might be locked up in jail or we might have to face a few more farcical trials. If, however, it is necessary in the interests of our case to go to Nabha I hope that my companions and I will do so. The Administrator may then have another

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Tribune*, 11 October 1923.
Jawaharlal, Gidwani and Santanam were each sentenced to 30 months' rigorous imprisonment but the sentences were suspended and they were ordered to leave the state Jawaharlal contended that the suspension was unconditional, the Nabha administration later adopted the attitude that the sentences would be enforced if they returned to the state

4. To Kapil Deva Malaviya and Mahadeva Desai[1]

I promised you in Delhi to write letters to you occasionally. I am afraid I shall hardly be able to do so because of *force majeure* and jail rules But I have a chance today as an under-trial of writing and I take it to send you and Devadas my love. In December 1921, Bapu expressed a certain desire in *Young India*, I think, to see father and me march along the streets in a particular fashion. That has partly come to pass though not with father. My companion was Santanam, Gidwani bringing up the rear. It was most interesting and we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

Our cases are proceeding under Sec. 188 and Sec. 145, I.P.C. The latter is a most extraordinary charge but such is life in India nowadays and one must not be surprised at anything. I am looking forward to a stay in the jails in Nabha State. It will be a new experience and in this *blase* world, it is something to have a new experience!

We have had no news of the outside world since the 19th, when we left Delhi. This seclusion has its advantages. Don't you envy me? I hope you are not downhearted after Delhi. Cheer up and march on. Was it not Nietzsche[2] (I am hopelessly wrong about the spelling) who said that there would be no resurrection if there were no graves?

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *Jawaharlal Nehru : Statements, Speeches and Writings* (Allahabad 1929), p 147. This undated letter was written from Nabha jail.
2. Nietzsche (1844 1900), the German philosopher and author of *Thus Spake Zarathustra.*

immediately. The case might be withdrawn and all proceedings stopped. We made it quite clear that we could give no undertaking of any kind whatever the result of the case might be. Our trial went on and we were eventually sentenced to 2½ years each. That same evening we were sent for from our cell by the Superintendent of the jail. We went out and found that the Chief of Police was also with him. The Superintendent read out to me an order of the Administrator under Sec. 407 Cr. P. Code suspending the sentences that had been passed on us that day. There was no condition of any kind mentioned in this order. After a while the Superintendent informed us that he had to communicate to us another order. He produced another piece of paper and read out that we were required to leave Nabha forthwith and not to return without the Administrator's permission. The second order had nothing to do with the first under Sec. 407. It was not issued under any section of the Code or any other law. It was headed I think an executive order. We were asked by the Superintendent what we proposed to do. We told him that this was no business of the officials of the Nabha State. So far as they were concerned they had to release us under the unconditional order under Section 407. For the rest we would do whatever we considered fit and proper. He agreed. On my asking for copies of the orders he refused to give them. He would not even allow us to copy the orders and in fact he showed us the written instructions of the Administrator to the effect that copies were not to be given to us. We then gathered together our belongings and went to the station where we enquired about trains etc. We left for Ambala a few hours later. Our telegrams from Nabha were all held up for a while to allow the version of the Administrator a good start. This version created the impression that we had been discharged conditionally on our giving an undertaking. The Administrator was at the time, I believe, the Nabha correspondent of the Associated Press.

My subsequent efforts to get copies of the judgements passed against us in Nabha met with failure. I was told that being an "outsider" I could not get a copy.

It is quite clear that the order under Sec. 407 suspending our sentences was unconditional and no piece of writing or "executive order" can make this into a conditional order. The old sentences have been suspended for good and they cannot legally be revived.

Jawaharlal Nehru
2/4/24

chance of covering himself with glory by setting aside all law and showing to the world the might of the 'reformed' Administrator of Nabha. I suppose that the purpose of deliberately not supplying us with copies of the orders was to enable different interpretations to be put on them.

Jawaharlal Nehru

Allahabad, Oct. 6

6. To K.M. Panikkar[1]

Allahabad
2 April 1924

Dear Panikkar,[2]
I find that there is a general impression that Gidwani, Santanam and I were discharged from Nabha in October last under a conditional order and that Gidwani having broken that order is undergoing that sentence now. This is quite wrong. The Administrator of Nabha is capable of doing anything and I am not surprised at his treating Gidwani as a convict without another trial, but the public should know the facts. I am sending you a statement giving the facts. This is not for publication as it is but merely to put you in possession of the facts. I wish Gidwani's position was brought out.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

During our trial at Nabha suggestions were made to us informally by high officials that all would be well if we agreed to leave the State

1. A I C.C. Papers, F. No. 4(1) (KW) (1)/1924, p. 267, N M M L.
2. (1895 1963); historian and diplomatist, who, after a varied career before 1947, served as Ambassador in China, the United Arab Republic and France and as a member of the States Reorganization Commission

not granted nor was I allowed to copy them myself. I was told that you had expressly forbidden copies. I shall be glad if you will kindly let me know if the facts I have stated above about the suspension order are correct. I shall also be obliged if you will send me copies of the suspension order and the 'executive order'. You will admit, I hope, that it is only fair to me to supply me with these copies so that I may know where I stand.

Jawaharlal Nehru

II[2]

Sir,—I enclose for favour of publication a copy of a letter I have addressed to the Administrator, Nabha State.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Allahabad, June 19.

Anand Bhawan,
June 19, 1924.

The Administrator,
Nabha State, Nabha (Punjab).

Dear Sir,

I sent you a letter under registered cover on the 24th May and requested you to supply me with copies of the order suspending Principal Gidwani's, Mr. K. Santanam's and my sentences and any other order relating to us issued at the time. I have not yet received a reply to my letter nor have I received the copies asked for.

I have no doubt whatever that the statement you made in your letter to the editor, *Young India* that Principal Gidwani, Mr. Santanam and I were discharged conditionally is wholly incorrect and a reference to the orders and other papers must have convinced you of this I trust that being convinced of this you will take early steps to correct your

2. Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 23 June 1924.

7. Correspondence with the Nabha Administration

I[1]

Sir,—I enclose a copy of a letter I have sent to the Administrator, Nabha State. I shall be obliged if you will publish it in *The Leader*.

Jawaharlal Nehru

Allahabad
24 May 1924

The Administrator,
Nabha State, Nabha (Punjab).

Dear Sir,

I have just read in *Young India* of the 22nd May a letter dated 12th May written by you to Mr. M. K. Gandhi in regard to Mr. Gidwani's imprisonment. It is stated in this letter that you suspended the sentence passed against Principal Gidwani, Mr. K. Santanam and me on condition that we left the State and did not return thereto without permission. My recollection of this episode is entirely at variance with this. I was and still am under the impression that our sentences were suspended unconditionally There was no reference, so far as I can remember, in the order of suspension under Sec. 407 C.P.C. or even on the piece of paper containing this order, to any condition, or to our returning to Nabha with or without permission. This point was further cleared up by our conversation with the Superintendent of the jail and the Chief of Police who were present. Subsequently, we were informed of another order styled as executive order on another piece of paper, wherein we were asked to leave the State and not to return without permission. In this second paper there was no mention of our sentences or suspensions. My request for copies of the orders was

1 Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 29 May 1924.

broken. An unconditional order cannot subsequently be made conditional nor can it be affected by a separate or subsequent order. I do not wish to advance or take advantage of purely legal or technical arguments but wholly incorrect statements have been made that our sentences were suspended unconditionally These statements are wrong and must be corrected. Prof. Gidwani when he crossed the Nabha border on a mission of humanity did not and could not infringe any condition laid down in the suspension order because there was no condition in the order.

I would again request you to publish or send me a copy of the suspension order so that all doubts about its interpretation may be set at rest.

Jawaharlal Nehru

previous statement and make it clear that Principal Gidwani, Mr. Santanam and I were unconditionally released. There can thus be no question of Principal Gidwani being sent to jail without trial or sentence because he is said to have broken a condition which was never made.

I would again request you to let me have a copy of the suspension order. I would also like to know definitely if Nabha State is supposed to be out of bounds for me and if so, under what order. I have no immediate wish to go to Nabha, but I should like to know what kind of a welcome awaits me there in case I am moved by a desire to visit the State.

III[3]

Dear Sir—I thank you for your letter of the 25th June[4] which was forwarded to me to Ahmedabad. I am sorry that you have overlooked my request to be supplied with a copy of the suspension order passed in my case. The wording of this order would have put an end to any difference of opinion on the subject.

I am aware that the sentences passed on me were suspended and not remitted. But the question is whether this suspension order was conditional or unconditional. If it was the latter, as I claim it was, then the sentence cannot be revised as there is no condition to be

3 Letter to the Administrator, Nabha State, reported in *The Leader*, 27 July 1924.

4 The following is the text of letter No 74 dated 25 June 1924 from Mr J. Wilson Johnston, Administrator, Nabha State to Jawaharlal Nehru.
"I regret that your letter of the 24th of May has remained unanswered owing to carelessness of my office
If you will remember, your sentences and those of your co accused were suspended and were not remitted You were ordered to leave the State forthwith and not to return without any express permission Prof. Gidwani violated this order and accordingly the suspension of his sentence was cancelled and he is at present serving the original sentence.
At the end of your letter you ask whether Nabha is out of bounds for you. It certainly is, save with my permission, and if you enter the State without such express permission you are liable to have suspension order in your case cancelled, as has been done in Prof Gidwani's case, and serve the sentence originally passed upon you"

GLOSSARY

Adab	salutation, Muslim style
Adhyaya	chapter
Ahimsa	non-violence
Akali	literally meaning immortal; a militant organisation among the Sikhs
Akhara	an arena for wrestling
Allah-o-Akbar	God is great
Amir	nobleman; title of the ruler of Afghanistan until 1926
Anga	loose upper garment
Angarkha	an upper dress for men
Asan	mat generally made of cloth or grass
Ashtami	the eighth day after the new moon or the full moon
Baba	a general term for religious leaders
Bakr-Id	a Muslim festival
Bande Mataram	"homage to motherland"; the song in Bankim Chatterji's novel *Anand Math*
Banka	silver ornament
Basant Panchami	Hindu festival denoting the advent of spring
Bhabhi	brother's wife
Bhai	brother
Brahmin	the highest caste among the Hindus
Bua	father's sister
Chacha	uncle
Chadra (Chadar)	a covering sheet
Chakkar	a circle
Chappals	slippers
Chara	fodder
Charkha	spinning wheel
Chatak	an Indian weight (equivalent to about 58 grams)
Chatai	mat
Chiriakhana	aviary or zoo
Chirag	lamp
Chowkie	police station, checkpost
Dadu	grandfather

Kisan	peasant
Kisan Sabha	peasants' association
Kotwal	an officer in charge of the police station
Kukri	a skein of untwisted thread
Kurta	an upper garment resembling a shirt
Lagan	the rent or revenue charged on a field or estate
Lahanga	ladies' garment
Lala	a title mostly for Vaishyas, the business community
Lathi	bamboo staff
Lota	a small metal pot
Mal	the belt in a spinning wheel, made from twisted yarn
Masha	An Indian weight of about a gram
Maulana	a title among Muslims, meaning a learned person
Mirzai	a light quilt
Mohalla	locality
Munshi	a scribe; sometimes used as a respectful form of address
Nagrahi	coarse corn
Naib	assistant
Namaskar	a form of greeting
Naumi	the ninth day after the new or full moon
Nawab	a title generally for Muslim rulers
Nazm	poem
Neem	margosa tree
Nukl	a kind of dry sweet
Paizeb (Pajeb)	a silver anklet
Pakka	something well established, as used here, prisoners already convicted
Panchayat	the village court; generally consists of five elected members, known as *panch, from among the residents of* that village. One of them is chosen their leader—the *sarpanch*
Pandit	a learned person
Pargana, Perganna	a revenue division comprising several villages
Pathshala	school
Patwari	a village record keeper

Deepawali	Hindu festival of lights
Dharamshala	free rest house for travellers
Dharma	religious duty
Dhoti	lower garment for men
Diwan	as used here, a religious congregation of the Sikhs
Dolar	a double covering sheet
Doli	palanquin
Ekka	a two-wheeled horse carriage
Ekkawala	owner or driver of an ekka
Gali	lane
Gatha	hand spun coarse cloth
Ghi	clarified butter
Gur	refined molasses
Gurdwara	Sikh shrine
Hakim	physician
Hamail	a necklace
Handi	an earthen pot
Hansli	a heavy silver ornament for the neck
Hartal	strike
Havan	a sacrificial fire
Hindola	a cradle or swing
Hindustan hamara	"Our India", a poem of Iqbal
Holi	Hindu spring festival
Ilaqa	area
Janamashtami	the day celebrated as the birthday of Krishna
Jatha	squad
Jhumak	an ornament for the ears
Ji Hazoors	yes men
Jo bole so nehal	blessed are those who utter
Julaha	weaver
Kangan	bracelet
Karan phool (Karna phool)	ear rings
Kirmala	worker-agent
Kacha (Kachcha)	something which is not permanent, as used here, an under trial prisoner
Kaviraj	an ayurvedic physician
Khadi Khaddar	hand spun cloth
Khees Chatai (Chatai)	formal feeding ceremony of a child
Khwaja	a rich or respectable nobleman, a Muslim mystic

Tapasya	penance, prayer, dedicated effort
Taria	a hand ornament
Thakurain	a rich land-owning high caste woman
Than	a roll of cloth of fixed length
Thanadar	the officer in charge of a *Thana*, a police station
Tobazia	an ornament
Tola	an Indian weight, about 11½ grams
Tonga	a horse-driven carriage on two large wheels
Ulemas	order of the Muslim divines
Upanayana	sacred thread ceremony of Hindus
Urad	a kind of black gram
Vaishakhi	a Hindu festival celebrated on the full moon day of the month of Vaishakh (March-April)
Vakils	lawyers
Vidyapeeth	educational institute
Vijaya Dashmi	a Hindu festival
Viyapar Mandal	trade association
Yagna	religious sacrifice and oblation
Zamindar	landlord
Zaminqand	yam—a vegetable
Ziladar	landlord's agent who collects rents from tenants

Pote	assessment on cultivated field
Pranam	salutation
Prarthna	prayer
Praschit (Prayashchitta)	atonement. Penance performed by orthodox Hindus
Puja	worship
Punis	cotton slivers
Purdah	veil
Qazi	a Mohammedan judge or law officer
Rajput	inhabitants, chiefly of Rajasthan, claiming descent from Kshatriyas
Raksha Bandhan Day	a Hindu festival when a Raksha, or band, is tied on a brother's wrist by his sister
Rasad	supplies
Ratti	an Indian weight
Ryot (Raiyat)	a cultivating tenant
Sabha	meeting; conference; association
Salooka, Saluka	upper garment
Samaj	society, association
Samvat	Vikram era—[one of the principal Hindu Calendars used in northern India]
Sarbarakar	deputy of the landlord
Sardar	chief; a title given to Sikhs
Sat Sri Akal	"true is the immortal God", a Sikh greeting
Satyagraha	truth force or soul force
Seer	an Indian weight (about 930 grams)
Seva Samiti	an organisation for voluntary social service
Shaikh	a chief and a spiritual guide
Shrawani	the last day of the month of Sravan, festival day among Hindus
Shuddhi	purification
Swadeshi	goods produced in one's own country
Swami	a religious leader
Syed	chief; tribe claiming descent from the Prophet
Tahsil	a sub-division of a district
Tahsildar	revenue collector in the tahsil
Takua	spindle
Taluqdars	landowners in Oudh
Tanzeb	fine muslin

INDEX

(Biographical footnotes are italicized)

Aaj, 239 fn, 351 fn, 356 fn
——, J N's interview, 360—63
Abdul Wadood Khan, Moulvi, 268 and *fn*, 271
Abdul Wali, Hakim, 233 & *fn*
Abhyudaya, 127 fn
Abul Hasan, 277 & *fn*, 299, 308, 339, 348
Adams, C.F., 165
Afghanistan, *148*, *186 fn*, *334 & fn*
Afghan army, 195
—— delegates, 161, 162, 164
—— peace delegation, 161 fn
Aga Khan, 89 & *fn*
Aga Khan Palace (Poona), 267 fn
Agha, Pran Nath, 94 & *fn*
Agra Province Zamindars' Association, 105 fn
—— Provincial conference, 201
Ahmedabad, 321, 388
Aikman, Sir Robert, 65 *fn*, 96, 124
——, Mrs, 65
Ajit Singh, deportation of, 26 fn
Ajmal Khan, Hakim, 261 & *fn*, 323, 332, 336, 350
Ajudhianath, 78
Akalis, 275, 370-71, 373, 375, 377
Akali Day, 275
Akali Jathas, 370, 377, 378
Akbar, 301, 318
Ali, Maulana Mohamed, 109 & *fn*, 187, 199, 354
——, Maulana Shaukat, 109 & *fn*, 174, 175, 176, 325, 331
Aligarh, 109 fn, 116, 196, 285 fn
Alipur Bomb Case, 56 fn
All India Home Rule League, 167
All India Khilafat Conference, Karachi, 201 fn
Allahabad, 1, 5, 21, 27 fn, 35, 36, 69, 78, 96 & fn, 103 & fn, 104 fn, 105 & fn, 106, 108, 111, 127 fn, 128 fn, 129 fn, 146, 163 & fn, 170, 192 fn, 196, 207, 215 & fn, 217, 248 fn, 251-55, 258, 266, 273, 275 fn, 277, 284, 307, 308, 319 & fn, 321 & fn, 325, 332, 351, 358, 381, 384
——Bank, 319
—— *district*, *103 fn*
—— District Conference, 171 2, 198 fn
—— High Court, 2 fn, 54, 88 fn, 105 fn, 152 fn, 319 fn
—— Law Journal, 127 fn, 342 fn
—— Municipal Museum, 240 fn
——, picketing of shops in, 251
—— Swadeshi League, 105 fn
—— University, 10 fn, 331 fn
Almora, 268
Alphonso XIII, 38 & *fn*
Aman Sabhas, 183 & fn, 184
Amanullah Khan, 186 *fn*
Ambala, 136, 385
Ameer Ali, 293, 306, 316
Amin Chand, (Lala), 131 & fn
Ampthill, Lord, 42 & *fn*
Amraoti, 107 fn
Amritsar, 107 fn, 127 fn, 130 fn, 136 fn, 145, 148, 210, 340
—— district, 131, 365 fn, 374 fn
Anand Bhawan, 9, 12, 103, 105, 108, 109, 111, 127, 318
Anand Math, 63
Ancient Indian Polity, 299, 305, 309
Andrews, Charles Freer, 139 & *fn*
Anglo-Indian Press, 141
Anglo-Indians, 15
Anglo-Turkish treaty, 179 & fn

Bombay Chronicle, 137 fn; J. Nehru's letters ot the Editor of, 145, 149, 167, 375 fn
Bombay Sentinel, 137 fn
Bombay Legislative Council, 38 fn
Bournemouth, 22, 23
Bowes & Bowes, 341
Boycott, of British goods, 166, 201, of Councils, 165, 166, 361; of foreign cloth, 250, 251, 255
Brahmaputra, 338
Brecon, 91
Brelvi, Syed Abdullah, 277 & *fn*
Brighton, 95
British India Corporation Ltd, 319
Bryce, James, 299, 301, 302
Bunch of Old Letters, A, 164 fn, 165 fn, 364 fn
Bundhelkhand, 177, 186, 189, 190
Bunyad Husain, Moulvi, 263
Burma, 125, 126
Bury, J B, 306
Butler, Sir Harcourt, 210 & fn
Buxton, 79
Byron, Lord, 304, 311

Calcutta, 15, 32 fn, 109, 319, 332 & fn, 349, 350 1
—— Bridge, 1
—— High Court, 113 fn
—— Law College, 215
Cam River, 55
Cambray and Co. (Calcutta), 320 fn, 337
Cambrian Railway, 90
Cambridge, 7 fn, 36, 39, 42 ff
—— Union Society, 34, 56, 73
Cambridge Review, 68 fn
Captain Fracasse, 299, 305
Carlyle, Thomas, 104 & *fn*
Carpenter, J. E, 304
Cavour, 311
Central Provinces, 19 fn, 159
Ceylon, 113
Chagla, M. C., 114 fn
Chak, Jagmohan Nath, 32 & *fn*, 40, 41, 44, 47
——, Manmohan Nath, 47 & *fn*
——, Prithinath, 47 fn, 70 & *fn*
Chakerbarty, 115
Chakravarti, Dr Gyanendranath, 10 & *fn*, 15 fn, 54, 100
Chandpur, critical situation in, 173 & fn
Chand Vardar, 111 fn
Chardenal, 303
Charkha, 172, 255, 321, 335, 339
Chatterji (tutor), 337
——, Bankim Chandra, 63 fn
——, Jagdish, 15 & fn
Chaturbhuj, 115, 118
Chauhan, Prithviraj, 111 & *fn*
Chauri Chaura (Gorakhpur district), 269 & fn
Church Road (Allahabad), 105
Chelmsford, Lord, 141 fn
China, 384 fn
Chinsura (Sitapur district), 246
Christ's College (Cambridge), 66
Chuchia (Sitapur district), 245
Churchill, Winston, 39 fn
City Road (Allahabad), 108, 109
Civil and Military Gazette, 40 & fn
Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee, 325 fn
Clarkson, 82 & fn
Clemenceau, 141 fn
Clements, Colonel, 263 & fn
Comrade, 109 fn
Communist Manifesto, 140 & fn
Coronation (1910), 89
Crawling Order, 149, 177 fn
Cromwell, 312
Crowborough, 96
Curzon Bridge (Allahabad), 231
Czechoslovakia, 346

Daily Mail, 14, 25
Daily News Year Book, 70
Daily Telegraph, 16 fn
Dara Shah Ajmal (Allahabad), 195
Dalhousie, 330
Danton 306
Dar (advocate), 114 fn
Dar, Har Prasad, 127 fn
——, Krishan Prasad, 127 fn, 342 & *fn*
——, Kunwar Prasad, 90 & *fn*
——, Ram Nath (Ramji), 127 & *fn*, 133, 151 & fn

Angora Day, 275, 276
Anna Karenina, 299, 306
Annamalai University, 113 fn
Ansari, Dr. M. A, 110 & *fn*, 350
Antiquities of India, 299, 302, 305, 309, 310
Antony & Cleopatra, 15
Arnold, Edwin, 301, 318
Arnold, T W, 306
Arrah, 163
Arundale, G.S, 106 fn
Aryan Rule in India, 301, 305, 310, 318, 339
Arya Samaj, 27 fn, 356 fn, 358 fn
Ashafi Lal, Dr, 230
Assam, 283 fn
Assembly, Central, 2 fn, 27 fn
Austria, 141
Autobiography, 104 fn
Avadh Narain Lal, 281 & *fn*
Awagarh, 119, 121
Awantika Prasad, Dr, 217 & fn, 220-224
Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam, 353 & *fn*, 359

Back to Methuselah, 306
Badri Narain, 336 & fn
Bain, F W, 305
Bajpai, Balmukund, 233 & fn
——, Bishambar Nath, 250 fn, 342 & fn
Bajaj, Seth Jamna Lal, 238 & *fn*, 319
Bajrangi's case, 122
Bakr Id, sacrifice of cows on, 188
Balfour, Arthur James, 82 & *fn*
Ballad of Reading Gaol, 306, 312 314
Balia, 174, 256, 279 fn, 280 fn
Benares (Banaras), 10, 175 fn, 199, 272 fn
—— Hindu University, 113 *fn*, 127 *fn*
Bande, Allah, 277
Bande Mataram, 63 fn
Banerjea, Surendra Nath, 128 fn
Banerji, J M., 105 & *fn*
——, Rabindranath, 232 & fn
——, (Judge), 125
Banker, Shankarlal, 319 & *fn*, 323
Basu, Bholanath Gwal, 63 & *fn*
Bara, 336 & fn
Bara Banki, 270 fn, 289 fn
Bareilly, incidents at, 353 & fn
Bareilly District Conference, 353
Barhaj (Deoria district), 267
Barnett, 302, 305, 309, 310
Baroda, 56 fn, 81 fn
Basti, 116
Basu, Ranendranath, 232 & fn, 236 fn
Basumati Ben *see* Vasumati Behn
Bath, 91
Battenburg, 39 & *fn*
Beacon Hotel (Crowborough), 96
Beal, 303
Bearman, (Judge), 124, 125
Behar *see* Bihar
Belfast, riots in, 32 & fn
Bengal, partition of, 11 fn, annulment of partition of, 94 *fn*
Bengalee, 128 & fn
Beni Madho, 237 & fn
Bernards, 10
Bernier, Francois, 318
Besant, Annie, 104 & *fn*, internment by Madras Govt, 106 & fn, 108 fn, 109 fn
Bevan, A, 299,301
Beti, *see* Hutheesing, Krishna
Bhagavad Gita, 263, 280, 282, 286, 287, by Annie Besant & Bhagawan Das, 301
Bhagwanpura (Gujranwala district), 138
Bhargava, Radha Krishna, 234 & fn
Bharatpur, 307
Bhawani Shankar, 263 & *fn*
Bhera, 139
Bhola Nath, Col, 320 & fn, 342
Bible, 301
Bihar, 170, 181 fn, 280 fn
Bijaisipur (Sitapur district), 246
Bijnor district, 191
Bikaner, Maharaja of, 89 & *fn*
Bindbasni Prasad, 265 & *fn*
Binjbasika (Sitapur), 246
Biju Bhai, *see* Nehru, Brijlal
Black Man's Burden, 195
Blavatsky, Madame, 10 *fn*
Blunt, W. S, 305
Bohemia, 346
Bolshevism, 141
Bombay, 5, 38 fn, 99, 129 fn, 331, 333, 351

Gandhi, Devadas, 260 & *fn*, 263 & fn, 268, 271, 274, 275, 277, 279, 282, 283, 285, 287, 289, 290, 321, 327, 339, 345, 346
Gandhi, Feroze, 232 fn
——, Indira, 232 & *fn*, 261, 274, 278, 282, 283, 287, 290, 323, 331, 332, 344, 347, 349, 351
——, Jamnadas, 333 & *fn*
——, Kasturba, 261 *fn*
——, Maganlal, 321 *fn*
——, Mahatma, 11 fn, 144, 149, 167, 168, 175; J Nehru's telegram to, 173, 177 fn, as leader of Khilafat, 179, and nonviolence, 182, J. Nehru's note to, 196 fn, 201 & fn, 209, and first non-cooperation campaign, 229 fn, his instruction to Congress workers, 240, 260, 261, 262, 321 fn, 322, 325, 353, 382, 386, and *Khaddar*, 242 fn, arrest of, 249, 250, 251, 278; Nabha Administrator's letter to, 386
——, Ram Das, 261 & *fn*
Gandhi Nehru Correspondence, 173 fn
Ganga Prasad, 176
Ganjoor, Daya Krishna, 278 & *fn*, 343
Garibaldi and the Thousand, 311, 326 fn
Garrick Theatre (London), 15
Gaur, Prof Ram, 175 & fn
Gauri Shankar, 221 & *fn*, 225
Gautier, Theophile, 299
Gaya, 273, 360 fn
George V, 71 *fn*; Delhi Durbar of, 93 fn
German Social Democracy during War, 299
Germans, killing of babes and children by, 216
Germany, 141, 346
Gharjakh (Gujranwala district) 138
Ghazipur, 175, 178
Ghose, Dr. Rashbehari, 41 & *fn*, 43 & fn
——, Aurobindo, 37 fn, 56 & *fn*
Gibbon, E., 302
Gibralter, 113
Gidwani, A T, 370 & *fn*, 352, 383 fn, 384, 386
Giya Bai V. Sadashiv, 154, 157
Gilbert and Sullivan, 359 fn
Girdharilal, 130 & *fn*, 133
Gita Rahasya, 287, 303
Gladstone, W E, 26 fn
Gloucester Terrace (London), 83-87, 89, 92 95
Gokhale, Gopal Krishna, 27 fn, 38 & *fn*, 40, 60, 103 fn
Gopalchand V Babu Kunwar, 159
Gorakhpur, 173 fn, 267, 269 & fn, 356, 358
Grantham, 15
Greece, 275 fn
Greek mythology, 43 fn
Gujranwala, 138, 139, incident, 136 & fn
Gupta, Shiv Prasad, 272 & *fn* 299, 327, 346
Gurtu, Ramnath, 260 & fn
Guru Ka Bagh (near Amritsar), 365 & fn, 375
Gutka Hindi Kosh, 302
Gwynne, J T, 281 & *fn*, 346

Habib, Prof. M, 261 & *fn*
Haksar, Colonel Kailash Naram, 100 & *fn*, 334
Haldane, Richard, 54 & *fn*, 123
Halley's comet, 72
Halna, Bhagwan Das, 285 & fn
Hamdam, 281
Hamid Ahmad, 198 & fn
Hampton Court School (Mussoorie), 163
Hindoo, Chandar, 69 & *fn*
Hardie, James Keir, 37 & *fn*, 70
Hardinge theatre (Allahabad), 104 fn
Hardoi, 237
Hargaon, 247
Harichand, 131
Harnam Sundarlal, 281
Harrow Association, 29
Harrow School, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9 & fn, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 28, 29, 30, 57, 58, 222, 252
Harrogate, 40, 63
Hasrat Mohani, Maulana, 201 & *fn*
Hathras, 200
Havell, E B, 301, 305, 309, 310 & *fn*, 318
Hazell's *Annual*, 70
Hedin, Sven, 64 & *fn*
Heidelberg, 7 fn, 65
Heifer of the Dawn, 301, 305
Hereward the Wake, 301, 305

Daraganj Rashtriya Vidyalaya (Allahabad), 192 fn, 215
Darjeeling, 333
Darwin Centenary, 52
Darwin, Sir Charles Galton, 52 *fn*
Das, Chitta Ranjan, 2 fn, 115, 139 & *fn*, 173 & *fn*, 274 *fn*, 330, 335, 350, 362
——, Diwan Niranjan, 334 & *fn*
——, Harkishan, 115
——, *Tarak Nath*, 316-17
Dave, Baldev Ram, 338 & *fn*
Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire, 302, 306
Defence of India Force Act, 108
Dehra Dun, 162 fn, 198, 349
Delhi, 93 & fn, 110 *fn*, 111 *fn*, 358 *fn*, 382
Delhi Durbar, 93, Gaekwar incident at, 94
Deo Narain, 197 & *fn*
Deokinandan, 285 & fn
Derbyshire, 93
Desai, Hanbhai, 282 & fn
——, Mahadeva, 261 fn, 267 & *fn*, 281, 287, 288, 321, 323, 339, 345, 350, 364 & fn, 382
Dhanpat Rai, Dr, 131 & fn
Dharmvir, Prof 288 & *fn*
Dieppe, 15, 79
Dijon, 336
Dolgelly, 90
Downing College (Cambridge), 65, 66
Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan, 16 & fn
Dresden, 346
Dublin, 30, 31, 32, 38
Dulac, Edmund, 82 & fn
Dulle (Gujranwala district), 138
Dumraon, 115
Dunne, 243
Durga Kotli Lane (Amritsar), 130 fn
Dutt, Romesh Chandra, 2 fn
——, Vidyavati, 283 & *fn*
Dwarka Prasad, 265 & fn
Dyer, General, 130 fn, 133 fn

Eastbourne, 24
Economic Consequences of the Peace, 299
Edalji, George, 16 & *fn*
Edevain V. Cohen, 124
Eastern Telegraph Company, 83
Edinburgh University, 23 fn
Edward VII, death of, 71 fn
Elgin Crescent (London), 34, 65, 74, 76, 81, 84, 97
Ellis V. Manchester Carriage Co, 124
Engels, F, 140 fn
Englishman, The, 327, 347, 350
Enver Pasha, 317
Esmond, 25, 27
Essays of Elia, 9
Etah district, 237 fn
Etawah, 110 & fn
Eton, 28 fn
Extremists, 15 fn, 19 fn, 25 fn, 39, 41 & *fn*, 109 *fn*
Extremist Party, 20

Fabian, 35 fn
Fabian Tract, 299
Fatehpur, 263 & *fn*
Fawkes, Guy, 38 & fn
Fazl i Husain, 139 & *fn*
Fergusson College (Poona), 38 fn, 41 fn
Fitche's shop (Mussoorie), 163 & fn
Fletcher, Sir Walter, 16 & *fn*, 23, 25, 61
Ford, Mr, 62 & fn
Forward, The, 128 fn
Foster, 45 fn
Fountains Abbey, ruins of, 41
Fourteenth of July, The, 306
France, 15, 372 fn
Franco British Exhibition, 49 fn, 53
Fundamental Unity of India, 299, 305, 309
Fursatganj (Rae Bareli), 210 fn, 217
Fyzabad, 128 fn, 172, 190, 197, 278 fn, 323, 343

Gaekwar, Sayaji Rao (Baroda), 81 & *fn*, and Delhi Durbar, 93 & fn, and Statham affair 94 fn
Gajadhar Lal, 152 ff
Gandhi Ashram (Banaras), 192 fn
Gandhi Day, 267 & fn, 268, 273, 284, 287

Jayakar, M R, 168 & *fn*
Jhansi, 177 fn, 190, 191, 280 fn
Jhuman Lal, 237 & fn
Jinnah, M A, 168 & *fn*, 169 fn
Joseph, George, 232 & *fn*, 268, 270, 281, 286, 327
——, Mrs, 282
Joti Pershad, 280 & fn, 281
Julius Caesar, 15

Kabul, 186, 195
Kamal Nain V Budh Singh, 154, 157
Kanhaiya Lal, 135 & fn
Kanpur (Cawnpore), 70 fn, 217 fn, 261 fn
Kanpur Case, 152 ff
Kanpur, Raghunath Prasad, 250 fn
Karachi, 201
Kashi Vidyapith, 288 fn
Kashmir, 334, Swadeshi movement in, 11,
Kashmiris, Blue Birds in, 92
Kasur, 136
Kasur case, 134 & fn
Katesar (Sitapur district), 244
Katju, Jivanlal, 12 & *fn*, 15, 23, 63, 65, 67, 91 287 fn, 324
——, Kailash Nath, 154 ff
——, Kunwar Lal (Nikku), 287 & *fn*, 324
——, Ratanlal, 12 fn
Kaul, Bal Krishna, 265 & *fn*, 321
Kaurava (Sitapur district), 244, 245
Kauriyanwala Khuh (Amritsar), 149
Kavita Kaumudi, 344
Kayastha Pathsala (Allahabad), 331
Kaye, 301, 305
Kazim Hussein, Mrs, 96
Keats, 301, 318
Keightley, Bertram, 10 & *fn*
Keynes, J M, 301
Khaliquzzaman, Chaudhry, 230 & *fn*, 233, 270, 275, 285, 286, 334
Khan, Habibullah, 186 fn
Khaparde, G S, 60 & *fn*, 62
Khilafat, 109 fn, 177, 180 ff, Khilafat Fund, 200
Khwaja Abdul Majid, 109 & *fn*, 196, 237, 358
Kidar Nath, 197 & fn
Kidwai, Rafi Ahmad, 270 *fn*
——, Saidur Rahman, 289 & *fn*
King's Speech (1907), 21 & fn
King Street, (London), 98
Kingsley, C, 301, 305
Kipling, Rudyard, 40 fn
Kisan Hitkarini Sabha, 207 & fn
Kisan movement, 197
Kisan Sabhas, 183 fn, 190, 192 fn
Kisanon Ko Sandesh, 192 fn
Kishore, Nand, 274, 318
Kismat Rai, 220 & fn
Klein, Sydney, 301
Knox, K N 124, 159, 252 *fn*, 266, 336
Komagata Maru, 374 & fn
Kopaganj (Azamgarh district), Incident at, 174 6
Koran, 301
Kotla Case, 114 ff
Kripalani, Acharya, J B, 237 & *fn*, 335
Kropotkin, Prince Peter, 142 & *fn*
Kuhne, Wilhelm, 288 & *fn*
Kumuk i Urdu, 306
Kunzru, Hirday Nath, 270 & *fn*
Kushalpal Singh, Raja, 114 15

Ladakh, 334
Lafayettes (photographers), 84 & fn
Laharpur (Sitapur district), 245
Lahore, 13 fn, 27 fn, 40 fn, 135, 136, 330
Lajpat Rai (Lala), 20 fn, deportation of, 26 fn, 27 & *fn*, 60 62, 177 fn
Lakhimpur, 269
Lakhna Case, 336 & fn
Lalta Prasad, 152 ff
Lambert, G B, 194 & *fn*
Lancaster Gate (London), 83
Law, Narendra Nath, 302, 305, 309
Lawrie, 301
Lea, General, 317
League against Imperialism, 272 fn
Leader, The, 104 fn, 105 06, 108 09 fn, 112 fn, 127 fn, 165 fn, 171, 174 76, 206, 209 327, 340, 348, 356, 365, 383, 386-88
Lee-Warner, Sir William, 89 & *fn*
Lenin Peace Prize, 2 fn
Leopardi, 311, 329, 338
Les Misérables, 305

Hewett Road (Allahabad), 355
Highgate (London), 2, 8, 10, 30
Hindu Mahasabha, 127 fn
Hindus and Mussalmans, 187, 241; dissensions among, 184, 185, 186
Hindu Succession Act of 1956, 152 fn
Hindustan Times, 350 fn
His Majesty's Theatre (London), 15
Hissar, 27 fn
History of Freedom of Thought, 306
History of Indian Mutiny, 299, 305
History of Indian Shipping, 299, 306
Holland Park (London), 74, 81, 97
Holmby House, 9
Holy Roman Empire, 299, 318, 320
Home Rule, 106
Home Rule Army, 111
Home Rule League, 104 fn, 105 fn, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 167
Hooper, Miss, 95 & *fn*, 96
Horniman, Benjamin Guy, 137 & *fn*, 319 fn
Hotel Cecil (Simla), 26
House of Commons, 37
Howrah Bridge, 1 fn
Hudson, General Havelock, 148 & *fn*, 149
Hugo, Victor, 305, 314
Hume, A O, 103 *fn*
—— Memorial Fund, 103
Humorous Anthology of English Verse, A, 303, 341
Hungary, 141
Hunter Committee, 140 fn
Hussain, Syed, 128 fn
Hutheesing, Krishna (Beti), 95 & *fn*, 261, 274, 277, 278, 283, 289, 322, 331, 332, 339
Hyde Park (London), 85

Ibrahim Hai, Dr, 234 & fn
Idylls of the King, 299
Imam, Hassan, 113 & *fn*
——, Yusuf, 261 & *fn*, 262
Indemnity Bill, 145 & fn
Independent, The, 128 & fn, 129, 160, 175, 319, J N's letters to Editor of, 205, 208, 236, G D. Upson as Editor of, 319 & *fn*
India in World Politics, 317
Indian Council of World Affairs, 270 fn
Indian Civil Service, 7 fn, 56 & fn, 65, 83, 89, 107, 134 fn, 136 fn, 281, 283 fn, 336, 352, 369
Indian Daily Telegraph, 347
Indian Defence Force Act of 1917, 105 & fn
Indian Defence Force, recruitment to, 105, 106
Indian National Congress, (1906), 15 fn, Motilal Nehru's role at Calcutta session of, 19 fn, Surat session of, 41 & fn, Calcutta session (1911), 94 & fn, 107 fn, 109 & fn; passport for delegates of, 113, and Swaraj, 177, instructions to workers of, 240; Calcutta session (1920), 177; Nagpur session (1920), 177 fn; rift in Gaya session (1922), 360 fn; Delhi session (1923), 369 fn
Indian National Herald, 137 fn
Indian Press Act (1910), repeal of, 104 fn
Indian Students, at Cambridge, 66; appointment of guardian of, 66
Indian Union Society (London), 90
Industrial Exhibition, Allahabad, 69 fn
Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, 331 fn
Inner Temple, 60, 62
Iran, 331 fn, 334
Ireland, Nationalist movement in, 37 & fn
Irving, Sir Miles, 136 & *fn*
Isaacs, Rufus *see* Reading, Lord
Italian Renaissance, 301, 305
Iyer, V. S Venkat Ram *see* Venkat Ram Iyer, V. S.

Jaito, 369 & fn, 371, 376
Jafes, Moulvi Kamaluddin, 230 & fn
Jallian Wala Bagh, J N's visit to, 107 fn, 130 fn, number of deaths, 136 fn; official figures of persons killed in, 147, 148, 190, 195
Jama Masjid, 358 fn
Jammu & Kashmir, 100 fn
Japan, 56 fn
Jawaharlal Nehru Statements, Speeches and Writings, 382 fn

Letters from John Chinaman, 299
Liberal Government, 21 fn
Life of Lokamanya Tilak, 305
Light of Asia, 301, 318
Liza, 305
Llandudno, 33
Lloyds (Austria), 67
Lloyd George, David, 141 fn, 316
London, 1 fn, 2 fn, 22, 40 41, 48, 50, 63, 65, 67, 74 76, 79, 81 82 fn, 84 fn, 85, 87, 90 91, 93 94, 97, 99 100
London School of Economics, 81, 91
Lord's (cricket ground), 28 and fn
Lucknow, 105, 112 fn, 117, 129, 167 fn, 229, 233 34, 239, 274, 281, 287 fn, 319 & fn, 345
—— district, 205 fn
—— District Jail, 229, 258, 260, 276, 300 301, 305, 309 10, 314, 316 17, 323, 325, 332, 340, 344-45, 348
—— University, 10 fn, 205
Lyallpur, 137 & fn
Lyon, 336

Macbeth, 15, 306
Macnaughten (Judge), 124 25
Madhavan Nair, Dr T, 113 & *fn*
Madras, 19 fn, 269
—— Executive Council, 107 & fn
—— Government, 106 fn
—— High Court, 107 fn
Madura, 232 fn
Magdalene College (Cambridge), 39
Mahadeoji 152, 155, 157, 159,
Mahadeva (Sitapur district), 247
Mahmud, Syed, 170 & *fn*, 350
Mahmudabad House (Lucknow), 105
Maidenhead, 77-78
Majlis (Cambridge), 60, 62, 65
Malaviya, Chandrakant, 272 & fn
——, Govind, 263 & *fn*, 319
——, Kapil Deva, 230 & *fn*, 381 82
——, Keshav Deva, 260 & *fn*, 279
——, Krishna Kant, 127 & *fn*, 263, 272 fn
——, Madan Mohan, 127 & *fn*, 145, 149, 167, 222
Mahbabad (Lucknow district), 238
Malkana Rajputs, conversion of, 356 & *fn*, 357
Malleson, 305
Manchester Guardian, 346
Mandi (Amritsar), 132
Mangla Prasad, 192 fn, 214, 216
Mannuci, 301
Manoopur (Sitapur district), 245
Manasarovar, 334
Mandalay, 27 fn
Maqbul Mohamad, 131 & fn
Maqsud Alum, 234 & fn
Marino Faliero, 311
Marris, Sir William, 352 *fn*
Marseilles, 3, 51, 99
Marx, Karl, 140 & *fn*
Maryada, 127 fn
Master of Man & other Parables & & Tales, 306
Mathura (Muttra), 234 & fn
Matlock, 93, 95
Mau, 174
Mears, Sir Grimwood, 154, 159, 319 & *fn*
Meerut, 103 fn, 280 fn, 289
Mehta, Sir Pherozeshah, 137 fn
Mela Ram, 237 & *fn*
Memoirs of Babar, 301, 318
Meredith, George, 311, 326
Mewar Patan, 299, 302, 305
Mikado, The, 359 fn, 370
Mills, J S, 304
Miner's comet, 69 & fn
Minto, Lord, 26 & *fn*
Mirzapur, 261 fn, 262
Misra, Gokaran Nath, 167 & *fn*
——, Harkaran Nath, 341 & *fn*
——, Mata Prasad, 223 & fn, 224, 265 *fn*
——, Sheo Narayan, 199 fn, 217 fn
Moazzam Ali, 261 & fn
Moderates, 15 fn, 39, 41 & fn, 109 fn
Modern Lower Shell, 7
Modern Review, 320, 328, 343
Mohammad Shafi, 276 & fn
Mohanlalganj (Lucknow district), 205 fn
Montagu, E. S, 142 & *fn*, 144
Montrose, 311
Moradabad, 56
Morley, Lord, 26 & *fn*, 29 & fn, 33 fn, 60, 63, 65 66, 315
Moscow, 1 fn

Nobel Prize for Literature, 141 fn
Norton, Eardley, 338 & *fn*
Norway, 76, 77, 80

Oakes, M L, 164
O'Dwyer, Sir Michael, 137 & *fn*, 147, 210
Officers Training Corps, 54, 55
Omar Khayyam, 82 & *fn*, 339, 341
Ootacamund (Ooty), 107
Oriel College (Oxford), 78
Orlando, 141 fn
Oswald Road (Oswestry), 90
Oswestry, 90
Oudh (Avadh), 205 ff, 336 fn, 341 fn
—— and Rohilkhand railway, 90 fn
—— Chief Court, 167 fn
—— Khilafat Committee, 233 fn, 286 fn
—— Kisan Congress, 197 fn, 209
Oxford, 24, 66, 76, 77, 78, 79, 81, 109 fn
—— University, 24

Pakistan, 103 fn, 261 fn
Padam Bhandari Bridge (Amritsar), 131 fn
Pal, Bipin Chandra, 25 & *fn*, 34, refused to give evidence, 37 & fn, appeal for mitigation of sentence, 39, address to Indian Majlis, 60, 62, 160
Panchayats, 160, 180, 181, 241, 249
Pande, Mannilal, 279 & *fn*
Pandit, Ranjit Sitaram, 1 fn, 275 & *fn*, 278, 285, 290, 299, 343
——, Vijayalakshmi (Nanni, Sarup Kumari), 1 & *fn*, 12, 13, 49, 57, 58, 65, 67, 90, 95, 273, 275 & fn, 290, 321, 325, 329, 338, 344, 346
Panikkar, K M, 384 & *fn*
Paris, 14, 15, 54, 79, 141, 336
Partabgarh, 120, 190, 197 fn, 207 ff, 214, 364
——, agrarian unrest in, 206
——, Rani of, 45
Pasha, Mustafa Kamal, See Mustafa Kamal Pasha
Pater, Walter, 299, 301
Patna, 273 359
Patiala, Maharaja of, 369 fn
Peter the Great, 317
Petit, Jehangir, 139 & *fn*
Phaphamow, 233
Picketing, 248, 250, of cloth dealers of Allahabad, 251, 254
Piggot (Judge), 124, 154, 159
Pilibhit, 234 & fn
Pioneer, The, 39, 350
Poe, Edgar Allan, 301, 305
Polak, H S, 263 & fn, 321
Poona, 38 fn, 41 fn, 267, 319
Pope (Master at Harrow), 4 & fn
Porter, Sir Leslie, 83 & *fn*
Port Said, 3, 56
Prakasam, T, 359 & *fn*
Prasad, Jwala, 192 fn
Pratap, 199, 217 & fn
Pratapgarh see Partabgarh
Prayag Mahila Vidya Pitha, 343, & fn
—— Station, 260
Preaching of Islam, 306
Prithviraj Raso, 111 fn
Privy Council, 80, 336, 337
Prosperous British India, 305
Puckle, Sir F., 134 & *fn*, 146, 147
Pulvens, Munnera, 304
Punjab, agrarian unrest in, 26 fn; occurrences in, 130-40
Puri, 177 fn
Punjabee, 25 & fn
Pyare Lal, 261 & fn

Qavi, Hakim Abdul, 233
Qureshi, Shuaib, 261 & *fn*

Radho Jan, 334 fn
Rafiq (Judge), 124
Raghavananda (Swami), 267 & fn
Raghubir Naram, Chaudhri, 289 & *fn*
Raghunath v Govind, 159
Rae Bareli (Rai Bareli), 172, 197, 198, 209 & fn, 210 ff, 278 fn, 285 fn, 343
Raja Ram, 115
Rajatarangini, 275 fn
Raj Bahadur, 237 & *fn*
Rajagopalachari, C, 350 & *fn*, 360, 361
Rajagopalacharyar, Sir P 107 & *fn*
Raksha Bandhan, 329

correspondence with Chief Secretary, U.P. 194 195, as defence witness in *Pratap* Case, 217 225; his first Prison Diary, 229 234, at time of first arrest, 235, note on the organization of Noncooperation Movement, 236 & fn 239, message on release from prison, 239, report on atrocities committed in Sitapur, 242-247, statement at trial, 252-257, second imprisonment, 258 fn, observed fast on last day of Ramzan, 260, observes Gandhi Day, 262, 268, 273, 284, 287, attended Gita and Urdu classes, 263, 280, 286, 287, jail ticket, 266, played volley ball, 279, teaches Devadas Gandhi, 282, 285, 287, released from prison, 289; record of interviews in prison, 289 290, record of spinning in prison, 291-298, record of books returned from prison, 299, record of weight in prison, 300, books received and read in jail, 300-308, notes and quotations, 309 receives first letter in Hindi from M N, 317; about interviews in prison, 321-322, seeks advice for using homoeopathic medicines, 327-330, learns Urdu, 327; desires to travel, 334, spinning going strong, 335, his reaction to Privy Council judgements, 336 337, transfer to Civil Ward of Lucknow Jail, 345, interview with Gwynne, 346, writes to M N about new jail rules, 349; spends more money in jail, 351, speech at Allahabad after release, 351 & fn, speech at Bareilly District Conference, 353, reply to Shamlal Nehru about convening meeting of Town Congress Committee (Allahabad), 354, and Shuddhi movement, 356 357, his letter to Swami Shraddhanand about "Shuddhi", 358, his interview with *Aaj*, 360 363, his views on constructive work, 362; his condolence letter to Mahadeva Desai, 364, his arrest and trial in Nabha, 369 382, his release, 383 384, correspondence regarding Nabha Trial, 384 389.

——, Kamala, 163 & *fn*, 261, 262, 263, 268, 271, 274, 277, 278, 281, 286, 287, 288, 290, 307, 308, 319, 320, 322, 323, 325, 328, 329, 331, 332, 337, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 347, 349, 350

——, Krishanlal, 23 & *fn*, 44, 45, 63, 233 fn, 261, 262, 268, 269, 272, 273, 277, 280, 283 fn, 288, 289, 290, 299, 319, 329, 331, 338, 340

——, Mohanlal, 90 fn, 128 & *fn*, 232 & fn, 262, 336 & fn, 338, 342 fn

——, Motilal, 1 fn, 2 *fn*; 3 100, 105, 106, 116, 127, 145, 146, 161, 162, 215 fn, 216, 222, 239, 266, 307, 308, 317, 319 fn, 337, 348, 370, 379, 381; received offer for sale of Anand Bhawan, 12 fn, learns to drive car, 14, President, U P. Provincial Conference, 19; his opinion about Bengali nationalists, 19 fn, and U P. Social Conference 66 *fn*; and Indian Defence Force, 105; started *Independent*, 128 fn; his correspondence with Puckle, 145-6, 317

——, Mrs Mohan Lal, 237

——, Nandlal, 12 *fn*, 23 fn, 128 fn, 232 fn

——, Nandrani (Bua), 12 & *fn*

——, Raj Dulari, 282 & *fn*

——, Rameshwari, 2 *fn*, 13 fn, 18 & fn, 283, 290

——, Ratan Kumar, 336 & *fn*

——, Shamlal, 232 & fn, 262, 354

——, Shivrajvati (Shauna), 233 & *fn*, 273, 283, 290

——, Shridhar, 7 *fn*, 15, 23, 44, 49, 50, 55, 57, 65, 91, 330, 337

——, Swarup Rani, 1 *fn*, 12 & fn, 48, 63, 75, 283, 322, 330, 343

Neki Ram (Pandit), 110 & fn, 111

Neogee, Upendranath, 128 & *fn*, 129

Neville (solicitor), 139 & fn

New College (Oxford), 78, 79

New Ireland, The, 37 fn, 38

New Statesman, 320, 327

Nietzsche, 382 & *fn*

Nigohan (Lucknow district), 205 fn

Nihal Babu, 351

Nihal Singh, Sirdar, 219

Ninetythree, 306, 314

Sherwood, Frances, 130 *fn*, 149
Sherring, C A, 303
Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, 275 fn, 373 & fn
Shivaji, 318
Shiv Raj Narayan, 319
Shohratganj, 256
Shraddhanand (Swami), 358 & *fn*
Shuddhi movement, 356 8
Shyam Mohini, 261 & *fn*, 289
Shyamdas Vachaspati, Kaviraj, 32 & *fn*
Sikhism, 299
Simla, 107, 135, 270
Simon Commission, 27 fn, 233 fn
Singh, Baba Gurdit, 374 fn
——, Bans Narain, 192 fn
——, Bhagwan, 115
——, Sardar Bupal, 210 14, 218 21, 223 25
——, Darbara, 374 & *fn*
——, Dhian Pal, 116
——, Hukm Tej Pratap, 110 & *fn*
——, Karanpal, 119 20, 122
——, Lachminarain, 115
——, Lokendra, 116
——, Megh, 115, 116, 118, 119, 120 122
——,Maharaja Ripudaman, 338 & fn, 369 fn, 372, 376, 380
——, Mahendrapal, 116
——, Major Ranjit, 105 & fn, 106
——, Mandhata, 115
——, Mokkam, 115
——, Pahar, 115
——, Parmatma Nand, 280 & fn
——, Pohap, 115
——, Raja Rampal, 137 & *fn*, 222
——, Shyam, 155
——, Sundar, 115
——, Thakur Jogendra Pal, 116
——, Umrao, 116
Sinha, Lord, 181 *fn*
——, Triveni Sahai, 171 & fn 172
Sinn Fein, 37, 38
Sitapur District, terrorism in, 242-47, 256
Sitaram, Sir, 103 & *fn*, 160 & fn
Smith, Vincent, 301, 303
Sobhani, Umar, 129 & *fn*, 323
Social Conference, United Provinces, 66 & fn
Solon, 128, 135
South Africa, passive resistance in, 103
Southwell Gardens (London), 11
Spain, 38 fn, 329
Srinagar, 1
Sri Gopal, L, 234 & fn
Srinivasa Sastri, V S, 137 & *fn*
Stanley, Sir John, 88 & fn
Statham Case, 94 & fn
St. Ives, 77
St John's College (Cambridge), 56
St. Leonards, 88
Storia do Mogor, 301, 318
Studies in Literature, 306
Suez Canal, 56
Sultanpur, 190, 197 & fn, 285 fn
Surat, 350
Suraj Narain v Iqbal Narain, 156
Sussex, 96
Swadeshi movement, 11 fn
Swaraj Party, 2 fn, 360 fn, 361, 362
Swaraj Sabha, 167-169, 231
Swatantra Party, 350 fn
Swinburne, A C, 304, 312
Symonds, J.A, 301, 305

Tagore, Rabindra Nath, 305
Tajpur, 336
Tale of Two Cities, 306
Tanda, 288
Tandon, Purushottam Das, 127 & *fn*, 133, 236 fn, 280, 286, 345, 346, 347, 351
Tanner, Mrs, 31 family, 22 & fn
Tara Chand (Dr), 331 & *fn*, 337
Tarn Taran, 131, 132, 134
Tazakrat Shuara, 201 fn
Tennyson, Alfred, Lord, 301, 303, 318
Tewana, Sir Umar Hayat, 137 & *fn*, 140 & fn, 149
Tewari, Radha Krishna, 280 & fn
Thackeray, William Makepeace, 25 & fn
Theology of Tulsi Dass, 306
Theosophical Society, 104 fn
Thompson, J P., 136 & *fn*, 138 & fn, 145, 147, 148, 149
Thus Spake Zarathustra, 382 fn
Tilak Ashram (Allahabad), 231
Tilak, Bal Gangadhar, 41 & *fn*, 62 & fn 269

Raleigh v Goschen, 124
Ralla Ram (Lala), 131 & *fn*, 132
Ram Chandra, 319 & *fn*
Ram Chant Manas, 301
Ramgarh, 194, 273, 274, 328, 338
Raman, Radha, 192 & *fn*, 214, 215
Ramraksha, Pandit, 263 & *fn*
Ranga Iyer, C S, 128 & *fn*, 129, 323
Rau, B. N, 56 *fn*
——, B Rama, 56 fn
Rawalpindi, 186 fn
Ray, Dr, 332 & *fn*, 339
——, Kali Nath, 129 & fn
Reading, Lord, 62 fn
Redmond, John Edward, 38 & *fn*
Renaissance, The, 299, 301, 306, 318
Renaissance in Italy, 299
Report of American Commission on Ireland, 305
Reserve Bank of India, 56 fn
Reuter's, 37, 42
Rice, Miss, 95 & fn
Richards (Chief Justice), 124
Ripon, Lord, 41 & *fn*
Ritusamhara, 275 fn
Roads to Freedom, 140 145
Rohtagi, Dr. Jawaharlal, 281 & *fn*
——, Dr Murari Lal, 237 & *fn*
Rolland, Romain, 306, 314
Round Table Conference, 109 fn
Roosevelt, Theodore, 72 & *fn*, 73
Rosetti, Christina, 304 D G 304
——, D G, 304
Rouen, 15
Rowlatt Act, 137 fn
Rubaiyat, 82 fn
Rudin, 305
Rudra, Sushil K, 150 & *fn*
Ruskin, John, 304
Russell, Bertrand, 140 fn, 141, 144
Russia, 141

Sabarmati Ashram, 321, 339
Sadaram, *115*
Sagarpali (Balia), 279 fn
Sahai, Ganpat, 285 & fn
——, Dr Lakshmi, 234
——, Raghupati, 265
——, Sitla, 230 & *fn*
Sahgal, Manmohini, 261 & *fn*, 289
Saharanpur, 257 fn
Sahjanand Saraswati (Swami), 276 & *fn*
Sai river, 216
Salamatullah, Moulvi, 233 & *fn*
Salaria, G S, 131 & *fn*
Sankaran Nair, Sir C, 107 & *fn*
Santanam, K., 350 & *fn*, 370 fn, 374, 382, 383 fn, 384, 386-388
Sapru, Hriday Nath, 128 & *fn*
——, Parmeshwar Nath, 128 fn
——, Tej Bahadur, 104 fn, 105, 119, 168 fn, 346
Saran district, 280 fn
Saran, Munshi Iswar, 105 & *fn*, 106, 167
Sarkar, Jadunath, 301, 318
Saturday Review, 58
Satyagraha Sabha, 364
Savoy Hotel (Mussoorie), 160, 161, 162, 165
Saxena, Dr Shivaraj Narain, 234 & fn
——, Jia Ram, 230
——, Mohan Lal, 233 & *fn*, 242 fn, 243, 247, 319
Saxony, 346
Science and the Infinite, 299
Secret History of English Occupation in Egypt, 305
Seditious Meetings Act, 172, 198, 199
Sen, A P, 287 & fn
Servants of India Society, 38 fn, 103 fn, 270 fn
Sesame & Lilies, 304, 306
Sessendi Estate (Lucknow district), 205 & fn
Sewa Samiti, 136 fn, 148 & fn, 149
Shakespeare, 15, 25
Shah, Sital, 115
Shahpur district, 139
Shankaracharya of Puri (Swami), 177 & *fn*, 191
Sharif, Maulana, 276
Sharma, Bhu Dev, 196 & fn
——, Dev Ratan, 198 & fn
——, Murari, 278
——, Ramchandra, 197 & *fn*, 207, 208
Shaw, George Bernard, 35 & *fn*
Shelley, P.B, 301, 318
Shepherds' Bush (London), 53
Sherwani, Tassaduq Ahmad Khan, 260 & *fn*

Sherwood, Frances, 130 *fn*, 149
Shering, C A, 303
Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak *Committee*, *275 fn*, 373 & fn
Shivaji, 318
Shiv Raj Narayan, 319
Shohratganj, 256
Shraddhanand (Swami), 358 & *fn*
Shuddhi movement, 356 8
Shyam Mohini, 261 & *fn*, 289
Shyamdas Vachaspati, Kaviraj, *32 & fn*
Sikhism, 299
Simla, 107, 135, 270
Simon Commission, 27 fn, 233 fn
Singh, Baba Gurdit, 374 fn
——, Bans Narain, 192 fn
——, Bhagwan, 115
——, Sardar Birpal, 210 14, 218 21, 223 25
——, Darbara, 374 & *fn*
——, Dhian Pal, 116
——, Hukm Tej Pratap, 110 & *fn*
——, Karanpal, 119 20, 122
——, Lachminarain, 115
——, Lokendra, 116
——, Megh, 115, 116, 118, 119, 120 122
——,Maharaja Ripudaman, 338 & fn, 369 fn, 372, 376, 380
——, Mahendrapal, 116
——, Major Ranjit, 105 & fn, 106
——, Mandhata, 115
——, Mokkam, 115
——, Pahar, 115
——, Parmatma Nand, 280 & fn
——, Pohap, 115
——, Raja Rampal, 137 & *fn*, 222
——, Shyam, 155
——, Sundar, 115
——, Thakur Jogendra Pal, 116
——, Umrao, 116
Sinha, Lord, 181 *fn*
——, Triveni Sahai, 171 & fn 172
Sinn Fein, 37, 38
Sitapur District, terrorism in, *242-47*, 256
Sitaram, Sir 103 & *fn*, 160 & fn
Smith, Vincent, 301, 303
Sobham, Umar, 129 & *fn*, 323
Social Conference, United Provinces, 66 & fn
Solon, 128, 135
South Africa, passive resistance in, 103
Southwell Gardens (London), 11
Spain, 38 fn, *329*
Srinagar, 1
Sri Gopal, L, 234 & fn
Srinivasa Sastri, V S, 137 & *fn*
Stanley, Sir John, 88 & fn
Statham Case, 94 & fn
St Ives, 77
St John's College (Cambridge), *56*
St Leonards, 88
Storia do Mogor, 301, 318
Studies in Literature, 306
Suez Canal, 56
Sultanpur, 190, 197 & fn, 285 fn
Surat, 350
Suraj Nardin v Iqbal Naram, 156
Sussex, 96
Swadeshi movement, 11 fn
Swaraj Party, *2 fn*, *360 fn*, *361*, *362*
Swaraj Sabha, 167-169, 231
Swatantra Party, 350 fn
Swinburne, A C, 304, 312
Symonds, J.A, 301, 305

Tagore, Rabindra Nath, 305
Tajpur, 336
Tale of Two Cities, 306
Tanda, 288
Tandon, Purushottam Das, 127 & *fn*, *133*, *236 fn*, *280*, *286*, *345*, *346*, 347, 351
Tanner, Mrs, 31 family, 22 & fn
Tara Chand (Dr), 331 & *fn*, 337
Tarn Taran, 131, 132, 134
Tazakirai Shuara, 201 fn
Tennyson, Alfred, Lord, *301*, *303*, *318*
Tewana, Sir Umar Hayat, 137 & *fn*, 140 & fn, 149
Tewari, Radha Krishna, 280 & fn
Thackeray, William Makepeace, 25 & fn
Theology of Tulsi Dass, 306
Theosophical Society, *104 fn*
Thompson, J P., 136 & *fn*, 138 & fn, 145, 147, 148, 149
Thus Spake Zarathustra, 382 fn
Tilak Ashram (Allahabad), 231
Tilak, Bal Gangadhar, 41 & *fn*, 62 & fn *269*

Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund, 199, 200, 241 & fn, 248, 269, 273, 338 & fn
Tilak Vidyalaya, 192 fn, 215 & fn, 231
Tilok Pal, 115
Times, The, 11, 94
Times Book Club, 85, 86
Times of India, 42
Tod, J, 302
Tolstoy, Leo, 301, 303, 306
Tottenham Local Board v Lea Constituency, 120
Trafalgar, 3
Trans Himalaya, 334
Transvaal, 42, 69 fn
Travels (Bernier's), 301
Trevelyans (tailors), 45
Trevelyan, G M, 311, 326 fn
Tribune, The, 129
Trieste, 67
Trine, 301
Trinity College (Cambridge), 16 & fn, 21, 35, 36, 37, 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 53, 54, 57, 58, 61, 63, 65, 66, 67, 68, 71, 72, 73, 75, 222
— (Oxford), 78
Tripathi, Lal Bahadur, 234 & fn
—, Ram Naresh, 167 & fn
Trivedi, Kanhaiyalal, 277 & fn
Tudball, (Judge), 124
Turgenev, I S, 305
Turkey, 110 fn, 179 & fn, 317

Uganda 22
Unnao (Unao), 210 fn
Unchahar, 209 & fn
Unionist Press, 21
United Provinces, 7 fn, repression in, 196
— Congress Committee, 165, 248 249
— Government, 1 fn
— Legislative Council, 103 fn, 110 fn
— Political Conference, 112 fn
— South Africa Committee, 103
— Social Conference, (1909), 66 fn
— South Africa Relief Fund, 103 & fn
United Nations General Assembly, 1 fn
United States of America, 56 fn, 72 fn, 142 fn
Upper Shell, 7
Upson, G D, 319 & fn, 327
Urdu, 305, 321, 327
Urde-e Mualla, 201 fn
Urmila Devi, 274 & fn, 335, 339

Vaidya, Martand Dutt, 212 & fn, 217
Vaikom Satyagraha, 232 fn
Vasumati Behn, 282 & fn
Vaughan, Father Bernard, 31 & fn
Vaughan Library (Harrow), 11
Vaze, 274
Viceroy's Council, 107
Victoria Station (London), 51
Vidyarthi, Ganesh Shankar, 199 fn, 217 fn
Vincent, Sir William, 113 fn
Vindhya Pradesh, 350 fn
Virgin Soil, 305
Visnes, 77
Vijapur Mandal, 254
Volunteer Corps, 231 & fn, pledge of 237 fn

Wajid Ali, Mir, 278 & fn, 343
Wales, 90 fn, 91
Wallas, Graham, 301
Walsh, J, 122
War Funds, 205
War Loans, 205
Washington, I fn
Waterfall, 306
Wells, H G, 302, 304, 306
Western Tibet and the Borderland, 334
Whewell's Court (Trinity College, Cambridge), 54
Wilde, Oscar, 302, 306, 309
Wilson, Thomas Woodrow, 141, 142 & fn, 143 fn
Wood, Dr Joseph, 9 & fn, 13, 16, 21
Wordsworth, William, 301
Wreck, The, 305

Young India, 149, 171, 201 fn, 232 fn, 382, 387

Zafar Husain, 265 & fn
Zutshi, Ladli Prasad, 69 fn, 261 fn
—, Laddo Rani, 261 & fn, 259, 322

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FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problem of the poor and the oppressed in all lands In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling—these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggle, both within himself and with the

outside world, to adjust such seeming contradictions are what made his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interest in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the "third world" as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.

Indira Gandhi

New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

EDITORIAL NOTE

This volume, the second in the series, deals with the many-sided activities of Jawaharlal Nehru from 1923 till his return from Europe in December 1927. In 1923 Congressmen contested the municipal elections in many important towns and in most cases secured a majority of seats. Jawaharlal Nehru was elected not only a member of the Allahabad Municipal Board but also to the office of Chairman and served in that capacity for two years. This was his first involvement in official administration, and his notes, memoranda and reports written as Chairman are of significance for both his ideas and his attitudes. He was also, at the same time, General Secretary of the Indian National Congress and President of the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee and, at times, also Chairman of the Allahabad Town Congress Committee; and just as he sought to impart the spirit of national service into municipal work, he strove to strengthen efficient methods of functioning in the national organization.

Then, in March 1926, Jawaharlal Nehru sailed for Europe. Though the journey was undertaken primarily in the interests of his wife's health, the visit served to deepen his understanding of world affairs. Apart from attending lectures in Geneva, he attended the International Congress against Imperialism held at Brussels in February 1927, served as a member of the Executive Committee of the League against Imperialism, and, before his return, paid a brief visit to the Soviet Union. His letters written from Europe, his speeches at the Brussels Congress and his reports on it, and his articles on the Soviet Union (later published as a book) show a mind awakening to fresh horizons.

The methods of editing adopted in the first volume are being followed in the subsequent volumes. The biographical footnotes and the terms in the glossary in the first volume have not been repeated.

The footnotes written by Jawaharlal Nehru for his various articles have been shown with an asterisk, and the footnotes added now have been numbered.

As in the first volume, we have relied heavily on the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru made available to us by Shrimati Indira Gandhi.

Acknowledgment is due to the Allahabad Nagar Mahapalika (formerly the Allahabad Municipal Board), the U. P. Government and State Archives, the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, the Jamia Milia Islamia, Shri Jamal Khwaja, Dr. N. S. Hardikar, Shrimati Padmaja Naidu and Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit for permission to include material in

their possession. The late Dr. Syed Mahmud and the late Shri Sri Prakasa were good enough to grant us similar permission. We are grateful to *The Leader, The Hindu, The Bombay Chronicle, The Tribune* and the *Aaj* for allowing us to reprint letters and reports first published in their columns. The Navajivan Trust has permitted us to include an article by Jawaharlal Nehru published in *Young India*.

The cooperation extended by the Director and staff of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library is acknowledged.

CONTENTS

1. Chairman, Allahabad Municipal Board

1	On Election as Chairman	4 April	1923	1
2	To Collector of Allahabad	4 April	1923	2
3	Circular to U.P. Congressmen on Municipal Work	5 April	1923	3
4	To Commissioner, Allahabad Division, regarding Passenger Tax	24 April	1923	5
5	On the Board's Patronage	24 April	1923	7
6	On the Report of the Water Works Enquiry Committee	30 April	1923	8
7	*On Electoral Reform*	7 May	1923	9
8	On Municipal Work during April and May 1923	10 June	1923	11
9	On the Treatment of Prostitutes	10 June	1923	14
10	On Rules regarding the Residence of Prostitutes	10 June	1923	16
11	On Presentation of Civic Addresses	29 June	1923	19
12	Note to Members of the Board and Heads of Departments	24 July	1923	21
13	On Municipal Work during June-August 1923	13 September	1923	26
14	Message from Nabha Jail	6 October	1923	31
15	On a Reception to Lord Reading	25 October	1923	33
16	To Commissioner, Allahabad Division, regarding Passenger Tax	13 November	1923	34
17	On Municipal Work during September-November 1923	17 December	1923	35
18	To Commissioner, Allahabad Division, regarding Passenger Tax	8 January	1924	38

19	Statement at a Meeting of the Board	15 January	1924	39
20	To Commissioner, Allahabad Division, regarding the use of the Word 'Vernacular'	28 January	1924	40
21	Note on Municipal work during December 1923 and January-February 1924	31 March	1924	41
22	On the Allahabad Octroi Committee	18 April	1924	43
23	From the Annual Administration Report for 1923-1924	30 May	1924	44
24	From Proceedings of Meeting of the Board	31 May	1924	47
25	Note for Finance Committee	2 June	1924	48
26	To Commissioner, regarding Reconstruction of Roads	9 June	1924	49
27	From Proceedings of Meeting of the Board	16 June	1924	52
28	Note for the Board	19 July	1924	53
29	Answers to the Questionnaire of the Improvement Trust Enquiry Committee	3 August	1924	55
30	Allahabad Municipal Administration	27 August	1924	62
31	Preliminary Note on a Municipal Programme	28 August	1924	64
32	On Municipal Taxation	28 August	1924	66
33	To Commissioner, Allahabad Division, regarding Grants for Roads	2 September	1924	69
34	On Coordination of the Board's Work	13 November	1924	70
35	On the Allahabad Improvement Trust	12 December	1924	71
36	On the Report of the Allahabad City Improvement Trust			72
37	On the Introduction of Adult Franchise	12 December	1924	76
38	Note to the Members of the Board	28 January	1925	77
39	To Chairmen, Municipal Boards, U.P.	22 April	1925	78

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

1	Circular to Secretaries of District Congress Committees and members of the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee	4 June	1923	81
2	Presidential Address at the first All India Volunteers Conference, Kakinada	25 December	1923	83
3	Speech at the Kakinada Congress		1923	87
4	To Maulana Mohamad Ali	13 January	1924	89
5	To N. S. Hardikar	19 January	1924	91
6	Circular to all Secretaries, P.C.Cs	11 February	1924	92
7	*Suggested Rules for the Collection, Custody and Expenditure of Congress Funds*	27 January	1924	92
8	To all P.C.C. Secretaries	3 March	1924	95
9	To the Secretary, P.C.C., Gujarat	5 March	1924	96
10	To Tarak Nath Das	9 April	1924	98
11	To Tilak Swaraj Fund Trustees	25 April	1924	99
12	To N. S. Hardikar	22 May	1924	100
13	To N. S. Hardikar	28 May	1924	101
14	On Congress Departments and the Indian National Service	10 June	1924	101
15	To Maulana Mohamad Ali	11 June	1924	105
16	To Shankarlal Banker	14 June	1924	106
17	To Maulana Mohamad Ali	30 July	1924	106
18	To the Treasurer, A.I.C.C.	16 August	1924	107
19	To N. S. Hardikar	4 September	1924	108
20	To the Treasurer, A.I.C.C., Bombay	23 October	1924	109
21	To N. S. Hardikar	7 November	1924	110
22	Message to The Volunteer	January	1925	111
23	To Henri Barbusse	9 February	1925	112
24	To Raghupati Sahai	23 February	1925	112
25	To Maulana Mohamad Ali	7 March	1925	113
26	On Maulana Mohamad Ali's Travelling Bills	17 March	1925	114

27	To Gauri Shankar Misra	3 April	1925	115
28	To Henri Barbusse	16 April	1925	116
29	To Municipal School Teachers in Allahabad	23 April	1925	117
30	A Note for the Working Committee on the Ajmer Khaddar Dispute	28 May	1925	118
31	To Madan Mohan Malaviya	5 June	1925	122
32	To Mangal Singh	23 July	1925	124
33	To Henri Barbusse	28 July	1925	125
34	To Chand Karan Sarda	16 September	1925	126
35	To the Secretary, P.C.C., Ajmer	17 December	1925	127
36	On the Ajmer D.C.C.	20 December	1925	129
37	Efficiency	January	1926	130

BOYCOTT OF BRITISH GOODS

38	To Umar Sobhani	20 January	1924	132
39	To the Secretary, P.C.C., Bombay	20 January	1924	133
40	To Umar Sobhani	10 February	1924	133
41	To Umar Sobhani	29 April	1924	134
42	To Umar Sobhani	21 August	1924	134
43	To the Treasurer, A.I.C.C.	22 August	1924	135

THE AKALI MOVEMENT

44	To A. T. Gidwani	25 January	1924	136
45	To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab	7 February	1924	137
46	To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab	10 February	1924	138
47	To A. T. Gidwani	18 February	1924	140
48	To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab	1 March	1924	141
49	To George Joseph	2 March	1924	142
50	To C. Rajagopalachari	12 March	1924	142
51	To Sampurnanand	12 March	1924	143
52	To Mahatma Gandhi	12 March	1924	144
53	To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab	13 March	1924	145

54	To Maulana Mohamad Ali	14 March	1924	146
55	To Karam Chand Shukla	14 March	1924	147
56	To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab	14 March	1924	147
57	To K. M. Panikkar	27 March	1924	149
58	To K. M. Panikkar	2 April	1924	150
59	To S. D. Kitchlew	27 April	1924	152
60	To K. M. Panikkar	30 April	1924	153
61	To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab	30 April	1924	154
62	To K. M. Panikkar	16 May	1924	156
63	To K. M. Panikkar	20 May	1924	157
64	To K. M. Panikkar	29 May	1924	158
65	To K. M. Panikkar	7 June	1924	159
66	To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab	13 June	1924	159
67	To K. M. Panikkar	13 June	1924	160
68	To K. M. Panikkar	25 July	1924	160
69	To K. M. Panikkar	30 July	1924	161
70	To Madan Mohan Malaviya and Motilal Nehru	2 August	1924	161
71	To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab	2 August	1924	162
72	On the Akali Jatha	27 September	1924	163

ON OPIUM TRAFFIC

73	To all the Members of the Working Committee	2 June	1924	164
74	To Tarak Nath Das	5 June	1924	165
75	To C. F. Andrews	16 August	1924	166
76	To C. F. Andrews	18 August	1924	167
77	To A. C. Wilson	9 January	1925	168

ON COMMUNAL DISTURBANCES

78	To Mahatma Gandhi	12 September	1924	169
79	On the Hindu-Muslim Trouble at Sambhal	12 September	1924	170
80	Mahatma Gandhi's Fast	22 September	1924	183
81	Draft Note on Delhi Conference	September	1924	184

82	To Mahatma Gandhi	19 October	1924	186
83	To Mahatma Gandhi	20 October	1924	191
84	To Mahatma Gandhi	24 October	1924	196
85	The Gorakhpur 'Swaraj' Resolution	5 November	1924	197
86	To Lala Lajpat Rai	14 November	1924	198

3. Miscellaneous

1	To Sri Prakasa	7 October	1923	203
2	Presidential Address at U.P. Conference	13 October	1923	204
3	To the Students of Allahabad	27 October	1923	213
4	Telegram to Devadas Gandhi	16 January	1924	215
5	To Devadas Gandhi	18 January	1924	215
6	To Syed Mahmud	21 March	1924	217
7	Message to the Vaikom Satyagrahis	11 April	1924	218
8	To Syed Mahmud	1 December	1924	218
9	To A. M. Khwaja	25 February	1925	219
10	An invitation	15 April	1925	220
11	To Raja Motichand	15 May	1925	220
12	To Raja Motichand	25 May	1925	222
13	To Syed Mahmud	3 June	1925	223
14	To Syed Mahmud	18 June	1925	224
15	To Maharani Chinkoo Scindia	2 August	1925	225
16	To Padmaja Naidu	29 January	1926	226

4. In Europe

1	To Syed Mahmud	6 March	1926	229
2	To Padmaja Naidu	14 March	1926	230
3	To Romain Rolland	8 May	1926	230
4	To Romain Rolland	13 May	1926	231

5	To Syed Mahmud	24 May	1926	232
6	To Syed Mahmud	15 July	1926	235
7	To the Editor, Journal De Geneve	3 August	1926	236
8	To Syed Mahmud	11 August	1926	240
9	To Syed Mahmud	12 September	1926	241
10	To Father	6 October	1926	244
11	To Father	13 October	1926	246
12	The English General Strike and Three Lessons for Volunteers	October	1926	247
13	To Father	16 November	1926	250
14	To Father	23 November	1926	252
15	To Devadas Gandhi	1 December	1926	253
16	To Syed Mahmud	1 December	1926	253
17	To Syed Mahmud	12 January	1927	254
18	To Rangaswami Iyengar	19 January	1927	256
19	To Rangaswami Iyengar	23 January	1927	257
20	To Rangaswami Iyengar	25 January	1927	258
21	The Psychology of Indian Nationalism	January	1927	259
22	Statement to the Press at Brussels	9 February	1927	270
23	Speech at the Brussels Congress	10 February	1927	272
24	To Rangaswami Iyengar	11 February	1927	276
25	To Rangaswami Iyengar	16 February	1927	277
26	Report on the Brussels Congress	19 February	1927	278
27	On the Indian Situation	2 March	1927	297
28	To Rangaswami Iyengar	7 March	1927	298
29	To N. S. Hardikar	8 March	1927	304
30	Note on a Proposal for a Parliamentary Bill for India	10 March	1927	305
31	To Mahatma Gandhi	15 March	1927	311
32	To Rangaswami Iyengar	16 March	1927	312
33	To Syed Mahmud	22 March	1927	313
34	To Rangaswami Iyengar	26 March	1927	314
35	Note for the Working Committee	4 April	1927	316
36	To Rangaswami Iyengar	5 April	1927	324
37	To Raja Rau	18 April	1927	324
38	To Mahatma Gandhi	22 April	1927	325
39	The Situation in China and India's Duty	April	1927	326

40	To Syed Mahmud	14 July	1927	328
41	To Rangaswami Iyengar	7 September	1927	329
42	Evolution of British Policy	September	1927	332
43	A Foreign Policy for India	13 September	1927	348
44	Victory over the Air	28 September	1927	364
45	To Raja Rau	26 October	1927	367
46	To Syed Mahmud	26 October	1927	368
47	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	10 November	1927	369
48	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	12 November	1927	371
49	To Rangaswami Iyengar	16 November	1927	375

5. Soviet Russia

	Foreword	1928	379
1	The Fascination of Russia	1928	381
2	The Journey	1928	384
3	Impressions of Moscow	1928	386
4	The Soviet System	1928	390
5	The Constitution of the U.S.S.R.	1928	395
6	Some Books on Russia	1928	399
7	Lenin	1928	403
8	More books	1928	408
9	The Peasantry	1928	412
10	Criminal Law	1928	416
11	A Prison	1928	420
12	The Problem of Minorities	1928	424
13	Education	1928	427
14	The Peasant and the Land	1928	435
15	Women and Marriage	1928	440
16	Russia and India	1928	447

ILLUSTRATIONS

Presiding over the International Congress against Imperialism, Brussels, February, 1927. *frontispiece*

With Syed Mahmud and A. M. Khwaja, 1925.
Ceremony of opening the mouth. *between pp.* 224–25

At Brussels, 1927.
With some delegates to the International Congress against Imperialism, Brussels, February 1927. *between pp.* 272–73

With some delegates to the International Congress, Brussels, February 1927.
Photostat copy of the first page of the confidential note to the Working Committee. *between pp.* 304–05

Moscow, 1927.
Photostat copy of the first page of Soviet Russia. *between pp.* 368–69

CHAIRMAN
ALLAHABAD MUNICIPAL BOARD

1. On Election as Chairman[1]

Sir,

The somewhat brief report of the proceedings of the special meeting of the Allahabad Municipal Board held yesterday, which appears in your issue dated the 5th instant, might perhaps mislead the unwary or the unenlightened reader. I trust that you will, of your courtesy, permit an explanation. You mention that four names—Sjt. Purushottam Das Tandon, Moulvi Kamaluddin Jafri, Moulvi Mubarak Hussain[2] and my name—were mentioned as likely candidates for the chairmanship. From this it might appear that there was some idea of contest between Messrs. Tandon and Jafri and I. This is utterly wrong. Under no imaginable circumstances could there have been a contest between any two of us. The burden and responsibility of the chairmanship has been thrust on me because my other colleagues would not stand. For long we had hoped that my honoured friend and co-worker Babu Purushottam Das Tandon would allow us to put him at our head in the Board, to guide us in the intricacies of municipal administration, and to show us how best to serve our city and fellow citizens of Allahabad. With great difficulty he consented. Subsequently it appeared that some Mohammedan gentlemen laid stress on having a Muslim chairman. There was no Hindu-Muslim question involved in the matter, but some efforts were made to create one and thus perhaps to influence a few voters. To us of the Congress and the Khilafat, it mattered little whether a Hindu or Muslim was elected chairman, provided he was competent and was a noncooperator. We would gladly have put forward our dear colleague Moulvi Kamaluddin Jafri, but for his illness which has incapacitated him for a while from doing any work. As soon as Babu Purushottam Das Tandon got to know of the efforts to create trouble between Hindus and Muslims over the question of the chairmanship, with his fine delicacy and nobility he insisted that he would not stand and that we should put forward Moulvi Kamaluddin Jafri in spite of his illness. Mr. Jafri during his illness could only be a nominal chairman; but if our Muslim cooperator friends wanted a Muslim, a Muslim they would have, but he would be a noncooperator. We determined as a party to put forward Mr. Jafri

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 6 April 1923.

2. Retired district and sessions judge; member of the Allahabad Municipal Board

as a candidate if the cooperator Muslims really were keen on having a Muslim. It soon appeared, however, that all the tall talk about a Muslim chairman indulged in by our cooperator friends was merely a cloak for having one of their own friends elected. We were informed that they would oppose Moulvi Kamaluddin Jafri and would put forward a retired pensioner as their candidate.

Under these circumstances there was little point in our putting forward Mr. Jafri in his present serious state of health. Mr. Tandon not agreeing to stand, I was asked by him and my other colleagues to stand and most reluctantly and unwillingly I bowed down to their wishes. The burden they have thrust on me is great and I do not know how I shall succeed in shouldering it. Nor do I know yet how it will affect or interfere with my other and to me more important work. I feel that the right person has not been chosen. I know that Mr. Tandon or Mr. Jafri, or indeed some other of my colleagues, would have been a far better chairman than I can hope to be. I only hope that before long, my friends will take pity on me and consent to relieve me of this responsibility and to put a better man in my place.

Allahabad
April 4 [1923]

Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To Collector of Allahabad[1]

4 April 1923

Dear Mr. Knox,

I have just received your letter. You have been incorrectly informed about the proposal to discuss a resolution on the 5th. So far as I am aware no meeting of the Board is taking place tomorrow.

I shall be glad to see you tomorrow morning at any time between 8 and 10.30 a.m. I am sorry I cannot come in the afternoon as I shall be going out of the station for a while.

As you are doubtless aware I have come to the Board to represent a certain policy and to do my utmost to further that policy, with due regard to the betterment of the city and people of Allahabad. I desire

1. Allahabad Municipal Board (referred to hereafter as A.M.B.) File 2/XII-4 of 1923.

no conflict with anyone but I shall certainly endeavour to carry out that policy. As Chairman of the Board I must obey and carry out the directions of the Board. If I happen to disagree in any matter of principle, or if the Congress Committee so desires it, I shall tender my resignation. Other considerations are not likely to influence me much. I regret that I cannot split myself up into various compartments—one for "general politics", another for "Municipal affairs" and so on.

Will you be good enough to drop me a line to say what time would suit you tomorrow morning. Please send your reply to my residence, Anand Bhawan.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Circular to U.P. Congressmen on Municipal Work[1]

In obedience to the directions of the Provincial Congress Committee, we endeavoured to capture the municipalities of this province. We ran our candidates for them on the clear and oft repeated ground of Congress and Khilafat policy and programme. We stood for those principles and not merely for the individuals we had put forward; we made it clear that the main purpose of our going to the municipalities was to help in the national struggle. We did not desire to wreck the municipalities or to play the part of obstructionists. But we wanted to work them honestly and efficiently in the best interests of our cities and above all in accordance with the Congress—Khilafat Programme.

The support that we demanded we have received. The public of these provinces has shown most unmistakably on which side its sympathies are. They have not voted for our little self, but for the Congress and Khilafat and have thus made it clear that they want us to work according to the Congress programme. How then are we to work? I do not wish to answer the question in its narrower sense just

1. To all District, Town and Tahsil Congress Committees and members of the P.C.C., 5 April 1923.
U.P. Government Secret Police Abstract Vol XLI, No 15(17), 14 April 1923.

at present. It will perhaps be desirable for Congressmen connected with municipalities to meet together and formulate a joint consistent policy in regard to local demands. We can easily meet about the time of the next Provincial Committee meeting which will take place in Allahabad on the 12th May, 1923. Meanwhile it will be desirable if brief reports were sent to us about the condition of the various municipalities, the Congress strength in them and the general outlook. The question of hoisting the national flag on the municipal building may crop up in any city and I should specially like to know your views and your Committee's views in the matter.

I cannot say much about the details of your future municipal work but I am very clear about the principle. The great work that lies before every Congressman is to fight for Swaraj unceasingly, to strengthen the Congress and not to rest till we have achieved our goal. Everything else is secondary. We have gone to the municipalities to help our primary object, not for secondary and comparatively unimportant reasons. Let us be careful that we do not forget this or else our capturing the municipalities will become a curse to us rather than a blessing. If by our presence in the Municipal Board our Congress work suffers then it is better for us to leave the Board and concentrate on the Congress work. On no account can we allow the Congress to take a back seat. You may have taken office. My colleague and fellow Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee, Chaudhri Khaliquz-Zaman, has been elected Chairman of the Lucknow municipality. Our General Secretary, Pandit Harkaran Nath Misra, has been elected Vice-Chairman. I have been made Chairman of the Allahabad Board. It is somewhat of a shock to me to occupy the post and to carry the additional burden. We had all hoped that our comrade Srijut Purushottam Das Tandon would honour us by accepting this office. But he was reluctant and ultimately for various reasons into which I need not go, I was put in the chair. I accepted the office because my comrades demanded this of me, but I accepted it with considerable misgivings. I feel that the wrong man has been chosen when better men were available. I trust that I will be permitted at an early date to hand over charge to some colleague of ours fitter for the task than I am.

Today I am Chairman of Allahabad Municipality and Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee. I have little doubt in my mind about the relative importance of the two offices. I am prouder of the Secretaryship and if the Committee will have me I intend sticking to this Secretaryship. This is my main work and I shall not permit other functions to interfere with this to any large extent. The day I am satisfied that the municipal Chairmanship is injuring my Congress work that day I shall submit my resignation of the Chairmanship. For the

Chairmanship is to me only the means for serving the nation for hastening Swaraj. The best method of doing so is to go straight ahead on the lines chalked out by our leaders and not to wander in the shady alleys and lands of constitutional activity. My mentality is revolutionary. I believe in revolution and in direct action and in battle. I know that many times we shall have to advance and engage the enemy and offer the inevitable price of freedom before we finally carry out the citadel. But I know also that revolutions require training and discipline, that direct action requires soldiers. Therefore, we must organise and instil discipline amongst our workers. I have written at some length to remove any misapprehension that may have arisen on account of my becoming Chairman of the municipality. I want my fellow-workers to know and understand me completely. If any one imagines that I am going to function as Chairman of the Allahabad Board for the next three years and to let my other duties suffer he is grossly mistaken. I do not forget the history and agony of India during the last few years and I am not going to spend most of my time in any office while my beloved leader lies in jail. I shall give battle whenever I can. I shall fight and hit hard whenever I may. That is my main function till Swaraj is attained. All else is training and preparation.

Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Commissioner, Allahabad Division, regarding Passenger Tax[1]

No. 104/XII-2/2

Allahabad
dated April 24, 1923

Sir,

With reference to G.O. no. 1370/XI-595E, dated April 10, 1923 received under your office endorsement no. 6143/XXIII-183, dated April 14, 1923, I have the honour to forward a copy of Board's resolution

1. U.P. Government Proceedings Nos. 1 to 52, Municipal Department File No. 595 E, April 1927. Passenger tax, Allahabad Municipality—No. 9(a) and 9(b).

no. 22, dated April 21, 1923 accepting the following rates of commission demanded by the East Indian and other Railways for the collection of the tax.

1. Oudh and Rohilkhand Railway .. 3% (subject to a maximum of Rs. 1,800 per annum)
2. East Indian Railway .. 5%
3. Bengal North-Western Railway .. 1%

The board also undertakes to bear the initial expenses to be incurred by the East Indian Railway in supplying revised printed tickets.

(2) With reference to your enquiry as to how the money realized from this tax will be spent, I have to draw your attention to resolution no. 690[2] of the board already sent to you. All sanitary improvement in the city will be conducive to the health and convenience of the pilgrims and a special effort is being made to improve the sanitation of the city. The water supply also affects the pilgrims greatly. Tube wells are being sunk in order to improve the water supply and the tube well in Daraganj is specially meant for the convenience of the pilgrims. Our new budget estimate for 1923-24, which I hope to send you within 10 days will indicate to you the manner in which the board intends to spend money on sanitary projects. These projects will cost the board a far larger sum of money than is likely to be realized from the tax. It is our intention to cater specially for pilgrims and we are asking our Medical Officer of Health to suggest methods whereby we can add to the convenience and health of our visitors.

Yours, etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

COPY OF BOARD'S RESOLUTION

Resolved that the rates of commission demanded by each railway and noted in paragraph 2 of G.O. no. 578 of January 19, 1923 be accepted.

Resolved further that the board undertakes to bear the initial expenses to be incurred by the East Indian Railway in supplying revised printed tickets equal to the stock which will become useless owing to the addition of the tax to the fare.

2. Not included here.

5. On the Board's Patronage[1]

The Municipal Board employs a large number of persons in the various departments under its control and has thus a great deal of patronage at its command. It would be a platitude, hardly deserving of repetition, to say that on the integrity and competence of the employees depends the efficiency and utility of the Board. Platitudes are dull things, unpleasant reminders of still more unpleasant facts. I would not have ventured to offer these observations to members of the Board if I had not had the misfortune during the past few days, of coming across several instances where this wholesome platitude was forgotten or ignored. I have been pestered with applications for appointments. Some gentlemen have imagined that my position in the Board would facilitate their entrance to a land flowing with milk and honey. Chits and recommendations have been brought to me from friends and attempts have been made to influence me in favour of various applicants. I have no doubt that every other member has a similar tale to tell. The Executive Officer has made the same complaint to me. There is evidently an impression amongst some people that the Board is a charitable organisation meant to supply soft jobs to the needy and the deserving, an asylum for the halt and the lame who have failed in the battle of life and who now seek shelter under the hospitable roof of the municipality.

I think that members should make it very clear that this kind of thing will not be tolerated for an instant. I would suggest that some general principles be laid down for the guidance of the public and all applicants for posts. Personally I have an almost unconquerable aversion to the "chit" system. Nearly everybody in India gives a testimonial, and nearly everyone flaunts these "chits" in the face of a long suffering people. I would suggest that such "chits" or testimonials should be made taboo. Every person who applies should give references only. The necessary enquiries can be made from the persons referred to. Any person bringing a specific letter of recommendation addressed to a member or the Executive Officer should be viewed with disfavour. It should be made quite clear that an applicant lessens his chances by trying to influence the officer concerned in this manner. If all members refrained from giving testimonials to applicants for posts

1. 24 April 1923, A.M.B. File No. 3/XII-1 of 1923.

and only answered references made to them, a healthier atmosphere would immediately be introduced in our activities.

I shall be very glad if members would make suggestions as to how to deal with the question. It is not easy of solution. Yet I am sure we can solve it if only we stick to this principle that incompetence is a deadly sin and will not be tolerated in any department of our work. I would personally introduce the element of responsibility as far as possible in every department and hold the head strictly accountable for any lapse or slackness of his subordinate. Only thus can work prosper.

The Executive Officer and I will try our utmost to improve matters according to our lights but the help of every member is needed and I earnestly and respectfully solicit this help.

Jawaharlal Nehru
Chairman
24-4-23

6. On the Report of the Water Works Enquiry Committee[1]

The report[2] reveals an extraordinary state of affairs. I am not concerned with individual responsibility. It is clear that without responsibility the Water Works Department is being run in an inefficient manner. The daily life of the people is perhaps more affected by this Department than by any other. A single day's stoppage means misery for thousands. I trust the Board will see to it that this Department is run on thoroughly efficient and business lines. Every officer in the Department must be made to understand that the Board will hold him personally responsible for the proper running of the departmental machinery. Success and failure will be the tests applied In case of

1. *The Leader*, 30 April 1923.
2. The Board had appointed a committee to enquire into the administration of the water works, and the committee had reprimanded the engineer for neglecting his duties. The report and its recommendations were considered at an emergency meeting of the Allahabad Municipal Board on 28 April 1923.

the latter, excuses will not find favour with the Board, and immediate and drastic action will be taken. Only such officers should be employed who are prepared for this responsibility.

I have noted with surprise the remarks made by the Superintending Engineer, Public Health Department, regarding the administration of our water works. Since August 1920 or perhaps even earlier he has been passing very disparaging remarks on the state of the water works. I do not know if these remarks were brought to the notice of the Board, and if so, what action the Board took. A remark in the report to the effect that the 'Executive Officer threatened the Water Works Engineer that the matter would be laid before the Board if any further delay occurred' has surprised me considerably. From this it appears that the Board was not usually informed of these matters. A system which tolerates this state of affairs is wrong. Any serious criticism by a responsible officer of our work must be brought to the notice of the Board without delay and immediate steps should be taken to meet it.

I trust that the enquiry will result in straightening up affairs in the Department.

Jawaharlal Nehru

7. On Electoral Reform[1]

"Upon the matter of regulating the suffrage", said Montesquieu[2], "depends the destruction or salvation of States." And since the days of Montesquieu, a hundred and fifty years ago, a continuous demand has come forth from the people for a broadening of the franchise, and latterly for universal suffrage. In India also stress has often been laid and rightly on this extension of the right to vote. But equally important is the technique of elections and the method for preventing fraud and corrupt practices. Everyone who has had anything to do with elections in any country knows how difficult it is to deal with

1. 7 May 1923. A.M.B. File 3/XIII of 1923.
2. (1689—1755); French political philosopher and author of *De L'Esprit des Lois*.

these questions. In Allahabad we have only recently had some extraordinary instances of impersonation and unfair dealing. Members of the Board, fresh from their elections, would do well to give a thought to these matters and endeavour to find a way out.

I have received two letters on this subject from Government which I am circulating amongst members for their information. In one of them the proposal is made that in municipal elections each candidate should be provided with a separate ballot box marked by some distinctive colour or emblem, or alternatively, that on voting papers in addition to the names of the candidates there should be added some distinguishing symbols. If either of these proposals is adopted and no other change made, it might result in our having an array of a dozen or more ballot boxes or a ballot paper with a multitude of signs and symbols. It is also clear that with a ballot box for every candidate there can be no secrecy of voting even for the literates.

To my mind the chief difficulty in Allahabad is the existence of plural constituencies. In non-Moslem Ward III there are as many as five seats. In Ward IV there are four seats amongst the Moslems and four amongst the non-Moslems. This is very undesirable and the average illiterate voter is hopelessly at sea when he faces the returning officer. The first reform that is needed therefore is the creation of single member constituencies. Plural constituencies can only be justified if we have proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote. That is admittedly the best and the most scientific system and it gives every minority a chance, and I earnestly hope that before very long this will take the place of our system of communal representation. But this system is only meant for those who have received a fair amount of education. Thus for the present there should be no plural constituencies.

In New York and elsewhere in America great importance is attached to having small election districts and usually they consist of 400 voters, or at most 600. It is very difficult in a small district of this kind to impersonate voters or to indulge in many other corrupt practices. Thus we should aim at dividing up our single member constituency into a number of smaller districts each having a polling booth. The chief objection to this is the multiplication of election officials. But that evil is preferable to shameless impersonation.

Another check on corrupt practices in America is a system of personal registration in every town of more than 5000 inhabitants. This takes place some days before the polling and only those who come and register themselves personally are entitled to vote.

If the above changes are brought about then it will not be necessary or desirable to have a large number of ballot boxes. It may however be desirable even then to have a symbol on the voting paper. Such symbols have been in use in America e.g. the Democratic candidate has a star, the Republican an eagle and the Prohibitionist a fountain.

The second proposal made by Government is that every candidate for municipal election should be required to deposit a security of Rs. 50/- which will be liable to be confiscated in the event of his securing less than a certain percentage of votes recorded. I do not know if Rs. 50/- will keep away many aspirants. Still I think that it would be desirable if this proposal were acted upon.

I shall be glad if members will favour me with their opinion on the above points at an early date.

Jawaharlal Nehru

8. On Municipal Work during April and May 1923[1]

I am obliged to those Chairmen of Committees and heads of departments who have been good enough to send me reports of the work done during the last two months....

I notice that the standing committees are not taking as much interest in the work of their departments as they should Extraordinarily few meetings are held and even then there is a poor attendance. Each Committee should keep a very close watch on its department. Instead of this I find that a committee meets once in a blue moon and if, fortunately, a quorum is present, a number of routine matters are gone through. If it was necessary for the board to meet 19 times during the two months it was necessary for each committee to meet at least once a week. The record is very poor. The Octroi[2] Committee met six times of which two meetings had to be adjourned for

1. *The Leader*, 16 June 1923
This long note, relevant extracts of which have been printed, is of interest as the first official report drafted by Jawaharlal.
2. Octroi is a duty levied on articles on their entry into a town.

want of a quorum. Messrs. Mazhar Husain[3], Girwar Sahai Saxena[4] and Khan Bahadur Muhammed Abdul Baqi Khan[5] only attended one meeting. An important matter like the revision of the octroi rules could not be taken because of want of a quorum. The Chairman specially drew the attention of members to the importance of this question and yet at the adjourned meeting only the Chairman and Mr. C. T. Robbie[6] were present. It is somewhat surprising to me why so much keenness is exhibited at the time of the election of the standing committees, when many members have no intention of attending meetings or in any way helping the administration of their departments. I have referred to the octroi report. That is, as a matter of fact, the best report I have got. The other reports, excepting the Education Committee's, exhibit a more woeful state of affairs. The Education Committee met five times, one meeting proving abortive for want of a quorum. The Public Health Committee met three times; the Public Works Committee twice, the second meeting having two members only, the chairman being one of the absentees; the *Nazul* Committee twice and the Town Improvement Committee once only. I have had no report from the Mechanical Plants Committee or the Hackney Carriage Joint Committee, but I presume that they have not distinguished themselves in this particular.

I can understand the Town Improvement Committee not meeting frequently, for, as the Chairman put it, the business of the Committee does not consist of routine work of making plans. But I presume that the process of making plans and brain work generally would be helped by consultation amongst the members of the committee. So far as the other committees are concerned, it is a wonder to me how they can carry on in the manner they do. The Public Health Committee and the Public Works Committee have charge of most important departments. Daily complaints come to me about the work of these departments and yet the committees have only met three times and twice respectively. I have been grieved to notice that the chairman of the Public Works Committee left his charge for a full month. He has sent me a report, one of the lengthiest I have received, and yet I regret I have found little satisfaction in it. It is full of good intentions but little has been done or attempted. Owing to the illness of the municipal engineer, and the absence on leave of the head clerk, work has been hampered and is in great arrears. The Chair-

3. Superintendent, Allahabad High Court and member A.M.B., 1923.
4. Member, A.M.B., 1923.
5. Member and elected Junior Vice-Chairman, A.M.B., June 1924.
6. Secretary, Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association, Allahabad.

man of the Committee and his colleagues are 'anxiously waiting to accompany the municipal engineer on his inspection trips'. I would suggest that they might well bestir themselves even before the Municipal engineer comes back from leave. They have heavy work before them. They must immediately see to it that all hydrants are raised above the ground. This matter has become an urgent necessity now and can no longer be trifled with. The fact that sufficient budget provision has not been made for this is no reason why the work should not be taken in hand immediately. Complaints of the water supply have been made and we must remove forthwith all possibilities of contamination....

I would repeat what I have often said in my circular letters and elsewhere. Every head is responsible for his department. He cannot shirk responsibility. Each head clerk will be called to account for the faults of any clerk under him, each head of department will be held personally responsible for all defects in that department. If any head of department thinks that he has incompetents under him, as some reports indicate, let him get rid of them with all speed and without mercy.

I have ventured to criticise various departments and to make some suggestions for future work. My note would be of little value if I did not express my true feelings in the matter. Personally I have reason to be grateful to the permanent officers of the board and to my other colleagues for their uniform courtesy and indulgence. I would specially mention with gratitude the help I have received on all occasions from Mr. N. K. Mukerji[7], the Junior Vice-Chairman.

June 10, 1923

Jawaharlal Nehru
Chairman

7. Member, General Assembly of United Church of North India, Katra, Allahabad and Secretary, Christian Tract and Book Society, Member, A M B, 1920 36

9. On the Treatment of Prostitutes[1]

The question of the residence of prostitutes has been before the Board for many years. I have purposely headed this note differently. I want the question to be considered in its broader aspects and not merely on the narrow ground of place of residence. Let us know what we are driving at and then we may be in a better position perhaps to achieve our purpose. Last year the Board made a brave effort to abolish prostitution by passing a resolution and appointing a committee. The effort was foredoomed to failure. The world would be a very different place if we could abolish prostitution and lying and cruelty and oppression and the thousand and one ills that flesh is heir to by resolution. Unhappily we can proceed but slowly with the task of regeneration.

Admittedly prostitution is an evil and a canker which eats its way into society. It has existed from the dawn of history and we need not be vain enough to imagine that we shall put an end to it suddenly. But every where attempts are made to lessen its evils in the interests of morals and public order and public health. In many cities of the West there prevails a system of regulation and registration but this has largely failed to achieve the end in view. In some cities recognised and inspected brothels are kept. These too are merely drops in the ocean and the vast majority of prostitutes refuse to be either registered or regulated in any way inspite of the best efforts of the police. The general tendency in the West now is for the state not to register or recognise in any other way the profession of prostitution. An indirect way of dealing with the question is to open clinics for the treatment of venereal disease and to spread knowledge of the effects of such disease. It is also realised that prominence given to prostitution is a bad thing and rules are made generally to prevent this. Soliciting is an offence in many countries.

1. A M B. General XII-2 Dept. File No. 9 of 1921-22/1926-27.
Many years later, on 14 October 1958, Jawaharlal wrote to Shri V. R. Krishna Iyer on this subject: "This is, of course, a major social problem, and I wish you success in your efforts to deal with it. I confess, however, that I have long felt that the type of efforts that are made usually meet with little success. I remember that, nearly thirty five years ago, when I was Chairman of the Allahabad Municipality, I tried to deal with this problem and wrote a long note on this subject. I did not succeed to any marked extent. The problem is so much connected with other economic and social aspects of our life that it is a little difficult to separate it Anyhow, it is good to do something about it."

Prostitution, it is well known, is largely due to two causes—the economic and the human. If we could raise the status of women and afford them honourable careers we would do more towards the lessening of the evil than by any number of byelaws. The human factor is more difficult to deal with, but everything that makes for social betterment and for equality between the sexes helps in the solution of the problem. We are scandalised at the residence of prostitutes in our midst. But prostitutes do not carry on their ancient trade by themselves. They are only one party to the transaction. I seldom hear anything against the other party, the man who exploits the poor woman and casts all the blame on her. *The proper way to deal with the question of prostitution* is to make it as dishonourable for a man as for a woman to help in it. We cannot do that by rules or byelaws, but only by raising public sentiment in its favour. If public opinion were strong enough we could reduce much of the exploitation and the apparent [consequences] of it. Some prostitution would of course remain so long as men and women do not become better as a whole than they are today.

The proposals to prevent prostitutes from residing in most of the residential or business quarters of the city would necessarily result in their being segregated in a remote corner of the city, if the byelaws were rigorously enforced. Personally I do not think it will be possible to drive out all prostitutes from the prohibited quarters. They may perhaps give up their public appearances but they are likely to carry on privately. But even if we succeed in driving them out and concentrating them in a remote corner of the city, how would this affect us? I shall quote from a European authority on the subject :

"In the course of an enquiry that included all the great cities of Europe from Glasgow to Budapest and from Rome to Christiania I did not meet a single police official who favoured the concentration of even registered prostitutes in a single neighbourhood. Not only is such concentration or segregation impracticable : it is highly undesirable. Prostitution, like crime, is most dangerous and most offensive when it collects in nests. The segregation of prostitution, even if possible, would be objectionable precisely as the segregation of criminals would be objectionable."

I feel that we should lay stress on the following points :

(i) Prevent prostitutes from residing near colleges, schools & hostels.

(ii) We should try to put a stop to all soliciting and all public examinations.

We should see to it that as little prominence is given to prostitutes or their trade as possible. The sights to be met with in some parts of the city of prostitutes displaying themselves from balconies etc. are not

desirable. I do not know if we can do anything to stop it but I should certainly like to do so as I consider it is a flagrant kind of soliciting.

(iii) The Board should encourage homes for women and give every facility to such institutions where widows and other women are afforded shelter and taught useful trade.

(iv) Carry on some educative propaganda among the people about the harmfulness of venereal diseases. I believe Pt. Krishna Kant Malaviya's resolution deals with this question.

(v) The laws of the country can help us by raising the age of consent and by imposing extreme penalties on persons exploiting young girls and living on their earnings.

I do not believe in issuing a fiat that prostitutes must not live in any part of the city of Allahabad except a remote corner. If this is done I would think it equally reasonable to reserve another part of Allahabad for the men who exploit women and because of whom prostitution flourishes.

Jawaharlal Nehru
10.6.23

I would add that brothels or regular houses of prostitution should on no account be permitted.

10. On Rules regarding the Residence of Prostitutes[1]

This matter has been pending for many years and has repeatedly taken up the time of the Board. In spite of many resolutions and several committees no final agreement has been sanctioned. Byelaws have been made and then cancelled and it is not easy to say what rules or byelaws govern the residence of prostitutes at present. The Board made a valiant attempt, by appointing a committee for the purpose, to "abolish absolutely the profession of prostitution", but this noble endeavour did not meet with the success it deserved. The matter is somewhat complicated and I have had to see many files in order to understand its history. In order to save members the trouble of having to go through all those papers and files I am giving some facts below.

1. A.M.B. General XII 2 Dept. File No. 9 of 1921 22/1926-27.

The question of framing draft byelaws to control the residence of prostitutes agitated our Board for some time. Eventually some draft byelaws were framed. These were very stiff and allowed only a small *strip of land east of Karelabagh road in ward IV* for the residence of prostitutes. They could not reside elsewhere. On

29.8.19 These draft byelaws were referred to a sub-committee of 5 (*Messrs R. N. Basu etc.*)

16.11.20 Mr. R. N. Basu sends report on behalf of sub-committee, says no other member of sub-committee attended. Hence *report was only his personal one.*

16.3.21 Board passed 3 byelaws in accordance with recommendations of Basu's committee.

14.6.21 *These 3 byelaws sanctioned by Govt. and published in Gazette* to come into force from 1st January 1922 (see byelaws).

6.11.21 Byelaws announced by beat of drum—press etc.

6.12.21 Motion to cancel byelaw 1 etc. *Board adjourns because of* Chairman's (P. D. Tandon's) arrest that day.

10.1.22 Motion to cancel byelaws. Consideration postponed for 6 *months apparently because P. D. Tandon so desired it.*

12.7.22 Above motion accepted by Board Committee appointed to draw up scheme to abolish absolutely the profession of *prostitution.*

28.7.22 Meanwhile some other draft amendments made to byelaws. Board appoints a fresh committee with B. Damodar Das as chairman to report whether these byelaws are "in consonance with the spirit of Municipalities Act". (This committee has not yet submitted any report).

8.9.22 Report of sub-committee appointed to abolish prostitution. Suggests law etc. (see).

11.1.23 Board resolution. Above committee has failed to carry out work entrusted to it. Prostitution still flourishes.

This is the position today. Legally the three byelaws published in the Gazette on 14 6 21 have still the force of law. The resolution of the Board cancelling byelaw 1 does not take away anything from the *legal force of the byelaw. On the other hand it is very undesirable to* take legal action on the basis of a byelaw which the Board itself has attempted to cancel. It is therefore necessary that the position be made clear. Either byelaw one be removed from our byelaws in the manner provided for by the law and byelaws 2 and 3 also either removed or altered, or the byelaws should be confirmed and an attempt made to enforce them. I would also point out that the resolution of the Board

dated 12.7.22 only purported to cancel byelaw I and did not touch byelaws 2 and 3.

A side issue has also arisen. In July 1922 one Muhammad Akabar and others sold a house in *mohalla* Chowk to a prostitute *named Akhtari.* The residents of the *muhalla* objected and sent in a petition demanding action under the new byelaw. Thereupon (on 6.8.22) the Executive Officer issued a notice to the vendor directing cancellation of the sale. (*on 12.7.22 Board accepted motion cancelling* byelaw 1 and on 28 7.22 Damodar Das Committee appointed). No further action taken. The residents of *muhalla* have also appealed to Commissioner with whom Board has been corresponding on the subject. In letter No. 5432 dated 25 4.23 Commissioner draws attention to fact that even if byelaw 1 be enforced, no prosecution can take place for a sale of house property. The byelaw only applied to the residence of public prostitutes and not to their acquiring property. Commissioner wants Board's *opinion about* byelaws so that he may either take steps to cancel them or the Board may enforce them.

I agree with the Commissioner's interpretation of the byelaw 1. I think it is clear that under byelaw I we cannot proceed against a prostitute or any other party for buying or selling house property in the prohibited area. Byelaw 2 is ambiguous on the point. The words "otherwise dispose of" would seem to include a case of sale. I feel however that it would be wrong to proceed in the courts against any party under the circumstances mentioned above. I would suggest to the Board that this matter be dropped and no steps be taken against the vendor or vendee.

I would also suggest that byelaws 1, 2 and 3 be cancelled and that the Commissioner be asked to take the necessary steps for this purpose. It will be difficult to amend them or improve them. Let us remove them entirely and then proceed with a clean slate. Some action is I think necessary. The problem is a most difficult one and cannot be solved merely by resolution. The Board can hardly frame byelaws or even amend them without a previous consideration by a committee. I know that committees on this subject have not a proud record. One of them sat on the file for many months and eventually returned it without any suggestion. Still I would suggest that a committee of three or 5 be appointed to suggest rules or byelaws and to report within a month.

I am making my suggestions as to how we should view this question on a separate sheet.

Jawaharlal Nehru
10 6.23

11. On Presentation of Civic Addresses[1]

It has of old been the custom of municipalities and other local bodies to honour men of note who have served their city or their country and have deserved well of their fellow-countrymen by the presentation of addresses of welcome. In England the freedom of the city is usually conferred on the favoured individual. In India no such elaborate ceremonial is gone through and the local bodies content themselves merely with the presentation of an address. In pursuance of this practice a large number of Government officials have been favoured with caskets and addresses. No objection was raised to this on behalf of the Government, and the money spent thereon were gladly sanctioned. Municipal Boards were encouraged to bow down and worship before the representatives of the power that held the country. Members of the old boards, brought up in the traditions of a bygone age, accepted this state of affairs as one of the inscrutable dispensations of Providence against which it was unwise to rebel. The usual state of many boards, embarrassed with deficits or looking forward to Government loans and grants, was one of trepidation lest the Government be annoyed and *inter alia* refuse financial help. And so this process of moral collapse went on and board after board did not honour those whom it would have liked to honour and to whom the honour was due but those the Government wanted to honour. It did not honour any individual for his virtues but simply because he happened to occupy a certain post or wear a certain uniform. Honour was due to the chair of State or to the livery of office and not to the person, wise or unwise, good or bad, who happened to sit on that chair or wear that livery. This arrangement, however humiliating to the board, was entirely to the liking of the gentlemen wearing these liveries and sitting on these gilded chairs, and there was or could be no conflict between them and the board.

Latterly, however, boards have developed the inconvenient habit of thinking for themselves. They have even presumed to honour men whom the Government does not like. In our own city of Allahabad, for the first time in the history of our board, a non-official, Deshbandhu

1. *The Leader*, 29 June 1923.
On 21 May 1923 the U P Government informed local district and municipal bodies that funds would be sanctioned for the presentation of addresses only to the Governor General and the Governor. Jawaharlal wrote this note for the guidance of the members of his Board

Chittaranjan Das, was presented with an address of welcome some months ago and the board also decided to honour similarly Hakim Ajmal Khan Sahib. A very petty sum of Rs. 25/- was voted for their addresses.

For years past the Government had been sanctioning without demur the considerable sums spent on caskets etc. given to Government officials. But now that the non-official has entered their preserves, their conscience has begun to trouble them. Having swallowed many camels they are now straining at a gnat. A G.O. informs me that the question of public expenditure by municipal and district boards on the presentation of addresses was referred to the Standing Committee of the Legislative Council appointed to advise the Minister for Local Self-Government. This Committee has recommended that expenditure on addresses to other than the Governor-General or the Governor of these provinces should not be sanctioned. This recommendation has been accepted by the Governor 'acting with his Ministers'.

It is clear that Government are not much concerned with the financial side of the question. They want to put a stop to the presentation of addresses to persons they do not like and instead of acting in an honest and straightforward manner, they have adopted these tortuous and indirect methods. But the cloven hoof is apparent.

The question for the Board to consider is whether they are going to abdicate from their functions and leave it to the Government to determine whom they are going to honour and whom they must not. It is not so much a question of political opinion. Every member of the Board, whatever his opinions on wider issues may be, must jealously guard the rights and prerogatives of the Board and refuse to tolerate any interference with them. The proposal of the Government to interfere, however indirectly, with one of the established rights of the Board is an insult and impertinence. I trust the Board will agree with this view and will so inform the Government.

Jawaharlal Nehru

12. Note to Members of the Board and Heads of Departments[1]

I have received two important communications from the Commissioner in the course of the last few days. The first of these was the Commissioner's reply to our annual report, and this contains a brief survey of municipal activity during the past year. The second is his answer to our budget estimates for 1923-24. I have replied to both these letters, and in the ordinary course both the Commissioner's letters and my replies to them will be circulated amongst members with a host of other files, and eventually laid before the Board. It is possible that if only this procedure was followed the attention of many members may not be drawn to them. I attach some value to the correspondence, and would like every member to read it carefully. I have therefore requested the officer to circulate these letters separately to all the members, so that each one of us may have an opportunity of considering them.

2. I have already had my say in my replies, but I would like to lay special stress again on some important points brought out by the Commissioner. Unfortunately I have to rely on my memory, as I am away from Allahabad and have not got the correspondence or any other papers with me. Another piece of ill luck is my being confined to bed with fever. I would therefore crave the indulgence of members for the scrappiness of this note and perhaps for other errors of needless repetition and the like.

3. The Commissioner has laid repeated stress on the unsatisfactory condition of our finances. We owe a sum of over Rs. 6,00,000/- to Government and for some years we have not paid anything towards this loan. This year we have set aside a small sum for the purpose but this is barely a third of the amount of the annual instalments. The result is that penal interest is being charged us and our debt is gradually mounting up. Members know that a new water works organisation scheme is being considered and in another year's time we may have to raise a big loan to finance it. How will we pay the interest and the sinking charges on this new loan if we cannot cope with our present debt? It may be that we will be required to pay as much as two lakhs a year towards our loans. This will necessarily

1. 24 July 1923. A.M.B. File No. 26/VII-9 of 1923-24.

result in heavy curtailment of other expenses and perhaps the abandonment of some projects. We must therefore take stock of our assets and liabilities now and shape our course accordingly. There is a very natural desire in the minds of members to encourage the spending of money on objects of public good e.g. public health and sanitation, education, public works etc. This desire led the Board to alter considerably the recommendations of the Finance Committee in regard to our last Budget estimates. The amounts allotted to education and public health were largely increased at the expense of the sum budgeted for the repayment of our debts. We cannot afford to be magnanimous with money other than our own and the best of projects must wait if we have no funds.

4. The two ways of improving our financial condition are increasing our revenue and lessening our expenditure. I do not know what new methods we can devise for increasing our revenue. We have recently raised our octroi rates and the house and water taxes and we cannot think of any further increase at present. Indeed I am doubtful if the present octroi rates do not err on the side of being too heavy. Octroi is not a very desirable source of revenue[2]. It is always a nuisance and may sometimes become a serious hindrance to trade. There is already a tendency in Allahabad amongst a number of traders to adopt underhand methods in order to avoid the payment of octroi. This must of couse be checked, but too high a rate of octroi will always lead to such practices. The new rates of house and water taxes are also heavy and have not made the Board very popular with the public. The only other principal source of revenue is the tax on carriages and motors etc. We are trying to get as much out of this as possible and we cannot increase it indefinitely. A new tax—the passenger tax—has been included in the budget but it has not yet been sanctioned by Government. How then are we to raise our revenue substantially? I confess I can think of no feasible method but I am a novice and perhaps older members will be able to make helpful suggestions. A source of income

2. However, octroi continues to be collected in Allahabad, and Jawaharlal, as Prime Minister, wrote to the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh on 23 March 1955: "I was surprised to learn that the Allahabad Municipality still charges octroi duty. I remember that more than thirty years ago when I was Chairman of the Municipality I had recommended strongly that octroi should be abolished. I am sure this is coming in the way of normal trade and development here. It might mean a loss of two or three lakhs of rupees, perhaps, for a year or two, but this would be easily made up later. I hope you will look into this matter soon."

which we are not fully utilizing at present is our sullage. I think that if we proceed in a business like manner we might under the new water works scheme realise as much as Rs. 1,00,000/- yearly from the sale or other use of our sullage. For the present we could easily get up to Rs. 12,000 per annum for our surplus sullage. The offer made to us for the purchase of surplus sullage meant this and we could have got a substantial sum even in the current financial year.

5. We come then to retrenchment. A committee has been considering this for a considerable time. I have no idea of what they have done so far and on what lines they are working. But to my mind real retrenchment does not consist in getting rid of a number of persons in the municipal establishment. A small sum saved thus will not make much difference. Real retrenchment must aim at efficiency. An efficient staff is always cheaper in the end. I regret that the present municipal staff is not efficient. There is far too much slackness and generally people do not seem to be wide awake or swift enough. If the recommendations of the Retrenchment Committee result in introducing efficiency in our various departments then they may congratulate themselves on the outcome of their labours. Efficiency will necessarily bring greater revenue and will lessen expenditure. One efficient person is worth more than any number of inefficients and to employ an incompetent or partly competent person in order to save a small sum is the worst economy.

6. In this connection I should like to say something about a wider issue. All large municipalities in India or the West have to face the problem of the division of responsibility between experts and popular representatives. Municipal administration is becoming more and more complex and the expert is gradually coming in to guide if not to control the activities of every department. Apart from matters requiring technical knowledge, it is felt that special experience is required for municipal administration and mere "common sense" is not enough. In America this has resulted in the evolution of a highly paid and a very efficient person called the "City Manager" who is the executive head of the municipality. He has very large powers but he is of course subject to the elected representatives and can be dismissed by them at any moment. The city manager and other experts are considered to be the permanent officials of the Municipality who do not, or should not, change with a change in the political complexion of the elected representatives. They are given the largest freedom and are only interfered with in matters of policy. Indeed it is impossible for any expert to function if he is constantly interfered with, often by persons who have no special knowledge of the subject. He will not feel that

he is responsible for the work entrusted to him and the pride of the artist and the specialist in him will seldom be quickened to action for the benefit of the Municipality. Under modern conditions we must have experts. If we want to utilise them to the full we must allow them a free hand and there should be as little interference as possible with their work. The ultimate direction of everything must of course remain with the elected representatives. Every expert or permanent official should know and feel that he is their servant and has to answer to them for everything that he may do. Permanent officials who are not under popular control, as we know to our cost, are a danger against which we must guard. They are too wooden, and utterly out of touch with the people, and have no sense of proportion or vision. They always tend to make a close corporation of themselves, indulge in mutual praise and are wholly intolerant of people who differ from them. This cannot be permitted but the elected representatives can well have full control over their servants and yet allow them a great deal of liberty.

7. We should introduce the element of responsibility and make the head of each department fully responsible for every sin of omission or commission of each clerk under him. We can only do so if we allow him considerable freedom. We cannot thrust inefficient men into his office and then hold him responsible for their misconduct. I therefore am of opinion that members of the Board as such should seldom think of any appointments. Since I have become Chairman I have received a vast number of applications for municipal appointments but so far as I can remember, I have not recommended even one of them to our permanent officers lest my recommendation be considered almost an order and be acted upon accordingly. If even so any incompetent person is employed I think I shall be perfectly justified in holding the permanent officer who employed him responsible for his inefficiency or misdeeds. I should like to make it quite clear that the one excuse I do not wish to hear from any head of department is that his subordinates are incompetent. If any person is incompetent he must be removed regardless of personal considerations.

8. Effective retrenchment will mean for us that no new project should be taken in hand which involves heavy expenditure of our money. I have heard light hearted suggestions that Government will give us a loan for this and a grant for that. I am afraid I dislike the idea of continually appealing to Government for help. But even if Government gave us a loan it will mean an additional burden on us. The only loan that we should have in view is the Water Works loan and on no other account should we approach Government for a loan however tempting the project may be.

9. The Commissioner refers to the adulteration of food and suggests that we should bestir ourselves in the matter and take more action against offenders than we did last year. Last year's figures are certainly not promising and I hope the Health Department will show better results this year. In this matter members can be of great help by bringing cases of adulteration etc. to the notice of the Health Officer. The suggestion that our laboratory might be used for detecting adulteration is worthy of consideration. Perhaps at present it has not got the necessary apparatus. This might be purchased if it is not too expensive.

10. The Commissioner has called our attention to the terrible infant mortality. The figures are indeed appalling. This is one of the matters we must provide for even though the best of our schemes and projects suffer. The Board has already appointed a committee to report. I feel that our present system of keeping *dais* is worse than useless. They are not properly trained and there is no proper supervision. In any event they should go. We should replace them with something that is more reliable.

11. Another matter to which the Commissioner has referred is the disposal of sullage. It is most unfortunate that after two years or so of negotiations and discussions we have returned to our starting point and have to start afresh. The question of loss of money, which we might realise immediately by the sale of the sullage, is important enough in the present state of our finances. But far more vital is the stoppage of the flow of the surplus sullage into the river near the *Sangam*. I feel, and I am sure that members will agree with me, that it would be a crime to do any thing which might result in an epidemic amongst the vast crowds that bathe in the *Sangam*. I had hoped that we could divert all our sullage and prevent it from going into the river before the *Kumbh Mela* which takes place next January. We have little time left for this now but I hope we shall yet succeed. I earnestly hope that the Committee which is considering this question will suggest a way out of the impasse.

12. There is another matter about which I should like to say something although the Commissioner has not referred to it—the purity of our water supply. Complaints have been made of this for some time past. I do not think there is any cause for alarm but I do think that there is considerable room for improvement. I am glad that all hydrants and scours are being raised. I hope the grouting of the second reservoir will also be taken in hand as early as practicable. All other methods of improving the supply should be explored and tried. The

excuse of want of funds should not be put forward. I am sure that the Board will not grudge money for this purpose.

I have written at unconscionable length. I hope my colleagues, if they take the trouble to read through this note, will not think me too officious or resent my troubling them even when I am absent from Allahabad.

Naini Tal
July 24th 1923

Jawaharlal Nehru
Chairman

13. On Municipal Work during June-August 1923[1]

Three months ago, I issued a short note on the work we had done in April and May. That note was largely taken up with complaints and fault finding. Since then, three months of hard work and earnest endeavour have gone by and today I have a far more agreeable task before me. I have gratefully to record the good work done by the chairmen of the committees, heads of departments and most of the members of the Board. If I have to find fault with anyone, it is the Chairman of the Board. I have been absent from Allahabad for lengthy periods and the burden of my work has fallen on other shoulders. I am grateful to Mr. Zahur Ahmad[2], the Senior Vice-Chairman, for having shouldered this burden. In his absence, it fell to Mr. N. K. Mukerji, the Junior Vice-Chairman, to add the Chairman's functions to his multifarious municipal duties. He has taken upon himself so many of my duties that I sometimes wonder how I could carry on without his help.

1. *The Allahabad Municipal Gazette Extraordinary*, 15 September 1923. Extracts.
2. A barrister of Allahabad and Senior Vice-Chairman, A.M.B. in 1923.

2. During the last three months, there were 26 meetings of the Board. The total number of meetings held during the last five months —since the new Board was formed—is 45. This works out at the heavy rate of 9 meetings per month, which is about double the last year's average. The work of the Board has greatly increased and has a tendency to go on increasing. I am glad to say that we are up-to-date in our work and there are no arrears, so far as board meetings are concerned....

9. Another matter connected with the water supply which has repeatedly come before the Board is the question of the disposal of surplus sullage. There appears to be some fatality which delays the solution of this problem and meanwhile we are losing good money and tolerating a very insanitary state of affairs. The *Kumbh Mela* is approaching and I very much fear that we cannot effectively control the sullage before that date. ..

13. I have received monthly reports from most departments. The one notable exception is the Building Department. In spite of repeated efforts, I have failed to elicit any kind of a report from this department during the past five months. The department is the greatest sinner so far as arrears are concerned and complaints are frequent. I hope that under its new and energetic Chairman, Mr. I. E. Gilbert[3], this chronic state of delay and dilatoriness will disappear. I find from copies of proceedings that the members of the Building Committee are not taking much interest in their work. On two recent occasions, meetings could not be held for want of a quorum. At the adjourned meetings only Mr. Gilbert was present and, naturally, the work was done expeditiously and without a single dissentient....

15. The Education Committee held 13 meetings during the three months. In one of their earliest reports, I was informed that the Committee was evolving a curriculum on national lines I shall await the result of their labours. They have introduced the Boy Scout movement in their schools and have just reported to the Board on the scheme of compulsory education. They have wisely suggested an increase in the salaries of the teachers to be appointed under this scheme. According to the Government scheme, the minimum salary is, I think, the miserable pittance of Rs. 14/- per month. I think that it is little short of scandalous that a teacher of our youth should be paid at that rate. The Committee has also introduced some national holidays in

3. Member, A.M.B., 1924-29.

their schools. I congratulate them specially on making the singing of Iqbal's[4] *Hindustan Hamara* a part of their school curriculum. Altogether, the Committee have done a good quarter's work with which they have reason to be satisfied.

16. The Public Works Committee only met 5 times during the 3 months. They have to face difficult problems which require ceaseless attention and I would suggest more frequent meetings. It is said that the Municipal Engineer has too much office work to do and has little time left for other important work. I think the complaint is partly justified. In future, however, I hope that he will have more time for other work as he has now been relieved of the heavy charge of part of the Water Works System. I am further informed that the office is in an unsatisfactory condition owing to the absence of the Head Clerk on sick leave. This is a feeble excuse. I hope the Executive Officer and Municipal Engineer will immediately see to it that proper arrangements are made to make the office efficient and up-to-date. It is unfortunate that a Head Clerk should fall ill, but it is still more unfortunate that we should be incapable of carrying on the work properly in his absence....

20. I have been shocked to see some of the roads, or rather apologies for roads, round about the city. Complaints are sometimes made about the condition of the roads in the Civil Station but few people ever hear or know about the roads in and round the city. The residents of the city are long suffering and not very vociferous. A humble petition for the metalling of a road is met with the stock answer of no funds and when the question of road repairs and renewals is considered, it is natural to think only of the metalled roads in the Civil Station and to forget that thousands have not even a decent *kutcha* road leading to their houses. In some places it is difficult to get any medical advice as no vehicles can safely go there and doctors refuse to walk the distance specially when this will involve wallowing in the mud. I think the Board has been sadly failing in its duty in its neglect of the city roads. Most of the people live in the city and by far the greatest amount of money is realised from them. And yet they derive the least advantage from it. Their money goes to improve and beautify the Civil Station. The Civil Station of Allahabad deserves to be

4. Sir Mohammad Iqbal (1876-1938); a well known Indian poet who wrote chiefly in Persian and Urdu. His poems had a great influence on his countrymen.

improved and kept up to the mark, but let us not forget that its residents are getting far more than they pay for; they are taking advantage of the taxes paid by the residents of the city.

21. I think that immediate attention should be paid to the metalling of a road leading to Atala and the road which goes to the brick-kilns. Atala and Gangaganj indeed are sinks of filth and dirt. I am told that any satisfactory scheme of sanitation and drainage would require a lakh or more as the land is low and forms a kind of cup. If this scheme has to be delayed, I hope that something will be done in the immediate future to get rid of the present horror.

22. The Mechanical Plant Committee[5] held 6 meetings during the three months, besides two which could not be held for want of a quorum, only the Chairman being present. I have already referred to the work of this department under another head. Complaint is made of the inefficiency of the firemen. It is no good complaining. Steps should be taken to replace the inefficients with more competent men even though this may involve a higher rate of pay .

26. A curious question of interpretation affecting a wider issue has arisen. Foreign goods coming from across the seas are charged octroi on the invoice. Indian goods are to be charged at the "market" rate whatever that may be. If this "market" rate is held to be the retail market rate, this is obviously higher than the invoice rate and the result is that Indian goods are actually penalised by being charged at a higher rate than foreign goods. This is a most undesirable result and yet this is the practice that is being followed at present. The matter is going up before the Board soon for their authoritative interpretation. Personally, I would urge that byelaws be framed empowering the Board to encourage Indian manufacturers by charging a heavier rate on foreign goods. Meanwhile, I hope at least that the Board will put an end forthwith to the present practice of protecting foreign goods.

27. The Chairman of the Town Improvement Committee is an ambitious person. He dreams of Allahabad as it should be fifty years hence. I envy him his dreams but not his powerlessness to realise them. To look far ahead is the only correct way of trying to improve a great city rationally and artistically. Unhappily, we have neither funds nor men to take up this work in earnest. Our engineers have

5. This Committee was formed to look after the water works, the drainage pumping station and tubewells.

hardly the time for extensive schemes of town improvement. The Committee has, therefore, to confine its activities to petty projects like the construction of public baths and the like. They are also trying to induce some generous minded citizen of Allahabad to build a theatre which might be used as a public hall. They recommended to the Improvement Trust that the area known as Minapur in Yahiapur and the land approached through Allahbande's Phatak near Chauk might well be taken in hand for improvement. The Trust does not view these suggestions with favour. They are too full of their own vast schemes to be able to think of smaller matters. Both Minapur and Allahbande's Phatak are inexpensive areas which can easily be acquired and converted into garden spots with, in the latter case, some good shops or houses which would pay handsomely. Another matter which has engaged the attention of the Committee is that sink of filth and rubbish in Shahganj known euphemistically as the "Phool" tank.

28. An important matter which should engage the attention of both the Building and the Town Improvement Committees is the construction of new houses on important streets like Johnstonganj. At present low and ugly and altogether disreputable structures are being built on this noble road which could have been made a sight worth seeing. I think we should have byelaws laying down definitely that only a certain style of houses will be permitted in these streets. The Board has also moved in the right direction by directing that applications for construction in congested areas should also be considered by the Town Improvement Committee....

31. I have been repeatedly approached by the *Ekkawalas* of Allahabad with a list of grievances. I think their complaints are largely justified and deserve every consideration. I am informed that during the last three months or so about 1,400 prosecutions of *Ekkawalas* were launched by the police. This is a stupendous figure and clearly indicates that something is very wrong somewhere. No rule or byelaw which requires so many prosecutions for its enforcement can be wholly good. The Municipality is not directly concerned in the prosecutions; that is the business of the police. But we must try to make the existence of *Ekkawalas* more tolerable. Their immediate grievance, apart from the number and frequency of prosecutions, is the want of a stand in Pasarhatta near the Chauk. Some months ago, a number of *Ekkas* were permitted to stand in this place, but the remedy was worse than the disease and the shop-keepers suffered a lot. I think that it is not desirable for us to have an *Ekka* stand there. We are trying our best to meet the difficulties of the *Ekkawalas* and hope to succeed partly at least.

32. In conclusion, I have only to say that I am very grateful to the officers and employees of the Board for the unvarying courtesy and indulgence they have shown to me.

Delhi,
September 13, 1923

Jawaharlal Nehru
Chairman

14. Message from Nabha Jail[1]

Dear Vyas[2], — What I expected for long has come to pass but I confess that it took me by surprise when it did happen. I came here on a peaceful mission of enquiry for a couple of days and did not imagine that anything untoward would happen. However, I was arrested at Jaito on the 21st. I tried to wire to you so that you might inform the Board immediately, but I have not been allowed to do so. We are now permitted to write letters and I take this opportunity of sending through you a message for the Board.

Two cases have been going on against us and I have no idea when they will end or what their result will be. In all likelihood, I am going to remain in Nabha territory for sometime as a guest of the present administration. I have no doubt that the Board will take the necessary steps to prevent my continued absence from affecting our work. You know that on two occasions I offered to resign from the Chairmanship, but on the advice of friends, I refrained from doing so. The period of my Chairmanship has now been somewhat suddenly interrupted, or may be ended.

I stood as a candidate for the Municipal Board six months ago much against my will and with a dislike of the usual municipal work. I did so morally because my friends and co-workers insisted on my standing. After my election there was no question of my becoming Chairman, but at the last moment, owing to various causes known to members, a principal reason being Tandon's refusal to accept it, I was pitch-forked into the Chairmanship I dreaded this office owing to my ignorance of municipal work and my other preoccupations.

1. 26 September 1923. *The Leader*, 6 October 1923.
2. Braj Mohan Vyas, Executive Officer of the A M B

Looking back over the past five or six months, I found that my outlook on municipal matters has largely changed. What I feared and disliked I have begun to like, and municipal work has begun to have some fascination for me. I feel that it is in the power of our Board to make life a little more bearable, a little less painful to the inhabitants of Allahabad. This is worthwhile work. But to me, in spite of my new liking for it, it is only secondary work. My real passion, as I have repeatedly informed the Board, lies in a different direction, and, God willing, I shall go that way till our purpose is attained.

What is, then, liking for municipal work in me due to? I have thought over this question and I have had only one answer. The Allahabad Municipal Board must have had many abler and better chairmen than I have been or can hope to be. But of one thing I am sure. No previous chairman could have had a better atmosphere to work in or more friendly cooperation from all members and officials of the Board. I cannot express my gratitude sufficiently to the members for their consistent and continued kindness to me. I am afraid, I am a very weak mortal making mistakes frequently and sometimes using harsh words. Members on whom I had no claim of previous friendship or old acquaintance, as well as members opposed to me in political and other matters, have offered to me their whole-hearted cooperation and have shown me every indulgence. It is this cooperation and indulgence that has made my path easy and made me attached to my work at the Board.

I am also grateful to the officers and employees of the Board for their uniform courtesy and help. To you and Mr. Tamini[3], I am deeply beholden. I do not know how I could have carried on my work without the daily assistance which both of you most ungrudgingly gave me.

In my last quarterly report I have indicated my ideas on some of the questions before the Board now. I am out of the heat and bustle of public activity for a while. I return, not without some satisfaction, to the seclusion where outside news seldom comes to disturb one's peace of mind or interfere with the quiet routine of the day. In this seclusion my thoughts will often go to the Municipal Board of Allahabad and its members and officers and I shall wish with all my heart that their labours may result in bringing some sunshine in the delinquent hearts of the poor in Allahabad.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Prem Kishan Tamini was the Assistant Secretary of the AMB.

15. On a Reception to Lord Reading[1]

I shall be obliged if you will kindly place the following lines before the meeting of the Board which is to be held today at 5 p.m. :—

I deeply regret that owing to physical incapacity I am again prevented from attending the meeting of the Board today. I would have particularly liked to attend this meeting as a resolution involving an important principle is being proposed. I feel, however, that in spite of my ill health, I should place my views in regard to this resolution before the Board for their consideration.

I feel that a public reception to the Viceroy is a shameful thing for anyone to whom the honour of India is dear and precious. I wish no personal discourtesy to Lord Reading. None of us wish him any discourtesy. But we are human, with eyes to see and often weep, and ears to hear, and hearts to feel, and feel the more because our arms are weak and there is no strength in us to stand upright and protect our own. Two and a half years of suffering the country has endured under Lord Reading's Viceroyalty and the noblest in the land lies in jail today. And now Lord Reading's Government in the arrogance of power have started a crusade against a brave and gallant people whose chief sin in the past has been a too great loyalty to the British Government. Their highest and their bravest have been arrested, and are being arrested by the hundred. Every Sikh with a black turban is being hunted down and fearing an exposure of their dark methods, the Government have gagged the press.

Is it this that we are asked to celebrate? Are these the brave deeds for which we wish to honour Lord Reading? I can be no party to this infamy. I cannot participate in these festivities when my heart is full and my eyes brim over at the thought of the persecution of these brave people by Lord Reading and his colleagues. I must dissociate myself utterly from all such celebrations.

Lord Reading, secure in his strength and proud of his might, has flung the challenge to the Sikhs and the Indian people. And he would have us applaud him for it, and thus complete our degradation. I am weak and powerless but I too have a little pride — the pride of the weak perhaps it may be. And I would sooner be trampled by Lord Reading's soldiery and ground to dust, rather than bow down to welcome a person who was responsible for so much sorrow to my country and countrymen.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. 25 October 1923. A.M.B. File 37/XII-3 of 1923-24

16. To Commissioner, Allahabad Division, regarding Passenger Tax[1]

No. 688-2/XII-2

Allahabad
13 November, 1923

Sir,

With reference to G.O. No. 2740/XI-595-E, dated October 12, 1923, received with your office endorsement no. 4487/XXIII-183, dated October 23, 1923, I beg to inform you that the municipal board have accepted the enhanced rate of commission demanded by the Bengal and North-Western Railway viz. 3 per cent. subject to a *minimum* of *Rs.* 1,800 per annum. As regards the figures of collections through each of the three railways, it is very difficult to give any accurate estimate but the rough figures are—

	Rs.
East Indian Railway	15,000
Oudh and Rohilkhand Railway	7,500
Bengal and North-Western Railway	7,500

2. The board are anxious that early orders may be passed so that the tax may be introduced *before the next Adh Kumbhi fair.* I would therefore request you to move the Government to have the tax sanctioned by the Government of India without delay. In the present state of their finances the board cannot afford to lose the substantial addition to their income which they hope to get if the tax is sanctioned and introduced before the fair commences.

I enclose herewith a copy of board's resolution.

Yours, etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru
Chairman, Municipal Board,
Allahabad

1. U.P. Government Proceedings Nos. 1 to 52, Municipal Department File No. 595-E, April 1927. Passenger Tax, Allahabad Municipality No. 13(a), 13(b).

Copy of board's resolution no. 535, dated November 12, 1923.

The Government letter No. 2740, dated October 12, 1923, forwarding a copy of a letter from the Agent, Bengal and North-Western Railway, demanding enhanced rate of commission for collecting the passengers tax was considered. It was resolved that the rate now demanded by the railway, viz. 3 per cent. subject to the minimum of Rs. 1,800 per annum be accepted and that the figures of collections through each railway as estimated by the executive officer be communicated to the Government.

The board further resolved that a special request be made to the Government to have the tax sanctioned by the Government of India before the commencement of the *Adh Kumbhi fair.*

17. On Municipal Work during September-November 1923[1]

My review of the work done by the various departments of the Municipal Board during the last quarter is, I regret to say, little based on personal knowledge or personal association. I have been guilty of long periods of absence from Allahabad and various causes, some of which were beyond my control, have resulted in my being kept away almost continuously from my municipal duties. A stay at Delhi for the Congress was followed by an involuntary stay at Nabha, and soon after came a somewhat protracted illness[2]. Even after that I had to spend much of my time at Amritsar. It is only by the indulgence of my colleagues on the Board and by their constant readiness to shoulder the burden that should rightly be mine, that I am continuing as Chairman of the Board. But it would be more in the fitness of things if some other person who would be something more than a ceremonial Chairman, could take charge of the office I have the honour to hold today....

11. The Education Committee held 5 meetings during the period under report. Besides these, two unfortunately could not be held for

1. 17 December 1923. *The Allahabad Municipal Gazette Extraordinary*, Part IV, 21 December 1923 Extracts
2. On his release from Nabha, Jawaharlal fell ill with a severe attack of typhoid.

want of a quorum. Their chief work has been the preparation of the compulsory education scheme. This has been passed by the Board and sent on to Government. Spinning wheels have been distributed in all girls' schools and lessons in spinning and carding given. I trust that spinning will be taught in a business-like way by experts and special attention is paid to the care and repair of the *charkha*. I am very glad to find that the boys are taking to scouting and both boys and girls have to drill. I hope that this will be persisted in. The Chairman of the committee informs me that special stress is being laid on health and sanitation and on habits of cleanliness. An admirable feature is a special day's outing every month for nature study and for developing the powers of observation of the children. The Chairman[3] makes a point of meeting all the head teachers every month and discussing with them their difficulties and suggesting improvements. She commends the efforts of teachers to improve the schools and specially mentions in this connection the headmistress of the Daraganj Girls' School.

12. Altogether, the report of the Education Department is an encouraging document. It is clear that attempts, which are not unsuccessful, are being made to infuse life in our schools and to lessen the deadening effect of education on a large scale. At the various prize distributions of the municipal schools and especially at the ceremony of the presentation of an address of welcome to Maulana Shaukat Ali by the Board, the boys and girls from our schools presented a cheering sight. Perhaps the best compliment to our schools is the fact that the children of many wealthy persons, who could afford to send them elsewhere, come to them. But satisfactory as all this is, we are faced by the urgent need for economy and even our education budget may have to suffer for want of funds.

13. The Public Works Department have sent no report for November. In September and October the committee held five meetings. The chief evidence of the department's activity, so far as the public is concerned, is the construction of the Johnstonganj sewer. A great part of this important thoroughfare has been dug up to the great inconvenience of every one who passes by. I trust the work will be over soon. It will bring great relief to the residents of Johnstonganj. Another evidence of the department's activity is an unsightly structure put up on the Stanley Road side of the Purushottamdas Park. This is meant

3 Shrimati Uma Nehru, wife of Shambhu Nehru, a cousin of Jawaharlal.

to be a *mali's* residence but why a *mali* should necessarily live in a structure which is most unpleasing to the eye, is not at all clear. Some of us are waiting with some trepidation, for the Public Works Department apparently does not believe much in combining beauty with utility, for the fountain to appear in the park....

21. Every month, with unfailing regularity, complaint is made by the *Mechanical Plants* Department of the menial staff in the Water Works and the firemen are especially said to be inefficient. It is extraordinary how this complaint continues to be made and yet no steps are taken to remove the inefficient and put better men in their place. I hope the committee will see to this. I am told that the engineering staff is efficient but is "slack" in sending reports. They "fight shy of pen and paper". I am afraid the staff will have to get over this aversion to pen and paper. Any slackness of this kind is most objectionable and is own brother to incompetence. It is impossible for a person who is slack to be efficient and I desire no slackness in the municipal employee. I hope the Mechanical Plants Committee will rigidly enforce the rule of periodical reports. I hope also that the committee will soon discard its present name and be called by the homelier name of the Water Works Committee.

22. The Public Health Committee held 8 meetings and 2 could not be held for want of a quorum. In the report for September, the promising statement was made that "slackers and undesirables" were being replaced wholesale. No further reference is made to this in the October or the November report. The omission is strange. Complaints continue to be made of the non-removal of filth and rubbish from places where it has been collected. The west section of Ward III is apparently the worst sufferer. This is an evil of long standing and I would suggest to the Public Health Committee to concentrate on this and make suitable arrangements for the speedy removal of all rubbish. Probably the most important duty of a municipality is to keep the city clean and it is most unbecoming for our Board to fail to come up to the mark in this respect. Perhaps the provision of dustbins in the congested parts of the city would go some way in helping to ease the situation. The contractor for rubbish removal for Ward I (Civil Station) did not do his work properly and has been replaced by another....

Jawaharlal Nehru
Chairman

18. To Commissioner, Allahabad Division, regarding Passenger Tax[1]

No. 755-2/XII-2,

Allahabad
January 8, 1924

Sir,

With reference to your telegram and letter no. 18-CH., dated January 5, 1924, communicating the sanction of the Government of India to the imposition of the passengers' tax, I have the honour to inform you that the municipal board passed a special resolution on January 7, 1924 directing the imposition of the tax with effect from January 15, 1924. I have already sent you a wire on the subject and I am now enclosing a copy of the resolution as required by section 135(1) of the Municipalities Act. I hope that the necessary notification will be published in the next Gazette.

Yours, etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Copy of board's special resolution No. 642, dated January 7, 1923.

The Government telegram intimating that the tax on passengers has been sanctioned by the Governor General in Council was read.

Resolved that the passengers' tax be imposed with effect from January 15, 1924, and that the Government be informed accordingly.

1. U.P. Government Proceedings Nos. 1 to 52, Municipal Department, April 1927; File No. 595 E Passenger tax, Allahabad Municipality No 18 and 18(a). Imposition of the tax was notified by the Government, vide Notification No. 55/XI-595 E, Municipal Department, 10 January 1924, it was imposed for a period of two years, with effect from 15 January 1924.

19. Statement at a Meeting of the Board[1]

I have taken the liberty of convening an emergent meeting as a serious situation arose yesterday at the *Kumbh Mela* owing to restrictions placed on bathing in the *Sangam*. Members of the Board are aware that the Municipal Board has no voice in the management of the *mela*. The Board is indeed treated with scant courtesy in regard to the *mela*. Nonetheless the Board cannot remain a passive and a silent spectator when the feelings of a large number of the residents of Allahabad are deeply hurt. The Ganges has this year taken a somewhat different course and the current is so strong near the *Sangam* that it is undoubtedly dangerous for people to bathe there without proper precautions. Little attempt was at first made to prepare a suitable bathing place near the *Sangam* but eventually on repeated request being made the Government made a special grant for the purpose and a host of volunteers prepared such a place where a limited number of persons could bathe in safety. The District authorities however refused all access to the *Sangam*. Every effort was made to make them agree to a small number of persons going in with proper precautions but they refused. A desire to prevent an accident or loss of life is most commendable and must appeal to everyone. The original plan of the authorities might have been based on this desire but I must say with regret that their attitude yesterday was entirely based on obstinacy and notions of prestige. They were prepared to allow even large numbers of persons to bathe in the *Sangam* but not those who had presumed to insist on bathing there unless they withdrew themselves and thus perhaps showed repentance for their temerity. The question of danger receded into the background and the whole issue became one of prestige. Danger can be discussed and overcome, prestige cannot. The result of this was a disobedience of the orders of the district authorities by a number of persons. It is most regrettable that a religious function should be marred by an exhibition of passion and conflict. I feel however that the blame must rest with the authorities who deliberately took a course which they must have known or should have known would result in deep annoyance to Hindus. They took little pains to begin with to prepare a suitable bathing *ghat* near the *Sangam*. When a small *ghat* was prepared and

1. 15 January 1924. A.M.B. File No. 23/XII-4 of 1923-24.

could be used with safety they would not allow even limited numbers to go to it with all necessary precautions. Their attitude was as wooden and wanting in reason as it could well be. There was little hint in it of a regard for Hindu feelings and susceptibilities. They have demonstrated that they have not the fitness to deal with the *mela*.

Yesterday is over with its obstinacy and folly, but the *mela* continues and it is for the Board to determine what steps, if any, it should take in the matter so that the pilgrims who come from afar may bathe in safety and yet may, as far as possible, be permitted to bathe according to their religious beliefs.

I would add just a few words. I must say that the behaviour of the police, officers and men, was commendable yesterday. Except in an individual case or two they behaved with courtesy and restraint.

Jawaharlal Nehru
15-1-24

20. To Commissioner, Allahabad Division, regarding the Use of the Word 'Vernacular'[1]

28. 1. 24

Sir,

The following resolution was passed by the Board on the 16th January:

> Resolved that wherever the word 'vernacular' occurs in the byelaws and regulations of the Board it be replaced by the word 'Hindustani'.
>
> Resolved further that Government be requested to replace the word 'vernacular' by the word 'Hindustani' in the Municipal Act and the rules made thereunder.

It was felt by the Board that it was not desirable to use the word 'vernacular' for 'Hindustani' as the ordinary use of that word is for the vulgar tongue or the *patois* and not for a literary language. Hindustani, either Hindi or Urdu, have literatures of their own and it would be incorrect to refer to them ordinarily as vernaculars. Another reason

1. AMB. File No. 44/XII 3 of 1924.

for the suggested change is the fact that 'vernacular' might mean any of the provincial languages in India. It is desirable to specify the particular language and in our province there can be little doubt that this language is Hindustani.

I trust that Government will see its way to change the word 'vernacular' to 'Hindustani' in the Municipal Act and the rules made thereunder.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

21. Note on Municipal work during December 1923 and January-February 1924[1]

. . .

5. The Municipal year is drawing to a close and the annual report will soon have to be prepared. I do not therefore at this stage, wish to discuss in any detail the work of the various departments and Standing Committees. A great part of their energies has latterly been taken up by the preparation of their budget for the coming year. In preparing this they were told to exercise the strictest economy and several departments, I am glad to say, responded to this appeal. The Water Works Department has considerably cut down its expenditure and so has the Education Department. The latter has amalgamated several schools and thus reduced the total number of schools. I trust this will be conducive to greater efficiency and will not deprive any children of the advantage of attending Municipal Schools. It is distressing even to appear to reduce the arrangements for education. I have felt that the physical and mental development of the young should be the special care of the state and the Municipality and in this respect we might well take a leaf out of the book of Soviet Russia. But the time for this is not yet and before we venture to take up ambitious schemes of education we must improve the sanitary and kindred services of Allahabad. The very first charge on the Board is to make of Allahabad a clean and healthy city with proper roads, water supply etc. This does not necessarily mean the starving of education and I hope that under the new

1. 31 March 1924. The Allahabad Municipal Gazette, 1 April 1924. Extracts.

arrangements a better system based on nationalistic principles will be introduced....

7. The problem of the upkeep of roads is intimately connected with another feature of Allahabad. Every visitor to Allahabad must notice the large compounds attached to bungalows. Most of these are not properly looked after and present a deserted appearance. It has become difficult for people here to keep large compounds in proper condition. The obvious remedy is that large compounds should not be encouraged. As it is Allahabad is quite spread out enough and scores of miles of road have to be kept in repair, watered, cleaned, lighted, etc. Schemes of Town Improvement, now being hatched in the Improvement Trust Office, would spread out Allahabad even more and increase the burden of the Board. What is required is that the present Civil Station of Allahabad should be more built up and the compounds attached to houses should become smaller and better looked after. The income of the Board would go up and the general appearance of Allahabad would also improve. Large compounds should be penalised for this purpose, either on the basis of area or road frontage....

9. The various committees to consider matters relating to the octroi have not yet finished their labours. It is being daily impressed upon me that the present octroi rates are strangling the trade of Allahabad. It is the height of unwisdom to kill the trade of Allahabad in order to realise a little more for municipal needs. I am anxiously awaiting the reports of the committees and I hope they will tackle the problem bravely and root out the evils of the present system.

10. Another matter which has been repeatedly brought to my notice is the dissatisfaction felt against the new assessment. I do not think the fault lies with the assessment. The rate of taxation is high, specially the water rate. This rate was not felt much when the assessment was low but as soon as the new assessment was made the pinch was felt. There was some difficulty in realising taxes, arrears accumulated, and eventually some stringent measures were taken to realise them. Money came in then but I must confess to a feeling of utter dislike to these methods of realising taxation. Individual cases have come to my notice when great hardship was caused by the procedure of the Tax Department. Indeed the Tax Department is not too full of the milk of human kindness and appears to rely too much on the strong arm of the law. The methods of a bully are not the only ways of realising taxation and a too frequent resort to them will defeat the end in view.

I feel that the real trouble however is due to the incidence of taxation and I would respectfully suggest to the Board in all earnestness to consider this question without delay. I know our financial difficulties and the many useful works that stand in need of money. But no consideration should make us go beyond certain limits. If life becomes too much of a burden in Allahabad, the Board will be the greatest sufferer in the end....

13. The Improvement Trust has lately drawn considerable attention. That is well, but I wish that the many critics and the few admirers of the Trusts might know more of the facts and might then place these facts before the public. The Trust dislikes publicity, it hates the light of day. It is even afraid of the Government prying too closely into its affairs or knowing too much of its mysterious ways. In the last six months or so a Sub-committee of the Trust has been considering the question of retrenchment. This committee by a majority of three to one recommended, *inter alia*, that the Chairman should be honorary, that there should be only one Chief Engineer for the three Trusts and various other retrenchments. After many delays the matter was considered by the Trust. The consideration of the main recommendations however has been postponed. A proposal that the Government be informed that the Retrenchment Committee had recommended that the Chairman be honorary was defeated by the Chairman himself casting two votes against it — an excess of zeal for a worthy cause. Thus the Trust would not even agree to inform the Government of its proceedings and wants to delay the consideration of these matters so that the decision may be taken too late....

Jawaharlal Nehru
Chairman

22. On the Allahabad Octroi Committee[1]

Sir, — I have seen a communication in the *Leader* of the 19th April purporting to be a report of a public meeting held on the 17th to consider certain octroi matters. The 'report' is an entirely fanciful picture of what happened. Indeed it is a report of much that did not happen.

1. Letter to the *Editor, The Leader*, 21 April 1924.

I was asked to attend the meeting to explain the action being taken by the Board in regard to the removal of certain disabilities and difficulties. I welcomed the opportunity and took advantage of it to explain at some length the Board's position. I further informed the people present that the action of a very few gentlemen two days before in preventing members of the octroi committee from going to the octroi office was improper and in no sense Satyagraha as it had been miscalled. Satyagraha was a noble thing and it had nothing to do with the action referred to. There was no reference whatever to the *Sangam* or Nabha unless the sender of the communication to you whispered it in his neighbour's ears. After explaining the position of the Board I left or rather endeavoured to leave. As I was leaving I noticed that several persons were talking at the same time. I returned and advised the conveners of the meeting to end the meeting as a full discussion had already taken place and a decision by a show of hands at that stage when people were somewhat excited, would not be helpful. The conveners were good enough to accept my advice and the meeting dispersed. Nothing further was said.

I may add that I have received a large number of representations from traders expressing their confidence in Thakur Parmatma Nand Singh, chairman of the Octroi Committee. Mr. Singh was and is desirous of not continuing as chairman of the committee, but it was because of my recommendation that he consented to continue as such. The responsibility is entirely mine.

Jawaharlal Nehru

April 18.

23. From the Annual Administration Report for 1923-24[1]

Sir,

. . .

2. I regret that there has been some delay in sending this report. I am to blame for this. For over a month I have occupied a somewhat anomalous position and have daily looked forward to being relieved of

1. 30 May 1924. A.M.B. Records, 1924 Extracts.

the honourable but nonetheless onerous burden of the Chairmanship of the Board. My resignation was sent to Government in the middle of April but I have received no reply so far. This state of uncertainty was not helpful in writing a report which might not perhaps find favour with my successor in office.

3. My last report was written soon after I joined the Board, fresh from other forms of activity but wholly ignorant of municipal administration. I can speak with a little experience now though I shall not presume to imagine that I know much even now of municipal affairs, or to measure my little knowledge with the wisdom of others. And experience has shown me, and perhaps many of my colleagues also, that municipal work is not an unmixed joy. The past year has been one of fairly hard work for most people connected with the Board. A glance at the list of Board meetings and committee meetings will show that the spirit, at any rate, has been very willing. How far this work has borne fruit, it is difficult to say, but the problems of municipal administration are not easy of quick solution. The Board has faced these problems boldly and has not shirked or shelved any of them and I trust that their year's labours have resulted in bringing Allahabad a little nearer to what it should be.

4. The Board as constituted after the general elections in 1923, had a majority of Congressmen in it who had sought election, as stated in the last report, on the ground that they would endeavour to carry on municipal administration on nationalistic lines and where possible to help the nation-building programme of the Congress. Most of the work of the Board has little to do with larger national issues but the manner of doing it varies, and it has been the endeavour of the Board during the year under report to introduce, whenever possible, this spirit of nationalism. In this endeavour, members, even of different shades of political opinion, have cooperated to a remarkable degree. Among the principal outward expressions of this spirit of nationalism have been the organisation of spinning and scouting in municipal schools as well as a definite attempt to develop the patriotism of the boys and girls there. The Board has laid stress on the use of khaddar and most of the employees and the teachers and boys and girls are now clad in the national dress. An endeavour has also been made, though progress is not as rapid as it might be, in making Hindustani, both in the Urdu and the Hindi scripts, the medium for the Board's work. As it is, Hindustani is almost always used in the Board's meetings except by members who do not know it well enough. Much of the correspondence is carried on in Hindustani. The result of this has been greater interest on the part of the public and also sometimes greater criticism. But criticism based

on knowledge will always be helpful and I hope that soon Hindustani will take pride of place as it should in this country and even our non-Indian colleagues will use the language of the country they have made their second home.

5. Among the minor changes introduced by the Board indicative of the new spirit referred to above have been the addition of the Tilak Day, the 1st August, the death anniversary of the late Lokamanya, and the 18th March, the Gandhi Day, when our revered leader Mahatma Gandhi was sentenced, to the list of holidays. The Empire Day has been omitted from the list of holidays. Maulana Shaukat Ali came to Allahabad early in December and received a cordial address of welcome from the Board. He inspected the boys and girls in the municipal schools. Mahatma Gandhi's discharge from jail early in February was celebrated by the Board by the illumination of municipal buildings. During the year the Viceroy, Lord Reading, visited Allahabad. The Board passed a resolution that they did not participate in the welcome to him....

15. It has become customary for almost all Municipal Boards in these provinces, if not elsewhere, to bemoan annually their financial position, and for Government to lay stress on financial reform. Allahabad has had its share of criticism and the Board fully realises that the first necessity of municipal administration is financial equilibrium. Efforts have been made to bring this about and I am glad to say that we have largely succeeded. The Board can derive some satisfaction from the fact that its financial position now, though demanding every attention, is not such as to cause any anxiety. There was a substantial surplus at the end of the year and we held a large balance. We have increased our reserve fund from Rs. 15,000/ to Rs. 25,000/-. We paid Rs. 35,000/- to Government last year in part payment of the loan instalment and this year we have already paid a lakh of rupees for this purpose. The Board has sanctioned another sum of Rs. 35,000/- besides the above, for payment to Government and this sum will be paid in a few days. We shall thus have paid in the current financial year the full loan instalment of Rs. 1,35,000/-. I hope it will be possible to pay a further sum before the year is over.... Allahabad has not been favoured with too much help from Government in the shape of grants and sometimes in the past has cast envious eyes on sister cities. I do not think the present Board is anxious to receive many grants. We want to stand on our own legs and do not believe in a municipality being habitually carried on by means of doles....

39. Allahabad is the proud possessor of a fire engine beautiful to look

at but of little or no real use. An attempt to get a grant from Government for a new engine met with failure. The Board realises the necessity for having an up-to-date engine but the high price demanded for it has so far been an effective bar to its purchase....

43. An innovation during the year was the issue of the Municipal Gazette every fortnight. This gazette gives in a concise form the proceedings of the Board and its Standing Committees as well as other information relating to municipal work....

45. I propose to follow my last year's report in one respect and that is to refrain from commending or criticising any colleagues of mine in the office or the Board. It is difficult for me to do so when many have done good work and tried their best to serve the Board. So far as I am personally concerned, however, I must offer my grateful thanks to the members of the Board and all my colleagues in the office for their never failing courtesy and indulgence and for the help which they never grudged me.

Jawaharlal Nehru
Chairman

24. From Proceedings of Meeting of the Board[1]

Question No. 21: Will the Chairman be pleased to state the policy and principles governing the appointments and dismissals of the employees of the Board if there be any. In the absence of such principles does the Chairman consider it desirable to lay down definite principles to be followed in such cases?

Answer: The Chairman hopes that the only principle governing appointments and dismissals should be fitness to do work. Some minor considerations also sometime affect appointments, e.g. position in the graduation list, etc. The Chairman hardly thinks it worthwhile to frame any other rules or principles.

1. 31 May 1924 A.M.B. File No 4 of 1924. Extracts

25. Note for Finance Committee[1]

It is notorious that Allahabad is a very spread out town with great length of road. The city part is fairly congested but the Civil Station is far too sparsely populated and there are few compounds which are kept in proper condition. The Improvement Trust is developing schemes which will spread out Allahabad even more and burden us with the upkeep of additional miles of roads. As it is we cannot keep our roads in proper condition. How will we provide for additional roads? There is only one way and that is to discourage this spreading out and encourage the filling of the open spaces between different parts of the city. The Civil Station must be more built up than it is. It will then perhaps be able to support its roads etc. Large compounds are bad for the city and bad for the Municipality. If any one wants to keep a larger compound he must pay for the luxury.

2. The obvious course for the Board is to tax either areas or road frontages. I cannot give any figures but I imagine it will not be difficult for us to determine this tax. This tax cannot be wholly in addition to the present house and water taxes. The tax would only touch people having big compounds, so that the city will not be affected. In the case of the big compounds the new tax may replace the house tax where it happens to be greater.

3. Another noticeable feature of Allahabad is the number of open plots lying unoccupied. Plots are purchased and then houses are not built for years. So long as houses are not built no taxes can be levied. Thus the municipality has to maintain roads, light them, clean them etc., and not get anything from the owner of these areas. This is improper and it hinders growth. There should be a tax on *land* which should always be payable whether there is a house or not and whether the house is occupied or not. This might be the splitting up of the present house tax into two parts: the land tax and the house tax.

4. It is not my object to increase the incidence of taxation generally. I think it is heavy enough in Allahabad and some relief may be desirable. The changes I have suggested would leave the residents of the

1. AICC File No G43/1928, pp 9—10. NMML

congested areas untouched. They would touch owners of bungalows and speculators buying land.

5. I do not think it would be very safe for us at this stage to reduce the rate of taxation generally. For the present we might leave the house tax and water tax alone as we have heavy commitments before us. We might however give relief to the poorer classes by raising the limit of exemption. A desirable and successful decision of this Board last year was to exempt from house tax or water tax houses fetching Rs. 24/- or less per annum as rent. This limit might be raised. We cannot decide without having figures before us. I would however suggest to the committee to approve of the principle contained in this paragraph.

6. The Finance Committee if it approves of my suggestions might appoint a sub-committee to report as to details, or might recommend the suggestions to the Board. The Board might in the latter case appoint a sub-committee.

Jawaharlal Nehru
Chairman

2.6.24

26. To Commissioner, regarding Reconstruction of Roads[1]

No : 79

Allahabad
dated June 9, 1924

Sir,

I am directed by the municipal board to address you on the subject of roads in Allahabad, and to draw Government's attention to the urgency of the problem confronting the board.

2. Allahabad, as you are probably aware, has more *pucca* roads than any city in these provinces although in point of size and population several other cities are ahead of it. There are 87 miles of metalled roads here, most of these being in the civil station where there are large

1. U.P. Government Proceedings Nos 46 to 72, Municipal Department File No. 800 E—46(a), 1929.

compounds and extensive road frontages. Owing to these large compounds the income from the houses adjoining these roads is proportionately little and the cost of keeping the roads in proper condition, in metalling, repairing, watering, lighting, and cleaning them is very great. In spite of the fact that the present burden is heavier than the board can well carry, there is a tendency both on the part of the Improvement Trust and the board to spread out Allahabad and have more metalled roads. Even in this year's budget there is provision for the metalling of a few more roads.

3. Though the permanent population of Allahabad is not as large as that of some other cities in the province, vast numbers of pilgrims visit the city and use the roads. The Grand Trunk Road in Allahabad is probably one of the most used roads in the United Provinces. Latterly motor lorries have started plying here, and there is every probability of heavy motor vehicles increasing. The present roads are wholly incapable of remaining in good condition even for a few months after repairs or remetalling in face of this traffic.

4. For some years past the board has not been spending as much on the roads as was necessary to keep them up to the mark. Demands from other departments and for other necessities were met out of the money which might otherwise have gone to the roads. This continued starvation of this department has naturally resulted in gradual deterioration. An attempt was made last year to budget more money for the roads and a larger sum was spent but this did not go far in removing the ill effects of many years neglect. We are thus faced with a simultaneous deterioration of nearly all our principal roads.

5. Even if we managed to make a great effort and remetalled these roads throughout, our difficulties would not end. Owing to the heavier traffic, specially of motor lorries, the roads will rapidly deteriorate and in a few months we would have to face the same problem. The only solution is to make the roads in such a manner and with such material as to be able to withstand the heaviest traffic. I understand that in Bombay the roads had practically to be re-made entirely because of this, and I have just learnt that this is going to be done in Lucknow also soon.

6. The capital expenditure required for making roads fit enough to bear heavy traffic for a number of years is very great and it is not possible for the board to find the money out of its general revenues. The board therefore is of opinion that a few of the most important roads

in Allahabad might be chosen for the experiment and Government might help the Board by a grant for the purpose. The roads which have to bear the heaviest traffic are, leaving out of consideration the provincial roads, Johnstonganj, City Road, Hewett Road, and Canning Road. I would suggest that a beginning might be made with these four roads and that they might be made by a bituminous process or some other equally lasting method.

7. Government transferred the provincial roads in the municipal areas to the board last year. They have also agreed, after some correspondence, to give an annual sum of about Rs. 27,000 for the upkeep of these roads. At the time of transfer the roads, and specially Grand Trunk Road and Cawnpore Road, were in a very bad condition. The money given by the Government for these roads appears to be proportionately more than the amount spent on the municipal roads by the board. In spite of this fact the transfer of these provincial roads has added to the burden of the board. The full amount given by Government is spent on them and it is impossible to keep them up to the mark. As mentioned above, the traffic on them, and specially on Grand Trunk Road, is very great from Khuldabad right up to Daraganj. Besides the money spent on them the board has had to use its rollers and scarifiers on these roads and we are hard pressed for want of enough rollers.

8. It is felt that any repairs or remetalling of these provincial roads is almost a waste of money. Very soon after the road will again be in a bad condition. Reasons of economy alone are sufficient to induce us to make these roads with more lasting material. The board therefore suggest to Government to have all the provincial roads in the municipal area remade by the bituminous or equally good process. In case the Government are unable to do this or to give the board money to have it done the board would like to be relieved of the burden of their upkeep and would request the Government to take back the provincial roads.

9. I understand that Government has given help on a most generous scale to Lucknow for its roads and that in addition to a loan for the purpose a grant of five lakhs of rupees has been made. I am aware that Allahabad is not to be compared with Lucknow in such matters. Nonetheless I trust that Government will be able to help this city also to some extent.

10. I am therefore to request Government on behalf of the board to give a grant to the board of Rs. 3,00,000 for the remaking by a bitu-

minous process of a few of the most important municipal roads, and also to arrange to have the provincial roads in the city remade by this process, or failing this to take these roads back from the board.

11. I might inform you that proposals are being considered by the board for the taxation of motor lorries and of large compounds.

Yours, etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

27. From Proceedings of Meeting of the Board[1]

Question No. 25: Will the Chairman inform the House whether any action has been taken regarding the Board's resolution necessitating wearing of *khadi* as a rule by every municipal employee on duty?

Answer: The Chairman has repeatedly drawn the attention of the employees to the resolution of Board desiring them to wear *khadi*. Recently another circular to this effect has been issued. In a number of departments a copy of the Board's resolution has been hung up to serve as a constant reminder.

Question No. 26: Will the Chairman inform the House of the percentage of the *khaddar*-wearing employees in the Board?

Answer: It is not possible for the Chairman to give the percentage without instituting an elaborate enquiry costing a great deal of time and energy. The Chairman does not think this worthwhile. He thinks however that quite a large number of the Board's employees now wear *khaddar*.

1. 16 June 1924. A.M.B. File No. 4 of 1924. Extracts.

Question No 27. Is the Chairman aware that in spite of the resolution of the Board to write the proceedings and carry on other work of the Board in Hindi or Urdu or both as far as possible, nearly all the Sub-Committees of the Board are carrying on their work in English? If the answer be in the affirmative what form of punishment does the Chairman propose to inflict on such negligent Sub-Committees?

Answer The Board expressed the opinion that Hindustani should as far as possible be used in carrying on the work of the Municipality. This resolution was communicated to the heads of departments and Standing Committees but most committees still continue to keep their minutes in English. The Chairman does not think that compulsion in the matter will be profitable and in any event the question of punishment does not arise.

28. Note for the Board[1]

In my letter to Mr. Zahur Ahmad dated 7th July I have stated the facts as I recollect them. I have now received his answer and have read it carefully. Mr. Zahur Ahmad states emphatically that he never wrote to me any letter in which he mentioned that he wished to resign from the Vice-Chairmanship. He says that he merely mentioned his intention to resign from the Vice-Chairmanship to me orally. As I have stated previously my impression was that he had also written but it is clear

1. 19 July 1924 A.M.B. File No. 5/XIII of 1924
This note concerns the acceptance by Jawaharlal of the resignation of the Vice-Chairman of the Board. However, the resignation, tendered orally, was later withdrawn and Jawaharlal felt he had erred in acting on an oral resignation. The note is of interest in that it shows Jawaharlal confessing to what he deemed an error and demanding that he be censured.

that impressions are unsafe guides and in view of Mr. Zahur Ahmad's statement I cannot affirm the contrary. The result is that the action taken by the Board in having a fresh election of a senior Vice-Chairman was irregular.

This action was based entirely on a statement I made to the Board. Thus a statement of mine was incorrect and misled the Board and induced it to take action which has put the Board and specially some members of it in a false position. This is a grave and a serious matter and I confess that I have felt deeply for my error. The Board rightly relies on the Chairman for correct statements of fact and a Chairman errs at his peril. I desire to offer my apologies to the Board and to express my deepest regret for the action I took. I think that the Board would be justified in expressing its displeasure of this action and I can assure the Board that I will appreciate this. I believe in discipline and no one should be above it.

But an expression of regret on my part is not very helpful to anyone concerned. It only makes me feel a little lighter. As the matter concerns me I do not propose to take part in deciding it and with the permission of my colleagues I shall retire from the meeting when this matter is discussed. I do not however wish to refuse to shoulder the responsibility of decision. I have already stated that having regard to all the facts I think that the Board's action was incorrect and irregular. If this was so then the way to put it right is for the Board to declare so. A Chairman's ruling is not the correct procedure, nor do I think it necessary to have a motion, as requested by some members, rescinding the previous resolution. This declaration would of course only apply to the irregular part of the previous resolution and not necessarily to the whole.

I would again express my regret to the Board and specially to my colleagues Mr. N. K. Mukerjee and Mr. Baqi Khan.

Jawaharlal Nehru
19-7-24

I have today received a letter from the Commissioner in regard to this matter. This makes the position quite clear. The course I have recommended to the Board fits in.

Jawaharlal Nehru

29. Answers to the Questionnaire of the Improvement Trust Enquiry Committee[1]

I desire to state at the outset that my answers relate to the Allahabad Trust only. I have no accurate knowledge of other Trusts. As Chairman of the Municipal Board I have been an ex-officio member of the Allahabad Trust for the last sixteen months and as such I have gained some insight into its working and methods. But I have no personal knowledge of the first two years of the Trust. My colleagues on the Municipal Board who have also been connected with the Trust are in a better position to judge of these two years and of how and why the Trust was started. My own answers are largely based on the information I gathered as a member of the Trust Retrenchment Committee last year. A copy of the report and notes of this Retrenchment Committee have already been submitted to the Enquiry Committee. This report gives many of the conclusions I arrived at together with some of my colleagues and I shall request the Enquiry Committee to read this report, especially the latter half of it which deals with the general *questions and the future of the Trust.*

1. I am clearly of opinion that the Allahabad Trust has not been conducted on right lines.

(i) To begin with, the Trust was started before the ground was prepared for it. It was premature. No such Trust can function efficiently without a proper survey and at the time the Trust was started no survey, cadastral or civic, had been made. The Municipal Board were just then beginning a cadastral survey. Mr. Lanchester suggested in his report dated 10th April 1920 that the survey work might be done under the auspices of the Trust Committee of the Municipal Board so that planning might be commenced immediately the Trust was organised. This however was not done with the result that a heavily paid staff had more or less to look on as the survey gradually and slowly progressed.

(ii) The Trust started inauspiciously in an atmosphere of extravagance. At the very commencement it antagonised the public and the Municipal Board by its extravagances. The heavy salaries and allowances of the principal officers were far from popular. The purchase of

1. J. N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L. The questionnaire itself is not available

an expensive motor car for the Chairman[2], a small matter in itself, caused great resentment and was probably the most powerful factor in increasing the unpopularity of the Trust. The Municipal Board had all along opposed the creation of the Trust but it is possible that, being presented with a *fait accompli*, they might have fully cooperated with it. The early attitude of the Trust however made matters worse and the Trust began to regard the Board as a rival and inimical body. The municipal representatives on the Trust were considered as enemies within the camp and the unseemly spectacle of the Trust being equally divided and the Chairman voting twice was often witnessed. Owing to the opposition of the Municipal Board and the public the principal officers of the Trust were always apprehensive that their tenure of office might terminate and their time and energy was chiefly spent in consolidating their own position. Far more attention was and has been paid to their remaining in their present well paid offices than to the work of the Trust. They have pursued this aim with singular tenacity and disregard of all public and private opinion. There is a very general feeling in every section of the Allahabad public, and I think there is considerable justification for it, that the high officers of the Trust mean to adhere to their offices till *force majeure* removes them. It is obvious that this kind of behaviour is not conducive to the maintenance of efficiency in the office or the carrying on of good work outside, and least of all to gaining the goodwill and cooperation of others.

(iii) I have referred to the heavy salaries above. As the Trust aged it gathered to itself a large and increasing staff, with the result that there was both a heavy staff and heavy salaries. The establishment charge alone for the current year is estimated to be Rs. 1,20,000/-. A top heavy system with such overhead charges can only end in failure. The Retrenchment Committee of the Trust recommended a number of reductions. A few minor recommendations have been carried out but there can be no substantial reduction if the Chairman, Chief Engineer, Executive Officer, Assistant Engineer and Secretary remain on their present salaries.

(iv) The schemes on which work was begun were not happily chosen. It would have been desirable if the Trust had taken some of the congested areas in the heart of the city in hand and made small open spaces and playing grounds, and some model houses for the poor. There are plenty of suitable areas in the city where with a little expenditure considerable improvements could be made. The Trust has got lost in a number of big schemes and as a result of three and a half years'

2. Major D. R. Ranjit Singh.

labour can show little except a large and heavily paid staff. The small schemes would have been popular, and in some cases remunerative. They would also have immediately improved the sanitation and health of the locality.

(v) The Improvement Trust was started because "of the extensive character of the improvements urgently required, of the difficulties caused by the numerous sanctions required before progress can be made with municipal works, and of the fact that the Municipal Board has accomplished little in the way of improvements during the past three years, except minor works in completion of its original schemes" (Joint Improvement Committee's report dated 13th April 1920). In spite of the advantages however of a Trust, the Allahabad Trust has succeeded in doing remarkably little having regard to the amount spent on establishment. I think this is largely due to the inexperience of the officers in charge. They were unaccustomed to this work and work suffered accordingly.

2. I think there has been a great deal of waste in the Allahabad Trust. The principal item of wasteful expenditure has been the heavy establishment charge. The whole office has been run on extravagant lines. This question has been dealt with in the Retrenchment Committee's report in some detail. I would only mention here a few other matters. The Harcourt Butler market has been a complete failure. It had little to do with Town Improvement and the site chosen was unfortunate. Over and above the actual cost, a sum of Rs. 1,000/- or so was unjustifiably spent on the opening ceremony.

Considerable loss has been caused to the Trust by mistakes in issuing notices. Owing to these errors notices had to be issued repeatedly in the Mir Khan ki Serai and the Zero Road schemes. This delayed matters and every delay means heavy loss.

The Secretary, an officer drawing Rs. 350/- a month, drew Rs. 1,000/- a month for six months when he officiated as Executive Officer. This, I consider most improper, specially as the Secretary could not do land acquisition work which is the chief duty of the E.O. A small increment for the officiating period would have been quite enough. The fact that the Secretary was officiating for the E.O. was brought to the notice of the Trust but they were not informed of the salary he was drawing.

3. I am not aware of any appreciable change in the health of Allahabad owing to the operations of the Trust. The work of the Trust has been so little that no great change could follow.

4. Complaints have reached me of want of proper accommodation for evicted persons. As a matter of fact, however, few persons have so far been evicted by the Trust as no big scheme involving eviction on a large scale has been taken in hand. I think that before any such scheme is started houses must be provided for the evicted poor. It is not enough that plots are offered for sale.

5. The principal causes of the unsatisfactory financial condition are:

(i) Heavy expenditure on staff and overhead charges.

(ii) Schemes taken up not paying.

(iii) Insufficient Government help. As compared to Lucknow and Cawnpore, Allahabad has received little assistance from Govt. in the shape of grants or loans.

6. I think that the present constitution and methods of working of the Trust are wholly unsatisfactory and almost any alternative is preferable to them. But if a change is to be made I would not recommend the suspension of the improvement operations. It is undesirable to suspend work on several schemes already begun. This will only mean loss now and greater expenditure in the future. I am therefore against A.

I am also against the first part of B and do not want the present Trust to continue.

I am not against the work being entrusted to a committee of the Municipal Board as recommended in the latter part of C. I would not like the Board to have direct control of the operations. But considering all the circumstances I would recommend the course suggested in the latter part of B, i.e. the continuation of these operations by the Trust with a modified constitution.

7. I am not in favour of A but if operations are suspended the assets should be handed over to the Municipal Board.

8. I would suggest that there should be an honorary elected chairman and a paid executive officer, a joint consulting engineer for the three Trusts, an assistant engineer and a superintendent of the office or secretary. I would also recommend that the municipal element in the Trust be increased by one, so as to give it a slight majority in the Trust. I would not have, on any account, a repetition of the present conflict. If the present constitution is to continue I would earnestly advise the Board to direct its representatives to withdraw from the Trust. Their presence there cannot be very helpful and frequent friction and opposition is not conducive to good work. The work must therefore either be completely controlled by the nominated members, and in this

event municipal representation is for the present at least not necessary, or it must be put under the indirect control of the Municipal Board. If four members are sent by the Board and three are nominated by Govt., this indirect control will be gained by the Board. I have no objection to raising the number of members of the Trust to 9, though I prefer a smaller number. If the number is 9 then the Municipal Board should send 5 members and there should be 4 nominated members. These 7 or 9 members should elect their own Chairman, who may be an outsider, and who must be honorary. This arrangement *will not take away the power of interference from Govt., as under* the Act they can easily control the expenditure of funds and the work on the schemes. Their control however must be of a general character. If they are to supply funds, they will legitimately desire some control and under the Act they will have it.

It is now admitted almost by everyone that the Chairman should be honorary. One well paid executive head is quite enough. Even the Allahabad Trust has made this recommendation. I suggest that the honorary Chairman should also be an elected one. This will make him more responsive to the Trust.

The Executive Officer need not necessarily be a deputy collector. *He should not be paid more than Rs. 1,000 including allowances, but* excluding a motor car allowance of Rs. 100 p.m. The other salaries should be as follows:

Executive Officer	1,000/-	Motor car allowance 100/-
Assistant Engineer	500-600/-	Motor bicycle or car allowance of Rs. 50/-
1/3rd share of Consulting Engineer's salary	500/-	
Superintendent of office or Secretary	250/-	

The annual establishment should not exceed Rs. 50,000/-.

It is very difficult for me to give figures for future work. Any figure that I may give will largely be the outcome of a guess. I would suggest that for the present rupees five lakhs per annum will be required apart from the income which may accrue from paying schemes. Half

of this five might be given as a grant by Govt., and the other half as a loan. I do not see any other sources of revenue. It is possible however that if the Trust is in the indirect or direct control of the Municipal Board, the latter may help occasionally with funds. But this help cannot go far.

9. As I have stated above, I would not prefer C but I would certainly welcome it to present conditions. One advantage of C is its elasticity. As work increases or decreases the staff can be proportionately increased or decreased. A great drawback to the present constitution is this want of elasticity. The big staff has to remain even when there is little or no work. If a committee of the Board is entrusted with the work I would recommend the employment of an engineer at 500/- or so. Additional staff will depend on additional work. If land acquisitions work is to be undertaken a special officer might be engaged for the purpose.

The funds required for C will be the same as for B. If the full sum asked for above is not granted work will be proportionately less. The sources of revenue are also the same. I might mention in this connection that the amount granted by Government to the Municipal Board in the past for improvement purposes was actually increased by the Board by having paying schemes.

10. Allahabad is a very spread out city. Large distances separate some of the *mohallas* from each other and there is plenty of room for growth between these *mohallas*. There is considerable congestion in the city proper and in part of Katra, and on the other hand many houses in the civil station have got enormous compounds. As it is the upkeep of the roads in the civil station is a heavy burden on the municipality and it cannot afford to increase this burden by having more metalled roads without a corresponding increase in income. Every extension of the city beyond its present inhabited limits means new roads, lighting arrangements, water supply, road watering, sanitation etc. each involving heavy expense. An improvement scheme must therefore avoid this heavy expenditure as far as possible and should take advantage of existing roads. The Trust should aim at a subdivision of the existing large compounds so as to reduce them as far as possible to one acre or less. In the city there are many areas which are covered at present by dilapidated huts with not a single *pucca* house. These areas can be easily acquired and would prove to be remunerative schemes. A number of such small schemes and the provision of decent houses for the poor and small playing grounds and open spaces would increase the amenities of life for a large number of people in the city.

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The present method of charging a tax on house values is not a desirable one. It results in plots lying vacant for years. The tax should be on land. This will be fairer and will prevent speculation in plots. There would also then be an inducement for building houses. This is not primarily a matter for the Trust but if such a tax was imposed in place of the house tax it would benefit both the Trust and the municipality.

11. If Sec. 103 of the Act is amended as suggested it would ultimately result in two municipalities for the city. I do not understand how this can be feasible or desirable.

Under the present Act the Trust has a right to include any municipal land in an improvement scheme by merely sending a notice to the Chairman of the Board. No compensation is paid except for buildings. If Sec. 103 is amended and Sec. 45 remains it will mean that the Trust can fatten at the expense of the municipality and the latter has no return.

At the present moment there is more chance of the liabilities of the Trust being in excess of its assets and the Municipal Board does not feel enthusiastic at the idea of its being the heir of these liabilities. If the present wasteful methods are continued the Board would like to be freed from the liability and would welcome a change in Sec. 103. But as I have said above I fail to see how there can ultimately be two rival bodies in a city.

12. (a) I am not in favour of this combined system. I do not think a single chairman is desirable, but there should be a single consulting engineer for the three Trusts. He should be paid Rs. 1,500 p.m.

(b) The Trust can only be financed by Govt. I would not recommend any special local taxation for them. This will make them even more unpopular and it will probably affect the Municipal Board's income. I would recommend however that the Govt.'s share of the *nazul* income might be made over to the Trust.

(c) I have no special suggestions to make. But I wish to point out that the present practice of the establishment charges coming out of funds earmarked for special schemes is very undesirable If necessary a special grant should be made for establishment and on no account must an encroachment be made on earmarked funds.

(d) I have no figures with me and I am unable to offer any special

suggestions. I think that with a careful selection of schemes and moderate overhead charges improvement work can be made paying and there should be no difficulty in repaying the loans.

13. I am willing to appear as a witness before the Committee.

August 3 1924
Allahabad

Jawaharlal Nehru

30. Allahabad Municipal Administration[1]

I regret to note that the endeavour to introduce the spirit of nationalism in our work meets with your disapproval. I had hoped that those who had imbibed this spirit of nationalism in England would appreciate our attempt to lay stress on it here. To show honour to the country's great men is not a novel procedure which we have initiated. Other countries have been known to do likewise. The Board has added to its list of holidays the Tilak and Gandhi Days and thereby honoured itself. No two men of modern India have commanded such universal respect in the country and the Board would have been failing in its duty if it had not given some such public expression of the popular esteem. It is no act of ill-will to any person or people. An address of welcome was presented to another honoured Indian, Maulana Shaukat Ali. No address was given to Mahatma Gandhi as mentioned in your letter, but I have little doubt that the board would have gladly availed itself of the opportunity to do so. The omission of the Empire Day from the list of holidays would hardly be surprising anywhere, least of all in India. The idea of an Empire in the true sense of the word is out of date and even its defenders base their support on consideration of common brotherhood and common interest. In India these considerations hardly apply and only the dark side of the

1. Extracts from a letter written by Jawaharlal to the Commissioner of Allahabad Division in reply to his criticism of the management of local bodies by the Congress. *The Tribune*, 27 August 1924.

Empire is visible. I understand that the celebration of the Empire Day is being given up even in other parts of the British Dominions. In refusing to take part in the welcome to the Viceroy, it was made clear that no disrespect was meant to his person. But the Board felt that such welcome tends to lengthen the life of a system of which they cordially disapprove and they could be no party to them.

I am surprised at your remark that the Congress members are taking advantage of their position in the Board to advance the programme of a political party and that this is illegitimate. The Congress members made no secret of their views during their election campaign and made it very clear that while fully cooperating with Government in municipal matters, they would endeavour to introduce national spirit in the municipal administration and specially would lay stress on the nation building parts of the Congress Programme. These parts are hardly controversial and they are not even opposed to Government unless everything that strengthens India is against the interests of the Government. The members were elected on this definite and clear understanding and there can thus be no question whatever of an unfair or illegitimate use of their position. If they have erred at all in this matter or on any such proposition it is merely by the vote of a particular group and they have always tried to win over others to their view point. Almost all the matters you mention were carried by large majorities in the Board composed of members of differing politics and some were carried unanimously. One matter, the celebration of Mahatma Gandhi's discharge from jail, was proposed in the Board by a valued member who is a confirmed Moderate in politics and passed unanimously. I would remind you in this connection that the non-Congress members form a large minority in the Board.

We have laid great stress on spinning in our schools because we believe in its economic value. I have little doubt that if you considered the question on its merits and without the prejudices born of political opinions you will appreciate the attempts to revive spinning and put it on a firm basis. If you will take the trouble to learn spinning yourself you will after a few days feel its charm and delight in the music of the wheel. Spinning is not a party matter confined to a particular group. It is for every one, whether he is in the Congress or outside it, and the illustrious champion of it would welcome English officials who take to the wheel.

We have endeavoured to instil into the minds of children attending the Municipal schools, the love of their country and the wish to serve her. I am not aware that this is a very peculiar political idea or is a distorted form of patriotism. I was under the impression that this was an essential part of education in other and more fortunate

countries. We wish to teach our children to keep their self-respect and neither to cringe nor to boast. We want them to grow up as good citizens of this city willing and fit enough to take an executive part in their country's onward progress. It may be that we are frail and imperfect but if you will take a dispassionate view you will no doubt discover that the ideals that have been placed before us are great and good both for us and for others and the patriotism which we desire to develop is of the straightest variety. If the Board has made good even in a small way it is because we were not working merely to carry on but had a definite objective before us and the motive power of these very ideals to carry us forward. These are our convictions and it is on these lines that we wish to work. We would discharge our trust poorly and would prove ourselves unfit to hold our charge, if we abandoned our convictions and pursued a different policy for fear that Government would stop giving financial assistance. Audacity is usually unseemly and unbecoming. I trust the Board will not indulge in it. But I trust also that the Board will remain firm when principles are at stake, despite all consequences.

Jawaharlal Nehru

31. Preliminary Note on a Municipal Programme[1]

August 28, 1924

It has been the custom in the past for every candidate for election to a municipal board to assure his electors that he will do his utmost for them; sometimes he goes a little further and specifies certain measures which will specially claim his attention—the betterment of roads, more schools, hospitals and a better water supply, sanitation etc. But obviously everybody must agree to this, although little enough may be done in practice. This does not and cannot constitute a programme.

Our municipalities are continually being criticised for their inefficiency in many respects, and the criticisms are often justified. We are

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-43/1928, p 1, N.M.M.L.
The note is incomplete.

told that they do not spend money on important services. On the other hand most of them are in a financially unsound condition and either live on bounties from Government or have no substantial surplus left after paying heavy interest charges on loans. No one dare mention an increase in the rates.

The problem therefore is a fairly complex one and radical remedies may be necessary before we can approach a solution. The problem is not peculiar to India or to our province. Every great or small municipality in the world has to face it today, although the local conditions may vary greatly. It is worthwhile for us therefore to consider the question in its broader aspects before we attempt to draw up a definite programme. This consideration will probably lead us to the formation of a general programme which strikes at the roots of municipal administration in India today; it will certainly conflict with the existing Municipalities Act. I do not think this should deter us from laying down such a programme. The educational value of a Programme of this kind will be great and it will help us to build up our municipal life on healthy principles. In addition to such a general programme it will probably be necessary to draw [up] a more specific and limited programme which might be capable [of] immediate application.

It is now a recognised principle that social welfare work is a primary concern of a municipality. Municipalities are not only supposed to provide adequately for education but also for cultural and recreational facilities, for sanitation, housing etc. Public expenditure is increasing enormously in all progressive communities on these public utilities. It is also well recognized everywhere, except in India, that the uplift of the poorest and most backward parts of a city are the first charge on municipal funds. No city or community can progress if it has black, insanitary hovels and starving people within its orbit. But large funds are necessary for any effective work in this direction, although it is possible even now to divert some of the funds used for other purposes, e.g. the embellishment of the areas inhabited by the well-to-do.

Funds can only come from additional taxation. Even if loans are raised, further taxation will be necessary to pay them off. Thus the problem becomes one of tapping new sources of revenues.

Municipal taxation in India is at present exceedingly low if compared with other countries and yet owing to the great poverty of the average resident it is a heavy enough burden on him. Indeed if a serious attempt is to be made to better the lot of the poorest people existing taxation so far as it applies to them will have to be reduced or wholly removed. This will further lessen the income....

32. On Municipal Taxation[1]

....The appointment of this Committee[2] by the Board has created a considerable amount of interest. The public press in Allahabad and elsewhere has commented on it and indignant correspondents have accused the Board of conspiracies and deep designs to injure a deserving class, and to encourage insanitary and crowded habitations. These comments are largely due to want of knowledge of the facts, but some of them raise a large issue. It was not my purpose, at the time I placed this matter before the Board, to raise this fundamental issue. I was burdened with the idea that under the present system of taxation of houses etc., Allahabad could not progress or expand. The contrast between the congested and insanitary houses in the city and some of the wide expanses, uncared for and untended, in the civil station, was marked. For various reasons, Allahabad was becoming a wilderness. I had not then clearly thought of the remedy. It appears to me now, however, that we cannot dispose of the matter, or solve the problem satisfactorily without facing the large issue. Old proposals of taxing house frontage and the like can seldom be equitable all round and might increase our difficulties.

There are a few facts which we must bear in mind. The first is that taxation in India, both in the rural and the urban areas, is largely on the improvements on the land, whether the improvements take the shape of machinery, a large yield or buildings.

The second thing to remember is that the taxation of rural areas is very heavy—much heavier than urban areas. Roughly, in the former case the tax is 50 percent of the produce; in the latter case municipal taxes seldom exceed 15 per cent and the richer people have to pay income tax as well. In return for the 50 per cent tax which the rural areas pay, the people living there get no special protection or amenities. Living is cheaper there and the standard of life lower. The State does extraordinarily little for these people. It does the taking part and there is practically no giving. In the cities, in spite of the lower rate of taxation, there are supposed to be many amenities.

1. 28 August 1924. *The Leader*, 6 September 1924. Extracts.
2. Land Tax Committee.

Thus the State is practically run from the funds supplied by the rural areas. All the expensive superstructure of the State is paid for by the villages. Not only this, but the rural areas contribute directly to the expansion and improvement of cities by means of Improvement Trusts which get or have got in the past large grants from Government.

It is clear that this state of things is grossly unfair to the rural areas and it can only last so long as these areas are inarticulate or not strong enough to express themselves forcibly.

I understand that the practice in America and in other advanced countries is to tax urban and rural land at the *same rate, the former* of course paying more because its capital value is greater, but *the rate* (per cent on capital value) being the same.

I mention these considerations not because we have to deal with these big issues, but it is well to remember them when considering our own land problems. We cannot, as a Board, have anything to do with taxation of rural areas. We should, however, try to reform our own method of taxation so as to conform to modern ideas more and so help in the evolution of a just system of taxation in the country.

It is not our purpose at present to increase our revenue from land and houses in the city nor do we wish to penalise any particular class. The present system in vogue in Allahabad, however, is based on wrong principles and is proving a hindrance to the growth of the city. The house tax, as its name implies, is a tax on houses, i.e., improvements and not on land. A person may possess land in the heart of the city and if he does not build on it, he pays no tax. He merely holds on to the land and it increases in value because of the industry of other citizens who work in the adjoining land He speculates with his land. *The house tax thus tends directly to discourage house building and* encourages speculation in land It falls entirely on the occupier of the house and thus raises rents. All taxing of improvements results in less use being made of the land There are less houses and rents, being the price of monopoly, go up.

For these reasons, the tendency has been in many countries to untax improvements and tax the land alone. In some countries both are taxed, and there are others where the tax on improvements is less proportionately than the tax on land

The land tax is calculated on the capital value or selling value of *the land minus the building or other improvements* on it. The rate of tax varies in different countries. In New York, I am told, it is as high as 4 per cent per annum on the capital value both of the land and the improvements on it. This is very high. In other countries, it is usually two per cent or thereabouts. Where both the land and buildings are taxed, they are separately valued and the latter is usually

charged at a reduced rate. A recent law in New York exempts new houses begun before a certain date altogether from taxation for a period of ten years, but the land is taxed from the very beginning.

When a landlord lets out his land to a tenant, he charges him for it whether the latter uses it or not. Similarly a tax on land values is to be considered payable to the community for the land so long as the land is held and quite apart from the question of using or occupying the land. The tax should also be a first charge on the land.

A tax upon building and improvements is finally paid by the users of the buildings etc., but a tax on the land value cannot be so transferred.

In Allahabad the price of land is not much as compared to the price of buildings. A tax on land value alone, therefore, may result in reducing the income of the Board greatly. I would, therefore, suggest that we should tax both the land value and the improvements so that the latter are encouraged. This does not mean any general increase in taxation. Both together need not exceed the present rate, but there may be a slightly better distribution. The question of rate must not be mixed up with the method of taxation. If we approved of the method suggested by me, the rate can be fixed as low as is desirable.

There is an impression that this tax will hit the bungalows in the civil lines. This fear is unfounded so far as the great majority of the houses are concerned. Houses in George Town and most houses in Cannington cannot be affected at all. But a house like Darbhanga Castle with its enormous lands must and should be affected. It sprawls over a goodly portion of Allahabad and neither adds to the beauty of it nor to its utility. And incidentally it pays a ridiculously small sum to the rates. If there had been any tax on land values the ground of Darbhanga Castle would have been greatly improved.

But it is open to the Board to fix such a low rate as to reduce the present burden even on houses. The question now to be considered is not one of rate but one of principle.

I suggest, therefore, that we should have in Allahabad:

(i) A tax on the land values, i.e., on the selling value of the land, this being paid as long as the land is held and regardless of occupation, and it should be a charge on the land.

(ii) A tax on improvements and houses, preferably at a lower rate, to be paid, as at present, when the house is occupied.

(iii) The two taxes above mentioned should not together exceed the present house tax.

(iv) There should be a general assessment of land values and improvements thereon separately to enable us to determine the new taxes.

This has of course nothing to do with the water rate. That must remain separate. I do not approve of the idea of consolidating house tax and water rate, as has been suggested, I believe, by some people.

The above proposals, if approved by the Board, may necessitate a change in the law. But this is no reason why we should not persevere with them.

33. To Commissioner, Allahabad Division, regarding Grants for Roads[1]

No. 166/XII

Allahabad
September 2, 1924

Sir,

On June 9, (letter no. 79) I addressed you on the subject of roads in Allahabad and suggested that grants be made for the metalling of both municipal and provincial roads. I understand that this matter is before Government. Unfortunately further delay was making the roads worse and consequently the Board had to give considerable time and attention to their immediate improvement. It was decided to spend a large additional sum to bring at least the principal roads up to the mark. Some of this additional money has been taken from the surplus which had not been provided for, but this was not enough and a larger sum was necessary. The Board therefore with regret decided to rescind its previous resolution, allotting Rs. 35,000 of the surplus to the payment of loan and diverted this money to the improvement of roads. I hope however that it will be possible for the Board to make a further provision for the payment of loans soon.

The Board is now spending a sum of Rs. 86,142 this year on the roads. This does not include the amount spent out of the Government grant on provincial roads. The state of these roads is very bad and the Government payment for them is meagre and wholly insufficient. In

1. U.P. Government Proceedings Nos. 46 to 72, Municipal Department File No. 800-E-49(a), 1929.

spite of the demands of the municipal roads, the Board has decided to spend Rs. 5,250 on provincial roads, in addition to the Government grant for them. But this too is insufficient and I shall be glad if the Government will take over these provincial roads or make provision for complete remetalling.

Yours, etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

34. On Coordination of the Board's Work[1]

I have only just seen the various notes etc in this file, including the EO's note addressed to me. It is surprising that a note addressed to me should form the basis of a resolution of a committee before I have even seen it.

It appears to me that a great deal has been made out of a small matter and unnecessary heat has been imported in the discussion. The question would never have arisen if instead of long notes being written one or more personal talks had taken place. We must try to learn to lessen red tape as much as possible and the surest way of encouraging red tape is to write long notes over trivial matters which can be disposed of in a minute's personal interview.

There has apparently arisen a question which might be termed a question of principle. In reality I see no difficulty — constitutional or practical. It is clear that the E.O. is the principal executive officer of the Board and as such must shoulder the main responsibility for the Board's work. It is desirable that he should be allowed sufficient freedom in routine and petty matters as it is most difficult for any officer to work if there is frequent interference. It is also clear that the standing committees and the heads of department and even the unfortunate chairman of the Board are partly responsible for the efficient and punctual carrying out of work. The Board can only function properly if there is coordination between the various officers and committees and

1. 13 November 1924. A.M.B. File No 23 III I, 1924 5.
It deals with a difference of opinion between the Public Works Committee and the Executive Officer of the Board.

a minimum of interference with the work of the permanent officers who must by virtue of their position and experience bear largely the burden of municipal administration.

There is no necessity for this matter to be further considered or prolonged. No more notes need be written. I hope in future if there is any doubt in anyone's mind regarding any matter he will seek to elucidate it by the ordinary methods adopted by men and women in their private life, before a formal file is opened and a note dictated.

Jawaharlal Nehru
13-11-24

35. On the Allahabad Improvement Trust[1]

It appears from the proceedings of this meeting (Trust meeting, dated the 6th December 1924) and from letters of Mr. Basu and Mr. Malaviya that the Trust has not only opposed the main recommendations of the Enquiry Committee, but has also reversed its own previous decisions taken on the subject. They have decided in favour of retaining a paid Chairman, a Chief Engineer, a Secretary and a Steno-tpist although only a short while ago this very Trust decided to do away with all these functionaries. The manner in which these decisions were taken can be seen from the letters of Messrs. Basu and Malaviya

I desire to say little here about the recommendations of the Enquiry Committee. I have written about them in the attached note. I would only add that I am more than ever convinced that it is necessary to increase the Municipal element on the Trust. So long as the Trust is in a position entirely to ignore popular wishes, *what transpired on Saturday* last will be a not infrequent occurrence. The best remedy for this is to increase by one the number of members elected by the Municipal Board.

1. 12 December 1924. A.M.B. File No 4 of 1924 Extracts

In view of what has happened the Board had to consider what its representatives in the Trust should do. It is clear that under present conditions their position is intolerable. The Trust has long been a by-word in Allahabad for incompetence and extravagance. After the fullest enquiry and with the knowledge that a year and a half's working of it has given me I must say with sorrow that the distinguishing features of the Allahabad Trust are intrigue and nepotism. The officers of the Trust care little and work less for the benefit of the Trust and of Allahabad. Their time and energy are entirely taken up in intrigue and canvassing and in ceaseless endeavour to stick on to their posts. In my written memorandum presented to the Trusts Enquiry Committee I stated that I had come to the conclusion that the Chairman of the Trust had a perfectly remarkable capacity for adhering to his office and that nothing short of *force majeure* would remove him from it. I am even more confirmed in this opinion now, and I would extend it to the other officers also. I want the Board to be no party to this scandalous state of affairs. It is painful to me and to my colleagues to attend meetings of the Trust and see public funds being wasted and no work being done.

I trust that Government will soon announce their decision about the future of the Trust. If this decision is in favour of keeping the present constitution and personnel then in my opinion there is no place in the Trust for the Board's representatives, and I would strongly urge the Board to withdraw their representatives from the Trust.

The problem before the Trust at present is not to improve Allahabad. The immediate issue is how to improve itself and so long as it does not do so and purge itself of its undesirable elements for so long it will not be possible for the Board or any self-respecting person to associate himself with it.

36. On the Report of the Allahabad City Improvement Trust[1]

1. The Allahabad Improvement Trust has had repeated occasions to consider and discuss the future constitution of the Trust and they have come to definite decisions which I presume have been forwarded to

1. Undated. *Allahabad Municipal Board Gazette*, No. 49 of 1924.

Government. They have decided that there should be an honorary Chairman of the Trust and that, as soon as the time of the present Chairman ends, this recommendation should be given effect to. They have further decided that there should be no Chief Engineer, that there should be an Executive Officer and that no Secretary was necessary. Several other decisions about minor appointments have also been taken. I do not therefore quite understand the force of two queries now put by Government to the Trust. The matter has been decided so far as our Trust is concerned and all that is necessary is to draw Government's attention to our previous decisions. It is possible that the enquiry from Government is meant more for other Trusts and has only been sent formally to us.

2. The only new matter which might perhaps affect the decision of the Trust is the report of the Enquiry Committee. But as it happens this report has accepted almost all the criticisms which werq made by the Retrenchment Committee of our Trust and its recommendations, with a few exceptions, are largely those which the Trust itself has made. The Trust therefore must feel strengthened in its previous attitude and there is little reason for it to reconsider its former decisions.

3. I do not desire to enter in this note into any detailed examination of the report or recommendations of the Enquiry Committee. I shall only mention a few principal matters.

4. I entirely agree with the recommendation that the Chairman should be honorary. I do not, however, see the necessity of providing that the Collector should be the Chairman in case no suitable person is available. There appears to be no reason why a suitable person should not always be available. The Collector is usually a busy person with a variety of functions to perform and he is likely to be less suited for the Chairmanship than a non-official honorary worker.

5. I agree with the recommendation that there should be an Executive Officer.

6. I also agree that there never was any necessity for two engineers in the Trust. An engineer of the salary and competence of the Assistant Engineer was enough for our purpose and the Chief Engineer was not necessary. For the future the Assistant Engineer should be ample for our needs. I do not, however, agree with the recommendation that the whole engineer establishment should be placed under Superintending Engineer, Public Health Department. I am entirely against this proposal on general grounds as well as on special grounds applicable to

Allahabad. I must confess that I have come to the conclusion that the Public Health Department is remarkable for the leisurely way in which it does things and is neither efficient nor economical. Nearly all the tube-wells constructed in Allahabad at a very heavy cost—compared to estimates of private firms, at exorbitant cost—have proved failures. The Allahabad Water Works Reorganisation Scheme has been hatching in the Public Health Department for many years. A business firm which took so much time and cost so much would probably have little work to do and would have to occupy themselves largely in contemplating their past achievements. The Katra Colonelganj Drainage Scheme, in which the Board is greatly interested, is still with the Board of Public Health. That august body meets once in two months and usually decides to postpone consideration of matters till next meeting or to call for further particulars. The result of all this is that little actually gets done. The wheels of the various departments move on but they have to revolve in the air and seldom get a grip of the ground.

7. I would imagine that a firm of consulting engineers would be much more suitable for the three Trusts. All the ordinary work could be done by the Assistant Engineer and when necessary the firm could be consulted. We need not confine ourselves to a firm in this province. There are firms of standing and repute in Calcutta and Bombay who will gladly assist us.

8. But even if a consulting engineer is appointed by the Public Health Department I am very much against this department appointing an Assistant Engineer or any other member of the engineer establishment. I agree with much that Nawab Muhammad Yusuf[2] has said in regard to this in his note of dissent.

9. So far as Allahabad is concerned the position is remarkably simple. We have no new scheme to look forward to. We are strictly limited to our choice of work and can only carry to completion a few schemes which have already been largely prepared in our office. Most of the town planning work is done and all that remains can easily be seen to by our Assistant Engineer. I would therefore strongly recommend that we should have an Assistant Engineer only and we should not be burdened with any contribution for a chief or consulting engineer. Of course,

2. Barrister and influential landholder in the eastern districts; member Legislative Council from 1921 and minister in U.P. Government 1926-36. Jawaharlal had known him as a student in London.

if any difficulty arises, which is unlikely at this stage, we can consult the Public Health Department or a private firm and pay their fees.

10. Our present Assistant Engineer is so far as I am aware a competent person and it would hardly be wise to remove him and get a new man in his place.

11. I agree with the recommendation of the Enquiry Committee about the Secretary. I also think that the staff allowed by the committee is sufficient for the work of the Trust.

12. I have already indicated above my answers to the two questions put by Government. But I must say that I have not wholly understood the purpose of the first question. There can be no rivalry between the Executive Officer and the Chief Engineer. They belong to different departments and do different works. The Chief Engineer can only be kept if he is wanted for the engineering work of the Trust. He should not be called upon to apply his engineering talents to the work of land acquisition or other work usually performed by the Executive Officer. As I have stated above it is clear that whoever else remains or not in the Trust, there is no further place for the Chief Engineer there.

13. I presume that there can be no doubt that the Chairman will be honorary soon. I do not know, however, from what date this recommendation will be given effect to. As soon as this takes place the Executive Officer will be even more wanted than he might otherwise be. But presuming that for some months more the Chairman is paid, even then I think that the Executive Officer will be necessary. As recommended by the Enquiry Committee he will have to do a great deal of land acquisition work for the Zero Road and this cannot be done satisfactorily by a new officer unacquainted with local conditions

14. I would, however, recommend that a reduction be made in the salary of the Executive Officer as recommended by the Enquiry Committee.

15. My answers to the two questions therefore are:—

(i) The Executive Officer should be retained but his salary etc., should be fixed at Rs. 1,000 and the Chief Engineer should leave the Trust. So far as Allahabad is concerned the Executive Officer must remain in any event for some time to do important land acquisition work.

(ii) The staff allowed by the Enquiry Committee is quite sufficient.

37. On the Introduction of Adult Franchise[1]

...Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru then took the chair and spoke in Hindustani from the English address. He said despite high hopes with which they began 18 months back they could not achieve much. They had hoped to make the municipalities free and help the national movement. He thought party politics should have nothing to do with municipal works but the municipalities must help national and political work. The Government wanted to exploit the municipalities for its own political purposes. They must stop that. The municipal work was a hard grind and so not inspiring but the real field for constructive work was getting more and more complicated owing to lack of funds and troubles all round. They had to decide the relationship between experts and members and remove the popular inertia. Relations between the central and local Governments must be decided. The municipalities should be independent. They would make mistakes but also learn from them.

Speaking of the difficulties the president said that the Government departments delayed, and individual members hampered, work. They only took interest in such matters as communal interests, appointments and dismissals. They must remember Mahatma Gandhi's advice to the Calcutta Corporation to supply good air, good water, good milk and free education. They must stop popular and communal passions and provide national education. He criticised the Government and the High Court's attitude towards Prof. Gour's book[2]. Regarding taxes he said the octroi and house taxes were bad as they hampered the growth of towns. He proposed taxes on land values to prevent the present system of land speculation which resulted in a serious loss to the boards. Lastly he spoke of the old municipal boards in ancient India which were really states and kept even kings in check. The municipal work was everybody's work and all should help but nobody cared and that was the cause of all troubles.

1. Report in *The Leader*, 12 December 1924, of Jawaharlal's presidential address to the Provincial Municipal Conference at Aligarh.
2. In July 1924 the U.P. Government proscribed the school text books in Hindi written by Pandit Ram Das Gour and widely used in national schools, and the Allahabad High Court declared these books to be seditious. Mahatma Gandhi pointed out that these books contained only reprints from the classics and other books, and the U.P. Congress challenged the Government to specify the passages which were objectionable.

38. Note to the Members of the Board[1]

Most of the members of the Board have been aware for sometime past that I have been contemplating resignation from the chairmanship of the Board. With many of them I have discussed this question. It was my intention to resign soon after my return from the Belgaum Congress but at the insistence of some colleagues I postponed action for some days. I have now considered the matter more than once and given it all the careful and anxious thought that I could. And the result has been that I have been confirmed in my decision. Every avenue of thought had led me to this conclusion that I should resign. I need not mention my reasons here. There are many and various. But the all sufficient one is that I cannot give enough time to do justice to the important and onerous office which my colleagues entrusted me with. Friends have suggested that I need not give much or indeed, almost any time, to my municipal duties and that my continuing even in name would be helpful. I am afraid I cannot agree to this. I cannot be a paper functionary. I must either do my work efficiently and well or make room for another. It is my belief that the various departments of the Board demand today a great deal of supervision and personal attention from the Chairman if they are to function as they should. This personal attention I cannot give.

I fear that many of my colleagues will not agree with me of the view I take about my resignation. They may think that I am precipitating a crisis merely to gratify a whim or because of some quixotic notions of mine. I would beg of them to be, as of old, indulgent to me, and to believe me that I would not act as I have done merely to satisfy a fancy or a whim — I have only done so because I think that it is the right thing to do and because I believe that ultimately it will be good for the Municipality. I have today sent my resignation.

I beg to express my deep indebtedness to all my colleagues for the kindness with which they have always laden me and the courtesy and cooperation which no one ever denied me.

Delhi
January 28th 1925

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. 28 January 1925. A.M.B. File No. XIII/13 of 1925.

39. To Chairmen, Municipal Boards, U.P.[1]

22.4.25

Dear Sir,

Many of the Municipalities in the United Provinces charge an octroi duty on all kinds of cloth, including hand woven cloth. The result is that hand woven cloth is penalised and goes up in price and the most important cottage industries of India — hand spinning and hand weaving — suffer greatly. As it is, it is not easy for the products of these cottage industries to compete without help with the mass production of the big factories. Ordinarily cottage industries are helped and protected by the state, but an octroi charge actually puts a burden on these cottage industries and their products which may make just the little difference which often separates success from failure. May I therefore beg of you and of your Board to consider this question, and, if such a charge is still made by your Board, to abolish it? The question is primarily an economic one and I trust members of all shades of political opinion will support a change which must benefit a most deserving cottage industry. Even Government is taking steps to encourage these industries and a resolution to this effect was passed recently in the U. P. Council, with the concurrence, I believe, of the Govt. If the Municipalities and District Boards of the province would also take effective steps in the matter, the cottage industries would be benefited greatly.

I would have suggested that favour should specially be shown to hand spun cloth as this benefits both the hand spinning and the hand weaving industries. But it may be that it will be difficult for a layman to distinguish between cloth made of hand spun and mill spun yarn. It will therefore be desirable to exempt from octroi all hand woven cloth. This can easily be distinguished from mill woven cloth.

May I also suggest that all uniforms for Municipal employees be made of hand spun and hand woven cloth. *Dusuti khaddar*, dyed any colour one choose, makes excellent and lasting uniforms.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 29/1924-25, pp 23-24, N.M.M.L.

2

GENERAL SECRETARY A.I.C.C.

For two and a half years, from May 1923 to December 1925, Jawaharlal Nehru served as one of the General Secretaries of the Congress. He took a close interest in all aspects of the organization and carried on a wide correspondence. The letters given here have been selected so as to indicate his general attitude as well as the variety of problems which demanded his attention.

programme before us or not. If it fails to achieve this then it will be unsuccessful in its objective. The United Provinces has a special responsibility in the matter because it was our Provincial Committee which had first accepted this resolution; and it is primarily due to its support that the All India Congress Committee has accepted it. Therefore it is our bounden duty to shoulder the responsibility of implementing the resolution. That is why I entreat you to apply all your energy to the programme before you. So far we have spent much of our energy in municipal and district board elections and that too at the cost of the work of the Congress; and we should not allow this to happen in the future. Now Congress work should engage our attention first and the rest of the work can come later.

What have we to do immediately? The All India Congress Committee has directed us to improve and strengthen the various Congress units, collect subscriptions and to enrol volunteers. This should be our first duty in the next two months. We should carry out necessary reforms in the district, town and *tahsil* Congress Committees and enrol members. We should enrol volunteers and collect enough money for the Tilak Swarajya Fund so as at least to complete the share of our provinces. The success we achieve in these will be our acid test.

The festival of *Bakr-Id* is approaching soon. It is our duty to see that it passes off in peace and harmony. We should not allow riots to take place by passively awaiting incidents. We should face this from the very beginning and strike at the very root of it. Therefore, all Congress workers and committees should be alert and keep the situation within their control. We shall try to remove difficulties and render you all possible help.

If all Congress Committees give us information of the situation within their limits and specify the kind of help we can extend to them, I shall be extremely happy.

I need not say that the only way to avoid controversies is for all the communities to be tolerant of each other and not be carried away by anger.

I am overburdened and I fear that I shall not be able to do justice to my duties as Secretary of the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee as well. Apart from this, constitutionally too, it is not right for the same person to be secretary of both the All India Congress Committee and the Provincial Congress Committee Therefore, with great regret, I am resigning from the post of the secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee; but I shall not relinquish the honour of rendering service to the Provincial Committee and I hope that I shall be able to serve you to some extent in the difficult days ahead.

I appeal to the members of the Provincial and District Congress Committees of these provinces to heed the call of Congress and to work for the furtherance of our country's cause during the next few months.

It will be good to publish a weekly account of the work done.

Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Presidential Address at the first All India Volunteers Conference, Kakinada[1]

Comrades:—

I thank you for the honour you have done me and the confidence you have reposed in me in choosing me as the President of this Conference. You have embarked on a great venture, full of the promise of high endeavour and noble achievement and it were fitting that you chose a captain wise in leadership and capable of guiding you aright. But sometimes it happens that the captains are otherwise engaged and circumstances force an ordinary soldier to the front. And so, in my case, events and circumstances, not unknown to you, have put me, a humble worker, in this Presidential Chair. I bow to your decision But I come to you as a mere soldier and not as an officer. Perhaps many of you are not aware that years ago I was a member of the Officers Training Corps in my school in England But I ended my career in the Territorial Army of England as a private and was not even awarded any badge or other sign of distinction during my two years in it. As a private then I come to you and seek your indulgence

We meet here today to consider how we can make ourselves more fit to serve our country and hasten the day of her liberation We meet as soldiers of freedom and as soldiers we must be men of action rather than of words. I shall endeavour to set an example in this respect by being as brief and businesslike as possible in this address.

The problem before us is to organise a body of disciplined volunteers who will serve their country and be prepared to sacrifice themselves at the altar of freedom. Our thoughts naturally go to the volunteer organisations of other countries and we seek guidance from them.

1. 25 December 1923, printed in *The Volunteer*, January 1925, pp 5—8

1. Circular to Secretaries of District Congress Committees and members of the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee[1]

Dear Friend,

You must have read the proceedings of the All India Congress Committee held at Bombay[2] with great eagerness and possibly with a little bit of uncertainty. The All India Congress Committee adopted a resolution similar to the one passed by the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee and its outcome has been surprising. Some of us have been compelled to accept the burden of AICC office work against our wishes.

The statement that has been issued by the new Working Committee is being sent for your information. You are requested to read it very carefully because it seems that there is considerable misunderstanding on this subject. The new Working Committee is not in favour of any radical changes in policy and it will endeavour, in all humility, to put into effect the old policies and programmes. The committee has felt that if our energy is frittered away in quarrelling among ourselves even on a single issue then it would be extremely difficult for us to implement our policies and programmes. The committee also felt that civil disobedience and all legislative programmes would fall into the background and only the controversy regarding Council entry would engage our attention. That possibility has not materialised. The majority among us, who had full faith only in the boycott of Councils, voted in favour of that resolution; and this, while maintaining the earlier decision of boycott of Councils, was expected to end the controversy. I do not know whether this resolution will be able to unite us and enable us to apply all our energies in the completion of this legislative

1. 4 June 1923. *Aaj*, 11 June 1923 Original in Hindi.
2. As a compromise between the Swarajists and the No-changers the AICC decided on 26 May 1923 that no propaganda should be carried on among the voters in furtherance of the Gaya Congress resolution relating to Council boycott. This led to the resignation of some members of the Working Committee, and a reconstituted Working Committee functioned under the chairmanship of Dr. Ansari.

Specially do we think of the Irish Volunteers and the part they took in the struggle for Irish freedom. We should profit by the experience of others but we must not forget that there is really not much in common between us and many of the Western volunteer organisations. The analogy of the Irish volunteers is a dangerous one, and we can profit more by avoiding their methods and mistakes than by copying them. For let us be clear that the very foundation of our movement for freedom is nonviolence, and any volunteer organisation that is to render effective service to this movement must have nonviolence for its basic principle.

We have had volunteers for many years; volunteers in the Congress, volunteers for social work and menial work. They worked for a while and then returned to their work. Then came noncooperation and more permanent groups of Congress and Khilafat volunteers were formed. Their numbers and power grew till Government, anxious to check their growth, applied the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and declared them unlawful associations. The wonderful response of the people to this challenge of Government must be fresh in every one's memory. Large numbers joined the volunteers and braved Government action, and many thousands went to jail. Eventually for very weariness Government stopped arresting them. But when official opposition was lessened the inner weakness of our volunteer organisations became apparent and they dwindled away, also for weariness. In 1923 another organised attempt was made to enlist volunteers and the triumph of Nagpur redeemed greatly the want of success in many parts of the country. This in brief is the story of our volunteers, and even these few lines will have made clear to us our strength and our weakness.

Volunteers can be of many kinds; but I take it that in this conference we mean by a volunteer a person who has the qualities of a soldier. By the very nature of our struggle he must be nonviolent; but in all other respects he must resemble the good soldier. He must be prepared to face danger courageously and to sacrifice himself whenever necessary. He must be fit and disciplined and must obey his officer's commands. We have seen in the past how thousands of our young men bravely faced suffering and few of us can doubt that thousands would spring up again when the call comes. We have also seen how utterly lacking in discipline our volunteers were and how our movement suffered because of this want of discipline The fault was not theirs. We paid little heed to discipline or drill and spent our time and energy in exhortations and appeals. We forgot that courage without discipline is of little avail, and a mob, however brave, is powerless before a trained army. Our object was not to have a body of trained volunteers.

We merely wanted to create an atmosphere of sacrifice and to infuse courage into many of our nerveless brothers. We succeeded wonderfully in our endeavour, but this success would have been even greater and more lasting if our people had been disciplined.

We have thus made no proper effort so far to have real volunteers. And the first question for us to determine is whether we require trained and disciplined men who will act like soldiers, or whether we want brave but untrained men, to face suffering and go to jail. Are we aiming at sending people to jail to vindicate our national honour as we did in Nagpur or in 1921—or are we desirous of training our people first, and afterwards whenever occasion arises to offer them for jail or any other service? The difference between these two methods is material, although perhaps it may not appear so. I would strongly recommend that we should choose the latter course and make every effort to have a trained and disciplined body. Without this training our strength will be wasted and our courage will bear little fruit. Above everything, we must concentrate on this training, and having given this training we shall have fitter men and women for constructive work and civil disobedience.

If this view commends itself to this conference and training and discipline are to be made our first objectives then it is desirable that we should offer this training to as large a number of people as possible. For the training will make them better citizens and more capable servants of the Motherland. I would put as few obstructions in their way as possible. Out of their number I would suggest that volunteers be chosen for constructive work and civil disobedience and these must take the Congress volunteer pledge before they undertake any responsible work.

The second important question which this conference will have to consider is, what relation the volunteer organisation should bear to the Congress. I think that there is little doubt that the volunteers cannot be independent of the Congress. It would be difficult for the movement to succeed without the fullest support from Congressmen, and even if it happened to prosper there would always be danger of friction and conflict. The volunteer organisation should therefore be subordinate to the Congress, and the All India Congress Committee or Working Committee should lay down the policy and guide the movement. It is also clear to me that it will be difficult to maintain discipline amongst the volunteers if District and Town Congress Committees are continually interfering with their organisation. I would suggest that the Provincial Congress Committees should guide and control the volunteer organisation in their province but that no subordinate committees should be empowered to interfere. I feel that in any event

the work of organising volunteers must of necessity be largely provincial and it is fitting that the Provincial Congress Committees should have a say in it. At the same time I am clear that effective All-India coordination will be necessary if one strong and efficient volunteer organisation is to be created in India. For this purpose an All-India board for volunteers should be appointed. The board will act in accordance with the directions given by the Working Committee of the Congress. This arrangement will keep the volunteer organisation under the Congress and will, at the same time, avoid undue interference with their internal management or discipline. As the board and the Provincial Congress Committees are both subordinate to the A.I.C.C. there is no reason why there should be any friction between the two. The volunteers will of course work in towns and districts in cooperation with the town and district Congress Committees.

I have had my brief say. The whole lesson of the past three years teaches us that discipline is essential for us and without it we can hardly hope to succeed. Most of our weaknesses can be traced to our lack of discipline. I feel sure that if this conference results in an organised attempt to train and discipline our people it will have done the greatest service to the cause of freedom. Our Akali brethren are today giving us an example of an effective action on nonviolent lines. They are brave and self-sacrificing but their real strength is their discipline. Let us profit by this example.

For a year and more many of us have engaged ourselves in debate and argument to the detriment of much other work. We who aspire to be soldiers should have little to do with wordy warfare and as members of this conference or as volunteers should concentrate on the issues before us and leave high matters of policy to other times and halls. Let this be a brotherhood of service which all who love India and desire to see her free can join. Our beloved leader lies in jail and the glorious spirit he infused in us has dwindled and grown less. Our eyes wander from the goal and our feet falter. But the dark days have passed and work again beckons. Some of the omens may still appear unpropitious. But let us remember that noble Hector, King Priam's son, as he sallied out on the plains of Troy to fight the mighty Achilles, being urged by his brother to bow to unfavourable omens and retreat, replied :— "One omen is best—to fight for our country."

3. Speech at the Kakinada Congress[1]

Mr. President and Gentlemen, [Cries of "English, English"]. Please allow me to speak in Hindi. I shall read the resolution to be placed before you in English.

"This Congress is of opinion that in order to train the people of India and make them effective instruments for the carrying out of the national work on the lines laid down by the Congress, it is necessary to have a trained and disciplined body of workers. This Congress, therefore, welcomes the movement for the formation of an All India Volunteer Organisation and calls on the Working Committee to take all necessary steps to form such a body of trained volunteers in cooperation with the organisers of the movement and to keep control and supervise over it, while giving it freedom of internal management and administration."

It means that, in the opinion of the Congress, it is necessary to give the people of India the requisite training that helps them to carry on their national work efficiently. It is a matter of joy to the Congress that an All India Volunteer Organisation is coming into being for the purpose. This resolution suggests to the Working Committee to render the necessary help in organising the volunteers. It further suggests that the Working Committee should bring under its control all those that devote their whole time and energy to the Volunteer Organisation. But that does not mean that we should interfere with their internal organisation.

Gentlemen, it is now more than three years since we began this war of nonviolent noncooperation at Calcutta. Since then Mahatmaji has pushed it on vigorously. It is proclaimed all along that this movement is nonviolent, that it intends no harm to anybody and that nobody shall raise his sword against others. Nevertheless you will understand that this is war. If you really want to attain success in this movement, you must all become soldiers. Nonviolence does not mean timidity and hiding behind the *purdah*. Mahatmaji has told us that sepoys in a nonviolent war should be many times bolder than soldiers fighting in a violent fight. We have carried on this fight for three years

1. Report of the thirty-eighth session of the Indian National Congress, 1923, pp. 118—19. Original in Hindi.

and four months. You know how during this period thousands have made great sacrifices and thousands of men and women have put up a bold fight against the government without yielding. But the result is not commensurate with this huge sacrifice. Have you thought of the reason for it? Our organisation was not thorough. If we had a perfect organisation the British Government would not have existed in India. Now-a-days I am always wondering whether or not this British Government should remain here. Should we change our creed or not? I do not know if this was placed before you, but I would prefer that the present system of Government was rooted out of this land. You may perform great sacrifices and undergo great difficulties; new leaders may come but you cannot attain your end without properly organising yourselves.

We must see whether we are going along the right path and also in the right direction. After choosing the right path we must conform to it. The purpose of this resolution is that all Indians should be trained and should organise themselves effectively to be fit soldiers of Swaraj. We are all speakers; none of us is a soldier. We should talk less and act better. So long as we have not got sepoys, we cannot oppose a nation of soldiers. We are fighting the British now. If you are capable of governing your country you must be ready to offer yourselves at the altar of your Motherland. You will be able to defeat your opponents the moment you outdo them in the immensity of your sacrifice. If you want that an alien nation should not dominate you, if you want to manage your affairs for yourselves, your immediate duty is to organise the volunteers effectively.

A question arises as to the nature of the organisation. Who will manage it? Will it not turn against the Congress itself? Or will others interfere in its organisation? This organisation will be subordinate to the All India Congress Working Committee. We are asking the Working Committee to organise this organisation in consultation with those who are already making attempts in this direction. The Working Committee should keep this organisation under its control and see that its aim and object are not distorted. There need be no interference with minor details. Such interference would impede work.

Do not view this lightly. Please set up the necessary organisation in various parts of the country. By bringing this resolution into force, you will not only learn the principles that should guide a volunteer but you will also put an end to futile discussions and the spirit of insubordination to your superior's orders. An army that spends its time in mere discussions can never enter the battlefield. There should be no disharmony in the organization. All of you should follow one creed. You are also responsible for your provinces.

In the Punjab, the Sikhs and the Akalis are practising Satyagraha. Remember that the whole of the Sikh community is opposed to the Government. They are determined to fight and offer Satyagraha. In every part of the country the Akalis are offering Satyagraha. Why is this community, so small in numbers, able to oppose the British Government? They are not extraordinarily heroic. We can find people among the Hindus and the Mussalmans who are capable of as much suffering. But they have not got the necessary training. The Sikhs are well organised and we are not.

Gentlemen, I request you to accept this resolution and organise in your respective provinces the army that can face difficulties, fight the enemy and perform national service in a nonviolent manner.

4. To Maulana Mohamad Ali[1]

107 Hewett Road,
Allahabad
13-1-24

My dear Mohamad Ali,

I have been wanting to write to you for some days but doubt and uncertainty about certain matters prevented me from doing so. I have not recovered yet from the shock of becoming Working Secretary[2]. I am not in the habit of shedding tears for past follies but I confess that the more I think of it the sorrier I feel for having become the Secretary of the A.I.C.C. A greater misfit could hardly have been arranged. Many members of the Working Committee distrust me and dislike my presence as Secretary. I feel that I am not in tune with the committee.

1. Maulana Mohamad Ali Papers, Jamia Millia Islamia.
2. Jawaharlal was reappointed Working General Secretary of the Congress at the Kakinada session on 2 January 1924

The A.I.C.C. office has not come here yet in spite of my strict injunctions that it should come forthwith[3]. I am receiving a fair number of letters etc. daily and I have to deal with them without any files or staff. I hope Raja Rau[4] will turn up soon—I have received a number of applications for the post of Assistant Secretary. Some are from fairly good persons but of course none approaches your standard. I don't know what to do with their applications. I think it will be best for the Working Committee to decide. I suppose any choice that I might venture to make would not be agreeable to some members. Please have a meeting of the Working Committee as soon as possible. It will be difficult to settle down to work without definite directions from the Working Committee. So far we have had only brave words in the Congress and no one seems to know exactly what to do. Let me know the date when you want the meeting and I shall issue notices. Of course the place of meeting will be Bombay.

Our Provincial Congress Committee is likely to close up shop for want of funds. We have exactly Rs. 20/- in the bank and the current month's liabilities to meet. These amount to several hundreds. My business ought to be to work hard for the P.C.C. and try to get it out of the morass. But it is difficult for me to do so with the All India Secretaryship dragging me away. I am very worried because of our provincial difficulties. If we don't look out the A.I.C.C. will soon be in much the same position as the United Provinces P.C.C.

I sent you a copy of a cable[5] received from South Africa yesterday. Please let me know if any action is to be taken on it.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. It had also been decided at Kakinada that the A.I.C.C. office should be located at Allahabad.
4. He had been appointed Under Secretary of the Congress and served in that capacity from 1924 for about ten years.
5. Inviting Shrimati Sarojini Naidu to visit South Africa. The Working Committee decided that Shrimati Sarojini Naidu and Shri B. D. Chaturvedi should be requested to visit South Africa to advise the Indians settled there.

5. To N. S. Hardikar[1]

Allahabad
19/1/24

My dear Hardikar[2],

I am almost ashamed to write to you. I have hardly done anything for the volunteers since I returned. I have not yet drafted the rules and regulations which the board asked me to do. I have not been idle. I have so many odd jobs that I hardly have time to think. And now I have succeeded in breaking a few laws and in all probability I shall be in jail before long.

If I succeed in remaining out I propose going to Bombay on the 28th reaching there on the 29th. The Working Committee meets on the 30th. Please call a meeting of the Volunteer Board for the 31st at Bombay. You can fix any place and time that suits you. The Working Committee will probably meet at the office of the Bombay P.C.C. in Krishna Buildings.

I shall try to draft the rules etc. before going to Bombay. I should like you however to draft them also. We could then compare the two and perhaps evolve something decent

My reference to jail above is not to be taken lightly. There is considerable chance of a case being started against some of us here soon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Please send printed copies of the draft constitution to all P.C.Cs. Numerous copies should be sent.

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (B. 1889); in 1923 organised the Volunteer Movement known as Hindustani Seva Dal, Jawaharlal gave full encouragement to his efforts; in 1931 the Dal was merged in the Volunteer Department of the Congress.

6. Circular to all Secretaries, P.C.Cs[1]

11/2/1924

Dear Sir,

In compliance with a resolution of the Working Committee passed at Bombay on Jan. 31st, I have to request your committee to adopt standing rules for the collection, custody and expenditure of Congress funds. The rules should be definite with as little vagueness as possible so that little discretion is left in the matter. I am sending you some model rules which have been generally approved by the Working Committee. I trust you will frame your own rules on the lines indicated in these model rules and will send them to me soon.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 12/1924, pp. 1—16, N.M.M.L.

7. Suggested Rules for the Collection, Custody and Expenditure of Congress Funds

27 January 1924

Every one knows that there is a great deal of suspicion and dissatisfaction in the country about the management of public funds. Much of this suspicion is baseless but also there is considerable justification for it. Our procedure so far has been entirely wanting in method and every office-bearer of the Congress has had full liberty to do what he

lites. We have apparently presumed that a person calling himself a Congressman or a noncooperator must have a great measure of honesty and competence, and we have staked almost everything on the goodness of human nature. This is hardly business or wisdom. The result has been slackness all round in the control of expenditure and a great deal of avoidable waste. Everything is left to the unhappy Secretary of a Congress Committee and he has little to guide him. With no definite rules, it is difficult for him to raise objections to another's bills. Telegrams are sent at the slightest provocation. I think this should not be allowed to continue any longer. Until this is stopped and the public assured that we are acting on business lines we cannot expect to collect much money. I propose therefore that the Working Committee should issue definite rules for the guidance of the A.I.C.C. office and all other Congress offices. I have drafted some for the consideration of members. They are only meant to form the basis for discussion.

A. Collection of funds

1. Only authorised persons to collect money. A written authority should be given to each collector. Lists of authorised collectors should be published for public information No one else to be allowed to collect on behalf of the Congress It will of course be open to anyone who is not an authorised collector to collect on his own responsibility and if the public trust him and choose to give him money they do so well knowing that the Congress Committee is not liable for him.
2. A Congress Committee giving authority to collect should give it for a specific area within its jurisdiction Collectors should only collect in allotted area
3. Each collector should have a register with a properly drawn up form. Entries in this register should be made as far as possible on the spot by the donor.
4. Receipts should be issued by the office.
5. The collection register should be produced at short intervals at the office, as far as possible on fixed days, for inspection

B. Custody

6. All monies collected must be sent direct to the bank. No part of the collections should be spent prior to deposit.

7. Funds should always be kept in banks and not with private individuals. In case of small towns or villages where there are no banks, *the major part of the funds should be deposited with* the district or provincial Congress Committees.
8. The person having custody of the funds should on no account spend them.

C. Expenditure

9. All payments above a certain amount, which might be fixed at Rs. 25 or so, should be by cheque.
10. All cheques should be signed by not less than two specified signatories.
11. Powers to sanction expenditure within fixed limits to be delegated to office bearers providing for emergency expenditure.
12. No expenditure to be incurred except by authorised persons and within the rules framed for this purpose.

D. Rules for Telegrams, etc.

13. Telegrams should be sent only when the post or other cheaper means are not available and when such telegrams are absolutely necessary from the Congress view point.
14. When telegrams are sent they should be as brief as possible.
15. Bills for telegrams should be supported by a certificate that the telegrams were absolutely necessary and dealt with Congress business.
16. Whenever a postcard will serve the purpose no letter should be sent.

E. Rules for Travelling Allowance

17. No travelling allowance will be admissible except when (i) the journey is on Congress business and (ii) the person charging it has been authorised to undertake the journey.
18. All travelling allowance bills should be countersigned by the Secretary.
19. *Definite rules should be made about the class of* which the fare will be allowed ordinarily and in special cases. As far as possible it should not be left to discretion. The rules should also provide if necessary for halting allowance or other incidental expenses. In special cases the president of the committee might

be authorised to sanction a relaxation of the rules but every such case should be reported to the Council or Executive Committee.

F. Bills

20 All bills must be submitted to the Secretary who if satisfied will countersign them.

21. It is desirable in large offices like the Provincial Congress Committee offices to have a fairly responsible person to audit all bills as they come and to see that they do not infringe any rule. *This duty may be assigned to the cashier if he is good enough.* The auditor should carefully check every bill.

22. If the auditor and Secretary disagree about any payment the President may overrule the auditor but such decision shall be placed before the Executive Committee.

23. The cashier or auditor should have a definite sum, say Rs 100 with him for small payments, as a permanent advance This advance will be recouped when a bill is presented supported by the paid vouchers which shall be defaced by the Secretary at the time of signing the cheque.

24. Periodical audited statements of accounts should be published by every Congress Committee in the local papers and by hand bills.

Jawaharlal Nehru

8. To all P. C. C. Secretaries[1]

3.3 1924

Dear Sir,

Reports in the daily papers state that several provinces are making collections for a Gandhi purse which will be presented to Mahatmaji when he visits the province. Gujarat has taken the lead in the matter and has called upon not only the residents of the province but all

1. No 8489, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya

Gujaratis in other parts of India to contribute to it. Gujarat is to be congratulated on the lead but I confess I do not understand appeals being made to people in other provinces to contribute to the Gujarat fund simply because they or their forefathers were at one time connected with Gujarat. No official or other intimation has been received by me about the conditions governing these collections in the various provinces. It is desirable that the Working Committee be informed of all steps that are being taken and I shall thank you if you will kindly send me full information and specially answer the following questions:-

(1) Is your provincial or any subordinate committee organising collections for a Gandhi purse? If so, have you tentatively fixed a sum for it?

(2) Are the Gandhi purse collections part of the Tilak Swaraj Fund collections or in addition to T.S.F. or in place of T.S.F?

(3) Will any part of these collections go to All India funds?

Are you making collections in your own province only or are you appealing to people in other provinces also who may be connected with your province?

I shall thank you for an early reply.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru
General Secretary

9. To the Secretary, P. C. C., Gujarat[1]

Allahabad
5.3.1924

Dear Sir,

I am informed by the Treasurer, All India Congress Committee that he has received a sum of Rs. 1,25,000 from Messrs. Maganlal Pranjivan & Co., Rangoon, and that of this sum Rs. 65,242/4/- are earmarked

1. No. 8459, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya.

for "constructive work" in Gujarat. I do not quite understand why money collected in one province should find its way to another province, nor is the earmarking very clear. "Constructive work" practically means all our present work, so that the earmarking merely amounts to this that the money may be spent in almost any Congress activity. Will the 5% quota of the A.I.C.C. be paid out of this? Or will the earmarking save it from this tax? If this is so it would almost appear that the sole object of earmarking is to deprive the A.I.C.C. of its rightful share. Instead of adopting these methods it would be better to put an end to the A.I.C.C.'s quota.

So far as I am aware the practice has been for collections to remain in the province where they have been made. I remember instances in the past when some people in the U.P. sent some money direct to the Gujarat Committee. The Gujarat Committee subsequently paid over this money to the U.P.P.C.C. although the donors had themselves sent it to Gujarat. Any other method must lead to confusion and friction. Except perhaps in the case of a particular institution like a Vidyapitha, there appears to be no reason why collections should be diverted to different provinces. I need hardly point out to you the undesirable consequences of leaders trying to collect money for their own pet or particular province. This not only encourages and nourishes a narrow provincialism but might lead to unhealthy competition and rivalry. It is bad enough in places for two appeals for funds to be made from the same platform, one for the Khilafat Committee and the other for the Congress. It will be far worse for every leader or follower to carry his province wherever he may go and try to raise money for his own province or town or village. It may be that the good sense of leaders will prevent them from quarrelling amongst themselves or from otherwise misbehaving but friction there is sure to be and where there is friction there is danger of ill feeling. Where is a line to be drawn?

I shall put up this matter before the Working Committee at its next meeting.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru
General Secretary

10. To Tarak Nath Das[1]

9/4/24

My dear Mr. Das[2],

Many thanks for your letters and also for the various cuttings and extracts you have kindly sent me.

You have evidently been misinformed about the Congress attitude towards foreign propaganda. I have not seen or heard of, previous to reading your letter, Lalaji's statement to which you refer. There is no question before us just at present of sending any representatives to foreign countries. Many of us believe in some kind of foreign propaganda but for the time being our difficulties here are so great that we must face them and overcome them before we can give much time or energy to foreign work. Now that Mr. Gandhi is again with us his views in the matter will naturally carry considerable weight with the Congress and the public.

Although there is no question at present of our appointing agents in foreign countries, I may point out to you that the chief difficulty is not a want of men of ability, as of men in intimate touch with developments in India. It is extraordinary how people who have been away for long have lost touch with the movement here. It will be difficult for any one who does not thoroughly understand the position here to represent the Congress elsewhere. But as I have said above, this question is not being considered here because of difficulties nearer home.

I shall put up your proposal about distributing 500 copies of your work—*India in World Politics*—to Senators in the U.S.A., before the Working Committee of the Congress. I am afraid we are having a period of financial stress and the tendency is to avoid all outside and avoidable expenditure. I shall let you know the decision of the committee.

I should have very much liked India to be represented in the International Women's Congress[3] at Washington but I am sorry to say

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 39, (Part I), 1924, pp 13—15, N.M.M.L.
2. (1884-1958); a Bengali revolutionary who went to Japan c. 1906 and thereafter migrated to the United States; was active in organising support in that country for the Indian nationalist cause.
3. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom was holding its biennial conference at Washington in May 1924

it is hardly possible. Mrs. Naidn would have been the best person for the work but she is still in South Africa. She has done good work there and in East Africa.

The Volunteer Movement here is entirely under the Congress. You need not be afraid of its breaking loose.

Your suggestion that elected members of the legislatures should contribute part of their salaries to Congress funds is evidently based on the misconception that they get salaries. They are not paid except travelling and other expenses.

May I make a small correction? You spell my name as "Jawaralal Nehru". It should be written "Jawaharlal Nehru".

I am very sorry that all your efforts for the cause are not sufficiently backed from home. But we are in difficulties and it is not easy to explain them all at such a distance.

You must have learnt that Lala Lajpat Rai has gone to England. His visit is chiefly for reasons of health.

My Bande Mataram.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To Tilak Swaraj Fund Trustees[1]

Bombay
25 April 1924

Dear Sir,

I have your letter of the 23rd April regarding certain inaccuracies in the statement on Congress finances issued by the Secretaries A.I.C.C. I regret greatly that any inaccuracies should have crept in. So far as the figures were concerned I relied entirely on our auditor Mr. Sopariwala[2] and I only had the statement printed after he had passed

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 28 (Part II) 1924, pp 179—80, N.M.M.L.
2. C. H. Sopariwala (1872-1950); audited Congress and Tilak Swaraj Fund accounts without charging any fees. Under Gandhi's influence, he did some social work among the scheduled tribes in Gujarat.

it and, as I thought, checked the figures. I realise now that it would have been better to have sent you a draft before publication.

It is clear that the inaccuracies must be corrected. I propose to issue a short statement correcting these. I shall be obliged if you will kindly draft this statement for me and send it to me. My knowledge of financial matters is meagre and I feel somewhat lost in figures. If you send me a draft I shall if necessary add to it or alter it and then issue it. To facilitate reference I am sending you a copy of the statement on Congress finances.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. To N. S. Hardikar[1]

Allahabad
May 22, 1924

My dear Hardikar,

I have your statement of accounts. I am afraid the Seva Dal is not distinguishing itself. The few reports that I have received are not encouraging. The blame is partly ours. What have you been doing? Have you received the training you wanted in Mysore or Travancore or somewhere in the far south? Has your arm recovered?

You must have learned that the A.I.C.C. is meeting in Ahmedabad on June 27. The Seva Dal Board had better also meet about that time. You might issue a notice saying that there will be a meeting on the 27th or 28th at the time of the A.I.C.C. meeting. The exact time and place will be announced later.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.

13. To N. S. Hardikar[1]

Allahabad
28.5.24

My dear Hardikar,
I find from your printed application forms for volunteers that you expect them to apply to you if they wish to join the Hindustani Seva Dal. This hardly appears correct. It is not possible for you or your office to know anything about most applicants and you cannot enrol them direct. It is much better for the application to be sent to the local secretary. Even the Provincial Secretary is too far from many local centres to deal directly with these applications.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.

14. On Congress Departments and the Indian National Service[1]

Allahabad
10 June 1924

Resolution 5 of the Cocanada Congress called upon the "Working Committee to prepare and submit at as early a date as possible to the All India Congress Committee for its consideration a scheme of organisation of separate Congress departments for more efficiently, expeditiously and uninterruptedly carrying out the various items of the programme of constructive work under its supervision and control"; and further that "the Working Committee should also submit a scheme

1. Maulana Mohamad Ali Papers, Jamia Millia Islamia.

of National Service of paid workers who would carry out the work of the various departments and provide adequate and efficient central and provincial secretariats and local office establishments."

In compliance with the above resolution the Working Committee appointed a sub-committee consisting of the President and the General Secretaries to draw up a scheme. This sub-committee has not so far considered the matter. As the All India Congress Committee is meeting soon it is desirable that the Working Committee should deal with the matter and put up a scheme. I do not think there is any chance of the next A.I.C.C. considering this question. There are far more vital problems before it and all the time and energy available will be taken up by these problems. I have however included the Congress Departments and Indian National Service in the agenda.

I enclose some suggestions. I have written them with considerable difficulty and reluctance as I feel that there is a great deal of unreality about discussing these things at the present juncture. If the President and the other Secretaries will favour me with their views before the A.I.C.C. meeting I will try to prepare a joint report for submission to the Working Committee. If this is not possible then we can meet and discuss the question at Sabarmati prior to the Working Committee meeting.

Jawaharlal Nehru

To

1. Maulana Mohamad Ali
2. Syt. G. B. Deshpande[2]
3. Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew[3]

Congress Departments

I do not think it will be desirable to have a large number of special departments at present. The Khaddar Board already exists and is functioning satisfactorily. I would propose that a small National Education Board be formed to overhaul the whole question of national education. This Board should devote itself immediately to the preparation of proper text books for primary and secondary schools. The

2. Gangadharrao Balkrishna Deshpande (1871-1960); General Secretary, A.I.C.C. 1923-24, Chairman of the Reception Committee for the Congress Session held in Belgaum in 1924.
3. (1883-1963); contemporary of Jawaharlal at Cambridge joined the national movement in 1912, came to national prominence during the martial law regime in the Punjab in 1919, was awarded the Lenin Peace Prize in 1952.

Board should consider the present state of national schools and colleges in the country and take steps to put them on a proper basis. Institutions which cannot be carried on properly either for lack of funds or any other reason should be closed.

I do not think any other department need be formed at present. The Working Committee can easily look after the rest of the work of the Congress. If necessary members of the committee can be put in charge of special work.

Jawaharlal Nehru

The Indian National Service

1. There will be two branches of the Indian National Service: The All India I.N.S. and the Provincial I.N.S.
2. The Working Committee, or a board appointed by it in this behalf, will, appoint members of the All India I.N.S.
3. The Provincial Congress Committee or a board appointed by it in this behalf, will appoint members of the Provincial I.N.S.
4. The Working Committee, and in the case of a province the P.C.C. concerned, will fix the numbers to be enrolled as members of the I.N.S.
5. The Working Committee shall appoint a board to consider applications for the All India I.N.S. to examine applicants and if approved to pass them and issue certificates to them Similar boards should be appointed by the P.C.Cs for the Provincial I.N.S.
6. No person shall be appointed to the service unless he has satisfied the Board concerned that he possesses the following qualifications:
   (i) He possesses a complete knowledge of the Province.
   (ii) He can spin and card well.
   (iii) He possesses an elementary knowledge of the economic, social and political conditions of the country and is also acquainted with the outlines of Congress history.
   (iv) He believes in the objects of the Congress and the methods laid down for the attainment of these objects.
   (v) He has complied with all resolutions of the Congress which apply to him.
   (vi) He is free from any serious disease or incurable habit that would interfere with the due discharge of his duties.
   (vii) He has attained the age of 21 years.

(viii) He is prepared to devote his whole time and attention to the service entrusted to him from time to time.

(ix) His general character is good and he is fit for national service.

7. Candidates should not receive more than what is required for the maintenance of their dependents and themselves, provided that in no case should a member of the Provincial I.N.S., receive more than Rs. 100 per month. Provided further that no candidate should be approved who is heavily in debt or who has a large family that cannot be reasonably supported on a monthly honorarium of Rs. 100.
8. Candidates should produce certificates of character signed by at least two respectable men.
9. Candidates will be liable to dismissal for continued neglect of duty, deliberate breach of discipline, dishonesty or non-compliance with the resolutions of the Congress in so far as they are applicable to them.
10. Each candidate who has been approved by the Board shall receive a letter of appointment and instructions to be signed by the Chairman of the A.I.C.C., or the P.C.C., as the case may be, which shall include specific directions for the strictest observance of nonviolence in word and deed and the details of the service to be performed by him.
11. Selected candidates may be required to undergo a further course of training, and may be stationed, in the case of the All India I.N.S., any where in the country, and in the case of the Provincial I.N.S. in any part of the province concerned.
12. Selected candidates must give an undertaking in writing to carry out the resolutions of the Congress in so far as they apply to them to observe strict nonviolence in word and deed, to observe the discipline of the service, and always to serve their country to the utmost of their ability.
13. Both men and women may become members of the I.N.S.

Jawaharlal Nehru

15. To Maulana Mohamad Ali[1]

107, Hewett Road,
Allahabad
11th June 1924

My dear Mohamad Ali,
I have just received your telegram about Desai's[2] notice. I have not seen this notice and I am not sure that I understand this telegram. I presume that Desai has issued a warning to visitors to make their own arrangements. I am writing to Desai and asking him to meet your wishes in the matter and to issue a notice accordingly. It is hardly possible for me to issue any notice as I do not know what arrangements are being made or can be made in Sabarmati. The hall where the meeting of the A.I.C.C. is going to be held[3] is not a very big one and I understand that at the most 200 visitors can be admitted. If however there is a full attendance of members this number of visitors will have to be reduced.

The usual practice so far has been to make arrangements for members and sometimes even to charge them for their arrangements. Visitors have never been encouraged and I am not aware of any arrangements having been made for their stay or board at any previous meeting. A large number of members of the A.I.C.C. are against admitting visitors to the A.I.C.C. meetings and at every meeting a proposal is brought forward to exclude visitors.

For the next meeting the Gujarat P.C.C., has invited the members to be their guests. They will have some difficulty in making arrangements for so many people in or near Sabarmati. It is possible that they may not have any houses or other suitable places left for the accommodation of visitors.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Maulana Mohamad Ali Papers, Jamia Millia Islamia
2. Mahadev Desai.
3. At Ahmedabad.

16. To Shankarlal Banker[1]

14 June 1924

My dear Shankarlal,
Thanks for your letter. I shall answer it tomorrow when I hope to have a little more time. Meanwhile I only wish to assure you that the possibility of my resignation hinted at in the note I sent you was not meant to be a threat or even an intelligent anticipation of coming events. I have no special desire to resign and I do not propose to do so unless I feel that it is absolutely necessary. Surely you can imagine a situation when it may be impossible for me as well as others to continue in office. When everything is in the melting pot, as you put it, why should I be impervious to heat or refuse to melt?

I am enclosing a supplementary statement on Congress finances which I am issuing today. I hope you approve of it.

I propose to reach Ahmedabad on the evening of the 25th.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 28/Part II, 1924, p. 263, N.M.M.L.

17. To Maulana Mohamad Ali[1]

30th July 1924

My dear Mohamad Ali,
Panikkar has evidently decided to leave the Akali Sahayak Bureau and take to editing the *Hindustan*. He has not written to me anything definite about his plans but I take it that he cannot remain in Amritsar

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (ii), 1924, p 451, N.M.M.L.
See also Nos 59 and 69.

much longer. Please let me have your directions as to what should be done now with the Bureau. I would recommend that it should be closed up and the furniture etc. sold. You will probably see Panikkar in Delhi. Kindly speak to him about the matter and tell him what he should do about the Bureau. Also you might discuss the question of writing a history of noncooperation.

The A.I.C.C. at Ahmedabad directed that Ansari's report on the National Pact should be circulated. I find that this report is not signed and have therefore written to him about it. Please ask him to signify his consent to me. Otherwise I cannot get it printed.

How is your spinning getting on?

Yours affly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. To The Treasurer, A.I.C.C.[1]

16th August 1924,

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 6th August forwarding to me the bill of *The Bombay Chronicle*. I am afraid it is not possible for me to check it from this distance. The bill appears excessive but I must accept anything that the auditor and you pass. I notice that Mr. Sopariwala has passed the bill for Rs. 950. If you can succeed in reducing the figure, we shall be the gainers. I shall wait to hear from you and shall then pass the bill and send it back to you for payment. I presume you will also require a requisition and debit slip.

As regards distribution, copies should first be sent to all members of the Working Committee as they will have to consider it at the next meeting. I do not think it is necessary to send a copy to each member of the A.I.C.C. Copies should be sent in sufficient numbers to all

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 2 (Part I), 1924, pp. 89—91, N.M.M.L.

the P.C.Cs and they might be asked to send it to all district committees and to such members of the A.I.C.C. in their province as they consider necessary. It is important the accounts be sent by you to all prominent newspapers—English and vernacular, daily, weekly & monthly. You can easily make a list of such papers, including of course Anglo-Indian papers. If you desire it however I can send a list. A little printed slip might be added to each copy to the following effect: "With the compliments of the Treasurer of the All India Congress Committee". You might also state in this slip that copies of the previous year's accounts can be obtained at your office. I think you should send at least 100 copies, if not more, to newspapers. We have to give wide publicity to it.

In one of my circulars to the A.I.C.C. members I shall state that copies of the accounts can be obtained at your office. If any member writes for it he should certainly be supplied with a free copy.

As for the previous year's accounts and the copies left over this year, I would not advise a sale. Nobody wants to buy accounts and we must not put any restrictions in the way of their distribution. We might say that any one who writes for them and sends 2 annas (or whatever the figure might be) for postage will be sent a copy. Every newspaper & member of the A.I.C.C. must however be supplied free.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

19. To N. S. Hardikar[1]

Allahabad
4th September, 1924

My dear Hardikar,
Thanks for your letter of the 28th August.

I am in a difficulty and I do not know what to do or advise. In answer to my circular about the Seva Dal, Mahatmaji has written to

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.

say that in his opinion the scheme is premature and the work should be left to local effort. This means that the Working Committee will in all likelihood postpone further consideration of the scheme. In view of this fact I should like you to circularise the members of the All India Board and invite their opinions as to what should be done. If they desire a meeting of the Board, this should be held, and it is not very material whether I attend it or not. No date has so far been fixed for the next Working Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. To the Treasurer, A.I.C.C., Bombay[1]

107 Hewett Road,
Allahabad
23rd October, 1924

Dear Sir[2],
I am in receipt of your letter without number dated 21st October and note Mr. Sopariwala's views on the subject of audit of provincial accounts. While fully appreciating his arguments and yours I am afraid I do not agree with the conclusion that visits to the various provinces are not called for. It is not very material however what I think in the matter. The Working Committee at Delhi was clearly of opinion, after full discussion, that our auditor should visit the provincial headquarters. That question is therefore settled and we have to comply with the committee's directions.

I do not think that the sending of accounts by post will serve our purpose. It will no doubt be of some help to you and I am therefore

1. Maulana Mohamad Ali Papers, Jamia Milia Islamia.
2. Jamnalal Bajaj was the Treasurer of the Congress at this time.

requesting all P.C.Cs to do so, but this cannot take the place of the auditor's visit. Please therefore make arrangements for the tour of the auditor.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru
General Secretary

Copy forwarded to Maulana Mohamad Ali for information.

21. To N. S. Hardikar[1]

Allahabad
7th November, 1924

My dear Hardikar,

I owe you many apologies for the delay in dealing with several letters and circulars from you. I have also been very much put out and perturbed lately and I have found it difficult to do all my work. Please forgive me.

I shall certainly send you a short message for the *Volunteer*. It will go off in another two or three days.

I have not heard from you about the balance of money with me. Have you consulted the other members of the Board? I am in favour of the money being invested as you propose but the Board should be consulted.

I am afraid it is not possible for us to meet before the Congress. Nor is it very necessary. Everything—including the future of the Congress—is in a state of flux and it is difficult to make any plans for the future. Perhaps we may be in a better position at Belgaum[2]

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. The Congress was to hold its annual session at Belgaum under Mahatma Gandhi's presidentship in December 1924

Regarding your proposals for the Volunteers' Conference, I would suggest as follows :—

1) I do not agree with you about my being president again. I am prepared to do the formal work of president but it is far better for you to have another president for the conference. I shall gladly of course serve the conference in any way I can.
2) I think the Volunteers' Conference should not be restricted to a small number of delegates. Why not open it to all full or first members of the Dal? There are not many. In matters of voting if you like, provinces may vote separately.
3) The Subjects Committee might be limited as you suggest.

North India is in a bad way owing to Hindu Muslim troubles and is not likely to send many delegates to the Congress.

I hope you are well.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

22. Message to The Volunteer[1]

Parties and varying policies and rival programmes are fighting for mastery. But one thing stands clear. India's greatest weakness has been for long and is today her lack of discipline. Without discipline the wisest of policies and the best of programmes are doomed to failure. And even an indifferent programme coupled with united and disciplined action can lead us to success. Thus unity and discipline are the two essentials for us today, and discipline of the body and mind is the surest way to unity. The Volunteer Movement is striving to introduce discipline in our National Movement and deserves the encouragement and the active support of all who wish to build a free and prosperous India on sure foundations. I welcome Dr. Hardikar's new paper[2] as a champion of this Movement and a stout soldier in the fight for freedom.

1. *The Volunteer*, January 1925
2. Dr. N. S Hardikar started publication of the *Volunteer* magazine from Hubli, from January 1925 and it continued till 1930 when it had to be discontinued soon after the commencement of the Civil Disobedience movement.

23. To Henri Barbusse[1]

9th February, 1925

Dear Sir[2],

I have learnt with much pleasure from your letter to the press of the formation by a number of distinguished and learned Frenchmen and Frenchwomen of the Comite Pro-Hindou. May I on behalf of the Indian National Congress extend to your Committee our warmest welcome and assure you of our fullest cooperation? I am sending you under separate registered covers a number of Congress publications which might interest you. I hope to send you other publications as they are issued. I shall be glad if you will be good enough to send to this office your monthly "Bulletin of Indian Information". I trust you will write to us and let us know how we can be of service to you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru
General Secretary

Enclosure: List of Books sent.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 33/1925, p. 1, N.M.M.L.
2. Henri Barbusse (1873-1935); French novelist, best known for his novel, Fire.

24. To Raghupati Sahai[1]

20 Western Hostel,
Raisina, Delhi
23.2.25

My dear Raghupati,

You need not have been so precipitate about the payment of Maulana Mohamad Ali's account. Travelling bills are not paid by wire however urgent they may be. Every bill must pass through the usual

1. A.I.C.C. File No 67/1925, pp. 21—22, N.M.M.L.

routine and be passed by the proper authorities before any payment is made. The fact that a person is hard up does not suspend the rules. We are all usually hard up. The accounts should be thoroughly checked and after they are passed by the accountant and either Raja Rau or you, should be sent to me if I am still here — vouchers need not be sent. I do not at all understand why these accounts should overlap with others already paid. Prima facie this means that confusing and bad accounts have been sent. If this is so I would probably have returned them and asked for better accounts.

No special zeal need be shown in future in paying bills. The surplus energy might well be directed to collecting outstandings.

Kindly ask Raja Rau to send me the statement of accounts for the past year which he and I were labouring to make.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

25. To Maulana Mohamad Ali[1]

Allahabad
March 7th, 1925

Dear Sir,
The Working Committee decided nearly two years ago that members attending meetings of the Committee were entitled to be paid their actual travelling expenses. No definite rules however were laid down and the Secretary has thus got the burden of passing travelling bills thrown upon him without any instructions to guide him. The practice has been for a few members of the committee to charge travelling expenses usually 3rd class or intermediate but sometimes second class. The matter was placed before the Working Committee informally last year and members were of the opinion that definite rules should be framed on the subject. No such rules were however made. I have now received accounts of travelling expenses from some members and

1. Maulana Mohamad Ali Papers, Jamia Millia Islamia

I find it extraordinarily difficult to deal with them without some instructions. The matter was referred to the president and he has directed me to consult the members of the committee. I shall be obliged therefore if you will kindly let me know your views regarding the payment of travelling allowance to members of the committee. In particular I should like you to consider the following points:

1. Should any class be specified for railway travelling? Or should it be left to the choice of the member?
2. Should travelling allowance be paid for attending meetings of the committee only or for doing other public work connected with the Congress; e.g. Hindu-Muslim disputes etc.?
3. Should travelling allowance be paid for attending the Congress Session or the committee meetings held during the Congress Session?
4. Should the travelling expenses of a servant accompanying the member be paid?
5. Should expenses incurred other than railway fares be also paid e.g. carriage hire, coolie hire, food charges etc.? Is it desirable to fix a round sum for daily incidental expenses when travelling instead of demanding a detailed account of such expenses.

I shall be obliged if you will kindly send me an early answer.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru
General Secretary

26. On Maulana Mohamad Ali's Travelling Bills[1]

17.5.1925

Maulana Mohamed Ali's account contains many items about which there are no directions from the Working Committee. It is difficult for me to pass these items or not to pass them in the absence of rules and directions. The members of the Working Committee are being circulated about the desirability of having definite rules. Meanwhile however this matter cannot be kept pending Payment indeed has already been made as an advance.

1. A I C.C. File No. 67/1925, p. 35, N.M.M.L.

The bills are passed for payment. Rs.683/14/6 to be paid in full settlement of Maulana Mohamed Ali's travelling account to date.

Jawaharlal Nehru
General Secretary

27. To Gauri Shankar Misra[1]

Allahabad
3/4/1925

My dear Gauri Shankar,

Thanks for your letter and for the information supplied. I am afraid you have misunderstood me. There is or can be no question of mistrust in a matter of this kind. My business is to see that all formalities are observed, all rules are followed regardless of personalities. The relaxation of rules for individuals specially in financial matters leads to undesirable results. No one—not even the Governor of the U.P.—can get paid a rupee from the Accountant General without every formality being fulfilled. I would have troubled you, as I am troubling many others, if the sum involved had been Rs. 12 only instead of Rs. 1,200. You might be interested to know that among others I am troubling Mohamad Ali, Santanam[2], Mrs. Naidu and George Joseph for detailed accounts. The question of accounts has been repeatedly up before the Working Committee and, specially in view of the charges made against the Khilafat funds[3], strictures have been enjoined on the Secretary. There is an amazing amount of slackness and irresponsibility in dealing with public funds and this has to be checked.

As you have no detailed account books of the *Navayuga* there is no point in your troubling now to draw up a balance sheet. Please therefore do not bother to do so. I suppose I have got as much information as I can under the circumstances on the subject. I propose to close the file now.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 1, 1924, pp. 75—77, N.M.M.L.
2. Pt. K. Santanam, barrister at Lahore and founder director of Lakshmi Insurance Company; Secretary of the Congress Punjab Inquiry 1919—20, d. 1949.
3. About Rs.16 lakhs had been collected for the Khilafat movement, and there were serious charges of embezzlement.

28. To Henri Barbusse[1]

16-4-1925

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your letter of the 25th March 1925 and for the first number of your Bulletin which you have kindly sent. It is gratifying to learn of your committee's activities in the cause of Indian freedom for which we are struggling. We realise that the burden of the struggle must be borne by India and Indians and we cannot share it with others. But we also realise that the sympathy and goodwill of the rest of the world is very necessary and valuable for us. Specially do we value the efforts which distinguished sons and daughters of France are making to understand our problems and to extend their sympathy and support to us.

I shall gladly send you our publications as they are issued. If you think that extra copies are required of any particular book for any library or institution, I shall endeavour to send more copies.

I shall suggest to representative Indians who may be passing through France to put themselves in touch with your committee.

With regards and greetings,

I am,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru
General Secretary

1. AICC. File No. 33/1925, pp 9—10, N.M.M.L.

29. To Municipal School Teachers in Allahabad[1]

23.4.1925

During my chairmanship of the Municipal Board I studiously refrained from asking you to join the Congress or take part in any other public activity. I would have welcomed your becoming members of the Congress but I did not think it proper to say anything which, having regard to my official position, might have been construed almost as an order. Now that I am no longer the chairman or even a member of the Board, I feel I can speak without restraint or hesitation.

I should like to congratulate you on the work you have done to establish spinning on a firm basis in the Municipal schools. Allahabad has given a splendid lead in this respect to other Municipalities and this is largely due to the active help and willing cooperation of the teachers. I trust you will continue this work with the same faith and ardour and will demonstrate even to the doubtful that spinning in schools is in every way a desirable innovation.

I would welcome your joining the Congress as spinning members. You must be aware that under the new Congress Constitution members have to give 200 yards of hand spun yarn per month. This may be self spun or not, but I would certainly prefer that persons joining should spin themselves and send this yarn. I would indeed like you not only to become spinning members yourself but to induce others to do so. You may if you like organise small spinning clubs for residents of particular localities.

I hope also that you will only use hand-spun khaddar for yourself and for your families.

I need hardly add that these are mere suggestions for your approval and adoption. If you do not agree with them then you should not of course adopt them. The Congress can only be strengthened by willing members, and any pressure to enrol unwilling members defeats its own object.

I shall be glad to give you any further information on the subject that you may desire.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No 29/1924—25, pp. 37—39, N.M.M.L.

30. A Note for the Working Committee on the Ajmer Khaddar Dispute[1]

28-5-1925

An unfortunate difference of opinion has arisen between the All India Khaddar Board and the Ajmer Khadi Board. A resolution of the All India Khaddar Board relating to some monies given to the Provincial Board was not obeyed by the latter as a whole although some individual members of the Provincial Board acted up to it. This has created an extraordinary and undesirable situation in Rajputana. As the points in dispute involve important questions of discipline and principle the matter has been referred to the Working Committee for their directions.

The facts and the view points of both the parties are given in the correspondence and the other papers placed before the committee. I attended a meeting of the All India Khadi Board held principally to reconsider the Ajmer situation. At this meeting the representatives of the Ajmer P.C.C. and Ajmer Khadi Board were present and full and lengthy discussions took place. I informed the Ajmer representatives that the Working Committee would consider the matter at Calcutta and invited them, if they thought necessary, to send any further representation or any one of their members to the Working Committee meeting.

The facts are briefly as follows:

The Working Committee made a grant of Rs.25,000 to the Ajmer P.C.C. in November 1921 for *khadi* work. Part of this money was actually paid to Ajmer, the rest was eventually handed over to the Khadi Department of the A.I.C.C. to be held in trust for the Ajmer P.C.C. and to be given to Ajmer on the Member-in-charge being satisfied that *khadi* work was being properly done. The A.I.K.B. when formed toook charge of the balance of these funds from the old Khadi Department. The A.I.K.B.'s first task was to organise in conjunction with the Ajmer P.C.C. a provincial Khadi Board in March 1924; moneys amounting to Rs.11,161/3/3 were given to this Provincial Board,

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 66/1925, pp. 5—17, N.M.M.L.

the President and the Secretary of the Board binding themselves down in writing to return the money to the A.I.K.B. within three months of notice, should the A.I.K.B. consider that the money was not being properly utilised.

The Provincial Board worked harmoniously for a while, but towards the end of 1924 there was friction amongst the members and two groups were formed. Work naturally suffered. For some years past the condition of the Congress Organisation in Rajputana has not been very satisfactory. There has been periodical friction and a large number of people have ostentatiously kept away from the Congress. This too had a bad effect on the *khadi* work.

Early in 1925 the President and Secretary of the A.I.K.B. went to Rajputana, at the invitation of the local Congress and *khadi* workers, to reorganise *khadi* work. They were not at all satisfied with existing conditions and were of opinion that money was not being properly utilised. They made, with the knowledge of local workers, arrangements with a private firm to have a big *Khaddar bhandar*.

Subsequently the A.I.K.B. considered the position in Rajputana. Letters were placed before the Board from the President and the Secretary of the Provincial Khadi Board. Each person complained against the other and drew a dismal picture of the machinations of others. The A.I.K.B. thereupon decided on April 22nd, 1925 that as the Ajmer Khadi Board had no longer the cohesion or stability required for the efficient discharge of *khadi* work in the province, and work had actually been hampered by differences amongst leading workers, the money given to the Ajmer Board be recalled. They did not however claim the full sum given but sent a representative to take charge of stocks and monies then held by the Ajmer Board. The idea was that the A.I.K.B. should directly supervise *khadi* work in the province.

The stocks of the Ajmer Board were partly in Beawar and partly in Ajmer. The representative of the A.I.K.B. went to Beawar first with letters from the President and Secretary of the Ajmer Board. He saw the President at Beawar on the 26th April and the latter willingly handed over charge of the Beawar stocks. A meeting of the Ajmer Khadi Board had already been convened for that day at Ajmer to consider other matters. This meeting when it heard of the A.I.K.B. resolution and that a representative had actually arrived at Beawar to take charge, hurriedly adjourned and a number of members took train to Beawar where they met at about midnight and continued their deliberations till about 3.30 a.m. of the 27th April. There was evidently an exchange of hot words between the President of the Provincial Board and some of the members who had come from Ajmer. The President's action in handing over charge to the A.I.K.B. was much

resented. The President refused to take part in the midnight meeting alleging on various grounds that the meeting was illegal. The other members however continued. On the 27th they passed a number of resolutions protesting strongly against the resolution of the A.I.K.B. and expressing their disgust at the action of their President in handing over charge. To mark their displeasure at this and other misdeeds of the President they there and then dismissed him from his office. They also went and put on another lock on the stocks which had previously been handed over to the A.I.K.B. This was followed by public notices by members of the provincial board against each other.

The President of the Ajmer Board has retorted by getting the written approval of a number of members of his board—according to him a majority—of his action in handing over charge. The Executive Committee of the Ajmer P.C.C. on the other hand has upheld those who condemned the President.

A large number of questions arise:

1. Can the A.I.K.B. in any event take back the money given to Ajmer for *khadi* work? The Ajmer people contend that the money was a grant and cannot be taken back.

2. In case the A.I.K.B. is entitled to take the money back must it not give three months' notice under the terms of the board? The Ajmer people contend that this notice must be given. The A.I.K.B. say that notice would certainly be necessary if the full sum was demanded back but as they merely propose to take charge of the existing stocks, whatever they might be even after the losses that have been incurred, notice is hardly necessary.

3. Apart from the validity of the action of the A.I.K.B. the question arises as to how far it was proper for the Ajmer Board to act in the manner they did. According to the A.I.K.B. indiscipline of this kind and flat disobedience of orders is likely to make work very difficult and the proper course for any party or board aggrieved is to obey and then appeal or refer the matter to the Working Committee.

4. The present Constitution and personnel of the Ajmer Khadi Board is also challenged. The Board as originally formed consisted of seven members plus the President and Secretary of the P.C.C. that is 9 in all. In the resolution of the P.C.C. forming the Board it appears that there was a clause giving full power to the Secretary P.C.C. to add any number of members to the Khadi Board. The official copy of the resolution sent to the A.I.K.B. did not contain this clause. Subsequently however a printed notice was sent to the

A.I.K.B. and this notice contained, *inter alia*, the resolution including the clause. The power to nominate members was also exercised by the Secretary, P.C.C. last year and no objection was raised by the A.I.K.B. to his nominations. The A.I.K.B. say that their attention was not drawn to this clause or power till very recently when four fresh nominations were made by the Secretary P.C.C. They say that they would certainly have objected to such an extraordinary power being given to the Secretary and they would probably not have given any money till the clause was altered.

The present position is that a majority of the *provincial board* as formed last year is decidedly in favour of the President of the board and approves of handing over charge to the A.I.K.B. The four new nominations however of the Secretary have converted this majority into a minority. But whatever way the majority may lie, the Board is hopelessly divided into groups hostile to each other.

5. The dismissal of the President of the Provincial Board does not affect matters much but it does raise a question of procedure. The manner in which it was done was summary and unusual.

6. The important questions of principle that are raised are:
   (i) Interpretation of Cocanada resolution forming A.I.K.B. What are powers of A.I.K.B.?
   (ii) Can the A.I.K.B. work independently in any part of a province without interfering with the work of the P.C.C.?
   (iii) Can the A.I.K.B. enter into any direct arrangements with firms or individuals for the sale of *khadi*, e.g. opening of a *bhandar*? The A.I.K.B. have entered into many such arrangements in the past without any objection being raised.

7. Another matter that requires to be cleared up is whether non-Congress members can join *khadi* boards as members.

A fact that has to be borne in mind is that the Ajmer P.C.C. is not now a very effective body. Its membership at present consists of 17 persons, indeed this is the full figure for Congress membership in the Rajputana province. The Ajmer P.C.C. representatives said that the yarn franchise was a great obstacle and they were unable to do any better under it.

At the discussions which took place at Mount Abu recently both the A.I.K.B. and the representatives of the Ajmer P.C.C. and Khadi Board made certain proposals regarding future work. These were in many cases in direct conflict with each other. Copies of them are attached.

The A.I.K.B. had no particular objection to the money or stocks being returned to them in three months' time. They were anxious however that future loss should not be incurred and suggested that in the event of any further delay occuring there should be no dealings which might result in loss.

About future work the A.I.K.B. suggested that the Ajmer Khadi Board should carry on its work to the best of its ability with the advice and assistance, where needed, of the A.I.K.B.; and at the same time the A.I.K.B. should work independently in some suitable part of Rajputana, both in organising a centre of production and depots for sale. Rajputana offers a very promising field for *khadi* work and little advantage has been taken of this so far. The Ajmer P.C.C. representatives were not agreeable to this suggestion or any suggestion involving independent work being done in Rajputana.

Jawaharlal Nehru

31. To Madan Mohan Malaviya[1]

107 Hewett Road
Allahabad
June 5th, 1925

Dear Sir,

I have to trouble you again on a subject about which I have written to you very often and at considerable length. The Punjab Relief Funds stand where they were in spite of the repeated resolutions of the Working Committee. You will remember that the funds were collected under the auspices of the Punjab Sub-committee of the A.I.C.C., a body *directly subordinate and responsible to the* All India Congress Committee. This Sub-committee looked after the funds and spent part of them. The balance[s] of all these funds are clearly the property of the A.I.C.C. The Working Committee has decided that all these balances should be paid to the A.I.C.C. and should be kept by the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F27/1925, pp 83—85, N.M.M.L.

A.I.C.C. earmarked for helping deserving persons who have suffered from government oppression and tyranny and that the claims of the Punjab will have a priority in this matter. In the opinion of the Working Committee this would meet most nearly the object of the funds. May I know when I can expect you to transfer to the A.I.C.C. the balances of these funds which you hold either jointly with others or separately? The matter cannot go on undisposed of indefinitely. I would remind you in this connection that the money in the Imperial Bank of India, Allahabad Branch, is still in current account, and is drawing no interest.

I learn from the Punjab that there are still many deserving cases of persons who have suffered during the martial law regime and who require help. I am informed that applications for help were sent to the Sewa Samiti of Allahabad but no help was forthcoming. It would be eminently desirable to have one central fund, as suggested by the Working Committee, for the relief of sufferers from the oppression of Government and I would strongly urge that the Sewa Samiti do transfer all the Punjab relief funds in its possession to the A.I.C.C. which will undertake to earmark them in the manner suggested above. But quite apart from this question, it is very necessary that help should not be denied to any deserving Martial Law sufferer. The A.I.C.C. has received practically no part of the Punjab funds so far. The funds are with (1) you (2) Sewa Samiti of Allahabad (3) Pandit Santhanam —proceeds of the sale of martial law reports and (4) Mr. Jehangir B. Petit. I earnestly trust that you will kindly make arrangements for help to be given to all deserving cases I am having a list prepared of such cases and can send it to you if you want it.

I shall be obliged if you will kindly ask your Sewa Samiti officials to send me full information about the Martial Law funds in their possession. How much did they bring over from the Punjab? How have they utilised it? Is it earmarked for any particular object or has it been put in the general funds? What is left now? Is any relief given to Martial Law sufferers now?

An early reply will oblige greatly.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru
General Secretary

Copy forwarded to Pandit Motilal Nehru.

34. To Chand Karan Sarda[1]

16-9-25

Dear Mr. Chand Karan Sarda,[2]

I have your letter of the 9th together with its enclosures. I am afraid I cannot place your communication before the A.I.C.C., in its present form. Under the rules a member can move a formal resolution after giving due notice. I have no power to read long communications of the kind you have sent me to the committee. If you desire to circulate your note I would suggest that you have it printed and posted to A.I.C.C. members direct.

You must have seen the note on the "Alwar atrocities"[3] in *Young India* of July 23rd 1925. This will have informed you that the matter was considered by the Working Committee. If you want the Congress at Cawnpore to take any steps in regard to it the proper course would be to bring the subject to the notice of the A.I.C.C. members by circulation. A hurried reference to the A.I.C.C. meeting at Patna, when members will be full of other matters, will do little good.

I am afraid I cannot answer your 12 questions within the limits of a letter. I would have to write an article to deal with them even briefly. But generally I may inform you that in my opinion the Congress has constitutionally every right to express an opinion or take action in regard to Indian States but the desirability of doing this must be judged in each individual case. A pious expression of opinion without the backing of some effective action does not carry one very far. At present the Congress is in difficulties in many ways and it can hardly take any effective action in the matter. I can quite understand and appreciate, however, the misery and unhappiness of the people who have to put up with tyranny and oppression.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 66/1925, pp. 51—52. N.M.M.L.
2. (1866-1957); President, Bar Association, Ajmer; took an active part in Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha activities; founder of Seva Sangha in Rajasthan; suspended practice during the noncooperation movement and was imprisoned, worked with Swami Shraddhanand for Shuddhi movement.
3. The Thakur of Neemuchana in Alwar State refused in 1925 to pay revenue according to the enhanced rates. The army was called in and opened fire, killing about 150 persons.

35. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Ajmer[1]

Tilak Nagar,
Cawnpore
17-12-1925

Dear Sir,

I have not heard from you in reply to my telegram of the 14th December and my letter No. G 79-5359 of the same date. I arrived here today and the Secretary of the Reception Committee drew my attention to a list of delegates purporting to be the Ajmer list of delegates for the Congress which had come to his office accompanied by a covering letter dated Cawnpore 15th December 1925 signed by Mr. *Janki P. Begerhotta*[2] *as Joint Secretary of the Ajmer P.C.C. It is not* clear why this covering letter is dated Cawnpore. No address is given and I am thus unable to communicate with Mr. Janki P. Begerhotta in regard to it.

Most of the names in this list of delegates are those of residents of the United Provinces. Out of the 407 names supplied there appear to be 246 names of U. P. residents. Besides these there are a number of residents of other provinces e.g. Punjab, Behar, C. P., Andhra, Karnatak, Bengal and Bombay. You will agree with me, I trust, that these features in the list are somewhat unusual and warrant enquiry

The Reception Committee inform me that they have been receiving information from almost every district in the province to the effect that those desiring to attend the Congress can do so by sending -/4/- to some person in Cawnpore who had constituted himself the agent of the Ajmer P.C.C. for the purpose of enrolling members. Attempts at enrolling members of the Reception Committee failed in many instances as the person approached was told by others that he need only send -/4/- to become an Ajmer delegate. In view of these facts and the unsatisfactory nature of the list of delegates submitted by your office the Reception Committee request that an enquiry be made forthwith so that it may be known soon whether the list sent is valid or not.

1. AICC Unnumbered File.
2. Secretary, Rajasthan States' Peoples' Conference

The P.C.C. consists of the 15 Ajmer D.C.C. members who can coopt others. There is a rule that if a D.C.C. does not exist the remaining members of P.C.C. can coopt members to fill the vacancies. Total number of P.C.C. is 51. At present the P.C.C. consists of 31. The Ajmer D.C.C. members have coopted 16. Thus they can coopt 20 more to complete P.C.C.

If in the course of the year a dead committee wakes up and wants representation on the P.C.C. they will be told that they should wait till the annual elections.

Jawaharlal Nehru

37. Efficiency[1]

Acharya Gidwani in his speech at the Volunteer Conference at Cawnpore laid stress on our utilizing the volunteer movement for increasing national efficiency. It is well that this aspect of the question should be emphasised. In the past little importance has been attached to it and even now most of us are apt to overlook it. Volunteering has meant for us, and rightly so, the cultivation of a spirit of service. *Seva* is a part of the name of our organisation and *Seva* should always be the motto of a volunteer. This fact has been well recognised and it is pleasing to see large numbers of our young men full of the spirit of service offering themselves for national work. The recent example of Cawnpore is before us. We saw there hundreds of young men doing all manner of tasks, pleasant or unpleasant, congenial and uncongenial without protest or murmur. Delegates who had come from far distances were full of appreciation for their work.

But indiscriminate *Seva* is not enough. It must be organised and efficient. And a chief purpose of an organisation like the Hindustani Seva Dal is to make us more efficient and thereby to increase national efficiency.

1. *The Volunteer*, January 1926, p. 8

Let us therefore now keep this ideal of efficiency before us. The last two years during which the Seva Dal has existed are full of lessons for us. To an outsider the progress made is very small. It is absurd to compare us with any military organisation or with even a well trained volunteer organisation. We are after all a set of amateurs trying to do *the work that should usually be done by experts. Unkind critics* make comparison between us and the University Training Corps and the comparison from the point of view of drill and smartness is much to our disadvantage. And yet I make bold to say that we have made substantial progress in the last two years. We have had to fight the apathy and utter indifference of our people and gradually we are making good.

Cawnpore has several lessons to teach us. As I have mentioned above the volunteers' desire for service was very obvious, but they were not efficient as units or as an organisation. In Belgaum the volunteers had a longer period of intensive training and on the whole they were smarter and more efficient than the Cawnpore volunteers. The reason for this difference is not far to seek. The men at Cawnpore had received less individual attention and had very little opportunity of group training. Some of the officers too, I believe, came at the last moment.

The Seva Dal, if it cares for its good name and its future progress, must concentrate on efficiency even at the sacrifice of numbers. It must see to it that its officers and men by their bearing, discipline and efficiency stand out wherever they may be placed. This can best be done by having camps in as many places as possible. I hope that during this year most of the provinces will have at least one such camp and by the time the next Congress takes place there will be healthy rivalry in efficiency and smartness between contingents from different provinces, and a real nucleus of a volunteer organisation will have been formed.

As the time is very limited I am sending Mr. Raghupati Sahai, the Under-Secretary of the A.I.C.C, to Ajmer by today's train to make personal enquiry into the matter. I have already informed you of this by telegram. You will kindly afford him every facility to carry on his investigation and place at his disposal all books and papers. In particular kindly show him your membership registers. Please also direct the Secretary of the Ajmer District Congress Committee to show him all books and papers, applications for membership, membership registers etc. Kindly also place before Mr. Raghupati Sahai all the information required by me in my letter No. G-79-5359 dated 14/12.

I should like you kindly to furnish me with answers to the following questions :

1. Is there any truth in the allegations made by the Reception Committee that a representative of yours has been trying to enrol members in the U.P.?

2. Why is your list dated Cawnpore December 15th 1925? Was it finally prepared in Cawnpore?

3. Have you opened an office in Cawnpore?

4. Are all the members, given in the list of delegates supplied, members of the Congress in your province? If so to which primary committee do they belong?

5. What do the various letters of the alphabet given under the column "district" signify, e.g. M.B.C.C., M.C.C.C., etc?

6 Some of the delegates in the list are described as members of the Delhi Congress or Cawnpore Congress. Are they also supposed to be members of some committee in Rajputana?

7. What were your Congress membership figures for the province and for each of the district committees at the end of October 1925 and also what are they now?

8. Is it a fact that most of the persons whose names are given in the list are new members? Have you received application forms from all of them?

9. Please name all your constituencies for electing delegates. Did you appoint returning officers for all of them? Were all candidates for election in the electoral roll of that constituency?

10. Was every one who sought election nominated in writing by 5 voters in the special form?

11. Were ballot papers issued? Please produce these papers as well as the reports of the returning officers.

12. Was an opportunity given to candidates to be present at the scrutiny of ballot papers?

I shall be obliged if you will give every assistance to Mr. Raghupati Sahai.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru
General Secretary

36. On the Ajmer D.C.C.[1]

20.12.25

Maulana Hasrat Mohani met members of Ajmer D.C.C. Ajmer D C C. meeting took place on 6.12.25 — 7 or 8 persons were present.

The 4 anna members elect a committee of 15. These 15 are the D.C.C. (both the general body and the Executive). The 4 anna members do nothing else. The 15 do everything including electing delegates. It was a meeting of these 15 on 6/12 They elected about 125 delegates — nearly all of them being local men

Notice of the meeting was sent to all members including Chandulalji[2].

No meeting of province except one on 2/12/(25) was held.

Under authority given by resolution of P.C.C. dated 2/12 Arjunlalji[3] enrolled delegates out of lists supplied by M. Hasrat Mohani and others in Kasganj etc.

1. A I C C Unnumbered File
2. Chandulal Bhargava, a leading lawyer and a Congressman of Ajmer Merwara who worked for the Home Rule League
3. Arjunlal Sethi (1880 1941); a Congressman of Ajmer, who was suspected of terrorist activities and imprisoned, 1914 20

BOYCOTT OF BRITISH GOODS

38. To Umar Sobhani[1]

20 January 1924

My dear Umar,

I have just received your letter of the 17th January. I agree with you that the resolution of the Working Committee on the organisation of a central bureau for boycott of Empire goods is not very clear. The intention of course was that the Bombay P.C.C. should advance the money to the Working Committee and not to the Boycott Committee. The resolution is also vague as to what sum is to be given to your committee direct from our fund, and what is to be advanced by the Bombay P.C.C. The Working Committee, however, discussed the matter and favoured the immediate grant of Rs. 1,000 to you from our funds; so that the Bombay P.C.C. is to advance Rs. 9,000 if they agree to it. On the basis of this I have asked Mr. Velji L. Nappoo[2], the treasurer, to pay you Rs. 1,000, and I have requested the Bombay P.C.C. to advance Rs. 9,000.

I am writing to the Secretary, Bombay P.C.C. to make it clear that the advance will be to the Working Committee.

I hope to be in Bombay on the 29th.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 5/1924, p. 9, N.M.M.L.
2. A leading social worker of Bombay who was treasurer of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee and also for a short while in 1921 and again in 1924, treasurer of the A.I.C.C.

39. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Bombay[1]

20 January 1924

Dear Sir,

I have already informed you of the resolution of the Working Committee in regard to the formation of a central bureau for the boycott of Empire goods. This resolution reads as follows: "Resolved that Rs.10,000 be budgeted for the Central Bureau for 6 months and such part of it as can be sent immediately be sent, and that the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee be requested to advance the sum, and that the Boycott Committee be informed that no bigger sum can at present be provided for having regard to our finances."

Some doubt appears to have arisen as to who will borrow the money from the Bombay P.C.C.—the Boycott Committee or the Working Committee. I should like to make it clear that the money will be advanced to the Working Committee by the Bombay P.C.C. I trust that you will be able to advance a sum of Rs.9,000 and will give this to Mr. Umar Sobhani, Convener, Boycott Committee.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Copy forwarded to treasurer for information.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 5/1924, p. 11, N.M.M.L.

40. To Umar Sobhani[1]

10 February 1924

Dear Sir,

I have already sent you a copy of the resolution passed by the Working Committee in regard to the loan to be taken from the Bombay P.C.C. for the work of the Empire Goods Boycott Committee. I trust there is no further difficulty in your way in obtaining the loan.

I may inform you that you are at liberty to collect funds for your work but all these monies should be treated as part of the Tilak Swaraj Fund, earmarked if necessary for the particular purpose.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 5/1924, p. 17, N.M.M.L.

41. To Umar Sobhani[1]

29 April 1924

Dear Sir,

I have received Rs. 9,000 from the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee as a loan to the A.I.C.C. for the work of the Empire Goods Boycott Committee. I have not heard from you about this committee for a long time and do not know what the committee has done since the Coconada Congress and what it proposes to do. I shall be glad if you will kindly let me have a brief report. Do you require this amount of Rs. 9,000? Has any directory of Swadeshi goods been prepared? I shall be obliged if you will kindly send an early answer.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 5/1924, p. 33, N.M.M.L.

42. To Umar Sobhani[1]

21-8-1924

Dear Sir,

I have had no answer from you to my letters dated 29th April, 15th May and 18th June, 1924. I presume that little is being done for the Boycott of Empire Goods and the sum of Rs. 9,000 asked for by you is not now needed by your committee. We have held this money for you for the last four months but you have not taken the trouble to take it from us. The money had been borrowed by us from the Bombay P.C.C. specially for you. If you do not require it, we might pay the money back to the Bombay P.C.C.

If no work is being done or has been done by the Empire Goods Boycott Committee, then you have probably not utilised the Rs. 1,000 granted to your committee in January last. Will you kindly let me know if this is so?

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 5/1924, p. 39, N.M.M.L.

43. To the Treasurer, A.I.C.C.[1]

22-8-1924

Dear Sir,

I enclose a copy of a letter I am sending to Mr. Umar Sobhani, Convener, Empire Goods Boycott Committee. Whatever his answer may be, I propose that the money we have borrowed from the Bombay P.C.C. should be returned to them. We can afford to do so. I shall put up the matter before the next Working Committee.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC. File No 5/1924, p 41, NMML.

THE AKALI MOVEMENT

44. To A.T. Gidwani[1]

Allahabad
25-1-1924

My dear Gidwani,

Thanks for your letter. I have just come back from Benares and I hasten to answer it. I shall take your letter with me to the Working Committee meeting and shall write to you fully after consulting the other members. I shall also endeavour to have more money sent to you.

I am glad you have got a decent office fixed up. I hope work will proceed smoothly now and you will be able to devote yourself more to thinking and organising and less to the clerical part.

I am surprised to learn from your letter about the allegation that Lala Lajpat Rai had written to anyone and advised against helping Akalis. I had not heard of this before and I find it difficult to believe. I discussed the Akali question with a number of persons besides the members of the Working Committee and no one ever hinted at any such thing. I feel sure the information is incorrect.

As for giving financial assistance to the Akalis, the question was fully discussed at the meeting of the Working Committee. Sardar Mangal Singh was present. The position is this. The Congress is hard up. Neither the A.I.C.C. nor most of the P.C.Cs have any money. Our P.C.C. has got just Rs.20 in the bank. In despair I left every other work and went to Benares to collect money. Thus our first business is collection of funds. How can we grant any big sum to the Akalis when we have not got it? Your suggestion that we should fix a sum and collect it is attended with danger. I do not like fixing sums lest we fail to get it. And then collecting money for different funds is not desirable and will create confusion. It was therefore decided to make every effort to get money for the Tilak Swaraj Fund and then to make a grant out of it to the Akalis.

I do not think it is quite fair to the Congress to accuse it of lack of earnestness in regard to the Akalis. What else can it do? You know

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1)/1924, pp 57—60, N.M.M.L.

well the position we are in. It is full of hope and yet it is confusing. Our capacity to help others depends upon our efficiency and organisation, and thus our immediate concern has become the reorganisation of the Congress. The Akalis are spending—largely on the defence—a sum of over Rs. 60,000 a month. Suppose the Congress gave Rs. 50,000 and that is more than it possesses today—how far would it go? I am afraid there is a great deal of loose thinking in regard to this matter. The greatest help that the Congress can give to the Sikhs is to perfect its own organisation and throw in its whole weight at the moment of crisis. Meanwhile we should help them with full publicity etc. as you are doing. These are of course my own views.

I wish you would arrange to send occasional exhortations and communiques to the various Provincial Congress Committees. If you keep pegging away at them they will do something. Please send me if possible all your communiques.

I am interested to learn that the Lawrence Statue[3] is again coming into its own. Please keep me informed of developments.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

There appears to be little chance of my arrest for the *Kumbh Mela* affray[4]. Worse luck!

Jawaharlal Nehru

3. The statue of Sir John Lawrence, set up in Lahore in 1887, had on it the inscription : "Will you be governed by pen or sword?" This was considered to be an insult to the people and the continuous agitation against it led to its replacement by the inscription : "By the pen and the sword I rule you."
4. This refers to the incident at the *Sangam* when Pandit Malaviya, Jawaharlal and others defied the authorities and courted arrest. The officials, however, took no action.

45. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab[1]

Allahabad
7th February 1924

Dear Sir,
I give below extracts from the proceedings of the Working Committee which met at Bombay on 1.2.24 :—

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1)/1924, p. 65. N.M.M.L.

"Mr. A. T. Gidwani made a statement about Hindu-Sikh relations in the Punjab. It was resolved that the Punjab P.C.C. be asked to take steps to adjust the differences amicably and if necessary to appoint a committee for this purpose in consultation with the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee."

"Mr. Gidwani also made a statement about the oppression being carried on in the Doaba[2] in the Punjab. Resolved that the Punjab P.C.C. be requested to report to the Working Committee on the situation in the Doaba and on the steps they are taking to deal with it."

I trust that you will take early steps to adjust the Hindu-Sikh differences and intimate the fact to me, and request that you will send me a report on the Doaba. I hope your report will reach me in time to enable me to place it before the Working Committee which meets in Delhi on the 26th February, 1924.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru
General Secretary

2. This refers to the police repression and military marches in the Hoshiarpur and Jullundur districts where there had been some terrorist activity by a group of Akalis known as the Babar Akalis.

46. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab[1]

10 February 1924

Dear Sir,

I have already communicated to you some resolutions of the Working Committee relating to the Punjab. As you are doubtless aware, Hindu-Sikh relations in Amritsar and the rest of the Punjab are far from desirable and this must of necessity injure the national cause. It has already deprived us of much of the good of the Akali civil disobedience. The Working Committee attaches the greatest importance to this matter and feels that the best service it can render to the Akalis, and indeed to the Punjab at present, is to remove this friction between two communities who have so very much in common. All other help that the committee may render to the Akalis is almost useless if Hindu-Sikh relations are not put on a proper basis. We have had enough trouble over Hindu-Muslim relations and the Punjab of all provinces has suffered the most. It will be disastrous if the virus

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1)/1924, pp. 69—72. N.M.M.L.

spreads still further and embitters the relations of other communities also. The Working Committee feel that every effort should be made to put an end forthwith to the present unsatisfactory state of affairs. The dispute is largely, so far as they can make out, one of prestige and an honest and sustained effort for peace is sure to succeed. The best persons to make this effort are obviously local people conversant with the ins and outs of the various matters in dispute. The Working Committee would therefore request you to explore every avenue of reaching a settlement. Perhaps it would be desirable for you and the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee to nominate a small committee of Hindus & Sikhs to discuss and settle everything. I am given to understand that the S.G.P.C. is perfectly willing to do so and to abide by the decision of any such committee.

2. The second matter to which the Working Committee would draw your attention is the oppression in the Doaba. Last year your committee, I believe, took some steps to give special publicity to this. I shall be glad if you will kindly let me know what your committee has so far done and what it proposes to do in future. The situation is too serious for us to ignore it.

3. The Working Committee has sanctioned a grant of Rs. 25,000 for helping the families of Akalis going to jail for offering civil disobedience. Of this sum Rs. 3,000 has been sent by the Burma P.C.C. for this special purpose. The balance of Rs 22,000 is out of a fund earmarked for civil disobedience. This money will be sent to your committee, so that your committee will utilise it for the purpose specified in consultation with the S.G.P.C. Rs. 3,000 will be sent in a few days, if it has not already been sent; the rest—Rs. 22,000 will be sent towards the end of the month as it will be in fixed deposit with a bank till then.

I hope you will consult the S.G.P.C. in all these three matters. Mr. Gidwani of course will be in Amritsar and I am sure he will be only too pleased to give you all the assistance in his power.

May I again beg of you to do your utmost to remove all communal friction? Now that Mahatmaji is out we can no longer afford to let matters drift.

I shall be glad if you will place this letter before your Council or Executive Committee and keep me informed of the steps you take.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Copy to Sri K. Santanam.

47. To A.T. Gidwani[1]

18 February 1924

My dear Gidwani,

Thanks for your letter of the 13th. The resolutions dealing with the Akalis were sent to the Punjab P.C.C. on the 8th February. I followed this up with a longish letter on the subject sent on the 10th February to the Secretary, P.P.C.C. and to Santanam. I suppose they must have reached the office of the committee just after the meeting of the 10th.

I have just received your press message about the march of the Shahidi Jatha. I envy you on your march with them. I notice that the only U.P. paper you send your messages to is the *Aaj*. I wish you could send them to the *Leader* also as it reaches a large number of people in the province. But perhaps it will not pay for the messages. The Urdu *Hamdam* of Lucknow has also a good circulation amongst the Urdu knowing people.

I suppose you know that the Working Committee meets on the 26th at Dr. Ansari's house at 4 p.m. If you want them to consider the Akali situation you had better attend the meeting. Please also send me your budget and accounts.

Your note paper is headed "Akali Sahayak Bureau".[2] There is no reference to the Congress in it. Do you not think that the name of the Congress should be kept very much in the forefront?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1), 1924, pp. 81-82. N.M.M.L.
2. In November 1923 the Congress Working Committee had decided to set up an office to assist the Akalis in their struggle

48. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab[1]

1 March 1924

Dear Sir,

I have already sent you the resolution of the Working Committee on the *Akali situation. I trust you will take immediate action on this* resolution. It is hardly necessary for me to point out to you that delay will prejudice our cause. It is possible that Mr. G. Joseph may be delayed in taking charge of the publicity arrangements. I would request you to send a competent person to carry on the publicity at Amritsar pending Mr. Joseph's arrival. Please also arrange to start the enquiry into the Jaito firing[2]. As I have stated already this does not mean that you should necessarily come into conflict with Government. It is clear that your representatives will not be allowed in Nabha territory. It is not necessary for them at this stage at any rate to try to enter prohibited areas. A great deal of information can be gathered from the many eye witnesses etc. who must be in Amritsar and the neighbourhood. The S.G.P.C. is I believe recording statements but I doubt if sufficient care is taken to sift the truth from a mass of exaggerations. What is required is cross examination of witnesses to find out what they say from personal knowledge and what from hearsay. I do not think this work will take more than a few days. Please keep me informed of the situation. You will of course remain in close touch with the S.G.P.C. and do everything in consultation with them.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1), 1924, pp. 113—14. N.M.M.L.
2. On 21 February 1924 the police opened fire at Jaito (in Nabha) on a crowd that had collected to worship and to protest against the deposition of the Maharaja. It was reported that 150 persons had been killed and about 55 wounded.

49. To George Joseph[1]

2 March 1924

My dear George,

Your telegram[2] came as a great disappointment. It has upset all our arrangements and at a critical stage. The Akali situation is developing at a tremendous pace and it is most necessary for a responsible Congressman to remain in constant touch with them. Publicity work in Amritsar is important, but far more important is the constant touch with the Sikh leaders. No Punjabee is suitable for this work and we must find an outsider. Well, I suppose we must face the difficulty.

I am so sorry to learn of your wife's ill-health. I hope it is nothing serious and that she will recover soon. Please convey my regards to her.

Your books are still with me. What shall I do with them?

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No 4(1), 1924, p. 125-A, N.M.M.L.
2. Joseph had regretted his inability to go to Amritsar because of his wife's ill health.

50. To C. Rajagopalachari[1]

12/3/1924

My dear Mr. Rajagopalachari,

Mohamad Ali showed me your telegram[2] to him about the Akali Sahayak Bureau. He was going to wire to you in reply, even without consulting me, to the effect that I could not go. I confess to some

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (i), 1924, p. 175 N.M.M.L.
2. In this telegram Rajagopalachari apparently suggested that Jawaharlal as General Secretary of the A.I.C.C. should himself go to Amritsar to look after the Akali Sahayak Bureau.

surprise at seeing your telegram. I happen to have quite enough engagements, which are perhaps even more important than domestic entanglements. It is utterly impossible for me to go. Joseph's inability to go, coupled with our inability to make some other proper arrangements, has done us a lot of harm. But there is no help for it. At my request the Punjab P.C.C. have made some temporary arrangement to carry on publicity work in Amritsar.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

51. To Sampurnanand[1]

12 March 1924

My dear Sampurnanandji,[2]
You must know that the Working Committee put Gidwani in charge of the *Congress Akali Sahayak Bureau* at Amritsar. On Gidwani's arrest at Jaito, the committee appointed Joseph to take his place, but Joseph has been unable to go owing to his wife's illness. We are in great difficulty as to whom to send and the work is most important and cannot wait. *Some temporary* arrangements have been made by the Punjab P.C.C. Is it possible for you to go? It has just struck me that perhaps you might be able to go for a while and I am therefore writing to you before suggesting your name to any one else. If you agree I shall propose your name to Mohamad Ali who as President must do the needful.

The work consists of (1) ordinary publicity work—issuing communiques etc. to the press (2) remaining in close touch with the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee and (3) for the present getting statements of eye witnesses etc. of the Jaito tragedy. All this work must be done in Amritsar as quietly as possible without any fuss or show. You are not supposed to invite arrest but of course if arrest comes your way it can hardly be helped.

1. A.I.C.C. File No 4(i) (K.W.) (i), 1924, pp 177—78 N.M.M.L.
2. (1891-1969); elected member A.I.C.C. in 1922 and thrice Secretary U.P.C.C.; Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh 1955-1960, Governor of Rajasthan 1962-1967 *Sampurnanand had a deep interest in astrology.*

If you agree to go and if Mohamad Ali has made no other arrangement, I should like you to come here for a day to discuss work there. You should be prepared to go for at least a month, and to go soon. The Congress will of course pay you your expenses and a subsistence allowance. Please send a wire to me signifying your assent or otherwise. I may add that there is a good office of the Bureau in Amritsar in charge of a competent assistant.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

52. *To Mahatma Gandhi*[1]

Allahabad
12/3/24

My dear Bapuji,

I received your telegram late this evening on my return home. It was a great pleasure to hear from you again after such a long time. I have not dared to intrude by another visit or by letter during your convalescence. But your telegram emboldens me.

I have just wired to you in reply and have also sent a telegram to Mohamad Ali. I did not wish to trouble him so soon after his bereavement[2] but I thought it was due to him to know about your telegram.

I have known Panikkar by repute for several years and I met him for a short time in Cocanada. I am sure, his presence will be very useful in Amritsar. His ignorance of Hindustani will be a drawback but this will be more than compensated by his other attainments. He will be an excellent man for publicity work. Perhaps, owing to his language difficulty, he might not be very helpful in bringing the Sikhs & Hindus nearer to each other. But on the whole Panikkar will be an acquisition in Amritsar.

As regards terms anything that you consider reasonable will surely be agreed to by all others. Technically the Working Committee appoints but the committee will not meet till the 21st April. The terms

1. Gandhi-Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalya, Serial No. 8474.
2. Maulana Mohamad Ali's daughter, Amna, died on 11 March 1924.

suggested in your telegram are rather complicated but that is for you to decide. I am glad to notice that Panikkar contemplates a lengthy stay at Amritsar. Personally I doubt if it will be necessary for him to stay for many months. There is just a possibility of Gidwani coming out sooner and an equal possibility of Gidwani's successor going in. Of course Panikkar will not unnecessarily invite jail, but neither did Gidwani.

Owing to Joseph's inability to go I requested the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee to make temporary arrangements to carry on the work at Amritsar. Only this morning I heard from them that they had appointed a certain gentleman, whom I do not know, to take charge of the work. This was of course a temporary arrangement only.

If Panikkar decides to go to Amritsar and if it is not inconvenient for him, he might spend a day here on his way up. Perhaps I might be able to give him some useful information. I shall be away from the 15th to the 20th.

With regards,

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

53. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab[1]

13 March 1924

Dear Sir,

I have your letter of the 10th March.

I have just had a telegram from Mahatma Gandhi suggesting that Mr. Panikkar, till lately editor of the *Swarajya* in Madras, be put in charge of the work in Amritsar. Mahatmaji of course did not know that some arrangements have already been made. I have wired and written to Mahatmaji leaving the matter in his hands. I have also consulted the President. I shall write to you again on the subject as soon as I hear from Mahatmaji or the President.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (i), 1924, p. 181. N.M.M.L.

54. To Maulana Mohamad Ali[1]

14 March 1924

My dear Mohamad Ali,

I have your telegram about Panikkar. I have also heard from Mahatmaji that Panikkar will leave Bombay for Amritsar on Sunday night. I would have liked to see him before he went but this would mean the loss of several days as I am going to Gorakhpur tomorrow. Time is more important than an interview and I have therefore asked him to proceed straight.

I enclose a copy of a letter I am sending to the Secretary Punjab P.C.C. Owing to my insistence that some temporary arrangement should be made for the Akali Sahayak Bureau, they appointed Pt. Karam Chand[2]. As it happened, immediately after his appointment Panikkar's name was suggested by Mahatmaji and the Punjab committee's arrangements have been upset. I have written a soothing letter and cast the responsibility chiefly on you! I feel Panikkar will do good work in Amritsar.

I am issuing the following press statement:

"In view of Mr. George Joseph's inability to go to Amritsar owing to his wife's illness, Maulana Mohamad Ali, President of the All India Congress Committee, has in consultation with Mahatma Gandhi appointed Mr. Panikkar to take charge of the Congress Akali Sahayak Bureau in Amritsar. Mr. Panikkar is an M.A. (first class honours) of Oxford, was a professor at the Muslim University, Aligarh and has till lately been the editor of the *Swarajya* of Madras. Mr. Panikkar is proceeding to Amritsar almost immediately."

I am going to Gorakhpur tomorrow evening for four days.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (i), 1924, pp 201—202. N.M.M.L.
2. Pandit Karam Chand Shukla, a journalist of Ferozepur; editor of the daily *Bande Mataram*.

55. To Karam Chand Shukla[1]

14 March 1924

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 10th March. The Secretary of the Punjab P.C.C. had also informed me that you had kindly consented to take charge of the Akali Sahayak Bureau in Amritsar. Just about this time however Mahatma Gandhi suggested the name of Mr. Panikkar, lately editor of the *Swarajya* of Madras, for the Bureau and the President Maulana Mohamad Ali has asked him to go to Amritsar. I am very sorry that the arrangements made by the Punjab P.C.C. should so soon have been upset and specially that you should have been put to inconvenience. Now that you are in Amritsar, I trust that you will remain there till Mr. Panikkar comes and discuss the whole situation with him. He will be a stranger to the province and to the work and you will no doubt be able to explain much to him. I have written fully to the Secretary Punjab P.C.C.

Mr. Panikkar leaves Bombay for Amritsar on Sunday night.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (i), 1924, p. 203. N.M.M.L.

56. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab[1]

14/3/24

Dear Sir,

I mentioned to you yesterday that Mahatmaji had suggested that Mr. Panikkar, till lately editor of the *Swarajya* of Madras, be put in charge of the Akali Sahayak Bureau in Amritsar. Maulana Mohamad Ali, President A.I.C.C. has accepted this suggestion and has asked Mr. Panikkar to proceed to Amritsar. I have just received a letter from

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (i), 1924, pp. 207—210. N.M.M.L.

Pandit Karam Chand informing me that he has taken charge of the Akali Sahayak Bureau under instructions from you. I am very sorry that just as Pandit Karam Chand had taken the trouble to go to Amritsar and take charge, new arrangements should be made for the bureau. I am sure Pt. Karam Chand's presence at Amritar would have been of great use and that he would have carried on the work entrusted to him with ability and success. In view of Mahatmaji's suggestion however, the President thought it desirable to entrust the work to Mr. Panikkar. You will kindly, I hope, explain the position to Mr. Karam Chand and offer my apologies to him for the trouble he has been put to. I do not think it will be necessary for Pandit Karam Chand and Mr. Panikkar both to remain in the Bureau. For the present however Pt. Karam Chand might kindly stay on till Mr. Panikkar arrives. He is due to leave Bombay on Sunday night the 16th. After his arrival the situation should be considered fully by Mr. Panikkar in consultation with your representatives and the representatives of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee. Pandit Karam Chand would no doubt be in a position to explain the situation to Mr. Panikkar.

2. After that the immediate work should be an informal enquiry into the Jaito firing. I am afraid your committee has entirely misunderstood the decision of the Working Committee. No formal enquiry, all India or otherwise, is asked for at this stage. We purposely wish to avoid a cumbrous and lengthy enquiry and we do not want a large number of men to carry it out. All that is required is that two or three competent persons should spend a few days in Amritsar personally examining and cross-examining such eye-witnesses of the firing etc. as may be available. They will draw up a short temporary report giving their impressions and conclusions on the more or less imperfect data supplied. This report will be considered by the Working Committee and if it then considers necessary a formal enquiry committee may be appointed. The report will be a private document unless the Working Committee decides otherwise. There should be no difficulty in your assisting in this work. The delay that has occurred already is unfortunate but even now something should be done. I notice that the S G P.C. have issued a small pamphlet about the Jaito firing.

3. I have noted that you are paying an allowance to Pt. Durga Das Vaid[2] out of the Akali Relief Fund I have referred the matter to the President.

2. Of Ferozepur district; a leading Congressman imprisoned in 1922 and 1924.

4. There is apparently some difficulty in drawing money from the bank for the Akali Sahayak Bureau as it stands in the name of Mr. Gidwani. I shall be obliged if you will kindly advance Mr. Panikkar any sum up to Rs. 1,000 in case he requires it. This money will be sent to you by me as soon as you ask for it. I do not know how to send money direct to Mr. Panikkar.

5. With reference to your request for a "substantial grant for the uplift of the Depressed Classes" I regret to inform you that the financial condition of the A.I.C.C. is not such as to enable it to make any substantial grant. However if you wish it I shall put up your request at the meeting of the Working Committee.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

57. To K. M. Panikkar[1]

Allahabad
27/3/1924

Dear Panikkar,
I have your letter. I have been wanting to write to you for some time but it is not easy to write about some matters. A talk would have been more satisfactory. Owing to my absence from Allahabad however I did not think it worthwhile to delay your departure for Amritsar.

I suppose you have picked up the threads already and require little outside help. You need not send frequent reports. All your communiques should be sent to me and they will keep me informed of your activities. You might also from time to time send me a personal letter giving any special news which has not appeared in the press. This should specially be done before a meeting of the Working Committee. It is really for you to consider when and what to write to me

1. A.I.C.C. File No 4(1) (K.W.) (i), 1924, pp 237-239 NMML

or to Mohamad Ali. We should of course be kept in touch with developments.

Gidwani had obtained authority for sending press messages from a large number of newspapers and he could thus send his communiques etc. to them by telegram free of cost. He also used to send weekly letters to the papers.

You are a journalist and I can hardly give you any tips as to how to carry on the publicity work most effectively. We have to give as much publicity as possible to the correct facts of the Akali agitation. We have also specially to keep the political side of it, and the side which affects the other communities, well in the forefront.

You have already noticed the unfriendly feeling between Hindus & Sikhs. If possible you should try to induce the various Hindu & Sikh newspapers to refrain from hurting each other. I believe that it is certainly possible for the two communities to come to an amicable understanding. Both of them want to put an end to the present undesirable state of affairs but each is afraid of lowering its prestige by taking the first step. I wish a private and informal conference of a few Sikhs & Hindus might take place. This would be helpful.

I hope you are proceeding with the Jaito enquiry. This should be finished as soon as possible. It should not of course be superficial but at the same time it need not be very detailed.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

58. To K. M. Panikkar[1]

April 2, 1924

My dear Panikkar,

Thanks for the Jaito report. I am sending a copy to Mohamad Ali for his directions as to whether it should be published or not. I shall let you know as soon as I hear from him. You state in the report more than once that "the crowd was absolutely unarmed except for

1. AICC. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (i), 1924, pp. 167-69. NMML.

the possession of *lathis*". Surely the crowd had *kirpans* and some of these *kirpans* are indistinguishable from swords. Also there were apparently some *Charis*. In view of these facts is not your statement too sweeping? I am sending copies of your report to all members of the *Working Committee and to Mahatmaji*. I am sorry to learn that you received no help from Sardar Mangal Singh or from Santanam.

I am glad to learn of your methods of work. As I said before so far as publicity is concerned, I cannot be of much help to you in offering suggestions. You know far more of it than I do.

I am inclined to think that you are right in saying that the Hindus in Amritsar are narrow minded and are taking up an undesirable attitude. Still I think this is not the sole cause of the bad relations between the two communities. The Sikhs have been largely to blame. There have been times when a generous word or gesture from them would have brought over the Hindus to them. But they did not care to make it. Their movement is largely a separatist movement so far as religion is concerned and this has naturally reacted in the social and political sphere. The almost general belief amongst the Hindus that the Akalis are arrogant and in their pride do not care for the feelings and sentiments of the Hindus is not without foundation. Sikhs have not been keen enough to win the Hindus in spite of their professions. The bitterness of the Hindu against the Sikh and the Muslim is chiefly due to the realisation of his utter weakness and humiliation, and being narrow minded and bigoted this bitterness instead of urging him to better himself or make himself stronger turns to hatred and curses. Unhappily Amritsar does not contain any Hindu leaders of note and in this respect one can sympathise with the Sikhs. They have no one to go to.

The latter part of your letter is interesting. If any important developments are likely to occur, it might be advisable for you to come over to Bombay. I would like to see you in any event but expense is a consideration. I have asked Mohamad Ali. I think you had better judge for yourself whether it is necessary for you to come. The Working Committee meets at Bombay in Shankerlal Banker's house in Choupatty on April 23rd at 3 p.m.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

59. To S. D. Kitchlew[1]

Juhu
27/4/24

My dear Kitchlew,

As you know the Working Committee have accepted Sardar Amar Singh Jhabbal's[2] resignation from the National Pact Committee[3] and have resolved to request the S.G.P.C. to suggest the name of another Sikh gentleman to serve on this committee. I have written to the S.G.P.C. but my letter is not likely to reach them. If it reaches them they will probably keep up their reputation and not answer it. I would therefore like you or Panikkar to see them or write to them about this matter and get their answer so that we may know where we are.

Far more important than the National Pact Committee however is the question of the future of the Akali Sahayak Bureau. You know the position well. It is clear that the present tendency of the S.G.P.C. is anything but desirable. Their treatment of the Congress Bureau, their secretiveness and their desire not to get mixed up in any way with the Congress is not very courteous to the Congress. It almost appears that we are thrusting ourselves and our help when it is neither wanted nor appreciated. You know that the Working Committee was definitely of opinion that under the circumstances the Akali Sahayak Bureau should be closed and the money withdrawn. But the committee did not wish to take any hasty action which might do injury to the Akalis and so they passed a resolution requesting you "to enquire and report as to the advisability of closing the Sahayak Bureau and taking back the money advanced". Will you kindly enquire into the matter on your return to Amritsar and send me a brief report? You

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (a), 1924, pp 343-44. N.M.M.L.
2. (1888-1962); joined Congress in 1919, President, Central Sikh League, 1923; started a weekly paper, *Desh Bhagat*, 1924, President, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, 1927; a 'dictator' of the Akali Dal, 1933-36; was imprisoned several times for participating in the nationalist movement.
3. Dr Ansari and Lala Lajpat Rai had proposed that all the communities sign an *Indian National Pact*, with *complete swaraj as the objective* and providing for full religious liberty, no preference to any particular religious denomination, protection to minorities and communal representation in all the legislatures.

will of course see some of the present responsible heads of the S.G.P.C. and explain to them what the Working Committee intends doing and the reasons for it.

As regards the money given for helping civil resisters this should not be handed over to the S.G.P.C. but should be given direct to the person needing it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Copy to Syt. K. M. Panikkar for information.

50. To K. M. Panikkar[1]

Juhu
30/4/24

My dear Panikkar,

I am so sorry I missed you. I sent you yesterday copy of a letter I have sent to Kitchlew. I have also spoken to him about it. I feel that there must be a straight talk with the officers of the S.G.P.C. and the consequences of their action must be clearly pointed out. I hope you will be present when Kitchlew meets the S.G.P.C. people.

I have read through your letters to Mahatmaji. I feel that we are to blame partly for allowing the situation to drift and not taking steps earlier to define our position and that of the Akalis etc.

I enclose a copy of a letter I am sending to the Secretary of the Punjab P.C.C. I am writing to him to hold on to the Rs. 25,000 or such part of it as is left, and only to give help out of it direct to the sufferers after full scrutiny by the committee appointed for the purpose. The greater part of the money had better be kept in fixed deposit.

I wanted to speak to you before you left about the preparation of a historical sketch of the noncooperation movement. I think that some

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (ii)/1924, pp 345-48 NMML.

such work is needed both in India & abroad. The work would deal more with the sweep of the movement and its essentials rather than with details. I think you would be just the person to do the work. There are two ways of doing it. One is to edit a collection of essays on different aspects of the movement by a number of leading authorities with a general introduction giving a historical sketch. The other way is for one person to write the whole work. Mahatmaji prefers the latter method. I discussed this subject with him. He did not show any great enthusiasm but he agreed that it might be of some use and he further agreed that you would be the right person for it. I understand from Kitchlew that you would like the idea of being entrusted with such work. Please let me have your ideas on the subject.

For the present you must have your hands full. I do not know how long you are likely to be busy with the Sahayak Bureau. But even now you can start collecting material for your work.

Please remember that you have to issue to the press an abstract of your Jaito report.

In case the Sahayak Bureau has to be closed the furniture etc. you have collected will have to be disposed of. Some of it, e.g. the duplicator, might be sent to the office in Allahabad. Please send me a full list of the furniture in the Bureau.

I propose to go to Allahabad in another week.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

61. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab[1]

Juhu
30 April 1924

Dear Sir,

Your letter No. 1860 dated 23rd April has been forwarded to me here. I understand that a similar letter has been sent by you to Mahatma Gandhi. I have had the advantage of discussing the matter with Mahatmaji and although this letter has not been seen by him it conveys generally his ideas on the subject.

1. AICC File No. 4(1) (KW) (ii), 1924, pp 351 53 N.M.M.L.

There is absolutely no prohibition against the participation by the Congress even in avowedly religious activities. No special sanction is necessary to take part in such activities, but it is for the local committee to decide whether having regard to the circumstances it is proper and expedient to do so. Of course, where such activities are opposed to the principles of the Congress or to our methods, or where they might lead to friction between different communities, then it will be desirable to hold aloof. But it is incorrect to say, as is mentioned in your letter, that the Congress cannot take part in such activities without transgressing its rules. Even if the Congress had not expressed its sympathy with many of the activities of the Akalis it would have been open to you, if you considered it fit and proper having regard to local conditions, to participate in the welcome to this *Jatha*. The Congress has not identified itself with the Sikh movement or the methods employed by the Akalis nor does it necessarily approve of all the objects as declared from time to time by the S.G.P.C. and its responsible members. Nonetheless the Congress has sympathised with the movement and has gone to the length of helping it indirectly. Apart from local conditions, therefore, it would ordinarily appear to be the right thing to join in welcoming and helping the Jatha. The fact that the S.G.P.C. is an illegal association should on the whole incline Congressmen and Congress Committees to help it rather than otherwise.

There is thus no principle or rule of the Congress which prevents us from helping and cheering the *Shahidi Jatha* on its way. But it is quite possible that the local conditions may be such that any aggressive activity may not produce wholesome results. Of this the local committee must be the sole judge. For instance, such help may create communal tension or increase it, or the people in the locality may be too timid to do much and hence an appeal from the Congress may fall flat.

It appears from your letter that this matter was informally discussed by some Congressmen. It would be desirable if an important matter of this kind was considered by a formal committee meeting.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Copy to Syt. K. M. Panikkar for information.

62. To K. M. Panikkar[1]

16/3/24

My dear Panikkar,

My stay in Juhu[2] was unduly prolonged and I only returned yesterday. I have seen your letters of the 3rd, 4th & 5th May.

I appreciate the reasons advanced by you for having one connected account of all Congress activities rather than a collection of essays by different persons. I did not suggest that we should adopt the latter course. What I mentioned in a previous letter was, I think, that a connected narrative should be supplemented by special essays. In any event, we must have a good historical account and this can only be written by one person and not by a number. The idea of having any essays is confusing and might be abandoned for the present. We should concentrate on the "history" and I am glad the work of taking this in hand appeals to you.

I mentioned this matter to the Working Committee in Juhu and although there was no resolution there appeared to be general agreement that the work should be done. Mahatmaji, although not over-keen on the subject, approved of your doing it. I think, therefore that you need not wait for the formal sanction of the Working Committee and can start work immediately.

I am sending you a copy of the report of the Civil Disobedience Committee[3]. Please get a copy of the report and evidence of the Congress Martial Law Enquiry Committee from the Punjab P.C.C. I have written to them about it. Some of the other books required by you are in my office and I may be able to send them to you. I shall write to you about them later.

I am sorry to learn about the state of the accounts. I suppose we must wait patiently for Gidwani's discharge.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No 4(1) (K.W.) (ii), 1924, pp 371 72. N.M.M.L.
2. Where Mahatma Gandhi was convalescing.
3. The Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee was appointed by the Congress in June 1922, with Hakim Ajmal Khan as its Chairman and Motilal Nehru, Vithalbhai Patel, Ansari, Rajagopalachari and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar as its members, to advise whether a recommencement of the Congress programme was necessary. The committee came to the conclusion that the country was not ready for civil disobedience on a large scale, but limited mass civil disobedience on the responsibility of Provincial Congress Committees could be permitted.

63. To K. M. Panikkar[1]

Allahabad
20/5/24

My dear Panikkar,

I have your letter of the 16th May. I am glad to learn of the new elections to the S.G.P.C. Certainly it would be inadvisable to close the Bureau at this stage. It is for Kitchlew and you to report accordingly to the President. Some of the relief money might also be judiciously distributed subject to the condition that the relief is given directly to the sufferers by your Bureau.

I have already written to you about the writing of the history of the noncooperation movement. I can quite appreciate the difficulties you will have to face and indeed I do not envy you your job.

Regarding the books, you must have received the Congress report on the Punjab atrocities and the Civil Disobedience report. I am now sending you the Hunter Report[2] and the Report of the Ahmedabad and Gaya Congresses. The reports of the Calcutta and Cocanada sessions are not yet out and the Nagpur report although recently published has not been received by this office. I am trying to collect the other books wanted by you and I hope to have them soon. There is only one difficulty. The Assembly reports are bulky and expensive and I do not like buying a full set. Will it not be possible for you to consult them in a library or at a friend's? My father I believe has got a full set and you could consult them if you were in Allahabad.

A useful publication which will help you in getting at facts and figures is the *Annual Register*[3] published in Calcutta. I am getting a full set of this for the office.

Do you want me to send you all the books to Amritsar? Will you require the Hunter Committee evidence? I can let you have my personal copy if you require it.

Please do not Pandit me too much. My name by itself is good enough and besides I do not want to feel older than I am!

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (u), 1924, pp 375-77. N.M.M.L.
2. The official report on the disturbances and martial law in the Punjab
3. Edited by H. N. Mitra, the *Indian Annual Register* started publication in the year 1921 from Calcutta. It was an annual chronicle and digest of public affairs in India

64. To K. M. Panikkar[1]

Allahabad
29/5/1924

My dear Panikkar,

I have your letter of the 26th. I do not much like the idea of making a public announcement at this stage about your being entrusted with the task of writing a history of the N.C.O. movement. I would have preferred the announcement to come after a formal resolution of the Working Committee. It is just possible that a premature announcement might not be liked by some people. In any event I should not like to mention Mahatmaji's name. He is not very keen about it and his name had better be kept out of it for the present. I am writing to the Provincial Congress Committees to send you any information that might help you. A public announcement could come after the Working Committee meeting.

I do not remember the details of the bills I have sent to Kitchlew. He ought to have them in his office. I think I have given him two bills. The main item in both these was intermediate travelling expenses from Allahabad to Amritsar. Please see the bills and if you think either of them rightly appertains to the Sahayak Bureau you can have it transferred.

Please remember to send me a statement of accounts of the Bureau for the next meeting of the Working Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(I) (K.W.) (II), 1924, pp. 385-86. N.M.M.L.

65. To K. M. Panikkar[1]

7/6/24

My dear Panikkar,
Your letter of the 4th June.

I shall be a little surprised if Government take action against the Akali Sahayak Bureau or you. I think it is very unlikely. But there is no knowing, and everything that happens is perhaps for the best *n'est-ce pas?* I hope however to see you in Ahmedabad if not sooner. Why do you not come here to Allahabad just before going to Sabarmati? Allahabad is not exactly on the way as you will have to travel back to Agra from here. If you think it worthwhile and not too much trouble you might come here a day or two earlier and we might then go together. I propose to start on the 23rd June.

You can dispose of the duplicator at less than cost price provided the price is reasonable.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (KW) (ii), 1924, p. 401. N.M.M.L.

66. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab[1]

13/6/24

Dear Sir,
Mr. Panikkar of the Akali Sahayak Bureau informs me that your committee has received Rs. 1,500 from Sikhs outside India for Akali relief. This money might legitimately be spent through the Akali Sahayak Bureau and I trust you will help the Bureau out of this fund. The future of the Bureau will be decided in Ahmedabad at the A.I.C.C. meeting there but meanwhile I hope you will give up to Rs. 500 for necessary expenses to the Bureau.

Kindly send me your account of the monies given to you for Akali relief. How much money has been spent on relief? Also please let me know how much money you have advanced to the Sahayak Bureau.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (KW.) (ii), 1924, p. 411. N.M.M.L.

67. To K. M. Panikkar[1]

13/6/24

Dear Sir,

I have your telegram. I have written to the Secretary, Punjab P.C.C. about the monies received from outside India for Akali relief and have requested him to spend this money through the Sahayak Bureau. In the meantime I have asked him to give you upto Rs. 500 for necessary expenses.

Kindly remember to send me an account of your receipts and expenditure for submission to the Working Committee.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4(1) (K.W.) (ii), 1924, p 413. N.M.M.L.

68. To K. M. Panikkar[1]

25/7/1924

My dear Panikkar,

Your letter came quite as a surprise. I thought you had forgotten us and our office. I have been wanting to write to you for some time but I have been very much occupied.

I have asked the Punjab P.C.C. to pay you Rs. 400. I am looking through your accounts and hope to settle them soon.

Have you sent the duplicator? It is badly wanted here.

Is there any truth in the report that you are soon going to take charge of a daily in Delhi?

I hope you remember that you have to visit Gidwani in jail.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No 4(1) (K.W.) (ii), 1924, p 437 N.M.M.L.

69. To K. M. Panikkar[1]

30/7/1924

My dear Panikkar,
Thanks for Bhagat's[2] receipts.

I have received the printed notice about the advent of *Hindustan*. I wonder if you are too busy to write to me about it. It appears to be settled now that the paper will come out. What is going to happen to the Sahayak Bureau? When do you intend leaving Amritsar? You will appreciate my interest in these questions. I do not personally think it is necessary to continue the Bureau after your departure. Please consult Mohamad Ali. Presumably you will see him soon. Also what happens to the great history?

In case you are closing up the Bureau, please sell off the furniture yourself or make satisfactory arrangements for its sale. Congress furniture has a habit of disappearing

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No 4(I) (K.W.) (n)/1924, p 449 N.M.M.L.
2. G. L. Bhagat assisted Karam Chand Shukla and later K M Panikkar at the Akali Sahayak Bureau in 1924

70. To Madan Mohan Malaviya and Motilal Nehru[1]

2/8/24

Dear Sir,
You will remember that the Congress has created a trust[2] for the Jallianwala Bagh and appointed you and a number of other gentlemen

1. A.I.C.C. File No 3, 1924, pp. 15-17 N.M.M.L.
2. In December 1919 the Congress decided to purchase Jallianwala Bagh for the nation, and appointed a committee, with Pandit Malaviya as president, to organize a trust for its management.

as trustees. I understand that money can be drawn from the fund under the joint signatures of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Pandit Motilal Nehru. Reports have come from Amritsar that the Bagh requires a great deal of supervision and encroachments are continually being made on it. May I suggest that you may request the Executive Committee of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee to exercise this supervision over the management of the Bagh? So far as payments are concerned they might only be made or sanctioned by you on the recommendation of the Punjab Committee. I think this arrangement will certainly improve matters. If you agree with this proposal I shall request you to inform the persons in charge of the Bagh now as well as the Secretary of the Punjab P.C.C.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

71. To the Secretary, P.C.C., Punjab[1]

2/8/24

Dear Sir,

Frequent complaints are made about the management of the Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar. The trustees of the fund can exercise little or no supervision and the whole burden is cast on the local officers in charge. I have suggested to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Pandit Motilal Nehru that they might request your Executive Committee to exercise the necessary supervision over the management and in case of expenditure to recommend to them what should be paid. I trust your committee will undertake this work.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 3, 1924, p 19 N.M.M.L.

72. On the Akali Jatha[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru said that they were talkative men whilst the Akalis were practical men. He commented on his conviction at Nabha and said it was due to Mr. Gandhi that he had not joined Professor Gidwani. The arrival of this *Jatha* showed how Indians abroad were thinking of the motherland. In India the Sikhs are in a minority but no one hears of their being attacked by Hindus and Mohamadans; this is due to their organisation and the readiness to defend themselves from unrighteous attacks. The noncooperation movement had been started to make people courageous. He condemned the Lucknow riots[2] and exhorted the people of Allahabad to remain calm. He deprecated the closing of shops on mere rumour and hartals of one community against the other. In view of Mr. Gandhi's fast all should strive for unity. The Akali affair was an all India affair and if Swaraj comes it would be a Swaraj of Hindus, Musalmans and Sikhs and all other peoples living in India and not of one nation alone. Unity was the foremost question of the day.

1. Government of U.P. Secret Police Abstract of Intelligence, Vol XLII, No 38 dated 27 September, 1924
   The Akali *Jathas* were squads of Sikhs courting arrest and imprisonment. The Canadian Akali *Jatha* was the group that had come out to India from Canada to participate in the struggle It came to Allahabad, and on 20 September 1924 a public meeting, presided over by Jawaharlal, was held to welcome it
2. There had been communal rioting at Lucknow on 12 September 1924

ON OPIUM TRAFFIC

73. To all the Members of the Working Committee[1]

2 June 1924

Dear Sir,

Mr. C. F. Andrews suggests that the Congress should conduct an enquiry in Assam to get together the facts relating to opium production in order to strengthen India's case against the continuation of the opium evil. The facts are said to be overwhelmingly in favour of this case but owing to the absence of any organized effort to collect them little advantage can be taken of them. The Government of India's representatives on the League of Nations stated on the last occasion that the people of India did not want to limit materially or put an end to opium production, so that Britain is using the fair name of India to continue the opium traffic. There is a great agitation in America this year against this traffic and the question is going to be specially considered by the League of Nations next November. The League has decided to hear individuals and representatives of associations and non-official bodies in addition to the official representatives. A number of Americans interested in this question have suggested that the Congress send representatives direct to this meeting of the League to present India's case. The Rev. J. T. Sunderland[2] has addressed an open letter[3] on the subject to Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian Congress Leaders.

Mr. Andrews suggests that immediate steps should be taken in Assam to collect facts relating to repression by Government with regard to

1. AICC File No 39 (Part I), 1924, p 97 NMML.
2. (1842-1936), an Unitarian minister from the United States, he paid long visits to India and wrote a book *India in Bondage* which was proscribed as seditious by the Government of India
3. In this letter of 24 April 1924, Sunderland suggested that the Congress send a delegation to the Opium Conference sponsored by the League of Nations and refute the British Government's contention that there was no desire in India to limit the production of opium

drink and drugs prevention; figures showing effect of popular movement on opium consumption and decline of revenue; facts regarding consumption of opium village by village; facts showing encouragement of opium by Government officials; draft summary of history of opium in Assam in the past and under British rule and as a monopoly; evidence as to actual carrying out of Opium Limitation Act of 1921, and general propaganda against opium. All these facts to be put together in a report to be published by the Congress.

It has been calculated that this enquiry will cost about Rs. 3,000 and it is said that if a grant of Rs. 1,000 is made by the A.I.C.C. for the purpose the local Congress Committee will be able to raise the remaining Rs. 2,000 or more if necessary. A request is therefore made to the A.I.C.C. to grant Rs. 1,000 immediately. The work will be undertaken under the auspices of the Assam P.C.C. and it is said that it will be very useful in reviving interest in Congress activities as well as diverting people's attention from communal troubles.

The President desires me to consult members of the Working Committee as to whether Rs. 1,000 should be granted for the purpose of this work. For the present this is the only question before us. The question of how the facts collected are to be utilised may be considered later. Kindly intimate to me your views as to this grant of Rs. 1,000 as early as possible.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

74. To Tarak Nath Das[1]

5 June 1924

My dear Mr. Das,
I am obliged to you for your letters and cuttings. I am also thankful for Miss La Motte's[2] *The Ethics of Opium* which you have kindly sent me. I have forwarded Rev. J. Sunderland's open letter to Mr. Gandhi together with your article. I have also sent a copy of your article to my father.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 39 (Part I), 1924, pp. 11-12. N.M.M.L.
2. Ellen Newbold La Motte (1873-1961), a nurse in the French army in 1915-16, opposed the opium policy of the Government of India in the mid-twenties and was awarded the Lin Tse-hsu memorial medal for her work against opium traffic in 1930.

The opium question is at last, I am glad to say, attracting some attention in India. There is a proposal, which will be considered at the next meeting of the Congress Executive, to have a thorough enquiry into the question in Assam. An endeavour will be made to collect facts to show how the British Government has consistently encouraged opium traffic and suppressed attempts at drink and drug prevention. I hope this enquiry will take place soon and will gather together useful facts.

The political situation in India is extraordinary and I shall not endeavour to explain it in the course of a letter. I hope it will clear up soon. Meanwhile many of us here are in considerable difficulties and are greatly perplexed.

Bande Mataram,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

75. To C. F. Andrews[1]

16 August 1924

My dear Mr. Andrews,

I hope you have had an enjoyable voyage and are quite fit.

You will remember urging an opium enquiry in Assam. The last meeting of the A.I.C.C. decided on this and I believe the Assam P.C.C. is carrying on the work. The Working Committee however has specially entrusted the work to you and it was largely relying on you that they decided as they did. I hope therefore that you will supervise the work there and put it on right lines. The writing of the report will also be largely your work. Kindly let me know what you propose to do and when the report is likely to be ready.

The A.I.C.C. also decided on sending a deputation to Ceylon and Malaya[2], according to your suggestion. As you are just coming from Malaya, you will probably be able to give valuable advice as to what we should do. Did you have time to study the condition of Indian labourers there in any detail?

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 39 (Part I), 1924, pp. 139-40. N.M.M.L.
2. To enquire into the condition of Indian labourers.

76. To C. F. Andrews[1]

18 August 1924

My dear Mr. Andrews,

I received your letter of the 27th July from Taiping a few hours after posting my letter to you. I do not know why there was so much delay in your letter reaching me. I think the post office delivered it by mistake to the wrong person.

Thanks for the cuttings from the *Times*. They will form a useful record of the O'Dwyer-Nair trial[2]. I am getting them sorted and pasted for facility of reference. I am very interested to learn that they were given to you by Miss Sherwood. I shall be glad if she comes back to India.

I am writing to Mr. Phookan[3] and the Assam Provincial Congress Committee to keep in readiness for you. In accordance with your suggestion the Working Committee has granted Rs. 1,000 for the Opium Enquiry, provided that the Assam P.C.C. collects another Rs. 2,000. So far I have sent them Rs. 250 for preliminary expenses. As soon as I learn that they have collected Rs. 2,000, I shall have the remaining Rs. 750 sent to them also.

I am very glad you have been able to conduct a full enquiry into the labour conditions in Malaya. Your work will save the Congress the trouble of sending a deputation as had been decided by the A.I.C.C. in June last. I have been corresponding about this proposed deputation with the Servants of India Society.

You will remember that the Congress appointed a committee in Ceylon to enquire into conditions there. Unfortunately they have done no work and are quarrelling with each other. You know them. Could you drop a line to some one there to make up their differences and proceed to work?

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No 39 (Part I), 1924, pp. 143-44. N.M.M.L.
2. Sir Michael O'Dwyer had sued Sir Sankaran Nair in London for libel in some passages in Nair's book *Gandhi and Anarchy*, where Nair had accused him of forcible recruiting and responsibility for the atrocities in the Punjab. The judge gave a partisan summing up and the jury awarded O'Dwyer £500 damages with cost. Professor Harold Laski was one of the few dissenting jurymen.
3. Tarun Ram Phookan (1877-1939); one of the leading Congressmen of Assam. He was also president of the Assam Sahitya Sabha.

77. To A. C. Wilson[1]

9 January 1925

Dear Sir,[2]

At the request of Mr. C. F. Andrews, I have today cabled to you the text of the opium resolution of the Indian National Congress passed at Belgaum towards the end of December. I enclose a copy of the full resolution on the Drink and Opium Traffic. You will notice that I had left out the first paragraph of the resolution in my cable as there appeared to be no urgency in communicating this part of the resolution.

You will be interested to know that it is proposed to publish soon the report of an enquiry into the opium traffic in Assam.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Encl. One

Drink and Opium Traffic

The Congress notes with satisfaction that notwithstanding the setback suffered by the campaign against the use of intoxicating drinks and drugs initiated in 1921, Congress workers in several parts of the country have continued it with vigour and determination. The Congress hopes that the peaceful endeavour of workers to wean those who are addicted to the drink or the opium habit from the curse, will receive further and greater strength and encouragement than hitherto.

The Congress is of opinion that the policy of the Government of India in using the drink and drug habit of the people as a source of revenue is detrimental to the moral welfare of the people of India and would therefore welcome its abolition.

The Congress is further of opinion that the regulation by the Government of India of the opium traffic is detrimental not only to the moral welfare of India but of the whole world, and that the cultivation of opium in India which is out of all proportion to medical and scientific requirements should be restricted to such requirements.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 39 (Part I), 1924, p 51 N.M.M.L.
2. A. C. Wilson (1866-1955), came to India in 1893 as secretary to his father who was a member of the Royal Commission on Opium, was an active member of the India Conciliation Group in the 1930's.

ON COMMUNAL DISTURBANCES

78. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
12-9-1924

Respected Bapuji,
I returned from Sambhal[2] yesterday and am sending you two copies of the report prepared there. I received your letter yesterday. I have also received your telegram and am replying to it separately. It would have been better had Mohamad Ali or Hayat come to Sambhal with me, but I just forgot about them. I had taken Badruzzaman[3] with me. He is related to Khaliquzzaman. He was quite helpful.

Lucknow is in a bad state and every day the tension is increasing. Some talks to secure an agreement are proceeding and I hear that the Amethi[4] Mohamadans are prepared to apologise to the Hindus. But this alone will probably not satisfy the Hindus. Some people have asked me to go and arrange a compromise, but I have no desire to do so and I have refused to go point blank. Whom would I represent? The Hindus are not going to accept me, and why should the Muslims do so?

Yours obediently,
Jawaharlal

1. Gandhi Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No 10481. Original in Hindi.
2. Sambhal is a town in Moradabad district. Of its population of nearly 50,000 in 1924, two-thirds were Muslims In 1924, the annual fair coincided with the Mohurram festival and sparked off communal rioting Jawaharlal and Shaikh Badruzzaman visited the town to report on the causes and nature of the riots
3. Shaikh Badruzzaman (b 1898) of Barabanki district, left the Aligarh University to join the noncooperation movement in 1920.
4. A large village about 20 miles from Lucknow where also communal rioting had occurred.

79. On the Hindu-Muslim Trouble at Sambhal[1]

12 September 1924

1. I was at Moradabad and Sambhal for three days—September 8th, 9th and 10th—to enquire into the Hindu-Muslim trouble which had occurred there during the *Mohurrum*. At my request Shaikh Badruzzaman had preceded me from Lucknow by two days and had interviewed a number of people in Moradabad before I arrived. We then went to Sambhal together. This report has not so far been seen by Mr. Badruzzaman as he is in Lucknow and I am writing this in Allahabad. We have however discussed the whole affair and together considered the evidence and have arrived at the same conclusions on the principal points at issue. This report embodies these conclusions.

2. As at Amethi and elsewhere where such incidents have occurred, there is sure to be a big criminal case in the court and both the parties are preparing for this. They are very much afraid to say or do anything which might prejudice this case, and it is extraordinarily difficult to get at the truth under these circumstances. *Prima facie* the Hindus are the aggrieved party. Two of their temples have been desecrated and idols have been broken; a number of them have been badly beaten and still bear the marks of injury. On the other hand no Mohamadan to our knowledge has sustained any marked injury. It is said however that a few were hurt. The burden of proof was therefore on the Mohamadan side and their position was a difficult one. There was some hesitation on their part to give evidence before us. At the very beginning we were told by them in Sambhal that they did not like the idea of committing themselves before us and our publishing reports in the press. We assured them that it was no concern of ours to mention any names and that in any event our report would be meant for Mr. Gandhi and not for publication. They reluctantly agreed to help us in the enquiry but they were far from satisfied.

1. A.I.C.C. File No 10, 1924, pp 49 74. N.M.M.L.

3. The Hindus approached us more eagerly and we interviewed a number of eye witnesses and those who had been injured and also several *raises* and leading citizens. On the Mohamadan side we did not see so many people, nor could we have the same kind of witnesses. By the very nature of the incident we could hardly have Mohamadan eye witnesses of the actual attack etc. giving evidence before us. The general Mohamadan viewpoint however was explained to us fully by a Mohamadan gentleman, the leading zamindar of Sambhal and the chairman of the local municipality. A number of other Mohamadans in Sambhal and in Moradabad were also seen by us and subjected to searching questions. But their evidence consisted almost entirely of hearsay and conjecture.

4. The general impression of the evidence is that there was a considerable amount of hard lying on both sides. The impression one gathered, as some persons gave their versions and answered our questions, was that of a court room and carefully tutored witnesses repeating a well prepared story. The two accounts differ materially on almost every important point. On the Hindu side there is direct evidence and important circumstantial data. Unfortunately the Muslim side could not be equally well put to us. This was partly due to the inherent difficulty of the position. We would have stayed on if there had been any chance of further reliable evidence coming to us. But this was not likely as our arrival in the town had created a bit of a commotion, and it was difficult for us to get out of the hands of the wire pullers on both sides. A quiet enquiry conducted by some little known person would perhaps be helpful in elucidating some doubtful points.

5. We have however sufficient data to come to some general conclusions which may be accepted without hesitation. The Hindus, as has been said above, have *prima facie* a good case. They are however trying to improve upon it by supplying all manner of details to show premeditation and careful preparation for attack on the part of Muslims, by exaggerating instances of cruelty and improper behaviour by Muslims, and above all by implicating in the riot almost every Mohamadan of note in Sambhal, as well as the local Muslim officials. The Mohamadans on the other hand try to make out that the Hindus carefully prepared to provoke Muslims by having music and singing on a large scale at the very time when the *Tazias* are taken out, and got ready to attack them and did in fact take the initiative; and that the Hindus themselves broke up their idols and desecrated their temples simply to get the Muslims in trouble. An attempt has also been

made to implicate in the riot, presumably as a counterblast to the similar attempt of the Hindus, one or more prominent Hindus.

6. Briefly what happened, in our opinion, was this. There had been considerable friction between the Hindus and Muslims for some time past and specially during the early days of the *Mohurrum*. The Mohamadans were smarting under the notion that the Hindus were getting uppish and with the help of a partisan sub-divisional officer were interfering with the rights of Muslims. On the night of 9th *Mohurrum* some Hindus were present in their temple and a large number of Mohamadans had gathered together at a little distance for the *Tazia* procession. The Mohamadans came to the temple and objected to any music. They were told that there was no music but they immediately fell on the Hindus and beat them and desecrated that temple as well as a *thakurdwara* at a little distance.

7. Sambhal is a town in the district of Moradabad, about 23 miles from Moradabad. It is a very ancient town, perhaps one of the few most ancient towns in India. Mention is made of it in the *Puranas*. It was an important place in the Hindu period and Prithvi Raj built a fine temple which it is said was subsequently converted into the principal mosque of the city. This still exists. There are other relics of Prithvi Raj also. During early Muslim times, it was an important seat of power and was even the capital once. During the Moghul period, it was the headquarters of a province. It is full of *teerths* and sacred wells. It is said that the next *avatar* will come from Sambhal. The population now is just under 50,000, two thirds of it being Muslim. Thus there are about 32,000 Mohamadans and 16,000 Hindus. The town itself now is really more of a collection of villages with large tracts of agricultural land between different *Mohallas*. Just outside the municipal limits of Sambhal are the *Sola Sarais* which are also thickly populated villages with a large majority of Muslims. The railway goes to Sambhal but nonetheless it is not very easily accessible as it is situated on the branch of a branch line.

8. The principal temple which has been desecrated is called the Surajkund temple. This is also supposed to be a very old temple. It stands in the centre of a grove belonging to the temple. The central building is a *Shivalaya* with one or two images of Ganesh at the side. A side building has a big image of Hanuman There is a small well and a *pucca* pond which owing to the rains had overflowed. Half the grove was under about two or three feet of water It is said that many Hindus hid in this water after the Muslim attack. Adjoining the tem-

ple ground is a Muslim graveyard. There have been some disputes about the line of demarcation and a right of way.

There is a *Thakurdwara* (of Lallu Pande) a short distance from this temple. This was also desecrated.

The tahsil headquarters, the *tahsildar's* house, the sub-inspector's house, and the Dak Bungalow where the S.D.O. [Sub-Divisional Officer] was staying are all within a furlong or at most a furlong and a half from the temple.

9. The district of Moradabad is notorious for Hindu-Muslim troubles. There is a large Muslim population in it and both in the city of Moradabad and in some small towns there is frequent friction. Congress work has not prospered there in spite of repeated efforts. There are a large number of weavers and an enormous quantity of cloth hand-woven either wholly or partly of mill yarn. No reliable pure *Khaddar* is made in any quantity. The local Hindus have also taken great interest in the *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan* movements.

10. There is a great deal of endowed temple property round about Sambhal. In course of time much of this had been misappropriated by various persons both Hindu and Muslim. Some five or six years ago, a Hindu Sabha was started in Sambhal. This was a local affair and at that time had little to do with any similar all India or provincial organisation. The Sabha started litigation to recover the temple property which in its opinion had been misappropriated. It has succeeded in many cases both against Hindus and Muslims, but chiefly the latter. Litigation is still going on about a right of way, the boundary of a graveyard and other matters. These activities of the Hindu Sabha have considerably irritated the Muslims.

11. Owing to their large majority in the town and neighbourhood, and for other reasons, Muslims have all along been top dogs in Sambhal. They have more members in the municipal board, including their own Chairman, and Hindus complain that nearly all municipal employees are Mohamadans. For a long time past there has been a practice that almost all higher Govt. officials in the town e.g. S.D.O., Tahsildar and Police Inspectors, are Muslims. This year an innovation was made and a Hindu S.D.O. was sent. This displeased the Mohamadans greatly.

12. The *chamars* and other similar castes are not allowed to use most of the wells in the town. They have a few special wells in their own *mohallas*. Some months ago, the local Arya Samaj had their annual conference, and on a representation from the *chamars*, who had con-

tributed money to the *Samaj*, it was decided to help them to break down this custom which prevented them from using many wells in the town. Later the *chamars*, supported by some others, drew water from two of these wells. This was resented both by the Muslims and the higher caste Hindus. As this incident happened during the *Ramzan* Muslims were all the more annoyed and some felt that it was specially meant for them. On applications being made to the local officials an order under Sec. 144 was promulgated whereby *chamars* and such like were forbidden to draw water from such wells. Since then the *chamars* have kept away and there has been no trouble on this score.

13. There is an annual *mela* in one of the distant and self-contained *mohallas* of Sambhal—Sarai Tarin. This is called *Chharion ka mela* and it comprises a procession of poles and flags representing some saint or *pir*. It is something like *Ghazi Mian's mela*[2] in other towns. Last year it fell during the *Mohurrum*. An agreement was arrived at by some Hindus & Muslims, with the help of the local officials, not to have the *mela* during the *Mohurrum*. This compromise was acted upon and no *mela* was held. It was stated by the Hindus however that the compromise was an enforced one and the Hindus were more or less compelled to agree to it by the S.D.O. and *Tahsildar*, both of whom were Muslims. This abandonment grieved the Hindus, specially as the District Magistrate had given out previously that full liberty would be allowed to each party to have their processions etc. The Hindus held a mass meeting of protest and condemned the compromise and the action of the local S.D.O. in bringing it about. The District Magistrate is also said to have expressed his displeasure at the abandonment of the *mela* and to have reprimanded the officials. All this happened last year.

14. This year also the *mela* conflicted with the *Mohurrum* and the Mohamadans wanted the precedent of last year to be followed. A little before the *Mohurrum* the Muslim S.D.O. of Sambhal was transferred and a Hindu S.D.O. took his place. On the 1st of August (*Mohurrum* beginning on the 3rd August), the District Magistrate of Moradabad promulgated a long order under Sec 144 Cr. P.C. which *inter alia* provided for the holding of the *Chhamon ka mela* and stated that there should be no music or singing when the mourning processions were taken out. No times were specified either in this order

2. Ghazi Mian was the most popular of the Panch Pir (five saints) worshipped by Muslims and Hindus alike.

or subsequently as to when these processions were to come out and the music and singing was not to take place. It was understood however that there could be music in the temple at the ordinary times of worship but certainly not at night after 9 p.m. This order, specially the part relating to the *Chhanion ka mela*, greatly displeased the Mohamadans and they boycotted the *mela* which was held on the 5th Mohurrum (7th August). As a protest the Muslims of Sarai Tarin, the *mohalla* where the *mela* is held, did not have any *Muharrum* celebration.

15. The various matters referred to above upset the composure of the Muslims and they feared that with the help of the officials the Hindus would encroach upon their rights. It is the Hindu case that the Muslims thereupon decided to revenge themselves on the Hindus and specially to get the new Hindu S.D.O. in trouble. The Hindus further say that the big Muslim zamindars and even the Muslim *tahsildar* were parties to this decision and word was sent to the Muslims in the neighbouring villages to gather in large numbers on the night of the 9th Mohurrum in Sambhal. We have no evidence worth the name about these allegations of the Hindus and the mention of the big zamindars' and the *tahsildar's* names in this connection appears to be largely prompted with the desire to get them into trouble. It is however clear and admitted that the Muslims were in an angry and resentful mood and felt that the authorities were being partial to the Hindus. The appointment of the Hindu S.D.O. and the promulgation of the order under Sec. 144 at a very late stage, on the eve of Mohurrum, when it was not possible to object effectively against any provision in it relating to the *mela* etc., were sufficient evidence for them to prove the partisanship of the higher authorities.

16. On the 7th Mohurrum (9th August) the Mehndi procession (a part of the Mohurrum celebrations) took place on a large scale as usual It is said that a Hindu *pujari* took exception to the presence of an extra drum in the procession but nothing untoward happened. Some Hindus as usual took part in the procession

I might mention here that Sambhal is famous for its Mohurrum drums. Some of these are enormous — they have a diameter of over six feet.

17. The 9th Mohurrum (11th August) was also the last Monday in Sawan. In the middle of the day a Muslim constable is said to have informed the police sub-inspector that it appeared that there would be a music party at the Surajkund temple. The sub-inspector informed the S.D.O. who was in the Dak Bungalow. The S.D.O. told him to send for the *pujari* of the temple and to read out the section 144 order

to him and make it clear that there must be no music after 9 p.m. This was done and the *pujari* was warned.

18. It is stated with unanimity by Hindus that all drum beating (excepting one drum) was stopped by the Muslims in the evening at about 6 p.m., and was not renewed that evening or night. This is denied with equal unanimity by the Muslims. The point is not very material except as an important indication that Muslims were agitated and were preparing for trouble. Hindus lay stress on it merely to prove this. It is probable that out of the 100 or more drums in the town many were not being used that evening. Of course all drums stopped as soon as news of the night attack spread. I am unable to say however on the evidence before us that all drums, excepting one, stopped definitely at 6 p.m., or thereabouts.

19. There was the usual *puja* in the Surajkund temple at the hours of worship, accompanied by *shankh*, bells etc. The evening *arti* took place about 7 or 7.30 p.m. and thus there was *shankh* blowing etc. then also. This was in accordance with the Sec. 144 order, and it was not objected to. The Hindu and Muslim versions of subsequent happenings are very different :

Muslim version

The Hindus were specially preparing to have music on a large scale this night in order to annoy and insult the Muslims during their *Tazia* procession. This is shown by the fact that the constable mentioned the matter to the sub-inspector and the S.D.O. had to send for the *pujari*. A large number of Hindus — about 200-300 — collected in the Surajkund temple at 9 p.m. and there was music which is variously described as harmonium playing, *sitar* etc. A short distance from the temple grounds Muslims were congregating for their *Tazia* procession. They heard the temple music with annoyance and anger. Some of them went towards the

Hindu version

The day being the last Monday in *Sawan* there was a stream of people coming to the temple, performing their *pooja*, and returning Many had fasted that day. The usual *arti* took place in the evening. After that some persons continued to come but few remained. At about 9 p.m. there were 25 to 30 men sitting on a *chabutra* adjoining the temple. These men were of the poorer classes, petty tradesmen, a few *sadhus*, and some *ganja* smokers. They were busy with their beads in silent *bhajans* or in distributing or eating *prasad*. Newcomers went to the temple and performing their worship rung the bell once or twice. Apart from

temple and, addressing the Hindus there from the garden gate, protested against the music. There were high words between the parties and the Hindus came out to the gate and attacked the Muslims. There was then a general fight for about ten minutes or so. It was ended by the arrival of the authorities when both parties retired. During the fight both Hindus and Muslims were hurt. Most of the Mohamadans present at the fight were probably outside villagers who had come to Sambhal as usual to celebrate the night of the 9th Mohurrum. These outsiders who were hurt went off to their villages and this explains why no Mohammadan wounded was found. A few Mohamadans pointed some days after the event to marks on their arms and hands as evidence of injuries received.

It is stated that the fight took place near the gate. The Mohamadans thus had no occasion to go near the temple, and they did not desecrate it. This desecration and breaking of idols must have been done by Hindus themselves partly immediately after the fight and partly late at night when everything was over, in order to get the Mohamadans in trouble.

this there was no music of any kind, not even conch blowing. Indeed there is no custom of having any music in the *Shivalaya* at that hour of the night. The peaceful character of the people assembled is pointed out, also the fact that most of them were middle aged. No one expected any trouble else they would have prepared for it by having more men or younger and better fighters.

Just then cries of *Ali & Hussain* and *Allah-o-Akbar* were heard gradually approaching. It was also noticed that large number of Muslims were wandering about all round the temple. Some Hindus fearing an attack tried to escape but, excepting one or two, they failed as all outlets were blocked by Mohamadans. Some Mohamadans then entered the temple grounds, with the crowd following them closely. They came to the *chabutra* and said something about objecting to music. Some Hindus replied that there was no music. Thereupon the Muslim mob fell on the Hindus and started beating them mercilessly with the big *dankas* (the sticks with which the drums were beaten). The Hindus present did not try to fight. They were wholly unprepared and were unfit for it. They tried to run away. A few succeeded in climbing up some trees; others hid in the water which covered part of the temple grounds. The Mohamadans after beating one man carried him and threw him into the temple well. They then started hunting for the Hindus who

had hidden themselves and pulled them down from the trees and out of the water and beat them again. One *sadhu* had been collecting money for a temple and had Rs.1,305 on him. He was stripped naked and the money was taken away. The temple was attacked and desecrated. The principal stone being firmly fixed could not be removed or broken, but it was subjected to *lathi* blows and chips came off it. A side image of Ganesh was broken. An image of Hanuman in a side temple was also hit with *lathis* but little harm was done to it.

It is also said that the Muslim *tahsildar* and prominent Muslim zamindars came when rioting was in progress and incited the rioters.

Some rioters went off to the neighbouring *thakurdwara* and desecrated it and broke its images. The *pujari* there on seeing the mob approaching had gone up a tree and there he remained for a long time till the coast was clear.

All this beating and rioting began at about 9 p.m. and lasted for at least an hour and at most two hours It was finally ended by the arrival of the Hindu S.D.O. with a police guard. The S.D.O. had the man in the well pulled out and he sent 17 Hindus who were lying wounded to the hospital. No Mohamadan wounded was found.

The S D O then patrolled the city to prevent looting etc. There was in fact no looting or rioting other than what took place in the temple and neighbourhood.

The Hindus identify most of the leading Muslims of the town as having been amongst the rioters. They point out that the *tahsildar* and sub-inspector (both Muslims) live quite near the scene of occurrence and yet there was great delay in coming to the spot, although the *tahsildar* was informed immediately. Indeed no special information was necessary as the noise could be heard all over the town.

20. Before I deal with the above versions I wish to state one or two subsequent facts. Immediately after the event, the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police went to Sambhal and a police enquiry began. The Hindus, as stated above, implicated all the leading Muslims. For a while there was no response on the part of the Muslims. On the 8th or 9th day after the event 9 Mohamadans put in statements confessing that they were present during the fight and took part in it. Part of the facts given in these confessions have been given above in the Muslim version. The names of one or two prominent Hindu zamindars were also mentioned in these statements as having been present in the fight. Some of these 9 Mohamadans claimed to have been hurt in the fight and pointed to some slight marks on the arms etc.

21. An attempt was made by the Magistrate some days later to bring about a compromise. He even formed a conciliation board of Hindus and Muslims, but all attempts have failed as the Mohamadans want to compromise only on condition that there is no case started against them, and the Hindus will on no account agree to this.

22. The Hindu version I have given above is based on some solid facts and is partly substantiated by direct evidence. There are however many exaggerations in it. I think it is absurd to think that the *tahsildar* or the leading Mohamadan zamindars actually participated in the fight. They would not dare to do so even though they might sympathise with the attackers. If, as is alleged, they had organised the whole affair, this is all the more reason why they should keep in the background. Besides it must have been extraordinarily difficult to recognize any person in the heat of conflict by moon light. Equally absurd is the allegation of some Muslims that one or two leading Hindu zamindars took part in the fight.

23. The Muslim version is based largely on conjecture. It is on the face of it improbable. The first thing they suggest is that the Hindus prepared carefully from beforehand to attack the Muslims. This is inherently improbable. Hindus would hardly do this in a town like Sambhal with a large Muslim majority. Even if they thought of doing so they would certainly not dream of fixing the night of the 9th of *Mohurrum* for it, when large numbers of Mohamadans from the surrounding villages gather in Sambhal. Then again the organisers must be very foolish and very inefficient to gather together a number of weaklings who in the result get a sound thrashing. I think it is clear that the Hindus did not prepare to attack nor did they expect an attack. The initiative in this respect was taken by the Mohamadans.

24. I have already stated that on the evidence in our possession we are unable to say that there was any premeditation on the part of the Muslims. But one thing is clear that they were resentful and angry and it may be that they were very ready to accept any real or fancied challenge to them. Some of them might have been under the impression that there would be another insult to them by the playing of music etc. that night, and they might have decided not to brook this but to take revenge. Apart from this idea there is no sufficient evidence to show premeditation.

25. Vague and varying statements are made by the Muslims on the question of music in the temple. Some say a harmonium was played, others a *sitar*, others a *shankh* and cymbals. Almost all evidence that we got on the subject was hearsay. I think there is little doubt that there was no harmonium or *sitar* or like instrument. I do not think there was any effort on the part of the Hindus to have any music. There was of course the occasional ringing of the bell and this might have misled the Muslim crowd. There is also a possibility of a *shankh* having been blown although there is no particular evidence that it was blown. Apart from this there could not have been any music. Even this noise of the bell or a *shankh* would be quite enough to upset an excited mob. It is quite possible that a wrong statement of a man to the effect that music was being played would immediately be accepted by the crowd without further enquiry. I think it is clear that there was no intention on the part of the Hindus to have music on any large scale at night and in fact they had no such music with the exceptions mentioned. There is also a slight possibility that the *bhajan* of some person present might have been sung so as to be heard by another and reported to the crowd as singing.

26. The Muslims, angry and in a mood for revenge, got excited by the noise of the bell or the *shankh* or even by false information and attacked the temple. There was evidently a short parley and then began the attack. The Hindus were very greatly outnumbered. There is no ground for imagining that there were 200 to 300 Hindus in the temple, as stated on hearsay by some Muslims. On the other hand the figure 25-30 may be an under-estimate. Probably the temple attracted a larger number of people that day, as it was the last Monday in *Sawan*, but they came and went. It is possible that 50 to 75 Hindus were present in the temple when the attack began. Some of these must have fled away right at the commencement. The Hindus apparently showed no fight. They tried to run away or hide themselves on the trees or in the water. The Hindu version tries to make out that a very long time elapsed before official help came and that this was spent in organised hunts with the aid of lanterns for Hindus in hiding. I think this is greatly exaggerated. During an affair of this kind one is apt to gain a very wrong idea of time. It is also possible that the tendency is on the part of the Hindus to prolong the period to show how lax and guilty the *tahsildar* was. Probably the attack lasted twenty minutes or at most half an hour. During this period some men in hiding on the trees or in the water might have been discovered and beaten. A very large number of Mohamadans—several thousands—were wandering along the streets and Hindus in hiding would not receive very gentle treatment. One man was undoubtedly found in the well when the S.D.O. came. Whether he was lifted up and thrown in or was driven into it in the fight it is difficult to say. He himself insists that he was beaten and lifted up and thrown in the well, where fortunately he could cling on to some protruding bricks. Similarly a *sadhu* vehemently told us that he had been robbed of Rs. 1,305 which he had collected for a temple. He had printed appeals which stated that he had already received considerable sums from persons named.

27. The suggestion in the Muslim version that the Hindus themselves must have desecrated their temples and broken their images is pure fancy and not possible to accept without the strongest proofs. On our pointing out the inherent improbability of this, we were told that Aryas did not believe in idol worship and they must have done this in order to accuse the Mohamadans of it afterwards. The whole suggestion is absurd. Even if an individual Hindu or Arya was capable of this, he dare not do it before other Hindus. The suggestion that the desecration or breaking was done late at night long after the riot is also unacceptable. No Hindu dared come out by himself during that night. They all locked and bolted their doors and waited anxiously for the morning.

The general appearance of that temple and *thakurdwara* also did not warrant this secret desecration. There were distinct blows on the stones and chips were off. Besides there is direct evidence of the Hindus who were wounded.

28. The subsequent statement of the 9 Muslims confessing their part in the riot is clearly meant to shield the bigger men whose names had been taken by the Hindus. It is evidently a put up affair. Some of these nine have however also been named by the Hindus as having been present during the attack.

29. Stress is laid on the part of the Hindus on the great delay in the arrival of the *tahsildar* and the sub-inspector, both of whom lived quite near. The Hindus do not say anything against the Hindu S.D.O. who was staying not much further off. I think that the officials might have been smarter and swifter but there was no such delay as is suggested. The *tahsildar* might have and perhaps should have gone immediately to the scene of riot. He did not do so but preferred to go to his superior the S.D.O. He found the S.D.O. asleep! Both of them then came towards the temple. They had no police guard with them and hence they proceeded rather cautiously. They met large groups of Mohamadans in the streets. One of these groups was called upon by the S.D.O. to disperse but they replied, "How can we disperse when our brothers are being beaten by the Hindus in the Surajkund temple"? Just then a squad of police arrived and a threat of fire induced the crowds to disperse. The S.D.O. then went straight to the temple and found that most persons had run away. The remaining persons fled on news of his approach. He found about 17 Hindus wounded lying and no Mohamadan. He had the man from the well taken out and the wounded sent to the hospital. One of the men is still in hospital.

30. It does not appear that there was any instigation for this attack or desecration of temple from outside. No such suggestion was made to us by any person—Hindu or Muslim. Outsiders have of course been frequent visitors in Moradabad and have increased communal feelings, but there appears to be no other connection between the Sambhal riot and the outside world. The local people are fully capable of doing it without any help or suggestion.

Jawaharlal Nehru

80. Mahatma Gandhi's Fast[1]

Sir,—I enclose for favour of publication a notice that is being circulated in Allahabad. I would beg friends in other towns and villages to circulate similar notices and to take steps immediately to put an end to the false rumours which encourage disunity and hatred and often result in strife. Leaders of all communities are meeting at Delhi on the 23rd and, God willing, will find a way out of the impasse. But time passes and daily the danger increases. Each town and village should immediately have its conference of the leaders of all communities and parties and consider and solve its own difficulties.

Jawaharlal Nehru

The Notice

Mahatma Gandhi has resolved to fast for 21 days as a penance for Hindu and Muslim quarrels.[2] He has issued the following statement:

> The recent events have proved unbearable for me. My helplessness is still more unbearable. My religion teaches me that whenever there is great distress, which one cannot remove, we must fast and pray. I have done so in connection with my own dearest ones. Nothing, evidently, that I say or write can bring the two communities together. I am therefore imposing on myself a fast of 21 days commencing from today and ending on Wednesday, the 8th of October. I reserve the liberty to drink water with or without salt. It is both a penance and a prayer. As penance I need not have taken the public into confidence, but I *publish* the fast as (let me hope) an effective prayer both to Hindus and to Mussalmans, who have hitherto worked in unison, not to commit suicide. I respectfully invite the heads of all the communities, including Englishmen, to meet and end this quarrel which is a disgrace to religion and humanity. It seems as if God has been dethroned. Let us reinstate Him in our hearts.—M. K. Gandhi.

Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 22 September 1924.

There were outbreaks of communal rioting in 1924 in Delhi, Lucknow, Shahjahanpur, Jabalpur, Nagpur, Gulbarga, Allahabad, Calcutta and, worst of all, in Kohat. Mahatma Gandhi, although still convalescing after his operation, decided to go on a fast for 21 days as a protest.

We have little to add to Mahatmaji's words. We would only beg the Hindus and Muslims of Allahabad to ponder over what Mahatmaji has said and to consider what the consequences of his action may be. Today we eat and sleep and quarrel, and he fasts and weeps and prays and lies sleepless, laden with sorrow at the disgrace and disunity that have descended as a curse on this land of ours. We have paid little heed to his words. Now we hold his life in our hands. By our conduct we shall determine our worthiness of the great and noble soul who came to lead our country out of bondage and misery. He fasts and fasts and the days go by and life hangs by a slender thread. Weak and ailing, after a severe illness, and with the burden of a nation's sorrow, he has taken this great resolve. How long can he survive? How long endure the madness of his countrymen to whom he has dedicated a life of service? It is for us, Hindus and Mohamadans, to think and answer these questions and take action, while there is time. The days and the hours pass by and the thread of life becomes slenderer. Let us hasten, and not fail our country and Mahatma Gandhi in this hour of trial.

Purushottam Das Tandon
Manzar Ali Sokhta
Jawaharlal Nehru

81. Draft Note on Delhi Conference[1]

Recent events in India have made it painfully clear that intolerance of another's belief and religious observances is widely prevalent, and often leads to conflict between persons professing different faiths. In spite of efforts to the contrary this intolerance is increasing and is poisoning the foundations of all national and civic life. It is felt by each community that the leaders of the other communities are partisan and irrational and blindly support their co-religionists in all their deeds and

1. Maulana Mohamad Ali Papers, Jamia Milia Islamia. The note is in Jawaharlal's handwriting and was presumably written sometime in September 1924.

The Unity Conference was held in Delhi from 26 September to 2 October 1924, to discuss ways and means of promoting communal harmony.

misdeeds. Passion and prejudice are displacing sanity and reason, and every kind of progress is becoming most difficult. There can be no effective peace in India till the spirit of intolerance is exorcised. *Unity* will only come after toleration is understood and practised. It is necessary therefore that the essentials of toleration be proclaimed in clear and definite language and *should be brought home to the people* of the country.

There must be perfect toleration of other faiths and beliefs and religious practices, and every man or woman *must have full liberty to* hold and practise and give expression to his faith. There must be no persecution for the holding of any opinions on matters of religion.

The very first essential of toleration is the protection of all places of worship to whatsoever religion they may belong. No provocation of any kind whatever can be deemed to be sufficient to excuse a *desecration* or attack, and all such desecrations must be condemned.

Conflicts frequently arise between persons of different faiths on the *most trivial and non-essential matters. In times of tension* and anger acts are done which are meant to annoy or wound the religious susceptibilities of another. These provocations are highly undesirable and should be discouraged. They will automatically cease with the return of normal times. But it must be borne in mind that any amount of provocation accompanying an act, otherwise justified and permitted by the principle of toleration, does not entitle a person to retaliate or interfere with the due performance of that act. There can be no interference in such cases and it must be left to the good sense of the individual or group concerned not to wound unnecessarily the feelings of sister communities. Cow sacrifice has been a fruitful source of conflict. Toleration *means that no Hindu must interfere with this however provocative* it may be. He may only request and leave the decision to the other. A very recent but an almost equally fruitful source of trouble has been the playing of music in Hindu temples and *when passing mosques.* The blowing of the *Shankh* has been specially objected to. Toleration again signifies that a Hindu may blow his *Shankh* where he pleases and may play his music even when passing mosques and no Mohamadan must interfere. Only a request can be made.

Every individual has a right to follow his own faith and to change it *whenever he so wills. He has further the right to convert or re-convert,* by arguments and persuasion, another, provided that on no account must *force or unfair means* be used. In the case of minor boys and *girls* under 16, to avoid the possibility of unfair pressure, no attempt should be made to convert *them* and they should be handed over to people of *their own community.* Mass conversions are also, in the present state of the country, extremely inexpedient.

82. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
19-10-24

My dear Bapuji,
I must apologise for the delay in writing to you. I have hastily scribbled some impressions and enclose them. I have not had time to re read them or to complete them.

I have had a telegram from Nagpur[2] asking me to go over there but I feel I must not leave Allahabad. Besides I have fever today and father will not let me go for some little time.

Yours
Jawaharlal

Confidential

Some Impressions of the disturbances at Allahabad

I have delayed writing a report on the Allahabad disturbances as I have so far been unable to form a clear idea of the occurrences as a whole. A large number of incidents happened almost simultaneously in various parts of the city and it is by no means easy to arrange them in proper order or to understand their sequence. I have also had to give a great deal of my time to activities, other than conducting an enquiry, connected with the recent troubles. My close connection with Allahabad has been more of a hindrance to me than a help and I have had to move warily in order to prevent harm resulting from some of my activities. To mention an instance, I arrived in Allahabad on the 10th afternoon and went immediately from the station to the city where I wandered about till 6.30 p.m., the curfew hour. I saw a number of

1. Gandhi Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No 10455
2. Following the outbreak of communal rioting in Nagpur and Kamptee, the local leaders sent telegrams to Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders, including Jawaharlal, to visit the area and settle the differences.

shopkeepers and they suggested that we should take some steps to have the big shops opened from the next morning. I welcomed the proposal and arranged a meeting of the Hindu shopkeepers for the next morning. I was told that the shopkeepers did not want to open their shops in obedience to the directions of the authorities but a hint from us might be acted upon. The proposed meeting of shopkeepers however fell through and hardly anyone turned up. I found that the idea that my advent should be followed by a quick opening of shops was not liked by some people and they succeeded in influencing the shopkeepers. As a result of this and one or two other causes the main shops did not open till the 13th. It is possible that if I had remained away in Delhi for another day or two the shops might have opened earlier.

The idea of our carrying an enquiry also somehow jarred on the nerves of many—both Hindus and Muslims—perhaps as each party thought that we would take up an attitude antagonistic to it. Dr. Syed Mahmud kindly broke his journey here on his way back from Delhi and spent 4 or 5 days in Allahabad. He is in perhaps a better position than I am to form definite conclusions about some aspects of the troubles. But even he was handicapped. There is a proposal now that a joint and detailed enquiry should take place on behalf of both communities. This proposal has made it difficult for us to prejudge the issues. As a matter of fact I have had to change my own conclusions in regard to many incidents several times as fresh information came in, and I am not prepared to say that I will not again change them in the light of fresh facts. These impressions should therefore be treated as impressions only liable to change even in material particulars Dr. Mahmud has now gone to Nagpur but I understand that he will also put down his impressions of the occurrences here. In view of these facts it will perhaps be desirable to keep these reports confidential for the present at least.

Both the communities are wholly and honestly convinced that the other is almost entirely in the wrong. Each accuses the other of premeditation and careful preparation, and each points to the almost simultaneous outbreaks in various parts of the city on the evening of the 7th in proof of their contention that the other organised them. There is an extraordinary ignorance of the other's viewpoint and losses, and hence both at present court an enquiry.

The troubles started on the night of the 7th October (the Dusehra day) and continued on the 8th & 9th. From the 10th onwards, there has been no disturbance of the peace, except an incident relating to a temple in Katghar (a mohalla of Allahabad) which took place on the early morning of the 10th.

The contributory causes here have been the same as elsewhere—*Sangathan* and *Aligol*, separate *akharas*—and the deliberate preaching of distrust and fear. The local Hindu Sabha consists of a number of very narrow-minded persons with little ability or power even to organise the Hindus but able enough to increase the dislike of the Musalmans. Muslims are very poor in their leaders. There are hardly any with whom one can discuss such matters on an intellectual level. Their most prominent leader is Mr. Vilayat Husain[3]. Hindus are very bitter against him and imagine that he is at the back of everything. As a matter of fact I doubt his capacity to do much. He is a timid person often used as a tool by unscrupulous persons, but I do not think he is bad at heart. I have been favourably impressed by him during the last few days.

Soon after the *Janma Ashtami* there is a *Datkanda* procession. This used to be an insignificant affair but latterly it has assumed some importance. The Mohamadans say that this year it was celebrated on a large scale and many *lathis* were exhibited. This is possible, but nonetheless it did not create any excitement in the city. I was in Allahabad at the time and I did not even know of the procession and heard of it for the first time a fortnight or more after it had taken place.

The *Chehlum* was to follow this and there were rumours of trouble. Admittedly large numbers of Mohamadans were sent for from the adjoining villages to swell the procession and display *lathis*, swords, etc., because it was said that the Hindus had done something similar on the occasion of the *Datkanda*. Just a few days before the *Chehlum* a few Hindus and Muslims met and decided to issue a joint appeal and also arranged that Hindus should accompany the *Chehlum* procession and Muslims the Ram Lila procession. This had a quietening effect and the Hindu Sabha eventually agreed to it. Quite a large number of prominent Hindus including the president and members of the Hindu Sabha took part in the *Chehlum* procession and everything passed off successfully—the procession ending with speeches and mutual congratulations. The procession itself was a long one with a great crowd of *lathiwalas* and a fair sprinkling of swords, spears, daggers etc. Almost every Mohamadan thought it his duty to bring some weapon and it was ludicrous to see the very old and the very young strutting about with rusty weapons and even in some case with open penknives! And the little boys with their penknives were patted on their back for their zeal and enthusiasm! However everything passed off successfully and it was hoped that the *Dusehra* would also end peacefully. The next day—22nd September—I went off to Delhi It appears however that

3. A leading Congressman of Allahabad.

the tension again increased and everyone looked forward to some trouble. There was no question of any conflict between the Ram Lila processions and Muslim processions. Nonetheless there was this general apprehension. The Muslims accused the Hindus of inviting large numbers of *lathiwalas* from the villages and the Hindus repeated the same charge against the Muslims. Ordinarily great crowds come from the rural areas to see the Ram Lila. In times of tension, every big banker or *rais* engages some of these professional fighters to defend his house. In the result a considerable number of such persons must have been in Allahabad. I do not think the Hindu Sabha as such invited such people. But the Hindu Sabha might have expected that the lower classes—*chamars, pasis* etc. would be useful in a conflict with the Muslims. These classes, for the last few years, have been asked to take part in the Ram Lila processions.

It is highly probable that Muslims also made special arrangements to get their *budmashes* and *lathiwalas* in But I hardly think it likely that they would choose the *Dusehra* day when, in point of numbers, the Hindus are strongest, to take the aggressive on any large scale. But they did prepare themselves for a conflict if such occurred. On the morning of the 7th—the *Dusehra* day—a rumour was circulated that the Muslims had issued invitations to the surrounding villages for a *Kabaddi* party on a large scale. This game was to take place on the outskirts of the town and on the route of the procession. The time also was the evening when the procession was to pass that way. The choice of the time and place is certainly significant. There could not have been a worse choice. Information of this was immeediately sent to the police station and apprehensions of coming trouble increased.

There are two Ram Lila processions, one following the other. The first one passed without any special incident, except that it is said that when they passed the Muslims gathered together for *Kabaddi* or any other purpose, to the extent of 500 men with *lathis*, the Muslim attitude appeared to be threatening. The second procession reached this place just at 6 p.m.—the time for prayers. The *Kotwal* was with it, so also Purushottam Das Tandon and others. As the *azan* was heard at the request of the *Kotwal*, who is a Muslim, the procession was stopped for a few minutes, and music stopped also. After about 5 minutes the *Kotwal* apparently made a sign although the prayers were not quite over. The music started. Thereupon there was a commotion amongst the 500 or so Muslims gathered together across the road (not on the mosque side) and one man hit with his *lathi* a drum. Some stones were also thrown from the mosque. No one was however hurt and the *Kotwal* immediately scolded the Muslims. It is also said that some Muslims themselves gave a slight beating to the man

who had thrown stones from the mosque. The procession started without any further mishap—went to the river and returned. It is said, probably with truth, that the news of this *contretemps* reached various parts of the city in various shapes and forms and was the spark which started the blaze. *Chal gai* was repeated by everybody, and the long expected conflict began in earnest in several places.

The Hindus say that Muslims started it everywhere. The Muslims deny the charge and accuse the Hindus. I am not at all clear about the events of the 7th night. There was fighting in the heart of the city, not far from the *Kotwali* and murders were committed soon after 7.30 p.m. The *Kunjras* (Muslim vegetable sellers) are said to have attacked Hindus inside the vegetable market as well as outside. They wounded some Congress workers, including a clerk in the P.C.C. office. But this clerk gallantly remained with them, and reasoned with them and actually succeeded in calming them a little. They are said to have apologized to him when they discovered that he was a Congress worker. At least one Hindu was killed that night, and many wounded.

About the same time a Hindu band dashed down the main street of the city, killing a harmless Mohamadan, cutting off the hand of another and wounding others.

At night a great effort was made to have the usual illuminations as this, it was believed, would have a calming effect. There was considerable stone throwing from houses—chiefly occupied by prostitutes—at Ramchandra & Laxman.

During 8th and 9th, assaults, free fights, stone throwing etc. continued, groups of both Hindus and Muslims taking the offensive by turns. Deaths also occurred, usually of innocent passers-by. The two or three main incidents were:

1. The looting by a Muslim crowd of a village (Mirapur) on the outskirts of Allahabad. One Hindu was killed here.

2. The attack by some Muslims on Gangagunj—a Hindu *mohalla* facing Muslim *mohalla*. A temple was desecrated here.

3. A fight in Shahgunj also accompanied by a desecration of a temple.

4. A Hindu *bania* shooting at a Mohamadan crowd and killing 2 men and a woman.

5. General and very shameful assaults on individuals and on groups both by Hindus and Muslims

I shall write more in details about these incidents tomorrow as the time for catching the mail is nearing. I may add however that apart from the mosque incident, I am inclined to think that Hindus took the

initiative on the night of the 7th, and (apart from Gangagunj and Mirapur) the Hindu middle class attitude was deplorable. Several very unfortunate incidents happened in Hindu *mohallas* where well-to-do people live.

Jawaharlal Nehru

83. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
20-10-24

My dear Bapuji,
I enclose the second instalment of my impressions. They are very hasty and sketchy and I hope you will excuse their many imperfections. I am sending you my only copy. Could you kindly show it to Mohamad Ali?

Father is going to Nagpur.[2] He is the most suitable person. I would have been hopeless so far as Dr Moonje[3] and his party are concerned

I have still some fever but I hope to be well soon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

Impression of the disturbances at Allahabad

I wrote yesterday about the incident at a small wayside mosque where the Ram Lila procession stopped for a few minutes and there was a little stone throwing This mosque is situated on the outskirts of the city and the main procession—so far as the crowds are concerned—gradually gets lesser and lesser before the mosque is reached

1. Gandhi Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No 10488.
2. Following the Hindu—Muslim riots, Motilal Nehru and Maulana Azad visited Nagpur on 26 and 27 October and were successful in bringing about an agreement
3. B. S Moonje (1872 1948); a leader of the Hindu Mahasabha.

and soon after it practically ends. The following plan may help to explain the position :

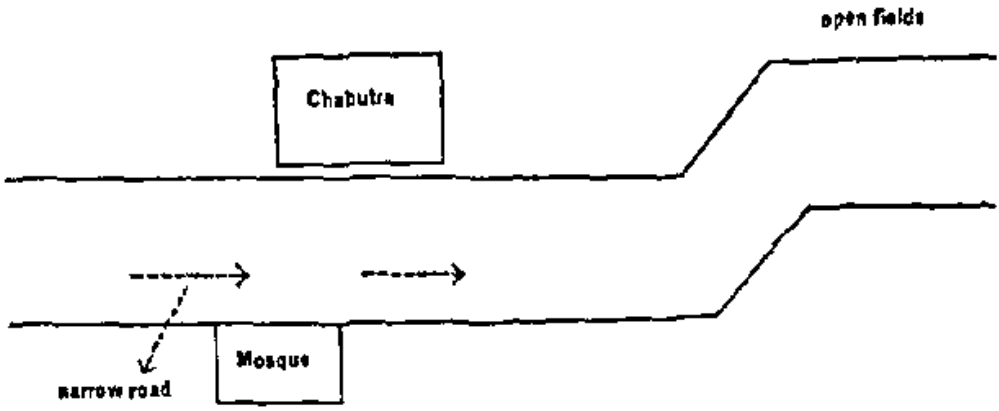

There were only a few persons in the mosque at the time of prayers —perhaps half a dozen. On the *Chabutra* opposite there are said to have been about 500 Musalmans. Many of them are armed with *lathis* etc. There are some detached Muslim *mohallas* in the neighbourhood.

The procession went on after this incident to the river Jamuna where the usual ceremonies were performed including some fireworks. People then returned in twos and threes. It is said that there was some stone throwing on the passers-by in the Muslim *mohallas*.

Before this however trouble had occurred in the heart of the city and elsewhere. Probably the cause of this trouble was an exaggerated account of the mosque incident and a belief that fighting had begun between Hindus and Muslims.

The vegetable market is situated in the busiest quarter of the city. The *Kunjras* (vegetable sellers) are Musalmans and are supposed to be a rough lot. It is said that they took the initiative and started attacking and beating all Hindus they came across. I am unable to say who began the attack but I doubt if the *Kunjras* are solely to blame. There can be no doubt that in one case at least on the night of the 7th a Hindu band rushed through the principal streets, killing one Mohamadan and wounding several. There was also a stone-throwing and bottle throwing contest between Hindus and Muslims near the *sabzimandi*. The fighting of the 7th resulted in the death and wounding of both Hindus and Muslims.

On the 8th and 9th there were many fights, some developing into pitched battles. They usually resulted in some injuries caused by stone throwing. In some places Hindus were on the aggressive, in others the Muslims. There were also attacks by groups or individuals of the other

community. These usually ended in serious injury or even death. Early on the 8th morning, a Muslim passer-by was seriously injured very near Bharti Bhawan, not far from Pandit M. M. Malaviya's house. The news of this attack spread in the Muslim *mohallas* in exaggerated forms and there was a general belief amongst the more ignorant Muslims that a slaughter of Muslims had taken place near Bharti Bhawan. This roused them to fury and they attacked a number of Hindus passing near their *mohallas*. As spears and daggers were used not infrequently by both parties, there were several cases of serious injuries.

Apart from these general incidents there were some special occurrences.

Mirapur—This is a village on the fringe of Allahabad. A group of Muslims from a neighbouring *mohalla* led by a notorious *budmash* took advantage of the prevailing disorder and swooped down on the village for purposes of loot. The Hindus resisted them for a while but then owing to the superior number of the Muslims the Hindus retired. It is stated on behalf of the Hindus that this was a pre-arranged affair and a drum was beaten to summon Musalmans from the surrounding villages. A sad feature of the occurrence was the joining in by the Muslims of that village in the attack on their Hindu neighbours. The village was thoroughly looted and one Hindu was killed.

Gangagunj—This is a Hindu *mohalla* facing several Muslim *mohallas* —Nai Basti, Atala etc., largely inhabited by butchers etc. It is stated that a band of Muslims invaded Gangagunj and after a fight with the Hindus succeeded in injuring a number of Hindus and in desecrating a temple. The temple was immediately desecrated and the idols had been broken. Some idols under a *peepul* tree were also broken.

Ram Krishna's firing—This gentleman is a rich *bania* who fired at a Muslim crowd and killed 2 men and a woman. It is his case that he was in grave danger and fired in self-defence. I am inclined to think that the danger was not great as he imagined and he might well have done without the firing, specially as the *Kotwali* was almost within a stone's throw.

Temple incidents—I have already referred to the desecration of the temple at Gangagunj. There was also a desecration in another *mohalla* —Shahgunj, but I think it was not premeditated here. During one of the street contests the Muslims pushed back the Hindus and reached this small road-side temple. They entered and used various idols and stones there as missiles to be thrown at Hindus.

Another temple incident is said to have occurred at Katghar on the morning of the 10th. The Hindus state that early in the morning a number of Mohamadans came to this temple quietly and removed the idols and threw them about near the temple. As soon as the Hindus observed this they raised an alarm and the Mohamadans immediately withdrew. The Hindus have named a number of Muslims whom they claim to have identified. These persons are some of the leading (though poor) Muslim residents of the *mohalla*. There can be no doubt that some one did remove the idols, but after an enquiry I have come to the conclusion that the case started against the Muslims is wholly false. Most of the persons named are innocent, but they have been reported against to terrify the Muslim community! As a result, the Muslims have brought an entirely false case of grievous hurt against the principal Hindus there. I think the work of displacing the idols must have been done by one or utmost two persons, and it is not wholly impossible that a Hindu did it. There has been an ancient feud between some Hindus and Muslims in the village over gambling transactions and the matter has gone to court more than once. I think that one of the persons concerned with this dispute must have misbehaved in this matter at the temple.

An interesting point came out in connection with the temple. It is dedicated to some *devi* and it is freely patronised in times of sickness, especially small pox, by many of the poorer Musalmans, who make offerings and take the earth of the temple floor to apply to the body.

I learnt of this Katghar temple incident on the 11th. At that time I did not know about the far more serious case at Gangagunj. I thought that the desecration of a temple would irritate the Hindus very much and make matters worse. We therefore went to the principal Muslim leaders and suggested they might do something to ease the situation. Thereupon they issued a notice condemning the act and saying that whoever had done it had erred against religion. No press was open to print this notice so it was duplicated and a few hundred copies distributed.

I have been surprised to find that there is no deep feeling amongst the Hindus regarding these temple desecrations A few of them were deeply grieved but most of them attached far greater importance to personal injury and mentioned the temple incidents almost casually.

A deplorable feature of the disturbances has been the treatment received by Muslims in the better class Hindu *mohallas*. On the night of the 7th a poor Musalman, resident of the *mohalla*, was nearly killed with daggers by some well-to-do Hindus in their *mohalla*. The next day another Mohamadan, Hafizuddin, a Congress worker, tried to go

through the principal Hindu *mohallas*. He was asked not to risk it, but he refused to believe that any resident of those *mohallas* would attack him as he was personally known to all of them. He lived nearby and used to pass that way daily. So he went with another Mohamadan. They were attacked and it is very doubtful if they would have escaped with their lives, if a Hindu, the executive officer of our Municipality, had not jumped to their rescue and smuggled them into his house.

On the 9th a gronp of Hindus and Muslims—P. D. Tandon, Manzar Ali, Zahur Ahmad etc.—made a tour of the affected areas. In the Hindu *mohallas* they had to face a very threatening attitude and in spite of Tandon's presence, the Muslims present narrowly escaped a bad beating. Even Manzar Ali, although he almost looks like a Hindu and is very well-known there, was advised by a friend or two to retire quietly into one of the houses. This experience was repeated near Bharti Bhawan. In both these places the Hindus who threatened belonged to the better classes.

A very large number of men and women go to see the Ram Lila procession. These people found it difficult to go to their homes owing to the outbreak of the disturbances. Thousands were thus roped up in small houses, in some cases for two or three days. Two large Municipal lorries, meant for the removal of rubbish, were used on the 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th to take these people to their homes. One of the petty grievances of the Muslims is that the Municipality thus favoured the Hindus and removed their *lathiwalas*. As a matter of fact women were chiefly taken. In one or two places stones were thrown at the lorries. The drivers of both the lorries are Musalmans and Hindus were at first not willing to trust them. But both the drivers worked very hard and even the Hindu Sabha proposes to show an appreciation of their work.

The position now is that the minor cases have been disposed of. A number of major cases—murder, dacoity etc.—are still pending, and fresh reports are made daily. A large number of these reports are probably false. Most of the persons arrested so far are Musalmans chiefly because of the Mirapur incident. Police officers are almost obviously partisan, each one trying to favour his own community. The *Kotwal* and most of the Sub-Inspectors being Muslims, there is a general impression amongst the Hindus that great favour is being shown to the Muslims by the authorities. I think this is an exaggerated impression.

The Mohamadan leaders now propose that all cases be withdrawn. This course was adopted in 1917 when a Hindu-Muslim riot occurred here. The Hindu Sabha strongly opposes this.

I have written these impressions in great haste and under fever. I am afraid there must be repetitions in them and vague statements which the context may not justify. But I did not wish to delay sending a report any longer. I do not think it will be desirable for the present to give publicity to my conclusions or impressions.

Jawaharlal Nehru

54. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
24-10-24

My dear Bapuji,
I forgot to mention in my record of impressions of Allahabad one fairly important matter. A headstone from a supposed grave was removed secretly one night during the disturbances. This "grave" has a short history. A small area in the heart of Allahabad has recently been the scene of operations of this local Improvement Trust. Many houses have been demolished, a road widened, and it was proposed to have a small park. A grave was however discovered under one of the houses and it was alleged by many Mussalmans that there were other graves also, and that the place was in fact a graveyard. As such they laid claim to the land. It is said that the grave in question is not a real one and was made in the course of few hours to give strength to the Muslim case. The Magistrate enquired into the matter (long before the riots) and held that the grave was a recently made one and the headstone had been brought over from some other older grave. I am myself inclined to think that it is a fictitious grave. However, whether the grave is real or not, the headstone was undoubtedly removed *during the riots. It is not known who did it but very probably* some Hindus must have done it.

The attempts to bring the Hindus and Muslims together have failed on account of the cases. The Hindus would not agree to the withdrawal of the main cases.

1. Gandhi Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 10488.

Meanwhile an attempt is being made by some Hindus to boycott Muslim vegetable shops (*Kunjras*). Hindu *Kunjras* have started shops. Hindu butchers have also applied for licences.

Father is going to Nagpur tonight. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad will meet him there tomorrow. I shall go to Gorakhpur for the Provincial Conference on the 29th.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

85. The Gorakhpur 'Swaraj' Resolution[1]

Sir,—I have just seen your comment on the resolution relating to 'Swaraj' passed by the Gorakhpur Conference[2]. May I be permitted to point out that some of your remarks are based on incorrect data? All the proceedings of the Gorakhpur Conference—resolutions, speeches etc., were in Hindustani and the report in the *Leader* is, I presume, based on translations and summaries made by your correspondent. As a result of this, a number of mistakes have crept in.

The resolution on 'Swarajya', after desiring the Congress to define the word, requested that the definition should state that 'Swarajya' meant *purna swatantrata* and that the system of government should be *prajatantric*, which was stated and understood to mean 'democratic'. The word 'republican' was, so far as I am aware, not thought of by any one. In my speech I made clear what I understood by the resolution. Personally I said I was for complete independence. I am against the idea of empire and of one country forcibly ruling over another. But the resolution, I said, did not go so far as that. It stated that India should have full freedom and must have a democratic system of government. Full freedom meant, I added, control over police, army and finances. If this freedom could be gained and kept consistently with a connection with England, the resolution certainly did not taboo such connection. The resolution did not aim at separation from England but at full freedom.

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 7 November 1924.
2. At the Gorakhpur Conference of 1924 an unsuccessful attempt was made to bring about a compromise between the No-changers, the Swarajists, the Independents and the Liberals

I also laid stress on the fact that the resolution, even if approved of and adopted by the Congress would not alter the article of Congress and that article expressly leaves the question open and both those who believe in Dominion government and in fuller freedom come under it. The Congress would thus remain open, as it should, to every shade of opinion on the subject. It may be that the advocates of Dominion rule may bring round others to their view and at a subsequent stage make the Congress declare in favour of such Dominion rule, whatever that may be. I shall personally, however, live in the hope that both Indians and Englishmen will adopt the view that the only sane government for any country is a completely free government and that only thus can healthy friendly relations be established between different countries.

I regret deeply that this resolution of the Gorakhpur Conference has pained you and made you think that to talk of common action is idle. This was far from its purpose. You will, I trust, agree with me that it is all to the good that frank expression of views should take place, and that few things are more harmful to a people than suppression of opinion for fear of the consequences. And is it such a bad thing after all that some of us should think and dream of an India not under any kind of duress, perfectly free to take the road of her choice, and co-operating on an equal footing with other nations for the advancement of humanity?

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Allahabad,
Nov. 5, 1924

86. To Lala Lajpat Rai[1]

14/11/1924

My dear Lalaji,

Your letter No. 2042 dt. 7th Nov. There is some mystery about the draft National Pact. I do not know much about it myself. Dr. Ansari

1. A I C C. unnumbered File.

sent me the report just before the last meeting of the A.I.C.C. at Ahmedabad. No one had any time to read it properly and the committee ultimately accepted the suggestion that it should be circulated amongst the members. In accordance with that direction I have circulated it. Personally I do not think much attention will be paid to it now after the Unity Conference. Mahatmaji so far as I know was not at all in favour of such a pact.

I think most people know that the last report gives Dr. Ansari's views only but in case you wish to make this clear, a statement can be made to the A.I.C.C. at Bombay.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3

MISCELLANEOUS

1. To Sri Prakasa[1]

Anand Bhawan,
Allahabad
7 October 1923

My dear Sri Prakasa,[2]
Your loving welcome was pleasant to read. Being very human myself I cannot help being touched by my friends' warm greetings. But I confess I do not understand why a fortnight in the Nabha jails[3] should have given me a push up towards heaven. I have returned to Allahabad twice before after serving much longer periods in jail but nobody took much notice of my return. Yesterday, however, there was quite a seething mass of humanity at the station to welcome and embarrass me!

I have wired to Sampurnanand accepting the presidentship of the conference.[4] Indeed I had little choice left and could hardly act otherwise. I feel that I am in a most unhappy position. It was difficult enough at any time and with ample leisure to have to prepare a presidential address. This year it is specially hard for the president to say anything worth saying or worth doing. I have a very few days before me and they are full up with engagements. The Municipal Board[5] has kept all the important matters for me and I have to tackle them immediately. Local Congress affairs require looking into and various election meetings are being held. On top of this I am not well. Various causes have conspired to make me indisposed and weak. I have not felt quite so feeble physically for a long time. Nothing serious is the matter but for the present this does affect my capacity for work. I can hardly keep standing for long. I have taken almost an off day

1. Sri Prakasa Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (1890-1971); son of Dr. Bhagwan Das and a contemporary of Jawaharlal at Cambridge; General Secretary, U.P.P.C.C. 1928-1934, General Secretary of the Congress 1927 and 1931; after 1947 High Commissioner for India in Pakistan, Minister, Government of India and Governor of Assam, Madras and Maharashtra.
3. For the arrest at Nabha see Vol. I, Section 5.
4. United Provinces Provincial Conference.
5. Jawaharlal was at this time Chairman of the Allahabad Municipal Board.

today and have spent the greater part of it resting in bed. From tomorrow I shall have no rest.

I shall gladly stop with you during the conference days. I propose to arrive on the early morning of the 13th by the night train. I have to be here on the 12th evening for an important meeting of the Municipal Board. I want to leave Benares as soon as I possibly can to go to Amritsar for a day and then to Jullunder for the Sikh League.[6] I am sorry to hear of Shiva Prasad's anger at the conference. Hope he will calm down.

Yours affy.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

I am afraid I have no photo of mine recently taken. I might find one of the old unregenerate days in English attire. Do you want it?

6. The Central Sikh League, set up after 1919 with Mahatma Gandhi's encouragement to promote nationalist feeling among the Sikhs.

2. Presidential Address at U.P. Conference[1]

Our trial was going on in Nabha and for many days we had been cut off from the outside world. A friend happened to gain admittance to the court room and he whispered to me that I had been elected president of this conference. Being very human I felt elated at this signal mark of confidence and honour. But immediately I thought of the long line of presidents, full of wisdom and courage, who had preceded me, and of the great responsibility of this office, and I shuddered at the prospect. And then, being human, I felt pleased at being in jail and so escaping the burden of this responsibility. But the Nabha Administration has willed otherwise. And the few days that have elapsed since my discharge under a suspended sentence, have been, I am ashamed to confess, days of illness for me. Today I stand before you an object for pity and indulgence.

1. J. N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L.
Jawaharlal was ill and could not attend the conference held in Varanasi but his address was read in his absence on 13 October 1923.

It is customary on these occasions to present a carefully thought out and previously prepared address, which is usually printed and distributed. I have not had the opportunity to do so, and even if I had had the time, I doubt if I could have produced anything worthy of record. You have chosen to cast this burden on me at a strange and critical period in our national history when rival theories and principles are at war with each other and the foundations of our great movement for freedom, as we have known it in the last three years or more, have been shaken; when senseless and criminal bigotry struts about in the name of religion and instils hatred and violence into the people. The best and wisest of guidance is necessary for us; how can I presume to show the way?

Less than a month ago the Congress met in Special Session at Delhi[2] and arrived at some momentous decisions. As a subordinate organisation we cannot go counter to those decisions. We must accept them and work them to the best of our ability. But I would have you consider where those decisions lead us to. Let us be quite clear in our minds about our goal and about the manner of reaching it. There was no doubt in us three years ago.

In 1920 and 1921 we were full of faith and confidence. We did not sit down to debate and argue. We knew we were right and we marched on from victory to victory. We felt the truth in us and every fibre of our being thrilled at the idea of our fighting for the right, and fighting in a manner unique and glorious. Those were brave days, the memory of which will endure and be a cherished possession for all of us. Then, our leader left us and, weak and unstable and inconstant, we began to doubt and despair. The faith of old went and with it much of our confidence. There followed a year of strife and dispute and mutual recrimination, and all our energy was diverted to combatting and checkmating our erstwhile comrades in the rival camp. Pro-changer and no-changer went for each other, and the average no-changer was not behind the pro-changer in forgetting the basic lesson of nonviolence and charity and in imputing the basest of motives to persons of a different way of thinking. We failed to keep even our tempers, how then could we exercise right judgment? And so gradually nonviolent noncooperation began to lose some of its fundamental features and for many became an empty husk, devoid of real significance.

2. The Special Session of the Congress was held in the third week of September, 1923. Maulana Azad was the President. The Session passed a permissive resolution on "Council entry and exercising the right of voting at the forthcoming elections", as a compromise between those in favour of Council entry and those opposed to it.

The Delhi Congress, it is said, has brought about a compromise between the two rival schools of thought and put an end to this long agony. *If the Congress results in ending the bitterness and suspicion* and in reintroducing in our politics charity of judgment and nonviolence in our thoughts, then indeed it has largely succeeded. But I do not think it is correct to describe the principal resolutions of the Congress as compromise resolutions; they were only so in so far as certain groups acquiesced in them. I do not think there can be any real or stable compromise between the two principal viewpoints which have been fighting for mastery in the country. They are fundamentally different. They are both honourable methods and their advocates are brave men and keen thinkers, but nonetheless they differ radically.

The Delhi Congress, it has been remarked, marks the end of noncooperation. I wonder at any one, who has lived through the last three or four years in India, making this assertion. It passes my comprehension how even a resolution of the Congress can put *an end to* a mighty movement. If India has at all imbibed the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi, if even a group of men remain true to that gospel, then noncooperation cannot die. And if all of us are utterly unworthy of this teaching and incapable of acting in accordance with it, even then a subsequent generation will wield the mighty weapon and prove to the world that this is the only way and the best way which ensures *true freedom and ends strife. Nonviolent noncooperation* cannot die. It has gone beyond the boundaries of our country and is the property of the world.

I shall not presume to criticize the Delhi Congress, but I do think that several of its decisions were opposed to the movement as started by Mahatma Gandhi; they were contrary to the basic principles, as stated by Mahatmaji, of nonviolent noncooperation. That of course is no reason why we should not change our programme, if we are otherwise convinced that a change is necessary. But even from the point of view of the original programme, I welcome the Delhi decisions. They do mean a going back and it is always difficult and painful to do so when one believes firmly in the old method. But I believe that this going back, or rather this permission to others to go back, was necessary at this stage. It may have been possible for those who believed in this, to get a verdict from the Congress against any change. But I doubt if this would have done much good to noncooperation. I am not in the least afraid of difference of opinion amongst ourselves. That must continue. But I confess to experiencing a feeling of humiliation when I saw that our noble movement, nurtured on high ideals and voluntary suffering, was being converted into two party caucuses each

devoting its money and its energy to raising delegates who would lift up their hands at the bidding of their leaders. Noncooperation will prosper not by resorting to such Western political methods and manoeuvres but by its utter purity and straightness and by its appeal to the masses. I almost wish that the Calcutta Special Congress in 1920 had not accepted the noncooperation policy and programme. This acceptance overwhelmed us from the very beginning and the weight of numbers paralysed us. We could then have marched on as a compact body, strong in our faith and in our discipline, and, at the right moment, have converted the masses and the Congress to our viewpoint. The process was reversed and we have suffered accordingly. The basis of noncooperation is direct action and this involves continuous suffering. No one can expect large masses of people to indulge continuously in direct action. Only the elect can do that, and the masses can sympathise with them and join them occasionally for a short while. If the Congress really represents the people, it is natural that it should attempt to go back a little to some kind of constitutional action, whenever large numbers of people are tired of direct action. To the eager, ever ready for the fray, this is painful. But there is no room for despondency. Only a heavier burden is cast on those who have to keep the method of direct action always before the people; they have to fight on whilst the main army rests or is engaged in peaceful pursuits. Let them rest assured that when the time comes the main army will not fail them. And so I am content with the Delhi decisions. Any attempt to force the issue would have had unhappy results.

What then is our aim and what should be our means? Our creed is short and simple but it shelters many interpretations. We have made it abundantly clear that we are fighting for complete freedom. We have not the slightest interest in provincial autonomy or the transfer of subjects in the Government of India. Full internal freedom means that we must control the finances and the army and police. So long as we do not control these we have no freedom in India. This is the minimum. But the question has arisen whether we should not define "Swaraj" in our creed as "Independence". Personally, I shall welcome the day when the Congress declares for independence. I am convinced that the only proper and right goal for India is independence. Anything short of it, whether it is styled Dominion rule or a partnership in the British Commonwealth of Nations or by any other name, is derogatory to the dignity of India. There can be no peace or friendship between India and England except on the basis of perfect equality and this equality cannot be gained so long as India remains an appendage of the British Empire. It may be that India after gaining independence, of her own free will, chooses to ally herself to England.

But that can come only after the attainment of independence. I would, therefore, on general grounds, strongly advocate that we should keep independence as our objective.

Another and an equally potent reason with me is my belief that the British Empire today is an instrument for evil and it has done and is doing great harm. It is the solitary representative of blatant imperialism on a large scale. I do not wish India to associate with this imperialism or be a party in any way to the exploitation of the people of Asia and Africa. It should be the business of India rather to fight this imperialism and to put an end to it.

A third reason why I would like to keep independence always in view is to change the outlook of our people. The British Government in India by its subtle policy and methods has created an idea amongst many of us that British rule in India is one of the inevitable things against which it is useless to contend. The N.C.O. movement has largely shattered this idea, but it still remains and the sooner it is removed entirely the better. I suppose there is hardly an Indian who does not in his heart of hearts desire independence, but there are many who dare not say so, many who think that it is unwise to make the assertion at this stage. Let us get rid of this mentality, this cowardice. We may not be strong enough to gain our object for a while, but we should be brave enough to declare it and to work for it.

I would therefore keep the ideal of independence before the people and accustom them to it. I am not desirous of changing the Congress creed at this stage. This would give rise to unnecessary debate and controversy and might narrow the Congress and exclude some people. Let us keep the Congress open for all. When the people have thoroughly grasped and approved of the idea, the change in the creed will automatically follow. Till then it is not desirable to force a change.

I have already indicated that I believe in the noncooperation movement as inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi. I believe that the salvation of India, and indeed of the rest of the world, will come through nonviolent noncooperation. Violence has had a long enough career in the world, it has been weighed repeatedly and found wanting. The present condition of Europe is eloquent testimony of the inefficacy of violence to settle anything. I believe that violence in Europe will go from excess to excess and will perish in the flames it has itself kindled and be reduced to ashes. Many people smile and fling cheap sneers at the prospect of nonviolence ever coming into its own and directing the affairs of men and nations. They point to the frailty of human nature and the universal prevalence of anger and hatred and violence. I am afraid few of us are free from these. I know, to my sorrow, that I am full of violent thoughts and can with difficulty drag myself back

to the straight and narrow path. But those who mock and smile would do well if they realised the power of ideas and if they studied the progress of this particular idea. For it has already caught the imagination of the thinkers of the world and the Indian masses have been wonderfully affected by it.

Noncooperation and nonviolence, these are the two essential ingredients of this movement. The idea of noncooperation is simple enough, clear to the meanest intellect, but nonetheless few of us had realised it, excepting partly during the Bengal partition days, till Mahatmaji issued his call to action. Evil flourishes only because we tolerate it and assist in it. The most despotic and tyrannical Government can only carry on because the people it misgoverns themselves submit to it. England holds India in bondage because Indians cooperate with Englishmen and thereby strengthen British rule. Withdraw that cooperation and the fabric of foreign rule collapses. That follows automatically. It requires no proof. But in spite of the logic and of the inevitability of the result, many of us cannot adopt this obvious method. The subtle poison of British rule has enervated us and emasculated us and made cowards of us all. We have lost the spirit of adventure and we cannot take a risk even though the prize be so splendid as the freedom of India. The idea of noncooperation has taken root and has sunk down to the masses, but sustained courage is lacking to give outward expression to this idea. With many it is an economic question. But what shall we say of those who even without this incentive give their time and energy and money to organising innumerable functions for the honour and glory of English officials? To such a depth have we sunk that men of intelligence and education amongst us think it no shame to help in their own dishonour. I make no complaint of the English officials. They are brave men serving their country to the best of their ability. I wish our men were equally brave and would think as often of the honour and dignity of their own country.

I firmly believe in the efficacy of nonviolence. But nonviolence has nothing to do with cowardice or weakness Mahatmaji repeatedly stated that even violence is preferable to cowardice. Fear and cowardice are the greatest sins and unhappily we have enough of them in our country. Our anger and hatred are really the outcome of our fear and impotence. If we could get rid of this fear and cowardice there would be little hatred left or any other obstacle to our onward march Let us therefore root out this cowardice and give it no shelter. Above all, let it not masquerade, as it unfortunately often does, as nonviolence "A world of evil", says a great Frenchman, "is preferable to emasculated good." There is too much soppiness and softness in us, too much

emasculated good. One is almost driven to the conclusion that we are inanely and passively good, if good that is, because this is the path of least resistance and because we have not the courage to be evil. We dare not sin, though we think of it often enough and would like to do so. This is a hateful condition. It is dishonest, neuter and hypocritical. Better the honest man of evil who sins consciously and knowingly and with the strength that is in him. When he reforms he will be a tower of strength to the cause of good, because his foundations are strong. *But the inanely and hypocritically good can be of use to* no cause. There is no strength in them, their foundations are laid on the shifting sands. And so there is no place for the cowardly in a nonviolent movement. Better a man of violence who has the courage of his convictions.

I am laying stress on this question of nonviolence for it is well that we should be clear about it after some years of suspension. There has apparently been a recrudescence of the violent revolutionary movement in Bengal. I can appreciate the impatience and longing for freedom which impels many a young man to violent action; I can admire the reckless courage which does not count the cost. But I cannot understand how anyone imagines that sporadic violence can bring freedom nearer to us. Freedom is our right and, according to old custom and the ordinary law of nations, we are entitled even to resort to violence to achieve it. But even freedom would be a doubtful and a tainted thing if we have to resort to foul means to gain it. I pray that this fate may never overtake our great movement. Violence may be justified under certain circumstances, but it must be open and above board and straightforward; but no circumstances will justify secret killing, the dagger of the assassin and the stab in the dark. No nation has yet profited by these methods; they but sully a great cause and alienate world sympathy. On no account therefore can we take to the bomb and the dagger. And those who unthinkingly adopt these methods injure the cause they have at heart. We cannot even think of open and organised violence. We have really little choice left in the matter, and even if we did not on other grounds prefer it, we would be driven to nonviolent noncooperation. Bolshevism and Fascism are the ways of the West today. They are really alike and represent different phases of insensate violence and intolerance. The choice for us is between Lenin[3] and Mussolini[4] on the one side and Gandhi on the other. Can there be any doubt as to who represents the soul of India today?

3 (1870-1924); the architect of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia of 1917.
4 (1883-1945); Fascist dictator of Italy from 1923 till his execution in 1945.

India made the choice more than three years ago. She chose the path of nonviolence and suffering, of direct action and peaceful revolution. From that there is no going back. There may occasionally appear to be some slackness or some change. We may have our bad patches and our moments of despondency. But the vision once seen cannot be forgotten and the glory of suffering for a great cause will not be given up. Again and again the chance will come to us, and while the wise argue, the brave will go forth, heeding not the consequences, full of joy at the thought that they have been privileged to serve the great cause. Learned disputations take place frequently in the country about the preparation for civil disobedience. Much can be done in disciplining the people and in creating a favourable atmosphere. But courage and the will to suffer cannot be instilled into the people by lectures or tours. Personal example alone can do it and it may be that a little incident may electrify the whole of India and make us launch a mightly campaign of civil disobedience. Till that time comes we may have many opportunities given us of testing our mettle and hardening our fibre. Let us take advantage of them and keep the practice and ideal of direct action and peaceful revolution ever before the people. We need not worry about opportunities and chances. They will surely come to us. Let us see to it that they find us ready when they do come.

But our suffering would serve little purpose if we cannot deal sanely with our communal questions and exorcise the spirit of strife and bigotry. A few broken heads matter little but the reason for this does matter. It is most strange that for the most trivial things, for childish superstition or silly prejudice people take risks and lose their reason in a sea of anger. The vital things, the real things that matter pass unnoticed. Ignorance and bigotry put an end to all rational thought. It is almost useless to argue or convince Religion is degraded and in its name are done the most shameful things. Indeed religion has become the excuse for many sins It has little sanctity left and it is trotted out in season and out of season and all argument naturally ends. We seem to have drifted back to a state of affairs which prevailed in Europe during the dark ages when to think rationally was considered an evil. I think it is time for persons who wish to regard religion as something good and sacred, and the exercise of rational thought as essential for human progress, to protest with all their might against all kinds of bigotry and superstition.

A great deal is being said in the press and from the platform about the protection of communal interests It is reported that associations for the purpose are being formed So far as I can gather all this sound and fury have little to do with action. We have little courage left for

effective action. Our helplessness enrages us and so we camouflage our fear with brave words and not daring to stand up to our real opponent we attack our brother and our neighbour. That has ever been the way of slaves. The Delhi Congress has done much to bring peace. Let us endeavour to put an end to all activities which are directed against another community and concentrate on the main issue. We have no time for mutual skirmishes.

I wish to say little about the certification of the Salt Tax[5] and the Kenya decision.[6] Enough has been said about them already. They but strengthen our contention that freedom is the only remedy and noncooperation the only means. Even Mr. Shastri, with his abundant faith in the imperial idea, has reconsidered his position and suggested methods closely akin to noncooperation. Even so will wisdom dawn on others. Nor do I wish to say much about Nagpur or the brave fight that was put up there. Our province took a worthy part in it, and no-changer and pro-changer joined hands to vindicate the honour of the national flag. Today all eyes are turned to the north where the gallant Akahs are challenging the might of Government. They have taken up the proud position of the vanguard in our army of freedom and they are fully worthy of it. I am sure your hearts go out to them in full sympathy and admiration, and when the time comes, as come it will, we will not be lacking in our support of them.

I have nearly finished. I would but remind you that no fight can go on without continuous preparation behind the lines. That is dull work but it is essential work. The real test of our perseverance and ability is the success we achieve in the constructive programme. We should therefore strengthen our Congress Committees and, above all, take the message of *khaddar* to every home. That was the last word of the Mahatma when he went to jail. We shall forget it at our peril. The Delhi Congress has suggested various kinds of activity. Every one of us, whatever his views may be, can find something to suit him. No one can offer an excuse for shirking work.

Before I end I would mention a predecessor of mine in this office, one whose life is one long record of suffering cheerfully borne for the sake of the country. Maulana Hasrat Mohani offered battle to the British Government and went to jail long before noncooperation had made jail-going an easy matter. Bravest and staunchest of the soldiers

5. The Central Legislative Assembly refused to authorise an increase in the salt tax, but the Governor General certified it as necessary for financial stability

6. The Congress had condemned the attitude of the British Government in Kenya towards the Indians resident there

of freedom, whom nothing could divert or turn away, who would not even give in to his comrades, much less to an alien Government. Whilst in jail, serving out a long sentence, he has been awarded another sentence of 2½ years for a jail offence. The Government perhaps think that they can break his spirit or frighten him by this shocking and vindictive sentence. They little know him. I am sure that your deep sympathy and greetings will go out to this bright jewel of our province.

I have had my say. I wish to assure you in all honesty that I am full of hope. I have little patience with the pessimists and croakers. I am convinced that political freedom will come to us before long, if not entirely through our strength, then through the weakness of Europe and England. For Europe is in the melting pot, and England, with all her seeming might, cannot but be affected by the collapse of the Continent. Wars and the rumours of wars follow each other in quick succession. They will continue till the lesson of nonviolence is learnt by bitter experience. So political freedom for India is certain. But I sometimes fear that when it comes to us it may find us lacking in true strength and the greater qualities. And instead of being a shining example to the rest of the world, India may become but a cheap and inefficient replica of the countries of the West. Let us take the longer view from now and try to avoid this, and build up a great and strong India, worthy of the great leader whom God has blessed us with.

3. To the Students of Allahabad[1]

Fellow students,

I venture to address you as one of yourselves although it is many years, more years than I care to remember, since I left the narrow streets and broad backs of Cambridge. But the memory lingers, and the desire to learn and seek the company of books. The whirlpool of politics has caught me for the present, an unwilling victim, but often I cast a wistful eye on the days that are no more and sometimes wish that the fates may be kinder to me in the future.

1. This leaflet, distributed widely in the town, is to be found in J. N. Correspondence, NMML.

But I desire to speak to you about the Viceroy's coming visit. How is he coming here? In what capacity? And why are some people desirous of welcoming him? Not as a great lawyer, or a diplomat, or an experienced statesman, or even as a man of note. He is coming here as the Viceroy of India, the head of the Government of India, and as such you are asked to welcome him and show him honour. It is not a personal matter. It happens that Lord Reading is the Viceroy today. But whoever the person occupying the office might have been you would have been asked to join in the welcome. For this welcome is to an institution and to an idea. The institution is the British Government in India and the idea is the idea of British rule in India. If anyone desires to exhibit his love for the present Government in India and all its works and a wish that it may continue for an indefinite period to govern India then only should he rightly participate in these welcomes and celebrations. It is not a question of any discourtesy to Lord Reading.

It is said that we must impress Lord Reading with the importance of Allahabad so that the capital may remain here. It is hoped, I suppose, that a warm welcome will melt his heart and incline him favourably towards our city. And in this lively expectation of favour to come we must put aside all wider issues and principles, forget the national struggle, forget the sorrow and suffering and join in the paean of welcome. Is it worth this, the change of capital? And is this the way to bring about a change?

Our *joining in the welcome means our giving a certificate to* Government for its past and present policy. It means an acquiescence, if not approval, in the continued incarceration of Mahatma Gandhi, in the certification of the salt tax, in the shamefully weak policy of the Government in regard to Kenya. Above all it means an approval of what is happening today in Bengal and the Punjab. Do you wish to set your seal of approval on the use of the Regulation of 1818, and the spinting away of people without charge or trials? Have you not read of the agony of the Sikh people? Little news is allowed to come but we know that Government is trying its utmost to crush the brave and gallant people who with their backs to the wall are fighting for their very existence. They ask for your sympathy, for a gesture of encouragement. Will you not even send your sympathy in this hour of their trial? Will you not make that gesture? Do not participate, I pray you, in the welcomes and the celebrations attending the Viceroy's visit. Let the Viceroy and his Government know that you strongly disapprove of their policy. Let the gallant Sikhs see this gesture of yours and draw encouragement from it. Let empty footpaths and empty

chairs speak out the minds of the students of Allahabad on the present policy of Government.

Jawaharlal Nehru

October 27th, 1923

4. Telegram to Devadas Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
16 January 1924

Your telegram. All most anxious[2] here. Convey our loving homage to Bapu.

Jawaharlal

1. Gandhi Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No 8130.
2. Mahatma Gandhi underwent an operation for appendicitis on 12 January at the Sassoon Hospital in Poona.

5. To Devadas Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
18/1/1924

My dear Devadas,
And so you and a few others have monopolised Bapu and you would have others keep away. It is well for Bapu and I hope your instructions will be obeyed. But some unfortunates would have been tremendously cheered by even a distant glimpse. Specially when the

1. Gandhi Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 8130

sword of Damocles is always there to threaten them and remind them of a quieter, if duller, world. Too many odd jobs and not a few worries have succeeded in making me even more excitable and cantankerous than I ever was, and a sight of Bapu would have been good for me. As it is I am afraid it will be a long time before I have the chance of seeing him.

You will wonder what I am writing about. The fact is I have done my utmost to land myself in jail. I have taken part in a petty riot and I richly deserve a spell of jail to quieten my over-excitable nature. You may or may not have read about an incident at the *Sangam* here a few days ago. Malaviyaji, greatly put out by a silly order of the Magistrate, decided to offer Satyagraha. It was difficult for me to restrain myself when there was talk of Satyagraha specially by Malaviyaji and on I went, like the men of the Light Brigade, with little thought or reasoning. However it is something to be tried for a disobedience of law with Malaviyaji as one's co-accused. Tandon, Krishna Kant, Ramakant[2], Manzar Ali and many others were there. So it will be a merry company. But I do not like the idea of going to jail on a false issue. And then I miss seeing Bapu.

It is by no means certain yet that the case will be started but it is highly likely. If nothing happens I propose to go to Bombay on the 28th. The Working Committee will probably meet on the 30th there.

My loving regards to Bapu but don't worry him by any mention of me.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

2. The eldest son of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya

6. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad
21/3/24

My dear Mahmud,
Thanks for your letters and enquiries. I arrived here today. I have had some fever since I left you at Lar Road Station. However I went to Nangarh and Bridgemangunj as arranged. I have still got some temperature. I presume a short rest will put me right.

Thanks for the manuscript address. I thought I had explained to you that I could not touch it or alter it. It is almost physically impossible for me to do so. So far as I am concerned it is done with.

May I say a thing to you which I have wanted to say for some little time? *Why are you so emotional, or rather why do you exhibit your emotion so much? Surely emotion should not be cheapened, it is too* valuable a commodity. The teaching of the West has made me value restraint a great deal and I feel that we as a race are continually indulging in emotionalism and lessening our activity thereby. We pitch everything in too high a key. And that is my standing complaint against Urdu & Persian poetry. It feels like "soppiness".

I have not read wholly your Urdu letter yet as it takes me some time to read Urdu and I have to write an answer soon as your man is returning.

I hope you have found every one well at home. I have had no news since I came and do not know what Mohamad Ali is doing.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, NMML.

7. Message to the Vaikom Satyagrahis[1]

I thoroughly sympathise with the Thiyyas[2] and other so-called Untouchables and Unapproachables in their grievances against the caste Hindus in the South. I trust that they will stand up for their rights and by their firmness remove all their grievances. I hope also that the caste Hindus will not deny their brethren the ordinary rights of human beings.

1. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 11 April 1924.
   Satyagraha in Vaikom in Kerala was an agitation against the closure of temple roads to lower caste Hindus.
2. A community of Kerala which was for long classified as backward.

8. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad
1.12.24

My dear Mahmud,

...I presume you do not wish to distress and embarrass me or my wife and yet you effectually succeed in doing so by sending large numbers of gifts without any apparent reason. It is obvious that our viewpoints on the subject are as the poles apart. For more than a year I think I have been begging you not to send me anything but you have not perhaps taken me seriously. I would beg of you again not to pain and embarrass me any more by sending gifts. Our superfluous cash, if we have any, can be utilised to much better advantage than by giving expensive presents to each other. There are many people who starve and the Tilak Swaraj Fund is still there.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

8. To A.M. Khwaja[1]

25 Western Hostel
Raisina,
Delhi
25/2/25

My dear Khwaja,
I could not answer your letter as I was bedridden owing to an operation[2]. Even now I am not permitted to sit up properly.

I have seen your statement in the papers. I must say that it is a very unconvincing document. Anyway it has failed to convince me. I think you were entirely in the wrong about the address affair[3]. This has nothing to do with cooperation or noncooperation. Even before noncooperation it was a bad and an undignified thing for public bodies *to present addresses to Governors & their kind and I trust that this* most unwholesome practice will end quite apart from the suspension or otherwise of noncooperation. I am not aware of any country where addresses are presented to Governors in the manner we manage these affairs in this damnable country. I am also convinced that we do not advance the interests of our Municipalities *by trying to tickle the vanity* of our Governors. If we have any request to make it is up to us to have a business interview with the officer concerned. The idea that our requests can only be contained in silver caskets does not appeal to me.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Khwaja Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Jawaharlal had had a minor operation in Delhi in February 1925. The surgeon was Dr. Ansari
3. Khwaja, as Chairman of Aligarh Municipality, had read and presented a civic address to the Governor

published recently. Do you agree with it fully? Or do you think it does not go far enough or too far? In case you agree with it will you support it in its entirety in the Council of State and elsewhere? What other effective steps would you suggest our taking to gain our object?

You will forgive me I hope for inflicting this long letter on you. I dislike elections being run on personal grounds. Votes should be asked for and given on grounds of principle alone and the fullest publicity should be given to the principles for which the candidate stands.

I shall thank you for a full answer and shall also invite you to make a public statement on the questions touched upon in this letter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. To Raja Motichand[1]

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad
25.5.25

My dear Raja Sahab,

I thank you for your letter of the 24th May and for the trouble you have taken to send a detailed reply. I am afraid you are not quite correct in thinking that I am a "declared supporter of the Swaraj Party". In some matters they have had my sympathy and I have preferred them to a certain extent to others working in the Councils. But in the past I have differed from them also in many ways and I have not so far supported them in any way either by my vote or otherwise. It is probable that in the Council of State elections I may not take any part. I am not very much interested in them. But I cannot bind myself down to any particular course of action. The situation changes daily and I cannot say what I shall do six months hence. But you are right in assuming that the Swarajist viewpoint, although not mine, is nearer to mine than yours is likely to be

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I wrote to you as well as Major Dube[2] on the subject of your views and policies because I was interested in them and I could see no public announcement about them. I entirely disagree with the view that to seek election or claim a vote is a personal matter for one's friends and supporters only. It is a duty which every candidate owes to the electorate as well as the general public to proclaim clearly and fully what he stands for. Principles should get votes, not personalities

I am glad to learn that you opposed the Bengal Ordinance in the Council of State.

I entirely agree with you that what is required is not only political but economic and educational work. We have been endeavouring to do the latter and I would invite your cooperation in making national education and the *khaddar* and *charkha* movement a success.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Major Ram Prasad Dube (1872-1936), after many years of service in Indore State, set up practice at the Allahabad High Court in 1919.

13. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad
3/6/25

My dear Mahmud,
I am afraid I can do nothing for Hayat[2]. The post of superintendent of education in the municipality would have suited him perhaps but I have no connection with the Board now. The place is getting worse daily and I would not like to go near it. I know of no other post. I shall certainly bear Hayat in mind. But little is likely to come my way.

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, NMML.
2. Hasan Mohammad Hayat, from Aligarh, secretary to Maulana Mohamad Ali, participated in noncooperation movement and went to London with the Khilafat delegation

10. An Invitation[1]

To celebrate their father's 64th birthday

Jawaharlal Nehru, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit and Krishna Kumari Nehru would like you to join them at a Book Tea on Monday, April 20, at 5.30 p.m. You should represent a well known book in English, Hindi or Urdu, or any other book of international reputation. You will be required to guess the names of the books represented by others. The highbrows who make the largest number of correct guesses will be installed in seats of honour and presented with souvenirs of the occasion.

There will be tea (or *sherbet* if you prefer it) with the usual eatables (cocogem being used where necessary). If you stay long enough you may have ice cream and home made lemonade also.

An answer conveying your acceptance of this invitation will be appreciated.

Anand Bhawan,
Allahabad
April 15, 1925

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

11. To Raja Motichand[1]

15 May 1925

My dear Raja Sahab,[2]
I thank you for your letter of May 2nd I am sorry for the delay in answering it.

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1876-1934); a leading industrialist of Varanasi.

Most of us, I suppose, are for a free India. Our object is the same though our degrees of earnestness might differ. The real question is how one faces the problems of the day. You are aware that I hold fairly radical and extreme views as regards the methods we should adopt to rid ourselves of the incubus of alien rule. I would hardly expect you or others similarly placed to agree with me in everything I do or propose. But I do expect a certain *minimum of effort for Swaraj, a certain* degree of opposition to and resistance of Government where their proposals are clearly against the honour or the interests of the country, and a certain sympathy with those who at considerable sacrifice are marching ahead of others on the thorny path which leads to freedom. Any person who does not attain this minimum is a hindrance to Swaraj.

There are at present some clearly defined parties in the country. Do you belong to any of them? In the past have you belonged to any party? You have been a member of the Council of State for many years. May I know if you have been a regular attendant at its meetings? I ask this as I am informed that you have hardly attended a single meeting during the last two years. You will I trust agree with me that it is an expensive luxury to have a legislator who takes no interest in his work.

I am also informed that on the occasion of the voting on Bengal Ordinance[3] you sided with Government. Is this correct? You will remember that the whole country—including every party—condemned this ordinance. Any person who voted in favour of such an illegal and improper procedure of Government and against the declared wish of the country can hardly be said to have attained the minimum mentioned by me above.

A voter must know where his candidate stands and what he is likely to do if an emergency arises. The Indian national struggle is not likely to collapse till success is obtained but many things might happen before then. Repression will repeatedly be indulged in by Government. On which side can one expect you to be when this contingency arises?

Your must have read the minority report[4] of the Reforms Committee,

3. The Bengal Ordinance, promulgated in October 1924, provided for the arrest of suspects without warrant, their detention and confiscation of their property without trial

4 In 1924 a Committee under Sir Alexander Muddiman was set up by the Government of India to examine the working of the 1919 Reforms The majority of the members, three British and two Indians, held that their function was restricted to recommending methods for the better working of *dyarchy A minority of four Indians* including Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, however, held that dyarchy was unworkable

Father is not here for me to consult on the point of Oudh Taluqdari Law you have mentioned. It is hardly necessary to trouble him as the Act is clear enough (Act 1 of 1869). All *taluqdars* whether they are Christian, Muslim or Hindu are governed by this Act in Matters of inheritance. I am surprised that none of our worthy enthusiasts has raised the cry that religion has been attacked because the personal law of *taluqdars* has been changed! Your question can only be answered after one knows in which list the *taluqdar's* name appears. Four lists were prepared under the Act. The first is a general list of all *taluqdars* and grantees. The law for each of the other lists is different from the other. In some cases as in list 2 all estates are impartible—in other cases personal law is applied. You had better consult the Act. It is a small one.

You have sent so many *leechees* that we do not know what to do with them.

For heaven's sake don't call your son Jawaharlal. Jawahar by itself might pass, but the addition of 'lal' makes it odious.

I have no idea who will preside at the Cawnpore Congress, nor am I very much interested. Brehtter's is closed today and I am afraid I may not have time tomorrow to go to them. I shall try.

I go to Dalhousie day after tomorrow. My address there is Hurst Lodge.

Please give my love to your children and apologise to them on my behalf. I appreciate their little notes but I feel diffident in answering them.

Yours affly,
Jawaharlal

14. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Chamba
18-6-25

My dear Mahmud,

Father's asthma has been troubling him greatly. It has brought on insomnia in its train He was slowly recovering at Dalhousie and we

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, NMML.

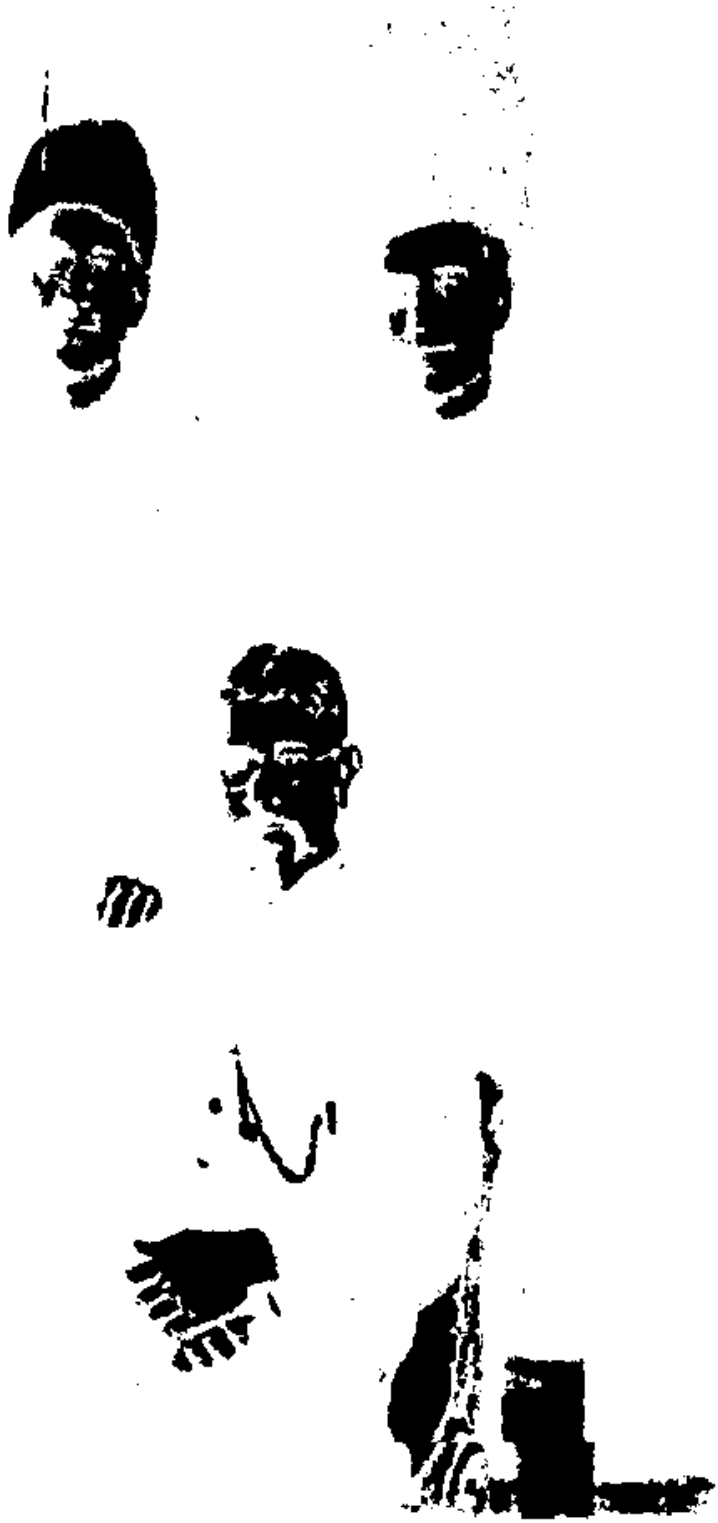

WITH SYED MAHMUD AND A. M. KHWAJA, 1925.

S.S. Rima
off Bimini Islands

A ceremony was made by our fishermen. [illegible]

We have had a rough passage through the Indian [illegible] Gulf of the Sea. This [illegible] we are [illegible] to get [illegible] with a [illegible] [illegible] in [illegible]! We [illegible] Bimini [illegible] the day after — [illegible]

CEREMONY OF "OPENING THE MOUTH"

took a little trip in the interior of the hills in the hope that it would do him good. He did in fact get better. We arrived in Chamba yesterday in the afternoon.

In the evening news came of C. R. Das' death the day before[2]. The shock has been very great for him and his asthma has returned and is worse than ever. We rested here today to give him some relief and rest but he is too upset to take advantage of it. We return to Dalhousie tomorrow.

Chamba is a pretty little place on the banks of the Ravi within easy reach of the high mountain passes. There are numerous trips for anyone who is a bit of a mountaineer and can do stiff climbing at high altitudes. I hope that in the future I shall have an opportunity of visiting some of these high valleys.

I shall probably go down from Dalhousie on the 25th. After a couple of days in Lahore I return to Allahabad and then I go to Calcutta.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

2. 16 June 1925.

15. To Maharani Chinkoo Scindia[1]

2.8.25

Your Highness,
I received your kind letter on my return to Allahabad from Calcutta. I must confess that I find it difficult to acknowledge it and to express my thanks for your exceeding courtesy. Your Highness has been good enough to convey your appreciation of an act of mine which both as an *Indian and a citizen of Allahabad it was my privilege* and duty to perform.[2] I availed myself eagerly of an opportunity to pay a humble tribute of respect to the memory of a great Indian who had laboured, and not unsuccessfully, for the well being of our motherland.

1. J. N. Correspondence, NMML.
2. Jawaharlal had been present at the ceremony of immersion of the late Scindia's ashes in the *Sangam* on 13 July 1925.

I am much beholden to your Highness for your great kindness in giving a thought to me in the midst of your sorrow and your affairs of State.

With respectful regards,

I am

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

16. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

In running tram,
B. N. W. Ry
29.1.26

Dear Bebee,[2]

Your letter came as I was leaving Allahabad. I am sorry I sent you the wrong number of the *Living Age*. I had an idea you wanted to read the story by Sigrid Unset (I hope the spelling is correct). I had little hope, from past experience, of finding the other number. But you are very lucky and I spotted it almost immediately and had it sent off.

I have been to Chapra to see Mahmud and incidentally to do some work of the Spinners' Association and visit Malkhachak, where much of the *khaddar* comes from. I am now on my way to Lucknow. Kamala will be pleased to learn that the saris from Hyderabad are coming.

I am certainly looking forward to the visit to Europe but I am full of apprehension. It is quite likely that when I get there I shall be looking backward to India! It is good to have a change and a holiday but this should rest on the solid foundation of something accomplished. The idea of going away just at present with your mother as President of the Congress and Gandhiji toiling away as ever is not particularly gratifying. On the whole perhaps it is as well that I am going but I doubt if I shall be very happy there. India is so like a woman—she attracts and repels.

Yours
Jawaharlal

This carriage is shaking a great deal. Hence the unsteady hand.

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Shrimati Padmaja Naidu; daughter of Sarojini Naidu, Governor of West Bengal 1956—67

4

IN EUROPE

In March 1926 Jawaharlal, accompanied by his wife and daughter, sailed for Europe, as a stay in Switzerland was expected to improve his wife's health. He and his family were away for nearly two years, returning to India in December 1927.

1. To Syed Mahmud[1]

S. S. Pilsna
6.3.26

My dear Mahmud,
Your four letters with the postscript reached me in Bombay before sailing. It is difficult for me to reply to them. You know, or ought to know, how deeply I value your friendship. But my whole training has been against display of emotions and soppy exhibitions.

I had no idea that you wanted to come with me to Bombay. If I had known this I would certainly have discussed the question with you. I would of course have dissuaded you for there was absolutely no point in your going to Bombay. It would have been a waste of time and money. My mother surely has a great deal of affection for me, but she did not suggest accompanying me to Bombay. My father went but simply because he had to go to Sabarmati. He was only in Bombay a few hours and did not stay till our departure. And then where would you have gone? I went to Sabarmati and not Bombay and after two days' stay there went on to Bombay. So it was best that you did not accompany us to Bombay.

We reach Aden this evening. We have had a good run so far. Kamala has been fairly well but since yesterday she has had a troublesome cough. I had a radio message from father informing me that Ansari was also coming soon.

Love,

Yours affly,
Jawahar

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, NMML.

2. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

S. S. Pilsna,
off Ionian Isles
14.3.26

A ceremony not needed by our politicians. No inducement needed by them!

We have had a rough passage through the Mediterranean & Kamala & Sarup are fed up with the sea. Their problem is how are they ever to get back to India with a few thousand miles of sea in between! We reach Brindisi tomorrow & Venice the day after.

Jawahar

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
   See illustration, "Ceremony of opening the mouth."

3. To Romain Rolland[1]

Hotel Roseraie
Chemin de la Roseraie 25
Geneve
8 May 1926

Respected Monsieur Rolland,[2]

I have pleasure in enclosing a letter for you from Mr Gandhi[3]. I am looking forward greatly to meeting you and hope I shall have the opportunity before long. I shall probably have to stay for some months in Geneva owing to my wife's treatment here.

1. Romain Rolland Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (1866—1944), French novelist who was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1915, was a close friend of Mahatma Gandhi and wrote his biography.
3. Introducing Jawaharlal as "one of my dearest co-workers and friends."

I am sorry to have to write this letter in English. I am afraid my French is very weak. I am trying however to improve it a little.

I trust you are well.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Romain Rolland[1]

Chemin de la Roseraie 25
Geneve
13 Mai 1926

Cher Monsieur Rolland,

Je vous bien remercie pour votre lettre et pour votre invitation. Madame Nehru regrette beaucoup qu'elle ne peut pas partir de Geneve parce que son docteur ne le permet pas encore. Elle espere, cependant, qu'elle pourra vous visiter et presenter ses respects a madame votre soeur apres quelques semaines. Mais j'aurai tres heureux de vous visiter la semaine prochaine. Je me propose d'aller a la villa Olga le jeudi 20 mai par le chemin de fer, et j'espere que j'arriverai a la villa vers les deux heures et demie.

Vous avez raison, c'est ma petite fille, Indira, qui est a l' Ecole Internationale ici. Je suis bien content d' apprendre que son professeur, Mademoiselle Hartoch, est une de vos amies. Indira, peut-etre, m'accompagnera jeudi a la villa Olga. Jeudi est un jour de conge dans son ecole.

J'ai ose de vous ecrire en francais mais j'ai peur qu'il ya beaucoup d'erreurs dans cette lettre. J'espere que vous les pardonnerez.

Veuillez agreer, Monsieur, l' expression de mes meilleurs compliments,

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J. N. Correspondence, NMML.

TRANSLATION

Geneva
13 May 1926

Dear Mr. Rolland,[2]
Thank you very much for your letter and invitation. My wife greatly regrets that her doctor will not allow her to go out of Geneva, but she hopes a few weeks later to call on you and your sister. However, I shall be delighted to see you next week. I plan to go to the Villa Olga by train on Thursday the 20th May, and I hope to reach your house at about 2.30.

You are right, it is my little daughter, Indira, who studies at the International School here. I am glad to hear that her teacher, Miss Hartoch, is a friend of yours. Indira may come along with me to your house, as she has no school on Thursdays.

I have ventured to write to you in French though I am afraid there are many mistakes in the letter. I apologise for these.

With best wishes,

Jawaharlal Nehru

2. "I had the privilege of meeting Romain Rolland on several occasions at Villeneuve thirty years ago. I was greatly impressed by him and, though he was so different from Gandhi, I sensed a certain communion of spirit between the two. These two men with different background of experiences met on a higher level and recognised each other."—Jawaharlal's foreword dated 1 June 1957 to *Cahiers Romain Rolland*, Vol. 9.

5. To Syed Mahmud[1]

C/o Thos. Cook & Son,
Geneva
24.5.26

My dear Mahmud,
Thanks for your letters. I have been leading a fairly quiet life here since I wrote to you and have nothing wonderful to record. I hope

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, NMML.

however to resume an active life now and to move about a little and also take a little part in the activities of Geneva. For Geneva is developing into a big international centre and there is always something going on here. The International Labour Conference[2] will begin day after tomorrow and after that there will be numerous conferences and meetings. In July & August there is a regular course on International Politics here and I might perhaps attend it. Meanwhile I propose to go to Paris next week and to Italy next month for a week or two. My sister Krishna will be landing at Brindisi about the middle of next month and I shall go to meet her.

I am afraid your knowledge of geography is a bit weak. Else you would not have asked me questions about Lausanne. Lausanne is very near Geneva and I had always intended going there. One of the persons on whom I relied most for advice—a Turk[3] whom Ansari introduced to me — lives at Lausanne.

There are not, so far as I am aware, many Turks in Switzerland. I have met two or three and they are cultured and enlightened persons. They have certainly given up religion as it is understood in India at present. But one of them, about whom I think I wrote to you, is one of the most essentially religious men it has been my good fortune to come across. It is a wonder to them why Hindus & Moslems quarrel over petty matters of so-called religion. I believe the Turkish royal exiles are somewhere in the south of France. I do not know anything about them.

News from India is most distressing. I do not attach very much importance to political squabbles but the communal frenzy is awful to contemplate. We seem to have been caught in a whirlpool of mutual hatred and we go round and round and down and down into the abyss. Rioting appears to have become a permanent feature of Calcutta life. I have read in the Indian papers the proceedings of the Khilafat Committee[4] & Mohamad Ali's interview.[5] I was grieved to read them.

2. This was the eighth session of the Conference
3. Essad Toad Bey.
4. At the special session of the Khilafat Conference, held at Delhi in May 1926, provocative speeches were made condemning the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha for their Sangathan activities and appealing to the Muslims to organise themselves and thus safeguard their interests.
5. On his way to Hedjaz, at a press interview Mohamad Ali warned the Hindu Mahasabha that the rioting in Calcutta might be the precursor of a bloodier struggle, and asked the Muslims to organise themselves for such a struggle

For months or even a year or more we have thought that the situation was so bad that it could not become worse and must improve. But it does go worse and heaven knows where it will end. Ansari and Abdur Rahman[6] were here last week and they were dejected and dispirited at the turn events had taken. They left by the last mail boat for India.

I met the other day Moulvi Barkatulla[7] here. He is having some book printed in Berlin and he tells me that his publishers have got a stock of 1,000 copies of the *Diwan-i-Ghalib*[8] which they printed some time ago for some one in India. I think this must be the same edition, a copy of which you gave me. The publishers want to dispose of the edition at one mark a copy. I told Barkatulla that you might want to take it.

It would probably cost 12 or 13 annas per copy landed in India. If there is a ready sale for the book it might be worthwhile to take the stock. If you are interested in the proposition you might communicate direct with Barkatulla. He should be addressed as follows:

Professor M. B. Maulavie
10 Ilgen Strasse
St Gallen (Switzerland)

You had better write to him in Urdu as he feels more at home in that language. Before deciding about purchasing the books you should send for sample copies so that there might be no mistake.

6 Dr. Abdulla Abdur Rahman (1873-1940); of Malayan parentage, was leader of the South African Indian deputation which visited India in 1925 to plead the cause of Indians in South Africa. It met the Viceroy and attended the Kanpur session of the Congress.

7. One of the most active of Indian nationalists working outside India. He went to Japan and the United States and in 1915 joined the Indo-German-Turkish mission at Istanbul. He reached Kabul with the mission and formed an Azad Government in Afghanistan. When the Afghan Government withdrew their support the mission left Afghanistan and Barkatulla went to Germany. After the war he organised propaganda for the Indian nationalist cause in various countries of Europe. He died an exile in Germany in 1928.

8 Asadulla Khan Ghalib's collection of Urdu poems was first published in 1863 by Munshi Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow. Ghalib wrote originally in Persian but later evolved a matchless style in Urdu which became famous for its simplicity and subtlety. The lyric quality and philosophic content of his poems and the elegance of his prose won him recognition as the greatest writer in the Urdu language. Ghalib lived in Delhi on the verge of poverty throughout his life. The centenary of his death in 1969 was observed not only throughout India but in many countries of Asia.
This German edition of Ghalib, referred to by Jawaharlal, was printed by Dr. Zakir Husain.

Barkatulla also said that he could arrange with his publishers to get other similar books printed.

Kamala is making progress. Nothing sudden can be expected in her case but if the slow progress is maintained, as I have every hope that it will, she will be quite fit in a few months. Indu goes to school here and enjoys it.

I hope your wife is well now.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

6. To Syed Mahmud[1]

46 Boulevard des Tranchees
Geneva
15.7.26

My dear Mahmud,

I am afraid even today I cannot write to you a long letter. I have been very much pressed for time lately and have had to deal with a voluminous correspondence. Many engagements are cropping up and now that I am living in a flat there are household affairs to be attended to.

I am very sorry to learn of the serious illness of your wife.[2] She has been under treatment in Delhi for some months now and I was hoping that she was getting better. But from your letters it appears that she is by no means improving. I do hope that by the time this reaches you she will be on the high road to recovery.

The success of your efforts in Behar to patch up Hindu-Muslim differences is gratifying. I am however more and more inclined to think that the only remedy is to scotch our so-called religion and secularise our intelligentsia at least. How long that will take I cannot say but religion in India will kill that country and its peoples *if it is* not subdued.

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N M M L.
2. Begum Rafiq ul Fatima (b 1909).

Kamala is more or less the same. She is gaining in weight. Her temperature has not improved but I hope that this too will be better soon. Indu is well. Her school is closed and I am thinking of sending her to the mountains here for a change.

I enclose some postcards for your children. Give these to them with my love.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

7. To the Editor, Journal De Geneve[1]

Dear Sir,—During my short residence in Geneva I have read with pleasure many of the able and well informed leading articles appearing in the *Journal de Geneve*. My surprise and regret was thus all the greater to read, as I was leaving Geneva for the week-end, the article headed *Les troubles de l'Inde*, which appeared in the Journal of the 31st July. I would not of course presume to question your right to express your opinion on the problems of India. But I do think that we can expect from a responsible newspaper of the standing of the Journal opinions which are based on facts and some knowledge of the various factors which have together produced the present political and economic situation in India.

It is not possible for me within the limits of a letter to you to deal with the various problems which confront India, and indeed I would not like to trespass too much on your courtesy. May I however indicate the various lines of enquiry which might lead to a truer understanding of these problems and of the Indian situation today? It is not necessary for me to point out to you that a study of the present condition of any country divorced from a knowledge of the past and of the underlying causes which have produced the results we now notice cannot be of any great value. In the case of India the references frequently made

1. The letter, dated 3 August 1926, was published in the issue of 28 October 1926.

to her past history would be more helpful if they were based on a study of her history. In your article you have yourself referred to bloody combats between Hindus and Musalmans taking place for centuries past in the towns and countryside of India, to the very recent, superficial and imported idea of nationality, and to periodic famines in the past. These statements, *partly true, would however convey an entirely* erroneous idea of Indian history, and any standard history of India whether written by an Indian or an Englishman would go a long way to correct this wrong idea. For India has through the ages been an extraordinarily prosperous country and indeed her past wealth and riches were famous enough to attract adventurers from all parts of the world; and in spite of wars and invasions she has had less of violence than most of the countries of Europe and has enjoyed, both during Hindu and Muslim rule, long periods of peaceful and efficient government when her literature, arts and industries flourished and a high degree of culture existed. Indeed even during many of her past wars the countryside was little affected. The modern idea of political nationality is of recent growth even in the West and India certainly has not had it for long, but her history and literature and even religious tradition teach us of the unity of India from the earliest times and of the existence, though not in an aggressive form, of an essentially national mentality.

To consider the record of British rule in India it is necessary to see what the condition of the country was prior to the occupation by the British, in what respects it has developed or deteriorated during the succeeding century and a half, and what it is now. It is interesting and *instructive to compare the changes brought* about in other nations during the same period. The most vital question is whether the wealth of India has increased or lessened. It is notorious that India is terribly poor today and even the Government of India's official statement to Parliament reads as follows:

> "The famine which actually occurs is only an aspect of a permanent scarcity. Or, in other words, the complete failure of the harvest in certain parts of India to such an extent that it should be obvious to everybody is only a repetition of what occurs almost every year; and the problem of saving a section of the population from misery or semi starvation in a large part of India occurs afresh every year."

This is the official statement after one hundred and fifty years of British rule. I do not wish to state here what the Indian viewpoint

is but I shall only quote one Englishman, Mr. Shore[2] of the Bengal Civil Service, who stated as long ago as 1837 that "the grinding extortion of the British Government has effected the impoverishment of the country and the people to an unparalleled extent." To understand how this terrible impoverishment has taken place it is necessary to know, apart from the admittedly predatory period of British rule, something of the land policy and of the trade and economic policy, and of how Indian industries were crushed out of existence for the benefit of British manufacturers. The recent currency policy which has caused great losses to the Indian Government and to innumerable private individuals is also a pertinent enquiry, and the fact that all the Indian Chambers of Commerce and manufacturers and merchants unconnected with politics are and have been very discontented with these policies and resent what they consider is a preference shown to British trade, is not without significance. More important still has been the attitude of the Government towards the nation-building departments such as education, sanitation, medical relief, etc. After a very long period of British rule India has less than 10% literates although the progress made in other countries during this same period has been prodigious. Attempts on behalf of the Indians to increase the rate of progress have been opposed by Government on the ground of lack of funds, most of the funds being spent on an exceedingly expensive British army of occupation and on a top-heavy Civil Service. The army policy indeed, and the way Indians have been kept disarmed and denied suitable opportunities of training for defence, is a distinct and profitable field of enquiry.

With regard to the Indian States you might be interested to know that some are ahead of the British Government in many respects. But undoubtedly most of them are in a backward and deplorable state. How they have continued to be so is worth enquiry, for it is stated that their incompetent and undesirable rulers can only remain in their places because the British Government supports its puppets, and the unhappy residents of these territories have to face not only their ruler but the real power of the British Government which is behind him.

Indians have no desire to ignore or minimise the Hindu Muslim question. It affects them too vitally. Whatever the intentions of the British in regard to it may be—and you yourself say that they can hardly welcome unity—it is very pertinent to enquire what their actions and

2. Frederick John Shore (d. 1837); arriving in India in 1818 to serve the East India Company, he became Civil & Sessions judge and later Commissioner, Sagar and Narmada territories.

policy are leading up to. For undoubtedly these troubles have increased during the past few years and merely to say that the Reform Scheme has led to this is a grave misunderstanding of the causes. These causes are real and can be effectively dealt with but recent history shows how a third party can easily aggravate the trouble and increase the friction The Irish analogy where rival religious factions struggled against each other *so long as a third party was controlling the situation but gradually* settled down to peaceful cooperation when they were left to themselves is instructive although it may not be wholly applicable.

Regarding the over population of India it is interesting to note that the mean density of population in British India is 226 per sq. mile. For some other countries the density is as follows:

Belgium	654
England	649
Netherlands	544
Germany	332
Japan	215
Austria	199
France	184

I do not know what special or general information has induced you to make the remarkable statement that Indians "almost unanimously" desire the domination of Britain. I am not aware of any responsible person or authority, Indian or English, official or non-official, who has said so. I would refer you to the Government of India's last annual report for the official viewpoint which, far from being the Indian point of view, is equally far from your assertion. As for the still more remarkable assertion you make that Indians, inspite of their protestations and their *nationalism*, really want this domination to continue, I can only conclude that you consider that the Indians who declare that they want freedom for their country are liars and hypocrites. There can be no room for argument if you hold this opinion. Indeed being myself one of this tribe I would also naturally fall into the category of the liars and hypocrites. Under these circumstances, I would not have troubled you with this letter, but on full consideration, I feel that I owe it to you to place the above considerations before you. For a considerable time, and till recently, I was the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress and am not unacquainted with happenings in India.

As I have stated above I do not know what criteria you have to find out the unanimous will of the Indian people. Perhaps you are unaware

of the fact that every responsible political organisation in India, moderate or extremist, Hindu or Muslim or Sikh, has demanded freedom for India. You may also not know that a considerable number of persons have suffered rather heavily for their activities in the cause of Indian freedom, that from December 1921 to March 1922 about 25,000 Indians were sent to jail; that political trials continue in that unhappy country; that special repressive laws are in force to arrest and detain people without trial or even the framing of a charge and that many persons are detained under them. It is remarkable that so much repression and punishment should be necessary for a people well contented with British rule, and still more remarkable that people should lie and be hypocritical merely to suffer in this way.

I apologise for the length of this letter and trust that you will extend to it the courtesy of your columns.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3.8.26

8. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Geneva
11.8.26

My dear Mahmud,

I am afraid I am a bit irregular in writing to you. Partly this is due to disinclination to writing merely disjointed notes, records of bare facts and nothing more, and partly to many pre-occupations. I dislike writing a letter which is like a cutting from a daily paper. But really I have managed to fill in my time fairly well during the last month. Geneva is full of all kinds of special courses and lectures and I am

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, NMML

attending a number of these lectures. On the whole they are interesting and as the lecturers belong to most of the different European nationalities, their varying viewpoints are instructive. But the result of spending all this time in lectures, which are usually in English, is disastrous from the point of view of my French. Far from becoming a Frenchman, as you seem to imagine, I have made little progress with the language. And this is not surprising considering the little time that I have given to it.

I was very glad to learn that Ansari had resigned[2] from the Khilafat Committee and the Muslim League. I can see no way out of our difficulties except by proceeding on more or less secular lines in politics. The outlook in India is dark enough but somehow I do not feel as pessimistic as the news would warrant. Do not get down hearted. We shall still see Swaraj. Whatever India might or might not do, I am fairly sure that England cannot hold on to India for long.

Kamala is doing well. So is Indu who is in the mountains. As for me I am flourishing like the proverbial green bay tree! You will be interested to learn that I have lost about 5 or 6 pounds in weight and am about 4 or 5 inches less in the waist. This is good work.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

2. In a speech at Delhi on 11 July 1926 Dr. Ansari declared that from that day he had ceased to be a member of the Muslim League, Khilafat Committee or any other communal organisation, and for him Congress alone was the body to which he owed allegiance and his religion was Swaraja

9. *To Syed Mahmud*[1]

Geneva
12.9.26

My dear Mahmud,
The last mail brought two short letters from you. This has happened several times before. I suppose the Chapra post office is not very up to date or perhaps you post your letters too late occasionally.

1 Syed Mahmud Papers, NMML

I was pleased to learn of the formation of the National Party[2] or Union—whatever it is called and I am very glad to learn from your letter that it is making good progress. It is decidedly a move in the right direction but of course much need not be expected of it. There is certainly some danger in getting a mixed and varied lot in it but you cannot help that and the other danger of its shrivelling up with a very limited membership is even worse. I would therefore welcome a large membership and pay little attention to undesirables coming in. You cannot stop them. At the same time I am not much in favour of personal canvassing for members. Appeals should be made through all newspapers, leaflets etc. and the greatest publicity should be given, but personal canvassing in India specially means dragging in people who do not really want to join and they are more of a hindrance than a help.

A large organisation including all manner of people must necessarily frame a moderate programme agreeable to all the groups in it. The larger the organisation the more moderate it is likely to be. It thus becomes necessary at times to have a smaller, better knitted group with a more advanced outlook. The time for that will come soon. For the present it is well that the large organisation is developing.

I think what is required in India most is a course of study of Bertrand Russell's books, or at any rate some of them. No country or people who are slaves to dogma and the dogmatic mentality can progress, and unhappily our country and people have become extraordinarily dogmatic and little-minded. Generosity of heart is a good thing but what is wanted is not an emotional outburst of generosity but coldly reasoned tolerance. Religion as practised in India has become the old man of the sea for us and it has not only broken our backs but stifled and almost killed all originality of thought and mind. Like Sindbad the Sailor we must get rid of this terrible burden before we can aspire to breathe freely or do anything useful.

The mention of Bertrand Russell reminds me of a new book of his —*On Education*—which I have been reading recently. I would strongly *recommend it to you. It has innumerable lessons for us*, for our women-folk and for our children. We complain of our country and of its people, and rightly, but after all they depend largely on our ideals of education. It is amazing how utterly wrongly we bring up our children—physically, mentally and morally—and as for our treatment

2. The Responsivists and Independents met in a conference in Bombay on 3 April 1926 and announced the formation of the National Party to prepare the country 'for the establishment of Swaraj of the Dominion type'

of women the less said the better. Is it any wonder that we have continually to contend against bodily ailments and mental troubles? Do you know of a single family of your acquaintance in India which is not always faced with disease? More than half our energy is spent in trying to lessen disease in the members of our family and in ourselves and yet a proper system of education of body and mind should make disease a very rare occurrence. We are always hobnobbing with doctors and *hakims* but it does not strike us that the way to combat disease is to combat it at the root and remove the causes. These causes are largely interwoven with our unfortunate social system and customs. I cannot conceive any woman to be healthy, physically or mentally, who has been confined behind the *purdah*. And I cannot conceive her children to be healthy or properly brought up, for the most important years of a child's education are the years from birth to about 10, when it is very largely under the influence of its mother.

Kamala, I am sorry to say, has not been keeping very well. There has not been any marked change but still there was a slight setback in August. She is again picking up now. Her temperature is due to the fact that the disease is present still. Krishna and Indu are well.

I am going to London day after tomorrow—after over 14 years of absence.

Love,

Yours affly,
Jawahar

Could you kindly send my wife some books of Iqbal and the poems of Hasrat Mohani? Also a small Urdu dictionary?

Jawahar

10. To Father[1]

Geneva
6.10.26

My dear Father,

This letter will reach you on the eve of the elections and you must be terribly busy. The caricature which you sent with your last letter shows the kind of things you must have to put up with. It must be a trial. I suppose it will take some time before the Indian public and electorate, not to mention the innumerable "leaders", get over personalities and fight over principles. Anyway I hope that the end of the election, whatever its result, will bring you some rest and relief. I must confess to a feeling of satisfaction at not being in India just at present. Indeed the whole future outlook is so gloomy that, from the political viewpoint, a return to India is far from agreeable.

Nan and Ranjit came here some days ago. Ranjit stayed for nearly three days and then left for Berlin. Nan remained behind. Ranjit returns here and then they both go to Trieste and sail on the 15th September. So that within ten or at most twelve days of your receiving this letter you will probably see them. If you happen to be in Bombay when they land, and Nan tells me this is possible, then you might see them sooner. They will probably reach Bombay on the 31st or thereabouts. Their boat is the Lloyd Triestino "Asia".

Kamala is more or less the same, that is, she looks well but continues to have a slight temperature — 99.5°. Her weight is satisfactory. It is quite clear now however that no further good can be expected from our prolonging our stay in Geneva. I have been told definitely that she cannot stand Spahlinger's[2] vaccine injections. I should have said as much judging from past results. Whenever she has taken the vaccine she has gradually got worse. Nobody seems to know exactly why this should be so, or at any rate I have received no satisfactory explanation. Whatever other ailments she may be suffering from they are certainly not upto much. She is certainly weak constitutionally but I presume that many sufferers from T.B. are in the same position. I have been

1. J. N. Correspondence, NMML.
2. Henry Spahlinger (1892-1965), Swiss bacteriologist who patented a serum treatment for pulmonary tuberculosis.

told not only that she cannot stand the vaccine now but that she is not likely to be able to do so in the future. Thus the vaccine treatment is more or less ruled out even according to Spahlinger and his advisers. And vaccine being an essential and all important part of Spahlinger's treatment it follows that Spahlinger's treatment is practically ruled out. The serum, which appears to do her good, may continue to be given to her, but I have been repeatedly told that the serum by itself does not carry one very far. At the most it just cures the disease for the time being but there is every chance of the patient getting it again.

All this points to the inevitable conclusion that the Spahlinger treatment is not the panacea which some people make it to be. There may be, and I think there is, a great deal of merit in it. But just like other remedies it suits some people and not others. I am not competent to judge of the real merit and importance of the treatment. Many people who have tried it speak highly of it. But in Kamala's case it has not been a success and I am certainly justified in saying that there is a great deal of tall talk about the efficacy of the treatment. The undoubted benefit which Kamala has derived during the last five months here might easily be accounted for by the change of climate, diet etc.

Under the circumstances the only thing to be done is to go to the mountains. Spahlinger himself suggested this. The only question is where we should go. There is not very much to choose between the various well known health resorts and sanatoria. On the whole, if there were no other considerations, I would have preferred Davos and next to it Leysin. But this not only meant a complete break with the Spahlinger treatment but probably a deliberate attempt on the part of the new doctors to do something very different to show their displeasure of Spahlinger & his works. I have therefore decided to go to Montana where Stephani[3] has his sanatorium. Stephani has been seeing Kamala off and on for the last three months or more and knows something about her case. Spahlinger's serum can also be continued there if necessary. I would personally like to go on from Montana to some other place after a while. But this can be considered later.

So the net result of the past five months' treatment is disappointing. It is difficult to say if she would have been better off elsewhere, but we certainly had been led to believe that she would be cured here within six months. From my personal point of view a stay in Geneva was more interesting and profitable than elsewhere in Switzerland, but that is poor consolation. We go to Montana on the 21st October. Indu will go off to Chesieres two or three days before that date.

3. Dr. Jacques Stephani, a Swiss lung specialist now resident in Geneva

I am ashamed at not having sent you any good photographs of any of us in spite of your repeated reminders. For months I have been thinking of facing the camera but something or other intervened. Kamala was not as fit as I would have liked her to be or Indu was away. At last however the prospect of leaving Geneva has moved me to action and we are going to the photographer tomorrow.

I have written fully to Ansari about Kamala.

Love,

from your loving son,
Jawahar

11. To Father[1]

Geneva
13.10.26

My dear Father,

You will forgive me I hope for a rather short note this week. I have been going about with Nan & Ranjit on little excursions and visits and my last few days have been largely taken up by them. Today we have returned after going to Lausanne and to Villeneuve to see Romain Rolland.

Tomorrow Ranjit & Nan leave for Trieste. Probably they will meet you soon after you receive this letter and they will give you all news first hand. It has been pleasant to have them here and we shall feel a little lonely after their departure.

Kamala has been keeping quite well. She has not looked better since she came here. Her temperature has been practically normal and her weight has gone up another half kilo — making 4 kilos in all since she came to Europe, that is 9 lbs. She is continuing the serum injections.

We saw the proofs of our photographs yesterday but I am afraid they will not be ready for despatch for another 10 days or more Indu's photographs have come out very well and the others are not bad.

Early next week I shall take Indu to Villars and a few days later the rest of us will move to Montana

1 J N Correspondence, NMML

My efforts to get expert opinions on the Lakhna finger prints[2] in Paris have failed. There appear to be no private experts and the police department which deals with finger prints would not agree even to give an opinion in a private matter in spite of every persuasion. In England there is the same difficulty to which one has to add an additional difficulty. The chief men of Scotland Yard have already given a definite opinion regarding the prints. I do not quite see who to approach in the matter now.

Love,

Your loving son,
Jawahar

2. In this protracted case of succession to an estate, doctors in London certified that a woman had given birth to a child and, as proof of the woman's identity, attached her photograph and thumb impressions. On receipt of this certificate the Privy Council referred the case back to the Allahabad High Court. But it was alleged that there had been impersonation and Motilal Nehru had the matter thoroughly examined. In this connection he wanted Jawaharlal to engage the services of finger-print experts in Paris or London.

12. The English General Strike and Three Lessons for Volunteers[1]

The General Strike in England took place some time ago, but as my friend Dr. Hardikar has asked me to write something for *The Volunteer* I feel that I cannot do better than draw the attention of my brother members of the Hindustani Seva Dal to some of its striking lessons. We are not concerned with the merits of the coal dispute in England. Those of us who have tried to understand the situation and have studied the question will probably have arrived at some conclusions and may sympathise with one or other of the two protagonists. But the lessons which the great strike has to teach us are independent of the dispute and it is immaterial whether the miners or the mine-owners are right or whether the Government in England handled the situation rightly or otherwise.

We must understand however the magnitude of the struggle. I have

1. *The Volunteer*, October 1926, pp 225—227.

no correct figures with me but it may be said roughly that about four millions or forty lakhs of workers ceased working. If the families of these workers are included we might put the figure moderately at 12 to 15 millions. This means that about a quarter of the population of Great Britain actually struck or actively sympathised with the strikers. On the other side there were the capitalists and owners with their far greater financial resources backed up by the whole power of the State. It was thus far and away the greatest industrial struggle between capital and labour which the world has yet seen. But it was something more. The very nature of the struggle and the use of direct action on such a large scale makes it something more than an industrial struggle, however much the leaders of labour might have wished to keep its scope limited. The General Strike meant the adoption of tactics and methods other than parliamentary and its success must inevitably have tended towards the gradual downfall of the parliamentary system of government.

The struggle thus was a very vital one and fraught with the greatest consequences. It might have resulted in as great a revolution as any that English history has to show. And yet how was it fought?

It was to the interest of the Government to preserve the *status quo* and to maintain order. But the other party—the workers—were in reality even more desirous of remaining orderly and peaceful. And throughout the strike no effort was spared by the leaders of labour to keep perfect peace and avoid all acts of violence and disorder. They preached nonviolence to their followers for they realised that every act of violence would react on themselves and not only alienate the goodwill of many people who sympathised with them but would strengthen the hands of Government. They realised further that acts of violence in the ranks would introduce indiscipline and break up their solidarity. For violence and nonviolence cannot exist together. Both are naturally exclusive and both in order to be effective require the strictest discipline. If violence is the method adopted to enforce a demand it must take the form of a highly disciplined army with all the latest weapons of attack and destruction in order to challenge effectively the organised violence of the other party. Any other kind of violence in which any of these necessary ingredients are wanting—where there is no discipline or organisation of sufficient numbers and no weapons of the most improved variety—must inevitably end in a fiasco. Where effective violence is not possible—and it would appear that it is no longer possible anywhere against an organised State unless the armies of the State itself mutiny—the only other effective weapon that remains is organised and disciplined nonviolent action. The labour leaders realised this and tried their utmost to avoid disorder and violence.

Our first lesson then is one of non-violence. No one is rash enough to say that wars between different States are things of the past. There are likely to be more wars before the world realises the folly of war. But the method of peaceful direct action is gradually taking the place of war where there is conflict within the boundaries of a State.

Our second lesson is one of discipline. Without this, it is becoming even more obvious now than it was before, every organised action is utterly futile. And in the labour struggle in England one cannot help admiring the wonderful discipline shown on both sides. The workers *displayed an amazing solidarity by obeying without hesitation, and with* hardly any dissenters, the mandate of their leaders. They showed discipline in the manner of leaving work, for care was taken to leave the mines etc. in proper condition and where necessary with a supply of safety men who would keep the mines from deteriorating. Their behaviour during the period of the strike was also commendable. On the other side, the rush of volunteers to help Government and their willing *submission to the discipline and hardships of new and uncongenial duties,* were admirable.

There is a third and equally important lesson for us and that is we must keep our heads and our good humour and optimism even through our *darkest trials. The English people came out well from the General* Strike and received the praises of other countries chiefly because of their light hearted — but not wanting in determination — manner of treating *it and the new problems it had created. That very spirit of buoyancy* halved their present troubles and paved the way for a happier understanding in the future.

I wish that these three lessons were taken to heart by the Hindustani Seva Dal and those others who have not yet so far joined the Dal. In the welter of communal troubles and political arguments, the Dal stands for something essential, something to which every thinking citizen must needs respond. *It stands for discipline and efficiency and peaceful* action, and may I add, good humour and optimism. And with sufficient support and encouragement the Dal could grow up into a body, well-organised and disciplined and effective enough not only to curb the fanatical outbursts of communal frenzy, which disgrace our country today, but hasten the advent of Swaraj.

C. U. C

13. To Father[1]

16-11-1926

In Berlin, apart from meeting many people, old friends and new, I had the opportunity of visiting some big factories I had not specially intended visiting there; but I happened to get into touch with a new firm called the Indo-Germaina which has been formed to encourage German trade with India. There is an Indian director but the important man at the head of it is an influential German. It was through him that I got into touch with various big German firms. I visited the A.E.G. and Simon's factories which are two of the largest and best equipped electrical factories; also the N.A.G., a big motor factory specialising in lorries and good class cars. The visits were very interesting and I was treated with great courtesy everywhere by the directors or other officials. I saw also the Ufa film making ateliers. I wanted to see very much a big aeroplane factory but I had no time for it.

For various reasons the Germans are well disposed to Indians at present and there are great facilities for industrial training which England neither has the capacity nor the good will to offer. Austria also is an attractive country for such training, in addition to being a cheap place to live in. I wish more Indian students could take advantage of these opportunities. In Austria I am told a student can on his return start a profitable undertaking with comparatively little capital — say Rs. 15,000 Kamala's brother Kailas[2] would do well if he went to Vienna instead of continuing his scientific studies in Lucknow. If you happen to come across any suitable youths I hope you will suggest to them the advisability of coming over.

I should particularly like Indians taking a course in aeroplane flying and construction. This can easily be arranged in Germany but of course they must come with some engineering knowledge. There is already an Indian who has fully qualified himself and is at present working as a responsible official of a large German aeroplane firm.

1. *A.I.C.C. File No. 92/1926-27*, pp 89—93, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. Kailash Nath Kaul (b. 1905); brother of Kamala Nehru, Director of the National Botanical Gardens, Lucknow, for many years

I wonder if you have heard of the League against Oppression in the Colonies and of the Congress they propose holding in Brussels on the 20th January and following days. This league is attempting to gather in one fold all organizations interested in combating imperialism in every shape. It has succeeded in getting great deal of support from nearly 400 organisations all over the world, including two governments—those of Mexico and Canton in China. Mexico comes in because of its fear of the U.S.A. *Invitations have been sent to the Congress in India and* to various other bodies. The Trade Union Congress of India has promised to send representatives, so also the South African Indian Congress. Andrews perhaps is coming on behalf of one of these bodies. The Congress at Brussels is likely to be a very representative one and it would be highly desirable to have some representatives of the Indian National Congress, for after all the most menacing imperialism of the day is the British imperialism in India. The date fixed for the beginning of this Brussels meeting is 20th January. This is awkward and it will probably be difficult to get our representatives over by then. But still I hope an attempt will be made. Apart from every other consideration, it will give us a chance to meet people from all quarters of the world. From China alone over 20 organizations are sending representatives. If you decide to send representatives it will be desirable to have one person among them who is an economist and knows something about British imperialist policy in regard to military matters in India as this is an important subject which is bound to interest the Brussels Congress. It *is for the A.I.C.C. to decide whom to send*, but just as a suggestion I might name Sarojini Naidu, Shuaib and A. T. Gidwani. Shuaib I have included as a Mohamadan would be very desirable and he strikes me as the most suitable. If you like my name might be added on but I should not like to be the one and only representative. In any event I should like to go to Brussels as a visitor just to meet people.

I shall write to you more on this subject next week. Meanwhile I hope you will give the matter some thought. It is worthy of it.

14. To Father[1]

Montana
23.11.26

My dear Father,
I posted a letter to you yesterday morning. On my return however from Chesieres this evening, I found your note written at Burhanpore, C.P., waiting for me. As there is still time to catch the mail I am writing these few lines.

I am not surprised at the view Sprawson[2] has taken about Kamala's treatment. I do not suppose any wonderful change for the better would have taken place if Kamala had gone straight to Davos. At the same time the results so far obtained have been so disappointing that it is just possible that Davos might have done her a little more good. Anyway that is a rather pointless enquiry now.

Nan looked fairly well when she left us here. Perhaps she was tired after the journey when you saw her. In Europe too she had little rest.

I have already written to you about our financial situation. With the help of the balance of the Lakhma money I have with me (£ 50). I can just carry on till about the 15th December. I find that the estimate I sent you some weeks ago of future expenditure slightly erred on the side of being an under-estimate. All manner of petty expenses keep cropping up and together they make a substantial sum. Even a visit to Indu is a costly item. My trip to Germany, although it turned out to be cheaper than I expected, has reduced the money in hand considerably.

Love,

Your loving son,
Jawahar

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. C. A. Sprawson, member of the Indian Medical Service, who was professor of medicine at Lucknow from 1913 to 1929 and retired in 1937 as Director-General of the Indian Medical Service

15. To Devadas Gandhi[1]

Montana
1.12.26

My dear Devadas,
I wish the Cow Conference[2] or the Cow Sabha or whatever it is called would send a deputation of the elect to have a look at the cow in this part of the world. It would do them good. And they might get some brighter ideas than keeping enormous *pinjrapoles* for the halt and the lame! I have been greatly interested in the day by day controversy in *Young India*. I wish however that some other animals — including human beings — might be treated likewise.
Love,

Yrs.,
Jawaharlal

1. Gandhi Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No 2125
2. The Cow Conference was held during the Congress week at Belgaum and was presided over by Mahatma Gandhi.

16. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Montana
1.12.26

My dear Mahmud,
I have not heard from you for some weeks. But Kamala has been giving me news about your family. I hope your wife is well.
Kamala received a parcel of Urdu books from you a few days ago. She tells me that in it there is a very interesting book about the training of a woman and the early education of a child. She gave me some

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, NMML

idea of what the book contains and I wondered how far you agreed with the learned author of the work. Some months ago I suggested to you to read Bertrand Russell's book *On Education*. I do not know if you read it. Whether you read it or not it is a little surprising that you should patronise such absolute trash as the Urdu book I have referred to above. Do you really think there is any sense in it? I was amazed that any man should be foolish enough to write such rot and that others should be sillier to read it. But I am perhaps unfair to the author. I am judging from some extracts only.

Kamala had a little relapse whilst I was away in Berlin but she is doing well now.

I am beginning to feel a bit restive and I wish I could hurl myself into the whirlpool of Indian politics. The suppressed energy of some months wants an outlet. I should have liked to be present at the Gauhati Congress[2]. Not that I think I would have done any good to anybody but I would feel better for a little aggressiveness. And there seem to be so many people about in India whom I should like to go for! From your letters it appears that you are down hearted and dispirited. Don't be so silly. There is nothing to be down-hearted about. We are passing through an inevitable phase and we shall all be the better for it. So cheer up and give it hot to everybody at Gauhati. And more power to your elbow if you do so.

Love,

Yours affly,
Jawahar

2. December 1926.

17. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Montana
12.1.27

My dear Mahmud,

You complain of my letters being short but surely yours have the virtue of brevity also. I must confess that I do not look forward to the mail day although as a matter of fact I have been keeping up an extensive

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, NMML

correspondence. I feel that life is short and there is so much to read and learn that one can spend one's time to better purpose in acquiring knowledge. I have read a fair amount since I came here but it is far less than I wanted to or expected and I am disappointed. Most of us acquire a smattering of the three R's and a little else during our years at school and college and consider that our education is complete and we are learned. In India specially the standard is extraordinarily low and I think most of our difficulties are due to this want of knowledge. Take Lajpat Rai's case as an example. He considers himself, I presume, a highly educated person and a keen political thinker and many others perhaps think likewise. My own opinion about him is that he has no sufficient intellectual or cultural background and is really a very badly educated person. Hence his peculiar behaviour in public life. It is not that we are not intellectual enough. I believe we are better off in this respect than most Europeans but the blight of religion with its handmaids, ignorance and refusal to think, are upon us and the imagined glory of our past, like the old man of the sea, crushes us. Not that our past was not creditable. But to make progress we shall have to throw it away from us and live more in the present and the future.

I have become an even greater believer in *khaddar* than I was but *khaddar* as an economic doctrine and not as an offshoot of religion. I have no patience left with the legitimate and illegitimate offspring of religion.

Kamala has not been keeping well for the last few days. Indu has just gone back to school after spending her Christmas holidays with us.

I am interested to learn about the controversy between Mohamad Ali and Hasan Nizami[2].

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

2. Khwaja Hasan Nizami (1876-1955); a well known essayist who wrote on many subjects including literature and religion. In later years his popularity waned because of his aggressive manner of propagating Islam. On entering politics he was involved in a press controversy with Maulana Mohamad Ali, who accused him of having divulged some secrets of the Nizam of Hyderabad to the British Government. During the conflict between the Muslim League and Congress in 1945-46 Hasan Nizami aligned himself with the Muslim League. In 1947 he migrated to Hyderabad, where he started a daily newspaper, but returned to Delhi in 1950.

18. To Rangaswami Iyengar[1]

Stephani,
Montana s/Siene,
Switzerland
19.1.27

My dear Rangaswami,[2]
Many thanks for your letter of the 22nd December and the copy of the letter you sent to Gibarti[3]. I had hoped that some kind of instructions would be sent to me for the Brussels Congress[4] but it appears that I shall have to shift for myself.

I have asked a friend of mine in London, Mr. Tarini Prasad Sinha[5], whom perhaps you know, to collect some facts and figures for the Brussels Congress and to attend it also. I am unable to do any such preparation work here in Montana owing to want of facilities. Sinha will be of help to me in Brussels. He is connected with the Independent Labour Party[6] in London and is specially in charge of its Indian work. I hope there will be no objection to my paying Sinha his travelling expenses etc. out of the money you are sending me. He cannot afford to come on his own account. The £50 you are sending will be ample for both of us.

I noticed in the *Forward* that a cablegram of greeting had been received by the Congress from the *Berlin Schadows*. I wonder if yon and others were also labouring under this misapprehension. The cable was

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-21(79), 1926-27, pp 77—78 N.M.M.L.
2. A. Rangaswami Iyengar (1877-1934); started as a minor official, then set up legal practice at Tanjore, and finally turned to journalism. He joined *The Hindu*, the leading English newspaper of Madras, but left it to become the editor of the Tamil journal *Swadesamitran*. He was general secretary of the Congress 1926-27. Elected to the Central Legislative Assembly, he was secretary of the Swaraj Party from 1925 and worked closely with Motilal Nehru. He returned to *The Hindu* as editor in 1928 and served it till his death.
3. A Hungarian communist and secretary of the organising committee of the Congress against Imperialism. Jawaharlal met him again, many years later, *at the Asian African Conference at Bandung in April 1955.*
4. International Congress against Imperialism held at Brussels in February 1927.
5. An Indian journalist in London, who was working in the office of the Independent Labour Party.
6. The Independent Labour Party was the original Labour Party in Britain, having been founded by Keir Hardie in 1893 seven years before the Labour Party. It was affiliated with the Labour Party till 1932. The I.L.P. was more radical than the Labour Party but opposed to Communism. It never commanded a large following

sent by Gibarti on behalf of the League against Oppression in the Colonies. "Schadowstr" (*short for Schadowstrasse*) was the name of the street.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

19. To Rangaswami Iyengar[1]

Sanatorium Stephani,
Montana — Suisse
23.1.27

My dear Rangaswami,

I have sent you by this mail three registered packets containing my reports and other papers relating to the Brussels Congress.

I wonder if you could take any effective steps to move the Indian labour leaders over the Chinese question[2]. I wish the trade unions could be made to adopt something similar to our joint declaration at Brussels or the Independent Labour Party resolutions. I am very much out of touch with labour leaders in India and do not even know who they are. I have written to Joshi[3] & Baptista[4] but I do not expect them to do much. I wish you would get the Indian Trade Union Council to take up the matter.

1. AICC. *File No G 29(82 A)/1927, Part III, p 255.* NMML
2. The Chinese question broadly was that the Kuomintang Government in China were trying to reduce the influence of the European Powers in that country, and this was being resisted by these Powers.
3. Narayan Malhar Joshi (1879-1955); joined *Servants of India Society*, 1909 and was connected with various social reform organisations, General Secretary, All India Trade Union Congress, 1925 29 and again from 1940 1948, deputy member of the governing body of the *International* Labour Organisation 1922 24 and member 1933 1944 and 1946 48, Member, Bombay *Municipal Corporation*, 1919 1923, nominated member of the *Legislative Assembly* for many years from 1902 to 1947; Member, Royal Commission on *Indian Labour as representative* of labour, attended Round Table Conferences 1930, 1931 and 1932 and meetings of the Joint Parliamentary Committee
4. Joseph Baptista (1864 1931); took a prominent part in the Indian Home Rule and labour movements, was President, Bombay Provincial Conference, *1915*, and Indian Home Rule League, 1916-26, Member, *Legislative* Assembly, 1926-27; President, All India Trade Union Congress, 1922 23, Labour Delegate to the Labour Conference, Geneva, 1924, President, Bombay Municipal Corporation, 1925.

I enclose a letter I received from Bridgeman[5] for your information.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Reginald Bridgeman (b. 1884); after his retirement from the British diplomatic service, became an active member of the British Labour Party and served for a few years as Secretary of the British branch of the League against Imperialism.

20. To Rangaswami Iyengar[1]

25.1.27

My dear Rangaswami,
Many thanks for your letter of the 6th January enclosing a cheque for £50. As I have already informed you, the Brussels Congress meets on February 10th, the preliminary committee meetings taking place from February 5th. I hope to go to Brussels early in February. I shall of course send you a report of the proceedings, specially in regard to India.

I was sorry to notice the strange omission of all reference to the Chinese situation in the proceedings at Gauhati. This situation is dominating politics in Europe and a great deal of attention is being paid to it. The latest developments point almost to war and if a war begins, Russia may be dragged in. I find in today's papers that Indian troops are being sent to China and Lord Irwin[2] has addressed the Assembly on the subject. All this may happen but evidently Indian politicians attach no significance to it and do not even care to pass a pious resolution. I wonder at times why different groups and parties in India are so bitter against each other. Fundamentally they seem to have more or less the same moderate mentality, whether they call themselves Liberals, Swarajists or No-changers. The mention of independence frightens them and every effort is made to dissociate oneself from the idea or from its implications. The Indian States and foreign policy are taboo and not to be discussed; the army and problems of defence are beyond us, and so we spend all our energy in protesting, with varying degrees of emphasis, against internments and imprisonments and regulations etc. I am afraid this

1. A I C C. File No. G-21(79), 1926-27, p 79. N.M.M.L.
2. Viceroy of India 1926-31.

very tame and constitutional and legal and proper and reasonable activity raises no enthusiasm in me.

My wife is getting on fairly well.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

21. The Psychology of Indian Nationalism[1]

More than two decades ago a great Indian, Mr. G. K. Gokhale, whose life was consecrated to the service of his motherland, founded an association called the Servants of India Society. This was a little group of men devoted to the service of India. In the rules of this association Mr. Gokhale referred with gentle irony to the inscrutable wisdom of Providence, which had joined the destinies of India and England. Inscrutable indeed was this dispensation which brought together in the relation of rulers and ruled two races and peoples so dissimilar and so little capable of understanding each other. Perhaps a healthy contact between the two types would have done good to both by humanising them more and toning down their angularities. But there is little of health, where an alien race governs another, however good intentions might be. Cooperation to be productive of good must be the cooperation of equals, not that miscalled cooperation which is based on the masterfulness of the rulers and the servility of the ruled.

And so we have the extraordinary fact that after a century and half of British rule in India, the two races are as apart from each other as ever, and today each views the other with resentment and hostility. The Indian being the under-dog has at least tried to understand the psychology of his rulers, not with great success it must be admitted, for passion and lack of sympathy make it difficult to appreciate another. But the English have not had even this inducement and the average Englishman is singularly incapable of appreciating, or even trying to appreciate a viewpoint different from his own. India is to him but a

1. Article in *The Review of Nations*, Vol. I, No. 1, published in Geneva, January 1927.

part of the mysterious and effete East, which always plots and intrigues most irrationally against the God-ordained might and majesty of England, and ungratefully forgets the many favours which England has bestowed on her. Has not England given India the railways, the telegraph and the telephone and established the Pax Britannica? It does not occur to him that there are other things, of the mind and the spirit, not to mention material good, more vital than railways and the like, and India may not have fared well in regard to them. Nor does it occur to him that other countries even in the East have developed railways and the telegraph and the telephone without England's help, and perhaps India also might have done so if Providence in its inscrutable wisdom had not thrust England on her. And peace is good, but even the terrors and the misery of the battlefield are better than the peace of the graveyard.

A little imagination, some fellow feeling, and less of self-complacency and smug unctuousness would have gone a long way to solve the problem of India to the mutual advantage of both England and India. Unhappily the necessary qualities have been wholly lacking and the problem will solve itself in its own way, but this way may bring, as it has already done, a great deal of suffering to India and some unpleasant surprises to England.

That India desires to control her own affairs and to regain her lost dignity is natural enough and requires no explanation or justification. The psychology of Indian nationalism is fundamentally the same as that of any other nation striving to rid itself of alien domination. But perhaps it is worth while to enquire how the nationalist movement in India took its present shape and gathered the impetus which it has had in recent years. To an outsider India appears today to be rent with faction and strife—the Hindu and the Muslim fighting, and various political parties bitterly opposing each other. This is largely true, and yet the dominant fact remains that almost every thinking Indian is thoroughly distrustful of England and desirous of getting rid of her rule. Never before was there so much and such widespread hostility to British rule and want of faith in the *bona fides* of the English. Every political party of any standing and even the great communal organisations have declared that India must have responsible government. Some people want independence, while others lay stress on dominion rule, knowing well that a thin line divides the two. The methods of political parties differ and they may quarrel among themselves about achieving their goal, but the fact remains that in essentials the goal of all is the same.

An individual or country in adversity always looks back to its more prosperous days and usually magnifies them. The Indian of today is

partly influenced by them but on the whole they adapted themselves to them. One fact is noteworthy. During all the troubles and invasions the village system of local self-government, which was the backbone of the Indian system of government, endured and was little affected.

The gradual disintegration and fall of the Moghul Empire produced unstable conditions in India and there was a period of internecine conflict. This was peculiarly favourable to foreign adventurers and the English took full advantage of it and gradually, by playing off one ruler against the other, established their sway.

It is not possible to mention here the achievements in art and literature and thought and even the science of government during the Hindu and Muslim periods. But they should be borne in mind to understand the Indian's pride in his past and his contemptuous rejection of the British claim that they rescued India from anarchy and barbarism.

This, in briefest outline, is the picture of the past which the Indian has in his mind. Very naturally he exaggerates the good in it and forgets the bad. But making all allowance, the past of India has a great deal worthy of a great country and compares very favourably with the squabbles and incessant conflicts of the little countries of Europe. She fell an easy prey to the conquerors from the West owing undoubtedly to decadence and want of cohesion and specially to her not having made sufficient progress in the science of war.

The British came to India as adventurers and freebooters and their first period was admittedly a predatory one. Enormous sums of money were taken out of India and individual Englishmen — the "nabobs" as they were called in those days — made vast fortunes. This was immediately followed by a more systematized method of extortion. The chief object was to fill the coffers of the East India Company to enable it to pay heavy dividends to its shareholders and to increase British trade with India. It is well known that the most cruel and unscrupulous methods were adopted to kill flourishing Indian industries in order to find a market for Lancashire goods. Duties ranging up to 120% were put on Indian stuffs imported into England and it was even made an offence in England to wear some Indian cloths. With the coming of the British and the development of the sea routes India also lost touch with her Asiatic neighbours, and thus the foreign trade of India was crushed. The British authorities then turned their attention to the internal trade and imposed all manner of heavy transit and other duties which made it very difficult to send Indian goods from one part of the country to another. Meanwhile Lancashire goods had free and easy access to the Indian market, and so gradually the great Indian cottage industries were annihilated, and Lancashire cotton and other English

goods had a free field. The result of all these measures was to make millions unemployed and to throw them on the land. But the land tax was heavy and was continually being increased at periodical assessments. The people became more and more impoverished while at the same time a stream of money went to enrich the East India Company and the manufacturers in England.

The third period saw the gradual consolidation and extension of British rule. In all departments which strengthened the hold of the Government or brought in revenue efficiency was shown but little was done for the people. Pious professions of bringing enlightenment to the heathen were frequent enough but the chief consideration was dividends. An attempt was made to start education on Western lines. The old village schools, which were widespread, died out as did the system of village self-government. The few schools and colleges started to give Western education only effected an infinitesimal number of persons and their main object was to train clerks for British offices and departments of government. This period came to a sudden end with the great Mutiny in 1857.

As usual the English knew little and cared less for what the people were thinking and feeling. Resentment and hostility against the policy and methods of the English were growing all round but they did not notice them. Ultimately a spark started a great conflagration. There can be no doubt that the Mutiny, as it is called by English writers, was a national rising against the British, and if by any chance it had succeeded, it would have been a war of independence. But patriots who fail are dubbed traitors and suffer the fate of traitors. Unhappily the mutineers committed barbarities and excesses of the worst kind. But the East India Company was even more atrocious and the memory of that nightmare of horror lingers. The rising was suppressed and the people cowed down. An Arms Act was passed depriving them of their arms and India was administered by the British Parliament direct and not by the East India Company.

The subsequent period was a quiet one and many administrative reforms were introduced by the British. A number of able administrators perfected the bureaucratic system of government, and the Indian Civil Service became a highly organised and powerful body of men, often actuated by good intentions for the peoples, so long as these intentions did not interfere with their own powers and privileges or touch the basis of British rule or injure British commerce. The control of the British Parliament was nominal and the Indian Civil Service which was until quite recently entirely recruited in England, had complete control over the destinies of India, the people of India having no place or power in government. Viceroys came and went and

seldom succeeded in doing anything against the wishes of the I.C.S. Such of them, as Lord Ripon, who tried to go counter to the I.C.S. were soon brought to book. It was natural that a close corporation like the I.C.S., uncontrolled either by Indian public opinion or by the British Parliament, should become more and more imbued with a sense of its own virtues and intolerant of all criticism and opposition. Like little Olympians, cut off from the world of suffering humanity, they sat on their mountain tops or in their offices, infallible and unapproachable except to such as brought them votive offerings of flattery and servility. All wisdom lay in them and the gift to probe the hearts of the millions committed to their charge, and finding, without any reference to them, what was good for them and what was not. And the luckless person who dared to question this wisdom was guilty of the deadliest of sins.

Nearly thirty years after the Mutiny, as the memory of its horrors receded, the new nationalism began to find fresh expression and the Indian National Congress was founded. This was at first entirely confined to the English educated few and it was a very moderate body, asking in the most respectful of language for trivial reforms. Gradually it gained strength, but for long it continued to represent the moderate nationalist. Early in the 20th century the nationalist movement gathered head and some of the measures of the government, among which the most important was the partition of the province of Bengal, fanned the flames of nationalism and hostility to England. For the first time in recent history a great political leader, Tilak, who had influence not only amongst the English educated but with large masses of his countrymen, arose, and in Bengal and the West of India the people were greatly stirred. A movement for the boycott of British goods was started and it achieved considerable success. In Bengal and elsewhere terrorist crime took place and the British government tried to meet the situation by deportations without trial and other repressive measures. In the Congress itself there was a conflict between the moderate and advanced sections which ultimately had to break between the two and the extremists left the Congress. Tilak was sent to jail for a long period and the Bengal agitation came to an end by the annulment of the partition of Bengal. The result of the new methods of agitation was also the introduction of some reforms in the government whereby Indians were given councils without any powers. These reforms were introduced, as has indeed been admitted, to divide the two wings of the nationalist party and they succeeded admirably in doing so. During the great war British statesmen were lavish in their promises to India and many hopes were built on them. But even during the continuation of the war various incidents, including the press gang methods

of recruitment in the Punjab, went a long way to intensify resentment against England, and a feeling that British promises were not likely to be kept, started a vigorous agitation for Home Rule, as it was then called. This bore fruit in the announcement made on behalf of the British Parliament that responsible government was the goal of British policy in India and this was followed by the Montagu Chelmsford scheme of reforms. But reforms delayed fall far short of expectations and seldom satisfy, and the demand for greater power and freedom, the more it is repressed the more it increases. The new scheme, which from an Englishman's point of view went far, fell flat and was bitterly criticised by the Indian Congress.

Meanwhile strange things were happening and the mind of India was vastly exercised and agitated. The close of the war brought to her not the freedom she longed for but Rowlatt Bills which were ostensibly aimed at suppressing revolutionary violence but which in reality gave great powers to the police and the executive to suppress political activity by arrest and detention without trial. The reaction in the country was tremendous and every shade of opinion was ranged against this law, but in spite of this unanimous opposition the bills were passed by the government. This brought a new force of tremendous import into Indian politics. Mr. Gandhi, already widely known and respected on account of his great fight in South Africa for the rights of the Indians domiciled there, came forward with a novel weapon of peaceful *satyagraha* and civil disobedience. His temporary arrests led to riots in some places and then followed the martial law regime in the Punjab. The massacre in Amritsar by Dyer and his crawling order and numerous atrocities perpetrated during this period by the Punjab officials drove the iron into the soul of India. India knew as never before what British rule meant and what it rested upon, and curiously, instead of being terrorised as she had been after the Mutiny, the very horror of the Punjab gave fresh courage and made her resolve to put an end to conditions which could permit such happenings.

The treatment accorded to Turkey and the Khilafat by England was also greatly resented by the Muslims in India, and from the Punjab wrongs and the Khilafat was born noncooperation which took hold of India and permeated to the remotest villages and was probably the greatest mass movement which any country has had in recent times.

To examine this great movement with any thoroughness would require the consideration of many details and this is not possible here. Noncooperation essentially was a passionate protest against British dominion in India and its method of action was to withdraw peacefully all support from the British government. It was based on the admitted assumption that British rule cannot exist in India without

the support and the exploitation of large numbers of the Indian people. It was something like Sinn Fein in Ireland, only it was wider and deeper. It was not, as a whole, an attack on Western civilization or even English education. But it was felt that of all the injuries done by England to India—the destruction of her manufactures, the impoverishment of her people—the greatest injury was moral rather than physical. She had deliberately emasculated us and developed the slave mentality in us and made us feel powerless and unable to contend against her might. She had made us despise even the good that was in our culture and by a system of education, which taught us false or perverted history, had turned us into a nation of clerks and underlings. She had developed groups and classes of people—her army of subordinates in the government service, the people attached to her law courts, the merchants dealing in British goods etc. whose subsistence was apparently bound up with the continuance of the British connection. So noncooperation struck at these strong ropes that tied us to Britain. The Councils were boycotted and so were the law courts; foreign cotton goods were not to be bought or sold and were to be replaced by the hand-spun and hand-woven product of our cottages and villages; the government schools were to be left, not because we were against education, but because the education that was given in them was anti national. Later in the scheme were the boycott of government service, civil and military, and ultimately a refusal to pay taxes. And all this was to be done without any resort to violence. It was logically a perfect scheme and no government could withstand it. But it required a tremendous deal of self sacrifice and forbearance.

The history of India during the years 1920 to 1922 shows the wonderful extent to which the people responded to this call. How enormous incomes were cheerfully given up and sufferings were willingly borne and how about 25,000 men and women went peacefully to jail. The movement met with greater success than could have been expected, but the removal of nearly all the leaders, who were put in jail, and the ubiquitous presence of the *agent provocateur* led to a break up of discipline and to acts of violence which resulted in Mr. Gandhi and the Congress suspending the movement.

But noncooperation did not die, nor can it die It has come to India to stay. The political movement took a different turn and the Congress decided to enter the Councils, not from any love of them but to carry on the fight there. And this fight inside the country continues and is likely to continue, although for the present it is clouded by internal dissensions.

Noncooperation, as has been said, roused up the masses of India. During the intensity of the struggle their attention was all in the fight but when the reaction came and success was delayed, the newly released energy went in wrong directions. There, still and at places stagnant waters could not be stirred up without unpleasant odours. Today this energy is turned inwards and helps in adding to mutual bitterness and strife. Indian politics appear to be dominated by the communal question, the antagonism said to exist between the Hindu and Muslim. There is no doubt that there is this antagonism today but there is also little doubt that much of it is the creation of interested parties. All who are acquainted with conditions know that England cannot hold India if the Hindu and the Moslem are together, and the strength of the noncooperation movement lay in this that they did act together. They also know that it has been the deliberate policy of the Government to play off one community against another. Officially this is of course denied but unofficially many even of the officials admit it. And such of us as have taken part in Indian politics know full well that at every turn we have to face the *agent provocateur* and even our national assemblies are full of the agents of the government's secret service. The responsibility of England for the communal situation in India is not a light one. Nonetheless no Indian will deny that ours is the primary responsibility and if we were not very much at fault no outsider could make us act in the foolish and criminal way we have done. And the solution will also come from us probably sooner than many expect.

India and China, though different in many ways, have much in common. China today is in a welter of civil war, the proteges and hirelings of foreign powers trying to suppress the nationalists and prevent the formation of a strong and independent State. But the victorious armies of Canton are going forward surely and steadily and every Indian rejoices at their success. India too may find the way to her goal through the present strife and faction. For it must be remembered that the long sleep of India is over, and if the waking is a troubled one, nonetheless the strength increases and as soon as the internal squabbles are adjusted, this energy and strength will all turn to the one goal which almost every one in India desires.

Why does an Indian desire freedom for his country? Is it strange that he should do so? What is the present position in the so-called British Commonwealth of Nations? India is an original member of the League of Nations, but the men who claim to represent her are nominated by the British Government and represent the government alone. In this Imperial Conference she finds a place by courtesy and

the noble gentleman[2] who has recently been "representing" her appeared to be overwhelmed in the high and distinguished company and all he could do was to express repeatedly his gratitude for being allowed to sit on the doorstep. In the British Dominions an Indian is treated as a *pariah*, and in South Africa especially, colour legislation has repeatedly humiliated him and made his lot terrible to bear. Even in parts of the Empire directly administered by the British Colonial Office, like Kenya, he is tolerated as an inferior being and not permitted to own property in the highlands which are the peculiar preserve of the few British settlers.

In his own country his lot is no better. He is cribbed and confined and has no opportunities for growth. All creative and artistic effort has largely died out of him under the uncongenial and stifling atmosphere and a third rate literary education had made him fit only for the office stool. After 150 years or more of British rule the magnificent result is a bare 8 per cent of literates. There are no funds, so says the Government, for increasing education or more sanitation, or hospitals, or other nation-building services. For most of the revenue is swallowed up by an enormous expenditure on an army one of whose chief purposes is to keep down turbulent nationalists. Indians are charged with being unable to undertake the defence of their country after a deliberate policy of depriving them of their arms and refusing to admit them, except recently in a very small measure, to commissioned ranks. Interminable enquires go on as to how further commissions can be given, but when it comes to increasing the pay of the Indian Civil Service, the highest paid service in the world, a Royal Commission is hurried through in the teeth of unanimous Indian protest and the pay is increased and free passage to England granted. Funds were not lacking for this.

If an Indian turns to commerce and industry he finds the policy of the British Government is always, and perhaps naturally, partial to British interests and firms. Highly inadequate arrangements exist in the country for imparting technical education and the Government of India did not even have a Department for Commerce and Industry till Lord Curzon's[3] time. The exchange and financial policy of government has admittedly done tremendous injury to Indian interests, the *corresponding gain going to British firms*. Till last year there was the

2. At the Imperial Conference held in England in October 1926, the Maharaja of Burdwan was content to acknowledge and acquiesce in the inferior position given to him at the Conference.

3. Viceroy of India 1899-1905.

unique spectacle of the Government of India taxing cotton goods manufactured in India itself. The cotton industry in India nearly broke down under this burden and ultimately the excise duty was removed.

In the Government of India, the Indian has little influence. The decisions of the new Councils in vital matters are overridden or ignored by the Viceroy. The Viceroy and his Council have powers to initiate legislation or to certify any measure although the Legislative Assembly or Provincial Council may deliberately vote against it. In the Assembly the Swarajists adopted the old constitutional method of protest and voted down supplies but the Viceroy could and did forthwith reverse their decision.

But the terrible fact which stares every one in India is the appalling poverty of the people. India is not a country of gaily bedecked Maharajahs displaying themselves and their jewels periodically in the West after the manner of star artistes of the cinema world as many people seem to imagine, but a grim land full of millions of poverty-stricken peasants and labourers for whom the next meal is always a problem, a problem which is often not solved. Competent observers have come to the conclusion that poverty has increased greatly since the coming of the British and is still increasing. But indeed statistics are hardly necessary to establish this for he who leaves the few towns with their thin veneer of activity and prosperity and goes deep into the villages, can see it for himself in the sunken eyes and the hopeless looks of the people. What will India be like in the future if this continues?

Meanwhile, many of the best of India's sons lie in jail or in forced detention. Many of them are exiles in foreign lands unable to return to their motherland. Under the Bengal Regulation, one of the gifts of Lord Reading and the last British Labour Cabinet to India, a large number of young men have been in jail without trial or without even the formulation of any charge. Conspiracy trials are frequent and young men whose chief fault was that they loved their country too ardently, if rashly and foolishly, suffer the extreme penalty of the law. This is the Pax Britannica in India and it is not surprising that the Indian is thoroughly dissatisfied with it and looks forward to the day when he will have no more of it.

What the future will bring it will be vain to prophesy but it is clear that no settlement short of complete self rule will solve the problem. That self rule may mean complete independence or it may mean what is called Dominion Status. Most Indian politicians talk about Dominion Status but perhaps they do so because it is apparently easier to achieve. In reality the vast majority desire independence and some have the courage to say so. The British Empire does not appear to

be in good health and daily it becomes more and more nebulous. The chief link between England and the Dominions is one of sentiment but sentiment does not carry one far when interests clash. If India were a Dominion there would be little of this sentiment, in fact at present there is some thing very much the reverse of it, and her economic interests are bound to clash with those of England. It is thus a little difficult to see how India could continue as a free member of the British Commonwealth. But perhaps the future may bring its surprises and India may find a place there. For India has no desire to nourish past grievances. She looks to the future.

One tendency however is already noticeable. The idea of closer contact with Asiatic nations is becoming increasingly popular. The similarity of many ideas and cultures is partly accountable for this but the real reason is, undoubtedly, a common antagonism to European domination and exploitation. There is some talk in the East of an Asiatic Federation but this may be for the present a little premature. But whenever India achieves real freedom, she is sure to be drawn towards her neighbouring countries and to try to work in a large measure in concert with them.

22. Statement to the Press at Brussels[1]

I am glad to have the opportunity to associate myself on behalf of the Indian National Congress and the people of India whom it represents with the aims and objects of this International Congress. The Indian Congress stands for the freedom of India; freedom from foreign rule and intervention as well as the liberation of the poor and oppressed from all exploitation. We welcome this International Congress because, as we understand it, it has been called together to further these aims and objects in the international sphere. We realise that there is much in common in the struggle which various subject and semi-subject and oppressed peoples are carrying on today. Their opponents are often the same although they sometimes appear in different guises and the means employed for their subjection are often similar. Contact

1. 9 February 1927 A I C.C. File No G 29 (82 A), Part 11/1927, pp. 183—185 N.M.M.L.

between the various peoples will lead to a better understanding of each other's problems and difficulties and is bound to result in closer cooperation which must bring success nearer to us all. The fabric of imperialism looks imposing and appears to hold together, but any dent in it will automatically lead to its total destruction.

The Indian National Congress is necessarily national and has nationalism as its basis, but as our great leader Gandhi has said, our nationalism is based on the most intense internationalism. The problem of Indian freedom is for us a vital and urgently essential, but at the same time it is not merely a purely national, problem. India is a world problem and as in the past so in the future other countries and peoples will be vitally affected by the condition of India.

Today the strongest and the most far reaching imperialism is that of England and English imperialism and policy always have India as their corner stone. Both Egypt and other parts of Africa have suffered domination because British imperialism wanted to strengthen its hold on India and to protect its sea routes to that country. The importance of India and her future for this International Congress is thus obvious.

The Indian national movement has welcomed with the liveliest sympathy and hope the successes of the nationalists in China. It has been a matter of shame and sorrow to us that the British Government should venture to send Indian troops to China[2] in an attempt to coerce the Chinese. You are probably aware that the Indian National Congress has protested in the strongest language against this and the nationalist members of the Indian legislature wanted to raise this question in the legislature but the English Viceroy exercised his veto on the ground that it raised matters of foreign policy. Mr. Gandhi and other Indian leaders have emphatically on behalf of the people of India expressed their ardent hope that the Chinese nationalists will bring about the final emancipation of China The Indian press has condemned the Government's action and mass meetings have been held in various parts of the country for the purpose. India today is with China not only because she has every sympathy for her but because she feels that China's successful fight is the most hopeful sign of the future downfall of imperialism. As of old imperialism is trying to utilise one subject country to coerce another but in spite of her weakness India is not so weak today as to permit herself to be employed *as a pawn in the imperialist game.*

2. In January 1927 it was announced that India being the nearest part of the British Empire from which troops could be immediately despatched to China, a contingent of Indian troops was being sent.

The attempt to use India against China makes it all the more necessary for the forces of nationalism in the subject nations to cooperate together for their common good. And I trust that this Congress will help us to bring about this cooperation and will thus bring nearer the freedom of oppressed nationalities.

23. Speech at the Brussels Congress[1]

Mr. President and friends,

I have the greatest pleasure in conveying the warm and cordial greetings of the Indian National Congress to this Conference and in associating our national movement with this joint endeavour to combat imperialism. We in India have felt the full weight of imperialism. We know exactly what it means, and we are naturally interested in any movement which concerns imperialism. Indeed, if you want a really typical example to enable you to understand the results of imperialism I doubt if you could find a better one than India. In India's internal condition, as our President[2] pointed out, you see the way in which British capitalism has suppressed and exploited the workers. Whatever phase of imperialism you study, you have a wonderful example in India. Our problems, of course, concern us deeply, but I would venture to point out to you, whether you come from China, Egypt or other distant countries, that our interests are much the same, and the problem of India is of interest and importance to you.

It is not possible for me here to tell you the story of Indian exploitation, of the way in which India has been utilised, suppressed and exploited by other people. It is a long and distressing story, and all I can do is to point out to you one or two of the more important factors, which we in this International Congress must especially bear in mind, because they have a particular relation to the work we have to do. You have heard of various disturbances, of various massacres and shootings, and most of you have heard of the Amritsar affair. Do not imagine

1. 10 February 1927. AICC File No. G 29(82 A)/1927, Part I, pp. 85—89. NMML.
2. Stephen Owen Davies (1886-1972); leader of the South Wales Miners' Federation, MP 1934-1972.

AT BRUSSELS, 1927.

WITH SOME DELEGATES TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS AGAINST IMPERIALISM, BRUSSELS, FEBRUARY 1927.

that because it gained greater notoriety in the world than many other events that it stood alone as the worst incident in the history of India since the British arrived there. They came there, as you are no doubt aware, taking sides first with one party and then another, and thus gradually taking a firm hold. Right through their stay there they have adopted the old policy of "Divide and Rule". I regret to say that that policy is still very much in evidence. Well, they came and the earlier history of their occupation is one of the most atrocious and shameless examples ever seen in the history of the whole world. It is admitted, even by British historians who are not exactly impartial in the matter, that the earlier history of India under the rule of the British is simply a predatory one, a predatory period where freebooters went unrestricted and looted and despoiled the country. Also perhaps you know of what is called the Indian Mutiny, which took place 70 years ago. It is called the Indian Mutiny, but if chance had willed it otherwise and the rebels had been successful, it might have been called the Indian War of Independence. But what I was really pointing out to you in passing was this—Amritsar was nothing to what happened in the case of what is called the Indian Mutiny, but since then things have been happening continually and it is even now not at all uncommon for shooting to take place, in fact, it is terribly common for innumerable comrades and friends of ours to go to jail with or without trial. Indeed, many of our best comrades in India usually live in jail, or are exiled and unable to return to their homeland. You may have heard also perhaps of not a new but a favourite way of the British in India, of taking hold of people and putting them in jail without trial or even accusation. This sometimes attracts a little attention. But the real injury that the British have done to India, the real exploitation is something even more serious than the shootings, hangings, massacres which occasionally gain some notoriety. That is the systematic way in which they have crushed the workers and peasants of India, and made India what she is today. We read in history, not only ancient but even fairly recent history, of the riches of India. India has attracted various peoples from various corners of the world because of her wealth and riches, and today if you come to India the one fact staring you in the face is the terrible poverty there. The way in which the great majority of the people do not know where to find their next meal, and as a consequence, often not getting their meals, gradually die of starvation or semi-starvation is appalling.

That is the state of India today. It does not require statistics, facts or figures to convince you that India in the course of the last few generations has deteriorated terribly and is in such a bad way that if something drastic is not done to stop this process India may even cease

to exist as a nation. You know, perhaps, that years ago—soon after the British came—how ruthless they were in their endeavour to make industries profitable to themselves. In those days the new doctrine of the trusteeship of the Indian peoples was not mentioned. Our oppression was perhaps not worse than it is today, but it was franker. There was ruthless and open exploitation and suppression of all Indian industries. This was bad enough but even worse followed. Gradually, by means of suppressing old systems of education, by disarming us, and in a hundred and one different ways they crushed the spirit of the Indian people and tried to make them lose all capacity for effective and creative work. That, I say, was the deliberate policy of the British in India and they carried it out by trying to divide us among ourselves. Having disarmed us they tell us that we are not capable of defending our country. Having brought in a system of education which killed all our old education, and substituted something which was ridiculously small and ridiculously inadequate, having taught us false history and attempted to teach us to despise our own country and to glorify England, they now tell us we are not sufficiently educated to be a free country!

Now it is frequently stated and made much of in the English Press, that the Indians are fighting against each other, the Hindu against the Moslem, etc. We must remember, apart from the fact that these troubles are greatly exaggerated that it is the policy of the British to create these troubles, or where they already exist to increase them and take every step to keep them going, even where they could easily be put down. That has been the policy of the British in spite of any denials from any quarter. Well, what is the condition of India today? We talk about exploitation. We have plenty of it. Not merely a single exploitation, as it may be called, but sometimes a double or even a triple one. We have a part of India called the Indian States, where under the "protection" of the British a feudal system prevails, and often the English people point out to us and point out against us in other countries: "Look at this part of India, which has some sort of self-rule. Other parts of India are far more advanced." I am prepared to admit that charge as being not entirely wrong, often these areas are far less advanced than other parts, but there are things the British forget to point out. They forget to tell us that they themselves have especially bolstered up these Indian States, have especially prevented them from advancing, in short have kept them as they are. Unhappily, the wretches living there submit not only to exploitation and oppression as a result of British rule, but it must be admitted that they cannot advance also because of their own incompetent rulers. But it is the British who really enslave them and do not permit them to progress.

Take again the big land owners. There again, the system of land tenure in a large part of India is a feudal system that has been kept going and imposed upon us by the British. It is exceedingly difficult to get it changed so long as the British Government is not willing to change it. As associates in the policy of the British Government in India, we must consider the Indian princes and big land owners who feel that they cannot submit to a free India which would result in the freedom from exploitation of the peasants. Then again, we often have an unholy alliance of British capitalists with Indian capitalists. So we in India have to submit to various and manifold methods of exploitation.

Now then, the study of past history of events in the past few years proves that British policy has been based largely on the question of holding India. After all, we here know a great deal of the British Empire. Try to conceive for a moment what it would have been by now if Britain did not hold India. There would have been no British Empire. What it will be in the future, if and when India becomes independent, I cannot say, but certainly the British Empire would cease to exist. Naturally, therefore, from their capitalist and imperialist points of view they wanted to do everything in their power to hold on to India. All their foreign policy has been largely shaped with this object in view because it is so important for Britain to hold India and control that vast territory. They must, therefore, keep a stranglehold on India. The result is that India has suffered and is suffering. But that is not all. On account of India a large number of other countries have suffered and are suffering. You have heard of the most recent example of British imperialism in regard to India—the sending of Indian troops to China. They were sent in spite of the fact that the National Congress of India expressed its strongest opposition. I must remind you that Indian troops, unhappily to my shame I confess it, have been utilised many times by the British in oppressing other people. I shall tell you the names of a number of countries where Indian troops have been utilised by the British for this purpose—in China they first went in 1840, in 1927 they are still going and they have been actively engaged there innumerable times during these 87 years. They have been to Egypt, to Abyssinia, in the Persian Gulf, to Mesopotamia, Arabia, Syria, Georgia, Tibet, Afghanistan and Burma. It is a fairly formidable list.

I want you to appreciate that the Indian problem is not a purely national problem, but that it affects a large number of other countries directly and the whole world indirectly, in the sense that it directly affects the greatest and most powerful imperialism of our time. It is obvious that such a condition of affairs is intolerable for us in India. We cannot go on, not merely because freedom is good and slavery

bad, but because it is a matter of life and death for us and our country. Not only that; it is equally intolerable for you. You cannot go on in this way. You who come from various countries, from the four corners of the earth, cannot put up with having these tremendous barriers to your own liberation. I do submit that the exploitation of India by the British is a barrier for other countries that are being oppressed and exploited (applause). It is an urgent necessity for you that we gain our freedom. The noble example of the Chinese nationalists has filled us with hope, and we earnestly want as soon as we can to be able to emulate them and follow in their footsteps (long applause). We desire the fullest freedom for our country, not only, of course, internally, but the freedom to develop such relations with our neighbours and other countries as we may desire. It is because we think that this International Congress affords us a chance of this cooperation that we welcome it and greet it.

24. To Rangaswami Iyengar[1]

Brussels
11.2.27

My dear Rangaswami,

Mr. Roger Baldwin, the Secretary of the American Civil Liberties Union[2], wants me to put him in touch with you. He has been very actively engaged in the United States in fighting the encroachments on individual freedom and liberty which have grown so common there, and has assisted in the defence of people who have been harassed in this way. He is prepared to send some money, out of the funds at his disposal, to India for the defence of political prisoners there. He wrote to this effect to Lajpat Rai and Andrews but neither of them sent him any answer. He has now asked me if he can do anything else in the matter and it seems to me that the best course for him to adopt would be to communicate officially with the Indian Congress.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-38 (186-V)/1926, pp 13—14 N.M.M.L.
2. Roger Baldwin was from 1917 to 1950 Secretary of the American Civil Liberties Union and served with Jawaharlal on the Executive Committee of the League against Imperialism.

You will remember that a special fund was started by the Cawnpore Congress for the defence etc. of political sufferers. I do not know if there is a special committee to manage this fund. In any case you will be able to, through the Congress office, put the money sent to you to the best use. I have no doubt that you and the Congress will cordially welcome American help, not merely because of its monetary value but specially because it is an expression of the goodwill of friends in America. I hope also that our Congress office will remain in touch with Mr. Roger Baldwin, who is one of the most courageous and effective workers in the United States.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

25. To Rangaswami Iyengar[1]

Brussels
16.2.27

My dear Rangaswami,
I am dead tired after 8 or 9 days of the Congress here. I have not had a good night's sleep and hardly a decent meal since I came here. I cannot therefore write to you much about the Congress. For the present I am sending you a list of organisations represented—not a very correct one—and copies of some resolutions. A very long cable was sent to Srinivasa Iyengar[2] two days ago. I hope he received it.

Next week I hope to write more fully and a full report will follow soon. Meanwhile I hope that every publicity will be given to this Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C C. File No G. 29(82 A)/1927, Part III, p 243. N M M L.
2. S Srinivasa Iyengar (1874 1941), Advocate-General of Madras who resigned his post in 1920 and joined the Congress; deputy leader of the Swarajist party in the Central Legislative Assembly; President of the Congress at Gauhati 1926, resigned from the Congress in 1930

26. Report on the Brussels Congress[1]

In compliance with the resolution of the National Congress, passed at Gauhati, appointing me their representative at the International Congress against Imperialism, I had the honour to attend the sessions of this International Congress and to take part in its proceedings. I am submitting separately another report for publication and for distribution amongst the members of the All India Congress Committee. But as it was not possible to refer to many matters in that report and as I wish the Working Committee to be in possession of all the facts, in order to enable them to take such action as they may deem necessary, I have decided to submit this further and more detailed report.

The Brussels Congress, regarded from any point of view, was an event of first class importance and it is likely to have far-reaching results. The English press, so far as I am aware, has given little or no publicity to it, with the exception of some Labour organs. The Continental press gave some more publicity but even here more or less satisfactory reports were confined to the Labour papers. This was not surprising as it is the deliberate policy of the big newspapers in the West to suppress and ignore such happenings. Quite a large number of press correspondents, including representatives of the big news agencies, were present at the public sessions of the Congress, but either their messages were suppressed or they themselves did not send any proper reports. Many of us were continually being pestered with requests for interviews from all manner of newspapers all over Europe and the press photographers made a public nuisance of themselves by taking scores of snapshots of most of us.

The Congress was, as such Congresses seldom are, very representative both of countries being exploited and oppressed by others and of workers' organisations. The list of organisations and delegates which I enclose will give some idea of the representative character of the Congress. This list is not quite correct as some people who are mentioned there did not come and others who are mentioned came. Among the countries represented China had the strongest representation. The Canton Government had a representative and so had the Kuo Min Tang[2]. Both

1. 19 February 1927. A.I.C.C. File No G 29(52 A) 1927, Part II, pp 151—182. N.M.M.L.
2. The Chinese National Peoples' Party organised by Sun Yat Sen It was prominent from the 1920's and formed the government in 1928. After a prolonged civil war, it was overthrown by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949.

the Northern and Southern Chinese national armies sent one of their generals, and the Chinese labour organisations had several delegates. There were several Indians present representing students or local organisations in Europe but they could hardly be said to represent *India*. The fact however that the Indian National Congress was officially represented made the Indian representation important and weighty, inspite of the deficiencies of the representative in question. Egypt, Persia, Syria, Dutch East Indies, Annam, Korea, Morocco, French North Africa (both Arab and Negro), South Africa (both Negro and White Labour), United States (Negroes and White representatives of the *minority movements), Mexico, & States of Central and South America*, were some of the countries represented. The European countries sent labour leaders, many of them famous in the ranks of socialism. England sent quite a number of leaders of the left wing of the labour movement—among them being George Lansbury,[3] M.P.; Fenner Brockway[4], Secretary of the I.L.P; Davies, member of the Executive of the Miners' Federation; Beckett[5], M.P.; Ellen Wilkinson[6], M.P.; Bridgeman; Pollitt[7]; McManus[8]; etc. There were besides some men of note in literature, like Henri Barbusse and Toller[9], the German dramatist.

3. (1859-1940); leading British pacifist; founded the *Daily Herald* in 1912 and edited it for many years; member of the Labour Government 1929-31 and leader of the Opposition 1931-35.
4. Fenner, now Lord Brockway (b. 1888), for many years Secretary of the Independent Labour Party; attended the Congress session at Madras in December 1927, rejoined the Labour Party in 1946.
5. John Beckett, at this time a member of the Independent Labour Party. He later joined the British Union of Fascists.
6. (1891-1947); well-known Labour politician, who served as Minister for Education in the Labour Government from 1945 till her death in February 1947. She was a close friend of Jawaharlal.
7. Harry Pollitt (1890-1960); Secretary of the British Communist Party from 1929 to 1956, and Chairman from 1956 till his death in 1960.
8. Leading British Communist who died soon after the Brussels Congress.
9. Ernst Toller (1893-1939); was a personal friend of Jawaharlal. His life was an unhappy one. He was in prison from 1919 to 1924 for participating in the Bavarian revolution. In 1932 he left Germany and after living in exile in Europe and the United States, committed suicide in 1939. On his death Jawaharlal sent the following message: "I met Ernst Toller for the first time in Brussels at a meeting of the League against Imperialism. This was I think early in 1927. We were attracted to each other and I met him subsequently on two or three occasions, I think, in London. I read several of his books but in English translation. He struck me as a man of great ability and with a strong feeling of humanity. He was very sensitive to human suffering, and it was a matter of grief for me to learn of the circumstances of his unfortunate death."

Among the senders of messages of goodwill there were Mr. Gandhi, Einstein[10] and Romain Rolland.

The gathering was thus a distinguished one and, considering the difficulties which the organisers had to contend against, it was a remarkably successful one. The organisers deserve credit for this but anyone present at the Congress could not help thinking that no amount of organisation could have made it a success if it had not supplied a real want. People in far off countries simply jumped at the idea and came long distances to attend the Congress. Many of the delegates from South America and South Africa had to raise subscriptions to which even the poor contributed to enable them to come to Brussels. This was an impressive fact and it naturally made one think that whatever the future of the organisation which the Brussels Congress has created might be, *some such international organisation is bound to come in* the near future.

For an Indian it was exceedingly interesting to meet the various types of humanity represented in the Congress. The Chinese were, most of them, very young and full of energy and enthusiasm. The traditional notion of the placid and tranquil Chinese received a rude shock and one was confronted with a group of persons, apparently not remarkably able, but with a great deal of driving force, and a desire to fill the picture. China of course, owing to circumstances, did fill the picture but before the Congress was over people were rather tired of listening to Chinese orations, which were not remarkable for their lucidity. I suppose the Chinese representatives were the natural products of a revolution and I was led regretfully to wish that we in India might also develop some of this energy and driving force, at the expense if need be of some of our intellectuality.

The Indonesians, chiefly from Java, were even more interesting. They were Moslems but even their names were partly derived from Sanskrit. Their customs, they told us, were still largely Hindu in origin, and many of them *bore a striking resemblance to the higher caste Hindus.* There are many Buddhists in Indonesia and we were glad to find that the relations between the Moslems and the Buddhists were uniformly good and both of them worked together for the independence *of their country.*

The negroes present varied from the inkiest black to every shade of brown. There were able men among them, full of eloquence and energy, but they all bore traces of the long martyrdom which their race had suffered, more perhaps than any other people, and there was a want of hope in the dark future which faces them. The Arabs from

10 The distinguished physicist.

Syria and North Africa were very different—typical fighting men, who understood independence and fighting for it and little else, and were wholly untainted with the slave mentality of more intellectual races.

The people from Latin America, dark as the northern Indian, were again a different and interesting type. Most of us, specially from Asia, were wholly ignorant of the problems of South America, and of how the rising imperialism of the United States, with its tremendous resources and its immunity from outside attack, is gradually taking a stranglehold of Central and South America. But we are not likely to remain ignorant much longer for the great problem of the near future will be American imperialism, even more than British imperialism. Or it may be, and all indications point to it, that the two will join together to create a powerful Anglo-Saxon bloc to dominate the world.

It was this bogey of the United States and the fear that they might not be able to stand up against them unaided, that drove them to seek for help from outside. So far the weakness of Latin America has been the want of unity. Each State quarrels with the other and often within the States there is also disunion, usually fomented by the United States. An interesting and instructive outcome of the Brussels Congress was the achievement of unity between the delegates of the various South American States. This unity was on paper only but it is probably the herald of a closer union of the States against their bullying neighbour of the North.

The South African Trade Union Congress of white workers sent a representative and so also did the Natal Native Council—a negro organisation. In these days of race hatred in South Africa and the ill-treatment of Indians it was pleasing to hear the representative of the White workers giving expression to the most advanced opinions on the equality of races and of workers of all races. The negro and the white man jointly represented South African workers and they worked together in the Congress.

The idea of holding an International Congress at Brussels apparently originated with a small group in Berlin. This group was probably in touch with Soviet Russia and the Russians approved of the idea. But the Russians kept themselves severely aloof from the Congress because they thought that too close an association might frighten away many people. Thus there was no representative from any Russian organisation and indeed Russia was conspicuous by its very absence. But there can be no doubt that there were very many sympathisers with Soviet Russia present and a number of professed communists. The Congress was entirely in keeping with Russia's present policy of encouraging and supporting every form of nationalism and indeed every other force which can help them to break imperialism, specially British

imperialism. Russia has toned down her purely communistic propaganda in order to lay greater stress on the common fight against imperialism. Probably it is felt that once this arch enemy is removed the orientation of the world along communistic lines will be easier.

So Russia did not overtly help the Congress in any way. I do not think that any money even was paid by her for the expenses of the Congress. The idea, once started, was welcomed by the Chinese and by the Mexicans, both of whom subscribed handsomely to the funds of the Congress. Other subscriptions were also raised from workers' organisations. The support of two Governments—Canton and Mexico—and a number of organisations in those and other countries laid the foundations of the Congress and a general appeal was then issued which met with a very satisfactory response. The decision of the Indian National Congress to send a representative was greatly welcomed by the organisers, as a Congress against imperialism without India, the typical example of imperialist exploitation, would have been a very incomplete affair. The chief planks of the Congress as the organisers wrote to me at the time, were going to be China and India ,and partly Mexico. Mexico was to take the lead in the consolidation of Latin America against the United States, and India and China were to be the battle fronts against British imperialism.

There were many difficulties to be faced by the organisers. Minor difficulties related to the attitude of the Belgian Government. These were ultimately overcome and the Congress was held in a fine old palace of Brussels, the property of the Government. There was a beautiful hall and ante-chambers and marble staircases. The Belgian Government also gave every facility in giving visas to delegates.

A major difficulty was an attack by an official of the Second International[11], who stated that the Congress was engineered by the Third International[12] and some disgruntled persons and should be boycotted. The Second International, as is well known, is the International Organisation of Labour which has its headquarters in Amsterdam and which existed before the war. The Third International is the Soviet one with its headquarters in Moscow. Organized Labour in England, Germany and some other countries belongs to the Second International. I believe the Indian trade unions have also recently become affiliated to it. There is bitter warfare between the two Internationals although constituent groups of them are friendly to each other. The British

11. It was founded in Paris in 1889. Most European socialist parties, including the German and Russian Social Democratic Parties, were affiliated to it.
12. The Communist International, known as the Comintern or Third International, was founded in Moscow in 1919. It was dissolved in 1943.

Miners' Federation, for instance, is very friendly to the Third International, and British Labour has been trying for some time to bring about a rapprochement between the two Internationals, but so far without success. There is not a very great deal of difference between the two — or rather it is more correct to say that there is not much difference between the left wing of the Second International and the Third International. The great objection raised to the latter is that it takes its orders from Moscow and does not leave any liberty to the various trade unions belonging to it.

The attack of the official of the Second International and some other circumstances created an unpleasant situation and it was at one time feared that British Labour as well as some other important trade unions would keep away. They were prevailed upon however to come, and I think that one of the many reasons which induced some of them to come was the knowledge that the Indian Congress would be officially represented.

The Brussels Congress was thus, so far as its delegates were concerned, by no means purely communist. There were important labour leaders who have openly opposed communism and the Third International. But the organisers were certainly communists or people having full sympathy with Russia. There was also a strong undercurrent of sympathy with Russia among the delegates. As one of the negro delegates from Africa put it, his people did not know much about communism but they felt that Soviet Russia brought a message of hope to the downtrodden and oppressed Every reference to Russia was cheered.

The Congress began its public sessions on the 10th February. But preliminary informal meetings of such delegates as had arrived were held on the 7th and 8th February. I arrived in Brussels on the evening of the 6th and took part in all the informal meetings. On the 9th representatives of the press were invited and the organisers and a few delegates representing different countries made statements to them about the Congress and what they expected it to do. I enclose a copy of the statement I made on that occasion.

I was a member of the Presidium — the Presiding Committee or Subjects Committee of the Congress. This used to meet daily before the Congress and decide on the agenda for the day. I enclose a copy of the general agenda from which you will notice that there were six main divisions of the work. General speeches were delivered by prominent people under each head and special resolutions were usually tacked on to them. On the first day I was one of the persons who delivered the opening addresses. The official languages of the Congress were French, English and German. Every speech had to be

given or translated into at least French and English and sometimes German also. Among the other languages used were Arabic and Chinese. An attempt to speak in Hebrew was stopped as apparently no one besides the speaker understood the language. The translation work was good and rapid and the general arrangements for taking down verbatim reports of speeches and typing copies in three languages were also good. But the translations are not always good and you must remember this fact when you read the proceedings of the Congress.

Each session of the Congress usually had a different President, supported by two others on either side of him. Most of the heads of delegations had thus a chance of presiding, and on one occasion I was the President. The more or less permanent President of the Presidium and the Congress was Edo Fimmen, a big labour leader of Holland and Secretary of the International Transport Workers.

The Indians were specially interested in four resolutions[13]. The first one of these (marked A) was drafted by us and as you will notice is quite a simple one. The second one (B) was a joint declaration on behalf of the Indian and Chinese delegates and really formed a kind of introduction to the other resolutions. The third (C) was a signed declaration of the British, Indian and Chinese delegates and is the most important and effective resolution of the three. We suggested to the British delegates that as their country was the chief sinner both in regard to India and China it was up to them to state what they proposed doing. Some of them thereupon produced a draft. We accepted the draft in its entirety except for one verbal change. Subsequent British arrivals objected to the form of clause 1 of the first part which stated, as drafted by the English delegates, that they would "fight for the severance of the British connection wherever such national forces so desire". To satisfy the objectors we suggested the substitution of "complete independence" for the "severance of the British connection" and this was accepted by them. So far as we were concerned the change made no difference.

You will notice that this resolution — the chief merit of which is that it is entirely a British production and was moved and supported by Britishers — lays down a strong line of action even in regard to India. Apart from the declaration in clause (1) that they would "fight for the complete independence" etc., clause (3) declares that they would vote against all military credits and clause (4) that they would carry on anti imperialist propaganda even among the soldiers. In clause (2)

13. Not included here.

of part 2 of the resolution direct action and strikes are recommended to prevent movements of munitions and troops to India and China.

This resolution was signed by Lansbury, M.P.; Beckett, M.P.; Fenner Brockway, Secretary, I.L.P.; Ellen Wilkinson, M.P.; Bridgeman; Rust[14], McManus; Pollitt; Davies of the Miners' Federation and some other British delegates. Liau[15] signed it on behalf of the Chinese and I signed on behalf of the Indians. The resolution was really meant to bind the British signatories who are affected most by it but to some extent it binds me as the Indian signatory also. I trust the resolution will have a good effect in India in lessening the extraordinary mentality which clings on to the British connection in spite of everything, and specially in regard to the army of occupation in India. So far as I am aware little has been said in India on this subject and the presence of a foreign army of occupation is taken for granted. In the Brussels Congress we laid special stress on this fact and whenever objection was taken to the despatch of troops to China we pointed out that we had to put up with foreign troops all the time and fresh contingents were continually being sent.

This resolution was sent by cable—at great cost—to the President of the Indian Congress and to the National Government of Canton. I hope the Congress will approve of this resolution and will adopt it if necessary with some minor changes It would largely fit in with the policy of the Swaraj party in the Councils and would give a welcome lead to the country in regard to outside action.

The fourth resolution in which the Indian delegates were interested related to Mesopotamia. We felt that as no delegate from Mesopotamia was present and as Indian troops had conquered and were at present occupying Mesopotamia, and large numbers of Indian clerks and employees were taking part in the exploitation of the country, it was up to us to demand the recall of the army of occupation and to say that we did not wish to be a party to this imperialist adventure, even though we may profit a little from the drippings of British exploitation. I regret I have no copy of this resolution with me at present. It will be sent to you later with the full record of the proceedings of the Congress.

There were many other resolutions, copies of some of which I am sending you. Many others could not be considered for lack of time. Some delegates — notably those from Korea and Persia — were considerably put out as nothing was done about their countries. A number of enormous manifestos were rushed through the Congress at the

14 William Rust (1903-1949); a leading British Communist.
15. H. Liau, representative of the Kuomintang

last moment when there was no time to consider them. One of these, called the Congress Manifesto, a copy of which I enclose, is more or less Marxian and, although personally I have no very great objection to it, the manner of its being rushed through was objectionable.

Finally, a permanent organisation was formed. The Presidium with some alterations was made into the General Council of the League. I enclose a list of this General Council. You will notice that there are five Honorary Presidents and in order to show honour to India they have made me one of these five. The others are Einstein, Romain Rolland, Madame Sun Yat Sen[16] and Lansbury. The General Council has an executive committee of 9 with four substitute members, who can always attend and can vote when the others are absent. It was proposed to have me as one of the secretaries but I pointed out that this was absurd as I could not even attend meetings from India. I was not made secretary but in spite of the same objection I was made a member of the Executive Committee. There are three secretaries, a Hungarian, Gibarti, who is a very capable linguist and worker and who has been so far in charge of the organisation; Liau, a Chinaman; and Senghor,[17] a full-blooded negro from the French African colonies but resident in Paris. Lansbury is to be chairman of the committee and Edo Fimmen the vice-chairman. The office will be in Paris but for some months it will continue in Berlin.

Under the constitution as adopted, the organisations that sent delegates might be considered as constituent or affiliated bodies unless they do not desire this. The Indian Congress can thus for the present be considered as an associated body. It will be for the Working Committee to decide this question. Personally I hope that the committee will approve of the association. The advantages are great and the disadvantages inconsiderable. Among the advantages are the opportunities to keep in touch with many Asiatic and other countries with problems not dissimilar to ours, and the use of the League as a very efficient means of propaganda and publicity. There is no doubt that the League can and intends to carry on propaganda on a big scale. We have discussed the question of foreign propaganda for a long time in the Indian Congress but for various obvious reasons nothing much has

16 Born in 1890, Soong Ching Ling married the Chinese revolutionary and leader Sun Yat Sen in 1915. After his death in 1925, she worked with Chiang Kai Shek and the Kuomintang, but her sympathies were with the Chinese Communists and she was elected Vice-Chairman of the Central People's Government in 1949.

17. Lamine Senghor was Chairman of the militant *Ligue pour la Defence de La Race Negre*

been done or could be done. Modern publicity and propaganda require vast sums of money which we certainly could not spare. But if we can take advantage of another organisation to do this work for us without our spending much money or energy over it, there seems to be no reason why we should not avail ourselves of it. There is another consideration to be borne in mind. Many speakers at the Brussels Congress spoke disparagingly of the League of Nations and called it a League of Governments. They referred rather grandiloquently to their Congress as the true League of Nations or Peoples. This is, for the present at least, an exaggerated description but there is a germ of truth in it and it is in the interest of the Indian Congress to be associated with an organisation which might play a big role in the future.

The disadvantages, as far as I can see, might be the socialist character of the League and the possibility that Russian foreign policy might influence it. The socialist tendencies of the League are very marked although individual members who were not socialists were present. The whole basis of the League is that imperialism and capitalism go hand in hand and back up each other and neither of them will disappear till both are put down. An endeavour is therefore made to join the forces against imperialism and capitalism and by this coordination to strengthen the two. So far nationalism of a narrow variety has been the main pillar of capitalism and imperialism in the imperialist countries. The example of Poland shows us that even in an oppressed country the achievement of political freedom results in driving nationalism into the imperialistic and capitalistic fold. The labour movements in the West are therefore developing along lines opposed to this narrow nationalism and to be called a nationalist is almost a term of reproach in labour circles. Almost to a man, the members of the labour organisations are socialists. The problem in oppressed countries is somewhat different and nationalism automatically and rightly takes precedence of all other sentiments. This is recognised even by socialists but they point out that in such countries nationalism might be given a broader basis more in consonance with the tendencies of the age; that it might derive its strength from and work specially for the masses, the peasants and the other workers. Personally, I agree with this contention because I accept in its fundamentals the socialist theory of the State. I do not know however how far the Indian Congress would be prepared to identify itself with socialism. I may point out however that the association of the Indian Congress with the League against Imperialism does not mean the adoption by the Congress of a socialist programme. The Congress is and remains entirely free to work along such lines as it considers best suited for the country.

There is a growing belief in labour circles in England and the rest of Europe that the exploitation of a subject people does not benefit greatly the labouring classes of the country which exploits. The party that benefits is the capitalist and if the capitalist was removed there would be very few causes of friction between the workers of various countries. How far this is correct it is difficult to say, but there is certainly some truth in it. It is conceivable of course that two socialist countries may develop imperialist tendencies and might attempt to exploit each other or a third. But for the present, advanced labour opinion is distinctly against the exploitation of another country as it believes that it ultimately results in a reduction of their own wages in the home country and in the lowering of their standard of life. Mr. Saklatvala[18] I notice has been criticising the boycott of Lancashire goods in India on the ground that this injures their comrades in Lancashire. This is an example of a possible conflict between our nationalistic interests and the interests of the workers outside. I do not think however that Mr. Saklatvala has given expression to any considerable body of opinion. I have met even communists who have criticised his statement and socialists generally I believe recognise the right of a subject country to boycott. It is easy enough of course to put Saklatvala's point of view before the British worker and to get him to give an enthusiastic assent. The case of China is very much to the point. In China the boycott of foreign goods has been reduced to a fine art and the strength of China today is this power of economic boycott which has nearly ruined Hongkong and has brought the British almost to their knees. But no word of protest is raised by British labour against this policy of boycott and indeed the support which British labour has given and is giving to China in the present crisis is remarkable.

I would therefore submit to the Working Committee that it is highly desirable for the Indian Congress to associate itself with the League against Imperialism, thereby of course in no way limiting its freedom

18 Shapurji Saklatvala (1874-1936); was a nephew of Jamshetjee Tata, founder of the industrial house of Tata, which he joined after his education in England. He spent three years in the jungles, exploring for iron, coal and limestone. His work helped in the establishment of the Tata Iron and Steel Works. From 1905 to 1925 he was in London as Tata's representative, and took an active part in the life of the Indian community there. Becoming interested in the Labour movement, he ultimately became a member of the British Communist Party. A brilliant orator, he was arrested for one of his speeches and imprisoned for a few weeks in 1922, and again in 1924. He was returned to Parliament in 1924 from North Battersea and was an M.P. until 1929. He visited India in 1927.

of action in India or elsewhere. In case the Working Committee so decides it will be proper for it to contribute to the funds of the League. The constitution of the League is vague on this point and merely says that each constituent organisation should contribute in accordance with its strength of membership and financial position. I would suggest that a first contribution of £100 be made and more might be sent later. Considering the activities of the League and the large amount required by it, this sum is a small one and might be augumented in the course of the year. I believe that the Congress has set aside Rs. 5,000 for foreign propaganda. The £100 might come out of this sum.

I stated above, in mentioning the disadvantages of our associating with the League, that Russian policy might influence it, but I forgot to deal with this question in its proper place. The Russians have an extraordinary capacity for propaganda and to this they add a really surprising knowledge of the internal conditions of other countries. I have not met any Russian myself, apart from some *emigres* and exiles, but the knowledge I have gathered from indirect sources about their activities and their intimate knowledge of external politics has amazed me. The British politician whose job it is to know thoroughly the countries he rules probably knows far less about them than the Russian experts. It is thus probable that the Russians will try to utilise the League to further their own ends. Personally I have the strongest objection to being led by the nose by the Russians or by anybody else. But I do not think there is much danger of this so far as we are concerned. We are so accustomed to being led by the British, in spite of what we may imagine, that it will take a long time for us to get out of the habit. And to break this British tradition will be a definite gain and once we have regained our mental equilibrium it will be up to us to decide what we should do. Apart from this, even if the Russians try to utilise the League they will do so very cautiously and on more or less unobjectionable lines. The presence of Lansbury as chairman and some others in the executive committee shows that it is not a onesided affair. I do not see why, under these circumstances, we should not cooperate with men representing the Russian viewpoint. The mere fact that English politicians are never tired of showing that the Russians are monsters need not frighten us or prevent us from associating with them where it is manifestly to our advantage to do so. In so far as we are up against British imperialism we must recognise that Soviet Russia is also very much against it.

An interesting feature of the Brussels Congress was the strong desire of the delegates from Asia that the beginnings should be made of some Asiatic federation. This was not due to any special feeling against

Europe or America but to a drawing together of the Asiatic elements and a recognition of a common bond uniting them. This was specially noticeable in the delegates from the smaller countries : Indonesia, Korea, Persia, Syria and Egypt (which might be considered an Asiatic country for this purpose). The organisers of the Congress were rather suspicious of this Asiatic spirit and did not want to encourage it, partly because they felt that it might lead to the formation of another organisation like theirs. The Asiatic delegates met once and talked for two or three hours but nothing came of it. But the desire to do something remained. I could not understand how an effective Asiatic organisation could be built up. Various parts of Asia are more inaccessible to each other than they are to Europe and at the present moment Europe is the best meeting ground for different Asiatic nationalities. As there was much feeling in the matter, specially among the delegates whose resolutions had not been considered by the Congress owing to lack of time, I arranged a meeting of a selected number of delegates from countries in Asia and from Egypt. We decided that it was premature to talk of any special Asiatic organisation and that we might concentrate for the present at least on strengthening the new League against Imperialism, which in effect would largely serve our purpose. At the same time it was highly desirable for various Asiatic countries and their national organisations to develop contacts and to remain in touch with each other. We exchanged the addresses of our organisations and decided that we should try to send each other our publications and reports. Further, that whenever possible we should try to visit the other countries and put ourselves in touch with the national organisation there. The best occasion for such visits would be when the national organisation has its annual or periodical Congress or meeting. Whenever this takes place invitations should be issued by the organisation holding the Congress to the other national organisations and such of them as are able to do so could send fraternal delegates. Further, we appointed a committee of four with its seat in Paris to cooperate with the League against Imperialism in regard to Asiatic matters, and specially to look after the interests of such countries, like Korea, Persia etc., which have no special organisation there to watch their interests.

I am sending separately some of the addresses of national organisations of Asiatic countries. I trust that the A.I.C.C. office will get into touch with them and send all our Congress publications and reports. Also that they will be invited to send fraternal delegates to the next Congress. It will perhaps be desirable for the A.I.C.C. to have a special department dealing with foreign affairs in charge of a

person who is acquainted with one other foreign language (French or German) besides English. This department could keep in touch with the League against Imperialism and with the national and workers' organisations in Asia and elsewhere. Our contact with the rest of the world is bound to increase and it is neither possible nor desirable for us to try to maintain our isolation. Even isolation if it was complete might have some advantages but we are now connected with the outside world practically through England and the English language only and our ideas of the world naturally tend to become lopsided and perverted. Quite apart from the desirability of our cultivating relations with other countries, it is necessary for us to train a body of young men with some knowledge of the present world and the forces that are shaping the future. A Congress department of foreign affairs and occasional visits paid by Indians to foreign countries, not as tourists but as sympathetic students, would go some way to train such a body of men.

I shall now deal with the present crisis in China and as to what we can do in regard to it. The news that reaches India about the Chinese struggle comes almost entirely through British official or semi-official agencies and the real truth seldom appears in the Indian papers. As England is intimately involved in the present crisis, it can easily be imagined that no chance is missed to run down the national movement here. The importance of the Chinese struggle cannot be over-estimated. It is not merely the attempt of an oppressed nation to regain its independence. It is that of course, but the methods employed have made it into a direct attack on the capitalist system and thus on the very foundations of the present system in vogue in almost every country except Soviet Russia. A victory for the Chinese means the creation of a great Soviet republic in the East closely allied with Russia and together with it gradually dominating the whole of Asia and Europe. This does not mean that the Chinese republic will be fashioned wholly on the lines laid down by Marx. Even Soviet Russia, owing to the pressure of the peasantry, has had to give up part of its communism, and in China where the small peasant is the deciding factor, the departure from pure communism will be all the greater. But in essentials and in their hostility to British and other imperialism, Russia and China will stand together. Japan must of necessity gravitate to this bloc. Indeed there is no lack of signs that Japan is trying to gain the goodwill of China. She has deliberately dissociated herself from the action that England is taking. It is obvious that such a combination threatens the very existence of the British Empire and directly affects the future of India. It is exceedingly doubtful if England even with

the aid of other European countries can do much injury to this great continental block. What is more likely is that England in order to save herself from extinction will become a satellite of the United States and incite the imperialism and capitalism of America to fight by her side.

It is the knowledge of this inherently weak position that has been the governing factor in British diplomacy of late. Today even in case of war England cannot do very great injury to China, at any rate she cannot break up the revolution. She can hold on to the ports and to the coastline and the Chinese can hold on to the interior for any length of time and bring about the complete ruin of British trade in China. But probably if there was war it would not be confined to Chinese territories or waters. It might spread to Russia. It is stated that the British Government has decided to break off all relations with Soviet Russia. If this happens it may gradually lead to war with Russia and that again may lead to a world war. It is well known that Poland is making feverish preparations for war against Russia. I do not think that any country really wants war at present but war has a habit of coming uninvited and sometimes unannounced. It has been notorious amongst politicians in Europe that preparations are going on for a great war about five years hence. This period of 5 years is fixed because the Singapore base will be ready about that time and England will be in a favourable position to fight in the Far East. It is believed that British military policy in India is also based on the preparation for a war about that time. In any war between Russia and England the North-West Frontier of India will naturally be the principal battle ground. I have gathered from newspapers and other sources that the Government of India is encouraging the import of motor lorries and trucks and I have an idea that the duty on them was removed or greatly reduced. These trucks form an essential feature of transport in warfare now, specially as railways cannot be wholly relied on in these days of strikes. The general strike in England was broken by means of motor transports. I understand that motor lorries go regularly now from Karachi to Peshawar, but I am not sure of this. Another feature of English policy in India appears to be to make India a self-sufficient country in case of war, capable of producing munitions and the other paraphernalia of war. Under the guise of protecting and encouraging Indian industries they are really encouraging only such industries as will help them in war time. With the battle fronts in India and China, England will be too far away to provide materials These will have to come from Singapore and India For this purpose probably attempts will be made to have alliances between British and Indian capitalists, so

that in time of need the latter might aid the former. The encouragement given to civil aviation in India is also part of the same war policy.

Thus England might prefer to have a war 4 or 5 years later. But on the other hand there is the fear of China being much stronger then than it is now. Apparently also Russia is not prepared for war now and so England might decide on an earlier challenge. I cannot prophesy what will happen but I want to place the various possibilities before you. It is quite possible that but for organised Labour in England the country might already have drifted into war, gifted as it is with one of the most stupid and blatantly pompous governments in history. The leaders of labour — MacDonald,[19] Thomas,[20] etc. — were very moderate and apologetic over the Chinese question, but the rank and file of Labour rose in an extraordinary way and forced their timid and halting leaders to adopt a stiffer attitude. There have been innumerable demonstrations in England against war in China and against the despatch of troops. Albert Hall had a tremendous meeting and a vast crowd gathered in Trafalgar Square. Leaflets have been distributed to the troops who were leaving for China. In fact it has been freely asserted that the Government did not trust the ordinary regiments and sent only the arisocratic regiments like the Guards. The policy of the I.L.P. is "to prepare the workers for organised mass resistance by refusal of war service, including the manufacture and transport of munitions, should the calamity of an outbreak of hostilites occur."

Whatever may be the outcome in China — peace or war — it is clear that India will be deeply affected thereby, far more even than by the war of 1914-18. The Congress must therefore take cognisance of the forces and policies that are shaping the future of the world and lay down its own policy and programme accordingly. We cannot remain aloof from them; else our best laid plans will break down and we will find ourselves suddenly faced with crises for which we are wholly unprepared or even stampeded into a war for the support of the very system against which we are contending. There does not appear to be — I speak with all deference and with insufficient knowledge — a sufficient

19. Ramsay MacDonald (1866-1937), first Labour Prime Minister of Britain 1923-24 and 1929-31, when he resigned to head a National Government. He was greatly interested in India, which he visited and then wrote a book called *The Awakening of India*. Invited to preside over a session of the Indian National Congress, he was obliged by his wife's illness to decline.

20. James Henry Thomas (1874-1949); organiser of the British railwaymen's trade union and member of the Labour Governments of 1924 and 1929-31. He was one of the Labour leaders who agreed to serve in the National Government of 1931, but resigned in 1936 because he was held responsible for leakage of budget secrets.

appreciation of the significance of the Chinese struggle, and the protests that have so far been made in India either by the Working Committee or by the press appear to lack conviction and strength. We are far more deeply concerned with the issue in China than British Labour is and yet we have not done an infinitesimal part of what the latter has done and is doing. The Secretary of the I.L.P. asked me some days ago why India was so quiescent in the matter and said that strong agitation in India would strengthen their hands tremendously. All I could say was that perhaps the news agencies were not sending us reports of what was happening in India.

It seems to me that India must take up a strong attitude, at least as strong as that of British Labour, not merely because it is right for us to do so but because it is manifestly in our interest. A strong agitation would divert attention from some of our internal squabbles and produce among the masses, and to a certain extent even in the Indian army, the mentality of resistance which we had for a brief spell during the height of the noncooperation movement.

I had many talks with Chinese delegates in Brussels. Faced as they were with a critical situation, they naturally wanted immediate action and were intolerant of delay. I pointed out to them that however much we might sympathise with them our internal difficulties prevented us from doing much at present. We would try to do our best now but what was more important was to lay the foundations of future cooperation. The joint declaration of the British, Indian and Chinese delegates lays down some definite lines of action. I do not know how far it is practicable to act along these lines in India at present. But if the lines are approved, considerable publicity might be given to them and mass opinion gradually educated.

The Chinese delegates were very keen on the Canton Government sending a permanent representative to India and the Indian National Congress sending a similar representative to Canton or Hankau. I agreed with them about the desirability of the proposal and said that I would place it before the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress with my strong recommendation. But I pointed out that there may be many difficulties in the way of the I.N.C. and they may not be able to send such a representative. A representative from the Canton Government to India would of course be warmly welcomed.

Some of the immediate steps that were agreed upon were as follows:—

1. The Chinese should open an Information Bureau at some place in India, preferably in Calcutta where there is a large colony of Chinese and supply the fullest information to the press and politicians of India on Chinese questions This Bureau to be under the charge of a com-

patent person who can, if necessity arises, confer with Indian leaders on Chinese questions.

2. At the opening of the Bureau will take a little time, immediate steps should be taken to send continuous information on Chinese questions to the Indian press and national organisations from a Chinese Information Bureau in Europe, preferably the London one.

3. A Chinese representative to be stationed in India. The head of the Information Bureau if he is competent enough might be such a representative.

4. As soon as feasible, Chinese representatives might visit India and make a tour of India to enlighten public opinion. I told them that I would suggest to the Congress in India to send an invitation and as a matter of fact I sent a cable to this effect to Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar from Brussels.

5. The Kuo Min Tang party in China might invite representatives of the Indian National Congress to visit China. I hoped that the Congress would be able to send one or two persons but I pointed out that it was quite possible that the Government may not issue passports. Even if Government prevented our representatives from leaving India it would have a good effect.

6. Similarly it was suggested that the Trade Union Congress in China might invite representatives of the Indian trade union movement to China. I told the Chinese however that apart from other difficulties there was an additional one — the fact that most of the leaders of labour in India are very moderate.

I was told that the Chinese are planning to hold a big workers' Congress in Canton on May 1, 1927 and they specially wanted representatives of the I.N.C. and the Indian trade unions to attend this. Probably invitations for this Congress will be issued to you soon. I hope it will be possible for you to send a representative.

7. Representatives of the Kuo Min Tang party might be invited to attend the next sessions of the I.N.C.

8. The Chinese delegates were very desirous of arranging a conference between Indian and Chinese representatives in the near future —within the next three or four months. Such a conference can either take place in China, or in India, or in Europe. I pointed out that if Chinese representatives came to India there would obviously be no difficulty in arranging a conference. In China or Europe it would be far more difficult as we may not able to send our people. Perhaps

if competent men could be sent to attend the workers' congress at Canton on May 1 they might be able to meet representative Chinese there. Or if suitable Indians happened to come to Europe next summer, some meeting could be arranged.

9. The Chinese delegates were also keen on some young Indians going to China for purposes of study and to develop contacts with the Chinese and their national movement. They said that the Indians would be very welcome and every facility would be given to them. I told them that it was not likely that many Indians would be able to go to China but I would place their proposal before the Indian leaders.

Meanwhile a continuous agitation should be carried on in India for the recall of Indian troops from China and on the duty of Indian soldiers not to fight their brethren in China. If the situation develops favourably there might be possibilities of mass action but nothing definite could be said about this.

I am afraid I have written a very long report, which will try the patience of the members of the Working Committee. But I preferred to be long and explicit, even at the expense of the reader's boredom, rather than short and perhaps misleading. The international situation changes rapidly and it is quite possible that by the time this note reaches India, important and far reaching developments might have taken place. The British position is weak and if complications arise it is highly likely that some sops will be thrown out to India to soothe public opinion. It is freely rumoured in London that the Bengal Ordinance prisoners will be released and the appointment of the Statutory Commission[21] in the course of the year announced. It is also unhappily possible—though I earnestly trust that it will not happen—that owing to our internal weaknesses we shall accept almost anything as a compromise. But if it is realised that relatively and potentially we are not weak, whilst England is daily losing ground in spite of her apparent strength, we might perhaps adopt a stiffer and more uncompromising attitude. A suitable settlement can only come when we are strong and not in our moment of weakness. We have but to hold out and refuse to have any dealings with the spirit of compromise, born of weariness, and concentrate on the building up of strength.

I hope the Working Committee will send me full directions on the various points raised in this report. It is possible that I may have to attend one or more meetings of the executive committee of the League against Imperialism before I return to India. It is also possible that

21. Better known as the Simon Commission, its purpose was to consider the working of the Reforms of 1919.

I may again come in touch with the Chinese and other people. It is therefore necessary that I should know exactly how the Working Committee feels in regard to these matters, and what action, if any, it would like me to take.

I am sending with this report copies of various resolutions and manifestos of the Brussels Congress. I hope to send soon a full report of the proceedings.

Montana

Jawaharlal Nehru
February 19, 1927

27. On the Indian Situation[1]

I want our country to gain complete swaraj, and this should be our aim till we succeed. I will probably not change my opinion, whatever be the state of my country. I thought, and I still think, that often our leaders forget this, and therefore I am writing to you about it.

Swaraj means two things: the external relations of our country and the internal organisation. In external affairs our country should have full freedom to do what it likes, to sign treaties or develop special relations with any country. If our country wishes to have any special relationship with England, she may. If she thinks it proper to have such relations with China or any other country, she should be free to do so. Thus all the rights that an independent country enjoys in this respect, should be those of our country also. To say even now that we shall always be associated with England, as a Dominion or in some other form, seems to me inappropriate, for it lessens our freedom of choice in the future. I do not want our country to be a victim of that narrow nationalism which is now to be found in almost all the countries of Europe and America. I hope that after gaining freedom we shall use our energy for extending peace in the world.

1. Extracts from a letter written by Jawaharlal from Montana and published in *Aaj*, 2 March 1927. Original in Hindi.
This letter received wide notice in India and was generally regarded as implied criticism of Motilal Nehru.

By internal independence I mean that our freedom should benefit the majority of our people, that is, the peasants and workers. I do not want that swaraj in which a few rich people benefit or a few Indians get even higher positions and the lot of the crores of peasants and poor people does not improve.

I had written to you earlier also that in my opinion there should be an extremist group in the Congress. I did not by that mean the formation of a new party to compete with others. I had emphasised that there should be no attempt to increase the number of parties. But what I was afraid of was that in the Congress or in the Swaraj Party, there would always be some men who would try to pull us back. It is but natural that in big parties there should be all sorts of people, extremists and moderates, impatient and slow. To stop this pulling us back there should be some pressure from the other direction as well. If those persons who agree with this view could consult together and take the right steps, the danger of our backsliding could be avoided. This will also add to the strength of our leaders and they could forge ahead with confidence. It does not mean opposing the existing parties, excepting those that go against our principles. Apart from the Congress, the Swaraj Party is the only leading group at present. Even those in that party, who think it proper, can join the extremist group and help their party to go ahead.

28. To Rangaswami Iyengar[1]

Clinique Stephani,
Montana s/Sierre,
Switzerland
7.3.27

My dear Rangaswami,

I enclose another note for the Working Committee I hope you will have copies sent to the members. My principal object in sending these notes is not only to keep the Working Committee in touch with developments but to divert the attention of the members for a while at least from Hindu-Muslim riots and murders. I think they ought to thank me for this little diversion!

1. A.I.C.C. File No G. 29(62-A)/1927, Part II p 131 N.M.M.L.

I do not know where you are likely to be when this reaches India. I am sending it to Madras. But I am also writing separately and shortly to you to Delhi.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

NOTE FOR THE WORKING COMMITTEE

As the committee might be interested in further developments in the work of the League against Imperialism, I am writing this additional note. The Executive Committee of the League will meet soon to decide on definite lines of action. It is clear that the League has already given a great impetus to various activities in different countries. I had an opportunity last week of meeting again the secretary of the League. I have been discussing the future programmes and I have also been in correspondence with various members of the committee.

The Brussels Congress has attracted considerable attention and is recognised to have been a very significant affair. In Germany great publicity was given to it by all the papers, perhaps because they are interested in anything which goes against the imperialist powers, Germany for the present at least not being one of them. In France there was less of press publicity, but political correspondents gave importance to the Congress. In England the press has been silent, except for some appreciative passages in the Labour organs. Lansbury's Weekly gave a good deal of space to it. The communist press has welcomed the Congress but has criticised it as being moderate. I am told that I have been described in it as the famed bourgeois representative of the Indian National Congress—a very correct description. A study of these press comments gives one a fairly accurate idea of the Brussels Congress and the League. It is not a communist affair, though it has strong labour and socialist leanings and it welcomes communists and non-communists alike. The right wing of the British Labour Party is fighting shy of it and is trying to prevent the left wing from identifying itself too closely with it. This is natural for the right wing has a purely imperialist outlook and cannot look with favour on anything which is really opposed to British imperialism.

The principal Egyptian delegate to the Brussels Congress was Hafiz Ramadan Bey[2], the leader of the Egyptian National Party and a leading advocate of Cairo. This party is slightly more radical than Zaglul

2. Mohamed Hafiz Ramadan Bey was a member of the General Council of the League against Imperialism in 1928

Pasha's[3] old party which is gradually declining in strength although Zaglul is himself very popular. There is no real opposition between the two parties. Zaglul is getting very old and much cannot be expected from him. Hafiz Ramadan is supposed to be the coming man in Egypt. He has promised to work on behalf of the League against Imperialism in Egypt and he proposes to start a branch of the League there which will have representatives of all the national parties and labour organisations in Egypt. He further proposes to give an annual sum of £500 on behalf of his party to the League. I understand that Zaglul is himself very interested in the League.

Steps are being taken to form a branch of the League representing the Arab countries. Probably the headquarters will be Palestine as Syria is in actual revolt. Mazhar El-Bakri, a Syrian notable and leader, is in charge of this. Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari probably remember El-Bakri. He told me that he had met them in Palestine or Syria. This branch will probably have representatives from Iraq also.

Mexico is taking the lead in organising the League in Latin America and it is probable that a Congress of representatives from Latin America will be held before long in Chicago or somewhere else in the U.S.A., the idea of holding it in the U.S.A. being to storm the citadel of American imperialism. Funds have been promised for work in Latin America. The Nicaragua problem[4] will be made the chief issue.

A branch will probably be started in the U.S.A. also. Funds for use in the U.S.A. have been promised.

The problems of the negroes in the U.S.A. and those in Africa are very different and the two branches of the race have hardly been in touch in the past. Efforts, which are likely to succeed, are being made under the auspices of the League to bring them together and make them act together.

The South African delegates have undertaken to form a branch of the League in South Africa in collaboration with the advanced wing of the white workers, the negro workers, the Negro Congress and the South African Indian Congress. This branch will specially work against all colour legislation and discrimination. So far there has not been much cooperation between these different organisations and each one of them has had to fight its battle singly. The white workers have

3 Saad Zaghlul Pasha (1850-1927), Egyptian Nationalist leader; suffered both arrest (1882) and exile (1919) for his attempts to end foreign domination in Egypt; in 1919, founded the Wafd Party.

4. Nicaragua, of interest to the United States because of her plans to construct a canal across the Isthmus, was occupied by U.S. marines for a long period.

of course not only not helped but have been the partisans of the colour discrimination policy. It will therefore be a great gain if the League succeeds in bringing about some cooperation and specially in associating at least the advanced white workers with the oppressed races in South Africa. A recent agreement between the Governments of South Africa and India has apparently been approved in India. I am unable to express an opinion on it, though it does not seem to me to go very far. But in any event it would be foolish to imagine that the troubles of Indian settlers in South Africa are over and the help of the other communities should be very welcome.

Probably some organisation will also be formed in North Africa.

The pressure of the right wing and the lukewarmness of many of the other Labourites in England is hampering work on behalf of the League in England. Lansbury and some others are keen but they feel that caution is necessary so as not to antagonise the others. The main objection raised is that the League draws its inspiration from Russia and technical difficulties are also raised to the effect that Labour organisations in England being affiliated to the 2nd International cannot be formally associated with another international organisation. The first objection does not carry one very far. The executive committee of the League has, I believe, a majority of non-communists and there is no reason why they should be led by the nose by the minority. Besides it is obvious that the League can only work satisfactorily on more or less common lines of action. A narrow majority ignoring a minority will soon break up the League. In any event it is premature to condemn the League before it does anything to which objection can be taken.

The second objection appears to me to be untenable. The League has been formed on a broad enough basis to include national organisations on the one hand and labour organisations belonging both to the 2nd and the 3rd Internationals. So long as there is no conflict between the principles and the practice of the League and those of another organisation, the latter is certainly at liberty to associate itself with the League.

This [China] of course will continue to be the principal activity of the League. The delegates from other countries—Egypt, Syria, South Africa, America etc.—realised how much their own future depended on the issue in China and have decided to make China a principal plank in their own national campaigns.

The situation in China continues to be grave. The British Government has, for all practical purposes, abandoned even its pretence of neutrality, in spite of all assertions to the contrary. Their troops are

stationed now in the Chinese part of Shanghai, outside the confines of the International Settlement. The commander of the Shantung troops—Chang Chung Chang—who is now opposing the Cantonese, has been allowed to fix up his headquarters inside the International Settlement and in all probability he is receiving every help from the British. He is admittedly and notoriously a brigand well known and hated all over China for his ruthlessness. The recent mass executions of strikers and pickets in Shanghai could never have taken place if the British troops had not been landed there and had not given their moral support to the Shanghai defence forces.

The battle for Shanghai may take place at any moment and the probability is that the Cantonese will defeat Chang Chung Chang. They will immediately then come face to face with the British troops and if these latter are outside the Settlement boundaries there is every chance of friction. The foreign troops in Shanghai have no great importance apart from the British contingents. They have been sent there for form's sake and I understand that they have instructions to avoid all conflicts. No foreign troops excepting the British and Italians—there is an unholy alliance between Austen Chamberlain[5] and Mussolini—are outside the Settlement boundaries. The British troops are fully equipped and have the latest tanks and aeroplanes.

The Chinese problem is intimately connected with the relations between Russia and England. The recent exchange of notes between these two countries has not added any lustre to England. Probably England is not yet prepared to face a rupture but conditions are bound to get worse.

As I informed the President of the A.I.C.C., Chinese representatives were invited to England by a number of Labourites. The British Government has however refused to give them visas. It is clear that a similar policy will be adopted in the case of Chinese visiting India or Indians visiting China. But this is no reason why every effort should not be made on our behalf to get into touch with the Chinese.

As I have already cabled to the President, A.I.C.C., the headquarters of the Kuo Min Tang in Canton have thankfully accepted the invitation of the Indian National Congress to send representatives to India. They have nominated for this purpose: Madame Sun Yat Sen, Professor Kuo Meng yu of the National University, Pek-

5. Sir Austen Chamberlain (1863-1937), British Conservative politician; was Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1903-5, Secretary of State for India, 1915-17; a member of the War Cabinet from April 1918, and Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1919-21. He succeeded Bonar Law as Conservative leader in 1921. From 1924 to 1929 he was Foreign Secretary.

ing and Wang Tsen Way, a member of the Central Executive of the Kuo Min Tang. The fact that the Kuo Min Tang attach considerable importance to this visit can be seen from the names of their nominees They are all very important persons in their movement. Madame Sun Yat Sen is of course famous, Professor Kuo Meng yu is the head of the propaganda section of the Kuo Min Tang. Steps are now being taken by the Kuo Min Tang to get visas for their nominees to visit India. It is highly unlikely that they will succeed in getting their visas. If they do not I trust the fullest publicity will be given to this fact in India and questions put in the Assembly.

The Chinese have suggested to me that perhaps it will be easier for Indians to go to China and they therefore desired that the Indian Congress should try to send representatives I do not agree with them in thinking that this will be any easier but nonetheless, I feel that an attempt should be made, especially if the Government do not allow the Chinese to come to India. I might mention that the Chinese have suggested to me that among the Indian representatives might be Dr. Ansari I do not quite know why Dr. Ansari's name was suggested but in any case Dr. Ansari would be an excellent choice. I believe the idea was that some solid and substantial persons who had a recognised position in India might be sent, partly because they wanted such persons and partly because they might have a better chance of reaching China and returning to India.

Our Chinese friends are extraordinarily keen on India doing something substantial to help them. They keep asking me what is being done and what more can be done.

As I stated in my last note, a long cablegram was sent to the President of the Indian National Congress by the President of the Brussels Congress on or about 13th February. But the last mail dated 18th February received from India contains no reference to this cable although a subsequent cable of mine is acknowledged. I am thus inclined to think that the first cable was suppressed by the Government. This is rather annoying as the cable cost £16.

It is proposed to hold a meeting of the Executive Committee of the League in Amsterdam within the next fortnight. I shall endeavour to attend.

Montana,
March 7th 1927

Jawaharlal Nehru

29. To N.S. Hardikar[1]

Clinique Stephani,
Montana s/Sierre,
Switzerland
8.3.1927

My dear Hardikar,

I have read your letter to Goswami[2] in the *Forward*, regarding the raising of a contingent of the H.S. Dal for ambulance work in China. I am very glad you have made a proposal of this kind. It is up to us in India to do something practical for China. Vague resolutions of sympathy do not carry one far. What form this practical help should take I cannot say from this distance. But I do hope that the All India Board of the Dal will decide on something effective.

In considering this question there are three matters to be borne in mind: men, money and the facilities which the Government will give us. The third matter is entirely beyond our control and it is highly likely that every difficulty will be placed in our way. All we can do is to make a reasonable and practicable proposal and for the rest we can ignore the action that Government might take. If we do our best and are prevented from proceeding further by Government it is not our fault.

I would imagine that the proposal to raise and send a large number of volunteers—200 as you suggest—would meet with insuperable difficulties. Perhaps you might raise the men but very large funds would be necessary and it is certain that Government would come in the way. It would be far more feasible to send a selected batch of say 20 or 25 volunteers trained in ambulance work. The funds required would not be very great and other difficulties would proportionately be less. In selecting these 20 or 25 men it would be desirable to get representatives of different provinces to some extent at least. If funds are not sufficient for even so many then only 10 need be sent. The number does not matter so much, it is the spirit of active help that will create a very good impression in China and India.

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Tulsi Charan Goswami (1898-1957), a zamindar of Serampore who was educated at Calcutta and Oxford and then entered politics; was a supporter of the Swaraj Party and helped Chitta Ranjan Das to start the newspaper *Forward*. He was a member of the Legislative Assembly from 1923-30 and 1937-45 and Deputy Leader of the Party till 1939. In 1943 he served as Finance Minister in the Bengal Government.

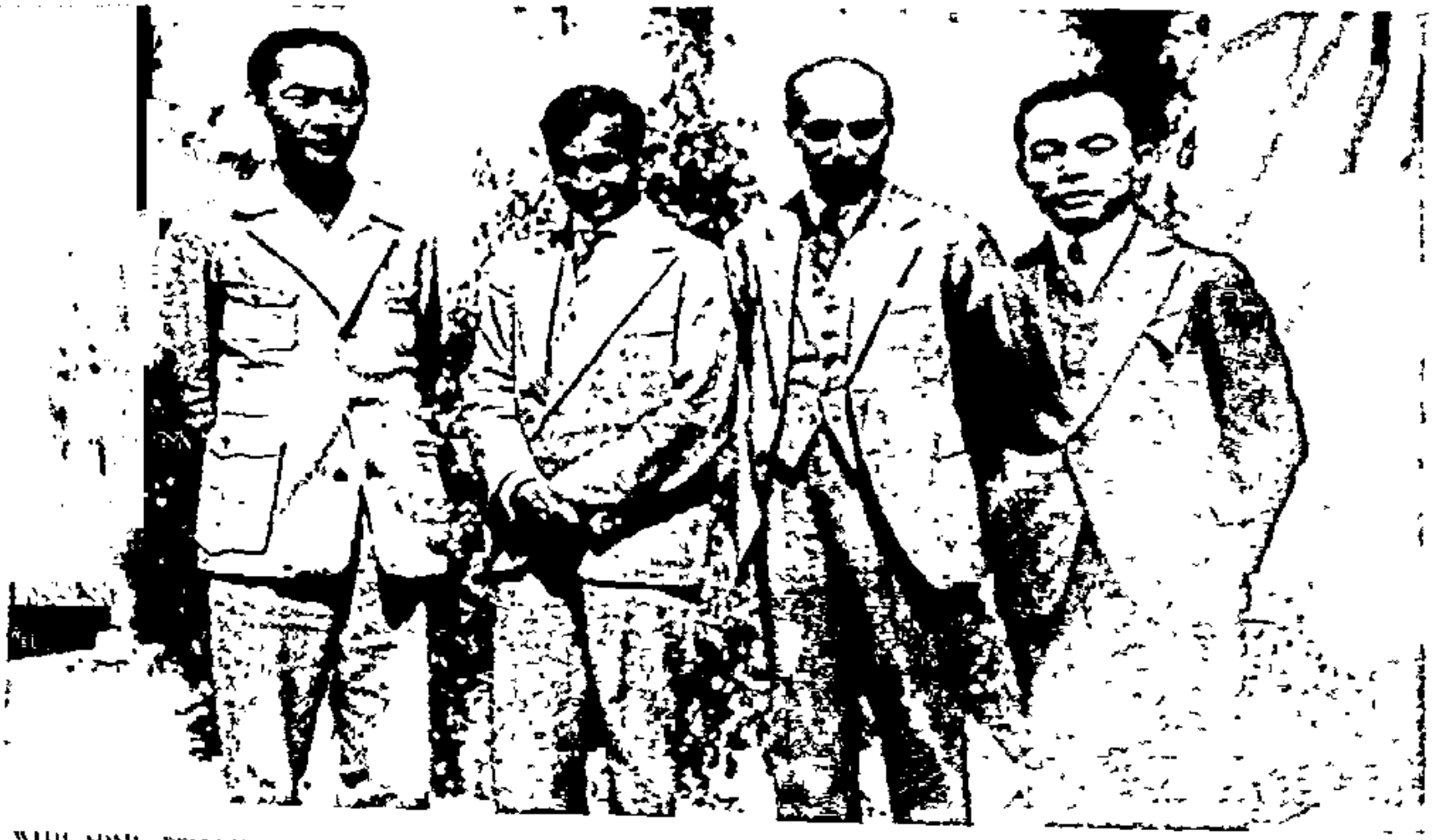

WITH SOME DELEGATES TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS AT BRUSSELS, FEBRUARY 1927
ON THE PLATFORM

Confidential - Not for publication

Report on the International Congress against Imperialism held at Brussels from February 10th to February 15th, 1927. submitted by Jawaharlal Nehru to the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress.

In pursuance with the resolution of the National Congress, passed at Gauhati, appointing me their representative at the International Congress against Imperialism, I had the honour to attend the sessions of this International Congress and to take part in its proceedings. I am submitting separately another report for publication and for distribution amongst the members of the All India Congress Committee. But as it was not possible to refer to many matters in that report and as I wish the Working Committee to be in possession of all the facts, in order to enable them to take such action as they may deem necessary, I have decided to submit this further and more detailed report

The Brussels Congress, regarded from any point of view, was an event of first class importance and it is likely to have far-reaching results. Yet the English press, so far as I am aware, has given little or no publicity to it, with the exception of some Labour organs. The continental press gave some more publicity but even here

151

PHOTOSTAT COPY OF THE FIRST PAGE OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NOTE TO THE WORKING COMMITTEE.

If your Board decides on some such action and the funds are available I would advise you to communicate immediately with the Kuo Min Tang party in Canton offering your services. You need not wait for Government permission. If Government subsequently refuse permission *you can inform the Canton Government or Kuo Min Tang of it.*

It would be a great thing if some action was taken quickly. Time is important. Keep me informed of what you do. My address will be C/o Thos. Cook & Son, Geneva.

I am enclosing a note for the *Volunteer.*

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

The note for the *Volunteer*[3] has developed into a little article. It might be worthwhile to send copies of it to other papers in order to give it greater publicity immediately.

J. N.

3. See item 39.

30. *Note on a Proposal for a Parliamentary Bill for India*[1]

10.3.1927

During a short visit to London which I paid in September last, I had occasion to meet the Secretary of the Independent Labour Party. He told me that it was the desire of his party to take up a well defined attitude in regard to India and then to endeavour to get the whole Labour Party to adopt this, so that when Labour comes to power they would be more or less committed to this line of action. The present position was highly unsatisfactory. Mrs. Besant's Commonwealth of *India Bill*[2] had been formally adopted by the Labour Party but it was a measure which created no enthusiasm in the I.L.P. (Independent Labour Party) or in India. They proposed therefore that another bill should be drafted and if the Indian leaders agree to its provisions, the I.L.P. should formally adopt it and carry on propaganda on it. At

1. J. N. Miscellaneous Papers, NMML.
2. In 1925 the British Labour Party decided to support this Bill, which was intended to place India on an equal footing with the Dominions, but in fact vested certain residual powers with the viceroy.

the present moment they are handicapped from taking up a strong enough attitude in public as if they do so, they are immediately confronted with the milk and water provisions of Mrs. Besant's bill which, for the time being, is an official Labour Party measure.

The I.L.P. felt that they could not do much in this direction without the backing of the Indian leaders. It would be difficult enough for them to convert the whole or a majority of the Labour Party to their view, not to mention the general public, but this task would become far more difficult if they had no support in India.

I told them that I appreciated their position and would gladly help them in any way I could. Personally I did not like the idea of drafting bills for Parliament or of Indian leaders or organisations committing themselves to any such bill! No bill could contain my idea of complete independence. But I added that the leaders in India would probably agree to a bill which was advanced enough, that is a bill which actually and immediately gave India full Dominion Status, not in theory only as Mrs. Besant's bill does. Even so, I added further, it would perhaps be better for the I.L.P. to go ahead on its own initiative, having previously assured itself of the goodwill of the Indian leaders to its measure, without trying to commit the Indian organisations to its formal support.

Various drafts were then sent to me in November for my opinion and I made numerous suggestions. The point I wished to emphasise and make absolutely clear was that the bill must provide for the immediate control of the Indian army by India and that no foreign army of occupation could be allowed to remain in India. A fresh draft was thereupon prepared, taking Mrs. Besant's bill as the basis and a short time ago I made further suggestions on this draft and sent them to the I.L.P. These suggestions, in the main, were as follows:

I have stated that on further consideration my doubts about the desirability of any Parliamentary Bill have increased. I cannot reconcile myself to India being a consenting party to her continued adherence to the British Empire. I feel strongly that the one and only aim which India can have is complete independence and the I.L.P. should also declare itself unequivocally in favour of this. I can well understand that the I.L.P. desires that India and England should cooperate together in the future but this cooperation can only come about after India has severed her connection with the British Empire. The I.L.P. cannot, if it wishes to be true to its own ideals and general policy, refuse to support the demand for Indian independence. I had some discussions on this point with I.L.P. members in Brussels. They admitted the correctness of my contention but almost every Englishman, however advanced

he may be politically, is a bit of an imperialist in matters relating to India. Having admitted the principle, they sought refuge in practice and in the oft repeated statement that they could not demand independence for India when India herself had not demanded it and indeed had repeatedly refused to countenance the idea. I was not prepared to admit this latter statement in its entirety but even granting the fact that India does not want independence, I gave it as my firm opinion that it was upto the I.L.P. to press for it. Independence was the only right solution of the problem and the fact that we in India feared to claim it as our due was only a vivid illustration of our own mental degradation and of the injury that England had done to us. It was absurd to ask a country under military occupation and with all manner of penalties attached to political work to express her real opinion on this subject. It was equally absurd to expect, after many generations of British domination and repression, that we would not be very much affected by the false ideology of our British rulers and by the slave mentality which this had produced. We have had since the Great War plebiscites in certain parts of Europe, Silesia[3] for instance. All the world knows the value of these plebiscites taken under the shadow of guns. And a plebiscite in India today would have an even less value for we have not only the guns but the perverted outlook which long association with the British has given us. So I contended that even if India did not want independence today, or even went so far as to declare herself definitely against it, even then it was upto the I.L.P. to declare that independence was India's due and she must have it. Afterwards when she had gained complete freedom and was in a position to form a right opinion she could easily, if she so wished, associate herself with the British Empire or Commonwealth. But not before.

I further pointed out that as a matter of fact it was not quite correct to say that India desired to remain in the British Empire. The reaction after the noncooperation movement had certainly produced a feeling of weariness and a desire for compromise in many of our leaders and others. Further the mere fact of working in the Councils in India necessitated the toning down of our demand to dominion rule. A demand for independence was out of court in the Assembly or Councils. Thirdly there was the feeling that an uncompromising demand for independence by the Congress might result in the declaration of the Congress as an unlawful assembly and thus bring about a crisis

3. A plebiscite was held in Silesia in 1921 to determine whether Upper Silesia should remain in Germany or be transferred to Poland. The plebiscite resulted in a heavy vote for Germany except in the easternmost part of Upper Silesia.

U. C. L.B.

which we in our present moment of weakness were not prepared to meet. And fourthly since the reaction which followed noncooperation the masses have largely kept away from the Congress and there is a preponderance of certain elements in it which on the whole profit by the British connection and are thus reluctant to break it. In spite of these four substantial reasons the urge for a Congress declaration in favour of independence has been growing and it has only been the personal influence and pressure of influential leaders which has kept it down. And I feel sure that it cannot be kept down very much longer. (May I add here that the arguments advanced by Mr. Gandhi[4] at Gauhati were in my humble opinion, and I say so with all respect, wholly untenable and based on an entirely wrong ideology).

I placed all these considerations before the I.L.P. and also pointed out that even in their own interests it was highly desirable for them to press for Indian independence and nothing short of it. British policy was aimed today at bringing about a close cooperation between certain capitalist, landlord and other elements in India profiting by the British connection with similar elements in England. The Indian States would of course fall in this group. And thus we may have in India in the near future a measure of freedom, just enough to break the backs of the advanced groups, and with all the power vested in groups friendly to English imperialism. It would be an alliance of imperialist England and an imperialist India, which would not only make real freedom and progress in India difficult but would lengthen the life of British imperialism. The I.L.P. could hardly desire this to happen and the most effective method of preventing it was to make India wholly independent.

Thus any Parliamentary Bill, which necessarily confined itself to Dominion rule, would not receive the support of at least that section in India which believes in independence. But I made it clear that probably it might be approved by most of our leaders.

Subject to the above, I made a number of other suggestions on the draft sent to me. This draft was rather vague on the question of defence. I had previously laid stress on Indian control of all military services. I again pointed out that unless this was made quite clear, the bill was in my opinion utterly worthless, and although it might be

4. Mahatma Gandhi opposed a resolution that 'Swaraj' should be defined to mean independence free of any British control. He said he himself would be satisfied with any constitution which gave India the power to declare independence. He asked the people to be patient and attain what was possible at the moment and then "mount further steps". Even the Dutch Boers had been content with Dominion Status though they could have declared their independence.

approved even as it was by some, it would meet with fierce and continuous opposition by others. The bill should lay down that the full control of all military, naval and air services should pass on forthwith to the Indian Parliament or executive and the actual withdrawal of foreign troops and the transfer of Indian troops to Indian control should begin immediately. The actual technique of transfer may take a little time — but not long —,but the theoretical control must vest immediately in the Indian executive.

A suggestion was made by some members of the I.L.P. that there should be no second chambers either in the Central or the Provincial legislatures. I entirely agreed with this. The proposed Senate in Mrs. Besant's bill is a most objectionable body. Any second chamber would either be based on a wide electorate and would thus be an unnecessary and undesirable duplication of the first chamber, or it would be based on a restricted electorate and would be a reactionary body always creating deadlocks.

A suggestion of mine, approved by the others, was the reconstitution of the provinces on a linguistic basis. Hindustani, with English as a permissible alternative, should be the official language of the Central legislature, *and the language of the province and Hindustani should* be the official language of each province.

The franchise for both the Central and the Provincial legislatures is proposed to be the same adult franchise. No property or educational qualifications are mentioned; only three years' residence and earning one's living. The latter is a rather vague phrase but the idea is clear and can be put in better language.

The minute details of village organisation in Mrs Besant's bill have been left out. It was felt that statutory provision for them would really hamper growth as there would be no flexibility.

In regard to the Indian States, no change has been suggested in their status in the draft bill, but they will be under the new Indian Central Government, which will take the place of the present Government of India. It will be open to the new Government by negotiation to bring about changes.

There were many other suggestions made to which reference need not be made here. On the whole the draft was made on the Irish model—the Irish oath of allegiance etc. being the least objectionable.

I do not know what the I.L.P. has finally decided on the suggestions made by me. But I have today received a letter from the I.L.P. office which informs me that their Council has been considering the question and the procedure they propose adopting is as follows: after preparing their final draft they will send copies of it to a number of

Indian leaders for their opinion and suggestions. If they generally approve, the draft will be sent formally with a covering letter to Indian political organisations—they will probably address other organisations besides the Congress. In this covering letter they propose to say frankly that should India demand complete independence the I.L.P. will support it; should India desire to remain within the British Commonwealth, the I.L.P. will support the demand provided it is a demand for full Dominion Status. Should, however, India desire to retain British control over the army and the Indian States, the I.L.P. will be sorry and although it will support this demand, it will not do so whole-heartedly. The draft bill which will be sent will give India control over the army and Indian States. The letter from the I.L.P. office continues as follows: "The Committee felt encouraged to go on with the bill in view of Srinivasa Iyengar's statement about drafting a bill. The National Council merely wants to push forward the matter and not in any way to intervene. If Srinivasa Iyengar proposes a bill to which every one agrees and if it is not a bill which leaves the army and the Indian States altogether in the hands of the Viceroy, the I.L.P. will scrap its own bill and take up Iyengar's bill. We want to draft the bill to show the best which will arouse our whole hearted support. Less than that will be merely 'reforms' which we feel could not rouse our enthusiasm, though we will support it." This letter contains not only the opinion of the individual who wrote it but it apparently purports to give the opinion of the I.L.P. Council.

It is an irony not without significance that the I.L.P. should express fear that the Indian leaders might tone down their demands to immaterial and trivial reforms which do little good and rouse less enthusiasm. But the record of the past few years shows that their apprehension is not unjustified.

I have so far not written on this subject to India but now that matters are taking some shape I thought it would be desirable to inform the members of the Working Committee about them. Probably it will be some little time before the I.L.P. communicates with Indian leaders and the formal letter to the Congress will only go much later. But as Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar apparently intends drafting a bill he may be interested in knowing of what the I.L.P. are doing. The Working Committee may also perhaps find a knowledge of what some Labour circles are doing in England useful in considering further developments in the political situation in India.

The I.L.P. do not desire any publicity to be given to their proposal at this stage either in India or England. They are afraid that publicity, before the full draft is ready after consultation with Indian leaders, will

make their task more difficult in England. The Labour Party as is well known has among its ranks imperialists of the richest hue; a majority and the party machinery are still under the control of men like MacDonald and Thomas who probably are a shade worse in regard to India than even Birkenhead[5]. But the I.L.P. is growing in power and as has been shown in the Chinese crisis they can occasionally bring the Labour Party upto the mark. It is therefore desirable that this note and the suggestion of the I.L.P. be kept confidential for the present.

Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Frederick Edwin Smith (1872-1930); first Earl Birkenhead, Conservative Lord Chancellor 1919-22 and then Secretary of State for India 1924-28

31. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Clinique Stephani,
Montana s/Sierre,
Switzerland
15.3.1927

My dear Bapuji,

I have not written to you for a very long time. I have purposely avoided doing so, so as not to add to your work, and have contented myself by sending you news of us through Mahadeva and Devadas. But neither of them has been, so far as I am concerned, an extraordinarily good correspondent. Of this I do not make the slightest complaint, as I can fully realise how busy Mahadeva must be with his numerous activities, and Devadas, I am very sorry to learn, has not been keeping well. Besides, *Young India* has been keeping me supplied with news about you. But the effect of not hearing often or frequently from any person is a slackening at this end also. And so I have not written as often even to Mahadeva or Devadas as I might otherwise have done.

I presume you have been in some sort of touch through father with our movements here and the state of Kamala's health. It is a year, almost to a day, since we landed at Venice, and it must be confessed that the results of the year's treatment have been far from satisfactory. At present Kamala is keeping well and latterly she has made real progress. I am hoping that this will continue but still I have a feeling

1. Gandhi-Nehru Correspondence, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 12590

that although she may be outwardly cured care will be necessary in future to prevent relapses. She goes out for fairly long walks now and so far as appearances go looks healthier than she has done for some years.

I had hoped to return to India in spring this year but this is not likely now. It is hardly wise to go during the monsoon. So it seems that we must stay on here till late August. We propose to remain in Montana for another five weeks and then to go down to Montreux, quite near the place where M. Romain Rolland lives, and later to France and England. If necessary we shall return to Montana for another few weeks' rest and treatment in the summer.

Indira has been living at a little school two or three hours journey from here. We see her about once a month. She will join us when we go down from Montana. Krishna is with us and is well.

You must have read of my going to the Brussels Congress. I had the pleasure of meeting a number of very interesting persons there. Among these was Ernst Toller, a young but famous German dramatist. I have only read one of his works — the *Machine Wreckers*[2] — but this I liked. It deals with the early industrial period of England and the hostility of the workers to machinery. It would interest you. Toller asked me specially to send you his respectful regards.

We have all been very glad to get reports of your good health.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

2. Published in 1923.

32. To Rangaswami Iyengar[1]

Clinique Stephani,
Montana,
s/Sierre, Suisse
March 16, 1927

My dear Rangaswami,

I have just received a bundle of papers from Berlin containing various resolutions and speeches of the Brussels Congress. Some of these papers have already been sent to you. Nonetheless I am sending this

1. A.I.C.C. File No G. 29, 1927, Part II, pp. 129—130. N.M.M.L.

whole lot to you under separate registered cover. This is by no means a full record of the Congress, but most of the important resolutions and some of the interesting speeches are included. I would specially draw your attention to the draft organisation resolution. I am sorry the resolution on Mesopotamia has not been included in this lot.

I would suggest that considerable publicity be given to this material. The speeches of course vary in ment greatly but almost all of them have something of interest in them, specially for the Indian public. Lansbury's is certainly worth reproducing; Pollitt's also is good; and the others from South Africa and America and other countries represent viewpoints which are sure to interest Indians and give them a wider outlook. Perhaps it might be desirable to send copies of this material to the principal newspapers in India. This will involve some work for your office but it would be worthwhile. But probably this may not be necessary as I now find, on referring to the letter from Berlin, that the material will be sent directly to the papers in India. Anyway I hope you will see that it is properly utilized.

The meeting of the Executive Committee of the League against Imperialism will take place in Amsterdam on the 27th March. I hope to attend it.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

During the China debate in the House of Commons last week the full joint resolution of the British, Chinese and Indian delegates at Brussels was read out, including the names of the signatones. Evidently some of the Conservative members were exceedingly annoyed.

Please note that my address in future will be C/o Thos. Cook & Son, Geneva.

33. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Montana
22.3.1927

My dear Mahmud,
The last mail brought your "private" letter. I appreciate it and thank you for it. But of course you know that your advice to me is not

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, NMML.

exactly novel in any sense. Ordinary common sense teaches it, not to mention an elementary knowledge of psychology.

I did not know that you were continuing your communion with the spirit world. I am sorry that you are wasting your time in this way. The older I grow the more I feel that there is so much to be learnt and studied and so little time to do it in. Most of us after a very perfunctory education imagine that we have learnt as much as is necessary and do not even attempt to increase our knowledge. This is sad, for progress can only come with knowledge and the few years that we spend at school and college teach us precious little.

I have been much surprised to read a sentence in your letter, about a friend helping and protecting another even though the latter may misbehave terribly and turn traitor. Is this a correct conception of friendship? Friendship flourishes on common ideals and endeavour. Without them there can be no true friendship. If I ever turned false to such an ideal or turned traitor I would expect my friend to shoot me and not to protect and help me.

Kamala has been keeping well lately and is making good progress. We shall be here for another month when we go down to Montreux and then Paris.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

34. To Rangaswami Iyengar[1]

Montana
s/Sierre
26-3-1927

My dear Rangaswami,

I have just received your letter of the 10th March.

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the League against Imperialism is going to be held at Amsterdam on the 29th March and I propose attending. I had hoped that perhaps before this meeting I would receive some instructions from India about the attitude of the Working Committee towards the League but it is evident that my full

1. AICC File No 127, Part II, 1927 28, pp 523—524. NMML.

report had not reached you when you wrote last. I shall therefore have to rely on my native intelligence at Amsterdam.

The agenda of the Executive Committee meeting contains, *inter alia*, the question of giving further support to the Chinese people in their struggle against imperialism, and the problems of Latin America (Mexico, Nicaragua etc.). There is a proposal, I believe, to hold a conference in Hankau in China but I have not got any details of it yet.

The most important point to be discussed however is the permanent organisation of the League. All future work necessarily depends on this organisation and care has to be taken that it should not only be effective but really representative and not dominated by a particular clique. Some members of the League are afraid that it might develop into an organisation taking its orders from the Communist International in Moscow and are therefore desirous of preventing this. There is no objection to cooperating with or conferring with people who represent the communist viewpoint but there is considerable objection to the League being used merely as a tool to further the objects of another organisation. This is the point of view of several important members of the League in England. Personally I agree with it I have already touched on this point in my report to the Working Committee. As far as I have been able to make out there is not very much justification for this fear. The Executive Committee has all interests represented and it will be difficult to convert it into a mere offshoot of the Communist International. Its work can only be carried on satisfactorily on a basis of unanimity on essentials at least. The organisers of the League have laid stress on this and evidently realise its importance. The presence of Lansbury as chairman also indicates that the cooperation of the non-communist elements is considered essential.

A further important point is the manner in which other organisations can be associated with the League in its work. They can be affiliated to it as more or less subordinate bodies but obviously this cannot be done in the case of important national or labour organisations. It has been suggested that some manner of association short of formal affiliation might be devised. I think this suggestion ought to get over all difficulties So far as the Congress in India is concerned it could easily associate itself with the League without thereby in any way committing itself to anything unknown. An association would signify an approval of the objects of the League and a desire to cooperate with the League and with other organisations having more or less similar objects.

I wrote to you and also mentioned in my report that a long cablegram was sent to you from Brussels embodying the joint resolution of

the Indian, Chinese and British delegates to the Congress. In a subsequent letter I hinted that this cable had probably been suppressed by the Indian government as no acknowledgement had been received by me. I was all along under the impression that the cable had been sent by the secretariat of the League; the secretaries however thought that I had sent the full resolution by cable and so they satisfied themselves by sending a short cable to Srinivasa Iyengar in which they made a brief reference to this resolution. I am sorry I did an injustice to the government by suggesting that they had stopped the cable.

I am enclosing a short report of a meeting on China held in London by the Indians resident there. It took place some time ago but perhaps you have not seen the resolutions. I understand that they were cabled to Gandhiji.

I have often been taken aback by the headings and the general presentment of Chinese news in Indian newspapers. Reuter's cables are invariably partial and our newspapers take them for gospel truth and even give their headlines accordingly. This is a most insidious form of propaganda. Now that the Chinese nationalists have taken possession of both Shanghai and Nanking a critical situation has arisen and every effort is being made in the English press to run them down. Already reports of 'atrocities' are coming in. I do hope that Indian newspapers will exercise a modicum of commonsense and not play into the hands of the British imperialists. I have arranged for some Chinese news to be sent to them from time to time from the Chinese Information Bureau in London. You will also get a copy.

I hope to send you a report of the Amsterdam meeting next week if I come back in time for the mail.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

35. Note for the Working Committee[1]

I visited Amsterdam last week to attend a meeting of the Executive Committee of the League against Imperialism. The meeting was held on the 29th and 30th March 1927 and was attended, amongst others, by George Lansbury (Chairman), Edo Fimmen (Vice-Chairman), Bridgeman (England), Roger Baldwin (U.S.A.), Liau (China) and representatives from Germany, Belgium etc. The principal item on the agenda was the consideration of the future organisation of the League.

1. 4 April 1927. AICC. File No 127, Part II/1927-28, pp. 493—521. NMML.

The Brussels Congress has evidently put out various governments greatly. We were informed that the British and French governments have formally addressed the Belgian government on the subject and expressed their regret at the latter having given facilities for the holding of the Congress. This was done privately and no reference to it has appeared in the press. The French government has gone further and arrested Senghor, a negro delegate to the Congress from the French African colonies and a member of the Executive Committee of the League. He has been arrested in Paris for high treason, objection being taken to the speech he delivered to the Congress. This speech was in French and I have already sent a verbatim report of it to the A.I.C.C. Office. Official activity was also noticeable in other directions. Our passports were carefully scrutinised in Amsterdam, presumably in the hope that some flaw might be discovered.

The Executive Committee sent a message of sympathy to Senghor and a protest to the French Premier Poincare[2].

Liau, the representative of the Kuomintang, told us about the situation in China. He said that the joint resolution of the English, Indian & Chinese delegates at Brussels and the joint declaration of the Indian & Chinese delegates had been much appreciated in China and had created a very good impression. He told us something of the Nanking incident[3] but at the time particulars were lacking. It appeared however that the bombardment of the town of Nanking, with a population of a million, by British & American warships had done a great deal of damage to the town and resulted in the death of large numbers of the inhabitants. A resolution regretting the death of foreign nationals and strongly protesting against the bombardment and calling upon labour and other organisations to take all necessary steps to prevent hostilities developing, was passed.

Liau also informed us that the Kuomintang proposed to hold a big conference at Hankau in June to which they were inviting representatives from India, Indonesia and other Eastern countries. The Chinese nationalists were very desirous of having these representatives of Eastern countries at the conference. The committee welcomed the proposal and decided to endeavour to send a delegation, representing the League to the conference. This delegation is to consist of four or five persons and among those chosen were Lansbury and Roger Baldwin. In case any of those chosen cannot go others could be appointed.

2. Raymond Poincare (1860-1934); French statesman; President of France (1913-20), Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, 1912 and 1922, and Prime Minister 1926-1929.
3. In March 1927 the Nationalist armies captured Nanking undeterred by the large scale and indiscriminate attack by foreign warships.

A resolution was also passed against American aggression in Nicaragua and Mexico and a summary of this was cabled to President Coolidge[4].

The question of organisation was fully discussed. Lansbury pointed out the difficulties in the way of the League in England. It was possible, he said, to call upon the Communists and others of the extreme left wing to organise the work of the League in England and to carry on agitation on a large scale. These people were strong enough to carry on an effective and sustained agitation of this kind but if they are the principal persons at the back of it, the official Labour movement would not only not help but would oppose them. In spite of this opposition however much would be done. If on the other hand it was desired to work in association with the Labour Party or even with the left wing of the Party, it would be necessary to keep the Communists in the background, and progress will be slow. The English Labour Party is terrified of the Communists and as is well known has formally expelled them from its ranks. The right wing of the Labour Party is definitely imperialistic and is hostile to the League against Imperialism. The left wing is favourably inclined to the League but it would hardly invite a break or much friction with the right wing over the question of support of the League. Thus in order to get the left wing to do anything in the matter it was necessary not to force the pace, but to proceed gradually in England. Lansbury as Vice Chairman of the Labour Party in England naturally spoke with a sense of responsibility and gave expression more to the right wing view than the view of the left wing. He himself is supposed to be in the centre although occasionally his enthusiasm carries him a little further. Very probably a left winger would have expressed himself differently. In fact Bridgeman, who was present at the meeting, was thoroughly dissatisfied with Lansbury's exposition, but Bridgeman has no particular weight in English politics. After some discussion the committee was of opinion that it was desirable not to rush matters in England and as far as possible to get the principal leaders of the Labour left wing to join the League and work for it in England.

In considering the question of the organisation and specially the affiliations of other associations, it was pointed out that there may be, and in fact were, national and other organisations which might not agree with the full programme of the League, and yet might be willing to cooperate with it to a limited extent. The negroes in the U.S.A., for instance, had a powerful organisation which was mainly concerned with

4. President of the United States from 1923 to 1929.

raising their status and not directly with imperialism as such. I pointed out that the Indian National Congress, although opposed to imperialism, had not adopted the socialist viewpoint and might not agree with some of our resolutions and activities. It was therefore desirable that our constitution should allow such organisations to be associated with us. This was agreed to and it was decided to have (i) affiliated organisations which would be more or less wholly in favour of the programme or activities of the League and (ii) associated organisations, which at least partly agreed with the programmes and activities and were prepared to cooperate to that extent.

Even in the case of affiliated organisations it does not of course follow that they are bound to agree with every resolution or activity of the League. In all international organisations the only way to proceed is to allow the utmost freedom to the affiliated bodies. Thus there is no vital difference between the affiliated body and the associated body. It is a question of degree, and in the latter case some stress is laid on the fact that there are or may be points of difference.

Thus there are to be affiliated organisations and associated organisations. It was also decided to permit individuals to join the League directly. In any country or suitable area where there are several affiliated or associated organisations and individual members, a national section might be formed to coordinate the activities of the various constituent bodies.

The rates of subscription of the constituent bodies were fixed as follows :—

Affiliated Organisations:		
If their membership is	1000	
or under		£ 2
" "	1000 to 5000	£ 3
" "	5000 to 10000	£ 4
For every subsequent	10000	£ 1
or under		

Half these rates would apply to organisations in colonial countries.

Associated Organisations:	
A minimum annual subscription of	£ 3

Individual members:
An annual subscription—not fixed for the present; left to the member.

It will be noticed that the rates are on the whole moderate. It is possible that the Miners' Federation of Great Britain might decide

other language for which special payment is made by the people concerned.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee was provisionally fixed for the first week of August.

I have already in my previous report discussed the advisability of the Indian Congress associating itself with the League against Imperialism. I did not then, nor do I propose doing now, give all the pros and cons, but I submitted to the A.I.C.C. and the Working Committee that on the whole it seemed to me highly desirable that there should be some association and that the Congress should contribute something to the funds of the League. Most of the arguments for and against such association will no doubt be before the members of the Working Committee. The League is a new organisation and it has all manner of elements in it. It is not possible to say now how it will develop or whether it will develop at all. The Congress can hardly exercise any control over its policy or its funds from such a distance. For the time being I happen to be here and can act as a kind of *connecting* link but even this link will not be there after a few months. These are some of the obvious drawbacks. Nonetheless I am clearly of opinion that the Congress should take any risk, if risk there is, and associate itself with the League. This opinion has been further strengthened by the newly framed rule that even such organisations as do not agree with all the programme and activities of the League can become associate bodies. I pressed for this rule chiefly in the interests of the Indian Congress and I feel that the Congress can take advantage of *it without* in any way committing itself to anything it does not approve of.

An associated organisation has to pay a minimum subscription annually of $3. This small sum was fixed at this more or less nominal figure for an organisation to make it easy for some very small associations in Europe and elsewhere to join. If the Congress decides to associate itself a fairly substantial sum will be expected from it. I suggested previously that $100 might be sent for the present, and later if developments warrant a further sum might be sent. There is of course the possibility that the money we send may be wasted or not profitably spent from our point of view. But that risk has to be taken and on the whole the sum is not great.

I have mentioned above the proposal of the Chinese nationalists to hold a conference in Hankau some time in June. I believe they call it the Pan-Pacific Conference. They are intensely desirous of having some leading representatives of the Indian Congress at this conference. Indeed if it suited the Indian leaders they could change the date of the conference. It is probable that our representatives may not be permitted to go to China by the government. That is a matter over which

we have little control but it would certainly appear desirable for the Congress to endeavour to send some representatives to the Hankau Conference. The good effect of such a meeting would be very great and all parties concerned will profit by it.

War between England and China appears to be nearer now than ever. The Nanking incident has given the Tory diehards a strong card and they probably imagine that they can rouse up their people for warlike action. Whether they can do so or not remains to be seen but meanwhile fresh troops are going to Shanghai. By no conceivable stretch of imagination can large armies be required just to defend the International Settlement at Shanghai. They can only be required for offensive action against the nationalists. It is quite clear now and is admitted that no internal power or military governor in China can withstand the nationalists. The road to Peking is open for them and within a short time they ought to be in possession of the whole of China proper, unless of course external complications arise. This is not at all agreeable to England and hence all the preparations for war. The Nanking incident is undoubtedly exaggerated greatly by the British government & press. It is quite possible that excited soldiery full of hatred against the English might have misbehaved but it is not easy to believe that any responsible Chinese leader wanted this to happen. Nor is it possible to believe that the bombardment of a city of a million inhabitants did not result in a very large number of casualties and great damages. It is interesting to read the continental press on these happenings. The French government and press are trying their best to minimise the importance of the Nanking & Shanghai events. They are evidently not keen on being dragged into a warlike adventure. The Japanese, in spite of the fact that they were one of the principal sufferers at Nanking, are also sitting on the fence. Only the Americans appear to have joined hands with the British. Meanwhile the attitude of the Chinese is by no means subdued and they do not seem to be frightened by the threats and ultimatums being issued to them.

I shall take the liberty of reminding the Working Committee of what I wrote in my previous report about the far-reaching consequences to India [illegible] any war, and of how we cannot, without peril to ourselves, perm[illegible]s to march to their tragic conclusion without trying our [illegible] them to the advantage of India. These events will not [illegible] remain in a state of suspended animation, in [illegible] settle our differences and create an "atmosphere [illegible]

Jawaharlal Nehru

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The rates for colonial countries for affiliated organisations were fixed at half the other rates as it was felt that Labour and other organisations there were seldom strong or well financed.

The fee of £ 3 for associated organisations is of course a minimum. It is expected that in actual practice the principal organisations will give large sums, otherwise it would be difficult to carry on the work of the League.

The subscription of individual members has not been fixed. No special effort will be made in most countries to enrol individuals. There are cases however where an individual not connected with an organisation desires to join and is willing to contribute handsomely to the funds of the League. A case was mentioned to us of an American who would like to do so and might pay $ 500 to $ 1,000 for the privilege.

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A resolution was also passed against American aggression in Nicaragua and Mexico and a summary of this was cabled to President Coolidge[4].

The question of organisation was fully discussed. Lansbury pointed out the difficulties in the way of the League in England. It was possible, he said, to call upon the Communists and others of the extreme left wing to organise the work of the League in England and to carry on agitation on a large scale. These people were strong enough to carry on an effective and sustained agitation of this kind but if they are the principal persons at the back of it, the official Labour movement would not only not help but would oppose them. In spite of this opposition however much would be done. If on the other hand it was desired to work in association with the Labour Party or even with the left wing of the Party, it would be necessary to keep the Communists in the background, and progress will be slow. The English Labour Party is terrified of the Communists and as is well known has formally expelled them from its ranks. The right wing of the Labour Party is definitely imperialistic and is hostile to the League against Imperialism. The left wing is favourably inclined to the League but it would hardly invite a break or much friction with the right wing over the question of support of the League. Thus in order to get the left wing to do anything in the matter it was necessary not to force the pace, but to proceed gradually in England. Lansbury as Vice Chairman of the Labour Party in England naturally spoke with a sense of responsibility and gave expression more to the right wing view than the view of the left wing. He himself is supposed to be in the centre although occasionally his enthusiasm carries him a little further. Very probably a left winger would have expressed himself differently. In fact Bridgeman, who was present at the meeting, was thoroughly dissatisfied with Lansbury's exposition, but Bridgeman has no particular weight in English politics. After some discussion the committee was of opinion that it was desirable not to rush matters in England and as far as possible to get the principal leaders of the Labour left wing to join the League and work for it in England.

In considering the question of the organisation and specially the affiliations of other associations, it was pointed out that there may be, and in fact were, national and other organisations which might not agree with the full programme of the League, and yet might be willing to cooperate with it to a limited extent. The negroes in the U.S.A., for instance, had a powerful organisation which was mainly concerned with

4. President of the United States from 1923 to 1929.

raising their status and not directly with imperialism as such. I pointed out that the Indian National Congress, although opposed to imperialism, had not adopted the socialist viewpoint and might not agree with some of our resolutions and activities. It was therefore desirable that our constitution should allow such organisations to be associated with us. This was agreed to and it was decided to have (i) affiliated organisations which would be more or less wholly in favour of the programme or activities of the League and (ii) associated organisations, which at least partly agreed with the programmes and activities and were prepared to cooperate to that extent.

Even in the case of affiliated organisations it does not of course follow that they are bound to agree with every resolution or activity of the League. In all international organisations the only way to proceed is to allow the utmost freedom to the affiliated bodies. Thus there is no vital difference between the affiliated body and the associated body. It is a question of degree, and in the latter case some stress is laid on the fact that there are or may be points of difference.

Thus there are to be affiliated organisations and associated organisations. It was also decided to permit individuals to join the League directly. In any country or suitable area where there are several affiliated or associated organisations and individual members, a national section might be formed to coordinate the activities of the various constituent bodies.

The rates of subscription of the constituent bodies were fixed as follows :—

Affiliated Organisations:		
If their membership is	1000	
or under		£ 2
" "	1000 to 5000	£ 3
" "	5000 to 10000	£ 4
For every subsequent	10000	£ 1
or under		

Half these rates would apply to organisations in colonial countries.

Associated Organisations:	
A minimum annual subscription of	£ 3

Individual members:
An annual subscription—not fixed
for the present; left to the member.

It will be noticed that the rates are on the whole moderate. It is possible that the Miners' Federation of Great Britain might decide

to affiliate itself with the League, even though the Labour Party as a whole keeps aloof, the Federation being much more advanced or extreme. It has a membership of 8,000,000. It would then have to pay £ 83 annually, which is not a large sum for such a great organisation. If it chose to become an associate organisation it can pay anything from £3 upwards.

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other language for which special payment is made by the people concerned.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee was provisionally fixed for the first week of August.

I have already in my previous report discussed the advisability of the Indian Congress associating itself with the League against Imperialism. I did not then, nor do I propose doing now, give all the pros and cons, but I submitted to the A.I.C.C. and the Working Committee that on the whole it seemed to me highly desirable that there should be some association and that the Congress should contribute something to the funds of the League. Most of the arguments for and against such association will no doubt be before the members of the Working Committee. The League is a new organisation and it has all manner of elements in it. It is not possible to say now how it will develop or whether it will develop at all. The Congress can hardly exercise any control over its policy or its funds from such a distance. For the time being I happen to be here and can act as a kind of connecting link but even this link will not be there after a few months. These are some of the obvious drawbacks. Nonetheless I am clearly of opinion that the Congress should take any risk, if risk there is, and associate itself with the League. This opinion has been further strengthened by the newly framed rule that even such organisations as do not agree with all the programme and activities of the League can become associate bodies. I pressed for this rule chiefly in the interests of the Indian Congress and I feel that the Congress can take advantage of it without in any way committing itself to anything it does not approve of.

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we have little control but it would certainly appear desirable for the Congress to endeavour to send some representatives to the Hankau Conference. The good effect of such a meeting would be very great and all parties concerned will profit by it.

War between England and China appears to be nearer now than ever. The Nanking incident has given the Tory diehards a strong card and they probably imagine that they can rouse up their people for warlike action. Whether they can do so or not remains to be seen but meanwhile fresh troops are going to Shanghai. By no conceivable stretch of imagination can large armies be required just to defend the International Settlement at Shanghai. They can only be required for offensive action against the nationalists. It is quite clear now and is admitted that no internal power or military governor in China can withstand the nationalists. The road to Peking is open for them and within a short time they ought to be in possession of the whole of China proper, unless of course external complications arise. This is not at all agreeable to England and hence all the preparations for war. The Nanking incident is undoubtedly exaggerated greatly by the British government & press. It is quite possible that excited soldiery full of hatred against the English might have misbehaved but it is not easy to believe that any responsible Chinese leader wanted this to happen. Nor is it possible to believe that the bombardment of a city of a million inhabitants did not result in a very large number of casualties and great damages. It is interesting to read the continental press on these happenings. The French government and press are trying their best to minimise the importance of the Nanking & Shanghai events. They are evidently not keen on being dragged into a warlike adventure. The Japanese, in spite of the fact that they were one of the principal sufferers at Nanking, are also sitting on the fence. Only the Americans appear to have joined hands with the British. Meanwhile the attitude of the Chinese is by no means subdued and they do not seem to be frightened by the threats and ultimatums being issued to them.

I shall take the liberty of reminding the Working Committee of what I wrote in my previous report about the far reaching consequences to India of any war, and of how we cannot, without peril to ourselves, permit events to march to their tragic conclusion without trying our best to shape them to the advantage of India. These events will not wait, nor will the world remain in a state of suspended animation, in order to give us time to settle our differences and create an "atmosphere" for action.

Montana, Switzerland — Jawaharlal Nehru

36. To Rangaswami Iyengar[1]

Montana
5.4.1927

My dear Rangaswami,
Thanks for your letter of the 17th March.

I returned from Amsterdam day before yesterday and I am sending you with this letter a report for the Working Committee on the Amsterdam meeting. I am also enclosing an account of expenditure incurred to date. You will notice that I have now a balance of £7-7-9 left with me. In the last account I sent you I stated that I had lost one of the cable receipts. I have now found it and am enclosing it. The telegraphic office here did not give me any receipts for the cables and telegrams I sent from Montana.

We hope to leave Montana soon. I hope you will remember that my address in future will be c/o Thomas Cook & Son, Geneva.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127, Part II, 1927—28, p. 491. N.M.M.L.

37. To Raja Rau[1]

Montana, s/Sierre,
Switzerland
18 April 1927

My dear Raja Rau,
I have received your letter No. G-29/430 of the 31st March. I have not met M. Roger Lievens of Liege nor do I know anything about him. I had a letter from him when I was in Brussels. In my reply I gave him one or two addresses including the address of the A.I.C.C. office. I do not think much need be expected of him. You can send him some

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127, Part II, 1927-28, p. 449. N.M.M.L.

I fancy that you have got a wrong impression about my idea of the utility of the League against Imperialism. I do not expect much from it and indeed I am quite sure that none of the members of the so-called imperialist or oppressing nations will help us in the least whenever their interests conflict with ours. I have no illusions about their altruism. But I welcome all legitimate methods of getting into touch with other countries and peoples so that we may be able to understand their viewpoint and world politics generally. I do not think it is desirable nor indeed is it possible for India to plough a lonely furrow now or in the future. It is solely with a view to self-education and self-improvement that I desire external contacts. I am afraid we are terribly narrow in our outlook and the sooner we get rid of this narrowness the better. Our salvation can of course come only from the internal strength that we may evolve but one of the methods of evolving such strength should be study of other people and their ideas.

I have so much that I wish to write. I have refrained from doing so in the past as I did not want to add to your work. But perhaps if you will permit me I shall write more fully a little later.

We are leaving London and England after about 3 weeks' stay today for Belgium. Kamala has been tolerably well in spite of the fatigue of living in a great city. But she is tired out. I hope she will be fresher after a few days on the Continent. We are all tired of staying in foreign parts and want to go back home. It was my intention to return in September but now father is coming here in August and we can hardly go immediately after his arrival.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

39. The Situation in China and India's Duty[1]

I have read with pleasure the suggestion made by Dr. Hardikar that the Hindustani Seva Dal should try to render some active help to our Chinese comrades, who are today so courageously and successfully carrying on their struggle for freedom not only against reactionary and predatory militarists at home but against the ill-concealed interference and partisanship of imperialist powers. If India were free today, it would have

1. *The Volunteer*, April 1927, pp 85—86.

been her privilege and duty to render every assistance to China. But unhappily we are bondsmen in our own household, not strong enough even to help ourselves, and far from helping China, we have to witness with shame and humiliation that our resources and manpower are being utilised by our imperialist masters to coerce China and tarnish the good name of India and make her hated by all who strive for freedom. It is well for us to realise the consequences which automatically follow from the use of Indian troops in China. These are not merely the coercion of China and, may be, the postponement for a while of her ultimate emancipation, but the moral isolation of India and the creation of ill-will and hatred against her in a great part of the world. India is not loved today in Egypt, in Mesopotamia, in China, in Persia and the Persian Gulf, in parts of Africa etc., for memories of mercenary Indian troops, used for the benefit of British imperialism, linger. Slaves ourselves, it has been our degrading function to help in the enslavement of others for the benefit of a third party.

We are weak today and the use that Indian troops are being put to, is the measure of our utter helplessness. It is right that we should point out our weakness and dissociate ourselves from the action that Government has taken. But is even our helplessness a sufficient excuse for not doing our utmost to prevent the Government from exploiting us in this shameful way? We shall not escape from disaster by pleading our weakness. And though India may be weak, she is not so weak as not to be able to do something effective.

The Chinese Revolution is not an event of local interest and importance. It is a world phenomenon of the greatest historic importance. On the issue in China depends the future of Europe and Asia, and the country which will be most affected by the issue will be India. For us it is a matter of pious hope and empty sympathy.

I hope that the Hindustani Seva Dal will do all in its power to convert this vague sympathy and goodwill for China which every Indian feels, into something more effective and helpful. It should be the business of every member of the Dal to help actively in the creation of a strong and intelligent public opinion on this question so that even the Government of India, filled with disdain for us and proud of its strength, may realise that its policy leads to danger in India. Above all I hope that it will be possible for the Dal to send to China an ambulance corps of trained volunteers carrying the message of goodwill to our Chinese comrades and rendering such help as they can for the relief of pain and suffering. China is holding out her hand of comradeship to India. It is for us to grasp it and to renew our ancient and honourable association and thereby ensure the freedom and progress of both these great countries, which have so much in common.

The invitation which was extended to the Kuo Min Tang Party in China by the Indian National Congress has been eagerly accepted by them and among the representatives they have nominated to visit India is Madam Sun Yat Sen, the revered lady, widow of the great and far-seeing leader of the Chinese Revolution. India will be honoured by her visit and it is up to India to show effectively that she stands shoulder to shoulder with China in her present travail.

I should like to add a warning. The news that India receives about the Chinese struggle comes almost entirely from prejudiced sources and every effort is made by skilful propaganda to run down the national movement there. We should be on our guard against this and not be misled by the exaggerated and misleading reports.

40. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Montreux
14.7.27

My dear Mahmud,

I have not written to you for many weeks. Indeed I have written to few friends in India during the last three months. We have been travelling about and I find some difficulty in writing letters unless I have leisure and am in the mood for it. You have often asked me to write every week but I am afraid you have not appreciated the psychology of letter writing. A letter which must be written by a certain time and repeated at regular intervals ceases to give pleasure. Only business communications can be dealt with in this manner and where business is concerned I am punctual enough. You suggest that at least a postcard might be sent every week. But that is a habit I have not developed and my postcards are usually reserved for children. I neither like receiving cards nor do I fancy sending them except for special reasons. We are none of us ill in bed necessitating frequent bulletins. Fortunately we have been keeping tolerably well. A letter can only be justified when it contains some ideas or impressions worth writing about and when I feel I cannot have this justification I am disinclined to write. But this is only a dissertation which means little! As a matter of fact Kamala has been writing to you or to your wife so frequently that I felt I could postpone my reply. And this feeling is a dangerous one for it results in continual postponements.

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

In one of your letters you ask me why Hindus and Mohamadans cannot live peacefully in India when the followers of various religions in other countries are friendly enough to each other. Surely the answer is simple enough. The Christians and Muslims and Buddhists of other countries have largely shed their religion whilst the Hindus and Muslims in India are steeped in superstition and religion. Here in Europe and elsewhere few persons, excepting some Roman Catholics, lay much stress on religion with the result that their conflicts are not religious but economic. Only the Roman Catholics because they are still over-religious arouse religious antipathy to some extent. As soon as we shed our religion we shall also behave better. Europe has got rid of religion by mass education which followed industrialism. Religion cannot stand the test of large-scale education. This process is bound to be repeated in India. I am convinced that the religion of our masses is skin deep. What is distressing is the behaviour of our prominent politicians.

We are going from here to Annecy and from there to Paris where I have to consult some doctors. Afterwards we shall return to Switzerland.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

41. To Rangaswami Iyengar[1]

Montana, s/Sierre,
September 7, 1927

My dear Rangaswami,

I wrote to you a hurried letter from Gland last week which I hope you have received.

The Cologne meeting of the Executive Committee of the League against Imperialism was chiefly occupied with questions of internal organisation. The office of the League has been definitely established in Paris but a subsidiary office will continue in Berlin. Lansbury who was our chairman, has resigned. The reason he gave for this step was overwork. The real reason appears to be the hostility of the leaders of the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127, Part II, 1927-28, p 445—447. N.M.M.L.

Labour Party in England to the League. A great deal of pressure was brought to bear on Lansbury and he succumbed. He is one of the prospective candidates for the chairmanship of the Labour Party and consequently wants to be on good terms with every wing of it. We had another instance of the hostile attitude of English Labour leaders of the right wing. John Scurr[2] agreed to be the treasurer of the British section of the League but a few days later he had to withdraw because his friends of the Labour Party disapproved of the League. This disapproval is of course confined to the right wing. The Independent Labour Party and the left wing approve of the League and are fully prepared to cooperate with it.

We elected Fenner Brockway in place of Lansbury as our chairman. Brockway, who was present, was perfectly agreeable but as secretary of the Independent Labour Party he wanted to consult his committee before giving his final answer. In all probability his committee will agree and he will be our chairman. In any event he will continue as a member of our Executive Committee.

There was another vacancy in our committee caused by the continued illness of Senghor, our negro member. This was filled by the election of Madame Duchene, a French lady, well-known and much respected. She is intimately connected with the Women's League for Peace and Freedom.

It was decided to hold a meeting of the General Council of the League, consisting of nearly 100 members, in the middle of November in Paris.

We also considered a proposal by some Indonesian organisations to send out a commission of enquiry to Java to investigate into the conditions there and specially into the shootings[3] and the intensive repression of the Dutch government. This proposal was made some time ago and we had been told that the costs of the enquiry commission would be largely paid by the Indonesian organisations. Since then the Dutch government has declared some of these organisations illegal and it is difficult for them to provide the necessary funds. If the commission goes the money for it must largely come from us. But we have little money and so it appears unlikely that we shall be able to send the commission. We have decided however to try to raise a special fund for the purpose and if we raise enough money to send our representative. These representatives have also been chosen. One of them is a Dutchman who was formerly a governor of Java or some other island there; the second is

2. John Scurr (1876-1932); Labour MP, 1923-31.
3. Between 1911 and 1927 there were mass movements of protest against the injustices perpetrated by the colonialists and the harsh methods of exploitation practised by the Dutch Government

Mardy Jones[4], a Labour (miners') M. P. in England; a prominent Frenchman and a German. If the commission goes it will spend about three months in Indonesia. It is proposed that on its way back it might spend some time in India to investigate labour conditions, specially in the mining areas.

Fenner Brockway, as I have already written to you, intends going to India early in December. He will attend the Congress officially as the fraternal delegate of the Independent Labour Party and of the League against Imperialism. I take it that his principal object will be to discuss with Indian leaders the I.L.P. draft bill which he has already circulated. I wish our leaders had enough vision and strength of mind to impress upon him that nothing short of complete independence will satisfy them. If they could only do so they could perhaps get the I.L.P. to support that demand fully. But whether the I.L.P. does it or not the real thing is to press for independence and nothing less. But there is little hope for it, specially after Ansari's amazing statement[5]. Any way I hope you will send a welcoming letter to Fenner Brockway. He is one of the very few men in the Labour movement in England who can take a broad view of India and not be too much obsessed by imperialist conceptions. His address is: I.L.P. office, 14 Great George Street, Westminster, London, S.W. 1.

Saklatvala, although not a member of our committee, was present by invitation at Cologne. He spoke of his impressions of the position in India.

I am sending you under separate cover a copy of the report of the Brussels Congress. This is in German and I am afraid will not be of much use to you. But you can add it to the A.I.C.C. library. The English and the French editions of this report will be out shortly and I hope to send them to you.

I enclose an account of expenditure incurred. This, together with the two previous accounts I have sent you, exhausts the amount—£50—which you sent. There is a small balance £2-12-3 due to me but you need not trouble to send it unless you expect me to do anything else on behalf of the Congress which might involve additional expenditure.

In one of your letters you mentioned to me that the A.I.C.C. or the Working Committee had agreed to the proposal I had made about our contributing something to the funds of the League against Imperialism.

4 Thomas Isaac Mardy Jones, Labour Member of Parliament from Wales, 1922-31.

5. On 17 August 1927 Dr Ansari issued a statement that in view of the failure of the 'noncooperation movement the Congress should cooperate with other parties in the councils and the ministries, and not hesitate, if necessary, even to abandon its basic principles, such as the wearing of khaddar.

The proposal I had made was that we should make a first contribution of £100 and await developments. I concluded from your letter that this sum of £100 had been sanctioned and was being sent and I informed the Berlin office accordingly. But as no contribution has so far come I am inclined to think that I misunderstood you. Kindly let me know definitely what has been decided. If any money has to be sent to the League you had better send it to me and I shall forward it on.

Father is due to arrive in Venice on the 15th and we are all looking forward greatly to meeting him. I am going on to Venice in a few days.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

42. Evolution of British Policy in India[1]

When did British rule start in India? It is difficult to fix a date. The development of British authority has been so gradual — hardly noticeable at the initial stages — that it took more than a hundred years to spread over the whole of India and Burma. However, it is generally admitted that British rule in India dates back to the battle of Plassey won in 1757 — more by intrigues and extortion than by arms. Therefore, 170 years ago Britain became the power dominating India. This long period witnessed several changes and several shifts of policy. I propose to present here the broad outlines of British policy in India and to describe the essential features of its development and modifications, neglecting the many minor factors — though important — and their effects on Indian life. This will perhaps help us in forming a better general idea of the economic and political forces which have contributed to the India of today. An appraisal of these forces can prepare us for a special study of any particular aspect of the Indian problem and its relations with the entire background. In a certain measure, this can also help us in predicting the future.

First of all, I would like to remove from your mind some wrong notions generally associated with the Indian problem. India's well-wishers, as

1. Paper read by Jawaharlal at the Summer School of the International League of Women for Peace and Liberty, held at Gland, Switzerland, September 1927. Translated from the French text published in *Europe*, 1928.

well as those hostile to her, often imagine that our country is radically different from the rest of the world; that East and West are separated like two opposite poles "and never will meet"; that the East, and particularly India, is religious, spiritual, metaphysical, philosophical and in general, outside this world; that consequently, the East is passive and peace-loving whereas the West is very much of this world: irreligious, active, scientific, practical, inventive and fighting. The legend goes that western legions used to sweep over like thunder and that the East would bend before the storm and sink back in deep thought. The legend is perhaps attractive, and a superficial study of recent events in the East and West makes it appear somewhat true. Unfortunately history does not confirm this. For thousands of years, Asia was the aggressor. Quite often it was Europe which had to bend before the Asian legions passing like a storm, and it is only during the last few generations that the roles have been reversed. Even mild and peace loving India, which in the past produced so many great thinkers and philosophers, gave birth also to men of action and remarkable fighters. There was no basic difference between the peoples of the East and of the West.

Climate and physical environment are certainly powerful factors in the development of a people. Tradition is even more powerful and the Eastern countries had to follow ancient customs and traditions. The ancient character of their old civilization makes them, to a certain extent, static and little inclined to rapid changes unless they are really forced by circumstances. These factors and many others have no doubt influenced Eastern countries and have given them certain special characteristics which differentiate them from one another as well as from Western countries. But fundamentally there was no basic difference between the East and the West before the advent of the machine age. The West got rapidly industrialized. No such thing happened in the East. The vices and virtues of industrialisation developed fast in the West, whereas the East preserved most of the vices and very few virtues of the previous age. The impact of the industrial West on the East was not advantageous to the latter. It destroyed the economic life of the pre-industrial age and replaced it by nothing better. Its vices grew worse while its virtues decreased. Hence the present society in the East is neither completely industrial nor pre industrial, but it possesses most of the defects of both these states.

The real difference that we observe today between the East and the modern West was therefore introduced by the industrial age. The virtues of the West are the virtues of industrialisation: science, organization, cooperation, activity; and the so-called virtues and vices of the East are those which, in a large measure, could be found in the West before the machine age.

India, like China, has, in the past, made its special and valuable contribution to thought and civilization. But considering the changing facets of the Indian problem, it is all the more desirable that we get rid of all our pre-conceived ideas of a mysterious, unchangeable East so very different from the West.

II

It is well-known that the British came to India as traders. They were, at first, humble supplicants before the great Mughal's throne with a request for permission to trade. Gradually they extended their influence and found a very good opportunity for doing so in the confused conditions which followed the fall of the Mughal empire. Politically their power increased and they made good use of it. They not only expanded their trade by more or less legal methods but also adopted a definite policy of extortion and took away immense wealth from India. The assessment is uncertain, and it is really difficult to obtain exact figures; but there is no doubt that during this period of extortion, the British removed without any excuse or justification whatsoever, and without the least return, an enormous part of the wealth accumulated in India.

This drain on Indian wealth had two definite results. First of all it was a big step towards the impoverishment of the country. The more interesting aspect was the help it provided for the industrialisation of Britain. Britain was starting its industrial career. It is known that during the first stages of industrialization of a country, the people face poverty. The old economic life is upset and large sums of money have to be spent on tools and on machinery for production and distribution without any immediate benefit. In this period, the masses become poor; but some relief may be provided if enough capital comes from outside. We are now witnessing the rapid industrialization of Russia, a purely agricultural country, and the lack of external capital—which is not easy to procure—weighs heavily on the people, at least for the time being. Britain passed this phase long ago, but its difficulties were relieved at the time and its industrialization quickened by the large sums of money forcibly removed from India.

At that time India was a country rich in arts and crafts. It had gone well past the stage of a purely agricultural economy, and large urban production and distribution centres were fully developed and attracted the best artisans and workers. The textile industry was very highly developed. Collective production had replaced individual production. Murshidabad and Dacca were large and rich cities which the British, at that time, compared very favourably to their own city of London. There were factories with often more than a hundred workers in each. Up to the beginning of the 19th century Indian cottons and silks were sold in

the British market at a price 50 to 60% lower than that of the fabrics made in Britain. Dacca alone exported muslin worth 300,000 pounds sterling. In fact, the first European traders were attracted to India not by her raw materials but by her finished products. Before the machine age India was therefore as highly developed industrially and commercially as any other country. The spinning and weaving industry was particularly prosperous and there were several millions of weavers. Spinning was a subsidiary occupation to agriculture and took half the time of an average peasant and his family.

The East India Company, which represented the British authority, took pains to destroy these flourishing industries and convert the country into a great consumer of cottons made in Lancashire. It is probable that even *without this unjust pressure the local Indian industries could* not have withstood for a long time the competition by cheaper products made by machines. This might have happened—as it did in several other countries—at the very beginning of Indian industrialization; but the fact remains that the policy of the British Government was to make India a country producing only raw materials and consuming the products made in Britain. This policy was pursued actively and cruelly by a number of measures. The first step was to stop the export of textiles manufactured in India by taxing them heavily when they entered England. The production cost in India was so low that at the beginning even the mechanical industries of Britain could not compete and had to be protected by duties of 80% and more. Naturally, British products exported to India obtained the greatest facilities and were not taxed. Earlier, India had trade relations with a large number of countries and not only with Asian countries, but these relations stopped gradually when British rule was established and in fact it was only through Britain that India could make contacts with the outside world. Hence the destruction of its trade with Britain meant for India the end of all external trade.

The internal trade, which remained quite large, was paralyzed by transit taxes levied under various forms whenever goods were sent from one part of the country to the other. These taxes were high, but the complications and the risks involved were even higher, and few had the courage to send their goods to other towns or villages.

In addition to these transit taxes the agents of the East India Company subjected the weavers to all sorts of vexations and taxations and forced them to work for the Company's benefit.

Thus the internal trade of India—especially in textiles—was also destroyed. This opened the Indian markets to Lancashire. India therefore helped the industrialization of Britain not only by supplying free capital at a time when India itself needed it most but also by opening a

poorer. We also see comparatively restricted groups: the great landlords, mostly dependent of the British, who protected their special privileges; a business community particularly interested in the exploitation of the country by British capital; and intellectuals who had received an English education, were closely linked to British rule but still suffered from various restrictions and incapacities which hindered their growth as a class. These last three classes, participating to a certain extent in the exploitation of the country by the British, were not very keen on bringing British rule to an end.

The whole weight of exploitation fell on the masses whereas most of the profits went to the British people; a small part of these profits was kept back by these three classes of Indians who gradually amassed wealth. In spite of their increasing poverty the masses made no organised effort to fight and get rid of this system which crushed them. There was only sullen resentment and a hopeless submission to a miserable fate. It is always difficult for a dispersed peasantry to combine in efforts for concerted action. After the failure of the great revolution of 1857 organised by the deprived aristocracy, the first attempt against the prevailing state of affairs was made not by the masses but by the middle classes who had received an English education. This resulted in the formation of the Indian National Congress which was, for long years, a very moderate assembly agitating for insignificant political and economic reforms.

Apart from this political movement the main factors leading to opposition to the British were the increasing poverty of the people and the large number of unemployed, not only among the peasantry and artisans but also among the intellectuals who had very few opportunities for employment, the eagerness of the intellectuals to occupy important positions in the Government of the country and the rise of a class accumulating wealth and wishing to invest in industrial enterprises. There were sharp conflicts even among them. The economic situation of the masses does not necessarily improve just because a few more Indians can hold important jobs; nor is it relieved just by an Indian capitalist taking the place of a British capitalist to exploit the country. But the presence of a common enemy — the British Government — brought together these more or less diverse elements; and, at the same time, a strong nationalist feeling developed. In face of the common enemy the social problems of the country fell into the background and it was felt that in any case it was better to be exploited by an Indian than by a foreigner. It was in the interest of the Indian politician to group these various elements in order to present a united front to the foreign government and he did this by under-playing the social problems which separated them. It was also in the interest of the British Government to separate the masses from the rich and educated classes and thus weaken the increasing re-

volutionary trend. The history of India during the second half of the 19th century is a tale of such attempts made on either side. There was a constant effort by the British to buy off the rich or intellectual classes by *insignificant reforms to "befriend the moderates", to quote* Lord Morley. This somewhat eased their situation but did not really bring a solution to the Indian problem. The British could not really tackle the vital problem of Indian misery, because a comprehensive solution of this problem required a complete change of the whole system and meant the end of the exploitation of the masses for the benefit of England. They therefore made half hearted compromises and by offering small packages of reforms often succeeded in detaching one class or one group from the national movement. This was no surprise because the movement was controlled by the rich classes who to some extent benefited from these reforms.

So the end of the 19th century saw a few insignificant and purely political reforms; and then came the reforms of Minto-Morley in 1909 and the reforms of Montagu Chelmsford in 1919. In 1909 the so-called reforms, though very nominal, could win over a large number of leaders of the Congress; but a strong minority remained undeterred and faced the usual methods of repression. The Montagu Chelmsford reforms of 1919 had a different fate because the national movement had by then gradually reached the masses, and it was not easy for a few leaders to compromise with the Government, in opposition to the general feeling. These "reforms" came after the Great War. However the revolutionary *feeling against British rule had increased and took the form of the noncooperation* movement led by Gandhi. For the first time this movement brought the masses into the political arena and was sufficiently strong to shake the foundations of British rule.

The Government made some more concessions in an effort to divide the nationalists. But India was no longer in a mood for compromises and was determined to get full freedom and nothing less. She refused half-measures. The national movement did not achieve its objective immediately and was followed by a reaction which strengthened the British hold over India. But, all the same, the noncooperation movement did liberate and activate the forces which were destined to play an increasingly important role in the future struggles of India.

IV

The political movement developed alongside changes in Indian economic conditions and was closely connected with them. In the second half of the 19th century heavy industry developed slowly in spite of all the obstacles placed by the Government. The wealth collected by the

vast and exclusive market to British products. Since then India has remained the main client of Lancashire.

From the Indian point of view, a more important effect of the destruction of the main local industries was the rapidly developing problem of unemployment. From an industrial country India became almost purely an agricultural one, and millions of craftsmen who had been deprived of their jobs joined the cultivators who were already excessive in number. They could not become cultivators because there was no more land to be distributed. They could only join the unstable ranks of agricultural workers. The cultivators who used to add to their income the benefits derived from spinning activities had to forego this additional income. The average income of the cultivator decreased and the problem of unemployment, or semi-unemployment, became worse. The extreme and increasing poverty of India is very greatly due to this unfortunate situation. The first effects were felt in the largest cities and in the regions near the distribution centres, and this continued until recent times. Gradually even the remote villages were pulled into the orbit of de-industrialisation and became dependent on foreign products. As such dependence became more acute, the wretchedness of the working class increased and they joined the unemployed or turned to agriculture which could not provide subsistence for them all.

It is interesting to compare the first effects of industrialisation in Britain with those in India. In Britain craftsmen and even cultivators were attracted towards the factories; there was an increase in urban population and the cities grew. In India, the deprived artisans found no work anywhere. There were no factories and so they had to return to the land. In India, therefore, the change was just the reverse and the urban population decreased considerably. It is estimated that at the middle of the 18th century about 25% of the Indian population was urban, whereas at the 19th century only 15% lived in cities. In 1770 the population of Dacca was about 200,000; 70 years later it fell to 90,000.

A little later, taxes on Indian exports to British and transit taxes were reduced or cancelled; but they had already crushed the Indian cottage industries which could not develop again in competition with the Lancashire products which were exempted from all taxes.

So India gradually ceased to be a manufacturing country of any importance except for food products and raw materials meant for the foreign manufacturing industries. Most of its huge population turned to agriculture in even greater proportion than in earlier days while, at the same time, areas for cultivation of food products were reduced and reserved for jute and indigo. Though India became more agricultural than ever before, it turned into a passive victim of industrialisation because it had to depend on others for the finished products the country needed.

Hence it suffered all the ills of industrialisation without drawing any of its benefits.

This development continued for long years. The only objective of British policy was to make India an outlet for British industries. No encouragement whatsoever was given to the establishment of modern industry in India. Until recently heavy taxes were imposed on machinery imported into India and the construction of a factory cost 3 to 4 times what it would have cost in Britain, inspite of cheap Indian labour. This policy lasted until world conditions required a change and a class of people who could no longer be ignored came up in India, insisting that industrial enterprises should be encouraged. But before examining the phases of this new development we must go back and study the other effects of British rule.

III

Soon after this first period of direct exploitation, the British Government took steps to consolidate its position and spread its influence. Important Government jobs were held by the British but it was neither possible nor economical to bring into India a large number of Englishmen to work as clerks or subordinates. English education, purely of a literary nature, was first imparted with the objective of training Indians for desk work under British officers. This raised a class of intellectuals with modern English education who filled Government offices, particularly in the legal and judicial fields.

The number of clerks and lawyers soon exceeded requirements and since their education did not prepare them for any manual work and also because they generally despised such work, unemployment soon arose in a class of people having a so-called literary background. Created by the British, this class was no doubt linked to them in many ways and depended on them for their work; but it also had in it the germs of revolution.

The business community formed a third category of people between the British manufacturer and the Indian consumer. As British trade grew and prospered in India, a small part of the profits drawn from the exploitation of the country came to this community. Due to his poverty, the cultivator was forced to borrow frequently from businessmen and often had to sell them his product even before the harvest and at a much lower price. Businessmen, therefore, commanded great power in the villages and became rich at the cost of an overburdened and miserable peasantry.

In the last quarter of the 19th century the great majority of the country's population, therefore, lived on the land and became poorer and

business community and a few intellectuals was partly invested in landed property, but the land was over-burdened and yielded no appreciable return. This capital investment was therefore directed towards industrial enterprises, particularly cotton mills. To stop this development the Government taxed the products of these mills and created a remarkable situation: contrary to the normal course of events, the Indian Government protected foreign goods and taxed local products of Indian origin.

In spite of a few depressions the slow progress of industrialisation was maintained. The large metallurgical works of Tata were installed on a wide scale without any assistance or encouragement whatsoever from the Government.

The War brought great changes and the Government helped the Indian industries out of sheer necessity. The Government took particular interest in the Tata metallurgical industries which had been neglected so far. It also helped the cotton industry by imposing a 3½% tax on imported cottons, mainly because Japan was capturing a part of the Indian market. Capital immediately rushed towards the textile industry. During the War and immediately afterwards, cotton and jute mills made enormous profits (most of the jute mills were owned by Englishmen). The average dividend in 1920 was from 120 to 140% and the maximum 365% for cotton and 400% for jute. The Indian capitalists thus accumulated new wealth and gained such a strong position that it was difficult to dislodge them.

The War therefore brought a great change in the economic policy of England in India; and this was characterized by the nomination of the Industrial Commission of 1916. With the Japanese competition and the increasing strength of Indian capital and industry it was no longer possible to maintain the old obstructive attitude towards industrialisation. This would have amounted to forcing the richer classes into the revolutionary movement which was growing stronger and more conscious. The lesson of the war provides another good reason for the change in policy. No country can successfully fight a war if it depends too much on other countries for its subsistance and armaments. During the Great War Britain escaped disaster only because she could keep control over the seas. In view of recent developments in the air force, gases and submarines one wonders if this success can be repeated. But even if Britain succeeds in protecting its trade routes, it is not very probable that during war time it can supply to India all the requirements for active war. A future war between Britain and Russia is not improbable. It is in Asia and particularly on the Indian frontiers that such a war would take place. India, the main theatre of the battle, has to be capable of producing all the requirements of such a war fought in the name of British imperialism. So military strategy made it imperative that India

become an industrial country and British policy was forced to change direction and help such industrialisation.

Another factor which explains this decision is the miserable condition of British trade and industry. This is due to several reasons. Britain had reached a high level of industrial development without any substantial internal scope of expansion, and this led to over-production. The industrialisation of other countries also reduced the external market; attempts to decrease salaries and increase working hours led to agitations and strikes; finally, general world conditions were unfavourable. For more profitable investments British capital started looking to other places where salaries were lower, working hours longer, and trade unions not sufficiently developed to create trouble to the employers. British capital therefore flowed to India, China and other countries and became the dominating factor of Indian industrialisation, taking to Britain a major part of the profits. But since it was difficult to completely ignore the Indian capitalist, he was treated as a "junior" associated in the exploitation of the country.

The British Government was sufficiently far-sighted to sacrifice a temporary gain in order to ensure future benefits and retain India as long as possible. Two years ago it abolished taxes on Indian cotton in order to help the Indian cotton industries even at the expense of Lanchashire. Imports of British textiles decreased but imports of machinery increased. At present India insists on greater protection for its cotton industries but the Government has so far refused.

In 1922 an Excise Committee was appointed in India. It recommended special protection to certain Indian industries and, wherever possible without loss, it recommended an "imperial preference". It also favoured the free access of foreign capital and a quick progress of industry. An idea of this rapid progress is given by the fact that in the International Labour Organization India is now among the first eight industrial countries of the world. In 1920 it was estimated that India employed 20 million workers in her industry.

Before the war 70% of textile goods came from Britain and 28% were made in India. After the war the percentage was 35 for Britain and 61 for India. The same progress can be noticed in extractive industries. In 1908 the ore production was 8 million pounds sterling; in 1920 it was 30 million.

The industrial development can be represented by the capitals invested:

Pre-war new capital:	12 million pounds
In 1918-1919	183 million pounds
In 1919-1920	100 million pounds

These figures give a slightly exaggerated idea because in 1918-1920 there was a sharp rise followed by a depression. However, these figures do indicate a very great industrial growth.

To a great extent, this extraordinary industrial development is not due to Indian capital. British capital is predominant — probably 90% of the capital of commercial firms operating in India is British; and the same is also true for the big shareholders. Therefore the protection of Indian industries as recommended and partly executed by the Excise Commission in fact amounts to the protection of British shares and British capital in India.

Recently the British Government appointed a Commission to investigate the possibilities of improving agricultural methods in India. It is in the interest of the British Government that agriculture yields as much as possible and there is certainly a very wide scope for improving the methods used in India.

The Commission may suggest some minor improvements but it is recognized that it will not touch on the essential point, the burning question of Indian agriculture.

The mechanization of agriculture can increase production but its immediate effect would be to create unemployment. In any case industry is developing in India and new factories are coming up on all sides. But whatever the rate of this industrialisation it will take a long time to absorb the large number of unemployed persons and it will be incapable of providing work to those who have been deprived of their jobs by the machines. The unemployed can have a satisfactory status only if a new agricultural policy is established. In the meantime, it is known that Gandhi is a great champion of cottage industries and particularly hand-spinning. He devotes a part of his time, and with considerable success, in reviving this old custom whereby the cultivators had been utilising their leisure in spinning, thus adding to their income from the land. This provides work to the weavers who are still present in large numbers and at the same time decreases the Indian consumption of foreign fabrics from Lancashire. It appears strange and unreasonable to attempt the revival of hand-spinning in these days of machinery. But it should be remembered that spinning is not being recommended as the main full-time occupation, but as a profitable way of utilising the spare time of the peasant and his family. The income from cultivation is so low that the peasant welcomes even a small additional income. There is no difficulty in starting spinning on a large scale. It requires little or no capital and the necessary skill is easy to acquire. Wherever spinning has been organised on a large scale it has brought definite relief to the cultivators and to the artisans who were in the process of disappearing. Even if industries grow very fast

in India it does appear that for a long time to come, this cottage industry can play an important role as an auxiliary to agriculture.

V

Thus British policy changed continuously and adapted itself to new circumstances. To possess and keep India has been the main objective of British external policy: control over the Suez canal and Egypt, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, her policy in China and in Persia are only a few examples. Without India the British Empire falls to the second rank and in fact ceases to be an empire. It is therefore essential for Britain to keep India at any cost, even, if need be, by sharing part of her power and profits with certain classes in India. It is believed that a concession made in good time can avoid disaster.

Today British policy appears to be based on the assumption that a future war is inevitable in the East — probably against Russia and perhaps against Japan and China. The great naval base of Singapore which is being built is only a military base against China and Japan. Fear of Russia and opposition to her are traditional in Britain and today the constant troubles between these two powers are due less to communism than to this old political rivalry. Communism plays its role to the extent that it attacks imperialism and spreads ideas undermining the so-called moral foundations of British rule in India.

There are many other signs indicating that much thought is being given to this war. It is now proposed to keep a large contingent of the British army in India. It is felt that the old expeditionary force which was sent to Belgium at the beginning of the Great War of 1914 is no longer required in Europe and should be stationed in India where there is greater need for it. Frequent references were made to troop movements in Burma towards the Chinese frontier.

If a war breaks out in the East, India must necessarily play a decisive role in it. A country rising against British rule and trying to get rid of it will not only hamper such a war but will obstruct all British plans. A satisfied or partly satisfied India could be of great help to Britain. The problem for Britain is therefore to maintain its hold on India and at the same time induce her to help in the war.

During the last eight years there has been continuous conflict in India between the nationalists and the Government. The nationalists failed and the Government appears to be more stable than ever. However, in spite of their weakness, the nationalists have not made many concessions to the Government, though some individuals or groups may be ready to do so. It is in the interest of the British Government to buy peace at any cost, before the situation is put to the test by the course

of events. If the Government is pressed it will grant almost anything. But before that it will try, as in the past, all possible means of repression and division of the nationalists. It will also try all means of weakening and depressing them to such an extent as to make them agree to a compromise settlement. In the near future the Government will play the role that it has already played: it will try repression to crush the extremists and new reforms to appease the moderates. The economic policy is meant to win over the rich classes. Princes and proprietors are bound to England by the heavy chains of personal interest. It is rumoured that new proposals are being made more or less to separate the Princes from the rest of India and place them under the direct control of the British Cabinet, thus creating in India an isolated block, which will be of great danger to the future unity of the country.

VI

It is difficult to predict whether the Government will succeed in winning over a large part of the rich and intellectual classes. In the best of conditions its success will probably be very limited. But even if it succeeded in winning over the majority of these rich classes, it should be remembered that they form only a very small percentage of the population — 2 to 3% — and many of them are not prepared for any petty compromise. The real test will be the attitude of the masses. Even if a small part becomes active — in fact their agitation is quite obvious today — their weight will be felt. During the 170 years of British rule the exploited class and the real victims were the masses and the fact that a few more Indians occupy high positions in the Government or a few more capitalists receive greater dividends makes little difference to them. From time to time we hear of famines in India but we do not realise that a state of famine is continuous in certain regions. This is referred to as "scarcity" and called famine only if millions of people die within a short time. It should also be remembered that in earlier times, famines were caused by shortage of food products in the affected region and the lack of communications to bring food from elsewhere; this difficulty does not exist nowadays. There is food in the country and there are railways and other means of transport. Food products are available but they cannot be bought and it is very true that during a famine period, grain was being exported to other countries. The present famine is a famine of money and not of food; a terrible poverty that India must envisage and endure, a poverty which caused the death of 12 million people during the influenza epidemic and which lowered the average age of the Indian from 30 years in 1882 to 22 years in 1921 and raised the death rate during the same period from 24 per 100 to 31.

Some figures and quotations from official reports will give a better idea of the poverty problem in India. It was already indicated that the main cause of this poverty was the overburdening of the lands as a direct result of British policy. In 1880, the official Famine Committee stated:

"The poverty of the Indian people and the risks to which it is exposed in the famine periods are due to the regrettable fact that agriculture is almost the sole occupation of the masses".

In 1911, the official Indian census report stated:

"There is no doubt that the percentage of the population living on agriculture increases rapidly. The profits of several classes of artisans have decreased due to the growing competition by machine-made products in the country or imported from outside and consequently these classes tend to abandon their traditional occupations in favour of agriculture".

The following are authoritative figures from the latest census reports, when the return to the land was less pronounced than earlier:

Census Year	Percentage of population living on agriculture
1891	61%
1901	66%
1911	72%
1921	73%

The report on the investigation of Dr. H. H. Mann, Director of Agriculture in Bombay in 1917, on the condition of villages in the south is a significant document.[2] He found in the case of a single village, that the average area of a property was 40 acres in 1771, 17½ in 1818, 14 in 1821-1840 and only 7 in 1915. He concluded that in the most favourable conditions, 81% of the lands could not feed the land-owner and this calculation was based on the lowest possible expenditure rate excluding even the cost of artificial light. Out of 103 families, he found only 8 in a reasonable economic condition according to this poor standard of living; 28 could live only by working in a neighbouring factory and thus ensuring an extra income; and 67 i.e. 65% could not meet their requirements in spite of income from the lands as well as extra earnings from outside.

2. Dr Harold Mann, principal of the agricultural college at Poona and later Director of Agriculture in the Bombay Presidency 1907—1927, conducted a number of investigations into agricultural conditions in India

In a second village which had no factory nearby, he found that 85% of the people could not meet their requirements.

Dr. Mann also states that in the first village the interest of debt amounted to 2500 rupees on a sum of 12000 rupees, representing the net income from the lands. In the second village the interest was 6700 rupees and the net income 14000. This leaves hardly any money to pay interest on debts unless the amount is drawn from what can be considered as essential expenses. These figures relate to debts in normal times. During years of famine or of some other calamities, debts increased in very alarming proportions.

Dr. Mann indicates that the average rent paid to the proprietors represents half of what a cultivator could earn if he owned the land. In the case of Zamindaris (large properties) the rent is much higher.

He concludes his investigation with the following statement: "At present, it appears that the condition of the Indian village is declining steadily".

These figures reveal the terrible poverty of the peasant. The condition of the worker who is not the land-owner is still worse. Agricultural over-population is sometimes attributed to the peace and prosperity brought by British rule. In fact, India's population is not increasing at anything like the rate in European countries.

Professor Brij Narain[3], author of the book entitled *Population of India*, states that during the last 30 years the cultivated area for food products has increased at a lower rate than the population. It is certain therefore that the people were under-fed. The fault lies with the entire agricultural system and unless a complete change is effected the tragic condition of the masses in India cannot be improved.

VII

It is often argued that the backward and miserable condition of the Indian masses is mainly due to its social customs and harmful superstitions. It is true that the Indian people suffer from such customs and that they are superstitious. But customs and superstitions can be eradicated only by education and the steps taken by the Government in this field are such that after 170 years, hardly 10% of the population is literate whereas in Japan, for example, the percentage is 95. Expenditure on education in 1919-1920 amounted to 12 6 million pounds i e., 11 pence per head whereas in England it was 85 million pounds, which amounts to 2 pounds per head.

3. (1889 1947); Professor of Economics at Sanatan Dharm College, Lahore for many years His book *Population of India* was published in 1925.

Medical facilities are almost nil in certain regions and sanitary conditions are extremely poor. *Malaria is rampant while it is generally admitted that it could be eradicated by suitable measures. It is quite difficult to fight* the evils of a harmful tradition transmitted from ancient times, but energetic steps can succeed. The British Government in India was not serious about this — except perhaps a few officers in their individual capacity. For those Government offices which strengthened its hold on the country and *facilitated exploitation the British Government* showed remarkable comprehension and built very efficient administrative machinery. But when it was a question of "building" the nation, the energy and will were lacking and the constant excuse was the lack of funds. Funds were not lacking to maintain a very expensive army in excessive size or for increasing the salaries of government officers.

The contact with the West and the economic development have produced new forces in India which deeply undermine the country's ancient customs. *This evolution will continue. But it is strange that the British* Government in India, unconsciously perhaps, played the role of a conservative factor in the social evolution of India. Hindu society and Hindu law were always governed by changing customs; a law ceased to prevail when it was proved that it was obsolete in a certain part of the country or of the *community and it was replaced by new customs more* in tune with our times. Therefore Hindu society was, on the whole, progressive and could adapt itself to changing conditions. But it became somewhat rigid to a certain extent because of the Muslims, and more so because of the British domination. The British codified these customs and flexible laws on very conservative principles. It then became impossible to change these customs and laws except by fresh legislation. Any attempt to introduce such legislation met forceful opposition from *the conservative elements of Hindu society and the Government took* their side to remain in their favour. It was difficult to create a mass opinion capable of influencing the Government to bring about changes in the laws because an illiterate mass crushed by poverty is inert by nature.

VIII

We have examined the main stages of the development of British policy. We have seen how India was first converted into a consumer country by the destruction of her cottage industries, and how later British capital industrialised India for its own profit. We have seen that as a result of this policy *most of the people* turned to agriculture which considerably increased the poverty of the country. The insignificant political reforms made from time to time do not touch the core of the problem and though they are profitable to a part of the rich classes they do not

improve the condition of the masses. The problem cannot be solved unless imperialist exploitation is brought to an end.

This will happen only when the masses, who are the people who suffer most, become conscious of the situation. They appear to be near such an awakening. Peasant associations and industrial trade unions are gradually being formed and when they have gained some strength, they will to a great extent, control the political movement. At that time the movement will be too powerful and too wide for the British Government to try to resist or to break by repression or by the offer of some reforms. Faced with the danger, the British will offer what is known as Dominion Status but it is doubtful if this will satisfy the Indian people. Dominion type government will not put an end to the exploitation of the masses by the British capitalists and will not bring any relief to them.

There cannot be peace between India and England unless India becomes completely independent.

43. A Foreign Policy for India[1]

To some of us in India it may appear a foolish waste of time to indulge in fancies about a foreign policy for India. Our national movement is at an ebb and the country appears to be rent into many factions—religious, economic and political. Efforts are being made to bridge the gulf between the Hindu and the Muslim and to bring the various political groups under one banner. Laudable as these efforts are they seldom appear to take into consideration the fundamental causes of disunion or lay much stress on the underlying principles which only can form the basis of effective political action. Unity is good and worth striving for with all our might, but only if it is based on principles which matter and which are believed in. A patched up unity at the cost of principles can only be followed by disruption at the moment of crisis and consequent disaster. It is bad ethics and worse policy. It is no waste of time, therefore, for us to consider some of these principles and the wider aspects of the Indian problem.

1. 13 September 1927. A.I.C.C File No 8, 1927, pp. 1—27. N.M.M.L.

It is not easy to consider these wider aspects during a period of internal trouble when we are only too conscious of our many weaknesses, and our seeming helplessness makes us lose heart and clutch at straws. Many of us begin to attach more importance to what we can get immediately than to what we should aim at and strive for. Strong language continues to be used but it is often a cloak for a sinking heart. We talk of ultimatums and minimum demands when probably we mean something very different. The prospect of a statutory commission agitates us considerably and we discuss its personnel and how many, if any, Indians are likely to be on it, and in the same breath we disdainfully reject the right of the British Parliament or any outside authority to determine our future. These and a hundred other signs are but the outward symptoms of the tumult that is going on in our heads and hearts. It is natural that it is so. Nonetheless it makes it a little difficult to consider calmly and dispassionately, and apart from the troubles of the moment, the fundamental problems that India has to solve.

We suffered a setback after the noncooperation movement and the reaction grows and we sink deeper and deeper into the trough. Let us remember however that we are not the solitary victims of reaction. Europe and America are equally its victims. The war and the Russian Revolution, like the great French Revolution, let loose strange forces and vitalized the elements of progress throughout the world. But in this very process, they also called out all that was reactionary, and today in a great part of Europe dictators reign and even the so-called democratic countries support them and admire them. In Europe, as in India during the noncooperation movement and after, we have had the flush of freedom followed by reaction. Does this mean that in Europe the progressive movements are essentially weaker than they were before, or that fewer people support them? Few will say so if they have any knowledge of the peoples and politics of Europe. These movements are more widespread and stronger than they have ever been and it is really the fear of their strength that has rallied the forces of reaction. It was easier for these latter to organise themselves; the existing system helps them, governments are their staunch supporters, and their resources in money and publicity are tremendous. So today they are masters of the situation, but they know that the potential strength of the others is greater, and the fear of this drives them into greater excesses of reaction. Europe has the appearance of an armed camp today, with the two groups facing each other. One, highly organised, is in an entrenched citadel fully stocked with ammunition; the other disunited is in the wilderness, but potentially it is far stronger and common suffering is welding it into a powerful and strongly knit group. But because the latter group is disunited and weak today it is not losing sight of its aims

and ideals. It sticks to them with greater intensity and fervour knowing well that real relief cannot come through any patchwork compromise.

India today bears a striking analogy to Europe. The Government is strong and we are weak and disunited. And yet no close observer can say that the spread of the national movement is less today than it was even at the height of the noncooperation movement. Extraneous causes may weaken us for the moment and we may waste our strength and energy in mutual conflict, but the solid fabric built up by the blood and suffering of tens of thousands remains and must endure. Let us not forget that our potential strength is greater than that of our opponents. The only danger we have to face is not from our opponents but from our friends, who, feeling disheartened and hopeless, may barter away our future for a paltry compromise. It is all the more necessary therefore that we should clearly envisage the problems we have to solve and the methods of their solution.

II

What are these problems? There are many but the four principal ones appear to be: the question of minorities, our future economic structure, our social problem, and our foreign relations.

A consideration of the minorities problem will include the Hindu-Muslim question, the Brahmana and the non-Brahmana, the Sikhs and the smaller minorities. We shall have to see how far the existing friction is due to economic causes and to what extent merely to religious intolerance and bigotry. The latter will involve a comparison with other countries and would lead us to the regrettable conclusion that our country, with its age-long reputation for religious tolerance, is today the worst example of intolerance and bigotry. It will be for us to consider whether this narrow outlook and religiosity can be eradicated by cautious compromises between rival superstitions or by a frontal attack on all superstition and bigotry, wherever it may be.

Our second problem — the future economic structure of our country — raises the vital issue which is convulsing Europe today. Are we to aim at a continuation of the capitalist regime in India, or some form of socialism, or something else which is different from either of these? This will largely influence our constitution and our methods of government. It will also necessitate a consideration of the causes of Indian poverty, of the terrible over-pressure on land, of land tenure and land revenue. We are apt to imagine that with the withdrawal of British political control the "drain" of India's wealth will cease. We forget that the amount that India pays in the shape of salaries and pensions and the bank charges and the like is only a small part of her tribute, and it is

quite conceivable that even self government may not stop the exploitation of the country, unless it is followed by a change in our economic structure.

The third problem deals with our social evils and raises vital issues which must be faced and boldly tackled. Katherine Mayo's notorious book, *Mother India*[2], has broadcast the most amazing generalizations and calumnies about our country. It would be easy enough for any one so minded to write a similar book about France or England or America, and by picking out the most disgusting facts from the records of the police courts and the files of Sunday journals to point to the conclusion that it was a loathsome country, past all redemption. And yet everyone knows that this would be a false caricature and a calumny, and that France and England and America have a great deal that is admirable and noble and worth acquiring. It is difficult for an Indian to read Katherine Mayo's book without anger and resentment. No person, Indian or foreigner, who has any knowledge of India, can read the vile charges brought against our people as a whole, without knowing from his personal experience that they are false. The book is a particularly mean and disgraceful effort at propaganda, and yet I should like as many Indians as possible to read it. We have our plague spots. Let us face them squarely and root them all out.

The fourth and the last problem for us to consider is that of foreign policy. I propose only to deal with this here and not with the other three, although it is difficult to separate questions which are so intimately connected. Our foreign relations will include our relations with England and her empire, now called the British Commonwealth of Nations.

III

We know that India was intimately connected in past ages with the countries of the East and even with some Western countries. Gradually these connections dwindled and with the coming of the British they almost ceased. Political reasons and the development of the sea routes to Europe brought us into greater touch with England but isolated us from the rest of the world. As the national movement in India took shape our leaders attempted to carry on propaganda in England. It was hoped thus to convince the British public of the righteousness of our cause and it was expected that fair dealing would follow this conviction.

2. Katherine Mayo was an American author who sought to show that India was socially backward and therefore unfit for freedom. Her book was written with the active assistance of British officials in London and India.

The expected did not happen and a revulsion followed. The Nagpur Congress in 1920 wound up the British Committee[3] of the Congress and the weekly newspaper *India* and practically declared itself against all propaganda in England. It was a natural and inevitable step. We had grown in self-consciousness and the axiom was laid down that only by developing internal strength could we achieve our goal. During our intensive campaign in India we forgot England and the rest of the world. Yet the strange result was that we had far more publicity in the press of the world than we had ever had before and the name of Gandhi, as representing our movement, became almost a household word in Europe and America. As the noncooperation movement became weaker, India ceased to occupy the columns of western newspapers. The wisdom of the Nagpur Congress decision was thus amply justified and it became clear that the best propaganda in foreign countries was effective action at home.

Many attempts have been made in recent years to induce the Congress to take up foreign propaganda, and although some resolutions favouring it have been adopted, little has been done. It has been rightly felt that our energy and money can be better employed at home. But the question we have now to consider is not one of propaganda to gain the sympathy of others but one of ending the isolation in which India has lived for generations and of developing contacts with other parts of the world. Whether we wish it or not India cannot remain, now or hereafter, cut off from the rest of the world. No country can do so. The modern world is too closely knit together to permit of such isolation. The Arcos raid[4] in London is followed by a murder in Warsaw and many executions in Moscow, and has its reverberations on the North-West Frontier of India. France, the most intensely national of countries, cannot have a minister who interferes too much with the plans of high finance of New York. M. Caillaux[5] falls because Wall Street does not approve of him; M. Poincare succeeds because Wall Street helps him to do so. We talk of labour and socialist internationals but the greatest and most powerful international organisations today are

3. The Committee was wound up in 1921 in accordance with the resolution passed by the Nagpur Congress in December 1920 as not being in keeping with the policy of noncooperation adopted by the Congress
4. In May 1927 the British police raided the office of Arcos, the Soviet Trading Corporation in London, and although no evidence of illegal activities was found, the incident caused embitterment and led to the termination of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union
5. Joseph Caillaux (1863 1944); Finance Minister of France, who was forced to resign twice, in 1925 and 1926.

those of capital and finance which control the governments of even so-called democratic countries and bring about war and peace. The American marines take possession of Nicaragua because Messrs. Brown Brothers of New York have money invested there. Cuba is not fit for independence, says President Coolidge, but all the world knows that her unfitness is due to the presence of rubber which American capitalists covet. China cannot be free because too much British and Japanese capital is locked up there.

India cannot keep apart from this tangled web, and her refusing to take heed of it may indeed lead her to disaster. We must understand world movements and politics and fashion our own movement accordingly. This cannot mean that we have to subordinate our interests or our methods of work to those of any other country or organisation. Nor does it mean that we should expect any help from outside or slacken our efforts at home. It simply means that we must educate ourselves in problems of world polity so that we may be able to serve our country better. It means that whenever possible we may take part in international joint action when this is to our advantage. It means also that we should gradually train a body of men and women who can be relied upon to serve Indian interests abroad when the power for doing this comes into our hands. Let us remember that there are many countries and many peoples who suffer as India does today. They have to face the same problems as ours and it must be to the advantage of both of us to know more of each other and to cooperate where possible. There may not be many opportunities of such cooperation but an obvious instance is an internationally organised boycott of goods.

The Congress took a step in this direction by taking part officially in the Brussels Congress against Imperialism and a further step by becoming associated with the League against Imperialism. These steps were important. It is difficult at present to appreciate fully their far reaching character, but we may measure it to some extent by the wrath of the British Government and their propagandists against the League.

IV

What is the position of the Indian in foreign countries today? Apart from a few students and others, he has gone either as a coolie or as a mercenary soldier on behalf of England. As a coolie he is looked down upon with contempt and as a hireling of the exploiters he is hated. Indian soldiers and the police have been used by the British Government to further its own interests in China, Egypt, Abyssinia, Mesopotamia, the Persian Gulf, Arabia, Tibet, Syria, Afghanistan and Burma, and wherever they have gone they have made the name of India hated. In Burma one can understand the grievance of some people against their

exploitation by the British and Indians and their desire to separate from India. In Mesopotamia our countrymen hold the country for the British and also join in the process of exploitation. Even in Annam, I am told by friends, the Indian community always sides with the French Government against the Annamese and, in the elections for a deputy for the French Chamber, cast their votes for the official nominee. In Shanghai the most hated are the Indian police who are made to do the dirty work of their imperial masters. It is not surprising, regrettable as it may be, that the Indian is not loved in those very countries which suffer a common fate with us and which should be our friends and allies. It is for the Congress to develop these contacts and to strive unceasingly for the withdrawal of all Indian armies and police from foreign countries. On the occasion of the despatch of Indian forces to Shanghai, the Viceroy declared that they were being sent to protect Indian interests in China. We have no interests there or anywhere which require the protection of armed force, and even if we had such interests it is better for them to suffer than to be protected at the point of the bayonet. The only interests we wish to develop in any country are such as are acceptable to the people of that country.

V

What then should India aim at? What manner of Swaraj are we struggling for? Some talk of independence and some of a membership of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and many are prepared to accept the latter because it appears to be the less difficult of achievement. And yet this very argument means that if a full measure of independence was, in their opinion, obtainable, they would prefer it. Independence, on the other hand, may mean very little if it is of the type which prevails in Egypt today, with a foreign army of occupation to overawe the National Parliament and British cruisers to enforce the decisions of the British Cabinet.

India cannot strive for anything less than the fullest freedom to develop as she will; she must control her finances, her military forces and her foreign relations. Any other ideal would be beneath her dignity and not worth the sacrifices that we have made or may be called upon to make in the future. She may if she chooses, and I trust she will so choose, agree to give up a measure of her freedom of action to an international body of which she is a member for the sake of world peace But she can only do so if other nations also agree to limit their sovereignty in like measure. It is becoming increasingly clear that international peace cannot be founded if each nation jealously guards its full sovereignty, and the League of Nations which sits at Geneva is proving

a dismal failure because the governments of Europe do not desire peace and will not even agree to compulsory arbitration. The League is indeed the plaything of a few great powers in Europe and its chief purpose is to protect the existing rights of these powers. Under its very constitution it is bound to safeguard the status quo, and India and other countries in a like predicament, suffering from the status quo and desiring it changed, can expect less than nothing from the League. It is an obstacle in their path cleverly designed to delude them and to waylay them. But should a real League of Nations arise working for peace and taking the necessary guarantees for peace from its component members, India should gladly join and agree to all such guarantees.

VI

Does the membership of the British group of nations as it is today promise India the full measure of freedom which we consider as essential? The British Empire, except for India and other dependencies, is becoming more and more nebulous. It is held temporarily together chiefly by the sentiment of its component members, but signs of disruption are evident enough. South Africa openly and continuously pulls in a contrary direction and advocates separation; Canada, and in a lesser degree Australia, gravitate economically and culturally towards the United States. It is certain that in case of an armed conflict between England and the United States, Canada and probably Australia, will cut away from the former and join the States. Such a conflict, though unlikely, is by no means impossible as the recent failure of the naval disarmament conference[6] clearly shows. But even if England and the United States should not war against each other, only an optimist, who is blind to all that is happening around us, can say that another great war in the not distant future is unlikely. If any such war comes the British Empire will hardly emerge from it as an Empire. For the present, however, it holds together largely because of sentimental ties and common economic interests. In the case of India there can be no sentimental tie based on common origin and culture; indeed the sentiment will be of an opposite kind. Still less is there any common economic interest. There is bound to be continuous friction and India will either have to break through or be coerced into an unwilling agreement with a policy against her interests.

6 In 1921 Britain, the United States, Japan, France and Italy had agreed on a ratio among themselves of capital ships; but an attempt in 1927 to fix a similar ratio for other types of ships ended in failure, France and Italy refusing to attend the conference at Geneva and Britain and the United States failing to reach agreement.

It is not conceivable that India can remain within the British group of nations and yet be mistress of her destiny.

What does the British Commonwealth stand for today? In its domestic policy we see colour and racial prejudice and the doctrine that the white man must be supreme even in countries where he forms a small minority. South Africa offers the most flagrant example of this, but Canada and Australia are equally strong believers in this doctrine. In Kenya and the adjacent territories it is now proposed to create a new federation or dominion with all the power in the hands of a few white settlers, who can do what they will to the large numbers of Indians and the overwhelming African population. Can India associate herself with this group and be a party to colour bar legislation and the exploitation and humiliation of her own sons and the races of Africa?

In the domain of international politics England occupies a still clearer position. She is the bully of all Eastern nations striving to be free and an enemy of all progressive movements. In China her armies and fleets and aeroplanes try to hamper and break up the national movement; her army keeps the Egyptians in their proper place and her cruisers are ever ready to bombard. In Europe she is the friend of every dictator, whether it be in Italy or Spain or Hungary or Greece. Even in the League of Nations her attitude is always the most conservative, and only lately we have seen that one of her own leading delegates, Lord Robert Cecil,[5] has had to resign because he considered that his Government did not strive for peace. Today England is without doubt the most reactionary force in the world. Partly this is due to the comic opera government which she has had the misfortune to possess for some years, but the chief cause is one which will endure. She has had too long a spell of Empire not to be corrupted by it and it will take time to live this down.

Is India to put herself in this group which represents reaction and suppression of struggling peoples and nations? It would be an immoral act and a crime against the freedom of all who are oppressed. But is it conceivable that India can ever be an equal member of the British Commonwealth? It is an old argument, but worth repeating, that if India ever became such a member, she would, by virtue of her vast population and her tremendous latent resources, inevitably become the predominant partner in the group. The British Commonwealth would be dominated by India and the centre of gravity would shift from London to Delhi. No one can imagine that England or the dominions will put up with this. They would far prefer that India was out of their group. It would

7. (1864 1958), a staunch supporter of the League of Nations, Lord Robert Cecil (later Viscount Cecil of Chelwood) resigned from the British Cabinet in 1927.

be easier to deal with her as an independent power rather than as a boss of their own concern.

It is thus difficult to conceive of a free India in the British Commonwealth. It is however quite possible to think of her as a nominal member of this group without an effective voice in important matters of domestic or foreign policy, financially a thrall of London, and being made to play the imperialist game at the bidding, and for the benefit, of England.

On vital matters she will always have to give in, her economic interests will suffer, and whether she wants it or not, she will have to put up with the capitalist exploitation of her masses. This is something very far from freedom and no definition of Swaraj, however feeble it may be, can be made to fit in with it. Those who advocate some kind of Dominion Status for India must realise its implications. It can only mean a continued subjection for India. There are only two alternatives for us and no possibility of a third—remaining a subject country and gaining complete independence.

We thus see that there is no possible place for our country in the British group of nations and it is idle to talk of India becoming a member of this group. The only possible goal we can have is one of full independence. This does not mean friction or enmity with England. We shall want peace and peaceful relations with all countries and we shall gladly welcome England as a friend if she chooses to meet us halfway, in spite of her previous record in India. Indeed friendship between England and India is only possible after India has broken the British connection. No friendship can be based on compulsion.

VII

It is often stated that we cannot defend ourselves and if England left us to our resources another foreign power would invade us and take possession of our country. And so some would argue that England should continue to defend but leave us internal freedom. Those who contend thus seldom realise the inevitable implications and consequences of their argument. With the defence forces under foreign control and an alien army of occupation always present, what measure of freedom can we enjoy? The ultimate authority will always rest with the foreigner and the nominal liberty we may possess will be hedged and circumscribed and not worth a day's purchase. Our very armies, controlled by foreign authority, will be used, as they have been used in the past, to thwart and oppress us. Some of us imagine, taking leave of the teachings of history and common sense, that the English will help us to build up our defence forces. They will indeed help to build them but they will be

tools in their hands, meant to protect their interests against ours, and a perpetual obstacle in our path. Our position indeed may become worse and more pitiable than it is even today.

But even if it were possible for us to come to an arrangement with England so that she might defend us, would it not be a shameful and humiliating position for us? With what dignity or self respect can we ask a foreigner to protect our honour or our interests? It is an amazing proposition, born of fear and timidity—worthy only of a people utterly devoid of manhood and the qualities which go to make a nation. If there is any truth in it then indeed we are wholly unfitted for freedom.

We have our Skeen Committees* and the like making feeble proposals which might result in the course of generations in Indianising a part of the army, and we have the patience to dicuss these proposals with gravity. And yet the Government will not agree even to these. We seem to have forgotten that only ten years ago huge armies grew up and officers *by tens of thousands were trained within some months in almost every* country of Europe. When the need arose there were no Skeen Committees appointed to take a leisurely view of affairs and make suggestions for the generations to come. If England or France had acted then as the Government of India is acting now, the war would not have lasted long and would have had a very different conclusion. India with her man power and tremendous resources can solve the question of defence within a year or two if her Government and people really want to do so. A national Government faced with the immediate responsibility of strengthening and protecting the country will do more within twelve months than the present Government will do within half a century. We have an efficient Indian army today but it is officered by the British. This army can become the nucleus of our defence organisation. Many of the non-commissioned officers can be promoted to commissioned ranks and steps can immediately be taken to train more officers. During the period of transition we shall welcome the aid of foreign officers as experts, English if they are prepared to serve us. If the English are not so prepared, there is no lack of others—French, Germans, Russians or Japanese. Indeed in the continent of Europe the English officer has no high reputation.

But war today is becoming more and more mechanised—a thing of tanks and aeroplanes and gas bombs. The infantry soldier and the cavalryman will soon be as much out of place in it as the man of

8. The Skeen Committee was set up by the Government of India to consider Indianisation of the Indian Army. Motilal Nehru and Jinnah were among its members.

armour with a lance and a battle axe. By the time the present Government of India gets to work and produces a few toy Indian officers, smartly dressed and well up in all the rules of parade, they will be about as useful to us as the ancient warriors with bows and arrows.

We shall of course do our utmost to make our defence forces efficient and capable of resisting all possible attacks. But our main strength will lie in our peaceful and friendly policy towards all countries and in the spirit of our people. We shall covet nobody's land or goods and there is no reason why we should have enemies outside. If we are successful enough in severing the British connection we shall be strong enough to resist any other power that may venture to attack us. From which country or countries need we fear attack? The countries of western Europe are too much involved in their mutual hates and jealousies to trouble us much. The United States of America are too far away for effective action. Japan has her hands full in China, and the latent hostility of America and the Western powers will not permit her to embark on any new adventure. China will have to face her own great difficulties for a long time to come, and in any event it is difficult to imagine that our relations with her will be anything but friendly. There remain the little state of Afghanistan and Russia. Afghanistan in the past has had the closest bonds with India and it will be our endeavour to revive them. Even if we do not succeed in doing so we have little to fear from her. The strength of her people lies in defence in their mountain fastnesses and not in a serious attack. Her people are brave fighters but their resources are very limited. It is not conceivable that they can succeed against us. It is quite possible, however, that they may carry out a number of successful raids before we can defeat them and hold them in check.

VIII

Russia then remains the sole country that may threaten our freedom. She is powerful enough and in a favourable position to attack us. Should we fear such an attack? For generations the bogey of a Russian invasion has been held up to us—during the days of the Tsars we were told that it was Russian imperialism thrusting down to the sea, and now it is communism trying to subvert the world. So we are told by the British. How far does the traditional rivalry between England and Russia concern us, and why should we inherit the hate and fear of Russia from England? The Soviet Government ever since its formation ten years ago has had to contend against a host of external enemies and even greater misfortune and difficulty at home. These enmities and difficulties continue and are likely to remain and Russia can hardly be expected to embark on an aggressive campaign with so

many dangers to face at home and abroad. Her Government is wholly based on the industrial workers and the peasants, and the latter are gradually gaining greater power and influence. The peasantry are notoriously against war. They can be roused to defend their country when attacked, as they did against Denikin and Koltchak[9], but no aggressive campaign can succeed with the dead weight of their disapproval. No country is perhaps more in need of peace than Russia and only fear of circumstances outside her control are likely to drive her to war. Nonetheless there is more talk of war in Russia today than in any other country. She suffers from a fear complex and the efforts of her many enemies to form combinations against her, haunt her and sometimes drive her to cruel excesses. She can have nothing to fear from a free India and there is no reason why she should imperil her existence by taking aggressive action against our country and thus permit her other enemies to attack her weakened flanks. We shall thus have little to fear from Russia when we are free. The danger from Russia is caused solely by the rivalry between England and Russia. It ceases as soon as the British connection is severed. Our position thus, in a military sense, is better and stronger as an independent country than it would be if we were within the fold of the British group of nations.

But although there is apparently no danger of attack or invasion from any country we cannot dismiss the possibility. Wars come unannounced and the best of neighbours fall out. We shall thus have to keep ourselves prepared and the best of preparation will be, not so much military material, but the spirit of our people. That spirit can only be roused if we put an end to all exploitation of our peasantry and workers. If they feel that the burdens that have borne down upon them for ages past and crushed them have at last been lifted, they will fight for their country and for their own freedom with the valour and doggedness that comes from a new hope. Let us remember how the ragged soldiers of the French Revolution, without food or guns, faced and vanquished the armies of Europe. Few of us can have forgotten the plight of Russia on the eve of her treaty with Germany ten years ago. The army had gone to pieces and there was chaos all over the land. Soon after they had to meet attacks from the East, the South and the West; they had to face a terrible famine and pestilence; they were the outcasts from the human family and all the world seemed to be against them. But they had one great asset, something well worth fighting for—a great ideal and their faith in it. And so they drove back their enemies, fought famine and disease, and with amazing

9. Leaders of the counter-revolutionary armies which sought after 1917 to destroy the Bolshevik regime.

courage and pertinacity set themselves to the task of reconstructing Russia. Like the men of the French Revolution they did much that was cruel and heartless. But we need not be communists, nor need we agree with their gospel of communism, in order to appreciate much that they have done.

In like manner will India defend herself successfully when the time of trial comes. But only if we have proceeded rightly and not compromised our principles for petty trifles; only if we have based our freedom on the freedom of the masses and raised the under-dog and made him a sharer in the good things that independence will bring to us. What Indian will suffer or fight with goodwill for a few more ministerships, or high posts, or provincial autonomy, or even the shackled liberty *that the British Commonwealth can promise us?*

We shall have to face risks and dangers. Why should we avoid them or be frightened of them when the only alternative is continual degradation and subjection to foreign domination? And if the risks and dangers are too great and overwhelm us, *let us at any rate go* down gallantly, having done our best, so that India may at least have a noble epitaph to end her millennia of chequered but magnificent history.

IX

In developing our foreign policy we shall naturally first cultivate friendly relations with the countries of the East which have so much in common with us. Nepal will be our neighbour and friend; with China and Japan, Indonesia, Annam, and Central Asia we shall have the closest contact. So also with Afghanistan, Persia, Turkey and Egypt. Some people, living in a world of their own creation, imagine that there is a pan-Islamic block which may threaten India. This is pure fancy. Everyone of the Islamic countries is developing on intensely national lines and there is absolutely no room in them for an external policy based on religion. Indeed even their domestic policy has little to do with religious dogmas. The interests of these countries are and will continue to be our interests. With the European nations we are bound to develop further contacts. We have much to learn from them and closer intercourse will be to the advantage of both.

Russia offers a peculiar problem which requires special consideration. She has adopted an economic policy with the rigid faith of a new religion and she is continually trying to spread it to other countries. That policy even in Russia has undergone some change during the last few years and it is possible that it may further change. Whether a variant of that policy or some other form of socialism should be our aim is one of the problems which we have to solve. But even if we

are wholly opposed to that policy we can have friendly relations with Russia. Turkey is no lover of communism but in her external policy she is on the side of Russia. In considering this question one cardinal fact has to be kept in mind. The principles, and what is more important the practice, of Soviet Russia have always, with one exception, been in favour of the fullest self-determination of various peoples. She has always been for the oppressed and the exploited. The one exception to this general policy is her behaviour in Georgia[10] where it appears that she is holding on against the will of the Georgians. Her excuse is that there is oil there and if she left some other power will take possession of the country. The excuse is a feeble one and is of the kind advanced by any of the imperialist powers. It is possible that in the future as she grows in power, even Soviet Russia may develop a new type of imperialism. But there is little chance of that for a long time to come and for the present she is undoubtedly, and for reasons of self-interest, the friend of all the oppressed nationalities. India has thus every reason to develop friendly relations with Russia. In many ways conditions in Russia are not very dissimilar to Indian conditions, in education and agriculture and the beginnings of industry to mention some instances, and we could learn much from studying their methods.

X

India will also have to keep watch on the many Indians who are abroad and lay down a policy for their guidance. They should be free to go where they like for purposes of labour or business but only to countries where they are welcome and are treated honourably. We cannot thrust them down in other lands and win for them a privileged position by force as the imperialist powers have so often done with their nationals. An Indian who goes to other countries must cooperate with the people of that country and win for himself a position by friendship and service. In Kenya, for example, there are many Indians, fellow-sufferers with the Africans under the domination of a few white settlers. The Indians should cooperate with the Africans and help them as far as possible and not claim a special position for themselves which is denied to the indigenous inhabitants of the country. To take another case, that of Burma. We all hope that in the future federation of India, Burma will be an honoured member. But it should be made perfectly clear that it is for the people of Burma to make the

10 The Soviet government suppressed a number of attempts in Georgia to declare independence.

decision, and should they decide on a separation from India, they are perfectly welcome to do so.

XI

Many of these questions will only arise after we are free. We can hardly develop a foreign policy so long as we are dependent on a foreign government. We can do little now. But we can at least lay down the general lines of our future policy and try to keep in touch with movements in other countries. The League against Imperialism offers us one way of doing so of which we should take full advantage. But we should not limit ourselves to it. There are many other ways also of our developing these contacts and it would be desirable for the Congress to open a foreign department to do so.

There is one vital issue, however, which we must face immediately. What will India do in case of a war in which England is involved? Thirteen years ago we were swept in before we knew what had happened and out manpower and resources were fully utilised for the benefit of England. Are we going to allow ourselves to be similarly exploited again? The danger of war coming in the near future is serious enough. All nations of Europe are making frenzied preparations for it, while their representatives spend pleasant days in Geneva discussing disarmament.[11] Russia is continually discussing the coming war. The whole of English policy seems to be based on it. And when nations prepare for war and expect it, it has a way of coming even though no country wants it. If war comes the East is sure to be involved and England is consequently strengthening her position in the Pacific and in India. The Singapore base can be a challenge only to Japan and China. In India it is proposed to transfer the control of the army to the British War Office and to station a large part of the British expeditionary force within easy reach of the North-West Frontier. All this means a preparation for war with Russia. India has no quarrel with Russia; she has considerable sympathy for her, and there is much in her that she admires. Why then should we be dragged into a war against Russia for the benefit of British imperialism? But there is no doubt that we shall be dragged in if we patiently wait on and do nothing. The British dominions have established their right to join England in a war or not to do so as they choose, though it is difficult to imagine where the British Commonwealth will be if one part of it is at war and another at peace. India should also declare unequivocally that she will

11. A series of bilateral and multilateral disarmament conferences was held at Geneva under the aegis of the League of Nations between 1919 and 1939.

are wholly opposed to that policy we can have friendly relations with Russia. Turkey is no lover of communism but in her external policy she is on the side of Russia. In considering this question one cardinal fact has to be kept in mind. The principles, and what is more important the practice, of Soviet Russia have always, with one exception, been in favour of the fullest self-determination of various peoples. She has always been for the oppressed and the exploited. The one exception to this general policy is her behaviour in Georgia[10] where it appears that she is holding on against the will of the Georgians. Her excuse is that there is oil there and if she left some other power will take possession of the country. The excuse is a feeble one and is of the kind advanced by any of the imperialist powers. It is possible that in the future as she grows in power, even Soviet Russia may develop a new type of imperialism. But there is little chance of that for a long time to come and for the present she is undoubtedly, and for reasons of self-interest, the friend of all the oppressed nationalities. India has thus every reason to develop friendly relations with Russia. In many ways conditions in Russia are not very dissimilar to Indian conditions, in education and agriculture and the beginnings of industry to mention some instances, and we could learn much from studying their methods.

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10. The Soviet government suppressed a number of attempts in Georgia to declare independence.

some 15 to 20 lakhs of people had gathered there. The Kaiser also, with all his officers, was there in great pomp. The airship came in at the correct time and it was greeted with great delight. All round, the German 'hoch', 'hoch' could be heard. I was busy to take some photographs with my small camera. They are still with me. The hotel in which we had stayed gave us that night a very nice photograph of Count Zeppelin. That too is with me still.

That was eighteen years ago. Since then man has mastered the air to a great extent and the aeroplanes have improved tremendously. Today thousands of passengers travel by air every day and from big cities aeroplanes carrying passengers fly every day. I also had two occasions to travel by air, once from London to Paris and then from London to Ostend.

But it was in Paris, only two months ago, that I realised how much progress had been made. Two Frenchmen, Chungrosse and Oldo, tried to fly direct to America from Paris. It was a very difficult and dangerous journey. All Paris was full of joy and of anxiety. A few hours after their departure, the news came that they had succeeded and reached America. There was rejoicing in every street in Paris. The big stores stopped working for sometime and everybody started congratulating everyone else. The house of the old mother of Chungrosse was swamped with flowers. But the happiness was short lived. It was realised that the news was false and that in fact the whereabouts of the [illegible] were not known. Thereafte[illegible] e was an inquiry [illegible] could be found nowhere a[illegible] became certain that t[illegible] their grave in the Atlar[illegible] ing. After a few days' [illegible] ws came that a boy [illegible] ving to Paris all alon[illegible] were laughing at his foolish[illegible] one had no n[illegible] f communication in any [illegible] For [illegible] ls of miles, between and [illegible] s acro[illegible] any mistake of his wou[illegible] ve been even found. [illegible] courag[illegible] ight as an arrow he [illegible] not m[illegible] this — an American [illegible] men [illegible] and died. But the [illegible] its [illegible] ple, and he was wel[illegible] [illegible] way in which even

[illegible] d King of Prussia. He [illegible] major naval, colonial and [illegible] lled in his abdication. [illegible] aviator, on 21 May 1927 [illegible] flight in *The Spirit of St.*

be no party to any war without her express consent, and if she is bullied or hustled into such a war, she will not help in any way. We must have this declaration made and repeatedly made and it should be made known to the people as widely as possible by press and platform. We have nothing to gain by being parties to such a conflict and we have a great deal to lose.

Montana, Switzerland

44. Victory Over the Air[1]

About 18 years ago, when I was a student at Cambridge, I saw aeroplanes flying in Germany and France. Before that also I had heard that in America the Wright brothers[2] had demonstrated that they could fly in a machine heavier than air. Some used to fly two yards higher than the ground; now they can fly at an altitude of 200 to 300 yards. This was the first time when a man flew in the air in a heavy machine. Before this, people had flown in balloons by filling them with gas and making them lighter than air, but that was a different principle. After the Wright brothers, it was known that a Frenchman, Santos Dumont[3], had also succeeded in flying in a similar machine.

After that news of quick progress started pouring in. Bleriot crossed the Channel and flew from France to England. Thereafter an aeroplane in the sky ceased to be much of a surprise.

About eighteen years ago, I was in Berlin. Count Zeppelin[4] was to arrive in his famous airship after a long flight. There was great publicity and a vast number of people had come to welcome him. We also went to the field where he was to land. There was a great rush, and

1. *Aaj*, 28 September 1927. Original in Hindi
2. Orville Wright (1871-1948) and Wilbur Wright (1867-1912), on 17 December 1903 they made the first controlled, sustained flights in a power-driven airplane. Record breaking flights in 1908 by Orville Wright in the United States and by Wilbur Wright in France brought them world wide fame.
3. Alberto Santos Dumont (1873-1932), Brazilian aeronaut resident in France from 1891 to 1928. A pioneer in the development of aircraft, he was the first to construct and fly in 1898 a gasoline motored airship
4. Ferdinand Graf von Zeppelin (1838-1917), German army officer and designer and builder of the famous airships named after him.

some 15 to 20 lakhs of people had gathered there. The Kaiser[5] also, with all his officers, was there in great pomp. The airship came in at the correct time and it was greeted with great delight. All round, the German 'hoch', 'hoch' could be heard. I was trying to take some photographs with my small camera. They are still with me. The hotel in which we had stayed gave us that night a very nice photograph of Count Zeppelin. That too is with me still.

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Paris was in mourning. After a few days the news came that a boy from New York was flying to Paris all alone. All were laughing at his foolishness. He was alone and had no means of communication or any special equipment in the plane. For thousands of miles, between sky and ocean, a slight defect in his aeroplane or any mistake of his own — and let alone seeking help, he would not have been even found. But this fool committed the folly of courage and straight as an arrow he came over Paris. The French did not much like this — an American success — where their own countrymen had failed and died. But the courage of Lindbergh[6] won the hearts of the people, and he was welcomed in Paris and in other cities of Europe in a way in which even

5. Wilhelm II (1859-1941), Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia. He failed in his endeavours to make Germany into a major naval, colonial and commercial power. The German defeat in 1918 resulted in his abdication.
6. Charles Augustus Lindbergh (b. 1902); American aviator; on 21 May 1927 landed in Paris after a solo, nonstop transAtlantic flight in *The Spirit of St. Louis* from New York.

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Paris was in mourning. After a few days the news came that a boy from New York was flying to Paris all alone. All were laughing at his foolishness. He was alone and had no means of communication or any special equipment in the plane. For thousands of miles, between sky and ocean, a slight defect in his aeroplane or any mistake of his own — and let alone seeking help, he would not have been even found. But this fool committed the folly of courage and straight as an arrow he came over Paris. The French did not much like this — an American success — where their own countrymen had failed and died. But the courage of Lindbergh[6] won the hearts of the people, and he was welcomed in Paris and in other cities of Europe in a way in which even

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Montana, Switzerland

44. Victory Over the Air[1]

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kings have not been received. As for America — the whole continent went mad about him. Had Lindbergh lost his head, no one would have been surprised. Even old and experienced men become arrogant on such occasions, and he was just a boy. But a greater miracle than even flying the Atlantic was the self-control that he showed. He did not let this massive applause and excitement go to his head. He was offered crores of rupees, but he refused to accept any money.

From where did this wonderful boy learn that daring and that patience? Lindbergh is considered as a god in the United States today but very few people know that his father was considered to be a rebel in his own country. He was a senator who fought for freedom and justice in the teeth of opposition. Such people are not very much liked. When the United States went to war against Germany in the Great War, the senior Lindbergh opposed it and was widely criticised. He could not get a platform to speak from and he was called a revolutionary. Had he been living today, the very people who are hailing his son to the skies would have called the father a Bolshevik. When he died he was not buried in the normal way, but he was cremated and his son took his ashes up in an aeroplane and scattered them over his land. Knowing that Lindbergh is the son of that 'Bolshevik' one is not surprised at his courage.

After Lindbergh, the Atlantic has been crossed on two more occasions, and now attempts are still being made. Europe and America give much attention to flying. What about India? I do not know if our leaders pay any attention to this or whether our young men ever think of conquering the air in this manner and enhancing the prestige and power of our country. Our country is unfortunately in bondage and so neither our leaders nor our young can do much; but still something can be done if attention is paid to it. England is full of Indians who, allured by the Bar, medicine or jobs, stay there undergoing all sorts of humiliation in London and Edinburgh. If even a few of them would dare to learn flying and shun the idea of jobs, they could be of so much benefit to India. After all our country also is going to be free and I think that will be soon. Where, after independence, shall we get persons who can fly aeroplanes? It is obvious even to the superficial observer that this victory over the air in Europe and America will bring far reaching results to the world, the foremost being the effect on the methods of warfare. It is now established that the old fashioned armies and ships cannot stand up to aeroplanes and gas. Aeroplanes can annihilate a big army and can ruin several cities with a bomb. The work of the ordinary army will gradually become what the police are doing today and guns and cannons will be reduced to the level of *lathis*. Our leaders, who are striving to secure for Indians also commissions in

the army, should consider this a little. Otherwise our officers and army will be mere glittering dummies on parade and be worth nothing else.

Passenger aeroplanes are today most common in Germany. According to the Versailles treaty, Germany cannot maintain military aircraft. She is therefore concentrating on passenger planes. The biggest aeroplanes factories in Europe are in Germany. In one of these factories an Indian holds a high position. I was so pleased to see him, and my expectations rose that other countrymen of mine also will join this line. France too has progressed considerably in this matter. England is rather backward. Aeroplanes can fly well and flying can be developed more in a country which is large and has hundreds and thousands of miles of open country. For this reason, in the future, it may progress in America and Russia and perhaps in China too. There is also plenty of opportunity for flying in our country.

I hope the Hindustani Seva Dal will pay attention to this matter. They should try to understand how in different parts of the world the air is being conquered and some of the volunteers should try to understand how an aeroplane works and learn to fly it.

45. To Raja Rau[1]

Paris
26.10.27

My dear Raja Rau,

I have just received your draft for Swiss frs. 2530-20/100. I shall pay over £ 100 to the League against Imperialism and send you their formal receipt for it.

In future if you have to make any remittance to the continent do *not* do it through Cooks. They give a very bad rate of exchange. I do not know what you paid them in rupees but the equivalent of the money you have sent is considerably short of £ 102-12-3. According to the rates prevailing here this sum in English money should amount to about 2580 Swiss francs. Thus you have been defrauded of nearly 50

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127, part II, 1927-28, p. 433-434. N.M.M.L.

francs which means nearly £ 2. Any big bank will give you a better rate. It is usually better to send a draft in English money and get it converted here.

I hope to sail with my wife, sister & Indira on Dec. 2nd. Father may come with us but it is not certain. We shall go by the Messageries Maritimes boat *Angers* which reaches Colombo on Dec. 19th. I hope to reach Madras in time for the Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

46 To Syed Mahmud[1]

Paris
26.10.27

My dear Mahmud,

Some time ago you wrote to me to thank me for not writing to you. As I have persisted in this honourable inactivity, so far as letter writing is concerned, I wonder why you have not repeated your thanks. As you have stated I am a headstrong and pig-headed person. For months past I have almost given up writing letters to India and somehow I cannot recapture the mood for correspondence. This is hardly a letter. It is meant to inform you that we intend sailing from Marseilles by the Messageries Maritimes boat *Angers* on Dec 2nd, reaching Colombo on Dec 19th. From Colombo we hope to go to Madras where we are all looking forward to meeting you and your wife. I am not sure yet if father will be able to come with us. Perhaps he may.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

47. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit[1]

Moscow
10.11.27

Nan darling,
This is not going to be a letter. I have no time to write a real letter but still I want to send you a few lines from Moscow, if only for the sake of the stamp! To give an account of our impressions and experiences even within the 36 hours or so we have been here would take a long slice off a day and many sheets of notepaper. We are in topsy turvy land. All one's old values get upset and life wears a strange aspect here. Everybody is *tovarish (comrade)*. We have to address the waiter or porter or cabby as *tovarish* and the president of the Soviet Republic has to do the same to the poorest peasant. It seems alright in theory but in practice it takes some getting used to.

Moscow is in some ways like any big city, and yet it is so different. The comparative poverty of the people is obvious. There are very few cars in evidence; private cars there are hardly any if at all. There are some taxis and then there are the cars belonging to the various departments of the State. Electric trams and motor buses run but most of the people seem to walk. The roads and pavements are crowded with pedestrians. The shops, though often containing beautiful Russian-made goods, are poor in comparison with shops elsewhere. But the spirit of equality is rampant, and pride in the revolution. We arrived a day too late and missed the great celebration. There was a grand parade of the army and a march past of a million and a half people in front of Lenin's tomb. It must have been a sight worth seeing. Then there was an aeroplane display — the aeroplanes are referred to by everyone here as Russia's answer to Chamberlain.[2] During the big procession, I am told, there was an effigy of Chamberlain which was hissed at continuously.

1. J. N. Correspondence, NMML.
2. Austen Chamberlain, British Foreign Secretary, announced in the summer of 1927 that trade and diplomatic relations with the USSR had been severed

Moscow is full of flags and bunting. The hammer and the sickle — the Soviet sign — is everywhere; and also the figures 1917 — 1927, representing the 10 years of the revolution. And of course Lenin's pictures. One cannot move or turn in any direction without gazing at Lenin — a statue or picture or photo or painting. Every house and almost every shop window has it. He is the God of the Russians today and a mere mention of his name makes them light up.

Talking of God — there is a beautiful chapel of the Virgin Mary[3] almost opposite our hotel nestling under the Kremlin[4]. Many people — chiefly women — visit it still. The Soviet people do not stop anyone from going there but on a wall opposite they have displayed prominently a quotation from Karl Marx: "Religion is the opium of the people".

Our hotel is a queer mixture of the grand and the lowly. It is a big building with fine halls etc. but some of the arrangements are primitive. It used to be a fashionable hotel. Now, the building stands as it was and even the fine furniture is sometimes to be found but it is carefully covered up with white cloth. Finery is not encouraged. The effect of a few hours of Moscow on Kamala was that she wanted to take off the border from a simple *sari* she was wearing as she felt she was over-dressed.

I can't continue this letter now. So I am posting it as it is.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

3. Near the Kremlin are two famous cathedrals dedicated to the Virgin Mary — Cathedral of the Assumption and Cathedral of the Annunciation They were built in the 15th and 16th centuries.
4. The citadel or walled city within Moscow, is the headquarters of the Soviet Government. It contains also the cathedral where the Tsars were crowned, an imperial palace, and the bell tower of Ivan the Great.

48. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit[1]

In Poland
en route to Berlin
12.11.27

Nan dear,
We are in the train going across Poland. We ought to reach Berlin tomorrow morning but an unfortunate oversight is likely to give us a lot of trouble and we may have to stop at the frontier. We have no fresh German visas on our passports and it appears that these are necessary to enter Germany again. We gave our passports to some Russian friends and asked them to get the necessary visas. They got us the Polish transit & the Russian but apparently overlooked the German. The passports were returned to us just before we left and we had no time to look into them before our departure. This morning as we entered Polish territory we found out definitely that we must have German visas also. We wanted to send telegrams to Berlin & Moscow to have instructions sent to the frontier but none of the stations will accept them. The people and the organisation here are quite primitive and hardly anyone understands anything but Polish. Besides they say they cannot send any telegrams beyond Moscow. So we are in a quandary. We are going on to Warsaw and will try to get visas there in the evening but there is no chance of success as all offices will be closed. What makes matters worse is that it is Saturday today and Sunday tomorrow. Probably we shall go on to the frontier & get stranded there! This means the loss of one day at least which is a pity as we might have spent it in Moscow.

Our stay in Moscow was ridiculously short — just three days! We saw a great deal but naturally our impressions are of the vaguest kind and rather jumbled. A month's stay might have made us understand conditions there a little. What was obvious however was the extraordinary absence of different classes such as we find in other countries. There was very little to separate the President[2] of the Soviet Union

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. M. I. Kalinin (1875-1946); Russian revolutionary and a loyal follower of Stalin; was the first Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. 1923-46, and a member of the Politburo, 1925-46.

from the poorest peasant, and the latter is as ignorant and primitive as the Indian peasant. The President indeed was himself an ordinary worker and has only recently been induced to put on a tie! What a comparison between this and the pomp & pageantry of other countries. We visited the great opera house[3] — a magnificent building with seven tiers of gilded galleries. It was absolutely full. Indeed we were given some special seats which were put in the passages for the purpose. Instead of an evening dress show audience we saw ordinary working folk and peasants in every variety of attire — mostly without ties, many in their shirt sleeves without coats even; Tartars in their native costumes, long coats with enormous headgear, Mongols etc. No powder and puff elegance, only the relaxation of tired working people. The show was exceedingly good. There were a number of separate tunes, songs, dances, ballets and some of them were the best I have seen.

We had no time to see other theatres or shows although tickets were waiting for us. We went to a cinema though and saw one of the numerous films of the revolution. It was very good.

Then we saw the central peasants' house in Moscow, with museums, reading rooms, lecture rooms and bedrooms for nearly 400. Every manner of agricultural implement of the latest variety was exhibited; a large electrical room showed the application of electricity to agriculture and domestic use. Free advice on legal matters and agricultural questions was given and daily lectures organised. We saw large numbers of peasants feeding in the dining room.

We were told that there were 350 such peasants' houses in North Russia alone now and scores of others in Ukraine, Georgia and Siberia etc.

The electrification of the country is proceeding very rapidly and already there are dozens of very big power stations scattered all over.

The industrial workers are of course far better organised than the peasants. They have their trade union halls everywhere where frequent lectures are given, fine reading rooms etc. Most of the old palaces of the nobility are now converted into workers' clubs or peasants' houses. There can be no doubt that the conditions of the peasantry and the workers in Russia, in spite of the general poverty and low wages, are far superior to those elsewhere. What is more, their whole moral stature has improved and they look forward with hope and confidence to the future.

We also visited a prison — the biggest in Moscow — meant for the serious cases. There were four hundred prisoners. The prison officials

3. The Bolshoi Theatre.

numbered 52 in all from the head to the lowest warder. There were no convict warders. Owing to the application of the 8 hour day the 52 officials worked in three shifts so that at one time there were only about 17 warders etc. None of those, except one or two at the gate, were armed. Indeed these few warders were not much in evidence. The whole jail was more like a factory inside where textile machinery was working away. The convicts were given wages for the work they did — 2/3rd of these wages were kept in reserve for them till the time of their release so that they might have some money to start life afresh. They were allowed to spend 1/3rd of their wages by making any purchases they liked — books, food, cigarettes etc. We saw in two of the cells we visited radio sets fitted which the convict had paid for out of his wages. No special dress is worn by the convicts, nor, we were told, are fetters or handcuffs ever used inside or outside the jail. Prisoners are not given numbers but are referred to by name. The maximum sentence of any prisoner in the jail was ten years, liable to reduction if good work is done. In the short time at our disposal it was not possible to go into the system thoroughly and probably only the rosy side was shown to us. Nonetheless what we saw created a very favourable impression. The jail was treated not as a place of punishment but as a place of detention. Indeed even the name has been changed. It is called a prison no longer but a place for isolation and improvement by work. There was a barber's shop in the jail run by a prisoner and we saw him shave another convict in proper style finishing up by an *eau de cologne* spray. Payment was made for this out of the wages earned by work. Prisoners are not allowed to keep money; they pay by chits etc. and the account is kept in the jail office.

In the jail yard we saw a crowd of prisoners having their midday exercise. No warders were in evidence and there was nothing special to indicate thaht these people were convicts. In one corner there were arrangements to play basket ball.

Two of the men we saw were political convicts. One had been sentenced for espionage. He was from Czechoslovakia and being a good musician he had been made music director of the jail. The other was a Russian. He was an aviator in the Red army and he had deserted with his plane and gone over to the White Russians when the latter were attacking the Soviets. He was sentenced to death, but later this was commuted to 10 years. He was employed as an electrician in the jail.

We were invited to a banquet one night by an association of servants. We were asked to go at 10 p.m. The home of this association was a beautiful villa of a rich merchant who had fled from Russia. There were fine halls & paintings. Dinner started at 11.30 p.m. Soon after the caviar speeches began and these went on in various languages right

through the feast—the languages being Russian, French, German, Spanish, English, Esperanto, Czech & perhaps some others. At 1.15 a.m. the dinner was gradually concluding but the speeches were going strong, and we left.

We paid an interesting visit to the Commissariat of Education and were told how the problem of illiteracy was being successfully tackled, even among the grown-ups. We were shown all manner of primers etc. in the numerous languages of Siberia & Turkestan etc.

Then there were meetings and a great Congress of the Friends of Russia held in a magnificent hall—where in the old days the Tzar used to hold his *durbars* or do some such thing.

We saw the Kremlin—also the Mausoleum of Lenin where Lenin's body is kept embalmed for all to see. He lies with his great forehead calm and peaceful, satisfied, as it were, with the work he had done. He died young, in the early fifties. A ceaseless stream of people passes by to look at him and do him reverence.

Among those we met were Lenin's widow[4], who is now an assistant Commissar in the department of education, Kalinin, the president of the Union, Chicherin[5], Bukharin[6] and several others whose names you are not likely to know. But one person who fascinated me was Madame Sun Yat Sen.

She is delightful, looks twenty five and is full of life and energy. She was six years in an American University and speaks English with an American accent, but not unpleasantly.

Impressions crowd on me but I cannot go on. The picture I carry away from Russia is one of admiration for the men who have accomplished so much within a few years in spite of all the disadvantages that one can imagine. We are always complaining of the poor human material we have in India; yet in Russia it is or was no better.

4. N. K. Krupskaya (1869-1939); Lenin's wife and collaborator
5. Georgi Vasilyevich Ghicherin. (1872-1936), Russian statesman, who joined the Social Democratic Party in 1904, was arrested during the October Revolution of 1917; returned to Russia in January 1918 as Trotsky's aide and soon succeeded him as foreign commissar. He successfully prepared for the recognition of Soviet Russia by the Great Powers, notably by the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922.
6. N. I. Bukharin, (1888-1938); Russian Communist leader and theoretician; took part in the October Revolution (1917) and became a leading figure in the Comintern and editor of *Pravda*. In 1924 he was made a full member of the Politburo. At first an ally of Stalin, he later differed from his policy. In 1929 he lost his major posts. In 1938 he was tried publicly for treason and was executed.

Enough of Russia.

I think I wrote to you some weeks ago that we shall require *khadi* clothing when we land in Colombo and later in Madras. So far as Madras is concerned you could send some clothes & beddings for us with any of the delegates who might be going there. Beddings are not required in Colombo. Please send them to Madras and do not send *lihaf* & *gaddas* & other bulky articles. As for clothe I want in Colombo: 2 pairs of *pyjamas*, 2 *kurtas*, 2 dhotis and 2 white caps—no more. I have some things with me also. These and such things as may be required in Colombo by Kamala, Betty & Indu should be sent C/o Thos. Cook & Son, Grand Oriental Hotel Buildings, Colombo.

Our Madras address will be C/o the Reception Committee, Indian National Congress.

We are approaching Warsaw now. It has been snowing all day. Moscow was quite warm & pleasant for the time of the year but father had previously come to the conclusion that Moscow was a very cold place and he was all the time on the defensive against a cold which did not exist.

Please do not forget to inform the Congress people in Allahabad or Benares wherever the office of the U.P.P.C.C. is to elect all of us as delegates to the Madras Congress. Any fees that may be necessary should be paid. Write to Shiva Prasad Gupta about it.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

You will find all the clothes I require in the things I have sent back.

49. To Rangaswamy Iyengar[1]

Montreaux
16.11.27

My dear Rangaswami,

As we have been travelling about incessantly I have not yet been able to get the receipt for the £ 100 I paid to the League against Imperialism.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127, Part II, 1927-28, p. 431-432. N.M.M.L.

We have received no letters for 2 weeks. Our short visit to Russia and constant travelling made it impossible for letters to follow us. I hope however to get the receipt soon and to send it to you. Meanwhile I enclose a letter I received from the Secretary, League against Imperialism sometime ago. According to his request I paid this money to Edo Fimmen.

As I wrote to you we hope to sail from Marseilles by the Messageries Maritimes Steamer *Angers* on Dec. 2nd. This is done to reach Colombo on December 19th. After a day or two in Colombo we shall proceed to Madras. It is not certain yet if father will be able to come. Much depends on his cases in the Privy Council. Anyway my wife, sister, daughter and I will sail on December 2nd.

I shall be obliged if you will make some arrangements for our stay in the Congress camp. I shall wire to you from Colombo our time of arrival in Madras.

Our visit to Russia was very short but nonetheless exceedingly interesting.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

SOVIET RUSSIA

Foreword

These articles were contributed to various newspapers in India. Most of them appeared in the *Hindu* of Madras, the one on 'Education' appeared in *Young India*, and some have appeared in other papers. I am having them issued in book form with considerable hesitation. I realise, more perhaps than the average reader, their deficiencies and how disjointed and sketchy they are. Some of them, may I confess it, were written in railway trains, and all have been sandwiched into the intervals between other activities which absorbed most of my time. I am also fully aware that it requires a person of considerable knowledge and some courage to write about the complex and ever changing conditions of Soviet Russia. I claim no such knowledge and though I may possess the habit of rushing in where wiser people fear to tread, I do not claim to lay down the law about Russia or to dogmatise about anything that has happened there. I have found the study of Soviet conditions an absorbing one, and from the numerous enquiries that I have received, it is clear that many others hunger for information about them. This patchwork series of articles, with many omissions and repetitions, based on a little personal knowledge and more on the reading of books, will hardly satisfy that hunger. But perhaps it may answer a few questions and point to those who wish to pursue the subject further, the path of fuller knowledge. Hence my temerity in offering this little book to the public.[1]

Woodrow Wilson in his address to the Congress on December 17th, 1917 said: "You catch with me the voices of humanity that are in the air. They grow daily more audible, more articulate, more comprehensive, and they come from the hearts of men everywhere". To the student of modern Russia it is these voices of humanity that come, the cry of the undistinguished masses, ever louder and more insistent, and it seems to him that echoes answer from every country. A war weary world heard these voices in 1917. President Wilson heard them. Outlining his famous Fourteen Points (alas, where are they now?) he referred to the peace parleys between Soviet Russia and Germany, and said: "The Russian representatives have insisted, very justly, very wisely, and in the true spirit of modern democracy, that the conferences they have been holding with the Teutonic and Turkish statesmen, should be held with open, not closed, doors. And all the world has been audience,

1. First published by Lala Ram Mohan Lal, University Road, Allahabad, in December 1928.

as they desired.... There is, moreover, a voice calling for the definitions of principle and of purpose, which is, it seems to me more thrilling and more compelling than any of the more moving voices with which the troubled air of the world is filled. It is the voice of the Russian people.... They call to us to say what it is we desire, in what if in anything our purpose and spirit differed from theirs; and I believe that the people of the United States would wish me to respond with utter sincerity and frankness. Whether their present leaders believe it or not it is our heartfelt desire and hope that some way may be opened whereby we may be privileged to assist the people of Russia to attain their utmost hope of liberty and ordered peace". And the sixth of the Fourteen Points was to be the acid test for the powers.

"The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unembarrassed and unhampered opportunity for the independent determination of her own political and national policy, and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing, and, more than a welcome, assistance of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good-will, of their appreciation of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy".

These were generous words. But even the author and his own country failed to live up to them. And history shows us the result of this acid test and how the "sister nations" have, instead of giving sympathy and good will, ceaselessly sought to hamper and destroy the new Russia. Today, ten years after the war, how far we are from an open diplomacy can be seen from the recent secret Anglo-French Naval Pact. But Russia has survived because she had the "voices of humanity" with her.

I am grateful to the editors of the various periodicals in which these articles have appeared for their courteous permission to print them. I am specially grateful to the editors of the *Hindu* and *Young India*. At the insistence of my friend, the publisher, some illustrations of his choosing have been included.[2] They bear little relation to the text, but they may perhaps be appreciated by some of those who are venturesome enough to possess themselves of a copy of this book.

ALLAHABAD
October 10, 1928

Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Not included here.

1. The Fascination of Russia[1]

Since my return from Europe I have frequently been asked about Russia. On the strength of a very brief visit to Moscow I have been treated almost as an expert on Russia and all manner of quesions have been put to me, often to my great embarrassment. When asked to speak, specially at student gatherings, the subject suggested has almost invariably been Soviet Russia. In spite, however, of limited knowledge of the subject, I have gladly responded, for I have welcomed this spint of enquiry and this interest in a country which has many points of contact with ours, and which has launched on one of the mightiest experiments in history. All the world is watching her, some with fear and hatred, and others with passionate hope and the longing to follow in her path.

It is difficult to feel indifferent towards Russia, and it is still more difficult to judge of her achievements and her failures impartially. She is today too much of a live wire to be touched without a violent reaction, and those who write about her can seldom avoid superlatives of praise or denunciation. Much depends on the angle of vision and the philosophy of life of the observer; much also on the prejudices and pre-conceived notions which he brings to his task. But whichever view may be right no one can deny the fascination of this strange Eurasian country of the hammer and sickle, where workers and peasants sit on the thrones of the mighty and upset the best-laid schemes of mice and men.

For us in India the fascination is even greater, and even our self-interest compels us to understand the vast forces which have upset the old order of things and brought a new world into existence, where values have changed utterly and old standards have given place to new. We are a conservative people, not over-fond of change, always trying to forget our present misery and degradation in vague fancies of our glorious past and an immortal civilisation. But the past is dead and gone and our immortal civilisation does not help us greatly in solving the problems of today. If we desire to find a solution for these problems we shall

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 3 April 1928.

have to venture forth along new avenues of thought and search for new methods. The world changes and the truths of yesterday and the day before may be singularly inapplicable today. We have to follow the line of life in its ever-varying curves and an attempt to adhere rigidly to an outworn creed may take us off at a tangent from this curve of life and lead us to disaster.

Russia thus interests us because it may help us to find some solution for the great problems which face the world today. It interests us specially because conditions there have not been, and are not even now, very dissimilar to conditions in India. Both are vast agricultural countries with only the beginnings of industrialisation, and both have to face poverty and illiteracy. If Russia finds a satisfactory solution for these, our work in India is made easier.

Russia again cannot be ignored by us, because she is our neighbour, a powerful neighbour, which may be friendly to us and co-operate with us, or may be a thorn in our side. In either event we have to know her and understand her and shape our policy accordingly. The bogey of war with Russia is ever with us. In the days of the Tsar we were told that Russian imperialism wanted an outlet to the sea; now that the Tsar has gone we are warned against the insidious attempts of communists to subvert a peaceful and well-ordered world. The old political rivalry between England and Russia continues, whoever may occupy the seats of power in Whitehall or in Moscow or Petrograd.[2] How far must India inherit this rivalry or be made to suffer from it? There are rumours and alarms of war and the problem is an urgent one for us.

It is right therefore that India should be eager to learn more about Russia. So far her information has been largely derived from subsidised news agencies inimical to Russia and the most fantastic stories about her have been circulated. The question most frequently asked me has been about the alleged nationalisation of women! The most prolific suppliers of news about Russia have been the Riga correspondents of British and other newspapers. A writer in the New York *Nation* described recently how Riga correspondents are made.

He wrote as follows:

"The first time I served as a Riga correspondent was in London. An Editor made a correspondent of me by giving me an editorial leader clipped from one of the morning papers. He instructed me to re-cast part of it in the form of a dispatch and date it from Riga. The editorial

2. Famous city in Russia, situated at the mouth of the river Neva. Founded by Peter the Great as St. Petersburg, it is now known as Leningrad.

was one reviewing in some detail the pernicious activities of the Third International. I must have re-written it rather well, for later I was entrusted with other tasks of the same delicate nature. I became the paper's regular Riga correspondent — "from our own correspondent", as they like to say in Fleet Street.

"A year later I was in Paris and attached to a newspaper there. And in Paris I found myself again a Riga correspondent. The work was twofold now. There were French journals and English journals to re-write. All of them, including the one in London which formerly employed me, seemed to boast Riga correspondents. In all their dispatches there were revelations — Bolshevist atrocities[3], Cheka[4] executions, Soviet economic difficulties[5], dissatisfaction of the people with the Government. As in London, this material was turned over to me; and out of the mass another composite Riga correspondent was born.

"Whenever I think of Riga now I do not visualize a city, but a newspaper office — *old desks, paste pots, shears, typewriters, waste paper. Riga* is a newspaper office city. It may have a geographic location. For all I know it may be populated with individuals absorbed in their own affairs; eating well, sleeping well, dreaming of owning automobiles. You cannot prove it by me. Once, in a moment of inexcusable curiosity, I went to the trouble of hunting up Riga in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica.* That fount of current information describes it as a thriving port on the Baltic Sea, from which agricultural products, chiefly oats, are exported to England. Obviously, it was an old edition of the Encyclopaedia. By this time the rumours far outnumber the oats.

"If cities ever receive decorations for signal service, the Western world should *confer prime honours* upon Riga. By its mere existence as a four-letter word used for a dispatch date-line it has served as a barrier against the plots of the Soviets, thus keeping sacred and inviolate the idealism of Western Europe. Riga defends the world against the insidious propaganda of the Soviets. Red lies break against its intrepid front."

3. Bolshevism was threatened by foreign intervention, prolonged civil war and frequent risings and plots. So the Bolsheviks adopted ruthless measures to root out opposition.
4. The secret police set up by the Bolsheviks after the Revolution of 1917.
5. The Bolsheviks won the civil war but during those three years the economy collapsed, foreign trade virtually ceased as a result of the Allied blockade, and there was widespread famine.

2. The Journey[1]

We had been invited by the Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries to visit Moscow during the tenth anniversary[2] celebration early in November, 1927. A very large number of invitations had been issued to men and women in all countries — not only to communists but to many professors, scientists and distinguished individuals. I believe between seven and eight hundred persons responded to these invitations. Our own visit was decided upon at the last moment as we had little time to spare and the journey to Moscow was a long one.

We went from Berlin and crossed the whole of Poland. It was an uneventful and dreary journey. Poland looked a desolate and dismal country. Except for Warsaw, the stations were small wayside buildings with very few houses in the neighbourhood. Our German conductor in the train had the supremest contempt for Poland and all things Polish. For him civilisation ended at the German frontier and the Poles were a barbarous people. It may be however that the cheerless aspect of the country was due to the season; it was the beginning of winter. But even winter could not have made much difference to an industrial country, and from what we could see from the train there were few evidences of industrialism.

We reached the Russian frontier at Niegeroloje on the night of November 7, 28 hours after leaving Berlin. Just before our arrival we were visited in our compartment by a Russian officer in charge of the customs. He asked us if we were going to the celebrations as guests, and assuring himself of this, he told us not to worry about our luggage as he would take charge of it. We were excused the customs examination.

The frontier station was all beflagged and decorated. There were red flags everywhere, and the Soviet emblem — the hammer and the sickle. There were also pictures and busts of Lenin and other leaders. It was

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 7 April 1928
2. The events which led to the Russian Revolution and the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks occurred on 7 November (25 October by the old Calendar) 1917.

the anniversary day, just ten years after the Bolsheviks seized power, and all Russia was celebrating it.

We had already taken our dinner but the station staff produced large quantities of food and, after the Indian fashion, would have no refusal. We had to comply with their wishes. We had some difficulty in communicating with each other as the only European languages we could express ourselves in were English and French. The station staff knew no English whatever and exceedingly little French. Several knew German well. Ultimately a person was produced who could speak a little French and he became our interpreter. We had quite a little function; a speech of welcome was made to which I had to respond briefly. About a score of villagers were present — men, women and children — and they took great interest in the proceedings. Partly this may have been due to the *saris* of my wife and sister. We were then taken round the room and the pictures and posters were explained to us and we had our first experience of Lenin worship. Every mention of Lenin brought a rapt expression on the faces of those present. Our whole stay at this little wayside station resembled nothing so much, as my father remarked at the time, as a visit of a Congress deputation to a small town or village during the noncooperation days.

From Niegeroloje we travelled in the Russian train. Our berths had been reserved by our hosts and we had a very comfortable journey. There is only one class in Russia but they have some special sleeping cars and we had been provided with these. We travelled the whole night and the greater part of the next day, arriving at Moscow the next afternoon. All the stations *en route* were decorated with flags and pictures in honour of the anniversary. The men and women and children we saw at the stations were well clad and most of them had great coats reaching to their ankles and big Russian boots up to the knees.

At Moscow we found representatives of the Cultural Society to greet us as well as a number of Indian young men whom we did not know. Mr. S. J. Saklatvala, who had preceded us by a few days, was also there. We were taken to the Grand Hotel de Moscow in the Place de la Revolution, a large building with many evidences of former grandeur and luxury. But evidently these signs of grandeur did not fit in with the present regime and were mostly covered up.

Our first feeling was of great regret that we had not come a day or two earlier. The real anniversary celebration had taken place the day before and we had missed it. This consisted of a march past the Lenin mausoleum of over a million troops and workers and children drawn from every part of Russia. Kalinin, the peasant President of the Russian Union, and still a peasant in his appearance in spite of his high office,

had taken the march past. From early morning till night had fallen the march past continued to the strains of the Internationale[3], the workers' anthem; first the troops of all kinds and then representatives from factories and colleges and schools, and towns and villages. Workers and peasants, men and women and children, forty deep, went by, with banners flying, heads high and full of enthusiasm. Effigies there were of Chamberlain and Briand[4] and Baldwin[5], some of them very clever. One of these showed Chamberlain wedged in a sickle with the hammer falling on his head. Finally, long after night had fallen, the Cossack cavalry made a magnificent charge at break-neck speed right across the great Red Square[6]. Such were the accounts that we heard, and the more we heard them the more we regretted having missed this magnificent spectacle.

3. A revolutionary hymn composed by Eugene Pottier in 1871.
4. Aristide Briand (1862-1932); French statesman. Between 1909 and 1929 he headed about a dozen governments. As wartime Prime Minister (October 1915-March 1917), he lacked vigour, but as foreign minister from 1925 to 1932 he was the chief architect of the Locarno Pact (1925) and the Kellogg Briand Pact (1928). He was a prominent figure in the League of Nations. He shared the 1926 Nobel Peace Prize with Gustav Stresemann.
5. Stanley Baldwin (1867-1947); Conservative politician and Prime Minister 1923-24, 1924-29 and 1935-37.
6. The Red Square, beside the Kremlin.

3. Impressions of Moscow[1]

The streets were full of people, mostly on foot. There were crowds everywhere, overflowing from the pavements to the middle of the streets, but they were orderly crowds obeying the law of the road and passing on ceaselessly without any jams or hold-ups. The police, or rather the militiamen, as they are called, seemed to control the traffic well. Their task was not so difficult as it is in other great cities, as the vehicular traffic was not great. There were many electric trams and motor buses, all crowded, and taxis and private cars, but altogether they made a poor show as compared with the vast numbers to be seen in Paris or Berlin

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 4 July 1928.

or London. Probably the crowds were greater than usual owing to the tenth anniversary celebrations of the Soviet Republic.

The city was beflagged and decorated for these celebrations. There was the red flag everywhere and the sign of the hammer and sickle, the symbol of the rule of the labourer and the peasant. Lenin's picture was often displayed, and the figure X representing the ten years of the republic was also frequently seen. At night there were illuminations showing off these decorations and signs, and even the electric bulbs were usually red. The colour red is dear to the Russian — even apart from its revolutionary significance. The Russian word for it means both red and beautiful, and the famous Red Square in Moscow, skirting the Kremlin, with Lenin's mausoleum on one side of it, was so called even before the revolution.

The first impression of Moscow is almost that of any great city, and yet as one proceeds differences are noticed, and one arrives at the conclusion that Moscow stands apart from the cities of the West. It is beautiful with its innumerable golden domes and wide squares and broad streets. It is full of churches — some one told us that there used to be 1,600 of them. Some of the bigger ones have been converted into museums but most of them are still open to the faithful. The Soviet Government does not encourage in any way church-going or religion. Indeed there are organisations which carry on a vigorous anti-religious propaganda, and education is wholly secular. But there are no restrictions in the way of people going to churches, and large numbers, specially from the countryside, still visit them. Right near the Kremlin is an ancient chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and its reputed holiness attracts people from far. We saw crowds, chiefly women, going in. There is no one to stop them, but none who pass that way can fail to see an inscription on an adjoining wall. In large letters, which stand out, is given a famous saying of Karl Marx: "Religion is the opium of the people".

No city in the West perhaps offers such a variety of costume and headgear as Moscow. Paris is supposed to be the greatest international centre of Europe. One comes across people from all countries there, but they are all in the standard costume of the West, almost the sole exception being Indian women, who continue to wear their *saris*. But in Moscow Asia peeps out from every corner, not tropical Asia but the Asia of the wide steppes and the cold regions of the North and East and centre. It has heavy boots on and every variety of long coat and hat. People have grown accustomed to these varieties and eccentricities of attire and pay little attention to them. Even the *saris* of my wife and sister, unusual as they were in Moscow, attracted less attention there than in Berlin or Paris.

But the real change one notices in Moscow, and which grows on one with every day's stay, is in the atmosphere and the very air of the place. The contrasts between extreme luxury and poverty are not visible, nor does one notice the hierarchy of class or caste. Everyone, whether he is a porter at the railway station or a waiter in a restaurant, is a *tovarish* — comrade — and a addressed as such. Merit or status is not judged by wealth or by the largeness of the salary. We were told that the highest salary paid to the members of the communist party — and all the high officials belong to this party — is 225 roubles a month, equivalent to about Rs. 300. The President of the Russian Union gets this salary and probably his clerk gets something not much less, the only difference being that the President will have some rooms to live in, a motor car for his use, and some other facilities. The peasant from the village or the labourer from the factory visiting the President will meet him as if he was one of his own class, only cleverer and more capable, and will address him as *tovarish*.

Most of the motor cars to be seen were either taxis or cars belonging to the State or to organisations — soviets, trade unions, co-operatives, factories, big firms, etc. Private cars, belonging to individuals, were not in evidence at all.

There were big shops and stores, outwardly resembling the shops of other cities. The big shops were all the property of the State, only the smaller ones belonging to individuals. There were also street hawkers trading in petty articles. Generally the goods displayed in the shops were simple and modest and had no pretensions to fashion or smartness. There were none of the dainties of the Rue de Rivoli or of Bond Street[2]. People in the streets and indeed everywhere were clad regardless of fashion, many without collars or ties. Many of them of course could not afford to buy anything expensive. But apart from the question of expense it was considered a bourgeois failing to waste time and money on clothes.

Some of the big squares had loud speakers which gave the news of the day and concerts and probably political speeches from time to time to convert the waverers and those in doubt. The communist does not miss a chance to give his gospel to the world.

We visited the State Opera House. It is a magnificent building, built in the Tsar's time, with seven golden tiers one over the other. In the days of the Tsar it was the meeting place of wealth and fashion. The audience we saw was very different. The house was full to overflowing with people in their work-a-day attire, sometimes without coats and in

2. A street in the West E[illegible]ndon, well known for its fashionable shops.

their shirt sleeves. There was no attempt at smartness or dressing up for the occasion. There were all homely looking folk—intellectuals and workers and peasants, with a fair sprinkling of children. The performance, which consisted of dancing and singing and ballets, was exceedingly good and was thoroughly appreciated by the audience, which insisted on encores. A little boy and girl, not more than ten years of age, danced delightfully. The principal item however was the dance of a star performer of Tsarist days, now a woman of 60 but looking hardly 30. She danced amazingly well. Altogether, from the point of view of beauty and art, it was a show difficult to beat anywhere in the world.

We also visited a cinema show and saw a revolutionary film called *The Last Days of Petrograd*. The Russians are famous for the beauty and artistic excellence of their films, but unhappily we in India have no opportunities of seeing them. We have a surfeit of the gorgeous but stupid and inane productions of Hollywood in America. The film we saw showed the contrast between luxury and misery in the days of the Tsar, and then the ghastly scenes of the war. The downfall of the Tsar[3], the Kerensky government[4], and the fight for power between the Bolsheviks and Kerensky[5], ending with Lenin's victory[6], were shown very effectively. It was a very powerful and stirring film and its propaganda value must be immense.

We visited the museum of the Revolution housed in a building which was the 'English Club' house in olden days — meaning thereby that it was an English type of club and not a club confined to Englishmen. There were many interesting things in the museum but on the whole we were rather disappointed with it. We saw also an art gallery and were specially interested in finding pictures in it from Asiatic Russia-Turkistan, etc.

3. Due to inflation, food shortages and poor morale among the Russian troops a revolution broke out in Russia on 12 March 1917, as a result of which Tsar Nicholas II abdicated.
4. The abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, led to the setting up of the Provisional Government under Prince Lvov, but his policy of continuing the war effort was opposed by the soviets of workers and sailors. The Provisional Government was reorganised in May but was replaced in July 1917 by a new one, headed by Kerensky.
5. A. F. Kerensky, Russian politician, a representative of the moderate Labour party in the fourth Duma, he joined the Socialist Revolutionary party after the February Revolution of 1917; became Minister of Justice, then War Minister and finally Prime Minister (July 1917) in the Provisional Government. He was swept out of office by the Bolsheviks in November 1917, fled to Paris and later migrated to the United States.
6. Kerensky failed to curb the growing power of the Bolsheviks. On 7 November 1917 the latter overthrew Kerensky's weak regime and established a Soviet government headed by the Council of Peoples' Commissars.

The magnificent Nobles' Hall of Tsarist days has now been converted into the Trade Union Hall. The 'Congress of the Friends of Russia' was held in this hall. It is one of the finest halls I have seen.

The Kremlin with its stately buildings and domes was of course visited by us. We did not go inside the Tsar's old palace or any other building except to pay a short visit to Kalinin, the President of the Union. He lived in two or three rooms, simply furnished, with no evidence of luxury or grandeur.

The revolution has changed many things in Russia but it has not changed the *drosky*. This is a primitive conveyance, a kind of four-wheeled rickshaw, drawn by a horse. Why anyone should use this ancient method of locomotion it was difficult to imagine. There was room for only one person in it or at most two thin persons, and the speed it went rarely exceeded six miles per hour.

The revolution has also not succeeded so far in putting down begging in the streets. We were often accosted by beggars, sometimes by young women with babes in their arms. The communists told us that this was much less than it used to be but it was difficult to wean the beggars from their age-long habit of begging.

Our stay in Moscow was too short for us to see much. But, short as it was, it was enough to make us feel the fascination of this beautiful city. We came away with regret and with the desire to see again its golden domes shining in the sun, and its streets and squares full of strange peoples from East and the West.

4. The Soviet System[1]

The Soviet system has become so much identified with Bolshevism and Russia that it is difficult to think of it apart from them. Yet it is conceivable that it may exist, or rather that its outward structure may exist, without communism. One of the fugitive ex-grand dukes of Russia, who considers himself the rightful Tsar of Russia and who still clings to a lingering hope that he might one day instal himself in the Kremlin, stated some time ago that he approved of it and would continue it minus of course the communism. But for all practical purposes we might consider it as synonymous with the present regime in Russia.

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 19 May 1928.

The Soviet idea was probably first outlined in 1834, by James Smith[2], one of the leaders of the Grand National Consolidated Trade Union[3], started by Robert Owen[4] in England. In 1847 was issued the famous Communist Manifesto[5] of Marx and Engels[6], which is considered to be the parent of present day communism. Nearly a generation later, in 1871, Paris had its brief and tragic spell of the Commune[7]. Louis Auguste Blanqui[8], the father of the Commune, clearly advocated a temporary dictatorship of the proletariat during a revolutionary period. Blanqui himself was put in prison the day before the Commune was declared in Paris, and largely owing to his enforced absence and the lack of efficient leadership, the Commune fell, drowned in the blood of thirty thousand Parisians, who were mercilessly slaughtered by Thiers[9] and his generals. Today only the memory of it remains, but it is a living and a vivid memory. And the wall in the Pere Lachaise[10] cemetery in Paris—*le mur des fedéres*—where the communards who had been taken prisoners were mowed down by machine guns, has become a place of pilgrimage for the communists and socialists of the world.

2. (1801-1857); edited various socialist journals, commonly known as Shepherd Smith from his journal *The Shepherd*, editor of *The Family Herald*, 1843-1857.
3. The leaders of the Trade Union movement in England were eager to bring all the working men in the country into a single union so that an effective general strike might be organised. In 1834 their efforts culminated in the formation of the Grand National Consolidated Trade Union under the presidency of Robert Owen. The experiment, however, failed.
4. (1771-1858); British Utopian socialist, tried to implement his theories by establishing socialist colonies in Lancashire, Hampshire and America.
5. Drafted by Marx and Engels and first published in German in London in February 1848, remains the basic document of international Communism.
6. Friedrich Engels (1820-1895); socialist writer and lifelong friend of Karl Marx, with whom he collaborated in writing many important works on socialism.
7. After the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War, the new French regime accepted the peace terms, which included the entry of German troops into Paris. This was bitterly resented and led to riots and the setting up of a central committee (26 March 1871), calling itself the Commune, in emulation of the Jacobin-dominated Assembly of 1793. It was suppressed by the Government after six weeks of fighting.
8. (1805-1881), French revolutionary thinker.
9. Louis Adolphe Thiers (1797-1877); French statesman. After the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) he was chosen chief Executive of the Provisional government. Soon after, he became the President of the Republic, which post he held for two years.
10. A well-known cemetery located between Menilmontant and the Place de la Nation.

During the revolution of 1905[11], in Russia, the Soviet system already took definite shape. It grew and developed and changed continuously, till it found itself firmly established in the seats of power in 1917. Its growth became rapid after the Bolshevik revolution, and it has since been continuously adapting itself to changing conditions.

The main characteristic of the Soviet system is its open recognition of the fact that society consists of different social groups or classes, each with different economic interests. So long as this condition lasts, every government must express the relative importance and strength of these social classes. The long course of history is interpreted as a conflict between these different social groups or classes. We thus have what is called the economic interpretation of history, or historic materialism. In each historic period, we are told, there is a dominating class, and the interests of other classes are only considered in so far as they serve to prolong or strengthen this domination. But this domination of one class over the others is seldom, if ever, clearly and openly expressed in the form of government. It is disguised in various ways to delude those who are exploited by it, and, where changes are slow, the dominating class creates an impression of eternal rights and duties, to safeguard its own interests. As society changes and newer and higher forms of the economic and social structure develop, new classes representing this development come to the front. These classes gradually get the upper hand over those older ones which had become obstacles to further development.

The dominating class controls the culture and education and the laws and customs of the people, but it always covers up its class character, specially when a new class begins to resist and to demand its own rights. Even present day 'democracy', according to the communists, is a form of government based on class domination, although it seeks cleverly to cover its class character. It is not in reality a social or human democracy. Its essential characteristic is to split up society into a number of individuals with the fiction of equality, and to organise the dominating class into a formidable capitalist state against which individuals or divided groups are powerless. Its class character can be seen when efforts are made to organise other classes. Our present day democracies then ruthlessly suppress all such organisations.

11. In 1905, as Russia suffered reverses in the war against Japan, a series of strikes and mutinies led to the first revolution of 1905. Its only results were the temporary grant of some civil rights and the establishment of a consultative Duma.

The Soviets[12] in Russia from the very beginning appeared as class organisations of workers. They were quite separate from the labour unions, although the advanced elements of the latter participated in the Soviets and combined with other similar elements. During the Kerensky period in 1917 the power of the Soviets increased greatly, till with Lenin's slogan, "All power to the Soviets", they became a rival and competing government.

During the earlier period before the revolution the Soviets represented the working class only. Then the soldiers and sailors came in, and later the peasants. But the peasantry were not given quite the same representation as the workers, as the latter were considered the more progressive group. Intellectuals were also allowed to participate but such as were in the service of the capitalist elements were excluded. The richer peasants were at first admitted but later most of them were excluded. Those living from the labour of others or on rent, old Tsarist officers generally and priests, were excluded, but some exceptions were made. In effect, the exclusions affected a comparatively small number of persons, amounting to 3.7 per cent of the adult population.

The governing principle under which groups are included or excluded is said to be as follows: those groups or classes that are necessary or *useful to the development of society* at a certain stage should be admitted at that stage, and the most progressive element should have the opportunity to exercise influence in accordance with its energy and social significance. The power of exclusion or inclusion ultimately rests with the All Russia Congress of Soviets—the highest governing body. The principle to be followed was laid down by the 3rd All R. S. Congress in January *1918*—"*There must be no participation in the Soviet* government by members of the exploiting classes". This was embodied in the constitution as adopted by the 5th All R.S. Congress in July 1918. The actual lists of exclusions are made by committees that supervise the elections for the different local soviets. These lists are subject to discussion and appeal to higher soviets and ultimately to the All Russia Soviet Congress or *its executive committee*. Communists declare that these exclusions are only necessary in the present transitional stage and that as the system develops it will embrace all useful human beings working with their hands or brains. This may be the ultimate result but for the present the system certainly helps greatly in the control of the State by a strong and well knit minority. But the minority will not long remain in power if it has not got the support or at any rate the passive acquiescence of the masses. Hence we have

12. Council of workers and peasants.

what is called the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', which in effect means the dictatorship of an advanced class-conscious and disciplined group claiming to represent and to possess the goodwill of the masses. In defence of this dictatorship communists point out that present-day democracies are in reality also dictatorships. But the latter are dictatorships of the capitalist class or the bourgeoisie and are meant to further the interests of this class. They are the dictatorships of the 10 per cent or less, whilst the dictatorship of the proletariat is supposed to be of the 90 per cent.

The characteristic feature of the Soviet system is its method of representation. It is not, as in most democratic countries, based on territorial or geographical constituencies, where the individual is the unit. The structure of the soviets is based on economic and social units, e.g., factories, villages, co-operatives, trade unions, etc. The number of delegates elected are proportional to the number of voters, small units combining for the purpose of electing representatives. There is one important deviation however from proportionality—the village, electing one delegate for 10,000 voters, the town, one delegate for 2,000 voters. The town dwellers, which means chiefly the industrial workers, are considered more advanced socially and are thus given more weightage.

The village soviet is said to be the soul of the village. The word 'soviet' means *sabha* and a village soviet would correspond to a *panchayat* elected by almost all the residents of an Indian village. This soviet is elected by show of hands at a kind of public meeting at which all the residents, men and women above a certain age, with certain exceptions, have the right to be present and to vote. The exceptions are rich peasants living by the labour of others, usurers, priests and such other elements as may be considered parasitical and unsocial. If there are any small industries or public institutions in the village, they will also send delegates direct to the Soviet. So also the local co-operative society, the Union of peasant labourers, women's organisations and the Young People's League.

There is generally a big non-communist majority in the village soviet, but a few communists are always present, and as these are usually the most active and intelligent members, their influence is considerable.

Most of the questions touching the daily life of the villagers are decided by the village soviet, subject to a right of appeal to higher soviets, which are also empowered to interfere when necessary. Thus the village soviet will deal with land problems and specially the distribution of land, the distribution of seeds for cultivation, wood to be cut in common forests, taxes according to general regulations, building

of schools and medical halls, medical service, fire protection, mutual aid, etc. The Soviet also serves as a link between the various other organisations in the village, and there is a growing number of these co-operative mutual aid societies, women's organisations, Young People's Leagues, Pioneers (corresponding to the Boy Scouts), international aid societies, etc.

Two other important features of the Soviet system might be mentioned here. The first is the power of recall. Each constituency has the right to recall its representatives in any soviet at any time. In other countries, as is well known, representatives to the legislatures are elected for a fixed period of three or four or five years and cannot be recalled. The second feature is the combination of the legislative and executive functions in the soviets. But it is not quite clear how this is done.

It is claimed that the soviet system reflects the real life of the community far more than any other. It is responsive and flexible and can be made to fit changing conditions so that the natural growth of a people to a better order is not impeded in any way.

5. The Constitution of the USSR[1]

The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (U.S.S.R.) was formed in December, 1922. Before the formation of the Union there were four separate republics: the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic (R.S.F.S.R.), Ukraine, White Russia and Transcaucasia. They carried on an independent existence but were allied to each other and had mutual agreements on many matters. The decision to form a Union was arrived at separately by the allied republics at their respective Congresses of Soviets. These Congresses also chose delegates to take part in framing a constitution[2] for the Union.

Originally these were the four members of the Union but in 1925 two other republics joined it. The Union now consists of the R.S.F.S.R., Ukraine, White Russia, Transcaucasia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Two of these constituent members are themselves federations. Thus the

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 24 May 1928.
2. The Constitution of 1924 which replaced the first constitution of 1918. This Constitution remained in force till a new constitution was approved in 1936.

R.S.F.S.R. consists of nine republics: Crimean, Tartar, Bashkir, Buriot-Mongolian, Keghiz, Karelian, Dagestan, Lakut and the German Volga Republic. The Transcaucasian F.S.S.R., consists of three republics: Azerbaijan, Armenian and Georgian. Besides these separate republics there are a large number of autonomous regions, there being twelve such in the R.S.F.S.R., alone.

All these republics are supposed to be sovereign except in so far as powers have been assigned to the Union. Among these powers which have been assigned are foreign relations, acceptance of new republics into the Union, and certain aspects of trade and taxation. The Union, says article four of the Constitution, is 'a voluntary union of equal peoples' and 'each of the Soviet republics retains the right of free secession from the Union.....the new United State is a worthy crown of the foundations laid in October, 1917, of the peaceful dwelling together and the brotherly collaboration of peoples'.

The constitution of the Union can be changed just like any other law. It is thus flexible and easily adaptable to new conditions. It is based on the recognition of the national differences and freedom to develop different cultures. It is entirely opposed to the autocratic unitary state of the old regime which tried to impose its own language and culture on all the various nationalities under its control

The supreme authority is the All Union Congress. The Union Council is elected on the basis of proportional representation of each constituent republic, and the Council of Nationalities is elected on the basis of five members for every republic and one for each autonomous region. Thus in the Council of Nationalities, the R.S.F.S.R., the principal and dominating republic of the Union, has the same number of representatives as any of the smaller republics.

The Central Executive Committee of the All Union Congress is comparable in some measure to a Parliament, the Congress itself consisting of over 1,100 members and meeting only once in six months. All legislation has to pass both chambers of the Committee. Thus the Council of Nationalities has a determining voice in all important matters. It is therefore claimed that the various autonomous republics have not only full opportunities of developing their own economic and social life and culture, but they take part in a decisive manner in the general government of the Union.

All Soviets and their executives and representatives are elected annually. Only the All Union Congress is elected every second year.

The All Union Congress also elects the heads of various departments, the Commissars, and these form the Union Council of Peoples' Commissars which is practically the cabinet of the Union.

Each constituent republic has its own Soviet Congresses, Central Executive Committee and Council of Peoples' Commissars. Certain departments, e.g., foreign affairs, are reserved for the Union Government; certain others exist both in the Union and the individual republics, e.g., supreme economic council, labour, finance, etc., and many exist only in the republics, e.g., agriculture, justice, education, health, social welfare, etc.

In each republic the soviet system is built up from village and factory upwards by means of indirect and direct elections. Thus the village soviet elects the rural District Soviet Congress and its executive committee, and the latter the Provincial Soviet Congress, which in its turn sends representatives to the Republican Congress. In the towns the urban Soviet elects the District as well as directly the Provincial Soviet. The Provincial Soviets elect representatives for the Republican Congress, but town areas have also the right of direct representation in this Congress. Thus the rural areas are represented very indirectly in the All Russia or other Republican Congress whilst the town areas are represented both directly and indirectly.

In the rural soviets, both the village and the district, the peasants are in a considerable majority. But gradually the proportion of communists increases in the higher soviet organs and they are in absolute control of all positions of power. The All Russian Soviet is entirely dominated by them.

The Communist Party, although it has apparently no official status in the constitution is really a pillar of the Soviet regime. It is a solid exclusive organisation representing the advanced elements of the working class and with a very definite purpose and programme. It is well organised and the discipline is military in its severity. The conviction of the communist that he represents the interests of the future of humanity can only be compared with the faith and zeal of a religious enthusiast. The party admits intellectuals and peasants to its ranks but only such as understand and appreciate the theory and practice of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is not very easy to join the party, and to preserve its purity there are periodical 'cleansings', as they are called, when those who are considered undesirable are excluded. The power of the party may be judged from the fact that the most powerful individual in the Soviet Union today is Stalin,[3] the general secretary of the party[4], although he holds no other high official position.

3. Joseph Stalin (1879-1953); Soviet statesman who was a colleague of Lenin and eventually his successor. His name will always be associated with the policy of 'Socialism in one Country' and with leadership in the war against Germany.
4. In 1922 Stalin was elected general secretary of the Communist Party.

There are large numbers of boards and commissions performing various duties, the most important being the Supreme Economic Council with its offshoots. The industrial units, such as Labour Unions, etc., are also essential parts of the State organisations. They are built on industrial lines, not those of craft. Thus all workers in a big industry belong to one union, whether they are miners, carpenters or mechanics. Then there is the wide ramification of co-operative societies and organisations of women, youth, pioneers, etc.

The Labour Unions and factory committees look after the interests of the workers in the factory, but the manager or board of managers of any industry are appointed by the Supreme Economic Council on behalf of the All Russian Soviet. In case there is a conflict between the manager and labour, there is a system of conflict committees and appeals. The manager may be removed or transferred.

Such in brief are some of the features of the Soviet constitution. It is admittedly framed to keep all power in the hands of the workers, and to give no quarter to capitalism or to those who want to bring back capitalism. Whether capitalism may not creep back in disguise in some form or other is a difficult question to answer. But in their fight against it the Bolsheviks do not propose to be guided by "bourgeois democracy". In the manifesto[5] of the first Communist International issued under the signatures of Lenin, Trotsky and others in March, 1919, it was stated that "to demand of the proletariat in the final life and death struggle with capitalism, that it should obey lamb-like the precepts of bourgeois democracy would be the same as to ask a man who is defending his life against robbers to follow the artificial rules of a French duel that have been set by his enemy but not followed by him".

We have the dictatorship of the proletariat today. But this, we are told, is a period of transition only, or a period of preparation for the great time to come when class conflicts will entirely cease as there will be only one class, and the State itself will sink into insignificance. That will be real communism, which, in the words of the communist manifesto, "will end the domination of capital, make war impossible, wipe out state boundaries, transform the whole world into one co-operative commonwealth and bring about real human brotherhood and freedom".

5. This manifesto was drafted by Trotsky and adopted unanimously by the first Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow in March 1919.

6. Some Books on Russia[1]

I remember attending a banquet given by the scientists and professors in Moscow. There were people from many countries present and speeches in a variety of languages were made. I remember specially a speech given by a young student who had come from far Uruguay in South America. He had come on behalf of his fellow students to see this strange land for himself and the impressions he had gathered had filled him with fiery enthusiasm. He spoke in the beautiful sonorous periods of the Spanish language and he told us that he was going back to his distant country with the red star of Soviet Russia engraved on his heart and carrying the message of social freedom to his young comrades in Uruguay. Such was the reaction of Soviet Russia on his young and generous heart. And yet there are many who tell us that Russia is a land of anarchy and misery and the Bolsheviks are assassins and murderers who have cast themselves outside the pale of human society.

Who is right? Or is it that both are right in some measure? I shall not venture to pass judgment or to give final opinions. I too am impressionable and I must confess that the impressions I carried back with me from Moscow were very favourable and all my reading has confirmed these impressions, although there is much that I do not understand and much that I do not like or admire. I shall only note down what I saw and leave it to others to draw their own conclusions, well realising that what I saw was a very small part of what might have been seen.

But personal impressions, as Professor K.T. Shah[2] has pointed out in his interesting series of lectures (*The Russian Experiment* 1917-1927[3], Taraporevala), are seldom very reliable guides although they may give a touch of colour to a bald narrative. Those who are interested should go to the books on the subject and read both sides of the question. There is already a vast and growing literature and as I have often

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 4 April 1928.
2. Professor of Economics, Bombay University and Secretary of the National Planning Council, 1938-47; d. 1953.
3. Published in 1927.

been asked to suggest books on Russia, I shall name some that I have come across. There are quite a large number of books in English written in criticism of the Bolshevik regime. Pro-Bolshevik literature is not so well represented in English as in German and other languages. But recently a number of little books have come out in English which though critical of many aspects of communism are written with some sympathy for its basic ideas and achievements.

A proper study of Bolshevism must start with some knowledge of the theory of communism and its historical development. "Ignorance and communism are incompatible," said Blanqui, the father of the Paris Commune of 1871, and it is extraordinary how even today communists are eager to educate everyone in the principles of their doctrine. If they wish to convert any one they will hurl at him a number of fat tomes from Marx's *Capital* — the Bible of the communists — and Engel's writings to the books of Lenin and Bukharin. But life is perhaps too short to read all this heavy literature. A little book by the master of Balliol College, Oxford, A.D. Lindsay[4], on *Karl Marx's Capital*[5] (Oxford University Press) is helpful in giving some idea of Marx's theories. It is a critical book and even more so is F. R. Salter's *Karl Marx and Modern Socialism*[6] (Macmillan). The communist viewpoint is best given in Bukharin's *Historic Materialism*[7] (George Allen and Unwin) and his *Economic Theory of the Leisure Class*[8] (Martin Lawrence). Bogdonoff's[9] *Short Course of Economic Science*[10] (Communist Party, London) is still I believe used as a text book in Russia. There are several books of Lenin available, I think in English, but the only one I have come across is his *Imperialism — The Last Stage of Capitalism*[11] (Communist Party, London). Those who are interested in the controversy between the Bolsheviks and the German Karl Kautsky[12], who though vigorously attacking the Bolsheviks claims to be a true follower of Marx, may like to read Kautsky's *The Labour Revolution*[13] (George Allen and Unwin). Lenin replied to this, and

4 (1879 1952); later Lord Lindsay of Birker; Master of Balliol College, Oxford, 1924-49.
5. Published in 1925
6 Published in 1921.
7 Published in (1921), 1926
8 Published in 1927
9. Russian Marxist philosopher
10. Published in 1923
1. Published in 1924.
2. Karl Johann Kautsky (1854 1938), German Austrian socialist and a dominant figure in the Second International
3. Published in (1922), 1925

Trotsky's[14] brilliant polemic *In Defence of Terrorism*[15] is also a reply.

A very ably written book is Prof. Laski's[16] *Communism*[17], in the Home University Library. It criticises the theory and practice, and it has called forth, I am told, an equally able reply from the British Communist Party, but I have not seen the latter.

These books, or even some of them, should enable the enquirer to have some idea of what the Bolsheviks stand for. Two other controversial books might also be mentioned: Trotsky's *Where is Britain Going?*[18] and Norman Angell's[19] *Must Britain Follow the Moscow Road?*[20] (Noel Douglas). Another book—*The Bolshevik Theory*[21] by R.W. Postgate[22] (Grant Richards) is a clear and good and sometimes critical account of the theory underlying the Soviet system, but the book is somewhat out of date, unless a new edition has come out since 1920.

Thus far the theory. But to understand the great drama of the Russian Revolution and the inner forces that shaped and brought the great change about, a study of cold theory is of little use. The October Revolution[23] was undoubtedly one of the great events of world history, the greatest since the first French Revolution, and its story is more absorbing, from the human and the dramatic point of view, than any tale or phantasy. Something of its elemental power can be felt in two accounts of eye witnesses, an Englishman and an American. The former, M. Phillips Price[24], was the correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* in Russia, and in his book—*My Reminiscences of*

14. Leon Trotsky (1879-1940); one of Lenin's chief colleagues in the Russian revolution. He was War Minister and leader of the Soviet delegates at the Brest Litovsk peace conference of 1917-18. Dismissed by Stalin in 1925, he became in 1929 a wandering exile. He was murdered in Mexico in 1940.
15. Published in 1921.
16. Harold Joseph Laski (1893-1950); British political scientist; Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics for several years; Chairman of the British Labour Party, 1945-46
17. Published in 1927.
18. Published in (1925), 1926.
19. Sir Norman Angell (1872-1967), British writer on international relations and author of *The Great Illusion*, awarded Nobel Prize in 1933.
20. Published in 1920.
21. Published in 1920.
22. Raymond William Postgate (b. 1896); British leftwing writer.
23. The revolution of November 1917 (October according to the old calendar).
24. (B. 1885); correspondent of *Manchester Guardian* in Russia, 1914—18; Correspondent of *Daily Herald* in Berlin, 1919-23.

the Russian Revolution[25] (George Allen and Unwin), he has told us the day to day story of Russia during those eventful days. From the March Revolution he has told the story, when Kerensky came into power; of how the red dawn broke in Moscow and the shackles of centuries of Tsardom were suddenly removed; of the coming of Lenin and of how he was jeered at in the very Soviet which a few months later was to make him the dictator of a vast territory; of the pitiful shufflings of Kerensky and his weak compromises with reaction; of the growth of the soviets and their victory and ultimate capture by the Bloshevik. He has also told us of the months of struggle against external and internal enemies, when the Soviet power held on by a thread, by sheer tenacity, when all hope seemed to be lost.

The second book—*Ten Days that Shook the World*[26]—is by John Reed[27], an American correspondent. This deals in even greater detail with the first ten days of the October Revolution. And as one reads, with horror and pain at times, the wonder grows that such a miracle could have happened and succeeded. And above all there is admiration for the group of men who did not flinch at the mightiest of obstacles, and, in the midst of war and rebellion, with a cruel death and disaster continually facing them, sat down to evolve a socialist order out of the chaos that surrounded them. They had time even on the fourth day of the revolution, with firing going on in the streets, to establish the eight hour day for the workers and formulate their policy for a system of popular education. Within a week they had tackled the problem of minorities, which like the poor is always with us in India, and declared:

> "1. The equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia.
> 2. The right of the peoples of Russia to free self-determination, even to the point of separation and the formation of an independent state.
> 3. The abolition of any and all national and national-religious privileges and disabilities.
> 4. The free development of national minorities and ethnographic groups inhabiting the territory of Russia."

25. Published in 1921.
26. Published in 1919.
27. An American Communist writer who died in Moscow and was buried in the Kremlin wall.

7. Lenin

I have already referred to a number of books which might help in understanding the background of the Russian Revolution. Like every other great upheaval it had its causes deep down in history and in the misery of generations of human beings. Economic factors, we are told, govern the world and politics is rapidly becoming a handmaid of economics. But Russia also repeats the lesson of history that men also shape destiny and sometimes the will of one man alters the lives of millions. It is instructive therefore to study the careers of some of the makers of the revolution, who out of anarchy and chaos created a new and strong Russia. Exiles, with no knowledge of military affairs, creating great and victorious armies; with no experience of diplomacy, treating successfully with the well seasoned diplomats of other countries; with no knowledge of business or administration, running an enormous state machine which controlled all production and distribution. Specially it is worthwhile to know something of the greatest of these—Lenin.

Many people have paid their tribute of admiration to him, but I have unfortunately not come across a satisfactory account of his life.* A book which will interest Indian readers is Rene Fullop-Miller's[2] *Lenin and Gandhi*[3] (Putnam). It is somewhat superficial and does not satisfy, but it contains some good pen pictures of Lenin. A short and interesting sketch of Lenin is also to be found in Emil Ludwig's[4] *Genius and Character*[5] (Jonathan Cape).

Four years ago Lenin died[6]. He was just over fifty, of which thirty years had been spent in preparation and ceaseless toil varied with persecution and flight in Siberia[7]. Victory came to him in the end but with it

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 5 April 1928.
* A recent book, highly spoken of, is *Lenin*, by Valerin Marcus Translated from the German into English (Victor Gollancz).
2. Author; visited Russia several times after World War I.
3. Published in 1927.
4. (1881 1948); German biographer; his works include lives of Goethe, Napoleon and Bismarck.
5. Published in 1927.
6. Lenin died on 21 January 1924.
7. Lenin was arrested in December 1895, kept in prison for over a year and sentenced to three years exile in Siberia. He was released in February 1900.

came years of tremendous difficulty and danger. He died as the result of a bullet wound but before he died he had conquered over these difficulties and dangers and he passed away in the knowledge of his triumph. Today he lies embalmed in a simple mausoleum in the beautiful Red Square of Moscow under the shadow of the Kremlin. He lies asleep as it were and it is difficult to believe that he is dead. In life they say he was not beautiful to look at. He had too much of common clay in him and about him was the "smell of the Russian soil." But in death there is a strange beauty and his brow is peaceful and unclouded. On his lips there hovers a smile and there is a suggestion of pugnacity, of work done and success achieved. He has a uniform on and one of his hands is lightly clenched. Even in death he is the dictator.

To this resting place of Lenin's body come people from distant parts to do reverence to his memory. Every evening the doors are thrown open for some hours and a continuous stream of the peasants and workers, for whom he lived and died and who loved him, passes by. The orthodox Church is at a discount in Russia but the cult of Lenin is everywhere in evidence. Every shop, every room almost, has his picture or bust. "In a religious age," says Maxim Gorki[8], "people would have made him a saint." In India he would certainly have been canonised, but saints are not held in repute in Soviet circles, and the people of Russia have done him the higher honour of loving him as one of themselves. To each of them he was a brother, a comrade, who knew and laboured for them and to whom they could always turn when in distress.

"I know a pair of eyes which have been for ever numbed by the burning sorrow of the Terror," said Gorky of Lenin. This sorrow did not leave him to the end. It made him a fierce fanatic and gave him the strength of will to persevere and achieve. But sorrow for the misery of his fellow men did not make him gloomy or reserved. He was "filled to the brim with the sap of life," and even "in the unhappiest moments of his existence, he was serene and always prone to gay laughter."

Lenin's early years were typical of the man. When he was seventeen his elder brother was hanged[9] for an attempt on the life of the Tsar. He was profoundly moved but even then he saw clearly that nothing could be gained by terroristic methods.

8. Maxim Gorky (1868-1936), Russian novelist and dramatist
9. Lenin's elder brother, Alexander, was a terrorist who in 1887 was implicated in a plot to assassinate Tsar Alexander III and was executed.

"We cannot succeed in that way; it is not the right way," he said. But that did not mean his giving up the struggle. He set about preparing in his own way. It was a long way and a wearisome way but quietly and persistently he worked at it for thirty years of his life. He did not suddenly develop into a champion of the workers. He paid little attention to speaking in public or writing, but set himself down to investigate and understand thoroughly the masses. In after years he had little patience with orators and fine speakers; he was always afraid of too many words preventing action. For him action was the only thing that counted. "Revolutions," according to him, "must not remain on paper, they must be carried out in action; and the proper execution of even the most unimportant measure was more important for the existence of Soviet Russia than ten Soviet resolutions." Thus, as Maxim Gorky has said: "His heroism lacked almost all external glitter. It was the modest ascetic zeal, not seldom seen in Russia, of a revolutionary who believed in the possibility of justice on earth, the heroism of a man who, for the sake of his heavy task, renounced all worldly joys."

A classic instance is often given of his utter calmness in emergency *and his attention to trivial detail even when the life of the State was* threatened. During the critical days of 1921 when Moscow itself was threatened by the enemy and most people thought that the Soviet power was going to collapse, Lenin thought of the introduction of electric light in the villages[10] and issued an ordinance for the immediate supply of electric light to certain areas.

Lenin has been called the coldest of fanatics. He would never let himself be carried away by enthusiasm and would not give in to the best of his friends even at the risk of a break. He had no use for sympathisers who did not actively join the fray. Only full-blooded adherents were to his liking, experts in revolution who devoted themselves wholly to the cause. Revolution was to be prepared for cautiously and quietly by educating "revolutionary experts, men who were revolutionaries by profession and not mere enthusiasts, idealists or dilettanti." He realised, what we in India are dimly beginning to appreciate, that it is a difficult, if not an impossible task, for amateurs, with little time to spare from their daily routine and no special training, to

10. Rural electrification was one of Lenin's pet projects. He wrote to the Chairman of the State Planning Commission (which had been set up in February 1921) that 'a plan must be worked out for the installation of electric light in every house in the R.S.F.S.R.' A special body called the State Commission for Electrification' was created to draw up the plan. This plan was later used by the State Planning Commission.

fight whole-timers who are experts at their business of defending the existing regime. "Let our comrades", he wrote, "permit the use of the rigorous term 'technical expert' for when I speak of inadequate preparations the accusation applies also to myself. I have worked with men who set themselves to very high and difficult responsibilities, yet we suffered painfully from the feeling that we were but amateurs. The more ashamed I am to confess this, the more bitter I feel towards those sham socialists who fail to realise that we dare not lower the revolutionary to the level of the amateur." With how much greater truth does this apply to all of us in India who dabble in politics!

Lenin was no believer in a patched up unity of which we hear so much in our country. He deliberately broke up his party[11] as early as 1903 by his insistence on action, and was accused by his own colleague, Trotsky, of being the "destroyer of the party." He insisted that the rules of the party should lay down that each member must actively participate in the work and not merely give monetary help. The majority of the party wanted to give sympathy and financial aid only, but Lenin would have neither unless action followed. And so the men of action separated from the men of sympathy and money. When later he was approached with proposals for unity he said with a smile: "I recognise only one form of conciliation with political opponents, *ecraser*—smash them," words spoken without the least emotion or excitement.

Gradually his colleagues left him but he had no fear and did not budge an inch. "I shall perhaps be alone," he said, "but I shall never be turned aside from my opinions; I shall never cease to champion them and follow the straight line."

And yet, fanatic as he was and unbending, he was a realist and ever willing to change his policy if the situation demanded it. Lunacharsky, a friend of his and the present Commissar of Education in Russia, has called him "a genius at opportunism." "It is childish," Lenin wrote, "to reject compromise on principle..... One must simply know how to analyse the circumstances and the concrete conditions of each issue." And again when accused of departing from some maxim of socialism he said: "You are worse than hens. A hen has not the courage to cross a chalk-line, but it can at least justify itself by pointing out that

11. At a meeting of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party held at London in 1903 Lenin brought about the split of the party into the Bolsheviks (extreme wing of the Russian Socialist party) and the Mensheviks, the moderates.

12. A. V. Lunacharsky (1875-1933); Russian revolutionary, dramatist and critic, was Commissar of Education from 1917 to 1929

the chalk circle was drawn by somebody else. But you have drawn your own circle and are now gazing at the chalk line instead of seeing reality!" Perhaps we may find many of these chalk-lines of our own making in India also, which keep us from looking at reality.

One of the greatest shocks that he gave to his followers was after the failure of the 1905 revolution. Not daunted by this, the advocate of an armed rising suddenly recommended[13] a participation in the moderate and semi-official Duma[14], and asked his adherents to study the detailed reports of its sessions. This was with no desire to give up his principles or to adopt the evolutionary method. But he felt that the only platform open to him then for carrying on revolutionary propaganda was through the Duma. He was decried as a weakling and a victim of parliamentarianism; but regardless of censure he pursued his path, nonetheless keeping armed revolution as his goal. To us in India with our controversies about Council entry his change of front must prove interesting.

In these days of pacts and unity conferences Lenin's views on the subject may be of interest. In a letter to a friend in 1912 he wrote: "The bourgeoisie, the liberals and the social revolutionaries, who never deal with 'great problems' seriously, but trot one behind the other, make pacts and go on in the old grooves with eclecticism, are always crying out about the dissensions and discords in social democracy. That is the exact difference between all of them and social democracy; the fight between the individual social democratic groups comes from deep roots of thought whereas with them even the differences are varnished over on the surface, while inside they are empty, petty, superficial. Never at any price would I exchange the vigorous fighting of the various tendencies in social democracy for the togged up emptiness and poverty of the social revolutionaries and their partners."

So Lenin prepared for the great day. And when this came, early in 1917, and he was summoned from Switzerland to his country to lead the revolution, he left a message to the Swiss workers[15]. There was

13. Lenin was of the view that the Duma could be treated as a forum for propaganda. The tactics of boycott, he wrote in September 1906, must be 'reconsidered': 'history had demonstrated' that the Duma is a valuable forum for agitation.
14. The Russian Parliament created by Nicholas II in response to demands in the Revolution of 1905. The First Duma sat from 10 May to 21 July 1905, the second from 2 March to 16 June 1907; the third from the end of 1907 to 1912, and the fourth from 1912 to 1917.
15. Lenin's 'Farewell letter to the Swiss Workers' (26 March/8 April 1917). See *Selected Works*, Vol. VI (London, 1946), pp. 13—20.

no hint of excitement or exultation at the approaching fruition of the labour of a lifetime. Carefully, like a scientist, he stated what the conditions in Russia were and what he wished to do.

It is difficult for most of us to think of our ideals and our theories in terms of reality. We have talked and written of Swaraj for years, but when Swaraj comes it will probably take us by surprise. We have passed the independence resolution at the Congress, and yet how many of us realise its full implications? How many belie it by their words and actions? For them it is something to be considered as a distant goal, not as a thing of today or tomorrow. They talk of Swaraj and independence in their conferences and their councils but their minds are full of reservations and their acts are feeble and halting.

In Russia also the revolutionaries of an older generation lived in a world of theory, and hardly believed in the realisation of their ideals. But Lenin came with his directness and realism and shook the fabric of old time orthodox socialism and revolution. He taught people to think that the ideal they had dreamed of and worked for was not mere theory but something to be realised then and there. By amazing power of will he hypnotised a nation and filled a disunited and demoralised people with energy and determination and the strength to endure and suffer for a cause.

Many had their full share in this remarkable triumph, among them specially Trotsky, who now lies in Siberia. But Lenin stood supreme. Saint or sinner, the miracle was chiefly of his doing. And we may well say with Romain Rolland, that Lenin was "the greatest man of action in our century, and at the same time the most selfless."

8. More Books[1]

I have suggested that an attempt to understand Russia as she is today should begin with the study of the theory of communism, and the history of the Russian Revolution. With my very limited knowledge of the subject I have mentioned the names of a few books that might help in this enquiry. But the real test of the success of the revolution does not lie in the theory, or in the courage and enthusiasm of the

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 6 April 1928.

people, or even in the greatness of Lenin. Nor can the revolution be said to have been a failure because the Bolsheviks ruthlessly exterminated their opponents and countered the white terror with the red. The real test of success can only be the measure of happiness of the masses of the people. It is partly a question of psychology, but partly also of material conditions, and facts and figures. It is not easy to judge the psychology of a people without the most intimate knowledge. It may be that freedom from oppression is preferable even though it results in a diminution of material well-being for a time; and visitors to Russia tell us that in the early years of the revolution when civil war and the blockade had brought the population to the verge of starvation, the new freedom more than compensated for the suffering and lack of food and all comforts. But leaving the realms of psychology alone, we can at least study the material conditions that have resulted from the revolution and follow their changes from year to year, and thus perhaps be able to indicate the lines of future progress or retrogression.

There is now an abundance of material for this study but my own knowledge of it is unfortunately meagre. I shall only mention here some of the books I have read and some I have heard spoken of. *Bolshevist Russia*[2] by Anton Karlgren, Professor of Slav at the University of Copenhagen (George Allen and Unwin), is patently anti-Bolshevik propaganda. I mention it so that the other side of the case may be fully known. Bertrand Russell's *Theory and Practice of Bolshevism*[3] (George Allen and Unwin), is also a criticism of the Soviet system, though a temperate one. Bertrand Russell and his wife both visited Russia, and it is curious that they returned with entirely different impressions — he was depressed with much that he saw, she was enthusiastic and believed that the foundations of a happier order were being laid by the Bolsheviks. Their visit took place in the earlier years before Russia had sufficiently recovered from the dark days of the civil war.

A ponderous book worth consulting, if only for the fine pictures it contains, is Rene Fulop-Miller's *Mind and face of Bolshevism*[4] (Putnam). It deals with the cultural side of Russia, and though very critical and not appreciative of much, is helpful in giving some idea of many of the tendencies of modern Russia.

2. Published in 1924.
3. Published in 1927.
4. Published in 1927.

A recent book, well recommended but which I have not read, is Maurice Dobb's[5] *Russian Economic Developments since the Revolution*[6] (Routledge). Dobb is an eminent economist with considerable sympathy for the basic ideas of the revolution, but withal critical and scientific. He deals with the growth and changes in Russia's economic policy, of the interaction of the communist in the cities and conservative peasantry in the villages, and specially with the effects on production.

Another recent publication is the report of the British Workers' Delegation to the Tenth Anniversary celebrations in Russia last year. This is called *Soviet Russia Today* (Labour Research Department, London). It is frankly a report of the friends of Russia, but is nonetheless valuable and full of information. It is signed by 92 representatives of workers' organisations in England and Scotland and no such document however partisan it may be can be lightly treated. It is not very critical and is full of enthusiasm for what they saw. Indeed as they themselves say. "No writing can adequately express the intense emotional experiences of every day of our visit, when we realised that in this country the crushing weight of feudalism and capitalism had been thrown off, and the highest achievements of knowledge and industrial development were here at the service of the working class." That Russia should produce such a reaction on representative hard-headed workers is itself a significant fact. It gives us a glimpse of how the Russian Revolution is creeping into the hearts of workers in different countries and Moscow is becoming the Mecca of the proletariat. Soviet Russia by translating their dreams into reality has given them a new hope and a new courage.

I remember meeting a Negro worker who had come from South Africa to the Brussels Congress against Imperialism. He was not a well-read or well-informed man; he was just a simple worker. He said at the Congress that although he had been told a great deal against Russia, somehow he felt that it could not be all true, and he and his kind had a soft corner in their hearts for Russia, and looked to her with hope.

This report of the British Labour Delegation gives us a great many facts and impressions in a short compass. It deals with the factories and working conditions; with wages, rents and housing; with education; with prisons; the peasantry; and co-operation. Having read it one feels that if only half of what is written is true, Russia indeed is a land of hope.

5. Maurice Herbert Dobb (b 1900), British economist, Fellow of Trinity College and Reader in Economics, Cambridge University, 1959 67.
6. Published in 1928

One other series of books I shall mention. This is now being issued by the Vanguard Press of New York, at 50 cents a volume, and it comprises 13 volumes dealing with almost every phase of life and work in Russia. The authors are distinguished writers, all with some special knowledge of the country. The first of the series is *How the Soviets Work*[7], by H.N. Brailsford[8]. Then there are books on Russia's foreign policy, her religion, village life, economic organisation, the family, the schools, civil liberties, trade unions, national minorities, and art and culture. The series should be a valuable addition to the literature on Russia.

Russia has passed through ten years since the Bolshevik Revolution. But it must be remembered that the first five of these ten years were entirely taken up in war against foreign and internal enemies[9] and in the harder struggle against famine and blockade. A host of enemies attacked and tried to strangle her by cutting off her food supplies. For years the revolution hung in the balance and the economic life of the nation went to pieces. It is only during the past five years that she has had comparative peace and a chance to develop her resources. But even during this period she has had to contend against the hostility of most of the governments of Europe and of the super-capitalist United States of America. Having little money to develop her resources she has been denied credits and capital abroad. If she has progressed then during these five years it has been despite these difficulties. And the testimony of all competent observers is that she has progressed and has already made good the losses of the War period of eight years. Today her production is greater than it was in 1914 when the German war broke out and it is said to be increasing rapidly.

The United States of America do not officially recognise the Soviet Government, but in spite of this official hostility, the progress that Russia is making is attracting numbers of American businessmen to her and many professors and students who go to study conditions on the spot. Indeed Russia has many foreign visitors now, not the tourists who fill every corner of Western Europe, but earnest students and enquirers; not socialists only who go to admire, but thinking capitalists who go in search of business and to find out what this strange opponent

7. Published in 1927.
8. Henry Noel Brailsford (1873-1958); leader-writer successively to *Manchester Guardian*, *Tribune*, *Daily News* and *Nation*; Editor, *The New Leader*, 1922-26, visited India in 1930.
9. The Bolsheviks made peace with Germany in March 1918 but it was only after three years of civil war that the White Armies were defeated, and the Allies (U.S.A., Japan, France and Great Britain) withdrew their forces.

of their time-honoured ideas is like. The eastern countries are well represented in this band of enquirers — China, Persia and Afghanistan. They go to study specially the educational system, agriculture, co-operation and the military machine. During our visit to the Commissariat of Education in Moscow we were surprised to come across two high officials of the Afghan Ministry of Education — one of them an ex-student of Aligarh College.

It would be an excellent thing if our professors and students also paid visits of enquiry and studied the educational and agricultural developments in Russia. Their visits would be even more helpful to us than those of politicians. Our universities could easily arrange for a small but competent delegation for this purpose.

Our universities and others interested could also without any difficulty, unless the British Government intervenes, get into touch by means of letters with educational and cultural establishments in Russia and exchange publications with them. The Russians will welcome such co-operation and will gladly supply any information. They publish periodically pamphlets and little books in various languages, including English, showing the progress made. These will of course be entirely one-sided but they will represent the official viewpoint and they will give the latest figures. The Information Bureau of the Peoples' Commissariat of Education, Moscow, issues regularly statistics regarding education and annual reports.

The "Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries" issues a weekly bulletin in Russian, English, French and German, besides other publications. The address of this society is Malaya Nikitskaya, 6, Moscow.*

* The Soviet Union Year Book, published by George Allen and Unwin, is a mine of information.

9. The Peasantry[1]

Among the sights we saw in Moscow one of the most impressive was the Central Peasants' Home. It was an enormous building containing

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 5 May 1928.

museums, demonstration rooms, lecture rooms and residential accommodation for about 350 persons. Practically everything that might instruct the peasant was there. There was a fine display of agricultural produce, all ticketed and compared and explained. Several halls were full of the latest agricultural implements and machinery and models of up-to-date and sanitary houses and farms for the peasantry. Another part of the building was devoted to health propaganda. Pictures and posters and models explained how disease was to be avoided and homes kept clean and healthy.

A large hall was devoted solely to electricity and was full of working models showing its uses for lighting and agricultural purposes. Water pumps of various sizes worked by electric power were much in evidence. A big chart showed the rapid development of electric power stations all over Russia. The whole display was admirably designed to impress the peasant with the advantages of electricity from his own viewpoint.

Many peasants came to the Home and explanatory tours round the various show rooms were organised. Lectures took place daily on educational subjects of interest to the agriculturists and free legal and technical advice was given. Peasants were encouraged to stay in the Home for a maximum period of two months to go through a small course of agricultural training. The building had a restaurant attached where cheap meals were provided. We saw it crowded with rustics fresh from the country.

It was a remarkably fine institution and one felt that even one such centre must improve the lot of the peasantry. We were told, however, that such peasants' homes were springing up all over the Union, though most of them were much smaller than the Central Home. There was another in Moscow city for the Moscow district and there were about 350 of them in Russia proper, excluding Ukraine and Asiatic Russia, where also there were many such homes. These hundreds of homes must transform the outlook of the peasantry to a remarkable extent within a short time.

Russia, as is well known, is pre-eminently a land of peasants, and yet the burden of the revolution fell almost entirely, in its earlier stages, on the industrial workers. The city proletariats of Leningrad and Moscow were the spear-heads of the revolution and the peasantry was for some time poorly represented in the Soviets. Immediate advantage however was taken by the peasantry of the Soviet decree to nationalise land, and even without the intervention of the central authority they ejected the landlords and divided the land amongst themselves. Having done so the more prosperous of them were content and had no desire for further change or more revolution. Many of them knew

little about communism and cared less, and gradually they developed hostility to the Soviet power which did not view with favour the hoarding of corn and the profiteering in which the richer peasantry was indulging. The blockade of Russia by the western European nations and the possession of some of the richest food-producing areas in the South by hostile powers created a terrible crisis in the large cities and the Red army had to face starvation. Immediate and energetic steps were taken by the Soviet Government and the hoarded stores of food were commandeered from the richer peasantry.

This eased the situation but the inherent conflict between the advanced class-conscious city worker and the conservative peasantry attached to the soil, continued, and ultimately the latter made its weight felt. At the instance of Lenin the whole policy of the State was suddenly changed and what is called the "New Economic Policy"[2] was introduced. Whether Lenin was forced by circumstances to follow this line or, as some now assert, it was the natural and intended outcome of his policy, it is difficult to say. The period of militant communism[3] could not last long, but the manner of its ending certainly seemed to indicate that the pressure on the Government was great.

Lenin adapted himself to the circumstances even at the cost of some of the principles of communism. He gave in to the peasantry and to the petty traders, but his giant brain evolved a new and subtle scheme to introduce the industrial outlook amongst the peasantry. "What is communism?" asked Lenin once, and he himself gave the strange reply that it was "The Soviet Republic plus electrification." He laid down that the whole of Russia must be electrified. It was a stupendous project, for Russia is a vast country. But already it has made good progress and Russians point with great satisfaction and pride to large maps which show the many great power stations which have sprung up all over the country.

The power of the peasantry is undoubtedly growing in Russia. The seats of authority may be filled by workers and intellectuals but little can be done against the dead weight of the disapproval of the peasantry. The controversy between the rival groups in the communist party – Stalin v. Trotsky – is largely concerned with the attitude to be taken

2. A period of relative economic liberalisation – the period of the New Economic Policy which lasted from 1921 to 1928. NEP allowed limited private enterprise and trade.
3. The period of 'War Communism' from 1918 to 1921, when Russia had to face civil war and foreign intervention. There was extensive nationalisation, food requisitioning, and control over industry.

up on agrarian questions. The Stalin group which is predominant today is apparently more amenable to compromise with the peasants than the other group.

Some people assert that a new agrarian aristocracy is gradually being built up. There may be some such tendency but it is difficult to believe that it can go far. The whole apparatus of the State is against it, public opinion would not tolerate it, and the poorest classes have too much power to permit a group to monopolise wealth and economic power. By its system of taxation the State is always trying to level incomes up as far as possible. About 25 per cent of the peasant farms are exempt from the payment of the agricultural tax and it has been proposed to exempt an additional 10 per cent. They are exempt as their income is supposed to be barely sufficient to permit the peasants working them to live decently. On the comparatively richer classes the burden of taxation is consequently all the heavier.

Land in theory belongs to the State. In practice, the village Soviet divides it amongst the inhabitants, usually giving as much of it to a person as can be tilled by his family. The extent of the holding depends on the density of the population, and various schemes of colonisation are afoot to equalise to some extent at least this density. An individual or family holding land will probably continue to hold it, but if the family increases or decreases a corresponding change may be made in the size of the holding at the next redistribution by the village Soviet.

Some figures of the agricultural output in recent years may prove interesting. It must be remembered that Russia went through six or seven years of foreign and civil war, blockade and intervention, hunger and cold, general dilapidation and radical transformation of time-honoured social traditions. The whole machinery of the State was upset and recast. There was a continuous fall in output till 1921-22 when the tide turned. During this period of war and decline the peasantry lost about 30 per cent of able bodied man power and there was a great destruction of livestock and implements. Cattle raising went down to 40 per cent and the area under cultivation dropped from 109 million dessiatines* in 1914 to 75 million in 1922. These figures are taken from the report presented by Rykoff[4], the Chairman of the Council of Peo-

* A dessiatine is equal to about 2¾ acres

4. A. I. Rykov (1881-1938); Russian revolutionary; became Commissar for the Interior after the October Revolution of 1917 and a member of the Politburo in 1922. On Lenin's death (1924) he succeeded as Chairman of the Council of Commissars (i.e. premier of the U.S.S.R.). He was expelled from the Politburo in 1930 and executed after a public trial for treason.

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ples' Commissars, to the tenth anniversary session of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. in October, 1927. Rykoff also gave the following figures of the aggregate value of agricultural output.

In 1913	11,790 million roubles †
1921	6,900 million roubles
1926-27	12,776
Estimate for 1927-28	13,186

Thus in spite of the great fall in 1921 the pre-war level had already been reached and exceeded last year. The pre-war level of the area under cultivation and of cattle raising was also reached in 1927. The Central Government is investing large amounts of capital in agricultural improvements. In 1926-27 the figure was 418 million roubles; in 1927-28 it was proposed to invest 520 million roubles.

These figures, and they are supported by independent testimony, indicate rapid progress. The progress is remarkable when the manifold difficulties and the lack of aid from outside are considered.

† A rouble is roughly equivalent to 2 English shillings or Rs. 1-5-4.

10. Criminal Law[1]

Nothing is perhaps more confusing to the student of Russia than the conflicting reports that come of the treatment of prisoners and of the criminal law. We are told of the Red Terror and ghastly and horrible details are provided for our consumption; we are also told that the Russian prison is an ideal residence where any one can live in comfort and ease and with a minimum of restraint. Our own visit to the chief prison in Moscow created a most favourable impression on our minds. Probably there is a measure of truth in both the statements. But before we examine the practice it is desirable to study the theory of the criminal

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 5 May 1928.

law in Russia. It may be that there is a great divergence between theory and practice, but the former will at least tell us what ideals the Russians have placed before themselves.

The new Criminal Code came into force on the 1st January, 1927, in the R.S.F.S.R., that is, in Russia proper. I do not know if it applies to the other republics of the Union. Before 1927 the tribunals had a few decrees to guide them but were generally supposed to decide on grounds of common sense and equity. These tribunals were composed of workmen and peasants.

Under the new Code both the judge and the jury have to be chosen from men who enjoy political rights under the constitution of the U.S.S.R. Thus they must be workers, either manual or intellectual. Capitalists, persons living on rent and nep men (those who under the new economic policy practise a modified form of capitalism) and the like, are thus excluded. The tribunal is presided over by a judge elected for one year by the local soviet of workers and peasants. He is helped by two jury men chosen apparently also by the local soviet, that is by all the voters in the area. These jury men are constantly changed as each person serves once a year only, for six days at most. Thus great numbers of workers take part in the working of the tribunals. It was estimated that in 1926-27 over 5,00,000 workers and peasants helped the judges in this way throughout Russia.

Lenin specially desired that as many people as possible, and specially the poorest inhabitants of the country, should assist in the administration of justice. He declared that the Soviet power must call these poor people to help in the tribunals so that they may participate in the government of the country, and thus should identify themselves with the State. In this way they would quickly learn the science of political power.

The idea of 'punishment' is not approved of in the Soviet Code, and the word itself has been replaced by a phrase, "measures of social defence." There is a strict prohibition against the infliction of physical suffering or the doing of anything which lessens human dignity. Article 9 of the Code says:

> "The measures of social defence do not have for their object the infliction of physical suffering or the lowering of human dignity, nor are they meant to avenge or punish."*

* This might be contrasted with article 978 of the United Provinces Jail Manual: "Labour in a jail should be considered primarily as a means of punishment and not of employment only; neither should the question of its being highly remunerative have much weight, the object of paramount importance being that prison work should be irksome and laborious and a cause of dread to evil doers."

Crime, according to the Soviet Criminal Law, is always the outcome of the antagonisms existing in a society divided into classes; it is always the result of a faulty social organisation and a bad environment.

These ideas about punishment and crime were first put forward and discussed in some detail by an Italian, Enrico Ferri[2]. But no state, with the exception of Soviet Russia, has so far incorporated them in its criminal code.

The convicts can thus more or less be called detenus, and the Soviet penitentiary system is based on the collective work of these detenus. Another method is compulsory work without the complete deprivation of liberty. The latter is the usual form for all except those who have committed serious offences.

The measures of social defence need not necessarily be applied to every act mentioned in the Code as being against social order. If in reality there is no danger, or the delinquent cannot be considered dangerous to society, the tribunal need not apply these measures to him. It may be also that the act committed though originally dangerous may have ceased to be so. Thus during the blockade of 1918, when there was great scarcity of food, the taking of false bread cards was a serious offence. In 1927 however there was no such scarcity and the offence had little meaning. Probably a tribunal would not punish any one now for having committed this offence even formerly.

The death penalty was abolished by the Soviet soon after they came to power, but only a few days later they had to reinstate it for acts of treason. It has also been applied in cases of corruption and embezzlement of public funds. Article 21 of the Code now states that:

"The penalty of death is a temporary measure of repression for the most serious crimes which threaten the very basis of the Soviet power and the proletarian State; it is only applied in exceptional cases of defence, pending its total abolition."

A proviso lays down that no pregnant woman, and no one who had not attained the age of 18 at the time he committed the crime, can suffer the death penalty.

The measures taken by the state against criminals are divided into three classes:

(1) repressive;
(2) medical treatment;
(3) pedagogic treatment.

2. (1856-1929); Italian criminologist, who emphasised the social and economic factors underlying crime; recommended classification of criminals as a basis for preventive treatment.

The last named is for children and the young. The law forbids absolutely all judicial measures of correction for children up to the age of 14. From 14 to 16 such measures can only be taken on the report of a special commission, consisting of a doctor and an educationist, and if it is found that medical or pedagogic treatment will have no effect.

The various repressive measures taken by the state are:

1. The death penalty.
2. The criminal is declared an enemy of the workers, is deprived of his citizenship of the U.S.S.R., and is banished. Persons thus banished by the judgment of a court cannot enter the territories of the U.S.S.R. at their own will; should they do so they risk the penalty of death.
3. The deprivation of liberty for a period not exceeding ten years. Formerly the maximum period was five years but in 1922 this was increased to ten. In reality few convicts or detenus have to remain in jail ten years. But by a system of remissions for work done the period of ten years can be reduced by two or three years.
4. Compulsory labour without total deprivation of liberty. The person condemned is not kept in detention all the time. He can go on leave. For the peasants compulsory leave is given during the harvesting season and other periods when agricultural work has to be done.
5. Loss of civic rights.
6. Banishment for a period from the U.S.S.R.
7. Deportation from the R.S.F.S.R. (Russia proper) or from any other republic in the Union, with or without the obligation to live in a particular place.
8. For officials—dismissal, with or without a prohibition to occupy a particular post.
9. Prohibition to practise a particular profession.
10. Confiscation, total or partial, of goods.
11. Public blame.
12. Fine.

The Code lays down that in place of fine there can be no imprisonment, and no fine in place of imprisonment.

It is also laid down that counter-revolutionary crimes or treason include any acts against another workers' state even though it may not belong to the U.S.S.R. Russians of course pride themselves on not being national in the narrow sense. They believe in the international solidarity of workers and their slogan is not "Russians unite," but "workers of the world unite."

11. A Prison[1]

During our stay in Moscow we had occasion to visit a prison on the outskirts of the city. We were told that it was meant for the more serious offenders only. The building was an old one — it used to be a Tsarist prison — and was not prepossessing. On entering it we found ourselves in a lobby with many corridors radiating from it with cells on either side. There were three stories. We were asked by the governor of the prison to choose the cells we wished to see so that we might not think that we had been shown selected cells. The insistence on our choosing the cells ourselves was rather curious and seemed to indicate that the whole prison was more or less of a show place, specially meant for the edification of visitors.

We went inside some cells. They were narrow and uncomfortable with two or three cots in each. There appeared to be little ventilation but this was apparently avoided as much as possible owing to the great cold. The cells were not particularly clean or tidy. They had a number of books, and in two cells we saw radio sets which we were told had been fitted up by the prisoners concerned.

There were over 450 prisoners, most of them sentenced for the graver offences to long terms of imprisonment — the longest being ten years, which was usually reduced by two or three years for good work and good conduct. The whole prison staff consisted of about 52 or 53 persons including the governor, and the surgeon and his assistants. This number worked in three shifts of 8 hours a day each. Thus at one time there were not more than 17 or 18 members of the staff on duty. This seemed a small number specially as there were no convict warders. We were told that to appoint prisoners to watch other prisoners was considered very objectionable. We also noticed that the warders had no arms, not even sticks. Only two men at the principal entrance had bayonets.

The governor of the prison informed us that the idea underlying the prison system was not to punish or to make an example of the offender but to separate him from society and improve him by making him work in a disciplined manner. Indeed the very word 'prison' was not favoured as it savoured too much of old methods of vengeance and punishment.

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 8 May 1928.

Instead, a long name, which I forget, but which signified a place for improvement by means of work, or some such thing, was given. The idea was that the human element in the prisoners must not be crushed. No numbers were given to them and as far as we could see no special dress was prescribed. We saw 25 to 30 prisoners walking about in the prison yard during an interval in their working hours, and there appeared to be nothing in their dresses to distinguish them. In this yard some games could be played, including basket-ball.

We asked if fetters and handcuffs were used. The Governor laughed and said that they kept these articles in their museums, and if we wanted to see them used we ought to go to bourgeois countries! Even when prisoners were taken outside the jail handcuffs or fetters were not used.

All the prisoners had to work 8 hours a day. A few did special work for which they might have been previously trained, but most of them worked in a textile factory attached to the jail. A great part of the jail was converted into a spinning and weaving factory, and the machines were working away at full pressure. Inside this factory there was hardly any evidence of the jail, except the presence of one unarmed warder at the entrance to each hall, who kept the door locked.

We were told that as far as possible trade union rules applied to the jail workers, hours of work, etc., and apparently the trade union occasionally inspected them for the purpose. The workers were given wages which were between 30 per cent and 50 per cent of the trade union rates of wages outside. Two-thirds of these wages were kept in a reserve fund for the prisoner and he was not allowed to touch them. On being discharged this money as well as any other that may lie to his credit was given to him, so that he may have something to start life afresh. One-third of his earnings could be spent by the prisoner in buying anything available in the jail store or even from outside when feasible. We saw this store. It was in charge of a prisoner and contained cigarettes, articles of food and toilet, etc. Books could be purchased. No cash was given to the prisoners but they could sign vouchers in making purchases and the jail office adjusted the accounts. Friends or relatives outside could send money or goods to prisoners.

Prisoners were permitted to smoke at any time and could speak to each other. There was a barber's shop inside the jail fitted up like any cheap barber's shop in a working class quarter of a city. It was run by a prisoner who earned money by his work there. The prisoners visiting him paid him out of their own earnings. We watched a prisoner being shaved and at the end an Eau-de-Cologne spray was given.

We asked if there were any political prisoners. We were taken to two. One of them told us that he had been sentenced to ten years for

spying in Russia on behalf of Czechoslovakia. He was a well educated man and a good musician. Hence he had been made the director of *music in the jail.* When we entered his cell he was actually writing the musical score of a piece. He had a wireless set in his cell which he had fitted up himself out of his earnings.

The second political prisoner we were taken to was a Russian who had been sentenced for a very grave offence. He had been an aviator in the Red Army and during the civil wars when numerous attempts were made by old Russian generals, with the assistance of the allied governments, to break the Soviet power, he deserted the Red Army and flew over with his aeroplane to the enemy. He was later captured and sentenced to death, the sentence being subsequently commuted to 10 years. He had already served 3 to 4 years and he was hoping to get off in another 3 or 4 years. He had been put in charge of the electric fittings of the jail. He also had a radio set in his cell and a number of books.

As we were very much pressed for time we were unable to see as much of the jail as we wanted to. We had an impression that we had been shown the brighter side of jail life. Nonetheless two facts stood out. One was that we had actually seen desirable and radical improvements over the old system prevailing even now in most countries; and the second and even more important fact was the mentality of the prison officials, and presumably the higher officials of the government also, in regard to jails. Actual conditions may or may not be good but the general principles laid down for jails are certainly far in advance of anything we had known elsewhere in practice. Anyone with a knowledge of prisons in India and of the barbarous way in which handcuffs, fetters and other punishments are used will appreciate the difference. The governor of the prison in Moscow who took us round was all the time laying stress on the human side of jail life, and how it was their endeavour to keep this in the front and not to make the prisoner feel in any way dehumanised or outcasted. I wish we in India would remember this wholesome principle and practise it in our daily lives even outside jail.

The prison we saw was a central jail for serious offenders — those who had committed murder, high treason, etc. The usual sentence was the maximum, which, apart from the death sentence, is ten years. In other jails, where lesser offenders are sent, we were told that conditions were even more agreeable and considerable freedom was allowed to prisoners. They are even permitted to go home for a few days on parol. In the case of peasants this leave is usually given during harvest time so that they can utilise it to the best advantage.

Miss Freda Utley has contributed an interesting article to the March number of the *Socialist Review*, describing a visit to a Bolshevik prison in Georgia. It was in Tiflis. She tells us how humanely the prisoners were treated and how they were all being educated. The Russians are trying to put into practice what psychologists have discussed for years past, and their prison system, instead of brutalising offenders, tends to change them into good citizens. Crime is regarded as the result of bad environment, and lack of education and understanding. Criminals are therefore treated as "victims of economic circumstances or as sick and ignorant people who have to be taken into an institution to be trained to live in society."

If this account is correct, and if what we saw ourselves truly represents the state of prisons in the Russian Union, it can be said without a shadow of doubt that to be in a Russian prison is far preferable than to be a worker in an Indian factory, whose lot is 10 to 11 hours work a day and then to live in a crowded and dark and airless tenement, hardly fit for an animal. The mere fact that there are some prisons like the ones we saw is in itself something for the Soviet Government to be proud of.

In considering this question however we should bear in mind two facts. The Soviet Government has a special and a ruthless way of treating its political opponents and all those whom it may suspect of counter-revolutionary activities. The humane principles of the general criminal law are not supposed to apply to them as they are considered to be the enemies of society. These people have been treated badly and in some cases very cruelly in the past and hence many of the stories of the Red Terror and Bolshevik tyranny. Extreme cases of such treatment may not occur now except when a war scare frightens Moscow, but even now the hand of the Soviet Government lies heavily on all its political opponents. Thus we have the general law of the land applied humanely to the great majority of the population say 95 per cent; and 5 per cent or so being suspected and watched and treated badly. The ordinary worker and peasant is probably very much better off; the relics of Tsarism and some individuals who are too independent for the government are much worse off.

Another consideration to be borne in mind is the paucity of funds at the disposal of the Bolsheviks. They want to spend everything they have on industrial development, on education and agriculture. They have no desire to spend it on erecting large prisons. They say that they hope to abolish most of the prisons by their better organisation of society. *Why then waste money on prisons? For the present they carry* on with the old Tsarist prisons. In Moscow and in the larger cities

these prisons may be in tolerable condition, but probably in the provinces they are not at all presentable. And the Soviet Government will not spend money on improving them. Hence probably the accounts of bad conditions in some of these jails.

But the ideal of a better social order and a humane criminal law, which inspires the Soviet functionary in a prison or outside, is something far more important than bricks and mortar and a better jail building. If that ideal endures Russia will make good despite all difficulties.

12. The Problem of Minorities[1]

Many of us are apt to imagine that India is particularly unfortunate in having to face a complicated problem of minorities and different communities. As a matter of fact many other countries have faced and solved this problem. Russia specially is a country with numerous national minorities with different languages and cultures, and it is interesting and instructive for us to study the methods of the Bolsheviks in regard to these minorities.

In Tsarist Russia there were about 140 different nationalities who did not speak Russian. There were twenty nationalities of one million each: the Turco-Tartars numbered 20 millions, the Ukrainians 25 to 30 millions, the Poles 8 millions, and the Jews 7 millions. The non-Russian speaking nationalities were 57 per cent of the total population.

The old policy, under the Tsar, was to pitch one nationality against the other. Attempts were made to Russianise aliens by bringing them into the Russian church. Any person, belonging to these minority groups, who aspired to become a professor had to change his religion and enter the orthodox church. The teaching of minority languages was not encouraged and sometimes was actively repressed. In 1831 under a decree of the Tsar all Polish schools were closed; only the religious schools of the Jews and Moslems were permitted to continue. Thus these minority communities became very backward.

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 10 May 1928.

Soon after the October Revolution in 1917 the 2nd All Russia Congress of Soviets made the following declarations:—

(1) Equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia.
(2) Right of self determination, even to separation and formation of an independent state.
(3) Abolition of all and every kind of national, racial and religious privileges.
(4) Free development of national minorities and ethnographic groups.

The Russian Union — the U.S.S.R. — is a federation of six constituent republics. Some of these republics are themselves federations and have besides many autonomous areas. Thus each considerable minority inhabiting a particular area has a great deal of autonomy and can develop its own language and culture. It is the policy of the Central Government not only to leave these republics and autonomous areas to work along their own lines but to help them actively to develop their resources and cultures. Schools conducted in the local languages are opened; an attempt is made to carry on public activities, work in the Soviets, etc., in the language of the area; and newspapers are published in these languages.

A distinction is made between the political rights and the cultural rights of a minority group. So far as the former are concerned they *have the same rights as any other minority community or as the majority.* They are not specially protected or given any weightage or separate representation, except in so far as a whole area may be made into an *autonomous area.* In cultural matters, however, much *more freedom is* given to them and their rights are specially protected. The Central Government feels that so long as there are backward communities in the Union the progress of the whole Union will be retarded, and hence the stress on levelling up of these groups.

In 1926-27 the primary schools, specially meant for different national groups, in one of the constituent republics — the R.S.F.S.R. alone (but including northern Caucasus) — amounted to:

for Turkish nationality	... 1,197
„ Ugro-Finns	... 1,810
„ People with western culture	... 1,272
„ Mongols and Manchurians	... 233
„ North Caucasus	... 788
„ People of the North	... 36

The school books are prepared in the different languages. Indeed primary instruction is given *now in 62 different languages in the Union,*

and books and papers are issued in 52 languages. In August 1927 the newspapers of the national minorities in the Soviet Union numbered 201, with a total circulation of 9,28,580 copies.

Prior to the revolution many nationalities had no regular written language, e.g., the Mordwa, Clmyks, Oirats, and the South Siberian peoples. The Soviet Government had new scripts prepared for 16 such groups, and it reformed many other scripts and made them simpler and more scientific.

Attempts have been made in the eastern republics to follow up the building of schools conducted in the native language by introducing this language in the local soviets and public institutions. This is specially succeeding in Tartaristan. In the village soviets of Tartaristan the Tartar language has been adopted at the following rate:

1922	1923	1924	1925
20	50	80	85

The town soviets have made similar progress.

During the last two or three years special steps have been taken to prepare teachers for higher education in the non-Russian languages. For this purpose 28 linguistic departments were opened, up to last year, in the higher schools. These departments will give a regular supply of graduates after a few years.

The Commissariat of Education also sets aside a number of places to train young people in languages, customs of nationalities, etc. The numbers of these during the last few years were:—

In 1923	...	991
„ 1924	...	1,034
„ 1925	...	1,777
„ 1926	...	1,283

Of these 236 men were Turco-Tartars.

Women in some of these eastern republics are making great progress. In Uzbekistan before the revolution women were mostly *purdanashins*, seldom literate, and in a state of half slavery. Now in this republic of Central Asia there are 276 women's educational institutions with 13,200 students. Of all the students of the national minorities 20 per cent last year were women. They are specially attracted to educational work and also to medicine.

It is difficult to draw any final conclusions about anything Russian at this stage, but it would certainly appear from the progress made in the last five years that the problem of minorities has been largely solved there. This does not mean that complete equality has been established and there are no evils left. Rykoff, the Prime Minister of the Russian

Union, stated last year that although much progress had been made, much still remained. They had not succeeded in uprooting serfdom, ignorance and superstition. By decree they had established the complete equality of all nationalities in the Union, but in practice this was not fully done. Full equality could only come with the removal of economic and cultural differences. Nor could women be free till they attained economic freedom also.

Rykoff is certainly right in drawing attention to all that has not been done. But the successes already achieved are great enough and show that properly tackled the problem of minorities can be solved with rapidity and ease. Two hundred and fifty years of British rule in India compare very badly in this respect with this effort. But may we whisper it? The British do not want the problem to be solved.

13. Education[1]

The new Russia is a fascinating study from many points of view. But to an Indian the most interesting and instructive aspect of her new policy is probably her attitude to education and specially her gallant fight against illiteracy. Enormous agricultural areas with an almost illiterate peasantry offer problems for solution which are not dissimilar to ours. An eminent educationist of America, Dr. Lucy L. W. Wilson, has written a little book on the *New Schools of New Russia*[2] which gives us some idea of how the Soviet government is trying to solve these problems. This book is one of the excellent studies of Soviet Russia which the Vanguard Press of New York are publishing.

The first impression that one gathers from this study, and from all accounts of Russia, is of the enormous importance that is attached to the education of youth by the Bolshevik leaders and rank and file. All the world over there is a realisation that only through right education can a better order of society be built up. In Russia the leaders today have no doubt as to what this future order should be and afire with their ideals they have set themselves out to realise it in their own time.

1. First published as articles in *Young India*, 9, 16 and 23 August 1928.
2. Published in 1928.

They have concentrated their great energy on the training of the youth of the country, and their ablest men and women have been charged with this task. Within a few days of the October revolution with civil war raging in the heart of Petrograd and every one predicting the speedy collapse of the Bolsheviks, they had time to announce their educational programme. Later, with amazing audacity, they proclaimed that they would put an end to illiteracy in the whole country within ten years. It was not merely a pious wish. They laid down a definite programme not only for the education of the youth but to "liquidate illiteracy," as they called it, in the adult population.

They failed in their endeavour. The fates were against them. Civil war continued, and the wars of the intervention, and famine and blockade ravaged the country and reduced it to a pitiful condition. But although they failed to liquidate illiteracy they have shown remarkable results within these ten years.

A second outstanding feature of Russian education is the relation which exists between the school and the everyday world. Education is not something in the air, cut off from the daily life of the student or from his future work as a citizen. Real education, it is felt, must be based on the actual environment and experiences of the child and it must fit him for the work he will have to do in after-life. In order therefore to plan an intelligent curriculum, one of the leading educationists made a thorough study of an industrial region and an agricultural region. It is being continually pressed on all teachers that they must keep in intimate touch with the life conditions of their pupils so as to be able to adapt their curriculum to them.

This necessitates that the medium of instruction should be the mother tongue. The Soviet Union has a far greater diversity of peoples and languages than India has, but in spite of the difficulties involved, this principle has been rigidly adhered to. For every different language group in the Union the schools use the particular language of that group. Sometimes in the same city the language of instruction in different schools is different. Efforts are made to develop in every way the local languages. The soviets in different areas are encouraged to carry on their work in the language of the region. Official newspapers and books are published in these languages and special institutes have been opened in Leningrad and Moscow and elsewhere to train teachers in the various languages. There are at present 45 such institutes The big universities have special faculties for national minorities. This desire to encourage the culture of the minorities has been carried so far that where there were only spoken dialects and no written languages, new scripts have been evolved. When we visited the Education Department at Moscow we were shown many school books in a variety of scripts, some

resembling the Persian script, others entirely unknown to us.

An extreme example may perhaps convey some idea of the length to which the Soviet government is carrying this policy. There is a small tribe in the Irkutsk region of Siberia. It is called the Karagass tribe and in all it numbers 405, including infants. They speak a variant of the Turkish language and are a nomad people living chiefly by hunting. Even for the children of those people a special school was opened. It is attended in winter only as the pupils accompany their parents in their summer wanderings. Another nomad people, the Gypsies, have three schools and an attempt is being made to produce a "Gypsy Speller". This has not been easy as there is no Gypsy alphabet.

The names of some of the other national minorities in the Soviet Union might be of interest. They are the Poles, Ukrainians, Latvians, Esthonians, Germans, Finns, Hebrews, Armenians, White Russians, Samoyeds, Ostiaks, Mongolians, Yakuts, Tartars, Bashkirs, Tungas, Buryats, Yukagirs, Kamtchadols, Esquimos, Kirghiz, Halassians, Oirats, Tchuvash, Komi, Mari, Kalmuck, Ingush, Mordvans, Assyrians in Northern Caucasus, and Koreans. This is not meant to be a complete list.

As this article is written the newspapers announce that the Leningrad Academy of Science[3] has founded an institute[4] for the study of Buddhist culture. The institute is compiling an Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, and an international Congress for the study of Buddhist culture is going to be convened.

It is interesting to note that in many of the outlying republics of the Russian Union, for instance amongst the Tartars and Bashkirs, women who till lately were in *purdah*, are being trained as teachers.

A third feature of Soviet education, which necessarily follows from the principle of communism, is its organisation for the masses. In most countries the better type of education is a monopoly of the well-to-do in private schools. In Russia an attempt is made to give this education to all. And it is based on the principle that education must be collective or co-operative, that is, the goal is not merely the acquisition of knowledge and individual skill but the ability to give to others and to take from them. Krupskaya, the widow of Lenin and a leading educationist, has stated in this connection that, "The collective principle is both the point of departure and the final aim of every educational process. This principle runs through it like a red thread. Except through the collective organisation of the children there is no social education.... This principle is its base, its essence and its content."

3. The academy of Sciences of U.S.S.R. was located at Leningrad till 1934, when it was moved to Moscow.
4. The Oriental Section of the Leningrad Academy of Sciences.

Education in the days of the Tsar was largely in the hands of the orthodox church. Its purpose was to teach loyalty to the Tsar and the Church and, as in India, to provide clerks for government offices. The 'lower classes' were not encouraged to rise above their station. A Tsarist minister of education laid it down that, "the children of coachmen, servants, cooks, laundresses and such like people should not be encouraged to rise above the sphere to which they were born." Children were taught the following catechism:

> Question: What does religion teach us as our duty to the Tsar?
> Answer: Worship, fidelity, payment of taxes, service, love and prayer; the whole being comprised in the words worship and fidelity.

The first decrees of the Soviet department of education provided for the separation of the school from the church, co-education, and the encouragement of non-Russian nationalities to organise schools in their own languages. It was further laid down that a pre-school education for children from three to seven years, elementary education from eight to twelve years and secondary education from thirteen to sixteen were all free, obligatory and universal; and in addition it was proclaimed that every Russian citizen was entitled to higher education. It is presumed that the social education of all children up to fifteen or sixteen is the affair of the state and not of the family. The aim of this education has been stated to be: "To promote the all-round development of an individual who shall be healthy, strong, active, courageous, independent in thought and action, with a many-sided culture; an efficient person striving for the interest of the working class, which is ultimately for the interest of the whole of humanity."

Education therefore begins at the age of three. Before that the child, and indeed the pregnant mother, is the responsibility of the department of health. Pregnant women workers are released from all work, with full wages, three or four months before and after child birth and are entitled to receive free medical aid. The mother is further given sufficient time daily during work-hours to nurse her baby, who is kept in creches attached to the place of work.

Every factory and trade union contributes to a culture fund which finances creches, nursery schools, kindergartens and children's playgrounds. In the pre-schools special attention is paid to hygiene, food and and sleep, and the curriculum includes play, stories, excursions, music, art and drama. An attempt is made even at this early age to encourage co-operative habits in the children. In the last few years about 10,000 of these pre-schools have been started, but of course they can only serve a small proportion of the population.

The Trade Unions also contribute 10 per cent of their income to adult education, and in their collective agreements with employers there is a special clause which requires the latter to pay 1 per cent of the total wages bill to this fund.

Elementary and secondary education is conceived of as a whole, the school being called the Unified Labour School and divided into a first grade (elementary) and second grade (secondary). The full course varies from seven to nine years. There are certain special features of this school. There are no examinations for admission, and promotion takes place on the quality of the year's work, which is judged by the collective work of the group of which the student is a part. In all schools there is co-education. There are periodical medical examinations of the children and individual attention is paid to the child's capacity. Thus, weak children are exempted from heavy work; those with poor eyesight are put in the first row. The Dalton plan has been largely adopted and this involves the giving up of lecturing as a method of instruction.

Student government in schools is encouraged greatly and there are many students' organisations: Octobrists[5], Pioneers, Comsomol, Children's co-operatives. Students have a considerable share in drawing up the school programmes. Communists of course firmly believe in a class war but so far as schools are concerned Krupskaya, Lenin's widow, has stated that "student self government cannot be a copy of the forms of the political life of adults, for in the life of children, neither class struggle nor class domination can take place. The school is rather an embryo and a symbol of the future society without classes." But in spite of this praiseworthy ideal there is probably a good deal of friction and antagonism even in the school.

The excursion method is very largely used in the schools. One of the reasons why this has become so important a method was the paucity of equipment and books in the early years. Students are being continually taken in groups to museums, historical places, art galleries and to study nature. Sometimes longer excursions are organised to distant places and if funds are not sufficient the group tries to earn money *en route*.

Another important method of education is what is called the complex or project. The complex is a centre of interest round which are grouped all the associated ideas. For instance the village complex would deal with village life; crops and harvests and agricultural produce; village hygiene and social life; local trade; the inter relation between village and town; the defects of rural life, their causes and cures; the government of

5. A Russian child is a member of the Octobrists from the ages of 8 to 10, a Pioneer from 10 to 14 and a Komsomol after that.

village. Large numbers of people are going through the army and returning to their village homes with some training to help in the improvement of village conditions and in the fight against illiteracy.

There are many number of special schools and institutes — research institutes, technical schools, technical short courses, workers' faculties, peasant schools, schools for defectives (deaf, blind, etc.), art and music schools. One of the most important training institutions is the Institute of Psychology and Defectology. The most eminent psychologists, physicians and educationists work in this institution for child study.

For higher studies there are about a score of universities besides two special communist universities in Moscow. The two latter are the Oriental University[6] and the Sun Yat Sen University[7]. They are specially meant for teaching the communist doctrines and methods of propaganda.

There was a tendency soon after the revolution to run down everything appertaining to the old regime. Even famous Russian classical authors were called bourgeois contemptuously and were not encouraged. Religion of course was a special target. Gradually these tendencies have softened and there is more tolerance. There is no active anti-religious propaganda in the schools although the whole background of education is non-religious. The letter sent by Maxim Gorky to Romain Rolland, which was recently published in the newspapers, showed that Russian authors of Tsarist days are widely read and appreciated. The Russian, even though he may be a communist, is too much of an artist not to appreciate good literature and art and music wherever they may be found.

Lenin himself was very much attached to some famous Russian classics and used to be affected powerfully by good music.

There is a story told of Lunacharsky, the present Commissar of Education, which gives us an insight into his character. During the early days of the Revolution when civil war was waging, news came that a part of the Kremlin in Moscow was destroyed. The news turned out later to be untrue but for the moment Lunacharsky was greatly affected. With tears in his eyes he rushed up to Lenin and handed in his resignation. He could not stand, he said, the destruction of the beautiful structures created in the past. He was prevailed upon to withdraw his resignation but only after the custody of Russian art was placed in his hands. Lunacharsky, as head of the department of education, now controls libraries, museums, artistic and scientific institutions, the theatres,

6. An Institute of Oriental Studies was established in Moscow in the autumn of 1920.

7. The Sun Yat Sen University of Toilers of the East was established in Moscow in 1925.

music, the cinematograph—practically the whole of the cultural side of Russia. A poet and a dramatist and a lover of the humanities and yet a revolutionary and a communist, he has given to the Russian educational system the wide cultural outlook which it possesses.

Another leader to whom Russian education owes much is Krupskaya, the life partner of Lenin in his long years of tribulation and in his triumph. Even during the years of exile she specialised in education and wrote a book on *Public Education and Democracy*. She dresses very plainly and her features are heavy and somewhat unattractive, but even a few minutes' conversation with her discloses her charm. Characteristic of her were some words she addressed to the Congress of Soviets after Lenin's death: "Comrades, men and women workers, men and women peasants: I have a great favour to ask from you. Do not pay external respect to Lenin's personality. Do not build statues in his memory. He cared for none of these things in his life. Remember there is much poverty and ruin in this country. If you want to honour the name of Lenin, build children's homes, kindergartens, schools, libraries, ambulatories, hospitals, homes for cripples and other defectives."

14. The Peasant and the Land

Moscow looms large in the Soviet Union. It dominates Russia and casts its shadow on the other countries of the world. But Moscow and Leningrad and the other towns are but a few islands in a sea of villages. For Russia, like India, is essentially rural and agricultural. Eighty per cent of her population lives in villages, and seventy-five per cent of her working population is engaged in the cultivation of the soil.

Tremendous efforts have been made to industrialise the country but for long years Russia is bound to be mainly agricultural. To understand her therefore one must go to the villages and see the peasant at his work. And to measure the gains and losses of the Soviet regime one must see the difference it has made to the peasants.

But the very vastness of the country makes the enquiry very difficult. Conditions vary and what is true of the villages near Moscow may be utterly false for more distant villages. There was indeed a report a year

the village; and the necessity for co-operation of all public workers to improve the village. In working out this complex the students are encouraged to work in the villages and put their theories into practice.

The health complex deals in some detail with the health of the individual, of the home and of the community, and tries to impress upon the student that the two former depend on the health of the community. The functions of the body, food, digestion, etc., are dealt with and the harmful effects of alcohol are demonstrated.

In this way many other subjects are treated as complexes—nature-work, children's life, human relations and finally community life. The object aimed at is to produce a desire to serve the community as a whole and to apply the knowledge gained not only for personal but for public welfare.

Very detailed programmes for these complexes are issued for the teacher, but it is made clear that these are for his general guidance only, and he must develop his own programme in co-operation with the other teachers and the children themselves. It is pointed out that artificial tendencies and mere moralizing are to be avoided. Students are made to think for themselves and to draw their own conclusions.

Schools are influenced considerably by the neighbourhood in which they are situated, for this neighbourhood serves as a practical laboratory. In rural areas village conditions dominate. If situated near a particular factory that factory will influence the teaching of many subjects—geography, science, and mathematics.

Education has been made universal in the urban areas but in rural areas much remains to be done. It is interesting to find, however, that the peasantry are beginning to take a live interest in the spread of education, and in some places have constructed schools with their own hands. Another interesting fact is that according to scientific tests it has been found that the average peasant child ranks higher in intelligence than the town child. This is probably due to their closer contact with nature and the school curriculum helps this natural development.

In some parts of Russia the land is not rich enough to support the peasants and an additional occupation is necessary. Weaving with handlooms is prevalent and the family loom is continually being worked by some member of the family, including the children.

The growth of rural education may be partly judged by the fact that in 1913 there were only 2,800 rural letter boxes. In 1926 there were 64,000 such boxes besides travelling post offices for the outlying villages. The drivers of these moving post offices distribute agricultural goods. A *Peasants' Gazette* started in 1923 has attained a circulation of a million copies and deals with all matters relating to the peasantry. Hundreds of thousands of letters are received by it containing enquiries, com-

plaints of officials etc., and these are investigated and whenever necessary action taken on them.

The soviets have used cinematograph films a great deal for educational purposes. One of their most famous artist-producers has recently produced a film called "Village Policy." This deals with all phases of agriculture and peasant life and specially with the actual problems and difficulties of the peasant. An attempt is made to rouse the audience to face the problem and to appreciate the solution.

The Revolution was primarily the work of the town workers and the peasantry only gradually drifted into it. For long the antagonism between town and village was very evident and it was largely owing to pressure from the peasants that Lenin introduced the New Economic Policy which was a departure from the pure milk of communism. The conflict between the two ideals still continues and is an important feature of domestic policy in Russia. Those in authority are very desirous of bringing about full understanding and co-operation between the town and the village and Lenin invented a special word for this purpose, which means "dovetailing." A workers' society for the Union of City and Village was started in 1923 and it now has several million members with branches all over the country. Factory groups and workers' clubs also develop special contacts with particular rural areas and help them in improving village conditions.

The fight against illiteracy was carried on in a variety of ways. Trade unions, workers' clubs, peasant institutes, co-operatives, prisons were all used as educational centres. Special schools for adults, agricultural and industrial, and both daily and for Sunday only, were started. An extraordinary commission for the Liquidation of Illiteracy was established and a voluntary society—"The Down with Illiteracy Society"—with a large membership was formed. The object aimed at is not merely to teach the three R's, but to impart social knowledge and to rouse a desire to co-operate in the building up of the State. The number of libraries is increasing rapidly and each one of them has one or more study circles. There are also travelling libraries. Cheap booklets dealing with the daily problems of the peasant and the worker are issued by the million.

All this has resulted in practically abolishing illiteracy in the urban areas and amongst the industrial workers. But the peasantry is still largely unaffected. They have been approached, apart from other methods, through the Red Army, which consists largely of peasants. For the two years during which the peasant serves in the army he is made to go through an educational course, and a little before his discharge a special course prepares him to do educational and cultural work in his

or two ago that a party of explorers in the Siberian forests had suddenly come across a settlement of 1,500 persons entirely cut off from the rest of the world. They had not heard of the Great War; they did not know of the Russian Revolution. They thought that the Tsar was still ruling them. The report is hardly credible although it appeared in a Leningrad newspaper. But whether it is fanciful or merely exaggerated it gives us some idea of the diversity of conditions in the Soviet Union.

It is well-known that serfdom existed in Russia till not long ago. The last of the edicts liberating the serfs was issued in 1863. At that date out of a total population of sixty millions nearly fifty millions were serfs of various kinds, either on state lands or on the lands of the royal family or with private landowners. During the period of serfdom the proprietor had almost complete legal power to make his serfs do what he liked and to punish them with lashes and blows. He could also send a disobedient serf to Siberia.

Emancipation did not bring great relief to the serfs. They usually had little land and it was not good and the village was burdened with the price of the land or the rent of it which had to be paid to the old landlord. The state helped outright purchases by means of loans but the burden continued. The people who benefited most by the new arrangement were the landlords who got hard cash and freedom from all worry.

Soon after, the revolutionary movement was carried to the villages but it met with poor response there. The peasant in Russia, as in India, did not appreciate or understand vague ideas of freedom. What he wanted was land and lighter taxes and protection from oppression. We find in the stories of some famous Russian novelists descriptions of this period and how young revolutionaries were suspected by the peasantry and sometimes even handed over to the police.

After the Russo-Japanese war[1] the peasants arose in many places, and riots and disorders spread. They were put down, but not entirely, and the peasantry organised a Peasants' Union[2] with the cry "all the land for those who labour on it."

The peasantry were helped in organising themselves by the existence of ancient village councils called *mirs*. These were *panchayats*, on a highly democratic basis, often meeting in the open and discussing the local affairs of the village. They owned some times some common land which used to be divided up by them. There were also more formal and official local bodies called the "zemstvos" which came into existence

1. 1904-05.
2. A Peasants' Union was formed in the summer of 1905. This Union joined the Union of Unions and staged the successful general strike of October 1905.

after the emancipation. The franchise for these was based on property and they were thus usually controlled by the landlords. They may be compared in their functions and activities to the present District Boards in India.

The war hit the peasantry the hardest. The army absorbed their best men and it is said that seven millions of them died or were maimed. Fields remained uncultivated and where man had fought for long years against the forest and had gradually driven it back, the forest advanced again triumphantly and undid the work of generations. Strange forces began to move the great masses and the cry arose, ever more insistent, of "peace and land" — to which the town people added "bread."

The peasants held aloof from the Bolsheviks during the early days of the revolution. But without the help of the peasantry Bolshevism was doomed to defeat. Ultimately Lenin won over the Peasants' Congress[3]. But even before this the peasants had taken the law into their own hands and had expropriated the landlords themselves and taken possession of the land.

The civil war that followed, with its bands of adventurers attacking the Soviet Government with foreign money and munitions, was a time of sore trial for the peasantry. Fearful of losing again their land, which they had acquired after so much toil and suffering, they rallied to the Soviet Government and it was largely with their help that the Soviet triumphed. But the war was followed by famine and disease and it was on this scene of horror and destruction that the work of reconstruction had to begin.

The earliest decrees of the Soviet Government deal with the nationalisation of land. Land could not be "bought, sold, rented, given as security, or expropriated by any means whatever." "The right to enjoy the land is accorded, without distinction of sex, to all citizens of the State who wish to work the land, either with their own families or in other forms of association, and only as long as they are capable of working. Hiring of labour is prohibited." The peasant thus got the land and was freed from the debt on the land and from yearly rents to landlords. Some of the big estates were taken over by the State and made into model farms. Distribution of land amongst the peasantry was left to the village communes.

The old practice of communes holding land made nationalisation easier than it otherwise would have been. This however often meant

3. The programme of the Socialist Revolutionaries (the peasant party) included the abolition of private property in land and the distribution of the large estates by elected village communities. This programme was reaffirmed at the All-Russian Soviet Peasants' Deputies in September 1917 and Lenin at once promised that the Bolsheviks would implement it if they came to power.

that the farmer lived far from the land and so the farmer had to migrate to his fields during the working season. The women-folk help in the fields in summer. In winter they keep busy by spinning, knitting and sewing.

The early decrees totally prevented the transference of the right to use land. But in spite of this all manner of illegal renting grew up. In 1922 the law was changed and renting for a fixed small period was permitted. Hiring of labour continued to be forbidden. Even this did not bring sufficient relief as large numbers of families had no horses or other animals to do the work. So a further change was made in 1926. The period for renting was increased and hiring labour on such rented land was permitted, subject to certain conditions. All rental contracts must be registered with the local authorities, and the working members of the family of the renter must work on the land, though they may hire labour to assist them. Hired labourers must be treated as regards food and lodging as members of the family. There are a number of other conditions regulating the renting of land and the hiring of labour.

The peasant pays one tax to the State—the agricultural tax. This is so arranged that the richer peasant pays not only more proportionately but the rate is an increasing one. On the other hand a large number of the poor peasants are wholly exempt from taxation on the ground that their income is too little and their standard of life too low to permit of further deterioration by taxation. They thus hold the land without paying anything for it. Till last year this exemption applied to twenty-five per cent of peasant farms. On the tenth anniversary of the Revolution, the Government announced that they proposed to extend this exemption to a further ten per cent. In addition a proposal was made to give state pensions to aged people among the poorer peasants.

Russia is very poor and there is nothing it wants so much as money for education, agricultural development and industrial expansion. It is curious therefore that in spite of this demand for money tax exemptions should be increased. The Communist Party Congress of 1926 stated that they refused to regard the peasant merely as an object of taxation. Excessive taxes and the increasing of retail prices would inevitably stop the progress of the productive power of the village and diminish the commodities of agriculture.

The average tax per peasant household in 1924-25 was 14.2 roubles; in 1925-26 it was 9.3 roubles and in 1926-27 it was 11.9 roubles (£1=10 roubles). The tax is based on the area of arable land, varied by the number of members of the family. Livestock is treated as parts of an acre for purposes of taxation. The tax is a steeply graded one. Thus for incomes up to 155 roubles it is 4.75 per cent; to 200 roubles, 5.25

per cent; to 300 roubles, 5.75 per cent; to 400 roubles, 8 per cent; to 600 roubles, 10.5 per cent; and over 600 roubles, 14 per cent.

A considerable part of the agricultural tax is spent on local needs. In 1925-26 the tax yielded 235 million roubles. Out of this roughly 100 million roubles were spent locally. The tax is thus meant to cover both local and national budgets. It is interesting to find however that many villages all over the country raise voluntary taxes for their own needs. This voluntary tax sometimes is as high as 35 per cent of the agricultural tax, and in one instance was reported to be 70 per cent of it.

Soon after the Revolution large numbers of communes sprang up. Groups of workers organised themselves into little communities to work on the land together and live a common life. Many religious groups did likewise. But in spite of its great initial success the movement dwindled, chiefly on account of friction on matters of detail. It was replaced gradually by the *artel* which was an association of peasants who pooled their resources and cultivated a common plot of land. Later came other forms of co-operative use of land known as "collectives."

The great advantage of these collective forms of cultivation is the use of machinery, tractors and the like, which are utterly out of the reach of the individual peasant. The tractor is almost a god in Russia today and it is the tractor that has led people to large scale co-operation on the land.

Agricultural banks and credit societies have been extensively organised and there are many facilities for obtaining credit. There were in 1926 over four million two hundred thousand members of these societies. Help is given by the State through these societies in the form of loans of money for capital, or loans of seeds, or by deferring payments on machinery. Co-operative societies of other kinds, consumers and agricultural, have also spread remarkably.

The Soviet Government is making every effort to induce families to migrate from the overcrowded areas to other parts of the country. Facilities in land and railway fares and loans and temporary exemption from taxation are offered to those who migrate.

Cottage industries used to flourish in Russia and several million men and women were engaged in them. The number decreased greatly during and after the war but they are again increasing. They are being encouraged in every way and such taxes as were a hindrance to them have been removed. This home industry is specially useful in the winter months when there is little else to be done. Clothing, boots, tinware, wooden goods and many other things, are thus made by hand or by simple machinery.

I have referred elsewhere in the course of these articles to the Peasants' Houses or Institutes and to the many other activities of the peasantry.

They have their newspapers and country fairs and academies and sanatoria; their libraries and reading rooms and women's clubs. The Society for the Liquidation of Illiteracy and Mutual Aid Societies are to be found everywhere. And so are the youth organisations—the Pioneers and the Komsomols.

Great changes have taken place in the economy of the village in Russia and the church has lost its pre-eminent position. But still it continues to be a centre of activities and the church holidays are celebrated with feasting and festivity. Civil marriage may be easy but many still crowd the church during the wedding season.

Gradually however the church is being ousted from pride of place by the "Narodni Dam", the Peoples House or *Panchayat Ghar*. This usually houses the library and reading room and club and class-rooms and theatre. And inevitably there is the Lenin corner, draped in red.

15. Women and Marriage

"Have they really nationalised women in Russia?" That is, almost invariably, the first question that is asked about Russia. It is not easy to understand what nationalisation of women means. Probably the newspaper correspondents and editors who have taken such pains to spread this particular item of "news" do not themselves know what they write about. At the back of their minds, perhaps, there is an idea of promiscuous sexual intercourse going on all over the Soviet Union. And they must imagine or wish others to imagine that the status of woman has been terribly degraded and she has become a mere chattel for the fulfilment of man's passions.

This is very far from the impression that a visitor to Russia, or even one who reads about her present condition, carries away with him. Whatever other failings the Russian woman of today may have, she is certainly not a chattel or plaything of man. She is independent, aggressively so, and refuses to play second fiddle to man.

I was present for a while at a women's conference in Moscow. Krupskaya, the widow of Lenin, was there, and Madame Sun Yat Sen and

the aged Clara Zetkin[1], and a large number of women from foreign countries. And all the women from the other countries of Europe who spoke, envied their Russian sisters for the social and economic freedom they had won.

The lot of the woman in Russia in old times was certainly not one of equality with man. The law favoured men. The wife was obliged to do what her husband told her. She could not enter any service without her husband's consent. It was almost impossible for her to get a divorce. The daughter could inherit only one-fourteenth part of the inheritance, the remaining thirteen parts going to the son or sons. After marriage the woman's property and money was under her husband's control. In the villages there was abysmal ignorance and it is said, and supported by many homely Russian sayings, that one of the principal pastimes of the peasant was to beat his wife.

The great war and the civil war that followed broke up many families in Russia. The Soviet Government had thus to deal with continually changing conditions. In their early days they legislated for women workers and marriage and in theory at least made woman the equal of man. But much of the legislation remained on paper although it had a powerful effect on changing the mentality of the masses. Lenin, speaking two years after the revolution, said: "A complete revolution in the legislation affecting women was brought about by the Government of the workers in the first months of its existence. The Soviet Government has not left a stone unturned of these laws which held women in complete subjection. We may now say with pride and without any exaggeration that outside of Soviet Russia there is not a country in the world where women have been given full equal rights, where women are *not in a humiliating position which is felt specially in every-day family* life. This was one of our first and most important tasks. Certainly laws are not enough and we will not for a minute be satisfied just with decrees. The legal position of women in Soviet Russia is ideal from the point of view of the foremost countries. But we tell ourselves plainly that this is only the beginning."

The general labour legislation was particularly beneficial to women workers and in addition there were special laws for the protection of women. Among the general regulations may be mentioned the eight hour day, which it is now proposed to reduce to seven hours, yearly holidays, social insurance, pensions for long service, rest homes, sanatorium treatment, prohibition of child labour under fourteen, only four hours

1. (1857-1933), one of the founders of the German Communist Party (1919) and a Communist member of the Reichstag 1919-32. Her *Reminiscences of Lenin* was translated in 1929.

work as training from fourteen to sixteen, and six hours from sixteen to eighteen. It must also be remembered that workers' committees in factories and trade unions have considerable authority in regard to workers' conditions. The special laws for the protection of women and motherhood are:

(i) Employment of women and young persons under 18 in heavy and dangerous industries is prohibited, such as the chemical industry, and others where workers are exposed to lead dust.
(ii) Four months' maternity vacation is given to industrial workers, and to non-industrial workers whose work involves special strain. Other non-industrial workers get three months' vacation.
(iii) Night work and overtime for pregnant women is prohibited.
(iv) A pregnant woman cannot be sent away from the place of her regular work without her consent.
(v) Nursing mothers are allowed, in addition to the usual intervals, further intervals of not less than half an hour at least every three and a half hours. These intervals are included in working hours and paid for.

It was feared that owing to the privileges given to pregnant women the employer might infringe agreements without proper cause. There is therefore a provision in the law which forbids the discharge of a pregnant woman without the sanction of the labour inspector.

There are also what are called 'night sanatoria' for workers who are not ill enough to leave off work but require care and dieting. They go there after their work and spend the night and their leisure hours there.

The number of women in industry has been growing, though not so fast as the men, and there was a tendency to employ them in almost all kinds of work. But lately there has been a reaction against this and it has been pointed out that "equal rights for women" does not mean the employment of women in some kinds of labour for which they are physically not fitted.

Women occupy the highest positions in the Soviet Union. It was a Russian, Kollontay[2], who became the world's first woman ambassador. A hundred thousand women were elected to the village soviets in the R.S.F.S.R., and the Ukraine in 1926; and 169 peasant women were members of the All Union Congress of Soviets. Even in backward

2. A.M. Kollontay (1872-1952), Russian revolutionary, diplomat and novelist became in 1920 People's Commissar for Social welfare. In 1923 she was appointed Minister to Norway—the first woman to hold that rank—and thereafter held various diplomatic posts till 1945.

Siberia there are 8,000 women members of the village soviets, forty-five of them being presidents of their soviets. Women have an equal right to the land. There are a million of them working their own land as heads of their households.

There is a special woman's department of the Communist Party known as the 'Genotdel', which carries on vigorous activity for women's education and rights. The 'Genotdel' publishes several journals and organises lectures on hygiene, baby welfare, co-operation, politics and like subjects. March 8th is celebrated throughout Russia as International Women's day.

The marriage and divorce laws of the Soviet are certainly a great break from old tradition. The problems they had to face were partly similar to those that other countries of Europe and America have to face and were partly the result of the general break-up of family life after the wars and of communist ideology. Other countries like Denmark and Turkey have not dissimilar marriage laws and in the United States of America there is a strong movement for what is called "companionate marriage." Soviet Russia is therefore not different in this respect from many other countries.

But Russia is different in one important respect. Tradition and ancient practice have no value there; indeed there is a tendency to go against them because they are inseparably connected with a form of society which is a symbol of slavery for the Russians of today. What the ideal of marriage in a communist state should be it is difficult to say for the high priests of the doctrine differ. Many of them are strong believers in the family but the family would be different from what it is now.

The first Soviet marriage law made marriage a civil ceremony. Religious ceremonies were not prevented and most people continued to have them, specially in the villages. It is curious to notice, however, that even the civil marriage gradually developed a ritual of its own with red draperies and pledges and speeches. Polygamy was prohibited and it was made a criminal offence to conceal a previous marriage at the time of a second. Divorce was free and easy and subject to mutual consent. No community of property was created by marriage, and husband and wife were mutually responsible for each other's support. Illegitimate children were given the same rights as legitimate ones. The husband and wife were permitted to take the name of either as a common name or to keep their own names. Children, after the age of fourteen, were permitted to decide whether they would take their father's or mother's name and also to decide about their citizenship and religion. The law required the parents to keep their children with them and support them. Adoption was not permitted.

Testamentary disposition of property is only permitted in certain cases and even then only in favour of the legal heirs. Ordinarily the wife and the dependent relatives receive equal portions. If the amount is insufficient to support all having a legal claim, those in greatest need have the first charge on it. The law at first did not permit the wife to inherit *more than 10,000 roubles (£1,000), the State getting the rest.* Two years ago this was changed and now inheritance is supposed to be unlimited, but the tax on it increases on an ascending scale. For a sum exceeding 5,00,000 roubles the tax is 90 per cent.

Such were the main provisions of the marriage law some years ago. In 1925 however an attempt was made to change it but the attempt did not succeed then and was postponed. For many months afterwards the whole of Russia discussed the proposed changes. Innumerable meetings were held all over the country and newspapers were full of the controversy. Leading communists took opposite sides and discussions were not lacking in frankness or warmth. Generally the peasants were more conservative than the town people.

One of the principal reasons why the changes were proposed was the existence of a large number of couples, estimated at one hundred thousand, who were living together but had not registered themselves. It was proposed to legalise these marriages. This was vigorously opposed as were also certain clauses making the whole household liable to pay maintenance to a wife in case the husband was too poor to pay it. The women's organisations were however in favour of protecting unregistered marriages.

After long debate the new marriage law was adopted in November 1926. It stated that "registration of marriage is established with the aim of facilitating the protection of personal and property rights and the interests of the wife and children. Registration is an indisputable proof of the existence of marriage." Thus registration was not marriage but the proof of it only, and marriage could take place without it though it might be more difficult to prove it then. The same protection was afforded to registered and unregistered unions but in the latter case definite proof was required by the court that an actual state of marriage existed. If there was an unregistered union there could be no remarriage.

The wife's maintenance was made a charge on the husband's household but only to the extent of the husband's share in it. Divorce was made even simpler, one party being permitted to claim it without the consent of the other. It was pointed out that in spite of this easy divorce the average number of divorces every year were eleven for every ten thousand of the population. This is said to be less than the number in many other countries where divorce is not free. It was also

stated that the new law although apparently removing restrictions on unions in effect helped to establish monogamy firmly, by attaching material responsibility to every relation.

Adoption was permitted by the new law. The old law forbidding adoption had not been a success. There were large numbers of young orphans who had no one to look after them and were taken as extra hands by peasants and treated like their own children.

The legal marriage age was at first sixteen for girls and eighteen for boys. But largely at the instance of women, the marriage age for women was also raised to eighteen.

This marriage law applies to the R.S.F.S.R. In the other republics of the Union there are some variations. Thus in White Russia only registered marriages are recognised.

It is difficult to moralise about any matter, as ideas of conventional morality differ from age to age and country to country. And conventional morality has suffered a severe set-back in Russia. There are many who attach little importance to constancy in married life. But there are also many who are called puritans and who wage unceasing war against sexual laxity of any kind. An eminent professor is the leader of this movement and he has laid it down that continence should be the rule and the sexual act should only be indulged in for the purpose of having children. He is greatly against birth control. But control indeed is not favoured by the State, not because they have any moral objections to it, but because they want the population of Russia to increase.

Many of the well known leaders of the communists — Lenin, Bukharin, Lunacharsky and others — have expressed great concern at the extremist tendencies on both sides — sexual laxity on the one side and an extreme form of puritanism which frowns even at handshaking and laughter and amusement of any kind on the other. The emphasis has been on the side of restraint and they have denounced indulgence of all kinds, sexual, in alcohol and in tobacco.

Lenin discussed these matters in an interview with Clara Zetkin in 1920. He said that his alarm had forced him to speak. "Our future generation disturbs me deeply. They are a part of the revolution. And if the evil manifestations of bourgeois society begin to appear in the revolutionary world — as the widely flowering roots of certain weeds — then it is better to take measures against them in time." Further he said that: "The changed attitude of the young to questions of sex life are of course on grounds of 'principle' and based on theory. Many call their position 'revolutionary' and 'communistic'. They sincerely think it is so. But that does not impress this fellow. Although

I am less than any one a gloomy ascetic, this so-called 'new sex-life' of the young, and often the older ones too, often seems to be entirely bourgeois, just another form of the bourgeois house of prostitution." Referring to the theory that the satisfaction of the sex impulse and the demands of love should be as simple and inconsequential as the drinking of a glass of water, he says: "Certainly thirst must be satisfied. But does a normal person, under normal conditions, lie in the street and drink from mud puddles? Or even from a glass that dozens of other people have been drinking from? But still more important is the social aspect of it. Drinking water is an individual matter. But two participate in love, and from it arises a third, new life. Here the interests of society come in. The duty to the collective must be considered.

"I don't for a minute want to preach asceticism. Communism must bring the joy of life and vigour which comes from the completeness of the love life. The excess in sex-life so often observed at the present time does not, in my opinion, bring with it joy of life and vigour, but on the contrary, lessens them. In time of revolution this is bad, very bad.

"Youth needs healthy sport, swimming, excursions, physical interests—study, investigation, scientific research—a sound body makes a sound mind. We want neither monks nor Don Juans, nor yet the German philistine as the happy medium."

To combat these unhealthy tendencies which troubled Lenin a special effort is being made to carry on propaganda on the dangers of sexual indulgence and venereal disease. The sport and physical culture movement is also being encouraged and has spread very fast. Prostitution is also being combated vigorously. The Communist Party has a rule that any member of the Party having relations with a prostitute shall be expelled from the party.

But more than these devices of lecture and propaganda it is hoped that the new conditions of life will teach restraint and divert attention to other interests of life. Laxity and indulgence flourish in wealthy leisure class which has little to do and takes to sex to escape from *ennui* and boredom. And this leisure class, being the model to be admired and looked up to, sets the fashion to the other classes below. In Russia this class has disappeared and few people have the time to think of much else than their work and their many other occupations.

In Moscow there stands the great Palace of Motherhood on the river bank. It has a fine exhibition of everything that relates to the health of the mother and the child. It carries on research for the fight against disease and mortality, and trains and sends out doctors, midwives and nurses. Beautiful paintings and posters carry its message to the distant

villages and teach the father how to treat the mother, and the mother how to treat the baby, and both how to have a pleasant and clean home and healthy children. They teach the mother specially to feed the baby at her own breasts. A poster represents a little calf looking with reproach in its eyes at a baby drinking milk out of a bottle and asking: "Why do you drink my mother's milk?"

The Department of Motherhood and Infancy is in charge of all the work concerning mothers and babies. It has started thousands of day nurseries in the villages. The peasants themselves contributed through their organisations 6,50,000 roubles for these nurseries in 1926 The number of nurseries increases rapidly as the peasants get to know them and appreciate their benefits.

But the Soviet Union is a vast area and all this change and improvement great as it is, has but touched the fringe of it. Most of the men and women are, as everywhere else, conservative and suspicious of newfangled notions. Still, the new order has cut deep into the ancient soil, and in Turkestan and Yakutsk and Azerbaijan, where women till lately sat secluded behind the veil, women today sit as the equals of men in the council chambers of the republics.

16. Russia and India[1]

I have endeavoured in these articles to touch on some aspects of present day Russia. I have done so very superficially, for I do not claim special knowledge, and I have not considered here many subjects of exceeding interest. Nor have I considered the future prospects of the Soviet Union, and whether it will retain its aggressively communist character, or gradually develop a system more in harmony with that of its neighbours. Soon after the revolution Lenin wrote: "The outstanding achievement of the Revolution has been that Russia, by her political system, has in a few months overtaken the progressive countries. But this is not enough, the struggle admits of no compromise: it is either

1. First published as an article in *The Hindu*, 25 July 1928.

to fail, or to overtake and even to surpass the progressive countries economically as well....either to go under or to move forward at full steam. Thus has the question been put by History." The struggle is indeed continuing but the period of militant communism is already over and the gentler methods of diplomacy are now being used more and more. Some people say that in spite of the desire of the communists to have a classless society new classes are gradually being formed in the Union. Whatever the future may bring, however, it may be said today that in spite of minor changes the struggle admits of no compromise. As Lenin said, Russia will either go under or move forward at full steam. A middle course seems hardly likely. And ten years have shown that Russia refuses to go under.

These are some of the questions which must interest the student of world affairs and politics and economics and history. The dynamic forces released by the revolution of 1917 have not played themselves out. They have made history and they will continue to make history and no man can afford to ignore them. We in India can least of all be indifferent to them. Russia is our neighbour, a giant sprawling half over Asia and Europe, and between such neighbours there can be either amity or enmity. Indifference is out of the question.

We have grown up in the tradition, carefully nurtured by England, of hostility to Russia. For long years past the bogey of a Russian invasion has been held up to us and been made the excuse of vast expenditure on our armaments. In the days of the Tsar we were told that the imperialism of Russia was for ever driving south, coveting an outlet to the sea, or may be India itself. The Tsar has gone but the rivalry between England and Russia continues and we are now told that India is threatened by the Soviet Government.

How far is this true? There can be no doubt that there is intense antagonism between British Imperial policy and Soviet Russia, and such antagonism often leads to war. Thus the danger of war is real. But will this war be of Russia's seeking, or does England desire to precipitate an armed conflict?

Russia has only recently passed through a period of international war and civil war, of famine and blockade, and above everything she desires peace to consolidate her economic position and build up on a sure foundation her new order of society. She has already attained a large measure of success and is working at high pressure and with "full steam" to develop peacefully her vast territories. War, even successful war, must put a stop to this process of consolidation and development, and is bound to delay indefinitely the full establishment of her new social order. She cannot welcome this. And so we have seen in the past few years that she has refused to be drawn into an armed conflict

in spite of great provocation and insult. In China, largely it is said at the instigation of England and some other powers, her embassy was raided[2] and her ambassador grossly insulted; in England the Arcos raid would ordinarily have been considered a sufficient *casus belli*. Her ambassadors[3] have been shot down in cold blood and her diplomatic agents imprisoned[4] and humiliated. But Russia has succeeded in avoiding war even at the cost of having to swallow her anger and resentment. To every student of recent history it is clear that Russia does not want war.

England on the other hand is *notoriously preparing for war* and refuses to agree to any effective scheme for disarmament or compulsory arbitration. Her attitude in the League of Nations has been one of frank and unabashed opposition to all such proposals. She will not suffer her empire to be included in any such scheme nor her imperial policy to be affected in any way. Only a few days ago she gave yet another instance of her determination not to loosen her grip on her empire in any way or change her aggressive imperialist policy for the sake of ensuring world peace. England's answer to the United States' proposal for the outlawry of war has been the hardest and most uncompromising in spite of the fine phrases in which it is wrapped. England is prepared to agree to any peace proposal, it practically says, subject to her having the right to fight for her imperial policy and adventures! A strange acceptance. The actual words of the British note to the States are: "There are certain regions of the world, the welfare and integrity of which constitute a special and vital interest for our peace and safety. His Majesty's Government have been at pains to make it clear in the past that interference with these regions cannot be suffered. Their protection against attack is to the British Empire a measure of self-defence. It must be clearly understood that His Majesty's Government in Great Britain accept the new treaty on the distinct understanding that it does not prejudice their freedom of action in this respect."

This in plain language means that the British Government retain full freedom to wage war when and where they will. But as if this was not enough, the British note makes a further reservation. It suggests

2 On 6 April 1927 the troops of the Chinese Nationalist government, instigated by the Western Powers, raided the Soviet Embassy in Peking. More than twenty Chinese employees were arrested as Communists and most of them were executed.

3. The Soviet ambassador in Poland was murdered on 7 June 1927.

4. In the summer of 1919 the Soviet Government sent a diplomatic mission, headed by I. O. Kolomitsev, to Iran. He was humiliated, imprisoned and finally murdered.

that the treaty should not be universally applicable "for there are some states whose governments have not yet been universally recognised." Every schoolboy knows that the principal state in the world whose government has not yet been universally recognised is Soviet Russia. Thus England after taking away by various reservations and qualifications all the effectiveness from the proposed treaty for the "unqualified renunciation of war," as the American note puts it, actually makes an exception of war against Russia. The unabashed frankness of these reservations and this exception is a little surprising but they are in full keeping with British policy. The whole basis of this policy has been to encircle Russia by pacts and alliances and ultimately to crush her. England has worked unceasingly for this end and has made the League of Nations an instrument of her policy. Locarno[5] was the result of this policy and the occasional flirtations of England with Germany[6] have also the isolation of Russia for their object. "Angur", the well-known spokesman of the British Foreign office, tells us candidly in a recent book that the growth of the League of Nations and the spirit of the Locarno pact are expressions of a desire to combat Bolshevism. It is the rigidity of the present British Government," he writes, "which builds up the wall of a united Europe against them (the Soviet Union)."

Thus it is absolutely clear from the official utterances and policy of British politicians that they eagerly desire a conflict with Russia and prepare for it and only await a suitable opportunity to wage open war. Many of the other great capitalist countries are equally opposed to the social theories and practices of Soviet Russia but they have no special political animus against her. It is only "the rigidity of the present British Government" that seeks to encircle and strangle Russia. It is equally clear that Russia eagerly desires to avoid war, but apprehensive of the dangers that threaten her she prepares for it, for she will not easily forego the freedom she has achieved at the cost of tremendous effort and sacrifice.

It is inconceivable that Russia in her present condition at least and for a long time to come will threaten India. She can desire no additional territory and even if she did the risks are too great for her. She is still mainly an agricultural country trying to develop her industries.

5. A series of agreements made in 1925 whereby Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy mutually guaranteed the peace in Western Europe, and Germany undertook to arbitration of her disputes with Belgium, France, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

6. The conciliatory policy towards Germany was marked by Germany's admission to the League of Nations, the regular payment of reparations under the Dawes Plan and the withdrawal of the Allied Commission to control German disarmament.

For this she requires capital and expert knowledge. She gets neither from India. She produces raw materials in abundance and not manufactured articles for export and dumping in foreign countries. So does India. The two countries are today too similar to be exploited by each other and there can be no economic motive for Russia to covet India.

Ordinarily Russia and India should live as the best of neighbours with the fewest points of friction. The continual friction that we see today is between England and Russia, not between India and Russia. Is there any reason why we in India should inherit the age-long rivalry of England against Russia? That is based on the greed and covetousness of British imperialism and our interests surely lie in ending this imperialism and not in supporting and strengthening it.

Indians have for generations been told to fear Russia and it is perhaps a little difficult to exorcise this fear today. But if we face the facts we can only come to one conclusion, and that is that India has nothing to fear from Russia. And having come to this conclusion we must make it clear that we shall not permit ourselves to be used as pawns in England's imperial game to be moved hither and thither for her benefit. We must continually proclaim, in the words of the Madras Congress resolution, "that in the event of the British Government embarking on any warlike adventure and endeavouring to exploit India in it for the furtherance of their imperialist aims, it will be the duty of the people of India to refuse to take any part in such a war or to co-operate with them in any way whatsoever." And if this declaration is made repeatedly and emphatically it may be that England may hesitate to embark on this adventure and India and the world may be spared the horrors of another great war.

Adh Kumbhi (Ardh Kumbh)	a festival every sixth year after the main Kumbh fair at Prayag
Aligol (Alighaul)	an organisation of Muslim volunteers
Arti	worship with lamps
Arya	an honoured person
Azan	call by Muslim priests at the time of prayers in the mosque
Bande Mataram	salute to mother-India, homage to motherland
Bania	a caste among Hindus traditionally given to trading
Bhagavat Gita	a Hindu scripture, containing Krishna's discourse to Arjun before battle
Bhajans	devotional songs
Bhandar	store house
Budmash	a bad character
Chabutra	a raised platform made of brick and mortar
Chal gai	commencement of a quarrel
Chamars	one of the scheduled castes
Charion-ka mela	a procession on poles and flags representing some saint or peer
Chavis	a long wooden staff with a sharp-edged steel disc at the end
Chehlum	the ceremony on the fortieth day performed by Shias to conclude the Muharrum festival
Dai	a mid wife
Dankas	wooden sticks used for beating drums
Dasuti	a bed cover made of coarse cloth
Datkanda	a festival usually observed in Allahabad, to celebrate Krishna's boyhood exploits
Devi	Goddess
Dusehra (Dashera)	a Hindu festival held usually in October to commemorate Rama's victory over Ravana

Gadda	cushion
Ganesh	a Hindu deity
Ganga-mai	mother Ganges
Ganga-mai-ki-jai	hail! mother Ganges
Ganja	hashish
Ghat	bathing place on river side
Hanuman	a Hindu deity
Jatha	a group of volunteers; a squad
Jathedar	leader of a group of volunteers
Kabaddi	an indigenous game involving test of stamina
Khaddar	coarse cloth woven by hand-spun threads
Khadi	hand-spun cloth
Kripan	sword
Kotwal	station officer, police
Kumbh Mela	a festival held every twelfth year at Prayag, Hardwar, Nasik and Ujjain
Kunjras	a scheduled caste whose traditional occupation was supply of vegetables
Kutcha	raw; unmetalled road
Lathi	a wooden staff
Lathiwala	one who can wield a wooden staff
Leechee	a pulpy fruit
Lihaf	quilt
Lokmanya	universally respected; a title bestowed on Tilak
Mali	a gardener
Mehndi	an arc carried in procession during Muharrum
Mela	a fair
Mohalla (muhalla)	a locality
Moharrum (Muharrum)	a Muslim festival
Nazul	government lands in urban areas
Octroi	tax levied on articles entering municipal limits
Pasis	a scheduled caste in and around Allahabad
Peepul	a kind of tree
Pinjrapole	a cowshed
Prajatantric	republican, democratic

Prasad	food distributed after offering at an altar
Puja (pooja)	worship
Pujari	priest
Puranas	ancient Hindu scriptures
Purdnashin	a veiled woman
Purna Swaraj (Purna Swatantrata)	full independence
Rais	a nobleman
Sadhu	one who has renounced the world
Samaj	society
Sangam	confluence of rivers
Sangathan	organization
Sawan (Shrawan)	a month in the Hindu calendar
Seva	service
Seva Dal	service corps
Shahidi Jatha	a squad of volunteers courting martyrdom
Shankh	conch
Sherbet	a sweet drink
Shivalaya	a temple of Siva
Sitar	a musical instrument
Srijut	a form of address like 'Mr' or 'Monsieur'
Subzimandi	a vegetable market
Swadeshi	indigenous; country made
Taltis	curtain made of bamboo frames
Tazia	a pyramid-like structure made of paper and bamboo and taken in procession during Muharrum
Thakurdwara	a place of worship
Teerth	a place of pilgrimage
Vedas	ancient Hindu scriptures

INDEX

(Biographical footnotes are italicized)

Aaj, 81 fn, 140
Abu, Mount, 121
Abyssinia, (see Ethiopia)
Academy of Sciences (Leningrad), 429
Achilles, 86
Aden, 229
Adh Kumbhi (Ardh Kumbh), 34, 35
Afghanistan, 275, 353, 359, 361, 412
Ahmed, Zahur, 26, 54, 195
Ahmedabad, 106, 107, 157, 159
Ajmer, 118, 119, 120, 126 fn, 129 fn, khadi board, 118—122
——— District Congress Committee, 129, 130, list of delegates, 127
———Provincial Congress Committee, 118, 120—122, 127, 130
Ajmer — Merwara, 129 fn
Akbar, Muhammad, 18
Akali(s) (Babar Akalis), 86, 89, 124, 136, 137, 138 fn, 140 & fn, 151, 152, 155; agitation, 150, assistance to, 136, resisters, 124; jatha, 163 & fn, movement 124 fn; relief, 159, 160, relief fund, 148
Akali Sahayak Bureau, 106, 140, 142 & fn, 143, 146—149, 152, 154, 159, 160, 161 fn, funds for, 136; no action taken against, 159, to be closed, 152
Akhtar Begum, *18*
Albert Hall (London), 293
Alexander (Lenin's brother), 404
Alexander III (Russia), 404 fn
Aligarh, 76 fn, 146, 169 fn, 219, 223 fn
Ali, Maulana Mohamad, 89 & fn, 103, 105, 106, 110, 112—115, 142, 144 & fn, 146, 147, 150, 151, 161, 169, 191, 217, 223 fn, bereavement of, 144, controversy with Nizami, 255 & fn
———, Maulana Shaukat, 36, 46, civic address presented to, 46
Allahabad, 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 12 fn, 13 fn, 16, 19, 22 & fn, 26, 29, 30 ff
———, Lord Reading's visit to, 46
———, (*mohallas* and localities) Allahbande Phatak, 30; Atala, 29; Cannington, 68; Chowk (Chauk) 18, 30, civil station 28, 29, 37, 42, 48, 49, 60, 66; Colonelganj, 74, Daraganj, 6, 36, 51; Gangaganj, 29, 190, 191, 193, 194, George Town, 68; Harcourt Butler Market, 57, Hewett Road 89; Johnstonganj, 30, 36, 51, Karchahagh, 17; Katghar, 187, 194; Katra, 13 fn, 60, Khuldabad, 51; Minapur, 30; Mirapur, 190, 191, 193, 195; Mir Khan ki Serai, 57, Pasarhatta, 30, Purushottam Das Park, 36, Shahganj, 30, 190, 193; Surajkund, 175; Yahiapur, 30; Zero Road, 57, 75
——— High Court, 12 fn, 76 & fn, 223 fn, 247 fn
——— Improvement Trust, 30, 43, 48, 50, 55—61; not conducted on right lines, 55; dislikes publicity, 43, 71, enquiry committee, 55, 71, 73; full of intrigues and incompetent, 72
———Municipal Board, 1 & fn, 2 fn, 3, 4, 5 & fn, 7—9, 14 fn, 17, 18, ff, Building Department, 27; Damodar Das Committee, 17, 18, Education Committee, 12, 27, 33, 36, 41; Education Department, 36, 41; Finance Committee, 4, 8, 49; Hackney Carriage Joint Committee, 12; Katra Colonelganj scheme, 74, Mechanical Plants Department, 37; Mechanical Plants Committee, 12, 29, 37, Nazul Committee, 12; Octroi Committee, 43, 44; Public Health Committee, 8, 12, 37, 74, Public Health Department, 9, 25,

74; Public Works Department, 36, 37; Public Works Committee, 12, 36, 37, 70 fn; Retrenchment Committee, 23, 43, 56, 57; Tax Department, 42; Town Improvement Committee, 12, 29, 30, 42; Water Works Department, 8, 37, 41; Water Works Enquiry Committee, 8 & fn; Water Works Reorganisation Scheme, 74; administration, note on, 62—64, 69—70; candidates seeking election to deposit security, 11; cancels bye law I, 18; compulsory education, 27; national holidays, 27, 46, 62; criticism against board, 9; depleted finances of, 21—22; financial equilibrium effected, 46; to remain firm, 64; Hindustani, medium of work, 45; Indian goods, reduced taxation on, 29; *Khadi* uniform for employees, 52; large compounds taxed, 42, 48, 61; hydrants, 13; municipal Gazette, 47; not a charitable organisation, 7; octroi, 22, 42; passenger tax, 5, 6, 34, 38 & fn; responsibility of officers in, 8—9; salaries of teachers, 27; scout movement in schools, 36, 45; spinning, 36, 45, 117; spirit of nationalism, 45; staff not efficient, 13, 23; tax on motor vehicles, 52; treatment of prostitutes, 14, 17, 18; use of *khaddar*, 45; vernacular replaced by 'Hindustani', 40
——— Municipal Gazette, 72 fn
——— Municipal Programme, 64—65
——— Municipal Taxation, 66—69
——— Municipalities Act, 38, 41, 65
All India Congress Committee, 80, 81 & fn, 82, 85, 86, 88—90, 96, 97, 99—102, 104—108, 110 ff, 290, 322, 324
———, General Secretary, 80 ff
———, session at Ahmedabad, 100, 105 & fn, 199
———, at Bombay, 199
All India Khaddar Board, 102, 118—122
——— Trade Union Congress, 257 & fn
——— Volunteers Organization, 87
All Russia Congress of Soviets, 393, 425
All Union Congress (Soviet Russia), 396, 442
Alwar, 126 & fn; atrocities at, 126 & fn
America, 10, 11, 23, 67, 277, 290, 301, 364, 365; opium traffic, agitation against, 164; urban land tax fn, 67
American Civil Liberties Union, 276 & fn
——— imperialism, 281
Amethi, 169, 170
Amna (daughter of Maulana Mohamad Ali), 144
Amritsar, 33, 106, 139, 141—149, 151, 152, 157, 162, 204, 265, 273; shooting at, 272
Amsterdam, 303, 314, 315, 316, 321, 324
Andrews, C. F., 164, 166—168, 251, 276
Angell, Sir Norman, 401 & fn
Anglo-French Naval Pact, 380
Anglo Indian and Domiciled European Association, 12 fn
Anglo Japanese Alliance, 343
Anglo Saxon bloc, 281
Annam, 279, 354, 361
Annecy, 329
Ansari, Dr. M.A., 81 fn, 140, 152 & fn, 156 fn, 195, 229, 233, 234, 300; amazing statement, 331 & fn; resigns from Khilafat Committee, 241 & fn; Jawaharlal operated upon by, 239, Report on National Pact sent, 107, 198—199
Arabia, 275, 353
Arcos raid, 352 & fn
Armenia, 396
Aryas, 181
Arya Samaj, 126 fn, 173
Asoka, 261
Asian African Conference (1955), 256 fn
Assam Sahitya Sabha, 167 fn
Atlantic Ocean, 365 fn, 366
Australia, 355, 356
Austria, 239, 250
Awakening in India, The, 293 fn
Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam, 191 fn, 197, 205 fn
Azerbaijan, 396, 447

Babar Akalis, (see Akalis)
Badruzzaman, Shaikh, 169 & fn
Bajaj, Seth Jamnalal, 109 fn
Baldwin, Roger, 276 & fn, 277, 316, 317
———, Stanley, 386 & fn
Balliol College (Oxford), 400 & fn
Baltic Sea, 383
Banaras (Benares) (see Varanasi)
Bande Mataram, 99, 146 fn, 166

Bandung Conference (1955), 256 fn
Banker, Shankarlal, 106, 151
Baptista, Joseph, 257 & fn
Barabanki, 167 fn
Barbusse, Henri, 112 & fn, 116, 125, 279
Barkatullah, Moulvi, 234 & fn, 235
Bashkir, 396, 429
Basu, R.N., 17, 71
Battersea, North, 288 fn
Beawar, 119
Bebee (see Shrimati Padmaja Naidu)
Beckett, John, 279 & fn, 285
Begerhotta, Janki P, 127
Belgaum, 77, 110, 131, 253, 343
Belgium, 316, 326
Bengal North-Western Railway, 6, 34, 35
Bengal Ordinance, 221 & fn, 223, 296
Bengal, partition of, 209; Regulations, 269
Berlin, 250, 256, 321, 329, 364, 384, 386, 387
Besant, Dr. Annie, 305, 306
Bhowla, 261
Bhagat, G L., 161 & fn
Bhargava, Chandulal, 129 & fn
Birkenhead, Earl of, 311 & fn
Bismarck, 403 fn
Blanqui, Louis Auguste, 391 & fn, 400
Bleriot, Louis, 364
Bogdornoff, 400
Bolsheviks, 366, 384 fn, 385, 389 & fn, 392, 398, 401, 402, 406 fn, 409, 423, 424, 427, 428, 437
Bolshevist atrocities, 385
Bolshevist Russia, 409
Bolshevik Theory, The, 401
Bolshoi Theatre, 372
Bombay, 50, 74, 81, 91, 92, 99, 132 & fn, 133, 137, 146, 148, 151, 216, 229
——— Provincial Congress Committee, 132 & fn, 133, 134
Bombay Chronicle, The, 107
Bonaparte, Napoleon, 403 fn
Bonar Law, Andrew, 302 fn
Bond Street (London), 388
Brailsford, H N., 411 & fn
Brehitter, 224
Brest Litovsk Peace Conference, 401 fn
Briand, Aristide, 386 & fn
Bridgeman, Reginald, 259 & fn, 279, 285, 316, 318
Brij Narain, Professor, 346 & fn
Brindisi, 230, 233
Britain, afraid of Russia, 343; and Chinese Revolution, 292; destroyed textile trade of India, 269, 335; policy of extortion, 262, 334; suppressed Indian industries, 273; paralyzed internal trade, 335
British, came as freebooters, 262
——— Commonwealth, 267, 270, 310, 354, 356, 357, 361
——— Empire, an instrument of evil, 208
——— goods, boycott of, 132, 133, 264
——— government, does not want minority problem to be solved, 427; emasculated India, 209, 265, impoverished her, 238, made Indians cowards, 209, protected foreign goods, 269
——— Union of Fascists, 379 fn
Brockway, Fenner (Lord), 279 & fn, 285, 330, 331
Brussels, 251, 277, 279 fn, 280, 283, 294
——— Congress, 251, 256—258, 272, 278, 279 fn, 280, 281, 283, 287, 289, 297 ff
Budapest, 15
Bukharin, N I., 374 & fn, 400, 445
Bulletin of Indian Information, The, 112, 116, 125
Burdwan, Maharaja of, 268 fn
Buriot — Mongolia, 396
Burma, 275, 332, 343, 353, 362
Burhanpore, 252

Caillaux, Joseph, 352 & fn
Cairo, 299
Calcutta, 74, 87, 118, 183 fn, 225, 294, rioting at, 233; Working Committee, session at, 118, 124, Corporation, 75
Cambridge, 102 fn, 203 fn, 213, 364, 410 fn
Canada, 163 fn, 355, 356
Canton, 251, 278, 282, 294, 295, 302, 305
Capital, The, 400
Cawnpore (see Kanpur)
Cecil, Lord Robert, 356 & fn
Central Legislative Assembly (India), 212 fn, 256 fn, 277 fn

Central Peasants Home (Russia), 412
——— Sikh League, 152 fn
Ceylon, 166, 167, 261
Chamba, 224, 225
Chamberlain, Sir Austen, 302 & *fn*, 369 & fn, 386
Chang Chung Chang, 302
Chapra, 226, 241
Chaturvedi, B.D., 90 fn
Cheka executions, 383
Chiang kai Shek, 286 fn
Chicherin, G.V., 374 & fn
China, 272, 275, 278, 301, 353, 361, 412, 449
———, boycott of foreign goods, 288
Chinese delegation, 296, 303, 327
——— National Peoples' Party, 278 fn
——— *Question*, 293, 302
Choupathy, Chowpatty (Bombay), 151
Christiania (Oslo), 15
Christian Tract and Book Society, 13
Chungessor, 365
Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee, 156 & fn, 157
Cocanada (see Kakinada)
Coley, 365
Cologne, 329, 331
Colombo, 375,
Comintern (see Third International)
Comate Pro-Hindou, 112
Commonwealth of India Bill, 303
Commonwealth of Nations, 207
Communism, 401
Communist manifesto, 391
Comsomol (Komsomol), 431 & fn, 440
Congress against Imperialism, see International Congress against Imperialism)
Congress, (see Indian National Congress)
Coolidge, Calvin, 318, 353
Council, boycott of, 81 & fn
——— of Nationalities (Soviet Union), 396
——— of State (India), 221—223
——— of Peoples' Commissars (Russia), 389
Cow Conference, 253 & fn
Crawling order, 265
Crimea, 396
Criminal Law Amendment Act, 84
Cuba, 353
Curzon, first Marquis, 268
Czechoslovakia, 422

Dacca, 334, 335
Dagestan, 396
Daily Herald, The, 279 fn, 401 fn
Daily News and the Nation, 411 fn
Dalhousie, 224
Damocles, sword of, 216
Darbhanga Castle (Allahabad), 68
Das, Dr. Bhagawan, 203 fn
———, Chitta Ranjan, 20, 304 fn, death of, 225
———, Babu Damodar, 17, 18
———, Dr. Tarak Nath, 98 & *fn*, 165
Davies, Stephen Owen, 272 *fn*, 279, 285
Davos, 245, 252
De L'Esprit des Lois, 9 fn
Delhi, 31, 35, 77, 107, 109, 183 & fn, 187, 219 fn, 233 fn, 234 fn, 235 255 fn, 299
——— Conference, 184 & fn
Denikin, 360
Denmark, 443
Desai, Mahadeva, 105, 311
Desh Bhagat, 152 fn
Deshpande, G.B., 102 & *fn*
Disarmament Conference, 363 & fn
Diwan i Ghalib, 234
Doaba, 138; oppression in, 138 fn, 139
Dobb, Maurice Herbert, 410 & *fn*
Dominion Status, 269, 306, 308 fn, 348, 357
Don Juan, 446
Dube, Major Ram Prasad, 223 & *fn*
Dutch East Indies, 279
Duchne, Madame, 330
Duma, 407 & fn
Dyer, General, 265

East Africa, 99
East India Company, 238 fn, 262—263, 335
East Indian Railway, 6, 34
Economic Theory of the Leisure Class, 400
Egypt, 272, 275, 279, 290, 301, 327 353, 361
Egyptian National Party, 299

Einstein, Albert, 280, 286
Empire Day, 46, 62
Empire goods, boycott of, 132—135
Encyclopaedia Britannica, 383
Engels, Frederich, 391 & *fn*, 400
England, 62, 83, 99, 247, 299, 363, 449; general strike in, 247, 292
———, Officers Training Corps, 83
———, Territorial Army, 83
Essad Toad Bey, 233 fn
Ethics of Opium, The, 165
Ethiopia, 275, 353
Europe, 332 fn

Family Herald, The, 391 fn
Ferri, Enrico, 418 & *fn*
Ferozepur, 146 fn, 148 fn
Fimmen, Edo, 284, 316, 320—321
Fire, 112 fn
First International, 398 & fn
Fleet Street (London), 383
Forward, The, 256, 304 & fn
Franco-Prussian War, 391 fn
French Revolution, 349, 360—361, 401
Fullop-Miller, Rene, 403 & fn, 409

Gandhi, Devadas, 215, 253, 311
———, Shrimati Indira, 231—232, 236, 241, 243, 246, 312, 376
———, M.K. (Mahatma), 46, 62, 63, 76 & fn, 87, 95, 98, 99 fn, 108, 110 fn, 139, 144—147, 151, 153—154, 163, 169—170, 184, 191, 206, 226 230 fn, 232 fn, 271, 280, 311, 325, at Gauhati, 308 fn; champion of cottage industries, 342, household word in Europe and America, 352, imprisonment of, 33, 214, nationalism based on internationalism, 271; noblest in the land, 33, noncooperation movement, inauguration of, 208, on history of noncooperation movement, 154, 156, 158, on National Pact, 199, operated upon, 215 fn; President, Cow Conference, 253 fn; receives report of riots, 186, 196, resolves to fast, 183 & fn, 184, Sikh League encouraged, 204 fn; violence preferable to cowardice, 209, widely known and respected, 265
Gandhi & Anarchy, 167 fn
Gandhi Day, 46
Gandhi purse, 95—96
Ganges, 39
Ganesh, 172, 178
Geneva, 230, 232—233, 354—355 fn
Genius & Character, 403,
Georgia, 275, 362, 372, 396, 423
Ghalib, Asadullah Khan, 234 fn
Ghazi Miian, 174 & fn
Gibarti, Louis, 256 & fn, 257, 286, 321
Gidwani, A.T., 130, 136, 138—140, 145, 149—150, 156, 160, 163, 251
Gilbert, J.E., 27 & fn
Gland, 329
Glasgow, 15
Goethe, 403
Gokhale, Gopal Krishna, 259
Gorakhpur, 146, 197; provincial conference, 197 & fn, 198, Swaraj resolution, 197
Gorki, Maxim, 404 & *fn*, 405, 434
Gour, Pandit Ram Das, 76 & fn
Goswami, Tulsi Charan, 304 & *fn*
Grand Hotel de Moscow, 385
Grand National Consolidated Trade Union, 391 & fn
Great Illusion, The, 401 fn
Greece, 356
Gujarat, 95—97, 100 fn, 105
Gulbarga, 183 fn
Gupta, Shiv Prasad, 204, 375
Gwalior, Maharani Chinkoo of, 225

Hafizuddin, 194
Hafizur Ramadan Bey, 299 & fn, 300
Hamdam, 140
Hankau, 294, 316
Hanuman, 172, 178
Hardie, Keir, 256 fn
Hardikar, Dr. N.S., 91 & *fn* 100—101, 108, 110—111 & fn, 247, 326
Hartnch, Miss, 232
Hayat, Hasan Mohammad, 223 & fn
Hector, 86
Hedjas, 233 fn
Hindi, 76 fn, 87
Hindu, The, 256 fn, 379—380
Hindus, 89
Hindu Mahasabha, 126 fn, 191 fn, 233 fn

Hindu Muslim quarrels, 114, 170, 173, 183, 195, 235, 298
Hindustan, 106, 161
Hindustan Hamara, 28
Hindustani Seva Dal, 91 & fn, 100—101, 111, 130, 247, 249, 304, 326—327, 367
Historic Materialism, 400
Hongkong, 288
Hoshiarpur, 138 fn
House of Commons, 313
How the Soviets Work, 411
Hubli, 111 fn
Hungary, 356
Hunter Committee Report, 157 & fn
Husain, Mazhar, 12 & fn
———, Vilayat, 188
———, Dr. Zakir, 234 fn
Hussain, Moulvi Mubarak, 1 & fn
Hyderabad, 226, 255 fn

Imperial Bank of India, 123
Imperial Conference, 267, 268 fn
Imperialism—The Last Stage of Capitalism, 400
Imperial Preference, 341
In Defence of Terrorism, 401
Independent Labour Party, 256 & fn, 257, 279 fn, 293, 305, 331
India, 352
India, cannot remain cut off from the rest of the world, 352, covets no territory, 359; fundamental unity always existed, 261; no quarrel with Russia; progress opposed by Britain and wealth spent on army, 238
India in Bondage, 164 fn
India Conciliation Group, 168 fn
India in World Politics, 98
Indian Annual Register, The, 157 & fn
Indian Mutiny or War of Independence, 263—265, 273
Indian National Congress, 1, 3, 4, 35, 45, 63, 82, 84, 86—90, 92, 115, 239, 251, 255 fn, 264, 270—272, 275, 278—279, 282, 319 ff
———, British Committee wound up, 352 & fn
———, sessions at, Ahmedabad, 157, Belgaum, 77, 102 fn, 110 & fn, 168, 253 fn; Calcutta, 157; Calcutta (special), 207; Delhi, 205 & fn, 206, 212; Gauhati, 254, 258, 277 fn, 278; Gaya, 81 fn, 157; Kakinada, 87, 89 fn, 101, 121, 126, 134, 157, 224; Kanpur, 277; Madras, 451; Nagpur, 157, 352 & fn
———, Working Committee, 86—88, 91
Indian National Pact, 152 & fn
——— National Service, 101—104
——— States, 238
——— troops sent as mercenaries, 258, 275
Indians, in other countries, 362; should take to flying, 367
Indo-German Turkish Mission, 234 fn
Indonesia, 280, 290, 361
Indore, 223 fn
Indu (see Shrimati Indira Gandhi)
International Congress against Imperialism, 256 fn, 278, 410
——— Congress of Oppressed Nations, 270, 272, 276
——— Labour Conference, 223
——— Labour Organisation, 257 fn
——— League for Peace and Freedom, 98 fn
International League for Women, 332 fn
——— Organisation of Labour, 282
——— *Settlement at Shanghai*, 323
——— Transport Workers, 284, 321
——— Women's Congress, 98
Iqbal, Sir Mohammad, 28 & *fn*
Iran, 449 fn
Iraq, 300
Irish Volunteers, 84
Irwin, Baron (later Earl Halifax), 258
Irkutsk (Siberia), 429
Istanbul, 234 fn
Italy, 233
Iyengar, S Kasturi Ranga, 156 fn
———, A Rangaswami, 256 & *fn*, 257—258, 277, 298, 314, 324, 375
———, S. Srinivasa, 277 & *fn*, 295; statement about drafting a bill, 310
Iyer, V R. Krishna, 14 fn
Ivan the Great, 370 fn

Jabalpur, 183 fn
Jafri, Moulvi Kamaluddin, 1—2

Jaito, 31, 141, 143, firing at, 141 & fn, 148; enquiry, 141, 148, 150; report, 150, 154; tragedy, 143
Jallianwala Bagh, 161 & fn, 162, trust formed for, 161
Japan, 98 fn, 234 fn, 291, 361, 392 fn; competes in Indian market, 340; dissociates from England's action, 291; seeks China's gooodwill, 291
Jathedars, 124
Java, 280, enquiry, 330; shootings, 330
Jhabbal, Sardar Amar Singh, 152 & *fn*
Jinnah, M. A., 358 fn
Joseph, George, 115, 141—142; unable to go to Amritsar, 142—143, 145—146
Joshi, N.M., 257 & *fn*
Journal de Geneve, 236
Juhu, 156
Jullundur, 138 fn, 204

Kabul, 234 fn
Kakinada (Cocanada), 83, 87, 89 fn, 90 fn, 121, 144
Kalinin, M.I., 371 *fn*, 374, 385, 390
Kamptee, 184 fn
Kanpur, 127, 128, 130, 131, 234 fn
Karachi, 292
Karlgren, Anton, 409
Kautsky, Karl Johann, 400 & *fn*
Kellogg Briand Pact, 386 fn
Kenya, 212 fn, 214, 268, 362; decisions, 212 & fn, 214
Kerensky, A. F., 389 & *fn*, 393, 402
Khaddar Board, 102, 118—122
Khaliquzzaman, Chaudhri, 4, 169
Khan, Hakim Ajmal, 20, 156 fn, 300
Khan, Khan Bahadur Muhammed Abdul Baqi, 12 & fn, 54
Khilafat, 1, 3, 84, 115, 265
——— Committee, 97, 241 & fn
——— Conference, 233 fn
——— delegation, 223 fn
——— funds, 115
——— movement, 115 fn
——— programme, 3
Khwaja, Abdul Majid, 219 & fn
Kitchlew, Dr. Saifuddin, 102 & *fn*, 152—154, 157, 158
Knox, K.N., 2
Kohat, 183 fn
Kollontay, Madame, A.M., 442 & *fn*
Kolomitsev, I.O., 449 fn
Koltchak, 360
Komsomol (see Comsomol)
Korea, 279, 285, 290
Kremlin, 370, 374, 386 fn, 387, 390, 402 fn, 404, 434
Krupskaya, N.K., 374 & *fn*, 429, 431, 435, 440
Kumbh Mela (Allahabad), 25, 27, 39, 40
———, affray, 137
Kuo Meng yu, Professor, 302
Kuomintang, 257 & fn, 278, 285 fn, 286 fn, 295, 302, 303, 305, 317, 328

Labour Revolution, The, 400
Lahore, 115, 137, 225, 346 fn
Lajpat Rai, Lala, 98, 99, 136, 152 fn, 198, 255, 276
Lakhna Case, 247 & fn, 252
Lakshmi Insurance Company, 115 fn
Lakut, 396
Lancashire, 288, 335, 341
Lanchester, Mr., 55
Lansbury, George, 279 & *fn*, 285, 286, 313, 315, 316, 317, 318, 320, 329, 330
Lar Road (Deoria, U.P.), 217
Laski, Professor Harold Joseph, 167 fn, 401 & *fn*
Last Days of Petrograd, 389
Lausanne, 246
Lawrence, Sir John, statue of, 137 & fn
Leader, The, 31, 43 fn, 66, 76 fn, 140, 197
League against Imperialism, 258 fn, 276 fn, 279 fn, 288, 290, 291, 299 & fn, 314, 316, 326, 329, 331, 353, 367, 375, 376
League of Nations, 164 & fn, 267, 287, 355, 356, 363 fn, 386 fn, 449, 450 & fn
League against Oppression, 257
Lenin, 403 fn
Lenin, 210 & *fn*, 370, 384, 385, 393, 393 fn, 398, 400—409, 414, 417, 429, 431, 433—435, 437 & fn, 440, 441, 445—448, believes terrorism not the right way, 404, 405; childish to reject compromise, 406; coldest of fanatics, 404, 406, dictator even in

death, 404; death of, 403, 404, 415 fn; destroyer of party, 406, genius of opportunism, 406, 414; god of Russians today, 370, greatest man of action, 408; patched up unity, no believer in, 406, rural electrification, his pet project, 405 & fn; victory of, 389, 403
———, *mausoleum of*, 374, 387
———, peace prize, 102 fn
Lenin & Gandhi, 403
Leningrad, 382 fn, 413, 428, 429 & fn 435, 436
Les troubles de Tlade, 236
Leyun, 245
Liau, H., 4, 285 & fn, 286, 316, 317, 321
Liege, 324
Lievens, Roger, 324
Ligue pour la Defence de la Race Negre, 286 fn
Lindbergh, Charles Augustus, 365 & *fn*, 366
Lindsay, A.D. (later Lord Lindsay of Birker), 400 & *fn*
Lin Tse-hsu, 165 fn
Living Age, The, 226
Locarno Pact, 386 fn, 450
London, 223 fn, 305, 387
Lucknow, 51, 58, 140, 169 & fn, 170, 183 fn, 226, 234 fn, 250 fn
———, municipality, 4
———, riots in, 163 & fn
Ludwig, Emil, 403 & *fn*
Lunacharsky, A.V., 406 & *fn*, 434, 445
Lvov, Prince (Russia), 389 fn

MacDonald, Ramsay, 293 & *fn*, 311
Machine Wreckers, The, 312
Madras, 145—147, 277, 299
Mahmud, Dr. Syed, 187, 218, 224, 226, 229, 232, 235, 240, 241, 253, 254, 313, 328, 368
Malaviya, Kapil Deva, 71
———, Krishna Kant, 16, 216
———, Madan Mohan, 122, 137 fn, 161 & fn, 162, 193, 216
———, Rama Kant, 216
Malaya, 166, 167
Malaya Nikitskaya (Russia), 412
Malkhachak, 226
Manchester Guardian, The, 401 & fn, 411 fn
Mann, Dr. H.H., 345 & *fn*, 346
Marcus, Valerin, 403 fn
Mardy Jones, Thomas Isaac, 331 & *fn*
Martial Law, 123; Enquiry Committee, 156
Marx, Karl, 291, 370, 387, 391 & fn, 400
Marx and Modern Socialism, 400
Mazhar El Bakri, 300
Mayo, Katherine, 351 & fn
McManus, 279 & fn
Mediterranean Sea, 230
Menilmontant, 391 fn
Mensheviks, 406 fn
Mesopotamia, 275, 285, 313, 327, 353, 354
Mexico, 251, 279, 282, 300, 315, 318, 401 fn
Mind and Face of Bolshevism, 409
Minto-Morley Reforms, 339
Misra, Gauri Shankar, 115
———, Harkaran Nath, 4
Mitra, H.N., 157 fn
Mohani, Maulana Hasrat, 129, 212, 243
Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, 265, 339
Montana, 245, 312, 313
Montesquieu, 9
Montreux, 312, 314
Moonje, B.S., Dr. 191 & *fn*
Moradabad, 169 fn, 170—174, 182
Morley, Lord, 339
Morocco, 279
Moscow, 352, 369, 370 fn, 372, 381, 382, 384—387, 390, 399 & fn, 404, 405, 413, 416, 420, 423, 428, 429 fn, 434, 435, 440, 446
Mother India, 351
Moti Chand, Raja, 220 & fn, 222
Muddiman, Sir Alexander, 221 fn
Muhammad Akbar, 18
Mukherji, N.K., 13, 26, 54
Murshidabad, 334
Muslim League, 241 & fn, 255 & fn
Mussolini, Benito, 210 & *fn*, 302
Must Britain follow the Moscow Road, 401
My Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution, 401
Mysore, 100

Nabha, 31, 35 & fn, 44, 204, administration of, 204, jails at, 31, 203; Maharaja

of, deposed, 141 fn
Nagpur, 84, 85, 153 fn, 154 & fn, triumph at, 84, national honour vindicated, 85
Naidu, Shrimati Padmaja, 226 & fn, 230
———, Shrimati Sarojini, 90 fn, 99, 115, 226 fn, 251
Nainital, 26
Nair, Sir C. Sankaran, 167 fn
Nanking, 316, 317; incidents at, 317 & fn, 323
Nan (see Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit)
Nangah, 217
Nappoo, Velu Lakhamu, 132 & fn
Nation, 382
National Botanical Gardens, 250 fn
——— Education Board, 102
——— Pact, 107, 152, 198, Committee for, 152
Naval Disarmament Conference, 355 & fn
Navayuga, 115
Naval Committee, 12
Neemuchana (Alwar), 126 fn
Nehru, Jawaharlal, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 16, 18, 20 ff, accepts socialist theory of State, 287; address at Brussels Congress, 272; against display of emotions, 229, against plural constituencies, 10, apologises for misleading the Board, 53 & fn, 54, arrested at Jaito, 31; averse to chit system, 7; believes in khaddar, 255, celebrates father's birthday, 220, Chairman, due to pressure from comrades, 2, 4, 31; changes in Indian States to be brought about by negotiation, 309, comments on Nabha arrest, 163, confined to bed, 21, 35 & fn; courts arrest at Sangam, 137 fn, 216; demands adult franchise, 309; desires name to be spelt correctly, 99; disinclined to be chosen President of Congress 325 & fn; dislikes appeals to government for aid, 24, drafts first official report, 11 fn; expert on Russia, 381; fascinated by Madame Sun Yat Sen, 374, fitness, criterion for jobs, 47; flies from London to Paris and Ostend, 365, freedom is our right 210; goes to London after 14 years, 243; had an operation, 219 & fn; introduced to Romain Rolland, 250 & fn; in Germany, 250; keeps extensive correspondence, 254, neither likes sending nor receiving post cards, 328, may be in jail before long, 91, 216, member, Officers Training Corps, 83, mentality is revolutionary, work, not unmixed joy, 45; non-266; no progress in Friends, 241; no one should be above discipline, 54; on Riga correspondents, 382, 383; opposes time reception to Viceroy, 33, pestered for jobs, 7; pleased at the formation of National Party, 252; president, volunteer corps, 83; presides over a session at Brussels Congress, 254, principles, not personalities should get votes, 222, 223, prouder to be secretary of U.P.P.C.C., 4; refuses to tolerate interference, and dislikes slackness in work, 20, 37; reports religion has broken our backs, 242; on Hindu-Muslim riots, 169—193; resigns chairmanship of A.M.B. and U.P.C.C. secretaryship, 77, 82; sails for Europe, 227; tame constitutional activity, not interested in, 259; views on civic addresses, 20, weak after fever, 203, 204 fn; will fight and hit hard, 5; working secretary of the Congress, 89 & fn
Nehru, Shrimati Kamala, 226, 229, 230, 235, 236, 241, 243, 244—246, 252—255, 311, 314, 328, 370, 375
———, Krishna (Shrimati Krishna Hutheesing), 220, 233, 243, 312, 375
———, Motilal, 123, 156 fn, 161, 162, 191 & fn, 197, 247 fn, 256 fn, 297 fn, 358 fn
———, Shamlal, 36 fn
———, Shrimati Uma, 36 fn
Newbold, Ellen La Motte, 165 & fn
New Economic Policy (Soviet Russia), 414, 433
New Leader, The, 411 fn
New Schools of New Russia, 427
New York, 10, 67, 68, 352, 365, 382, 411, 427
Nicaragua, 300 & fn, 315, 318
Nicholas II (Russia), 389 fn, 407 fn
Niegeroloje (Russia), 384, 385
Nizami, Khwaja Hasan, 255 & fn

Nobel prize for literature, 230 fn, 401 fn
——— for peace, 386 fn
Nobles' Hall (Tsarist Russia), 390
No-changers, 81 fn, 205
North Africa, 279, 281, 301
North-West Frontier, 363

October Revolution, 374 fn, 402, 415 fn, 425, 428
Octobrists, 431 & fn
Octroi, 11 & fn, 12, 22 & fn, 29, 43, 44, 78
O'Dwyer — Nair Trial, 167 & fn
O'Dwyer, Sir Michael, 167 fn
Official Indian Census Report (1911), 345
Official Famine Committee (1880), 345
On Education, 242, 254
Opera House (Russia), 372, 388
Opium Conference, 164 fn
——— enquiry, 164
——— Limitation Act, 165
——— Traffic, 164—168
Oriental University (Moscow), 434
Oudh & Rohilkhand Railway, 6, 34
Oudh Taluqdari Law, 224
Owen, Robert, 391 & *fn*
Oxford, 146

Pact, Anglo—French Naval, 360
Palace of Motherhood (Russia), 446
Pande, Lallu, 173
Pandit, R.S., 244, 246
———, Shrimati Vijayalakshmi, 220, 230, 244, 246, 369
Panikkar, K.M., 144—146, 149, 150, 152, 153, 155—158, 160, 161 & fn; accepts editorship of *Hindustan*, 106, 160; decides to go to Amritsar, 145—147; editor, *Swarajya*, 145, 146; long stay not possible, 106; will visit Gidwani in jail, 160; undertakes to write history of noncooperation movement, 154, 156
Pan Islamic block, 361
Pan Pacific Conference, 322
Paris, 233, 247 & fn, 314, 329, 383, 386, 387, 389 fn, 391
Pasha, Zaghlul, 300 & fn
Passenger Tax, 5 & fn, 6, 34 & fn, 38
Patel, Vithalbhai, 156 fn
Patna, 126
Pax Britannica, 269
Peasants' Congress, 437
Peasants' Gazette, 432
Peking, 449 fn
Pere Lachaise (Paris), 391
Persia, 279, 285, 290, 361
Persian Gulf, 275, 353
Peshawar, 292
Peter, the Great, 382 fn
Petit, Jehangir, B., 123
Petrograd, 382, 428
Pioneers, 431 & fn
Phookan, Tarun Ram, 167 & *fn*
Place de la Nation, 391 fn
Place de la Revolution (Moscow), 385
Plassey, battle of, 332
Poincare, Raymond, 317 & *fn*, 352
Poland, 371, 384
Pollitt, Harry, 279 & *fn*, 285, 313
Poona, 215 fn, 345 fn
Population of India, The, 346 & fn
Postgate, Raymond William, 401 & *fn*
Pottier, Eugene, 386 fn
Pravda, 374 fn
Priam, 86
Price, Phillips, 401 & *fn*
Privy Council, 247 fn
Pro-changers, 205
Prussia, 365 fn
Public Education & Democracy, 435
Punjab, atrocities in, 157 & fn; relief funds, 122
Purdah, 87

Qureshi, Shuaib, 251

Rafiq ul Fatima, Begum, 235 fn
Rahman, Abdur, 234 & *fn*
Rajagopalachari, C., 142 & fn 156 fn
Rajasthan States Peoples' Conference, 217
Ram Krishna, 193
Rangoon, 96
Ranjit (see Pandit, R.S.)
Rapallo, treaty of, 374 fn
Rau, Raja, 90 & fn, 113, 324, 367
Reading, first Marquis, 33, 46, 269
Red Army, 422, 433

Red Square, 386 & fn, 387, 404
Regulation of 1818, 214
Reforms Committee, 221
Reichstag, 441 fn
Reminiscences of Lenin, 441 fn
Reed, John, 402
Review of Nations, 259 fn
Riga, 382, 383
Robbie, C.T., 12 & fn
Rolland, Romain, 230 & *fn*, 231, 232 & fn, 246, 280, 256, 408, 434
Round Table Conference, 257 fn
Rome, 15
Rowlatt Bills, 265
Royal Commission on Opium, 168 fn
Rue de Rivoli (Paris), 368
Russell, Bertrand, 242, 254, 409
Russian Economic Development since the Revolution, 410
Russian Experiment, The, 399
Russian Revolution, 403, 408, 410
Rykoff (Rykov), A.I., 415 & *fn*, 426, 427
Russo-Japanese War, 436

Sabarmati, 102, 105, 229
Sahai, Raghupati, 112, 128, 129
Saklatvala, Shapurji, 288 & *fn*, 331, 355
Salter, F.R., 400
Sambhal, 169 & fn, 170—175, 179, 180
———, Saras Tarun, 174, 175
Sampurnanand, Dr., 143 & *fn*, 203
Sangam (Allahabad), 25, 39, 44, 225
Sangathan movement, 173, 233 fn
Santanam, Pandit K., 115 & *fn*, 123, 139, 140, 151
Santos—Dumont, Alberto, 364 & fn
Sapru, Tej Bahadur, 221
Sarda, Chand Karan, 126 & *fn*
Sarup (see Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit)
Sassoon Hospital (Poona), 215 fn
Satyagraha, 44, 89
Saxena, Garwar Sahai, 12 & fn
Schadowstrasse (Berlin), 257
Scotland Yard (London), 247
Scurr, John, 330 & *fn*
Second International, 282 & fn, 283, 301, 400 fn
Senghor, Lamine, 286 & fn, 321; arrested, 317
Servants of India Society, 167, 257 fn, 259
Sethi, Arjunlal, 129 & *fn*
Seva Dal, 106, 111, 131
Seva Samiti, 123, 126 fn
Shah, Professor K.T., 399 & *fn*
Shahidi Jatha, 140, 155
Shahjahanpur, 183 fn
Shanghai, 302, 316, 323, 354
Shastri, S. Srinivasa, 212
Shepherd, 391 fn,
Sherwood, Miss F, 167
Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, 138, 139, 141, 148, 153, an illegal organisation, 155; new elections to, 157
Shore, Frederick John, 238 & *fn*
Short Course of Economic Science, 400
Shraddhanand, Swami, 126 fn
Shuddhi movement, 126 fn, 173
Shukla, Karam Chand, 146 & *fn*, 148, 161 *fn*
Siberia, 372, 403 fn, 408, 429, 436, 443
Sikh League, 204 & fn
Silesia, 307 & fn, plebiscite in, 307 & fn
Simon Commission (Statutory Commission), 296 & fn
Singapore, 343, 363
Singh, Major D.R. Ranjit, 56 fn
———, Sardar Mangal, 124 & *fn*, 136, 151
———, Thakur Parmatma Nand, 44
Sinha, Tarini Prasad, 256 & fn
Sinn Fein, 266
Sleen Committee, 358 & fn
Smith, James, 391 & *fn*
Sobhani, Umar, 132—135
Socialist Review, The, 423
Society for Cultural Relations, 384
Solhta, Manzar Ali, 184, 195, 216
Soparwala, C.H., 100 & *fn*, 107
South Africa, 90 & fn, 99, 234 fn, 268, 279, 301, 355, 410
———, Trade Union Congress of, 281
South African Indian Congress, 251
South Wales Miners' Federation, 272 fn, 279, 285
Soviet Russia, 41, 281, 282, 283, 291, 359, 362, 379, 381, 382, 385, 387, 388, 399, 405, 418, 425, 441, 443, 448, 450

Soviet Russia Today, 410
Spain, 356
Spahlinger, Dr. Henry, 244 & fn, 245
Spirit of St. Louis, 365 fn
Sprawson, C.A., 252 & fn
Sri Prakasa, 203 & fn,
Stalin, Joseph, 374 fn, 397 & fn, 401 fn, 414, 415
Statutory Commission (See Simon Commission)
Stephani, Dr. Jacques, 245 & fn
St. Petersburg, 352 fn
Stresemann, Gustav, 366 fn
Suez Canal, 343
Sunderland, Rev. JT., 164 & fn; sends open letter to Gandhi, 164, 165
Sun Yat Sen, 278 fn, 286 fn
———, Madame, 286 & fn, 302, 328, 374, 440
Sun Yat Sen University, 434 & fn
Supreme Economic Council (Soviet Russia), 398
Swadesamitran, 256 fn
Swarajists, 81 fn
Swaraja, 4, 5, 68, 145—147
Switzerland, 233, 329, 407
Syria, 275, 279, 281, 290, 301

Tamm, Prem Kishan, 32 & fn
Tandon, P.D., 1, 2, 4, 17, 184, 189, 216; tours riot affected areas, 189, 195; would not stand for Chairmanship, 1, 2
Tanpie, 256 fn
Tartar, 396, 429
Tartarstan, 426
Tata, Jamshedji, 288 fn, 340
Ten Days that Shook the World, 402
Theory and Practice of Socialism, 409
Thiers, Louis Adolphe, 391 & fn
Third International, 282 & fn, 283, 301, 383
Thiyyas, 218
Tiflis, 423
Tilak, Lokmanya, 264; sent to jail for long periods, 264
Tilak Day, 46
Tilak Swarajya Fund, 82, 96, 99, 100 fn, 133, 136, 218
Times, The, 167
Toller, Ernst, 279 & fn, 312
Trade Union Congress (India), 251
Trafalgar Square (London), 293
Transcaucasia, 395, 396
Travancore, 100
Tribune, 411
Tribune, The, 62 fn
Trieste, 244, 246
Trotsky, Leon, 374 fn, 398, 401 & fn, 406, 408, 414
Tsars, 355, 359, 430
Turkey, 265, 361, 362, 443
Turkestan, 447
Turkmenistan, 395

Ukraine, 372, 395, 413
United Church of North India, 13
United Provinces, 78, 81, 97, 115, 143; government of, 19 fn, 34 & fn, 74 fn, 76 fn; Jail Manual, 417 fn; municipal conference, 76 fn; municipalities Act (1916), 17; provincial Congress Committee, 4, 81, 82, 90, 97, 203 fn, Legislative Council, 20, 74 fn, 78
United States of America, 98 & fn, 164 fn, 234 fn, 276, 277, 279 & fn, 251, 292, 355, 366, 443
Unity Conference (Delhi), 184 fn, 199
University Training Corps, 131
Unset Sigrid, 226
Utley, Miss Freda, 423
Uzbekistan, 395, 426

Vaid, Durga Das, 145 & fn
Vaikom, 218 & fn; Satyagraha at, 218
Valerio, Marcus, 403 fn
Varanasi, 136, 204 & fn, 375
Venice, 230, 311, 332
Versailles, treaty of, 367
Villars, 246
Villeneuve, 232 fn, 246
Virgin Mary, Chapel (Moscow), 370 & fn, 387
Volga, Republic of, 396
Volunteer, The, 83 fn, 110, 111 fn, 130 fn, 247, 305
Volunteers' Conference (Belgaum), 111, (Cawnpore), 130; (Kakinada), 83, 85
Vyas, Braj Mohan, 31 & fn

Wafd Party, 300 fn
Wang Tien Way, 303
Warsaw, 352, 354
Washington, 98 & fn
Where is Britain Going?, 401
Whitehall (England), 352
White Russia, 395
Wilkinson, Ellen, 279 & *fn*, 285
William II, Kaiser, 365 & *fn*
Wilson, A.C., 368 & *fn*
Wilson, Woodrow, 379, his fourteen points, 379, 380
———, Dr. Lucy L.W., 327
Women's League for Peace and Freedom, 330
Wright, Orville, 364 *fn*
———, Wilbur, 364 & *fn*

Yakutsk, 447
Young India, The, 126, 233, 311, 379, 380
Yusuf, Nawab Muhammad, 74 & fn.
Young People's League, 394, 395

Zaghlul Pasha, (See Pasha, Zaghlul)
Zahur Ahmed, (See Ahmed, Zahur)
Zeppelin, Ferdinand Graf von, 364 & *fn*, 365
Zetkin, Clara, 441 & *fn*, 445

Selected
works of
Jawaharlal
Nehru

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Volume Three

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FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling—these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of the East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in

civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles, both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the "third world" as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.

Indira Gandhi

New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

EDITORIAL NOTE

The third volume of the Selected Works takes up the story in December 1927, when Jawaharlal Nehru returned to India after a stay of nearly two years in Europe. The impact of this visit can be seen in the new tone of radicalism and the clear understanding of international affairs which inspired his activities. At the Madras session of the Congress he secured the passage of a resolution preferring full Independence to Dominion Status; and in the following months he organized the Independence for India League to prevent any backsliding. At a broader level he sought to mobilise the youth of India and prepare them for the struggles that lay ahead, not only for political but also for economic and social freedom. Swaraj and socialism were joint objectives and Jawaharlal Nehru repeatedly stressed that India could not have the one without the other. He also emphasised the influence of world forces on Indian events, warned his countrymen of the dangers of war and all that it implied, and promoted in India the work of the League against Imperialism. The national ideal was a cooperative socialist commonwealth, and the international ideal a world federation of socialist states.

As the documents in this volume reveal, these multifold activities of Jawaharlal Nehru caused concern not only to the Government of India but also, occasionally, to Mahatma Gandhi and many of Jawaharlal Nehru's colleagues in the Congress. But, with astonishing energy and effort, Jawaharlal Nehru pressed ahead on many fronts. At the Calcutta session of the Congress in December 1928, it was primarily because of him that, while the Congress accepted the Nehru report, it decided to launch another campaign of noncooperation if this report were not accepted by the government within a year. Meantime the government launched its own offensive in the form of *lathi* charges, widespread arrests and repressive legislation. The result was that by the summer of 1929 events were heading, as Jawaharlal Nehru foresaw and relished, towards a direct confrontation between the government and the Congress.

The *Letters from a Father to his Daughter*, written by Jawaharlal Nehru from Mussoorie in the summer of 1928, have not been included in this volume as they are easily available in book form.

Much of the material included in this volume has been selected from the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru.

Acknowledgment is due to the U.P. Government and State Archives, the Maharashtra Government, the National Archives of India and the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya for permitting us to utilise material in their possession. *The Leader*, *The Hindu*, *The Bombay Chronicle*, *The Tribune*, *The Searchlight*, *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *The Hindustan Times* and the *Abhyudaya* have been good enough to allow us to reprint letters and texts of speeches and statements first published by them.

The cooperation extended by the Director and staff of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library is acknowledged.

CONTENTS

1. The Madras Congress and After

THE DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE

1	Statement to the Press	19 December	1927	1
2	To Mother	23 December	1927	2
3	Statement to the Press	22 December	1927	2
4	On the Resolution on Independence	25 December	1927	3
5	The Resolution on Independence	27 December	1927	5
6	Presidential Address at the First Session of the Republican Congress	28 December	1927	7
7	Speech at Allahabad	7 January	1928	8
8	To Mahatma Gandhi	11 January	1928	10
9	Statement to the Press	12 January	1928	16
10	On Mahatma Gandhi's Leadership	21 January	1928	17
11	To Mahatma Gandhi	23 January	1928	18
12	Statement on the Independence Resolution	27 January	1928	20
13	To B. Sambamurti	14 March	1928	23
14	To Swami Govindananda	19 March	1928	24

THE DANGER OF WAR

15	On the Danger of War	December	1927	25
16	To Chaudhri Raghubir Narain Singh	15 March	1928	30
17	To Secretaries, P.C.Cs Delhi and Punjab	15 March	1928	31
18	To Secretary, P.C.C., U.P.	March	1928	31
19	To Chaudhri Raghubir Narain Singh	31 March	1928	32
20	To Chaudhri Raghubir Narain Singh	11 June	1928	32

2. The Nehru Report

1	Circular to Political Organisations	18 January	1928	35
2	To Mahatma Gandhi	23 February	1928	36
3	Statement at All Parties Conference	8 March	1928	36
4	To Syed Mahmud	17 March	1928	37
5	To the Members of the Congress Working Committee	3 May	1928	38
6	To J. N. Gupta	9 May	1928	39
7	Interview to the Press	22 May	1928	40
8	The Ideal of Indian Freedom	24 May	1928	42
9	To S. S. Mirajkar	11 June	1928	43
10	To M. M. Banaji	11 June	1928	43
11	To Hosakoppa Krishna Rao	11 June	1928	44
12	To Saifuddin Kitchlew, Deva Ratan Sharma and Mangal Singh	11 June	1928	45
13	To Subhas Chandra Bose	27 June	1928	46
14	To K. T. Mathew	27 June	1928	47
15	Invitation to the meeting of the All Parties Committee	28 June	1928	48
16	To Mahatma Gandhi	30 June	1928	49
17	To Syed Mahmud	30 June	1928	50
18	Resolution on Reservation of Seats	7 July	1928	52
19	To Choithram P. Gidwani	6 August	1928	52
20	To Swami Krishnanand	6 August	1928	54
21	To the Secretary, All India Aryan League	21 August	1928	54
22	To Khaliquzzaman	21 August	1928	56
23	Speech at the All Parties Conference	29 August	1928	57
24	On the Results of the All Parties Conference	4 September	1928	61
25	To C. Vijiaraghavachariar	21 September	1928	62
26	To Muhammad Shafi	13 October	1928	62
27	On the Nehru Report and the Indian States	14 October	1928	63
28	To Balaki Ram	16 January	1929	64

3. The Independence for India League

1	Provisional Rules of the League	31 August	1928	67
2	To N. V. Gadgil	18 September	1928	68
3	To V. Chattopadhyaya	27 September	1928	69
4	To Kshitis Chandra Dutta	4 October	1928	71
5	To N. S. Hardikar	8 October	1928	71
6	Statement to the Press	2 November	1928	73
7	Circular on the Activities of the League	8 November	1928	74
8	Interview to the Press	16 November	1928	76

4. Boycott of the Simon Commission

1	Organization of the boycott	7 January	1928	81
2	Speech at Allahabad	10 January	1928	83
3	To S. Srinivasa Iyengar	17 January	1928	84
4	To the Editor, Swarajya	18 January	1928	86
5	Message to the citizens of Allahabad	19 January	1928	86
6	Statement to the Press	24 January	1928	87
7	To Kamta Prasad Kakkar	25 January	1928	88
8	On the observance of the Hartal	29 January	1928	88
9	To the Secretary, P.C.C. Maharashtra	2 February	1928	89
10	On the Success of the Hartal in Allahabad	3 February	1928	90
11	Speech at Allahabad	3 February	1928	92
12	To Syed Mahmud	4 February	1928	93
13	Interview to the Press	7 February	1928	94
14	On the Hartal in Allahabad	27 February	1928	95
15	Interview to the Press	4 April	1928	97
16	To Atul Krishna Ghose	9 June	1928	98
17	To Fenner Brockway	11 June	1928	100
18	Interview to the Press	2 November	1928	100

19	To the Editor, Sarhad	10 November	1928	101
20	To Mohanlal Saxena	14 November	1928	102
21	*Tribute to Lala Lajpat Rai*	21 November	1928	103
22	They have dared!	November	1928	104
23	To Mohanlal Saxena	1 December	1928	105
24	Statement to the Press	30 November	1928	106
25	Telegrams to R. Bridgeman and G. S. Dara	3 December	1928	108
26	Statement to the Press	1 December	1928	108
27	Statement on the lathi-charge at Lucknow	1 December	1928	115
28	To Dhirendra Mozumdar	5 December	1928	116
29	To V. Chattopadhyaya	5 December	1928	117
30	Statement to the Press	4 December	1928	119
31	To R. Bridgeman	5 December	1928	119
32	To Subhas Chandra Bose	6 December	1928	120
33	*To Mahatma Gandhi*	13 December	1928	121
34	Evidence in Desh Bhagat Case	9 August	1929	121

5. League Against Imperialism

1	To Roger Baldwin	13 March	1928	125
2	To Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi	15 March	1928	126
3	To Subhas Chandra Bose	15 March	1928	126
4	Circular to all Provincial Congress Committees	27 March	1928	127
5	To H. S. Liau	18 April	1928	128
6	To Edo Fimmen	7 May	1928	129
7	To Roger Baldwin	14 May	1928	130
8	To James Maxton	14 May	1928	131
9	To R. Bridgeman	11 June	1928	132
10	To V. Chattopadhyaya	26 June	1928	132
11	To R. Bridgeman	26 June	1928	133
12	To V. Chattopadhyaya	July	1928	134
13	To Mangal Singh	10 July	1928	136

14	To Roger Baldwin	19 July	1928	137
15	The Changing Face of Imperialism	21 July	1928	139
16	To V. Chattopadhyaya	3 October	1928	142
17	To the Secretary, League against Imperialism	9 October	1928	145
18	To V. Chattopadhyaya	9 October	1928	145
19	Circular on the Second World Congress of the League	20 October	1928	146
20	To V. Chattopadhyaya	25 October	1928	147
21	To R. Bridgeman	25 October	1928	149
22	To V. Chattopadhyaya	31 October	1928	150
23	To V. Chattopadhyaya	7 November	1928	151
24	The Imperialist Danger			152

6. General Secretary, A.I.C.C.

1	Presidential Address at the Fifth Session of the *Hindustani Seva Dal*	December	1927	159
2	To Subhas Chandra Bose	15 March	1928	161
3	To N. S. Hardikar	28 March	1928	162
4	On the Boycott of Foreign Cloth	13 April	1928	163
5	To A. Rangaswami Iyengar	18 April	1928	164
6	To Secretaries of Provincial Congress Committees	8 June	1928	165
7	To the Congressmen of Kerala	10 June	1928	166
8	To M. Annapurniah	11 June	1928	167
9	To the Editor, Mysore Patriot	26 June	1928	168
10	To Vahid Yar Khan	4 July	1928	169
11	On the Inauguration of the Physical Culture Academy, Bagalkot	July-August	1928	169
12	To N. S. Hardikar	24 August	1928	170
13	On the Dal	August,	1928	170

14	To Syed Mahmud	14 September	1928	173
15	To M. A. Ansari	21 September	1928	174
16	To Mahatma Gandhi	14 November	1928	175
17	To Mahatma Gandhi	24 November	1928	176

7. Call to Youth

1	Address at Indian Youth Conference	23 December	1927	179
2	An Appeal to Youth	18 March	1928	179
3	To K. Venkatachari	28 March	1928	181
4	To Jahangir Vakil	5 April	1928	182
5	Circular Letter to Congressmen	5 April	1928	183
6	On the Mission of Youth	20 May	1928	185
7	To the Editor, Abhyudaya	30 June	1928	187
8	Presidential Address at the All Bengal Students Conference	22 September	1928	188
9	Reply to Address of All Bengal Students Association	25 September	1928	197
10	To Subhas Chandra Bose	2 October	1928	199
11	Message to Lahore Students Union	9 October	1928	200
12	Reply to Students' Welcome Address at Meerut	12 October	1928	201
13	On the Task of Students	16 November	1928	201
14	Presidential Address at the Bombay Presidency Youth Conference	12 December	1928	203
15	Speech at the Bombay Youth League	13 December	1928	211
16	On the Nature of Freedom	14 December	1928	211
17	Presidential Address at the Socialist Youth Congress	27 December	1928	213

8. Political Addresses and Statements

1	Reply to Address of the Allahabad District Board	3 April	1928	217
2	Presidential Address at Punjab Provincial Conference	11 April	1928	219
3	On the Punjab Provincial Conference	15 April	1928	230
4	Presidential Address at the Banaras District Conference	28 April	1928	231
5	On politics and religion	17 May	1928	232
6	Presidential Address at the Kerala Provincial Conference	27 May	1928	234
7	Concluding remarks at the Kerala Provincial Conference	28 May	1928	241
8	On the political situation in India	29 May	1928	242
9	The Indian struggle	29 May	1928	244
10	The Landholders and Socialism	19 July	1928	246
11	On the Zamindari Question	26 August	1928	249
12	On the alleged letter by M. N. Roy	1 September	1928	250
13	Presidential Address at the Delhi Provincial Political Conference	13 October	1928	251
14	Indian States and British India	13 October	1928	254
15	Presidential Address at the U.P. Provincial Conference	27 October	1928	255
16	Address at the Champaran District Political Conference	15 November	1928	263

9. The Calcutta Congress

1	To Shankarlal Banker	13 July	1928	269
2	On Independence	27 December	1928	270

3	On the establishment of Congress agencies abroad	31 December	1928	275
4	On Subhas Bose's amendment of Mahatma Gandhi's resolution	December	1928	276
5	On the Calcutta Congress	10 January	1929	277

10. The Independence for India League 1929

1	To Members of the All India Council of the League	31 January	1929	281
2	To A. A. Shaikh	13 February	1929	283
3	To N. V. Gangadhar	14 February	1929	283
4	To K. L. Ganguly	5 March	1929	284
5	To B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya	19 March	1929	285
6	To Members of the Central Council and Provincial Organisers and Secretaries of the League	10 April	1929	286
7	To S. Srinivasa Iyengar	8 May	1929	289
8	To Members of the Central and Provincial Councils of the League	15 November	1929	290
9	To Members of the Central Council of the League	7 December	1929	291

11. League against Imperialism 1929

1	To V. Chattopadhyaya	January	1929	295
2	To James Maxton	16 January	1929	296
3	To V. Chattopadhyaya	23 January	1929	296
4	To B. G. Lokhare	28 January	1929	297

5	To R. Bridgeman	31 January	1929	298
6	To R. Bridgeman	13 March	1929	299
7	To V. Chattopadhyaya	4 April	1929	299
8	To V. Chattopadhyaya	25 April	1929	300
9	To V. Chattopadhyaya	7 May	1929	301
10	To V. Chattopadhyaya	22 May	1929	302
11	The Coming Crisis in India	22 May	1929	302
12	To Taraknath Das	21 June	1929	307
13	To Secretary, League against Imperialism	26 June	1929	307
14	To Shiva Prasad Gupta	27 June	1929	308
15	To Roger Baldwin	27 June	1929	310
16	To. V. Chattopadhyaya	1 August	1929	310
17	To Taraknath Das	25 August	1929	311
18	To Edo Fimmen	25 November	1929	312
19	To V. Chattopadhyaya	25 November	1929	312
20	To Roger Baldwin	25 November	1929	313

12. Public Safety Bill

1	Statement to the Press	4 February	1929	317
2	On the Public Safety Bill	7 February	1929	318
3	Speech at Delhi	7 March	1929	319
4	Statement to the Press	22 March	1929	320
5	On the Public Safety Bill	13 April	1929	321
6	Comments on the Public Safety Bill	5 July	1929	324

13. The Meerut Conspiracy Case

1	To M. K. Basu	22 March	1929	331
2	To R. Bridgeman	4 April	1929	332

3	To S. Srinivasa Iyengar	4 April	1929	332
4	To B. N. Dutta	4 April	1929	333
5	To Father	24 April	1929	334
6	To R. Bridgeman	25 April	1929	335
7	To Father	1 May	1929	337
8	Cable to R. Bridgeman	7 May	1929	341
9	To R. Bridgeman	7 May	1929	341
10	To R. Bridgeman	20 May	1929	342
11	Statement on Meerut Prisoners	22 May	1929	343
12	To R. Bridgeman	10 June	1929	344
13	To V. Chattopadhyaya	20 June	1929	344
14	To R. Bridgeman	22 June	1929	348
15	To Walter Citrine	22 June	1929	349
16	To R. Bridgeman	1 July	1929	353
17	To R. Bridgeman	11 July	1929	354
18	To R. Bridgeman	11 July	1929	355
19	To S. Srinivasa Iyengar	20 August	1929	356
20	To S. Srinivasa Iyengar	27 August	1929	357
21	To A.C.N. Nambiar	23 September	1929	358

14. Articles and Addresses

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC

1	Speech at Mahila Vidyapith, Allahabad	31 March	1928	361
2	The poverty of India and its cure	April	1928	363
3	On Kisan agitation at Katahara	4 July	1928	368
4	Swaraj and Socialism	11 August	1928	369
5	The Kisan and Swaraj	September	1928	372
6	The Misfortunes of the Kisans	December	1928	374
7	Unemployment in India	April	1929	377

GENERAL

8	India and the need for international contacts	13 May	1928	379

9	Reply to address of the Calicut Municipal Council	30 May	1928	386
10	For a King's Favour	27 June	1928	387
11	On ministers and the like	10 July	1928	390
12	The proscription and censorship of books	6 March	1929	393
13	Slaves of the Gods	25 April	1929	395

15. Miscellaneous Correspondence

1	On police atrocities in Banaras	21 January	1928	403
2	To F. J. Ginwala	14 March	1928	404
3	To Kanhaiyalal Shastri	31 March	1928	404
4	To Mahatma Gandhi	14 April	1928	405
5	On the death of Anandi Prasad Sinha	20 April	1928	406
6	To Ratanlal Bhatia	4 May	1928	408
7	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	24 May	1928	409
8	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	31 May	1928	410
9	To Alokananda Mahabharati	10 July	1928	412
10	To W. P. Ignatius	10 July	1928	412
11	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	19 July	1928	413
12	To Subhas Chandra Bose	11 August	1928	414
13	To Biswanath Mukerji	27 September	1928	415
14	On violence at Tamkohi	29 October	1928	415
15	To Syed Mahmud	15 November	1928	419
16	To Sri Krishna Sinha	16 January	1929	420
17	To S. S. Rao	16 January	1929	420
18	To B. P. Singh	19 January	1929	421
19	To R. S. Sharma	19 January	1929	421
20	To Mahatma Gandhi	21 January	1929	422
21	To T. Braganca Cunha	22 January	1929	424
22	To T. Braganca-Cunha	12 February	1929	424
23	To the Times Book Club, London	14 February	1929	425
24	To Duncan Greenlees	22 February	1929	427
25	To William B. Feakins	26 February	1929	427

26	To Shambhu Nath	5 March	1929	428
27	To Thakurdas Pahwa	13 March	1929	428
28	To S.A.S. Tyabji	22 March	1929	429
29	To Father	29 March	1929	430
30	To N. K. Bannerji	5 April	1929	431
31	To Mathura Prasad	8 April	1929	432

ILLUSTRATIONS

With Mahatma Gandhi, 1929. *Frontispiece*

With Congress workers in Madras, 1927.
With Congress workers at Allahabad, 1928. *between pp.* 32–33

Family group
With Dr. M. A. Ansari.
Meerut, October 1928. 112–113

President, Bombay Presidency Youth
Conference, Poona, 1928.
President of the U. P. Political
Conference, Jhansi, 1928. 208–209

With Sarojini Naidu and others.
Lucknow, 1929.
Photostat of first page of letter
to Mahatma Gandhi, 23 January 1928 304–305

1

THE MADRAS CONGRESS AND AFTER

THE DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE

1. Statement to the Press[1]

I have been away from India for nearly two years. Hence I prefer not to make any definite statements regarding the political situation in India at present.

I am going to Madras to attend the Congress and hope to meet there some of my colleagues and to come in closer touch with the current developments. As far as the Statutory Commission is concerned I am not in the least concerned. I do not think that the inclusion of Indians[2] would improve it in the least or make it any more acceptable. I do not believe that the Commission could do anything for India. Indians themselves must work out their own political emancipation. It is a struggle between Indians and the British and, as such, Indians will have to create strength in themselves to achieve their emancipation.

The presumption of the British Parliament in dictating to Indians was an insult to India and we should treat it as such and ignore the Commission.

I have read *Mother India*, which is a very offensive book. It is a gross libel on Indians and an outrageous misrepresentation of Indian women. I am not able to say whether the book had been subsidised by the British Government, but from certain statements made in the book and elsewhere it was clear that Miss Mayo had been assisted by officials of the country. All members of Parliament had been provided with free copies. I wonder who had borne the expenses. The book is not much known in the Continent, but possibly translations will be made.

To my mind the Hindu Muslim tension was due to the display of too much religiosity on the part of both communities. The communal leaders are more to be blamed for this than the masses. It is indeed a disquieting factor in our progress and the earlier it is got rid of the better. There is too much of what is called religion in our life and

1. Colombo, 19 December 1927. *The Leader*, 22 December 1927.
2. On 8 November 1927 the Conservative Government announced the appointment of a commission, consisting of members of the British Parliament with Sir John Simon as chairman, to report on the working of the Act of 1919. The exclusion of Indians caused much indignation, and there was a general determination to boycott the commission.

politics. The less we talk of and worry about the next world, the more good we are likely to do to our fellow countrymen and country.

2. To Mother[1]

Madras
23.12.27

My dear Mother,
We arrived here yesterday. Our immediate problem was that of clothes, for we have no *khadi* clothes. Kamala and Beti are busy stitching since yesterday.

We are all well but have no news of you. In Colombo we heard that you have not been well for some time. I was greatly worried till I got your telegram. But we have still received no letter.

Work pertaining to the Congress session has begun now and for some time there will be more than enough to do.

We hope to see you soon now.

Love.

Your son
Jawahar

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

3. Statement to the Press[1]

I had been cut off from all Indian news for over two weeks during the period of my voyage to India. But on arrival here, I read the two messages which Major Graham Pole[2] had brought out.

1. 22 December 1927. *The Leader*, 24 December 1927.
2. Labour M.P. who was interested in Indian problems. In 1927 he brought messages from Ramsay MacDonald and Lansbury to the Indian people, appealing for cooperation with the Simon Commission.

Just before leaving London, I had occasion to watch the proceedings *in Parliament in regard to the Indian Statutory Commission* and the activities of the Labour Party relating to it. It was my firm conviction then and it is now that the Labour Party has definitely adopted a fully imperialist attitude wholly in consonance with the Tory Government's attitude towards India.

Even the Independent Labour Party has been brought in line with the majority view of the party and, as is well known, the only effective opposition in Parliament was that of the solitary Indian member, Mr. Saklatwala. The left-wingers of the Labour Party, with the partial exception of Col. Wedgwood,[3] remained wholly silent and had not one word to say about their much-vaunted principle of self-determination.

Messrs MacDonald and Lansbury are over-fond of giving expression to their sympathy and cordiality with India, but in no single instance has this effusiveness been translated into action, and I am quite certain that a future Labour Government, if it comes into power, will be as objectionable to the Indian people as Lord Birkenhead and company.

For my part, I prefer a frank opponent like Lord Birkenhead to gentlemen who talk tall and do nothing like Messrs MacDonald and Lansbury. They are very fond of giving advice to Indians. May I follow their example in one small particular at any rate and ask them to keep their messages and messengers to themselves? In spite of our problems and difficulties we hope to make good without the help of the Labour Party.

3. Colonel Josiah, later 1st Baron Wedgwood, (1872-1943); Labour M.P. 1906-42, member of the Labour Government 1924, vice-chairman of Labour Party 1921-24.

4. On the Resolution on Independence[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru moved:

'This Congress declares the goal of the Indian people to be independence with full control over the defence forces of the country, the financial and economic policy and the relations with foreign countries.

1. Discussion at the Subjects Committee of the Congress at Madras on 25 December 1927, *reported in The Hindu*, 26 December 1927.

The Congress demands that this right of the people of India should be forthwith recognised and given effect to, in particular by the complete withdrawal of the alien army of occupation.'

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru regretted that the resolution should have been characterised as silly and as such would make them the laughing stock of the world. Mr. Vijiaraghavachariar,[2] a veteran in the Congress, brought to bear in his criticism against the resolution all the weight of his learning and experience. He talked of the French Revolution and such other things but the speaker wished that Mr. Vijiaraghavachariar had carried his research a little further into the 19th and 20th centuries. He wished Mr. Achariar had told them something of the more recent developments. He was too full of what had happened in the 17th and 18th centuries. He had been pleased to call the resolution silly and some others present had echoed that cry. The resolution might be defective. It might contain many faults. It might even be considered premature by some but it could not be called silly.

He referred to the remarks of Babu Rajendra Prasad[3] that by passing this resolution the Congress would become the laughing stock of the world. He had never heard of a more amazing proposition. Countries such as Morocco, Turkey, Syria and Palestine were claiming independence. Did they become the laughing stock of the world? This attitude on the part of people only showed they had adopted a monastic view of things and he had a very strong objection to that. If they proposed to wait for a favourable opportunity when they could make a declaration of their goal of independence that opportunity would never come. They had to face the situation boldly and clearly and spell out their demands openly. There is no question of possibility or probability. Swaraj within the British Empire was nothing for him. He felt it to be degrading for this country to be within the British Empire. A great country like ours must be a free country and if and when it was free, it could stretch out its hands and make alliances. There was no question of enmity or ill-will towards Britain when they so said it. He would with

2. C. Vijiaraghavachariar (1852-1944), Member, Madras Legislative Council, 1895-1901 and of the Imperial Legislative Council 1913-16; President of the Indian National Congress at its session in Nagpur in December 1920.
3. Dr. Rajendra Prasad (1884-1963), set up legal practice in Patna, joined Mahatma Gandhi in the Champaran Satyagraha 1917, joined the noncooperation movement in 1920, President, Indian National Congress 1934, 1939, and 1947-48; served several terms of imprisonment; in charge of Food and Agriculture portfolio 1946-48; President, Indian Constituent Assembly 1946-50; President of India 1950-62.

humility ask Babu Rajendra Prasad which country, what tribe or what individual outside India would laugh at this resolution. He was sure he could not name it. Rajendra Babu must have got this idea from Anglo-Indian and moderate journals.

But Mrs. Besant's point was as to whether this resolution affected the creed of the Congress. His opinion was it did not affect it. Of course it would be interpreted that the creed of the majority was the creed for the time being and the ruling of Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar and other eminent lawyers was that the creed remained what it was at present. The resolution did not exclude anybody from joining the Congress. He hoped that more people would come in and change it if they wanted it.

Pandit Nehru then dealt briefly with the amendments before the House and said that though he would very much like to preserve the wording of this resolution he would for the sake of unanimity agree to the following form as he found it was acceptable to a large majority of members:

> "This Congress declares the goal of the Indian people to be complete National Independence."

5. The Resolution on Independence[1]

It is my high privilege to place before you the resolution on Independence.

The resolution reads thus :—

> "This Congress declares the goal of the Indian people to be complete National Independence."

I do not think I can describe this resolution in any better language than that used by the distinguished ex-President of the Congress, Dr. Annie Besant, in an interview which she gave immediately after the

1. Report of the Proceedings of the Indian National Congress, Madras 1927. This resolution was moved by Jawaharlal at the open session of the Congress on 27 December 1927.

Subjects Committee had accepted this resolution. She said that it was a dignified and a clear statement of India's goal.

No special remarks are necessary from me in commending this resolution for your acceptance specially after the almost complete unanimity with which the Subjects Committee approved of it. But I wish to explain very clearly one or two points connected with this resolution. The first thing is that this resolution, although it makes clear the goal, does not change the present creed of the Congress. If you pass this resolution, you declare by a majority, I hope by an overwhelming majority, that the Congress is today for complete independence. Nonetheless you leave the doors of the Congress open to such persons as may not approve of this goal as they perhaps are satisfied with a lesser or a smaller goal. I think that although the door of the Congress is open, there should be no doubt, if you approve of this resolution, then everybody must say that the majority of the Congressmen today demand complete independence for the country. Now this resolution as placed before you is a very short and simple one. In the Subjects Committee the resolution, as you may know, because the proceedings are quite public, was slightly longer and more complicated. But ultimately it was changed to this present formula and this formula was adopted.

I wish to make it clear to you that the adoption of this formula does not in any way change the spirit or the meaning of the resolution. It means what it says. It means complete independence. It means control of the defence forces of the country. It means control over the financial and economic policy of the country. It means control over the relations with foreign countries. Without these things, independence would be a travesty and camouflage.

Thirdly I wish to point out to you, lest there be any mistake, that this goal, which I hope you will adopt today, is the immediate goal and not a goal of the far distant future. Whether we achieve it today or tomorrow, a year hence or 10 years hence, I cannot say. That depends on your strength and the strength of the country.

May I in conclusion express my heart-felt gratitude that the Congress is about to adopt the goal worthy of our country's high destiny and hope that this goal may be reached in the near future.

6. Presidential Address at the First Session of the Republican Congress[1]

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru thanked the organisers of the Congress[2] for electing him as President, and observed that he had been in no way connected with the workers and comrades who organised the *Swadhin Bharat Sangha*[3] because he was not present in India at that time. The attraction of a Republican ideal was very great and if it was possible for him to give his services to promote that ideal he felt it his bounden duty to do so. Some people said that now that the National Congress declared its goal to be full national independence, there was no necessity for a Republican Congress. Primarily they should take their stand on the principle that Swaraj was India's birthright. When there was domination and oppression there was bound to be terrible suffering. Even though the Congress passed a resolution of independence, a new organisation should be formed to carry on propaganda and try to convert those who had vague ideas of independence and did not know what Republicanism was. The object of the resolution of independence passed by the Congress was the ultimate withdrawal of the British from India. It ought to be the duty of the new organisation to lay stress on things which were to be done to give effect to the resolution of independence. In the first instance the Republican ideal should be promulgated. The main lesson of this year's Congress was that it had been the most important session because it really changed the direction in which the Congress had been so far moving. In one or two matters it gave a new angle of vision. Since the failure of the noncooperation movement the Congress had been drifting to middle class or Babu politics and was losing the support of the masses. Various forces were at work today which were important and which were likely to shape the future of the country. It was important for them to form some kind of organisation which would keep the National Congress up to the mark and also prepare the country for a Republican ideal. The

1. *The Hindu*, 29 December 1927.
2. The Republican Congress held its first session at Madras on 28 December 1927 in the Congress pandal. Bulusu Sambamurti opened the Congress and Jawaharlal presided over it.
3. The Republican League, the organisation set up to work for the establishment of complete national independence as early as possible. Jawaharlal was president of the executive committee.

world had adopted Republicanism. Some countries had some kind of monarchy but almost everybody realised that Republicanism was the only thing that was necessary for the future. Monarchies, wherever they existed now, were not likely to survive very long. Republicanism had come to stay. It would be for India to determine what kind of Republicanism would be best suited to Indian conditions. Did India wish the government of this country to be based more or less on the exploitation of one by another or did she wish to remove the exploitation and the causes thereof so that there might be equality between the various members of the Republic? That was the problem before them. The Republican propaganda should make it clear on what principle India wished to establish her Republican government. It was right for India to keep apart from international complications. They had had enough of the British connection and India should try not to have any entanglements in the future with any foreign country or organisation. Nonetheless, in order to fashion their policy they should understand what was happening in the rest of the world. The Republican Congress organisation should have simple rules for its work.

7. Speech at Allahabad[1]

Referring to the present political situation, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru remarked that he was afraid he might be thought to have become a greater revolutionary as a result of his travels in Europe. The Madras Congress could be regarded as epoch-making in one sense, namely, that it passed several resolutions[2] which were most urgently needed.

The first important resolution recorded was the one which made clear the goal Indians were striving for. It was often said that we wanted freedom, Swaraj, terms which were not intelligible to everybody. The independence resolution made clear, so far as the Congress was concerned, what sort of freedom we wanted. We wanted

1. 7 January 1928. *The Leader*, 9 January 1928.
2. The important resolutions passed by the Madras Congress pertained to independence, boycott of the Simon Commission, the war danger, the situation in China, the League against Imperialism, the drafting of a constitution and Hindu Muslim unity.

that in our country we should have complete independence and no other nation should interfere with our administration. It meant that we should have complete control over our army also.

The demand for freedom meant that we would have the right to decide ourselves what, if any, relations we wanted to contract with other foreign countries. We might or might not keep the connection with Britain but that question would only arise after the existing relations were resolved and Indians had complete independent control over the country.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that there were signs of a big war in the near future. The efforts of the government at fortifying the frontiers of India showed that the war, if it came, would be round the boundaries of India. The question to be seriously considered was as to the attitude Indians should adopt in case a war broke out, as they were bound to be called upon by the British to help. The Congress had announced that Indians were not prepared to give assistance to the Government in connection with any such war. This resolution of the Congress was passed after mature consideration of the consequences which were likely to follow India's refusal to respond to the call of the British for assistance during the war.

Referring to the Hindu-Muslim unity resolution,[3] Mr. Nehru expressed the hope that further unity efforts would be crowned with success.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru told the people that if they really wished to assist the Congress in boycotting the Simon Commission and in pushing on other work, mere sympathy would be of no avail. He appealed to the people to cooperate with the town Congress Committee in doing actual work.

3. This comprehensive resolution recommended joint electorates, reservation of seats, introduction of the Reforms in N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan, re-distribution of provinces on a linguistic basis and the immediate formation of Andhra, Utkal, Sind and Karnatak. No legislature should interfere with liberty of conscience or intervene in inter-communal matters without the consent of three-fourths of the members of either community. Hindus and Muslims were urged to respect each other and not to undertake *forcible conversions*.

8. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
11.1.28

My dear Bapuji,
The Working Committee is now meeting in Benares and so I cannot go to Bombay or Sabarmati for some time.

I am loth to inflict another letter on you so soon after my last[2] but I am very much troubled by your criticism of the Congress resolutions and I feel I must write to you again. You are always very careful with your words and your language is studiously restrained. It amazes me all the more to find you using language which appears to me wholly unjustified. You have condemned in general language the proceedings of the Subjects Committee and specially selected some resolutions for greater criticism and condemnation. May I point out that it is always unsafe to judge on hearsay evidence? You were not present yourself and it is quite conceivable that the opinions you may have formed after a personal visit to the Subjects Committee may have been different. Yet you have chosen to condemn and judge unfavourably the whole committee, or at any rate a great majority of it, simply basing your judgement on the impressions of a few persons. Do you think this is quite fair to the committee or the Congress? You have referred to discipline and to the Working Committee as the National Cabinet. May I remind you that you are a member of the Working Committee and it is an extraordinary thing for a member, on the morrow of the Congress, to criticise and run down the Congress and its principal resolutions? There has been a general chorus of congratulations on the success of the Madras Congress. This may be wrong or without sufficient basis but undoubtedly there was this general impression in the country and atmosphere counts for a great deal in all public work. And now most people who thought so feel a bit dazed at your criticism and wonder if their previous enthusiasm was not overdone or mistaken.

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No 13039.
2. The first letter is not available. In his letter of 17 January 1928, Mahatma Gandhi had written, "Your first letter I destroyed after reading and replying to it. The second I am keeping....."

You have described the independence resolution as "hastily conceived and thoughtlessly passed."[3] I have already pointed out to you how the country has discussed and considered this question for years past and how I have personally thought over it, discussed it, spoken about it in meetings, written about it and generally been full of it for the last five years or more. It seems to me that under the circumstances no stretch of language can justify the use of the words "hastily conceived." As for "thoughtlessly passed", I wonder if you know that the resolution was discussed in the Subjects Committee for about three hours and more than a dozen speeches for and against were made. Ultimately as you know it was passed almost unanimously both in the committee and the open Congress. Were all the people in the committee and the Congress who voted for it "thoughtless"? Is this not rather a strange assumption? And why should it not be said with greater truth that the small minority opposed to the resolution were mistaken? You mention that last year the resolution was rejected by the committee. I do not know what inference you draw from this but to me it seems obvious that this can only mean that the committee and the Congress have been eager to pass it in the past as in the present but refrained from doing so out of regard for you. I hope you will agree with me that it is not healthy politics for any organisation to subordinate its own definite opinion on a public issue out of personal regard only.

I am not referring here to the merits of the resolution. But I shall only say this that after prolonged and careful thought a demand for independence and all that this implies has come to mean a very great deal for me and I attach more importance to it than to almost anything else. I have thought over every word you said the other day in Madras on this question and it has merely confirmed me in my opinion. But I doubt if anyone outside a small circle understands your position in regard to this. I am sure that none of the others — liberals etc. — who want Dominion Status think in the same way with you. Yesterday Sir Ali Imam[4] addressed a meeting here on the Simon boycott. I also spoke for a few minutes[5] and like King Charles' head independence cropped up and I laid stress on it. After the meeting Ali Imam told me that I did well in laying stress on this; he and his friends would probably come round to this position sooner or later but for the time

3. Article in *Young India*, 12 January 1928.
4. (1869-1932); President, All India Muslim League in 1908; Law Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1910-15; Judge, Patna High Court, 1917; Member, Executive Council of the Governor of Bihar and Orissa, 1918, one of the signatories of the Nehru Report, 1928.
5. See post, Section 4, item 2.

grow very fast, but I do not see how freedom is coming in its train. As I mentioned before to you our *khadi* work is almost wholly divorced from politics and our *khadi* workers are developing a mentality which does not concern itself with anything outside their limited sphere of work. This may be good for the work they do, but little can be expected from them in the political field.

What then can be done? You say nothing. You only criticise and no helpful lead comes from you. You tell us that if the country will not even take to *khadi* how can we expect it to do anything more difficult or daring. I do not think the reasoning is correct. If the country does not go ahead politically by one method, surely it is up to our leaders to think of other or additional methods.

Reading many of your articles in *Young India*—your autobiography etc. — I have often felt how very different my ideals were from yours. And I have felt that you were very hasty in your judgements, or rather having arrived at certain conclusions you were over-eager to justify them by any scrap of evidence you might get. I remember how in an article on the "Two Ways"—or some such title—you gave some newspaper cuttings from America about crime and immorality and contrasted American civilisation with India. I felt it was something like Katherine Mayo drawing conclusions from some unsavoury hospital statistics. Your long series of articles[12] based on the French book—*Towards Moral Bankruptcy* — also made one feel the same way. You misjudge greatly I think the civilisation of the West and attach too great an importance to its many failings. You have stated somewhere that India has nothing to learn from the West and that she has reached a pinnacle of wisdom in the past. I entirely disagree with this viewpoint and I neither think that the so called *Rama Raj* was very good in the past, nor do I want it back. I think the western or rather industrial civilisation is bound to conquer India, may be with many changes and adaptations, but nonetheless in the main based on industrialism. You have criticised strongly the many obvious defects of industrialism and hardly paid any attention to its merits. Everybody knows these defects and all the utopias and social theories are meant to remove them. It is the opinion of most thinkers in the West that these defects are not due to industrialism as such but to the capitalist system which is based on exploitation of

12. A series of 8 articles written by Mahatma Gandhi in *Young India* from 1 July to 19 August 1926, based on M. Paul Bureau's *D'Indiscipline des moeurs*, condemning the use of contraceptives.

others. I believe you have stated that in your opinion there is no necessary conflict between Capital and Labour. I think that under the capitalist system this conflict is unavoidable.

You have advocated very eloquently and forcefully the claims of *daridranarayana*—the poor in India. I do believe that the remedy you have suggested is very helpful to them and if adopted by them in large numbers will relieve to some extent their misery. But I doubt very much if the fundamental causes of poverty are touched by it. You do not say a word against the semi-feudal zamindari system which prevails in a great part of India or against the capitalist exploitation of both the workers and the consumers.

But I must stop. I have already exceeded all reasonable limits and I hope you will forgive me. My only excuse is my mental agitation. I did not want to become Secretary[13] of the A.I.C.C. as I wanted perfect freedom to say and do what I considered necessary. But Ansari pressed me on the ground that many of my resolutions[14] and specially the independence resolution, had been passed by the Congress and I thus had full freedom to work on my own lines. I could not answer this argument and had to accept. Now I find that every effort is being made to belittle and ridicule these very Congress resolutions and it is a painful experience.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

13. Jawaharlal was again elected General Secretary in January 1928 and continued to serve in that capacity till December 1929.
14. In addition to the resolutions on independence and the war danger, Jawaharlal had moved at the Madras Congress resolutions on the League against Imperialism, support of China, and condemnation of restrictions on issue of passports

being they had to be a little restrained as they wanted to carry many people with them. I am sure most liberals welcome the independence resolution, whatever they may say about it, as they feel that it strengthens their position. But whether they like it or not, it passes my comprehension how a national organisation can have as its ideal and goal Dominion Status. The very idea suffocates and strangles me.

I took no special interest in the resolution on the boycott of British goods[6] chiefly because I felt that it would meet with your strong disapproval and the boycott could not succeed unless a more or less unanimous effort was made. But I have no doubt that it can be made into a partial success if there was some unanimity in our own ranks. You must have read about the wonderful effectiveness of the boycott in China.[7] There was nothing special in China which we have not got and there is no fundamental reason why we cannot succeed where they succeeded. But granting that it is not likely to succeed, is it such a laughing matter after all? Has our boycott of foreign cloth by *khaddar* succeeded so remarkably—has our spinning franchise succeeded? They have not but you did not hesitate to press them on the country and the Congress because you felt, and rightly, that they would be good for this nation even if they did not wholly succeed.

I remember how Kelkar,[8] Aney[9] & Co., even as members of the Working Committee, used to make fun of the Congress resolutions on *khadi*, and it is very painful for me to think that you are also ridiculing important Congress resolutions. The Kelkars & Aneys do not count and I do not care what they say or do. But I do care very much for what you say and do.

Having singled out two resolutions for your special condemnation you casually refer to the others as "several irresponsible resolutions". Excepting the Unity resolution every other resolution of the Congress may come under this heading. And so the labours of the 200 and odd persons in the Subjects Committee and the larger numbers in the Congress are summarily and rather contemptuously disposed of. It is very hard luck on the unhappy persons who, though wanting perhaps in

6. 'With a view to bring about as effective a boycott of British goods as possible, this Congress calls upon provincial Congress committees to organise a boycott of selected British goods having regard to the conditions of each province.'
7. In 1925 a boycott of British goods was organised in China. It lasted for months and caused heavy losses to British traders.
8. N. C. Kelkar (1872-1947); a lieutenant of Lokamanya Tilak, editor of the *Mahratta*, 1896-1918; he later became a responsivist.
9. M. S. Aney (1880-1968); acting President, Indian National Congress 1933; Member, Viceroy's Council, 1942, representative of the Government of India in Ceylon, 1943-47; Governor of Bihar, 1948-52, Member, Lok Sabha, 1959-67.

foresight and intelligence, did not spare themselves and tried to do their best. We have all "sunk to the level of the school boys' debating society" and you chastise us like an angry school master, but a school master who will not guide us or give us lessons but will only point out from time to time the error of our ways. Personally I very much wish that we were more like real school boys, with the life and energy and daring of school boys, and a little less like the right honourable gentlemen who are for ever weighing the pros and cons and counting the cost.

You know how intensely I have admired you and believed in you as a leader who can lead this country to victory and freedom. I have done so in spite of the fact that I hardly agreed with anything that some of your previous publications—Indian Home Rule[10] etc.—contained. I felt and feel that you were and are infinitely greater than your little books. Above everything I admire action and daring and courage and I found them all in you in a superlative degree. And I felt instinctively that however much I may disagree with you, your great personality and your possession of these qualities would carry us to our goal. During the noncooperation period you were supreme; you were in your element and automatically you took the right step. But since you came out of prison something seems to have gone wrong and you have been very obviously ill at ease. You will remember how within a few months or even weeks you repeatedly changed your attitude—the Juhu statements,[11] the A.I.C.C. meeting at Ahmedabad and after etc.—and most of us were left in utter bewilderment. That bewilderment has continued since then. I have asked you many times what you expected to do in the future and your answers have been far from satisfying. All you have said has been that within a year or 18 months you expected the *khadi* movement to spread rapidly and in a geometric ratio and then some direct action in the political field might be indulged in—several years and 18 months have passed since then and the miracle has not happened. It was difficult to believe that it would happen but faith in your amazing capacity to bring off the improbable kept us in an expectant mood. But such faith for an irreligious person like me is a poor reed to rely on and I am beginning to think if we are to wait for freedom till *khadi* becomes universal in India we shall have to wait till the Greek Kalends. *Khadi* will grow slowly, and if war comes it will

10. *Hind Swaraj* or Indian Home Rule, written in Gujarati in 1909 during Mahatma Gandhi's return journey to South Africa from England, was a severe condemnation of western civilisation

11. Mahatma Gandhi was against Council entry, but, under the influence of Motilal Nehru and Chittaranjan Das, who met him at Juhu after his release in February 1924, agreed to a compromise that those who did not believe in the boycott could contest the elections.

9. Statement to the Press[1]

Various criticisms and interpretations of the independence resolution have appeared in the press. As there appears to be some misapprehension about this resolution, I desire as a Secretary of the Congress and as the mover of the resolution in the Subjects Committee and in the open Congress to explain its significance. The resolution was not conceived in haste. The subject has been discussed at length in the country for some years and has repeatedly come up before the Congress in various forms. Several provincial Congress committees have adopted it in the past. The mover of the resolution and many others have written repeatedly in Indian and foreign periodicals and addressed numerous gatherings on the subject. Nor was the resolution passed by the Subjects Committee thoughtlessly or in a hurry. It was discussed for about three hours, and more than a dozen long speeches were delivered for and against it.

The resolution, as passed, is quite clear. Complete national independence is a correct legal definition of an independent country. It necessarily involves severance of the British connection as it exists; but it does not mean that there should be no alliance between India and England or any other country. It does not necessarily mean any ill will to Britain; but it does mean that the question of alliances only arises after independence. Independence also obviously and very specially means the withdrawal of the alien army of occupation in India. There can be no freedom of any kind with a foreign army occupying India as it does in Egypt, controlling and suppressing the nation's activities. The Congress, therefore, demands the withdrawal of the army, as was made clear in the speeches on the resolution. The defence of India can be entrusted to an Indian army, which can have foreign experts as officers if necessary under the control of a National Government.

Independence has been declared as our goal. This does not and cannot mean that there are intermediate goals before independence is reached. Whether it is realisable soon or not depends on the strength of the nation. If the national movement remains weak it will not be realised. Achievement can only come when the strength

1. New Delhi, 12 January 1928 The Tribune, 14 January 1928.

to achieve is present. But whether we are strong or weak, the Congress has made it clear that the only goal we are striving for is independence, which naturally involves severance of the British connection and full control over our defence forces and our foreign policy.

10. On Mahatma Gandhi's Leadership[1]

Sir,—Some days ago you published in the columns of the *Leader* a report of a speech I delivered at a public meeting in Benares. This report was wrong and misleading, but I did not think it necessary to trouble you with a correction or contradiction. But I find now that at least one newspaper of northern India has commented on it and drawn all manner of inferences which were not justified by what I actually said. I crave your courtesy therefore for these few lines in order to remove any misapprehension that might exist.

My speech was in Hindi, the report is in English. The report refers to 'effete and fossilised' people. My knowledge of Hindi is not sufficient to include any word for fossilised. What I wished to say was that we must develop the spirit of youth and not become unchanging embodiments of age. I laid stress on the fact that this spirit was sometimes to be found more in our elder men than in our youth, many of whom seemed to be born old. An extraordinary inference has been drawn that I was criticising Mahatma Gandhi. This is a monstrous notion. No person who has had a glimpse of him even once, much less one who has had the high privilege of working with him and under *him for many years, can call him old in spirit. He is the supreme example* of latter day India, of all that is good in youth—energy and action, courage and daring, perseverance and resolution. And if India and any Indian today possesses, in a small measure, any of these qualities it is largely due to his splendid example. We who talk of youth and the call of youth are pigmies before his giant and irrepressible youth.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Allahabad, 21 January 1928. Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 25 January 1928

11. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
23 January 1928

My dear Bapuji,

Your letter[2] came as a bit of a shock and was painful reading. Painful because with relentless logic you had contemplated certain eventualities which I had not considered possible or even thought of in their entirety. You talk about my carrying on 'open warfare' against you and of 'unfurling my banner'. I have no particular banner to unfurl nor had I thought of the possibility of any warfare between you and me. I had certainly thought of differences of opinion, which may be fundamental, and of my following a line of action in regard to certain matters which may not meet with your approval. But I felt that you would certainly desire me to follow that line, even though you disagreed with it, if you thought that I was quite clear about it in my own mind. And even if there were possibilities of conflict on some points, there appeared to me absolutely no necessity for this difference or conflict to spread to the many other points on which I presumed there would be considerable ground for common action. You have referred to Sastri[3] and your relations[4] with him. Is any assurance from me necessary that nothing that can ever happen can alter

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 13040.
2. In his letter of 17 January 1928 Mahatma Gandhi had written: "I give you all the freedom you may need from the humble, unquestioning allegiance that you have given me for all these years .. I see quite clearly that you must carry on open warfare against me and my views. For if I am wrong I am evidently doing irreparable harm to the country and it is your duty after having known it to rise in revolt against me... The differences between you and me appear to me to be so vast and radical that there seems to be no meeting ground between us. I can't conceal from you my grief that I should lose a comrade so valiant, so faithful, so able and honest as you have always been; but in serving a cause, comradeships have got to be sacrificed... I suggest a dignified way of unfurling your banner. write to me a letter for publication showing your differences. I will print it in *Young India* and write a brief reply."
3. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri.
4. "To take Sastri for instance, he and I differ in the political outlook as poles asunder, but the bond between him and me that sprung up before we knew the political differences has persisted and survived the fiery ordeals it had to go through."

or lessen my deep regard and affection for you? That regard and affection is certainly personal, but it is something more. No one has moved me and inspired me more than you and I can never forget your exceeding kindness to me. There can be no question of our personal relations suffering. But even in the wider sphere am I not your child in politics, though perhaps a truant and errant child?

I should very much like to discuss many things with you and I cannot say whether I shall or shall not change many of my present opinions after my discussion with you. I hope I am not rigid in mind and outlook and nothing could please me more than to be convinced by you. I have wanted to have a good talk with you frequently in times past but you are always so busy and although I saw you often enough before I went to Europe I never had the opportunity I desired. I shall try to come to you as early as possible. Before I do so I shall write to you again and somewhat more fully some of the conclusions I have arrived at after some thought. I do not want to trouble you, specially in your present state of health, with long letters. But I think that if I write to you about my present views it would clarify matters and save time when we discuss them.

I do not quite appreciate your suggestion to publish my previous letter and to comment on it. Should you wish it of course you can do so. *But it was an entirely personal letter and I do not see why the public* should concern itself with it. Perhaps you may have been led to think that I am going to start some kind of a campaign against your ideas and it was desirable that before doing so some kind of statement should be issued. I have no such intention and if I criticise anything or defend anything against your wishes it will be done incidentally only. May I however warn you against believing everything that appears in the papers. The other day I spoke at Benares at a public meeting. I spoke in Hindi and my speech was wholly distorted in the English report and I was made to say something which I had never thought of. This was commented upon by the *Tribune* of Lahore, and may be other papers and it was made out that I was attacking you. This was a monstrous notion as I had not referred to you or thought of you in that connection. I have sent a contradiction[5]. There is danger of this happening and I would beg of you not to believe such reports and to *give me credit for greater sense and courtesy.*

I would therefore suggest that for the present at least you might not publish my letter. But it is for you to judge and if you think it necessary you can publish extracts from it.

5. See ante, item 10.

The last letter I received from father was not a cheerful document. He had evidently been upset by the doctor's reports about the state of his eyes and his heart. He has been told that if he does not take great care he may lose his sight. He talks in his letter of the "approaching end" and appears to be very dispirited. I want to meet him in Bombay on Feb. 6th when he lands. If he agrees I should like him to go with me to Sabarmati straight from Bombay.

Please do not trouble to answer this letter. There is nothing to answer. I shall try to follow it up after a week or so by another letter.

With love,

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

12. Statement on the Independence Resolution[1]

In view of the importance of the independence resolution of the Madras Congress, it is desirable that the fullest publicity be given to it and that all its implications and consequences explained at public meetings and in the Press. The following points are noted in the hope that they may prove of some assistance to Congress committees and Congressmen generally.

There is no conflict between 'Independence' and 'Swaraj'. No such issue as "Independence Vs. Swaraj" arises, or one being greater or more comprehensive than the other. Swaraj can and does mean complete freedom, but owing to certain happenings in past years it had come to signify in the minds of many something very short of full freedom. An ambiguity and vagueness had crept in and the independence resolution has removed this. A goal must be as definite and clear as possible. Swaraj as used by the Duke of Connaught[2] probably meant something very different from the Swaraj of a Congressman. Independence therefore does not replace Swaraj. It clarifies it and removes the latent ambiguity.

1. The Tribune, 27 January 1928.
2. The Duke of Connaught (1850-1942), third son of Queen Victoria, visited India in 1921 to inaugurate the new building of the Indian legislature.

There has been a tendency in many quarters to interpret Swaraj as Dominion Status and a belief in the inevitability of the British connection. Independence rules out this interpretation and puts an end to this belief as far as the Congress is concerned.

Independence is certainly not a happy word but it conveys a special political significance which is easily understandable. It does not mean isolation. No nation today can be or ought to be isolated and cut off from the rest of the world. There must be to a large extent an interdependence and cooperation for the common good of humanity. A free India will so cooperate with the progressive nations of the world.

Dominion Status means at the least that we must so cooperate with England and her group of nations and have special and more intimate relations with them than with other countries. Independence does not limit our choice or bind us necessarily to any particular group whether it suits us or not. We are free to develop contacts with any nation or group.

Are there any special reasons for us to have more intimate relations with England and her group than with other countries? Her past record in India is all against her. Her present policy raises unanimous protest and is condemned by all parties. What does the British Army stand for today even outside India? In the colonies there is racial conflict and economic discrimination. Indians are humiliated in every way and the lot of the other coloured races is sometimes worse. Even in the colonies where the whites are in a small minority they hold all the power and guard it jealously.

In China and Egypt and Mesopotamia and Persia the role of England has been the main obstacle to freedom. In Europe she is the friend of every reactionary dictator and an enemy of all progressive movements and prevents all endeavours to establish peace on an enduring basis. She had opposed all attempts at compulsory arbitration and disarmament conferences have failed chiefly because of her obduracy. Even her own principal delegate to the League of Nations, Lord Robert Cecil, had to resign because according to him his country was not sincerely trying for peace. England is considered today, and rightly so, the most reactionary force in the world. What reasons thus can India have to develop more intimate relations with her than with other countries? India's willing association with the British group can only mean that we support reaction and war and the suppression of struggling peoples and nations.

What is the position of England and her various dominions today? They have a common culture, largely a common origin and language, some ties of sentiment, and more or less common economic interests. And yet in spite of having so much in common they are drifting apart

specially where economic interests conflict. South Africa and Ireland are continually pulling away from the group. Canada, and in a lesser degree Australia, gravitate economically and culturally towards the United States. A world crisis is exceedingly likely to result in the splitting up of the British group of nations.

In the case of India there is nothing in common with England except the hard and unpleasant fact that we have been ruled and exploited by her for a century and a half. Our economic interests conflict all along the line, and if we ally ourselves to the British group there is bound to be continuous friction and India will either have to break away or be coerced into an unwilling agreement with a policy against her own interests. It is not conceivable that India can remain in the British group and yet be mistress of her destiny.

Can India ever attain Dominion Status and be an equal member of the British Commonwealth? If this happens, India by virtue of her vast population and her tremendous latent resources inevitably becomes the predominant partner in the group. The British Commonwealth would be dominated by India and the centre of gravity would shift from London to Delhi. It is not conceivable that England or her dominions will agree to this. It would be easier to deal with India as an independent power than as a boss of their own concern.

It is thus difficult to conceive of a free India in the British Commonwealth. It is possible however for her to become a nominal member of the group with a semblance of political power but without an effective voice in important matters of domestic and foreign policy, financially a thrall of London, and being made to play the imperialist game for the benefit of England. This is something very far from Swaraj. The cooperation of the lion and the lamb is bound to result, as it has always resulted, in the lamb being inside the lion. The subjection of India will thus continue, though perhaps in a different form. There are thus only two alternatives for us, and no possibility of a third way, remaining a subject country and gaining complete independence.

An important aspect of the independence resolution, and one to be laid stress on, is its psychological reaction in India and abroad. It helps to create a mentality of freedom which no amount of talk about Dominion Status can do. In foreign countries no one appreciates the idea of Dominion Status and when told that India wants this status, the natural assumption is that India is not very much dissatisfied with British rule as she is still prepared to continue her close relations with England.

If India has a message to give to the world it is clear that she can do so more effectively as an independent country than as a member of the British group. Even England will listen to her more attentively

if this message comes from a free and separate country than if it is accompanied with economic friction and domestic squabbles which must occur if we are tied to her.

It is also important to lay stress on the immediate withdrawal of the alien army of occupation. The proposal to have ourselves protected by foreigners is most ignoble and must be rejected, whatever the consequences. As a matter of fact the chief function of the alien army is to suppress us. The question of the foreign army raises many issues which will be dealt with in a separate memorandum.

13. To B. Sambamurti[1]

14 March 1928

My dear Sambamurti[2],

The *Swadhin Bharat Sangha* seems to have vanished into thin air. For the last two months I have been trying to get a copy of its rules and of the resolutions passed at Madras but they are not to be had. I met Govindananda[3] at Delhi and he knew nothing about them. This is an extraordinary state of affairs. It is hardly my notion of building up an organisation. I had hoped that we might be able to do something with the *Sangha* but it all seems to have ended in smoke. Can you get into touch with the people responsible for it?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-37/1928, p 27, N.M.M.L.
2. (1886-1958); joined the Home Rule movement in 1919 and the noncooperation movement the next year, led the Arms Satyagraha in Nagpur, 1927; president, Hindustani Seva Dal, 1929, 1930 and 1932; Speaker, Madras Legislative Assembly, 1937-41.
3. Swami Govindananda (1888-1955); president of the Sind P.C.C. for several years.

14. To Swami Govindananda[1]

19.3.1928

My dear Govindanandaji,
I am still awaiting the rules and resolutions of the *Swadhin Bharat Sangha*. Enquiries for them came to me but I have to confess that I am wholly ignorant and have no papers. This is a most unfortunate state of affairs. It was hardly worthwhile making so much noise in Madras if we had no intention of keeping up the organisation. I wish you would move in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-37/1928, p 25, N.M.M.L.

THE DANGER OF WAR

15. On the Danger of War[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru moved :

"This Congress has noted with grave concern the extraordinary and extensive war preparations which the British Government is carrying on in India and in the Eastern Seas, specially in the North West Frontier of India. These preparations for war are not only calculated to strengthen the hold of British imperialism in India in order to strangle all attempts at freedom, but must result in hastening a disastrous war in which an attempt will be made to make India again a tool in the hands of foreign imperialists.

The Congress declares that the people of India have no quarrel with their neighbours and desire to live at peace with them, and assert their right to determine whether or not they will take part in any war.

The Congress demands that these war preparations be put an end to; and further declares that in the event of the British Government embarking on any warlike adventure and endeavouring to exploit India in it for the furtherance of their imperialist aims, it will be the duty of the people of India to refuse to take any part in such a war or to cooperate with them in any way whatsoever."

Mr. President and comrades—This session of the Indian National Congress will have many important resolutions to consider and adopt. But I venture to say that not one of them will be more important than the one I have just now placed before you. It is important because any war nowadays is an international disaster. It must result in terrible slaughter and destruction. It must let loose, as the last war let loose, the floodgates of hatred and barbarism. When all countries and all nations are linked together and cannot be separately considered it is inconceivable, even if a war is fought outside the frontiers of India, that it would leave India untouched. We have intimate connection with any such war because it is likely to be fought very near our frontiers and India is very likely to be involved in it. If there is such a

1. Report of Proceedings of the Indian National Congress, Madras, 1927, pp. 4-9.

war, you and I will not sit peaceably holding our conferences and congresses. Indeed, we may ourselves hear the roaring of cannons and we may see bombshells dropping from aeroplanes upon our peaceful villages. It is very important also because such a war may result—I hope it does not result—in strengthening British Imperialism to such an extent that it may make it more difficult for us to achieve freedom. It may remove for a generation or two our hope of freedom, so that in any event we cannot ignore any preparations for war or any chance of war.

No man or woman can ignore it, least of all an Indian who desires to achieve freedom for his country. It is a well known fact that all countries are preparing more or less for war. It is not England only; it is every country because in Europe today there is fear. Europe is in the grip of fear and out of fear comes hatred and out of that comes violence and barbarism. Every country in Europe hates every other country. The most feared and hated country in Europe is England. There is talk of disarmament, there is talk of peace. But those of you who have taken the trouble to study what has been happening at Geneva and elsewhere will realise that all this talk of disarmament is mere camouflage. Today Europe is perhaps a greater powder magazine than it was in 1914 when the last Great War broke out. War has not broken out yet because all nations are exhausted. But all the seeds of war are present and at present in greater number than they were thirteen years ago. When you look at the Balkans, Poland, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania and Russia, everywhere there is preparation for war, and there is chance for war. Let us see what attitude the country with which we have most relations has taken in these war preparations and in this talk of peace and disarmament. We are specially interested in Britain's attitude. We have had in recent times various disarmament conferences at Geneva. There was a Naval Disarmament Conference also. But these conferences failed largely because Britain could not agree to proposals made by other countries. Indeed in the past Britain has definitely refused to accept the principle of compulsory arbitration with a little country like Switzerland because it may be giving up a dangerous principle! It has stood for its right to wage war without any reference to the League of Nations or to any other authority. At the last meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations Sir Austen Chamberlain made an extraordinary speech on behalf of England. He stated that he was not prepared to sacrifice the empire for the vague ideals of peace and disarmament of the League of Nations. For him the British Commonwealth was a greater thing than those ideals.

What is the empire but India? It comes to this; for the sake of India, to hold India under subjection, Sir Austen Chamberlain and the

British Government cannot agree to the principles of disarmament or peace. It is well recognised in Europe, especially by small nations who are always raising this question in the League of Nations, that England is the greatest obstacle today in the attainment of disarmament or world peace. I should like to indicate to you some of the war preparations which England is making. You know that preparations for war are secret preparations. Nations do not advertise when they are going to prepare for war. Nonetheless when preparations are being carried on on a most extensive scale—on the scale which England has been carrying on—it is impossible to hide them. So some of these things have come to light. The biggest and one of the latest things we have had for a number of years before us is the Singapore base.[2] Why is England spending millions and millions of pounds and making this great naval base at Singapore? Surely it can only be a challenge directed against some of the powers which have interests in the Pacific and round about the Eastern Seas. It is primarily directed against China and Japan, also against France, for, if there is a war there is a danger of France declaring war against England. Then England can threaten French possessions in Indo-China from Singapore. It is also directed against the Dutch East Indies, because England can force Holland to be neutral in case of war. It is directed partly at any rate against America and American Dominions in the Pacific, because in case of conflict England could sweep down on the Philippine Islands and take possession of them. It is chiefly directed against India because it is for the retention of India that all these things are done. Imagine that there is a struggle in India, then, the Singapore base will facilitate the transport of troops from Australia to India and in many other ways will help the British in taking the offensive in India. So much for the Singapore base.

Then, we have another naval base which is being made at Trincomalee[3]. We have also the great Royal Indian Navy which has recently been created with a flourish of trumpets. Whatever it may be, it is not an Indian Navy except perhaps that the expenses for it will come out of the Indian Exchequer. This Navy is merely an adjunct of the British Navy to help the British Government against India although it may be at our cost. Again, I should like to draw your attention to the

2. After the Washington Naval Conferences (1921-22) the Admiralty began the construction in 1924 of a first-rate naval base at Singapore. The building work which was stopped by the Labour Government in 1924 was renewed by the Conservatives in 1926. It was completed in 1938.
3. Trincomalee, on the east coast of Sri Lanka, was a land-locked harbour used by the British from the time of its capture in 1795 to control the Bay of Bengal.

rapid development of the transport system in India, especially in the North-Western Frontier Province, western Punjab and the North-East Frontier in India. War nowadays very largely depends on transport. That is why the transport system has been perfected. Strategic railways have been laid all over the North-Western Frontier. You have heard of the Khyber Pass Railway.[4] You will also hear subsequently of other strategic railways which are being built at great cost for military reasons. When military reasons are considered, cost is no consideration. Military roads have been built from the Khyber Pass, from the Punjab, from the North-West Frontier right up to Karachi. Motor lorry services have been started from Karachi to Peshawar. All this will facilitate the transport of troops and other materials in time of war. Although railways are there, railways might perhaps not be suitable — they may perhaps have strikes to contend against; therefore the whole military machinery of England is being made self-sufficient.

Now let me come to the North-Eastern Frontier in Assam. Recently you might have noticed in the papers, that proposals are being considered that a part of Assam to the north-east of India may be converted into a new military province, like the North-West Frontier, to facilitate the carrying on of war there, if necessary. For this purpose roads are laid. Railways are projected between Bengal and Burma and even between Burma and Assam. You may remember that the *Forward* of Calcutta was some time ago banned from entering Burma. The reason why it was banned was that it published and criticised something about these military roads in Assam, and the proposal to create a new military province.

Let me now go back to the North-Western Province where there is an extraordinary concentration of air force and tanks. Those who know have told us, it is the finest and best equipment that any army possesses. Karachi has been created an air-base[5] and other bases in the North-Western Province are being prepared; so that province is today full of activity for preparations for war. Two proposals have been made in England and also in Anglo-Indian journals in India which, although officially denied in Parliament, persist in getting publicity in the press. These periodicals are supposed to know what the government are doing and these proposals are of the greatest interest to us. The first was that

4. The construction of the Khyber railway was sanctioned in September 1920 and work on it began in November. It was completed by 2 November 1925.
5. This is a reference to the Imperial Airship Scheme of 1927 under which a mooring mast was constructed at Karachi airship base.

a part of the British Expeditionary Force[6] should be stationed in India because there is more danger of war in Asia than in Europe. Therefore, it is desirable that that force should be ready in India and should immediately start war-like preparations when necessary. The second proposal was that these highly developed mechanised forces should be used when there is any danger of war. The procedure that England should adopt was, as coldly stated in the English Press, to be not to wait for an attack but to make a forward spring into Central Asia across Afghanistan in one sweep. This was proposed because just in the same way Germans are supposed in their attack on France to have made a forward spring across Belgium.

I should like to tell you one or two things also in connection with the war preparations of Britain to which a friend of mine has drawn attention. He himself is a famous doctor and he tells me that a large number of persons have received a circular letter from the Medical Military Department in India. This letter has been issued to every member of the Civil Military Department and he has been asked if he is prepared in case of emergency to serve as a Medical Military Officer. Another letter has been issued to all military doctors who have served in the last war asking them if they are prepared to join the Medical Reserve. Friends, I should like you to consider what all this means. When this resolution was moved in the Subjects Committee, some people thought that it was rather an unnecessary resolution. They have not heard of any military preparations and they do not know anything of the coming war. They think that our domestic problems are more important. They ask, why we should waste time and energy over what might be happening in the North-West Frontier Province. I beg of you to consider whether these few facts are not sufficient to make you realise the great danger of war that exists in the world and round about India in particular. If such a danger exists, are you prepared to take no notice of it, but discuss only petty problems?

Two more things I want to tell you in connection with these preparations. The recent treaty between England and Mesopotamia — the Anglo-Iraq Treaty[7] — is one. And the second is the Amir's visit[8] to India. I would not be surprised if the cordial welcome the British Government extended to him, has not something to do with the

6. In 1914 Lord Haldane had created the British Expeditionary Force of six divisions for immediate dispatch to Europe
7. In 1924 a treaty was signed between Iraq and Britain providing for the maintenance of British military bases in Iraq.
8. King Amanullah passed through India on his way from Afghanistan to Europe in December 1927 and was given an aerial escort.

desire of the British Government to win him over. It may be we are not in a position to stop the war. But at any rate we are in a position to make it clear what attitude India will take up and it is quite possible and conceivable that if India's attitude is clearly stated then England too may change hers. England might not dare to provoke war when she knows that India would not support the war but actually hinder the conduct of the war. Now this resolution lays down clearly that India has no quarrel with her neighbours. As to the declaration itself, it is our right to determine whether we shall join the war or not. Thirdly, another declaration follows and that is the most important. In case war comes and an attempt is made to exploit you, you will refuse to be exploited and to take any part in the war. I trust that if war comes, and I think war may be nearer than most of us imagine—it may come in a year, two years or five years—this National Congress will follow up the lead given today. I also trust that the Indian people will rally round the Congress forgetting their petty differences and generally adopt the attitude which the Congress has suggested and refuse to participate in the war and suffer any consequences that might follow. I am convinced that if the Congress and the Indian people adopt this attitude they will emerge from that great ordeal much better, much freer and India will be a unified independent nation.

16. To Chaudhri Raghubir Narain Singh[1]

15.3.1928

My dear Chaudhri Sahab,

I enclose a copy of the letter I am sending to the Secretaries of the Punjab and Delhi P.C.Cs. I am sure you will be able to help us greatly in the matter. Mahatma Gandhi is very keen on these facts. A threatening war situation is developing in India and we must be prepared for it. I do not expect much from the Delhi P.C.C. but I do expect a great deal from you in this matter. I shall be greatly obliged if you will kindly take early steps and let me have the result of your enquiries.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-25/1928, p. 107, N.M.M.L.

17. To Secretaries, P. C. Cs Delhi and Punjab[1]

15.3.1928

Dear Sir,

Many reports[2] have reached us of great activities in recruiting in the Punjab and in the districts surrounding Delhi, which as you know are well known areas for recruiting. We want to have full particulars to enable us to give publicity to it. Mahatma Gandhi is also greatly interested in the subject and desires to write about it. But we must have authentic information before we can take any steps in the matter. Would you kindly take early steps to get this information from your district committees and from such individuals as may be in the know. Information is required not only on recruiting but also on any other war preparations. An early reply will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C C. File No. G 25/1928, p. 105, N M M.L.
2. *Early in 1928, it was announced in the rural areas of Meerut district* that demobilized soldiers of the First World War could enlist again. But this recruiting campaign was not very successful

18. To Secretary, P.C.C., U.P.[1]

March 1928

...I am also very keen on gathering together all the available material on war preparations and the like. I should very much like you to help me to get this material. Could you write to your district Congress committees in the north as well as to such individuals as are likely to be in the know to supply authentic information both in regard to recruiting and any other war preparations? I shall be greatly obliged if you will kindly take early steps in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C C. File No. G-25/1928, p 109, N M M L Extracts

19. To Chaudhri Raghubir Narain Singh[1]

March 31, 1928

My dear Chaudhri Raghubir Narain,

...*Information is required regarding* all manner of war preparations or recruiting. It is difficult to give you any more specific details. It is a well known fact that war preparations are going on on an extensive scale. Of course in so far as your district is concerned the only indication of such preparations can be intensive recruiting. It is really for you to consider whether any fact that may come to your notice has any bearing on war preparation or recruiting. If so, kindly note it down. We are specially interested in special recruiting, that is, recruiting in larger numbers than is usual and in any press gang methods that may be used.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-25/1928, p. 65, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

20. To Chaudhri Raghubir Narain Singh[1]

June 11, 1928

Dear Chaudhri Sahab,

Thank you for your letter[2] of the 7th June about recruiting and also the printed sheet that you sent me. It seems to me that extensive preparations are gradually beginning to be made. I shall welcome further information.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-25/1928, p. 25, N.M.M.L.
2. R. N. Singh had written to Jawaharlal that a meeting to be addressed by officials was being held to promote recruiting

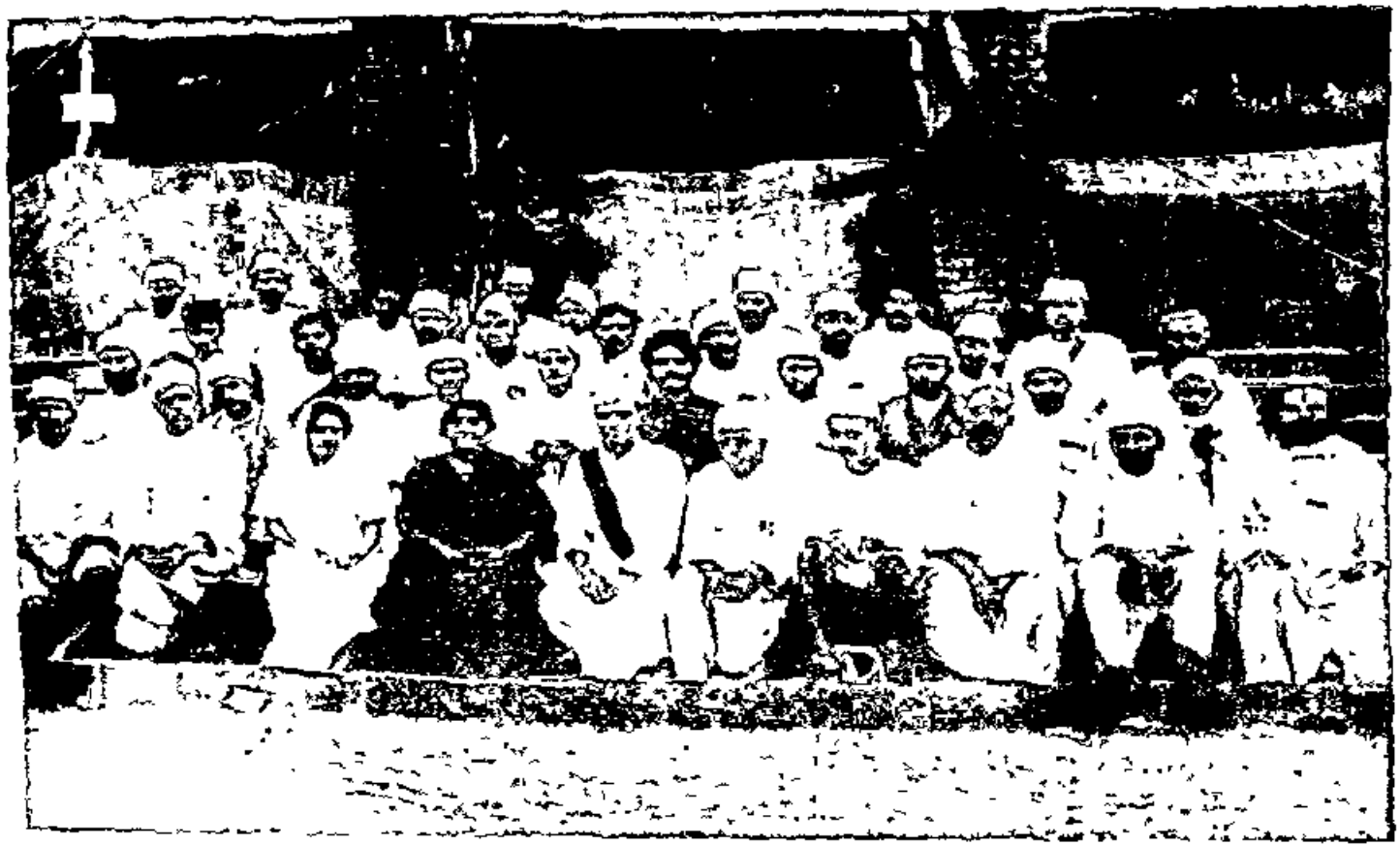

WITH CONGRESS WORKERS IN MADRAS, 1927.

WITH CONGRESS WORKERS AT ALLAHABAD, 1928.

2

THE NEHRU REPORT

1. Circular to Political Organisations[1]

Anand Bhawan,
Allahabad
18th January, 1928

Dear Sir,

In continuation of my letter No. G.2 of 28/1322 dated the 2nd January 1928, I am glad to inform you that the All Parties Conference[2] which met at Benares on the 15th inst., considered besides the boycott of the Statutory Commission, the question of fixing a suitable place and date for the conference between the Congress Working Committee and committees of other organisations to draft a Swaraj Constitution in accordance with the resolution adopted by the Indian National Congress at Madras. The conference after full consideration came to the conclusion that the second week of February at Delhi would generally suit the convenience of representatives of various organisations who will be attending the conference and accordingly fixed the 12th February for the purpose. May I therefore request that you will make early arrangements for the appointment of your committee and for their attending the conference on Sunday the 12th February at Delhi? The exact hour and place of the meeting at Delhi will be announced later.

I shall be obliged if you will kindly intimate the names of your representatives to me at the address noted above.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Meerut Conspiracy Case Papers, Defence Exhibit 145 (22), National Archives of India.
2. The Madras Congress passed a resolution directing the Working Committee to convene an All Parties Conference to draw up a constitution for India acceptable to all parties. This was in reply to Lord Birkenhead's challenge to Indian politicians to produce an agreed constitution for India. This conference first met at Delhi from 12 to 22 February 1928.

2. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
23.2.28

My dear Bapuji,
I wrote to you a few hours ago and informed you that I hoped to be in Sabarmati on Monday or Tuesday night. Immediately after I received a summons from Delhi to go there and remain there for the next fortnight or more to assist in constitution drafting. I have no present intention of remaining in Delhi and I shall try my best to visit you but it may be that I am delayed in Delhi a little. Personally I have had enough of this All Parties Conference. After ten days of it the strain was too great for me and I fled to avoid riot and insurrection! I feel better already after a three days' absence but another dose of all the parties may go to my head. I am thus not at all desirous of attending the meetings in Delhi. But I do not know what might happen. I shall wire to you from Delhi.
Love.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No 13079.

3. Statement at All Parties Conference[1]

Delhi
8 March 1928

Jawaharlal Nehru wishes to state that although he has expressed his agreement with and dissent from some matters dealt with in this report he has a fundamental objection to the basis on which the constitution

1. Report on All Parties Conference, Delhi, February March 1928 Extracts.

is sought to be drafted. He is of opinion that it should be made clear that the constitution should establish a democratic socialistic republic in India. He also thinks that territorial elections should as far as possible give way to elections by economic units. Even if this cannot at present be done to any large extent, a beginning should be made wherever practicable. Representation by economic units will not only ensure real and effective legislatures representing the life of the country and every interest therein, but will also automatically do away with the problem of communal representation.

4. *To Syed Mahmud*[1]

17.3.28

My dear Mahmud,

Your letter. I returned from Delhi last Monday. I shall be here till the end of the month. Early in April I shall probably go to Punjab for a week or 10 days. Kamala and Indira may go to the hills in April.

Gandhiji was very weak when I saw him but he has been thus for long. Outwardly there was no great change in him. He intends going to Burma and Singapore this summer. I hope he goes. This will do him good.

Surely you do not expect me to write a long account of the All Parties Conference. Why are you so much out of touch with public affairs? Have you lost all interest in them? And if so why would you like me to write about them? Try to bestir yourself and make yourself follow the doings of the world and India in particular. The conference was a very trying affair. It was a battle[2] of a few extremists on either side—Jinnah and his group on one side and the Hindu Mahasabha on the other—the others had little say in the matter except when they got angry. I was thoroughly fed up with both the groups. Still I think that things are moving slowly.

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, *NMML*.
2. The demands of the Muslim League for reservation of seats, extension of the Reforms to N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan and the separation of Sind, were all opposed by the Hindu Mahasabha

By the way there is a great deal of talk of war in the near future. You had better prepare yourself for it.

Father is still in Delhi. He is not expected back for a fortnight.

Love.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

5. To the Members of the Congress Working Committee[1]

Allahabad
3 May 1928

The All Parties Conference will be held as previously fixed on the 19th May in Bombay. Members of the Working Committee are no doubt aware of the developments which have taken place since the All Parties Conference adjourned and prior to it. It was stated on behalf of the Muslim League in the final stages of the conference that they were not prepared to consider other constitutional matters unless and until an agreement was arrived at in regard to the communal issue. When the conference discussed the report of the sub-committee the members of the Muslim League did not take any part in the proceedings. The representatives of the Hindu Mahasabha at the conference also took up an attitude which was not conducive to any compromise being arrived at.

Subsequently the Hindu Mahasabha met at Jubbulpore and passed a resolution of strong protest against All Party recommendations specially in regard to the separation of Sind.[2] It is clear therefore that no help can be expected under the circumstances from the representatives of the Mahasabha and probably of the Muslim League. In regard to one or two matters the attitude of the Sikh League is also uncompromising.

It is too much to be hoped that these conflicting viewpoints will be able to accommodate themselves and will agree to a common formula.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-63/1928, p. 39, N.M.M.L.
   This was drafted by Jawaharlal. The text is incomplete.
2. The Mahasabha, meeting under Kelkar's presidentship, objected to political reforms being given a communal character and to the separation of Sind for obviously communal reasons.

We are therefore to prepare ourselves for this conflict and to decide on our course of action.

Suggestions were made that the All Parties Conference might be postponed. This proposal was *firmly rejected. It is better to face the* trouble as we come to it than shirk the issue. The President also desires me to draw your attention to these and suggests that the Working Committee should manage to carry on with its own programme despite all defections. In the main this programme will be naturally based on the resolution of the Congress but of course it is open to the committee to make such alterations in it without going against the Congress mandate as it desires to do. We have seen in the past that a large number of organisations in the country for instance, the All India Liberal Federation, the Home Rule League, the Southern India Liberal Federation, the Bengal Liberal League and various other organisations were in substantial agreement. It should not be difficult to secure the consent of most of the organisations represented at the conference to any reasonable plan which provides for all interests.

The members of the Working Committee present at the conference should be ready with a clearly thought out programme which they must press the conference to accept. It is for them to think this out previously. It is upto us to hold a meeting of the Working Committee at least three days before the conference. We shall meet in Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's room at 5.30 p.m. and I trust you will make it convenient to attend the meeting. The All Parties Conference will be held on 19th May at Congress House, Bombay.

6. To J. N. Gupta[1]

Allahabad
9 May 1928

Dear Sir,[2]
I am in receipt of your letter of the 7th May. The question of the army and military training was not forgotten in the discussions at the

1. A.I.C.C. File No AP 9/1928, pp. 7-9, N.M.M.L.
2. A resident of Shahabad, Bihar.

All Parties Conference. But the details as to the training and military schools etc., cannot form part of the permanent Constitution. So far as the Constitution is concerned the first important thing to have in it is that the army should be controlled by the popular Assembly or Parliament. This has been laid down in Delhi, if not very clearly at any rate inferentially. The only other possible reference to military training in the Constitution can be a provision for compulsory training.

Apart from the Constitution however it is desirable to pay a good deal of attention to this question because it is a vital matter for us. I am glad that you have been thinking about it and have written a book on the subject. I hope you will send me a copy of this book when it is ready.

In your note you suggest certain improvements in the army with a view to make India help the empire in the coming war. Personally I am entirely opposed to the idea of India giving the slightest help to England in the course of such a war. I hope on the contrary that India will obstruct it in every possible way.

I also think that every single British soldier should be withdrawn from India not because he is expensive but because he has no business in this country.

I do not know if you have paid much attention to the modern developments in the army. The old infantry and cavalry are about as useful now in modern warfare as people with bows and arrows. What counts today is the mechanical element, tanks, aeroplanes, gases and the like. *It is quite conceivable that you may build up an army on the* lines you have suggested and yet be as weak in defence as we are today.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. Interview to the Press[1]

Q. What are your views on the decisions of the Bombay session of the All Parties' Conference?

1. Bombay, 22 May 1928. *The Hindu*, 27 May 1928.

Jawaharlal Nehru: Frequent conferences are held, but very little work is done; but I am prepared to work and cooperate with any organisation so long as the fundamental problem is to get our freedom. My faith is that action alone will bring us Swaraj.

Q. Do you agree with Pandit Motilal Nehru that Dominion Status is welcome?

J. N.: It is a knotty question, and I cannot say Yes or No. I do not think that there is the slightest chance of Dominion Status ever being given to India, because it is not to the advantage of India and England. I can conceive, however, of an independent India being in alliance with England, and coming to an agreement about cooperating in certain fields. But I think that a healthy atmosphere can never come through pressure, so long as any feeling of superiority on one side and inferiority on the other side continues. I believe in mutual cooperation between nations. Indeed I believe in world cooperation and not in cooperation between two or three nations in opposition to another group. It seems to me that the British Empire at present is definitely a group opposed to a large number of other groups. It is not interested in evolving a larger group comprising all the nations of the world. This mutual rivalry between the British Government and other groups is a continual danger to world peace. This peace, I feel, can only come when there is no domination of one country over another. Therefore, I think that the first essential is that India should become completely free.

Q. Is the British public aware of India's feelings?

J. N: As far as the larger British public is concerned, it does not think about India and cares less about it. The political section of it, to whatever party it might belong, excepting certain individuals, appears to have no desire whatever to grant any measure of freedom to India. But the British public have a way of adapting themselves to circumstances. I am sure that they will adapt themselves to Indian feeling when they are convinced that there is enough strength behind the Indian demand and that it is unsafe for them to resist it any longer.

Q. Can the British public be sounded?

J. N.: I do not believe in any propaganda in England. It is not a question of convincing anybody. The only conviction that is required is the conviction of India's strength. The day this conviction dawns in the minds of British people, they will approach the subject in a proper

frame of mind. Thus the problem for India is one of developing her strength. How to develop this strength both in the political and economic sphere has been discussed and partly laid down by the Congress. I am sure every Indian, whether he is a Congressman or a Liberal, desires full independence for India. It is inconceivable that any Indian should not do so. Some Liberals, however, state that they are content with Dominion Status. I take it, that this is because they feel it is easier to achieve. I think that it is equally easy or difficult to attain independence. It is not a question of convincing anybody in favour of independence, because everybody is heartily so convinced. It is only a question of developing strength. The moment we succeed in doing so, the Liberals will welcome independence as much as anyone else.

8. The Ideal of Indian Freedom[1]

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru maintained that the full freedom of India was not compatible with the ideal of Dominion Status. The comparison of Canada, Australia or South Africa did not hold good with regard to India. The question of the defence of India frightened a number of people. But as a matter of fact there was no obvious danger of invasion from any outside country. Even if there was invasion, India would be able to face it. Indian soldiers were inferior to none in the world. They had shown their capacity to fight in the great war. Officers could be trained in a short time from the intelligent material always at hand provided there was a sufficient incentive.

1. Speech at Hubli, 24 May 1928. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 26 May 1928.

9. To S. S. Mirajkar[1]

11 June 1928

Dear Comrade Mirajkar,[2]
The short accounts in the press about the All Parties Committee[3] are very misleading. The committee has not given much thought so far to the question of labour.[4] As you know the main problem before it is the communal problem. As soon as this bugbear is removed some attention can be paid to other important subjects.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-52/1928, p. 15, N.M.M.L.
2. A trade union leader and Communist of Bombay who was one of the accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case; spent over ten years in jail; Mayor of Bombay 1958.
3. The committee to recommend the principles of a Constitution for India, set up in Bombay in May 1928, under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru, and with 9 members including Sapru, Ali Imam, Jayakar and Subhas Bose. Though Jawaharlal was not a member, he gave the committee a great deal of assistance.
4. S. S. Mirajkar in his letter dated 7 June 1928 had written to say that he had read in the papers that the All Parties Committee had determined the rights of labour and peasants, and asked Jawaharlal to give him an idea as to what these rights were.

10. To M. M. Banaji[1]

11 June 1928

Dear Sir,[2]
I am in receipt of your letters dated the 20th and 30th May. I have little to add to what I have already informed you. In no case have

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 104/1928, p. 269, N.M.M.L.
2. A resident of Andheri, Bombay.

13. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

27 June 1928

My dear Subhas,[2]

I have your letter of the 25th. I have shown it to my father. He thinks and I agree with him that it will not be desirable to invite Sir Abdur Rahim[3] to the meeting on the 6th July. In case he happens to come it is certain that the meeting will end in a fiasco. His presence will put up the backs of most Hindus present and even the Mohamadans will stiffen up in their attitude. There is no doubt that his coming would be a disaster. It is difficult enough as you well know to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. It is hardly wise to lessen the faint chances that we may have by inviting Sir Abdur Rahim. But you say that he is not likely to come. That may be so. Even then I do not think it is right for us to attach importance to people like Abdur Rahim. I think the Congress has already gone too far in trying to win over all manner of folk. This is neither good principle nor good expediency. Abdur Rahim is just the kind of man who has made himself impossible like Shafi[4].

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 104/1928, p. 155, N.M.M.L.
2. (1897-1945); born in Cuttack; educated in Cuttack, Calcutta and Cambridge; having qualified for the I.C.S., resigned in April 1921; on return home joined noncooperation movement and became a follower of C. R. Das; arrested in 1924 and detained till 1927, mostly in Mandalay jail; President, Bengal P.C.C. and General Secretary of the Congress, 1927; President of the Congress 1938 and re-elected 1939 defeating Mahatma Gandhi's nominee; resigned presidentship and founded All India Forward Bloc; placed under house arrest at the beginning of Second World War but escaped to Germany in 1941; organised Indian Independence League in South East Asia, organized and led the Indian National Army and was acclaimed as Netaji, after the fall of Japan died in an aircraft accident on 18 August 1945.
3. (1867-1952); a rich zamindar of Midnapore, West Bengal and a successful lawyer of the Calcutta High Court; Judge of the Madras High Court in 1910 and 1920; Member, Bengal Legislative Council in 1926, Minister, Bengal government, 1927; Member, Central Legislative Assembly in 1930, in 1933-34 was the Leader of the Opposition in the Central Assembly and President, Central Legislative Assembly from 1935 to 1945.
4. Sir Mian Muhammad Shafi (1869-1932); a politician of the Punjab and a prominent leader of the Muslim League; Member, Viceroy's Executive Council 1922-1924.

In any event if it is a question of inviting him, that only arises for the full conference, not to a small gathering of a dozen persons or so.

Father thinks that the fewer the men invited the better and he may perhaps cut down the list slightly. J. N. Basu[5] however will be invited according to your suggestion.

The 6th July has been fixed for the meeting. I take it it will last two or three days if not more. Please see to it that Abul Kalam Azad comes to it.

I hope you will come armed with full figures about the respective Hindu and Muslim populations in the various constituencies of Bengal. This may help the committee. The other figures about population I shall get from the census.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. (1872 1946); a leading liberal politician of Bengal.

14. To K. T. Mathew[1]

27 June 1928

Dear Sir,[2]

I am in receipt of your letter dated the 17th June. This letter was placed by me before the All Parties Committee. Copies of the Swaraj Constitution which you were good enough to send have also been distributed to the members of the committee. This committee as you are well aware is a very small committee. The very object of its formation would have been defeated if every interest had been represented on it. I entirely agree with you that the Indian States' subjects occupy a very important position and it would have been desirable to have them represented. But it is not for me to criticise the conference which elected the committee. As a matter of fact, the point you mention was raised in the conference and subsequently withdrawn, the committee being elected unanimously.

1. A I C.C. File No. 104/1928, p. 147, N.M.M.L.
2. (1895-1946); Secretary, All India States Subjects Conference.

I trust that when the draft Constitution is placed before the full conference your representatives will see to it that your interests are entirely safeguarded. Personally if I may say so I am wholly in agreement with your demand. Indeed perhaps I may go a little further still. But you are right in thinking that many of our politicians consider the Indian States as a somewhat thorny problem and are therefore afraid of going into details. It is for you to bring pressure on them and I have no doubt that your point of view will prevail in the end.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. Invitation to the meeting of the All Parties Committee[1]

Allahabad
28 June 1928

The committee appointed by the All Parties Conference met here on the 5th June and continued its sittings up to the 22nd June. Much solid work has been done but I am sorry to say that the controversial points have not received a unanimous solution.

I am sure you will agree with me in thinking that the strength of the nationalist case about the kind of Constitution India needs depends in a great measure upon whether the report of this committee is unanimous or not. If unanimous, very considerable weight will naturally be attached to it and its passage through the All Parties Conference will be comparatively easier. But if we are unfortunate enough to continue to differ there is no chance of the opinion of any particular section of the committee being acceptable to all the leading parties in the country. The reactionaries will then have all their own way and it will take a good long time to regain lost ground. It is therefore of vital importance to us all that the report of the committee should be unanimous and we must do all we can to ensure that result.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 104/1928, p. 143, N.M.M.L.
This letter, drafted by Jawaharlal and signed by Motilal Nehru, was sent, among others, to Dr. Ansari, Pandit Malaviya, Maulana Azad, C. Y. Chintamani and Sachchidananda Sinha.

I have fixed the 6th and 7th July for the final meeting of the committee at which we must come to a unanimous decision if an ignominious surrender to the reactionary forces now at work is to be avoided. I need hardly say that the committee is not approaching this matter from party points of view. The members who as you know belong to different parties have agreed to consider the broad national aspects of the questions before them without being tied down by party commitments.

In these circumstances it appears to me very desirable to have the benefit of the advice of a few select friends whose presence at the deliberations of the committee will, I am confident, contribute largely to a successful solution of the difficult problems before it.

I therefore earnestly request you to arrange to come to Allahabad for the 6th and 7th July even at some inconvenience. Please inform me of your arrival by post or telegram and I shall make such arrangements for your comfort as are possible in Allahabad.

16. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
30.6.28

My dear Bapuji,
Father has I believe written to you about Kamala and Indu. Indu I am glad to say has been pronounced to be well but Kamala is supposed to be more or less as she was two years ago. Ansari agrees with the diagnosis but says that only a very small part is affected and this should yield easily to treatment. She looks well. She has a bad cough but I believe this is a separate ailment and has nothing to do with T. B.

I know Kuhnes system fairly well. In fact many years ago I tried it myself. I had no special occasion to do so as I am not in the habit of falling ill. I can't say that it cured me of anything because I was not suffering from anything. But I felt fitter all the same. Kamala has also tried it in the past. I think it would do her good now, but it is difficult to arrange it just now in Mussoorie without breaking off completely with the present doctor. When she comes to Allahabad I shall start it.

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 13444.

The "agreed draft constitution" seems to be as far off as ever. Indeed I think it is further off. Even in our little committee a sufficient amount of heat is engendered and it is not easy to consider the communal question dispassionately. I do not know if anything will happen next week when a final effort is going to be made to settle differences. I doubt it. Everybody thinks he is 100% in the right and the other party is a narrow-minded obstinate pig or a bigot of the worst kind. This does not produce a helpful atmosphere.

One of the wisest things I have done was to withdraw my name from the membership of the committee. As it is, my presence at committee meetings is a trial to all concerned. It is certainly painful to me to have to put up with all that is said and done there and I am sure my occasional intrusions are not welcomed. The committee will be over in a few days but the problem will however remain. The fault must be mine but anyway it results in my feeling always that I do not fit in with anything. I am always the square peg and the holes are all round. I feel very lonely.

I trust Mahadeva is quite well now.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

17. To Syed Mahmud[1]

30.6.28

My dear Mahmud,

Your letter from Hyderabad has just come. Also the copy of the address which Ross Masud[2] delivered at Poona. I shall read this with interest. I have already seen extracts from it in the papers.

Kamala is in Mussoorie at the Savoy Hotel. She is not well and is troubled greatly by a cough. I took Ansari there to examine her. He was of opinion that she had lung trouble again although it was not much. I hope to go to Mussoorie again in about a fortnight.

The All Parties Committee has not progressed very satisfactorily. You say that you heard somewhere that father is opposing the Muslim

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (1889-1937), grandson of Sayad Ahmad Khan and son of Justice Syed Mahmood, Director of Education in Hyderabad for several years and Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University, 1929 to 1933, later appointed as Minister for Education, Bhopal State.

demands. He is opposed to one part of them and in theory so am I. As a compromise if the contending parties agree of course anything is acceptable to him. But when parties do not agree one has to proceed on some principles. The main items in dispute as you know are the N.W.F.P., Sind and the reservation of seats for majorities. So far as the first two are concerned the opposition of the Hindu Sabha though strenuous is unreasonable and can be ignored. But the real difficulty arises in regard to the reservation of seats for a majority, specially in the Punjab. Both the Sikhs and the Hindu Sabha are violently opposed to this and all constitutional and democratic theory is with them in this point. The Sikhs would be nowhere with such a reservation. As a matter of fact we have carefully calculated the figures for all the districts in the Punjab and we have found that the reservation of seats for the Muslim majority is not only wholly unnecessary as the Muslims are bound to have a majority but it is positively harmful to them. From my point of view, which is purely economic, it will be very harmful also and prevent the real issues being considered. It seems to me that we must tackle the problem and solve it once for all and not have anachronisms based on unreal communal differences in our Constitution, specially when it can be demonstrated that the majority Muslim community is really the gainer. Safeguards can be and have been provided for all contingencies and the fullest cultural autonomy granted by the creation of special communal councils to look after cultural and educational matters. This is the only real point at issue. So far there has been no agreement. There is going to be a full meeting of the committee on July 6th to which a number of non-members have been invited, among others Ansari, Shaukat, Shafi Daud,[3] Khaliq, Kitchlew and some others. I wish you would come also. Father would like you to.

As for my presidentship of the Congress, don't worry. I had rather not preside. The real objection to me is not youth or jealousy but fear of my radical ideas. I do not propose to tone down my ideas for the presidentship.

If Ross Masud comes here I shall be very glad to meet. I have heard so much of him but I don't think I have ever met him.

About the article for the *Searchlight* I am afraid I cannot write to order. I must be in the mood for it.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

Do come for the 6th.

3. Maulana Shafi Daudi (1863-1949); a Swarajist leader of Bihar.

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18. Resolution on Reservation of Seats[1]

We are unanimously opposed to the reservation of seats in the legislatures either for majorities or minorities and we recommend that no such reservation should be provided for in the constitution. But if this recommendation is not accepted and an agreement can be arrived at only on a reservation of seats on the population basis we recommend that such reservation may be made for majorities or minorities without any weightage and with a clear provision that it shall automatically cease at the expiry of ten years or earlier by the consent of the parties concerned.

Anand Bhawan, Allahabad
July 7th, 1928

1. A.I.C.C. File No 110/1928, p. 97, N.M.M.L.
Jawaharlal was one of the twenty signatories to this resolution, but the Nehru Committee was unable to adopt it. The committee recommended that in provinces other than the Punjab and Bengal an exception had to be made in favour of Muslim minorities by permitting reservation of seats, if desired by them, in proportion to their population, both in Central and Provincial Legislatures.

19. To Choithram P. Gidwani[1]

August 6, 1928

Dear Sir,[2]
The President of the A.I.C.C., Dr. Ansari, who is at present in Allahabad desires me to acknowledge your telegram to him.

He has invited the Provincial Congress Committees to send representatives to the All Parties Conference. Similar invitations were also issued for the meeting of the conference held in Bombay. All the invitations for the conference have been issued by him from time to time usually in consultation with his colleagues of the Congress Working

1. A.I.C.C. File No. AP-16/1928 (Pt. I), pp 25-27, N.M.M.L.
2. (1889-1957); a prominent Congress leader of Sind

Committee and sometimes at his own discretion. There is no resolution naming the organisations to be invited which fetters his discretion in any way. The object he has aimed at in issuing invitations is to have as many viewpoints as possible represented. In Bombay, last May, his attention was drawn to the fact that the Communist Party and the Workers and Peasants Party[3] were not represented. He thereupon directed me to issue invitations to these organisations also.

As you are aware the All Parties Conference does not usually come to decisions by majority voting. The numbers present at the conference do not make much difference to the decision that might be arrived at.

The President has felt that the provincial Congress committees in many provinces are far more powerful and representative organisations than many All India organisations. At the Delhi meeting of the conference some of the organisations invited were represented by nearly 30 nominees. No limit had been placed on the numbers although a request had been made that too many should not be sent. The result was that the National Congress, although the convening body, had very few of its representatives in the conference and many of its best people could not attend and give the conference the benefit of their cooperation because they were not members of the Congress Working Committee. Some time before the Bombay meeting this point was raised by the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and great stress was laid on permission being given to them to send representatives. The President felt the force of the argument and acceded to their request. Having done so there was no reason in denying the other provincial Congress committees the right to send their representatives to the conference. A circular letter to this effect was thereupon issued to all provincial Congress committees.

The President does not see how any such arguments apply to the provincial branches of other communal or political organisations. He regrets therefore he is unable to issue any such general invitation.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. In an effort to create a mass revolutionary party with a neutral name Workers and Peasants Parties were formed between 1926 28 in Bengal, Bombay, U P. and the Punjab.

20. To Swami Krishnanand[1]

August 6, 1928

Dear Sir,[2]
The President of the Congress, Dr. Ansari, who is in Allahabad at present desires me to acknowledge your telegram to him. He has not seen Mr. Govindananda's announcement to which you refer nor is he aware of any special mandate which has been issued to Congress representatives on behalf of the Congress. But quite apart from any mandate it seems to him obvious enough that a representative of the Congress should stand for the principles which have been approved of by the Congress. It would be a travesty of representation if a person claiming to be a Congressman and representing a Congress organisation should take up a position in the All Parties Conference or elsewhere directly opposed to the declared views of the Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. AP-16/1928 (Pt. I), p. 29, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1890); a Congressman of Himachal Pradesh who worked in Sind before independence.

21. To The Secretary, All India Aryan League[1]

21 August 1928

Dear Sir,
I have just received your letter No. 822 dated 18th August. The Arya Samaj, as you rightly pointed out, is a most important organisation in our country. The fact that it was not invited, I take it, was not due to any doubt about its importance or about its strength but to other

1. A.I.C.C. File No. AP 16/1928 (Pt. I), pp. 71 72, N.M.M.L.

reasons. As Secretary of the Congress I have merely to carry out the orders of the Working Committee and I issued invitations in accordance with these instructions. I cannot therefore say why the Arya Samaj was not invited. But I presume it was not due to any doubts as to its representative character in its own sphere of action. I take it that the Arya Samaj is a body chiefly concerned with religious and social reform in the country. The All Parties Conference was meant to consist of political organisations as well as communal organisations which had been taking a great interest in political matters. It was probably considered that organisations of a purely religious and social kind however important they might be were not necessarily equally interested in political matters. This of course is not wholly true because religion and social reform and politics cannot be easily separated. But an attempt was probably made to confine the conference to such organisations as are primarily political. Hence the Arya Samaj and many other organisations of a like nature, for instance, the Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, the Shuddi Sabha, the Tabligh Association, the Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, the Akali Dal and many other similar organisations of whose existence you are doubtless aware were not invited. If an exception was made in favour of anyone of these organisations it would be difficult to draw a line anywhere.

I am merely suggesting what I think was the reason actuating the Working Committee of the Congress. The matter as such has not been considered by the committee. So I cannot say definitely what the viewpoint of the Working Committee was or is. Your letter is the first of its kind that this office has received. I am afraid I cannot take any action on it on my own responsibility. I am however, referring the matter to the President of the A.I.C.C.

As a large number of other organisations have been invited I have no doubt that many important members of the Arya Samaj will be present in the conference as representatives of other organisations.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

22. To Khaliquzzaman[1]

21 August 1928

My dear Khaliq,

I have been away from Allahabad and I only received your letter of the 15th last night.

It seems to me that the police have no right to a free pass for our conference. They have such a right only when the meeting is a public one. The conference is limited to holders of tickets. The fact that we are issuing tickets to the press does not make it a public gathering nor does it entitle the police to come there as of right. We are entitled to refuse to issue the press ticket to any particular pressman or newspaper. So also we are entirely within our rights in refusing to give the free ticket to the police. Indeed we are equally entitled to refuse to sell the ticket to any individual or policeman. I am quite clear that the police have no right as claimed by them and this should be made quite clear to them. My father however suggests that a press ticket might be given to them. You might therefore issue one press ticket to them and no more. But at the same time you should make the position quite clear and tell them that we are doing this as an exceptional case which we are not going to treat as a precedent. You can also sell as many tickets to them as they agree to buy.

After much hesitation I have accepted the Maharaja's[2] invitation to stay with him. I must confess that I did not at all like the idea of staying in his palace but I thought that you would be too full and too busy and so perforce I agreed. Said ur-Rahman has asked me if I want to stay in Qaiserbagh or in Butler Palace. I am writing to him that I prefer the former. This will be nearer the conference.

I hope you have had the press tickets and the visitors' tickets printed. I am having a few special visitors' tickets printed for persons invited by the President. Some chairs for these people should be placed near the dais.

I hope to reach Lucknow on the morning of the 27th.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. AP-16/1928 (Pt 1), p 79, N M M L
2. Maharaja of Mahmudabad (1877 1931), a leading talukdar of Avadh, executive councillor, U.P. 1921-26; one of the signatories of the Nehru Report.

23. Speech at the All Parties Conference[1]

The members of the committee, whose report we are considering, have been good enough to commend a little bit of drudgery that I performed for them[2]. It is a little ungracious of me to criticize their work, especially as, perhaps, I know more than any one else how hard they worked on this report.

Why was the committee appointed? We all know that it was appointed principally to find a solution for our communal difficulties. We were faced at Bombay by an impasse and no way out was visible then. Therefore, this committee was appointed and *not so much because it* was necessary to draft a fine Constitution. Their report testifies to the measure of success that they have attained in finding this solution.

It is a fair solution, just to all parties, and I earnestly trust that the conference will accept it.

Some of the other proposals that the committee has made are to my thinking not so happy. I am specially unable to reconcile myself to Dominion Status and all its implications. What is the meaning of the resolution that we are considering? The preamble tells us that it is open to us to carry on activity and propaganda for independence. But *this is a mere flourish, meaning little. The second part of the resolution* really commits every organisation and every individual in it to Dominion Status. The speeches in support of the motion, and specially that of the mover, made this even clearer. I wondered when I was listening to them, whether I was not attending a session of the Congress a generation ago. They embody an ideology of a past age utterly out of touch with facts and realities of today. We were told of the injustice in not having Indian governors, Indians in the Service and in the Railway Board. Is this what we have met here for? Is this our idea of freedom? It seems to me that we are drifting back from the 20th century to the ways and methods of the 19th.

We are told that we must be practical, and being practical is taken to mean adherence to an outworn set of ideas, regardless of the changes that have happened in the world. The mover of the resolution told us

1. Lucknow, 29 August 1928. Report of the All Parties Conference, 1928.
2. Jawaharlal acted as the Secretary, All Parties Committee.

that he had learnt politics from John Stuart Mill[3] and Green,[4] the author of *A Short History of the English People*. Eminent men they were, but may I remind him that they are dead and gone and much has happened since then? They are dead as Queen Anne, as Charles I, as Louis XVI of France and as the last Tzar of Russia. The world has moved and changed, and if we are to be practical, let us take stock of the changes that the world has brought. What does the British Commonwealth of Nations, as it is now called, stand for? It stands for one part domineering over and exploiting the other. There are England and the self-governing dominions, exploiting India, parts of Africa, Malaya and other parts of the world. When we obtain Dominion Status, are we going to get promotion from the exploited part to that of the exploiting? Are we going to assist England and the other Dominions in exploiting Egypt and Africa? The thing is inevitable. Dominion Status for India must necessarily mean the break-up of the British Empire as it is today.

Then again we are told that Dominion Status may be obtained by consent, independence only after an appeal to arms or force. I do not know if any one here imagines that Dominion Status is going to be achieved by sweet reasonableness and logic. If so, all I can say is that he is a very credulous individual. Dominion Status or independence both require a sanction behind them, whether that is the sanction of armed force or non-violent force. You will get Dominion Status the moment you make it clear to the British people that unless it is granted they will stand to lose much more. You will get it when they feel that it will be hell for them in India unless they agreed to it. You will not get it by logic or fine phrases. In matters of this kind justice has little place. Therefore both for independence and Dominion Status, a sanction and a force of some kind is necessary. Consent only follows the creation of the sanction. It cannot come without it. Alternatively if Dominion Status can be the result of an agreement between India and England, I see no reason why independence also should not be agreed to between them. We may agree to certain safeguards, if necessary, for British interests, not because we consider that the British are entitled to any safeguards, but as the price of peace in order to avoid bloody warfare and great suffering. Perhaps, it is easier for me to cooperate with the British people than it is for many of those who talk of Dominion Status, but I cannot cooperate on their terms. I shall

3. (1806-73); English philosopher and economist; a leading exponent of Utilitarianism.

4. John Richard Green (1837-1883), eminent British historian. *A Short History of the English People* was published in 1874

cooperate with them on equal terms only when I have some sanction and force behind me.

I am therefore, interested much more in the creation of this sanction than a fine Constitution. Do it by all means, but remember that in order to enforce it you *must have a sanction and that applies both to* Dominion Status and independence. Do not be under any delusion that Dominion Status is a matter of consent and easily obtainable and that independence is much more difficult of attainment and can come only through war. If India gets Dominion Status, it necessarily follows that we fit our foreign policy with the foreign policy of England, that we support England in Egypt, China and elsewhere. Indeed the report makes it clear that there should be a joint imperial policy. Are you prepared to be tied to the chariot-wheels of England in this way? Dominion Status involves cooperation between India and England.

Let us consider the various groups in England today. Are you going to cooperate with my Lords Birkenhead and Winterton or with Mr. Lloyd George of the 'Steel frame' and his great supporter in the press, *The Manchester Guardian*, which has called this report that we are considering a piece of lunacy? Or will you cooperate with the valiant Jix,[5] the Home Secretary in England, who among his merits—and they are few—has certainly the quality of frankness, who stated that the English people had come to India, not for the benefit of India, but to fill their own pockets? Or will you cooperate with the sanctimonious and canting humbugs who lead the Labour Party in England? For my part, I would prefer to deal with the Birkenhead crowd than with MacDonald and Co. Whom, then, do you cooperate with in England? Nobody will have you, nobody will deal with you, but still you go on repeating the worn out formula of making offers and compromises and convincing the British people. You will never do so till you develop the sanction and enforce your will. Therefore, I say to you with all humility that to talk of Dominion Status is to delude ourselves and to give the country an entirely wrong lead. The only practical goal is that of independence, and it is bad policy and worse tactics to agree in any shape or form to Dominion Status, even for a while and even as a compromise.

There is talk of unity amongst various parties and undoubtedly the gathering here is a very representative *gathering*. But I would beg of you to remember that we represent largely the intelligentsia of this country only. We represent directly at any rate, the two or three or five

5. William Joynson Hicks, first Viscount Brentford (1865-1932); Parliamentary Secretary, Overseas Trade Department 1922-23, Postmaster General and Paymaster General 1923, Home Secretary 1924-29.

per cent, in this country only. The whole country as we all know, has been convulsed this year by labour troubles. Strikes, lockouts[6] and shootings and terrible misery involved in all these and the peasant troubles have taken place in different parts of the country. Yet what do you find in the report in regard to these matters? There is hardly anything except a few good principles in the Declaration of Rights and elsewhere. Only a few days ago the government produced a measure, the Trade Disputes Bill,[7] which is intended to stifle and prevent labour organisation. What have we to say in regard to it? Still more recently a new measure[8] has been produced to deal, it is said, with Bolshevik agitators in the country. He must be a simple enough person who imagines that a few Bolsheviks and the like or even hundreds of them can create all this labour trouble and peasant trouble in India. This measure is meant to apply to non-Indians. But we all know that there are enough measures in the Statute Book, like the Bengal Ordinance, which can be made to apply to Indians. There is no necessity for any further enactments for Indians. This has been and is the consistent policy of England towards India.

Do you think it is right for us to claim Dominion Status and to put our seal in a way to this policy?

I do submit that it would be a wrong thing and a fatal thing for India to make Dominion Status as our objective. Those of us who think with me have carefully considered this resolution and we have definitely come to the conclusion that we cannot support it. We do not desire, however, to hamper the work of this conference, because we feel that the principal work it has before it is the settlement of the communal issue. We are prepared to help in so far as we can in the settlement of this problem. We have, therefore, decided to dissociate ourselves entirely with this resolution and not to have anything to do with it by way of amendment or otherwise. If you will permit me, Sir, I shall read out the statement which I have already placed in your hands on behalf of members of this conference.

6. There were many strikes and lockouts in 1928, especially those of the textile workers in Bombay, the mill workers in Jamshedpur, and the workers of South Indian and East Indian Railways. The total number of working days lost was 3,16,47,404 and 5,06,851 workers were involved in the strikes.
7. Under the provisions of this bill, it was a penal offence for the workers employed on monthly wages in public utility services to strike without previous notice. Heavier penalties were also provided for persons abetting such offences.
8. The Public Safety Bill was said to be intended to stop the entry of foreign Communist agents into India, the government wanted to be in a position to use the same arbitrary powers against foreigners as they had been using against Indians themselves.

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This statement runs as follows :—

"We the signatories of this statement are of opinion that the Constitution of India should only be based on full independence. We feel that the resolution that has been placed before the All Parties Conference definitely commits those who support it to a Constitution based on what is termed Dominion Status. We are not prepared to accept and we, therefore, cannot accept or support this resolution. We recognise that the preamble to the resolution gives us the right to carry on activity in favour of independence, but this preamble does not in any way lessen the commitment contained in the second part of the resolution. We have decided, however, not to obstruct or hamper the work of this conference but we desire to record our considered opinion on this question and disassociate ourselves with this particular resolution in so far as it commits us to the acceptance of Dominion Status. We shall not take any part in this resolution by moving amendments or by voting on it. We propose to carry on such activity as we consider proper and necessary in favour of complete independence."

24. On the Results of the All Parties Conference[1]

The conference had undoubtedly been a tremendous success. As I stated in the conference, I cannot reconcile myself to Dominion Status and I propose to work for independence. But I recognize that it is a great thing to bring so many diverse parties on a common platform with a common programme. Individuals here and there may object and protest, but I hope this conference has given the finishing kick to communalism. The question that will soon face us will be how to devise *sanctions to force the will of the conference.* I trust if all parties will join in creating and enforcing the sanctions, the problem of freedom for India will be solved.

1. Speech at Lucknow, 4 September 1928. *The Tribune,* 9 September 1928

25. To C. Vijiaraghavachariar[1]

21 September 1928

My dear Mr. Vijiaraghavachariar,
Please forgive me for the delay in answering your letter. I have just returned from Mussoorie.

I am glad you have dropped Panditji from my name. I wish you would also drop the Mr.

I quite agree with you that political meetings nowadays are much too rushed and one hardly has any time to make friends or to cultivate acquaintances. I wish it were otherwise but life itself seems to be more hurried now than it used to be. Anyway I hope that when we meet next I shall have the opportunity of spending sometime with you.

The All India Committee meeting will probably be held on the 20th of next month in Calcutta. As it is the first meeting of the year it is likely to be important. The All Parties report and resolutions will come up for consideration. I am afraid it is difficult for me to suggest whether you should come or not. I would not like to trouble you by too much travelling. But if you could conveniently come it would certainly be a good thing.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-40(ii)/1928, p. 15, N.M.M.L.

26. To Muhammad Shafi[1]

Dr. Ansari desires me to point out that it is impossible for him to say beforehand what the conference will decide in regard to any matter

1. Extract of a letter published in *The Hindustan Times*, 13 October 1928
Sir Muhammad Shafi when invited to attend the All Parties Conference had said: "Invitations had been issued only to those who were expected to support the organisers and their policy." He had further said in his reply to Dr. Ansari: "Provided your Conference agrees to the retention of separate Muslim electorates in the revised Indian Constitution the Punjab Muslim League is willing to cooperate."

before it. As I have already informed you, representatives of all organisations have been invited to this conference and they will no doubt give expression to a variety of views. The fullest liberty to express such views must necessarily be accorded and it is for the conference to accept or reject what it chooses. Neither Dr. Ansari as President of the Congress nor the Congress Working Committee can dictate to this conference or bind it down to any prescribed course of action. Should there be any such attempt, it would give just cause for complaint and resentment to a large number of those who will attend the conference.

. . .

27. On the Nehru Report and the Indian States[1]

So far as my views are concerned, I look forward to an India which will be independent, wherein both what is now the British part and the Indian States will occupy the same position and have the same powers. I cannot conceive a part of India having responsible government and another part living under a system of feudalism. The report[2] had been produced by persons resident in British India. It was not for them to lay very great stress on the demands of the people of the Indian States as against their rulers. I have no doubt that many of them were entirely in agreement with those demands and were fully agreeable to the fullest responsible government being accorded to the people in the States. But fundamentally this was a matter for the people of the States to lay stress on.

Looking at it from this point of view, the attitude which the States' people might adopt regarding the Nehru Report would be not so much one of opposition but one of acceptance, subject to reservations, the principal reservation being responsible government as in other parts of India.

1. *The Leader*, 14 October 1928.
2. The Nehru Report accepted Dominion Status as the objective, reservation of seats for two years to Muslim minorities everywhere and to non Muslim minorities in N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan, separation of Sind and the introduction of the Reforms in N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan

28 To Balaki Ram[1]

16 January 1929

My dear Balaki Ramji,[2]

Thank you for your letter. The pledge you suggest is good but I do not see how it is possible now to go about asking people to sign it. It will be difficult to organise large numbers of signatures.

As far as I am aware no special effort was made to please the Muslims at the cost of the Sikhs. Indeed the Muslims were not at all pleased. The Sikh attitude did seem to me an unreasonable one. So far as their own province, the Punjab, is concerned, the All Parties Committee accepted the suggestions made by them that there should be no communal *representation whatsoever.*

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C File No. G-40(1)/1929 (Pt. I), p 57, N.M.M.L.
2. A resident of Gujranwala district, now in Pakistan. He had suggested that every literate Indian should sign a pledge to free the country.

3

THE INDEPENDENCE FOR INDIA LEAGUE

1. Provisional Rules of the League[1]

The signatories of the statement on independence which was read out by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at the All Parties Conference on the 29th August and others who agreed with them, met on the evening of the 30th August and decided to form a body called the "Independence for India League." The following resolutions were passed by them :—

(1) Resolved that we the members of the Indian National Congress present at this meeting being firmly of opinion that the immediate goal of the people of India should be full independence, do hereby form the Independence for India League.

(2) The object of this League is achievement of independence for India and the League shall carry on propaganda in this behalf.

(3) Members of the League shall also be members of the Indian National Congress.

(4) No member of the League shall advance any claim on behalf of himself or another person or group for political or economic rights based on membership of religion or sect, nor shall he work for or advocate what has come to be called communalism in India.

(5) No member of an organisation which has for its object the attainment of political or economic rights based on membership of religion or sect can be a member of the League.

(6) The League shall oppose communalism in every way, but it may support it when it considers it proper and necessary by mutual arrangement between two or more groups or communities.

(7) Every member of the League shall pay a subscription of Re. 1 per annum subject to rules to be framed hereafter.

(8) A provisional committee consisting of Messrs. Subhas Chandra Bose, Dr. Zakir Husain,[2] and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is formed to draw up a Constitution and rules of the League to arrange for enrolment of members and the holding of a full meeting of members of the League to adopt this Constitution and to lay down the future programme of the League.

1. Drafted at Lucknow, 31 August 1928. *The Tribune*, 2 September 1928.
2. (1897-1969); Vice Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi 1926-48, Vice Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University, 1948-56, Governor of Bihar, 1957-62; Vice-President of India, 1962-67, President of India from 1967 till his death in 1969.

(9) That till the next meeting of the League the following shall act as provincial organisers of the League :—

Bengal	..	Dr. K. L. Ganguly,[3]
Behar	..	M. Abdul Bari,[4]
U.P.	..	Mr. Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi,
Delhi	..	M. Arif Hasvi,[5]
C.P. Hindi	..	Mr. V. Subedar,[6]
Sind	..	Mr. J. Bukharey,[7]
Ajmer	..	Mr. Arjun Lal Sethi,
Kerala	..	Mr. S. K. Kombrambail.[8]

The Provisional Committee shall have power to appoint organisers in the remaining provinces.

3. A member of the Jugantar Party who was sent to Germany in 1921 to study military science, but on his return devoted himself to political rather than revolutionary activity.
4. Moulvi Abdul Bari, a prominent Congressman from Bihar who was assassinated on 2 March 1947.
5. Maulana Arif Husain Hasvi, a leading Congressman of Delhi; was imprisoned several times; editor of an Urdu paper *Huriyat*; died 1936.
6. (1885-1970); Member, A.I.C.C. for twenty years; in 1923, led the volunteer corps in the Nagpur Flag Satyagraha, Secretary and Vice President of the Mahakoshal P.C.C. for many years; member of the Central Provinces Legislative Council from 1937 to 1939; in 1939, joined the All-India Forward Bloc.
7. A radical Congressman who later joined the Communist Party. After 1947 he was detained under martial law in Pakistan.
8. Journalist and Congressman who was imprisoned several times in the non-cooperation movement; died 1970.

2. To N. V. Gadgil[1]

Poona
18 September 1928

The question of the League's relations to communal organisations was discussed at length at Lucknow. We all know that these organisations

1. *The Searchlight*, 26 September 1928. Extracts.
N. V. Gadgil (1896-1966), a leading Congressman of Maharashtra, elected to the Central Assembly, 1934; Union Minister for Works, Production and Supply, 1947-52; Governor of Punjab, 1958-62, Vice-Chancellor of Poona University, 1964-1966.

have many staunch nationalists and believers in independence. But they also undoubtedly have many people who are "communalists" above everything else. Any rule which was vague and which depended on its interpretation on our personal likes and dislikes was likely to be abused and to lead to favouritism. This was bound to result in friction inside our organisation and our effectiveness would be lessened. We, therefore, decided that we must be strict even at the expense of losing some good men. I cannot definitely lay down which organisations now existing would thus be taboo for our members. I have not got their rules or objects before me. I imagine, however, that both the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha have some rules or objects which would prevent our joining them. The Khilafat Committee is undoubtedly acting in a communal manner, even more so perhaps than the Muslim League, but it may be that it has no rules or objects whereunder political or economic rights are claimed for Muslims as such. About non-Brahmins, I cannot say anything without seeing the rules of their organisation. Probably they will be entitled to join us. So also the depressed classes. The claim of the latter and the non-Brahmins as well can hardly be considered a claim on behalf of religious groups. The question can only be decided after reference to the rules of the organisations.

3. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

27 September 1928

My dear Chatto,[2]
I am in receipt of your two letters dated August 29th and September 5th. I have just returned from Calcutta where I went to preside over the All Bengal Students' Conference. This conference was very suc-

1. A I C C. File No. 127/1927-28, pp. 153 154, N.M.M L. Extracts
2. Brother of Sarojini Naidu, attended Stuttgart Congress of Socialist International 1907, formed Indian Independence Committee in Germany during First World War; attended 3rd Congress of Communist International in Moscow 1921 and thereafter was prominent in communist activities in Europe. From 1927 was joint secretary of the central office of the League against Imperialism, left Berlin for Moscow in 1932 and died sometime after 1937.

cessful and it has formed a strong association for the students of Bengal. I expect that before long there will be an all India association for students.

I am going away again today for a District Conference in Oudh[3] and have not got much time. We are having famine conditions in the greater part of the U.P. and this makes it a little difficult to carry on any organising work in the rural areas.

Regarding the Secretaryship of the Congress you may have seen that I offered to resign[4] but was asked to reconsider my decision. For the present I am continuing as Secretary but I do not know how long I can do so. I am afraid it is not possible for me to hold on at all costs to any office.[5] I can only remain there so long as I feel that I am welcome.

The All India Congress Committee meets next month in Calcutta and much will depend on what this committee does. Meanwhile the Independence for India League has had a good reception although it is largely on paper still. The real danger to all such organisations is not from lack of support but from the wrong kind of people entering it and neutralising all its influence.

You are perfectly right in saying that the want of a newspaper is a great drawback for us. But newspapers cost money and I see no prospect of money anywhere. I would not like to run any newspaper or any organisation in India with the help of money raised outside India. A daily paper is utterly out of the question. The most that can be attempted at present is a weekly. Even that is difficult both from the point of view of money and men. * * *

You will notice that the Public Safety Bill in the Assembly was just defeated by the casting vote of the President and that the matter has now been postponed till the next session of the Assembly.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

3. Held at Lakhimpur Kheri.
4. Jawaharlal had offered to resign because he felt that his work for the Independence for India League might conflict with *Congress policy*.
5. Chattopadhyaya in his letter of August 29th had written " . It would be a serious political blunder if you resign your position as General Secretary of the Congress. The reactionaries among whom must, of course, be included Subhas Bose, will take advantage of the situation created by your retirement in order to make the Congress revert to its old position, abandon the Independence Resolution and sever the connection of the Congress with the League. That is one reason why you must at all cost hold on to the Secretaryship."

4. To Kshitis Chandra Dutta[1]

Allahabad
4 October 1928

Dear Sir,[2]
Your letter of the 30th. You are quite right in thinking that I do not agree with a great deal in the Nehru Committee report. Undoubtedly the Independence for India League has been started because of the All Parties decision in Lucknow. In fact I made this clear at Lucknow itself. Under the circumstances you are right in not joining this League.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No 7/1928-29, p. 127, N.M.M.L.
2. A lawyer of Sylhet, now in Bangla Desh.

5. To N. S. Hardikar[1]

October 8th, 1928

My dear Hardikar,
I have just sent a telegram[2] to you. I must say that you put me a very difficult question. It became doubly difficult for me as I did not have all the facts. I have sent you a reply but I am not at all satisfied with it. You know my own attitude to the Nehru Committee's report. I am prepared to be enthusiastic about its solution of the communal problem. I am also prepared to welcome many other things in it.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-8/1928, p. 91, N.M.M.L.
2. 'Difficult to advise without details. You might carry on propaganda for Nehru Report subject to independence. Please decide yourself.'

Some other things I do not welcome but for the sake of peace I am prepared to be silent. The fundamental issue of Dominion Status and independence however is one on which I must speak out my mind not because I love hearing my voice or seeing my name in print but because I do feel that the cry for Dominion Status will land us into very great difficulties. Looking at it even from the narrow point of view of supporting the Nehru Committee's report I should have said that it was a good thing if a party in the country stood for independence.

At the time of the Lucknow Conference I disliked very much the plunge into a Dominion Status Constitution. Ever since I have felt that the situation has definitely worsened in regard to this question.

I do not want to attack the Nehru Report if I can help it because it has succeeded in a very great measure in solving the communal problem and I am prepared to pay a large price for that. At the same time without attacking this report I do want to go on repeating that some of us stand for independence. I also want to see an organisation of these people grow up. That is why the Independence for India League was started.

That being the position what am I to advise you? If I had had full details of the kind of work that Lala Lajpat Rai wants you to do, I might perhaps have suggested something, but I do not know. It is therefore best that you should decide for yourself and act accordingly.

Your letter of October 2nd has just reached me. I am glad you have got into touch at last with the Calcutta Reception Committee. I did not refer to the Dal in my address at the Students' Conference because one has to keep some artistic unity in what one says and no occasion arose for me to refer to it. But I spoke to the volunteers about the Dal and warmly recommended their joining it.

I am going to Meerut in a few days for the Delhi Conference and then to Jhansi.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. Statement to the Press[1]

There appears to be some misapprehension about the Independence for India League meetings which are going to be held in Delhi. As the convener of these meetings I should like to make the position clear. The Independence for India League, as is well known, was started at Lucknow at the time the All Parties Conference met there. Provisional rules were framed and some conditions of membership were laid down. Every one who subscribed to these rules and conditions could join the League. Subsequently independence leagues were started in other parts of the country. This was a welcome sign that the independence movement was strong and widespread in the country. It is not clear, however, what relation these provincial leagues bear to the organization started at Lucknow. Only those who have actually joined the latter and accepted its provisional rules and conditions of membership can be considered its members. It appears that many of the members of the provincial leagues have not done so. There are, for instance, definite clauses in our provisional rules excluding communalists from joining our league. I do not know if such clauses exist in the rules of other leagues.

I gather that other leagues have been formed with the object of affiliating themselves, at a later stage, with the organization started at Lucknow. They will be welcome if they do so. Some of such organisations apparently aim solely at getting the National Congress to adhere to the independence resolution and having succeeded in this purpose to disband. The organization, formed at Lucknow, aims at something more than this. It is a permanent organization, with a definite policy and programme. It will cooperate with pleasure with all other organizations which have objects in common with it, but its constitution can only be settled by its own members. Meetings of the Independence for India League formed at Lucknow, which are going to be held in Delhi, as has already been announced, are open to all members who have already joined it. Members of other independence leagues are welcome to attend those in an advisory capacity. Some such members have already been invited to do so. But only full members of the organization started at Lucknow, who have accepted its provisional rules and conditions, are entitled to determine the constitution and programme of the League.

1. 2 November 1928. *The Tribune*, 6 November 1928.

7. Circular on the Activities of the League[1]

At general meetings of the members of the League held in Delhi on November 4th and 5th, 1928 the following elections were made and decisions arrived at:

1. OFFICE-BEARERS OF THE LEAGUE

President	:	S. Srinivasa Iyengar
Treasurer	:	Shiva Prasad Gupta
Secretaries	:	Subhas Chandra Bose
		Jawaharlal Nehru

2. PROVISIONAL ALL INDIA COUNCIL

1. Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi	U.P.
2. Sri Prakasa	U.P.
3. Kiran Sankar Roy[2]	Bengal
4. Harikumar Chakravarti[3]	Bengal
5. B. Sambamurti	Andhra
6. T. Viswanathan[4]	Andhra
7. S. Satyamurti[5]	Tamil Nadu
8. Abdul Bari	Behar
9. Shankar Lal[6]	Delhi

1. Issued at Allahabad, 8 November 1928. A I C C. File No 7/1928, pp. 117-125, N.M.M.L.
2. Member of the Anushilan party who later joined Das and the Swarajist party in Bengal, leader of the Bengal Congress party in 1939, leader of opposition in Bengal Assembly, 1946; Deputy Chief Minister, West Bengal, 1949; d. 1949.
3. One of the leaders of the Jugantar Party in Bengal, imprisoned in Mandalay jail, for some time Secretary, Bengal P.C.C.
4. b. 1895; advocate of Visakhapatnam who joined the noncooperation movement and served several terms of imprisonment; member Madras Assembly 1937-39 and 1946-53, Minister for Law in Andhra Pradesh 1953-54; Member Lok Sabha 1967-71.
5. (1889 1943); advocate, Madras High Court and leading Congressman of Tamil Nadu, served several terms of imprisonment in the noncooperation movement; Swarajist Member of the Madras Legislative Council from 1923 to 1930 and of the Central Assembly from 1935 till his death, secretary and then deputy leader of the Congress Party in the Central Assembly; a distinguished parliamentarian, well known for his oratory and quick repartee, especially during question hour in the Assembly
6. (1885-1953); a Congressman and leading member after 1939 of the Forward Bloc in Delhi.

10. Arif Hasvi	Delhi
11. Jamnadas Mehta[7]	Bombay
12. Kedar Nath Saigal[8]	Punjab
13. Govindananda	Sind

The office bearers were empowered to add one name each from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Central Provinces (Marathi) and Punjab after consultation with the local committees. They were also authorised to add four additional names preferably to represent such provinces as are not so far represented on the Provincial Council.

3. The following provincial organisers were appointed:

Kerala	S. K. Kombrambail
Karnataka	N. S. Hardikar

4. Resolved that articles 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9 of the constitution be printed on the application form for membership.

5. Resolved that the office of the provisional All India Council be situated at Allahabad in charge of Secretary, Jawaharlal Nehru, and that he be authorised to take necessary steps to organise it.

6. Resolved that fifty per cent of the membership subscriptions realised in provinces be sent immediately to the Treasurer of the All India Council, Shiva Prasad Gupta, Seva Upvan, Benares.

7. Resolved that membership certificates be issued by the provincial offices.

8. Resolved that the League do associate itself with the League against Imperialism.

9. Resolved that, as soon as funds permit, a weekly newspaper to carry on propaganda for the League be started, and a research department be established.

10. Resolved that a meeting of the Provisional All India Council be held in Calcutta before the sessions of the National Congress, and that the Council meeting should be followed by a general meeting of the members of the League also before the Congress sessions.

11. The meeting discussed the immediate programme of the League and was of opinion that the League should

(i) help in the organisation of the workers, peasants and professional classes; and

7. (1884-1955); a Congressman and railway trade union leader; representative of the Government of India with the Government of Burma, 1944-46.
8. (1896-1963); accused in the Lahore Conspiracy Case and the Meerut Conspiracy Case; one of the organisers of the demonstration against the Simon Commission at Lahore; imprisoned several times; publisher of *Bande Mataram*, Lajpat Rai's newspaper.

(ii) train workers to carry on the work of the League.

A committee consisting of the office-bearers and B. G. Horniman, S. Satyamurti, Dr. Datta,[9] Kedar Nath Saigal and Jamnadas Mehta was appointed to draw up a programme for the League and to place it before the next meeting of the All India Council.

12. Resolved that a committee consisting of the office-bearers, Shanker Lal and Kedar Nath Saigal be appointed to report to the All India Council the names of communal organisations which have for their objects or as their declared policy the advocacy of political or economic rights based on membership of a religion, caste or sect, as for instance:

1. The Muslim League
2. The Hindu Mahasabha
3. The Sikh League
4. The South Indian Liberal Federation

Jawaharlal Nehru

9. Dr. Bhupendra Nath Datta (1880-1961); younger brother of Swami Vivekananda, associate of Sri Aurobindo Ghose, first editor of *Jugantar*, and convicted for sedition; later devoted himself to socialist propaganda.

8. Interview to the Press[1]

I was very much surprised to read the other day that Dr. Besant had complained of the intolerable tyranny[2] of the Congress. I do not know what she referred to. There could not have been any complaint about the Congress not giving a patient hearing to every speaker. Dr. Besant perhaps does not approve of some of the decisions of the Congress or of the All India Congress Committee, but that surely does not mean

1. Interview given at Bettiah on 16 November 1928. *The Searchlight*, 21 November 1928.
2. In a press statement Mrs. Besant had said: "The Congress is becoming an intolerable tyranny by denial of free speech to the minority. The All Parties Conference is the only refuge of those who uphold free speech." Referring to the discussion at the A.I.C.C. in October 1928, she had said: "There was something unreal in declaring for independence and at the same time going to the British courts for justice and councils for legislation. Indians must make their lives consistent with their declared beliefs."

that the Congress is tyrannical. If Dr. Besant wants the majority of the Congress to bow down to the minority or to an individual, that surely would be some kind of tyranny and the tyranny of the minority or of an individual is worse than any other tyranny. I would naturally like the Congress to agree with those who think like me. If the Congress does not do so I have no right to call it a tyranny.

The Independence for India League represents the left wing element in the country and the Congress. While the Congress admits all groups, the League confines itself to certain left wing groups only. It is not a rival of the Congress, but it certainly desires to influence the Congress and to carry the Congress majority with it. The Congress today stands certainly for independence, but there are many elements in it which are continually pulling towards the right. I do not think there is the slightest chance of the Congress going back on its decision regarding independence, but even without going back there is always the danger of the position being undermined and so it is necessary to be vigilant. It is also necessary for those who clearly believe in independence to be a compact and disciplined body. This need the Independence for India League supplies. I hope it will draw into its ranks all the left wing elements in the country. The League has also as its object something besides national independence. This is the reconstruction of Indian society on a basis of social and economic equality. The Congress so far has not adopted this ideal but I have hope that it will approve of it. This is another reason that the League should have a separate existence.

The Congress is a great national organisation with tremendous prestige. It is at the same time, by reason of its very bigness, a somewhat unwieldy body for action. In moments of crisis it may come up to the mark and lead in action also; but ordinarily it is difficult to get it moving. The Independence for India League, being a disciplined and well-knit body and consisting of people who are more or less agreed about the aims and methods, will have no such difficulty in having a programme of action.

Those who want Dominion Status will be satisfied with even less than Dominion Status. The demand for Dominion Status is really a step in the wrong direction which, even if achieved, will not carry us very near our ultimate object. Dominion Status or independence, sanction of the people is the first essential requisite of it and so long as that is not created in the country, the discussion about Dominion Status will in essence be as much academic as that of independence. It is true that there was greater sanction in the country in 1920-21 than after the Madras Congress, without there being any talk about independence. But then there was no talk in the country about Dominion

Status either and when one was being loudly talked about, it is necessary to carry on propaganda in favour of the other also.

The All Parties Conference does not seem to be serious about creation of sanction. Let them begin work for its creation and I shall not speak a single-word about independence and wholeheartedly work with them.

4

BOYCOTT OF SIMON COMMISSION

1. Organization of the boycott[1]

You will notice that so far as propaganda and other action connected with the carrying out of the boycott of the Commission are concerned, the Working Committee is taking steps to act in concert and cooperation with other political organisations and will be meeting in Bombay on the 15th instant for this purpose and will confer with other parties and take further steps. In the meantime, I hope you will take action on the other parts of the Congress resolution immediately and do the needful.

In regard to the directions contained in the resolution relating to non-official members in the legislatures, namely, clauses (c), (d) and (e), you will notice that apart from the specific instructions as to what should be done by the non-official members of the legislatures for carrying out the boycott resolution, they are called upon not to attend meetings of the legislatures "except for the purpose of preventing their seats being declared vacant or for the purpose of making the boycott effective and successful or for the purpose of throwing out a ministry or of opposing any important measure, which, in the opinion of the Working Committee of the Congress, is detrimental to the interests of India."

I am enclosing herewith a memorandum dealing with what will have to be done by non-official members, particularly members of the Congress Party, in the several legislatures in pursuance of these clauses. I trust this will have your immediate attention.

MEMORANDUM

The Congress resolution on the boycott of the Statutory Commission, in so far as it relates to the legislature, "calls upon non-official members of the Indian legislatures and leaders of political parties and communities of India and all others not to give evidence before the commission nor cooperate with it in any manner public or private, nor attend or participate in any social functions given to them." It also calls upon the non-official members of the Indian Legislature "neither

1. Circular to all provincial Congress committees and Congress parties in the legislature issued by Jawaharlal on 7 January 1928 *The Tribune*, 10 January 1928

to vote for nor serve on Select Committees that may be set up in connection with this commission; to throw out every other proposal, motion or demand for grant that may be moved in connection with the work of the commission and not to attend meetings of the legislatures except for the purpose of preventing their seats being declared vacant or for the purpose of making the boycott effective and successful or for the purpose of throwing out a ministry or of opposing any important measure which, in the opinion of the Working Committee of the Congress, is detrimental to the interests of India."

In order to carry out all the directions, express and implied, in these clauses, it has to be ascertained first what the dates are in January and February on which the several legislatures, central and provincial, will meet.

It has also to be ascertained, when motions for the appointment of a Select Committee in respect of the commission or for the making of grants or for the taking of any other action in connection with the Commission will be or are likely to be made in the several legislatures. So far as the Assembly is concerned, the provisional programme of the business of the Assembly, a summary of which has appeared in the press, shows that the Assembly meets on 1st February on which day official business will be transacted. On the 2nd February, the Viceroy addresses both the legislatures and no business will then be taken. The Assembly again meets on the 6th February and transacts official business for three days. Non-official business is to be taken on the 9th and so on till the last week of March. The Simon Commission is expected to arrive in Bombay on the 3rd February, and we may anticipate that they would be in Delhi on the 6th. It is not known what official business the Government will bring up on the 1st February or on the 6th, 7th and 8th; nor is it known on what date the official motion, if any, for a Select Committee on the Simon Commission will be put down.

It has also to be noted, that, in so far as permission to attend the legislatures for any purpose other than that of carrying out the boycott of the Statutory Commission is concerned, the resolution of the Congress contemplates only purposes involving the throwing out of important Government or non-Congress proposals which, in the opinion of the Working Committee of the Congress, are detrimental to the interests of India. It therefore rules out any proposal from the Congress Party itself whether by way of resolution, motion or otherwise which could be moved or is sought to be carried in any legislature including resolutions or motions dealing with the Statutory Commission itself. Non-official members and particularly Congress Party members can

attend only to throw out proposals of a general character or any involving the matter of the Statutory Commission itself.

In the next place, it follows that, when members of the Congress Party cannot attend the legislatures for the purpose of promoting or advancing any measure within the council but only for the purpose of throwing out injurious proposals of the kind pointed out above, they cannot either attend meetings of Select Committees or any other statutory or advisory committees on which they may now be serving.

The interpretation of the Congress resolutions relating to the council programme and the latitude and laxity which such interpretations *permitted in the past seem to me to make it essential that, if the members* of the legislatures, particularly of the Congress Party, sincerely desire to carry out the boycott of the Simon Commission in letter and in spirit in accordance with the Congress resolution, the action of the members of the party should be such as to be unambiguous and effective for the purpose intended, and I trust that no efforts will be made to whittle down the effect of the boycott by applications for exemptions[2] and permissions to attend for all manner of matters and subjects.

2. In fact, exemptions were sought and granted for certain matters.

2. Speech at Allahabad[1]

When Sir Ali Imam himself finds it difficult to swallow the Simon Commission, you can imagine my feelings when I have to face such a proposition. I am glad that something has happened which places me on the same platform with Sir Ali Imam who, with many of his colleagues, has adopted methods of noncooperation. I and noncooperation have been old friends and I am greatly pleased to find that others are accepting this sovereign remedy for the various ills from which our country suffers. We should not only boycott the Simon Commission, but at the same time decide to boycott now and for ever the whole conception behind it, the whole conception that the British Parliament is there to give us what it wills and to keep away from us what it likes, and the whole conception that we are parts for ever and ever of the

1. 10 January 1928. *The Leader*, 12 January 1928. Extracts.

British Empire. After the insulting manner in which we have now been treated, it is for us to decide whether we are going to be partners or not in the British Commonwealth. The only honourable and self-respecting reply to the Simon Commission is for us to say that not only are we not prepared to accept it but we are also not prepared to accept any commission, of whatever composition, which the British Parliament is going to appoint. If our rights are wholly recognised and if we are treated as equals with the representatives of Parliament, we Indians would be prepared to treat them as, for instance, the leaders of the Irish Nationalist Party treat representatives of the British Government.

3. To S. Srinivasa Iyengar[1]

17 January 1928

Dear Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar,

I received your telegram suggesting that the next meeting of the Working Committee be held in Delhi on the 30th or 31st January. I placed this before the committee. The committee felt, however, that in view of the fact that the *hartal* had been called for on the 3rd February many members would like to be in their own province to organise this *hartal* and has therefore fixed the 9th February for the next meeting of the Working Committee to be held at Delhi. On the 12th February the Working Committee will confer with the committees of other organisations. I trust these days will suit you and I hope that you will come armed with a draft[2] from which the King Emperor has been excluded. May I also suggest that it might be desirable to have a short statement of the principles underlying the Constitution. This will be easier to discuss and agreed to by a miscellaneous gathering.

You must have been glad to see that we have got our Liberal friends to agree unanimously to a *hartal*. I enclose a copy of the resolution passed at the Boycott Conference. I am sure that whatever other parts of India may or may not do, Madras will come out with a successful *hartal*.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-58/1928, p. 9, N.M.M.L.
2. On independence.

RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE ON BOYCOTT

17 January 1928

Dear Sir,

I give below for your information and necessary action a resolution passed by the Boycott Conference which was held at the instance of the Working Committee in Benares on January 15th and which was attended by representatives of various parties. The resolution was unanimously passed and I trust that all parties will join in making it a success. The resolution was later formally adopted by the Working Committee.

The Boycott Conference was also of opinion that voters should be encouraged to write to their constituents in the Council of State, or Assembly or Legislative Council, asking them to boycott the Simon Commission in every way. Such an expression of the will of the electorate, if well organised, is bound to produce considerable effect. I trust that you will endeavour to have this done.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

This conference representing various political parties is unanimously of opinion that the Statutory Commission must be left severely alone by the people of India and in pursuance of this resolution, it appeals to the people:

1. to observe *hartal* all over India on February 3rd, the day the Statutory Commission lands at Bombay, the *hartal* to be observed from the morning till the time of the meetings referred to in clause 2.

2. to hold public meetings all over India on February 3rd at 4-30 p.m. At these meetings the following resolution to be placed for adoption :—

'This meeting of the citizens of——places on record its condemnation of the appointment of the Statutory Commission in utter disregard of Indian opinion and its firm resolve to have nothing to do with that commission in any form and at any stage of its work. It calls upon all the elected members of the Council of State, the Assembly and the Legislative Councils and in particular the representatives of this (town, province etc.) to do everything that lies in their power to oppose and prevent the formation of a committee of the legislature in connection with the said commission. This meeting places on record its opinion that the Constitution of India should be framed by Indians and strongly supports the proposal of a special convention to frame such a Constitution.'

4. To the Editor, Swarajya[1]

18 January 1928

Dear Sir,

I have the honour to send you with this letter a copy of the resolution passed by the Boycott Conference at Benares on January 15th. You have already given publicity to this resolution. May I however request you to give as much additional publicity as possible to the recommendations of this conference, specially the appeal for a *hartal* and a public meeting on Friday 3rd. If I may be permitted to suggest it, a daily reminder, displayed prominently in your paper, would carry the message far and would contribute greatly to the success of the demonstrations.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-58/1928, p. 201, N.M.M.L. The *Swarajya* was a Congress newspaper published in Madras.

5. Message to the citizens of Allahabad[1]

February 3rd, the day the Statutory Commission lands on the Indian soil, will not be a day of mourning but it should be treated as a day for rejoicing, for on that day will commence afresh in India our war for 'independence'. I appeal to the people to observe a complete *hartal* on that day and to assemble in large numbers in the evening at the Purushottam Das Park to record the resolutions framed by the All Parties Conference at Benares.

1. 19 January 1928 *The Leader*, 21 January 1928.

6. Statement to the Press[1]

The lead given by the All Parties Conference at Benares has been taken up with enthusiasm and earnestness by the whole country and every city in India is organising itself for the boycott of the Simon Commission. I trust that every Congress Committee will fully cooperate with other organisations that are working for this boycott and will thus ensure complete success of the *hartal* and public demonstrations on Feb. 3. But the success of this *hartal* will only mean one step forward for us. The real struggle will follow and we cannot relax our efforts after a successful demonstration. We shall have to carry on this struggle continuously and intensively till we make the will of India prevail over the will of England. All manner of attempts are being made on behalf of the British Government and their supporters to weaken the boycott and to prepare the ground for some kind of cooperation and compromise. It is up to our people and organisation to stiffen up and make it absolutely clear that we will not compromise on the basis of any foreign intrusion or intervention. Our aim is a completely free India and we have nothing to expect on this basis.

Prime Minister Baldwin stated recently in the course of a reply to Mr. Ponsonby's[2] peace letter: 'Is it not our inalienable right to govern ourselves, to develop our liberty and our institutions in accordance with our national ideals not subject to foreign domination?' He referred to England but that right is the right of every nation. That is the inalienable right of India and the Simon Commission and all commissions of the kind emanating from England deny that fundamental right and can receive no quarter in India. We stand by that right and must see to it that no one, whether he is a foreigner or a countryman, is allowed to tamper with it and that we develop enough strength to enforce it.

1. New Delhi, 24 January 1928. *The Leader*, 26 January 1928.
2. Arthur, first Lord Ponsonby, Minister in the Labour Government 1924 and 1929-31, and specialist in foreign affairs. In the years when he was out of office, he campaigned against war and issued a regular 'peace letter'.

7. To Kamta Prasad Kakkar[1]

Allahabad
25 January 1928

Dear Mr. Kamta Prasad[2],
As you must be aware it has been decided by the All Parties Conference at Benares to observe a *hartal* and hold a meeting on February 3rd—the day of arrival of the Simon Commission. We are issuing a notice for this above the names of a large number of conveners including Malaviyaji, Chintamani[3], Hirday Nath Kunzru, Beharilal[4], Chairman of the District Board, and many others. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru will preside over the meeting. I should be glad to have your name also as a convener.

May I also suggest[5] that the Municipal offices be closed on that day? The Calcutta Corporation will be closed. So also I think Bombay, Benares and some others.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-58/1928, p. 173, N.M.M.L.
2. Kamta Prasad Kakkar was, at this time, the Chairman of the Allahabad Municipal Board.
3. C. Y. Chintamani (1880—1941); an Andhra domiciled in the U.P.; editor of *The Leader* 1909-20 and chief editor, 1926-41; Minister of Education U.P. 1921-23; President of the National Liberal Federation 1920 and 1931.
4. A landlord of Allahabad.
5. The suggestion was accepted.

8. On the observance of the Hartal[1]

The response to the appeal for *hartal* on February 3 has been magnificent, and there is no doubt that the cities and towns of India will observe it fittingly. All classes are joining in making this great demonstration a

1. Statement issued to the press by Jawaharlal on 29 January 1928. *The Tribune*, 1 February 1928.

success. Merchants and shopkeepers have agreed willingly to observe a *hartal*. Corporations and municipalities have decided to do likewise. All who have understood the real significance of the Simon Commission are taking part in the *hartal* and public meetings. It may be, however, that some persons for various reasons do not desire to associate themselves with the demonstrations. They must be left perfectly free to do what they wish. The *hartal* is a voluntary demonstration of our resentment, and there is no place in it for any kind of constraint. The workers should approach merchants and others, and explain to them the reasons for *hartal* and persuade them by all friendly and peaceful means. If any person does not agree or is not willing to participate, he should be left to himself without any interference. The opening of a shop or two when hundreds are closed does not mar the success of the *hartal*. It only brings out into striking prominence the contrast and demonstrates that those who are opposed to the *hartal* are an insignificant minority.

9. To the Secretary, P.C.C. Maharashtra[1]

2 February 1928

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your telegram[2] and have noted the instructions you have given to all your Congress committees regarding the sending of a telegram to Sir John Simon. I feel I am not justified on my own authority to issue instructions to other Congress committees in the matter. I have a recollection that the question was informally discussed in the Working Committee and there were two opinions on the subject. I am thus precluded from taking action such as you suggest. But you and other provincial committees are perfectly free to act in the manner they choose and I wish you all success in your campaign.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-58/1928, p. 143, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary, Maharashtra P.C.C. telegraphed on 30 January 1928 that Maharashtra Provincial Executive Committee had decided to request all Congress Committees in Maharashtra to wire as follows — "Sir John Simon Delhi Public Meeting in Maharashtra condemns Commission." He wanted Jawaharlal to recommend to Congress Committees throughout India to send similar telegrams.

10. On the Success of the Hartal in Allahabad[1]

Dear Sir,—After the *hartal* and the great demonstrations we have witnessed today in Allahabad, will you permit me to offer on behalf of the organizers and on behalf of myself our grateful thanks to all who worked so hard and contributed so much to our joint success? The papers have contained some brief accounts of the official and semi-official and interested opposition we had to face. But none who was not in the thick of the fight can have any idea of the intrigues and the unfair pressure that was brought to bear on all who wanted to take part in the boycott and the *hartal*. In Katra an intensive campaign was carried on for days by a sub-inspector of police accompanied by two worthy honorary magistrates and threat of prosecutions and heavy fines were held out to the shopkeepers who wanted to close their shops. Many of these shopkeepers told us that they were made to sign a notice against *hartal* under duress and against their will. The value of this notice can be gauged by the fact that in spite of it most of its signatories closed their shops and did, in fact, observe the *hartal*. I do not know if the police and the magistrates propose to act up to their threats and punish these shopkeepers. If so I trust that there will be no lack of public support for those brave persons who dared to do their duty in spite of the threats held out to them.

In the city all manner of false rumours and misleading notices were continually being circulated. But the main opposition came from a group inspired from above and with plenty of financial resources at its disposal. It was directed chiefly against the Muslim shopkeepers, and every device—religious bigotry, communal feeling, grievances against the municipality and the like—was dragged in to mislead the unwary, and yet it had little effect and had finally to be supported by passionate personal appeals which it is always difficult for us Indians to resist. There was no question of principle, no open opposition but only insidious propaganda. No one dared to come to our numerous *mohalla* meetings to face us there and oppose us although we gave every opportunity for it.

Some success attended these efforts and many of the Muslim shopkeepers in Chowk kept their shops open. And yet we know that

1. Letter to the Editor, 3 February 1928. *The Leader*, 6 February 1928.

many of them wanted to close them but dared not do so. Many of even the Muslim shops were closed. Among the Hindus there was a complete *hartal* of all the major shops. Owing to the opposition every shopkeeper had to think for himself and decide for himself and was not merely giving a passive consent to a decree of outside authority. It was an active and thinking *hartal* and its amazing success was greater than any of us had anticipated. It had its fitting climax in the gallant processions that marched through the pouring rain from Bharadwaj and Moti Park and in the great meeting in the evening. The sudden change of venue for this meeting owing to the rains made it impossible for us to inform even a portion of the people who wanted to attend, but the big hall was crowded with an enthusiastic and exuberant audience.

We have succeeded. And our success is due entirely to the workers who laboured with extraordinary energy and devotion. I shall not thank my colleagues, Hindus and Muslims, of the city Congress committee. We have been colleagues and comrades for many years and I owe them too much for thanks. But I should like specially to express my deep indebtedness to some of the Muslim merchants and shopkeepers who carried on bravely despite all pressure and inducement — Messrs. Bahauddin, Abdul Latif, Abdul Khaliq, Haib Ullah, Abdul Razzaq Khan and Habibur Rahman. To my young comrades, the students of the University, I can only say that their youth and spirit made our work a joy and the occasional trouble we had to face melted away before their energy and gaiety. Without any outside pressure or inducement they decided to take a full part in the national demonstration and almost in a body left the University for a day. Of the 1500 and odd students in the University I am told that about 95 per cent participated in the *hartal*, the 5 per cent belonging chiefly to one particular hostel. A number of other students not belonging to the University also joined the *hartal*.

It has been a great day for Allahabad, a precursor I trust of the greater days to come when the call for more effective action goes forth. We know now that this call will meet with a suitable response from our fellow citizens and specially from the spirited youth of the city of Allahabad.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. Speech at Allahabad[1]

The extent of the feeling of indignation against the Commission should be judged from the *hartal* and not merely from the passing of the resolution. After the experience of the past several *hartals*, I am in a position to pronounce that I am completely satisfied with today's *hartal* for several reasons. On this occasion, numerous counter influences were at work against the demonstration. In Katra, I was told, a police officer, too well-known to be named, and two honorary magistrates have been exerting their influence on the shopkeepers. They circulated a paper and obtained several traders' signatures, the police officer threatening prosecution and the honorary magistrates threatening to fine if they refused to sign. When I with others went to the shopkeepers, I was told by the traders that their signatures were obtained on a blank paper under compulsion. In spite of all that, it was noticed that even shopkeepers, whose signatures were obtained for a manifesto issued against the *hartal*, had suspended business. In Chowk, too, I think forces against *hartal* were at work and leaflets were flooded daily.

All sorts of efforts were made to force the Muslims not to close their shops. It should not, therefore, be inferred that the Muslims were opposed to *hartal* if many shops were kept open today. Many of the workers were Muslims. The greatest pleasure which today's demonstration offered to me is that the University students observed *hartal* on their own initiative, without being influenced by anybody. My information is that only 5 per cent of the students went to the University and even those who were obliged to attend the classes were from a particular hostel.

In open meetings no one came forward to oppose the motions for *hartal*. The Muslims, on the other hand, held a meeting last night in a place where I could not have reached. Mr. Haidar Mehdi and other Muslims who were in favour of *hartal* however attended that meeting, but so long as they remained there nothing was discussed seriously about the boycott of the Commission. Mr. Haidar Mehdi and his party ultimately left the meeting after waiting for a couple of hours and it was when they had left that resolutions were passed against the *hartal*.

1. 3 February 1928. *The Leader*, 6 February 1928.

Today is the beginning of a real struggle. If work is to be pushed on, the people would have to take sufficient interest in the matter, so that the Commission should not only know the Indians' views but also the nature of their ultimate determination to achieve the end.

12. To Syed Mahmud[1]

In train to Bombay
4 February 1928

My dear Mahmud,

Today is the first real opportunity I have had after many days to write personal letters. I have been trying to pit myself against the bigoted and reactionary group of Muslims in Allahabad and although I must confess that for the moment victory is theirs I think their foundations have been shaken. I am not going to leave them in peace. The Muslim leaders[2] in Allahabad, as you know, with very few exceptions, are a bad lot and I think it is about time that they were put in their proper place. If there had been any effective Muslim to help it would have made a great difference. But Khwaja is worse than useless. He will not do anything and his being in Allahabad and not doing anything is positively harmful. Tasadduk is helpful but he is not quite active enough. And so I a Hindu, though a nominal one, have to face the Maulanas and the like!

I am going to Bombay to meet father. From there we shall probably go to Delhi direct for a week.

Your letters are thoroughly dismal reading. Why should you put on a woe-begone expression and be always dissatisfied with yourself and the world? I think it is the effect of Urdu poetry. People brought up on such sickly and sentimental and soppy stuff are bound to become a decadent people. Get rid of this outlook. Become a little more

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Muslim leaders like Maulana Vilayat Hussain, Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan, Muhammed Hussain and Zahur Ahmad had been addressing meetings against the boycott of the Simon Commission

aggressive and you will see that the world does offer something to live for and fight for!

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

13. Interview to the Press[1]

I must say that the *hartal* was a far greater success than I had dared to anticipate. We had to contend against communal feelings, threats and all manner of pressure brought to bear upon us on behalf of official, semi-official and other interested parties. The result was that each person who participated in the *hartal* had to think about it and decided after some consideration whether he should participate or not. The *hartal* was, therefore, a result of conscious thought and not merely an automatic obedience to the behests of any organization. I welcome *hartal* as a sure sign of political consciousness among the masses. I welcome it specially because of the awakening amongst students in India. It is always well for a country if her youth is spirited and daring. The *hartal* has shown that youths of India are both spirited and daring.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald is obviously in a temper and that is a sure sign that our boycott is having its effect. It is also a sign that Mr. MacDonald is beginning to feel that he is very much in the wrong. Those people only who begin to doubt their position get into a temper. So far as the plea of inferiority complex goes I have very little to say about it. It may be true that all people under alien domination necessarily suffer a little from the inferiority complex. But whether that is true or not, it is quite obvious that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald is suffering from a 'superiority complex' and cannot tolerate any opposition or criticism of his position. That complex is invariably found in the 'Jingoes' and imperialists and Mr. MacDonald appears to be indistinguishable from those classes. His speeches and actions daily resemble more and more those of the imperialist brand. Mr. MacDonald accuses us of both an inferiority complex and lack of self-respect. This seems to me somewhat contradictory. If we suffer from this complex,

1 *The Bombay Chronicle*, 7 February 1928

it means that we are too tender regarding what we consider touches our self-respect and not that we are lacking in it. His idea of Indian self-respect apparently is that we should obey implicitly the commands issued from Westminster or from the worthy leaders of the Labour Party. But that is not our notion of self respect and no amount of bullying from Mr. Ramsay MacDonald or from anybody for the matter of that will convince us to the contrary. We shall unite and see who is in the right and whose policy succeeds.

14. On the Hartal in Allahabad[1]

Sir,— I am enclosing for favour of publication copies of two letters[2] I addressed to Mr. Zahur Ahmad of Allahabad. Neither of these letters elicited a response from Mr. Zahur Ahmad. Five days ago I sent a third letter[3] to him and informed him that in case I did not hear from him I would send these letters to the press. He has not taken the trouble to reply nor has he even done me the courtesy of an acknowledgment. In view of the charges that he has made against those who worked for the *hartal* in Allahabad, and which he has not considered it necessary to substantiate or justify in any way whatever, I would beg of you to give publicity to these letters.

Jawaharlal Nehru

I

Allahabad
Feb. 8

Dear Zahur Ahmad,— On my way back from Bombay yesterday I read your letter in the *Pioneer* of the 6th regarding the *hartal* in Allahabad. The following sentences occur in this letter :—

1. Letter to the Editor, 27 February 1928 *The Leader*, 2 March 1928
2. These two letters were published in *The Leader*, 2 March 1928
3. A.I.C.C. File No. G 58/1928, p 3, *N.M.M.L.*

'All kinds of methods were used for this purpose. The vegetable sellers were exposed to severe threats by enthusiastic boycotters. Attempts were made to intimidate the shopkeepers and other persons engaged in trade'.

I presume you are aware that I took perhaps the most active part in organizing the boycott and *hartal* in Allahabad, and that I addressed a large number of public meetings in various parts of the city on the subject. As I am not aware of any undesirable practices on behalf of my colleagues or myself I shall be obliged to you if you will kindly supply me with some details of the charges you have made against the 'enthusiastic boycotters'. At the numerous meetings that I addressed I laid stress not only on the fact that the *hartal* must be voluntary but no shopkeeper who was not convinced by our arguments should close his shop. So far as the vegetable sellers were concerned I appealed to them specially the day previous to the *hartal* not to be influenced by any personal considerations they may have for any of us but to keep their stalls open unless they agreed with my argument and way of thinking. I was not fortunate enough to see you or, indeed, any other opponent of the *hartal* at these meetings and all I could do was to offer the fullest opportunity to any person who had doubts to speak or to ask questions. It was my intention to attend the meeting held on the night of Feb. 2 at Maulana Vilayat Husain's house, but I was informed that it was a semi private gathering and that in any event a non-Muslim would not be welcome.

I shall be glad, therefore, if you will send me full particulars of the charges in your letter to the *Pioneer* and also to specify what the 'campaign of vilification and abuse' mentioned in your letter was and against whom it was directed.

You have often told me and many others in the past that you are no believer in principles in politics. That is your undoubted right, but unhappily I have a different standard and I do believe in and try to act up to some principles which I consider vital. Hence my request to you to enlighten me further in regard to your statements.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

II

New Delhi
15 February 1928

Dear Zahur Ahmad,
I wrote to you on the 8th February regarding the communication you had addressed to the *Pioneer* and requested you to enlighten me about some statements made therein. I have had no answer from you to this letter. I shall be glad if you will kindly send me an early reply. Please address it to Anand Bhawan, Allahabad.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

III

23/2/28

Dear Zahur Ahmad,
I have written to you twice already, once on the 8th February and a second time from New Delhi a week later, without eliciting any response. After having made serious charges of intimidation and undue pressure against those who worked for a *hartal* on February 3rd I think it was up to you to substantiate them or at any rate indicate what they were based on. I trust you will still do so. I shall wait for your reply till day after tomorrow. After that I propose to send copies of my letters to the press.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. Statement to the Press[1]

The *Pioneer* of March 31 published a message from its Bombay correspondent to the effect that Mr. Gandhi may proceed to England as

1. *The Leader*, 4 April 1928.

the head of a deputation to Lord Birkenhead to find some way out of the present political impasse resulting from the boycott of the Simon Commission. The idea was on the face of it fantastic and no one who knew Mr. Gandhi or Pandit Motilal Nehru could imagine that there could be any truth in it. Nor am I aware of the slightest ground for believing that any responsible quarter has ever entertained it. To make absolutely sure, however, I communicated with Mr. Gandhi and I have his authority for contradicting it and stating that there is absolutely no truth in it.

Jawaharlal Nehru

16. To Atul Krishna Ghose[1]

9 June 1928

Dear Sir,[2]

I thank you for your letter of the 29th May as well as your pamphlet on the boycott. I have read the latter. You ask me for my views on your little book. I am afraid I cannot give full expression to my views without writing a book myself. I feel also that there is such very great difference in our viewpoints that it will not be easy to find common ground. A discussion or an argument to be profitable must be based on certain admitted premises. But I find that even those will be lacking between you and me. I do not think therefore that it will be worthwhile my endeavouring to write at length to you.

I would only point out to you that it is not an amusing thing for most of us to leave our sheltered nooks of society, upset our domestic lives, and generally face uncertainty and insecurity for the mere fun of it. Nobody likes these things and if people are prepared to face them it is because they are actuated by an intense conviction. It is of course possible that that conviction may be a wrong one and due to ignorance but ordinarily one gives credit for bonafides.

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-40 (a)/1928, pp 139-40, N.M.M.L.
2. Ghose, a lawyer of Alipur, had sent to Jawaharlal his pamphlet "*A Dream and a Bluff*", in which he had termed the boycott of the Commission suicidal folly. He thought Jawaharlal "would improve if he had more experience of the village life of India."

And even wisdom is not a monopoly of any individual or group. As you know I am a fairly aggressive opponent of British rule in India. It may perhaps interest you to know that I have spent the most impressionable years of my life in England at school and college and I have a number of good English friends. I have also had occasion to read much and to travel much and have met the peoples of many countries so that I have had some opportunities to arrive at a correct conclusion which are usually denied to many of my countrymen.

You say in your letter that you have been good enough to change your opinion about me after reading two of my speeches. It may be that a personal interview may result in still further change. Similarly it may be that if you meet many of the persons you have criticised you may find out that they are neither so foolish nor unpractical nor self-seeking as you might otherwise think. Most of us I suppose are compounds of good and evil.

You have called the boycott of the Simon Commission a dream and a bluff and have criticised those who have advocated it. Do you think that any movement which is so widespread can possibly be a bluff or can be based on anything but conviction? You have compared the case of Egypt and Ireland. I am sorry I cannot go deeply into this question but allow me to assure you that your comparisons and the conclusions you draw have little basis in fact. And I say so from a fair knowledge of both the questions and of Irishmen and Egyptians. You will find if you go to other countries that there is not much to choose between them and India in regard to strength and weaknesses. They have all their weaknesses. Some may have more than others. It is my conviction with which many Egyptians are in agreement that India is politically more advanced than Egypt and is likely to attain her freedom sooner than Egypt.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17. To Fenner Brockway[1]

11 June 1928

My dear Fenner,

Thank you for your letter of the 11th May. I am glad to find that you have resumed the editorship of the *New Leader*. I hope this means that you are well on the way to health.

It is obvious that Simon & Co., are very desirous of dividing the Indian parties and that they are quite prepared to make various concessions. But I cannot conceive of any concessions which can go anywhere near acceptance by the Congress. You must have read about the *Pioneer* scheme for 'bridging the gulf'. I am almost sure that this is officially inspired and if there was any chance of its acceptance by the Indian parties the Government would put it forward itself.

I am rather worried on account of my wife's health. She appears to have had a relapse and her lungs are giving trouble again.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F-28/1928, p. 1, N.M.M.L.

18. Interview to the Press[1]

I am not surprised at what happened at Lahore[2]. It was but to be expected. I am glad Lahore has done well and I hope Lucknow would do better.

1. 2 November 1928. *The Tribune*, 4 November 1928.
2. The lathi-charge on 30 October 1928, when Lajpat Rai was severely beaten He died on 17 November.

19. To the Editor, Sarhad[1]

10th November 1928

Dear Sir,

I have your letter of the 1st November. I am very glad to know that you are *issuing a Boycott Number of your weekly. The North West* Frontier Province, owing to its strategical position, has been made into a stronghold of British imperialism. I am not surprised that reaction flourishes there. In the interests of British imperialism the province has been denied even the petty reforms which were granted to the rest of India. If there is any part of India which has suffered more than any other under *British rule it is the Frontier Province.* It is therefore up to that province to boycott the Simon Commission even more than the other provinces have done. That is not only a question of honour but good politics, for the more pressure you can exercise by your boycott the more you will impress upon both the Commission and the British Government that you can be trifled with no longer and that your demands must be acceded to.

It is well known that vast military preparations are being made by the British Government for a possible war in the near future. The burden of that war will necessarily fall chiefly on the people of the Frontier. It is for them to decide if they are going to permit themselves to be exploited for the benefit of British imperialism. If they are not so prepared then the only thing they can do is to boycott the Simon Commission and to join hands with all the progressive elements in India to free our country once for all from all foreign domination. *When India is free* there will be no question of reforms for this or that part of the country. Every person and every province will be a sharer in that freedom.

Wishing you all success,

I am
Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-73/1928, p. 7, N.M.M.L.
The *Sarhad* was an Urdu weekly published in Peshawar.

20. To Mohanlal Saxena[1]

14 November 1928

My dear Mohanlal,

I told you in the train coming from Delhi that it would be difficult for me to draft any kind of an appeal for your boycott demonstrations in Lucknow. The more I think of it the less I feel like doing it. The real difficulty is that I do not know what you propose to do, how far you are prepared to go and what your material is like. It is no good shouting and doing nothing. Therefore the draft of this notice must be left to you.

I have not yet received any intimation that the provincial Congress committee will be held on the 25th November. Our P.C.C. office certainly deserves a gold medal for its thorough inefficiency. I have still hopes that the meeting will be held on that day. If so I shall reach Lucknow by the early morning train on the 25th. I would suggest your having public meetings on the 25th evening as well as the 26th, 27th and 28th. If you like you may leave out the 25th because we shall be busy with our committee meeting. I shall only stay on till the 28th if there is much doing. Otherwise I do not propose to waste good time in waving a little flag.

The A.I.C.C. at Delhi has definitely laid down that there should be *hartals* in places visited by Simon. There is no choice left. I hope therefore that you are organising such an *hartal*. Your Rajas and Nawabs will probably object to it as being against Hindu *Sabhyata* and the like and I am very much afraid that they will impress their will upon you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-73/1928, p. 5. N.M.M.L.

21. Tribute to Lala Lajpat Rai[1]

I agree with Babu Krishnaballav Sahay[2] that Lala Lajpat Rai was not an individual but an institution and a public meeting is not the place where one can make an adequately correct estimate of his great personality. The present year is particularly unfortunate for India. The year opened under the shadow of the death of Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan. And now has come the death of another ex-president of the Congress. What is the moral to be drawn from the deaths of these personalities? The moral is that there is no dearth of great men in India. India has produced a larger number of great men in every sphere of life than possibly any other country in the world. Why is it that even in spite of that the country is not progressing at the rate the other countries are doing? To me it appears that the reason is that great men there are in the country, but a requisite number of followers is not forthcoming. That is also the reason for the untimely deaths of most of our leaders. All the leaders of India are more or less in bad health, because the strain of work generally falls too heavily on them, strain both mental and physical. Sacrifice also is not wanting in India. Every year conspiracies are unearthed in some part or other of India and every year people are found embracing death smilingly at the gallows. And yet Swaraj is not in sight; and why? Because in India, people know how to die but not how to live and die inch by inch for the sake of the country. Lala Lajpat Rai was an embodiment of that ideal, the ideal that MacSwiney[3] described by saying that "It is a great thing to die for a cause, but it is a greater thing still to live for it". Indian people should learn this lesson from the life and death of Lala Lajpat Rai.

1. *The Searchlight*, 21 November 1928.
2. B. 1898, Minister for Revenue and Excise, Bihar Government, 1946-57, Chief Minister, Bihar, 1963-66.
3. Terence MacSwiney, Mayor of Cork in Ireland died of a long hunger strike in a British prison in October 1920.

22. They have dared![1]

It is announced in the public press that the Lucknow University authorities have invited Sir John Simon and his undistinguished crew to the University convocation. I do not know who these authorities are, but every school boy knows that India has resented the appointment and the coming of the Simon Commission and has boycotted it. Has no whisper of this reached the academic ears of the Lucknow University authorities? Have they not heard or felt in their *boudoirs* the deep rumble of a nation in anger? Do they not know how one of the greatest of India's sons was treated in Lahore city less than a month ago because he would not bow his head to this commission which the authorities of Lucknow University have invited? What was his greatness worth or the love that millions of his countrymen bore him before the baton of an insolent policeman? Only a few days ago his great and generous heart pulsated with life and the warm blood throbbed through his veins, and with untiring energy his rich mind worked for the emancipation of his country and all who were oppressed in it. And then, his body lay cold and stiff and the valiant spirit that had inhabited it for four and sixty years had gone. Today that body is dust and ashes. We are told by his doctors that his death was hastened by the blows received by him when he led his fellow citizens to protest against the Simon Commission. And yet the authorities of Lucknow have invited this Commission to their convocation! And yet, they have dared!

Young men and women of Lucknow, what say you to this infamous and insolent challenge? Is the honour of your country nought that it can be kicked in the dust by a policeman clad in the livery of our alien rulers? But the poor policeman was but an instrument in other hands. What of your University authorities who of their own free will dare to honour those whom the nation has repudiated and boycotted? What of them and their attempt to exploit your University for the glorification of the Simon Commission? This is the measure of their nationalism, of their love of India and her honour. This is

1. *Message to the students of Lucknow, November 1928* A.I.C.C. *File No.* G-73/1928, p 3, N.M.M.L.

the tribute they pay to the memory of Lajpat Rai. Will you too forget soon this fragrant memory and this shining example?

They have dared! What date you? Will you not make it clear to your University authorities, to the Simon Commission, and to all whom it may concern, that the young men and young women of Lucknow cherish the memory of their departed leader and stand for the cause for which he lived and died? That they stand for the boycott of the Simon Commission and will not permit anyone to exploit them on behalf of the enemies of Indian freedom. Will you not take part in the boycott demonstrations in Lucknow, and, above all, boycott the convocation to which your University authorities have invited the Simon Commission?

They have dared! Do you also date?

Jawaharlal Nehru

23. To Mohanlal Saxena[1]

1 December 1928

My dear Mohanlal,

I understand that you propose to have a number of kites[2] flying with black flags etc. on December 5th when the party is held in Kaiserbagh. This is a very good idea and I hope you will persevere with it. You might also have a few large kites or *tukkals* with big streamers of flags.

There is another suggestion that I might make. You might write formally as Secretary of the Boycott Committee to all the talukdars participating in the party or at any rate you will send your letter to the Executive Committee of the British Indian Association[3] and other important persons. You can tell them that their action in giving a party is strongly resented by the public of Lucknow and is considered to be most unnational and dishonourable.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC. File No. G 73/1928, p. 1, NMML.
2. When a garden party was given by some taluqdars to the Simon Commission in the Kaiserbagh at Lucknow, no one who was suspected of being a boycotter was allowed by the police to approach even the roads near the Bagh. The result was the descent from the skies of numerous black kites and balloons bearing such legends as "Simon Go Back" and "India for Indians".
3. An association formed by the taluqdars of Oudh in 1861.

24. Statement to the Press[1]

Lucknow experienced the full might of the British Empire this morning when a hundred mounted and foot police charged a crowd of 30 thousand or more across the country for two or three furlongs. Hundreds were beaten with *lathis*, some were injured seriously and the life of one is in danger. Many were beaten down and horses passed over them.

The trouble arose when the procession carrying black flags which started this morning reached the *maidan* opposite the railway station. They were asked to enter the space which was allotted to them a quarter of a mile removed from the place where the commission was going to pass. Objection was taken to this as it was considered futile to demonstrate from such a distance.

There was plenty of land on the left and enough to accommodate lakhs which was not allotted to anybody. The procession stopped along the road in an orderly manner, a small part of it facing the open space on the left. In front of the latter were some mounted police. The leaders of the procession said they were prepared to remain at a distance away from the road but were not prepared to go a quarter of a mile away. Thus the procession remained on the road a little to the left of it.

Many people also gathered near the route of the commission, and individuals gradually dribbled from the road where the procession was standing to the other group near the route, but the main procession headed by myself, Pt. Pant[2] and other Congress leaders of Lucknow stood where it was.

1. Issued at Lucknow, 30 November 1928 *The Bombay Chronicle*, 1 December 1928.
2. Govind Ballabh Pant (1887 1961), educated at Almora and Allahabad; advocate of the Allahabad High Court, leader, Swaraj Party in U.P. Council, 1923 30; severely beaten along with Jawaharlal at Lucknow in the Simon Commission demonstration 1928 and received injuries from which he never fully recovered, suffered many terms of imprisonment, Premier, U P 1937 39 and Chief Minister, 1946-55; Home Minister, Government of India, 1955-61.

Suddenly it was noticed that the group, a quarter of a mile away across the big *maidan*, standing near the route, was driven back by mounted police who beat them mercilessly. Galloping horses pursued the individuals and knocked them down. Meanwhile the procession stood like a solid phalanx on the road near it.

The mounted police forced the main procession but the procession solidly stood its ground. There was a fierce attack by the mounted as well as the foot police. As the attack proceeded the processionists reached to the other side of the road, the police followed beating them and throwing stones at them.

Having reached the plot originally offered to them the police pushed the crowd about a further 200 yards and stone throwing by the police and for some minutes also from the crowd ensued. The latter were immediately stopped by the leaders of the boycotters. In spite of this fierce charge the procession did not break into a rabble.

When the Simon party passed a little later there were tremendous shouts all along of "Simon go back", "shame". The procession marched back to the city in an orderly manner, and after a brief speech from me at the Aminuddaulah Park they dispersed. Almost everyone of the prominent leaders was injured. After receiving two or three *lathi* blows I was surrounded by students who insisted on receiving the blows to protect me. Some of these brave young men were badly hurt in their efforts to protect me, Pt. Pant and Mrs. Mitra.[3]

Apart from the legality of the question, the manner the police charged was extremely brutal. The police were there when the crowd went there and they could have been stopped then. They were suddenly pounced upon by the police and given *lathi* blows on all parts of the body. It was scandalous. The Deputy Commissioner[4] himself got excited and started collaring people. The police officials seemed to have a blood-lust from the way they went about and pounced upon unarmed people. They are openly boasting, it is said, of the great beating they have given to the boycotters. Lucknow, specially the young men and students, distinguished themselves by their discipline and courage and Lucknow has reason to be proud of the events of this morning, and officials who were responsible for this morning's events have helped greatly in producing an atmosphere in India which will put an end to the British rule.

The local government issued a communique regarding the events of the 28th evening. It is understood they are issuing another regarding last night's and today's happenings.

3. Shrimati Sumti Devi Mitra, an active Congress worker of Lucknow.
4. C. W. Gwynne, I.C.S., at this time Deputy Commissioner, Lucknow and later Chief Secretary, U.P. Government.

25. Telegrams to R. Bridgeman and G.S. Dara[1]

3-12-28

Thanks. Injuries severe but not serious.
Hope survive British Empire.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(i)/1928, p. 463, N.M.M.L.
Gurdit Singh Dara was associated with the London branch of the Indian National Congress and was editor of *India*, a journal published in London.

26. Statement to the Press[1]

A number of statements have been issued regarding the recent happenings in Lucknow. It may interest people to have a connected account of these incidents from one who was an eye witness to many things that happened there.

It appears that the authorities were assured by their underlings and informers that the boycott demonstrations in Lucknow would not amount to much. They were told that Muslims would not take any prominent part and a slight difference of opinion in the Boycott Committee was magnified and made to appear as if there had been a split among the boycotters. The original attitude of the authorities was thoroughly accommodating. As soon as news of the so-called split reached them they stiffened their attitude. But very soon they found that there was no split and the Boycott Committee was as determined

1. Issued at Allahabad, 1 December 1928 *The Leader*, 3 December 1928

and *united as ever. Immediately the authorities became more accommodating and agreed to the procession on the 26th.* So far as the Boycott Committee were concerned they made it clear that they were prepared to abide by all reasonable arrangements made by the police. It was not their intention to seek a conflict with the police. Their sole object was to organise a great demonstration against the Simon Commission.

The procession of the 26th November was an eye-opener to the authorities. It was a vast procession whose numbers it is impossible to guess. It proved conclusively the tremendous strength of feeling against the Simon Commission and the Government that was backing this Commission. Nothing untoward happened during this procession in spite of the vast numbers that took part in it because the police did nothing aggressive. The procession, however, made it clear to the authorities that their informants who had told them that there was not going to be much boycott agitation were hopelessly in the wrong. Immediately there appears to have been a change in the attitude of the officials and they seemed to have decided to try a little bit of terrorism to cow down the people.

The first fruit of this change of attitude became visible on the 28th, when another procession was to have been taken out from the Congress office. Notice of this procession and the route it was going to take was sent to the police authorities. On the very evening of the procession, however, the police informed the Boycott Committee that they would not permit that route. The secretary of the Committee told the police that it was too late for them to change their plans. The procession therefore gathered under the Congress office. The city magistrate, Mr. Ainuddin, with mounted police, came there and spoke to Babu Mohanlal Saxena, secretary of the Committee. They went into an adjoining shop and exchanged written notes which have been published.

The *procession formed up* It was faced by the mounted police. The procession had hardly proceeded a step or two when they were attacked by the mounted police and batons were used freely. It is untrue to say, as has been said in the Government communique, that the procession tried to force their way through the police. Their idea was to assert their right to proceed and to stop if the police actually stopped them. They had in fact stopped when the charge was made. It is stated in the Government communique that people tried to get round the police by climbing over the railings of the park. This is untrue. Many people did try to climb over the railings, but this was when the police charge was made and they wanted to escape. It must

be remembered that, apart from the processionists, there were many other people there and it was largely these people who tried to escape the charge. The police, however, pursued them on the pavements to the railings and beat them there. The marks of the hoofs of the police horses were plainly visible the next day on the pavements. Many people on the side of the processionists were injured. Among them were Messrs. Mohanlal Saxena, Pestonji[2] and Kishan Prasad Kaul[3] of the Servants of India Society.

It is stated by the Government that stones were thrown by the processionists on the police and some police officers were injured. It is impossible for anyone to say whether stones were thrown or not, but it was pointed out at the time to the deputy commissioner, Mr. Gwynne, that if the processionists had wanted to throw stones there were piles of them on the roadside. Mr. Gwynne was also asked if he would show to any responsible members of the Boycott Committee the injuries which were alleged to have been caused to the police by stone throwing, but none was forthcoming. Mr. Gwynne stated ultimately that no obvious injuries were caused. Anyway, in spite of repeated requests, none was shown.

In the night I received a telephone message from Lucknow about the police assault and I left for Lucknow the next day. I found on arrival that there was very great resentment at the police assault of the day before and the general feeling was that the Boycott Committee should have no further official dealings with the police authorities. There was no procession on behalf of the committee that day, that is, Nov. 29, but a mass meeting had been called to celebrate Lajpat Rai Day. A *mohalla* meeting had been called at Narhi at the back of Hazratganj. I went to this small meeting with Mr. Khaliq-uz-zaman, Mr. Harkaran Nath Mista, and Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant. After the meeting was over, it was proposed to go in a body to the big meeting in Aminuddaula Park. I suggested that we should not all go in a procession as there were a number of small boys present and it might not have been easy to have an orderly procession. Our suggestion was that two or three small groups not exceeding twelve should go and the rest should go individually. We further suggested that in order to avoid any blocking of traffic or any conflict with the police we should not go through Hazratganj, which is the main European shopping quarter,

2. Kuverji Peston, a Congressman of Lucknow
3. Secretary, Oudh Liberal Association for several years, edited Urdu weekly *Hindustan*; President, *Anjuman Taraqqi Hind* in 1930, died in 1955.

but should proceed by unfrequented roads. In the course of these discussions the assistant superintendent of police came up to me and wanted to know what we were going to do and if we proposed taking out a procession. I told him that in view of the wanton attack of the police the day before we were not prepared to have any further dealings with them. A little later we formed up three groups of twelve each. Two of these groups remained standing whilst one headed by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and myself proceeded along Newal Kishore Road. We had barely started when we were stopped by the mounted police and a charge was made on this group of twelve. The road was practically empty at the time except for us and the mounted police. The members of our group received plenty of *lathi* blows. After a few minutes the *lathi* blows ceased and the Deputy Commissioner appeared on the scene.

It is curious that both on the evening of Nov. 28 and on Nov. 29, when the police made an assault and used their batons, the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Gwynne, appeared on the scene like a *deus ex machina* immediately after the occurrence. It would almost appear that on both occasions he was waiting in the neighbourhood for the assault to be over in order to put in his appearance.

We had a long argument with the Deputy Commissioner. He said that he had no objection to our proceeding in the manner we intended to do but we must have a formal permission for it. We told him after the police behaviour on two occasions we were not prepared to ask for any formal permission. Thereupon he suggested that he would be satisfied by an oral request, but that too we were not prepared to make. Ultimately he even said that he was prepared to treat our conversation as an oral request if we were also prepared to treat it as such. We were unable, however, to agree to this even.

It thus became entirely a matter of prestige on either side. We sat down by the roadside with the mounted police barring our way. Meanwhile news of these happenings spread far and wide and had created a great deal of consternation at the mass meeting that was going on in Aminuddaula Park. There was a tendency for the audience to come in a body to us. This was stopped and the meeting sent a deputation to make enquiries and report. Great crowds began to assemble on the Hazratganj side of the Newal Kishore Road. Ultimately, after an hour's waiting, the Deputy Commissioner said he would permit our group to proceed along the route we had originally decided upon. Whether this was due to the increasing crowds or the triumph of reason I do not know. His decision was evidently not to the taste of the Superintendent of Police, who did not like the idea of official prestige going

down before the prestige of a group of twelve men. However, our groups were allowed to proceed. We told the great crowd that had assembled to go back to the meeting by other roads, which they did. Our three groups marched, preceded by the mounted police as a kind of guard of honour, along Hazratganj and Kaiserbagh to the park. The incident of the evening had naturally attracted a great deal of attention and our little procession which might otherwise have been unnoticed became a kind of triumphal march. The meeting itself in the park was an enormous gathering and very great enthusiasm prevailed in it.

The secretary of the Boycott Committee had asked the police previously for a block of land along the route to be taken by the Simon Commission from the station for our demonstration. The Deputy Commissioner had replied on the 29th that he would have no objection to giving this plot, but he had already allotted it to the depressed classes. Late at night on the 29th some of us went to see the lands lying round about the station. We saw that the so-called depressed classes numbering about 30 or 40 were occupying two little *shamianas* at a great distance from the station and there was enough land along the road and in front of the station to accommodate five or six lakhs of people. No question could possibly arise of our taking any land which had been allotted to the depressed classes. We visited those people and found that they had been asked to come there to witness dancing and singing by professional singers who had been brought from Cawnpore. This is locally known as *Nautanki*[4] performance. We were told that each person who had come had been given Rs. 2. They were also provided with *ganja* and *charas*. We talked to some of these people. They knew little about the Simon Commission and those who did know something about it said that they were prepared to wave black flags, etc., when it passed by.

It was clear from the vacant land available that if the Deputy Commissioner was sincere in his offer to give us a good site there was no lack of space. It was the easiest thing possible for him to separate us by a hundred yards or so from the depressed classes and if necessary to put policemen between us. Even apart from the line of the route there was an adjoining *maidan* which, though not very suitable for us, was far better than the plot of land at a distance that he had allotted.

4 Popular folk dances of Uttar Pradesh. The themes are taken either from religious legend and history or from current events and problems.

WITH DR. M. A. ANSARI.
Meerut, October 1928.

The next morning the procession started from the Congress office at 6 with black flags, etc. The procession was well organised and marched in fours, with ropes on either side to keep the lines. Behind the regular procession of a thousand or more, followed large numbers of other processionists in no very regular array. It was a vast crowd on the march. Smaller processions went directly from various *mohallas* to the station. When the main procession arrived near the open space opposite the station it turned to the left to go towards the line of the route. They were stopped by the police and were asked to go to the right. The plot in the right was at least a quarter of a mile away from the nearest point of the Simon Commission's route. We pointed out that it was ridiculous for us to congregate at this distance. As, however, we were not allowed to proceed to the left we remained standing there. Part of the procession was allowed to march a little further ahead along the route but was then stopped by the police. Here we stood for an hour or more. Many of the smaller processions and individuals gradually dribbled to the other side of the *maidan* near the line of route. I had a short conversation with the Deputy Commissioner and pointed out to him that his allotment was grossly unfair and there was plenty of vacant land available for us in a better position. He told me gruffly, however, that he was not prepared to argue and that his orders must be carried out. A day before the police assault he had appeared in the guise of a sweetly reasonable person. On the 30th morning there was little of sweetness or reasonableness about him. Evidently he had felt annoyed at the downfall of official prestige the night before and wanted to reinstate it by aggressive and offensive behaviour. So we stood for a long time, the main procession in serried ranks on the road, with a small part of it facing the left, and the crowd near the line of route and some individuals spread out over the *maidan* to the left. It is difficult to estimate the numbers present. Opinions vary greatly. Some people estimate the entire crowd at a lakh of persons. Others give a much smaller figure. I do not think there could have been less than 50,000 people in the various open spaces in front of the station.

Suddenly we saw a charge by the mounted police at the other end of the *maidan*. We were told subsequently they had given five minutes' notice to the party but had as a matter of fact charged within a couple of minutes. The *maidan* was full of little groups of people. These were driven down ruthlessly by the mounted police and beaten with *lathis*. Many people fell down and were driven over by horses. The *maidan* has an enormous space and the mounted police had a fine chance of charging at a gallop, which they took full advantage of.

All this we saw from a distance of nearly a quarter of a mile—a distance which rapidly decreased because the drive was in our direction. Ultimately the mounted police reached the procession. The processionists stood firm and for a little while refused to budge. Even the horses were brought to a standstill by the solid phalanx of the procession. The aid of the foot police was then taken and the mounted and the foot police charged with batons at the procession. Quite a prominent part in the attack with *lathi* blows was taken by the Assistant Superintendent of Police.

The procession, however, did not break up in spite of this but gradually receded step by step maintaining a fair measure of order. Having crossed the road we came to the plot which had actually been allotted to us. The police charge, however, continued for another hundred yards or more. The police then stopped the charge and took to throwing stones—a pastime in which some of the police officers on foot vigorously indulged. This was a bit too much for the nerves of the procession and they began to retaliate in kind. A number of stones were thus thrown by people on the side of the processionists, but immediately they were asked to desist and stone-throwing stopped on the side of the processionists.

The procession lined up again and stood facing the mounted and the foot police in battle array three or four deep, with a distance of 10 or 15 yards separating them. Thus they stood and a little later they saw in the extreme distance cars being rushed away from the station which presumably contained the gallant commissioners. After some time the procession marched back in an orderly manner to the Congress office where after a little speechifying it dispersed.

It is difficult to estimate the number of casualties, but it is clear that hundreds of persons must have been injured, though probably the really grave injuries were fortunately not many. One man's life was despaired of and several had their heads split open. On the police side one of the Assistant Superintendents was hit on the hand by a stone.

After the end of the procession the students of Lucknow University, who had taken considerable part in it and who were largely responsible for the discipline and orderliness, marched back to their University quarters. At one place they were pursued by the police. There was a little argument between the two, the police threatening to arrest the lot. The Vice-Chancellor, however, appeared on the scene and damped the ardour of the police. Practically the whole day little processions of students and others went about the city and held meetings in Aminuddaula Park. The city observed a very fine *hartal*. In the

evening a great mass meeting was held at which Pandit Motilal Nehru and others spoke.

So far as I am concerned, I have not the slightest grievance against the government or the officials in Lucknow. The Boycott Committee ought to give them honourable badges for the tremendous help that it received owing to their stupidity in making the boycott demonstrations a magnificent success. Everything that they did was from the point of view of the government stupid in the extreme and from the point of view of the boycotters extremely felicitous. It was painful of course, to me and to others to see the extraordinarily callous and brutal behaviour of the police, but I suppose that is the price which we shall often have to pay. It was clear on the 30th that the police were out for vengeance. Indeed, they gloated about it afterwards, but in their stupidity did not realize that they had completely played into the hands of the boycotters. They have brought the real issue before the people of the country bereft of all sophistries and legal quibbles. That issue is that British rule in India means the policeman's baton and the bayonet and the real problem is how to overcome them. Logic and reason is unhappily lost on the baton and the bayonet. They will be overcome by the strength and the sanctions that the country develops. In this process of developing sanctions we can have no greater allies than British officials of the kind which Lucknow possesses today.

27. Statement on the lathi-charge at Lucknow[1]

Many friends have made anxious inquiries about my condition under the impression that I received serious injuries at Lucknow on 29th November. I should like to assure them that I am perfectly well and alive and kicking. The half a dozen or so *lathi* blows I received on my shoulders and back and legs may technically constitute serious injuries, but they have not hurt me much and I am none the worse for them.

1. Issued at Allahabad, 1 December 1928. *The Tribune*, 4 December 1928.

Indeed I feel better for them and am rather pleased with myself at having had the opportunity of sharing in the magnificent demonstration which Lucknow made yesterday morning. Even to see it was enough to make a sick man well. To participate in it and to have the privilege of working shoulder to shoulder with the gallant young men of Lucknow was worth far more than a few *lathi* blows.

I am thoroughly pleased at the new experience and at having found out that my back is strong enough and solid enough not to give way before *lathi* and baton blows. I may have been hurt more, if two or three gallant young men, students of the Lucknow University, had not insisted on constituting themselves a kind of bodyguard. They almost enveloped me much against my will and received numerous blows which otherwise might have fallen on me. Nobody need worry about me.

28. To Dhirendra Mozumdar[1]

Allahabad
5 December 1928

My dear Dhiren,[2]
... I received a number of hard *lathi* blows but apart from causing me a fair amount of pain and swelling and leaving marks behind there was no serious injury.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-8/1928, p 11, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. A Gandhian worker since 1921.

29. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

5 December 1928

My dear Chatto,

I do not know if you have been writing to me regularly but I do know that I have not been hearing from you regularly. After your letter of October 10th the next letter[2] has come today dated November 14.

You seem to be considerably perturbed about the speech I delivered at Meerut.[3] I have warned you not to place too much reliance on press reports. As a rule they are bad but in reporting Urdu speeches in English they are even worse. I had said that what I was aiming at was the total ending of imperialism and until this happened there would always be trouble in India and elsewhere. I had even said that I might even accept Dominion Status if it could be conceived minus all imperialism but as I could not conceive this I was against Dominion Status.

Matters are certainly gradually coming to a head here and I agree with you that after the Simon Commission has reported we are likely to reach a critical stage. Exactly what will be done then I cannot say nor can you from a distance of several thousand miles give much advice. Action has to follow certain principles. It must also fit in with the circumstances. I am not afraid as I have often stated of violence that may be thrust on us. But I do think that essentially

1. AICC. File No. 127/1927-28, pp. 1-3, NMML.
2. Chattopadhyaya in his letter had said, "You have time for organisation during the next few months According to my reading of the Indian situation the revolutionary ferment will come to a head just after the Simon Commission has reported to Parliament and the Government prepares a plan of reforms for the purchase of the owning class If you are organisationally prepared by this time, you will be able to strike a blow, just as Gandhi was able to do in 1921. But I hope that this time there will be no sentimental nonsense about the shedding of a few litres of blood, and that the revolutionary movement will be led on *purely materialistic lines by trained Marxian revolutionaries.*"
3. In his address on 13 October 1928, Jawaharlal had said, "if a Constitution could be framed even under Dominion Status but fundamentally directed against imperialism" he would be prepared to support it.

our movement will have to be carried on on more or less peaceful lines including some kinds of civil disobedience and non-payment of rent and taxes if necessary. As for the movement being run by trained Marxists I fail to see any in India and I certainly do not consider myself as such. Generally of course I am in agreement with the theory and I believe that our political evolution must follow those lines. How and to what extent must depend on many circumstances. You must remember that situated as India is today the strongest appeal must inevitably come from nationalism.

You have not mentioned the receipt of the cable I sent you long ago asking you to invite your affiliated organizations to the Calcutta Congress. I presume you have got it as you say that these organizations are going to send messages to the Congress.

You must have read or will read about recent happenings in India. At Lucknow we were assaulted by the police with *Lathis*. The Simon boycott is undoubtedly becoming stronger largely because of the attitude of the officials. I had a fairly severe beating but was not greatly affected and I am recovering rapidly.

I had another query from Calcutta. It appears that Johnston[4] has gone about claiming to represent you at the Trade Union Congress at Jharia. I was asked if Johnston was your representative. As you have not written to me anything about him and I do not know who he is I was unable to give any reply.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. The delegate of the American branch of the League against Imperialism who attended the Trade Union Congress held at Jharia. He also addressed several meetings at Calcutta and Bauria on labour problems. He was served with orders to leave India and was arrested on 18 December 1928.

30. Statement to the Press[1]

In the press communique issued by the U.P. Government about the incidents of November 29th and 30th at Lucknow, there are many incorrect statements and a great deal of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*. I do not, however, propose to discuss the incidents again. One statement in the communique, however, is so extraordinary that it merits a little attention. It is stated that "contrary to argeement" our little groups of twelve were reinforced in numbers as they proceeded, and "failed to follow the route settled". These groups were being led by the mounted police, and there were policemen to the right and to the left of them. All we did was to follow the mounted vanguard of the police, and it is really amazing to be told that we broke any agreement by going along a different route.

Our impression was that if we had sought to rid ourselves of this vanguard by going along any other route, we might have had a little *lathi* play again on our backs. The second charge, of people following us, is also indicative of a loosening of the mental apparatus of those responsible for it. How a handful of us, marching along the road, could prevent others going the same way along the pavements or following us, passes my comprehension.

1. Issued at Allahabad, 4 December 1928. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 5 December 1928.

31. To R. Bridgeman[1]

5 December 1928

My dear Bridgeman,
Many thanks for your cable. I had quite an exciting time at Lucknow and although the police gave us many hard blows I thoroughly enjoyed myself. In my excitement I hardly noticed the blows and indeed

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 5, N.M.M.L.

He was present at Lucknow at the time of the Simon Commission there. There were several processions and demonstrations for the boycott of the commission. He took part in two big processions and a third (which might also be technically called a procession), besides public meetings. In these processions, continued Pandit Jawaharlal, nobody was armed to his knowledge. The first word *nihatha* in the fifth line of the poem in question meant unarmed. At two of these processions he was present when the police attacked. The procession, which he had technically termed as a procession, consisted of 16 persons, and they were attacked by the police, before the two remaining groups of sixteen persons each could form and follow the procession separately. The policemen, who attacked were on horseback and were armed with regulation *lathis*. They used their *lathis* freely on those 16 men as well as on the people who then happened to be on the pavements. The word *dil kholkar* in the poem meant freely. Pandit Jawaharlal declared that he was one of those 16 men of the group who received *lathi* blows and thought that it was an act of gross abuse of power which could be described as *zulum*.

The word *zulum* in the poem meant a person who was guilty of *zulum*. Witness emphasised that he condemned this action of the police on numerous occasions in speeches and in statements made to the press. He said that he had spoken of the incident and the subsequent incidents in the same strain in which he had described them in court and his statement on the subject was published to his knowledge in all the newspapers in India. These incidents were condemned in similar and stronger language by the press as well as by various organisations, including the Congress. No action, civil or criminal, was started against witness for having made those statements.

Cross-examined by the prosecution inspector, witness stated that he did not know whether the accused was a member of the Congress or not. Further cross-examined, he stated that he received two *lathi* blows. He could not give the number of injuries which the processionists received but there were many *lathi* blows. He could not conclude that the police objected to the particular road on which they were attacked. That road to his knowledge was not included among the prohibited roads. Witness averred that the police did not like any demonstrations or processions against the Simon Commission. He concluded: 'The basis of Indian criminal legislation, in my opinion, is wrong.'

5

LEAGUE AGAINST IMPERIALISM

I shall try to send you some material about the political prisoners in India.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi[1]

15/3/1928

My dear Ganesh Shankarji,
I have already sent a telegram to you agreeing to preside over the Mazdur Sabha anniversary on April 1st. Another date had been given to me previously but I suppose this was changed to April 1st.

I want to issue from the A.I.C.C. office a concise statement dealing with political prisoners in India. This will be meant for foreign countries and must therefore be brief and yet quite clear. Can you help me to prepare this? I believe you are in charge of the political sufferers' fund and should have a great deal of useful information. It is possible that we may get some money from abroad, specially the United States of America, for political sufferers here. I hope you will be able to send me a note on political prisoners.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-35/1928, p. 81, N.M.M.L.

3. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

15/3/1928

My dear Subhas,
You will remember that I spoke to you in Calcutta about the desirability

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-35/1928, p. 5, N.M.M.L.

of preparing a short memorandum on the Bengal detenus[2] for foreign countries. Something brief, concise and yet capable of being understood by a stranger who has not heard of the subject before. I have just received a reminder from Roger Baldwin, Director of the Civil Liberties Union in the United States, about whom I spoke to you. He wants to have facts about political prisoners in India for use in the United States. He may also be able to help us a little with money. His organisation is a powerful one and we should try to supply him with all the details he requires. I want to have two notes prepared, one on political prisoners generally and the second on the detenus. I hope you will at least take charge of the latter and let me have it soon.

Should you wish to communicate directly with Baldwin his address is:

Roger N. Baldwin
Director, Civil Liberties Union
100 Fifth Avenue
New York City N.Y.

But perhaps it will be better for you to send the note on the detenus to him through me. I could also send it to other foreign organisations.

It might be a desirable thing to send Baldwin a complimentary copy of the *Forward*.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Those who were arrested and detained without trial under the Bengal Ordinance of October 1924

4. Circular to all Provincial Congress Committees[1]

Allahabad
27 March 1928

Dear Sir,

It is proposed to issue a concise statement giving particulars about political prisoners in India. I shall be very glad of your assistance in preparing this statement. You are no doubt aware that stress is often

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-35/1928, p. 37, N.M.M.L.

1. To Roger Baldwin[1]

13 March 1928

My dear Baldwin,
Thank you for your letter of February 9th. I entirely agree with what you have said in your letter to Gibarti. I gather from Liau that Gibarti is on leave and is recuperating. He certainly is in need of rest but his absence does not carry us very far unless something positive is done. Liau says that some wonderful changes are going to be made in the headquarters' organisation. I do not know what these are going to be but I hope that to begin with at any rate stress will be laid on the proper functioning of the office.

Last year I gave £ 100/- on behalf of the Indian National Congress to Edo Fimmen for the League. In spite of many reminders I have not even received a receipt for the sum. This makes it difficult for us to make further contributions and all manner of objections are raised by our auditors. As a matter of fact I have got sanction for another £ 100/- for the League but I cannot send it till I get a receipt for the former £ 100/- and also till I have some assurance that the office is working properly.

I hope your offer to pay a salary for a competent assistant will be accepted but now that the Paris Office appears to be closed up for the time being owing to the absence of Gibarti I do not see what Ventadour[2] could do in the matter. We are having rather a difficult time here but on the whole we are getting on. The boycott of the Simon Commission has been a very great success in spite of the coloured cables which you might have seen in the press. The next step, however, is a little more difficult.

War preparations are going on apace in India. Recruiting is very brisk and doctors and engineers are being roped in. The North-West Frontier of India is in the height of activity and judging particularly from the Indian preparations one would say that war is not very distant.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 409, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary of the French branch of the League against Imperialism.

laid on the large number of detenus and other prisoners being still kept in jails and often ill-treated. Friends in foreign countries ask for accurate facts in regard to them and it is therefore necessary to prepare some statement which they can understand without any previous knowledge of the subject. You will therefore kindly send me all the information required giving figures for the detenus separately from other prisoners.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. To H.S. Liau[1]

18 April 1928

My dear Liau,
I have your letter of the 21st March with its enclosures. I met Chaman Lal[2] the other day in Lahore and enquired from him as to what has taken place at Cawnpore. He was surprised to learn of what you had written to me.[3] He said that he had absolutely no objection then or now to the T.U.C. affiliating with the League. But they did not then have and they do not now have a copy of your rules even. It is obviously difficult to go ahead without having your Constitution. I am also finding some difficulty owing to my not having a set of your rules. Will you kindly have printed copies of these sent to me as well as to other organisations? Letters and appeals cannot go very far without these rules.

1. A.I.C.C. File No 127/1927-28, p. 383, N.M.M.L.
2. Dewan Chamanlal (b. 1892); founder member, *All India Trade Union Congress*; member, Central Legislative Assembly 1923-31, member, Royal Commission on Labour 1928-31; represented India in the International Labour Conference at Geneva in 1928, 1932 and 1946, member, Punjab Legislative Assembly 1936-45; member, Constituent Assembly 1946-48; Ambassador of India in Turkey 1948-49, member, Rajya Sabha 1952-1967.
3. Liau in his letter to Jawaharlal had referred to an article in *Worker's Life* in which it was stated that "Chamanlal, Joshi and other trade unionists had opposed the affiliation of the Trade Union Congress to the League against Imperialism on the ground that the latter was a 'communist manoeuvre'."

As you are aware I was present at the T.U.C. meeting at Delhi last month. I spoke against the affiliation of the T.U.C. with Amsterdam. I was present merely as a visitor but I may be put on their committee soon.

I am anxiously awaiting the decision in Mohammad Hatta's case[4]. Send my love to him if you are writing to him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4 B. 1902; a leader of the Indonesian nationalist movement; Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia, 1945-49 and again from 1950-56; Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, 1948, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1949-50. In September 1927 four leaders of the Perhipunan Indonesia, including Hatta, were accused of inciting rebellion against the Dutch Government and were arrested, but were released after trial by the Court.

6. To Edo Fimmen[1]

7 May 1928

My dear Fimmen,
S. Srinivasa Iyengar, an ex-president of the Indian National Congress, has just left India for Europe. I have given him a letter of introduction for you. In case he meets you in Amsterdam or elsewhere I hope you will tell him all about the League against Imperialism and get a good donation from him. He can well afford it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 363, N.M.M.L.

7. To Roger Baldwin[1]

14 May 1928

My dear Baldwin,

Thanks for your letter of April 11th which I have received today.

The Berlin office of the League has been sending me quite a large number of letters and it would appear at least that something is being done. But whether this has resulted in anything solid is not clear.

As suggested by you I am writing to Maxton.[2] I am afraid he has too many troubles of his own to pay much attention to the League.

I have sent a first instalment of £ 50 for the League to Edo Fimmen. When I hear from him I shall send another £ 50.

I am sorry I have not sent you a note on the political prisoners in India. I have been trying to get the latest facts but most of our provincial offices are not helping in getting these. They are almost as bad as the office of the League against Imperialism. You wanted Gandhi to write some kind of an appeal. He is not keen on doing anything of the kind. As for Lajpat Rai I would rather not ask him.

There is just a chance of my father going to Canada.[3] The Empire Inter-Parliamentary Union, or some such body, invited some members of the Indian Legislatures and he is one of the delegates chosen. He will try to go if he can find the time. If he goes to Canada he may visit the States for a few days also.

With warm regards,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No 127/1927-28, p. 355, N.M.M.L.
2. James Maxton (1885-1946); M.P. from Glasgow, 1922-46; leader of the Independent Labour Party and an eloquent orator
   Baldwin had written to Jawaharlal asking him to write to Maxton and "stir him up to some sense of responsibility as Chairman of the League" For Jawaharlal's letter to Maxton, see following item
3. Motilal Nehru was invited to visit Canada as a member of the Empire Parliamentary Delegation but finally decided not to go.

8. To James Maxton[1]

14/5/28

Dear Mr. Maxton,

I was very glad to learn that you had accepted the presidentship of the League against Imperialism. I have all along felt that the League could be made to do the most excellent work in bringing nearer to each other the various nationalist movements of the East and in putting them in touch with the progressive labour movements of the West. I believe in the future of the League but I must confess that I have often been troubled by the very obvious mismanagement of the League office. During my stay last year in Europe I tried with Roger Baldwin to induce the people in charge to organise the office on business lines, but with little success, I am sorry to say.

I am told that something has been done now but I cannot judge from this distance. I hope that now that you are the president you will take interest in the League and see to it that its office functions properly. I am positive that if we organise properly we are bound to make our influence felt for good. Even with the present organisation the League has established a name for itself in distant parts. What is required is concentration on the everyday routine of the office and not so much the issuing of manifestos. Our friends on the continent are a little too fond of issuing manifestos and resolutions of enormous length. This business element I am sure you will supply to the League if you give a little time to it.

Last year the Indian National Congress contributed £ 100 to the League. This year it has sanctioned a similar amount. I have sent £ 50 to Edo Fimmen and on hearing from him shall send him another £ 50. I do not think there would be much difficulty in raising funds for the League if it was realised that its office was functioning properly.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No 127/1927-28, p 357, N.M.M.L.

9. To R. Bridgeman[1]

11 June 1928

My dear Bridgeman,
Thank you for your letter of the 17th May. My last letter[2] to you was not meant as a formal document to be placed before the British section of the League. I had merely referred to the feeling of the man in the street in so far as hostility to England was concerned. So far as the Congress is concerned it has declared itself in favour of independence and I have every hope that it will stick to it. There are undoubtedly groups in the Congress and outside who would be prepared to compromise for less. I feel also that India's cooperation cannot be purchased by England at any price now. There is absolutely no chance of a repetition[3] of what took place in 1914.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 347, N.M.M.L.
2. The text of this letter is not available.
3. All sections of Indian opinion, including the Congress, had extended full support to the British Empire when the First World War had started.

10. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

26 June 1928

My dear Chatto,
I have received your two letters dated the 20th May.

You write to say that you feel very tired and homesick. I can understand the feeling but I do not suppose you would feel happy if you were nearer home. Things are pretty dull here and it is extremely difficult to wake people up. And the feeling of being tired is common enough here too, the only difference being that it is not the result of work but of doing nothing. I wish you would not bother about coming back to India. I am sure you would be disillusioned after a few weeks.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 335, N.M.M.L.

I hope the draft and the tea reached you safely.

My father has not yet quite decided whether to go to Canada or not. If he goes he might leave by the end of July or the beginning of August. He would go straight to England and then to Canada. He proposes to return via Japan and China. But I doubt if he will go.

Did I write to you that poor Kamala is again laid up? In spite of what your friend Klemperer said the doctors here are of opinion that she has got lung trouble still or it may be that it has revived again after a period of quiescence. Ranjit has also just been through a severe attack of pleuro-pneumonia.

I was delighted to receive a picture card from Koln from you and Liau and his wife. Please thank them for it and give them my regards. It made me wish that I had been with you there also.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To R. Bridgeman[1]

26 June 1928

My dear Bridgeman,

Thank you for your letter of the 1st June and for the circular about the first British Conference[2] of the League against Imperialism. This letter will reach you many days after the conference. So there is no point in my writing anything for the conference.

I am glad to learn that the British section of the League is making good progress. We have all been interested in the news that Maxton and Cook[3] have publicly protested against the official Labour leaders. It has been a wonder to me how any person who calls himself an anti-imperialist can put up with the policy of the Labour Party in regard to India, Egypt or China.

1. AICC. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 325, NMML
2. Held on 7 July 1928.
3. A.J. Cook (1885-1931); general secretary, Miners Federation of Great Britain and one of the leaders of the General Strike in 1926.

The President of the All India Congress Committee, Dr. Ansari, has sent a cable to Srinivasa Iyengar requesting him to represent the Congress at your first conference. I trust he was able to do so.

You must have noticed in the press that India is going through a series of strikes and lockouts. The whole mill industry in Bombay is affected and a large section of railway workers. I do not suppose that labour will win anywhere. They are too poor and too ill-organised to be able to resist long. But poor as they are they have put up an amazingly good fight. This shows if indeed any evidence was necessary that their present lot is almost unbearable and anything is better.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

July 1928

My dear Chatto,

The last mail brought three letters from your office dated June 6th, 13th and 20th. It also brought the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of the League dated the 28th April. The fact that all these letters came together shows that somebody was probably profiting by reading them on the way. You say that you have been writing to our office weekly. As a matter of fact I have not received weekly letters from you. It is probable therefore that some had disappeared *en route*. I received some time ago your leaflet containing the resolutions of the General Council. I thought I had already acknowledged it.

I have just been reading the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting. They have given me a good idea of the position. On the whole I am inclined to think that the outlook is not quite so bad as was made out by some people at the meeting. But undoubtedly it is a difficult job. The minutes have given me the first information of the fact that you are one of the new Secretaries.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, pp. 271-275, N.M.M.L.

I have not seen in the papers the resolutions passed by your Committee at Brussels. I am therefore having them duplicated and sending copies to the principal newspapers.

I have not received any circular letter so far from you about the proposed World Congress of the League in 1929. I am afraid April is a very difficult time for an Indian representative to go. It is easier to manage a visit later in the summer. However this is a small matter. So far as I am personally concerned I am afraid there is not the least chance of my being able to attend the meeting. I should love to go but many reasons, one of the all important ones being the question of funds, effectively prevent me from going. I had a telegram from Srinivasa Iyengar suggesting that the Congress might nominate him as a fraternal delegate to the conference of the British section. Ansari thereupon sent him a cable authorising him to attend the conference on behalf of the Indian Congress. I had a letter from Bridgeman suggesting a cable of greetings to the conference but this letter arrived just too late and so I did not send any cable.

I think it is a good thing to open branches, if you may so call them, of the Indian National Congress in London and Paris and Berlin. A branch with a fair membership can get definitely affiliated or recognised by the Congress Executive here and can thus automatically represent the Congress in foreign countries. As for the goal of independence I do not suppose that the Congress is ever likely to go back on its Madras resolution. But as you must know, every effort is being made not so much to attack the resolution openly, because that is difficult, but almost to ignore it in many ways. This is very unfortunate but not surprising. Most of our leaders have yet to grasp the full significance of the Independence idea. Even if the Congress should unfortunately turn down its Independence resolution not by another resolution but in actual practice, this does not in any way compromise the Congress Committee abroad. I hope therefore that Indians in Berlin will certainly form such a committee. Groups of Indians abroad will thus be able to bring some little pressure on our home politicians.

I have suggested to the Hindustani Seva Dal to get themselves affiliated or associated with you. In a sense they might be considered indirectly associated already as they are an associate body of the Indian Congress. You once asked me about the Republican League. This League ought certainly to have got into touch with you but after a flourish of trumpets in Madras it vanished into thin air.[2] This of course does not mean that there was not enough support for it. It simply

2. *See ante*, Section 1, item 13.

means that the Secretaries and other organisers did not work at all and allowed it to lapse. I hate to be connected with any organisation run in this slipshod manner. I tried my best to wake up these people but would you believe it I have not yet succeeded in getting copies of the Constitution and rules as passed in Madras? How can one take any action without even these papers?

It would be a good thing for you to get the Sikh League associated with you. I shall write to Mangal Singh about it. The Rashtriya Stree Sabha is hardly the kind of organisation which will take an intense interest in your activities. By the way, in spite of repeated requests you have not sent me a copy of your rules and objects. Surely this is the very first thing that you should send to any one who wants to join you and yet apparently you have had no such leaflet printed. Whenever I have suggested to any organisation to become associated with you the invariable reply has been, send us a copy of their rules. And as I do not possess such a copy and indeed I have never seen one the matter has ended there. Please have an attractive leaflet printed giving a very brief account of the history of the League, the work done, the objects, the rules and conditions of affiliation and association.

I am having some of our old Congress publications sent to you. They are not of much use now but perhaps they may be required for reference.

Ranjit and Swarup sailed for Europe last week. Ranjit is going on legal business on behalf of some minor Indian chiefs.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

13. To Mangal Singh[1]

10 July 1928

My dear Sardar Mangal Singh,

I learn from the Secretary of the League against Imperialism that he has written to you suggesting that the Sikh League might affiliate with the League against Imperialism. I hope you will consider this request

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p 267, N.M.M.L.

favourably. I feel that it is very desirable for our organisations to associate themselves with international bodies like the League against Imperialism. This helps the anti imperialist cause and at the same time it broadens our own outlook.

There are two ways of cooperating with the League against Imperialism. One is direct affiliation which means a close contact and an acceptance of all the principles and activities of the League; the other is association which implies an agreement in regard to the objects of the organisation and general activities but not necessarily in agreement with all the activities or resolutions of the League. The Indian National Congress has become an associate body of the League and I think it will suit the Sikh League better to become an associate body rather than an affiliated body. This does not mean being tied down to anything and leaves you perfectly free to act in any manner that you may choose.

In any event I trust you will send your publications and your communiques regularly to the League Office in Berlin. The address is:—

League against Imperialism,
24, Friedrichstrasse,
Berlin S.W. 48.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To Roger Baldwin[1]

19 July 1928

My dear Baldwin,

I have just received your letter of the 14th June. I have come up to a hill station in the Himalayas for a few days. My wife is spending the summer here.

A couple of weeks ago I received the full report of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the League which was held in Brussels.

1. AICC. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 265, NMML. Extracts.

I had not realised till then how persistent had been the opposition of the officials of the Second International to the League. It seems to me that except for Maxton and a few others of the I.L.P. in England there is hardly any important non-communist element in the socialist parties in Europe which is not opposing the League. This is most unfortunate. You know that I agree with you that the League should not become purely a communist organisation. But it seems to me that the socialist parties of Europe are bent on making it so. I do not see what I can do from this distance. At the present moment if the communist element dropped out from the League it would immediately become a lifeless body. The only satisfactory feature is the association of some nationalist organisations with the League and these are certainly not communist. Maxton's presidentship is of course good. What would you suggest that I should do to 'reinforce' your position?[2]

The British Labour Party as a whole, leaving out Maxton and Cook and a few others, is going from bad to worse so far as India or the colonial question is concerned. MacDonald has taken up such a blatantly imperialist attitude, and our dear friend Lansbury has loyally followed him, that everybody in India is thoroughly fed up with British Labour. The mere mention of MacDonald's name is enough to anger people here. I do not refer to the communists here as they are few but to the members of various political parties here who think in terms of nationalism only * * * *

I learn that it is proposed to hold a full Congress of the League in April next. Will you be able to attend it? I am afraid that there is little chance of my getting away from India then or later.

My father has had to give up his visit to Canada. It has been a great disappointment to him specially as he hoped to visit the States in the course of the visit. But our internal politics would not permit it.

With all good wishes,

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Baldwin had written to Jawaharlal "You know the Berlin Office as well as I do and can figure both on its ability and its political connections My own feeling is that the League must be strengthened by more elements from the right and by less obvious Communist direction I know how you feel about that and perhaps you can reinforce that position."

15. The Changing Face of Imperialism[1]

"In olden times imperialism was satisfied with no less than a general levy of the inhabitants of a conquered territory to make them serve as slaves; later on it took possession of the land, leaving the people a certain autonomy; *today it contents itself with taking hold of the sources* of wealth, leaving the land and the inhabitants to themselves". So wrote Manuel Ugarte[2], the new prophet of Latin America. Economic imperialism and dollar diplomacy have been common phrases in the West, but the full significance of this new method of holding dominion *over another people is not yet fully realised in our country. Some of* us talk of independence for India, others of Dominion Status, but few realise that these are mere words which may mean much or nothing at all. There are many countries today calling themselves independent, with fine constitutions on paper, which dare not do anything which *displeases their real masters in* Wall Street or *in the City of London.* If even independence may be almost an airy nothing how much less must be Dominion Status, which presumes all manner of economic bonds with England?

It is worthwhile therefore for us to study this new development of imperialism. Professor Parker Moon has recently given us a comprehensive survey of the whole subject — *Imperialism and World Politics* — *which within a year or two has attained the dignity of a classic. But* to understand the inner workings of modern imperialism a more detailed study is necessary. It is not easy to carry on this study in the British dependencies as the economic motive, though all powerful, is often obscured by the actual possession of territory. England has not yet emerged from Ugarte's second category of nations. The United States of America, however, have few such colonial encumbrances and they can carry on *their career of profit without troubling themselves* much with the government of dependencies and national movements of protest. It is the United States therefore which offer us the best field for the study of economic imperialism.

1. 21 July 1928. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 28 July 1928.
2. (1878 1961); Argentine writer, and propagandist against 'Yankee imperialism'.

The Vanguard Press of New York city has provided us with detailed studies of American imperialism in various countries. Helped by the American Fund for Public Service, competent investigators were appointed, and they have collected together facts and figures which without any rhetoric make us realise the helpless condition of so-called independent countries before the all-powerful magnates of Wall Street.

One of these books deals with Bolivia. It is called *The Bankers in Bolivia* and the author is Margaret A. Marsh. Once part of the proud empire of the Incas, Bolivia today is a poverty-stricken country in the grip of American financiers. The great majority of her people, the descendants of those who had a fine civilisation when Columbus is said to have "discovered" the Americas, spend their lives today in toiling for a miserable pittance in mines for foreign masters.

Nature has been unkind to Bolivia. Having provided her with rich mineral resources she has made them difficult of access. The high mountain range of the Andes has cut the country into two — on the East the rich fertile but thinly peopled land and on the West the bleak tableland 13,000 ft. high, rich in minerals but destitute of water and fuel — and communications between the two are extremely slow and primitive. The Pacific Ocean though near is cut off by the Andes, and the Atlantic is thousands of miles away. But if nature has been unkind to Bolivia, man has been unkinder.

Gold and silver attracted the Spaniards of old to Upper Peru, as Bolivia then was, but today it is a homelier article, tin, that makes the United States cast covetous eyes on her. Next to the Federation Malay States, Bolivia is the biggest producer of tin in the world and the United States with all their mineral resources have no tin, and tin is an essential commodity today in peace and war. Great Britain controls the Malay deposits and has a monopoly of tin smelting.

Tin therefore is the main factor in Bolivian politics. There is oil also, and large tracts of oil producing lands have already been acquired by the Standard Oil Co., but the difficulties of transportation have so far prevented any production. Tin is the chief source of revenue of the republic and on the world price of tin depends its solvency or bankruptcy. But only a very small part of the profits from tin go to the public treasury. Most of the industry being in foreign hands, enormous profits leave the country in the shape of dividends. The mining companies reap the profits but the men who produce them are the Indian labourers who work in these inhospitable mountain regions for long hours so that dividends may be high. The laws of Bolivia provide for an eight hour day but apparently this provision is more honoured in its breach than its observance. We are told that a British

Company works its Indian labourers, men and women, twelve hours a day; and incredible as it seems there is a mine near Potosi where the Indians work a thirty-six hour shift with little intervals for food and coccal

In 1908 Bolivia had no foreign debt; in 1927 her external debt amounted to over forty million dollars, almost all of which was borrowed in the United States. The career of borrowing, once started, led to all manner of entanglements and has now reduced Bolivia to hopeless subservience to New York bankers. In 1921 a six months loan of a million dollars was taken from American bankers with an option to them on any external loan the Republic might make within the next three years. This option proved the undoing of the Republic. Next year they had to negotiate another loan and although they were offered better terms by English and French bankers and other American companies they were forced by the optional clause to agree to the much more onerous terms of their old creditors.

The contract for this Refunding Loan of 1922 between the Republic and the Equitable Trust Company of New York is a most illuminatory document. The bonds carry specific and inclusive securities which *covered in 1922 almost half the total national revenue and in 1923, owing* to increase in mining profits, almost two thirds of the national income. Among the securities pledged were:-

1. all the shares in the National Bank belonging to the Republic, with the proviso that the Republic will always have controlling shares in the Bank,
2. all dividends on these shares,
3. the tax upon mining claims and concessions,
4. the revenue from the alcohol monopoly,
5. ninety per cent of the revenues from the tobacco company,
6. tax on corporations other than mining and banking,
7. tax upon net income of banks,
8. tax on interest on mortgage cedulas,
9. tax on net profits of mining companies,
10. all import duties,
11. surcharge on import duties,
12. all export duties.

The list is comprehensive and it is not apparent what important item of revenue is left out. As further security however mortgages and liens were created on all properties and earnings of railways constructed and *to be constructed.*

The customs receipts alone amounted to 45% of the total revenue of Bolivia. In addition all kinds of direct and indirect taxes were included,

and with a vision worthy of a better cause the financiers included in their securities which might come into existence in the future the railways to be constructed.

Further it was stipulated that a Permanent Fiscal Commission of three, two members of which were to be nominated by the bankers, one of them being chairman, should have charge of the collection of taxes in the Republic during the life of the loan — twenty five years. The Commission could collect all taxes, national and departmental, and could revise the nation's accounts. The President of the Commission was to become the Inspector General of Banks and Monopolies, and also a director of the National Bank.

It was further laid down that the bonds were not redeemable before 1937, and even then may only be redeemed as a whole at 105 with accrued interest, a price 13 points higher than the issue price. Thus the Republic is prevented from converting its obligations at lower rate and is made to pay a sum far in excess of what was received. And so long as the loan lasts the practical control of the State rests with the Equitable Trust Company of New York.

What measure of independence Bolivia enjoys under the terms of this contract it is not difficult to see. So far the Republic, though protesting, has fulfilled the terms of the contract. But should it fail to do so the State Department in Washington would forthwith intervene and in the name of the sanctity of contracts extract the pound of flesh from the bankers. In Nicaragua, Salvador and other countries the United States government has already acted as the tax collector for its financiers. In Bolivia the need has not so far arisen. Should it arise Washington will not be slow to act. And Bolivia is the third largest country in the South American continent.

16. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

Allahabad
3 October 1928

My dear Chatto,

I did not receive any letter from you last week. The last letter that came was dated 5th September. I think I have acknowledged it already together with the letters dated 23rd August and 29th August.

1. AICC File No 127/1927-28, pp 153-54, NMML.

I have not received your circular letter about the next World Congress. But I got a copy from my father. I shall put it before the All India Congress Committee at its next meeting and suggest that some delegates should be appointed.[2] But it is no easy matter for them to appoint delegates when this means spending a lot of money. If some desirable person is going out to Europe next summer he may well be appointed. Will you let me know what other individuals or organisations your League is in touch with in India. So far as I know the only organisations are the Trade Union Congress, the Hindustani Seva Dal and may be the Sikh League. As for individuals Jhabvala[3] is the only name I can remember. I shall try to get into touch with these people.

You have heard no doubt of the new Independence for India League. Very likely this will associate itself with you. It may also be a meeting ground for anti imperialist activities. But so far it is in its infancy and requires organisation. Personally I would like it to concentrate on organisation and do nothing else till it has something to speak of.

It would be a very good thing if you can send a representative to the Trade Union Congress and the National Congress.

There is no doubt that there is a tendency to backslide in Congress circles here. This is very unfortunate. But I do not think that there is any chance of the Congress going back on its resolution of independence. Probably no such attempt will be made because it is feared that it may fail. Nonetheless the general impression is certainly gaining ground that the demand for independence is not honestly meant and is only made from the point of view of bargaining, the real demand being Dominion Status. It is not easy to fight vague impressions. Nonetheless there can be no doubt that there is a reaction also against the Dominion Status idea. My own notion is that the Congress will have to stand by independence and a little later when the sub-conscious belief that much may come out of the Nehru Report disappears there will be a firmer stand still.

The difficulty is not so much in getting resolutions to be passed. That can be done with ease anywhere. But then somehow or the

2. Shiva Prasad Gupta was selected to represent the Indian National Congress at the Second World Congress of the League against Imperialism and he attended the Congress.
3. S H Jhabvala (1884-1971); a well known trade union worker in Bombay; associated with a number of workers unions including the taxi drivers union of which he was the founder; was imprisoned for 4½ years in connection with the Meerut Conspiracy Case.

other it is extraordinarily difficult to induce people to act. Labour after a succession of struggles is exhausted. The peasantry is in a bad way and after the scarcity in rains is worse off still. The zamindars in most provinces and specially in the Bengal and the U.P. are triumphant over it. In Bengal the Congress party is largely under their influence and they went to the length of supporting them in a tenancy measure. From the U.P. reports come frequently of oppression and atrocities from zamindars. I intend to go tomorrow to see a doctor friend[4] who has received a bad thrashing from hooligans employed by zamindars.

Another extraordinary feature is that certain politically advanced sections of people are extraordinarily backward socially. They live in an ideology of the past and refuse to recognise new forces. They distrust me very much because I talk of socialism. As you know few people here have heard of socialism and consequently they fear it. I find however that opinion is veering round strongly. There are no definite ideas still but there certainly is a vague appreciation of what socialism may signify.

You must have seen how very pleased our friend Lansbury is because the All Parties Conference has adopted Dominion Status. He has some reason to rejoice but he is a little premature.

I hope you met Ranjit and Swarup before they returned.

The Punjab Provincial Conference[5] has just met and dispersed. You will see their resolutions in the newspapers. Very probably the resolutions of other Congress organisations as well as of Congress itself would be on these lines.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Dr. Biswanath Mukherjee (1893-1942), a homoeopath and a prominent Congressman and a leader of the Workers' and Peasants' Party; accused in the Meerut Conspiracy Case; President, All India Sugar-cane Workers Union in 1938.
Mukherjee was beaten up by the hirelings of the raja of Tamkohi. See *post*, Section 15, item 13.
5. The Punjab Provincial Political Conference met at Lyallpur on 29 September 1928 under the chairmanship of Lala Dunichand. One of the resolutions was in favour of independence.

17. To the Secretary, League against Imperialism[1]

October 9th, 1928

Dear Comrade,
The Indian National Congress holds its annual sessions in the last week of December in Calcutta. We shall be very glad if the League against Imperialism sends a fraternal delegate to our Calcutta sessions. On behalf of the National Congress I have great pleasure in inviting you to send your representative to our Calcutta sessions. I shall also thank you if you will kindly convey our invitation to all the organisations affiliated or associated with you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Maharashtra Government records, Police Commissioner's File No. 1291/B/I.

18. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

9 October 1928

My dear Chatto,
I have at last received the first number of the *Anti Imperialist Review*. It is well got up and contains interesting articles. I liked it. I hope you will be able to continue and maintain a high standard.

I have also received your letter[2] of the 19th September. I am sorry to say that no invitations have been issued so far as I know to various

1. AICC. File No 127/1927-28, p. 113, NMML.
2. Chattopadhyaya had in his letter suggested that invitations to the Calcutta Congress should be issued to various organisations like the Egyptian National Party, the African National Congress, the Persian Socialist Party and the Perhapunan Indonesia

national and other groups in other countries. This is usually the business of the Reception Committee. But I am certainly to blame for the omission. I am doing so now. Unfortunately I have not got the addresses of all the organisations. I have repeatedly suggested to you to issue a little pamphlet giving these addresses as well as addresses of members of your committee.

I enclose a formal invitation for the League. I also enclose a letter to Madam Sun Yat Sen which kindly forward to her. I shall be glad if you will convey through your office our invitations to the various organisations associated and affiliated with you. You might suggest that in case they cannot send any representative a message of greetings will be very welcome.

I wonder if you could give me information about a certain person called Dr. Ajoy Chandra Banerjee, (also spelt Banerjhi) a brahman from Behar. I have been approached by his old mother who lives in Allahabad for news of her son. I know nothing about him but I find reference to him in the "Communist Papers" published by the British Government in 1926. It is stated there that Banerjee was a medical student in England and an ardent communist though not a member of the Communist Party. He is believed to have gone to the Continent. His poor mother is naturally very anxious as she has not heard from him for two or three years. She will be happy to know that he is still alive somewhere. So if you happen to find out anything about him you might let me know.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

19. Circular on the Second World Congress of the League against Imperialism[1]

Allahabad
20.10.28

You are doubtless aware that the Executive Committee of the League against Imperialism has decided to hold the Second World Congress

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, pp. 31 & 111, N.M.M.L.

of the League next year. It has decided to hold the Congress in Paris in July 1929.

The League has, during the year and a half of its existence, become a good friend of oppressed nations and peoples. It is daily adding to its strength by affiliations and otherwise. India has always occupied a prominent place in the programme of the League and it is desirable that India should take a full part in the next World Congress of the League.

The Executive Committee of the League have authorised me to take the necessary steps to form an organising committee of the League in India, Burma and Ceylon, with a view to insure that India participate fully in the World Congress.

I am sending this letter to all organisations in India which are affiliated or associated with the League against Imperialism with the request that they will nominate a representative to serve on this organising committee. All affiliated and associated organisations will be entitled to send representatives. We shall also welcome representatives from organisations which sympathise with the objects of the League.

May I request you to place this letter before your organisation and to let me know the name of your representative for the organising committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

25 October 1928

My dear Chatto,

I have your letters dated September 12th and September 26th. I have also received your circular letter about next year's World Congress.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 69, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

I am glad to learn that De Valera[2] intends to get his party to affiliate to the League. Also that the National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association is affiliating. I hope many other trade unions will follow in England and elsewhere...

The Independence for India League which has recently been formed may well serve as a centre for anti-imperialist activities. So far it is more or less in the air. We are having a meeting next week to put the organisation on a better basis. Meanwhile I am communicating with your associated organisations in India. Unfortunately you do not help at all by supplying addresses and the like. I am looking forward to receiving a pamphlet containing your objects, rules and regulations as well as a full list of the members of your executive council and general council and your associated organisations with addresses in each case.

I am enquiring about the Sikh League. I am afraid that they are hardly likely to pay much attention to your League at present. They seem to have developed a very strong communal outlook.

I am sorry I have not sent you an article for your Review. I have been fairly well occupied but the real reason was that I was not in a mood to write it. I shall endeavour to contribute something for your third number.

The need for a newspaper is keenly felt. We shall discuss the question at the meeting of the Independence League. I did not write to you last week as I have been very much put out by Kamala's ill health. She had a relapse which necessitated my rushing off to Mussoorie suddenly. She has come back to Allahabad now and is a little better.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Eamon De Valera (b 1882), joined Irish Volunteers in 1913, commandant in Irish rebellion in 1916, death sentence commuted on technical grounds to penal servitude for life, released by general amnesty in 1917; President, Sinn Fein, 1917-26; Prime Minister, Government of Ireland, 1937-48, 1951-54 and 1957-59, President, Irish Republic since 1959

21. To R. Bridgeman[1]

25 October 1928

My dear Bridgeman,
I was glad to get your letter of the 23rd September. I have been reading accounts of the progress that the British Section of the League has been making. I realise the forces you have against you in England. It was therefore a special pleasure to find that you are getting on well and that you have succeeded in getting the National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association to affiliate to the League. I learn from Berlin that there is some chance of De Valera's party also affiliating. I hope that other trade unions and parties will follow.

You know from the Indian papers the general trend of happenings here. On the whole the prospect is not as bad as it might appear. Some of our leading politicians have more or less allied themselves with the moderate group and have toned down their demands in an attempt to keep these moderates with them. These tactics are always doomed to failure and they do a great deal of injury. The reaction against this however has been marked.

It seems from the general behaviour of the Simon Commission that their recommendations are likely to be such as to annoy the most moderate of Indians. That would be better than some halting progress.

There are many general indications here also of war preparations but it is difficult to know details. Such preparations are hardly called for unless there was a definite prospect of war.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C.C. File No. F.D. 23/1929 1930, p. 143, N.M.M.L.
Bridgeman in his letter commended Jawaharlal's firm stand on independence, hoped that the All India Trade Union Congress would affiliate itself with the League against Imperialism and spoke of the British military disposition in India in the event of a war with Russia.

22. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

31 October 1928

My dear Chatto,

I have just returned from Jhansi where I presided over the U.P. Provincial Conference. I found your letter of the 10th October waiting for me. I have noted your suggestions.[2] I am not quite sure how far all of them are feasible just at present. In spite of all our past experience it is not at all easy to work on all-India lines. Some of the bigger provinces becomes jealous immediately and want to go along the path of their choosing. There are of course many other disruptive elements. Above everything there is the extraordinary difficulty of finding really competent men to do any work. The result is that almost everything has to be done by oneself and that is no way of carrying on any work.

I do not know the address of Dr. Manilal[3] of Fiji. I shall however find it out and ask him to communicate with you. I shall also write to Banarsidas Chaturvedi.[4] He is at present editing a Hindi magazine called the *Vishal Bharat*. It is issued by the Modern Review Press and deals with Indians abroad.

I do not know much about the All India Teachers' Conference. You say that it is going to be held on the 3rd of November. There is absolutely no time now to communicate with anyone nor I can think of any very suitable persons. You must know that the average teacher is a government servant or a professor in an aided university which is equally bad and it is very difficult to get them to move. The students

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 43, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. Chattopadhyaya in his letter of 10th October had suggested an All India Conference of the League in Calcutta. For this purpose he had proposed the issue of a manifesto in all the Indian languages and the appointment of a full time secretary of the League in India.
3. Manilal Maganlal Shah of Baroda, also known as Dr. Manilal, worked for Indian immigrants in Mauritius from 1907 to 1912 and from 1912 in Fiji, led the militant strike of the P.W.D. and municipal workers of Suva in 1920, was externed from many parts of Fiji and returned to India; from 1923, interested in Indian labour problems.
4. B. 1892, edited *Vishal Bharat*, a Hindi monthly journal from Calcutta 1928 to 1939, took great interest in the problems of Indians overseas; joint author of biography of Andrews; member of Rajya Sabha 1952-64

of Allahabad sometimes ask me to address them. This got on the nerves of our worthy Vice Chancellor[5] here who is an orthodox Hindu Sanskrit scholar. He has now passed an official order that no outsiders should be invited by any student body without his special permission and our students have meekly submitted to it.

I shall write to Lakshmi[6] about the Educational Workers' Manifesto.

I am going to Delhi tomorrow for the All India Committee meeting. Also for the meeting of the Independence for India League...

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Professor Ganganath Jha.
6. *Shrimati Lakshmi Menon, educationist who taught for many years in Calcutta, Lucknow and Patna; Deputy Minister for External Affairs, 1957-62; Minister of State for External Affairs, 1962-66.*

23. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

7 November 1928

My dear Chatto,

I have not had a letter from you for a week or two. We have been having a fairly busy time and have made some progress with the Independence for India League. I agree with you that it is not desirable at present to open a separate office to represent the League against Imperialism. The Independence for India League office will of course remain in touch with you. As a matter of fact as I am the Working Secretary of that League it really amounts to this, that I should continue writing to you frequently as before subject of course to the goodwill of our benign government. Indeed I am told that the aforesaid benign government has taken a deal of interest in me and this interest

1. AICC. File No. 127/1927-28, p. 39, NMML.

may develop to such an extent that I may not be able to communicate with you or anyone else for the matter of that. However that is a minor matter which need not worry us. The next month or two are likely to be very heavy ones.

I hope some representative of your League will be able to attend the Congress at Calcutta.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

24. The Imperialist Danger[1]

I have much pleasure in adding a foreword to Mr. Schmidt's little book. I think Mr. Schmidt has done a needed service in drawing attention to certain facets and in removing certain misapprehensions about the League against Imperialism.

I have had the privilege of being associated with the League since its formation at the Congress held in Brussels in February 1927. I welcomed its formation because I felt that it supplied a common platform for the two great movements of revolt against the existing conditions which we have in the world today, the struggle of labour against the entrenched citadel of capital and the nationalist movements in countries under alien domination. What is there in common between these two except indeed the common factor of exploitation? Labour looks beyond national boundaries and seeks to create a cooperative world commonwealth. A narrow patriotism is not enough for it.

1. Jawaharlal's foreword to P.J. Schmidt's *The Imperialist Danger*. It was reprinted in *The Tribune*, 24 July 1929, with the following note by Jawaharlal: "The following foreword was written by me at the request of Mr. P.J. Schmidt, editor of *Recht en Vrijheid* of Amsterdam for a little book he had written called *The Imperialist Danger*. It was written more than a year ago, in May 1928. I do not know if the book has been published or not The League against Imperialism is attracting a great deal of attention now on account of the determined attacks being made on it by the British Government. Within a week the Second World Congress of the League meets at Frankfurt in Germany. This foreword, though written more than fourteen months ago, may not be wholly out of date and may interest some people."

Nationalism, on the other hand, is necessarily limited in its outlook; it is based on an intense patriotism and territorial boundaries are sacred to it. How then can the two be reconciled and brought to march together?

And yet there is, or ought to be much in common between the two, and unless the two are harmonised and made to work together for the common good, there can be no permanent solution of the problems of the day. Can there be a world commonwealth with half the world in chains? What kind of socialism will it be, if it is based on the exploitation of other countries? Indeed can the world of labour in western countries better its lot even in the smaller field of wages and hours of work and standards of living, so long as imperialism continues and capital has full freedom to exploit the weak and unorganised labour of colonial countries and pit it against the worker at home? The independence of colonial countries is very necessary to the inhabitants of those countries, but it is clear today that it is equally necessary from the point of view of the European worker. And so both from the viewpoint of high idealism and the narrower and mundane one of self-interest, it has become the duty of the working class to combat imperialism and to help the nationalist movement of oppressed countries.

It is possible that the nationalist movement in a country under foreign domination may succeed in gaining independence without the support of labour. That may happen, as it has happened in the past, but it will result in creating a new capitalist state, nominally independent, but with little freedom for the worker. That will not bring peace any nearer or solve any of our problems.

The League against Imperialism, for the first time, saw the common factors in the two movements and wisely sought to bring them together. It tried to bring home to the European worker the need for national independence of all countries; and it placed a new vision of social equality and freedom before the somewhat narrow nationalist movements of various countries. To all, it proclaimed that imperialism was the common enemy to be fought ceaselessly and rooted out before a better order could be established.

If the League had not done any other work, it would still have justified its formation. But during the year of its existence it has already brought nearer together the various peoples of Asia and Africa struggling for freedom, and it has made them realise in some measure that there is a bond between them and the worker of the West. And gradually even national movements like the Indian National Congress, conservative in their social outlook, are beginning to look towards the socialist ideal of society.

Such is the record of the League, and yet it is an amazing thing that those who call themselves socialists should attack it and seek to injure it, and that it should be necessary for Mr. Schmidt to refute their arguments. We in India have not concerned ourselves with the rivalries and conflicts between the Second and the Third Internationals. But even a casual acquaintance with facts is enough to show us the attitude of the two towards the nationalist movements of the East. Russia has not merely given pious expression to her sympathy but has acted up to it in China, in Persia and elsewhere. What the Second International has done, or rather not done, has been well shown by Mr. Schmidt. And specially we are interested in the doings of those pillars of the Second International — the British Labour Party. They have shown us the measure of their socialism and of their belief in the oft-repeated slogan of self-determination. They have proved to us that the possession of empire injures those who profit by it as much as those who suffer under it. In their deeds they have acted as full-blooded imperialists indistinguishable from the more blatant variety belonging to the Tory Party. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's term of office as Prime Minister of England was signalised by the Bengal Ordinance under which hundreds of Indians were kept in jail without trial or charge. And now he and his party have wholeheartedly agreed and cooperated with the Simon Commission appointed by the Tory Government against the declared will of all parties and groups in India. And because there was indignant protest in India Mr. MacDonald has lost his temper and has sent us hectoring and offensive messages after the manner of the choicest imperialists of the Tory School. Labour journals in England have supported him and joined in denunciation of Indian nationalists and its leaders. Is it any wonder that Indian public opinion of all shades has seen and fully realised that under the thin veneer of an academic socialism Mr. MacDonald and his party are as much imperialists and supporters of the present capitalist system as the Baldwins and Birkenheads. Indeed we prefer the frank brutality of the latter to Mr. MacDonald's imperious and hypocritical message of goodwill.

As I write we have had yet another demonstration of the British Labour Party's attitude towards imperialism. British warships have coerced the Egyptian Parliament and people in postponing a measure entirely dealing with internal order and these men of war have carried with them the goodwill of the Labour Party. Sir Austen Chamberlain tells us that British interests as stand today will be protected "for ever", and Mr. MacDonald has acquiesced in this monstrous assertion.

I wish well to the League against Imperialism, and wishing well to it, I am glad that Messrs MacDonald and Co are not of it but are

against it. I hope this League will never give shelter to men who talk glibly of the future socialist order and of the evils of imperialism and yet who belie their words by every action and betray their principles at every crisis.

The League is said to be a "Communist manoeuvre" and so it must be cursed with bell, book and candle. One of the organisations associated with the League is the Indian National Congress and even the leaders of the Second International should know that the Indian Congress is not a communist body, is not even as a whole socialist in its outlook, though it contains many socialists. But the Congress is not afraid as the Second International is afraid of cooperating with all forces that are anti imperialist whether they are communist or non communist. The Congress has no desire to have any dealings with those who merely talk and always fail at the moment of action.

From the best part of my adult years I have been associated with the Indian National Congress and I have desired the freedom of India passionately. But I believe in the socialist order of society and I trust and hope that India will evolve such an order. The League against Imperialism offers a platform for both these ideals — national independence and social equality — and all such as believe in them should surely welcome the League and help it in its great task.

GENERAL SECRETARY
A.I.C.C.

1. Presidential Address at the Fifth Session of the Hindustani Seva Dal[1]

Comrades, four years ago you did me the honour of making me the President[2] of the first session of this conference. Now, on the occasion of the fifth session, I am placed in the same position. I propose very briefly to consider with you the results of these four years of work. I must confess that in taking stock of the results we find that they are not very encouraging. This organisation was started with the object of having a permanent body of volunteers not only for the Congress work but also for all purposes and especially to prepare the Indian youth for emergencies when any special political action was necessary. Unfortunately, during the last four years, we have not made any great progress. But at the same time, may I say that we have not been encouraged and helped sufficiently by our Congress leaders? As my predecessor has stated and the speaker who preceded me told you, we have had many Congress leaders as our patrons, but somehow or other, we have received no effective help from Congress organisations in the country. Even in Madras, today, our position is more that of outcasts than anything else.

During some of the past Congresses, we, the members of the Dal, were entrusted with the training and organisation of volunteers; and whenever we had this opportunity, we produced an efficient and trained body of young men and women. But our participation in Congress work at the time of the annual sessions has been progressively getting less and less and now in Madras we have been entirely left out in the cold. The Congress is again reverting to its old practice of enrolling at the last moment large numbers of untrained people for the work of the session and as soon as the session is over they drift back to their ordinary work and not even a nucleus of trained volunteers remains. These temporary volunteers work hard willingly and we must all be grateful to them for their service. But it is a great pity that this willing service does not fructify into a solid band of well trained volunteers. This was one of the principal objects for which our Dal was started

1. Madras, December 1927. *The Volunteer*, January February 1928, Vol. IV. Nos 1 and 2.
2. For Jawaharlal's speech at the first session, see *Selected Works*, Volume 2, pp 83-86.

and it is a matter for sorrow that owing to indifferent help and encouragement from those in authority, we have made little progress in this direction.

The Constitution of the Dal was originally framed so as to make us of the Congress and yet outside the Congress in regard to our internal organisation. We bound ourselves loyally to follow the Congress creed and policy in every way that we could; but we also made it clear that we must be fully autonomous. No volunteer organisation could afford without imperilling its discipline to have outside control so far as its internal organisation was concerned. But to facilitate the fullest co-operation with provincial Congress organisation we made rules empowering provincial Congress committees to start volunteer boards. But these very rules which were meant to facilitate work have proved a hindrance as most of the provincial Congress committees have refused to take any action and we have been powerless to take any independent action in such provinces. It is necessary therefore to alter these rules so that where necessary we can go ahead even if the P.C.C. refuses to act. Some of these changes in our Constitution are also necessary to facilitate our future work.

You are aware that a great number of youth organisations have sprung up in the country and this movement is gradually spreading. The members of these organisations are not volunteers and under our rules we can only affiliate trained volunteers. But undoubtedly we have much in common with them and it would be desirable if you authorised the All India Board to cooperate whenever possible with the youth movements.

We have not succeeded in doing anything spectacular during the past few years. Our work has not been extensive, but nonetheless we have done a great deal of intensive work and we have built a solid foundation on which it would not be difficult to erect an enduring superstructure. We have learnt a great deal and our experience will stand us good in future. Our work therefore has certainly not been in vain and we can say with some confidence that with some help and encouragement from outside we can carry far the good work of building a strong volunteer organisation in our country.

The struggle for Swaraj is bound to become keener in the future and the burden of it will fall on our young men. It will be for them to face the dangers and difficulties in a spirit of courage and resolute daring. The trained members of the Dal would have a special responsibility; for a trained man is worth many untrained persons. There is danger of war and elaborate preparations are being made by the British Government on the North-West and North East frontiers of India as

well as elsewhere. England is playing an aggressive game and while it talks of disarmament, prepares feverishly for war. Even Lord Robert Cecil, the British representative in the League of Nations, had to resign from his post as according to him England is not sincerely trying for disarmament. If war comes an attempt is bound to be made to exploit India for the benefit of England and to use her man power and resources to further the interests of British imperialism. India must not allow herself to be made a tool of foreign imperialists and must resolutely refuse to participate in such a war without her own consent. And if she is forced into it, it will be our duty to refuse to help in any way and face the consequences whatever they may be. The volunteers must be prepared for this contingency and must clearly define their policy should such a crisis arise. It will be for them to take a lead in the country and if they do so and if the country acts courageously and wisely we shall emerge from the crisis with honour and with freedom in our grasp.

2. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

15/3/1928

My dear Subhas,

We have been reading about the great boycott demonstrations[2] that you have been holding in Calcutta and elsewhere and admiring your energy. People have been writing to us also for information on the subject. Our office is however hardly in a position to supply this information. I wish you would let me have a concise note as to what you are doing and what you are definitely aiming at. You have proclaimed a boycott of British goods and specially of British clothes. Does the former mean simply a general appeal not to buy or use British goods or have you drawn up lists of particular goods which you wish to concentrate upon? Regarding the boycott of British cloth are you allowing in your scheme the sale and purchase of other foreign cloth?

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-48/1927, p. 1, NMML.
2. A campaign for the boycott of British goods started in Calcutta on 1 March 1928. 32 meetings were simultaneously held in 32 wards of the city where the message of boycott was preached. On 3 March 1928 ten thousand ladies at a meeting in Calcutta vowed to boycott British cloth.

Have you approached the wholesale and retail dealers in foreign cloth and tried to induce them to come to terms? If you wish to confine the boycott to British cloth only what steps do you propose to take to distinguish between such cloth and foreign cloth? I presume you are prepared in the future to resort to picketing.

I shall be obliged if you will kindly send me full information on these subjects. It will not only help me to understand the position in Bengal but enable us to do something on more or less similar lines elsewhere.

I am specially interested in the organisational side of the movement. The political effect of boycott propaganda is of course considerable but unless it is backed up by an efficient organisation and a well thought out scheme, the economic effect may not be marked, and after a short while there may be a reaction. I have no doubt that you must have thought out all the future steps and that you must be aiming at not merely a temporary demonstration but also at a permanent exclusion to a large extent of British cloth. I shall be thankful if you will let me know this programme of yours.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To N.S. Hardikar[1]

28 March 1928

My dear Hardikar,

I had your card of the 19th March. I am glad of the progress you are making in the construction of the Physical Culture Academy[2] building. But I wish you would get hold of some fat and prosperous person to do the opening ceremony. I am neither very fat nor prosperous and I am not used to such functions. But the fact is that it is very difficult for me to say definitely where I shall be on that day. And it seems to me a waste of good money and time to take this long journey for the purpose. As you know the All Parties Conference is meeting in Bombay on May 19th and I may have to be there for a

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-8/1928, p. 323, N.M.M.L.
2. Was started on 1 August 1928.

number of days in connection with it. If you happen to come to Bombay then I shall be glad to see you. It will be very difficult for me to go south again after another month. I hope you will forgive me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. On the Boycott of Foreign Cloth[1]

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that some people objected to the boycott of British goods on the ground that the present was the age of machine and the cry "back to the days of cottage industry", was futile. To this objection there were two answers. Firstly, in the countries where the industrial system was supreme, an immense discontent prevailed, it would be wise to avoid those troubles. Secondly, in India the present factories could not meet the demand of the people without being supplemented by cottage industry.

He explained the evils of industrialisation of a country and pointed out how those countries which had given up agriculture almost altogether were dependent upon other countries for their subsistence. The power of England which was completely industrialised was waning. The rising powers, according to the forecast of statesmen, were *America, China* and *Russia, for they were self-sufficient in* almost every way. It was necessary for India to oust foreign cloth and make her position secure. It was impossible to achieve this object by using mill made cloth only. The aid of *khadi* was absolutely necessary. It was a false notion that *khadi* could not be manufactured on a large scale. It could easily keep pace with the growing demand.

Khadi alone could succeed in driving out foreign material. Mahatma Gandhi was, however, prepared to make a compromise[2] with the millowners. But it was necessary that the latter should cease to be unduly greedy. Mahatmaji wanted the millowners to

1. Speech at Lahore, 13 April 1928. *The Tribune*, 17 April 1928.
2. In fact, no compromise was reached.

promise not to raise the price of the cloth produced by them, exorbitantly. The latter had also to satisfy the legitimate demands of the workers. If no settlement is arrived at between Mahatmaji and the Indian millowners, it will be our plain duty to boycott mill cloth and use *khadi* only.

One-third of the cloth consumed in India is imported from abroad. Eighty per cent of this is received from Britain and the remaining twenty per cent from Japan and other countries. Foreign cloth should be boycotted and it should be replaced by means of indigenous effort.

In the near future, a big war was bound to break out. Foreign cloth will cease to be imported then on the scale on which it is being imported now. The Indian millowner will in that case get an opportunity to raise the price of his stuff. We must begin to wear *khaddar* habitually to meet the imminent danger.

5. To A. Rangaswami Iyengar[1]

April 18, 1928

My dear Rangaswami,

Thank you for your letter of the 4th April. I am sorry to have to give you trouble about Mahalinga Sarma.[2] Perhaps I may have been a little hard on him but I have little patience left with patriots who seem to think that their stay in jail is sufficient to compensate for all their failures. I am waiting to hear from the Manager of the *Swadesamitran*, about the new arrangements made.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-13/1928, p. 145, N.M.M.L.
2. S. Mahalinga Sarma was employed in the A.I.C.C. office, and Jawaharlal had found his work unsatisfactory. On 30 March 1928 Jawaharlal wrote to him: "So far as this office is concerned I have no wish to have any one connected with it who is careless or incapable of doing his work properly."

6. To Secretaries of Provincial Congress Committees[1]

Allahabad
June 8th, 1928

Dear Sir,

I have very recently had occasion to visit the Karnatak Province and of inspecting on the spot the organisation of the Hindustani Seva Dal. I visited one of their camps and also saw a new academy of physical culture which is being built at Bagalkot. I was considerably impressed by what I saw. The young boys that have been through some course of training — from the age of 7 upwards — were a fine straight-backed and disciplined lot, and did credit to the Seva Dal. I could not help thinking that if there were a larger number of such training centres in India we would soon have a great number of these disciplined and trained youths.

The Seva Dal has also helped greatly in Congress work, specially in enrolling Congress members. It is now building an academy of physical culture at Bagalkot to give special facilities for training selected persons from all over India. This academy will be opened on August 1st and I am informed by the Secretary of the Seva Dal that he will welcome representatives of the provincial Congress committees at the opening ceremony. It is proposed to have a rally of 500 trained members of the Dal at the time of the opening ceremony.

The Seva Dal may train a few persons in distant centres but it can carry on effective work in any province only by working on the spot. If provincial committees are interested they can easily make arrangements for the training through their provincial bands or through the headquarters of the Seva Dal.

I trust that P.C.Cs will take full advantage of the services of the Seva Dal and will thus build up a trained band of disciplined volunteers in each province.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-8/1928, p. 279, N.M.M.L.

7. To the Congressmen of Kerala[1]

10 June 1928

Dear ...,

On my return from a brief tour in Kerala I have been trying to sum up my experiences of your province. I feel that there is a great deal of room for substantial political work there. The material is good but unhappily there is no proper organisation functioning. I have no doubt that with a little effort a great deal can be done. If only a few persons take some interest in the matter they can change the whole face of the province. You will permit me therefore to make one or two suggestions.

Political work depends on workers and money, apart of course from the will to work. I think you have a few workers at least provided some funds are forthcoming so that the immediate problem before you should be one of funds. The essential thing about political work is its continuity. We may have periods of intense activity but what really tells in the end is continuous work even though this may be on a small scale. Gradually this creates an impression of permanence and the people respond to it in a large measure. Therefore it is necessary for you, to begin with, to see to it that your provincial Congress office and your district Congress offices should function regularly and should be in constant touch with their members. I was told that owing to lack of funds it is difficult sometimes to spend money even on postage. This of course is the surest way of killing an organisation. It is essential for constant touch to be maintained by Congress offices with their members and it is also essential for Congress offices to function continuously. I would therefore suggest to you that an attempt might be made to put your provincial Congress committee and district Congress committee offices on a running basis. This does not require much money or much energy but a minimum income must be guaranteed for it. Larger collections may be made for special objects. But for the daily work of the Congress there should be fixed monthly income. I would suggest a monthly income of Rs. 200/- for P.C.C. and Rs. 50/- for each D.C.C.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1928, pp 130 131, N.M.M.L.

This is not much and a few friends can give monthly donation of Rs. 5/- or Rs. 10/- to make up this amount. As a matter of fact, every political organisation in the West takes large contribution from its members and if we are at all keen on Congress work the very least that we can do is to provide some funds for it. This monthly income will of course not be enough for any special effort. For that special funds will have to be raised. For the present however I would suggest that an effort be made to ensure this monthly income. The P.C.C. certainly and if possible the D.C.Cs should have paid assistant secretaries to carry on the work from day to day.

This arrangement has been adopted in some cases with happy results and I trust that in Kerala you and other friends will help in this way and stabilise Congress work.

I am sending a small sum of Rs. 50/- to the Secretary of your P.C.C. as a contribution towards any fund that you may raise for Congress work in the province. This is a trivial sum but it represents my goodwill and affection for your beautiful province.

Will you permit me to thank you for your kindness and courtesy to me during my visit to Kerala.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. To M. Annapurnlah[1]

11 June 1928

Dear Sir,[2]

I have your letter of the 4th June. I wish you success in your issuing a special number of the Congress on the occasion of the birthday of Sitaramaraju.[3] I do not know much about Sitaramaraju but from what

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-40(ii)/1928, p. 127, N.M.M.L.
2. A Congressman from Andhra, and editor of a newspaper, *Congress*, published at Seetanagram in East Godavari district.
3. Alluri Sitaramaraju, a leader of a tribal revolt against the British in the agency tracts of Godavari and Visakhapatnam districts from 1922 to 1924, when he was killed. He became a hero in Andhra, and his 32nd birthday was to be commemorated in 1928.

I have heard about him it appears that he was an extraordinarily brave and daring individual and that his main objective was the freedom of his country. These qualities must command respect and admiration.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. To the Editor, Mysore Patriot[1]

Allahabad
26 June 1928

Sir,

A friend has sent me a cutting from the *Mysore Patriot* containing an article on "Disciplined Volunteers". This article refers to a letter I had issued to Congress committees recommending the formation of branches of the Hindustani Seva Dal to train volunteers. The conclusions you have drawn from this letter of mine are such, however, as to take my breath away. I have been criticised and accused of many things in the past. But so far as I am aware no one has yet charged me with love for the British Empire. I am afraid you could not have followed closely the politics of the Indian National Congress or its allied organisations like the Seva Dal, if you laboured under the impression that any of them worked for the glorification of the British Empire or for the consolidation of this empire. So far as I am personally concerned I am convinced that the British Empire has done and is doing more harm to the world than any other organisation. Few things would please me more than the liquidation of this empire. And I hope to have this pleasure before very long.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.
A newspaper published from Mysore city

10. To Vahid Yar Khan[1]

4 July 1928

Dear Mr. Vahid Yar Khan,[2]
I have your letters. I agree with you about your idea of sympathetic strikes[3] but it is not very easy to bring them about. The repeated attempts in Europe have so far not succeeded. Of course if they can act it would be an excellent thing.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1928, p. 95, N.M.M.L.
2. Editor, *New Light*, Calcutta
3. To express sympathy and support for the Lilloah railway workers strike in Bengal, Vahid Yar Khan had written to the Bengal Trade Union Federation suggesting that they organise workers in other fields to strike in sympathy with the strike at Lilloah.

11. On the Inauguration of the Physical Culture Academy, Bagalkot[1]

The date has been well chosen.[2] It is a most auspicious day and it should remind us of one who more than any other laid the foundations of our fight for freedom, and who has left for the Indian people a shining example of courage and self-sacrifice. On that day also was launched the noncooperation movement. It is well that this date has been chosen so that the members and associates of the Seva Dal may draw inspiration from the genius and life work of a great countryman, and may always remember the gallant days when the masses of India asserted their right to freedom and came near to achieving it. I wish the Academy every success and those who have the good fortune to study there every opportunity to put their knowledge and efficiency to the test in the service of the Motherland.

1. *The Volunteer*, July August, 1928.
2. 1 August, the anniversary of Tilak's death.

12. To N.S. Hardikar[1]

August 24, 1928

My dear Hardikar,
I have your letter of the 19th August. I have carefully considered the resolution which the Karnataka Conference passed. I am not quite sure that I agree with it. I appreciate that in a military organisation frequent changes should not be made. Thus the same office-bearers should, as far as possible, continue. But this does not necessarily mean that you should elect them for a long term of years. If a person is eminently suited for an office he will be elected again and again. I think there is some slight danger of the organisation becoming stiff-backed with semi-permanent officials who cannot easily be removed.

It may be desirable to separate the function of the President of the Dal from that of the President of the conference. The President of the conference should obviously be elected every year. The President of the Dal may be elected every two or three years. I should not lengthen the period beyond three years in any event. So also the Secretary and the Treasurer. About the others I think we should adhere to annual election.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-8/1928, p 129, N.M.M.L.

13. On the Dal[1]

Every year during the sessions of the National Congress volunteers are enrolled to preserve order in that great assembly and to perform a hundred and one acts of special service. But the exigencies of the moment seldom permit the training of these volunteers to any large extent. There are also many other organisations of volunteers in various parts of India, some affiliated to political organisations and others devoted to

1. *The Volunteer*, August 1928.

social work only. But with a few exceptions proper training is seldom given to them.

During the noncooperation days large bodies of volunteers sprang up in their thousands in the cities and villages of India. Their purpose was chiefly to defy various orders passed by the British Government and to court jail. As is well known, many thousands of these young men and women did go to jail and although the jails were filled to overflowing, there was no lack of aspirants for the honour of entering them in the service of the country's cause. But with the suspension of some parts of the noncooperation programme, those organisations broke up. There had been no training and there was no cohesive force to keep them together.

It was felt by many that the old methods of enrolling volunteers were wasteful of energy and enthusiasm as the same process had to be repeated again and again without establishing any substantial results. The lack of proper training resulted in want of efficiency and still more so in the temporary volunteers forgetting very soon what little they had learnt. In spite of repeated attempts there were hardly any well trained volunteers and disciplined body of men and women in the country. We had always laid stress on numbers and enthusiasm and not on training and efficiency. But enthusiasm is often wasted unless controlled and properly directed; and numbers are often a hindrance unless they are disciplined and know how to cooperate with each other. With intelligent cooperation and discipline, two and two make more than four. Without cooperation two and two may cancel each other and may make zero.

It was therefore considered necessary to start a new All India Organisation with the object of giving this training and discipline and building up an efficient body of men and women for national service and whenever necessary for disciplined sacrifice for the attainment of Swaraj.

With a view to give effect to this proposal an All India Volunteer Conference was held in Cocanada in December 1923, during the sessions of the Indian National Congress. Out of the deliberations of this conference the Hindustani Seva Dal saw the light of day.

The Seva Dal was formed as an All India Organisation "to train and organise the people of India for National Service and disciplined sacrifice with a view to the attainment of Swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means," and "to control and bring under uniform discipline all the existing volunteer organisations and to establish new ones wherever and whenever necessary." An All India Board of twelve members was also elected to form the Executive of the Dal.

The Cocanada Sessions of the National Congress welcomed the for-

mation of the Dal and passed the following resolutions in regard to it:-

"This Congress is of opinion that in order to train the people of India and make them effective instruments for carrying out of the national work on the lines laid down by the Congress, it is necessary to have a trained and disciplined body of workers. This Congress, therefore, welcomes the movement for the formation of an All India Volunteer Organisation and calls upon the Working Committee to take all necessary steps to form such a body of trained workers in cooperation with the organisers of the movement and to keep control and supervision over it while giving it freedom of internal management and administration."

The Seva Dal is thus a fully autonomous body but it is affiliated to the National Congress and in matters of general policy it follows the lead of the Congress.

The Seva Dal has since continued to function and annual conferences have been held during the Congress sessions. Many training camps have been organised where an attempt has been made to give a thorough training to groups of boys and young men. The Dal has full members, both men and women associates, and there is a junior section for boys and girls. Full courses of training and camp regulations have been issued.

The object of the Dal is to train as many men and women and boys and girls as possible without interfering with their ordinary occupations. Thus courses of training can be taken advantage of in any city or rural area, wherever there is a group desirous of having it, in the evenings or at any other time. Students in schools or colleges can easily take a course without detriment to their studies. For the full training it is desirable, however, to go to a camp and live the life of a camp for at least two or three months. These camps can be arranged during vacation time or at any other time suitable to a group. The Seva Dal has already trained a body of instructors and it is always glad to lend the service of one of its instructors to any group desirous of training.

The Seva Dal has, in addition to an All India Board, Provincial Boards also, elected annually. Its trained members can form themselves into groups of different sizes and special designations.

The Dal works in cooperation with the provincial Congress organisations. It also gladly cooperates with the youth leagues[2] or other organisations in the country desiring its services for the training of their members.

2 After the Youth Congress in Madras in December 1927 a number of youth leagues were formed all over India and various conferences were held.

The encouragement of physical culture is an important part of the Dal's activities. For this purpose, an Academy of Physical Culture has been started at Bagalkot in Karnatak. This Academy is open to people from all parts of India. It is hoped, as soon as funds are available, to start similar academies in other parts of the country.

The Executive of the Seva Dal feels that the work which they have the honour to be charged with is of great importance. It is the essence of nation building, and though it may be laborious and slow, it is sure to and must bear fruit. They confidently appeal, therefore, for the co-operation of all who are interested in increasing the efficiency of the Indian people and in training and organising them for national service. The work costs money. The greater the funds at the disposal of the Seva Dal, the greater the service it can render to the country. Donations will therefore be welcomed and thankfully received.

The Headquarters of the Seva Dal are situated at Hubli in Karnatak. Enquiries which will be gladly attended to and other communications should be addressed to Dr. N.S. Hardikar, General Secretary, Hindustani Seva Dal, Hubli (Karnatak).

14. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Mussoorie
14 September 1928

My dear Mahmud,

...I do not know anything about the rumour that government is going to prosecute me. I believe Zafar Ali[2] started it. I do not think there is any foundation for it...

Love

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N M M L. Extracts.
2. Zafar Ali Khan (1870 1956); editor of the *Zamindar*.
Zafar Ali Khan had informed the press that Jawaharlal was expected to be arrested soon for inaugurating the Independence for India League.

15. To M.A. Ansari[1]

September 21, 1928

My dear Ansari,

I received your telegram about the A.I.C.C. meeting last night on my return to Allahabad from Mussoorie. Your instructions will be carried out and the meeting will be fixed for the 20th. It is just possible however that the Calcutta people may refuse to take the responsibility of arranging for the meeting on the eve of the *Durga Puja*. If this happens would you like the meeting to be held elsewhere? I am going to Calcutta today and shall consult Subhas, Sen-Gupta[2] and others. If everything is fixed up I shall not wire to you. Otherwise I shall wire to you from there.

I enclose a letter I am sending to the Secretary of the Congress Assembly Party. I must say that I have been greatly shocked at reading the decision of this party regarding attendance at Viceregal receptions. If this is the result of the All Parties report and conference it seems to me that the sooner we scrap the report and break up the conference the better. It is obvious that the Congress contains at least two if not more groups which have nothing in common between them and the sooner they break apart the better. The crisis is likely to come at the next meeting of the A.I.C.C. I shall return from Calcutta on the 26th. My address there will be care of Subhas.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-60/1928-29, p 39, NMML.
2. J. M. Sen Gupta (1885-1933); first met Jawaharlal at Cambridge in 1907; a barrister of Calcutta who suspended legal practice in 1921 and succeeded Das in 1925 as president, Bengal provincial Congress committee; leader of the Swaraj Party and Mayor of Calcutta; acting president of the Congress, October 1930.

16. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
14.11.28

My dear Bapuji,
Shankarlal[2] writes to me that he has sent you a letter I wrote to him some days ago. I do not know if I made my meaning clear in this letter. I suggested to him that for various reasons it would be desirable for the A.I.S.A.[3] Council to have a more competent person than myself as agent in the U.P. I am painfully conscious of the fact that I am not much of a success there – partly because of my inability to go deeply into accounts and partly because of other occupations. I did not mean that I want to get rid of the responsibility or the work. I shall gladly carry on and do what I can. But if it is possible to make better arrangements I shall welcome them.

I cannot suggest many names. The only person I can think of in the U.P. is Kripalani. He is practically a U.P. man now, is well known in *khadi* circles here and is a wholetimer. It would have been a good thing if he was made the agent for both the U.P. and Delhi. This would result perhaps in better coordination between the Gandhi Ashram and the U.P. dept. of the A.I.S.A. I am not sure however how far this suggestion is practicable at present.

There is no immediate hurry in this matter. I wanted the A.I.S.A. Council to consider it largely in view of the rumours of my impending arrest. But I do not think anything of this kind is going to happen this year.

Kamala has been giving us a great deal of anxiety. Not because she is in any critical state but she is generally much weaker and liable to all manner of pains and troubles. We propose to take her to Calcutta for treatment.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 12787.
2. Shankarlal Banker.
3. All India Spinners' Association.

17. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
24.11.28

My dear Bapuji,
Thank you for your letter. I shall of course carry on to the best of my ability with the A.I.S.A. work. I have no desire to leave it. But I felt a little overwhelmed with various kinds of activities and thought that I was not doing justice to the A.I.S.A. Sitla Sahai's departure for a lengthy period made matters worse and hence I wrote to Shankarlal.

I am being dragged willy nilly to this municipality.[2] For the last six months or more I have resisted and refused but the facts are too strong for me and I have had to give a conditional consent. It may be that I am elected the Chairman in a week or so. This is not a prospect which cheers me up. I like municipal work but the present state of our municipality is so bad that a tremendous deal of work is required.

I should very much like to come to Wardha for the A.I.S.A. meeting. I shall try to do so but I doubt if I shall succeed. Anyway I hope to see you in Calcutta. The papers announce that you are going to Mysore in December.

It is obvious that Kamala did not get cured in Europe. She is tolerably well at present but is very weak. She will go to Calcutta and may stay there some time for treatment.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No 13734
2. Jawaharlal was again involved in Allahabad municipal politics, but was defeated by one vote in a contest for the Chairmanship.

7

CALL TO YOUTH

1. Address at Indian Youth Conference[1]

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who hoisted the Youth Flag at the opening of this conference said that when he glanced over the aims and objects of the youth movement, he found that one of the rules of the organisation was that it was a non political one. He did not know whether at this present juncture any of their organisations would be a live one if it was non political. The speaker was aggressively political and he did not know why he was asked to participate in that function. He would, however, ask them to remember that youth meant that it was standing for progress, rebellion and action and not passive inactivity. He desired that the youth of the country should not be looking back to the glorious past of their motherland, but should always look forward. The difference between old age and youth was that while the former would always be thinking of its achievements and sufferings in the past, the latter would think of the crowded hours that lay ahead of them. Again the meaning of youth was that it stood for inquiry, criticism and rebellion of the mind and the spirit. He hoped that they would interpret the object of their movement in that spirit. All the world over, a spirit of enquiry and search was animating youth and he hoped that the youth flag he was going to hoist would remind them of their duties.

1. Summary of Jawaharlal's address to the second session of the Indian Youth Conference at Madras, 23 December 1927. *The Volunteer*, December 1927.

2. An Appeal to Youth[1]

18 March 1928

Sir,

Ever since my return from Europe eleven weeks ago I have seen and felt a *new awakening in the youth of India*. After long suppression the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 12/1928, pp. 325-327, N.M.M.L.
This letter was published in all the leading nationalist newspapers.

spirit of youth is up in arms against all forms of authoritarianism and is seeking an outlet in many ways and in many directions. Youth leagues have sprung up in all parts of the country and individual young men and young women, weary of the continual and barren strife of many of their elders, are groping for a path which might lead them to a fuller realisation of themselves, a better and more prosperous India and a happier world. They are beginning to realise that communalism is the very negation of what we should strive for and the attempts that are made to remove this canker from our body politic, well meant as they are and sometimes productive of good results, seldom touch the roots of the problem.

It is felt by many that religion, as preached and practised in India, has become a grave danger to the State and octopus-like it spreads its tentacles into every department of life whether it is political, economic or social. The rules and regulations laid down in a bygone age and for an entirely different society are sought to be applied now in all their rigidity to modern life and conditions, with the inevitable result that there is a hiatus, and friction and unhappiness are the common lot of life in India. Like the old man of the sea, religion has mounted our backs and effectively prevents all progress and advancement. Religion was not meant to be this and if it continues to encroach on other departments of life, the reaction may engulf it utterly.

Thinking men and women, and the young specially, cannot help being distressed at the present inequalities between man and man, class and class. Gross and vulgar luxury on the one side and abject misery on the other must produce in all who are sensitive and those who themselves suffer under the existing system, a feeling of intense bitterness and revolt. The present system has been admittedly a failure and is condemned. As to what should take its place opinions differ but whatever it may be it should provide for the removal of, or at any rate tend to remove, inequalities of class and caste and wealth. It should result in equal opportunities for everyone and not the grossly unfair lack of opportunities which is the lot of most people today.

These are the two avenues along which the thought of many people in India is moving today, and a necessary corollary to them is that India must be fully independent to work along the lines of her own choosing.

Many young friends, Hindu and Muslim, have spoken and written to me on these lines and have expressed a desire for an organisation based on these fundamental ideas. We have many organisations already and I am not at all sure that an addition to them is called for. But that depends on the number of people who agree with these ideas and are prepared to cooperate with each other to realise them. In any event

it is worthwhile for those who agree on these general principles to get into touch with each other. It will be open to them then to consider whether they should have a loosely-knit or a compact organisation, or none at all.

I would therefore beg of those who generally agree with what has been said above to write to me, making such other suggestions as they may consider necessary. To recapitulate, this appeal is addressed to those who:

1— believe in full independence for India,
2— think that religion should be a purely personal matter with each individual and should not be permitted to interfere with the consideration of political, economic and social questions and especially that communalism should be fought in all its aspects,
3— desire to remove inequalities of caste, class and wealth, and wish that there should be an equality of opportunity for every one.

Letters should be addressed to me to Anand Bhawan, Allahabad.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To K. Venkatachari[1]

March 28, 1928

Dear Mr. Venkatachari[2],

I have your letter of the 24th March. I am very glad to learn that there is a chance of the youth delegation going to attend the World Youth Congress in Holland. I am afraid however that it is wholly impossible for me to go with the delegation. This is not because I consider the claims of youth on me of secondary importance. I believe in youth movements so much that I am prepared to sacrifice all other work to the organisation of youth in India. I feel however that I will serve that purpose much better by remaining in India at present and not by going on a delegation. You know I have only recently returned from Europe after a long stay and it is not right for me to rush back.

1. A I C C. File No. O 3/1928 (Pt. 1), p. 65, N.M.M.L.
2. General Secretary, the Indian Youth Congress and Secretary, Young India Party, Madras at this time

I had a letter from a young friend in Madras suggesting that I should issue an appeal for funds for a youth delegation. I wrote to him that if an All India delegation is sent an all India appeal should be made, but for a provincial delegation, funds should be raised in the province concerned.

I do not think that large funds are necessary. Members of the delegation can travel third class by the French steamers sailing from Colombo. I do not know if there is third class accommodation in the boats going from Bombay. Even second class accommodation in some boats is not expensive. Inquiries might be made from tourist agencies like Thomas Cook or the American Express.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Jahangir Vakil[1]

April 5th, 1928

Dear Mr. Vakil,[2]

Thank you for your letter of the 2nd April. I remember you very well and you need not have refreshed my memory.

I agree with a great deal of what you have said. It is obvious that if the caste system is an eternal thing no question of changing our social organisation can arise. No one who believes in the caste system as such can possibly accept the second or the third principle[3] I have mentioned. Nor do I agree with the dictum that a son must necessarily follow his father's profession. If we form an organisation it is certainly necessary to be very clear and definite although giving of details often confuses the issue. Some kind of discipline also is necessary. All these problems however will arise after we have some idea of the members in the organisation. Personally I would rather start with a small number

1. A.I.C.C. File No 12/1928, p 247, N.M.M.L
2. (1898-1970); an Oxford graduate who after working for five years as professor of English at Santniketan, started the Pupil's Own School in Poona.
3. See appeal dated 18 March 1928, pp 179-181 ante.

than a big unwieldy one. A select body of men and women clear in their minds as to the objective is obviously better than an inchoate mass.

As regards the possibility of a conflict with the Congress this may certainly result. If it does, it will mean that a member of the organisation must not be a responsible officer of the Congress. There is nothing to prevent him from being a member of the Congress and putting forward his viewpoint there. Indeed the organisation should try to convert the Congress to its views.

I do not think that an avowed communalist can have any possible place in the organisation. But perhaps you mean a member of the Communist Party. I presume that such a person would be entitled to join the organisation as also a moderate socialist. I doubt however if a person who does not believe in socialism will have a place there. I am not aware of members of the Liberal Party working for the removal of inequalities of caste and wealth.

Regarding the cow question I imagine that it is open to anyone to discuss its economic aspect. But to make of this a fetish in the name of religion would certainly go against the second principle which I stated.

A weekly or a fortnightly newspaper would be of great help. But I have no funds in view and till they are forthcoming it is difficult to entertain the idea.

I have written to you rather hurriedly and not as fully as I should have desired. I am leaving for the Punjab and hope to be back within two weeks. I am returning your letter as desired.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Circular Letter to Congressmen[1]

Allahabad
April 5th, 1928

Dear Friend,
The letter I wrote to a number of newspapers suggesting the formation of a new organisation based on three principles, which I stated, has

1. AICC. File No 12/1928, pp 321 323, NMML

evoked a considerable response from all parts of the country. It is not possible for me at this stage to write to each one of my correspondents separately. You will therefore forgive me, I hope, if I send this general acknowledgement. I hope to write individually later when I have a little more time.

I find however from the answers received that there is a great deal of misapprehension about the third principle that I had mentioned. About independence and the removal of religion from our public activities there is full comprehension and appreciation.

The third principle dealt with the removal of all barriers of caste and class and the establishment, as far as possible, of a society in which there was an equality of opportunity for all. This raises partly the religious issue, in so far as the caste system results in degrading and suppressing various groups in the community. But the chief question which has to be considered in this connection is the exploitation of various classes by one or more dominant groups under the present capitalist system: In other words it raises the issue of socialism versus capitalism. Socialism is a vague term which covers many theories but it is needless to enter into them at this stage. It is generally agreed however that it means the nationalisation of the means of production and distribution so that the whole state may benefit by them and individuals may not seek to amass huge fortunes by the exploitation and impoverishment of others. It means the organisation of the State on a vast cooperative basis so that all avoidable waste, which is so much in evidence in the present state of society, may be prevented. It means friendly cooperation with other countries, not with the desire to exploit one for the benefit of another, but to the mutual advantage of all, so that finally wars may be put an end to and a great world cooperative commonwealth may be built up.

This will necessarily raise questions of labour versus capital and landlord versus tenant. We must have clear ideas about them and not try to shirk their solution because we fear opposition. The immediate programme may be a limited one, but the final goal must be clear and ever kept in view. To raise conflict where there is none is most undesirable, but to refuse to recognise it or face it when it already exists, is not wisdom and does not bring us any nearer solution.

I suggested a doubt in my letter to the press about the formation of a new organisation. As a matter of fact I had not the least doubt about it, but I wanted to sound others. The organisation is certainly needed but it must consist of people who agree on the fundamental problems of modern life. A small organisation, well knit and clear in its own mind of the path to be pursued, will go far. A large unwieldy

body consisting of diverse elements and ever in doubt of its policy is likely to remain, as so many of our organisations remain, in a state of suspended animation.

I trust you agree with the views I have expressed in this letter. If you disagree I shall be glad to hear from you. I hope to address you again after some time.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. On the Mission of Youth[1]

I have visited many foreign countries, and everywhere I found this kind of talk about each country being a chosen country with a special mission. I found it in England where Englishmen regard themselves as chosen by God to civilise the earth. I found it among the French with their invincible pride talking about a mission of France. You have heard about *German Kultur*.

Russia says she has a special task in solving the world problem. It strikes me as all very curious. Frankly I do not believe in it. No country, however great, can be regarded as a chosen country or a race of chosen people. Historically countries have grown great at one time and have taken dominating roles in shaping world destinies. Apart from that there is nothing chosen about them. And I regard it as a dangerous way of looking at it.

Then there is good deal of talk about difference between East and West. I confess I fail to see it. China and India differ in their habits, customs and outlook from each other as much as they differ from any western country but they are grouped together as against Europe. There is much difference between Europe and Asia today because Europe is industrialised and Asia is not. Europe of the Middle Ages was much the same as Asia of the Middle Ages. And I see no particular

1. Speech at a students meeting at Bombay, 20 May 1928 *The Tribune*, 22 May 1928.

reason to pride ourselves on our peculiarities, angularities and insularities. I always feel irritated when anybody talks of our immortal past. I am not unconscious of the greatness of our past. But when I study our later history and survey our present condition I see very little of the chosen people about us.

Much is said about the superiority of our religion, art, music and philosophy. But what are they today? Your religion has become a thing of the kitchen, as to what you can eat, and what you cannot eat, as to whom you can touch, and whom you cannot touch, whom you could see and whom not.

What is our music? Our national music is nothing more than infernal din and painful noises which are a nuisance on our roads. Even this sometimes assumes communal aspects and not infrequently results in deplorable tragedies. What is our art? What is there that is beautiful in the homes of our countrymen? Why, even in your own homes? What is India's national literature? As far as I know, much of what goes under the name of modern literature in Hindi and Urdu is sloppish and soppy.

Indian civilisation today is stagnant. It is the duty of youth to convert this stagnant pool into a moving stream. The test of youth is action, rebellion in every sphere. Every youth must rebel. Not only in the political sphere but in social, economic and religious spheres also. I have not much use for any man who comes and tells me that such and such thing is said in *Koran*. Everything unreasonable must be discarded even if they find authority for it in the *Vedas* and in *Koran*. I know there are difficulties in pursuing this path but these difficulties are infinitely better than inaction.

Looking at the present conditions everywhere we see that fear is the dominating feeling. It is so in Europe. Everybody is afraid of everybody else. And they are going on arming themselves in the fear that somebody would attack them. It is the same in India. Every group, every community was afraid of the other, each thought that at the next opportune moment the other would swallow it. That was the reason why at the All Parties Conference yesterday we found each community not only asking for its just rights but bargaining for a dominant position, as each community felt that that was the only way in which it could ensure its existence. This feeling of want of security must go. If Indian youth must achieve India's destiny it must be in the words of the great leader of the French Revolution, "daring and daring and still more daring".

7. To the Editor, Abhyudaya[1]

Dear Sir,

Sri Gauri Shankar Misra seems to have been highly offended by certain words of mine, alleged to have been spoken at a students gathering[2] in Bombay. Had he seen the correct report of my speech, his opposition might not have been so vehement. I had spoken so fast and so hurriedly that my words were reported in a distorted form in the newspapers.

I do not wish to take up precious time and space by repeating what I had said at Bombay. At the same time, I do wish to remove certain misunderstandings. If our differences persist even after this, it will be my misfortune.

At the Bombay meeting I said that creative ability is generally not to be met with in Indian life today. Laxity and inertia have crept in and generally, after this, comes stagnation. I said nothing about the "superior glory of the Vedic religion", but I did say that, in spite of a promising beginning, as far as the masses were concerned, religion was now confined to mere taboos and rituals. And music has now come to mean the reproduction of deafening noises made in the processions brought out to commemorate that great tragedy[3] that occurred in Arabia 1300 years ago.

It is well known that there are many great thinkers and philosophers among us and that our music is highly developed and scientific. But only a few understand these subtleties of music and religion; the common man is indifferent to them. Even the few outstanding persons among us rarely invent new things. Very often we carry on the ideas of our ancestors. Unless we have the energy and enthusiasm to generate new ideas, mental inertia is inevitable and we shall be unable to progress.

At no time have I said that there is no beauty in Indian homes. What I did say was that the lurid publications of Germany and Austria were far too popular in middle class Indian homes. I had definitely said that modern Urdu and Hindi literature were quite worthless.

1. *Abhyudaya*, 30 June 1928. Original in Hindi.
2. See *ante* item 6.
3. Imam Husain, grandson of the Prophet, and 72 of his followers were killed in Karbala by the army of Yazid, the ruler of Arabia.

quite agree with Sri Misra that my knowledge of these two literatures is very limited. This I had already declared in my Bombay speech. But, even at this age I have maintained my habit of reading, perhaps more than many, and I am not entirely ignorant of the literary trends of various countries. I shall be glad if Sri Gauri Shankarji could suggest names of a few Hindi and Urdu books, the study of which might alter my ideas on the subject.

Sri Gauri Shankar Misra need not have talked of the Indians of today and bygone days as he has done—for, what I had specifically said was that in spite of a glorious past we had come to such a pass. Fortunately, even now we have several great men among us and, had it not been for the fatal effect of foreign domination, India would have had many more Gandhis and Tagores. It is easy to object to ordinary sentences and, if taken in the usual sense, my sentences may be easily repudiated. Everyone knows that there are many revivalist movements going on in India today. But the deep-rooted narrow-mindedness of years will not be ended as long as there is foreign domination. Independence is therefore needed, and for this we must relentlessly attack that which has enmeshed us in the chains of antiquity.

I wish to state that Gauri Shankar Misra is mistaken in the idea that I was born in England. I have been told by persons, who should be considered reliable in this matter, that it was in the holy city of Prayag that I first beheld this world.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. Presidential Address at the All-Bengal Students Conference[1]

Young men and women of Bengal,

You have done me honour in inviting me to preside over this gathering of the youth of Bengal, and I am grateful for it. But I have wondered what you wished me to say or do, what kind of message to deliver. I have no special message and you know well that I am no weaver of

1. Calcutta, 22 September 1928. *The Searchlight*, 28 September 1928.

the fine phrases or trafficker in eloquence. To Bengal, justly known for her warm-hearted eloquence and love of art and beauty and passionate emotionalism, you have invited a dweller from the colder and sometimes much hotter regions of the north, whose ancestors came not so very long ago from the barren and snow-covered mountains that overlook the vast Indian plain, and I am afraid I carry with me something of the coldness and hardness of that mountain climate. A very great leader of Bengal[2] and of our country, whose memory we revere today, once called me very justly "cold blooded." I plead guilty to the charge, and since you have taken the risk of inviting me you will have to bear with my cold bloodedness.

I have begun by drawing your attention to certain minor differences between us, a Kashmiri settled in the heart of Hindustan, which is now called the United Provinces, and the residents of Bengal—and yet you all know how unimportant these differences are and how strong are the common bonds that tie us—the bonds of a common legacy from the past, of common suffering and the hope of building up a great future for this country of yours and mine. And, indeed, you can carry the comparison a little farther across the artificial frontiers that separate country from country. We are told of vital differences of race and character. Such differences there undoubtedly are but how many of them are purely accidental due to climate and environment and education and how liable to change they are. You will find that the common bond is greater and more vital than the differences, though many of us may not realize the fact.

It is realization of the common bond of humanity that has given rise to the great youth movement of today. Many of you may be too young to remember the despair and feeling of revolt in the minds of youth during, and specially after, the Great War. Old men sat in their comfortable cabinets and banking houses and hid their selfishness and greed and lies under a cover of fine phrases and appeals for freedom and democracy. And the young, believing in these fine phrases, went out by the millions to face death, and few returned. Seventy millions of them were mobilised and of the fifteen millions that actually served on the front, over eight millions died and over five-and-a-half million were maimed for life. Think of these terrible figures and then remember that they were all young men with their lives stretching out in front of them and their hopes unfulfilled! And what did this awful sacrifice bring forth? A peace of violence and an aggravation of all the ills that the world was suffering from. You remember well that the first fruits

2. C R Das

of the peace in India were the Rowlatt Act and Martial Law. You know also how the fine principle of self-determination, which the Allies shouted from the house-tops, has been applied to India and to other countries. A new cloak for the greed of the imperialist powers was created in the shape of mandates and in awarding mandates the "principal consideration" was to be the preference of the inhabitants. This preference was shown unaccountably by rebellion against the British in Mesopotamia and rebellion against the French in Syria. But the aeroplane and the bomb was the British answer in Iraq and the ancient and beautiful city of Damascus was reduced to ruins[3] by the French. In Europe itself the peace created far more problems than it solved.

Is it any wonder that the youth of the world rebelled and cast out their old-time leaders on whom even the terrible lesson of the war was lost, and who still went on intriguing in the old way, and prepared for yet another and a greater war? Youth set about organising itself and set out to find the ways and means of establishing an order of society which would put an end to the misery and conflicts of today.

And so the youth of the world probed deeper into the cause of present-day misery. They studied the economic and the social conditions of the people, and they saw that although science and the changes that science had brought, had in a few generations covered the track of centuries, the minds of men still lagged behind the thought in terms of a dead past. Science had made the world international and interdependent, but national rivalries continued and resulted in war. Science had vastly increased production and there was enough for all and to spare but poverty continued and the contrasts between luxury and misery were more marked than ever before. But if mankind is foolish and errs, facts do not adapt themselves to errors and the world of our imagination conflicts with the world of reality; and is it any wonder that chaos and misery result?

Facts are not to blame for this. The troubles and the difficulties lie rooted in things, in our misconception of them and our misinterpretation of them. Our elders fail frequently because they are rigid in their minds and unable to change their mental outlook or adapt themselves to changing facts. But youth is not hidebound. Youth can think and is not afraid of the consequences of thought. Do not imagine that thought is an easy matter or that its consequences are trivial. Thought is not or should not be afraid of the wrath of heaven or the terrors of hell. It is the most revolutionary thing on earth. And it is because youth dare think and dare act that it holds out the promise of taking

3. The French twice bombarded Damascus in 1925 to put down a revolt.

out this country and this world of ours from the ruts and the mire in which they have sunk.

Are you, young men and women of Bengal, going to dare to think and dare to act? Are you prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder with the youth of the world, not only to free your country from an insolent and alien rule but also to establish in this unhappy world of ours a better and a happier society? That is the problem before you and if you wish to face it sincerely and fearlessly, you will have to make up your mind to rid yourselves and your country of every obstacle in your path whether it is placed by our alien rulers or has the prestige of ancient custom.

You must have your ideal clear-cut before you. How else can you hope to build the great structure of your dream? Can you build a palace on the foundations of a mud hut, or a fine bridge with straw? With definite ideas of your goal you will gain clearness of purpose and effectiveness of action and each step that you take will carry you nearer to your heart's desire.

What shall this ideal be? National independence and perfect freedom to develop on the lines of our own choosing is the essential requisite of all progress. Without it there can be no political, economic or social freedom. But national independence should not mean for us merely an addition to the warring groups of nations. It should be a step towards the creation of a world commonwealth of nations in which we can assist in the fullest measure to bring about cooperation and world harmony.

But there can be no world cooperation as long as one country dominates over and exploits another and one group or class exploits another. Therefore, we shall have to put an end to all exploitation of man by man or woman. You cannot have a purely political ideal, for politics is after all only a small part of life, although situated as we are under alien rule, it dominates every branch of our activity. Your ideal must be a complete whole and must comprise life as it is today, economic, social as well as political. It can only be a social equality in the widest sense and equality of opportunity for everyone. It is notorious that we have neither of these today.

Our womenfolk, in spite of the great examples of old that we are so fond of repeating, are shackled and unfree. Large classes of our countrymen have been deliberately suppressed by us in the past and denied all opportunities of growth in the name of religion and ancient practice. And all over India, we see today millions toiling in field and factory and starving in spite of their toil. How can we rid these millions of their dire poverty and misery and make them share in the

freedom to come? We hear of the service of the poor and sometimes even of the exaltation of the poor. And by a little act of charity or service we imagine that our duty is done. Having reserved very magnanimously the kingdom of heaven for the poor we take good care to keep the kingdom of the earth for ourselves. Youth at least should be above this hypocricy. Poverty is not a good thing; it is not to be exalted or praised but an evil thing which must be fought and stamped out. The poor require no petty services from us or charity. They want to cease to be poor. That can only come by your changing a system which produces poverty and misery.

In the course of the last few months you have seen the whole of India convulsed in labour troubles. Lock-outs and strikes and shootings have followed one after another. Is it amusing, do you think, to the worker to strike and starve and perhaps be shot? Surely no one does so unless his lot becomes unbearable. And indeed the lot of the Indian today in factory or field is past all endurance. In the jute mill of your province, profits and reserve accumulations in ten years before 1926 amounted to nearly 440 crores of rupees. Think of this enormous figure and then see the condition of poor workers in these mills. And yet the jute workers, miserable as they are, have gone there because there was no room for them on the land or their conditions on the land were even worse. Can you expect any peace in the land when there is so much misery and so much contrast between wealth and abject poverty?

You cannot ignore these problems or leave them to a future age for solution. And if you are afraid of tackling them, you will find that facts can only be ignored at your peril. We are sometimes told that we must do justice between landlord and tenant and capitalist and worker, and justice means the maintenance of the *status quo*. It is the kind of justice the League of Nations gives when it maintains the present *status quo* with the imperialist powers dominating and exploiting half the earth. When the *status quo* itself is rank injustice, those who desire to maintain it must be considered as upholders of that injustice.

If your ideal is to be one of social equality and a world federation, then perforce we must work for a socialist state. The word socialism frightens many people in this country but that matters little for fear is their constant companion. Ignorant of everything important that has happened in the world of thought since they left their school books, they fear what they do not and will not understand.

It is for you, the youth of the country, to appreciate the new forces and ideas that are convulsing the world and to apply them to your own country. For socialism is the only hope for a distraught world today. It is interesting to note that during the great war when a great crisis

threatened to engulf the nations of the West, even the capitalist countries of Europe were forced to adopt socialistic measures to a large extent. This was not only done internally in each country but, unable to resist the pressure of events, even internationally. There was cooperation in many fields and national boundaries seemed to recede into the background. There was economic cooperation of the closest kind and ultimately even the armies of many nations became one army under a single head. But the lesson of the war has been lost and again we drift towards a greater disaster.

Socialism frightens some of our friends, but what of communism? Our elders sitting in their council chambers shake their grey heads and stroke their beards in alarm at the mere mention of the word. And yet I doubt if any of them has the slightest knowledge of what communism is. You have read of the two new measures which are being rushed through the Assembly—one of them to throttle the trade union movement, and the other to keep out people whom the government suspects of communism. Has it struck you that it is a very curious thing that the mighty British Empire with all its tanks and aeroplanes and dreadnoughts should be afraid of a few individuals who come to spread a new idea? What is there in this new idea that the British *Empire should collapse like a pack of cards before this airy nothing?* Surely you could not have better evidence of the weakness of this giant empire which sprawls over the fairest portions of the earth's surface. It is a giant with feet of clay. But if an idea is a dangerous thing, it is also a very elusive thing. It crosses frontiers and customs barriers without paying any duty and bayonets and men of war cannot stop it. The Government of India must be strangely lacking in intelligence if they imagine that they can stop any ideas from entering India by legislation.

What is the communist idea before which the British Empire quakes? I do not propose to discuss it here, but I wish to tell you that though personally I do not agree with many of the methods of the communists, and I am by no means sure to what extent communism can suit present conditions in India, I do believe in communism as an ideal of society. For essentially it is socialism, and socialism, I think, is the only way if the world is to escape disaster.

And Russia, what of her? An outcast like us from nations and much slandered and often erring. But in spite of her many mistakes she stands today as the greatest opponent of imperialism and her record with the nations of the East has been just and generous. In China, Turkey and Persia of her own free will she gave up her valuable rights and concessions, while the British bombarded the crowded Chinese

cities and killed Chinamen by the hundreds because they dared to protest against British imperialism.

In the city of Tabriz in Persia, when the Russian ambassador first came, he called the populace together and on behalf of the Russian nation tendered formal apology for the sins of the Tzars. Russia goes to the East as an equal, not as a conqueror or a race-proud superior. Is it any wonder that she is welcomed?

Some of you may go in after years to foreign countries for your studies. If you go to England, you will realise in full measure what race prejudice is. If you go to the Continent of Europe, you will be more welcome whether you go to France or Germany or Italy. If any of you go to Russia, you will see how racial feeling is utterly absent and the Chinamen who throng the universities of Moscow are treated just like others.

I have placed before you the ideals of internationalism and socialism as the only ideals worthy of the fine temper of youth. Internationalism can of course come to us only through national independence. It cannot come through the British Empire or the British Commonwealth of Nations, call it what you will, for that empire is today the greatest foe of internationalism. If in future England chooses to enter a real world federation none will welcome her more than we, but she will have to shed her imperialism before she can enter. Our quarrel is not with the people of England but with the imperialism of England.

I have laid stress on internationalism although it may be a distant ideal for us. But the world *is already largely international*, although we may not realise it. And situated as we are, the reaction against foreign rule is apt to make us narrowly national. We talk of the greatness of India, of her special mission to the world and we love to dwell on her past. It is well that we remember our past, for it was great and worth remembering. But it is for the aged to look back; youth's eyes should be turned to the future. And I have often wondered if there is any country in the world, any people who do not fancy that they have a special mission for the world. England has her white man's burden which she insists on carrying in spite of the ungrateful people who object and rebel; France has her *mission civilisatrice*; America is God's own country; Germany has *Kultur*; Italy has her new gospel of Fascism; and Russia her Communism. And it has been so always. The Jews were the elect of the Lord, and so were the Arabs. Does it not strike you as strange that every country should have the identical notion of having a special mission to reform the world, to enrich its culture in some way, and none need lay claim to being the chosen of the Lord?

Self-admiration is always a dangerous thing in an individual. It is equally dangerous in a nation, for it makes it self satisfied and indolent and the world passes by leaving it behind. We have little enough reason to be satisfied with our present lot, with many of our customs, with our excessive religiosity, with the sad lot of our women and the terrible condition of the masses. What good does it do us to waste our energy and our time in chanting praises of the dead past when the present claims our attention and work awaits us? The world changes and is changing rapidly and if we cannot adapt our society to the new conditions, we are doomed to perish. We have seen what can be done in a brief span of years and even months by a Kemal Pasha or an Amanullah who were not afraid to break through ancient custom and prejudice. What has been done in Turkey and backward Afghanistan can be done in India. But it can only be done in the manner of Kemal Pasha or Amanullah, by fearlessly facing obstacles and removing them and not waiting till the crack of doom for slow reform. It is not a choice for you as it was not a choice for Turkey or Afghanistan, between extinction and immediate action. Turkey and Afghanistan chose the latter path and are reckoned today as great nations. What will your choice be?

The world is in a bad way and India especially is in a perilous state in spite of the glitter and superficial splendour of our great cities. There are rumours of war and awful prophecies that the next war may result in irretrievable disaster to civilisation. But the very excess of evil may hasten the cure.

Does not our own Gita state:

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।[4]
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥
परित्राणाय साधूनाम् विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥

4 "Yada yada his dharmasya glanirbhavati Bharata
Abhyutthanam adharmasya tadatmanam srijamyaham.
Paritranaya sadhoonam vinasaya ca dushkrtam
Dharma samsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge."
[Chapter IV, Verses 7 & 8]
Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata (Arjuna), then I send forth myself.
For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being from age to age.

Great men have come from age to age in this country and elsewhere to help mankind. But greater than any man is the idea which he has embodied. And the conception of *Dharma* changes from age to age, and in a changing world a custom that was good in the past may be perilous to society today. You do not go to Bombay today in a bullock cart or fight with bows and arrows. Why stick to customs which were good only in the days of the bullock cart and bows and arrows?

And the great men who have come have always been rebels against the existing order. Two thousand five hundred years ago the great Buddha proclaimed his gospel of social equality and fought against all privileges, priestly and otherwise. He was a champion of the people against all who sought to exploit them. Then came another great rebel, Christ, and then the Prophet of Arabia, who did not hesitate to break and change almost everything he found. They were realists who saw that the world had outgrown its ancient practices and sought to bring it back to reality. Even so we have outgrown the creeds and rituals of yesterday and as realists we must not hesitate to discard them wherever they clash with reality. The *avatars* of today are great ideals which come to reform the world. And the idea of the day is social equality. Let us listen to it and become its instruments to transform the world and make it a better place to live in.

I may be a weak instrument capable of doing little by myself in spite of my ardent desire to do much. And you individually may be able to do little. But you and I together can do much and working with the awakened youth of this country we can and will achieve a great deal. For only youth can save this country and the world. I do not admire the Fascists but I admire them for having as their war-cry a hymn to youth: *Giovinezza*. And I wish you would also adopt their motto "Live dangerously". Let our elders seek security and stability. Our quest must be adventure, but adventure in a noble enterprise which promises to bring peace to a distracted world and security and stability to the millions who have it not.

You and I are Indians and to India we owe much, but we are human beings also and to humanity we also owe a debt. Let us be citizens of the commonwealth or empire of youth. This is the only empire to which we can owe allegiance, for that is the forerunner of the future federation of the world.

9. Reply to Address of All Bengal Students Association[1]

Political freedom is never achieved without some kind of sanction behind it. This sanction or force may be physical, non-violent or violent but it is to be admitted that there must be some such force behind to achieve political freedom. You can't expect that foreigners should be so generous or unselfish, that they ought not to have any interest for themselves. History has yet to show a country which has been so unselfish. A nation possesses more of the psychology of the mob; and the psychology of the mob is lower than that of an individual. During the noncooperation movement there was some kind of sanction. This sanction, though on a smaller scale, was the first of its kind so far as India is concerned. There was of course a strong movement in Bengal before that. So far India as a whole is concerned, it was only in the period of noncooperation that an attempt was made to develop mass sanction. It has of course not achieved freedom for India but it has been successful in creating fear in the Government of India. There is no doubt about that. Let us not discuss noncooperation. But how can we develop that sanction? It is said that any amount of sanction that is developed in the country will be inadequate to put pressure on the Britishers. But whatever the method, if we join together it is bound to succeed. Reference has been made from time to time to boycott of foreign cloth, British goods and the like. There is no shadow of doubt that these are bound to succeed to the extent they get sanction behind them. We are to develop such sanction behind us. But what do I mean by "we"? Does it mean men who understand English? I do submit that the English educated classes by themselves can wrest freedom from the Britishers. It is quite a conceivable thing provided they act together and do not go against the masses. But if we analyse the English educated classes in the country we find that quite a large number of them owe their very existence to the British Government; either it is for service or hope of services or the like. He will naturally be afraid if the British rule goes away. Take the instance of trade; a great deal of trade is dependent on the British connection. There is no doubt that a large number of people who are directly or indirectly

1. Calcutta, 25 September 1928 *The Searchlight*, 5 October 1928.

connected with the British Government think that political independence will bring disaster to them. The English educated classes in the country are split up in two. The one is connected with the British Government. They may in theory like freedom but are afraid of the consequences that may befall them. Another class which is desirous of freedom in a different degree of intensity is the unemployed intellectual class which has really very little to lose in case the change takes place. They think that in future India, their position will not be the same as it is now.

Feudalism all over the world is dying. But in India the Indian princes are the embodiments of feudalism. It is inconceivable that in future India, the Indian princes should remain as they are at the present moment. Personally, I cannot conceive such an idea. They are bound to lose a good number of their privileges if they do not lose them completely. They certainly cannot desire the dawning of Swaraj unless they are extremely unselfish. Similarly the big zamindars may feel the same way. They are enjoying certain privileges which they may not expect to enjoy when Swaraj is established in India. There may be individual zamindars and also princes who may sincerely desire Swaraj in India but they, the zamindars as a class, cannot certainly desire political freedom for India. If we analyse the various other classes we find that their interest is solely centred round the British rule in India. So we find that it becomes a very difficult proposition.

We come back to the place from where we started. Let us now analyse the position of another class. They are obviously the peasants and the industrial workers and members of the other like professions. But undoubtedly these classes have a great deal to gain and very little to lose if the alien rule is abolished. These are the people who must form the armies or forces to fight the battle of India's freedom. It is in their interest to do this as they have got very little to lose. Primarily the struggle will rest on them and it is bound to rest on them. The intellectual classes must join along with the tenants and the industrial workers. Other classes may possibly extend their support to them. Without the support of the masses or the industrial or the agricultural workers it is inconceivable that India can achieve her freedom. So you are bound to depend on the masses. But how are you going to approach the masses? Many of you have experience of the organisation of masses or of village work. It may be that the ideal of Swaraj may not be understood by the ordinary peasants. You may see that many of them might not be very enthusiastic about Swaraj. It is a thing that they may not thoroughly appreciate. They may not take any interest in this change of their condition. It is a fact that they will not feel

inclined to your ideal so long as you do not place an economic programme before them. Without such a programme you cannot organise them. When you see that the condition of the masses is so deplorable you cannot utterly ignore it. What after all is political independence or the national ideal? It certainly does not mean independence for the rocks or rivers of India, it means the betterment of human beings that live in India. What is to be the economic ideal that we should have? There are party organisations which think that by extending from 5 to 10 years the period of tenant occupancy they will be able to solve the problem. But you cannot get it by such petty reforms. If you face the problem you must root out the cause. So you come back to the fundamental basis of socialism. Thus you cannot avoid socialism however much you may dislike it.

10. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

Allahabad
October 2, 1928

My dear Subhas,

I hope you have come back from Jamshedpur safe and sound.

I had a visit yesterday from D. L. Ananda Rao who is the organising scout commissioner in these provinces. He has been connected with the *Seva Samity* scouts. I am personally not in favour of the *Seva Samity* and their scouts. There is too much of "God save the King" for my liking. But Ananda Rao need not be judged by his association with the *Seva Samity*. He proposes to leave it very soon. He is very keen on youth organisation and for the last many months he has been touring all over India for the purpose of inviting organisations of students and others to cooperate in the next All India Youth Congress. I have naturally referred him to you on the subject and he will probably write to you. Should you so desire he may pay you a visit in Calcutta or you may put him in touch with the people in charge of the next Youth Congress. You will probably find him of considerable assistance

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-39/1928 (Pt. I), p. 73, N.M.M.L.

as he knows personally a large number of youth organisations in India and is very keen on the subject.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. Message to Lahore Students Union[1]

I am sorry I am unable to be present at the first annual function[2] of the Lahore Students Union. In a world full of strife and misery nothing is more promising than the awakening and revolt of youth. I am very glad that the students of Lahore have organised themselves into a union and I hope that through this union they will not only try to better their own lot, but will equip themselves by study and co-operative effort and action. Whenever necessary, take an effective part in evolving a new social order, which will bring freedom to the nation as well as to the millions of individuals who comprise the nation. National freedom is good, but it does not take us very far if the great majority of our countrymen are unable to participate in it and are denied all opportunities for advancement by an economic or social order which enslaves them. It is for the youth of this country to think out the solution and work for it with all their might regardless of the selfish claims of vested rights, whether political, economic or social. Let them leave their elders to compromise and temporise. Youth thinks and acts in terms of eternity and cares little for the petty gains and losses of today and tomorrow. And in thinking and acting so, youth is eminently practical, far more so than the short sighted men and women who think themselves very practical because they have no ideals and no visions of the future and seldom see beyond the tips of their noses. No building of any consequence can be raised without a plan and careful thought and proper foundation. You cannot raise a noble palace on the foundations of mud. And the great structure of a future order of a free society cannot be raised unless as practical men and women we lay firm

1. *The Tribune*, 9 October 1928.
2. Held on 7 October 1928.

foundations for it here and now. Therefore, to be an idealist is to be a realist of the kind that matters. I hope that the students of Lahore will be idealists and realists of this kind. I wish them all success in their high endeavour.

12. Reply to Students' Welcome Address at Meerut[1]

Pandit Nehru expressed dissatisfaction that the address was organised by the elders. If the students had arranged it, it would not have been so formal and serious. They would not have heaped praises. He hated such praise. Young students should not subscribe to such formalities which were meant for elders. He wanted them to revolt against the tame spirit of unquestioned obedience. They should try to assert themselves.

1. 12 October 1928 *The Hindustan Times*, 14 October 1928.

13. On the Task of Students[1]

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru began by saying that he had not been supplied with any subject on which to speak. He would therefore deal with some matters affecting the students' interest outside India.

Of the students who went abroad for education and training, a very large majority went to London alone, and to their utter misfortune they were subjected to all sorts of wretched treatment at the hands of the Britishers, not on account of colour or complexion but simply because of their being Indians, a subject race. No

1. Speech at Muzaffarpur, 16 November 1928 *The Searchlight*, 23 November 1928

such sentiment existed in any other European country against any foreigner and therefore he would advise the Indian students to go to other foreign countries, if they at all wished to go outside India to receive such technical education as they needed. Students going to London generally went with the impression that on completing their studies there they would be provided with lucrative jobs on their return to India. But such an idea at the cost of personal and national prestige involved a high price which no self-respecting nation should pay.

He exhorted Indians to study the real state of affairs in other countries, for all that they learnt about other countries through books and the information supplied to them by British agencies were far from true and were only meant to create an impression about the gigantic strength and influence of the British people over all other countries. In fact the truth was that America was today the greatest power in the West, and France and Germany and other countries of the western world were in no way inferior to the British nation either in point of strength or in cultural advancement.

The Russians, though they were not very strong, nor had wealth enough for the present to cope with the Britishers, were fast organising themselves on a solid economic basis and fully utilising the vast resources of their great country which was about one fourth or one fifth of the whole world.

Today the political doctrine of the country which had received a very enthusiastic reception from the people not only in Russia but in other countries as well was a kind of socialism. This was the only doctrine on which labour, peasantry and working classes could be permanently organised. The Government of India was foolishly afraid of it and therefore wanted to devise measures to stop the spread of this doctrine in India. It was with that aim in view that the Public Safety Bill which had been defeated by one vote was introduced in the Assembly. He said that the attempt was foolish because it was preposterous to stop anybody from thinking *on a particular line.*

Regarding the Nehru Report, he deplored the attitude[2] of some of the Mohamadans, principally of Maulana Shaukat Ali and others

2. Maulana Shaukat Ali had said on 4 November that he was against the Nehru Report because it had been prepared with a view to remove the *Hindu Maha sabha's* grievances and to bring the moderates into the national movement. Motilal Nehru had been responsible for reopening the decisions of the Madras Congress not only on constitutional points, but also on communal adjustments.

who were present in the All Parties Conference and raised no voice to protest there against the Report.

He discussed the question relating to Hindu-Moslem representation in the Councils in detail, and pointed out that the Mohamadans were certainly the gainer by the Nehru Report. He advised the Mohamadans not to complicate the situation but try to solve the difficulties by stating their viewpoints in the All Parties Convention which was to meet at Calcutta during the Congress week.

14. Presidential Address at the Bombay Presidency Youth Conference[1]

Friends and Comrades,

I am a little tired and weary of conferences and a little doubtful of the extent of their utility. But even though my enthusiasm for conferences may have waned, my attraction to a conference of youth remains, for it is so unlike the gatherings of older folk. Many of you also, it may be, when you grow older, may unhappily fall into the ancient ruts and forget the spirit of adventure and dare-devilry which was yours when you were young. But today you are young and full of enthusiasm and I, with the years creeping on me, have come to you to be a sharer in your abounding hope and courage and to take back with me to my daily work some measure of your faith and enthusiasm. I have come, because the call of youth is an imperative one and few can say no to it, and when this call came from you, young men and women of Bombay who have been the leaders in the recent awakening of youth in this country, I appreciated the honour all the more and gratefully accepted it.

Why do people meet in conference? Why have you met here today? Not surely just to deliver speeches and listen to them or as a mere diversion from your work and play. Not simply to play a

1. Poona, 12 December 1928. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13 December 1928.
The Government of India regarded this speech as particularly mischievous and dangerous as it was thought to advocate the use of material force, and informed local governments that if the movement grew in that particular form, then the law should take its course.
(Home Department (Political) File No. 168/1929, National Archives of India).

prominent part in the political or social arena, to become a celebrity and be intoxicated by the applause of the multitude. You have met here, I take it, because you are not content with things as they are and seek to change them. Because you do not believe that all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds. Because you feel the weight on your young shoulders of the sorrow and misery of this country and this world of ours, and with the energy and fine temper of youth you believe that you have it in you to remove this load of sorrow or at least to lessen its weight. If this is the urge that has brought you here, then you have met well and out of your meetings and deliberations something of permanent good might emerge. But if you are not dissatisfied with existing conditions, if you have not felt this urge which makes you restless and drives and lashes you to action, then wherein do you differ from the gathering of older people who talk and debate and argue much and act little? It is not those who are continually seeking security and have made a god of discretion who reform the world. It is not the sleek and shiny people having more than their share of this world's goods who are the apostles of change. The world changes and progresses because of those who are disaffected and who are not prepared to tolerate the evils and injustice of things as they are or have been.

The basis of society is some measure of security and stability. Without security and stability there could be no society or social life, but how many today in our present-day society have this security and stability? You know that the millions have it not; they have hardly enough to keep body and soul together. And it is a mockery to speak to them of security. So long as the masses do not share in this security, you can have no stable society. And so you see in the history of the world, revolution after revolution, not because any group or person is a lover of bloodshed, anarchy and disorder, but because of this desire for greater security for larger number of persons. We shall have real security and stability in this world only when it has come to signify the well being of the vast majority of the people, if not all, and not of small groups only. That time may not be near, but society is continually, sometimes it may even be a little blindly, struggling towards it. And the greater the struggle, the greater the urge to that end, the healthier and more vital the society. If this urge is wholly absent, society becomes static and lifeless and gradually withers away.

So long therefore as the world is not perfect, a healthy society must have the seeds of revolt in it. It must alternate between revolution and consideration. It is the function of youth to supply this dynamic element in society; to be the standard-bearers of revolt against all that

is evil and to prevent older people from suppressing all social progress and movement by the mere weight of their inertia.

Many of you may wonder why I am addressing you in this somewhat academic vein. I do so partly because I am no orator and platform hero and partly because I feel that most of our troubles are due to a false ideology. Acceptance by foreign, political and economic domination is bad enough, but the use of ideology of our rulers is to my mind even worse, for it stunts all efforts and sends us wandering aimlessly in blind alleys with no opening. I want, therefore, as far as I can, to get my own thinking straight and to remove the cobwebs from my brain and I should like you also to do likewise. It will do us little good to repeat the political catch words of the day without clear thinking on our part as to what we are aiming at and how we attain our goal. I shall welcome your agreement with me but that would mean little if it has not been preceded by thought and conviction. I am much more concerned with finding in you a true appreciation of the present condition of the world, a passionate desire to better it, and an earnest spirit of enquiry as to what to do and how to do it. Reject utterly what I say to you if you think it is wrong. But reject also everything, however hallowed it may be by tradition and convention and religious sanction, if your reason tells you that it is wrong or unsuited to the present condition. For "religions" as the Chinese say, "are many, but reason is one".

What do we find in this world of ours today? Utter misery is the lot of vast numbers of people and while a few live in luxury, the many lack even bread and clothing and have no opportunity for development. Wars and conflicts ravage the world and the energy that should go to build up a better order of society is spent largely in mutual competition and destruction. If that is the condition of the world at large, what of our own unhappy country? Foreign rule has reduced her to utmost poverty and misery and a rigid adherence to outworn customs and ideas has sapped the life out of her.

There is obviously something radically wrong with the world and one is led to doubt if there is any ultimate purpose behind this chaos and unhappiness. Two thousand five hundred years ago the Prince Sidhartha, who later became the Great Buddha, saw this misery and in agony of spirit put himself the same question:

> How can it be that Brahma
> Would make a world and keep it miserable?
> Since if all powerful He leaves it so,
> He is not good, and if not powerful,
> He is not God!

But whether there is any ultimate purpose or not, the immediate purpose of every human being should be to reduce this misery and to help in building up a better society, and a better society must necessarily aim at the elimination of all domination of one nation over another or of man over man. It must replace competition by cooperation.

You have probably often condemned British imperialism because you suffer under it. But have you thought it is but a manifestation, certainly the most objectionable and aggressive manifestation, of a world phenomenon? And that this world imperialism is the direct outcome of a system of society which prevails in the greater part of the world today and is called capitalism. Your immediate problem and mine is to gain political freedom for our country, but this is only part of the problem facing us. So long as imperialism is not rooted out, mankind will be exploited and oppressed by a few. It may be that some of us may join the ranks of the exploiters, but that will not bring freedom to the many. We must aim, therefore, at the destruction of all imperialism and the reconstruction of society on another basis. That basis must be one of cooperation, and that is another name for socialism. Our national ideal must, therefore, be the establishment of a cooperative socialist commonwealth and our international ideal, a world federation of socialist states.

Before we approach our ideal, we have to combat two sets of opponents—political and social. We have to overcome our alien rulers as well as the social reactionaries of India. In the past we have seen the curious phenomenon in India of the political extremist sometimes being a reactionary in social matters, and not unoften the political moderate has been socially more advanced. But it is impossible to separate the political life of the country from its social and economic life and you cannot cure the social organism by treating one part of it only. The infection from one affected part continually spreads to other parts and the disease takes firmer root. Your political and social philosophy must, therefore, be a complete whole and your programme must comprise every department of national activity.

It is clear today, even if there was some doubt of it in the past, that the social reactionary is the ally of those who wish to keep India in subjection. If any proof was needed of this self-evident fact, the events of the past few months have provided it. You have seen and you have helped in the magnificent boycott of the Simon Commission. You have also seen how some people and some groups have cooperated with this Commission and joined in welcoming it in defiance of the national will. Who are these people and these groups? Almost invariably you will find that they are the social reactionaries, communalists, those who

want favours and privileges for themselves at the expense of the larger community.

An even more striking instance of the alliance of political and social reaction is the attitude of the present government in India towards measures of social reform. Efforts made by the representatives of the people to get rid of harmful social customs are checkmated by government and our society cannot progress sufficiently fast or adapt itself to changing circumstances largely because of official opposition. The British Government of India have become the self-constituted guardians of Hindu and Muslim customs and traditions. Recently in the debate in the Assembly on the Public Safety Bill, it was a touching sight to see the spokesmen of government waxing eloquent on the beauties of Hindu and Islamic ideals of society and pointing out in woeful accents the terrible upheavals that would follow the spread of socialistic and communistic ideas. It would almost appear that the British occupants of the official benches in the Assembly were on the verge of being won over by the enthusiasts for *Shuddhi* or *Tabligh*—it was not quite clear which they favoured most. It is a strange sight with a moral that none can miss, to see the Christian rulers of India pretending to become the bulwarks of Hinduism and Islam.

Religion has in the past often been used as an opiate to dull men's desire for freedom. Kings and emperors have exploited it for their own benefit and led people to believe in their divine right to rule. Priests and other privileged classes have claimed a divine sanction for their privileges. And with the aid of religion the masses have been told that their miseries are due to *kismat* or the sins of a former age. Women have been and are still kept down and in the name of religion in many places are made to submit to that barbarous relic of an earlier age—the *purdah* system. The depressed or the suppressed classes cry out to the world how infamously religion has been exploited to keep them down and prevent them from rising. Religion has been the fountain-head of authoritarianism and meek submission and it is because our rulers realise this and because their own rule is based on this ideology of authoritarianism that they seek to bolster up its cruder manifestations in India. If the spirit of intellectual revolt spreads to ancient custom and tradition, then the very basis of authoritarianism crumbles and takes with it the foundation of British rule.

In India today and indeed in the world there is a great deal of argument and debate on matters political and social. From all this argument two sets of opposing ideas emerge. One is the reformist idea which believes in a gradual betterment with the consent of those in power or in positions of privilege today. It believes in a slow evolu-

tionary process. In the political field it believes in the achievement of Dominion Status by agreement or consent of the British; in the economic field it relies on a gradual conquest of power from the capitalist and the landholder with their consent also, though this may be grudging and partial; in the purely social domain reforms are to come by the slow displacement of the parties of privileges. The other idea is the revolutionary one which seeks rapid change and does not believe in the holders of power ever giving it up unless they are forced to do so. Consent comes in here also; but it is the unwilling and forced consent of the vanquished.

These rival ideas are fighting for mastery today. There is little doubt as to which will emerge victorious in the end. To a large extent both the evolutionary and the revolutionary methods work side by side. Every revolution is preceded by a process of evolution and preparation. But the difference in ideology is of vital importance and therefore it becomes essential for you to make your choice and throw all your strength and might on the side you favour.

If any of you believe that you can force power out of those who possess it today by sweet reason and argument, then all I can say is that you have not read history with much profit, nor have paid much heed to recent events in India. The problem before us is the problem of the conquest of power. In our Councils and Assemblies where fine speeches, however strongly worded they may be, do not affect the seat of power, we see an outward show of argument and reason, although even then the attitude of official spokesmen is often insulting and overbearing But go outside to the fields and the market-place and you will find that whenever there is a clash between the popular will and the will of the government, however peaceful the people may be, the government meets them, not by argument and reason, but by the bayonet and the policeman's baton, by shooting and sometimes by martial law. The fundamental fact of the situation is the bayonet and baton. How can you argue or be sweetly reasonable with cold steel and dead wood? You must meet them, if you wish to overcome them, by other methods; by the development of sanctions greater and more powerful than the bayonet and baton that face you.

The government, it is said, must preserve law and order. What matters it, if this results in the gravest disorder and in death and injury to the people? Every Indian knows the crimes that have been and are being committed in the name of law and order, and yet there are some of us still who are obsessed by this notion. Law and order are the last refuge of the reactionary, of the tyrant and of him who has power and refuses to part with it. There can be no law or order till

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

President
Bombay Presidency Youth Conference
POONA.

Jawaharlal Nehru
18.12.28.

पण्डित जवाहरलाल जी नेहरू

आप आगामी १६, २० और २१ अक्टूबर को झांसी में होने वाली युक्तप्रान्तीय राजनैतिक कांफरेन्स के सभापति चुने गये हैं।

PRESIDENT OF THE U.P. POLITICAL CONFERENCE, OCTOBER 1928.

freedom comes, for as the French philosopher Proudhon[2] said, "Liberty is not the daughter but the *mother of order.*"

The advocates of reformism make earnest and eloquent pleas for change. With an advocate's zeal they try to score fine legal points over their adversaries. But their forensic ability is wasted on their opponents who carry on unmoved, well knowing that their power is not threatened by such methods; it rests on the solid steel of the bayonet. And unhappily even the common man on whose behalf the reformists argue, is unmoved by their argument. He does not understand it, nor is any great attempt made to make him understand. All the energy is spent in compromises between the leaders, in efforts to lull various vested interests, and the masses are ignored. Is it any wonder that the masses in their turn remain apathetic and do not respond to the call of leaders? The head of the nation is so far away from the rest of the body that the trunk can hardly see it.

It is not thus freedom has been won and greater changes brought about. The voice that claims it must be the voice of revolt, the dull and threatening roar from a hundred thousand and a million throats, not the sweetly modulated tone of an accomplished debater. When that voice is raised, England, as she has always done in the past, will bow to the inevitable. But if that voice is not raised, do not imagine that you can hoax or trick the English people out of power.

The voice of the masses will only be raised if you put before them an ideal and a programme which affects them and improves their economic condition and when raised, it will only be followed by action if the end in view is worth the struggle and sacrifice.

The governor of the province I come from, recently, following the tradition of his tribe, gave advice to the taluqdars of Oudh. He told them to choose their allies wisely. That advice I heartily commend *to you although it is highly probable that my choice and yours will be* very different from that of Governor Hailey. In choosing your allies you have to see who are the vital elements in the nation and who are the parties who are going to profit by the freedom of India and who are those who profit by the British exploitation of your country. Choose the former and do not waste your time and energy in trying to appease or win over the latter. Above all ally yourself to the masses of *the country—the peasantry* and the industrial workers—and think in terms of them when you envisage a *free India. And if you do so,* you will automatically avoid the pitfalls of reformism and petty compromise. You will have your pulse on reality and your programme will

2. Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-65), French social theorist famous for his remark, "Property is theft", in his pamphlet, *What is Property.*

be a live programme with the sanction of the masses behind it. And freedom for the masses must inevitably mean the end of British as well as all other exploitation. It must mean the independence of India and the reconstruction of Indian society on the basis of social and economic equality.

The freedom of India is dear to all of us here. But there may be many here who have the ordinary conveniences of life and are not hard put to it to find their daily bread. Our desire for freedom is a thing more of the mind than of the body, although even our bodies often suffer for the lack of freedom. But to the vast masses of our fellow-countrymen present conditions spell hunger and deepest poverty, an empty stomach and a bare back. For them freedom is a vital bodily necessity, and it is primarily to give them food and clothing and the ordinary amenities of life that we should strive for freedom. The most amazing and terrible thing about India is her poverty. It is not a dispensation from Providence or an inevitable condition of society. India has enough or can have enough for all her children if an alien government and some of her own sons did not comer the good things and so deprive the masses of their dues. "Poverty", said Ruskin,[3] "is not due to natural inferiority of the poor or the inscrutable laws of God, or drink, but because others have picked their pockets." And the control of wealth by the few not only means the unhappiness of many, but it exercises a power over men's minds so that they do not wish for freedom. It is this mental outlook which paralyses the poor and the oppressed and it is this mentality of defeatism that you will have to fight.

You have been the leaders of the youth movement in India and you have built up a strong and living organism. But remember that organisations and institutions are passive instruments of man. They become living and vital only when they are pushed onward by the strength of great ideas. Have great ideals before you and do not lower them by ignoble compromise. Look deep down to where the millions toil in field and factory and look across the frontiers of India to where others like you are facing problems similar to yours. Be national, the sons and daughters of your ancient motherland working for her liberation; and be international, members of the Republic of Youth, which knows no boundaries or frontiers or nationalities and works for the liberation of the world from all thraldom and injustice. "To do great things", said a Frenchman many years ago, "a man must live as if he had never to die". None of us can evade death, but youth at least does not think of it. Old men work for the span of years that still remains for them, the young work for eternity.

3. John Ruskin (1819-1900), English writer and art critic.

15. Speech at the Bombay Youth League[1]

What we want in the country is a clash of ideas leading to clear thinking and ultimately its translation into action. Politics, like any other vocation, requires trained experts, and those of you who are training yourselves for politics should remember that the governance of mankind is no easy job. But unfortunately in India and all over the world there are all types of politicians and there is a wonderful exhibition of ignoramuses strutting about the political arena as politicians and high government officials. In North India, ministership has become a scandal. So young men and women should not carry home with them rancour or ill feeling about their comrades because of difference of opinion. You should let argument and debate help you to clarify your vision. You should act with a proper perspective of your ideal.

1. Poona, 13 December 1928. *The Hindu*, 14 December 1928.

16. On the Nature of Freedom[1]

Pandit Jawaharlal, referring to the eulogising terms in which the Chairman[2] had described him, said it seemed to him that he belonged to a category of men, upon whom greatness was simply thrust. He was sure the audience had come to give expression of their sympathy and support to two ideas with which his name had been coupled. Those two ideas were "complete political freedom" and "complete social freedom". He had advocated these ideas from various platforms and had had a wonderful response from every part of the country, especially from the youth. He had absolutely no doubt that these ideas had come to stay in the country and would conquer in the end.

1. Bombay, 14 December 1928 *The Bombay Chronicle*, 15 December 1928.
2. Jamnadas Mehta

Personally, he could not divorce political independence from social freedom. If complete political independence was to be attained a very great measure of social freedom ought to go with it. It meant real freedom to every man to hold his own beliefs, free from outside influence, and a patriotism nobody could question. The same could be said of those who advocated Dominion Status. Yet there was a gulf between the two. The difference was fundamental in the mental and ideological outlook about society, politics, and imperialism.

He asked the audience to realise this ideological difference. The advocates of Dominion Status were ideologically hopelessly in the wrong. They were not giving the correct lead to the country. The goal of the country ought to be one which should inspire courage and sacrifice on the part of the people. Every step for the advancement of the country must, therefore, be taken from the standpoint of whether it would increase the psychology of revolution among the people or not. If it did increase the psychology of revolution even by an iota such a programme should be propagated. He appealed to the youth to accept his ideology of creating a revolutionary atmosphere in the country in order to change the whole fabric of the society as it existed today.

It was a good sign that wherever he went he had seen, especially among the youth, a revolt against what is known as "authoritarianism". One of the curses of India was that Indians meekly submitted to customs and traditions and old sets of ideas, and this was the real strength of the British Government in India. The youth should not support social reactionaries because they injured the national cause, and social reaction was always followed by political reaction.

Youth should be the standard-bearers of complete political and social freedom. For a country to be free in the real sense of the term, it ought to gain freedom socially, politically and economically. Any programme towards the attainment of such freedom would, of course, meet with opposition of some sort. "Don't say anything which might hurt your friends on your right". This was the stock argument which was advanced so far as social customs and various privileges based on religious sanction were concerned.

What was needed was a radical change in the whole fabric of the society as it existed at present. It might be that it would have to do away with the class known as "landlords" and to dispose of "capitalists", but out of fear of that particular class or government a programme in that direction would never be contemplated. The result was that there were many in the country who talked about political freedom but dare not specify how that political freedom was going to affect 95 per cent

of the people of the country. For fear of the various vested interests in the country the programme would be so toned down till it assumed a sorry shape. It might be acceptable to the intellectual few but would not bring forth or inspire courage and sacrifice in the cause of that freedom.

17. Presidential Address at the Socialist Youth Congress[1]

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that socialism was a very intricate subject, although the present cry for socialism was prevalent both among the intellectuals and the masses. They should explain the meaning of socialism to the masses and prepare the country to chalk out a plan of work. Socialism could be found in politics, religion and other spheres of activities. He had come there not to give them a learned discourse on socialistic doctrines, but to give them his good wishes as he knew very little of the subject. He felt however that only by true socialism was there any chance for the independence of the country. Socialism was not a mere war cry, but it was a thing to be learned, studied and practised.

He then referred to the ideas embodied in the speech of the Chairman[2] of the Reception Committee and asked the audience to examine those ideas carefully and chalk out a programme of work based on those ideas. He agreed with the Chairman in his suggestion about the formation of 'study circles' and advised the audience to meet and discuss in those circles and find out the real truth in socialism. It was incumbent therefore on the socialists to find out the truth in socialism and when they had succeeded in doing that they would secure a proper place in the country as socialists.

There were opinions, oppositions and suppositions in every Congress conference and congregation in the country and it was a good sign for the country which was proceeding to search for truth in its attainment of their goal. Socialism could not be attained

1. Calcutta, 27 December 1928. *The Indian Annual Register*, 1928, Volume II, pp. 453-54.
2. Dr. B. N. Dutta.

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by excitement and enthusiasm but by serious and thoughtful study of all concomitant circumstances. If they were convinced that by socialism they would attain salvation, he asked them to preach it before the country. If they wanted socialism to grow in the country, they should prepare a band of militant groups to carry out their ideas. Socialistic fights in the country were going to be a stiff fight, but they would have to fight against a number of prejudices courageously.

Today the whole country was thinking seriously of the question of communalism. Hindus, Christians, Jains and Mahamadans were expressing their respective views. If they took up this particular work at the present moment he thought that they could remove this communal spirit by socialist ideas.

India, he concluded, was a tremendous country which comprised various provincial groups with different ideas. As socialists they could work for the unification of different groups in the provinces. If they could develop this idea they could attain salvation and international brotherhood would come into existence.

8

POLITICAL ADDRESSES AND STATEMENTS

1. Reply to Address of the Allahabad District Board[1]

I did not know that it was a special merit on my part to visit foreign countries, something which deserved the high honour you have done me. For a soldier to desert from the field of battle and while away his time in leisurely repose, far from the scenes of conflict, is not usually considered a very praiseworthy act. But you have made even this an occasion for doing me honour. The reason can only be, as you have yourself hinted, your exceeding kindness and your affection which seeks an occasion when there is none. May I say that nothing could give me greater pleasure than this token of affection from the peasants of the district of Allahabad and their representatives? I have wandered in many of your villages and have ever met with the warmest welcome, and the poorest out of his poverty has offered hospitality. Political life has many ups and downs, many disappointments, many sinkings of heart, and I have had my share of these, but all these have been more than amply compensated by the love and trust of the peasantry and I look back on my association with them with these feelings of gratitude. I can never forget them or their love and simple faith for one who is not one of them, who belonged to a different class and who lived a life of comfort and ease while they suffered poverty and a lack of all good things of life. They did me the high honour of treating me almost as one of themselves. That honour I shall treasure to the last.

You have referred to two things which are very dear to me, independence for this country of ours and equality between man and man. You could have chosen nothing else for which I cared as much. I rejoice that you sympathise with these ideals. Whatever difference there may be among politicians and others, I make bold to say that there is no Indian who does not want to look forward to complete independence for this country. Differences there are about methods. May I remind you that twenty years ago Gopal Krishna Gokhale, who dedicated his life to the service of the motherland, had said that he hoped that India would achieve complete independence some day? The day is twenty years nearer now than it was then, and let us hope that we shall see it soon.

1. 3 April 1923. Reprinted in *Life and Speeches of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru*, edited by R. Dwivedi, Allahabad, 1929, pp. 67-71.

Today we see a society in which there are tremendous differences between man and man — great riches on one side and great poverty on the other. Some people live in luxury without doing any work, while others work from morning to night with no rest or leisure and yet have not got the barest necessaries of life. This cannot be right. It is the negation of justice. It is not the fault of our individuals who happen to be rich. It is the fault of the system and it is up to us to change this system which permits of exploitation of man by man and produces so much misery. Our country can produce enough to permit every man and woman living in it to live in comfort and peace. Every man and woman must have the opportunity to develop to the best of his or her ability. But to do so, we shall have to forget some of our ideas of a bygone age. Honour and merit must come from ability and hard work and not because of caste or birth or riches. Let each one of us consider the other as his brother, not higher or lower, neither to be worshipped nor despised, but treated as equal with equal rights to share this good country of ours and all it produces.

I have travelled much and I have compared with pain the condition of the peasantry in other countries with our peasants. In other countries, I have found a large measure of comfort and even luxury; here there is abject poverty, which is made worse by the evil customs which we still adhere to. We must fight and get rid of the causes of this poverty and also discard these customs which keep us from progress. We must learn what is happening in other countries and profit by their example. Our district boards often approach the government for grants. But have you realised that the whole machinery of government is run from the rural areas? All the money spent on the army, on the huge salaries of the Viceroy and Governors and other officials — where does it largely come from except from the poverty-stricken villages of India? Even our towns live at the expense of our villages. And what do our villages get in return? There is very little education, very little sanitation or medical facilities, and absolutely no arrangements for proper housing. All your money is taken away and when you beg for doles very little is given to you by way of favour. In other countries it is the bounden and first duty of the State to give free education to every person, free medical facilities and sanitation and to build good houses for the poor. In other countries, it is felt that no nation can be strong unless its men and women are healthy and well-educated. But here it is more important to pay heavy salaries to officials and spend money on the army. No one thinks of the poor, and the country is weak and poor. We must put an end to this if we have to build up a prosperous India full of healthy and educated men and women. The

future of India lies with the peasantry.

I thank you again for the honour you have done me and for the good wishes which you have so generously expressed. And I join with you in the fervent hope that our ideals may be speedily realised and India may come into her own again.

2. Presidential Address at Punjab Provincial Conference[1]

I am deeply grateful for the honour you have done me. But few of you, I fancy, will envy me my position here today. It has become customary at our congresses and conferences to refer to the crisis which continually confronts us and every year we are told that the situation is more critical than before. Too frequent reminders have made the warning lose some of its meaning and the cry of wolf often passes unheeded. But crisis or no crisis, it may be said without exaggeration that we are rapidly approaching the cross-roads of our destiny and whether we will like it or not, we shall have to make a vital choice. I do not refer to the seven uninvited gentlemen from England who have recently visited us and threaten to come again despite all protestation. Their comings and goings do not vastly excite me. But greater things are happening than the Simon Commission, vaster changes are afoot. The world is in ferment and strange forces are at work. The gods of yesterday are neglected and lie almost forgotten and new ideas and new myths convulse the people. Even from India with its immemorial and crushing weight of tradition and its fear of change, the challenge to the dead past has gone forth and increases in volume. Brave indeed must be the person who will don the role of prophet and point out with certainty the path to be pursued by us. I claim no such role and hence my hesitation in accepting the presidentship of this conference.

If the framing of a policy for India as a whole offers difficulties, the Punjab has her own problems which, small in themselves, have gradually overshadowed the larger issue and effectively prevent a solution. This province has earned a most unenviable reputation.

1. Amritsar, 11 April 1928. *The Tribune*, 18 April 1928. The speech was delivered in Hindi.

The Punjab has been described as a pitfall in the way of Swaraj, as an obstacle in the onward march of those who were fighting for India's freedom. The Punjab has undoubtedly earned a bad reputation. I have, however, an affection for the Punjab. I always remember the Punjab as the Punjab of 1919, when it suffered for the whole country and gave birth to the noncooperation movement. It was due to the suffering of the Punjab that the battle for freedom acquired a fresh momentum. The place where this conference is meeting has been sanctified by the blood of our national martyrs. Your present communal dissensions will soon be forgotten; but no one can forget the memorable events of 1919. With all its defects, the Punjab is a province of action. In other provinces we can get eloquent speakers, good writers, able lawyers, but few men of action. The Punjab is the province of practical men; and we can never despair of a province or a people who have the courage of their convictions and are prepared to make all sacrifices for what they hold dear. Even if the Punjab is now treading the wrong path, there is hope that it will one day return to the right path, because it cannot be said of the Punjab that it is stagnant or lifeless. It is and has always been full of life and vigour.

The industrial revolution has not affected India as much as other countries. Without going into all these changes in detail, some aspects of them might be worthy of consideration here. Industrialism has resulted in greater production and greater wealth, in the concentration of wealth in a few countries and a few individuals and a more unequal distribution of wealth. It has resulted in a struggle for raw material and markets, and has thus brought into existence the imperialism of the last century. It has caused wars and has given rise to the colonial empires of today. It has laid the seed of future wars. And recently it has taken the shape of an economic imperialism which, without the possession of territory, is as efficient and potent in exploiting other countries as any colonial empire of yesterday. All this is well known but what is perhaps not sufficiently realised is the international character of industrialism. It has broken down national boundaries and has made each nation, however powerful it may be, dependent on other countries. The idea of nationalism is almost as strong today as it was and in its holy name wars are fought and millions slaughtered. But it is a myth which is not in keeping with reality. The world has become internationalised; production is international, markets are international and transport is international, only men's ideas continue to be governed by a dogma which has no real meaning today. No nation is really independent, they are all interdependent. The world of reality has changed utterly but our ideas continue in the old rut and thus conflicts arise and

society is ever in a ferment.

And if there is a conflict between facts and ideas in the West, how much more do we see it in India? Many of us, regardless of what is happening all around us still live in the ancient past, and imagine that we can have it back again. Some want the Vedic age, others a reproduction of the early democratic days of Islam. But

"The moving finger writes;
And having writ, moves on:
Not all thy piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line."

We forget that our ancient civilisations, great as they are, were meant for different ages and different conditions. We cannot have today, in an industrial age, an early agrarian economy such as we had in Vedic times; much less can we have in our country a civilisation meant for a desert country more than 1,300 years ago. And many of our traditions and habits and customs, our social laws, our caste system, the position we give to women, and the dogmas which religion has imposed on us, are the relics of a past, suitable in those far-off days but utterly out of joint with modern conditions. They are shibboleths today, in conflict with reality. Men's ideas may lag behind but it is not possible to arrest the course of time and the evolution of life.

Where there is conflict between the two, there is friction, and stagnation and progress is slow. Where ideas come into line with realities, then that fortunate country advances with a bound. Thus we have the instance of defeated, backward, disorganised and dogma ridden Turkey changing suddenly, almost overnight, into a great and rapidly progressing country under the inspiring leadership of Kemal Pasha. We have also the instance of Russia, where a demoralised, illiterate and disunited people were changed into men of heroic mould, who faced and conquered war, famine and disease and a world of enemies. So also will India progress when she discards the myths and dogmas in favour of the reality of today.

We thus see that the world has now become a delicate and complicated organism, each part depending on the other, and none wholly capable of standing apart. How then can India ignore the rest of the world or keep herself in splendid isolation? India must understand world forces and take her proper share in the shaping of them. India must also get her ideas in line with facts and realities. The day she does so, her progress will be stupendous.

I have referred to industrialism and its effects on the modern world. Its evils are obvious and many of us dislike them intensely. But whether we like them or not we must realise that the spread of indus-

trialism cannot be checked. Even in India it is taking giant strides and no country can stop its onward march. Must we also succumb to all the evils which come in its train or is it fruitful for us to adopt industrialism without its major evils? We must remember that industrialism means the big machine and the machine is but a tool to be used for good or ill. Let us not blame the tool if the man who holds it misuses it and causes injury thereby.

In the West industrialism has led to large scale capitalism and imperialism. Many of us who denounce British imperialism in India do not realise that it is not a phenomenon peculiar to the British race or to India, or that it is the necessary consequence of industrial development on capitalist lines. For capitalism necessarily leads to exploitation of one man by another, one group by another, and one country by another. Therefore we are opposed to this imperialism and exploitation. We must also be opposed to capitalism as a system and to the domination of one country over another. The only alternative that is offered to us is some form of socialism, that is the state ownership of the means of production and distribution. We cannot escape the choice and if we really care for a better order of society and for ending the exploitation of man by man, we cannot but cast our weight on the side of socialism.

And if we so decide, what consequences follow? The necessary result is that we must not only fight British dominion in India on nationalistic ground but also on social and industrial grounds. This is all the more necessary as the modern form of imperial domination is not the old crude method of possession of territory, but the subtler way of economic imperialism. England may well permit us to have a larger measure of political liberty but this will be worth little if she holds economic dominion over us. And no Indian, capitalist or socialist, if he appreciates the full significance of this new slavery, can willingly submit to it.

Another consequence that must follow the adoption of the socialistic viewpoint is over changing all such customs as are based on privilege and birth, and caste and the like. From our future society we must cast out all parasites, so that the many who lack utterly the good things of life may also share in them to some extent. We must remember that poverty and want are no longer economic necessities; although under the present anarchic capitalist system they may be inevitable. The world and our country produce enough or can produce enough for the masses to attain a high standard of well-being, but unhappily the good things are cornered by a few and millions live in utter want. In India, the classic land of famine, famines are not caused by want of food but by the want of money to buy food. We have famines of money, not food.

The third consequence will affect our international contact and our international outlook. If we are opposed to imperialism and know that this is a phase of capitalism we must oppose the latter wherever we may meet it. England as a premier capitalistic and imperialistic power becomes our chief opponent in this field also, and there can be no effective cooperation between India and England so long as she does not come into line with modern progressive thought.

In the light of these considerations let us briefly examine the question of independence for India. Even if the National Congress had not pronounced in its favour, I am sure none of you would require to be converted to it. But some of our elders and friends suffer strangely from various complexes and delusions and the British Empire is one of them. They cannot get out of the professions and habits of a lifetime, nor can they rid themselves of the chains of their own fashioning. What is the British Empire today—"The third British Empire"—as an ardent advocate has called it? If we leave out India and the dependencies, it is like the famous Cheshire cat in *Alice in Wonderland* whose body has entirely disappeared and only the grin has remained. How long can this disembodied grin remain, I leave it to you to judge. The world has judged already and few imagine that it will endure long. The empire is fast approaching dissolution and a world crisis may end it. The British people have shown extraordinary ability in adapting themselves to changing circumstances and to this they owe their strength and the long lease of power that they have enjoyed. But the world is moving too fast for them and recent events, specially in relation to India, indicate that their old skill is gone. But whether the empire endures or not, how can India find a place in it when her national and international and economic interests conflict with it in almost every vital matter? We must recognise internationalism of today and act internationally if we are to face realities. We cannot be independent in the narrow sense. When we talk of independence we mean the severance of the British connection. Afterwards we can develop the friendliest contact with other countries including England. The British Commonwealth, in spite of its high-sounding name, does not stand for this international cooperation, and in its world policy has consistently stood for a narrow and selfish ideal and against the peace of the world.

If independence is our only and inevitable goal, we cannot in logic, in decency, ask the British to protect us from other foreign countries. I am wholly prepared to accept the argument that if we want British help to defend our frontiers, we are not fit for independence. But I wholly deny that we cannot face the risk of foreign invasion without British aid. No country is strong enough today, with the possible ex-

ception of the United States of America, to withstand a group of hostile countries. England certainly is not. But no one will say that England should, therefore, be deprived of her independence and put under alien control. The security of a country depends on many factors, on its relations with its neighbours and on the world situation generally. If the problem of Indian defence is examined in the light of these factors, the strength of India becomes obvious. She has no great dangers to face and in a military sense she is by no means weak. But even if there were danger, it is shameful and cowardly to seek for help from a nation which was in the past and is today oppressing us and preventing all growth. Whatever independence may or may not mean and whether we use that word or another, the one thing that we must keep in the forefront of our programme is the immediate withdrawal of the British army of occupation from this country. That is the real meaning of freedom. Unless that takes place, all other talk is merely moonshine.

We may demand freedom for our country on many grounds. Ultimately it is the economic problem that matters. Our educated classes have so far taken the lead in the fight for Swaraj. The economic pressure on them was considerable and others were only vocal elements; and so the demand has taken the form occasionally of Indianisation of services, of higher posts being thrown open to Indians. They are to blame for these demands. They have acted as every class conscious of its interests acts. But in doing so they have seldom paid heed to deeds of the masses. Whenever vital questions affecting the masses have arisen, they have been shelved, they have been asked to stand over till Swaraj has been attained! Why confuse the issues now, it has been said, we can settle our problems later. Like all class conscious groups, they have considered themselves the most vital elements in the nation and in the name of freedom have really sought to advance their own interests and many of our intellectuals have become the staunchest defenders of the privileges of empire as soon as they had their share of the titles and power. What shall it profit the masses of this country — the peasantry, the landless labourers, the workers, the shopkeepers, the artisans — if every one of the offices held by Englishmen in India is held by Indians? It may benefit them a little as they can bring more pressure to bear on their own people than on alien government. But fundamentally this condition cannot improve until the social fabric is changed, and I think that the only effective change can be the formation of a democratic socialistic state. But even from the narrow point of view of our intellectuals, it is now well recognised that no effective pressure can be brought to bear on the British Government without mass support. But in spite of recognition there is the fear of

the masses and little is done. Mass support cannot come for a vague ideal of Swaraj. It can only come when the masses realise what Swaraj means for them. Therefore it is essential that we must clearly lay down an economic programme, must have an ultimate ideal in view and must also provide for the immediate steps to be taken to bring them relief.

Our ideals thus can only be an independent democratic state, and I would add a socialistic state; and for this we must work. What can be our methods? This is a revolutionary change from present conditions and revolutionary changes cannot be brought about by reformist tactics and methods. The reformer who is afraid of radical change or of overthrowing an oppressive regime and seeks merely to eliminate some of its abuses, becomes in reality one of its defenders. We must, therefore, cultivate a revolutionary outlook, one that devises a radical and far reaching change, and not merely that halting outlook of the half hearted reformer. The way of violence not being open to us in our present conditions, the only other course is some form of non-cooperation. Everything that goes towards creating a revolutionary atmosphere helps everything that lessens its hindrances. I use the word 'revolutionary' in its proper sense without any necessary connection with violence. Indeed, violence may be, and I think this is today in India the very reverse of revolution. Acts of terrorism of a hero have counter-revolutionary effect and for this reason alone, apart from any other reasons, are injurious to the national cause. No nation has yet been built upon such individual acts of terrorism."

There was a great controversy in this country some years ago on the *merits of* Council entry and the echoes of it still linger. It almost became a creed, a religious issue, a matter of faith. But the sole test of this, as of others, is the reaction it produces on the national mind. I can quite conceive work in the councils helping us to produce the right atmosphere in some measure. But it will only do so if it is carried on in the right spirit and with the ideal always in view, not with the desire to pursue better reformist tactics. I must confess, however, that the able and decorous parliamentarians who throng our councils cannot be mistaken for revolutionaries anywhere.

But you will tell me that all this may be very good but it is very vague. The real problem before you is how to exorcise communalism. I have already indicated to you the kind of India that I should like to build up. There is no place for communalism or dogma-ridden people in it. Communalism, of course, has to be fought ruthlessly and suppressed. But I really do not think that it is such a power as it is made out to be. It may be a giant today, but it has feet of clay. It is the outcome largely of anger and passion and when we regain our

tempers it will fade into nothingness. It is a myth with no connection with reality and it cannot endure. It is really the creation of our educated classes in search of office and employment. How does the economic interest of a Hindu or Muslim or Sikh differ from each other? Certainly not because they have to profess different faiths. It may be that if there is a vacancy for a judgeship of a High Court, or a like occasion, the raising of the communal issue may profit an individual. But how does it generally profit his community? What does it matter to the Muslim peasant whether a Hindu or Muslim is a judge in Lahore? Economic interests run along different lines. There is a great deal in common between the Muslim and Sikh and Hindu zamindars; and a great deal in common between the Muslim and Sikh and Hindu peasantry; and very little in common between a Muslim peasant and a Muslim zamindar. We must, therefore, begin to think of and act on common economic issues. If we do so, the myth of communalism will automatically disappear. Conflict there may be, but it will be between different classes and not different religions.

What communal interests are sought to be protected? I think fundamentally they are cultural. Every country in the world has cultural minorities and it is a well-recognised principle that such minorities should have the fullest autonomy so far as their culture is concerned. So also in India every considerable cultural group should be given freedom and, indeed, should be encouraged to preserve and cultivate its culture. Only thus can we build up a rich and varied and yet common culture for India. Culture would include the question of language, education and schools.

If this question of culture is settled satisfactorily, and sufficient safeguards are provided for the interests of minorities and groups which may be in danger of suppression, what remains of communalism? If in addition we replace our present system of territorial election by some method of selection by economic units, we not only introduce a more efficient and progressive system, but also do away with the problem of joint and separate electorates and the reservation of seats. It is generally recognised now, or it ought to be, that separate electorates, which are meant to protect the interests of minorities, really injure them and reduce their effective power in the State. If anybody should be against that, it is the minority. But such is the power of a myth that many of us have come to believe that separate electorates are a "valued privilege" to which we must cling on. I think a little clear thinking will convince any person who is not a bigot on the subject that separate electorates are not only a danger to the State but specially to the minority community. Personally, I am not in favour of territorial election at all,

but if it is retained I am wholly opposed to separate electorates.

I do not fancy reservation of seats on a communal basis either, but if this solution pleases people I would agree to it. We have to face realities, and the fact remains that many people feel strongly on these subjects. I am quite certain that any arrangement that may be arrived at will be of a provisional nature only. *A few of us cannot bind down* future generations and I trust that those who come after us will look upon all problems entirely free from all religious and communal taints. It is necessary, however, for such of us as do not believe in communalism and religion interfering with political and economic matters, to *take up a strong attitude now* and not permit the extremists to have it all their own way.

In the course of this fairly long address, I have referred very little to the Simon Commission. I have done so partly because the problem we have to face is a much bigger one and partly because none of you here want any convincing from me to boycott it. That boycott is going to continue in spite of the dejection of weak hearted individuals and of well meant attempts to "bridge the gulf."

The gulf will not be so easily bridged. And it is a folly to deceive ourselves that it can be easily bridged. Before a new bridge is built on the basis of friendship and cooperation, the present chains which tie us to England must be severed Only then can real cooperation take place. It may be that a few of us are over keen even now to find a way to lead them to the pleasant and sheltered paths of cooperation. If so they are welcome to them but they will be to none of us. We shall carry on this boycott regardless of back sliders. But a boycott of the commission confined to public meetings and resolutions is the feeblest of methods. How can we make it really effective?

A boycott of British goods has been suggested and we are fully entitled *to have it. I hope we shall carry it on to the best of our ability. But* we must know that such a general boycott, justified as it is on sentimental grounds, cannot take us far. The only real thing that can be boycotted is British cloth. Can we bring about an effective boycott of British cloth? The present position stated roughly is, I believe, as follows: *our mills in India produce one third of the cloth consumed by us; our handloom weavers produce another third* and we import from foreign countries the remaining third, of this over 90 per cent being English.

There is a strong movement in the country today to boycott British cloth only. This is perfectly justified and if we could do so we would force the hands of England. But *there is the serious danger of our* failing to do so. If we permit other foreign cloth to come in, British cloth will then creep in the guise of Japanese or some other foreign

cloth and it will be impossible both for the ordinary purchaser or the retailer to distinguish between the two. This practical difficulty seems to be inseparable and it would thus appear that in order to boycott British cloth we must boycott all foreign cloth. Another advantage this would bring us would be that *khadi* and mill cloth in India would cooperate with each other for the boycott. If we favour other foreign cloth, there can be no cooperation between the mills and the *khadi* producers in India. We must therefore concentrate on the boycott of all foreign cloth, thereby also helping tremendously our manufacture. A boycott of foreign cloth today really means boycott of British cloth. It means our displacing one-third of the cloth we consume and which comes from foreign countries by cloth manufactured by us. This should offer no great difficulty, if our *khadi* organisation and our cotton mills cooperate in the task instead of competing with each other. It is well known that *khadi* can be produced in almost unlimited quantities at short notice if there is demand for it. Our mills even with their existing machinery can also greatly increase their output. Thus there is no doubt that we are in a position to produce enough to boycott foreign cloth totally and in the near future, provided only the will to do so is present. It is for the public to express this will. If they do so, all other difficulties will disappear. We cannot expect those who profit by the import of foreign cloth to feel enthusiastic over the boycott; it must cause loss to the importers and others in the trade. But are we to sacrifice the interests of India and her millions for the sake of a handful of importers? Most of our millowners also have not a good record. They have in the past sought to profit by national sentiment in India, they have collected enormous dividends and yet have treated piteously the poor workers who were the foundations of their fortunes. Today instead of combating foreign cloth, many of them are competing with coarse *khadi* and are thus profiting even by the *khadi* sentiment of the people. If they could see far enough and knew their real interest, they would realise that their progress is bound up with the goodwill of the people, and their whole-hearted cooperation in the boycott would benefit them even more than it would the nation as a whole. But this cooperation can only be based on full justice to the workers in their mills and the minimum of profit.

An effective boycott is clearly possible with *khadi* and Indian mill cloth cooperating. Even if only a few millowners are agreeable to our conditions we can work with them, and I am sure that others will be drawn into our movement later. But if there is to be no cooperation with the mills, what can we do then? Our duty is clear. We must, by concentrating on *khadi* only, bring these misguided owners to reason

and make this boycott of cloth as effective as we can.

I have in an earlier part of this address referred to the coming industrialism in India and have stated that I believe it to be an inevitable process. I have no objection to the big or small machine and I think that properly used they can be made to serve man and not to dominate over him. And yet I have advocated the use of khadi also. I have done so, because I am convinced that in our present conditions and in the future for some time, *khadi* is a boon to the poverty-stricken millions of India. I cannot say if *khadi* will be necessary for us in the distant future. But I can say that today it supplies a very real want and wherever it has been produced, it has brought a measure of well being in its train. The theory of its being an ideal auxiliary to agriculture would prove this; but if there was any doubt, our experience and the evidence of our eyes has removed it utterly. To bring immediate relief to our long suffering peasantry and to make India more self-sufficient in the matter of cloth, *khadi* today is essential. The necessity for *khadi* is even greater in case of war or crisis, when automatically foreign imports will cease. How can we satisfy our needs then; our mills will make vast profits, prices of cloth will soar up and our poor folk will practically have to go naked. Only *khadi* will meet the situation then. It will supply the growing demand and will force the mills to keep their prices down. So even from the point of view of war, *khadi* is a necessity.

But if war comes, and everything indicates that it will come before long, we shall have to face other and more vital problems than that of boycott of foreign cloth. The Madras Congress has given us a lead in this matter and it is for this province to ponder over this lead, for the real burden of action will fall on the Punjab. You and your gallant soldiers have been exploited enough in the past, not in India only, but in the four quarters of the world. Even today they are made to do the dirty work of British imperialism in China, in Persia and in Mesopotamia, and they are used to suppress people who are our friends and neighbours and who have done us no harm. It is time that we put an end to this shameful exploitation of the courage of our manhood. We are told that we are not capable of defending our country against the foreign invasion, but our soldiers are capable enough of defending the British Empire, in Europe, in Asia and in Africa. You know how our man-power and our wealth were exploited by the British during the last war. You know also the measure of return that we got for our help; it was the Rowlatt Act and Martial Law in the Punjab. Are you prepared to be deluded again, to be exploited again and to be thrown into the scrap-heap again? Wise men, they say, profit by the failures

and experience of others, ordinary men by their own experience, and fools by neither. We may not be very wise, but let us not be fools either. Let us make up our mind now what we shall do when a crisis comes. Let us decide that whatever else we may or may not do, we shall not permit ourselves to be exploited by British imperialism. Let us say with the Madras Congress that, if the British Government embarks on any warlike adventure and endeavours to exploit India, it will be our duty to refuse to take any part in such a war or to cooperate with them in any way whatsoever. *This will be no easy matter. It* will mean our having to face and endure fines and hardship, but if we have the courage to face them and the capacity to endure them to the end and the statesmanship not to compromise, we shall emerge triumphant from this ordeal and our dear country which has so long suffered alien domination will be free again.

3. On the Punjab Provincial Conference[1]

The Provincial Conference at Amritsar was certainly a very evident sign of the reviving political life of the province. It was a living and enthusiastic body, over-exuberant perhaps, and discussions in the Subjects Committee were keen. Some of the decisions of the conference were, perhaps, not very desirable and there was an element of irresponsibility in them. Instead of passing over 20 resolutions, I would have far preferred three or four important resolutions only, which could have been put into practice immediately. But, unhappily, we seem to attach more importance to resolutions than to subsequent action. I wish that our workers would remember a famous dictum of Lenin. He said that the proper execution of even the most unimportant measure was more important to the existence of Soviet Russia than all theory; more important than ten Soviet resolutions. Even so, it is far more important for the freedom of India to work and act methodically a little than to talk a lot and pass resolutions.

A noticeable tendency of the conference was against all communalism. The last two months have shown, even more than before, that the Congress cannot expect any effective cooperation in national work from either the Muslim League or the Hindu Mahasabha or any other communal organisation. The attitude of the Muslim League at Delhi was one of noncooperation with the Congress and other groups. The Hindu Mahasabha at Jubbulpore has also shut all doors leading to cooperation and progress. And yet, strangely, all these communalists swear in the

1. Interview at Lahore, 15 April 1928 *The Tribune*, 19 April 1928

name of nationalism. No sensible person, I hope, is taken in by these pious professions. Even some of our Sikh brothers declare themselves against communalism, but their words and actions often show that the taint is present. If any community tries to domineer over the others, there can be no peace or progress. The time has come when people should resolutely set themselves against all aspects of communalism and I feel confident that they will succeed in suppressing it.

4. Presidential Address at the Banaras District Conference[1]

I have been thinking since the morning what I should say to you. I have also asked my friends about the problem. Everybody knows that I cannot make speeches. I feel nervous when asked to make a speech. Therefore I just want to talk to you. The notices distributed claim that I shall speak about my tour abroad. I lived abroad for two years and returned four months ago. I found that in Russia and elsewhere even the poorest of the poor live well, wear good clothes and reside in well built houses. The condition of the poor in our country is deplorable. Here the rich are no better than the poor in other countries. Once upon a time our country was rich. Greedy for wealth, the English came. Through trade, they managed to establish their hold upon the land. They also practised some fraudulent measures with the result that they became rich and we were impoverished. The English traded deftly with other countries as well but most of their wealth was gained from us. It is useless to blame them for this. They looked after their own interests. Other countries do the same. Perhaps, in such circumstances, we would behave in the same way. We were fools. The English let us fight among ourselves and gradually established themselves here.

We want the *Panchayati Raj* in our country. We want ours to be a land of labourers with government in the hands of the working class. Today power is in the hands of the rich or of a privileged class. In Russia and certain other countries this system of government has been done away with. Russia is now a land of the working classes.

A man who does not produce anything or does neither physical nor mental work is a burden on the nation. Zamindars, money-lenders, capitalists and beggars are all a drag on the country. Even the kisans are becoming a burden in certain respects as much of their time is spent in idleness. If they spun in their spare time they would not be so poor. Conditions have changed in the villages that have taken to the

1. Sixth Session, 28 April 1928. *Aaj*, 30 April 1928 Original in Hindi.

charkha. If Indians began to weave their own cloth then the English would have to suffer a hard loss of about 70 crores. All our trade has been taken from us. If the *charkha* finds favour, many of our countrymen can find employment once more.

What is Swaraj? Merely the appointment of Indians to important posts will not bring Swaraj. Your District Collector is an Indian. However good or bad he is, that will not mean Swaraj. Swaraj will not be obtained through flattery, nor will the British give it for the asking. The only way to gain it is to put pressure on the British. Let them realise that if they do not give self government to the Indians they will suffer heavier losses. The noncooperation movement was organised with this purpose. Noncooperation includes non payment of taxes. We might even have to do that for Swaraj. We will have to face many difficulties. But usually *khadi* work requires few or no sacrifices. Please wear *khadi*. By so doing, you will be able to get rid of your poverty as well as pressurize the English so that India may obtain Swaraj. This is our only weapon at present: to boycott foreign cloth and to use *khadi* instead.

It is said that a war is imminent. We helped the British in the last war. A million of our people fought—many were killed and as many injured. As a result we had the Rowlatt Act. I ask you if you intend to make the same mistake in the coming war. It is your duty not to cooperate with them in this war. Please be prepared to brave any difficulties you may be faced with in this connection.

Turkey and Afghanistan have made considerable progress within a short period. The reason is that they are independent. We should try to treat all Indians as equals and give up the distinctions between high and low. Every one should be given equal opportunity to progress.

5. On politics and religion[1]

I have just read the special statement issued by the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Maharashtra Conference and the President and the Secretary of the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee[2], in explanation of the attitude taken up by the Maharashtra Conference

1. Statement to the press. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 17 May 1928.
2. They had said, "The principle of divorce of religion and politics recently advocated by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, was found acceptable by the Subjects Committee..."

in regard to social and communal problems. My name has been mentioned in this statement in support of the contention that religion and politics should be divorced from each other, and certain conclusions which appear to me remarkable, have been drawn from this premise. I have certainly referred to this subject repeatedly in my public utterances but my words must have been lacking in clarity to have led some people to imagine the very reverse of what I intended. I have stated that the so-called religion in India today encroaches on every department of life—political, social, economic, cultural—and I have taken strong exception to this and have expressed a wish that it should not be permitted to make this encroachment. If religion, or rather what is called religion, in India continues to interfere with everything, then it will not be a mere question of divorcing it from politics, but of divorcing it from life itself.

If the high priests of religion and the shining lights of communal organisations are to decide the question of untouchability and all other social problems, the division of provinces and the methods of election and similar problems, what exactly is the function of the National Congress or of other political organisations? The Congress might as well liquidate itself instead of continuing an existence which is humiliating and futile. It will not discuss the live problems of the day; it will only carry on an academic debate on such subjects as the communal organisations in their wisdom agree to leave to the Congress.

This is an intolerable position for the least of our organisations. For the Congress, it is unthinkable. Indeed the Congress has always in the past taken a lead in social and communal matters and I am sure it will continue to do so unless it wants to commit *harakiri* or to die of inanition. Perhaps there is no subject on which it has taken up a stronger attitude than the one of untouchability, and to say today that this is outside the purview of the Congress because it smacks of religion, is an amazing assertion. The Congress has also taken up a clear and definite attitude in regard to the redistribution of provinces, the separation of Sind, and the methods of election and representation. It is open to the Congress to change its opinion if it chooses. But it is not open to any one to say that such and such subjects are outside the scope of the Congress. The Congress does not acknowledge the right of the British Parliament to interfere with us politically or otherwise; much less is it likely to agree to any dictation or interference from religious or communal organisations in the social or economic sphere.

The Congress stands for Indian freedom, the freedom of the entire people of India, not the freedom of a class only which will dominate over other classes and while it carries on the struggle for political free-

dom and against political reaction, it strives equally for social freedom and against social reaction. In particular, it has declared war against untouchability and all that it implies. And neither of the two struggles admits of any compromise. There can be only one end to them: complete political freedom or independence, and complete social freedom, that is, the right of every man and woman to have the fullest opportunity for development without any restrictions or barriers of religion, caste, custom or economic privilege.

6. Presidential Address at the Kerala Provincial Conference[1]

I thank you for the honour you have done me. I do not know if I can be of much service to you, as I am ignorant of your local conditions and problems; but the call of beautiful Malabar was too strong to be resisted. For long years I have wished to visit this land of beauty and when your behest came I gladly agreed to undertake the journey of 2,000 miles from my northern home.

We must examine the very foundation of our political, social and religious beliefs. It is not enough for us to find temporary patch-work remedies for long-standing grievances.

This is no easy task and I am not presumptuous enough to imagine that I am fitted for it. But I do feel that although we discuss our everyday political problems so often we pay little heed to the deeper issues, and I shall only venture to draw your attention to some of these.

We are thoroughly dissatisfied with our present condition and we rightly seek to better it. But what manner of Swaraj or independence we are going to have we seldom seek to enquire.

However, before we proceed on this enquiry, we must discard all prejudices and preconceived notions even though they come in the garb and with the sanctity of religion or ancient custom. We can only face the issue if we dare to think unhampered by sentiment and are prepared to go to the logical limits of our thought. 'Life', said Deshbandhu Das "is greater than logic", and no one can deny the truth of this statement. Our best laid schemes go wrong because life is required to follow the dictates of our cold logic. Human reason and logic are still weak supports for us, but unhappily we have no better guides. And so weak

1. Payyanur, 27 May 1928 *The Hindu*, 28 May 1928

and frail as they are, we have to rely on them, taking care that when life moves away from them we have to think afresh and fashion ourselves accordingly.

We must notice at the very beginning that our society is suffering from a terrible stagnation and inertia. The very factors which made for its strength in the past are now a heavy load on its back which prevents it from going forward or adapting itself to present day conditions. And the very basis of this society is authority — authority of sacred books, of old customs, of immemorial habits. On the strength of this authority we presume to treat many of our brothers as untouchables, and we adhere to many customs which, our reason tells us, are not good.

We claim freedom for our country. Can we deny that freedom to large masses living in this country? If the worship of authority has brought us to our present low state and our nation to misery, should we not challenge the foundations of that authority and try to evolve a new order wherein the millions who inhabit this country may have all shackles removed from them and may have a fair chance of living a happy and harmonious life.

We may be told that all this is not practical politics. It is a profitless search for a Utopia and we would better occupy ourselves in dealing with the problems of the immediate present. But the practical politicians have singularly failed to solve our everyday problems and practical politics divorced from ideals and a vision of the goal are apt to lead us, as they have so often done in the past, into the morass of nowhere. To refuse to consider what is ultimately desirable and possible is to invite failure and disaster. A loss of belief in ideals means a relapse into barbarism and must result in a cynical opportunism.

How far are the evils of the modern West due to industrialism? Industrialism means the use of machinery, of tools to lessen human labour and it seems a little unreasonable to blame our tools when the fault lies with us in misusing them. Industrialism certainly has produced evils but it may be that these evils are due to the system under which industrialism has flourished and not so much to industrialism itself. That system is capitalism and under its evil influence the very progress that science has made has been prostituted and the beauty of life has been sacrificed to a mad race for profit and wealth. The foundation of a good society cannot be perpetual conflict and competition; nor can it be the senseless production of vast quantities of unnecessary goods which we are made to buy by the clever methods of modern advertisement. A good society can only be based on cooperation and the freedom of each individual to develop to the best of his capacity without any barriers of economic or political or religious privileges.

Our aim must be a society from which the wasteful and competitive activities of individuals are lessened, where there is more cooperation and what is done is good in itself and what is produced is worth producing, not for profit, but because it is good and worth having.

India has little in common with England and her economic interests conflict in almost every particular with those of England. An imperial bond between the two can only be an enforced union productive of ill-will and continuous friction and must of necessity be to the advantage of England.

For the present, however, the union must necessarily be the union of the lion and lamb, with the lamb inside the lion. This is evident if we study the relation of England with other countries like China, Persia, Mesopotamia and Egypt. She has opposed all attempts at freedom of these countries and only recently we had an amazing example of her imperial policy in independent Egypt. Even in regard to the countries of Europe, she is acknowledged to be the main obstacle to world peace and cooperation. It is inconceivable, therefore, that India can have a real measure of freedom within the limits of the British Empire and you will welcome, I am sure, the resolution of the Madras Congress laying down our goal as complete national independence. This does not mean ill-will to England or to any other country, but it is a condition precedent to our future growth and to the development of peaceful relations with other countries including England. The Madras Congress resolution is important specially because it attacks the psychology of submission and slavery and helplessness, which generations of foreign rule have developed in us. It prepares our minds for the will to be free without which freedom cannot come even today. There are so many of us who take an academic interest in Indian freedom, who while they talk of freedom feel no inner urge for it. Doubts and difficulties assail them and fear born of a slave psychology hampers their efforts. We are told of the dangers that India may have to face in the event of England leaving us to our own resources, of the fear of foreign invasion and of our inability to cope with it. But it is not realised that the strength that succeeds in enforcing India's will on England also succeeds in protecting India from other foreign incursions. It is not felt keenly enough that we are even now suffering under a foreign invasion and the future cannot bring any greater disaster to us. Not to get rid of our present domination because of future problematical dangers is the height of fear and weakness. But what external dangers will face us when the British leave India? We have an Indian army brave and efficient, well tried in many continents. It is good enough to fight for the freedom of the Allies in the battlefields of Eu-

rope and it will be good enough to fight if necessary for the freedom of India. When freedom comes, we shall develop our army and strengthen it and make it more efficient than it is today. We have seen during the Great War how vast armies can grow up in time of need.

The strength of the country depends not only on the defence force but even more so on the international situation and the balance of power. Poland, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, Belgium, Holland, Yugoslavia, Portugal, Bulgaria, Rumania and many other countries are independent, but not one of them can withstand one great Power. Even the great Powers cannot separately cope with the combination against them; but they remain independent because none dare attack them for fear of complications. The other countries could not tolerate that the rich prize of India should fall again to another Power. But what power could indeed threaten us? France, Germany and Italy are too much involved in their mutual hatred and jealousies and are too afraid of each other to trouble us at all. The United States of America is too far away for effective action. Japan has to face the hostility of the United States and even of the Western European Powers and cannot dare to embark on a new adventure, which would be fraught with the greatest risks for her. Afghanistan is strong in defence but weak in attack and it is inconceivable that with its limited resources it can do us any harm. It may at most carry out a number of successful raids before we can defeat it and hold it in check. But there is absolutely no reason why we should have any such relations with Afghanistan. Russia remains the sole danger but even this danger is largely imaginary, as every one knows, or ought to know, that no country is in greater need of peace than Russia. The Great War, the civil war, the famine and the blockade have shaken her foundations and done her tremendous injury. She has made good much of her losses but above everything else she desires peace to build up the new social order she has established. Experts tell us that although strong in defence she is weak in attack. Her whole government is based on the goodwill of the workers and the peasantry and she cannot count on this goodwill in an oppressive campaign. She has so many enemies that she dare not of her own accord start an invasion of India and leave her western flanks exposed to attack. Nor has she any economic reason to covet India. India and Russia are too alike to help each other much. Both are largely agricultural countries with raw materials and markets. She wants capital and machinery and India can supply neither. We thus see that no danger threatens India from any direction and even if there is any danger we shall be able to cope with it.

It may be, however, that we are unable to cope with it and go down

in the struggle. That risk must be faced as it has been faced by every brave people in history. Because of risk, we cannot give up our birthright or take the shameful position of asking for the British help to defend our country and liberty. We must make it clear that on no account are we prepared to have the British forces in our country. The alien army of occupation must be withdrawn.

It is said that by laying stress on Independence, we antagonise other parties in the country just when the need for unity was the greatest. Unity is certainly most desirable, but can unity be achieved by the sacrifice of our principles? Our opponents and even those of our colleagues for whose sake we sacrifice our principles will respect us the less for it. Let us respect the sentiments and even the prejudices of others. But let us not give in on any matter which we consider vital. The Congress has already shown its desire to cooperate, whenever it can, with other groups and parties without giving up our ideals and our goal. We have cooperated wholeheartedly with others for the boycott of the Simon Commission and are today cooperating with numerous groups in the All Parties Conference. We could give no greater evidence of our goodwill, and our tolerance cannot extend to sacrifice of the principle and the goal; and the ideal we have set before us is too vivid to be forgotten or discarded for a temporary compromise. We have to travel the road together respecting each other and it may be that when we reach the crossroads we may have converted many others to our view. If we fail to do so, we would agree to differ and part company without rancour or ill will.

You must have been disappointed at the proceedings of the All Parties Conference in Bombay and yet the very fact that we are having so much difficulty in finding a solution to contending claims shows that we are at grips with the real problems. By ignoring them or making a patchwork compromise we cannot solve them. It is a measure of our earnestness that we are trying to face them squarely, and I have every hope that if we continue to do so, we shall find a solution.

What are these problems we hear of — controversies about the separation of Sind and separate and joint electorates and reservation of seats? If you go to the bottom of all this, you find one all pervading cause. It is the fear of the Muslim that the Hindu may exterminate him, the fear of the Hindu that the Muslim may crush him, the fear of each community or group. It is a senseless fear. To protect itself, each community wants a privileged and dominating position in each province. Surely no group should dominate over another; and the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League each desire domination and there can be no compromise between the two. Are we then to give up the task as

hopeless? The duty of the Congress and of all other organisations which are not based on pure communalism is clear. After paying due regard to the fears, whether justified or not, they must evolve a constitution which should be as just and reasonable as can be expected under the circumstances and then should place it before the country. And the country as a whole, I feel sure, will accept it if it is based on reason and justice.

Unhappily it is not possible in this world of ours today to produce an ideal constitution. We cannot ignore prejudice and unreason, but let us at any rate try to approximate to the ideal as far as we can. The history of India tells us that danger has always come because of the want of central authority. We have too much of decentralisation. If we are to build up a strong India, we must have a strong Central Government but at the same time we cannot afford to kill the rich and varying cultures of India by having too much uniformity and discouraging local effort and enterprise. In other countries, the tendency today is to give full local autonomy to cultural areas. We must, therefore, while laying stress on a strong Central Government, accept the principle of giving considerable autonomy to different areas having traditions and cultures of their own. The best test of a culture is that of language. There may be too many small autonomous areas. The economic life of the country may suffer; but this can be safeguarded by giving up powers to large areas including several autonomous cultural areas. If this principle is kept in mind and if in addition we have joint electorates and proper safeguards for all the minorities and backward groups, I think we might evolve a satisfactory constitution for a period at least. Let us hope that the committee which the All Parties Conference has appointed will meet with success in drawing up this Constitution.

It is becoming clear that the Indian States cannot be ignored or excluded. Nothing can be more fatal for India than a division between the two entities. The problem has become an urgent one because we find that efforts are being made to raise a barrier between the two parts of India. Recently a scheme[2] has been published on behalf of a number of Indian princes under a superficial garb of goodwill to British

2. Early in 1927 the rulers of Indian States pressed for the appointment of a special committee to examine their relations with the Paramount Power. In December 1927 Sir Harcourt Butler was appointed the Chairman of the Indian States Committee. The princes claimed that they were sovereign rulers except to the extent that they had expressly surrendered any portion of their sovereignty and demanded direct relations between the States and the British Crown the committee, which submitted its report in February 1929, rejected the theory of residuary sovereignty but accepted the doctrine of direct relations between the States and the Crown

India. This scheme lays down the dangerous principle of separation of Indian States and so far as the people of the States are concerned, we are told they will live under a rule of law. We know well what rule of law and order means. This scheme must, therefore, be combated by us not only in British India but in the States. Even such of the ruling princes as are wise and foreseeing enough should reject it and take their stand by their own people and by the people of British India. We stand together and nothing must be allowed to separate us.

I have tried to examine the general position in which India stands today and have stated some principles which should guide us in our work. We have to prepare and work for a socialistic Indian republic cooperating with other countries to produce a cooperative world commonwealth. We have to discard the evil customs and habits that cling to us and specially to bring about equality of opportunity between all the men and women that inhabit this country. We have to fight and overcome everything that is a barrier to this equality—untouchability and many other social customs, the exploitation of the worker and the peasant by the capitalist and the landlord. From the West we have to learn much, specially science and the scientific spirit. But there is also much in the West today which we have to avoid.

Are we likely to attain this ideal, or even to go a step in the right direction with the help of the Simon Commission? Does the Commission or the British Parliament have this ideal? It is patent that we have nothing in common and our ways are entirely separate. No question of cooperation can thus arise. You will, I have no doubt, continue vigorously the boycott of the Commission which India has so far carried on with such great success.

There is thus only one course open to us. We must lay stress on hand-spun and hand-woven *khaddar* only in order to boycott foreign cloth. We must thus make it clear to the mill owners that their own interests demand that they should cooperate with nationalist India and not with the alien government. When they have realised this they will be in a proper frame of mind to work with us. But that is not yet. We must therefore with all the vigour at our command work for *khaddar* and for the boycott of foreign cloth through *khaddar*.

You are no doubt aware of the great struggle[3] that is going on in Bardoli. It is an economic struggle but there is little to distinguish economics from politics today. So also is the gallant struggle of the

3. A satyagraha campaign conducted successfully by Vallabhbhai Patel in Bardoli tahsil in Gujarat against enhancement of revenue.

mill workers of Bombay against great odds. Bardoli has ceased to be a merely provincial affair. The whole country is watching it with eager interest and I have no doubt that you will send your heartiest greetings and your best wishes to the gallant people of Bardoli who are facing jail and confiscation of property without flinching. It is Bardoli versus Britain, as a friend has put it, and all our sympathies go out to the little *taluka* which is challenging the might of an empire.

I have finished. I trust that the words I have uttered will induce you, not so much to agree with me in what I have said, but to provoke you to think of the soundness of such of our beliefs as we may consider fundamental. I should like you to be rebels in thought, critical of everything and accepting nothing which your reason does not accept.

7. Concluding remarks at the Kerala Provincial Conference[1]

It is the fashion sometimes to characterise every session of a conference or Congress as momentous or epoch making. I do not like this and I do not think we have done anything momentous or epoch-making today. As for the resolution on independence, it seems to me that we have got into the habit of getting excited not over matters of practical politics but over merely academical questions. I should personally welcome the day when the Congress has developed strength sufficient to change the creed to one of independence. But our resolution was simply a recommendation to the Calcutta Congress and recommendations do not appeal to me. In my opinion men like Dadabhai Naoroji[2], Surendranath Banerjea[3] and others must be called revolutionaries because they made possible the present political life by their courage and intrepidity in the old days when nobody dared to say anything.

1. Payyanur, 28 May 1928. *The Hindu*, 29 May 1928.
2. (1825-1917); *Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy*, Elphinstone College, Bombay, 1854; Dewan of Baroda, 1873; author of *Poverty and Un British Rule in India*; Member, Bombay Legislative Council, 1885-1887; President of the Congress, 1886, 1893 and 1906; member of the British Parliament 1892-1895; member, Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure, 1896.
3. (1848-1925); joined I.C.S. 1871; dismissed 1874; editor, *Bengalee*, 1879-1919, member, Bengal Legislative Council, 1893-1901 and Central Assembly, 1913-1918; President of the Congress 1895 and 1902; left Congress in 1918 and started the Indian National Liberal Federation; Minister in Bengal, 1921-1923.

8. On the political situation in India[1]

I am quite exhausted and my mind being almost perfectly blank, I have very little idea of what I shall say. I have been asked to speak on the present political situation in India, which is not a healthy subject, so far as I am personally concerned. The present political situation in India, to put it briefly, is that India happens to be under English domination and that there was some talk of achieving freedom.

As a subject nation under a foreign domination, we have been subjected to all sorts of humiliations and the fact remains that the urge to get rid of that domination has not been sufficiently realised by us. In spite of tall talk by politicians, public speeches, resolutions at conferences and editorials in newspapers, the urge for freedom has still to be created. Last year, I had occasion to attend a conference at Brussels. That conference was attended by people of several nationalities, who were struggling for political or social freedom as we in India. There were people from Africa, Mesopotamia, China and other places, and it was exceedingly interesting to study their views. Indians compared very favourably with them as far as intellectual capacity was concerned, but the solid fact remains that Indians have not got anywhere near the same level.

We have in India more of intellectual and philosophical men, who are considering schemes of action and inaction and who deliver heated speeches without any definite action. There is also excitement. But heat and excitement have found their way only into speeches and not in other directions. I referred to the Brussels Conference only to bring home to you the remarkable indifference of some of our leaders. That indifference, I will call a destructive indifference. There were no doubt exceptions, but India is unique with regard to her incapacity for action. It is really an axiom in politics, and it provides an opportunity for the English people to continue to govern India.

If there is really a strong urge in India to get freedom, we can obtain it. The noncooperation movement was for the purpose of creating that urge in India, and it really made that urge in India to a certain extent. Everyone of us realised, as a result of that movement, that we wanted freedom. Every organisation in the country speaks about it,

1. Speech at Calicut, 29 May 1928. *The Hindu*, 30 May 1928.

and it is said that all that is required is unity. Yet we find it extremely difficult to get on smoothly. The feeling for unity is not strong enough to overcome the destructive feeling for disunity. That is one conclusion I draw from the present political situation.

The Indian capitalists are bound hand and foot with British capitalists and Indian industries are undoubtedly run with 90 per cent of British capital and 10 per cent of Indian capital. Protection of Indian industry means protection of British capital. The Indian capitalists dare not offend British capitalists. There is not a single Exchange Bank in India. Almost all banks are English, except one or two. The Imperial Bank and the Exchange Banks can ruin any industry if they wanted, and it will be extremely difficult to resist that power. Indian capitalists occasionally create an agitation and shout for petty things like the ratio but they cannot go against British interests. If we were to analyse we would find that many classes cannot go against the British. Right at the bottom of the social scale, there are workers and labourers in factories. Those mostly interested in the fight for freedom are workers and peasantry and lower middle class intelligentsia. But most of us do not want Swaraj to come suddenly and are not in favour of any kind of revolution. We are also afraid of some changes which might upset our position and we do not want a radical change in our condition.

The noncooperation movement was started, about eight years ago, by the upper intelligentsia in India, who controlled it. There was a mass element in that movement and certainly it made the Congress a strong body. It was powerfully affected by the mass element, but most of the leaders became frightened and agitated. Nonetheless, we did not wholly appreciate that national mass movement. Later on, when the noncooperation movement gradually developed, the control of leaders became less and less, and they suspected the masses from the beginning. Then the liberal leaders kept themselves aloof from it. Thus while the masses became more and more aggressive, the leaders were less and less aggressive in their turn. The divorce between the masses and the leaders brought about the downfall of that movement. If we cannot really create the urge for freedom, while we feel the foreign domination as most humiliating, we cannot attain freedom. We have to define what kind of freedom we want. Many people in England have said that England is not free and that democracy in England is a sham with all kinds of propaganda and irregularities in elections, etc. A reaction has set in there against that so-called democracy. The political and economic ideas of Indians are those of Victorian times, and a generation or two behind the present democratic ideas of England.

The All Parties Conference is making valiant efforts at constitution-

making but I do not attach much importance to it, unless it tends to remove the present feeling of insecurity. We are a timid race. Once India gains freedom, she will draw up any kind of constitution suited to her conditions, regardless of the attempt made by the All Parties Conference of 1928.

The points I place before you will help you to realise the present political situation in India. We want a good deal of emotion and passion in the fight for Swaraj. There is an extraordinary ignorance in India of what is happening in the other parts of the world. Most of us are not in touch with what is happening in other countries for attaining freedom.

9. The Indian struggle[1]

By habit and nature I am not a platform speaker and so I am going to give you more of a talk than an oration on the situation in the country. Politics today in a sense has become a thing of the past. It has become now all-comprehensive. The world is concerned much more with economic events than politics. They in the West talk of social revolution whereas in India we hear of social reform like untouchability etc. In Europe, they talk of Labour and Capitalism, both different aspects of the same thing. It is said that politics has passed away and the problems have entered into the daily life of men. In the olden days kings and dynasties waged against each other and that was pure politics and those events have entirely changed now. In India at the present day, economic and social questions are gradually forcing their way to the front covering a large space in the nation's life. If bread and butter cannot be provided for the masses what use then of talking politics?

We talk of the independence of India and in my opinion no country can think of independence as long as it has to depend for so many things on others. In that sense England is not an independent country, as it depends on others for many things. There is no question of absolute independence. It is not possible for India to really isolate herself and full freedom means only severance from British control. On the other hand, it does not mean no contact at all with Britain. That is left for Indians to choose. That question will arise after freedom has been attained.

1. Address at Palghat, 29 May 1928 *The Hindu*, 30 May 1928

I will stress the point that we have to think internationally and should *not cut ourselves off from the rest of the world.* Each nation should cooperate with the other and should not exploit the other as is done at present. That cooperation must be based on understanding. It is for us to consider those problems and to be clear as to what kind of freedom we are to have, especially when three hundred millions are to share in that freedom.

There is no royal road to Swaraj. The potential strength of India remains a fact and India can become free the moment it decides that way. The question of violence and non-violence is absurd to my mind. The moment violence becomes necessary I will not hesitate to use it, but at present I do not think that violence will lead India to freedom. There is a condition precedent to all these and that is the creation of discipline and we must be prepared to take risks.

The boycott of British goods and the *khaddar* programme is a solid proposition and forms an auxiliary industry to use up wasted time. There are fifty-five lakhs of beggars in the country sponging upon the rich and well to-do and according to a certain calculation five crores of agriculturists are idle for a portion of the year, enough to break the back of any country in the world. *Khadi* is the way to find work for these men. *Khadi* then is a sheer, solid, economic proposition; and in spite of all our best efforts it has not so far secured a nationwide popularity. We should consider that aspect as a weapon against England, as boycott was successfully used by China as a great weapon to hurt Hong Kong which is now reduced to a pitiable condition. The boycott is a weapon which any nation can use against any alien nation. It should be used internationally also. If we boycotted British cloth alone, it would flow into our country through other channels. Hence we must boycott all foreign cloth. The Bombay mill owners refuse to cooperate with us in the campaign and they are competing with *khadi*. That can not help the problem. It is up to us not to cooperate with the mill owners, who now get cooperation both from the government as well as from the people. Therefore we must show the mill owners that it is to their interest to side with Indian nationalism and not with British imperialism. We must carry out the boycott through *khadi* and that way lies the fight for freedom. I appeal to one and all of my listeners to make one little sacrifice by using *khaddar*, carry out the boycott programme *in all vigour and to strengthen the political organisation* in the country, the Indian National Congress.

10. The Landholders and Socialism[1]

Sir,

Some little time ago I noticed a statement in the press, purporting to be signed by 50 zamindars and landholders of the Punjab, challenging some remarks which I had made at the Kerala Provincial Conference. Stress of work prevented me from devoting any time to this statement then but I have now hunted it out from old files of newspapers and read it with care and, may I say, with pleasure. The statement protests against my advocacy of socialism as applied to the land, but I am glad of it, because it shows that the Punjab landholders are at least beginning to think of some of the vital problems of the age. Out of this thought will surely arise some recognition of the unfairness and injustice of our present land laws and the misery they have caused to vast numbers of our countrymen, and this recognition must result in a desire to change them and lessen this misery. I feel confident that many of the landholders in the Punjab and elsewhere in India will then appreciate and commend the way of socialism.

The Punjab landholders are entirely right in pointing out that in their province the average landholder is not a big "landlord or capitalist, but a peasant with small holdings of land, upon which he lives and thrives." They have therefore little to fear from socialism or from the nationalisation of land, and this fear, it seems to me, is largely due to ignorance of what socialism is. My remarks at Kerala were largely directed to the big zamindars and taluqdars, and from their statement it appears that the Punjab landholders are in considerable agreement with me. They admit that it is wrong for an individual or small group to live in luxury on the exploitation of the masses. But they follow this up by imagining that nationalisation of land in the Punjab would result in the exploitation of the vast mass of Punjab landholders "for the comforts of a few, under false expressions of sympathy". What this means I am utterly unable to understand, nor have I any idea as to who these 'few' are likely to be.

What is nationalisation? It means that the ownership of the land vests in the nation or in society as a whole. As a matter of fact I believe it is claimed by the British Government in India that the ownership of land belongs to it. And so it has been stated and argued that

1. Letter to the Editor, 19 July 1928. *The Tribune*, 24 July 1928.

land revenue in India today is in the nature of rent. If this interpretation holds good, then, when the British Government gives way in India to a *democratic Indian Government, it may be presumed that the ownership* of the land will rest in theory with this Indian Government or with the Indian people as a whole. Do the Punjab landholders prefer that ownership of land should rest with an irresponsible British Government or with a responsible Indian Government, which must in the nature of things be largely composed of representatives of the agricultural population? Bardoli has exposed, if exposure was necessary, the strange ways of the British Government in India in enhancing the assessment on land on the reports of irresponsible officers who have no one to control or check them. Is it likely that an Indian Government will behave in this manner and thus anger the agriculturists of India who form the vast majority of the population?

Nationalisation does not necessarily mean the deprivation of the present landholders of their lands. It may mean certain restrictions on the right of alienation and on speculation in land. *It certainly should not* result in depriving peasant proprietors of their lands. But it may be and ought to be, and here the Punjab landholders would appear to agree with me, accompanied by other measures which would prevent an individual or a group from exploiting large number of others and living in luxury on their toil. The big zamindaris and *taluqas* are based on this exploitation. They cannot therefore be tolerated and must go.

In practice therefore the socialisation of land in India would result in the creation of large numbers of peasant holders all over the country, each with a holding which he and his family can cultivate. The produce of this land will be theirs to do what they will. The land will remain in the family, and if the family dependent on the land increases it may even claim more land, subject of course to more land being available. Big holdings necessitating the employment of many outside labourers will not be encouraged, and there will be restrictions on the alienation of land. The change will thus not be such as the Punjab landholders have any reason to fear.

The principal change will be the breaking up of large zamindaris. Only the State, as representing the community, will directly hold some *large areas which will be converted into model farms where experiments* may be carried on *for the benefit of the peasant holders.*

The social injury caused by large zamindaris is well recognised all over the world now and everywhere, quite apart from socialism, efforts have been made to put an end to them. In many countries of Europe and elsewhere these efforts have succeeded. Even in Ireland it was a conservative government of Great Britain, I think, which put an end to the big

landlords but they provided for compensation to be given to them. The question therefore for India to consider is not whether big zamindaris should continue or not. They cannot continue if India is to progress. They are doomed. The only question for us is whether any compensation should be given for them or not. It is possible to give full compensation or part compensation or none at all. Personally I do not see the justice of giving any compensation to people who in the past, without doing any work themselves, profited out of all reason from the work of others. But apart from the justice of the case, I fail to see where we can find the enormous funds that will be necessary to compensate the dispossessed taluqdars and big zamindars.

Socialism is not such a terrible thing as perhaps some of the Punjab landholders imagine. A little study of it will make them change their opinion. Even today living as we do under a capitalist form of government society is being forced, by stress of circumstances, to socialise a host of undertakings. Our railways and post offices and roads and many other things have been nationalised. In England electricity is being socialised by a conservative government. Why not land?

Society is a living organism composed of myriads of human beings. Can it prosper if any part of it is diseased, or if any group of human beings live in misery and starvation? How long will the heart or the brain survive if the limbs of a body are paralysed? If the Punjab landholders and other zamindars will take the larger view, ultimately even the more selfish view, they will realise that their prosperity depends on the prosperity of others and specially the peasants of this country. They will not lose by socialism. And if it appear to them that they are losing something now, it will be more than counterbalanced by a larger and worthier inheritance which they will share with their fellow countrymen.

For ages past the peasantry of India have carried a heavy burden. They have for some generations made the world safe for British imperialism; on their uncomplaining toil a handful of persons have lived in idle luxury; out of their grinding poverty and misery money has been wrung out to build the palaces of Imperial Delhi and for the superficial magnificence of some of our big cities. But even the worm turns and a day will come when they will bear no more. In that struggle the Punjab landholders, who do not believe in the exploitation of the many by the few, will I trust be with them.

Jawaharlal Nehru

11. On the Zamindari Question[1]

Sir,

In your issue of the 14th August Mr. Raghbir Singh has accused me of inconsistency and has sought to point out that what I said at the Kerala Conference is different from what I said in my recent letter which appeared in the *Tribune*. He imagines that I have changed my front altogether and have receded from the position I took up in Kerala. Allow me to assure him that I have done no such thing. I still adhere to everything, I am even more convinced than I was then of the necessity of changing our social structure completely and putting an end to the exploitation of man by man by the nationalisation of the means of production, that is, land and factories, and the means of distribution.

In my reply to the landholders' manifesto I had pointed out what nationalisation in practice would mean so far as the land was concerned. I agree that this would not be complete socialisation of land. That can only come when we have got rid of the "psychology of ages". But a very great step would be taken towards complete socialisation if the big zamindaris were abolished and there were small holdings, each landholder having just enough for his family to look after. This would automatically end a great deal of exploitation. I added that the landholder would not have the power to alienate his land.

Mr. Raghbir Singh accuses me of trying to create a split between the big zamindars and the small landholders. I was not consciously trying to create any such split, but I shall certainly welcome such a cleavage, as it would represent the economic facts of the situation. The split is indeed here, however much we may try to hide it, and the sooner we recognise it the better.

I do not wish to trespass too much on your courtesy or space. The subject is big enough for a treatise and a letter to a newspaper can hardly do justice to it. I would add, however, that Mr. Raghbir Singh has got somewhat mixed up in his ideas of Russia and Communism. I should like to know how he has got hold of the idea that the urban classes in Russia deprived the peasants of their lands. This is the first time I have heard of it and I have taken some trouble to study the Russian situation. It would be an excellent thing if Mr. Raghbir Singh

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Tribune*, 26 August 1928.

paid a visit to Russia and examined rural conditions on the spot. I am sure he would get rid of the "psychology of ages" soon enough then.

I have not said anything about communism in either my speech in Kerala or in my letter. But evidently Mr. Raghbir Singh sees red. I wonder if he knows what communism is. It is a philosophy of life and of the methods to be adopted to attain a certain end. The end is socialism. I have been discussing the end or the aim only, not the philosophy or the methods.

Whether I am injuring the cause of nationalism or not, it is not for me to say. But I am very sure that nationalism minus the nation, or rather minus the vast majority of the people, is something that I do not hanker after. The nation to me is the 95 per cent or 98 per cent or whatever the percentage may be, and not the 2 per cent or 5 per cent consisting of the big zamindars and capitalists and others of their kind.

Jawaharlal Nehru

12. On the alleged letter by M.N. Roy[1]

When this letter was published in the press I could not of course say whether it was genuine or not. I do not know what Mr. Roy's[2] views

1. Lucknow, 1 September 1928. Defence Exhibit 148(5) — Meerut Conspiracy Case Papers. National Archives of India.
   In August 1928, the government released to the press a letter, which M. N. Roy was said to have written on 30 December 1927, urging the C.P.I to affiliate formally with the Comintern and the Workers and Peasants Party with the League against Imperialism and referring to Jawaharlal as the "liaison agent between Moscow and India". The letter was a forgery and Roy denounced it as such.
2. Narendra Nath Bhattacharya (1893-1954); better known as Manabendra Nath Roy, the name he adopted in 1916; founder member of the Jugantar Party in 1914, left India in 1916 and participated in revolutionary movements in Mexico and in European countries; in 1919 founded the Mexican Communist party; one of the founder members of the Communist International, in 1927 went to China as the representative of the Comintern; differed from the Comintern in 1928, returned to India in 1931, was arrested and sentenced to six years' imprisonment; joined Congress for a short period; later founded the Radical Democratic Party and the Indian Federation of Labour, supported the government during the Second World War; after his break with Communism became one of the principal exponents of Radical Humanism.

may be in regard to communist work in India. It struck me as peculiar, however, that this letter which is said to be dated some time in December last should suddenly be given publicity 8 months later. On the face of it the letter contains statements which appeared improbable. The manner and time of publication increased the element of suspicion. The Trades Disputes Bill and the so-called anti-Bolshevik measure coming at about the same time made it clear that the publication was designed to frighten a number of people and thus facilitate passing of the measures. The cablegram I received from Berlin stating that after inquiry it has been found that the letter is a fabrication, justifies the suspicion that it raised. I trust that no one will be deluded by this letter, whether it is genuine or not.

The two new measures introduced by government are objectionable and should be opposed. The trade union movement in India is very young and the Trades Dispute Bill endeavours to weaken and cripple it in its infancy. This cannot be willingly permitted. I am glad to say the Congress Working Committee today has expressed strong opinions against both these measures.

13. Presidential Address at the Delhi Provincial Political Conference[1]

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that he had absolutely nothing to do with the Simon Commission. He had ceased to think of it, much less talk about it.

He divided the Nehru report into three parts, i.e. communal, general, and the controversy between Dominion Status and Independence. Discussing the communal aspect, he asserted that the report not only embodied a carefully thought-out and worked-out scheme, but the decisions incorporated agreements among all the people concerned. The real trouble had been with regard to the questions of Sind, reservation of seats for the majority community in the Punjab and Bengal and joint electorates. All these three points were settled by agreements by the parties concerned. The Sind agreement was

1. Meerut, 13 October 1928. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 October 1928. The speech was delivered in Hindi.

signed not only by the Hindus and Muslims concerned but also by Maulana Shaukat Ali and Shafi Daudi who are now most unaccountably trying to discredit it. Their memories must be short. The Punjab agreement was similarly solved by unanimous agreement among the Punjab delegates, subject to a note by the Sikhs. Why people should carry on an agitation against it, passed his comprehension. But it was obvious that the general feeling in the country was amazingly in favour of the solutions. He hoped that the conference would strongly approve of them and ask for their complete adoption by the country.

Even more than the solution he welcomed the new spirit of compromise at Lucknow. People now realized that the good of the country was inextricably bound up with the good of the whole. That spirit was a certain sign of better times.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru referred to the clause in the fundamental rights guaranteeing a living wage. He approved of it throughout but liked to know how the Nehru Committee and the conference proposed to give effect to it. Where would they get the vast funds necessary? They could get them from the richer classes who were in superfluity of good things in the world. But the report assured them all rights to property and titles. It might be said that increased production would leave more money at their disposal. But under the present circumstances that money would go to the landlords and capitalists. The only possible solution was offered by socialism, i.e. equalization, as far as possible of income and control by the State of means of production and distribution. It followed that there must not be big zamindars and big factories must be owned by the State. That was the only way to ensure a living wage for all. If all vested interests were protected, it was impossible to provide a living wage.

On the Dominion Status versus Independence controversy Pandit Nehru remarked that the tendency of the Nehru Committee was to limit the liberty of action of those who stood for independence and glorify the Nehru Report. Other developments also pointed painfully to the general withdrawal from the position of independence. He specially referred to the recent report that members of the Congress party in the Central Legislature were permitted to sign the Viceroy's book. One could see gradually that the spider's web of imperialism was catching even Congressmen. The whole matter of the constitution was not one for legal quibbles as to whether Dominion Status conceded some amount of freedom or not.

Freedom was not going to be won by nice points made by lawyers. It was to be attained by developing the will for power. We were

up today against imperialism. Did Dominion Status promise us to be relieved from it? It was all very well to say that by getting Dominion Status we should change the composition of the British Empire and imperialism would disappear or decrease. The British Commonwealth of Nations was the strongest exponent of imperialism. We would not demolish it under Dominion Status. He objected also to asking for Dominion Status on the ground that they feared the consequences of independence. This meant that they were accepting Dominion Status under duress. He did not want India to accept anything under compulsion. The right moment for accepting Dominion Status might come after independence had been attained and India was free to choose what she liked best. Moreover, the scheme would not develop a desire for freedom and capacity for sacrifice and, more dangerous still, it would make the people imagine that no sanction was necessary for it.

The question of violence and nonviolence had been debated in this country almost from the religious point of view. Undoubtedly, violence was a bad thing and the chief grievance of the socialists against capitalism was that it developed violence and war.

He declared that they wanted a world as far as possible without wars and violence; but violence, though utterly bad, was preferable to slavery. If India was convinced that she could become free through violence, she would undoubtedly have the right to indulge in it as other countries have done. The modern development of warfare has, however, made organised states terribly powerful. It was impossible to combat the government by violence. In Europe, the main methods of developing sanction and of seizing power were based not on violence but peaceful organisation of workers, peasants and others. That was the only way for India too. Essentially it was noncooperation, although there was difference in details. With organised masses tremendous pressure could be brought on any government which would be compelled to give in. They had an instance of this in Bardoli and the success there showed its efficacy. Such a method, if employed on an all India scale, was bound to result in national victory.

14. Indian States and British India[1]

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that the wording of the resolution was not happy and pointed out that the Nehru Committee report had absolutely nothing to do with the resolution. He held fairly strong and rigid views in regard to all princes. He thought that the days of princes and priests were over throughout the world. The princes were fast disappearing in the different countries of the world and anybody would be a brave man who was prepared to say that this tendency was going to be reversed and that the princes would again appear on the scene. The same process was bound to repeat itself in India also. So far as the Indian princes were concerned, he thought that with a few exceptions they had proved themselves a thoroughly bad lot. The sooner this lot was removed from India, the better it would be for everybody concerned.

Pandit Nehru said that individual nations everywhere wanted to be attached either to a world group or a smaller group and that was why they heard people talking of a World Commonwealth or the British Commonwealth. The tendency was not for nations to remain absolutely independent of one another, but to be interdependent and this was bound to go on until a World Commonwealth came into existence. It was inconceivable that Indian States could remain apart. The relations between them and British India must of necessity be very intimate and they must evolve a common defence force, a common foreign policy, a common fiscal policy and a common economic policy and so forth. They would then find that automatically Indian States would be absorbed into British India. If both Indian India and British India were aiming at responsible government, then the power of Indian princes must be very greatly limited. Either Indian India could be cut off entirely from British India and remain practically an independent nation, or else it must be absorbed, as the resolution put it. They could not conceive of Indian India forming a separate independent nation and the only possible alternative was that Indian States should be absorbed in British India.

1. *The Leader*, 13 October 1928
Speech in a debate at the Allahabad University Union, on the motion 'that in the interests of democracy and the maintenance of individual rights the Indian States should be absorbed into the future Commonwealth of India.'

15. Presidential Address at the U.P. Provincial Conference[1]

For a second time[2] you have done me the honour of making me President of this Provincial Conference. Grateful as I am, I fully realise that I am here today in place of another[3] whom you had wisely chosen and than whom you could have had no better to guide your deliberations here and your activities in the coming year. But to our misfortune, domestic troubles have prevented your chosen President from taking his rightful place in the chair here today and the burden of his work has fallen on me. That burden I shall endeavour to discharge here at this conference but you will surely join with me in the hope that in the course of the year our valiant and great hearted comrade will take his rightful place as the head of the Congress organisation in this province.

Five years ago you chose me President and I ventured to say to you then that the only possible ideal we could work for was the ideal of complete independence. Our conference adopted this ideal and recommended to the National Congress likewise. It is well to remember this in these days of argument and debate about Independence and Dominion Status. The cry of independence is no new cry in India. From the day our country fell under an alien rule, there have always been people who have dreamed of independence, struggled and worked for it and sacrificed their all for it. What was the great struggle of 1857 but a war of independence consecrated by many gallant deeds and heroic sacrifices and also darkened by misdeeds which brought failure in their train. Here in this city of Jhansi the mind dwells lovingly on that chip of a girl[4] who knowing no fear, went out to struggle and die against overwhelming odds for the glory of India and her womanhood.

1. Jhansi, 27 October 1928. *The Leader*, 31 October 1928.
2. For the first Presidential Address to the U.P. Provincial Conference at Varanasi in October 1923, see *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 204-213.
3. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. Jawaharlal had not wanted to preside: "It is absurd my presiding over every provincial conference ... I can only repeat myself again and again." He had also wished to have a free hand to participate in the proceedings. But Vidyarthi could not attend because of his father's illness.
4. Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi (1832-1858); was one of the leaders in Bundelkhand and Central India in the revolt of 1857 and died fighting the next year.

As generation has succeeded generation, there has been no lack of men and women who have refused to bow their heads and bend their knees before the alien ruler. For that disobedience they paid a very heavy price, but the gallant stream went on and increased in volume. Memories are short and we are apt to forget the deeds of the past. But even the present generation in which we live has been full enough of golden and inspiring deeds. Were the young men and old, who faced death and long imprisonment thinking of the mirage of Dominion Status or of full-blooded freedom?

No living nation under alien rule can ever be at peace with its conqueror. For peace means submission and submission means the death of all that is vital in the nation. And India has shown her vitality by the endless sacrifices her sons and daughters have made to free her from alien rule. India cannot be at peace with England till she has attained her freedom. That is the psychological, the fundamental reason for our desiring and working for independence. This freedom cannot come by our becoming partners, even if that were possible, of that imperialist concern which is called the British Empire, and we have realised, or ought to realise, that imperialism and freedom are poles apart. The day England sheds her imperialism, we shall gladly cooperate with her. But do you see any signs of it? Or are you simple enough to imagine that we can reform her from within by first entering her Empire or Commonwealth? England today is the arch-priest of imperialism and perhaps the worst offenders are those of her Labour Party who have the remarkable capacity for combining tall talk about freedom and self-determination with full-blooded imperialism.

It is not England that is our enemy. It is imperialism and where imperialism is, there we cannot willingly remain.

But you do not require arguments from me in favour of independence. You have been the leaders in this movement inside the Congress organisation and you may well take pride in the fact that the lead you gave has been followed by the Congress itself.

We have so far laid stress on political independence. It is now time for you to take the lead again and declare what you mean by independence. We are told by some people that the Congress must not concern itself with matters other than political. But life cannot be divided up into compartments, nor indeed can politics itself ignore the other functions of society. The problem before us is to build a free society and to do that you must consider and seek to change social and economic conditions. What manner of independence is it which results in starvation for many and the exploitation of millions? Independence must necessarily involve freedom from all exploitation and to bring

this about you must attack everything in your society which helps the exploiter. That is also a powerful reason why we cannot be satisfied with Dominion Status, for that is bound to result in giving a dominant position to foreign capital and foreign capital means foreign exploitation.

The problem before us is, therefore, twofold, firstly to chalk out an economic and social programme which will provide freedom for the masses and then to indicate the manner of creating sanctions to enforce our programme.

But before we consider the programme let us be clear about our aims and our general outlook. Most of us talk about serving the masses and relieving their poverty, although we seldom have any but the vaguest of notions as to how to do it. We imagine that with the coming of Swaraj, the masses are bound to benefit. This is partly true no doubt, but it is by no means certain that they will do so. Our very method of referring to the masses betrays that we think ourselves something apart from them. By virtue of our intellect or our material possessions we consider ourselves the natural leaders of the masses. It is "we" and the "masses" and if any conflict arises between the two we naturally attach more importance to our own interests. We are convinced that we are the chosen of the land and on our worthy shoulders has fallen the burden of freeing this country and incidentally of bettering our own position.

This is the way we think consciously or unconsciously. It is the way of hypocrisy. Let us not talk of serving the masses when our principal object is to serve our own class. Therefore in drawing up programmes we must keep the interests of the masses uppermost and sacrifice everything else to them. For it is the masses who really are the nation. On their prosperity depends the prosperity of the country. Not only is it just that our programme must keep the interests of the masses uppermost, but it is highly necessary and expedient from other points of view also. Only thus can we raise the sanction which can enforce their will. But to give effect to that programme we shall have to subordinate ourselves and give the predominant place in our movement to the representatives of the masses. Thus only can we make it a real mass movement. Only those who are themselves interested in an economic change can effectively bring it about. The leadership and effective control of the movement must therefore ultimately pass to those who are most exploited today. They will stumble and fall and make many mistakes but they will have the driving force of economic necessity behind them and this is bound to carry them to victory. Bereft of this driving force, our politics are bound to become, as they have indeed become, a jumble of resolutions and processions and shouting with no

action behind them. Swaraj will not be obtained by scoring lawyer's points or by forensic eloquence.

I have repeatedly stated that to my thinking the only solution for our many ills is socialism. Socialism therefore must be our aim. Some of you may perhaps think, not without reason, that we cannot reach it at one bound and it is necessary to have a lesser immediate programme. It is not easy to draw up this programme at a conference and I would earnestly recommend that this conference should appoint a committee to do it. I shall merely indicate here some important matters which should be considered for inclusion in the conference.

Our social programme must lay down clearly that we cannot tolerate the many disabilities which various classes, called the depressed classes, suffer from. We must do away with these distinctions and try to give full opportunities of growth to everyone. Special provision must be made for freeing our womenfolk from the many burdens and disabilities they suffer from, both legally and otherwise. They should have the same status as men, such relics of barbarism as *purdah* must of course go entirely.

Our economic programme must aim at the removal of all economic inequalities and an equitable distribution of wealth. For the moment we may take the provision of a living wage for a worker and protection from the economic consequences of old age, maternity, etc., as provided for in the All Parties Fundamental Rights, as the basis of our programme. How will the provision be made? Surely not by keeping the economic and social structure of today. To give to the poor and depressed, you must take from the rich and those who possess. We have, therefore, to equalise as far as possible the present distinction of wealth and at the same time to see that the principle of taxation is such as to prevent both great wealth and great poverty. That is to say, that the burden of taxation must be increased on the rich and decreased and even removed entirely from the poor.

We in this province have to face especially the zamindar and kisan problem. To our misfortune we have zamindars everywhere and they have prevented all healthy growth. Compare our province to other provinces like the Punjab and Gujarat, where there are peasant holdings. We have indeed in this province produced in the past and have today great men who do honour to the country. But we have hardly a middle class; we specialise in extremes of wealth and poverty. We must therefore face this problem of landlordism, and if we face it, what can we do with it except to abolish it? There is no half-way house. It is a feudal relic of the past utterly out of keeping with modern conditions.

The abolition of landlordism must, therefore, occupy a prominent

place in our programme and instead of that we should have small holdings ordinarily enough for a family to cultivate. But in order to prevent *accumulations, we must prohibit all alienations of land and all transfers* for debt.

How are we to abolish the big estates? Some advocate confiscation, others full compensation. The latter is on the face of it impossible as we cannot find the enormous amount of money for it. And if we could find the money the burden on the land will continue and the peasant holder will certainly not profit by the change. The only person who will profit will be the zamindar who will be saved all trouble and worry and will get hard cash instead of a varying and troublesome income. Besides, there is no attempt at equalisation of wealth if full compensation is given. The example of other countries shows us that full compensation for land has brought no relief or solution of the problem. In no event therefore can we give full compensation.

Confiscation, on the other hand, though equitably perfectly justifiable, *may lead to many cases of hardships. I would suggest therefore that* some compensation might be given specially in cases of hardships. But compensation should certainly not be given so as to make the receiver of it a wealthy man again.

I would also suggest that the very poor holders of land, who can merely make a living out of it, should be entirely exempted from taxation.

Another problem that we have to face is the indebtedness of the peasantry. These debts must be subject to partial compensation in cases of hardships.

Taxation should be direct and as far as possible indirect taxation should be abolished. Further, this direct taxation should be steeply graduated so as to fall mainly on the larger incomes.

A tax which we have not got in India, though many other countries including England have got it, is an inheritance tax or death duty. This is an eminently just and social tax and should be introduced in India and steeply graduated so as to prevent large inheritance.

India has become sufficiently industrialised for us to pay special attention to the condition of the workers in the factories. Indeed, the history of the past few months with its strikes and lock-outs and shootings is such that no one can ignore industrial labour. Government does not ignore them. They realise far more than do most of our leaders the potential strength of the workers and so with frantic haste they have sought to muzzle and tie up trade unions. They are not troubled to act in this way with our conferences and the like, for they know well that our chief industry is talk, which, specially that of lawyers, is a harmless commodity. The real danger to government comes from the peasantry

and the workers and the industrial workers being more capable of organised action must inevitably take the lead in mass action. We see, therefore, the attempts of government to crush their organisation and prevent organised action. Wherever there is industrial trouble the whole strength of government is always on the side of the big employer, and in addition to having to put up with starvation wages and miserable housing conditions, the workers have to face bullets of the government soldiers and police. But even this repression was not considered enough and we have had the Trades Disputes Bill and the Public Safety Bill. The British Government has done and will do everything in its power to prevent workers from organising themselves. Are you going to take a neutral attitude in the matter and allow the workers to be crushed? Go to Cawnpore and see the terrible conditions of the workers and the houses they live in. Go to the jute regions of Bengal and compare the millions of profit made by British capitalists with the condition of the miserable workers.

Ordinary humanity must induce you to side with the workers. Political prudence will point the same way, for the workers are the most dynamic factor in our society today and if we ignore them we shall find ourselves ignored and put by on a shelf.

Therefore, we must deliberately help the workers to organise themselves; and by workers I do not merely refer to those who do manual labour but all who work by their muscles or their brains. First of all, we have to combat the measures of government which hamper the growth of the workers. We must help trade unions and try to develop factory committees to safeguard the rights of the workers. Our immediate programme must be the enforcement of the 8-hour day and the 44-hour week and the fullest provisions for compensation, insurance and the like. For women and children special provisions must be made, regarding hours of work, the kind of work which is suitable for them and maternity provisions. Healthy and sanitary housing accommodation must be provided by the employers for every employee and a minimum living wage must be fixed. These suggestions are not revolutionary. Even from the capitalist point of view they are recognised to be essential *in order to increase the efficiency of labour.*

These are only some odd suggestions for you to consider. Many others will suggest themselves to you. My present object is to impress you that we can no longer make any progress by the cry of Swaraj only. We must make it clear that we aim at economic and social Swaraj as well as political and for this purpose we must lay down a definite economic and social programme. Only thus can you bring your movement for freedom in touch with reality and make it a dynamic and irresistible

force. This is also the surest way of killing communalism.

Communalism cannot go by pious resolutions or endless talks of unity. If you will examine it, you will find that in essence it is the desire amongst intellectuals for the loaves and fishes of office. It has nothing to do with the masses but the masses are deluded and misled and made to forget their real troubles. If you direct their attention to economic facts which matter, you will automatically turn them away from communalism and pseudo-religious mentality.

We have the curious fact today that some of our prominent politicians talk fondly of independence and yet claim all manner of communal rights and privileges. We are told repeatedly that the heart of the community is sound. I have no doubt that the heart of every community is sound, but this strange mixture of communalism and independence makes me doubt if the heads of those who combine the two are sound. For there is nothing in common between these two and you cannot build up the noble edifice of a free India on the shifting and sandy foundations of communalism. The All Parties Conference has made a number of suggestions on the communal issue. These do not put an end to all communalism but they go a very long way in that direction and should, therefore, be cordially welcomed. Under the circumstances I believe they are the best solution of this problem and I trust this conference will fully endorse them and work for them.

Having defined our ideal, how are we going to achieve it? Every one says that we must have sanctions, but I have noticed a tendency in some of us to believe that if we shout together and shout long enough and do nothing else we shall succeed. Apparently they believe that the British dominion in India will suddenly give way like the walls of Jericho, if the noise we make is loud enough. That is I think the basis of the cry for Dominion Status and that is another reason why I consider Dominion Status as an ideal to lead away from the right path. It makes us think that sanctions are not necessary and that is a dangerous thought. Even a child in politics knows that without strength behind a demand that demand is worthless.

We have, therefore, to devise sanctions. I have already hinted these sanctions can only come from mass organisation and mass action. The nature of that action must be determined at the particular moment but in principle it must be some kind of noncooperation. We may not perhaps adopt all the items of the noncooperation programme of 1921 but we must adopt the spirit of it leading to non-payment of taxes or other forms of mass civil disobedience.

It may be that we may be called upon to help England with our men and treasure in an imperialist war. The Congress has already given us

a lead for this and we must watch with vigilance that we are not exploited again as we were in 1914.

India is not so weak as many people imagine. Our weakness is merely due to our own faint hearts and specially our fear of the masses. If we once get into touch with the masses and work with them, and for them, our strength will become enormous. World forces help us and even India, weak as she is, can make a difference in a crisis.

I have not referred so far to the Simon Commission, for so far as that is concerned I would be speaking to the converted. You will of course have nothing to do with it. That is only an example of the mentality of England and shows us how she wants to treat us. She will have no cooperation with us and she is only there to enforce her will. Why then should we waste our energy in evolving schemes of cooperation with her? Let us develop strength and ultimately the strong will prevail.

The report of the Nehru Committee and the decisions of the All Parties Conference have been discussed threadbare and only a few days ago I had occasion at another provincial conference to deal with them at length. I have already referred to some parts of it, notably the communal recommendations. For the rest, although I disagree with some recommendations, I am prepared to commend it generally subject to the qualification of independence. I recognise fully the value of the report and do not wish by petty criticism to lessen it.

One thing more I refer to and that is the question of the Indian States. We have had recently a very illuminatory address by the Maharaja of Bikaner.[6] Among various revealing statements he has made, perhaps the most revealing is his clear declaration that in case of a future war between India and England, he will wholeheartedly support England against his own country. I do not think you will require any comment from me on this amazing declaration. If the Maharaja had lived in England or France or Germany or the United States or indeed any other country and had made such a declaration, what kind of reception do you think it would have had? The Maharaja is perhaps living mentally in the middle ages and still thinks of the divine right of kings and imagines like the French King of old, *L'etat c'est moi*. But the king who said this is long departed and a republic exists in his country, and in England the king is but a figurehead without the least power. It would be well for our princes and chieftains to remember that the days of kings and princes are past. This leads us to another conclusion. In drawing up programmes of work we must see what classes and groups

6. Ganga Singh (1850-1943), became ruler in 1887 and secured ruling powers in 1898; Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, 1921-26

in the country stand to gain special privileges by the freedom of India and what stand to lose them. Let us be quite clear in our minds about this and having made this distinction let us draw up a programme for the former group. The latter can never be a help to us and in a moment of crisis may turn against us and do us great injury. Any attempt to satisfy them and include them in our programme is imprudent not only on equitable grounds but also from the point of view of expediency.

17. Address at the Champaran District Political Conference[1]

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that in the existing world conditions India could no longer remain an isolated national unit shut within her own boundary, unaffected by the currents of thought in the modern world. Improvements in the methods of communication had considerably eliminated the barriers of time and space and events occurring in one part of the world were bound to influence life and thought in even the remotest corner and therefore there was no escape for India from the onrush of modern thoughts and ideas. It was therefore but right and proper that India should commence to study the newest thoughts and ideas that were revolutionising life in the western countries and thus equip herself for occupying her rightful place in the modern world.

Although the European countries were not fighting like India for political freedom, a fight equally tenacious and desperate was being ruthlessly carried on in those countries for the attainment of economic emancipation, for putting an end to all exploitation by the landlords of the peasants and by capital of labour. Russia had nearly attained her goal. There the organised peasant and labour forces had succeeded in uprooting Tsarism and feudalism, substituting for them a government by the real people. There the principle of 'no work no food' was firmly established, and labour was raised to its rightful position of dignity and sanctity and all parasitical elements in society who had hitherto been exploiting labour and the peasantry were being removed. A man who did not work had no right to the privileges of society. A society was an organic whole, each member of which was required to contribute his own quota to its development and it would be weaker in the proportion in which there were members in it contributing little or nothing towards the production

1. Bettiah, 15 November 1928. *The Searchlight*, 21 November 1928. The speech was delivered in Hindi.

of national wealth. In India the tendency was to ignore this basic principle of the entire system of social law and that was the root cause of the appalling poverty of the vast mass of her population. The number of social parasites was very large in India and the mistaken notion had gained ground that the more idle the person, the greater was the honour and reverence due to him. However good and benevolent a zamindar might temperamentally be from the economic standpoint, he was producing nothing and contributing nothing towards national wealth. This was also the case of the money-lenders, and yet these two classes of people, whose number was by no means inconsiderable, were held in universal esteem throughout India. Besides these two classes, there were other parasites such as *sadhus* and *fakirs* whose number, according to the Census Report, was over 55 lakhs. These people who were living on the labour of others were a regular burden on society, and a perpetual drainage on the national wealth. Over and above this, the cultivators of India had to remain without any productive employment for about 3 or 4 months a year and live on the labour of the remaining nine months. No wonder that with such a heavy burden of the unemployed on her shoulder, the economic backbone of the country had reached almost the point of breaking.

The tragedy of the situation lay in the fact that the people, who themselves were the sufferers, accepted this state of things as a matter of course and even tried to defend the existing inequalities on religious grounds. It was the *Kaliyuga*, they would say, and in this age the state of society could not be otherwise. But there were other countries in the world also and there was no reason why *Kaliyuga* should particularly descend upon India and not on many other countries in the world. The whole conception was based on superstition and the speaker appealed to the people to shake it off and face facts squarely in the face with a view to finding out the true remedy.

What was the remedy? According to the speaker, the true remedy lay in socialism. If India wanted true Swaraj which should be synonymous with simultaneous political and economic emancipation for the masses they must try to establish in India a form of government based on a socialistic conception of the State. All avenues of production, land, factories and channels of distribution must be rescued from the hands of a few individuals or groups and transferred to the possession and control of the nation. This alone was capable of putting a stop to centralisation of wealth, monopoly of production and distribution without which the economic emancipation of the people would for ever remain a dream. Merit must as a matter of course be

rewarded but provision must be made for equal opportunity for all. Theoretical equal opportunity in the existing state of grinding poverty of the mass of the population was nothing better than myth and delusion. The present system could only produce a David Yule[2] on the one hand and the diseased, emaciated, ignorant and starving labourer on the other who in the event of joining a strike out of exasperation would rush headlong to be shot down by the police, while the man who exploited the labours of him and his colleague would die a peaceful death, leaving an inheritance of crores of rupees for his successors. Nothing short of a socialistic state could ensure genuine equal opportunity for all and so long as that was not provided for, the talk of merit getting its proper reward was mere eyewash.

The existence of the present system of disproportionately unequal distribution of wealth gave rise to imperialism which in its turn created the blind race for power among different nations leading ultimately to devastating warfare. And who would pay for this war? Not the capitalists who would bring it about but the same poor people bled white by the exploiting capitalistic agencies. A great world war was likely to come again and this would be more extensive in its magnitude and more devastating in consequences than even the last great war. Considerable progress had been made in the art of destruction and the poor would again be called upon to give their blood. How could this and its repetition be stopped? The only royal road was establishment of socialism all over the world.

Dealing with the question of Swaraj the speaker said that repetition of the word Swaraj over and over again would not bring them any the nearer to it. They must visualise the form of Swaraj they wanted. Monarchy was a discredited system and they could not establish a monarchical state in India. Personally he wanted a constitution which would be based on the socialistic model. But whatever might be its form, it is the people who should have to fight for its attainment. Ostensibly, it might appear to the peasants and the labourers that it was the educated people who wanted and would derive benefit from Swaraj and that they who were concerned only with their zamindars or proprietors did not need it and had nothing to expect from it. This also was a mistaken notion. In fact, persons like him who were not standing in immediate need of food, who might, if they liked, get any lucrative government service, were the persons who did not stand in urgent need of Swaraj The peasants and the labourers, living perpetually on the verge of starvation were just the

2. Sir David Yule (1858 1928), director of Andrew Yule and Company Ltd., a well known British firm in Calcutta.

persons who needed it most and having no immediate concern with government patronage, were the fittest persons to plunge into the battle for freedom. In Russia, freedom was won by the ordinary people, and if India also wanted Swaraj it would be for her peasants and labourers to fight for it.

9

THE CALCUTTA CONGRESS

1. To Shankarlal Banker[1]

Allahabad
13 July 1928

My dear Shankarlal,
I have your letter of 9th inst. I have gone through the enclosures and I am sorry to find that there is some trouble[2] about the *khadi* exhibition to be held in Calcutta this year.

There is no doubt that there is considerable difference in outlook between you and the Calcutta people in charge of the exhibition.

Probably the way I would look at this matter will not be quite the same as that of other members[3] of the Council. I am not opposed to machinery though I do not see the necessity for displaying it in this exhibition. But I am strongly opposed to Indian mill cloth being exhibited.

Could it not be possible for you to have an entirely separate *khadi* exhibition? The Reception Committee might be induced to give you some land and some money and leave you a free hand. I should have thought that this was the best way out. The Bengal people will certainly not convert you to their way of thinking and I doubt that you will convert them for the present at least. It may be possible to bring pressure to bear on them to modify their original programme. But this would only result in friction and dissatisfaction and the local people will become disgruntled and will not help at all. It is better for us to have a free hand and to leave them free to do what they want to.

I am sorry it is a little difficult for me to go to Sabarmati about the 20th of this month. I am going tomorrow to Lucknow and from there I shall proceed to Mussoorie to see my wife. If I go to Ahmedabad I shall have to give up the visit to Mussoorie. Much as I would like

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No 13635.
2. The Calcutta Congress exhibition committee, headed by Bidhan Roy and Subhas Bose, had planned to exhibit a variety of items including machinery and Indian textiles They had also invited all local governments to participate in the exhibition Mahatma Gandhi had disliked any display of Indian textiles and ultimately this was abandoned.
3. The other members included Mahatma Gandhi, Jamnalal Bajaj, C. Rajagopalachari, Vallabhbhai Patel and Rajendra Prasad.

to meet you I am not sure that this particular matter of the exhibition is important enough to make me change my programme. Important it is but you and other members of the Council hardly require my assistance to deal with it. You will therefore I hope excuse me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. On Independence[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru moved the following amendment to Mahatma Gandhi's resolution[2]:

"This Congress adheres to the decision of the Madras Congress declaring complete independence to be the goal of the Indian people and is of opinion that there can be no true freedom till British connection is severed.

This Congress accepts the recommendations of the Nehru Committee as agreed to by the Lucknow All Parties Conference for settlement of communal differences.

This Congress cordially congratulates the Nehru Committee for their labours, patriotism and farsightedness and without prejudice to the resolution of the Congress relating to complete independence, is of opinion that the recommendations of the Nehru Committee are a great step towards political advance and without committing itself to every detail generally approves of them."

It is unbecoming for the Secretary of the Working Committee to challenge a resolution recommended by the Working Committee and certainly it might be considered presumptuous on my part to get up and challenge the resolution moved by Mahatmaji. Notwithstanding, I have felt it incumbent to do so because of the very teaching I have learnt at his feet, because of the lesson he taught me when I had the

1. Discussion at the Subjects Committee meeting of the Congress at Calcutta on 27 December 1928, reported in *The Searchlight*, 30 December 1928
2. Mahatma Gandhi's resolution welcomed the Nehru Report and, while adhering to the resolution on independence passed at the Madras Congress, called on the British Parliament to accept the Report before 31 December 1929. If this were not done, the Congress would organise nonviolent noncooperation.

high privilege to serve under his banner. At the conclusion of his address he advised us not to vote for the resolution because of the personality involved.

This resolution is identical to the one moved and passed at Delhi[3], and although for myself I would have liked to keep the phrase 'British imperialism', I have agreed to delete that with a view to make it identical with the Delhi resolution. It might be further said that the Delhi resolution was a self-contradictory one; there was not so much of mental honesty as there should be about a resolution in this session. The charge is partly justified as all compromise resolutions are like that. We can get rid of that by taking a definite line with the resolution of others; but our political life being what it is, we have very often to tone down our demands and pass the resolution which some of us might not like in its entirety as we want a certain unanimity of opinion to prevail.

I know very well that the Delhi resolution represented a compromise so far as some of us are concerned, giving up many things that we do not like to give up, but we felt it was not right for us to force the issue and have our viewpoints completely adopted by the Congress and thereby spoil the agreement and bring about either a split or a great deal of friction between ourselves. It is because of this that some of us earnestly desired that we should not take up any such position, that we should take up the very minimum. It is from that viewpoint that this resolution was put forward at Delhi and passed with practical unanimity; only one or two persons voted against it.

It seems to be a very unfortunate commentary on the evolution of our public life for the last three months that the resolution passed at Delhi with unanimity should come in the shape of an amendment — an amendment which is not accepted by the mover, nor accepted by the Working Committee which recommended the resolution to the Delhi A.I.C.C. I come before you with this resolution not because it is perfectly self-consistent but because it does offer a fair and just basis for compromise between the two rival schools of thought who represent two entirely different mentalities.

I can assure the House that nothing shall be done on our part which will hinder our working together. We are prepared to give up much.

3. The All Parties Conference Report was taken up by the A I C C. at its meeting in Delhi on 4 5 November 1928 It reiterated the goal of complete independence, endorsed the communal solution of the Nehru Committee, and was of opinion that the proposals of the Nehru Committee were a great step towards political advance and generally approved them, without committing itself to every detail

We are prepared to subordinate our ideas to some extent, but there are one or two things on which we find it impossible to give up whatever the consequences may be. I have understood that in the programme of action as to what is to be done and what is not to be done there should be a compromise and we have to fit ourselves in with other people's reasoning and desire; but I have not heard of compromise about ideals, of giving up an ideal to suit another's fancy. I do submit, whether it be for two years or one year or for a day, giving up of the ideal is a serious thing, which represents that you are pulling down your flag and that is a very serious thing. You are welcome to do it if you want it but you must realise fully the national and international consequences of that and having realised that, if you are prepared to pull down the flag of independence then do so by all means; but then you must give us the liberty to hold on to that flag even though we may be in a minority in the country. This is a vital issue and we feel with regard to it that there can be no compromise. It is a matter with us of the deepest conviction, it is a matter with us of what we think is the honour of the country and I submit it should be a matter with this House and the Congress of the most vital consequence involving the honour of the country.

To say that we cannot accept the report of the Nehru Committee *in part is not wholly correct. So far as action is concerned,* we are prepared, now as in the past, to cooperate in a large measure in giving publicity to the recommendations of the Nehru Report. We have put no impediment in that way; on the contrary, we have helped. But it is one thing to help it and another thing to give up what we cherish most. Without precipitating friction we must remember that the issue will arise as it arose in Ireland, whether you should accept Dominion Status or not.

I am not aware of any such country which under similar circumstances had adopted deliberately and consciously the dominion ideal of government. *I do not see why we should say we want the Dominion type* of government—mind you, it is not offered to us, there is no mention of this on the other side; but by their acts and deeds you can see the insult offered to you when a Commission goes about your country adding insult to injury. Do you think that it is right to haul down the Swaraj flag and to go on talking of Dominion Status? Personally I think, from whatever point of view you look at it, either from the standpoint of national honour or from the point of view of experience, if you accept Dominion Status it would be an extremely wrong and foolish act. You know incidents that have happened in the country which have made you feel that it is impossible to carry on. You know the

death of Lala Lajpat Rai, you know what has happened at Lahore and Lucknow, and you know what insulting threat[1] the Viceroy has issued. After that are you going to say that you have changed your opinion whatever the Viceroy and the like may say? If there was ever any necessity for not pulling down the flag, it should not be drawn down at the present moment when the threats are in the air. After what has happened, what is happening, I think it would be a fatal error if you break the spirit of national resistance, if you turn down the flag of independence. After all it is the programme of action that matters. Words do not carry us very far but certain ideology makes a great deal of difference.

I submit to you honestly that if I have energy to serve the country that energy oozes out of me at the very thought of Dominion Status. I cannot go about spending my energy and strength for Dominion Status. I do submit to you that there are many like me in this country who feel like that. You will find in all India groups of organisations that are springing up full of energy and militant spirit and they promise to attain an early freedom for India. The question is, are you going to help the development of the militant spirit in the country? Are you going to help the development of this revolutionary spirit in the country or are you going to damp it and kill it in trying to bring about a compromise? Certainly it damps my spirit if you talk of Dominion Status and I can only judge others by my standard. The real thing in the world is not so much the question of struggle between India and England, the real conflict is between the two sets of ideals; and the question is, which set of ideals are you going to keep before the country? This is a conflict between imperialism and all that is not imperialism and if you look at it from that point of view, you cannot for one moment think of Dominion Status so long as Great Britain has the empire around her. That is the question before you. Just consider what you mean. By accepting Dominion Status you show to the world that you are prepared to accept the psychology of imperialism and this is a very dangerous thing. For then you talk in terms of the British Empire as it is. For you do not talk about it in terms of the British Com-

1. The Viceroy, Lord Irwin, speaking at the European Association dinner in Calcutta on 17 December 1928, referring to the boycott of Simon Commission had said: "I am sure that all sober minded citizens of India must have witnessed with regret and will condemn the continued attempts to conduct unmannerly and offensive demonstrations against the Commission and their Indian colleagues..... In such circumstances it is the plain duty of government to take whatever steps it deems necessary to prevent the recurrence of these discreditable incidents."

monwealth which is likely to be later on after two or three years. Do you expect the British Empire to suddenly become devoid of imperialism? I say that is not going to happen by accepting Dominion Status, but you say that you are prepared to help their psychology of imperialism.

Remember, what effect it will have on the other empires. The world is divided today between imperialistic and non-imperialistic groups; people do not understand the subtle line of logic about which we have heard so much, telling us that Dominion Status is really independence. People only want to know which group you belong to, whether you belong to the imperialistic group or to the large number of exploited and suffering nations. Today you have received messages of sympathy from Java, Sumatra and other down-trodden countries wishing you success because they feel that you are one of them and because they feel that by declaring for independence you have joined in their struggle against imperialism all over the world. If you pull down the flag of independence and talk of Dominion Status immediately you go back, mentally at any rate, to the fold of that very imperialism and you give up the cause of suffering nations who look forward to you for the success in their movement, not because you are going to Java to help them but because it is well-known in world history for the last hundred years that the greatest obstacle to freedom is the British Empire and the British possession of India. That is the fact which has governed world history for a century and that is the fact which everybody realises today. Therefore to the extent you get rid of this imperialism, to that extent you help these down-trodden countries; and if to gain some internal freedom you adopt the psychology of imperialism and of Dominion Status, you may gain a little certainly but you break the links with these people who are looking to you and are prepared to join with you in the struggle.

I therefore submit to this House that prepared as this House should be for any compromise on any lines it should not be prepared to give up this definite and clear idea of independence for any length of time.

3. On the establishment of Congress agencies abroad[1]

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that he sympathized completely with Mr. Satyamurti in his desire to establish relations with other countries. He had been thinking over this matter for some time past not merely vaguely but with a view to work out a scheme for that purpose, but he felt that it was extraordinarily difficult at the present moment for them to open up regular agencies of this kind. It seemed to him that the opening up of the various branches of the Congress was an easier way of doing things, without having to spend much money over it or doing anything special or spectacular. He thought that in the course of a year these subordinate branches and affiliated committees will spring up wherever Indians are present in considerable numbers in any part of the world so that automatically they would have some kind of agencies to represent their interests. It was quite possible, and personally he would very much have liked to establish two or three centres where they could have definite first class agents. The Working Committee could possibly do that. They could establish an agent, if possible, in Paris, America, Constantinople, Moscow and Tokyo. He had the strongest objection to an agent being kept in London. So far as Nanking and Moscow were concerned, he doubted very much whether they could possibly in the present circumstances send representatives there but Mr. Satyamurti possibly thought of utilising Indians there. He asked if it were not possible for them to form some kind of a committee which could be affiliated to the All India Congress Committee. Of course, there was difficulty in corresponding with these countries. If the Working Committee want to work it out they could do it by forming a foreign department. He hoped that it would be possible for them to send a representative in July next to Paris, where an opportunity would be presented to them to come into contact with labour organisations all over the world. Even if this meant spending some money for that purpose, it would

1. From a report in *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 31 December 1928.
Speech delivered in the Subjects Committee meeting at the Calcutta Congress on S. Satyamurti's resolution that agencies be established abroad on behalf of the Indian National Congress for promoting trade, cultural and political relations between India and foreign countries. Satyamurti later withdrew the resolution.

be a better way of keeping in touch with foreign countries than by embarking on an extensive programme.

4. On Subhas Bose's amendment of Mahatma Gandhi's resolution[1]

President, sisters and brothers,

The resolution[2] of Mahatma Gandhi is before you and what it says must be clear to you. Several amendments have been moved to that. One[3] of them is by Subhas babu. You must have understood that also and compared it with Mahatma Gandhi's resolution. Several people have already spoken on both sides. To oppose Mahatmaji's proposal is not easy. We are passing through a critical period. Let us consider Mahatmaji's resolution completely. The fact is that he is one of our foremost rebels. I would even say that if at any time India had to rise in revolt Mahatma Gandhi would be the first person to lead it.

The question before you is very plain — do you prefer Dominion Status or complete independence? For which are you prepared to fight? I pose a very simple question to our senior leaders. Is there any country in the world where this type of Dominion Status is prevalent? It exists nowhere except in the British Empire. Why then do we hanker after some thing which sounds so strange to us? We all know what independence means. But do we know the implications of Dominion Status? It is meant for those who originally belonged to Britain but established colonies elsewhere. The situation in our country is quite

1. Report of the Proceedings of the Indian National Congress, Calcutta, 1928. Original in Hindi.
2. This stated that, while adhering to the resolution relating to complete independence as passed at Madras Congress, the Congress approved of the constitution drawn up by the All Parties Committee; but in the event of its non-acceptance by the British Parliament on or before 31 December 1929, the Congress would organise nonviolent noncooperation
3. Subhas Bose's amendment was that the Congress did not accept Dominion Status as the basis of the recommended constitution but was of the opinion that the other recommendations contained in the Nehru Committee Report constituted a step towards political advancement and without committing itself to every detail generally approved of them.

different. India can never become their colony. Has any nation ever sacrificed her sons for such a sort of state? Dominion Status can never be liked by any Indian.

You know that the flag of independence was for the first time unfurled at the Madras Congress and there it was resolved that complete independence is our goal. Since then the Nehru Committee has been in session and it has prepared this Nehru Report. We appreciate this report for it has made many points that will benefit our country. But we cannot accept it as our ideal or aim. Having accepted independence as our goal a year earlier, if we now accept this report as our ideal — you can well imagine where we are going!

Our struggle for independence does not concern India alone. This is an international issue. You have received so many messages from abroad; and all of them have emphasised that we should not let our demand of independence be superseded by anything else. None of them has recommended Dominion Status.

The British are not going to concede our demand howsoever low we may pitch it. I do not want you to be emotional. You should seriously consider this problem. Emotions do not solve problems. We have to see how best we can succeed in our mission. If you wish that India be free and our country rid of this slavery as soon as possible, then our goal can only be independence. My personal opinion is that India's aim should be complete independence and she should strive for that. So I support Subhas babu's amendment.

5. On the Calcutta Congress[1]

I am sorry I have no special statement to make. The Congress session did many things of which everybody can approve and some things which some people cannot like. But undoubtedly it was a remarkable session — the very conflicts that arose showed a clash of ideas which means that the Congress is in touch with the realities of the situation. So long as it retains this vital touch it remains a vital body. The Congress and the Working Committee have pointed the way for work to every one according to his liking. Let us, therefore, concentrate on this work and give up arguments and debates for a while.

1. Calcutta, 10 January 1929. *The Searchlight*, 13 January 1929.

10

THE INDEPENDENCE FOR INDIA LEAGUE 1929

1. To Members of the All India Council of the League[1]

Allahabad
January 31st, 1929

Dear friend,

You will remember that at the meeting of the League held in Delhi early in November a constitution was drafted and two sub-committees were appointed. One of these was to draw up a programme for the League. The other was to draw up a list of communal organisations which came under the ban. It was hoped to have meetings of the Council in Calcutta to consider these matters as well as to lay down definite lines for future work. It was also proposed to hold a conference of the League in Calcutta.

You know what happened in Calcutta. Two or three meetings of the Council were held in the early days but they spent all their time in considering what should be done in the Convention and in the Subjects Committee. Later many hurriedly convened meetings of odd members of the League, who could be reached, were held again to consider the proceedings in the Subjects Committee and in the open Congress. We never had time to sit down and think of our programme and future work. We have come away from Calcutta with no definite directions on the subject and I find it difficult to answer enquiries about it.

Even before the Calcutta Congress I found it difficult to get members of the League to take very much interest in the tasks that had been entrusted to them. For instance, the committee to make a list of communal organisations would not do any work in spite of many reminders. Indeed I seldom had a reply from its members. The programme committee was almost equally oblivious of its duty. Ultimately finding no response whatever I circulated a draft programme myself. To this also there was practically no response. Only Dr. B. N. Datta sent me a draft of his own and Shiva Prasad Gupta also wrote briefly on the subject. The other members of the committee, which included all the office-bearers, sent no word of any kind.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 7/1928-29, pp 77-79 N.M.M.L.

It is obvious that no organization, much less a new organization, can carry on work if it has to contend with inertia even in its inner circle of members. I seek your guidance therefore as to what should be done.

It is obviously difficult for the Central Council to meet in the near future. Something can be done by correspondence but this is an unsatisfactory method. One thing that can be done is for provincial committees to meet and draw up their own definite programmes within the lines and principles laid down by the League. There is however one danger in this, that two committees may work on more or less different lines. Another alternative is that the draft programme which I have circulated might be considered as a basis for suggestions by the provincial committees and the members of the Central Council.

We were informed last year of large numbers of members having been enrolled in some provinces. But no membership dues have been sent to our Treasurer. Indeed the expenditure that we have had to face in the central office has largely fallen on individuals here as money was not forthcoming from the provinces.

Our League cannot continue in a state of coma. It must be either a live body or cease to exist. The League came into existence primarily for the ideal of independence but it was clearly felt at the time and repeatedly stated that mere political independence is not enough. In our objectives therefore we deliberately included the reconstruction of Indian society on the basis of social and economic equality. If we are to justify this object we must carry on work in accordance with it.

For this work as well as for other work funds are necessary. The League has already recommended that each member should contribute a percentage of his income. I do not know if any member has done so but no part of it has so far reached our office.

This letter is not likely to prove helpful but the state of our League at present is itself a little chaotic. So this letter is also bound to suffer from want of clarity. I am addressing it to you for your general advice in regard to the future of the League and what action this office should take. On receipt of your reply I shall endeavour to take some definite action.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To A. A. Shaikh[1]

February 13th, 1929

Dear Shaikh,

... There can be no objection to your starting a branch of the Independence for India League in Berlin. The League unfortunately is not very firmly established in India yet. This is not because the idea of independence lacks support but for various other reasons. The resolution passed by the National Congress this year makes it certain that practically the whole of nationalist India will stand for independence by the end of this year.

You can also start a branch of the National Congress in Berlin. This has been done in London and in New York as also in Kobe in Japan. I think it is desirable to have as many such overseas branches as possible. If you wish to start such a branch it is for you to form one provisionally and ask for affiliation. You will probably have to pay an affiliation fee which will not be a very big sum.

Regarding funds I do not think the Congress is likely to send you any money. As you must know they have sanctioned £ 30 monthly already for an Indian Students Advisory Bureau in Berlin. This is a very unusual departure for the Congress and they are not likely to make any further grants for the time being...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F. D. 20/1929 (Pt. I), p. 11, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

3. To N. V. Gangadhar[1]

Allahabad
February 14th, 1929

Dear Dr. Gangadhar,[2]

I have your letter of the 29th January together with stamp for Re. 1/-. I enclose a form for membership of the League which please fill in and return to me.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 16/1929, p. 99, N.M.M.L.
2. Dr. Nadgir Vishwanath Gangadhar, a resident of Hirekerur, Dharwar district.

It is not quite correct to say that I have slackened in my efforts for the Independence for India League. I have many things to attend to and therefore I cannot devote myself wholly to the Independnce League.

As you know the Congress is committed to Independence if Dominion Status is not granted this year. There is no chance of Dominion Status being granted this year. So there will only be one party, that of Independence, left in the country. Nonetheless we should strengthen the Independence for India League.

The constitution of the League is being sent to you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To K. L. Ganguly[1]

March 5th, 1929

My dear Ganguly,

I am glad to hear from you again. I am very sorry about the membership certificates. The Treasurer Shiva Prasad Gupta handed me a bundle in Calcutta and I quite forgot to issue them. I think your lot is in this bundle. I am having the matter seen to.

Owing to various difficulties and other preoccupations the Council of the Independence League did not draw up any programme in Calcutta. I have circularised them but this is an unsatisfactory course. The only thing to do is to have a meeting and it is no easy matter to have an all-India meeting. Meanwhile I am suggesting to all provincial branches to inform me what they propose to do. So far as our province is concerned we are concentrating and issuing leaflets[2] specially dealing with socialistic ideas.

It is obvious that we have a big struggle ahead. I do not know if it is desirable for the Independence League to work on an entirely separate programme in this struggle. When the struggle comes it takes

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G.8/1929 (Pt. II), pp 187 189, N M M L.
2. The Kisan and Swaraj, Misfortunes of the Kisans, Unemployment in India, and Poverty of India and its Cure See *post* Section 14.

place on one or two particular issues and we can well cooperate with others on these issues. Meanwhile we can carry on our work specially amongst the workers and peasants. The Congress resolution in Calcutta was not from our point of view a very satisfactory one. But it has one great advantage. At the end of this year the Congress and Mr. Gandhi are committed to independence as indeed Mr. Gandhi has stated. There is not the least chance of our getting any kind of Dominion Government this year. So next year there will practically be one party, the party of independence.

I am glad you are interesting yourself in a volunteer corps. In this connection I do not see why you should not cooperate with the Hindustani Seva Dal. Subhas Bose is President for this year. But he is taking no interest in the matter and he is keeping the Bengal volunteers aloof from it. I do not at all like this provincial separatism. I am sending you a copy of the constitution and rules of the Dal. Any further information on the subject you can obtain from the Secretary, Dr. Hardikar, Hubli, (Karnatak).

I may go to Calcutta about the 20th of this month.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. To B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya[1]

Allahabad
March 19th, 1929

My dear Dr. Pattabhi,[2]
I am glad to find that you have been elected President of the Andhra branch of the Independence for India League. The League is in a very curious position. I sent a circular letter about this to the members of the Council and to certain others. I do not know if you got it. I

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 7/1928-29, p. 3, N.M.M.L.
2. (1880-1959); physician at Machilipatnam in Andhra, member A.I.C.C. 1916-52, member Working Committee 1929-31, 1934-36, 1938-46, 1948, official candidate for the Congress presidentship but defeated by Subhas Bose 1939, President All India States Peoples' Conference at Karachi, 1936 and Navasari Convention 1938-39 and Working President 1946-48, President of the Congress 1948; Governor of Madhya Pradesh 1952-57.

propose to have a meeting of the Council when the All India Committee meets in Allahabad probably on the 13th May. In the U.P. all we are doing on behalf of our branch of the Independence League is:

(1) to keep the organization going quietly enrolling members without making any special effort in that behalf;

(2) trying to fix upon a social and economic programme;

(3) issuing small leaflets mostly on social and economic matters. This does not in any way conflict with the Congress programme. Of course all of us as Congressmen are working to the best of our ability for the Congress programme.

It passes my comprehension how anyone who believes in independence can talk of accepting office in the provincial councils. I have heard vague rumours to the effect that some people in Madras have been talking in this way. But I do not know anything definite. It is clear that our League must put this kind of thing down.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. To Members of the Central Council and Provincial Organisers and Secretaries of the League[1]

Allahabad
April 10th, 1929

Dear Friend,

The Independence for India League has been in a state of suspended animation for some time past. In some provinces a little work has been done. In others not even this has been done. Partly this is due to the fact that members of the League have been busy helping in Congress reorganisation. Inquiries come from people as to what the League is doing and what it intends to do. It seems to me that it is very necessary for us to clarify the position of the League both in regard to its programme and its present activities. For this purpose a meeting of the Central Council should be held. As the All India Congress Committee meeting is being held on the 24th of May our Central Council might meet a day earlier on the 23rd.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 7/1928-1929, p. 53, N.M.M.L.

The U.P. branch of the League has adopted a certain programme and has recommended this to the All India Council for adoption. I am sending you a copy of this programme for you to consider it and be ready with your suggestions for the next meeting. I shall inform you of the exact time and place of the meeting after consulting the president.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

PROGRAMME OF THE LEAGUE U.P. BRANCH

The U.P. branch of the Independence for India League met at Farrukhabad on March 31st and April Ist to consider the programme of the League. The following tentative programme was adopted and has been recommended to the All India Council of the League:-

The object of the League is to achieve independence for India and to reconstruct Indian society on a basis of social and economic equality. This necessarily implies that the League is out to remove all political, social and economic barriers between various groups or between man and man and man and woman. It means that the League aims at the socialistic democratic state in which every person has the fullest opportunities of development and the state control of the means of production and distribution.

The League must therefore seek to change the present capitalist and feudal basis of society. These changes can only be brought about by developing sanctions to enforce demands and sanctions can be developed only by organisation of those groups and classes which suffer and are exploited most under the existing system. The vast majority of the people fall in those groups. The few that remain are mostly those who are themselves exploiters and whose interest it is to have the present system continue. There are also those groups between these two who cannot be definitely said to belong to either. Among them are many who perform useful functions in society and who can become useful members of our future socialist state.

We must therefore seek to organise all such groups and classes which are necessary for the well being of the society, such as peasants, workers on land, industrial workers, shopkeepers, members of some professions, artisans and craftsmen and unemployed intellectuals. We can have nothing in common with those classes which are by their very nature parasitical on society. There can be no room for these parasites in the future state. While the organisation of all progressive and vital groups

is necessary and should be encouraged, special stress must be laid on peasantry and industrial workers who form the bulk of the population and on whom the burden of exploitation has fallen most heavily. The League will, therefore, help in every way the formation of trade unions and peasants' unions.

The immediate programme is:-

GENERAL:-

(1) Direct taxation as far as possible on a steeply graduated scale. The principles of income tax should be applied to income from land.

(2) Inheritance taxes or death duties also steeply graduated.

(3) Universal, free and compulsory primary education.

(4) Adult suffrage.

(5) Minimum living wage for all workers.

(6) Religion or caste or sect to give no political or economic status.

(7) Excess profit tax.

(8) Panchayats and arbitration boards.

(9) Organisation of people into occupational groups.

INDUSTRIAL:-

(1) State should gradually acquire control of key industries.

(2) Formation of trade unions.

(3) Formation of factory committees of workers.

(4) Eight-hour day and forty four hour week.

(5) Special provision for women workers and young (a) not to be employed in heavy or dangerous trades, (b) maternity provisions, (c) creches.

(6) Right to strike.

(7) Unemployment allowances.

(8) Insurance against sickness and accident.

LAND:-

(1) Land system should be changed so as to remove all intermediaries between the cultivator and the State.

(2) Creation of small holdings usually enough for one family to work in and no right of alienations.

(3) Annulment of agricultural indebtedness, partial compensation being paid.

(4) Formation of producers and consumers cooperative societies

SOCIAL:-

(1) Removal of untouchability and all degrading barriers between man and man.

(2) Abolition of *purdah* for women, equal legal and civic status for men and women.

FURTHER RESOLUTIONS

The League further resolved that in view of the fact that there is little likelihood of the British Parliament accepting the constitution of the All Parties Conference within the year and that the Congress will stand committed to full independence next year, and further in view of the fact that members of the Independence League being also members of the Congress have to work for the Congress programme, the League is of opinion that for the present its activities should be confined to the following:-

(1) Where possible to start branches of the League.

(2) Help in formation of workers' and peasants' unions.

(3) To publish literature in provincial languages and popularise the objects of the League.

(4) To help in strengthening Congress organisation and further its programme.

The League recommended this programme to the All India Council as the basis of work for the present year. The League appointed a propaganda committee and further determined to open a village centre for work among the peasantry.

7. To S. Srinivasa Iyengar[1]

May 8th, 1929

Dear Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar,

You must have received my notice convening a meeting of the Independence for India League Council in Bombay on the 23rd May. I have included in the agenda a consideration of the question of our attitude to the Council elections. I have been reading carefully what you and others in Madras have said in regard to this matter. I have also read the resolution of the Tamil Nad P.C.C.[2] Personally I find myself in total disagreement with the plea for an acceptance of office as ministers or even for supporting others to retain this office. Whatever arguments there may be in favour of this I cannot reconcile it either *with independence or with anything that has a remote resemblance to*

1. AICC File N. 7/1928, p. 69, NMML
2. The Tamil Nadu provincial Congress committee, following the precedent of the Bengal committee, resolved to constitute an election board of its own for Tamil Nadu, and favoured acceptance of office by Congress members.

revolution of any kind. There are obviously marked differences of opinion on this subject. It is therefore desirable that the matter should be considered by our League.

I hope to be in Bombay on the morning of the 22nd. I trust you will also come early.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. To Members of the Central and Provincial Councils of the League[1]

November 15, 1929

Dear Sir,

You are aware that our League has hardly functioned this year. Our Central Council has met once and various provincial Leagues have also held their meetings, but on the whole it may be said that the Independence League has lain in a dormant condition. Without going into past history, the question arises what we should do in the future. It is clear that the need for the League is quite as great today as at any time in the past.

I shall be glad if you will kindly let me have your advice as to what should be done. In particular I would like to have your opinion on the following questions.

1. Should a general meeting of the members of the League be convened some time during the next Congress session? I might mention that it is next to impossible to know who is a member and who is not. I have a register of such members as have paid their subscriptions to this office. I have also some record of members, a percentage of whose subscriptions has been sent to this office. But many provinces have not sent any part of the members' fees and I have no information whatever of their membership.

2. Should a meeting of the Central Council of the League be convened at Lahore? Even the Central Council is a somewhat nebulous body, but most of the members are certainly known. The representatives of some provinces are not known.

1. AICC. File No 7/1928, p 39, NMML

3. What is to be done to provincial Councils which have not sent any part of the members' fees to headquarters in spite of every effort? One province informs us that they had a large membership and promised to send half the membership fees, according to our rules, within a week. It is now over a year since this promise was made and no money has been received. Under these circumstances what is this office to do? Are we to treat such provincial branches as branches of the League or not? How is it possible for this office to draw the line unless some strictness is observed by us in enforcing our rules?

I am sending this letter to the members of the Central Council (such as are now in our office) and to provincial branches. I shall be glad if the latter will confirm who their representatives on the Central Council are and also if they will kindly send me a brief report of any work done by them in the course of the year.

As there is little time left before the Congress an early answer will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. To Members of the Central Council of the League[1]

Allahabad
December 7th, 1929

Dear Sir,

It appears to be the desire of many members of the Council that a meeting of the Council should be held during the Congress week in Lahore. I think this is very desirable. We should definitely decide where we stand and what we propose to do. At the present moment it is not quite clear who is in the Council or who is not. Some provinces have not sent any part of their subscription and it is not known if any has been realised. Intimation has been received that some of these provincial councils are not in existence now and resignations have

1. A I C.C. File No 7/1928, p. 25, N.M.M.L.

also been received from members of the Council. I am however sending this notice to all persons who are likely to be members of the Council.

I suggest that a meeting of the Council be held on the 25th December in the evening in Lajpat Rai Nagar, Lahore. It is difficult to fix a definite place now but members of the Council can easily find it out for themselves by a reference to the A.I.C.C. office in Lahore. They are requested to inform the A.I.C.C. office therefore of their addresses in Lahore. The meeting of the 25th may not be convenient to all members. If so we can adjourn it after some discussion to another time. I trust you will be able to come.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11

LEAGUE AGAINST IMPERIALISM 1929

1. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

...The many messages that were received from outside organisations, thanks to your efforts, were very much appreciated. I may add however no message from the Perhipunan Indonesia reached us. Probably this was suppressed *en route*.

The Congress has passed a resolution calling upon the All India Committee to organise a Foreign Department. I have been asked to take the necessary steps to do this. I should particularly like to have full names and addresses of foreign organizations. I have been asking you to send me these addresses for a long time but you have not done so. I hope you will kindly do so at once.

The Congress also passed a resolution about summoning a Pan-Asiatic Conference in India in 1930. Nobody quite understands what this means, including the mover of this resolution[2]. However it is a fine-sounding name and it was easily passed. I doubt if it is at all possible to hold any such gathering in India.

One resolution of the Congress sent hearty congratulations to the people of China "on their having attained their full and complete freedom." This is of course entirely wrong and some of us opposed the resolution but few people knew the facts and the resolution was passed in spite of our opposition.

I suppose you have learnt that I have been elected President of the All India Trade Union Congress for the year. Also that the Congress has affiliated itself to your League. The year is likely to be a heavy one both from the labour and the political point of view...

1. A I C C. File No. F.D 1(ii) (Pt. III)/1929, p. 173, N M M.L. Extracts.
2. This resolution was moved by S Satyamurti

2. To James Maxton[1]

16 January 1929

Dear Sir,
Your cablegram conveying the fraternal greetings of the League against Imperialism to the National Congress was received by us in Calcutta and was read at the open session of the Congress. Permit me on behalf of the Congress to express our gratitude for your good wishes. The National Congress has come into close touch with the League against Imperialism in the course of the last two years and knows well how valiantly the League is fighting against great odds for the freedom of all oppressed peoples. In this great fight the Congress offers the League its fullest cooperation.

It was humiliating for us to find that your fraternal delegate Mr. Johnston had been arrested by the British Government and was thus unable to take part in our deliberations. You will appreciate from this act of the government how much they dislike the Congress developing contacts with outside organizations and specially with your League The Congress passed a resolution of strong protest against this arrest and deportation.

With fraternal greetings.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-91/1928-29, p. 73, N.M.M.L.

3. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

23 January 1929

My dear Chatto,
I have just received your letter of the 2nd January as well as a copy of your Statutes which were sent with your covering letter dated December

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1(u) (Pt. II)/1929, p. 105, N.M.M.L.

19th. I cannot write to you anything about the latter just yet. I shall go through them and perhaps next week I may have something to say in regard to it.

I think I have already written to you about the Johnston affair. A few days before the Jharia Congress he got an order from the Government of Bengal to leave the country. He sent a reply to that and later came to Jharia. I met him there for a while. He attended and spoke at the first day's session of the Congress. On our way back from the Congress late in the evening he was arrested and taken to Bombay and I take it that he sailed from Bombay. I believe Joshi is writing officially to the Governments of Bengal and Bombay to inquire from them the whereabouts of Johnston.

You must know that the Workers and Peasants Party at their meeting in Calcutta[2] decided not to permit their members to join the Independence for India League. This was not a very wise decision I think. Various other factors too have gone to weaken the League.

I hope you will expedite matters about the Information Bureau and will specially send me its address very soon. I am very keen on showing results.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. 21 December 1928

4. To B. G. Lokhare[1]

28 January 1929

Dear Lokhare,[2]
Thank you for your letter enclosing a copy of the letter you have sent to the League against Imperialism. It will be desirable for Hardikar to try to pick up a little knowledge of French. He cannot learn much I am afraid quickly but anyway he will find it easier to travel about.

1 AICC. File No. G 8/1929 (Pt. II) p 281, NMML.
2 Close associate of Dr N S Hardikar

As regards study if he could read up something about modern socialistic movements in Europe and try to understand what the Second International stands for and what the Third International is aiming at and why they are in conflict with each other he will be able to follow European politics very much better.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. To R. Bridgeman[1]

31 January 1929

My dear Bridgeman,
Your cablegram[2] regarding Afghanistan came yesterday morning. I am issuing it to the press. The Afghan trouble seems likely to last some time and there appear to be infinite possibilities of its developing into something vaster. There is of course strong sympathy in India for Amanullah. Among the Mohamadans there were many whose religious scruples were badly shocked by Amanullah's reforms. But even they are veering round to his side because they feel that the British are against Amanullah.

I hope you and Maxton were none the worse for your enforced detention at Ostend.[3]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC. File No. F.D 22/1929, p 43, NMML.
2. In this cable the British section of the League against Imperialism expressed its sympathy with the progressive elements in Afghanistan and congratulated the Indian people on also showing sympathy.
3. They were detained at Ostend on 14 January 1929 for a day before being allowed to enter Belgium

6. To R. Bridgeman[1]

March 13th, 1929

My dear Bridgeman,
Many thanks for the cutting from the Forward[2] giving your reply to MacDonald's attack upon the League. You may have noticed that the League has come in for a great deal of attention in official circles in India. References have been made to it repeatedly by government spokesmen in the Assembly. It is obvious that the activities of the League reduce the government to a state bordering on panic. They are trying to make out that the League is a purely communist organisation. This of course is bunkum.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C.C. File F.D. 23/1929 30, p. 134, N.M.M.L.
2. *A monthly journal published in Belfast*

7. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

4 April 1929

My dear Chatto,
I received your cable yesterday informing me that you had joined office. I was *glad to learn of it*. For many weeks past I have had no letters at all from your office. Very likely this is due to the kind attention of our government who do not wish us to be corrupted by your influence. It is rather *annoying* but still I do not quite see how we can help these unwarranted attentions.

You will no doubt have read in the papers all about the arrests and the Meerut trial. I am sending you a copy of a letter I have written to Saklatvala as well as a copy of the complaint in the trial. You will find that the League against Imperialism figures prominently as an

1. A I C.C File No. F.D. 1(a)/1929 (Pt. II) p. 96, N M M L

organisation "controlled by and subject to" the Communist International. It is unfortunate that the British Government is so extraordinarily stupid. I hate stupidity in my opponent.

I am glad to know that Nanu[2] is going ahead with the Information Bureau.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. A.C.N. Nambiar (b. 1896); an exile in Germany till 1947; Indian ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany 1955-58.

8. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

April 25th, 1929

...You must be following events in India from the newspapers. You must have seen that a committee has been started to help in the defence in the Meerut trial. This committee includes my father, Ansari and some others. The defence is bound to cost a fair amount of money. The committee has appealed for this money but so far there has not been very great response. I wonder if any help could come to us from organisations in Europe. They need not send very big sums but even moderate sums accompanied by their sympathy would be very welcome. Any such moneys should be sent to me. I might add that the Meerut trial indirectly hits the League against Imperialism. I have already sent you a copy of the complaint in the case. You will find in this that the League is mentioned as one of the bodies subordinate to and controlled by the Communist International and hence a very dangerous organization. It is therefore worthwhile for the League and its associate bodies to take interest in the matter...

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1(a) (Pt. II)/1929, pp. 190-191, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

9. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

May 7th, 1929

My dear Chatto,

I have repeatedly asked you to issue a list of the names and addresses of all organizations affiliated or associated with the League against Imperialism. I do not know why you did not do so. A little pamphlet containing the names and addresses of these organizations and their office bearers as well as the names and addresses of the members of your Executive Council and General Council would be of the greatest help to put people in touch with each other. As you know a strenuous attempt is being made to run down the League against Imperialism. To meet this attack facts are necessary and the best facts are the names of peoples and organizations connected with it. I would beg of you to take this matter in hand immediately. Even if you do not get this printed send me a typed copy immediately.

You will notice that arrests and house searches continue and are being extended to nationalists pure and simple. There is no doubt that this kind of thing will increase.

My own personal difficulties are greatly increased by the illnesses of Krishna and Kamala. Krishna is still in hospital in Calcutta. Probably she will not leave it without being operated upon Kamala has had another attack and it is extraordinarily difficult to leave her even for a short time. As soon as the attack subsides I shall take her to Calcutta. Any number of operations are better than these attacks of severe pain.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC. File No PD 1/1929 30, p. 73, NMML

10. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

Camp Bombay
22 May 1929

My dear Chatto,
In response to your cablegram I am sending you an article for your review.[2] I am afraid this is a scrappy affair hastily dictated. But what more can you expect of me? Somehow I cannot develop the mood for writing I am too worried both in the political sense and the domestic sense. Krishna has just got over her operation and is progressing well. Kamala however presents a more serious case. They are both in hospital in Calcutta where I shall have to go again soon.

Srinivasa Iyengar has been behaving in a most extraordinary manner. He seems to be bent on creating trouble. His latest stunt is the acceptance of office, the ministries. How he can reconcile this with independence and the like passes my comprehension. The irony of it is that even some of the moderates are in favour of refusal of office now.

I am on my way to Bombay to attend meetings of the Independence League and the A.I.C.C. There is likely to be trouble there. You will know of it perhaps before you get this letter.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1(ii) (Pt III)/1929, p. 151, N.M.M.L.
2. See following item.

11. The Coming Crisis in India[1]

If the measure of repression and terrorism that a government indulges in against popular movements in the country, the number of arrests and trials and convictions and round ups and house searches and shootings, is the measure of the strength of those popular movements, then it may be said without doubt that both the nationalist and labour

1. A.I.C.C. File No 1/1929, (Part I) pp 9 13, N.M.M.L.
An article sent to V. Chattopadhyaya on 22 May 1929 for publication in the Anti Imperialist Review.

movements in India have gained in strength tremendously. The last few months have seen a succession of these acts of repression and every day brings news of fresh arrests and house searches and labour troubles. Many prominent leaders of the national and labour movements have been convicted and sentenced. A great conspiracy case, in which also the leaders of both the national and labour movements are involved, is beginning at Meerut; and it appears that several other such conspiracy cases are being prepared by the British Government in India.

It is obvious that this feverish activity of government to repress the forces ranged against it indicates clearly enough that the government is frightened at the strength of these forces and wants to suppress them before they grow strong enough to enforce their will. The state of nerves of the government was well evidenced some days ago at Meerut and elsewhere. On the 9th of May there was practically a state of siege in the city of Meerut. All arrivals at the station were scrutinised and the whole place resembled a military encampment. Evidently the government remembered what had taken place just seventytwo years ago on May 10th, 1857 when a great rising against the British occupation began in Meerut. Evidently the government was in a state of fear lest some repetition of this may take place on its anniversary. There was no talk or hint of this on the popular side but a guilty conscience makes cowards of us all and specially of governments that are based on forcible exploitation of the people.

The situation in India is complicated enough and it is not easy to analyse it in the space of a short article. Some facts however stand out. The national movement, after some years of quiescence and reformist activities in the official-ridden legislatures of the country, was again gathering strength and looking to more effective and direct methods of action. All along the national front there was a very noticeable toning up. Even the moderates and liberals of Indian politics approvingly adopted some of the methods which frightened them some years ago. They talked of boycotts of the Simon Commission and of British goods and cloth and in a large measure cooperated with other more advanced groups to make the boycott of the Simon Commission the great success that it was. In the National Congress the left wing elements gathered strength and reference was continuously made to a programme of direct action involving non payment of taxes.

The movement for complete independence for India also gathered great strength and the Congress a year and a half ago formally adopted independence as its objective. But a fear of the consequences of an open avowal induced many of the leaders to refrain from doing so. The Congress resolution was therefore a great step in the right direction.

At the next Congress held at Calcutta last December, owing to a variety of reasons, strenuous attempts were made to obscure the issue of independence. The resolution adopted at Calcutta was a slight going back on independence. As a matter of fact however that very resolution pledges the Congress not only to independence at the end of this year but also to a definite policy of direct action in order to achieve it.

Another feature of the national movement is the broader and more international vision that is gradually animating it. This is the direct consequence of its association with the League against Imperialism. For the last two years the Congress has passed a war danger resolution in which it has made it clear that it will not help the British Government in any way in any imperialist war that it might undertake. Further, it has made it clear that in case any attempt is made to force India in any such imperialist adventure, the National Congress would advise the people to withdraw all cooperation with government. The Congress at its last session received a large number of messages of greetings from foreign countries and organizations. This was a welcome evidence of foreign contacts that the National Congress is developing. In order to further them the Congress has started a foreign department.

Another very obvious feature of this situation in India is the rapid growth of trade unions and labour movements with a militant outlook. As elsewhere the labour movement has its two wings and there is often conflict between the two. But the repressive policy of government and the intolerable conditions of workers is strengthening the movement at its very basis i.e. in the rank and file. And once the rank and file is imbued with this spirit it will not be possible for any weak leader to betray it. A very illuminating example of the spirit of the rank and file was recently seen in Bombay where there is today the best organised and the strongest labour union, the Girni Kamgar Union in the textile mills of Bombay. In order to crush this Union which had carried out a very successful six months' strike involving over 100,000 workers last year,[2] almost all its prominent workers and leaders were arrested and are now being tried. But in spite of this wholesale removal the Union gathered strength and some weeks ago there was again a conflict between the millowners and the workers on the ground of victimization of union officials and a general strike again involving more than 100,000 workers took place. That strike shows that the strength of the movement lay with the rank and file which had developed a strong feeling of class solidarity and not merely in a handful of leaders. That strike is still continuing in spite of the strong opposition of the millowners and the government and even the moderate leaders of labour.

2. April October 1928

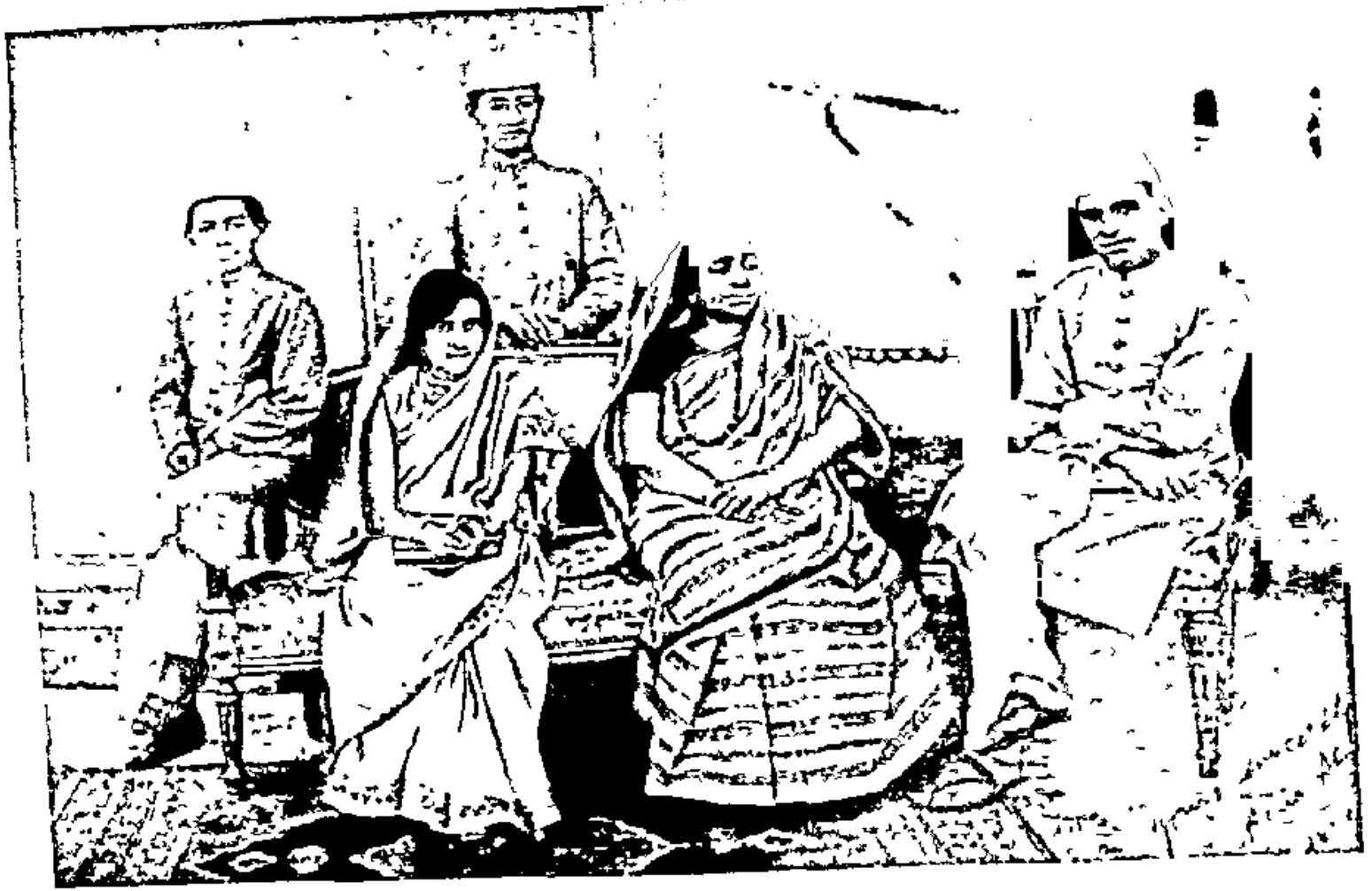

MRS. SAROJINI NAIDU AND OTHERS.

47

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S.N. 13044

PHOTOSTAT OF FIRST PAGE OF LETTER TO MAHATMA GANDHI, 23 JANUARY 1925.

This rapid rise of the labour movement and its gradual rapprochement with the advanced elements in the national movement has exercised and frightened the government. The British rulers realised that the real danger to them came from mass organization. They have therefore taken a number of steps to suppress the rise of labour. Legislation has been passed not only to prevent outsiders from coming into India to work with labour but also to prevent strikes and trade union organization. One of these measures, the Public Safety Bill, was enacted by the Viceroy by executive fiat as it could not be passed in the Legislative Assembly. In addition to these measures a great conspiracy trial is being started at Meerut. The ordinary methods of repressing labour wherever there is a conflict with the big capitalists are of course always in force. The police and the military are always handy to suppress labour.

It is obvious, both from the legislation passed by government and from the difficulty experienced in obtaining passports by Indians to go out of the country and by many foreigners to come into the country, that the government fears all foreign contacts with India and seeks to put an end to them except such as happen to be with British imperialists. The League against Imperialism has become a pet bogey of the government and every effort is being made to run it down as a purely communist organization under the control of Moscow. Many attacks have been made on the League from the official benches in the Legislative Assembly and a similar reference has been made to it in the indictment in the Meerut case. Very probably an attempt will be made in this case to run it down still further and it may be that the government may go to the length of declaring it an illegal organization, association with which in itself constitutes an offence. This would have been done long ago but for the fact that the National Congress was an associate body and recently the All India Trade Union Congress has affiliated itself to it.

It is also probable that, as the situation develops, the British Government can attack directly the leaders of the independence movement and make it a criminal offence to claim independence. From the point of view of those who work for independence nothing could be better because then the straight issue will be before the people. The movement for independence is too widespread and deep-rooted to be suppressed by legal or any other action.

The life of the official legislatures in the country is coming to an end and fresh elections are taking place soon. These elections may cause some friction and trouble in the Congress ranks. Indeed it is already evident that some Congressmen are being greatly attracted to the idea

of accepting ministerial office in these bogus legislatures. The ministers are really ministers of the people in name only. They are bound hand and foot to the British imperialists. But the lure of office is great and some may succumb to it. It is practically certain however that the National Congress will strongly oppose this movement. Indeed the tendency is that the legislatures should again be boycotted or that the old Sinn Fein methods, of getting elected and not attending, be adopted.

All indications point to an approaching crisis. This may come within the next few months. It cannot be delayed much longer than the beginning of next year. In this crisis the advanced elements in the National Congress and left wing of labour will probably cooperate. The centre elements in the Congress may remain neutral for some time but they are likely to be dragged in before long. The right wing elements in the country and in labour will probably side with the British exploiters of the country. Much depends of course on the international situation. But whatever the immediate outcome of the struggle may be it is certain that the British Government cannot crush the nationalist and labour movements of the country.

In this struggle the burden will naturally fall on the people of India. Other peoples, themselves suffering exploitation or foreign domination, cannot be expected to help much. But it is a truism in politics that the fate of India powerfully affects the fate of other countries and no other country or individual who is exploited can afford to be indifferent to what happens in India. India is beginning to realise that her problem is not merely the national problem of gaining political independence but an international problem of ridding the world of exploitation. Naturally her own efforts are largely limited to the national problem but she looks with the deepest interest to other phases of this problem in other countries and, when opportunity offers itself, she will gladly cooperate with these countries. Realising, as she does, that she must rely on her own strength and resources, she hopes that other countries and other peoples will send to her their good wishes in her arduous struggle and will help her whenever an opportunity presents itself.

Owing to passport and other difficulties the National Congress has been unable to send a strong delegation as it would have liked to do, to the Second World Congress of the League against Imperialism. The National Congress will however be represented by a member of its executive committee who is also the Treasurer of the Congress, Mr. Shiva Prasad Gupta. Mr. Gupta carries with him to the World Congress of the League against Imperialism the greetings of the Indian people to the representatives of all the countries and peoples who are oppressed and exploited today. The people of India will watch with great interest

the proceedings of the World Congress and hope that this meeting will result in the strengthening of the League against Imperialism and the formulation of an effective programme for the advancement of the ideals of the League.

12. To Taraknath Das[1]

June 21st, 1929

...I take it that you refer to the League against Imperialism when you say that in your opinion the Indian National Congress should not be affiliated with any organisation with communistic tendencies. I am afraid that the subject is a vast one to be disposed of in a letter. So far as the League is concerned I happen to know a good deal about it having been connected with it right from the very beginning. I believe in it as an organisation which brings together many diverse peoples and movements on the common plank of anti imperialism and I think that the National Congress should certainly associate itself with this movement...

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 20/1929 (Pt. II), p. 75, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

13. To Secretary, League against Imperialism[1]

June 26th, 1929

Dear Comrade,

I gather from the papers that the Second World Congress of the League will be held in Berlin[2] and not in Paris. This letter will probably reach you just before the Congress meets.

The National Congress has already appointed a special delegate Mr. Shiva Prasad Gupta to your World Congress. I trust that he will personally convey to your Congress the greetings and good wishes of the National Congress and will join in your deliberations at this critical juncture. May I also, on behalf of the National Congress of which I

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1(ii) (Pt. I)/1929, p. 1, N.M.M.L.
2. The Congress was in fact held at Frankfurt on 21 July 1929.

have the honour to be the General Secretary, send you a word of g
ing and good cheer. You are doubtless aware that an effort is b
made in India to make it appear that the League against Imperiali
is opposed to the ideas of the National Congress or of free In
I can assure you however that in spite of all this propaganda
National Congress realises the good work that the League has done
appreciates its association with it. On behalf of it therefore I wish
all success in your Congress and hope that your joint labours will re
in hastening the day of liberation of all who are oppressed.

May I personally express my regret at my inability to be present
your second Congress? It was a great privilege for me to have atten
the first Congress at Brussels. I would have liked greatly to be able
attend your second Congress also and renew acquaintance with many
the friends and comrades with whom I had the pleasure of working
Brussels. But circumstances compel me to remain in India and I h
to be content with sending you and through you to our other fri
and comrades my greetings and good wishes.

Yours fraternally
Jawaharlal Ne

14. To Shiva Prasad Gupta[1]

June 27th, 1

My dear Shiva Prasad,

I have not heard from you since your departure to Europe. I am
that you are at present somewhere in Norway admiring the beaut
fjords of that northern country. The very thought of these fjords ma
me long to be there.

I am sending a copy of this letter c/o the League against Imperial
as you may be attending their Congress when this letter reaches Be
You must have heard of course that the Congress is going to be h
in Berlin and not in Paris. I believe it begins on the 20th July
hope you will attend it and make the acquaintance of people fr
various parts of the world. You will of course meet our friend Cha
You will also meet Roger Baldwin from America He is a very
man and I have great regard for him Also Reginald Bridgeman fr

1. AICC. File No F.D 1(a) (Pt 1)/1929, pp 45, NMML.

England. He is one of the very few Englishmen who can view the Indian question minus the English prejudices. He has just failed in getting into Parliament as a Labour member.

The Meerut trial is proceeding here. The prosecution is making every effort to show that the accused are anti nationalists and that the League against Imperialism is an out and out creature of the Communist International. This is incorrect as anyone intimately connected with the League knows. I should like you to find out the true position so that you may know these at first hand. The fact is that although the League has a strong communist element in it, it has an even stronger non-communist element. We have repeatedly at the League Executive Committee meetings discussed this question. It was clear that if the communists wanted to dominate it entirely many others will leave the League and the whole thing would collapse. On the other hand it was equally clear that if the communists left the League there would be no vitality left in it. The whole thing could proceed only on a basis of cooperation between the two groups trying to dominate over the other.

Now that the government here is making a dead set against the League it seems to me all the more incumbent that we should stick by it. I am therefore very glad that you have been formally nominated to represent the National Congress at the World Congress of the League.

Your resignation from the Congress Treasurership was considered in Bombay last month. As there was no other suitable Treasurer in view it was decided not to make any change for the present.

We have got to face a very heavy programme of Congress organization here. The A.I.C.C. has laid down that unless we send a certain proportion of members the committee will be disaffiliated so that there is the chance of the whole of the U.P.P.C.C. being disaffiliated. Last week we had a meeting of the P.C.C. in Lucknow.

Write to me from time to time and let me know what your programme is. When do you propose to come back?

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. To Roger Baldwin[1]

June 27th, 1929

My dear Baldwin,
Two or three days ago I wrote to you to New York. It has just struck me that you will be in Europe when the letter reaches New York. I am therefore sending this to Berlin.

At Dhan Gopal Mukherji's[2] suggestion I have sent you to New York a copy of my little book *Soviet Russia*. I would have sent this much earlier but for the fact that I did not think it was a solid enough book to interest you. It is just a collection of hastily written newspaper articles.

I have just received from a bookseller in London a copy of your *Civil Liberties in Russia*. I ordered it last year and it has taken a mighty long time in coming. I am looking forward to reading it very much. For the present my father has taken possession of it.

I am disappointed at not being able to attend the League Congress where I could meet you again. But the British Government in India is such a handful that one has little leisure to do the many things one wants to do. My thoughts will however be with you and our other friends and I shall hope that the Congress does good work not only in the region of talk but also of solid work.

With greetings and all good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No F.D. 16/1929, p. 15, N.M.M.L.
2. Indian author settled in the United States; author of *My Brother's Face*; first met Jawaharlal in Geneva in 1927.

16. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

August 1st, 1929

My dear Chatto,
You have no doubt been very busy with your Congress. Hence no letter

1. A.I.C.C. File No F.D. 1(a) (Pt. I)/1929, p. 21, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

from you. We have just had a visit from Sarojini. She gave me some news of you and Nanu. She is full of America as you must know.

My wife's health is again giving trouble. I wish the doctors to operate upon her and put an end to this continual pain. It may perhaps be that an operation may take place some time this month. I have been feeling rather seedy for some time past. I do not know what to do. There appear to be no holidays for those engaged in political work in this country. As the year advances more and more work has to be done. I wish I could leave India for a month or two and then come back. It would set me up for a long time. But no such luck...

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17. To Taraknath Das[1]

August 25th, 1929

Dear Mr. Das,

... I think you are incorrect in calling the League against Imperialism a communist organisation. Undoubtedly it has communists and you may even say that its outlook to some extent is communistic. But at the same time it has many non-communists. The National Congress cooperates with it in so far as its activities are anti imperialist. The Congress is prepared to cooperate with any other organisation or state whether it is monarchical, republican or fascist.

About bringing out a German edition of Dr. Sunderland's book I should like to have some idea of the amount required before I can put the matter up before the Congress Working Committee. It is highly unusual, indeed I do not know of a precedent for the Congress to have books published anywhere. I do not personally agree with this policy but there it is. I shall be surprised if the Working Committee undertakes to meet the cost of publishing a German edition of *India in Bondage*. Is it not possible for a German publisher to take it up? Anyhow if I could be given some idea of the amount required I would put the matter up before the Working Committee.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No F.D. 20/1929 (Pt. IV) p. 281, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

18. To Edo Fimmen[1]

November 25th, 1929

My dear Fimmen,

Thank you for your letter of the 31st October. I am very sorry to learn of the condition of the League against Imperialism. Baldwin has also written to me on the subject and the report of our delegate Shiva Prasad Gupta has also come in. It is extraordinarily difficult to do anything by correspondence but I am entirely with you in regard to the suggestion you make. The League will certainly collapse completely if it becomes a purely communist organisation. I propose to write accordingly to them.

I am looking forward to your longer letter that you have promised.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1(ii) (Pt. III)/1929, p. 141, N.M.M.L.

19. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

November 25th, 1929

My dear Chatto,

I do not know if I have previously acknowledged your letter of the 30th October. I have been very much troubled about the League. Reports received from Edo Fimmen and Roger Baldwin have been very unfavourable. You will remember that in the early stages of the League we discussed repeatedly what the position of the communists and non-communists should be in the League. It is clear that the League was not a purely communist organization as you have yourself repeated. It was an organisation which brought together all anti-imperialist elements whether communists or not. It appears however that the non-communist elements have been driven out of the League. This seems to me a very

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1(ii) (Pt. III)/1929, p. 140, N.M.M.L.

unfortunate policy which is bound to end in the collapse of the League. There are many people in the National Congress here as well as in the Trade Union Congress who are taking exception to certain activities of the League and it may not be easy to continue affiliations.

Regarding the National Congress you will remember that it was not affiliated to you but associated with you. This was made quite clear even in the resolution passed by the All India Committee. I wrote to you about it subsequently when you sent me the draft statutes. I do not know what happened later. But I think that this point should be made clear so that it may not be difficult for organisations like the National Congress to be associated with you.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. To Roger Baldwin[1]

November 25th, 1929

My dear Baldwin,
I have just received your letter of the 24th October. I have also just heard from Edo Fimmen and he makes the same complaint as you do regarding the League against Imperialism. He says that it should be made perfectly clear by the non-communists in the League that they can only continue in the League provided they are given a proper place in it. They cannot continue in it if the League becomes a purely communist organisation. I have written to the League headquarters on the subject.

Our bulletins will be sent to you regularly and you will find some reference to political prisoners in them. As a matter of fact the names and lists given there are by no means complete. There is some talk of amnesty here but in spite of this arrests and convictions continue.

1. AICC. File No. F.D. 16/1929, p. 81, NMML.

I was sorry about Maxton. I have yet to know the real reasons why he was expelled[2]. It seems to me that some of our friends have a peculiar knack of doing things the wrong way. I have just learnt that Einstein has resigned from the Honorary Presidentship of the League on the ground of its anti-Zionist policy. I do not know very much about the conflict between Arab and Jew in Palestine but it is certainly a pity to lose Einstein.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Maxton was expelled in September 1929 for failing to prevent the Independent Labour Party's support of the Labour Government's policy in India, Egypt and elsewhere.

1. Statement to the Press[1]

After listening to Mr. Crerar's[2] laboured eloquence[3] for nearly an hour I wondered if he knew what he was talking about. His terrifying picture of the consequences of the beast, called Communism, might well have been taken in its entirety from the *Daily Mail* of London or some other paper of that kind. It is evident Mr. Crerar's knowledge of communism or socialism or any "ism" is of the feeblest kind. He tried to frighten people with dark hints about changing the structure of society. If Mr. Crerar is content with things as they are, he is at liberty to remain in his blissful condition; but others are not content and they propose to continue their efforts to improve society by reconstructing it on a better basis. The whole speech has little of argument or reason about it to show the necessity of the measure.

Mr. Crerar's mock-heroics are most amusing. In tragic tones he said, 'These are the facts. Find the remedy'. The remedy has been indicated often enough and it was indicated last time at the Calcutta Congress. If Mr. Crerar and his colleagues want to cure India of various diseases she suffers from, the only way is to accept that remedy. They are vastly mistaken if they imagine that by passing legislation of the kind indicated they can make their hold secure over India or stop the flow of ideas. If the Government of India is going to proscribe socialism they will have to consider whether they can cooperate with the Socialist Government of England of which there is a possibility within the next few months.

1. New Delhi, 4 February 1929. *The Tribune*, 6 February 1929.
2. Sir James Crerar (1877-1960); joined I.C.S. 1900, Home Secretary to the Government of India 1922-27; Home Member 1927-32.
3. Crerar's speech was an attack on communism as subversive of the social order. He alleged that the communist movement in India was being financed by communist agencies abroad, encouraged by communist emissaries, and affiliated to communist organisations such as the League against Imperialism. He attributed its strength to the youth movement and labour unions which tried to get a grip over strategic points by organising strikes in railways, docks and textile factories.

2. On the Public Safety Bill[1]

I do not know if the second reading of the Public Safety Bill has been passed or not. Even if it has been passed, it cannot mean that the fight against it is at an end. Much has been said about the Bill in the Assembly. It is clear now that the Bill is really an attack on the national movement far more than on one or two odd communists who might come to India. The Bill punishes the intention of a person. The judge of this intention is the Viceroy. It is easy enough to imagine what tremendous power this vague phraseology, dealing with intention and possibilities of what might be, gives to an individual; and that individual is to be guided solely by police reports and the like. It is humanly impossible for the Executive Government not to take advantage of this power to crush anyone they do not like. There is also no doubt that the Bill, if passed, is bound to be followed by a similar attack on Indians.

Reference is frequently made in the Assembly to communism. It is obvious, however, that none of the hon'ble members suffer from the least knowledge of the subject. It would be a good thing if some classes on communism were opened for members of the Assembly, especially for the government benches. They would then be in a better position to consider and vote upon this Bill.

Ten years ago, almost to a day, another Bill was before the predecessor of this Assembly in the same city of Delhi. That Bill was opposed unanimously by the elected members, but by sheer force of an official bloc it was passed. That Bill and its consequences made history in India. The government could not have forgotten all that resulted from the passing of that measure. They passed the Rowlatt Bill despite all opposition, and strange to say this Act itself has never been applied in a single instance. History seems to be repeating itself and nationalist India should be content that it is.

1. Lahore, 7 February 1929 *The Tribune*, 9 February 1929.

3. Speech at Delhi[1]

The arrest[2] of Mahatma Gandhi, a personality who is greatly revered throughout the world, is a great insult to the country and we should not rest until we have given a fit reply to it. History is repeating itself. Exactly ten years ago the foreign bureaucracy had managed to pass the Rowlatt Bill, popularly known as the Black Bill, in the teeth of strong public opposition, which resulted in the proclamation of martial law in the Punjab and shooting of innocent people. On 30th March 1919, Delhi observed complete *hartal* as a protest against Mahatma Gandhi's arrest and Swami Shraddhanand bared his breast before police bayonets in Chandni Chauk.

The government is once again perpetrating the same folly by trying to pass bills like the Public Safety Bill and the Trades Disputes Bill. The more I think over the situation, the happier I feel that we are going to begin freedom's battle once again from the stage where we left it ten years back. The Public Safety Bill is an attack on the liberty of thought, while the Trades Disputes Bill is a blow to liberty of action. I am sure that the government, by repeating such blunders, will soon revive the crisis that was created in 1919 and once again the country will launch the movement of noncooperation.

The arrest of Mahatma Gandhi is no insult to Mahatmaji because he is above all insults, but it is a great insult to the country and the only reply to it is to strengthen the boycott of foreign cloth and British goods and to make huge bonfires all over the country. Let us remember anything which is resented by the government means that it is to our benefit. The boycott of British goods is hitting the British Government on its tenderest part. A nation of shopkeepers cares more for money than for anything else.

The fight is on. Let us march on undaunted. We should make the Congress programme a success by recruitment of Congress members, enrolment of national volunteers and complete boycott of foreign cloth.

The government wants to snatch away the labourers' right of *hartal*, because it realises that peasants and labourers are the greatest force

1. 7 March 1929 *The Hindustan Times*, 9 March 1929.
   This speech was delivered at a mass meeting of Delhi citizens presided over by Rafi Ahmad Kidwai.
2. On 4 March 1929 Mahatma Gandhi was arrested in Calcutta for promoting boycott of foreign cloth, but was released soon after.

today. It knows that the engine of hunger is most powerful and it is impossible to check its progress.

It was Delhi that led the movement of freedom in 1919. Let Delhi lead again and let the message of freedom emanate once again from this capital of India.

4. Statement to the Press[1]

The long shadow of the Public Safety Bill is upon us. While the Honourable Members debate in the Council Chamber, New Delhi, the tentacles of the British administration have spread out over the length and breadth of India and seized many persons — Congressmen, labour leaders, and youth leaguers.

All have been caught in a widely-flung net[2] of the British Government. If this is a foretaste of the Bill, what of it when it is a law of the land to use or misuse as suits the heads of the Criminal Intelligence Department? The attack is primarily directed against the labour movement and the youth leagues. An ex-president of the All India Trade Union Congress[3], the Secretary of the Bengal Federation of Labour[4] and many other responsible leaders of trade unions have been arrested. Youth League offices have been searched everywhere and prominent officials of the League have been arrested. As was expected, the attack was specially directed against the Bombay Youth League and its gallant leader, Mr. Nariman[5], and Secretary, Mr. Yusuf Meherally[6].

1. Issued at Allahabad, 22 March 1929. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 23 March 1929.
2. On 20 March 1929 the British Government arrested a large number of Congress, communist and labour leaders and members of the youth league.
3. D. R. Thengdi, a communist and trade union leader; President All India Trade Union Congress 1925; d. 1933.
4. Kishorilal Ghosh, a lawyer and journalist of Calcutta; prominent trade union leader.
5. K. F. Nariman (1885-1948); a lawyer of Bombay; President of the Bombay Youth League 1928-29; President of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee 1929, Mayor of Bombay 1935, left Congress in 1937 and helped Bose in forming All India Forward Bloc 1939; rejoined Congress after 1947.
6. (1903-1950); started Youth League in Bombay in 1928; played a leading part in youth movement and organised All India Youth Conference in Bombay in 1929; edited monthly journal *Vanguard*, was one of the founders of the Congress Socialist Party and became its General Secretary in 1939; presided over All India Students' Conference, 1941, and was Mayor of Bombay, 1942-43, was arrested several times in connection with the nationalist movement.

My own young comrade in Allahabad, Puran Chand Joshi[7], Secretary Allahabad Youth League, is among the arrested. I do not know if the government imagines it will strike terror in the hearts of those who work for labour or the youth movement by these arrests and searches.

Having the honour of being connected with both labour and youth, I am convinced that it is vastly mistaken. Labour and youth will take up the challenge and will stand by their comrades to the last. Labour and youth defy the government to do their worst. We welcome the conflict because we are sure about the ultimate result. I trust the Congress Committee will give every support to labour and youth movements and I trust youth everywhere will flock to the standard of their league. Let this be their answer to the challenge of government. I hope all members of youth leagues will also concentrate on boycott of foreign cloth and when they go home to their towns and villages during the vacation they will carry messages of boycott with them. The youth of Allahabad have already given a fitting answer to the government. I hope the whole province will follow the example.

7. Organised the U.P. branch of the Communist Party in 1928, convicted in the Meerut Conspiracy Case in 1929 and remained in jail till 1933; General Secretary of the Communist Party of India 1935-48.

5. On the Public Safety Bill[1]

As is usual with Viceroys, Lord Irwin has thought it fit to preach a sermon on the sins of Indian humanity; and to the sermon had been added threats of future action as well as the threat of the immediate enactment of the Public Safety Bill as an ordinance under section 72 of the Government of India Act. Only the day before, the Assembly had passed a resolution in which it had "assured the authorities of its full support in such reasonable steps as may be necessary to prevent the recurrence of such a crime". I am amazed to notice that no voice has been raised against this full-blooded assurance.

1. Speech at Allahabad, 13 April 1929 *The Bombay Chronicle*, 14 April 1929

Every one in India knows what steps the government has taken in the past and is likely to take in the future in the name of law and order. Knowing this, the Assembly rushed in to give this wholly unnecessary assurance and within 24 hours the Assembly was to hear that even if the President[2] rules the Public Safety Bill out of order, the Viceroy in the plenitude of his power would make it a law off his own bat. If assurances were necessary it was for the Viceroy and the government to give them for future good behaviour.

The Viceroy has told us that the reprobation and condemnation of the throwing of the bombs must be unqualified. Evidently he suspected the bonafides of those who had so loudly condemned the bomb-throwers and thought that in their hearts there was not a whole-hearted condemnation. The Viceroy's suspicion may or may not be correct, but I wish to state that, much as many of us may grieve over the incident[3] for reasons which the Viceroy may not appreciate, it is absurd to talk of unqualified condemnation of the young men who did it. No coward could have done it. Only the very brave could do it. Most of us who deeply regret it, do so because we believe that no mass movement can be built upon these acts and, without a mass movement, we feel we cannot create sanctions to enforce our will. Such acts must necessarily divert attention from the larger and more solid movement for which the country is preparing.

Some people with very vivid imaginations have connected the bombs with Moscow. For them everything they do not like comes from Moscow. They do not trouble themselves even to understand the psychology of Moscow. They do not know that Lenin turned his country from terrorism and put his faith in mass organisation. A French newspaper *Le Temps* has also ventured to drag in Moscow, but everybody who knows anything of French politics knows that this paper is intimately in accord with the British Foreign Office. An English newspaper has gone one step further and made the remarkable statement that the Hindustani Seva Dal is the same thing as Hindustan Socialist Republican Army. What the latter is, I do not know; but I do know what the Seva Dal is. It is an open organisation associated with the Congress which has nothing secret about it. I hope however in the

2. Vithalbhai Patel (1870-1933); elder brother of Vallabhbhai Patel; a barrister of the Bombay High Court; member of the Bombay Legislative Council 1914; member of the Legislative Assembly 1923, President of the Legislative Assembly 1925-30.

3. On 8 April 1929, when the Central Assembly was debating the Public Safety Bill, a bomb was thrown inside the House from the visitors' gallery by Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt.

fullness of time when freedom comes it will develop into our national republican army.

Lord Irwin has told us of the naked conflict between two contradictory philosophies; that of physical violence and that of reason and argument and persuasion. On which, may I ask, do Lord Irwin and government base their rule in India? Is the foreign army present here to reason with us sweetly? Are the mercenary Indian armies the embodiment of persuasion? Are the police, the shootings and the brutal assaults, vindictive legal processes? Were the *lathi* blows that fell on Lala Lajpat Rai an attempt to reason with him? Is the C.I.D. meant to help the flow of reason? Are our footsteps dogged wherever we go, our movements watched, our houses searched, our letters opened, and our young men sentenced, to promote the reign of reason? And today the trial[4] of the Meerut 31 and the passage of the Trades Disputes Bill and the Public Safety Bill, the latter over the head of, and in insult of, the President of the Assembly — do they also signify reason and argument?

Lord Irwin should stick to his trade of government by violence and not talk about political philosophies which may raise inconvenient questions for him to answer. Does he deny that the British Government in India is based on, and maintained by, force? How then can he presume to talk of the virtues of nonviolence and of reason and argument? Mahatma Gandhi is justified in condemning violence. This is in accord with his whole philosophy of life and his practice. But Lord Irwin is not so justified. Let Lord Irwin and his government mend their ways and show by their own acts that they believe in reason and argument. Then they may earn the right to condemn others who indulge in violence.

So far as the Congress is concerned it has to choose carefully between the two methods regardless of what the Viceroy may or may not have said. The choice is between organised mass action of the nature of civil disobedience and non-payment of taxes and individual acts of violence. Such individual acts, however brave they may be, cannot help in creating mass action. They in fact retard it. We must therefore concentrate on building up an organisation which can offer effective battle on a mass scale by the withdrawal of cooperation from the British Government.

4. 31 persons were tried for conspiracy at Meerut, later Lester Hutchinson was included among the accused. The case was opened in June 1929 and dragged on for several years until in 1933 the Allahabad High Court on appeal from the special sessions court ended it by acquitting several of the accused and reducing drastically the sentences passed on others.

6. Comments on the Public Safety Bill[1]

Sec. 2 (iii) (a)[2]

"Indirectly" — even theoretical and academic discussions can easily be brought into purview of section.

"Unlawful interference with ownership of property".

This may apply to any advocacy of a change in the economic system. The whole of clause (a) is probably contained in some form in the Penal Code and is thus entirely unnecessary.

Clause (b)[3]

"Or with any object the attainment of which is intended to conduce to that result."

There is no reference to force or violence in this clause and the second part of it makes it so vague that anything which the government dislikes can be brought in. Undoubtedly, passive resistance, civil disobedience, non-payment of taxes, can be brought in. Even far milder things may be considered by government to be intended to conduce to the ultimate subversion of the government established by law. There is no question of communism here. It is a direct attack on every form of direct action and indeed every strong action.

Sec. 2 (iii) (c)[4]

This clause is so wide that it can be made to apply to every member of the National Congress and the Trade Union Congress. Both of

1. 5 July 1929. A.I.C.C. File No. 6/1929, pp. 35-39, N.M.M.L.
2. (iii) "Person to whom this Act applies means any person who —
(a) directly or indirectly advocates the overthrow by force or violence of the government established by law in British India, or the unlawful destruction of property, or unlawful interference with the ownership of property."
3. "seeks to foment or utilise industrial or agrarian disputes or other disputes of a like nature with the direct object of subverting organised government in British India or with any object the attainment of which is intended to conduce to that result."
4. Sec. 2 (iii) (c) refers to a person who "is a member of, or is acting in association with any society or organisation, whether in British India or elsewhere, which advocates or encourages any such doctrine or activity as is described in sub-clause (a) or sub-clause (b) of this clause, or which is affiliated to or connected with, any such society or organisation."

these organizations are associated with the League against Imperialism and the government has merely to declare that the League is an organisation of the kind meant in the Act and automatically the Congress becomes a suspect body. Members of the British or American or other outside branches of the Congress, if they are not Indian British subjects will come within the purview of the Act.

Sec. 3 (i)[5]

All that is necessary is for the Governor-General in Council to be satisfied.

Sec. 4[6]

Clause (a) refers to monies sent from outside to British India but clause (b) refers to money in British India. All that has to be shown is that the money is intended to be applied in accordance with any directions given from outside India. If for instance it is shown that the League against Imperialism wants us to boycott foreign cloth or the Simon Commission and we propose to spend money on these boycotts, then immediately the Congress funds become liable to be confiscated.

The provision for appeals etc. is ridiculous.

The High Court can only set aside an order on ground that person is an "excepted person" and "on no other ground." Thus the High Court only considers trivial matters of residence etc.

The bench of 3 will be nominated by government itself. It will be shown secret documents etc. by government. The accused cannot see them. He will only be given a general idea of the case against him. It will be difficult for him to defend himself against secret accusations.

5. "If the Governor-General in Council is satisfied that any person is a person to whom this Act applies, he may by order in writing, direct such person to remove himself from British India within such time or in such manner and by such route and means as may be specified in the order and not to return thereto without the permission in writing of the Governor-General in Council."
6. "If the Governor General in Council has reason to believe —
(a) that any moneys, securities, goods or credits have been or are about to be transmitted from any place outside British India by or on behalf of any such person as is described in sub clause (a), sub clause (b) or sub clause (c) of clause (iii) of Section 2 or by or on behalf of any society or organisation such as is described in sub clause (c) or that clause."
(b) that any moneys, securities, goods or credits or the sale proceeds of any securities or goods, are intended to be applied in British India in accordance with any directions or instructions given from outside British India by any such person, society or organisation as aforesaid."

A disobedience of the order to remove oneself makes one liable to be arrested without warrant and punished with imprisonment for a year. Disobedience constitutes in doing nothing but remaining where one is.

Section 15, Clause 3[7]. Indemnification clause.

It is clear that under this Act a great deal can be done and if it is passed will be done which will be against law and equity. Such a clause thus is very necessary to protect these high-handed proceedings.

In the statement of objects and reasons stress is laid on the activities of the Communist International and upon their ultimate object of *destroying by violence both the government established by law* and the present economic organisation of society.

The bill itself does not refer to communism, as such its language is very wide. The whole bill applies not to acts but to intentions and the Governor-General in Council is the judge of the intention. This is dangerous enough at any time and in any country to make the Executive Government the judge of what is in the mind of those opposed to it. It is far more dangerous in India where there is a foreign government.

Crerar laid stress on activities for changing the present basis of society and private ownership. All legislation is meant to affect in some degree or other the basis of society e.g. death duties and inheritance which affects private property. By playing with the exchange the government can and does virtually confiscate enormous sums belonging to private owners. It is therefore ridiculous to talk about interfering with the ownership of property.

It may however be said that this does not touch the present basis of property. The structure remains. If the principal industries and lands were socialised this undoubtedly would change the basis. Is the bill aimed at preventing the spread of socialistic ideas? Socialism stands for cooperation and to bring this about state control, the advocacy of national control of a number of industries, such as coal or iron, would certainly interfere with the ownership of private property.

At one time many roads and bridges were private property and people had to pay toll in order to pass over them. Subsequently they were made state property. This process of socialisation has gone on all along the line and according to many people is bound to go on till the entire state is socialised and run on a more rational basis.

Crerar referred to all the industrial troubles and strikes in past years and seemed to imagine that one or two foreigners were at the bottom

7. Section 15 (3) "No prosecution or other legal proceeding whatsoever shall lie against any person in respect of anything in good faith done or intended to be done under this Act."

of all these troubles. A more ridiculous statement is difficult to imagine. Mr. Crerar must either be himself a very credulous person or must imagine that the House is very credulous to make a statement which every schoolboy knows is silly. All the resources of money, propaganda and the like are on the side of government and, in the case of labour disputes, on the side of the employers. To talk of one or two outsiders creating all the trouble in labour circles is to blind oneself to the facts of the situation which are that there is a great economic distress and until a radical cure is found for it it is sure to try to seek a cure by means of strikes and the like. A strike is always unfortunate and deplorable just as a fever is unfortunate and deplorable but it is no good cursing the fever. The wise man treats it and tries to remove the causes of it. Mr. Crerar apparently prefers the old methods of treating fevers and distempers of the body politic by the method of driving out and exorcising the demons by incantations and curses. Mr. Crerar and his government may live in the middle ages and believe in these methods. But even backward India has outgrown those times and these methods.

If socialism or communism are bad they have to be met in the open, discussed and defeated in argument. To try to suppress them forcibly is a method which is bound to fail because ideas are never suppressed in this way. What the government is entitled to do is to suppress the violent activities. No government should go beyond this and suppress ideas.

To describe the League against Imperialism as a purely communist body is entirely wrong. It is an organization which includes within its fold both communists and non-communists, both labour groups and nationalist groups. The Indian National Congress is an associate body. Is the Congress a communist organization? The various national groups in Asia and Africa and America affiliated to it, are they all communist in inspiration and working? The secretaries of the League at present may be communists. But the President, James Maxton, who is also the Chairman of the Independent Labour Party of England, and a majority of the members of the Executive Committee are not communists. Certainly the League contains people who are not afraid to cooperate with communists where their interests are alike. But they cooperate on their own terms, not the terms of the communists. Why do they so cooperate? Because they find that there is a great deal in common, in so far as the fight for national freedom and against the imperialist idea is concerned, between the two. We are prepared to cooperate with anybody but the terms shall be of our choosing. We have in the past in a large measure cooperated with the British Government in India. We cooperate with it in spite of our belief that it

has done and is doing tremendous injuries to India. If we have cooperated with them in the past and in the present, there is no one with whom we cannot cooperate. Certainly we can cooperate in many matters with the communists where their paths and ours overlap. Where they do not overlap we shall not only not cooperate with them but resist them. Having had enough experience of cooperation with foreigners who have taken possession of our country and who retain it despite the declared will of the people Mr. Crerar may rest assured that we propose to take no further risks in the future with any other foreigner.

13

THE MEERUT CONSPIRACY CASE

1. To M. K. Basu[1]

22 March 1929

Dear Mr. Basu,[2]
I have your telegram. It is very difficult for me to take any effective steps from here. As a matter of fact the offences for which people have been arrested are non-bailable. Besides so many have been arrested that I do not see what arrangements could be made for bailing the lot of them. I think what is much more important is for some arrangements to be made for the preliminary stages of the investigation e.g. identification etc. Unfortunately I am not very much in touch with people in Meerut. Meerut lies in the Delhi Province so far as the Congress is concerned. I am writing to friends in Delhi and Meerut to do what they can but they are likely to be overwhelmed by the number of people requiring assistance. I think that it would be desirable for you to send someone to Meerut to find out what can be done and make necessary arrangements.

I am going to Calcutta day after tomorrow and shall spend the 25th and part of the 26th there. I shall be glad to see you. I hope to stay with Subhas Babu.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1929 (Pt. II) 315, N.M.M.L.
2. Mrinal Kanti Basu (1886-1957); a journalist and trade union leader of Bengal, president of the Press Workers' Union 1922-48, All India Trade Union Federation 1923, Bengal Trade Union Congress 1932, National Trade Union Federation 1933-40 and All India Trade Union Congress 1946.

2. To R. Bridgeman[1]

4 April 1929

My dear Bridgeman,
I owe you an apology for the delay in answering your cablegram. This was partly due to the fact that we were ourselves waiting for developments and partly to the fact that I was continuously travelling about. *I have today sent a cable to Saklatvala giving him some particulars of* the indictment. I have also sent you a short cable informing you that I have telegraphed to Saklatvala. It would have been an unnecessary expense for me to cable to you in full.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter I am sending to Saklatvala. This will put you in possession of the facts as we know them.

The President of the Assembly here has put the government in an awkward dilemma[2] and I do not know what will be the outcome of it. It may be that the Public Safety Bill will be postponed. I take it that the trial at Meerut will go on.

Your suggestion that we should appeal to the Trade Union Congress in England was forwarded by me to Joshi, the General Secretary of the All India Trade Union Congress. I recommended to him to take the step suggested by you. I do not know what he has done in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F. D. 23/1929-1930, p. 133, N.M.M.L.
2. Vithalbhai Patel refused to permit the Public Safety Bill to be introduced again in the Assembly after it had been earlier rejected and the Viceroy had no alternative but to issue an Ordinance.

3. To S. Srinivasa Iyengar[1]

4 April 1929

My dear Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar,
I enclose copy of a letter I am sending to father. You are well conversant with the situation in England and I am sure any lead given by you will be appreciated by the people.

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

The other day I had a message from some of the undertrial prisoners in Meerut. They asked me to try my best to induce you to take up their defence. I promised to communicate their wish to you. I have seen in the papers that a kind of defence committee has been formed but I do not know anything about it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To B. N. Datta[1]

Allahabad
4 April 1929

Dear Dr. Datta,
I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of the 21st March but owing to my absence from Allahabad I only saw it yesterday. The question of the defence of the persons arrested in the Meerut case has already been discussed and I believe a defence committee has been chosen. I am told that it is possible to get a number of really competent lawyers to help us in an advisory capacity. But it is very difficult to get a competent man for the trial. It is likely to last months and months and may be a year. However such arrangements as can be made will be made.

The National Congress and the Trade Union Congress will probably not officially undertake the defence of the accused. This is too great a financial liability for any organisation to take up. It is also partly inexpedient for organisations to interfere in this way. The right thing to do is for Congressmen as well as Trade Union people to cooperate as an independent committee in the defence. The Trade Union Executive will be meeting soon in Bombay and will consider this.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

5. To Father[1]

Allahabad
24.4.29

My dear Father,

... Nan tells me that you have asked Ranjit to go to Meerut. I have not met him yet and do not know the details. In Calcutta I discussed the Meerut case with various people. As I have already told you the Bengali prisoners in Meerut had suggested Abbil Dutt.[2] I found however that everyone I consulted in Calcutta was against this suggestion. They said Abbil Dutt was not smart enough. Sudhir Ray[3] suggested B. C. Chatterji[4] or Nishit Sen.[5] Both these gentlemen are expensive. Nishit Sen would want about Rs. 6000 a month and Chatterji a little more. Sen-Gupta recommended Nishit Sen strongly and as his junior A. C. Mukerji[6]. He thought that A. C. Mukerji could be put in charge of the preliminary enquiry and Nishit Sen to come in for the trial and also for consultation now.

Sarat Bose[7] was strongly opposed to Nishit Sen. Not so much perhaps because of his competence but because he considered him thoroughly unreliable. He recommended A. C. Mukerji for the case — the man Sen-Gupta suggested for the inquiry. A.C. Mukerji would want I was told 3000/- p.m. but he might be beaten down to Rs. 2000/- p.m.

I do not know what arrangements you have in view but I am writing these details of conversations in Calcutta so that you might be kept informed. As a matter of fact the Bombay labour people are likely to supply most of the funds and their views will carry more weight than those of the Calcutta people.

1. M.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. An advocate of Calcutta
3. A barrister of Calcutta.
4. A barrister specialising on the criminal side in Bengal.
5. An eminent criminal lawyer of Calcutta.
6. A pleader in police courts who subsequently became a barrister.
7. Sarat Chandra Bose (1889 1950); elder brother of Subhas Bose and a leading barrister of Calcutta, detained during the civil disobedience movement (February 1932 July 1935) and again during the Second World War (December 1941-September 1945); for sometime President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and member of the Congress Working Committee; leader of the Opposition in the Bengal Assembly 1937 1945, elected to the Central Assembly in 1946; member of the Interim National Government of India, September November 1946.

I understand that you have asked for Ramji Gurtu[8] also. I do not know if it will be worthwhile sending for many juniors from outside specially if you have to pay them. If juniors have to be sent for would it not be better to get men like the one from Bihar who has offered his services for a small allowance to maintain his family?

Your loving son,
Jawahar

8. Ram Narain Gurtu, a barrister of Allahabad, judge of the Allahabad High Court; at present adviser, Anand Bhawan, Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund.

6. To R. Bridgeman[1]

25 April 1929

My dear Bridgeman,
A few days ago I received your cable referring to an air mail enquiry dated March 28th which you had apparently sent us. No such communication has been received by us. I can only presume that it has been suppressed by the authorities. I am therefore in the dark as to what this enquiry was about. I have already sent Saklatvala by post a copy of the indictment in the case and have supplemented this with such other facts as we had in our possession. If there is anything more that you want to know I shall gladly supply the information. The procedure in such cases is that a preliminary magisterial enquiry is held and if a *prima facie* case is established the people concerned are committed to the sessions where their proper trial takes place. So far not even the preliminary enquiry has begun although it is now over a month since the arrests took place. Every two weeks the police take a fresh remand on the ground that they have got hold of such a mass of papers that they want time to go through them. It is a curious reason and it leads one to think that the original evidence in the possession of the police was extraordinarily feeble and they are now trying to supplement it by searches on houses. Even so a month has not sufficed to prepare them for the enquiry.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F. D. 23/1929 1930, pp 120-23, N.M.M.L.

The magistrate who has so far remanded the case has given expression to some extraordinary opinions and sentiments. He has so far not taken the trouble to inform anyone, either the prisoners or their counsel, that the police are going to move for a remand. He has simply walked into the jail in the early hours of the morning and given a further remand to the police. Some bail applications had been presented to him. That he has rejected them is not very surprising but his principal reason for doing so is really remarkable. In adopting the police argument he says that the mere fact that such a prosecution has been launched by the Government of India shows that the accused are in all likelihood guilty. You can imagine what one can expect from a trial presided over by a magistrate of this kind. I believe an application has been made to the Viceroy on behalf of the accused to transfer the case to one of the High Courts, either Calcutta or Bombay. I notice that Saklatvala has been putting some questions on this subject in the House. There is little likelihood of the transfer taking place. Under the law European British subjects have a right to demand a trial by jury which Indians cannot demand. Bradley[2] and Spratt[3] therefore have this right and they may exercise it.

As you must have seen from the copy of the indictment, the League against Imperialism has been made a special target by the authorities here. I trust therefore that the League and its associate bodies will help us not only financially for the defence but chiefly in mobilising support elsewhere. The matter is however an even bigger one and concerns not merely the left wing organisations but all labour organisations. I hope therefore that you will be able as you say in your cable to get British Labour to support Indian labour at this crisis. The Meerut trial taken together with the Trades Disputes Act and the Public Safety Ordinance passed by the Viceroy over the head of the President of the Assembly all indicate an attack on trade union organisations and labour. If these attacks are allowed to pass unchallenged there will be little of labour organisation left in India.

I have not been able to adopt your suggestion to appeal directly to the British Trade Union Congress. I suggested it to Joshi, Secretary of the All India T.U.C. But Joshi hesitated and wanted us to wait till our Executive Council considered the matter. The Executive Council is meeting day after tomorrow in Bombay.

2. *Benjamin Bradley, a British communist who arrived in India in September 1927.*
3. Philip Spratt, a British communist who arrived in India in December 1926 and was in jail with a short interruption from 1929 to 1936, in later years he moved away from communism

A defence committee for the Meerut accused has been formed. This committee consists of some leading members of the National Congress like my father, Srinivasa Iyengar, Ansari and others. They have appealed for funds but the response so far has been poor. Other local defence committees for raising funds have also been formed, specially in Bombay.

During the last fortnight I have been very much troubled by my sister's and wife's illness. They both managed to fall ill together and both were suspected of having appendicitis. Fortunately they are better now.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To Father[1]

Allahabad
1 May 1929

My dear Father,
As you have written to Ranjit, there seems to be a hopeless muddle about this case. People come and go, make statements, give interviews, issue manifestoes and nobody seems to be any the better for their activities. From time to time the press correspondents at Meerut issue foolish accounts of what is happening or not happening and this makes the confusion worse confounded. Many people may be to blame for this but I do think that the Central Defence Committee must shoulder its share of the blame. It has so far given no lead in the matter. Practically all that has been done is the appeal for funds in the press.

The committee has various difficulties to face—lack of funds etc. But whatever these may be some decision should be arrived at for the preliminary stages at any rate. This decision may be varied later on but it will at any rate serve the useful purpose of lessening the element of irresponsibility. Few people know the names of the members of the Central Committee, and I do not think anybody has been appointed its secretary yet.

I have already written to you what people in Calcutta said. They suggested three names: B. C. Chatterji at about 6000/- a month; Nishit Sen at about 4000/- or so; and a junior criminal lawyer A. C.

1. M N. Correspondence, N M M L.

Mukerji at 3000/- or may be 2000/- per month. Most people recommended Nishit Sen but Sarat Bose was strongly opposed to him. A. C. Mukerji was recommended by several but it was suggested that he should have a senior specially at the trial. For the preliminary enquiry he might be good enough.

In Bombay no special names were mentioned to me. Deshmukh, a fairly senior barrister of Nagpur, the brother of the Bombay surgeon, has been asked by some people if he will consent to go but his answer bad not been received. It was presumed by some that he might agree to take up the case without any fees or for nominal fees.

Nariman is involved in so many things that it is not possible for him to leave Bombay for several months. He was prepared however to go occasionally for a week or so. Probably he has gone to Meerut for the next remand proceedings.

One or two other names were mentioned rather vaguely but no one had much of a notion as who might be able to go. It may not be difficult to get one or two juniors from the C. P. without much of a fee. Jinnah I believe was also asked but he told them that he would be too expensive for them.

You will thus see that everything is undecided and nobody knows what to do. If the Central Committee appoints any fairly competent person or persons they will be acceptable to most. Some people may try to supplement them by additional lawyers but that will not matter much.

Much depends on finances. So far as your committee is concerned you might be able to raise a few thousands by personal appeals. A general appeal does not help much. At Delhi I understand that certain promises were made on behalf of various provinces. Satyen Mitra[2] I am told said that Bengal would give at least Rs. 10000/-; and Satyapal[3] promised to raise 5000/- in the Punjab. I doubt very much if you will get so much from Bengal now that the general elections are on. As for the Punjab we need not expect much in spite of Satyapal's word. So far about 3000/- have been collected in Bengal but these are almost

2. Satyendra Chandra Mitra (1888-1942); vakil, Calcutta High Court; Secretary, Bengal Provincial Swaraj Party 1924, member A I C C 1920-27, member Bengal Legislative Council 1923-26; elected to Central Assembly 1926; President of Bengal Legislative Council, 1937.
3. A prominent Congressman of Punjab; played a leading part in the Rowlatt Act agitation, was deported from Amritsar in 1919 with Kitchlew; suffered imprisonment several times; President, Punjab P C C. for many years; Speaker of the Punjab Assembly in 1952; died 1954

solely for Kishorilal Ghose. In Bombay there are various funds and several defence committees.

There is the defence committee of the Gimi Kamgar Union. This had already collected about Rs. 8000 and hoped to collect a larger sum. But the union is involved in a general strike and so long as this strike lasts obviously no further collections can be made. There is no immediate probability of the strike ending.

Then there are separate collections by the railway unions. I do not know how much has been collected, probably about 2000 or 3000. This is divided into three parts: a general fund for all the accused, a fund for the three or four railway people involved, and a fund for Jhabvala alone. Jhabvala's friends have taken care to see that the last fund is the biggest, much to the annoyance of the others concerned.

There is another defence committee in Bombay with a large and representative membership. Collections are chiefly made by the members of the Youth League for this. They have so far collected about 900 and they hope to collect about 3000.

I have been receiving odd sums from time to time for the defence. Altogether I have received about Rs. 100.

The financial prospects are thus not bright unless the general strike in Bombay ends soon. When I visited the accused in jail, Bradley and Spratt suggested that we should appeal to foreign organisations for help. I have made no such direct appeal but in my letters to some organisations I have mentioned that we are collecting funds for the defence.

In regard to the engagement of lawyers there is of course a general desire that competent men should be engaged. At the same time it is obvious that we cannot pay heavy or even moderately heavy fees. The case will last at least a year and may be more. It is also felt that even apart from our inability to pay heavy fees, it is undesirable to do so. It does seem all wrong for door to door collections to be made and the annas and pies of the poorest to be gathered to pay substantial sums to a few lawyers. *The Times of India*[4] had a gibe about the Meerut case proving a godsend to 'patriotic' lawyers.

Personally I feel that the maximum sum that should be spent in the preliminary enquiry is Rs. 2000/- a month and in the trial Rs. 3000/- a month. Even this may mean Rs. 40000/- or more in all.

Girdharilal happened to be in Bombay a few days ago just before I went. He took the people there to task for not having sent on their collections to the central committee. I believe he gave them the

4. 27 April 1929.

impression that he was the secretary of the committee. He may not have said this though. I should like to know if he is the secretary or if somebody else has been chosen. The people in Bombay told him rightly enough that they had no definite knowledge of the central committee except what they had seen in the papers. They did not know the names of the members, the name of the secretary, the address of the office. No official communication had been sent to them and it did not appear what the committee was doing. They had no objection to sending their collections to this committee if work was started.

I have told the Girni Kamgar people, who possess most of the funds, that obviously they will have to part with the money if they want to help the central committee to do something. They were quite agreeable to do so but their fear was that all their money might be swallowed up very soon without anyone else contributing substantially to the defence. I suggested to them that they might contribute a sum monthly, say 1000 or so and keep remaining funds themselves. I do not think there will be much difficulty about coming to some arrangement.

I have had a letter from Govind Ballabh Pant saying that it will not be possible for him to do much in the case. He is still a victim of lumbago and there is the possibility of the general election in the U. P. Mahmud writes to me offering his services for the case. It is not clear whether he is prepared to work entirely without fees. I have now placed the whole position before you. I think the central committee must immediately take some action. It must appoint a secretary if it has not already done so. It must have an office or at least an address. And it must take charge of the work at Meerut.

As I told you after my return from Meerut we had fixed up the appointment of two wholetime junior lawyers in Meerut at 200/- and 100/- a month. Also a clerk and a typist at 100/- and had further sanctioned 100/- for copies and miscellaneous expenses. I had requested you to have 500/- sent immediately to Meerut. I do not know if this was done but from a letter I have received from Meerut it appears that the money was not received by them. If so of course they could *not start doing anything on business lines.*

The Bombay people are waiting to hear from me. If you could kindly let me know what you propose doing I shall write to them immediately.

Your loving son,
Jawahar

I am sending a copy of this letter to Ansari.

8. Cable To R. Bridgeman[1]

Owing to correspondence being suppressed and delayed it is difficult to keep in touch with you. The Meerut trial, the Trades Disputes Act, the Public Safety Ordinance, are a direct attack on the labour and trade union organisations.

If allowed to pass unchallenged the trade union movement must be grievously crippled. Trust British Labour will support Indian labour and help in fighting these retrograde legislation and in defending the Meerut accused.

There is no progress in the Meerut case as yet. The prosecution is taking remand after remand without disclosing the case against the accused. Remands given without previous notice to the accused or their counsel. All bail applications rejected. Chief reason given by magistrate being that the mere fact that the Government of India has started the prosecution shows that there must be strong proof of guilt against the accused.

A Defence Committee, consisting of Dr. Ansari (Chairman), Pandit Motilal Nehru, Srinivasa Iyengar and others, has issued an appeal for funds for the defence.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F. D. 23/1929, p. 125, N.M.M.L. The cable was published, in part, in the *Daily Herald*, 7 May 1929.

9. To R. Bridgeman[1]

7 May 1929

My dear Bridgeman,

You will no doubt have seen from the papers that arrests and house searches continue in India. They began ostensibly to combat communism and communists. As a matter of fact many people who are arrested are well known not to be communists and even most of the so-called communists are communists in theory only. Practically every

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 23/1929-1930, p. 119, N.M.M.L. Extracts

one belonging to the left wing of labour is dubbed a communist. Now however they have gone a step further and nationalists of note are being arrested as such.

We are having a general strike in Bombay.[2] The strike itself is an extraordinary example of solidarity. As happened last year there is some danger of communal troubles developing in Bombay. The real issue of course has nothing to do with religion or communal strife. But it is so easy for those who are interested to do so to develop communal passions. In the present strike one of the main issues is the reinstatement of 6000 union workers in place of non-union men engaged. As it happens nearly all the union workers kept out are Hindus and the non-union men engaged in their place are Mohamadans. Some time ago there was a strike in one of the mills on the ground of victimisation of the union committee in the mill. The mill owners engaged non-union men to take the place of the strikers. Now there is a general strike in support of these union members displaced as well as in protest against the victimisation of union officials. The question is a purely economic one but the mere fact that most of the non union men engaged are Mohamadans gives people a handle to raise the Hindu-Muslim issue...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. 67 cotton mills in Bombay closed down on 26 April 1929 following a general strike by the 'Red Flag' Textile Workers' Union. Over 1,50,000 workers were affected.

10. To R. Bridgeman[1]

20 May 1929

My dear Bridgeman,

I have your letter enclosing copy of a resolution passed at the Trafalgar Square meeting. I note your telegraphic address.

I have also received the cable you sent me informing me that you had circulated my cable to the T.U.C. and labour organisations.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 23/1929-1930, p. 111, N.M.M.L.

We are having a number of police round ups and arrests all over the country. Either the police have completely lost their heads or a deliberate attempt is being made to show that vast conspiracies are afoot. Every day papers state that so-called red letters are sent to various people. It seems to me inconceivable that any sane person or even any practical revolutionary would go about distributing such letters broadcast. There is a general impression that most of these letters are the productions of proteges of the criminal intelligence department.

I have been greatly worried for many weeks past owing to my wife's and sister's illness. My sister was operated upon for appendicitis last week and it is probable that my wife will also have to undergo an operation.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. Statement on Meerut Prisoners[1]

I noticed the other day that the authorities concerned have refused to give any special facilities in regard to diet or other jail conditions to the Meerut accused with the exception of Messrs. Bradley and Spratt who are classed as Europeans. I do not suppose those accused care very much for the comforts and luxuries of life and certainly none of them is prepared to ask favours from the government.

But the question is a larger one. Here are these people arrested and kept for months in jail even before the preliminary enquiry commences. Bail is not accepted. And yet the most ordinary amenities are denied to them and they have to live almost as condemned prisoners. To be an Indian prisoner at any time is not a pleasant experience; in the height of summer in the U.P. it often becomes unbearable. For those in solitary cells it is hell. The government grudges a few annas a day to a prisoner but it pays enormous fees to lawyers and their numerous retinue. I do hope the lesson will not be lost on the people and they will help in the defence of the Meerut accused.

1. Allahabad, 22 May 1929. *The Tribune*, 24 May 1929.

12. To R. Bridgeman[1]

10 June 1929

My dear Bridgeman,

... The preliminary enquiry in Meerut is likely to commence in two or three days' time. I am going there tomorrow to be present at the beginning at least. The defence committee has made some arrangements for defence during this enquiry. So far of course we do not know what the case for the government is except very vaguely and generally. For nearly three months the accused have been kept in jail under very trying circumstances during the hottest part of the year and not even the enquiry has begun. The reason given is that there was such a mass of papers to go through that the prosecution could not get ready in time. The fact that the prosecution chose its own time for the arrests and had full opportunity of preparing the case before arresting people right and left does not seem to carry much weight.

We have not been able to collect enough funds for defence so far. The only people who might have helped much are the trade unionists specially in Bombay. But these people also are in the middle of a strike and are consequently incapable of helping.

In case I wire to the British Trade Union Council I shall also send you a cable.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D 23/1929-30, pp 101-103, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

13. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

20 June 1929

My dear Chatto,

Your letter dated May 29th. I have just returned to Allahabad after a fairly lengthy absence. This was largely due to my presence in Calcutta

1. A.I.C.C. File No F.D. 1/1929 1930, pp. 61-67, N.M.M.L.

to look after my wife who was in hospital. She is having a bad time and her stay in Calcutta has not done her much good. Krishna is very much better after her operation.

The name of the T.U.C. delegate which you could not read was I think Purandare[2]. I do not know him personally but I believe he is a fairly energetic trade union worker. I do not know if he has been able to go to Europe.

I am not surprised at the activities of Shiva Rao[3] & Co. They are sure to do their utmost to drag the A.I.T.U.C. in the wake of Amsterdam. Probably they are full of the Labour Government in England at present and are having frequent interviews with Graham Pole & Co. It is obvious however that they have no authority to negotiate for the affiliation of the A.I.T.U.C. with Amsterdam. It all depends on the composition of the T.U.C. this year when the question is bound to come up for decision. Owing to the arrests of large numbers of left wingers there is a probability of the moderate section having a majority. The moderates of course seldom get arrested except by mistake. It is also probable that an attempt will be made to annul the affiliation of the T.U.C. to the League. Certainly as you say it is desirable to give correct information about the League to various unions. But I do not think even this will make very much difference. Those who are afraid of government action will continue to oppose affiliation in spite of all the information that you might give. It is clear that the government is making a dead set against the League. A deal of prominence has been given and will continue to be given to the League in the Meerut trial. This is enough to frighten away all the timid folk in the T.U.C.

It would be a good thing if you could send me suitable material containing full facts and information about the League and its activities. I could give publicity to it both from the point of view of the Meerut trial and the T.U.C.

The Meerut case has begun. So far we only had two days of oratory from Langford James,[4] the senior counsel of the prosecution. After he has finished his opening address he will lead some evidence. The defence will not cross-examine at this stage. They have only to see that irrelevant matter is not brought in. After the conclusion of the preliminary enquiry which is likely to take three months or more the accused will be committed to sessions where the formal trial will begin.

2. V.B. Purandare, General Secretary of the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union 1930.
3. B. Shiva Rao (b. 1891); delegate to I.L.O. Conference, Geneva 1929-30, delegate to the Round Table Conference 1930-31; member of the delegation to the U.N. General Assembly 1947-50, 1952, member of the Constituent Assembly 1946-50, member of Lok Sabha 1952-57; member of Rajya Sabha 1957-60.
4. A senior barrister of Calcutta.

You will read Langford James' address in the Indian papers. It is a pure propaganda effort and the obvious attempt is made to prejudice the Meerut accused in the eyes of the nationalists. This attempt will partly succeed because many of the friends of the accused have a way of cursing nationalists in the most offensive language. This has already resulted in many people who had promised to contribute towards the funds of the defence refusing to do so.

You will see that an addition has been made to the Meerut accused. Hutchinson[5] was arrested a few days ago and taken to Meerut. Probably one or two others will also be arrested. I do not personally know Hutchinson very well. I only met him slightly once or twice in Bombay.

In spite of the great resources of government and the time they have had to prepare their case it is obvious that they are not yet quite ready to begin. They started on the 12th June and on the 13th the case was adjourned for 10 days, the plea being the *Mohurrum* holidays. This was only a dodge to get the benefit of another remand without having to ask for it.

The whole case is being run on propaganda basis by the government. The official Director of Publicity R. S. Bajpai has actually been sent down from Simla to Meerut to supervise publicity arrangements. I am told also that government is defraying the expenses of sending full reports through the Associated Press. You will see from Langford James' preliminary address that he has been trying to understand without great success what communism and the various Internationals are. Unfortunately there are not many people who know much of these subjects here.

I have read with interest a copy of the letter of Sailendra Nath Ghose[6] and Bajpai[7] to you. I had not seen it previously but I suspected as much from some other letters that I have received from them. Little importance need be attached to them. They will be suitably dealt with.

As I wrote to you it was my intention to cable and write fully directly to the British T.U.C. regarding the Meerut trial. But before doing so I wanted to have copies of the correspondence on the subject between the Indian T.U.C. office and the British T.U.C. Bakhale however has not sent these yet to me. I am telegraphing to him and I hope to be able to send an air mail letter to the British T.U.C. soon.

Regarding the detailed information that you require about the Meerut case I am afraid it is very difficult for me to send you all the details you

5. Lester Hutchinson, in India 1928-33, M.P 1945 50; author of *Conspiracy at Meerut*.
6. President of the branch of the Indian National Congress in New York in 1929.
7. Ramlal B Bajpai was the secretary of the branch of the Indian National Congress in New York in 1929

require weekly. We are trying to arrange however to issue necessary information from Meerut regularly. I am sending your request to the people there and asking them to communicate with you weekly if possible. So far there are no documents in the case except the indictment a copy of which I have already sent you. As for other copies it is an expensive job getting numerous copies. I shall try however to arrange to have copies of important papers sent to you.

The treatment of prisoners is a little better now. They are all kept together in a big barrack. Of course Meerut in the hot weather is an extraordinarily disagreeable place and the accused get the full benefit of the heat in the jail.

About the life and work of the accused I shall also ask the Meerut people to send you such details as they can get. You are not likely to get photographs of many of them.

The arrangements made for the defence so far are as follows:

There is a central defence committee consisting of Dr. Ansari as Chairman and Girdhari Lal as secretary. Other members are my father, Raghubir Narain Singh and Jyoti Prasad[8] of Meerut, N. C. Kelkar, K. F. Nariman, V. H. Joshi[9] and myself Nariman and Joshi are the representatives of the two Bombay defence committees. There are also local committees in Calcutta and elsewhere. As I have mentioned above the defence has not got to do much during the preliminary enquiry. So far the following counsels have been engaged for this enquiry:—

Deoki Prasad Singh, Chagla,[10] Chakravarty,[11] F. Ansari,[12] and Gupta[13] of Lucknow. Chakravarty has been deputed by the Bengal Committee.

8. Jyoti Prasad Gupta (1887-1966); a prominent Congress leader of Meerut; elected in 1952 to U. P. Legislative Council.
9. Vasudev Hari Joshi, a communist of Maharashtra, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment in the Mulshipetha Satyagraha campaign in 1923 During the Meerut Conspiracy Case he tried to go to Moscow to enlist support, but was arrested in Bombay.
10. M C. Chagla (b. 1900); a barrister of Bombay; Judge of Bombay High Court 1941-47 and Chief Justice 1947 58, Judge, International Court of Justice, 1957, member, Law Commission, 1955 58, Ambassador to U.S 1958 61; High Commissioner to U K. 1962 63, Minister of Education, Government of India, 1963-66, Minister for External Affairs 1966-67, leader of the Indian delegation to U.N. Security Council during debates on Kashmir question 1964 and 1965.
11. Khitish Chandra Chakravarty was an advocate of the Calcutta High Court.
12. Faridul Haq Ansari, a barrister of Delhi, prominent member of the Congress Socialist Party; member of Rajya Sabha 1957 62.
13. Chandra Bhanu Gupta (b. 1902); advocate and Congressman of Lucknow; member A I C C. 1926-59, member U.P. P.C C. from 1933 onwards and treasurer 1946 58, Parliamentary Secretary to the Chief Minister, 1946-47; Minister 1947 57, Chief Minister, U P. 1960 63, March April 1967 and 1969 70.

A few of the accused, mostly the Punjab ones, have stated that they do not desire to defend themselves. The others have been divided up amongst the counsel named above. Jhabvala has not associated himself with the common defence. I believe he has engaged Chamanlal to defend him. About Chamanlal I might add that he did not withdraw from the defence as you have stated. As a matter of fact most of the accused refused to have him.

It is proposed to have one senior man at least for the trial.

You will no doubt notice that a growing number of people are being arrested for sedition and similar offences here. It is not an easy matter to defend these people in the courts of law. Besides so far as sedition is concerned it is the position of the Congress that it is our bounden duty to be seditious to the British Government. The question of defence hardly arises. It has therefore been the policy of the Congress not to defend such cases and the A.I.C.C. has not given any money for such a defence in the past. As a very special case and for the first time the Working Committee has sanctioned a grant of Rs. 1500 for the Meerut defence.

I enclose copy of a letter I am sending to the American Branch.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To R. Bridgeman[1]

22/6/29

My dear Bridgeman,

I enclose a copy of a letter I am sending Citrine[2] today by air mail. Also a copy of a cablegram I am sending him.

So far as the Meerut trial is concerned I think the greatest stress should be laid on the manoeuvre by which government has deprived most of the accused of a jury trial to which they were entitled. There may be a feeling that now that proceedings have commenced in Meerut it is too late to intervene or get a transfer. This is a wrong notion. Only

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 23/1929-1930, pp. 95, N.M.M.L.
2. Walter, later Lord Citrine, (b. 1887), British trade union leader; General Secretary of Trade Union Congress 1926-46; president of the International Federation of Trade Unions 1928-1945.

a preliminary magisterial enquiry has begun. This itself may last four months or six months—we do such things in a leisurely manner here—and then there will be a commitment for the trial. The enquiry and the trial might well take a year and a half.

You must have read about Hutchinson's arrest. He has been added to the Meerut crowd.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. To Walter Citrine[1]

Allahabad,
June 22nd, 1929

Dear Mr. Citrine,

I have no doubt that you have been following recent events in India with considerable interest. The Trades Disputes Act, the Public Safety Ordinance made the law of the land by executive fiat, the Meerut trial and the daily arrests and house searches that are going on in India, have kept us fairly busy in this country. You have already been kept informed of many of these developments by the office of the All India Trade Union Congress. I am writing as President of the A.I.T.U.C. to supplement the information that has already been sent to you and to request your General Council to take some action in the matter.

I do not propose to write at length on the general situation in India. For the moment I shall confine myself to the Meerut trial. I would like to point out however that this trial cannot be isolated from the general situation and must be treated as one phase of the offensive which the government here has started against the labour movement. This fact is well recognised in India and the Executive Council of our Trade Union Congress has laid stress on it in their resolution on the subject. Even the Indian National Congress, which is not directly or solely concerned with labour, has been constrained to admit this.

You know well what the lot of industrial workers is in India. Your own fraternal delegates to the A.I.T.U.C.[2] have raised the curtain from the hell, that is industrial India, in many places. With the growth of

1. Maharashtra Government Records/Bombay Police Commissioner's File No 1291/B/I.
2. At the All India Trade Union Congress held in Jharia on 18 December 1928 Ryan and Johnston were among the fraternal delegates.

the trade union movement in India the workers have gradually become conscious of their own exceeding misery and degradation and with this consciousness has come bitterness and the spirit of revolt. The continual industrial conflicts that are going on, the strike and the lockouts are evidence of this spirit of revolt. Some of these strikes may be hastily and unwisely begun but their very unwisdom is often a measure of the desperation of the workers.

Such has lately been the general outlook of the worker in India. He has also observed how at every stage and in every conflict between worker and employer, the whole weight of the executive government is cast on the side of the employer. At the least provocation the police and even the military thunder up to overawe the worker and not unoften fire on him with effect. And so there is not much love lost between the worker and the government and daily the bitterness of the worker, both against his employer and the government, has increased. Obviously this was not to the liking of the government. It was bad enough for them to have to deal with an aggressive nationalist movement. It was far worse to have the organised workers grow more and more militant from day to day. They had to be broken, and all the power and resources of government were utilised to this purpose.

It is easy enough to understand the events of the last year in India if looked at with this background. The repressive legislation, the arrests and trials, and the attitude of government during strikes and lockouts all hang together and point to the one conclusion that the government is out to break the back of the trade unions and organised labour in India.

There is a lot of shouting about communists and communism in India. Undoubtedly there are some communists in India but it is equally certain that this cry of communism is meant to cover a multitude of sins of the government. Of the 31 accused in the Meerut case, now 32 since Hutchinson's arrest, the majority know little about communism. People connected with any kind of labour or peasant activity have been arrested and are being tried. Eight of those included in the Meerut case are members of the All India Congress Committee[3]—the Central Executive Committee of the National Congress. It is patently absurd to say that the government is confining its attention to communists.

Of course even so far as the communists are concerned the question arises how far the government is dealing fairly with them in the trial;

3. Dr. Biswanath Mukherji, Kedar Nath Sagal, Sohan Singh Josh, Muzaffar Ahmad, K.N. Joglekar, R.S. Nimbkar, S.A. Dange, and D.R. Thengdi.

how far they are given a decent chance to put up a defence. Most of the accused were arrested in Bengal or Bombay. In the ordinary course of affairs they would have had the benefit of a jury trial in their own presidencies. But, not without a full realisation of the consequences, it was decided by government to have the trial in Meerut. Automatically the accused lost their valued right of trial by jury. And the choice of place was such that the defence had to face every conceivable difficulty. Attempts made to induce the Viceroy to change the venue of the trial have ended in failure.

The Meerut arrests took place on or about March 20th. In the ordinary course a preliminary magisterial enquiry should have been held soon to decide if there was a *prima facie* case for the Sessions. Instead of this, remand after remand was taken by the prosecution on the plea of not being ready to proceed with the case. They chose the time of arrest. No one else forced them to do so on that date and yet month after month remands were taken. If the accused had been let out on bail this might not have mattered but bail was refused in every instance, and the amazing argument was advanced by the magistrate that as the Government of India had started the case there must be something in it which will probably justify conviction. This, at the commencement of the case when not a scrap of evidence had been produced.

All this took place in the hottest part of the year when the northern India plains have a temperature in the shade of about 116 °F. In jail you can imagine what the conditions must have been. As a matter of fact cholera broke out in the jail and the accused had suddenly to be sent elsewhere for a few weeks. They returned to Meerut later.

Repeated remands taken by the prosecution became so outrageous that there was a public outcry against them. So ultimately the prosecution said they would start the case on the 12th June. They did so. On the 13th however the case was adjourned for ten days partly because of some Muslim holidays which need not have interfered with the case and partly to suit the convenience of the prosecution again. So that in effect the prosecution got in another remand.

The two days' proceedings were however very instructive. The counsel for the prosecution held forth as if he was addressing a Hyde Park meeting and the Government of India sent down their head publicity officer from Simla to Meerut simply to organise propaganda. So that this highly paid officer whose chief job is to collect important statistics and prepare the annual report on India for Parliament is now engaged in Meerut in doing obvious propaganda work for the prosecution. He is utilizing the public press agency to send the messages he wants to the papers in India and England. The cost of these messages is going

to be paid by the government. These facts make it clear enough what the Meerut trial is meant to achieve. You will probably see reports of the trial in the newspapers in England. These reports are in all likelihood coming through the tainted source I have mentioned above.

The fact that the Meerut trial has a deeper significance than is made out by government is obvious enough and has been appreciated by most people here. The Indian National Congress which is very far indeed from being communistically inclined is helping in the defence. The All India Trade Union Congress has expressed itself strongly in the matter, and prominent lawyers and others who have nothing to do with communism or socialism or even labour have associated themselves with the defence.

Under these circumstances I hope your General Council will appreciate the importance of the issues involved and will express itself unequivocally on the subject. The real issue is the breaking of the trade union movement in India. We are quite sure that your council cannot view the possibility of any injury being done to this infant movement in India with equanimity and that you will do your utmost to help us at this stage. We would like you to expose and oppose the whole policy underlying the recent labour legislation of the Government of India and the Meerut trial. In particular we would request you to insist on the trial being held, if at all, in a place where the accused are not deprived of their right of a jury trial. This seems to us such an obvious and elementary right that the government's action in avoiding a jury trial seems extraordinary. Even in ordinary cases this would be bad enough. In a case of this magnitude with the possibliity of the severest penalties the prevention of a jury trial is little short of scandalous. And it should be remembered that the great majority of the accused come from places where they were sure to have a jury trial.

I am sending you separately some copies of the "Congress Bulletin" which gives the names and other particulars of the Meerut accused. Please refer to pages 74-77, 86 and 104.

I am afraid I have written to you at great length. But I feel that I would not do justice to the great issues involved in the government policy in India nor would I be fair to your General Council if I wrote briefly and just asked for your sympathy and help. We want the help and sympathy of British labour; we want your council's help and sympathy to fight the attacks being made on organised labour in India, to defend the Meerut accused and to build up a strong trade union movement in India. But we want this help and sympathy to be based on a cool appreciation of the issues involved. I have therefore written at some length.

I shall very gladly supply you with any other information that you may require.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To R. Bridgeman[1]

1 July 1929

My dear Bridgeman,
Thank you for your letter of the 10th June enclosing a copy of your letter to Citrine.

I am full of admiration for the sweetly reasonable letters that you are writing to Citrine in spite of his offensive replies. You are obviously a diplomat. I must say that I was annoyed to read Citrine's reply to your letter. When writing to him however last week I tried to keep my temper in hand. I hope I succeeded. If Citrine continues the offensive I am afraid my patience will be exhausted.

I am very thankful to you for all the trouble you are taking in spite of the difficulties you have to face.

The Meerut case has been postponed after another two days of oratory on the part of the Public Prosecutor. I am trying to send you by this week if possible a full report officially supplied of the opening address of Langford James on behalf of the prosecution. You will find this interesting reading.

In a day or two an application is going to be made in the High Court here for a transfer of the case to enable a jury trial to take place.

It seems to me obvious that Ramsay MacDonald or Wedgwood Benn[2] are going to do nothing of importance in regard to India. Personally I am not very sorry because I do not *think the time has arrived for* peace. I am afraid whether we want it or not there will be trouble and much suffering before there is talk of peace. That seems to be the inevitable course of the events everywhere.

1. AICC, File No. P.D. 23/1929-1930, pp. 85-87, NMML.
2. Wedgwood Benn, first Viscount Stansgate (1877-1969), joined Labour party in 1927; Secretary of State for India 1929-31; Secretary of State for Air 1945-46.

I wonder if you could supply me with information regarding the Workers' Welfare League in London and the Labour Research Department of London.[3] Both these are figuring prominently in the Meerut case and are stated to be pure communist organisations. So far as I know this is an entirely incorrect description although undoubtedly both belong to the left wing of labour. I believe that the Research Department was founded by very sober trade unions and Fabians and that the Trade Union Congress has supported it in the past. If I could have some information on this subject which could be utilised in the court here it might be useful. Annual reports of these organisations or references to them in other printed proceedings might help. I have made this request to the London branch of the National Congress also. I am repeating it to you to ensure that something comes to me soon.

In this connection you will see from Langford James' address that the League against Imperialism is specially selected for attack. You know well that the League, although it has had and has communists in it, is not a pure communist venture and is certainly not at the dictation of the Comintern. Any suggestions that you might possibly send to me in regard to this that might help in the Meerut case would be welcome.

With all good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Saklatvala was one of the founders of the Workers' Welfare League of India in London. The prosecution alleged that Philip Spratt was sent to India on behalf of the Labour Research Department of London to organise the communist party in India.

17. To R. Bridgeman[1]

11 July 1929

My dear Bridgeman,

... An application for a transfer of the Meerut case from Meerut to Allahabad was made in the High Court here today. The application was necessarily limited in scope because the High Court here could not

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 23/1929-1930, pp 65-67. N.M.M.L. Extracts.

entertain any other application. A transfer to Allahabad was asked for together with a jury trial. The application has not been finally disposed of yet. But it is clear what the order is going to be. The High Court will not order a transfer of the case at this stage at any rate. As regards the jury trial they say the question should be raised after the commitment proceedings are over.

This application here does not take away any rights of any of the accused so that if it is considered advisable applications may be made at a later stage either in Calcutta or Bombay or in the King's Bench in London...

I have received your cablegram suggesting that we should authorise the London branch of the Congress to send six selected supplementary delegates on our behalf and that we should meet their extra expenses which may amount to about £ 100...

Regarding expenses I am afraid it is difficult for us at this stage to be generous and knowing my colleagues in the Congress Working Committee as I do I am certain they will not like to pay any large sum. This is not because of any want of sympathy for your proposal but because we really have to be careful of our funds We have got a difficult situation to cope with here in India in the near future.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. To R. Bridgeman[1]

Allahabad
11 July 1929

Dear Sir,

I have learnt with pleasure of the formation of a representative committee to work for the release of the Meerut prisoners and to press for full trade union and political rights for the Indian working class organisations. Your committee will not only have the cooperation of the central defence committee for the Meerut prisoners here but also I hope of the trade unions in India.

It is announced in the public press that the new Labour Government in England is going to repeal or amend the recent legislation affecting

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 23/1929 1930, p. 69, N.M.M.L.

trade unions in England[2]. May I point out to you that similar legislation has been passed in India also in spite of the opposition of the trade union movement here. I trust therefore that your committee will work for the repeal of this Indian legislation also, in particular of the Trades Disputes Act and the Public Safety Ordinance.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Labour Government planned to repeal or amend the Trade Disputes and Trade Union Act 1927 which declared that strikes intended to coerce government were illegal but was unable to do so.

19. To S. Srinivasa Iyengar[1]

Camp Calcutta
20 August 1929

Dear Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar,

I have just seen a press report that at a meeting of the Tamil Nad P.C.C. you made the following observations in the course of a speech:-

"It was for the same reason that although I was not a communist I was ready to take up the defence of the Meerut prisoners. But owing to the insolent behaviour of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru who said that I must formally write to the defence committee offering my services I was obliged to have nothing to do with it. He is a fool. I am not going to pay any heed to such fools. I had never cared for such fools in my life. I am not going to care for them in the future."

I do not know if this is a correct report. The extract has been translated from a Tamil paper and it is possible that errors have crept in both in the reporting and the translation. In view of the fact however that such a report has appeared I owe it to you and to myself to write to you and inform you that you are labouring under a total misapprehension so far as the Meerut defence committee is concerned.

Being an interested party I am obviously not in a position to judge the extent of my own folly. Probably you are a better judge and if after some experience of me you have arrived at a certain conclusion it is not for me to challenge it. But I am concerned to find you referring to something that I had said or done regarding your desire to take up the defence of the Meerut prisoners. I do not know where you got

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-40/1929 (Pt. III), pp 541-43, N.M.M.L.

your facts but obviously they are all wrong. I am not aware of my ever having suggested that you should formally write to the defence committee offering your services. It may be that some incorrect press report misled you.

What happened was this. At the time of the meeting of the All India Congress Committee at Bombay several meetings of the central defence committee took place. At that time we had to fix up the defence in the case. Ultimately some arrangements were made. You will remember that we met several times in Bombay and you did not mention anything about the Meerut case. As I was leaving Bombay I saw a note in the press that you had agreed to take up the defence in Meerut. Press reports are not always accurate and I did not know what exactly you might have said. I enquired from some members of the defence committee and they did not know anything about it. Later in Calcutta I was asked by a press representative if the defence committee had arranged with you for the defence. I told him that the defence committee would of course be very glad to have you undertake the defence but we had no knowledge on the subject excepting the press report that had appeared. This is all that I said. I do not know if this statement was an offence in your eyes. Anyway it never struck me in that light. My point was that such statements are made by third parties without sufficient justification and I was afraid that some one may not have correctly reported your words. There was no question of your formally writing to any committee.

I am writing this letter to you because I do not want you or anyone else to think ill of the Meerut defence committee in spite of the fact that I happen to be a humble member of it. I would not have troubled you if the matter had been a purely personal one.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. To S. Srinivasa Iyengar[1]

27/8/1929

Dear Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar,

I have just received your letter. I am glad to learn that the newspaper report to which I referred in my last letter was incorrect.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40/1929 (Pt. IV), pp 613-614, NMML.

Regarding the report of what I said about your appearing for the Meerut defence I hope you will agree with me that I did or said nothing which was in any way discourteous to you. Indeed I did not give a formal interview at all on the first occasion. Some newspaper man made it up after hearing scraps of conversation and rushed to the papers. I was annoyed when I saw this. Later I told the Free Press or A.P. representative that this was not correct and asked him to state that your taking up the defence would be welcome but I did not yet know definitely if you had agreed to it. There was no question of your formally writing to the defence committee.

I saw the report in the *Chronicle* but neither Nariman nor any one else spoke to me then or later on the subject. I must confess that I doubted if you would be able to go as you are much too busy to go to Meerut for six months or more. I was told that previously you had said that much as you would like to go you could not possibly spare the time. It was not unnatural for me to conclude that the report in the *Chronicle* might not be quite correct. I was going to write to you but the simultaneous illness of both my wife and sister, which took me to Calcutta, kept me occupied for a considerable time, and the matter escaped my mind.

Anyhow I should like to assure you that whatever my other failings may be, and they are no doubt many, I never intended any discourtesy to you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

21. To A. C. N. Nambiar[1]

23 September 1929

My dear Nanu,

...It has been publicly stated in the Meerut trial that government has issued special orders for my correspondence to be intercepted. Of course I knew this well enough. Latterly however this interception seems to have resulted in an almost complete stoppage of my foreign mail. Your letters dribble through. Almost all other letters are stopped. This is rather annoying but one has to grin and put up with it...

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 20/1929 (Pt. II), p. 109, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

14

ARTICLES AND ADDRESSES

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC

1. Speech at Mahila Vidyapith, Allahabad[1]

Mr. Chancellor,[2] brothers and sisters,

I thank you for the honour you have done me in asking me to lay the foundation-stone of the *Vidyapitha*. I was rather surprised to receive this invitation and I hesitated to accept it. I have always thought that it was the business of high officials and revered elders to perform such ceremonies. I belong to neither of these categories. I have also found that on such occasions it is the usual custom to utter pious platitudes which mean little. But you are perhaps aware that being a rebel by nature, I am no lover of the platitudes of the bygone age, and it may be that something that I may say today will not be pleasing to many of you here. But you have taken the risk in inviting me. I have accepted this invitation partly because I was connected with this institution when I was the Chairman of the Municipal Board. But my chief attraction has been the interest that I take in women's education and women's rights.

A great French idealist, Charles Fourrier[3] once said: "One could judge the degree of civilization of a country by the social and political position of its women." And if we are to judge India today, we shall have to judge her by her women. The future that we build up will also be judged by the position of Indian women. I must confess to you that I am intensely dissatisfied with the lot of the Indian women today. We hear a good deal about Sita and Savitri. They are revered names in India and rightly so. But I have a feeling that these echoes from the past are raised chiefly to hide our present deficiencies and to prevent us from attacking the root cause of women's degradation in India today.

1. 31 March 1928 *Reprinted in Life and Speeches of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru*, edited by R. Dwivedi, Allahabad 1929, pp 63 68
2. Kailash Nath Katju.
3. (1772-1837); French philosopher.

I find from a reference to the report of this institution that it was started to give special instruction to women. It was laid down that while man was the bread-winner, woman's place was in the home and her ideal should be that of a devoted wife and nothing more. Her chief delight should be in skilfully rearing her children and serving her revered elders. May I say that I do not agree with this ideal of women's life or education? What does it signify? It means that woman has one profession and one only, that is the profession of marriage and it is our chief business to train her for this profession. Even in this profession her lot is to be one of secondary importance. She is always to be the devoted help-mate, the follower and the obedient slave of her husband and others. I wonder if any of you here has read Ibsen's[4] *Doll's House*; if so, you will perhaps appreciate the word "Doll" when I use it in this connection.

The future of India cannot consist of dolls and playthings and if you made half the population of a country a mere plaything of the other half, an encumbrance on others, how will you ever make progress? Therefore I say that you must face the problem boldly and attack the roots of the evil. We have *purdah* and child marriage and denial of rights to women in so many fields. Go to any country and you will see bright-faced boys and girls playing and growing strong in mind and body. Here children of the same age are kept in *purdah*, locked up in cages almost, and denied in a large measure all freedom. They are married just when they should be growing physically and intellectually and are thus stunted and made miserable for life.

If this *Vidyapitha* really stands for the progress of our women, it must attack these evil customs. But I should like to remind the women present here that no people, no group, no community, no country, has ever got rid of its disabilities by the generosity of the oppressor. India will not be free until we are strong enough to force our will on England and the women of India will not attain their full rights by the mere generosity of the men of India. They will have to fight for them and force their will on the menfolk before they can succeed.

I hope therefore that this *Vidyapitha* will be instrumental in sending out, into the province and the country, women who are rebels against the unjust and tyrannical social customs of the day and who will fight all who oppose this progress; women who are as much soldiers of the country as the best men.

4. Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906); Norwegian dramatist who had a profound influence on the theatre and drama throughout Europe.

2. The poverty of India and its cure[1]

The National Week celebrations are at hand. Nine years ago, on the 6th April, the new struggle for India's independence was launched and on 13th April thousands of our brothers were shot dead or wounded in the Jallianwala Bagh. These nine years have seen many ups and downs. Our movement gained momentum and then abated. Yet, the struggle continued and is still on. So long as the reasons for which the struggle was launched and the declaration of independence made remain, the battle cannot be over. This struggle is not merely for glory or honour although it involves, to a very great extent, the question of the honour of our country and our people. In reality the fight for independence is a question of subsistence. We are starving and so demand food. We are thirsty so we want water. Till we get these we cannot rest.

These are not matters to be uttered or acted upon hastily It is essential that we think calmly on them, discover the basic causes of our country's weakness and then find the remedy.

It is well known that India was famous all over the world for her wealth. All the countries of the world thought and rightly regarded India as the land of milk and honey. In olden times, foreign invasions were prompted by the lure of India's richness, and prospects of obtaining enormous booty. All travellers who came to India eloquently described her wealth and prosperity. Britain and the other countries of Europe were attracted by these tales of India's wealth and thought that trade with such a prosperous country would be profitable.

So India in the past had indeed been rich. There is no need to elaborate on her condition today. In every village, the under-nourished men and women, in tattered clothes, and in small and unhealthy hovels, amply demonstrate our present state. Millions die because of ordinary epidemics. This clearly shows that the people have not enough resistance to withstand even the ordinary changes of climate. Poverty is daily on the increase. Only a few are rich; the majority are poor. India's poverty is so widespread that today it is the poorest country in the world. Leading economists have conducted investigations into the average annual income of the people of India. Their findings are:

1. Pamphlet published in Hindi, April 1928 J. N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L.

	AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME OF AN INDIAN
	Rs.
Dadabhai Naoroji	20
Government estimate of 1882	27
William Digby[2]	17½
Lord Curzon	30
Prof. Joshi[3] & Wadia[4]	44
Visvesvaraya[5]	45
Prof. Kale[6]	40 to 48
Dr. Balakrishna[7]	21

The findings vary but it is agreed that every Indian has an average income of about Rs. 50/-. This average, however, includes the millionaires as well. One can deduce from this how meagre is the average income of the villager. In contrast we have the average incomes of other countries:

COUNTRY	AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME PER HEAD
England	750
U.S.A.	1080
Germany	450
France	570
Italy	345
Canada	600
Australia	810
Japan	90

A glance at these figures is enough to show how poor we are today. There was a time when people came here to make money; today Indians are the poorest of the poor.

India was still rich and prosperous when the British came. Various kinds of articles were manufactured here. Handicrafts, particularly textiles, were of extremely good quality. Commodities made in India were exported in exchange for gold. Initially, the English had come to

2. (1849 1904); journalist who sympathised with the Indian nationalist movement; editor, *Madras Times* 1877-79, founder and director, Indian Political Agency London, 1887-92; editor, *India* 1890-92; "*Prosperous*" *British India*, which he wrote in 1901, was proscribed by the British Government.
3-4 G. N Joshi, Professor of Economics, Wilson College Bombay, joint author with P. A. Wadia of *The Wealth of India* (1925).
5. M. Visvesvaraya, (1861 1962), Chief Engineer, Government of Mysore, 1900; *Dewan of Mysore*, 1912 18, one of the pioneers of planning in India.
6. V. G. Kale, Professor of Economics, Fergusson College, Poona; Member, Indian Tariff Board, 1923-25.
7. Professor of Economics at Kolhapur.

India with the intention of selling Indian goods in foreign markets at enormous profit. Then a number of machines were invented in England and cloth began to be manufactured in mills. However in the beginning these British textiles could not compete with Indian cloth, which was *much cheaper even in England. Various measures were therefore taken* in England to curb the sale of Indian calicoes and heavy taxes were imposed upon them. They even went to the extent of penalising those who were seen wearing certain varieties of Indian cloth. They were totally for local cloth and would not allow foreign cloth to carry away their bullion or to wreck their own industries.

Consequently export of Indian cloth to England completely stopped. But there was still enough market for Indian cloth in India itself. The English politicians now began to worry about sales of their mill-made cloth abroad. To secure this at the expense of India was the easiest way of all. British cloth began to be imported into India free of duty. Indian cloth could not now compete with British cloth, because it was already burdened with heavy taxation. In this way, first the external trade and then the internal trade of Indian cloth were destroyed by the British. At first foreign cloth began to be used in the bigger towns which were easily accessible by railways; and later it reached the villages as well.

What was the effect of this on India and on Britain? The money from India helped to keep the British factories running. The British weavers began to work in the factories, i.e. on leaving their old profession they were provided with a new occupation. Britain's wealth increased greatly in proportion to the output of these factories.

The Indian farmer who used to supplement his income by plying the charkha in his spare time was also suddenly deprived of his extra income. Weavers, carders and dyers became unemployed. They were forced to fall back on the land for a livelihood, by cultivating the land or by working as labourers, but there was already enough pressure on the land. The result was that the majority of the people were compelled to act as farm labourers, and somehow manage to keep alive. The result was obvious. The national income had already decreased to a great extent. The unemployed became a serious burden on the land, and as a result *other kisans also became poorer. This is the root cause of India's* poverty. There are very few vocations left and the majority of the people try to subsist on the proceeds of a little bit of land. And this poverty began from the time the British came here because they started their own trade while destroying ours.

We can see in the *bigger towns a few wealthy traders, a few shop*keepers who sell foreign cloth, and some rich money-lenders. There are

also some well-to-do zamindars, lawyers, doctors and government officials. But all of them put together constitute only a handful of the total population of India. India cannot be called prosperous because of the wealth of these few individuals. The shopkeepers dealing in foreign cloth receive only an anna or two in the rupee, the rest of the profit goes to England. If home-made cloth could have been sold here instead of foreign cloth, then Indians too could share in this profit, which is taken away to England. The money-lenders are rich only because they exploit the kisan and impoverish him.

Everyone knows that there have been a number of terrible famines in India during the past 50 years. There were famines even before the arrival of the British but as far as we know they were not as devastating as the present ones. This was so, in spite of the fact that in those days there were many difficulties which do not exist today. If there was a famine in one part of the country, there was no means of transporting food from another part. Today, there are many railways and grain can easily be transported from one place to the other. In those days, in spite of famines there was never any complaint regarding dearth of food in India. Even during periods of famine wheat was exported abroad. Under the British, grain is available but there is no money to buy it. Now it is not a shortage of foodgrains but of money.

People say that famines are due to an increase in the population but in fact India's population has hardly risen in comparison with other countries.

The following figures prove that in comparison with other countries the population of India has risen very little in the last 50 years:

Germany	59%
England	58%
Russia	73.9%
Europe	45.4%
India	18.9%

Moreover, the cultivated land and its produce have definitely increased, so it cannot be argued that famines have been caused by a rise in the population. Famines occur because the country is poor. Much of its wealth has been drained away and even what is left is now a "golden stream" which flows towards England in various forms—as wages and pensions of important Englishmen, as interest and profit and above all as payment for cloth. Britain receives Rs. 70 crores annually on the basis of this textile trade alone. If we stopped the sale of foreign cloth here, these 70 crores could be divided among our kisans, weavers, dyers,

spinners, shopkeepers and others. Many people who are now unemployed and a burden on the land could take to other professions thus increasing the variety of our country's produce and adding to its wealth.

British cloth can be ousted either by Indian mill made cloth or by *khadi* or by both. There is no objection to wearing Indian mill-made cloth but it should be remembered that there are many mills in India which are being run with British capital, and the profits of which go to Britain. There is no difference between the cloth made in these mills and the foreign cloth. Secondly if we want to boycott all British cloth immediately, that cannot be done by replacing it with Indian mill cloth. Big mills cannot be erected overnight in large numbers. This will require crores of rupees and will take years. But *khadi* cloth can be made immediately at much less expense, and every man could assist in this. The country gets the full benefit of this, and the money received by its sale is divided among the poor, who need the money most. It is different from what takes place in the mills when the profits go to a few and the many remain poor.

At present *khadi* does not compete with Indian mill made cloth. Our objective should be that Indian mill made cloth and *khadi* should together drive out foreign cloth completely from the country. And we are confident that if the public helps, this can be done.

One result of this will be that national wealth will remain within the country and the poor will benefit. Also the British will be hit hard. Those who have hitherto looked down upon us and have not heeded our words will now be forced to do as we desire and thereby we shall be able to free the country and banish all its troubles.

Attention has been drawn to a few important points in this pamphlet. There is much to be said about them and several books have been written on the subject. Those who are concerned about India's poverty and slavery and who are interested in achieving freedom for the motherland should give thought to these problems. They too will conclude that without Swaraj our misfortunes cannot be ended. To attain Swaraj and particularly to eradicate poverty, the first step is to boycott foreign cloth. This is of primary benefit to us and will exert considerable pressure on England.

So I hope that the wellwishers of the country will strive for a total boycott of foreign cloth and the spread of *khadi*. This should be specially done during this National Week.

Jawaharlal Nehru
Agent
United Provinces Charkha Sangh

3. On Kisan agitation at Katahara[1]

Sir,

In your issue dated July 4th there is a message from Benares on the peasant movement in the U.P. This message refers to meetings in various places and specially purports to give some details of a meeting in Kathar (? Katihar) over which I had the honour to preside. I shall not presume on your indulgence in giving details of this movement. Everyone who has any acquaintance with the villages of these zamindar-ridden province knows of the misery of the peasantry and the way taluqdars and zamindars fatten on extortions from the poorest in the land. Under these circumstances peasant movements are bound to arise and no one need be surprised at them.

But I should like to correct a serious misstatement in the message. It is stated there that the meeting at Kathar or Katihar condemned the action of the police who are reported to have threatened and beaten the peasantry. The police have many sins to their discredit and I have often criticised them. But in the present instance this charge so far as I am aware is entirely groundless. The facts are that there is a big zamindari—the Saidih *taluqa*—in the *tahsil* of Handia in the district of Allahabad. The present owner of this zamindari is a young widow but the father of this lady is the manager and for all practical purposes the owner of the estate. Numerous complaints of extortion and ill-treatment of the kisans by this gentleman have been made in the course of the last few months. The Allahabad District Congress Committee ultimately appointed a committee to investigate and find out the truth of these complaints. This committee has taken a large number of depositions of kisans in support of the charge made.

About two weeks ago, on the 17th of June, the local kisans and some others organised a meeting in Katihar which is situated in the Siadih *taluqa*. I was not present at this meeting but I am informed by the organisers that a large number of men armed with *lathis* came to the place of meeting and stated that they had been sent by the

1. Allahabad, 4 July 1928 J N Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L.
This letter was sent by Jawaharlal to the *Pioneer* but was not published.

manager of the Siadih estate to break up the meeting. This they proceeded to do by threatening everybody who came and beating a number of kisans. Not desiring to provoke a riot the organisers abandoned the meeting.

This meeting had not been officially organised by the district Congress committee although some members of it were among the organisers. In view of what had happened however the committee felt that a very important issue had been raised—the right of the kisans to assemble peacefully together at a public meeting—and they could not tolerate this kind of forcible dispersal. The committee thereupon convened a public meeting for the Sunday following the 24th June at the same place—Katihar. The President of the committee, Dr. Kailas Nath Katju, wrote to Mr. Parmeshri Dayal, the manager of the Siadih *taluqa* and, giving an account of the happenings on June 17th, asked him if it was true that he had sent the men with *lathis* to break up the meeting. Mr. Parmeshri Dayal was informed of the next meeting on June 24th and was invited to be present at it and to have his say. He refrained, however, from answering Dr. Katju's letter or denying the allegations and did not attend the meeting.

It is this subsequent meeting which is apparently referred to in your Benares message. The meeting was a very great success and about two thousand kisans attended in spite of the fact that work in the fields had begun in right earnest owing to the coming of the rains. They condemned the action of those who had broken up the meeting on June 17th and further condemned the methods and behaviour of the manager of Siadih towards his tenantry. It further called upon the kisans to organise themselves to protect their interests and supported the Bardoli Satyagraha.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Swaraj and Socialism[1]

India is rapidly approaching the cross-roads of its destiny, and we shall have to make a vital choice. I do not refer to the seven invited gentlemen from Britain; greater things are happening than the Simon Commission. The world is in a ferment and strange forces are at work. Even

1. Article in *The New Leader*, a journal edited by Fenner Brockway, and reprinted in *The Hindu*, 11 August 1928.

from India, with its immemorial weight of tradition and its fear of change, the challenge to the dead past has gone forth and increases in volume.

Right action can only follow dispassionate thinking and some knowledge of the forces that are shaping the modern world. We have today a great number of people prescribing remedies for the diseases that afflict India. Nearly all lay stress on mass organisation and many talk of unity among the various political groups. But there is seldom a consideration of principle, of ultimate ideals, of the place of India in the world. What are we aiming at? What manner of country should we like India to be?

Before we answer these questions, it is worthwhile taking a larger view of world events. We all know the great changes which have followed the industrial revolution, although they have not affected India as much as other countries. Industrialism has resulted in the concentration of wealth in a few countries and a few individuals, in a struggle for raw material and markets, and it has brought into existence the imperialism of the last century. It has caused wars and has laid the seed of future wars. Latterly, it has taken the shape of an economic imperialism, which without the possession of territory is as potent in exploiting other countries as any colonial empire of yesterday.

All this is known, but what perhaps is not sufficiently realised is the international character of industrialism. It has broken down national boundaries and has made each nation dependent on others. The idea of nationalism is almost as strong today as it was, and in its holy name wars are still fought and millions slaughtered. But it is a myth which is not in keeping with reality. The world has become internationalised. Production is international, markets are international and transport is international. Only men's ideas continue to be governed by a dogma which has no real meaning.

Many of us, regardless of what is happening all around us, still live in the ancient past. Some want the Vedic age, others a reproduction of the early days of Islam. We forget that our ancient civilisations were meant for different conditions. Many of our traditions, habits and customs, our social laws, our class system, the position we give to women, and the dogmas which religion has imposed on us, are the relics of a past utterly out of joint with modern conditions. India will only progress, as Turkey and Russia have progressed, when she discards the myths and dogmas of yesterday in favour of the reality of today.

Many of us who denounce British imperialism in India do not realise that it is not a phenomenon peculiar to the British race or to

India, or that it is the consequence of industrial development on capitalist lines. Capitalism necessarily leads to exploitation of one man by another, one group by another, and one country by another. If, therefore, we are opposed to this imperialism and exploitation, we must also be opposed to capitalism. The only alternative that is offered to us is some form of socialism.

As a necessary result of this decision, we must fight British dominion in India, not only on nationalistic grounds, but also on social and international grounds. Britain may well permit us to have a large measure of political liberty, but this will be worth little if she holds economic dominion over us. Another consequence of the socialistic view is that we must change all customs which are based on privilege of birth and caste. We must cast out all parasites and drones, so that the many who lack the good things of life may share in them. Poverty and want are not economic necessities. The world and our country produce enough (or can produce enough) for the masses to attain a high standard of well being, but unhappily the good things are cornered by a few and the millions live in want. In India, the classic land of famine, famines are not caused by want of food, but by the want among the masses of the money to buy food.

We may demand freedom for our country on many grounds, but ultimately it is the economic one that matters. Our educated classes have so far taken the lead in the fight for Swaraj, but in doing so they have seldom paid heed to the needs of the masses. And so the demand has taken the form of the "Indianisation of the Services", of higher posts being thrown open to Indians. Whenever vital questions affecting the masses have arisen, they have been postponed till Swaraj has been attained. But what shall it profit the masses of India—the peasantry, the landless labourers, the workers, the shop-keepers, the artisans—if everyone of the offices held by Englishmen in India today is held by an Indian? It may benefit them a little, because they will be able to bring more pressure to bear on an Indian than on an alien government but fundamentally their condition cannot improve until the social fabric is changed.

Even from a narrow point of view it is now recognised that no effective pressure can be brought to bear on the British Government without mass support but there is fear of the masses and little is done. Mass support cannot come from vague ideals of Swaraj. It is essential that we must clearly lay down an economic programme for the masses, with socialism as its ideal. We must cultivate a revolutionary outlook. Everything that goes towards creating a revolutionary atmosphere helps; everything that lessens it, hinders. I use the word "revo-

lutionary" without any necessary connection with violence. Indeed violence may be the very reverse of revolution. Acts of terrorism often have a counter-revolutionary effect and are injurious to the national cause.

Everything indicates that before long another great war will come. Indian soldiers are made to do the dirty work of British imperialism in China, in Persia, and Mesopotamia, and are used to suppress peoples who are our friends and neighbours and who have done us no harm. It is time we put an end to this shameful exploitation of the courage of our manhood. Let us make up our minds now that if the British Government embarks on any warlike adventure and endeavours to exploit India, it will be our duty to refuse to take part in such a war or to cooperate in anyway whatever.

5. The Kisan and Swaraj[1]

We have been hearing of Swaraj for a long time now. Long speeches are made about it and kisans are asked to help in the fight for Swaraj. But the poor kisans have enough troubles of their own. The British Government tyrannizes over them; the landlords dominate over them; the police, the patwaris, the agents, the chaprasis all harass the kisans and add to his troubles. In such circumstances, of what use can Swaraj be to the kisan! He can give attention to no other problems than how to lighten his daily burden; to provide enough food for his family and to look after them. Has Swaraj anything to do with this problem? Of what use is Swaraj to the kisan if it does not? If only the educated townsfolk are to benefit by Swaraj, why should the kisan struggle for it?

What is the main problem of the kisans? Most of them have no land. They earn their livelihood by labour and that work too they can get only for a few days in a year. Even those who own some land live constantly in the fear of being ejected. It is said that the new Act has made it difficult to eject a kisan, but in reality all know that this Act is of no use. If the landlord so desires he can eject even the occupancy tenant. The law is defective, but, even if it were

1. Pamphlet published in Hindi, September 1928 J N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L.

not, the poor farmer would not be able to derive benefit from it. The zamindar has access to high officials. The police, the court, all help him. And he has money enough for all these. If a case between a landlord and kisan comes up in the court, it is difficult for the kisan to win the case, no matter how just his cause. The kisans often get no receipts for the rents they pay. If the landlord or his agent allege that he has not paid rent, it becomes impossible for the kisan to prove otherwise. He is sure to lose the case and be ejected.

The kisan has to pay large *nazranas* besides the rent; and various kinds of unlawful taxes are exacted from him. He is also often made to work without payment. If an officer comes on tour, they are made to submit fictitious receipts.

These are only a few of the hardships which kisans have to suffer. There are many more, and it is difficult to enumerate all of them. How can these be set right and what will be the fate of the kisans in the Swaraj of which there is so much talk?

In our country few people live in towns, and even fewer are educated. The majority of our people are kisans who live in the villages or labourers who work in the factories. If only the few people living in the towns derive benefit from Swaraj and the kisans remain as they are, then it cannot be deemed to be Swaraj for all. It will be Swaraj of the rich only. Even to this day, we see a section of our people which is extremely rich, be they zamindars or factory-owners or money-lenders or lawyers. On the other hand, a much larger section is steeped in abject poverty. A few reside in palaces, the rest have not even a hut to live in. They even get hardly enough to eat. This is totally against justice. Those who actually work do not reap the benefits, while a few live in ease and comfort without having to work because of either inherited wealth or income derived through usury. Justice can only be achieved when all have equal opportunities to earn and progress and each is paid according to his work.

Therefore we must strive for that Swaraj which ensures such justice, where a few rich men do not live in comfort and exploit others but there is an equitable distribution of the country's wealth. If such a Swaraj can be attained, will not the lot of the kisan be better? As the majority of our people are kisans, such a Swaraj will in fact be a government of the kisans, and when the kisans rule which zamindar or his agent or the police will dare to harass them!

Swaraj may be interpreted in different ways but the kisans should strive for such a Swaraj which ensures justice for him as well as others.

What shall be the shape of such a Swaraj? How can the present injustice be removed? So long as the land is owned by the zamindars,

till then the kisans will be under their tyranny. At present the landlords reap the maximum benefit without doing anything, and those who do not produce anything are a burden on the country. In an ideal country there would be no landlords. A number of countries had very big landlords but they have been removed and the land given to the kisans. We should also try to do the same. Every farmer should own as much land as he and his family are able to cultivate. He should pay a certain amount as tax to the main *Panchayat* of the country. This big *Panchayat* will be the government of the country, but that State will be responsible to the people. The amount collected as tax would then be spent for the improvement of the country. If the landlord is done away with, the kisan's income will increase and they will be more independent. The national revenues will also increase, and this will enable the government to do more for the welfare of the kisans.

In other countries the government regards it as its prime duty to improve the conditions of the peasants. We too could do this if we had a government of the kisans. Canals could be dug, wells could be constructed, hospitals and dispensaries could be opened in the villages. Arrangements can be made for the proper education of the children. If the government is ours and its expenditure is also for our benefit then no one would mind paying taxes to the government. But whatever money is paid to the landlords does not benefit anyone, neither the kisans nor the public.

Therefore our first objective should be the immediate abolition of the system of landlords. We should strive for this in our Swaraj. But it is well known that the landlords are a powerful group and the might of the British Government is behind them. So to remove them will not be easy. But we should keep our ideal before us and strive our utmost for attaining it. Side by side we should also try to reduce our daily miseries as much as possible. This will be discussed in another pamphlet.

6. The Misfortunes of the Kisans[1]

It has been written in another pamphlet that the troubles of the kisans will be over only when they become the owners of the land and there

1. Pamphlet published in Hindi, December 1928 J N Miscellaneous Papers, NMML.

are *no* big landlords. We should try to understand clearly what this means. In other countries this principle is accepted and the number of landlords has been reduced to a few. In our country in some provinces like Punjab and Gujarat there are few big landlords. There the kisans and small landowners are much better off than those in our province. If big landlords could be dispensed with, the condition of our kisans could soon be raised to the same level.

But these things will take time. In spite of the continuance of landlords, we should try to get rid of whatever difficulties we can. What are these hardships? How do they arise? It is very difficult to give an exhaustive list. But generally they are of three kinds :—

(1) *Those arising out of grossly unfair laws, i.e. the laws are against* the kisan;

(2) those resulting from the oppressions of the zamindars, their agents and the police;

(3) those created by the kisans themselves acting in a way that *cause harm to them.*

Every province of the country has different laws regarding the kisans. In our province itself, Oudh has one Tenancy Act while Agra has another.[2] The condition of the kisans in Oudh especially was very bad. There are big taluqdars who extracted huge *nazranas* from the petty kisans who had *no* occupancy rights, and ejected them whenever they liked. They were also victims of torture in various other ways. Eight years ago the kisans of Oudh started a great agitation. They organized big meetings and formed *panchayats*. The government backed the taluqdars and tried to suppress the movement by sending thousands of kisans to jail and taking bonds from others. The agitation was no doubt suppressed for the time being but it had its effect and a new law for the kisans was enacted. This Act was slightly better than the previous one and ostensibly, at least, dispossession was minimized. But even this Act is unjust and the kisans of Oudh still face many hardships.

In Agra too, a new law was recently enacted. It was proclaimed that it would protect the kisans and be more fair to him. But if the law benefited a few it has caused even greater hardships than before to others. And all the kisans of our province are aware of the hardships the Agra kisans have to suffer.

2. The two Acts regulating the relations between landholders and tenants in force in 1921 were the Oudh Rent Act of 1886 and the Agra Tenancy Act of 1901. Both these Acts were amended in 1921 and 1926 respectively and were claimed to confer security of tenure on tenants.

We should try to bring these oppressive laws to the notice of our countrymen and try to get them repealed. We should not forget our fundamental principle i.e. the abolition of landlordism. And while keeping the ultimate end in view, we should try to get the existing laws amended in our favour as best as we can. In order to get this done the kisans must elect their own *panchayats* and discuss the laws among themselves. They should also draw up a list of amendments which they feel would benefit them. They should then combine and start a big agitation for securing these amendments. Special attention should be paid to the question of dispossession, so that only reasonable rents might be realised from them.

Howsoever good the laws may be, a wicked landlord can always oppress his kisans. Even today there are many taluqdars and zamindars, who realise illegal taxes and exact *begar*, and harass the farmers in many ways. It was said in Oudh that a certain zamindar realised over 50 illegal taxes. How is one to prevent these? The only remedy lies in kisans organizing themselves and forming their own *panchayats*; to deal with those who torture them. An agent or chaprasi may be able to suppress an individual kisan but if at any place there is a kisans organisation and they are united to help each other, then even the biggest taluqdar will not be able to suppress them. Therefore it is essential to build up such organisations. The way in which this can be done will be discussed in another pamphlet.

It is said that a man falls by his own stupidity or weakness. The chief reason why our kisans have fallen so low lies in their own evil customs. When they get rid of these practices, they will gain strength automatically. If they strengthen their organisation quickly they will be able to safeguard their rights. Some kisans blame their fate or their sins and regard them as *karma*. These beliefs merely delude others as well as ourselves. He who always bemoans his fate and does nothing, will always remain down-trodden. He who is courageous is bound to succeed. So we should forget such talk and realise that we can mould our own destiny and lessen our hardships if we so desire and apply ourselves to the task. In other countries people do not talk much about fate. They do their work without sitting idle and worrying about their previous births. This is why other countries have progressed so much and we have remained backward.

It is essential that we think about our weaknesses and our bad habits and consider how best we can remove them.

This will be discussed in the next pamphlet.

7. Unemployment in India[1]

How does a country become wealthy? By the labour of its people. The more industrious the people, the greater their production and the richer the country. Those who do not work are a burden on the country and impoverish it. How many of us are adding to our country's wealth and how many are making it poorer?

The kisan's work on the land is productive and adds to the prosperity of our country. Labourers and workers do the same. A carpenter makes something useful like a plough with a piece of wood; a weaver or a blacksmith increases our wealth by his craft. A good writer or artist, too, is an asset to the country. Teachers also help in their own way for education is the greatest of riches and is the chief means of producing wealth. The shopkeepers and tradesmen sell commodities produced by others when they are needed most and thus help to enrich the land.

On the other hand, take a zamindar, who is rich; but where did he get his money? He received it as rent from his tenants. This transfer of money has not increased the country's wealth. Similarly a money-lender, who prospers by collecting heavy interest from others, does not benefit the country in any way. Lawyers too become rich by extracting money from others. As for the idle rich, who live on the property inherited from their ancestors, they are a burden on the country. They might sometimes help in seeing that justice is done, but their profession does not benefit the country to any great extent.

Every man requires food, drink and clothing. If he does not, by his labour, produce sufficient for his needs, he impoverishes the country. Naturally a country with many such people deteriorates. There are many in India who are totally idle, doing practically no work of any kind.

It is said that there are 52 lakh *sadhus* and beggars in India. Possibly some of them are honest. But there is no doubt that most of them are completely useless people, who wish to dupe others and live on their earnings without working themselves. Our kisans are so simple

1. Pamphlet published in Hindi, April 1929. J. N. Miscellaneous Papers, N M M L.

that they worship and feed a man who bears the slightest resemblance to a *sadhu*. But saffron robes or a long *tika* do not make a *sadhu*. Our country is overburdened by these lakhs of idlers and worthless people. And this will continue as long as our kisans continue to have such blind faith in *sadhus*. We should not help these people and force them to work instead. It should be clearly realized that if these 52 lakhs also worked, production would greatly increase. There are many who take advantage of the credulity of others e.g. quacks, and *pandas* at places of pilgrimage—who rob people in the name of religion. These too are a burden on the country and should try to take up work which will bring wealth and prosperity to the country.

I have said that kisans add to the country's wealth by their work. But in our country almost all kisans are idle for a few months every year. Their women too are generally unemployed. Everyone has sufficient work during the harvesting season; but after that there is plenty of leisure and many become a burden on the country for those months. Those without land and working on the land of others are also without employment for a part of this time. We have 20 crores of farmers, and their idle period varies from 2 to 5 months in the year. If we take an average of 2 months per year we find that 3¼ crores are always unemployed in the villages. If such is the degree of unemployment, how can the country become rich?

If we are to eradicate poverty we must first do away with this widespread unemployment. We should try to remove or at least lessen the number of the idle professions. This is not easy, but we should start doing it gradually.

Two steps we can take immediately: refuse alms to the *sadhus* and urge them to work instead, and see that the kisans are usefully employed in their spare time. They should be found some supplementary work.

Mahatma Gandhi has told us how to do this. The kisan can easily spin thread on the *charkha* and grow a little cotton on his land. The village carpenter can make *charkhas* at low cost and everyone can easily learn to handle them. Unemployment can be rooted out at once if all kisans and the women of their households start spinning. In this way they can also get more cloth for their own needs: and at the same time many carders, weavers, dyers and washermen would secure employment. The country's wealth could increase and the kisan's troubles would end.

GENERAL

8. India and the need for international contacts[1]

After a long period of not very splendid isolation India is again beginning to look to the outside world and to take interest in other countries. It is realised that the modern world is closely knit together and no part of it can ignore the rest. Science and industry and new methods of transportation have made each country dependent in a large measure on the others, and though the myth of nationalism flourishes and holds men's minds, it is an outworn creed and internationalism approximates more and more to reality. Wars can seldom be localised, nor can peace endure in a country when the rest of the world is at war. Idealists tell us that the only way to put an end to the ceaseless conflict between nations and to inaugurate an era of world peace is to create a super-state to which all nations will owe allegiance or to have a cooperative world commonwealth.

It is difficult for us in India to think of the larger issue, of world problems and world peace, when the problem that confronts us always is how to free ourselves from our present subjection. And yet our problem is but part of the larger one, and it may be that we shall also have helped greatly in establishing world peace. If imperialism is the real cause of most of the exploitation and troubles in the world today, the classical and typical example of imperialism is the British Empire of India, and the freedom of India becomes an essential condition for world freedom.

Many of our friends in India and outside are therefore continually laying stress on the necessity for us to develop contacts with other countries so that we may appreciate the forces that are moulding the world today and be able to coordinate our activities to them; some of them tell us that we should cooperate with all other anti-imperialist forces to combat imperialism; others favour an Asiatic federation; while a third group are sanguine enough to want us to utilise the machinery of the League of Nations for our benefit. But all these agree that

1. Written on 13 May 1928 and published in *The New Era*, a quarterly published in Madras.

international contacts are necessary for us. Some who are of a contrary opinion fear that too much of internationalism may make us forget the real work at home and make us imagine that we can achieve our freedom with the help of outsiders. The fear is a real one but perhaps it is a little exaggerated. No one who has come up against the hard realities of the struggle is likely to forget that there is little of charity in international dealings and no country can make good except through its own efforts.

The advantages of international contacts from a purely political view point are evident enough. But there is another aspect of the question on which perhaps enough stress has not been laid.

Foreign rule and exploitation of a country have many sins to answer for. Some of the tragedies they bring in their train are obvious and frequent reference is made to them. But one unhappy, and yet unavoidable, consequence to which little attention is usually paid, is the *concentration of nearly all activities in the struggle for freedom*. The rich and many-coloured life of a nation loses its variety and its diversity and only one hue is visible, brilliant enough at times, but usually a drab grey covering the uniform misery of the people. The creative spirit can find little expression and the strength and energy of the chosen in the land are diverted to the long fight for freedom. There are brilliant episodes in this fight when the soul of a whole people is exalted and for the sake of an ideal even men of common clay do heroic deeds. But this work is one of destruction in the main and destruction and creation seldom go together. Ireland offers us a sad and yet a noble example of such a struggle for freedom. For seven hundred years or more she carried on her fight for independence. Her history is full of heroism and sacrifice but the rich and noble culture that was hers has almost passed away. India is another sorry example of stagnation and cultural death brought on by long years of foreign rule.

And yet the struggle for political freedom brings with it an intense desire for one's own culture and traditions. The hatred of foreign rule extends to the foreigner's ways and institutions, and an escape is sought from them in dreams of the past when the foreigner was not there. We think of the golden age of past times, of *Rama Raj*. And this very looking back makes us still more stagnant and rigid and incapable of creative work. We do not try to enrich the present with our thought and action. We merely worship the past and what we worship we make lifeless.

The culture of a people must have its roots in the national genius. It must smell of the soil and draw its inspiration from its past history. But it cannot live for ever on the earnings of its forefathers or on an

old bank account to which nothing is added. It must be a live and growing thing responsive to new conditions and flexible enough to adapt itself to them. In India the moment we tried to make our culture rigid in order to protect it from foreign incursions, we stopped its natural growth, and slow paralysis crept in and brought it near to death. We talk vaingloriously of our immortal civilisation, but what does it consist of today so far as the common people are concerned? Our religion is one of the kitchen, of what to touch and what not to touch, of baths and top-knots, of all manner of marks and fasts, and ceremonies that have lost all meaning; our very gods are manufactured in the factories of England or Japan; our music chiefly consists of painful noises which accompany processions and ceremonials and make the day or night almost unbearable, and usually result in broken heads, or the terrible din whereby our Muslim friends mourn an ancient tragedy that took place in Arabia twelve and a half centuries ago; our artistic cravings are satisfied with hideous prints from Germany; our literature largely consists of sentimental and soppy effusions; in our thought there is little new, we merely repeat and paraphrase and expound *ad nauseam* what was said ages ago, or else we denounce it equally irrationally. The few brilliant exceptions that we have produced in recent times only serve to heighten the surrounding gloom.

We had everything in the past that made for a rich and varied culture and a progressive civilisation. And yet we have landed ourselves in a stagnant quagmire from which escape is not easy. We can effectively escape from it only when the struggle for political independence is ended in our favour, and our energy can be diverted to more creative channels. But success in that struggle depends in some measure on our social and cultural progress. It is a vicious circle and we have to attack the enemy on all fronts, though necessarily the political and economic fronts will claim most attention.

Thus whether we consider our problems from the standpoint of politics or economics or of culture and civilisation in their widest meanings, we are driven to the conclusion that we must end the isolation of India and try to understand world currents and world happenings. We must in addition to our nationalism develop an internationalism which is prepared to profit by the good things of other countries, and to cooperate with the progressive forces of the world. So far practically our sole contact with the outside world has been through England and the English language. This has been unfortunate for we have seen the world through English eyes and with English prejudices. And even with England our relations could not be healthy. Between the rulers and the ruled there can be no wholesome cooperation.

Our international contacts must now therefore be largely with countries other than England. Only thus can we gradually get out of the curious mentality of subservience to England, of the inevitability of the British connection, and see the world in proper perspective. Many of us imagine that because we are under British rule, England is the dominating force in the world today and we feel powerless before this colossus. A wider knowledge of the world situation will convince us that England is no longer what she was and the days of British dominion are numbered. But whatever the future of England may be the world is bigger than England and we cannot understand or profit by the varied cultures of different countries through England only.

We have had in our own day notable examples of eastern nations shaking off the lethargy of ages and making rapid progress through contact with other countries. Every one knows of Turkey but an even more remarkable example is that of Afghanistan. In the course of a very few years Afghanistan has risen from being a backwater of Asia, a dependency of England, to an independent position which commands respect everywhere. How did this happen except through the development of contacts with other countries? Today there are hundreds of young Afghan students in the universities of Europe. One finds them in large numbers in France and Italy and Germany and Turkey, even in Russia. But curiously enough out of the 1600 or more young Afghans studying in Europe, there are hardly any in England. They prefer, and rightly so, Paris, Berlin, Constantinople, Rome and Moscow to Imperial London.

Afghanistan and Nepal have much in common. Their geographical and strategic position is similar, and till a decade ago there was little to choose between the two so far as their political position was concerned. A few years however have made a tremendous difference, and while Afghanistan is forging ahead and taking an effective part in world politics, Nepal still continues in the ancient rut and is daily becoming more subservient to British policy. The difference between the two has been caused principally by world contacts in the case of one and the entire absence of them in the case of the other. If the rulers of Nepal were far-seeing enough they would also claim their full independence and their right to determine their foreign policy. They would also send their representatives to foreign countries and their students abroad to study the science and civilization of the modern world. No one, not even England, can say them nay, and within a brief space of time they would make their country—rich in everything today except wisdom and foresight—independent and strong and prosperous. But they live in their little shells isolated and ignorant of

what happens elsewhere and their chief business appears to be to supply mercenary soldiers to England to be used against their own kith and kin in India.

Some among us feel that contact with the West is dangerous for our culture; it may not be able to survive the impact. If our culture is such a feeble thing the sooner it dies a natural death the better. But if there is any life left in it, it will derive fresh vigour from the healthy impact of other forces and will survive, changed it may be and more suited to the conditions of today, but still based fundamentally on the genius of the race. But the surest way of killing this culture of ours is to isolate it and keep it away from fresh air and make it die of suffocation.

International contacts are essential for India from every point of view. How then can we develop these contacts? Even today there are thousands of Indians, apart from students and labourers, settled in various parts of the world. One can find them not only in the frequented countries of western Europe, but in almost every country from China to Peru. There are exiles who cannot return to their homes, traders, and adventurous spirits who have ventured out without help or favour and have made good. In India we discuss our inability to provide officers for our armies, but in distant countries Indians have risen to high military rank and have even commanded air forces. Unhappily however these Indians in foreign countries are completely cut off from their mother country. They are mostly forgotten by us and we can profit little by them, except in individual cases. Probably the only people who know much about them are the officers of the British secret service. It would be desirable however for our organisation to get into touch with these scattered children of the country, to help them where they can, and to utilise their services for the service of the country whenever possible. There are many difficulties in the way, not the least of them being that most of these residents abroad are so much cut off from present-day India that it is a little difficult for them to appreciate the conditions here. But nonetheless something may be done if an effort is made. The real difficulty in the past has been our fear of compromising ourselves before the British. For it is the privilege of our rulers, among other things, to decide what company we may keep.

To develop political contacts the straightest, though not the easiest, way is for the National Congress to appoint its representatives in certain foreign countries. A few places of world importance may be chosen for this purpose: Paris, the greatest international centre today, New York, Constantinople, or Angora for the Middle East and the Islamic

countries, Moscow, and Tokyo for the Far East. These five places would cover all the live centres of world politics today. Through our representatives there we could keep in intimate touch with current happenings and with the men and women who count. We would also gradually build up a trained body of experts in international matters from whom will develop our diplomatic corps of the future. The difficulties in the way of the Congress are twofold, one of finance and the other and the more serious one of finding suitable representatives. The Congress cannot send out second-rate men to represent it and unhappily we are very poor in politicians of ability who can be expected to undertake this work. There is such a lack of good workers at home that it is difficult to spare one of them. A third difficulty we might have to face would be due to the attitude of the British Government. They will not fancy the idea of our sending representatives abroad, specially to Moscow. But whatever the difficulties may be, if the Congress was really eager to do something in this direction there is little doubt that it could make a beginning.

Another way for us to develop international contacts would be for our chambers of commerce to keep representatives in some foreign countries. I was given to understand in the Continent of Europe that such representatives, although they would be non-officials, would be treated with every consideration, and every facility would be given to them. Their presence would be helpful in developing trade relations with countries other than England and thus in helping in the boycott of British goods. Machinery for use in India could be purchased at better rates than in England, and markets for Indian goods could be found. I have been told that the sports goods manufactured in India have been gradually spreading out in many countries. If our merchants and chambers of commerce develop direct relations with other countries they will gradually free themselves from the stranglehold of the British banks.

It is customary now for large numbers of professors and students to utilise their vacations in paying visits to foreign countries to study conditions there. Americans of this kind, probably because they have the most money, are very much in evidence all over Europe, and even Russia is being invaded by them. I am afraid our students are too poor to visit foreign countries during the vacations but our professors should certainly follow the examples of their confreres in other countries. Our universities should send deputations specially with a view to study educational methods and other problems which might help. This is most necessary in the case of Russia which is passing through

a most interesting and instructive phase and offers problems very similar to ours.

Lastly, I would suggest that a definite and concerted attempt be made to divert the stream of Indian students which goes for study to England to other countries. Mere considerations of self respect ought to have been sufficient to induce our students to keep away from England. We have all heard of the treatment that is meted out to them there, the difficulty of finding lodgings because most people object to Indians, *the want of facilities for study, and the aggressive and offensive social* atmosphere which an Indian has to encounter in England. But even *apart from self-respect it is well known that continental and American* universities teach much better and more thoroughly. If the Indian Civil Service or the Indian Medical Service or the profession of the bar is the objective of an Indian youth then he has little choice. He must go to England and face all the discomfitures and difficulties which are the lot of Indian students there. But if he desires to do any kind of creative or useful work and not be a mere hanger-on to the British Government or a member of an overcrowded and parasitic profession, then it is folly for him to go to England. He will get the best of training—scientific, technical, medical, surgical and cultural—elsewhere and will be treated with far greater courtesy and consideration.

The question of language usually keeps many people away from the continental countries. It is certainly a handicap to have to learn a new language suddenly in the middle of one's university career. But the difficulty is not so great as it appears and the reward of knowing an additional language is certainly worth all the trouble taken. From the national point of view it is very desirable for Indians to acquire a knowledge of other languages besides English. Educated men in India should try to know at least one foreign language. Too many of them know English already and there is no danger of English suffering from want of patronage so long as we remain a dependency and even after. It cannot displace our mother tongue, but it has become, as a friend of mine put it, the *step-mother tongue* of our intellectuals. It is therefore necessary for us to encourage other foreign languages. Our universities have not done much so far in this respect and there is great *room for improvement. Even where other foreign languages are taught* the medium of *instruction is English, which is an exceedingly foolish* way of teaching a third language. The average student would often have to translate twice before he can express himself to begin with in the new language. As a matter of fact there are certain grammatical resemblances between *Hindustani* and for *instance French which would* facilitate the learning of French through Hindustani direct. *Our schools*

and colleges should therefore start the teaching of foreign languages directly through Hindustani or Bengali or any other language of the country, without the intervention of English.

A knowledge of these foreign languages will make it easier for our students to go to France or Germany or Italy or Russia. But even for those who do not go out of the country it will open out new literatures, new worlds of thought and action; and it will enable them to follow the throbbing day to day life of another nation by means of its publications, its journals and reviews.

"To understand all is to forgive all", says the French proverb, and to understand another people and another nation is to like them and appreciate their good points. International contacts promote mutual comprehension and the spirit of goodwill and are thus the surest guarantees of an enduring peace.

9. Reply to address of the Calicut Municipal Council[1]

Pandit Jawaharlal said that he was thankful to them for the address they were good enough to present to him. They had referred in the address to the fact that he had been connected with municipal administration also. Municipal administration covered a wide field of activities, and it was highly essential that one should study the various problems of a municipality. The activities of a municipal administration included not only sanitation, but also cultural and other sides of public life, and what was necessary was a standing programme of activities. Nothing would result from a vague and unsettled programme, and the question was how would they be able to draw up a definite programme of activities? The primary object of a municipality should be to create happiness and prosperity in the city, and that should be the ideal of every municipal council. They should give as much cultural and educational facilities as possible. It was the duty of a municipal administration to see that every man in the municipality had a home, and if there

1. 30 May 1928 *The Hindu*, 31 May 1928.

was a single individual without a home, it was the fault of municipal administration. But, where were the funds to come from? They were suffering from paucity of funds in Calicut like many other larger municipalities.

He then compared the present prosperous condition of the Vienna Municipality with that of the other municipalities in the world, and said that that municipality was now one of the best in the world with all kinds of comforts and facilities for public life Usually, the Municipal Acts they had, were not of a perfect kind, and the gentlemen, very often the Collectors and other officers, who sat in judgment over their activities, were not perfect symbols of municipal administration, for they would be perfectly ignorant of the various activities of municipal bodies. Unless they changed the Acts, it would be impossible for them to do anything independently in the interests of the public.

In regard to funds, he suggested the imposition of a tax on land values. They must lay down, as already stated by him, a programme of what should be done to create a better order of humanity in the town, and create public opinion in favour of it, by which they would be able to induce the government to accept their view.

10. For a King's Favour[1]

King Amanullah Khan of Afghanistan has returned from his long journeying and has been welcomed back by his own people. From capital to capital of the countries of the West he went on his triumphal tour and everywhere he and his charming queen received a welcome such as the greatest of monarchs might well envy. A few years ago Afghanistan was almost an unknown kingdom, hidden away in the mountains, dependent on England for many things and not daring to offend even the Government of India. Today it has an assured international position and treats with other powers on a basis of equality. Much is expected of Amanullah Khan in the future, but if he did nothing more for his country's sake and belied the bright promise of his early deeds, even so his name is assured of inclusion in the roll of the great builders of nations.

1. 27 June 1928. JN. Miscellaneous Papers, NMML.

Why was the king of a little mountain State so cordially and sumptuously welcomed by the great powers? Was it for love of him or his country or because of the charm of his gracious queen? All the world knows the reason for this cordiality. Afghanistan though small and powerless compared to the great European powers occupies a key position in case of war between England and Russia. In no other contingency is Afghanistan an important consideration. And because there is danger of war between England and Russia England has tried her utmost to win over Amanullah and, with a singular lack of tact, has at the same time tried to impress upon him the might of the British Empire. Every device was tried to win the King's favour and, fearful of Russian influence, every attempt was made to prevent him from visiting the Soviet Union. Offers of alliances, it is said, were made by England, and of loans on easy terms.

With what impressions Amanullah has returned to Kabul no outsider can definitely say. But even the outsider can see the indications and read the obvious. The frantic efforts of the British Government to prevent Amanullah from visiting Moscow failed signally. He went and during his stay there he did not fail to offer his tribute to the great man who has made the Russia of today. "Carrying a red wreath," a report says, "tied with the black and yellow colours of Afghanistan, he went down into Lenin's mausoleum in the Red Square and stood for a long time at the salute, gazing at the body of the man who first made human equality, and specially the equality of Asiatic and European, a living reality."

Wedged between two great powers Afghanistan has to make up its mind from which side danger threatens most. Apparently Amanullah has made up his mind for reports have it that having refused to be entangled into a British alliance he has entered into alliances with Turkey and Persia. And both these two countries, it is well known, have a definite understanding with the Soviet Union.

That the danger to Afghanistan from the British side is real and pressing and daily grows nearer is evident to every student of international affairs. About a year ago—on July 1st 1927—the military correspondent of the London *Daily Telegraph* frankly stated that British policy was to take an offensive spring forward from the Indian frontier. The best way, it said, "of countering any danger" was "by an offensive forward spring, rather than by any passive cordon based on infantry." And the best way to carry out this forward spring was by means of "mobile forces, mechanised and air." We all know what this offensive forward spring in the name of defence means. It means that the British Government will not wait for danger or an attack or

perhaps even a declaration of war. It means that England will herself take the initiative and declaring war on Soviet Russia will immediately sweep across Afghanistan on the military principle which dictated the German invasion of Belgium in 1914.

Preparations for this offensive continue apace. We have just been told that more money must be spent on the Indian army to make it thoroughly up to date in its mechanical and air equipment. Large air ports are being established and military roads and strategic railways on the frontier are being built. As soon as these preparations are deemed to be complete a slumbering India may wake up to the boom of cannon and the whirr of air fleets. We can almost hear the drums of war in the answer that Sir Austen Chamberlain has sent to the American proposals for the outlawry of war. After making wide reservations relating to the British Empire, he has expressly said that the proposed treaty will not apply to countries not officially recognised. The only great country not so recognised is Russia. No indication could be clearer of what British policy is aiming at.

With this background before us we can realise the significance of the welcome given to King Amanullah in London. Weak as his State may be comparatively, it is a factor of importance in the coming war. Even little Belgium could hold up the German armies for many invaluable weeks. And Afghanistan can make a great deal of difference to the carefully laid plans of the British General Staff. Hence the frantic attempts that have been made to gain the King's favour.

For us in India there is a moral which it were well if we understood and grasped thoroughly. If the little State of Afghanistan is a factor of importance in a war, how much more is the goodwill of the Indian people. If we but realised the true position we would see that in our dealings with England today we occupy the dominant position and can dictate our terms. Weak and powerless as we are, we can make all the difference in any war which England may indulge in to further her imperialist designs. To gain the favour of a king, England went very much out of the way and tried her utmost. But to gain the goodwill and favour of an outraged people, what can England not do?

11. On ministers and the like[1]

"Politics", said George III of England, "are a trade for a rascal, not a gentleman." The remark was perhaps a little exaggerated. And yet all of us who dabble in this trade weary of it at times and feel disgusted with it. Not unoften we see others in the trade, sometimes in our own ranks, more frequently in the ranks of our opponents, for there is less of charity in judging those who are not with us, who seem to demonstrate the truth of the dictum of the English King. It is strange to watch the making of a politician. A doctor has to go through a laborious course of training before he can venture to practise his profession and no sensible person will go to a quack or one without training for his treatment. So does the engineer, the electrician or any other expert in science or industry. No one will dream of asking a man who is not a trained engineer to build a bridge.

But no such training is required of the politician, and every man is good enough for the governance of his brother men. Professors and other highbrows of their kind may write fat books on the science of politics. They may tell us of social problems which are convulsing society and suggest solutions; they may delve deep into the laws of economics, of eugenics and sociology and try to fathom the psychology of man, and discuss a hundred other matters of import to the leader of men. But the politician does not bother himself with these musty tomes. He is content with his fund of "common sense" and is quite sure that this is sufficient equipment for him to take charge of the ship of state. But, alas! common sense is often common nonsense and the ship founders frequently and brings disaster to many. But, strange as it may seem, repeated disasters have not exposed the politician for what he is or opened the eyes of the people to his utter incompetence. In highly advanced democratic England we see "Jix" of the Home Office behaving like a privileged buffoon attached to the royal courts of old, and Sir Austen Chamberlain making up in pomposity what he lacks in wisdom and sense, and of course our very own Lord Birkenhead who has such a pretty conceit about his own greatness and who is so lost in the contemplation of the grandeur that was F. E. Smith and

1. 10 July 1928 *The Searchlight*, Anniversary Number, 1928.

is now Birkenhead. Such are the gods of England! It is no wonder that Romain Rolland has suggested that instead of talking about the outlawry of war we should outlaw these men who make war. We should outlaw the politicians.

But why go to distant England for examples when our own country can produce the choicest specimens. Perhaps in the days to come we may have a museum of historical curiosities, something after the fashion of Madame Tussaud's[2] exhibition with its chamber of horrors, which alas! is no more. In this museum there will surely be exhibited models of many of our ministers and our executive councillors for the wonder of the coming generations. The teacher of youth in that happier age will show these sleek and shiny models to his students and tell them of the barbarous days of old when these people held sway and were charged with the direction of human affairs. He will point out that in those days not competence, nor wisdom, nor knowledge, not even the cruder qualities which capture the imagination of the crowd, were the tests for high office. Indeed they were disqualifications, and the greater and more abysmal the ignorance the more the chance of success in the race for office. He will tell them that truth and adherence to any principle were at a discount in this tribe of office-seekers and the prize usually fell to those who betrayed the cause they had stood for and gave the fullest evidence of inconsistency.

Every province of India will have its representation in this museum of curiosities. There will be the C.P. with its notorious example of a member of a party pledged to non acceptance of office, casting his pledges and his principles to the four winds of heaven and developing overnight into an executive councillor.[3] Other provinces will be there also but surely the largest and the most prominent part will be that of the United Provinces of today. Chief amongst his peers will be the gallant Nawab[4] who presides so gracefully in frock coat and trousers over the domain of local self-government. Knight of many a plush carpet and a hero of green lawns, he pursues his primrose way from party to party. Not for him the straight and narrow path of knowledge. He disdains books and has not been known even by his intimates to read any except perhaps the lighter forms of literature to be found

2. A famous exhibition of wax works in London. Madame Tussaud was a French lady who escaped to London at the time of the French Revolution.
3. The reference is to S. P. Tambe, the Swarajist president of the Central Provinces Legislative Council. In October 1925 he accepted membership of the Governor's Executive Council without the knowledge of his colleagues and party leaders.
4. Nawab Sir Mohammad Yusuf, Minister of Local Self-Government in U.P.

at the bookstalls of railway stations. His greatest friends cannot accuse him of dallying with anything that concerns intellect or of displaying any measure of intelligence. On his own subject of local self-government he has preserved a virgin mind, and knowing as much about it as he does of the condition of Mars can give an absolutely unbiased opinion.

Another interesting model will be of the Nawab's new colleague, the noble raja[5] whose conscience has convinced him that he must sacrifice himself at the altar of high office in spite of his opinions and convictions, in spite of his loudly declared views and protestations. The student of psychology will find him and his like an interesting study.

Many others there will be in this museum, and the future student will wonder at the strange dispensation under which wisdom and knowledge were specially lacking where they were most needed. He will wonder still more that any people should be so degraded or deluded as to tolerate even for an instant turncoats and ignoramuses. But if he has been a student of history he will know that such has been the fate of every country under alien rule. Evil flourishes thereunder and little of good. And he may recall the lines of a great poet of an earlier day about another land which suffered the agony of foreign domination:

> "She stood before her traitors bound and bare,
> Clothed with her wounds and with her naked shame,
> As with a weed of fiery tears and flame,
> Their motherland, their common weal and care
> And they turned from her and denied, and swore
> They did not know this woman nor her name.
> And they took truce with tyrants and grew tame,
> And gathered up cast crowns and creeds to wear
> And rags and shards regilded — Then she took
> In her bruised hands their broken pledge, and eyed
> These men so late so loud upon her side
> With one inevitable and tearless look,
> That they might see her face whom they forsook;
> And they beheld what they had left, and died."

5. Raja Jagannath Baksh Singh, deputy leader, U.P. Nationalist Party (which boycotted the Simon Commission) deserted his party when he was appointed Education Minister and cooperated with the Simon Commission.

12. The proscription and censorship of books[1]

Human nature is notoriously perverse. One has but to forbid a thing or taboo it to make it attractive. And out of the fear of taboo and its fascination arises the eternal conflict in man, the age-long struggle to escape from the wiles of the evil one. But, alas, escape is difficult for Satan peeps in at every corner and beckons to the unwary, and perhaps even more so to those who have been forewarned. Even saints are not beyond his reach for legend tells us that the holy *rishis* were sorely tempted by the *apsaras* of Indra's court, and all the great ones of the earth have had to go through the slippery valley of temptation. On this conflict the scientists of the modern age have built up the structure of psychoanalysis and we are told that all the ills that flesh is heir to arise from this conflict and repressed desire.

What then is to be done? Is evil to be allowed to flourish unchecked lest the very checking of it increase its fascination? For undoubtedly the sins of this world would lose half their flavour if they were not forbidden to us. It may be that their chief attraction lies not in them but in the red livery that society makes them put on. Discard the livery and see them for what they are worth—naked and unbeautiful and unattractive. But it is not easy to do away with the livery and its fascination. Centuries of taboo have engraved it on our minds and hearts and only a long and laborious course of instruction can right our perspective.

What then can we do? "The easiest way to overcome temptation" said Oscar Wilde, "is to succumb to it." A certain method, no doubt in a way, but a curious one and not to be commended.

But let us leave these high problems to philosophers and psychoanalysts and the like. I am concerned at present with the banning of books. The papers have recently announced that the Viceroy or the Home Member or the Governor-General and his whole Council put together have proscribed a recent addition to the 'Today and Tomorrow' series. I have a soft corner for this series and have read and enjoyed a goodly number of its little books, and I am afraid I am a little prejudiced against the Viceregal crowd. My sympathies were therefore entirely with the book without knowing in the least what it contained.

1. JN. Miscellaneous Papers, NMML.
This article, dated 6 March, appears to have been written in 1929.

With the perversity of human nature to which was added the perversity of the Indian politician I determined to read the book[2] in case chance threw it in my way. Subsequent researches however led me to the discovery that the book was largely a record of the adventures of the author in the brothels of Calcutta and from his ripe experience garnered in these surroundings he had judged India and prophesied about her future. He informs us that he encountered honourable members of Council in these haunts of his. Perhaps his experiences were confined to the pre-reform days; otherwise he might have encountered even bigger fry. For, may we whisper it? Those whom Viceroys and Governors delight to honour are seldom known for anything except ignorance and incompetence.

Presumably the government has banned the book to protect the good name of India. There was I believe a cry for the banning of Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* also. But I must confess that I see no logic or sense in this suppression of books. From the larger point of view I do not believe in the official censoring or proscription of books in any country, much less in India where the official happens to be a foreigner. But even apart from this, if India is to be protected from the evil effects of the book it should be proscribed in other countries. No one in India is likely to be misled by a journalist's account of Calcutta brothels and his deductions therefrom.

It is a dangerous power in the hands of a government: the right to determine what shall be read and what shall not. And it almost always fails to achieve its object. Those who wish to do so can usually get hold of the proscribed book. In India the power is likely to be misused and has been misused a hundred times. We have to be careful therefore lest one right use of the power is held to justify its misuse on scores of occasions.

I believe that Mazzini's[3] *Essays* were long banned by the Government of India. A more flagrant instance of misuse of power it would be difficult to find. Savarkar's[4] history of the *War of Independence* is another famous example. It is a brilliant book though it suffers from prolixity and want of balance occasionally. I had occasion to read it in Europe and I have often felt that a new edition, more concise and with many of the oratorical flights left out, would be an ideal

2. R. J Minney, *Shiva or the Future of India* (London, 1929).
3. Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-72); revolutionary theorist of the Italian Risorgimento and of European nationalism
4. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966); suffered incarceration and internment 1910 37 for his revolutionary activities, later leader of the Hindu Mahasabha.

corrective to the British propaganda about the events of 1857. But I am afraid we shall have to wait for this till Swaraj comes.

Sometimes, I fear that even with Swaraj we may have to face a strict censorship. The spirit of puritanical censorship is evident enough in many quarters in India today and, much as we may dislike it, some of us who desire no censorship of books may find ourselves in a minority then. Let us hope that we shall carry on the good fight against suppression of books even then. Meanwhile let us not be caught in a trap and give up a principle simply because we happen to think that a book that the government has banned is undesirable.

13. Slaves of the Gods[1]

"What is celebrity?" asked a French philosopher and he suggested an answer to his query — "to be known by those whom we do not know." Katherine Mayo may well claim a measure of celebrity or notoriety according to this definition. Little known in the continent of Europe, discredited and almost forgotten in her native country, many in England and India still remember her. In England, perhaps because she is supposed to have supplied a moral argument, which was difficult enough to find, for the continuance of British domination over India. In India for a different reason.

Probably no foreigner has aroused the anger and bitter resentment of the Indian people as much as Katherine Mayo. There is hardly an Indian of note, from Gandhi and Tagore downwards, who has not condemned her travesty of Indian life. Even those who were dragged in by her in support of her argument have turned against her and denied her. Yet, with amazing self-confidence, or of conceit and arrogance, she has gone her way and not profited by past experience.

I well remember my first reading of *Mother India*. It was on a hillside in Switzerland clothed in the beauty of spring flowers. And, as I read, a feeling of nausea overcame me, a sense of physical sickness, and I wondered if I was reading about my own country or of some wild and savage land unknown to me.

1. A review of Katherine Mayo's *Slaves of the Gods* in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 25 April 1929.

I claimed some knowledge of India. I had lived and wandered in many of her towns and villages, and had looked with unfriendly eyes on some of her old-world customs and traditions. Yet, the picture in *Mother India* was a strange and new one, and even when it bore any resemblance to a familiar landscape it was a distorted and coloured semblance. But the book was cunningly written and produced a strange first effect on its readers.

This much cannot be said of her short stories collected in this book called *Slaves of the Gods*. Her theme is the old one but the stories make poor reading. Occasionally they anger, sometimes they shame, but usually they bore the reader by their obvious sensationalism. Probably, if Katherine Mayo had not written them, few would have paid them much attention. They are of the kind which frequently appear in mission magazines meant to impress the virtuous and wealthy widows of the West in order to induce them to subscribe to mission funds.

There is little of artistry in them. The language is laboured and overdone and the well-known phraseology of Anglo-India, which has little to do with the language of the people, is used in order to create an Indian "atmosphere." In a jungle of degraded humanity—where religion is prostitution and rape on immature child-wives and infanticide, and the forcible suppression of vast numbers of "untouchables"—appear from time to time strong silent "sahibs" and "lady miss sahibs" doing gallant deeds of knight-errantry and bearing evidence of the nobility of the religion of Christ.

There are twelve of these stories and we are told at the beginning of each that "the narrative is taken from real life." We may well doubt the correctness of this statement as Miss Mayo has not proved herself a stickler for the truth in her previous book. But, even apart from this, it is difficult to understand how she could get the real facts of many of her stories.

One of the stories—"The Two Ranis"—purports to deal with the happenings in a princely *zenana* where secret conspiracies are hatched. How Miss Mayo could get the purport of these conversations and decisions passes one's comprehension. She must either be singularly gullible or singularly careless in mixing fact and fiction. The story of "The Two Ranis" is a remarkable one, bearing the impression of improbability in every page. It is difficult enough to believe that any occurrence corresponding to it could have taken place; it is not possible to conceive how any one could verify it even if it occurred.

Another story tells us of a man throwing out his girl-wife through the window into the street on her bridal night because apparently she did not come up to his expectations. Presumably Miss Mayo thinks

that this is not an uncommon occurrence in India, and stranger still, that a crowd would watch the girl lying with broken limbs in the street *without help or comment.*

A third story gives a graphic account of the killing of infant girls in the Punjab and the method of killing them is to leave them "alive" in a hedge of thorns. Why the guilty party should not adopt safer and quicker and less cruel methods we are not told. And when, by a freak of chance, a girl is rescued from the hedge just in time and grows up for two or three years, another attempt is made to kill her, but this time with a knife. The attempt does not succeed as the father, who is a leading vakil and the son of a big zamindar, repents at the last moment. Really, some of Miss Mayo's informants must be the direct descendants of Ananias.

But the story which gives us a real insight into Miss Mayo's mind and makes her bonafides suspect, is "The Widow". We are told of the troubled days of 1921 when "in the very streets of the capital (Calcutta), secret plotters and killers vied with open assassins to terrorize all who opposed the will of the new-made saint, Gandhi, then at the zenith of his power. And though the saint himself continued to preach nonviolence, his speech, day by day, was the speech that breeds hatred and destruction and drives simple folk to the spilling of blood." Young men, who preach the boycott of foreign cloth, are said to curse the widow for having worn a Manchester *sari* and, for fear of the curse, she discards her only covering and hangs herself till she is dead.

No newspaper had apparently hinted at this terrible consequence of the boycott movement, none of the many opponents of the boycott had mentioned it anywhere, but Miss Mayo has succeeded in obtaining the details of this tragedy of a Bengal village.

Such amazing stories make Miss Mayo suspect. Her object is not a bonafide one, in spite of her protestations. She appears to be full of malice against that unhappy creature, the Indian politician, and she is prepared to give credit to the wildest of accusations against him.

She had material enough in India to make out a terrible indictment, but she has spoilt her case by deliberate mis-statement and wilful exaggeration, and most people who were prepared to listen to her are *today suspicious of her statements. Her twelve stories are full of these* exaggerations and any person *with a knowledge of India can point out* the obvious inaccuracies. But, even if most of the stories are mainly true, some of them at least cannot be typical.

It matters little, however, what Miss Mayo says or writes. India will carry on in spite of her. But what does matter to every Indian is the

condition of men and women in this country and the many evil customs we suffer from. Katherine Mayo may indulge in exaggerations and falsehood, but there can be no doubt that the real sting in what she writes lies in the kernel of truth that it contains. This hurts.

For the fact is that Indian society is in a bad way and our old and outworn customs cling to us like the Old Man of the Sea and are as difficult to be rid of. Why we are crushed under this weight of custom and tradition is another matter. Miss Mayo would have us believe that it is all due to the Hindu religion, to our "ancient code's inhibitions". Religion has much to answer for in all parts of the world, and India has certainly suffered enough from it. But other and more important factors go also to build the fabric of society, as Miss Mayo may find out when she starts to learn a little. The economic condition of the people has something to do with it.

Perhaps, some day, when a real history of India is written, we may be able to trace the development of these many factors, their reactions on each other and the tremendous effect of foreign rule. Unhappily, such a history will not be available to us for some time, for every such attempt is frowned upon by our "sahib rulers".

The history that has to be written will deal with many things. It will tell us of the strange fact that a society, which had dynamic elements of change and adaptability in it, became more and more static under foreign rule, of how the British rulers, themselves the representatives of what might be considered a more advanced social system, became the bulwarks of reaction and conservatism. Not directly interested in social progress in India, and not daring to take the risk of offending the conservative elements, they threw the whole weight of the State against reform. Hindu law, which was very largely custom, even adapting itself to changing conditions, became under their rule rigid and unyielding, only to be altered by the legislature. And every attempt to alter it thus was met with the active opposition of the conservatives.

But, to understand the problem of India in any of its aspects, we have to come back not to religions, as Miss Mayo imagines, but to her economic condition, to her great poverty and the causes that have produced it. For India is a strange medley today of the old and the new, having little of good of either and much of evil. Her social structure, her family system, are relics of feudalism and of an agricultural and pre-industrial age; how can they fit in with modern conditions? And yet modern conditions have proved no blessing to her as yet.

The industrial age has come upon her stealthily and deprived her of her old economy, but it has given her little to replace it. Industrialism has not meant wealth for this country or a higher standard of living or education, or better health, or spirit of cooperation, or the power of organization, or any of its other virtues. So, unhappy India, at the same time feudal and capitalist, agricultural and industrial, suffers from the vices and shortcomings of both and has few of their virtues.

Who can be responsible for this except the type of government that has ruled India for 170 years or more, and during this long period had the fullest power and opportunity to do what it chose, and yet has produced this starving and illiterate and miserable generation of Indians with sad and listless faces and sunken eyes from which hope has all but fled?

And the remedy for this lies not in the religion of Christ or in any other religion deluding the people into an acceptance of their present degraded lot by giving them hopes of the hereafter. The remedy lies in the religion of social and economic equality and, if the Hindu religion and Islam are not prepared to admit this principle in its entirety, then Hinduism and Islam cannot look forward to much of a future. It is only in a socialist state that one can look forward to freedom from oppression of one man by another or one class by another.

Social reform legislation is good and to be worked for and welcomed. But all the good legislation in the world will not make a man or woman a free agent so long as he or she is economically under another's bondage. It is this economic bondage that is the root cause of the troubles of the Indian woman and to the removal of this our energies must be directed. The joint family system of the Hindus, a relic of a feudal age, utterly out of keeping with modern conditions, must go and so also many other customs and traditions. But the ultimate solution lies only in a complete refashioning of our society.

Meanwhile, let us by all means attack each separate evil—*purdah*, which is fortunately disappearing, and early marriage and untouchability and women's illiteracy. The Indian intelligentsia has a heavy task and many have nobly essayed it. But there are far too many whose words are louder than their acts and who seek to cover their social obscurantism by pious phrases or by political extremism. They are gradually being found out and they must realize that political progress cannot be divorced from social and economic progress, and the choice lies between progress all along the line or stagnation and reaction.

The picture that Katherine Mayo draws of India is a false one. To her India spells sex and nothing more—our religion is the religion of

the phallus, our science concupiscence, our chief diversion sexual intercourse with immature girlwives. This is a monstrous picture and it is easy enough to demonstrate its falsity and to retort in kind. It is easy enough to discuss the sex conditions and problems which dominate the western world and which have practically put an end to the family and the home and are taking the race to none knows where. That would be easy but it would serve little purpose. Let us realise that the beam in our eyes is a big one and try to cast it out. How will it profit us to know that the beams in others' eyes are also big?

15

MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE

1. On police atrocities in Banaras[1]

Sir,

May I crave the courtesy of your columns to give publicity to what appears to me to be an amazing instance of barbarity?

About a week ago two Bengali youths—Anil Chandra Mukerji and Manindra Nath Banerji—belonging to the Gandhi Ashram, Benares, and doing *khadi* work, were arrested in Benares, presumably as a consequence of the revolver shots fired at a police officer[2] on January 13. They were kept in the police lock up for two or three days and were then removed to the prison. Both were kept in heavy fetters. Later Anil Chandra's fetters were removed, but Manindra Nath has been kept in fetters, night and day, and they are heavy. No one was allowed to see Manindra Nath and when his people engaged a vakil, the prison authorities informed them that he refused to sign the *vakalatnama*. It was impossible to find out how far this was true as no interview could take place. A barrister, who did not require a *vakalatnama*, then applied to see him. He was permitted to do so. He found him in heavy fetters and when he proceeded to take instructions from him a police shorthand reporter wanted to take down every word that was said. The barrister left in disgust.

I am afraid my knowledge of the law is rusty and I do not know what is permitted to prison and police authorities and what is not. But it seems to me an extraordinary thing for a person who is not even an under-trial prisoner, against whom no charge has been so far framed and no offence specified, to be kept in fetters and denied an opportunity to instruct his lawyer properly. I do not know if this is a peculiarity of the Benares official hierarchy. If so, I would suggest to them a little trip to Soviet Russia to learn more modern and more humane methods of prison treatment.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Letter to the Editor, 21 January 1928. *The Leader*, 23 January 1928.
2. Jitendra Nath Banerji, deputy superintendent of police, *CID* was shot at Banaras on 13 January 1928. A. C. Mukerji and M. N. Banerji, belonging to the Gandhi Ashram at Banaras, were arrested on this charge.

2. To F. J. Ginwala[1]

14 March 1928

Dear Mr. Ginwala,[2]
I am in receipt of your letter of the 17th February. I am sorry for the delay in answering it. I have been travelling about and out of touch with my correspondence.

I would gladly help the *National Herald* if I could but I really do not see how I can raise any money for it here. The usual custom is for us to go to Bombay for money and not for Bombay to come here. We are having the greatest difficulty in raising small sums for our daily Congress work. Besides the U.P. is very badly in need of a decent newspaper. But want of funds always stands in the way. We are a poor province at least so far as public work is concerned. The zamindars have the money but they have no desire to part with it, specially in these days of socialist talk. You will thus see that I am wholly unable to help the *Herald* with any money.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5/1928, p. 31, N.M.M.L.
2. A solicitor, and Secretary, Bombay Legislative Council Swaraj Party in 1928, had desired to start a newspaper, the *National Herald*, in Bombay.

3 To Kanhaiyalal Shastri[1]

31 March 1928

Dear Mr. Kanhaiyalal,[2]
I have your letter with the manifesto of the *Sudharak Sangh*. I have read through this manifesto and I find that I agree with almost everything it contains. In some respects perhaps I would go further.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-39/1928 (Pt. I), p. 39, N.M.M.L.
2. Assistant Registrar, Kashi Vidyapeeth. Died 1932.

I feel that in all our attempts at social reforms the economic factor is forgotten. Social reforms would follow automatically with some measure of economic freedom of the individual, man or woman. The whole question of women's rights is one of women's economic freedom.

I often feel that the joint Hindu family system has done a vast amount of harm to our country and made most of our young men sheer parasites whose sole function in life is to live on others.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

14 April 1928

My dear Bapuji,

We have just been shocked to learn from the papers about Maganlal Bhai's death. He was the last person I would have thought of in this connection. But somehow our strongest and healthiest pass away and the weak and the ailing remain. To you and the *khadi* movement his passing away must be a great loss. He had intended coming to Allahabad this month from Calcutta and we were all looking forward to seeing him here. But that is not to be.

We seem to be having a cup full of misfortunes. One of our best workers here, Anandi Prasad Sinha, the secretary of the district Congress committee and a member of the A.I.C.C. died last week. He went on April 13 for a National Week meeting to a village about 20 miles from here. After finishing the meeting he was in a hurry to return to Allahabad to attend the meeting here too. In trying to mount the railway train he slipped and fell and had his leg cut off. He might perhaps have lived on if he had been looked after properly, but he was neglected both by the railway people and the police and when at last he arrived in hospital here there was great delay in tending to him. To the last, with profuse bleeding going on, he kept on smiling. We have few enough people who do any national work now. They can be counted on the fingers of one hand. And the loss of one good worker is a big loss.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 14710.

5. On the death of Anandi Prasad Sinha[1]

Sir,

You have already given publicity to the news of the tragic death of Syt. Anandi Prasad Sinha. To those of us who knew him and had worked with him the news came as a painful shock. He had been prominently connected with Congress activities in the city and district, was the secretary of the Allahabad District Congress Committee and a member of the All India Congress Committee. Indeed he died as he had lived in working for the Congress and the country. He had gone to Handia on April 13th to address a National Week meeting there and in his attempt to get back to Allahabad in time for the public meeting here the same evening he met with his tragic accident.

I am craving the courtesy of your space however not to mourn the loss of a valued comrade but to draw attention to certain facts connected with his death which must concern every resident of Allahabad. Anandi Prasad is dead and nothing that can be done now is of any use to him. But I am by no means sure that he would have died if ordinary precautions had been taken by the railway authorities and the police and prompt treatment given to him by a qualified doctor. I trust however that those responsible for rendering medical aid to victims of accidents in Allahabad will learn a lesson from Anandi Prasad's case and make better arrangements for the future.

Anandi Prasad met with the accident at Handia station. As he was trying to enter the 18.5 train from there he slipped and fell and one of his legs was almost completely cut off. The railway authorities and police did not help in any way. They did not think it was any concern of theirs. Indeed the guard objected strongly to Anandi Prasad being brought by that train to Allahabad. No step was taken, so far as I know, by any official to send a telegram to Allahabad to summon medical aid or to have it ready. A fellow passenger and some students did all they could for Anandi Prasad. One of them sent a telegram to the police at the Allahabad city station. On arrival at the city station they found however that no arrangements had been made. An officious policeman was more interested in taking down statements than in rendering any help to Anandi Prasad who was bleeding profusely and for whom every minute's delay was vital.

1. Letter to the Editor, 20 April 1928. *The Leader*, 23 April 1928.

He was carried to the Colvin Hospital. He arrived there at about 8 p.m. or soon after. There were no qualified doctors there and the compounders present took little interest in the case. Apparently they did not even take the trouble to fetch a doctor. Meanwhile some of Anandi Prasad's friends learning of the sad news had turned up. Finding that the compounders were a hopeless lot and no one was attending to the patient, they went in search of doctors. The assistant surgeon, who lives in the hospital compound, was unfortunately away in the civil station attending to an urgent case, the sub-assistant surgeons were in their respective houses, one I believe in Lukerganj. A telephone message was sent to Pandit Motilal Nehru who immediately telephoned to the Civil Surgeon. The Civil Surgeon promised to attend to the case. He telephoned to the hospital but as it happened there was no member of the hospital staff in the office to receive the message. A friend of ours who was present went to the telephone and was told by the Civil Surgeon to find out Dr. Mukerji or the sub-assistant surgeon. The Civil Surgeon apparently thought that he was addressing the compounder. On Pandit Motilal Nehru again telephoning to the Civil Surgeon he decided to come round himself.

Meanwhile attempts were being made to trace the sub-assistant surgeons. This was not an easy matter. When the house of one of them was found a lady came out and first stated that he was in and later that he was not at home. The other sub-assistant surgeon apparently carries on private practice and usually sits in a chemist's shop. He was not to be found there. He was at last found at his house and asked to come to the hospital immediately. He did come but on arrival discovered that he had left his spectacles at home and so he could not see properly.

The spectacles and the Civil Surgeon arrived almost simultaneously. The Civil Surgeon instead of attending to the patient immediately spent some minutes in conversing with his staff and in expressing his displeasure at the person who had telephoned to Pandit Motilal Nehru. The Civil Surgeon and the sub-assistant surgeon's "eyes" arrived at about 9.15 p.m. Thus Anandi Prasad lay in the hospital for over an hour without being attended to. Till about 9 he was quite cheerful but gradually the great loss of blood began to tell and he began to sink. The Civil Surgeon left at about 10.30 p.m. and the sub-assistant surgeon soon after. Anandi Prasad died at about 3 a.m.

The facts stated above need no comment and the moral is obvious. It seems to me that the railway authorities and the police were grossly negligent and the arrangements at the Colvin Hospital for emergency cases are as inefficient as they can well be. The Municipal Board is

supposed to be in charge of the hospital although so far as I am aware it has seldom interfered with the internal management. The chronic disease of paucity of funds always pursues it. But whatever the reason may be it is a scandalous state of affairs that Allahabad should not have a place where an Indian victim of an accident can be attended to promptly and efficiently. The Civil Hospital, meant almost solely for European patients, suffers from none of the defects and deficiencies of the Colvin Hospital. It is, as every hospital should be, thoroughly up to date. But the Indian has to go to the Colvin and Indian life is cheap.

I trust the Municipal Board will enquire into the matter and will take immediate steps to remedy these defects.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. To Ratanlal Bhatia[1]

4 May 1928

Dear Sir,[2]

I thank you for your letter of the 19th April. With much that you say I am in agreement. You have referred to a number of important aspects of the national problem and any attempt by me to deal with them in the course of this letter will result in my writing a long essay on the subject. I am afraid I cannot do that at present.

I agree with you that we should not have a mentality which believes in self-suffering more than on putting pressure on the opponent. As a matter of fact however this is an academic question. Individuals may or may not believe in it but political organisations cannot be run and have not been run in the past on this basis. The *hartal* to which you object is really a form of demonstration which involves the very minimum of sacrifice. The mourning processions of protest against the Simon Commission can hardly be looked upon as anything but aggressive protest.

Few people rule out violence on moral grounds. Many might prefer nonviolent efforts but if at any moment they feel that violence has

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-25/1928, p. 1, N.M.M.L.
2. A resident of Lahore.

a better chance they would undoubtedly adopt it. It is a question of expediency more than of anything else. I do not personally think that it is possible for us to organise any efficient militia on military lines. In a military sense it would be utterly useless. But every attempt to organise a body of people is good in so far as it makes them an organised unit for action. Therefore I am certainly keen on efficient organisation of volunteers. Perhaps you know that the Hindustani Seva Dal was started with this object.

The military strength of any state today is so great that it can only be upset by an equally strong or stronger military organisation. Volunteers and trained militia men cannot face it. But there are other ways of attacking a state and of paralysing a state. All these depend on organisation. The possession of a few rusty swords or guns or the use of them does not make the slightest difference to anybody in these days of highly mechanised ways of warfare. It is obvious that we cannot produce an aeroplane corps or a tank corps in our militia. So long as we cannot do that we are negligible in a military sense.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit[1]

Hubli
24 May 1928

Nan dear,

I am on my way South. I have had no news[2] of Ranjit for 3 days now but as the last news was good I hope all is well. The arrival of father and Pratap must have cheered Ranjit and that is always the herald of victory over the enemy.

I have been carried about from place to place like a performing animal and made to hold forth. It is hateful. Day before yesterday I performed at Poona—yesterday at Dharwar and later the same day at Hubli. Apart from these public performances there are private rehearsals and I find little time to think even. I am supposed to deliver

1 J. N. Correspondence, NMML.
2. Ranjit Pandit was suddenly taken ill in Mussoorie. Motilal Nehru and Pratap, Ranjit's brother, went there to see him.

the presidential address at the Kerala Provincial Conference day after tomorrow. I tried to jot down something in the train but it shook so much that it was difficult to hold on to the pen or paper! It was not easy even to read or think. So I gave up the attempt. I have to face the same railway, the M. & S.M. Ry, again this afternoon in going to Mysore. From Mysore I go by car through, I am told, very beautiful scenery. So the presidential address will remain in the head.

At Belgaum I met a holy one who is converting thousands of the Goanese to Hinduism. Perhaps you may have read about him in the papers. Here today I visited an even holier person—a regular saint who is visited by crowds from distant provinces. He is said to be about 100 years old and he looked this age. He was very gracious to us and insisted on giving all manner of *prasad* but fortunately he did not treat us as he treated some others. The latter washed his feet and carefully took away the water probably for drinking. They also ate and drank out of the leavings of the holy one. I am afraid even the holy one could not have made me indulge in these disgusting barbarities, but he did not try.

I hope to spend 4 days in touring about Malabar and the Ghats. I should have liked to spend at least a week or more but I am so rushed and have to be back in Allahabad. I am therefore missing a chance which may not occur again.

Love

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

8. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit[1]

Mangalore
31 May 1928

Nan dear,

I arrived here from Cannanore today. Cannanore has a lovely sea front, partly beach and partly rock. I liked the place. It was a very pleasant change after unlovely and insanitary Calicut. I had a terrible experience yesterday at Cannanore. I was told that there was going to be a procession in my honour. I protested vigorously but in vain. The municipality having refused by the casting vote of the chairman to give me an address, it became a matter of honour for the people

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

to parade me about and present me with an address of their own. So I had to give in. Imagine my horror when I heard the strains of music—it is a travesty to call it music—something between a third class band and a *Shehnai*. But worse was to follow. A baby elephant appeared on the scene and was made to follow our carriage. It appeared that the elephant had been borrowed for the afternoon from a travelling circus. The elephant babe however refused to give in to man made schemes and would not take his proper place in the procession. Ultimately he agreed to follow at the tail end far from everyone else.

I had to address two meetings, one of them meant exclusively for Mohamadans. It was very difficult to address the latter—English was not understood by any and only a dozen or so knew a little Hindustani. Ultimately I spoke in Hindustani and was translated—very badly—in Malayalam.

I do not know if I succeeded in convincing the intelligentsia of Cannanore by what I said at the meeting. But I created a great impression on them by another feat. I went to an Indian club in the evening and managed to beat the best player there at billiards.

Mangalore is a delightful place. All the houses are hidden by palm groves. It is built in the hollow of a cup with the sea on one side of it—I had a look at the hollow from one of the surrounding ridges and imagine my amazement to see practically no signs of houses. A whole city of 50000 or 60000 lay underneath and it was almost invisible. All one could see were groves of cocoanut palms and other trees. But there is no good beach here. The sea is some distance from the city. Within twenty minutes my engagements begin here. A small worker's meeting—the unveiling of Swami Shraddhanand's picture—a public meeting and address—an at-home at a club here—and later in the night I have to attend a benefit performance of a Canarese play. I won't understand a word of it but as the show is being given in aid of the Hindustani Seva Dal I have to put in an appearance.

Tomorrow we start by car at 4.30 a.m. and after wandering about the Ghats, lecturing at various odd places—paying a visit to a very holy gentleman—I reach the railway line at about midnight. The next day we shall again travel by car and train and there are several meetings finishing up with the night's stay at Bagalkot. The next day at Bijapur and then I rush back to Kalyan and Allahabad.

Love

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

9. To Alokananda Mahabharati[1]

10 July 1928

Dear Friend,[2]

I have received your letter of the 25th June and I have read it with great interest. I am afraid it is a little difficult to discuss the vital problems in the course of the letter.

You object to my criticising religion. I do so not because religion in its real sense is bad but because it has come to mean for the majority of people dogmatism and bigotry and want of reason.

In regard to the rich it is not a question of exterminating them. It is a question of putting an end to a system which tolerates so much inequality and poverty.

I have no doubt that India can be independent even before the old economic order changes. I should like both events to happen as soon as possible. But in case one precedes the other it will help the happening of the other. The figures[3] you have given for the U.S.A. expenditure on war services appear to me to be very wrong. I have no means of checking them at present.

I thank you for the two little books that you have sent me. I shall read them with interest and pleasure.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1928, p. 85, N.M.M.L.
2. Of Arunachal Mission, Deoghar, Bihar.
3. Alokanand had stated in his letter: "Britain spends 67% of her national income on war, past and present, the U.S.A. 80%."

10. To W. P. Ignatius[1]

10 July 1928

My dear Ignatius,[2]

I have your letter of the 4th July and am glad to note that you are interesting yourself in Hindi *prachar*. I wish you all success. I am

1. A.I.C.C. File G-40(ii)/1928, p 80, N.M.M.L.
2. A propagandist for Hindi in south India under the auspices of Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha.

afraid however that I cannot possibly go down to South India nor hold forth on Hindi at various places. Firstly, I could not find the time. Secondly, to be quite honest with you I would not have much inclination. Not that I do not think Hindi *prachar* important but just at present my mind is full of other things. Thirdly, my Hindi is of a kind which will not be understood by most of your Hindi-speaking friends in Madras with the result that I shall succeed in scaring away more people than I attract. You will therefore I hope excuse me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit[1]

Savoy Hotel
Mussoorie
19 July 1928

Nan dear,

I have just heard of your cable from Port Said. So you have not only survived the perils of the Indian Ocean but have also faced and conquered the terrors of the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. I hope you are having well-earned rest in the more peaceful Mediterranean.

I came here day before yesterday. Kamala has been keeping well. She is much better than she was when I saw her last in spite of Butcher.[2] So I propose leaving her here for the rest of the summer. I shall be here for a week more.

You will be in London when this reaches you, busy and terribly occupied with the social functions to which Ranjit was looking forward. I envy you and Ranjit your youth and *joie de vivre* and hope that you will have a thorough good time. I am too old in mind if not in body to feel the ecstasy; too much a sufferer from what a Frenchman once called *la maladie des desastreuses*; life's dark corners have cast a shadow over me although I am glad to say that they have not enveloped me.

1. J. N. Correspondence, NMML.
2. A physician at Mussoorie.

I have just received a notice from Agarwala to say that the club[3] has been shifted to Gopi Nath Kunzru's[4] house.

Love

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

3. Started by young Indian army officers.
4. Leading advocate of Allahabad; son of Pandit Ajudhianath.

12. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

11 August 1928

My dear Subhas,

I am informed that a gang of men belonging to a big contractor working in the East Indian Railway was present very near the place where the Belur accident[2] took place. I am further told that many of these men are in a position to give relevant and important evidence in regard to the accident. Some of the facts as stated by them are as follows:—

The railway line was in good order when the train came. The permanent way had in no way been tampered with.

Secondly, that the villagers from the neighbouring villages were not permitted by the railway authorities to approach the scene of the disaster. In fact it is even stated that they were fired upon to drive them away. It is further stated that the casualties were very great.

I am giving this information to you for what it is worth. You may make enquiries yourself among these men who I believe are still working on the line somewhere not far from the place of the accident. The contractor is of course a very timid gentleman afraid of losing the big contract he has got. Nothing can be expected of him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1928, p. 43, N.M.M.L.
2. 21 passengers were killed in a railway accident at Belur on 8 July 1928.

13. To Biswanath Mukerji[1]

27 September 1928

Dear Dr. Mukerji,
I received your telegrams at Calcutta and sent you a reply requesting you to send a full account here. I am leaving tomorrow to fulfil an old engagement at Lakhimpur. I hope to return by the 1st October.

I have been thinking here as to what should be done. It is obvious that after the disgraceful attack on you matters cannot be allowed to rest where they are. The only thing that strikes me that we can do is to visit the domains of the Raja of Tamkohi[2] and face him in his own zamindari. But this will take several days and hence my difficulty as I do not see how I can find several days in the immediate future I shall meet some friends at Lakhimpur and shall consult in the matter. I shall then write to you and if possible go over to Gorakhpur for a day or two in October.

I hope you are better now and have recovered from the assault.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(i)/1928, p. 103, N.M.M.L.
Also used as defence exhibit No. 202 (56) in the Meerut Conspiracy Case.
2. A taluqdar with large estates in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

14. On violence at Tamkohi[1]

Sir,
Some time ago the papers contained report of a brutal assault on Dr. Biswanath Mukerji near Tamkohi in Gorakhpur district. Dr. Mukerji is a member of the All India Congress Committee and a leading public man of Gorakhpur and the assault was deeply resented not only by his friends and acquaintances but by the public at large. I had occasion

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Leader*, 29 October 1928.

to visit Gorakhpur some time after. On my return I addressed two letters to the Raja of Tamkohi. I enclose copies of these for favour of publication. They speak for themselves.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

TO RAJA OF TAMKOHI

I

Allahabad
9 October 1928

Dear Raja Saheb,

You are doubtless aware that the reason for my visiting Gorakhpur last week was the occurrence which took place last month at Madhopur Buzurg when Dr. Biswanath Mukerji was badly assaulted and beaten with *lathis*. The meetings I addressed at Gorakhpur on Friday last and at Madhopur on Saturday were largely concerned with this incident and I expressed myself freely on the subject. I have no doubt that the purport of my remarks must have been repeated to you as some of your estate officers were present at the second meeting.

When I met you on Saturday afternoon I had little time at my disposal and besides I did not think it was necessary for me to start a discussion on the subject. I feel, however, that I owe it to you to write frankly so that you may, if you so desire, explain to me what your viewpoint is.

You will agree with me that it is an extraordinary and most undesirable occurrence for a public worker to be assaulted and beaten in a public meeting while he was actually addressing a meeting. There is no doubt that he was so treated and there is still less doubt that such an assault is a most cowardly thing and deserves the severest censure and punishment. Dr. Biswanath Mukerji happens to occupy a responsible position in public life, but, apart from his position, any such assault on any person is equally objectionable and cannot be tolerated. The only questions that arise are. (1) who was guilty of the assault and (2) how far the beaten party was to blame?

So far as the first question is concerned there appears to me to be sufficient testimony to establish not only that many of your employees were present at the meeting but that some of them at least took part in the assault. This has been repeatedly and publicly asserted and I am

not aware of any denial on your behalf. The enquiry conducted by a special representative of the *Swadesh* also establishes this as a fact beyond doubt.

If this is so, and I see no way of denying it, then the responsibility for the outrage must rest largely with your employees and nothing that may have preceded the assault can lessen this responsibility. It was the duty of your employees, even if they had been passive spectators at the meeting, to intervene and prevent any such occurrence. The meeting was being held in your estate and, morally at any rate, they were bound to prevent assaults. Inevitably such an occurrence was bound to affect your prestige and damage the reputation of your management. That was their duty as passive onlookers. How much more reprehensible was it, therefore, for these people actually to take the initiative and become the guilty parties themselves?

I am told that it is said on your behalf that Dr. Biswanath Mukerji was to blame because he had espoused the cause of an old opponent of yours, Rajdhari Rai, and also because he said something in his speech which was disrespectful to you. Granting all this, I must say that the excuses are about the feeblest that one can imagine. I can hardly conceive of any reasonable person advancing them seriously. Is it to be maintained that because of the two reasons mentioned above, Dr. Biswanath Mukerji ought to have been cruelly beaten? It is admitted that neither he nor any one on his behalf raised their little finger against those who assaulted them. The assault and the beating was all on one side.

But let us examine the two excuses mentioned above. I admit that Dr. Mukerji ought not to have mixed himself up in a private dispute between you and an old tenant of yours. I gather that he did not know much about this matter and merely took it up as an ordinary kisan versus zamindar matter. But in any event how this lessens the insult and injury of the assault I entirely fail to understand

The second excuse is that Dr. Mukerji said something disrespectful to you. I do not know what statement your employees attribute to him, but from what I have heard from independent sources he said something to the effect that he was not afraid of you and did not care for you or for what you might do. The statement may have been uncalled for and wholly unnecessary. But is such a statement supposed to be a very terrible thing in Tamkohi? If so Tamkohi must be a very backward place indeed. It is a statement which I have made in different languages on many occasions in regard to many persons. To make this an excuse for an assault is to add insult to injury.

There is one other matter which seems to me deserving of attention.

The objectionable statement was made at the meeting. But before the meeting commenced a number of people armed with *lathis*, and I am told with lances, came to the meeting. Why was it necessary for this band to turn up at all in this way at the meeting?

It seems to me that the whole incident reflects little credit on your employees and the only right thing to do is to punish the guilty parties and to express regret to Dr. Mukerji. But that is for you to decide. In any event I shall welcome a reply from you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

II

Allahabad
24 October 1928

Dear Raja Saheb,

On the 9th of October, that is, more than two weeks ago, I sent you a registered letter, in which I drew your attention to certain facts and the inferences I had drawn from them. As these facts and the inferences brought little credit on your estate management I invited you to explain them or correct them. I have had no such explanation. Indeed you have not done me the courtesy of even acknowledging my letter. I can only conclude that you have nothing to explain or challenge and that my inferences are correct. But although you do not challenge my facts, I regret to observe that you have not the courage to take the only right action which a gentleman would take under the circumstances. You have neither expressed your regret for the brutal assault on Dr. Mukerji nor have you, so far as I am aware, punished the guilty parties who happen to be in your employ.

During my visit to Gorakhpur two public meetings were held to condemn this assault. One was held in the town and among the speakers were Syt. Shiva Prasad Gupta, the Raja of Kalakankar[2] and Syt. Gauri Shankar Misra. At this meeting the resolution of condemnation was unanimously passed and not a single person opposed it. I gather that the president of the meeting has informed you of this resolution. At the second meeting your employees, who were present in some numbers, were repeatedly given an opportunity to speak but they did not challenge or correct a single statement made.

2. Raja Awadhesh Singh (1906-1934); a leading taluqdar of Oudh who sympathised with the nationalist movement. Motilal Nehru died in his house in Lucknow in 1931.

I do not propose to write to you any further on the subject as I have other and more important work to attend to. But I must express my regret that any Indian, even though he be a big zamindar, should have shown himself so lacking in courage and fairness.

I am sending these letters to the press.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. To Syed Mahmud[1]

B.N.W. Ry
On Way to Bettiah
15.11.28

My dear Mahmud,

I am on my way to the Bettiah conference. I would have liked to go through Chapra and have a glimpse of you but the B.N.W. train service is so bad that I decided, to save time, to go via Patna and Dighaghat.

Your letter was a very pleasant reminder that I am of sufficient interest to at least one of my friends for him to remember my birthday. I try to forget, unsuccessfully I must confess. It is not pleasant to get older and older and I am past the age when birthdays are agreeable or welcome.

Your birthday gift had not come when I left Allahabad. I am bound to like it coming as it does laden with your good wishes. You *make me feel quite young with your gifts and presents!*

Love

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

16. To Sri Krishna Sinha[1]

16 January 1929

Dear Mr. Sinha,[2]
I thank you for your letter. I am afraid it is not possible for me to tour about and preside over conferences in various parts of the country. I propose to remain as far as possible at my headquarters and to tour only in connection with organisational work and not for delivering speeches. You will therefore, I hope, forgive me for not agreeing to preside over your district conference.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-40(1)/1929, (Pt. 1), p 51, N.M.M.L.
2. (1887-1961); lawyer of Monghyr who joined the noncooperation movement in 1920 and served long terms of imprisonment; Chief Minister of Bihar, 1937-39 and 1946-61.

17. To S.S. Rao[1]

Allahabad
16 January 1929

Dear Sir,[2]
I have your letter of the 10th January. I have not insured myself in any company, Indian or foreign, particularly because I have not got the wherewithal to pay the premiums. Those that insure themselves should certainly do so in Indian companies. This is so obvious that it requires no argument.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-40(1)/1929 (Pt. 1), p. 35, N.M.M.L.
2. An insurance agent in Nidadavole in Andhra.

18. To B.P. Singh[1]

19 January 1929

Dear friend,[2]
I have your letter. I am sorry to know that owing to financial difficulties you are unable to do the national work which you have at heart. I do not know how you can be helped to get over these difficulties. It is not possible for any national fund to pay the debts of individuals and as for individuals it is not an easy matter for them to pay it either. So far as I am personally concerned it is not a possibility for me nor can I for the moment think of any paid position which might help you to pay off your debts. You must realise that yours is not wholly an individual case. There are many deserving young men who are more or less in the same position as you are and it is extraordinarily difficult to make provision for them. It is the system that is wrong and all you should do is to work for a change in that system.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(1)1929 (Pt. I), p. 67, N.M.M.L.
2. A resident of village Gainjahwa, Gonda district.

19. To R.S. Sharma[1]

19 January 1929

Dear Mr. Sharma,[2]
I thank you for your letter of the 10th asking me to preside over the *Punjab Provincial Political Conference*. I presided last year over this conference and it seems to me utterly wrong for me to preside again. Apart from this fact I wish to try to avoid presiding over such functions this year. I shall however try to come to your conference at

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(1)/1929 (Pt. I), p. 59, N.M.M.L.
2. Vakil, Rohtak, Punjab.

Rohtak specially as the area is one which supplies large numbers of recruits to the army.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad
21.1.29

My dear Bapu,
Your letter has surprised me a little. Sitla Sahai has also written to me that he has been asked to give up the secretaryship of the U.P. branch of the A.I.S.A. as a result of some arrangement arrived at between Jamnalalji and me. Evidently there has been a serious misunderstanding somewhere.

My impression of the conversation I had with Jamnalalji was and is that the *status quo* should be maintained for the present but that Kripalani be asked to tour round our centres and select spots and make recommendations for the reorganisation of *khadi* work in the province. Jamnalalji certainly referred to the possibility of Sitla Sahai doing some other work if he was not suited to his present work. But as in my opinion the question did not arise just yet, I did not discuss it. Kripalani's name was discussed for the agentship, not the secretaryship. Jamnalalji however wanted me to remain as agent. I agreed to this. My only difficulty was that I did not consider myself a competent agent.

It does not really much matter what my opinion is on the subject. It is for you and Jamnalalji and Shankarlal to decide and we shall abide by your decision. I had not contemplated the possibility of Sitla Sahai leaving the secretaryship. I feel now however that there is practically no alternative. It appears that Jamnalalji and Shankarlal are both decidedly of opinion that Sitla Sahai is not fit for this work. If that is their opinion then he must go whatever my own opinion may be. As a self-respecting person he should himself resign.

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No 14990.

My own opinion of Sitla Sahai's capacity is different from Shankarlal's. I am fully cognisant of his failings, and specially of his remarkable capacity for rubbing people up the wrong way, but still I think that he is a very good worker. I am not aware of any one in my immediate circle of workers in the U.P. who can replace him with advantage in the A.I.S.A. The Gandhi Ashram probably can supply one or more good workers for the A.I.S.A. here.

Since Sitla Sahai's departure for Sabarmati I have had the greatest difficulty in doing A.I.S.A. work. It was largely owing to this that I first wrote to you last year suggesting my resignation from the agentship. Our annual report ought to have been sent nearly two months ago. But there is no one here who can draft it properly. I must do this whole thing myself after going into all the figures etc. December was a heavy month and I was away for the greater part of it. January so far has also been well occupied and I have not had any time to give to the drafting of this report. I do not want to be responsible for an office which cannot do its work punctually and yet what am I to do? To find some time is not so difficult. But to find enough time and the mood to go into the business side of shops etc. is difficult. If somebody could relieve me of this side of the work I should be very happy.

I hope you will go to Europe this year. As you know I am always in favour of your going. Father is not very keen on your going simply because he has made up his mind that I am going to be arrested within the next three or four months. I am afraid his love for me makes him take too tragic a view of the possibility of my arrest and to consider it an event of extraordinary importance. So far as I can see nothing wonderful will happen, only I shall have some peace of mind and freedom from worry.

Kamala is keeping tolerably well. I shall soon begin giving her Kuhne's baths. As for sun baths the Indian sun was not good enough for the Calcutta doctors! They have advised ultra-violet rays and given me a small apparatus to produce these rays.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

21. To T. Braganca-Cunha[1]

22 January 1929

Dear Mr. Cunha,[2]

... I am interested to learn about the activities of the censor in Goa. Censorship is a peculiar annoying thing but ultimately it does not do very much harm. I shall be glad to give you every help in issuing any statements that you may like to make. I have written to the Free Press in Bombay about you and have also sent them your typed note. You can communicate with them direct or you can send me any material. I shall be glad if you will let me know from time to time what is happening in Goa. I may include some of your items in my Congress Bulletin...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. A-4/1929-31, p. 75, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. (1891-1955); a leader of the freedom movement in Goa who founded the Goa Congress Committee in 1928 and secured its affiliation to the Indian National Congress.

22. To T. Braganca-Cunha[1]

12 February 1929

Dear Mr. Cunha,

...I realise that conditions in Goa are different from conditions in other parts of India. But the difference in these conditions is largely due to the fact that Goa is a small enclave in what has for long been considered more or less foreign territory. Now that the feeling of common nationality is developing these differences will decrease.

The situation in Afghanistan is likely to develop[2] and to involve the big powers. This of course is full of all manner of consequences for India.

I hope you will keep me informed of developments in Goa.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. A-4/1929-31, p. 57, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. After the abdication of Amanullah, civil war had broken out in Afghanistan.

23. To the Times Book Club, London[1]

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad
14.2.29

Dear Sir,
Please send me the following books:

1. R. M. Fox	:	The Triumphant Machine (Hogarth Press)
2. Everyman's Library	:	Dictionary of Quotations and Proverbs
3. George Bruson	:	A History of English Socialism
4. Prof. Soddy	:	Impact of Sciences on an Old Civilization
5. Godwin	:	Cain or the Future of Crime (Today and Tomorrow Series)
6. Tenner Brockway	:	A Week in India (I.L.P.)
7. Harold Lamb	:	Tamerlane
8. Do Do	:	Chenghiz Khan
9. A. W. Humphrey	:	The Modern Case for Socialism (George Allen)
10. John Strachey	:	Workers' Control in the Russian Mining Industry (I.L.P.)
11. Raymond L. Buell	:	The Native Problem in Africa (Macmillan)
12. Valerin Marcu	:	Lenin; translated by E.W. Dickes (Victor Gollancz)
13. L. W. Moffit	:	England on the Eve of the Industrial Revolution (P. S. King)
14. Kropotkin	:	The Great French Revolution (I.L.P.)
15. Do	:	The Conquest of Bread (I.L.P.)
16. Arthur Ponsonby	:	Falsehood in War Times (I.L.P.)
17. Upton Sinclair	:	The Profits of Religion
18 Samuel Butler	:	Erewhon (I.L.P.)
19. Jack London	:	Essays of Revolt (I.L.P.)
20. Do	:	The Valley of the Moon (I.L.P.)

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
This letter has been included as a sample indication of the wide range of Jawaharlal's reading interests.

21. Robert Tressell : The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists (I.L.P.)
22. John Reed : Daughter of the Revolution (I.L.P.)
23. I.L.P. Pocket Diary for 1929
24. J. A. Hobson : Evolution of Modern Capitalism (Scott)
25. M. H. Dobb : Development of Capitalism (Labour Research Department)
26. Borchardt : The People's Marx (Reformers Book Shop)
27. Bukharin and Preobrazhensky : A.B.C. of Communism
28. Edward Jack : A History of Politics (Temple Primers)
29. F. A. Jackson : The British Empire
30. Scott Nearing : The American Empire (Plebs)
31. R. W. Postgate : Out of the Past (Labour Publishing Co.)
32. Mark Starr : A Worker looks at History (Plebs)
33. Egerton : Short History of British Colonial Policy
34. A. Rhys Williams : Through the Russian Revolution (Labour Publishing Co)
35. General Lothomsky : Memoirs of the Russian Revolution (Fisher Unwin)
36. Leon Trotsky Russian Revolution to Brest Litovsk (Allen & Unwin)
37. W. T. Goode : Bolshevism at Work (Allen & Unwin)
38. An Outline of Modern Imperialism (Plebs League)
39. F. Seymour Cocks : The Secret Treaties
40. S. & B. Webb : The Decay of Capitalist Civilization (Allen & Unwin)
41. Lenin : State and Revolution
42. The Jews and National Minorities in Russia (Vanguard Press N.Y.)
43. T. C. Wang : The Youth Movement in China
44. T. C. Woo : The Kuomintang and the Future of the Chinese Revolution (Allen & Unwin)

45. Corbett and Smith : Canada and World Politics (Faber Guyer)
46. Isadora Duncan : My Life (Victor Gollancz)
47. E. P. MacCullum : The Nationalist Crusade in Syria (Foreign Policy Association, U.S.A.)
48. M. Phillips Price : Economic Problems of Europe (Allen & Unwin)
49. A. Wickstead : Life Under the Soviets (John Lane)

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

24. To Duncan Greenlees[1]

22 February 1929

Dear Mr. Greenlees,[2]

...I read your letter with pleasure. Unfortunately most of us know very little about Ireland specially since the Treaty with England. I have been trying to get books about her but all those that I have obtained seem to be in favour of the present regime. I shall be greatly obliged to you if you would arrange to send me *An Poblacht* regularly. Perhaps it will be more convenient if you could order the publishers to send it direct to me and I could pay them or you the subscription. I should also like you to recommend some recent books on Ireland...

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(a)/1929 (Pt. I), p. 135, N.M.M.L. Extracts
2. Associated with the Theosophical High School, Madanapalle, Andhra Pradesh

25. To William B. Feakins[1]

New Delhi
26 February 1929

Dear Sir,[2]

Thank you for your letter of the 16th January.

A visit to U.S.A. is one of the dreams of my life but circumstances have so far prevented it from materialising.

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. A resident of New York.

It is possible though not very probable that I may have to visit England in connection with the question of the Indian constitution sometime this year. If I do so I hope to include some parts of the U.S.A. in my programme. At the present moment, I am sorry to say, I am unable to give you more definite information.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

26. To Shambhu Nath[1]

5 March 1929

My dear Shambhu Nathji,[2]
I have your letter of the 1st March. I am glad you are thinking of devoting yourself to removing the social evils in Kashmere. Some of them you mention are indeed very important and must be stamped out. I wish you all success. You must realise that it is not easy for me even if I had the time to do anything in Kashmere. Probably I would not be admitted there. Kashmere however is bound to be affected by the progress made in other parts of India. I shall follow your work with interest.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1929 (Pt. II), p. 203, N.M.M.L.
2. Headmaster, D. B. School, Nanglor, Delhi.

27. To Thakurdas Pahwa[1]

13 March 1929

Dear Mr. Pahwa,[2]
I thank you for your letter of the 4th March and the copy of your book *The Ring of the Indian Bell* which you have kindly sent me. I shall

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1929 (Pt. II), p. 257, N.M.M.L.
2. A resident of Phillaur, Punjab

read this book with pleasure though perhaps I may not be able to do so in the immediate future. It is a little difficult for me to find much time for reading. I do manage to get some time but when I do so I like to get away from purely political subjects and read better forms of literature. I shall however endeavour to read your book.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

28. To S.A.S. Tyabji[1]

22 March 1929

My dear Tyabji,[2]
Your telegram. I do not exactly know what to send you. The rules of a kisan sabha are the ordinary rules of any organisation. So far as the object is concerned it should be a general one: something to the effect to improve the condition of the peasantry in every way so as to assure that they can get the full reward of their labour and may not be subjected to hardships and oppression. This is very vague. You may make it more definite or else you can have a separate programme. I have no idea what the condition of the peasantry is in Burma. What land tenures there are. Whether you have peasant proprietorship or a *zamindari system*. Your programme must necessarily depend on this. Above all an attempt should be made to have real peasant associations, not a paper show with a few city folk in it. Real work among the kisans can only be done by opening centres of work in rural areas where a fairly competent man can stay and work. This man can organise a kisan sabha, act as a village school master, help a little in co-operative *activities*, *try to encourage the panchayat* system in settling disputes and prove useful in many other ways. A small library with newspapers and a common room for villagers to come and sit is very desirable.

If you will let me know exactly what you propose to do and where, I might be able to offer some more suggestions.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G 52/1929, p 1, N.M.M.L.
2. A Congress worker in Burma

29. To Father[1]

March 29th 1929

Dear Father,

You gave me a letter from Sailendra Nath Ghose of New York which had been apparently forwarded to you from Calcutta. This letter gives the Kellogg Treaty as well as an abstract from the proceedings of the American Senate where objection was taken to certain reservations[2] made by Austen Chamberlain. These reservations refer specially to India. The extracts from the proceedings of the Senate are interesting. The Kellogg Pact was signed on behalf of India by Lord Cushendun[3] who thus signed it twice: one signature standing for England, the other for India. Every dominion had its separate signatory. Why should Cushendun have any authority to sign anything on behalf of India? Why is this matter not considered by the Assembly? I think this question ought to have been raised in the Assembly as suggested by Sailen Ghose. It is necessary that the strongest objections be taken both to Cushendun signing on behalf of India and to the reservations of Austen Chamberlain. I suppose it is too late to do anything in the matter now. However I am returning S. N. Ghose's letter to you with its enclosures. When you have finished with it you can send it to our office.

Your loving son,
Jawahar

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Austen Chamberlain had said "there are certain regions of the world, the welfare and intergrity of which constitute the special and vital interest for our peace and safety. His Majesty's Government have been at pains to make it clear in the past that interference with these regions cannot be suffered. Their protection against attack is to the British Empire a measure of self-defence. It must be clearly understood that His Majesty's Government in Great Britain accept the new treaty upon the distinct understanding that it does not prejudice their freedom of action in this respect."
3. Ronald McNeill, 1st Baron Cushendun (1861 1936); Acting Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, August December 1928.

30. To N.K. Bannerji[1]

5 April 1929

Dear Mr. Bannerji,[2]

I have your letter dated 25th March. May I point out that I am not a member of the Assembly.

Regarding your criticism of the Muslim League I think you were a little premature. As you must have seen soon after writing your letter the majority of the Muslim League actually stood against the communal tendencies of the others and even succeeded in carrying a resolution in the Subjects Committee. The League was however broken up by the minority at a later stage. So that it cannot be said that the Muslims in a body acted in a narrow communal way. It is also obvious that your statement to the effect that Muslims can unite quickly for their own objects has also been proved not to be correct.

The Hindu Mahasabha meeting at Surat as you will notice has gone back on its previous decision.[3] I think that the Mahasabha has taken a very unwise step and in spite of its loud professions has demonstrated how intensely narrow-minded it is. Personally I do not worry very much about the happenings in the Muslim League or in the Hindu Mahasabha. I think in both of them a non-communal element is getting stronger. It is bound to win.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C C. File No. G-40(ii)/1929 (Pt. III), p. 389, N M M L.
2. A resident of Rangoon.
3. The Hindu Mahasabha at its session at Surat on 30 March— 1 April 1929 passed a comprehensive resolution opposing communal representation in legislatures and public services, and particularly opposing Muslim demands for the separation of Sind and the reservation of one-third of elected seats in the Central Legislatures for Muslims.

31. To Mathura Prasad[1]

8 April 1929

My dear Mathura Babu,[2]

I wrote to you only a few days ago. I have however received your letter of the 5th April pressing me again to visit Behar. It is very difficult for me to continue refusing without appearing to be discourteous to you. But I do beg of you to excuse me. I know my own capacities and there is nothing I hate so much as not doing the work I am in charge of and meddling in other work. I cannot possibly go about touring districts this year.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1929 (Pt. III), p. 429, N.M.M.L.
2. Associated with the Sadaqat Ashram, Patna.

GLOSSARY

Apsara	nymph
Begar	forced labour
Charas	drug
Daridranarayan	divine image of poverty
Dil khol kar	open heartedly
Fakir	Muslim ascetic
Kaliyuga	according to Hindu mythology the last of the four ages
Karma	consequence of the deeds of previous birth
Kismat	fate
Maidan	ground—open space
Nautanki	ballad, opera
Nazrana	forced levy
Nihatha	defenceless; without arms
Panchayati Raj	village committee's rule
Panda	Brahmin whose profession is to look after pilgrims at shrines
Prachar	publicity
Ram Raj	equitable and ideal rule
Rishi	saint
Sabhyata	ethos
Shamiana	tent
Shehnai	musical instrument similar to the clarionet
Sudharak Sangha	reformers league
Tabligh	preaching that may lead to conversion
Taluka	sub-division
Tika	mark placed on the forehead
Tukkal	kite
Vakalatnama	letter of authority to attorney
Zenana	ladies apartments
Zulum	oppression

INDEX

(Biographical footnotes are italicized)

A.B.C. of Communism (Bukharin & Preobrazhensky), 426
Abhyudaya, 187
Afghanistan, 29 & fn, 195, 232, 237, 298 & fn, 382, 387—389, 424
———, Amir of (Amanullah), visit to India, 29 & fn
Africa, 58, 242, 327
Agra, 375
———, Tenancy Act, 375 fn
Ahmad, Muzaffar, 350 fn
———, Zahur, 93 & fn, 95, 97
Ahmedabad, 13, 269
———, A I C C. session at, 13
Ainuddin, 109
Ajudhianath, Pandit, 414 fn
Alice in Wonderland (L. Carroll), 223
Ali, Maulana Shaukat, 51, 202 & fn, 203, 252
Allahabad, 18, 35, 36, 38, 39, 45, 48, 49, 52, 54, 56, 71, 75, 83, 86, 88, 90—93, 95, 96, 116, 127, 142, 146, 148, 151, 161, 168, 174, 175, 181, 183, 199, 217, 281, 283, 286, 291, 321, 333—335, 337, 344, 354, 355, 361 & fn, 405—408, 410—411, 414 fn, 416, 419—420
All Bengal Students Conference, 69, 188, 197
All India Aryan League, 54
All India Congress Committee, 70, 126, 134, 143, 174, 302, 406
All India Forward Bloc, 46 fn
All India Liberal Federation, 39
All India Spinners Association, 175 & fn, 422, 423
All India States Subjects Conference, 47 fn
All India Students Conference, 320 fn
All India Teachers Conference, 150
All India Trade Union Congress, 149 fn, 295, 305, 313, 320 & fn, 324, 331 fn, 332, 342, 345, 346, 349 & fn, 352
All India Trade Union Federation, 331 fn
All India Youth Congress, 199
All Parties Committee (see Nehru Committee)
All Parties Conference, 35 & fn—40, 45, 48, 52, 53, 55, 57, 61, 62 & fn, 67, 71, 73, 76 fn, 78, 86, 87, 144, 162, 186, 203, 238, 239, 261, 262, 270, 289
All Parties Report (see Nehru Report)
Amanullah (Amir of Afghanistan), 29 & fn, 195, 298, 387—389, 424 fn
American Empire (Scott Nearing), 426
Amritsar, 230
Amsterdam, 129, 345
Anand Bhawan, 45, 52, 335 & fn
Aney, M.S., 12 & fn
Angora, 383
Anjuman Taraqqi i Hind, 110 fn
Annapurniah, M., 167 & fn
An Poblacht, 427
Ansari, Fazlul Haq, 347 & fn
———, Dr. M.A., 15, 48 fn, 51, 52, 54, 62 & fn, 63, 134, 135, 174, 300, 337, 340, 341, 347
Anti Imperialist Review, 145, 302 fn
Anushilan Party, 74 fn
Arunachal Mission, 412
Arya Samaj, 54, 55
Assam, 28
Ataturk, Kemal Pasha, 195, 221
Australia, 22, 42, 364
Austria, 187, 237
Avadh, 56, 70, 209, 375—376, 418 fn
———, Rent Act, 375 & fn

A Week in India (Fenner Brockway), 425
Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam, 47, 48 fn

Bagalkot, 165, 169, 173, 411
Bahauddin, 91
Bajaj, Jamnalal, 269 *fn*, 422
Bajpai, Ramlal B., 346 & fn
———, R.S., 346 & fn
Balaki Ram, 64 & fn
Balakrishna, Dr., 364 & fn
Baldwin, Roger, 123, 127, 130, 131, 137, 308, 310, 312, 313
———, Stanley, 87, 154
Balkans, 26
Baluchistan, 9 fn
Banaji, M.M., 43
Banaras (see Varanasi)
——— District Conference, 231
Bande Mataram, 75 fn
Banerjea, Surendranath, 241 & *fn*
Banerjee, Dr. Ajoy Chandra, 146
Banerji, Manindranath, 403 & fn
Bangla Desh, 71 fn
Banker, Shankarlal, 175 & fn, 176, 269, 422
Bankers in Bolivia, 140
Bannerji, N.K., 431 & fn
Bardoli, 240 & fn, 241, 247, 253
———, satyagraha at, 369
Bari, Maulana Abdul, 68 & *fn*, 74 & fn
Basu, J.N., 47 & *fn*
———, Mrinal Kanti, 331 & *fn*
Beharilal, 88
Belfast, 299 fn
Belgaum, 410
Belgium, 29, 237, 298 fn, 369
Belur, 414 & fn
———, accident at, 414
Bengal detenus, 127
Bengal Federation of Labour, 320 & fn
Bengal Liberal League, 39
Bengal Ordinance, 60, 127 fn, 154
Bengal Trade Union Congress, 331 fn
Benn, Wedgwood, first Viscount Stansgate, 353 & fn
Berlin, 135, 137, 283, 307, 308, 310
Besant, Dr Annie, 5, 76 & fn, 77
Bhagat Singh, 322 fn
Bhagavad Gita, 195
Bhatia, Ratanlal, 408 & fn
Bikaner, Maharaja of, 262 & *fn*
Birkenhead, first Earl, 3, 35 fn, 59, 98, 154, 390—391
Bolivia, 140—142
Bolshevism at Work (W.T. Goode), 426
Bombay, 10, 20, 38—40, 43 & fn—45, 52, 53 & fn, 57, 60 fn, 81, 82, 85, 86, 88, 93, 95, 97, 162, 163, 187, 188, 238, 241, 245, 289, 290, 297, 302, 304, 309, 340, 351, 355, 357, 404 & fn
———, general strike in, 342
Bombay Chronicle, 358
Bombay Youth League, 211, 320 & fn
Borchardt, 426
Bose, Sarat Chandra, 334 & *fn*, 338
———, Subhas Chandra, 43 fn, 46 & *fn*, 67, 70 fn, 74, 126, 161, 174, 199, 269 fn, 276 & fn, 277, 285, 331, 414
Bradley, Benjamin, 336 & fn, 339, 343
Braganca-Cunha, T., 424 & *fn*
Bridgeman, Reginald, 108, 119, 132, 133, 135, 149, 298, 299, 308, 332, 335, 341, 342, 344, 348, 353—355
British Empire, (F.A. Jackson), 426
British Expeditionary Force, 29 & fn
British goods, boycott of, 12 & fn, 161 & fn, 162, 197, 227, 319
British Indian Association, 105
British Trade Union Congress, 332, 336, 344, 346
Brockway, Fenner, 100, 369 fn
Brusou, George, 425
Brussels, 135, 137, 242
———, International Congress at, 308
Buddha, Gautama, 196, 205
Buell, Raymond L., 425
Bukharey, J., 68 & fn
Bukharin, 426
Bulgaria, 237
Bureau, Paul, 14 fn
Burma, 28, 37, 429 & fn
Butcher (physician at Mussoorie), 413 & fn
Butler, Sir Harcourt, 239 fn
———, Samuel, 425

Cain or the future of Crime (Godwin), 425
Calcutta, 28, 46 fn, 62, 69, 75, 88, 118 & fn, 126, 145, 152, 161 & fn, 175, 176, 203, 269 & fn, 281, 284, 285, 296, 301, 302, 304, 319, 320 fn, 331, 334, 336, 337, 344, 345, 355, 357, 358, 394, 397, 405, 415, 423
Calicut, 386—387, 410
Cambridge, 46 fn
Canada, 22, 42, 130, 133, 364
Canada and World Politics (Corbett and Smith), 427
Cannanore, 410
Cawnpore, (see Kanpur)
Cecil, Lord Robert, 21, 161
Chagla, M.C, 347 & *fn*
Chakravarti, Harikumar, 74 & fn
———, K.C, 347 & fn
Chamanlal, Dewan, 128 & *fn*, 348
Chamberlain, Sir Austen, 26, 154, 389—390, 430 & fn
Champaran, satyagraha at, 4 fn
———, Political Conference at, 263
Chandni Chowk (Delhi), 319
Chapra, 419
Chatterji, B C., 334 & fn, 337
Chattopadhyaya, Virendra, 69 & *fn*, 70 fn, 117 & fn, 132, 134, 142, 145, 147, 150 & fn, 151, 295, 296, 299—302, 308, 310, 344
Chaturvedi, Banarsidas, 150 & *fn*
Chengiz Khan (Harold Lamb), 425
China, 12 & fn, 15 fn, 21, 27, 59, 133, 154, 163, 185, 193, 229, 236, 242, 245, 295, 372, 383
Chintamani, C.Y., 48 fn, 88 & *fn*
Citrine, Walter, first Lord, 348 & *fn*, 349, 353
Civil Liberties in Russia (Roger Baldwin), 310
Cocks, F. Seymour, 426
Colombo, 2, 182
Comintern, 250
Commonwealth, British, 22, 26, 58, 64, 194, 253, 254
Communist Party of India, 321 fn
Congress, 167 & fn
Congress, Indian National, 12—13, 15, 17, 25, 30, 35, 39, 42, 46, 51, 54 ff
Congress, declares independence, 3, 5, 16
———, session at Calcutta, 241, 269 fn, 275 fn, 277, 304, 317
———, session at Madras, 1, 3, 8 & fn, 10, 15 fn, 20, 23, 24, 25, 38, 77, 229, 230, 236, 270 & fn, 276 fn, 277
Congress Socialist Party, 320 fn
Connaught, Duke of, 20 & *fn*
Conquest of Bread (Kropotkin), 425
Conspiracy at Meerut (Lester Hutchinson), 346 fn
Constantinople, 275
Cook, A J., 133 & *fn*, 138
Council, Imperial Legislative, 4 fn
Crerar, Sir James, 317 & *fn*, 326—328
Curzon, first Marquis, 364
Cushendun, first Lord, 430 & *fn*
Cuttack, 46 fn
Czechoslovakia, 26, 237

Daily Herald, 341 fn
Daily Mail, 317
Daily Telegraph, 388
Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, 412
Damascus, 190
Dange, S.A, 350 fn
Dara, Gurdit Singh, 108 & fn
Das, C R, 13 fn, 46 fn, 74 fn, 234
Das, Taraknath, 307, 311
Datta, Dr Bhupendranath, 76 & *fn*, 213 fn, 281, 333
Daudi, Maulana Shafi, 51 & *fn*, 252
Daughter of the Revolution (John Reed), 426
Dayal, Parmeshri, 369
Delhi, 22, 23, 30, 31, 35 & fn—38, 40, 53, 68, 72, 73, 74, 82, 84, 93, 102, 129, 175, 230, 271, 318—320, 331, 338
———Provincial Conference, 251
Desai, Mahadeva, 50
Desh Bhagat, 121 & fn
Decay of Capitalist Civilization (S & B. Webb), 426
Deoghar, 412
De Valera, Eamon, 148 & *fn*, 149
Development of Capitalism (M H. Dobb), 426

Dharwar, 409
Dickes, E.W., 425
Dictionary of Quotations and Proverbs (Everyman's Library), 425
Digby, William, 364 & fn
D'Indiscipline des moeurs (Paul Bureau), 14 fn
Doll's House (Henrik Ibsen), 362
Dobb, M.H., 426
Dominion Status, 11, 12, 21, 22, 41, 42, 57—61, 63 fn, 77, 251—253, 256—257, 261, 272, 274, 276, 281, 285
Dream and a Bluff, 98 fn
Duncan, Isadora, 427
Dunichand, Lala, 144 fn
Dutch East Indies, 27
Dutt, Abbil, 334 & fn
———, B.K., 322 fn
Dutta, Kshitis Chandra, 71 & fn

Economic Problems of Europe (M. Phillips Price), 427
Egerton, 426
Egypt, 16, 21, 58, 59, 99, 133, 236
Einstein, Albert, 314
Empire Inter-Parliamentary Union, 130
England, 13 fn, 21, 22, 46, 58—60, 67, 132, 133, 161, 163, 188, 209, 222—224, 227, 236, 243—244, 248, 256, 259, 262, 309, 317, 327, 351, 352, 355, 356, 364, 366, 381, 385, 387—388, 390—391, 430
England on the Eve of the Industrial Revolution (L.W. Moffit), 425
Erewhon (Samuel Butler), 425
Essays of Revolt (Jack London), 425
Evolution of Modern Capitalism (J.A. Hobson), 426

Falsehood in War Times (Arthur Ponsonby), 425
Farrukhabad, 287
Feakins, William B., 427 & fn
Federation Malay States, 58, 140
Fimmen, Edo, 125, 129—131, 312—313
Forward (Belfast), 299
Forward (Calcutta), 28, 127
Forward Bloc, 75 fn, 320 fn
Fourrier, Charles, 361 & fn
Fox, R.M., 425
France, 27, 29, 237, 262, 364, 386
Frankfurt, 307 fn
French Revolution, 4, 186, 391 fn

Gadgil, N.V., 68 & fn
Gandhi Ashram, 175, 403 & fn, 423
Gandhi, Shrimati Indira, 37, 49
———, Maganlal, 405
———, M.K. (Mahatma), 10 & fn, 13 fn, 14 fn, 17, 18 fn, 30, 31, 36, 37, 46 fn, 49, 97, 98, 130, 163, 164, 175, 176, 269 fn, 270 & fn, 276, 285, 319 & fn, 323, 378, 395—397, 405, 422
Gangadhar, N.V., 283 & fn
Ganguly, K.L., 68 & fn, 284
Geneva, 26, 310
George III, 390
Germany, 187, 202, 237, 262, 364, 366, 382
Ghose, Atul Krishna, 93 & fn
———, Aurobindo, 76 fn
———, Sailendranath, 346 & fn, 430
Ghosh, Kishorilal, 320 fn, 339
Gibarb, L., 125
Gidwani, Choithram, P., 52 & fn
Ginwala, F.J., 404 & fn
Girdharilal, 339, 347
Girni Kamgar Union, 304, 339, 340
Goa, 424 & fn
Gokhale, Gopal Krishna, 217
Gollancz, Victor, 427
Goode, W.T., 426
Gorakhpur, 415, 416, 418
Govindananda, Swami, 23 & fn, 54, 75
Great French Revolution (Kropotkin), 425
Green, J.R., 55 & fn
Greenlees, Duncan, 427 & fn
Gupta, Chandra Bhanu, 347 & fn
———, J.N., 39 & fn
———, Jwala Prasad, 347 & fn
———, Shiva Prasad, 74—75, 143 fn, 281, 284, 306—308, 312, 418
Guru, Ram Naram, 335 & fn
Gwynne, J.T., 110—111

Habib Ullah, 91
Hailey, Sir Malcolm, 120 & fn, 209

Hardikar, Dr. N.S. 71, 75, 162, 170, 173, 285, 297 & fn
Hawi, Maulana Arif Husain, 68 & fn, 75
Hatta, Dr. Mohammad, 129 & fn
Hindu Mahasabha, 37 & fn, 38, 45 fn, 69, 76, 202 fn, 230, 238, 394 fn, 431 fn
Hindu Muslim tension, 1
Hindustan, 110 fn
Hindustani Seva Dal, 23 & fn, 135, 143, 159, 160, 165, 168, 169, 171—173, 285, 322, 409, 411
———, Conference at Karnatak, 170
Hindustan Socialist Republican Army, 322
History of English Socialism (George Bruson), 425
History of Politics (Edward Jack), 426
Hobson, J.A., 426
Holland, 27, 237
Home Rule League, 39
Home Rule movement, 13 & fn, 23 fn
Hong Kong, 245
Horniman, B.G., 76
Hubli, 409
Humphrey, A.W., 425
Hungary, 237
Hurriyat, 68 fn
Husain, Dr. Zakir, 67 & fn
Hussain, Maulana Vilayat, 93 fn, 96
———, Muhammad, 93 fn
Hutchinson, Lester, 323 fn, 346 & fn, 349, 350
Hyderabad, 50

Ibsen, Henrik, 362 & fn
Ignatius, W.P., 412 & fn
Imam, Sir Ali, 11 & fn, 43 fn, 83
Impact of Sciences on an Old Civilization (Prof. Soddy), 425
Imperialism and World Politics (Parker Moon), 139
Imperialist Danger (P.J. Schmidt), 152 & fn
Independence for India League, 67—68, 70 & fn, 73, 74, 76—77, 143, 148, 151, 173 fn, 281—287, 290, 297, 302
Independent Labour Party, 3, 138, 314 fn, 327
India, 108 fn
India in Bondage (J.T. Sunderland), 311
Indian National Army, 46 fn
Indo China, 27
International Federation of Trade Unions, 348 fn
International, Second, 138, 154, 155, 298
International, Third, 154, 298
Iraq, 29 & fn
Ireland, 22, 99, 247, 272, 380, 427
———, treaty with England, 427
Irish Nationalist Party, 84
Irwin, Baron, later Earl Halifax, 273 & fn, 321, 323
Italy, 26, 237, 364, 386
Iyengar, A. Rangaswami, 164
———, S. Srinivasa, 5, 74, 84, 129, 134, 135, 289, 302, 332, 337, 341, 356, 357

Jack, Edward, 426
Jackson, F.A., 426
Jallianwala Bagh, 363
Jamshedpur, 60 fn, 199
Japan, 27, 133, 237, 283, 364, 381
Java, 274
Jayakar, M.R., 43 fn
Jews and National Minorities in Russia (Vanguard Press), 426
Jha, Prof. Ganganath, 151 & fn
Jhabvala, S.H., 143 & fn, 339, 348
Jhansi, 72, 150, 255
———, Rani Lakshmibai of, 255 & fn
Jharia, 118, 297, 349 fn
Jinnah, M.A., 37, 338
Joglekar, K.N., 350 fn
Johnston (American delegate to T.U.C.), 118 & fn, 296, 297, 349 fn
———, arrested at Jharia, 297
Josh, Sohan Singh, 350 fn
Joshi, G.N., 364 & fn
———, N.M., 128 fn, 297, 332, 336
———, P.C., 321 & fn
———, V.H., 347 & fn
Joynson Hicks, William ('Jix'), 59 & fn, 390
Jubbulpore, 38, 230
Jugantar, 76 fn

Jugantar Party, 68 fn, 74 fn
Juhu, 13 & fn

Kabul, 388
Kakkar, Kamla Prasad, 88 & fn
Kalakankar, Raja Awadhesh Singh, of, 418 & fn
Kale, V.G., 364 & fn
Kanpur, 128, 260
Karachi, 28 & fn
Karnatak, 9 fn
Kashmir (Kashmere), 428
Katju, Kailash Nath, 361 & fn, 369
Kaul, Kishan Prasad, 110 & fn
Kelkar, N.C., 12 & fn, 38 fn, 347
Kellogg Treaty, 430
Kerala Provincial Conference, 234, 241, 246, 249, 410
Khaliq, Abdul, 91
Khaliquzzaman, Chaudhuri, 51, 56, 110
Khan, Abdul Razzaq, 91
———, Hakim Ajmal, 103
———, Shafaat Ahmad, 93 fn
———, Sir Saiyad Ahmad, 50 fn
———, Vahid Yar, 169 & fn
———, Zafar Ali, 173 & fn
Khilafat Committee, 69
Khwaja, A.M., 93
Khyber Pass Railway, 28 & fn
Kidwai, Rafi Ahmad, 319 fn
Kitchlew, Dr. Saifuddin, 45 & fn, 51
Kobe, 283
Kombrambail, S.K., 68 & fn, 75
Kripalani, J.B., 175, 422
Krishnanand, Swami, 54 & fn
Kropotkin, Prince Peter, 425
Kuhne's system, 49, 423
Kunzru, Gopinath, 414
———, Pandit Hriday Nath, 88
Kuomintang and the Future of the Chinese Revolution (T.C. Woo), 426

Labour Party (British), 3 & fn
Lahore, 19, 104, 128, 200, 273, 290—292, 408 fn
Lahore Conspiracy Case, 75 fn
Lajpat Rai, Lala, 72, 75 fn, 100 fn, 103, 105, 130, 273, 323
Lakhimpur, 415
Lamb, Harold, 425
Langford James, 345 & fn, 346, 353
Lansbury, George, 2 fn, 3, 138, 144
Latif, Abdul, 91
Leader, The, 17
League against Imperialism, 8 fn, 125 & fn, 128 & fn, 130, 131, 133, 134, 136, 137, 145, 152—155, 295—297, 299—301, 304—309, 311—313, 317 fn, 325, 327, 336, 345, 354
———, World Congress of, 134, 146, 147, 306, 307, 309, 310
League of Nations, 21, 26, 27, 161, 192, 379
Lenin, 230, 322
Lenin (Valerin Marcu), 425
Le Temps, 322
Liau, H., 125, 128 & fn, 133
Life under the Soviets (A. Wicksteed), 427
Lithuania, 26, 237
Lokhare, B.G., 297 & fn
Lloyd, George, 59
London, 3, 22, 201, 202, 275, 283, 354, 355, 382, 388—389, 391 fn
London, Jack, 425
Lothomsky, General, 426
Louis XVI, 58
Lucknow, 56, 68, 71, 73, 100, 102, 104—108, 110 & fn, 114—116, 118—120, 252, 269, 270, 273, 309, 347, 418 fn
———, conference at, 72

MacCullum, E.P., 427
MacDonald, Ramsay, 2 fn, 3, 59, 94, 95, 138, 154, 299, 353
MacSwiney, Terence, 103 & fn
Madame Tussaud's, 391 & fn
Madanapalle, 427 fn
Madras, 1, 2, 7 fn, 23, 24, 35, 86 fn, 135, 136, 159, 181 fn, 182, 229, 286, 289, 413
Madras Times, 364 fn
Mahabharati, Alokananda, 412 & fn
Mahila Vidyapith (Allahabad), 361—362
Mahmood, Justice Syed, 50 fn
Mahmud, Dr Syed, 37, 50, 173, 340, 419

Mahmudabad, Maharaja of, 56 & *fn*
Malaviya, Pandit Madan Mohan, 43 fn, 55
Malaya, (see Federation Malay States)
Manchester Guardian, 59
Mangalore, 410—411
Manilal, Dr., 150 & *fn*
Marcu, Valerin, 425
Marsh, Margaret A., 140
Martial Law (in the Punjab), 190, 229
Masud, Syed Ross, 50 & *fn*, 51
Mathew, K.T., 47 & *fn*
Maxton, James, 130 & *fn*, 131, 133 135, 296, 298, 314 & fn, 327
Mayo, Katherine, I, 14, 394, 399
Mazzini, Giuseppe, 394 & *fn*
Meerut, 72, 117, 303, 305, 323 & fn, 331—334, 337—339, 340, 341, 343, 346—348, 351, 353, 354, 356, 358
Meerut Conspiracy Case, 43 fn, 75 fn, 299, 300, 309, 332, 336, 341, 345, 346, 348, 349, 352, 358, 415
Mehdi Haider, 92
Meherally, Yusuf, 320 & *fn*
Mehta, Jamnadas, 75 & *fn*, 76, 211 & fn
Memoirs of the Russian Revolution (General Lothomsky), 426
Menon, Shrimati Lakshmi, 151 & *fn*
Mesopotamia, 21, 29, 190, 229, 236, 242, 372
Mill, John Stuart, 58 & *fn*
Minney, R.J., 394 fn
Mirajkar, S.S., 43 & *fn*
Misra, Gauri Shankar, 187, 188, 418
———, Harkaran Nath, 110
Mitra, Satyen Chandra, 338 & *fn*
———, Sumiti Devi, 107 & fn
Modern Case for Socialism (A.W. Humphrey), 425
Moffit, L.W., 425
Monghyr, 420 & fn
Moon, Parker T., 139
Morocco, 4,
Mother India (Katherine Mayo), I, 394—396
Moscow, 275, 305, 322, 384, 388
Mozumdar, Dhirendra, 116 & fn
Mukherjee, Dr. Biswanath, 144 & *fn*, 350 *fn*, 415—418
Mukherji, A.C., 334 & fn, 338, 403 & fn
———, Dhan Gopal, 310 & fn
My Brother's Face (Dhan Gopal Mukherji), 310 fn
My Life (Isadora Duncan), 427
Mysore, 44 fn, 410
Mysore Patriot, 168
Muslim League, 11 fn, 37 fn, 38, 45 fn, 46 fn, 62 fn, 69, 76, 230, 238, 431
Mussoorie, 49, 50, 62, 173, 174, 269, 409, 413

Nagpur, 338
Naidu, Sarojini, 39, 69 fn, 311
Nambiar, A.C.N., 300 & *fn*, 311, 358
Nanking, 275
Naoroji, Dadabhai, 241 & *fn*, 364
Narman, K. F., 320 & *fn*, 338, 347, 358
Nationalist Crusade in Syria (E.P. Mac Cullum), 427
National Trade Union Federation, 331 fn
Native Problem in Africa (Raymond L. Buell), 425
Naval Disarmament Conference, 26, 27 fn
National Herald (Bombay), 404 & fn
Nearing, Scott, 426
Nehru Committee, 43, 44, 47, 50, 52 fn, 64, 71 & fn, 72, 252, 254, 262, 270—272, 276—277
Nehru, Jawaharlal, 2—5, 7—9, 15 fn, 17, 20, 23—25, 30—32, 35, 36, 38, 40—45, 48 & fn, 50—56, 62, 67, 70—72, 74—76, 84—86, 91, 94, 96—102, 105, 116, 117 fn, 118, 120—122, 126—128, 130—134, 136, 137 ff
———, on All Parties Conference, 36, 37, 41, 44, 47, 48, 50, 55, 57, 60, 61, 63, 71, 72, 78, 174, 238, 244, 262; on communalism, 1, 9 & fn, 37, 39, 43, 45, 46, 51, 61, 64, 67, 71, 93, 181—183, 186, 203, 206, 207, 214, 225, 230, 233, 238, 258, 261, 431 & fn, on Congress presidentship, 51; on Dominion Status, 4, 12, 21, 41, 42, 57—61, 72, 77, 117, 143, 212, 223, 252, 261, 272, 273, 276, 277, on Gandhi, 10, 12, 15, 17—19, 37,

98, 121, 270, 423; on independence, 1, 3—6, 8, 11, 12, 16, 20, 41, 42, 57—59, 67, 72, 77, 87, 117, 132, 143, 212, 223, 252, 256, 261, 272, 274, 276, 277, 363, on kisans, 53, 75, 144, 184, 198, 209, 217—219, 224, 226, 229, 231, 240, 245—249, 253, 258, 259, 263—266, 284, 285, 287, 288, 297, 319, 365, 366, 368, 369, 371—378, 417, 429; on office acceptance, 211, 259, 302, 305, 306, 391, 392; on possible visit to U.S.A., 427, 428; on republican ideal, 7, 8; on rules of kisan sabhas, 429; on Simon Commission, 1, 2 fn, 3, 4, 8, 9, 35, 81—84, 86—87, 89, 93, 98—99, 101, 105, 120, 149, 206, 227, 240; on social evils in Kashmir, 428; on socialism, 153, 155, 184, 191—193, 199, 206, 210, 212, 213, 222, 225, 246—248, 250, 264—266, 267, 371; on violence, 117, 118, 225, 245, 253, 323, 324, 326, 327, 372; on youth, 17, 92, 104, 105, 107, 114, 116, 120, 159, 160, 165, 171, 172, 179—181, 185, 188—196, 199—201, 203, 210—214, 320, 321

———, Kamala, 2, 37, 49, 50, 133, 145, 175, 176, 301, 302, 413, 423

———, Krishna (Shrimati Krishna Hutheesing), 2, 301, 302, 345

———, Motilal, 13 fn, 20, 41, 43 fn, 48 fn, 98, 115, 130 fn, 202 fn, 407, 409 & fn, 418 fn

Nehru Report, 11 fn, 56 fn, 63 & fn, 143, 174, 202, 252, 270—272, 276 fn, 277

New Delhi, 97, 320

New Era, 379 fn

New Leader, 100, 369 fn

Nepal, 382

New York, 283, 310, 383

Nicaragua, 142

Nikadnole, 420 fn

Nimbkar, R.S., 350 fn

Norway, 308

Ostend, 298 fn

Oudh (see Avadh)

Outline of Modern Imperialism, 426

Out of the Past (R.W. Postgate), 426

Pahwa, Thakurdas, 425 & fn

Pakistan, 64

Palestine, 4, 314

Pan-Asiatic Conference, 295

Pandit, Pratap, 409 & fn

———, R.S., 133, 136, 144, 334, 337, 409 & fn, 413

———, Vijayalakshmi, 136, 144, 334, 409, 410, 413

Pant, Govind Ballabh, 106 & fn, 107, 110, 111, 340

Paris, 147, 275, 307, 308, 382, 383

Patel, Vallabhbhai, 240 fn, 269 fn

———, Vithalbhai, 322 & fn, 323, 332 & fn

Patna, 419, 432 fn

Peoples' Marx (Borchardt), 426

Perhipunan Indonesia, 129 fn, 145 fn, 295

Persia, 21, 154, 193, 194, 229, 236, 372, 388

Peru, 383

Peston, Kuverji, 110 & fn

Peshawar, 28

Philippines, 27

Physical Culture Academy, 162, 169, 173

Pioneer, 96, 97, 100, 368 fn

Poland, 26, 237

Pole, Major Graham, 1 & fn, 345

Ponsonby, Arthur, 87 & fn, 425

Poona, 50, 65, 364 fn

Port Said, 413

Portugal, 237

Postgate, R.W., 426

Prasad, Mathura, 432 & fn

———, Dr Rajendra, 4 & fn, 5, 269 fn

Prayag, 188

Press Workers Union, 331 fn

Price, M. Phillips, 427

Profits of Religion (Upton Sinclair), 425

Proudhon, Pierre Joseph, 209 & fn

'Prosperous' British India (William Digby), 364 fn

Public Safety Bill, 60 fn, 70, 202, 207, 269, 305, 318—324, 332 & fn

Public Safety Ordinance, 336, 341, 349, 356

Punjab landholders, 246, 247

Punjab Provincial Conference, 144, 230, 421

Purandare, V.B., 345 & fn

Ragged Trousered Philanthropists (Robert Tressell), 426
Rahim, Sir Abdur, 46 & *fn*
Rahman, Habibur, 91
Rai, Rajdhari, 417
Rajagopalachari, C., 269 fn
Rangoon, 431 fn
Rao, B. Shiva, 345 & *fn*
———, D. L. Ananda, 199
———, Hosakoppa Krishna, 44 & fn
———, S S, 420 & fn
Ray, Sudhir, 334 & fn
Reed, John, 426
Republican Congress, 7 & fn, 8, 23, 24, 135
Republican League, 7 fn, 35
Ring of the Indian Bell (Thakurdas Pahwa), 428
Rohtak, 421 fn, 422
Rolland, Romain, 391
Rome, 382
Rowlatt Act, 190, 229, 232, 318, 319
Roy, B.C., 269 fn
———, Kiran Shankar, 74 & *fn*
———, M N, 250 & *fn*
Rumanus, 237
Ruskin, John, 210 & *fn*
Russia, 26, 163, 193, 202, 221, 230, 231, 237, 249, 250, 266, 310, 366, 370, 386, 388, 389, 403
Russian Revolution to Brest Litovsk (Trotsky), 426
Ryan, 349 fn

Sabarmati, 10, 20, 36, 269, 423
Sadaqat Ashram, 432 fn
Sahai, Sitla, 176, 422, 423
Sahay, Krishna Ballav, 103 & *fn*
Sad ur Rahman, 56
Saigal, Kedarnath, 75 & *fn*, 76, 350 fn
Saklatvala, S, 3, 299, 332, 335, 336 354 fn
Salvador, 142
Sambamurti, B, 7 fn, 23 & *fn*, 74
Sapru, Tej Bahadur, 43 fn, 88
Sarhad, 101 & fn
Sarma, S Mahalinga, 146 & fn
Sastri, V. S Srinivasa, 18 & fn
Satyamurti, S, 74 & *fn*, 76, 275 & fn, 295 fn
Satyapal, Dr, 338 & *fn*
Savarkar, V.D, 394 & *fn*
Sawna, Mohanlal, 102, 105, 110
Schmidt, P J, 152 & fn, 154
Searchlight, The, 51
Secret Treaties (F. Seymour Cocks), 426
Sen Gupta, J M, 174 & *fn*, 334
Sen, Nishit, 334 & fn, 337, 338
Sethi, Arjunlal, 68 & fn
Shafi, Sir Muhammad, 46 & *fn*, 62 & fn
Shahabad, 39 fn
Shaikh, A.A, 283
Shambhu Nath, 428 & fn
Shankarlal, Lala, 75 & *fn*, 76
Sharma, Pandit Dev Ratan, 45 & fn
———, R.S, 421 & fn
Shastri, Kanhaya Lal, 404 & *fn*
Sherwani, T.A K., 93
Shiva or The Future of India (R J. Minney), 394 fn
Short History of British Colonial Policy (Egerton), 426
Short History of the English People (John Richard Green), 58 & fn
Shraddhanand, Swami, 319, 411
Sikh League, 38, 45 fn, 76, 136, 143, 148
Simla, 351
Simon, Sir John, 1 fn, 89 & fn, 102, 104, 107
Simon Commission, 9, 75 fn, 81—89, 92, 93, 122, 149, 154, 219, 227, 240, 262, 272, 273, 325, 369, 392 fn, 408
———, boycott committee, 105, 108—110, 112
———, boycott conference, 84—86
———, boycott of, 1 & fn—3, 8 fn, 35, 81, 93 fn, 98, 99, 101, 104, 105 & fn, 112, 113, 117 & fn, 118, 120, 125, 154, 206, 238, 303
Sinclair, Upton, 425
Sind, 9 fn, 37 fn, 38 & fn, 63 fn, 233, 431 *fn*
Singapore, 37
———, naval base at, 27 & fn
Singh, B P., 421 & fn
———, Chaudhri Raghubir Naram, 30, 32 & fn, 347
———, Deoki Prasad, 347
———, Raghbir, 249, 250

———, Raja Jagannath Baksh, 392 & fn
———, Mangal, 45 & fn, 136
Sinha, Anandi Prasad, 405, 406, 407
———, Sachchidananda, 48 fn
———, Sri Krishna, 420 & *fn*
Sinn Fein, 306
Sitaramaraju, Alluri, 167 & *fn*
Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, 285 & *fn*
Slaves of the Gods (Katherine Mayo), 395 & fn, 396
Smith, F.E., (*see* Birkenhead)
Socialist Youth Congress, 213
Soddy, Professor, 425
South Africa, 13 fn, 22, 42
Southern *India Liberal Federation*, 39, 76
Spratt, Philip, 336 & fn, 339, 343, 354 fn
Sri Lanka, 27 fn
Sri Prakasa, 74
Starr, Mark, 426
State and Revolution (Lenin), 426
Statutory Commission (see Simon Commission)
Strachey, John, 425
Stuttgart, 69 fn
Subedar, V., 68 & *fn*
Sumatra, 274
Sunderland, Rev. J.T., 311
Sun Yat Sen, Madame, 146
Surat, 431 & fn
Swadesamitran, 164
Swadesh, 417
Swarajya, 86 & fn
Swarup (see Vijayalakshmi Pandit)
Switzerland, 26, 395
Syria, 4

Tabriz, 194
Tagore, Rabindranath, 183, 395
Tambe, S.P., 391 & fn
Tamerlane (Harold Lamb), 425
Tamkohi, 415, 417
———, Raja of, 415 & fn, 416
Thengdi, D.R., 320 fn, 350 fn
Through the Russian Revolution (A. Rhys Williams), 426
Tilak, Lokamanya, 12 fn, 169 fn
Times Book Club (*London*), 425
Times of India, The, 339
Tokyo, 275, 384
Towards Moral Bankruptcy (M. Paul Bureau), 14
Trades Disputes Bill, 60, 251, 260, 319, 323, 336, 341, 349, 356 & fn
Trade Union Congress, 118, 121, 128 & fn, 129, 143
Trafalgar Square (London), 342
Tressell, Robert, 426
Tribune, The, 19, 249
Trincomalee, 27 & fn
Triumphant Machine (R.M. Fox), 425
Trotsky, Leon, 426
Turkey, 4, 193, 195, 221, 232, 370, 382, 388
Tyabji, S.A.S., 429 & *fn*

Ugarte, Manuel, 139 & *fn*
United States of America, 14, 22, 27, 126, 127, 129, 163, 237, 262, 275, 303, 311, 327, 364, 412, 427

Vakil, Jahangir, 182 & *fn*
Valley of Moon (Jack London), 425
Varanasi, 17, 19, 35, 75, 85—88, 403 & fn
Venkatachari, K., 181 & fn
Ventadour, 125
Victoria, Queen, 20 fn
Vidyarthi, G.S., 68, 74, 126, 255 fn
Vienna, 387
Vijayaraghavachariar, G., 4 & *fn*, 62
Vishal Bharat, 150 & fn
Viswanatham, T., 74 & *fn*
Visvesvaraya, M., 364 & *fn*
Vivekananda, Swami, 76 fn

Wadia, P.A., 364 & fn
Wang, T.C., 426
Wardha, 176
Wealth of India (G. N Joshi & P. A. Wadia), 364 fn
Webb, S & B., 426
Wedgwood, Josiah, first Lord, 3 & *fn*
Westminster, 95
Wickstead, A., 427
Wilde, Oscar, 393

Williams, A. Rhys, 426
Winterton, Earl of, 59
Woo, T.C., 426
Worker looks at History (Mark Starr), 426
Workers and Peasants Party, 53 & fn, 144 fn, 250 fn, 297
Workers' Control in the Russian Mining Industry (John Strachey), 425
Workers' Welfare League, 354 & fn
World Commonwealth, 254
World Youth Congress, 181
Young India, 14 & fn, 18 fn
Youth Conference, at Madras, 172, 179 & fn
Youth Movement in China (T.C. Wang), 426
Yugoslavia, 237
Yule, Sir David, 265 & fn
Yusuf, Nawab Sir Mohammad, 391 & fn, 392
Zamindar, 173 fn

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Volume Four

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FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling — these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles,

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both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the "third world" as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.

Indira Gandhi

New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

EDITORIAL NOTE

The confrontation with the government which Jawaharlal Nehru had foreseen came to a head during the two years, 1929 to 1931, covered in this volume. Jawaharlal Nehru continued to take a deep interest in the peasant and trade union movements. On the other hand he found himself elected, on Mahatma Gandhi's insistence, the President of the Congress. His address at the Lahore session in December 1929 is a clear and courageous statement of his political ideas. It was a socialist and a republican who was at the head of what was basically a conservative body interested only in political concessions.

The contradiction was not immediately apparent for the Congress was pledged to independence and authorised Mahatma Gandhi to organise civil disobedience. So Jawaharlal Nehru wound up the Independence for India League and gave all his attention to salt satyagraha. It was the nationalist endeavour which was now in the forefront, and criticism from the League against Imperialism led Jawaharlal Nehru to sever his relations with that body. The jail diaries and letters of 1930 exude a glow of patriotic exaltation.

This did not, however, last long. The death of his father in February 1931 and Mahatma Gandhi's settlement with the Viceroy were both intense shocks. Jawaharlal Nehru loyally accepted Mahatma Gandhi's decision, but it was not easy. His health gave way under these strains, and he spent a few weeks in Sri Lanka and southern India in the summer of 1931.

In this volume much of the material has been selected from the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru.

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CONTENTS

1. On the Role of Youth

1	Message to Naujawan Bharati Sabha	11 January	1929	1
2	Advice to Youth	5 February	1929	1
3	Socialism and Communism	8 February	1929	2
4	To Yusuf Meherally	22 February	1929	4
5	To Bhagwat Dayal	3 April	1929	5
6	To Yusuf Meherally	29 June	1929	7
7	On the Hunger Strike of Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt	5 July	1929	8
8	To Yusuf Meherally	24 July	1929	9
9	Statement on Punjab Arrests	26 July	1929	10
10	To Balvantray Mehta and H. M. Pandya	1 August	1929	10
11	To Sri Prakasa	2 August	1929	11
12	On Violence	5 August	1929	12
13	On a Visit to Prisoners on Hunger Strike	9 August	1929	13
14	On Hunger Strikes	9 August	1929	14
15	Address to Allahabad Youth League	11 August	1929	16
16	On the Need for Change	21 August	1929	17
17	The Need to Abolish Feudalism	31 August	1929	18
18	To Yusuf Meherally	23 September	1929	19
19	To Damodar Swarup Seth	7 October	1929	20
20	Statement to the Press	16 October	1929	21
21	To Sumant Mehta	5 December	1929	22
22	Speech at Students' Convention	30 December	1929	23

2. The Trade Union Movement

GENERAL

1	To J. E Potter-Wilson	22 January	1929	27
2	Note on the Strike at Bauria	24 January	1929	27
3	To Subhas Chandra Bose	24 January	1929	29
4	To D. B. Kulkarni	22 March	1929	29
5	To R. R. Bakhale	March	1929	30
6	On the General Strike at Bombay	28 April	1929	31
7	On the Trade Union Movement	18 May	1929	31
8	To D. B. Kulkarni	1 June	1929	32
9	To C. B Johri	12 July	1929	33
10	To R. Bridgeman	23 July	1929	35
11	To V. Chattopadhyaya	24 July	1929	36
12	To S. Y. Yatzdani	14 August	1929	37
13	To C. B. Johri	25 August	1929	37
14	To D. B. Kulkarni	10 September	1929	38
15	Address at U.P. Trade Union Conference	16 September	1929	40
16	On the Royal Commission on Labour	20 September	1929	41
17	To R. R. Bakhale	24 September	1929	42
18	To D. B. Kulkarni	7 October	1929	43
19	To N. M. Joshi	20 October	1929	44
20	To R. S. Ruikar	20 October	1929	45
21	To R. S. Ruikar	29 October	1929	46
22	To R. R. Bakhale	31 October	1929	48
23	To Nilakantha Das	20 November	1929	48
24	Presidential Address at the All India Trade Union Congress	30 November	1929	49
25	Statement on the Proceedings of the All India Trade Union Congress	30 November	1929	55

26	Message to the Golmuri Tinplate Workers	17 May	1929	57
27	To Jatindranath Mitra	1 July	1929	58
28	To R. R. Bakhale	1 July	1929	58
29	On Strikes	13 July	1929	59
30	To Jatindranath Mitra	16 July	1929	61
31	To M. John	16 July	1929	62
32	To the General Manager, Golmuri Tinplate Company	31 July	1929	63
33	To V. V. Giri	19 August	1929	64
34	To Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co.	21 August	1929	64
35	To Maulana Azad	25 August	1929	68
36	To Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co.	10 September	1929	69
37	To Father	10 September	1929	70
38	Note on the Golmuri Tinplate Workers' Strike	September	1929	72
39	To Abdul Bari	4 October	1929	80
40	Statement to the Press	5 October	1929	80

3. General Secretary, A.I.C.C.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

1	To Madam Sun Yat Sen	16 January	1929	85
2	To General Secretary, National Minority Movement	16 January	1929	86
3	To Goune Sinha	16 January	1929	86
4	To Secretary, Perhipunan Indonesia	19 January	1929	87
5	To Alokananda Mahabharati	19 January	1929	88
6	To P. N. Trivedi	19 January	1929	88
7	To M. E. Burns	22 January	1929	89
8	To B. Weinbren	22 January	1929	89
9	To Otto Reinemann	22 January	1929	90

10	To N. N. Acharya	22 February	1929	91
11	To Secretary, Punjab P.C.C.	23 February	1929	91
12	To T. Braganca-Cunha	2 March	1929	94
13	To Secretary, Punjab P.C.C.	2 March	1929	95
14	To Sailendranath Ghose	6 March	1929	95
15	To Satyapal	13 March	1929	96
16	Statement to the Press	21 March	1929	98
17	To Miaz Ali	7 May	1929	100
18	On the Victory of British Labour	2 June	1929	101
19	On the British Labour Government	7 June	1929	102
20	Interview to the Press	9 June	1929	102
21	To B. J. K. Hallowes	26 June	1929	103
22	To A. C. N. Nambiar	11 July	1929	105
23	To Fenner Brockway	1 August	1929	107
24	Anglo-Indians and the Congress	27 August	1929	109
25	To C. Rajagopalachari	9 September	1929	110
26	To L. Paul	7 October	1929	110
27	To Members of the N.W.F.P.C.C.	21 November	1929	111
28	To Sakarben K. Vyas	6 December	1929	112
29	To S. Srinivasa Iyengar	7 December	1929	112
30	To D. V. Gundappa	11 December	1929	113

MAHATMA GANDHI'S U.P. TOUR

31	To Sri Prakasa	12 March	1929	114
32	Circular to Members of the U.P.P.C.C.	13 July	1929	115
33	To B. D. Misra	23 July	1929	117
34	To Sri Prakasa	31 July	1929	117
35	To Damodar Swarup Seth	31 July	1929	118
36	To J. B. Kripalani	5 August	1929	119
37	To M. A. Ansari	22 October.	1929	119
38	To J. B. Kripalani	28 October	1929	120

CONGRESS BRANCHES ABROAD

39	To Ramlal B. Bajpai	19 March	1929	122
40	To Ramlal B. Bajpai	7 May	1929	123
41	To Sailendranath Ghose	20 June	1929	124
42	To Sailendranath Ghose	23 August	1929	125
43	To Ramlal B Bajpai	31 October	1929	126
44	To Ramlal B. Bajpai	21 November	1929	127

HINDUSTANI SEVA DAL

45	To N. S. Hardikar	25 January	1929	129
46	An Appeal for the Hindustani Seva Dal	25 January	1929	130
47	To N. S. Hardikar	11 February	1929	130
48	The National Flag	8 March	1929	131
49	On the Hindustani Seva Dal	27 June	1929	132
50	Message to the Seva Dal Camp at Nawakot	18 September	1929	133

BRITISH GOODS BOYCOTT COMMITTEE

51	On the Duties of the Kisans	9 March	1929	134
52	On Khadi	21 March	1929	135
53	To Jairamdas Doulatram	23 March	1929	136
54	To Secretaries, Punjab and Delhi P.C.Cs	23 March	1929	137
55	To Jairamdas Doulatram	23 March	1929	137
56	To Jairamdas Doulatram	23 March	1929	138
57	To Jairamdas Doulatram	8 April	1929	140
58	To P.C.Cs	8 April	1929	140

INSPECTION OF CONGRESS OFFICES

59	To Secretary, Punjab P.C.C	13 March	1929	141
60	U.P.P.C.C—Notes of Inspection	15 March	1929	143
61	To Secretary, U.P.P.C.C	23 March	1929	145
62	To Jairamdas Doulatram	30 April	1929	146

63	To Lala Shankarlal	2 May	1929	148
64	To Secretary, Bombay P.C.C.	6 May	1929	149
65	To Secretary, U.P.P.C.C.	13 July	1929	151
66	*Report on Hathras*	22 July	1929	151

4. *The Congress Presidentship*

1	To Mahatma Gandhi	9 July	1929	155
2	To Mahatma Gandhi	13 July	1929	156
3	On the Congress Presidentship	21 August	1929	158
4	Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi	21 August	1929	158
5	To Father	30 August	1929	158
6	To V. Chattopadhyaya	23 September	1929	159
7	To R. Bridgeman	1 October	1929	160
8	To Shiva Prasad Gupta	1 October	1929	160
9	To S A. Brelvi	7 October	1929	161
10	To Govind Ballabh Pant	14 October	1929	162
11	To Editors of *Nationalist* Newspapers	29 October	1929	162
12	To All Members of the Working Committee	29 October	1929	163
13	To B. N. Sen	31 October	1929	164
14	The Delhi Manifesto	1 November	1929	165
15	To Mahatma Gandhi	4 November	1929	166
16	To the President of the Congress	4 November	1929	168
17	To M. Desai	14 November	1929	169
18	To D. V. Divekar	14 November	1929	170
19	To Frances J. Pratt	20 November	1929	170
20	To S. Srinivasa Iyengar	20 November	1929	171
21	To B. V. Burli	20 November	1929	172
22	To Satyapal	21 November	1929	173
23	To R. Bridgeman	23 November	1929	174
24	To V Chattopadhyaya	26 November	1929	175
25	The Congress and the Viceroy's Statement	November	1929	175

26	To K. Santanam	4 December	1929	178
27	To Prafulla C. Mukherji	9 December	1929	179
28	To Krishna Narayan	10 December	1929	180
29	To Nand Kumar Rai	11 December	1929	180

5. The Lahore Congress

1	The Hoisting of the National Flag	29 December	1929	183
2	Presidential Address	29 December	1929	184
3	Concluding Address	1 January	1930	199

6. Preparation for Civil Disobedience

1	To Secretaries, P.C.Cs	6 January	1930	203
2	Statement to the Press	6 January	1930	204
3	To Abdur Rahim	7 January	1930	205
4	To Mahatma Gandhi	7 January	1930	206
5	To R. Bridgeman	8 January	1930	207
6	On the Boycott of Councils	9 January	1930	208
7	On the Treatment of Political Prisoners	11 January	1930	209
8	The Coming Struggle	13 January	1930	210
9	To Mahatma Gandhi	13/14 January	1930	211
10	To Syed Mahmud	15 January	1930	213
11	To Mahatma Gandhi	17 January	1930	214
12	Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi	17 January	1930	215
13	The Independence Pledge	17 January	1930	215
14	Circular to P.C.Cs	17 January	1930	217
15	To Abdur Rahim	21 January	1930	219
16	To T. V. K. Naidu	21 January	1930	220
17	To Bhagwan Din Mishra	22 January	1930	220
18	To R. S. Misra	23 January	1930	221

19	On the Duty of Youth	23 January	1930	222
20	To Syed Mahmud	23 January	1930	222
21	Circular to Secretaries, P.C.Cs	24 January	1930	223
22	Circular to P.C.Cs	24 January	1930	224
23	On Independence Day Celebrations	25 January	1930	225
24	To G. V. Ketkar	25 January	1930	225
25	Statement to the Press			227
26	Complete Independence			228
27	To B. C. Roy	27 January	1930	230
28	To Uma Shankar	28 January	1930	231
29	Statement to the Press	28 January	1930	231
30	To V. Chattopadhyaya	30 January	1930	232
31	To R. Bridgeman	30 January	1930	233
32	To Secretaries, League against Imperialism	30 January	1930	234
33	To Secretary, Punjab P.C.C.	31 January	1930	239
34	To Bansgopal	January	1930	240
35	To Raja Mahendra Pratap	January	1930	241
36	No Going Back on Pledges	1 February	1930	242
37	Speech at Tangan	5 February	1930	242
38	Call to Action	17 February	1930	251
39	Message to Volunteers	18 February	1930	252
40	To Shiva Prasad Gupta	24 February	1930	253
41	Circular to Secretaries, P.C.Cs	25 February	1930	253
42	To J. Adhikari	25 February	1930	254
43	Resolution at U.P.P.C C.	1 March	1930	255
44	To Edo Fimmen	4 March	1930	256
45	To Shiva Prasad Gupta	5 March	1930	258
46	Message to Baroda State People's Conference	13 March	1930	258
47	The Problem of Minorities	14 March	1930	259
48	The Satyagraha Pledge	24 March	1930	262
49	Note on Congress Disputes in Bengal	29 March	1930	263
50	To Secretary, League against Imperialism	9 April	1930	267
51	On the Boycott of British Drugs	11 April	1930	268

1	Circular to P.C.Cs	22 February	1930	271
2	To Secretaries, P.C.Cs	5 March	1930	273
3	Either Freedom or Slavery	6 March	1930	274
4	Statement to the Press	7 March	1930	275
5	To Mahatma Gandhi	7 March	1930	275
6	To B. G. Lokhare	7 March	1930	276
7	On the Arrest of Vallabhbhai Patel	8 March	1930	277
8	The Campaign in the U.P.	8 March	1930	278
9	Circular to P.C.Cs	12 March	1930	279
10	If Mahatma Gandhi Be Arrested	12 March	1930	280
11	To Mahadeva Desai	13 March	1930	280
12	Students and Satyagraha	14 March	1930	281
13	To M. S. Aney	16 March	1930	282
14	To K. F. Nariman	16 March	1930	283
15	Statement to the Press	18 March	1930	283
16	Note for the *Congress Bulletin*	20 March	1930	284
17	To Secretaries, P.C.Cs	20 March	1930	285
18	Interview to the Press	20 March	1930	286
19	The A.I.C.C. and Civil Disobedience	22 March	1930	287
20	Inqilab Zindabad	24 March	1930	289
21	Circular to Secretaries, P.C.Cs	25 March	1930	290
22	Appeal for the Seva Dal	25 March	1930	290
23	To Lal Behari Tandon	25 March	1930	291
24	To Basheer Ahmed Sayeed	25 March	1930	292
25	To Mahatma Gandhi	27 March	1930	292
26	To Shri Krishna Dikshit	28 March	1930	293
27	No Choice but to Fight	31 March	1930	294
28	The Battle for Independence	3 April	1930	295
29	Circular to Secretaries, P.C.Cs	4 April	1930	295
30	Circular to P.C.Cs	4 April	1930	296
31	Statement to the Press	4 April	1930	297
32	Circular to P.C.Cs	4 April	1930	297
33	To Roger Baldwin	4 April	1930	298
34	To Ranu Bala Debi	4 April	1930	299

35	Students and Civil Disobedience	6 April	1930	300
36	Message to Punjab Satyagraha Conference	6 April	1930	301
37	Statement to the Press	8 April	1930	302
38	To Vichitra Narain Sharma	10 April	1930	303
39	To the Working Committee	10 April	1930	304
40	To Ganesh Lal Dashera	10 April	1930	304
41	To Sitla Sahai	11 April	1930	305
42	Reply to U.P. Government	11 April	1930	306
43	To Sitla Sahai	12 April	1930	307
44	To Mahadeva Desai	12 April	1930	308
45	To Rafi Ahmad Kidwai	13 April	1930	311
46	To Din Dayal	13 April	1930	312
47	To Sri Prakasa	14 April	1930	313
48	The Trial	14 April	1930	313
49	Message to the People	14 April	1930	314
50	Message to the Citizens of Allahabad	14 April	1930	314
51	Message to Mahatma Gandhi	14 April	1930	314

8. Prison Diary with Letters
14 April 1930—11 October 1930

Prison Diary with Letters 317

9. The Eight Days Interlude
11-19 October 1930

1	Very Much Alive and Kicking	11 October	1930	391
2	Message to the Country	12 October	1930	391
3	Reply to the Viceroy	12 October	1930	392
4	To Secretary, All India Spinners Association	13 October	1930	395

5	To K. D. Malaviya	13 October	1930	397
6	Circular to P.C.Cs	14 October	1930	397
7	To C. Rajagopalachari	15 October	1930	400
8	Message to the North West Frontier Province	16 October	1930	401
9	To K. Santanam	17 October	1930	402
10	To Dhan Gopal Mukerjee	17 October	1930	404
11	On the Boycott of Foreign Cloth	18 October	1930	405
12	Reply to Municipal Address	18 October	1930	406
13	On Khadi	19 October	1930	407
14	To the Workers of Bombay	19 October	1930	408
15	A Note on Acting President in Case of Arrest	19 October	1930	408

10. Prison Diary with Letters
19 October 1930—26 January 1931

Prison Diary with Letters 413

11. The Gandhi-Irwin Settlement

1	Speech on His Release	26 January	1931	465
2	On His Father's Illness	30 January	1931	466
3	Acknowledgement of Messages on His Father's Death	9 February	1931	466
4	To Khan Sahib	11 February	1931	467
5	To Jaffar Shah and Abdulla Shah	11 February	1931	468
6	To Tej Bahadur Sapru	12 February	1931	470
7	Draft Communique of the Working Committee	16 February	1931	470
8	Note for the Working Committee	16 February	1931	473

9	Interview to the *Hartford Times*			474
10	Circular to P.C.Cs	17 February	1931	475
11	Interview to the Press	18 February	1931	476
12	To Kiran Sankar Roy	23 February	1931	476
13	To B. C. Roy	23 February	1931	477
14	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	28 February	1931	478
15	Note for the Working Committee			479
16	A Note on the Provisional Settlement	4 March	1931	481

12. After the Settlement

1	Interview to the Press	8 March	1931	485
2	Telegram to Roger Baldwin	8 March	1931	486
3	To Mulkraj Bhalla	8 March	1931	486
4	Truce but not Peace	9 March	1931	487
5	To Secretaries, P.C.Cs	10 March	1931	488
6	The Significance of the Settlement	10 March	1931	490
7	To Krishnanand	10 March	1931	492
8	To Nripendra Chandra Bannerji	12 March	1931	493
9	Purna Swaraj, not Dominion Status	15 March	1931	493
10	Speech at Ghatkopar	16 March	1931	497
11	Tribute to Mahatma Gandhi	17 March	1931	498
12	Speech at Volunteers Rally	18 March	1931	499
13	To Secretary, Agra District Congress Committee	22 March	1931	499
14	On the Execution of Bhagat Singh	24 March	1931	500

13. The Karachi Congress

1	Speech at All India Students Convention	27 March	1931	503
2	The Release of Political Prisoners	27 March	1931	504
3	Message to *The Bombay Chronicle*	29 March	1931	504
4	On the Lahore Executions	29 March	1931	505
5	On the Gandhi-Irwin Settlement	30 March	1931	507
6	The Future of Burma	31 March	1931	508
7	On the Forward Policy in the Frontier	31 March	1931	509
8	Resolution on Fundamental Rights	31 March	1931	511

14. Trip to the South

SRI LANKA

1	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	15 April	1931	517
2	To Indira Nehru	21 April	1931	518
3	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	22 April	1931	520
4	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	25 April	1931	521
5	To Syed Mahmud	25 April	1931	522
6	To Syed Mahmud	30 April	1931	523
7	Speech at Kandy	2 May	1931	525
8	To Syed Mahmud	5 May	1931	527
9	To Vallabhbhai Patel	5 May	1931	528
10	*Speech at Civic Reception*, Colombo	16 May	1931	529

SOUTHERN INDIA

11	To Krishna Nehru	22 May	1931	532

	Interview to the Press at Tuticorin			536
3	Reply to Addresses at Tinnevelly	27 May	1931	537
4	Reply to Addresses at Trichur	30 May	1931	539
5	Message to Travancore	30 May	1931	540
6	Reply to Addresses at Calicut	30 May	1931	541
7	Speech at Calicut	31 May	1931	543
8	Speech at Civic Reception, Coimbatore	31 May	1931	544
19	Address at Civic Reception, Mysore	1 June	1931	545
20	Reply to Addresses at Mysore	1 June	1931	547
21	Address to Bar Association, Mysore	1 June	1931	549
22	Reply to Addresses at Bangalore	2 June	1931	550
23	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	8 June	1931	553
24	On Indian Labour in Ceylon	11 July	1931	559

15. Miscellaneous

1	To Gopal Singh Khalsa	1 July	1929	563
2	To K. T. Shah	12 July	1929	563
3	To S. A. Brelvi	16 July	1929	565
4	To S. A. Brelvi	23 July	1929	565
5	To Dan Singh	14 August	1929	566
6	To Rash Mohan Roy	16 August	1929	567
7	To the Editor, *The Scholar*	19 August	1929	567
8	To Shambu Nath Hakhu	25 August	1929	568
9	To Devi Das Vaid	7 October	1929	569
10	To Nripendra Chandra Bannerji	7 October	1929	570
11	To T. L. Ahobalacharya	7 October	1929	571
12	To Master Tara Singh	10 October	1929	572
13	To K. P. Choubey	21 October	1929	574
14	To S. E. Stokes	5 December	1929	574
15	To Jahangir Vakil	6 December	1929	575

16	Message to *The Light of the World*	9 December	1929	576
17	To R. V. Dhulekar	16 January	1930	576
18	To C. V. J. Chetty	27 January	1930	578
19	To K. S. Venkatramani	1 February	1930	578
20	To Durbar Secretary, Rewa State	25 February	1930	579
21	Statement to the Press	8 March	1930	580
22	To Sri Prakasa	13 March	1930	580
23	To Motilal Nehru	28 March	1930	581
24	To Members of the Working Committee	28 March	1930	582
25	To Father	5 April	1930	583
26	To Krishna Nehru	21 February	1931	584
27	To Khwaja Ahmad Abbas	12 March	1931	586
28	To Chairman, Allahabad Municipal Board			587
29	The Economic Exploitation of India	24 March	1931	588

ILLUSTRATIONS

Frontispiece

With Congress workers at Bombay, 1929
Lahore Congress, 1929
President Elect *between pp.* 96—97

Lahore, 1929
Lahore, 1929 192—193

Salt Satyagraha, Allahabad
At Naini Prison, 14 April 1930 304—305

Diagram of Barrack No. 6, Naini Prison
Cover of *The Eight Days Interlude* 320—321

First page of statement at trial, 24 October 1930
Photostat of first page of letter to
Indira Nehru, 26 October 1930 416—417

At a meeting in Bombay, 1931
In Sri Lanka, 1931 528—529

1

ON THE ROLE OF YOUTH

1. Message to Naujawan Bharati Sabha[1]

I have been following with anxious interest the news in the press about the numerous arrests that have recently been made in the Punjab. Friends from the Punjab have also told me of what is happening there and of how under the pretext of investigation the police are making a dead set against earnest young workers and specially the Naujawan Bharati Sabha in the Punjab.

From what I know of this Sabha and its members I feel sure that nothing that the police can do by way of repression or terrorism is likely to damp their ardour. They are brave men who will realise the consequences of their acts and are not afraid of them. They do not require courage from outside but they can rest assured that many in India are full of sympathy for them and are prepared to help them as much as they can. I am sure the Naujawan Bharati Sabha will survive and grow in strength to take a leading part in forming a national India.

1. *The Searchlight*, 11 January 1929.

2. Advice to Youth[1]

The world is moved by ideas. Thought is always greater than armies, more lasting than the most powerful and best organised despotism. Thoughts are more powerful than fighting men, guns and prisons and laws. Their beginnings are feeble but their effect is mighty.

The British Government is afraid of Soviet principles and is trying its best to uproot socialist ideas and not to allow any communist to preach his gospel. So it has prepared the so-called Public Safety Bill. The Bill in fact aims at crushing everything that leads to freedom. Its underlying idea is to weaken the forces of nationalism in India.

1. Speech at Delhi, 5 February 1929. From *The Hindustan Times*, 7 February 1929.

Communism is a new principle and like other new-born principles it has to undergo the tyrannies of imperialists. But the government should know that ideas can never be checked by cruel laws. The more the *zulum*, the greater the spread of ideas.

The mistake which despots have been making ever since organized states came into existence is that they overestimate their coercive powers, which are only physical and material, and, on the other hand, underestimate the power and vitality of ideas and sentiments.

Youth should not be slaves of tradition, but should break the authority of custom, tradition and government. It is false to say that the ideas of socialism are against Hinduism or Islam. In spite of all effort to suppress the ideas of socialism they are making great progress because society is suffering from numerous social and economic evils which require immediate eradication.

The whole question before the ordinary people is that of bread. Indian youth are so greatly in the grip of unemployment that over a thousand M.As, graduates and others had recently applied for a job of thirty rupees.

By merely shouting 'Swaraj' it will not come to us. It is our duty to face problems like practical men. Swaraj is not our goal, it is a means to our goal. The goal is human happiness and human equality.

It is my desire that the spirit that was infused in the youth of Europe after the Great War, and especially by the Russian revolution, should be kindled in every Indian youth. The youth of Delhi should form an active youth league and chalk out a way for themselves. The Bombay, Bengal and Madras youth leagues have done splendid work. I am confident that the youth of Delhi will not lag behind. I want youth to bring the older generation to the right path and revolutionise their rigid ideas, and release India from the clutches of foreign slavery.

3. Socialism and Communism[1]

We want to discuss socialism and preach its gospel to the people, because we want to help to solve the problem of bread and butter. In

1. Speech at Lahore, 8 February 1929. From *The Tribune*, 10 February 1929.

India, millions of people are underfed and underclothed and the mere discussion or talk of freedom cannot bring them freedom. We want to change the order of society in India and raise our people to the same level as the modern nations of the world, so that our people can live more comfortably and get sufficient food every day. I disapprove of the spirit of fatalism and accepting everything blindly, which has caused great harm to our country. But whenever we attempt to create a new order of society, the government immediately gets nervous and sees 'red' in everything. The whole aim of the government is to shut out all new ideas which could come into this country from outside. Government has proscribed from time to time foreign literature, particularly Russian literature, in order to prevent Indian youth from imbibing fresh and new ideas.

The spirit of nationalism has existed in India for many years, but if nationalism is combined with socialism the day of freedom would be hastened. I know that if we spread socialistic ideas we are bound to come into conflict with the capitalists. But this should not deter us from working for the welfare of the peasants and the workers. These are the real sons of the soil and they truly represent the Indian nation. If they are organised we will have the real sanction of the people behind us. It is clear that the big landlords and talukdars and the Rajas and the Maharajas will not join us and support our cause; but as soon as we are able to organize the workers and create a mass consciousness among the people, these capitalists will themselves come down from their places of privilege and join us. The workers and the peasants are the only people who would stand by us at all times of difficulty. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the former Labour Prime Minister of England, has suggested that Indians should adopt socialistic principles gradually and slowly. But this slow rate would mean fifty years for us to come in line with the advanced socialist countries of the world.

The Bolsheviks believe that sooner or later the people will have to confront the autocrats and the bureaucrats and therefore the people should be trained from now. All that goes to form wealth and power should be secured by the people, who should form a state of the proletariat. *The exploitation of the workers by the capitalists must be* stopped. Those who help and labour in the production of wealth should live as comfortably as those who possess wealth. Socialism means co-operation. I, therefore, ask all of you to work together in order to elevate the masses.

Students should not only express enthusiasm but train themselves in such a manner that they might become experts and not mere amateurs. Incompetent amateurs can never hope to achieve anything in the world.

Students should discard foreign cloth and wear khaddar and take an active part in national activities.

4. To Yusuf Meherally[1]

February 22nd, 1929

My dear Meherally,

Thank you for the literature[2] you have sent me. Your league *must* have had a very heavy and arduous time during the Bombay riots.[3] From all accounts that I have heard your members did remarkably well. I was deeply grieved to learn of the death of the three young volunteers. Will you kindly convey my heartiest congratulations to your members and volunteers for the splendid work they did during these riots?

In Lahore I met the members of the students' association. They are an earnest lot and I wish you would get in touch with them. Please write to the secretary, Lahore Students' Union, Lahore. This is a sufficient address. You can say that you are writing to him at my instance.

I found that some of them were worried about the conflict between the Youth Congress and the Socialist Youth Congress. I tried to assure them that there was or should be no conflict between the two, the Socialist Youth Congress comprising the left wing of the larger congress. I wish you would write to them and impress this on them. Most of the young men who saw me were fairly advanced in their views and suggested that if there was any conflict they would prefer the more advanced congress.

Could you send me copies of the resolutions passed at the Youth Congress at Calcutta?[4]

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-39/1928 (Pt. I), p. 113, N.M.M.L.
2. On the constitution of the Youth League.
3. Communal riots broke out in Bombay on 5 February 1929 and lasted for a week.
4. The Youth Congress, which was held in Calcutta on 25-26 December 1928, declared that complete independence and not Dominion Status should be the objective of India. It called upon youth to combat the forces of communalism and capitalism. They were asked to pledge themselves to the use of khaddar and to encourage *swadeshi*. They were also asked to keep up and stiffen the boycott of the Simon Commission.

I have not heard anything definite about the U.P. Conference.[5] I believe however that some conversations are going on about it. I am going to Lucknow tomorrow and shall inquire.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. It was to hold its first session at Lucknow in July 1929.

5. To Bhagwat Dayal[1]

3/4/29

Dear Bhagwat Dayalji,[2]
I received your letter of the 28th March yesterday afternoon on my return to Allahabad. I was very much surprised to read it and to find what curious notions have entered the heads of some students. What a youth league is meant for is a question which can hardly be answered in the course of a brief letter. I have given expression to my own ideas on the subject on several public occasions and specially at the All Bengal Students Conference[3] and the Bombay Presidency Youth Conference[4] last year.

I had often suggested at public meetings and elsewhere the desirability of starting youth leagues in the U.P. I had also stated that the initiative must come from the youth themselves and that it was not my business to start it. In December last, I think, I was told that a league had been started in Allahabad in a small way. I did not know much about it. In January or perhaps February I was asked if I would agree to be the president of this league. I said I had no objection. I told the young men who approached me, however, that I would be a president more or less in an honorary capacity. I would gladly help them to the best of my ability but the burden of carrying on the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-39/1928 (Pt. 1), pp. 153-159, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1900); lecturer, Allahabad University, 1925-45; Indian ambassador in Thailand, 1946-51, and in Indonesia, 1951-53.
3. 22 September 1928. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 188-196
4. 12 December 1928. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 203-210.

league must rest on the young men. I was busy with other things and so far as I know the league did nothing special except holding a meeting of sympathy with the Gujarat College students.[5] I was not present at any meeting when the name or constitution was considered. Some time back, probably last year, I was shown some draft constitutions and asked my opinion. Probably I made some suggestions but I do not recollect exactly. My impression was that the league was called the Allahabad Youth League and was confined to Allahabad.

Immediately after Puran Chand Joshi's arrest I heard for the first time that the league was called the U.P. Young Comrades' League and I saw their membership form with some rules at the back. I was a little surprised at the name as I had not heard it before. I enquired about it and was told that this name had originally been given to the organisation. As I had not been in touch with what was happening I did not know anything about it I pointed out however that it was not a happy name and that it should confine its activities to Allahabad. Most of the others agreed but said that the name should not be changed just then, so soon after Joshi's arrest. This might be interpreted as the result of fear caused by the recent arrest. I appreciated this argument and so, for the moment, we dropped the subject.

My own idea was, and I think this also was the idea of others who were working for the league, that a permanent constitution should be made after a fair number of members had been enrolled. For the moment therefore a provisional committee was elected and some general and somewhat vague rules were made.

As for terrorism and communism I do not understand why you should put me the question. Surely you did not imagine that the league would have such a monstrous aim as terrorism or that it should stand for communism! A youth league, as I understand it, should consist of young men who are dissatisfied with present conditions and seek to better them. Any young person, whatever his way of thinking may be, should be welcome if he takes life seriously and wants to discuss its problems and do something. The league should not encourage rigid adherence to creeds and dogmas and any one who is full of self-complacency would not be a desirable member.

The principal object of such a league should be, I think, self-education by discussions, study circles and by developing contacts with the masses. The members should prepare themselves for future work rather than

5. The students of Gujarat College, Ahmedabad, had gone on strike on 3 January when the principal fined those students who had been absent on the day of the arrival of the Simon Commission and ordered them to reappear for the examinations.

take up active work before they are clear in their own minds what to do and how to do it. The preparation itself may involve some active work but the object should not be so much the work as the training and knowledge that the work gives. Some kinds of activities can be indulged in even at this stage, for example, boycott of foreign cloth and occasional participation in national demonstrations and the like. Occasionally also, activities are thrust on the league by repressive measures of the government.

Communism today is a very vital factor in world politics and quite apart from its merits it seems to me essential that our youth should try to understand it. Personally, although I do not agree with many of its methods and am doubtful how far India is developed enough for it, I am attracted by its ideology. And even if I was not so attracted the mere fact that the government wants to suppress all honest consideration of the subject would induce me to do this. But that is neither here nor there. So far as the youth league is concerned it is certainly not committed to communism or any other 'ism' and its doors are open to those who may be communistically inclined as well as those who consider communism the special gift of the Evil One. So far as the average student is concerned, as you must know, he knows precious little about communism or socialism.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. To Yusuf Meherally[1]

June 29th, 1929

My dear Meherally,
I have just received your letter of the 24th June. I am very glad to learn that you propose to issue a weekly called the *Vanguard*.[2] I am convinced that there is a great deal of room for such a paper. Indeed for some time I myself thought of having such a paper issued from Allahabad or Benares but want of time prevented me from doing it.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-39/1928 (Pt. II), pp 211-213, N.M.M.L.
2. On 24 June 1929 Yusuf Meherally wrote to Jawaharlal that he proposed to start a weekly journal—*Vanguard*—to propagate the principles of socialism.

Besides, I was loth to issue anything which was not A-1. I wish you all success.

My experience of Indian journalism has been very disappointing and hence I am diffident of connecting myself in a business capacity with any newspaper. I should not like to be a director of a paper in name only and I do not see what else I can do from such a distance. However it is difficult to say 'no' to you and if you insist you can have my name as a director.

I am glad you have got a number of competent young men with you. That is very good. Try to spread your net as wide as possible and get articles from a variety of individuals. The same persons writing repeatedly become a little stale. Try also to get an international outlook by getting contributors from other countries.

I think that the annual subscription you have fixed is too little. I would suggest at least Rs. 5, if not more. However this is for you to decide.

I think you ought to make a point of paying your contributors. To begin with you need not pay them much but you must recognise the principle that literary craftsmen have to live and the Indian habit of getting free articles is a most pernicious one. You will get much better work if you pay for it and you will help some deserving young men.

One thing more Do not make your paper too heavy with politics. As for an article from me I shall try to send you one occasionally but I shall not promise anything just at present. Probably I shall prefer writing to you on a non-political subject. I have too much of politics in my life already.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. On the Hunger Strike of Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt[1]

I have learnt with deep grief of the hunger strike of Bhagat Singh[2]

1. Statement issued at Delhi, 5 July 1929. *The Tribune*, 7 July 1929.
2. (1901 1931), organised revolutionary activities in the Punjab, Delhi and U.P.; alleged to have been involved in the shooting of a police officer at Lahore on 17 December 1928, arrested after he and B K. Dutt had exploded a bomb in the Central Assembly on 8 April 1929 He was one of the principal accused in the Lahore Conspiracy Case and was sentenced to death and executed on 23 March 1931.

and Dutt.[3] For 20 days or more they have refrained from all food and I am told that forcible feeding is being resorted to. The two young men may have done wrong, but no Indian can refrain from admiring their great courage and our hearts must go out to them now in their great and voluntary suffering. They are fasting not for any selfish ends but to improve the lot of all political prisoners. As days go by, we shall watch with deep anxiety this hard trial and shall earnestly hope that the two gallant brothers of ours may triumph in the ordeal.

3. Batukeshwar Dutt (1908-1965); close associate of Bhagat Singh; awarded life imprisonment in the Lahore Conspiracy Case; released in 1938.

8. To Yusuf Meherally[1]

July 24th, 1929

My dear Meherally,

... Your letter of the 19th together with the memorandum and the articles of association of the Vanguard Publishing Co. Ltd. I am afraid life is too short to consider your memorandum and articles in detail. I suppose they are in the usual form. There is one small matter however which I should like to point out. In paragraph 3 of your memorandum Ci.(a) you refer to "vernaculars". I have strong objection to the use of this word anywhere. As a matter of fact it is incorrect English although the word is used frequently enough in India. Certainly it is a slight on our languages. I would therefore suggest the substitution of "or in any of the Indian languages" in place of "or in the vernaculars" ...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-39/1928 (Pt. II), p. 235, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

9. Statement on Punjab Arrests[1]

This Committee congratulates the people of the Punjab on the gallant way in which they are facing the arrests and convictions of their leaders and workers, brutal assaults, including assaults on under-trial prisoners, and the barbarous methods of repression of the British Government. In view of the fact that this terrorism appears to be aimed at preventing a successful session of the Congress in Lahore, the only adequate answer that the people of the Punjab can make is to redouble their efforts to make the forthcoming Congress a complete success and to prepare themselves for the action contemplated in 1930.

1. A.I.C.C. File No 7/1929, p 9, N.M.M.L.
This statement, issued by the Congress President after the A.I.C.C. meeting on 26 July 1929 at Allahabad, was drafted by Jawaharlal.

10. To Balvantray Mehta and H.M. Pandya[1]

August 1st, 1929

Dear Sirs,[2]

I have received your letter of the 26th July. As I am wholly ignorant of what is taking place in Rajkot in connection with the organisation of the youth conference there I am unable to answer your questions

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-39/1929, p 77, N.M.M.L.
2. Balvantray Gopalji Mehta (1899-1965); born at Bhavnagar, entered public life in 1920, actively worked for harijan uplift and women's education; imprisoned several times during the freedom movement, one of the founders of the All India States People's Conference and its general secretary from 1928 to 1947, president of the All India Panchayat Parishad, 1958-61; Chief Minister of Gujarat from 1963 till his death in an air crash on 19 September 1965. Balvantray and Pandya were then president and secretary, respectively, of the reception committee, Kathiawar Youth Conference.

definitely. I may however inform you that I am very much against any restriction of the right of free speech and so far as I am concerned I should not like that right to be limited in any way. I am writing accordingly to the office-bearers of the Rajkot conference. In case any undertakings which restrict this right have been given I should prefer to be relieved of the presidentship.

As for asking the permission of the ruler of a state, if there is no rule requiring it there appears to be no necessity for it. The mere asking of permission however does not seem to make much difference. It is the conditions which are often attached to the permission that are apt to be humiliating.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To Sri Prakasa[1]

August 2nd, 1929

My dear Prakasa,

I saw Dandekar[2] at the station. He was looking very cheerful as I expected him to be. He is a very brave boy and I have no doubt that he will survive whatever trouble and suffering he has to undergo and come back to put his shoulder to the wheel again.

He told me that he did not propose to defend himself. I agreed with him. Quite apart from any question of noncooperation and the like I do not see how any of us can offer a defence in a purely sedition case. It is our business in life to propagate disaffection for the government and that is sedition. In case the speech or speeches that Dandekar delivered are correctly reported there is little to be done except to admit them.

I suggested to Dandekar, however, that it might perhaps be advisable to have some lawyer to visit him, not with the intention of appearing

1. A I C.C. File No P-20/1929, p. 109, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. V. S. Dandekar, assistant secretary of U.P.P.C.C., 1929. He had been arrested on 31 July 1929 on a charge of sedition.

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2. V. S. Dandekar, assistant secretary of U.P.P.C.C., 1929. He had been arrested on 31 July 1929 on a charge of sedition.

in his case subsequently but just to keep us in touch with him so long as he is not convicted. A lawyer has greater facilities than others. You might therefore write to some one in Mainpuri to go and visit him in jail as a lawyer...

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. On Violence[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru said that although they had been proclaiming constantly that they would employ legitimate and peaceful means for the attainment of Swaraj still the government was repeatedly having recourse to repressive measures. The government was realizing that Indians were now not afraid of jails and, therefore, they were adopting measures of violence.

The Congress creed was achievement of Swaraj by nonviolent and peaceful means. Of the persons who took recourse to violent means, many, he thought, did not adopt such measures under the belief that they would obtain Swaraj by those means. It was their disgust for the present plight that made them impatient. They could not tolerate the idea of living any more in a country tied with bonds of slavery and, therefore, they adopted violent means risking their lives. They might also have another object in view in risking their lives, namely, rousing the public.

The only way of removing the impatience of such people was to have a strong organisation in the country, because anything could be achieved by a strong organisation without anybody risking his life.

Young men should train themselves for the service of the nation. Mere excitement without any training and expert knowledge was useless.

1. Speech at Allahabad on Political Sufferers' Day, 5 August 1929. *The Leader* 7 August 1929.

13. On a Visit to Prisoners on Hunger Strike[1]

I visited the Central Jail and the Borstal Jail yesterday and saw Sardar Bhagat Singh, Mr. Batukeshwar Dutt, Mr. Jatindranath Das[2] and all the other accused in the Lahore Conspiracy Case, who are on hunger strike. Attempts have been made for many days past to feed forcibly all these hunger-strikers. In the case of some of them, the results of this forcible method were so injurious that, all forcible feeding had to be given up in the face of a greater danger.

Some of the accused are just maintaining a measure of strength on account of forcible feeding which is given twice a day. Others are in a bad way. Those who cannot be forcibly fed, lest they should die under the force used, cannot obviously survive long now if present conditions continue. They are dying slowly from day to day and the final act in the tragedy cannot be long delayed.

The condition of Mr. Jatindranath Das is specially critical. He is very weak and cannot easily move. He speaks in whispers. He is in considerable pain and looks for release in death. Others whose condition is serious are L. Shiv Varma,[3] Mr. Ajoy Kumar Ghosh,[4] and L. Jaidev.[5]

It was very painful for me to meet these extraordinarily brave young men and to see their manifest suffering. I gathered from them that they would adhere to their resolve, whatever the consequences to their individual selves might be. Indeed, they did not care very much for their own selves. They could not undergo such tremendous suffering for a little personal comfort in future. They feel strongly, however, that the lot of political prisoners in India is bad and must be improved.

1. Statement issued at Lahore, 9 August 1929. *The Tribune*, 10 August 1929.
2. (1904-1929); member of the Revolutionary Party; arrested on 14 June 1929 for complicity in the Lahore Conspiracy Case; died on 13 September 1929 after 63 days of hunger strike.
3. (b. 1906); a revolutionary of Hardoi district, U.P.; chief organiser of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association in U.P.; in jail, 1929-1946
4. (1909-1962); son of a doctor of Kanpur; member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association; one of the accused in the Lahore Conspiracy Case, general secretary of the Communist Party, 1951-1962.
5. (b. 1909); a revolutionary of Hardoi district, U.P.; studied at D.A.V. College Kanpur and Banaras Hindu University Varanasi; convicted in the Lahore Conspiracy Case, and in prison, 1929-1946.

The position, as explained to me by Sardar Bhagat Singh, was that all political prisoners, with one exception if necessary, should be given special treatment. This exception was the case of an actual perpetrator of murder.

I can only hope that the great sacrifice which these young men are making will bear fruit.

11. On Hunger Strikes[1]

The hunger-strikers in Lahore jail are undergoing this magnificent suffering, suffering which it is in the power of few men to endure, not for themselves but for all political prisoners. The few comforts which they themselves might hope to get are not commensurate with the terrible and prolonged agony through which they are voluntarily and cheerfully passing.

How can we help these brave souls, these national heroes? Not by raising shouts at public meetings or in the streets of Lahore, but by joining in the national army of freedom. Let us free our country from bondage. Then there will be no political prisoners. Let us extend and perfect the organisation of the Congress.

I had heard in Allahabad that the people of the Punjab had been giving up their slumber and were preparing themselves to take part in the battle for the country's freedom. Since my arrival I have been hearing the new shouts of *Inqilab Zindabad*, but I have also heard another quiet, but equally powerful, shout inside the jails which the Conspiracy Case hunger strikers were raising. The sacrifice of these young men has roused us to a new consciousness of political life and once more made all of us yearn for the liberty of our country. We should realise the great value of the struggle that these brave young men are carrying on inside the jails. They are not struggling to get honours from the people or laurels from the crowd for their sacrifice. What a contrast this is, compared with the unfortunate wrangles among Congressmen and the fighting for securing positions in the Congress and the reception committee! I am ashamed to hear of these internecine differences amongst the Congressmen. But my heart is equally

1 Speech at Lahore, 9 August 1929. From *The Tribune*, 11 August 1929.

delighted by witnessing the sacrifices of the young men who are determined to die for the sake of the country.

These young men, particularly two of them, who have been on hunger strike for the last 57 days, have taken up their battle in right earnest. The forcible feeding resorted to by the authorities has added to their trouble, but at the same time has made them more determined to suffer. These hunger-strikers are not undergoing suffering for their personal happiness. If they have determined to suffer they have done so for the sake of a great principle, namely, to improve the status of political prisoners in India. The European and Eurasian prisoners get better treatment compared to the treatment meted out to Indians. These hunger-strikers are determined to end that state of affairs and, therefore, they have taken the vow to end their valuable lives. Bhagat Singh, Dutt and Das have been showing us every day by their suffering on what path we should be moving. Some of them may leave the mortal coil here within a few days, but that will not solve the question of our liberty and freedom. Their sacrifices at least will teach us one lesson, which is that the people should now give up their lethargy and join in freedom's battle. They are determined to die, but the question is what will the rest of us do? Will we not also follow in their footsteps and free the country from foreign bondage by similar sacrifices?

The police in India have for some time past been using the lathi rather freely. It seems that they have come to the conclusion that the people have no fear of jails. The police want to take us to jail after first breaking some of our heads. This improper use of the lathi began with the beating of Lala Lajpat Rai and this practice is taking a worse turn every day. I am told that the deputy commissioner of Lahore was smoking his pipe while the police were beating the volunteers with lathis. I cannot understand the psychology of the authorities. What sort of conduct is it to beat volunteers and then also to take them to jail?

We should organise ourselves and take mass action. Isolated bomb-throwing and pistol firing will not succeed; only nonviolent mass action and mass movements will pay if we want to face the well-organised British people. Unless the people in this country are organised it will be impossible to carry on the fight to a finish. There will always remain a class of people in this country who will betray their country for a few crumbs, but there must also rise and spring up another section of the people, who will unite to end the subjugation of their country. This section of the people will consist of the masses, the peasants and the workers, and their joint action will paralyse the government.

Everybody in the army cannot be officers. If all of them became

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1 Speech at Lahore, 9 August 1929. From *The Tribune*, 11 August 1929.

delighted by witnessing the sacrifices of the young men who are determined to die for the sake of the country.

These young men, particularly two of them, who have been on hunger strike for the last 57 days, have taken up their battle in right earnest. The forcible feeding resorted to by the authorities has added to their trouble, but at the same time has made them more determined to suffer. These hunger-strikers are not undergoing suffering for their personal happiness. If they have determined to suffer they have done so for the sake of a great principle, namely, to improve the status of political prisoners in India. The European and Eurasian prisoners get better treatment compared to the treatment meted out to Indians. These hunger-strikers are determined to end that state of affairs and, therefore, they have taken the vow to end their valuable lives. Bhagat Singh, Dutt and Das have been showing us every day by their suffering on what path we should be moving. Some of them may leave the mortal coil here within a few days, but that will not solve the question of our liberty and freedom. Their sacrifices at least will teach us one lesson, which is that the people should now give up their lethargy and join in freedom's battle. They are determined to die, but the question is what will the rest of us do? Will we not also follow in their footsteps and free the country from foreign bondage by similar sacrifices?

The police in India have for some time past been using the lathi rather freely. It seems that they have come to the conclusion that the people have no fear of jails. The police want to take us to jail after first breaking some of our heads. This improper use of the lathi began with the beating of Lala Lajpat Rai and this practice is taking a worse turn every day. I am told that the deputy commissioner of Lahore was smoking his pipe while the police were beating the volunteers with lathis. I cannot understand the psychology of the authorities. What sort of conduct is it to beat volunteers and then also to take them to jail?

We should organise ourselves and take mass action. Isolated bomb-throwing and pistol-firing will not succeed; only nonviolent mass action and mass movements will pay if we want to face the well-organised British people. Unless the people in this country are organised it wi be impossible to carry on the fight to a finish. There will always remai a class of people in this country who will betray their country for a fe crumbs, but there must also rise and spring up another section of th people, who will unite to end the subjugation of their country. Th section of the people will consist of the masses, the peasants and workers, and their joint action will paralyse the government.

Everybody in the army cannot be officers. If all of them b

officers who would form the rank and file? It is the habit of the young to criticise their elders. But this criticism will not have any meaning if young men cultivate the same disease of self-advertising and speaking on platforms. Give up cultivating the habit of platform speeches. Speakers there are many; and the habit should be abandoned. Youth should learn the habit of discipline, which is a very necessary element in the attainment of true success.

Give up also the habit of condemning the provincial Congress or the All India Congress Committee. The Congress is not made of mere resolutions. It stands above these things and occupies a unique and supreme position. The Congress is greater than its leaders. You should not try to dismantle this old structure, which has been built brick by brick with great labour during the last forty-three years. To try to break up such an institution would be suicidal.

The Congress is about to take a big step forward on the 1st of January, 1930. So you should not fritter away your energies by useless personal or communal differences. You should prepare for that struggle and stand up together to free our motherland from bondage.

15. Address to Allahabad Youth League[1]

I am asked by people outside what the League stands for and especially whether it has anything to do with communalism or communism or terrorism. The questions are curious, and I personally doubt if they are seriously meant. If the questioner had troubled to read the rules and objects of the League, he would have got some idea of what they stood for. He would find that the League was deadly opposed to communalism. As for communism, our rules and objects say nothing about it. It is open to communists and non-communists, socialists, individualists and any other 'ists'. We welcome all who feel that they could work for our country, and want to help in strengthening it. The main principle of the League is freedom from dogma. As for the question, whether

1. 11 August 1929. From *The Hindu*, 12 August 1929.
Jawaharlal Nehru was elected president and R. N. Mukherji, secretary

the League stands for terrorism, the questioner could not have asked this ridiculous question unless for some reason or other he had not been suffering from fright of some kind himself. Our main purpose is to discuss social, political and economic problems and hammer out the truth. Our objects have also been laid down, that we should try to get rid of all antiquated social and religious customs.

16. On the Need for Change[1]

Personally I feel it is impossible for us to make any progress politically or economically if we are chained up to the past customs. The suitability and adaptability of these particular customs to the present age is a question for you to consider. Undoubtedly the world has changed and it is changing day by day at a terrific speed. It is sheer folly on our part not to see that and not to adapt ourselves to it. That does not, of course, mean that we should give up everything that is old and past and copy everything that is Western. But we must try to realise that in the race of life we have been left behind. India is utterly stagnant and static and youth must bring a dynamic change in the country.

Youth wants continuous change for the better and revolution against everything that is evil. The present system of government tends to suppress the best elements in the country by employing an army of secret service and spies. The benefit of association with *Pax Britannica* to India has been peace, but it is the peace of the graveyard and not of the living.

A dangerous tendency in the youth movement in India is only to criticise the elder statesmen and not do what they ask us to do. This tendency is due to the fact that youth is not self reliant enough, self-conscious enough, and self disciplined enough. Do not lean on others, but think out problems for yourselves and come to a logical and clear conclusion. If you try to do that there will be no occasion to ask the question as to what will be done on the 31st December, 1929.

1. Speech at Calcutta, 21 August 1929 From *The Tribune*, 24 August 1929

17. The Need to Abolish Feudalism[1]

I have just come to know that a prince[2] in a state in Kathiawar has issued an order that no young man or woman from his subjects shall take any part in this conference. The order is really strange. Perhaps, the prince might have feared that the youth of his state may learn bad things by attending the conference. Neither this prince nor this order requires any comment. This prince is a very famous man. His reputation is unique in the cricket world. But on the cricket field, the art of administration is not taught. And this prince appears to know little of how to rule. There is no doubt there are many such other princes also.

The imperial game is to divide into two watertight compartments British India and Indian India. The youth of the Indian states should offer a united front against this mischievous attempt.

You all know, all the world over there were many kings and emperors nearly one century before. But now only seven or eight kings survive in the whole of the world. And they too are totally powerless. Let me count before you the present kings. In France, Germany or Russia, nobody today even remembers the king. At present the race of kings is steadily losing in power. I tell you that the days of kings and emperors, the days of Rajas and Maharajas are gone. During the last great war their fall had commenced and now they can never rise again. Rajas and Maharajas have no place in the future society.

There was a period of European history when the people of different countries after a long, strenuous and desperate fight deprived their kings of all power. King Charles I of England attempted to levy taxes on the English nation without securing the consent of Parliament, which ultimately resulted in his being beheaded. Kings lost their heads in the French revolution and the Russian revolution.

The feudal system still prevailing in Kathiawar cannot survive. Without giving a death-blow to feudalism you cannot proceed even a step in the direction of progress.

1. Speech at Kathiawar Youth Conference, Rajkot, 31 August 1929. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 14 September 1929.
2. The Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, Maharaja Ranjitsinh, the famous cricketer 'Ranji'.

The young men and women of Kathiawar should provide their quota in the battle of Swaraj. I warn you, and the leaders of British India, never to expect the Rajas and Maharajas to range themselves on the side of the people, that is, against the British Government on whom they depend for their existence. Princes as an institution cannot join us. They fear their rights and privileges will be taken away from them. *They are not prepared to lose their present incomes. Let me once* more tell you that Rajas and Maharajas can have no gains by Swaraj. They can, then, enjoy no more their autocratic hereditary rights. I may once again say this too that, in future, the princes will not remain. That the institution of the princes can continue is against the lessons of history. Whether the people of Indian states want the princes or not they can decide. I believe every man and woman has equal rights. Nobody can have more or less rights because of birth or inheritance. In this age, it is sheer foolishness to say or to believe that one particular class or man has or should have special rights.

Young men, you may have your residence in British India or in an Indian state; no matter, the fight is the same. Young friends, keep before your eyes the vision of the new society of the future in which every man and woman will have equal rights, in which feudalism, imperialism and such institutions will have no place. Young men, keep this vision before you, think over it again and again and leave no stone unturned to materialize it in this land of your birth. That is your real work. That is real service of the motherland.

18. To Yusuf Meherally[1]

September 23, 1929

My dear Meherally,

I had seen in the papers that you had been assaulted by the police again.[2] I did not know how serious this was. I find now that you had quite a good beating. My congratulations. This will make you tough.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC. File No G-39/1929, p 43, N.M.M.L.
2. On 15 September 1929, the police lathi charged a procession taken out by the Bombay Youth League to honour the sacrifice of Jatindranath Das

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1 Speech at Kathiawar Youth Conference, Rajkot, 31 August 1929. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 14 September 1929.

2. The Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, Maharaja Ranjitsinh, the famous cricketer 'Ranji'.

I am very sorry indeed that the Kakori prisoners had not benefited at all by the recent agitation. If you will kindly send me the facts we shall try to give publicity to them as much as possible ..

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. Statement to the Press[1]

Statements have appeared in the press about the treatment accorded to the Kakori prisoners in the Bareilly and Agra jails.[2] I have enquired into the matter and it appears that, instead of any improvement in their unhappy lot, as a result of the assurances given in the Assembly in regard to political prisoners,[3] they are actually being treated worse than before. It is difficult to know the exact facts as interviews are not easy and the jail officials observe a discreet silence. Some facts, however, emerge from the visit of two members of the local council to the Bareilly jail.[4] It appears that as a punishment for having gone on hunger strike they have been deprived of a number of small privileges in regard to reading books, food, and meeting each other occasionally. They have further been deprived of the remissions they had gained during the last two years. They were kept in dark and dirty cells when the M.L.Cs saw them. It is further stated that they are subjected in many other ways to harsh and humiliating treatment. In all probability, the hunger strike is continuing. At the insistence of many friends they had agreed to give up the hunger strike but when they found that they were being punished for it and were treated worse than before they

1. Allahabad, 16 October 1929. *The Hindu*, 17 October 1929.
2. The Kakori Conspiracy Case prisoners were confined in narrow cells and subjected to degrading jail drill.
3. The death of Jatindranath Das led to a nation wide protest. On 14 September 1929 an adjournment motion was carried in the Assembly The Home Member denied allegations of ill treatment of prisoners and said that the government was in touch with the governments of U P. and the Punjab regarding the hunger strikers
4. Actually in October 1929 Jia Ram Saxena visited Bareilly jail and Lakshmi Narain Garg visited Agra jail.

felt they could not give it up. It cannot definitely be said whether they are at present hunger-striking or not as no news is allowed to come out of jail. No interview is allowed and the superintendent refuses to give any information either. From this it is highly probable that the strike continues and the government is trying to break the prisoners by additional punishments. We are used to the ways of the government and anything that it may do can hardly surprise us, and yet one is amazed at the vengeful and inhuman spirit which prompts it to inflict further suffering on helpless men in jail who are on hunger strike. The A.I.C.C. passed the resolution urging suspension of the hunger strikes on the assurance of members of the Assembly that there was a change of heart on the part of government and Jatin Das's martyrdom had assured a better lot for political prisoners. If a change of heart means further suffering for our comrades in jails then we would rather do without it. It may be that the government followed its usual practice of promising bravely at a time of crisis and then carrying on in its usual way when the crisis was past. If so, the members of the Assembly who were imposed upon by the government owe it to themselves and to the A.I.C.C. to find out how the barbarous treatment accorded to the Kakori prisoners fits in with the assurances given to them.

21. To Sumant Mehta[1]

December 5th, 1929

Dear Dr. Mehta,[2]

Thank you for your invitation to the Youth Conference.[3] It would have given me great pleasure to attend the conference and to renew acquaintance with many of the friends I made in Poona last year but I am afraid it is not possible for me to do so. Both as Secretary of the

1. AICC File No G-40(1)/1929 (Pt III), p 303, NMML.
2. Dr. Sumant Mehta, a doctor and social worker of Gujrat and a prominent member of the Baroda State Subjects' Conferences.
3. The third session of the Bombay Youth Conference was scheduled to be held at Ahmedabad on 14 December 1929.

Congress and as the prospective President I have a great deal of work to face. You will, I hope, forgive me.

It is superfluous for me to send you my good wishes because you have them in full measure already. The youth of Bombay will soon have to face very difficult problems and much will depend on their attitude. Everyone in India is at present talking of the youth movement and expecting much of it. The Bombay Youth League is the leader in this movement and it must therefore not only have the glory of leadership but also must bear the burden of it. I earnestly hope that it will face the future calmly and unflinchingly and demonstrate to the world that Indian youth can rise to the occasion.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

22. Speech at Students' Convention[1]

So much has been said about the youth movement and the awakening of youth. The latter criticise the leaders as being old fossils and demand that they must make room for younger people. Much of this criticism may be justified to some extent. The elders have got into the habit of getting rusty. The youth say that they must take charge; but are the young men ready to take charge today? The spirit of youth is criticism and restlessness rather than the spirit of shouldering responsibility. The youth movement is of recent growth and lacks experience. Enthusiasm is essential for any work, but we must see that this is not wasted. The youth of our country sadly lack discipline. There has been too much bickering, too much struggle for leadership. It is essential therefore that the students should develop themselves and their organisations so that the people may realise that the youth movement is a movement not only of words but also of deeds.

1. Lahore, 30 December 1929. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 31 December 1929. The speech was delivered in Hindi.

Some of you want me to speak in English. I am more at home in English than in Urdu as unfortunately most of my education was in England. I am sorry the students are indifferent to learning Hindi or Urdu which is one of the greatest languages not only of India, but also of the world. If the deliberations of our country were not carried on in our own tongue progress would be impossible. Western people love their own languages. When General Botha[2] went to see the King he spoke in Dutch, although he was perfectly at home in English. When the Irish delegates went to the League of Nations they spoke in Gaelic, although there was no third person to understand their tongue. So I would like you students to learn your mother tongue and carry on your deliberations only in that language.

2 (1862-1919), South African general and statesman, Prime Minister of the Transvaal, 1907-10, and of the Union of South Africa, 1910-19

THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

GENERAL

1. To J. E. Potter-Wilson[1]

January 22nd, 1929

Dear Comrade,[2]
I thank you for the message of greeting which you sent to the Indian National Congress. The message was read out in Calcutta and was much appreciated. As you are aware a deliberate attempt is being made in India to prevent the workers from organising themselves. Numerous strikes have taken place in the course of the last year and firing has frequently been resorted to. The government has brought forward legislation in order to hamper the workers' movement. In this fight for the workers and for their right to organise themselves the National Congress stands shoulder to shoulder with the workers of India.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No G 91/1928 29, p 63, N M M L.
2. Secretary, Workers' Welfare League of India, London.

2. Note on the Strike at Bauria[1]

The little village of Bauria lies sixteen miles from Howrah town. A short railway journey carries one from the palaces and noble mansions of Calcutta to the mud huts and coolie lines of Bauria. In this village and

1. Allahabad, 24 January 1929. A.I.C.C. File No G 95/1929, pp. 191-195, N M M L.

the surrounding area is being fought a grim struggle between the poor worker in the factory and the jute kings of Bengal.[2] For companions the worker has hunger and semi nudity and stark want; but the lords of jute have wealth in abundance and their allies are the government, the police forces and even the law courts. The scales are heavily weighted, but still with amazing endurance the workers have been carrying on the fight. Fifteen thousand of them have carried on the struggle for six months or more. During this period they have had to face firing and arrests and lengthy trials in courts of law, which are still proceeding.

Nowhere in India have such tremendous and outrageous profits been made as in the jute mills of Bengal. Other trades may suffer depression but the jute trade continues to flourish and to produce vast dividends. And yet it is in this trade also that the condition of the workers is bad and wages are low, and now attempts are made by changing shifts to increase the number of the unemployed. It is difficult to conceive of a greater contrast.

The employers are behaving after the manner of their kind; the workers are struggling manfully with amazing courage against tremendous odds. But what of the public? What of the awakened youth of the country? What are they doing to help in this struggle? What have they done? It is sad but little has so far been done by them. Are they prepared to see the arrogant lords of jute, aided by all the powers of the government, crush the poor workers of Bauria and set this example to all the jute workers of Bengal? For the struggle is not a local one merely but one which affects the whole jute area and the trade union movement in India.

All those who feel that the workers in Bauria have right on their side should not merely sympathize with them but help them with money and with their time and energy. All those who admire the tenacity and endurance of these poor workers should come to their aid in their moment of trial.

2 The strike at Bauria began in July 1928 when the workers in the jute mills formed a union and the management retaliated by closing down the mills The strike ended on 31 December 1928

3. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

24/1/29

My dear Subhas,

Kishorilal Ghosh writes to me that the position of the Bauria strikers is becoming more and more critical Even a little financial assistance may help them to tide over this period. I should be so glad if you could arrange to have some help given to them.

I hope you are coming to Delhi for the Working Committee meeting on Feb. 3rd.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No G 95/1929, p 197, N M M L.

4. To D. B. Kulkarni[1]

Allahabad
March 22nd, 1929

Dear Comrade,[2]

I have your letter dated the 19th March. I have been in communication with Mr. Joshi for some time past regarding a meeting of the executive council I believe it is proposed to hold it towards the end of April in Bombay.

1. A I C C File No G 95/1929, p 187, N M M L.
2. A communist and trade union leader, communist candidate against Jawaharlal for the presidency of All India Trade Union Congress, 1928, vice president, All India Trade Union Congress, 1929.

I am entirely in agreement with you regarding the Royal Commission on Labour.[3] It seems to me that we have no alternative but to boycott it, specially after the recent arrests. I suppose only the Executive Council can give a decision on the point.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3 The British Government, in consultation with the Government of India, appointed on 24 May 1929 a Royal Commission on Indian Labour. Its chairman was J. H. Whitley. The report was published in June 1931.

5. To R. R. Bakhale[1]

Allahabad
March 1929

My dear Bakhale,[2]
I do not know if Joshi is in Bombay. I have just sent a telegram to your office suggesting that in view of the arrests of labour leaders and the government's policy of repression against labour we should issue a statement declining cooperation with the Labour Commission. I feel that it would be very wrong for us not to take up this attitude at this stage. The matter will of course be considered at the meeting of the Executive Council but some kind of lead should be given. If you think that it is not desirable to commit the congress I can issue the statement in my personal capacity and leave the Executive Council to decide. I do feel that a little boldness is necessary at this stage. We cannot take things lying down.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No. G-95/1929, p. 185, NMML.
2 A prominent trade union leader and chief executive of N. M. Joshi, member of the Servants of India Society, d. 1932.

6. On the General Strike at Bombay[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru said that he had come there to express his sympathy for the workers. He was told that the general strike was declared because the owners had resorted to methods of victimisation.[2] It was proper that they had declared a strike in order to protest against victimisation of their workers. He warned the strikers against attempts of interested people to disrupt their forces and especially against attempts to foment Hindu-Muslim dissensions. They had to realize that their struggle was against capitalism and not against any religion. In this struggle Hindus and Muslims had to fight shoulder to shoulder. The whole country was anxiously observing the big fight that they were carrying on. Their fight was a fight of the masses of the whole country. If they succeeded, it would be a success for the whole country, just as their defeat would mean the defeat of the whole country.

1. Speech at Bombay, 28 April 1929. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 29 April 1929. The speech was delivered in Hindi
2. The communists organised a general strike of textile workers in Bombay from April to October 1929. After the strike the strike committee was transformed into the Mumbai Girni Kamgar Union—the Bombay textile workers' union The membership increased to over 50,000. The communists organised another strike of textile workers in 1929 but it proved a failure.

7. On the Trade Union Movement[1]

It is perfectly clear the government is out to weaken the labour movement in India and put difficulties in the way of its development. The

1. Statement at Calcutta, 18 May 1929. *The Tribune*, 22 May 1929.

trade union movement in India, though still in its infancy, is giving indications of a virile growth and at the same time is beginning to co-operate with the national movement because an organised labour is always a strong weapon in any such struggle. The government is, therefore, out to disorganise labour as early as possible, both by their attitude as regards strikes and lock-outs and by repressive legislation.

The government probably thought that they could break up the strongest union in the country, viz., the Girni Kamgar Union in Bombay, by arresting all their prominent leaders in connection with the Meerut case, but to their consternation the Union remained as strong as ever.

Similarly, the repressive policy of the government cannot break the trade union movement in the country. There may be ups and downs. The final outcome must be a victory of trade unionism. The rank and file of Indian labour is surprisingly strong and the sense of class solidarity is very evident today. They may go astray occasionally on account of weak or defective leadership, but their new-found strength is bound to prevail.

8. To D. B. Kulkarni[1]

June 1st, 1929

Dear Comrade,

I have your letter dated 30th May. I was sorry not to see you and Purandare in Bombay. I shall be glad to see Mr. Purandare before he sails but he must make sure of my whereabouts before coming here. I am often going out and he might otherwise miss me.

In regard to the Labour Commission you must have seen in the papers that the National Congress has asked all its members to withdraw from the councils as well as from all committees and commissions. A Congressman therefore cannot join the Labour Commission without disobeying the Congress mandate. My opinion has been expressed on several occasions in regard to this matter. If occasion arises I shall do so again.

1 AICC. File No G95/1929, p 73, NMML.

About translation of *Soviet Russia* in Marathi, it appears from your friend's letter that he proposes to bring out not a complete translation but a resume of it. I am quite agreeable to this being done. I would suggest however that all profits from this venture should be given to the cause of labour to be determined upon by the translator and myself.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. To C. B. Johri[1]

July 12th, 1929

My dear Chandra Bhal,[2]
Your letter of the 9th July. I was surprised to find that you were acting as secretary to Ginwala's[3] Union. I had heard of the split at Chalisgaon but I did not have much information on the subject.[4] Without this information I am not in a position to give an opinion. Generally however, I might say that I am far more in agreement with the more radical elements in the trade union movement than with the conservative element like Ginwala and Joshi. I think the policy pursued by the conservatives is harmful to the trade union movement as a whole. But I have no desire to precipitate a split in the movement and I am therefore not taking any active step of any kind. Joshi is undoubtedly one of the few men we have in the movement who is a sound trade unionist and who is efficient in his work. I feel however that the time is bound to come when there will be a split in the Trade Union Congress.

Even in the Meerut trial the attitude taken up by Ginwala and his friend Jhabvala has been unfortunate. They are not cooperating with the other accused or with the defence committee. They want to keep apart in the hope of saving Jhabvala regardless of the interests of others. This seems to be a very undesirable state of affairs.

1. AICC, File No P-20/1929, pp 25-27, NMML. Extracts.
2. Secretary, G I P. Railway Kamgar Union, Bombay, 1929.
3. *F. J. Ginwala; a moderate trade union leader and an associate of N. M. Joshi,* organiser of the non-communist G I P. Railway Kamgar Union, Bombay, 1929
4. This refers to the split in the G I P. Railwaymen's Union and the formation of two rival unions by the communists and the non-communists

Regarding the question[5] you put me it is difficult to give advice but you will gather from what I have written above that I am not in great sympathy with Ginwala's point of view. In any event I should of course like you to work for a reconciliation between the two sections.

Regarding the national service for the U.P. it was my intention to collect funds for a service to be run under the directions of the provincial Congress committee. I have made some little collections for this although they may not amount to much. Your proposal that I should start a society of the kind started by Lala Lajpat Rai is an attractive one but for various reasons I do not think I can give effect to it at present.[6] All my activities must be through the Congress or through other existing organisations with which I am concerned. I cannot however discuss this question at length in a letter. For the moment I should certainly like competent workers to join the Congress or the trade union movement.

I do not think that the existing societies have been very great successes. You mention Vallabhbhai's work in Gujarat and Subhas Chandra Bose's in Bengal and Srinivasa Iyengar's in Madras. Probably you would not be so enthusiastic about the last two if you knew all the facts. Vallabhbhai has undoubtedly done very good work in Gujarat for which he deserves great credit. His resources, however, including as they do the whole of Gandhiji's Ashram and Gandhiji's personality, are very great.

So far as you are concerned I should very much like you to come to the U.P. I am not in a position to suggest or to promise any work of a permanent kind. But if you would agree to work on behalf of the provincial Congress committee or amongst the kisans, say near Allahabad, I would very gladly arrange this. Unfortunately we cannot afford to pay much. Personally I should like you to take charge of an area which is 20 miles from Allahabad, where there is a fair amount of kisan awakening. We should like to have a regular centre there for work. The place is within easy distance of Allahabad and is not far from Benares. After making a start there we could survey the situation and see what else we could do so far as kisan organisation is concerned...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. John had asked what his attitude should be toward the proposed compromise between the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union and the G.I.P. Railway Kamgar Union.
6. Lala Lajpat Rai had founded the Servants of the People Society in 1921.

10. To R. Bridgeman[1]

Allahabad
July 23rd, 1929

My dear Bridgeman,
I have received your letters dated June 30th and July 1st with their enclosures. Citrine evidently did not act up to your suggestion to send me a cable. Indeed I have not even had a letter of acknowledgment from him.[2]

We have been having some extraordinary exhibitions of the might of the British Government in India. In the Lahore Conspiracy Case the accused are kept even in court handcuffed with a policeman on either side and the policemen have actually thrashed them in court while the magistrate is trying to look the other way. When an application was made for a transfer of the case from this magistrate's court it was thrown out as being frivolous. It was ordered however that handcuffs need not be kept on inside the court room. In the city of Lahore even stranger things have happened. Processions have been going about collecting funds for the accused. The other day a procession consisting of seven young men was asked to disperse. On their refusal to do so they were belaboured with lathis (long batons) till some of them became senseless. They were then dragged along the road to the police lorries and carried away to the lock-up. The by-standers were also belaboured and many shop windows were broken by the police. Several leading Congressmen who happened to be present were also arrested.

Meanwhile the hunger strike of Bhagat Singh and Dutt is in its sixth week.

In three days' time we are having an important meeting of the All India Congress Committee here and I am busy in connection with it.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P.D. 23/1929-1930, p. 47, N.M.M.L.
2. For Jawaharlal's letter to Citrine, see *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 349-353.

11. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

July 24th, 1929

My dear Chatto,

I received your cable this morning asking me to send an express message to Shiva Rao, Kalappa[2] and Sethi[3] asking them to represent the T.U.C. at the World Congress. As desired by you I have sent an express cable[4] although this has been a heavy drain on my purse. The National Congress obviously cannot pay for such cables, and the T.U.C. does not provide me with any funds for the purpose.

Although I have sent the cable I doubt very much if it will serve any useful purpose. If any of the three persons you have mentioned do not want to participate officially in your congress my cable will hardly induce them to do so However we shall hope for the best.

Day after tomorrow the All India Committee is meeting here. There is considerable excitement and we are likely to have one of the biggest sessions that we have had. The excitement centres round the proposed resignation from councils. As a matter of fact this is a cloak. The real thing is whether we are going in for any still action at the end of the year or not, and if we are, whether we are going to prepare for it from now. It is difficult to say which way the decision will lie now.

Meanwhile you must be reading in the papers of the strange happenings in the land of the five rivers.

I have not heard from you for some little time although I get official letters from Nanu almost every week. I suppose you have been much too busy preparing for the World Congress at Frankfurt. Reuter has been good enough to send a brief report of your congress. This was more than I expected of them. Even from this report it appears that

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P.D. 1(ii)/1929 (Pt. I), pp. 22-23, N.M.M.L.
2. V. R. Kalappa (1898-1949); member of the executive committee of the All India Trade Union Congress, 1924-26, a founder and first secretary of the All India Railwaymen's Federation, delegate to the International Labour Conference in Geneva, 1929, president, All India Trade Union Congress, 1940-42.
3. R. G. Sethi, secretary of the Jamshedpur Labour Association.
4. "Trust your representative attending congress according to T.U.C. decision."

the congress was a successful one. My congratulations. You must be continuing your sessions now and my thoughts are with you and with other friends there.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. To S. Y. Yatzdani[1]

Camp Calcutta
August 14th, 1929

Dear Comrade,[2]
I am glad to learn that the Indian Seamen's Union is bringing out a new weekly. I trust this weekly will serve the cause of the Indian seamen as well as the larger cause of Indian labour and will help in strengthening the trade union movement in the country. In these days of strikes and lock-outs it is as well to realise that the strength of Indian labour lies in its solidarity. The failure of a strike in Bombay has its inevitable consequences on labour in the north or the east of India. I trust your weekly will lay stress on this solidarity of labour.
Wishing you all success,

Yours fraternally,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC. File No. G-40/1929 (Pt. III), p. 463A, NMML.
2. Yatzdani was a worker in the docks at Kidderpore, Calcutta.

13. To C. B. Johri[1]

Camp Calcutta
August 25th, 1929

My dear Chandra Bhai,
I have just received your letter of the 20th August which was forwarded to me here. I am sorry to learn that you have been unwell.

1 AICC. File No G-40/1929 (Pt. III), p 587, NMML.

I have carefully read through what you have said and realise your difficulties. I would indeed help you as far as I can to overcome them. But I am afraid it is not possible for me to become president of the G.I.P. Ry. Union. I do not believe in accepting responsible positions without discharging the work required. I am at present too full of work to be able to take any other. Indeed I do not know how to manage as it is. Touring is utterly out of the question. I cannot even give any office time to other work. So you must excuse me.

The trade union movement in India is going through a very difficult phase. I do not think you can get over the difficulties by putting me or anybody else as the 'show' presidents of big unions. But as I have written above it is physically impossible for me to take up additional work this year. What I can do next year I cannot say now.

I am returning to Allahabad tomorrow. I have decided to go to Rajkot after all. But I do not go *via* Bombay.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To D. B. Kulkarni[1]

Allahabad
September 10th, 1929

Dear Comrade Kulkarni,

I have your letter of the 6th September. I heard some time ago about the split in the G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union and that Ginwala had started another union. Mr. Johri, who is acting as secretary to Ginwala's union, wrote to me about them and he asked me if I would agree to become president of the union in case a compromise was arrived at between the two groups. I wrote to him that this was not possible for me as I was too full of other work. Also, that I did not like to undertake responsibilities which I could not discharge. I felt that the G.I.P. Union presidentship was a big job for which I was hardly fitted.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 16/1929, pp 111-113, NMML.

Some days ago I was in Rajkot and Mr. Johri came there to see me and again pressed me to help in bringing the two groups together. He suggested that the only way this could succeed was by my accepting the presidentship of the joint union. I was put in a great difficulty because I did not want to interfere where I was not wanted. Besides I really have no time for additional work. Ultimately I told Mr. Johri that if I could help in bringing about a compromise and if my presidentship was desired by all sections I would agree to it.

The G.I.P. Railwaymen's Union is such an important union that it would be a great pity to weaken it by internal troubles. It was because of this consideration that I agreed to help in bringing about a compromise. I was not at all sanguine of my capacity to do so.

In the last number of the *G.I.P. Railwayman* there is a leading article in which the National Congress is attacked for not boycotting the Whitley Commission. Some reference is also made to "dangerous enemies of labour" like me. This criticism of the Congress is based entirely on ignorance. Of course everyone knows that the Congress is not a labour organisation. It does not pretend to be one. To expect it to act as a pure labour organisation is a mistake. The National Congress is a large body comprising all manner of people. Diwan Chaman Lal is hardly a Congressman. His only connection with the Congress is his membership of the Swaraj Party in the Assembly.

There has been a strong move in the National Congress to boycott all committees and commissions and even the Assembly and councils. This move nearly succeeded but for various reasons the decision was put off till December next. I have no doubt that the Congress will formally adopt this at the end of the year. Under the constitution of the Congress it is not an easy matter to take the initiative in the middle of the year through its committees. To talk therefore that the Congress is cooperating with the Whitley Commission is entirely wrong. The Congress is much too busy at the present moment preparing for the great struggle early next year.

In the article reference is also made to the Meerut trial and it is stated that the Congress has not helped the defence. Now this is an amazing proposition. I think the National Congress has done more for the defence and is doing more than any organisation in India. It has not done so much in any case in the past. The Meerut case is going on from day to day. Mr. Chagla had to leave because many of the accused from Bombay did not want him. Also, because the funds at the disposal of the defence were limited.

So far as I am concerned I can assure you that I have no desire whatever to take up any job unless I am wanted. I accepted the

presidentship of the T.U.C. much against my will. If I had been present at Jharia on the day of election I would certainly have retired in your favour. I feel that the presidentship should go to an active unionist and worker like you and not to a person like me who has not been connected with trade unionism before. But owing to my absence I was elected and later I did not know how to get out of it. I am glad however that my period of office is coming to an end and I hope that a fitter person will be chosen in my place.

As I have said above I shall gladly help you to bring about a compromise in the G.I.P. Union. My only difficulty is want of time to go to Bombay. I am exceedingly busy and I shall be touring about for the rest of this month and may be in October. Even your telegram may not reach me for many days However, if it is at all possible for me I shall try to come to Bombay Would it be possible for the two parties to meet me in Allahabad?

Yours fraternally
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. Address at U. P. Trade Union Conference[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru, who was voted to the chair, said that it was a great weakness for the Labour Conference to have elected him, an outsider, as chairman. It was necessary to produce presidents from among themselves The right to strike is a weapon in the hands of labour, but it is an instrument to be used only on very grave occasions, and with full determination and organisation. The Whitley Commission would do no good to Indian workers. It was a clever move on the part of Britain to distract the attention of the workers from the real struggle. It had been said that it should not be boycotted because two of its members were prominent leaders of the Indian trade union movement. That was no reason at all. Such boycotts took place in other countries also. Even in England a Labour Commission that included persons from the British trade union organisation was boycotted by workers there. Further, India

1. Kanpur, 16 September 1929. The Hindu, 17 September 1929.

had bitter experiences of such commissions, as for instance the Agricultural Commission.[2] The first demand of the workers before the commission should be that the commission should leave the country.

The working class movement had been criticised for class hatred. But if big dividends were necessary for capitalists, at least a minimum living wage was indispensable for the poor labourers.

2. The Royal Commission on Agriculture in India was appointed in April 1926 under the chairmanship of Lord Linlithgow. Its report was published on 28 June 1928.

16. On the Royal Commission on Labour[1]

I have been asked to say a few words about the Royal Commission on Labour which is soon going to descend upon us. Only a few days ago I spoke on this subject at some length at the Cawnpore session of the U.P. Trade Union Conference.

A little knowledge of the history of trade unionism in England and India shows that such commissions are seldom intended to benefit the worker or the peasant. Almost always it will be found that they have been appointed when labour was becoming aggressive, in order to divert attention and induce the workers to give up their militant attitude in the hope of getting some relief from the commission. Almost invariably the commission has resulted in the forging of new fetters for the growing labour movement.

On general grounds, therefore, such commissions must be looked upon with great suspicion. So far as we are concerned in India we have recently had experience of a similar commission — the Agricultural Commission — which after spending vast sums of money did not produce even the proverbial mouse, so far as any relief to the poor agriculturist was concerned.

1. 20 September 1929. AICC, File No. 16/1929, p. 73, NMML.

On special grounds the case for a boycott of the Labour Commission is even stronger. Ostensibly the Commission has been appointed to better labour conditions in India and to conciliate labour. As a prelude to it however we have had and are having a persistent and widespread attack on labour and peasant organisations. We have had legislation penalising labour, like the Trades Disputes Act and the Public Safety Ordinance. We have the Meerut trial. We have the open partisanship of the government with the employers, and the police and military being used to break strikes, the most recent instance of which is the tinplate workers' strike[2] in Golmuri. We have police charges on strikers and peaceful workers and occasional firing. Are these the methods to conciliate labour?

It is obvious that the government and the employers are out to break the labour movement in India and the Royal Commission is one of the methods which are being used for this purpose. If this is so, can we cooperate with it? Can we be consenting parties to an attack on ourselves? Our obvious duty is to have nothing to do with the commission and to boycott it, and to strengthen our labour and peasant organisations. Only in our strength lies our safety and the promise of future success.

2 See *post*, item 26.

17. To R. R. Bakhale[1]

24/9/29

My dear Bakhale,

Your letter of the 16th Sept.

Ordinarily I would of course agree with your suggestion that Shiva Rao should go to Ceylon.[2] But I have been worried of late about certain matters. You know that our viewpoints differ in politics and in trade union matters. I have however tried my utmost to avoid all disharmony.

1. A I C.C. File No. 16/1929, pp 65-66, N M M L.
2. The All Ceylon Trade Union Congress had asked Bakhale to send fraternal delegates to their second session.

I find however that many of my efforts in foreign countries, specially England, have been counteracted by Joshi. I have been taking a strong line with Citrine & Co. not only about the Meerut case but about other matters. Ultimately Citrine, not having any suitable answer, has sought refuge in silence. Being personally acquainted with many of the labour leaders in England I hold definite views in regard to them. I understand now that much of what I had done or was hoping to do was counteracted by Joshi.

I have just also heard from Reginald Bridgeman. He wrote twice to Joshi in London but Joshi did not even acknowledge his letters although Bridgeman had referred to me and to what I had written to him. Obviously it is somewhat ridiculous for office-bearers of the same organisation to spend their time in trying to undo each other's work. At one time I felt like resigning but then the year was drawing to a close and I did not think it worthwhile.

I feel that in view of the tension between the two groups in the congress I should not like to take the responsibility of nominating a pronounced member of one group. But if you can get the consent of some members of the executive who consider themselves to belong to the 'left' wing I shall gladly agree to Shiva Rao or anyone else.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. To D. B. Kulkarni[1]

Camp Gorakhpore
October 7th, 1929

Dear Comrade,
Thank you for your letter of the 1st October and your good wishes. I am glad to know that you are trying hard to put the G.I.P. Ry. Union on a firm basis. I wish you all success. I have heard from Johri recently.

1. AICC. File No. P.D. 1(n)/1929 (Pt I), p 60, NMML

It would have been much better if the A.I.T.U. Congress could meet early and decide on the question of boycott of the Whitley Commission. But the Executive Council has decided by a majority of votes to hold the congress in December. We must therefore wait till then for the congress decision. Before that individual unions will have to decide for themselves. In view of the council decision I have suggested that the congress might be held from the 7th December onwards.

Yours fraternally,
Jawaharlal Nehru

19. To N. M. Joshi[1]

Camp Mussoorie
October 20th, 1929

My dear Joshi,
Your letter of the 11th October has been forwarded here. I am very glad to read it and to find that I was quite wrong in imagining what I did. I am very sorry indeed that I did so. I have not at present with me a copy of the letter I wrote to Bakhale but from what I remember I suggested that in view of the fact that you had studiously avoided getting into touch with Bridgeman and his committee you did not probably approve of what I have done. From your letter it is clear that far from avoiding Bridgeman you wrote to him and sent *him* a donation. Obviously in view of this fact the whole basis for my impression vanishes and I am sorry I was guilty of harbouring it.

It is very strange that Bridgeman should not have received your letter or your donation. I am writing to him about it.

About the larger question of cooperation between the left and the right wings, I can assure you that so far as I am concerned I am no lover of splits and obstruction and I shall gladly cooperate to the best *of my ability with* others whenever there is such a chance of cooperation. And certainly there must be no coercion or intimidation or suggestion of unworthy motives.

1. AICC File No. F.D 3(a)/1929 (Pt. III), p. 139, NMML.

I hope you have profited by your stay in Europe and are in much better health.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. To R. S. Ruikar[1]

Camp Mussoorie
October 20th, 1929

Dear Ruikar,[2]
I have your letter of the 15th October. So far as the next session of the T.U. Congress is concerned I am afraid we shall have to abide by the decision of the majority of the Executive Council. The question has again been referred to that committee as to whether the dates should be from the 28th November or the 7th December. Whatever the decision may be I trust we shall abide by it. I can quite understand your difficulties. I am afraid all of us have difficulties but we have to face them somehow. It would be most unfortunate if on the question of date the whole congress session was either not held or there was some kind of a split. If there is going to be a split let it be on a matter of principle, not on a trivial matter.

I cannot say which way the Executive Committee will decide. But whatever this may be I hope you will accept it. You know that personally I have been in favour of an early session. It was only right that the T.U.C. should consider and decide its attitude regarding the Whitley Commission at an early date but if circumstances are against us we have to accept them for the moment. One thing, however, I should like to put before you. That is this. There is some possibility, though not a big one, that the Meerut case might end suddenly and the accused might be discharged. If this happens it would be a good thing for the congress. Regarding your suggestion that I should draft and circulate a statement for the boycott of the Whitley Commission I feel that it will not be proper for me to organise such a movement.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40/1929 (Pt. IV), pp. 701-703, N.M.M.L.
2. (1895-1954); a labour leader, president, All India Trade Union Congress in 1932 and 1935, president of Hind Mazdoor Sabha in 1948.

I will gladly take part in any such movement and give expression to my views but I occupy a somewhat peculiar position at present and I am not sure that I will help the cause by taking up the attitude you suggest. Apart from other reasons I am afraid I am full up with many things and can hardly give time to any special propaganda.

Regarding Madras I can do nothing.[3] I am sorry to say that Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar is apparently displeased with me and my writing to him may have the opposite effect to that intended.

Thanking you for your good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3 Ruikar had suggested that as Madras lagged behind in the boycott of the Whitley Commission, Jawaharlal should write to Srinivasa Iyengar or some other Congress leader to take the lead in the matter.

21. To R. S. Rulkar[1]

29/10/29

My dear Ruikar,

When I wrote to you yesterday your letter of the 20th October was not before me. It had gone to Mussoorie and had to follow me back here.

I have referred to Rule 7 to which you draw my attention. The rule undoubtedly gives the initiative to the reception committee in regard to the fixing of dates for the congress. But it also says that the dates are to be fixed in consultation with the Executive Council and are subject to its approval. Under the circumstances a reference to the Executive Committee cannot be unconstitutional. The method of doing so may or may not be happy but that will not make it illegal.

About the voting it will be difficult for me to get the votes here. If however the votes are mentioned by name there should be no difficulty in checking them.

1. AICC File No 12/1929, pp. 27-30, NMML

Bakhale referred the question to me as to whether secretaries of unions can vote when there are duly accredited representatives of unions on the Executive Council. I replied to him yesterday that it was difficult for me to give a final opinion without knowing the usual practice. Much depends on practice and convention. I suggested however the following rules:

1. Where the representatives of unions have been elected and their names have been sent in, and they have voted, these votes should be counted and not that of the secretary's on their behalf.

2. Where the representatives have not so far been elected, the secretary's vote may be counted on behalf of the union.

3. Where the representatives have been elected but they have not voted, the secretary's vote may be counted on behalf of the union on the presumption that he is acting under the instructions of the representatives.

You are no doubt aware of the impending official pronouncement of the government about the future constitution of India or a Round Table Conference or whatever it may be. I do not know what it is going to be but it is highly unlikely to be satisfactory. It is very important that Indian labour should make its voice heard in regard to it. It is very necessary therefore that we should meet in congress and give our opinion.

Dr. Bhupendra Nath Datta has written to me suggesting a joint manifesto against the Whitley Commission. I wrote to you about this that I could not spare the time to do much in this respect. I suggest however that if such a manifesto is issued it might refer to my statement[2] on the boycott and quote from it, if necessary. This would associate me fully with the manifesto. I have not got a copy of my statement. Will you kindly send a copy of it to Dr. Bhupendra Nath Datta, 3 Gour Mohan Street, Calcutta.

Yours fraternally,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. See *ante*, item 16.

22. To R. R. Bakhale[1]

31/10/1929

My dear Bakhale,
I have just received copy of your letter to Ruikar dated 29.10. I must say it is very decent of you and Joshi to agree to accept Ruikar's dates, if he insists, in spite of the majority of the council deciding in your favour. I very much appreciate your attitude.

It seems to me that I am in for a fairly bad time. As the year approaches its end my work seems to increase. For the National Congress I am supposed to function both as Secretary and as President! Besides the ordinary routine work, which is heavy, I am supposed to draw up annual reports and accounts, and write the presidential address.

I am going to Delhi tonight for two or three days. Probably I shall meet Joshi there. I have had a letter from him from Lahore.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 A.I.C.C. File No 12/1929, p 39, N.M.M.L.

23. To Nilakantha Das[1]

Allahabad
November 20th, 1929

Dear Mr. Das,[2]
I have your letter of the 16th November. I am afraid I am not an admirer of the activities carried on at Geneva on behalf of labour. Indeed I would welcome the abstention of Indian delegates from the Geneva Conference. I am therefore hardly a suitable person to advise you in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
[illegible] Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. [illegible] /1929, [illegible]
2. (1884 19[illegible] [illegible] Orissa [illegible] of Utkal Provincial[illegible] [illegible] Central Assembly, 1952 1957 [illegible] Assembly.

24. Presidential Address at the All India Trade Union Congress[1]

The last decade has seen strange happenings in India. New forces and ideas have arisen and have come into play even in our ancient country. They threaten not only the present political structure, under which India has suffered so long, but also the social and economic structure. In the political field we have seen the ideology and practice of direct action displace the slow and ineffective methods of an earlier generation. We have seen the growth of a great movement which convulsed the country and shook the foundations of British rule in India, and then weakened and gave place to reaction and mutual strife. We see it again gathering its strength for another and more powerful and determined move forward.

But great as has been the political achievement of the last decade, no less remarkable has been the growth of the labour movement in India. None of us can call our trade union movement today strong or ready for successful battle. But who can deny that during a few short years we have covered ground which it took generations in other countries to traverse? In spite of the great poverty of the worker and the fear born of slavery that possesses him and makes it difficult to organise him, in spite of political difficulties which a foreign government is ever placing in his way, in spite of the preoccupation of the country as a whole with the national struggle, there has developed rapidly a class-conscious and militant and aggressive spirit in the Indian worker. This spirit has led him to numerous strikes, sometimes ill-conceived, often with failure as certain goal but, nothing daunted, he has gone on ahead. If he has weakened, it has, not unoften, been due to the weakness of his leaders.

And yet the movement is weak and the work that has been done is exceedingly little, and how much remains! The fact that I stand here today and address you as your president is itself a sign of your weakness. Why should I, a newcomer to the labour movement, and one who, whatever his sympathies may be, is not one of you and has not suffered as you have done in field and factory, why should I preside

1. Tenth Session, Nagpur, 30 November 1929. *The Indian Quarterly Register*, Vol. II, July December 1929, pp 424-428. The speech was delivered in Hindi.

22. To R. R. Bakhale[1]

31/10/1929

My dear Bakhale,

I have just received copy of your letter to Ruikar dated 29.10. I must say it is very decent of you and Joshi to agree to accept Ruikar's dates, if he insists, in spite of the majority of the council deciding in your favour. I very much appreciate your attitude.

It seems to me that I am in for a fairly bad time. As the year approaches its end my work seems to increase. For the National Congress I am supposed to function both as Secretary and as President! Besides the ordinary routine work, which is heavy, I am supposed to draw up annual reports and accounts, and write the presidential address.

I am going to Delhi tonight for two or three days. Probably I shall meet Joshi there. I have had a letter from him from Lahore.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No 12/1929, p 39, NMML.

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Allahabad
November 20th, 1929

Dear Mr Das,[2]

I have your letter of the 16th November. I am afraid I am not an admirer of the activities carried on at Geneva on behalf of labour. Indeed I would welcome the abstention of Indian delegates from the Geneva Conference. I am therefore hardly a suitable person to advise you in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No 12/1929, p 107, NMML

2 (1884 1967); a prominent Congress worker of Orissa, twice president of Utkal Provincial Congress Committee but left Congress in 1940, member, Central Assembly, 1924 1930 and 1935 1945, member, Orissa Legislative Assembly, 1952 1957, and elected Speaker in 1957.

the creation of capitalism and so long as capitalism endures it will endure. For those who are on the top it is easy to ignore it and to preach moderation and goodwill. But the goodwill does not induce these self-proclaimed well-wishers of ours to get off our backs and shoulders. They only shout the louder from the eminence which they have acquired at our cost. The class war has existed and exists today. By our trying ostrich-like to ignore it, we do not get rid of it. Only by our removing the causes are we likely to bring peace.

This ideal then we must ever keep before us; and we must try to get our national movement also to adopt it. It may be that before we can attain our full ideal we may be able to gain somewhat better conditions for labour and more opportunities for organising them. These will bring only some little relief but we cannot refuse anything that brings some comfort to the unhappy worker. But we cannot at the same time work for such petty relief or compromise on them. For us the objective can only be a new order under which the worker will have true freedom and opportunity of growth.

Today you have an immediate problem facing you and you may want me to say something about it on this occasion. Some of you have already decided on your lines of action. Others have not done so. Meanwhile the Labour Commission is going its way and recording evidence as is offered to it. In considering whether we should cooperate with the commission or not we have to bear in mind many things. Some of these I shall place before you.

Let us consider the circumstances under which the Labour Commission has been appointed. The much advertised Labour Government is in office in England, and labour everywhere should ordinarily rejoice. But its past record, specially in regard to India, is difficult to forget. Its present record is fresh in our memory. Having reached the promised land they seem to be content with remaining there and not to do anything which might imperil their existence. We are told from day to day that their intentions are of the best, but what can they do with a hostile majority in Parliament? Meanwhile, like the newly rich, their chief aim appears to be to prove to the world that they are as sober and respectable as those who are the inheritors of wealth. When Prime Minister MacDonald speaks in America or in Geneva, is it the socialist or the pacifist that is speaking? He speaks as the representative of imperialist England and Sir Austen Chamberlain could be no fitter representative. Mr. Snowden[2] at the Hague forgets his socialism and

2. Philip, 1st Viscount Snowden (1864-1937); Chancellor of the Exchequer in the British Labour Governments of 1923 and 1929, joined the National Government of 1931.

over your deliberations? At your command I am here, and I am grateful for this honour and the confidence which it implies. But you could have given no greater sign of the infancy and weakness of your movement. I shall welcome the day when the worker from the mine and the factory and the field stands in this place which I occupy today, and when I, and those who are like me, take a secondary place in your counsels. Only then will you be able to speak with confidence and pride of your labour movement; only then will the true voice of the worker be heard from your forums and council halls.

Our country today is under the domination of another and the sentiment of nationalism is strong. It is natural that the best and bravest in the country should strive for national freedom, but to how many of our workers does this make appeal? Ground down by poverty and by forces which seem to be unconquerable, with the daily struggle for wages and bread ever before us, how can we think of larger issues? And yet we cannot afford to ignore them for our future is intimately bound up with them. The lot of the worker cannot be improved much by charity, nor by the goodwill of an employer or even of a government. The trouble lies deeper as you all know. It is the system that is wrong, the system that is based on the exploitation of the few and the prostitution of labour. It is the system which is the natural outcome of capitalism and imperialism and if you would do away with this system you will have to root out both capitalism and imperialism and substitute a saner and healthier order.

What is this ideal that you should have? It will not profit you much if there is a change in your masters and your miseries continue. You will not rejoice if a handful of Indians become high officers of the state or draw bigger dividends, and your miserable conditions remain, and your body breaks down through incessant toil and starvation and the lamp of your soul goes out. You want a living wage and not a dying wage. You want to prevent the exploitation of man and to ensure equal opportunities and fair conditions of living for all. It is certain that this cannot be done under the existing system.

We are often accused of preaching the class war and of widening the distance between the classes. The distance is wide enough, thanks to capitalism, and nothing can beat the record of capitalism in that respect. But those who accuse us are singularly unseeing and ignorant of what goes on around them. Is it the socialist or the communist who separates the classes and preaches discontent or the capitalist and imperialist who by his policy and methods has reduced the great majority of mankind into wage slaves who are worse even in many ways than the slaves of old? The class war is none of our creation. It is

The Labour Party in England, under Mr. MacDonald's guidance, was the complacent partner of the Tory Party in their imperialist policy. Now that it is itself in the seat of authority it is taking a lead in formulating that very policy. And this policy is all the more dangerous and deceptive because it is clothed in honeyed language. Calling itself socialist, it has betrayed the principles of socialism. Calling itself the friend of freedom in other lands and of internationalism, it has acted in a rigidly national and imperialist way and has forfeited all claim to the confidence of the Indian people.

The Labour Commission is sent to India. Is it an earnest of peace and goodwill to the suffering workers and a promise of better times to come? If so, the ways of the British Government are strange and past all understanding. We have had in India during the past year a general offensive against labour in which the government and the employers have joined hands and cooperated together. The Trades Disputes Act and the Public Safety Ordinance were the first contributions of the Government of India. Then followed the trial of the thirty-two labour leaders and workers in Meerut and a large number of individual cases against labour workers. This trial, as you know, has attracted a great deal of attention not only in India, but in foreign countries. It has now, after prolonged sitting, arrived at the end of the first stage, that of magisterial enquiry. Apart from the more important considerations in the case, you will observe what vast sums the government is spending in trying to put down respected leaders of the labour movement. You will join with me, I have no doubt, in sending them and all other comrades of ours, who are being proceeded against or have been convicted for their labour activities, our fraternal greetings and good wishes.

These are the conditions that face us. Are they the forerunners of peace or of strife? And yet we are asked to believe in the *bona fides* of the Labour Government and to cooperate with the Whitley Commission. Some of the respected leaders of our movement are in fact so cooperating and I for one will not easily consider them wrong. But with all respect to them I do submit to you that it is utterly wrong for us to offer this cooperation. Indeed the time has come when we should make it perfectly clear that we cannot cooperate with any such commission or with the British Government that appoints them.

The question of affiliation troubles us. If I may venture to suggest it would be best for us not to be affiliated to either International. So far as the Second International is concerned the proximity and the occupancy of office in various countries has made its leaders betray their principles and to become the exponents of a new type of imperialism, Labour imperialism, which may not speak in the accents of the

stands for the prestige of John Bull and the glory of the Union Jack. The very triumphs of the Labour Government's policy, such as they are, are the triumphs of imperialist policy. Is it any wonder that Mr. Stanley Baldwin has congratulated Mr. MacDonald for his adoption of conservatism? Or that Mr. Winston Churchill[3] has tauntingly promised him his "cordial cooperation in the government's self-imposed task of carrying out the Conservatives' policy and making the world easier if not safer for capitalism"? Or that Mr. Lloyd George[4] should call Mr. MacDonald the "last of the Conservatives"? We know the part played by Mr. MacDonald in the appointment of the Simon Commission, in spite of the resolution of the British Labour Party pledging itself to self determination in India.[5] We know also his part in the Chinese crisis when British troops were sent to Shanghai,[6] and in the Egyptian crisis[7] when British dreadnoughts and cruisers went to Alexandria to overawe the Egyptian Parliament into suspending a measure dealing with internal order.

Recently there has been an impression that the Labour Government has pursued a liberal policy in Egypt and elsewhere. So far as India is concerned, I shall refer to it later. In Egypt the best judges are the Egyptian people and it appears that they do not approve of the draft Anglo-Egyptian treaty.[8] In China extra-territoriality still continues and in Palestine we have recently seen the policy of national suppression of the Arabs.

3. (1874 1965); British Conservative statesman; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1911-15 and 1939-40, Minister of War, 1918-21; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1924 29, Prime Minister during the war years, 1940-45, and during 1951-55 He was well known for his diehard views on India, but after 1947 his personal relations with Jawaharlal were cordial.
4. (1863 1945), a leading British Liberal statesman, Prime Minister, 1916 22.
5. The British Labour Party conference unanimously carried a resolution moved by Lansbury recommending Dominion Status for India Ramsay MacDonald, however, against the wishes of Lansbury and some members of the Independent Labour Party, agreed to let two Labour members (Clement Attlee and Vernon Hartshorn) serve on the Simon Commission.
6. Early in 1927 when the communist workers seized power in Shanghai, Chiang Kai Shek, who was leading the counter revolutionary movement, sought the help of the imperialists More than 30,000 British, U.S, French and Japanese troops advanced on Shanghai.
7. On 30 May 1927 three British warships left Malta for Egyptian ports—two for Alexandria and one for Port Said—as the British Government was alarmed by the reported increase in the strength of the Egyptian army.
8. The Egyptian people did not approve of the draft Anglo Egyptian Treaty of 1927 which qualified Egyptian sovereignty by reserving certain matters over which Egypt would have no control.

only in the national, but also in the wider international sphere. And political freedom means nothing to it if the present exploitation is to continue. That position it cannot give up and no individuals have the right to compromise it. And by that position those who stand by independence stand today and nothing that has happened has made any difference to it. The time is fast approaching when our professions will be put to the test of action and suffering. And the measure of your earnestness and your desire for real freedom will be the measure of the deeds that you can do and not the strong language that you may use.

So I would beg of you to prepare yourselves for the struggle that looms ahead and not to lose yourself in mutual conflict and barren strife.

25. Statement on the Proceedings of the All India Trade Union Congress[1]

Unlike the National Congress, the Trade Union Congress elects its president for a year at the conclusion of its annual session. The president so elected presides at the next annual session. I was elected president last year at Jharia, and my presidentship terminated at Nagpur, where Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose was elected president for the next year. I was a newcomer to the labour movement, and it has been a great privilege for me to come in contact with its leaders and its rank and file. Especially do I value having met and worked with real workers who are gradually coming to the front as trade unionism develops. Although, as subsequent events have shown, the Indian labour movement is showing signs of cleavage, it was my honour and privilege to have had the cooperation of both sections, and I am very grateful to all my colleagues for it. I am particularly grateful to Mr. N. M. Joshi and Mr. R. R. Bakhale, general secretary and assistant secretary of the T.U.C. during the past year, for their uniform courtesy and cooperation.

I had hoped in my presidential address that the threatened split[2] would not occur, but even before I had a chance of delivering this address, the cleavage developed, and widened as a result of the decisions

1. Allahabad, 30 November 1929. *The Indian Quarterly Register*, 1929, Vol. II, pp 428-429.
2. The communist-dominated Trade Union Congress passed some resolutions which were disliked by the moderates, who seceded and formed a rival organisation: the All India Trade Union Federation.

Tories but which is nonetheless thorough. The main preoccupation of the Second International is no longer the fight against capitalism but the fight against communism. And, in particular, India and the colonial countries have been studiously ignored by it and at every vital step it has sided with the forces ranged against us. I am quite convinced that we should not affiliate ourselves with it, and to do so would be disastrous to our cause.

Should we then ally ourselves to the Third International? Recently all manner of threats have been held out to those who may do so. I hope this congress is strong enough to ignore them and to act regardless of them. It is obvious, however, that affiliation with the Third International is largely a gesture because under the present circumstances it is not easy for us, with various government restrictions, to develop contact with the Communist International. There is another difficulty that I feel. Personally, I am a strong admirer of the general trend of policy in Russia. Soviet Russia today, in spite of heavy blunders and many sins, holds out the bright promise of a better day to the world at large and to the worker specially, more than any other country. The great experiment has already succeeded in some measure and it would be a tragedy if anything happened which interfered with it or put a stop to it. With all my sympathy for the communist viewpoint, however, I must confess that I do not appreciate many of their methods. The history of the past few years in China and elsewhere has shown that these methods have failed and often brought reaction in their tram. To affiliate with the Third International must mean an adoption of their methods in their entirety. I do not think this is desirable for us and I would therefore respectfully recommend to this congress not to affiliate itself to either International. This does not of course mean that we should not develop contacts with them whenever desirable.

Recently, we have had a new diversion. The Labour Government has offered some kind of a conference, at some time or other, to discuss something connected with India's future constitution. In spite of the vagueness of everything in this announcement it created some excitement, which is rapidly cooling as subsequent events have revealed the true inwardness of the situation. I shall have something to say about this in another place a few weeks hence and I shall content myself here with some brief remarks. Those of us who stood by independence stand by it still. We do so not because we want isolation from other countries, but because we want the freedom to change the structure under which the worker is exploited. The labour movement is above all international. It seeks to build society on a cooperative basis not

GOLMURI TINPLATE WORKERS STRIKE

26. Message to the Golmuri Tinplate Workers[1]

I am deeply grieved that in spite of repeated requests I have so far been unable to respond to the call of the Golmuri tinplate workers and to visit them in Jamshedpur. From what I have read and heard of the strike[2] that is in progress it seems to me clear that the demands of the workers are fully justified and they must command the sympathy of all who desire that labour should have a decent standard of living and should not be victimised for organising itself in unions. I have also heard with pleasure that in spite of discouragement and want of effective help from outside the workers have shown great solidarity and perseverance in their struggle. It is easy for an outsider who does not have to bear the brunt of the struggle to advise a course of action which may bring suffering and privation to many thousands. It would be easy for them to do so. Advice of outsiders on such questions does not help much. The decision must ultimately come from those who have to carry on the struggle themselves. If this decision is taken by them after full thought, the outsider can offer his fullest sympathy. Our comrades of the Golmuri Tinplate Workers' Union have taken this decision and for forty days or more have bravely carried on the struggle. I admire them and wish them all success.

I regret greatly that I cannot promise to come myself at this stage owing to severe illness in my family. I shall however try my utmost to come, if only for a few hours, on Saturday evening next. If I am prevented from coming then I shall endeavour to come early in June.

1. 17 May 1929 *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 May 1929.
2. In December 1928 the tinplate workers at Golmuri in Jamshedpur formed a union and demanded higher wages and improvement in their conditions of work. As the British management did not concede these demands a strike began on 6 April 1929 and continued for more than ten months.

of the Executive Council which met before the open session. I deeply regret that this should have been so, for I realise that our labour movement can ill afford disunity. But perhaps, a split at this stage was inevitable. I have no doubt that experience and force of circumstances will bring the two wings together again, so that even though they may differ, they may also act together whenever occasion demands. But, although the split was likely in any event, there is no doubt that many people actively worked for it and forced the issue. On the one side, there was the youthful enthusiasm of some members of the left wing, who wanted to go ahead regardless of consequences, and on the other, the deliberate attempt to push them on so as to widen the breach and thus get additional reasons for seceding.

The seceders did not take part in the open sessions of the congress on the ground that the resolutions passed in the Executive Council were bound to be passed in the congress. They need not have been so hasty in their conclusions, or precipitate in their action. It was easy enough for them to withdraw after the congress had finally decided one way or the other. As a matter of fact, subsequent events showed that, had they attended the congress, the final decisions might well have been different. Even in their absence, one resolution to which they had taken the strongest objection, the Pan-Pacific affiliation, was postponed to next year.

Credentials were accepted at the congress on behalf of 51 unions representing 189,436 organised workers. According to the constitution, in a division, voting takes place by unions, and each delegate represents 200 members of the union. There was, thus, a total voting strength of 938. One union with a membership of 1,000 was ultimately not represented. This reduced the voting strength to 933. The seceders from the congress represented thirty unions with a membership of 36,639, and a voting strength of 478. Those that attended the congress represented twenty unions with a membership of 91,787 and a voting strength of 455. Thus, it is clear that the seceders had a majority, and I regret the split, but far more, I regret the manner in which it was brought about. I have no doubt that, sooner or later, the real workers of both the wings will join hands. The trouble comes from those who change colour in the course of an afternoon. I am glad to see that the new president of the T.U.C., Subhas Chandra Bose, is already trying to bridge the gulf. I may suggest it might be worthwhile to hold a meeting of the full Executive Council some time during the National Week in Lahore to discuss the methods of future work and common lines of action. One thing I would beg of all my colleagues in the labour movement, and that is to avoid mutual recrimination.

feel that the Golmuri workers deserve every sympathy and help. They are up against sheer pig-headedness and obstinacy on the part of the management. If you can in any way help them I shall be very glad. I believe you have already circularised the unions on this subject. It might be worthwhile to do so again. The longer the strike lasts, and it has lasted nearly three months now, the more vital becomes the question of help.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

29. On Strikes[1]

Sir,
How heavy is the burden and how gallantly the white man shoulders it! Silver and gold are heavy to carry and dividends are apt to mount up and it is said that the possessor of them may not find it easy to enter the kingdom of heaven. The eye of the needle is small and will not permit the passage of a camel or of bags bulging with money. But, even at the cost of imperilling their immortal souls, the princes of finance and industry, the lords who control the destinies of oil and jute and steel and tinplate, insist on carrying the heavy burden.

Workers with little minds and no vision, with no appreciation of the majesty of the existing social structure whereunder they contribute their little mites so that palaces may arise to solace in their leisure moments the giants who shoulder the great burden, protest and strike and give troubles. Intent on their petty selves and unreasonably insistent on having enough to eat or something to wear or somewhere to live, they forget the larger purpose of things. Do we not all believe in the doctrine of evolution? Should not then the fittest survive? Who can be fitter than the Man of Money, lord of many a factory or field and master of many thousands of undistinguished and miserable persons labouring away so that the stream of dividends may never cease? What does it matter if the thousands or the millions starve or die? There are others to replace them.

1. Letter to the Editor, 13 July 1929. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 18 July 1929.

27. To Jatindranath Mitra[1]

Allahabad
July 1st, 1929

Dear Mr. Mitra,[2]
I thank you for your letter of the 27th June. I am glad my press statement was of some help to you. You are keeping up the strike wonderfully and I do hope that you will be able to carry it to a successful conclusion.

I am writing to Bakhale about the suggested loan. So far as I am concerned I shall certainly recommend it but I do not know what the state of the finances of the T.U.C. is. I shall also suggest to Bakhale to circularise the unions to help you.

With best wishes for your success and greetings to all those on strike,

Yours fraternally,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC File No. G95/1929, p. 63, NMML.
2. Jatindranath Mitra, a trade union leader in Jamshedpur; president of the All India Trade Union Congress in 1932.

28. To R. R. Bakhale[1]

Allahabad
July 1st, 1929

My dear Bakhale,
I have just received a letter from J. N. Mitra, the acting president of the Golmuri Tinplate Workers' Union. He tells me that he has asked you for help for the strikers. As a last resort he suggests that you might give him a loan on behalf of the T.U.C. I do not know what your finances are and whether you can do anything or not. But I do

1. AICC. File No. G95/1929, p. 61-C, NMML.

In Jamshedpur, three months ago, there was a strike of tinplate workers who dared to make a few claims so that their lot might be a little better. That strike continues today. But the masters who rule over the Golmuri Tinplate Factory are no weaklings. They are made of stern stuff. Are they to be cowed down by a lot of miserable workers presuming to ask for something more than they have been getting? Never! What does it matter if the workers' demands are reasonable? If that is so it is all the more necessary to have no talks with them or discussions. Else what answer could be given to them? And so the strong, silent men who manage the Golmuri Tinplate Factory continue their strong silent career. What does it matter if the condition of workers is bad or if they suffer? That is unfortunate no doubt but how are the managing agents or the directors responsible for nature's economic laws? But alas for the perversity of human nature! The strike continues and there are deep rumblings in the ranks of other workers in the employ of the same masters. People have even said hard things about the strong, silent men of Messrs. Shaw Wallace and Co.,[2] and have dared to suggest a boycott of the Burma Oil Company's[3] oil and petrol.

News comes that the workers in some jute factories have gone on strike. How ungrateful some people can be to those who provide them with work! Is it not a glorious destiny that we should all work and work till our backs are bent and our eyes are dim and our hands tremble so that mighty dividends should go forth to those who toil not but typify, in their highly cultured and aesthetic selves, the fine flower of modern civilisation? Is it not a comforting thought that although the worker may have nothing to eat and his children are weak and hollow-eyed for lack of food, the master in his palace has an abundance of delicate viands which are wasted and thrown away for very excess? Low wages are apt to annoy. But surely any sensible worker will put up with them when he realises that the result of his labour is a mighty dividend for some other people.

Some of the jute workers are on strike. But despite this, the lords of jute refuse to be deflected from the straight and narrow way which they have chalked out for themselves. And so, despite strikes, dividends continue to come. The Hooghly Mills Co. Ltd., has this year declared a dividend of 125 per cent. It is obvious that they had no special desire to profit. Large sums were put aside for depreciation and renewals. The managing agents no doubt got their share, which must

2. Managing Agents of the Golmuri Tinplate Company.
3. The Burma Oil Company held two-thirds of the shares of the Golmuri Tinplate Company.

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32. To the General Manager, Golmuri Tinplate Company[1]

31st July, 1929

Dear Sir,

The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress considered at their last meeting held in Allahabad a representation from the Golmuri Tinplate Workers' Union. In this representation reference was made to the grievances of the workers and an account was given of the strike which has been in progress for nearly four months now. It was further stated that the union executive had repeatedly tried to open negotiations with the management, and, in order to bring about an honourable settlement, had agreed to the appointment of an impartial committee consisting of representatives of the management and the workers to discuss and settle the outstanding grievances of the workers. The union had further laid stress on there being no victimisation and on the reinstatement of workers dismissed before and during the strike. To this offer of the union, it appears, there was no response from the management. Attempts made by labour leaders like Messrs. V. V. Giri[2] and M. Daud[3] to bring about a settlement were also unsuccessful owing to this lack of response from the management. It is stated that the management refused even to grant interviews to these gentlemen.

The Working Committee were unable to appreciate why the management should avoid a settlement of the dispute. Before taking any further action however the committee directed me to communicate with you to find out if the version given above is substantially correct. Further, they desire to know if you are opposed to any attempt at mediation on the lines suggested above.

1. AICC File No. G-71/1929, p. 67, NMML.
2. (b. 1894); one of the founders of the All India Railwaymen's Federation, president of Trade Union Congress, 1926 and 1942; delegate to I.L.O. Conference; Geneva, 1927, member, Central Assembly, 1934-37, Minister, Madras, 1937-39 and 1946-47, High Commissioner to Ceylon, 1947-51; Labour Minister, Government of India, 1952-54, Governor of U.P., 1957-60, of Kerala, 1960-65, and of Mysore, 1965-67, Vice President of India, 1967-69, President of India since August 1969.
3. Muhammad Daud, secretary of the Indian Seamen's Association, Calcutta; delegate to I.L.O. Conference at Geneva in 1926 and 1929; president, All India Trade Union Congress, 1928.

I have not had any reply from Mr. Bakhale about the suggested loan. Indeed I have not heard from him at all for a long time although I have written to him repeatedly. I do not know if he is ill or away from Bombay.

The success of your strike has really been gratifying and it would be a very great pity if it could not be carried to a successful conclusion.

My colleague here, Mr. Bakar Ali Mirza,[3] who is the Congress Labour Research Scholar, proposes to visit Jamshedpur within the next few days. He would like to study both the strike situation as well as the general conditions of workers. He wrote to you some time ago but he says that you have not replied to his letter. I hope you will kindly help him in every way during his stay in Jamshedpur.

Yours fraternally,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. (1900-1973); a Congress worker of Hyderabad, active in the labour movement; general secretary of the Bengal Jute Workers' Union, 1929-35, and of the Hyderabad Pradesh Congress, 1951-52; member of the Lok Sabha, 1962-67.

31. To M. John[1]

July 16th, 1929

Dear Comrade John,

My colleague, Mr. Bakar Ali Mirza, the Labour Research Scholar of the National Congress, proposes to go to Jamshedpur soon to study the strike and labour conditions there. I hope you will give him every help in this work.

I have just had a letter from your acting president giving me some idea of what the position is now. It seems to me that in spite of the obstacles you have in front of you there is great deal of promise in the situation. I wish you all success.

Yours fraternally,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC. File No. G-95/1929, p. 43, NMML.

Tinplate Workers' Union in which they have stated their grievances and have given an account of the negotiations preceding the strike. Since the strike commenced, it appears to be common ground between them and you that the management of the company has refused to encourage any attempt at a settlement.

For various reasons, which you no doubt appreciate, the tinplate workers' strike has attracted considerable attention in India and elsewhere. Strikes and lock-outs involving a far larger number of men have seldom attracted so much attention. I presume you are aware that the strikers have received both moral and financial help[2] from trade union organisations in England and in the continent of Europe. The reason for this widespread sympathy and desire to help can only be a belief that the strikers' claims are reasonable and that they are being unjustly dealt with. That belief may be right or wrong but you will agree that it *exists*.

The National Congress is not a labour organisation and it does not usually interfere in industrial disputes. The Congress has however felt impelled to take interest in the tinplate workers' strike principally for two reasons. One of these was the allegation, not denied by you, that the management refused to have any dealings with the representatives of the strikers or with others on their behalf, and that they were not prepared to help in any way to bring about a settlement. The second reason was based on the fact that the tinplate industry is supposed to be one of the essential national industries and as such it had received a special measure of protection from the state. Both these reasons have induced the National Congress to take the unusual step of interesting itself directly in the strike. If an industry desires the help of the state, this help can only be given on the clear assurance that the labour in that industry is being paid a proper wage and is not being unjustly treated.

You mention in your letter that "the present position of affairs is that there are more tinplate workers in the district than the factory is capable of accommodating". From a perusal of the reports of the Tariff Board on the tinplate industry in India it appears that the success of the industry depends on skilled labour and the whole problem before the industry is one of training the particular kind of skilled labour required. It was with this object that the Tinplate Company brought a large number of expert workers from abroad and paid them a very high salary. It was stated before the Tariff Board, and accepted by the Board as an argument in favour of giving protection to the

2. See *post*, item 37.

I shall be glad if you will kindly send me an early reply.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

33. To V. V. Giri[1]

August 19th, 1929

Dear Mr. Giri,
Thank you for your letter of the 9th August. I am sorry for the delay in acknowledging it. I appreciate your difficulties. It seems to me that we must try to build up a strike fund. But even such a fund can hardly survive a big strike.

I went to Jamshedpur last Friday. The position there is not at all promising as you know. Under the circumstances I feel the strike must be carried on whatever the consequences. Meanwhile we shall try to do what little we can.

Your sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No G 40/1929 (Pt III), p 509, NMML.

34. To Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co.[1]

Camp Calcutta
August 21st, 1929

Dear Sirs,
I have received your letter No. F. L. 9-168 dated 6th August 1929. I have also received communications from the officers of the Golmuri

1 AICC, File No. G-71/1929, pp 68-71, NMML.

with Mr. Homi[3] till he resigned his post of president of the union. It seems to me that there has been a great deal of misunderstanding in the matter and much of the trouble is due to this fact. Who is responsible for this misunderstanding between the management and the workers I am unable to say, but many representatives of the workers seem to be convinced that Mr. Homi played a dubious part in the negotiations. The workers were given to understand that certain demands of theirs would be acceded to. Later they were told that if this was not done by a certain date they should strike. Your management must of course know what they told Mr. Homi. But the workers only know what Mr. Homi told them the management said and it is quite possible for serious discrepancies to creep in between these two versions.

The workers genuinely felt that they had a grievance and equally genuinely felt that they had been promised redress. When this redress did not come, in spite of assurances conveyed to them through Mr. Homi, there was a strong feeling that they had not been justly treated. This feeling ultimately led to a strike when the workers thought that some of their colleagues were being victimised. It is quite possible that the workers acted somewhat precipitately but to them the action did not appear as precipitate and from day to day they had been discussing this action with Mr. Homi and others. As for Mr. Daud, his sympathy with the tinplate workers and the strike may be gathered from the fact that he has repeatedly tried to help them. He had previously resigned from the Union because of Mr. Homi's activities.

In the course of the strike Mr. Daud, Mr. Giri and Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmad[4] have, I understand, definitely approached the management with the request for interviews but the management was unable to agree to this. Whatever the sins of the workers may have been it seems extraordinary that these gentlemen should have been denied these interviews. It also seems extraordinary that the management should not even attempt to understand the workers' point but should rely solely on its power to starve them into submission. If this is the attitude of the management then wider issues are affected and the National Congress cannot remain indifferent

The Congress Party in the Assembly has taken considerable interest, as you know, in the proposals to grant protection to various industries in

3 Manek Homi, an official of the Tata Iron and Steel Works at Jamshedpur who resigned and became a prominent trade union leader of the area.

4 Vice President of the Labour Association of Jamshedpur, 1929.

industry, that Indian experts would gradually be trained to take the place of the foreign experts. I gather that this has been done in some measure although a considerable number of foreign experts still remain. I have further been given to understand that, in spite of the decrease in the foreign element, the output per head has increased and thus Indian labour costs have actually lessened. This appears to be due to the general improvement in the quality of Indian labour. The Tariff Board had expressed the hope that this improvement would continue rapidly and would result in Indian labour replacing foreign labour in the factory and in lessening the costs of production.

Under these circumstances it is not clear how there can be a superfluity of trained tinplate workers in the district. Presumably you refer to the ordinary unemployed labourers, specially those who have recently had to leave the Tata Iron and Steel Co. owing to retrenchment, who have no special training to do tinplate work. Unemployed untrained workers are of course to be found in abundance in India, but it is a little difficult to understand how the quality and efficiency of labour is going to be improved if untrained hands are to replace trained workers from time to time. According to you, at present you have 3,200 men working in the factory although the tinplate works normally employ only 3,000. This itself shows that the efficiency of labour has decreased. The exact extent of this decrease must of course be known to you and your officers.

From the point of view of the state there appear to be two alternatives. Either the industry is a very specialised one and requires highly trained workers, or it does not require specially trained workers. In the former case state help may be desirable for the initial period during which workers are being trained. In the latter case there appears to be no necessity for state help.

So far it has been stated on behalf of the industry that they were training up the special workers If this process is stopped or delayed by untrained workers being taken it means a wastage of the money given by the state. It appears to me, and I shall be glad if you will correct me in case I am wrong, that the tinplate company are bound to take back nearly all their old trained workers and the present employment of new hands is largely meant to create an impression that they are carrying on successfully and in order, if possible, to break the strike. Once the strike is broken the company, it may be thought, can easily replace the new hand by the old trained hand.

You refer in your letter to the fact that the management cooperated with Mr. Daud until the Tinplate Workers' Union threw him over, and

day. I wonder if you can manage it. Your visit will be very much appreciated both by the labour elements and the general public of Jamshedpur. It would just mean a day's absence from Calcutta. Subhas Bose is in Jamshedpur and will remain there for some days. If you can manage to go please send a telegram to him care Labour Association, Jamshedpur.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

36. To Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co.[1]

September 10th, 1929

Dear Sirs,
I am in receipt of your letter No. P.L. 9-200 dated 7th September.

It is clear from your brief account of the negotiations preceding the strike that there is considerable difference of opinion as to what occurred between you and the officials of the Golmuri Tinplate Workers' Union. You have referred me to Mr. Daud. I had already consulted him on the subject and to the best of my recollection he confirmed the account given to me by the union officials. The fact that Mr. Daud has been interesting himself on behalf of the strikers since the strike in itself shows how he sympathises with those strikers. In view of this difference of opinion the obvious method to remove misunderstandings and misapprehensions would have been a free and frank discussion between the two parties. But the management of the Tinplate Company have not thought fit to encourage any such discussion or negotiation ever since the strike commenced. You are yourself aware that even Mr. Daud to whom you refer and an independent labour leader like Mr. Giri were refused interviews by the General Manager. This attitude can only be interpreted in one way and that is the desire not to discuss the issues and to starve the strikers into submission.

You will no doubt appreciate that no worker looks forward lightheartedly to a strike which must necessarily mean considerable suffering

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-71/1929, p. 25, N.M.M.L.

India. If one of these industries is carried on in a manner that is definitely vindictive to its own workers and is at the same time uneconomical and wasteful from the point of view of the state, the question of continuing any state help or protection has to be considered afresh. In view of the approaching session of the Legislative Assembly in Simla, the Congress Party will have to decide its attitude on this question in the near future. I have written to you fully on the subject so that my committee may know your viewpoint on the points referred to. I have not discussed the grievances of the tinplate workers. These can be considered later. For the present the only question to be considered is the attitude of your management towards the tinplate workers on strike. I can only conclude that this attitude is the result of some grave misapprehension or misunderstanding.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the General Manager of the Tinplate Company of India Ltd.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

35. To Maulana Azad[1]

Camp Calcutta
August 25th, 1929

My dear Maulana Saheb,

I have been here for some days and I would have very much liked to meet you. But I was told that you were away. I have just heard that perhaps you may have come back. If so I shall try to meet you before I go. I am going away tomorrow and am rather rushed. I am therefore not quite sure if I shall be able to come.

I had hoped that you would visit Allahabad but unfortunately this visit has not come off yet. I hope you will be able to come in the near future.

One thing more I have to request you. You must have heard of the Golmuri tinplate workers' strike near Jamshedpur. I was there yesterday and I was asked specially to request you to visit the place for a

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40/1929 (Pt. III), p. 589, N.M.M.L.

reached the telegraph office after your departure I found that our first telegram to him was being despatched. I stopped this and gave another in its stead. This was sent Express but evidently missed him.

As desired by you I am sending the first volume of Michael Collins[2] book. I cannot find any other book dealing with the hunger-strikers in Ireland. I have sent another little book by Dan Breen. I am not sure if this contains any account of the hunger-strikers but it will give you some idea of the violence with which the Sinn Feiners waged war.

I hope you will take some interest in the Golmuri tinplate strike. I think that the Managing Agents and the management of the Tinplate Company have behaved very badly and very unfairly and this fact should be brought home to them. To my knowledge no strike of this kind has evoked so much widespread sympathy. The British Trade Union Council has sent them £100. The Amsterdam Federation of Trade Unions has sent them £200. Both of these organisations are eminently respectable and moderate.

Among the strikers one finds Hindus, Mohamadans, Christians and Sikhs. They include also the ordinary workmen, the skilled workers and the clerical staff. The strike has now lasted five months and in spite of Shaw Wallace's great words the Company has suffered greatly and cannot carry on for long. Yet they refuse to have any talk even with the representatives of the other side. A more pig-headed attitude I cannot imagine. The question is not whether a certain demand is reasonable or not. The strikers have only asked for an impartial enquiry into their grievances and no victimisation. I cannot conceive of any striker having a lesser demand.

I should have liked to send you a full account of the strike but I have no time to prepare one now. If possible I shall send one later. Meanwhile, however, I am sending you copies of my correspondence with Shaw Wallace. This will give you some idea. In case a resolution is being moved in the Assembly on the subject perhaps you might show this correspondence to the mover of the resolution. I should like you to say something yourself. You know of course that Shaw Wallace are representing the Burmah Oil Company which is a tremendously rich and powerful corporation. They deserve no sympathy. Their oil mills in Budge Budge have also gone on strike largely in sympathy with the Golmuri strikers.

Jawahar

2 (1890 1922); Irish revolutionary leader.

for him. It may be that he is misled or misinformed. But a long strike must necessarily be based on a conviction that there are substantial grievances. If there are no such grievances as you appear to indicate it ought to be very easy to demonstrate this fact to those who are deluded enough to believe in such imaginary grievances. The management of the Tinplate Company, by refusing to have any dealings with anyone on behalf of the strikers, has adopted a course which leaves no alternative to the outsider but to believe in the justice of the workers' cause.

You must have noticed the great amount of sympathy for the strikers all over the country. I regret that in spite of this widespread expression of public disapproval of the attitude of the Tinplate Company that the company should persist in maintaining it. This can only result in greater estrangement between the workers and the company and in stronger public disapproval. You are no doubt aware that the Congress party in the Assembly proposes to take up the matter and to move that no further protection be granted to the tinplate industry. In view of the persistent attitude of the Tinplate Company to which I have referred above, culminating in the employment of Pathans by the company to overawe the strikers and in the forcible ejectment of workers from their houses, the Congress Party cannot remain an indifferent spectator and must take such action as it can to help the workers. The Behar Legislative Council has already condemned both the management of the Tinplate Company and the local government in regard to the attitude taken up towards the strike.[2]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 On 6 September 1929 the Swaraj Party in the Bihar Council carried an adjournment motion on the subject.

37. To Father[1]

September 10th, 1929

My dear Father,

Your telegram came this morning. Deoki Prasad must have left Meerut before he received any telegram from you. As a matter of fact when I

1. M N. Correspondence, NMML

It was stated at the beginning that the tinplate industry was a highly technical one requiring special experts. This expert element was provided by the engagement of a large number of Welsh tinplate workers. These workers were paid very heavy salaries. I am told that the average pay was Rs. 750 per month plus bonuses which amounted to another Rs. 500 or Rs. 600 per month. Thus the monthly pay came to about Rs. 1,300 or over. It should be remembered that these Welsh workers were ordinary skilled workers getting far less in Wales. The Tinplate Company commenced work at the end of 1922. In 1924 all mills came into operation.

In 1924 the Tariff Board recommended a duty of Rs. 60 per ton which was equivalent to 15%, on imported tinplate. In 1926 this duty was raised to Rs. 85 per ton owing to the rate of exchange changing. In order to help the company the revenue duty on tin (raw material) was reduced from Rs. 555 to Rs. 250 per ton.

The Tinplate Company entered into long term contracts with the B.O.C. and the Tata I. & S. Co. The Tariff Board state that the contract with the Tatas was very unfavourable to the Tata Company.

The output of the plant increased rapidly and in 1926 was 35,000 tons i.e. 7,000 in excess of the output designed on the plant. There was an improvement in the quality of Indian labour and the output per head also increased in spite of the decrease in the number of Europeans. In 1924 there were 84 European experts. In 1925 there were 71 and in 1926, 58.

In spite of this output however the financial results were not satisfactory. According to the Tariff Board the losses up to the end of 1925 were 50 lacs. The company stated that the losses amounted to 87 lacs. These losses were largely due to the exchange being fixed at 1-6 and the consequent fall in the sterling price of tinplate.

The general conclusion of the Tariff Board in 1926 was that but for the protection given in 1924 the company could not have survived. There had been rapid progress and they were working up to an economic output. The industry was one of great national importance and was likely to become firmly established in a short period.

The Tariff Board also referred to the desirability of reducing labour charges. This reduction referred to the European staff and they said that the wages of Indian labour were relatively low. They recommended greater efficiency and a lesser number of men to be employed resulting in a higher standard of living. The Board were of opinion that after 1933 no special protection would be necessary.

At the suggestion of the Board the contract with Tatas was revised.

38. Note on the Golmuri Tinplate Workers' Strike[1]

This strike has now been going on for about five months. It has attracted a great deal of attention in India and even in foreign countries. The Working Committee meeting held on the 27th July asked me to prepare a case for the strikers and to get into touch with the management. In accordance with this direction I wrote both to the General Manager of the Tinplate Company, Mr. J. Leyshom, and the Managing Agents, Messrs Shaw Wallace and Co., of Calcutta. Copies of my correspondence with the latter are attached. These will give some idea of the present position.

The tinplate industry has been granted special protection by the Legislative Assembly on the recommendation of the Tariff Board. In view of this fact the industry is considered a semi-national one. It is therefore all the more necessary that the labour dispute between the workers and the employers should not be ignored by the general public.

I give below certain facts relating to the grant of protection to the industry and to the happenings before and after the strike.

The Tinplate Company of India was registered in 1920. It was to be started at Golmuri near Jamshedpur as a subsidiary or allied industry to the Tata Iron and Steel Co. The share capital was 75 lacs; 2/3 of the shares were held by the Burmah Oil Company and 1/3 by the Tata I. & S. Co.

The estimate for the erection of the plant and buildings was greatly exceeded owing, it is said, to the unfavourable exchange and the higher price of materials. There being a shortage of capital, 10% debentures were issued. An issue of 125 lacs was authorised. It is not known how much was actually issued. The exact figure is kept confidential. All the debentures issued were taken over by the Burmah Oil Company.

It will thus be seen that the debenture holders controlled the situation completely. The debenture holders, i.e., the Burmah Oil Company, are also the holders of 2/3 shares so that the B.O.C. may be considered the sole proprietors of the Company. Tata's 1/3 shares have little value and it is stated on behalf of Tata's that they have written them off. Tatas have however the right to nominate some members to the Board of Directors. I understand that their directors take little interest in the concern.

1. September 1929. A.I.C.C. File No. G-71/1929, pp. 59-65, N.M.M.L.

On the 18th January Daud came and interviewed the General Manager about these dismissals and other grievances. No relief was given but the General Manager agreed to recognise the union as mentioned above.

Owing to the failure of Daud to get redress there was great disappointment among the workers. At this stage Homi intervened. The workers were disappointed with Daud and thought that Homi might bring them better luck. Thereupon Daud resigned and Homi was elected president of the union.

Homi interviewed the manager many times. He announced to the workers on the 7th February that a settlement had been arrived at on 31-1-29 but the company wanted the sanction of their Directors. It was stated that the company had agreed to pay five days' wages for three days' work. They were going to take back the six workers who had been dismissed. There was an increase of roughly 7% in their wages and there were various provisions regarding bonus, provident fund, maternity, etc.

The union was more or less satisfied with these terms as announced by Homi. It was found later that the terms applied only to some of the workers. Out of 847 men in the hot mills only 368 got the increase and 479 did not get it. There were other differences of opinion between the company's interpretation and the workers' and the workers were greatly dissatisfied. Homi promised to interview the manager again. He did so but it is not known what transpired.

6th March — Abdul Samed, a member of the executive committee of the union, was discharged for alleged bad work. Thereupon all men of his shift came out. Homi saw the manager and he agreed to have a joint committee of enquiry. Men resumed work the same day. Next day the committee sat and it was agreed to take back Abdul Samed. He was however not taken back. The men of his shift again came out on strike at Homi's instance. Two active members of the union, Manga and Hanif Ullah, were then dismissed by the manager. Later these two were taken back. But Abdul Samed was not taken. Homi told the workers in a mass meeting that Abdul Samed would be taken back later. If he was not taken within a fortnight they could strike.

On 28th March the union wrote to the manager about Abdul Samed. There was no answer. Previously, on the 22nd March the union sent a deputation to the manager about certain grievances but this was not received as the manager disapproved of the personnel.

Many men were discharged, suspended and transferred. Several letters were sent by the union in consultation with Homi to the management regarding these grievances and suggesting a joint committee and employment of old hands. The manager refused. At the end of March the

It is interesting to note that the Welsh Plate and Sheet Manufacturers' Association presented a memorandum to the Tariff Board objecting to the protection that was being given. In this memorandum they laid stress on the excessively high wages paid to the Welshmen who had been brought by the Tinplate Company and to the very low wages of Indian labour. The Welsh Association referred to the Tinplate Company as a mere department of the B.O.C. and stated that this protection was being used to penalise rivals in the oil trade. They said that the B.O.C. being a monopoly should pay the losses of the Tinplate Company. The Tariff Board did not agree with these contentions. They laid stress on the military reasons for encouraging the industry as tinplate was a necessary part of war equipment.

In December 1926 the Tariff Board recommended a reduction of the protection duty from Rs. 85 to Rs. 48 per ton. This was to continue for seven years.

The production went on increasing and in 1927 amounted to 45,000 tons. In 1928 the output suffered because of the strike in the Tata I. & S. Co's Works.

On the 18th of October 1928 the Tinplate Workers' Union was formed with Mr. Daud as chairman. To begin with the membership was 1200. This increased to 2700. The total number in the factory at that time was under 3000.

The union was recognised by the company on the 18th January 1929 on assurance that it would be registered. Application for registration was made in January but there was delay and actual registration took place on the 13th April.

The union used to take up individual cases of hardship to the General Manager but relief was not usually forthcoming.

In December 1928 workers' demands were drawn up by the union. These were sent to the General Manager but were not acknowledged. They were followed by repressive measures. At workers' meetings repeated reference was made to preparations for a strike in case demands were refused.

The company started working all men for 3 days a week and paying them for these days only. It may be noted that during the Tata strike last year the men worked for three days only but were paid for five or six days.

Early in January 1929 the company dismissed six active workers of the union. Three of these, Biswas, Profullo Bhattacharji and Jan Mohamad, were members of the executive committee of the union. These workers were dismissed on the pretext that they were not working properly and were inciting other workers.

There was great resentment at Homi's sudden change and his display of police force. His resignation from the presidentship was accepted by the union.

Early in May Mr. V. V. Giri, ex-president of the A.I.T.U.C., came to Golmuri. In consultation with the executive committee of the union he wrote to the General Manager asking for an interview. No reply was received. At Giri's suggestion the union applied to the government for application of the Trades Disputes Act.

The government sent the Commissioner of the division, Mr. J. R. Dain,[3] to enquire. On the 28th May Giri, Mitra and others went on deputation to Ranchi to interview the government. They presented a note on the grievances of the workers. They pointed out that the promised increment had not been given, that there had been victimisation of workers, that the management had refused to receive the union deputation and old hands were being replaced by new. The government however refused to intervene.

In June Mr. Daud came to Golmuri and wrote to the General Manager for an interview. No formal reply was sent but an official of the union saw Daud and told him that the company could not reply officially to his letter and was not prepared to open negotiations.

Later Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmad, vice-president of the Labour Association of Jamshedpur, asked for an interview from the General Manager. He was informed by telephone that the General Manager could not see him on this subject.

In July Daud came again and again tried for an interview but he got the same answer. About this time Jawaharlal Nehru also visited Golmuri and addressed a workers' meeting.

On the 5th July Sir B. N. Mitra[4] happened to visit Jamshedpur. He saw unofficially Giri, Daud and Mitra. Commissioner Dain and Homi were also present. Homi at this interview opposed the labour case.

Representations were sent by the union to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State. Appeals for funds were also issued. They received help from the British Trade Union Congress, £100, the Amsterdam Federation of Trade Unions, £200, the All India Trade Union Congress and individual unions in India.

Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose visited Golmuri on many occasions. Others who visited were Babu Rajendra Prasad, Baba Gurdit Singh,[5] Pt. Nilakantha Das and Jawaharlal Nehru. All these visitors appreciated the

3. (1883 1957); joined I C S in 1907 and served in Bihar.
4. Bhupendra Nath Mitra (1875 1937); member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, 1924-30.
5. The Sikh leader who had chartered the *Komagata Maru*.

General Manager spoke to the vice-president of the union, Mitra, in the mill and said that he would like some people to be present besides Homi at interviews as apparently Homi did not represent the management's viewpoint correctly.

15th April — Homi, Mitra and Hayat Baksh[2] on behalf of the union had interviews with the General Manager. Homi and Mitra pointed out that the situation was getting hopeless and unless something was done there was bound to be a strike. The manager said that there would be no repression for the next seven days. The workers' representatives said that they would try to cooperate with the management. When asked about the men who had been discharged the manager said that he would give them an assurance that he would consider Abdul Samed's case.

The union executive was not satisfied with this specially because the management had not kept their promise to take back Abdul Samed. At this time the management started employing Gurkhas as workers. This annoyed the old workers who thought that the management was merely gaining time to prepare for a strike.

On the 7th April Mitra asked Homi to interview the manager as the situation was very serious. Homi refused to go. They then asked Homi to convene a general meeting of the workers to explain the situation. Homi said he was too busy but he suggested that an announcement be made by beat of drums that men should go on working as usual. This was attempted but the drum was snatched away by the men who went about canvassing for a strike. Men started picketing. Mitra and others asked them not to do so but they refused and were bent on a strike. Homi stated later the same day that he would support the strike.

8th April — The strike began. Homi sent his resignation from the presidentship of the union but he explained to the union executive that he had done so for form's sake to enable him to help in the settlement. He was asked to withdraw the letter. He wanted three days' time to consider. On the evening of the 8th, a mass meeting of the workers confirmed the strike. The executive of the union did likewise. On the 12th day of the strike Homi came into a mass meeting of workers and asked the men to remain firm. At Homi's request there was a fresh election of the executive committee. He was again elected president.

On the 26th day of the strike Homi attended a workers' mass meeting accompanied by high police and district officials and a number of policemen and asked the men to end the strike unconditionally. The men refused.

2 Assistant secretary, Golmuri Tinplate Workers' Union, Jamshedpur, 1929.

Most of the clerical staff also joined. The work of the factory had practically come to a standstill. In spite of this however the management continued their stiff-necked attitude and refused to have any negotiations. Nor did the government intervene.

I have no accurate knowledge of what is happening during the last fortnight. It appears however that the company is continuing its aggressive attitude and is now trying to eject the men from their quarters which belong to the company. I do not know how many people are still carrying on the strike and how many have gone back. The papers say that the company is thinking of locking out all workers. If this is so it clearly shows that they cannot carry on with their existing staff and that the strike is being continued successfully.

An interesting feature of the strike has been the cooperation between the different religious groups amongst the workers as well as between the low paid and the better paid staff. The strikers are Hindus, Muhamadans, Sikhs and Christians and they are both manual workers, mechanics and clerical staff.

About the 3rd week of August the oil workers in the Burma Oil Company's mills in Budge Budge also came out on strike. This was partly on account of their own grievances which were many and partly in sympathy with the Golmuri strikers. I do not know if this strike is continuing.

It must be remembered that the B.O.C. are the owners of both the concerns. It was because of this that at one time an appeal was made on behalf of the Golmuri Union for a boycott of B.O.C. petrol.

A few days ago the Golmuri strike was discussed in the Behar Council on a motion for adjournment. The motion was carried in spite of government opposition.

A resolution has been tabled in the Assembly to put an end to the protection being given to the tinplate industry because of the attitude of the Tinplate Company during the strike.[6] There is no doubt that the company must view this withdrawal of protection with alarm.

6 On 24 September 1929 Pt Nilakantha Das moved a resolution to amend the Steel Protection Act of 1927 in order to withdraw the protection granted to the tinplate industry in India. The motion was carried.

moderation of the workers' demands and criticised the company for their unbending attitude.

The demands of the workers were:

1. That there should be an impartial committee of enquiry for all grievances.
2. That there should be no victimisation.
3. The cases pending in the courts against strikers for picketing, etc., should be withdrawn.

Subhas Bose sounded Shaw Wallace and Company in Calcutta. He was told verbally that the local management had full powers and that they were helpless.

The great majority of the strikers remained firm but after some months there was a tendency for strikers to get back. All of those who wanted to go back were taken by the company. About the middle of August the position was this: Out of a total of 3200 persons employed, 700 were old hands and 2500 were new hands. Most of the new men were not competent. The result was that the factory was working at a great loss in spite of having full complement of men. To encourage people to work the management started giving free meals at great cost to themselves They also gave better pay to those who joined as well as to the new hands. The company also engaged a large number of Pathans ostensibly to keep order.

In the third week of August an attempt was made to picket on a big scale. Three or four hundred workers accompanied by Mr. Subhas Bose and Baba Gurdit Singh stood some distance from the factory entrance and shouted various *jaykars*. The crowd was very orderly and was congratulated by the police officials who removed most of the policemen. The mass demonstrations induced many of those who were working in the factory to come out. The day passed peacefully.

The next day about thirty or forty workers accompanied by Baba Gurdit Singh went to the same place to picket. The Afghan employees of the Company attacked them with stones. The picketers retaliated also by throwing stones. Just then the mounted police arrived and ruthlessly drove the picketers away, riding down some of them and pursuing them right to their quarters. The door of one hut was actually broken open and the man inside was beaten.

That same day an order under Sec. 144 Cr. P.C. was passed prohibiting all gatherings of five persons or more in the Golmuri area. The next day this order was somewhat modified.

The effect of the attack by the Pathans and the police was to produce great excitement amongst the workers. Large numbers of the new hands as well as the old hands in the factory came out and joined the strike.

carry these new men to the works. There is absolutely no question of force being offered to these workers by the strikers, yet there is always this imposing array of police. Several cases have been instituted against the strikers, I am told, on trumped up charges. The chief cashier, who joined the strike last month, is being proceeded against by the company on a charge of embezzlement of a small sum.

Many strikers have been ejected from their quarters and most amazing of all is that the company has cut off the water supply from some of the strikers' quarters. As there are no wells the suffering caused by cutting off the water can well be imagined. The whole thing is a most shameful exhibition of how employers and government combine to crush the poor workers. Some of the workers who had been on strike have been forced to rejoin by starvation. Over 2,000 are still holding out. And all this is happening because the employers and the government will not agree even to an enquiry or to a discussion. The Trades Disputes Act which contains a multitude of most objectionable clauses also contains clauses relating to the settlement of labour disputes by government intervention. Yet the government refuses to intervene or apply the Act.

39. To Abdul Bari[1]

4.10.29

My dear Bari Saheb,
I have your letter of the 30th. I am glad to learn that the Golmuri strikers are firm.

I am afraid it is not possible to get any Sikh leader of note to go to Golmuri for some time. The Sikh League is meeting in about 10 days and there is a big tussle going on between two parties. One party wants to boycott the Congress, another wants to cooperate. No prominent Sikh will leave the Punjab for a fortnight or more. As for Sardar Kharak Singh[2] he is very bitter at present against the Congress and all its works and if I write to him he is likely to feel very annoyed.

Personally I do not think it will make much difference if any Sikh leader comes or does not come. Golmuri has had Baba Gurdit Singh and he has already done his utmost to influence the Sikh workers.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC File No G-71/1929, pp 33-34, NMML
2. (1867-1963), prominent Sikh leader of the Punjab, founder president of the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee; participated in the freedom struggle and spent 20 years in jail.

40. Statement to the Press[1]

It is evident that the government is helping the management of the Tinplate Company in every possible way. Armed police go up and down the *bastis* partly to terrorise the strikers and partly to help in recruiting new men. Police lorries with policemen before and behind

1. Calcutta, 5 October 1929. The Tribune, 8 October 1929.

GENERAL SECRETARY
A.I.C.C.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

1. To Madam Sun Yat Sen[1]

January 16th, 1929

Dear Madame Sun,

I am exceedingly grateful to you for the two messages which you sent us, one for the National Congress and the other for the women of India. The messages were read out in the Congress and were greatly appreciated. It is humiliating for us that a foreign power should prevent one whom India honours from visiting our country. We trust however that the time is not far distant when you will be able to come to this country as the honoured guest of the nation.

Unfortunately little is known in India of the present conditions in China. It is generally assumed that China has gained her freedom from Western imperialism. A resolution congratulating China was passed by the National Congress although some of us pointed out the true facts and opposed the resolution.[2]

With warmest regards and good wishes,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No. FD 1(a)/1929 (Pt III), p. 174, NMML.

2 The resolution was opposed by Jawaharlal who was of the view that the people in China were not really free a few military governors had seized power with the financial support of the imperialist powers.

Congress for the message of fraternal greeting on behalf of the workers of Ceylon which you were good enough to send to Calcutta. We realise that the struggle for freedom is a joint struggle for all who are oppressed and we rejoice that in this struggle we have the good wishes of our comrades in Ceylon.

With fraternal greetings,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Secretary, Perhipunan Indonesia[1]

January 19th, 1929

Dear Comrade,

From a letter from the League against Imperialism we came to know that you were celebrating your twentieth anniversary on the 22nd December 1928.[2] The letter which gave us this information reached us long after the 22nd December and it was impossible for us to send our greetings to you even by cable so as to reach you in time. We regret very greatly that we were thus not able to send our good wishes to you on your anniversary. May we assure you now however that we have followed with deep interest your struggle for independence and the sufferings you have had to undergo. We realise that there is a great deal in common between your difficulties and ours. We have to fight different powers but in effect the fight of both of us is against imperialism.

Your country has been bound to ours by innumerable ties in the past. And even now there are many points in common between us. We hope that we shall be able to develop our contacts so that we might know a little more of each other and may be able to help each other whenever possible.

Wishing you all success in your fight for freedom,

I am,
Yours fraternally,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 24/1929, p. 1, N.M.M.L.
2. In the Indonesian nationalist movement a notable part was played by the student organization—the Indonesian Association (Perhipunan Indonesia).

2. To General Secretary, National Minority Movement[1]

January 16th, 1929

Dear Friend,

I thank you for your letter of the 10th December conveying your message of goodwill to the National Congress. Unfortunately your letter arrived after the Congress session was over but publicity is being given to your letter. I regret very much that your chairman, Mr. Tom Mann[2], was prevented by the British Government from coming to us in person. It would have been a great pleasure for us to welcome him.

We appreciate greatly what you and some other friends in England have done in exposing the true character of the Simon Commission. India has had sufficient experience of the official labour leaders of England and desires to have no more to do with them. We realise however that a great part of British labour is not represented by their official leaders in Parliament and we have no doubt that when the rank and file of the labour movement know the real facts they will refuse to help in the exploitation of others which ultimately results in their own exploitation.

With fraternal greetings,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No G 91/1928 29, p 75, NMML.
The National Minority Movement was started in 1924 by the British Communist Party to gain influence among the industrial workers.

2 (1856 1941), British labour leader and socialist, one of the founders of the British Communist Party, 1920.

3. To Goune Sinha[1]

January 16th, 1929

Dear Sir,[2]

Allow me to express my gratitude to you on behalf of the National

1. AICC File No. G 91/1928 29, p. 71, NMML.
2. President, All Ceylon Trade Union Congress, Colombo.

7. To M. E. Burns[1]

January 22nd, 1929

Dear Comrade,[2]
Your message to the Indian National Congress was read out at Calcutta and was much appreciated by the Congress. We are very glad to find that *the organised workers of London District are with us in our struggle* against imperialism and repudiate absolutely the Simon Commission. British labour has unfortunately lost all prestige here owing to the activities of some of its official speakers in Parliament who have fully supported the Simon Commission. It is pleasing therefore to notice that the rank and file of the workers are determined to fight imperialism. I hope that you will take steps to make it clear to India and the world that the present leaders of the Labour Party in Britain do not represent the workers in their views on imperialism or their policy to India.

With all good wishes and fraternal greetings,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-91/1928 29, p 65, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary, London District Committee, League against Imperialism

8. To B. Weinbren[1]

January 22nd, 1929

Dear Comrade,[2]
I have to thank you on behalf of the Indian National Congress for the message of fraternal greetings which you have sent. Your message was read out to the National Congress and was greatly appreciated. In our struggle against imperialism in all its manifestations it is a great consolation to us that our comrades from thousands of miles away are

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-91/1928 29, p 59, N.M.M.L.
2. Chairman, South African Federation of Non European Trade Unions, Johannesburg

5. To Alokananda Mahabharati[1]

January 19th, 1929

Dear Friend,
I thank you for your letter dated 30th December. On the question of independence I am wholly at one with you. I should very much like the Congress to declare in favour of it completely. Unfortunately it is not easy to get what one wants done. I hope however that the whole country will turn to independence after a few months.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC File No G 40(1)/1929 (Pt. I), p. 79, NMML.

6. To P. N. Trivedi[1]

January 19th, 1929

Dear Friend,[2]
I have your card. It is difficult to explain anything in a letter. I may mention however that I was very much averse to accepting the secretaryship of the Congress this year. The Independence for India League however decided that in view of the fact that the Congress resolution still adheres to independence and permits the fullest propaganda for independence, members of the League should enter the Working Committee of the Congress. Thereupon a number of members were elected to the Working Committee. In obedience to the directions of the League I consented to be the Secretary of the Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC, File No G 40(1)/1929 (Pt. I), p 69, NMML.
2. A student of Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi

10. To N. N. Acharya[1]

22-2-1929

Dear Sir,[2]
I have received your letter. We too feel sorry that we have no relations with Nepal although it is so near us. We wish to improve our ties with her and it pains us to read about the conditions you have described in your letter. We shall consider any measures you may suggest.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C File No G-40(ii)/1929 (Pt I), pp. 83 84, N M M L Original in Hindi.
2. A resident of Haridewat.

11. To Secretary, Punjab P.C.C.[1]

23/2/29

Dear Sir,
I shall be glad if you will keep me informed of the progress of work in connection with the next Congress. I hope that now that both the parties have agreed to cooperate there will be no hitches or difficulties. A little generosity and courtesy go a long way to smooth difficulties. I hope therefore that in the composition of your reception committee as well as your provincial executive you will kindly bear in mind that both groups should be well represented.

I have already written to you that early steps should be taken in regard to certain matters if you wish the Congress to be successful and desire to avoid waste.

EXHIBITION

This requires careful preparation spread out over a long period. Your committee is no doubt aware of the strong objection which Mr. Gandhi

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-99/1929, pp 3 9, N.M.M.L.

with us. We are fully aware of the difficulties against which you have to contend in South Africa and we watch your efforts to overcome them with the liveliest sympathy. We feel that imperialism in India has been the bulwark of imperialism in many other parts of the world. A free India would help greatly in freeing the other oppressed races of the world.

We shall appreciate it if you will send to us from time to time a record of your activities.

With all good wishes and fraternal greetings,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. To Otto Reinemann[1]

January 22nd, 1929

Dear Comrade,[2]

On behalf of the Indian National Congress I write to thank you for your message of greeting. We rejoice that your committee is working to create a World Federation of Youth for Peace. There can be no greater work and none more urgently needed in view of preparations for war that are still going on. We wish you all success in your endeavour and thank you heartily for your sympathy in our cause. Our cause is as much yours as yours is ours. For we feel that so long as India is not completely free there can be no true peace or freedom in the world

With fraternal greetings,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC. File No G-91/1928 29, p 47, NMML.
2. Secretary, German Preparatory Committee for a World Federation of Youth for Peace.

campaign which we are undertaking.

Some amusements are of course necessary. There should be no great difficulty in determining which should be excluded. Games, sports, wrestling and athletic events can certainly be included.

It seems to me that you should have little difficulty in arriving at decisions in consonance with Mr. Gandhi's wishes and yet without giving up any aspect of the exhibition to which you attach importance. The object of the exhibition should certainly be educative and not merely a money-making one. You will have, I take it, a health section and an education section. A fine-arts section is also desirable and perhaps also a music section.

If you feel that you cannot agree entirely to Mr. Gandhi's proposal to put the A.I.S.A. in charge of the exhibition, may I suggest a *via media*?

The khadi section to be put in entire charge of the A.I.S.A., mill cloth being wholly disallowed.

For the other sections of the exhibition a strong joint committee consisting of representatives of the reception committee and the A.I.S.A. Council to be formed. This committee to nominate sub-committees for the various sections. This course may help you to get over various difficulties.

I hope that a special effort will be made to find out what cottage industries and arts and crafts exist in India, specially in the Punjab and U.P. and to exhibit these.

VOLUNTEERS

I would suggest that you should concentrate on having a minimum of 500 fully trained volunteers. By fully trained I mean those who have had the Hindustani Seva Dal course of training. In addition to these you can of course have as many more as you like of semi-trained volunteers. The latter can be got ready during the last few weeks but the full training will require a long period and should be taken in hand forthwith. Apart from the Congress you will appreciate the advantage of having a trained volunteer corps for all Congress activities in the future.

You can, if you like, ask the Hindustani Seva Dal to take charge of the volunteer department. But even if you do not do so you should take full advantage of their help. They are undoubtedly the most experienced organisation for this kind of work and they are a Congress organisation. It will be desirable to get two or three of their trained instructors immediately and to start training centres at Lahore, Amritsar

took to certain features of the Madras and Calcutta exhibitions. His objection raises a question of principle and your committee must come to an early decision in regard to this. The longer you delay a decision on this the more difficult will be your task later on. Mr. Gandhi has suggested that you should give the control of the exhibition entirely to the A.I.S.A. It is for you to consider if you are agreeable to this. This does not of course mean that your committee will have no voice in the matter. The exhibition committee would, even so, consist of your members and the representatives of the A.I.S.A. but the final decision in any important matter would rest with the Council of the A.I.S.A This course would save you a great deal of trouble. The suggestion is that if you adopt this course the A.I.S.A. will bear losses, if any, and the profits would go to you.

It is often thought that the exhibition is a money-making concern and in order to make as much money as possible some features to which Mr. Gandhi objects have been introduced in the past. The chief objections have been to:

1. all foreign articles, including machinery,
2. mill made cloth,
3. certain types of amusements.

I take it that if the exhibition is to be a *swadeshi* exhibition all foreign articles have to be excluded. This does not mean that all foreign articles are bad. Many of them indeed are very useful but the distinctive feature of a *swadeshi* exhibition is that it should contain Indian-made articles only. Machinery made in foreign countries, even though useful, hardly requires boosting up from us. It seems to me therefore that there should be no difficulty in deciding that foreign articles including machinery should be excluded.

It is of course not necessary to exclude Indian-made machinery. Ordinarily the machinery to be exhibited should be suitable for cottage industries or agriculture.

Difficulties might arise in determining whether a certain article is made in India or not, but this need not trouble us much. The point is that the manufacture must have taken place in India even though the raw products came from outside. A mere putting together in India of articles manufactured in foreign countries does not make the article concerned *swadeshi*. Thus a Chevrolet car is now assembled in Bombay but all the parts come from America. It cannot possibly be called *swadeshi*.

In regard to mill-made cloth even the Calcutta exhibition excluded it in theory, though not in practice. There can thus be no doubt that it should be entirely excluded, specially in view of the intensive boycott

13. To Secretary, Punjab P.C.C.[1]

March 2nd, 1929

Dear Sir,

...You state that "the government are out to make the coming Congress session a failure and thus are trying to put obstacles in the way of workers". You have not given any specific instances apart from the list of persons arrested. If there is anything else to warrant your statement I shall be glad if you will kindly intimate it to me. I need hardly add that the Lahore session of the Congress is bound to be a success in spite of any efforts of the government.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-42/1929, p 35, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

14. To Sailendranath Ghose[1]

March 6th, 1929

Dear Sir,

The President of the A.I.C.C. has forwarded to me your letter of the 24th January. We are noting with pleasure your activities in the States.

It is not possible for us to regulate in any way the activities of the press here. Unfortunately the press in every country gives special prominence to the darker aspects of life. All thinking persons however realise that this in no way represents the life of the nation. The United States is too big and great a country not to have its dark corners.

In regard to American imperialism it is a little difficult and I am not quite sure how far it is desirable to avoid all reference to it. If such references are to be avoided similar references of imperialist activities of other countries, for instance, France, Japan, Italy, etc, must also

1. A.I.C.C. File No. A-3/1929-1931, p 309, N.M.M.L.

and wherever else you can manage them. This training need not interfere with the ordinary work of the person trained. Thus a student or shopkeeper or a professional person need not leave his work. He need only devote some of his spare time to the training. During the vacation training camps can be organised.

At a later stage I think it will be desirable for you to get at least a dozen well trained volunteers from the headquarters of the H. S. Dal. The travelling expenses will be worth paying for their services.

I suggested during my stay in Lahore that the election of the office bearers of the reception committee might be delayed for the present This may be done but I feel that immediate steps should be taken in regard to the funds collected for the Congress. These should be kept entirely separate from the ordinary funds of the provincial committee. It is also desirable to appoint as soon as possible a competent and thoroughly trusted individual as the treasurer of the reception committee He may be given assistants of his choice.

I trust your Committee will not consider it presumption on my part to offer these suggestions. I have written at length with no desire to dictate but to help as far as I can in making the next Congress a successful and memorable one. Everything in India points to an approaching crisis and it may be that the Punjab will have the high honour to take the lead again in the great struggle. My earnest desire is that it should be prepared for it when the time comes and should sink all petty and personal quarrels in the great quarrel which all of us have to wage.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. To T. Braganca-Cunha[1]

March 2nd, 1929

Dear Mr. Cunha,

...I am sorry to learn of the activities of your government. On the whole, however, this is a good sign. Such repression means that people in Goa are waking up It is a good idea of yours to have your suppressed articles published in book form...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. A-4/1929-31, p 51, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

13. To Secretary, Punjab P.C.C.[1]

March 2nd, 1929

Dear Sir,

...You state that "the government are out to make the coming Congress session a failure and thus are trying to put obstacles in the way of workers". You have not given any specific instances apart from the list of persons arrested. If there is anything else to warrant your statement I shall be glad if you will kindly intimate it to me. I need hardly add that the Lahore session of the Congress is bound to be a success in spite of any efforts of the government.

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Jawaharlal Nehru

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In regard to American imperialism it is a little difficult and I am not quite sure how far it is desirable to avoid all reference to it. If such references are to be avoided similar references of imperialist activities of other countries, for instance, France, Japan, Italy, etc., must also

1. A.I.C.C. File No. A-3/1929 1931, p. 309, N.M.M.L.

be avoided. That simply means that we do not consider the world aspect of the question but only attack British imperialism. I agree with you that there is no point in our attacking the American Government. But a consideration of imperialism must necessarily involve the American aspect of it.

I do not quite understand what you mean by saying that we should not give prominence to any American in our deliberations so long as such American has not got your approval. So far as America is concerned we have no opportunity to give prominence or otherwise. So far as India is concerned we seldom have visits from any prominent Americans. It is obvious that in any matter relating to America we shall immediately communicate with you and consult you before taking any definite action.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. To Satyapal[1]

March 13th, 1929

My dear Dr. Satyapal,

I am sorry I could not have a good talk with you at Rohtak as I intended.[2] I had hoped when I left Lahore that there would be no further trouble of any consequence so far as the party question was concerned. I am not aware that there has been any particular friction but I did feel at Rohtak that all was not well. I am therefore writing to you frankly on the subject. I am writing to you specially because in conversation with several colleagues of yours we were informed that your attitude was the hardest in the matter.[3]

1. AICC File No. G-99/1929, p 23, NMML
2. Dr. Satyapal presided over the Punjab Provincial Conference at Rohtak on 8 March 1929.
3. There were sharp differences between two sections of the Punjab Congress.

WITH CONGRESS WORKERS AT BOMBAY 1970

LAHORE CONGRESS, 1929
PRESIDENT ELECT

It seems to me that it is neither wise policy nor is it good tactics either from the larger or from the narrower viewpoint to endeavour to perpetuate the feuds of election time. I was not in India at the time of the latest election and I do not know all that happened. But I have a good idea of what happened and I may inform you that I have not an atom of sympathy for the activities of Lala Lajpat Rai's party[4] during election time. I think they have erred grievously and did a lot of injury to the national cause. Nonetheless I am quite clear in my mind that we must put no obstacles in the way of that group joining the Congress and to join the Congress not as outsiders but as colleagues and comrades. If we do a thing let us do it generously and reap the benefit of generosity. Otherwise we are neither here nor there. I was strongly opposed in Lahore to the way in which Lalaji's group put forward certain conditions. I pointed out to them that this was all wrong and I am glad to say that they appreciated my viewpoint. The question is what we have to do now. I had hoped that your group will be generous and go more than half way to meet the others.

In Delhi the other day I made a suggestion to Sardar Sardul Singh.[5] I do not know if he has mentioned it to you. I have suggested that special care should be taken to have a strong finance committee and a treasurer who is, as far as possible, not intimately connected with any party and is thoroughly trusted. I do not know many people in the Punjab and so obviously I cannot say who is the ideal person for this job. I suggested however that Purshottamdas Tandon might be asked to serve as treasurer. From many points of view he would be a very good choice. His business is finance and banking. He is a man who is very well known in Congress circles in India and he is a man whose extraordinary trustworthiness even in trivial matters is notorious in the U.P. and outside. He has been connected with Lala Lajpat Rai in the past but so far as I know he has not taken any active part in party politics. I suggested his name for these reasons and also because a man of his ability should certainly be utilised by you to the full advantage. Please do not imagine that I wish to force this suggestion of mine on your committee. The choice is yours and you can do just what you wish. I only claim the liberty to make recommendations. You have the liberty to reject them.

4. The Nationalist Party.
5. Sardul Singh Caveeshar (1886 1963), a prominent nationalist Sikh leader of the Punjab; secretary, All India Sikh League, 1920, secretary, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, 1920, participated in the noncooperation movement and was imprisoned several times, elected member, AICC, 1928, close associate of Subhas Chandra Bose and president of the Forward Bloc, 1941.

I was very much troubled by the fiasco of the Jullundur election.[6] It struck me that the whole thing was greatly mismanaged and an occurrence which might have added to your strength in many ways has led to a serious blow being struck at the Congress prestige. I hope no such mismanagement of Congress affairs will happen in the future.

I am sending copies of this letter to Dr. Mohammad Alam[7] and Sardar Sardul Singh.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6 The Congress candidate withdrew from the by election to the Council from the Jullundur constituency at the last moment, thus enabling an independent to be elected unopposed.
7 A barrister and prominent nationalist leader of the Punjab.

16. Statement to the Press[1]

Maulana Mohamed Ali has done me the honour of criticising some remarks I have made. I stand corrected. The ex-Presidents of the National Congress are certainly a mixed lot and are not always amenable to discipline. Like the king they appear to be above the law. I had ventured to criticise a statement made by one of them forgetful of this truism in Indian politics because of my high regard for this gallant leader in the cause of Indian freedom.[2] He has made history and, if he but will, can do so again. But just when India is stretching her limbs for another and a stiffer struggle, when drooping spirits are reviving, he cries 'halt' and calls back his regiments and battalions. And have not many of those with whom he consorts in this endeavour been the strongest bulwarks of British rule in India and the antagonists of those who strive for freedom?

1. Allahabad, 21 March 1929. *The Tribune*, 24 March 1929.
2 On 9 March 1929 Jawaharlal criticised the Muslim leaders' manifesto (which was signed among others by Maulana Mohamed Ali, an ex President of the Congress) asking the Muslims not to take part in the Congress demonstrations in favour of the Nehru Report. On 13 March Maulana Mohamed Ali issued a rejoinder.

I was no admirer of the so-called compromise resolution of the Calcutta Congress. I spoke against it. But by virtue of that resolution itself the time is fast approaching when the Congress must stand for independence and independence alone. That may be nine months hence or even sooner. Does Maulana Mohamed Ali believe that Dominion Status, whatever that may signify, is going to be presented to us in the course of the year? If not, then why worry? The goal of the Congress remains independence and there can be no compromise on any other basis after a few short months. Our work then is cut out for us to prepare ourselves and the country for the struggle. The programme of the Working Committee was aimed at this preparation.

Will not Maulana Mohamed Ali help in the boycott of foreign cloth? Is he not pleased at the splendid response in the country to the call for boycott? Do not the bonfires of foreign cloth warm and gladden his heart? Is not Maulana Mohamed Ali in favour of strengthening the Congress organisation so as to make it a fit instrument for the fight?

Maulana Mohamed Ali, if I may say so, suffers from the Mahasabha complex. He sees the evil hand of the Hindu Mahasabha everywhere and its tainted mark on every forehead. He will allow me to assure him that his fears and suspicions have little basis in fact. It is my misfortune to be unable to understand how a Hindu or a Moslem can have any political or economic rights as Hindu or Moslem. And I cannot conceive why Moslems or Sikhs or Hindus should lay stress on any such rights. No minority should be unjustly treated. But Maulana Mohamed Ali is well aware that minorities get on well enough as a rule. It is the great majority which requires protection. A handful of foreigners rule India and exploit her millions. A handful of India's rich men exploit her vast peasantry and her workers. It is this great majority of the exploited that demands justice and is likely to have it sooner than many people imagine. I wish Maulana Mohamed Ali would become a champion of this majority and demand political and economic rights for them. But this majority does not consist of Hindus only or Moslems only or Sikhs only. It consists of Hindus and Moslems and Sikhs and others. And if he works for this majority, I am sure he will come to the conclusion that he need attach little importance to the imaginary rights of individuals or groups based on adherence to a religious creed.

News comes today that the government is making a desperate effort to crush the labour and the youth movements. What reply will Maulana Mohamed Ali give to this challenge? What commands will he issue to his battalions?

18. On the Victory of British Labour[1]

The British election results are certainly important from the international viewpoint as they would probably mean a reorientation of the foreign policy of England.[2]

From the Indian point of view, however, they make little difference. Indeed, the slight difference they might make might not be to the advantage of India. With the Conservatives in power the issue as regards India is usually a fairly straight one, but with Labour there is so much empty and pious talk that some minds are apt to be confused and overlook the fact that there is no action behind the talk.

It is clear that the Labour Party as a whole is as imperialist in its outlook as any other British party. They have tried to ignore the Indian problem and have hardly referred to it in their election campaign. They will probably continue this ostrich-like policy so that, so far as we are concerned, our programme must hold good in India, whatever party is in power in England.

It is by no means certain how things will shape themselves after the re-assemblage of Parliament. In spite of the sweeping gains of Labour, they have not got a clear majority and it is probable that Conservatives and Liberals will defeat them if any vital issue is raised.

This may precipitate another election in the near future because it is obvious that Conservatives certainly cannot hold office for long.

As for the Liberals they have shot their last bolt and both the party as a whole and its leader, Mr. Lloyd George, can never hope for office.

The Labour Party has a left wing which is slightly preferable from the Indian viewpoint. But this left wing, as far as one can make out, has little influence in shaping the party's policy.

The real bosses of the party are Ramsay MacDonald, J. H. Thomas, Arthur Henderson[3] and Philip Snowden, and as far as all these gentlemen and especially Mr. Thomas are concerned they glory in possessing an imperialist viewpoint.

Therefore for India the work is cut out and this work is to carry on with the organisation of resistance so that we may achieve our objective, whatever party may be in power in England.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 2 June 1929 *The Leader*, 3 June 1929.
2. In the general elections in Britain in May 1929, 288 seats were won by Labour, 260 by the Conservatives and 59 by the Liberals.
3. (1863-1935); Secretary, Labour Party, 1911-1934, Foreign Secretary, 1929-31.

17. To Miaz Ali[1]

May 7th, 1929

Dear Sir,[2]

...Regarding the national flag I shall try to send you a small one in khaddar. I am afraid it will not be very well made but it will give you some idea. We only use hand-spun and hand-woven cloth for flags. This makes them rather heavy unless they are made of very expensive stuff. For the moment I have only got very cheap flags here.

The flag contains three colours, one above the other, the top one being white, middle one, green and the bottom, red. Right across the flag there is the emblem of the *charkha* or the spinning wheel. Often however this charkha is left out because it is not very easy to print it properly.

This flag has not been formally adopted by the National Congress. As a matter of fact however it is used on all Congress occasions and is recognised generally as the national flag. It was not formally put before the Congress in order to avoid a flag controversy being suddenly raised. We wanted to give it prestige and to develop the tradition behind it. As a matter of fact it has already got a history behind it and many people have suffered for it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 16/1929, p. 19, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. Secretary, United India League of Detroit, U.S.A.

21. To B.J.K. Hallowes[1]

June 26th, 1929

Sir,

Your letter of the 19th of June was delivered to me on the evening of the 24th June. I am afraid I have no authority to make grants out of Congress funds. Only the Working Committee of the Congress can do so. If you so desire it, I shall place your request before the Committee at their next meeting.

Conditions in the district of Gonda and in its neighbouring district of Bahraich are terrible enough. Indeed many other districts in the province are little better. You say in your letter that government have done their part in relieving this distress and it is for private persons and organisations to do their share. In the face of an appalling catastrophe, as in the case of a critical illness, immediate relief measures have necessarily to be undertaken. But you will no doubt appreciate that such measures have a temporary significance only. They neither cure the disease of the social group or of the individual. To find the remedy you have to search for the causes of the distemper and to remove them.

Is it not a strange and disconcerting fact that such terrible famines should occur with more and more frequency, and even in the intervals scarcity, own brother to famine, should prevail? And is it at all surprising that continued starvation should result in the "resistance of the people" being "seriously weakened" as the recent *communique* of the U.P. Government puts it? Surely there must be something very seriously wrong somewhere in the machinery of the state or the structure of society or both.

1. A.I.C.C. File No F-16/1928, pp. 17-23, N.M.M.L.
B. J. K. Hallowes, Deputy Commissioner, Allahabad, and president of the Famine Relief Fund of Gonda made an urgent appeal to the Congress committees for help. He wrote to Jawaharlal. "If you commute the sentence on European clothes from burning to banishment, I guarantee that they will never return. You will not, I think, wish any longer to burn clothes, when you realise that there are thousands of your countrymen wearing rags which are too scanty even for decency. You have promised £ 1000 to the League against Imperialism. Will you not give as much to the League against Starvation? Prominent members of the Congress are collecting funds to save from prison 31 alleged communists at Meerut. Will you not do the same to save from famine five lakhs of hungry men at Gonda?"

19. On the British Labour Government[1]

India's prospect depends not on any government in power in England but only on the organised strength of the Indian people. The Labour Party dare not conciliate various groups in India. It is quite possible they may adopt an aggressive anti-Indian attitude. Lord Olivier's[2] appointment to the India Office would be objectionable. The alternative of Lord Chelmsford in Whitehall is highly insulting to India.[3] India must protest against being thus trifled with, which is possible only by concentrating on Congress organisation.

1 Calcutta, 7 June 1929. *The Tribune*, 9 June 1929.
2 He had served as Secretary of State for India in 1924.
3 In fact Wedgwood Benn was appointed Secretary of State for India.

20. Interview to the Press[1]

India's prospects depend very little on the government in power in England They depend very much on the organised strength of the Indian people. The sooner this fact is completely appreciated, the better.

The motley collection of individuals in the British Labour Party, including as it does lords and knights, Labour imperialists and a small group of earnest anti-imperialists, cannot make much difference. They are not, for fear of offending various groups, going to take up any sensible attitude in regard to India. They can either sit tight and allow things to drift to their inevitable crisis or, what is quite possible, they may take up an aggressive anti-Indian attitude.

The only course, and the obvious course, for India, is to clench her teeth and concentrate on organising the Congress and labour, so that we may be able to show to the noble lords and gentlemen in Westminster that it is not easy to trifle with India. The Congress has laid down a comprehensive plan for re-organisation. Let us all attend to it.

1. Calcutta, 9 June 1929. *The Tribune*, 12 June 1929.

question can fail to arrive at this conclusion. Your sympathy for the poverty-stricken will not end by giving them temporary relief. You will want a surer remedy giving more permanent results than the quack's nostrum. I trust that you will appreciate this sure remedy lies in the complete replacement of the present system of government and a change in the social structure. Believing this to be the only right way which promises a measure of comfort and happiness to our suffering countrymen, the National Congress has determined to follow this path. Your cooperation, moral and material, as well as the cooperation of all others who object to the exploitation of a country or a people or a class by another, will be welcome.

I might add that so far as immediate relief measures in case of urgent necessity are concerned, the Congress has in the past given such relief either directly or through its associate organisation, the All India Spinners' Association.The Congress believes that even temporary relief should take the form of teaching an auxiliary industry to agriculture which will provide an immediate income now and a welcome addition in better times. Every person taking this form of relief is a permanent gainer thereby and his spare time which was wasted gets converted into yarn and cloth and money. The method of organising this kind of relief is to encourage carding and hand-spinning by lending and distributing spinning wheels and cotton. Hand-weaving, of course, automatically benefits by this. If you appreciate this kind of relief and are prepared to cooperate with it, I shall gladly recommend to the All India Spinners' Association to do what they can in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

22. To A.C.N. Nambiar[1]

July 11th, 1929

My dear Nanu,
I have received your letters of the 12th and the 19th June. I am glad that the Bureau[2] is progressing well.

1 A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 20/1929 (Pt. II), pp. 81-83, N.M.M.L.
2 Immediately after the Calcutta Congress of 1928, the Working Committee sanctioned a monthly grant of £ 30 for the establishment of a Students' Information Bureau in Berlin. The grant was later increased.

The days when we could cast the blame on the Gods for all our ills are past. Modern science claims to have curbed to a large extent the tyranny and the vagaries of nature, to have increased production and to have introduced swifter methods of transportation and communication. And yet in spite of all this progress India faces almost continually famine and scarcity and her condition becomes steadily worse.

Your relief works must bring some solace, however temporary, to many. They are certainly to be appreciated. But do you not think that all this charitable relief does not touch even the fringe of the problem of Indian poverty? For the problem is one of poverty, not of failure of rains or other natural calamity. You do not ask me to send you food, but money. There is enough food in the country and enough of trains and conveyances to carry it to every famine area. But there is no money to buy it How and why this state has arisen and how it can be remedied are vital questions which we must answer. Probably your method of tackling these questions is different from ours. But it is certain that the charity of the wealthy does not put down poverty and famine relief measures do not put an end to conditions which cause famines.

The whole *raison d'etre* of the National Congress is to put an end to such terrible conditions by removing the root causes. The Congress is convinced that only by changing the whole system of government and the structure of society can poverty be conquered and a measure of social well being introduced. The Congress therefore fights for this change and in so doing faces a considerable measure of risk and suffering. And it is for this reason that the Congress associates itself with other organisations, like the League against Imperialism, which also attack the root cause of poverty and inequality.

If the government at present functioning in India were really desirous of attacking and eradicating poverty they would do something much more and vastly different from the petty relief they give in times of acute distress. They would feel that in a country where there is such terrible poverty it is a tragic absurdity to have an expensive and top-heavy system of administration. They would feel that the whole political and economic system they have built up in the country, and the social structure they have bolstered up, have impoverished the country with great efficiency and rapidity, and this process continues. They would realise that the responsibility for this poverty is theirs and therefore the speediest way of ending it is to remove themselves from the scene of action, liquidate their government and make room for others who can tackle the problem with greater disinterestedness and competence than they have shown.

I cannot believe that any one who has given some thought to this

23. To Fenner Brockway[1]

August 1st, 1929

Dear Fenner,

Thank you for your letter of the 22nd July. You are absolutely right in telling us to rely upon ourselves. That is a lesson which hard experience has taught us and we are not likely to forget it. There is no question of our placing reliance on communists in England or elsewhere If communists happen to do something which helps us we are prepared to cooperate with them. If not we go different ways. There is no question of the communists dictating our policy here or elsewhere. At the same time I do not appreciate why we should consider the communists as untouchables and keep away from them lest more respectable people might be offended.

So far as you are concerned I fully understand and appreciate the position. I was glad to find your name on the Provisional Meerut Prisoners' Defence Committee. But even if your name had not been there I would not have misunderstood.

I have been sending the I.L.P. our little *Congress Bulletin* which gives our proceedings and some odd facts from time to time. I suppose you have seen this. There is nothing much in it. The situation here is undoubtedly getting more difficult. The National Congress is absolutely committed to adopting a strong line at the end of this year. Most of us agree on the merits that such a line should be taken up. Others may be a little doubtful of this but even they realise that circumstances are too strong for them. If by any chance the Congress fails to take any effective action or having taken such action did not show any good enough results, it will be extraordinarily difficult to prevent India from adopting the ways of Sinn Fein in Ireland. No man in his senses welcomes the prospect of this bitter warfare. It is bound to lead to terrible suffering and no one can say what the result will be. And yet we seem to go inevitably in this direction.

Perhaps you may have seen in the press some account of what is happening in Lahore Various conspiracy and sedition cases are going on there I have no complaint against these cases as such. But the behaviour of the civil authorities and the police has been extraordinarily barbarous. Young men collecting funds for the defence have

1. A.I.C.C. File No F.D. 33/1931, pp. 19-23, NMML.

As you will remember the Congress sanctioned one year's expenses for your Bureau. You have now been functioning for about five months and have another seven months to run. The question is what will happen at the end of this seven months. I should like you to consider this question at an early stage so that we may be prepared for all eventualities. In one of your letters you mentioned that you hoped to make the Bureau almost self-supporting by the end of this year. If that could be done, of course there would be no further difficulty. Even if you could make it partially, say to the extent of 50 p.c., self-supporting, I think it would not be difficult to carry on. In the event however of your requiring a continuance of the present grant there is just a possibility of difficulties arising. There are many people who have influence in the Congress here who are not keen on so much money being sent to you. They appreciate what you do but they feel that the money might be utilised to better purpose here. It is not an easy matter to argue with them or convince them to the contrary. We may perhaps be able to do it. If so, well and good. If not what is to be done?

There is another difficulty. If the situation in India develops as it well might in the course of the next few months it may become very difficult and even physically impossible for us to continue helping you in the way we have done. I am putting these considerations before you so that you may give thought to them. There is no immediate hurry. Another factor which I should like you to remember is that I am not going to be the permanent Secretary of the Congress, partly because in the nature of things I cannot continue for ever and partly because it is highly unlikely that the British Government will permit me to carry on my ordinary activities for very long.

You refer to Srinivasa Iyengar. You are right in saying that personal differences and animosities have had an unfortunate effect on him. Yet I think that the explanation is not quite so simple. He is a very hard person to cooperate with.

Krishna is well but my wife's troubles continue.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

why Goans should be under any misapprehension about their future. They are as much Indians as any one else. They should therefore be sharers in any good that may come to India. So far as the Portuguese Government is concerned it is for them to decide what they should do. It is not for us to dictate to them or force their hand. But you can rest assured that the rest of India will gladly cooperate with them in any task for the betterment of our country.

I hope therefore that you will remove any misapprehensions that may have arisen. It is absurd to say that if India attains Swaraj, "Goans will have to march bag and baggage to Goa." Nobody need march bag and baggage out of India unless his sole object is to exploit India. Even foreigners will be very welcome to remain in India and cooperate with us in our work. Much more so must Goans be welcome who are themselves Indians.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

27. To Members of the N.W.F.P.C.C.[1]

Allahabad
21st November, 1929

Dear Friend,

It has given me much pleasure to read in the report of the Frontier Provincial Congress Committee that you have helped greatly in organising Congress work in your province. I hope you will permit me to congratulate you and to express my thanks. We have difficult times coming when every ounce of energy and organisation will be wanted. I have every hope that your province will take the lead in the next forward movement that the Congress is planning next year.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 A.I.C.C. File No. F.27/1929, p. 11. NMML.

Concluding, he thanked those present for the spirit which had prompted the arrangement of the meeting and wished the community every success.

25. To C. Rajagopalachari[1]

September 9th, 1929

My dear Rajagopalachari,
I have just seen your letter of the 26th August. Certainly I shall do what I can to help you in your campaign. I must confess to you however that I do not feel terribly excited about it. I think that your task is much too easy a one. India is really convinced of the rightness of prohibition. I do not think any other country can be considered to be so convinced of it. The only people who succumb are the poor workers specially in factory towns and the rich whom we are not likely to influence much unless we deprive them of their riches which would be a very laudable thing to do.

I shall mention your campaign in the next issue of the *Bulletin* and will also send a circular to the provincial committees.

Your cuttings are enclosed.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No C-2/1929, p. 39, NMML.

26. To L. Paul[1]

Camp Gorakhpore
October 7th, 1929

Dear Sir,[2]
I am in receipt of your letter of the 2nd October. I do not understand

1. AICC. File No. G-4(ii)/1929 (Pt. III), p 449, NMML.
2. A Goan of Bombay.

persons pledged to independence can become members of the Congress in future. I shall be glad if you could let me know what other ideas you may have in regard to Congress work in the future. How would you suggest that sanction should be developed or the will of the Congress made to prevail? It seems to me that this is a vital question that we have to face. We can hardly talk bravely and pass resolutions only in the Congress without any subsequent effective action. I shall be greatly obliged if you would suggest to me what in your opinion should be done on an all-India scale and also what you would suggest that you might do in South India. I am myself not at all clear on this and your opinion might help me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

30. To D.V. Gundappa[1]

11th December, 1929

Dear Sir,[2]
I am in receipt of your letter of the 6th December with its enclosures. I thank you for them.

I do not think there is any chance of the Congress accepting invitations for the Round Table Conference. Personally I cannot conceive of such a conference being representative if only the rulers of Indian states go there and not the people.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No. G-47 [illegible] p. 114, NMML.
2 [illegible] President Karnataka Sabha Secretary [illegible], Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs, Poona.

28. To Sakarben K. Vyas[1]

December 6th, 1929

Dear Sister,[2]
I have your letter of the 30th November. I am afraid you have not appreciated fully the function of the Indian National Congress. The Congress is a political organisation seeking political change in India. Much as it does believe in social service it is of opinion that social betterment can be brought about only through political and economic changes and not to any large extent by social service. Therefore the Congress must necessarily concentrate on the struggle for power. No number of *ashrams* of the kind you mention will transfer the power from the foreigner to Indian representatives. Therefore I regret that the Congress cannot make any grant of funds for the purpose you mention.

This does not mean of course that Congressmen do not sympathise with your work. They wish you well but you will no doubt appreciate that if any fundamental or quick change is to be brought about in India it cannot be by social service.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(1)/1929 (Pt. III), p. 315, N.M.M.L.
2 Mantri, Arya Sevak Ashram, Broach.

29. To S. Srinivasa Iyengar[1]

December 7th, 1929

Dear Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar,
You have stated on several occasions that you desire the Congress to change its creed at its next session. I take it this means that only

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-63/1929, p. 3, N.M.M.L.

There must be the fullest intention to cooperate and to carry out the directions of the P.C.C.

Try to form a representative reception committee. Bindhyabasini Prasad might be the chairman or better still have no chairman. A convener is all that is necessary. This is no special honour and I do not know why people should fight about it. However if they do then you have simply to put your foot down. If any party does not wish to cooperate except on special terms, well then let him keep out. If there are no sensible groups in Gorakhpore then the whole district may be left out of Gandhiji's tour programme.

I am sure however that you will be able to fix up something. This is essential from the point of view of our future work.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

32. Circular to Members of the U.P.P.C.C.[1]

You must have read the new decisions of the All India Congress Committee reached at Bombay. One of its decisions is such that if we all do not try our utmost, there is a danger that all the rights of our provincial committee may be taken away and we may not be able to participate in the All India Congress Committee or attend the Congress.[2] Why was this severe action suggested by Mahatma Gandhi to the All India Congress Committee and why did the latter agree to it? A little thinking will reveal the real reason. The All India Congress Committee is preparing from now for what is going to happen at the end of this year. It was necessary therefore now to set its own house in order.

1 *Abhyudaya*, 13 July 1929. Original in Hindi.

2 The Congress Working Committee at its meeting held in Bombay on 24-25 May 1929 passed a resolution that in the event of a P.C.C. not paying its annual contribution to the A.I.C.C. by the prescribed date the A.I.C.C. members representing the defaulting province should be debarred from participating in the meetings of the committee.

MAHATMA GANDHI'S U.P. TOUR

31. To Sri Prakasa[1]

12/3/29

My dear Prakasa,

I gather that you are going to Gorakhpore to help in the formation of a Gandhi Reception Committee.[2] Sitla Sahai has already been to Gorakhpore once and he tells me that the situation there is by no means an easy one. You will therefore have to exercise your arts of peace and war to induce the denizens of Gorakhpore city and district to cooperate together and not to behave like the famous cats of Kilkenny...

I feel that we cannot afford to carry on our old election bitterness and rivalries. Of course if we think that a man is a thorough bad sort we have to keep away from him. Otherwise we must try to cooperate. The political situation is developing fast and it is folly to waste our time and energy in mutual conflict.

It is a good thing that you are going to Gorakhpore and you happen to be the defeated candidate of the last election. If you advise that Raghava Das[3] should be taken into the fold it is as well that you should do so and not another.[4]

But before this reunion there should be a heart to heart talk. It should be made perfectly clear that if any one intends to come in merely to create splits and parties and trouble then he had better keep out.

1. AICC. File No G-27/1929 (Pt III), pp. 495-498, NMML. Extracts.
2. Mahatma Gandhi toured the UP. during September-November 1929 to strengthen the Congress and collect money for the Khadi Fund.
3. Resident of Poona but migrated to UP, where he established an *ashram* at Barhaj; participated in the noncooperation movement and imprisoned in 1922, 1932, 1941 and 1942; associated with a number of educational institutions in eastern UP.
4. Baba Raghava Das, who had considerable influence in Gorakhpur, had incurred the displeasure of the local Congress committee on account of his activities against the official Congress candidate during the previous election

33. To B.D. Misra[1]

July 23rd, 1929

Dear Bansi Dharji,[2]
Your letter of the 19th July. Certainly I should like to go to Lakhimpur but unfortunately I can not split myself up into several parts. I can only go to one place at a time and I have to visit many places in the province as well as some places outside. All I can do therefore is that I shall try my best to include Lakhimpur in my tour. When I can come I am not able to say.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-64/1929, p. 12, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1900), advocate, and Congressman of Lakhimpur Kheri (U.P.); member of the Constituent Assembly; well known Hindi writer.

34. To Sri Prakasa[1]

July 31st, 1929

My dear Prakasa,
...You know already what the A.I.C.C. decided. Whether one approves of that decision or not, and I am inclined to disapprove of it to a large extent, it was almost an inevitable decision having regard to the temper of the country. I do not know anything about the Bombay incident[2] you refer to. It is difficult therefore for me to understand what happened. I presume however that something had happened quite apart from the incident you mention which had upset my father and hence his exhibition of temper. I wish you will not attach any importance to it.

1 A.I.C.C. File No. P. 20/1929, pp. 97-101, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2 Motilal Nehru had cut short a rambling speech by Sri Prakasa at a public meeting

You are well aware of the present state of affairs in our province. The work of the Congress is carried out by a few. Every year when there are elections in the provincial Congress committee, Congressmen turn up in large numbers; and after that the attendance gradually goes down. So much so that sometimes at the provincial committee council meetings there is not even a quorum. Such little interest can lead to only one result; a deterioration in the position of the Congress in the province. Only two or three persons have worked in the whole province. No organisation can function soundly with two or three workers. So you should consider how we can best organise ourselves for work in this province and what contribution you can make. The All India Congress Committee has made it difficult for nominal Congress committees to continue. Either the committees function satisfactorily or they will cease to exist.

A crucial period is ahead. We have to prepare for action by the end of the year. I hope that taking all these factors into consideration, you will decide to work for some months setting the Congress organisation right.

I have dared to write this only because I have myself worked very little in my province. What I have written applies to me as well. The All India Congress Committee office takes up a lot of my time; so does, unfortunately, the illness of members of my family. But hereafter I am prepared to tour the province, as much as I possibly can. If you think that my coming to your district will do some good, please write to me. But it is apparent that I cannot, for lack of time, go to every district. Wherever I go, I would like some contribution to be collected for the Congress organisation and specially for the national service scheme.

You are aware that Mahatma Gandhi will be touring our province from about 20 September. We should completely set right the organisational work of our provincial Congress by then. That would be the best welcome to him.

Yours etc.,
Jawaharlal

36. To J.B. Kripalani[1]

August 5th, 1929

My dear Kripalani,
I was expecting you here but you have not come. I am going away tomorrow for nearly a week. On my return I may have to leave almost immediately again. It is just possible therefore that I may not meet you at all. As you must realise there is very little time left now to make final arrangements for Bapu's tour. The only possible way to proceed is for one man to take dictatorial charge of it. That man can only be you. Don't waste time in consulting people. Of course if you have a chance, consult them. I suppose you have fully consulted Sri Prakasa. You know my views already. Thus you can go ahead and fix up matters finally...

It seems to me that Bijnor, Dhampur, Nagina and Najibabad are too many places in the same area. Politically they are all dead. Could not one day be saved there?...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G 27/1929 (Pt. III), p 357, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

37. To M.A. Ansari[1]

Camp Mussoorie
October 22nd, 1929

My dear Ansari,
Thank you for your letter of the 18th. I appreciate your difficulties. We have to face something of the kind in almost every place. Yet the Mahatma has a way of lifting money which is extraordinary. He has definitely decided to go to Delhi reaching there on the evening of

1 A.I.C.C File No G-64/1929, p. 113, N.M.M.L.

...It was my intention, as I wrote to you, to tour about a great deal in the U.P. in August. I find however that I shall not be able to do anything of the kind. I have to be in Meerut on the 7th August to give evidence in a sedition case[3]—not the conspiracy case. From there I must go to Lahore where the situation is daily becoming more critical.[4] At the earliest I can return on the 12th. On my way to Meerut I shall go to Etawah...

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3 The *Desh Bhagat* case, see *Selected Works*, Vol 3, pp. 121-122.
4 See *ante*, item 23.

35. To Damodar Swarup Seth[1]

July 31st, 1929

My dear Damodar Swarup,
I am still waiting to get from you a list of the donors to the National Service Fund with their addresses. So long as I do not get this list I cannot send out my receipts. You must know that it is very unbusinesslike not to issue receipts immediately. As it is, several weeks have passed by. This has a very bad effect on the general public. I pride myself on my efficient habits but what am I to do if you will not help me in keeping to them? Please send me immediately these names and addresses.

Have you got any money from Pandey?[2] If not let me know his name and address and I shall write to him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-40/1929 (Pt. II), p. 259, N.M.M.L.
2. Bindeshwari Prasad Pandey, Chairman, Municipal Board, Bareilly.

Delhi cannot now be left out. Bapu will speak to you about it. He has fixed up engagements there.

I am glad you have purchased the building at Meerut. It will do you good to get tied down to a piece of earth. Next to a wife, or perhaps even more than a wife, it has a tremendous sobering effect!

I find huge files of work awaiting me here. I am afraid I cannot budge from Allahabad for some time...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

November 1st. If you arrange a public meeting or a ladies' meeting or both on November 2nd, he will attend them and take such purses as are offered to him. If you feel that meetings should not be held he will take rest. In any event he will leave Delhi by car early on November 3rd for Bulandshahr. He has received an invitation from Sultan Singh[2] or his son[3] and he proposes to stay at their house in Delhi with his party which is a fairly large one.

I have mentioned your letter to Gandhiji. I am glad to inform you that in spite of the very heavy strain of the U.P. tour he is flourishing. The day he arrived in Mussoorie he had a very bad time. People here pulled him about in a rickshaw all over Mussoorie and Landaur. He was thoroughly exhausted and not in the best of tempers but he revived soon. He has very long walks twice a day and he walks at a good pace.

Kamala, since her return from Calcutta, has been keeping fairly well. She has been avoiding all kinds of exertion so far because we wanted to take no risk.

I am returning to Allahabad on the 25th November. The same day Gandhiji goes to Saharanpur. If you wish to write to him please send your letter to Meerut.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. A landlord of Delhi.
3. Raghubir Singh, the founder of Modern School, New Delhi.

38. To J.B. Kripalani[1]

28.10.29

My dear Kripalani,
Your letter of the 22nd missed me at Mussoorie and reached me here. We found at Mussoorie that contradictory reports were being received from Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur. I hope however that everything passed off satisfactorily.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-27/1929 (Pt. I), pp 91-93, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

40. To Ramlal B. Bajpai[1]

7.5.1929

Dear Sir,

... Regarding American imperialism, I am afraid our viewpoints are not identical. The question is a large one and hardly capable of discussion or solution in a letter. In various ways the matter has been discussed and will be discussed in the National Congress and the All India Congress Committee. What the decision will be at any particular moment nobody can say. It is one of the vital questions before the world today.

One thing is quite clear. That under certain conceivable circumstances we may certainly seek the cooperation even of imperialist powers as against British imperialism.

Regarding Johnston, perhaps you are not aware of the fact that he came to us as a delegate of the League against Imperialism with which the Congress is associated. He did not represent America as a whole or even any particular group in America. I do not know what you would have us do to the fraternal delegates from the associate bodies that come to us. If through sheer fear of America we are to give up our *friends and consort only with those people whom America approves* of then American friendship is a bit too expensive.

As a matter of fact so far as American imperialism is concerned it is too far away from us to touch our daily life or to excite anything except a distant interest. Therefore there is no obvious conflict between our national movement and the American Government.

You will no doubt realise that the Indian National Congress is a mass movement which is ultimately controlled not by a few individuals, even though those individuals may include a man like Gandhi, but by the opinion of the rank and file. It is not possible to work on mass lines with a hush hush policy. I happen to be the Secretary of the Congress today. Very probably somebody else will be Secretary a few months later. The Congress may then be a much more revolutionary body or a much more conservative body. It may be completely in the hands of Indian capitalists, or Indian labour may capture it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Maharashtra Government Records, Bombay Commissioner's File No. 1291/B/I. Extracts.

CONGRESS BRANCHES ABROAD

39. To Ramlal B. Bajpai[1]

March 19th, 1929

Dear Sir,

Pt. Motilal Nehru has asked me to reply to your letter dated the 5th February.[2] Your cable to the effect that you propose to open a legation next month has also been received. The question you raise is a very important one and involves a new departure for the Congress. So far as I am concerned I may inform you that I am entirely agreeable to the Congress opening such legations in foreign countries. I am not sure however how far the idea will be approved of by the Working Committee of the Congress The matter, involving as it does a new departure, must be considered by the Working Committee. I propose to place it before them at their next meeting. I am not sure whether even the Working Committee will be prepared to take any definite action without referring the matter to the All India Congress Committee.

It seems to me however that you require no special authority from the Congress here to represent it in America. As office-bearers of the branch of the Indian National Congress in America your president and secretary naturally speak with some authority. So far as the resolutions of the Congress are concerned they speak with full authority. So far as any new question is concerned they can only speak subject to confirmation by the Congress.

You will no doubt realise that it is not very easy for the Congress executive here to authorise any one to bind it down to any course of action without any reference to it. I do not see that any such contingency is likely to arise in the future.

I shall communicate to you the decision of the Working Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C C. File No A 3/1929-31, p 293, N M M L.
2. Bajpai had written that he intended to set up a Congress Legation in Washington.

42. To Sailendranath Ghose[1]

August 23rd, 1929

Dear Mr. Ghose,

... I have read with great surprise that you do not keep any lists of members for fear that your members may get into trouble. In other words your branch has to exist more or less in secret. Indeed it is so secret that even its headquarters cannot know much about it. From the point of view of the National Congress this is an extraordinary state of affairs. The very basis of our work has been our public character. I do not suppose that there is more police surveillance and harassing of Indians in any country than there is in India. Every day news comes to us that our colleagues have been arrested and sentenced to monstrous sentences. Yet no activity of the Congress has gone underground. If we break the law we do so quite openly. In regard to our membership our lists are completely open in spite of the fact that for large numbers of people membership of the Congress means harassment from the police. It is an arguable matter as to what is the right policy for the Congress to adopt. But there can be no doubt that its present policy is in favour of public activity and full publicity. If the Congress and its headquarters lay stress on this it can hardly admit the right of a branch committee to a different form of activity.

I would also remind you of the statement made by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu to the effect that you have only a handful of members and are not representative of the Indian residents of America. Obviously, under the circumstances it is up to you to send lists of your members so that the Working Committee can decide on the truth of this allegation. I am quite sure that the committee will disapprove entirely of your having a branch without any lists of members.

Regarding the question of association with the League against Imperialism I would point out to you that the All India Committee definitely associated the Congress with the League in 1927 and the Madras Congress of 1927 reiterated this association. So the position of the Congress is quite clear. At the same time the Congress is in no way bound to every resolution or programme of the League against Imperialism. The Congress wants to fight imperialism and because it felt that

1. A.I.C.C. File No. A 3/1929-31, pp. 235-239, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

41. To Sailendranath Ghose[1]

June 20th, 1929

Dear Sir,

... I have received a copy of a letter dated May 15th sent by you to the League against Imperialism, Berlin. I have read this letter with some surprise. You are undoubtedly entitled to hold any views that you like. But as a branch of the Indian National Congress you cannot go behind the declared policy of the Congress. You can try to change this policy within the Congress itself. But outside, no subordinate committee can range itself against the parent body. The National Congress as you are aware has determined to associate itself with the League against Imperialism and it has also sent an official delegate to the Second Congress of the League.[2] The Congress does not thereby commit itself to the whole policy or programme of the League but the Congress does range itself with the League in its joint fight against imperialism. That policy may be right or may be wrong but it is the policy of the Indian National Congress so far and it is not open to any of its subordinate committees to challenge it except by the ordinary constitutional means of moving for a change in the policy or programme at a session of the Congress. In your letter you state as follows:

"Somebody has got to take the initiative in challenging this programme of the Indian National Congress and we do so now by this open action".

It is evident that you do not realise what the functions and duties of a branch of the Congress are. Your branch has a perfect right to challenge the programme of the Congress but the inevitable result of such a challenge is the supersession of your branch. In this connection I should like to draw your attention to a resolution passed recently by the A.I.C.C. in Bombay.[3] You will find it printed in the ninth number of the *Congress Bulletin*, pages 93, 94 and 95. This lays down that any committee of the Congress which deliberately acts against the declared policy of the Congress may be superseded.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. A-3/1929-31, p. 257, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. The Congress was held at Frankfurt on 20 July 1929.
3. It met during 23-26 May 1929.

to get it on the right path. But it is not clear to me how an affiliated or subordinate branch can work independently or contrary to the parent body.

I am glad to learn that you have a distinguished membership. But I have yet failed to appreciate why your membership rolls should be secret. Our activity here and elsewhere is definitely open activity and the Working Committee views with great disfavour this new principle of secret membership rolls which you seem to have introduced for the first time in Congress history...

The Working Committee want specially to be assured that their affiliated branches are really representative of the Indians resident abroad. Unfortunately in many places abroad our countrymen cannot cooperate with each other and factions arise. The committee would not like an affiliated branch to be dominated by such factions. We know quite as well as you do that the British have their secret service agents everywhere to create trouble. Our experience has been that the only possible way to deal with them is to have open activities. Nothing encourages a secret agent more than secret activity...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

44. To Ramlal B. Bajpai[1]

Nov. 21st, 1929

Dear Bajpai,
I have your letters of the 23rd October. I have also received a letter of the same date from Sailendra Nath Ghose. Also a letter from the Hindustan Association of America.

I was considerably surprised to read the newspaper cuttings that you sent me and for which I presume you are responsible. To refer to Gandhiji as having gone out of public life shows a singular ignorance of conditions in India. Quite apart from one's views on matters of principle or policy no one in India can deny that Gandhiji is the most powerful individual factor in politics here today. Far from retiring he is in the thick of everything. There are many other statements in the

1. AICC File No A 3/1929-31, p 145, NAIML.

the League against Imperialism is carrying on the same fight vigorously, it joined hands with it to that extent and no more.

I do not suppose it will serve any useful purpose for me to argue about the merits and demerits of the League or an anti-imperialist programme for the Congress. Presumably we would not be able to convince one another. I only desire to point out to you the present position of the National Congress.

You are quite correct in saying that the Congress has not issued any instructions regarding the functions and duties of foreign branches. As a matter of fact they have treated them as any other branches or committees in India The fact that a branch is situated in a foreign country does not in their eyes give it any different position although its activity undoubtedly might be somewhat different. Obviously the work of the American branch is to further the interests of India in the United States but there are many ways of attempting to do the same thing. Who is to decide on the method? In matters of policy only the Congress, the A.I.C.C. or the Working Committee of the Congress can decide.

In regard to the declaration of policy which you want to be moved in the Lahore session of the National Congress I shall gladly have it included in the agenda of the Subjects Committee. But some member who is present must be found to move it before it can be considered. Will you therefore kindly get into touch with someone who is prepared to move in the committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

43. To Ramlal B. Bajpai[1]

31.10.29

Dear Bajpai,

... I am afraid there is a divergence in outlook and methods between yours and those favoured by the Congress authorities here. It is not so much a question of merits as to which is better or more effective. If the Congress is wrong or misguided in its activities it is up to us

1. A.I.C.C. File No. A-3/1929-31, pp 193-196, N.M.M.L. Extracts

to get it on the right path. But it is not clear to me how an affiliated or subordinate branch can work independently or contrary to the parent body.

I am glad to learn that you have a distinguished membership. But I have yet failed to appreciate why your membership rolls should be secret. Our activity here and elsewhere is definitely open activity and the Working Committee views with great disfavour this new principle of secret membership rolls which you seem to have introduced for the first time in Congress history...

The Working Committee want specially to be assured that their affiliated branches are really representative of the Indians resident abroad. Unfortunately in many places abroad our countrymen cannot cooperate with each other and factions arise. The committee would not like an affiliated branch to be dominated by such factions. We know quite as well as you do that the British have their secret service agents everywhere to create trouble. Our experience has been that the only possible way to deal with them is to have open activities. Nothing encourages a secret agent more than secret activity...

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I was considerably surprised to read the newspaper cuttings that you sent me and for which I presume you are responsible. To refer to Gandhiji as having gone out of public life shows a singular ignorance of conditions in India. Quite apart from one's views on matters of principle or policy no one in India can deny that Gandhiji is the most powerful individual factor in politics here today. Far from retiring he is in the thick of everything. There are many other statements in the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. A-3/1929 31, p. 145, N.M.M.L.

article which are quite incorrect. I wish that anything going out from a foreign branch of the National Congress should be absolutely correct. This is not so in so far as these articles are concerned. You are also no doubt aware that Gandhiji is at the present moment an important member of the Working Committee of the National Congress, that is to say, he is a member of the inner cabinet. How anyone can refer to him as having retired from politics is a little difficult to understand. Nor do I appreciate attempts being made by Congress branches to run down members of the Congress executive. Many of us happen to differ from Gandhiji in many matters but this does not mean that we should try to run him down.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

HINDUSTANI SEVA DAL

45. To N.S. Hardikar[1]

January 25th, 1929

My dear Hardikar,

... Regarding my issuing an appeal for funds the right thing would be for a joint appeal to be issued, signed by Subhas and me, and if possible, some others like Dr. Ansari. Individual appeals are not very desirable. I *hope to see Subhas in Delhi. We shall then discuss and draw up* such an appeal...

About the press appeal to observe a flag hoisting on the 27th I am afraid it is already too late for me to take any action. I must confess, besides, to a strong dislike of issuing manifestos and press appeals. I do not even like to be interviewed by the press. You see that I am not sufficiently modern for your purpose. But manifesto issuing is becoming so common in this country that I want to be a little uncommon. Besides in what capacity would you expect me to issue such a message? Subhas is the right person to do so...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C File No G-8/1929 (Pt II), p. 293, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

46. An Appeal for the Hindustani Seva Dal[1]

25.1.1929

Slowly but surely the Hindustani Seva Dal is justifying its existence and training up a fine body of young men and young women for the service of the country. The work of the Dal is quiet work. It is not the business of the volunteer to shout or advertise his or her existence. And it is not the business of the Dal to advertise itself. But in this imperfect world money is required for most activities and even the Hindustani Seva Dal requires money for its work. Owing to lack of funds its work is necessarily limited. The larger the funds the greater the work. The Congress is moving to a fateful decision next year. We have to prepare for it with all our might so that when the call comes we may be ready for it. The Seva Dal offers its whole-hearted services for this work of preparation as well as for the day of action. Those who cannot join it in person and take the training can supply money for our work. I trust therefore that all who believe in training disciplined workers and in increasing the efficiency of our people will help the Hindustani Seva Dal with donations.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. An enclosure to a second letter to N S Hardikar, 25 January 1929, Hardikar papers, N M M L.
Jawaharlal wrote· "Since writing to you this morning I have changed my mind and have issued a small message to the press about the observance of next Sunday I am enclosing an appeal for funds..."

47. To N.S. Hardikar[1]

February 11th, 1929

My dear Hardikar,
Your letter of the 5th February. I am not surprised at Subhas Bose's not answering your letters. He seldom does so. I have written to him

1. A I C C. File No G-8/1929 (Pt. II), p 245, N M M.L.

at least five or six times in the course of the last month and I have had no reply.

Regarding funds I am afraid I cannot help you greatly. It is not possible for one and the same person to make appeals at the same time for a variety of objects. I have naturally to appeal for the Congress. I am also very much interested in collections for trade unions. Then there is our Independence League. I am also asked to help in Lajpat Rai Memorial Fund collections. All I can do is to put in a good word now and then for you. But I cannot write personal letters to people and specially not to "leaders".

I have mentioned a few important funds above but as a matter of fact I am very worried about some other matters which require money also. Friends in Berlin write to me that they are in a very bad way and must be helped soon. I have to make some collection for them also.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

48. The National Flag[1]

The national flag is the symbol of unity and independence. It is the honour of the nation and not a symbol of oppression over others. The flag in one's own country is a mark of honour but when it is waved over other countries it becomes a symbol of oppression and tyranny. People of other countries have sacrificed their lives for upholding their national flag. Indians should also hold their flag aloft and win freedom.

1. Speech at Rohtak, 8 March 1929. From *The Tribune*, 10 March 1929

49. On the Hindustani Seva Dal[1]

In an imperfect and suffering world there are a host of righteous causes deserving support. They are all worthy enough. But today in India there is one supreme cause — the cause of freedom — to which all others must necessarily give precedence. Gradually but surely the mighty giantess that is India is again stretching her limbs and preparing to shake off the invader and the usurper. How shall we, her sons and daughters, help her so that she may be free again?

How many of us remember and realise the significance of the 31st of December that is coming?[2] And yet that may well be a date which will end an epoch, giving place to another with a larger vision, a new ideology and more effective methods of action.

How do we prepare for this day and its aftermath? Surely the best way is to have as many trained and disciplined soldiers of freedom as possible. For freedom will be won not by the shouting crowds but by the disciplined and efficient workers who shout little and do much.

The Hindustani Seva Dal is performing this task of training and disciplining these soldiers of India. Join it yourself if you have the fire of youth in you and be proud of belonging to the army of Indian freedom. But if for any reason you are unable to do so or if age has lessened your activity and your blood does not tingle and course through your veins as it used to do, nonetheless help the Dal with money. Men and money are wanted for our national army. Give us both if you can or at least one of these. Many cannot immediately spare the time for the training. They can become associates of the Dal. And everybody can contribute something to the funds of the Dal.

The 31st of December is coming. What have you done so far? What will you do? Get ready for it through the Hindustani Seva Dal.

For Punjab

To the young men and to the young women of the Punjab I would specially appeal to join the Hindustani Seva Dal and to help it in every way. They have to shoulder the burden of the Congress this year and

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 27 June 1929. *The Tribune*, 30 June 1929.
2. As the one year's notice to the government to concede the demand for Dominion Status was being ignored, it was becoming obvious that at the Lahore session on 31 December 1929 the Congress would decide on action.

they will have to shoulder a heavier burden before very long. Let them prepare for it by training themselves under the banner of the Seva Dal and becoming efficient instruments for giving effect to the national resolve.

50. Message to the Seva Dal Camp at Nawakot[1]

I am glad to learn that a volunteer camp has been started to train volunteer instructors for the coming session of the Congress. I hope that all members of the camp realise the work that they have to do. It is not merely to do social work at the time of the Congress. They have to show their powers regarding organisation and discipline on a large scale. It is, therefore, necessary that they should train themselves thoroughly, to be ready for all emergencies. Nothing is more impressive to the outsider and more heartening to us than a fine disciplined body of volunteers.

It is one of the purposes of the camp to lay the foundation for a volunteer army in the Punjab. Your responsibility is great. I trust that you will discharge it efficiently.

I trust also that you will not permit this training to disappear after a few months. We are out to build up a permanent volunteer organisation in the country. The Hindustani Seva Dal is the premier organisation for this purpose. I hope, therefore, that as many volunteers as possible will join the Hindustani Seva Dal and start branches of it in their respective localities.

1. Lahore, 18 September 1929. *The Tribune*, 20 September 1929.

BRITISH GOODS BOYCOTT COMMITTEE

51. On the Duties of the Kisans[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru said that the problem before them was how to remove their sufferings and troubles due to disease and ignorance The big landlords owned enormous wealth and property and spent their time more or less in idleness, while the poor peasants suffered untold miseries. He asked the peasants to read and write and keep themselves informed of what was happening in India and how crores of rupees out of the taxes paid by them were wasted on new and costly buildings in New Delhi and the exorbitant salaries of officers. Although they paid taxes, very little was spent on their own education, sanitation and the betterment of their lives. He asked the peasants to assert their rights. The exploitation of India would not cease unless the peasants and workers organised themselves. If they could put up a fight on their grievances like the peasants of Bardoli, they were bound to improve their conditions of life and save themselves from ruin and starvation. The peasants of Rohtak had provided lakhs of recruits in the last war. They had sacrificed their lives in order to protect the independence of England. But what was their reward? Martial law was declared in their province and people were shot down in hundreds. They were bombed by aeroplanes and all sorts of indignities were inflicted on them. They should not take part in any future war if it was declared against the wishes of the people of India. Peasants should take to the *charkha* and wear *khaddar*. The spinning wheel would solve the economic problem of this country to a very great extent. At least it would help them to promote the boycott movement against foreign cloth.

1. *Speech at Rohtak, 9 March 1929. The Tribune, 12 March 1929.*

52. On Khadi[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru explained why they urged the use of khadi only and not of *swadeshi* mill cloth. There was no doubt that foreign cloth could be driven out by the use of *swadeshi* mill cloth but there were circumstances which forced the Congress to insist only on the use of khadi. The attitude of the *swadeshi* mill owners was mainly responsible for their insisting on the use of khadi only and not of mill cloth.

The mill owners not only failed to cooperate with the leaders in the foreign cloth boycott movement but showed a tendency to compete not with foreign cloth but with khaddar. They began to manufacture cloth similar to khaddar with the result that it became difficult to distinguish between hand spun khaddar and mill khaddar.

Accordingly, there was a discussion on the subject a year ago and a suggestion was made to form a committee of *swadeshi* mill owners and others to persuade the mill owners to manufacture fine cloth to compete with foreign cloth and not to make undue profit. Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Motilal Nehru, therefore, went to Bombay to discuss the problem with the mill owners, but the latter practically refused to see them and left for Poona.

The result, therefore, of urging the use of *swadeshi* mill cloth and not of khadi would be to enrich a handful of Indian mill owners only, though the wealth would not be drained out of the country. They, therefore, could not recommend the use of *swadeshi* mill cloth and were obliged to insist on khadi only.

One object of khadi propaganda was to force the *swadeshi* mill owners to cooperate with them in the driving out of foreign cloth from the Indian market by manufacturing fine cloth without making enormous profits. When the mill owners realised that only khadi was getting popular and the *swadeshi* mill cloth too was being discarded they would be forced to effect a compromise and insist on the boycott of foreign cloth.

The main reason, however, for fixing that day for preaching the boycott of foreign cloth and the use of khadi was to bring pressure on the British administration to compel them to yield to their demand, for this movement was a very effective weapon.

1. Speech at Allahabad, 21 March 1929. *The Tribune*, 24 March 1929.

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1. Speech at Rohtak, 9 March 1929. *The Tribune*, 12 March 1929.

54. To Secretaries, Punjab and Delhi P.C.Cs.[1]

March 23rd, 1929

Dear Sir,
I enclose a copy of the letter I am sending to Mr. Jairamdas Doulatram, secretary, Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee. The letter will put you in possession of the facts. The boycott movement naturally depends on a joint effort all over India. It is essential therefore that Delhi and Amritsar should be in the forefront of the boycott movement. Will you kindly take all steps to bring this about?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C C. File No. G 34/1929 (Pt II), p. 307, N.M M L.

55. To Jairamdas Doulatram[1]

March 23rd, 1929

My dear Jairamdas,
The demand for khadi is increasing so rapidly that we are hard put to meet it. I have my work cut out in answering complaints of people who cannot get what they want. Our khadi *bhandars* have got little stocks left and our production centres cannot supply the demand. This is having a very bad effect. We are trying to do our best but production cannot be increased to any large extent without additional capital being put in and we have no fresh capital. I suppose that we shall get some capital when Gandhiji tours here in June.[2] But it would be wasting a golden opportunity if we have to wait till then for increasing our production. I have written to the A.I.S.A. to give us a loan of at least

1. A I C C File No G-34/1929 (Pt II), p. 305, N M M L.
2. In June 1929, Mahatma Gandhi went to Bareilly, Almora and Naini Tal as a prelude to a more extensive tour of the U P from September to November.

53. To Jairamdas Doulatram[1]

March 23rd, 1929

My dear Jairamdas,[2]
Your circular letter dated 18th March. You did not enclose with it the pledges you mention.[3] Hence I am unable to give you any opinion in regard to them.

But generally I might say that I dislike pledges and feel that they do not help us much. A few conscientious people observe them, others break them whenever they feel like it and the measure of their fall is all the greater because of the pledge they took. Therefore, personally I am not keen on any pledge. Then there is the difficulty pointed out by you that a pure khadi pledge may not be taken up by numbers of people whilst an alternative pledge will necessarily weaken the khadi pledge.

For the moment I would suggest that we might not enter into this question What is the good of our asking people to take pledges when we are unable to supply them with khadi? Let us concentrate on producing khadi and inducing people to buy it...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C C. File No. G-34/1929 (Pt. II), p. 295, N.M M L. Extracts.
2. (b. 1892); leading Congressman of Sind, member, Bombay Legislative Council, 1926 1929, secretary, All India Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee, 1929, member of A I.C.C, 1917-1941, of the Working Committee, 1928 1941, and General Secretary of the Congress, 1931-1934; participated in the noncooperation movement and was imprisoned several times; Governor of Bihar, 1947, Minister, Government of India, 1948-1950, Governor of Assam, 1950 1956; member, Rajya Sabha
3. The suggestion was that Congress volunteers should take pledges from the people for the boycott of foreign cloth.

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2. In June 1929, Mahatma Gandhi went to Bareilly, Almora and Naini Tal as a prelude to a more extensive tour of the U P from September to November.

Rs. 12,000. As a matter of fact, I think that we ought to take our courage in both hands and push the boycott by increasing our production and sale depots right and left. There may be some risk involved in it from the business point of view but the risk is well worth taking from the political and economic point of view. Every considerable town writes to me asking for a *bhandar*. What am I to do?

So much about the U.P. I am writing to you however not because I want any particular help from you for the U.P. but because similar conditions are probably arising in other parts of the country and I should like you and your committee to consider them and make some provision for them.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

56. To Jairamdas Doulatram[1]

March 23rd, 1929

My dear Jairamdas,

I have recently visited Cawnpore and interviewed some of the cloth dealers there. I find that the situation there is hopeful. Big orders for foreign cloth are usually sent in February and March and in July. During this spring barely 10% were, I am told, sent. The cloth importers were not sure of the future and did not like to take the risk of sending big orders Of course their reluctance to place these orders was not however largely due to patriotism and the like. They are now waiting and watching. If the boycott movement develops they will adhere to it. If, on the other hand, they see other big centres importing cloth as usual, they will follow suit. They told me their experience of the last boycott movement in 1921 was very unfortunate. Whilst they adhered to the boycott, other centres did not, with the result that a good deal of business was permanently transferred to Calcutta and Delhi, specially Delhi. They are very much afraid that the same thing might happen again. On the last occasion they paid fines amounting to about Rs. 12000 for importing some foreign cloth after they had taken a pledge not to do so.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-34/1929 (Pt. II), pp. 301-303, N.M.M.L.

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They insist therefore that the same treatment should be accorded to them as to other importers elsewhere. Further that they should not be made to suffer unless the same amount of pressure is brought to bear on Delhi and Calcutta and Amritsar. From this you will no doubt gather that they are a little apprehensive of our strength in Cawnpore.

I assured them, of course, that we did not desire to do them any injury. Our object was entirely to boycott foreign cloth. Obviously this could not be gained by boycotting it at Cawnpore alone.

In Cawnpore they have got a regular committee of their own called the Kapra Committee and it is easy to deal with them in a body. I do not know if any such committees exist elsewhere. I would suggest that an attempt be made to have such committees of shopkeepers dealing in foreign cloth to further the boycott. This sub-committee would consist of only a few persons who are favourable to us. But their influence in an organised way would be great and we would be able to tell people in other places that even the importers themselves are helping us. This was the suggestion of the Cawnpore people.

They further suggested that it should be made perfectly clear what their position was going to be, and till when they could continue dealing in foreign cloth. I told them that after the Working Committee resolution requesting them not to give further orders they were supposed not to get any more foreign cloth. If they do so in spite of our warning they do so at their peril. As regards previous stocks we would permit them to dispose them off, i.e. in the sense that we would not picket them but we would lay stress, of course, on khadi. To prevent fraud they said it would be desirable to find out what stocks of foreign cloth were possessed by the importers or the retailers. This could easily be done in Cawnpore with the help of the trade people themselves. A layman would find great difficulty in doing it. If any sub-committees of the kind I have mentioned above are formed they might be entrusted with this work.

I would specially like you to induce people in Delhi to take some action of this kind. Cawnpore is specially afraid of Delhi. As a matter of fact nearly 75% of Cawnpore business is in *swadeshi* cloth. Delhi on the other hand has about 75% foreign business. Amritsar also is very largely foreign.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Delhi and Punjab Provincial Congress committees.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

57. To Jairamdas Doulatram[1]

April 8th, 1929

My dear Jairamdas,
Your letter dated 4th April. Our Congress organisation is much too elephantine to move easily. The only thing to be done is to peg away at them. I am writing to the provincial committees as suggested by you. The difficulty of most provinces is that their districts do not send them proper reports. What is the provincial office to do when it does not get information from others? However I shall try my best.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 A I C.C File No G-34/1929 (Pt. II), p. 283, N.M.M L.

58. To P.C.Cs[1]

April 8th, 1929

Dear Sir,
The secretary of the Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee complains that he is not receiving much cooperation from the provincial Congress committees. Only five committees, namely, Behar, Bengal, Delhi, Gujarat and Kerala have so far sent reports of boycott work. Of the other committees, eight, namely Andhra, Assam, Burma, Berar, C.P. Hindustani, Sind, Tamil Nad and N.W.F.P. have not even taken the trouble to send formal acknowledgements to letters from the Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee. You will no doubt appreciate that it is impossible for any committee or individual to work effectively unless he receives the cooperation of others. A nation-wide boycott, in particular, depends on the closest cooperation. It was with this object in view that the Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee was started and special care was taken in appointing as its secretary an efficient and enthusiastic organiser like Mr. Jairamdas Doulatram. Mr. Jairamdas has given up most of his other activities for this work. I trust that your committee will give him every facility in his work and, in particular, will send him frequent progress reports.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-34/1929 (Pt. II), p. 281, N.M.M L.

INSPECTION OF CONGRESS OFFICES

59. To Secretary, Punjab P.C.C.[1]

March 13th, 1929

Dear Sir,

With reference to the inquiries I made from you at Rohtak regarding the working of your provincial Congress committee, I have to make the following observations.

It is clear that the Congress organisation in your province is at a low ebb as only 10 districts out of 30 have committees and even these 10 districts have the barest minimum of members. If you desire the Congress to be a really effective organisation in your province it is essential that almost every district should have a proper committee and there should be a large membership. I was informed by you that the number of Congress members was about 1000 in the whole of the province but that no accurate figures were available from the districts. The figure 1000 is a very small one for a big province.

Even that, as you say, is a rough estimate.

It seems to me that you should take effective steps to lay down that no district committee should be affiliated to the P.C.C. until it can show a fair number of members, the very lowest number being 250. A rule to this effect has recently been made by the U.P.P.C.C. The minimum they have fixed, I believe, is 320 for a district. If such a rule is made two or three months' time should be given to each district to enrol the necessary members. After that, if the district has not fulfilled your conditions it should not have the right to be represented in the provincial Congress committee or to send delegates to the Congress or provincial conference. Of couse, as soon as it fulfils the conditions it will recover its rights.

[1] AICC File No P 28(1)/1929, pp 107-109, N.M.M.L.
In March 1929 Jawaharlal inspected a number of Congress offices in the U P and other provinces and made detailed recommendations Some letters and one set of notes have been included here as specimens of his method of work

As you are having the Congress this year, there is likely to be a great competition in getting elected as delegates to the Congress. If it is known that only such committees as have a decent membership can send delegates, there will be incentive to form committees with a larger membership. Your task therefore should not be difficult.

I have no doubt that in any district where one or two earnest workers try hard enough Congress members can be made in sufficient numbers. Ordinarily no one tries himself but casts the blame on the apathy of others just as few people subscribe themselves to Congress funds but complain of others not subscribing. We do not deceive anybody by a paper show. It is better to disaffiliate the district and say so than keep it on as an affiliated body without any membership.

I suggest therefore that you should amend your rules in the manner hinted at above.

Further, it seems to me that your rules for the election of delegates for the Congress are most unsatisfactory. There is bound to be friction and trouble if a large number of people desire to get elected. As this competition is going to take place this year you should change your rules now so as to provide for it. You may, in this connection, get into touch with other provincial Congress committees and get their rules for comparison.

Your primary committee or unit is the district committee. A district seems to be too wide an expanse for a primary committee. Probably a tahsil or taluqa would be better. But this is for you to decide. At the present moment, if you had a large Congress membership your district committee would become a terribly unwieldy body.

I gather that you have no permanent rule for the filling of interim vacancies in the list of Congress delegates. Ordinarily the President and the General Secretary are authorised to fill the vacancies. This is not desirable. I do not know if it is necessary for you to have any rule now in view of the recent change of the constitution but to provide for contingencies you might have a rule to the effect that your executive committee or council of the P.C.C. or a special committee appointed in this behalf be authorised to fill such vacancies. It should be made clear, however, that vacancies only arise in case of death or resignation in writing.

I would recommend to you to form a small Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee to cooperate with the Central Boycott Committee.

You are at present very busy with arrangements for the next Congress and specially with the enrolment of members for the reception committee. This of course has to be done. But I would like to impress upon you that even more important is the strengthening of the

Congress organisation by enrolling Congress members, forming committees and enrolling volunteers. If the Congress organisation is a strong one it is obvious that the annual session of the Congress must be a success.

I have already written to you previously on the desirability of all ranks of Congressmen cooperating both in strengthening the Congress organisation and to make the next Congress a success. Your committee must be aware that the political situation is developing very rapidly. It will be unwise for us and very shortsighted policy to keep out people who can be of help at this juncture. This does not mean that a few individuals who are kept out necessarily make much difference. But by the adoption of such a procedure an atmosphere of friction is created and this is certainly prejudicial to good work.

You will, I trust, keep me fully informed of the activities of your provisional reception committee. I am specially waiting to hear from you your decision regarding the tent agreement with A. N. Mukerjee.[2]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 A tent maker of Calcutta

50. U.P.P.C.C.—Notes of Inspection[1]

15/3/29

Office in a room of the Kashi Vidyapitha—no rent—room good but room is shared with Vidyapitha—morning lectures 11.30 to 5.30—office hours of P.C.C. Previously in Dec. 1928 and before, separate office building. This was left to save rent.

46 districts.

Unit or primary committee—tahsil committee—also circle, town and village committees.

Town committees of Allahabad, Lucknow, Bareilly, Cawnpore, Agra and Benares have status of tahsil committee.

1 AICC File No P 25(i)/1929, pp 79-82, NMML

35 D.C.Cs have sent representatives to P.C.C.
11 „ have not so far sent reps. to P.C.C.

Some of these 11 have people who call themselves Secys D.C.Cs & correspond with P.C.C. but there cannot obviously be any proper Congress organisation there.

Of the 35 it is by no means clear that all have got proper D.C.Cs. In many places all tahsil committees not formed. No proper figures of this available.

Total No. of P.C.C. members under rules: 171 including 9 *ex-officio* (ex-presidents) and 162 elected.

Present strength	Elected	136
	Ex-officio	9
		145

CONGRESS MEMBERSHIP

No figures available either for 1928 or 1929. No report from D.C.Cs.
Recom. send forms for reports to D.C.Cs.
No special time for enrolling members.

VOLUNTEERS

H.S. Dal board for province.
Demand for organisers and trainers.
No figures available of trained volunteers.
Rs 50 a month given to H. S. Dal.

CIRCULARS

Now being issued regularly to C.C.Cs and T.C.Cs; sometimes in print.
Our questionnaire not answered yet.
P C C. meetings last year 1927-28 5
Council meeting in 1927-28 7
Travelling allowance paid only to Council members—3rd class.

ELECTION DISPUTES

Mirzapur D C C.
Etawah D.C.C.

INTERIM VACANCIES

New rule to be filled by council or special committees—vacancy only in case of death or resignation in writing.
Rolls being revised.

Muttra newly added.
Recom. Muttra to be informed of U.P. unit etc.

P.C.C. PAID STAFF

Assistant Sec	60/- just arrived Mr. Dandekar
Clerk	40/-
Clerk	15/-
Part time worker	15/-
Peon	15/-
	145/-

New budget includes organisers, printing, travelling etc. Proposal to inspect all D C Cs.
So far inspected: Rae Bareli, Ghazipur also probably: Etah, Muttra.
No propoganda leaflets issued yet, might be done.
Recom. filing and proper organisation.

ACCOUNTS

2 years' muddle—sub-committees etc. trying to clear it up. With S.P.G.
At present practically no money left.
Paid 300/- to A.I.C.C.
No debts—all paid off.
Special Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee.
Inspectors.
Magic lantern slides.

J. N.

61. To Secretary, U.P.P.C.C.[1]

March 23rd, 1929

Dear Sir,
I enclose my notes of inspect'on of the Benares District Congress Committee. I regret the great delay in sending them. I inspected the D.C.C. on the 15th of March. I also inspected the town Congress committee books.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-28(i)/1929, pp. 70-72, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

I did not find any special irregularities in the offices, but I must confess that I had a feeling that not sufficient work was done. The Benares District Congress Committee reminded me of a prim and proper maiden lady of advanced years, irreproachable but with little life. I think it would be a gain for the committee if it gave up this maidenly attitude and developed a little more vigour...

62. To Jairamdas Doulatram[1]

Moving train
April 30th, 1929

My dear Jairamdas,
I have written to the secretary, Maharashtra P.C.C. about your going to Poona to inspect their office. Please therefore write to them yourself and fix up some time for your visit.

It is not necessary to make any detailed suggestions about the inspection. As I told you the idea was to have a good notion of the present state of the Congress organisation so that we might, where possible, try to remedy the existing defects. You will therefore kindly make such recommendations for future work as you may think desirable.

During the inspection the following points may be kept in mind:

1. What is the primary committee to which all four anna members belong?
2. How many such primary committees are functioning in the province?
3. Have all districts got committees and do they function?
4. Are all districts fully represented in the P.C.C. according to the P.C.C. rules?
5. What is the full membership of the P.C.C.? What is the present membership?
6. Are there any election disputes in the P.C.C. or in any of the D.C.Cs? If so, what steps are being taken to settle them?
7. Do the D.C.Cs send regular reports of their activities and specially of their membership figures, to the P.C.Cs? It is desirable that the P.C.C. should send printed forms for such monthly reports.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-29/1929, pp. 37-40, N.M.M.L.

8. Does the P.C.C. take any steps to inspect the D.C.Cs and verify the figures supplied to them. It is very necessary that this should be done. Are there any inspectors for this purpose?
9. What are the membership figures for the province as a whole and for the individual districts? Last year's figures should be given as well as this year's.
10. Is there a branch of the Hindustani Seva Dal? If so, how many members and associates has it got?
11. Are there any other volunteers for any special purpose, e.g., boycott of foreign cloth, demonstrations etc.
12. Has the P.C.C. got a proper office and are office hours kept? Have any of the D.C.Cs got proper offices (or) are they usually housed in a corner of the secretary's house?
13. What is the office staff of the P.C.C. (clerks, menials, etc.)? What are they paid?
14. Are there any other paid workers in the province or districts?
15. When circulars are received by the P.C.C. from the A.I.C.C. office or the office of the F.C.B.C., are they immediately sent on to the districts?
16. How often does the P.C.C. meet every year? And the council or executive committee?
17. Does the P.C.C. keep a register of all Congress four-anna members or do only the D.C.Cs or the primary committee, whatever they may be, keep them?
18. Does the P.C.C. keep the usual registers, account books, etc., which an up to date office should keep? Has it got a stock register?
19. Are the accounts of the P.C.C. audited annually or six monthly? If so, does a qualified auditor do the work or a layman? It is desirable that only certified auditors be asked to do this work.
20. Are the accounts of the D.C.Cs audited?
21. Does the P.C.C. prepare a balance sheet in addition to a statement of income and expenditure? Does the D.C.C. do this? With out a balance sheet it is not possible to find out the exact position of the P.C.C. or other committees. It is desirable, therefore, that such balance sheets should be prepared.
22. Does the P.C.C. prepare a budget for the year? If so, a copy of the budget as well as the copies of the audited accounts should be taken.
23. Has the P.C.C. done anything special in furtherance of the programme for the boycott of foreign cloth? Have there been any bonfires in the province? Have the cloth dealers been approached? Is the campaign meeting with success?

24. Have the Sunday programmes been observed?
25. Are there any political prisoners in the province? If so their names and particulars of convictions.
26. Is there any special feeling against the co-called khaddar franchise? Is it considered a hindrance in the way of Congress organisation? If it is removed will this not affect adversely the movement of boycott of foreign cloth?
27. In the past there has been considerable friction between two groups of Congressmen in Maharashtra. Is there any such friction now or are the groups cooperating?
28. Generally, is the Congress on the up grade or not?

I have reproduced from memory most of the points of my questionnaire and have added to them. It is therefore not necessary for me to send you from Allahabad a copy of the questionnaire.

If it is at all possible for you to go to Gadag (Karnatak) I would be very grateful. It will just mean another step from Poona. If you can go please write to them direct. I am mentioning to them that perhaps you might be able to come.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

63. To Lala Shankarlal[1]

May 2nd, 1929

My dear Shankarlal,

Your letter of the 25th April. I do not know if this answer of mine is likely to reach you soon or not. Anyway I am writing to you in the hope that it might reach you.

I am sorry that anything that I wrote previously hurt you.[2] Such was obviously not my intention. But I must confess to you that I am myself very much pained by the extraordinary casual way in which Congress affairs are managed. It seems to be the general opinion that

1. A I C C. File No. P 29/1929, p 36, N M M L Extracts.
2. Jawaharlal had expressed his displeasure to Shankarlal for his failure to hand over the chequebook and the passbook to his successor, Prof. Indra.

everything connected with the Congress can be done in an unbusiness-like way. Certainly no business could have survived the want of method which the poor Congress has had to put up with. My own personal bent is all for method and thoroughness. The less I see of these in Congress offices the more I get put out. And in Delhi I saw very little of it...

...What is necessary for any organisation is strict business methods and they are sadly lacking in our Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

64. To Secretary, Bombay P.C.C.[1]

6/5/29

Dear Sir,

I am grateful to you for your courtesy on the occasion of my visit to your office for the purpose of inspection.

I must confess that I was a little disappointed with my visit. Bombay has, in the past, always played a leading role in our national activities and we have come to expect a high standard from your committee. Judged by that high standard your committee today does not come up to the mark. Your office carries on its usual activities in a methodical way and I have nothing to criticise in regard to it. But a dynamic movement, such as our Congress movement, has to do something more than routine work if it has to justify itself and achieve results. I trust therefore that your committee will endeavour to shake up the city of Bombay and make the Congress organisation there really representative of its life.

Although the Congress is not so pre-eminent in Bombay as it used to be, you know well that even today Bombay is full of activity. The labour movement is probably stronger there than anywhere else in India. The Bombay youth also lead the youth of India in the rapidly growing youth movement in our country. There seems to be no reason why the Congress only should lag behind in Bombay where there is such good material at hand.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-28(i)/1929, pp. 57-62, N.M.M.L.

You have also the great advantage of having a fine building and an assured income. All that is required is additional energy and I am sure this will not be lacking now that the country is faced again with a full-blooded repression on the part of the government.

Many provincial committees controlling vast areas have some difficulty in keeping in effective touch with their distant district committees. Bombay has no such difficulty to face. You can and should remain in constant and intimate touch with all your district committees. I was surprised and grieved to find that there is no such contact between you and your district committees.

I would strongly recommend that your committee should have a paid inspector or organiser whose chief function should be to visit the district committees frequently. If you have such an inspector it will not be necessary for you to wait till the D.C.Cs send you information on any subject. The inspector must himself see to it that the D.C.Cs keep up to the mark and should send you frequent reports from personal inspection of the number of Congress members, etc.

The number of your Congress members is very small. I think that you should aim at getting a minimum of 10000 during the next two or three months. These should be allotted to different D.C.Cs.

To facilitate the sending of regular reports you might issue printed forms for the purpose to your D.C.Cs. Reports should come at least once a month.

I appreciate your difficulty in enrolling volunteers but to have only 3 members of the Seva Dal and a board of 9 to look after them seems curious. In spite of the fact that there are other volunteer corps in the city it should not be difficult to have at least 100 or 50 trained members of the Dal. Even if this takes a little time you could start with enrolling associates of the Dal who need not be trained to begin with.

Besides the above, however, I would recommend that you enrol special volunteers for special activities, e.g., demonstrations, boycott of foreign cloth etc. These volunteers need not have the training required for a member of the Hindustani Seva Dal.

Your committee had no detailed information about the volunteers enrolled by D.C.Cs. I think you should have this information.

In regard to the enrolment of Congress members I found that there was no uniform system in Bombay and each D.C.C. was free to adopt its own system. I think you should have uniform procedure.

Thanking you again,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

65. To Secretary, U.P.P.C.C.[1]

13/7/29

Dear Sir,
I visited Kashipur on the 3rd July and Moradabad on the 4th, and inspected the papers of the district committees. I enclose my notes of inspection.

The Naini Tal district is working fairly well and can be made to work better. Moradabad is however in a bad way. There are two or three young men who have some enthusiasm. The older men seem to be all dried up and little need be expected of them.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-20/1929, p. 39, N.M.M.L.

66. Report on Hathras[1]

The visit to Hathras was a great disappointment. I had gone there on the express stipulation that I should get at least Rs. 1000. On arrival there I was coolly informed that the Congress committee did not consider it desirable to collect funds at the moment. I was helpless and I did not desire to sally forth on my own account. In Aligarh I had had an annoying experience which I did not wish to be repeated. One of the persons we went to for a donation was offensive in his behaviour and hinted at the *mala fides* of Congress people collecting funds. He was a vakil. Having given expression to his views on the subject he had to listen to about ten minutes of abuse from me. Later I understand he stated to some people that he would bring a libel action against me.

We had a very good public meeting at Hathras. Personally, I think I could have collected a few hundred rupees in Hathras if I had tried.

1. 22 July 1929. A.I.C.C. File No. P 20/1929, p 81, N.M.M.L.
This was submitted by Jawaharlal to the secretary, U.P.P.C.C.

4

THE CONGRESS PRESIDENTSHIP

1. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
9.7.29

My dear Bapuji,
I returned last evening. On my way back from Delhi I stopped for two days in Bareilly to keep my promise made when you were there. I visited a number of villages.

Could you kindly ask Pyarelal to let me know who will accompany you when you come here for the A.I.C.C. meeting? As desired by you we shall not have any public functions which usually take place during your tours. I should like to know however if you would mind attending a public meeting which we propose having on the 27th evening. The A.I.C.C. and W.C. are sure to take 2 days, so in any event you will be here till the evening of the 27th or return on the morning of the 28th. We should like to have a meeting or perhaps more than one meeting to be addressed by visitors. As there is always danger of rain we shall probably have our meetings in a hall, admission being regulated by tickets. The meetings will take place in any event. But of course if you could go there for a short time it would be a great advantage. Please ask Pyarelal to reply. You need not trouble.

Regarding the Congress presidentship, I think it would be better if you did not write or say anything in public for another month or so. There is no hurry. I am very nervous about the matter and do not like the idea at all. The situation in the country is changing and developing and another month might give us more data to go by.

Yours affy.,
Jawaharlal

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 15417.

2. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
13.7.29

My dear Bapuji,
I have your letter. About the presidentship, I wrote to you a few days ago and you must have got my letter soon after you wrote yours. My own personal inclination always is not to be shackled down to any office. I prefer to be free and to have time to act according to my own inclinations. But for years past I have been tied down to various offices and have had to give a great deal of my time to routine and other work to the exclusion of other matters to which I would have liked to attend to. On my return from Europe I had the fixed intention of spending a few months at least in some village areas, more or less cut off from outside activities. I wanted to try to organise them according to my own ideas but even more so I wanted to educate myself and try to get at the back of the mind of the villager. The Congress secretary duties and repeated and continuous calls for other work prevented me from doing this.

Somehow or other I cannot extricate myself from the tangle of activities I have got into It seems even more difficult to extricate myself now than it has been. Now that it is proposed to take a really serious step in the near future, it is all the more difficult to think of retirement for a while to a village.

So far as I am concerned the presidentship will thus be a burden to me. Most others also are likely to consider it a burden and a nuisance. You will not of course be deceived by various odd persons here and there expressing their confidence in me. It is very good fortune that I have won the goodwill of a number of people but with this goodwill there is also a lack of confidence. I represent nobody but myself. I have not the politician's flair for forming groups and parties. My one attempt in this direction—the formation of the Independence for India League last year—was a hopeless failure so far as I was concerned. Instead of having a group of single minded individuals cooperating together for a common object, I found that there was neither single-mindedness nor cooperation and I was being compelled by force of circumstances to do things I was in thorough disagreement with.

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 15428.

Most people who put me forward for the presidentship do so because they want to keep some one else out. I am the lesser evil. This kind of negative backing is hardly good enough and does not enthuse.

If there is going to be effective action next year there can be no doubt that it will make all the difference in the world whether you lead it or not. Of course you can lead, as you have done in the past, without being Congress President. But it would help matters certainly if you are also the official head of the organisation. I feel that it would be a great gain if you would preside. That would strike the imagination of the country and other countries. If I have the misfortune to be President you will see that the very people who put me there, or many of them, will be prepared to cast me to the wolves.

Anyhow, I do not see why a final decision should be made now. The A.I.C.C. meeting this month is bound to have far-reaching results whichever way the decision goes. I think the best one can do is to wait till it is over.

I am sorry you disapproved of my giving Bhagat Singh and Dutt's statement in the *Congress Bulletin*. I was myself a little doubtful as to whether I should give it but when I found that there was very general appreciation of it among Congress circles I decided to give extracts. It was difficult however to pick and choose and gradually most of it went in. But I agree with you that it was somewhat out of place. I think you are mistaken in thinking that the statement was the work of their counsel. My information is that counsel had nothing, or practically nothing, to do with it. He might have touched up the punctuation. I think the statement was undoubtedly a genuine thing.

Have I been advocating the fast? I had not intended doing so and I do not know to what statement of mine you are referring to. In Delhi I had stated that we could not help sympathising with Bhagat Singh and Dutt during their long fast. As a matter of fact I am not in favour of hunger strikes. I told this to many young men who came to see me on this subject but I did not think it worthwhile to condemn the fast publicly.

Kamala had another attack three days ago but it was a short and mild one this time My mother is now laid up with dengue fever.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

3. On the Congress Presidentship[1]

"Do you want me to sit in judgment over Mahatma Gandhi?" said Jawaharlal Nehru when questioned on the refusal of Mahatma Gandhi to accept the presidentship of the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress. He declined to make any statement or comment on the Mahatma's refusal and his suggestion to the Reception Committee that Jawaharlal Nehru be elected to the position, as this was a question in which he was personally concerned.

1. Interview to the press, Calcutta, 21 August 1929. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 22 August 1929.

4. Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Calcutta
21-8-29

Beg of you not to press my name for Presidentship.

Jawaharlal

1 Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 15496.

5. To Father[1]

Ashram
Sabarmati
30 8 29

My dear Father,
I have had a long talk with Gandhiji. Briefly put, he feels that few people are prepared to follow him although they demand loudly for

1. J. N Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

his presidentship. If he was convinced that he was seriously wanted to lead and not merely to be exploited, he would, I think, agree to preside. In any event there should be a meeting of the A.I.C.C. He would like to place his position before the Committee and if they agree to his conditions he is likely to accept the presidentship. Please let me know where and when you would like the meeting to be held. I think it might be held in the last week of September. The place might be Lucknow, Cawnpore or Benares. Allahabad would mean too much of a burden on us.

I have discussed the Meerut summons with Gandhiji also. He is strongly of opinion that I should not help the prosecution in any way either by producing documents or giving evidence. He says, and I entirely agree with him, that this raises a question of principle and we should not give in.

I am going tonight to Rajkot. Probably I shall come here again for a day on my return.

Your loving son,
Jawahar

6. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

September 23rd, 1929

My dear Chatto,

Your letter of August 28th came as a pleasant surprise. I had almost given up hope of hearing from you. For this of course I did not blame you. The reason was obvious enough. Evidence in the Meerut trial has gone to show that the government has issued special orders for the interception of my correspondence. So far as you are concerned you know well how dearly the British Government loves you. How can they then miss a *billet-doux* from you!

About the Congress presidentship, I do not yet know definitely what will happen but it is probable that Gandhiji will preside. I cannot discuss in the course of a brief letter the various reasons for and against

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1(II)/1929 (Pt. I), pp. 30-31, N.M.M.L. Extracts

his presiding. I feel however that under all the circumstances it is best that he should preside.

Kamala has just come back from Calcutta after her operation for appendicitis. She is weak still but I hope she has got rid of her trouble...

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To R. Bridgeman[1]

October 1st, 1929

My dear Bridgeman,

I have just been elected to preside over the next session of the National Congress. I tried my best to get out of this but circumstances were too strong for me. I am not at all happy about it.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No FD 23/1929 30, p 45, NMML. Extracts.

8. To Shiva Prasad Gupta[1]

October 1st, 1929

Dear Shiva Prasad,

...Three days ago the All India Committee met in Lucknow. Strenuous attempts were made to get Gandhiji to preside over the next Congress but he absolutely declined. Ultimately I was elected simply

1. AICC. File No. FD 1(n)/1929 (Pt. III), pp. 148 149, NMML Extracts

because somebody had to fill the vacuum created. I have been placed during the last few months in a very difficult position but now it is even worse. I realise thoroughly that few people are keen on me but somehow or other, without many people wanting it, I have been pitchforked into the Congress chair. I am afraid I shall have my work cut out for me to avoid losing all my cheerfulness and light-heartedness.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. To S. A. Brelvi[1]

Camp Gorakhpore
October 7th, 1929

My dear Brelvi,
Thank you very much for your congratulations though indeed I feel I am an object of sympathy rather than congratulation. I have been quite clear in my own mind that my election as president would reduce my effectiveness in many directions. But fate has willed it otherwise and I feel in spite of my scientific spirit and outlook that after all we are to some extent playthings of fate.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1929 (Pt. III), p. 473, N.M.M.L.

10. To Govind Ballabh Pant[1]

14th October, 1929

My dear Govind Ballabhji,
Thank you very much for your telegram of congratulation. You will

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(ii)/1929 (Pt. III), p. 551, N.M.M.L.

forgive me, I hope, for the delay in acknowledging it. I have been touring to some extent with Gandhiji.

You must have read Gandhiji's article on the duty of the U.P.[2] The fact that I am President does not make very much difference but the fact remains that the U.P. has got a tremendous responsibility. I have been a poor enough president of the P.C.C. and now I am getting more and more entangled in other activities. I only hope that friends like you and others would take the burden of provincial work and see to it that the U.P. does not lag behind any other province.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 *Navajivan*, 3.10.1929. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, XLI, pp 501-502.

11. To Editors of Nationalist Newspapers[1]

29.10.29

Personal—Not for publication

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you at the instance of the President of the A.I.C.C. You are no doubt aware that an official pronouncement is going to be made by government within the next few days. It is not known yet what this announcement is going to be but it is highly unlikely that it will meet the Congress demand. Whatever it may be it is obviously desirable that nationalist India should preserve a united front as far as possible. It is well known that it is the policy of the government to divide our ranks by rallying one group or another. We should try to defeat this policy. The Working Committee will meet at an early date to give a considered reply to the government. Meanwhile it would be unfortunate if separate conflicting statements were made by Congressmen and well known nationalist newspapers committed

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-15/1929, pp. 15-16, N.M.M.L.
This was sent to *The Bombay Chronicle*, *The Hindu*, *Swarajya*, *Liberty*, *Basumati*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *The Tribune*, *The Hindustan Times*, *Aaj*.

themselves. The President suggests for your consideration that the most helpful policy for nationalist newspapers would be a critical one without any commitment. They might wait for a few days for further development and for fuller consideration. This would enable the country to give a dignified and powerful reply to government.

I would add that this suggestion is made for your consideration and not with any desire to fetter your discretion in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. To All Members of the Working Committee[1]

29th October, 1929

Dear Friend,

At the request of the President I have sent you the following telegram today:

> In view impending official pronouncement President suggests early Working Committee meeting to issue answer on Congress behalf. Meanwhile separate conflicting statements from members Working Committee undesirable. Would welcome your presence Delhi November 1st or second for informal consultation. Congress.

It is not known yet what the statement is going to be but it is unlikely that it will be such as to meet the Congress demand. In any event a united front and a united response on the part of Congressmen must necessarily create a strong impression. It was not possible to have a Working Committee meeting at very short notice. At the same time it was undesirable to allow matters to take their own course pending a Working Committee meeting. Hence it is proposed to have an informal meeting of such members of the Working Committee as can come to Delhi on November 1st and 2nd. Mr. Gandhi will be there then.

1. J. N. Correspondence, NMML.

It is further suggested to have a meeting of the Working Committee in Allahabad on November 16th when Mr. Gandhi will be here.

I might add that the President would be glad if nationalist newspapers did not commit themselves wholly immediately on publication of the statement. A critical attitude pending further developments and fuller consideration would, in his opinion, be helpful.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

13. To B.N. Sen[1]

31/10/29

Dear Friend,[2]

Thank you for your letter. I appreciate the difficulties you have pointed out and it was because of these and because of my inability to cope with them that I was very much averse to becoming President. However the thing is done now and we have to make the best of it.

I am grateful for your offer of assistance. This is very welcome. I cannot at present say what we shall have to do, but I have no doubt that the time is coming when earnest and thoughtful men will be badly needed.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C C. File No. G-40 (III)/1929, p 1, N.M.M.L.
2. Bhupendra Narayan Sen, a Congress worker of Calcutta.

14. The Delhi Manifesto[1]

We, the undersigned, have read with careful consideration the Viceregal pronouncement on the question of India's future status among the nations of the world.[2] We appreciate the sincerity underlying the declaration, as also the desire of the British Government to placate Indian opinion. We hope to be able to tender our cooperation to His Majesty's Government in their effort to evolve a scheme of Dominion constitution suitable for India's needs.

But we deem it necessary that certain acts should be done and certain points should be declared so as to inspire trust and ensure the cooperation of the principal political organisations in the country. We consider it vital for the success of the proposed conference that (a) a policy of general conciliation should be definitely adopted to induce a calmer atmosphere; (b) political prisoners should be granted a general amnesty; and (c) the representation of progressive political organisations should be effectively secured and that the Indian National Congress as the largest among them should have predominant representation.

Some doubt has been expressed about the interpretation of the paragraph in the statement made by the Viceroy on behalf of His Majesty's Government regarding Dominion Status. We understand, however, that the conference is to meet not to discuss when Dominion Status is to be established but to frame a scheme of Dominion constitution for India. We hope that we are not mistaken in thus interpreting the import and implication of the weighty pronouncement of His Excellency the Viceroy.

Until the new constitution comes into existence, we think it necessary that a more liberal spirit should be infused in the government of the country, that the relations of the executive and the legislature should be brought more in harmony with the object of the proposed conference and that greater regard should be paid to constitutional methods and practices. We hold it to be absolutely essential that the public

1. New Delhi, 1 November 1929 *The Leader*, 4 November 1929. The signatories included Jawaharlal Nehru
2. The Viceroy's statement (31 October 1929) on the Round Table Conference to settle the Indian political problem declared that "it is implicit in the declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress, as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion Status."

should be made to feel that a new era has commenced even from today and that the new constitution is to be but a register of the fact. Lastly, we deem it as an essential factor for the success of the conference that it should be convened as expeditiously as possible.

15. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

November 4, 1929

My dear Bapuji,
I have thought well for two days. I can take, I think, a calmer view of the situation than I could two days ago but the fever in my brain has not left me.

Your appeal to me on the ground of discipline could not be ignored by me. I am myself a believer in discipline. And yet I suppose there can be too much of discipline. Something seems to have snapped inside me evening before last and I am unable to piece it together. As General Secretary of the Congress I owe allegiance to it and must subject myself to its discipline. I have other capacities and other allegiances. I am president of the Indian Trade Union Congress, secretary of the Independence for India League and am intimately connected with the youth movement. What shall I do with the allegiance I owe to these and other movements I am connected with? I realise now more than I have ever done before that it is not possible to ride a number of horses at the same time. Indeed it is hard enough to ride one. In the conflict of responsibilities and allegiances what is one to do except to rely on one's instincts and reason?

I have therefore considered the position apart from all outside connections and allegiances and the conviction has grown stronger that I acted wrongly day before yesterday. I shall not enter into the merits of the statement or the policy underlying it. I am afraid we differ

1. J N. Correspondence, N M M L. First published in *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp 76-78.

fundamentally on that issue and I am not likely to convert you. I shall only say that I believe the statement to have been injurious and a wholly inadequate reply to the Labour Government's declaration. I believe that in our attempts to soothe and retain a few estimable gentlemen we have ruffled and practically turned out of our camp many others who were far more worth having. I believe that we have fallen into a dangerous trap out of which it will be no easy matter to escape. And I think that we have shown to the world that although we talk tall we are only bargaining for some titbits.

I do not know what the British Government will do now. Probably it will not agree to your conditions. I hope they will not. But I have little doubt that most of the signatories—excluding you of course—will be quite prepared to agree to any modification of the conditions which the British Government might suggest. In any event, it is quite clear to me that my position in the Congress will become daily more and more difficult. I accepted the presidentship of the Congress with great misgivings but in the hope that we shall fight on a clear issue next year. That issue is already clouded and the only reason for my acceptance has gone. What am I to do with these "Leaders' Conferences"?[2] I feel an interloper and am ill at ease. I cannot have my say because I am afraid of upsetting the conference. I repress myself and sometimes the repression is too much for me and I break out and even say things which I do not wholly mean.

I feel I must resign from the secretaryship of the A.I.C.C. I have sent a formal letter to father, a copy of which I enclose.[3]

The question of the presidentship is a far more difficult one. At this late hour I do not know what I can do. But I am convinced that I was a wrong choice. You were the only possible president for the occasion and the year. I cannot be president if the policy of the Congress is what might be described as that of Malaviyaji. Even now if you agree there is a possible course which does not necessitate a meeting of the A.I.C.C. A circular might be sent round to A.I.C.C. members saying that you are agreeable to accepting the presidentship. I would beg of them to excuse me. This would be a formal matter as of course all the members, or nearly all, would welcome your decision with joy.

2. The Leaders' Conference held in Delhi on 1 November 1929 issued the Delhi Manifesto The second Conference which was held in Allahabad on 18 November 1929 expressed concern at the debates in Parliament but decided to stand by the Delhi Manifesto.
3. See *post*, item 16.

An alternative course is that I should declare that in view of the circumstances, and also in view of the difficulty of choosing another president now, I shall not retire now but immediately after the Congress is over. I shall act as the chairman and the Congress can decide what it likes regardless of me.

One of these two courses seems to me to be necessary if I am to retain my physical and mental health.

As I wrote to you from Delhi I am not issuing any public statement. What others say or do not say does not worry me very much. But I must be at peace with myself.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

I am sending a copy of this letter to father. I feel a little lighter after writing this letter. I am afraid it will trouble you a little and I do not want to do so. I feel half inclined not to send it to you just yet but to wait for your arrival here. Ten days more will no doubt lessen my agitation and give me a better perspective. But it is better that you should know how my mind has been working.

16. To the President of the Congress[1]

4.11.29

Dear Sir,

At the informal meeting held in Delhi on the 2nd November it was pointed out to me that as a member of the Working Committee I was bound to carry out the wishes of the majority of the members of the Committee and sign the statement subsequently issued. Although there had been no formal meeting of the Working Committee, I felt the force of the argument and signed the statement, in spite of my personal reluctance and disagreement with it. I have thought over the matter carefully and I have come to the conclusion that the only course

1 AICC. File No G-117/1929 30, pp 15-16, N.M.M.L.

open to me is to tender my resignation from the general secretaryship of the A.I.C.C. and the membership of the Working Committee. The question raised in Delhi was a vital one for me and I have no doubt that we shall have to face similar contingencies again. It would be most unfair to the Committee and to me if I continued to occupy a responsible position in the A.I.C.C. and in the Working Committee when my views are opposed to those of the majority of its members.

I beg therefore that you will accept my resignation. This resignation, I would add, need not upset the work of the A.I.C.C. office. My colleague, Dr. Ansari, would be in charge of it but this need not mean an additional burden on him. The actual work will be done by the under-secretary and my services will always be at hand for any particular work.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17. To M. Desa [1]

14/11/1929

Dear Friend,[2]
Your letter. I would not like you at this stage to publish my letter. I shall make a statement when I think it necessary. Probably many friends might misunderstand my silence but for the moment that cannot be helped.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G. 40(1)/1929 (Pt. II), p. 153, N.M.M.L.
2. Associated with the journal, *The Young Liberator*, Bombay.

18. To D.V. Divekar[1]

14.11.1929

My dear Divekar[2],
...The Delhi Manifesto[3] is a very unfortunate affair. I quite agree with you in what you say. I hope that the matter will be set right soon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC File No G-40(i)/1929 (Pt. II), p. 169, NMML. Extracts.
2. Associated with the *Kesari*, secretary of Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee, 1929.
3. See *ante*, item 14.

19. To Frances J. Pratt[1]

November 20th, 1929

My dear Miss Pratt,[2]
...The presidentship of the National Congress to which I have been elected is not a very soft or pleasant job. There is a great deal of talk of Round Table Conferences and the like between the British Government and Indian nationalist leaders but all this, I think, is mere eyewash and nothing will happen. Our Congress is bound to take up a strong line this year. It may be therefore that early next year you may have interesting items of news of India.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. To S. Srinivasa Iyengar[1]

November 20th, 1929

Dear Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar,

I am not wholly surprised at receiving your telegram. The proceedings of the so-called leaders' conferences are strange enough but they must appear stranger at a distance. The great redeeming feature however is the approach of the Congress which will automatically put an end to all such conferences and their activities. I am not very worried over this matter. What does worry me greatly is the action that we must take at and after the Congress. It is clear enough that there is not an outside chance of the British Government acceding to the four conditions laid down. So that even moderate Congressmen will have no alternative left except to stick to independence. It is not a very difficult matter to take a strong line, so far as a resolution is concerned, in the Congress. Some such thing is bound to be done. What is more important however is effective action which must follow in support of the independence claim. Once that is started, as I hope it will be, it will not be difficult to put an end to such conferences.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-117/1929-30, p. 7, N.M.M.L.

22. To Satyapal[1]

21st November, 1929

My dear Dr. Satyapal,

Thank you for your letter. I am very glad to learn that you are cooperating with the Reception Committee. This is very sporting of you. It is a most unfortunate sign of the times that from almost every part of India we are having election troubles and disputes. I am almost inclined to think that prominent Congress workers who are more concerned with the work than with anything else should pass a self-denying ordinance under which they should not accept any high office in the Congress. I am sure that their influence for public good will increase thereby.

In the U.P., on the whole we have been fortunate in avoiding quarrels in the ranks of the Congress. This has largely been due to the fact that some of the principal workers here have consistently tried to keep away from office and even when they have accepted it, it has been thrust on them. We have also a convention that no one person should remain in high office for long. Thus we change our presidents regularly every year. The result is that the presidents as such have no special powers or influence. Of course if the president happens to be a prominent public man then he has that influence.

As you know I was partly involved in Punjab Congress affairs this year. I was exceedingly grieved to note the developments. It seems to me that the right course for real Congress workers to follow at the present moment in the Punjab is to cooperate in the fullest degree in making the Congress a success. They will thus demonstrate that they can put down personal feelings in the matter in the interests of a higher cause and they will undoubtedly rise in public esteem thereby.

The various leaders' conferences that have taken place are rightly agitating the public but I hope that another five weeks will see us launched on the path of independence. I am not saying anything at present in public in spite of many misunderstandings because I want to

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-100/1929-30, pp. 153-155, N.M.M.L.

make it very difficult for people to oppose independence at the Lahore Congress.

I am told that all manner of police arrangements are being made in Lahore. We are evidently in for a warm time.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

23. To R. Bridgeman[1]

November 23rd, 1929

My dear Bridgeman,

...You must have been wondering greatly why my name has appeared as if I supported the Labour Government's proposals. As a matter of fact I look upon them simply as a trap into which many of my confiding countrymen are prepared to fall. But still the position created here was such that some of us thought it better from the point of view of a campaign for full independence at the Lahore Congress to give some rope to those here who wanted to adopt a compromising policy. They laid down a number of conditions and as it is certain that none of these conditions is going to be fulfilled, the Congress will meet in Lahore much stronger for effective action. Anyhow the next few weeks will show whether some of us have made a great mistake or not. I myself have been exceedingly troubled and anxious. On the whole *however I feel that in spite of what people, ignorant of the conditions* here, may say we have prepared the ground better for the struggle next year.

With all good wishes,

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No F.D. 23/1929 1930, p 31, NMML. Extracts.

24. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

26 November, 1929

My dear Chatto,
Your letter of November 6th (typed October 6th) has just come.[2] I quite appreciate your position and largely agree with it. I have written to you briefly on the subject already. In view of the Delhi Manifesto I had sent in my resignation from the Congress Working Committee. This resignation was not accepted for various reasons. As I feel that the end of the year will see a big offensive on our part I do not wish to create any difficulties in the way of this offensive at present. It is a question of three or four weeks now.
I am going to Nagpur tomorrow.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C C. File No. F D I. (ii)/1929 (Pt. III), p 145, N M M L.
2. Chattopadhyaya had written on 6 October.

25. The Congress and the Viceroy's Statement[1]

1. The National Congress, at its last session held in Calcutta, resolved to keep the door open for a compromise with the British Government on the basis of the acceptance in its entirety of the national demand, as embodied in the All Parties Committee's Report, till the 31st December 1929. It further resolved that in case no such settlement was arrived at within the stated period or, in case there was an utter rejection of the national demand, the Congress would work for the independence

1. Jawaharlal's note written in November 1929. A.I C C. File No. G 113/1929, pp. 5 10, N M M L.

of India. Congressmen are bound by that resolution and only a full session of the Congress itself can vary it. Many events, which have happened in the course of the year, and the policy of widespread repression carried on unceasingly by the British Government in India, may legitimately be taken to indicate a rejection on the part of the British Government of the national demand, and it would have been open to the Congress Executive to shorten the period fixed by the Calcutta resolution. But the Executive has no power to extend that period. Only the Congress itself can do so.

2. We have referred to the Calcutta resolution of the Congress because we as Congressmen are bound by it. We have however paid careful attention to the statement made by the Viceroy on behalf of the British Government and have tried to interpret it as liberally as possible. We regret to find that the statement is vague in regard to essential matters and, as it stands, can in no way be interpreted to mean an acceptance of the national demand. We recognise that the language of the declaration is conciliatory, but there is no assurance in it that our demands will be acceded to in the near future. It is well known that there is a strong party in the country which desires complete independence for India and the Congress itself is committed to this objective if no settlement is arrived at before the end of the year. All other parties in the country have based their minimum demand at Dominion Status. It is on the basis of this minimum demand alone that any fruitful conference can take place betwen the representatives of India and the representatives of the British Government. There can be no common ground if even Dominion Status is considered a distant objective to be arrived at by successive stages

3. We are also of opinion that the success of any conference must depend on the personnel of the Indian delegation. Unless that delegation is really representative of political India and Indian labour it will carry no weight with the people of India and its decisions can bring no settlement. We feel therefore that it must be made clear that the representatives from India will be such as to command the respect and authority of those whom they represent and that the National Congress will have the dominant voice in their selection.

4. We have referred to the policy of widespread repression carried on by the British Government in India. All over the country Congressmen and others have been convicted and are being tried for their political opinions and activities. A member of the Working Committee,[2] the supreme executive of the Congress for the year, has been

2. B. Sambamurti.

in jail for many months; another member[3] is now being tried for sedition. Many members of the All India Congress Committee have been convicted or are under trial. The treatment of political prisoners has been such as to evoke widespread protest in India and has resulted in hunger strikes in jails and in the self-immolation of a brave son of India. Assurances given for better treatment have still to be given effect to. Even under-trial prisoners have been subjected to treatment which can only be described as barbarous. Organised labour has been penalised in many parts of the country and resolutions of the Assembly ignored by the government.

5. This policy of organised and persistent repression can only result, as it has resulted, in creating bitterness and ill-will, and in producing an atmosphere which cannot be conducive to the success of any conference. It is manifestly impossible for representatives of India to confer honourably or with any peace of mind with the British Government when many of their colleagues are in jail or are liable to be tried or convicted for their political activities. It may be even difficult to choose our best men to represent India when some of them are in prison. The British Government should therefore, if it desires a real conference, which is expected to lead to a settlement, abandon the policy of repression and, as an earnest of its desire to deal honourably with India, should release all political prisoners and withdraw all pending political cases.

6. We have every desire to believe in the goodwill of the Viceroy and of the British Government, but our past experience has not been a happy one. If we take upon ourselves the responsibility of recommending to the National Congress a variation of the resolution, passed after full consideration at Calcutta, or an extension of the period mentioned therein, we must be assured that there is a real change of heart on the part of the British Government and an earnest desire to meet our national demand. We have mentioned above some of the conditions which we consider necessary to produce this assurance. We would add that if there is a real change in the angle of vision of the government it must necessarily result in an immediate change in the present methods of administering the government of the country. We realise that the existing constitution, such as it is, is too archaic and undemocratic to be easily adapted to democratic procedure. But even under present conditions it is possible, if an earnest attempt is made, to make a change for the better by the abandonment of autocracy and an adherence to democratic methods.

3. Subhas Chandra Bose.

7. Finally, we would point out that if the Congress is asked to extend the period fixed by it at Calcutta it will be difficult to have a lengthy extension. It will be desirable therefore to expedite all the preliminary steps so that the final consideration and the settlement take place at an early date.

26. To K. Santanam[1]

4th December, 1929

My dear Santanam,

I was surprised to receive your telegram in Nagpur and wondered what it was about. On my arrival here I got your letter and was greatly disappointed to find that there was nothing exciting in it.

I am not aware of anyone having said that the Reception Committee would only arrange for me or two persons and not for a large party. As a matter of fact I have myself stated that I thought it unfair for the Reception Committee to be saddled with a large party.

I have already written to Dr. Gopichand[2] that I would like to stay in the camp. Father does not want to go to the camp. I think you had better arrange for me and my wife and perhaps Indira, though I am doubtful about her, to live in the camp. The others will have to put up somewhere else. Father would probably like to have more than two or three persons with him. There is my mother, my two sisters, Ranjit, just to mention a few. He is likely to return here tomorrow and I shall find out from him.

I entirely approve of your charging everyone. As the General Secretary is going to develop into the President you need only allow for him once and not twice. But I think you should give free quarters and food to the A.I.C.C. staff.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-100/1929-30, pp. 107-109, N.M.M.L.
2. Gopichand Bhargava (1890-1966); a prominent Congress leader of the Punjab; imprisoned several times in the civil disobedience movement, Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly, 1937-40; Chief Minister of Punjab, 1947-51, and Minister, 1957-64

I am amazed to read about the chariot. I thought you had some sense but it is obvious that the Lakshmi Insurance Co. has gradually driven it out of your head.[3] Do you expect me to go about Lahore on a bullock cart? I wish your committee will have the courage to do away with the procession completely or at most just to drive through certain selected routes, the whole thing not lasting more than an hour. It is an absurd waste of time and energy to spend five or six hours over this. As for riding on horseback I have no objection to it but what on earth are you going to do for five or six hours? I do not at all like this idea of a *barat*. Be original and say that you will have no procession.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. K. Santanam was the chairman of the Lakshmi Insurance Company, Lahore.

27. To Pratulla C. Mukherji[1]

9/12/1929

Dear Mr. Mukherji,[2]
I thank you for your letter of November 8 which has just reached me.

The kind of press reports that you get from India are often misleading. But there is no doubt that the Viceroy's statement has been accepted as more or less satisfactory by the moderate elements here. The National Congress will only consider it in Lahore. I do not think there is much chance of its weakening. Indeed it may stiffen up more. So far as I am concerned I entirely agree with your opinion in regard to this statement.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D 16/1929, p. 57, N.M.M.L.
2. Chairman, Hindustan Association of America, Pittsburgh, U.S.A.

28. To Krishna Narayan[1]

December 10th, 1929

Dear Sir,[2]
I have your letter and your post card. Your criticism that responsibility and power invariably tone down people is perfectly justified. All of us no doubt equivocate to some extent frequently and it is quite possible that if we had a large measure of responsibility we would do so even more.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(i)/1929 (Pt. II), p. 379, N.M.M.L.
2. A resident of Chiniot (now in Pakistan).

29. To Nand Kumar Rai[1]

December 11th, 1929

Dear Sir,[2]
I am in receipt of your card of the 9th December. I appreciate the motive which has induced you to write it but I am at a loss to understand what you mean. You refer to threatening letters written by me. To whom have I written these letters? Will you kindly specify anyone? Nor do I quite follow what you mean by asking me not to join the Congress. I presume you refer to the National Congress. It is my misfortune this year to have been elected its president. Would you have me resign from this?

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(i)/1929 (Pt. III), p. 391, N.M.M.L.
2. A vakil of Ballia.

5

THE LAHORE CONGRESS

1. The Hoisting of the National Flag[1]

I have just unfurled the national flag of Hindustan. What is the meaning of this flag? It is one of the symbols of India's freedom. It is a symbol of India's unity. But remember that when a country's flag is raised then as long as there is a single living soul in the country it is not brought down. Today you have met on this occasion, when the National Congress is holding its most momentous session and is going to take a great step forward in the fight for the country's freedom. Today, when you have raised this flag, are you not fired by the determination that it shall not be lowered? I want you to take a vow that you will have sufficient strength to protect this flag, and that you are ready to sacrifice your lives for freedom.

The flag under which you stand today and which you have just now saluted does not belong to any community. It is the flag of the country. If you have so far worked for any particular community to the detriment of the nation you have proved false. All those who stand today under this flag are Indians, not Hindus, not Muslims, but Indians. The volunteers, who have saluted the flag today, should be prepared to lay down their lives for its honour. Remember once again, now that this flag is unfurled, it must not be lowered so long as a single Indian, man, woman, or child lives in India.

1. Speech at Lahore, 29 December 1929. *The Tribune*, 31 December 1929.

2. Presidential Address[1]

For four and forty years this National Congress has laboured for the freedom of India. During this period it has somewhat slowly but surely awakened national consciousness from its long stupor and built up the national movement. If today we are gathered here at a crisis of our destiny, conscious of our strength as well as of our weakness, and looking with hope and apprehension to the future, it is well that we give first thought to those who spent their lives with little hope of reward so that those that follow them may have the joy of achievement. Many of the giants of old are not with us and we of a later day, standing on an eminence of their creation, may often decry their efforts. That is the way of the world. But none of you can forget them or the great work they did in laying the foundations of a free India. And none of us can ever forget that glorious band of men and women who, without reckoning the consequences, have laid down their young lives or spent their bright youth in suffering and torment in utter protest against a foreign domination. Many of their names even are not known to us. They laboured and suffered in silence without any expectation of public applause, and by their heart's blood they nursed the tender plant of India's freedom. While many of us temporised and compromised, they stood up and proclaimed a people's right to freedom and declared to the world that India, even in her degradation, had the spark of life in her, because she refused to submit to tyranny and serfdom. Brick by brick has our national movement been built up, and often on the prostrate bodies of her martyred sons has India advanced. The giants of old may not be with us, but the courage of old is with us still, and India can yet produce martyrs like Jatin Das and Wizaya.[2]

This is the glorious legacy that we have inherited, and you wish to put me in charge of it. I know well that I occupy this honoured place by chance more than by your deliberate design. Your desire was to choose another—one who towers above all others in this present day world of ours—and there could have been no wiser choice. But fate and he conspired together and thrust me against your will and mine

1. Lahore, 29 December 1929.
2. A Buddhist monk of Burma who was imprisoned on a charge of sedition and who died after a prolonged hunger strike on 19 September 1929.

into this terrible seat of responsibility. Should I express my gratitude to you for having placed me in this dilemma? But I am grateful indeed for your confidence in one who strangely lacks it himself.

You will discuss many vital national problems that face us today, and your decisions may change the course of Indian history. But you are not the only people that are faced with problems. The whole world today is one vast question mark, and every country and every people is in the melting pot. The age of faith, with the comfort and stability it brings, is past, and there is questioning about everything, however permanent or sacred it might have appeared to our forefathers. Everywhere there is doubt and restlessness, and the foundations of the state and society are in process of transformation. Old established ideas of liberty, justice, property and even the family are being attacked, and the outcome hangs in the balance. We appear to be in a dissolving period of history, when the world is in labour and, out of her travail, will give birth to a new order.

No one can say what the future will bring, but we may assert with some confidence that Asia, and even India, will play a determining part in future world policy. The brief day of European domination is already approaching its end. Europe has ceased to be the centre of activity and interest. The future lies with America and Asia. Owing to false and incomplete history many of us have been led to think that Europe has always dominated over the rest of the world, and Asia has always let the legions of the West thunder past and has plunged in thought again. We have forgotten that for millennia the legions of Asia overran Europe and modern Europe itself largely consists of the descendants of these invaders from Asia. We have forgotten that it was India that finally broke the military power of Alexander. Thought has undoubtedly been the glory of Asia and specially of India, but in the field of action the record of Asia has been equally great. But none of us desires that the legions of Asia or Europe should overrun the continents again. We have all had enough of them.

India today is a part of the world movement. Not only China, Turkey, Persia and Egypt, but also Russia and the countries of the West are taking part in this movement, and India cannot isolate herself from it. We have our own problems, difficult and intricate, and we cannot run away from them and take shelter in the wider problems that affect the world. But if we ignore the world, we do so at our peril. Civilization today, such as it is, is not the creation or the monopoly of one people or nation. It is a composite fabric to which all countries have contributed and then have adapted to suit their particular needs. And if India has a message to give to the world, as I

hope she has, she has also to receive and learn much from the messages of other peoples.

When everything is changing it is well to remember the long course of Indian history. Few things in history are more amazing than the wonderful stability of the social structure in India which withstood the impact of numerous alien influences and thousands of years of change and conflict. It withstood them because it always sought to absorb them and tolerate them. Its aim was not to exterminate but to establish an equilibrium between different cultures. Aryans and non-Aryans settled down together recognising each other's right to their culture, and outsiders who came, like the Parsis, found a welcome and a place in the social order. With the coming of the Muslims the equilibrium was disturbed, but India sought to restore it, and largely succeeded. Unhappily for us, before we could adjust our differences, the political structure broke down, the British came and we fell.

Great as was the success of India in evolving a stable society, she failed in a vital particular, and because she failed in this, she fell and remains fallen. No solution was found for the problem of equality. India deliberately ignored this and built up her social structure on inequality, and we have the tragic consequences of this policy—millions of our people who till yesterday were suppressed and had little opportunity for growth.

When Europe fought her wars of religion and Christians massacred each other in the name of their Saviour, India was tolerant, although, alas, there is little of this toleration today. Having attained some measure of religious liberty, Europe sought after political liberty and political and legal equality. Having attained these also, she finds that they mean very little without economic liberty and equality. And so today politics have ceased to have much meaning, and the most vital question is that of social and economic equality.

India also will have to find a solution to this problem, and until she does so, her political and social structure cannot have stability. That solution need not necessarily follow the example of any other country. It must, if it has to endure, be based on the genius of her people and be an outcome of her thought and culture. And when it is found, the unhappy differences between various communities, which trouble us today and keep back our freedom, will automatically disappear.

Indeed the real differences have already largely gone, but fear of each other and distrust and suspicion remain and sow seeds of discord. The problem before us is not one of removing differences. They can well remain side by side and enrich our many-sided culture. The problem is how to remove fear and suspicion, and, being intangible, they

are hard to get at. An earnest attempt was made to do so last year by the All Parties Committee, and much progress was made towards the goal. But we must admit with sorrow that success has not wholly crowned its efforts. Many of our Muslim and Sikh friends have strenuously opposed the solutions suggested, and passions have been roused over mathematical figures and percentages. Logic and cold reason are poor weapons to fight fear and distrust. Only faith and generosity can overcome them. I can only hope that the leaders of the various communities will have this faith and generosity in ample measure. What shall we gain for ourselves or for our community if all of us are slaves in a slave country? And what can we lose if once we remove the shackles from India and can breath the air of freedom again? Do we want outsiders, who are not of us and who have kept us in bondage, to be the protectors of our little rights and privileges, when they deny us the very right to freedom? No majority can crush a determined minority, and no minority can be sufficiently protected by a little addition to its seats in legislatures. Let us remember that in the world today almost everywhere, a very small minority holds wealth and power and dominates over the great majority.

I have no love for bigotry and dogmatism in religion, and I am glad that they are weakening. Nor do I love communalism in any shape or form. I find it difficult to appreciate why political or economic rights should depend on the membership of a religious group or community. I can fully understand the right to freedom in religion and the right to one's culture, and in India specially, which has always acknowledged and granted these rights, it should be no difficult matter to ensure their continuance. We have only to find out some way whereby we may root out the fear and distrust that darken our horizon today. The politics of a subject race are largely based on fear and hatred; and we have been too long under subjection to get rid of them easily.

I was born a Hindu, but I do not know how far I am justified in calling myself one or in speaking on behalf of Hindus. But birth still counts in this country, and by right of birth I shall venture to submit to the leaders of the Hindus that it should be their privilege to take the lead in generosity. Generosity is not only good morals, but is often good politics and sound expediency. And it is inconceivable to me that in free India the Hindus can ever be powerless. So far as I am concerned I would gladly ask our Muslim and Sikh friends to take what they will without protest or argument from me. I know that the time is coming soon when these labels and appellations will have little meaning and when our struggles will be on

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of the offer. Even so your Working Committee chose to keep open the door of negotiation and left it to this Congress to take the final decision.

During the last few days there has been another discussion of this subject in the British House of Commons, and the Secretary of State for India has endeavoured to point out that successive governments have tried to prove, not only by words, but by deeds also, the sincerity of their faith in regard to India. We must recognize Mr. Wedgwood Benn's desire to do something for India and his anxiety to secure the goodwill of the Indian people. But his speech and the other speeches made in Parliament carry us no further. "Dominion Status in action," to which he has drawn attention, has been a snare for us, and has certainly not reduced the exploitation of India. The burdens on the Indian masses are even greater today because of this "Dominion Status in action" and the so-called constitutional reforms of ten years ago. High Commissioners in London, and representatives on the League of Nations, and the purchase of stores, and Indian governors and high officials are no parts of our demand. We want to put an end to the exploitation of India's poor and to get the reality of power and not merely the livery of office.

Mr. Wedgwood Benn has given us a record of the achievements of the past decade. He could have added to it by referring to Martial Law in the Punjab and the Jallianwala Bagh shooting and the repression and exploitation that have gone on continually during this period of "Dominion Status in action". He has given us some insight into what more of Dominion Status may mean for us. It will mean the shadow of authority to a handful of Indians, and more repression and exploitation of the masses.

What will this Congress do? The conditions for cooperation remain unfulfilled. Can we cooperate so long as there is no guarantee that real freedom will come to us? Can we cooperate when our comrades lie in prison and repression continues? Can we cooperate until we are assured that real peace is sought after and not merely a tactical advantage over us? Peace cannot come at the point of the bayonet, and if we are to continue to be dominated over by an alien people, let us at least be no consenting parties to it.

If the Calcutta resolution holds, we have but one goal today, that of independence. Independence is not a happy word in the world today, for it means exclusiveness and isolation. Civilization has had enough of narrow nationalism and gropes towards a wider cooperation and interdependence. And if we use the word independence we do so in no sense hostile to the larger ideal. Independence for us means

an economic basis. Meanwhile it matters little what our mutual arrangements are, provided only that we do not build up barriers which will come in the way of future progress.

The time has indeed already come when the All Parties Report has to be put aside and we march forward unfettered to our goal. You will remember the resolution of the last Congress which fixed a year of grace for the adoption of the All Parties scheme. That year is nearly over, and the natural issue of that decision for this Congress is to declare in favour of independence and devise sanctions to achieve it.

That year has not brought Dominion Status or the All Parties Constitution. It has brought instead suffering and greater repression of our national and labour movements, and how many of our comrades are today forcibly kept away from us by the alien power! How many of them suffer exile in foreign countries and are refused facilities to return to their motherland! The army of occupation holds our country in its iron grip, and the whip of the master is ever ready to come down on the best of us who dare raise their heads. The answer to the Calcutta resolution has been clear and definite.

Recently there has been a seeming offer of peace. The Viceroy has stated on behalf of the government that the leaders of Indian opinion will be invited to confer with the government on the subject of India's future constitution. The Viceroy meant well and his language was the language of peace. But even a Viceroy's goodwill and courteous phrases are poor substitutes for the hard facts that confront us. We have sufficient experience of the devious ways of British diplomacy to beware of it. The offer that the British Government made was vague and there was no commitment or promise of performance. Only by the greatest stretch of imagination could it be interpreted as a possible response to the Calcutta resolution. Many leaders of various political parties met together soon after and considered it. They gave it the most favourable interpretation, for they desired peace and were willing to go half way to meet it. But in courteous language they made it clear what the vital conditions for its acceptance were. Many of us who believed in independence and were convinced that the offer was only a device to lead us astray and create division in our ranks, suffered bitter anguish and were torn with doubt. Were we justified in precipitating a terrible national struggle with all its inevitable consequences of suffering for many when there was even an outside chance of honourable peace? With much searching of heart we signed that manifesto, and I know not today if we did right or wrong. Later came the explanations, and amplifications in the British Parliament and elsewhere, and all doubt, if doubts there were, was removed as to the true significance

may do so, it will strengthen these vested interests and create more. And each one of them will be a fresh obstacle in our way. Of necessity the government has to rely on oppression, and the symbol of its rule is the secret service with its despicable and contemptible train of *agents provocateurs*, informers and approvers.

We have had much controversy about independence and Dominion Status, and we have quarelled about words. But the real thing is the conquest of power by whatever name it may be called. I do not think that any form of Dominion Status applicable to India will give us real power. A test of this power would be the entire withdrawal of the alien army of occupation and economic control. Let us, therefore, concentrate on these and the rest will follow easily.

We stand, therefore, today for the fullest freedom of India. This Congress has not acknowledged and will not acknowledge the right of the British Parliament to dictate to us in any way. To it we make no appeal. But we do appeal to the parliament and conscience of the world, and to them we shall declare, I hope, that India submits no longer to any foreign domination. Today or tomorrow we may not be strong enough to assert our will. We are very conscious of our weakness, and there is no boasting in us or pride of strength. But let no one, least of all England, mistake or underrate the meaning or strength of our resolve. Solemnly, with full knowledge of consequences, I hope, we shall take it and there will be no turning back. A great nation cannot be thwarted for long when once its mind is clear and resolved. If today we fail and tomorrow brings no success, the day after will follow and bring achievement.

We are weary of strife and hunger for peace and opportunity to work constructively for our country. Do we enjoy the breaking up of our homes and the sight of our brave young men going to prison or facing the halter? Does the worker like going on strike and losing even his pittance and starving? He does so by sheer compulsion when there is no other way for him. And we who take this perilous path of national strife do so because there is no other way to an honourable peace. But we long for peace, and the hand of fellowship will always be stretched out to all who may care to grasp it. But behind the hand will be a body which will not bend to injustice and a mind that will not surrender on any vital point.

With the struggle before us the time for determining our future constitution is not yet. For two years or more we have drawn up constitutions, and finally the All Parties Committee put a crown to these efforts by drawing up a scheme of its own which the Congress adopted for a year. The labour that went to the making of this scheme was

complete freedom from British domination and British imperialism. Having attained our freedom I have no doubt that India will welcome all attempts at world cooperation and federation, and will even agree to give up part of her own independence to a larger group of which she is an equal member.

The British empire today is not such a group, and cannot be so long as it dominates over millions of peoples and holds large areas of the World's surface despite the will of their inhabitants. It cannot be a true commonwealth so long as imperialism is its basis and the exploitation of other races its chief means of sustenance. The British empire today is indeed gradually undergoing a process of political dissolution. It is in a state of unstable equilibrium. The Union of South Africa is not a very happy member of the family, nor is the Irish Free State a willing one. Egypt drifts away. India could never be an equal member of the Commonwealth unless imperialism and all it implies is discarded. So long as this is not done India's position in the empire must be one of subservience, and her exploitation will continue. The embrace of the British empire is a dangerous thing. It cannot be the life-giving embrace of affection freely given and returned. And if it is not that, it will be, what it has been in the past, the embrace of death.

There is talk of world peace and pacts have been signed by the nations of the world. But despite pacts armaments grow and beautiful language is the only homage that is paid to the goddess of peace. Peace can only come when the causes of war are removed. So long as there is the domination of one country over another, or the exploitation of one class by another, there will always be attempts to subvert the existing order, and no stable equilibrium can endure. Out of imperialism and capitalism peace can never come. And it is because the British empire stands for these, and bases itself on the exploitation of the masses, that we can find no willing place in it. No gain that may come to us is worth anything unless it helps in removing the grievous burdens on our masses. The weight of a great empire is heavy to carry, and long our people have endured it. Their backs are bent and down and their spirit has almost broken. How will they share in the commonwealth partnership if the burden of exploitation continues? Many of the problems we have to face are the problems of vested interests, mostly created or encouraged by the British Government. The interests of rulers of Indian states, of British officials and British capital and Indian capital and of the owners of big zamindaris are ever thrust before us, and they clamour for protection. The unhappy millions who really need protection are almost voiceless, and have few advocates. So long as the British empire continues in India, in whatever shape it

LAHORE, 1929

not wasted, and India has profited by it. But the year is past and we have to face new circumstances which require action rather than constitution making. Yet we cannot ignore the problems that beset us and that will make or mar our struggle and our future constitution. We have to aim at social adjustment and equilibrium, and to overcome the forces of disruption that have been the bane of India.

I must frankly confess that I am a socialist and a republican, and am no believer in kings and princes, or in the order which produces the modern kings of industry, who have greater power over the lives and fortunes of men than even the kings of old, and whose methods are as predatory as those of the old feudal aristocracy. I recognise, however, that it may not be possible for a body constituted as is this National Congress, and in the present circumstances of the country, to adopt a full socialistic programme. But we must realise that the philosophy of socialism has gradually permeated the entire structure of society the world over, and almost the only points in dispute are the pace and the methods of advance to its full realization. India will have to go that way, too, if she seeks to end her poverty and inequality, though she may evolve her own methods and may adapt the ideal to the genius of her race.

We have three major problems—the minorities, the Indian states, and labour and peasantry. I have dealt already with the question of minorities. I shall only repeat that we must give the fullest assurance by our words and deeds that their culture and traditions will be safe.

The Indian states, even for India, are the most curious relics of a bygone age. Many of their rulers apparently still believe in the divine right of kings—puppet kings though they be—and consider the state and all it contains to be their personal property, which they can squander at will. A few of them have a sense of responsibility and have endeavoured to serve their people, but many of them have hardly any redeeming feature. It is perhaps unjust to blame them, for they are but the products of a vicious system, and it is the system that will ultimately have to go. One of the rulers has told us frankly that even in case of war between India and England he will stand for England and fight against his mother country.[3] That is the measure of his patriotism. It is not surprising, then, that they claim, and their claim finds acceptance with the British Government, that they alone can represent their subjects at any conference, and no one even of their subjects may have any say. The Indian states cannot live apart from the rest of India, and their rulers must, unless they accept their inevitable limitations, go the way of others

3 Ganga Singh of Bikaner · see *Selected Works*, Vol 3, p. 262.

who thought like them. And the only people who have a right to determine the future of the states must be the people of those states, including the rulers. This Congress which claims self determination cannot deny it to the people of the states. Meanwhile, the Congress is perfectly willing to confer with such rulers as are prepared to do so, and to devise means whereby the transition may not be too sudden. But in no event can the people of the states be ignored.

Our third major problem is the biggest of all. For India means the peasantry and labour, and to the extent that we raise them and satisfy their wants, will we succeed in our task. And the measure of the strength of our national movement will be the measure of their adherence to it. We can only gain them to our side by our espousing their cause, which is really the country's cause. The Congress has often expressed its goodwill toward them, but beyond that it has not gone. The Congress, it is said, must hold the balance fairly between capital and labour and zamindar and tenant. But the balance has been and is terribly weighted on one side, and to maintain the *status quo* is to maintain injustice and exploitation. The only way to right it is to do away with the domination of any one class over another. The All India Congress Committee accepted this ideal of social and economic change in a resolution it passed some months ago in Bombay. I hope the Congress will also set its seal on it, and will further draw up a programme of such changes as can be immediately put in operation.

In this programme perhaps the Congress as a whole cannot go very far today. But it must keep the ultimate ideal in view and work for it. The question is not one merely of wages and charity doled out by an employer or landlord. Paternalism in industry or in the land is but a form of charity with all its sting and its utter incapacity to root out the evil. The new theory of trusteeship, which some advocate, is equally barren. For trusteeship means that the power for good or evil remains with the self-appointed trustee, and he may exercise it as he will. The sole trusteeship that can be fair is the trusteeship of the nation and not of one individual or a group. Many Englishmen honestly consider themselves the trustees for India, and yet to what a condition have they reduced our country!

We have to decide for whose benefit industry must be run and the land produce food. Today the abundance that the land produces is not for the peasant or the labourer who work on it; and industry's chief function is supposed to be to produce millionaires. However golden the harvest and heavy the dividends, the mud huts and hovels and nakedness of our people testify to the glory of the British empire and of our present social system.

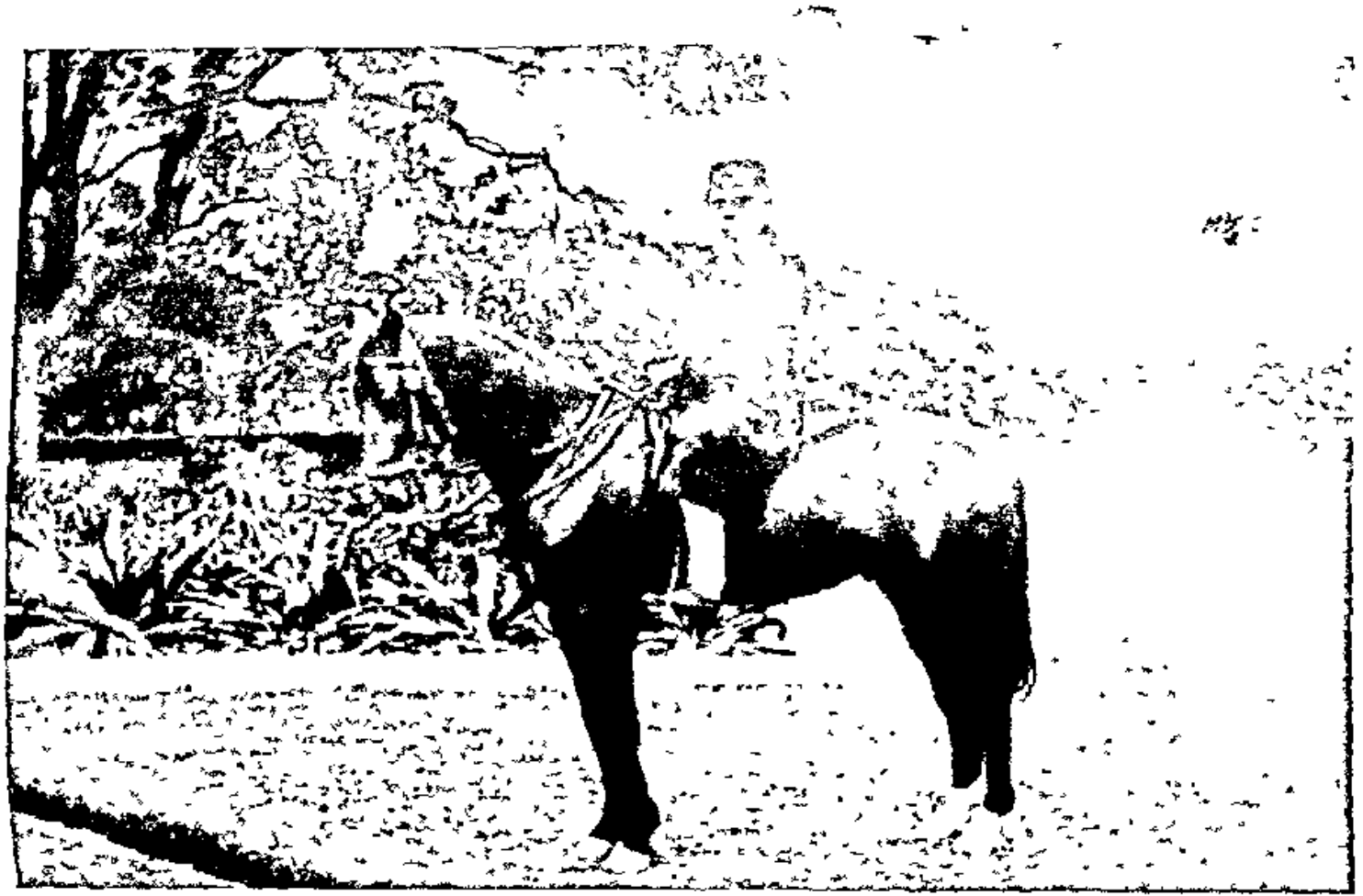

The past year has been one of preparation for us, and we have made every effort to reorganize and strengthen the Congress organization. The results have been considerable, and our organisation is in a better state today than at any time since the reaction which followed the noncooperation movement. But our weaknesses are many and are apparent enough. Mutual strife, even within Congress committees, is unhappily too common and election squabbles drain all our strength and energy. How can we fight a great fight if we cannot get over this ancient weakness of ours and rise above our petty selves? I earnestly hope that with a strong programme of action before the country our perspective will improve and we will not tolerate this barren and demoralizing strife.

What can this programme be? Our choice is limited, not by our own constitution, which we can change at our will, but by facts and circumstances. Article I of our Constitution lays down that our methods must be legitimate and peaceful. Legitimate I hope they will always be, for we must not sully the great cause for which we stand by any deed that will bring dishonour to it and that we may ourselves regret later. Peaceful I should like them to be, for the methods of peace are more desirable and more enduring than those of violence. Violence too often brings reaction and demoralization in its train, and in our country specially it may lead to disruption. It is perfectly true that organized violence rules the world today, and it may be that we could profit by its use. But we have not the material or the training for organised violence, and individual or sporadic violence is a confession of despair. The great majority of us, I take it, judge the issue not on moral but on practical grounds, and if we reject the way of violence, it is because it promises no substantial results. But if this Congress or the nation at any future time comes to the conclusion that methods of violence will rid us of slavery, then I have no doubt that it will adopt them. Violence is bad, but slavery is far worse. Let us also remember that the great apostle of nonviolence has himself told us that it is better to fight than to refuse to fight out of cowardice.

Any great movement for liberation today must necessarily be a mass movement, and mass movements must essentially be peaceful, except in times of organised revolt. Whether we have the noncooperation of a decade ago or the modern industrial weapon of the general strike, the basis is peaceful organization and peaceful action. And if the principal movement is a peaceful one, contemporaneous attempts at sporadic violence can only distract attention and weaken it. It is not possible to carry on at one and the same time the two movements side by side. We have to choose and strictly to abide by our choice. What

Our economic programme must, therefore, be based on a human outlook and must not sacrifice man to money. If an industry cannot be run without starving its workers, then the industry must close down. If the workers on the land have not enough to eat, then the intermediaries who deprive them of their full share must go. The least that every worker in field or factory is entitled to is a minimum wage which will enable him to live in moderate comfort and humane hours of labour which do not break his strength and spirit. The All Parties Committee accepted the principle and included it in their recommendations. I hope the Congress will also do so, and will in addition be prepared to accept its natural consequences. Further, that it will adopt the well known demands of labour for a better life, and will give every assistance to it to organise itself and prepare itself for the day when it can control industry on a cooperative basis.

But industrial labour is only a small part of India, although it is rapidly becoming a force that cannot be ignored. It is the peasantry that cry loudly and piteously for relief, and our programme must deal with their present condition. Real relief can only come by a great change in the land laws and the basis of the present system of land tenure. We have among us many big landowners, and we welcome them. But they must realise that the ownership of large estates by individuals, which is the outcome of a state resembling the old feudalism of Europe, is a rapidly disappearing phenomenon all over the world. Even in countries which are the strongholds of capitalism the large estates are being split up and given to the peasantry who work on them. In India also we have large areas where the system of peasant proprietorship prevails, and we shall have to extend this all over the country. I hope that in doing so we may have the cooperation of some at least of the big landowners.

It is not possible for this Congress at its annual session to draw up any detailed economic programme. It can only lay down some general principles and call upon the All India Congress Committee to fill in the details of cooperation with the representatives of the Trade Union Congress and other organisations which are vitally interested in this matter. Indeed I hope that the cooperation between this Congress and the Trade Union Congress will grow, and the two organisations will fight side by side in future struggles.

All these are pious hopes till we gain power, and the real problem, therefore, before us is the conquest of power. We shall not do so by subtle reasoning or argument or lawyers' quibbles, but by the forging of sanctions to enforce the nation's will. To that end this Congress must address itself.

the choice of this Congress is likely to be I have no doubt. It can only choose a peaceful mass movement.

Should we repeat the programme and tactics of the noncooperation movement? Not necessarily, but the basic idea must remain. Programmes and tactics must be made to fit in with circumstances, and it is neither easy nor desirable for this Congress at this stage to determine them in detail. That should be the work of its executive, the All India Congress Committee. But the principles have to be fixed.

The old programme was one of the three boycotts—councils, law courts and schools—leading up to refusal of service in the army, of nonpayment of taxes. When the national struggle is at its height, I fail to see how it will be possible for any person engaged in it to continue in the courts or the schools. But still I think that it will be unwise to declare a boycott of the courts and schools at this stage. The boycott of the legislative councils has led to much heated debate in the past, and this Congress itself has been rent in twain over it. We need not revive that controversy, for the circumstances today are entirely different. I feel that the step the Congress took some years ago to permit Congressmen to enter the councils was an inevitable step, and I am not prepared to say that some good has not resulted from it. But we have exhausted that good, and there is no middle course left today between boycott and full cooperation. All of us know the demoralisation that these sham legislatures have brought in our ranks, and how many of our good men their committees and commissions lure away. Our workers are limited in number, and we can have no mass movement unless they concentrate on it and turn their backs on the palatial council chambers of our legislatures. And if we declare for independence, how can we enter the councils and carry on our humdrum and profitless activities there? No programme or policy can be laid down for ever, nor can this Congress bind the country or even itself to pursue one line of action indefinitely. But today I would respectfully urge the Congress that the only policy in regard to the councils is a complete boycott of them. The All India Congress recommended this course in July last, and the time has come to give effect to it.

Our programme must, therefore, be one of political and economic boycott. It is not possible for us, so long as we are not actually independent, and not even then completely, to boycott another country wholly or to sever all connection with it. But our endeavour must be to reduce all points of contact with the British Government and to rely on ourselves. We must also make it clear that India will not accept responsibility for all the debts that England has piled on her.

The Gaya Congress[4] repudiated liability to pay these debts, and we must repeat this repudiation and stand by it. Such of India's public debt, as has been used for purposes beneficial to India, we are prepared to admit and pay back. But we wholly deny all liability to pay back the vast sums which have been raised so that India may be held in subjection and her burdens may be increased. In particular, the poverty stricken people of India cannot agree to shoulder the burden of the wars fought by England to extend her domain or consolidate her position in India. Nor can they accept the many concessions lavishly bestowed, without even proper compensation, on foreign exploiters.

This boycott will only be a means to an end. It will release energy and divert attention to the real struggle, which must take the shape of non-payment of taxes and, where possible, with the cooperation of the labour movement, general strikes. But non-payment of taxes must be well organised in specific areas, and for this purpose the Congress should authorise the All India Congress Committee to take the necessary action wherever and whenever it considers desirable.

I have not so far referred to the constructive programme of the Congress. This should certainly continue, but the experience of the last few years shows us that by itself it does not carry us swiftly enough. It prepares the ground for future action, and ten years' silent work is bearing fruit today. In particular we shall, I hope, continue our boycott of foreign cloth and the boycott of British goods.

I have not referred so far to the Indians overseas and I do not propose to say much about them. This is not from any want of fellow-feeling with our brethren in East Africa or South Africa or Fiji or elsewhere, who are bravely struggling against great odds. But their fate will be decided in the plains of India, and the struggle we are launching into is as much for them as for ourselves.

For this struggle we want efficient machinery. Our Congress constitution and organisation have become too archaic and slow-moving, and are ill suited to times of crisis. The time of great demonstrations is past. We want quiet and irresistible action now, and this can only be brought about by the strictest discipline in our ranks. Our resolutions must be passed in order to be acted upon. The Congress will gain in strength, however small its actual membership may become, if it acts in a disciplined way. Small determined minorities have changed the fate of nations. Mobs and crowds can do little. Freedom itself involves restraint and discipline, and each one of us will have to subordinate himself to the larger good.

4. December 1922.

The Congress represents no small minority in the country, and though many may be too weak to join it or to work for it, they look to it with hope and longing to bring them deliverance. Ever since the Calcutta resolution the country has waited with anxious expectation for this great day when this Congress meets. None of us can say what and when we can achieve. We cannot command success. But success often comes to those who dare and act; it seldom goes to the timid who are ever afraid of the consequences. We play for high stakes; and if we seek to achieve great things, it can only be through great dangers. Whether we succeed soon or late, none but ourselves can stop us from high endeavour and from writing a noble page in our country's long and splendid history.

We have conspiracy cases going on in various parts of the country. They are ever with us. But the time has gone for secret conspiracy. We have now an open conspiracy to free this country from foreign rule and you, comrades, and all our countrymen and countrywomen are invited to join it. But the rewards that are in store for you are suffering and prison, and, it may be, death. But you shall also have the satisfaction that you have done your little bit for India, the ancient but ever young, and have helped a little in the liberation of humanity from its present bondage.

Vande Mataram.

3. Concluding Address[1]

The declaration of independence as your creed has already resounded all over the world wherever Indians are living.[2] They can hold their heads high and they are full of hope, but remember today you have merely set your foot on the right path. The way to be traversed is full of difficulties, but it is a great thing that you have adopted the right course. This Congress has attracted attention all over the country. Some have liked and some disliked our decision. Some threaten to defy us. That would be a matter of pain, but the fact remains that the Congress has now taken a step which will enable you to differentiate between those who stand for mere reform and the present order, and those who stand for a radical change in our previous creed, a creed which enabled all sorts of men to remain in our ranks, and pull us in all directions, thereby delaying our onward progress. I am not worried by the statements that the Congress will, as a result of secession, lose its strength. If there is one lesson the world's history teaches us, it is that strength does not come of sheep-like behaviour, but through a band of disciplined, organised men, pledged to action.

Vande Mataram.

1. Lahore, 1 January 1930. *The Hindu*, 2 January 1930.
2. In the resolution passed at Lahore on 31 December 1929, the Congress had declared the attainment of Swaraj or complete independence to be its aim and had called on Congressmen to resign from legislatures and official committees and not participate in elections.

6

PREPARATION FOR CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

1. To Secretaries, P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
January 6th, 1930

Dear Sir,

The office of the A.I.C.C. will send you soon the resolutions passed by the Congress, the A.I.C.C. and the Working Committee in Lahore. These resolutions, as you must have appreciated, are very important and require immediate action. In particular, I would draw your attention to the following steps that should be taken without delay.

1. Resignation from councils. Kindly address all Congress members of the central and provincial legislatures from your province and ask them to resign forthwith. Names of all those who resign should be forwarded immediately to the A.I.C.C. office. Names of such Congress members as do not resign in spite of the Congress resolution should also be forwarded. In case any member resigns and then stands for re-election, please intimate the fact to this office.

2. A campaign to enrol Congress members and volunteers and to recover subscriptions from last year's members should immediately be started. We have heavy work before us and it is desirable that we should put our organisation in order immediately. It may be that after some weeks we may have to concentrate on more important work and we may not have time then to look after the organisational side of the Congress. It is necessary, therefore, that this side be attended to immediately. I would suggest also that every province should endeavour to have a body of fully trained and uniformed volunteers. These may not be many but even a small number will be of great help.

3. Holding of public meetings to explain the Congress resolutions and to prepare.

4. National celebration on Sunday, January 26th, of independence or Purna Swaraj or *Azadi*. This celebration must be organised on as big and impressive a scale as possible. I am taking the liberty to send you a copy of a press statement I have issued about this

1. AICC, File No. P-1/1930, p. 96, NMML

celebration. It is not enough to have a celebration at the chief town of the district. There should be meetings and flag unfurlings in as many villages as possible. Full reports of all such celebrations should be sent to this office and to the press.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Statement to the Press[1]

The Congress Working Committee has fixed Sunday, January 26th, for country-wide celebration of the adoption of complete independence or Purna Swaraj as its immediate objective by the Congress. This celebration will, I trust, take place on as wide a scale as possible so that the message of independence may be carried to all the towns and villages of India. The provincial Congress committees and district and local committees are requested to take immediate steps to organise this national celebration. Detailed directions will be issued soon.

Meanwhile, it is desirable to have preliminary meetings everywhere to explain the scope and implications of the Congress resolutions and to prepare for the great demonstration of January 26th. Local programmes may be drawn up by the respective committees for this day. It should be remembered that January 26th is the last Sunday of the month, that is to say, the day on which the national flag is to be hoisted at eight in the morning.

I would suggest that the flag should be unfurled as usual at this time. Later in the day there should be processions, and public meetings should be held at five in the evening under the national flag.

1 Allahabad, 6 January 1930 *The Searchlight*, 15 January 1930.

3. To Abdur Rahim[1]

January 7th, 1930

Dear Friend,[2]

I have just received your open letter.[3] I have read it carefully. I agree with much that you say but I do not quite see what you would like me to do. I regret, of course, that there should have been a misunderstanding in Lahore resulting in a section of our colleagues walking out from the A.I.C.C.[4] I regret specially that this should have been due to any action of mine. I had been hoping that in spite of what has happened there would be no difficulty in our cooperating in action. Personally, I fail to see what vital differences there are between the two viewpoints.

For the moment I leave out the question of boycott of councils because Subhas Babu himself proposed this in his amendment. I take it we are agreed about it. Subhas Babu laid stress in a recent statement on a boycott of local bodies. I entirely agree and you will remember that the old Working Committee recommended this but the Subjects Committee was not in favour of it. Then there is the question of including the organisations of workers and peasants. Some mention of this was made in Subhas Babu's amendment. I entirely agree. The question is how best this can be brought about. Finally, there was the question of a parallel government. I have no doubt that a time will come when a regular parallel government will have to be established in India. There is nothing against it in the Congress resolution. At the same time I feel that vague and tall talk often defeats its very purpose. Any campaign for independence must necessarily aim at parallel government at some stage. Civil disobedience and non payment of taxes in a particular area practically means the organisation of a parallel form of government.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-126/1930, pp. 13-15, N.M.M.L.
2. A Congressman of Bengal.
3. Abdur Rahim had written that Jawaharlal should not give adventurers any opportunity to discredit the Congress and that many Congressmen were jealous of Jawaharlal becoming president at such a young age.
4. At the A.I.C.C. meeting on 1 January 1930, differences had arisen on the procedure for electing members, resulting in the formation of the Democratic Congress Party.

My difficulty is that I do not understand what vital difference there is in the programme suggested by the newly formed Democratic Party and the programme of the Congress. There is a great deal of talk about left wings and right wings. I wish there was some clear thinking also. Mr Satyamurti, for instance, in a recent statement practically says that the declaration of independence was for show purposes only and he can easily conceive of our going to a round table conference and agreeing to Dominion Status. I cannot conceive this.

The whole question is one of calm discussion. I fail to appreciate the inclusion of the personal factor in politics and I for one would very gladly discuss this or any other subject quite apart from incidents of the like. I can assure you that I have not the least bitterness against anybody. How can I have bitterness against people who have been my valued colleagues for years past? Of course, in the nature of things, people's temperaments and methods of work differ but that is no reason why there should not be cooperation whenever necessary.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
7.1.30

My dear Bapuji,

I enclose some odd notes.[2] I am sure they are perfectly useless but still I am sending them. I do not quite know what kind of information you require for the statement. Probably I am sending this too late. Anyhow this will not make much difference.

I shall expect your statement and resolution for the 26th in a few days. Could you also add some directions for the observance of the

1 Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 16335.
2 On the exploitation of India, made by Jawaharlal from Sunderland's *India in Bondage*, Lajpat Rai's *Unhappy India* and other books.

day? For instance, should there be speeches at meetings or just a reading of the statement? I think that it would be desirable if meetings were all held at one time—5 p.m. This may be suggested, with local freedom to change the time.

I enclose a letter from Rajagopalachari.[3] I think there is something in what he says. There are so many statements and counter statements in the press that the issues are likely to be clouded. Personally I dislike touring on a big scale but if you think I should rush about I shall do so.

Rajagopalachari's idea that we may get some of the non-Congress members out of the legislatures seems to me to be amazingly optimistic. There is no chance of this happening. Indeed it is clear that many Congress members even will stick on or resign and then seek election. I do not think we need mind this very much, provided we can create a boycott mentality in the people and take action against all Congressmen who disobey the Congress resolution.

But even apart from the council boycott it seems desirable to make the country feel that we are in earnest. If we remain quiet for some weeks it may have a bad effect.

Father is going to Calcutta for the Bengal dispute[4] on the 10th January.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

3. Rajagopalachari had written that Jawaharlal and Mahatma Gandhi should tour the country to give publicity to the decisions of the Lahore Congress.
4. Long standing differences among Congressmen in Bengal and the rivalry between Subhas Chandra Bose and J. M. Sen Gupta had been aggravated by election disputes.

5. To R. Bridgeman[1]

January 8th, 1930

My dear Bridgeman,
Your cable reached me in Lahore suggesting to me that I should publicly withdraw my signature from the Delhi Manifesto before the Congress session. I am afraid I have done no such thing. But, what is

1. AICC. File No. F.D 23/1929-30, p. 27, NMML.

more important, the Congress as a body has publicly withdrawn from it Good advice is always welcome but it seems to me that people have a tendency to jump to conclusions without sufficient data. If I had followed the advice of your section and announced the withdrawal of my signature I have no doubt that this would have created vicious difficulties in the way of the Congress itself withdrawing from it.

We have got a stiff time ahead of us here. Probably the Labour Government will have the honour of sending some of us to prison before long.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal

6. On the Boycott of Councils[1]

In response to the Congress mandate, a large number of members in the central and provincial legislatures have already sent in their resignations, and intimation of fresh resignations is being received daily by the All India Congress Committee office. A number of press statements, many emanating from New Delhi, have been however issued recently, attacking the boycott of councils. Leading Congressmen have described the main resolution as outrageous and others have stated that this resolution does not represent the view of the country. I should like to remind all these critics that this resolution was passed by the Congress almost unanimously, less than a dozen persons voting against it in the final stage All the amendments, with the exception of one, were defeated by overwhelming majorities. In particular, the amendment for the deletion of the clause relating to the boycott of legislatures received very little support, only a handful voting for it. The only amendment largely supported, but ultimately defeated, was for the removal of the clauses expressing appreciation of the Viceroy's efforts This did not affect in any way the operative part of the resolution It may therefore be asserted with confidence that the Congress almost unanimously approved the line of action laid down in the principal resolution. Any person who does not act accordingly or does not resign his seat in the legislature or, having resigned, seeks re-election clearly disobeys the Congress.

1 *Statement to the press, Allahabad, 9 January 1930. The Hindu, 10 January 1930*

7. On the Treatment of Political Prisoners[1]

Some months ago, the courageous hunger strike of the political prisoners in Lahore and elsewhere concentrated public attention on the treatment and condition of political prisoners all over India. Moved by public indignation, the government gave all sorts of assurances and appointed committees to enquire into their conditions. As usual, the public was lulled into the belief that something was being done, but as a matter of fact little was done and the government even ignored the reports of the committees appointed by itself. The Kakori prisoners, in particular, were punished for their temerity in going on hunger strike. The U.P. Jails Enquiry Committee suggested last year that these Kakori prisoners should be given better treatment and should be put in a higher class. No attention has apparently been paid to these recommendations.

Mr. Sachindra Nath Sanyal,[2] according to a jail visitor, was absolutely segregated and was put under fetters. Owing to having been kept for about six months in solitary confinement, he began to show signs of mental derangement. He has lost 24 lbs. in weight, of which 5 lbs. have been lost during the last three months.

Mr. Suresh Chandra Bhattacharji,[3] I understand, has contracted tuberculosis and is now in the Sultanpur jail. He has lost over 30 lbs. in weight.

Messrs. Ramkrishna Khatri,[4] Bhupendra Nath Sanyal,[5] Rajkumar Singh[6] and Ramnath[7] have also been made to undergo all manners of ill treatment and jail punishments.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 11 January 1930. *The Hindustan Times* 15 January 1930.
2. (1893 1943); a Bengali revolutionary involved in the Lahore, Banaras and Kakori Conspiracy cases, released in 1931 but kept in detention from 1941 till his death.
3. Of Kanpur, serving a sentence of seven years
4. Of Chanda, serving a sentence of ten years.
5. Of Allahabad, serving a sentence of five years.
6. Of Kanpur, serving a sentence of ten years.
7. Ram Nath Pandey of Varanasi, serving a sentence of five years.

It is difficult to get full information but even the scanty information that trickles through the high walls of jails is sufficient to make the public realise that these political prisoners are being subjected to vindictive and inhuman treatment.

8. The Coming Struggle[1]

Every possible chance has been given to the British Government for a compromise but they apparently want a compromise on their own terms which the Congress cannot possibly accept. The Lahore Congress has, therefore, finally decided about independence.

Those who were responsible for this decision did not take it in a moment, in a hurry or in a fit of anger but after a most anxious and careful consideration and with full appreciation of consequences. There is no turning back from it and every effort will be made to fight for independence in accordance with the methods indicated by the Congress.

This year is likely to see a big struggle. The Congress cannot proclaim at this stage the details of every step that will be taken. For the moment we must concentrate on taking the message of independence to all parts of India. For this purpose the 26th of January has been fixed as the day of national celebration. Very soon the Working Committee of the Congress will be meeting to suggest other steps.

The strength of this movement must necessarily be with the masses, the peasantry and the industrial workers. But the city-dwellers and members of various professions are equally interested in the great cause and they must take full part in it or they will be left behind by the workers and the peasants.

During the next month or two we should concentrate on enrolling Congress members so that our hands might be free for other and more important work later.

The die has been cast, and the choice taken after the fullest consideration. There is no alternative for India now but to fight on till full independence is achieved.

1 Speech at Allahabad, 13 January 1930. From *The Leader*, 15 January 1930

Whatever little good the councils might do ordinarily, it is inconceivable to me to carry on the work in the councils and at the same time fight for independence on an intensive scale.

The choice before the country is between petty reformist activity and activity meant to bring about a revolutionary change. The two *cannot be carried on together by the same persons.* Councils mean reformism and indeed there is very little of reform even now. Therefore, if we were serious in our declaration at Lahore, we must inevitably boycott the councils and concentrate on direct action.

The response so far has been considerable. There are, however, some people who are raising doubts and difficulties, but the Congress has decided in favour of the boycott almost unanimously and this programme is going to be acted upon strictly. There is no doubt that opinion in favour of this boycott is overwhelming.

9. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
January 13/14th, 1930

My dear Bapuji,

Your letter with your draft statement reached me late in the evening. I was under the impression that in addition to this statement there would be a resolution for the meeting on the 26th. I had issued instructions to this effect to the provincial Congress committees. I sent to you a telegram[2] accordingly. I am however not quite sure that a resolution, apart from the statement, will be necessary.

As the time at our disposal is limited I am typing this letter myself in the small hours of the morning. I have also just typed a slightly revised statement for your *approval. This has been done in a great* hurry and I am not at all satisfied with my draft. However, here it goes. Even if there is a little delay in issuing it, it will not matter so much.

1. A I C.C. File No. 26/1930, pp. 31-33, N M M L.
2. Not printed.

I do not particularly fancy giving a quotation in our statement from Trevelyan.[3] The quotation itself may be apt but it is merely an expression of opinion which seems to me to be somewhat out of place in the statement.

I presume the figures you have given have been carefully verified. I do not know where you got the figure about customs in Russia. It is probably correct. But the conditions in Russia are very different and the Soviet Government controls all imports and hardly permits anything but necessary articles to come in. In the average daily income the figure given is seven pice; the average daily tax is stated to be 2.5 pies. I presume this is correct.

I am not all clear how you can keep the Congress out of any programme of civil disobedience. However this can be discussed when all of us meet in Sabarmati. I shall certainly come a day or two before the Working Committee meets.

Father is still in Calcutta and must be busy with the Bengal dispute. I expect him back on the 15th. I doubt if he can travel about much just yet but he may be able to go to a few places. He has been very poorly since his return from Lahore. His blood pressure has been very high.

For the short resolution for the 26th meeting I had drafted the following:

> We, the people of...., assembled here to demonstrate that India must be completely free, do solemnly resolve that we will strive to our utmost capacity so that Purna Swaraj may be attained, and we will carry out the Congress instructions issued from time to time in this behalf.

I do not like this nor am I sure on reconsideration that such a resolution is necessary after a longer statement. But I give it for what it is worth.

I shall await your reply.

Yours affy.,
Jawaharlal

3 Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan (1807 1886), Governor of Madras, 1859, Finance Member, Government of India, 1862.
The quotation read, "Educated in the same way, interested in the same things, engaged in the same pursuits with ourselves they (Indian educated youth) become more English than Hindus just as Roman provincials became more Roman than Gauls or Italians."

10. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Allahabad
January 15th, 1930

My dear Mahmud,
Your letter of the 12th. I can well appreciate your difficulties but I am afraid there is no help for it. All of us have to face some difficulty or other.

I am going to Cawnpore on the morning of the 19th for a day, from there to Lucknow for another day, returning to Allahabad on the 21st. If you come on any other day I shall be glad to meet you.

Regarding the Frontier investigation, it is possible and even probable that your committee may not be able to go there.[2] If so, you should proceed nonetheless to the nearest place to the Frontier Province and hold your investigations there. We were told by the Frontier people that this was quite easy and they will be able to bring witnesses to you. Meanwhile you should ask them to supply members of your committee with copies of all the rules and regulations to which they object. Also, a full statement of their grievances. Your committee will then be armed with material to examine and cross-examine.

I am very keen on going to the Frontier Province myself but I am sure that if I announce the fact I shall not be allowed to go. If I can manage it I should like to go there quietly without any previous intimation. I should like to do so when your committee is there. You need not mention this to others yet.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, NMML.
2. The Congress had appointed a committee to examine the working of the North West Frontier regulations but, as Jawaharlal expected, the government prevented them from proceeding beyond Attock and reaching Peshawar.

11. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
January 17, 1930

My dear Bapuji,
I received two telegrams from you yesterday. From the first telegram it was obvious that my express telegram and my press message sent to *Young India* had been stopped or delayed. I have learnt from a friend in Agra that the government had stopped these telegrams. Apparently they allowed them to go later. But I do not know if they were censored or not. It is obvious that we cannot rely on the Telegraph Office in future, and the Post Office is almost as doubtful. I shall send telegrams to you today but to make sure that my communication reaches you I am sending this by a messenger.

Father returned from Calcutta yesterday and I have discussed the statement with him. He felt that the paragraphs of percentages, etc, were out of place. I feel this way too, but I do not wish to make any radical changes at this stage. A few changes we are making, which I hope you will not mind. I am giving these separately. I shall issue the statement to the press, to the P.C.Cs and a number of individuals today. Probably I shall have difficulties in getting it printed because press people are very timid.

Having regard to various developments and the news in the paper it seems likely that the government will try to obstruct us as much as possible. I agree with you that stress should not be laid on processions. At the same time it is difficult to prohibit them. I propose to send a circular today discouraging processions but at the same time leaving the matter in the hands of the local committee. I shall give them the reasons which you yourself have mentioned.

It is possible that an attempt may be made to prevent the demonstration on the 26th January either by Sec. 144 or by other means. Father thinks, and I agree with him, that express directions should be issued to provincial and district committees in regard to this matter. I feel that if such an order is made merely prohibiting a meeting we cannot

1. A I C C. File No. 26/1930, p. 63, N M.M L.

submit to it. We should gather together peaceably and make the declaration and disperse. If even this is sought to be prohibited we should disobey the order and take the consequences. There is hardly time to consult in this matter. I shall not issue a public statement but I propose to send a circular to provincial committees more or less on these lines.

I am sending this letter with a young man named Murari Sharma. You may, if you like, send him back with any message or keep him in the Ashram till we come. If he remains in the Ashram I hope some work will be given to him.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

12. Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi[1]

17.1.30

Your telegram just in time. Changes made.[2] Also other changes which communicated *Young India*. Separate resolution unnecessary.

Jawaharlal

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 26/1930, p. 59, N.M.M.L.
2. In the Independence Pledge released on 17 January 1930.

13. The Independence Pledge[1]

The following resolution[2] is issued on behalf of the Working Committee for adoption at public meetings all over India on Purna Swaraj Day, Sunday, January 26th, 1930. The resolution must be read at the

1. Issued at Allahabad, 17 January 1930 A.I.C.C. File No. 31/1930, pp 35, N.M.M.L.
2. This was the joint draft of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal

meeting in the language of the province and those present should be invited to signify by show of hands their assent to it. Provincial committees should immediately get the resolution translated and widely distributed in their respective provinces.

We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or complete independence.

India has been ruined economically. The revenue derived from our people is out of all proportion to our income. Our average income is seven pice, less than two pence per day, and of the heavy taxes we pay, 20% are raised from the land revenue derived from the peasantry and 3% from the salt tax which falls most heavily on the poor.

Village industries, such as hand-spinning, have been destroyed, leaving the peasantry idle for at least four months in the year, and dulling their intellect for want of handicrafts, and nothing has been substituted, as in other countries, for the crafts thus destroyed.

Customs and currency have been so manipulated as to heap further burdens on the peasantry. British manufactured goods constitute the bulk of our imports and customs revenue from these, which ought to have been used to lessen the burden of taxation on the masses, is 44 times lighter in India than it is in Russia and 24 times and 8 times, respectively, less heavy than it is in the United States of America and Germany. The arbitrary manipulation of the exchange ratio has resulted in millions being drained away from the country.

Politically, India's status has never been so reduced as under the British regime. No reforms have given real political power to the people. The tallest of us have to bend before foreign authority. The rights of free expression of opinion and free association have been denied to us and many of our countrymen are compelled to live in exile abroad and cannot return to their homes. All administrative talent is killed and the masses have to be satisfied with petty village offices and clerkships.

Culturally, the system of education has torn us from our moorings and our training has made us hug the very chains that bind us. Spiritually, compulsory disarmament has made us unmanly and the presence of an alien army of occupation, employed with deadly effect to crush in us the spirit of resistance, has made us think that we cannot look after ourselves or put up a defence against foreign aggression, or even defend our homes and families from the attacks of thieves, robbers and miscreants.

We hold it to be a crime against man and God to submit any longer to a rule that has caused this fourfold disaster to our country. We recognise, however, that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. We will therefore prepare ourselves by withdrawing, so far as we can, all voluntary association from the British Government, and will prepare for civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes. We are convinced that if we can but withdraw our voluntary help and stop payment of taxes without doing violence, even under provocation, the end of this inhuman rule is assured. We, therefore, hereby solemnly resolve to carry out the Congress instructions issued from time to time for the purpose of establishing Purna Swaraj.

14. Circular to P.C.Cs[1]

January 17th, 1930

Dear Comrade,

I have pleasure in enclosing a copy of the resolution to be passed at the meeting to be held on Sunday, January 26th—Purna Swaraj Day or Independence Day. I regret the delay in sending it. This was largely due to the fact that the government held up our telegrams and made it difficult for members of the Working Committee to consult each other.

1. AICC. File No 31/1930, p. 39, NMML.

Kindly take immediate steps to get this resolution translated in your provincial language and broadcast throughout the province. The greatest publicity should be given to it and every effort should be made to make the celebration of January 26th worthy of India.

Enquiries are made about a detailed programme for the day. I have already suggested something through the press and I find that the Hindustani Seva Dal has also put forward a programme of celebration. In this connection it should be remembered that the essential part of the celebration is the meeting in the evening where the declaration is to be adopted. Everything should be done to make this a solemn and successful ceremony, and nothing should be done to divert attention from it.

Processions are ordinarily desirable. But it is not desirable to ask for police permission for processions on the 26th. On the other hand, if the police prohibit a procession the question arises immediately whether the police order should be obeyed or not. If obeyed it will create an unfortunate impression, if disobeyed then this disobedience itself will become the principal event of the day and the subsequent meeting may sink into insignificance. I have placed these considerations before you so that you may be able to advise your local committees accordingly. On the whole, it is not desirable to have a procession where there is any danger of our having to face this dilemma. But the whole matter rests with you and your local committees.

In case, however, an attempt is made by the use of Sec. 144 or otherwise to stop the meeting itself, the order should certainly be disobeyed and we should try to hold the meeting in spite of it. We cannot give up our meeting or declaration simply because an order under Sec. 144 has been issued In case the meeting has to be held in the face of prohibition, care should be taken that everything is done in a peaceful and disciplined way.

The meeting should be held at 5 p.m. in the evening punctually under the national flag. Speeches are not to be encouraged. Wherever possible the national flag should be hoisted at eight in the morning. The national flag should also be flown on as many public and private buildings as possible

Please send to the A.I.C.C. office full reports of the celebrations in your office.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. To Abdur Rahim[1]

January 21st, 1930

Dear Friend,

After you saw me here I received your letter of the 11th January from Lahore. Later I received your letter of the 15th. I have just come back to Allahabad after a short absence.

As for the publication of my reply to you, you are perfectly welcome to do so should you so desire. There is no question of my issuing statements on the subject.

I do not know if it is worthwhile our discussing the events that happened in Lahore. I would point out to you however that it was a physical impossibility in Lahore to consult anybody. The only consultations which I attended were the Working Committee meetings. I cannot remember even a short talk on any important matter with anyone outside these meetings. The personnel of the new Working Committee was considered for the first time half an hour before the A.I.C.C. meeting to elect it. The whole Congress was such a tremendous rush for some of us that one had little time to think or do anything except the immediate matter facing one. It seems to me that people do not realise this when they start criticising, and they develop imaginary grievances of having been ignored and the like. Not being a sentimental person myself it is not easy for me to understand sentimentality in others. But these matters are over and done with and I do not know why they should be discussed again.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-126/1930, p. 1, NMML.

Kindly take immediate steps to get this resolution translated in your provincial language and broadcast throughout the province. The greatest publicity should be given to it and every effort should be made to make the celebration of January 26th worthy of India.

Enquiries are made about a detailed programme for the day. I have already suggested something through the press and I find that the Hindustani Seva Dal has also put forward a programme of celebration. In this connection it should be remembered that the essential part of the celebration is the meeting in the evening where the declaration is to be adopted. Everything should be done to make this a solemn and successful ceremony, and nothing should be done to divert attention from it.

Processions are ordinarily desirable. But it is not desirable to ask for police permission for processions on the 26th. On the other hand, if the police prohibit a procession the question arises immediately whether the police order should be obeyed or not. If obeyed it will create an unfortunate impression, if disobeyed then this disobedience itself will become the principal event of the day and the subsequent meeting may sink into insignificance. I have placed these considerations before you so that you may be able to advise your local committees accordingly. On the whole, it is not desirable to have a procession where there is any danger of our having to face this dilemma. But the whole matter rests with you and your local committees.

In case, however, an attempt is made by the use of Sec. 144 or otherwise to stop the meeting itself, the order should certainly be disobeyed and we should try to hold the meeting in spite of it. We cannot give up our meeting or declaration simply because an order under Sec. 144 has been issued. In case the meeting has to be held in the face of prohibition, care should be taken that everything is done in a peaceful and disciplined way.

The meeting should be held at 5 p.m. in the evening punctually under the national flag. Speeches are not to be encouraged. Wherever possible the national flag should be hoisted at eight in the morning. The national flag should also be flown on as many public and private buildings as possible.

Please send to the A.I.C.C. office full reports of the celebrations in your office.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

after the passing of the independence resolution. It is open to anyone, of course, to have his own opinion regarding the desirability of continuing to practise after believing in independence. The fact remains that the Lahore Congress deliberately did not call for a boycott of law courts. Thus it left such of its members as are practising lawyers free to practise. As a matter of fact some very prominent Congressmen who are in favour of independence are still practising in the courts. Thus the difficulty that you have mentioned does not arise.

It is clear however that people who believe in independence may have to face government action and any person who is not prepared to face any such action should keep himself away from the line of danger. That is for each one to decide for himself.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. *To R.S. Misra*[1]

January 23rd, 1930

Dear Friend,[2]
I do not know what to say about the Independence for India League. As a matter of fact it seems to be dying a natural death. So far as our U.P. branch is concerned, as we have had some money we are utilising it for opening a village centre which will work in full cooperation with the District Congress Committee. My own idea is that the League should continue on paper but otherwise should be dormant. In case of need it can wake up.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40/1930, p. 219, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary of the Betul branch of the Independence for India League.

16. To T.V.K. Naidu[1]

January 21st, 1930

Dear Sir,[2]

I have your letter of the 15th. I regret greatly that it is not possible for the National Congress to give any financial aid for the conduct of the appeal.[3] Ordinarily the Congress funds are not used for this purpose. After the independence resolution this has become even more difficult. Very soon it may be that a large number of Congressmen may be arrested and it will be impossible for us to spend money on their defence. We have therefore decided that Congress funds should not be spent for this purpose. It is open, of course, for private funds to be raised.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC File No G-42/1930, p. 9, N.M.M.L.
2. A South Indian Railway labour leader.
3. Naidu and some other labour leaders had appealed to the High Court against a sentence of ten years' imprisonment for conspiracy.

17. To Bhagwan Din Mishra[1]

January 22nd, 1930

Dear Sir,[2]

I have received your letter of the 17th January with a copy of Mr. Bhandari's resignation.[3] I am not aware of any rule or act which prevents a practising lawyer from being a member of the Congress even

1. AICC File No. G-40/1930, p. 223, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary, Congress Committee, Bahraich, U.P.
3. Bhandari, a lawyer and president of the Bahraich Congress Committee, had resigned from the Congress on the ground that according to the Bar Council rules and the Legal Practitioners Act, a lawyer could not be a member of the Congress "when independence is the creed of the Congress"

not want to have a fight with the government about the procession but we must have the meeting in spite of government prohibition if necessary. If Sec. 144 is applied to prevent the meetings, nonetheless the meeting should be held. Of course, under these circumstances care should be taken that the disobedience is in a disciplined way. Personally, I do not think that meetings will be interfered with.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

21. Circular to Secretaries, P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
January 24th, 1930

Dear Friend,

A large number of Congress members of the legislatures have already resigned in obedience to the Congress mandate. Some have not done so. Those who refuse to resign clearly break their election pledges. Those who resign but stand again for election do so in violation of the Congress mandate. The matter will come up before the meeting of the Working Committee which will be held on February 14th. Our office would like to have full and authorised lists of all those who have resigned and those who have not done so, or who seek re-election, for the consideration of the Working Committee. Please also inform us what steps your P.C.C. has taken or intends to take against those Congressmen in your province who oppose the Congress mandate.

I should like to remind you that the Congress direction is that we should abstain from participating "directly or indirectly" in future elections. Thus we should abstain from voting or otherwise assisting candidates. This should be made perfectly clear to all your local committees and to the voters in your province. Congressmen should take no sides in future election campaigns. It may be, of course, that sometimes one non Congress candidate is preferable to another. But even

1. AICC. File No. P-1/1930, p. 53, NMML

19. On the Duty of Youth[1]

Do not be led away by wrong statements that are appearing in newspapers in this province against the Congress resolution alleging that there is a great revolt against the Congress in the country. Seldom has any controversial resolution before the Congress been passed with such great unanimity as the independence resolution, and yet in spite of this unanimity there appear in the press long statements against the decision

If these statements are analysed, the real dispute would appear to be over the question of participating in the legislatures. I do not understand how any one can be in a council and also carry out the Congress resolution. I fail to understand the mentality of some people who think that we can get anything only by pleasing the British. There is a sufficiently large number of people in the country who will not be satisfied with anything less than complete independence. I hope that the youth movement will follow the programme of work to be framed on behalf of the Congress. If there is strong discipline in our youth movement, nothing else is needed.

1 Address to the Youth League, Allahabad, 23 January 1930. From The Hindustan Times, 26 January 1930.

20. To Syed Mahmud[1]

January 23rd, 1930

My dear Mahmud,

Your letter and the translation only reached me today. I have wired[2] to you that it is not necessary to have processions on the 26th. We do

1 AICC File No G-131/1930, p. 33, NMML.
2 Telegram not printed.

23. On Independence Day Celebrations[1]

In accordance with the decision of the Executive Committee of the Indian National Congress, the people of India will celebrate tomorrow all over the country as Independence Day beginning with the hoisting of our national flag.

The resolution, printed in hundreds of languages and dialects, will be distributed and voted on by the people.

The National Congress's decisions are meeting with enthusiastic response all over the country. Huge demonstrations have been organised. A great many members of the official legislatures have resigned in obedience to the Congress's mandate.

The National Congress's executive meeting will be held on February 14th to determine further action.

1. Cable to the North American Newspapers Alliance. Allahabad, 25 January 1930. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 15 March 1930.

24. To G.V. Ketkar[1]

January 25th, 1930

Dear Sir,[2]

I have just received your letter of the 22nd January. I think there is some misconception in regard to the Working Committee resolution. The resolution in no way attempts to go beyond the Lahore Congress resolution.[3]

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G. 131/1930, pp. 3-7, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1898); editor of *Kesari* and *Mahratta*; president, Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee, 1932; general secretary, Hindu Mahasabha, 1940.
3. Ketkar had felt that turning the Independence Day programme into some kind of civil disobedience had not been envisaged by the Lahore Congress.

so we should keep studiously apart and our only appeal must be to the electors not to vote.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

22. Circular to P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
January 24th, 1930

Dear Friend,
The Independence Day celebrations will see all over India a great display of national flags and emblems. It is highly desirable however that even after January 26th we should encourage in every way this display. Carriages and motor cars could have little flags attached to them. Even more desirable is the wearing of independence badges by individuals. I would suggest for your consideration that your committee should carry on a widespread campaign for the wearing of these badges and little flags on pins. The propaganda and psychological effect of this will be very great.

Many P.C.Cs and other organisations have already issued some kind of badges. I shall be obliged to you if you could send this office a few samples of the badges you may have issued or come across. After a comparison of the various badges we may be able to suggest one uniform badge for all-India adoption. Arrangements could also be made for large scale production of this badge.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 Hardikar Papers, NMML.

not specify the items on which withdrawal should take place. Obviously the Working Committee is not empowered to make radical suggestions in this behalf. It will be for the All India Committee to do so if considered necessary.

The Working Committee resolution for the 26th January does not declare independence in the sense that independence has been achieved or that we are going to function as an independent country afterwards. This point has been made perfectly clear, if there was any doubt, by Gandhiji. All that the Working Committee resolution does is to confirm the change of creed. I do not think any person who voted for the Lahore resolution need have the slightest difficulty in voting for the resolution recommended for January 26th.

The Purna Swaraj Day programme is not intended to result in civil disobedience. It was specially for this reason that we have asked Congress committees not to have processions if there is any danger of conflict. Mahatma Gandhi has laid stress on this in *Young India*. In the circular to the provinces I made this clear. I stated however that in case the meeting itself is not allowed to be held we should endeavour to hold the meeting in spite of such prohibition. That was and is my personal view because I feel that we should not be forcibly stopped from making our declaration. But so far as we are concerned we are not out for civil disobedience at this stage.

I hope this explanation will satisfy you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

25. Statement to the Press[1]

The first fruits of the independence resolution are the conviction of and sentence passed on Messrs. Subhas Bose, Das Gupta, and others. For accompanying a procession they have been awarded the sentence of one

1. Issued at Allahabad, clearly before 26 January 1930. (Censored.) *The Tribune*, 28 January 1930.

I do not fully appreciate the difference between attainment and establishment. Attainment of Swaraj must necessarily be contemporaneous with some kind of establishment of it, otherwise there would be a gap when there is no government in the country. The distinction is a very technical one and I do not think it is worthwhile laying any stress on it. As for the establishment of a parallel government, there is no mention of this as such in the Working Committee resolution or the Lahore Congress resolution. Mr. Subhas Bose's amendment which mentioned this was rejected not because it advocated a parallel government but because as a whole it was not approved of by the house. Any movement for Swaraj, and specially any movement which has civil disobedience and non-payment of taxes as its basis, must necessarily envisage at some stage or other a parallel government which later on gives way to a Swaraj government. There is nothing in the Lahore Congress resolution against such a process. Some people did not like an immediate declaration that a parallel government be started because they felt that it will merely remain a declaration and no practical effect could be given to it. There was no difference in principle.

However, so far as the Working Committee resolution is concerned there is no reference to parallel government in it. Nor is there even an indirect hint of it at this stage. It may be that later developments, should we gain enough strength, may entitle us to talk of parallel governments.

If we fight for the attainment of Purna Swaraj we fight to gain power. If we gain power we exercise it in trying to control the government of the country. When our control is considerable we become the government of the day.

The idea of withdrawing voluntary association from the government is inherent in any form of noncooperation or civil disobedience on a national basis. Of course, it is not humanly possible to withdraw all association so long as another government controls the machinery of state. But we can try to withdraw voluntary association as far as we can. This is all that the Working Committee resolution says and this, I think, was very clearly indicated in the Lahore Congress resolution. Indeed, it has been the fundamental basis of Congress policy since 1920 You are perfectly right in saying that the withdrawal of association with the government should include the boycott of law courts and schools. But for various reasons the Congress did not preclude us from withdrawing our association as much as possible. The phrase used in the Working Committee resolution is a general one and does

India is a country which has a glorious past of thousands of years, and which has produced illustrious men and women; its civilization was famous throughout the world. When Europe and other parts of the world were living in a dark age, people came to India from all parts of the world to study in its seats of learning. How can such a country remain a slave country or agree to anything less than complete independence?

Such was India, and how low it has fallen! With the halter of slavery round its neck, it has suffered in every way and now it has no status in the world. Foreigners have drained India of its wealth and made this rich country an example of poverty. Crores of people lack food, clothes and houses. Even those who are educated lack employment and have no means of earning their bread. The average income per day of an Indian is only seven pice. But even on that there are exorbitant taxes, and heavy rents and revenue, the burden of all of which falls mostly on the poor. Even salt is taxed. This affects particularly the poorest class. Cottage industries which flourished in every home have all been destroyed, and no alternative is provided.

Indeed, we are educated in such a manner that we cling to the chains of slavery. A foreign army prevents us from even protesting. If we dare to do so we are crushed. Many of our brave young men are in prison. Some have even gone to the gallows. What was their crime? Patriotism! To struggle for our freedom is today the greatest sin in India.

We have heard so much about reforms. Some Indians have risen to be high officers. But what tangible advantage has this given to the people? How far has their starvation, poverty and unemployment been reduced? Big buildings have been put up at Delhi, but in the countryside most of our people have not even a mud hut.

The continuance of the British Empire implies that the wealth of India will be drained out to Britain. So long as we remain in this empire, we can never be free and shall not be able to remove our poverty. So we must achieve complete independence in the shortest possible time and then establish a Panchayati Raj in our country. That is what the Congress decided at Lahore.

Some people say that we can win freedom by being friendly with the British and by making them understand our demand. This is astounding. The British will only yield when our strength is adequate. We shall gain nothing by begging and flattering.

Now the fight for complete independence is starting with full force. Mahatma Gandhi is the commander of the army of freedom fighters.

year's rigorous imprisonment.[2] Bengal has taken the lead again in the great fight and her honoured sons may well be proud that it has fallen to their lot to be the vanguard in the army of India. They have done their work but we that remain have to shoulder the burden and carry on.

What shall our response be to this fresh attack? Let us prepare and discipline ourselves for the onward march and make of it an irresistible sweep to the goal of independence. Let us remember that next Sunday is the Independence Day, a red-letter day in Indian history, and let us celebrate it in a manner worthy of India and of her martyred sons.

2. Subhas Chandra Bose, Kiran Shankar Roy, J. M Dass Gupta and nine other Congress leaders of Bengal, who had been arrested for leading a procession on the Political Sufferers' Day in August 1929, were each sentenced on 23 January 1930 to one year's rigorous imprisonment.

26. Complete Independence[1]

At Lahore on 1 January the supreme council of the country—the Congress—declared complete independence as the goal. It has proclaimed to Britain as well as to the entire world that we do not accept even the least subjection to the British Empire and India cannot remain in it. Once our country attains complete independence, poverty will be eradicated and our countrymen will lead a life of freedom and prosperity. The entire world has heard of the Congress declaration and everywhere people are excited to learn that this ancient country also has awakened from its slumber. Our countrymen living abroad will also be able to hold their heads high and say with pride that they will not allow slavery to continue and will not rest till complete independence is attained.

Complete independence is our birthright. Lokmanya Tilak was the first to assert this. And now Mahatma Gandhi, by introducing the independence resolution and getting it passed by the Congress, has launched the struggle for complete independence.

1. *Hindi* pamphlet, clearly written before 26 January 1930, and published by the secretary, Allahabad Youth League. A.I.C.C. File No. 3/1930, pp 75-78, N.M.M.L.

28. To Uma Shankar[1]

January 28th, 1930

Dear Sir,[2]

I thank you for your letter addressed to the Secretary of the A.I.C.C. intimating to us that you have resigned from the local council. I think that you are attaching far too great importance to the views of a few individuals when you say that there is bitter controversy. The Congress independence resolution has been welcomed with greater unanimity than almost anything in recent Indian history and the Congress today is stronger than for a long time past. Probably you have got your information from prejudiced sources like the daily papers issued from Allahabad.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-125/1930, p 81, N.M.M.L.
2. A vakil of Fatehpur, U.P.

29. Statement to the Press[1]

Reports from all over the country show how magnificently the Independence Day was celebrated by all classes, and I must respectfully congratulate the nation on the success of the solemn orderly demonstrations and the enthusiastic adherence to independence. In the great cities, led by Calcutta and Bombay, scores of thousands met and took the great resolve, and in the countryside thousands of villagers assembled at numerous village meetings.

In Lahore, the Congress spoke on behalf of the nation and proclaimed complete independence as our immediate objective. On the Independence Day, it was the nation itself that spoke—India herself with a

1. Allahabad, 28 January 1930. *The Hindu*, 29 January 1930.

If you love India and pine for its freedom then you must help in this struggle.

Sunday, the 26th January, is Independence Day. On that day the national flag will be unfurled and at big meetings the independence resolution will be adopted. In Allahabad on that day the flag will be unfurled at 8 a.m. in the Purshottam Das Tandon Park, and at 5 p.m. there will be a public meeting. All lovers of freedom should attend these meetings.

If you desire to strengthen the Congress in the battle of freedom, you must become its members. Those who want to become volunteers should give their names. The Congress office is located at 51, Hewett Road.

Jawaharlal Nehru
President
Town Congress Committee
Allahabad

27. To B.C. Roy[1]

January 27th, 1930

My dear Bidhan,[2]

I enclose a copy of a letter[3] which I am sending to the secretary, B.P.C.C. The letter will speak for itself. I wish that we could somehow manage to put a final end to the party squabbles that we have had in various parts of the country. We go rapidly to a crisis. We cannot afford to think of petty matters now.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-120/1930 (Pt. II), p. 201, N.M.M.L.
2. Bidhan Chandra Roy (1882-1962); eminent physician and Congressman of Bengal, mayor of Calcutta, 1931-33; Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University, 1942-44; Chief Minister of West Bengal from 1948 till his death.
3. Not printed.

no further explanation. I am afraid you are often very much misled by some of your correspondents in India. I can well understand a difference in outlook. If this difference is fundamental then cooperation is difficult. If there is a fair measure of agreement then it is desirable to work together. In any event it does not help matters much by calling people, with whom you may happen to disagree a little, traitors and the like. Perhaps if you came in personal contact with some of our most aggressive young men who pose as workers' leaders you might change your opinion of them. Some of them undoubtedly are fine young men but some also are entirely untrustworthy.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

31. To R. Bridgeman[1]

January 30th, 1930

My dear Bridgeman,
I enclose a copy of a letter I am sending to the secretary of the League against Imperialism. I have written at length because I wished to deal with the question fully. I wish it was possible for me to go to Europe for a short period to discuss various matters but this is not at present possible. Letters are hardly satisfactory. It seems to me that there is a great deal of misapprehension as to the position in India. I hope you will also write to the League secretariat your views on the matters touched upon by me.

With all good wishes,

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D 23/1929 30, p. 25, N.M.M.L.

million voices taking the pledge of independence and resolving to sever *the British connection* which had ruined her in so many ways. The pledge has been taken. The flag of freedom has been hoisted. Let no one who has taken that pledge forget it or weaken in his resolve, and let no one do anything which may bring dishonour to the national flag.

In the midst of these national rejoicings, I have read with pain and surprise of the slight disturbance[2] that marred the great Bombay demonstration. I do not know all the facts and therefore I hesitate to draw any conclusion or to say much. But I cannot permit any attempt to dishonour the national flag, by whomsoever committed, to pass unnoticed. There is, and should be, no rivalry between our national tricolour flag and the workers' red flag. I honour and respect the red flag, because it represents the blood and suffering of the workers. And our tricolour flag, if it stands for anything, stands for the freedom of the masses of India from exploitation Today, it is the symbol of independence, the outer emblem of our yearning hearts, the sight of which floating bravely and proudly against the blue Indian sky fills us with gladness and gives us strength and hope to go forward and win. We shall tolerate no dishonour to that flag from any country or from any individual, whether he is an Indian or a foreigner. We shall protect it and defend it with full determination, and with the last ounce of strength and energy in us. And those that may attack it and seek to dishonour it shall be none of us and with them we shall have nothing in common.

The pledge of independence has been taken. Let us work to redeem it with right good will.

2. During the Independence Day celebrations in Bombay efforts had been made to hoist the red flag alongside the national flag.

30. To V. Chattopadhyaya[1]

January 30th, 1930

My dear Chatto,

I enclose a formal letter[2] which I am addressing to the secretary of the League against Imperialism. The letter is long enough and requires

1. A.I.C.C. File No F.D.-1/1929-30, p. 45, N.M.M.L.
2. See *post*, item 32.

my recommendation, agreed to associate itself with the League. In doing so it expressly stated in a note that it did not thereby accept all the resolutions or the methods of the League.

So far as the National Congress is concerned, that is its present position. It is not clear, however, what you consider the position of the Congress to be in relation to you. Some time ago when the draft statutes of the League were prepared I pointed this out to you and requested you to make special provision for this kind of association. You informed me that you would do so. Since then I have not heard from you on the subject and I do not know how matters stand.

Your subsequent activity in regard to India, however, makes it appear that you imagine your function to be not only to dictate to us our policy and programme but to criticise in unsparing language those who happen to be at the helm of the Indian National Congress. You have, of course, every right to criticise any body and to suggest any line of activity. But you will appreciate, I hope, that such criticisms do not make it any the easier for us to continue our association with you or contribute to your funds. Our delegate to the Frankfurt Congress definitely recommended to us, after his experience of that Congress, that we should not formally affiliate or associate (he did not appreciate the difference) ourselves with your League. Many members of our Working Committee were of a like opinion but we decided not to take any action which might weaken your position. Your subsequent communications, and specially the circular letter referred to above, make it clear that your principal activity in regard to India at present is to run down the executive of the National Congress as well as the general policy of the Congress as decided at its annual session in Lahore. It is difficult enough to understand an intricate political situation in a distant country. You chose not only to imagine that you had done so far better than 95% of the delegates of the Lahore Congress, but you evidently based your conclusions on telegraphic summaries of the proceedings which must have appeared in the European press. Evidently you could not have seen any detailed report of our proceedings on January 8th when you issued your circular letter.

In this circular letter you have made many wrong statements of fact which were perhaps inevitable as you had no full report before you. The principal object of your letter however is to condemn Mr. Gandhi and the present and past Working Committees of the Congress, who according to you should have been expelled from the Congress itself, and to call upon Congressmen of the left wing to rebel against them and dismiss them from their posts. Who these gentlemen are to whom you appeal I do not know for the main resolution of the Congress was

32. To Secretaries, League against Imperialism[1]

30/1/30

Dear Sirs,[2]

Our office has received a circular letter[3] from you dated January 8th, 1930, addressed to all anti-imperialist organisations in India. This letter, as well as some other communications from you and the attitude adopted towards our delegate, Mr. Shiva Prasad Gupta, at the Frankfurt Congress, impel us to write to you frankly about the relation of the League to our National Congress. We had hoped to avoid any controversy on this subject, although many things that your secretariat had done appeared to us strange, but in view of your persisting in a particular attitude to our Congress we feel that it is neither fair to ourselves nor to you for us to remain silent any longer.

You will remember that in the early days of the League the attitude of the League towards national organisations was repeatedly discussed by the executive council. It was pointed out then that important national organisations could not possibly agree to subordinate themselves to the League or to bind themselves to carry out the dictates of the League. While fully desirous of working against imperialism and appreciating the common platform offered for this purpose by the League, many national organisations were not prepared to subscribe to the entire policy or methods of the League. And in no event could they agree to take orders about policy or programme from the League. This objection was considered a weighty one and in the provisional constitution of the League it was specially laid down that apart from affiliation there could be association of an organisation with the League. Further, it was stated that association meant a general agreement with the aims and objects of the League and did not mean acceptance of all its methods and resolutions. Thereupon the Indian National Congress, on

1 A.I.C.C. File No. P.D.1/1929-30, pp. 47-61, N.M.M.L.
2. V. Chattopadhyaya and Willi Munzenberg
3 This criticised "the leaders and executive officers of the Congress" for having placed themselves "under the dominating leadership of Mr. Gandhi", who was protecting the interests of "the propertied class who are the chief supporters of the imperialist system".

fight to a finish with British imperialism, largely because some of its leaders had the wisdom to prepare the ground for it. It would have been poor consolation indeed for them to talk bravely and keep their individual reputations for extremism and at the same time to see the national movement weaken and hesitate to take the great step forward

I am afraid you have not the least notion of conditions in India and yet you do not hesitate to lay down the law for us. The National Congress has welcomed your League and has agreed to cooperate with you but it cannot tolerate outside interference of the kind you have been carrying on.

It is curious that you should have chosen a moment to attack us when the Congress is more advanced in its views, both political and social, than it has ever been before, and when it has launched a great revolutionary struggle. The capitalist and the zamindari elements have dropped out and are openly siding with the British Government. Many of the richer professional classes are keeping aloof from us because of the risks involved in a struggle for independence. Many Congressmen of old standing have gradually dropped out because of this same fear and also because the Congress is becoming definitely a mass organisation and is developing a socialistic outlook. And yet in spite of these defections the Congress is stronger today than it has been since 1921, and it may soon become more powerful than it was then. This is the critical moment when you have chosen to attack it and to create disruption in it.

The resolution of the Congress repudiating the so-called "national" debt and all unjust concessions has also resulted in scaring away big financial interests and in making it almost impossible, if the Congress remains true to its own declaration, for it to come to any terms with British imperialism.

Four days ago the country celebrated Independence Day at the bidding of the Congress. These celebrations were on a vast scale and the success was beyond our expectations. Millions participated in them. In your circular referred to above you had suggested that these celebrations should be interfered with and their direction taken out of the hands of the Congress. This is the curious attitude you adopt, sitting in a distant place, towards an associated organisation. Fortunately your circular had no effect on any body and the celebrations have resulted in increasing the prestige of the Congress organisation greatly.

You have referred in your circular to the case of China We are well aware of the unfortunate turn of events there and the tyranny of the present government over the workers and the peasants. We realise that this government is largely in the hands of foreign capitalists.

passed almost unanimously, only a dozen out of 2500 delegates voting against it. But the point is that you are trying to take an active part in the internal politics of this Congress, and that part is directly in opposition to the elected executive of the Congress. It is this very executive which deals with you on behalf of the Congress and decides about affiliations and associations and grants. It is not surprising therefore if this executive expresses a desire to discontinue its association with you.

If you feel that there is a vital difference between your viewpoint and that of the Congress then it is obvious that we cannot work on a common platform and the sooner we separate the better. That would be a straightforward course and that would give both parties full freedom of action. But it is an impossible position for us to be associated with you and to be continually attacked by you.

It may interest you to know that the present leaders, who according to you make a habit of betraying their country, have never clung to leadership or to any office in the national organisation. They have been thrust, very often against their will, into positions of responsibility because the great majority so desired. Their views are public enough, and they are not in the habit of delivering radical speeches merely to gain the goodwill of the people. They believe in strong action and not in strong language and perhaps, accustomed as you are to strong language only, you are led to think that our courteous phraseology is a sign of weakness and servility. It may also interest you to know that many strong and radical speeches that seem to impress you from a distance emanate from British secret service agents or from gentlemen whose strength is speech and not action. You seem to imagine that a minority was excluded from the Working Committee because it wanted immediate mass action. You are wholly mistaken. There was no such issue at the time of election of the Committee and, indeed, many of the people who belonged to this minority have shown their desire for immediate mass action by remaining in the official legislatures in spite of the Congress boycott of them.

You may also be interested to learn that the "shameful document", the Delhi Manifesto, was never accepted unconditionally by the Leaders' Conference. The offer of this conference in vague phraseology had deluded many people. In order to bring out the real issues clearly various conditions precedent were laid down in the Manifesto. The failure of the British Government to accede to these conditions immediately convinced large numbers of people of the real intentions of the government and made the path of the Congress towards independence far simpler. The Congress stands today irrevocably committed to a

I should like to have an early answer to this letter from your secretariat. I should also request you to place this letter before the next meeting of your executive council.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

33. To Secretary, Punjab P.C.C.[1]

January 31st, 1930

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter No. 794 dated 28th January.[2] The Working Committee will no doubt issue instructions as to what should be done with those Congressmen who continue in councils in spite of the Congress mandate and in spite of their own pledge. It is open to provincial committees, however, to take action on their own initiative. Before taking any definite action it will be desirable to call upon such members to show cause why disciplinary action should not be taken against them. Perhaps the best course would be to ask them to show cause now and await the meeting of the Working Committee, which will be held on the 14th February, for further instructions in the matter.

Care should be taken to distinguish between the case of those members who definitely went on the Congress ticket and had promised to carry out Congress directions, and those who did not go on such a ticket but otherwise formed members of the Congress party. In the case of the former, they are bound to resign from the council whatever their views may or may not be. Resignation from the Congress executive is not enough to absolve them from the pledge they took and we must take disciplinary action against all such persons.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-125/1930, pp. 67-69, N.M.M.L.
2. He had written that while two Congressmen had resigned from the legislature, another, a member of the A.I.C.C., had not done so, nor had Dewan Chamanlal or any Sikh member.

We would venture to suggest that the present condition of China is a danger signal not only to us but to you also. This condition was brought about largely by the mistaken methods of those who were in charge of the revolutionary movements. A purely revolutionary act may well result in counter-revolution if it does not fit in with the existing circumstances.

We appreciate your motives and believe that you earnestly desire the freedom of India. But your earnestness and good motives divorced from a real knowledge of the situation may well prove harmful for our movement. We cannot abdicate our functions as the executive of the Congress at any body's bidding. We have undertaken the grave responsibility of directing the national movement and we will discharge it to the best of our ability. Today in India there can be only two parties—those who work with the Congress for the independence of India and those who directly or indirectly oppose the Congress and thereby help the British Government. The Congress has done me the high honour of making me its President for the year and it has entrusted Mr. Gandhi with the direction of the movement. Whether you agree with him or not, you must appreciate that he is the only possible leader here today. That, at any rate, is the conviction of the vast majority of the people, even though many of them may not wholly agree with him.

I have written to you at great length because I want you to appreciate fully our position. It is likely that some of us may be arrested in the near future and may thus be removed from the scene of our activities Complaints have repeatedly been made in your executive council and elsewhere that your secretariat is working along communist lines We have no objection to cooperating with communists in a common task but please understand that most of us, and certainly the National Congress, are not communists. If the League is going to function purely as a communist organisation then clearly it is not the place for us. If, however, it is going to be a meeting place for all anti imperialist elements, communist and non-communist, and both viewpoints have sufficient weight attached to them, then there is a possibility of our cooperating together.

In this connection I should like to draw your attention to my personal position also. You have done me the honour of putting me on your executive council I am not of much use there as I cannot attend your meetings. I am prepared however to continue there if the position of non-communists in the League is cleared up. If not, then I would beg of you to treat this letter as my resignation from the council.

35. To Raja Mahendra Pratap[1]

Allahabad
January 1930

My dear Friend,[2]

It was a pleasure to hear from you again.[3] I received your telegram also at Lahore. You must have read in the newspapers of the proceedings at the Lahore Congress. Apart from details the main thing is that the Congress is definitely and finally committed to full independence for India. This is a great gain. In the course of the year there is likely to be a big struggle for independence.

Most Indians are in favour of Pan-Asian unity. It is difficult however to do anything practical in regard to it. As for Russia, I am personally very sympathetic to the great experiment going on there and I have repeatedly stated as much.

I enclose a copy of our *Congress Bulletin*. I would like to send this to you regularly but I do not know to what address I am to send it. Please let me know. There is also some difficulty in sending letters to Afghanistan because apparently the postal arrangements are not good.

We have had no news of the Kabul Congress Committee for a long time. Please ask them, if they still exist, to write to this office formally sending full particulars about their membership, etc. They will also have to send the annual affiliation fee if they want to have the right of representation in the Congress. I shall be glad to have their address.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C C. File No F.D. 22/1929, p 5, N.M.M L.
2. (b 1886); son of Raja Ghanshiam Singh of Murshan in Aligarh district; president, First Provincial Government of Hind founded at Kabul on 1 December 1915; met Lenin in 1919; president of the executive board of Free India, an organization founded in Japan in 1940, returned to India in 1946, member of the Lok Sabha, 1957-62.
3. In his letter of 21 December 1929, Mahendra Pratap had said that Indians must express their support for Soviet Russia, accept the principle of Pan-Asian unity and work for the freedom of all nations and a world federation

In regard to those who did not take this particular pledge, all that the Congress committee can insist on is that they should not occupy any executive office in the Congress. This, however, is my personal view.

Where new elections are held there should certainly be propaganda asking the voters not to vote.

So far as I know, Diwan Chamanlal did not actually take the Congress pledge on seeking election. Please let me know if this is the fact. Nor did the Sikh members so far as I am aware.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

34. To Bansgopal[1]

Allahabad
January 1930

My dear Bansgopal,[2]

I have your letter. There is not such a storm of opposition to the Congress resolutions as you seem to imagine. The fact that we have no nationalist newspapers in the province gives one a wrong impression of what is happening.

I agree with you in much that you say.[3] I am trying to do my best. But after all I can only do one man's work and not that of a dozen.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40/1930, p. 457, N.M.M.L.
2. A Congress worker of Fatehpur, U.P.
3. Bansgopal had made some suggestions for strengthening the Congress

by praising one another. If you have heard or read anything you must be knowing that a hard time is coming in your country. Times have always been hard for you. Which of our peasant brothers has not to face pain and trouble? But now your courage is going to be put to a severe test all over the country. You have heard that about a month ago the big parliament of the country, the Congress, held its session at Lahore. *The Congress is an old organisation. The parliament of this* country was born forty-five years ago. When it was born, our brothers saw that many evils were daily creeping into the country and began to reflect on how to get rid of these troubles. The first thing they observed at the time was that many of our troubles are due to the fact that the people of foreign countries come to rule over us and take away the products of our country. At first they thought it advisable to talk of a few *things* only and in a suppressed tone. *This was forty-five years ago.* They knew of very few things. But slowly this organization gained in strength until it produced ten or twelve leaders whose names you must have heard. Many of the leaders, Lokmanya Tilak for instance, were sent to jail twenty-five years ago. Lala Lajpatrai was one of these. He was arrested and sent to Burma. The arrest of these men caused the power of this big organisation to increase all the more. The reason was that the people began to perceive *what the government was do*ing to their greatest leaders. Whoever was thought to be a big leader by the people, and was most respected by them, would be caught and sent to jail by the British Government. From this we could infer what our position in the country was and could see how poor our country was growing day by day. Famines were frequent and our peasant and labourer brothers were becoming poorer and poorer every day. *Just see how many lakhs and crores of rupees go out of* our country every year. You probably know why the Englishmen came to our country. Our country was thought to be very rich, and in their greed for wealth they came here to trade. We quarrelled amongst ourselves. They deceived us and settled down in our country. They increased their strength slowly until they had established their rule. It was then chiefly because of our quarrels and our folly that they became the rulers here. *Our country was very wealthy* when they came here. You have read about it in books and stories. This was not at the time of the Vedas or of the *Mahabharata*, but only a very short time ago. If you read our history, you will know what was the condition of England. The Englishmen had no wealth in their own country. *It was one of the* poor countries of the world. They came here then, greedy for wealth, and if you look around now you will find that even the people called poor in Britain are very wealthy when compared with you.

36. No Going Back on Pledges[1]

I have noticed with amazement a Lucknow "Free Press" message stating that a special session of the Congress was being discussed because the response had been poor.

The correspondent, who issued this message, must have a fertile brain and I shall be glad to know what, if any, is the reliable source from which he gets his news.

The response to the Lahore Congress decisions has been splendid. The Independence Day has shown what the country wants and what it is going to have. A very large number of council members have resigned but even if not a single one had resigned, the Congress and the country would have gone ahead and left them to muse in their council chambers. Let no one mistake it. There is no going back from the pledges solemnly taken. A greater ideal than that of 1921 is before us and a greater movement than even the noncooperation of nine years ago has begun in earnest. India is fighting for independence and India will be independent despite the doubters and the quibblers.

1 Statement issued at Allahabad, 1 February 1930. *The Tribune*, 5 February 1930.

37. Speech at Tangan[1]

Mr. President and Peasant Brothers,

Just now you have shouted out "*Jai, Jai*" several times, and Pt. Mata Prasad Ji has told you much about me. You should understand now that it is no longer the time to shout "*Jai, Jai*" only. Praising one another is of no use. We have got accustomed to consoling our hearts

1 Based on the translation by official reporters of the speech delivered in Hindi at Tangan, Rae Bareli district, on 5 February 1930. . Home Department (Political) File No 90/1930, National Archives of India.

the business of this organisation? The business is to do away with the evils in the country. If people are becoming weaker and weaker, what will be our condition after a few days? We have to make many efforts. We cannot sit down to make long-drawn-out arrangements. We are hungry at present. It is not enough if some one asks us to wait for ten or twenty days after which the arrangements will be made. Our want is immediate. Your country asks you a big question. What is to be done now?

Now I am not going to tell you the whole history of forty or forty-five years of the Congress. You know that eight years ago the Congress had started the great noncooperation agitation, and Mahatma Gandhi, our great leader, had organized it. He told us that we ought to follow the path of noncooperation to achieve Swaraj for the country and to get rid of our troubles. You will recall that there was a great commotion in the country at that time. The peasants had, at that time, organized themselevs rather well and the zamindars were also frightened by their organisation. The peasants here were fired upon and many of them were arrested. Every effort was made to break the peasants by threats and other such means. You were much threatened. Still the work, which was going on in our country and your district, never slackened. But it is generally true that sometimes the work went ahead fast and sometimes slowly. But you must be knowing that the movement which was started in the country was never stopped. Many people, twenty-five thousand men and women, were sent to jail; still the work did not slacken but continued as before. Many of you must have wondered what benefit you had derived from the arrest of so many people, what was the use of having gone to jail once that you should go again? And what is the use of this talk of Swaraj and of the big flag which was taken out recently? The question, then, is, do you wish to change the present state of things? To this you will reply that you do wish to change it. What, then, is the means of doing it? What are your troubles? Your troubles are that the zamindar makes you pay huge rents and realizes the enhancements in revenue, and his worker or the policeman or other people are ready to trouble you. In Oudh, specially, the zamindar as well as the government had been frightened by the agitation. The government made great promises at that time that they would enact laws preventing eviction. This did not benefit the peasants much. Indeed, it has not benefited you at all. The reason is that so long as the peasants are weak and cannot stand on their own legs, the same state of affairs will continue to exist, however good the laws may be.

On coming here, I have heard that the revenue is being enhanced

What, on the other hand, is the condition of our country? You can also see how poor it has grown and how many people do not even get enough food. It is no use telling you these things. Only last year, after the crops had failed for two or three years, the people had to starve and die for a long time and could not get food for many months. During these hundred and fifty years our country has grown much worse while England has much improved. It is an open affair and not a thing which requires teaching. That much wealth has gone out of our country, you yourself will know if you look around. It is not easy to explain this. You peasants pay lakhs of rupees but the zamindar keeps one large portion of it, and another large portion goes to the government. This is direct taxation. But when you go to the market and buy something, a large portion of the money paid by you goes to the government. Take the example of salt. You know that salt is also taxed, though you do not have to pay this tax. But the taxation of salt increases its price and the government is paid out of the price that you pay. The money collected in this way goes to a foreign country. When you wear foreign cloth, you send your money to a foreign country. You like foreign cloth, but you do not know that by the price you pay you make your country poorer. This money goes across the seven seas. If all the people do such things how much money would go out? This is how the money goes out of your country. If the money goes out of your country like this and you do not get money from foreign lands in exchange for this, the country will become poorer, famine will result and epidemics will break out. What is famine? If the rains fail even a little, there is a great deal of weeping and crying over the failure of crops. Agriculture is not practised in our land only, but in other places also. But have you ever heard of famines in these places? The people of these places never die of epidemics. But they are wealthy. One or two crops may fail, but they have money and are not afraid. You are afraid of the failure of crops because you have no money. As for food, it can be brought from Cawnpore, Partabgarh and Allahabad, if there is a shortage of it at Rae Bareli. Food can never be scarce. It is the money which runs short. This is not true famine. If the food is before you, but you have not the money necessary for buying it, it cannot be called true famine but a shortage of money. The thing is that our peasants have become so poor that they can be blown away by a breath, and die in thousands during the epidemics. You wail and beg of high officers with folded hands but you have to think how your troubles can disappear. This cannot happen by begging with folded hands. Small branches of this big organisation of the country, which holds its session annually, exist in your districts and tahsils. What is

not forced to it. So now, neither the zamindars nor the government will give up their or its benefit so long as we do not force them and they do not begin to be afraid that the peasants of the country have become strong.

So this is your problem. If you wish to improve your condition, you will have to increase your strength and fight them and show that you can no longer bear their tyranny. They will threaten and try to frighten you. We ourselves have allowed ourselves to be frightened and have consented to continue in slavery as we have done up till now and to be kicked about by them as we have always been. You ought to be sure that your condition has become such that however much you are repressed you will no longer go to them. This is quite possible. If the peasants are organized, neither the zamindar nor the government, nor the police, nor anyone else whosoever can keep them down. These people can continue to threaten you for a short time only. If during this time you fall, you will gain nothing whatever. But if you can fight, you are bound to win. You should, therefore, rise up now; and, after all, you shall have to rise before tyranny. If you do not wish to do it, keep on undergoing hardships. But if you do want to do away with these things you will have to do a good deal of fighting. Not only a good deal but much fighting and trouble will have to be borne. What this trouble will be, I cannot tell you. It may be that your goods will be confiscated or that the police officers will threaten you. But I really cannot say what it will be. They will keep on trying to frighten you so long as they see that the peasants can be suppressed. But what will they do when they find the peasants cannot be put down? So your condition cannot improve so long as they think that you can be suppressed and frightened. If some one asks you, 'What was the result of going to jail on the former occasion?' you also should ask him, 'What was the condition of the zamindar and the government when we were strong?' The zamindar and the government became presumptuous the moment you had weakened. You can see for yourself that in proportion to the weakening of your power they will tyrannize over you, and in proportion to the increase in your power they will become weaker. Your power will increase only in proportion to your preparations. I ask you neither to go to jail nor to keep out of it, but you should understand that no one can do away with his troubles so long as he is not prepared to fight. Do you think that your troubles will disappear by your sitting idle and doing nothing? To what a condition have our peasants been reduced! Even the meanest policeman behaves like a lion when he approaches them. The parliament of our country, the Congress, has been thinking over these things and has found that the poverty and

and ejectment is practised. You want to stop these things. The zamindar is against you and wants to extort as much as he can through the rent. Your government also wants to get as much money as possible so that it may pay high salaries. You must have heard of the man who was beaten with his own shoe. Money is realized from us and through it the army and the police are maintained in order to suppress us. We are oppressed by our own money. Whose money is it? It is the peasant's money. Go to big cities like Allahabad, Lucknow or Delhi, and you will find big palaces for the governors being built there. Seventeen or eighteen lakhs of rupees have been spent on buildings in New Delhi. Where does all this money come from? It comes from the peasant. A small portion comes from the inhabitants of the cities. But what comes from the cities is spent in the cities. How much of the money realized as rent is spent on you? We want that the money collected from the country should be spent for the benefit of the country. There are many things which can be done for the good of the country, such as the spread of education, the making of roads, the opening of the hospitals. Money is required for this. It is the duty of your panchayat that when it has money, it should open good dispensaries all over the country, make good roads and arrange for sanitation and provide for educational facilities. The money that you pay should be spent on you; only then can your condition improve. But of the money which is realized from you, how much is spent on you? If a hundred rupees are realized, five of these are spent upon you and ninety-five on the pay of big Englishmen, the building of big palaces and the maintainance of large armies. Much of the money is sent to foreign lands. This will continue, and what will be its result? Our country will continue to be harmed. Of the people who live in our country, a handful are big people but the remainder are poor. All the inhabitants are becoming poor while the peasants are being ground down. What are the burdens on the peasant? On the one hand is the burden of running the whole of the government and paying the salaries of big officials and on the other the burden of the zamindar and his workers. How can the poor, unfortunate peasant bear these burdens? He is being ground down by the burden while you are asking, 'What shall we do?' Can you not do anything because you are afraid? Such big issues are before the country. If you wish it, you can lighten these huge burdens of the government and the zamindar. These will not disappear by shouting "*Jai, Jai*" or by clapping. The government is here for its own benefit. So long as it is benefited it will not abdicate. One or two zamindars may exist, who do not seek their own benefit, but all of them cannot be of this nature. No one gives up his benefits so long as he is

not forced to it. So now, neither the zamindars nor the government will give up their or its benefit so long as we do not force them and they do not begin to be afraid that the peasants of the country have become strong.

So this is your problem. If you wish to improve your condition, you will have to increase your strength and fight them and show that you can no longer bear their tyranny. They will threaten and try to frighten you. We ourselves have allowed ourselves to be frightened and have consented to continue in slavery as we have done up till now and to be kicked about by them as we have always been. You ought to be sure that your condition has become such that however much you are repressed you will no longer go to them. This is quite possible. If the peasants are organized, neither the zamindar nor the government, nor the police, nor anyone else whosoever can keep them down. These people can continue to threaten you for a short time only. If during this time you fall, you will gain nothing whatever. But if you can fight, you are bound to win. You should, therefore, rise up now; and, after all, you shall have to rise before tyranny. If you do not wish to do it, keep on undergoing hardships. But if you do want to do away with these things you will have to do a good deal of fighting. Not only a good deal but much fighting and trouble will have to be borne. What this trouble will be, I cannot tell you. It may be that your goods will be confiscated or that the police officers will threaten you. But I really cannot say what it will be. They will keep on trying to frighten you so long as they see that the peasants can be suppressed. But what will they do when they find the peasants cannot be put down? So your condition cannot improve so long as they think that you can be suppressed and frightened. If some one asks you, 'What was the result of going to jail on the former occasion?' you also should ask him, 'What was the condition of the zamindar and the government when we were strong?' The zamindar and the government became presumptuous the moment you had weakened. You can see for yourself that in proportion to the weakening of your power they will tyrannize over you, and in proportion to the increase in your power they will become weaker. Your power will increase only in proportion to your preparations I ask you neither to go to jail nor to keep out of it, but you should understand that no one can do away with his troubles so long as he is not prepared to fight. Do you think that your troubles will disappear by your sitting idle and doing nothing? To what a condition have our peasants been reduced! Even the meanest policeman behaves like a lion when he approaches them. The parliament of our country, the Congress, has been thinking over these things and has found that the poverty and

they are at present. The Englishmen have framed such laws that our sources of business are being destroyed. If you are a peasant and till the land, you want that the land should belong to you and be your own property, that there should be no possibility of your being ejected and that the problem of taxes and enhancement of revenue should not face you every day. This, then, should be the meaning of Swaraj for each one of you. If, then, some one in India asks the meaning of Swaraj for the peasant he should be informed that it means that the land should belong to the peasant and that, if by using their strength peasants organise their panchayats and thus increase their power, their panchayats should rule the country. If there is a parliamentary form of government established in the country, the majority should be obeyed At present, only a few men are obeyed. They enforce their will through the threats of the police which has you under its feet. But this can never happen if you have the power in your hands.

In my opinion the zamindar community is quite superfluous. I cannot understand the sense of zamindari. The man who works should enjoy the fruits of his labour while the man who sits on the cushion should get nothing. If I have my way I will arrange that no one should be idle and that the man who works harder should get more, while the man who works less should get less. This is my resolution. Look at other countries. The landlords in these places are slowly disappearing. It does not mean that they should run away, but that, finding themselves idle, they should exert themselves. The land should belong to the peasant. If this problem is to be solved, you alone can solve it. The one thing to be considered is this: what will be the respective share taken by you and them in this battle for Purna Swaraj, which the parliament of the country is going to begin in right earnest? This is your own battle. If you want to do away with your troubles, you should, like a soldier, take full part in it. You have seen that seven or eight days ago the Independence Day was observed all over the country. Thousands of men took part in it. It was observed in big cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Lahore, Benares and Lucknow. From this you could infer how many persons wanted complete independence. You should remember that the police used threats and tried to frighten away the people from the procession. The sub-inspectors and other officers who were present tried their best that the people should not take part in it. Still lakhs and crores of people took part in it. The country is offended and worried. It wants to get out of this condition somehow or the other. But to get out of it we should strengthen and organize ourselves and await Mahatmaji's orders On the day he asks you to stop paying taxes, the payment should be stopped. If we refuse to pay a tax, and even ten persons go on

paying it, our strength will be decreased. But they, and no one else, will be the losers because of it. The problem of the enhancement of revenue is before you at Rae Bareli. About this, what advice shall I offer you? In my opinion you have the right to refuse the payment of the whole revenue. At least the zamindar's share is absolutely wasted; you are having bad crops. It appears to be blindness to me to propose the enhancement of revenue. But you have to decide for yourself. I have heard that to consider these things a meeting of your tahsil is to be held after a month or five or six weeks. It should be held in other tahsils also. You should all meet and decide what is to be done about these troubles. We are prepared to advise you, but really it is you alone who can decide it. If you help yourself, we also will help you. I hope, then, that Rae Bareli will be foremost in the big battle now being fought.

38. Call to Action[1]

The Working Committee after careful and anxious consideration has decided that civil resistance should be started.[2] The decision was not lightly taken nor with any disregard of the immediate and ultimate consequences. The civil resistance, however it may begin, will develop into a mass campaign and the whole strength of the Congress organisation and the nation will have to be concentrated on it. The A.I.C.C. has been convened and will meet on the 21st March to take stock of the existing situation and give marching orders for the future.

Meanwhile, all provincial Congress committees should meet to consider the general situation and specially chalk out the plan they contemplate to adopt in their provinces. All Congressmen will naturally watch eagerly the beginning of civil resistance. They must help this

1. Statement to the press issued on 17 February 1930. *The Tribune*, 20 February 1930
2. Meeting at Ahmedabad from 14 to 16 February 1930, the Working Committee had authorised Mahatma Gandhi to start civil disobedience as and when he chose.

great movement by maintaining perfect discipline in their ranks remembering that nonviolence is the essence of this kind of action. At the right time they can become civil resisters in their own provinces. But this must be done in a disciplined way so as to help the central struggle.

It is now for the provincial committees to consider what method of civil resistance is possible. The decision of the Lahore Congress has to be honoured. The pledge taken on the Independence Day has to be redeemed. Get ready for action. The time has come.

39. Message to Volunteers[1]

Again the nation has to face a great struggle for freedom, a grim struggle and a difficult one, but nonetheless a joyful one. For the prize in front of us is none other than Indian independence and the future happiness and well being of the Indian people. What part will the Seva Dal play in this good fight? Surely they will be of the vanguard carrying proudly the tricolour standard of freedom to the citadel so long occupied by the foreigner. It was for this that the Seva Dal was started; for this that we have laboured and trained quietly and without ostentation these many years. The time has come and the hour of trial is on us. Who comes forward with faith and courage in his heart and joy on his countenance?

The volunteers of the Seva Dal are the soldiers of freedom. To them has come the high honour of serving their country at a great moment of her destiny. May they ever remember that they have the country's honour in their keeping and do nothing to tarnish or sully it. They desire no leadership but service and sacrifice. Perfect discipline must be their motto.

All Seva Dal branches should improve their organisation and enrol and train members. Those members who voluntarily desire to take the pledge of civil disobedience should do so, but there should be absolutely no compulsion in the matter. Let everyone weigh for himself or herself the consequences and having come to a decision stick to it.

1. Bombay, 18 February 1930. *The Searchlight*, 2 March 1930.

40. To Shiva Prasad Gupta[1]

February 24th, 1930

My dear Shiva Prasad,

I have your two letters of the 8th and the 16th *Magh*. I have also read your correspondence with Chatto. It does seem very strange that they should have got through an important and controversial resolution[2] without any clear reference to you. I am afraid I do not at all like these backstairs methods. As you know I have already written to the League against Imperialism regarding our association with them. During the Congress last year no mention was made of the League or our association with them. It may however be presumed that our association continues so long as it is not definitely put an end to. I am waiting for the answer of the League before putting the matter before the Working Committee, or, if you like, we shall wait till you return. I enclose a copy of the letter I am sending to the League on this matter.

You must have seen the Working Committee's resolution regarding civil disobedience. The progress of matters cannot be delayed any longer and it may be that before you come back to India much may happen here and you may miss many old faces.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C C File No F D. 1/1929 30, N M M L
2. The League against Imperialism had resolved that the Congress could not be relied upon for an "uncompromising struggle against imperialism".

41. Circular to Secretaries, P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad,
February 25th, 1930

Dear Sir,

I have been directed by the Working Committee to take the necessary steps under the disciplinary rules of the Congress against members of

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F-1/1930, p. 111, N M M.L.

the Congress who have violated the Congress mandate in regard to the boycott of councils and still continue in elective Congress committees. It is desirable that wherever such steps have to be taken they should be taken early. I have, however, no sufficient information at my disposal to enable me to take necessary action. Most provincial committees have not yet sent authorised lists of those who have resigned and those who have not. This should be done immediately.

It should also be clearly stated if any present member of the central and provincial legislature is a member of any Congress elective committee. If so, he must be asked by you immediately to resign from either the legislature or the elective Congress committee. He cannot remain a member of both. He may, however, continue as a four-anna member. Please therefore put this alternative to such members and communicate their replies to me within ten days if possible.

This procedure will apply to all members of the legislatures who are in the Congress committee.

In the case of those persons who went on the Congress ticket to the councils and took the pledge and yet have refused to resign, it may be necessary to take some further action against them as their conduct is more reprehensible. Please therefore clearly indicate who such persons are.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

42. To J. Adhikari[1]

February 25th, 1930

Dear Comrade,

.... So far as the G.I.P. Railway strike[2] is concerned I have expressed my views pretty clearly on several occasions. I think that the railwaymen were perfectly justified in striking and I think it is up to the other

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-13/1930, p. 1, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. Over 75,000 employees of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway had gone on strike from 4 February 1930, to protest against the unfair treatment given to the Indian employees.

railwaymen in India to support them in every way. It would certainly be a very fine thing if all the railwaymen in India could strike in support of the G.I.P. workers. Not knowing the exact position of other railway unions and what they are prepared to do, I can hardly make fervent appeals to them to strike. But certainly I should welcome such a strike if it could be brought about.

I agree with you that all industrial struggles are ultimately of the nature of political struggles. Indeed this should be so. I am not sure, however, how far this point of view is understood by the average striker. I should like him to appreciate it and act accordingly....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

43. Resolution at U.P.P.C.C.[1]

The economic programme for the nation should lay down that the principal industries of the country are owned and controlled by the state, and the land is owned, as far as possible, by the peasant who works on it. In particular the programme should include the following proposals:

1. The land system to be changed so as to remove all intermediaries between the cultivator and the state. The creation of small holdings, usually enough for one family to work in. No right of alienation.
2. Reduction of land revenue.
3. Annulment of agricultural indebtedness, partial compensation being paid.
4. Formation of producers' and consumers' cooperatives.
5. Principal industries to be owned and controlled by the state.
6. Principal means of transportation and distribution to be owned and controlled by the state.

1. *The Leader*, 1 March 1930
Jawaharlal moved this resolution at the meeting of the U.P.P.C.C. which met at Allahabad on 26 February 1930. The Committee referred it to its council for consideration

7. Minimum income for all workers. No taxation of any kind if income is below this minimum.
8. No indirect taxation as far as possible. Abolition of salt tax.
9. Direct taxation on steeply graduated scale. The principle of income tax to be applied to income from land.
10. Inheritance taxes also steeply graduated.
11. Eight hour day and 44 hour week.
12. Organisation of people, for purposes of representation, into occupational groups.

44. To Edo Fimmen[1]

March 4th, 1930

My dear Fimmen,

Your letter of the 12th November only reached me a few days ago.

I have already sent you a copy of a letter I sent to the League against Imperialism.[2] I quite agree with you that it will be very unfortunate if the League carries on in the way it did at Frankfurt. Unfortunately I could not get full reports of the Frankfurt proceedings. Only gradually I got to know of what happened there. I am now awaiting the reply of the League which should come soon.

Thank you for your copy of the proposals of your committee regarding the extension of the I.T.F.[3] I should be very glad if I could help. I do not quite know what I can do.

For the last two or three weeks a big railway strike on the G.I.P. Rly. has been going on here. The strike has been quite successful. As usual, however, there has been trouble at the top. The rank and file had behaved well but the leaders do their utmost to injure the workers' cause by mutual strife.

Within a few days the National Congress is going to begin a civil disobedience campaign against the government. This campaign is likely to develop and to become a big affair soon. What the mass response

1 AICC File No F.D 1/1929-30, pp 21-23, NMML.
2 See *ante*, item 32.
3 International Transport Federation.

to such a campaign is likely to be it is always difficult to prophesy. But there is so much economic distress not only among the workers and peasants but also the intellectuals that it is highly likely that the movement will spread rapidly. Recently there was a celebration all over India of Independence Day. This was a very great success.

This national fight for independence is going to be a big affair. Obviously the British Government is not going to give in unless absolutely forced to do so. India is too great a prize to be given up lightly. At the same time those at the back of the independence movement in India are also pretty determined and will carry on whatever the consequences. It is probable that before long many of us may be arrested. Perhaps I may not be able to write to you again for some time. That will not mean that we have forgotten you. It will simply mean that the British Government has made it impossible for us to communicate with our friends. Whatever happens I shall think of you and other friends in Europe and it will be a comfort to feel that we have your whole-hearted sympathy. The national struggle in India has a tendency to become a racial one. Many of us here want to avoid this. In this we are helped greatly by the sympathy of friends in Europe and elsewhere. I am glad to say that the National Congress itself is becoming more and more social stie in its outlook though the basis of the struggle is still national. Most of the rich elements like the landlords and the big capitalists are against us.

The Indian Trade Union Congress is not in a very flourishing condition. Last year there was a split as you probably know. This itself would not matter much but unfortunately the failure of several big strikes has resulted in a natural reaction. Also, the worker is a bit fed up with the quarrels of the leaders. As usual the really active elements are often those who are communistically inclined. These people are sometimes very good workers. At the same time they have a peculiar knack of annoying and irritating others. It seems to be a deliberate policy of communists to be offensive. As a matter of fact there are very few real communists in India. Many people who pose as such are British agents.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

45. To Shiva Prasad Gupta[1]

March 5th, 1930

My dear Shiva Prasad,
I have your letter of the 28th *Magh*. I have already dealt in my previous letters to you with the question of our association with the League against Imperialism. It is clear that we cannot admit the right of the League to boss over us in any way. As soon as I hear from them in reply to my letters I shall put the matter up before the Working Committee.

It may be, however, that we may not have time to consider these questions. We are on the eve of great developments and we have to concentrate on the main issue. I wish you were here also.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 1/1929-30, p. 25, N.M.M.L.

46. Message to Baroda State People's Conference[1]

March 13th, 1930

Dear Sir,[2]
As I am unable to be present at your conference,[3] I gladly accede to your request to send you my good wishes. The strange notion that the Indian states were something apart from the rest of India and that what is called British India could carry on without any reference to the states

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40/1930, p. 439, N.M.M.L.
2. B. R. Naik of the Baroda State Prajamandal. He was chairman of the reception committee of the Conference.
3. The Conference was to be held at Navsari on 18 March 1930.

is rapidly disappearing. It was time it did. We have to realise that our interests are identical and are indissolubly linked together. Neither of us can do without the other. It is very gratifying to notice the increased activity of the people of the states. India is in the throes of a great national struggle today. It is not possible for anyone, whether he lives in British India or in the states, to keep himself cut off in the struggle.

I wish you all success in your conference.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

47. The Problem of Minorities[1]

The curtain has gone up again on the Indian stage and all the world is witness to our struggle for freedom. It is a strange struggle and our methods are novel. But it is also a grim struggle and the pledge that India took on Independence Day, January 26th, will not be forgotten. The spark that was lit by our leader on the banks of the Sabarmati is already spreading like a prairie fire throughout the country and soon the whole land will try to redeem that pledge. Many a tragic scene will be enacted and many an actor on this vast stage will suffer torment before the curtain rings down finally on a free India.

But even when the fight is fiercest and consumes all our energies we must remember that the true solution of our difficulties can come only when we have won over and given satisfaction to our minorities. Today it is unfortunately the fact that some of them fear the majority and for fear of it keep apart from the struggle for freedom. Fortunately, this applies to some members only of the minority groups and not to all. Many brave Muslims, specially in the Punjab and the North West Frontier Province, are in the vanguard of the struggle. The gallant Sikhs are happily with us and will allow no others to outstrive them in courage and sacrifice. But it is sad that some who were our comrades in arms ten years ago are not with us today. None of us who had the

1. 14 March 1930. *Young India*, 15 May 1930.

privilege of marching shoulder to shoulder with them then can forget the brave part they took and the sacrifices they made. We cherish that memory and we are confident that when the fight thickens they will take their rightful place in the forefront.

The history of India and of many of the countries of Europe has demonstrated that there can be no stable equilibrium in any country so long as an attempt is made to crush a minority or to force it to conform to the ways of the majority. There is no surer method of rousing the resentment of the minority and to keep it apart from the rest of the nation than to make it feel that it has not got the freedom to stick to its own ways. Repression and coercion can never succeed in coercing a minority. They but make it more self-conscious and more determined to value and hold fast to what it considers its very own. It matters little whether logic is on its side or whether its own particular brand of culture is worthwhile or not. The mere fear of losing it makes it dear. Freedom to keep it would itself lessen its value. The new Russia has gone a long way in solving its minorities problem by giving each one of them the fullest cultural, educational and linguistic freedom.

Therefore we in India must make it clear to all that our policy is based on granting this freedom to the minorities and that under no circumstances will any coercion or repression of them be tolerated. There is hardly any likelihood of economic questions affecting the minorities as such, but should they do so we can also lay down as our deliberate policy that there shall be no unfair treatment of any minority. Indeed, we should go further and state that it will be the business of the state to give favoured treatment to minority and backward communities.

In a free India political representation can only be on national lines. I would like this representation to be on an economic basis which would fit in with modern conditions far more than territorial representation and would also automatically do away with the lines of demarcation along communal lines. With religious and cultural and linguistic freedom granted, the principal questions that will arise in our legislatures will be economic ones, and divisions on them cannot be on communal lines. But, whatever the method of representation adopted may be, it must be such as to carry the goodwill of the minorities.

If these principles are accepted and adhered to, I do not think any minority can have a grievance or feel that it is ignored. It is possible, however, that while agreeing to these principles the minority may doubt the *bona fides* of the majority in giving effect to them. To that the only effective answer can be the translation of these principles into action. Unfortunately, the ability to translate them into action can only come

with the conquest of power in the state. If the *bona fides* of the majority are doubted, as they might well be, then even pacts and agreements are of little value. A general and country-wide adoption of certain broad principles can create a public opinion strong enough to prevent even an aggressive and evil intentioned majority from going astray. But temporary pacts between individuals or even representatives cannot have the same value.

These principles should apply to all minority groups—to the Muslims, *who really are in such large numbers in India that it is inconceivable* that any majority can coerce them; to the Sikhs who, although small in numbers, are a powerful and well knit group; to the Parsis, to the Anglo-Indians or Eurasians who are gradually drifting to nationalism; and to all other minorities.

What is the present position of the Congress on this vital question? The Nehru Report has lapsed, but surely the non-controversial parts of the report remain. The Fundamental Rights, as stated there, included religious, cultural, linguistic and educational freedom. This declaration must remain and it removes at once the major fears of a minority. So far as other matters are concerned, minorities as such will hardly be affected and the Lahore Congress had declared that in an independent India such questions should be solved on strictly national lines. It has gone further. It has assured the Muslims, the Sikhs and other minorities that if any solution of any communal problem is proposed in future it will not be accepted by the Congress unless it gives full satisfaction to the parties concerned. A more complete guarantee could not have been given and if the Congress remains true to its words no minority need have the least fear.

Thus the Congress has endeavoured to give effect to the principles that should govern the treatment of minorities. If in the eyes of some it is suspect still it is not because of what it has done but because of want of trust and an unjustified fear. The Congress, I trust, will remain true to these principles and will demonstrate to the country that in communal matters it will not deviate to the right or the left and will hold the centre impartially. It will, I hope, prove to the minority communities that in independent India, for which we strive, theirs will be an honoured and a favoured place. And by its sacrifices and its determined courage in the fight for freedom it will convince all of its *bona fides*.

48. The Satyagraha Pledge[1]

Various forms of pledges for volunteers offering themselves for civil disobedience are being used in the country and thousands have already signed these pledges. It was felt, however, by the Working Committee that it would be desirable to have a uniform pledge for all such volunteers. Members of the Committee considered the various pledges and later some of them had the advantage of consulting Gandhiji on the subject. With his approval, the following pledge was drawn up:

1. I desire to join the civil resistance campaign for the independence of India undertaken by the National Congress.
2. I accept the creed of the National Congress, that is, "the attainment of Purna Swaraj (complete independence) by the people of India by all peaceful and legitimate means".
3. I am ready and willing to go to jail and undergo all other sufferings and penalties that may be inflicted on me in this campaign.
4. In case I am sent to jail I shall not seek any monetary help for my family from the Congress funds.
5. I shall implicitly obey the orders of those who are in charge of the campaign.

This pledge is simpler and shorter than many already in use. It will be noticed that it does not refer specifically to khadi or communal unity, which are usually mentioned in such pledges. This, of course, does not mean that the Congress is going to lay less stress on these items of our programme. The Congress will continue to lay the greatest stress on these and it is hoped that volunteers will remember this fact. It was felt, however, that if we are to have a mass campaign of civil disobedience in which hundreds of thousands take part our pledge must be a simple one, chiefly laying stress on civil disobedience.

The signing of this pledge by anyone does not automatically make him or her acceptable as a satyagrahi. The signed pledge is merely an application which may or may not be accepted by the committee concerned.

1. Circular issued from Allahabad, 24 March 1930. A.I.C.C. File No. 8/1930, p. 229, N.M.M.L.

Those who have already signed pledges which are stiffer than the one suggested above need not sign again. It is not essential that signatories to the pledge be four-anna members of the Congress.

Jawaharlal Nehru

49. Note on Congress Disputes in Bengal[1]

I have received a letter from Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy in which he has given an account of this conflict, specially so far as the Corporation elections were concerned.[2] I need hardly say that I have watched this conflict with dismay. I have purposely avoided interfering because I could not see my way to doing anything which might reasonably be expected to put an end to it. I had hoped that in view of the conviction of various leaders the parties would come nearer each other. I had further hoped that in any event the advent of the civil disobedience campaign would put an end to internal troubles. It is exceedingly unfortunate that in spite of the fact that the whole country is on the verge of mass civil disobedience and we are faced with the biggest national struggle of our generation petty election squabbles should go on in Calcutta and should to some extent neutralise the effort of Bengal in the coming fight.

Personally, I was of opinion in Lahore that we should keep away completely from municipal elections. The Congress, however, deleted the clause dealing with the boycott of municipalities and thus left it open to Congressmen to seek election to them on the Congress ticket. This of course did not mean that Congressmen have to do so. Indeed, in many provinces provincial committees have decided to keep away from municipal elections. Whatever doubts any of us might have had about the desirability of contesting municipal elections have certainly been

1. 29 March 1930. A I C.C. File No. G-120/1930 (Pt. I), pp. 63-67, N.M.M.L.
2. Roy had accused the Calcutta District Congress Committee of defying, under Sen Gupta's instructions, the Bengal P.C.C. during the elections to the Calcutta Corporation.

removed by the exhibition of mutual friction and intolerance amongst Congressmen in Calcutta. It has been an amazing sight—on the one side the country ringing with preparations for civil disobedience; on the other, Congressmen spending their time and energy and money in attacking each other for the purpose of gaining admittance to the Calcutta Corporation. I cannot conceive that any person who is desirous of taking an effective part in the civil disobedience campaign would care to enter a municipality at this stage. And I hope that even now Congressmen in the Corporation or outside will attach more importance to civil disobedience than to the Corporation.

I have been asked by Dr. Roy to give my opinion on certain issues raised by him It is clear that I cannot give anything resembling a decision as between the B.P.C.C. and the Calcutta District Congress Committees without giving the fullest opportunity to both parties to state their case. Even so I would be somewhat reluctant to interfere as past experience has shown that such interference does not help much. I am convinced that the troubles in Bengal will be put an end to by friends in Bengal themselves when they have come to the conclusion that they must do so.

Although I cannot give any decision or final advice in the matter I propose to give my opinion on some of the issues involved. This opinion is, of course, subject to any further information that I may receive from either party.

I have read various papers, pledge forms, newspaper articles and correspondence on the subject of the recent Corporation elections. It seems to me that there can be no doubt that certain district Congress committees in Calcutta definitely refused to obey the B.P.C.C. They in fact rebelled against some of the B.P.C.C.'s decisions and some of their own men stated that they had rebelled. What justification they had for this rebellion, I cannot say without studying their side of the case. But it is manifest that there was rebellion. If this is granted then the rest follows and it is not surprising that the spirit of defiance should continue.

The very word 'rebellion' denotes a breaking of the constitution. It may be justified by special reasons but it is a clear breach of the constitution. No organisation can be carried on if its component bodies are always defying the central authority. It is often unfortunately the case that the central authority itself makes a mistake or exercises its power unfairly. Ordinarily the only course open is for the minority to try to convert the majority. Any other way is fraught with the gravest consequences. Unhappily, in Bengal, I regret to say, there has not been much of the sporting spirit which puts up with defeat after a fair

fight and which organises for future victory. There has been too much of walking out and dissension and formation of rival factions. This can only lead to the break-up of the whole organisation.

The B.P.C.C. may have erred grievously in many things. But nonetheless it continues to be the properly organised Congress agency in Bengal and unless some extraordinary event occurs the district Congress committees owe allegiance to it. Rule 3 of the B.P.C.C. is quite clear on this point, but indeed no rule was necessary. In view of this fact, *prima facie* the action of the district committees in regard to the Corporation elections was a clear contravention of the constitution. The issuing of separate pledges was most unfortunate. It could only result in confusing the public, bringing the Congress into disrepute and, particularly, demoralising candidates. The very least that the districts might have done was to refer the matter to the Working Committee of the A.I.C.C. No such reference was made. It seems that the districts were out to form an organisation which would be a rival to the B.P.C.C.

It may be that as the districts contend it was their proper function to take charge of the Corporation elections, and the B.P.C.C. had no business to intervene. Even so, who is to be the final authority to decide? Obviously, in any ordered society or organisation there must be a final authority. I can conceive of no other authority within Bengal than the B.P.C.C. itself. Of course, as I have stated, the matter could have been referred to the A.I.C.C. This final authority of the B.P.C.C. has been deliberately challenged by the district committees.

This may be a legal or a constitutional view. My real difficulty however is that obviously there must be something seriously wrong in Bengal Congress politics to produce such a situation. Why is it that the B.P.C.C. has alienated so many Congressmen and so many districts? The authority of the B.P.C.C. can ultimately rest only on the willing cooperation of its constituent bodies. If it loses that cooperation the inference is almost inevitable that it has erred to some extent at least. A mere reliance on the letter of the law will not help greatly. If I may suggest to the B.P.C.C., it should be its endeavour more to win over those who are at present indisposed to it than to compel them to submit. If I may make a suggestion to the district committees, it is this: that whatever their grievances against the B.P.C.C. may be their methods have been utterly wrong, and wrong methods never lead to right results.

I now proceed to give my opinion on the five issues raised by Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy. As I have stated above, everything that I say is subject to modification after I have heard the other side. These are my tentative replies only.

1. It seems to me that it was very wrong of the districts to issue separate pledges in contravention of a certain pledge issued by the B.P.C.C. I say this regardless of the merits of the other question, that is to say, as to whether the B.P.C.C. or the district committees should run the election.
2. It seems to me even more improper of the districts to insist on members, who had already signed the B.P.C.C. pledge, cancelling and adjuring that pledge. To ask a man who has signed any pledge to give it up can never be good morals and in politics it can only lead to demoralisation. It is obvious that this has been the result already in the Calcutta Corporation. The sight of councillors shifting about from group to group and pledge to pledge is not an elevating one.
3. I do not understand how any such body as the Congress municipal council can exist if its members belong to various groups some of whom do not choose to obey the B.P.C.C. There can only be such a council or such a group with a common loyalty. If members owe allegiance to different pledges and different committees there is bound to be continuous friction.
4. Therefore, if such groups continue, it is better that those who have taken different pledges should form separate groups, however undesirable this may be. Obviously, this would lead to disruption and cannot be commended.
5. So far as the B.P.C.C. is concerned, it has obviously to stand by those who have taken its pledge and stand by it.

I have given above my views. But I feel very strongly that the matter is not merely a legal one. I wish even now that the Congress could cut adrift from the Corporation. Let the real test of leadership be the capacity for sacrifice, not a desire for power and position.

I am sending a copy of this note to the Calcutta district committees for their information. I would beg that this note be not sent to the newspapers for publication although, of course, it is not a confidential document and may be shown or read out at committee meetings. Within an hour or two I am leaving Allahabad and I shall be away almost continuously for the next ten days. When I come back here the country is likely to be in the throes of civil disobedience. No one can say what the outcome of that will be and I am afraid I can be of little service to friends in Bengal in regard to these internal squabbles. They must settle their own troubles and march shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the country.

Jawaharlal Nehru

50. To Secretary, League against Imperialism[1]

April 9th, 1930

Dear Sir,

Your letter dated 26th February acknowledged our letter of the 30th January and you promised to place our letter before your executive committee. I do not know if you have done so or not. The matter is urgent and it is to be considered by our Working Committee at an early date. Kindly therefore expedite your reply and send it by air mail.

Quite apart from what your executive committee might think I should like to know what your secretariat thinks about it. The main burden of carrying on the work lies on the secretariat and if the secretariat itself approves, as it probably does, the recent circulars and activities of the League then it becomes difficult for the National Congress to remain associated with the league.

I have been given to understand on reliable authority that some newspapers in Berlin have announced the fact that I have been expelled from your executive committee. I was not aware of this fact as you had not taken the trouble to communicate it to me. I do not know what your procedure is but it does seem extraordinary that statements should be made in the press without any previous or subsequent intimation being sent to me. I make no grievance of this. I draw your attention to it only because it has deepened my conviction that my outlook differs greatly from yours. Whether you have expelled me or not, I entirely agree with you that there is no point in my continuing to remain a member of a committee which does not want me and which I cannot attend. You will therefore kindly remove my name from your committee.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C.C. File No. F.D. 1/1929-30, p. 3, N.M.M.L.

51. On the Boycott of British Drugs[1]

I have welcomed the decision[2] of the British Medical Council to refuse to recognise Indian medical degrees. I hope this will make our medical practitioners and hospitals stand on their own legs and not look up to England or to what is miscalled the Indian Medical Service. We all know how Indian medical students have been treated in Great Britain. The sooner Indians stop going to Great Britain for their studies and instead go to the continental countries of Europe the better it will be. They will get both better education and better treatment there.

I understand that the Indian Medical Association is organising a boycott of British drugs and medical requisites and specially wants to prevent dealers from sending lucky-day indents on the fourteenth. I agree entirely with this proposal and hope that dealers will support it. Both self respect and the national struggle demand it.

1 Statement to the press, Allahabad, 11 April 1930. AICC File No G-129/1930 (Pt 1), p 17, NMML.

2 Announced on 24 February 1930.

7

SALT SATYAGRAHA

1. Circular to P.C.Cs[1]

22/2/30

Dear Friend,

Our office has already drawn your attention to the recent resolution of the Working Committee regarding civil resistance. I have just returned to Allahabad and I hasten to write to you on the subject. There appears to be some misunderstanding, and doubts as to the future course of work have arisen. I am endeavouring by means of this letter to remove them as far as possible.

2. By authorising Gandhiji to start civil disobedience the Congress Working Committee has in no way divested itself or the A.I.C.C. of responsibility. The A.I.C.C., as you already know, has been convened to meet on the 21st March at Ahmedabad, and the Working Committee will meet earlier to consider the then situation and take steps accordingly. Meanwhile it was felt by the committee that Mr. Gandhi should be given a free hand to start civil disobedience on his own lines and with people of his choice. As the general methods which the Congress proposes to adopt are largely those suggested by Gandhiji, it was considered desirable for him to be given freedom to initiate the campaign. The Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. can of course take any action at any time and as the movement develops they are bound to control it.

3. The first stage of the campaign is thus likely to be some form of civil disobedience undertaken by Gandhiji and his associates. It is desirable not to complicate matters by any other aggressive action at this stage. As soon as the movement is definitely started by Gandhiji it is likely that he and his associates will be arrested. This will mark the end of the first stage and it is likely to come soon after the beginning of the campaign.

4. Gandhiji's arrest should immediately widen the area of the campaign, and the A.I.C.C., the Working Committee and the P.C.Cs then take action. This action should be at first on the lines adopted by Gandhiji. It is open to the A.I.C.C. or the P.C.Cs to organise civil resistance in particular areas on different lines also, suitable for those

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P 1/1930, pp. 113-119, N.M.M.L.

areas. Thus the second stage will gradually develop into a mass campaign with a large measure of provincial autonomy as regards ways and means.

5. The third stage will be the stage of the mass campaign when it is expected that most of the present Congress leaders will be in jail and unable to guide the movement. It is hardly possible to issue specific directions about this as much will depend on the situation then existing. It is at this stage that the Working Committee has suggested that, as far as possible, all cooperation with the British Government should cease. Lawyers, students, etc., should then withdraw their cooperation. It is obvious that when a mass movement is convulsing the country it will hardly be possible for anyone who wants to help the movement to continue cooperating with the British. Also, in the absence of the older leaders new leaders will have to be chosen to carry on this campaign.

6. In view of this possible development of the campaign it is necessary that provincial Congress committees should forthwith meet and consider the kinds of civil disobedience they can offer when the time comes, and to prepare for it. The time, indeed, is not far distant and we must be up and doing. Whatever the methods may be, Congress members and volunteers are necessary, and these should be enrolled and the latter trained.

7. There has been considerable reference in the newspapers and in speeches to an attack on the salt monopoly. It is well known that this monopoly has been in the past, and is today, one of the monstrous methods of squeezing revenue from an impoverished people and depriving them of the most essential article of food. There are various ways of attacking this monopoly but a method which can become universal is the local manufacture of salt either from sea water or salt-earth. It is possible not only to make salt with the greatest ease near the coast, but it is equally easy to make it in many places inland from salt earth. Most villagers still remember the process which is easy. The manufacture of salt, and even the possession of salt earth, are offences under the Salt Act of 1890, punishable with 6 months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs 500/-. Even if salt cannot be manufactured by everyone it should be possible for each one of us to get our salt from some private individual who has made it. Thus the government manufactured salt can be totally boycotted. If necessary government salt depots can be picketed. There are other possible methods also which need not be discussed at this stage.

8. Salt offers us a very favourable ground for attack. The monopoly is most unjust and the masses must be with us in any such movement. But apart from salt it is open to P.C.Cs to have other forms of civil disobedience which may involve non-payment of taxes, of land revenue or

rent, wherever these are very oppressive and the people who suffer under them are prepared to take action.

9. This office will always endeavour to give all possible assistance to you but you will no doubt appreciate that the time is fast approaching when those who run this office and your principal leaders and workers might all be removed from the scene of action. That contingency we must welcome and look forward to, for that must result, we hope, in mass action on an extensive scale. But, for that we must prepare also with foresight so that the removal of leaders may make little or no difference to the discipline and organisation of our forces.

With all good wishes for success in the great fight ahead.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

May I suggest to you to pay particular attention to Gandhiji's suggestions in coming issues of *Young India*. These will help us in understanding his plan of campaign.

For those who desire to study the question of the salt monopoly, a recent publication might be recommended. This is: *A Monograph on Common Salt*, issued by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. It is obtainable at most booksellers.

2. To Secretaries, P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
March 5th, 1930

Dear Comrade,

On the 22nd February I addressed a circular letter to you in which I endeavoured to point out the various stages of the civil disobedience campaign. We are now on the eve of the first stage. Gandhiji has sent a letter to the Viceroy intimating to him, in his usual fashion, that on a certain date he proposes to start civil disobedience.[2] In all likelihood,

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-1/1930, p. 132, N.M.M.L.
2. On 2 March 1930 Mahatma Gandhi had written to the Viceroy that he would start civil disobedience on 11 March by violating the salt law.

areas. Thus the second stage will gradually develop into a mass campaign with a large measure of provincial autonomy as regards ways and means.

5. The third stage will be the stage of the mass campaign when it is expected that most of the present Congress leaders will be in jail and unable to guide the movement. It is hardly possible to issue specific directions about this as much will depend on the situation then existing. It is at this stage that the Working Committee has suggested that, as far as possible, all cooperation with the British Government should cease Lawyers, students, etc., should then withdraw their cooperation. It is obvious that when a mass movement is convulsing the country it will hardly be possible for anyone who wants to help the movement to continue cooperating with the British. Also, in the absence of the older leaders new leaders will have to be chosen to carry on this campaign.

6. In view of this possible development of the campaign it is necessary that provincial Congress committees should forthwith meet and consider the kinds of civil disobedience they can offer when the time comes, and to prepare for it. The time, indeed, is not far distant and we must be up and doing. Whatever the methods may be, Congress members and volunteers are necessary, and these should be enrolled and the lat' trained.

daughters court suffering and imprisonment and death for her dear sake and to bring relief to her unhappy millions? There are only two ways open to each one of us—the way of freedom and the way of slavery. There can be only two hosts in the country—the army of freedom and the army of exploiters. Which way do we go and which host do we belong to? Let each one of us search his heart for the answer and give it in deeds worthy of India and of the great cause we fight for.

4. Statement to the Press[1]

On March 12th, Gandhiji begins his great march, and satyagraha for independence commences. The eyes of India will be upon him on that historic day, and the prayers and good wishes of the millions of her sons and daughters will follow him and his gallant band. I suggest that, all over the country, we should celebrate that great day by meetings and suitable demonstrations by reiterating our pledge of independence, and wishing Godspeed to the soldiers of freedom. In particular, I hope that on that day volunteers for satyagraha will be enrolled everywhere.

1. *Allahabad, 7 March 1930. The Hindu, 8 March 1930.*

5. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

7-3-30

My dear Bapuji,
Your telegram[2] came yesterday. The *Bulletin* has been printed off accordingly and is being despatched.

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 16623.
2. Dated 6 March 1930, this read: "Letter handed press for publication. Marching early morning 12th with sixty companions." In fact, 79 satyagrahis accompanied Mahatma Gandhi.

therefore, we shall presently see the beginning of this campaign. Having begun it will automatically grow and spread. I trust that your committee is fully prepared to face the crisis that is impending. Some provincial committees have, I am very glad to notice, already taken effective steps to carry on the campaign.

2. Gandhiji proposes to begin with the salt monopoly. How he will attack this will soon be announced but the easiest way of doing so is to manufacture contraband salt locally. This can be done without great difficulty. District committees should, wherever convenient, choose suitable areas for the purpose and at the same time should encourage the peasantry and others to manufacture their own salt from sea water or salt-earth.

3. You should not start the campaign just yet. Wait for Gandhiji to take action. If he is arrested, start immediately. Even if he is not arrested you can start gradually with salt.

4. After Gandhiji's arrest, remember your provincial committee can, if it so chooses, lay down other methods of satyagraha also. Indeed, many provinces are already doing so. Each province should concentrate in the earlier stages on its strong point. Later, we hope that a mass campaign will comprise many methods of satyagraha.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Either Freedom or Slavery[1]

The final decision has been taken. Six days hence, on the 12th of this month, Gandhiji will start on his great march to begin civil disobedience. He will go and many brave men will accompany him. Who will sit still and unmoved during this great fight when India strives to regain her lost freedom? Who will remain passive when India's bravest sons and

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 6 March 1930. *The Searchlight*, 9 March 1930.

such attachments take place the better will the movement develop. At the same time it is open to anyone to transfer his property to others. In many cases, of course, it is not possible to make this transfer. Take the case of a non-payment of land revenue or rent campaign. Manifestly, the people who do not pay must be in possession of the land and they run the risk of attachment and sale. How then can we try to avoid that risk?

It does not seem to me absolutely necessary for satyagrahis to sign any other pledge. Ordinarily they should be Congressmen. No fee should be charged from satyagrahis.

Regarding the guarding of the national flag, this should be done by all volunteers even at the risk of arrest. No fresh instructions need be asked for. Of course the only way they can guard it is to remain at their post and seek arrest. They should not retaliate.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. On the Arrest of Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's arrest and conviction[2] is a significant and happy omen. It means that we are in the thick of the fight. We shall miss his wise counsel; but his undaunted spirit and determination, which made Bardoli famous in India, will radiate from the walls of Sabarmati Jail, and create an all-India Bardoli. It is clear that other prominent Congressmen will soon follow Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Gandhiji may also be arrested before long.

I suggest to all Congress committees and other organisations and individuals that Gandhiji's arrest should be followed immediately by an all-India hartal to demonstrate our deep respect for and confidence in our great leader and our determination to follow him. I hope that all institutions that sympathise with the struggle for freedom will close their doors that day and the whole country will demonstrate again that it stands for the independence of India.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 8 March 1930. *The Tribune*, 12 March 1930.
2. He was arrested at Ras on 7 March 1930 and immediately sentenced to three months' imprisonment and ordered to pay a fine.

The news was fully expected and yet it sent a thrill through all of us. How I wish I could join your gallant band or at least could see it start off bravely on the morning of the 12th.

If you are not arrested before the 20th, I do hope you will attend the Working Committee meeting on that day and the A.I.C.C. the next day. I hope to reach Ahmedabad on the night of the 19th.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

6. To B.G. Lokhare[1]

Allahabad
March 7th, 1930

Dear Lokhare,

Your letter of the 3rd March. I do not think it is necessary to add "nonviolence in thought" to the satyagraha pleadge as drafted. There is no question of any inferiority complex.

I think we should suggest to members of provincial boards to sign the satyagraha pledge. There should be no compulsion or disciplinary action at this stage at any rate. Only the All India Board can consider this question.

I hope you will send the instructions to the U.P. soon.

As regards your service men, they should be asked if they want to volunteer for satyagraha. There should be no compulsion even in their case. Those who volunteer should have their names put down in your list. It should be made clear to them that they must wait for orders from your office before offering organised satyagraha. This is more or less the policy that is being adopted by the A.I.S.A.

The breaking of the salt law or any other law undoubtedly means danger to the property of the civil resister. It is for the person concerned to decide what steps he will take about his property. Ordinarily he should not care as to whether his property is attached or not. Indeed, the more

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.

9. Circular to P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
March 12th, 1930

Dear Comrade,

Today Gandhiji started on his great march and a new chapter in India's long history has been opened. How this chapter will end will depend on us, the workers of the Congress, to a large extent. We are now in the thick of the struggle and the time for procrastination and debate is past. We have to plunge in whatever the consequences. The A.I.C.C. meets soon and will no doubt give a lead to the country. Meanwhile, each day and each hour is important and cannot be wasted. I hope your province is forging ahead with its preparations. These preparations must consist of: (1) enrolment of picked volunteers for satyagraha, (2) enrolment of other volunteers, (3) selection of one or more areas in your province for concentrated civil disobedience, (4) propaganda in and preparation of this area, (5) training of volunteers, specially for satyagraha, and also for other purposes, (6) general propaganda in the province.

For the moment we wait for developments before launching on civil disobedience outside Gujarat. But this does not mean that we wait for long. If Gandhiji is arrested we start satyagraha in any area where we are ready for it. If he is not arrested for some days, even so we can start in prepared areas. Therefore, in either event we should keep ready.

I have already suggested to you that civil disobedience should be for the salt tax as well as for any other grievance under which your province may be suffering, e.g., land revenue, rent, *chowkidari* tax, etc. Ordinarily, a no-tax campaign should follow the salt campaign. It will be easier to follow this procedure as the salt campaign will prepare the ground for the no tax campaign.

In the last Bulletin it has been suggested that the satyagraha pledge suggested by the Hindustani Seva Dal should be used for satyagrahis. I attach a copy of this pledge[2] for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 14/1930, pp. 29-31, N.M.M.L.
2. Not printed.

8. The Campaign in the U.P.[1]

The reason why Mahatma Gandhi selected the salt laws for violation was that those laws are most arbitrary, they can be easily infringed and their infringement will also be of advantage to the country. The campaign will first be started in districts near the sea side but in the United Provinces too there are many districts where salt is produced. Since the agitation for disobedience of the salt laws began, many people have come to me telling me that they know how to manufacture salt and therefore demanding directions to start manufacturing it.

After the first stage of the campaign, which will end with the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi, the second stage will begin when it will be the turn of the Working Committee on behalf of the country and of the provincial committees to continue the movement and it would then be for each provincial committee to select the law or laws for violation suitable to its province or any district or any part of a district. Perhaps in the second stage many workers in different provinces will be arrested and the third stage will follow when a sort of mass campaign will be started in the whole country.

The citizens of Allahabad should come forward to get enrolled as volunteers. There will be two classes of volunteers, those who are ready to join the satyagraha movement at once and those who are at present not ready to participate in the campaign but are able to help in other ways in the success of the struggle.

It is a mistake to say that Mahatma Gandhi was made a 'dictator'. As it was not possible to hold meetings frequently to decide matters arising out of the civil disobedience campaign, Mahatma Gandhi was given the fullest authority by the Working Committee to organise the campaign. Such authority was needed from the Working Committee as the movement had to be started in the name of the Congress.

I hope that after the 12th March, when Mahatma Gandhi is arrested, people will give a suitable reply to Earl Winterton's statement that not a dog barked in 1921 when Mahatma Gandhi was arrested, although the fact is that no demonstration was made then in compliance with Mahatma Gandhi's own request and directions.

1. Speech at Allahabad, 8 March 1930. From *The Leader*, 10 March 1930

12. Students and Satyagraha[1]

It seems to be the intention of the government not to touch Mahatma Gandhi so long as it is possible for it to do so, but there is evidence to show that in the meanwhile one leader or the other will be taken away gradually. For, after the arrest of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, news has been received of the arrest of another leader, Mr. Sen Gupta, who is being taken to Burma.[2]

The movement, however, has to be strengthened and it is, as a matter of fact, already gaining in strength. It will not be long before the country will soon see the fire of struggle burning all over the country. The reason why the spread of the civil disobedience movement in other provinces has been checked at present is that they are waiting to see what happens to Mahatma Gandhi. But it cannot be checked for long.

It will not be possible for the people to let Mahatma Gandhi alone remain for long in the field, themselves being mere spectators.

The result of such a big fight cannot be expected to be known early. One special feature of the struggle initiated by Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress is that there is no room for any compromise. Peace undoubtedly follows every battle and this much I can safely foretell, that the result of the present struggle will not be that we will remain as we are.

Students, particularly, should consider during the forthcoming holidays how they can contribute towards the success of the movement.

1. Speech at Allahabad, 14 March 1930. From *The Leader*, 16 March 1930.
2. Sen Gupta was arrested at Calcutta on 10 March 1930 for speeches delivered in February at Rangoon, and taken there for trial.

10. If Mahatma Gandhi Be Arrested[1]

It has been decided to observe a hartal, organise processions, and hold meetings when Mahatma Gandhi is arrested. Whether Mahatma Gandhi is arrested or not, either will be of advantage to the country; for in case of his arrest, the movement will gain strength, and if he is not arrested many people will follow him in breaking laws, and eventually a day might come when we will sit down to make our own laws. It has also been decided to have a bonfire of foreign cloth on the occasion of *Holi* under the auspices of the Allahabad Congress committee.

1. Speech at Allahabad, 12 March 1930. From *The Hindu*, 13 March 1930.

11. To Mahadeva Desai[1]

March 13th, 1930

My dear Mahadeo,

Your letter. How wonderful it must have been yesterday at the Ashram when Bapu left. Surely this struggle so auspiciously begun cannot but end in victory.

About writing to *Young India*, I would gladly do so. But I am stupid about writing for papers and somehow for months past I have been unable to bring myself to do it. However, we shall talk about it when we meet in Ahmedabad.

I shall send you the book[2] on Michael Collins.

I am afraid it is not possible for Bapu to come back to the Ashram now for the meeting of the A.I.C.C. But I must see him before this meeting. I hope it will be possible to waylay him somewhere on his march and have a little talk with him. I shall reach Ahmedabad on the night of the 19th.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-40/1930, p 437, N.M.M.L.
2. *Michael Collins and the Making of a New Ireland* (1926) by F. Beasley.

14. To K.F. Nariman[1]

March 16th, 1930

Dear Friend,
Your letter of the 13th March. In a vague kind of way I have already suggested a complete hartal on the day of Gandhiji's arrest. I have not specified factories and the like but I would certainly like a one-day strike as suggested by you. I do not want, however, to make this suggestion till I have consulted my colleagues in the Working Committee. I shall soon have a chance of doing this.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-56/1930, p. 7, N.M.M.L.

15. Statement to the Press[1]

The manager of All India Spinners Association, Khadi Karyalaya, Akbarpur informs that four persons with cycles, clad in khadi, are going about telling people in the district of Fyzabad that they have been deputed by Jawaharlal Nehru and that nonviolent methods will not now do, and the country should be prepared for armed resistance.

One of these persons came to stay in A.I.S.A. Karyalaya, Akbarpur, for the night, but was not allowed to stay there.

The people are warned against all such impostors, whose only object is to create mischief.

1. Allahabad, 18 March 1930. *The Tribune*, 20 March 1930.

13. To M.S. Aney[1]

March 16th, 1930

My dear Mr. Aney,

I thank you for your letter of the 11th March. I appreciate very much your frankness in writing to me as you have done and specially in your sending your resignation from the A.I.C.C. even though you disagree with the interpretation of the Working Committee.[2] This interpretation is not free from difficulty. As you have written to me I shall put up the matter before the Working Committee.

We are in the thick of the struggle now and we can hardly argue amongst ourselves about petty things. All of us have to do our best and I have no doubt that the A.I.C.C. will be the poorer for your absence. As a matter of fact, whether you continue a member of the A.I.C.C. or not, your cooperation and advice will always be welcome. The Working Committee took the step it did because it considered it a right one and also because unless it did so a number of people who really are not going to be of any help to the Congress might continue in the A.I.C.C. Any such general step automatically hits the wrong persons also.

I would be very glad if you could come to the meeting of the A.I.C.C. in Ahmedabad because none of us can afford to do without the help of any good fighter like you and other friends. The task before the country is prodigious and we are humble enough to know our own capacities.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-1(n)/1930, p. 67, N.M.M.L.
2. Aney's view was that the Working Committee could ask members to resign from executive bodies of the Congress but not from the A.I.C.C. which was a deliberative body.

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Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

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2. Aney's view was that the Working Committee could ask members to resign from executive bodies of the Congress but not from the A.I.C.C. which was a deliberative body.

16. Note for the Congress Bulletin[1]

The next meeting of the All India Congress Committee will take place at Ahmedabad on Friday, March 21st, 1930, at 2 p.m. The Working Committee meets on March 20th.

As civil disobedience is going to be started soon, various provincial Congress committees are getting ready to take full part in the campaign. According to the decision of the Working Committee, Gandhiji will initiate the campaign and, to begin with, this will take the form of an attack on the salt monopoly. In case of his arrest each provincial committee will, subject to what the A.I.C.C. may decide at its next meeting, have the liberty to determine the place and method of offering satyagraha. It is desirable that the salt campaign should be kept in the forefront everywhere as it touches the poorest and almost everybody can join it. In addition to this other methods of offering civil disobedience may also be adopted. Provincial committees and local committees should however remember that any action that they may take must be such as to fit in with the general campaign as initiated by Gandhiji.

As civil disobedience spreads and develops into a mass movement, it is hoped that all rendering voluntary cooperation to the government, or receiving so-called benefits from it, will withdraw their cooperation or renounce the benefit, and throw themselves into the struggle for freedom.

Particular attention should be paid now to the enrolment of volunteers, and specially to those who offer themselves for satyagraha. The satyagraha pledge is not compulsory for all volunteers. Only such as wish to take it need do so. The Hindustani Seva Dal has prepared a satyagraha pledge which can be commended to provincial committees and others.

The Working Committee has made it clear that, in view of the mandate of the Lahore Congress, members of the legislatures cannot continue as members of the All India Congress Committee or other elective Congress committees. Members of the A.I.C.C. who have acted contrary to the Congress mandate have therefore been called upon to resign from the A.I.C.C.

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal, clearly before 20 March 1930. A.I.C.C. File No. 43/1929, pp. 35-39, N.M.M.L.

to support the Salt Act civil disobedience campaign? A plenary session of the Congress has not passed a resolution in favour of it.

A: I am surprised at the question. The Congress resolution on independence authorised the All India Congress Committee to take whatever measures were necessary to secure independence, and civil disobedience being one of the effective measures, support for it was implicit in that resolution.

19. The A.I.C.C. and Civil Disobedience[1]

The A.I.C.C. met on the banks of the Sabarmati, but the presiding genius of the place, for whose sake the venue was fixed, was not there. But, though absent, his spirit seemed to pervade the place and everyone's thoughts were on him and his gallant band of satyagrahi volunteers marching along the dusty roads of Gujarat, through seas of humanity, to the appointed place where India is first coming to grips with the great British Empire. Two other members of the Working Committee could also not be present, being kept away by the alien power. Vallabhbhai, the victor of Bardoli and the leader of Gujarat province, which is destined to take the lead in this fight for our independence, lay a mile away behind the high walls of Sabarmati prison. Sen Gupta had been carried off suddenly across the high seas to distant Rangoon and was being tried there for having spoken sedition against the British Government.

The committee met under a heavy sense of responsibility. The fight had begun in earnest and the time for empty talk was past. Any day might bring news that their leader had been arrested. Indeed; no member of the committee knew what his own fate might be within the next few days. The attendance was good, although many members had excused themselves from attendance on the plea that they were busy with preparations for civil disobedience in their own areas. There was no question of voting in the committee. The result was a foregone conclusion.

The principal resolution that was passed confirmed the Working

1. Article written at Broach on 22 March 1930. *Young India*, 27 March 1930.

If Gandhiji is arrested such an opportunity may present itself. It is probable that he will begin his satyagraha on the 1st April and he may be arrested soon after.[2] We should therefore try to be ready for action by that day. Even if he is not arrested, we shall probably have to start satyagraha in the other provinces early in April. We cannot allow the whole burden of the satyagraha campaign to rest on Gandhiji's shoulders. So that, in any event, the beginning of April is important.

In the second week of April we have the National Week.[3] This must be utilised fully for an intensification of our campaign. Details about its observance will be sent to you later.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Mahatma Gandhi reached Dandi on 5 April and started satyagraha the following day by breaking the salt law. He was, however, arrested only on 4 May at Karadi.

3. The week from 6 to 13 April was observed as the National Week every year in memory of the martial law in the Punjab and the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy in 1919.

18. Interview to the Press[1]

QUESTION: What course will the All India Congress Committee take now? Probably it will back up Gandhiji's movement.

ANSWER: Probably, yes.

Q: Press reports have it that Congress leaders think of discrediting the government's currency note issue. Is there any foundation for it?

A: Well, there are many courses open, but for the present, we are of opinion that it is better to concentrate on one programme—Gandhiji's programme.

Q: Will it not be too heavy a responsibility for the A.I.C.C. to take

1. Jambusar, 20 March 1930. *The Hindu*, 21 March 1930.

20. Inqilab Zindabad[1]

"*Inqilab zindabad! Inqilab zindabad!*" Loud the shouts rang out in conference and meeting hall, and the echo answered, "*Inqilab zindabad*". The young men and women of India were indeed awake and they thundered out their welcome to revolution and the will to do and die. Who could doubt the meaning of this cry? And who was not filled with enthusiasm at this great awakening and resolve? India was going to be free. The youths had decided it.

And today the pilgrim marches onward on his long trek. Staff in hand, he goes along the dusty roads of Gujarat, clear-eyed and firm of step, with his faithful band trudging along behind him. Many a journey he has undertaken in the past, many a weary road traversed. But longer than any that have gone before is this last journey of his, and many are the obstacles in his way. But the fire of a great resolve is in him, and surpassing love of his miserable countrymen. And love of truth that scorches, and love of freedom that inspires. And none that passes him can escape the spell, and men of common clay feel the spark of life. It is a long journey, for the goal is the independence of India and the ending of the exploitation of her millions.

The pilgrim marches onward. And whither go you, young men and women of India, who shouted so loudly and so lately of independence and *inqilab*? Whither go you? Were your brave cries all in vain and your shouting a mere cloak for the cowardice in your hearts? The field of battle lies before you, the flag of India beckons to you, and freedom herself awaits your coming. Do you hesitate now, you who were but yesterday so loudly on her side? Is the examination hall or the counting-house dearer to you than India's freedom? Will you be mere lookers-on in this glorious struggle and see your best and bravest face the might of a great empire which has crushed your country and her children? What shall it profit you to get your empty degrees and your mess of pottage if the millions starve and your motherland continues in bondage? Who lives if India dies? Who dies if India lives?

1. Written on 24 March 1930. *Young India*, 3 April 1930.

Committee's resolution authorising Gandhiji to begin civil disobedience. This resolution also laid down the conditions under which the various provinces should start satyagraha. The Congress today does not propose to indulge in satyagraha as a gesture. It aims at civil disobedience on a mass scale in which hundreds of thousands will take part. The salt laws have therefore been chosen as they affect everyone, and almost every province can cooperate in the campaign against them.

The resolution gives a great deal of liberty to provincial Congress committees in regard to the manner and place of civil disobedience. It is open to them to prepare their provinces for any form of satyagraha best suited to them, but it should be realised that different forms of satyagraha in different provinces may tend to weaken the general movement. It is therefore necessary, and the A.I.C.C. has laid stress on it, that the Salt Act satyagraha should be first undertaken in every province where it is possible. Other forms of satyagraha may be prepared for but they should be reserved for the second stage of the campaign.

In case Gandhiji is arrested, P.C.Cs can immediately, or at any date they may determine, start civil disobedience. In case he is not arrested, they should wait for him to reach the coast and start satyagraha. He will then give his signal and the P.C.Cs will be informed immediately through the A.I.C.C. office. This means that P.C.Cs must keep ready from now onwards, as it is possible that news of his arrest may come at any moment. In the ordinary course he is likely to reach his destination on April 5th, the eve of the National Week. It will be fitting that this week should see civil disobedience in a large number of places all over India.

The A.I.C.C. has confirmed the resolution of the Working Committee of February 16th. It will be remembered that in the latter an appeal was made to all who either help the government or receive benefits from it to join the campaign as soon as it develops into a mass movement. The day is not far when such a development might take place and all such persons, students, lawyers, etc., will soon have to decide if they will throw in their lot with that of the civil resisters. It is obvious that no one can go about deliberately breaking laws and yet continue his profession in a law court or his academical studies. The Gujarat Vidyapith has set a good example to all educational institutions, national and otherwise. It has mobilised all its resources for helping the civil disobedience campaign.

All institutions and individuals who wish to take part in civil disobedience or to help the campaign in any way must realise that we are on the verge and soon we shall have to take the plunge. Let them therefore get ready and keep ready.

Congress. Since then, it has quietly and persistently trained volunteers in national service. Today, the time has come when it should justify itself and prove its worth in the great national struggle which we have begun. The Dal has naturally and rightly placed all its services at the disposal of the Congress for the satyagraha campaign and is busy enrolling volunteers for satyagraha. I am sure there will be no lack of volunteers for this noble work. I hope also that those who can do so will assist the Dal financially to enable it to carry on this work efficiently and with speed.

23. To Lal Behari Tandon[1]

March 25th, 1930

Dear Friend,[2]
Your letter. If Gonda district has got plenty of salt-earth it is for you to take advantage of this fact and start salt manufacture. There are many other districts in the U P. where this can be done. Each district where we are going to break the salt law has to take the burden on itself. If Gonda is prepared to give a sufficient number of volunteers for this the P.C.C. will gladly help. But you cannot expect volunteers to come from other districts to help you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C C. File No G-29/1930 (Pt. II), p 265, N M M L.
2 Secretary, District Congress Committee, Gonda, imprisoned during the salt satyagraha in 1930, member, U.P. Legislative Assembly, 1937 and 1946.

21. Circular to Secretaries, P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
March 25th, 1930

Dear Comrade,

There is an impression that the salt laws can only be broken in areas where there are facilities for manufacturing salt, either from the sea or salt-earth. As a matter of fact we are at present aiming at a technical breach of the laws and not large-scale manufacture. This technical breach can take place almost anywhere with great ease. I should like you to consider this point and to arrange accordingly. For instance, each province can choose a few areas for Salt Act satyagraha, which have the sea or salt-earth. In addition, in each considerable town where there are satyagrahis, volunteers can publicly break the salt laws by collecting some salt earth in a suitable place and, after due notice, deliberately attempting to make salt out of it, the whole object being to invite arrest. If arrests take place because of this, it is easy enough to continue it If arrests do not take place then the operations can be widened.

In trying to restrict satyagraha to a few limited places only in a province, there is some danger of our preventing the movement from developing normally and as rapidly as it should. We have to remember that our aim is a mass campaign in which large numbers can take part

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Maharashtra Government, Home Department (Special) Intercepted Letters

22. Appeal for the Seva Dal[1]

More than six years ago the Hindustani Seva Dal was started with the blessing of the National Congress as the volunteer department of the

1 Allahabad, 25 March 1930 *The Hindu*, 26 March 1930,

from Peshawar to Dandi. These persons will not go there primarily to offer civil disobedience but to explain, if they have a chance, to their fellow Pathans there in Pushtu the *significance of the national campaign* and of civil disobedience. Two names are suggested: Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan[2] and Maulana Khan Mir.[3] The former, I know, is a good person. Khan Mir, I am told, has recently been released from exile whatever that might mean.

Of course, Pathans cannot be said to excel in nonviolence. They are apt to lose their tempers but I do not think one or two of them are likely to do anything harmful if they are near your group. Whether they do anything useful or not at Dandi, contact with your group will do them good and the Frontier Province will appreciate the honour. If you think it is worthwhile for these friends to be sent for, kindly send a telegram to our office here in which you might say, 'Send Muslim friends'.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

2. (b. 1891); born at Utmanzai, of the Mohamadzai clan, and brother of Dr. Khan Sahib; prominent Congress leader of the North West Frontier Province, popularly known as 'the Frontier Gandhi' for his unqualified faith in nonviolence; in 1919, imprisoned for protesting against the Rowlatt Bill; president of the Khilafat Committee at Peshawar; founded the Red Shirt or *khudai khidmatgar* organisation in 1929; imprisoned several times during the freedom movement, and from 1947 to 1955 detained by the Pakistan Government for demanding Pakhtoonistan; in November 1969, received the Nehru Award for International Understanding.
3. Secretary, Congress Committee, Peshawar; imprisoned in 1929 for propagating Amir Amanullah's cause.

26. To Shri Krishna Dikshit[1]

March 28th, 1930

Dear Sir,[2]
I have your letter. I am glad to find that you and your friends desire to serve the country.[3] Primarily, it is desirable for people to work in

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-44(1)/1930, p. 73, NMML.
2. An employee in the collector's office at Etawah.
3. *Dikshit and three others had offered to leave government service and work for* the national cause if ensured suitable employment.

24. To Basheer Ahmed Sayeed[1]

March 25th, 1930

Dear Sir,[2]
I have your letter of March 16th. I note that you have resigned your membership of the A.I.C.C.[3] I thank you for your assurance that you will ever be ready to serve the interests of the country.

I am afraid you are taking an incorrect view of the Muslim response to the Congress campaign. This response is very satisfactory and encouraging in the predominantly Muslim provinces, the N.W.F. and the Punjab. In other provinces in the north also, as well as in Bombay, we are having many young Muslims who are throwing themselves into the movement for freedom.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-1(ii)/1930, p. 17, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1900); advocate, and later, Judge of the High Court at Madras.
3. Basheer Ahmed Sayeed had written that his constituents, all Muslims, had "commanded" him to continue in the legislature, and that Muslims were "altogether out of the Congress throughout the country".

25. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

March 27th, 1930

My dear Bapuji,
I have received a letter from the Frontier Provincial Congress Committee stating that they are deeply pained to learn that illiterate Pathans have been engaged by the government to obstruct you at Dandi. The Committee feel that this use of the Pathans by the government brings discredit on the Pathans of the Frontier Province. They suggest therefore that if you are agreeable they might send some nationalist Pathans

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G 29/1930 (Pt. II), p. 251, N.M.M.L.

28. The Battle for Independence[1]

I have been hearing revolutionary cries such as "Long Live Revolution" for a long time. Now the time has come for actual revolution. Our satyagraha is a peaceful and nonviolent struggle and is bound to be crowned with success. There is no power on earth which can frustrate our design. Men and women of the country should devote themselves to the sole occupation of defeating the government. Mahatma Gandhi will launch the salt tax campaign from the 6th April and it is high time for young men and women to enrol themselves as volunteers for the emancipation of the country. The general has sounded the bugle and it is the duty of the soldiers to rally round the Congress banner to march ahead.

We should not lose courage if Mahatmaji is arrested. We must proceed to break the laws one after another. By so doing, one day we might make our own laws. We should not be content with simply breaking the salt law. Rather, we should bear in mind that our aim is complete independence.

1. Speech at Muzaffarpur, 3 April 1930 From *The Searchlight*, 6 April 1930.

29. Circular to Secretaries, P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
April 4th, 1930

Dear Comrade,

As we are on the eve of the satyagraha campaign and it is probable that large numbers of our volunteers will be arrested, we should be quite clear about our course of action in the law courts.

1. A I C C. File No. P-1/1930, p. 114, N M M.L.

their own districts. If that is not possible sometimes arrangements can be made elsewhere. I am afraid, however, that we cannot give you any promise of financial help. It is impossible for us to pay our volunteers. I would suggest to you to get into touch with your district Congress committee and see what you can do, or you may write to the provincial Congress committee at Benares.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

27. No Choice but to Fight[1]

The local authorities have started prosecuting the Congress workers in the hope that their confinement would cause the collapse of the satyagraha movement, but I would like to make it clear that the district has been selected for the fight by the provincial Congress committee and every Congressman in the province will make it his duty to continue the fight in the district. I myself and a large number of Congress workers of the province shall make the district our headquarters and will continue satyagraha.

We shall begin the fight with defiance of the Salt Act, but will later on take up such other laws for violation as are determined by the Satyagraha Committee.

At this juncture there can be only two parties in the country, one for independence and the other for continuance of the present administration. Everyone will have to take sides. He who is not with us is a rebel against the country.

We have already succeeded in making the section on sedition of the Indian Penal Code a dead letter. If we continue to defy one law after another, there will be an end of the government.

1 Speech at Rae Bareli, 31 March 1930. From The Searchlight, 4 April 1930.

31. Statement to the Press[1]

The All India Congress Committee left it to Mahatma Gandhi to give the signal to the country to start civil disobedience. Gandhiji has given that signal and has announced that satyagraha may be started in different provinces from April 8th. Provincial Congress committees are therefore at liberty to go ahead from that date onwards and I call upon them to begin satyagraha, in such areas as they may have selected, on the 8th or any date suitable to them in the National Week. With full faith in our cause we go ahead to redeem the pledge we took on January 26th. By that pledge of independence we shall stand, come what may. Let each one of us, young or old, man or woman, who cares for the freedom of our motherland and her suffering children, throw in his lot with the soldiers of freedom and may the faith and courage of our people stand the great ordeal and out of their sacrifice emerge the India of our dreams.

1. Allahabad, 4 April 1930. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5(KW)(i)/1930, p. 355, N.M.M.L.

32. Circular to P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
April 4th, 1930

Dear Comrade,
In our circular No. 24, dated the 24th March, I informed you that as soon as Gandhiji gave the signal for the commencement of mass satyagraha I would telegraph to you. Gandhiji has now done so and he suggests that satyagraha in other places be started on April 8th. As *Young India* and the newspapers have already announced this I am not

1. Home Department (Political) File No. 5/92/32, National Archives of India

1. If volunteers are arrested for civil disobedience it is clear that there can be no question of offering defence. The volunteers should take no part whatever in the proceedings of the court. They should simply inform the court that they propose to take no part in the proceedings. It is desirable that they do not give even their names or addresses. It is for the police to find out their names or addresses and there is no reason why we should help the police in any way in getting at this information. The volunteers who are arrested should take up a dignified attitude in court. They should not brag or boast or be defiant but they should stand on their dignity and give no information to the court.

2. In the event of any of our workers being arrested for sedition it is also clear that we cannot engage any defence. Our very creed at present is sedition, and there can be no denial of this. If, however, any false statements are attributed to us then those statements should be denied or corrected. Otherwise, there should be no participation in the trial.

3. In case a totally false non-political case is brought against our workers, for instance, a false case of dacoity and the like, then it is open to the person concerned to defend himself and to adduce such evidence as he wishes. Such false non-political cases are frequent enough.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

30. Circular to P.C.Cs[1]

April 4th, 1930

Dear Comrade,

Friends have suggested that it may be desirable to ask people and specially the peasants to collect a little salt-earth in their houses. This will come in handy for the manufacture of salt on a mass scale. It may also be useful when the rains set in although probably by that time our campaign will have many fronts. I recommend this proposal to you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Home Department (Political) File No. 5/90/32, National Archives of India.

more to follow. We have, of course, the fullest sympathy of the millions and indeed of many of those who are outwardly allied to the government or are in government service. Wherever we go we are pursued by police reporters and officials. But usually we get on quite well with them and there is little ill feeling.

Day after tomorrow Gandhiji begins the civil disobedience campaign. He may be arrested immediately. If so, the rest of the country takes up the campaign in hundreds of chosen places. Even if he is not arrested we take it up elsewhere. Within a month or two we hope to have a mass campaign of vast dimensions. It is going to be a goodly show and not merely a show.

Most of us expect arrest at any moment. But the government has stayed its hands so far and has not arrested many prominent persons. It has, however, arrested and convicted several hundreds of our ordinary workers, and this continues daily. I do not know if I shall be able to write to you again in the near future. But wherever I may be I shall think of our good friends abroad and this thought will cheer us up.

With all good wishes,

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

34. To Ranu Bain Debi[1]

April 4th, 1930

Dear Sister,

I have received your letter of the 30th March signed by a large number of our sisters in Benares.[2] This letter of yours has given me very great pleasure. You will permit me to congratulate you and our other brave sisters for the brave lead you have given to the women of India. The great fight for independence requires the active help of women as well as men. If women hold back how can their brothers go forward? Therefore it is most gratifying to find that so many of our sisters are prepared to take their full part in the struggle.

1. AICC File No. G 44(i)/1930, p. 63, NMML.
2. The signatories had offered to join the national struggle.

sending a telegram to you. Please therefore note that your provincial Congress committee is at liberty to start satyagraha from April 8th. You may begin on that date or within a day or two of the 8th. In any event, satyagraha should begin in the National Week.

Go ahead now, and may good fortune attend you and may the issue of our great struggle be a free India.

Long live the independence of India!

Your comrade,
Jawaharlal Nehru

33. To Roger Baldwin[1]

April 4th, 1930

My dear Baldwin,

....I am just returning from a four days' intensive campaign in the villages of a certain area.[2] During these four days I toured, chiefly by automobile, about 600 miles. I addressed 22 mass meetings, with audiences varying between 5 thousand and 20 thousand. In all, I must have addressed about 200,000 persons during these four days. Besides this, our route was often lined by villagers come out to greet us. Considering that we have no modern helps for propaganda and no proper means of communication, these vast crowds were amazing. Many people had to walk long distances to attend. There is no doubt that India is awake and astir and we are going to give a good fight to the British Government. The government will no doubt try its utmost to break us. But it is quite likely that in attempting to crack the nut the cracker itself may break. Somehow I cannot help thinking that the days of the British Empire are numbered now and that it is going to be our privilege and good fortune to help to end it.

We are enrolling thousands of persons pledged to offer civil disobedience. We hope to have at least 100,000 in India to begin with, and

1. AICC. File No. FD 16/1931, pp 167-169, NMML. Extracts.
2. Rae Bareli and Muzaffarpur districts.

shout out various national cries, which have been previously given to them on a piece of paper, and then one of them delivers a short speech, the notes of which have been previously supplied. The whole thing does not last more than 10 minutes. Then they move on to the next street corner. In this way they have held as many as 200 street-corner meetings in one day in Bombay. You can imagine the tremendous propaganda value of these methods, specially when they are practised in the poor quarters where newspapers are not often read.

36. Message to Punjab Satyagraha Conference[1]

The 6th of April is a memorable day for India. Eleven years ago, on this very day, the whole of India declared a historic hartal as a protest against the Rowlatt Act. Today, again, on the very same day, Gandhiji and his volunteers have reached Dandi sea-coast and broken the salt laws. This day will remain a red-letter day in India. But I am sorry that the Punjab is still engaged in holding conferences, while Gujarat and other provinces have actually started civil disobedience. I hope that such conferences will stop and the Punjab will immediately start civil disobedience. The time has now come when we must declare boldly from every platform that we do not want foreign rule in this country. Gandhiji launched civil disobedience after due deliberation and with a full sense of responsibility. He has come out on the battlefield with a grim determination either to win victory or end his life fighting for freedom. I hope that people in the Punjab will learn lessons from Mahatmaji's determination and will not fritter away their energies by only raising shouts. These shouts alone will not bring us freedom. The time has now come when we should boldly declare to which side we belong; we should be loyal either to the government or to the country. Those who are not loyal to the country should be considered opponents of the national cause. I do not like being emotional but I have no hesitation in declaring that those who do not support the country's cause at the present moment are traitors to the country.

1. Gujranwala, 6 April 1930. From *The Hindu*, 7 April 1930.

I would suggest that you should organise yourselves in Benares under the auspices of the Benares Town Congress Committee and cooperate in the struggle with the advice of Congress friends in Benares. I would specially commend to you to consult in this matter Babu Sri Prakasa, the General Secretary of the Congress, and Babu Sampurnanand who has been appointed in charge of satyagraha in Benares.

Again, thanking you with all good wishes for victory in the struggle.

I am,
Your brother in the fight,
Jawaharlal Nehru

35. Students and Civil Disobedience[1]

....So far as the National Congress is concerned we are soon going to take the plunge and we hope that that will result in bringing about a mass campaign all over the country. I should, of course, like students and young men to join in large numbers. I have no doubt that if they did so there would be a speedy result. It is not a question so much of the boycott of schools and colleges. The question is, however, that when the country is in a state of war with the government and large numbers of leading men are in jail, should not the young men throw in their lot with those who are leading the campaign? Obviously we cannot combine satyagraha with the normal course of literary studies. Thus, if a person wants to join the satyagraha movement, he must of necessity be prepared to suspend his studies for a while. The best thing would have been a general strike of the students for a period of, say, six months or a year.

If this cannot be done, at any rate a sufficient number of young men might join the satyagraha movement. Others can indirectly help them by adopting the methods you have suggested. All those methods are good in themselves but they require a great deal of organising.

In Bombay, the volunteers are doing something which might interest you. They go out in batches, stop at a street corner, blow a bugle,

1. *India Tomorrow* (a fortnightly journal of students in Bengal), 6 April 1930. Extracts.

38. To Vichitra Narain Sharma[1]

April 10th, 1930

My dear Vichitra,[2]
I have your letter. Yes, the battle has begun and it is getting on very well. This evening I am leading the first batch of the Allahabad city satyagrahis and we propose to make salt publicly. May be I shall be arrested.

I cannot send you any detailed directions regarding our comrades in the Ashram and the U.P. Department. You will have to decide this in consultation with Kripalani. Probably it will be best for them to go in twos and threes so that you might replace them as far as possible. It is conceivable that the time may come when you may have to close down many of your departments. But I think that this time has not come yet and you should carry on as long as possible. We must remember that the boycott of foreign cloth has to be carried on too.

I think you should issue a statement to the press saying that all your workers of the Ashram and the U.P. Department have signed the satyagraha pledge and have offered to go forward as soon as they are permitted by the Ashram to do so. Further, that the Ashram proposes to permit them to perform satyagraha in small batches so that as far as possible the work of Khadi production and sale may not suffer.

With all good wishes to you and your friends in the Ashram.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 A.I.C.C. File No. G-37/1930, p. 1, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1898); educated at Banaras University, co-founder of the Gandhi Ashram at Meerut, and its general secretary, 1920-58, and in 1961; imprisoned in 1921, 1932 and 1942 during the freedom movement, Minister in U.P. Government, 1952-60 and 1962-63.

The people of the Punjab should take common action with other provinces and decide to break the salt laws as far as possible. But I am told that the people of Gujranwala want to start civil disobedience on the question of hoisting the national flag on the town hall. Those who do not wish to join the satyagraha movement should step aside and not put obstacles in the way of Gandhiji. But whoever joins this battle must have implicit faith in nonviolence.

37. Statement to the Press[1]

Gandhiji has deliberately broken the iniquitous salt law and so have thousands of others. They have not dared yet to lay hands on Gandhiji, but hundreds of our comrades have been arrested and convicted. Soon I hope I shall have the honour of joining this gallant band. Contraband salt has become the symbol of our fight today. Let all, who can, manufacture it and sell it and use it. Let all, who dare, stand up against British imperialism and plunge into the fight. Our leaders are being removed, but there is no lack of human beings in India. If they are men and women worthy of their country, the way to independence lies clear before them and no further lead is necessary. Forward, then, to the goal of freedom. India expects every Indian to do his duty.

1 Allahabad, 8 April 1930. *The Searchlight*, 11 April 1930.

SMT SATYAGRAHI, ALLAHABAD

39. To the Working Committee[1]

Allahabad
April 10th, 1930

The All India Congress Committee, by a resolution passed in Ahmedabad on March 21st, authorised me in the event of my arrest, and in case normal procedure cannot be followed, to nominate my successor to the presidentship. As there is a chance of my arrest today, I nominate Gandhiji to succeed me in the presidentship of the A.I.C.C. In case Gandhiji is previously arrested or is otherwise unable to accept, I nominate Pandit Motilal Nehru to succeed me.

Such nomination will have to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. Till then my nominee will have such powers as I possess as President.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-77/1930, p. 17, N.M.M.L.

40. To Ganesh Lal Dashera[1]

April 10th, 1930

Dear Friend,[2]

Your letter. So far as your examination is concerned, if it does not conflict with satyagraha you can certainly appear in it. Try to get into a batch offering satyagraha on the 17th, after your examination. If, however, you are urgently wanted before then, certainly you should give up your examination.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-44(3)/1930, p. 25, N.M.M.L.
2. A student of Allahabad University.

39. To the Working Committee[1]

Allahabad
April 10th, 1930

The All India Congress Committee, by a resolution passed in Ahmedabad on March 21st, authorised me in the event of my arrest, and in case normal procedure cannot be followed, to nominate my successor to the presidentship. As there is a chance of my arrest today, I nominate Gandhiji to succeed me in the presidentship of the A.I.C.C. In case Gandhiji is previously arrested or is otherwise unable to accept, I nominate Pandit Motilal Nehru to succeed me.

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Jawaharlal Nehru

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40. To Ganesh Lal Dashera[1]

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Your letter. So far as your examination is concerned, if it does not conflict with satyagraha you can certainly appear in it. Try to get into a batch offering satyagraha on the 17th, after your examination. If, however, you are urgently wanted before then, certainly you should give up your examination.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-44(i)/1930, p. 25, N.M.M.L.
2. A student of Allahabad University.

About parents, it is for you to judge. I think that it is proper that parents should be informed at a fairly early stage. But not knowing the circumstances I cannot give advice in an individual case.

The first batch will not contain your name, nor will the second. These have already been fixed up.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

41. To Sitla Sahai[1]

April 11th, 1930

My dear Sitla Sahai,

....We had a tremendous show here yesterday and huge crowds collected to see us begin satyagraha. The crowds were so great that the police could not reach us. I have never seen Allahabad quite so excited. No arrests have taken place. The government has issued a most stupid *communique*.

I enclose a copy of a letter from Jayaprakash[2] to me and my note on it. I agree with Jayaprakash that we should lay stress on the economic side. Otherwise our salt campaign will not catch. Ultimately our strength must lie in an economic struggle. All of you should keep this in mind....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC File No G 59/1930, pp. 27-31, NMML. Extracts.
2. Jayaprakash Narayan (b. 1902); Sarvodaya leader, imprisoned several times during the freedom movement; one of the founders of the Congress Socialist Party, 1934, member, Congress Working Committee, 1936; leading member for some time of the Socialist Party and of the Praja Socialist Party; served as president, All India Railwaymen's Federation and All India Posts and Telegraph Employees' Union

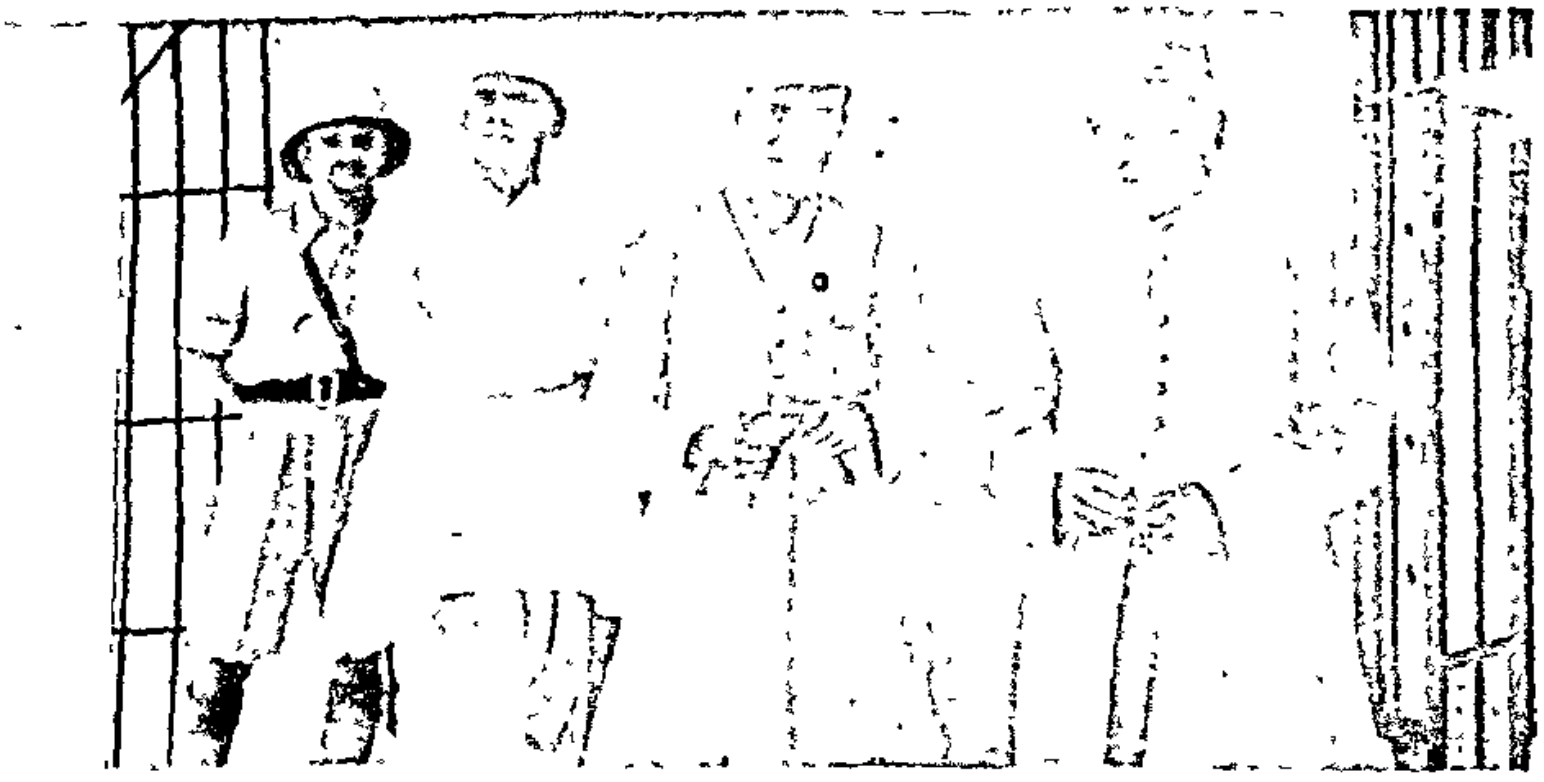

इलाहाबाद नगर के भाइयो और बहिनो मैं आप का नगर हूं जिस काम से कि मैं आप को और लोगों का सम्मेलन हूं और आशा करता हूं कि इस देश की आजादी के महा युद्ध में यह मुझ हिस्सा लें। इलाहाबाद नगर की लाज रखिये।

43. To Sitla Sahai[1]

April 12th, 1930

My dear Sitla Sahai,

Your letter of the 11th. I am glad to find that you are getting on well. Your policy in creating new centres is the correct one. This must be pursued. At the same time I think that you must now try to make really good salt at some one place which can be sold in sufficiently large quantities for personal use. Probably Mohanganj will be the best area for this. You can start manufacturing this without any great fuss but, of course, not secretly. Try to get really good salt out and sell it at nominal prices in small packets.

I am afraid I cannot go to Rae Bareli before the Cawnpore conference.[2] I find it difficult enough to go to Handia. Day after tomorrow I have got to go to Raipur in the Central Provinces. On my return I must spend a day in Allahabad and Handia and then go on to Cawnpore for the conference. I shall try my best to visit Rae Bareli before the conference.

We are getting on fairly well here and are spreading our activities. In Handia there is a regular tussle every day for the possession of the pans. No arrests have been made in Allahabad yet.

About the money, we sanctioned Rs. 500 at our last meeting in Rae Bareli. Have you received this money yet? If not, you should demand it from Sri Prakasa or Kailas Nath Katju. I am afraid I cannot get anything from him today but in your letter tomorrow morning if you will make it clear what you have received I shall try to get the amount soon to you.

I am glad Nand Kumar[3] has joined you. He will be of help.

Please consider my suggestion above that we must start salt manufacture on a large scale somewhere not merely to break the law but to provide it to people. This means that you should open a small salt factory which will work more or less all day quietly but without secrecy. An attempt should be made to make really good salt there....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C.C. File No. G-59/1930, pp. 7-9, N.M.M L. Extracts
2. The U.P. Provincial Political Conference was scheduled to be held on 21 April 1930
3. Nand Kumar Dev Vasishta, an instructor in the Hindustani Seva Dal.

42. Reply to U.P. Government[1]

The U.P. government sitting on its hill top at Naini Tal has discovered that the Salt Act was not infringed in Allahabad city yesterday and has hastened to proclaim the fact lest its vanishing prestige might suffer. Presently it will discover that the Salt Act itself has disappeared, and hence, of course, there can be no infringement of it. The anxiety of the government to show that it is not weak is pathetic. It need have no such anxiety. We have seen a revealing instance of its strength recently when peaceful and inoffensive boys were beaten with lathis in Bulandshahr in the presence of the governor.[2] The mighty gathering at Allahabad yesterday, brimming over with enthusiasm, was perhaps not considered a suitable target for a repetition of this frightfulness.

The government *communique* refers to the liquid salt solution being brought in bottles. It may interest the government to know that no such solution was brought in bottles and, indeed, we had no bottles. Subsequently, a bottle containing kerosene oil was sent for to help to keep the fire burning satisfactorily. Our salt was prepared from the salt-earth which was put in solution and strained. We propose to go on manufacturing salt from salt-earth from day to day, not only in one selected spot but in a large number of places, and to sell it, and it is wholly immaterial to us whether the government arrests us or not. Meanwhile, we shall read with interest and amusement the concoctions and falsehoods which the unfortunate U.P. government has to gather. If it chooses to behave like an ostrich we have no objection.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 11 April 1930. *The Tribune*, 13 April 1930.
2. See *post*, item 44.

Below I give you a brief account of what is happening in the U.P. This is of course very incomplete.

AGRA. Satyagraha started on 6th. Sri Krishna Datt Paliwal[3] arrested and convicted for six months. A few others also subsequently arrested. Satyagraha being continued in three centres in the district.

CAWNPORE. Satyagraha started, I think, on the 7th. Being continued. Hariharnath Shastri[4] and some others arrested and convicted. Other centres in the district starting satyagraha.

RAE BARELI. Even before commencement of satyagraha about 45 persons arrested, mostly under section 107. The president of the D.C.C. Mata Prasad Misra, being tried for sedition. Also others. On 8th, satyagraha started. There were some difficulties about the land as the police brought great pressure on the owners of the land to eject us. Ultimately satyagraha was started in the presence of father who had specially gone there for the purpose. After father left the police turned up and arrested the leader of the satyagrahis who was also the secretary of the local Congress committee. They did not arrest the others. The next day they arrested the leaders of two batches. On the third day they came after the whole process was finished and asked Sitla Sahai to hand over any one person to be arrested. Sitla Sahai told them that it was none of his business to pick and choose. He was going to give them no information. They could arrest anybody they wanted. They did not arrest anyone. On the fourth day an announcement was made all over the city on behalf of the district magistrate that the manufacture of salt without licence was against the law and everyone who helped in this manufacture and those who encouraged it in any way would be dispersed. The result of this announcement was that greater crowds assembled. The police came and forcibly took away the pan. A start was made again. There was a tussle and the police forcibly took away the pans again. They also took seven volunteers with them. Ultimately however six of these were allowed to go back and one remained under arrest. Several volunteers were hurt in the scuffle. Two other centres of satyagraha are being started in Rae Bareli district.

3. A prominent Congress worker of U.P.; imprisoned in 1930 during the salt satyagraha; Minister for Finance and Information in the U.P., 1947-48; member, U.P. Legislative Assembly in 1956; president of the United Forward Republican Bloc in U.P., but rejoined the Congress in 1963.
4. (1904-1953); Congressman from U.P.; imprisoned several times during the freedom movement; president, All India Trade Union Congress, 1933-35; president, Indian National Trade Union Congress, 1947-49, president, National Federation of Indian Railwaymen, 1953; elected to the Lok Sabha, 1952.

44. To Mahadeva Desai[1]

Allahabad
April 12th, 1930

My dear Mahadeva,
I received your letter of the 7th last night. Your account of things and happenings in Gujarat is most heartening. Indeed the whole country is responding to the call very satisfactorily. Owing to the government censorship and their way of holding up and delaying letters and telegrams we are not getting all the facts. Local news gets some prominence in local newspapers, if the latter happen to be favourably disposed to the movement. In the U.P. we suffer from the great handicap that we have no such English newspapers. *The Leader* distorts and often suppresses our news. *The Hindustan Times* is giving good publicity and is gaining rapidly in circulation in the U.P. but it is difficult to keep up a regular supply of news from distant parts of the province. We have started a local paper in Hindi—*Satyagraha Samachar*—and it is eagerly sought after. It has been coming out three times a week but we propose to make it a daily.

An amazing instance of suppression of news was the way newspapers did not give publicity to the recent savage attack of the police on a number of young boys who took out a black flag procession in Bulandshahr on the occasion of the governor's visit. These boys were belaboured mercilessly by the police in the presence of Hailey and I am sorry to say that the district magistrate...[2] took part in this savage attack. *The Hindustan Times* gave publicity to this but *The Leader* and other papers did not even mention it. A resolution of our provincial satyagraha committee on the subject calling upon all Congress committees to boycott the governor wherever he went and take out black flag processions was also suppressed. Father was very much put out by this incident and he criticised these methods of barbarism very strongly and said that in some ways these were worse than even Dyerism.

In order to keep in touch with some of our satyagraha centres we have had to arrange a daily messenger service. This is working well between Rae Bareli and Allahabad.

1 A.I.C.C. File No. G-29/1930 (Pt 1), pp 105-109, N.M.M.L.
2 Name omitted

in Rae Bareli and in Allahabad. We have been selling such salt in the Allahabad city daily.

Although many arrests have not been made in the U.P. so far for actual breaches of the salt laws, arrests continue to be made for sedition or under sec. 107. Owing to the harvesting season most kisans have been busy in their fields. In another week's time they will be free.

News from Behar is very good. In Saran district the police raided the volunteer camp and even took away the tents. There is tremendous enthusiasm amongst the volunteers and a spontaneous social boycott of the police, so much so that the police have to send for their food to the headquarters of the district by car. They cannot get it in the villages at all.

Thank you very much for the packet of salt collected by Bapu. It is very welcome. I should like to keep it but perhaps it is desirable to auction it. I am afraid, however, that we cannot get a good price in Allahabad. At the very outside it might perhaps go up to Rs. 400 or Rs. 500.

You are very busy and yet I have inflicted a long letter on you. You must forgive me.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

45. To Rafi Ahmad Kidwai[1]

April 13th, 1930

My dear Rafi,

Today's news from Rae Bareli showed that things are warming up and that Sitla Sahai has also been arrested. This is excellent. I wish I could come to you now but I am afraid I must go to Raipur for a day tomorrow. It was because of this that I requested Mr. Sri Prakasa to postpone the meeting of the provincial satyagraha committee. I think we can well afford to meet five or six days later at Cawnpore. Meanwhile it seems to me that the situation is developing exceedingly well everywhere.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G 59/1930, p 3, N.M.M.L.

There is a great concentration of forces on behalf of the government in this district. The Kashi Vidyapith has sent some of its professors and senior students to help in the campaign.

ALLAHABAD-HANDIA. Satyagraha began on the 9th. Great tussle between the police and volunteers to get possession of the pans. Ultimately police took them away. No arrests. This is continued daily. Satyagraha is being started now in some other parts of the tehsil also.

ALLAHABAD CITY. Satyagraha began on the 10th. Huge procession going through city, headed by a batch of satyagrahi volunteers whose leader was Jawaharlal Nehru, and deputy leader, Sadiq Ali.[5] Other members of the batch were Kamala Nehru and Krishna Nehru. The procession was stopped at dozens of places *en route* by shopkeepers and others and garlanded and various offerings were made. Muslim shopkeepers and residents vied with the Hindus in welcoming the procession and giving it their blessings. Vast crowd had gathered at the scene of operations. Allahabad had not seen the like of it before. While salt was being manufactured from salt-earth a number of policemen under the sub-inspector tried to reach the place of manufacture but the crowd was so great all round that they found it impossible to reach it in spite of repeated efforts. Later, the salt made was auctioned and a sum of about Rs. 500 was realised. Volunteers returned in procession to the Congress House. No arrests were made. This was repeated on the second day. The police did not intervene at all. The U.P. Government issued a *communique* after the first day that no contravention of the law had taken place as manufactured salt had been taken in solution in bottles. This was a ridiculous statement. A bottle of kerosene oil was sent for by the volunteers to help to light the fire. It is now proposed to have several centres of salt manufacture in the city. In the Congress office itself salt is manufactured on a bigger scale every day.

BENARES. Satyagraha has been taking place daily for some time without any great interference from the police. On the 10th, however, a strong force of police raided the place and tried to seize some pots and pans. There was a great tussle for nearly 20 minutes, some volunteers getting hurt. I do not think any arrests have been made.

Satyagraha has also begun in some other places like Etawah but I have not got details of it yet.

Father took an active part in the auction of the contraband salt both

5. (b 1910), permanent secretary, AICC, 1938-48, general secretary, AICC, 1958-62, elected to Rajya Sabha, 1958 and 1964.

47. To Sri Prakasa[1]

Allahabad
14/4/1930

My dear Prakasa,
Just a hurried line before I go to Raipur. The situation in Rae Bareli demands immediate attention and help. I would have gone there like a shot but I feel that I cannot give up Raipur at the last moment. On return from Raipur I shall go to Rae Bareli regardless of other work. I am even prepared to give up the provincial conference at Cawnpore. Meanwhile, what is to be done? Could you not send some worthwhile person to Rae Bareli for a day? Could you not go yourself? There are plenty of persons in Benares and I am sure you could be spared for a while.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

48. The Trial[1]

The magistrate, reading the charges against Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru asked, "Do you plead guilty or not guilty?"

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: May I know what it is, a public trial or a private trial?

MAGISTRATE: All the members of your family have been permitted to attend the court and the representatives of the press but not the public in general.

1. Allahabad, 14 April 1930. From *The Leader*, 16 April 1930.
Jawaharlal was arrested and tried on 14 April and sentenced to six months' simple imprisonment.

If you require any money please write to Sri Prakasa and Kailas Nath. As you know we have sanctioned Rs. 500/- for Rae Bareli. As for more helpers, also communicate with Sri Prakasa. Perhaps you can get some from Cawnpore also. I am afraid we cannot spare any just at present.

In Allahabad we are spreading out our activities in various *mohallas* but no arrests have taken place. Today we have added a new feature. We are taking out the little carriages which *churanwalas* use and both making salt in it and selling it with appropriate songs. Don't you think this is a brilliant idea? Telegraph to me c/o provincial conference, Raipur. I shall be there till the night of the***[2]

Carry on as you have begun and I am sure that Rae Bareli would distinguish itself. The government appears to be hopelessly perplexed and has no uniform policy.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

2. Word missing in the text.

46. To Din Dayal[1]

Allahabad
13/4/30

My dear Din Dayal,

I have your letter. I am very sorry to learn of your mental suffering[2] I can quite appreciate your difficulties. Most of us have had to face them at some time or other. If properly faced and overcome they go to strengthen us. Do not lose heart or become hysteric. That does not become a young man out to do great things. How shall we do them if we despair when difficulties come our way? Do not hurry. Take your time and, above all, remain cool and collected.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J N Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Din Dayal was distressed as he could not participate in the salt satyagraha owing to domestic circumstances.

8

PRISON DIARY WITH LETTERS

14 April 1930–11 October 1930

J.N.: I do not propose to take any part in the trial at any time, or answer any questions. But quite apart from the trial, I have stated on many occasions and am prepared to state for your information that I have deliberately broken the salt laws.

MAGISTRATE: Would you be prepared to sign this statement?

J.N.: Rather not.

49. Message to the People[1]

Keep smiling, fight on and see it through.

1. Given by Jawaharlal while leaving the courtroom. *The Leader*, 16 April 1930.

50. Message to the Citizens of Allahabad[1]

What can I say to the brothers and sisters of Allahabad except that I thank them for their love and kindness and hope that they will participate fully in the great struggle for the freedom of our country.

Keep up the honour of Allahabad!

1. 14 April 1930. Original in Hindi. See illustration facing p. 305.

51. Message to Mahatma Gandhi[1]

I have stolen a march over you.

1. *The Leader*, 16 April 1930.
Jawaharlal telephoned this message from prison to Motilal Nehru who conveyed it to Mahatma Gandhi.

April 14th 1930—Monday[1]

On way to Raipur in C.P. to preside over C.P. Hindi Provincial Conference[2]—Took the shuttle to Chheoki for the Bombay mail. On arrival at Chheoki arrested in the shuttle itself at 7.35 a.m. Tendulkar[3] was with me. He was somewhat taken aback. I was brought to Naini Prison by car. Was permitted to telephone home from jail office—Spoke to father—

I was kept waiting in the jail office—At about 10 people started collecting outside. The whole family present—My trial took place in an upper room over the jail office. The city magistrate, apparently an Anglo-Indian deputy collector, presided. Charge under Sec 9(c) Salt Act of 1882. I took no part in trial but stated that I had deliberately defied salt laws.

Sentenced to 6 months simple imprisonment—No fine.

Huge crowd had collected down below outside jail. Singing national songs and shouting out slogans. In court room only relatives and pressmen admitted. A few other friends also succeeded in coming in.

After conviction father was allowed to see my quarters. Evidently not over pleased with them. I am going to live here all by myself—Father said something about solitary confinement to which the Superintendent replied that he would keep me company from time to time! Cheerful prospect, either way!

Still, as things go, the place might be worse. I dislike the high circular wall which encloses my present domain. It is about 14 ft or 15 ft high and the space it encloses has a diameter of probably under 100 ft. In the centre of this area is an ugly little building full of bolts and bars. A part of this I occupy—half of it is vacant. I have a cell—I do not know what else to call it—about 10 ft × 8 ft with an entrance about 2 ft wide, an open arch with thick iron bars on another side, and a small open archway leading to a bathroom. The bathroom is certainly a convenience, but on one side there is a door with the usual bars and

1. In this section the diary kept by Jawaharlal in the Naini Central Prison, from 14 April to 11 October 1930, has been printed. Letters and notes written by him during this period have been interspersed. The diary, letters and notes are available in the N.M.M.L.
2. The third session of the C.P. Hindustani Political Conference commenced at Raipur on 15 April 1930, in Jawaharlal's absence Seth Govind Das presided.
3. D. G. Tendulkar (1909-1971); born at Ratnagiri and educated at Cambridge University; biographer and writer; participated in the freedom movement; well known for his biography in eight volumes of Mahatma Gandhi.

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with no curtain. Of course there are no curtains anywhere. I can have little privacy. Even when I am sitting in my room I can be gazed at through the bars from various angles. Rather disconcerting. One feels as if one was in a cage and always being watched. Perhaps later I might be able to improvise some khadi curtains.

I dislike the circular wall. Whichever way one looks one sees it. It reminds one of captivity more than a rectangular enclosure.

My predecessor in this barrack was an Afghan prince who got into trouble at the time when Bachha Saqqa[4] was boss at Kabul.

The Superintendent, Major Uberoi,[5] appears to be a decent person—anyway he is decent to me. The jailor Tyne (Teyen) is also an agreeable person. Both are trying to make me comfortable. A big *newar* bed has been sent to me. It was brought to my cell with difficulty. A teapoy and chair have also come. A little punkha has been put up.

Punkha coolies come at night also but I refused to have them. I was allowed to sleep in the open outside my cell. This is a welcome privilege—more welcome when the days and nights get hotter.

Food came from home in the evening. Against rules, but as it was the first day an exception was made.

My barrack:[6]

April 15th Tuesday

Venkatesh Narain Tewari[7] came with the jail Supt. this morning He came as the official jail visitor.

I have been given a cook. Just as he had finished cooking food came from home. This would not have been sent to me but as Kamala or Betty had brought it, the Supdt. relented. However, no more food from outside.

Books, chiefly French ones, have also come.

I have sent for my *charkha* and some other things.

4 A rebel chief who made himself Amir of Afghanistan for a short time in 1929.
5 Later served as Inspector-General of Prisons, U.P.
6 The diagram in the diary is reproduced in the illustration facing p 320.
7 Venkatesh Narayan Tiwary (1890 1965); general secretary, U P P.C C, 1914 18, edited *Abhyudaya* and other Hindi journals, for some time member of the Liberal Party, imprisoned several times during the freedom movement; member U P P.C C. Committee on Agrarian Distress, 1931; member, U P. Legislative Assembly during 1937 39 and 1946 52, member, Constituent Assembly of India, 1946-50, member, Lok Sabha, 1952 57.

I have quite a crowd of people looking after me—or is it watching me? Two wardens, two C.Os[8] and three other convicts seem to be permanently installed here—besides the punkha coolies who come from outside the jail. Other warders and C.Os are continually coming in and spending some time here. The real work is done by the ordinary convicts who are rubbing and scrubbing and cleaning almost all day. The warders of course do not work and the C.Os seldom do. The warder orders the C.Os who pass on the orders to the ordinary convicts. What a lot of human energy not being used or being wasted on trivial matters! I require little service for myself. My doing my own work seems to worry the crowd of warders and C.Os. They are very sympathetic and try their best to do something for me.

The C.Os tell me that there was great excitement in the jail yesterday when the national songs sung by the crowd outside were heard by the prisoners. Many convicts expected a mass attack on the jail! The Supt. stopped all work and locked up all convicts in their respective barracks.

All C.Os are long term prisoners, usually for life. Their offence as a rule is murder in a riot connected with a land dispute. And yet they are very far from being a murderous crowd. They look decent, quiet, easy to manage and very responsive to kindness. How easily they could be made into useful members of society!

The warder tells me that the strike of schools and colleges continues today. Yesterday there was a hartal all over the city and all schools and colleges closed down. The warder's son goes to the Jumna Mission School and it was on his information that the warder said that the strike continued.

April 16th Wednesday

Maharaj Singh[9] came to see me today. Spent over an hour with me. Was very keen on doing something to add to my comfort. I am comfortable enough physically but I do not feel very bright. During the last three days I have had more rest and sleep than I have had for many a month, and yet I feel below par. Perhaps it is the effect of the environment. The circular wall is not a cheerful sight. Almost the only colour one sees is the drab mud of the walls and ground. There

8. Convict Overseers.
9. (1878-1959); Commissioner of Allahabad, 1927, 1929 and 1931; Home Member, U.P. Government, 1935 37; Governor of Bombay, 1948 52.

is no greenery inside the barrack or any other colour. Birds seldom come. A little bit of a neem tree peeps over the wall from outside. Sometimes, when the door leading out of the barrack is open I have a glimpse of a cabbage patch and at the other end of it a kind of huge cage. Looks like a cage at a zoo. And this reminds me of the animals at the zoo and I begin to sympathise with them in their confinement.

I have the blue sky of course in daytime and the stars at night. The high wall cuts off a good bit of both. The circular part of the sky it shows at night reminded me of a planetarium. As I write, my old friend Sirius, the Dog Star, looks wisely at me from just over the wall. Orion I cannot see now. It is hidden by the wall. Castor and Pollux are almost above me and I recognise a few other old acquaintances.

Maharaj Singh told me that Kamala had come here yesterday and wanted to come to my barrack. The Supdt. however did not encourage her and the poor girl went back disappointed. It is as well. I don't think she would have enjoyed the sight of these high walls and bleak aspect. It is difficult to enthuse over them.

What a terrible waste of brick and mortar just to deprive people of their liberty! A very decent, large-sized house could be built out of the materials of my particular wall only. There is 14 or 15 ft of it in height only.

I was massaged today for my pain in the shoulder. Some improvement, but the rubbing was done so strenuously that a bit or my skin was almost removed.

The Supt. tells me that I can have a visit every fortnight. Two persons are allowed but as a great favour he might allow three! Letters also once a fortnight. Probably the number of pages or words is limited. So I need not trouble myself about writing or seeing anybody till the end of this month.

The warder says that he visited the bazaars of Allahabad today and there was a great deal of talk about salt. People generally said that they would make their own salt in future.

The prisoners and warders have evidently been much taken by the national songs which were sung outside the jail during my trial. A C.O. asked me to write them down. I happened to have a leaflet containing them and I gave it to him. Since then 2 C.Os and a warder have been jointly reading them and humming them.

A prison is a strange place at night. All manner of noises reach one throughout the night from the night watchmen and others. Sometimes one feels as if one was on the verge of the forest and the peasants

My barrack :

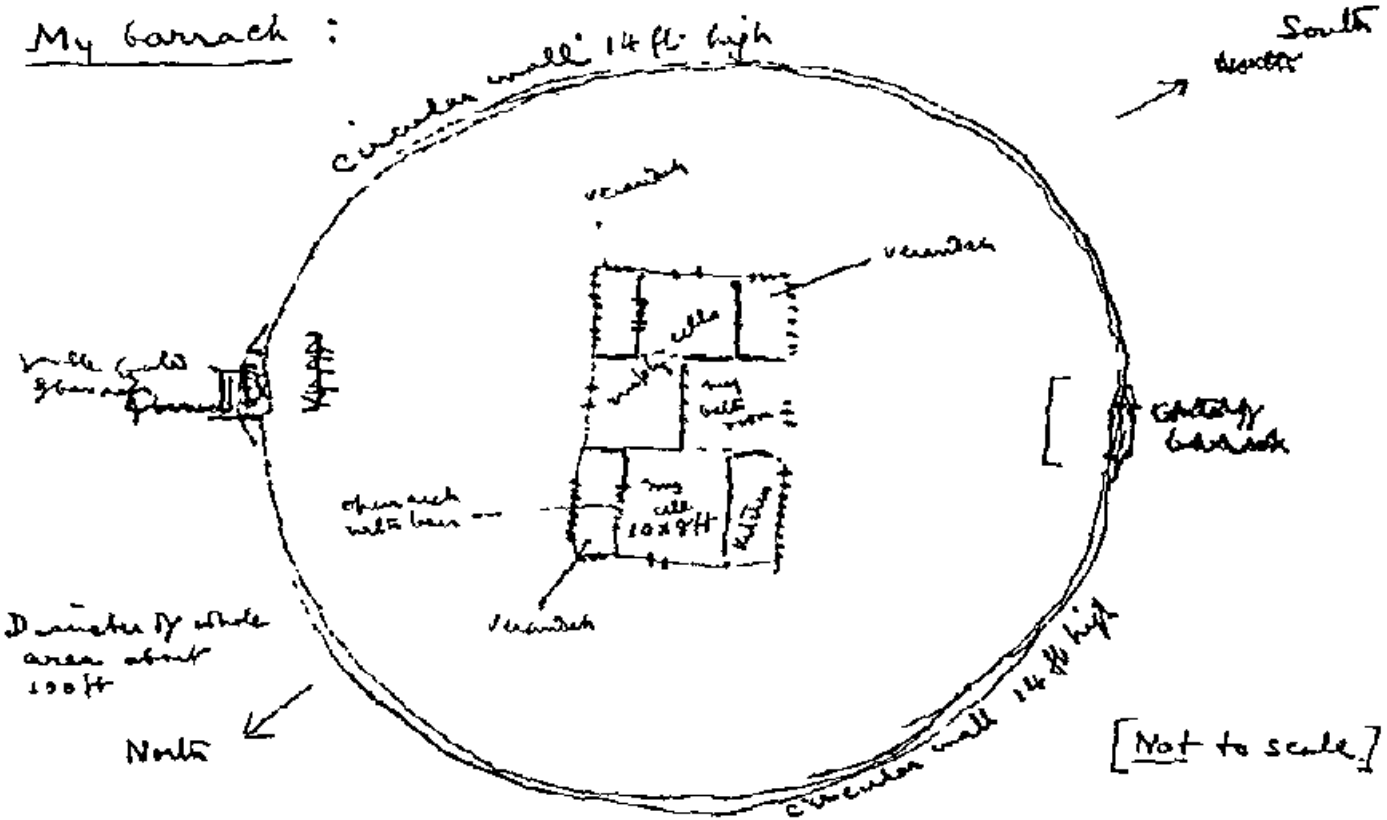
circular wall 14 ft high
South
verandah
verandah
cells
cells
cells
10x8 ft
verandah
Gateway barrack
Diameter of whole area about 100 ft
North
circular wall 14 ft high
[Not to scale]

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Maharaj Singh told me that Kamala had come here yesterday and wanted to come to my barrack. The Supdt. however did not encourage her and the poor girl went back disappointed. It is as well. I don't think she would have enjoyed the sight of these high walls and bleak aspect. It is difficult to enthuse over them.

What a terrible waste of brick and mortar just to deprive people of their liberty! A very decent, large-sized house could be built out of the materials of my particular wall only. There is 14 or 15 ft of it in height only.

I was massaged today for my pain in the shoulder. Some improvement, but the rubbing was done so strenuously that a bit of my skin was almost removed.

The Supt. tells me that I can have a visit every fortnight. Two persons are allowed but as a great favour he might allow three! Letters also once a fortnight. Probably the number of pages or words is limited. So I need not trouble myself about writing or seeing anybody till the end of this month.

The warder says that he visited the bazaars of Allahabad today and there was a great deal of talk about salt. People generally said that they would make their own salt in future.

The prisoners and warders have evidently been much taken by the national songs which were sung outside the jail during my trial. A C.O. asked me to write them down. I happened to have a leaflet containing them and I gave it to him. Since then 2 C.Os and a warder have been jointly reading them and humming them.

A prison is a strange place at night. All manner of noises reach one throughout the night from the night watchmen and others. Sometimes one feels as if one was on the verge of the forest and the peasants

were shouting to keep wild animals away from their fields. Sometimes, it is the forest itself and the beasts of the night keep up their nocturnal chorus.

April 17th Thursday

I was arrested and convicted on an auspicious day. It was the first of *Vaisakh* 1987—the New Year's day of the *Samvat* calendar. I do not quite understand this as we celebrated the *Naoroz* about two weeks or more ago. Anyway the Gyanmandal सौर रोज़नामचा[10] begins 1987 *Samvat* from the 14th April.

It was just after the full moon when I came and every morning I have watched the contest between the dawn and the moonlight. How gradually the daylight creeps and overcomes the light of the moon!

Lying enclosed by the circular wall suddenly made me feel that I was in a big well. And then I thought of the Towers of Silence and some little birds sitting on the top of the wall reminded me of the vultures. Poor inoffensive *mainas* to be compared to vultures! I apologise.

The Supt., at Maharaj Singh's suggestion, is going to let me out in the early mornings for a run. That is, he will let me out of my barrack, not of the jail. He showed me the big outer wall of the jail and said I could run along it on one side of it which is nearly 500 yards long. Tomorrow I hope to begin—I am looking forward to it—A run and a sight of trees and greenery will be delightful.

I am told that I cannot get daily papers. Of the weeklies I am offered the *Bharat* (Hindi)[11] and the *Illustrated Times*.

The Supt. told me that Venkatesh Narain Tewari had given an interview about his visit to me. He had apparently waxed eloquent about my *newar* bed! Perhaps he does not fully realise that there are other things in heaven and earth than *newar* beds.

I have asked the Supdt. for some manual work and he has suggested *newar*-making. I have agreed and he will have the necessary things fitted up in my barrack soon. As an inducement he informed me that if I worked I could get a reduction of four days a month. Not much inducement as I am likely to return to prison soon after my discharge —probably for a much longer period.

10. A diary based on the solar calendar.
11. A Hindi weekly published from Allahabad.

The F Days Interlude

JARLAL NEHRU

President of the Indian National Congress.

April 18th Good Friday

A convict from another barrack brought me flowers today—white *bela* buds and red fuchsias—and some *tulsi* leaves. He said he had been wanting to see me for several days but could not manage to get permission. He is a cook in another barrack. At last on the pretext of bringing some dal or something he was allowed to come for a few minutes. It was a gracious gift he brought and I felt very thankful. But I hardly knew what to say to him

Today is a holiday in jail, being Good Friday. It is rather silly giving Christian holidays to Hindus & Moslems but a holiday is a holiday and must be appreciated.

I had a good run this morning outside under the outer wall. Feel the better for it. I came across a new type of convict jail official today —the M.W. (Main Wall). The C.N.W.—C.O.—C.W. I knew before. The M.W's stand like statues at fixed distances under the outer wall.

The Supt. had a long chat with me. Evidently he wants to make up for my lack of company. He told me that father had rung up and wanted to see me. The Supt. told him that he might arrange an interview for urgent private reasons only, to which father replied that his private business and public business were inextricably mixed up. That means I suppose that there will be no interview till the fortnight is over.

It is easy enough for me in jail with no worries—only occasional ennui. But the burden of the struggle and of the family falls on father and I feel greatly for him. I wish I could help.

I was weighed today—130 lbs. Yesterday they took my thumb impression and noted various distinguishing marks on my body!

April 19th Saturday

I had a pleasant surprise this morning. The jailer came and told me that my father had come to see me. I went to the office—Father was there—also mother, Kamala and Indu. We were not supposed to discuss politics but I gathered that things were going on splendidly all over the country. Allahabad was doing very well and every day there were two processions of volunteers breaking the salt laws. Uma Bhabi led one day—Ranjit another day. Contraband salt was offered for sale right in the *Kotwali!* Yet no arrests were being made here. The Youth League had contributed another 15 volunteers.

I had some more clothes and books from home. The former were hardly necessary, the latter were welcome. But the German reader I was keen about has not come. I must get to know some German before I go out. That has been an old promise I made to myself and I have repeated it to Padmaja.

One book I sent for has not come—Spengler's[12] *Decline of the West*. Probably the Supt. has kept it. He asked me what it was. Evidently he suspected that it contained something subversive of the British Govt.

The cabbage patch in front of my barrack looks bare and forlorn. The cabbages have all been cut off and only the stumps remain. Beyond, the cage and the pump, and today when the Supt. took me out to show me the place for exercise, I saw a large number of convicts going round and round inside this cage working the pump. A more idiotic and barbarous way of using human labour I cannot imagine.

I am told that there are some Handia[13] salt law breakers here. Three apparently came the day I was convicted. Three more are said to have arrived today. The latter include Maharaj Kishore[14] and Rup Narain (?)[15]

The warder tells me that salt is the topic of the day in the city and large numbers of people are making it. Also that the Punjab and Lucknow are going strong. Why the warder has coupled the Punjab & Lucknow, and left out the rest of the country I do not know.

The warder and the C Os said that they had read the little leaflet of national songs again and again and wanted more literature. How was I to produce this?

Sachin Sanyal is here and wants to see me. The Supt. said he will arrange an interview.

Also Shyamvir Singh of the Bareilly case is here.

I have visits from large numbers of warders and C.Os. They come in their spare hours for *darshan* and put curious questions. All of them want to know when Swaraj is coming. None of them is enamoured of the British Govt. One of them wanted to know if there would be no jails under Swaraj! He said this was the impression of many convicts.

12 Oswald Spengler (1680 1936); German philosopher, known for his work, *The Decline of the West*, which was translated into English during 1926 29.

13 North eastern tahsil of Allahabad District, U P.

14 He was then president of the Handia tahsil Congress committee.

15 Rup Narain Tripathi, joined the Congress in 1924 and was imprisoned several times during the freedom movement.

April 22nd Tuesday

Got the new number of *Bharat* today which gave some news, though not very much that was new.

The Dt. Magistrate of Allahabad paid a visit to the jail this morning. He was gracious enough to send word to me that if I had anything special to say to him he would come round to me. But as I had no special confidences for him the visit did not come off.

I did a little *newar*-weaving today. Not difficult. Hope to do some every day. The *charka* meanwhile awaits the pleasure of the I.G.

In the evenings I give some time to the warders & fellow convicts in my barrack. They ask all manner of funny questions. The chief warder, who is a Moslem, could not get over one difficulty. Ramachandra, he said, is supposed to be God, and yet we know that he was born like other human beings and had a father & mother &c. How can God have a father and mother? I do not know if my answer satisfied him or not!

My senior warder has put in 26 years service in this jail. He tells me that there are many convicts who have been here for over 20 years and are still here. Amazing long sentences are given—the man who came to teach me *newar*-weavmg had received a sentence of 26 years in a dacoity case!

I had a few cigarettes in my bag when I was arrested. These came with me to my cell and I smoked them from time to time. The last one was finished today—Good thing!

April 23rd Wednesday

Had an unwelcome visitor—a scorpion—in my cell. Can't make out where he came from—There is so much sweeping and cleaning going on.

There seems to be a general impression in jail that the Salt Act has gone and that I am going to be discharged. The reason for this being that salt is being made publicly in all manner of places and no action is taken.

The way jail is run in India is not unlike the British Govt. of India. There is great efficiency in the apparatus of govt.—which goes to strengthen the hold of the govt. on this country—and little or no care of the human material of the country. Outwardly this jail must appear efficiently run and to some extent this must be true. But no one seems to think that the main purpose of the prison must be to improve and help the unhappy individuals who come to it. Break them! That is the idea—So that by the time they go out they may have not an atom of spirit left in them.

Gandhiji it appears did not wish to act as President of the A.I.C.C and father has therefore taken on the job. Tomorrow the whole family is going to Cawnpore to attend the provincial conference.

Father has been preparing for jail himself. He has reduced the staff of servants at Anand Bhawan and wound up several of his affairs. But there is little chance of his arrest.

Kamala said that Mohanlal Saksena was being treated badly in Lucknow jail.[16] I was glad to notice that Kamala was looking well—So were father and mother—Indu was still troubled by a bad leg.

I find that six men from Handia are in the jail—among them are Maharaj Kishore, Punya Deva, Bhuwerji[17] and Rup Narain Tripathi.

My *charkha* has arrived in the office, but there is a hitch. The Supt. got an attack of nerves and wrote to the I.G. about it. He awaits his answer and meanwhile the *charkha* awaits in his office.

April 20th Sunday

Father sent me two of my favourite picture books today—*Les Alpes* par Hans Schmithals and *Les Portraits des Mont-Blanc* par Andre-Charles Coppier. It was a delight, not unmixed with regret, to gaze at the wide expanses of the cold glaciers and the magnificent peaks in their solitary grandeur and the Alpine flowers in bloom.

April 21st Monday

A week over today! The days are getting a little monotonous. The same routine, the same programme.

As I was walking outside this morning I overheard some convicts discussing the prospects of Swaraj. They came to the conclusion that the prospects were very favourable, their chief reason apparently being that we who strive for Swaraj are a persistent and obstinate lot and it will not be possible to keep us down for long. दबाव से झगड़ा बहुत दिन तक नहीं हो सकती।[18]

16 He was arrested on 14 April 1930 for violating the salt law and sentenced to 18 months' rigorous imprisonment

17. (b 1893), member of the Sabarmati Ashram for some years, imprisoned several times during the freedom movement; is actively associated with Khadi and village industries.

18 Those who are persistent cannot be suppressed for long

April 24th Thursday

The Supt. told me that A class prisoners are allowed only 6 books at a time. So he suggested that I might keep books in excess of six in his office. Evidently the gentlemen who make these rules are not in the habit of keeping company with books. In French alone I have about half a dozen books which I read or consult daily—a dictionary, grammar, exercises, anthologies of poetry & prose, novels—Then there is an English dictionary—two picture books on the Alps—the *Bhagawad Gita*—some reference books to help me continue my letters to Indu &c. As a matter of fact I was waiting for more books before settling down to writing work. If I am reduced to six including dictionaries I shall have to revise my programme greatly. Anyhow I am sending back home the picture books and others. I dare not leave them in the jail office.

For the last two days I have had curtains in my cell—It is a great improvement specially in the middle of the day—also they give a measure of privacy.

April 25th Friday

A large assortment of fruit arrived from home today with a note for the Supt. from father to the effect that today was his 69th birthday—I had not thought of this. The Gregorian date is May 4th. What a burden he has to carry at this age when he should have rest!

Venkatesh Narain Tewari came this morning. He was evidently put out at a message I had sent *Bharat* about my article on Gandhiji. I agreed to allow him to print it if he stated that the article was written for a French book 3 or 4 years ago.[19]

From V. N. Tewari I learnt that Mahadev Desai & Shankarlal Banker have been arrested.[20]

I gather that the Handia people have been put in jail clothes and have been given work—*newar*-weaving & press. Also that two additional men have come from Handia.

I felt very poorly all day today. Had a headache. Could not do much solid work.

I am told that every effort is made to isolate me from other prisoners and warders. Very few people are allowed to come here—even C.Os who usually have this liberty. My C. Os here are not now allowed to

19 The article does not seem to have been published in *Bharat*. The article in French is not traceable

20 They were arrested at Ahmedabad on 23 April.

I hear gruesome stories of this jail during the last regime. There has been decided improvement since the jailer etc. were changed. But the system remains. On the whole food is tolerable now and work is not so hard as it used to be.

The whole idea of having convict warders, C.Os &c. seems to be bad. It encourages sneaking and telling tales of brother prisoners to the jail officials. The C Ws I learn are paid the lordly sum of Re. 1/- per month as pocket money—or rather this is deposited in their account.

Vague reports indicate that things are going well in the country.

Since it has got known that I appreciate flowers, I am getting quite a lot of them Chiefly they are *bela* buds; sometimes there are other flowers also.

My daily programme at present is more or less as follows:

4 a.m.	Wake up—usually getting up at 4.15 a.m.
4.15-5.30	Toilet—exercises (Muller's &c.) &c.
5.30-6	Run and walk outside barrack—Run of 1460 yards Walk of a mile or more.
6-7	Massage of shoulder and arm (there is still some pain). Shave—bath.
7	A cup of tea and some fruit if received from home.
7.30-10.30	Reading, writing, *newar*-weaving and usually a visit from Supt. for half an hour.
10.30	Food: rice, dal, chapattis, vegetables.
11-1 p m	Reading &c.
1-2 p m.	Sleep or at any rate rest. If night has been very disturbed I sleep longer.
2-3	Reading.
3	Some fruit (if available).
3.15-5.30	Reading, writing &c.
5.30 6 15	Walking inside barrack.
6 15 6.45	Bath and evening meal consisting of chapattis, dal & vegetables—no rice.
6 45-7.15	Walk inside barrack.
7.15-8 15	General talk with warders, C.Os &c. in my barrack—answering questions &c.
8.15-9	Reading &c.
9 p.m	Bed.

The nights are usually very disturbed. Every little while there is shouting by the night watchmen. Once or twice in the middle of the night our barrack is visited by the night inspectors to make sure that we have not fled. Lately this has been done quietly. The man has simply shouted from outside if all is well and has then gone on.

Another scorpion appeared today—It stung one of the *safayas*. I was more excited than he was—I suggested his going to the hospital but he contented himself by applying some mud to the part affected. He seems to be none the worse for it.

I am getting into bad habits. Sleeping a lot in the middle of the day and generally not leading a very strenuous life. The weather is not helpful—Getting up at 4 in the morning means that by 12 or 1 p.m. or so one feels quite tired—Specially when the previous night has not been a long one. Still I am having a slack time comparatively. When I think of the work going on outside and the people who have to do it I feel quite guilty. But I wish I could have a fling outside also. This dull lotus eating existence with walls surrounding you and warders always guarding you is not very cheerful.

April 28th Monday

Two weeks!

All round me I have prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment. Many of them have already spent ten or fifteen years in jail—some over twenty. For years and years they have not seen a child or a woman or even a horse or a dog. What a terrible outlook! A lifer! As I was walking outside my barrack early this morning a C.O. asked me: What of us lifers? Will Swaraj take us out of this hell?

Mostly they come in the gang cases. In each case a hundred or more may be convicted mostly for life or 20 years. Some of them are probably guilty but even so a life sentence is terrible. But most must be innocent—It is quite enough to look at them and say that they have not got spirit enough for big crime. Usually they get sentenced in batches on the evidence of some approvers.

My cook is a lifer—a more harmless individual it is difficult to imagine. His story is that some distant relative wanted to rape his widowed daughter and in a fit of rage he stuck a knife into him. He is over 60 now and has been in jail for two or three years or more.

The Supt. casually told me today that my bed is going to be chained up in future! It was an amazing proposition and it took me by surprise. It appears that this precautionary measure is not for my sake but for the sake of the other five convicts in my barrack, lest they use my bed to climb over the wall. How they can do so with me in the bed it is a little difficult to imagine. So from tonight onwards when my bed is taken out of the cell, it will forthwith be chained.

mix much with others outside. I suppose it is thought that they might carry messages.

Today is *Vaisakh Badi* 12, 1987 *Samvat*. I suppose this is father's birth date.

April 26th Saturday

Maharaj Singh came and spent over an hour with me. Probably it was due to his efforts that I received my *charkha* at last. I spun for an hour today. Also I did newar-weaving for 45 minutes.

Felt very heavy-headed in the middle of the day and slept a good deal. Felt better in evening.

How extraordinary narrow in his outlook is Maharaj Singh! Perfectly straight and honourable, yet wholly ignorant of new ideas and their suggested solutions. The English Public School ideal.

April 27th Sunday

Sanyal came to my cell today. We had quite a long talk, the jailer being present most of the time. He looked well.

I understand that Shiva Murti Singh[21] has come here today and joined the Handia lot. The Handia people are being so far treated as ordinary Class C prisoners, though light work is being given them. Class B, and of course Class A prisoners, are known as the *raises* (रईस) in the jail population!

I learnt the interesting fact today that the cell and enclosure in which I am kept was originally built for particularly dangerous criminals who had to be kept quite apart. Some 8 or 9 years ago two such persons were kept here in fetters or chains. Their cell door was locked and so was the barrack door. Still they escaped! One of them managed to get out of his fetters, got into communication with the other in the adjoining cell, and then they together came out of the cell through the roof. To go over a few walls 14 or 15 ft. high presented no great difficulty. The very chains that had bound them were utilised to help in getting over the walls. This is the jail gossip of the prisoners—I do not know how far it is true. They add that the escaped convicts were not caught again. This place where I am quartered used to be called with the cheerful name of कुत्ता घर।[22]

21. He was then secretary of the Allahabad District Congress Committee and was arrested at Handia on 27 April 1930 for violating the salt law and sentenced to four months' rigorous imprisonment.
22. Literally, "dog house".

affect people in the mass. I was asked who Narmada Prasad was and if he would apologise!

I am feeling rather worried about the differentiation in treatment between me and other politicals. I am the only person who is Class A. Some others are Class B. Others apparently not classified yet. This is getting on my nerves. I have a good mind to tell the govt. that I do not want this Class A treatment. The only thing that keeps me is the effect on father & mother. Probably I shall see them in a few days and I shall mention the matter to them.

Today is a fortnight since my conviction. I ought to have been allowed to write a letter but I have had no word from the Supdt. I asked him specially to let me know.

There was *pagli* today.

30 April 1930[25]

My dear Father,

Your letter of the 28th has just been delivered to me.

My life is not terribly exciting and there is nothing very particular to say but I hasten to reply to avail myself of this fortnightly privilege. It is rather incongruous to write on this note paper from Naini Prison and I am not sure if the jail authorities will approve of it. But I have no choice in the matter as I have nothing else approaching note paper. Perhaps it is not wholly inappropriate as a vital part of the A.I.C.C. office is at present in Naini Jail, though it is not functioning.

I am glad Indu is well again. I think it is better for her to remain in Allahabad during the summer and not to get a school transfer. Of course during her vacation she can go to Chand[26] at Naini Tal or elsewhere. I hope she is taking a daily swim in the swimming bath. That will keep her more fit than Naini Tal.

I am sorry Chand and Tara[27] continue to be unwell. Nan herself is in very poor condition and a visit of the family to the hills is certainly advisable.

About Darbhanga,[28] I suppose you must carry on with the case as long as you can. I do not see how you will be able to stick to it to the

[25] M. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
[26] Chandralekha, eldest daughter of Vijayalakshmi Pandit.
[27] Nan and Tara, second daughter of Vijayalakshmi Pandit.
[28] Motilal Nehru was representing the Maharaja of Darbhanga, one of the directors of the Agra United Milk Co. Ltd., in a civil suit.

This new direction has come from the I.G.—Our Supt. apparently refers everything to the I.G. He dare not take the initiative in any thing. Having allowed me to sleep outside my cell he forthwith asked the I.G. for sanction for this too The response brought the sanction—and the chain.

A new assistant jailer came to see me. He is fresh from Agra District Jail and brought news of friends there—These were Paliwal, Dandekar Jugal Kishore,[23] John and others. He said that they were getting on well together.

Two more salt offenders from Handia are said to have come here today.

A fresh stock of fruit from home—also the weekly *Bharat* and the *Illustration*.

Some of the petty jail officials—clerks, warders &c.—seem to be getting a little nervous about the civil disobedience movement. If Swaraj comes what will happen to them? Assurances to me are not lacking that their hearts beat true and only fear of starvation makes them continue serving the foreign government.

My warder visited the city today and he tells me that he saw women picketing cloth shops in the *chowk*.

April 29th Tuesday

A cold wave, most unusual for time of the year. The night was very cool

Early in morning I learnt that Sardar Narmada Prasad Singh[24] had been arrested and brought to this jail and was sitting in the office There were some trials in jail today. Apparently he was not tried. I half expected him to be brought to my barrack but he did not come.

Some person from Handia who was tried in jail this morning apologised and said he would not break the Salt Act any more. He was of course released I do not know who this person was. The news of his apology was brought to me by a warder and subsequently by two C.Os separately. They were all rather put out at it. How quickly little things

23 Acharya Jugal Kishore (b 1893), General Secretary of the Congress, 1930 33 and 1946-48, imprisoned several times during the freedom movement, Minister U P, 1956 and 1960, Vice-chancellor of Lucknow University, 1952 54, and of Kanpur University, 1966-69.

24 (1889 1961), president of the district Congress committee, Allahabad, for 17 years, imprisoned several times during the freedom movement, president, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, 1935 36, Minister, Vindhya Pradesh, 1948-49, left the Congress in 1951 and became president of the Kisan Mazdoor Party.

My mosquito net is in good condition. So is my *charkha* which came to me three or four days ago. I do an hour's spinning every day and an hour's *newar*-weaving. Perhaps by the time I get out I might have woven enough *newar* for a bed for you! But the stuff is likely to be the property of the jail.

I have enough *punis* for another 10 or 12 days. Some days later another bundle might be sent.

Venkatesh Tewari saw me about my article on Gandhi. I told him he could print it, with an explanation, in the *Bharat*. But please get my manuscript from him soon and ask Raja Rao to send it to Cedric Dover[30] in Calcutta. The office people know the address. Dover should be asked to return this after he has done with it—also the other manuscripts of mine he has got.

I do not require any thermos. My *surai* gives me good cold water (which I have boiled previously). This is better and healthier than the addition of chunks of ice. A refrigerator of the electric variety would no doubt be better but that is beyond the capacity of Naini Prison or the dreams of even class A prisoners! But really I do not want any ice. The whole idea appears incongruous to me.

It is very good of you to keep up a constant supply of fruit. I wish however that the quantity was less. I can hardly keep pace with it. The only way of doing so I have found is to give up the ordinary meal every little while and have a purely fruitarian meal. Please also do not send anything that attracts ants. Ants are a perfect nuisance here if anything sweet is about.

I have been thinking that it might not be a bad idea if I had my cooking done, or did it myself, in a cooker. Perhaps you might send a small one? There is no hurry about it. The food I am getting here is quite decent.

I do not require any more books at present. If I want them I shall send word. I am surprised at my German first book not being found in the library. I was almost certain that it was in the book case containing the State trials. It is bound to be somewhere in the library. It is quite a little unbound dark grey book. However, there is no hurry about it.

There is another book I asked for but I did not get. I refer to it not because I want it now but because in case I may ask for it later

[30] An Anglo-Indian writer, author of *Half Caste*.

end and new developments will make it more and more difficult for you to do so. But for the present you have to appear.

I doubt if it will eventually be possible to let out any part of the old house, or at any rate any substantial part of it. I do not like the idea of it being let out for residential purposes to outsiders. At the most we can let rooms out for offices of a suitable kind like Youth League, etc. At present it is not possible to make any big changes. But ultimately we shall have a library room or rooms, and a public reading-room. We have a fairly large library as it is—it is in Bombay. The only suitable room for the library is the big drawing room or your old room. However, the library can wait. A reading-room there should be as soon as the office goes there. This room can be put in charge of the Youth League who ought to undertake to look after it. These people should also be given an office room on moderate rent.

It is right that Raja Rao should live in a part of the house. The house could really give accommodation to many of our staff members but our happy customs make it difficult for persons to live in one house without all manner of special arrangements, kitchen, etc. So for the present only Raja had better come. It may also be possible for Jaya Prakash and Prabhavati[29] to move in and, say, occupy my old rooms upstairs. They might be consulted. It will probably be more convenient and cheaper for them. They could pay Rs. 25/- to Rs. 30/- a month. About the kitchen for them, a little room adjoining the old kitchen might be given.

One thing I hope will be made clear to all. The house must be kept spick and span—no clothes drying all over the place or other similar signs of Indian habitation. Some rule might be made whereunder members of the staff might pay a proportion of their salaries as rent if they live in the house. This will be an approximate rule only.

We have an old *chaprasi* pensioner who lives near Anand Bhawan. He is called *Bare Mian*. Ask Raja Rao to tell the old man to spend the day in the old building as a kind of day *chowkidar*. This will not mean much trouble to him. He can be paid a slight increment for this if necessary.

The *Bharat* has given me the important news. I hope Kamala and Betty are not overdoing things. Specially I hope they will take plenty of rest in the middle of the day and not tempt the sun too much.

29 Wife of Jayaprakash Narayan, d. 1973.

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Venkatesh Tewari saw me about my article on Gandhi. I told him he could print it, with an explanation, in the *Bharat*. But please get my manuscript from him soon and ask Raja Rao to send it to Cedric Dover[30] in Calcutta. The office people know the address. Dover should be asked to return this after he has done with it—also the other manuscripts of mine he has got.

I do not require any thermos. My *surai* gives me good cold water (which I have boiled previously). This is better and healthier than the addition of chunks of ice. A refrigerator of the electric variety would no doubt be better but that is beyond the capacity of Naini Prison or the dreams of even class A prisoners! But really I do not want any ice. The whole idea appears incongruous to me.

It is very good of you to keep up a constant supply of fruit. I wish however that the quantity was less. I can hardly keep pace with it. The only way of doing so I have found is to give up the ordinary meal every little while and have a purely fruitarian meal. Please also do not send anything that attracts ants. Ants are a perfect nuisance here if anything sweet is about.

I have been thinking that it might not be a bad idea if I had my cooking done, or did it myself, in a cooker. Perhaps you might send a small one? There is no hurry about it. The food I am getting here is quite decent.

I do not require any more books at present. If I want them I shall send word. I am surprised at my German first book not being found in the library. I was almost certain that it was in the book case containing the State trials. It is bound to be somewhere in the library. It is quite a little unbound dark grey book. However, there is no hurry about it.

There is another book I asked for but I did not get. I refer to it not because I want it now but because in case I may ask for it later

30. An Anglo Indian writer; author of *Half Caste*.

you can spot it. It is the first volume of the *Cambridge History of India*—it deals with ancient India. There is a third volume also dealing with a subsequent period but this is not wanted. I may require the 1st vol. for reference later. If you cannot find it do not trouble to send for it from a book shop. It is too expensive and not worthwhile.

I should like to have some of my old note books. They are bound dark blue khadi—Kamala knows them. She sent me one of them the other day.

I am very glad to know that my friends of the Christmas dance remember me. Please send my love to them and my good wishes and appreciations

I should like to have a bottle of Elliman's embrocation for massaging my shoulder and arms. I have been having them massaged daily and there is great improvement. But still sometimes I have a twinge.

Information about your birthday on the 25th April came as a bit of a surprise. I was of course thinking of the 4th May. I am late in sending you my love and good wishes. But the responsibility is hardly mine. The high walls of Naini jail are responsible. And yet the walls make little difference and I have wished with all my heart that you may have a great many happy returns of the day. Were you born on the 12th *Vaisakh*? That was the *Samvat* date on April 25th.

You will be interested to learn that the day of my arrest was the 1st *Vaisakh* of the new *Samvat* 1987. I started the new year well. In your room there is a copy of a Hindi diary sent by Shiva Prasad—it is called the सौर रोजनामचा. This begins with the 14th April—1st *Vaisakh*.

Maharaj Singh was here again a few days ago. He casually hinted if I felt the heat much here it might be possible to arrange for a transfer to a jail in a cooler place. He made it clear that he had no authority in the matter but that he could suggest it. I told him definitely that I required no such change. I would much rather be in Naini than in its namesake in the hills. Here at least I feel that I am not far from you although the river Jamna and the jail walls may be between us Besides, you know that I flourish exceedingly in the hot weather.

As a matter of fact I am not very happy at the thought that I am specially selected for what is called Class A treatment To my knowledge there is no one else here getting this treatment. I do not like being the recipient of any special favour. I am waiting for the present to see developments

Do not worry about me in the least and do not trouble to send the car frequently. It is the people outside who have to shoulder the burden and face the heat of the fray. I do not want to come in the way

of your work. Anything that I have asked for in this letter need not be sent forthwith. At the time of the next interview I can be given them.

I think often of our friends all over India. Many of them—how many!—I find from *Bharat*, have taken shelter behind high walls and prison bars. Of them and of others I think frequently, and send my good wishes.

My love to all in Anand Bhawan and in 9, Cawnpore Road.

Your loving son,
Jawahar

April 30th Wednesday

Had a letter from father this morning. It was dated the 28th. I sent an answer for him to the Superintendent soon after. On the whole very satisfactory news.

The idea of mother picketing the foreign cloth shops is very moving. The warders tell me that the foreign cloth boycott is the talk of the city. One of the warders asked me what happened to Mohamed Ali. Apparently some notice has been issued on his behalf asking Muslims to keep apart from the C.D. movement because of Nehru Report &c. &c. It also appears that counter-notices by Muslims have also been issued. My Muslim warder strongly disapproved of Mohamed Ali's *volte face* and suggested unworthy reasons for it. The more I think of it the more I am convinced that the Muslims in India can do nothing more disastrous for their own interests than to keep away from the freedom movement. It is obvious however that they are not keeping away as a whole. What of Peshawar and the N.W.F.P.![31]

31 The civil disobedience campaign was proceeding vigorously in the N.W.F.P. The Congress had decided to picket liquor shops at Peshawar on 23 April. The previous day, the Congress investigation committee, which was proceeding to Peshawar, was stopped at Attock. To protest against this, a mammoth meeting was held that evening in Peshawar. The next morning, Congress leaders were arrested and a large crowd followed them to the police station. Suddenly, without any warning, armoured cars drove through the crowd, killing some and seriously injuring many. The people were not allowed to remove their dead but instead were fired upon.

I gather that Narmada Prasad was sentenced today to 9 months' R.I. Quite a crowd was present in the jail office including Kalakankar, Malaviyaji &c. Outside there was a big crowd.

I did five feet of *newar* weaving in an hour today.

May 1st Thursday May Day

I am very worried about Class A & B & C. It is annoying enough to sit idly doing no active work when people outside are working away for all they are worth. I sit and read when mother & Kamala & Nan & Betty picket in the hot sun! It is even more annoying to find that I am the only person here in Naini Jail getting this Class A treatment. Even Narmada Prasad has not been given it. I understand he will have to put on prison clothes and do prison work. This is getting on my nerves and I can't stand it. I hinted as much to father in yesterday's letter. I shall wait for my interview with him in two or three days. Afterwards, I shall write to Govt. or the Supdt.

I have given up sleeping in the afternoon. The news from outside during last few days has made me feel too excited to sleep. It seems such a futile way of spending any part of the day. I feel very proud and happy at the part mother & Kamala & Nan & Betty are taking in the campaign. Altogether the country seems to be doing splendidly. How can this wonderful energy and enthusiasm fail. Oh! to be in the fray and not to sit idly by, behind high walls.

I have been reading in a history of the Orient about the Indian colonies in Malaysia, Indo-China &c. Fascinating subject—I must get a bigger book on this subject.

The chain to tie and lock my bed up has come! Tonight I shall have to endure it.

The Superintendent mentioned today that Patel had a great procession yesterday.[32] The warder also gave interesting bits of news of the great meeting last evening—apparently Abul Kalam Azad was present.[33]

32. On 30 April, on his way from Simla to Calcutta, after having resigned the presidentship of the Central Assembly, Vithalbhai Patel was welcomed by a large number of people at the Allahabad railway station and taken out in a procession.

33. This public meeting in Allahabad was addressed by Vithalbhai Patel and Maulana Azad.

The day before Mahmud & Hasrat Mohani spoke at a monster gathering in Allahabad.[34] The Muslims are besturring themselves.

I ran a longer distance than usual this morning. Ordinarily I run 1466 yards, today I ran 1833 yards—a little over a mile.

I finished Andre Maurois'[35] *Ariel ou la Vie de Shelley* today. Liked it. Since I have been in Naini Jail I have not read very much as a good bit of my time has been spent in doing French poetry—still I have read the following books:

1. T. C. Woo's *Kuomin Tang*[36]
2. K. T. Shah's *The Splendour that was Ind.*[37]
3. Bertrand Russell's *A.B.C. of Relativity.*
4. Three plays by Henry Bernstein[38]
   La Marche,[39] *La Griffe,*[40] *Le Detour.*[41]
   (*La Griffe* we saw in Paris)
5. Habib's *Amir Khusrau*[42]
6. Johan Bojer's[43] *The New Temple.*

May 2nd Friday

The reveille was sounded at 4.30 in the morning today. Till yesterday 5 a.m. was the hour for it but now the day has been advanced by half an hour. I have been getting up about 4 a.m.

It continues to be remarkably cool, specially at night.

My punkha coolie, a poor Musulman from outside (not a convict), has been bringing me a few little mangoes almost daily. They are not up to much, but the gift is worthy of the gods. The man is very poor. I showed him some sympathy and this is his way of conveying his gratitude to me!

34 On 29 April, a public meeting was held to congratulate Sardar Narmada Prasad Singh on his arrest and to commend the people of Peshawar for their bravery; Syed Mahmud and Hasrat Mohani addressed the gathering

35 (1885-1967); French biographer, novelist and essayist.

36 *Kuomintang and the Future of Chinese Revolution*, published in London, 1928.

37. Published in Bombay, 1930

38. (1876-1953); French dramatist.

39. Published in 1900.

40. Published in 1906.

41. Published in 1902.

42. Published in 1927.

43. (1872-1959); Norwegian novelist.

May 3rd Saturday

Had my fortnightly interview today with father, mother, Kamala & Indu. Many others came but they remained outside and we could just see each other through the office window for a while. Among those who remained outside were Nan, Betty, Ranjit, Bibi, Mahmud, Purushottam, Mukerji, Upadhyaya,[44] Madan,[45] Raja Rao &c.

Learnt from father that practically all newspapers in Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta &c. have stopped publication on being asked to give security under the new ordinance.[46] *The Leader* of course has not been asked.

This morning the District Magistrate, Thompson, came for a few minutes to see me.

I told father that I was dissatisfied with Class A treatment when others were not getting it. He did not like the idea of my objecting. However I feel I must do something. Shall write to the Supt. tomorrow.

Father seemed to think that the next fortnight will either see a general amnesty or the arrest of Bapu, father and all other important persons outside. I think that from the point of view of the movement the latter is the more desirable alternative.

As I was going to the office to see father, passed Shiva Murti, Bhuwerji &c. in the outer office. I was in such a hurry that I did not stop. I was glad to see them but I felt rather ashamed to be in my ordinary clothes when they were in jail clothes.

•

44 S D Upadhyaya (b 1899), joined the noncooperation movement in 1920, served as personal secretary to Motilal Nehru from 1923, and to Jawaharlal from 1931, imprisoned several times during the freedom movement; member Lok Sabha, 1952 57, and Rajya Sabha, 1967-70.

45 Madan Atal (1886-1957), a physician who accompanied his cousin, Kamala Nehru, to Europe in 1935, practised later in Lucknow, went to Spain as head of a medical mission and in 1938 led the ambulance unit sent to China by the Congress, died in China

46 On 27 April 1930, the government issued the Indian Press Ordinance under which newspapers were required to furnish cash securities which could be forfeited if the government felt that objectionable matter had been published.

4th May 1930[47]

TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, CENTRAL PRISON, NAINI

Dear Sir,

Immediately after my conviction I informed the trying magistrate that I did not desire any special treatment or privilege in prison which was not accorded to other political prisoners. I find, however, that there has been a marked differentiation of treatment among political prisoners, many of whom have been sentenced for an identical offence. I am sensible that special privileges have been given to me, although my colleagues, who have been sentenced, have in most instances not even received the ordinary amenities usually associated with political prisoners. They are being treated like ordinary criminals. I appreciate the courtesy shown to me, but I would appreciate still more if my colleagues and I were treated alike.

It has been stated, I believe, that prisoners will be treated according to "social status" or their "standard of living" and not for racial or political reasons. How far racial discrimination has disappeared it is a little difficult to see. The new division into three classes itself seems ultimately to have a racial basis although the reason given may be "social status" or "standard of living". And even within the same class there is a considerable measure of differentiation on racial lines, the reason given probably being again a different one.

There are at present many persons in this jail who have deliberately committed a breach of the law in pursuance of a nation-wide movement in which the greatest and noblest in the land have joined. Their motives cannot be questioned nor can anyone doubt the purity of their conduct. They are mostly, I believe, classed and treated as ordinary criminals. Some one or two, it may be, are perhaps put in Class B. On the other hand there are many people in the jail getting special treatment whose offences have been of the most serious kind involving moral depravity. Yet they get special privileges and are put in Class B, and even there they manage to get much more than others. Whatever the reasons given may have been, in the result it is obvious that racial discrimination exists, and as between offences of a purely political character and others involving moral depravity the latter receive gentler and softer treatment.

47. *J. N. Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.*

If the test applied in giving any kind of treatment is "social status", I do not know how this is judged and who judges it. But in any event I wish to recognise no such test. In choosing my colleagues I applied no such test and in facing the consequences of my action it would ill become me to take shelter under this plea.

If the test is the standard of living I may state that I have experimented with many and varying standards and can get used to most. Physically, I believe I am fit, and am probably in far better condition than many of my colleagues in this jail who are being treated as ordinary criminals for the same offence as mine. In many ways I am better capable of bearing hardship than they are.

Under these circumstances I fail to see any reason why I should be granted privileged treatment which is denied to others unless the object is to keep me apart from my colleagues. I would request, therefore, that the same treatment be given to me as to my other colleagues.

I would beg of you to forward this letter of mine to the proper authorities.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Sunday May 4th

Venkatesh Tewari came in the morning with his little son. Told me that poor Narmada Prasad was having a bad time. Specially at night when he has to sleep inside the barrack.

I sent a long letter to the Supdt. about special treatment &c. I have said that I want no privilege for myself which is denied to my colleagues.

Monday May 5th

Three weeks over today—and some heat!

The Superintendent spoke to me about my letter sent yesterday. Suggested that I might not press it. Tried to explain how fairly and leniently he had tried to act. How he wanted to reform jail administration &c. Useless to argue I told him however that he had better

send the letter on to the I.G. It will do me good to do without punkha &c. Make me grow thin!

While the Superintendent was with me he sent the jailer to meet the Sessions Judge and to take him round. Struck me that he was treating the judge *differently—not the way he behaved to the District* Magistrate. The reason apparently was that the S J. was an Indian.

He was Rup Kishan Aga. Came round to see my barrack for a few minutes.

A lot more fruit came from home. But the weekly *Bharat* for which I was eagerly waiting did not come. I hear that Bapu has been arrested. The warder tells me that there is perfect hartal everywhere, even in Naini bazar. Evidently the news came this afternoon.

So Bapu has been arrested! *Ca marche bien.* It is full-blooded war to the bitter end. Good.

May 6th Tuesday

Probably Bapu was arrested on May 4th. Evidently the hartal yesterday was remarkable. All manner of rumours come here. Some prisoners thought that the whole Swaraj movement was ended now that the leader was put in jail!

The Supdt. spoke to me again of my letter to him about the treatment. He has been trying to induce me not to have it sent on to the I.G. He makes out that I am not getting anything special except fruit from outside and fortnightly interviews. Punkha he has allowed for medical reasons. The real difference is between simple and rigorous imprisonment and I have got simple. My insisting on giving up more frequent interviews would do little good to the others. Besides he hopes to get orders to put Narmada Prasad in Class A soon. This was his argument. I do not know what to do. My giving up interviews would hit father, mother & Kamala hard. Besides, if father is arrested, as he well might be, am I to keep apart from him in Class B? I ought to keep myself as fit as possible physically & mentally for work later. Difficult to decide. For the present I have asked the Supt. to keep my letter with him and not to send it on to the I.G.

My weight has just been taken. It was 123 pounds—a drop of 7 pounds since 18th April—18 days. I am glad of this drop.

May 7th Wednesday

A painful incident, but not unusual in jails, took place today. I do not know all the facts but it appears that the new assistant jailer, Chhatar Singh, who has recently come from Agra, has not made himself very popular. Within a few days in his attempts to cow down the prisoners in the barrack entrusted to him he has had them beaten repeatedly with shoes &c. Today he produced someone before the Supt. for some petty jail offence and it is doubtful if there was any offence. Some punishment was given, fetters or some such thing. On coming out of the Supdt.'s room, in the head jailer's office this man suddenly hit Chhatar Singh. He had not a shadow of a chance. The head jailer immediately gave the order to the *pukkas, lambardars* &c. to fall on him which was done very effectively and a very thorough beating was given. Apparently he succeeded in biting Chhatar Singh in the stomach. Now the poor prisoner is likely to get 30 stripes or so. But Chhatar Singh is not likely to have an easy time. If an official consistently misbehaves there are plenty of hardened people who will give trouble and face all consequences. In every jail there are some of these usually sentenced to a life term with only a jail life to look forward to.

It is amazing how casually prisoners are beaten almost senseless for the slightest reason or no reason at all. Today's beating took place almost in the Supdt.'s presence and yet it is not clear if he intervened. Having given a thorough beating to the poor prisoner, now a formal applicaton for permission to flog may go to I.G. and later this judgment will be pronounced and the flogging given.

Whatever may happen in jail, a prisoner never has a chance against a jail official. And it is painful to see the C.Os & *pukkas* beating fellow prisoners just to please the jailer. Like our "loyalist" friends in India and the British Government.

It appears that Bapu was arrested at dead of night at about 3 a.m. in the train. He has been interned in Yeravda jail.

May 8th Thursday

The Supt. tells me that three salt prisoners are being sent here from Rae Bareli prison for disciplinary reasons.

It appears that Venkatesh Tewari has resigned from the local council as a protest against the general repression. So I suppose he ceases to be an official visitor to the jail. Poor chap—I referred to him

somewhat harshly in these notes without the slightest justification. He has evidently been much troubled by what has been going on and has repeatedly tried to do something for the political prisoners. His resignation from the council must be directly opposed to the Liberal creed but I suppose the Liberal Party is elastic enough—anyway it cannot afford to lose any of its better known members.

May 9th Friday

The warder assures me that all is well for tomorrow—*Bakr Id*—The Hindus & Muslims have come to an agreement—M. Vilayat Hussain has issued an appeal to Muslims to avoid hurting Hindu feelings &c.

He also informs that there is a general impression outside that Swaraj is coming within a few months! He got this idea from a conversation with Naini shopkeepers.

Today I had a visit from Puran Singh *alias* (or) Gurdial Singh who is a fellow prisoner. The Supt. had often spoken to me about him. He took nearly an hour of my time. Extraordinary muddle-headed fellow.

May 10th Saturday

Id ul Zuha—apparently everything passed off well, in Allahabad at least.

Uberoi, the Supt. told me that he met Betty at the Khannas last night and she said that they were worried because my weight had gone down so much. How did anyone outside get to know of it? It is really extraordinary. But news passes the jail walls rapidly enough although very often in a coloured and distorted form.

Every day rumours reach me of all manner of happenings outside—The latest is that the Indian troops and police at Patna have refused to fire on the people and indeed have marched off from their barracks! I try to discountenance these reports, but before I have finished with one, another is on the way. Quite a lot of people here seem to imagine that it is a question of a few months, if not weeks, before the British raj crumbles. I tell them that it is not such an easy matter. It is a much stiffer job and may take many years yet before final and complete victory comes.

May 7th Wednesday

A painful incident, but not unusual in jails, took place today. I do not know all the facts but it appears that the new assistant jailer, Chhatar Singh, who has recently come from Agra, has not made himself very popular. Within a few days in his attempts to cow down the prisoners in the barrack entrusted to him he has had them beaten repeatedly with shoes &c. Today he produced someone before the Supt. for some petty jail offence and it is doubtful if there was any offence. Some punishment was given, fetters or some such thing. On coming out of the Supdt.'s room, in the head jailer's office this man suddenly hit Chhatar Singh. He had not a shadow of a chance. The head jailer immediately gave the order to the *pukkas, lambardars* &c. to fall on him which was done very effectively and a very thorough beating was given. Apparently he succeeded in biting Chhatar Singh in the stomach. Now the poor prisoner is likely to get 30 stripes or so. But Chhatar Singh is not likely to have an easy time. If an official consistently misbehaves there are plenty of hardened people who will give trouble and face all consequences. In every jail there are some of these usually sentenced to a life term with only a jail life to look forward to.

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May 13th Tuesday

Narmada Prasad is to come to my barrack. He has been promoted to Class A—so the Supdt. informed me this morning. The adjoining cell is being prepared for him.

I gather that Tika Ram[53] was brought to the jail today.

Today's hartal in the city was apparently due to Abbas Tyabji's arrest.[54] All manner of wild rumours spread in jail. The most persistent relate to Indian troops refusing to fire and coming into conflict with the authorities.[55]

I sent back a lot of books today, and received Spengler's *Decline of the West.*

14th May 1930[56]

My dear Father,

Your letter of the 12th has just come. Your reference in it to your health and to the possibility of a physical and nervous breakdown has alarmed me. Doctor's advice can do little to lessen the burden of worry and anxiety, and the times we live in provide enough of these. That has to be faced. Still, I hope Bidhan, during his visit to Allahabad, examined you thoroughly and that you are following his advice.

I saw in the *Bharat* that there was a Working Committee meeting on the 12th and that day I thought a great deal of you all. I am glad Shiva Prasad has come back from Europe. I hope he is thinner!

My idea about Swaraj Bhawan is that the municipality should cooperate with you in keeping up the grounds as a public garden. If you put it to them that you are prepared to treat the grounds as such, I see no reason why they should not do so. Their *malis* can supervise

53. Tika Ram Tripathi; he was arrested on 12 May 1930 for violating the salt law in Phulpur sub-division of Allahabad district.
54. He was arrested on 12 May while leading the satyagrahis to take possession of the government salt depot at Dharsana.
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the garden and they can make some special arrangements for the water etc. I do not mean that the whole burden of the upkeep should fall on the municipality. But a good part of it should. The assessment of the building part could be made separately and would naturally be reduced You might speak to Purushottam Das Tandon about this and he can discuss it with municipal officers. The fact that no municipal water reaches the home ought also to be brought to their notice. Why should a heavy tax be paid when we get no water?

I do not think it is possible for water to reach the taps on the upper floor to my old rooms. The hand pump never worked. After all, when we were there we had almost always to get water fetched from below. The only thing to be done is for you to allow your well water for domestic purposes in the whole of Swaraj Bhawan and this could be carried up to the first floor.

The rents you have fixed for the upper rooms and the corner room below appear to be fair. Of course, in particular cases you might reduce them a little if you so wish for any particular reason but the rent fixed for particular rooms should on the whole not vary.

I sent you word about the Meerut case money as I felt that if the money is not paid there is bound to be trouble. The Meerut accused and the party sending the money will both object. Besides, I cannot remember without reference to books and papers, what part of the money received by me was spent. It is quite possible that some part of it remained. I think therefore that the full balance of Rs. 850/- should be paid to them. As I said, the amount should be paid to such parties as the accused indicate. I suppose Deoki Prasad Sinha will enquire and let you know. If he does not do so then a reminder might be sent to him. The principal accused to be consulted in the matter are Bradley, Dange, etc.

I am glad that Indu and Chand are going to Naini Tal. A change will do them good. As for a school I do not quite understand what you mean by asking me to think out courses of study. A good private school for little boys and girls is very necessary in Allahabad. But this is an expert's job and none of us who has not specially studied this subject can say much. The thing to do is to get hold of a really competent woman who has experience of modern methods, preferably the Dalton method,[57] which is more or less a continuation of the Montessori system. The new school must be really a better place than any

57 A method of school teaching first tried by Helen Parkhurst in 1920 at Dalton in the United States.

existing one. I suppose there are enough good trained teachers in India. English women should not be employed, but I see no reason why other foreigners should not be engaged. Indeed, I would suggest getting a really competent American girl out if necessary. Dhan Gopal Mukherji's wife is supposed to be an expert and has a high reputation as a teacher according to the Dalton methods. She is the head of a school in New York, I think. It would be an excellent thing if she could be induced to come to India for a year and put the new school on a sound basis. In the alternative she might be asked if she could suggest someone who is both competent and sympathetic, and at the same time not expensive. In any event she could send us helpful ideas.

But it is not necessary to have a woman from America to start a school in Allahabad. I do think, however, that if modern methods are to be introduced we must have someone with experience of them. However, a good enough school can be started almost immediately with a good head with some assistance. If you succeed in getting a good head I would give her a free hand to a great extent.

The Modern School in Delhi, to which Ballo used to go to, is quite a good school. Perhaps some helpful ideas might be got from it. I am sure a new school will succeed and will attract students, provided it is really well run.

I am glad you are retiring from Guzders[58]—once you sell your shares it will be no concern of yours whether the business is carried on or not. But obviously the right thing to do is to close it up.

I was weighed on the 6th May. I was 123 lbs, that is, 7 lbs less than I was on the 18th April. The drop is considerable but I expected it and more or less brought it about. I have been taking a great deal of exercise—running, walking, Muller—and I wanted to reduce my superfluous fat. As a matter of fact I feel very fit and you yourself remarked during the last interview that I was looking better. I was weighed three days after the interview. Probably I shall be weighed again before our next interview. Betty came across the Superintendent at Khanna's place and said something about my weight having gone down. I do not know how she had got to know it. Anyway do not worry in the least—I am perfectly fit. I want to come out of jail physically and mentally strong and I shall take good care to do so.

Narmada Prasad Singh has been "promoted" to Class A and he is coming to stay in this barrack with me. This is good as I shall have

58. A firm in Allahabad.

the garden and they can make some special arrangements for the water etc. I do not mean that the whole burden of the upkeep should fall on the municipality. But a good part of it should. The assessment of the building part could be made separately and would naturally be reduced You might speak to Purushottam Das Tandon about this and he can discuss it with municipal officers. The fact that no municipal water reaches the home ought also to be brought to their notice. Why should a heavy tax be paid when we get no water?

I do not think it is possible for water to reach the taps on the upper floor to my old rooms. The hand pump never worked. After all, when we were there we had almost always to get water fetched from below. The only thing to be done is for you to allow your well water for domestic purposes in the whole of Swaraj Bhawan and this could be carried up to the first floor.

The rents you have fixed for the upper rooms and the corner room below appear to be fair. Of course, in particular cases you might reduce them a little if you so wish for any particular reason but the rent fixed for particular rooms should on the whole not vary.

I sent you word about the Meerut case money as I felt that if the money is not paid there is bound to be trouble. The Meerut accused and the party sending the money will both object. Besides, I cannot remember without reference to books and papers, what part of the money received by me was spent. It is quite possible that some part of it remained. I think therefore that the full balance of Rs. 850/- should be paid to them. As I said, the amount should be paid to such parties as the accused indicate. I suppose Deoki Prasad Sinha will enquire and let you know. If he does not do so then a reminder might be sent to him. The principal accused to be consulted in the matter are Bradley, Dange, etc.

I am glad that Indu and Chand are going to Naini Tal. A change will do them good. As for a school I do not quite understand what you mean by asking me to think out courses of study. A good private school for little boys and girls is very necessary in Allahabad. But this is an expert's job and none of us who has not specially studied this subject can say much. The thing to do is to get hold of a really competent woman who has experience of modern methods, preferably the Dalton method,[57] which is more or less a continuation of the Montessori system. The new school must be really a better place than any

57 A method of school teaching first tried by Helen Parkhurst in 1920 at Dalton in the United States

May 17th Saturday

Interview with father, mother, Kamala, Indu & Chand. Others outside: Nan, Betty, Ranjit, Tassadduq, Mahmud, Khwaja, Jaya Prakash &c.

Mother not looking well—Father much the same—Kamala looking fit in spite of rushing about all day. Indu going to Naini Tal tomorrow. Also Chand. Father going to Agra tomorrow for Dunthanya case.[59]

On the whole good news from outside—arrests continuing—Sardul Singh arrested on his way back from Working Committee. Abdul Qadir Kasuri[60] also arrested. So also Rafi.[61] Kamaladevi[62] arrested and sentenced to 9 months—also another woman in Madras.[63]

Martial Law in Sholapur.[64] Ten years for carrying national flag.

Altogether most satisfactory!

Sarojini being besieged with her volunteers near the salt depot in Dansana.

Gave over 5500 yards of yarn, which I had spun, to Kamala to be sent on to the A.I.S.A.

Monday May 19th

The Supt. informs me that our books have to be passed by the District Magistrate, and that I must not keep more than 6 at a time. Probably the Magistrate has never heard of Spengler's *Decline of the West*. He is sure to suspect the title. I have sent a number of my books to the jail office to be kept there so that the number fixed might not be exceeded.

59. A case at Agra in which Motilal Nehru had been appearing since April 1929. He wanted to retire from this case to devote himself fully to the civil disobedience movement but Mahatma Gandhi had advised him to fulfil his obligation to his client.
60. Then president of the Punjab P.C.C. He was arrested on 16 May 1930.
61. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai. He was arrested on 15 May 1930 at Rae Bareli
62. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya (b. 1903); imprisoned several times during the freedom movement; for many years a leading member of the Congress Socialist Party.
63. Rukmini Lakshmipathi (b 1892); president, Youth League, Madras, Health Minister, Madras, 1946-47.
64. At Sholapur, on 8 May 1930, when the police opened fire, killing several volunteers picketing liquor shops and injuring many, the crowd killed some policemen. On 12 May 1930, martial law was imposed. Four persons were sentenced to hanging and many to long terms of imprisonment

some little company—man is a social animal and too much solitude is not good. I have drawn up a fairly stiff programme for myself and I am doing something or other all day. Any relaxation would make me feel bored!

I am very glad indeed to learn of the successful passing off of *Bakr Id* in Allahabad.

Today I complete just one month of my imprisonment. By the time I come out I expect to find the womenfolk running everything. They seem to be getting quite aggressive! I personally approve of it. I hope that Kamala, Nan and Betty are keeping well in spite of their manifold activities.

Love to all.

Your loving son,
Jawahar

The following articles might be sent when convenient. There is absolutely no hurry.

1. A *durrie* for my bed. I want to send back my *namda* which is very warm.
2. A small *surai*
3. Spengler's *Decline of the West*, Vol. 2.

Please do not have *dahi* sent as usually this does not reach me in good condition. Nor need mango *panna* be sent. As mangoes are sent this can be easily made here.

May 14th Wednesday

Completed a month today

Had a letter from father dated 12th, to which I replied today.

Narmada Prasad came to my barrack this evening. The hartal yesterday was in celebration of Peshawar Day.

May 15th Thursday

My weight today 124 lbs—one lb more than last time.

There has been some trouble over the parade in barrack 4 where the salt prisoners are kept. They refused to attend and the Supt. mentioned this to me. He was aggrieved about it.

I am in the thick of Spengler's *Decline of the West*.

May 17th Saturday

Interview with father, mother, Kamala, Indu & Chand. Others outside: Nan, Betty, Ranjit, Tassadduq, Mahmud, Khwaja, Jaya Prakash &c.

Mother not looking well—Father much the same—Kamala looking fit in spite of rushing about all day. Indu going to Naini Tal tomorrow. Also Chand. Father going to Agra tomorrow for Dunthanya case.[59]

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I am worried about special treatment. There are some Kashi Vidyapitha boys[65] who are being punished here for disciplinary reasons—the Handia people are also likely to get into trouble over the parade question. And in any event they get Class C treatment. Today they sent me from home some sweets, *murrabas* &c. The sight of them put me off. I returned them.

Two salt law breakers have come from Handia today.

May 20th Tuesday

The Supt. brought Rup Narain to see me about the parade.

Finished Andre Maurois' *La Vie de Disraeli*.[66] Liked it—specially the pen pictures of Gladstone[67] & his smugness.

May 21st Wednesday

Had some fruit &c. from home. Sent word that no more should be sent. In future hope to live on jail food only. After a few days intend asking for Class C food. From the looks of it I doubt if I shall be able to swallow it.

The three Kashi Vidyapitha boys from Rae Bareli are apparently being kept in solitary confinement—each in a separate cell—all day except for an hour in the morning and an hour in the evening when they can come out in the barrack enclosure. They are not allowed to speak to anyone. It is not clear what they have been punished for. The Supt. says he does not know! It seems that, high spirited as they are, they resented some offensive remarks of the Rae Bareli Supt. about the Vidyapitha. It must be awful torture to be kept in solitary closed cells in this weather. I have been haunted by these boys and the thought of their suffering.

65 Five students of Kashi Vidyapitha were arrested on 29 April 1930 at Kaithamal in Rae Bareli district for manufacturing salt and sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment.

66. Published in 1927.

67. William Ewart Gladstone (1809 1898); British Liberal statesman; Prime Minister during 1868 74, 1880 85, 1886, 1892 94.

Even little hand fans are not allowed to be given to prisoners. Narmada Prasad tried to arrange for fans for the Handia people but the jailer would not allow this. The European convicts have of course a proper overhead fan.

The reveille now takes place at 4.15 a.m. I get up usually at 3.45 a.m. and go out for the run at 5 a.m.

May 24th Saturday

This morning the Supt. brought round a young Punjabi—Sucha Singh[68] or some such name—who is Joint Magistrate in Allahabad. Has recently come here from Sitapur. Is a "friend" (quaker) and knows Reginald Reynolds[69] well. Seemed to talk as if he was in very great sympathy with the national movement.

In spite of my request, more fruit came from home. Probably my wishes were not made known to them clearly. I took the fruit but made it clear that next time if it was sent, it would be returned. The Supt. has been trying to induce me to carry on with the fruit as I must have vitamins or else my health will suffer. What about the others and their health? Strange how officials look down on the average Indian of the 95%—as if they were something subhuman. But even apart from this the classification into A & B is a camouflage. Out of 2000 prisoners in Naini Jail about 8 or less, excluding Europeans, have been given B treatment and 2—Narmada Prasad and I —A treatment. Almost all the politicals—us two excepted—are being treated as Class C prisoners. The Vidyapitha boys from Rae Bareli are apparently kept in cells all day except for an hour in the morning and in the evening.

Mohanlal Gautam[70] arrested and brought here today. From Handia it appears.

I have had no book to read for the last three days besides Spengler and the French anthology. I asked the Supt. to send me *Jean Christophe*[71] which he is keeping for me in his office. He promised

68. S. S Khera; joined I.C.S in 1927, Cabinet Secretary, 1962-64
69. (1905-1958); British writer who carried Mahatma Gandhi's letter of 2 March 1930 to the Viceroy; author of *India, Gandhi and World Peace* (1931), *The White Sahib of India* (1937) and *To Live in Mankind* (1951).
70 (b. 1902); general secretary, U.P.C.C., 1930-31, and secretary, 1936 and 1963-64, imprisoned several times during the freedom movement, secretary of the Congress Socialist Party, 1934, member, Constituent Assembly, General Secretary, A.I.C.C., 1950-51; Minister, U.P., 1952-54 and 1957-60; member, Rajya Sabha, 1960-1972.
71. By Romain Rolland. First published in ten volumes during 1904-12.

to send it but I am still waiting. I suppose the Dist. Magte. has be referred to to find out if I can safely read a French novel!

The Supt. objected this morning to Narmada Prasad arranging toilet things in such a manner as to make his cell look attractive a "luxurious". The articles of luxury being—tooth brush, paste, founta pen ink, bottle of oil &c.!

I suppose he strongly objects to my attempts to fix up my cell. have some flowers and ferns in a pot—Indu gave me a bouquet at t last interview a week ago and I have carefully tended them since. T flowers are all dried up but even dried flowers are better than no fl ers. Before last week I stuck on to another bunch of flowers—rose sent by Nan, for a full fortnight. All the petals came off eventua and I picked them up and treasured them up. All this must be stric against jail discipline! Anything that cheers is bad for a prison Obviously this is the view of the worthy Supt.

Of the two *safayas* we have had so far one has been ordered av today. So only one will remain. There is a great deal of work to done. Fetching water from a distance itself takes a lot of time. I not know how one man will be able to do it.

May 27th Tuesday

Supt. informed me that I.G. did not think it proper for my yarn be sent out of jail or to be sent home. But I can keep it and t it out with me when I am discharged. Supt. was worried that he l allowed me to send the last lot out. He actually telephoned to Ana Bhawan for it but it had gone on to Sabarmati. He then sugges to me that the new yarn I had spun might be considered the old In other words that in case of enquiry I should tell a lie! What amazing coward the Supt. is. He is afraid of doing the least thing his own bat. Wants to refer everything to the I.G.

Finished Spengler's *Decline of the West* Vol. 1.

Strong rumour that there has been heavy firing in Lucknow result in many casualties amongst women and even children.[72] Also t Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi has been arrested and sentenced 6 months.

72. At Lucknow, on 25 May a procession of volunteers was beaten up by police, and a number of persons, including women, were arrested.

28th May 1930[73]

My dear Father,

Your letter dated the 23rd from Agra, with a note added by Kamala, has just come. Your reverting to injections I hope does not mean that you have had any further trouble.

The Mau melons you sent from Agra reached me here. They were very good.

Some days ago I asked the head jailer to send word to Anand Bhawan that I did not want any fruit or anything else sent to me, unless I specially asked for it. In spite of this message, fruit did come. As I thought there might have been some misapprehension I took this fruit but repeated the request that nothing more was to be sent.

I came to this decision after full thought for a variety of reasons, which I hope you will appreciate. Even the weekly budget of news that trickles through the massive walls and iron gates of Naini prison, by means of Hindi *Bharat*, is enough to give some idea of happenings outside. Frequent firings, assaults, martial law, flogging of boys, imprisonment of women and so on and so forth denote a state of affairs that is very far from normal and in this state it is difficult for me to accept with pleasure dainty articles of food. The very sight of these dainties has the reverse of an agreeable effect on me. If Naini prison prevents me from doing something when barbarities are being committed all over this country, at least I cannot hold high festival here.

If I am in jail the least I can do is to prevent myself from being a burden, even to the least extent, on those outside. X X X X Every ounce of energy and every rupee of money of those outside must be used for better purpose in these critical days than to provide comforts for those who like me are for the moment *hors de combat*. Therefore I do not want anyone to bother about sending anything to me, except the weekly *Bharat*. My needs in future may comprise a cake of soap, some slivers of cotton, a tube of toothpaste and the like. These can be brought to me when required at the time of the interview.

A third reason which has worried me for many weeks past is the differentiation in treatment. At one stage I was so much troubled about this that I wrote a formal letter to the Superintendent requesting him to treat me as the other politicals were being treated. It was pointed to me however that there was no particular point in my asking for

73. M. N. Correspondence, NMML The censored portions are indicated by crosses

such a change as it was always open to me to take advantage or not of particular "privilege". I saw the force of the argument and do not press my letter. I do not therefore intend to ask for any change of class, but I do feel that I should simplify my life and wants in jail as much as possible. So far as interviews and letters are concerned I shall continue to have them twice a month as at present. But I should like to approximate my food to that taken by the ordinary persons.

It has been a revelation to me that after all the hubbub of last year and the conferences you had with the Home Member and his crowd X X X X the lot of the political prisoner is really worse than it was previously. It is far worse than it was in 1921-22. People who had special treatment of the kind we had are now treated as Class C, that is, ordinary prisoners—not even Class B. X X X X An odd person here and there gets what is called Class A, a very few get Class B and the great majority of politicals are classed as ordinary prisoners. You will remember that in 1921-22 special class prisoners, even when sentenced to rigorous imprisonment, were not required to do any jail work. It is not so now and Class A people, if sentenced to rigorous imprisonment, are made to do the full day's work, although this work will be what is called the lighter work—*newar*-weaving, etc.

It would be interesting to have statistics of the political prisoners in all the jails in India and inquiries to show how many of them are in various classes and how many non politicals and Europeans get Class A and Class B treatment.

The irony of it is that under present conditions I am sure even poor Jatin Das would be classed as an ordinary prisoner! Here I have in Naini many old colleagues of mine—there are graduates and students of the Kashi Vidyapitha, some are responsible office-bearers of the Congress—but I believe nearly all of them are put in Class C. X X X X It is not a question of a few annas more for food—Class B food is, I understand, nothing to shout about, and food is one of the important points in which it differs from Class C. It is really the hundred and one other things in jail that grate on one and that could be easily remedied with a little psychological insight.

When my colleagues and, specially, young students are being treated thus it seems to be highly unbecoming for me to get supplies of dainties from outside. If it is said that the food I am getting now in jail is not healthful enough, then it is a strange commentary on jail food. If even Class A food is not healthful, what of Class B and Class C food?

Do not worry about me. I am quite fit and am well able to look after myself. But please do not press me to change my decision about

outside foodstuffs and do not bring them with you when you come for the next interview.

You will remember that I sent a cable to Indu's old school at Bex in Switzerland. A little before my arrest I wrote to this old lady there that we were having some difficulty in getting a passage for Indu and she might not be able to come. I wish someone would write to her—Betty might do it—and tell her of subsequent developments and that there is no chance of Indu going to Switzerland in the near future. She may of course go there again some time later. The address is:

Mlle. Haemmerlin
Ecole Nouvelle
La Pelouse
Bex (Switzerland).

The I.G. has decided that the yarn I spin should not be sent out but that it may remain here and I may take it with me when I am discharged. X X X X It is a comfort to me that he takes such a gentle and abiding interest in me.

Class A prisoners are supposed to have 6 books at a time and no more. X X X X Six books are or should be ordinarily enough for light reading but if government officials who frame rules were used to the companionship of books and to intellectual pursuits they might realise that serious work often suffers from such a limitation. Even a schoolboy has a number of books. Besides when the six books contain dictionaries, *Gita*, etc., which are hardly reading books, the number is even more limited. It was because of the limitation that I returned some time ago the two picture books of the Alps and also some French exercise books and others. X X X X I believe I might be able to keep one dictionary apart from the six but one additional dictionary might corrupt the soul.

I am keeping some reference books in the jail office. I shall carry on in this way without much difficulty. The censorship of books is the job of the District Magistrate. I suppose outside events keep him and his tribe sufficiently busy. X X X X So I suppose they judge by the title or the colour of the cover. Some amusing difficulties arise. If a book is in two volumes, is it one book or two? I have such a book and it is at present considered two books. If, on the other hand, two books are bound together, what then? Does the jail prefer small type one-volume editions to better editions? I am reading a novel by Romain Rolland. It is in four volumes—which means it is four books. It can also be obtained in one or two-volume small type editions. I am going to ask you to send me a volume of Shakespeare's collected works. This will contain several plays—will it be considered several

books or one? I think the best solution is to allow books by weight!

I shall be glad if you will kindly bring with you at the time of the interview the following books:

1. Emil Ludwig's *Bismarck*.[74]
2. Beal's[75] *Buddhist Records of the Western World*.[76]
3. Shakespeare's Works (in 8 vols. in red morocco binding)—Volume One.

All the above are in the big northern book-case in the library.

4. A copy of my letters to Indira.

Please have a copy of these letters sent to Mlle. Haemmerlin at Bex whose address I have given above.

I should also like to have some washing soap and razor blades for a Gillette. I would prefer not to have the original Gillette blades. These were sent to me last time and were quite unsatisfactory. I should like to get the German ones this time.

I have enough cotton slivers but they are not good. If any fresh *punis* are received from Sabarmati please bring them. Otherwise do not bother.

I returned the two candlesticks as I was not using them. I do little reading at night as I retire early. Candles in this weather are not a success. They wilt and melt, and every additional article in a room means an additional repository for dust.

Our interview is due day after tomorrow, on the 31st. (It is the 29th today—I started this letter last night and am continuing it this morning). Our letters are so close to the interview that even a little delay in delivering them may make them o[illegible] with the interview. There has been some slight delay this tim[illegible] am not sure if you will get this in time.

I have h[illegible]ter from Lado [illegible] not to write

May 29th Thursday

Received letter from father last evening. There was a note added to it by Kamala. Answered the letter this morning. In the evening today the Supt. came over with my letter saying that it was very strongly worded and that there would be trouble if it was sent. He specially took exception to some greatly sarcastic remarks about the I.G. and to certain disparaging statements about the intellectuality of English officials in India. I told him to cut off any part of the letter he disapproved of.

The Lucknow affair appears to be true—It was bad.

I have been getting up at about 3.30 a.m. for some days. This gives me a little more time in the mornings. I started *newar*-weaving again from today.

May 31st Saturday

Interview day is a red letter day in jail—मुलाकात का दिन. How one looks forward to it and prepares for it. I took out a new blade today to get a good shave. The cleanest of my *kurtas* and dhoties were searched for, and generally there was a buzz of preparation!

Father came & mother & Kamala as usual. I missed Indu. Others outside were Nan, Betty, Bibi, Prabha, Purushottam Tandon, Tassadduq Sherwani, Uma Bhabi, Shama Bhai, Manzar Ali, Muzaffar & Waheed.

News of the outside world was serious enough. Dhanraj got badly hurt by the police lathis at Lucknow. The Viceroy has issued more ordinances![77] Picketing is a crime and so is asking people to resign from govt. service. The Congress has also extended the front. Let us hope this will go on to the bitter end. Nothing more unfortunate than a premature compromise could take place.

Some of the moderates are waking up, but some behave like old women—weeping & howling and feeling terribly oppressed about everything! The *Leader* is evidently among the weeping widows. If they have not got gumption enough to do anything why do they not shut up? It is enough to sicken one to hear them sing the praises of Irwin & Benn & Co! It is difficult to imagine a greater babe at the political

77 On 30 May 1930, the Governor General issued the Unlawful Instigation Ordinance, which authorised local governments to 'notify' areas in which no one could instigate any person to defer payment of any tax or cess or other dues to the government, and the Anti Intimidation Ordinance, which debarred the Congress from picketing.

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I have had no letter from Lado Bhabi. Please tell her not to write to me to the jail.

I am flourishing exceedingly. I wish all of you were as fit and well as I am.

Love to all.

Your loving son,
Jawahar

74 Published in 1926; English translation, 1927.

75 Samuel Beal (1825-1889); an English scholar of Chinese; wrote several books on Buddhism.

76 Published in 1884.

Yesterday a blind "habitual" prisoner was discharged after 13 years in prison. I do not know if he came blind or got blind in jail. It was rather touching to learn how prisoners who had come to know him well tried to help him. There were not many ways open to them. But still one gave him a pair of *chappals* which he had himself received that very day. Another gave him his *kurta* which was deposited with the jailer & so on. There appears to be more charity in jail than outside it.

There is a young C.O. here who has already spent 13½ years in prison. He has got a sentence of 25 years or so. He came at the age of 14. He says that his offence was that in the course of a game of marbles his companions cheated him, they had high words and a fight. Some bricks were hurled and a death occurred!

A beautiful bouquet of flowers came from home today.

June 7th Saturday

Since outside fruits & eatables were stopped there is little to eat apart from the two principal meals. I feel fairly hungry in the mornings and afternoons. *In the morning* we have just a cup of tea—*a la rum*—with lemon. In the afternoon till two days ago we had some *sattu* which mother had sent me. Having exhausted this we have to fall back on a bottle of orange. This will last for a few days and then we hope to make some lemon sherbet fresh in the afternoons if the lemons and sugar are available. Sometimes in the evenings we have some gram— चना. This is good but the man who brings it is so filthy that it is hardly possible to swallow it. He brings it in a dirty cloth—Once he brought it *in his cap!* In spite of my desire to eat it I have to give it away. Once I was so hungry that I washed it and then swallowed it—of course all the taste and crispness had gone.

The result of this hunger is that I enjoy the two meals or at any rate I look forward to them. Otherwise I am sure I would have got thoroughly fed up with them.

June 8th Sunday

Beautiful flowers came with the *Bharat* today—and Kamala's *Malabar* mattress.

game than the moderate in India. Nothing could condemn British rule in India more than the amazing product of it!

I doubt if I shall see father at the next interview—He is likely to be arrested—Tomorrow he is going out touring. Indeed there is no obvious reason why Kamala & Nan & Betty should also not be arrested. They are leaving no stone unturned to get themselves in jail. And now with picketing a crime it ought to be easy enough. Father was evidently worried at the prospect of women having to face the police lathi blows. After Lucknow it is perfectly clear that our benign govt. will not stop at anything.

Indu sent me a sweet letter. I could not get it as a letter as my fortnightly letter had already been received by me, but the Supdt. allowed me to read it in his office during the interview. The letter was from Naini Tal. She said how she wanted to come here on the 31st so as to be able to be present at the interview, but if our wishes could be realised then would we not have Swaraj immediately! She informed me gravely that a crowd of ten C.I.D. men followed her! Heigh-ho! She is getting the bitter taste of alien rule early enough.

June 1st Sunday

My weight 122 lbs—2 lbs less than a fortnight ago and 8 lbs less than when I came to Naini prison.

My jail number is 10255.

June 3rd Tuesday

Slight change in programme from today. I do the weaving at 6.30 in the morning. Three baths a day!—at 6 a.m., 10.30 a.m. and 6.15 p.m.

June 5th Thursday

The Supt. informs me that the rules for A Class prisoners have arrived and, *inter alia*, they lay down that only one chair and one table will be allowed. So I shall have to part with a chair. It is really immaterial whether there is one chair or two or none at all. But it is annoying to have these pinpricks from day to day. I got rather put out and told the Supt. that he might as well put us in Class C and have done with these arguments &c.! I suppose he will gradually enlighten us about the rules. Probably wants to break it gently!

June 18th

Our old C.O. Ganesh has suddenly been promoted and made a *pukka*. This means that he leaves us—This is unfortunate. He was very decent and we had got used to each other.

I finished my roll of *newar* today.

June 25th 1930[78]

Nan dear,

It is about a month today since I received my last letter from home. Two weeks ago, when the time came for another letter to be sent to me, father telephoned to say that as there was an interview soon it would be better to write in between two interviews. This was certainly better. But no such letter has come and so I have decided to take the initiative myself. I suppose father is away and is fully occupied He told me last time that he and Kamala were going to Bombay—probably he is there and is busy enough. Or it may be that he wrote, but letters have a strange way of disappearing in these days!

What am I to write about? Life in prison is not meant to be exciting—it is about as uneventful as the existence of the average turnip—and if some exciting event does take place once in a while, the veil of mystery must not be removed and no whisper of it must percolate to the outside world. Inside the jail—and outside—the massive gates and the high walls of the jail separate two worlds. Almost one might say that it is like one living world and the hereafter—but few, if any, want to rush to the hereafter, and none love the jail so much as to wish to remain here. Two worlds! You could also compare the two to the animal and the vegetable kingdoms. The object of jail appears to be first to remove such traces of humanity as a man might possess and then to subdue even the animal element in him so that ultimately he might become the perfect vegetable! Soil-bound, cut off from the world and its activity, nothing to look forward to, blind obedience the only 'virtue' that is instilled, and spirit considered the great sin—is it any wonder that the prisoner approximates to the plant? Of course this does not apply to the likes of me who come for short periods, but the others who spend years and years here, wherein do they differ, I wonder, from the plant? And if after long years they are let off how do they feel in the strange new world of bustle and activity?

78. Vijayalakshmi Pandit Papers, NMML.

The warders and others say that the Collector had an accident when playing polo yesterday and died soon after.

Finished Spengler's *Decline of the West* Vol II today—curious book—fascinating at places, provoking, boring, heavy. Certainly it makes one think—but it is so heavy—wish a Frenchman had handled this theme. But perhaps none but a German could be so learned.

Also finished today Emil Ludwig's *Bismarck*.

June 14th Saturday

Two months completed! An interview day. Father came and mother, Kamala and little Tara—Outside Nan, Betty, Mahmud, Waheed, Ramkumar, Hari &c. Supdt. came a little before and told me that too many people used to come and stand outside and he did not want to encourage this As a matter of fact there were fewer persons this time.

At father's and mother's insistence I took some fruit.

Father seemed to be worried—He is going to Bombay soon, Kamala probably with him Betty going to Lahore.

Allahabad appears to be dull at present. Nothing important happening and so people wasting their time over trivial matters. Bombay going strong. Lucknow doing well—generally the fight is being kept up well all over the country.

Father had specially asked Supt. to advance the interview by 2 days to suit his convenience as he wanted to go to Agra—of course the subsequent interview to be two days latter. But the Supt. dared not allow this. He is about the most meek and gumptionless person I have come across. Evidently he is not given the slightest freedom of action, and he puts up with it!

He has managed to get back my yarn from Sabarmati and is keeping it in the office He is afraid even of giving it to me to keep!

I have had no letter from home last week. We are so arranging that letters should come in between interviews and not too near them.

June 16th Monday

Weight today 121 lbs—one pound less than on 1st June and 9 lbs less than when I entered Naini Jail.

of keeping myself in training, so that when I bid *au revoir* to this delectable spot I may get out as a human animal, and not as a plant, and I may speed my way like an arrow from the bow.

For some weeks I have done less and less reading. I found that after some reading it was difficult to concentrate and my mind wandered. So I spent more time on spinning on my *charkha* and weaving *newar*. I found this, and specially spinning, soothing to the nerves. Both spinning and weaving are semi-automatic occupations and allow one to think gently at the same time. To some extent the effect is similar to having a pipe in your mouth! I spent as much as four hours a day in spinning and weaving and sometimes even five—more time being given to spinning than to weaving. Latterly the weaving has automatically stopped as I finished my last roll and I am waiting for a fresh one to be fixed up. I have woven about 150 feet of *newar*, not very good and not long enough for a bed. But perhaps it will be enough for Tara's bed or for the littlest one. You had better take it when you come next.

I have not got many cotton slivers left for spinning. Last Sunday I received a little packet which from the look of it must have come from Apurna Devi of Benares. These are very good but they do not take me far. Please thank her. I believe Kamala wrote to Mira bai[79] or some one else in Sabarmati for *punis*. If a fresh stock has not arrived please send a reminder.

I suppose I have to hold you responsible for the beautiful flowers that came last Sunday. They are delightful and make my cell look bright and gay—a most unbecoming thing in jail. The Great Red God is sure to disapprove of this frivolity and colour. Please therefore do not send too many flowers or too frequently lest the Gods get jealous and intervene. Send a few every Sunday when the *Bharat* comes. If flowers have been given during the interview on the preceding Saturday then no fresh supply is necessary on the Sunday following.

Besides, do not spoil my admiration for them by an *embarras de richesse*. I remember the first bouquet that you brought. It had roses. For a fortnight I clung to it although it dried and shrivelled and its petals fell. But I tended it carefully even in this poor shrunken condition and gathered up its fallen petals. I had not realised till

79. Mira Ben (Madeleine Slade) (b. 1892); daughter of Admiral Slade; a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, lived at Sabarmati Ashram for many years; participated in the civil disobedience movement; arrested along with Mahatma Gandhi in August 1942 and detained with him at the Aga Khan's palace; now living at Ebreichsdorf near Vienna.

Ours is a different world in jail and we worship different gods. Above all we bow down to the Great God—Red Tape. Mighty and long-limbed is he, red like Ganesha, and all pervading and slow of movement. His scriptures multiply exceedingly and are greater and weightier than these scriptures of all other gods put together. His priests and acolytes have strange signs to communicate with each other and a mysterious language which ignores ordinary usage and grammar—and from his coils there is little hope of escape.

Then we have our Totems and Taboos. The high priests and dignitaries of the Great Red God are the Totems and none shall take their name in vain, and the Taboos are so many, how can I enumerate them! And indeed I may offend against one of their number even by endeavouring to give a covering of ink to their airy substance.

What then shall I write? Nothing, I am sure, would please the Great God R.T. better than if I were to write to you that every day in the early misty morning I get up and shout out 'Hallelujah!' to it and give thanks that India is under its benign rule, and further shout out from an overburdened heart my gratitude for its innumerable blessings! But even to please the G.G.R.T. I cannot write this as I do no such thing. Indeed to my recollection I have never shouted 'Hallelujah' and there is little chance of my beginning with the aforesaid God Nor have I an uncontrollable desire to praise and laud him for anything at all.

I do not shout 'Hallelujah' in the early misty morning, but I get up even before the mists come and when the starlight hardly gives any sign of the coming morning. You will be surprised to learn that I often get up at 3.30 in the morning—I am myself amazed at this when I think of it for I have never been guilty of it before. But jail is responsible for this sudden conversion to these unearthly hours. I like the early morning hours And anyhow I have to retire early at night specially since the rains commenced. So I get up when all the world is asleep, and feel very superior about it. And after a little quiet in the morning, I spend a strenuous day strictly according to time-table. You could almost take your time from my work and movements. I read and write and spin and weave and run and walk—indeed I am always running a race with time. Why this unseemly haste, you will ask, as if the Devil was after me? Purposely I do so to escape any approximation to the plant. I want to create tension, to live in it. Perhaps it is opposed to the Indian mentality and outlook. There is little enough of tension here. But I believe in it as a method of keeping in form and as an incentive to continuous effort. And that is my way

fiddle nobody knows. I have changed our meal times and contents. Between Narmada Prasad Singh and myself we used to get two rations of ordinary Indian food. We now take one of these rations and one of what is called the European ration. In the early morning I consume a large quantity of *dallia* and some toast—about midday we have rice etc., and in the evening at 6.30, toast, dal and vegetable. This suits me much better than the previous arrangement and I am very much afraid I shall fatten. The European ration is supposed to include 3 annas worth of meat daily. I have made a present of this to the jail!

At the last interview mother brought some mangoes and other things although I had previously requested that nothing eatable should be brought. It was difficult and rather churlish of me to refuse, so I took the mangoes. But I definitely do not want to take any eatables from outside. The very idea upsets me. This is not a pledge or anything of the kind. When I feel like having anything I shall send for it. Meanwhile kindly ask mother not to send me or bring anything to eat. Basketfuls of food and fruit get on my nerves.

We have had a little rain, though not much. At night it drives one indoors to sleep and that is not usually pleasant. But it is pleasant to listen to the pattering of the rain on the roof and to breathe fresh earth soaked with rain. We have simple joys in jail! I have been reading some extracts from Paul Verlaine:[85]

O doux bruit de la pluie
Par terre et sur les toits!
Pour un coeur qui s'ennuie,
Oh! le chant de la pluie!

But do not imagine that there is much 'ennui' about me. I keep myself too busy. Three times a day I bathe. It is pleasant to do so in this weather and, besides, my weaving shed might well be compared at times to an efficient steambath room. As I weave I melt away—and a bath becomes necessary.

Send my love to Betty—Ranjit I suppose is still away—kisses to the kids.

Love

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

I hope you wrote to Higginbotham thanking him for the New Testament he sent to me to the jail.

85. (1844-1896); French lyric poet

then how charming even dried up rose-petals can be. I have those petals still. And now, with more and more flowers coming, the influence of riches has corrupted me and I throw away dried bouquets in a lordly, plutocratic way as soon as fresh flowers come. Do not spoil me further!

Next Saturday—June 28th—is my interview day. I do not know if father is likely to be here then or Kamala—I hope neither of them will change their programme or interfere with their work just to have half an hour or so with me in the Superintendent's office. If he and Kamala are returning in the ordinary course by Saturday or a day or two later, then of course they will come to see me on any day convenient to them. If, however, they are staying away, then there is no reason why we should not take advantage of the interview day. I presume mother is in Allahabad and I suppose you are here also. Betty was to go to Lahore—I do not know if she is still there. Indu perhaps has returned and Chand. So that you and mother and Indu can fix up the interview next Saturday morning. You might telephone to the jail.

If father is still in Bombay send this letter to him and send my love to every one in Bombay—Bombay has indeed justified its motto: *Urbo primis in Indis.*

I asked for some books last time—only two of these came. Kindly send on, or give at the time of the interview, the following:

1. Emil Ludwig's *Kaiser Wilhelm*[80]
2. Emil Ludwig's *Types & Characters*[81] (I am not quite sure of the name)
3. Shakespeare's Works, Vols 2 and 3 (Red morocco edition)
4. Fenner Brockway· *Crime & Punishment*[82] (Some such name)

You will find all these in the big northern book-case in the library. Emil Ludwig's books somewhere near the lower shelves in the middle. Brockway's to the right fairly high up.

I should also like to have two or three books for some students who are here. I would suggest a book on economics (light brown binding)—I forget the name of the author—it is in the big book-case I think Also books of Ruskin: *Sesame & Lilies,*[83] *Unto This Last,*[84] etc.

My letter seems to have grown! I hope you are well and all the children are fit. As for me, I am as fit as a fiddle—though why a

80 Published in 1926, English translation, 1927.
81 *Genius and Character*, published in German in 1923.
82 *A New Way with Crime*, published in 1928.
83 Published in 1865
84 Published in 1862.

June 28th Saturday

Nan's reply came yesterday. This morning had interview with father, mother, Kamala & Indu. Outside Betty, Bidhan Roy, Abul Kalam Azad & Hardikar. Was surprised to learn that Hardikar not been arrested so far. Father and rest of family returned from Bombay only yesterday. Meeting of the Working Committee today—Hardikar had been taken on it too.

Purushottam Tandon, Shiva Prasad Gupta and Narendra Deva[86] arrested and sentenced to 3 months R.I. in Basti!

Father's account of Bombay most comforting. Some attempts being made to approach him indirectly on behalf of govt.—Hope he will have nothing to do with them.

Indu does not want to go to Convent any more—Have told her she need not go.

Nan gone off to Bombay this morning.

July 7th Monday

A hectic week after two and a half months of quiet seclusion. Suddenly on June 30th Monday we heard early in the morning that father & Mahmud had been arrested and brought to Naini Prison.[87] Soon after they came to our barrack. There was no room for them here but the other possible places were worse. So the Supt. put them here. The next day was their trial and they were both sentenced to 6 months S.I. Since they have come I have hardly done any reading or spinning —chiefly because there is hardly any place to sit down and do so. Father shares my cell with me and my bathroom, and Mahmud shares Narmada Prasad's. Each of our cells is about 11 ft square. One of these is our pantry, baggage room, bathroom, lavatory—It is cram-full —The other is also full of various things. When it rains, as it often does, it is not possible to sit or sleep outside and all manner of difficulties arise. The Supt. is having two separate sheds put up to serve

86. Acharya Narendra Dev (1889-1956); born at Sitapur in U.P.; imprisoned several times during the freedom movement; member, Working Committee, 1936, president, All India Kisan Sabha in 1939 and 1942; resigned from the Congress in 1948, leading member of the Socialist Party of India and the Praja Socialist Party; Vice Chancellor, Lucknow University, and later, Banaras Hindu University.

87. They were Acting President and Secretary respectively of the Working Committee which was declared an unlawful association by the U.P. Government on 30 June 1930.

June 25 Wednesday

Naini Prison has been stirred to its depths—suddenly, without previous warning a great movement gathered strength challenging authority; within a day it spread all over; equally suddenly it collapsed! On Sunday the 22nd some of the habituals started a hunger strike on the ground, mainly, that the long term prisoners are not now let off as they used to be after ten or 14 years but have to go on 20 or even 25 years. No hope of discharge, why thus should they live? Food was another grievance, specially the difference between European food and theirs.

By Monday morning this hunger strike spread to other habituals and then to casuals. By Monday evening almost the whole jail was involved. There was no work done in jail on Monday except the pumps which was specially permitted by the hunger strikers and some of the kitchens. The food that was wasted was sent to the cattle.

On Tuesday morning complete hunger strike—no kitchens working —no other work. Even the C.Ws and C.Os informed the authorities that although they were prepared to do other ordinary work they must not be asked to beat the other prisoners. The politicals joined the strike merely in sympathy. It was difficult to eat when everybody else was fasting. I was rather put out as to what I should do. The action of the habituals was precipitate and I had no definite knowledge of their case. I sympathised with them a little certainly but I certainly felt I could not follow their lead. So Narmada Prasad and I continued feeding.

On Tuesday afternoon large numbers of police and warders & the Dt. Magte. turn up and separate about 60 of the habituals and put them in cells. Immediately the strike collapses! Others ask for food and get it. The ringleaders have apparently been fettered and are likely to be punished. It is not clear if they have fed yet or not.

Strange demonstration of the power of the prisoners to put an end to jail administrations by unity and passive resistance; also of difficulty of keeping this unity, and want of will power. The object aimed at did not really interest any but the lifers and long term prisoners. The others joined partly in sympathy and partly in terror.

Today everything is normal.

I have written to Nan today.

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as a joint bathroom and lavatory. This would relieve the congestion, but slightly. Father has suggested that a verandah might be added. This would solve many difficulties. The Supt. appeared to be partly agreeable but there is the I.G., who it is said is going to inspect our prison soon! Meanwhile a *choldari* has been put up for two of us to sleep in case of rain. The place is horribly uncomfortable for father —I don't think he has ever had to put up with this lack of room and awful congestion—not even in Lucknow jail or Naini Tal jail.

A good part of the day is spent in cleaning the rooms, vessels &c., laying the table for meals, clearing up, &c. &c. Naturally all of us try to be of some service to father. At his age to have to put up with these discomforts and inconveniences and to give up many lifelong habits is a great trial.

So far as food is concerned we have an abundance and even a superfluity of everything now. Plenty of fruit and other things come for father Narmada Prasad is in his element supervising the cooking arrangements and even cooking himself. He spends the whole morning and forenoon over it.

On Saturday July 5th father had an interview with mother, Nan, Betty & Indu In future we propose to have interviews on alternate Saturdays.

My weight on July 2nd was 118 lbs, another drop, this time of 3 lbs in two weeks. I have lost 12 lbs in all since coming here. I feel fit however and am glad of the reduction. I am afraid that now I shall go up in weight as the exercise is much less and food is richer. I am trying to keep up my mile run in the mornings. The rest has gone.

July 14th Monday

I complete three months today.

On Saturday 12th had interview with mother, Kamala, Nan, Betty & Indu Exciting news. Nan's arrest imminent—however she has not been so far arrested. Yesterday, Sunday, Sundarlal,[88] R. M. Mukerji, Madan, Upadhyaya, Chandrakant Malaviya, Keshav & Padmakant arrested and brought here There was a big crowd outside. Some people located our barrack from outside and climbed some trees which overlooked the jail wall. Sundarlal &c.'s case is going on today.

88 Sunder Lal (b 1886), participated in the freedom movement, president, U.P. Provincial Political Conference, 1930, vice president, U P P C C. 1931-36, president, All India Peace Council, 1959 63

The I.G. descended on the prison today like a messiah or rather a prophet of doom whose advent has been long heralded. It appears that the "Governor-in-Council" is agitated about my *charkha*! If I spin and send out my yarn perhaps this may have a fictitious value and may serve to excite people. During the last two months there have been overlapping and contradictory orders about my spinning. The matter is again going to be considered by the G-in-Council!

July 15th Tuesday

Letter from Kamala with a note from Ranjit & Nan attached.

28.7.30[89]

My dear Bapuji,
It is a delight to write to you again after a long interval even though it be from one prison to another. I would like to write at length but I am afraid I cannot do so at present. I shall therefore confine myself to the matter in issue.

Dr. Sapru and Mr. Jayakar came yesterday and had a long interview with father and me.[90] Today they are coming again. As they have already put us in possession of all the facts and have shown us your note[91] and letter, we felt that we could discuss the matter between us two and arrive at some decision even without waiting for the second interview. Of course, if anything new turns up at the second interview we are prepared to vary any previously formed opinion. Our conclusions for the time being are given in a note which we are giving to Dr. Sapru and Mr. Jayakar. This is more or less brief but it will I hope give you some idea of how our minds are working. I might add that father and I are in full agreement in regard to what our attitude should be.

89. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
90. See the following item.
91. On 23 and 24 July 1930, Jayakar and Sapru met Mahatma Gandhi in Yeravda prison with the government's approval. Mahatma Gandhi gave them a note stating his conditions for negotiating with the government. These were: the Round Table Conference should discuss safeguards for the transitional period only, with the right for anyone to raise the issue of independence; civil disobedience would be called off but peaceful picketing and salt manufacture would continue; all satyagrahi prisoners should be released, confiscated properties restored, fines refunded and dismissed officers reinstated.

I must confess that your point (1) regarding the 'Constitutional Issue' has not won me over. Nor does father fancy it. I do not see how it fits in with our position or our pledges or with the realities of today. Father and I entirely agree with you that we can be "no parties to any truce which would undo the position at which we have arrived today". It is because of this that the fullest consideration is essential before any final decision is arrived at. I must confess that I do not see any appreciable advance yet from the other side and I greatly fear a false or a weak move on our part. I am expressing myself moderately. For myself, I delight in warfare. It makes me feel that I am alive. The events of the last few months in India have gladdened my heart and have made me prouder of Indian men, women and even children (!) than I have ever been. But I realise that most people are not warlike and like peace and so I try hard to suppress myself and take a peaceful view!

May I congratulate you on the new India that you have created by your magic touch? What the future will bring I know not, but the past has made life worth living and our prosaic existence has developed something of epic greatness in it. Sitting here in Naini Jail I have pondered on the wonderful efficacy of nonviolence as a weapon and have become a greater convert to it than ever before. I hope you are not dissatisfied with the response of the country to the nonviolence creed. Despite occasional lapses the country has stuck to it wonderfully—certainly far more grimly than I had expected.

I am afraid I am still somewhat of a protestant regarding your 11 points[92] Not that I disagree with any one of them. Indeed they are important. Yet I do not think they take the place of independence. But I certainly agree with you that we should have "nothing to do with anything that would not give the nation the power to give immediate effect to them."

92 These were published in *Young India*, 30 January 1930, and later communicated to the *Viceroy* The points were total prohibition; reduction of the exchange ratio to 1s 4d; reduction of the land revenue by at least 50%; abolition of the salt tax, reduction of the military expenditure by at least 50%; reduction of high salaries, protective tariff on foreign cloth; passage of the Coastal Tariff Reservation Bill, discharge of all political prisoners save those condemned for murder or threat to murder and withdrawal of all political prosecutions and abrogation of repressive laws, abolition of the C.I.D; free issue of licences for firearms

Father has been unwell for the last 8 days ever since he took an injection. He has grown very weak. The long interview last night tired him out.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

Please do not be anxious about me.
It is only a passing trouble and
I hope to get over it in two or
three days. Love

Motilal Nehru

We have had another talk with Dr. Sapru and Mr. Jayakar. At their desire we have made some alterations in our note but they do not make any vital difference. Our position is quite clear and I have no doubt whatever about it. I hope you will appreciate it.

MEMORANDUM TO T. B. SAPRU AND M. R. JAYAKAR[93]

We have had long conversations with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. M. R. Jayakar and they have informed us of the various events which led to their seeking interviews with Gandhiji and with us in our respective prisons, in order, if possible, to terminate or suspend the present hostilities between the people of India and the British Government. We appreciate their earnest desire for peace and would gladly explore all avenues which might lead to it, provided that such a peace was an honourable one for the people of India who have already sacrificed so much in the national struggle, and meant freedom for our country. As representatives of the Congress we have no authority to alter in any material particular its resolutions, but we might be prepared, under certain circumstances, to recommend a variation in details, provided the fundamental position taken up by the Congress was accepted. We are however faced with an initial difficulty. Both of us are in prison and for some time past have been cut off from the outside world and the national movement. One of us, for nearly three months, was not allowed any daily newspaper. Gandhiji has also been in prison for several months. Indeed, almost all our colleagues of the original Working Committee of the Congress are in prison and the Committee itself has been declared an illegal organisation. Of the 360 members of the A.I.C.C., which is the final authority in the

93. A.I.C.C. File No. 26/1930, pp 77-79, NMML.

National Congress organisation, subject only to the full session of the Congress, probably 75% of the members are in prison. Cut off as we are from the national movement, we cannot take upon ourselves the responsibility of taking a definite step without the fullest consultation with our colleagues, and specially with Gandhiji.

As regards the Round Table Conference, we feel that it is unlikely to achieve anything unless an agreement on all vital matters is previously arrived at. We attach great importance to such an agreement, which must be definite, and there must be no room for misunderstanding or misinterpretation. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. M. R. Jayakar have made it very clear, and Lord Irwin has also stated in his published letter to them,[94] that they are acting on their own behalf and cannot commit him or his government. It is however possible that they may succeed in paving the way to such an agreement between the Congress and the British Government.

As we are unable to suggest any definite terms for a truce without previously consulting Gandhiji and other colleagues, we refrain from discussing the suggestions made by Sir Tej Bahadur and Mr. M. R. Jayakar and by Gandhiji in a note of his dated 23rd July which has been shown to us. We might add however that we agree generally with Mr. Gandhi's 2nd and 3rd points. But we should like to discuss the details of these points and specially his point 1 with him and others before we can finally make our suggestions.

We suggest that this note of ours be treated as confidential and be shown only to such persons as see Gandhiji's note dated 23rd July 1930.

Motilal Nehru
Jawaharlal Nehru

August 1st Friday

Long gap since last entry. And yet there was plenty to record. But I am growing lazier and lazier and all my time-tables and programmes have gone to pieces. I have not been feeling up to the mark recently and without doing much during the day, feel tired out in the evening. Father has had a bad week or ten days of fever and other troubles—ever since he took an injection on July 21st. He has just got over these troubles.

94. Dated 16 July 1930.

Today is Kamala's birthday—31st according to the Roman calendar. Acc. to Samvat it was on the 21st July. From all accounts she has done splendid work outside since my arrest, and work and responsibility have trained her to face critical situations. She does not shirk anything and is quick of action. Father apparently was considerably impressed by her work before he was arrested. Her nomination to the Working Committee by Vallabhbhai has apparently been disliked by some people. There is talk of petticoat govt.!

I had my last interview on Saturday 26th July. Kamala, mother, Nan, Betty, Ranjit & Indu present. On 30th I received a letter from Kamala. She is vastly agitated at the so-called 'peace moves'. There must be no peace she says except on the basis of Purna Swarajya.

Sapru & Jayakar have had two long interviews with father and me on 27th and 28th July. Lot of time wasted in listening to what Irwin said & Jinnah did and Fazl-i-Husain intrigued. Nothing important or hopeful. Bapu's note disappointing although it is clear that even that will not be acceptable to the Viceroy. We have not suggested anything. Have said that without full consultation with colleagues, specially Gandhiji, we cannot make any suggestions. We have not committed ourselves in any way although we have hinted at a stiff attitude. I have been worried however for last two or three days. I wish we had definitely stopped all talk of 'peace'. It is harmful and diverts attention. There is no peace anywhere in sight.

Sunderlal, the three Malaviyas (Chandrakant, Kesho & Padmakant), Mukerji and Madan have been transferred to Fyzabad.

The Handia salt people have also been sent away to various jails.

My weight yesterday, 31st—118 lbs.

I have hardly done any spinning and little reading recently.

August 3rd Sunday

Maharaj Singh visits us—Finding father looking very poorly and pulled down suggests that he (Maharaj Singh) might on his own account write to the Governor strongly recommending his release. Father does not like the idea but tells him that he can do just what he pleases.

August 4th

Maharaj Singh again with fruit and flowers and chess board and even playing cards! The Commissioner encouraging frivolity in prison.

August 9th Saturday

My Interview: Mother, Kamala, Nan, Betty, Indu, Ranjit, Uma Bhabi & Bhanumi.[94]

Yesterday—Friday—Sapru came again with the Viceroy's reply.[96] *Says Viceroy* has no objection to our going to Yeravda but he and his Council cannot permit our meeting Vallabhbhai, Abul Kalam &c. as these people are still carrying on the campaign against govt. Sapru wanted to know if we were prepared to go to Yeravda. We told him we had and could have no objection to going to see Gandhiji but under the circumstances there was no chance of us three deciding anything. The arrest of Vallabhbhai, Malaviyaji, Sherwani &c. in Bombay had not improved matters.[97] We asked Sapru to make the position quite clear to the Viceroy. Sapru however said that there would be no harm in our meeting Gandhiji almost immediately.

August 10th Sunday

The Nawab of Chhatari[98] visits the jail and comes to our barrack also. Puts on a long face when talking to father.

We are informed at 5.30 p.m. that we will have to leave by special train for Poona at 9 p.m. We claim a parting interview with the family.

August 11th

In special train—rushing past big stations—stopping at small ones. Still news of us travels ahead of us and crowds gather both at the stations we stop and those where we do not stop.

Reach Kirkee at 11 p.m.—Fast journey.

August 12th-19th

In Yeravda Prison

On 13th we move to Bapu's barrack—the European Ward. Conversations with Sapru & Jayakar, on 13th, 14th & 15th.

Leave Yeravda 19th night 9.20 p.m. Taken to special Governor's siding in Kirkee station—Special train—Luxurious tourist car.

On 16th father gets high fever with shivering, brings up some blood with his sputum. Our departure delayed by two days because of this.

August 15th, 1930[99]

TO T. B. SAPRU AND M. R. JAYAKAR

Dear Friends,

We are deeply grateful to you for having undertaken the duty of trying to effect a peaceful settlement between the British Government and the Congress. After having perused the correspondence between yourselves and H. E. the Viceroy and having had the benefit of protracted talks with you and having discussed among ourselves, we have come to the conclusion that the time is not yet ripe for securing a settlement honourable for our country. Marvellous as has been the mass "awakening" during the past five months and great as have been the sufferings of the people among all grades and classes representing different creeds we feel that the sufferings have been neither sustained enough or large enough for the immediate attainment of the end.

Needless to mention that we do not in any way share either your view or the Viceroy's that civil disobedience has harmed the country or that it is ill-timed or that it is unconstitutional. English history teems with instances of bloody revolts whose praises Englishmen have sung unstintingly and taught us to do likewise. It therefore ill becomes the Viceroy or any intelligent Englishman to condemn a revolt that is in intention, and that has overwhelmingly remained in execution, peaceful. But we have no desire to quarrel with the condemnation, whether official or unofficial, of the present civil disobedience campaign. The wonderful mass response to the movement is, we hold, its sufficient justification. What is, however, to the point here is the fact that we gladly make common cause with you in wishing, if it is at all possible, to stop or suspend civil disobedience. It can be no pleasure to us needlessly to expose the men, women and even children of our country to imprisonment, lathi charges and worse. You will

99 [illegible] Papers, NMML. Original in Jawaharlal's hand with changes by Mahatma Gandhi. These changes are shown in italics.

August 9th Saturday

My interview: Mother, Kamala, Nan, Betty, Indu, Ranjit, Uma Bhabi & Shammi.[95]

Yesterday—Friday—Sapru came again with the Viceroy's reply.[96] Says Viceroy has no objection to our going to Yeravda but he and his Council cannot permit our meeting Vallabhbhai, Abul Kalam &c. as these people are still carrying on the campaign against govt. Sapru wanted to know if we were prepared to go to Yeravda. We told him we had and could have no objection to going to see Gandhiji but under the circumstances there was no chance of us three deciding anything. The arrest of Vallabhbhai, Malaviyaji, Sherwani &c. in Bombay had not improved matters.[97] We asked Sapru to make the position quite clear to the Viceroy. Sapru however said that there would be no harm in our meeting Gandhiji almost immediately.

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August 11th

In special train—rushing past big stations—stopping at small ones. Still news of us travels ahead of us and crowds gather both at the stations we stop and those where we do not stop.

Reach Kirkee at 11 p.m.—Fast journey.

August 12th

Kept in separate barrack—not allowed to meet Bapu because of some instructions sent by Sapru! Apparently he did not want us to meet unless he was present to chaperon. Father very annoyed at this.

95 Shyam Kumari Khan (b. 1904); daughter of Shamlal and Uma Nehru; practised law in Allahabad High Court, 1928-37; member, Rajya Sabha, 1963-68

96 Dated 2 August 1930

97. They were arrested on 2 August 1930

98 Muhammad Ahmed Said Khan, Nawab of Chhatari (b. 1888); Minister of Industries, U.P., 1923-25, Home Member, U.P., 1926-33; Prime Minister, Hyderabad, 1947.

2. If the foregoing appears to be feasible to the British Government and a satisfactory declaration is made to that effect, we should recommend to the Working Committee the advisability of calling off civil disobedience, that is to say, disobedience of certain laws for the sake of disobedience, but peaceful picketing of foreign cloth and liquor will be continued unless the government themselves can enforce prohibition of liquor and foreign cloth. The manufacture of salt by the people will have to be continued and the penal clauses of the Salt Act should not be enforced. There will be no raids on government or private salt depots.

3. Simultaneously with the calling off of civil disobedience,

(a) all satyagrahi prisoners and other political prisoners, convicted or under trial, who have not been guilty of violence or incitement to violence, should be ordered to be released, and

(b) properties confiscated under the Salt Act and Press Act and Revenue Act and the like should be restored, and

(c) fines and securities taken from convicted satyagrahis or under the Press Act should be refunded;

(d) all officers, including village officers, who have resigned or who may have been dismissed during the civil disobedience movement and who may desire to rejoin government service should be reinstated.

NOTE: The foregoing sub-clauses refer also to the noncooperation period.

(e) All Viceregal ordinances should be repealed.

4. The question of the composition of the proposed conference, and the Congress being represented at it, can only be decided after the foregoing preliminaries are satisfactorily settled.

Yours sincerely,
Motilal Nehru
M. K. Gandhi
Sarojini Naidu
Vallabhbhai Patel
Jairamdas Doulatram
Syed Mahmud
Jawaharlal Nehru

A NOTE[100]

On the 16th August Gandhiji wrote a letter to Mr. Jayakar asking him to give a copy of our joint letter of August 15th confidentially to Mr. Abul Kalam Azad and also to communicate it to Dr. Ansari,

100. Clearly written after 16 August 1930. J. N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

therefore believe us when we assure you, and through you the Viceroy, that we would leave no stone unturned to explore any and every channel for an honourable peace. But we are free to confess that as yet we see no such sign on the horizon. We notice no symptom of conversion of the English official world to the view that it is India's men and women who must decide what is best for India. We distrust the pious declarations of good intentions, often well-meant, of officials. The age-long exploitation by the English of the people of this ancient land has rendered them almost incapable of seeing the ruin—moral, economic and political—of our country, which this exploitation has brought about. They cannot persuade themselves to see that the one thing needful for them to do is to get off our backs and do some reparation for the past wrongs by helping us to grow out of the dwarfing process that has gone on for a century of British domination. But we know that you and some of our learned countrymen think differently. You believe that a conversion has taken place, at any rate sufficient to warrant a participation in the proposed conference. In spite, therefore, of the limitation we are labouring under we would gladly cooperate with you to the extent of our ability. The following is the utmost response it is possible for us, circumstanced as we are, to make to your friendly endeavour.

1. We feel that the language used by the Viceroy in the reply given to your letter about the proposed conference is too vague to enable us to assess its value in terms of the national demand framed last year at Lahore, nor are we in a position to say anything authoritative without reference to a properly constituted meeting of the Working Committee of the Congress and, if necessary, to the A.I.C.C. But we can say that for us individually no solution will be satisfactory unless,

(i) It recognises, in as many words, the right of India to secede at will from the British Empire;

(ii) It gives to *India* complete national *government responsible to her people*, including the control of defence forces and economic control, and covers all the eleven points raised in Gandhiji's letter to the Viceroy; and

(iii) It gives to India the right to refer, *if necessary*, to an independent tribunal such British claims, concessions and the like, including the so-called public debt of India, as may seem, to the national government, to be unjust or not in the interest of the people of India.

NOTE : Such adjustments as may be necessitated in the interest of India during the transference of power, to be determined by India's chosen representatives.

Father is improving slowly. Yesterday was the first day when he had no blood in his sputum. But today again there was a trace of it. So we are not out of the wood yet. Day before yesterday he suddenly felt rather irritated at talks of his release and efforts being made for it. He was so uncomfortable about it that he sent the following telegram:

> Lord Irwin, Simla.
>
> I understand efforts are being made to secure my early release for reasons of health. While appreciating kind intentions prompting such efforts I wish to say that I do not approve of them. I seek no favour or clemency.

I take it that there is no question of his release now before his term expires.

The burdens on Kamala are increasing and she takes them very seriously and conscientiously. I should not be surprised if within the week she and my sisters were arrested. Hansa Mehta[103] having gone[104] there is no reason why Kamala and others should not also be arrested. The picketing ordinance has now been applied to Allahabad. I hope you are keeping well.

Love

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

Syed Mahmud sends his respects, regards and love. Hope you are taking fruits now.

31st August 1930[105]

NOTE FOR MAHATMA GANDHI

We have had further interviews with Mr. M. R. Jayakar and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru yesterday and today, and have had the advantage of long talks with them. They have given us a copy of the letter, dated August 28, addressed to them by His Excellency Lord Irwin. In this letter, it is stated clearly that Lord Irwin regards discussion on the basis

103. (b 1897); wife of Dr. Jivraj Mehta, Vice Chancellor, University of Baroda, 1949 58; President, All India Women's Conference, 1946, member, Constituent Assembly, 1947-50, Indian representative on U N. Human Rights Commission, 1947-52.
104 She was arrested on 30 August 1930
105. J. N Papers, N M.M L.

Pandit Malaviya and Mr. Vithalbhai Patel. In the course of the interview or conference on 15th August, Messrs Sapru and Jayakar were requested by the Congressmen present to publish their joint letter as well as all the other papers and communications relating to our interviews. They agreed to do so after the Viceroy had seen them. They proposed to see the Viceroy on or about the 25th August. It was stated that publication might take place about the end of the month. In case, however, the Viceroy was prepared to agree to the conditions laid down in the joint letter, publication might be delayed for a few days pending an interview with us.

August 20th

En route—huge crowds at some stations specially at Harda, Itarsi, Sohagpur. Train dashes by—accidents narrowly averted. Reach Naini at 2.30 a.m. on 21st.

August 22nd

My weight	118½ lbs
Father's	133½ lbs

August 23rd Saturday

My interview with mother, Kamala, Bhai Sahab, Nan, Betty, Indu, Bappi, Ranjit & Chand.

Father examined by Nilratan Sarkar,[101] Bidhan, Ansari &c.

August 24th

Father again visited by Nilratan Sarkar, Bidhan &c.

August 25th

Father examined by official medical Board.

31.8.30[102]

My dear Bapuji,
I enclose our joint note for you.

101. (1861-1943), a leading physician of Calcutta, and for some time Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University
102. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

that had been given to us take us back, in some respects, even from the position that was previously taken. In view of the great hiatus that exists between our position and Lord Irwin's, it is hardly necessary to go into details, but we should like to point out to you certain aspects of the letter. The first part of the letter is practically a repetition of his speech to the Legislative Assembly and of the phrases used in his letter dated July 16, addressed to Mr. Jayakar and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. As we pointed out in our joint letter, this phraseology is too vague for us to assess its value. It may be made to mean anything or nothing. In our joint letter we have made it clear that a complete national government responsible to the people of India, including control over the defence forces and economic control, must be recognised as India's immediate demand. There is no question of what are usually called safeguards or any delay. Adjustments there necessarily must be for the transference of power, and in regard to these we stated that they were to be determined by India's chosen representatives.

As regards India's right of secession at will from the British Empire and her right to refer British claims and concessions to an independent tribunal, all that we are told is that the conference will be a free conference and any point can be raised there. This is no advance on the previous statement made. We are further told, however, that if the British Government in India were definitely faced with the possibility of the former question being raised, Lord Irwin would say they were not to treat it as an open question. All they could do was to inform the Secretary of State of our intention to raise the question at the conference.

As regards the other proposition, we are told that Lord Irwin could only entertain the idea of a few individual financial transactions being subjected for scrutiny. While such scrutiny may take place in individual cases, its scope will have to extend to the whole field of British claims including, as we have stated, the so-called public debt of India. We consider both these questions as of vital importance and a previous agreement on the lines suggested in our joint letter seems to us essential.

Lord Irwin's reference to the release of prisoners is very restricted and unsatisfactory. He is unable to give an assurance that all of the nonviolent civil disobedience prisoners even will be discharged. All he proposes to do is to leave the matter in the hands of the local governments. We are not prepared to trust in such a matter to the generosity or sympathy of local governments or local officials, but, apart from this, there is no reference in Lord Irwin's letter to other nonviolent prisoners. There are a large number of Congressmen and others who were sent to prison for political offences prior to the civil disobedience

of the proposals contained in our joint letter of August 15th to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar as impossible, and under the circumstances, he rightly concludes their efforts have failed to produce any results. This joint letter, as you know, was written after a full consideration by the signatories to it and represented the utmost they were prepared to go in their individual capacities. We stated there that no solution would be satisfactory unless it fulfilled certain vital conditions, and that a satisfactory declaration to that effect was made by the British Government. If such a declaration was made, we would be prepared to recommend to the Working Committee the desirability of calling off civil disobedience, provided simultaneously certain steps indicated in our letter were taken by the British Government in India.

It was only after a satisfactory settlement of all these preliminaries that the question of the composition of the proposed London conference and of the Congress being represented at it could be decided. Lord Irwin, in his letter, considers even a discussion on the basis of these proposals as impossible. Under the circumstances, there is or can be no common ground between us. Quite apart from the contents, the tone of the letter and the recent activities of the British Government in India clearly indicate that the government has no desire for peace. The proclamation of the Working Committee as an illegal body in the Delhi Province soon after a meeting of it was announced to be held there, and the subsequent arrest of most of its members can have that meaning and no other.[106] We have no complaint against these or other arrests or other activities of the government, uncivilised and barbarous as we consider some of those to be. We welcome them But, we feel, we are justified in pointing out that a desire for peace and an aggressive attack on the very body, which is capable of giving peace and with which it is sought to treat, do not go well together. The proscription of the Working Committee all over India and the attempt to prevent its meetings must necessarily mean that the national struggle must go on, whatever the consequences, and that there will be no possibility of peace, for those who may have some authority to represent the people of India will be spread out in British prisons all over India.

Lord Irwin's letter and the action taken by the British Government make it plain that the efforts of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar have been in vain. Indeed, the letter and some of the explanations

106 The Working Committee was declared unlawful in Delhi on 25 August, and its members were arrested on 27 August 1930.

that had been given to us take us back, in some respects, even from the position that was previously taken. In view of the great hiatus that exists between our position and Lord Irwin's, it is hardly necessary to go into details, but we should like to point out to you certain aspects of the letter. The first part of the letter is practically a repetition of his speech to the Legislative Assembly and of the phrases used in his letter dated July 16, addressed to Mr. Jayakar and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. As we pointed out in our joint letter, this phraseology is too vague for us to assess its value. It may be made to mean anything or nothing. In our joint letter we have made it clear that a complete national government responsible to the people of India, including control over the defence forces and economic control, must be recognised as India's immediate demand. There is no question of what are usually called safeguards or any delay. Adjustments there necessarily must be for the transference of power, and in regard to these we stated that they were to be determined by India's chosen representatives.

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the publication of the correspondence must no longer be delayed, and we are not justified in keeping the public in the dark. Even apart from the question of publication, we are requesting Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar to send copies of all correspondence and relevant papers to Chaudhuri Khaliq uz-Zaman, the Acting President of the Indian National Congress. We feel we ought to take no step without immediate information being sent to the Working Committee, which happens to be functioning.

Motilal Nehru
Syed Mahmud
Jawaharlal Nehru

September 8th Monday

Father discharged at 7.30 a m He had been keeping very bad health and steadily losing weight—had lost 14 lbs since 30th June when he came to prison.

10th Sept. 1930[108]

My dear Father,
I am glad everything has been fixed up at Mussoorie and that you are going there tomorrow. The rains must be finishing up there and in another two weeks Mussoorie ought to be delightful. I am sure you will get well soon there. It is immaterial whose diagnosis is correct—the doctor's or the hakim's. The main thing is to get well. Personally I have little faith in medicines—in calcium agoolar. But I have great faith in nature and in the mountain air of the Himalayas. I am glad the house you have taken is on the Happy Valley side and far from the bazar. This will save you to some extent at least from people desiring *darshan.*

I am sorry to learn about Khaliq. However it does not matter much now as you are outside. Give him my love tomorrow when you see him at the Lucknow Station and tell him to pull himself up and develop a little pep.

Excuse change in ink! The violet didn't work so I had to divert to the more homely blue-black.

108. M N. Correspondence, N.M M L.

There is nothing much in the nature of news appertaining to Barrack No. 6 of the Naini C.P. that I can give you. Our population has undergone no change but if rumour is not entirely a lying jade, we may have Malaviyaji here soon. We shall try to make him comfortable to the best of our ability here. So far as we are concerned you need not worry.

Indu is best judge about going to Mussoorie. She should certainly go if she feels like it.

We are keeping the ice-box you sent back although it is not particularly needed.

I have already read Churchill's *World Crisis*[109] (2 Vols). Perhaps you might like to take it with you. Ludwig's *Genius & Character*, if you have finished it, might be sent to Kalelkar[110] in Yeravda jail.

Mahmud sends his salams.

Love

Your loving son,
Jawahar

10th September 1930[111]

Betty dear,

Hope you will enjoy your visit to Azamgarh. Go to the Shibli Manzil there and give my regards to Syed Sulaiman Nadvi and my love to Masud Ali Nadvi. Tell the latter that I am happy to know that he has taken the jump. I should like to meet him very much on my release, if he is out there.

Ask Anand, if he is here (otherwise ask Shammi to write to him) to take the following message to Jocelyn Tanner:[112]

> I was delighted to have news of him after such a tremendous long time. I have very pleasant recollections still of St Anne's Vicarage and its inhabitants. I hope that we may meet some time—but not in his capacity as S.P.!

109 The World Crisis, published in four volumes, 1923-29.

110 Dattatreya Balkrishna Kalelkar (b. 1885); Vice-Chancellor, Gujarat Vidyapith, 1928-34; president of the Hindustani Talimi (Basic Education) Sangh till 1957, chairman, Backward Classes Commission, 1953-55; member, Rajya Sabha, 1952-64.

111. M. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

112. A member of the Tanner family with whom Jawaharlal had spent some of his vacations while a student in England.

Meanwhile my love.
Don't orate too much at Azamgarh!

Love.

Jawahar

Give my love to mother and tell her to get fit in Mussoorie for all the tours she has still to make!

Sept. 12th Friday

Ranjit arrested[113]—Brought to our barrack at 4 p m.

27.9.1930[114]

My dear Father,
According to all the most reliable reports emanating from the *chowk* of Allahabad and other places where the citizens of our city foregather, I ought to have been discharged today, or even yesterday. But as I am still sitting in the spacious verandah of barrack No. 6, which you left as a gift for us, I am constrained to come to the conclusion that the reports were exaggerated. However all good things come to an end and I am afraid that my present term of imprisonment must also end soon and I shall have to change my life of languid ease into one of rush and bustle. Perhaps, who knows, I may then look back with regret to the months I spent here, far from the madding crowd, and all responsibility. But the regret cannot be long-lived for a benign and far-seeing government will no doubt see to it that I am provided again with peace and quiet.

We are all very much worried about your health and the latest news is not satisfactory. I wonder if Mussoorie is agreeing with you. Malaviyaji saw us this evening and he seemed to think that Mussoorie at this time of the year would be too cold for you and suggested your going to Rajpur or Dehra Dun. But of course you like the cold and, besides, Mussoorie is not cold in September or even October. It may be however that the altitude is too much. All this is for you and your doctors to consider. Personally I would have thought the climate of Mussoorie in October to be a near approach to the ideal. Would not sun baths do you good?

113 He was arrested for sedition and sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment

114 M N Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

There is little to report here. The calm waters of jail life have few disturbances and even ripples are seldom visible. We are carrying on our daily routine much in the way we did when you were here, except for some minor changes. There is a fair amount of spinning and Ranjit is developing into a crack performer. He has been drawing out very fine and beautiful yarn. It is now his ambition to produce enough for a couple of saris for Nan. If he goes on at the rate he is doing, I have no doubt that he will produce a wardrobe full.

The *takli* has been much in evidence here lately. All four of us have taken to it and have made some progress at least. And with this small success I have dispelled a great fear that was haunting me! For many weeks or months past I was wondering how I would face everybody outside jail without being able to twiddle the *takli* with effect. None of us here need have that fear any more although, of course, we are beginners yet and there is great room for improvement. There is a fierce competition going on between Mahmud and the Sardar for honours in *takli* spinning—and it has come to this that Mahmud was noticed the other night twiddling his fingers even in his sleep as if he was working a *takli!*

Another diversion—but of the future—is the garden that promises to grow up in the wild open spaces of our barrack. Ranjit talks lovingly of sweet peas and hollyhocks and all manner of delectable flowers. Some seeds have already come and a lot of digging and shoving of earth has been going on When all was ready the heavens interfered and sent vast quantities of rain converting our trenches and hollows into little lakes and pools. We await the coming of the Sun God to give us and the ground heat and dryness. But the flowers and the garden will not be for use this time. With luck I shall come and enjoy these a little later. With Ranjit in charge I have no doubt the garden will appear and make barrack No. 6 a real oasis.

I wonder if you know that the *Pioneer* has ceased to come to us. It continued to come for some days after you left. Then came orders from the high—and no more *Pioneer*. Later we discovered that an Urdu daily issued in Lucknow—the *Himmat*—was on the list of permitted papers. So at our request the Superintendent ordered this and we are getting it. It is not exactly a first-rate paper but it gives the principal news—usually not more than a few days after its occurrence.

I understand that you wish me to visit you soon after my discharge. I would myself like to do so. It is impossible for me to make any programme in my present state of uncertainty as to my release. I cannot be sure, till I am actually discharged, of my release even. But

in the ordinary course I ought to be released about the 10th to 13th. I should like to spend two or three days in Allahabad and then to go to Mussoorie It will be difficult and perhaps not desirable for me to leave Allahabad immediately on release. I must get the hang of various things. In Mussoorie I may stay for a couple of days and then return to Allahabad. I should like Kamala to accompany me there. Betty is already going and may even take this letter.

Ranjit has discovered that the ordinary *khattas* of the jail are very like grape fruit! He has asked the Supdt. to send you a few to try. He wants you specially to try them and eat them as if they were grape fruit.

Ranjit sends you his love, and Mahmud and Narmada Prasad their salams and *namaskars*, respectively.

Love

Your loving son,
Jawahar

October 11th Saturday

Discharged at 3.30 p m. Two days before sentence expired.

JAIL NOTES[115]

Books read

1. Habib's *Amir Khusrau*	15/4 Retd.
2. T. C. Woo's *Kuomin Tang*	17/4 Retd.
3. Johan Bojer's *The New Temple*	18/4 Retd.
4. Henry Bernstein: *Le Marche, La Griffe, Le Detour.*	21/4 Retd.
5. K. T. Shah's *Splendour that was Ind*	23/4/30 Retd.
6. Bertrand Russell's *ABC of Relativity*	25/4/30 Retd.
7. Andre Maurois: *Ariel ou La Vie de Shelley*	1/5/30 Retd.
8. *Les Chef-d'Oeuvres de la Langue Francaise—Poesie*	11/5/30 Retd.
9. *History of Orient*—Steijer-Beyer-Benitez	12/5/30 Retd.
10. H. A. Giles: *China and the Manchus*	13/5/30 Retd.
11. Yvette Guilbert: *Chanson de ma Vie*	13/5/30 Retd.

115. Jail Note Book No. 11, pp. 3 7.

12.	Andre Maurois: *La Vie de Disraeli*	20/5/30 Retd.
13.	Spengler's *Decline of the West* Vol I	27/5/30
14.	Les Chef-d'Oeuvre de la Langue *Francaise—Prose*	28/5/30 Retd.
15.	Spengler: *Decline of the West* Vol 2	8/6/30
16.	Emil Ludwig's *Bismarck*	9/6/30 Retd.
17.	Hieun Tsang's travels in Beal's *Buddhist Records of the Western World*	11/6/30 Retd.
18.	Shakespeare's *Tempest*	12/6/30 Retd.
19.	—do— *Two Gentlemen of Verona*	14/6/30
20.	—do— Measure for Measure	
21.	„ *Merry Wives of Windsor*	
22.	„ *Comedy of Errors*	
23.	Complete long note on Spengler's *Decline of the West*	24/6/30
24.	Emil Ludwig's *Napoleon*	27/6/30
25.	*Slings and Arrows* by Lloyd George	28/6/30
26.	S' *Much Ado about Nothing*	
27.	*Pardon Madame* by Romain Coolus and Andre Rivoire	7/7
28.	S' *Love's Labour Lost*—	
29.	Manuel Ugarte—*Destiny of a Continent*	15/7/30
30	Lucien Romier—*Who will be Master—Europe or America?*	19/7/30
31.	Ludwig's *Genius and Character*	25/7/30
32	*Les-Trois Henry*	
33.	Memoirs of Halide Edib	
34.	Churchill: *World Crisis* 1916-18 2 vols	
35	*Enigmas*	
36.	*The Prophet* by Khalil Gibran	
37.	*Do We Agree*—a debate between G.B.S. & G.K.C.	
38	*Les Miettes et L'Elastique* par Edmond See	
39.	*La Double Passion* par M. Auguste Villeroy	
40.	Bukharin—*Historical Materialism and Economic Theory of Leisure Class*	
41.	*An Indian Journey*	
42.	Upton Sinclair—*The Profits of Religion* &c. &c.	

9

THE EIGHT DAYS INTERLUDE

11-19 October 1930

1. Very Much Alive and Kicking[1]

I am very much alive and kicking. I hope to do my little bit to hasten the dissolution of the British Empire and take part in its final obsequies.

1 Statement issued on his release, Allahabad, 11 October 1930. *The Eight Days Interlude* (published by the A I C C, in 1930), p. 2. This pamphlet contains Jawaharlal's speeches, letters, messages and statements of the period 11-24 October 1930.

2. Message to the Country[1]

After six months of enforced absence I am returning to my post of duty and resuming charge of the high office with which the nation entrusted me at Lahore. In doing so, I wish to express my deep gratitude to the several acting Presidents of the All India Congress Committee who have led the great struggle for freedom with high courage and self-sacrifice during these six months—to Pandit Motilal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr. M. A. Ansari and Chaudhri Khaliquzzaman.

To the nation, I must pay my reverent homage for the magnificent fight that has been put up. I pray that I may be given wisdom and strength so that I may not prove an unworthy son of India in her hour of trial and an ignoble countryman of the martyrs of Peshawar and Sholapur and Bombay[2] and all the other places where the sons and daughters of the motherland have suffered for the great cause. Hundreds have died that India may live, tens of thousands have suffered great bodily injury and forty to fifty thousand lie behind the prison

1. Allahabad, 12 October 1930. *The Eight Days Interlude*, p 8.
2. In Bombay, during 1930, there were frequent lathi charges on Congress volunteers. On 1 August, a Tilak Day procession was stopped outside the Fort area. The volunteers remained there through the night in pouring rain, and in a lathi charge the next day, 350 were injured.

Huns. Not only have we experienced a surfeit of savagery but we have had a refinement of cruelty and hypocrisy—barbarous behaviour trying to preserve an innocent and saintly appearance.

Recently Lord Irwin made a speech[3] in which he criticized the Congress in connection with the recent effort of Dr. Sapru and Mr. Jayakar. I do not take much interest in the Viceregal utterances, but two or three things I wish to make clear. The first is about the strange charge regarding secret diplomacy. For anyone to accuse any organisation or a group, with which Mahatma Gandhi is connected, with any secrecy or with any diplomacy in a bad sense shows his amazing ignorance. Lord Irwin is obviously ill served by his set of informers. This has led him to be surprised many a time in the past and he will have further cause for surprise many times again. The Congress stands for open diplomacy at every stage and in every way. Indeed, on the very first occasion when Dr. Sapru and Mr. Jayakar visited Naini jail they were told clearly and in writing that no private assurance or secret understanding would be accepted by us, partly because we deal in no secret merchandise and partly because we had had enough of the assurances of Viceroys and others, which had not been kept. At every stage and at every step of the negotiations this point was driven home to Messrs. Sapru and Jayakar. Lord Irwin refers to a certain formula which was approved by Pandit Motilal Nehru long before the negotiations started. He does not state that this formula was only meant as the basis of consultation with Mahatmaji. Lord Irwin and the government whose agent he is in India may take it that, so far as the Congress is concerned, we shall not be satisfied at any step with any private assurance or anything secret.

Lord Irwin further hints, I do not know on what basis, that the terms put forward were for show purposes only and we were out to bargain. It is strange that he has not realized that people who are out to bargain do not jump into a fire or get themselves shot or get lathi blows or break up their families to go to jail in scores of thousands.

Let him realise once for all that we are in deadly earnest, we have burnt our boats, we have taken the great resolve, and there is no going back for us. For two years now the Congress has moved from step to step, after due notice, with inexorable logic. Let all realise that the Congress stands for the independence of India and it will fight to the bitter end till it has achieved it.

3. On 29 September 1930 at Simla.

bars. May their noble sacrifice inspire us to redoubled effort leading to the independence of our beloved country.

Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Reply to the Viceroy[1]

Before I begin I must pay homage to the many thousands of men and women in the country who have faced death and braved atrocities. The All India Congress Committee office has received reports that between forty and fifty thousand persons have been sent to prison in connection with the civil disobedience movement. In particular, I wish to pay my homage to the martyrs of Peshawar and Sholapur, and to the splendid part taken in the national struggle by the city of Bombay. The day of my release was an auspicious day because on that day a new ordinance was issued by Lord Irwin.[2]

The success of our movement can well be gauged by the number and variety of ordinances which are produced with regularity in the factories of Simla. The fact that this ordinance is the severest of all is in itself a sign that the British Government in India is getting in a bad way.

Indeed the time has come when, from the point of view of the British Government, every one of us should be a rebel. It is clear that India, big as it is, is not big enough to contain both the Indian people and the British Government. One of the two has to go and there is little doubt as to which this is going to be.

Today every man has to choose between the two flags, the flag of Indian freedom and the flag of foreign domination. The country has made its choice and has stuck to it in spite of all the frightfulness and methods of barbarism which history has associated in the past with the

1. Speech at Allahabad, 12 October 1930. From *The Eight Days Interlude*, pp 3-7 The speech was delivered in Hindi.
2. The Unlawful Associations Ordinance of 10 October 1930 empowered local governments to occupy immovable property and confiscate the movable property of any association which had been declared unlawful.

a man like Bhagat Singh. Courage of the Bhagat Singh type is exceedingly rare. If the Viceroy expects us to refrain from admiring this wonderful courage and the high purpose behind it, he is mistaken. Let him ask his own heart what he would have felt if Bhagat Singh had been an Englishman and acted for England.

Coming to the programme ahead of us, so far as the main items are concerned, like the boycott of foreign cloth, the boycott of British goods, prohibition and the salt tax, there can be no compromise of any kind on any of these issues. I deeply appreciate the attitude of merchants which brought about the wonderful boycott of foreign cloth. However, no Congress committee has any right or authority to come to any terms with any foreign cloth dealers other than the complete exclusion of foreign cloth from the market. The various no-tax campaigns going on in parts of the country will have to be extended soon to other parts.

The first phase of the great struggle has come to an end. It has been marked by a national awakening to which the world has been an admiring witness.

Now the second stage is beginning, the stage of our laying the foundations of a future, free India. Every city, every *mohalla*, every village must now play its part in this effort by making itself ready to become a living, self-dependent entity in free India. We must be prepared not only not to pay any taxes to the British Government but also to do without any service which they may render to us. While lawyers argue and raise their petty quibbles in London, we in India will fight for the reality, the conquest of power.

4. To Secretary, All India Spinners Association[1]

Allahabad
October 13, 1930

Dear Sir,

I am sending you under separate registered cover a parcel containing the yarn spun by me during my confinement in Naini Central Prison.

1. AICC File No G40(KW)(a)/1931 (Pt III), pp 461-463, NMML

It has become a pastime for some individuals who dare not show themselves in public to criticise the Congress. Without confidence in themselves or in the cause or in our country, always fearful and terrified, some of these persons have left India by the backdoor at the bidding and at the nomination of the representative of the foreign government here to speak in the name of India. It is a scandalous state of affairs that the nominees of the enemy should thus go secretly and parley with the enemy whilst the fight is in progress.

The Congress today is the Indian people, including every major and minor community. The Congress is not even Mahatma Gandhi, great as he is. When the Indian people decide otherwise, they can put an end to our movement or carry it on in any other form. It is because the Indian people have entrusted us with this duty and made us take a pledge and carry it out that we cannot be false to our pledge and our people.

If Lord Irwin or any of his colleagues want to know what the Indian people think, why do they not come down from their mountain tops and go to the bazars and the field and the factories and watch the lathi charges, the atrocities on women and old men and children, and the firing No, they have chosen the other path of shutting their eyes to truth, suppressing it and deliberately preventing it from spreading by various ordinances and the like, and then making a hysterical reference in praise of the police and the military. But we do not complain.

Lord Irwin has also referred in his speech to what was said in the Lahore presidential address[4] on the subject of violence and nonviolence. It is always interesting to read a sermon on morals from one who does not practise them. If England were invaded by Germany or Russia, would Lord Irwin go about advising the people to refrain from violence against the invader? If he is not prepared to do that, let him not raise the issue. It is for Mahatma Gandhi and others, who believe with him, to do so.

So far as I am concerned, I stick by every word I said at Lahore. We have adopted the policy of nonviolence because we believe in it and wish to give it the fullest trial in all honesty. Recent events have conclusively shown the wonderful efficacy of that policy and I for one hope that the country will stick to it and thereby achieve success.

But let there be no mistake about it. Whether I agree with him or not, my heart is full of admiration for the courage and self sacrifice of

4. See *ante*, section 5, item 2.

a man like Bhagat Singh. Courage of the Bhagat Singh type is *exceedingly* rare. If the Viceroy expects us to refrain from admiring this wonderful courage and the high purpose behind it, he is mistaken. Let him ask his own heart what he would have felt if Bhagat Singh had been an Englishman and acted for England.

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The first phase of the great struggle has come to an end. It has been marked by a national awakening to which the world has been an admiring witness.

Now the second stage is beginning, the stage of our laying the foundations of a future, free India. Every city, every *mohalla*, every village must now play its part in this effort by making itself ready to become a living, self-dependent entity in free India. We must be prepared not only not to pay any taxes to the British Government but also to do without any service which they may render to us. While lawyers argue and raise their petty quibbles in London, we in India *will fight for the reality, the conquest of power.*

4. To Secretary, All India Spinners Association[1]

Allahabad
October 13, 1930

Dear Sir,

I am sending you under separate registered cover a parcel containing the yarn spun by me during my confinement in Naini Central Prison.

1. *AICC. File No G-40(KW)(n)/1931* (Pt. III), pp 461-463, NMML.

A part of this yarn was sent by me to you in May last but subsequently the government of the U.P. decided not to permit any such yarn to be sent out of the prison during the period of the sentence, and thereupon, at the request of the superintendent of the jail, you sent back the yarn.

The yarn represents about 3½ months' more or less regular spinning. For some time, to begin with, I was not allowed the *charkha*. Later, my visit to Yeravda prison and other occupations prevented my spinning regularly. Details of the yarn are given below. Nearly all of it is *charkha*-spun yarn. A little is *takli*-spun but I am afraid this is bad and overtwisted as I had only just begun the *takli*. A few hanks represent an attempt at fine spinning, the finest being 65 counts. This was done from *punis* received from Sabarmati.

The total length of the yarn sent is 31426 yards—out of this 30681 yards being *charkha*-spun, and 745 yards, *takli*-spun. Kindly credit this to my past and future subscription to the A.I.S.A.

Will it be possible to get this yarn woven separately so that I may have some pieces of cloth spun by myself. I do not wish to give you any special trouble If it can be done easily I shall welcome it and pay the cost incurred. Otherwise, please do not trouble.

Kindly acknowledge receipt of the yarn.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

DETAILS OF YARN SENT

Yarn spun in Central Prison, Naini, between April 26th and October 10th, 1930, representing about 3½ months' regular spinning.

Charkha spun. 42 hanks

Total length : 30681 yards
Total weight : about 52-1/3 *tolas*
Counts from : 19 to 65
Average count : 28

Takli spun : 5 hanks

Total length : 745 yards
Total weight : about 3-5/6 *tolas*
Counts from : 6½ to 11

Grand total length : 31426 yards

I regret that the size of the hank is, as a rule, the awkward one of 4 ft. 5 ins. This was all that was available to me for a long time in jail.

The cotton used was mostly from Sabarmati. Some came from local sources.

My A.I.S.A. Roll No. is : 17(79)

5. To K.D. Malaviya[1]

October 13, 1930

My dear Kapil Dev,

Your letter came yesterday in my absence. Thank you for your good wishes which are very welcome. I am surprised that of all persons you should feel shy about anything. In spite of what you say I am convinced that before long you will have to pack up your knapsack and join the army. I am just going to Mussoorie for two or three days.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G 40(KW)(n)/1931 (Pt. III), p. 459, N.M.M.L.

6. Circular to P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
October 14, 1930

Dear Comrade,

On my return to duty after six months' enforced absence, I send you and my other comrades in your province my greetings, and I wish to pay my homage to those who have suffered in the great national struggle. For seven months now, we have carried on this fight and today, in spite

1. *The Eight Days Interlude*, pp. 9-11.

of the barbanties and inhumanities of the enemy government, in spite of its martial law and ordinances, in spite of lathi charges and the sending of about 50,000 men and women to jail, we are marching along undaunted, more determined than ever, to the goal of independence As we approach this goal, the struggle becomes fiercer and our sufferings greater. As defeat looms ahead before the enemy government and paralysis creeps over their trade they are becoming more and more reckless and unscrupulous.

The time has now come for us to make another great effort and to launch another offensive. I trust your committee is fully prepared for this and is ready to go ahead with vigour I am making certain suggestions below to guide your committee in its future work.

1. Please make it clear to all our friends that they must not be misled by frequent rumours about peace talks and the like. These are started by interested parties to confuse the issue and make people think that the struggle is ending. We are far from the end of the struggle yet and there can be no peace till there is success for us. Assure our friends also that the talk of 'secret diplomacy' is a deliberate misrepresentation. The Congress can and will do nothing which is not public.

2. The main planks of our campaign must continue—the boycott of foreign cloth, of British goods and liquor, and the disobedience of the Salt Act—with all vigour and without any compromise.

3. It appears that some local committees have made compromises with some cloth dealers permitting them to dispose of their old stocks of foreign cloth on certain days This is improper and is in direct contravention of the directions of the Working Committee. Please make it clear that under no circumstances can any such compromise or weakening be permitted. Where such compromises have been made, the provincial committee should take the necessary steps, after due notice, to put them aside and to revert to its original attitude of unadulterated boycott.

4 The disobedience of the Salt Act must also continue in any manner which your committee considers desirable. We must develop the habit of people manufacturing their own salt in large numbers.

5. In the boycott of British goods, the cooperation of people, who may not be interested in other items of our programme, should be sought and special committees formed. It may be desirable to make a list of the more commonly used articles of British manufacture and to work for their complete exclusion. Our office will send you such a list soon.

11. Finally, I would have you remember that this fight is going to be fought to the bitter end and victory always goes to those who dare. Remember what Danton[6] said a hundred years and more ago: "*Pour vaincre les ennemis de la patrie il nous faut de l'audace, encore de l'audace, toujours de l'audace*"—"in order to overcome the enemies of our country we must be daring, we must dare again, we must always dare." Dare therefore, and victory is ours

Your comrade,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6 (1759 1794); leading Jacobin in the French Revolution, who was later guillotined.

7. To C. Rajagopalachari[1]

Camp Mussoorie
October 15, 1930

My dear Rajagopalachari,
Welcome back.[2] On my arrival today father showed me your telegram about the census. We do not know what the details of your proposal were but evidently you are suggesting a boycott of the next census. We entirely agree. This would, of course, involve a refusal on the part of the public to give honorary help as enumerators and otherwise as well as a refusal to give information.

I hope to be in Bombay in a week or ten days. If it is possible for you to come there about that time we might meet. Bombay is, in any event, well worth a visit. The easiest way for you to find out when I am going there is from the press as a personal telegram may not reach you.

As you must know, father is here because of his ill health. He has not improved very greatly since he has come here. Recently, however, there has been a marked change which, though little, so far gives

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-40(KW)(n)/1931 (Pt III), p 421, N.M.M.L.
2 He had been in prison from 30 April to 10 October 1930.

promise of better results. I am going to Allahabad in a couple of days and after about three or four days' stay I am going to Bombay and may be to Ahmedabad from there.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. Message to the North West Frontier Province[1]

During the last seven months India has witnessed many a deed of heroism and self sacrifice. It is difficult indeed to enumerate them or to give a list of the brave men and women who have given their lives or suffered exceedingly so that India may be free. On my discharge from prison I have taken the earliest opportunity to pay my reverent homage to all these heroes. I should like, however, to make special mention of our brave comrades of the Frontier Province who, right at the beginning of the great struggle, gave an exhibition of peaceful courage and wonderful sacrifice at which India and the world have marvelled. I have read with amazement and admiration the record of their doings and their sufferings in the Patel Enquiry Report.[2] The Pathans are known to be brave fighters but they have shown that even in our nonviolent struggle they can take the lead and set an example which is not easy to emulate. I would therefore like to send my greetings and my homage to all our comrades of the Frontier Province, whether in prison or outside. The dead are no longer with us, but their memory lives and will live.

There used to be in past years talk of petty reforms in the Frontier Province. Today we are not fighting for reforms but for independence. Our comrades of the Frontier have shown in the fire of suffering what metal they are made of. Out of our common suffering

1. Mussoorie, 16 October 1930. *The Eight Days Interlude*, p 12.
2. The Peshawar Enquiry Committee, with Vithalbhai Patel as chairman, was appointed by the Working Committee to inquire into the happenings at Peshawar on 23 April. Its report was published on 25 June 1930.

we shall fashion free India, in which all of us, including the Frontier Province, will be equal shaters. The men and women of the Frontier Province have purchased by their blood and suffering a full right to this freedom. For the brave no gift can be too much, and those who know how to die know also how to live as free men.

Men and women of the Frontier, you have written a golden page in Indian history! That will be an inspiration for us and we shall remember it in the long days to come. India cannot forget those who helped to make her free.

9. To K. Santanam[1]

Camp Mussoorie
October 17, 1930

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 15th October informing me that the Punjab P.C.C. has passed a resolution regarding the incorporation of an additional colour in the national flag.[2] Owing to my recent release from jail, I have no knowledge of this resolution and do not know if my office has taken any steps in regard to it.

As you are aware the National Congress has not formally adopted the national flag by a resolution But practice and convention have certainly made the tricolour flag at present in use the national flag of India. The colours of this flag were not meant to represent any communities as such. In various countries of Europe there are tricolour flags but their colours do not represent different communities. Nonetheless, some people have certainly stated that these colours represent different communities and I can well appreciate the desire of the Sikhs to have their own particular colour incorporated. This question was discussed at Lahore between Mahatma Gandhi and Sikh leaders. So far as I know Mahatmaji said that he would place the matter for the

1. AICC File No. G-40(KW)(ii)/1931 (Pt. II), pp 345 347, NMML.
2. At a meeting held in September 1930.

consideration of the Congress executive. He did not and could not give any undertaking. Since then the country has launched on a vast campaign against the British Government in India and the Congress is involved in a life and death struggle. As you know even our executive has been declared an illegal body. Your own provincial committee and district committees have also been declared illegal Under the circumstances it is difficult for the All India Committee to meet just to consider the question of the flag. This question will undoubtedly have to be gone into thoroughly whenever we have an opportunity to do so. But at present it is manifestly impossible for us to do so. Nor would it be fair for any small committee to take upon itself the responsibility of fixing finally what the national flag of India should be I am afraid, therefore, that the Working Committee is not in a position at present to go into this question much as it appreciates the desire of the Sikhs.

The decision of the Punjab P.C.C to incorporate an additional colour throughout the Punjab seems to me to have been premature and untimely. If every provincial committee acted separately in this matter we might have a variety of flags. The question can only be decided finally by the National Congress in its annual sessions. I have no doubt that our Sikh friends will appreciate the position of the Congress. We have our backs to the wall and can hardly think of anything but the great fight that we are waging. When victory comes with the joint efforts of all the communities of India it will be for all of us together to evolve a flag which is acceptable to each group and to the nation at large. I have no doubt that no individual or group can make the question of the colour the reason for holding back in the struggle. It seems to me to be doing an injustice to the Sikh community to say that they will not take their rightful part in the war for freedom because of this. Large numbers of brave Sikhs have already joined the soldiers of freedom and faced the enemy. I am sure that all others who have refrained so far will wait no longer now that the fight has become fiercer and more intense.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. To Dhan Gopal Mukerjee[1]

Camp Mussoorie
October 17, 1930

My dear Dhan Gopal,

Your letter reached me two days after my discharge from jail. I hasten to reply to it because I may have to go back very soon. I am perfectly fit, as indeed I always am. So you need not worry about my physical condition Mentally and spiritually I am also at peace because, strange to say, nothing suits me more than activity and conflict. Don't worry yourself about violence and nonviolence. As a matter of fact India has been nonviolent to an amazing degree during the last six months in spite of terrible provocation. However, I had better not say much about politics. Else this letter will not reach you. As it is I doubt if it will go out of India. We are more or less cut off from the rest of the world and our telegrams and letters are neither sent nor are they delivered.

About my book, do what you like with it, change it, add to it, subtract from it, mutilate it, improve it or do anything else with it. So far as I am concerned it is absolutely impossible for me to give any time to it. I am glad you think well of my literary efforts. But for the moment the artistry of action appeals to me more. It is far more exciting to help in making a nation than in making a book.

I am glad you are thinking again of coming to India but your last visit was not exactly comforting. I must confess that I had been unable to understand why you left so suddenly. The events of the last few months in India would have dragged me from the uttermost corners of the earth to India. You, on the other hand, left us just when things were becoming interesting. I hope your next visit will be a longer one. Anyway, before you come again much will have happened here.

Kamala received the £8 you sent her. You may have heard that Ranjit Pandit is imprisoned now Probably before this reaches you the whole of the clan Nehru will be in jail. But don't worry. Every decent man has been to jail or will go to jail.

If any new book of yours comes out, send it to me. I shall read it in jail if I am there.

Love to Gopal,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No G-40(KW)(n)/1931(Pt II), pp 351-353 NMML

11. On the Boycott of Foreign Cloth[1]

Nothing has been more remarkable during the past few months than the success of the boycott of foreign cloth. This success has been primarily due to the response of the Indian public. It has also been due to the cooperation of the merchants all over India and I should like to express my appreciation of their patriotic efforts in this behalf. Recently it has been pointed out by some of these merchants that they had suffered considerable loss and they have asked for permission to sell the old stocks of foreign cloth with them. In some places local Congress office-bearers have entered into some kind of compromise for fixed periods. I should like to point out to all Congress committees, Congress office bearers, merchants, and the public generally that it would be exceedingly harmful to the interests of our country if this boycott were slackened in the least at this stage. Everybody knows what is happening in India today. From day to day new ordinances come and thousands are arrested. Only two days ago a great offensive was launched by the British Government on the Bombay Congress.[2] We welcome these offensives because we know they are the signs of weakening and defeat on the other side. At the same time it is incumbent on us at this present moment to stiffen our boycott and to make it complete. On no account must there be the slightest slackening. No Congress office-bearer or committee has any right or authority to enter into a compromise on this subject. The boycott of foreign cloth is indeed so important that it is better for other Congress activities to suffer, but this must be kept in the forefront.

I have no doubt that when our friends, the merchants, realise the critical situation in which we are placed today, they will give us the same cooperation which they have done. The public, I feel certain, will stick to its resolve to boycott foreign cloth, whatever the consequences. In particular, I appeal to the merchants of the great importing centres of Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, Amritsar, Karachi and Cawnpore. Those who stand by the nation today in this life and death struggle cannot be forgotten by a grateful country when victory comes.

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 18 October 1930. *The Eight Days Interlude*, pp. 15-16.
2. On 15 and 16 October 1930, the police raided Congress offices in Bombay and arrested a large number of persons. As a protest, complete hartal was observed in the city on 16 October.

Those who line themselves with the enemy must be prepared for the consequences of their action.

12. Reply to Municipal Address[1]

It is my belief that the Lucknow Board is not honouring an individual but an institution. I have been given an address because I am President of the Congress—an unlawful body—and, as such, a rebel. In spite of the fact that the Congress is being declared unlawful it is functioning as a living organisation almost throughout the country. That shows who has more adherents among the masses. The time has come when every individual must decide which way to go—whether to follow the tri-coloured banner of the Congress or the Union Jack of those who kept the country under thraldom. Personally, I have no quarrel with the Union Jack as such and I cannot understand why the national flag is such an eyesore to the imperialists. I cannot comprehend why some persons take peculiar pleasure in wounding the susceptibilities of millions of Indians by insulting the national flag, by hauling it down and replacing it by the Union Jack. Every Indian, whatever his political creed, must see that such insults to the national flag and national feeling are not repeated.

In the United Provinces, the district and the town Congress committees will shortly start a campaign of non-payment of taxes. This campaign will in the first place be directed against land revenue, rent and income tax. Then there is the scheme of running parallel institutions by the Congress. Municipal boards, district boards and other local bodies can effectively come to the aid of the Congress in making this constructive scheme a success.

Perhaps the worst phase of repression is now in store for the country, but I am confident that the policy of repression will not kill the national movement. In spite of all suppression of news the country knows very well how the people behaved at Peshawar, Sholapur and Lucknow. The bureaucracy talks of giving wretched reforms to the

1. Lucknow, 18 October 1930. From The Leader, 20 October 1930.

14. To the Workers of Bombay[1]

The workers should organise themselves in their organisations and at the same time help the Congress for fighting for complete independence of India. To oppose the Congress at the present juncture would be nothing else than to help the British Government in putting down the present movement. The workers should stick to their economic programme and demand their rights.

1. Allahabad, 19 October 1930. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 21 October 1930

15. A Note on Acting President in Case of Arrest[1]

Owing to my impending re-arrest I regret I cannot continue to work as the President of the Congress.[2] On the last occasion when I was arrested I nominated Mahatma Gandhi, and failing him Pandit Motilal Nehru, to act as President.[3] Gandhiji not being able to accept my nomination, Pandit Motilal Nehru was good enough to take charge of the onerous duties of the Congress presidentship. I would gladly have requested him to undertake the burden again, but his ill health makes it imperative that he should have complete rest and should not be troubled with any kind of exacting work. I therefore do not wish him to trouble himself with the work of the Congress President or the leadership of the national movement at this stage and so long as he is not well. The best service he can render to the nation is to get well soon so that India may have the benefit of his wise counsel and his ever youthful energy in the difficult days ahead of us. Within a few days

1. Allahabad, 19 October 1930. J. N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Since his release on 11 October 1930, Jawaharlal had been actively propagating a no-tax campaign among the kisans and had been served with notices under sec 144 at Dehra Dun and Allahabad
3. See *ante*, section 7, item 39

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel will probably be discharged from prison.[illegible] I request him to act as Congress President and nominate him as such. In case Pandit Motilal Nehru considers it necessary that there should be some acting President for these few days, before Mr Vallabhbhai Patel is released, he has authority to nominate any person for this period.

Jawaharlal Nehru

[illegible]

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Jawaharlal Nehru

10

PRISON DIARY WITH LETTERS

19 October 1930–26 January 1931

FIFTH CONVICTION[1]

October 19th (Sunday) 1930

Arrested again at 8.30 p.m. at crossing of Lowther & Thornhill Road almost in sight of Anand Bhawan—Re-enter Naini Prison on the stroke of 9.[2]

October 22

My weight 118½ lbs

24-10-1930[3]

MESSAGE TO COMRADES

The honour of arrest has again been accorded to me. I am about to stand my trial and have no doubt that I shall be convicted for the fifth time. That honour is always welcome. And yet I am sorry it has prevented me from keeping my promise of visiting Bombay and Delhi. To the brave soldiers of freedom of these cities, my apologies and regrets. I had long hoped to journey to the new places of pilgrimage in this ancient land—to Bombay and Peshawar, Gujarat and Delhi and so many others—and to see with my own eyes what manner of men and women they were who defied the British raj in all its panoply of power; and to try to understand the magic secret which had transformed our people, in their scores of thousands, into heroes. I cannot journey now. But, rest assured, I shall keep my promise and come to you when your heroic sacrifice has borne fruit and made India a free land, worthy of the heroes and heroines that inhabit her.

I have been arrested principally for my part in inaugurating a no-tax campaign in my province. I trust that the United Provinces will answer the challenge and will carry this campaign from village to village and town to town, and will try to emulate the splendid example

1. The diary kept by Jawaharlal in Naini Central Prison from 11 October 1930 to 26 January 1931 has been printed here, with the letters, notes and statements of the period interspersed. These documents are in the NMML
2. Jawaharlal was arrested for his speech at Allahabad on 12 October 1930, see *ante*, section 9, item 3.
3. A.I.C.C. File No G-40(KW)(ii)/193[illegible] p 363, NMML.

of Gujarat. I trust also that other provinces will do likewise. The freedom we seek is the freedom from all exploitation of the peasant and the worker. Let this message of freedom be carried to field and factory, and, together, let all of us face and overthrow the imperialism which dominates over us and exploits us.

Be of good cheer, comrades, for the day of our deliverance approaches. And if in the great struggle we lose our property and our belongings, why, then we shall be the lighter and more unencumbered and can march the more swiftly to our goal. In a long and difficult journey often one has to leave one's baggage behind.

Keep smiling! Let the enemy lose his temper and his composure. He has reason to, for defeat approaches him. But we know that we are in the right and we are going to win. Why then should we not smile even though the fight rages fiercely and clouds occasionally darken the horizon? Behind the clouds lies the sun of freedom and presently it will break through the mists and vapours and rejuvenate us with its life-giving energy.

October 24th, 1930[4]

WRITTEN STATEMENT AT TRIAL

For the fifth time I have been arrested and charged with various crimes by the officials of the British Government. For the fifth time, I have no doubt, I shall be convicted. I have so far taken no part in this trial and I desire to take none. But I wish to say a few words so that those who are trying me today, and my own people, who have honoured me beyond measure, may have some glimpse of what I have in my heart.

I am charged with sedition and with the spreading of disaffection against the British Government. Eight and a half years ago I was charged with a similar offence and I stated then that sedition against the present government in India had become the creed of the Indian people, and to preach and practise disaffection against the evil which it represents had become their chief occupation.[5] For the Indian people had come to realise that there could be no freedom for them, no lessening of the terrible exploitation which had crushed the life out of millions, till British rule was removed from India. Since this realisation came upon me in all its tragic intensity, I have had no other profession, no other business, no other aim than to fight British imperialism and to drive it from India.

4 J. N. Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.
5 See *Selected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 252-257.

On the first day of this year the National Congress finally resolved to achieve the independence of India, and on the 26th of January the Indian people pledged themselves in their millions to put an end to British rule in India. They declared the age-long right of a people to subvert any government which had misgoverned and crushed them, and they charged the British Government with having exploited them ruthlessly and done them almost irreparable injury politically, economically, culturally and spiritually. Since that pledge was taken, there can be no willing submission of any Indian to British authority, no recognition by him of British rule; and if a few of us side with the enemy or parley with him while the fight is in progress, it is a terrible measure of the spiritual injury caused by British rule, making them kiss the rod that smites them and hug the very chains that bind. Some of these misguided and erring countrymen of ours have chosen to desert the motherland in her hour of need and talk of compromises with British imperialism, but the country has chosen another path under the guidance and inspiration of our great leader, and that path it will pursue till success comes to it. There can be no compromise between freedom and slavery, and between truth and falsehood. We realise that the price of freedom is blood and suffering—the blood of our own countrymen and the suffering of the noblest in the land—and that price we shall pay in full measure.

Already the world is witness to the sacrifice and suffering of our people at the altar of freedom, to the wonderful courage of our women, and to the indomitable spirit of our brave peasantry. Strong in the faith with which our leader has inspired them, with confidence in themselves and in their great cause, they have willingly set aside their material pleasures and belongings, and written a stirring and a shining chapter in India's long history. And the world has also seen how our peaceful struggle is sought to be crushed by frightfulness and methods of barbarism which have earned for the British Government in India a comparison with the Huns of old. Unlike the Huns, however, they have added insult to deep injury and have sought, after the manner of their kind, to cover their deeds of frightfulness with a cloak of piety and sanctimoniousness. Fearful of exposure, they have sought to suppress truth in every way. Those whom the gods wish to destroy they first drive mad, and all the mad deeds which the British Government has done in India during the last seven months—desperate devices of a tottering empire—are visible emblems of the crash to come.

We have no quarrel with the English people, much less with the English worker. Like us he has himself been the victim of imperialism, and it is against this imperialism that we fight. With it there can be

no compromise. To this imperialism or to England, we owe no allegiance and the flag of England in India is an insult to every Indian. The British Government today is an enemy government for us, a foreign usurping power holding on to India with the help of their army of occupation. My allegiance is to the Indian people only and to no king or foreign government. I am a servant of the Indian people and I recognise no other master

The end of our struggle approaches and the British Empire will soon go the way of all the empires of old. The strangling and the degradation of India has gone on long enough. It will be tolerated no longer, and let England and the world take notice that the people of India are prepared to be friends with all who meet them frankly as equals and do not interfere with their freedom. But they will be no friends with such as seek to interfere with their liberties or to exploit the peasant or the worker. Nor will they tolerate in future the humbug and hypocrisy which has been doled out to them in such ample measure by England.

To the Indian people I cannot express my gratitude sufficiently for their confidence and affection. It has been the greatest joy in my life to serve in this glorious struggle and to do my little bit for the cause. I pray that my countrymen and countrywomen will carry on the good fight unceasingly till success crowns their effort and we realise the India of our dreams.

Long live free India!

Jawaharlal Nehru

October 24th *Friday*

My trial—3 sections—judgement reserved.[6]

6 Jawaharlal was charged with sedition, abetting offences under the Salt Act and instigating people not to pay taxes

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FIRST PAGE OF STATEMENT AT TRIAL, 24 OCTOBER 1930

Central Prison
Naini
October 26th 1932

Indira Priyadarshini
on her Thirteenth birthday — शान्तिकी सुखी रहे

my dear, On your birthday you have been in the habit of receiving presents and good wishes. Good wishes you will still receive in full measure, but what present can I give you from Naini prison? My presents cannot be very material or solid. They can only be of the air and of the mind and spirit, in as a good fairy might have bestowed on you — something that even the high walls of prison cannot stop.

You know, sweetheart, how I dislike sermonizing and doling out good advice. When I am tempted to do this I always think of a story of a "very wise man" I once read. Perhaps one day you will yourself read the book which contains this story. Thirteen hundred years ago there came a great traveller from China to India in search of wisdom and knowledge. His name was Hiuen Tsang and he went through the deserts and mountains of this world he came travelling.

TO INDIRA NEHRU[7]

Central Prison
Naini
October 26th 1930

For Indira Priyadarshini
on her thirteenth birthday—कार्तिक सुदी ५[8]

My dear, On your birthday you have been in the habit of receiving presents and good wishes. Good wishes you will still have in full measure, but what present can I give you from Naini Prison? My presents cannot be very material or solid. They can only be of the air and of the mind and spirit, such as a good fairy might have bestowed on you—something that even the high walls of prison cannot stop.

You know, sweetheart, how I dislike sermonizing and doling out good advice. When I am tempted to do this I always think of a story of a "very wise man" I once read. Perhaps one day you will yourself read the book which contains this story. Thirteen hundred years ago there came a great traveller from China to India in search of wisdom and knowledge. His name was Hiuen Tsang,[9] and over the deserts and mountains of the North he came, braving many dangers, facing and overcoming many obstacles, so great was his thirst for knowledge. And he spent many years in India learning himself and teaching others, specially at the great university of Nalanda, which existed then near the city that was called Pataliputra and is now known as Patna. Hiuen Tsang became very learned himself and he was given the title of "Master of the Law"—the Law of the Buddha—and he journeyed all over India and saw and studied the people that lived in this great country in those far off days. Later he wrote a book[10] of his travels and it is this book which contains the story that comes to my mind. It is about a man from South India who came to Karnasuvarna, which was a city somewhere near modern Bhagalpur in Behar; and this man, it is written, wore round his belly and waist copper plates, and on his head he carried a lighted torch. Staff in hand, with proud bearing and lofty steps, he wandered about in this strange attire. And when any one asked him the reason for his curious get up, he told him that *his wisdom was so* great that he was afraid his belly would burst if he did not wear copper

7. NMML. First published in *Glimpses of World History*, 1934.
8. The fifth day of the bright half of the lunar month *Kartika*. In 1930, according to the *Samvat* era Indira Nehru's birthday fell on 26 October.
9. (c. 602-664); Chinese Buddhist scholar and traveller.
10. *Hsi yu chi* (Descriptions of the Western Lands), written in 648.

plates round it; and because he was moved with pity for the ignorant people round about him, who lived in darkness, he carried a light on his head!

Well, I am quite sure that there is no danger of my ever bursting with too much wisdom and so there is no need for me to wear copper plates or armour! And in any event I hope that my wisdom, such of it as I possess, does not live in my belly. Wherever it may reside, there is plenty of room still for more of it and there is no chance of there being no room left. If I am so limited in wisdom how can I pose as a wise man to others and distribute good advice to all? And so I have always thought that the best way to find out what is right and what is not right, what should be done and what should not be done, is not to give a sermon, but to talk and discuss and out of the discussion sometimes a little bit of the truth comes out. I have liked my talks with you and we have discussed many things, but the world is wide and beyond our world lie other wonderful and mysterious worlds, so none of us need ever be bored or imagine, like the very foolish and conceited person whose story Hiuen Tsang has told us, that we have learned everything worth learning and become very wise. And perhaps it is as well that we do not become very wise for the very wise, if any such there are, must sometimes feel rather sad that there is nothing more to learn. They must miss the joy of discovery and of learning new things—the great adventure that all of us who care may have.

I must not therefore sermonize. But what am I to do then? A letter can hardly take the place of a talk; at best it is a one sided affair. So if I say anything that sounds like good advice do not take it as if it was a bad pill to swallow. Imagine that I have made a suggestion to you for you to think over, as if we were really having a talk.

In your history books you read of great periods in the life of nations. We read of great men and women and great deeds performed, and sometimes in our dreams and reveries we imagine ourselves back in those times and doing brave deeds like the heroes and heroines of old. Do you remember how fascinated you were when you first read the story of Jeanne d'Arc[11] and how your ambition was to do something like her? Ordinary men and women are not usually heroic. They think of their daily bread and butter, of their children, of their household worries and the like. But a time comes when a whole people become full of faith for a great cause, and then even simple, ordinary men and women become heroes, and history becomes stirring and epoch-making. Great

11 Joan of Arc (1412-1431), French national heroine; defeated an English army at Orleans in 1429, tried for heresy and burnt at the stake.

leaders have something in them which inspires a whole people and makes them do great deeds.

The year you were born in—1917—was one of those great years of history when a great leader, with a heart full of love and sympathy for the poor and suffering, made his people write a noble and never to be forgotten chapter of history. In the very month you were born, Lenin started his great Revolution which has changed the face of Russia and Siberia. And today in India another great leader, also full of love for all who suffer and passionately eager to help them, has inspired our people to great endeavour and noble sacrifice so that they may again be free and the starving and the poor and the oppressed may have their burdens removed from them. Bapuji lies in prison but the magic of his message steals into the hearts of India's millions, and men and women and even little children come out of their little shells and become India's soldiers of freedom. In India today we are making history, and you and I are fortunate to see this happen before our eyes and to take some part ourselves in the great drama.

How shall we bear ourselves in this great movement, what part shall we play in it? I cannot say what part will fall to our lot but whatever it may be let us remember that we can do nothing which may bring discredit to our cause or dishonour to our people. If we are to be India's soldiers we have India's honour in our keeping and that honour is a sacred trust.

Often we may be in doubt as to what to do. It is no easy matter to decide what is right and what is not. One little test I shall ask you to apply whenever you are in doubt. It may help you. Never do anything in secret or anything that you would wish to hide. For the desire to hide anything means that you are afraid, and fear is a bad thing and unworthy of you. Be brave and all the rest follows. If you are brave, you will not fear and will not do anything of which you are ashamed. You know that in our great freedom movement, under Bapuji's leadership, there is no room for secrecy or hiding. We have nothing to hide. We are not afraid of what we do and what we say. We work in the sun and in the light. Even so in our private lives let us make friends with the sun and work in the light and do nothing secretly or furtively. Privacy of course we may have and should have, but that is a very different thing from secrecy. And if you do so, my dear, you will grow up a child of the light, unafraid and serene and unruffled, whatever may happen.

I have written you a very long letter. And yet there is so much I would like to tell you. How can a letter contain it?

You are fortunate, I have said, in being a witness to this great struggle for freedom that is going on in our country. You are also very fortunate in having a very brave and wonderful little woman for your mummie, and if you are ever in doubt or in trouble you cannot have a better friend.

Good-bye, little one, and may you grow up into a brave soldier in India's service.

With all my love and good wishes.

Your loving
Papu

October 26th Sunday

Indu's 13th birthday कार्तिक सुदी ५
Wrote to her.

October 29th Wednesday

Judgement & sentence
Section 124 A : 18 months R.I. + 500/- fine
in default 3 months R.I.
Salt Act of 1882 : 6 months R.I. + 100/- fine
in default 1 month R.I.
Ordinance VI of 1930 : 6 months R.I. + 100/- fine
in default 1 month R.I.

Last two to be concurrent i.e. total imprisonment 2 years R.I. plus 5 months in default of fines.

Govind Malaviya arrested immediately after my trial as he was going out of Naini Jail.

November 1st Saturday

My weight—117¾ lbs
Ranjit's interview.

November 3rd Monday

Govind sentenced to 1½ year and Rs. 500/- fine.

November 8th Saturday

My usual interview ought to have taken place today but it was hastened and took place on the 5th. It was feared that perhaps all the interviewers may not be out of jail by today! This livening up in Allahabad

due to the promulgation of Sec. 144 against processions in the Civil Station, as a result of the celebration of 'Jawahar Week'.[12] Processions declared unlawful and asked to disperse—Hold on—squat on the ground for some hours and then on withdrawal of police proceed to complete the programme. Lathi attacks were expected but they did not materialise. Sundar Lal, Manzar Ali, Gur Narain, &c. arrested the next day.[13] Kamala and Nan would no doubt be arrested but apparently there is some hesitation to proceed against them or against women. Not because of any chivalry but because it is feared the reaction might be a big one.

In the last two weeks nearly I have been taking injections of contramine & chloral iodine for the pain in my shoulders. Result—I have felt poorly all day. There is no marked improvement in my shoulder trouble.

Last night Ba and Vallabhbhai & Mahadeva must have arrived in Allahabad.

Owing to shoulder trouble and daily injections have not been able to do any spinning. Can only use my arms in early morning before injection and in the evening. During both these periods I have been doing *newar*-weaving.

Nov. 15*th Saturday*

Interview with father, mother, Kamala, Nan, Betty and Indu. Father not at all improving. Is bringing up far more blood. The atmosphere of worry is all against his treatment. He hopes to go to Calcutta day after tomorrow and from there for a sea trip to Rangoon and Singapore. But much depends on what happens in Allahabad tomorrow—Jawahar Day! There is some likelihood of Kamala etc. getting arrested. May be also some lathi play on the part of the police.

I have had two birthday celebrations. On the 13th it was the *Samvat* day—*Aghan Badi* 7. Food &c. came from Anand Bhawan and some presents from mother. On the 14th—the date according to the Gregorian calendar—Mahmud produced some gorgeous presents—a lovely fountain pen &c.—and arranged with Khwaja to send a huge feast.

On the 13th Brailsford turned up and had a long interview with me. Amazingly weak in practice and oppressed with the might of the capitalist and the imperialist order!

12. This was celebrated at Allahabad from 3 November with processions, public meetings and spinning competitions.
13. They were arrested on 4 November on a charge of violating section 144

I learned today that my birthday was celebrated (or rather was to have been celebrated) yesterday in the Yeravda Female prison—Sarojini wanted to celebrate 17th Nov., which is Bebee's birthday, by feeding her fellow prisoners. Bebee suggested the 14th and this apparently was agreed to.

My weight today—15th—118 lb.

Nov. 16th Sunday

Jawahar Day![14] Arrests—convictions—lathi charges all over the country!

November 1930[15]

TO KRISHNA NEHRU

I understand that you are gathering caskets and addresses. What exploit are they meant to celebrate? Surely a few hours in Malacca jail do not deserve an epic.[16] Anyway don't get a swelled head—or perhaps it is better to have a swelled head than no head at all!

It has recently occurred to me that the British Government by issuing an order under Sec. 144 on me and by subsequently arresting me on the 19th Oct.[17] made me forget a most important event, or rather anniversary on that day, and the beautiful and artistic gift that I should have made to my dearly beloved sister, did not materialize. This lapse on my own part was most unfortunate. But I hasten to correct it. Therefore, take yourself to a book shop and choose some volumes containing the wisdom of the ancients, and the faith of the middle ages, and the scepticism of the present, and glimpses of the glory that is to be, and take them and pay for them and consider them the belated but loving gift of a somewhat absent minded brother who thinks often of his little sister. And read these chosen volumes and out of them construct a magic city full of dream castles and flowering gardens and running brooks where beauty and happiness dwell and the ills that this sorry world of ours suffers from can gain no admittance. And

14 This was celebrated all over the country. Besides processions, meetings, flag hoistings and hartals, copies of the pamphlet, *The Eight Days Interlude*, were distributed. The government confiscated many copies and at several places there were lathi charges and arrests.

15. Clearly written after 11 November 1930. *Nehru's Letters to His Sister* (London, 1963); pp. 17-18.

16 Krishna Nehru was arrested on 11 November 1930 for attending an unlawful meeting and was sentenced to one month's imprisonment or a fine. She was released when, against her wishes, a friend paid the fine.

17. Her birthday that year according to the Hindu calendar.

life will then become one long and happy endeavour, a ceaseless adventure, to build this city of magic and to drive away all the ugliness and misery around us.

If you find any books likely to interest me, send them along to me. And if father has finished with Garibaldi[18] (the first volume about the Defence of the Roman Republic)[19] send it to Indu. If father has not read it perhaps it will be better to get another copy. Send the first copy to Indu. I should like her to read it soon as I want to write to her on the subject. Send me your Book Co.'s catalogue.

Au revoir, and look after Papa and yourself and come back fatter and wiser than you went.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

2/12/1930[20]

TO MAJOR OBEROI

Dear Major,

I enclose a letter[21] which will speak for itself. All of us have been greatly upset by the news that has been coming, in papers and interviews, about floggings on political prisoners. Under the circumstances we must take some action and the letter I am attaching is the first step in this direction. I shall be greatly obliged if you will send this letter on as soon as possible to the I.G. or to the provincial government. We shall wait for some days for the reply. On receipt of the reply, or if there is no reply within a reasonable time, we shall take such further action as may appear to us to be called for.

You will now appreciate that the action we are taking or contemplating has nothing to do with Naini Prison. We would be sorry to do anything which might add to your trouble or worry. But the issue is too important and too painful for us not to take any action.

18. Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882); Italian patriot, soldier and guerilla leader. He was one of Jawaharlal's boyhood heroes
19. *Garibaldi's Defence of the Roman Republic* by G. M. Trevelyan, published in 1907.
20. J. N. Prison Papers, NMML.
21. See the following item.

I hope we shall have a reply to my letter within a week or so.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

TO SUPERINTENDENT, CENTRAL PRISON, NAINI[22]

Dear Sir,

As you are aware, we are to a large extent cut off from the outside world and only fragmentary and belated accounts of happenings outside the prison walls reach us. From the newspapers supplied to us, however, we have come to know that recently some of our colleagues in other prisons in these provinces have been flogged by the jail authorities for alleged breaches of jail discipline. In particular, we understand that flogging was inflicted on boys or young men, sentenced for political offences, in the Mirzapur jail and in the Allahabad District Jail. In the latter case, it is stated that the alleged offence was the writing of "Mahatma Gandhi *ki jai*" on the walls of the cell. We also understand that a circular was issued some little time ago by the Inspector General of Jails to the various prisons in these provinces asking the jail authorities to inform political prisoners that in case of any breach of jail discipline or non-compliance with 'parade' rules flogging would be inflicted. It also appears that political prisoners are being frequently put in fetters and that even under-trials have had fetters put on them. We are naturally not in a position to state how far these allegations are correct. In view, however, of the gravity of these allegations and of the issues involved, I am addressing this letter to you with the request that you may forward it to the responsible officers of the British Government in these provinces, so that we may have an authoritative answer from them and may then be able to determine what our future line of action may be.

It has been our policy in prison to observe as far as possible jail discipline and rules. We have deliberately counselled a large measure of cooperation inside jail to such of our colleagues as have been convicted. But conformity to jail discipline, which we have so far agreed to and advised, has always been subject to this: that there will be nothing in the jail rules or discipline that may be degrading or dehumanizing, nor anything that may bring dishonour to our cause or our country. The allegations about flogging, etc., to which I have referred above, would indicate, if the facts are true, that a deliberate attempt is being made by the present government of these provinces, or its agents, to insult

22. J. N. Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.

I hope we shall have a reply to my letter within a week or so.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

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22. J. N. Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.

and harass political prisoners and to compel them by threat of flogging to submit to certain practices or orders. Flogging is well known to be a barbarous practice in civilized countries and even in the case of hardened criminals it is seldom resorted to. To inflict it on political prisoners for minor breaches of jail discipline is a monstrous procedure. To give a general license to inflict this punishment, as the alleged circular of the Inspector General of Jails appears to suggest, indicates an outlook which it is difficult for us even to conceive.

As political prisoners we are personally concerned with this matter. But we have also a duty to our young comrades who have been punished and who are threatened with the punishment of flogging. If the facts we have referred to above are in the main correct we shall necessarily have to change our policy in prison with regard to the observance of jail rules. What we shall do, it will be for us to determine, after careful consideration, on receipt of an answer from the provincial government or the Inspector General.

We would like to add that so far as we are personally concerned we have no grievance about the treatment that has been accorded to us. The authorities of the Naini Central Prison have treated us with courtesy to which we have naturally responded by giving them a large measure of our cooperation. But the issue before us is a larger one, and we feel that we cannot remain silent or passive when a deliberate attempt is being made to humiliate and punish our young comrades by flogging.

My colleagues with me here are in agreement with me and desire me to express their concurrence with this letter. I shall be glad to have an answer to this letter at a very early date.

The matter, as you will no doubt appreciate, is urgent and vital, affecting as it does large numbers of our colleagues who are in prison, as well as the general public.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

December 7th Sunday

Have spent a bad two days. Am feeling a little calmer and more collected now, though even now my mind is frequently troubled.

On the 3rd December the announcement appeared that the Allahabad Congress Committee—Youth League *ashram*, etc., had been declared illegal. News of this trickled through to us in the course of the

day and we rejoiced thinking that now Allahabad was given a chance of doing wonders. Next morning we heard that processions and demonstrations were going to take place on a big scale—and also that many arrests were impending. We were in a fever of excitement, eagerly waiting for news.

News came the next day and with it depression and anger. Instead of a striking and dramatic procession and meeting, the whole thing was a miserable failure. Evidently terror seized some of our नेतागण[23] and every attempt was made to avoid trouble. Kamala was told by Tandon not to lead the procession as her arrest might have a bad effect on father who was ill! The leaders conspicuous by their absence Why did Kamala agree to this humiliation? It was shameful and I have felt miserable. One wrong act can undo half a year's good work. The whole city is depressed. Tandon lies ill and not only does nothing himself but prevents others from acting.

December 13th 1930[24]

TO MAJOR OBEROI

Dear Major,

We have just had a long talk among ourselves regarding your suggestion that we should delay sending our second letter. As I mentioned to you we had fully considered the question yesterday and indeed have decided to take some further action in the matter without much more delay Subsequent news that had come to us had gone to confirm the previous impression that the provincial government and its principal officers were out to crush political prisoners by methods of frightfulness. I believe there has been flogging in other places also—in Ghazipur and probably in Fyzabad This is bad enough but what is even worse is the lathi play on several occasions in the Allahabad District Jail when almost every political prisoner there—and there were hundreds of them—was beaten. It is a little difficult to contemplate the happenings with equanimity. To add insult to injury some of these persons who were beaten are being proceeded against in court. This hardly shows that any change has taken place in the mentality of those in authority. For us to be passive under these circumstances is not easy and every day's delay is a trial. Our reading and other work suffers because of the distress of our minds. Besides, being somewhat aggressive in such matters, a defensive attitude does not suit us, especially as those who suffer or

23. Flock of leaders.
24 J N Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.

have suffered are young colleagues of ours. If we had been the principal sufferers we could easily have waited but when those who relied on us and confidently looked to us to help them in time of need are made to suffer, are we merely to tell them to wait and see! We have a responsibility towards them and if any punishments are to be awarded we ought to be the first to get them. After all we led them "astray"!

Hence our desire to do something as soon as possible We would gladly meet your wishes and postpone action for a short while but I do not quite see what difference a day or two would make—if you think it will, then we can delay our second letter by a day or so but as far as I could gather from you, you suggested a delay of about a week or so. I am afraid this will be too much and would largely stultify the action we might take.

It was our intention to state in our second letter that we would not observe jail rules or discipline whenever we so chose—in particular we would not obey any rules regarding parade or jail tasks—and to invite any punishment for these breaches. When and how else we might break jail discipline, it would of course be for us to determine. It was also our intention to state that as a mark of sympathy for our colleagues, who had been made to suffer or have been insulted and harassed in various jails, we would observe a complete fast for 72 hours, that is, three full days beginning from December 14th, Wednesday. This fast would not be in the nature of a hunger strike, but realising that fasting is an offence in jail—and one of the charges against the political prisoners being tried now—we would invite similar proceedings against ourselves. The fast being one of sympathy with the past and present sufferings of our colleagues has little to do with the attitude that the government might take, and the object of the fast is not wholly served by delaying it considerably. We would indeed have taken it already but we felt that it may have far-reaching consequences and hence we stayed our hand. I might point out that it is not our desire that the fast should become general and that other prisoners, political and non-political, should join it. We would make it clear that we do not desire others to join. At this stage, at any rate, it is a purely personal matter for us, but of course we fully realise its public aspect.

In view of what you said it seems to us that perhaps it might meet both our viewpoints to some extent if we made certain changes in our proposed second letter. The letter might be sent to you on Monday morning—unless you specially desire that it be delayed by a day or so. We would not say anything definite in it regarding the non-observance of jail rules yet—that would be postponed for some time till the reply

of the government came, or did not come, as the case might be. We would state, however, that in sympathy with our colleagues we were going to observe a three days' fast. For this of course we would invite proceedings against ourselves. This course would not commit us to any future action—apart from the fast—and would leave the door open for any response from the government. I trust you think it is a reasonable *via media*.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17/12/30[25]

TO SUPERINTENDENT, CENTRAL PRISON, NAINI

Dear Sir,
We have received no answer yet to the letter dated December 2nd 1930, which was addressed to you on our behalf by one of us, Jawaharlal Nehru, on the subject of the recent floggings of political prisoners in these provinces. We understand that, in response to our request, the letter was forwarded to the provincial government. We do not know if you have had any acknowledgment or reply, but as none has been communicated to us, we presume that you have not received any. We realise that the wheels of government move slowly and red tape and efficiency seldom go together. But, as was pointed out in our last letter, the matter is urgent and vital and affects large numbers of people who are in jail as well as the general public. We had every desire to give full time for consideration to the British Government in these provinces, and indeed it was because of this that we have waited patiently for an answer. But as not even an acknowledgment has come, we have no alternative left but to consider the data that have already reached us, fragmentary and in some cases vague as they are, and to decide upon our course of action accordingly.

Indeed, such further information as has come to us goes to confirm the previous reports and to show that the policy of flogging political prisoners has been more or less general in these provinces. We understand that in addition to the floggings in Allahabad and Mirzapore district jails, political prisoners have been flogged in Ghazipur and in

25. J. N. Prison Papers, NMML. Original in Jawaharlal's hand.

Lakhimpur. Further, we gather that some of these floggings, at least, were given in the presence of other political prisoners, with the intention, we presume, of impressing them with the might and ruthlessness of the prison authorities and the government. We need not mention here the many other instances of insult and harassment which have come to our knowledge and which apparently have taken place sometimes in the presence of high officials. But we must refer to the reports of repeated and indiscriminate lathi beatings of political prisoners in the Allahabad District Jail. We have learned of these with horror and amazement, and we can only conclude from them that the mental apparatus and nerves of the men at present in authority in these provinces have given way under stress of the national movement.

It is clear that such a widespread and ruthless attack on political prisoners can only be due to a deliberate policy of the government. We had hoped that this may not be so and in that hope we had sent you our last letter. But the government has not chosen to deny the reports or to disclaim responsibility or to punish those who have been guilty of this barbarous practice. Instead, they have added insult to injury by taking proceedings in court against some of our colleagues for indiscipline in the Allahabad District Jail.

Under these circumstances we cannot continue our policy of cooperation inside jail. We shall be constrained to change it unless a satisfactory assurance is given to us on behalf of the provincial government and suitable action is taken by them in pursuance of this assurance. To begin with, we propose to observe a three days' fast from tomorrow morning, December 18th, that is to say we shall abstain from all food for 72 hours. We shall do this as a mark of sympathy with our colleagues who have been flogged or who have suffered in other ways at the hands of jail officials in these provinces. Abstention from food is, we understand, in itself an offence in jail, and some of our colleagues are being tried for this offence. We invite a like treatment. We would add that this fast is, at this stage at any rate, a purely personal matter for us and we do not recommend others to join in it.

We shall await a little longer a response to our last letter before taking any further steps in the matter.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru
Ranjit S. Pandit
Syed Mahmud
Narmada Prasad Singh

December 18th

We have begun a three-day—72 hours—fast today in sympathy with political prisoners who have been flogged in other jails. Flogging apparently has taken place in Allahabad District Jail, Mirzapur, Ghazipur & Lakhimpur jails—worst in Malacca (Alld. District). Apart from flogging, lathi beatings &c. I wrote a letter on this subject to Supt. on 2nd December. Malaviyaji wrote to the Governor—Lambert—Having waited for 10 days for an answer I wanted to write again. At Supt.'s request I postponed second letter. Ultimately sent it yesterday. This was a joint one signed by Ranjit, Mahmud, Sardar and me. Govind sent a separate letter to same effect.

So we are in the middle of the fast. Am looking forward with great interest to the 2nd and 3rd day. As far as I can remember I have never fasted for more than 36 hours in health.

Mahmud after having started the fast was discharged on completion of his term today at 2 p m.—much to his disgust. He tried to get round the Supt. to allow him to stay on for a few days more!

Malaviyaji was sent yesterday to the Civil Hospital. He has suffered a lot lately from colic pain.

December 19th Friday

Going strong after 31 hours of fast! I had my usual exercises and the full run of a mile and three quarters this morning. At meal times yesterday some feeling of hunger but even that is not troubling me much. The day seems long.

We were weighed on December 16th. My weight was 115 lbs—a drop of 2 lbs in the previous fortnight. I have now lost 15 lbs since April when I came to jail on the last occasion and this in spite of sufficient food and exercise. My weight now—8 stone 3 lbs—is almost what it was when I left Harrow and went to Cambridge. I remember it was 8 st 4 lbs or thereabouts. I have an idea, however, that the jail balance is all wrong and shows 4 or 5 lbs less weight than it should. Thus I should be 8 st 7 lbs or 8 st 8 lbs. The balance however shows the difference in weight accurately enough.

Mahmud has lost 23½ lbs in 6 months
Ranjit " " 1½ lb in 3 months
Narmada Pd " " 21 lbs in 8 months

and all this before the fast!

December 20th Saturday

53 hours over! Felt quite fresh when I got up in the morning at 5. Only a slight feeling of emptiness and a somewhat unpleasant taste in the mouth as in a fever. As usual had my morning exercise though not very vigorously. Ran a mile—might have easily gone further but thought I had better be cautious.

On the whole the discomfort of the fast has been far less than I thought it would be. The little suffering is probably mental more than physical. There is a little weakness about the legs. A slight unsteadiness if one stands for some little time—and a feeling of emptiness. Sitting down and reading I can distinctly hear my heart thumping.

Ranjit and Narmada Prasad more or less in the same condition as I am. After a cold bath at midday I felt very much refreshed and quite forgot about the fast for a while.

No news from home. Today was Ranjit's interview day but no one seems to have come back from Calcutta. Kamala is also apparently away—Mahmud must be all by himself in Anand Bhawan. Rather bravely he is continuing the fast even after his release. No!

December 21st Sunday

We are successfully through the fast without any trouble or even great discomfort. At 8.25 a.m. today we broke it with some grape fruit, followed by *dallia* and half-boiled eggs. Even this amount of food made one feel heavy. There was not much obvious appetite or desire for food at midday.

Just before ending the fast we weighed ourselves. Surprised to find that all of us had been greatly reduced in three days. The weights were:

Mine 108 lbs—reduction of 7¼ lbs
Ranjit 122½ lbs—reduction of 7 lbs
Sardar 140½ lbs—reduction of 8¾ lbs

As usual Ranjit and I had our morning run and walk—ran half a mile—walked 1½ miles without any discomfort except, towards the end of the run, there was a slight oppression in the region of the heart. This was before we ended the fast.

Last evening the most marked feeling was a weakness of the lower leg—below the knee. The night was a restless one and I must have woken up a score of times.

Before we broke our fast we arranged that our convict colleagues in

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father may rest assured, be wholly foolish. One policy I have never believed in—and that is one of defensive submission. Neither has father. If there is going to be aggression on the part of the government, there is going to be no submission on our part—quite the reverse. But we do not think much will happen either way now—certainly there is just a possibility of matters developing to such an extent that it may become desirable for us and others to disobey jail regulations etc. generally. I do not contemplate this contingency but if it should arrive I shall view it with equanimity. Even then I think our position as a whole is a strong one and it is no easy matter for the government to face and suppress general indiscipline.

Anyhow, so far as Ranjit and I are concerned, nothing much can happen to us whatever may happen elsewhere. Rest assured that we are well able to take care of ourselves, wherever we may be, jointly or separately. At the most we may be separated and one or both of us may be removed from Allahabad. That will be unfortunate but after all it is not a very terrible contingency. So do not worry. Nothing will happen. And whatever happens somehow turns out to be for our good—in spite of the folly and weakness of many of us. The very gods seem to work in our favour! So heigh-ho and long life to the Plum Pudding!

Just at present I am feeling exceedingly fit after the 3-day fast. Excellent thing—a 3-day fast! I am prepared to recommend it to everybody.

Love to the little one and the little one and to the tiny tot from the

Mamu

28.12.1930[27]

My dear Father,

I had an interview with Kamala and Indu yesterday. They could not give me any very recent news about you. The latest was five days old when apparently a 'phone message came here from Calcutta to say that you were improving under the Kaviraj's treatment. This was very pleasing news but I wish it had been followed up by some further information. We have no idea—neither had Kamala—about the date of your return to Allahabad. If all goes well, I take it, you will be here within the first week of January. Meanwhile, a letter from me is due and I propose to take advantage of this by writing to you. If, however, this letter has the misfortune to go by post, I doubt if it will

27. M. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

our barrack, who had also been fasting in sympathy with us, should break their fasts. They did so with *dallia* and milk.

During the period of our fast we took absolutely nothing to eat. All we took was water—about 2 or 3 tumblers in the course of the day.

Do not feel quite normal yet. A feeling of heaviness, although the meals we have taken were not abnormal.

23/12/30[26]

Nan Dear,

I am very sorry father has worried about our fast etc. Please tell him not to worry. All that we have done (or will do) is only after the fullest consideration. There is no question of acting in a huff or in a hurry. It was a pity that you or Kamala did not prepare him for our fast etc. We had suggested previously at our interviews that you might.

We did not act as we did because of anything that Tandon may have said or done. We do not even know what he said. We acted independently of our own accord on the facts before us. I do not think Tandon's message had any effect on any jail—certainly not on the Malacca jail. The position however at our time became a difficult one and it might have justified at some later stage, perhaps, some general change of attitude as is stated to have been suggested by Tandon. There is no question of going in for parade etc. No one has objected to it or to the ordinary jail discipline. But when a deliberate attempt is made to humiliate and insult with the threat of the whipping triangle and the lathis behind it, it becomes almost impossible to remain passive. Besides, it is bad tactics. Submission to this aggression means an increase of it all round till everyone has to suffer. For instance, even lately the offensive of the I.G. was not confined to C class prisoners but was directed to B and A class prisoners also. Therefore common prudence dictated that something should be done—of course, there were stronger reasons for doing so from the larger point of view. Such action as we have so far taken has already justified itself and we are credibly informed that the change is noticeable in many jails. There is very little likelihood of any more floggings.

So far as any future action on our part is concerned we do not contemplate anything just at present. If nothing aggressive or irritating occurs we may not take any further steps. If however the government misbehaves we may do something, but whatever we may do will not,

26. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

of us have had a week of remission taken off, but in practice it makes precious little difference to Ranjit or me. Only the Sardar, after having packed up and brushed up, had to unpack and unbrush again! Very soon however he will go, and our little barrack will miss him as it has been missing Mahmud for the last ten days. The perpetual argument about the desirability of *masala* in food will be hushed and our cook will become monarch of all he surveys in the kitchen—within limits however. Ranjit nurses a wild hope that some day he might learn to cook in a cooker. He might be able to do so. So far as I am concerned I am quite content with my present knowledge of cookery. It is not exactly extensive, but I have the comforting conviction that I shall never starve for want of a cook.

Our garden grows and the flowers peep at us in the mornings Some of them will go to Anand Bhawan, I hope, to welcome you back on your return.

Kamala tells me that you—more probably Betty—have bought a goodly number of books in Calcutta. I am eager to see the new books —it is a disease—I know I cannot read all of them or even many of them. If you wish to pander to this disease still further, I enclose a list[29] of books that might be ordered. Perhaps some of them have already been purchased by you.

Malaviyaji paid us a short visit the other day, after his discharge. He looked so weak and frail. It was such a pity as he made famous progress during his first two months here. He used to dash about at the rate of 5 miles an hour, and now he has lost all that and a good bit besides. I am very glad he is out. The cold weather in jail did not suit him at all.

1930, with all its ups and downs, has been a great year. 1931, I have no doubt, will be a greater. You will be well soon I hope, full of strength and energy, and ready to welcome the great day when it comes to our country. With love and all our best wishes for the New Year.

Your loving son,
Jawahar

Betty dear,
Your long stay in Calcutta will not, I hope, make you too much of a Bengali. At any rate don't take to the oil!

29 Not printed

reach you in time. You may be in Allahabad by the time it reaches Dakshineshwar[28] and makes itself felt more than even the visible emblems of her might! Indeed, as the stage becomes barer and emptier, the commotion behind the scenes increases, and one can even hear the panting and the throbbing of the stage hands. One might almost say that one can hear their furious attempts to think. Unhappily the hartal age inaugurated by the Mahatma and the Congress has had some evil effects. It has resulted in continuous hartals in the heads and brains of some people. The upper storey has been locked up and the key is missing. It is a sad and deplorable result, but I suppose we must all bear up with this additional affliction.

Apropos of letters, we were much puzzled and perplexed by some news the Superintendent gave us the other day about your health. He had received a letter from Nan from Calcutta and on the strength of this he stated that you were still carrying on Nilratan Sirkar's treatment and were much the same as before. This was amazing as Nan had told Ranjit during her last visit that you had started the Kaviraj's treatment and were prospering under it. We could not make out what had happened to induce you to revert to allopathy. There seemed to be some mystery about it. This was solved by the Superintendent scrutinising the letter and its envelope again and finding out that the former was dated a week or more earlier. The letter had been written *before* Nan left Calcutta but, as happens often enough, it went to the other Naini in the hills and then gradually and leisurely descended to the plains below!

I suppose we have to put up with suchlike happenings—but so long as the British raj provides us with a postal and telegraph system, however slow and unreliable it may be, there is no reason why some advantage should not be taken of it by Nan or Betty sending word of your health. Our noncooperation need not extend to a boycott of information!

We are well and are putting on weight rapidly, I suppose, after the fast. We have not weighed again. The weather is pleasant and cold and the mornings are spent sitting in the sun with the head covered. A few days ago we had quite a sharp snap of cold—the temperature went down to 36°F. The poor Sardar does not approve of the cold—he is quite sure of this. The very prospect of cold terrifies him—however he has survived, and is at present putting in an extra week in barrack No. 6 for his tementy m fasting for 3 days. In theory all three

28. A suburb of Calcutta known for its temple of Kali, where Ramakrishna Paramahamsa had his first mystical experiences

NOTES MADE IN NAINI PRISON, 1930[33]

The Congress, which is the great panchayat of the whole country, is fighting today for Purna Swaraj. In many parts of the country zamindars have, at the request of the Congress, stopped paying their land revenue to the foreign government, and the tenants have stopped paying rent. Zamindars and kisans must understand what our great panchayat is fighting for and what Swaraj will mean for them. How will they benefit by Swaraj? And what is Swaraj?

Today both zamindars and kisans have to carry out the orders of officials of the foreign government. Settlements are made by them, *tenancy acts and land laws are made by them, and zamindars or kisans* have little say in the matter. When Swaraj comes, the power to make land laws, tenancy acts, settlements and everything connected with the *zamindar and the tenant will rest with the people—the kisans and the* zamindar. Their panchayats will decide all these matters. When this power is in their own hands they can do away with all evils which trouble them. They will not then have to beg favours of big officials but decide for themselves what they want. This panchayati raj will be Swaraj. What the zamindars and kisans will decide then it will be for them to determine. No one else can decide it for them beforehand.

The provincial Congress panchayat has however considered these questions fully and it recommends the following programme to zamindars and kisans alike:

FOR ZAMINDARS

1. There should be a land tax.
2. Petty zamindars and peasant proprietors who cultivate their own land and whose agriculture income is below a certain taxable minimum

1. There should be a taxable minimum and all agricultural incomes below this minimum must be exempted.
2. The usual rate of land tax should be 25% and not 40%. The tax to be a graded one like the income-tax (after a certain limit, say, on income of Rs. 1000 per annum).
3. There will be no forfeiture of landed properties. Where the state acquires land, adequate compensation will be given.

33. *J. N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L.*

Here is a long list of books.[30] Get them or order them if you have not already got them.

Give my love to mother and wish her and Nan and yourself (with the help of a mirror) a happy New Year.

Love

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

December 1930[31]

TO SYED MAHMUD

My dear Mahmud,

Barrack No. 6 has been missing you a lot. I hear that you are having a big gathering on New Year's Day in Allahabad. Give my love to such friends of mine who may come. From reports it appears that things are marching satisfactorily to the appointed goal. I am almost inclined to think that our movement is becoming foolproof, that is, it will go on to success in spite of all mistakes even.

I feel that the A.I.C.C. office is behaving very badly or rather it is *not behaving at all! Does it function at all? I wish you would spend* some time there and make the place hum. If there is not enough work make the staff stand on their heads. Anything to keep them working.

I am sending you a copy of an agrarian programme for the U.P. which we have suggested.[32] This is for your information. Do not keep it in the office.

One good result of your working in the A.I.C.C. office in Allahabad will be that if you are *arrested again you will come back to barrack* No 6.

The old Sardar has had to put in extra work because of the fast. He is the only real sufferer. We enjoyed the fast very much. Only we missed you. If you meet Masud Ali give him my love.

Love to your children and regards to your wife.

An attempt should be made to have a Working Committee meeting.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

30 Not printed

31 Written some time after 21 December 1930. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

32 See the following item.

rent in pursuance of the Congress campaign. With the attainment of Swaraj all such lands will be restored to their rightful owners. So far as the Congress can help it zamindars and kisans will not be made to suffer for their adherence to the no-tax campaign for Swaraj.

2. It has been stated above that compensation will be given for all lands acquired by the Swaraj government. But it must be clearly remembered that those persons who help the enemy now and oppress the kisans and thus try to delay Swaraj can expect no consideration or compensation or special privileges from the Swaraj government.

AN AGRARIAN PROGRAMME FOR THE CONGRESS

Any movement which seeks to become a mass movement must necessarily have an economic programme for the masses. On general principles, therefore, it is essential that the Congress should lay down the broad outlines of such a programme. Such a programme would have to deal with questions of capital and labour and the land laws, more the latter, as India is still overwhelmingly an agricultural country. Two difficulties have stood in the way of the Congress and prevented it from tackling these questions. One is the lack of uniformity of the land laws in the various parts of the country, and the other is the fear of many Congressmen lest they irritate and antagonise powerful classes like the big capitalists and the landlords. The result has been that although many attempts have been made to get the Congress to tackle these questions, it has fought shy of them. In spite of this ostrich-like desire not to face facts, however, Congress was being forced gradually but surely to recognise them and to give its opinion in regard to them. An appreciation of the fact that the only solid basis of a revolutionary movement is an economic programme of radical betterment of the masses led the Congress to make several rather vague but none the less significant gestures which were meant to win over the masses. To some extent they succeeded in winning the sympathy of the people, but they did not translate themselves sufficiently into the day-to-day economic life of the people to fire them to irresistible movement.

Some of these "gestures" might be mentioned here.

Some time in May or June 1928 the A.I.C.C. adopted a resolution in Bombay (at the instance of the U.P.P.C.C.) which dealt with the removal of all exploitation of workers and peasants. A little later the All Parties Report, in the midst of some very reactionary provisions, laid down, probably without thinking of its inevitable consequences, the

should be exempted.

4. Inheritance taxes on big zamindaris (i.e., those paying a land tax of Rs. 2000 or above).
5. No roster year as at present.
6. Collection of water rate through revenue agency instead of through zamindars.

FOR TENANTS

1. Transferable hereditary right.
2. Right to buy up outright the zamindari rights on instalment plan.
3. Reduction in rent at least in proportion to the reduction in revenue.
4. Right to construct works, build houses, plant trees.
5. Common pasture land in village.
6. No free labour or *nazrana*.

GENERAL

1. Large zamindaris should not be encouraged and should be gradually acquired by the state, adequate compensation being given. With these acquired lands provision to be made as far as possible for the landless people who require land.

2. Village panchayats elected by all the adult men and women. These should have considerable powers given to them to settle land disputes as well as other civil and criminal disputes.

3. Encouragement of cooperatives in villages, working through the village panchayat, helping the cultivators with loans, seeds &c. and getting them out of the control of the money-lender.

4. Every village to have a panchayat *ghar* which will belong to the whole village and which will be the meeting place of all the residents. The panchayat *ghar* to have a reading room, library, school room etc.

5. Provision to be made for education and medical relief for all villages.

6. No salt tax.

IMPORTANT

1. All zamindars and kisans must remember that the Congress has declared that it will not recognise any sales or rejections which may take place for non-payment of land revenue or

alone. The object, clearly stated, of a no-tax campaign must be economic gain, not the release from jail of Mahatma Gandhi, Vallabhbhai Patel, or Jawaharlal Nehru or any other person. The latter gives prominence to the personal element and no mass campaign can last long on this basis.

The fear that any detailed economic programme is likely to irritate some groups is perfectly justified. It is impossible to give an abundance of the good things of life to everyone, at this stage of our civilization at any rate. All that one can do is to distribute the good things more equitably. If more of them are given to the poor peasant or tenant obviously some one has less of them. It is no use avoiding this conclusion. There should be no doubt that the basis of any agrarian programme must be the good of the man in the field—the cultivator as well as the landless man who would cultivate if he had the chance.

The Congress does not desire to precipitate a class conflict. It is wise in avoiding it, but it must always be remembered that the conflict has been there and is there. It is the inevitable outcome of existing conditions. Therefore it cannot be wholly ignored, and circumstances might at any time force the issue before the Congress for immediate decision. Those who shape Congress policy must be prepared for such a contingency and must be clear about certain matters. They must have the ultimate ideal clear-cut in their minds. This need not be advertised at this stage. At the same time it need not be kept secret either. The immediate programme will necessarily depend on many circumstances, but it must always be such that it takes us towards the ideal and benefits the really vital classes in the community. We must not do anything to irritate needlessly any group—zamindar or capitalist. It is no good adding to our enemies in the middle of a great fight. But where a choice between two positions has to be made the Congress must, without fear, back the vital groups—the masses, the kisans and petty zamindars and landless people—even though the consequences might be the driving away of the taluqdars and the big zamindars. Any weakening in such matters would end the solid and the only real support of the masses for the taluqadar's shadow which we can never grasp. This point has to be stressed as most of us are apt to think too much of the big zamindar. He is always shouting about his vested interests while the poor tenant or petty zamindar is seldom audible. So that, even without our having much sympathy for the big zamindar, we are impressed by him and his shouting and automatically give him more than he deserves.

The words 'zamindar' and 'tenant' are somewhat misleading as by far the vast majority of zamindars are petty ones, little better than the

principle of the living wage. There were some other important provisions also for workers etc. In October or November 1928 the outlines of an agrarian programme were discussed in the presidential address of the U.P. Provincial Conference at Jhansi by Jawaharlal Nehru.[34] The Council of the U.P.P.C.C. went a step further early in 1930 and adopted a resolution on the subject which was forwarded to the *A.I.C.C.* as its recommendation. This resolution *inter alia* laid down the general principle that the state should have direct dealings with the cultivators, that is to say, that there should be no intermediaries between the state and the cultivator. According to this there was no place for the zamindar letting out his land to others. A second part of the resolution dealt with the details of the programme. The consideration of this was postponed by the U.P.P.C.C. The papers however gave it considerable publicity. Owing to the commencement of the civil disobedience movement probably the subject was not considered again.

Gandhiji's eleven points, in his letter to the Viceroy, were essentially parts of an economic programme and some of them dealt with the peasantry. They were written however from the viewpoint of the Gujarat peasantry and laid stress on the reduction of land revenue by 50%. His intention was that even in the zamindari areas the rent of the tenant should be reduced by 50%.

So far as an all-India economic programme is concerned it is perhaps difficult to draw one up at this stage. Any agrarian programme applicable to the whole of India must be a very radical one which changes the present land system in every province completely. Perhaps the time is not ripe for that just yet. In any event it is doubtful if the leading Congressmen would agree to it. But there appears to be no reason why the U.P. Congress Committee should not take the lead, so far as their own province is concerned. Indeed the U.P.P.C.C. has been doing this for the last few years. The rapid spread of the no-rent campaign in the U.P. makes it imperative that some authoritative statement be made on behalf of the Congress in regard to agrarian policy. It is only fair that zamindars and tenants should know where they stand and what they gain or lose by Swaraj. This is also sound expediency. The battle cry of an economic programme is a far more powerful one for the peasant than that of Swaraj

34 See *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 255 263.

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for definite activities against the state or the national movements. Land will be acquired on payment of compensation. Almost every big zamindar will welcome this assurance today. He is afraid of the future and knows that it is not possible for present conditions to continue for long. We shall of course take steps to tax heavily big estates by means of a graded land tax and inheritance tax.

A principle that must be borne in mind in fixing the land tax or rent, is that of a living wage or income. No taxation or rent is justified if the income is below this limit.

An agrarian programme for the province is suggested below. It should apply to both the Agra and Oudh provinces. It has been drawn up with caution and contains no revolutionary proposals, and yet some of the proposals are of far-reaching importance. Inheritance taxes or death duties are not mentioned in it, but of course the state will have the right to impose them. The gradation of the land tax, on the lines of the income-tax is definitely mentioned. This should be kept as otherwise the whole programme becomes lop-sided. It is no good having proposals of exemption and reduction without some effort at counterbalancing them. The programme will lack reality otherwise and no one will take it seriously. They will all think that we have something else up our sleeves, or have really no thought-out programme. Besides a graded land tax is almost everywhere acknowledged to be just.

The other proposals made need no comment.

The principles governing our programme should be:

1. The living wage must be provided for, that is to say there should be a taxable minimum and agricultural incomes below this minimum must be exempted.

2. The usual rate of land tax should be 25% and not 40%. The tax to be a graded one like the income-tax. According to the figures given above probably about 95% of landlords would pay the minimum only. The remaining 5% or so would pay on the sliding scale, increasing as the income increases.

3. Large zamindaris will not be encouraged. Gradually they will be acquired by the state, adequate compensation being given, and provision will be made for the landless.

4. There will be no forfeiture of landed properties.

5. Inheritance taxes on big zamindaris.

6. Peasant proprietorship will be encouraged. It would be desirable not to permit alienation or mortgage as this results ultimately in the formation of big estates. Perhaps this restriction may not be appreciated at present.

putting this idea of the goal at the back of our minds and not relating it to the immediate work before us. With this outlook we may gradually relapse into a dreary round of activity, good in itself, but feeble and ineffective and wholly uninspiring from the larger viewpoint. There are some people who perhaps imagine that the goal is really a distant one and that immediately we must aim at something else. This cannot be the Congress viewpoint and can be ignored. Others, not consciously thinking in this way, are yet apt to lose themselves in petty activities which by themselves are wholly insufficient to advance our cause.

What then are we aiming at? We have definitely put before us the attainment of a revolutionary, that is root and branch, change in our national political structure. (The word 'revolutionary' is used throughout as meaning a great and radical change. It has no reference to violent activities.) If our ideal is a revolutionary one then our methods must also necessarily be revolutionary (also in a nonviolent sense). And indeed, the whole conception of noncooperation and civil disobedience is revolutionary. Ideas and activities, however, have a remarkable way of losing their vitality and of falling into ruts. This appears to be happening in the country now and clear thinking is therefore very necessary.

No revolutionary movement can be static. The very terms are contradictory. Revolutionary activities must necessarily be dynamic. As soon as the dynamic character disappears the revolutionary element also goes. Then again, it must be borne in mind that no revolution can stand still. It marches forward from step to step or it goes backward and collapses. Thirdly, a revolution is largely based on the psychology of the people and therefore the psychological aspect must ever be kept in mind, specially so in our type of movement which is intimately connected with mental reactions. Fourthly, and as a consequence of the last, our activity should be such as to appeal to or inspire the largest numbers of classes of our countrymen. It is possible for a while to induce people to act in the heroic way but large numbers do not continue acting in this way unless they feel that there is a good chance of their bettering their economic condition if the goal is attained. Obviously the largest numbers ultimately mean the peasantry and the workers—in the U.P., the peasantry and petty farmers. Fifthly, strength can only come in a revolutionary movement from below up, not from above down. Therefore it becomes essential that a continuous attempt be made to keep the people at the bottom of the organisation in proper form. They must have a large measure of initiative and direction and they must feel that they are the vital parts of the organisation. Thus,

7. *For the Tenants*

1. Right to buy up outright from the zamindar their land on instalment plan.
2. Transferable hereditary right.
3. Right to plant trees, construct works, build houses.
4. Common pasture land in the village.
5. Reduction in rent at least in proportion to the reduction in revenue.
6. No *nazranas*.
7. No free labour for the zamindar.

Quite apart from the agrarian programme, one subject might be mentioned here. It is desirable for us now to lay stress on a properly elected Constituent Assembly meeting in India and drawing up our future constitution. Most people cannot envisage how a change to a new constitution can take place apart from an agreement with the British. The idea of a Constituent Assembly is good on merits, its associations are good, and it can fit in alike with an agreement or break with England. It is the natural outcome of our demand for full self-determination. It is also a solid answer to all Round Table Conferences and the like. Some difficulties might arise as to the manner of election of such Constituent Assembly. We need not go into this question now. But we can make it clear that it must be thoroughly representative of the country as a whole. Of course it will be nothing like our puny assemblies and legislative councils of today. Propaganda on the basis of such a Constituent Assembly can be carried on easily in town and village as the idea is an easy one to grasp. No one can possibly object to it, as such an assembly will not represent any party or grouping as such, but will represent India.

NOTE WRITTEN IN NAINI CENTRAL JAIL[35]

Our campaign for independence has now lasted continuously and intensively for nine months. It has gone on from victory to victory and strength to strength and each new effort to crush it has resulted in a fresh move forward. All this is solid gain for the country and our added strength and self-confidence are certain indications that we are nearing our goal. Yet we must remember that the real thing is the attainment of the goal and every step that we take must be taken from the viewpoint of the very early attainment of this goal. This appears to be a truism but, in effect, it is not so. There is very grave danger of our

35. Written some time in December 1930. J.N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L.

of harm's way. If Gandhi is not indispensable much less are others. The best of workers becomes useless and even harmful the moment people begin to think that he is avoiding jail.

The talk of concentrating on constructive work means in plain language not doing any dangerous work. Constructive work is a side issue today. The main thing is destructive and every Congressman must hurl himself into this. The more the defiance, etc, the more will khadi, etc., flourish. If the defiance and law breaking and arrests and lathi charges, etc., disappear then automatically the boycott and khadi will weaken. Constructive work has become the cloak for no work today. We are out now to conquer power by revolutionary means. Let this never be forgotten and this can only be done by an intensification of law-breaking and, above all, by the no-tax campaign.

Thus from every point of view it is clear that the whole basis of the movement must continue to be defiance and law-breaking. If in any place there is a tendency to revert to normal conditions the gentleman who calls himself the 'dictator' of the place should be asked to take leave and rest and to leave the direction of affairs to more energetic and daring persons. It appears that several places, including even Lucknow, have shown this tendency. It must be put down with rigour and regardless of personalities Normalcy or normal conditions are the very reverse of revolutionary conditions. Our object is to have abnormality and to make it impossible for the government and people alike to revert to normalcy.

Recently a no-tax movement was inaugurated in Allahabad district. There does not seem to be any great enthusiasm for it in leading Congress circles and it is even said that the movement should be limited to a small area only. Any more fatal move it is difficult to imagine. It was declared with pomp and circumstance that Allahabad would have a no-tax campaign. Thousands of volunteers were informed. Work was done—pledges taken—large number of arrests made. And now to try to limit it! So far as Allahabad is concerned this is unthinkable.

But even the larger question of a no-tax campaign in the U.P. as a whole must be considered very seriously. It must be remembered that ultimately this is the only thing that counts. Some recent articles of Brailsford are very illuminating. As an impartial observer and a keen student of revolutionary movements he attaches importance at present in India only to the no-tax campaign.

We may not be strong enough to work all over the province for this. Peasants and zamindars may not be strong enough either to resist repression. But all this is not very material at this stage. Our

in villages, the panchayat must be made as far as possible to function and act; in towns, councils and committees—specially *mohalla* committees—should act. Too much dictation from above kills initiative and ultimately the movement. Even when there is dictation it should almost be invisible and should take the form of a decision of a committee. The people should get used to obeying an impersonal committee chosen by themselves, not individuals.

Sixthly, the initiative should always be in our hands. We must not permit it to go to the enemy. This means that we must always be on the aggressive. No resolution can fight successfully a defensive warfare. The psychology of mass revolt disappears with a defensive attitude.

Seventhly, we must keep the idea of mass revolt always before us. Ultimately, that is the only thing that will tell. In spite of the great success of our movement we have not yet come within measurable distance of moving the masses in a revolutionary sense. There is sympathy, but no more. Gradually, if we do not look out, even this sympathy will get less and less

These are some of the considerations that must be borne in mind in carrying on the campaign. Sometimes it is said that it is no good going to jail as we can do better work outside; that we should concentrate on constructive work, etc. This is a foolish and dangerous line of reasoning. Nobody wants to rush to jail for no rhyme or reason but to deviate by a hair's breadth from one's line of activity in order to avoid jail is playing entirely into the hands of the government. This means that the initiative has passed to the government. It also means that we are on the defensive and the psychological reaction on the people is bound to be great. And, in addition, people seem to forget that however much one may avoid jail one cannot keep out of it for long unless one does no solid work at all and more or less retires from effective public life. Anyone that is considered dangerous by the government is picked off by them, whether he wants to or not. Government is bent on keeping our effective workers in prison. Vallabhbhai Patel goes out He is pursued by Section 144 and although, partly for reasons of health, he does not break any such order, even then he is arrested for a petty speech on a minor occasion. If one has got to be arrested one might as well do it in style and reap the benefit of a brave and defiant attitude. Otherwise we are apt to look very much like hunted animals trying to save our skins—a most demoralising and depressing outlook. The whole nature of our campaign demands aggression, defiance, daring and challenging. It is better to err on this side than on the side of caution. It is absurd for anyone to feel that he is indispensable to the movement and must keep himself safely out

general appeal must be—no taxes. Then we can choose special districts for more concentrated work. But the stage of any kind of concentrated work has passed. The government will not permit it. All we can do is to issue directions to the people and leave it to them to carry them out to the best of their ability. If all of us and our workers are arrested, it does not matter, provided our directions are vigorous and clear. The movement can never weaken this way. But it is bound to weaken if we show a weak front or compromise or avoid trouble. Therefore we must take up a strong line on the no-tax issue. It is impossible to conceive of a more favourable economic condition from this point of view than now. To pay under pressure and in fear of trouble although we have started a no-tax campaign is one thing. But it is a totally different thing for us to agree to any taxes being paid. This way lies our downfall.

Besides, for an independence campaign, right in the midst of a critical struggle, to agree to payment of taxes is deplorable weakness and bad tactics.

It has been stated above that everything depends on the attitude. If it is defiant enough the rest will follow. The boycott will succeed even without any picketing. With defiance absent the boycott will automatically vanish, for everyone will feel that the movement was weakening. So far as the cloth boycott is concerned it should be remembered that the greatest and the most ruthless strictness is essential. There can be no compromise, no weakness on any single point. It is better that we remain strict even though we are powerless to enforce our will. At least we give then the right lead to the people. A compromising spirit means a wrong lead to the people.

Those people who come back from jail must remember that a great deal depends on their readiness to return. For if it appears to the government and the people that such persons are not prepared to return to jail, then the government wins. Only when it sees that there is terrible determination will it realise that it must own defeat. The government itself has been laying stress on the fact that in many places people who have returned from jail keep at a safe distance from it! This kind of thing has a bad psychological effect.

Lately the government has declared that the movement is moribund in the towns of the U.P. This may be an exaggeration but anyhow it is not a compliment to those who direct the movement in the U.P. and the fact certainly appears to be that the leaders of the movement in the U.P. are showing terrible caution. There is no verve—no dash—no jumping into the fire—no gambling for big stakes—no reliance on the masses and specially the peasantry. There is a very middle-class

cautious approach to problems and no striking decisions. The U.P. P.C.C. is in a rut. Till it gets out of it, little will be done.

In the course of every revolution a time comes when the revolutionary ardour of the principal workers lessens and when, instead of being in the vanguard, they drop behind and try to keep back others from advancing. This is the tragedy of revolutions. Let the U.P. not experience it.

The above is written from a purely political standpoint. From the socialistic standpoint, much greater stress would necessarily be laid on the peasants and workers and on an agrarian movement. Unless we have such an agrarian movement there is grave danger of our relapsing into a sect of civil resisters and the country going on merrily in spite of us!

The Congress has not definitely adopted a socialistic viewpoint although it favours it. The U.P. committee favours it still more and has declared generally but definitely in favour of it. At this stage it is not possible to outline on behalf of the Congress a definite economic and agrarian programme. None the less it may be necessary to put forward some such programme tentatively so that those concerned may know what the intentions of Congress workers and some leaders are today. It should be pointed out, however, that the final decision will rest with the Congress sessions and everybody will have a right to have his say there.

A tentative agrarian programme is suggested below. This is not from a purely socialistic standpoint but from a Congress viewpoint with some leanings towards socialism.

1. The Congress is definitely opposed to the present land tenure system in the U.P. and considers it unjust and unsocial. It will seek to change it as soon as it has the power to do so, and will endeavour to establish direct contact between the cultivator and the state and to have a kind of peasant proprietorship as exists today in Gujarat, Punjab, Madras, etc. In particular, the Congress is opposed to big zamindars and considers them most harmful to the social order. The objective aimed at will be to have peasant proprietors and also to have large state farms where big agricultural experiments can be tried by the cultivators to whom the lands would be leased out and who would own them jointly.
2. In order to have peasant proprietorship it will be necessary to acquire the big zamindaris. The petty zamindars can well remain. The Congress is not against them, nor does it seek to injure them in any way. The big zamindaris should be acquired by the state and compensation given. What this compensation should be is to

be determined later but it is clear that full compensation is impossible.

3. It should be clearly stated that zamindars who side with the enemy in this national campaign forfeit any right to compensation.

4. There should be a graduated land tax, like income-tax, instead of the present land revenue. There should also be an inheritance tax.

It appears that indirect or direct encouragement has been given in some districts to kisans appealing to the government for remission of rent or revenue. This is very wrong from the Congress viewpoint. Indeed, it is playing into the hands of the government. This is the very policy adopted by the government in Gujarat. Congressmen should stick to the no-tax campaign and not temporise or compromise on this issue. Sometimes it is stated that enquiry committees should be appointed to find out where and when to have a no tax campaign. This also is absurd. The time is now. There is no room for an enquiry. It can only be a cloak for not doing anything. Another suggestion has been made that the agrarian movement should be organised on behalf of a 'Kisan Sabha'. If a powerful kisan *sabha* had been in existence, it would of course have taken the lead without waiting for outside help. But there is no such *sabha* and it is merely exploiting the kisans to call a few persons a 'Kisan Sabha'. Besides, the principal movement and the Congress are bound to suffer by these tactics. It is the Congress that is fighting and it is the Congress, therefore, that should stand out for any action The real centres of activity should indeed be villages and *mandal* panchayats. They can be called Congress or Kisan Panchayats or both.

It would be desirable if stress was laid now on a Constituent Assembly. So far we have had a negative programme. It would help if there was some positive side to it. On the government side there is the Round Table Conference. The Congress ignores it and will ignore its decisions. Who then will fix up our constitution for free India? It might be said that the Congress itself. But it would be better if the Congress undertook for the purpose to convene a Constitutent Assembly properly elected. The method of election of this Constituent Assembly should be laid down by the Congress and should provide for representation of minorities and specially of peasants' panchayats, etc. This method will, of course, be for the Constituent Assembly only. The permanent constitution will be determined later by this Assembly itself. This idea might be put forward by the U.P.P.C.C. Council or by individuals. It would be a positive suggestion which will do great

good. Even in case of a compromise with England our terms can be that a Constituent Assembly should decide our constitution as well as the question of any future relation or none with England.

It occasionally happens that some local Congress committee is declared 'dissolved'. How exactly this is done it is not clear as there is no provision in the Congress constitution for it. If any office-bearer or others are in a funk they can resign. They have no right or authority to dissolve the committee. Nobody can dissolve it except a superior authority. From the point of view of expediency also, it is most objectionable to do so, specially when a committee is declared illegal. That is just the time when it must not be dissolved. A declaration of illegality must not be allowed to make the slightest difference to our work, except insofar as it should make us more aggressive or defiant. The A.I.C.C. office has already circularised P.C.Cs on this subject but still some cowards and weaklings are humiliating the Congress by declaring local committees dissolved (e.g., Kashipur). It should be clearly announced that this cannot be done and any person offending must be turned out and disciplinary measures taken against him. No weakness should be tolerated in the Congress movement. Weakness, like courage, is catching. Therefore it must be ruthlessly suppressed.

The value of liquor-picketing at this stage is perhaps not so great as it was, as the government auctions have already taken place. Much depends on circumstances but on the whole it is far better to concentrate on cloth, and, above all, on the no-tax campaign.

For the last three years the last Sunday of every month has been observed as Flag Day. This continues to be observed in Bombay and elsewhere in spite of lathi charges, etc., but it seems to have been dropped in the U.P. Regular observance of this day is very desirable, specially as the government has repeatedly insulted and removed our flag.

New Year's Day 1931

Kamala arrested!—a good beginning for the New Year.[36] She will be happy now and it is quite possible that she may profit by the rest in prison—Poor Indu alone—What impressions must be produced on a growing child's mind by all these events?

Narmada Prasad discharged today on completion of his sentence of 9 months. He ought to have gone a week ago, but we have all been

36 She had delivered speeches urging people not to pay taxes.

punished for the fast (?) by our remission period being reduced by 6 or 7 days. It makes no difference to Ranjit or me but it made a week's difference at the last moment to the Sardar.

My last interview with Kamala was on the 27th Dec.—wonder when I shall meet her again. Father, mother, Nan & Betty are all near Calcutta still—no prospect of their return.

Kamala's message on being taken to prison on Jan. 1st:

> I am happy beyond measure and proud to follow in the footsteps of my husband. I hope the people will keep the flag flying.

Jan. 3rd Saturday

Kamala sentenced to 6 months S.I. on each of two counts—concurrent.

Jan. 12th Monday

Had interview today with father, mother, Nan, Betty, Indu, Chand & Tara. Father looking ill and weak. I had a shock on seeing him. He told me he was much better than he had been.

Kamala sent to Lucknow District Jail on Jan. 10th.

12-1-31[37]

My dear Father,

As suggested by you I am sending you my letter for Kamala. Kindly forward it to her. It was good to see you after nearly two months. But it was sad to find you looking no better. I do hope that you have got the trouble under full control and are marching rapidly to recovery. I feel it is a pity that you could not after all leave the shores of India for a while. I should have liked you to breathe another atmosphere and above all not to have to worry about things and persons here. To worry about anything is a waste of good energy and is profitless. Yet one cannot help it at times, when one comes into contact with persons whom I have described as having a perpetual hartal of the mind. You do not suffer fools gladly, and unhappily there are a fair number of this breed about. They are even more aggravating than knaves. Hence I can well understand your being put out and worrying occasionally. But really such people make little difference to the larger scheme of things and can well be ignored. Prison life has one sovereign virtue. It teaches one detachment to some extent and the capacity to see

37 M N Correspondence, NMML.

things in their proper perspective. And I have felt here how utterly unimportant were many things which worried me in the past. They looked big only because I was near to them.

We shall look forward to seeing you at our next interview looking much better and stronger and with more weight on. For the first time in our lives, I think, I am now more in weight than you are. You must not permit me to be so.

Love,

Your loving son,
Jawahar

After our interview I learnt from Ranjit that a young lady named Kishori has made Anand Bhawan her residence. She had done so previously also, I understand, and has now reverted to it. I do not know her, but from various reports, which appear to be worthy of credence, I feel that it is not desirable for her to stay in Anand Bhawan. May I suggest for your consideration—it is, of course, for you to decide—that she should be politely but firmly requested to depart?

A NOTE[38]

I think some notice should be taken by the Working Committee of the announcement which Macdonald will make today.[39] The text of the announcement will be received in India at about midnight. No advance report has yet been received. It is not likely to be out in tomorrow's papers, but will be heard by those who possess radio sets.

My only fear is that if the Working Committee does not give any lead in the matter some Congressmen will rush into print with their individual views and thus embarrass the Congress to a certain extent. Even if individual Congressmen say nothing the moderate element is sure to applaud the announcement and a body of Indian opinion, whatever its real value, will come into existence in support of the declaration of British policy. In the absence of a resolution or a statement

38 Clearly written on 19 January 1931. J. N. Miscellaneous Papers, NMML.

39 At the end of the Round Table Conference on 19 January 1931, Ramsay MacDonald declared that central and provincial legislatures would be given the responsibility for governing India, under a federal constitution, with certain safeguards, reservations and guarantees during the transitional period, and that discussion on the constitution would be continued, for which "if in the meantime there is response to the Viceroy's appeal from those engaged at present in civil disobedience, steps will be taken to enlist their services."

by the Working Committee that body of opinion will hold the field and the silence of the Working Committee will be construed against the Congress. I am, therefore, clear that the Working Committee must pass a suitable resolution. What that resolution is going to be will depend upon the terms of the announcement, but whatever the terms, it may safely be assumed that they will not come anywhere near the Congress demand. That they will have to be rejected admits of no doubt and the only question is how, when and by whom the rejection has to be made. If the Working Committee says 'no' at once, repression will continue, perhaps in more intensified form, and there will be no question of amnesty, general or limited. If, however, the Working Committee refers the matter to the Congress without expressing any opinion of its own the holding of the Congress session and some sort of an amnesty will become a practical certainty. At the same time a reference to the Congress without any recommendation from the Working Committee will have a great demoralising effect on the country. The question is solely one of tactics. Whatever we do we must not, in my opinion, create any hopes in the minds of the people which would tend to relax the intensity of the campaign. In fact, no relaxation is conceivable unless all the repression is stopped and ordinances withdrawn. Before doing this the government is sure to insist on calling off civil disobedience. This, in my opinion, will be suicidal. A truce till the session of the Congress can be held, involving suspension of hostilities on both sides, will in my opinion be equally dangerous. The only safe course to adopt, therefore, is for the Working Committee to express its opinion boldly and say that the announcement is entirely unsatisfactory and that it is not prepared to relax the present campaign of civil disobedience or even to refer the matter to the Congress, which would in the circumstances be a sheer waste of time. The Congress can only consider a definite offer made to it directly by the British Government and cannot act upon public statements and announcement by officials.[40]

TO FATHER[41]

My dear Father,

I was somewhat confused the other day and could not give a clear answer. There was little time, and the kind of questions that were put

40. In a speech on 17 January 1931, the Viceroy appealed to Mahatma Gandhi to stop civil disobedience.

41. Presumably written on 22 January 1931. M. N. Correspondence, NMML.

to me filled me with anxiety and clouded my brain for a while. I am therefore writing this to make my viewpoint clear as similar occasions are likely to arise again. Of course I have no business from here to interfere in the decisions outside. But I should like my point of view to be considered and I am sure you will forgive me for troubling you with it. A major reason for my doing so is that the main burden of decision must fall on you as you are the only person outside jail who counts. Indirectly I gathered from your note that there were forces in the Working Committee which were for a very weak and temporising attitude and that you were trying to stiffen them up.

I agreed largely with your note, but the procedure suggested seemed to me not good tactics. The proposed interview would have been, I think, an unfortunate error. The suggestion that a reference be made to the Congress would, if adopted, have been almost fatal. It was really this mere suggestion which troubled me greatly and made me rather incoherent in my reply. I do not know what the Working Committee has done.[42] I have just seen MacDonald's statement hurriedly. I could have almost written it out word for word for him. Anyone who was following what was happening could have done so. The statement is as vague as anything could be. It does not and cannot make the slightest difference.

I should like to say something about (1) the fundamental basis governing our struggle and (2) the 'immediate tactics'.

(1) I have always laid stress on the psychological character of our fight—on morale. We have to produce an impression of morale and strength on our own minds, on our people and, thirdly, on our enemy. If we are quite clear in our own minds what we must have and what we are going to have despite all obstacles, we are bound to produce the impression of strength on our own people and on the enemy. The day we convince the enemy that we are immovable like the Himalayas and as difficult to crush—that nothing in the world can make us bend —that we shall put up with all that they may inflict on us—that day the enemy will crumple up. A really strong-minded man makes the other party realise his strength by his very attitude. He need not shout. Indeed, to shout is usually the way of the weak. If our country is strong then of necessity the enemy gives way. Our job is to go on making the country stronger and making the enemy think that we shall

42. On 21 January, the Working Committee resolved that MacDonald's declaration of 19 January was too vague and general to justify any change in the policy of the Congress. This resolution, however, was not published.

never give in except on our terms. The country as a whole is very big. *It is difficult to consider it as an entity. But we may say that* if a sufficient number of persons are firm as a rock in the country, they will set the tone for the whole country. *Now there is no doubt* that there are thousands in the country who will not bend though they may break. Gandhiji and a thousand or so, I am sure, are quite enough to win through in this struggle—provided our own Congress brethren do not rend us. Therefore it does not matter much how many persons get tired or want to rest, or how a certain city or province cannot keep up to the mark. I am absolutely confident of the strength of *the country.* I would be confident if I was told tomorrow that the Bombay Congress had crumpled up or that the Gujarat peasantry had given in. *My confidence is based on Gandhiji, on my own strength,* on the strength of many colleagues. Nothing that may happen to the hobbled and the lame and the weak in the country will affect that confidence. But apart from this personal view, the business of the Working Committee must be to keep the objective fixed before the people as an unchangeable one. Like the law of the Medes and the Persians, it remains whatever happens. You will remember that during the Great War, one of the greatest of the English statesmen, Lord Lansdowne,[43] had to retire into oblivion, simply because he mildly suggested that there might be an honourable peace.

Now if the people think that we are not sure in our own minds about our objective—that we are haggling and bargaining and waiting for the Round Table Conference to give us something—how will their *minds be affected by this? All the fixity of purpose,* the rock like will, will go and be replaced by fluidity of mind. Nothing is more fatal in a campaign than a *fluid temperament and outlook. Our meeting* to consider the P.M.'s statement is bound to make people think that after all there was in our opinion something to be considered. Even if we condemn it, we produce this impression of fluidity. Of course any temporising with it, like a reference to the Congress, is abject surrender, even though we may clothe it in brave language. But even consideration has a dangerous side, specially when we decide to consider it even before it is made. An average man is bound to think that we are over-eager to find an excuse to compromise—even our subsequent condemnation will not clear our position completely. There will always be a suspicion left in people's minds that behind the barrage of words

43 Marquess of Lansdowne (1845-1927), Viceroy of India, 1888-93. As a Minister in Asquith's cabinet in 1916, he advocated a negotiated peace to end the war.

and condemnation there is preparation for compromise. All this, whether we condemn or not, will lead to fluidity of mind which is dangerous for us.

On the government also it will have the effect of making them believe that we are cracking up. Why else this hurry to consider a thing which is still to come? They will feel that we are rapidly approaching our limit and that we are bound to break up under further strain. So even if their morale was near breaking point they would pull together and carry on as if nothing had happened and wait for us to crack or exercise more pressure on us.

I fully appreciate what you say—that at a critical moment the Working Committee should give a lead to the country. There must undoubtedly have been a danger of various persons saying the wrong thing. But I would not attach much importance to what odd persons might say. The Liberals might be excluded entirely from our calculations As for Congressmen so-called, who misbehave, I would welcome such persons to be outside the Congress rather than inside. They are more dangerous with us than against us. I am quite sure there are very few who would do so publicly as they know the strength of public opinion. But even if there were many it would make little difference. So far as the general public is concerned, it judges by action not words. Words have a way of substituting themselves for action. If we fight on, that is a sufficient enough indication to the country as to where we stand.

Therefore I would say that it should be the function of the Working Committee never to do anything which produces doubt in the minds of anyone that we are weakening. That should be the fundamental idea governing it. And this, regardless of the position in the country—regardless of strength or weakness. Our struggle is not a military struggle which may collapse because of the loss of a battle. Our struggle is such that a complete defeat is an utter and absolute impossibility if even a handful of strong men carry on. Therefore if the Working Committee has to die through government action, its last message should be 'Don't budge an inch! carry on!'

(2) Coming to the immediate tactics The position as I understand it is that the British Government will move heaven and earth to get into touch with the Congress leaders and to try to win them over. If it cannot win all of them over, at least to break their ranks sensibly. In effect it comes to this that they will try their utmost to win Gandhiji. Let us leave out what might happen afterwards. For the moment the British Government must get into touch with the Congress leaders in jail. How can they do so? Not easily while they are

in jail. Of course non-official emissaries may go, but even this is doubtful. If they really want to get into touch with Congress leaders they are bound to release them, more or less, generally. There is no other way for them, unless of course they have decided to fight the Congress and not approach it at all. And this I do not believe, and indeed the Viceroy and others are clear on the subject. There is going to be one more—probably many more—efforts to get at the Congress. This will lead to the discharge of prisoners in all probability, unless something intervenes. If Wedgwood Benn is coming here, surely he is not coming to meet Sapru and Co.[44] And surely he would not like to come just to be greeted with black flags and to be the occasion for lathi blows and charges. He will only come when he thinks that the atmosphere is at least partly favourable. It cannot be even partly favourable unless there is a general gaol delivery. Therefore, again I come to the conclusion that some time or other the government is bound to have an amnesty. Also, Irwin would not like to go and Willingdon[45] would not like to come without an attempt being made to make conditions less abnormal.

Now if this is the attitude of the government how are we to meet it? Why not take full advantage of it? That is to say, let them take the initiative, discharge prisoners etc., without any understanding or undertaking on our part. We do not ask anything—either discharge of prisoners, or removal of ordinances or anything else. We simply carry on calmly and quietly, and leave the government to take action. Personally, I would rather that there was no amnesty for some months. But if it is to come, let it come unasked for and unbargained for, leaving us free to do what we like.

From this point of view, a meeting of the Working Committee to consider the P.M.'s announcement was tactically wrong. Having considered it you must pass judgment on it and the only judgment is one of condemnation. This means first of all that the acting Working Committee is empowered to accept or reject terms (but that is a detail) and secondly that this condemnation really makes it more difficult for the government to take any action in regard to the amnesty. From the government point of view it would have been better if the Working Committee had refused to consider the question formally

44 Wedgwood Benn had suggested that a British deputation visit India to prepare the ground for the next Round Table Conference but the proposal was later dropped.

45 Earl of Willingdon (1866 1941); Governor of Bombay, 1913 19, and of Madras, 1919 24, succeeded Irwin as Viceroy in April 1931.

If the government choose to declare the Working Committee illegal they must stand by the consequences of their declaration and not expect the consideration of this question by the Working Committee. If the Working Committee ignored the question and merely carried on, the government would be hard put to it what to do. They could hardly ask for a decision of an illegal body; and they could hardly get into touch with people in gaol. And so they would be forced to take action—which would probably be an amnesty, etc.

I think that it was unfortunate that publicity was given to the fact that the Congress Working Committee was considering the P.M.'s declaration. However that has been done and the Working Committee might have come to some decision also. I am writing at length about things that have happened. It really does not matter much now that they have happened. No great harm can follow either way. I am too much of an optimist to attach importance to minor incidents. I am writing really for the future and not so much for the past.

I should like the Working Committee to bear in mind one or two other matters. One is that the larger world situation demands that England make peace with India. I cannot develop this argument here. But I am quite sure of it. This is working entirely in our favour. Even the prospect of a war in the future with India anyway is a terrible one for England. They *must* come to terms with India and cannot risk anything else. Of course, this does not mean that they are bound to do what we tell them. Our terms may be too heavy for them and this risk may be greater than the others. All I wish to say is that this is an important factor which goes to strengthen us. So far as we are concerned, we have of course to rely on ourselves only.

The second matter is that there is grave danger of the Working Committee landing us all into the fire from the frying pan. Coquetting with compromise in any way is playing with fire—and fire which is far more dangerous for our country than any martial law of the British Government can be. The danger is one of a fratricidal conflict. The Working Committee is a changing body. You are the one solid rock in it. But you may not be able to attend to it always, and others may come to unfortunate decisions. *Such decisions, e.g., the suggestion to* refer to the Congress, are fraught with the gravest consequences. Because whatever the form of such a reference might be, however bravely it may condemn and criticise, any such reference is surrender, and the people will *know it as such.*

The P.M.'s statement is as vague and futile as anything can be. The fellow seems to think that he is talking to schoolboys, whenever

he addresses Indians! But even if the statement went very much further, even if he had said that he agreed to Indian independence—even then I would say that the Working Committee should hold its hand and say nothing and carry on. There is no more slippery customer than the British Government. They are past masters in the art of political chicanery and fraud and we are babes at the game. We can never in future listen to any declaration unless action follows. The British actually gave independence to Egypt. What of it? It is almost worse today than India. Therefore, whatever the Irwins and the MacDonalds may say we can ignore it utterly and wait for action. What action? Let them, if they are serious, go to Gandhi and Co. and discuss. Let them approach them *suo motu*, officially and without any conditions and qualifications. That at least will be some indication that they are serious. When that stage arrives we can all consult and consider together.

Before that stage arrives I feel that the acting Working Committee should do nothing but carry on the campaign. It should be the war council only giving no thought to peace. It should not bother itself about any talks with the government or about *pourparlers* with anyone else. Its sole answer should be that all these things are outside its separate competence. This is the only safe attitude to take up. Thus you will force the hands of the government.

The Working Committee today may be a good one. Your presence itself in it is enough to inspire the people with confidence and make the government feel that they can deal with you. But you may not be able to attend to it all the time. The Committee may change. And it may come to pass that it lands us into serious difficulties by agreeing to compromises and terms. Without meaning any disrespect for the present or any subsequent Working Committees I would say that for them to negotiate any compromise would be wrong tactics. Refer all negotiations to the original Committee. Let the government take action then. I would also suggest that it is somewhat derogatory for the Working Committee to consider public speeches. Only direct communications should be considered. I would suggest therefore:

(1) If an official or demi-official approach is made to the Working Committee or to any of its members the answer should be that 'We regret we are not in a position to give any definite answer. Only the original Working Committee can consider and answer questions regarding the civil disobedience campaign. We are only a war council carrying on the campaign. This we shall do till the original Working Committee tells us to desist.'

(2) Absolutely no demand should be made for the release of prisoners or about the ordinances, etc. Indeed, no demand of any kind should be made.

(3) If a private approach is made, say by Sapru and Co., exactly the same attitude should be taken up.

(4) Thus the acting Working Committee should definitely deprive itself of the authority to negotiate even, except of course in conjunction with the original Committee. This will save the acting Working Committee from shouldering the great responsibility of acceptance or rejection of any terms, and will force the government to take the initiative in approaching us. The members of the Working Committee individually might also adopt a similar attitude. I suggest this specially as it would save you a lot of troubles. I do not want you to bother overmuch about these matters in your present state of health.

Forgive this long rigmarole. I have written it in the hope that it may help in lessening your burden in the immediate future. I have no doubt that you will be approached repeatedly. I hope the people and the government will be made to realise that our fight will go on not for months but for years if necessary, and that we shall not and will not give in except on our terms. I am a bit of a diehard but I have not written this from that attitude. I have tried to consider the situation as a moderate Congressman!

Your loving son,
Jawahar

Since writing the above, I have seen MacDonald's full speech. The whole thing is sound without substance Having kept back everything important, they have magnanimously given the rest. But it is clear that they have been won over. They were already there—always willing (as Chloe the Faithful Shepherdess about whom I told you two or three times in jail). So it makes no difference!

Even after writing all this, I hesitate to send it to you. It seems presumptuous to interfere in outside decisions with very imperfect and insufficient knowledge of happenings—and specially to presume to advise on tactics! But still I think I shall send it as I shall feel the lighter for it. Please treat this for what it is worth and no more.

Jan. 26th—Independence Day

Discharged suddenly in forenoon owing father's serious condition

Other Working Committee members—original & substitutes—also discharged this day.[46]

JAIL NOTES[47]

Fifth Term October 1930

1.	Baldwin's *Liberty Under the Soviets*	
2.	Swinburne's *Collected Poems* Vol 1	
3.	Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*	
4.	„ *Merchant of Venice*	
5.	„ *As You Like it.*	
6.	Kropotkin's *Great French Revolution* 2 vols.	8/11/30
7.	Collum's *Dance of Civa*	9/11
8.	Barber's *Imprisonment*	11/11
9.	Meredith's *Poems*	
10.	Radhakrishnan's *Hindu View of Life*	14/11
11.	Thornton Wilder: *The Woman of Andros*	17/11
12.	Maeterlinck's *Life of the Bee*	21/11
13	Trotsky *My Life*	26/11
14	Le *Prof. d'anglais* pat Regis Gignoux (P.I)	
15.	Aldous Huxley: *Point Counter Point*	3/12
16.	Maeterlinck's *Life of the White Ant*	5/12
17.	Ernest Dimnett· *Art of Thinking*	7/12
18.	Shakespeare· *Taming of the Shrew* &c. 4 plays (Vol III)	
19.	L. MacManus: *White Light and Flame*	18/12
20	G B S. *Socialism & Capitalism*	25/12
21	Anatole France· *Le Revolte des Anges*	27/12
22.	Gilbert Baquani's *Rome & the Papacy*	29/12
23	Carlyle: *Heroes*	2/1/31
24	Maeterlinck· *Life of the Ant*	5/1/31
25.	A E.W. Mason—Nouvelles—in P. III (*Le Clif, Le Saphir—La loc de Finte*)	8/1
26.	Shaw's *Apple Cart*	12/1
27.	Keyserling's *Travel Diary* Vol I	14/1
28.	—Do— —Do— Vol II	24/1

[*Arthashastra* of Kautilya
Firdausi's Shahnamah]

46 They were released before expiry of their sentences to enable them to consider MacDonald's declaration of 19 January.

47 Jail Note Book No 11, pp 57.

11

THE GANDHI-IRWIN SETTLEMENT

1. Speech on His Release[1]

Friends, I must thank you all for the rare welcome. I should have been happier to have received it along with my revered father but, as you all know, he is laid up with severe illness and unable to move out, a fact, as you all might well be aware, which necessitated our release ten hours sooner than we anticipated.

I am particularly glad that today, on Independence Day, I am among you all but as we meet here today, freed from the captivity we did not seek, let us remember the year that has gone by. Let us remember and bring to our minds once more the sights that others have seen and you and I know, and all the other terrible things that have happened. Let us not in the moment of our joy and freedom forget those who have poured out their lives in this cause like water on the thirsty soil. Let us remember the martyrs of Midnapur,[2] of Sholapur and a hundred other places Let us render thanks unto our women, who have shown by their magnificent example their devotion, loyalty and capacity to serve. It is most necessary that we must remember all this today. Friends, you will join with me in passing a resolution of thanks and gratitude for those that have struggled and are in many cases no more.

Let us not forget, too, that one person who has seldom been mentioned in the newspapers, who has seldom been praised, but for whom all this terrible struggle we have been witnessing for the year could not have been continued. That person is 'the volunteer'. If any one is worthy of praise and deserves the nation's great gratitude today it is the poor unostentatious volunteer, who received lathi blows with patience and who walked so gallantly to his cell. Therefore, it is necessary to remember him above all things when we take stock of the year's struggle.

1. Allahabad, 26 January 1931. From *The Hindu*, 27 January 1931. The speech was delivered in Hindi.
2. There had been severe repression in Midnapur district. On 3 June 1930, police opened fire and killed 12 persons in Daspur village At Contai, on 7 June, the police fired on a crowd watching the preparation of salt and injured 25 persons.

2. On His Father's Illness[1]

A large number of friends all over India, anxious about my father's condition are sending me telegrams of enquiry. It is very difficult for me to cope with all these individual enquiries. Friends who do not receive a separate answer will therefore forgive me. I realise my father's health is not merely a matter of anxious concern for us who are near and dear to him, but to the whole nation. Frequent bulletins are therefore being issued for public information by eminent doctors who are devoting themselves with all loving care to my father's treatment. Their constant attention and good wishes and the prayers of the nation are bearing us up in the hour of trial and anxiety.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 30 January 1931. *The Hindu*, 31 January 1931.

3. Acknowledgement of Messages on His Father's Death[1]

To all those friends in India and distant countries who have sent messages of condolence and all those millions of my countrymen and countrywomen who have shared our sorrow in our hour of trial, I tender my grateful thanks on behalf of my grief-stricken mother, my sisters, my wife and myself. I am unable to thank them all separately. To the eminent physicians[2] who tended my father with all loving care and did all that was humanly possible to relieve him of his suffering, I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude. And to him, our beloved friend and leader, carrying the burden of a nation's suffering and longing for freedom but still ever ready to share and lighten the burdens of others, what words of mine can convey our feelings? He has been to us a solace and inspiration, and has given us strength and courage when the blow came and darkened our horizon.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 9 February 1931. *The Hindu*, 10 February 1931.
   Motilal Nehru passed away at Lucknow on 6 February 1931.
2. M A Ansari, Juraj Mehta and B C. Roy.

4. To Khan Sahib[1]

February 11, 1931

My dear Khan,[2]

Your little note introducing two friends was very welcome. During the past few months, the Frontier Province has been very much in the public eye and we have to admire greatly its magnificent spirit and sacrifice. I have often thought of you in these days and I had wished greatly that I could visit you and meet you again after so many years. But I am afraid my visit to your province must be delayed till India is free.

I have had a good talk with our friends who came with your letter and I am very glad to find that the Frontier Province is as strong as ever. We have to carry on for a long time yet and it may be that the struggle ahead of us will be fiercer than the one we had left behind. But whatever it may be, one thing is certain, that we shall not end it till we gain freedom. And it is a great solace and a comfort to know that the brave men of the north are fighting in the struggle so gallantly. Give my greetings to our workers there and my warmest congratulations.

Father's death has been a great blow for us. He died the death of a great warrior. As he had lived he died. The legacy he has left behind is one of continuous struggle till freedom is achieved, and, God willing, we shall be true to this.

I do not know how long I am likely to remain out of prison but I should like to hear from you and to have news of you and your family. Give my love to Mrs. Khan and the children.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-40(KW)(n)/1931 (Pt. II), p. 219, *NMML*
2. Khan Sahib (1882 1958); brother of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and friend of Jawaharlal during his student days in London; physician and leading Congressman of the N.W.F.P.; imprisoned several times during the freedom movement; Prime Minister, N.W.F.P., 1937-39 and 1945 47, Chief Minister, West Pakistan, 1955-57; assassinated in Pakistan on 9 May 1958.

5. To Jaffar Shah and Abdulla Shah[1]

February 11, 1931

Dear Friends,[2]

I am in receipt of your letter.[3] When I was in Naini prison I heard with pride and pleasure of the gallant part which the people of the Frontier Province had taken in the national struggle. It is difficult for news of the outside world to enter the walls of the prison but enough of it managed to reach me to give me some idea of the great sacrifice of the Frontier people for the national cause. As the days went by and I found that in spite of martial law and all manner of terrorism the Frontier people were bravely carrying on the great struggle, I marvelled at their sacrifice and their endurance. On my coming out of jail in October, I took an early opportunity of congratulating them and expressing the deep appreciation of the nation to them.[4] Again on returning from jail I find that the Frontier people continue to remain in the vanguard of our struggle, and again I take this opportunity through you to congratulate them.

In a statement I issued in October last to the men and women of the Frontier Province,[5] I assured them that so far as the Congress is concerned all of us stood shoulder to shoulder with the Frontier people and together we were fighting for the freedom of the whole of India, including, of course, the Frontier Province. Common justice demanded that the same freedom which the rest of India desired should also be given to the Frontier Province. This has been the Congress viewpoint all along even apart from the great sacrifices which the people of the Frontier Province have undergone in the course of the last year. But these sacrifices and the brave part that these people have played in the struggle for freedom have drawn the attention of the whole of India to them and to their demands and it is inconceivable that we can agree to any limitation of our joint freedom for them. I hope, therefore, that you will assure our friends and comrades of the

1. AICC File No G 40(KW)(a)/1931 (Pt. II), pp 221 225, NMML.
2. Two Afghan leaders of the Khudai Khidmatgars.
3. They had stressed the contribution of the N.W.F.P. to the freedom movement and asked for an assurance that their fundamental interests would be safeguarded in any settlement with the British Government.
4. See ante, section 9, item 2.
5. See ante, section 9, item 8

Frontier Province that we stand or fall together and that they must be equal sharers with us in the freedom that we are going to achieve for our common motherland. Please tell them that any propaganda to the contrary is the work not of the Congress but of our opponents who want to mislead them. The Congress has never stood for any unfair treatment of the Frontier Province which would keep it in a backward position in India. We have always maintained that every province and every group and community in India must share equally in our freedom.

As you rightly say, the problem of the defence of India from any external aggression is one that is common to all of us and the people of your province are as interested in it as the people of other provinces. This problem we shall have to face in consultation with our comrades from various parts of the country, including your province, as soon as the struggle for freedom ends in our victory. I have no doubt that we shall solve this problem satisfactorily. We have no quarrel with our neighbours on any of our frontiers. We seek freedom for our country and friendship with other countries, specially those that are near us. I feel that we shall have no difficulty in arriving at friendly settlements with all our neighbouring countries, which will conduce to the peaceful progress of both India and these countries and will increase the contacts between us. In the past, as you know, there were innumerable contacts between India, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Tibet and China. These countries were largely cut off by the coming of the British in India and we have been isolated from our neighbours. We shall have to resume these contacts and make them even closer than they were before. We shall have to put an end to the policy of continuous conflict which prevails in the regions of the N.W. Frontier and which is often called the "forward policy".

A free India is going to be a strong India for freedom brings strength and self-confidence. Our country will not, of course, tolerate any interference from outside. At the same time we shall wish well to all our neighbours. We shall have no desire to seek domination over others or to interfere with the liberties of others. On this basis I have no doubt that we shall find an abiding peace in the Frontier and all of us in India and in the neighbouring countries will jointly help in the peaceful progress of Asia and of humanity.

I trust you will convey my greetings to our comrades of the Frontier Province.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. To Tej Bahadur Sapru[1]

Anand Bhawan
February 12th, 1931

My dear Tejbahadurji,
Mr. Sastri and Mr. Jayakar are coming here tomorrow afternoon again for consultation. I do hope you will also be able to come and join in our informal talks. Gandhiji will also be glad if you could make it convenient to come. We have fixed 2 O'clock in the afternoon for the meeting.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. Sapru Papers, National Library, Calcutta.

7. Draft Communique of the Working Committee[1]

The Working Committee has considered the declaration made by the Premier on behalf of the British Government on the 19th January 1931, and the appeal made by him and the Viceroy to the Indian National Congress, and has conferred with Syts. Sastri, Sapru and Jayakar at whose request the Committee had suspended publication of its resolution of January 1931.

After careful consideration of everything that has happened since the date of the said Resolution, the Working Committee has formed the opinion that, far from the decisions so far arrived at by the recent conference

T.B.S. *disapproves*

1. Written on or before 16 February 1931. J. N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L. This draft was prepared by Jawaharlal but was not published as in the meantime Mahatma Gandhi had been invited by the Viceroy for talks. The marginal comments are also by Jawaharlal.

held in London promising India the immediate attainment of complete national government responsible to her people, including control of the defence forces and economic control, to which the Indian National Congress is pledged, they seem to put off the event to a distant future.

disapproves

Nevertheless, if the assurance given by Syts. Sastri, Sapru and Jayakar that the decisions of the said conference, being only provisional and tentative, are open to revision and amendment be officially confirmed, and if it is officially made clear to the public that it is open to the Indian National Congress at the meetings of the conference now to be held to consider the whole question of the future Indian constitution in the light of the decision of the Lahore Congress and the joint letter of Gandhiji, Pandit Motilal Nehru and others, dated the 15th August 1930,[2] written from the Yeravda Central Prison, and in particular:

delete de novo partly closed.

(i) to consider *de novo* the whole question of defence and foreign affairs and services;

delete middle clause

(ii) to examine with a view to their total removal the reservations as to finance and fiscal policy;

T.B.S. strongly opposed to whole of this. Not open?

(iii) to raise the question of and insist upon submitting the public debt account and British claims, concessions and the like to examination by an independent tribunal in order to settle the quantum of obligation to be borne by the new government of India;

Certain states have granted these rights but not agreeable to Brit. India demanding.

(iv) to secure the freedom and the protection of the fundamental citizen rights of the people of the Indian states and their adequate representation in any federal legislature that may be evolved,

Not open

(v) to insist, in regard to the connection between Great Britain and India, on a declaration that either party has the right to sever this connection

2. See *ante*, pp. 375 377.

and dissolve the partnership, subject to the discharge of the then existing obligations;

the Working Committee of the Congress will be prepared to enter any conference for the purpose of settling the constitution for India, provided:

1) the Congress is given adequate representation at such conference;
2) an atmosphere productive of mutual trust and suitable for calm discussion free from any coercion is produced by the British Government

Agrees but recommends leaving out Meerut people in their own interests.

a) releasing satyagrahi prisoners and under trials, including the Meerut case prisoners, and withdrawing externment orders under the Foreigners Act;

b) withdrawing the ordinances and other repressive measures;

Requires very careful drafting—agrees to part of it—not rest.

c) ordering restoration of properties confiscated or occupied, refund of fines or securities realised, and also awarding compensation for properties unlawfully destroyed by the authorities during the civil disobedience movement;

Serious difficulties—not likely to agree as a condition precedent—could be pressed in personal talk.

d) instituting an enquiry into alleged police and prison excesses by a committee acceptable to the Congress;

Viceroy's statement on last occasion—do his best but not at cost of others.

e) reinstating, on application, officers who were dismissed or who resigned in connection with civil disobedience.

In the event of the Government of India being agreeable to the foregoing proposals, the Working Committee will simultaneously suspend the civil disobedience movement, including:

If based on economic considerations.

a) suspension of the movement for non payment of taxes, it being understood that, pending full settlement, no measures for collection of taxes within the areas where the movement has already commenced will be taken;

b) the breaking *en masse* of the salt laws, e.g., raid on salt pans, mass manufacture of salt;

c) the breaking of the forest laws;

d) the breaking of any other existing specific law for civil disobedience.

Why raise question of peaceful picketing? It is allowed.

(N.B. This suspension does not preclude peaceful picketing, without obstruction to the public, of foreign cloth shops and drink and drug shops, and manufacture of salt by individuals.)

8. Note for the Working Committee[1]

1. The British Govt. to recognise the right of the Indian people to independent nationhood and to sever their connection from the British Empire.

2. Full control of the defence forces (army, navy and air), police and finances to be handed over to representatives of India as soon as possible, and in no event later than six months from the date of this agreement. The process of transfer of power and control to begin almost immediately, the British troops being gradually withdrawn.

3. Right of India to develop diplomatic and commercial relations directly with foreign powers to be recognised by the British Govt.

4. Adjustment of financial relations between Great Britain and India, including consideration of past obligations and claims, to be referred to a committee consisting of an equal number of representatives of Great Britain and India. In the event of there being disagreement between the two, the matter in dispute to be referred to an impartial third party or parties agreed upon between the two countries.

5. Gandhiji's 2nd and 3rd points.[2]

1. Written on or before 16 February 1931. J N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. This note represents Jawaharlal's minimum conditions for a settlement with the government.

2. Of 23 July 1930. See *ante*, p. 369.

6. Such political prisoners as are not let off on the plea of their having been guilty of violence should be tried by the ordinary courts in accordance with the ordinary criminal law. No such trials to take place or to continue by procedure laid down in any of the recent ordinances.

7. During the period of this truce between the parties, no political prisoner to suffer the death penalty even though he has been convicted and sentenced by a court.

8. Officers of the British Govt. in India, whether in the army, police or the civil services, who are proved to have been guilty of having used an excessive and an illegal amount of force against the people in their attempts to repress the national movement, must retire immediately from service and will not be entitled to any pension or other monetary help from the Indian revenues. In special cases of outrageous behaviour, the officer concerned to be proceeded against and punished. In particular, enquiries be conducted in Peshawar, Sholapur, Bombay, Lucknow, etc., etc.

9. Interview to the Hartford Times[1]

Whether we win today or tomorrow, India will be a liability and not an asset to England. India has made a resolve to be free. England cannot revive its trade in India. It will henceforth spend more and more and earn less and ultimately go bankrupt.

QUESTION. Is it not possible to achieve the Congress end by constitutional means?

ANSWER. There is no constitution in India and unless there is one, it is absurd to talk of constitutional means.

Q. Do you not believe that with the help of England things will be right in time?

A. We do not want 'in time', we want now. None who has usurped power has returned it by mere sweet reason.

Q. Do you not believe in England's generosity?

A. I have studied the whole of English history and have not come across a single instance of generosity in English history. And we don't want generosity.

1 Allahabad, before 16 February 1931. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16 February 1931. A newspaper in the United States.

Q. What reply will the Congress give to the British Prime Minister?
A. The Working Committee will decide it during the next two days.

10. Circular to P.C.Cs[1]

February 17, 1931

Dear Comrade,
I am writing these few lines to you to convey to you, and through you to all our friends and comrades of the Congress, my deep gratitude for the messages of sympathy and condolence which have poured upon me in our hour of grief and trial. My personal sorrow at the departure of a beloved person who was not only my father and my friend and colleague in the great cause of India's freedom, but a father and a friend to innumerable others, is softened by a nation's sympathy. Our hearts are empty without him and Anand Bhawan has lost its spirit and presiding genius. I feel lonely and weak. But when I think of his brave life and brave death, some part of his great courage comes to me and fills me with strength to face the ordeals before us. Like a happy warrior he lived, and like a warrior he died, serving to the last our common mother, India, whom he loved so well. But the gallant fight continues and the goal is yet to be reached. I pray that all of us who are left behind, and on whom the burden of the struggle falls, may be inspired by his example and may keep alight the torch of freedom till India attains independence.

There are talks of peace and compromise. Peace we shall always welcome whenever it may come with honour and freedom in her hands. No other peace can be a peace, nor can it be welcome to us. Therefore, let no one be deluded into a false sense of peace or security. We have to carry on the struggle unabated as the resolution of the Working Committee says.[2] Our brothers and sisters are being shot down and beaten with lathis and made to suffer in inhuman and barbarous ways. Let us, on our side, go ahead with our campaign and meet this inhumanity with fortitude and resolution, and ever remember the pledge we took on Independence Day last year and repeated this year on

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-1/1931, p. 187, N.M.M.L.
2. This resolution was passed on 13 February 1931 at Allahabad.

January 26th. Peace will come to this long-suffering land when independence comes with freedom from exploitation. And not till then.

Your comrade
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. Interview to the Press[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru, questioned before leaving for Delhi, about the prospects of a settlement, said with a smile that so far as he was concerned the position was clear. He added:

In fact, our programme was already laid out in Yeravda jail. It has to be seen what attitude the opposite party takes.

1. Allahabad, 18 February 1931. *The Tribune*, 22 February 1931.

12. To Kiran Sankar Roy[1]

Camp Delhi
February 23, 1931

My dear Kiran,

I have read with considerable surprise the correspondence that has appeared in the papers regarding the Independence Day incident in Calcutta.[2] When I read the Home Member's speech in the Council, attacking the Congress, I was very indignant and we considered what step

1 AICC File No G-40(KW)(a)/1931(Pt. I), p 171, NMML.

2 The Bengal Government had suggested that the Independence Day procession be called off, and the Congress leaders in Bengal had thought of negotiating abandonment of the procession in return for release of political prisoners. Nothing came of this, and the procession led by Subhas Bose was lathi-charged

we might take in the matter. But the press correspondence has disclosed that in the main the facts narrated by him were correct. We have been very pained to find that any negotiations, even of an informal character, should have taken place with the commissioner of police and that even a possibility of an abandonment of the Independence Day celebrations should have been considered. Dr. Bidhan Roy casually mentioned to me on the 26th January soon after my release from jail that Tegart[3] had suggested that the celebrations be abandoned and that he had promised to ask the A.I.C.C. authorities in Allahabad. I was even then surprised at the presumption of Tegart and at the fact that prominent Congressmen should go within a thousand miles of him. However, I was too much worried about my father's illness and I attached little importance to the incident. It appears now that matters had gone much further. I shall be glad if you will kindly let me know what the correct version is. Of course it is possible that the newspaper accounts are exaggerated. The fact that our people more or less agreed to preventive arrests, thereby leaving the crowds to shift for themselves and may be face lathi charges, is one which is difficult to believe. Kindly write to me to Allahabad where I hope to return soon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Sir Charles Tegart, the commissioner of police in Calcutta.

13. To B.C. Roy[1]

Camp Delhi
February 23, 1931

My dear Bidhan,
Gandhiji and most of us have been amazed to read the correspondence in the papers regarding the Independence Day incident. I must confess that even your statement is one which was painful reading. Why should we have such dealings with the police and specially with a man like Tegart? I can only hope that the full version that has appeared

1. AICC. File No. G-40(KW)(ii)/1931(Pt. I), p 169, NMML.

in the press is not correct. I have written to Kiran Sankar about it and I enclose a copy of my letter.

I do not yet know when I shall go back to Allahabad, may be in 2 or 3 days' time.

I have not received your reply yet about the Swaraj Bhawan Trust Deed.[2] Perhaps it is lying in Allahabad.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 Motilal Nehru had decided to offer his former house, renamed "Swaraj Bhawan", to the nation. See also post, section 15, item 23.

14. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit[1]

Delhi
28-2-31

Nan darling,

The long conversations are at last drawing to a close and we have to prepare again for jail or worse! This is all to the good. Only I should like a few days in Allahabad to set our house in order. I hope to return soon—perhaps on Monday.

I am trying to dispose of the Delage here. Please ask Ranjit to see that the car is in order.

More when we meet.

Love to the children.

Your loving
Jawahar

1 Vijayalakshmi Pandit Papers, NMML.

15. Note for the Working Committee[1]

The Working Committee has read and carefully considered the notes received by Mahatma Gandhi from H.E. the Viceroy regarding the peace negotiations, and is of opinion that the majority of the terms offered fall far short of the requirements of the situation.

In particular the *non possumus* attitude of the Government of India regarding picketing of foreign cloth and intoxicating drink and drugs, additional police,[2] demand for an enquiry into the alleged police excesses in well-defined cases, and for relief for the poorest in the matter of manufacture and sale of salt by them in their neighbourhood, presents insurmountable barriers in the way of the Congress suspending civil disobedience, and undertaking (in spite of grave doubts) to participate in the work of the proposed conference.

The Working Committee feels that the government attitude regarding the additional police ignores the realities. It is contended on behalf of the Congress that additional police, better and popularly known as punitive police, has been imposed to terrorise the people concerned and frighten them into submission. To compel payment of the expenses of the quartering and withdrawing of punitive police is a novel method of offering peace terms to the party that claims to have been seriously injured. The Committee challenges enquiry into the cases where punitive police has been imposed. The Committee is of opinion that such police, wherever imposed, must be immediately withdrawn and that *all* collections in that connection be stopped.

On a par with the Government of India's attitude on the question of removing the punitive police is its attitude on the demand for an acceptable enquiry into the cases of well defined excesses. What is offered is a kind of departmental enquiry in which the public have no faith. What is wanted is an open, judicial and impartial inquiry. If the police have done no wrong they should for the sake of their own honour warmly welcome such an enquiry. (It is impossible for the Congress, while Congressmen labour under the charge of committing offences and covering them by falsehoods, to approach with any degree of

1. Written some time between 28 February and 3 March 1931. A.I.C.C. File No. G 6(KW)(i)/1931(Pt. III), pp 319 323, N.M.M.L.
2. To deal with the civil disobedience movement in 1930 the government had imposed additional police in certain areas and forced the inhabitants to bear the expenditure.

confidence and dignity the very responsible work of assisting at constitution-making.) The Working Committee holds that such an enquiry should be a preliminary condition of its participation in the conference proceedings.

As to picketing of foreign cloth and drink and drug shops, the Government of India seek to enunciate a doctrine, hitherto unknown, which would deprive the citizen of the common law right of picketing which he has hitherto enjoyed without let or hindrance. The note in question refers to foreign goods. The Congress has never sought to boycott all foreign goods. (If the mention of foreign goods, instead of foreign cloth is intentional, it can only be an attempt—scarcely honourable—to win the approbation of foreign powers for the policy of frightfulness which evidently the Government of India wish to pursue with greater vigour than heretofore.) But the Working Committee holds that the boycott of foreign cloth and intoxicating drink and drugs is the inalienable right of the nation. The boycott of foreign cloth is desired for the purpose of assisting the famishing millions to supplement their scanty resources by taking to the spinning-wheel and manufacturing khaddar in their cottages and with it replacing foreign cloth. The boycott of drink and drugs is intended to rebuild homes shattered through the drink and drug habits and to prevent the ruin of millions of other homes which may be going along the downward path. The Working Committee admits that both the boycotts have been used during the civil disobedience campaign as political weapons through picketing. But it was the Committee's intention, as would be clear from the note sent[3] by Mahatma Gandhi to the Viceroy with the Committee's approval, to confine picketing, on a truce being declared, predominantly to social and moral ends. It is common cause between the Government of India and the Working Committee that picketing should be free from all taint of violence. While the Working Committee recognises that stray cases of deviations from nonviolence have occurred, the Committee combats the sweeping charges of violence made in the note and is prepared to stand an enquiry.

As to salt, the note betrays callous disregard for the starving millions and ignorance of the true situation. Thousands of poor people are pledged to eat only tax-free salt or salt manufactured by themselves. Hundreds have during the past eight months bled for vindicating the right. The leaders are involved in the pledge taken by the people. Humiliation of the people and their leaders and invitation to them to break their pledge is hardly the way to approach peace. The

3 On 28 February 1931.

Working Committee cannot help pointing out that no popular government can possibly exist without sometimes having deliberately to connive at breaches of its laws. The Government of India are at the present moment conniving at the open breach of the Sarda Act.[4] But the Working Committee would be glad to have the Government of India countenancing or introducing an amendment of the Salt Act exempting from its operation manufacture and sale of salt in their neighbourhood by the poor people.

In view of the foregoing four insurmountable barriers the Working Committee considers it profitless to point out the niggardly spirit pervading the other terms. The terms take no note of the frightful sufferings to which, according to outside, unimpeachable, even English testimony, men, women and children have been subjected and the material losses sustained by the people for daring to love freedom and offer civil disobedience, which they have held to be their sacred duty, rather than take to methods of violence. The sum total of the terms is to the Working Committee an unmistakable indication that, however pleasing the words of British statesmen may be to the ear, India is not to expect through the conference the freedom she has bled for during the past 12 months.

4 The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929, which laid down 18 years as the minimum age for marriage for boys and 14 years for girls. Provincial governments had however been confidentially directed to ignore violations of this law.

16. A Note on the Provisional Settlement[1]

In consequence of the provisional settlement[2] between the Working Committee and the Government of India a period of truce has been

1. Clearly written on 4 March 1931 A I C C. File No. G-6(KW)(i)/1931, pp 331 332, N M M L.
2 Its main terms were: civil disobedience would be discontinued, the Congress would participate in the constitutional discussions with certain conditions, boycott of British goods as a political weapon would be discontinued but peaceful picketing to promote the sale of Indian goods was permitted, there would be no enquiry into allegations against the police; the government would withdraw the ordinances issued in connection with the civil disobedience, release non-violent civil disobedience prisoners, remit unrealized fines and withdraw prosecutions against those not guilty of violence; persons living near the sea would be permitted to make salt for their consumption but not for sale outside their villages

proclaimed. It is with deep regret that, on the morrow of this agreement, I have to strike a note of discord. I recognise that in many respects the terms of settlement are honourable and give evidence of the strength that the nation has gained by the sacrifice and suffering of the past year. I recognise also that the settlement is provisional leaving all the vital questions open, and the final settlement is yet to come. But I feel that there is a certain commitment in it regarding the scope of discussion and a certain limitation of our ideal as laid down at Lahore. Safeguards and reservations are referred to and, although these are said to be in the interests of India, they may be, and I fear will be, interpreted to mean a limitation of our freedom in regard to defence, external affairs, finances and the public debt.[3] The Congress and the Working Committee are pledged to the full control by the people of India of the defence services, the financial and economic policy, and the....[4] Many of my colleagues of the Working Committee are of opinion that the reference to safeguards and reservations does not limit their freedom in any way to work for the independence of India. I hope they are right and will prove their contention by their achievements in the coming conference. But as I cannot get over my doubts in regard to this phraseology, I am unable to accept or reconcile myself to any reference to safeguards and reservations. I do not desire, however, that any impediment should be placed in the way of those who interpret the words differently from me and who propose to extract independence out of them. Truce having been proclaimed by the Working Committee, I trust all of us will honour it and carry out the directions of the Working Committee in regard to it.

3. Clause 2 of the settlement stated that as regards constitutional questions, future discussion would pertain to the scheme of constitutional government discussed at the first Round Table Conference: of this, federation and Indian responsibility were essential parts, as also "reservations or safeguards in the interests of India" on such matters as defence, external affairs, minorities, the financial credit of India and the discharge of obligations.

4. Some words missing.

12

AFTER THE SETTLEMENT

1. Interview to the Press[1]

As a member of the Working Committee, I stand by the decision of the Committee. This has also been made clear in the resolution issued by the Committee at Delhi.[2]

Mahatma Gandhi has stated clearly the position of the Working Committee as regards clause 2 of the statement issued by the government embodying the provisional settlement.[3] The Working Committee has also issued a statement[4] with regard to this. I have nothing to add to these declarations except to repeat that if we continue the negotiations, we do so on the basis of the decision of the Lahore Congress, and in particular with the object of securing full control by India of the defence services and economic and financial policy, of getting admitted and acknowledged our right to sever our connection with Britain at our will and have our public debts and obligations examined by an impartial tribunal.

Under the agreement, boycott of foreign cloth and of liquor shops continues, and we are entitled to picket foreign cloth and liquor shops. Special care will be taken by us to ensure the perfectly peaceful character of this picketing. We shall try to approach the buyer more than the seller and thus cut at the root of the foreign cloth and liquor trade. Even so far, we have insisted on our picketing being peaceful and, apart from occasional lapses, it has been peaceful. But it has been of an aggressive character; in future it is going to be unaggressive.

So far as the no-tax movement among the tenants is concerned, we have undertaken to stop it as a part of the civil disobedience movement. That is to say, we shall not ask the tenantry to refrain from paying their taxes on purely political grounds. If they can pay, they should do so. But we know that owing to the terrible economic distress it is not possible for them to pay. We hope that now that a provisional agreement has been arrived at with the government, the latter will

1. Allahabad, 8 March 1931. From *The Hindu*, 9 March 1931.
2. On 5 March 1931, the Working Committee endorsed the provisional settlement and directed Congress committees to abide by its terms.
3. In a statement to the press on 5 March 1931, Mahatma Gandhi said: "It is open under that clause to either party to walk along its own lines ."
4. On 6 March 1931.

see to it that ejectments made during the campaign are set aside and immediate attention is paid to the economic position of the tenantry. There should be remission of a large part of the revenue and rent. The Congress, I hope, will interest itself in the agrarian situation and help the peasantry to get their wrongs redressed.

2. Telegram to Roger Baldwin[1]

No final settlement yet. Truce terms only to enable negotiation. Our objective remains independence on basis which we negotiate. All civil disobedience prisoners discharged. Hope others follow soon.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. 8 March 1931. AICC. File No. F.D. 16/1931, p. 41, NMML.

3. To Mulkraj Bhalla[1]

Allahabad
March 8, 1931

Dear Mr Bhalla,[2]
I am writing to you about Pandit Radha Krishna Tiwari. On my return to Allahabad yesterday I was very much surprised to learn that his services have been dispensed with by your Cawnpore branch apparently because he had been to jail for six months as a Congress worker. It is no business of mine to interfere with the management of your affairs but an issue of some national importance has been raised by this action of your Cawnpore branch and I cannot refrain from drawing your attention to it.

1. J. N. Correspondence, NMML.
2. Managing Director, Punjab National Bank, Lucknow.

Perhaps you know that we have been taking pledges from various Indian mills and other organisations to the effect that they must deal with Indian banks. We propose to carry on this campaign further and ultimately to break the power of the foreign banks in India. It would be a poor result of our endeavours in this behalf if national banks started behaving as badly as the foreign banks. The Punjab National Bank has a reputation of being a nationalist organisation and as such it has been patronised by the Congress and recommended by us to others. It cannot keep this reputation if it acts vindictively against those of its employees who have sympathy for the national movement and who have suffered for it. I know of many industries who have made a point of taking back their employees who have gone to jail.

I have known Pandit Radha Krishna Tiwari for many years but I would not have troubled you in this matter unless it did not raise important issues. I understand that he has been in your bank service since the opening of your branch in Allahabad in 1925. Later he was transferred to Cawnpore and it was in Cawnpore that he was convicted and sent to jail.

I trust you will understand my object in writing this letter. In a very few days' time it is my intention to issue an appeal in favour of Indian banks as opposed to foreign banks. Mr. Tiwari's case has surprised me exceedingly and made me wonder if there is really much difference between the two.

I shall be obliged if you will kindly let me have a reply at an early date.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Truce but not Peace[1]

It is truce and not peace. Peace is an idle dream until and unless Swaraj is achieved. The Congress and the government have mutually agreed to give up aggressive activities on either side and discuss and settle the constitutional issues at the next Round Table Conference.

1. Speech at Lucknow, 9 March 1931. From *The Leader*, 11 March 1931.

If the constitutional questions are decided favourably, peace will be a reality; otherwise the struggle will begin afresh. Personally I do not cherish high hopes of a successful settlement. Swaraj implies control of Indian affairs by Indians and not substitution of a handful of British officers by Indian. Swaraj will be a farce if Indians have no control either over the army or the purse.

I admit that the truce terms are not all to my liking, but as a soldier my business is to obey and not to question the Congress decisions. I strongly feel that amnesty should have been extended to the prisoners jailed in connection with the conspiracy cases. Picketing of liquor shops, boycott of foreign cloth and preaching of *swadeshi* must be carried on, if anything more vigorously than before. The Congress has now suspended the no-tax campaign, but in places where the tenants are unable to pay rent owing to economic distress, as is really the case in parts of the United Provinces, the Congress does not expect them to pay.

There is an apprehension in certain quarters that the present truce will result in the Congress movement losing its momentum. I have no such fear and my advice to the released prisoners is that they should go back to their villages, work hard and work incessantly. The period of truce must not be wasted in idleness but utilized in gathering more strength.

5. To Secretaries, P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
March 10, 1931

Dear Comrade,

Our office has already informed you of the action to be taken in regard to the truce between the Congress and the Government of India.[2] I trust that you will carefully read the terms of this provisional settlement and will act up to it. The word of our great organisation has been given to our opponents and we are in honour bound to keep it.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P.I/1931, p. 173, N.M.M.L.
2. On 5 March 1931, provincial Congress committees had been asked to discontinue civil disobedience.

The matter will no doubt be considered at the Karachi Congress and the general policy which would govern our future work will be laid down there. Those of us who may have any criticism to make in regard to this truce would have full liberty to express themselves there. You will agree with me that in any event it is highly undesirable that a debate on the merits of what was done in Delhi should take place outside Congress circles.

A certain amount of misapprehension has arisen regarding the interpretation of clause 2 of the agreement. This clause is unfortunately worded and can be interpreted in a variety of ways. But so far as the Working Committee is concerned they have given their interpretation in a statement issued to the public and Mahatma Gandhi has also interpreted it on the same lines. According to this interpretation we stand by the resolution of the Lahore Congress and by our subsequent pledges. There can be no change in these.

It is vitally necessary that you should take immediate steps to consolidate the position gained by the Congress during the last year and to strengthen it still further. The immediate action to be taken is to send out our workers, those who have been discharged from jails and others, to the villages to explain exactly what has been done in Delhi, further to see that there is no harassment or oppression of any kind in the rural areas. If such cases of harassment occur either on the part of police officials or the agents of landlords, our workers should immediately come to the help of the persons harassed and by negotiation try to get their difficulties removed. In case they find difficulty in doing so they should refer the matter to you. It might be desirable for you to appoint a sub-committee to look into this matter specially.

You will notice that our picketing programme continues, but stress should always be laid on its peaceful character.

If we now establish firmly definite centres of work and activity in rural areas we shall strengthen our organisation and prepare the people for any contingency that might arise. I need not tell you that the provisional settlement at Delhi means a truce only and no final peace. That peace can only come when we have gained our objective in its entirety.

Kindly keep this office informed in regard to the non-release of prisoners who you think should be released and also in regard to any aggression in your province on the part of the police or the agents of the landlords.

Delegates' certificates will be issued to you from Karachi but it may be that these do not reach you in time. Please, therefore, have your

own certificates printed. In these certificates it should be clearly stated whether the delegate has been elected in the normal way or by the new ex prisoners' constituency.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. The Significance of the Settlement[1]

It was known at about 2 a m. on March 4 that a settlement had been effected and all present there[2] were inwardly struck with a peculiar shock and sensation, not on account of any sort of grief or jubilation, but at the thought that the fight which they had been carrying on for a year to attain complete independence was to be stopped.

Over the temporary suspension of the fight, therefore, our hearts palpitated at the moment and our eyes were wet. But on a thoughtful consideration of the truce it was realised that there was no occasion for depression, for it had been repeatedly declared in clear terms that the compromise was effected only to provide an opportunity for friendly talks for a settlement, and there could be no question of a settlement until the country attained its goal of independence.

There are two parts of the agreement, one of which is a sort of preamble while the other contains the conditions of the truce, namely, what action the government should take and what action the Congress should take under the truce. You must have realised that it was not proper that the fight should have continued along with the talk for a compromise. If it was decided to enter into a talk for peace, it was necessary that hostilities on either side should cease.

As for the manufacture of salt, the condition set by Mahatma Gandhi has been accepted completely and everybody has the right to manufacture salt in his village and also sell it in his village and neighbouring places. It was not necessary to consider the question of the sale of salt manufactured everywhere as our fight about the right of people to manufacture salt was not initiated by any thought of commercial enterprise.

1. Speech at Allahabad, 10 March 1931. From *The Leader*, 12 March 1931.
2. At the Working Committee meeting in Delhi.

Regarding the campaign against the payment of rents and other dues, the Congress has agreed that the campaign will be withdrawn as part of the civil disobedience movement but it was made clear during the negotiations that owing to serious economic conditions it would not be possible for us to ask the tenants and zamindars to pay their dues. There were many things like this which were made quite clear during the negotiations but have not been embodied in the official document. You should remember that it is a government document.

Though some of the conditions are not to my liking also, they are, on the whole, honourable conditions and have proved our strength.

Many persons have complained to me about clause 2. I am not surprised at hearing these complaints for I also realise that the language of that clause can lead to many interpretations, and possibly the enemies of the country might interpret it against our interests.

There can be talk of a settlement only on the basis of the independence resolution of the Lahore Congress, as pointed out by Mahatma Gandhi and the Working Committee, about which you took pledges on the 26th January, last year and this year. The Working Committee has no power to act in contravention of the Congress resolution.

When I talk of complete independence or Purna Swaraj I mean independence not in name only. The country should have complete power to govern. It should have, for instance, complete control over its army. Egypt nominally enjoys independence but its people do not exercise effective control on the administration.

I have no objection against a connection with Britain but I am against Dominion Status because it implies that the system of British administration should be embodied in the constitution and the same economic structure adopted. That is to say, by having Dominion Status you bind your country to the same economic wheel which is run by the British people.

If the Congress has decided to participate in the next Round Table Conference it will do so only on the condition that the country will have complete independence and control over its army and finance. If these are not achieved the fight will be resumed with renewed vigour, and I for one doubt whether these will be achieved as a result of the conference.

We made every effort for the release of such prisoners as Bhagat Singh and we have every hope that our effort will be successful. If we had been obstinate in asking for the immediate release of Bhagat Singh he would perhaps have been hanged by now. If he is alive still, it is because of Mahatma Gandhi's effort, and if he and other prisoners

guilty of violence are eventually released it would be due to Mahatma Gandhi's effort.

I cannot say even now if the Congress will participate in the Round Table Conference, though for the present it has indicated its willingness. But if the Congress does join the conference, the intervening period will be very important and I hope that during this period you will strengthen your unity in order to be ready to resume the struggle with greater vigour if occasion arises for its resumption. I would appeal to women, particularly, to take up the work of organisation and to make every village a fort for India.

7. To Krishnanand[1]

March 10, 1931

Dear Krishnanandji,[2]

Rafi Ahmad Kidwai was telling me about the good work that Barabanki has done. Your district was somewhat backward in the past and I was very glad to learn that it came up to the mark during times of crisis. I hope you will continue to keep it at the right level. As you no doubt realise we have to keep on the alert and at any time we may have to revert to our struggle.

Rafi said to me that you wanted some help for khadi work as well as for political organisational work. In regard to the former, I understand that the Lucknow Charkha Pracharak Sangh or whatever it is called will probably help you. In regard to the help required for political activities, I have recommended to Babu Purushottamdas Tandon to send you Rs. 200. He has agreed to do so.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(KW)(ii)/1931 (Pt. I), p. 147, N.M.M.L.
2. An advocate and Congressman of Barabanki.

not the chance to be in the thick of the fight. I would then think that whenever I got a chance I would go to Bombay and see if a feeble man like myself could do what the women of Bombay did.[2] I am sorry that I am making a speech when I should be fighting the enemy. During the last year or so we have found out better ways of achieving our object than making speeches.

Our general has ordered us to stop the fight. Remember, he has merely asked us to stop our aggressive activities. It is not peace. Remember that this fight cannot be called off by anybody unless we achieve final victory.

I am sorry to see that we again seem to be engaged in a wordy warfare. Different interpretations are being put on the terms of the agreement. I am sorry that those terms are capable of different interpretations. There was a time when I was a lawyer, but I have now given up that parasitical profession and since then I dislike words with double meanings. However, I am constrained to say that before the ink of the agreement has dried, different meanings are being put on it. But I have given my consent to that agreement with a particular meaning. Our general has made it clear. It is the only meaning by which we will stand. If a settlement is arrived at in the light of that meaning, only then can it be acceptable to us.

I wish to make it clear that there should be absolutely no doubt as to what we desire, what our ambitions are and which way we have to adopt.

The Lahore independence resolution and the pledge that you took on January 26, 1930, and reiterated on January 26 this year, are a solemn resolve you made. Remember it, and if you have forgotten then go home and ponder over it. Remember that you cannot go back on that solemn resolve. It is that resolve by which India has to stand. No one can change that ideal. The Congress which fought the mighty government cannot change. Even Gandhiji with all his greatness has no right to change it. The final right to do so rests with the Indian nation.

On March 4, when I was informed by Gandhiji at 2 a.m. in the night that a provisional settlement had been arrived at, I confess that for some time I was embarrassed. I did not feel quite at ease when I realised that we would have to give up the fighting programme which had become our daily occupation. I could not decide for some time whether the noble sacrifices that the country had made were properly compensated.

2 The Rashtriya Stree Sabha and the Desh Sevika Sangh of Bombay had actively participated in the civil disobedience during 1930.

To the Congress there is only one interpretation of the truce. It must be considered in the light of the Lahore decision and the independence pledge reiterated by the nation twice during the last 15 months As satyagrahis we must stick to that pledge There can be no turning back. If, however, there is any Congressman who cannot go further because of his personal weakness, he has no right to retard the progress of the nation. He cannot thrust his weakness on the nation.

We fought the mightiest empire in the world. We were unarmed but our general had given us a weapon which, though nonviolent, brought our enemies to their knees. Personally I am not ashamed to confess that I would not mind using other weapons thousands of times. What I am ashamed of is not the use of weapons. I am ashamed of the bondage of my country. But before we use any weapon we have to think over its practicability. We have to see what the nation can do and what it cannot. Considering all that, we adopted the nonviolent method and the whole world has admitted that by that method we have achieved great things. This experience has convinced us all the more of the efficacy of that unique weapon.

But though we have decided to follow this method there are others who have adopted another method. They are our brave comrades. Most of them are in jail. I feel grieved and ashamed to see that they are rotting in jails while I am free. We could not free all our comrades. Do not think that it was due to lack of sympathy for them on our part. It was only due to our weakness. We had not enough strength to free them. But the moment we gather strength, we shall not fail to do our duty by them.

One of my brave brothers was recently shot dead. His name was Chandrashekhar Azad.[3] Ten years ago he was a boy of 15 reading in a school in Benares. He gave up his studies, joined the noncooperation movement and went to jail. There he was flogged for shouting "Mahatma Gandhi ki *jai*" but it did not deter him. For every lash that fell on his tender body he repeated the same cry. He did so till he fainted. Who can fail to appreciate the marvellous courage of that boy! He had adopted means other than ours. But he was not afraid of its result and ultimately he paid the highest penalty for it. Do not think even for a moment that we who do not agree with these comrades are superior to them.

3 (1906-1931); well known revolutionary involved in the Kakori Conspiracy Case, 1925, the shooting of a police officer at Lahore in 1928, and the bomb explosion in the Central Assembly, 1929, died on 27 February 1931 in an encounter with the police at Allahabad.

I must again emphasize the need for a clear understanding of the terms of the Delhi truce and the spirit in which the Congress agreed to it. I have been shocked to read some of the meanings put on those terms by some people and the press. There is a likelihood of the old controversy regarding Dominion Status and complete independence being revived. I am opposed to Dominion Status. I have no grudge against the British people or their country. But I do dislike and resent their attitude, their ways and their imperialist policy, and I am out to destroy and to put an end to the system.

Under Dominion Status, the army and the finances of the country are likely to remain in the hands of the foreigners and this would only mean a veiled form of slavery. Take the example of Australia. Though it is a 'white' dominion, it has been brought to the verge of bankruptcy by the Bank of England.[4] When this treatment is accorded to a 'white' dominion it is not difficult to imagine India's fate if it becomes a dominion. Egypt enjoys 'independence' theoretically, but actually it is still under Britain's heel because its army and police are in the hands of Britain. Dominion Status would mean that the present economic and social structure would remain intact, and I personally am not prepared to tolerate this.

I want that Indians must have full control over the army and every soldier of the British army must be immediately removed. The entire administration of the country must also be in Indian hands. Secondly, there should be no foreign interference in the finances of the country. The present economic structure must be changed and I would not personally mind even if the capitalists of Bombay were ruined in the reorganization. I do not want freedom for a handful of men. It must be for the masses. Because it cannot be had under Dominion Status I am opposed to it and want complete independence. Side by side with political independence I want one thing more and it is a socialistic order. There should not be so much disparity between the rich and the poor as there is at present.

With the heavy burden of debts Swaraj would not be worth having. You know how these debts have been piled on our head. Wars were declared on our neighbours without our consent. The brave Afghan race was harassed The Burmese were persecuted. And we are asked to pay those debts and the interest on them. Is this not the height of stupidity? It is impossible that we should agree to pay all those debts. Justice demands that it is Britain who should pay something every year to India as a meagre compensation for the injustices heaped on us.

4 Following the Exchange Mobilisation Agreement of 1930, the value of the Australian pound had fallen appreciably in relation to the pound sterling

If you want figures I can only refer to the sum of 150 crores which is said to have been given as a free gift to Britain during the Great War.[5] India cannot afford to forgo such sums. It must be written up against Britain and every pie of it must be recovered. Those who attended the Round Table Conference have mortgaged India to Britain and are now saying that they have brought freedom for this country. The country cannot agree to pay the debts. But we do not want to decide this ourselves. It can be examined by an independent tribunal.

The Congress Working Committee accepted the truce as it did not want to be accused of intransigence, especially when it was the opponent who offered peace terms. Soon the Karachi Congress will meet to decide momentous questions. I would ask you to shed the hair-splitting mentality and have a clear idea of our demand, which is Purna Swaraj, and resolve to work incessantly for its achievement.

The negotiations that Gandhiji carried on with Lord Irwin at Delhi were a contrast to the visit of the Round Table Conference delegation to London. When Gandhiji went to the Viceregal Lodge, Lord Irwin could see behind him millions of Indians. I want you to lend the same support to the Congress.

Lastly, I wish to remind you of one thing. This is not final peace. The war is not yet over. The contending parties have merely agreed to suspend their aggressive activities. But you must keep yourself ready to resume the fight whenever there is occasion for it. Besides carrying on the constructive programme of the Congress like the boycott of foreign cloth, etc., you must keep up the 'war mentality' in the country, so that if there is to be another fight we must be able to carry it on more vigorously and achieve our final goal. If you do that I assure you Swaraj is yours.

5. During the First World War the government gave Britain a "gift" of about £150 million raised through rupee loans.

10. Speech at Ghatkopar[1]

There is a great stir throughout India about the Delhi agreement. But people should stick to the programme of the Congress. Many interpretations have been put on the wording of the settlement. I agree

1. 16 March 1931. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 18 March 1931.

to its implications in the way they were explained to me. You should follow the meaning understood by us. If the government thinks that our interpretation is wrong, they may end the truce.

You should continue the boycott of foreign cloth and liquor shops. The time is sure to come when we will have to fight again. We will have to force the government to give us all the powers. The fight is not between the Indians and the English. It is between imperialism and socialism. We are not prepared to have any connection with imperialism.

So long as we do not achieve Purna Swaraj, we will not sit silent. I cannot say when we will achieve victory. It might come in eight to ten months or it might take two, three or more years.

People living in the cities might do some brave deeds but in the end they are likely to tire. Peasants are superior to city dwellers in that they are the bravest fighters and they will fight unstintingly to the very end. The peasants of Gujarat are better off than those of my province who are very poor.

The people want Swaraj, but it is not an article or thing which we can snatch. To the peasants, Swaraj is food and drink. I believe in socialism through which wealth may be properly distributed.

11. Tribute to Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Many a time during the last twelve months we have shouted *"Inqilab Zindabad"*. We have also done a little to bring about that revolution. But the man who preached that revolution, who is the father and apostle of that revolution, is among us this evening.

You remember what a tremendous revolution it was that we witnessed in this country in 1921. Who was the originator of that revolution? Every one of us did something for it. We might have sometimes gone the wrong way, but the leader of this revolt has always tried to and has succeeded in bringing us together and keeping us on the right path.

By sheer force of his personality and intense patriotism he has always commanded our obedience. We are like children to him. What we

1. Speech at Bombay, 17 March 1931. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 18 March 1931.

Jawaharlal presided over this meeting which was later addressed by Mahatma Gandhi.

have to do is to carry on this struggle for completing that revolution and making the complete freedom of this country a reality.

12. Speech at Volunteers Rally[1]

From the time the Seva Dal was started I have been closely associated with it. At that time I hoped that when the big battle of India's freedom began the Seva Dal would take a great part in it and render full service to the nation.

I do not know exactly how much national work they have done in this campaign as I have just come out of jail and have not had the time to learn all about it. But I know some of the great work they have done in the past and I am very glad that since the beginning of the Dal six years ago, it has achieved very good results.

The volunteers should know that this is only the beginning of the fight and, whether there has been a truce or no truce, they should always be ready to render full service and the Seva Dal should be so ready that they will be able to go ahead at any time. One way to fight is through satyagraha and the other is by quiet constructive preparation.

Originally volunteers were recruited at the time of each session of the All India Congress and they would cease functioning as such soon after the session was over. The Seva Dal is a fully disciplined army of volunteers and will have to work at any time and, therefore, they should be soldiers in every respect. If there is any defect in them then they are not fit to be volunteers.

At present I have not much time but I may come again when I will have the occasion of seeing more. All should remember the object with which the Seva Dal was started and that the prestige and honour of the Dal rest in their hands.

1. Bombay, 18 March 1931. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 19 March 1931.

13. To Secretary, Agra District Congress Committee[1]

Camp Delhi
March 22, 1931

Dear Sir,

The attention of Mahatma Gandhi has been drawn by the Government

1 A.I.C.C. File No G-40(KW)(ii)/1931, p 277, N.M.M.L.

of India to the following report from the commissioner of the Agra Division to the U.P. Government:

> On the 8th of March a purchaser from a foreign cloth shop in Agra city was attacked by Congress volunteers who wanted to haul him before the Boycott Committee and tried to seize the cloth which he had purchased. He escaped after a fight and made a report at the *thana*. Three of the accused are now being prosecuted under Sec. 342.

I shall be glad to know what truth there is in this report. You must be aware that our picketing must in any event be peaceful and no force of any kind can be used. After the agreement regarding a truce, the peaceful character of picketing has been emphasised still more. If it is not possible to carry on peaceful picketing in a particular area picketing should even be suspended. I should not like to form any opinion in regard to what happened at Agra on the 8th of March merely from the report of the commissioner but I do trust that you will not give any occasion to the opposite party to think that we have in any way broken the terms of the truce. Please send me your reply to Karachi.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. On the Execution of Bhagat Singh[1]

I have remained absolutely silent during their last days lest a word of mine may injure the prospect of commutation. I have remained silent though I felt like bursting, and now all is over. Not all of us could save him who was so dear to us and whose magnificent courage and sacrifice have been an inspiration to the youth of India. India today cannot even save her dearly loved children from the gallows.

There will be hartals and mourning processions everywhere. There will be sorrow in the land at our utter helplessness but there will also be pride in him who is no more, and when England speaks to us and talks of a settlement there will be the corpse of Bhagat Singh between us, lest we forget.

1 New Delhi, 24 March 1931. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 25 March 1931. On 23 March 1931, Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukhdev were executed at Lahore for involvement in the Lahore Conspiracy Case.

13

THE KARACHI CONGRESS

1. Speech at All India Students Convention[1]

Friends,

I am greatly perturbed by the recent happenings in the country. The execution of Bhagat Singh and his comrades is a reminder of our inability to protect brave and patriotic young men. I have also heard in the afternoon of the tragic happenings at Cawnpore, culminating in a large number of deaths.[2] It is reported that one of my very dear friends, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, president of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, has been killed in the course of the rioting. Like the true brave Congressman that he was, he must have rushed to the point of danger and tried to pacify the people who were killing each other. If he has met his death in this manner, it is as a true Indian should meet it.

The tragedy of Cawnpore is an object lesson that violence, though we may use it with the best of motives, is apt to recoil on us and lead to internecine conflict. The only people who profit by it are our opponents. Today, we cannot settle any vital problem in the country, much less the communal problem, by violence; nor can we settle it by temporary pacts or arrangements. Only by attacking the root of the disease can we eradicate it. Young men must envisage a new order of things and remove the evils which make progress impossible. Young men must remember that 'freedom' and 'independence' are mere words till a new order is fashioned which ends inequalities, exploitation and religious bigotry.

There is a great deal of discussion about the truce today, but I should like the youth to remember that no living country can accept a settlement which is anything less than complete independence. Any settlement, which barters away any part of freedom, must necessarily fail, and the struggle will have to be continued.

Therefore you should be quite clear about the ideal of complete freedom and social equality. The time for shouting slogans has passed, and you must act, for action alone counts.

1. Karachi, 27 March 1931. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 28 March 1931.
2. At Kanpur, on 24 March, 166 persons were killed and 450 wounded in a communal riot caused by differences over a hartal to mourn the execution of Bhagat Singh and others.

2. The Release of Political Prisoners[1]

I second the resolution.[2] The specification of particular classes of prisoners in the resolution is only illustrative and I am aware that certain omissions exist. If the substantive part of the resolution is discussed and adopted, the Working Committee will further consider the lists of prisoners and of other persons that have to be included. The cases of the Sholapur prisoners and certain other cases have been omitted as they come within the terms of the truce which the government are bound to carry out. It is therefore unnecessary to mention these cases in the resolution; it would only weaken them.

Members should mention all cases for release, that they have in mind, to the Working Committee which will then be in a position to know which come under the truce and which under the present resolution. Please give full particulars of all cases in both the categories, including details regarding name, occupation, age, offence, and place, so as to enable the Committee to take suitable action.

1 Speech at the Subjects Committee, Karachi, 27 March 1931. From *The Hindu*, 28 March 1931.
2. On the release of political prisoners.

3. Message to The Bombay Chronicle[1]

India has passed through many a crisis in the course of the memorable year that has just ended and she has successfully surmounted them all, and advanced from strength to strength. Again she faces a critical situation.

May the people of India, who have suffered and done so much in the national struggle, keep the ideal of complete freedom ever before them and not rest content till they have achieved it.

1. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 29 March 1931.

4. On the Lahore Executions[1]

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It would have been better if someone else had moved this resolution.[2] It would have been more appropriate if he who holds the reins of the Congress and represents the Congress in the real sense of the term, and who has drafted the resolution, had moved it. He is the greatest apostle of nonviolence in the world. He would have come before you and praised through this resolution the brave lad who rightly deserves that honour. But he is busy day and night with Congress work. That is why I have been asked to move this resolution.

Since the news of the execution at Lahore reached us, we have all been strangely disturbed. We had hoped that the government would definitely consider the public demand. But it has done exactly the opposite. We have become so sad and frustrated that we do not know what to do. In the wake of this tragedy came news of another tragedy at Cawnpore. You would have read in the newspapers that hundreds have died in communal riots in Cawnpore. Have we all gone mad? Shall we gain Swaraj by these quarrels? We have also learnt of the tragic end of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi; his body is still untraceable. All the time I see his face before me. Such a tragedy has occurred after many of our men have been killed in the firings during last year's struggle at Peshawar, Sholapur and other places. The government was unrelenting in its repression at that time.

Now the hanging of Bhagat Singh has caused a strange reaction in the country. Why is everyone thinking of Bhagat Singh today? Even children in villages know about him. Many before him have made sacrifices and many more are still doing so. But why is the name of Bhagat Singh on every tongue? Why is his picture adorning walls and why are buttons studded with it? There must be some reason for this. He was a clean fighter who faced his enemy in the open field. He was a young boy full of burning zeal for the country. He was like a spark which became a flame in a short time and spread from

1. Speech at the Congress Session, Karachi, 29 March 1931. From *Report of the 45th Session of the Indian National Congress*, pp. 33-40. Original in Hindi.
2. The resolution expressed admiration for the bravery of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Raj Guru, but disapproved of political violence.

one end of the country to the other dispelling the prevailing darkness everywhere.

Will not the execution of Bhagat Singh cause tumult in the country and hamper our work which we have resolved to carry on by peaceful means?

We have always rejected violent means and we shall continue to do so. The resolution says that in honouring Bhagat Singh and his companions for their brave deeds we have nothing to do with their methods. The Congress does not approve of the path they took. We have not met here for fun. We are going to decide as to what is and what will be our programme. Our way is not Bhagat Singh's way. We have always declared that we cannot free our country by the use of bombs. Some may favour this method and advocate it. But Mahatma Gandhi has shown us the path of nonviolence. We have progressed considerably along that path. There was a struggle last year throughout the country and even women and children went happily to prison. This success has proved that there is only one way for us—the way shown by Mahatma Gandhi, the way of nonviolence. The most suitable method for our struggle is nonviolence. Bhagat Singh's way was altogether different. But we respect him, and what the Congress did for him is well known to you. We tried to get his sentence reduced to life imprisonment but we did not succeed. My regard for Bhagat Singh is no less than that of any of you.

I shall not conceal anything from you. I declare openly that only by the method of Mahatma Gandhi will we gain freedom and if we leave the path of nonviolence we shall not be free for years to come. This is my opinion. I honestly believe that we cannot gain independence by violence. I am fully confident that those who think violent means would solve the problem are wrong. The way of violence is a dangerous way for our country. It will ruin the country and set brother against brother and, God forbid, they may start killing each other. That is why I insist that you should accept this resolution. If you approve of it, it means that you accept the way of noncooperation. I consider noncooperation to be the noblest way to fight.

I also consider it below human dignity to say one thing now and act differently later. If we want our country to progress then we shall have to adopt open methods. Our journey is very long. We have been covering the distance in stages and who knows how many stages still lie ahead. We may falter several times before reaching the destination. If we fall, it is our duty to clear the path for others and show them the correct way. Let us prove that ours is a country of brave men.

5. On the Gandhi-Irwin Settlement[1]

A year ago we unfurled the flag of complete independence at Lahore, and to achieve that end also fought a battle during the last eleven months, in which lakhs of women, men and children participated.

I am now going to move a resolution which may create some doubt in your minds.[2] It is said that this resolution is less than complete independence. But I want to remove that doubt. We have already decided to win complete freedom and we shall not rest in peace till that is achieved.

We took a vow at Lahore that we would not have any relations with the British. When the truce talks were going on in Delhi, our hearts were full of pain. I wondered, and you too would have wondered, whether we were not going against our pledged word. After the glorious year that had passed, should we now agree to such a half-way house? We thought deeply over this and concluded that we would compel the government to give us complete independence, and if we did not get it, we would fight.

Last year we have done much. In the beginning we had many doubts. We felt that we would not be able to achieve anything. But the promptness with which the people have acted has shown that we can fight for freedom. The wiseacres in Parliament are labouring under the illusion that the Congress will be easily satisfied and so they have been making one promise after the other. But we want to make it clear to them that now no tricks will work. We cannot go to the Round Table Conference unless we are able to state our chief aim there. What should your representatives say there? In this resolution you are telling them to place the Lahore resolution before the conference.

1. Speech at the Congress Session, Karachi, 30 March 1931. From Report of the 45th Session of the Indian National Congress, pp. 63-64. Original in Hindi.
2. The resolution endorsed the provisional settlement, reiterated Purna Swaraj as the goal of the Congress and authorised Mahatma Gandhi to represent the Congress at the second Round Table Conference.

6. The Future of Burma[1]

Respected President, Sisters and Brothers,

I am here to support the resolution[2] that has been moved by Shri Maung Maung. The resolution is very necessary. The responsibility for this resolution should have actually been on our Burmese brothers for it is stated in the proposal that the Burmese have every right to do what they think is good for them. The fact is that the Burmese are being instigated against India and lots of rumours are being spread among them. They are told that their welfare lies in separation from India. The Congress, however, gives them freedom to do whatever they think is proper for their country. We do not want to compel them to agree to what we say.

If the Burmese want to remain as equal partners in India, they are welcome. But they may do as they think best. Whether Burma does or does not remain a member of the Indian federation, whether she should secede from India or not—the responsibility for this rests with the Burmese. It is they who have to decide all these matters for they alone can know what is best for them. This resolution only states what the Congress thinks on this issue; it states that the Congress leaves it to our Burmese brothers to decide what they think proper.

The British administration has decided to exploit Burma by all possible means, and they have devised novel methods for this. Sometimes they say that it will be good for the Burmese to separate themselves from India; sometimes they say that India is exploiting Burma. But is this charge true of Indians or of the British? It is being widely propagated that if Burma wants to progress it is essential that she should at once secede from India. Who will profit from this? Who will benefit from the British cry that Burma should be separated from India? The British want to separate Burma so that they may be free to exploit it, with none to stop them.

Do you know why the British are so fascinated by Burma? There are several reasons for this. The first is that the British have clearly

1. Speech at the Congress Session, Karachi, 31 March 1931. From *Report of the 45th Session of the Indian National Congress*, pp. 123-126. Original in Hindi.
2. It recognized the right of the Burmese to separate from India, should they so wish, but condemned British exploitation of Burma and attempts to impose a separation from India.

understood that they will have to leave India very soon. When they do so, they must have some other place in their possession. They are making Singapore a big naval base. So they think that if they have to leave India, they will at least have a foothold in Burma.

You know that the mighty kingdoms of the world which are making progress these days are floating on oil. Burma's oil is a great attraction for everyone. The oil wells of Burma are all in the hands of British industrialists, and they are reaping the maximum possible gains from these. That is why they are anxious not to let Burma slip out of their hands. They fear that if Burma is not separated from India then Indian industrialists may also share in their spoils.

We want to make it very clear that all the propaganda that they are doing is for their own benefit. The Congress wants to state clearly that it gives full freedom to the Burmese to do as they think proper. The abundant oil wells of Burma are a greater headache to the British than to the Burmese themselves. It is also said that the Indians are against the separation of Burma. This resolution clearly says that Indians are not at all against this and that the question is solely for the Burmese people to decide. All these problems are due to oil. That country which has possession of this oil is considered to be the mightiest.

The British want to keep their empire intact. If they leave India they will have a place to dig their toes in—Burma. But if the British sway continues over Burma, it will be dangerous not only for India but for all the countries of the East. China and Japan also realise that the British hold over Singapore and Burma is very dangerous for them.

These are the dangers of which we are fully conscious. The Congress wants to declare clearly that the Burmese are completely free to do what they like.

7. On the Forward Policy in the Frontier[1]

Gentlemen,

For the last so many years, and more so since last year, we have heard a lot about the inhabitants of the Frontier region. We are told such

1. Speech at the Congress Session, Karachi, 31 March 1931. From *Report of the 45th Session of the Indian National Congress*, pp 129-132. Original in Hindi.
The resolution moved by Jawaharlal disapproved of the government's "forward policy" on the North West Frontier and demanded that British occupation of tribal territory should be terminated.

strange stories about the Frontier people—that they are cruel and inhuman barbarians and that but for the British they would have devoured us all. For long we have been told that India is safe from the hands of these barbarians only because of the British army. Their propaganda is that it is the British who protect India from their raids. They have been dinning it into our ears for so long and have been repeating it so frequently that we have really begun thinking that whatever they say is true. So much so that we have really begun to believe that if the British leave our country we shall not be safe, that the Frontier is really full of dangers for us.

People outside the Congress say that it is only the British arms and guns that protect India. They consider the presence of the British to be essential for the protection of India.

Now, who teaches us all these lessons? Was India not adequately protected before the arrival of the British? Did only thieves and dacoits then enter this country? Put the idea propagated by the British out of your heads. I am confident that there is none among you who will think in that way.

I live in the interior of India but I do have some experience of the border areas. I can testify as to how very peace-loving the races living in the Frontier are. If they have any complaint or quarrel, it is not with India. They can be at loggerheads only with the British, not with us. When bullets are showered on these people, for how long will they remain without attempting to defend themselves? Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan will corroborate this. I can confidently declare that under the leadership of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan the Pathans have become more patriotic.

Why has the Frontier bogey been raised at all? We were taught that so long as the British armies are here we are safe, but once they are removed the Pathans will ravage our land. It is not only in the Hindus that this fear was instilled. The Muslims have also been filled with fear by the government—the fear that if the British go, China and Japan will overpower us. Please ponder on this matter and try to see the hidden motive beneath it. Enmity is created with our neighbours and battles are fought with them in our name. But we state very clearly, here and now, that we have enmity with none. We have already announced, and again do so, that the Congress is friendly with all the neighbouring countries.

Since we are slaves, we are helpless. With China, Burma, Afghanistan and other countries, we have no enmity. Let them not be misled into believing that if Indian armies are sent somewhere to fight, it is on our behalf that they are fighting. We want to make it very clear

that we have no hand in it. We are sure that when India becomes free then it will truly be for us to decide with whom to fight and with whom not to fight. We are confident that when we gain independence, we will be in no danger of invasion from any quarter, for we have enmity with none. We have been slaves long enough. If we want to be free again, we will have to cast off this fear.

Our country is staggering under the burden of the expenditure on such a huge army. We are fighting for others. There is no enmity between Afghanistan and India. The fact is that the British are all the time bombing and shelling them; so they too sometimes give the British some trouble. They are a brave race and they cherish their independence. If they are given full opportunity to enjoy their freedom, they will be hostile to none.

It has been the policy of the British sometimes to harass them and at other times to appease them. The encroachment by the British into their territory is a long story. The Afridis have some trade with India. The British stopped it and prevented the essentials of life from reaching them. They have put them to great distress and also occupied some of their territory. So, firstly the British do not let them live in peace, and secondly they are making them our enemies for the future. But we declare today that we have no enmity with the Frontier people and also that we do not want that anyone should arouse their enmity in our name.

8. Resolution on Fundamental Rights[1]

This Congress is of opinion that in order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions. In order, therefore, that the masses may appreciate what Swaraj, as conceived by the Congress, will mean to them, it is desirable to state the position of the Congress in a manner easily understood by them. The Congress therefore declares that any constitution that may be agreed to on its behalf, should include the following items, or should give the ability to the Swaraj government to provide for them.

1 Karachi, 31 March 1931. Report of the 46th Session of the Indian National Congress, pp. 137-141.
Drafted by Jawaharlal with changes by Mahatma Gandhi.

1. Fundamental rights of the people such as:

   (i) Freedom of association and combination.
   (ii) Freedom of speech and press.
   (iii) Freedom of conscience and the free profession and practice of religion, subject to public order and morality.
   (iv) No disability to attach to any person of religion, caste or creed in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and the exercise of any trade or calling.
   (v) Equal rights and obligations of all citizens. No civic bar on account of sex.
   (vi) Equal rights to all citizens of access to, and use of, public roads, public wells and all other places of public resort.
   (vii) Their right to keep and bear arms in accordance with regulations made in that behalf and such reservations as may be required for public safety.

2. Religious neutrality on the part of the state.
3. A living wage for industrial workers; limited hours of labour; healthy conditions of work; protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment.
4. Labour to be freed from serfdom or conditions bordering on serfdom
5. Protection of women workers and, specially, adequate provisions for leave during the maternity period.
6. Prohibition against employment of children of school-going age in factories.
7. The right of labour to form unions to protect their interests, with suitable machinery for settlement of disputes by arbitration.
8. Substantial reduction of land revenue and rent and, in the case of uneconomic holdings, exemption from rent for such period as may be necessary.
9. Imposition of a progressive income-tax on agricultural income above a fixed income.
10. A graduated inheritance tax.
11. Adult suffrage.
12. Free primary education
13. Military expenditure to be reduced by at least one-half of the present scale
14. Expenditure and salaries in civil departments to be largely reduced No servant of the state, other than specially employed experts and the like, to be paid above a certain fixed figure which should not ordinarily exceed Rs. 500/- per month.

15. Protection of indigenous cloth by exclusion of foreign cloth and foreign yarn from the country.
16. Total prohibition of intoxicating drinks and drugs.
17. No duty on salt.
18. State regulation of the exchange ratio so as to help the Indian industries and bring relief to the masses.
19. Control, by the state, of the key industries and mineral resources.
20. Control of usury—direct or indirect.

NOTE: It will be open to the All India Congress Committee to revise, amend or add to the foregoing so far as such revision, amendment or addition is not inconsistent with the policy and principles thereof.

14

TRIP TO THE SOUTH

SRI LANKA

1. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit[1]

Allahabad
15.4.31

Nan darling,
Kamala and I are going off tomorrow to Bombay. Where I shall go to from there I do not yet know. Perhaps Ceylon. Perhaps I might come back very soon as I dislike missing our provincial conference[2] at Mirzapur, which will come off early in May. If I come back soon we shall go to the Himalayas. Mussoorie frightens me. I would prefer some out of the way place above Almora. I shall write to you from Bombay.

I am so sorry to miss you. But we shall meet later. Meanwhile get strong. There is heavy work ahead.

The United Motors people claim something between 300/- and 400/- as the balance on the exchange of the cars. I have told them that I shall only pay this if you pass their bill. I know nothing of the conditions of the exchange.

I have written a business letter to Ranjit. Tell him I am very glad he will undertake the preparation of last year's report.[3] By the time I come back all the material should be ready and then we shall jointly revise it. Ranjit's letter has just come. I shall be glad to see Manmatha Ram in Bombay. But there are no secretaryships going, and no trips to Europe.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

1. Vijayalakshmi Pandit Papers, N.M.M.L.
   In the summer of 1931, Jawaharlal, accompanied by his wife and daughter, toured Sri Lanka and South India
2. The U.P. Political Conference, held from 5 to 7 May 1931.
3. The Congress General Secretaries' report for 1930.

2. To Indira Nehru[1]

S.S. Cracovia
April 21, 1931

Darling Indu,

It is long since I wrote to you. Nearly three months have gone by—three months of sorrow and difficulty and strain; three months of change in India, and change above all in our family circle. India has stopped for a while the campaign of satyagraha, or civil disobedience, but the problems that face us are not easier of solution; and our family has lost its dearly loved head, who gave us strength and inspiration, and under whose sheltering care we grew up and learnt to do our bit for India, our common mother.

How well I remember that day in Naini Prison! It was the 26th of January, and I sat down, as was my usual practice, to write to you about the days that have gone by. Only the day before I had written[2] about Chandragupta and of the Mauryan Empire which he founded. And I had promised to carry on the story and to tell you of those who followed Chandragupta Maurya, of Ashoka the Great, beloved of the gods, who shone like a bright star in the Indian sky and passed away, leaving a deathless memory. As I thought of Ashoka, my mind wandered and came back to the present, to the 26th of January, the day I sat with pen and paper to write to you. That day was a great day for us, for a year ago we had celebrated that very day all over India, in city and in village, as Independence Day, Purna Swaraj day, and all of us in our millions had taken the pledge of independence. Since then a year had passed by, a year of struggle and suffering and triumph, and again India was going to celebrate that great day. And as I sat in barrack No. 6 of Naini Prison, I thought of the meetings and processions and the lathi charges and arrests that would take place that day all over the country. I thought of this with pride and joy and anguish, when suddenly my musing was cut short. A message was brought to me from the outside world that Dadu[3] was very ill and I was to be released immediately to go to him. Full of anxiety, I forgot my musings, and put away the letter to you I had just begun, and left Naini Prison for Anand Bhawan.

1. *Glimpses of World History* (Asia Publishing House, 1962, Second Edition), pp. 54-56
2. Letter not printed, for the text see *Glimpses of World History*, pp 51-54
3. Motilal Nehru

Ten days I was with Dadu before he left us. Ten days and nights we watched his suffering and agony and his brave fight with the Angel of Death. Many a fight had he fought during his life, and many a victory won. He did not know how to surrender, and even face to face with Death, he would not give in. As I watched this last struggle of his, full of anguish at my inability to help him whom I loved so much, I thought of some lines which I had read long ago in a tale of Edgar Allan Poe:[4] "Man doth not yield himself to the angels, nor even unto death utterly, save by the weakness of his feeble will."

It was on the 6th of February, in the early morning, that he left us. We brought his body, wrapped in the flag he loved so well, from Lucknow to Anand Bhawan. Within a few hours it was reduced to a handful of ashes and the Ganga carried away this precious burden to the sea.

Millions have sorrowed for him; but what of us, children of his, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone! And what of the new Anand Bhawan, child of his also, even as we are, fashioned by him so lovingly and carefully. It is lonely and deserted and its spirit seems to have gone; and we walk along its verandahs with light steps, lest we disturb, thinking ever of him who made it.

We sorrow for him and miss him at every step. And as the days go by the sorrow does not seem to grow less or his absence more tolerable. But, then, I think that he would not have us so. He would not like us to give in to grief, but to face it, as he faced his troubles, and conquer it. He would like us to go on with the work he left unfinished. How can we rest or give in to futile grief when work beckons and the cause of India's freedom demands our service? For *that cause he died. For that cause we will live and strive and, if necessary*, die. After all, we are his children and have something of his fire and strength and determination in us.

The deep blue Arabian Sea stretches out before me as I write; and on the other side, in the far distance, is the coast of India, passing by. I think of this vast and almost immeasurable expanse and compare it to the little barrack, with its high walls, in Naini Prison, from where I wrote my previous letters to you. The sharp outline of the horizon stands out before me, where the sea seems to meet the sky; but in gaol, a prisoner's horizon is the top of the wall surrounding him. Many of us who were in prison are out of it today and can breathe the freer air outside. But many of our colleagues remain still in their narrow cells deprived of the sight of the sea and the land and the horizon.

4. (1809-1849); American poet and story writer.

And India herself is still in prison and her freedom is yet to come. What is our freedom worth if India is not free?

Your loving
Papu

3. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit[1]

22.4.31

Nan darling,
Strange that we should be travelling by the "Cracovia"—it has few passengers and life is quiet, which is to my liking. We sleep a lot! There is a Japanese consul and his wife with whom we spent a fair amount of time. Tomorrow we reach Colombo. I have no idea what fate will await us there. I wanted to go away immediately to Nuwara Eliya but it seems that I am not going to have such an easy time. A radio message has just come conveying the welcome of a reception committee which has just been formed in my honour! I feel better already after two days of sea. I am sure I shall be as fit as a fiddle after three or four weeks. All I want is sleep and a different atmosphere. I hope to have both in Ceylon.

We are passing quite near the Indian coast. It must be Cochin or Travancore. It is thickly wooded and looks like Juhu from a distance.

In Bombay I gave a letter of introduction to a Dutchman, Dr. Spykman,[2] for Ranjit. He is likely to go to Allahabad early in May. Probably Ranjit will not be there then. But if he is there I shall be glad if he will cheer him up by inviting him to a meal or some such thing. Spykman is an interesting person. I met him in Geneva. He is now a professor at Yale in America.

I hope you are well now. Write to me from time to time. Address: C/o Thos. Cook & Son, Colombo. But a better address will be communicated to Anand Bhawan by wire.

Love,

Your loving
Jawahar

1. Vijayalakshmi Pandit Papers, NMML.
2. Nicholas John Spykman (1893-1943); a scholar of international politics.

4. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit[1]

Kandy
25.4.1931

Nan dear,

I sent Betty some press cuttings yesterday which will give you some idea of our adventures here. We have not had a very restful time so far but it has been interesting and even the crowds have not been such a burden as they are in India. In India one has to face responsibility. Here there is no such problem and so the mind has rest even though the body is occasionally tired. The three days on board ship and the three days in Ceylon have already done Kamala and me a lot of good.

I am changing my opinion of Ceylon. It is indeed a beautiful place. The amazing loveliness of some of its views and aspects takes one's breath away. We reached Kandy by car at noon today and have had a fairly strenuous day meeting the local Sinhalese gentry. Kandy is a charming place. It is full of beauty spots and the climate is agreeable. Tomorrow we proceed to Nuwara Eliya.

Now that the beauty of Ceylon has taken possession of me there is little chance of our leaving the island before our month of holiday is up. We shall therefore remain here till the end of our trip and then perhaps return overland to Allahabad.

The local reception committee has very sensibly put us up for the night in this hotel. It is clean and cosy and up to date and reminds one of an average Swiss hotel.

I enclose a picture of ours in a Colombo Tamil paper. It is rather good—only Indu looks very ancient and very wise.

My love to mother and the children.

I suppose you are in Mussoorie but I am sending this to 9, Cawnpore Road.

Love,

Your loving
Jawahar

1. Vijayalakshmi Pandit Papers, NMML

Bernard Aluwihare[2] is here and is going strong. He is greatly excited about things in general and about our visit in particular. In his excitement he forgot and ignored certain important persons accompanying us and thereby offended them deeply. Having committed this error he subsequently went and abased himself before them in order to appease their wrath!

Quite a number of people are insisting on placing their cars at our disposal. If I took the lot of them we would have a fleet of them. Some of them are fine cars—one was a huge limousine Daimler with all manner of luxurious fittings. But accepting one car and not another means giving offence to the owner of the latter! What is to be done?

2. A Sinhalese friend whom Jawaharlal first met at Allahabad in 1929, for some time Minister for Education in Sri Lanka; d. 1961.

5. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Kandy
25.4.31

My dear Mahmud,

I have been three days in Ceylon and I must say that I am fascinated by its beauty. Tomorrow we are going to Nuwara Eliya where perhaps we shall stay for a fortnight.

I have been cut off from news of India. But in a paper I saw something about the Muslim Nationalist Conference.[2] I can't say that I am enthusiastic about its proceedings. But this I do not know much about and I have no material to judge.

We are likely to spend a full month in Ceylon. Both Kamala and I are feeling better already.

1 Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.
2 Held at Lucknow on 18 and 19 April 1931. It recommended that the future constitution of India should be federal with residuary powers vesting with the federating units

Raghavachari[3] must have gone off to Ahmedabad. I have written to Upadhyaya to work in the A.I.C.C. office whenever necessary. Make him do so.

You will always get my latest address at Anand Bhawan.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

3 A stenographer in the Congress office at Allahabad.

6. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Nuwara Eliya
30/4/31

My dear Mahmud,

Your two letters reached me yesterday. I sent you a telegram which I hope you received.

I am very glad to learn of the success of this Lucknow Conference. I have not seen the resolutions passed by it in full but from your account I can form some idea of these. They seem to be all right. About the residuary powers vesting in the provinces, I do not agree. This is bound to encourage provincialism and this is even now a bane of India. My own idea is, as I have told you before, that the present provinces should be cut up and divided. We have too big provinces. As a matter of fact the real question is the division of functions between the central government and the provinces. The question of residuary powers hardly arises. Where it arises, under modern constitutional practice, the powers vest in the centre. The tendency today all over the world is for the centre to increase its powers as the modern world is too complicated to function separately in units. In the United States the residuary powers, I believe, vest in the component states. But the centre has been forced to encroach on them. As a matter of fact there

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, NMML.

are many proposals today that even independent nations should part with power to a central international authority to prevent economic and political chaos.

I am sorry to learn of the rumours about Bhopal, etc., becoming arbitrators. I have seen a report of an interview which Ansari is supposed to have given on the subject.[2] I was surprised to read it. But I think that the rumours are exaggerated so far as Gandhiji is concerned. Simply because he sees Shaukat Ali people begin to talk. As a matter of fact I was in Bombay when he met Shaukat. The meeting was none of his seeking. Sarojini brought Shaukat alone. I have written to Gandhiji today on the subject.[3] Don't bother about rumours etc., but carry on the way you have been doing. We must continue taking a strong line regardless of what others may do.

Don't trouble yourself about my health. I am a worshipper at the shrine of bodily fitness and I shall take jolly good care to get fit. As a matter of fact doctors are agreed now that there is nothing fundamentally wrong with me. All I wanted was a little rest and I am getting it here. I shall return fit and strong for the fray which cannot be delayed long.

About the Gorakhpur D.C.C. secretary, please speak to Tandon. He should take strong action in the matter.

I hope Ranjit is preparing the annual report for last year. Upadhyaya should work in the A.I.C.C. office.

I understand that a boy named Shamshere Bahadur is living in Swaraj Bhawan. He should be asked to quit.

You know that I am not demonstrating or sentimental. But you should also know how I value your affection and friendship and how this has helped me on many an occasion. I am sure that our comradeship will bear rich fruit for both of us.

I propose to remain in Ceylon till about the 25th May and then to return *via* Malabar, reaching Bombay early in June.

My address here is: C/o S. Somasundaram,[4] 27, New Chetty Street, Colombo.

Love,

Yours affly,
Jawahar

2 On 22 April 1931, Ansari had suggested arbitration to settle the communal problem and proposed Mahatma Gandhi and the Nawab of Bhopal, among others, as arbitrators. Soon after, it was rumoured that Mahatma Gandhi had settled the problem and the Nawab of Bhopal had arranged a compromise

3 This letter is not available.

4. A lawyer of Colombo.

7. Speech at Kandy[1]

Political parties are not purely political parties but parties with an economic programme, with economic viewpoints, and they fight each other on economic issues. That is to say, today the questions that trouble the world are social questions in the larger sense and include economic issues, not so much purely political issues.

India is at present in a stage of transition. I would draw your attention to the Karachi Congress resolution dealing with various fundamental rights and certain economic changes. I do not propose to go into the merits of the resolution, which are immaterial, but the point is that the Congress has been forced almost unwillingly to face the issues.

The Congress is primarily a political organisation, and necessarily so because it has to face national issues first, but it has found that it cannot move on purely political lines. The Congress, therefore, has had to consider other matters because they are so bound up with the future well-being of the people of the country.

The Karachi resolution gives an inkling of the kind of freedom which the Congress wants. The resolution may be criticised; indeed, it has been criticised. May be it was hasty, may be it is imperfect, but the point is that the Congress and the people of India are gradually beginning to think on economic lines and of politics in terms of social and economic change.

The change has been coming for some time—in fact, ever since Mahatma Gandhi came into Indian politics a dozen years ago. It may be that the kind of change the Mahatma wanted was not what other people wanted, but the point is that any change must solve social and economic problems—in a nutshell, it must solve poverty and must place power in the hands of those who represent the masses.

Everybody understands, or should understand, that nothing is more futile than a purely political change which removes, say, a few English persons dominating the country and replaces them by a few indigenous products but otherwise does not change the political structure of the country. In my opinion this changed viewpoint is the principal achievement of the Karachi Congress, because I have always felt deeply on this

1. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 2 May 1931.

subject and believe that unless and until these tremendous economic changes take place there is no future for India.

I cannot envisage, and I probably would not care to spend any time or energy or be prepared for what in a loose way is called 'sacrifice' for a purely political change. Why should I take any trouble simply for the sake of a number of individuals?

But there is no question of trouble or sacrifice in working for an end one intensely desires. If I take trouble it is for something worthwhile, not trivial. Do you imagine India has gone through the fiery furnace of the past year for something trivial? Do you imagine that India is *prepared to go through the same fiery ordeal* or worse, *again*, for something trivial, some change in superstructure?

If India has gained a great deal of strength in the past year it is because the vast masses of India participated in the movement. It was not the movement of a few, not the movement of such great persons as Mahatma Gandhi, greatly as he is responsible for the movement. It was a movement of the masses of India—a movement of the masses because the masses felt deeply the suffering they were undergoing, and *because they felt equally the need for a change.*

They hoped the campaign would give that change and bring some relief at the end of the movement. And because the feeling was so widespread at the Karachi Congress their aspirations found vent in a somewhat imperfect resolution on fundamental rights and economic change.

There is a large number of young men present here and, without presuming to say anything about politics in Ceylon, I should like you to *think about your future* in terms of social and economic change. Come to any conclusion you like; it is immaterial; but I want you to get a move on and not enter into ruts, because nothing is more terrible than mental ruts from which you cannot emerge.

If anything is a sign of youth, it is its elasticity of body and of mind. As soon as the body becomes rigid you are *verging* on age. I hope you will make an attempt not to become mentally rigid but keep the windows of your mind open for all new ideas, discuss them, come to *some conclusion and act upon them.*

The centre of world history has shifted. The might of England had dominated the world for several generations. America can play a very important part but, potentially, world history is taking shape in *Asia.* There is not the shadow of a doubt that the future history of the world will be fashioned far more in Asia and America than in Europe. Nationalism in the narrow sense is a thing of the past.

When we speak of Indian independence we do not mean isolation. As soon as India is free, her first business will be to cultivate as many foreign relations as possible with the rest of the world.

Nationalism must be a part of world internationalism—that intense internationalism into which is woven nationalism and the social structure of the country with other nations of the world.

8. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Nuwara Eliya
5.5.31

My dear Mahmud,

Your letter has just come. I was not delighted to learn that a bundle of papers was coming to me from the office. As it is I have to write about 25 letters and cards a day and, having no typist or secretary, it is quite a job.

Raghavachari had to go. He is far more useful with Gandhiji than in the office at present.

About Raghubir Sahai,[2] it is strange that he did not reply. If he has not turned up already you can drop him.

I am very glad to learn of your activities on behalf of the Nationalist Muslim party. Carry on and do not mind rumours of compromise, etc.

I have not yet received from office papers except a few which I have disposed of. Regarding the auditing of P.C.Cs' accounts, consult Jairamdas who can discuss the matter with Vallabhbhai. You might find out if Tewari, who did some work for us two years ago, is available. He will be in Allahabad or Cawnpore. Radha Krishna Tewari is his name.

We propose to leave Colombo by boat for Tuticorin on the 22nd May. From there we go to Cape Comorin, Travancore, Cochin, Malabar, Mysore, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Bombay. But this programme

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. A Congressman of U.P. who had helped in collecting material for the report of the General Secretaries for 1930.

is not certain yet. My address here is: C/o S. Somasundaram, 27, New Chetty Street, Colombo. Telegraphic address—C/o Jalatharg Colombo.

Love.

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

9. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Nuwara Eliya
5.5.1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Many thanks for your letter. I am glad you sent me some bits of news about the situation in Gujarat. I learn from the U.P. that the position there is also difficult.

I am glad Raghavachari is with Bapu. Bapu must always have a stenotypist with him.

Mahmud writes to me that he is having some difficulty in fixing up auditors for the P.C.C. (Provincial Congress Committee). P.C.Cs also are not anxious to have auditing done soon as they say their accounts are not ready. I have asked Mahmud to write to Jairamdas about it. I think the auditing should be hurried up in spite of the P.C.Cs' objections. For the last two years we have been helped by the A.I.S.A. auditors but apparently there is some difficulty this year. There is a good man available probably in Allahabad. His name is R. K. Tewari.

We forgot at Karachi to appoint auditors. So I suppose the old auditors continue. They are in Bombay. I forgot their names. They might be asked to help.

The Reception Committee people in Karachi have been asked to hurry up the report of the Congress. I have suggested to them that they should send proof copies of all principal speeches to the speakers for correction. Also that they should have a chapter describing the arrangements. I propose to write a short preface as General Secretary.

1 Maharashtra Government, Home Department (Special) Intercepted Letters.

AT A MEETING IN BOMBAY, 1931

IN SRI LANKA, 1931

If you have any further suggestions to make, will you please communicate them direct to Karachi.

Please ask Jairamdas to remind the Reception Committee to put out half of the surplus for the A.I.C.C. Also to hurry up with the auditing of Karachi Congress accounts.

We hope to sail on the 22nd May for Tuticorin. From there, we shall probably go to Travancore, Cochin, Malabar, Mysore, Bangalore, Hyderabad and back to Bombay—reaching Bombay early in June. If I can do anything in any of these places, please let me know. My address is: C/o S. Somasundaram, 27, New Chetty Street, Colombo. Telegraphic address—C/o Jalatharg Colombo.

On return to Bombay the first thing I want to do is to see you and Bapu. If you are in Gujarat, I shall run up there.

I have not been very well here. Colds and the like have proved troublesome. But my rest is certainly doing me good. I feel better.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

10. Speech at Civic Reception, Colombo[1]

The gods have been good to me in many ways, and my country and my people in India have honoured me beyond measure. They have shown me kindness which I could never, however much I may try, repay even in a small fraction. I have grown vain, I am afraid, by that kindness which has been showered on me, and it seems to have somewhat spoilt me and made me somewhat conceited and somewhat expectant of welcome and goodwill wherever I may go.

When I decided to come to this pleasant island of Lanka, I expected, let me confess to you, I expected welcome, goodwill and friendship. I expected them. But my vanity, my conceit was humbled by you. The welcome which you gave, the hospitality which was showered on me, both in Colombo and elsewhere in this island, and the goodwill that came in such ample measure humbled my pride and conceit.

1. 16 May 1931. From *The Hindu*, 21 May 1931.

I wondered as to what had happened that I should be considered worthy of the welcome. I thought that it could not possibly be because of the small part I played in India's national struggle. I was but one of the many millions who took part in that glorious struggle, whose names were not known to you—men and women who had made strenuous sacrifice. And the realisation came to me, and has grown, that for the moment I stand here or elsewhere I become not Jawaharlal Nehru but the emblem or the symbol of something else for you that you wish to honour in the great national movement—that you wish to honour the millions of people with whom it has been my honour and privilege to fight the great fight which we have fought in India.

The great march from Sabarmati was led by that indomitable captain, Mahatma Gandhi, little more than a year ago. An army of men, women and children followed the leader—father, mother, daughter, wife and husband, forgetting their relationship, fighting only as comrades and soldiers in the battle-line, taking counsel together and marching with an exhilaration indescribable. The sufferings undergone by them were, after all, not sufferings because they were in a good cause, and they were in such a state of exhilaration all the time that they did not mind the lathi blows showered on them. Their blood tingled with joy and the British realised that it was not possible by their crude methods of warfare—lathis, guns and the jail—to suppress that great movement.

They put their last ounce of energy into the fray and went on and on. Among those who died on the march were many great souls who had gone to rest. I could not see them all, but I wish to mention the name of Ganesh Shankar who died in saving his brothers at Cawnpore a month or so ago. There were many others who had gone on their march. Men may come and men may go, but India will go on. Then what else matters? If India lives they all live. If India dies who lives then? What does it profit, then, for those who live after?

Friends, it is right that you show your welcome to us. But don't waste your sympathy for the suffering and the sacrifice that India has undergone. We want no sympathy from anyone on earth. We want no sympathy even from our brothers or cousins. Sympathy is a thing that we are sorry for. We are not sorry for what has happened. India is proud of it. Therefore why call for sympathy?

We came here about three weeks ago. We have wandered about your pleasant island. I have wondered at the goodwill showered on us. I belong to what may be called the northern or central part of India. I might go still to my mother's home in Kashmir, the land of eternal winter, with snow-capped hills, overlooking the plains of southern India.

The gift[2] offered by India some two thousand years ago is still preserved by you here. It was a little more than a gift. It has been an indissoluble bond between the peoples of India and of Ceylon. In a few days we will be going away from this land and its verdure. We would be delighted to stay here, but India beckons to us and we have got to go. It is not possible to disobey that call, so we shall leave in a few days to shoulder our task and the burden of the fray in that great struggle.

In that work of ours, sometimes a little despair assails our hearts on our weary way. At that time of despair we shall think of Ceylon and the memory of your pleasant island. The memory of your hospitality that we have enjoyed will hearten us in our task and lighten the work and strengthen us in our duty.

2. A tooth of the Buddha preserved in a temple at Kandy.

SOUTHERN INDIA

11. To Krishna Nehru[1]

S.S. Something
22.5.31

Betty dear,

Our month of holiday in Lanka is over and as I write the shores of the island recede in the distance and the coconut trees become little specks on the horizon. It has been a strenuous holiday, specially the last part of it, but it has been a wonderful one, for Lanka is an enchanted place, beautiful till the eyes get satisfied with its beauty and nature's prodigality. It is ever afternoon there and the summer breezes blow and rustle through the graceful palm trees. And the great blue sea kisses lightly its pleasant green shores and sings a lullaby which soothes and intoxicates. One forgets almost the struggle and misery of the world of action.

We have had a welcome everywhere, magnificent and amazing. And as I went from one great crowd to another and passed numberless people waiting for hours by the wayside, I wondered at this miracle and tried to fathom its meaning. I realized that there must be something behind it, something obviously more than individual preference. And I felt suddenly that it was the glory of India and of our great fight that they were honouring and we were just the poor symbols and embodiments of that glory. There was a time, not so long ago, when an Indian had to hang his head in shame in foreign countries. But something has happened and that shame seems to be a thing of the past, a painful dream that has passed away. Today it is a proud privilege to be an Indian, and specially one who has borne his share in the heat and burden of the fray, and wherever anyone of us may go, he or she carries a bit of the glory of the new India.

I could write to you so much about our experiences. They have been rich and various and we are carrying away a host of memories. After we left Nuwara Eliya we visited the ancient cities in ruins and

1 *Nehru's Letters to His Sister* (London, 1963), pp. 21-26.

dreamt of the great days of Lanka. We visited Sigiriya with its great rock fortress and a cobra confronted us on the narrow rocky path up the hill and held us up for a long time till we managed to cajole it away. We went to Pollonarrua with its extensive remains of old palaces and temples and admired great statues of the Buddha and frescoes of the gods set in a lotus pond carved out in the shape of a lotus flower. We had a dip in the sea at Trincomalee and saw its beautiful harbour. In Anuradhapura we saw the widespread ruins of the sacred city built when the message of the Buddha was brought two thousand years ago by Mahindra and Sanghamitra, son and daughter of Ashoka. We saw there the ancient peepul tree, brought from Gaya 2000 years ago and said to be the oldest tree in the world.[2] And we wondered at the beauty and serenity of a statue of the Buddha. In Dambulla we saw the big temples and statues carved out of the solid rock and frescoes on the rock roof which we mistook to be paintings on canvas. In beautiful Kandy I addressed a great gathering almost under the *shadow of the Temple of the Tooth. And then we returned to Colombo,* to a whirl of engagements, addresses, meetings, receptions, crowds and enthusiasm, till my head felt giddy and my mind wandered and my body threatened to collapse. One night an amazing thing happened to me. I fell off my bed and woke up on the floor with my face all covered with blood. How this happened is still a mystery to me for my bed was a great big bed and I had not even a recollection of falling out of it or of hurting myself. But then I was on the floor in the dark with the unpleasant taste of blood in my mouth. All manner of strange thoughts came into my mind—thoughts of attacks and the like. I woke up Kamala, who was in the next room, and as she was washing my head, she fainted away and I had to carry her and look after her. The memory of the anonymous letters I had received in Allahabad had come to her and the sight of blood completed her collapse.[3] Hari[4] was then found and he washed me, and Kamala later dressed my head. There was just a small cut on the head about ¾ of an inch long—nothing much to speak of. It was quite superficial and I must have got it as I fell from the bed on the hard floor.

2. A branch of the pipal tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment had been planted at Anuradhapura.
3. Before he left for Sri Lanka, Jawaharlal had received two anonymous letters threatening his life.
4. Harilal, Motilal Nehru's personal servant who later, up to his death in 1961, served Jawaharlal.

The hurt was nothing—it has quite healed up—but the circumstances of the hurt were peculiar and eminent doctors came to see me. A heart specialist thumped me about a great deal and ultimately pronounced my heart and lungs and every part of me perfectly sound. The only possible explanation was that I was thoroughly exhausted and my brain was in a bit of a whirl when I brought off this strange fall. Please do not worry about it. It was a momentary lapse and I am thoroughly ashamed of it.

From Colombo we went south, hugging the coast and passing through splendid scenery. Every few moments we had to stop for addresses and short visits to schools and colleges. We passed through Kalutara and Galle and reached Matara in the far south. On the way we paid a visit to a French count who has built a charming house for himself on a tiny island just off the mainland. As it was high tide we had to take a catamaran boat and most of us got soaked. Just before we reached Matara we were stopped and told that the Motor Lorry Drivers' Association had organised a procession of a few lorries—just a paltry 75 or so—and we were to join this. There were many other private cars also and so we had this procession of a hundred cars, mostly lorries decorated and full of people. On reaching Matara we found a great crowd waiting for us and the lorries lined up all round the crowd. It was a fine sight.

In Matara a strange incident occurred. I had been invited by the municipality to accept an address and I had agreed. Not knowing where I was to go to I went to the public meeting. This upset the municipal council very much. They were waiting for me elsewhere. I offered to go there later but they turned up their noses. The chairman came to me in the evening and began telling me in a somewhat offensive tone—probably unintentional—that I had insulted him. This was a bit too much for my frayed nerves and I told him to go to hell and take his council with him. I made certain other similar polite remarks. There was an audience watching. Early next morning we found that the whole city was placarded with huge posters announcing to all and sundry: "Matara apologizes to Pandit Nehru for ill manners of U.D.C. Chairman"—U.D.C. meaning Urban District Council. Smart work, done overnight. A rival political faction had taken advantage of the incident to rub it in. On my return from Matara, I received frantic apologies from the chairman and in my turn I apologized also. So everything ended happily.

From Matara we went to Dondia Head nearby—the southernmost point of Ceylon—and looked to the south and felt exhilarated at the thought that there was no land between us and the South Pole.

On return to Colombo we left our cars and for the first time took to the railway train. We had sleeping cars—bedding, linen, etc., provided. Indeed, we have not required our bedding anywhere here. In private houses or the government rest-houses—corresponding to our dak bungalows, but far better—linen and pillows were always provided.

We went to Jaffna in the far north by train and had a tumultuous welcome. Jaffna is the centre of the Tamil and of the aggressive youth leagues. We had a heavy programme, motored all over the neighbourhood, and had a dip in the sea and swam out towards India—she was only 16 miles across. And so back again to Colombo this morning. A visit to a Buddhist temple and college for monks, blessings from the venerable head and my respectful reply to the venerable one, visits and short speeches at three different colleges, private visits to bid farewell to a number of friends, meetings and photographs with the reception committees and the volunteers, large numbers of people to say good-bye to us, a crowd at the jetty—and here we are! And so ends the story of our visit to Lanka.

Bernard Aluwihare has asked me to rub it in when I write to you—to make you feel sorrier and sorrier that you did not come. I hope I have done so sufficiently. Bernard belongs to a well-known and historical family here. They consider themselves among the chosen and do not approve of Bernard hobnobbing with Indians and the like! Bernard has the distinction of having a grandfather or great-great-grandfather who was beheaded for rebellion against the British.

Christians and Buddhists seem to mix well here. Bernard would curtsey deeply whenever he met a Buddhist priest and would treat him with all reverence.

Kamala has often been taken for my daughter. But what do you say to Indu being taken for the mother! This has happened repeatedly.

I am tired—we have just come back from dinner. We are the only first-class passengers on board. So Kamala sat on the right of the captain and Indu to the left. Tomorrow morning we reach Tuticorin. I do not know when I shall be able to write to you or anybody again—show this to Nan and Ranjit and tell mother we are all well and flourishing.

Love,

Your brother,
Jawahar

Tuticorin
23.5.31

One interesting thing I forgot to write to you. In Ceylon a great

banquet was being organized in my honour at a big hotel. At the last moment I was asked if I would have any objection to formal toasts of the king and the government. As I did object the whole affair fell through!

12. Interview to the Press at Tuticorin[1]

QUESTION. What are your impressions of Ceylon?

ANSWER. It is a beautiful and charming country and its people gave me a wonderful welcome.

Q. What is the attitude of the Ceylonese people towards their new constitution?[2]

A. There are many strong movements there which have boycotted this constitution, and even those who are accepting it are doing it in order to change it. But I have not studied the question myself and can't say whether that constitution would work well.

Q. What is the condition of Indian labourers in Ceylon?

A. It appears to be highly unsatisfactory. I did not investigate the conditions in detail but I saw hundreds of Indian labourers in the tea estates, especially women, and almost all of them complained to me of the hard life they had to lead. It was obvious enough from their faces. In spite of an effort that is being made to reduce their wages on the ground that prices have gone down, any national government in India would oppose it by all means in their power.[3] Unfortunately, the Indian labourers are not organised. I think it would be a good thing if all emigration of Indian labour were stopped until their conditions are bettered.

The first thing to be done is that people in India should understand that such an attempt has to be made. In this, newspapers and public

1. Given some time between 23 and 25 May 1931 to *The Ceylon Independent*. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 2 June 1931.
2. Introduced early in 1931, the constitution did not satisfy the people who wanted full self government.
3. In May 1931, the Ceylon government had, with the concurrence of the Indian government, reduced the wages of Indian labourers.

organisations can help. The other day I read a report of the shareholders' meeting of a Ceylon tea company in London. A thirty-five per cent dividend had been declared and yet the chairman of the board of directors said that they were trying, with the consent of the Ceylon government, to reduce the wages of Indian labourers. No argument is needed to show the monstrosity of the procedure. Unfortunately there is no cooperation between the Sinhalese and the Indian labourers in Ceylon. The former feel that Indians lower their standards of living and hence Indian labour and emigration should be stopped.

I think that the Sinhalese and their leaders are somewhat short-sighted in their labour policy, but I am perfectly prepared to support their demand for stoppage of Indian labour and emigration. As a matter of fact, if this were done the Ceylon planters and the Ceylon Government would come to terms soon enough with Indians. Reduction is sought of the legal minimum wage fixed by law. I have no doubt that the Government of India, if they so choose, can improve the condition of Indian labour.

Q. Will you go to England if Mahatma Gandhi goes to the second Round Table Conference?

A. The Congress Working Committee has definitely decided that only Mahatmaji should represent the Congress and I have therefore no business to go. Members of the Committee can go only as delegates and organised representatives of the Congress. As Mahatmaji is the sole representative, the question of other members of the Working Committee going does not arise.

13. Reply to Addresses at Tinnevelly[1]

It was a great time that we had last year, in this ancient country of ours. Although we have not achieved political freedom, the whole world knows, and you and I know, what we have achieved. There was a time not long ago, when any Indian going to a foreign country had to hang down his head in shame and everywhere he was looked down upon because we belonged to a subject country. Things have now changed. Let constitutional lawyers note this.

1. 27 May 1931. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 30 May 1931.

If you want to know and appreciate this altered status that has come upon us, go out of India and see how Indians are treated in foreign countries. For today in foreign countries, Indians, and especially those who took part in last year's movement, go about with the glory of India.

We have grown conscious of our strength. Though there may still be foreign domination, we have now the will and the strength to remove it. We know that England also knows that.

The position is now different. You know that at present there has been a truce between the Indian National Congress and the British Government and there is a provisional settlement. I hope that you know that this provisional settlement is very much provisional and cannot signify any permanent settlement. Of course, we want peace and everybody wants peace but the peace we want must be a peace that must bring freedom to India. Otherwise, there cannot be any peace.

We have given our word to honour the terms of the provisional settlement. We shall do our best to honour them. But, year by year, we shall not compromise except on terms which will bring independence to this country. We shall do our best to come to our objective by means of negotiations, but if these fail, and if there is a certainty that they will fail, there is no alternative except to start our campaign again in right earnest.

Therefore, I would in all humility suggest to you to leave the negotiations to Mahatmaji and the Working Committee. Don't bother about them. Get ready for action when the time comes for it.

I want to remind you that there are two or three things which are essential. You must bring about a complete boycott of all foreign cloth. Secondly, there must be a boycott of liquor. Thirdly, you must have as many trained and efficient volunteers as possible.

We have learnt very many lessons from the last year's struggle and the biggest lesson is that you can't carry on a struggle without trained and efficient volunteers. Take steps to build up a strong volunteer corps, not only of men but also of women, to serve the nation efficiently.

A time will come when you will be tested in a manner you have not been tested last year. When we entered with doubt into this valley of shadow, we found that it was full of glorious sunlight. Let us not worry, for there cannot be a shadow for those who work for a great cause. The real joy of life is to throw ourselves into a great cause and work on till we are exhausted. Many of us felt that real joy of life last year. Thousands of us felt it. When again the opportunity occurs, I hope hundreds of thousands will come forward.

14. Reply to Addresses at Trichur[1]

I would like to thank the organisers of the several institutions which have honoured me and my wife this evening, particularly the Desh Sevikas, because their address reminded me of the wonderfully marvellous activities and driving force of women during the last civil disobedience movement.

I have greatly appreciated the spirit of enthusiasm and perseverance that marked the activities of the Yuvajana Samithi and the Youth League. As a result of the civil disobedience movement we are nearer to Swaraj. We have the capacity in us to free ourselves. I cannot say whether India can win Swaraj within one year or two years, but I am sure that India will be free very shortly.

Indians cannot be considered as unintelligent and incapable of independent administrative capacity but the administrative machinery has been so devised by the imperialistic authorities that they have put wrong and weak persons in responsible posts, so as to point out their incapacity and thus draw Indians into ridicule. It is this system of jobbery against which I protest and rebel.

The last Round Table Conference was a failure because everyone who went there as a member did not know his real function. It is not that they did not have the intelligence to know their duty, not that they were unpatriotic, but that they were mere puppets.

As regards untouchability, the Congress cannot and will not tolerate untouchability or any inhuman system. The Congress stands for a new social order of things, wherein a healthy and more rosy structure will prevail.

We have entered into a truce with the British. If we get what we want, we shall not fight any more. If we do not, we must go to war again. I cannot, therefore, say whether a time may not come when we may have to be again forward in war. We have had to suffer and sacrifice to an inordinate extent. This is going to be a tough fight and we must not think that we are going to put an end to British imperialism by slogans. I doubt very much if the British have eagerness enough to fight it out. India is not going to be divided despite the Butler Committee and a hundred other committees. Mahatma Gandhi,

1. 30 May 1931. From *The Hindu*, 2 June 1931.

who is going to the Round Table Conference as the sole representative of the Congress, carries with him the support of 330 millions. There must be some tangible result from the negotiations. Otherwise, the entire 330 millions will launch a greater fight.

15. Message to Travancore[1]

We have spent a few days in Travancore and we have had a delightful time. It has been a strenuous time also and the very affection that was showered on us by the people all along the route and wherever we went, welcome as it was, became a strain. This little strain or trouble that we had to undergo was soon forgotten, but the memory of the loving welcome lingered in our minds and strengthened and cheered us. We shall long remember this visit of ours to the southern tip of India.

The large number of schools that we passed was in itself a good enough indication of the spread of education in the state, a pleasant contrast to the desert of ignorance that prevails in the greater part of what is known as British India.

And so we passed on, and everywhere there were signs of a new life, of a new awakening, of a feeling that India was one and all of us had a share in the great national movement and in the freedom to come. But one big blot covers this fair landscape—the blot of untouchability. Where nature has been so generous, man has been so narrow and selfish and has denied his brother even the ordinary rights of a human being. I hope this blot will go soon—there are signs of its going already—and untouchability and the denial of the right to enter the public temples and go along public roads will soon become an evil dream which has passed.

We go back with pleasant memories of a beautiful land and of a charming people.

1. Alleppey, 30 May 1931. *The Hindu*, 1 June 1931.

16. Reply to Addresses at Calicut[1]

After a tour lasting nearly a week, we are leaving Kerala tonight. In the course of this short stay we have been overpowered by the affection shown to us by the people of Kerala in every village we visited. To be honest, I am sure I do not deserve so much honour. The people who have honoured me have spoken highly of my poor contribution to national service. In fact, the idle talk of sacrifice is insulting. Men and women who are made for service and sacrifice have no other option but to satisfy the purpose of their lives. A soldier who has actually taken his place in the battle-field has no courage to retreat for fear of being court-martialled. The same is the case with our national workers and sufferers.

When at Cape Comorin I sat on the cape proper, I felt as if I was sitting at the feet of Mother India. As I watched the junction at which the waters from the east and the west met, I felt a throbbing in my heart which shook me like a storm. My thoughts were riveted on the very stubborn unity of the Indian masses, though it has been mischievously and outrageously disputed. A strong emotion pervaded my senses and I was quite confident that from the snowy peaks of Kashmir down to the beautiful plains of Kerala there were no two individuals who were not brothers or sisters or were not engaged in the common pursuit of freedom.

I went to Ceylon in order to have a look at India from outside. Even in that small island I realised how much shame had been piled up on poor India. Every foreigner has the most offensive contempt for the 330 millions of Indians who are kept under control by a handful of Englishmen. No Indian can walk with head upright in any foreign country. But now, just at the end of the great agitation for freedom, Indians have demonstrated their capacity to think and do, to assert their independence and self-respect and to walk with an upright head and fearless mind through any foreign country.

Indians are now in an atmosphere of truce. If real peace is coming, it is well and good and everybody will welcome it. I cannot tell when real peace will be attained. Until real peace comes or until the government forces the people to make a breach of the truce, Indians have to

1. 30 May 1931. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 4 June 1931.

observe the terms of the truce whether or not the government maintains it in spirit and word. At Lahore, Purna Swaraj was resolved upon as the ideal. It has to be borne in mind that this oft-repeated ideal must be kept in view throughout the struggle. No worker can go back upon this most sacred and solemn vow. It has to be fulfilled in right religious fervour. Everybody knows that a Round Table Conference was held in London some time ago. Those who attended the conference were patriotic and competent enough. But they were sorely in need of public support. They were not particularly concerned with what Great Britain would give to India, but their only helpless request was that unless something was granted a section of the Indian people, who were more fierce and patriotic than themselves, would rise in revolt against the British Government. But what occurred as a result of the Irwin-Gandhi *pourparlers*? *Through the frail body of the "half-naked fakir"* Lord Irwin did see the strength of 330 million souls and readily agreed to the safest move within reach.[2] That mentality of the Englishman who realised the tremendous strength of united India must be kept going by actions which will prove the irresistible capacity and courage of the Indian masses.

The question of the depressed classes is especially peculiar and poignant in Kerala. I have been terribly shocked and agitated to hear about the prevalence and recrudescence of untouchability. The uplift of the untouchables is a prominent item of the Congress programme. The vow of independence taken a year and a half ago well defines the Congress ideal of Swaraj. The resolution on fundamental rights passed at the Karachi Congress also explains the Congress view of Swaraj. The Congress is fighting not only for political freedom but for economic and social freedom also. The Congress will never approve of a Swaraj scheme where social liberty does not attain as large a degree as it ought to. Can anybody show that Mahatma Gandhi, or I, or any other Congress worker is content with a Swaraj *where there is no freedom* for untouchables? If I am fighting for a particular cause, it is in accordance with the dictates of my inner spirit. If that cause is not satisfied by the Swaraj government, I will never hesitate to fight even with the Swaraj government. But I have something special to tell the untouchables. They should never keep brooding over their fate. Weeping and wailing will *not achieve freedom. They should stand up and fight out*

2. On 18 February 1931, Winston Churchill had described the talks between Mahatma Gandhi and Irwin as a "nauseating and humiliating spectacle" of "this one time Inner Temple lawyer, now seditious fakir, striding half naked up the steps of the Viceroy's Palace, there to negotiate and to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King Emperor".

their cause to a finish. If, otherwise, they keep aloof from the national struggle, saying that their demands are not satisfied, they are doomed for ever.

I congratulate you, the people of Kerala, on the very successful manner in which the picketing campaign is being carried on in your province, and I regret the charge that appeared in the General Secretaries' Report[3] that South India lagged behind North India in political activity.

3. For 1930, placed before the Working Committee at Karachi in March 1931; this was however withdrawn.

17. Speech at Calicut[1]

It is almost a week now since we entered the land of Kerala and tonight we propose to leave it. It has been a very pleasant week, a somewhat strenuous week, but none the less a very delightful week. When I was asked by my friends in Kerala to go over here and there and address public meetings in various parts of Malabar I told them that I could not do so but merely wished to pass through Malabar on my way to Bombay, but in my attempt to pass through, the very call of your affection was so great that it was impossible for me not to stop and receive the honour which you are good enough to show us today.

When I landed at Tuticorin I had almost a feeling as if I was going on a pilgrimage. When I went to the southernmost part of India, to Cape Comorin, and when I sat there, I felt that I was sitting at the feet of India, and as I waited, the waters of the eastern and western seas washed gently over the feet of India. At that time I had a feeling which I shall remember for many years to come. When I, who hail from a place in Kashmir, travelled in these parts I found a feeling among everyone that we are all brothers belonging to the same land and tradition and marching together side by side towards the same goal. It is a feeling of unity among everyone in India. Wherever I see, I find only brothers, sisters and comrades. You are showing your affection towards us in a lavish manner. After all we are human beings

1. 31 May 1931. From *The Hindu*, 2 June 1931.

and by the honour you shower on us we feel how greatly one is honoured for the sacrifice he has made. Those who took part in the last campaign did not think about their service as sacrifice but they considered it as a joy in their life. So, if you want to get real joy, I tell you, you can get it only if you get yourself interested in the mighty cause of India.

I would like to pay a tribute to the part played by the women of India during the last fight and to congratulate the people of Kerala for keeping up the fight to the last. I feel extremely sorry for the remarks in the Congress Secretaries' report regarding South India. The southern provinces did their utmost and some from the very beginning had to face repression. So far as you, the people of Kerala, are concerned, from all accounts you have taken a leading part in the movement. I congratulate you for this, and appeal to you to strengthen the Congress and be ready for action.

18. Speech at Civic Reception, Coimbatore[1]

I regret that I am unable to stay in your midst for a longer time. But I would like to pay my tribute to you, the people of Coimbatore, who have so nobly responded to the call of the country. The sight of such a mighty gathering gives me some idea of the enthusiasm of the people in the district, which no amount of newspaper accounts could have given. Wherever I have gone I have found the same enthusiasm—a new spirit, a new quality and a new mission—at work, and anybody who has eyes to see can say that the country is bent on achieving complete freedom and also that the country knows that it has got the strength to get it. You should remember that the Swaraj you are fighting for means not only freedom from foreign domination but also freedom for every caste, creed and individual in the community. Our Swaraj is going to be a Swaraj in which every Indian will have equal liberty.

In our fight last year, we succeeded in a large measure not because every group had joined us but specially because the women of India played a great part in it. We did well last year but let us remember

1. 31 May 1931. From *The Hindu*, 1 June 1931.

that we are still far off from what we set out to achieve. The present truce does not mean that our struggle has ended. Nobody likes to see his friends going to jail in thousands and suffering lathi blows. But if there is no alternative to freedom, we have to face that also as we did in the past.

Therefore it is necessary not to slacken our efforts but to utilise them to strengthen our organisation and to keep ourselves in readiness to start the struggle for freedom, if necessary. We must carry on the boycott of foreign cloth and liquor shops. The boycott is not a political weapon for the moment but is a thing that is going to stay. Therefore we must have these boycotts and complete them. We must also get rid of the curse of untouchability and raise up our brothers.

I would like to thank the municipal chairman and you, the citizens of Coimbatore, for the addresses of welcome you have presented to me. I have also been presented here on the platform with a purse of Rs. 3,821. This purse, I take it, is meant for national work. Therefore I propose to hand over the money to the office bearers of your district Congress committee. Finally, I thank you all for having sat in considerable discomfort to hear me.

19. Address at Civic Reception, Mysore[1]

I am most thankful to you for your address of welcome and kind words and for this very beautiful casket which you have presented to me. In your address, you have stated something to the effect that it has been a sacrifice on my part in coming to Mysore and you have mentioned the numerous virtues I am supposed to possess and the numerous sacrifices I have made in coming to Mysore. As a matter of fact, coming to Mysore has been something I have looked forward to for a long time and I come here with a very high sense of giving effect to an ancient wish of mine. After all, a person does what it pleases him to do.

1. 1 June 1931. *The Hindu*, 2 June 1931.

People find pleasure in different ways. Sacrifice or no sacrifice, it has been a great joy for those of us who have been connected with this national movement to have done what we have done and to have had the satisfaction of having served a mighty cause. To call that 'sacrifice' is a misnomer. It is a real joy in life. It was not I alone but it was the thousands and tens of thousands of people who had the privilege to have experienced this joy. For them the other joys are feeble, futile and passing. Therefore, you need not talk of any sacrifices on my part.

I thank you for your welcome. It is good to go to a place and to find that a welcome awaits one who goes. I envy you, the members of the municipal council, that you have in your charge and keeping a beautiful city to be looked after and to improve. It is a great thing to see beauty grow by your efforts and to create a city, beautiful with public gardens and other amenities. I have not seen much of your city, yet the little I have seen impresses me by its beauty and I have felt envious of those who have made this beauty. The parks at any rate are beautiful and I hope you will make them more and more beautiful. After all this, one fact I would submit for your consideration, and that is that the beauty of a city is to be judged fundamentally and primarily not by the beauty of the mansions of the rich but by the beauty of the houses of the poor. The best of a city's life is not the sanitary condition of the parks and the places inhabited by the rich but the condition of the slums. When you think of the beauty of Mysore city you have always to think of the poorest parts of the city and see whether those places are beautiful, healthy and sanitary, or not. After all, the fundamental beauty of a city, as the beauty of a country, depends much more on flesh and blood and less on brick and mortar. The primary function of a municipal council is to see that the poorer residents are well-housed, well-fed, and well-clothed. That, after all, is the ultimate test of life in a municipality. That is a tremendous ideal to be put before any municipality or country and it will be long before a municipality can reach such an ideal. But that is the ideal that a municipality should always have. There is no use of a municipality saying that they have no funds to do this thing and that thing. You have to see whether the poorest of the city are keeping health, both mentally and physically. I hope that your council will always keep this ideal before it, and even if the municipality may not succeed in all efforts to reach the ideal you will have done much towards reaching it ultimately.

I thank you very much once again for the welcome and the address.

20. Reply to Addresses at Mysore[1]

It seems to have become a custom in these addresses that are presented to a person to often praise the person, in whose honour the addresses are presented, beyond all measure. I must confess to a strange feeling of going from place to place and of being welcomed by large crowds and replying to addresses—on an average, six to ten a day—which I may say in passing are done by people who have no idea of the consequences of presenting addresses in wooden frames. I realise that I would be buried in wooden frames. What would I do with about 200 of these wooden frames? A friend of mine asked me if I am interested in any furniture shop in Allahabad!

Having heard so much fulsome praise, I must confess to feeling a kind of nausea because I am neither used to this nor do I like it. It is not good for the soul of either party. I beg of you not to take my words in any sarcastic or jocular sense. Whatever my failings are, I do not suffer from modesty. I have a full knowledge of my virtues, and modesty is not one of my failings. I would however ask you not to indulge, in your public and private work, in this laxity of language in regard to individuals. One finds it all the more in Indian states and regrets it all the more.

Fundamentally it is a wrong outlook on life, if in national matters you look upon individuals and not upon the movement and forget the environment in which they work and look upon them as makers of a great national movement. No great movement can be built up by individuals alone. It has been our pride and privilege to have had in India during the last few years individuals of note of whom any country can be proud. We have had captains than whom we could wish no better. Can you think of only captains and captains general and not thousands and tens of thousands who, without really expecting any reward or receiving any address or garlands, have suffered and worked for the national cause? I recall to you what happened last year. When our general started his march to Dandi village there were people who laughed at his futile adventure. Gradually they felt the strength of the call and there was a tremor in the Indian continent. People who heard the call considered that it was a call from India herself and even those who hesitated and doubted at first felt a strange feeling in their hearts

1. 1 June 1931. *The Hindu*, 4 June 1931.

and could not say 'no' to the call. Millions of Indians marched in response to the call and thousands of them were removed to prisons. Our women, you know, are not used to the market-place and they were not capable of facing police lathi charges. Most of them lead a life of sheltered ease. But they could not say 'no' to the national call when they saw that their husbands, brothers and fathers were fighting in this struggle, and they showed that they could also suffer and sacrifice. Not only did they show themselves capable of suffering and sacrifice but they showed that they had powers of organisation and endurance and that even if the men of India failed the women of India could not fail. The movement went on and developed and you who talk of suffering and sacrifice need not waste your sympathy for those who suffered and sacrificed because they who sacrificed suffered and enjoyed doing so.

What kind of life do most of us live in this country? Do we live like live persons? We live more like vegetables. We go round the same routine like potatoes and cabbages. We are always worried by the petty worries of the world. We are full of grievances and troubles and we carry on our life in that routine fashion until we deservedly die. For some time, at any rate, we got out of that vegetable state of existence. We felt the joy of life just then. Do we want sympathy for such a feeling of joy? No, we do not want to be turned again to potatoes and cabbages. There were some things said in the addresses about suffering and sacrifice. Those whom you have loved marched forward and were faced with lathi blows. Some of you might have heard of it. Have you ever heard the soft thud of a lathi falling on soft flesh? It angers you when you hear it or see it. We, some of us, who saw it happening in front of us—what do you think were our feelings then? We learnt the lesson of discipline, imposed by our captain. Without discipline the bravest man is a useless soldier. Therefore, whatever we saw, and however much it angered us and induced us to retaliate, we restrained and controlled ourselves and only strengthened our resolve to resist till we could put an end to such a happening.

Its mark is left not only on India but on England and on the entire world. It has left its mark on us and today in India we feel we have something in us which we did not realise before. We feel that we have also something in us which will knock down the mighty British Empire. We cannot prophesy how long it will take us to win our freedom. We are at any rate conscious today of strength enough to win and we are confident and optimistic of success. We do not very much care what happens in conferences and the like. The fundamental question is always one of the inner strength and of the sanction we have

behind us. If you and I have strength we shall go forward and we shall get the results of our strength. If our nation is not strong enough to get what it deserves, do you think we shall win by our lawyers' quibbles and arguments? We have been engaged in doing real work in building up the strength of India and we know we shall build it enough in a large measure, and because we know the process now of building it we shall go forward and do not very much care what happens in the near future. *We have to keep ourselves prepared, and those who have* gathered here in such a large number should consider what they are prepared to do to help this movement and those persons who are connected with this movement. You must put that question and try to answer it yourselves. The future depends on your answer to such a question. That is why I have a horror of demonstrations, processions and shouting of slogans. Very often people who shout do nothing else. We are in for a big thing in this country. India has started something which is going to make a lot of difference not only for India but for the whole world. We are in for a big thing and we intend to see it through. Take it from me that there are men and women determined to see it through. It will be folly to imagine that the work before us is easy work. It is dangerous work and it has risks. But we have qualities of grit and endurance which can be compared to that of the bulldog. We embarked on this struggle because there was no other way for it. Now it all depends on the measure of response that we get from the men and women of India. I hope the answer will be one which will induce you to do something solid and to prepare yourselves for more action I hope you will therefore at the present moment strengthen in every way that national movement and the national organisation and also help in the boycott of foreign cloth and liquor. We must eliminate foreign cloth from India and we have included this in the terms of the truce. You have to help us in these things. Above all, get ready in *mind and body for a greater call that may come.* Get clear ideas and be in a fit condition, like an athlete, to face the pistol.

21. Address to Bar Association, Mysore[1]

Though it is nearly twelve years since I ceased *to take any interest* in law, it is for the first time that I have had the good fortune now of

1. 1 June, 1931. *The Hindu*, 4 June 1931.

being invited by persons who are members of the profession to which I originally belonged. I have on many an occasion given expression to very severe criticism about the profession in general and about the members of the bar in India because the lawyer is generally prone to lose sight of the vital facts of life and be sordidly ridden by precedents and sections of law. That has been so. Yet one must admit that a large portion of public life has been shared by lawyers, and there might be cases when law has been helpful to them in solving the riddles of life. It is, however, a fact that the brightest of our intellectuals have chosen the profession for want of any other opening. The lawyer is apt to be parochial in his outlook and I fear that any system of law which does not receive the sanction of the community to which it applies is bound to be retrograde in its operation. You all know that within the brief space of one to one and a half years there has not been any change either of the legal or the constitutional aspect of India, but still the status of India has tremendously increased and Indians are held in higher esteem than they have ever been before. Even persons who had worked against the Congress are being, since the last one or one and a half years, held high in esteem because of the fact that the national movement has enveloped them also. This is a point which all lawyers may now and then seriously ponder over and contribute their mite towards the national upheaval.

22. Reply to Addresses at Bangalore[1]

I thank you for your welcome, for your reception and for your addresses of welcome. I thank my comrades and co-workers of the district and city Congress committees, the Youth League, the Mysore State Congress and the Arya Samaj, and in thanking you, I should like you to remember, as I have no doubt you do remember, that when you present address to indrviduals whose names you are acquainted with, when you welcome them, you should always remember that the real credit for the good campaign that we had last year, for the great fight that we had last year—the real credit does not belong to an individual here and an individual there. You know that the credit belongs to the women, and thousands of volunteers and workers, who worked and worked, not to

1. 2 June 1931. From *The Hindu*, 3 June 1931.

catch the public eye but behind the scenes, without any expectation of congratulations given to them. They worked because they wanted to do their best for the cause of the country. Do not imagine that the mighty movement that we had last year was the making of only a few leaders. The movement was in a large measure due to the great captain, Mahatmaji. The movement was the Indian people in action, millions of people in action. Therefore we produced the great results, not so much the political results, but the moral and psychological results, which have made for India a place in the world and an influence which we have not had for some generations past. Now Indians go out of India not with so much of degradation and slavery about them as they went before. Today you go out of India with something of the glory of India about you. People respect you, people honour you and people are interested in you and ask you to tell them all about India and ask all about Mahatmaji. Such is the wonderful force of that mighty personality, such is the power of the man whom we have got as our leader.

You have also to honour the womanhood of India, who really might be said to have shouldered the greatest burden in this movement. They came out of their homes at the time of the greatest crisis when most of the workers in thousands had gone to prison. There was some risk of the movement slackening but the women came out and faced the heat of the fray. This movement has set the example for the rest of India. So wonderful have been its effects that it is impossible to put down the people of India. Again, if in the campaign some people played a prominent part, how did they do so? It was their privilege to play a prominent part because of the tremendous spirit they derived from the rank and file, because after all a leader is ultimately made by his following. The strongest of leaders become weak, when the following becomes weak. If you want to be strong and want your leaders to be strong, be strong yourselves. We know that today there is that spirit in the nation. India today is strong because millions of people are prepared to go ahead. Leader after leader came forward and even when 70,000 people, men and women, went to jail there was no lack of leaders. Leadership was rightly vested in the nation as a whole. Therefore we know that there is no danger to India. Nothing can happen which can upset our movement.

But, there is the problem of the future. One does not want to look back in the past. Greater than the past is going to be the future. Today we are in a period of truce. The Congress has given its word to the government that it will observe the conditions of the truce. We have agreed to a provisional settlement, and having given our word, we shall all stand by that word and honour its conditions rigorously. But remember, it is only a provisional settlement. If we can get peace on

terms of India's freedom in accordance with the National Congress, well and good. Nobody wants to suffer unnecessarily and go through a tremendous campaign. But we want freedom more than peace. We cannot make any peace which does not bring with it complete freedom for India—not only political but also social and economic freedom as well, because the National Congress stands today not only for political freedom, but even more so for economic and social freedom. If peace comes with freedom, well and good. If peace cannot be obtained with freedom, then there will be no real peace and there will be war.

Therefore, it is up to us to keep ready both for peace and also for a breakdown of the negotiations. It is up to us all to observe the terms of the truce. Boycott of foreign cloth and picketing of liquor shops have to continue. We must concentrate our attention on the strengthening of the Congress organisation We must train volunteers and discipline them. We must concentrate on getting ourselves ready for the great movement of action whenever it comes. India is going to play a big part and our movement is going to be an even bigger one than the big one which we had. Do not get left behind when the stream of India's freedom goes forward.

India is one and India is going to remain one. So there can be no question of a division as Indian India and Indian states. This is one fundamental fact of which you need not have the slightest doubt. India is not going to be divided, for India is going to have a federation, as probably she will have. But it does not mean that the kind of federation is the one suggested by the Round Table Conference, because in my opinion it is a ridiculous and absurd kind of federation. What manner of federation we will have, I cannot say offhand. But you cannot have different units in the federation with different positions and status. There might be some transitional arrangement. In any event it must be certain that even if there is any kind of compromise on this issue, it can be subject only to certain fundamental rights in the states. An assurance that these rights will be protected properly is absolutely necessary. Also, there should be recognition of the fact that the people of the states cannot be ignored but must be represented in the federation. The ideal is identical both to the Indian states and to the rest of India. In the ultimate ideal, both of them must have the same status. Now we want to concentrate our fight against the outsider. We want peaceful negotiations. If peace comes to us in that way, well and good.

I hope that the welcome addresses and the reception indicate that the people of the Indian states are prepared for anything that might come in the future.

Organisation and discipline are the symbols of preparation. Therefore it is best for us to utilise the time we have now to train ourselves to become soldiers of India.

23. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit[1]

Bardoli
8 6 31

Nan darling,

Our wanderings are over, and although we are far from home, we are back again in the field of our labours and in more familiar surroundings than we found in the far south. Yesterday we reached Bombay, thinking that we would stay there some days. But on arrival I found a summons from Bapu awaiting me and to Bardoli I came. Tonight I travel back with him to Bombay. Probably I shall be in Bombay some three or four days and then I may go to Poona with Kamala and Indu. It will be the middle of June before we get back to Allahabad.

I had your letter and Betty's at Hyderabad. I wanted to write to you from there but even the 'social' programme arranged by Sarojini—politics, of course, are not encouraged in the dominions of H.E.H.—was heavy enough and left no leisure. Indeed ever since we landed at Tuticorin on the 23rd of last month we have been rushing along from place to place and function to function with little rest and less peace. It has been a pleasant enough tour, we have had a cordial welcome everywhere, and we have seen many places worth seeing. Impressions crowd in upon me as I write and yet they are beginning to fade already, and soon what is vivid now will be but a memory. Practically all our touring from Tuticorin to Mysore was done by motor car. It was only at Mysore that we finally took to the railway.

From Tuticorin we went to Tinnevelly and then to Cape Comorin or Kanya Kumari as the name should be. Kumari has been corrupted to Comorin. Right at the tip of India stands the shrine of Kanya Kumari, the Virgin Goddess, and so virgin and inaccessible is she that the likes of us, who had crossed the seas, were not admitted to her holy presence. But right up till midnight we sat by the sea and watched the meeting of the eastern with the western waters. And it seemed to us as if we

1. Vijayalakshmi Pandit Papers, N.M.M.L.

were literally sitting at the feet of India, and the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal were competing with each other in paying homage to the old lady. It was a peaceful spot, this southern tip of India, and the noise and the tumult seemed very far.

From Comorin we went to Nagercoil, the southernmost town in India —for Comorin is just a village—and then we proceeded to Trivandrum. There were crowds and addresses of welcome at frequent stages, and triumphal arches and pavilions erected across the road. So much trouble and expense, and we stopped there barely two minutes to be garlanded. Our motor journey through Travancore State threatened almost to become one continuous procession. There were so many stoppages, and at many places music and a short procession had been arranged. We passed scores of schools on the way. There seemed to be a school every mile or even less and all the little children from Tara's age upwards stood in lines along the road to see us pass by. Thus even a motor journey made us realise how advanced Travancore was in the matter of education. It is stated that 100% of the school going age go to school. And Cochin State has about the same percentage.

We reached Trivandrum late on the 25th night, but late as it was there was a huge crowd waiting for us. They surrounded our car and became so excited that it became impossible for the car to move. So I decided to get down and mix with the crowd and lead it away. I succeeded but the young men in the crowd became even more worked up by my presence and started shouting and dancing. Something of the spirit of the crowd took possession of me also, and so we marched along the main streets of Trivandrum with the shopkeepers and others gaping at us and not knowing what was happening. I was getting tired and wanted the car, but the cars had all disappeared. We sat down, many hundreds of us, by the roadside and I addressed them but still no car. So we decided to walk on. A short cut to our place of abode lay through the fort area which was a public area containing the palaces, shops, etc. We tried to go through this but were stopped by the Travancore Army! Mind you, not one or two men, but quite a crowd of men with muskets barred our way, imagining perhaps that we intended storming the fort or the palace. Every gate was similarly guarded and we had to take a long round before we reached our house.

The next morning I received an address from the municipality and in my reply I referred to the incidents of the day before in a manner not complimentary to the State of Travancore. Soon after I had a call from high police officials to apologise and to make it clear that they had nothing to do with the stoppage and that it was all the fault of the army people.

From Trivandrum we went to Quilon where we spent a pleasant hour on the backwaters; and then to Alleppey—strange names for India. From Alleppey we went by boat *via* the backwaters to Kottayam. They are very beautiful, the backwaters of Malabar, and to travel along them on a moonlit evening is a delightful experience. But beautiful as they are, they grow monstrous, and one wearies a little of them in the day time. In Alleppey we met an old Syrian Bishop, the head of the Nestorian Christians today. The once powerful Nestorian church which extended all over Central Asia and parts of Europe and Africa, is now confined to a small corner of South India. Kottayam is a centre of Syrian Christians—not Nestorians. George Joseph lived somewhere in the neighbourhood. The Syrian Christians are supposed to have come to India in the first century or two of the Christian era.

From Kottayam we went to Ernakulam by boat again from midnight to six in the morning. It was not a very comfortable journey. A crowd of Gujarati volunteers, who had come to do us honour, crowded the boat and made the night a trial to us by their conversation and movements. At Ernakulam we went straight to Tatapuram and met Jal.[2] In the director's bungalow at Tatapuram we came across again, to our joy, modern sanitary arrangements in the bathrooms, etc. The south of India may be very beautiful, but their ideas on the subjects of lavatories and bathrooms are extraordinary.

From Tatapuram we paid a short visit to Cochin which is just half an hour by motor boat. After meetings and addresses and various visits we went to see an old Jewish synagogue which belongs to a very curious crowd—the white jews of Cochin. These white Jews keep quite apart from the black Jews; mostly they marry among themselves and as they are a very small community now—about a hundred—they are getting pale and yellow and sickly. As we went through the white Jew quarter which we were told was like old Jerusalem (!) we saw the Jewish women and children going towards their temple in gala attire. We found that we had come just when the whole community was gathering together to witness a circumcision. A tremendous row was going on inside the synagogue. It was difficult to make out if the people there were quarrelling or weeping or wailing. But our conjectures were quite mistaken. What was happening was merely a recitation from the *Talmud*, suitable for the occasion. Everyone present—man, woman or child—was reciting

2. Jal Naoroji, grandson of Dadabhai Naoroji and a close friend of the Nehru family; d. 1938.

or shouting at the top of his or her voice and the din was hardly bearable. We were proudly informed, however, that the method of recitation and intonation had been carefully preserved for several thousand years and was identical with that of Abraham or some other ancient gentleman. The novelty of the place held us in spite of the din. The women seemed to wear anything they could lay their hands upon. There were some in saris and some in European dresses and some in loose pyjamas and some in a kind of लङ्गोट[3] Plenty of silks and satins and कारचोब.[4] It was a curious medley and the whole thing seemed a pantomime.

We would not have stayed for the ceremony itself but we were pressed by our companion, a white Jew himself, to stay on. Probably they would have been offended if we came away without seeing it. So we stayed on and saw a babe about a month old circumcised. Ordinarily we were told this took place within a week or so of birth.

I felt tired out at Ernakulam and so we decided to steal a day and rest there. This enabled us to inspect the Tata factories, the Cocogem plant and the wonderful new soap with which Jal expects to astonish India in the course of the next few months. It is to be called the 'Jal' soap.

From Ernakulam we went to Trichur where we had a mighty meeting Here we saw Malabar dancing and specially their famous Kathakali, a mute play supposed to resemble greatly the Java mute plays. I liked the Kathakali very much.

Then to Calicut where a strange incident took place. Always, something happens if people take me out in procession. I can't stand being dragged about and usually I jump out of the car. At Calicut I got fed up with the rate of progress—I jumped out of the car and started walking ahead of it briskly. This was not very successful, so I seized hold of a bicycle from a volunteer and cycled away, the poor volunteer running on in front to show me the way! It was a curious sight and the assembled multitude was much taken aback and did not know what to make of it. Their garlands remained unused, except for one adventurous youth who made a successful attempt to lassoo me with his garland.

From Calicut to Coimbatore, where we had perhaps the biggest of our meetings. And then away by car to Ooty—two hours stop there, a visit to the botanical gardens, etc.,—and off again—stops and addresses

3 Loin cloth.
4 Embroidered cloth.

on the way. At one place a procession and a big meeting and a municipal reception, and at last at about 10 p.m., Mysore, after having motored about 195 miles that day. We were the guests of the Maharaja and were comfortably installed in a guest house. We spent a busy day in Mysore, which included several meetings and addresses, visits to the Cauvery dam and to the Art and Technological Institutes—a short interview with the Maharaja and dinner with the Dewan, Sir Mirza Ismail,[5] who tried to induce me to agree to go to the Round Table Conference. My companion at dinner was Sir H S Gour's[6] daughter—the father was also somewhere at the dinner table. The young lady seems to have undergone some beauty treatment which has brightened up her complexion. She seemed to be a little more intelligent than her father.

Then Bangalore—vast crowds and an amazing programme from early morning to night. The flowers and garlands and bouquets we received in Bangalore and Mysore must have cost many hundreds of rupees, perhaps a thousand. We got enormous and most beautiful garlands by the hundred. In our car we were almost in flowers and our railway compartment became a bower or a florist's shop, whichever way you like to put it.

A long twenty four-hour railway journey from Bangalore took us to Hyderabad. We were surprised to find Sarojini, Padmaja and Leilamani[7] boarding our train at a previous station. I did not expect Padmaja would be well enough, but she is a funny girl. She looks well and almost immediately after, all her healthy look vanishes and she looks terribly ill. Some pushing about at Hyderabad station was too much for her and she fainted in our car which she reached with difficulty.

The Hyderabad government was much exercised as to what to do with me. There had been talk of serving me with an order not to indulge in political work but wiser counsels prevailed and nothing was said to me. But probably a hint was dropped to Sarojini to keep me away from mischief. She was keen on my not mixing myself up in public functions. I wanted to rest myself but any inhibition or prohibition

5. (1883 1959), Dewan of Mysore, 1926 41, delegate to the three Round Table Conferences, Prime Minister of Jaipur, 1942 46, Prime Minister of Hyderabad 1946 47.
6. (1872 1949); leader of the opposition in the Central Assembly, 1927-34, first Vice Chancellor of Delhi University, founder and Vice-Chancellor of Saugor University; Member of the Constituent Assembly
7. Leilamani Naidu (1903 1959); daughter of Sarojini Naidu, member of the Indian Foreign Service, 1948 58

mbs me up the wrong way. If a formal order had been served on me I would probably have broken it, technically at least, or else I would not have gone to Hyderabad. Socially, we had a busy time—Sarojini arranged a number of gatherings. I met all the big officials to the accompaniment of 'Mahatma Gandhi *ki jai*' which was being shouted by large crowds surrounding our house. I met younger people also and found that there was still some little spirit in them. But Hyderabad is a miserable place to live in. Only a worm can stand it for any length of time, but even a worm turns and so far the Hyderabadis have given no exhibition of turning.

On my arrival at the Golden Threshold[8] my first visitors were the Superintendent of Police and the Kotwal of Hyderabad. They offered me their services! A gentle way of telling me that they were interested in me.

And so on to Bombay, with midnight meetings on the way and a great gathering at Sholapur station at 1.30 a.m. and a big crowd at Victoria Terminus.

It has been a great tour, full of incident and interest. Do not judge of it by this letter which is apt to read like an abstract from a guide-book. Everywhere the crowds and the welcomes were overwhelming, and everywhere the welcome was not so much to me as to the Nehru family. Our family has captured the imagination of the millions in this country and 'Nehru' has become a magic word with which you can conjure. It is a great honour and a great responsibility. I feel a little frightened and overwhelmed by my own popularity. It is a great burden to shoulder. So much is expected of one, and one can do so little.

I have utilised part of the afternoon in writing this letter to you. It is Bapu's मौन[9] day and I have to wait till he speaks. The time is drawing near now and my letter must also therefore end. I wonder if the letter is readable. I dosed at several places. However it will give you some idea of our doings.

Give my love to Betty and share this letter with her.

Love,

Your loving
Jawahar

8. Sarojini Naidu's residence at Hyderabad.
9. Silence.

24. On Indian Labour in Ceylon[1]

Sir,

I am far from Lanka but distant echoes from it manage to reach me even here. I am told that some remarks of mine about labour conditions in the Ceylon plantations have been resented and criticised by some people who have described me as a maker of mischief. I am accused of trying to upset the harmony that prevails between the employer and the employed, and sometimes, taking pity on my ignorance, my critics have pointed out to me the many benefits that have come to Indian labourers in Ceylon. In particular, stress is laid on the fact that Indian labour is better off in Ceylon than in its homelands in South India, and a sufficient proof of this is the continuous stream of Indian humanity to Ceylon. Further, it is said that labour conditions in the plantations have vastly improved during the last decade and employers have spent large sums of money in building labour lines and providing other amenities.

I do not deny this. I am well aware that labour conditions have greatly improved in the last few years. I know well also that conditions in South India are bad and starvation drives thousands to seek a living in Ceylon. India has been exploited and misgoverned for generations past and it is no wonder that millions starve here and are driven to accept even a bare pittance so that they may carry on a miserable existence. That is fundamentally the basis and *raison d'etre* of our urge for political and economic freedom.

But admitting all this, I ventured to describe the attempt that is being made to lower the wage of the Indian labourer as a scandalous thing. In the past years, when dividends of 80 per cent or 100 per cent were declared, what part of them went to the labour that created them? And when the slump comes, the first to suffer must be the labourer. Even in these days of economic depression, to declare a dividend of 35 per cent and in the same breath to talk of lowering the minimum wage seems to me to indicate a mentality that is a danger to society. It is this mentality which always tries to pay the least possible wage to keep body and soul together and at the same time seeks to wring out the biggest dividends from the labour of these wage slaves.

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Ceylon Daily News*. Republished in *The Hindu*, 11 July 1931.

1. To Gopal Singh Khalsa[1]

July 1st, 1929

Dear Mr. Gopal Singh,[2]
Your two letters dated April 24th and May 17th have reached me almost simultaneously thus demonstrating the interest that our government takes in our correspondence. I shall gladly send you such literature as we may publish.

I have noted what you say about Miss Grace Boroughs.[3] You know well the kind of persons that our rajas and maharajas are. How can you expect the Congress to improve them? If we did not have a number of people who are always trying to ape the foreigner not in matters of science and intellect but in the foolish things of life we would not be quite so far from freedom.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 16/1929, p. 33, N.M.M.L.
2. He was then general secretary, Hindustan National Party, San Francisco, U.S.A.
3. An American tourist who was the guest of some Indian princes

2. To K. T. Shah[1]

July 12th, 1929

My dear Mr. Shah,
Your letter of the 1st July reached me rather late owing to my absence from Allahabad. I now enclose, as desired by you, a copy of the draft you had sent me.[2]

I agree with you that with an editorial board in command it may be possible to fit in various contributions and to reduce angularities a great deal. My chief difficulty is that I do not quite see how the various persons you have mentioned are going to cooperate or collaborate together. My father is not likely to be of much help. He is not a

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-61/1929, pp. 1-3, N.M.M.L.
2. For a compilation on Indian politics, economics and culture that Shah proposed to publish for propagating the Indian cause abroad.

man who likes to do much writing and he is generally busy with a number of things. So I doubt if he will agree. Ansari is also a man whose time is taken up by various things and he is not likely to agree. I cannot say anything about Mukul Dey[3] and Raman.[4] But very probably they would be valuable contributors. Kamaladevi might also be useful in a limited way. I do not see exactly how Jinnah will fit in I find there is not very much in common between him and me so far as our outlooks are concerned. Do you think he accepts your economic interpretation of history? Or, for the matter of that, that he has ever given any thought to it or knows much about it? Brelvi ought to help. I agree that Ramanand Chatterji[5] is cast in too ancient a mould to look at things from a modern viewpoint. Tagore is, I suppose, too 'eminent' a person for us even to approach and Mrs. Naidu might contribute a poetic chapter but would otherwise not fit in with your argument. Sivaswami Aiyar,[6] I do not know well. Probably he is good in his own way. Is he not rather stodgy and exceedingly moderate in his outlook? Dange[7] is in jail and likely to remain there. So you might leave him out. Dr. Sumant Mehta ought to be helpful. Sir Jagdish Bose[8] and Subhas Bose are both in their own way very good but I am not sure if they will fit in with your scheme. There is just a possibility of their doing so to a certain extent. As for Satyamurti, it is difficult to say what his viewpoint is in anything. He changes so often. Radhakrishnan,[9] of course, we have already approached. We have sent him a copy of your draft for his suggestions.

I shall write to you more later.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Mukul Chandra Dey (b 1895); well known artist, principal, Government School of Art, Calcutta, 1928 43, curator, National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, 1955-57.
4. C. V. Raman (1888 1970); professor of physics, Calcutta University, 1917-33, director, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, 1933-43; awarded the Nobel Prize for physics in 1930.
5. (1865 1943); Editor of the *Modern Review* for several years.
6. P. S Sivaswami Aiyar (1864 1946); Advocate General, Madras, 1907 12, member of the Executive Council, Madras, 1912-17; a leading Liberal politician
7. S. A. Dange (b 1899); member, A I C.C., 1928, 1929 and 1936, member, *Lok Sabha*, 1957 62 and 1967-71; one of the founders of the communist movement in India and chairman of the Communist Party of India since 1962
8. Jagdish Chandra Bose (1858 1937); an eminent botanist famous for his researches establishing that plants are not manimate.
9. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (b 1888); professor of philosophy at Calcutta and Oxford, ambassador to the Soviet Union, 1949-52; Vice-President of India, 1952 62, President of India, 1962 67.

3. To S. A. Brelvi[1]

July 16th, 1929

My dear Brelvi,
I have your letter of the 14th July. Of course, your Congress Muslim Party has my fullest support and goodwill.[2] I am not sure, however, if the support of a person like me who, I am told, is secretly conspiring against the Muslims and in the interests of the Hindu Mahasabha, is likely to be of much value. Such value as it has, you are welcome to it.

Personally, I am a little doubtful of the desirability of fighting communalism through communal organisations but it may be a necessary step. Of that you are the judge. In any event, any attempt to fight communalism, in whatever shape or form, must be welcomed.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5/1929 (Pt. II), p. 273, N.M.M.L.
2. Brelvi was the chairman of the Bombay branch of the All India Nationalist Muslim Party which had been formed in July 1929.

4. To S. A. Brelvi[1]

July 23, 1929

My dear Brelvi,
Mr. T. Braganca Cunha, the secretary of the Congress committee in Goa, desires me to write to you about him. He is at present interested in getting back a large number of people who had been taken under false pretences from Goa to the Assam plantations. I know personally how terrible is the condition of the people in these plantations. It is real slavery of the worst kind. I wish we could raise the matter on a big scale in India. Events however force our hands and crisis after crisis comes, which prevents attention being given to such matters.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. A-4/1929-31, p. 35, N.M.M.L.

I understand that a new governor is coming to Portuguese India. He has announced that he is coming to suppress the nationalist movement here. The gentleman is a military man responsible for the ruthless suppression of a revolt in Porto[2] last year. His advent has been preceded by Indians in the Portuguese services in Goa being replaced by Portuguese. It may be that you will get communications on this subject from Braganca Cunha. He is a tolerably reliable individual. His English is weak. If they are worthy of publication, I hope you will publish them. The press in Goa, as you perhaps know, has been gagged by a stiff censorship.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 A town in Portugal.

5. To Dan Singh[1]

August 14th, 1929

Dear Mr. Dan Singh,[2]
I have your letter of the 12th July. I agree with you that it serves little purpose to talk about India's message to the world so long as India is unfree. Our job is to get free first and then to talk of messages I do not personally believe in any country being the chosen of the Lord. I think that all countries have some message for the rest of humanity and none have a monopoly of this.

I thank you for your good wishes. As for your imagining that I am going to do great things in the future, I would only say that you and our friends abroad should not put too much faith on any individual. The task is too big for anyone single-handed. What the future will bring the future alone will show.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No FD 16/1929, p. 39, NMML.
2. Then a resident of New York, he later became a leader of the Methodist Church in India.

6. To Rash Mohan Roy[1]

August 16th, 1929

Dear Sir,[2]
I have received your letter of the 5th August together with your note on the Hindu Mission.[3] I have read your note with interest It seems to me from reading your note that the people of the Khasi and the Jaintia hills are not in any need of outside missions. Their ideals seem to be of the highest and they have the advantage of having no caste system or untouchability. Further, the women seem to be economically free.

Personally, I do not believe in proselytising missions. Of course, any person who gives education or medicine or otherwise helps the people should be welcome.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40/1929 (Pt. III), p. 487, N.M.M.L.
2. A resident of Mawkhar in Assam
3. Members of this mission, led by Swami Satyananda, were then active in Assam.

7. To the Editor, The Scholar[1]

Camp Calcutta
August 19th, 1929

Dear Sir,
I have your letter of the 10th August. I am sorry I am wholly unable to send you a contribution for your annual. I should have liked to do so as I appreciate the good work that your journal is doing.

I should like to send you, however, my best wishes. During the few days I had the privilege of spending in Kerala last year I was charmed

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40/1929 (Pt. III), p 517, N.M.M.L.
A journal published from Palghat.

by the beauty of the land and I felt how, in many ways, it was an ideal place to live in. At the same time I received many shocks when I saw or heard of the treatment of man by man in this beautiful land. Today all over the world men who think at all aspire to social equality in the widest sense of the term, including as far as is possible, economic equality, but in Kerala there is the very opposite of social equality. Every newspaper and magazine must therefore make it its first business to join the crusade against this relic of an ancient past which is unjust in itself and is holding back India from her onward march. I trust that your monthly will also help in this crusade.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. To Shambu Nath Hakhu[1]

Camp Calcutta
August 25th, 1929

Dear Shambunathji,[2]
Your letter has been forwarded to me here. I am sorry to learn of your difficulties. I am afraid, however, that I am wholly unable to write to the various gentlemen you have named. I am very strongly opposed to this method of securing appointments by personal recommendations and I have not written any such letters in the past in spite of great pressure.

I really cannot understand why a strapping young person like you should go about begging for appointments. I feel you have gone to work the wrong way. If you had attached yourself to any municipality as an unpaid apprentice you would have found it much easier to get on later.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C C. File No G-40/1929 (Pt. IV), p 597, N.M.M.L.
2 A resident of Srinagar, Kashmir.

9. To Devi Das Vaid[1]

Camp Gorakhpore
October 7th, 1929

Dear Sir,[2]

I have your letter. I do not know how I can be of help to you. Do you not think that it is not very fair to try one's luck in the usual channels opened by the government and having failed therein to turn towards national service? Still, I am glad that you desire to do public work. But please remember that public work does not consist of speaking at meetings or writing in the press. That is only the show part of it and the least important part of it. Indeed, it would be a good thing if our young men paid no attention to it. An intellectual person who wants to do public work must qualify for it by an ardent study of politics and economics and sociology and the many theories for the betterment of society that are being discussed today. From your letter it appears that you have not made any such study yet. You yourself say that you know very little of politics. How then can you expect to help?

You seem to be afraid of working as an ordinary volunteer. Of course, it is good that you do not desire to be a mere demonstrator but you must not imagine that because of a little intellectual training you are superior to the average volunteer or the manual worker. In our country there is a strange idea that a person with a little literary training is superior to the manual worker. The result is a large number of unemployed in our educated classes.

I am afraid I cannot help you to get a suitable training. I do not know what you think about me. Evidently you have a very wrong conception when you talk of my "train of followers". I do not carry about a train or even a single individual with me. I do not believe in this system of people having followers of this kind. A young man like you, who has gone through college, should surely have learnt enough to carry your own education further and to train yourself.

It is wholly immaterial what the dominating public men of the Punjab may or may not be. If they lack in intelligence or independence

1. AICC. File No. G-40(a)/1929(Pt. III), pp 495-497, NMML.
2. A resident of Lahore.

or sincerity, it is all the more reason for energetic young men to do honest public service. There is always room for such a young man if he has got enough go in him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. To Nripendra Chandra Bannerji[1]

October 7th, 1929

My dear Bannerji,
Thank you for your letter. When in Lucknow I got a telegram from Subhas asking me for my consent to the inclusion of my name in the All India Memorial Committee for Jatin Das. I consented. I could not do otherwise. I did not know in what relation this committee stood to your committee. It is very unfortunate that there should always be the element of competition in our national activities. There is so much work to be done and so few workers. Yet somehow each one of us wants to take the credit for work oneself and not to allow others to do anything important.

The names you mention for your Board of Eleven are good. Youth leagues will of course help you.

I am afraid you are not likely to remain out of jail for long. The government seems to be bent on having you. Perhaps most of us will follow you a little later. It is a funny world.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC, File No. G 64/1929, p. 61, NMML.

11. To T. L. Ahobalacharya[1]

Camp Gorakhpore
October 7th, 1929

Dear Sir,[2]

I have received a copy of your open letter addressed to me. The letter raises so many interesting questions that it is impossible for me to answer it with any satisfaction unless I write a long essay or a little book on the subject. One thing, however, I should like to suggest to you. Either the various men and women in our country who are working in the political as well as in other fields and who do not happen to be working exactly in the manner you would like them to do are are all knaves or fools or else they may have sufficient justification for the kind of work they may be doing. I suppose you would agree with me that there are a fair number of intelligent and honest people in the public life of our country. Some of them, at any rate, have taken the trouble of studying social, economic and political questions. Some of them also have taken the trouble of studying the cooperative movement of which you are such an advocate. If this is so then it does not help at all to be imagining that everybody else except oneself is mistaken

I may inform you that so far as I am personally concerned I am a very firm believer in the cooperative principle. I believe in it so much that I would like to introduce it in all departments of the state, including the whole structure of government. I would like to have a cooperative commonwealth and even to extend it on an international scale. If that is the ideal, the problem before us is how we can reach it. Cooperation has made a most tremendous progress in some of the Western countries. It has made very little progress in India. Why is this so? Partly because the government is not really desirous of increasing the cooperative spirit of the people. The whole structure of cooperation in India is an official ridden structure.

It is of course possible to some extent to encourage private cooperative organisations and no doubt this should be done wherever possible.

1. AICC. File No. G-64/1929, pp 63-64, NMML.
2. (b. 1906); a journalist associated with labour organizations.

But it cannot be done on any large scale except by the state or with state help. It becomes necessary, *therefore, to have political control* before we *can advance rapidly in any* direction, whether that direction is cooperation or education or sanitation or anything else. What is necessary really is the development of the spirit of cooperation which is singularly absent in India. That can only come with proper education which is wholly lacking.

While, therefore, we *can in our own way* try to help by means of cooperation or otherwise, real help can only come on a nation-wide scale after political control is gained. That control, I agree with you, should be gained by the peasantry. Let the peasants control the destinies of India, and I have no doubt that the peasantry will flourish exceedingly. The problem before us is—*how is the peasantry going to control India?* To that we have to address ourselves. To ignore the political problem is to waste our energies in a fruitless effort.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. To Master Tara Singh[1]

10/10/29

Dear Master Tara Singh,[2]

I have to thank you for your kind invitation to attend the session of the Sikh League at Lyallpur. I would have very much liked to attend but unhappily it is hardly possible for me to do so now....

I have no doubt that under your able guidance the Sikh League will lay down a brave and *forward policy for the future.* Unhappily, during the past year there has been a great deal of misapprehension and mistrust and many Sikh friends have expressed their disagreement with certain provisions in the All Parties Report.[3] The recent statement on

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-93/1929, p. 5, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. (1885-1967); prominent Sikh leader of the Punjab, a supporter after 1947 of the 'Punjabi Suba'.
3. The annual session of the Sikh League held at Gujranwala on 22 October 1928 passed a resolution objecting to the communal representation proposed in the *Nehru Report and demanding instead reservation of at least 30%* of the seat in the local legislature and the same proportion of representation from the Punjab to the central legislature on a system of joint electorates and plural constituencies.

this subject by Pandit Motilal Nehru, I hope, has gone a long way in allaying these suspicions and removing the mistrust.[4] The suggestions made in the All Parties Report obviously cannot be considered final and irrevocable. *It is for all of us to meet together in a spirit of mutual* confidence and forbearance and try to find other and better solutions of the problems that confront us, if the proposals already made are inadequate.

Personally, as you know, I am opposed to the idea of political or economic rights being given to an individual or a group on the basis of religion. In other words, I am entirely opposed to what is now usually called 'communalism'. The profession and practice of a religion ought to give cultural rights, if there is a separate culture, and of course religious rights. But beyond that, I feel, is an invasion of another domain. I have no doubt that when India is free these communal troubles and friction will automatically disappear. The country will then have to face more vital issues which affect the community as a whole and not merely a small part of it.

The Sikhs have, during the past eight years, by their disciplined courage, earned an honourable position in the struggle for national freedom. The struggle is entering a new and more critical phase and soon may absorb all our energy and vitality. Already the blood tingles in the veins and the call to the field of action becomes louder and louder. Brave men and women cannot say 'no' to that call, and the Sikhs do not lack brave men and women.

I earnestly trust that at this critical moment in our nation's history your League will take a broad and national view and will throw its full weight on the side of those who seek to put an end to all exploitation in India.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

[4] In his letter of 27 August 1929 to Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Motilal Nehru assured the Sikhs that their legitimate interests would be safeguarded but warned them that boycott of the Congress would be harmful.

13. To K. P. Choubey[1]

Camp Mussoorie
October 21st, 1929

Dear Sir,
I have received your letter and am exceedingly sorry to learn of your difficulties. As you say yourself such cases are not uncommon in our country and it is really not possible to give any kind of individual help. One cannot cure poverty by giving alms but by removing the cause of poverty. It is obvious that you cannot continue borrowing money from your friends and relatives. Probably you will be inclined to get work of a clerical kind and have failed to do so. I would suggest that you should try work which involves manual labour. This is easier to obtain than clerical work. For some foolish reason it is considered below one's dignity to do manual work although living on others' charity is not so considered.

You are young and I would strongly advise you to search for some manual labour which will be good training for you and will help you for the present at least.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC. File No G40/1929 (Pt IV), p. 711, NMML.

14. To S. E. Stokes[1]

December 5th, 1929

My dear Stokes,[2]
It was a great pleasure to hear from you again. During the last few years I have often thought of you and spoken of you to friends. But like *sanyasis* of old you had retired so effectively in the mountains that it was difficult to have news of you.

1. AICC. File No G-40(1)/1929(Pt. III), p 301, NMML.
2. A resident of Kotgarh in the Simla hills. His sympathy for the Indian nationalist movement led to his imprisonment in 1921.

It was very good of you to send me your long note. I have read it once already and I hope to do so again. I must confess that I do not for the moment agree with your viewpoint. I think that the course you suggest will be injurious for us and will delay the day of our freedom. The problem is difficult enough and I do not pretend to know of any ready-made solution. I shall certainly think hard about your suggestions. If even so I do not see my way to agree with them or with any of them, you will, I am sure, understand. We have to steer ourselves by our own lights, however dim they may be. In my case they are dim enough; but what am I to do?

I hope you have been keeping well.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. To Jahangir Vakil[1]

December 6th, 1929

My dear Jahangir,

....As for the Congress, I cannot say what will happen to it after a year or more. It is quite conceivable that it may become a respectable and sober body doing nothing. For the moment, however, it is undoubtedly the most powerful political organisation in the country and it would be folly to ignore it or to break it....

Don't be distressed overmuch and in future do not write to me only a tenth part of what you would like to. Give it hot. It will do me good and you will feel relieved afterwards.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC. File No. G-40(I)/1929(Pt III), P. 311, NMML. Extracts.

16. Message to The Light of the World[1]

The name of the new magazine is very ambitious. I can only hope that it will derive some inspiration from its name, and will take the torch of freedom to the many dark corners in this country where sorrow dwells and misery is a constant companion.

1 9 December 1929. A.I.C.C File No G-40(i)/1929(Pt III), p 373, N.M.M.L
A magazine started in Bombay.

17. To R. V. Dhulekar[1]

Allahabad
January 16th, 1930

My dear Dhulekar,[2]
Thank you for a copy of your open letter to me. I have read it carefully.

Regarding the framing of the constitution I am afraid I do not agree with you that it is necessary at this stage. When the All Parties Committee was constituted they were criticised on the ground that constitutions are framed after the struggle and not before. I think the criticism was justified. India will find no difficulty in evolving her constitution at the right moment. Any present attempt to do so is bound to divert attention from the real struggle.

This does not mean that we should not lay down certain general principles. The first principle that we may take it that the Congress has laid down is the severance of the British connection. The second principle which it has laid down, though not absolutely unequivocally, is that in an independent India there should be no communalism. The third principle, which I should like it to lay down, is the rights of the

1. A.I.C.C File No G-40/1930, pp 141-143, N.M.M.L.
2 Raghunath Vinayak Dhulekar (b 1891), Congressman from Jhansi, imprisoned several times during the freedom movement; member of the U.P. Legislative Assembly, 1937-39 and 1946-50, of the Constituent Assembly, 1946-50, and the Lok Sabha, 1952-57.

peasants and workers. I should like the Congress to adopt an economic programme for them.

I do not quite understand how the Congress as an organisation can interfere with the youth organisation. The two organisations are both necessary to the country and there is no inherent conflict though occasionally there may be criticism of each other. Many of the leading personalities in the youth movement are Congressmen. That is right. But how the Congress as such can start youth movements, I fail to see.

Regarding the national service fund that you suggest, the Working Committee had actually recommended a resolution encouraging provinces to do so on the lines of the U.P. But when the Subjects Committee defeated the resolutions regarding autonomous committees of the Congress we did not put forward the national service resolution. The Working Committee thought that a national service in order to be efficient must keep apart from the party intrigues in Congress committees and should therefore be put in charge of trustees appointed by the provincial committee. When this principle of autonomy was not accepted by the Subjects Committee it was not thought necessary to bring forward a similar resolution regarding national service. I propose, however, to circularise the provincial committees on the subject and recommend to them the example of the U.P. I do not think it is possible at this moment to start any all-India service; provinces must have their particular services.

Regarding the organisation of peasants and labour I have already hinted above, as I stated in my presidential address,[3] that the Congress must lay down an economic programme for them. This programme is not likely to go as far as, for instance, the programme of the T.U.C., but it should go far enough. Apart from laying down this programme and providing for the inclusion of direct representatives of labour organisations on Congress committees I do not think the Congress can do much. I do not think Congress committees as such can start labour unions. As one interested in labour I would object to this because it would mean that committees consisting of all kinds of people are exploiting labour. Labour can only grow on its own feet. Other people coming in will tone it down, and not up. Of course, this does not mean that Congressmen should not identify themselves with labour and help in its organisation. That they must do. Also, the executives of labour organisations and the Congress must cooperate with each other in both the national struggle and the economic struggle.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. See *ante*, section 5, item 2.

18. To C. V. J. Chetty[1]

January 27th, 1930

Dear Sir,[2]
I have your letter of the 20th January. It is difficult for me to deal with the points you raise. It is for the secretary of the All India Spinners' Association to consider them. He will no doubt write to you on the subject. I might say however that I entirely agree with you that we should follow the principle of small profits and quick returns. This is good business. That principle had been adopted by the A.I.S.A. I am not sure how far they can enforce it on semi independent concerns.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No G 40/1930, p 273, NMML.
2 A khaddar merchant of Salem, Tamil Nadu.

19. To K. S. Venkatramani[1]

February 1st, 1930

Dear Mr. Venkatramani,[2]
I have to thank you for your book *Renascent India*[3] which you were good enough to send me some little time ago. Unfortunately I have not had much time to read books recently but your books are so charmingly written that it is a pleasure to read them. I am afraid I do not agree with the solutions offered by you. I doubt very much that India can ever be free unless it goes through the whirlpool.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1 AICC File No G 40/1930, p 321, NMML.
2. A well known writer who wrote *Renascent India*, *Paper Boats*, *A Day with Sambhu* and other books.
3. Published in 1928

20. To Durbar Secretary, Rewa State[1]

February 25th, 1930

Dear Sir,

We have received many complaints in our office about conditions in Rewa State. We are informed *inter alia* that no meetings of any kind are permitted in the state without the special permission of the district magistrate, and meetings of a political kind or in criticism of the administration are never permitted. There is thus no freedom of association in your state; nor, we understand, is there any freedom of speech or press.

Further, we are told that recently a new settlement took place whereunder an enhancement of 50% revenue was made.

It is also stated that Madhusudan Prasad Dixit, a resident and zamindar of Rewa, was arrested about the 10th August 1926, and was secretly sentenced for some offence to 20 years' imprisonment. Attempts made to get a copy of the judgement in the case or to get any particulars about him have entirely failed. The records of the case have not been shown to the lawyers engaged on his behalf.

I mention some allegations made to us here. As a matter of fact many other serious allegations have been made. It is not the custom of this office to give publicity to any such matter without finding out its correctness. I am therefore writing to you to request you if the facts mentioned above are correct or not. On hearing from you the matter will be referred to in the *Congress Bulletin* that is issued from this office from time to time.

I should also like to know if it is possible for people to be sent to your state to carry on personal investigations in regard to the complaints made and if such persons can expect the cooperation of the state authorities in their work.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC. File No G 17/1930 1931, pp. 23 25, NMML.

21. Statement to the Press[1]

I have read the report of the Patiala Enquiry Committee appointed by the Indian States Peoples Conference.[2] To say that I have read it with amazement, is to put it mildly. It has produced a feeling of disgust and nausea in me. Admittedly the enquiry was one-sided and the report is an *ex parte* document, and as such its conclusions cannot be considered as final. But, as it is pointed out, under the circumstances it could not have been otherwise. The evidence that is given certainly supports the conclusion that a strong *prima facie* case has been made out. It is a monstrous thing that such charges should be made and no attempt to disprove them should be made by one who has autocratic control over the lives and property of large numbers of persons. No person, whoever he may be, can honourably remain silent under this accusation; much less can a prince or a public man. For, those who are in charge of public affairs must be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion.

1. Allahabad, 8 March 1930. *The Hindu*, 10 March 1930.
2. This committee was appointed in August 1929 following government inaction on a memorial to the Viceroy from the citizens of Patiala charging the Maharaja with misconduct, misappropriation of public funds and other malpractices. Its report, published in February 1930, upheld the charges.

22. To Sri Prakasa[1]

March 13th, 1930

Dear Sir,

With reference to the resolution of your committee imposing an income-tax of 1% on your members I have to inform you that my personal income is about Rs 150/- per month. This is a rough estimate only as the income is variable, chiefly depending on royalties. As I have not to pay out of this income for my board and lodging and other necessaries, I can give a much larger percentage than 1% for Congress work

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-40/1930, p. 443, N.M.M.L.

I have so far this year given Rs. 210/- to the local Congress committees. To your committee I gave the minimum sum of Rs. 2/- some time ago. I now enclose a cheque for Rs. 98/- thus making the total sum given to your committee, Rs. 100/-. These payments, totalling Rs. 310/-, may be considered the tax for the full year. But I hope to pay more, specially to the local committees, in the course of the year.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

23. To Motilal Nehru[1]

March 28th, 1930

Dear Sir,
Permit me to offer you my grateful thanks for the generous offer you have made of the old Anand Bhawan. It is fitting that this house, which has been associated with the national movement for so many years, should become the property of the nation. It is also in the fitness of things that this dedication to the nation should take place at the auspicious moment when the country is launching on a great national struggle for independence. I am communicating your offer to the members of the Working Committee and, on receipt of their answers, I shall write to you. Meanwhile allow me to express the hope that the old Anand Bhawan, appropriately renamed "Swaraj Bhawan", will play a worthy part in the struggle for freedom and will before long see the establishment of independence in India.

Jawaharlal Nehru
President

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 16731.

24. To Members of the Working Committee[1]

Allahabad
March 28th, 1930

Dear Comrade,

I enclose a copy of a letter dated March 27th from our colleague, Pandit Motilal Nehru, offering his house, the old Anand Bhawan, to the nation. I also enclose a copy of my reply to him.

I think the offer should be accepted. This does not mean that we can take possession of the house soon. In any event it will take a few weeks for Pandit Motilal Nehru to vacate the house, and for us to leave our present office buildings.

I should like, however, members to consider one aspect of this matter. Anand Bhawan is a big rambling house, in some ways particularly fitted for a public institution but at the same time a somewhat expensive house to keep in good condition. The taxes are also fairly heavy. It may be possible to induce the municipality to remit or reduce these taxes on the ground that the building is a national possession, but I cannot be sure of this. Thus the house may become a financial burden on us to some extent at least. It is possible, however, to reduce this burden by suitable arrangements. Anyway, every big house is a burden in this sense.

On the whole I am clearly of opinion that the offer of Pandit Motilal Nehru should be accepted. The Working Committee can consider later to what use we can put such parts of the building as are not occupied by the office.

I shall thank you if you will kindly send me an early answer.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No 16730.

25. To Father[1]

Allahabad
5/4/30

My dear Father,
I received your letter with its enclosures at Rae Bareli station.

I do not think there is any question of the Working Committee or any members of it accepting your offer patronisingly. Jamnalalji, as you know, is a cautious bania and he was probably afraid, as I was at the beginning, that the property though valuable and desirable may prove a white elephant for the Congress. I have no doubt that the Working Committee will accept your offer. But in view of Jamnalalji's telegram it will be necessary to put the matter up at the next meeting of the Working Committee.

I was a little surprised yesterday on my return to Allahabad to learn the details of the dedication ceremony. I had not looked forward to any such dedication at this stage. My idea was that the national flag should be hoisted by you on the 6th April in token of the resolve on your part that the building should be given to the nation. The question of the transfer of the building at this stage did not arise, nor need we have waited for any acceptance or otherwise. This hoisting would have certainly meant that in future the building would be used for a national purpose. What this purpose would be, would depend on the Working Committee and on you. If the Committee was not willing to accept on your terms then it would be open to you to suggest some other national purpose.

Whatever the Working Committee may or may not do, it seems to me clear that Anand Bhawan must in future be used for a public or national purpose. It is right that this should be so, and after your public offer it would not be desirable to treat it as private property.

I would suggest that the dedication ceremony should be proceeded with. In the course of it you might state that owing to shortness of time your offer has not yet been considered by the Working Committee as a whole and so you cannot say definitely whether they agree to your proposals. But whatever their answer might be, so far as you

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

are concerned you have decided that Anand Bhawan should be given to the nation in some form or other. This form can be decided later —meanwhile, in token of your resolve to give the house to the nation, you were performing the dedication ceremony.

Personally, I am convinced that the Working Committee will gratefully accept your offer.

The only other alternative is postponing the dedication as you suggest. This might be done, though personally I prefer the course I have suggested.

The limitations in your gift are three:

1. The house must be used for the headquarters of the Indian National Congress.
2. The trustees should consist of yourself, Gandhiji and I and the members of the Working Committee.
3. The house must not be sold or mortgaged.

I do not think there is likely to be any marked objection to any of these. I do not very much care for the second limitation.

The very fact that you value the house greatly for sentimental reasons is a strong reason why the house should be used for some national purpose and should not be sold to a private owner.

Some of the Working Committee members have already sent their views to the office. If you have not seen these letters, please send for them.

Sri Prakasa is going to Allahabad tonight. You might discuss the matter with him. I have not been able to show him your letter.

Sri Prakasa will also tell you of the happenings in Rae Bareli.

I reach Allahabad by the down mail on Monday the 7th.

Your loving son,
Jawahar

26. To Krishna Nehru[1]

Delhi
21.2.31

Betty darling,

I seem to be hung up here indefinitely and I do not know when I shall return. This is rather disconcerting as there are so many things

1 *Nehru's Letters to His Sister* (London, 1963), pp 19 20.

which I want to do in Allahabad. I had hoped to get a clear week there to settle in consultation with the family our domestic affairs. So far the whole burden had fallen on father and all of us were relieved by his loving care and foresight of a host of difficulties. His amazing love for his children enveloped us and protected us and we lived our lives freed in a large measure from the care and anxiety which most people have to face. The very thought of him was a comfort and he was a tower of strength and a refuge whenever the hard facts of life confronted us. We have to do without him now and as every day passes I feel his absence the more and a terrible loneliness takes hold of me. But we are children of our father and have something of his great strength and courage, and whatever the trials and difficulties that may come our way we shall face them with resolution and with the determination to overcome them. I want so much to discuss the future with all the members of the family. But circumstances have driven me here and I do not know when I shall go back. If I get even a couple of days off I shall go to Allahabad. Meanwhile, I am writing to you, but this letter is a poor substitute for a talk. Soon I hope I shall supplement it with a long talk.

I have not been able to examine father's papers yet. But probably he has not left a will or any directions in regard to the property he has left. It was not necessary for him to leave a formal will as even a hint of his wishes would have had the force of law for us. We have therefore to do without any direction from him and have to decide for ourselves what we should do.

Technically, in law, I suppose I am the heir of his property. But my own inclination is against inheriting property or at any rate living on inherited or unearned increment. Circumstances today are such, however, that if I have to devote myself to public work I cannot at the same time earn a livelihood. After considering the matter impersonally and dispassionately I think it will not be right for me to stop my public activities at this stage and direct my attention to money-making. I have no doubt that I can earn enough, if I so choose, to live in tolerable comfort. But it would not have been father's wish that I should turn to money-making now.

In any event, however, I can only consider myself as a joint sharer in father's property, the other sharers being mother and you. I am not including Nan as she stands in no need of money. I would like you, therefore, to consider yourself as an equal sharer with mother and me of father's property. Indeed, mother and you are the real sharers. I am a trustee for the family property. We shall discuss this matter more when we meet. But I want you to be clear about one thing. You are

in no way dependent on me. You have as much right, indeed more, to father's property as I have.

We have also to discuss other matters—your future programme—what you propose to do. I promised some months back to give you plenty of work. You shall have it if you so desire. But the main thing is to be perfectly clear in one's own mind as to what one wants to do.

Look after mother and yourself.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

27. To Khwaja Ahmad Abbas[1]

March 12, 1931

My dear Friend,[2]

Thank you for your letter of the 7th. You owe me no apology for the letter you sent me to Delhi. I was quite pleased to read it. I like spirit in a young man and it delighted me to find that you were full of it. You are perfectly right in feeling that our opponents are masters in the art of diplomacy and they might mislead us.

I could not remain in Delhi for further discussions as I had to come back to Allahabad for certain ceremonies in connection with my father's death. I shall be back in Delhi in a few days' time when I understand further talks on the question of Hindu-Muslim unity will take place.

Regarding the Indian states and their rulers I have no doubt whatever in my mind that the rulers will have to go completely. Whether it is possible to dispose of them soon or late depends on circumstances.

I am sorry I have not got any photograph of mine at present which I can send you. When I have one, I shall do so.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC File No G-40(KW)(n)/1931 (Pt 1), p. 103, NMML.
2. (b. 1914); well known journalist and film producer.

28. To Chairman, Allahabad Municipal Board[1]

Sir,

It has been brought to my knowledge on my return to Allahabad, after a lengthy absence, that a controversy has arisen in the Board regarding the naming of a park or building. I would not have troubled you or the Board with this letter, if I had not learnt to my surprise that my name was involved in this controversy. I am writing as it is extremely distasteful to me that I should become the subject of a controversy in such a matter.

I do not know exactly what the question at issue is. I gather that some member has proposed that a street or park be named after me. I further understand that some other member has proposed that the late Maulana Mohamed Ali's name should be given either to the same street or park or to another. I am grateful for the kind thought which prompted this conferment of civic immortality on me, but for two reasons I am very much averse to it. The first reason is one of principle. I am strongly of opinion that streets, parks and public buildings should never be named after living persons. When I had the honour of being chairman of your Municipal Board, it was my intention to bring this matter up formally before the Board and to get a resolution passed, if the Board agreed with me, to the effect that no name of a living person be given to any public thoroughfare or building or place of resort. Owing to my resignation, I could not do so, but I have continued to hold the same opinion, and with all respect I would like to bring this before you and the Board that such a resolution would give a very desirable lead to other boards and would eliminate a great deal of personal controversy in future. We are apt to exaggerate the importance of living persons. It is far safer to permit history to judge of their importance before we try to perpetuate it. For this fundamental reason, I would beg you and the Board not to consider my name in this connection. I hope I have many years yet to live, and the time to judge of my work or services is not yet.

My second reason is a personal one. The Maulana was a true comrade of mine with whom I had the honour of standing shoulder to shoulder in many national struggles. It is inconceivable to me that my

1. Written before 14 March 1931. *The Hindu*, 16 March 1931.

name should be pitted against his in any matter, and it would be a matter of grief for me should my own Board, with which I have had such intimate relations, do so. The Allahabad Municipal Board and the city of Allahabad will honour themselves if they perpetuate the name of Maulana Mohamed Ali in our city. I would beg of you, therefore, as well as the Board that my name should not be considered in regard to the naming of any public way or place of resort. Should you desire it, you can place this letter before the members of the Board informally or formally.

Jawaharlal Nehru

29. The Economic Exploitation of India[1]

INSURANCE AND BANKING

For the past ten years India has worked for the boycott of foreign cloth. The exploitation of India has been carried on for long in a variety of ways, some obvious enough, many others veiled and deceptive. Cloth was chosen as the major item of our boycott not only because it represents a great drain from India but also because it has been the classic example of exploitation in India. On the boycott of cloth, therefore, the nation concentrated specially in the course of the last year and met with very great success. The Congress stood primarily for khaddar so that millions of spinners and weavers might profit by the boycott and develop their ancient subsidiary industry again. But in order to make the boycott a complete success every effort was made by the Congress to secure the cooperation of Indian cloth manufacturers, and to this cooperation was due largely the success of the boycott of foreign cloth. Indian manufacturers of cloth have naturally profited by this boycott which was to their advantage. The Congress had hoped that the profits secured by them would not be used for personal advantage but would go towards the betterment of labour which so sorely needs better conditions. The Congress also hoped to induce them to promise to assist in every way in freeing India from other forms of foreign exploitation. It must be realised that cloth is not the only form of this exploitation although, for historical as well as practical reasons, we have

1. *The Hindu*, 24 March 1931.

laid the greatest stress on cloth. If we are to free the country from the burden of foreign exploitation and vested interests, we must pay sufficient attention to these other forms also and specially to the hidden and veiled forms which take the life-blood from the country without our people realising it.

With this object in view a form of undertaking was circulated on behalf of the Congress to Indian cloth manufacturers and they were asked to sign it. In this they undertook to assist Indian enterprises in the fields of insurance, banking and the like. I am glad to say that a very large number of cloth manufacturers agreed to this undertaking. Some who did not were placed on the ban by the Congress. It is hoped that before long every firm manufacturing cloth in India will agree to this undertaking and we shall carry on our campaign with redoubled energy for the elimination of foreign domination in the economic sphere.

FOREIGN INSURANCE BUSINESS

One of the directions in which leakage of national resources is taking place is the field of insurance. I understand that under this head alone there is a net drain from this country of something like Rs 5 crores a year. It is deplorable that this should be so in spite of the fact that several very reputable insurance institutions exist in this country. It is further deplorable that in this drain many an Indian assists the foreigner, and reputable and otherwise patriotic firms of Indians are acting as the agents or, rather, as the brokers of alien insurance companies. For the sake of some personal advantage, the economic and political freedom of the country is thus put in jeopardy. I hope that all Indians will realise the importance of stopping this drain of insurance money and patronise only Indian institutions. If there are not enough Indian institutions to undertake all the work that exists in India today, it should be easy enough for our industrial and commercial people to start additional companies. Every rupee which an Indian spends must be spent with discrimination and with a definite desire for creating work in India for our own people, so that the savings of our people may remain in the country and may help nascent enterprises.

BANKING

Insurance and shipping and various kinds of trade drain money from this country. But the place of honour in the field of foreign exploitation must be given to the alien banking institutions. In any country

the banks play a very important part. Behind the democratic structure of parliaments it is really the great banks that dictate policy and largely control it. It has become a recognised axiom that unless the state controls the banks for the public good, the banks will control the state for their own good. In India the position is, however, a far more difficult one than that which prevails in free countries. Foreign banks work in this country as a part of the commercial operations of their own nationals. The British banks are members of the British Chamber of Commerce and they share their outlook. British trade helps British banking, and British banking helps British trade. There are at present as many as 19 foreign banks in India. They have a monopoly in the field of foreign exchange and the financing of foreign trade. They work in this country in a closed ring through an association of their own. They have developed such strength that it is impossible for any Indian institution to come on the scene and to expect to operate without heavy losses being inflicted on it. Not being content with their activities at the ports and in the field of foreign trade, the foreign banks have invaded the interior of India and they are now engaged in the operations of ordinary commercial banking with reference to internal trade. They have opened more branches and have increased their activities at the older branches in such a manner that they not only compete seriously with all Indian institutions, but have also inflicted a definite setback to the Imperial Bank of India. Towards Indian institutions they have been notoriously hostile. They refuse all cooperation and they have shown a spirit of intolerance of Indians not only in the field of banking but also in shipping and insurance. Before giving assistance to their clients they demand assurances that the shipping and insurance would be effected through foreign institutions. In their personnel no Indian finds a place either of honour or dignity. It is very doubtful if they are even paying proper taxes in this country on the heavy profits which they should be making.

INDIAN SUPPORT

The tragedy of the whole situation appears to be that their people operate in India not from monies which they bring over from abroad but from money deposited with them by our own people. The amount of such deposits, I understand, has increased in the last 30 years by over 700 per cent, and they have today between Rs. 70 to Rs. 80 crores of Indian money in their hands. With this money they have helped the effective transfer of trading operations from Indian hands into

foreign hands. The continued existence in this country of these foreign banks in their present position must result in the continued exclusion of Indians from the legitimate handling of the trade of their own country. With resources which they gather in India they are in a position to secure not only banking profits but trading profits for their own nationals, with all the harmful effects on Indian aspirations and Indian enterprise. This is a monstrous situation calling for immediate notice and action. No free country would permit this for any length of time. The foreign banks have found a ready and over-generous hospitality in India but many of them have not scrupled to abuse it by a systematic weakening of Indian institutions and by engineering attacks on them.

It is stranger still that monies are deposited by Indians with these foreign banks actually at a rate lower than they are able to obtain from Indian institutions. Apart from an item of profit of Rs. 80 lakhs on this account alone, these foreign institutions levy a charge on the entire foreign trade of this country ranging from Rs. 500 to Rs. 600 crores. Through their monopoly they are able to make the Indian exporter and the Indian importer, i.e., the Indian producer and the Indian consumer, pay on every item that is taken out of this country and on every item that is imported into this country. This profit on the exchange transaction alone is reckoned at something well over a crore of rupees. In addition, these banks render all kinds of services to their clients and charge for them. They earn interest and they make their ordinary banking profits, inflicting a collective drain on this country, which, as a whole, it would be difficult to estimate at anything less than Rs. 5 crores. The indirect losses to India, not merely in money but in morale, cannot be estimated.

Some of these foreign banking institutions are so powerful that they attempt to buy out the best established banking institutions in India. Is this a position which any Indian can contemplate with a sense of safety or security? Under these circumstances Indian enterprise must languish. And yet, because Indian institutions do not always flourish as they should, our opponents preach to us and tell us that we are unable to look after our own affairs and must therefore leave it to them to run our country and its business.

NEED FOR ECONOMIC FREEDOM

We are carrying on a great struggle for political freedom. It is well to realise, however, that political freedom is a delusion without economic freedom. If we merely concentrate on that political side of freedom we shall find that our exploitation will continue and our last state will

be worse than the first. A time will come, I hope, when a politically free India will control her economic resources and will not permit anyone to exploit them for the benefit of a few. The key industries, I hope, will be controlled by the state. Today even the state is not ours, so there can be no question of its controlling them. But even today we must be clear that economic exploitation is the real thing to be aimed at and put an end to. And in this economic exploitation, banks play a dominating part. Even now we can observe an interaction of economic forces on political thoughts and events. The attempts being made by foreign exploiters to retain their present privileged position in the economic field in India, under cover of phrases like 'equal rights and opportunities', throws a lurid light on the realities of the situation. It would be a poor gain to us, if gain at all, if in our removing the political disabilities of India we confirm her financial and economic disabilities. I would therefore beg of the country to ponder over these questions and to set itself out to put an end to all foreign exploitation. Every Indian should give undoubted preference to an Indian institution and should lay stress on the fact that it is run for the good of the many and not merely for the good of the few. No foreign institution should be allowed to function in India to the detriment of the Indian people.

GLOSSARY

Aghan Badi	the fortnight of the ninth month of the Hindu lunar calendar when the moon is waning
Ashram	hermitage
Azadi	independence
Barat	a bridegroom's wedding procession
Bare Mian	respectful Urdu appellation for an elderly person
Bela	jasmine
Chaprasi	peon, attendant
Choldari	small tent
Chowk	city square, street crossing
Chowkidar	watchman
Chowkidari	the watchman's occupation or wages
Dahi	curds
Dallia	broken wheat boiled with milk or water
Darshan	view of a person
Durrie	mat woven from cotton yarn
Ghar	house
Inqilab	revolution
Inqilab Zindabad	long live revolution
Jaykars	cheers
Khatta	a sour fruit
Kotwali	police-station
Lambardar (Numberdar)	convict overseer; cultivator responsible for collection of government dues from his village
Magh	eleventh month of the Hindu lunar calendar
Mainas	mynas
Masala	spices
Murraba	sweet pickle, preserve, jam
Namda	woollen rug

Naoroz	the New Year Day observed by Kashmiri pundits, which falls on 1 Vaisakh; also the name for the Parsi New Year Day
Newar	thick white cotton tape used in weaving a bed
Pagli	alarm raised in jail to signify an emergency
Panna	cold drink made from green mangoes; a sweet made from milk
Safayas	cleaners
Sanyasi	ascetic
Sattu	cold drink made from ground wheat, gram or barley
Surai	long necked earthen pitcher
Takli	spindle with disc at the bottom for drawing thread from cotton slivers
Tulsi	basil
Vaisakh	second month of the Hindu lunar calendar
Vaisakh Badi	the fortnight of Vaisakh when the moon is waning

INDEX

(Biographical footnotes are italicized)

Abbas, Khwaja Ahmad, 586 & *fn*
A.B.C. of Relativity (Bertrand Russell), 337, 387
Abhyudaya, 318 fn
Abraham, 556
Acharya, N.N., 91 & fn
A Day with Sambhu (K.S. Venkataramani), 578 fn
Adhikari, J., 254
Afghanistan, 241
———, Amir of (Amanullah), 293 fn
Aga Khan, 363 fn
Aga, Rup Kishan, 341
Agra, 21 & fn, 143, 309, 330, 342, 349 & fn, 353, 360, 442, 443, 499, 500
Ahmad, Shamsuddin, 67 & fn, 77
Ahmedabad, 6 fn, 22 fn, 251 fn, 276, 280, 282, 285, 304, 327 fn, 401, 523
Ahobalacharya, T.L., 571 & *fn*
Aiyar, P.S. Sivaswami, 564 & *fn*
Akbarpur (U.P.), 283
Alexandria, 52 & fn
Ali, Manzar, 357, *421*
———, Maz, 100 & fn
———, Maulana Mohamed, 98 & fn, 99, 335, 587, 588
———, Sadiq, 310 & *fn*
———, Maulana Shaukat, 524
Allahabad, 5—7, 10 fn, 14, 34, 38, 40, 68, 103 fn, 111, 120, 121, 143, 148, 155, 156, 159, 164, 167 fn, 206, 209 fn, 211, 213, 214, 219, 223, 224, 230, 231, 240, 244, 246, 253, 255 fn, 266, 271, 273, 276, 279, 280, 290, 295, 297, 303—305, 310—314, 320, 321 fn, 322 fn, 323, 325, 328 fn, 330 fn, 331, 336 fn, 337, 344 fn—348, 351, 360, 364, 374 fn, 379, 385, 387, 395, 397, 401, 405 fn, 420, 421 & fn, 424—426, 428—430, 433, 434, 436, 447, 477, 478, 486, 487 488, 495 fn, 517, 520, 521, 523 fn, 528, 533, 547, 553, 563, 576, 582—588
Allahabad Municipal Board, 587, 588
Allahabad Youth League, 6, 16, 17
All Bengal Students Conference, 5
All Ceylon Trade Union Congress, 42 fn, 86 fn
Alleppey (Kerala), 555
All India Congress Committee, 16, 20, 22, 35, 95, 115—117, 122—126, 155, 157, 159, 160, 162, 167, 169, 178, 196, 199, 203, 205 & fn, 208, 218, 219, 227, 231, 239 fn, 251, 265, 271, 276, 279, 280, 282 & fn, 284—288, 304, 310 *fn*, 324, 351 fn, 371, 376, 391, 392, 399, 403, 436, 439, 451, 477, 513, 523, 524, 529, 564 fn
All India Kisan Sabha, 367 fn
All India Nationalist Muslim Party, 565 & *fn*
All India Panchayat Parishad, 10 fn
All India Peace Council, 365 fn
All India Posts and Telegraph Employees Union, 305 fn
All India Railwaymens Federation, 36 fn, 305 fn
All India Silk League, 50, 97 fn, 572 & fn, 573
All India Spinners Association, 92, 93, 105, 137, 276, 253, 347, 395—397, 407, 528, 578

All India States Peoples Conference, 10 fn, 580
All India Trade Union Congress, 29 fn, 33, 36 & fn, 40, 44, 45 & fn, 49, 55 & fn, 56, 58 & fn, 63 fn, 77, 166, 257
All India Trade Union Federation, 55 fn
All India Women's Conference, 379 fn
All Parties Committee, 175, 187, 191, 194
———, report of, 188, 261, 335, 439, 572 & fn, 573
Almora (U P), 137 fn, 517
Aluwihare, Bernard, 522 & fn, 535
Amir Khusrau (Mohamed Habib), 337 & fn, 387
Amritsar, 93, 137, 139, 405
Amsterdam Federation of Trade Unions, 71, 77
Anand, 384
Aney, M S, 282 & fn
A New Way with Crime (Fenner Brockway), 364 & fn
Anglo Egyptian Treaty, 52 & fn
An Indian Journey, 388
Ansari, M A, 119, 129, 169, 377, 378, 391, 466 fn, 524 fn, 564
Anti Intimidation Ordinance, 357 fn
Anuradhapura (Sri Lanka), 533 & fn
Apple Cart (Bernard Shaw), 462
Apurna Devi, 363
Ariel ou la Vie de Shelley (Andre Maurois), 337, 387
Arthashastra (Kautilya), 462
Art of Thinking (Ernest Dimnett), 462
Arya Samaj, 550
Arya Sevak Ashram, 112 fn
Ashoka, the Great, 518, 533
Asquith, H H, 456 fn
As You Like It (Shakespeare), 462
Atal, Madan, 338 & fn, 373
Attlee, C R, later Earl, 52 fn
Attock (Pakistan), 213 fn, 335 fn
Avadh, 442, 443
Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam, 68, 336 & fn, 367, 374, 377, 391
———, Chandrashekhar 495 & fn
Azamgarh (U P), 384, 385

Bachha Saqqa, 318 & fn
Backward Classes Commission, 384 fn
Bahraich (U.P.), 220 fn
Bajaj, Jamnalal, 583
Bajpai, R B, 122 & fn, 123, 126, 127
Bakhale, R R, 42 & fn, 47, 48, 55, 58, 62
Baksh, Hayat, 76 & fn
Baldwin, 462
———, Roger, 298, 486
———, Stanley, 52
Ballia (U P.), 180 fn
Ballo, 347
Banaras—see Varanasi
——— Conspiracy Case, 20 fn, 209 fn
——— Hindu University, 13 fn, 88 fn, 303 fn, 367 fn
Bangalore, 113 fn, 527, 529, 550, 557, 564 fn
Banker, Shankarlal, 327
Bannerji, Nripendra Chandra, 493 & fn, 570
Bansgopal, 240 & fn
Bappi, 378
Baquani, Gilbert, 462
Barabanki (U.P.), 492 fn
Bardoli (Gujarat), 134, 277, 287, 399 fn, 553
Bareilly, 21 & fn, 118 fn, 137 fn, 143, 155, 322
Bari, Professor Abdul, 61 fn, 80
Baroda, 344 fn
———, University of, 379 fn
——— State Peoples Conference, 258 & fn
——— State Prajamandal, 258 fn
——— State Subjects Conference, 22 fn
Basti (U P.), 367
Bauria (Bengal), 27
———, jute mills, strike in, 28 & fn, 29
Beal, Samuel, 356 & fn, 388
Beaslay, P, 280 fn
Bengal Jute Workers Union, 62 fn
Bengal Ordinance, 382
Benn, Wedgwood, 102 fn, 189, 357, 458 & fn
Berlin, 105 fn, 131, 267
Bernstein, Henry, 337, 387
Betul (Mysore), 221 fn
Bex (Switzerland), 355, 356

Bhagalpur (Bihar), 417
Bhagat Singh, 8 & *fn*, 9 fn, 13, 14, 20, 35, 157, 395, 491, 503 & *fn*, 505 & *fn*, 506
———, execution of, 8 fn, 500 & fn, 503 & fn, 505, 506
Bhagawad Gita, 327, 355
Bhalla, Mulkraj, 486 & fn
Bhandari, 220 & fn
Bharat, 321 & fn, 325, 327 & fn, 330, 333, 335, 341, 344, 345, 353, 359, 363
Bhargava, Gopichand, 178 & *fn*
Bhattacharji, Profullo, 74
———, Suresh Chandra, 209 & fn
Bhavnagar, 10 fn
Bhopal, Nawab of, 524 & fn
Bhuwerji, 324 & *fn*, 338
Bijnor (U.P.), 119
Bikaner, Maharaja of (Ganga Singh), 192 fn
Bismarck (Emil Ludwig), 356 & fn, 360, 388
Biswas, 74
Bojer, Johan, 337 & *fn*, 387
Bombay, 2, 4, 29, 30, 32, 38—40, 62, 92, 110 fn, 115 fn, 124, 135, 149, 150, 169 fn, 231, 232 & fn, 250, 300, 317, 332, 360, 361, 364, 367, 374, 391 & fn, 392, 400, 405, 408, 413, 439, 456, 493, 494 & fn, 517, 520, 524, 528, 529, 543, 558, 576 fn
———, Congress offices raided at, 405 & fn
———, general strike in, 31 & fn
———, riots in, 4 & fn
Bombay Presidency Youth Conference, 5, 22 & fn
Bombay Youth League, 19 fn, 23
Boroughs, Grace, 563 & fn
Bose, Jagdish Chandra, 564 & *fn*
———, Subhas Chandra, 29, 34, 55, 56, 69, 77, 78, 97 fn, 129, 130, 177 fn, 205, 207 fn, 226, 227, 228 fn, 476 fn, 564, 570
Botha, General, 24 & *fn*
Bradley, 346
Braganca Cunha, T., 94, 565, 566
Brailsford, H N, 421, 447
Breen, Dan, 71
Brelvi, S A, 161, 564, 565 & fn
Bridgeman, R, 35, 43, 44, 160, 174, 207
British Chamber of Commerce, 590
British Medical Council, 268
British Trade Union Congress (Council), 71, 77
Broach (Gujarat), 112 fn
Brockway, Fenner, 107, 364
Buddha, Gautama, 531 fn, 533 & fn
Buddhist Records of the Western World (Samuel Beal), 356 & fn, 388
Budge Budge (Calcutta), 71, 79
Bukharin, 388
Bulandshahr (U P.), 120
Burli, B.V., 172 & fn
Burma Oil Company, 60 & fn, 71—74, 79
Burns, M E, 89 & fn
Butler Committee, 539

Calcutta, 4 & fn, 27, 37, 61, 63 fn, 64, 68, 69, 87, 92, 120, 138, 139, 158, 160, 164 fn, 177, 178, 207, 214, 230 fn, 231, 250, 263 & fn, 264, 266, 281 fn, 285, 333, 336 fn, 378 fn, 399 fn, 405, 421, 431, 433—435, 452, 476, 564 fn, 567, 568
———, Congress session at, 99, 105 fn, 175, 176, 188, 189, 198
———, Corporation of, 263—266
———, University of, 378 fn
———, Youth Congress at, 4
Calicut (Kerala), 541, 543, 556
Cambridge, University of, 317 fn
Cambridge History of India, 334
Cape Comorin—see Kanya Kumari
Carlyle, 462
Caveeshar, Sardul Singh, 97 & *fn*, 98, 349, 573 fn
Cawnpore—see Kanpur
Ceylon, 42, 63 fn, 517, 522, 559
Chagla, M.C, 39
Chalisgaon, (Maharashtra), 33
Chamanlal, Dewan, 239 fn, 240
Chamberlain, Sir Austen, 51
Chanda (Maharashtra), 209 fn
Chandragupta Maurya, 518
Chandernagore, 493 & fn
Chanson de ma Vie (Yvette Guilbert), 344, 387

Charles I, 18
Chatterji, Ramanand, 564 & *fn*
Chattopadhyaya, Kamaladevi, 349 & *fn*, 564
———, V., 36, 159, 175 & fn, 232, 234 fn, 253
Chelmsford, Lord, 102
Chesterton, G.K. (C.K.C.), 388
Chetty, C.V.J., 578 & fn
Chhatari, Nawab of, 374 & *fn*
Chheoki (U.P.), 317
Chiang kai Shek, 52 fn
Child Marriage Restraint Act, 481 & fn
China and the Manchus (H.A. Giles), 387
Chinnot (Pakistan), 180 fn
Chittagong Armoury Case, 493 fn
Choubey, K.P., 574
Churchill, Winston, 52 & *fn*, 384, 388, 542 fn
Citrine, Walter, 35 & fn, 43
Coastal Tariff Reservation Bill, 370 fn
Cochin (Kerala), 555
Coimbatore (Tamilnadu), 544, 545, 556
Collins, Michael, 71 & *fn*, 280
Collum, 462
Colombo, 86 fn, 520, 521, 524 & fn, 528, 529, 533—535
Comedy of Errors (Shakespeare), 388
Communist Party of India, 564 fn
Congress Bulletin, 107, 110, 124, 157, 241, 275, 279, 285, 579
Congress, Indian National, 16, 23, 27, 32, 36, 39, 48, 55, 62, 63, 65, 67, 80, 85—91, 93—95, 97, 98, 100, 102—107, 109, 111—113, 115, 116, 122—126, 128, 130, 131, 133, 135, 140—143, 149, 151, 155—158, 160, 162, 163, 165—168, 170, 171, 173—180, 183, 184, 191—199, 203—208, 210, 212, 217, 219, 220 & fn, 222, 223, 225, 228, 230, 231, 234—243, 245, 247—249, 251, 253 & fn, 254, 257, 261—263, 265—267, 271, 272, 279, 281, 282 & fn, 286, 290—292 & fn, 294, 300, 308, 309, 330 fn, 335, 339 fn, 344 fn, 345 fn, 354, 357 & fn, 371, 372, 375, 376, 380, 391 fn, 393—395, 398, 399, 402, 403, 405, 406, 408, 415, 434, 437—441, 445, 449—451, 453—459, 468, 469, 471, 485 fn—488, 490—497, 499, 500, 505—511, 517 fn, 523 fn, 525, 529, 537—540, 542, 544, 550—552, 563, 565, 573 fn, 575, 577, 580, 581, 583, 588, 589
——— session at Calcutta, 99, 105 fn, 175
——— session at Gaya, 197
——— session at Karachi, 489, 497, 503—513, 525, 526, 529, 542
——— session at Lahore, 10, 95, 126, 132, 172, 174, 207 fn, 210, 221, 225 & fn, 226, 231, 235, 241—243, 261, 284, 485, 489, 491
Congress Working Committee, 29, 63, 72, 88, 99, 103, 122, 125—128, 155, 162—164, 168, 169, 172, 175, 176, 203, 205, 212, 215, 217, 223, 225—227, 235, 236, 239, 251 & fn, 253, 258, 262, 265, 267, 271, 272, 276, 278, 282—285, 287, 304, 305 fn, 344 & fn, 345, 349, 367 & fn, 371, 373, 376, 377, 380 & fn, 383, 398, 399 fn, 401 fn, 403, 436, 453—462, 470, 472, 475, 479—482, 485 & fn, 489—491, 497, 504, 537, 538, 543 fn, 577, 581—584
——— meeting at Delhi, 485, 490, resolution on truce issued by, 485; and statement, 489
Congress Socialist Party, 305 fn, 349 fn, 351 *fn*
Contai (Bengal), 465 fn
C.P. Hindustani Provincial Political Conference, 317 & fn
Coolus, Romain, 388
Coppier, Andre Charles, 324

Dain, J.R., 77 & *fn*
Dakshineshwar (Bengal), 434 & fn
Dalton (U.S.A.), 346 & fn, 347
Dambulla (Sri Lanka), 533
Dance of Civa (Collum), 462
Dandekar, V.S., 11 & fn, 108 fn, 330
Dandi (Gujarat), 286 fn, 292, 293, 301, 547
Dange, S.A., 346, 564 & fn
Danton, 400 & *fn*
Darbhanga, Maharaja of, 332 & fn
D(h)arsana, 345 fn, 349

Das, Seth Govind, 317 fn
———, Jatindranath, 13 & *fn*, 15, 19 fn, 20, 21 fn, 22, 108 fn, 184, 354, 570
———, Nilakantha, 48 & *fn*, 77, 79 fn
———, Raghava, 114 & *fn*
Das(s) Gupta, J. M., 227, 228 fn
Dashera, Ganesh Lal, 304
Daspur (Bengal), 465 fn
Datta, Bhupendra Nath, 47
Daud, Muhammad, 63 & *fn*, 67, 69, 75, 77
Dayal, Bhagwat, 5 & *fn*
Decline of the West (Oswald Spengler), 322 & fn, 345, 348, 349, 352, 360, 388
Dehra Dun (U.P.), 385, 408 fn
Delhi, 2, 29, 48, 97, 119—121, 129, 137—139, 149, 155, 157, 163, 167 fn, 168, 169, 229, 246, 380 & fn, 405, 413, 476, 478, 490 fn, 497, 499, 507, 584, 586
———, Congress Working Committee meeting at, 485, 490
———, manifesto issued at, 165, 167 fn, 170, 172, 175, 207, 236
———, resolution on truce issued at, 485, and statement, 489
Delhi Settlement—see Gandhi Irwin Settlement
Democratic Congress Party, 205 fn, 206
Deoki Prasad, 70
Desai, M., 169 & fn
———, Mahadeva, 280, 327, 421
Desh Bhagat Case, 118 fn
Desh Sevika Sangh, 494 fn
Destiny of a Continent (Manuel Ugarte), 388
Detroit (U.S.A.), 100 fn
Dey, Mukul Chandra, 564 & *fn*
Dhampur, 119
Dhanraj, 357
Dhulekar, R.V., 576 & *fn*
Dikshit, Shri Krishna, 293 & fn
Dimnett, Ernest, 462
Din Dayal, 312 & fn
Divekar, D.V., 170 & fn
Dixit, Madhusudan Prasad, 579
Dondra Head (Sri Lanka), 534
Doulatram, Jairamdas, 136 & *fn*, 137, 138, 140, 146, 377, 382, 528, 529
Dover, Cedric, 333 & fn
Do We Agree (Bernard Shaw & Chesterton), 388
Dunthanya Case, 349 & fn
Dutt, B K, 8 & fn, 9 & *fn*, 13, 15, 20, 35, 157

East Africa, 197
Ebreichsdorf (Austria), 363 fn
Edib, Halide, 388
———, Memoirs of, 388,
England, general election in, 101 & fn
Enigmas, 388
Ernakulam (Kerala), 555, 556
Etah (U.P.), 145
Etawah (U.P.), 118, 144, 293 fn, 310
Exchange Mobilisation Agreement, 496 fn

Fatehpur (U.P.), 231 fn, 240 fn
Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, 273
Fiji, 197
Fimmen, Edo, 256
Firdausi, 462
Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee, 137, 140
Forward Bloc, 97 fn
France, Anatole, 462
Frankfurt, 36, 124 fn, 234, 235
Fyzabad (U.P.), 373, 426

Gadag (Mysore), 148
Galle (Sri Lanka), 534
Gandhi Ashram, 303 fn
Gandhi Irwin Settlement, 455—490, 494—495
Gandhi, Kasturba, 421
———, Mahatma, 34, 91—93, 114—116, 119—121, 123, 127, 128, 135, 137 fn, 155, 156, 158—160, 162—164, 166, 206, 207 fn, 211, 214, 215 & fn, 227—229, 234 fn, 235, 238, 245, 248—250, 251 fn, 262, 271, 273—275 & fn, 277—281, 283, 284, 286—288, 292, 295, 297, 299, 301,

302, 304, 314 & fn, 317 fn, 324, 327, 333, 338, 341, 342, 344 fn, 349 fn, 351 fn, 363 fn, 369 & fn, 371—375, 377—379, 393, 394, 402, 408, 419, 424, 434, 440, 441, 447, 454 fn, 456, 457, 460, 470 & fn, 471, 479, 480, 485 & fn, 489—492, 494, 497—499, 506, 507 fn, 524—528, 530, 537—539, 542 & fn, 553, 558, 584
Garg, Lakshmi Narain, 21 fn
Garibaldi, Giuseppe, 423 & *fn*
Garibaldi's Defence of the Roman Republic (Trevelyan), 423 & fn
Gautam, Mohanlal, 351 & *fn*
Gaya, Congress session at, 197
Geneva, 36 fn, 48, 51, 63 fn, 520
Genius and Character (Emil Ludwig), 364 & fn, 384, 388
Ghanshiam Singh (of Murshan), 241 fn
Ghatkopar (Bombay), 497
Ghazipur (U.P.), 145, 426, 428, 430
Ghose, Sailendranath, 95, 124, 125, 127
Gibran, Khalil, 388
Gignoux, Regis, 462
Giles, H.A., 387
Ginwala, T], 33 & *fn*, 34, 38
G.I.P. Railway Kamgar Union, 33 fn
———, split in, 33 fn, 34 fn
G.I.P. Railwayman, 39
G.I.P. Railwaymens Union, 38—40, 43
G.I.P. Railway strike, 254 & fn, 256
Giri, V.V., 63 & *fn*, 64, 67, 69, 77
Gladstone, William Ewart, 350 & *fn*
Goa, 94, 111, 565, 566
Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs, 113 fn
Golden Threshold, 558 & fn
Golmuri (Bihar), 59, 72, 77—80
———, strike in, 42, 57
——— Tinplate Workers Union, 57, 58, 63, 65, 69, 76 fn
Gonda (U.P.), 103 & fn, 291 & fn
Gopal, 404
Gorakhpore (Gorakhpur) (U.P.), 43, 110, 114 & fn, 115, 161
Gouna Sinha, 86 & fn
Gour, Hari Singh, 557 & *fn*
Government School of Art (Calcutta), 564 fn
Great French Revolution, (Kropotkin), 462
Great War, the, 2
Guilbert, Yvette, 344, 387
Gujarat College, strike in, 6 fn
Gujarat Vidyapith, 288, 384 fn
Gujranwala (Punjab), 285 fn, 302, 572 fn
Gundappa, D.V., 113 & *fn*
Gupta, Shiva Prasad, 160, 234, 253, 334, 345, 367
Gur Narain, 421
Guzders, 347

Habib, Mohamed, 337, 387
Haemmerlin, Mlle, 355, 356
Hague, the, 51
Hague Court, 493
Hailey, Sir Malcolm, 308
Hakhu, Shambu Nath, 568
Half Caste (Cedric Dover), 333 fn
Hallowes, B.J.K., 103 & fn
Handia (U.P.), 307, 322 & fn, 324, 327, 328 & fn, 330, 350, 351, 373
Hanif Ullah, 75
Harda, 378
Hardikar, N.S., 129, 130, 367
Hardoi (U.P.), 13 fn
Haridewat, 91 fn
Harilal, 360, 533 & fn
Hartford Times, 474 & fn
Hartshorn, Vernon, 52 fn
Hathras (U.P.), 151
Henderson, Arthur, 101 & *fn*
Heroes (Carlyle), 462
Hieun Tsang—see Hiuen Tsang
Higginbotham, 365
Himmat, 386
Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, 330 fn
Hind Mazdoor Sabha, 45 fn
Hindu Mahasabha, 99, 225 fn, 565
Hindu Mission, 567 & fn
Hindustan Association of America, 127, 179 fn
Hindustani Seva Dal, 93, 130, 132, 133, 144, 150, 172 fn, 218, 252, 279, 284, 290, 291, 307 fn, 499
Hindustani Talimi Sangh, 384 fn
Hindustan National Party, 563 fn
Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, 13 fn
Hindustan Times, 308

Hindu View of Life (S Radhakrishnan), 462
Historical Materialism and Economic Theory of Leisure Class (Bukharin), 388
History of the Orient (Steiger-Beyer-Benitez), 344, 387
Hiuen Tsang, 388, 417 & *fn*
Homi, Manek, 67 & fn, 75, 76
Hooghly Mills Co., 60
Howrah (Calcutta), 27
Hsi yu chi (Hiuen Tsang), 417
Hubli (Mysore), 172 fn
Husain, Fazli-, 373
Hussain, M. Vilayat, 343
Huxley, Aldous, 462
Hyderabad (A P.), 62 fn, 527, 529, 553, 557 & fn, 558 & fn
———, Nizam of, 553

Illustrated Times, 321
Independence for India League, 88, 131, 156, 166, 221 & fn
India, Gandhi and World Peace (Reginald Reynolds), 351 fn
India in Bondage (Sunderland), 206 fn
Indian Institute of Science, 564 fn
Indian Medical Association, 268
Indian Medical Service, 268
Indian National Trade Union Congress, 61 fn, 309 fn
Indian Press Ordinance, 338 fn
Indian Seamens Association, 63 fn
Indian Seamens Union, 37
Indo China, 336
Inner Temple, 542 fn
Indra, Professor, 148 fn
International Labour Conference, 36 fn, 48, 63 fn
International, Second, 53, 54
———, Third, 54
International Transport Federation, 256 & fn
Ireland, 442
Irwin, Lord, 357, 372, 379—382, 392—394, 458, 460, 497
Ismail, Mirza, 557 & *fn*
Itarsi, 378
Iyengar, S. Srinivasa, 34, 46 & fn, 106, 117, 171

Jaffna (Sri Lanka), 535
Jaipur, 557 fn
Jallianwala Bagh, 189, 286 fn
Jamshedpur (Bihar), 57 & fn, 58 fn, 60, 62, 67 fn—69, 76 fn, 77
Jamshedpur Labour Association, 36 fn
Jawahar Day, 421, 422
Jawahar Week, 421
Jayakar, M R., 369 & fn, 371—373, 375, 377—383, 393, 470, 471
Jean Christophe (Romain Rolland), 351 & fn
Jeanne d'Arc (Joan of Arc), 418 & *fn*
Jhabvala, S H, 33
Jhansi (U P.), 576 fn
———, U.P. Provincial Conference at, 440
Jharia (Bengal), 40, 55
Jinnah, M.A, 373, 564
Johannesburg, 89 fn
John, Michael, 61 & fn
Johnston, 123
Johri, C B, 33 & fn, 34 fn, 37—39, 43
Joseph, George, 555
Joshi, N M, 29, 30 & fn, 33 & fn, 43, 44, 48, 55
———, P C., 6
Jugal Kishore, Acharya, 330 & *fn*
Juhu (Bombay), 520
Jullundur, 98 & fn

Kabul, 241, 318
Kaiser Wilhelm (Emil Ludwig), 364
Kaithamal, 350 fn
Kakori Conspiracy Case, 20 fn, 21 fn, 209 fn, 495 fn
——— prisoners, treatment of, 20, 21 & fn, 209
Kalakankar, Raja of, 336
Kalappa, V.R, 36 & *fn*
Kalelkar, D B, 384 & *fn*
Kalutara (Sri Lanka), 534
Kandy (Sri Lanka), 521, 525, 533
Kannada Sahitya Sammelan, 113 fn
Kanpur, 13 fn, 41, 138, 143, 159, 209 fn, 213, 244, 307, 311—313, 324, 405, 486, 487, 503 & fn, 528, 530
———, tragedy in, 503 & fn, 505
Kanpur University, 330 fn
Kanya Kumari (Tamilnadu), 527, 541, 543, 553, 554

Kapra Committee, 139
Karachi, 405, 489, 493, 528, 529
———, Congress session at, 489, 497, 503—513, 525, 526, 529, 542
Karadi (Gujarat), 286 fn
Karnasuvarna, 417
Kashi Vidyapitha, 143, 310, 350 & fn, 351, 354
Kashipur (U.P.), 451
Kasuri, Abdul Qadir, 349 & fn
Kathiawar (Gujarat), 18, 19
——— Youth Conference, 10 fn
Katju, Kailas Nath, 307, 312
Kautilya, 462
Kesari, 170 fn, 225 fn
Ketkar, G. V., 225 & *fn*
Keyserling, 462
Khadi Fund, 114 fn
Khaliquzzaman, Chaudhri, 344, 383, 391
Khalsa, Gopal Singh, 563 & fn
Khan, Khan Abdul Ghaffar, 293 & *fn*, 467 fn, 510
Khan, Maulana Mir, 293 & fn
Khan Sahib, Dr., 293 fn, 467 & *fn*
Khan, Shyam Kumari—see Nehru, Shyam Kumari
Khatri, Ramkrishna, 209 & fn
Khera, S.S., 351 & *fn*
Khilafat Committee, 293 fn
Khudai Khidmatgars, 293 fn, 468 fn
Khwaja, Abdul Majid, 349, 421
Kidderpore (Calcutta), 37 fn
Kidwai, Rafi Ahmad, 311, 349 & fn, 492
Kirkee (Poona), 374, 375
Kishori, 453
Komagata Maru, 77 fn
Kotgarh (Simla Hills), 574 fn
Kottayam (Kerala), 555
Kripalani, J.B., 119, 303
Krishnanand, 492 & fn
Krishna Narayan, 180 & fn
Kropotkin, 462
Kulkarni, D.B., 29 & *fn*, 32, 38, 43
Kuomintang and the Future of Chinese Revolution (T.C. Woo), 337 & fn, 387

La Double Passion (Auguste Villeroy), 388
La Griffe (Henry Bernstein), 337 & fn, 387
Lahore, 4, 14, 35, 48, 56, 93—97, 107, 118, 179 & fn, 199 fn, 203, 205, 207, 209, 211, 212, 219, 228, 229, 241, 250, 263, 360, 364, 376, 391, 394, 399 fn, 402, 482, 494, 495, 505, 507, 569 fn
———, Congress session at, 10, 95, 126, 132, 172, 174, 207 fn, 210, 221, 225, 226, 231, 235, 241—243, 261, 485, 489, 491
——— Conspiracy Case, 8 fn, 9 fn, 13 fn, 14, 35, 209 fn, 382, 500 fn
Lahore Students Union, 4
Lajpat Rai, Lala, 15, 34 & fn, 97, 206 fn, 243
Lajpat Rai Memorial Fund, 131
Lakhimpur Kheri (U.P.), 117 & fn, 429, 430
Lakshmi Insurance Company, 179 & fn
Lakshmipathi, Rukmini, 349 & *fn*
La loc de Finte (A.E.W. Mason), 462
La Marche (Henry Bernstein), 337 & fn, 387
Lambert, G.B., 430
Landaur, 120
Lansdowne, Marquess of, 456 & fn
Lansbury, George, 52 fn
La Vie de Disraeli (Andre Maurois), 350, 388
Leader, 308, 357
Leaders Conference, 167 & fn, 236
League against Imperialism, 87, 89 fn, 103 fn, 104, 123—126, 232—235, 237, 253 & fn, 256, 258
———, second World Congress of, 36, 124 & fn, 234, 235
League of Nations, 24
Le Clif (A.E.W. Mason), 462
Le Detour (Henry Bernstein), 337 & fn, 387
Legal Practitioners Act, 220 fn
Lenin, 241 fn, 419
Le Prof. d'anglais (Regis Gignoux), 462
Le Revolte des Anges (Anatole France), 462
Les Alpes (Hans Schmithals), 324
Le Saphir (A.E.W. Mason), 462
Les Chef d'Oeuvres de la Langue Francaise—Poesie, 387

Les Chef d'Oeuvres de la Langue Francaise—Prose, 388
Les Miettes et L'Elagique (Edmund See), 388
Le Trois Henry, 388
Leyshom, J., 72
Liberal Party, 318 fn, 343
Liberty Under the Soviets (Baldwin), 462
Life of the Ant (Maeterlinck), 462
Life of the Bee (Maeterlinck), 462
Life of the White Ant (Maeterlinck), 462
Light of the World, 576 & fn
Linlithgow, first Marquess of, 41 fn
Lloyd George, David, 52 & fn, 101 388
Lokhare, B G, 276
London, 43, 89 & fn, 395, 467 fn, 471, 497, 537
Love's Labour Lost (Shakespeare), 388
Lucknow, 5, 20 fn, 143, 159, 160, 246, 250, 322, 324, 330 fn, 338 fn, 358, 368, 383, 386, 406, 452, 466 fn, 486 fn, 519, 522 fn, 570
———, firing in, 352 & fn
———, U.P. Youth Conference at, 5
———, University of, 367 fn
Lucknow Charkha Pracharak Sangh, 492
Lucknow Conference—see Muslim Nationalist Conference
Ludwig, Emil, 356, 360, 364, 384, 388
Lyallpur, 572

MacDonald, Ramsay, 3, 51—53, 101, 453 & fn, 455 fn, 460, 461, 462 fn
MacManus, L, 462
Madras, 2, 34, 46 & fn, 92, 292 fn
Madras Youth League, 349 fn
Maeterlinck, 462
Mahabharata, 243
Mahabharati, Alokananda, 88
Maharaj Kishore, 322 & fn, 324
Maharaj Singh, 319 & fn, 321, 328, 334, 373
Mahmud, Syed, 213, 222, 337 & fn, 338, 349, 360, 367, 377, 379, 383, 386, 387, 421, 429—431, 436, 522, 523, 527, 528
Mahratta, 225 fn
Mainpuri (U.P), 12
Maheca jail (Allahabad), 422, 430, 432
Malaviya, Chandrakant, 373
———, Govind, 420, 430
———, Kesho, 373
———, Madan Mohan, 167, 336, 374, 378, 384, 385, 430, 435
———, Padmakant, 373
Malaysia, 336
Malik, Lal Khan, 285 fn
Malta, 52 fn
Manga, 75
Manmatha Ram, 517
Mann, Tom, 86 & fn
Martial Law, 134, 189, 286 fn, 349
Mason, A E.W., 462
Matara (Sri Lanka), 534
Mathura, 145
Maung Maung, 508
Maurois, Andre, 337 & fn, 350, 387, 388
Mawkhar (Assam), 567 fn
Measure for Measure (Shakespeare), 388
Meerut, 53, 70, 103 fn, 118, 120, 121, 159, 303 fn, 472
Meerut Case, 33, 39, 43, 45, 159, 346, 382
Meerut Prisoners Defence Committee, 107
Meherally, Yusuf, 4, 7 & fn, 19
Mehta, Balvantray, 10 & fn
———, Hansa, 379 & fn
———, Jivraj, 379 fn, 466 fn
———, Sumant, 22 & fn, 564
Memoirs of Halide Edib, 388
Merchant of Venice (Shakespeare), 462
Meredith, 462
Merry Wives of Windsor (Shakespeare), 388
Michael Collins and the Making of a New Ireland (P. Beaslay), 280 fn
Midnapore (Midnapur) (Bengal), 465 & fn
Midsummer Night's Dream (Shakespeare), 462
Mira Ben (Mira bai), 363 & fn
Mirza, Bakar Ali, 62 & fn
Mirzapur (Mirzapore) (U P), 144, 428, 430, 517

Mishra, Bhagwan Din, 220 & fn
Misra, B D, 117 & *fn*
———, Mata Prasad, 309
———, R.S, 221 & fn
Mitra, 76, 77
———, B.N, 77 & *fn*
———, Jatindranath, 58 & fn. 61
Modern Review, 564 *fn*
Modern School (Delhi), 347
Mohamad, Jan, 74
Mohanganj (U.P.), 307
Mohani, Hasrat, 337 & fn
Montessori, 346
Moradabad (U.P.), 151
Much Ado about Nothing (Shakespeare), 388
Mukerjee, A.N., 143 & fn
Mukerji, 338, 373
Mukherji, Dhan Gopal, 347, 404
———, Prafulla C, 179 & fn
———, R.N., 16 fn
Mumbai Girni Kamgar Union, 31 fn, 32
Munzenberg, Willi, 234 fn
Murshan, 241 fn
Muslim leaders' manifesto, 98 fn
Muslim Nationalist Conference, 522, 523
Mussoorie, 44—46, 119, 120, 383, 385, 387, 400, 402, 404, 517, 521, 574
Muttra—see Mathura
Muzaffar, 357
Muzaffarnagar, 120
Muzaffarpur, 298 fn
My Life (Trotsky), 462
Mysore, 529, 545, 547, 549, 553, 557
———, Maharaja of, 557

Nadvi, Masud Ali, 384, 436
———, Syed Sulaiman, 384
Nagercoil (Tamilnadu), 554
Nagina, 119
Nagpur, 55, 175
Naidu, Leilamani, 557 & *fn*
———, Padmaja, 422, 557
———, Sarojini, 125, 349, 377, 382, 422, 524, 553, 557 & fn, 558 & fn, 564
———, T.V.K., 220 & fn
Naik, B.R., 258 fn
Naini (Allahabad), 317, 331, 334, 336, 337, 339, 341, 343, 351, 354, 360, 366, 367, 378, 384, 393, 395, 396, 413, 417, 420, 423, 424, 425, 428, 444, 468, 518, 519
Naini Tal, 137 fn, 151, 306, 331, 346, 358
Najibabad, 119
Nalanda, 417
Nambiar, A C N, 36, 105
Naoroji, Dadabhai, 555 fn
———, Jal, 555 & *fn*, 556
Napoleon (Emil Ludwig), 388
Narayan, Jayaprakash, 305 & *fn*, 332 & fn, 349
Narendra Dev, Acharya, 367 & *fn*
National Federation of Indian Railwaymen, 309 fn
National Gallery of Modern Art, 564 fn
National Minority Movement, 86 & fn
National Service Fund, 118
National Week, 286 & fn, 288, 297, 298
Naujawan Bharati Sabha, 1
Navsari (Gujarat), 258 fn
Nawakot, 133
Nawanagar, Jam Saheb of, 18 fn
Nehru Award for International Understanding, 293 fn
Nehru, Indira, 178, 323, 324, 331, 338, 346, 355, 364, 367, 368, 373, 374, 378, 384, 417 & fn, 420, 421, 433, 451, 452, 518, 535, 553
———, Jawaharlal, 5, 7 & fn, 9, 10 fn, 12, 16 fn, 21, 23, 27, 29 & fn, 30, 33, 35 & fn, 37, 38, 40, 44, 45, 47, 48, 52 fn, 59, 61, 62, 64, 68—71, 77, 85—91, 94, 95, 98 & fn, 100, 103 fn, 105, 106, 109—113, 115—124, 126—131, 134—140, 141 fn, 143, 148 fn—151, 155, 157—164, 168—172, 174, 175, 179, 180, 204, 205 fn—208, 212, 213 & fn, 215 & fn, 218—221, 223, 224, 227, 230, 231, 233, 239—241, 253—255, 258, 263, 266, 267, 273, 274, 276, 277, 279, 280, 282, 283, 286, 290—292, 294, 296, 298—300, 303—305, 307, 310—314, 317 fn, 335, 338 fn, 340, 348, 356, 365, 371, 372, 377, 379, 383, 384 & fn, 385, 387, 392,

396, 397, 400, 401, 403, 404, 408 fn, 416 & fn, 423—425, 428, 429, 435, 436, 440, 441, 453, 461, 467, 469, 470 & fn, 486, 487, 490, 492, 498 fn, 500, 509 fn, 511 fn, 517 & fn, 520, 521, 522 fn, 523, 524, 528—530, 534, 535, 558, 560, 563—568, 570, 572—575, 577—579, 581, 582, 584, 586, 588

———, presides at Lahore Congress, 184—199, advocates launching no tax campaign, 399; advocates non-payment of *chowkidari*, 399; desires to work in villages, 156; dislikes office work, 156; dislikes the word 'vernacular' 9; expresses regret to Joshi, 44; nominates successor to presidentship, 304, 409; on provisional settlement, 481, 482, 489, 490, 491, 494, 496, 497, 503, 507, 538, 539, 545, 551, 552; resigns from League against Imperialism, 238, 267; upset by flogging of prisoners, 423; visits Sri Lanka, 517—531

———, in jail, 317—388, 413—462, arrested and imprisoned (fourth time), 313, 314, 317; arrested and imprisoned (fifth time), 413, 414, 420, dislikes differentiation in treatment of political prisoners, 336, 339; drafts agrarian and economic programme, 437—444, fasts for three days, 427, 429, 430; interviewed by Brailsford, 421; treated for shoulder pain, 326, 334

———, on Anglo Indians and Congress, 109; on behaviour of volunteers on arrest, 295, 296; on Bengal Congress disputes, 230, 263—266, on boycott of foreign cloth, 134—139, on British Labour Party, 86, 89, 102; on Calcutta Congress, 99; on China's freedom, 85 & fn, on communalism, 186, 187, 503, 505, 573; on communism, 7; on Congress, 99, 125, 127; on Congress presidentship, 155, 161, 164; on Constituent Assembly, 444, 450, 451, on dignity of manual labour, 569, on discipline, 166, on duties of municipalities, 546; on economic distress of peasants, 243—251; on economic programme, 255, 256; on efficient work, 118, 149, on father's death, 466, 519; on fundamental rights, 511, 512; on foreign banks in India, 487, 589, 590; on forward policy, 469, 509—511; on independence, 191, 198, 199, 228, 229; on Independence Day, 204, 218, 224, 225, 230, 231, 285; on Indian labour in Sri Lanka, 536, 559, 560, on Indian states, 192, 193, 258, 259, on India's poverty, 104; on journalism, 8; on khadi, 134—136; on kingship, 18, on literacy in Cochin and Travancore, 554; on minorities, 99, 259—261; on national flag, 131, 183, 232; on national language, 24; on nonviolence, 506, on conduct in life, 419, on parallel government, 205, 226; on political prisoners, 210; on prohibition, 110, on psychology of political movements, 445—447, 455—461; on public debt of India, 196, 197; on relations with neighbours, 469, 510, 511, 527, on release of political prisoners, 504, on separation of Burma, 508, 509; on socialism, 2, 3; on Swaraj, 2; on trade unionism, 32, 49, 50; on unity of India, 541, 543; on untouchability, 539, 540, 542; on violence, 12, 195, 495, 503, 505, on youth, 2, 3, 6, 7, 222, 503, 526

———, Kamala, 120, 157, 160, 310, 318, 320, 323, 324, 334, 336, 338 & fn, 341, 348, 349, 353, 358—361, 367—369, 373, 374, 378, 379, 404, 421, 426, 431, 432, 435, 451, 452, 517, 521, 522, 533, 535, 553

———, Krishna Kumari, 106, 310, 318, 336, 338, 343, 347—349, 357, 358, 360, 364, 365, 367, 368, 373, 374, 378, 384, 421, 422 & fn, 435, 452, 521, 532, 553, 558, 584

———, Motilal, 117 fn, 122, 135, 304, 314 fn, 331 fn, 338 fn, 344 fn, 349 fn, 371, 372, 377, 383, 391, 393, 408, 409, 466 fn, 471, 478 fn, 518 & fn, 519, 533 fn, 573 & fn, 581, 582, offers Swaraj Bhawan to the

nation, 478 fn, 581
———, Shamlal, 357, 374 fn
———, Shyam Kumari, 374 & *fn*, 384
———, Uma, 323, 357, 374 & fn
Nehru Report—see All Parties Committee Report
Nepal, 91
New Delhi, 120 fn, 208, 246
New Temple (Johan Bojer), 337, 387
New Testament, 365
New York, 170 fn, 347, 566 fn
North West Frontier Province, 335 & fn, 401, 402
Nuwara Eliya (Sri Lanka), 520, 522, 523, 527, 528, 532

Oberoi, Major, 318 & fn, 423, 426
Olivier, Lord, 102 & fn
Ooty (Ootacamund) (Tamilnadu), 556
Orleans (France), 418 fn
Oudh—see Avadh

Palghat (Kerala), 567 fn
Palwal, 330
———, Sri Krishna Datt, 309 & *fn*, 330
Pandey, Bindeshwari Prasad, 118 & fn
———, Ram Nath, 209 & fn
Pandit, Chandralekha, 331 & fn, 346, 364, 378, 452
———, Nayantara, 331 & fn, 360, 363, 452, 554
———, R.S., 178, 323, 338, 349, 365, 369, 373, 374, 385—387, 404, 420, 429—431, 433—435, 452, 453, 478, 517, 524, 535
———, Vijayalakshmi, 331 & fn, 336, 338, 348, 349, 352, 357, 358, 360, 361, 366—369, 373, 374, 378, 386, 421, 432, 434, 436, 452, 478, 517, 520, 535, 553
Pandya, H.M., 10 & fn
Pant, Govind Ballabh, 161
Paper Boats (K.S. Venkatramani), 578 fn
Pardon Madame (Romain Coolus & Andre Rivoire), 388
Parkhurst, Helen, 346 fn
Partabgarh, 244
Pataliputra (Patna), 417
Patel, Vallabhbhai, 34, 277, 281, 287, 373, 374, 377, 382, 391, 399 fn, 409 & fn, 421, 441, 446, 527, 528
Patel, Vithalbhai, 336 & fn, 378, 401 fn
Patel Enquiry Committee—see Peshawar Enquiry Committee
Patiala, Maharaja of, 580 fn
Patiala Enquiry Committee, 580 & fn
Patna, 343
Paul, L., 110
Perhipunan Indonesia, 87 & fn
Peshawar, 213 fn, 293 & fn, 335 & fn, 337 fn, 344 fn, 345 fn, 391, 392, 401 fn, 406, 413, 505
Peshawar Day, 344 fn, 348
Peshawar Enquiry Committee, 401 & fn
Picketing Ordinance, 382
Pioneer, 386
Pittsburg (U.S.A.), 179 fn
Poe, Edgar Allan, 519 & *fn*
Point Counter Point (Aldous Huxley), 462
Pollonarrua (Sri Lanka), 533
Poona, 114 fn, 146, 148, 553
Porto (Portugal), 566 & fn
Port Said, 52 fn
Potter-Wilson, J.E., 27 & fn
Prabha, 357
Prabhavati Devi, 332 & *fn*
Praja Socialist Party, 305 fn, 367 fn
Prasad, Bindhyabasini, 115
———, Mata, 242
———, Rajendra, 77
Pratap, Raja Mahendra, 241 & *fn*
Pratt, Frances J., 170 & fn
Press Act, 377
Profits of Religion (Upton Sinclair), 388
Prophet (Khalil Gibran), 388
Public Safety Bill, 1, 42, 53
Punjab National Bank, 487
Punya Deva, 324
Purandare, V.B., 32
Puri, Major N.D., 108 fn
Pyarelal, 155

Quilon (Kerala), 555

Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli, 462, 564 & *fn*
Rae Bareli, 145, 244, 251, 298 fn, 307—309, 311—313, 342, 349 fn, 350 & fn, 351
Raghavachari, 523, 527, 528
Rahim, Abdur, 205 & fn, 219
Rai, Nand Kumar, 180 & fn
Raipur (M.P.), 307, 311—313, 317 & fn
———, C.P. Hindustani Provincial Conference at, 317 & *fn*
Rajagopalachari, C., 110, 207 & fn, 400
Raj Guru, 500 fn, 505 fn
Rajkot (Gujarat), 10, 11, 38, 39, 159
Rajpur, 385
Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, 434 fn
Raman, C.V., 564 & *fn*
Ramkumar, 360
Ranchi, 77
Rangoon, 281 fn, 287, 421
Ranu Bala Debi, 299
Rao, Raja, 332, 333, 338
———, B. Shiva, 36, 42
Ras (Gujarat), 277 fn, 399 fn
Rashtriya Stree Sabha, 494 fn
Ratnagiri (Maharashtra), 317 fn
Reimemann, Otto, 90 & fn
Renascent India (K.S. Venkatramani), 578 & fn
Revenue Act, 377
Rewa, 579
Reynolds, Reginald, 351 & *fn*
Rivoire, Andre, 388
Rohtak, 96, 134, 141
———, Punjab Provincial Conference at, 96 fn
Rolland, Romain, 351 fn, 355
Rome and the Papacy (Gilbert Baquani), 462
Romier, Lucien, 388
Round Table Conferences, 47, 113, 165 fn, 170, 369 fn, 372, 444, 453 fn, 456, 458 fn, 482 fn, 487, 491, 492, 497, 507 & fn, 537, 539, 540, 542, 557 & fn
Rowlatt Act, 293 fn, 301
Roy, B.C., 230 & *fn*, 263 fn—265, 367, 378, 466 fn, 477
———, Kiran Sankar, 228 fn, 476, 478
———, Rash Mohan, 567 & fn
Royal Commission, on Agriculture, 41 & fn
———, on Indian Labour, 30 & fn, 39—42, 44, 45, 46 fn, 47, 51, 53
Ruikar R.S., 45 & *fn*, 46 & fn, 48
Ruskin, John, 364
Russell, Bertrand, 337, 387
Russia, 54, 419
———, revolution in, 2, 18, 419

Sabarmati, 158, 212, 215, 277, 280, 287, 324 fn, 352, 356, 360, 363 & fn, 396, 397, 530
Sahai, Raghubir, 527
———, Sitla, 14, 305, 307, 309
Saharanpur (U.P.), 120
Salem (Tamilnadu), 578 fn,
Salt Act, 325, 330, 416 fn, 420, 481
———, violation of, 272, 288, 290, 294, 302, 306, 398
Sambamurti, B., 176 fn
Samed, Abdul, 75, 76
Sampurnanand, S., 300
San Francisco (U.S.A.), 563 fn
Sanghamitra, 533
Santanam, Pandit K., 178, 179 fn
Sanyal, Bhupendra Nath, 209 fn
———, Sachindra Nath, 209 & *fn*, 322, 328
Sapru, T.B., 369 & fn, 371—375, 378—383, 458, 461, 470, 471
Saran (Bihar), 311
Sarda Act—see Child Marriage Restraint Act
Sarkar, Niratan, 378 & *fn*, 434
Sastri, V.S., Srinivasa, 470, 471
Satyagraha Samachar, 308
Satyamurti, S., 206, 564
Satyananda, Swami, 567 fn
Satyapal, Dr., 96 & fn, 173
Saxena, Jta Ram, 21 fn
———, Mohanlal, 324
Sayeed, Basheer Ahmed, 292 & *fn*
Schmithals, Hans, 324
Scholar, 567 & fn
See, Edmond, 388
Sen, B.N., 164 & fn
Sen Gupta, J.M., 207 fn, 263 fn, 281 & *fn*, 287
Servants of India Society, 30 fn

Servants of the People Society, 34 fn
Sesame and Lilies (Ruskin), 364
Seth, Damodar Swarup, 20 & fn, 118
Sethi, R.C., 36 & fn
Shah, Abdulla, 468
———, *Jaffar*, 468
———, K.T., 387, 563 & fn
Shakespeare, William, 355, 356, 364, 388, 462
Shamshere Bahadur, 524
Shahnamah (Firdausi), 462
Shanghai, 52 & fn
Shankarlal, Lala, 148 & fn
Sharma, *Murari*, 215
———, Vichitra Naram, 303 & fn
Shastri, Hariharnath, 309 & fn
Shaw, George Bernard, 388, 462
Shaw Wallace and Company, 60, 64, 69, 71, 72, 78
Sherwani, T.A.K., 349, 357, 374
Shiromani *Akali Dal*, 80 fn
Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, 80 fn
Shokipur, 349 & fn, 391, 392, 406, 465, 504, 505, 558
Siberia, 419
Sigiriya (Sri Lanka), 533
Sikh League—see All India Sikh League
Simla, 68, 336 fn, 379, 382, 392, 393 fn
Simon Commission, 4 fn, 6 fn, 52, 86, 89
———, boycott of, 4 fn
Sinclair, Upton, 388
Singapore, 421, 509
Singh, Bhagat—see Bhagat Singh
———, Chhatar, 342
———, *Dan*, 566 & fn
———, Gurdial—see Singh, Puran
———, Baba Gurdit, 77, 78
———, Sardar Kharak, 80 & fn
———, Sardar Narmada Prasad, 330 & fn, 336, 337 fn, 340, 341, 345, 347 348, 351, 352, 365—368, 386, 387, 429, 430, 431, 434—436, 451, 452
———, Puran, 343
———, Raghubir, 120 fn
———, Rajkumar, 209 & fn
———, Shiva Murti, 328 & fn, 338
———, Shyamvir, 322
———, Sultan, 120 & fn
———, Master Tara, 572 & fn
Sinha, Deoki Prasad, 346
Sinn Fein, 107
Sitapur (U.P.), 351, 367 fn
Slade, Admiral, 363 fn
Slings and Arrows (Lloyd George), 388
Snowden, Viscount Philip, 51 & fn, 101
Socialism and Capitalism (Bernard Shaw), 462
Socialist Party of India, 367 fn
Socialist Youth Congress, 4
Sohagpur, 378
Somasundaram, S., 524 & fn, 528, 529
*South African Federation of Non-*European Trade Unions, 89 fn
Soviet Russia (Jawaharlal Nehru), 33
Spengler, Oswald, 322 & fn, 345, 348, 349, 351, 352, 388
Splendour that was Ind (K.T. Shah), 337 & fn, 387
Spykman, *Nicholas John*, 520 & fn
Sri Lanka, 517 fn, 522 fn, 529, 532, 533 & fn, 559, also see Ceylon
Srinagar (Kashmir), 568 fn
Sri Prakasa, 11, 117 & fn, 119, 300, 307, 311, 312, 580, 584
St. Anne's Vicarage, 384
Steel Protection Act, 79 fn
Steyer Beyer Benitez, 387
Stokes, S.E., 574 & fn
Sukhdev, 500 fn, 503 fn
Sundarlal (Sunder Lal), 368 & fn, 373, 421
Sunderland, J.T., 206 fn
Sun Yat Sen, Madam, 85
Swaraj Party, 70 fn
Swinburne, A.C., 462

Tagore, Rabindranath, 564
Talmud, the, 555
Taming of the Shrew (Shakespeare), 462

Tandon, Lal Behari, 291 & *fn*
———, Purushottamdas, 97, 338, 346, 357, 367, 426, 432, 492
Tangan (U.P.), 242
Tanner, Jocelyn, 384 & fn
Tata Iron and Steel Company, 67 fn, 72, 73
Tatapuram (Kerala), 555
Tata Workers Union, 61 fn
Tegart, Sir Charles, 477 & fn
Tempest (Shakespeare), 388
Temple of the Tooth (Sri Lanka), 533
Tendulkar, D G., 317 & *fn*
Tewari—see Tiwari and Tivary
Thailand, 5 fn
Thomas, J.H, 101
Thompson, 338
Tilak Day, 391 fn
Tilak, Lokmanya, 228, 243
Tinnevelly (Tirunelveli) (Tamilnadu), 537, 553
Tivary, Venkatesh Narayan, 318 & *fn*, 321, 327, 333, 340, 342
Tiwari, Radha Krishna, 486, 487, 527, 528
To Live in Mankind (Reginald Reynolds), 351 fn
Trades Disputes Act, 42, 53, 81
Transvaal, 24 fn
Travel Diary (Keyserling), 462
Trevelyan, Charles Edward, 212 & *fn*
———, G M., 423 fn
Trichur (Kerala), 539, 556
———, Youth League at, 539
———, Yuvajana Samithi at, 539
Trincomalee (Sri Lanka), 533
Tripathi, Rup Narain, 322 & fn, 324, 350
———, Tika Ram, 345 & fn
Trivandrum, 554, 555
Trivedi, P.N., 88 & fn
Trotsky, 462
Tuticorin (Tamilnadu), 529, 535, 543, 553
Two Gentlemen of Verona (Shakespeare), 388
Tyabji, Abbas, 344 & *fn*
Tyne (Teyen), 318

Uberoi—see Oberoi
Ugarte, Manuel, 388
Uma Shankar, 231 & fn
Unhappy India (Lajpat Rai), 206 fn
Union of South Africa, 24 fn, 190, 197
Unlawful Associations Ordinance, 392 fn
Unlawful Instigation Ordinance, 357 fn.
U N. Human Rights Commission, 379 fn
United Forward Republican Bloc, 309 fn
United India League (Detroit), 100 fn
United States of America, 51, 92, 95, 96, 100 fn, 122, 125, 126, 216, 346 fn
Unto This Last (Ruskin), 364
Upadhyaya, S D, 338 & *fn*, 523, 524
U P Jails Enquiry Committee, 209
U P. Provincial Political Conference, 307 fn, 368 fn, 517 & fn
U P. Trade Union Conference, 40, 41

Vaid, Devi Das, 569 & fn
Vakil, Jahangir, 575
Vanguard, 7 & fn
Varanasi, 7, 88 fn, 143, 145, 146, 159, 209 fn, 250, 299, 300, 310, 363, 399 fn
Varma, L. Shiv 13 & *fn*
Vasishta, Nand Kumar Dev, 307 & fn
Venkatramani, K.S, 578 & fn
Verlaine, Paul, 365 & *fn*
Victoria Terminus (Bombay), 558
Vidyarthi, Ganesh Shankar, 352, 503, 505, 530
Villeroy, Auguste, 388
Vyas, Sakarben K, 112 & fn

Waheed, 357, 360
Washington, 122 fn
———, Congress Legation in, 122 fn
Weinbren, B., 89 & fn
Welsh Plate and Sheet Manufacturers Association, 74
White Sahibs of India (Reginald Reynolds), 351 fn
Whitley, J H., 30 fn
Whitley Commission—see Royal Commission on Agriculture
White Light and Flame (MacManus), 462

Who will be Master—Europe or America? (Lucien Romier), 388
Wilder, Thornton, 462
Willingdon, Earl of, 458 & *fn*
Winterton, Lord, 278
Wizaya, 184 & fn
Woman of Andros (Thornton Wilder), 462
Woo, T.C., 337, 387
Workers Welfare League of India (London), 27 fn
World Crisis (Churchill), 384 & fn, 388
World Federation of Youth for Peace, 90 & fn

Yale (U.S.A.), 520
Yatzdani, S.Y., 37 & fn
Yeravda (Poona), 342, 369 fn, 374, 375, 384, 396, 422, 471, 476
Young India, 214, 215, 227, 273, 280, 297
Young Liberator, 169 fn
Youth Congress, 4 & fn

Zutshi, Lado Rani, 356

Who will be Master—Europe or *America?* (Lucien Romier), 388
Wilder, Thornton, 462
Willingdon, Earl of, 458 & *fn*
Winterton, Lord, 278
Wizaya, 184 & fn
Woman of Andros (Thornton Wilder), *462*
Woo, T.C., 337, 387
Workers Welfare League of India (London), 27 fn
World Crisis (Churchill), 384 & fn, 388
World Federation of Youth for Peace, 90 & fn

Yale (U.S.A.), 520
Yatzdani, S.Y., 37 & fn
Yeravda (Poona), 342, 369 fn, 374, 375, 384, 396, 422, 471, 476
Young India, 214, 215, 227, 273, 280, 297
Young Liberator, 169 fn
Youth Congress, 4 & fn

Zutshi, Lado Rani, 356

Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru

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Volume Five

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FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps, outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling—these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of the East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles,

both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the 'third world' as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.

Indira Gandhi

New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

EDITORIAL NOTE

After the settlement concluded by Mahatma Gandhi with the British Government in March 1931, Jawaharlal Nehru, despite his mental reservations, loyally abided by it. However, the government had no intention of permitting this truce to develop into any form of final settlement. Particularly in Jawaharlal Nehru's home province, official repression combined with the general economic depression to cause acute agrarian distress which Jawaharlal Nehru could not ignore. In the absence of Mahatma Gandhi in London, he tried his best to secure at least the minimum redressal of tenant wrong without coming into direct clash with the government. But the government was eager for a conflict and Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested while on his way to Bombay to receive Mahatma Gandhi.

A few days later, civil disobedience was resumed and Mahatma Gandhi and the other Congress leaders were promptly arrested. The diaries maintained by Jawaharlal Nehru in prison from December 1931 till his release in August 1933 vividly reflect his mental conflict and his disappointment with many aspects of the policy of the Congress and especially of Mahatma Gandhi. After his release he gave special attention to the formulation of ideas which would rapidly advance economic development and social change.

Much of the material included in this volume has been selected from the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru. The cooperation extended by the Director and the staff of the Nehru Memorial Museum & Library is acknowledged.

The Maharashtra Government, the National Archives of India and the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya have kindly allowed us to utilise material in their possession. Letters and texts of speeches and statements first published in *The Hindu*, *The Hindustan Times*, *The Bombay Chronicle*, *The Tribune*, *The Leader*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *The Times of India*, *Pioneer*, and *Young India* are reprinted with their consent. Punch has authorised us to reprint one of its cartoons, and Asia Publishing House have permitted us to include two letters first printed in *Glimpses of World History*.

CONTENTS

1. Congress, the Settlement and the Round Table Conference

1	Truce is not Peace	7 June	1931	1
2	Be Prepared	8 June	1931	2
3	On the Changed Temper of the Nation	11 June	1931	2
4	Speech at Poona	15 June	1931	4
5	Peace Only with Honour and Freedom	20 June	1931	4
6	On Resumption of the Struggle	22 June	1931	6
7	On Observance of the Truce	23 June	1931	7
8	Circular to P.C.Cs	16 July	1931	8
9	Interview to the Press	18 July	1931	9
10	Interview to the Associated Press	21 July	1931	10
11	On His Interview at Simla	25 July	1931	11
12	On Congress Participation in Round Table Conference	14 August	1931	12
13	Little Hope of a Compromise	15 August	1931	13
14	On the Working Committee's Decision	18 August	1931	14
15	To Fenner Brockway	20 August	1931	17
16	On Government's Attitude towards the Settlement	20 August	1931	18
17	Circular to D.C.Cs	26 August	1931	21
18	Circular to P.C.Cs and Members of Working Committee	27 August	1931	22
19	Repudiation of Press Propaganda	29 August	1931	23
20	On the Simla Settlement	31 August	1931	25
21	Circular to P.C.Cs	31 August	1931	27

22	To Mahatma Gandhi	1 September	1931	28
23	To Mahatma Gandhi	11 September	1931	31
24	To Mahatma Gandhi	12 September	1931	32
25	To the Maharaja of Patiala	16 September	1931	37
26	To Roger Baldwin	17 September	1931	41
27	To Mahatma Gandhi	17 September	1931	42
28	Circular to P.C.Cs, D.C.Cs and Seva Dals	23 September	1931	44
29	To Home Secretary, Government of India	27 September	1931	44
30	To Vallabhbhai Patel	27 September	1931	45
31	To Mahatma Gandhi	27 September	1931	46
32	To M. A. Ansari	4 October	1931	48
33	Telegram to S. K. Datta	10 November	1931	49
34	To Vallabhbhai Patel	8 December	1931	50
35	On the Order Banning Congress Activities in Puri	8 December	1931	50

2. Agrarian Distress in the United Provinces

1	To G. B. Pant	March	1931	55
2	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	11 March	1931	56
3	Message to the Peasants of Rae Bareli	12 March	1931	61
4	Note on Economic Distress in the United Provinces	23 March	1931	61
5	Appeal to Kisans	March	1931	65
6	To Commissioner, Allahabad Division	9 April	1931	66
7	To Sitla Sahai	11 April	1931	68
8	Appeal to the Kisans of Allahabad District	13 April	1931	69
9	On the Rent and Revenue Situation in U.P.	18 April	1931	70
10	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	17 June	1931	79
11	To G. B. Pant	18 June	1931	80

12	Address to Kisans	20 June	1931	81
13	The Significance of the Truce	25 June	1931	85
14	No Compromise on Swaraj	26 June	1931	91
15	To Deputy Commissioner, Rae Bareli	26 June	1931	95
16	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	27 June	1931	96
17	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	27 June	1931	98
18	To Secretary, U.P.P.C.C.	27 June	1931	99
19	To Mahatma Gandhi	27 June	1931	100
20	To Deputy Commissioner, Rae Bareli	28 June	1931	100
21	To Deputy Commissioner, Rae Bareli	1 July	1931	101
22	To T.A.K. Sherwani	3 July	1931	101
23	On His Speech at Lucknow	4 July	1931	102
24	On the Need for Unity and Nonviolence	5 July	1931	103
25	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	23 July	1931	105
26	The Congress and the Kisans	28 July	1931	105
27	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	29 July	1931	106
28	Interview to the Press	29 July	1931	108
29	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	30 July	1931	108
30	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	31 July	1931	109
31	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	1 August	1931	111
32	Interview to the Press	2 August	1931	113
33	Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi	15 August	1931	114
34	To A. Sahay	20 August	1931	114
35	To Private Secretary to Viceroy	1 September	1931	115
36	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	5 September	1931	115
37	Statement to the Press	11 September	1931	119
38	How They Manage Things in [illegible] Mettra Dated	19 September	1931	120
39	To Vallabhbhai Patel	19 September	1931	123
40	To Sita Sahai	22 September	1931	123

41	To Rampal Singh	23 September	1931	124
42	Reply to Charges against Congress	23 September	1931	125
43	To Commissioner, Allahabad	23 September	1931	126
44	On the Resumption of Satyagraha	24 September	1931	128
45	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	24 September	1931	128
46	To Deputy Magistrate, Bareilly	30 September	1931	131
47	To Mahatma Gandhi	1 October	1931	133
48	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	2 October	1931	136
49	To Mahatma Gandhi	4 October	1931	137
50	To Deputy Commissioner, Bahraich	7 October	1931	138
51	To Rampal Singh	12 October	1931	139
52	On Conditions in Balrampur Estate	13 October	1931	140
53	The Deepening Agrarian Crisis	14 October	1931	141
54	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	15 October	1931	143
55	Issue Before the Kisans	15 October	1931	147
56	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	15 October	1931	148
57	To Private Secretary to Viceroy	16 October	1931	152
58	Cable to Mahatma Gandhi	16 October	1931	155
59	To Mahatma Gandhi	16 October	1931	156
60	To Vallabhbhai Patel	16 October	1931	157
61	To Purushottamdas Tandon	16 October	1931	158
62	To T.A.K. Sherwani	16 October	1931	159
63	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	16 October	1931	160
64	To Secretary, Jalabad Congress Committee	17 October	1931	161
65	To Jagannath Prasad Agarwal	19 October	1931	161
66	Speech at Allahabad District Kisans Conference	23 October	1931	162
67	To Sitla Sahai	23 October	1931	163
68	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	26 October	1931	164

69	To T.A.K. Sherwani	30 October	1931	166
70	To Vallabhbhai Patel	2 November	1931	167
71	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	3 November	1931	169
72	To Rampal Singh	5 November	1931	170
73	On the Condition of U.P. Kisans	7 November	1931	172
74	Interview to the Press	17 November	1931	175
75	To Vallabhbhai Patel	21 November	1931	176
76	To Khan Sahib	23 November	1931	177
77	Address to Kisans	23 November	1931	178
78	To the Kisans	23 November	1931	179
79	No Half-way Settlement	25 November	1931	179
80	To Vallabhbhai Patel	26 November	1931	180
81	To Syed Mahmud	27 November	1931	181
82	To Private Secretary to Viceroy	28 November	1931	182
83	To Krishna Chandra	28 November	1931	183
84	To Vallabhbhai Patel	1 December	1931	183
85	To Vallabhbhai Patel	4 December	1931	185
86	To Vallabhbhai Patel	7 December	1931	187
87	On the U.P. Ordinance	17 December	1931	187
88	Interview to the Press	21 December	1931	190
89	To Vallabhbhai Patel	23 December	1931	191
90	Telegram to Vallabhbhai Patel	23 December	1931	191
91	To District Magistrate, Allahabad	23 December	1931	192

3. General Secretary A.I.C.C.

SWADESHI MOVEMENT

1	Circular to P.C.Cs	8 April	1931	197
2	To Vallabhbhai Patel	8 April	1931	197
3	Circular to P.C.Cs	18 June	1931	199
4	To Secretary, Dhariwal Woollen Mills	24 June	1931	200
5	To M. Abdullah	25 June	1931	201
6	To Bishambhar Nath Gupta	30 June	1931	203

7	Reply to Muslim Cloth Dealers	30 June	1931	204
8	To Muhammad Hussain	2 July	1931	205
9	To President, Nellore D.C.C.	3 July	1931	208
10	To Muhammad Hussain	6 July	1931	208
11	Circular to P.C.Cs	16 July	1931	209
12	To S. K. Datt Paliwal	21 July	1931	210
13	To Mahavir Tyagi	22 July	1931	211
14	To President, Dharwar D.C.C.	27 July	1931	211
15	To Shankarlal Banker	21 August	1931	212
16	To Shankarlal Banker	1 September	1931	213
17	Swadeshi as a Creed	24 September	1931	213
18	To G. R. Khanna	4 October	1931	214
19	Statement to the Press	6 October	1931	215
20	To Kurur Nambudiripad	25 October	1931	216
21	To Secretary, Bombay P.C.C.	7 November	1931	216
22	To Vallabhbhai Patel	21 November	1931	217

HINDUSTANI SEVA DAL

23	Volunteers to Allay Panic	9 April	1931	219
24	On the Training of Volunteers	13 April	1931	220
25	Appeal for Flag Day Celebration	22 April	1931	221
26	Circular to P.C.Cs	16 July	1931	221
27	Speech at Seva Dal Conference	9 August	1931	224
28	Message to the Khudai Khidmatgars	12 August	1931	225
29	Volunteers and Other Organisations	11 September	1931	226
30	To N. S. Hardikar	14 September	1931	226
31	To N. S. Hardikar	4 October	1931	227
32	To N. S. Hardikar	12 October	1931	228
33	To Nandkumar Deo Vashishta	12 October	1931	229
34	To Secretary, Bengal P.C.C.	18 October	1931	230
35	To N. S. Hardikar	19 October	1931	230
36	On the Hindustani Seva Dal	21 October	1931	231
37	To All Provincial Seva Dal Boards	6 November	1931	235

38	Appeal to the Youth of Bengal	19 November	1931	236
39	Address to Women Volunteers	15 December	1931	236
40	On British Criticism of the Seva Dal	16 December	1931	237
41	Address to Volunteers	19 December	1931	238
42	Circular to All Provincial Seva Dals and Members-in-charge	21 December	1931	239

GENERAL

43	Circular to P.C.Cs	9 April	1931	240
44	To Pattabhi Sitaramayya	12 April	1931	242
45	To Mustafa Ali	14 April	1931	243
46	To M. John	28 June	1931	244
47	To Vallabhbhai Patel	30 June	1931	245
48	To Mata Prasad Misra	1 July	1931	246
49	To President, Bangalore City Congress Committee	2 July	1931	246
50	To Secretary, Indian Journalists Association	4 July	1931	248
51	To Anjani Kumar	21 July	1931	248
52	To B.S. Ramaswami Iyengar	24 July	1931	249
53	On the New Design of the National Flag	7 August	1931	250
54	Note on Foreign Branches of the Congress	8 August	1931	250
55	To Secretary, Frontier P.C.C.	12 August	1931	253
56	To C. Chattur Singh	26 August	1931	254
57	To Secretary, Bangalore D.C.C.	18 September	1931	254
58	To Vallabhbhai Patel	24 September	1931	256
59	To Prithvi Raj Singh	2 October	1931	257
60	To Ali Gul Khan	3 October	1931	257
61	To Khurshed Naoroji	3 October	1931	259
62	To Abdul Ghaffar Khan	3 October	1931	260
63	To Vallabhbhai Patel	7 October	1931	261
64	To Khan Sahib	14 October	1931	262
65	To Khurshed Naoroji	14 October	1931	262
66	To Ali Gul Khan	22 October	1931	263

67	Note on the Kanpur Riots Enquiry Report	31 October	1931	264
68	To Saadullah Khan	10 November	1931	267
69	To Prafulla Chandra Sen	16 November	1931	271
70	To Sampurnanand	21 November	1931	271
71	Telegram to Vallabhbhai Patel	22 November	1931	272
72	To Vallabhbhai Patel	24 November	1931	272
73	To Gopinath Singh	26 November	1931	273
74	To Vallabhbhai Patel	26 November	1931	274
75	To D.R. Thengdi	4 December	1931	275
76	To Khan Sahib	5 December	1931	276
77	To Vallabhbhai Patel	7 December	1931	276
78	To Vallabhbhai Patel	8 December	1931	277

4. Political Speeches and Statements

1	On the Riots in Kanpur	April	1931	281
2	Appeal for Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi Memorial Fund	13 May	1931	282
3	On Hindu Muslim Unity	9 June	1931	282
4	On Minorities and Nationalism	13 June	1931	283
5	The Congress and Mill Workers	13 June	1931	286
6	On H S. Suhrawardy's Allegations	15 June	1931	287
7	On the Defence of the Accused in the Delhi Conspiracy Case	23 June	1931	288
8	On the Congress Attitude towards Harijans	24 June	1931	289
9	Reply to Depressed Classes' Welcome Address	9 July	1931	290
10	On Terrorist Occurrences	30 July	1931	290
11	On Political Violence	6 August	1931	291
12	On Protection of Women Workers	8 August	1931	292

13	On Formation of the National Government in England	24 August	1931	293
14	Address to Mill Workers	10 September	1931	293
15	On the Firing at Hijli Detention Camp	24 September	1931	294
16	On the National Flag	26 September	1931	294
17	Speech at Punjab Political Conference	26 September	1931	295
18	On Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday	2 October	1931	296
19	On M.N. Roy's Defence	9 November	1931	297
20	On Hijli and Chittagong Occurrences	14 November	1931	298
21	Harijans and the Congress	19 November	1931	299
22	To the Youth of Bengal	19 November	1931	300
23	Call to Eschew Violence	23 November	1931	303
24	On Bengal's Sacrifices	7 December	1931	305
25	Reply to Address of Gadag Municipality	19 December	1931	306
26	To the People of Gadag	19 December	1931	307
27	Reply to an Address at Hubli	19 December	1931	308
28	Imminence of a Struggle	20 December	1931	309
29	Message to Karnatak	20 December	1931	311

5. Miscellaneous

1	To C. Chattur Singh	9 April	1931	315
2	To Bharati Sarabhai	8 June	1931	315
3	To Bharati Sarabhai	6 July	1931	317
4	To Will Durant	22 July	1931	318
5	To Will Durant	20 August	1931	319
6	To Sri Prakasa	30 August	1931	321
7	To George Slocombe	31 August	1931	322
8	To S.A. Brelvi	7 September	1931	323
9	To S.B. Patel	18 September	1931	324
10	To Mahatma Gandhi	19 September	1931	324
11	To Jawaharlal Rohtagi	22 September	1931	327

12	To Mahatma Gandhi	24 September	1931	327
13	To D.N. Bahadurji	14 October	1931	328
14	To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	16 October	1931	329
15	To the Manager, Gauhr-i-Hayat Office, Kanpur	19 October	1931	330
16	To Vallabhbhai Patel	21 November	1931	330
17	To Vallabhbhai Patel	24 November	1931	331
18	To P.R. Lele	26 November	1931	332
19	To K.F. Nariman	27 November	1931	333
20	To Vallabhbhai Patel	28 November	1931	333
21	To K.F. Nariman	4 December	1931	335
22	To the Members of the Swaraj Bhawan Managing Committee	8 December	1931	336
23	To Syed Mahmud	9 December	1931	337
24	To Syed Mahmud	10 December	1931	338
25	To the Income Tax Officer, Allahabad	23 December	1931	338

6. Prison Diary with Letters
26 December 1931—31 December 1932

Prison Diary with Letters 343

7. Prison Diary with Letters
1 January 1933—30 August 1933

Prison Diary with Letters 449

8. On the Situation in India

1	On His Release	30 August	1933	505
2	Interview at Allahabad	30 August	1933	505

3	Interview to the Pioneer	31 August	1933	506
4	To Aldous Huxley	1 September	1933	510
5	To Desmond Young	1 September	1933	514
6	To B.K. Das Gupta	2 September	1933	516
7	To T.C. Goswami	3 September	1933	516
8	On the Congress Organisation and Programme	4 September	1933	517
9	On the World Situation	4 September	1933	519
10	To S.P. Khambatta	7 September	1933	520
11	To Sri Prakasa	10 September	1933	521
12	To Kapildeva Malaviya	10 September	1933	522
13	To Bhagavan Das	11 September	1933	523
14	To Patrick Lacey	13 September	1933	524
15	The Andaman Prisoners	13 September	1933	525
16	To Mahatma Gandhi	13 September	1933	526
17	To J. Makhmoor	14 September	1933	530
18	Statement to the Press	14 September	1933	531
19	Interview to the Press	15 September	1933	533
20	Interview to the Press	17 September	1933	534
21	Interview at Kanpur	19 September	1933	538
22	On Gandhi Jayanti Celebrations	20 September	1933	539
23	On the Treatment of Political Prisoners in Rae Bareli Jail	21 September	1933	540
24	To Bhagavan Das	23 September	1933	540
25	Appeal for Khadi	23 September	1933	543
26	On the Congress Programme	24 September	1933	543
27	Speech at Lucknow	24 September	1933	545
28	To A.G. Venkatachari	25 September	1933	546
29	To S.K. Mukerji	26 September	1933	547
30	To V.V. Giri	30 September	1933	549

9. General 1931-33

1	Foreword to a Biography of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi		1931	553
2	Foreword to a Book on Prison Reforms	6 July	1931	554
3	The Defence of India	9 September	1931	555

4 A Window in Prison 10 September 1933 560
5 Prison Land 18 September 1933 565

Appendix

To K.M. Munshi 29 April 1940 579

ILLUSTRATIONS

Frontispiece

The Elusive Mahatma
With Mahatma Gandhi in Bombay, 29 August 1931 — *between pp.* 48–49

Bombay, 1931
Bombay, 1931 — 112–113

With Congress workers at Allahabad, 1931
At Allahabad District Kisans Conference, 25 November 1931 — 176–177

With Vallabhbhai Patel in Ahmedabad, 1931 — 224

At Chheoki station on the eve of arrest, 26 December 1931
A page from the jail diary — 352–353

Statement to be read at trial, 4 January 1932
The barrack in Dehra Dun jail — 384–385

First page of letter to Indira Nehru, 3 October 1932
A page from the jail diary, 8 May 1933 — 416-417

1

CONGRESS, THE SETTLEMENT AND THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

1. Truce is not Peace[1]

When I recall the splendid record of Bombay during the last civil disobedience movement I must pay a high tribute to the people of this great city for their achievement. But I must remind you that the truce is only a temporary suspension of hostile activities and we must keep ourselves in good trim to resume the fight if there is need for it.

In view of the work before the country in the immediate future, I *appeal to you to strengthen the hands of Gandhiji. The fight that* Gandhiji is carrying on is for the freedom of the masses and for solving the problem of feeding the hungry millions in India. It is, in short, the question of providing bread to the poor.

The victory achieved by the Congress is due to the solid backing that the Congress received from the poor people. They have stood behind the Congress like one man, faced all sorts of sufferings and kept the Congress flag flying. It is up to them now to stand by Gandhiji and strengthen his hands.

I warn you not to be led away by the cry that truce is 'Peace'. I want to make it perfectly clear that it is not peace but merely a truce, or, in other words, a temporary suspension of hostile activities. No one knows nor can say what will come out from the truce. It may be lasting peace or it may be a grim fight again. But whether it is going to be peace or war, you, as soldiers of freedom, must keep yourselves ready for any emergency. For that purpose, you must gather more and more strength and it is only when you do that, that the dream of Swaraj will come true.

1 Speech at Rashtriya Stree Sabha, Bombay, 7 June 1931. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 8 June 1931.

2. Be Prepared[1]

Be prepared for peace as well as for war. If there is no peace you will have to fight. You have got an opportunity to prepare yourselves within three or four months. Bardoli has taken a great part in tho last struggle and great responsibility rests on its shoulders. There should be the strength of millions behind our representative. Then there will be peace, otherwise not.

I have travelled as far as Ceylon.[2] Everywhere I have found men and women inspired with one ideal. There is unity from one end of the country to the other, despite dissensions at some places. We have now acquired the power to win Swaraj.

1. Speech at Bardoli, 8 June 1931. From *The Hindu*, 9 June 1931.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol 4, pp. 518 531.

3. On the Changed Temper of the Nation[1]

Wherever we may look we can see India completely changed because of the war we have fought. Hitherto wherever an Indian went he was regarded as a slave unworthy of any respect; but things have changed after the magnificent fight we gave last year. The constitution on paper is the same, but the temper of the whole nation has changed. We can see that change with our own eyes. What is the moral of this great change that has come upon us? It is that we have now developed a strength in us which is impossible to be put down or defeated. Our sacrifices and sufferings have given us that strength.

We have obeyed our leaders, no doubt, but we have also put greater responsibility on them. Hereafter the leaders will not dare to go a step astray. They must keep to the path and that path is the path of war.

1 Speech at Bombay, 11 June 1931. From The Bombay Chronicle, 12 June 1931

We have taken a vow to attain independence. We are bound to fulfil it at any cost. If that can be done by peaceful negotiations at the Round Table Conference, by all means, let us have it; but if that fails, there must be no doubt in anybody's mind that we have to go back to the old path and that is the path of war. It is impossible that we shall be slaves in our own land.

Let us not think that Mahatmaji will bring independence from England and that we can sleep here. We must be alert now and for ever. Even when Mahatmaji is in England we must be so up and doing that the whole world must feel that the strength of the entire nation is behind him. It is left to us to create sanctions behind Gandhiji's demand.

Large number of Muslims had gathered to hear the speakers at the Dongri meeting. Only a handful of mischief mongers wanted to break up the meeting by despicable means. In any other country such rowdies would have been thrown out of the meeting. These mischief-makers could not succeed in their attempts. I read in the papers that after the meeting was over, these michief-makers began to throw stones at the crowd and assaulted innocent persons. By these dirty tactics the hooligans had exposed themselves. These hooligans went to the length of stabbing innocent persons. One brave young man was a victim of their stabbing. That was a most unfortunate incident. What bravery is there in stabbing an innocent person? They ought to have stabbed me, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Abdul Ghaffar Khan or Dr. Ansari, if they were brave. If these people really want a fight I am prepared for it. I would go to Dongri. Let them fight with me. The time has come when these cowardly tactics must stop.

The nation that gave such a valiant fight to the mightiest power on earth is not going to be cowed down by these despicable methods of a handful of persons. The Congress has begun to fight and that is going to be fought to the finish. No community is going to be cowed down by threats Even Hindus and Muslims put together could not cow down a small community like the Sikhs. The strength of the nation is the strength of sacrifice. Who can put down that strength?

4. Speech at Poona[1]

I visited this city last year with my father as the honoured 'guest' of His Majesty at Yeravda jail. Though we have not attained Swaraj following last year's struggle, we have shown our strength. One cannot say for certain whether we may have to fight again. But the nation must be prepared for emergencies, keeping itself in readiness like organised and disciplined soldiers.

Several distinguished men went to the Round Table Conference last year, but they were not sent by the people of India as their representatives.[2] Now, we are sending Mahatma Gandhi to represent the whole of India.[3] So, the success of the Congress depends on the strength behind it and behind Mahatma Gandhi.

To those who say that Muslims are not behind the Congress I would tell them that during the last movement, out of 70,000 persons who went to jail, nearly 14,000 were Muslims. The Frontier people have borne the brunt of the struggle and they have lost more lives and suffered more in comparison with other provinces.

I appeal to the merchants who have promised that they will not sell foreign cloth for a certain period, to give up its sale for ever.

1. 15 June 1931. From *The Hindu*, 16 June 1931.
2. The Congress did not participate in the first Round Table Conference because it failed to get an assurance from the government that the discussions in the conference would take place on the basis of full responsible government—Purna Swaraj
3. Mahatma Gandhi attended the second Round Table Conference which met from 7 September to 1 December 1931.

5. Peace Only with Honour and Freedom[1]

When two nations sit together to arrive at a settlement, fine questions of constitutional law are of no avail. It is the sanction behind a particular representative that really counts. If therefore the Mahatma attends

1. Allahabad, 20 June 1931. From *The Searchlight*, 23 June 1931.

the Round Table Conference he will do so as the representative of the organised will of the nation, and the sanction of millions of his countrymen, of all classes, will be behind him. The British Government should not, however, feel elated as they have to face a nation which does not yield easily. Meanwhile we should strengthen the Congress and its internal power.

I have been criticised that I mar the peaceful atmosphere of the country by my references to the next fight which we may be forced to start.[2] We must remember that 'eternal vigilance is the price of liberty' as an American had said. Even free countries maintain armaments and study the international situation. If, therefore, we want to achieve freedom and retain it we must be vigilant and ready for all emergencies.

It is no pleasure to those who are at present leading the people to throw their countrymen into the fire of political struggle and into the suffering that attends it. But in arriving at a settlement we must not forget the vow of Purna Swaraj we have taken and we must remember that no peace which is not honourable and which does not secure us freedom can satisfy the country.

Ever since my arrival in Allahabad, I have been approached by tenants who related woeful tales of harassment and oppression in the districts. The Congress has observed the terms of the Gandhi-Irwin Settlement honourably. Mahatma Gandhi himself met the Governor of the province in order to arrive at some formula to tide over the difficulties of the tenants and the zamindars. But his very reasonable proposals were not accepted. I would advise the tenants that they should observe the peace terms and follow the Mahatma's advice in this connection. The result in the long run is bound to prove beneficial to them and the country.

2. Such criticism long continued. See Jawaharlal's letter to K. M. Munshi of 29 April 1940. Appendix one.

6. On Resumption of the Struggle[1]

Our strength and solid organisation alone shall lead us to success whether at the Round Table Conference or outside it.

After having toured the whole country and watched the mood and the temper of the people myself, I can say that the people who were denounced as slaves have risen from their slumber and 350 million people are now determined to be free. It is this determination of the people which has attracted world attention. And the people throughout the world hold our leader Mahatma Gandhi in high esteem.

The selfless sacrifices and silent sufferings of our people are responsible for making us rise in the estimation of the world and we feel much stronger now. The truce itself is a proof of our strength.

At the Round Table Conference, Mahatma Gandhi will deliver the message of India to the British and the world. His voice would be the voice of India's 350 millions, and most probably his demands would be met

As regards the truce, I must say that the government has not sincerely fulfilled its part of the agreement. In U.P., repression is in full swing and selected Congress workers are being prosecuted. The government alone is responsible for breach of the truce terms. It is shameful for such a powerful government to use the zamindars for crushing the poor kisans. It is impossible for us to go on crying 'truce', 'truce', while our peasant brethren are being trampled under foot. We shall have to take some drastic action.

I must also say that if the fight is resumed again, the government alone will be responsible for it. The government must know that the peasants are as strong as before to give it another big fight. It must take a lesson from the past. If last year, thousands of men, women and children could make tremendous sacrifices, we would certainly make much greater sacrifices in the next fight which would be more fierce. The next political earthquake will be of a more tremendous nature.

I cannot say when we shall gain complete victory, but I must say that victory is assured to those—be it today or tomorrow—whose fight is for truth, justice and righteousness.

1. Delhi, 22 June 1931. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 29 June 1931.

7. On Observance of the Truce[1]

When we made the truce with the government three months back we knew that if an opportunity arose, we could again enter the battlefield afresh with our sword of satyagraha unsheathed.

The truce is a temporary measure, for it is well-known how far its terms are adhered to.

In the United Provinces, the zamindars and the government are crushing the poor kisans. Though the peasants have paid as much rent as they can and the Congress is observing the truce terms, the government are not adhering to them. The government have begun arresting the chief organisers and workers of the Congress in various places under different sections in order that they may not be able to help the Congress when needed.

This cannot be borne for long, though the Congress wants to prove that it is not taking an aggressive attitude, yet, if the government and the zamindars persist in their policy, the Congress will be obliged to do something. The government will be mistaken if they think that the movement can easily be crushed, for it has spread into the villages.

Gandhiji will go alone to the Round Table Conference not to argue but to convey the message of the country and he will be heard because he has the support of the whole country behind him. India is not fighting individuals but the government as a whole. And if that is to be fought out we should establish a strong Congress *sangathan*. We have already succeeded to some extent in this. I also appeal to you to continue the boycott of foreign cloth.

1. Delhi, 23 June 1931. From *The Hindu*, 24 June 1931.

8. Circular to P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
July 16th, 1931

Dear Comrade,

The Working Committee met at Bombay on the 7th July and had a prolonged session lasting full six days. Many vital matters affecting the future of the country and the national movement were considered and important resolutions were passed. The next number of the *Congress Bulletin* containing the Working Committee resolutions will be sent to you soon. Meanwhile, I am addressing you separately and drawing your particular attention to these important resolutions requiring immediate action. These relate to the communal problem, the volunteer organisation and the pledge for the exclusion of foreign cloth and yarn.

The most important question, however, before the Working Committee was the action to be taken in regard to the numerous breaches of the Delhi Settlement on the part of local governments and their officers. As you are aware provincial and local Congress committees and individuals have brought many such instances to the notice of the Working Committee and the Committee felt that it was not possible to ignore them or to permit the situation to drift from bad to worse. After the most anxious consideration they decided to make another earnest effort to bring about an observance of the settlement on the part of the government, and Mahatma Gandhi has proceeded to Simla with this object. Gandhiji will undoubtedly do his utmost to secure a peaceful settlement of the matters in issue so that there may be no future complaints of this kind. But it is obvious enough that there are dangerous possibilities ahead and it is well to be prepared for all emergencies. We must of course continue to observe scrupulously the terms of the Delhi Settlement. Any other action that we may have to take can only be considered after all avenues of amicable settlement by negotiation have failed and the Working Committee gives a definite lead. Till then no breach of the truce, individual or collective, on our part is permissible.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-1/1931, p. 111, N.M.M.L.

But in view of the grave situation, it is incumbent on us to keep wide awake and to keep our organisation ready and prepared. You will therefore kindly see to it that all the local Congress committees in your province are kept up to the mark and are made to appreciate the necessities of the situation.

The next meeting of the A.I.C.C. will take place in Bombay on August 6th afternoon and following days. We have not received the names of the new A.I.C.C. members from many provinces and it is therefore difficult to inform them individually. I shall be glad if you will kindly send information about this meeting of the A.I.C.C. to all the A.I.C.C. members in your province. Members desiring board and lodging arrangements to be made for them in Bombay should address the secretaries, Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, Congress House, Girgaum Back Road, Bombay, as early as possible.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. Interview to the Press[1]

My talk at the Viceregal Lodge was only a side issue and I was called in because it was felt I could propound certain points. There is nothing to be satisfied or dissatisfied about my talk with the Viceroy.

Question: Do you think that Mr. Gandhi's going to London is more certain than before?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is just the same as before.

Q: Would you be seeing Lord Willingdon again?

JN: If he sends for me I shall certainly see him. Today he was in a hurry to leave for Mashobra and we have made no appointment so far.

1 Simla, 18 July 1931 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 July 1931. When Mahatma Gandhi met the Viceroy and other officials in Simla in the middle of July 1931 for discussing the matters relating to the breaches of the settlement, Jawaharlal also joined him for elucidating certain points concerning his own province While in Simla, he also met the Viceroy and other officials for the same purpose

10. Interview to the Associated Press[1]

Gandhiji is the main person to decide the question whether there is an agreement.[2] So far as I am concerned my talks with everyone have been quite satisfactory.

Question: Do you think that the government will agree to appoint an inquiry board to go into the alleged breaches of the Delhi Pact in the United Provinces and inquire into economic conditions?[3]

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is too early to say anything about it just now. The way is just being paved to get at an amicable settlement.

Q: Can you say, as the result of your talks with Mr. Emerson,[4] Sir James Crerar and Sir George Schuster,[5] that there is a turn for the better or that an optimistic view could be held?

JN: The very fact that we are staying on here shows that there is something like real optimism prevailing. Otherwise we should have gone away long ago.

Q: Do you think that the chances of Gandhiji going to London are now more certain than before?

JN: I won't put it so rosily as all that, but there is every chance of Gandhiji going to London.

Q: Can it be said that the bone of contention is the arbitration board and an economic inquiry?

JN: They are not the only things, but they are the vital issues.

1 Simla, 21 July 1931. From *The Hindu*, 22 July 1931.

2 Mahatma Gandhi had demanded the appointment, in different provinces, of inquiry boards, each consisting of an official and a Congress nominee, to inquire into the allegations on both sides and also a permanent arbitration board to interpret the settlement correctly.

3 In addition to an inquiry into breaches of the truce, Jawaharlal had asked for an inquiry into the economic distress of the U.P. peasants.

4 Herbert William Emerson (1551-1962); Home Secretary, Government of India, 1930-33, Governor of Punjab 1933-38.

5 Finance Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1928-34.

11. On His Interview at Simla[1]

During my stay in Simla, I gave no interview as such to any press correspondent, but I find that interviews purported to have been given by me have appeared in the press. They convey an entirely wrong impression. I refer particularly to the interview which the Associated Press of India have published. They have picked up odd words and sentences of mine and tried to cross the t's and dot the i's. In doing so, they have added something which I did not say and changed the tenor of my words.

It is stated that my interviews at Simla were very satisfactory and that the situation was promising. What I said was that during all the interviews I had in Simla, I was shown all courtesy. This had nothing to do with the possibility or otherwise of a satisfactory outcome of our interviews in regard to the points at issue between the Congress and the government. There has been no settlement yet, and we cannot say whether the Congress will be represented at the Round Table Conference or not. To say that I am optimistic is not correct. At the same time, it would be equally incorrect to say that there is no chance of a settlement.

The present conditions are very unsatisfactory in the United Provinces, in Bardoli and elsewhere. If these conditions manifestly improve, then there will be a chance of Gandhiji going to London.

Question: Is there any time limit for an improvement in the situation?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Gandhiji may decide to go to London if an improvement in the situation appears even two or three days before the date fixed for the delegates to sail for London.

Q: But the government has definitely refused to concede the Congress demand for an inquiry or arbitration board.

JN: Statements made in the press in regard to this matter have not been correct, but I would rather not go further into the subject at this stage. The demand for an inquiry board is not the only question at issue.

1 Interview to the press, Allahabad, 25 July 1931. *The Hindu*, 26 July 1931.

10. Interview to the Associated Press[1]

Gandhiji is the main person to decide the question whether there is an agreement.[2] So far as I am concerned my talks with everyone have been quite satisfactory.

Question: Do you think that the government will agree to appoint an inquiry board to go into the alleged breaches of the Delhi Pact in the United Provinces and inquire into economic conditions?[3]

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is too early to say anything about it just now. The way is just being paved to get at an amicable settlement.

Q: Can you say, as the result of your talks with Mr. Emerson,[4] Sir James Crerar and Sir George Schuster,[5] that there is a turn for the better or that an optimistic view could be held?

JN: The very fact that we are staying on here shows that there is something like real optimism prevailing. Otherwise we should have gone away long ago.

Q: Do you think that the chances of Gandhiji going to London are now more certain than before?

JN: I won't put it so rosily as all that, but there is every chance of Gandhiji going to London.

Q: Can it be said that the bone of contention is the arbitration board and an economic inquiry?

JN: They are not the only things, but they are the vital issues.

1 Simla, 21 July 1931. From *The Hindu*, 22 July 1931.

2 Mahatma Gandhi had demanded the appointment, in different provinces, of inquiry boards, each consisting of an official and a Congress nominee, to inquire into the allegations on both sides and also a permanent arbitration board to interpret the settlement correctly.

3 In addition to an inquiry into breaches of the truce, Jawaharlal had asked for an inquiry into the economic distress of the U.P. peasants.

4 Herbert William Emerson (1881-1962); Home Secretary, Government of India, 1930-33, Governor of Punjab 1933-38.

5 Finance Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1928-34.

In the event of emergency arising so as to leave no time for calling the Working Committee, the President is hereby authorised to act in the name and on behalf of the Committee.

The resolutions will indicate to you that the political situation in the country has undergone a vital change. In spite of this change, however, the Working Committee wishes all Congressmen to observe the terms of the settlement. It may be that it may become difficult for you, owing to the governmental action, to observe these terms scrupulously. If so, you must refer the matter to the President. Any action contrary to the terms of the settlement should not be taken without the President's permission.

You will no doubt appreciate that the trend of events is such that at any moment one may be called upon to face an even more critical situation. We must be ready for all eventualities.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

13. Little Hope of a Compromise[1]

It is a pity that Mahatma Gandhi is not going to London. The Round Table Conference, however, is not being held under the best conditions from the Congress point of view. For one thing it is a packed conference Gandhiji would have taken part had he gone and joined the debates, but the principal objective of the Congress in accepting the invitation to be present in the first place was that it might, through its representative, get into close touch with the British Government and the people.

Question: There is still a strong feeling that a compromise may be reached.

Jawaharlal Nehru: I am not inclined to agree with this view. In fact I think it is very improbable We are all watching the position very closely.

1 Interview to the press, Poona, 15 August 1931 *The Times of India*, 17 August 1931.

12. On Congress Participation in Round Table Conference[1]

Camp Bombay
14 August 1931

Dear Comrade,

Yesterday the Working Committee passed the following resolution:

> The Working Committee has carefully considered the correspondence exchanged between the Central Government and various provincial governments on the one hand and Mahatma Gandhi on the other upon matters arising out of the Delhi Settlement, and has also considered the statement made by Mahatma Gandhi describing the events that led to the correspondence.[2] The Committee notes with great regret that there have been, in its opinion, repeated and, in some cases, serious breaches by provincial governments of the conditions of the Delhi Settlement. A stage was reached when, failing satisfaction, Mahatma Gandhi had asked, with the approval of the Working Committee, for the appointment of an impartial tribunal to investigate the allegations of breaches and to interpret the terms of the settlement. Such request has now been refused even in matters affecting the vital interest of the peasantry. The Committee has, therefore, been obliged reluctantly to come to the conclusion that, consistent with the terms of the settlement and the national interest, the Congress cannot and should not be represented at the Round Table Conference.

This morning the Committee passed, *inter alia*, the following two resolutions

> In view of the resolution relating to the Congress non-participation in the Round Table Conference passed by the Working Committee on August 13th, the Committee desires to make it clear that this resolution should not be construed as ending the Delhi Settlement. The Committee therefore advises Congress organisations and all Congressmen to continue to comply, until further instructions, with the terms of the settlement, in so far as they are applicable to the Congress.

1 A I C C File No P-1/1931, p 55, N M M L. This was a circular sent to P.C Cs.
2 The correspondence was carried on from 21 March to 13 August, when Mahatma Gandhi wired to the Viceroy that because of the "fundamental difference in our respective outlooks" he could not go to London.

matter of vital principle involving the *bona fides* of Mahatma Gandhi, and his assurance given to the cultivators of Bardoli.[3] The question, therefore, is not a petty issue relating to Bardoli but one of principle and one which shows the mentality of the government behind. I cannot say what will happen in the immediate future. The Working Committee has made the position of the Congress quite clear. The next move lies with the government. If they accept the contention of the Congress and are prepared to remove the obstacles in our way then the Committee will certainly be prepared to reconsider the position. But there can be no reconsideration so long as the obstacles are not removed. All along Mahatma Gandhi has stressed that, where there is a difference in the interpretation, the matter should be judged impartially. Even this obvious way out of the impasse has been rejected by the government who claim to be the sole judge. If they are to be the sole arbiters then there was no necessity for the Delhi Agreement. They may very well say that they will do what they think right and proper.

Question: Is the decision of the Working Committee the result of the communal situation?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The decision of the Working Committee has nothing to do with the communal situation or with various incidents that happened in Bombay recently.[4] I do not wish to go into any details as Mahatma Gandhi is the recognised spokesman of the Congress in this matter, and I have no doubt that he will explain fully the present attitude and the future policy of the Congress.

Q: Was the latest suggestion of an inquiry by an officer of the government, such as a High Court judge, also discussed with the Viceroy before?

JN: In regard not only to Bardoli but to the interpretation of all doubtful terms of the settlement we have claimed that an impartial inquiry tribunal or committee should decide. The question of what this tribunal or committee should consist of has not been considered as the principle of any such reference to a third party has not been accepted by the government who claim to be the sole judge.

3 Following an assurance by the local authorities, Mahatma Gandhi had advised the peasants of Surat district that if they paid the land tax according to their ability no coercion would be used against them

4 On 3 August, the nationalist Muslim leaders were assaulted by some hooligans, and on 6 August, members of the Youth League picketed the entrance to the A I C.C. meeting protesting against the Congress proposal to attend the Round Table Conference

Q: Do you think that the Congress Working Committee is in a frame of mind which will allow compromise on the position as it stands at the moment? Would it be prepared to make any sacrifices to retract the position described in Gandhi's letters to the Viceroy?[2]

JN: Congress has already made sacrifices all along the line and things have come to a pitch where it has felt that it can do no more. The decision to withdraw the Congress representation has thus been made.

2. Mahatma Gandhi wrote on 14 August 1931 to the Viceroy: "The Working Committee of the Congress has no desire to embarrass the government at the present juncture and therefore it is prepared to continue honourably to work the Settlement. But such working must depend upon a reciprocal attitude on the part of provincial governments. As I have told you so often through correspondence and our conversations, this reciprocity has been found to be progressively missing."

14. On the Working Committee's Decision[1]

I think it is unlikely that the government will remove the obstacles so that Mahatma Gandhi may be able to proceed to London.

If further developments affect the resolutions of the Congress Working Committee, another meeting of the Working Committee will have to be convened to reconsider the situation.

The correspondence published by the government is not complete.[2] Specially in regard to the United Provinces, only two telegrams have been published and these do not give any facts. It has been our contention that there have been numerous breaches of the terms of the settlement on the part of the government in the United Provinces. The question, however, which was in the forefront in Bombay was that of Bardoli. This involves a clear breach of an undertaking given to Mahatma Gandhi. However much the Congress Working Committee is prepared to put up with unpalatable facts, it cannot give in on a

1 Interview to the press, Allahabad, 18 August 1931. *The Leader*, 20 August 1931.

2 On 14 August 1931.

15. To Fenner Brockway[1]

20/8/1931

My dear Fenner,

Long ago you wrote to me and I have been discourteous enough not even to acknowledge your letter for these two or three months.[2] I shall not apologise or excuse myself for excuses are rather futile.

We seem to be at the cross-roads again, if we have not passed them already. The 15th August has gone and Gandhiji has not sailed for London and it seems highly unlikely that he will do so now. So the R.T.C. may do or not do just what it pleases so far as we are concerned. We shall carry on in our own way and perhaps some time later there will be a real conference with real persons in it.

As you know the London branch of the Congress has been disaffiliated.[3] I saw the letter you and some others wrote asking for the recognition by the Congress of another organisation. I am afraid this is not going to be given. We have had bitter experiences of our branches and our Committee is all against foreign commitments. But I do not see why this should prevent you from working on the lines indicated by the Congress.

All good wishes,

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No F.D 33/1931, pp 12, NMML.
2. Fenner Brockway in his letter of 14 April had written, "I have been so delighted by the attitude you have been taking since the truce."
3 For Jawaharlal's note on disaffiliation of Congress branches abroad, see *post*, section 3, item 54. Also see *Selected Works*, Vol 4, p. 124

Q: The object of the truce is to enable the Congress to participate in the Round Table Conference. Your Working Committee has decided against the Congress participation. Should not the truce be considered as ended?

JN: We are perfectly justified in saying that the truce is over, but simply to avoid precipitating a conflict, we are prepared to carry on as if the truce continues provided the other party also takes the same view and gives us relief in cases where, according to us, there have been manifest breaches of the truce.

Q: But the Working Committee has already held that the other party has broken the truce and the Committee should have, therefore, concluded that the other party does not desire to continue the truce.

JN: This is true but we wish to give the truce another chance. It may be that the other party is not yet prepared to terminate the truce, and on reconsideration, it may give us the relief, in proof of its desire to continue the settlement.

Q: Am I to understand that the reason for your not declaring the truce as ended is that you want the other party to say so?

JN: Certainly it is for the other party to say whether it wants the truce to continue or not. If it does not want to continue it, obviously we ourselves cannot do so. If it does still wish to continue it we are prepared to do our best to carry on with the settlement. We have no desire to restart the conflict so long as we have any other alternative left. When there is no other way left open to us, then, of necessity we have to fall back on our sole effective method of action, that is, satyagraha.

Q. Suppose the Congress does not participate in the Round Table Conference, will it give consideration to the decisions that may be arrived at in the Round Table Conference?

JN: The Congress will give consideration to anything and everything which fits with the Congress resolutions on independence and fundamental rights.

offer proper relief to the tenants. For some time no doubt the government did adopt a policy but when they saw the Congress power among the tenants increasing, they deliberately went back upon it and desired that the government themselves should help the zamindars in realising rents.[3] Police aid was given to them and if under these circumstances, excesses were committed the government were certainly to blame.

The repression in Allahabad district and other parts of the United Provinces has ruined thousands of tenants. In the beginning the Congress offered to settle matters between the kisans and the zamindars and asked the government either not to interfere with them, or, that if it interfered, it should interfere properly. At that time, the Congress understood that the government would handle matters pertaining to the tenants properly, and in some places it even permitted the Congress to meet the kisans and the zamindars to settle matters among them, but subsequently deliberate attempts were made against the Congress meeting the kisans, and zamindars and taluqdars were told that they should not go to the Congress, the result of which was that the taluqdars and the zamindars were encouraged to resort to repression against the tenants. Therefore if anybody is responsible for the excesses committed on the peasants, it is the government and its officials. I may also refer to repression against Congress workers in certain places where there is no question of disputes between the kisans and the zamindars, and also the failure of the government servants to admit students who have left schools and colleges in connection with the civil disobedience movement in spite of the assurance given to the Congress in that matter.

But I attach great importance to the attempt being made to break the Congress organisation in villages by arresting leading village Congress workers and this is done because it is realised by the government that the real power of the country is the kisan and the Congress organisation has gained a complete hold on them. The United Provinces Congress Committee viewed such a concerted attempt to break the

3 In his letter of 30 June 1931, the Chief Secretary, U P. Government, wrote to H W Emerson, the Home Secretary. "We are satisfied that rental collections have actually been going on steadily throughout the greater part of the province.. but in some of the districts such as Rae Bareily, Bara Banki, part of Allahabad and possibly Unao, matters are coming to a head owing to the greater pressure exerted by Congress It is clear that the personal activities of Jawaharlal, Purushotam Das Tandon and one or two others may have a very detrimental effect in these districts and if matters seriously deteriorate we may have to apply to the Government of India for permission to prosecute Jawaharlal."

16. On Government's Attitude towards the Settlement[1]

It is necessary that the whole country should know what happened at Bombay and what will happen. Some Anglo-Indian papers have published what purported to be secret instructions of the Working Committee.[2] The Congress, however, does everything openly. If these papers do not have enough sense to understand that, I can only pity their intelligence. Several falsehoods have been spread by them during the last few months but I would tell them that such trickery would neither help nor retard the advent of Swaraj. If India wins Swaraj it will be by the sheer strength of her people.

Gandhiji has made it quite clear that he will not proceed to London until certain questions are settled. I want to know whether the government is genuinely anxious for peace or is simply deceiving us. It is well known how the truce has been made. The government wanted peace and Gandhiji said it was not proper to reject the hand of peace when the government offered it. At that time we virtually stemmed the mighty tide of an overflowing river. We restrained the great enthusiasm of the people. It was so great that it would not have been surprising if we had failed. We, however, succeeded and the government knows we have a force of disciplined soldiers.

Now that the door of charges is open it is possible that thefts and dacoities committed in the country will be laid at the Congress door. But I want to make it clear that it is easy for the government to enforce the truce because they have got the power to do so. If they do not faithfully enforce it, we can reasonably complain. The Congress, on its part, although it has only the method of persuasion and appeal at its disposal, has succeeded in implementing the truce.

The Congress, however, cannot quietly sit on the fence while the peasants are subjected to all sorts of oppression and harassments. Many excesses had been committed by the zamindars, but the government deny responsibility for them. The Congress position is that if the government do interfere in this matter, they should do so effectively and

1. Allahabad, 20 August 1931 From *The Leader*, 22 August 1931.
2. *The Times of India* had published a report on 17 August 1931 about instructions having been sent to Congress workers to disobey government orders, and to farmers in Kaira and Surat districts not to pay any more land revenue.

Bardoli. When the Viceroy refused to do anything in connection with the Bardoli affairs, it became impossible for Mahatma Gandhi to go to London.

Though at present the Congress has decided to abide by the truce, everything would depend on the attitude of the government. If the government do not change their present ways it will be impossible for the Congress to abide by the settlement. I doubt if the government will declare in clear terms that the truce is over but it may try to do things secretly as if there was a fight. If the struggle is revived, it is bound to be much stronger and more extensive than before on either side. It will decide the issue finally.

17. Circular to D.C.Cs[1]

Simla
August 26th, 1931

Dear Sir,

I enclose a cutting from the Gazette of India of August 24th giving the government's reply to the charges brought forward by Mahatma Gandhi in regard to——————————district.[2] The reply of government denies many of the charges made. It is therefore necessary to deal with this reply immediately. Will you please send me to the A.I.C.C. office, Allahabad, immediately your reply and criticism of the government statement? Please remember that you should be definite and positive in your statement. Vague statements will not help. Further please send us any further information regarding government activities in your district. A copy of your reply should be sent direct to Mahatma Gandhi wherever he may be.

Kindly treat this as urgent.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No 53/1931 (Pt. 1), p 25, NMML.
2 They were listed in a memorandum accusing the government of either coercion, persecution, terrorism or harassment

Congress hold in the villages though it has been unsuccessful, with anxiety, and discussed it repeatedly, and eventually when it became impossible to tolerate it, the committee asked the Congress Working Committee to take steps for putting a stop to such attempts or to permit the provincial committee to take such steps. The civil disobedience movement has been withdrawn on account of the truce, but the Congress cannot leave the peasants in distress. The main function of the Congress is to relieve the peasants of their distress and if the Congress cannot perform that function, it will be better to dissolve it. It is impossible for the Congress to keep silent while atrocities on the peasants and secret activities to paralyse the Congress organisation continue. In view of these circumstances, how can Mahatma Gandhi go to London?

Gandhiji invited my opinion whether the truce should be broken on the ground of the breaches in the U.P. I however did not wish him to do so, though the government is guilty of violating the truce terms.

There is little hope of achieving Swaraj by going to England and it is also apprehended that perhaps his going to England may be harmful to the interests of the country. Still the Congress decided to give the conference a chance. Accordingly, we have tolerated many things, but when the attitude of the government is clearly understood, the path that is left open to us is one which cannot take us from Bombay to London but which takes us from Bombay to the villages.

Although it has been decided that Mahatma Gandhi will not go to London, still the Congress Working Committee has declared that we should stick to the settlement. There is no doubt that the decision against going to London has brought the question of a revival of the fight very near. Still the Working Committee has announced that there should be no talk of reviving the struggle at present as the Congress wants to give the government one more chance so that the Congress may not be blamed for reopening the fight. If the government declares that the truce is over and the fight may recommence the Congress is prepared for it. But if the government desires to continue the truce, the Congress is prepared for it as well, but the government should give proof of its desire to continue the settlement by its conduct.

The decision not to participate in the Round Table Conference has been taken particularly on account of U.P.

There have been complaints from many other provinces before the Working Committee, particularly from Bardoli. The Bardoli situation is comparatively a smaller matter than the case of the United Provinces. But here a principle of paramount importance is involved and if Mahatma Gandhi had tolerated what had happened in Bardoli and had gone to London in spite of it, he would be guilty of deceiving the tenants of

19. Repudiation of Press Propaganda[1]

In the message of the Simla correspondent of *The Times of India* it is stated that Mahatma Gandhi telegraphed on Wednesday, 26th, to Miraben and to his secretary and Mr. Andrews stating that he was leaving for London. It is further stated that although he had made up his *mind to go to London, he went on arguing and haggling to the very* last moment.

As usual these statements are entirely wrong. The motives behind them are obvious enough but I do not wish to say anything about them. I shall only say that no such message was sent by Mahatma Gandhi, or any member of the staff or any one else, and both the members of the Government of India and others connected with the negotiations know well enough that everything was in the melting pot till Thursday afternoon.

Indeed on Thursday morning it seemed almost certain that he would not go. Mr. K. F. Nariman, reading various press reports, wired to Mahatma Gandhi suggesting a public meeting in Bombay, just prior to Gandhiji's departure. Gandhiji wired back that nothing has been decided and that he should not arrange any meeting.

It was not till Thursday afternoon that the agreement was reached. I do not wish to say anything about the various stages of the negotiations, but the Simla correspondent of the 'Times' presumably can find this out easily for himself and discover how utterly mistaken he is in his message.

Another point which The Times of India has made for itself is that the Congress has abandoned its claims to be an intermediary between the people and the government. It is remarkable how this conclusion has been reached. The claim of the Congress is not going to be decided by the *'Times' or by anyone else. It has already been decided* by the people of India. The very course of the negotiations and their final outcome shows that the government acknowledge it in effect.

The demand for inquiry related specially to Bardoli. We were not interested in other inquiries, but we *pointed out to the government* clearly that where there is a conflict of opinion, the only intermediate step between submission of one party to the other's viewpoint and civil disobedience on the part of the Congress was an impartial inquiry.

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 29 August 1931. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 31 August 1931.

18. Circular to P.C.Cs and Members of Working Committee[1]

Camp Simla
27/8/31

Dear Comrade,

As you are aware Mahatma Gandhi issued some days ago a statement containing instances of breaches of the truce on behalf of government. To this government has replied in the Gazette of India dated August 24th, 1931, a copy of which I enclose. In many cases government has denied the charges made and it is therefore necessary for us to issue a full statement on the subject substantiating our charges and, where necessary, correcting them. We should like your help in preparing this statement. Will you, therefore, please send a detailed criticism, based on facts and not on surmises, of the government's reply?

Mahatmaji's charge-sheet against the government was based on some facts which had come to his knowledge. It was by no means complete as many provincial committees had not supplied the necessary information. Kindly therefore send us a full and detailed account of all instances of breaches of settlement in your province. This will of course include instances which have not so far been referred to in the charge-sheet or elsewhere. Care should be taken not to make vague charges which cannot be substantiated.

Your reply should be sent to Syt. Jairamdas Doulatram, General Secretary, A.I.C.C., Ahmedabad. This matter should be treated as urgent.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-1/1931, pp. 45-47, N.M.M.L.

as it has done, as an intermediary between them and the government and when it fails in bringing this relief, the only other course open to it is to side with the kisans completely and offer such defensive direct action as may be deemed necessary. But in no event can the Congress desert the kisans. If it did so it would abdicate from its principal function.

20. On the Simla Settlement[1]

It is true that there were many hitches before the final draft of the settlement was approved by both the parties.[2]

I do not wish to go into the details of these difficulties and hitches, but I may mention that there was no desire on our part to ask for inquiries other than that in Bardoli. This was made quite clear at an early stage and there was no further argument about it. Of course we were not prepared to give up the theoretical right of having an inquiry as this is the only way out of a difficulty short of conflict. But as the government was averse to facing any such inquiries we pointed out to them that the only alternative, if relief is denied, is defensive direct action, in other words, civil disobedience. This fact has been made perfectly clear in the correspondence that has been published. We are quite content with the elucidation of this position of the Congress. If the government prefers the fire to the frying pan, it is for the government to choose. We shall of course try our best to avoid any resort to direct action, but the Congress cannot desert the kisans and its own workers where they are in trouble. If it did so it would abdicate its

1 Allahabad, 31 August 1931. *The Leader*, 2 September 1931.

2 The settlement, together with Mahatma Gandhi's letter of 27 August to the Home Secretary and his reply, embodied the terms: (1) Congress to be represented at the Round Table Conference; (2) provisional settlement remained operative; (3) inquiry to be held into the alleged coercive collection of land revenue in Surat district but "no inquiry in regard to other matters hitherto raised by Congress", (4) complaints of a general nature to be dealt with according to normal administrative procedure and (5) in extreme hardship when no relief was forthcoming Congress had the right to adopt "defensive direct action."

If the inquiry is left out, satyagraha is the only consequence. This fact has been brought out clearly in Gandhiji's message to Mr. Emerson and the government's reply has acknowledged it.

So the position is this. In regard to Bardoli there will be an inquiry. In regard to other matters that may arise, there may or may not be an inquiry. But in regard to all grievances, old and new, where relief is demanded, if such relief is not given and there is no impartial tribunal to decide, the Congress has a right to start defensive direct action, that is to say, civil disobedience.

In the United Provinces, as is well known, we have a large number of grievances, in particular the thousands of ejectments that have taken place and proceedings against Congress workers and kisans under preventive or the Criminal Procedure Code.

We shall endeavour to the best of our ability to get relief in regard to this matter, but should relief not be forthcoming, we cannot desert the thousands of kisans who are in trouble and our only alternative is defensive direct action.

The measure of distress among the kisans in U.P. can be gathered from reports that many of them are surrendering their holdings. No tenant, specially non-occupancy tenant, who has stuck on to the land for generations, wants to give up his holdings, except on the extreme pressure of economic circumstances.

Ordinarily conditions in U.P. are such that they would have given rise to very serious agrarian troubles. It is due entirely to the Congress influence and ceaseless effort of the Congressmen in U.P. that the peasantry have remained peaceful to a remarkable extent. But it is obvious that such conditions cannot continue.

Hence the problem of the U.P. is an urgent and vital one for the Congress and we shall do our utmost to get relief for them. The government itself has recognised this by appointing a committee which was recently reported to be bringing down rents substantially. I have not seen the report yet but this committee dealt with the future only, and the immediate problem is one of the present.

The Congress in the U.P. is primarily a kisan organisation, and for the last few years, therefore, it has been concentrating on the distress among the peasantry.[2] It can try to bring relief to the kisans by acting,

2 H W Emerson writing on his discussions with Mahatma Gandhi on 15 and 16 July 1931 observed: "I challenged his statement that Congress was identical with the kisans, and suggested to him that the close identity of interest had been developed since the Settlement and was part of the policy of consolidation in rural areas as preparation for a new fight."

JN: I have only seen a brief report of the committee's conclusions and it does not give sufficient information to enable me to form an opinion. It seems to me, however, that the government has again made the mistake of producing an intricate and elaborate scheme in which *patwaris* and the lesser revenue officials will have a large say. Apart from the quantum of reduction in rent which is still vague, the methods are very unfortunate and, I am afraid, will not give the relief desired.

21. Circular to P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
August 31st, 1931

Dear Comrade,

Mahatma Gandhi has sailed for England in order to attend the Round Table Conference[2] and it may be that some of us will think that we have little to do now except to wait till he returns. A greater error cannot be committed. The burden on us is the heavier because he has gone. The Congress has agreed to take part in the Round Table Conference with great doubt and hesitation and without much faith in it. But because we believed that there was a possibility of some good resulting from it, and specially because we thought that Gandhiji's participation in it, with the mandate of the Congress behind him, cannot possibly do harm to the national cause, the Congress sent our leader to represent the nation. He may come back within a few weeks or he may return after two or three months. His success will depend on the strength of an organised nation behind him. And if he returns, as he well might, with our objective still to be gained and a greater struggle before us, we have to be ready to welcome him back, alert and fully prepared for all contingencies and eventualities.

But even before he returns we may have to face a crisis which may test our strength and organisation to the full. The Simla Agreement makes it clear that if relief is not given to us in any vital matter, the Congress has the right to resort to defensive direct action, that is, satyagraha or civil disobedience. We must be prepared for this.

1. A.I.C.C. File No P-I/1931, p 39, N.M.M.L.
2. On 29 August 1931.

function. Therefore we shall try our utmost by all means of peaceful persuasion to get relief for such grievances as people may have. Failing such relief and failing an impartial inquiry into such grievances, the only alternative for us is direct action. But I hope that this alternative will not be forced down on us while Mahatmaji is away.

Question: Suppose this alternative is forced down upon the Congress in any part of the country, will it interfere with Mahatma Gandhi's participation in the Round Table Conference?

Jawaharlal Nehru: That will necessarily depend on circumstances and on the extent of the defensive action that we may have to take.

Q: It is being stressed that the Congress has given up its position as 'intermediary'. What is your comment?

JN: This is an extraordinary statement and it shows how keen our Anglo-Indian newspaper friends are to clutch on to straws. The whole course of negotiations and the agreement shows one thing and that is this, that the Congress is treated as a representative of the people. The argument is sought to be enforced by a reference to inquiries in the future. As a matter of fact we laid no stress on such inquiries, as I have stated earlier, because they are seldom real and impartial and they take up a great deal of time and energy.

Q: What will be the programme of the Congress when Mahatma Gandhi is in England?

JN: Our future programme has not been changed by Gandhiji's departure. We continue strengthening our organisation and carrying it to distant villages; we continue the boycott of foreign cloth and liquor and we shall continue to get redress for those who are suffering by what we claim to be breaches of truce on behalf of the government and on account of economic distress. In particular the Congress is concerned with the situation in the United Provinces and the Frontier Province.[3] I hope that in both these places relief will be forthcoming.

Q. What are your views on the conclusions of the committee appointed by the government to adjust rent and revenue in conformity with the present range of prices?[4]

3 In July 1931, Mahatma Gandhi presented to the government a charge sheet which included accounts of highhanded behaviour of the local authorities in the N W F P. In a report prepared for the Working Committee, Devadas Gandhi gave instances of cruelty and torture perpetrated by the N.W.F.P. authorities in connection with the realisation of land revenue and rent.

4 The U P Government had appointed a committee on 23 July 1931, consisting of officials and zamindars, to suggest remissions of rent and revenue. The committee suggested only 21 per cent remissions whereas the fall in prices had been about 54 per cent.

to be a duller and an emptier place without you and I am afraid many will look, oftener than the pious Muslim's five times a day, to the Kaaba in the west, and will pay little heed to work at home. Wireless reports tell us that you are enjoying yourself on board and are unperturbed at the frolics of the Arabian Sea, although many others have been laid low. I am glad for one reason at least that you have gone. You will rest after a fashion for a fortnight and the sea air will freshen you.

I returned to Allahabad from Bombay to find Kamala ill. She had had fever—probably malarial. She is better now but is extraordinarily fragile and weak.

I am enclosing some papers. There are copies of letters from and to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy.[2] There is a newspaper cutting giving an article from an Egyptian paper.[3] I hope you will read it, specially as I understand Shaukat Ali is going to descend on you at Port Said.[4] There is some wholesome advice in this article which Shaukat would do well to accept—but I fear he will not do so! The example of Egypt has often been thrust upon us. It is well that we should know what it was.

I am also enclosing a cutting from the *Pioneer* just to show you what your friend Newham[5]—if that is his name—is capable of. It is a shameless bit of writing and propaganda. I said something about it in a press interview yesterday but the *Leader* took special care to leave out that part of the interview. But after all it was not for me to contradict. It is for Abdul Ghaffar and I have drawn his attention to it.[6]

I have decided to send Kamala's brother, Kailas Nath Kaul, to Khan Sahib. I sent for him here and explained to him what his job was going to be. He liked the idea of going. I think the Khan will like him and get some work out of him.

I have suggested to Vallabhbhai to invite Abdul Ghaffar to the Working Committee on the 8th. I hope he will come.

2 For Jawaharlal's letter to Private Secretary to Viceroy, see *post*, section 2, item 35

3 It stated that the settlement of the minority problem in Egypt was based on trust and goodwill of Muslims and Christians and not on reservations and safeguards

4. He joined Mahatma Gandhi on 7 September.

5 Charles E Newham, then editor in chief of *The Pioneer*.

6. Jawaharlal wired to Abdul Ghaffar Khan: "*Pioneer* and *Civil Military Gazette* carrying on propaganda against Khudai Khidmatgars suggesting conflict with Congress giving misleading statements in alleged interview with you at Simla. I suggest your issuing press statement"

Kindly therefore impress upon local committees that:

(1) The Delhi Agreement is still in force and must be respected. Any breaches of it by government officials must be reported to the President and an attempt should be made to get redress by peaceful persuasion. Where redress does not come, in spite of all our efforts, we may have to resort to satyagraha. But in no event must any satyagraha, individual or mass, without the special permission of the President, be started.

(2) Special attention must be paid to the improvement of the Congress organisation by starting village and *mohalla* committees.

(3) Foreign cloth boycott must be continued and, wherever necessary, picketing should be carried on.

(4) *Boycott of liquor and intoxicating drugs should be continued.*

(5) Volunteers must be reorganised and volunteer units started in all towns and in rural areas in accordance with the new rules. This is most important and urgent and provincial committees must take this work in hand immediately and send fortnightly reports to the Allahabad office

The A.I C.C. office at Allahabad issues a *Congress Bulletin* from time to time, giving the resolutions of the A.I.C.C., the Working Committee and other information for Congressmen. These bulletins are sent free to all members of the A.I C C. and to P.C.Cs. We shall gladly send these bulletins to any district and town or taluqa committees or to individual Congressmen on payment of Rs. 2/- per annum to cover cost of production and postage. The *Bulletin* comes out irregularly.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

22. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
Sept. 1st, 1931

My dear Bapu,

You have gone at last and there have been great rejoicings in many quarters and five column headlines in the newspapers. But India seems

1. J N Correspondence, NMML.

23. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Ahmedabad
September 11th, 1931

My dear Bapu,

The Working Committee has been sitting for three days. It has not finished its work yet. Probably it will end today. As desired by you we considered what our minimum demands should be and a note to this effect has been drafted. This is not technically a resolution but it is as good as a resolution. We are of course treating this as confidential. Vallabhbhai will send you a copy of the note. I am also enclosing it.

The note covers most of the points mentioned by you except on the type of federation desired and the division of subjects. We may consider this before we part.

According to your suggestion I wrote to Ramanand Babu about the army matter. He has not replied yet but his assistant editor has done so and as this reply is interesting, I am sending it to you with this letter.[2]

In discussing the note we were to send you, Ansari was very keen on adding some kind of an assurance to the princes. Most of us were not agreeable to this. He tells me that he is writing to you on this subject.

Bengal is troubling us a great deal. Sen Gupta is acting aggressively and putting us in a very false position.[3] The Frontier appears to be a little worse. U.P. is bad and indeed worse also. In Muttra district

1. J N. Correspondence, N M.M L.
2. The assistant editor of *Modern Review* had written "The authoritative military opinion seems to be that it requires more time to train soldiers in India than, say, in England, and that, on this account, it is not possible to raise a large army in this country within a short time . In times of real danger and stress it requires almost as much intelligence and initiative in a private as in a Commissioned Officer This initiative and intelligence, the Indian sepoy is unable to supply on account of his defective education and lopsided character development. . This phenomenon .has been exploited to the full by the British as an argument for the retention of the British personnel And what is still more important, it will always remain as an obstacle to the complete Indianization of the Indian Army unless that fundamentally vicious thing—the recruitment policy of the British Government of India is absolutely done away with."
3. The reference is to the rivalry between Sen Gupta and Subhas Bose

Another enclosure is a copy of the letter I have sent to Slocombe.[7]

In the U.P. conditions are bad but there are no red spots. People seem to be resigned to their fate. Cholera is raging in the Allahabad district and helps to divert attention. Ejectments continue, and our good workers are caught here and there in the coils of Sec. 108 Cr. P. Code. But all this is being done more quietly and without any fuss. The Chief Secretary—Jagdish Prasad[8]—writes to me long letters, courteous and detailed, dealing with the complaints I make. I present the tenant's side, he puts forward the other side and it is a little difficult to say without full enquiry where the truth lies. Probably there are exaggerations on both sides. But the solid fact remains that thousands of tenants, and specially occupancy tenants, have been dispossessed and are in great trouble. I see no obvious way to tackle this problem. I shall continue writing of course to Jagdish Prasad.

The report of the Agrarian Committee appointed by the U.P. Government does not appear to be at all satisfactory. We do not know all the details yet but I am afraid it has produced a complicated scheme and the quantum of reduction is not enough. Much will be left to the petty revenue officials and this will mean trouble.

Meanwhile the rains are holding back and there is likelihood of a bad harvest.

You asked me to send duplicate copies of all air mail letters by the ordinary mail. This is going to be a little difficult. I cannot easily get duplicates of all the cuttings and enclosures. It is not even easy to get a copy of this letter unless Krishna gets busy with her typewriter. The A.I.C.C. office here has been depleted and a little illness makes it difficult to carry on. However it does not matter very much if my letter goes astray.

With love and all good wishes,

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

7 See *post*, section 5, item 7, George Slocombe, correspondent of the *Daily Herald* in India in 1930.

8 (1880-1957), Chief Secretary to the U.P. Government 1927-31; Home Member, U.P., 1933, Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1935-40

In the copy of the letter I am enclosing I have made a wrong statement which I must correct. I have stated that there have been over 2,000 ejectments in Muttra district in August. What I should have stated is that over 2,000 processes have been issued. The actual ejectments have not taken place yet.

Love.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

The Working Committee's note is being treated by us as a confidential document. But you are at full liberty to use it in any way you like, even to publish it if you so choose.

J.

ENCLOSURE

The Working Committee at its meeting held in Ahmedabad on September 8th, 9th and 10th considered what attitude should be taken up on behalf of the Congress at the Round Table Conference, or in any other negotiations with Great Britain. The Committee felt that the points noted below should form the basis of a settlement.

The Karachi Congress resolution reaffirmed the Lahore resolution and, in particular, laid down that India should have control over the "defence forces, external affairs, finance, fiscal and economic policy, and to have a scrutiny by an impartial tribunal of the financial transactions of the British Government in India and to examine and assess the obligations to be undertaken by India or England and the right to either party to end the partnership at will." This resolution has brought out the main points clearly. Some of these with their implications are dealt with below.

2. Right to sever connection—It is not clear what the connection or partnership between India and Great Britain is likely to be in terms of the Karachi resolution This partnership, based as it must be on the independence of India, will be something more than what is termed Dominion Status Further this partnership must be capable of being put an end to by either party at will

3 Defence—The full control of all the defence forces by India is a necessary attribute of independence. This will mean:

1) that the British troops should be withdrawn from India immediately,

there have been over 2,000 ejectments in August. Some of our special workers have been arrested (not in Muttra).

I enclose a copy of an article[4] on the Defence of India I have given to Kumarappa[5] for *Young India*.

We propose to publish our rejoinder to the government soon.

This letter goes by ordinary post which goes today. In a day or two I shall write by air mail.

Jinnah, just before he left, gave an interview on the communal question,[6] which can hardly be beaten by Shaukat Ali. It was an amazing farrago of nonsense and narrow-minded communalism.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

4 See *post*, section 10, item 3.
5 J. C. Kumarappa (1892-1959); Gandhian economist, in charge of *Young India*, May 1930-31, author of *Gandhian Economic Thought* and other books.
6 On 5 September 1931, M. A. Jinnah had said: "The new constitution should provide for reasonable guarantees to Muslims and if they are not provided, the new constitution is sure to break down."

24. *To Mahatma Gandhi*[1]

Ahmedabad
12.9.31

My dear Bapu,

Yesterday I sent you a letter by the ordinary post, registered. I am sending a copy of this and a copy of the Working Committee's note by air mail.[2] There are some minor corrections in the note which I enclose today which yesterday's copy did not contain.

The Working Committee finished its sessions yesterday. I am staying over for a day or two to clear up some work. The next meeting of the Committee has been fixed for October 24th—either in Delhi or Allahabad. Probably by that time we shall know tolerably well how you have been fashioning in London!

1 Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 17701.
2 See enclosure. Jawaharlal drafted this note on 28 August while travelling with Mahatma Gandhi to Bombay.

insisted upon. The real test should be the freedom from the operations of international finance and the Bank of England resulting in the exploitation of the country. We should be at liberty not only to encourage Indian industries and mercantile interests irrespective of its effect on foreign business interests but also we should have the power to follow an economic policy for the betterment of the masses different from the one now in vogue. The resolution on fundamental rights lays down that the key industries and services must belong to or be controlled by the State. This would mean that banking and other key services are controlled by the State.

Foreign capital may be obtained and the State may guarantee its safety. But it is desirable that such dealings with foreign capital are as far as possible with and through the State. With regard to the foreign private capital already invested in the country, control by the State may not be possible for a period, and during this transitional period, therefore, such capital may continue to function subject to certain limitations.

The claim put forward by the British commercial community as embodied in the proposition accepted by the Minority Committee of the R.T.C., namely, "that there should be no discrimination between the rights of the British mercantile community, firms and companies trading in India and rights of the Indian born subjects, and that an appropriate convention based on reciprocity should be entered into for the purpose of regulating these rights", cannot be accepted. Nor can we accept that "the existing rights of the European community in India in regard to criminal trials should be maintained." We do not think that any special rights or privileges need be granted to the British commercial community. It should be made clear that the Swaraj government shall have the right to organise its industries so as to protect and favour its national interests.

5. Public Debt etc.—In regard to the alleged public debt of India we must stand by the Congress resolution demanding an impartial tribunal to scrutinise the financial transactions of the British Government in India and to examine and assess the obligations of either party. The tribunal must also investigate all other obligations and concessions which are inherited by independent India and are subject to dispute. (These points were brought out in the Lahore Congress resolution but have not been covered by the Bahadurji Committee's report).[3] Further the tribunal must consider such counter claims as may be presented before it on behalf of India.

3. A committee consisting of D. N. Bahadurji, K. T. Shah, Bhulabhai J. Desai and J. C. Kumarappa examined the financial obligations between Britain and India. The committee found that Britain owed to India over £546 million.

ii) the control of the military, naval and air forces shall rest completely with the Swaraj government,

iii) all the defence forces including the *militia* shall be organised and controlled by the central authority and there shall be no provincial armies or militia and no provincial control over the defence forces stationed in the province,

iv) no part of India should be used as a military, naval or aerial base by Great Britain, nor should any means of communication or transport by air, land or sea be utilised by Great Britain for warlike operations,

v) Great Britain may however use our airways and aerodromes for the purpose of civil aviation. This will not prevent our permitting other nations to enjoy like privileges,

vi) such British technical experts and officers as are required by the Swaraj government may be retained for such period and on such salaries as may be agreed upon. The Swaraj government shall however be free to employ other foreign experts and officers,

vii) no state which is a member of the federation can be permitted to maintain any army or militia apart from the federal troops. As however some states have got existing armies of their own, their future will have to be determined. This may be done by their being absorbed in the federal army or by other arrangements that may be agreed upon.

It is difficult to conceive how any state can really keep out of the federation as this would result in an impossible situation which cannot last for long. But if it is assumed that this is a possibility and a state chooses to remain outside the federation, it should be understood that it shall not be made a military, naval, or aerial base by itself, by any other state or Great Britain for any operations which may affect the safety of the Swaraj government. Transit of troops of such states cannot be permitted through territories of the Swaraj government.

This naturally leads to the conclusion that such a state cannot have an independent existence for long and must become a member of the Indian federation. Economic reasons point to the same conclusion.

It is sometimes urged that India will require the services of a navy to protect her shores. This is perfectly true and free India will have to build up a fresh navy with rapidity with the help of foreign experts. But the risk of any attack by sea is not great. In any event it is preferable to face that risk rather than depend upon foreign protection.

4. Economic policy and Finance—Complete freedom in regard to these is necessary. Fiscal freedom and control of currency must of course be

immediate effect to the resolution on fundamental rights. This test however is not a complete test as it does not touch certain important matters, e.g. defence, referred to above.

10. Name—We are of opinion that the word "Hindustan" be used officially in place of "India" in describing federated India.

25. To the Maharaja of Patiala[1]

Allahabad
September 16th, 1931

Dear Maharaja Saheb,[2]
I owe you an apology for the great delay in writing to you about your scheme of federation.[3] I have been over-burdened with work and it was difficult to find time to write at length. The subject you had suggested is, as you well know, bristling with difficulties and any proper consideration of it would necessitate the writing of a lengthy essay. It is because I wished to write to you at some length that I went on postponing the writing of this letter. Repeated meetings of the Congress Working Committee and the All India Congress Committee and the continuous effort to deal with a difficult situation in the country have robbed me of my time. I have now decided not to delay any longer my writing to you in the hope of dealing with the subject at length. I feel that I should write something at least to give you an idea of what I have in mind.

I do not propose to criticise in any detail the scheme of federation which the Round Table Conference and you have put forward. I feel it would be better to suggest the background of such a federation as I *conceive it should* be.

I have been a student of constitutions and of constitutional law, but I feel that the problem of India, as indeed of any other country today, is not one which can be decided only by jurists and lawyers, who are

1 J. N. Correspondence, NMML.
2 Bhupindra Singh (1891-1938), Chancellor of Chamber of Princes, 1926-30.
3 In June 1931, the Maharaja of Patiala rejected the federation scheme he had supported at the first Round Table Conference and proposed a "union of the Indian States alone in direct relationship with the Crown."

6. Services—The new India will not be able to carry on efficiently if the services are manned to any great extent by the present personnel. It will be necessary to have as our civil servants people who believe in the new scheme and can work for it with ardour and missionary enthusiasm. It will therefore be necessary to replace to a large extent the old civil servants. Many of them may retire of their own accord. We must have the option to keep as many members of the All India services as we choose. We must also have the right to retire others on such compensation as may be deemed proper. We consider that the Government of India scale of compensation for retired officials is an extravagant one.

7. Communal question—We do not think it necessary to say anything here in regard to this as the Committee has already put forward its scheme after full discussion.[4]

8. Indian States—We have referred in connection with the problem of defence to some aspects of the question of the states. We feel that the minimum conditions on which we can agree to the states coming into the federation are:

i) That a guarantee of fundamental rights be agreed to by them.
ii) There should be a Supreme Court not subordinate to the states to protect these rights.
iii) That the subjects of the states are given representation in the central legislature on an elective basis.

It is difficult for us to conceive how any state can keep outside the Indian federation for long and we cannot give up the ideal of the unity of India. In case however the states do not accept our minimum terms or agree to join the federation, we suggest that the consideration of the question of the states be postponed for the moment and the future of what is known as British India may be discussed directly with the British Government. But this can only be done after we have made it quite clear that we are leaving the states question as an open one and that we will not be bound by any agreement arrived at between England and the states behind our back. In case a settlement is reached between British India and Great Britain the question of the states can be taken up afresh.

9. Fundamental Rights—A test of the extent of power that a new constitution confers upon the country is how far it enables us to give

4 The scheme, which was evolved in July 1931, proposed joint electorates with reservation of seats to Muslims and Sikhs and statutory guarantees for the protection of their religious and cultural rights. If this proposal were rejected, the Congress would accept any other solution acceptable to all parties.

immediate effect to the resolution on fundamental rights. This test however is not a complete test as it does not touch certain important matters, e g. defence, referred to above.

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ever looking for precedents and who can seldom get out of the ruts which we have inherited from the past. If one thing is obvious to anyone having some knowledge of *international conditions* it is this: that the political and economic structure of the present day world is highly unstable and cannot endure. It is changing rapidly and in some places is on the verge of a breakdown. The old edifice still stands in many places, but its foundation has been sapped. Politics, in the narrow sense of the word, has almost passed away and many other forces control the various departments of human activity. A recent portent of this has been the crisis in England which has resulted in the fall of the Labour Government and the formation of what is called a National Government.[4] England with all her power and prestige is facing a grave crisis and it is difficult to say what its outcome will be.

In considering the problem of India therefore we must bear this in mind—the emergence and dominance of world economic factors, the new ideals, the new forces, almost elemental in their character, and the general tendency in the world today. We have to deal with impalpable and yet powerful movements, with masses of people in action and in the grip of an idea. We have passed the stage, here as elsewhere, of a nation's destiny being decided in a private conclave of a few individuals. The wonderful awakening of India last year during the civil disobedience movement demonstrated, as nothing else has done, that Indian humanity was up and on the move, in the sense that nations move once in many generations, magnificently and irresistibly, sometimes even blindly, towards the objective that they have set before themselves. That great urge onwards is far from exhausted. Indeed the nation has just begun to realise its own strength and the difficulty is to keep it in check. I am reminded of a saying of Bernard Shaw: "When a great political movement takes place, it is not consciously led or organised· the unconscious self in mankind makes its way through the problem as the elephant breaks through the jungle."

Any consideration of the future of India must bear this cardinal fact in mind. For this is the reality today and all other factors are more or less side issues. Reality can seldom be ignored except at great risk.

With this background, and no other is possible, we must consider the question of federation. What is the future scheme of things going to be in India? And can we fit in the idea of a federation in it? It is well known that India is aiming today at the completest freedom, political and economic. While India may agree to an alliance or an

4 On 24 August 1931 the Labour Government resigned owing to a financial crisis and a [illegible]al Government dominated by the Conservative party was formed.

arrangement with Great Britain, that arrangement or partnership cannot ultimately take away from this full freedom or the sovereignty of India. It must also be remembered that this freedom must be for the masses. I have no doubt that a federation is possible in India and that in all likelihood some federation will ultimately be evolved here. But that federation must take into account the above factors and must not be a relic of the past. A federation implies a union between equals and the component parts of the future Indian federation must therefore be equal in dignity and in freedom and responsibility. They must all have the larger ideal of Indian unity before them and all their other ideals and wishes must fit in with this larger ideal of unity and freedom.

If this is agreed to it is not difficult to come to an agreement about other matters. You will remember that you told me that you would like us to consider the question of federation on the basis of responsible government in the states. I replied then that if responsibility was granted to the people of the states there was little to discuss. We could then agree easily to most other things. The difficulties which are supposed to come in the way are, if I may say, personal and individual. In a sense there is no problem of Indian states, the problem is one of Indian princes.

On the one hand the princes feel that the British Government has gradually taken away all the real powers and the rights that they possessed, on the other hand they are afraid of the new democracy in India. You will remember that you pointed out very rightly that the present backward condition of the states is very largely due to the existence and the interference of the British Government. Even autocracy has to be in a measure responsible to the people it governs and cannot go beyond a certain limit in defiance of their wishes. There is a certain contact and relation which subsists between them. The coming of the British Government and the power it exercised behind the scenes in the states did away with all this sense of responsibility and personal contact. The ruler cared only to please the British Government and in many cases ignored his subjects. The British Government cared only to keep the ruler under their influence and ignored his subjects. So the poor subjects had nowhere to go to and their condition became worse and worse. I have no doubt that if the British Government had not intervened, a stable equilibrium would have been established between what is now called British India and the states, and also between the rulers and their subjects. I was glad to find that you agree with this viewpoint. If that is so, the first thing for all of us to do is to remove the influence and the interference of the third party and we shall then easily come to a common understanding.

But here the personal factor comes in—the fear of the rulers that under the new order in India their position may not be safe. In wider questions of national policy it is difficult to lay down a hard and fast rule. No one knows what the new forces will be in India. But in so far as the Congress is concerned it has sought to bring about a peaceful solution of the Indian problem as between the British Government and India. Much more so must it necessarily strive for a peaceful solution of our internal problem of the states. It will go far to allay the fear of the states and in doing so it may even compromise to some extent with its declared policy. We are sure that we shall be able to evolve a free and united India in cooperation with the various elements in the country. While therefore the Congress is prepared to go a long way to meet the wishes of the states it cannot put in jeopardy the whole ideal of Indian unity and freedom. So that whatever arrangement may be agreed to must be such that it puts no barriers in the way of our future progress towards our ideal.

As I have stated, a federation must be between equals and with a common object. The common object can only be the advancement of India as a whole unrestrained from foreign interference. Equality must mean that the people of the states are on the same level as regards freedom as the people of the rest of India. There may be some difficulties in bringing about this equality to begin with and the Congress recognises this fact and is therefore willing to agree to a transition stage so far as the states are concerned. But some steps should surely be taken to put the states and their people on the road to equality with the others in India Otherwise even if the Congress agree there would be no stability or contentment and we would have ceaseless trouble.

If the princes recognise these governing factors and decide to act in accordance with them all the clouds that darken the skies would soon vanish away. They would become real leaders of their people who would be their strongest bulwarks. After all it will be for the people of the states themselves to say the final word regarding their form of government and their princes.

I earnestly hope that the rulers of the states will look at this question from this larger point of view. I hope that the great vision of a free and united India with all parts cooperating and working together for the common good, will come to them also. Any other objective would be unworthy of India or of any son or daughter of India. We live in great times and we have to act greatly if we are to play an effective role in the making of India's history today.

I am afraid I have written to you rather vaguely. None the less I hope I have made it clear how I approach the question of federation

and the states. I believe that my views are generally shared by Congressmen, but I cannot commit the Congress or any one else to them.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

26. *To Roger Baldwin*[1]

September 17th, 1931

I have just received your two letters of the 27th and 28th August. Gandhi as you know is in London. I hope you have seen him there. I do not know what the outcome of his visit is going to be. Anyhow we shall know in a couple of months' time. You are correct in thinking that Gandhi is made of stern stuff. I do not think he will give in.

We shall gladly keep in touch with the U.S. as you suggest. We are prepared to cooperate with any group but for the moment I do not see the necessity for official recognition of any group there. Even if I thought this was necessary it would be difficult to convince my other colleagues. Their past experience of foreign committees has been unfortunate. Do write to me your views on the subject. Meanwhile I would suggest your forming an independent committee or group in the U.S with which we could cooperate without any official bonds.

I have sent you a cable today about M. N. Roy.[2] I am a member of his defence committee and I shall gladly do what I can to help him We do not yet quite know what charges are going to be brought against him It seems to me that some old charges are being revived. Certainly there is no suggestion that he has been indulging in any act of violence. I realise that he is rather a forlorn figure. On the one side his old colleagues of the Communist Party have kicked him out; on the other the non-communists dislike him. I know that he has said many uncomplimentary things about me in the past but that makes no difference. I shall certainly give him the help I can but as I am so busy with other things this cannot amount to much. The T.U.C. here has

1. J N Correspondence, N M M L.
2 M N Roy was arrested in Bombay on 21 July 1931 for his alleged involvement in the Kanpur and Meerut Conspiracy Cases

opened a defence fund. There are also local defence committees, but so far there has not been an abundance of money. Our local communists—there are not many of them—continue to stigmatise Roy as traitor to the cause. The help which you and others outside could give would be to send some money. If you like you could send the money to me and I shall hand it over to the defence committee. You could also of course draw public attention to the case.

I do not know if this letter will catch you in Geneva. I am therefore sending a copy to New York.

Jawaharlal Nehru

27. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
17.9.31

My dear Bapu,

I have had a letter from Mahadeva from Aden and he has told us something of the happenings on board. But we do not suffer from lack of news of you. We have the minutest details about your meals and prayers, and the hour you get up, and your walks and above all your famous loin cloth.

I returned yesterday from Ahmedabad after a fairly prolonged stay there. The Working Committee seems to swallow up more and more time. We meet again on October 24th perhaps at Delhi.

I do not wish to trouble you about our difficulties here. I only want to inform you that at my request Vallabhbhai has written to Emerson about the distressing state of affairs in the U.P. I am myself thinking of writing briefly to the Viceroy's Secretary.[2]

Next week I shall send you the report of our agrarian enquiry committee.[3]

1 J N Correspondence, N M M L.

2 See *post*, section 2, item 35.

3 A committee, consisting of Govind Ballabh Pant, Venkatesh Narain Tivary, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai and Mohanlal Gautam, was appointed on 19 September to examine the question of rent remissions in the United Provinces It recommended that all rent arrears should be written off and remissions between 60 to 70 per cent should be given.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter I have sent to the Maharaja of Patiala.[4]

The Working Committee did not consider after all the question of federation and division of functions. But the Committee's views on this subject are clear enough. They believe in a strong Central Government. The list of central subjects given in the Nehru Report may be treated as a good basis for discussion. I find from the report of Shafaat Ahmad Khan's speech[5] in the Federal Structure Committee that he claims sovereignty for the provinces. This is an interesting development. Shafaat Ahmad is more than half mad and cannot be taken seriously but it is likely that some of the other stalwart Muslims may support him. I think there should be some plain speaking on this subject.

You must have heard about Chittagong.[6] It was pretty bad but the reports you must have received were no doubt exaggerated. Sen Gupta has been openly stating that the whole affair was got up by the official and non-official Europeans. Others have said this also and there appears to be truth in the charge.

There was a lovely cartoon in *Punch* the other day about the 'Elusive Mahatma'[7]—I wonder if you saw it. I was so taken by it that I forthwith subscribed to *Punch* as well as other English papers to read what they say about you.

I hope you met Roger Baldwin. In a letter from him which I have just received there is a passage which might interest you. "...the new British 'Dictatorship' is the creature of the American bankers. You have two enemies to fight from now on—the hidden enemy of Wall Street, backed by the American Government, and Britain. Wall Street will use all its power to save India for Britain as the chief source of revenue in trade for an economically degenerating empire."

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

4. See *ante*, item 25.
5. (1893-1947), professor of History, Allahabad University; High Commissioner of India in South Africa, 1941-44, Member, Interim Cabinet, Government of India, September-October 1946. In his speech at the Federal Structure Sub-Committee on 14 September 1931 he advocated full autonomy for provinces and transfer of some central subjects to them.
6. There was a complete breakdown of law and order in Chittagong for three days in the first week of September 1931. The damage caused by hooliganism was estimated at a crore of rupees.
7. See illustration facing p. 48.

opened a defence fund. There are also local defence committees, but so far there has not been an abundance of money. Our local communists—there are not many of them—continue to stigmatise Roy as traitor to the cause. The help which you and others outside could give would be to send some money. If you like you could send the money to me and I shall hand it over to the defence committee. You could also of course draw public attention to the case.

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The salt concession was an explicit and important part of the Delhi Settlement and its withdrawal raises vital issues. So far as my information goes there has not been any abuse of it in Shahpur district, but in any event we would have expected that any allegations should have been brought to the notice of the Congress President, as you have done in some other cases, before any action was taken by the government. If the date of the notice is 10th August, as is mentioned in the copy, Mr. Gandhi was here at the time and could have been informed of it.

In the ordinary course, our President, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, would have written to you about this matter and I would not have troubled you about it. But in view of the importance of the matter and the desirability of avoiding delay I have ventured to write to you direct I am of course informing our President and I shall be obliged if you will write to him in answer to this letter of mine. You need not trouble to write to me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

30. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Jhang
September 27th, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a copy of a letter I am sending to Emerson, also a copy of a notice issued by the deputy commissioner of the Shahpur district withdrawing the salt concession from the salt range. I did not want to write to Emerson direct but then I felt that great delay would occur if I referred the matter to you first. Hence the action I have taken. I hope you do not mind.

Some time ago you issued a warning to people abusing the salt concession I believe this applied to Karachi or parts of Sind but I am not sure. So far as I remember, the salt range in the Punjab had nothing to do with it. It seems to me that it is highly improper for government to withdraw the salt concession in this way whatever the facts regarding abuse might be I am informed that there has been no such

1 AICC File No G 60/1931 (Pt I), pp 76 77, NMML

28. Circular to P.C.Cs, D.C.Cs and Seva Dals[1]

September 23rd, 1931

Dear Comrade,

I should like to draw your particular attention to one of the resolutions of the Working Committee meeting held at Ahmedabad recently.[2] This resolution related to breaches of the Delhi Settlement on the part of the government officials or other matters of complaint. All such cases should, in the first instance, be reported to the provincial Congress committee concerned, and the president or the secretary of the P.C.C. should endeavour to obtain relief from the representatives of the local government. In case relief is not forthcoming, the matter should be referred to the President of the A.I.C.C. Information in regard to all important matters should, however, be promptly sent by the D.C.C. to the A.I.C.C. office through the P.C.C....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 A.I.C.C. File No. P.I/1931, p. 29, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2 Held from 8 to 11 September 1931

29. To Home Secretary, Government of India[1]

Jhang
27th Sept. 1931

Dear Mr. Emerson,

I have been shown a copy of a notice which the deputy commissioner of Shahpur district is said to have issued withdrawing the salt concession from the whole area covered by the salt range.[2] I enclose a copy of this notice, which bears the date 10.8.31. I do not know if this date is correctly given in the copy as the notice has, I understand, only recently been generally published for public information.

1 A.I.C.C. File No. G.7/1931, pp. 23-24, N.M.M.L.
2 It alleged that the people had abused the salt concession by removing surplus salt for sale in markets miles away from the salt range.

motley crowd. I wonder if any purgatory would be more dreadful for me than to carry on in this way. If I had to listen to my dear friend Mohamad Ali Jinnah talking the most unmitigated nonsense about his 14 points[2] for any length of time, I would have to consider the desirability of retiring to the South Sea Islands, where there would be some hope of meeting with some people who were intelligent enough or ignorant enough not to talk of the 14 points.

It is a month today since the fateful decision was taken at Simla and you rushed across India to sail for foreign lands. Four weeks you have been away and it seems so long.

Lahore
28.9.31

I am continuing this letter in a hurry during a brief stay in Lahore. I enclose a copy of a letter I have sent to Emerson.

The Punjab papers were full some time ago of your having accepted Jinnah's 14 points. The Sikh League got alarmed and hurriedly summoned an All Party Sikh Conference. This conference has rejected the Working Committee's scheme and reiterated their 17 demands.[3]

There is a great deal of repression going on here and large numbers of young men are being proceeded against. Some are being charged under Sec. 302 (the murder section) for a speech, which is extraordinary. These speeches are reported usually by police constables who know nothing about shorthand. It is easy to distort them or to introduce a particular phrase or two. There has been of course a general tendency here to use strong language. I have been going for it since I came to the Punjab and Naujawans have had a severe drubbing.

This is written in a hurry as I want to catch the air mail and I am leaving Lahore soon.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

2. Jinnah formulated his demands in 14 points, the important ones being a federal constitution with residuary powers vested in the provinces, separate electorates with a third of the seats in the Central Legislature reserved for Muslims, reforms in the N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan, creation of Sind as a separate province, and no bill or resolution to be passed in an elected body if three fourths of the representatives of any community opposed it

3. They reiterated the rights of the Sikh community, opposed communal representation and reservation of seats, but if communal representation were adhered to they demanded one-third of membership in the Punjab Cabinet and legislature, 5 per cent representation in the Centre and at least one Sikh member in the Central Cabinet.

abuse. People from Shahpur district tell me that as a matter of fact full advantage has not been taken of the concession. It may be that there have been minor breaches by individuals. In any event, the burden of proof rests entirely on government and they must prove their case before they take action.

I find that repression here is going strong and a very large number of persons, chiefly young men, are being proceeded against under various sections. Many are being tried under Sec. 302 I.P.C. (the murder section) coupled with some other sections, simply because of a speech. I read through the speeches in one such case. It was a report taken by a head constable and most of it was strenuously denied as incorrect. But even accepting it for what it was worth it is an extraordinary state of affairs to proceed under Sec. 302 for a speech.

This is just an instance. In a variety of other ways local officials here are misbehaving. Unfortunately the Punjab P.C.C. is not an efficient or a capable body and does not do much. It is hardly possible to make it realise what should be done and what should not be done.

I notice from the papers that you are still in Bombay. I do not know what your future programme is. I am sending this letter to both places.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

31. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Jhang
Punjab
27.9.31

My dear Bapu,

I grow impatient, you will think. You have hardly been in England a fortnight and I complain of you not having got the British Government and others to agree to discuss vital matters of principle. I am sure you are right and I am wrong. But when I read of the same old crowd repeating the same old pet phrases about the communal problem and you putting up with this inanity, I marvel at your patience. How wonderful you are to argue and argue and yet again argue with this

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No 17863.

THE ELUSIVE MAHATMA.

SHE ONLY SAID, "MY LIFE IS DREARY,
HE COMETH NOT" SHE SAID
SHE SAID "I AM AWEARY, AWEARY
I WOULD NOT BE A PERFECT LADY
I'D LIKE TO SMASH HIS HEAD" —(With apologies to Tennyson)

REPRODUCED FROM *Punch*

32. To M.A. Ansari[1]

Camp Cawnpore
October 4th, 1931

My dear Ansari,

Thank you for your letter.[2] I had a telegram last night from Vallabhbhai saying that he has received a message from Alam requesting him to change the date of the Working Committee meeting so as not to conflict with the Punjab Nationalist Muslims Conference. I have suggested to Vallabhbhai to have the Working Committee on the 27th if other members agree. This ought to suit everybody.

You seem to fill the picture in London town. I am very glad that the Mahatma is insisting on your presence.[3] Please do not be so rash as to cable to him to do what he chooses. This will put him in a false position. I sometimes wish I was there to have a loving chat with the Muslim delegation. There seems to me to be too much sugariness in the proceedings at least so far as our side is concerned. That of course is Gandhiji's way and we must not complain. But a little pepper would add to the taste. How I would love to have a nice little chat with the London crowd of Round Tablers

Last evening I received a long letter from Mahadeva. He says that Shaukat took an impossible position on board on every matter. Even apart from the communal question he seems to be committed to the British Government on almost everything. I think it is a matter of days now before the break comes in the conference and Gandhiji thinks of the return journey It is good however that he has gone there.

1 AICC File No G-60/1931 (Pt I), pp. 101-102, N.M.M.L.

2 In his letter of 30 September 1931, Ansari had said "I feel like cabling to Mahatma to do whatever he thinks best irrespective of anybody or any party and face the consequences . . The Muslim reactionaries are haggling over their supporting my candidature in return for all their demands being conceded by Mahatma"

3 In his letter to Jawaharlal written from London on 2 October 1931, Devadas Gandhi wrote "Although Bapu assured the persons concerned that if Dr. Ansari came he would try his best to persuade him to agree to the Muslim demands, they could not see their way to agree to his coming ... Mr. Shafi Daudi quite openly admitted that he had been instrumental in keeping Dr. Ansari out . Bapu was pained beyond measure.... He feels that now he can no longer press with dignity for Dr. Ansari. It would mean courting greater insult...."

I am on a tour of some U.P. districts specially rural areas. I shall return to Allahabad on the 11th morning.

There is a great deal of friction still between Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the Peshawar Congress Party. I think that Rafi ought to go there. I hope you will spare him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

33. Telegram to S.K. Datta[1]

10 November 1931

Your telegram.[2] Thanks. Working Committee already cabled Bapu.[3] Personally have no desire prevent his visiting other countries but feel developing Indian situation may upset his programme. Psychological effect of long tour after unsuccessful end conference bad specially with increasing repression here. Suggest his visiting few important places on way back. Why not return overland route.

Jawaharlal

1 AICC. File No. 57/1931, p 13, NMML.
S. K. Datta (1878-1942); principal, Forman Christian College, Lahore; member, Legislative Council, 1924-26, delegate to the second Round Table Conference representing Indian Christians.

2 In his telegram Datta said there was some chance of Mahatma Gandhi saving the situation by his intervention and stressed the need for Mahatma Gandhi visiting the Continent and Ireland

3 The cable said that when conditions were worsening in India his early return was desirable and a long Continental tour inadvisable.

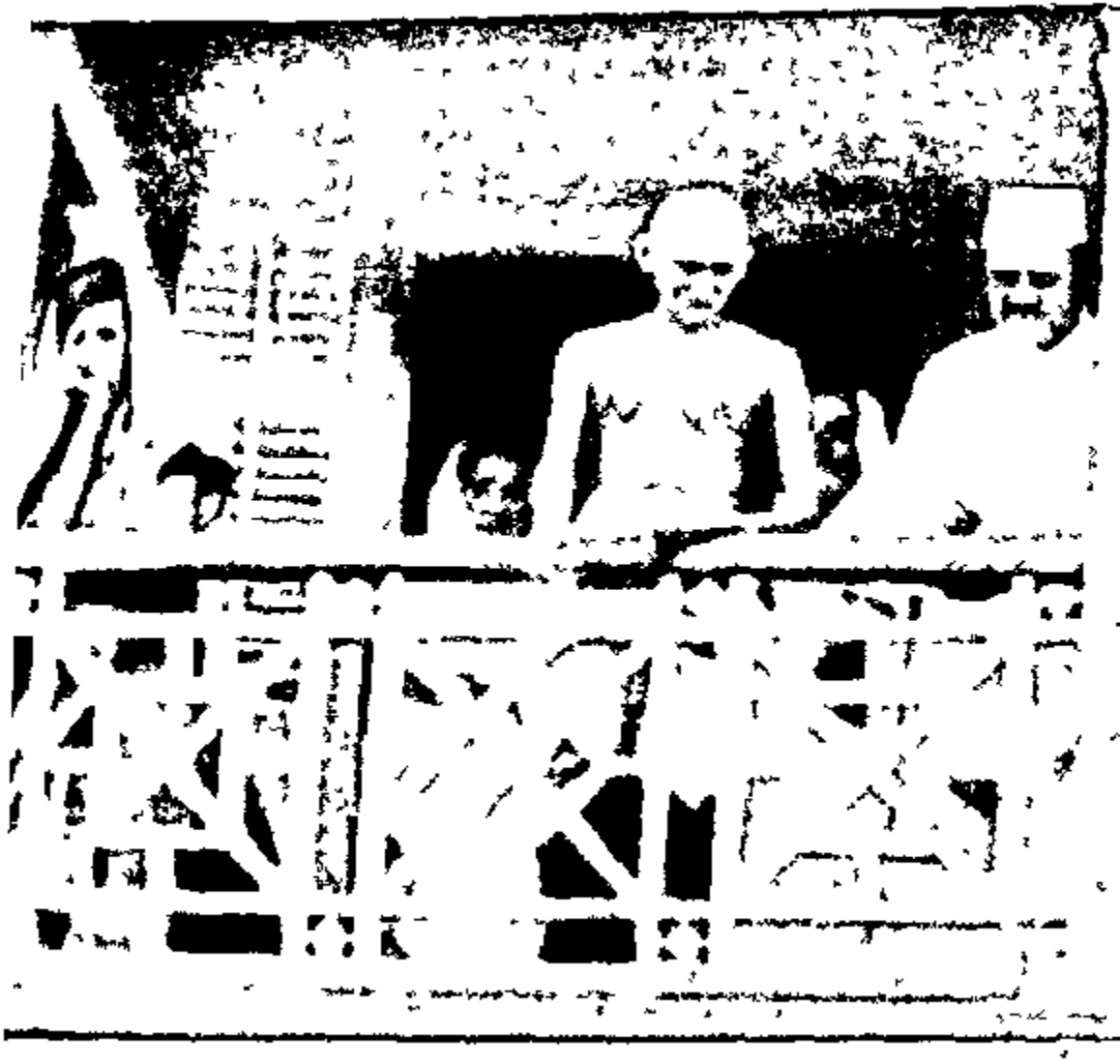

THE MAHATMA GANDHI IN BOMBAY, 29 AUGUST 1931

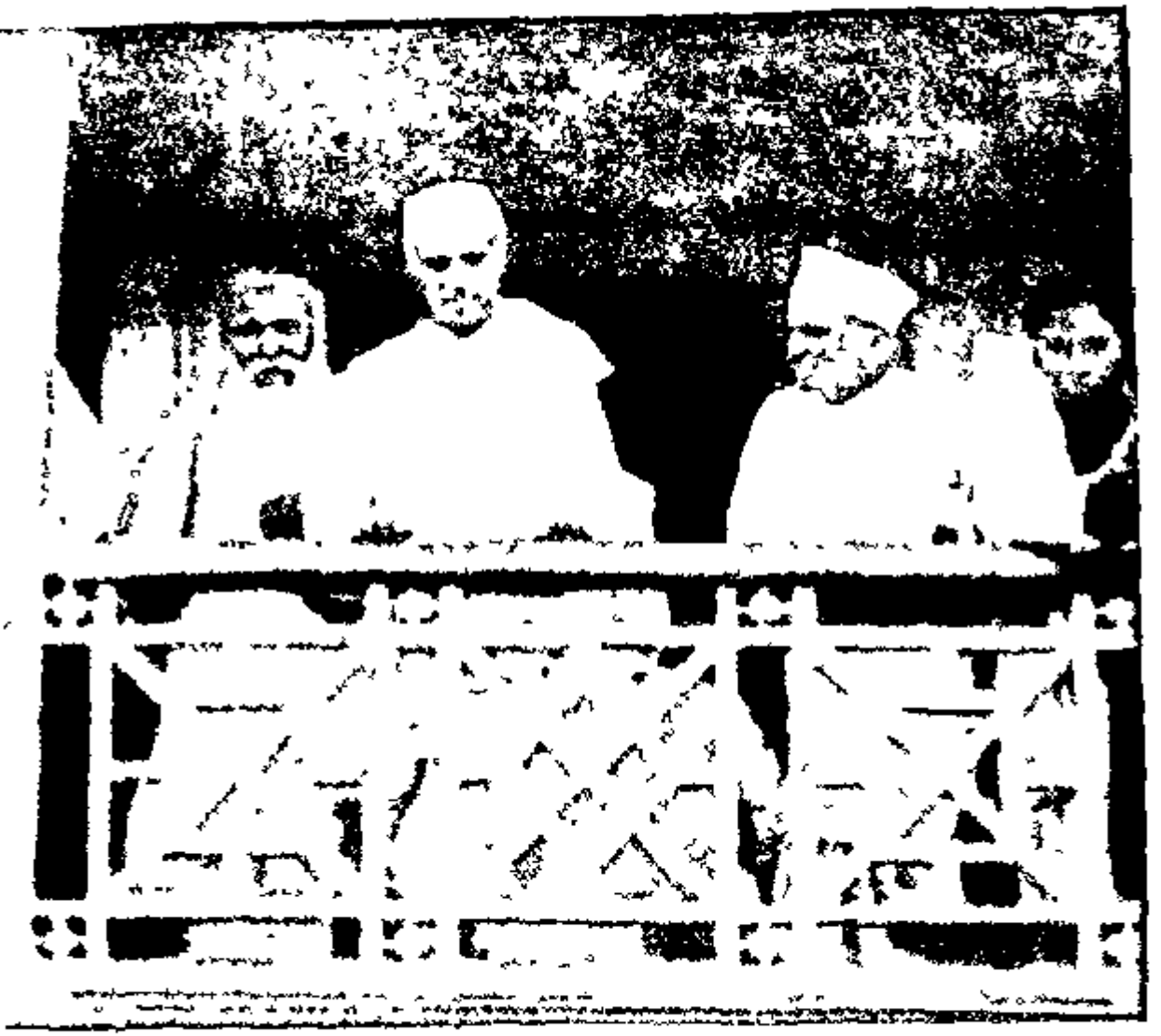

Ever since the inception of the Congress, forty-six years ago, it has been the custom to have volunteers to help in Congress arrangements and to serve delegates and visitors and to control crowds. In accordance with the usual practice, training camps for volunteers were opened in various parts of Orissa. The officials of Puri town have, however, distinguished themselves by issuing orders under Section 144, Criminal Procedure Code, and under Section 30 of the Police Act, endeavouring to prevent the training. The district magistrate, at first, prohibited volunteers from marching in regular formation with lathis as this was likely to be taken as a challenge to established authority. The order was obeyed. Soon after, the superintendent of police issued an order prohibiting all processions and assemblies. Even before these orders were promulgated, the volunteers of the Puri camp went out for a long route-march. On their way back, they were met by 100 police constables, armed with rifles and lathis, under the command of the superintendent of police. The volunteers were marching along quietly without even singing. The leader of the volunteers was arrested and the police insisted on the others breaking their formation and dispersing. Objection was specially taken to any volunteers marching in step even though they might be in twos or threes. Later, armed police kept watch on the camp. In the city an announcement was made by beat of drums, warning the public not to join any Congress meeting or procession and not to have anything to do with the Congress. The district magistrate further ordered that the Congress volunteers were not to help pilgrims on the *Kartik Purnima* festival day and that they were not to be allowed to help in controlling crowds.

These remarkable orders have been passed without the slightest allegation that the volunteers have misbehaved themselves in any way or *done anything which was objected to by any section of the public.* They are apparently intended to interfere with the arrangements for the Puri Congress and a deliberate effort seems to have been made to provoke Congressmen and volunteers by offensive and aggressive behaviour.

I am issuing this statement, both as Secretary of the Congress and as one responsible for the Volunteer Department of the Congress, so that the facts may be placed before the public.

34. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

December 8, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,
I have just received a copy of a letter dated 2 December sent to you by the *Seva Nayak* of the Puri Reception Committee.[2] I have read this and the orders issued with amazement. A more flagrant interference with Congress activities, it is difficult to conceive. I presume you will address government on the subject. I think they should be asked to state clearly if they consider the truce at an end. It is quite impossible to tolerate this kind of interference. It would make all our work impossible. I am issuing a statement to the press merely to give publicity to the facts. I enclose a copy.

Thanks for your telegram about the Etawah conference dates. We have fixed the 23rd to the 27th. At the latest we shall finish on the 28th. We have to hold a meeting of the P.C.C. two days before the conference as the Subjects Committee and after the conference also. This procedure takes up three days.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 52/1931, p. 9, N.M.M.L.
2. Formed for the 47th annual Congress to be held in Puri, but which did not meet as in the meantime all leaders had been arrested.

35. On the Order Banning Congress Activities in Puri[1]

Repeated attention has been drawn to the numerous breaches of the Delhi truce on behalf of the government and interference with the ordinary activities of the Congress. An extraordinary instance of this has now occurred in Puri, where the next Congress is to be held.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 8 December 1931. *The Hindu*, 9 December 1931.

2

AGRARIAN DISTRESS IN THE UNITED PROVINCES

1. To G.B. Pant[1]

March 1931

My dear Pantji,
I had hoped to meet you in Lucknow and was disappointed not to do so. There is a meeting of the Council on the 13th and I hope you will be able to come.

Some of our colleagues have been much exercised about various matters resulting from the truce. A suggestion has been made with which I heartily agree that help should be enlisted in straightening out some of the tangles that are bound to remain. We propose that we should sit down in Lucknow together with one or two others forming a committee for two purposes: (1) to find out what prisoners have not been released and to take such steps for their release as you may think necessary, that is to say, you should keep in touch with government officials and draw their attention to the non-release of our people. We could ask our District C.Cs to send you full lists of such persons as are not released together with particulars regarding them; (2) to keep in touch with government in regard to the rent and revenue situation and specially regarding any excesses that might be committed by the police or by the agents of the zamindars on the tenantry. This is a very difficult matter and we have to take every care that the peasantry are not made to suffer now in any way. We have also to impress upon government the urgent necessity of a considerable remission.

I saw Chhatari[2] and Jagdish Prasad[3] in Lucknow night before last. They were very cordial and they promised all manner of assistance both in regard to the prisoners and in regard to the economic situation. But they were very vague also and it is therefore necessary that we should keep a vigilant watch over these matters. No one better than you can be suggested for this purpose. If you like you can have Venkatesh Naram Tiwary to assist you. I hope you will agree to undertake this work.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No 63/1931, p. 77, NMML
2 *Home Member, U.P. Government*
3 Chief Secretary, U.P. Government.

as of the different districts. Stress has also been laid on this in the speech of the Revenue Secretary which you have been good enough to send me. Undoubtedly this is true but it is equally undoubted that the distress is almost universal. The occupancy tenant is slightly better off than the statutory tenant. But even the occupancy tenant has also had to face, in the recent past, a steep rise in his rent amounting to, I understand, in some cases, upto 50%. It is difficult for me to generalise but I can certainly say that large numbers of occupancy tenants in Allahabad district are really very hard hit by the prevailing prices and general economic depression. Here in Allahabad district a very large proportion of the tenantry are occupancy tenants and to my knowledge they are very badly off. It is true that the statutory tenants are worse off. The policy of the local zamindars seems to be to carry on a campaign against the occupancy tenants in order to deprive them of their occupancy rights by ejectment or otherwise. It is hardly fair to take advantage of the economic conditions and the prevailing distress to deprive these tenants of the rights they or their forefathers had earned.

Large numbers of tenants are coming to me daily with tales of woe. It appears that in the Karchchana tahsil of the Allahabad district about 800 ejectments have already taken place. In Handia tahsil also there have been very many ejectments. Even in the Court of Wards estates in this district ejectments have taken place. In addition to these ejectments we are continually receiving reports of ill-treatment and beating of tenants by the agents of zamindars or the police. Only last night a crowd of tenants came from Soraon tahsil and gave us a graphic account of a police raid on their village at the instigation of the landlord. The tenantry, it was stated, has been beaten with the butt ends of rifles and otherwise maltreated. One of these tenants who came had to be treated in the hospital.

I trust you will agree with me that this attitude of the zamindars, backed up as it is by the police, is not likely to help in creating a peaceful atmosphere or in inducing the tenantry to pay up their rents. Some of them may be frightened into paying what they can but there is bound to be a feeling of deep resentment and hostility. I had hoped that the local government would see to it that all aggressive action on the part of zamindars would stop and, in any event, that the police will not help them; also that in the matter of ejectments the government would take up a strong line—something of the kind you told me it took up in the past—when it gave orders that ejectment suits should be postponed for a long period. So far, there has been no improvement of any kind on the part of the zamindars or the police that is

2. To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government[1]

March 11, 1931

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,
Thank you for your letter of the 9th March and the statement in Council by the Revenue Secretary.

I have been consulting my colleagues as to what we should do regarding the rent and revenue situation. We have been receiving large numbers of complaints both of ejectments and of oppressive action on the part of the zamindars. We are repeatedly asked for advice as to what the tenantry should do in the face of this aggressive attitude of some zamindars and I must confess that it is no easy matter to advise under the circumstances. Your suggestion that we should merely tell them to pay up honestly what they can pay does not carry us very far. That is the advice we have given in many cases but it does not lead to the solution of any difficulty. Indeed it is really a negative form of advice. Speaking not as a Congressman but as one deeply interested in the welfare of the tenantry I feel that whatever the tenants might do should be more or less in an organised capacity. If each individual is to act separately, it means as it has meant in the past, that he will be crushed by the powers opposed to him. His only strength lies in some measure of united action. If this is admitted, then individual advice ceases to have much value and indeed may be positively injurious from the point of view of the tenants at large. All my colleagues are of opinion that when distress is so general it should be to the interest of all parties concerned, i.e., the tenantry, the zamindars as well as the local government, to lay down clearly and precisely the policy that should be followed. If a generous policy was followed and a large measure of agreement was arrived at between the parties concerned there would be no further difficulty. Otherwise it is obvious that suffering and bad blood will continue to increase and will lead to graver problems in the future. To wait and see is not always the best method to get over a present difficulty.

You told me that it was the intention of the local government to wait for the rabi crop and then to come to a decision. As a matter of fact the rabi crop has already been cut and it should not be difficult to come to a decision in regard to it now. Further you laid stress on the varying conditions of the different classes of the tenantry as well

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-40(KW)(iii)/1931, pp. 237-245, NMML.

expression of opinion will go a long way in limiting the aggressive activities of those zamindars who are apt to err. In any event the police and the tahsil staff might well be asked not to help zamindars in collecting rents.

In the course of our conversation I promised to draw your attention to particular cases of prisoners who had not so far been released. I am attaching a note to this letter in regard to them.[3]

We have received information that attachments are still taking place in Kanauj to recover the punitive police tax. There must be some mistake about this as we have been assured that no further collections in this behalf will be made.

I am sorry to send you such a long letter. I am leaving Allahabad on the 14th for Bombay. From there I shall go to Delhi and Karachi. I shall therefore not be back here for another three weeks or more. If you wish to send any communication on the matters touched on in this letter you could kindly write to Mr. Purushottamdas Tandon, Provincial Congress Office, Zero Road, Allahabad. Some of us have been thinking that it would facilitate our work if one of our colleagues would interest himself specially in these matters and remain at Lucknow so that whenever necessary he could get into touch with you. We are requesting Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant to do so.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

ENCLOSURE

MAINPURI CONSPIRACY CASE[4]

A number of persons were convicted in this case on the 1st September 1919. The maximum sentence was seven years. On the 5th February 1920 there was an amnesty and two days later these persons were released on their signing a bond to be of good behaviour. The bond contained certain other provisions also. For ten years nothing special happened so far as they were concerned. In 1930, three of them, Dammilal, Sidh Gopal and Karhori Lal were arrested in connection with the civil disobedience movement. Dammilal and Sidh Gopal are now in the Fyzabad district jail in the B class. Karhori Lal

3 See enclosure to this letter.

4 About fifty young men, mostly students, were arrested in 1918-19 in U.P. on a charge of revolutionary conspiracy.

acting with them and apart from ejectments and general ill-treatment it has been reported to us that property belonging to kisans has been destroyed.

You will remember that there has been firing at Kalyanpur in Soraon tahsil in Allahabad district and at village Kehla in Partabgarh district. The Kalyanpur case, I believe, is going on in the courts. In Kehla our people report to us that a very strenuous attempt is being made to manufacture some evidence by terrorising the tenantry.[2] The police are justified in taking action in cases of violence but in both these places, to the best of our information, the crowds did not misbehave to any marked extent. In Kehla I took some part in the enquiry myself and I was unable to discover any aggressive action on the part of the crowd. Where there is no solid and obvious evidence of violence would it not be desirable for the government to be generous and not to proceed with the cases? In any event the attempt to frighten the people into giving false evidence, as is reported from Kehla, is deplorable.

In Fatehpur district, as you must know, a tahsildar was killed. The persons involved in his death will of course be proceeded against but from repeated reports received from people of the locality it appears that the whole village has been deserted owing to police action. One of these reports appeared in the *Leader* yesterday.

In the *Aj* newspaper of Benares dated the 9th March there appears a letter from the *Mukhtar-i-am* of the Raja of Bara. In this letter it is stated *inter alia* that the Raja has ordered the suspension of 50% of the revenue of all his tenantry for a year provided that limitation does not run. This appears to be a general order applied to all tenants. I do not know that mere suspension is much good as conditions are not likely to be rosy in the future. But in any event a general order of this kind for all the tenants appears to me to be good. If the other zamindars followed suit it will not be difficult to arrive at a satisfactory settlement. I hope the local government will help in bringing about this settlement. In particular I trust they will ask the zamindars not to use coercive processes as far as possible and not to eject. If those who have already been ejected are given back their lands, as we were told in Delhi might be done, it would create a very good impression. The Court of Wards estates could set a good example in this respect. There are zamindars of all kinds, good and bad, and it may be that even the local government cannot control all of them. But a strong

2. On 16 February 1931 police fired on the kisans at Kehla, a village in Partabgarh district, for alleged attack on them. A case was later filed against the police.

3. Message to the Peasants of Rae Bareli[1]

Rae Bareli had done a lot, still more is expected from Rae Bareli. Our peace is still far away. The more our strength increases, the sooner we will have real peace and this is only possible when we obtain complete Swaraj. I therefore hope that all tenant brethren will understand what has been done and what still remains to be done. We cannot take rest yet. We will take rest only when the troubles of tenants are over. That time will also come.

1. Home Department (Political) File No. 33/24 of 1931, National Archives of India. This was brought to the notice of the U.P. Government by the district magistrate of Rae Bareli on 12 March 1931.

4. Note on Economic Distress in the United Provinces[1]

Owing to a variety of causes, in particular the great fall in prices, there has been great economic distress among the agriculturists of the U.P. This fact has been recognised and admitted by everyone concerned. The measure of distress varies to some extent in different parts of the province and among the different classes of the zamindars and the tenantry; but that there is all round distress, amounting in some cases to inability to pay, is an acknowledged fact. This fact was brought prominently to the notice of Mr. Gandhi at the time he was having his conversations with the Viceroy regarding the terms of the provisional settlement. It was pointed out to Mr. Gandhi that even on the withdrawal of the political no-tax campaign the economic distress would obviously continue and it would not be possible for the tenantry to pay the full demand. In the event of a settlement taking place the no-tax campaign would of course be suspended but the Congress

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 4/1931 (Pt. I), pp. 61-65, N.M.M.L. Jawaharlal prepared this note at the request of Mahatma Gandhi who sent it on 23 March 1931 to the Home Secretary, Government of India.

is in the C class in Mainpuri district jail. I should like to point out that:

1. The undertaking which they gave in 1920 must be deemed to have expired on the expiry of the period of sentence, that is to say, a maximum of seven years. As a matter of fact they were not re-arrested till 10 years later.

2. Under the present amnesty the sentences for disobedience of Salt Act etc. ended and therefore we can presume that the old sentences, even if they are supposed to continue, have also ended. The case of these three persons is thus exactly on par with that of any other non-violent civil resister.

In Fyzabad jail there are at present three sepoys, two of whom were sentenced to six months and one to one year apparently for wearing a Gandhi cap when not on duty. I understand that seven others were similarly sentenced and are in other jails. The offence of these sepoys was a very trivial one, hardly involving any strict breach of discipline, and I trust that they will be included in the released prisoners.

In Shahjahanpur I am informed that some people under the Security Section 107 have not yet been discharged.

It appears that some people arrested under Sec. 131 for distributing the resolution of the Congress Working Committee regarding the duty of the police and the military have not been discharged. I should have thought that people arrested and convicted under this section would definitely come under the category of nonviolent satyagrahis.

We have issued definite instructions that orders passed by the police or other officials should not be disobeyed. Thus orders under Section 144 are not to be disobeyed on the part of the Congress. But I hope you will appreciate that it does not help in the restoration of peaceful conditions if such prohibitive orders are passed.

Jawaharlal Nehru

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Meanwhile the U.P. Congress Committee was faced by a serious situation. In many areas, zamindars, aided by the police, were harassing the tenantry and telling them that now that there had been a settlement between the Congress and the government they must pay up the full demand immediately. In many places, to our knowledge, tenants were beaten. They came to us in large numbers in their distress telling us of their sufferings. Some of them had actually to be treated in hospital for their injuries. We found that most of them could not possibly pay the full demand. The capacity to pay varied but roughly it was about 50%.

To all the tenantry that came to us as well as to zamindars we said that we would be glad to help in arriving at a settlement on a fair basis for all concerned. It was manifestly absurd to expect the payment of the full demand from the tenantry. It was equally wrong to leave each tenant to deal separately with his landlord. A peasant or an industrial worker is absolutely powerless as an individual. The whole of the trade union movement has been built up to ensure corporate action for the workers or the peasantry. We advised the tenantry therefore to confer in groups of villages or larger areas with their zamindars and with government. Later the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee having carefully considered the situation passed a resolution in which *inter alia* it was stated that the economic situation demanded that considerable remissions be made in the rent. It was suggested that 50% remission should be given to the occupancy tenant and 60% to the statutory tenant. These figures were not final figures for the whole of the province because it was realised that conditions varied. They were merely suggested as a basis for the consideration of the subject of remission. The figures however were not casually given. They were carefully thought out and represented the conviction of the U.P. Provincial Committee. As a matter of fact in the district of Allahabad one of the larger zamindars, the Raja of Bara, had publicly announced that he had suspended 50% of the rent from all his tenants, occupancy as well as statutory. The Raja of Bara has not been connected with the Congress movement in any way. Indeed he has always opposed it. But the mere force of economic circumstance has made him take this action.

All these facts were brought to the notice of the U.P. Government by letters. In addition, the U.P. Provincial Congress decided to open an office in Lucknow specially to deal with the question of the undischarged prisoners and the rent and revenue situation. We put one of our prominent colleagues, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, who used to be the leader of the Swaraj Party in the local council, in charge of

could not, in fairness or justice, leave the tenantry or the zamindars in the lurch when they were faced with a grave economic crisis. The Congress would use its best endeavour to arrange a settlement by way of remission or otherwise between the government, the zamindars and the tenantry. Further, the question of ejectments was also raised. It is understood that reference was made to these difficulties which the Congress would have to face in the U.P. in the course of the conversations between Mr. Gandhi and the Viceroy or Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Emerson.

The U.P. Provincial Congress Committee started the no-tax campaign in October last. It was confined to certain districts only, probably not more than five or six. Undoubtedly many districts where the no-tax campaign was not started were indirectly affected by it. But in the great majority of the U.P. districts—and there are 48 districts in the U.P.—the real problem to be faced was an economic problem and not a political one and it was because of actual inability to pay that people did not pay. On the conclusion of the provisional settlement between the Government of India and the Working Committee of the Congress, the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee immediately proclaimed that the political no-tax campaign was to be discontinued. Further they took steps to get into touch with the U.P. Government and their members interviewed repeatedly the Home Member and the Chief Secretary of the U.P. Government and fully discussed the rent and revenue situation. The position of the Congress was frankly and fully stated to the government. The Home Member and the Chief Secretary, on the other hand, explained the position of the government. They recognised that there was great economic distress in the province although the measure of it varied in different parts. Thus the districts of Meerut, Muttra, Agra etc. were the hardest hit. The permanently settled districts in the east were comparatively well off. Most of the other districts in between were in a bad way though they were not quite so bad as Meerut and Muttra. It was admitted that the statutory tenants were in the worst position of all and they could not possibly be expected to pay the full demand. The U.P. Government further admitted that it had to do something radical in the matter in the way of remission or suspension of revenue but it wanted to postpone action as long as it could in the hope that something might happen which might help the situation. This hope was not based on anything real as it was known that even the rabi crop had been a failure. Still the government wanted to wait and see. Apparently it was their desire to realise as much revenue as possible before announcing any liberal remissions or suspensions.

lead to a satisfactory solution. The Congress appreciates the difficulties of the government and is prepared to meet them as far as possible, but it also appreciates the difficulties of the tenantry and the petty zamindars and it would be failing in its duty if it did not lay stress on this.

Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Appeal to Kisans[1]

Dear Kisan Brothers,

Last year we all participated in the struggle for complete independence of the country. How the satyagraha campaign was carried on during the year, and how thousands of our brothers and sisters went to jail and made other sacrifices is known to you all. The kisans of Gujarat fully participated in this battle and I am happy that the district of Allahabad did not lag behind. You know how much this battle has strengthened us. We have not yet gained complete independence but we have now become stronger to achieve it.

You would have heard that Mahatma Gandhi, after detailed discussions with the Viceroy, has decided on behalf of the Congress that we should stop our battle for some time and see if some settlement can be arrived at. We have therefore stopped satyagraha for the time being though permanent peace is yet to come. A complete settlement will come only with complete independence. If the present peace parleys were successful, well and good; otherwise we shall have to launch satyagraha again. Be prepared for it.

What have we to do now? The British Government have freed our brothers from jail and have made some friendly gestures. We also have now to stop the battle of satyagraha. But we have every right to carry on the boycott of foreign cloth and continue campaigning peacefully for the boycott of liquor, *ganja* and other intoxicants. Wherever a boycott is launched it should be completely peaceful. All enquiries in this regard should be addressed to the Congress Office, Prayag.

1 AICC File No 4/1931 (Pt. I), pp 106-107, N.M.M.L. Pamphlet, published in Hindi, issued by Jawaharlal and Purushottamdas Tandon in March 1931

this office. He was instructed to keep in intimate touch with the U.P. Government so that there may be as little friction as possible between them and us.

Mr. Pant has been interviewing the U.P. Government officials and placing before them the point of view of the Congress. He reports that he saw the Revenue Secretary of the U.P. Government recently and discussed the agrarian situation with him with special reference to the lines laid down for its solution by the U.P. Congress Committee. The Revenue Secretary did not wish to commit himself in the matter of remission. But he is reported to have appreciated the point of view of the Congress. About statutory tenants he agreed largely with the Congress. In regard to occupancy tenants he was of opinion that they were in a stronger position. But even in regard to them he did not reject some of the points advanced on behalf of the Congress. Stress was laid by him on local conditions and he asked if Mr. Pant could suggest any means for determining fair rates with regard to local circumstances. Mr. Pant suggested that local conferences might be held in every district between representatives of those concerned in order to find out what portion, if any, of the rent the tenants could reasonably afford to pay. He further stated that the Congress would be willing to lend its assistance in reaching an amicable settlement between the zamindars and the tenants on this question. The tenants should not be required to pay anything in excess of the amount determined by the conference and whatever be the difference remitted. The Revenue Secretary promised to place the whole matter before the government and further stated that actual ejectment could not be effected before May. As a matter of fact Congress had received complaints about hundreds of ejectments, amounting in one tahsil of Allahabad district alone to 600 or more. The Revenue Secretary promised to enquire into this matter also.

The U.P. Provincial Congress Committee is desirous of helping in every way a settlement between the zamindars, the tenantry and the government. It feels however that the way to bring about such a settlement is not by merely leaving the tenantry in the lurch and asking them to shift for themselves. The tahsil Congress organisations are practically peasant organisations and it is their duty to protect the interests of the tenants quite apart from the political side of the Congress movement. The Congress has made it very clear that the political movement has stopped and on the economic side all that it desires is a satisfactory settlement. The attitude of the U.P. Government, we have been told, is sympathetic. But it has been rather vague and this has made it difficult to formulate any definite plan which would

In Delhi a few days ago I was told of the contents of a letter you had addressed to the government about the hostile attitude of the kisans and some Congress workers in the district.[2] I am unable to find out, without further enquiry, what the real state of affairs is in the rural areas in Allahabad district. It is quite possible that some kisans have adopted an aggressive attitude in some places. It is also possible that some Congress workers have been indiscreet. Most of the prominent Congressmen, as you know, have been away in Karachi. It is obvious however that the conditions prevailing in the district are very abnormal and undesirable. It is also clear that the kisans have had to face and are facing today a great deal of ill-treatment and repression. Some villages, I understand, have even been deserted by the inhabitants for fear of the zamindars and the police. Many cases, it appears, have also been started against kisans under Sec. 107 and even bail has not been encouraged.

In any movement affecting vast numbers of people accidents are likely to happen. It is admitted that there is great economic distress and all the rural areas are affected by it to a greater or lesser extent. What is happening however is something more than the usual crop of accidents. Certainly it is not at all in keeping with the truce or the provisional settlement between the government and the Congress. So far as I am concerned, or my colleagues, we desire strictly to abide by the spirit and letter of this settlement and we shall certainly try to remedy any errors that may have been committed on our side. But it was pointed out to the Government of India by Gandhiji and to the local government by me that the Congress is not purely a political body.[3] In the rural areas it is practically a kisan organisation and as such it must interest itself in the well-being of the kisans, quite apart from political issues. We tried therefore by negotiation and direct approach to the local government to help in arriving at a satisfactory settlement between the zamindars and tenants. In some districts I am glad to say we have met with a measure of success. But in Allahabad conditions appear to be daily worsening. They are bound to become worse or to improve. They cannot remain where they are. I shall be

2 He had reported to the government in March 1931 that tenants were being asked by the Congress to pay only a part of the rent, zamindars had been attacked by the tenants at some places and Congress panchayats were coming in the way of police investigations.

3 In an interview on 6 April 1931, Mahatma Gandhi told the Home Secretary, Government of India "The Congress is predominantly a peasants and workers' organisation." During his talks with the officials of the U.P. Government on 7 April, Jawaharlal had reiterated this position

Our battle of satyagraha started with the Salt Act. It has been agreed that the kisans can make salt for their use as well as for their neighbours wherever saline earth is available.

The biggest problems of the kisans are of payment of rent and ejectments. A lasting solution of these problems will be found only when complete independence is achieved. We shall then have the power to relieve the kisans of their troubles. That time, we hope, is soon to come. At present, under the truce, it has been decided that we should not include non-payment of taxes in our satyagraha campaign. But we all know that because of a fall in the prices the condition of the kisans is very bad and they are not able to make full payment. We, therefore, expect the government and the landlords to prepare such conditions under which the kisans may only pay as much rent as they can, and the rest of it be written off. We shall, in this respect, try to bring about some compromise and inform the kisans later what they should do. An attempt will also be made to get back the lands of those kisans who have been ejected during the struggle. Please help us in this and inform the Congress Office wherever disposession has taken place.

Your brothers
Jawaharlal Nehru
Purushottamdas Tandon

6. To Commissioner, Allahabad Division[1]

Allahabad
9.4.31

My dear Maharaj Singh,

I returned to Allahabad yesterday after three weeks' absence and almost the first sight that came my way was a number of wounded kisans who had come to our hospital for treatment. I was further informed that a serious case was lying in a village and could not be removed by carriage or train. An ambulance car was sent for him. Later I was besieged by other kisans from various parts of the district, all of them bringing tales of woe and complaints of ill-treatment by zamindars or the police.

1 AICC File No. G-40(KW)(ii)/1931, pp. 233-235, NMML.

8. Appeal to the Kisans of Allahabad District[1]

Dear Kisan Brothers,

On my return to Allahabad after three weeks, I have learnt with great sorrow that the kisans of the district have been put to great hardships and they are in a miserable condition. At some places kisans are also reported to have resorted to violence. This has made me all the more unhappy. All kisans should remember that our principle is to work peacefully. Those who resort to violence will harm the kisans and bring a bad name to the Congress. It should therefore be well understood that neither from the Congress side nor from the side of kisans should there be any violence.

The Congress has recently decided at Karachi that after the achievement of independence the taxes on land will be reduced to the minimum so that the poor kisans and small zamindars get relief and their condition improves. But we shall be able to do this only when we gain independence and power rests with the masses. We have therefore to work ceaselessly for the achievement of Swaraj.

At present we have not got Swaraj. It has been agreed between the Congress and the British Government that for some time we should both stop fighting and work for a settlement. It will be good if a settlement is arrived at; if not, we shall again have to wage war for Swaraj. It should be remembered that at present our fighting has been stopped. No kisan or volunteer should adopt a posture of war. Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress have given their word that so long as negotiations continue, we shall not resort to satyagraha or start a civil disobedience campaign. We have to keep our promise. When the time to do something else comes, we shall let you know, and then we shall all do it together.

We actually want at this time some agreement over the payment of rent between the kisans and the zamindars. Some zamindar brothers are willing and it is hoped that some agreement will soon be reached with them. But it is very sad that some zamindars have inflicted great hardships on the kisans and these continue unabated. Wherever this happens, please report it to the Congress Office at Allahabad. We

1 A.I.C.C. File No. 4/1931(Pt.I), pp. 109-110, N.M.M.L. Pamphlet published in Hindi on 13 April 1931.

very sorry if matters do not improve, and I shall gladly do everything in my power to improve the situation.

If you think it is worthwhile I shall gladly come over to see you and explain our viewpoint. Or if you prefer I can send you a note on the subject.[4] I am keeping bad health and have been told to take rest immediately. I shall be leaving for Bombay and Ceylon soon, but I am here for the next five days or so, except the 13th.

May I have a line in reply?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. See *post*, item 9.

7. To Sitla Sahai[1]

April 11, 1931

My dear Sitla Sahai,

I have your letter of the 7th April. I do not remember receiving any letter from you at Karachi. I am told that a letter was given to me at Delhi but I have been so unwell that I cannot deal with my work properly. From your letter it appears that on the whole you are surmounting your difficulties. I am glad to learn this. We are having far greater difficulties in Allahabad district.

I shall be leaving Allahabad for some time on the 16th morning. I shall go to Bombay and from there perhaps to Ceylon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No G-40(KW)(iv)/1931, p. 135, NMML.

to bring about an amicable settlement of the agrarian problem between the zamindars, the tenantry and the government.

It is stated on behalf of the government that the Congress has not faithfully carried out the terms of the truce in the U.P. and has tried to carry on the no-tax campaign in another form.[3] The truth or otherwise of the statement can only be judged after a proper appreciation of the economic situation in the agrarian areas in the U.P., and the steps that the Congress has taken to relieve it by helping a settlement between the parties concerned. The Congress, as representing a very large number of the tenants, could not leave its tenant members in the lurch when they were admittedly in great difficulties. This fact was repeatedly brought to the notice of Mr. Gandhi when he was having his conversations with the Viceroy, prior to the settlement. He was further informed of the difficulties caused by ejectments. We were given to understand that the government would help in the solution of the problem in every way, if the political no-tax campaign was withdrawn, and would also try to give possession of lands from which ejectment had taken place. It was reported that Mr. Emerson had written to the U.P. Government on these subjects.

A brief account of the agrarian situation in the U.P. in the course of the past few years is given below. It must be remembered that the tenancy law of the Agra province is different from that of Oudh. In Oudh there are no occupancy tenants and it is admitted that the Oudh tenantry is on the whole in a worse economic plight than the peasantry of Agra province. The facts given below relate in the main to Agra province. The figures for Oudh are even more unfavourable from the point of view of the tenants.

The province of Agra (as well as that of Oudh) is mostly a land of small cultivators, whose holdings, on an average, do not exceed, according to a government estimate, 5½ acres. This means that the vast majority of tenants have got between 3 to 4 acres only. There are three classes of tenants: (a) occupancy tenants, (b) statutory or life tenants, and (c) sub-tenants. The average rates of rents for these classes of tenants vary from district to district. They are the highest in the district of Muzaffarnagar and the lowest in Jhansi. In the district of Allahabad occupancy tenants pay between *Rs. 3-8-0* and *Rs. 5-8-0* and non-occupancy tenants pay between Rs. 10 and Rs. 16 per *bigha*. The cooperative department of the U.P. are of opinion that between 60 to 80% of the cultivators are generally in debt.

3 The collectors of Allahabad and Mathura had reported in these terms to the local government in March 1931.

cannot do much for you but we shall do whatever we can. But remember, whether the zamindars ill-treat you or not, you will not ill-treat them. Whatever be your complaints, report them to the Congress Office and discuss them there.

About rent, the Congress has told you that those kisans who can pay easily may come to an understanding and make payments. This understanding cannot be reached individually. The people of any tahsil, group of villages or of the villages under one zamindar can reach an agreement with the government or the zamindar. The provincial Congress committee has suggested that an agreement for payment of half the rent will not be bad for the kisans. But the conditions are not the same everywhere. Therefore, the payment of a little bit more at some places and slightly less at others should be suitably devised. We suggest that half the land tax should be written off, for, if the kisans are unable to pay fully during the current harvest, how will they pay more later? It will be good if the zamindars write off that much. If they write off a part and postpone the payment of the rest, it should be understood that the kisans will not be able to pay the arrears of rent. The government has not yet announced its policy in this regard. But I hope that our zamindar brothers will not be harsh, will sympathise with the kisans and try to reach an agreement with them. The Congress will give full support to this.

Your servant,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. On the Rent and Revenue Situation in U.P.[1]

About a month ago a note on the economic distress in the rural areas in the U.P. was given to Mr. Gandhi in Delhi and passed on by him to Mr. Emerson.[2] In this note it was pointed out that even on the withdrawal of the political no-tax campaign, as a result of the provisional settlement between the Congress and the government, the economic crisis would continue and the tenantry would find it impossible to pay the full demand or anything approaching it. Reference was made in this note to the various steps taken by the U.P. Provincial Committee

1. 18 April 1931. AICC File No. 4/1931 (Pt I), pp. 75 91, NMML.
2. See *ante*, item 4

According to Mr. Har Swarup M.L.A. (*Leader* of January 16, 1931) the cost of producing an acre of sugarcane will be somewhat as follows:

	Rs. as.
Rent and Revenue	20—0
Manure	10—0
Ploughing, harrowing, weeding and bunding	25—0
Irrigation with labour for watering	12—0
Seed	15—0
Cutting and collecting	7—8
Making *gur* with its cartage to market	22—8
Total	112—0

Thus "the tenant gets, in sugarcane, in spite of all his labours, about 35% less than what he actually spends. The case of wheat is still worse because the tenant produces on an average 12 maunds of wheat worth Rs. 30 and spends about Rs. 62, i.e. thus getting a return of less than one half."

Mr. Brijnandan Lal M.L.C. in the course of his speech in the U.P. Legislative Council gave certain striking figures relating to three villages in which he had made personal enquiries. These figures show the terrible plight in which the tenants and zamindars find themselves in at present owing to the unprecedented fall in prices. According to him, in one village the cash value of the produce per acre was Rs. 204, while the cost of production, excluding the maintenance charges of the cultivators and their families, came to Rs. 311 per acre. For the other two villages the respective figures given by him were: Rs. 186 and Rs. 20, being the value of the produce, and Rs. 240 and Rs. 28, being the cost of production per acre.

Pandit Venkatesh Narayan Tivary carried out a rough economic enquiry, on behalf of the Congress, in the rural areas in three tahsils of the Allahabad district this year. The information he obtained from the landlords showed that the cost of cultivating a plot of 6 *bighas* was, in the case of occupancy tenants, between Rs. 110 and Rs. 130, according as the rent was low or high, while the cash value of the produce was in normal years between *Rs. 125* and *Rs. 140. In the present year the cash* value has been less than one-third of what it was in 1926-27.

It would appear that even before the no-tax campaign was started in the U. P. the local government had under consideration the question of remission and suspension of land revenue on a generous scale. They realised, as they had to, that the agriculturists of the province were passing through a severe economic crisis, the like of which had not been

Such was their condition in normal years. Since 1928-29, however, it has steadily grown worse. In 1928-29 the government remitted no less than Rs. 60 lakhs in land revenue and suspended nearly Rs. 20 lakhs. In 1929-30 there was a remission of Rs. 33 lakhs and suspension of Rs. 24 lakhs. Out of the rabi demand only for 1930 remission amounted to Rs. 11.57 lakhs and suspension to Rs. 2.94 lakhs. That is to say that from April 1928 to June 1930 the government had to remit about Rs. 105 lakhs and suspend nearly Rs. 46.82 lakhs. In addition to these sums, over Rs. 24 lakhs were spent on famine relief etc.

These figures demonstrate that the economic condition of the U.P. tenantry had been steadily deteriorating and their power of resistance was breaking down. They were at a very low ebb when the phenomenal fall in the prices of foodstuffs set in. This was the last straw on the camel's back.

The following figures will show how serious this fall of prices has been:

	Year 1873	Year 1916-20	Increase per cent
Rice	3.12	6.24	100
Jawar	1.89	4.24	124
Wheat	2.41	5.39	124
Barley	1.9	4.0	111
Gram	1.39	4.56	228

For sugarcane and cotton the record of prices goes back only to 1901:

	Year 1901	Year 1916-20	Increase per cent
Sugarcane	4.29	8.82	106
Cotton	13.69	34.64	153

The comparison of this year's rates with those of 1916-20 is as follows:

	Price of 1916-20	Present rates	Percentage of fall on the prices of 1916-20
Sugarcane	8.82	4 to 5	120—80
Cotton	36 64	12.0	275
Rice	6.74	5.0	33
Wheat	5.39	2.5	112
Barley	4.0	1.25	325
Jawar	4.24	1.125	400
Makka	4.24	1.125	400
Gram	4.56	3 0	33

out of rents received from their tenants. Some other zamindars borrowed money to meet the demand. The great majority however had neither resources of their own nor could they find people to advance money to them. But as they had to find money, the only way open to them was to extract as much as they could from their unfortunate tenants. Threats of violence and actual violence have been and are being used for this purpose. Thus the policy of the U.P. Government and their instructions to realise as much of the land revenue as rapidly as possible has resulted in great suffering and hardship for the tenantry.

It may be mentioned that where the local authorities have been even slightly helpful or have not been obstructive, satisfactory settlements between the zamindar and the tenant have been brought about by Congress workers. Such settlements have been made in the district of Rae Bareli in Oudh, where there are a large number of big taluqdars. Some of these taluqdars have agreed to remit generally one half of the rents due to them. A settlement having been reached on this basis, Congress workers have helped and succeeded in rapidly collecting the balance of the rent. A similar policy on the part of the district officials in Allahabad would have succeeded equally well. In spite of the difficulties facing the Congress in Allahabad district, prominent Congressmen are even now trying their best to arrive at a settlement with a number of zamindars by means of private negotiations.

If the local government agreed to take the following steps immediately and cooperated with Congress workers in bringing about settlements between the zamindars and their tenants, there would be an immediate and widespread improvement in the situation all over the province, including the district of Allahabad:

(i) Remission of -/8/- in the rupee in the case of non-occupancy tenants for both the kharif and rabi demands.

(ii) In the case of occupancy tenants, remissions of four annas and suspension of four annas in the rupee.

(iii) Lands from which tenants have been ejected should be restored to them.

(iv) No suits for arrears of rents to be filed by landlords during the next twelve months.

These terms are by no means over-generous. They have been admitted to be just by some of the biggest landlords in the district of Allahabad. Indeed, the distress in certain areas is so acute that even these terms will be difficult of fulfilment. The tenantry may not be able to pay even eight annas. In some areas in Allahabad district, particularly in tahsil Soraon, hailstorms have inflicted great damage and have worsened a bad enough situation.

experienced in recent times, and only extraordinary measures would relieve the situation. But as soon as the no tax movement was started the idea of a substantial reduction was apparently dropped, for the time being, on political grounds. But hopes of remission were kept alive by statements made by officials in their unofficial capacities. It was stated that there would be both remission and suspension in regard to the kharif instalment of land revenue. These hopes have, however, proved illusory. The Finance Member of the U. P. Government has stated in the local Council that the government had decided not to give any general remission in regard to the kharif demand. This announcement was made after the pressure of the no-tax campaign was removed as a result of the provisional settlement between the Congress and the Government of India. The reticence and ambiguity of previous official statements have now given place to a definite statement against the grant of any general relief to zamindars and tenants in regard to the kharif demand. Some remission and suspension is suggested for the next rabi demand which falls due next month.

The net result of all this has been that there has been a paltry remission of Rs. 10 lakhs for the kharif in the case of the worst affected *districts only, while the major part of the province has been left to* get along as best it could, in spite of admitted economic distress of an extraordinary degree. The figures given above relating to remissions and suspensions for years 1928-29 to 1930 (rabi instalment only) show that while in those two and a half years the government remitted nearly Rs. 105 lakhs, they have so far remitted only Rs. 10 lakhs for the kharif instalment this year, when the cash value of the kharif produce has on an average been reduced to one-third of what it would be in a year of normal prices. The local Council has passed a number of resolutions and adopted various motions in order to impress upon government the urgency and the need for liberal remissions and suspensions. But so far this has produced no substantial result. The local government has been putting pressure on the zamindars to pay up as much as possible. Orders have been issued to revenue officials to expedite collections, and they have exercised the maximum of pressure on the zamindars to pay up their dues in full before the close of the financial year. If the zamindars happened to be honorary magistrates, *munsifs* or assistant collectors, they were told that cases would not be sent to their courts if they failed to pay up before the due date. Zamindars were also threatened with the withdrawal of licences for firearms. Some attachments were also made. Zamindars were made to feel that they would be under official displeasure if they delayed in paying up. A few of the richer zamindars paid their dues from their private resources, as they could not pay them

Tenants, who have been ejected, naturally have no further interest left in paying any part of their rent. They become a discontented group, full of bitterness at what they consider an unjust treatment. It is therefore a necessary part of a solution of the problem that these ejectments should be set aside and the lands restored, when possession has been actually taken. If such a solution is delayed somewhat, in any event, all pending ejectment suits should be stayed.

In the same way, if a settlement is to be worked for, attachments of property, cattle and the like should be discontinued and where such attachments have taken place, there should be no sales. Sales, where they take place, will necessarily complicate the situation.

Complaints have been made about the attitude of Congress workers in the U.P., and specially in the Allahabad district. It has apparently been stated on behalf of the government that the Congress has made no attempt to discontinue the no-tax campaign. This is not correct. The Congress in the U.P. has taken great pains to face a difficult situation and, while making it clear that the political *no-tax campaign* is off, has made every effort to bring about settlements between the parties concerned. In some cases it has succeeded. Where the local authorities were not helpful it has not been so easy to succeed. The Congress obviously could not leave the tenants to shift for themselves or tell each individual tenant to deal directly with his landlord. Any person acquainted with the principles of trade unionism will appreciate that this was an impossible position for it to take up. A single tenant left to himself must go to the wall. His strength lies in corporate bargaining and the Congress has tried to represent his interests and to protect him from undue pressure.

Some irresponsible statements may have been made by certain Congress workers in Allahabad and it is true that in a few cases the kisans have acted wrongly. Where this has happened the correct position of the Congress has been explained in leaflets which were widely distributed, and the tenants have been repeatedly warned against acting aggressively.[4] But it must be remembered that the tenantry are being made to put up with all manner of hardships by many zamindars and sometimes by the police. Reports of ill treatment are being received by the Congress office in Allahabad almost hourly and crowds of kisans come themselves with tales of their sufferings. If so desired, instances of ill treatment of kisans, and the forcible methods being employed to make them pay up, can be supplied. Those who are acquainted with agrarian problems will realise that nothing is more resented than dispossession of lands and general ill treatment of the tenantry in

4 See *ante*, items 5 and 8

Stress is laid on the part of the government that the occupancy tenants are far better off than the statutory or the non-occupancy tenants and should therefore be given little or no relief. It is admitted that occupancy tenants are as a rule better off and hence the relief suggested for them is less than in the case of the others. But it must be borne in mind that they are also in a bad way and in any event are not in a position to pay anything like the full demand. They can only pay if they realise rents from their sub-tenants. These sub-tenants are admitted to have been very hard hit and are not in a position to pay much. If then the sub-tenants do not pay much to the occupancy tenants, it is not just or reasonable to expect the latter to pay in full. In cases where it is shown that the occupancy tenant has realised a large part of the sub-tenant's rent, relief to him may be proportionately limited. Otherwise he is fully entitled to substantial relief.

The amount of rent paid by a tenant is by itself no safe criterion of his economic condition. Thus in the U.P. the tenants in the northern districts pay far higher rents than those in the eastern districts, and because of this the government argue that the latter stand in less need of relief. Accordingly some partial remissions were granted to the districts of Agra, Muttra etc. in the north, while no remissions were granted to the other districts. But this reasoning ignores several vital factors, on which stress has been laid in the government reports. One of these factors is the size of the holding. Where the holdings are comparatively larger, a larger surplus is left over and consequently a higher rent can be paid.

A very large number of ejectments have already taken place in Allahabad district and this has complicated an already difficult situation. This district has a great majority of occupancy tenants—probably 80% Many zamindars are taking advantage of the situation by depriving occupancy tenants of their occupancy rights. These zamindars welcome the chance of increasing the value of their lands considerably. But this policy is creating great difficulties and is increasing bitterness. No occupancy tenant likes to part with rights which he or his ancestor has laboriously acquired, and if these ejectments are to remain, it will hardly be possible for a peaceful atmosphere to be restored. This was pointed out at the earliest stage when the terms of truce were being discussed. There had been few ejectments then. Instead of these few ejectments being set aside, as was hoped, a large number of fresh ejectments, about two thousand, have taken place in Allahabad district, and many more are pending.

10. To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government[1]

17.6.31

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,

I returned to Allahabad last night after two months' absence. Immediately I was met with numerous complaints of ill-treatment and *harassment of kisans by zamindars and, in many instances, by the* police or by *chowkidars*. I do not wish to trouble you with the details at present as I am investigating the reports made to me. But I might mention that complaints have come from a large number of districts *and particularly from Rae Bareli, Allahabad, Gonda and Gorakhpur.*

Occasionally the newspapers have contained reports of agrarian trouble and of aggressive action on the part of the kisans. Some time ago, as you know, a zamindar and some of his men were killed in Allahabad district. I regret this very much, but from all the accounts I have had, very great provocation has been offered by some zamindars in attempts to terrorise the kisans in paying rents. Sometimes the worm has turned. Little or no publicity is given by the newspapers to the continuous harassment that is being caused to the kisans.

In Rae Bareli district, so far as I know, there has not been a single instance of aggressive action by the kisans during the last two months or more. And yet it appears that the district authorities and some of the taluqdars there have joined hands to crush the tenantry. Large numbers of our men have been proceeded against under Section 107 and other sections.[2] Lathi charges have taken place on the kisans, and some of our volunteers, it is stated, were beaten inside the police station day before in tahsil Maharajganj, police station Sheodarshanganj and were tauntingly asked to send for Gandhi. A few days ago in Mauza Gulupur, tahsil Rae Bareli, a taluqdar accompanied by his own men and the police, is reported to have had our volunteers beaten and their clothes, flags and other belongings taken away.

I am writing to you specially however about a notice under Section 144 Cr P.C. issued on the 10th of June by the district magistrate of

1 A I C C. File No G-40(KW)(m)/1931, pp 227-229, N M M L.

2 Legitimate Congress work like enrolment of members and volunteers and hoisting of the national flag was banned and Congress workers were ordered to abstain for two months from speaking on the agrarian issue and from carrying on propaganda among the tenants.

times of economic distress. In spite of this great provocation however the tenantry have been generally kept in control and the lapses on their part, regrettable and unfortunate as they were, have been few. And for each lapse they have had to suffer greatly. In Dadauli in the tahsil of Soraon (Dist. Allahabad) there was a petty riot between the zamindar's men and the tenantry resulting in the death of two of the former.[5] This has been the most serious lapse on the part of the tenants. Since then, apparently owing to police action, several villages in the neighbourhood have been deserted.

Most of the difficulties that have arisen in the province are due to the fact that the U.P. Government cannot make up its mind. Even yet there has been no clear and final decision by the government about remission and suspension. It is not easy to arrive at settlements with zamindars when they do not know what their position is likely to be. It appears to be the policy of the government to say nothing definite till the last moment and to try to realise as much as possible meanwhile. This is most unjust to the zamindar as well as to the tenant.

Even if a tenant can pay and is willing to pay half his rent, he is afraid to do so as he might be proceeded against and ejected even then. Why then should he pay anything at all? Some cases have been brought to our notice where tenants have paid -/8/- and are being harassed for the balance.

Another great difficulty is the practice of many zamindars not to give any receipts for the rent paid to them. This is illegal but is none the less a very prevalent practice and a tenant can do little against it.

The last year has been admittedly one of great agrarian crises. It is very strange that in spite of this the government do not propose to give any marked relief for the kharif and only propose remission or suspension for the rabi. It is essential that substantial relief be given for both the kharif and the rabi.

5. On 22 March 1931, the zamindar's son who had gone with his servants to Dadauli to collect rent was attacked by the tenants, and two of his servants were killed

held on the 27th and 28th June at Allahabad. I am waiting for his reply. I want to take a considered opinion of the Council to the Working Committee. If the Council meeting is held I hope it will be possible for you to attend.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. Address to Kisans[1]

Kisan Brethren,

I beg your pardon for arriving here so late. I am coming here after attending another big meeting at Sulahpore. When more than one meeting has to be attended then it becomes difficult to attend any on time.

As you have been waiting here for a long time and there is not much time left now, I may not be able to tell you all that I want to. I have been away from the province for about two months and have just returned to Allahabad after a very long journey. So, I am not very well acquainted with recent conditions. Since my return to Allahabad I have been hearing how the kisans of our district and other places in the province are being subjected to repression and injustice, how they are forced to pay rent, beaten with lathis and prosecuted and how many of our workers are being tried under Sec. 107.

I am very much pained and troubled by all such sad accounts. It has also pained me much to know how you are faced with serious troubles. I, therefore, agreed to attend two or three *sabhas* of kisans so that I may have an opportunity to talk with you and give you some advice. But before giving you any advice, I wish to consult our leader Mahatma Gandhi, and a few Congress workers who are present here. At present, it is rather difficult for one person to advise you much

You know when we launched a great struggle for complete Swaraj, many Hindus, Mohamadans and kisans joined us and helped us as they knew that Swaraj when achieved would be beneficial to them and

1 Home Department (Political) File No 33/24/1931, National Archives of India The only report available of this address, delivered in Hindi on 20 June 1931 at a kisan meeting at Kohkharaj in Allahabad district, is the English version prepared by the police reporter for the Criminal Investigation Department. The text printed here is based on that report and has to be read with caution.

Rae Bareli to most of the prominent Congress workers in Rae Bareli. Section 144 has been responsible for many curious notices but the one issued in Rae Bareli has certain features which are unique. I am enclosing a copy of this notice. You will observe that if a person is to obey this notice he must abstain from all activity, agrarian, political and labour. Thus no Congress work or any other similar work can be carried on in Rae Bareli. No member can be enlisted and we cannot do any work even in regard to *swadeshi*, boycott of foreign cloth or prohibition. You will remember that according to the terms of the provisional settlement between the Government of India and the Congress even peaceful picketing is permitted.

The order under Section 144 appears to me to be a clear breach of the truce terms and I must confess that I am surprised that such an obvious breach should be committed by an officer of your government. I presume it was done on his initiative and without the knowledge of the provincial government. As my advice has been sought by my colleagues in Rae Bareli I am taking the liberty of writing to you and drawing your attention to the notice and to the happenings in Rae Bareli district.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To G.B. Pant[1]

June 18th, 1931

My dear Pantji,

I enclose a letter sent by me yesterday to Kunwar Jagdish Prasad. This letter will speak for itself. I feel that the government or the officers of the government are deliberately committing a breach of the truce and are trying to break up the whole Congress movement under the guise of meeting the agrarian situation. This kind of thing cannot be tolerated and I do not propose to do so for long. A meeting of the Working Committee is taking place on the 1st July. I want to put everything before them and get the necessary directions. I have suggested to Sherwani that a meeting of the U.P. Council might be

1 AICC File No 63/1931, p 103, NMML

Mahatma Gandhi, as you know, is a great leader. He is such a leader because he has been chosen by the people of this country to be their leader unlike the governors and others who are not appointed by the people. Mahatma Gandhi has become our leader because the people of India love him and have great confidence in him. If you lose confidence in him tomorrow then you can remove him from the leadership of the country and replace him by another person. You should remember that Gandhiji has the people's strength behind him. But what strength has the governor behind him? He has the strength of the gun and sword at his back through which he can put fear in your minds and commit oppression.

Under Mahatmaji's leadership, not only you, but the people of the entire country took part in the battle for Swaraj. As the people were sick of their problems and as they also loved Gandhiji, they followed him. Thousands of our brethren went to jail. Both Hindus and Musalmans took part in the struggle with the result that the British Government became perplexed. The British Government is a strong government and not a weak one. It knows how to fight a big battle but it had also to acknowledge the bravery of those who were fighting the Congress battle. How can the government or the English nation check the fight for Swaraj which is fought by crores of kisans and other people? How can the police stop them when they are prepared to suffer lathi blows? The result of the battle has been that the people of this country have won the respect and admiration of the outside world. The people outside this country have come to know that Indians are brave. Formerly, they thought that Indians who are ruled by a handful of men are slaves and thirty-three crores of Hindus and Muslims bow down their heads and receive kicks like slaves. Last year's struggle has led people in countries like Germany, America, Japan, and England too to think us to be brave and courageous. They now appreciate that we can also make sacrifices for attaining Swaraj.

Our successful fight also produced a great effect on the British Government and the British people. They sought to reach a compromise with us. You know that there were some talks between Mahatma Gandhi and the Viceroy about two months ago, as a result of which we agreed to suspend the struggle for some time, so that further talks on the compromise could be held. If a settlement is arrived at resulting in Swaraj under which the grievances of the kisans are removed, so much the better and we shall gladly accept it.

When the British offered terms, Mahatmaji agreed to them and suspended the battle from our side. The British, as you know, released many prisoners from jails and cancelled new ordinances. They gave

their grievances would be removed. They helped because they understood that Swaraj meant removal of the poverty of the masses and their other grievances.

Who constitute the masses of India? It is the kisans in the villages and not a few citizens or vakils living in the cities. Of what avail would Swaraj be if the kisans' difficulties were not removed. Swaraj really means the removal of the difficulties of the masses of India, specially the kisans. Their difficulties in the main relate to such questions as rent, ejectment and possession of lands. Swaraj would be of little avail if it did not solve their problems relating to these matters.

Swaraj, therefore, means that there should be no foreign government in the country and no single individual should be the ruler in the capacity of a raja, maharaja or a governor. Our Swaraj means a panchayati raj in which there will be no distinction between the ruler and the ruled. We wish that all those who are ruled now should become the rulers of the country. There should be a panchayat in the country of all its people which may manage its affairs. The *panchas* who are temporarily your rajas should become your servants as well.

There are two forms of government. One is based on the use of force. It makes people obey its orders by terrifying them by use of police and the army. The other form of government is that in which the people in consultation with each other establish panchayati raj without resort to force. Such a government does not need the help of the army and the police. The present government in the country is run with the help of the army and the police. Nothing is done in the country with your consultation. An order passed by an officer is enforced by the police or the army.

But what type of government do we want? We want such a government under which the panchayat established with the consent of the people will manage affairs. No *panch* will ever use a lathi or a gun and, if he does so, he will be removed. There are, therefore, two forms of government. One, which we see now in our country, under which cases are instituted and forcible ejectments from land take place. The people are sent to jail and efforts are made to realize rents by the use of force. The other government formed by the panchayat will be established in the country when Swaraj is attained.

The kisans have joined the battle for Swaraj with the idea of establishing a panchayati raj under which their grievances would be removed. There was no need for them to join the struggle for Swaraj if it did not hold out a hope of removing their grievances in such matters as rent. The Congress had also launched a struggle for the same Swaraj.

The second thing is, that on one side, the efforts for reaching a settlement are being made and, on the other, atrocities are being committed on kisans. Congress workers are being arrested and securities under Section 107 are demanded from them. Section 144 is promulgated.

When the truce talks were going on we clearly told the British Government that we were prepared to advise the kisans to suspend the no-tax campaign. Afterwards, we informed the Viceroy of the condition of the kisans and their plight owing to fall in prices. We also informed the government that they should be under no misapprehension that as the truce has been effected we can ask the kisans to pay the full rent. We told them that the kisans cannot pay it in full and so the zamindars also cannot pay the revenue demand in full. We shall, of course, ask them to pay as much as they can but we also know at the same time that they are unable to pay the full amount. We, therefore, requested the government to remit the major portion of the rent. Only then could the settlement be effected as it was quite impossible for the kisans to pay their full rent. This fact was also admitted by the government as they knew that the conditions of the kisans are bad. We accepted the truce on this condition as we made it quite clear to them that the kisans cannot pay the full rent.

We are certainly anxious for a settlement as we do not want to create any trouble. We have tried hard and are trying still to see that the kisans are not put to any trouble. Mahatma Gandhi also visited our province with a view to see what can be done for the kisans. He had a talk with the Governor and issued a pamphlet which you may also have seen. He tried his level best to see that there was no clash between the kisans and the zamindars. He even went one pace ahead of the Congress in the matter of payment of rents by the kisans. He asked those kisans who had occupancy rights to pay up to -/12/- so that -/4/- would be remitted to them. To those who were non-occupancy tenants, he advised that -/8/- should be remitted to them. He also suggested that for paying -/12/ or -/8/-, the kisans should be issued receipts for the full amount. This would save the kisans from ejectment as in the absence of a receipt for the full amount, a decree could be passed against them for the remitted sum by showing it as outstanding against them. Everything should be shown clearly in the receipt so that no suit for the amount remitted might be instituted. Some zamindars have accepted this condition but most of them have not. We have tried to settle matters amicably but the zamindars are not agreeable to that.

We again ask you to pay whatever you can easily pay. You must pay whatever Mahatma Gandhi has advised you to pay. If zamindars

permission for the manufacture of salt for which we had first started our battle. The kisans can now manufacture salt in the villages if they so like. We also told the British that we have a right to picket foreign cloth shops and we will do it. At the time of the truce, we made it quite clear that we shall banish foreign cloth and forbid the sale of liquor in our country. We would have continued to picket shops selling foreign cloth and liquor no matter whether there was a truce or not. We agreed to suspend the struggle and not to resort to satyagraha or a no tax campaign.

Although three months have passed, further talks for compromise have not commenced. It is not yet known whether the conference will be held in India or in England. It is also not yet decided whether anyone on behalf of the Congress should go there or not. The Congress would decide to send its representative to the conference only when it is convinced that honest and sincere talks for a settlement would take place. Only one representative of the Congress, whom the country and the kisans would like to go, would attend the conference. He may be Mahatma Gandhi or anybody else. When we start the struggle, all will take part in it. At this time, however, one person alone is enough to hold talks.

There is no negotiation for a settlement yet. But what has been done against the kisans during this time? Excesses are being committed against them for realisation of rent, cases have been instituted against them and they are hard pressed in many other ways. It is a matter of regret that at one or two places the kisans, having endured the atrocities and oppression for long, have in sheer desperation resorted to violence. We regret such incidents very much and hope that, in future, the kisans will adhere to the principle of nonviolence and start satyagraha after mutual consultations, if they have to protest against their oppressors Once they had accepted the advice of Mahatma Gandhi to fight peacefully, they ought not to have deviated from that path. The breach of the peace has resulted in great loss to the kisans and has done no good to them.

You have to fight many battles and do bigger things. Along with the important question of winning Swaraj we have also taken up the question of kisans. Your forefathers have also undergone such sad experience as ejectment from land as you are going through. But, for the removal of your grievances, you have to undergo a lot of suffering and pain You should, therefore, remember that if you adopt the path of violence, it will not benefit you in any way. We wish to adopt such methods by which we have already shown to the whole world last year how brave our country is. It is the first thing you should keep in mind.

shall have to adopt the same old ways. We shall have to resume satyagraha and suffer lathi blows. We should therefore hold ourselves in readiness. A settlement is always effected with the strong. So, we should remember that the country which keeps itself in readiness can fight any battle and succeed in bringing about a settlement.

You should therefore make the organisation of the Congress and the kisans strong. You must remember that if kisans look perplexed or feel nervous at this time, then, the zamindars, thinking them to be weak and helpless, will eject them from their lands. Nobody will then be able to do anything for them, for the Congress has no legal authority or military strength through which it would get the ejectments stopped. We can help you in one way only. It is by fighting vigorously for Swaraj. It is only then that we shall be able to restore your lands to you and help you in other ways. All this will be possible when we have power in our hands. We can, therefore, do nothing at present but make efforts for the achievement of Swaraj.

There is one thing more which you should remember at this time. It is that none of you should try to acquire the land made available through the ejectment of a brother kisan. If you do that then you will be cutting each other's throat. Do not allow any ill-feelings to develop among you at this time as these will weaken you and harm your cause. Unity among yourselves will give you all the required strength to meet the present situation without getting nervous. At the same time, I may tell you that we are not in a position to help you, and therefore we cannot give you any promise of the same. The only course left open to us will be to fight again. But our methods of struggle are quite different. When the time comes, we shall start satyagraha again. We shall defy orders and do all other things. But whatever we may do, we will do it like a disciplined army. A handful of men should not start the struggle at this time. Keep yourself in readiness and when the struggle for a no tax campaign is launched then we shall start it with all the strength we command.

do not agree to receive that much, then it cannot be helped. We ask both you and the zamindars to settle the differences amicably.

Efforts are being made to realise rent from you by the use of force and by filing suits. I tell you to pay whatever you can. But, at the same time, I also say that you should not pay a single pie to anybody if he tries to compel you. We were ready to pay whatever we could but it was not accepted then. Now, it is being realized by using force and by instituting cases and effecting ejectments. It is degrading to pay in this manner. You should ask your zamindar to reach a compromise with you. Tell him that you are ready to pay but if he tries to realise it by the use of the lathi then you will not give him a single shell even. You must tell him that you are not beasts to be degraded and humiliated.

Your suffering and your sacrifices for the attainment of Swaraj will be of no avail, if, at this juncture, you should lack courage and, out of fear of lathi blows and ejectments, allow the zamindars to think that they can easily suppress you and keep you under their control.

We shall have peace only when we get our rights and when kisans get their rights. Today the immediate question before us is that of remission of rent. The Congress aim is to secure permanent remission of rent and revenue. It can, however, be achieved only when we have power in our hands. We are at present fighting for the Swaraj which will strengthen the hands of the masses of India. We are fighting for the Swaraj under which we shall be able to frame laws for the removal of the grievances of kisans and make permanent reductions in their rent.

If you ask me for my personal views, I am against the zamindar class, in principle. In my view, everybody should be the owner of his land. But this will ultimately have to be decided by the people of this country. I will certainly be very pleased if my views are accepted in this regard.

The question facing you now is what you should do under the present circumstances when you are so hard pressed, and rent is being realised from you by the use of force. I would again repeat and tell you that you should not submit to coercion, but must tell them that you will pay whatever you have been asked by Mahatma Gandhi to pay. I must tell you that the more you are oppressed greater will be your strength. You should tell the zamindars that by threats of intimidation and beating, you cannot be coerced by them nor can rent be realised from you in that way.

If our object can be achieved through peaceful means, it is no good engaging in a fight for it. But, if no settlement is arrived at, then, we

laws and asks us to abide by them. If we refuse to obey the laws there is the police, the army and the *danda* to force us to obey. The present rule is the rule of might, of the cannon and the gun. But the rule of Swaraj will be the rule of people carried on according to their wishes. It will be a panchayati raj and will not be carried on by means of the lathi. There can be two methods of governing a country—one by means of lathi as at present, and the other by means of panchayat under which a lathi can never be used. The present lathi raj will not continue long. There can be no other alternative to make us yield than to use force because the government cannot make us understand a thing as it is itself at fault. Sometimes attempts are made on behalf of the government to deceive us. We have now to decide about the setting up of panchayati raj which will be carried on according to the counsels of the people and in which the *panchas* will be elected by the people themselves. The public will have a right to dismiss any *panch* who makes mistakes. At present no one has the right to question a big officer who behaves like a monarch but if we defy him, the police and the army are ready to use force against us. It was to resist such force that this big fight was started. Our power has now greatly increased as is evident from the fact that we have been able to unnerve the spirit of a great and powerful nation like the English with all its army and the police. It is not an easy thing to accomplish. As a result of this the government had to seek a truce.

We have now pledged to emancipate ourselves. What can the government do when the people cannot be frightened by the police or lathi blows and jails? We should not however think that we have defeated the government. If we think that then it will only be a delusion because there is much to be done. The English and the people of other countries have fully realized the power of Indians and they have begun to understand that Indians cannot be subdued now. We however cannot say when we will attain Swaraj as it depends upon our courage and perseverance.

It is ridiculous for the government to talk of a truce while resorting to coercion. It raises doubts in our minds. But we have to observe strictly the truce terms as Mahatma Gandhi has given his word to act according to them.

We want peace that will alleviate the sufferings of kisans; if not, then there is no other alternative for us than to fight. So we should be in readiness both for war and for peace. The Congress wants to do everything above board; if it will have to fight, it will inform the government beforehand as was done last year by Mahatma Gandhi before

13. The Significance of the Truce[1]

You promised me during my last visit about one and a half years ago, that you would take part in the civil disobedience movement and supply ten thousand volunteers. You all know how the movement was launched by Mahatma Gandhi and what events happened during the last year's struggle in your district as well as in other places. The struggle was started by violating the salt laws, and thousands of our brothers and sisters had to go to jail. Lathis and bullets were freely used at many places and many lost their lives. In spite of all this the movement could not be suppressed. This makes us realise that our strength has grown much. At one time all our leaders along with about sixty to seventy thousand of our people, including many women, were in jail. More were prepared to follow but the government did not like to arrest them. Thus we fought the war and in the wake of it a no rent campaign was launched in Gujarat with great force and vigour.

You all know that about two or three months ago, Mahatma Gandhi made a truce with the great *Lat Sahib* to stop the fight temporarily. He held then that a real truce could be effected when some final decision was arrived at. It is useless to hold peace parleys when coercion to realise rent is being adopted in a greater degree. This is far from Swaraj. The Congress has suspended the struggle and made a truce at the request of the government. It does not matter. We do not like to fight as nobody would like to send his brother and sister to jail or have them beaten. But when a country is overtaken by misery, the people are compelled to alleviate it by liberating themselves from the chains of slavery and thus save themselves from ruin. And that was why the Congress, about one and a half years ago, resolved on the attainment of complete independence. The kisans cannot be relieved of their affliction and misery unless Swaraj is attained. The real meaning of Swaraj is to save the kisans from their present plight of being harshly dealt with by zamindars and police who extract work from them as if they were their masters.

In the present system of government the kisans are not consulted in setting up legislatures. What the government does is that it frames

1 Home Department (Political) File No 33/24/1931. National Archives of India This is based on a report of the C I D. of the speech delivered in Hindi at the kisans' gathering at Lalganj in Rae Bareli district on 25 June 1931.

laws and asks us to abide by them. If we refuse to obey the laws there is the police, the army and the *danda* to force us to obey. The present rule is the rule of might, of the cannon and the gun. But the rule of Swaraj will be the rule of people carried on according to their wishes. It will be a panchayati raj and will not be carried on by means of the lathi. There can be two methods of governing a country—one by means of lathi as at present, and the other by means of panchayat under which a lathi can never be used. The present lathi raj will not continue long. There can be no other alternative to make us yield than to use force because the government cannot make us understand a thing as it is itself at fault. Sometimes attempts are made on behalf of the government to deceive us. We have now to decide about the setting up of panchayati raj which will be carried on according to the counsels of the people and in which the *panchas* will be elected by the people themselves. The public will have a right to dismiss any *panch* who makes mistakes. At present no one has the right to question a big officer who behaves like a monarch but if we defy him, the police and the army are ready to use force against us. It was to resist such force that this big fight was started. Our power has now greatly increased as is evident from the fact that we have been able to unnerve the spirit of a great and powerful nation like the English with all its army and the police. It is not an easy thing to accomplish. As a result of this the government had to seek a truce.

We have now pledged to emancipate ourselves. What can the government do when the people cannot be frightened by the police or lathi blows and jails? We should not however think that we have defeated the government. If we think that then it will only be a delusion because there is much to be done. The English and the people of other countries have fully realized the power of Indians and they have begun to understand that Indians cannot be subdued now. We however cannot say when we will attain Swaraj as it depends upon our courage and perseverance.

It is ridiculous for the government to talk of a truce while resorting to coercion. It raises doubts in our minds. But we have to observe strictly the truce terms as Mahatma Gandhi has given his word to act according to them.

We want peace that will alleviate the sufferings of Kisans; if not, then there is no other alternative for us than to fight. So we should be in readiness both for war and for peace. The Congress wants to do everything above board; if it will have to fight, it will inform the government beforehand as was done last year by Mahatma Gandhi before

launching the movement. The Congress will not do anything surreptitiously.

We have tried our best to observe the truce but the government has not. I appeal to you to organize yourselves; without that we can achieve nothing. Mahatma Gandhi is respected for the sole reason that he commands the following of a majority.

I have been informed that coercive methods are being adopted by the zamindars to realise rent and hundreds of kisans are being proceeded against under Section 107 in your district. I have also been told that zamindars are oppressing the kisans with the help of the police. During his conversation with the Viceroy Mahatma Gandhi had clearly said that he would stop the no-rent campaign and help the government if more rent was not realised by force and adequate remissions were given to the tenants. We also tried to bring about some agreement between the zamindars, the kisans and the government, but in vain. Mahatma Gandhi in his manifesto advised the kisans to pay their rent at the rate of 8 annas, more or less according to their capacity, and take receipt for full payment. He also advised them that if the zamindars did not give them full payment receipts, they should deposit that money in a certain bank to avoid charges being made later on against them for non-payment of rent.

But the government has remitted only 2 annas in a rupee which is inadequate. Judicial cases now proceeding against the kisans are nothing but an attempt to harass and frighten you and the Congress workers. The government now helps the zamindars in violation of the truce terms Do not be afraid of these coercive methods and judicial cases but suffer them patiently and courageously, otherwise the zamindars and the police will use more force and take from you all that you have. On the attainment of Swaraj every possible attempt will be made to compensate your losses. You should not also run away from your villages on the arrival of the zamindar and the police, leaving a few behind to be tortured and beaten; but all of you should assemble at one place and ask the zamindar and the police what they want. If they beat you, suffer it patiently without even raising your hand, by offering a united front you will be able to face them better. You may defend yourselves in the court but you should not expect any justice from the court where dishonesty has the upper hand. I would ask you not to purchase the land of any ejected tenant and not to pay a single pie to the zamindars who use coercion in the realization of rent unless they apologize for it. On hearing the news of coercion, I have toured the district and now I will mention at the meeting of the Congress Working Committee all that I have gathered from your complaints.

I also advise you to organize a branch of the Hindustani Seva Dal in your district. I am sorry to hear of the death of Kadir Khan, a political prisoner who died in jail when a wall fell upon him. Fat-salaried officers who alone are responsible for such mishaps are generally very incompetent and unfit for work. I would not like to keep them even as my clerks.

I deplore the undesirable dissensions among the Congress at Lalganj which should be ended at once. An enquiry committee will soon visit the district to settle these affairs. I wish to see a perfect harmony and organisation among our people.

14. No Compromise on Swaraj[1]

Brothers, the first request is that no volunteer should utter a word. Whether the audience is sitting or standing the volunteers must sit. I have come to your city after about three months, and during these three months I have moved about a lot, and have gone abroad as well. I toured Ceylon. Wherever I went, I saw the effects of our last campaign.

We know what we did last year, how we faced a well established government; and the impression we have made on the people of other countries can be seen if one goes abroad. One finds Indians, who were once considered as slaves coming from a slave country, being respected now. It is so because they now know how bravely we have fought for the freedom of India, and how out fight has now grown stronger. And you know it well, that no power in India can stop us from attaining Swaraj. Hence we are respected everywhere. Wherever we go, we carry the aspirations of India with us.

It is said that we did our best last year. But last year is now over and another year has started. What we have to do this year is a question to be considered. You know how the kisans are being treated in the districts of Oudh and in Allahabad and elsewhere, indeed throughout the province. Last year we started a no-rent campaign and

1 Home Department (Political) File No. 247 of 1931, National Archives of India. This is based on the C I D. report of the speech delivered in Hindi at the kisans' meeting in Lucknow on 26 June 1931.

in spite of the promulgation of as many as ten or eleven ordinances we succeeded in it. The ordinances only strengthened our position and we made further progress in our struggle. If the no rent campaign was stopped, it was done so by us at the time of the truce. Since then we have done our best to keep the peace. We have tried to effect a compromise between zamindars and tenants as we do not want a fight at this time. We do not seek to fight and to compromise simultaneously. This may be the way of the government. We have shown that we are really able to fight, and when there is a necessity we shall show it again. If there is any promise made on our behalf, we shall honour it.

We have tried for a compromise among the zamindars, taluqdars and tenants. Such a compromise would have been the best thing. We approached high officials although we never liked it. We went to see the Governor at Naini Tal, had a talk with him; with arguments, we tried to effect a compromise, but with what result? In some districts, taluqdars, government servants and specially the police are confronting the kisans with their full vigour. They beat them, and Section 107 proceedings are specially resorted to against them. Securities are demanded because you have unfurled the flag or you have met in committee. I know English, but I do not follow the meaning of the word "committee". Again you are charged that you have threatened the zamindar's men or that, you are concerned with the boycott and non-payment of taxes or stop others from paying rent. So hundreds of notices under Section 107 are being served in every district. It means clearly that the government want to unite the zamindars and taluqdars to overpower the kisans, as well as weaken the Congress. They know that the kisans are the real power who will fight. Hence they want to weaken the kisans during the truce period. This is a false whim, this is a dream, and the world will see through it shortly. The treatment meted out to the Congress last year, the *mar pit* and so on, are well known to us. When we settled the truce in March, I can say that we were more powerful than what we were when we launched the campaign. If we effected a compromise, it was from the position of strength. We did not do this because we had grown weaker. I am sure that had we continued the fight the results would have been in our favour. When the government could not weaken us last year in spite of using its full force it is mere wishful thinking that they will weaken us now by merely serving notices under Section 107 to the kisans and by beating them. You will shortly see the result of all this.

I wish to say one thing in this city of taluqdars. The world knows and you also know that India will soon be free. The taluqdars will

soon have to decide which side they will join in this country. It appears to me that they have decided always to remain under the British Government, protected by British lathis, and their guns. Blessed be their decision! But then they will have to live across the seven oceans. It is impossible for anybody—whether he be a taluqdar, an Englishman or an Indian—to live in India, if he is against the Indians, or against us, or has troubled us, is rich or a government servant. We are now ready to compromise. We will allow Englishmen to live in India, but with honesty. We will not fight them. But nobody who has proved a traitor to the country can live here, although he be a taluqdar. I am just coming from Rae Bareli. Those who are torturing the kisans or beating them will have to stand trial in court. If it is proved that they had attacked their countrymen now under their protection with the guns of the enemy then there can be nothing more shameful for an Indian. They can bear this but India will not bear to allow such cruel men to live unless they mend their ways. I know that our *sangathan* cannot be weakened by this.

I know that our country is now growing stronger, and we desire, and also will try our best, to settle all problems with a compromise. Mahatmaji *may have to go to London for the sake of freedom, or anything* else may happen. We must try for peace. As we wanted peace, we stopped the fight. So we also agreed that Mahatmaji should go on behalf of the Congress and the country. It is difficult to say whether he will go because if violations of truce continue, it will be wiser for Mahatmaji not to leave his country. We can acquire here the real power to attain Swaraj. When we get enough power there will be no necessity to go and argue in the Round Table Conference. Your power will be seen there, and it is hoped that your decision will be accepted because when such questions arise between two countries, no arguments are wanted, but only their powers are weighed. We are ready to try our best even now. We do not want a fight—who would like to involve his country in a troublesome war which may entirely ruin a number of families and the lives of lakhs of young men? The leader of our country cannot take up this responsibility of commencing the war unless and until he is compelled to do so for sufficient reasons. Therefore every effort has been made and will be made to make peace. But we are determined to attain Purna Swaraj and liberate our country. We have unfurled our national flag for a year and a half. The only lasting compromise will be that which will give us complete freedom. If this cannot be done, then it is no compromise, and we must start the fight. We shall march ahead with the national flag and will face any difficulty. We know the difficulties in our way, many of which we have already

experienced. The difficulties experienced during the last struggle now seem to be light, because when a man starts a big fight, he does not mind trifling difficulties. He remembers only his goal and forgets everything else.

You have seen our young brothers and sisters coming forward merrily and receiving lathi blows. This happened in Bombay and at other places where the young cheerfully received lathi blows and bullets. What was behind all this courage? It was their fearless determination to face anything, what to say of the guns and lathis. Now we have trod this path enough and have gained sufficient experience and we still remember what we have learnt. Now we are fully convinced as to what we can do or what we cannot do. When the time comes we will be fully prepared. We shall try, if possible, not to fight without any sufficient reason. But it is not in our hands that there should not be a war. We will not break the peace terms from our side lest we be blamed for it. Compromise is a good thing. After all, we have to decide how far we should bear this treatment, *mar pit*. It is possible that a time may come when we may not be able to bear these things, so we have to keep ourselves ready for any eventuality. Compromise was effected when we were strong.

Kisans have to work hard and be prepared to receive abuses. They are also weak. Their troubles can be removed when the country attains Swaraj.

If you face death in this fight, or are sent to jail, remember that it is for freedom's sake. Remember, that you have to carry on this fight peacefully. If we use lathis we will be dealt with lathis. The government rules the country not according to our wishes but on directions from abroad. It is a government of lathi, police, *thana* and foreigners. We have to turn this out and establish Swaraj, in which there will be no question of might.

There has been enough picketing of foreign cloth in Lucknow. There have been enough arrests. I do not know what is wrong in picketing as under the truce the foreign cloth may be boycotted. Let us therefore continue picketing as we do not want any foreign cloth in our country. As we apply no force, it is possible that some foreign cloth dealers might get some customers. But let us confine ourselves to mere appeals. Anyhow, a time will come when no one in this country will purchase cloth from them, and they will be put to loss. It has already been decided that there cannot be compromise in the matter of foreign cloth. We cannot tolerate its sale and purchase. The people of Lucknow city should also be ready and keep their *sangathan*.

I heard that leaflets had been circulated which defamed our women. Do you know what was the greatest thing in last year's struggle? It was that women took part in it. The part played by them, their receiving blows, and going to jail attracted the attention of the whole world. While I was in jail I read with a sense of pride how our sisters took part in the movement; and how glad I was! Who now dares to issue such anonymous leaflets in Lucknow? Only mean fellows can issue such leaflets. You must treat such mean fellows with a like meanness, so that they may realize that those who act like them are not respected by anybody. We cannot tolerate our sisters being defamed.

15. To Deputy Commissioner, Rae Bareli[1]

Rae Bareli
June 26th, 1931

Dear Sir,[2]
I am credibly informed that a certain letter, a copy of which I enclose, has been issued by you to the taluqdars of Rae Bareli district.[3] As this letter suggests a definite policy on behalf of the district authorities in regard to the agrarian situation, I shall be glad to know from you if the copy I am enclosing is a correct one.

Since my arrival here yesterday I have met large numbers of people who have received notices under Sec. 107 Cr.P.C. I am told that several hundred persons have probably been served with these notices, but the information supplied to me might be exaggerated. I would be obliged if you could kindly send me the correct figure.

Many of these notices under Sec. 107 that I have seen state, among the reasons for requiring security, that the national flag was hoisted and a "committee" took place. It is not clear what is meant by the

1 A I C C. File No G 40 (KW) (III)/1931, p 205, N M M L.
2 S S L. Dar
3 The deputy commissioner of Rae Bareli in his letter of 6 June 1931 had asked the taluqdars to report to the authorities the objectionable activities of the Congress and kisan sabhas and help the police to prosecute the agitators

word "committee". May I know if it is the view of the district authorities that the hoisting of the national flag, or the formation of a panchayat or the holding of a public meeting are offences which must be prevented by means of Section 107 Cr.P.C.?

An early answer addressed to Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad will be appreciated.[4]

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. On 26 June 1931 the deputy commissioner replied that he had written the letter of 9 June 1931 to only three or four landlords seeking their help to prosecute law breakers.

16. To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government[1]

27.6.1931

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,

Thank you for your acknowledgement of the 22nd June. I was glad to learn at Rae Bareli day before yesterday that the notices under Sec. 144 Cr. P.C, a copy of which I sent you with my last letter, had been withdrawn.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter which I am credibly informed was sent by the deputy commissioner of Rae Bareli to the taluqdars of the district. In order to make sure that the letter is quite genuine I have sent a copy to Mr. S. S. L. Dar. So far I have not had his reply.

This letter of Mr. Dar appears to be an invitation to all taluqdars to cooperate with government in a general campaign against the Congress, kisan sabhas and panchayats. The campaign itself is obvious enough as hundreds of people in the district are being proceeded against under Sec. 107 Cr. P.C. and sometimes other sections. The reasons for demanding security usually include the hoisting of the national flag and the holding of a "committee". What is meant by the word "committee" I do not know. It may mean a panchayat or a meeting. In either event I shall be glad to know if it is the view of government that the hoisting of the national flag or the constitution of a panchayat or the holding of a meeting are to be put down and are reasons for the demand of security.

1. AICC. File No G-40 (KW)(m)/1931, pp 201 204, N.M.M.L.

In the Bara Banki district also, which I visited yesterday, I was informed that a very large number of persons had already been arrested and were being proceeded against. It appeared that every petty police official carried about with him blank forms which he could fill in at any moment and issue a notice under Section 144 Cr. P.C. I presume that in Bara Banki also, and perhaps in some other districts, a general campaign like that in Rae Bareli is being carried on.

I should like to write to you perfectly frankly on the subject. Indeed I should have liked to meet you and discuss it fully so that at any rate we might understand, if not appreciate, each other's viewpoints. Many of us are placed in a terrible predicament by recent happenings. It may be that your government has not approved of some of our activities, but we have tried our level best to carry out the terms of the provisional settlement between the government and the Congress At the same time we have tried to help the kisans because we felt that they were the greatest sufferers on account of the agrarian distress. Often it was difficult to reconcile the two viewpoints, but we tried our best to do so, and it seemed to us at first that the attitude of the government, though critical and a little difficult, was not entirely unfriendly to the tenantry and there was some desire to cooperate with us. We had to face local difficulties with local officials but we hoped that these difficulties would be surmounted if the provincial government proved helpful.

I was away for two months. On my return I found a different atmosphere. There appeared to be a general campaign in progress—a campaign in which the government or its district officials had joined hands with the big zamindars to crush the tenant and to break up the Congress organisation in the rural areas. The zamindar's men did most of the dirty work but the lead seemed to come from the government officials. Some of the accounts that have come to us—notably from the Balrampur Estate in Gonda and from Unao—make one's hair stand on end. Of the neighbouring district of Bahraich and its deputy commissioner we have had strange tales. In Muttra a dead set seems to have been made on Congress workers. A case from Unao has been reported in *Young India*—I enclose a cutting. I need not add to the list here for then this letter would become intolerably long.

You can well imagine what effect all these accounts of atrocities have on our minds. But even more disconcerting is the belief that the government is deliberately not playing us fair. The reaction of

2 On 30 May 1931, Pipri in Unao district was raided by the zamindar of the village and his men for collection of rent They beat the tenants, insulted the women, snatched away their ornaments and seized personal belongings

each one of us to this belief varies according to his or her temperament. But in every case the reaction is marked. Soon the Working Committee of the Congress will meet and will consider the U.P. situation. It may decide to issue definite directions in the matter. Before that happens it would have been well if we knew the policy of government. Perhaps we may be wrong in misjudging it or in imagining that it is deliberately not playing the game with us. If this impression could be removed from our minds it would be a relief and it would make it easier for us to fashion our policy so that peace may result from it. You will no doubt appreciate that it is impossible for us to desert our colleagues, and specially our helpless kisan colleagues in their hour of trial and need.

I shall be thankful to you if you could kindly let me have early reply.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17. To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government[1]

Allahabad
27.6.31

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,

I have already sent you a long letter today. But I am troubling you again as I wish to add to it. I have been in communication with Gandhiji in regard to the U.P. agrarian situation and its off-shoots. Our communications have been intermittent, owing I suppose to censorship regulations. Gandhiji, like most of us, is troubled by recent developments here and he feels that perhaps it might help matters if there was a personal talk and our position was laid before the U.P. Government before the Working Committee meets. He has suggested to me therefore that I should seek an interview with Sir Malcolm Hailey. I will gladly do so and I shall be obliged if you could kindly let me know if it is possible to arrange an interview in the course of the next few days. The Working Committee meets in Bombay on the 7th July and I shall have to leave Allahabad on the 6th July morning for Bombay. I am afraid there is very little time and and it is hardly fair

1. A I C C. File No. G-40 (KW) (iii)/1931, p. 197, N M M.L.

on my part to attempt to rush an interview in this manner. But if it is at all possible, I shall be glad. Could you kindly send me a telegram?[2]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Chief Secretary replied that the Governor was not free till 6 July 1931 and the commissioners of Lucknow and Fyzabad could be contacted on the subject.

18. To Secretary, U.P.P.C.C.[1]

June 27, 1931

Dear Sir,
I have had occasion recently to visit Rae Bareli and Bara Banki districts and acquaint myself with the agrarian situation there. In Allahabad, Muttra, Bahraich, Gonda, Unao and Gorakhpur, as you no doubt know, the situation is also bad. A meeting of the Working Committee will take place very soon and I propose to place before them the facts relating to the U.P. agrarian situation and to take their advice on it. It will help me greatly if you would kindly prepare and send me at a very early date a note on this situation dealing particularly with:

(1) Remissions of revenue to zamindars and consequent remissions of rent to tenants.
(2) Effect of such remissions in the various districts and on various kinds of tenants.
(3) Coercive methods adopted by government to collect revenue.
(4) Coercive methods adopted by zamindars to collect rent.
(5) Action taken by government to help the zamindars to collect rent forcibly.
(6) Instances of cruelty, beating and destruction by agents of zamindars or by police.
(7) Action taken by government officials against Congress workers and volunteers and panchayats and specially:
   i) Notices under Sec. 107 Cr.P.C.—number, nature etc.
   ii) Notices under Sec. 144 Cr.P.C.

1. A I C.C. File No 63/1931, pp. 93 95, N.M.M.L.

iii) Arrests and proceedings against Congress workers or kisans.
iv) Action against national flag. Orders preventing outsiders from entering a village or a particular area.

As I need this note urgently please prepare it from the materials you possess already. Do not ask afresh for facts from the districts for the purpose of this note. Please also give facts in the note, which are true to the best of your information.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

19. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
27.6.31

My dear Bapu,
I have written several letters to you. Some have been acknowledged, others may or may not have reached. I have decided to follow your advice and to seek an interview with the Governor. The enclosed copies of letters will speak for themselves.

Yours affly,
Jawaharlal

1 AICC File No 4/1931 (Pt. II), p 131, NMML.

20. To Deputy Commissioner, Rae Bareli[1]

June 28th, 1931

Dear Sir,
I am obliged to you for your letter of the 27th June. In my letter of the 26th I drew your attention to a large number of notices under Sec. 107 Cr P.C. and requested you to let me know how many such notices

1 AICC File No G-40(KW)(ii)/1931, p 195, NMML.

had been issued and what the policy of the government was in regard to panchayats, kisan meetings and hoisting of the national flag. May I have a reply to this?

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

21. To Deputy Commissioner, Rae Bareli[1]

July 1st, 1931

Dear Sir,
I am in receipt of your letter of the 30th June for which I thank you. I am sorry that you are unable to supply me with accurate figures regarding the issue of notices under Sec. 107 Cr.P.C. You will agree with me that there can be two opinions as to what the situation requires. As the figures supplied to me appeared to be excessive, I thought perhaps you could correct them and moderate them. Opinions may differ but facts are usually solid enough. I had hoped that such facts might be placed within my knowledge so that I may not be led away by vague information.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC File No G-40/(KW)(III)/1931, p 191, N.M.M.L.

22. To T.A.K. Sherwani[1]

July 2nd, 1931

My dear Tasadduq,
I do not know where you are. I have been waiting to have some news of you for some days past. I feel that the provincial committee must function at present continuously and must keep all eyes open. We are

1. AICC. File No 63/1931, p. 89, N.M.M.L.

going inevitably to a *crisis and we must* be prepared for all contingencies. That was why I suggested a meeting of the Council on the 27th but unfortunately this could not be held. I hope that you will convene a meeting soon.

I am going to Bombay on the 6th and will probably return after a week. If the Council meeting is held on the 15th it will be convenient for me. But do not mind me. What is important is to hold the meeting and decide about many pending matters. Whether I am present or not *is immaterial*.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

23. On His Speech at Lucknow[1]

Sir,—A brief report of a speech delivered by me in Lucknow on the 26th June seems to have attracted a measure of attention.[2] The report did *me* no justice and conveyed a wrong impression of what I said. My views on the zamindari system are well known. Much as I love many taluqdars and zamindars I do not love the system under which they flourish. *Indeed, the course of recent economic events* has made it absolutely clear that the present land system in the United Provinces cannot endure and is breaking down through force of circumstances. A state which attempts to bolster up this system in the face of hard facts will itself ultimately share in its downfall. Therefore, everyone, whether he is a taluqdar or a tenant or is a part of the machinery of the state, must address himself to the problem of evolving a new and more stable order which would function harmoniously and bring well-being to as large a number of persons as possible. Such a change might be brought about with a minimum of disturbance and loss if there was some cooperation in the various elements; or it might entail a considerable upsetting of everything and consequent loss, if there was no such cooperation. No one, I hope—and certainly I do not—desire to cause needless loss to any individual or group. But it must

[1] Allahabad, 4 July 1931. Letter to the editor, *The Leader*, 6 July 1931.
[2] For government version of the speech see *ante*, item 14.

be borne in mind that the burden of the change must of necessity fall largely on the big zamindars and taluqdars. In this connection it should be remembered that the vast majority of the zamindars in these provinces are petty zamindars who are themselves sufferers under the present system and who have been hard hit by the fall in prices. In any change that may come they can hardly be expected to suffer more.

But in my Lucknow speech I did not enter into this question at all. I referred, if I remember rightly, to two matters. The first was the tendency of some taluqdars to combine with government officials as against their tenantry. I pointed out that in the future order of things, which was bound to come soon, they would have to live and deal with the tenantry without any outside interference and the vast rural population was certain to have considerable power in the state. It was, therefore, wise and desirable that they should gain the goodwill of these masses. If, however, they thought that their safety lay in ignoring and ill treating their tenantry and in taking shelter under the protecting wings of deputy commissioners, commissioners and the like, what would happen to them when the present order changed and their protectors crossed the seas to far off lands? It would be better for them then to accompany their aforetime protectors and cross the seas themselves so that they might continue to bask in the sunshine of their presence.

My second point referred to instances of tyranny and oppression on the part of some taluqdars and their agents. Some of the facts that have come to my notice have made my hair almost stand on end. Those who were guilty of such behaviour, I said, would have to answer for it before the nation. But I gladly admit that this applies to certain individuals only and not to all taluqdars.

Jawaharlal Nehru

24. On the Need for Unity and Nonviolence[1]

The recent conduct of the government in dealing with the peasants has led us to feel that the government is not carrying out the terms of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. The reports of oppression and instances of

1. Speech at Wardha, 5 July 1931. From The Leader, 9 July 1931.

alleged breaches of the truce by the government will be considered at the forthcoming meeting of the Working Committee as also the question as to what should be done on that account.

Nobody can say when we may have to resume the fight or when a settlement be effected. We should be prepared in every way. Meanwhile, the peasants should strengthen their *sangathan*. I fully sympathise with them in their distress, but I regret I cannot help them beyond giving them consolation as I have no power, for instance, to save them from litigation or from being sent to jail. The only thing I can do is that I can also go with them to jail. I appeal to the peasants for their cooperation in the struggle for Swaraj, as that alone can help them in the removal of their miseries.

I appeal to you to be strictly nonviolent. Satyagraha is an invincible weapon. If there are any excesses committed against you in the collection of rent, you should not reply with violence, nor should you run away leaving your oppressed brethren in distress. You should all face the situation bravely and calmly and remain strictly nonviolent, for violence will only increase your miseries, and will lead to arrests and criminal prosecutions.

I have heard that certain panchayats have been attempting to decide big civil and criminal cases, to impose fines and to advise social boycott. I would discourage such attempts as they may lead to undesirable consequences.

The government order on the remission of rent for the Allahabad district is so complicated that it is not easy for the tenants to understand as to how much and in what proportions the remissions have been made.[2]

Mahatma Gandhi had suggested that the occupancy tenants should pay upto 12 annas and non-occupancy tenants, upto 8 annas in the rupee, though that does not mean that they must carry on the directions at any cost, even by falling into debts and raising money by selling cattle and ploughs.[3] I emphasise the conditions suggested by Mahatma Gandhi that while making payments to the extent recommended by him, receipt should be demanded for the entire liability.

2. In May 1931 the U.P. Government had announced rent remission for Allahabad district amounting to Rs 9.5 lakhs, which was 17 per cent of the total rental demands of the peasants.
3. On 23 May 1931, after an interview with the Governor, Mahatma Gandhi suggested this formula in a manifesto to the kisans. He also advised them to be "thoroughly nonviolent in their attitude and conduct towards the zamindars."

25. To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government[1]

Delhi
July 23, 1931

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,
I have just returned from Simla and am staying here for a few hours on my way to Allahabad. In the course of the conversations at Simla H.E. the Viceroy expressed the opinion that it would be desirable for us to get into direct touch with H.E. the Governor of the U.P. in regard to the agrarian situation in the province. I am writing to you therefore to say that I shall gladly meet H.E. Malcolm Hailey, should he wish me to do so. I shall remain at Allahabad till I hear from you. On the 2nd of August I have to take part in the six monthly *shraddha* ceremony of my father and on the next day I shall be going to Bombay for meetings of the Congress Working Committee and All India Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No. 63/1931, p. 33, NMML.

26. The Congress and the Kisans[1]

The Congress stands for complete independence and the typical representative Indian is the man behind the plough. The Congress is a peasant organisation and it is the duty of the Congress to better the condition of the tenants. My personal view is that the landlord is a superfluity. That however is not the Congress view and the Congress is keen on bringing about an amicable settlement between the landlords and the tenants. The government does not want the Congress to butt in between the landlords and the tenants. I would ask why the government had not taken adequate and timely measures to avoid all this trouble between the landlords and the tenants before

1 Speech at Lucknow, 23 July 1931. From The Hindu, 26 July 1931.

the Congress was forced to come in. There are allegations of brutal treatment of tenants and their womenfolk. No redress is forthcoming. Often, even reports of excesses by zamindars' men are not being recorded by the police and the *thanas*. What option have Congressmen but to come into the field and share the tenants' suffering? This indifference of the officials towards the serious allegations certainly led the Congressmen to think that the government are not observing the terms of the Delhi Agreement. Mahatma Gandhi and others have gone to Simla to talk matters over, but as yet no final settlement is forthcoming. Mahatma Gandhi is due to sail within another three weeks, but as yet it is uncertain whether he will go or not.

27. To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government[1]

Allahabad
July 29th, 1931

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,

I presume Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant has sent you the note you wanted.[2] I should like however to draw your attention again to the fact that the really important thing is immediate relief for the large body of tenants—relief from further collections and from coercive processes and repression. Gandhiji has been doubtful about going to England because he was greatly troubled at the continuation of these enforced collections and the consequent misery. He has felt that he could not go away till he felt assured that substantial relief had come and there was no chance of any further general repression of the tenantry or of Congressmen. It was with this object that he made various suggestions at Simla. I showed you a letter containing some of these. He urged that "all coercive processes be stayed, landlords being satisfied with such voluntary payments as are possible" and that the "thousands

1. AICC File No. G-118/1930, pp. 79 81, NMML.
2. Jawaharlal and Govind Ballabh Pant had talks with the Chief Secretary on 28 July 1931. Jawaharlal had contended that the season for the collection of rent was over, that the tenants had already paid from 9 to 12 annas or more in the rupee and that, therefore, further collection should be suspended and coercive processes stopped. A note was sent the same day by Pant giving specific instances of ejectments and prosecutions.

of tenants who have been evicted by reason of non-payment of rent should be immediately reinstated, subject to special cases being dealt with by a summary enquiry." He further urged that "notices and prosecutions against tenants and Congress workers issued in respect of the agrarian situation should be withdrawn." He had also suggested that a summary enquiry might be made as to the ability of tenants to pay the current dues, collections being suspended meanwhile. I suppose that the government will hardly care to have such an enquiry now and I personally think that it is not necessary. Even without such an enquiry it is fairly obvious that the tenants in the affected areas have been made to pay as much as and often more than they could pay. In most of the affected districts I think they must have paid from 9 annas to 12 annas or more. The season for collection is also past. It would be perfectly natural for the government now to suspend collections and stop all coercive processes. This would immediately relieve the tension and produce an atmosphere suitable for a dispassionate enquiry leading to future adjustments.

There is just one point however I should like to remind you of. I spoke to you about the punitive tax in Soraon tahsil in Allahabad district. Large numbers of tenants are perturbed and upset because of this and they feel that they are being very unjustly treated. From many of the villages which are being punished in this way, not a single person is being proceeded against. In any case this method of punishing the general population of an area is rather curious, even though a few of the persons who are punished might be guilty. But when the punishment is entirely vicarious a Gilbertian element is introduced. As it happens some of the villages chosen have suffered last year from hailstorms and suchlike natural calamities. It is obvious that the tenants with the best will in the world can only pay a part of their rent. What are they to do when an additional 20% of the rent is demanded from them as a punitive tax? This is unfair both to the tenant and to the zamindar, who is bound to suffer. What is likely to happen is that the great majority of the tenants will not be able to pay and then their houses will be raided and their cattle and goods and chattels will be attached, and the last state of everybody—tenant, zamindar and even the State—will be worse than the first. I do hope that this will be avoided.

I shall be obliged if you could kindly let us have rent and revenue figures for 1901, 1915-16, and for the current year. I do not want to give your office people any additional trouble. I am mentioning these particular years as I understand that these figures have been prepared by the government. Would it be pos[illegible] for us to have a copy of

the instructions issued by the government to district officers regarding the calculation of remissions of current dues? I should also greatly value figures of ejectments. If it is possible for you to send all this information, or any part of it, kindly have it sent direct to Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Congress Office, Lucknow. I shall be going to Bombay rather early.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

28. Interview to the Press[1]

I cannot say anything about my conversations with the Chief Secretary. We are watching the situation very closely and anxiously. If it shows signs of immediate improvement, the present tension may grow a little less, but the situation is such that the policy of mere watching and hoping is likely to lead to worse consequences. I am not prepared to say that it is almost settled that Gandhiji is not going to London and that a "no rent" campaign will soon be started from Bardoli. Such an opinion might have been formed from my telling people generally that they should be prepared for the revival of hostilities any moment.

1 Allahabad, 29 July 1931 From *The Hindu*, 30 July 1931.

29. To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government[1]

July 30, 1931

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,
I enclose copy of an order under Sec. 144 Cr. P.C. issued by the district magistrate of Fyzabad on the 21st of July. This order, I understand, has been served on three Congress workers in Akbarpur tahsil. I had

1. A.I.C.C. File No G 118/1930, p. 75, N.M.M.L.

hoped that such orders would not now be passed, but it appears that there has not been much change. The order clearly means that Congressmen should do nothing in regard to the agrarian situation.

I understand that a case under Sec. 392 is proceeding against 4 Congress workers for picketing liquor shops at Ajodhya. In Tanda tahsil of Fyzabad district Barkat Ali is undergoing imprisonment for a year under Sec. 108 Cr P.C.[2]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Then secretary of the Congress committee of Rajey Sultanpur in Fyzabad district, was arrested for making an allegedly seditious speech.

30. To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government[1]

Allahabad
July 31st, 1931

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,

I am sorry to trouble you with frequent letters but very disturbing information is coming to me and I feel that I must pass it on to you. It appears that coercive processes both against tenants and zamindars are still being issued and Congressmen and their sympathisers are being specially penalised. Fresh ejectments continue and attempts are being made to get new tenants to take the holdings. I can send you, if you so desire, a long list of instances of great hardship being caused to kisans by these coercive processes, although they have paid a substantial part of their rent and are prepared to pay more if given a little time. I shall only mention here some typical instances:

1 Mohamad Shakir—zamindar of Chail. Revenue demand over Rs. 900. In past years usually paid up full sum by 30th September. Had paid about half when the S.D.O., Mr. Rahman Baksh Qadri, visited the village on 14th July and threatened him with all manner of penalties because a few days earlier he had rented a small house of his to the tahsil Congress committee for their office. Other zamindars who had paid much less and in some cases nothing till then, were given time, but Mohamad Shakir was given no time although he said he would pay full

1 AICC File No G-40(KW)(ii)/1931, pp 165 167, NMML

demand by usual date, September 30th. His property had been previously attached. The very next day—July 15th—a notice of auction of his moveable and immoveable property including furniture, vessels etc. was issued and July 30th was fixed for the auction. Subsequently Mohamad Shakir paid some more sums. The balance due from him now is Rs. 163. No auction was actually held on July 30th and it is not known what further steps are going to be taken.

In Chail there have been substantial remissions in some villages for local calamities etc. These remissions have meant considerable loss to the zamindars and Mohamad Shakir has had to borrow to pay what he has paid. It is difficult to borrow more.

2 Jagannath, occupancy tenant of village Gaura, *Pargana* Karari, tahsil Manjhanpur. Has just been ejected although he offered the full sum of over Rs. 80 having sold and mortgaged his property to the *bania* for Rs. 60. The tahsildar refused to accept his money and ejected him. He had actually ploughed and sown his fields and some crops were coming up.

3. Bhaila village, Manjhanpur tahsil. Many tenants have paid a substantial part of rent, usually about -/8/- but proceedings for ejectment are being taken against them. Some tenants are very poor and patently incapable of paymg up. They are also being proceeded against.

4. In Bakarganj village, tahsil Manjhanpur, owing to local calamities, kisans in a very bad state. Paid part of rent after selling cattle etc. Incapable of paying more. Many have therefore surrendered their holdings. These lands are being given by the zamindars to other kisans from distant villages.

5. Janka village, tahsil Chail. Hailstorm on 25th February 1931 doing great damage. Applied for remission on this account. In the remission slips issued by *patwari* this was included but later *kanungo* said this was a mistake and attempts are being made to realise this part of the rent too.

6. Jagdishpur, tahsil Soraon—Zamindar claims arrears for 2 years—*kisans* say that they paid up last two years' rent but got no receipt for it. They are prepared to prove this if given the chance. Suit filed for arrears and attachment likely to be made in a day or two.

7. Phulpur tahsil—Matabhik Singh, vice-president, tahsil Congress committee—Rs. 300 security demanded under Sec. 107 Cr.P.C. because he is alleged to have delivered a speech inciting kisans against zamindars. As a matter of fact he did not speak at all at the meeting in question. His case is coming up on August 7th.

8. Handia tahsil—Fresh notices issued under Sec. 107 Cr.P.C. against several Congress workers.

These are some of the cases that came to my notice today. If this kind of thing is continuing in Allahabad where there are many Congress workers, it can be imagined what is happening in out of the way districts. There are at present many ejectment cases pending and those who have already been ejected are not getting back their lands as I had hoped they would. Unless they are reinstated and the coercive processes stop I am afraid there will be no improvement in the situation.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

31. To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government[1]

Allahabad
August 1st, 1931

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,
I am again troubling you with a letter on the eve of my departure for Bombay.

I am enclosing some papers. One of them is a copy of a confidential G.O. which has been sent to me by the chairman of a municipal board. This order seems to me quite extraordinary under the existing circumstances. The desire of the government to pursue our young workers, even to the extent of preventing their employment in municipal and district boards, is certainly not in keeping with the truce. I do not wish to say anything more about it and will leave it to you to consider it for yourself

The other papers relate to proceedings against a *mukhtar* of Ballia.[2] The judgment in his case is enclosed. I am not sending you the evidence but this is still more illuminating and shows how cases have been built up out of nothing at all against our people. But even taking the findings in the judgment it is really amazing that a sentence of two years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500 was inflicted. On

1. AICC File No. G-40(KW)(ii)/1931, pp. 177-179, NMML.
2. He was convicted on a charge that his activities in the village "seriously affects its peace"

top of that comes the High Court order threatening suspension or dismissal. What the High Court will do I do not know. It may not take further action, but even so this persecution of Congressmen is very far from what we expected at the time of the Delhi Settlement.

You will remember that when Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and I saw you in Lucknow we mentioned the Kalyanpur case. This case was decided today and in spite of the fact that the jury gave a verdict of not guilty the judge sentenced the lot—nearly 30 men—to six months each and a fine of Rs. 50. I am afraid it is a little difficult for me to view this case very calmly. I would beg of you to look through the record of the case yourself. Even on the record, which is far from the truth, there is nothing in the case. It is notorious that the whole case was a trumped up affair. There is no proof of violence on the side of the tenants and the prosecution evidence collapsed on an x-ray examination. Yet there was firing and several people were hit and one of our boys nearly died. Having faced and suffered from the firing all of these persons have to go to jail now. One of them was taken away from the Congress hospital this evening. The idea of imposing a fine of Rs. 50 each on a large number of poor tenants in this period of acute distress would be humorous if it was not tragic. It is said that attachments will be issued immediately.

This letter is long enough. It would become intolerably long if I gave details of happenings in Muttra district. There has been no agrarian trouble there of the kind some other districts have experienced. But in spite of this, case after case has been started against Congress workers, specially in Bijhari[3] and Nohjhil[4] circles and in village Chaumuha and the police have excelled themselves in their powers of invention. Apart from cases, actual raids and assaults have taken place. Complaints have been filed by the Congressmen concerned against the police, but they have been dismissed. There can be only one explanation of all this—that in the district of Muttra a determined and persistent attack is being made against the Congress by the local officers. I wish, if you had the time, you would see the record of some of these cases. Indeed I would welcome your asking any impartial person to examine these records.

The kind of evidence that is being given in these cases against Congressmen is well exemplified by the instance I gave you in the course

3 On 20 May 1931 the police raided the houses of Congress volunteers in Bijhari when most of them were away at Mathura to attend a political conference

4 The police dispersed a public meeting held at Nohjhil on 26 June by force and arrested some Congressmen.

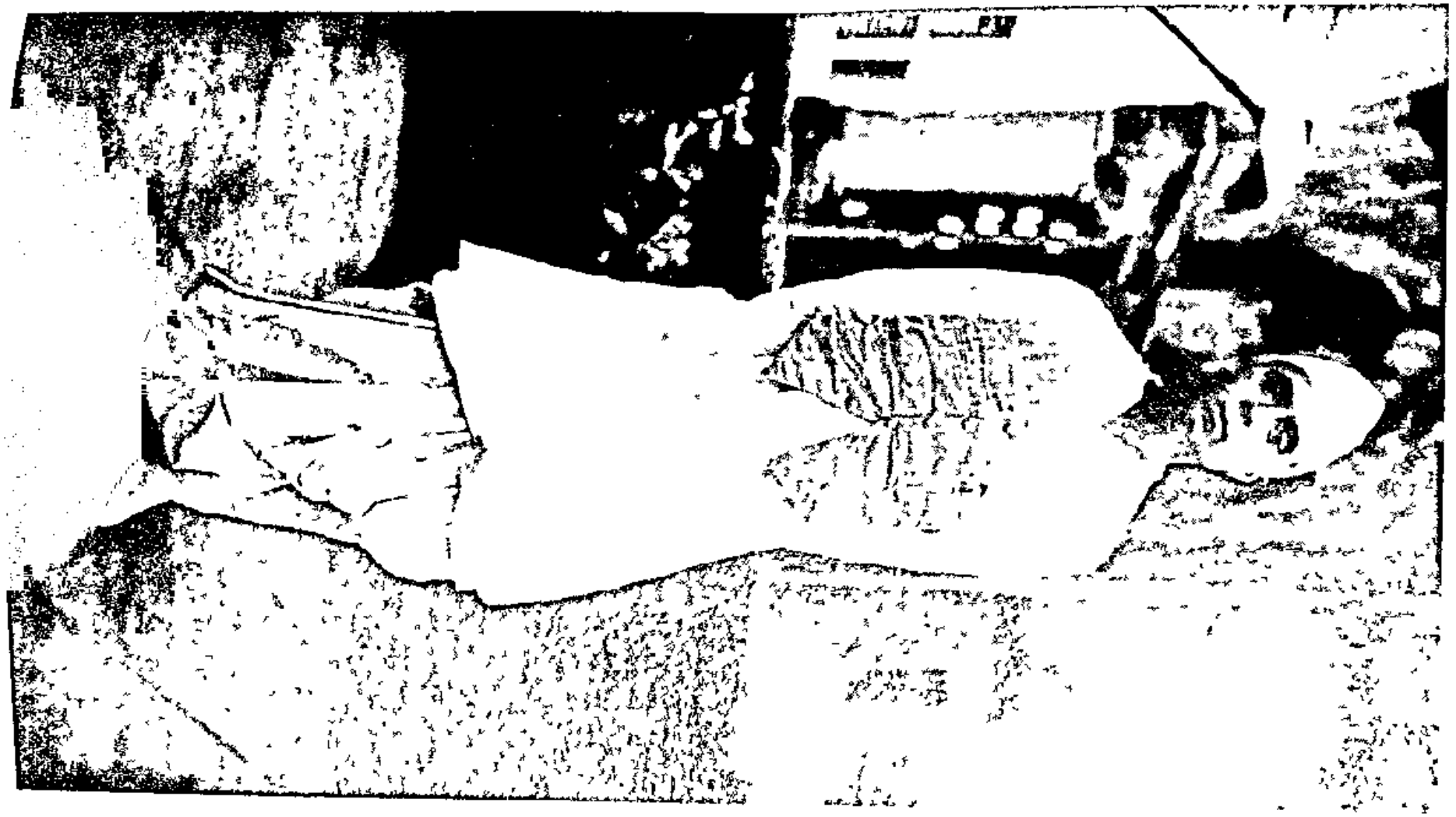

of our conversation. I mentioned the Bachchrawan[5] (Rae Bareli) case in which the police witnesses stated that in the course of my speech there I called upon the tenants to take their lathis and attack and loot the zamindars.

All this is happening now. These are not instances of even a month ago. Please consider them from our viewpoint and you will get some idea of how we must feel. I am going to Bombay and I shall place all these facts before Mr. Gandhi.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Thakur Bhagwan Baksh Singh, zamindar of Rampur and vice president of Maharajgunj tahsil Congress in Rae Bareli district, had presided over the meeting addressed by Jawaharlal at Bachchrawan on 26 July 1931 and treated the audience as his guests. The district officials in reprisal arrested the zamindar for arrears of revenue though the amount involved was small.

32. Interview to the Press[1]

Question—Are you going to attend the meeting of the Working Committee with the same 'unfavourable' impression about the agrarian situation in the United Provinces as the last meeting or do you possess some material to report improvement in the situation since the previous meeting?

Jawaharlal Nehru: So long as the British Government ruled India, my impression would always be unfavourable.

Q.—Do you find any change in the situation in these provinces?

JN: I do not find any change. The intensity of repression may be less but it is still fairly widespread.

1 Allahabad, 2 August 1931 From *The Leader*, 5 August 1931.

33. Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Bombay
15 August 31

U. P. Government invited Govindballabh Pant sit on Agrarian Committee which considering future revenue policy. I consider under present circumstances his joining inadvisable. Please wire your opinion to Sherwani Elgin Road Allahabad.[2]

Jawaharlal

1. Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 17430.
2. Mahatma Gandhi wired back, "Your wire. Think Govind Ballabh should join committee Have wired Sherwani accordingly." But Pant did not join the committee.

34. To A. Sahay[1]

20/8/31

Dear Comrade,[2]

. . . . As you must know we have again to face a grave crisis and a few days or weeks may see a restarting of the civil disobedience movement. Under these circumstances it is difficult to find time to do any writing work.[3]

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC File No. A 5/1929-31, p. 1, NMML Extracts.
2. (b. 1898); worked in Japan for India's freedom, India's commissioner in Trinidad, 1950 53, and in Mauritius, 1953 54, Consul General of India, Hanoi, 1955 56 and ambassador in Thailand, 1956 60.
3. Sahay had requested Jawaharlal to write a preface to his pamphlet.

35. To Private Secretary to Viceroy[1]

Allahabad
September 1st, 1931

Dear Mr. Mieville,[2]
I thank you for your letter of the 28th August. I am grateful to His Excellency for his suggestion that I should go to him in case of need. I would not like to trouble him needlessly, but should any occasion arise when I feel that the difficulties we have to face may be removed by a reference to His Excellency, I shall not hesitate to take advantage of his kind offer. I certainly feel, and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and our other colleagues I am sure also feel, that we have to shoulder a heavy responsibility during Mr. Gandhi's absence.

I am troubled specially about the agrarian situation in the United Provinces and at the great distress of the peasantry. They have had to bear the brunt of the suffering caused by recent economic conditions and by an unfair and out of date land revenue system, and large numbers of them have been dispossessed of their lands. I do hope that the U.P. Government will see its way to restore their holdings to them and thus in some measure reduce their present distress. I am encouraged in the hope by His Excellency's kind thought in asking me to seek his help whenever I may have any difficulty.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 A.I.C.C. File No. G-7/1931, pp. 13-14, N.M.M.L.
2 E. C. Mieville (1896-1971); Private Secretary to the Viceroy of India 1931-36; Private Secretary to King George VI, 1937-45, returned to India in 1947 as member of Lord Mountbatten's staff.

36. To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government[1]

Allahabad
September 5th, 1931

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,
I thank you for your D.O. Nos. 1008-S and 1042-3 dated August 20th and 26th respectively, which I received on my return to Allahabad. I

1 A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(KW)(iii)/1931, pp. 125-129, N.M.M.L.

am grateful for the trouble you have taken to enquire into the various complaints I referred to you. In most of these cases the facts as stated by you differ materially from the facts related to us. It may be that a coloured version has reached us through the kisans or our workers. But it is equally possible that the version supplied to you, based on reports of petty police or revenue officials, is far from the truth. I do not know how we can arrive at the truth under these circumstances. Complaints made by us may be denied, but the denial brings little satisfaction when our information appears to us to be correct. In any event, wherever the truth may lie, the result is tangible and solid enough in the shape of prison for our colleagues or security proceedings or ejectments.

The judgment in the case of Barkat Ali, copy of which you have kindly sent me, is interesting reading. An old colleague of ours, long a member of our provincial Congress committee, is referred to as a 'notorious Congress leader'. The meeting is then described. "The audience chiefly consisted of illiterate and fiery-tempered peasants who some 10 years ago divested the area by indiscriminate looting and other previous offences. In short 42 villages were looted completely and the peasants perpetrated all sorts of imaginable atrocities and crimes in this part of the district." The judicial balance and intelligence of the S.D.O. who wrote this judgment is worthy of attention and is an excellent example of the kind of thing we have to put up with. He refers to an audience at a public meeting as consisting of persons who ten years ago perpetrated various misdeeds and then his righteous indignation at these enormities runs away with him. It is a little difficult to appreciate what the events of a past decade have to do with a public meeting or a speech delivered at it. If these ancient matters were enquired into perhaps I could have given the S.D.O. some pertinent information which would have conflicted with his theory in regard to them. I happened to be present at the spot in 1920 within a day or two of the occurrences.[2] Perhaps you will remember that many hundreds of persons were arrested then and tried and convicted to long terms of imprisonment. I do not know if the S.D.O. imagines that these unfortunates, having served out their long sentences, have come out to give trouble again!

It is this outlook and prejudice, common enough in the cases we have to deal with, which vitiate the judgments and convictions. In Barkat Ali's case it appears from the judgment itself that he did not defend himself or cross examine any witness. He merely denied the correctness

2. Some peasants of Fyzabad district looted the property of a taluqdar in Akbarpur under the instigation of a zamindar who had told them that Mahatma Gandhi wished them to do so.

of the report of his speech. This attitude of the accused should ordinarily have made the judge the guardian of his interests. But it merely made the judge remark that "his general attitude throughout the proceedings has been of defiance of law and authority."

If a judge is likely to go astray to this extent, it is reasonable to assume that the petty officials and policemen, on whose reports prosecutions are undertaken and statements made to higher officials, are often very far from the truth. You will not be surprised then at our not accepting their statements and preferring the versions of our own workers.

I enclose some notes supplied to me by the Allahabad District Congress Committee on a few of the cases referred to by you.[3] I realise that it serves little purpose to go on repeating the same thing when it is denied. But what else are we to do? In regard to the complaint about village Gamarhata, tahsil Phulpur, it is stated in your letter that the "*karinda* never tore up the receipt." As it happens the tenant has produced the torn receipt. It may be said that he has torn it himself. To that there can be no reply. But it is extraordinarily difficult to believe that any tenant will do so.

In the Sec. 107 Cr.P.C. case of Matabhik and others in Phulpur tahsil, two persons have been asked to give security for certain speeches they are said to have made. One of these—Kanhaiya Baksh Singh—did not speak at all at the meeting, except to say that it was late and the meeting should end.

I should like to draw your special attention to the complaint concerning village Bhaila in tahsil Manjhanpur. A great part of the rent was collected by the zamindar because of the efforts of the Congress workers. The zamindar had agreed to accept 8 annas from the statutory tenants and 12 annas from the occupancy tenants. Thereupon Congress workers helped in inducing the tenants to pay up and they had a measure of success. Some kisans here are wholly incapable of paying and we are prepared to show this to any one's satisfaction. In spite of all this a number of cases for arrears of rent were filed, most of these being for arrears of previous years. It is an extraordinary fact that, when the tenants are admittedly unable to meet the current demand in full, they should be compelled to pay arrears of past years. I do not know how it is possible to tolerate this. If the law allows it there must be something very wrong with the law. As there is so much dispute as to facts, I shall welcome an informal enquiry, at which we could also assist, in this particular instance at least.

3. They related to ejectments.

I think I have already written to you on a previous occasion about the Bachchrawan (Rae Bareli) case in which 8 persons have been jailed for not furnishing the security demanded. These persons were alleged to have uttered incitements to violence. I am told that the prosecution witnesses further said that I had also, during a visit to Bachchrawan, made similar statements. As I am quite sure that I said nothing of the kind, and I prefer to believe myself even as against the police witnesses, I am naturally led to the conclusion that the others who have been convicted were wrongly charged and convicted.

An interesting Sec. 107 case is now going on here. It is against Thakur Uday Bhan Singh and eleven others of Chata, tahsil Phulpur. The Thakur is a pious old man spending most of his time in *puja* but his crime apparently has been his presidentship of a circle Congress committee. The writer of the police report grows quite eloquent and refers to Thakur Uday Bhan Singh's activities as a Congressman and to his constant "dreams of Swaraj". To make assurance doubly sure he has added that the Thakur had set fire to some *khalyan* belonging to another —an allegation which is totally denied. Respectable men connected with the Congress are thus hauled up and harassed and have to face all manner of trumped up charges.

My letter has grown long although I have referred to a few recent instances. But important as they are, they sink into insignificance before the general question of ejectments. I have not received figures for these ejectments yet but in regard to Allahabad district, I think you told me that 5,000 ejectments had taken place. You further said that every effort would be made to give back the land to those who had been dispossessed. You suggested that this was bound to happen in the ordinary course and you asked us to allow matters to drift for a while. We have done so—we have anxiously searched for the effort. We have hoped almost against hope, but no improvement is visible. Indeed far from putting right the wrongs done, the process of ejectment continues.

I enclose lists giving some instances from Allahabad district. Even last month, in August, a large number of ejectments took place. They continue, in spite of assurances to the contrary, and in spite of the fact that the time for making collections is long past, and in spite of the acknowledged distress. Your advice to us to let matters drift and take their natural course—advice which Mr. Emerson also gave me specially in regard to tenants who had been technically dispossessed but were still in possession[4]—has resulted in criminal cases for trespass being

4. This refers to Jawaharlal's talks with the Home Secretary at Simla on 19 20 July 1931.

brought against the tenants. Particulars in regard to 22 such rent cases in Allahabad are enclosed.

We were further told that if the dispossessed tenants paid up a fair amount they would get back their lands. Many cases have come to our knowledge where such amounts were paid or offered but the lands were not returned. A list of a few such cases from Allahabad district also is enclosed.

Our figures as regards Allahabad are very incomplete. Regarding other districts I have not received any detailed figures yet. But even the incomplete figures, you will agree, disclose a lamentable state of affairs. It must be remembered that in Allahabad most of the persons dispossessed are occupancy tenants and it is a hard thing to part with land which one's forefathers have held.

There is only one other instance I would like to bring to your notice. In Rae Bareli in two areas—in Arkha in Salon tahsil and in Surajkunda —hundreds of tenants surrendered their lands and are doing nothing. I understand that about 2700 *bighas* are lying fallow.

I would beg of you to let us know if the government proposes to take any action in regard to ejectments. Are they going to let matters drift and see these thousands of dispossessed tenants starve out? Action has been delayed long enough. May we presume that no further action in this respect is intended?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

37. Statement to the Press[1]

I do not think there is any improvement, at any rate, in my province and also the Frontier province. The agrarian situation in the United Provinces continues to be bad.

The time for collection is long past, but coercive processes continue. In the district of Muttra during August over 2,000 processes have been issued and the cattle of the tenantry attached in large numbers.

1. Ahmedabad, 11 September 1931. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 12 September 1931.

Prominent workers are being removed one after another under Section 108 Cr.P.C. The main trouble, however, is the ejectment of the tenants in large numbers. There could be no solution to the problem till this matter is attended to and relief is given. From other provinces also complaints about official interference with Congress activities continue to come.

38. How They Manage Things In Muttra District[1]

The district of Muttra in the U.P. has gained a measure of notoriety in recent months and it has found prominent mention in the charge-sheet against government framed by Gandhiji. The truce has been observed there by numerous arrests of Congress workers and by police raids on villages and assaults on villagers and Congress workers. The complaints in regard to Bijhari, Nohjhil and Rayah,[2] mentioned in the charge-sheet, were denied by the local government. The judgments in appeal in recent cases show clearly that the government's reply is wrong and the charges, in the main, correct. Congressmen convicted by the first court have been acquitted in appeal. In the Bijhari case the sessions judge has held that the sub-inspector of police, the *amin* and a zamindar colluded to bring false charges against the accused. In the Nohjhil judgment the judge says:

> "I cannot finish my judgment without observing that it is to be regretted that while the complainant and other Congressmen were holding a meeting some policemen, two of whom were Ghandi and Yusuf Ali, had surely assaulted one Ghure Lal, most probably under the very nose of the S.O. (Station Officer) of the police, Nohjhil. To order further enquiry in this case with respect to the injury received by Ghure Lal, who is not a party to this complaint, may give rise to complications. The names of two of his assailants out of four were not known and in these circumstances I think fit that Ghure Lal may, if he likes, take legal proceedings against his assailants."

1. Article published in *Young India*, 19 September 1931.
2. On 10 July 1931, a Congress volunteer was beaten with shoes by the police at Rayah and ordered to leave the village.

But the most revealing document is the judgment of another judge in the Kosi Kalan case. This case was made out to have arisen out of a communal quarrel between Hindus and Muslims. Over seventy accused, including most of the prominent merchants in the largest grain market of the district, were tried and the case lasted fifteen months. The judge, perhaps intentionally as the case was supposed to be a communal one, was a Christian. He has written a judgment running into 210 typed pages and has acquitted all the accused. He has held that it was not a communal affray at all and has discredited the attempts to drag in the Congress into it. "I may state at the outset," he says, "that a prosecution case so wretched as this it would be impossible to imagine." Perfectly innocent persons, who had themselves suffered from looting and had been seriously injured, he further says, were implicated "in a serious offence so that bail might not be granted to them and they might thus be prevented from bringing complaints." About a police officer, he says, "it is disgusting in the extreme to find a police officer in his position telling deliberate lies." Referring to a Congress meeting which the police prevented from being held by barbarous methods, the judge says, "the authorities could have prohibited the meeting if they so wanted and if it was attempted to be held in spite of the prohibition it could have been dispersed by a lathi charge. There was no need to prevent it by hooliganism." The police "first arrested everybody whom they wanted to arrest and after that the witness was brought to say that they had all taken part in the riot."

The police officers stated in evidence that they kept a list of Congressmen and of office-bearers of the Congress but the district magistrate refused to produce this list on the ground that it was a confidential document.

Witnesses for the defence were threatened by the police and were actually "prosecuted for alleged offences under Section 34 of the Police Act and other offences."

The sessions judge concludes by saying that a petty affray, which had been made into a communal riot, "and which the police could have easily prevented, has cost the public treasury probably not less than half a lakh of rupees, has wasted nearly a year of the valuable time of the court, has kept a large number of perfectly innocent individuals, many of whom had themselves suffered seriously at the hands of the *qassabs*, in jail for nearly 15 months and has probably ruined them and also possibly the largest grain market in the district."

The judge has further ordered the prosecution of five witnesses for perjury.

These few extracts from an able and exhaustive judgment will give some idea of this extraordinary case, extraordinary not because such things are unusual, but because it is seldom that they see the light of day in a judgment of a court. This judgment itself is a sufficient condemnation of the methods of the government and the police and a complete answer to the denials of government of the charges made against them.

But the lesson of this judgment has not gone home and the district authorities still continue to follow the even tenor of their ways. In spite of the great economic distress and in spite of the fact that the time for collections is long past, coercion processes, ejectments and attachments continue. Relief has been insistently asked for those who have already been dispossessed but instead of this relief fresh processes are being issued. As late as August a large number of notices for ejectment were issued and many were actually ejected. Exact figures are not available but it is believed that about 2,500 processes for ejectment have been issued. The attachment *amins* have been increased from 7 before March to 25 now in service to cope with this additional work.

September followed August but the activities of the revenue officials only increased and became even fiercer. It is stated that on the 9th September a large number of revenue officials, including a tahsildar, a *naib* tahsildar, *amin*, *kanungo* and a host of peons went to the village of Parkham, 17 miles from Muttra town, and to Jharwahi, nearby. The usual assaults and beatings were resorted to and people were made to take up the *murga* position—a posture which is quite a favourite device with the police and revenue officials in the United Provinces. People were made to do without food and even old men were not spared a beating and two of them (Ramchand and Balwant) fainted. At least one woman (named Mango) was maltreated. The cattle, carts and other belongings of the tenants were seized and sold on the spot to any bidder for any price that he was pleased to offer. The revenue force remained in these villages for four days.

On the 13th September when the secretary of the district Congress committee visited the village of Jharwahi for enquiry he found that all the tenants, numbering about 500, had disappeared and hidden themselves in the neighbouring jungles. The village was deserted and there was no one to be found there. It was only after it was known that it was not the police or revenue people but Congressmen who had come, that the terrified villagers came out and gave their statements. Soon after, however, they went back to their hiding places lest the wrath of the revenue peons might descend upon them.

Such is the way they manage things in Muttra district.

39. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

September 19th, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,
Thank you for your letter sending a copy of your letter to Emerson. Things are pretty bad here and beating and assaults continue. I think I shall write to the Chief Secretary again.

I have sent to Jairamdas a proof copy of our rejoinder, also an article on Muttra. I should like you to see both of them.

The U.P. Agrarian Report which will contain the rejoinder will be issued very soon.[2] You told me that there was no objection to this being issued. A copy of it will be sent to you tomorrow.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1 A.I.C.C. File No. G-7/1931, p. 21, N.M.M.L.
2. See Appendix XVII to the U.P. Congress Committee report—*Agrarian Distress in the United Provinces*, 1931.

40. To Sitla Sahai[1]

September 22nd, 1931

My dear Sitla Sahai,
I have received your long letters. I have no time to reply to them at present. I wish to say however that I do not quite understand the relations between your kisan unions and the Congress. Obviously your work should be done as Congress representative and there should be no conflict between kisan sabhas and the Congress. Rae Bareli matters have been referred to the president of the U.P.P.C.C. He will probably visit you in this connection.

1 A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(KW)(i)/1931 (Pt. II), p. 309, N.M.M.L.

I propose to spend a day in Rae Bareli on the 9th October. I hope to reach there by train from Lucknow at 9.55 a.m. and shall leave at night. Please inform Mahesh Narain[2] and arrange my programme in cooperation with him. This visit of mine is a short one but I cannot give more time then. I may come again later.

Your request for permission to start civil disobedience did not impress me. The instances you gave of breaches were all old ones. Also you did not indicate what kind of civil disobedience you wished to start. You must be more definite.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 (1896 1943), a Congressman of Rae Bareli district; imprisoned several times during the civil disobedience movements, president, Rae Bareli District Congress Committee, 1934.

41. To Rampal Singh[1]

September 23rd, 1931

Dear Raja Saheb,

I read your letter in this morning's *Leader* with great surprise. I have written in reply a letter to the *Leader* copy of which I enclose for your information.[2] I shall be glad if you will kindly send me a list of specific instances. It is hardly fair to the Congress for you to make vague charges without substantiating them. I can promise you that fullest enquiry will be made into every charge.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C.C. File No. G-140/1931 (Pt. V), p 355, N M M L.
2. See next item.

42. Reply to Charges Against Congress[1]

Sir,

My attention has been drawn to the letter of Raja Rampal Singh appearing in your issue dated September 23rd. The Raja has been pleased to use strong language regarding the activities of the Congress and has not hesitated to refer to them as "mendacious" and "debasing" and as a "deliberate" misrepresentation of facts. He has referred to two specific examples in proof of these charges. One relates to the Bara Banki Congress Committee which is alleged to have made a claim which according to the Raja Saheb was a "misleading travesty of the facts." The other refers to a notice said to have been issued by Syt. Sitla Sahai in Rae Bareli.[2]

I have been unable to find out from the Raja's letter what the claim of the Bara Banki Committee was to which he has taken exception. I am therefore unable to say anything about it.

As for the second instance I had not previously seen the notice. Presumably a translation has been given. If such a notice was issued and the translation is correct I agree with the Raja Saheb that it conveys a wrong impression of what happened. I am sure that Mr. Sitla Sahai, if he issued the notice, must have been under misapprehension, and even if the facts were correct he should not have referred to the conversations which the Chief Secretary had with me. I am asking Mr. Sitla Sahai for the correct facts and if he has made any mistake he will be the first to express his regret for it.

I should like to make it clear however that so far as the government's Agrarian Committee was concerned the Congress had nothing to do with its appointment, and certainly my conversations with the Chief Secretary had no bearing whatever on it. I regret that any such impression should have been created in any person's mind. I regret particularly that private conversations should be referred to in a public notice.

I should like to ask the Raja Saheb however if this error of judgment or misapprehension, whatever it may have been, is a justification for the unworthy language he has used. The Congress is a mighty organisation known and respected the world over today, and it is greater than the vast number of men and women who are privileged to serve

1 23 September 1931. *The Leader*, 24 September 1931.

2 It was alleged that Sitla Sahai had, in a leaflet to Rae Bareli kisans, claimed that the official Rent and Revenue Committee was set up as a result of Jawaharlal's talks with the Chief Secretary.

it, and through it the nation. It is unbecoming of any one, whoever he or she may be, to speak lightly of it and to make vague and general charges against a very large body of devoted workers. The Raja Saheb has gone even a step further and with the flimsy excuse of a little notice has sought to damn the Congress. Instead of cursing with bell, book and candle, if he will take the trouble to give specific instances where Congressmen have, in his opinion, erred, I promise him that an open enquiry will be made in every one of them and he will be invited to be present at it. When it comes to writing down hard facts and not vague generalisations, he will probably find, if I may venture to prophesy, that there is little to write, and that he was suffering from a grave delusion in regard to the Congress and Congressmen, and that the reports he had heard from his underlings were unreliable and such as no "educated publicist" ought to have put reliance on. And further enquiry will demonstrate to him that the Congress position is the only right position, the Congress way the only way, and the Congress goal the only goal, and his doubts and fears will vanish, "and the cares that infest the day will fold their tents like the Arabs, and as silently steal away."

One thing more I should like to point out to the Raja. The Congress is not much concerned with creating a temporary impression or gaining a petty advantage. We left that stage long ago. We play for higher stakes; we fight for the transfer of power to the people of India, and we shall win.

Yours etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

43. To Commissioner, Allahabad[1]

Allahabad
September 23rd, 1931

My dear Mehta,[2]
I have your letter of the 22nd.[3] Certainly we shall try to follow the procedure suggested by you and refer any matter of complaint to you

1. A I C C. File No G-40(KW)(m)/1931, p. 105, N.M.M.L.
2. V. N Mehta, commissioner of Allahabad division at this time.
3. Mehta suggested that the district authorities should be approached first for redressal of any kisan grievance.

in the first instance. We tried to follow this method right at the beginning but the district authorities were not very helpful or encouraging. The recent instance of Badalpur village in Karchchana tahsil is also in point.[4] Three persons, like Purushottamdas Tandon, Venkatesh Narayan Tivary and my wife, visit the village and personally investigate the matter. A report is sent to the district magistrate and an offer is made to send one of our number with him to the village. He prefers to go alone and forthwith issues a press statement denying our version. Our people were under the impression that the matter would not be sent to the press just then Later when our rejoinder was sent to the press we were told by the pressmen that the district magistrate in his capacity as censor had stopped it. This kind of cavalier treatment and summary disposal and denial of grave charges made after enquiry by responsible people may be government's method of doing work, but they do not fill one with joy and gratitude. Am I to blame if I prefer believing Tandon and Tivary and my wife to believing the district magistrate? However, as I have said above, local complaints will in future be sent to you.

I understand that P. D. Tandon, the president of the Allahabad District Congress Committee, will write to you soon about another recent occurrence which took place in Karchchana tahsil in village Sakrawal. I only wish to say here that a number of men and women from this village came to me the other day and I personally saw injuries all over their bodies. The women bore these marks on their shoulders and backs and freshly broken teeth were displayed to me. One woman was badly injured and could not leave the village and no ambulance could go for her on account of flooded areas. All this, we were told, was to recover a paltry sum like Re. 1/- and Rs. 5/-.

I hope you have received the preliminary list of 393 ejectments sent by the local Congress office.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. On 1 September 1931, the police, while helping a zamindar to realise rent, harassed the tenants of Badalpur in Karchchana sub-division of Allahabad district. As a result, the villagers left their homes.

44. On the Resumption of Satyagraha[1]

I know that the people do not take delight in warfare but we cannot help fighting if forced to do so. In our second settlement with the government, we have made it abundantly clear that we can start satyagraha, whether Gandhiji is in England or here, if the circumstances demand that step. Of course, we do not wish it, but it is possible that we may be required to start satyagraha for the situation in the country is becoming worse day by day. The truce was but a phase of the fight, a change of tactics. We will have to continue the struggle till we have won complete freedom for our motherland.

1. Speech at Delhi, 24 September 1931 From *The Hindu*, 25 September 1931

45. To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government[1]

Camp Delhi
September 24th, 1931

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,
In the *Leader* dated today there is a long letter from Raja Rampal Singh. In this letter reference is made to a notice said to have been issued by Sitla Sahai in Rae Bareli. I was not aware of any such notice and I do not know if the notice is correctly given. But if any such notice was issued, I should like to express my regret to you for it. Not only is it incorrect in so far as the agrarian committee is concerned, but any reference to our conversations was improper. I am finding out from Sitla Sahai what the facts are. I am sure he would not consciously make a wrong statement.

V. N. Mehta, the commissioner here, has suggested that instead of sending local complaints direct to you, we might send them to him or the district authorities in the first instance. We have willingly agreed to this procedure. Indeed this was our practice but it fell into disuse by the want of encouragement we had from the district magistrate. I enclose copy of a letter I have sent to Mehta on the subject.

1. *AICC*. File No G-40(KW)(III)/1931, pp 97-99, NMML.

I do not know if your attention has been drawn to recent happenings in Muttra district. Most of our complaints in regard to the activities of the district authorities have been justified by the judgements in the Bijhari, Nohjhil and Choumuha cases. The Kosi Kalan case is a still more revealing document. But in spite of these exposures of official and police methods, the district and revenue authorities in Muttra have continued their coercive and repressive activities. During a recent visit to Muttra I found that large numbers of cattle had been attached and the number of notices for ejectment were said to be about 2500. The number of attachment *amins* have gone up from 7 before March to 25. It seems very unusual and extraordinary that all this should be done when the time for collections is long past. The actual methods employed to collect rent forcibly are still worse. On the 9th of September the villages of Parkham and Jharwahi were visited by a large force of revenue officials, including a tahsildar, *naib* tahsildar, *amin*, *kanungo* and others and men and women were assaulted and beaten till some fainted. Cattle, carts etc. belonging to the tenants were seized and sold on the spot to any bidder for any price offered. Terror reigned in the villages for some days. It is possible that these facts may be officially denied but responsible people have investigated them and you cannot expect us to disbelieve them.

In Bareilly new developments have taken place which were quite foreign to the city and district before.[2] Our meetings are interfered with and stones are thrown and threats used. In one instance dancing girls were brought to the meeting and were made to perform in order to interfere with the meeting. Nothing of this kind happened before but ever since our committee there was asked by the authorities to desist from picketing foreign cloth, these strange developments have followed. One of our prominent colleagues Damodar Swarup Seth[3] is being proceeded against under Sec. 108 Cr. P.C. It is not unreasonable for us to conclude that all this has resulted because we wished to continue our picketing and the people who are made to obstruct and interfere are mere tools in the hands of others. One of the persons who have taken a prominent part in these objectionable activities is an honorary magistrate.

2 The Chief Secretary in his reply dated 26 October 1931 denied that any harassment, coercion or intimidation was resorted to by the local authorities in Bareilly district.

3 Then secretary, Bareilly D C C He was arrested on 5 August 1931.

In Rae Bareli proceedings have been taken against Raj Bahadur and eleven others who were picketing a liquor or drug shop under Sec. 342 and some of them were sentenced to 3 months R.I. It is probable that if the case is contested up to the appeal court there may be an acquittal here also. But the harassment of peaceful picketers continues.

Another instance of harassment of Congress workers took place at Pakargaon in Rae Bareli on August 6th, when a large crowd of revenue officials and the taluqdars' servants surrounded the village and thrashed Bodh Prasad, Sri Narain, Faiz Mohamad Khan and other Congress workers. Some of them were injured and these three were arrested. They were kept in jail for a fortnight and then released without any case being brought against them.

Soon after the Delhi Settlement the Rae Bareli Congress Committee wrote to the district authorities and asked for the return of property seized on the 20th January from the Maharajganj Congress office. They were told then that a reply would be sent later. A recent letter of the deputy commissioner informs them that the property was sold on the 10th March 1931. This seems to be a clear infringement of the terms of the Delhi Settlement.

On the 18th September, we are informed, the *naib* tahsildar with armed police and tahsil peons and the taluqdar's men from Pandri Ganeshpur estate visited Bainti in Rae Bareli district and beat the kisans there. I am not sending you details of this and other incidents but I can supply them if needed. The reports are supported by the statements of the kisans.

I have also in my possession many complaints of beating and assaults in order to extract rent forcibly in Gorakhpur district. If you so desire I can send details of these.

I should also like to draw your attention to the fact that in Meerut the joint magistrate has been taking active part in the activities of a "City and Cantonment League" which puts "anti-picketing" in the forefront of its programme of work.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

46. To Deputy Magistrate, Bareilly[1]

Bareilly
30 September 1931

Dear Sir,

I have been informed that ordinary Congress activities in Bareilly town and district have been considerably interfered with for some time past and the police force of the district has taken an active part in this interference or has encouraged and tolerated this interference. It has been the practice of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee to bring such complaints to the notice of the local government, in order to avoid friction as much as possible, and the local government has frequently enquired into the matter and informed us of the result of their enquiries. It has been pointed out however that this procedure involves delay and that it would be better if the district authorities were first informed of such complaints. In case relief was not obtained locally the matter could be referred to the local government. I am venturing therefore to write to you to bring to your notice certain facts and circumstances which have been mentioned to me. I understand that the secretary of the district committee has already written to you on three occasions and the president on one occasion, but no reply or acknowledgment has been received by them from you.

1. The local Congress committee engaged the hall of the Rohilkhand cinema for a meeting to be addressed by me. The rent for the hall was actually paid. I am informed that the city kotwal sent for the proprietor of the cinema and brought pressure to bear upon him not to permit the use of his hall by the Congress.

2. The kotwal also, it is stated, has told the proprietors or managers of local printing presses that they must not print any notice or leaflet on behalf of the Congress. Policemen have visited presses to find out if any Congress notice was being printed and where any such notice was found it was taken by them.

3. The kotwal sent for the owner of the house where the local Congress office is situated and told him that he must eject the Congress committee. The owner has thus been induced by the kotwal, apparently under threats of penalties, to issue a notice to the committee.

4. Stones were thrown at two public meetings held in Bareilly city. One of the meetings was held on the 3rd September and the other a few days before.

1 A.I.C.C. File No G-40(KW)(iii)/1931, pp 89-91, N.M.M.L.

5. In Kosari, bundles of hay belonging to a Congress volunteer named Dharm Pal Singh were set on fire. This was done on the very day a kisan conference was held there. Damage to the extent of Rs. 100/- was caused by this fire. This took place about the middle of June.

6. In Ballia, towards the end of June, a kisan conference was organised by the tahsil Congress committee and two *shamianas* were put up. In the course of the night burning balls of cotton were thrown on to the *shamianas*, one of them being considerably burnt.

7. The police actively stop the villagers and others from attending Congress meetings in the rural areas. They surround the area and more or less picket it. Usually the policemen are not in uniform.

8 The police ordered the owners or drivers of some motor lorries not to take Congressmen or Congresswomen and have thus considerably harassed them.

9. Rowdies have interfered with Congress meetings in rural areas. In village Udra, tahsil Baheri, the tahsildar asked some people who were involved in a criminal case to interfere with and prevent the holding of a Congress meeting in the month of August. He further told them that if they acted according to his wishes the criminal cases against them would be withdrawn.

10. In village Agras, tahsil Bareilly, some people who act as such rowdies were paid by the tahsildar Re. 1/- each, according to them, for the purpose of breaking up Congress meetings. This took place towards the end of July.

11. In village Faridpur, tahsil Faridpur, a Congress meeting was held on the 30th August on land belonging to the president of the Bareilly District Congress Committee. The president not being present his son's permission was taken. The meeting was continued on the 31st August. On this day Thakur Bakhtawar Singh, a retired deputy collector, and an honorary assistant collector came and objected to the meeting being held on that place. He stopped men and women physically from going to the meeting and actually tried to snatch away the flag and misbehaved right through the meeting by making offensive remarks. He also brought two dancing girls and made them sing and dance so as to interfere with the Congress meeting.

12. A few days ago, a *chowkidar* in uniform in Kadampur near Sheopuri snatched the flag and some clothes from a Congress volunteer.

Most of these matters have already been brought to your notice in the letters of the president and secretary of the district Congress committee. Should you desire any further details I shall gladly send them. I shall be obliged if you will kindly send me an answer at an early

date informing me if the facts given above are, according to your information, correct. Some of these facts appear to us to be clear breaches of the Delhi Settlement and hence I am troubling you on the subject.

I am leaving Bareilly this evening. My address afterwards will be Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

47. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
October 1st, 1931

My dear Bapu,

I returned today from the Punjab, visiting three U.P. districts on the way. On my arrival here I found your letter from the high seas awaiting me. The English newspaper cuttings were interesting reading. I am sending them on, as desired by you, to Vallabhbhai.

There is no marked change to report about the U.P. I get occasional letters from Jagdish Prasad, the U.P. Chief Secretary, and they are always courteous and promise enquiry into complaints made. Sometimes minor relief also comes. For instance you will remember my drawing your attention to the joint magistrate of Meerut joining an anti-picketing association. He has been asked to resign from it. The major question—the ejectments from land—continues unsolved. I am told by government officials that a fair number of the ejected tenants have been allowed to retain possession by private arrangements with their landlords but I have not been able to verify this. I have no further news of Muttra. In another three days I shall go out on a little tour of Bara Banki, Gonda, Bahraich and Rae Bareli and find out locally what is happening. Meanwhile, I have an impression that the local government is trying to restrain its district officials, but not wholly with success. The rains have naturally interfered with activity —both on the tenants' side and the zamindars'. Considerable damage has been caused to the crops by heavy rains during the last ten days. The chief trouble with the ejected tenantry is their fear of losing their

1 J N Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

crops. This fear induces them to sell and borrow and do anything almost to save their crops for themselves.

I enclose some newspaper cuttings. Two deal with Hijli. You will be able to judge from Tagore's speech how deeply Bengal has felt in the matter.[2] It has really been a terrible affair. There is a feeling in Bengal that the Congress executive has callously ignored their sufferings in both Chittagong and Hijli. Vallabhbhai has, I understand, written to Emerson asking for an impartial enquiry into the Hijli affair.

The other cuttings contain Aney's award in the Bengal Congress dispute.[3] A compromise has been arrived at, which seems to be fair and reasonable. There is, however, an unfortunate tendency on the part of the *Advance*[4] party to crow over it.

I have tried my best to keep in touch with Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Kailas, Kamala's brother, was sent to him two weeks ago. I have had no news of him or his work. I do not know if letters are not written or are stopped on the way. Khurshed[5] is of course there. I have been writing frequently to Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his brother Dr. Khan Sahib but have only received one or two brief acknowledgments. I do not know what the present situation is so far as the government is concerned. But the friction between the old Jirga people and the Peshawar Congressmen continues. I had a long talk with one of the latter in Lahore and he was full of complaints. I soothed him and made various suggestions. I feel however that some one of us must go there and personally help in removing this friction. Our resolution about the Frontier P.C.C. and the Afghan Jirga and the Khudai Khidmatgars was a difficult enough one to give effect to.[6] It becomes doubly difficult when the people concerned have little notion of constitutions and the like, and are not fond of letter writing. Abdul

2 On 26 September 1931 Rabindranath Tagore described the Hijli shooting incident at a protest meeting in Calcutta as "tragic and cowardly in its brutality."

3 Under the terms of Aney's award all complaints in the Bengal Congress elections dispute were to be dropped and fresh elections to the Bengal P.C.C. held in January 1932. Till then a joint committee consisting of an equal number of members from the two rival factions was to carry on the Congress work.

4 The newspaper of J. M. Sen Gupta's group in the Bengal Congress.

5. A grand-daughter of Dadabhai Naoroji.

6. The Working Committee had decided that the Frontier P.C.C. and the Afghan Jirga, which had not been part of the Congress organisation, should merge and a new organisation be formed on the basis of the Congress constitution. Khudai Khidmatgars, founded in 1929 by Abdul Ghaffar Khan to promote nonviolence among the Pathans and improve their conditions by peaceful work, was the volunteer wing of the Afghan Jirga. This became the volunteer unit of the Frontier Congress in 1931.

Ghaffar Khan is also having some difficulties with his own people in the Jirga. Some, like Ahmad Shah,[7] have strongly criticised the Working Committee resolution. But Abdul Ghaffar's position in the Jirga is very strong and he can certainly deliver the goods. I am trying to send Rafi Ahmad Kidwai to him. I think Rafi is a good man for the job.

Jaya Prakash is here. He has had a lot of trouble in his family—deaths and illness—and has been absent a lot. He is unhappy and feels unsettled and without any foundations. I do not think he is enamoured of his work with Birla.[8]

Kamala accompanied me to the Punjab but was unwell most of the time. She seems to require complete rest for a period. She has grown very weak and it is only her enthusiasm and will that carry her on.

We read daily of your fresh triumphs and conquests in the land of our rulers. Whatever happens, it seems to be quite clear that your visit has been all to the good and will bear rich fruit. Tomorrow is your birthday and we shall gather together in town and village and think of you and send you our loving homage and good wishes. But a birthday is not needed to remind us of you. You have a strange way of filling the mind and stirring the emotions, and even a cold-blooded person like me feels a little less cold-blooded when thinking of you.

I enclose a copy of the letter I sent to Emerson. This should have gone to you with my last air mail letter but I could not lay my hands on it then.

I hope you received the draft of the Swaraj Bhawan Trust Deed which I sent you some time ago. I shall await your instructions in the matter. Ansari and Perin[9] are strongly opposed to any reference in the deed to a sale of the property. They say that this should not be permitted in any event. I have not heard from Bidhan and Jamnalalji yet. But Jamnalalji's views I know already.

I have written to you fairly regularly since you left—twice a week, by air mail and ordinary post. I hope my letters have reached you. Sometimes I have felt that my letters must be becoming a nuisance to you. Do not trouble to write to me except when you have something special to say.

7 A close associate of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and one of the founder members of the Khudai Khidmatgar organisation, parted company with the Congress in 1931 on the question of the merger of Khudai Khidmatgars with the Congress. Later joined the Khaksar movement.

8 G D Birla (b. 1894), leading industrialist, was on close terms with many Congress leaders Jaya Prakash Narayan worked as his secretary for some time.

9 Perin Captain, grand daughter of Dadabhai Naoroji.

Vallabhbhai writes to me that he has sent you a cable but he has forgotten to send me a copy. Apparently the cable relates to the unholy marriage of the pound with the rupee and the drain of gold from India that is likely to take place.[10] I do not pretend to understand the intricacies of currency and finance but I am very much disturbed at recent happenings. I feel that the English people, or rather their financiers, are bent on making us a pauper and a bankrupt nation by the time Swaraj comes. You must have seen that the People's Bank has failed. I wonder if other Indian banks will follow.

I was glad to read the messages of Madame Zaghlol Pasha and Nahas Pasha.[11] I wish you could visit Egypt on your way back.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

10 In September 1931 Britain separated the rupee from the gold standard and linked it to sterling. As the exchange value of the sterling was falling in terms of gold, the rupee also depreciated in the world market

11. Mustapha Nahas Pasha (1876-1965); Egyptian nationalist leader who became head of the Wafd in 1927; served a number of times as prime minister between 1928 and 1951.

48. To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government[1]

2/10/1931

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,
Thank you for your letter of the 28th September. As desired by you I am sending you some accounts in original of beatings and assaults in the Gorakhpur district.

From Cawnpore I have received a formidable list of persons who are being proceeded against under various sections. The list comprises two persons being tried under Section 124-A, I.P.C., 12 persons under Section 108 Cr. P. Code, and 55 under Section 107 Cr. P.C.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-40(KW)(m)/1931, p. 63, N.M.M.L.

49. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Lucknow
4.10.31

My dear Bapu,
I have had a long letter from Mahadeva from London giving an interesting account of happenings there. The newspapers tell us that Ansari, though absent, fills the picture. He seems to be a little worried about it, quite needlessly, I have told him. He has called an emergent meeting of the Council of the Nationalist Muslims Party for day after tomorrow. I wonder if you have sent him a cable. The more I read about the innumerable claims for special representation the more I feel that it is almost impossible to have anything but a purely nationalist solution. Certainly there can be no peace or solution of the problem by merely agreeing to Jinnah's ridiculous 14 points.

Since I wrote to you last I have had time to find out a little more about the agrarian situation. The tenantry have lost hope to a large extent of any real relief being given to them. Their passion for land is amazing and specially the fear of being dispossessed with the crops ripening has made many of them do almost anything to stick on. A large number of the dispossessed tenants in Allahabad, probably 25% or more, have raised money somehow, by sale of property etc., and paid up the dues fully and thus got back the land. This is bad enough as they will soon find out. What is worse is the effect this is going to have on future remissions. There is a clause in the report of the official rent committee that these proposals will not apply to cases where the zamindar and the tenant have mutually agreed to a fresh arrangement. Altogether the position is most unsatisfactory. Stray reports of beatings of kisans continue to come. Collections also continue.

The Working Committee meets probably at Delhi in the last week of this month.

Love

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

1 Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No 17973.

50. To Deputy Commissioner, Bahraich[1]

7.10.31

Dear Sir,

I understand that the president of the district Congress committee, Bahraich addressed a letter to you dated 30th September and sent you with this letter a number of complaints of tenants. In answer to this letter you informed the secretary of the Congress committee on October 1st that the tenants should be asked to approach you direct. There are obvious difficulties in this procedure and it has therefore been our practice during the last seven months to inform local and provincial authorities of such grievances. Individual grievances have their importance but the policy of the government or the taluqdars which results in these grievances is more important and this can hardly be grasped in its entirety by the individual tenant. We have been in correspondence with the provincial government in regard to such matters of policy as well as individuals' grievances for many months. It has been suggested to us however that a more expeditious method of procedure would be to send such individual grievances to the local authorities before they are sent to the government. It was with a view to give effect to this suggestion that we instructed our local committees to communicate directly with district officers. If however you do not approve of this procedure in your district then the grievances can be referred directly to the local government.

A notice, appearing above your name, has been shown to me. In this it is stated that if rent for the current kharif is not paid up within a month the remission may be cancelled. I have also seen a number of remission slips given to the tenants on the backs of which this information is given. It is further stated in the notice that no objection of a tenant regarding the rent can be attended to so long as the tenant has not paid up in full the rent for the kharif. The announcements contained in this notice raise important issues and are likely to affect the tenants vitally. If the announcements are in pursuance of a policy of the local government I should like to write to them about it. But before I do so I shall be obliged if you will kindly let me know if they relate to any such general policy or are peculiar to this district.

1 AICC. File No G-40(KW)(in)/1931, pp 71 77, NMML.

As I am leaving Bahraich today I shall thank you if you will be good enough to send an answer to Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

51. To Rampal Singh[1]

October 12th, 1931

Dear Raja Saheb,
On the 23rd of September I wrote to you enclosing a letter I had sent to *The Leader* in reply to your letter appearing in that paper.[2] I have had no answer from you. Since then I have noticed that Syt. Sitla Sahai has pointed out that your translation of the notice was incorrect.[3] I have myself seen the original of the notice. I do not think it is happily worded nor do I think that it was desirable for Mr. Sitla Sahai to refer to my conversations with the Chief Secretary. But even so he does not state what you thought he had said. Under the circumstances I shall be glad if you will kindly correct your previous statement. In particular I await a list of specific instances which according to you go to prove that the activities of the Congress are "mendacious and debasing" and a "deliberate misrepresentation of the facts." You will agree with me, I hope, that such charges should either be supported and substantiated by evidence or should be withdrawn. It is hardly fair to a great organisation like the Congress and to those who are privileged to work for it to be accused of this without any basis. I shall be obliged if you will kindly send me an early reply.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC File No G-140/1931(Pt IV), p. 255, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, items 41 and 42.
3. In a letter to the editor, *The Leader*, Sitla Sahai reproduced in English his Hindi leaflet, wherein there was no mention that Jawaharlal's talks with the Chief Secretary had led to the appointment of the official Rent and Revenue Committee

52. On Conditions in Balrampur Estate[1]

On my return from a tour of the rural areas of some Oudh districts I have read a long *communique* issued by the U.P. Government regarding certain occurrences which took place in the villages of Baraipur and Semri of the Balrampur Estate under the Court of Wards in the Gonda district.[2] It is something the government have at last thought that the charges of amorous behaviour and outrage on women were worthy of their consideration, but it is monstrous that such charges and accounts of disgusting and shameful incidents, supported by abundance of direct evidence and held to be substantiated after a personal enquiry on the spot by responsible public men, should be treated by any government in a manner unworthy of the pettifogging lawyer.

The government has quoted from the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee's recent agrarian report. It should know that some petty points it has raised are answered in that very volume. It should further know that not unoften the police terrorise the village folk and prevent them from taking any action. It should certainly know that in one of the cases mentioned, the people arrested and tried were removed from the village before the outrage on women and they could not know anything about it in the jail.[3] There are many other things which the government should know but I shall not add to the list here.

As it happens I visited both Baraipur and Semri villages only last week and met personally many of the victims as well as witnesses of outrages, and I have come back not only with the conviction that the charges are true but with indignation and humiliation in my heart that such things should occur and be tolerated in our country. Women's honour has become cheap indeed here if it can be subjected with impunity to gross indignity by estate officials and policemen and *thekedars*.

1 Statement to the press, Allahabad, 13 October 1931. *The Tribune*, 15 October 1931.

2 On 9 May 1931 the police and local officials besieged the tenants of Baraipur for rent collection. The tenants wanted two days' grace but they were beaten up and twenty three of them were arrested. At Semri the *thekedar* and his men ill treated the women. For three days no one was allowed to draw water from wells until payment was made. Later thirteen men were prosecuted for having used force against the *thekedar's* men.

3. This happened at Semri.

When I visited Baraipur last week an attempt was made to prevent my going. Several ditches were dug across the road apparently to prevent my car from reaching the village. I survived the ditches. When I reached the village I found that a police guard had been stationed there. I do not know what they were supposed to do. But I was told by many persons that they were trying to prevent people from giving any evidence about the assaults on women. I suppose this is the usual method of finding out truth adopted by the police and the officials of the Court of Wards in the Bahrampur Estate.

53. The Deepening Agrarian Crisis[1]

During my recent tour in the districts of Bara Banki, Gonda, Bahraich and Rae Bareli I went into the rural areas and addressed about 20 mass gatherings of tenants. The remission slips were being distributed at the time and there were a great many objections raised to them at all the meetings I addressed. Quite apart from the original basis of calculation which the government has laid down and which the Congress has considered wholly insufficient, objections were raised everywhere to the method of the application of this basis. So much has been left to government officials that it is possible for them to vary these remissions greatly according to their own predilections or to the pressure brought to bear upon them by various parties. As a rule the zamindars were in a better position to know what was happening and to approach the district magistrates. The tenantry only got to know of the remissions when slips were distributed. They were manifestly dissatisfied with these slips. Two of the factors which agitated them greatly were the public and official announcements that the remissions might be cancelled if full payment was not made within a month; and the further announcement that tenants' objections would only be considered if full payment was made. To call upon tenants to pay up in full and then object is absurd on the face of it, because the contention is that they are not in a position to pay. It is also obvious enough

1. Statement issued at Allahabad, 14 October 1931. *The Leader*, 16 October 1931

that once they pay they are not likely to get back anything. Even worse is the attempt to frighten them into payment by a threat of cancelling the remission.

There has been no relief from collections this year for the tenantry. Coercive processes including steps under Section 21-A for the last rental demand are still continuing. Ordinarily such processes stopped with the coming of the monsoon but this year there has been no such interval. Now a fresh demand is made and threats are held out. It is quite possible that if any payment is made now it will be credited to arrears Then again some classes of tenantry cultivate crops which do not yield much at this time of the year. They will be totally incapable of payment now. Altogether the past and the present policy of the government seems to be to terrorise the tenantry into payment. Many of them in the past have paid up but any inquiry will show that such payment has been made at tremendous loss and even by incurring debts and sale of goods. The desire to hold on to land, specially occupancy land, is so great that a tenant will do almost anything to avoid losing it. The government and the zamindars have played up to this passion for land and extorted the uttermost farthing. Apart from the want of humanity of this procedure it is the worst possible economics; it is bound to lead to an even graver crisis than we have had. I also found during my tour and we are continually getting reports to this effect that assaults and beatings of tenants continue.

Our provincial Congress committee has done its uttermost to find a peaceful solution for this problem by cooperation with all concerned. It seems to us, however, that our efforts have been largely ignored and our advice has hardly ever been accepted by the government. Large numbers of ejected tenants are still to be found in many districts. We made it clear at an early stage that so long as the problem of these ejectments was not satisfactorily solved we could not accept any arrangement as final. The fact that these people have been ejected does not mean so far as we are concerned that the matter is finished. Our provincial committee is now faced with a grave problem and it must come to some decision which may involve far-reaching consequences. We have definitely pledged our word to help the tenantry and we must abide by that. In the absence of Mahatma Gandhi we have tried our best to avoid any action that might be considered to be aggressive, but, if we have no other alternative left, some defensive action may become necessary.

54. To Chief Secretary, U. P. Government[1]

15.10.31

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,

Mr. R. F. Mudie,[2] the collector of Allahabad, has given some figures to the press to show that the remissions he is giving are fair and in accordance with the principles laid down by the local government. He has also made certain statements that the settlement officers' standard rates were taken as fair rates as these were based on rents fixed between 1271 and 1300 *Fasli*, i.e. 1863 and 1892. I do not know how far these figures are correct as other figures obtainable from the Gazetteer and Settlement Report conflict with them. In this connection I should like to draw your attention to some of these latter figures and to the amount of remissions given and announced.

In 1338 *Fasli* the remissions were calculated as follows:

(i) 15 years' increments to be remitted.
(ii) *Less than 12½% increments not to be remitted.*
(iii) Remissions for rabi only

For 1339 *Fasli*, i.e. the current year, remissions are supposed to be calculated on the following basis:

(i) 30 years' increments to be remitted.
(ii) Remissions to apply to all increments, including those less than 12½%.
(iii) Remissions are for both kharif and rabi.

Prima facie the remissions for the current year should thus be far greater than the remissions for 1338 *F*. The actual figures are:

	For fall in prices	For local calamities
In 1338 *F*	Rs. 5.55 lakhs	Rs. 6.75 lakhs

Total remission 12.30 lakhs.

	For fall in prices
In 1339 *F*	Rs 9.50 lakhs.

Although the sanctioned amount for 1338 *F* was 12.30 lakhs, it appears from the collector's statement that only 11 lakhs were distributed. The collector has also stated he gave 7 lakhs for fall in prices and 4 lakhs for calamities. Further he states that the remissions were for

1 A I C C File No G 25/1931, pp 123-129, N.M M L.
2. (b. 1890), Chief Secretary, U P Government, 1939 43; Home Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1944 46, Governor of Sind, 1946 47, after 1947 served in Pakistan

both kharif and rabi 1338 F although government had previously stated definitely that they were for rabi only.

The total remissions for 1339 F are thus apparently less than they should be even if the 1338 F remissions are taken into account.

In this connection it is pertinent to compare the population figures for Allahabad district for different years, as also the figures for area of holdings and under cultivation.

Population

In	1911	12.96 lakhs
	1921	12½ lakhs
	1931	14½ lakhs

(The population of the municipality and cantonment has been excluded)

Area of holdings

In	1907-08	..	12,37,000 acres
	1925-26	..	12,31,000 acres

Area under cultivation

In	1903-07	..	10,67,000 acres
	1922-27	..	10,47,000 acres

Thus while the population has gone up considerably in the last decade, the area of holdings and actually under cultivation has gone down This obviously puts a greater burden on the tenantry. Mr. Drake-Brockman[3] wrote in his Settlement Report of Allahabad, basing his remarks on the population figures of 1911, that a bigger population could not be maintained economically. The outside margin, according to him, had been reached. Even then there were a large number of un-economic holdings. As the population has gone up by 12% and the area under cultivation has gone down the position of the tenants has greatly deteriorated.

The total rental demand in 1915-16 was Rs. 44.7 lakhs, in 1929-30 it was Rs. 57 3 lakhs. The increase in these 14 years was thus Rs. 12.6 lakhs. If even the 1915-16 figures are taken the amount remitted now for 1339 F (Rs. 9.5 lakhs) is 3.1 lakhs less. But the figures for 1915-16 must be greatly in excess of the 1901 figures and therefore the difference will be all the greater.

Mr Mudie states that a special scheme was sanctioned by the government for Allahabad, Fatehpur and Etawah districts. Under this scheme he need not go, for Allahabad, beyond the last settlement

3 Settlement Officer, Allahabad division, 1912 15, commissioner, Fyzabad division, 1929-32

in 1320 *F*, i.e., 1914-15. The settlement officer's standard rates are said to be based on returns fixed between 1271 *F* and 1300 *F*, i.e., 1863 and 1892. This appears to conflict with figures given in Mr. Drake-Brockman's report and in the Allahabad Gazetteer. These figures are as follows:

	Occupancy		Non-occupancy	
	1907-08	1914-15	1907-08	1915-16
For Gangapar ..	5.93	6.15	6.16	6.96
For Doab ..	4.71	5.10	5.59	6.38
Average of above two ..	5.32	5.70	5.88	6.80

The figures for 1907-08 are from the Gazetteer and the figures for 1914-15 from Mr. Drake-Brockman's Settlement Report. Jamnapar has not been given as it is taken separately with Bundelkhand.

The figures for 1907-08 given above are likely to be greatly in excess of 1900 figures as rents went up rapidly after the passing of the Agra Tenancy Act in 1901.

Mr. Mudie's figures according to tahsils may also be compared to the Gazetteer figures for 1907-08 :—

		Mr. Mudie's figures	*Gazetteer : 1907-08*
Bara ..	Occupancy	.. 2.90	.. 2.95 per acre
	non-occ.	.. 2.80	.. 1.87
Chail ..	Occupancy	.. 5.90	.. 5.07
	non-occ.	.. 6.60	.. 6.24
Handia ..	Occupancy	.. 6.10	.. 5.72
	non-occ.	.. 6.50	.. 6.23
Manjhanpur ..	Occupancy	.. 4.70	.. 4.16
	non-occ.	.. 5.70	.. 4.83
Phulpur .	Occupancy	.. 5.90	.. 5.95
	non-occ.	.. 5.90	.. 5.69
Meja .	Occupancy	.. 2.80	.. 2.64
	non-occ.	.. 1.80	.. 1.70
Sirathu .	Occupancy	.. 5.60	.. 4.97
	non-occ.	.. 5.40	.. 5.48
Soraon .	Occupancy	. 6.40	.. 6.33
	non-occ.	6.40	.. 6.75

All these figures go to show that the rents of 1914-15 were as a whole considerably in excess of rents in 1907-08 and it is reasonable to presume that they were still more in excess of those in 1900-01, specially

as the Agra Tenancy Act was passed in 1901 and rents went up subsequently. It is thus not correct to say that the figures for 1914-15, taken as a basis by Mr. Mudie, are equivalent to the figures for 1901, which year the government accepted as the basis of calculation. The result of having taken the wrong year as a starting point means a considerable reduction in the remissions.

Allahabad district has been particularly hard hit during the past six months. The large number of ejectments and the attempts made by the ejected tenants to get back their lands at any cost and at any loss has exhausted them completely. Even the most liberal application of the government's directions as to remissions would not have brought relief to them But the present application of this policy based on 1914-15 makes matters far worse.

So far as I know, no notice of payment within a month has been issued in Allahabad. In the adjoining district of Fatehpur this has been done. Apart from the obvious difficulties of tenants paying up within a month there is another point for consideration. It is well known that receipts are often not given. This will make the poor tenant's position still worse as he will not be able to prove payment. Then again arrears are always with him. It is a little difficult to imagine how a tenant, who is given remission because he cannot pay the full demand, is expected to pay arrears. Yet we have seen during the last six months that he was so expected and was ejected for failure to do so.

I am told that every consideration will be shown to the tenant and every facility afforded to him. Our experience during these past months and even now has been unfortunate. The revenue staff seems to look upon the tenant as the enemy of society to be harassed in every way and made to pay up by any means. For him the period following the Delhi Settlement has been one of the most intense suffering and it is a little difficult to conceive that he will get better treatment now. But even if the treatment was good the fact remains that he must be made to pay and whether he can do so or not is immaterial.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

55. Issue Before the Kisans[1]

Under Swaraj, the administration will be carried on by the people who will have power in their own hands. Swaraj is a kind of panchayati raj, for all over the country, *panchas* will be chosen by the people to decide all matters. The kisans will obviously be the rulers as they form the large majority of the population. Moreover, under Swaraj, everybody will have equal status without any distinction of caste or creed or of high and low.

I feel sorry that the kisans have to toil and labour the whole day while there were others who take away their earnings. It is for ending such sufferings that the Congress started the struggle for Swaraj. Last year the Congress did its best to alleviate the sufferings of the peasants but hitherto its efforts have yielded negligible results. All kinds of sufferings have to be endured in the struggle for attainment of any ideal.

The news received of the Round Table Conference indicates that the conference will yield no result. Swaraj will surely be achieved one day because unity among the people in the country is growing day by day. There is, however, no hope of our achieving it as a result of the Round Table Conference. Mahatma Gandhi may shortly come back empty-handed, and the struggle for Swaraj will then have to be resumed with renewed vigour.

But, meanwhile, we are faced with the question of rent remissions. I do not like the way the district officers are issuing orders that remission will be cancelled if payment is not made within a month of the due date. They are also insisting that the rent should be deposited beforehand in case any tenant desires to file an objection. Though the government have announced that rents should be brought to the level of those paid in 1901, in Allahabad, the district officer has only taken the 1915 rent as the basis for calculating the remissions. The government have sanctioned remission to the extent of 8 annas in the rupee but different methods are reported to have been applied in different districts with the result that in some districts the remission is being given only to the extent of 2 or 3 annas in the rupee.

1 Speech at Bara in Allahabad district, 15 October 1931 From *The Leader*, 18 October 1931.

The tenants should, therefore, consider whether they could pay even the reduced rent. Any decision for non-payment should be taken after great deliberation for it will lead to great suffering and distress. A campaign against payment of rent also seems to be against the truce, but, when entering into the truce, a reservation was made that the Congress would have the right to advise such an action in case of any oppression.

A decision on non-payment can be taken with the consent of the President of the Congress and the Congress Working Committee. If it is taken, there should be no slackening in its execution, for it will become a fight for Swaraj, though, if the tenants desire, the fight can be confined only to rent reduction.

As the Congress committee has decided to hold a tenants' conference on 23 October, I would like the kisans to send to that conference as many representatives as possible so that the committee is able to take right decisions in the matter.

56. To Chief Secretary, U. P. Government[1]

15.10.31

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,

I have written to you on many occasions in the course of the last few months and brought to your notice various activities of government officials, the police and zamindars' agents. You have been good enough to enquire into many of these matters and to inform me of the government viewpoint in regard to them. Sometimes some relief has also followed. But, as a whole, the position has not improved, and indeed, it has deteriorated in many respects. We continue to get reports from a large number of districts showing that the tenantry are being ill-treated and Congress workers are harassed, and, what is even more important, that the rent policy of government and its application is causing misery to vast numbers of people. I hesitate to write to you again and again on the same subject. Attempts to communicate directly with district officials have often been met with snubs from them. I do not know if government have any uniform policy in regard to such matters. If they do not want us to communicate directly with

1. A I C C. File No. G-40/(KW)(m)/1931, pp 49-57, N M M L.

district officers, please let me know so that we may issue our instructions accordingly. Would you like our provincial Congress committee to address you directly in regard to all complaints from districts?

I have recently visited some rural areas and many complaints were brought to my notice. In Bahraich district a note containing a number of recent complaints from Naapara, Payagpur and other estates was sent to the deputy commissioner. These complaints included charges of molestation and outrage on women. In his reply the district commissioner indicated that he could only take action if the tenants approach him direct. The district magistrate of Bareilly has consistently refused to take any notice of complaints forwarded to him by the local Congress people. I was in Bareilly about two weeks ago and I wrote to him about these complaints.[2] In his reply he has said that he will send answers to them to the local government. From Basti district many complaints have come of the activities of the employees of zamindars.

In Muttra it appears that the *thanedars* of Chaumuha and Bijhari are again instituting cases under Section 107 Cr. P.C. You will remember that the police of these two places were criticised in the recent judgments of the sessions judge.[3] No steps have been taken against police officers and they appear to be free to continue in the old way.

I presume the government have made up their mind about the Semri and Baraipur occurrences, judging from the long *communique* they have published.[4] I should like to tell you however that after personally meeting the parties concerned and talking to them at some length, I am quite convinced of the truth of the charges made. You know that the Baraipur occurrences were brought to the notice of the deputy commissioner of Gonda at the beginning of June by the president of the district Congress committee. About Semri I was told that a registered letter containing an account of what had happened was sent to the deputy commissioner the day after the occurrence. I have seen the postal receipt for this. I do not refer here to other facts, such as the reported attempt of the women to lodge a complaint at the police station. The evidence is really overwhelming.

I have drawn your attention on several occasions to the ejectments, specially in Allahabad district. Many of these ejected tenants, driven by their passionate attachment to their land, have got them back, but they have done so at the cost of heavy additional debts and selling

2 See *ante*, item 46

3 See *ante*, item 38.

4 *The communique dated 16 July 1931 denied the Congress allegation of harassment and ejectments.*

their cattle. They are in a bad way and are sinking deeper and deeper into the mire. Their capacity to pay anything in future is being reduced to vanishing point. Collections backed by coercive processes have continued without a break both here and in other districts, in some of which Sec. 12A Oudh Rent Act, is being enforced now.

It has been a continuous story of pay, pay, pay or lose your lands and in addition suffer other penalties. Cases of trespass against ejected tenants have been frequent and have resulted in imprisonment and fine. And before the old chapter has ended, a fresh one of payment backed by threats has now begun.

It has been our contention that the basis of the remissions for the new year is incorrect and inadequate. But even worse has been the method of applying this basis. A great deal has been left to the discretion of the district officials and remissions have thus varied in accordance with individual temperaments. In Allahabad district the remissions for the current year as announced are actually less than for the last rabi, although they are meant to be for two seasons while the rabi remissions were for one season only. Apart from this it would appear to be obvious that this year's remissions should be greater than last year's as they are supposed to be based on the 1901 figures. The district magistrate of Allahabad has come out with many columns of figures and contends that the figures for 1901 were the same as those for 1914-15. This is difficult to believe and such figures as we have in our possession go to contradict it. In this connection it is interesting to note that the district magistrate allowed less remissions in rabi last year than the government had actually sanctioned.

The tenants have had practically no opportunity to object to the amount of the remissions. It is now stated that they may file objections provided they pay up the full demand first. This proviso is curious and instructive. The tenants are not flush with money and their difficulty is often that they cannot pay the full amount. If they cannot do so then they are debarred from even raising objections. If they manage to pay by begging or borrowing or selling, then *prima facie* they are in a position to pay and little value need be attached to their objection.

In some of the districts I have visited, notices have been officially circulated that if the tenant does not pay within a month the remission may be cancelled. I understand that this has been done under directions from the local government. The object of such a direction can only be to frighten the tenant into payment anyhow. So far as I know it is very seldom, if ever, that the full amount due is paid up in November. For many tenants, dealing in particular crops, this is

quite impossible as such crops are only gradually collected. Then again if all the tenants have to pay up within the month, this necessarily means that the tenants must sell their produce immediately and more or less together. If a large quantity of grain or other crop is thrown on to the market at the same time this is bound to result in a fall in the price of grain or other crop, and this in its turn will make the condition of the tenant as well as his zamindar worse.

It may be that the government does not intend to enforce rigidly this direction about payment within a month, and that it was meant merely as a threat. Even so many zamindars will take shelter under the direction and profit by it and the poor tenant will go to the wall.

Thus the outlook for the tenant is about as black as it could well be and there seems no way out. If the government policy is enforced, he is doomed to even greater suffering than he has passed through. We have been anxiously considering this and the Allahabad District Congress Committee have felt that they can be no parties to this continuous oppression of the kisan leading to his economic death. They feel that it may be necessary for them to advise the tenantry to withhold payment of rent till a satisfactory solution is found.[5] They do not wish to take any decision, involving far-reaching consequences, without the fullest thought and consideration. As at present advised however they see no other way. They are however calling a representative kisan conference to consider the question, and are also communicating with the provincial and the All India Congress.[6]

I regret greatly that such a step should be contemplated by them, specially at a time when Gandhiji is attending the Round Table Conference. But the question of payment or non-payment is an urgent issue and cannot await the deliberations of the Round Table Conference or the return of Gandhiji. We have tried to avoid raising any issue which might lead to friction and we shall continue to do so. But the fates seem to be against this.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5 On 15 October the Allahabad D.C.C. passed a resolution seeking permission from the provincial Congress committee to start a no rent and no revenue campaign in Allahabad district

6 For Jawaharlal's speech at this conference held on 23 October 1931 at Allahabad, see *post*, item 66.

57. To Private Secretary to Viceroy[1]

16.10.31

Dear Mr. Mieville,

You were good enough to write to me some time ago and convey His Excellency's message to me that he wished me to communicate with him in the event of my having any difficulty. I pointed out in my reply that I was greatly troubled at the large number of ejectments of tenants and the coercive processes employed to extort rent from them which they could not ordinarily pay without selling their cattle and other property or borrowing at a heavy rate of interest.[2] I have not written again to you as I did not wish to trouble His Excellency. But I have been writing to the local government and keeping them informed of our difficulties. I believe Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel has also written to Mr. Emerson on the subject.[3]

I am now availing myself of His Excellency's suggestion to write to you, for his information, as the agrarian situation has again become critical.[4] The tenantry have had to face, during the last six months, continuously coercive processes and forcible measures to extort rent from them. Large number of them were ejected from their lands. His Excellency will appreciate what the reaction of a peasant is when he is dispossessed of his land, specially if he has had an occupancy holding which has been in his family for generations. The Indian peasant, like any other peasant, or perhaps even more so, is passionately attached to his land. Thousands of ejectments caused deep distress and misery and repeated attempts were made by us to get the lands returned to them on fair terms. Mr. Gandhi discussed this matter with Mr. Emerson[5] and I have been continually writing about it to the U.P. Government. The problem and the distress were recognised to exist but it was apparently hoped that something would

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G 7/1931, pp. 47-53, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, item 35.
3. Vallabhbhai Patel wrote to Emerson on 15 September 1931: "The wholesale ejectments in various places and specially the recent issue of notices in Muttra district is creating a grave and unbearable situation."
4. The Private Secretary to the Viceroy replied: "Acting on His Excellency's instructions, I have requested the Home Department to ascertain from the local government the facts as mentioned in your letter."
5. On 15 and 16 July 1931.

happen which would automatically solve the problem and remove the distress. So nothing was done except to continue the coercive processes and to proceed for criminal trespass against those ejected tenants who remained on their lands.

Gradually the poor tenant was beaten down and made to feel that his land was going for ever. His passion for the land was too great for him to put up with this idea and so many sold their cattle and other belongings and often borrowed at heavy rates of interest. They managed to get back their land after paying not only the full demand but also various other charges. Thus the tenant, who was recognised to be very hard hit by the fall in prices and therefore entitled to remission on the usual rental demand, ultimately had often to pay a sum often in excess of the full demand. He did so practically at the cost of selling himself to the moneylender. It was an act of folly for which he and all concerned will suffer, but it is difficult to blame him for it. He has nothing in the world except his land to fall back upon.

Ever since the Delhi Settlement the tenant in the United Provinces has had to face a most difficult situation. He has been treated to every kind of indignity and harassment and every device has been employed to make him pay. The general depression and the economic situation were against him. To this was added the treatment he got from his landlord and from the revenue staff. To both these the tenant seemed to be an enemy to be combated and beaten down. His Excellency knows of the numerous complaints we have made from time to time about the treatment of the peasants. In varying degrees this treatment has continued and there has been no interval or period of rest for the tenants. Ordinarily the period of collections is supposed to close about the time the rains break out and the peasant is left in peace to till his field. There has been no such break or suspension this year and forcible collections for the past season have continued and are continuing. In many cases, the peasant has been allowed to till his field and sow his crop and just when the crops appear and harvest time approaches and he hopes to get some return for his toil, he has been threatened with dispossession and actually dispossessed. Now the new season has begun and the new rental demand falls due. Thus before the tenant has survived the coercive processes of the last season, he is confronted with a repetition of the same processes. The period of the Delhi Settlement has been one of ceaseless war against the tenant.

I do not wish to trouble His Excellency with lists of complaints. We have communicated these from time to time to the local government.

57. To Private Secretary to Viceroy[1]

16.10.31

Dear Mr. Mieville,

You were good enough to write to me some time ago and convey Hi Excellency's message to me that he wished me to communicate wit him in the event of my having any difficulty. I pointed out in m reply that I was greatly troubled at the large number of ejectments o tenants and the coercive processes employed to extort rent from then which they could not ordinarily pay without selling their cattle an other property or borrowing at a heavy rate of interest.[2] I have no written again to you as I did not wish to trouble His Excellency. Bu I have been writing to the local government and keeping them informe of our difficulties. I believe Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel has also writte to Mr. Emerson on the subject.[3]

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1 AICC File No. G-7/1931, pp 47-53, NMML
2 See *ante*, item 35
3 Vallabhbhai Patel wrote to Emerson on 15 September 1931: "The wholesale ejectments in various places and specially the recent issue of notices in Muttra district is creating a grave and unbearable situation."
4. The Private Secretary to the Viceroy replied. "Acting on His Excellency's instructions, I have requested the Home Department to ascertain from the local government the facts as mentioned in your letter."
5. On 15 and 16 July 1931.

us no option. They have suffered enough during the past six months. We cannot be willing parties to any further suffering for them.

I am sorry to have to write at such length. I feel that some explanation is due to His Excellency for the step which one of our Congress committees intends to take. It is with great regret that the taking of such a step has been contemplated, specially at a time when Mr. Gandhi is attending the Round Table Conference. But the question of payment or withholding of payment of rent is a vital and an urgent one for the tenantry and it cannot afford to be shelved till the conclusion of the London conference.

I trust His Excellency is well now.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

58. Cable to Mahatma Gandhi[1]

16/10/31

Agrarian situation becoming critical. Coercive processes attachments forcible collection rent continued right through without interval. Many ejected tenants proceeded against for criminal trespass. Many for fear permanently losing land sold cattle belongings borrowed money. Paid full demand plus extras. Fresh demand now made for current season. Inadequate remissions. Threat that if full payment not made within month remission might be cancelled. Also no objection considered on behalf tenants till full payment made. Condition kisans deplorable. Thoroughly exhausted after past six months continuous harassment forcible measures. Apparently process likely to be repeated this season also. Allahabad District Congress Committee resolved under circumstances ask permission start satyagraha if necessity arises by advising withholding payment rent. Application for permission made to Vallabhbhai and provincial committee. Representative district kisan conference being held next week to decide question. Decision likely have far-reaching consequences but question payment or withholding payment must be decided soon. Vital urgent problem for kisans admitting no delay.[2]

1 A.I.C.C. File No. G-140/1931 (Pt III), pp. 167-168, N.M.M.L
2 On 18 October 1931 Mahatma Gandhi cabled back: "You should unhesitatingly take necessary steps meet every situation. Expect nothing here"

But I should like to mention two cases which have filled us with humiliation and indignation. These are instances of barbarous outrage on women in the villages of Semri and Baraipur in the Balrampur Estate under the Court of Wards in Gonda district. The U.P. Government has issued a long *communique* denying that anything of the kind alleged occurred. If this is the U.P. Government's view after a private enquiry, I suppose we cannot help it, but it is no one else's view. Many prominent public men have personally investigated the matter with care and are convinced of the truth of the charges. I have myself visited the localities and met the persons concerned. I have no doubt whatever that the outrages were committed. But the U.P. Government has ignored all the direct evidence and put forward certain circumstantial arguments which were not worthy of them. If they are so sure of their facts a public and impartial enquiry would have satisfied everybody. His Excellency will appreciate that people feel strongly where the honour of their womenfolk is concerned.

Our present difficulty is that the new scale of remissions, for the current agricultural year, is not only inadequate in principle, but has been applied in such a way as to reduce even the remissions which ought to have been given under it. Further, it is stated that if the tenant does not pay up in full within a month even these remissions might be cancelled. It is obvious that after all that has occurred during the last six months he is not in a position to pay up anything quickly. He has not got over his last payment yet and if all the tenants tried to pay within a month, they would have to flood the market with their produce and thus further reduce the price of grain etc. This would be disastrous for the tenant as well as the landlord and the State. The prospect ahead of the tenantry is again therefore one of coercive processes, ejectments, harassments, attachments, sale of cattle or property, if they still possess any, and all that has happened this summer will be repeated. They faced this prospect on our advice last season and they have come out of it terribly shaken up. We dare not offer them this advice again. Therefore we may be driven to advise them to withhold payment of rent for the present. One of our local Congress committees, the Allahabad District Congress Committee, has after anxious and prolonged consideration decided to approach its superior body, the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, and our President, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, for permission, should need arise, to advise withholding payment of rent till relief is given in regard to various matters connected with it. This refers to one district only but we realise that this may have far-reaching consequences. Circumstances and the miserable plight of the tenantry appear to leave

us no option. They have suffered enough during the past six months. We cannot be willing parties to any further suffering for them.

I am sorry to have to write at such length. I feel that some explanation is due to His Excellency for the step which one of our Congress committees intends to take. It is with great regret that the taking of such a step has been contemplated, specially at a time when Mr. Gandhi is attending the Round Table Conference. But the question of payment or withholding of payment of rent is a vital and an urgent one for the tenantry and it cannot afford to be shelved till the conclusion of the London conference.

I trust His Excellency is well now.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

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16/10/31

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1 A.I.C.C. File No G-140/1931 (Pt. III), pp. 167 168, N.M.M.L.
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2 On 18 October 1931 Mahatma Gandhi cabled back: "You should unhesitatingly take necessary steps meet every situation. Expect nothing here."

59. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
October 16th, 1931

My dear Bapu,
I have sent you a cable today which I am afraid will add to your worries. This cable relates to a decision of the Allahabad District Congress Committee asking for permission to advise tenants to withhold payment of rent for the current year. I am enclosing copy of this cable as well as copies of letters I have addressed to Private Secretary to the Viceroy and Kunwar Jagdish Prasad. You need not trouble to read through these letters specially one of them which is full of figures. I thought, however, they should be with you for facility of reference. I have taken all these steps on my own account more or less privately. But the final communication will be sent by the presidents of our provincial and Allahabad District Congress Committee. It is really deplorable to what a pass we have reduced the tenants largely because of the advice we gave. They followed that advice for a while and talked of paying 8 annas and 12 annas and taking full receipts but it had little effect on anybody and they were proceeded against and finally ejected. Meanwhile of course there were all manner of acts of oppression. Even after their ejectments they hoped that the Congress would do something for them to save them their lands. Nothing happened except numerous cases of criminal trespass. Not only were they ejected from their lands but they were sent to prison and fined for trespass. Ultimately they despaired of getting any help from the Congress and had nowhere to look to for relief. Even then they did not blame us or lose faith in our *bona fides*. But they certainly felt that we were not in a position to do anything for them. At last, full of despair, urged on by the one desire to save their lands at any cost, they sold up their cattle and borrowed money wherever they could and at whatever rates they could without thinking of the consequences. Only one thought obsessed them—the idea of saving their lands. So they paid not only the full sum due for the current year but often some arrears and heavy costs. They thus had to pay very much more in the end to get back their land than if they had paid the full rent without any remission to begin with. And they got back something much less than they previously had. Their occupancy rights had gone and they became life tenants.

1 J N Correspondence, NMML.

Now they are threatened with the new season's demand and the same processes are likely to be repeated. It is a difficult problem for them and for us. After very careful consideration our district committee felt there was no way out except to advise that rents be withheld. This advice must be given within the next two or three weeks if it is to be in time and effective. Hence the urgency of the matter. Our district and our province will of course take no step without the permission of the Working Committee. The Working Committee meets at Delhi on the 27th of this month. Our provincial committee meets immediately after.

It is clear that any step that the Allahabad district might take would have its effect on adjoining districts which are equally hard hit. The matter may become provincial. You can yourself appreciate the other far-reaching consequences.

I do not know how this will affect your work in London. So far as I can see the Round Table Conference is as dead as a door nail and it does not matter much what effect is produced on it.

I am sending this letter some days ahead of the air mail date. I shall try to follow it up with another letter, if necessary, giving you further particulars.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

60. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Allahabad
October 16th, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I sent you a telegram yesterday informing you of the decision of the Allahabad District Congress Committee to ask for permission to start, if need arises, satyagraha, i e, advising tenants to withhold payment of the current rent.[2] I now enclose copies of letters I have sent to the

1 AICC. File No G-25/1931, p 121, NMML.

2 The telegram read "Agrarian situation here growing serious. Allahabad District Congress Committee decided to request permission to start satyagraha if necessary by advising tenants not to pay rents at present. Holding representative kisan conference next week to consider question."

Private Secretary to the Viceroy and Chief Secretary to the U.P. Government. Also a copy of a cable I have sent to Bapu.[3] There will be a district kisan conference next week to consider this question still further. But of course no definite action can or will be taken without your permission. The whole matter might be considered at the Working Committee on the 27th. Any action taken in Allahabad district will involve the province gradually, and any such provincial action will necessarily have far-reaching consequences. So it is necessary for the Working Committee to consider it fully.

I have your telegram informing me that the Working Committee has been definitely fixed for Delhi the 27th at noon. I am glad of this. Do you want me to reach there on the 27th morning or earlier? If you like I can get there a day earlier.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

3 See *ante*, item 58.

61. To Purushottamdas Tandon[1]

16/10/31

My dear Purushottamdas,

In pursuance of yesterday's resolution of the D.C.C. I have written some letters and sent a telegram and a cable. I enclose copies of some of these letters for your information—also copy of a cable I have sent to Gandhiji. I have sent these papers to Sherwani also.

I hope that you have written for permission to the P.C.C. as well as to Vallabhbhai. Your letters to them should be fairly detailed and should explain the situation fully and the need for satyagraha. My letters to the various parties are more or less private communications. Vallabhbhai is in Bardoli.

Mehta, the commissioner, saw me yesterday. He tried to make out what special steps government was taking to meet the difficulties of

1 *AICC File No G-25/1931*, pp 115-116, *NMML*. Purushottamdas Tandon was president, Allahabad D.C.C., at this time.

the tenants. He was very keen that some one should meet Mudie before he leaves Allahabad in a day or two. I was under the impression that you were going to see him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

62. To T. A. K. Sherwani[1]

16.10.31

My dear Tasadduq,
As you know the Allahabad D.C.C. has passed a resolution yesterday asking for permission to start satyagraha, i.e., to advise tenants to withhold payment of rent for the present. I have written a number of letters in this connection, copies of which I enclose for your information. These are two letters to Jagdish Prasad, one to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, one to Vallabhbhai Patel and a cable to Gandhiji. I also sent a telegram to Vallabhbhai yesterday.

I have communicated with the President, A.I.C.C., but the formal communication should go from you. I would suggest your asking him or the Working Committee to authorise our P.C.C. Council to take action if it thinks this necessary. This matter might be included in the next Council agenda.

It has been definitely decided that the Working Committee will meet at Delhi on October 27th, 1931. So I think you might have the P.C.C. notices issued for the 31st and 1st as previously fixed.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No G-25/1931, p. 119, NMML. Sherwani was president, UPPCC, at this time.

63. To Chief Secretary, U. P. Government[1]

Allahabad
October 16th, 1931

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,

I enclose copies of two notices under Sec. 144 Cr. P.C. issued by the district magistrate of Sultanpur. You will remember that a very large number of such notices were issued in Sultanpur some months ago and your attention was drawn to the fact that a deliberate attempt was being made to suppress all Congress and kisan activities. These notices gradually expired. Now a fresh batch is appearing. The way these notices are prepared can be imagined by the fact that Pandit Badri Shukla[2] to whom the notice headed B was issued had not even been to the villages mentioned on the dates given in the notice. When this was pointed out to the district magistrate he quietly withdrew this notice and immediately issued another which did not mention any place. It is clear enough that a notice had to be issued; whether there was any reason for it or not was immaterial.

The language of the notices is also worthy of attention. To criticise the zamindars or the Court of Wards is forbidden. Do you think this is a *bona fide* notice? Or do you not think that it is not *bona fide* and is solely aimed at suppressing the ordinary activities of the Congress? I might add that the district magistrate was asked to point out what he objected to in any speech made. He has so far not done so.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

64. To Secretary, Jalabad Congress Committee[1]

October 17th, 1931

Dear Friend,
I have your letter and telegram. You should write to us more fully. I understand that you have been told that remissions will be withdrawn if payment is not made within a month. This has been done in several districts. This is most objectionable. The remissions are also very inadequate. Our provincial Congress committee will consider this matter on the 1st November. We may have to take strong action to help the kisans.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C C. File No. G-140/1931(Pt. II), p. 155, N M M L.
Jalabad is in Farrukhabad district.

65. To Jagannath Prasad Agarwal[1]

October 19th, 1931

My dear Jagannath,[2]
Your letter of the 13th.[3] Will you please send definite accounts of oppression? Vague charges do not help us much.

As for Sheikh Habeeb Ullah refusing to take money through you I can quite understand it.[4]

I cannot send you an expert merely to enquire into the remissions in your district. You will have to do it yourself.

I am sorry I cannot yet promise you a day. The political situation is developing so rapidly that I cannot make a promise.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 A I C C File No G-140/1931(Pt II), p 147, N M M L.
2 President, Sitapur D C C
3 He had complained that inadequate rent remission had been granted to the kisans in Sitapur district and coercion for realisation of rent still continued.
4 Taluqdar of Mahmudabad Estate in Sitapur district who refused to accept rent through Congress workers

66. Speech at Allahabad District Kisans Conference[1]

The government officials were told during the Gandhi-Irwin talks that if the tenants were asked to pay the full amount of rent, it would be tantamount to oppression, for they would not be able to comply with the demand. The government then declared that they would consider the plight of the peasants and grant adequate remissions. The Congress, therefore, told the kisans to pay as much as they could.

I am very much grieved to find that during the last six months the tenants have been oppressed a lot. Satyagraha is the only effective weapon which could allay the distress, but that weapon has to be laid aside for the moment on account of the truce. The Congress therefore is helpless, and Congressmen merely content themselves with hearing reports of the tenants' sufferings.

No effort is now needed to foresee the result of the Round Table Conference. The only reply to the insult by the Prime Minister to our leader is that the fight should be resumed with vigour and carried through to the end till victory is attained.[2] The question is when the fight for Swaraj has to be resumed. I hope that it will be resumed as soon as Mahatma Gandhi comes back from England.

But the question before the tenants conference is the consideration of the payment of rents and they cannot afford to wait till the return of Mahatma Gandhi. Because, if the decision about non payment has to be taken, it should be taken at the proper time, and not in the midst of the rent collections. This would enable all the tenants to have equal advantage of the decision. The tenants have to consider whether the present remissions are sufficient.

You know that the district Congress committee has asked for permission to start satyagraha in the shape of a no-rent campaign. Considering your deplorable plight I would say that the peasants have every right to do what they think best to meet the situation. But as a member of the Congress Working Committee I cannot give any definite advice on the subject as it would have an effect on the political situation in the [illegible] untry. So it becomes necessary that the Working

[illegible] The [illegible] October 1931.

[illegible] speaking at the Minorities Com[illegible] that the Congress represented the

Committee should give its decision. The president of the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee and the president of the district Congress committee have been specially invited to the meeting of the Working Committee to help the Committee arrive at a decision with their advice. I would like you to express your views on the question of rent at this conference.

This resolution about satyagraha is a sort of invitation to you to go to jail and to undergo repression,[3] which is bound to be acute on this occasion, as the present fight would be the last fight and would go on until Swaraj is attained. Therefore, if you are prepared to undergo such suffering then accept it. So far as my view is concerned, it is this, that for us, for you, and for the whole country, there is no other way out of the difficulty than this.

3 "In case government does not adopt suitable methods for meeting the conditions, the tenants of the whole district will oppose government by resorting to a no rent campaign and they will gladly carry out the instructions of the Congress committee in this behalf."

67. To Sitla Sahai[1]

October 23rd, 1931

Dear Sitla Sahai,

Your letter. I have had no reply from the U.P. Government about Gajadhar Singh.[2] I cannot write to them again as we are on breaking point. As for appeal it is for you and others to judge. I do not know all the facts.

I was told that some of our people in Rae Bareli have been giving security under Sec. 107. This should not be encouraged. Of course if any one wants to give it we cannot stop him. But it is not the Congress policy to give security

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No G-140/1931(Pt II), p 143, NMML.
2 He was arrested on 31 August 1931 for picketing a drug shop at Deraigan in Rae Bareli district

68. To Chief Secretary, U. P. Government[1]

26.10.31

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,

As I told you on the telephone yesterday we shall gladly meet the settlement commissioner and the Allahabad officials.[2] I should have liked this meeting to take place before the Working Committee meets but that I am afraid is impossible. I am leaving shortly for Delhi as the Working Committee meets there from tomorrow onwards. Soon after the provincial Congress committee will meet at Lucknow. As both these committees will have to consider the agrarian situation in the U.P. and specially in the Allahabad district it would have been discreeter if we had met the settlement commissioner and the other officials before the committee meetings took place. Unfortunately that cannot be arranged now. I cannot definitely suggest a date for our informal conference now. It will have to be some time early in November—probably the 3rd. November 3rd, Saturday, at Allahabad, may be provisionally fixed. Unfortunately Purushottamdas Tandon has gone to Lahore. I shall get into touch with him and inform him of this date. If no hitch occurs, and you do not hear from me to the contrary, we shall adhere to November 3rd.

So far as Allahabad is concerned the presence of Purushottamdas Tandon, Venkatesh Narayan Tivary, Lal Bahadur,[3] the secretary of our district committee, and myself will be necessary. I feel however that the questions to be discussed will raise wider issues and it will be desirable if some of our provincial representatives are also present. In particular our president, Tasadduq A. K. Sherwani and Govind Ballabh Pant, should be present. As the provincial Congress committee is meeting soon they will probably decide on a course of action or authorise

1 A.I.C.C. File No G-25/1931, pp. 91-95, N.M.M.L.

2 Jawaharlal had charged the government that the remission in Allahabad district had not been calculated according to the government formula published on 8 August 1931. The Chief Secretary informed him on 25 October 1931 that Congress representatives could discuss the remissions issue with Allahabad district officials.

3. Lal Bahadur Shastri (1904-1966); member of the Servants of the People Society; spent nine years in jail during freedom struggle; general secretary, U.P.P.C.C. 1935-38; Home Minister, U.P., 1947-51; General Secretary, A.I.C.C. 1951, Union Minister for Railways, 1952-56, for Communications, 1957-58, for Commerce and Industry, 1958-61, for Home Affairs, 1961-63 and Prime Minister, June 1964—January 1966

their Council to take the necessary steps. It is difficult for me to commit them without consulting them.

Another difficulty that faces us is this. An important point at issue between the Allahabad District Congress Committee and the local officials has been the manner of calculation of the remissions and particularly the date from which such calculations should be made. But there are other important matters also. For instance, the principle underlying the policy of government in regard to these remissions is itself objected to. Further there is the question of arrears. It is difficult for us to understand how any arrears can be rightly demanded when it is admitted that the full current demand itself cannot be paid. Then there is the question of ejectments about which I have written to you so often. The date of payment is also important in view of the notices issued in many districts that the remissions might be withdrawn if payment is not within a certain date. There are some other points also but I need not refer to all of them here. One matter however I must mention. This is the loss caused by local calamities. It is well known that the recent rains have ruined the crops in many areas. This has to be taken into consideration in assessing the current rent.

I might add that we continue to receive reports from districts which show that the repressive policy of government in regard to rent collections and the like continues. In Bulandshahr, we are informed that the police and *kurk amins* have been going about attaching property. In Bara Banki quite a large number of Sec. 107 notices have been issued. In Sultanpur district, a notice, dated 19th October, under Sec. 144 Cr. P.C. was issued to Syt. Sitla Sahai last week forbidding him from speaking on the ground that he had been "wandering over the countryside and instructing tenants to withhold payment of rent full or partial." This is a totally wrong statement. He has only been once before in Sultanpur since weeks or months ago and said nothing about withholding payment of rent.

I hope you will get over your indisposition soon.

Immediately after writing the above to you I telephoned to Mr. V. N. Mehta and informed him that November 3rd might be fixed provisionally for the conference. He suggested to me that meanwhile it would be desirable that no aggressive propaganda was carried on on our behalf. I would gladly agree to anything that would avoid friction and make it easier to arrive at an understanding. But certain steps have been taken by us, for instance, the tenants' conference held on the 23rd, which came to certain conclusions. A number of meetings in rural areas have also been fixed up and it was proposed to issue some leaflets. I shall suggest that propagandist leaflets be not issued for the time

being, but it is hardly possible or desirable to stop the meetings which have already been arranged. These meetings are held regularly by our workers and they need not be interpreted as constituting any special aggressive campaign.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

69. To T. A. K. Sherwani[1]

30.10.31

Dear Sir,

I enclose a copy of the resolution passed by the Working Committee on the application of the Allahabad D.C.C. for permission to start defensive satyagraha.[2] The Working Committee was of opinion that the U.P.P.C.C. should first consider the matter and forward their opinion before the question could properly be considered by the Working Committee. In order, however, to avoid any unnecessary waste of time in a matter of urgency the Committee has authorised the President, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, to deal with the application and to give his decision on it after the P.C.C. has considered it. Will you therefore place the application before your provincial committee, which I understand is meeting soon, and communicate to me their recommendation?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No G 25/1931, p 83, NMML.
2 "If the Provincial Congress Committee felt that the plight of the Allahabad district peasants was a fit case for defensive satyagraha in terms of the Simla agreement, the Congress President might give such decision on the application as he considered necessary."

70. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Lucknow
Nov. 2nd, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,
I enclose copies of two resolutions passed by the U.P.P.C.C. today. The Council of the P.C.C. recommended these resolutions after prolonged consideration extending to two days. We have also appointed a small committee to negotiate with government.[2] We meet some officials tomorrow but I am afraid the question of basic principle will hardly be considered then. We shall offer to discuss them with the provincial government. I have little hope of a successful outcome.

I also enclose a note on the Cawnpore report.[3] It has been hastily written but it gives my viewpoint. If you decide on publishing the report, I think it will be desirable to have it printed in Allahabad under Sunderlal's supervision. All the proof correcting and other labour will then fall on him and he will like it. He could also be entrusted with the translation of it.

I am just going to Allahabad.

I was shocked to read of the second terrorist outrage in Bengal.[4] I felt that I was wrong in Delhi when I suggested waiting for further news before passing a resolution. I spoke about these outrages here at the district conference and a resolution was also passed by the conference.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

ENCLOSURE

RESOLUTION OF U.P.P.C.C.

The P.C.C. has considered the application of the Allahabad District Congress Committee for permission to start satyagraha against the agrarian

1. AICC File No. 54/1931(Pt. III), pp. 365-366, NMML.
2. It consisted of Jawaharlal, Purushottamdas Tandon, Govind Ballabh Pant, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Venkatesh Narayan Tivary and T. A. K. Sherwani
3. See *post*, section 3, item 67
4. At Dacca, there was an unsuccessful attempt made to murder the district magistrate on 28 October 1931

policy of the government by recommending that the payment of rent and revenue should be withheld till such time as adequate relief is given to the agriculturists, and the resolution of the Working Committee passed on this application being forwarded to them by the president of this committee. The committee has also considered reports from various districts which show that the remissions announced by government for the current *Fasli* year are wholly unsatisfactory and inadequate in principle; that the method according to which they are subject have made them still more ineffective and unacceptable; that no provision is made for the restoration of land to the ejected tenants or in regard to the arrears of rents and revenue and other debts which weigh down the agricultural classes; that no allowance has so far been made for the local calamities which have afflicted numerous districts in the province. The committee has further been informed that coercive processes for the realisation of rent continue and tenants are still being harassed, and many zamindars have been subjected to hardship and indignity to compel them to pay the full revenue demand. The provincial committee as well as many district committees have made continuous efforts to seek relief from provincial and local authorities, but the policy followed by the government during the last six months has resulted in the progressive deterioration of agrarian conditions in the province and has caused great suffering to the peasantry. The committee is of opinion that unless immediate relief is given the Allahabad district and many other districts will be justified in resorting to satyagraha in terms of the Simla Agreement dated 27th August 1931, referred to in the Working Committee resolution. The committee however is of opinion that another effort should be made to obtain adequate relief and authorises its Council in this behalf.

In the event of such relief not forthcoming the Council is given authority to take necessary permission from the President of the A.I.C.C. to allow Allahabad D.C.C. as well as other districts similarly situated to take such defensive action as may be considered necessary.

The Council is further authorised to appoint, should necessity arise, a smaller committee to deal with agrarian matters and to give effect to this resolution of the committee.

The second resolution passed by the P.C.C. is as follows:—

The P.C.C. has noted that local officials in many districts have continued to pursue a policy of direct and indirect interference in Congress activities and of gagging and arresting Congress workers and of encouraging people to indulge in disgraceful practices to break up Congress meetings. The committee has further noted that well established incidents attested to by responsible public men, where atrocities have

taken place, have been denied by government without any open and proper inquiries. In accordance with the Congress policy since the Delhi truce the P.C.C. has consistently endeavoured to place all such grievances before the provincial and local officials with a view to obtain relief. In view however of the fact that such occurrences continue and relief is seldom obtained and the truth is frequently denied on behalf of the government, the committee thinks it necessary to reconsider this policy and where Congress work is deliberately interfered with, to take the necessary steps to continue it in spite of this interference. The P.C.C. authorises the Council to consider such cases and to give necessary directions in the matter and if necessary to take the permission of the President of the A.I.C.C. in this behalf.

Peace we can understand and war we are not unused to. But this is neither peace nor war. It is an impossible situation which cannot last for long.

71. To Chief Secretary, U. P. Government[1]

Allahabad
November 3rd, 1931

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,

The informal conference with the district officials and Mr. K. N. Knox,[2] that was arranged at your suggestion, took place today. I am afraid it did not yield any useful result.[3] We were told that we could not consider the basis of remissions, nor could we discuss arrears or debts or ejectments or local calamities or similar matters. The interpretations put on the Rent and Revenue Committee's report and on the G.O. defining government policy were also novel and extraordinary. It is not quite clear what the purpose of the conference was if no single important matter even relating to Allahabad district could be discussed.

1. A I C C. File No. G 25/1931, p. 41, N.M M L.
2. Settlement Commissioner, Allahabad district.
3. During the discussion the Congress leaders raised the question of the whole policy underlying the remissions but the officials argued that they could only discuss the remissions in Allahabad district The discussions were therefore inconclusive.

I have written to you so frequently on this subject that it is not necessary to trouble you again with a repetition of what I have previously said. I would only add that, so far as we are concerned, the situation is grave and no relief seems to be in sight. The matter has been considered by the All India Working Committee of the Congress and the provincial committee. The provincial committee has directed us to make a further effort to obtain relief from the local government. They have also appointed a special committee for the purpose of meeting representatives of the local government, if the government is agreeable to having such a conference. Our president, T. A. K. Sherwani, will write to you separately about this.

I am a member of this committee but I have to go to Bombay on the 6th and I may not return till the 10th. If the proposed conference is held after the 10th I shall try to be present. But we are anxious that there should be no delay and even in my absence other members can meet you or others whom the government may suggest.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

72. To Rampal Singh[1]

Allahabad
November 5th, 1931

My dear Raja Saheb,

I regret the delay in acknowledging your letter of the 25th October. You have dealt at length in the letter you enclosed with the incidents of Syt. Sitla Sahai's leaflet.[2] I hardly think I need say anything more on this subject. The matter is of little importance. Even if your interpretation is correct, and I do not think it is wholly correct, it simply amounts to this that some of our local workers tried to take the entire credit for themselves of certain happenings. This may have been wrong and unfortunate but it is a human failing and can hardly be dignified by calling it a major sin. So far as I am personally concerned I have already expressed my regret to you for any misapprehension that might have been caused.

1 A I C C. File No. G 140/1931(Pt 1), pp 79, N.M.M.L.
2. Raja Rampal Singh had asserted that throughout the year the zamindars and the taluqdars had tried to secure relief from the government to the peasants

You refer to strong language being used against taluqdars. Further you say, quite rightly, that every person by joining the Congress does not become a saint. The Congress is today a mass organisation. It has the power and the strength and the failings of such an organisation. Unfortunately it has within its ranks undesirable persons also. But it has the advantage of the leadership of a very great person and he has set an ideal before us which though all of us may not follow it none the less raises us in a large measure and raises the tone of public life in this country. I would beg of you to compare the Congress movement with any great popular movement in any country past or present. You will then find that by virtue of our leader's precept and example we have been able to live up as an organisation on a level which has never been obtained by a similar organisation anywhere.

Regarding zamindars and taluqdars I should like to make the position of the Congress as well as myself quite clear. The Congress stands for the removal of the hardships of the masses and the masses being chiefly the peasantry the Congress has to stand for their interests. The Congress is not against the zamindars as such but where there is a conflict between the two interests the interest of the masses must prevail. That is, so far as I have been able to understand, the Congress viewpoint. My personal viewpoint is the same but in addition I am convinced that the zamindari system is a system which is injurious to society. This opinion has nothing to do with good zamindars or bad zamindars and taluqdars. It is based on purely economic reasons. Further I am convinced that this system is utterly divorced from modern conditions and is bound to topple over because of its inherent instability. All the world over one can see this process going on. It is the part of the wise man whether he is a zamindar or a tenant or a mere politician like myself to try to understand what is happening in the world, what economic and other forces are at play and to profit by the experience of others. It would be foolish for any of us to base general conclusions in regard to an economic system on the strength of goodness or badness of certain individuals who are parts of that system. As you know I have very many good friends among taluqdars and zamindars of this province. My contacts have been far greater with them than with the tenantry. How can I wish ill to those whom I have learned to respect in their individual capacities. But I cannot allow the personal question to blind me to the facts and these facts tell me that the existing economic system in India and specially in our province in regard to the land is out of date and it brings terrible misery to vast numbers. I do not believe in allowing fate and other unseen powers to do what they like without any effort on my part. I believe that human beings

can control their destiny and so can society at large. If we have an economic depression today which has brought so much trouble to zamindars and kisans alike whose fault is it? Are these economic crises due to an act of god or mismanagement of incompetents who have unfortunately the fate of man in their hands? I have not a shadow of doubt that if existing conditions are allowed to continue both the zamindars and kisans will go to the wall.

I want therefore that the problem should be placed in its proper setting and perspective by everybody so that we might by putting our heads together evolve a satisfactory solution. If, however, some of us, ostrich-like, refuse to face facts they do so at their peril because facts do not disappear into thin air simply because some one does not recognise them.

I do not want to accelerate a class war between the zamindars and the tenants. But I am quite sure that unless a solution is found to the existing problems nothing in the world can avert such an unfortunate struggle.

I trust I have made my position clear. I owe it to you to do so because I do not wish to sail under any false colours or to give any wrong impression about myself to anyone. My views are slightly in advance of those held by the Congress as a whole but as a soldier of the Congress I act strictly within the limitations imposed by the Congress. I have the right, however, to try to convert both the Congress and the public at large to my viewpoint and I live in the hope of being able to convert not only the public at large and Congress but even our taluqdar friends to my viewpoint. For it is obvious that what is good for a part of it, and what is good for India must be good for the taluqdars

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

73. On the Condition of U.P. Kisans[1]

The resolution in regard to the agrarian situation gives a glimpse of the conditions that have prevailed and are now prevailing in the

1. Interview to the press, Bombay. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 7 November 1931.

province.[2] It is impossible in the course of a resolution to give more than a glimpse. As a matter of fact the period since the Delhi truce has been one of serious trouble and harassment and misery for the tenants and also to the smaller zamindars. It has not been a period of peace for them but of war carried on incessantly. They have not even had the respite from collections which usually comes with the monsoon. Even now coercive processes and forcible collections are continuing for the last season.

A vivid description of what is happening in U.P. has been given in the report of the Agrarian Committee appointed by the U.P.P.C.C. which has been published. In this report very authentic cases of barbarous behaviour and outrages on women have been given. But without any open or impartial inquiry the U.P. Government have denied them, although responsible public men held open inquiries before arriving at the finding.

The crisis that has now arisen is due to the fact that fresh collections have to be made for the new season. The last season's forcible collections resulted in a large number of tenants being ejected from their lands and many of them in despair selling their cattle and other belongings or incurring additional debts. They were thoroughly exhausted and are in a bad way.

Now the government has announced certain remissions which according to us are entirely inadequate. They have further stated that the full demand after deducting these remissions must be paid up within a month, or else these remissions may be cancelled. The tenants have thus to face an immediate crisis and they cannot afford to wait. They have either to decide that they should not pay anything at all or they have to submit to a repetition probably on a worse scale of what took place during the last six months. If they pay whatever they can afford to, it will only be a small amount and the result may be that although they have paid, they will be ejected.

It was for this reason that the Allahabad District Congress Committee and the provincial committee were forced to take action although they were very unwilling to do so while Mahatmaji was in London. But they had no alternative as the decision must be made very soon or not at all. The immediate questions are:—

(1) The amount of remission in the current demand.

(2) The question of arrears and debts—It is clear that if a person cannot pay the full demand even after remission from this, he obviously cannot pay up his arrears and debts. This obvious conclusion has not

2. See *ante*, item 70, enclosure.

can control their destiny and so can society at large. If we have an economic depression today which has brought so much trouble to zamindars and kisans alike whose fault is it? Are these economic crises due to an act of god or mismanagement of incompetents who have unfortunately the fate of man in their hands? I have not a shadow of doubt that if existing conditions are allowed to continue both the zamindars and kisans will go to the wall.

I want therefore that the problem should be placed in its proper setting and perspective by everybody so that we might by putting our heads together evolve a satisfactory solution. If, however, some of us, ostrich-like, refuse to face facts they do so at their peril because facts do not disappear into thin air simply because some one does not recognise them.

I do not want to accelerate a class war between the zamindars and the tenants. But I am quite sure that unless a solution is found to the existing problems nothing in the world can avert such an unfortunate struggle.

I trust I have made my position clear. I owe it to you to do so because I do not wish to sail under any false colours or to give any wrong impression about myself to anyone. My views are slightly in advance of those held by the Congress as a whole but as a soldier of the Congress I act strictly within the limitations imposed by the Congress. I have the right, however, to try to convert both the Congress and the public at large to my viewpoint and I live in the hope of being able to convert not only the public at large and Congress but even our taluqdar friends to my viewpoint. For it is obvious that what is good for a part of it, and what is good for India must be good for the taluqdars.

Yours sincerely,
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The crisis that has now arisen is due to the fact that fresh collections have to be made for the new season. The last season's forcible collections resulted in a large number of tenants being ejected from their lands and many of them in despair selling their cattle and other belongings or incurring additional debts. They were thoroughly exhausted and are in a bad way.

Now the government has announced certain remissions which according to us are entirely inadequate. They have further stated that the full demand after deducting these remissions must be paid up within a month, or else these remissions may be cancelled. The tenants have thus to face an immediate crisis and they cannot afford to wait. They have either to decide that they should not pay anything at all or they have to submit to a repetition probably on a worse scale of what took place during the last six months. If they pay whatever they can afford to, it will only be a small amount and the result may be that although they have paid, they will be ejected.

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(1) The amount of remission in the current demand.

(2) The question of arrears and debts—It is clear that if a person cannot pay the full demand even after remission from this, he obviously cannot pay up his arrears and debts. This obvious conclusion has not

2 See *ante*, item 70, enclosure.

been accepted by the government The result is that the remission itself is of no value.

(3) The question of ejectments—A large number of tenants who are ejected are in a deplorable state and something must be done to give them back their lands.

(4) Local calamities—The last rains have spoilt and sometimes ruined the harvest and the crops in a large number of districts. This makes it even more difficult for the tenants to pay. The government however say that unless 50 per cent loss is caused in an area, they must ignore it.

All these difficulties have to be faced by the tenant and it seems to be patent enough that he must succumb unless someone goes to his help.

Remissions are primarily assessed by the fall in prices. This fall is estimated at 55 per cent. To this has to be added the rise in the cost of production which might be down at a minimum of 10 per cent. This brings up the figure to 65 per cent. In the Allahabad district the remissions actually given amount to about 17 per cent. The discrepancy between the figure corresponding to the fall in prices and the actual figure is obvious. When we add to this the numerous difficulties caused by the last six months' forcible collections we will get some idea of the state of the tenantry and their inability to meet the present demand The provincial committee was very much perturbed by this but it felt that another effort should be made to seek relief from the government and a special sub-committee was appointed for this purpose.

A conference has already taken place between Congress representatives and officials regarding the Allahabad district. This related to the district only. I don't wish to say anything about this conference at this stage. An effort is now being made by Mr. Sherwani, the president of our provincial Congress committee, to arrange a conference with the local government to consider the whole agrarian situation in the province. As to what action the provincial committee will take depends on the result of this conference.

Allahabad has been mentioned repeatedly in this respect. This does not mean that Allahabad is the worst sufferer. As a matter of fact all the districts in Oudh are in many respects worse off than Allahabad and there are many districts in the Agra province which are as bad or even worse than Allahabad.

The second resolution passed by the P.C.C. relates to the arrests of Congress workers and to the use of Section 144 to prevent our workers

from speaking. Some of our most prominent workers have been proceeded against. Only this week one of the members of our Council, Seth Damodar Swaroop, who was being proceeded against under security section refused to give an undertaking pending a trial and was not only arrested but an attempt was made to handcuff him in the court.

In some districts a new device is being resorted to. *Goondas* and hooligans are engaged, to our knowledge, at the instigation or even directly by petty officials in order to break up Congress meetings. Last week in Bareilly district some of these *goondas* came to a meeting. They used drums, and what is worse, they forcibly pushed about people including speakers and the chairman of the meeting. They even tried to gag them by tying pieces of cloth round their mouths.

In one place a number of dancing girls were brought and were made to dance right near the meeting place. Sometimes all the local papers are threatened not to print any Congress notices in them. Only the other day I was to have spoken in a big cinema hall in Bareilly but the kotwal of the place threatened the owner of the cinema, so much so that he withdrew permission to use the hall. These are just recent instances. It is obvious that an attempt is being made by a number of district officials to prevent Congress activities and to weaken the Congress organisation especially in rural areas. I do not know how far this has the backing of the provincial government.

Our position is really difficult on account of the Delhi Settlement.

74. Interview to the Press[1]

While we are still trying our best to get relief for the peasants through the government and are prepared to meet them and discuss the matter with them, the Congress has advised the peasantry of the Allahabad district to withhold payment of rent and revenue pending the negotiations, which have not yet ended.[2] If relief comes, of course we shall advise the tenantry to abide by the settlement; and there will be no

1 Calcutta, 17 November 1931. *The Hindu*, 20 November 1931.

2. The U.P.P.C.C. resolution of 15 November 1931 said that the tenant had no alternative but to withhold rent temporarily till the negotiations with the government had been concluded.

question of any no-tax campaign. Otherwise there seems to be no other alternative. So far, this advice has been given to the Allahabad district only but the conditions in many other districts are also very bad, and it is possible that the example of Allahabad might be followed elsewhere. This no-tax movement is a purely economic one, and not political as such, though of course we realise that it might affect the political situation. It is a movement which clearly comes within the terms of the Simla Agreement of August 27, where it is laid down that, if relief is not obtained, it will be open to the Congress to start defensive action. We have tried our utmost to avoid such action. Even though we could see that the condition of the peasantry was becoming worse and worse, we wanted to wait till Mahatmaji returned; but the new season, with its prospect of coercive processes being started afresh against the tenantry, made it impossible for us to wait any longer. The U.P. Congress Committee would have been false to the U.P. peasantry, if it had not stood by them at this hour of crisis.[1]

75. To Vallabhbhai Patel[2]

November 21st, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am sorry I have not been able to write to you about the agrarian situation here. As you have noticed in the press, certain developments have taken place. The P.C.C., I take it, will write to you direct and send you a copy of their resolution. I enclose copies of three letters which have passed between Sherwani and Jagdish Prasad, Chief Secretary.[2]

As you know the time for collection of rent had come and it became imperative for us to give some advice. The advice given is that pending negotiations payment should not be made. I am afraid there is little chance of any compromise. The no-tax movement will thus have

1 AICC File No G-180/1931, p 14, NMML.

2 On 12 November 1931 Sherwani wrote to the Chief Secretary that the sanctioned rent remissions were inadequate, that arrears should be withdrawn and that the land should be restored to the evicted tenants. The Chief Secretary replied on 17 November that the suggestions were impracticable. On 20 November Sherwani wrote again that the tenants saw no alternative but to withhold payment of rent.

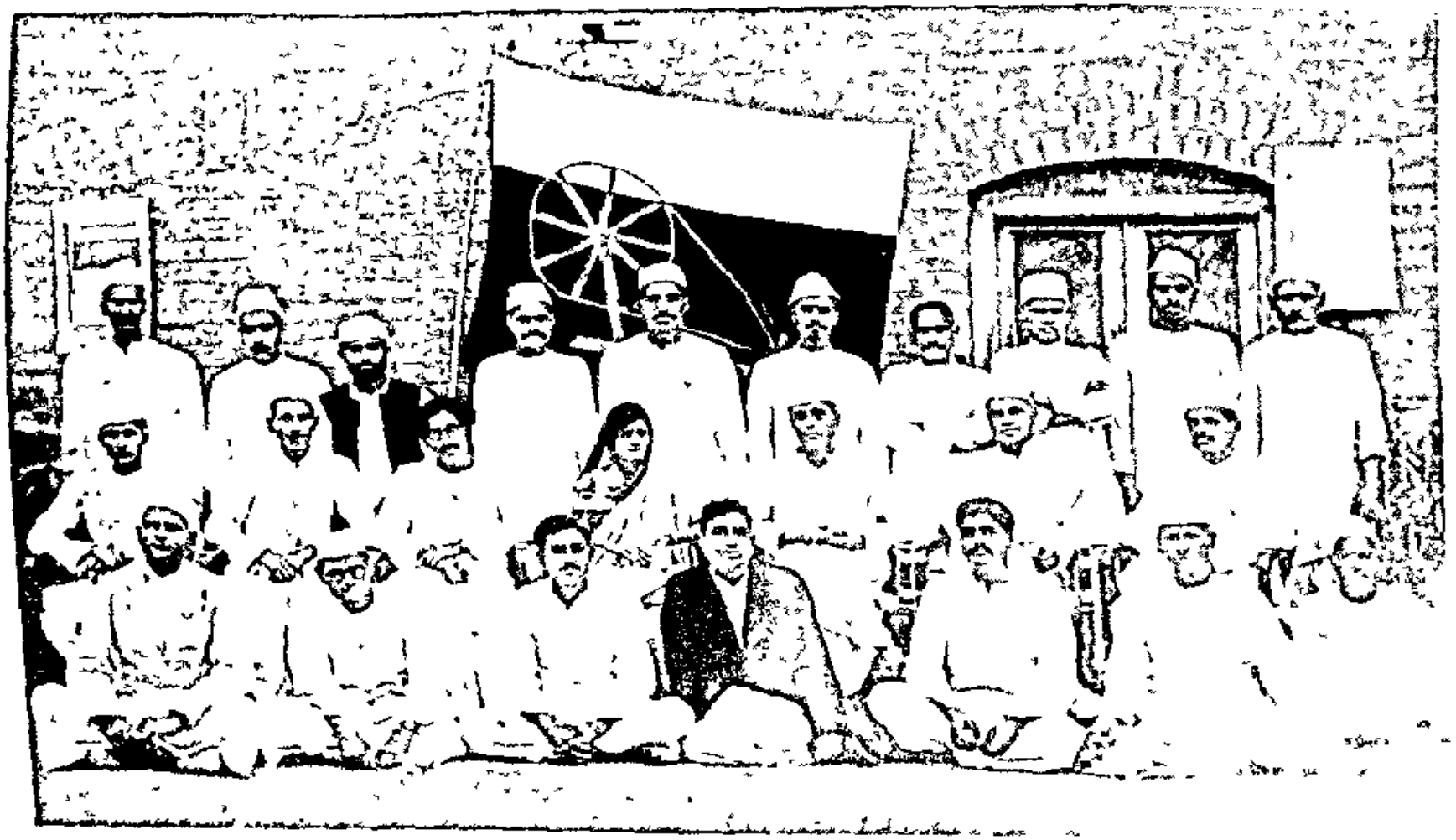

WITH CONGRESS WORKERS AT ALLAHABAD, 1931

AT ALLAHABAD DISTRICT KISANS CONFERENCE, 25 NOVEMBER 1931

to be continued. The consequences will necessarily be grave. It was probably in this connection that the Viceroy had suddenly come to Lucknow. There is a rumour that a number of arrests will take place soon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

76. To Khan Sahib[1]

November 23rd, 1931

My dear Khan,
Thank you for your letter of the 16th. I am very glad to read that some of the information I have received was inaccurate.[2] I have no doubt that you and Abdul Ghaffar Khan were working along right lines but I was afraid that some of your colleagues might not do so, and so I ventured to write fully and frankly on the subject. Your letter has removed my doubts.

We are getting involved in a no-tax campaign here owing to the economic distress. It is possible that many of us may be arrested before long. Whether we are arrested or not, rest assured that we shall think of our comrades in the Frontier province frequently and with the confidence that whenever the time may come they will play a brave and leading part in the struggle for freedom.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1 AICC File No P-17/1931, p. 7, NMML.
2 Jawaharlal had been told that communal slogans and flags other than the national flag were being used in the Frontier province. Khan Sahib denied these charges.

77. Address to Kisans[1]

The Congress has been making efforts to secure relief to the tenants but the efforts had hitherto proved futile. In 1338 *Fasli* some remissions were announced but they were utterly inadequate. The Congress often thought whether the time had not come to start satyagraha in view of the tenants' sufferings, but it continued to tolerate the situation. The Congress can wait even now but it has become impossible to do so on account of the acute distress caused by the fall in prices to the extent of 9 annas in the rupee, and remissions being given only to the extent of about 2 annas 7 pies in the rupee for the year 1339 *Fasli*.

In the preceding year you had a bitter experience because you paid on Congress advice even more than you could pay. Still you were ejected and harassed. In view of such a bitter experience the Congress would not advise payments nor can any reliance be placed on the rumours that the tahsildars were going about informing the tenants that no arrears need be paid this year.

Negotiations for a settlement are still proceeding and the district Congress committee acting on the advice of the council of the provincial Congress committee has asked the tenants to withhold payments pending negotiations. We do not desire that a fight should be resumed until all hopes of a settlement have disappeared. Till now no satisfactory reply has come from the government on the demand for relief beyond their doing things which could only lead to trifling results. The question which the district committee faces is whether it should call upon the tenants to pay the rents or start satyagraha.

While the tenants have been advised by the district committee to withhold payments pending negotiations, a tenants' conference has been convened by the committee on November 24 and at that conference you would be called upon to decide for yourselves whether you should pay or start a no-rent campaign.

Though Congressmen are ready to suffer with the tenants the real burden of the no-rent campaign, if it is started, would fall on you. You should, therefore, take a decision after profound deliberations and thought. Not being a tenant myself, I hesitate to give definite advice to you on this question but I must say that the time for begging has gone and the only effective weapon for the settlement of the question is, to my mind, satyagraha.

1. Sadabad in Allahabad district, 23 November 1931. From *The Leader*, 25 November 1931.

78. To the Kisans[1]

The present zamindari system in India is most detrimental to peasants. Land is considered to be the property of the zamindars. The zamindar does not work on his land but enjoys its fruits sitting at home. He gives his land to the peasants on rent and is always on the look out for extracting as much rent as he possibly can. It is my belief that the land should belong to the person who tills it and not to the zamindar or taluqdar.

We should also try to have Swaraj in our country—not of the capitalist but of the poor and the peasants. If Swaraj means that the Britishers should leave India, and the capitalists, the rajas, and the maharajas should come in their place, the lot of the peasantry cannot be improved. You should therefore take up the campaign of Swaraj in your hands. The present day zamindars and taluqdars are in fact a burden on the country. They do nothing, nor do they produce anything but they fill up their stomachs all right. The taluqdars and zamindars are just leeches attacking the body of the Indian peasants.

1. Home Department (Political) File No. 7/13/34 of 1934, National Archives of India. Translation of a Hindi leaflet over Jawaharlal's signature which was distributed in Ajmer Merwara at Pushkar fair on 23 November 1931.

79. No Half-way Settlement[1]

The Congress has been doing its best for the past several months to improve the condition of the tenants. To me the question of remissions is a petty one. There are millions of people—peasants—starving and homeless, and the question before me is of their life and death. So far the door for negotiations was open and the government could have a settlement but if the government wanted to offer any

1. From *The Leader*, 27 November 1931. This is a report of the speech at the kisans conference in Allahabad on 25 November 1931.

threat then it should consider the door for negotiations closed. During the last eight months the Congress did its best to effect a settlement on the agrarian question. It was ready to accept a settlement if it brought prosperity to peasants. The question of 2 annas or 3 annas remission was a petty one. If we are to die, we shall die after a fight. I do not want a half-way settlement or a half-way fight.

At the meeting of the subjects committee the tenants regarded the resolution under discussion as a very mild one and they wanted to resolve to stop the payment altogether. The negotiations have almost completely failed and therefore they could resolve to start satyagraha or no-rent campaign. But the appropriate thing to say from the side of the tenants or the Congress is that they will withhold payment until their demands are accepted and they will be ready for a compromise the moment they are accepted.

I really wonder how the tenants could have suffered so much. The awakening which is created in them now should have been created 50 years ago. I feel that if the fire of satyagraha is fully lit up the kisans' miseries would disappear in that fire and the kisans and the country would then be free.

80. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

November 26th, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have received copies of your letters to Emerson and the letter you received from Ram Gopal of Fatehpur, together with your reply to it. I am glad you wrote to Emerson. I am afraid the die is cast and there is no hope of any arrangement being arrived at in the near future. The U.P.P.C.C. office which has shifted to Allahabad are sending you copies of recent correspondence between the Chief Secretary and Sherwani. Yesterday there was a very successful kisan conference of Allahabad peasants. It confirmed the decision of the D.C.C. withholding payment of rent and revenue. I enclose the resolution passed by it. I expect government action to suppress this movement very soon.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-160/1931(Pt. I), pp. 50-51, N.M.M.L.

Regarding Bans Gopal's letter it was highly improper of him to write to you and not even to tell you what the P.C.C. had decided regarding municipal and district board elections. The P.C.C. has resolved that no office-bearer or member of any executive committee of the Congress in the province including district and tahsil executives can stand for election to municipal and district boards. This is positive and clear enough. Naturally many aspirants for municipal honours are greatly disappointed but the P.C.C. will stick to its decision and take disciplinary action where necessary. It is absurd to talk of satyagraha and municipality in the same breath.

I am not likely to see Bapu when he returns. I am beginning to doubt if any of you will see him. I also doubt greatly if the Puri Congress will come off.

I wrote to you about the Bengal Provincial Conference. I am getting telegrams from them insisting on my going. I cannot make up my mind. Perhaps circumstances will decide for me. It appears that Rajendra Babu is ill and cannot go. My present intention is to go to two U.P. districts—Unao and Farrukhabad on the 29th and 30th. On the 5th December we have a meeting of the Council of our P.C.C. at Lucknow. If I am free I should like to go to Hubli, Bagalkot and Poona to visit the Seva Dal headquarters and camps. If you are in Bombay I shall of course visit Bombay. But all this is vague and undecided. During Christmas week the U.P. Provincial Conference meets at Etawah.

It is very likely that the agrarian satyagraha will rapidly spread to at least half a dozen other districts. It will of course affect the whole province.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

81. To Syed Mahmud[1]

27.11.31

My dear Mahmud,
I have had no news from or of you for a long time—except for the birthday letter. I have no idea of what you have been doing. Have

1 Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

you forgotten the A.I.C.C. office? I have been pretty busy. Probably very soon—within a few days—I shall be removed from my sphere of activity.

I have appointed temporarily an assistant secretary of the A.I.C.C. to act in the office here. His name is Madan Mohan Gaur. He is an M.A. of Allahabad (a recent one) and honours in Hindi and Urdu. He was on the staff of *Today*. He is doing his work well and deals with a great deal of the correspondence. He will be able to carry on with the routine work in my absence. If I am arrested will you be able to give some time to the office?

Kamala has had a strenuous time and has not been well. Today she developed high fever—probably malarial. I hope she will get over this in a day or two but she requires rest.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

82. To Private Secretary to Viceroy[1]

28/11/31

Dear Mr. Mieville,

I am sorry to inform you that all our efforts to secure an honourable compromise for the unfortunate tenantry have failed to achieve any substantial result and we have been compelled to advise the peasantry in Allahabad district to withhold payment of rent and revenue till relief is obtained. I trust you will convey my deep regrets to His Excellency that we should have had to adopt this course. But I can assure him that we tried our utmost to avoid it and to find a way out of the difficulty.

Under the circumstances my colleagues feel that we should publish the correspondence which we have had with the U.P. Government on the subject so that the public may know what steps we took in the matter. If His Excellency has no objection I should like to add to these letters which are being published the letter I addressed to you dated 16th October and your reply to it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No. G-25/1931, pp. 1-2, N.M.M.L.

83. To Krishna Chandra[1]

November 28th, 1931

Dear Friend,[2]
I have your letter.[3] I do not know what advice you expect me to give you. We have almost passed the stage of writing to the government and protesting. If you are prepared for stronger action go ahead. You must be following what is happening in Allahabad. Many other districts are likely to act similarly. It is for your committee to decide what it should do under these circumstances.

I am forwarding your letter to the provincial Congress committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-21/1931, p. 45, N.M.M.L.
2. General Secretary, Mathura District Congress Committee.
3. Krishna Chandra had sought permission to start satyagraha in Mathura district.

84. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

December 1st, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,
I returned to Allahabad today after a short tour in the rural areas. I have received your telegram about Bapu's programme. I have also received your two letters dated 27th and your letter of the 28th November as well as the copies of letters to and from Emerson and the confirmation order on the appointment of Madan Mohan Gaur. Thanks.

I have seen your interview in today's papers regarding the U.P. agrarian situation. Your letter to Emerson and your interview are in

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G 60/1931 (Pt. I), pp. 33-34, N.M.M.L.

line with our last letter to the U.P. Government.[2] No reply has been received to our last communication. Sherwani has addressed the U.P. Chief Secretary asking him if he has any objection to the publication of the correspondence.[3] I have also written to the Private Secretary of the Viceroy on this subject. May I know if we can publish your correspondence with Emerson on this subject?

Regarding the Working Committee it is a little difficult to advise. I am inclined to think that developments will make an emergent meeting of the Committee necessary long before Bapu comes. Perhaps it would be as well to write to all members to hold themselves in readiness for such a meeting and not to fix a date now. As soon as you feel it necessary to call a meeting you might do so. I am sending to you a *telegram accordingly*. So far as I am concerned I am not making any fresh engagements. My present engagements are: Karnatak 2 or 3 days from the 15th onwards and the Christmas week for the U.P. Conference. But even all of these are of course subject to developments and if summoned by you for the Working Committee I shall come regardless of all other engagements.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. In his press interview Vallabhbhai Patel had said: "I would certainly tell the U.P. Congress Committee to suspend their *resolution advising the peasants to* temporarily withhold payments of rents if I knew that on the other side the collection of rents would be suspended pending the result of further discussion." On 28 November 1931 Vallabhbhai Patel wrote to the Home Secretary that "the government should postpone its recovery work for a short while and the Congress should suspend *its resolution*." T. A. K. Sherwani in his letter of 25 November 1931 had suggested to the government that the advice to the kisans of Allahabad district could be withdrawn only if the collection of rent was stopped while discussions were going on.
3. On 5 December 1931, the correspondence exchanged since 15 October between the government and the Congress leaders was published in a pamphlet. It was meant to establish that the Congress was in no hurry to resort to satyagraha in U.P. without exploring other means to solve the agrarian problem.

85. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

December 4th, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have your letter of the 30th. The situation in the U.P. is developing rapidly. Today's paper contains the news that a special ordinance for the U.P. will come out very soon. Day before yesterday Sherwani received another letter from the Chief Secretary. There was nothing new in this. It was a repetition of the statement that in view of the U.P. Council decision to advise suspension of payment, government have to withhold their offer made previously. As a matter of fact no definite offer was made by government at any stage and hence there could be no withdrawal of it. All that government have stated was that they were not prepared to discuss any of the real and important matters. All that they could do was to discuss individual applications of their formula and individual cases of hardship. We had pointed out that this limited scope would not help. But even so we were prepared to discuss any matter big or small. Our object was to gain sufficient relief whatever the method might be. Sherwani has sent a reply on these lines.

The U.P.P.C.C. is bringing out today a printed pamphlet containing the correspondence with the government. They are not giving the whole correspondence of the truce period as this would be too voluminous. They have begun from the 15th October when the question of remissions for the current season was raised by the Allahabad D.C.C. Your letters to Emerson are included as also my letter to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy. I wrote to the Private Secretary for permission to publish and his reply has come that the Viceroy has no objection. We have also given sufficient notice of publication to the U.P. Government and they have raised no objection. We have not heard from you about the publication of your letters to Emerson and his replies. I hope under the circumstances we can presume this permission.

Copies of the printed correspondence will be sent to you, I hope, by this evening. They will also be sent to all the A.I.C.C. members and provincial committees and the press.

1 AICC File No. G 60/1931(Pt. I), pp. 24 25, N.M.M.L.

I am at present on my way to Benares to attend the closing ceremony of an instructors camp of the Seva Dal. I return to Allahabad today and leave for Lucknow after a few hours. Tomorrow we have a meeting of our provincial council in Lucknow to consider further recent developments. I shall return to Allahabad on the 6th evening and shall remain there for 7th and 8th. On the 9th I visit a neighbouring district. On the 10th I have been summoned to appear as a witness in M. N. Roy's case at Cawnpore.

I note that 15th has been fixed by you for the opening function of the women's central camp. I shall try to reach Bombay on the 15th morning. From there I shall go on to Hubli, Bagalkot and Poona. Probably I shall return to Bombay by the 20th. In view of the situation it will be very difficult for me to remain away from the U.P. for several days more. I shall therefore return to Allahabad even though I have to go back to Bombay the same week. As I have told you our provincial conference meets at Etawah during the Christmas week. This clashes with Bapu's arrival. I should like your advice as to what I should do—whether I should attend the early part of the conference and then go to Bapu or meet Bapu first and dash back to be present at the later stages of the conference.

Kamala has been ill and bed-ridden for the last six days. She has apparently got malarial fever. This is bad enough and she has grown very weak. What is worse is that she is fretting greatly that at this time of crisis she should be unable to do anything. I shall try to bring her with me to Bombay. But all these plans are in the lap of the gods and may be we shall not have to worry ourselves too much about them.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

86. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

December 7th, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,
I returned last evening from Lucknow after our council meeting. Your letter of December 1st awaited me.[2] I am afraid the correspondence had already been published as you know. If we had felt that you wanted postponement of publication I would certainly have asked the U.P.P.C.C. people to do so. But with ordinances in the air the P.C.C. felt that they should place all the letters before the public as soon as possible. So far as the P.C.C. letters are concerned they do not bar the door at all and the publication need not be looked upon as an aggressive step. I am inclined to think that people will realise that our attitude has all along been conciliatory.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1 A.I.C.C. File No G 60/1931(Pt. I), p. 13, N.M.M.L.
2 Vallabhbhai Patel had written: "I strongly suggest to you to hold over the publication of the correspondence until the government takes some definite aggressive action"

87. On the U.P. Ordinance[1]

The full text of the new U.P. ordinance has not reached us yet but the extracts that have appeared in the press are enough to make us appreciate and admire the thoroughness with which the job has been done by the government.[2]

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 17 December 1931. From *The Hindu*, 18 December 1931.
2 The U.P. Instigation and Emergency Powers Ordinance of 14 December 1931 made it an offence to advise peasants not to pay rent, empowered the government to detain supected persons, take over property, control transport and impose community fines on the residents of any locality where Congress activities were noticed.

What was sought to be done in the name of violence in Bengal[3] has been done openly to crush an admittedly peaceful movement in the U.P. The whole press of India is made *to suffer for the sins* of the U.P. Congress Committee, and reversing the biblical concept, the sins of the children shall be visited on their fathers and guardians.[4] It is not for an individual like me to say *much at this stage regarding* the ordinance.

The answer to it will, no doubt, be given by the Working Committee and the U.P.P.C.C. at the proper time.

It is interesting to note that the government issued the ordinance almost at the exact hour when Gandhiji sailed from Europe.

It is stated that the U.P. Government has attached a very *lengthy* apologia to the ordinance. A long apology was no doubt needed to explain away the mess which the government had made of the agrarian situation. I shall hold myself in patience till the eleven *and half pages* of printed foolscap, which the U.P. Government has hurled on an unfortunate public, reach me.

But what little of it has already appeared in the press makes it clear that the U.P. Government's statement is full of false statements and mendacious propaganda. Copious extracts are given from circulars and private letters *which the government pilfered in transit.*

We have nothing to hide but it is interesting to note how government have been behaving in regard to private correspondence even *during* the period *of* truce.

The government state that we started the no-tax movement five days after the Delhi Pact.[5] This is an absolutely false statement and anyone who has been following developments since March must know it is so. We have openly and publicly tried to strengthen our Congress organisation, to train volunteers and to keep ready for all emergencies. No

3. The Bengal ordinance promulgated on 30 November 1931 enabled the government to arrest not only those who committed or were about to commit certain offences, but also those who might be members of terrorist associations or be helping such bodies. It vested special tribunals with extraordinary powers regarding procedure and passing of sentences.

4. Under the ordinance realisation from parents and guardians of money due from their sons and wards was made lawful.

5. The Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State on 26 December 1931: "The Delhi Pact at all events is dead and gone, murdered by Jawaharlal Nehru and Abdul Ghaffar. Edward Irwin certainly made a great and gallant effort, but it has proved unsuccessful and further proved that, as long as it lasted, it was a great handicap to government in its administration and an enormous advantage to Congress in promoting their activities."

secret was made of this and it is amazing that anyone could imagine that to weaken and wither away before our object was achieved. But so far as the no tax movement was concerned, there was no question of it till last October when the new demands for the current *Fasli* year were announced.

Previous to this we went out of our way to induce the peasantry to pay what they could, although we saw with anguish the sufferings of the agriculturists. Even when the new demands were decided upon without any reference to the peasantry or the Congress, we tried our utmost to find a way out by writing to and offering to meet the representatives of the local government. But they were adamant and did not even agree to meet our representatives.

Some of the recent correspondence has been recently published by us. We would welcome the publication of the whole correspondence from the very beginning. The report published by the U.P.P.C.C. on agrarian distress in the U.P. deals with our difficulties and our attempts to find a solution and I trust everyone interested in the question will read it.

The U.P. Government refer to 'revolting and obscene propaganda' on behalf of the Congress. Apparently this refers to our giving publicity after the fullest enquiry to cases of barbarous assaults on women perpetrated in attempting to realise rents forcibly. I entirely agree that they were 'revolting and obscene'. Many of my esteemed colleagues and I myself inquired into the matter in as public a way as possible and found that the charges were justified.

We repeatedly requested government either to accept our facts or to have impartial enquiry, but they did neither. They have avoided the truth and, ostrich-like tried to ignore it as it was not pleasant to see, and now they have the temerity to accuse us of giving publicity to it. If they really believe in what they say let them even now, late as it is, have an impartial enquiry.

Reference was made to these incidents in the charge-sheet, published by Gandhiji.

We are accused of fomenting violence. This is an amazing charge. There has been a vast deal of violence but nearly all has been against and at the expense of the poor tenantry. Occasionally some tenants, under great provocation, retaliated and suffered for it. But I make bold to say that there is no instance anywhere of an agrarian movement on such a vast scale and accompanied by so much suffering and repression remaining peaceful to such a remarkable extent. This has solely been due to our insistence on nonviolence. The lesson has been well learnt by the millions.

We are further charged with proclaiming to the tenants that we are out to establish a Peasants' and Workers' Republic and to expropriate wholly the landlords. I am a socialist and my views are well known, but the statements attributed to me are entirely wrong so far as I am concerned and even more so, in so far as they apply to the Congress. There has been no reference to expropriation in the sense referred to. We have often stated that the Swaraj we were working for was a 'Panchayati Raj' in which all would have equal rights. That is a phrase which is easily understood by every peasant.

It is not possible for me to deal with all the wrong statements made in the U.P. Government's lengthy note, that we humble Congress workers of the U.P. have been accused of in common with Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and we are well content to remain in that company.

88. Interview to the Press[1]

Question: Will you return to Bombay to welcome Gandhiji?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I have every intention of returning to Bombay to welcome Gandhiji. I am going tonight to Allahabad to attend the provincial political conference to be held at Etawah this week-end.

Q: Do you intend disobeying the order under Section 144, Cr. P.C. if it is served on you?

JN: Oh! I cannot say what I shall do if a certain hypothetical situation arises. I shall have to decide on the spot having regard to all circumstances

Q: Does the ordinance allow the holding of a conference?

JN: I am not aware of anything which prevents holding of a conference. In this connection I might tell you that the policy of the U.P. Congress Committee is that we should carry on our ordinary work in spite of any obstruction that may be placed in our way. We are not at present going to disobey the law for the sake of disobedience but if any order or ordinance interferes with our ordinary activities then our workers have been advised to carry on those activities in spite of such an order or ordinance.

Q: Will the provincial political conference discuss the no-rent question?

1. Bombay, 21 December 1931. From *The Tribune*, 23 December 1931.

JN: As usual the annual conference will discuss all the current problems, and it is, therefore, bound to discuss the no-rent question also.

I am sure to come back to Bombay as I am leaving my wife behind in Bombay.

89. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

December 23rd, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose copies of various papers for your information. I propose to start for Bombay on the 26th morning reaching there on the 27th morning. But of course all this is problematic. We are having police raids in all our Congress offices in the city and district and landlords are being coerced into giving us notices.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No G 60(1)/1931, p 1, NMML.

90. Telegram to Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

In view new situation[2] provincial Council decided postpone provincial conference to date after Working Committee meeting so as to have advantage of Working Committee's advice on general situation. Sherwani and I propose starting for Bombay twenty sixth morning to welcome Bapu back and attend Working Committee meeting.

Jawaharlal

1 23 December 1931 A.I.C.C. File No. P-21/1931, p. 19, N.M.M.L.
2. The U.P. Government had told the U.P.P.C.C. that nothing should be said or done in the Etawah Conference scheduled for 22 December 1931 to further the no rent campaign The Council and the U.P.P.C.C, in view of Mahatma Gandhi's return to India on 28 December and the meeting of the Working Committee soon after it, postponed the conference.

91. To District Magistrate, Allahabad[1]

December 23rd, 1931

Dear Sir,

On arrival at Chheoki last night I received a notice signed by you purporting to be an order under Section 5 of the U.P. Emergency Power Ordinance of 1931. I am desired in this notice to restrict my activities in a variety of ways and to refrain from leaving the municipal limits of Allahabad without your sanction or that of the superintendent of police I should like to inform you that I am not in the habit of taking orders from anyone except the great organisation of which I have the honour to be a member. It is for the Indian National Congress to order me and I recognise no other authority. It appears to be your desire to make me a virtual prisoner in Allahabad town and to cut me off from my friends and colleagues and prevent me from carrying out the duties which have been entrusted to me. I cannot agree to any limitations to my activities much less can I submit to anything that interferes with my work as the General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee and as an office bearer or member of other committees and boards. So long as I am physically capable of doing so, I shall endeavour to do justice to the work with which I have been charged.

I should like to inform you therefore that I propose to carry on all my usual activities without seeking any permission from you or the superintendent of police. In particular I have to inform you that I shall leave Allahabad whenever any work demands my presence elsewhere. Within two or three days I propose to go to Bombay to meet Mahatma Gandhi and to attend a meeting of the Working Committee of the Congress.

I should further like to make it clear that I shall continue to give publicity to my views in regard to any matter whenever I think it desirable to do so. As it has often happened that the provincial government and the district authorities of Allahabad have given publicity to false and misleading statements in regard to facts, I shall place the truth before the public whenever the necessity for this may arise.

As I can only accept the decisions of the Congress in regard to my public work I am prepared to place, should you so desire it, any communication from you or your government before the Working Committee

1. J N Prison Papers, 1931 32, N M M L

of the All India Congress Committee or the Council of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee for their directions.

I should like to point out that your notice asking me not to leave the municipal limits of Allahabad was served outside these limits. It is not quite clear to me how I was supposed to confine myself to Allahabad town when I was actually many miles away from it at the time of service of notice.

I shall be glad if you will kindly take the trouble to write my name correctly in any communication that you might send me.[2]

I am sending a copy of this letter to the press

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 He had spelt the name as "Jawahir Lall Nehru".

GENERAL SECRETARY
A.I.C.C.

SWADESHI MOVEMENT

1. Circular to P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
April 8th, 1931

Dear Comrades,
On my assuming charge of the secretaryship of the A.I.C.C, permit me to send you and our other comrades my greetings.[2] After a year of direct action we have for a while changed our methods of work and have to concentrate on the less ostentatious, but none the less important work of organisation and constructive effort. We may have to face direct action again before long and must therefore prepare ourselves for it. Our office will be happy to give you every assistance in its power in this work of organisation and preparation....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C C. File No. P-1/1931, pp. 153 155, N M.M L. Extracts.
2. After relinquishing presidentship of the Congress, Jawaharlal became one of the three General Secretaries from April 1931 and was in charge of general administration

2. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Allahabad
April 8, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,
I have just arrived here. I am taking immediate steps to issue some circulars containing various directions to the provincial Congress committees and others. Copies of these circulars will be sent to you as well as to Jairamdas.

1 A I C C File No G 40(KW)(iv)/1931, pp 313-315, N M M L.

I enclose a letter from Nargis Captain.[2] In this letter she proposes that a committee of Jairamdas and two others including her brother Jal Naoroji might be appointed to consider all questions relating to the mills The proposal seems to me to be a reasonable one. A local committee in Bombay would deal immediately with a variety of questions. Continual reference to some one in another city delays matters. It would be better for you to nominate a small local committee which would function under the larger committee rather than to leave the matter to the Bombay P.C.C. This need not be interpreted by the Bombay P.C.C. as a slight on it. The question of exemptions etc. of the mills is an all India question and it is right that it should be dealt with independently of a provincial organisation.

It was a pity that Shankarlal's proposal for a large council or committee to deal with *swadeshi* concerns and the like was not passed in Karachi and was postponed. I hope that this council will be formed at the next meeting of the Working Committee and that it will contain some good people outside the Working Committee. You and Jairamdas should be *ex officio* members of it No other Working Committee member need belong to it.

We have to face all manner of difficulties here both owing to the Hindu-Muslim tension and the zamindar-tenant question. I shall try to do what I can in the course of the next few days. The tenants are being arrested under Sec. 107 and large numbers of them have been beaten and ill treated. Some local Mohamadans during our absence from Allahabad made a proposal that *Prabhat Pheris*[3] should be stopped as they interfered with morning prayers. Kailas Nath Katju apparently agreed for a few days with the strange result that some of our Mohamadan groups of volunteers have had to stop their morning rounds because they interfered with prayers. This is a novel demand. However I do not think anything much is likely to happen in Allahabad in spite of the tension. There is of course always some element of risk. The *Bakr-Id* comes in a fortnight's time and soon after, the *Moharrum*. I have arranged to address meetings daily in the Muslim *mohallas* from this evening onwards.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

2 Grand-daughter of Dadabhai Naoroji.

3. Early morning rounds of Congressmen and their sympathisers singing national songs.

3. Circular to P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
June 18th, 1931

Dear Comrades,

I hope to send you soon the resolutions of the Working Committee passed in Bombay.[2] But I should like to draw your special attention immediately to a resolution regarding the boycott of foreign cloth. The committee has repeatedly stated that there can be no relaxation of this boycott and it is not open to any provincial or local Congress committee to make any arrangements permitting the sale of old stocks or in any way countenancing a relaxation even for a period. The Working Committee has again laid stress on this and further it has declared that if any provincial or local committee comes to any arrangement with foreign cloth dealers or others infringing the boycott or the directions issued by the committee in regard to it, the President of the A.I.C.C. will take disciplinary action against such committee. In particular, I should like you to note that on no account and under no circumstances can permission be given for the sale or purchase of any foreign cloth or foreign yarn even though this may belong to old stocks Any arrangement made contrary to this cannot stand and must be set aside.

The Congress policy is clear and unambiguous. We stand for the complete boycott of foreign cloth and yarn and we can only give this advice to all buyers and sellers. Where this advice is disregarded it is open to us to picket peacefully. Picketing may however depend on a variety of considerations and it is for the local committee to consider when and in what manner it should be undertaken. But whether there is picketing or not the Congress policy and advice remains the same.

Occasionally it has come to our notice that Congress committees come to agreements with cloth dealers under which the latter promise not to buy or sell foreign cloth for a period, which may be a year or six months. Such agreements for a period should not be made on behalf of the Congress because our programme of boycott is not for a year only. When such agreements are made there is always dissatisfaction at the end of the period and the cloth dealers feel that they

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P 1/1931, p. 127, N.M.M.L.
2. They related to (1) disapproval of certifying the products of a particular mill or the cloth in a shop as "purely Indian material" (2) picketing of foreign cloth shops and (3) formation of a board to prepare a directory of swadeshi goods other than cloth.

are justified in selling foreign cloth then. It is therefore desirable to make it perfectly clear to all concerned that our boycott is not limited to any period. Of course it is open to any dealer in cloth to say in writing that he will not deal in foreign cloth for a period. We can accept this pledge and can refrain from picketing his shop so long as he honours his pledge. But the period mentioned in his pledge cannot bind the Congress. This should be made clear.

Please also note that the Working Committee does not approve of the certification by Congress committees of any shops dealing in cloth or in *swadeshi* goods generally The Committee has decided to start a Central Swadeshi Board which will issue a directory of *swadeshi* goods.

Kindly inform your local committees of the contents of this circular so that they may not, under a misapprehension, act in a way which might lead to disciplinary action.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Secretary, Dhariwal Woollen Mills[1]

June 24th, 1931

Dear Sir,

As you are aware the management of your mill having agreed to make the declaration[2] required by us your mill was placed on the approved list of mills prepared by the All India Congress Committee. In the declaration it is stated that no person connected with the management of the mills will engage himself in propaganda hostile to the national movement or participate in any activity organised voluntarily or at the instance or on behalf of the British Government in India in opposition to the movement.

1. A I C C. File No G 177/1931, p. 201, N M M.L.
2. The mills accepting the Congress conditions for not being boycotted had to declare (1) that they had sympathy for national aspirations (2) that not less than 75 per cent of the share capital was held by Indians and 60 per cent of the directors were Indians (3) that there was no foreign interest in the firm and the partners of the firm were not interested in foreign insurance and import trade and (4) that the mill would assist in propaganda for *swadeshi* and safeguard Indian interests.

I am given to understand that sometime back some of your employees were dismissed because they came to work with "Gandhi" caps on their heads.[3] I do not know if this dismissal preceded the signing of the declaration by you or not. In any event the dismissal of any employee merely because he wears a white khadi cap seems extraordinary. I trust you will not penalise any one this way and that it will be quite open to any one of your employees to wear khadi should he so choose.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. The managing director of the British India Corporation denied this.

5. To M. Abdullah[1]

Camp Rae Bareli
June 25th, 1931

Dear Mr. Abdullah,[2]
I received your letter in Ceylon.[3] But ever since then I have been continuously on the move and hence could not reply to it. I hope you will excuse me. Even now I am on tour and cannot write to you at any length. The points you raise in your letter require full treatment. I can only deal with them briefly at present.

I agree with you in regard to the fundamental position that religion must not be allowed to interfere with politics or economics. But what is religion is a difficult thing to say. It includes a large number of social customs and conventions and modes of thought. By saying merely that we banish religion from politics we cannot do away with the habits and conventions of generations. All one can do is to develop

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. A journalist who was associated with the *Mussalman* published from Calcutta.
3. In his letter of 6 May 1931 Abdullah had written that "if religion was banished from Congress offices and platforms and if Hindus and Muslims were welded together through cultural assimilation", there would be no communal problem.

an outlook which is based on a scientific and reasonable appreciation of modern conditions. So far as I am concerned I have tried to lay stress on this outlook and there are many others who have done so. I have no doubt that this outlook will grow because one cannot for long ignore existing conditions.

I do not think that it is necessary to do away with cultural differences entirely. To some extent it is bound to happen but cultural differences, if they are not antagonistic, enrich national life.

To some extent I may agree with you that Gandhiji's outlook on life is not in keeping with modern thought. But what exactly is modern thought? Almost everything that was supposed to be the basis of modern thought is today being questioned in the West and western civilization itself has largely failed. The essential thing about Gandhiji's outlook is his laying stress on the ethical and moral side of life and politics In the main I appreciate this and agree with it. So far as the Congress is concerned it has not accepted all the views of Gandhiji in regard to the social structure and Gandhiji himself has made this repeatedly clear.

Certainly the mode of living of Hindus should not be thrust on non Hindus and *vice versa*. I am quite sure that before long there would be a far closer approximation between the various communities in India in regard to many things and specially inter-dining and inter-marriage but what is important is approximation in thought and not the result that comes from it.

I see no great objection to people performing some social ceremonies which have been practised for long unless there is anything radically wrong about them. Gradually these ceremonies may automatically change or die out. Thus there are some things which I consider radically wrong and conducive to superstition. I would not do these in any event. There are other ceremonies and practices which though I may attach no importance to them yet I would not object to taking part in them if I was required to do so by people whom I did not wish to displease. On the occasion of my father's death there were some things personal to me which I had not approved of and which I did not do. There were others in connection with the *shraddha* ceremony in which I had no personal faith but I was prepared to take part in them and did take part in them because otherwise I would have caused great unhappiness to my mother and others. Besides most of these ceremonies have a dual basis—one is somewhat superstitious and the other is more or less philosophical.

Anyhow I entirely agree with you that religious principles and customs should not influence politics.

The real thing to my mind is the economic factor. If we lay stress on this and divert public attention to it we shall find automatically that religious differences recede into the background and a common bond unites different groups. The economic bond is stronger than even the national one. Working among the kisans, among peasants I have found very little difference when they have this economic bond.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. To Bishambhar Nath Gupta[1]

June 30th, 1931

Dear Sir,[2]
Your letter of the 27th June.[3] A list of approved and boycotted mills is being sent. This contains the pledge to be signed by mills. Any mill not signing this pledge is placed on the boycotted list. For purposes of picketing they are to be treated as if they deal in foreign cloth. Ordinarily shops dealing chiefly in foreign cloth should be picketed first but you have authority to picket shops dealing in the products of boycotted mills unless such stuffs are sealed up. Please send 4-1/2 annas in postage stamps, the cost of the directory.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 A.I.C.C. File No. 177(1)(KW)1/1931, p. 369, N.M.M.L.
2. A Congressman of Farrukhabad, U.P.
3. He had asked Jawaharlal whether a mill which had not signed the *swadeshi* pledge but produced cloth from indigenous yarn could be boycotted and the shop selling its cloth could be picketed.

7. Reply to Muslim Cloth Dealers[1]

I regret I am unable to follow your argument when you refer to the communal question. The boycott of foreign cloth can by no stretch of imagination be considered a communal question. It is a purely economic issue destined to better the whole nation and, specially, the poorer classes who spin and card and weave and dye and perform the other operations which go to the making of cloth. The weavers being very largely Muslims benefit specially by this boycott. I am surprised to find the statement in your letter that the weaver class has suffered greatly by picketing. It is a well known fact that it is this very class which has benefited, and rightly benefited, by the campaign, and I have no doubt that if you took the trouble to visit the villages you would find the weavers prospering as they have not prospered for long years. You will find that the vast majority of these weavers use hand-spun yarn or spun by Indian mills and you ought to know that the Congress does not boycott either of these. I had not previously heard the statement made by anybody that the weavers had suffered by picketing. I was not aware even of the fact that any weaver in our town or district had ever been picketed. I shall be glad to know from you what justification you had for making this statement.

I shall also welcome your explaining to me how the economic or political interests of the Muslim masses suffer by the boycott of foreign cloth. As I am myself greatly interested in economic questions I shall be glad to be enlightened on this point.

The boycott of foreign cloth necessarily involves loss to those merchants who have carried on the foreign cloth business. But they have taken the risk deliberately when they know that for years past this question has been in the forefront and in the course of the past year it has become one of our most vital issues. I shall be glad to know, however, how this boycott is supposed to injure Muslim merchants specially in Allahabad. So far as my information goes the greatest sufferers have been the non-Muslim merchants whose stocks were far greater, but none the less most of them agreed to seal their foreign cloth. For

1. Allahabad, 30 June 1931. *The Leader*, 2 July 1931. On behalf of Muslim cloth dealers of Allahabad, Muhammad Hussain, an advocate of Allahabad and two others jointly wrote to the Allahabad DCC, questioning the wisdom of its plan to picket foreign cloth shops when such picketing had often led to communal riots.

the nation is greater than any individual or group and I am glad to say that many foreign cloth dealers have willingly suffered this loss for the sake of the great cause we all served.

I do not know what the unfortunate occurrences at Benares, Agra, Mirzapur and Cawnpore have to do with our peaceful picketing.[2] Our picketing is going to be perfectly peaceful without the slightest element of compulsion in it. It will be directed to the buyer, to whom our appeal will, in the main, be addressed. Those who choose to purchase foreign cloth in spite of our appeal will be perfectly free to do so. And I shall be glad if any shopkeeper will draw our attention to any indecorous behaviour on the part of our volunteers.

I have no doubt that when you consider the question on the merits, you and the other gentlemen who have signed the letter you have sent me, will agree with me that the boycott of foreign cloth has nothing whatever to do with the communal question, and that all of us can and should join wholeheartedly in making it a complete success, so that the nation may prosper and the millions of our poor, Muslims and Hindus, may have one burden at least removed from their weary shoulders.

2 It was contended in the joint letter that communal riots at these places were the result of forcing Congress decisions on the Muslims.

8. To Muhammad Hussain[1]

I am obliged to you for your letter of today's date.[2] I have read it carefully and tried to appreciate your viewpoint but I regret I have not been wholly able to do so. So far as the National Congress is concerned I can speak with a measure of authority as I have been closely associated with its working in the city and district of Allahabad, in the United Provinces and in all India. Speaking with this authority and with the experience which I possess in this connection, which, you will agree with me, must of necessity be far greater than yours, allow me to assure you that your ideas about the Congress have little to do with the facts.

1. Allahabad, 2 July 1931. *The Leader*, 4 July 1931.
2 It dealt with how picketing of foreign cloth affected communal relations and Muslim weavers.

It is a fact that the Congress contains a great majority of Hindus because Hindus happen to live in large numbers in this country. It is also a fact that a considerable number of Muslims have not yet identified themselves with the Congress. But everyone knows that large numbers of Muslims are in the Congress and that some Muslims are among its most distinguished and trusted leaders and counsellors. Everyone knows also that the Congress contains in its wide fold able and respected representatives of every other community in India—the Sikhs, Christians, Parsees, Jews, etc.

It will serve little purpose for me to waste my time and yours in arguing about the relative numbers or strength of the two main political groups among the Muslims today—those who style themselves nationalists and the others. That is a matter for Muslims themselves to settle and you have no doubt read the recent interesting and illuminating utterances of Dr. Ansari on the subject.[3] So far as I am concerned I can say this that it has been a proud privilege for me to be associated as a comrade-in-arms with many a Muslim friend and colleague.

The Congress has always stood for communal unity and, instead of avoiding this vital question, has put it in the forefront of its programme. As you know well, the difficulties in the way are not of the making of the Congress. But in spite of these difficulties I have no doubt that communal unity will come and nationalism will triumph in the end.

In regard to your charges of the Congress betraying our comrades of the North West Frontier Province may I suggest that you might take the opinion of these very gentlemen on the subject?

I am afraid I must again beg of you to visit certain villages inhabited by weavers before you form any opinion about their past or present condition. It is a well known fact that the machine industry was slowly but surely killing weaving as a cottage industry and throwing out of employment vast numbers of our weavers, who fall back upon the land. This and other causes resulted in the rural population of India actually increasing during the last hundred years or so, although in every other country the urban population has been increasing rapidly. It was with the coming of the noncooperation movement eleven years ago that the poor weaver got his first chance after his long neglect. And in many places, to my personal knowledge, his mud hut gave place to a brick built house.

3 On 29 June 1931 at the Bengal Nationalist Muslim Conference, M. A. Ansari had said that the Muslim League, which through official patronage was going to attend the Round Table Conference did not really represent the vast majority of Muslims in India.

As the *swadeshi* and hand spinning movements have advanced the weaver has prospered. Our present movement for the boycott of foreign cloth has been of great benefit to him. The great majority of weavers use yarn manufactured by Indian mills. This is encouraged by us and thus there is no question of boycott. A small number of weavers doing very fine work use foreign yarn. In theory we boycott foreign yarn but in practice we do not go to the handloom weaver who uses foreign yarn. Certainly there has not been any question of picketing him or his products. Thus the great majority of weavers who use handspun or Indian mill-spun yarn have greatly profited by our movement and the small number of weavers who use foreign yarn have also as a rule indirectly profited and have certainly not lost as a whole. If you wish to study this question, in order to arrive at correct conclusions, I shall be happy to suggest some books to you. I would also recommend your studying the statistics compiled by various government departments.

The Congress does not propose to interfere with the freedom of action of anyone. I pointed out to you in my last letter that there was no question of force or compulsion. The strength and force of the National Congress is based on the goodwill and confidence of the people of this great country. It has no armies or police forces to enforce its decisions All it can do is to appeal to all the children of this common motherland of ours. If they heed this appeal, well and good. If they do not heed it, they are free to go their several ways and there is nobody to prevent them or coerce them.

The boycott of foreign cloth is a purely economic question. It has nothing to do with the communal question; it has nothing to do, except indirectly, with Swaraj or political rights. It has everything to do with stopping a big drain from India and with raising the standard of the poor, whoever they may be. In this economic campaign all can join whatever their other differences may be.

I visited this morning every cloth dealer in the central parts of Allahabad city and I explained to them what our policy was. I am glad to say that everyone—Hindu or Muslim—whether he agreed with me wholly or not, appreciated my viewpoint. All that our volunteers were doing for the present was to plead in the street with intending purchasers to buy *swadeshi* cloth only. But if in spite of this appeal they wanted to buy foreign cloth they were free to do so.

You will thus see that the Congress is not forcing anything upon the Muslims or Hindus against their will. We only plead with our fellow countrymen, and I shall live in the hope that when you have thoroughly appreciated our viewpoint you will willingly offer your cooperation in this great undertaking.

9. To President, Nellore D.C.C.[1]

3/7/1931

Dear Sir,

We are in receipt of your letter without date.[2] As requested a list of mills is sent separately. Please send four annas six pies to cover its price and postage.

I am rather surprised at your questions. The Working Committee has made it perfectly clear that no compromise permitting the sale of existing stocks of foreign cloth can be entered into. I enclose a copy of the latest resolutions of the Working Committee. Subject to your not agreeing to any sale of foreign cloth, your agreement is permissible. It is however a little too comprehensive. It would be better to have a few simple clauses which can be adhered to. It would be better for you to give up some of the less necessary clauses and lay stress on immediate sealing of all foreign cloth.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 *AICC. File No. G 151/1930, p 69, NMML.*
2 He had asked Jawaharlal whether his committee could stop picketing the shops of dealers who would clear their stock of foreign cloth in a short time or keep it for the time being under seal

10. To Muhammad Hussain[1]

I am in receipt of your letter of the 3rd July.[2] I am afraid our correspondence is rapidly going off the rails. We started with the picketing of foreign cloth but we seem to have travelled far from that subject.

1. Allahabad, 6 July 1931. *The Leader*, 8 July 1931.
2. Muhammad Hussain contended that the Congress had not done anything practical to achieve Hindu Muslim unity though the question had been given great importance in the Congress programme.

You will excuse me, I hope, if I do not give any more time to this vague and general discussion of topics many of which died and were buried long ago. I am busy enough with vital and living questions.

I am glad to find that you are of opinion that a Musalman is a real democrat and a nationalist. This has all along been my opinion in regard to the numerous Muslim colleagues with whom I have been associated in the national movement. But I was afraid that those who were not so associated with us might not agree with me. Your assurance is, therefore, comforting.

11. Circular to P.C.Cs[1]

July 16th, 1931

Dear Comrade,

In view of the fact that all manner of pledges, sometimes conflicting with each other or not in consonance with the Congress policy, have been used in connection with the campaign for the exclusion of foreign cloth, the Working Committee has issued a form of a pledge which I give below. It is desirable that this identical pledge be used wherever necessary. Where pledges have already been given or taken, such pledges should be compared with this. If they are in line with the Working Committee's suggested pledge, they may be allowed to stand. But any pledge which conflicts with this, or is inconsistent with it, cannot be held to be a valid pledge.

In this connection I would again remind you that no compromise permitting the sale of any foreign cloth or yarn, even of old stock or even for a period, can be allowed.

Please communicate the new form of the pledge immediately to your district and local committees, boycott committees, picketing committees and all other organisations interested in the exclusion of foreign cloth.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No P I/1931, p 101, NMML.

PLEDGE

Resolved that any pledge in connection with the exclusion of foreign cloth and yarn, inconsistent with the following pledge, shall be held to be invalid.

We pledge ourselves that we shall observe the following conditions so long as the Working Committee of the Congress does not give express permission by resolution to do otherwise:

1. We undertake not to purchase or sell any foreign yarn made from cotton, wool or silk or cloth manufactured from such yarn.
2. We undertake not to purchase or sell any yarn or cloth manufactured by mills that have not accepted the Congress conditions.
3. We undertake not to sell in this country any foreign yarn or silk or wool or cloth manufactured from such yarn or silk that may be lying with us.

12. To S.K. Datt Paliwal[1]

Simla
July 21st, 1931

Dear Paliwalji,

I have received your letter of the 6th July. I have no doubt that there is a good deal of room for well-conducted insurance business in our province. There is also no doubt that insurance is a field which should be developed. In particular, Industrial Insurance Companies of the kind that you seem to have in view are desirable.

Personally I have little technical knowledge of insurance to be able to offer you any helpful advice. I feel, however, that any such undertaking must be run competently and in the most efficient and up to date manner possible. We cannot afford to take risks by running any business that we start inefficiently. This naturally injures the movement for *swadeshi*. I trust that you will make your company an example in efficient management.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No. G-179/1931, p. 165, N.M.M.L.

13. To Mahavir Tyagi[1]

July 22nd, 1931

My dear Tyagi,[2]
I have your letter of the 13th July. I can realise that unless the foreign cloth market in Delhi is controlled it will be difficult to do much in the neighbouring districts. I believe picketing has been started in Delhi. We shall of course try to do our best. But remember this that our picketing and all our propaganda is ultimately meant to impress the consumer. We have succeeded already very largely in doing so. We must carry on because ultimately the success of the foreign cloth boycott will depend on the desire of the consumer to buy *swadeshi* only. *Therefore do not mind very much if you find that your picketing is not* as successful as it ought to be. Your real success lies deeper down. You are keeping an ideal before the public and educating it and that is bound to have result.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. A I C C. File No. G 152/1931, p. 165, N M M.L.
2. (b. 1899); then president of Dehra Dun District Congress Committee, member, A I.C C, 1923-65, of Constituent Assembly, 1946-49, of Lok Sabha, 1952 67 and of Rajya Sabha since 1970; Union Minister of Revenue and Expenditure, 1951-53, of Defence Organisation, 1953 57, and of Rehabilitation, 1964 66, Chairman, Fifth Finance Commission, 1968-69.

14. To President, Dharwar D.C.C.[1]

27.7.31

Dear Sir,
I am informed that you have directed the Gadag Congress Committee to picket shops selling American cigarettes. Although it is desirable to

1. A I C C File No. G-152/1931, p. 163, N.M M L.

carry on propaganda against all foreign goods it seems to me undesirable for you to picket any shops except those dealing in foreign cloth and liquor. This direction was sent to the Gadag Committee and I believe to you also through the Bombay P.C.C. I regret that in spite of it you have continued picketing the cigarette shops. We cannot afford to fritter away our energies at the present moment. We must concentrate on the boycott of foreign cloth and liquor. I hope you will issue necessary instructions in the matter. I am sending a copy of this letter to the president of the Gadag Congress Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. To Shankarlal Banker[1]

21/8/31

My dear Shankarlal,[2]
I enclose a letter for you to answer.[3]
I am receiving complaints from all manner of odd places against the mills on our approved list. In particular the charge is brought that some of them are using foreign yarn. Very responsible persons in Bombay brought this charge. A frequent complaint is also that full lengths are not applied. I mentioned some of these charges to you once but you did not attach importance to them. In view however of persistent complaints I feel that something should be done to enquire into the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC. File No G 177/1931, p. 41, NMML
2. Then secretary, All India Spinners Association and Congress Textile Mills Exemption Committee.
3. A letter from Meerut Congress Committee complained of certain mills in the approved list not observing the conditions of the swadeshi declaration

16. To Shankarlal Banker[1]

1/9/31

Dear Sir,

I have your letters of the 26th and 28th Aug.[2]

I agree with you entirely that we should ask the mills in Indian states to limit their hours of work to ten and that we should not give them recognition till they do so.

I also agree that in case a reduction in wages is made we may have to place these mills on the boycott list. But this should be done only after every effort has been made to get them to desist from such a course.

I enclose two letters for you to dispose of.[3]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 A.I.C.C. File No. G 177/1931, p. 23, N.M.M.L.
2 The letters complained of mills in the Indian states working more than twelve hours a day while the Congress had fixed ten hours in British India, and also of the mills which had refused to restore the reduction in wages.
3 One letter from a millowner suggested a labour policy for the consideration of the Congress and another from the Meerut Congress Committee alleged the use of foreign yarn by some mills included in the approved list.

17. Swadeshi as a Creed[1]

All of us should try to promote *swadeshi* and check smuggling of foreign cloth into India from Japan and elsewhere. So far, foreign cloth boycott has been an instrument of war, but now we should make it our creed under all circumstances. Our aim should not be to injure others but to benefit ourselves. Dependence on other countries leads to degeneration and it has been the cause of India's decline.

1 Delhi, 24 September 1931. From *The Hindu*, 25 September 1931.

18. To G.R. Khanna[1]

October 4th, 1931

Dear Sir,[2]
Your letter of the 26th September.[3]

In case a foreign cloth dealer persists in the business and refuses to come to terms with you, you are entitled to picket his shop completely asking people to refrain from buying even *swadeshi* stuffs from that shop. The reason is that buyers may be deluded into buying foreign stuff. Whether you should picket a shop in this way or not is for your committee to decide having regard to local conditions. But you certainly have the right to do so.

Boycotted mills are in the same position as foreign cloth and you are entitled to picket their cloth also. You may see, however, if the shopkeeper is persisting in getting goods from the boycotted mills or if he has merely got some old stock. In the former case you must treat him as if he is dealing in foreign goods. In the latter case you need not be so strict in picketing but you will of course ask people not to buy such goods.

If you are going to begin picketing I might suggest that you should first have patrolling for a week or so. The next step should be gentle picketing, that is to say, you should ask people not to buy foreign cloth at any shop. Later, if found necessary, you can start strict picketing of individual shops. But all this your committee must decide having regard to local conditions.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-152/1931, p. 61, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary, Muzaffarnagar Town Congress Committee.
3. The correspondent had asked for Congress instructions on peaceful picketing.

19. Statement to the Press[1]

I am surprised to find that some people have misunderstood the recent resolution of the Working Committee warning mills working more than ten hours a day.[2] The Committee by doing so has obviously not approved of the ten-hours day. It has not approved or fixed the working hours for factory labour by this resolution. All it has done is to say that it will boycott some of the worst offenders among the textile mills specially in the Indian states.

It is unfortunate that most of our mills still adhere to the ten hours day and the Committee hopes that they will take early steps to reduce the working day. Meanwhile, however, we could not tolerate even for a short while the glaring exploitation of workers by some of the mills working even more than ten hours. I am glad that the Committee's resolution has had effect immediately and hours have been reduced in some mills in Indian states.

The Working Committee has not definitely laid down what the working day should be, but in the resolution on the Fundamental Rights it has been clearly stated that the working hours must be reasonable. I have no doubt that we should aim at at least eight hours a day, and 48 hours a week. The next step, however, in these mills, should be nine hours a day and 54 hours a week.

I hope that mill owners will realise that efficiency of labour is greatly increased by lessening the hours of work. Complaints are made that Indian labour is not efficient enough. It is absurd to expect efficiency if you keep a man at work for ten hours and give him a paltry wage.

1 *The Bombay Chronicle*, 6 October 1931.

2 By this resolution the Textile Mills Exemption Committee was asked to urge the mills which worked more than ten hours a day to follow a ten hour day schedule and also those which had cut wages to restore them.

20. To Kurur Nambudiripad[1]

October 25th, 1931

Dear Nambudiripad,[2]

.... Regarding picketing I do not understand what you mean by any picketing other than peaceful. In any event our picketing must be peaceful. You may, if you like, write to the Bombay P.C.C. but you may expect little help from them. Ultimately whatever you do will be out of your own strength. If the Christian shopkeepers do not listen to you it shows that you have not touched the Christian buying public yet. It is for you to do propaganda among them as well as to carry on peaceful picketing before their shops. It does not matter if the picketing is not wholly successful. It is the best propaganda and is a continual reminder of the boycott. You may in particular concentrate on one or two big shops.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C.C. File No. G 152/1931, p 69, N M.M L. Extracts
2. (b. 1896), a Congressman of Trichur who participated in Vaikom satyagraha, salt satyagraha and the temple entry movement.
Nambudiripad had written to Jawaharlal that Christian shopkeepers had not taken the boycott pledge. He had also suggested that the Bombay P.C C. should try to stop the flow of foreign cloth from Bombay to the west coast of India.

21. To Secretary, Bombay P.C.C.[1]

Camp Bombay
November 7th, 1931

Dear Friend,

The Working Committee considered your letter of the 22nd October as well as the representation of your Foreign Cloth Boycott and Swadeshi

1. A.I C C. File No. G-150/1931, p. 43, N.M.M L.

Committee.[2] The Working Committee would have liked to have the views of your P.C.C. in the matter. As you know this question is full of difficulties and we have considered it on several occasions. We have felt that, desirable as it is, it might be difficult for the Working Committee to take charge of certification of *swadeshi* articles and the like. We wanted this to be done for two or three months by other organisations and then to review the situation with a view to ultimate control. One of the difficulties in our way was the feeling that *swadeshi* work should not be made to depend on political changes and campaigns. If it was so dependent it may be disorganised on the resumption of the civil disobedience campaign.

But we realise the obvious difficulties of this attitude and we propose to consider it afresh. Meanwhile I am collecting some information as to what has already been done. I should like to know from you if it is possible for your committee or a sub committee of your committee to cooperate with the Bombay Swadeshi League and the Indian Merchants Chamber in the production of a really good *swadeshi* directory. I feel that with this cooperation good would result. This is a personal suggestion from me and it does not come from the Working Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 The committee had represented that the P C Cs had no scope for *swadeshi* activities as the All India Spinners Association and Textile Exemption Committee had unitary control in this respect, also that there was no machinery for certifying to the manufacturer of indigenous goods that his articles were *swadeshi*

22. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

November 21st, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,
Your letter of November 18th regarding the *swadeshi* directory. I am sorry that some confusion has arisen owing to the action I took in the

1 AICC File No G-180/1931, pp 12 13, NMML

matter.[2] I did so in complete ignorance of the correspondence you refer to. The matter was considered, as you will remember, at the Delhi Working Committee meeting. The Bombay P.C.C. had written on the subject. The consideration of this was adjourned and I was asked to find out how matters stood. I wrote accordingly to the Bombay Swadeshi League. No mention was made in Delhi about the correspondence with the Federation. Again the matter was brought up by me at the Bombay Working Committee meeting this month. There was no mention then also of the steps that had already been taken. The Working Committee accepted my suggestion that the three organisations I had mentioned might be entrusted with the task of preparing the directory. I wrote accordingly to all the three of them as well as to the Federation.

You will remember that the question of the formation of the Swadeshi Board as well as the preparation of the *swadeshi* directory was considered by the Working Committee on two occasions when Bapu was here. Jal Naoroji attended the Working Committee once also and Jairamdas and I attended a meeting of the Merchants Chamber. I gathered from Bapu at the time that the preparation of the directory should be left to the Swadeshi League and Indian merchants organisation. The latter were certainly fitted to do the work but there was one danger to be considered. They were after all intimately concerned with the matter and there was a possibility of some wider national interests being overlooked. It was for this reason that the Bombay Swadeshi League was included. It was also made clear that the Congress would not commit itself for the present but would watch developments and later give its opinion. I had this in mind when I placed the matter before the Working Committee and later when I wrote to the various parties concerned. As however I now find that at your suggestion the Federation has taken a number of steps already it is certainly desirable to allow them to carry on their work. I am not yet quite sure about the desirability of a formal authority being given to the Federation on behalf of the Working Committee. Meanwhile I am writing to the Federation and to the Bombay P.C.C., the Indian Merchants Chamber, Bombay, and the Bombay Swadeshi League, in accordance with your direction. I enclose copies of my letters. I

2. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries in collaboration with the Indian Merchants Chamber and Bombay Swadeshi League had undertaken to compile a *swadeshi* directory on Mahatma Gandhi's suggestion and at the request of the Congress President Jawaharlal, not having known about this arrangement wrote to the Federation that it should not make it known that the directory was being compiled on behalf of the Working Committee.

think it will be best if future correspondence on this subject was carried on with the Ahmedabad office to prevent any overlapping or confusion.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

HINDUSTANI SEVA DAL

ts to Allay Panic[1]

nefited neither the Hindus nor the Muslims.
uble at Allahabad still I wish that some precau-
on on behalf of the Congress. To allay panic
curity in the minds of traders, I propose to enrol
be posted at certain localities. They would appeal
entertain any fear of trouble and suppress false
event of danger protect shops.

1931 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 10 April 1931

24. On the Training of Volunteers[1]

The burden of the great work that was done by the Congress last year fell largely on the volunteers who came forward to do their duty to their motherland in her hour of need. All over the country, from city and from village, young men and women came forward and offered their services and suffered for the sake of India's freedom. The credit for any achievement is theirs.

In particular I should like to mention the services of the Hindustani Seva Dal. The Seva Dal has always laid stress on training and discipline and has thus raised the efficiency of the individual as well as of the nation. The work of the volunteers is still unfinished. We have travelled a good way towards our goal but a long way still remains to be traversed. We must, therefore, continue to train our young men and women as volunteers for national service and sacrifice. The Hindustani Seva Dal proposes to have a large number of training centres in the United Provinces and also to have a camp early in June. I hope that young men and women will join these centres and the camp in large numbers and thus make themselves trained and efficient servants of the nation. I hope also that the people of the province will help the Seva Dal in every other way.

In Allahabad it has been decided to start a training centre under the auspices of the Seva Dal almost immediately. I hope that young men and women here will join this centre, so that we may have a trained and disciplined volunteers' corps in Allahabad, worthy of our city and of the great cause for which we labour.

1 Statement issued at Allahabad *The Leader*, 13 April 1931.

25. Appeal for Flag Day Celebration[1]

Over two years ago, the Hindustani Seva Dal fixed the last Sunday of every month as a flag day when the national flag is hoisted and honoured simultaneously all over the country. The lead given by the Seva Dal was eagerly taken, and the last Sunday of each month has become the recognised day for this observance. The Dal has now fixed Sunday, April 26th, as a special day in honour of the national flag. The great campaign for freedom of the past year has brought honour to our flag and made it very dear to us. Under its shelter, men and women have performed deeds of heroism, and it has become a source of inspiration for us, a symbol of the yearning for freedom in our hearts. It is well that we should honour it. I hope therefore that Sunday, April 26th, will be duly celebrated all over the country and our brave tricolour will be everywhere in evidence, floating gallantly against the blue Indian sky. And as we salute it and carry it in procession, we shall remember that though much has been done, much still remains, and the freedom for which it stands is still to be achieved. Under it and through it, we shall salute those who have died for our country and those who have suffered and sacrificed for her freedom. And we shall resolve to carry on their great work till India is completely free and independent.

1. *The Hindu*, 22 April 1931.

26. Circular to P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
July 16th, 1931

Dear Comrade,
Among the resolutions passed by the Working Committee in Bombay one of the most important related to the Hindustani Seva Dal and the volunteer organisation of the Congress.[2] As you are aware, the Seva

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-8/1931, pp. 147-150, N.M.M.L.
2. By this resolution the Hindustani Seva Dal was recognised as the central volunteer organisation of the Congress and Jawaharlal was appointed the member-in-charge and Hardikar, the organising secretary.

Dal has been functioning for over seven years and has built up an efficient organisation of volunteers in various parts of the country. Apart from the Seva Dal, however, there have existed all over the country large numbers of Congress volunteers working under provincial or local committees. A third group of volunteer corps are those which are not affiliated to the Congress and are in no way subordinate to it, but which have often cooperated in Congress activities. Yet a fourth group consists of volunteers who have nothing whatever to do with the Congress and who do not cooperate with us in any way.

We may leave out of consideration the fourth group as it has nothing to do with us

During the past few years there has been a very marked growth in the volunteer movement in the country and last year at least a hundred thousand volunteers participated in the civil disobedience campaign. But most of these volunteers had little discipline and there was no uniformity in their training or organisation. A great deal of energy was thus wasted and efficiency sacrificed. It was obvious that a radical improvement must be brought about in the volunteer organisation in the country if the nation is to take full advantage of it. And there was no time to lose. We live in changing and stirring times and any day we might be called upon to put forth the last ounce of our strength and energy for the great cause of which we are such willing servants.

The Working Committee therefore gave its earnest attention to this problem and passed the resolution to which I have already drawn your attention. This resolution will have to be supplemented by rules and regulations before it is completed. It is also right that the resolution be considered by the All India Board of the Hindustani Seva Dal as it is vitally affected by it. All this, it is hoped, will be done soon and you will have all the help and guidance we can give to enable your committee to build up a strong and efficient volunteer organisation in your province, uniform and coordinated with the central and other provincial organisations.

But you need not wait a day for any additional rules before taking action in the matter. The principles and rules laid down by the Working Committee are sufficient for you to begin immediately. In this connection the following facts must be borne in mind:

1. The Hindustani Seva Dal becomes the Central Volunteer Organisation of the Congress. It will train officers and instructors and certify them and at the same time keep a permanent All India Corps of volunteers at its headquarters.

2. All P.C.Cs are required to form duly recognised volunteer corps. These corps must have, as officers, holders of certificates from the Seva

Dal, and all these members must be members of the Congress and must conform to the Congress creed.

3. If any P.C.C. so chooses it may ask the central organisation, that is, the Seva Dal, to organise volunteer corps in its province.

4. No volunteer board or corps not recognised by the Working Committee can work in future in any province in the name of the Congress.

5. Every volunteer will have to take a pledge. The form of this pledge will be intimated to you as soon as the additional rules are sanctioned by the Working Committee.

6. The volunteer movement must strictly keep aloof from party politics. No volunteer, as such, can take part in them without risk of dismissal.

7. Volunteer Boards of provinces should consist in the main of experts and not laymen. It is proposed to have a Central Volunteer Board for the Seva Dal consisting of the member-in-charge, the organising secretary and three experts. Provinces might well follow this procedure and, instead of the present lay boards, appoint a member of their executive council as member-in-charge and three or four experts to form a provincial volunteer board.

8. The course of training to be followed for the present and till further notice must be the training prescribed by the Hindustani Seva Dal.

9. Existing volunteer units, whether of men or women, should be permitted by provincial committees to continue to function, provided they conform to the conditions laid down by the Working Committee. A unit which has been functioning as such develops an *esprit de corps* and it will be undesirable to break this or remodel it to such an extent that it loses this sense of common discipline and comradeship.

10. The central volunteer authority will take early steps to appoint an examining board for officers and instructors. Lists of officers and instructors who desire to appear for examination and certification should be prepared immediately by provincial committees, in duplicate, one copy being sent to Dr. N. S. Hardikar, Hindustani Seva Dal, Hubli, Karnatak, and the other to me, A.I.C.C. office, Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad. These lists should give full information about each person. In particular they should state :—

(i) Qualifications and training—whether Seva Dal course or any other.
(ii) Period of service as a national volunteer, mentioning various places and corps he has served in.
(iii) Age.
(iv) How long he or she has been a Congress member.

(v) Part taken in noncooperation movement of 1920-22 and civil disobedience campaign of 1930-31. Periods of imprisonment and sections under which convicted.

(vi) Is the applicant prepared to serve under the Congress and in conformity with the Congress creed, and will he or she undertake not to take any part as a volunteer in party politics?

Examinations of officers and instructors may be arranged locally where necessary

11 It is proposed to issue two grades of certificates for junior and senior officers.

12. Provincial committees are requested to send a report as early as possible of the various Congress volunteer corps in their province—their locations, numbers, discipline, relation to P.C.C. etc. This report should include those corps also which are not at present under the P.C.Cs but which cooperate in Congress activities. Every corps should be asked if it is prepared to agree to the conditions laid down by the Working Committee. A copy of this report should be sent to Dr. N. S. Hardikar, Hindustani Seva Dal, Hubli, Karnatak.

I shall be greatly obliged if you will send the information asked for above at the latest by the 30th July. Even if the information and figures you can send by that date are incomplete, your report should reach us in time. The next meeting of the Working Committee takes place on the 4th August and we have to prepare our recommendations for it.

I shall be glad to give you any further help or information you require.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

27. Speech at Seva Dal Conference[1]

Those who opposed the decision to bring the Hindustani Seva Dal under Congress authority had not understood the present situation in the country. I am surprised to hear those objections from Seva Dal volunteers.

1. Bombay, 9 August 1931. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 10 August 1931.

WITH VALLABHBHAI PATEL IN AHMEDABAD, 1931

I do not know how it can be said that after a few years no one would hear anything about the Dal except its name. What would happen after four or five years is that either we become a free nation or perish in this struggle. Whatever happens one thing is certain that we are not going to live like dumb driven cattle. Either we will be free or go to hell.

It had also been decided to bring the entire Khudai Khidmatgar organisation under the control of the Congress. But a fear had been expressed that that army which now numbered over 50,000 and whose number was increasing every day, would not keep up the Seva Dal principles in the manner that they should be maintained. Such a fear is based on a mistaken view about the work of the Congress and the way in which the Congress is doing things.

28. Message to the Khudai Khidmatgars[1]

I convey the greetings of the Hindustani Seva Dal and my personal greetings to our brave comrades, the Khudai Khidmatgars. We have been comrades in a great cause for some time past but now we are on the threshold of a closer association and I should like to extend to the gallant soldiers of freedom of the Frontier Province my warmest welcome. The Khudai Khidmatgars have already proved their mettle and the country has admired their courage and fortitude under the most adverse circumstances. Difficult and anxious times lie ahead of us when all of us will be put to the test. In the struggles ahead I have no doubt that we shall be true comrades of each other and will stand by each other and share alike in suffering and the ultimate triumph. May freedom come soon as the result of our united efforts.

1 A.I.C.C. File No. P-17/1931, p. 195, N.M.M.L.
The Khudai Khidmatgars became the Congress volunteer organisation in the N.W.F.P. in accordance with the Working Committee's resolution of 4 August 1931. Jawaharlal greeted the new association with this message sent in a letter dated 12 August to Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

29. Volunteers and Other Organisations[1]

Rule 10 of the rules for Seva Dal volunteers passed by the Working Committee lays down that no volunteer shall belong to any communal organisation or any other political organisation. This rule has led to some doubts and references have been made to the headquarters of the Dal for elucidation of the rule. The purpose of the rule was to prevent communalism from creeping into our volunteer organisation and also to prevent people who may bear allegiance to other organisations which are sometimes hostile to the Congress from coming in. The volunteer must feel that his chief function is volunteering and his organisation is the Congress. He cannot have a divided allegiance. It may be difficult, however, to apply this rule very strictly to all other organisations. Nor is it necessary to do so in the case of many organisations which do not conflict in any way with the Congress. The following interpretation of the rule should, therefore, be followed. Communal organisations, membership of which should be barred for our volunteers, are such as demand political and economic rights on the basis of religion. In regard to political organisations, any organisation whose objective or activities conflict with those of the Indian National Congress is barred. It may be added, however, that the membership of any other organisation is seldom desirable for a volunteer, as it disturbs his attention and takes away from his efficiency as a volunteer.

Provincial Congress Committees are requested to bear the above interpretation of rule 10 in mind. In case of doubt the matter might be referred to the member-in-charge.

1. Statement to the press, Ahmedabad, 11 September 1931. From *The Leader*, 13 September 1931.

30. To N. S. Hardikar[1]

Camp Ahmedabad
September 14th, 1931

My dear Hardikar,

.... *I spoke last night to Vallabhbhai about the flag salutation. He* agreed with me entirely that the bending of the knee and the nodding

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts

of the head should be done away with. I think you had better make this clear. I am sure if our point of view is explained to our other colleagues they will agree. We have too much of bendings in this country and we had better not encourage them. I also dislike the way people point to the flag when singing the flag song. I shall expect to get your chapter heads for the manual soon.[2]

Get your office to move along with expedition and rapidity. We have to show that the Dal can get things done rapidly and efficiently.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. A Seva Dal manual giving relevant information for the use of volunteers was being prepared by N. S. Hardikar.

31. To N. S. Hardikar[1]

Camp Cawnpore
October 4th, 1931

My dear Hardikar,
On my return to Allahabad I found a sheaf of letters from you and from Lokhare. I am glad that your office is showing some pep. More power to your elbow. You have caught me at an unfortunate moment when not only have I got a huge amount of work but I am also continually moving about specially in the rural areas. However you can rest assured that the Seva Dal work will have precedence. I am dictating this in the train. I shall be out of reach of letters for a week after which I return to Allahabad....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

32. To N. S. Hardikar[1]

Allahabad
12.10.1931

My dear Hardikar,

. . . The Benares camp is running us into heavy expenditure. I have been thinking about this matter and I feel that we are drifting in a wrong direction. What are we driving at? Large scale training of thousands and thousands. Are we going to do this by means of expensive camps? We simply can't do it. We cannot reproduce in our volunteering the expensive educational methods of the English in India. Nor can we take western models. We must have our poverty in view and our kisans. We are at present, in some of our camps, giving a higher standard than that of the lower middle class, with the result that we make our volunteers dissatisfied with their lot later when the standard is reduced. Also we are making it more and more difficult to have camps because our funds are not inexhaustible....

Another matter about the Benares camp. You have laid stress on the camp being a *sainiks'* camp and rightly so. But under the extraordinary circumstances prevailing at present we are not likely to have much time for repeated camps with intervals in between. Both time and money are against us. Suppose we train 75 *sainiks* in Benares. They get spread out and cannot train anybody unless they are brought together again for another camp for instructors. It is far easier to pick out the promising ones and carry on with them and give them additional training. Benares offers special facilities for intellectual training and the present campers will probably be quite qualified in the intellectual subjects. I suggest therefore that after the conclusion of the *sainiks'* camp of 5 weeks, the smart people should be kept on for another three weeks and given additional training for instructorship. At the end of this period if they pass our tests we can appoint them 'provisionally' as instructors subject to any further training or instruction that we might give them later. This will immediately release a number of persons to work in their own districts and a great push will be given to the volunteer movement. Otherwise we shall proceed at a snail's pace....

Yours sincerely
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

33. To Nandkumar Deo Vashishta[1]

Allahabad
October 12, 1931

Dear Nandkumar,[2]
I had a long talk with Sampurnanandji yesterday about the Benares camp. I hope to come there myself on the 16th but as some matters have troubled me I am writing to you immediately on the subject.

The first is that there seems to me to be too much of the spirit of extravagance in the camp specially in regard to food. I understand that men who do hard work require sufficient nourishment but other facts have also to be borne in mind. Our workers, peasants and volunteers who picket, and the residents of the Sabarmati Ashram and the like have to do hard physical work also. We cannot possibly introduce into our camp a standard of living far higher than the prevailing standard. This would necessarily mean that we cannot extend our activities to the masses because at this rate we would require lakhs and lakhs of rupees if not crores. Our objective is to train vast numbers as rapidly as possible. If we set a wrong standard in our provincial camp that is sure to be followed in other camps with the result that very soon there will be no camp left at all.

When I come to Benares I should like to go into this matter more thoroughly because this question of extravagance in food is a very basic question and we cannot allow any drift in regard to it. I am really surprised to learn that it was proposed to spend some hundreds of rupees on milk alone.

I have an impression that the Jhansi camp was also run extravagantly. I do not want that impression to be confirmed by the Benares camp. Otherwise we shall have to revise completely our system of having camps. We must always remember that we have to fit in with Indian conditions. It is no good our aping western models specially in regard to standard of living....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L. *Extracts*
2. A Seva Dal organiser who had conducted the volunteers' camp at Varanasi

34. To Secretary, Bengal P.C.C.[1]

October 18th, 1931

Dear Sir,

....The Hindustani Seva Dal is straining every nerve to push the Hindustani Seva Dal movement in the country and in every province. We seek your full cooperation in this work. We may have to face a crisis before long and we may not have time then to build up our volunteers. Therefore we cannot afford to waste a single day. I hope your committee will give this matter the attention which it so urgently deserves.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Hardikar Papers, NMML. Extracts.

35. To N.S. Hardikar[1]

Allahabad
19 October, 1931

My dear Hardikar,

I have come back from Benares. There are many things about the Benares camp and other camps that I should like to discuss with you. They will have to wait till you come. Two or three matters, however, I might mention.

There seems to me too little staff work about our undertakings. We do not make sufficient preparation before we plunge in and then we seek to cast the blame on others. This cannot and must not happen in the Dal. I was amazed to find that even now no sufficient arrangements had been made for charkhas and spinning in the camp. There is absolutely nothing required in the camp that cannot be procured or prepared within three days and it is gross carelessness and inefficiency on the part of some one if the camp lacks anything. This point must be made clear to persons in charge of camps.

1. Hardikar Papers, NMML. Extracts.

In your formal application please do not have any column of enquiry about caste....

In the Benares camp I was surprised to find one man aged 54. Obviously such a person should never have been taken in the camp. As a matter of fact the medical examination of the recruits showed that only about 10% of them were really fit....

Yours sincerely,
J. Nehru

36. On the Hindustani Seva Dal[1]

Congress volunteers are as old as the Congress itself. Every year, during the session of the National Congress, volunteers have been enrolled to preserve order in that great Assembly and to perform a hundred and one acts of special service. But little attempt was made in the past to train these volunteers. During the noncooperation movement of eleven years ago a new type of volunteer came into existence and thousands of his kind were found in the cities and villages of India. The chief purpose they had before them was to disobey peacefully certain selected laws and orders of the British Government and thus to court jail. As is well known many thousands of these young men and women did go to prison and although the prisons were filled to overflowing, there was no lack of aspirants for the honour of entering them in India's service.

With the suspension of some parts of the noncooperation programme, disobedience for laws was stopped and the volunteer organisations were gradually disbanded. There had been very little training and there was not enough cohesive force to keep them together.

It was felt by many that the old methods of enrolling volunteers were wasteful of energy and enthusiasm as the same process had to be repeated again and again without attaining any substantial results. The lack of proper training resulted in want of efficiency and still more so in the temporary volunteers forgetting very soon what little they had learnt. In spite of repeated attempts there were hardly any well trained

1. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 21 October 1931.

volunteers or disciplined corps of men and women in the country. Stress had been laid on numbers and enthusiasm and the capacity to suffer and go to prison. But enthusiasm is often wasted unless controlled and properly directed; and numbers are almost always a hindrance unless they are disciplined and know how to cooperate with each other, and the capacity to suffer for a great cause, precious as it is, yields richer results if it has training behind it.

It was therefore, considered necessary, soon after the noncooperation movement, to start a new All India Organisation with the object of giving this training and discipline and building up an efficient body of men and women for national service and, whenever necessary, for disciplined sacrifice for the attainment of Swaraj. With a view to give effect to this proposal, an All India Volunteer Conference was held in Cocanada in December 1923, during the sessions of the Indian National Congress. Out of the deliberations of this conference, the Hindustani Seva Dal saw the light of day.

The Seva Dal was formed as an All India Organisation "to train and organise the people of India for national service and disciplined sacrifice with a view to the attainment of Swaraj by peaceful and legitimate means", and "to control and bring under uniform discipline all the existing volunteer organisations and to establish new ones wherever and whenever necessary."

The Cocanada session of the Congress welcomed the formation of the Seva Dal and passed the following resolution in regard to it.

> This Congress is of opinion that in order to train the people of India and make them effective instruments for carrying out of the national work on the lines laid down by the Congress, it is necessary to have a trained and disciplined body of workers. This Congress, therefore, welcomes the movement for the formation of an All India Volunteer Organisation and calls upon the Working Committee to take all necessary steps to form such a body of trained workers in cooperation with the organisers of the movement and to keep control and supervision over it, while giving it freedom of internal management and administration.

It will be noticed that from its very inception the Seva Dal sought to function under the control and supervision of the Working Committee of the Congress. At the same time it desired, and was given, freedom of internal management and administration. It was an autonomous body serving and following the policy and programme of the Congress and subject to the Congress supervision. An All India Board elected by the conference formed the Executive of the Dal.

For six years the Seva Dal continued to function in various parts of India and gradually but effectively built up trained bodies of volunteers. The work was not spectacular and the progress not rapid, as stress was always laid on training and efficiency and not on numbers. Many training camps were held and courses of training drawn up. A junior section for boys and girls was also started. Annually, the conference took place and at this the All India Board for the year was chosen. The Central Board cooperated with the provincial Congress committees in the formation of the provincial Seva Dal Boards. At Bagalkot, in the Karnatak, an Academy of Physical Culture, open to volunteers from all parts of India, was started by the Dal.

The great stress that was always laid on training and efficiency by the Seva Dal not only resulted in creating trained volunteers of the Dal but it set a tone for other volunteer organisations in the country and the whole standard of volunteer training was raised thereby.

In December 1929, following the lead of the National Congress, the Seva Dal made the "Independence" of India its objective, and, subsequently, the Dal threw all its resources into the great national struggle of 1930-31. That heroic struggle called out of their homes men and women by hundreds and thousands, to face prison and the brutal lathi and sometimes death. Only a small proportion of this great number had training, but even those who were not trained showed what splendid material we had to build up a great country-wide volunteer organisation.

Soon after the Delhi truce the Working Committee considered the whole question of volunteering and the Hindustani Seva Dal in the light of new developments and the experience gained during the civil disobedience campaign. It was clear that the training of volunteers on a large scale for national service had become an essential and an immediate work for the Congress. The Working Committee thereupon passed a resolution on the 11th July 1931, recognising the Hindustani Seva Dal as the Central Volunteer Organisation of the Congress and bringing it directly under its own authority and control. The old Seva Dal gladly accepted this fundamental change in its constitution which put an end to its separate autonomous existence and made it into the volunteer department of the Congress. For seven and a half years it had sought to serve the Congress and through it the nation and had drawn repeated attention to training and efficiency. The time had come when its sphere of action should be enlarged and the Congress itself should take charge of its great work.

The Hindustani Seva Dal today is the Volunteer Department of the National Congress and it functions in accordance with the rules framed by the Working Committee and the Central Volunteer Board appointed

by the Working Committee. These rules will be found in the Seva Dal Manual, to be issued in the course of a week or two. It must be remembered, however, that the Seva Dal is not a static body. It is a dynamic organisation, ever growing, ever adapting itself to changing conditions and environments, and constant only in its desire to be of service to India in the struggle for independence and to train and organise the men and women of India and make them into disciplined and efficient soldiers of India's peaceful army. The task is a mighty one, but the Congress has undertaken it in earnest; and with the help of our great organisation and the active cooperation of our comrades all over the country, success should come to us in a large measure. Already, the provinces are astir and training camps are growing up and sending out trained *sainiks* and instructors to carry on the good work in their respective districts. Soon we hope that the badge of the Seva Dal will be a familiar sight in the towns and villages of India. It will be the badge of service and discipline and sacrifice. It will be a badge of honour for those who are privileged to wear it.

The Hindustani Seva Dal is the Central Volunteer Organisation of the Congress. It will have a central corps and institutions for the training of officers and instructors. Provincial Congress Committees have been given autonomy in the organisation of their volunteers. But this autonomy is subject to the general supervision of the Central Board in regard to training and technique of organisation. All officers and instructors must have the certificates of the Central Board and all volunteers must be members of the Congress and must take the prescribed pledge.

The Seva Dal Manual contains all the rules so far framed by the Working Committee and the Central Board. These rules and regulations are being added to from time to time and may be varied by the Board whenever necessity arises. Suggestions for the improvement of the organisation will be welcomed by the Board from all who are interested in the work with which the Working Committee had charged the Board.

37. To All Provincial Seva Dal Boards[1]

Allahabad
6th November '31

The Central Board of the Hindustani Seva Dal has framed courses of training for *sainiks* and instructors and has drawn up rules for the organisation of the Dal. In accordance with the wishes of the Working Committee, the board is endeavouring to bring about uniformity in volunteer training all over India and to raise the standard of efficiency. The board wishes to make it clear however that it has no desire to limit the autonomy of the provincial Congress committees and their provincial boards in regard to their voluntary organisations, except in so far as the basic rules passed by the Working Committee are concerned. The board further realises that conditions differ in various provinces and an absolute uniformity may not be possible or desirable. Provincial boards and provincial members-in-charge will, where they consider it quite necessary, vary the courses drawn up by the Central Board. In case this is done information should at once be sent to the Central Board. But it is hoped that such variations will not be great and will not lower efficiency.

The volunteer movement in India is still in its infancy and it is not easy to arrive at final decisions in any matter relating to it. The Central Board will not hesitate to change any of its own previous decisions if it feels that such a change will help in the work they have undertaken. Provincial boards are requested to point out their particular difficulties so that the existing rules might be improved upon as occasion arises for this.

It should be noted that the head of the volunteer organisation in any province is the member-in-charge acting under the provincial board or the P.C.C. He will be the final authority in that province for all volunteer work, camps etc.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.

38. Appeal to the Youth of Bengal[1]

I should like to appeal to the young men and women of Bengal to join the Congress Volunteer Organisation and to take the necessary training to make themselves into efficient servants of the nation. The Hindustani Seva Dal has been taken over completely by the Congress and functions now as the volunteer department of the Congress, subject to certain fundamental rules laid down by the Working Committee. The provincial Congress committees have been given autonomy in the matter of organising their Seva Dals. The general technique and organisation is laid down by headquarters. Apart from this, it is for the provincial Congress committees to take all necessary steps for the organisation of volunteers. This work has been going on at a rapid pace in many provinces. In Bengal the B.P.C.C. has recently formed a volunteer board called the Bangiya Seva Dal. I hope that this board will receive the cooperation and the support of the people of Bengal and that the splendid material that Bengal offers will soon be trained and organised under the banner of the Congress. The Seva Dal desires to train both men and women. For this purpose training camps are started. I trust that these camps will be helped with necessary funds and materials. We have to work with a time-limit before us and therefore I trust that there will be no delay. Our future work must necessarily depend on trained and efficient volunteers, and Bengal, I have no doubt, will give more than its quota.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1 Calcutta, 19 November 1931 J N Miscellaneous Papers, N M M L.

39. Address to Women Volunteers[1]

The Seva Dal is only a branch of the Congress organisation. The volunteers of the Dal are the soldiers of the Congress and it is for the President to command them. It is, however, a matter of gratification

1 Bombay, 15 December 1931. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16 December 1931. The speech was made at a training camp for women volunteers in Bombay opened by Vallabhbhai Patel

that the President has personally come to bless our efforts. We all know what an excellent part the women of India have played during the last war. There were very few of them trained then. It was the inextinguishable fire of patriotism which supplied the energy and the driving force to your wonderful sacrifices. To be a soldier, you must have the spirit of a soldier and not merely his drill. However the training is necessary for better discipline and organisation. The Seva Dal is not an army of artificial and mercenary soldiers. Our war is of a different kind and mere artificial methods would not carry us an inch forward. We had fought the last war but a new war is almost on us again.

We have no more time to lose in reorganising our forces. Things are happening at a terrific speed in the country. In a national war, there is no question of either sex or community. Whoever is born in this country ought to be a soldier. In the last campaign there were not more than 5,000 trained volunteers but the soldiers who fought the war could be counted by lakhs. The camp that you are opening is merely an ideal or rather a nucleus which would serve as an inspirer to the whole volunteer organisation. Like the President I am also not sure if we would really reach the end of the camp. Very soon we shall be compelled to go to the other camp which is a bigger camp and perhaps our steps ought to move in that direction in the near future. When the time to go to that camp comes, we should remember the vow we had taken as soldiers of our country under the tricolour flag

40. On British Criticism of the Seva Dal[1]

The attack of the British press on the Seva Dal movement showed that they were afraid of the Seva Dal. But there is no need for that panic on their part. Whatever the Congress does, it does openly. The work of the Congress during the last ten or twelve years was there, and there was nothing to warrant the fear that the British press seemed to entertain. The Congress is accused of the breach of the Delhi truce, but it is an entirely baseless charge. The truth is that the government were unable

1 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 17 December 1931.
Report of a speech at the Hindustani Seva Dal volunteers' camp in Bombay on 16 December 1931.

to crush the nonviolent activity of the Congress, and, therefore, they have to resort to vilification of, and base attacks on the Congress, but that will not deter Congress from its path.

If we had a national government we would have opened camps like this all over the country. Every citizen of the future Swaraj government must be a well-trained soldier able to face any responsibility during peace or war. The volunteers who were under training in the camp were expected to spread the zeal for freedom throughout the country. Their work would be to rouse the people for the freedom's fight. It was comparatively easier to fan that fire, but it was really difficult to control it, and it was to achieve the latter object that they wanted trained men.

41. Address to Volunteers[1]

You have just taken a pledge. The Seva Dal is today a part of the Congress and functions under the Working Committee of the Congress. Your responsibility is therefore great. You cannot forget the pledge you have taken to fight under the Congress flag. The Congress is an all-pervading organisation and your responsibility is great. The honour of the country is in your hands. Friends and foes alike will criticise you. Don't stain the name of the Congress. If you do anything that will bring a bad name to the Congress, it will be contrary to your object. Everyone will watch your actions.

The object of the Seva Dal is to fight for freedom and get it. It is not merely a thought for the moment, but every action in the day and dream at night must be freedom. The time is coming when you will have to face the hard work and sufferings. You pledge that you will serve to bring about communal unity. Freedom is not merely for a community or a province, but for the whole of India. India cannot be divided. Either the whole becomes free or remains in slavery. It is impossible for one part to be free and the other to be in bondage. During the communal riots in Cawnpore, while doing his duty, Syt. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi offered his life. If such a contingency occurs, be prepared to act in the same way. You must leave all communal differences and point the way to freedom to the people. Show what the Congress and the Seva Dal workers can do when trained.

1 Hubli, 19 December 1931. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 December, 1931.

42. Circular to All Provincial Seva Dals and Members-in-charge[1]

21.12.31

Dear Comrade,

We need hardly draw your attention to the rapidly developing political situation in the country. The Round Table Conference has ended and we await the return of Mahatma Gandhi and the meeting of the Working Committee for further directions as to the work we have to do. Meanwhile the government have promulgated the Bengal Ordinance and the U.P. Ordinance and in both these provinces as well as in the Frontier province a full-fledged offensive has been launched by government against our comrades. The business of the Seva Dal is to train workers for Congress work and our *sainiks* and *sainikas* and other workers have to hold themselves in readiness for such work as may be entrusted to them by their P.C.C. We would suggest that provincial boards and members-in-charge might confer with other authorities of the provincial Congress to determine what work has to be done in future. The Seva Dal will of course continue to function despite ordinances and other notifications. We take orders from the Congress only and from no other authority. The present camps should therefore continue, but a situation may arise when workers are needed for other purposes. In such a contingency it will be open to the provincial officer in charge to suspend the training and offer all his volunteers to the provincial Congress for such work as they may direct. This offer indeed might be made even now, while training is going on, so that our organisation and our volunteers may be ready for the work demanded of them.

We shall endeavour to communicate with you from time to time, but as our communications are interfered with, it is possible that they may not reach you. Whether they reach you or not, we are confident that you and our other comrades in your province will bear with fortitude and goodwill all the trials that may be in store for us in the service of the motherland. Ours is the high privilege of being the trained workers of the Congress. We will do nothing that may bring discredit to that great organisation or to the flag to which we have sworn allegiance.

Officers, instructors, *sainiks*, *sainikas* and all other workers of the Hindustani Seva Dal, we send you our comradely greetings and look to you to be worthy of the Dal in the hour of trial.

Your comrade,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.

GENERAL

43. Circular to P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
April 9th, 1931

Dear Comrades,

Audit and Inspection—The period of truce between the Congress and the British Government has given us an invaluable opportunity to put our house in order. We must utilise it to perfect our organisation and to put all our Congress committees on an efficient and working basis. We propose to have an audit and inspection of the P.C.C. offices soon. We are requesting Mr. Rangaswami of the A.I.S.A., who was good enough to audit the P.C.C. accounts in 1929, to undertake the work again. Other auditors will also be appointed and they will communicate with you direct. Please therefore keep your accounts and books ready for inspection. Please also prepare statements of accounts and profit and loss statements for the auditors. I would further suggest that you should get all your district Congress committees to get their accounts audited. Their statements of accounts should be kept in your office for the inspection of our auditors.

II. Elections—Fresh elections must now take place in all provinces from the local areas upwards. In this connection care should be taken to avoid anything which may savour of partisanship. In particular, it should be borne in mind that every person, who fulfils the conditions laid down in the constitution for members, is entitled as of right to become a member. No rule or bye-law which limits his right to membership is valid. Complaints reach our office from time to time that receipt books for membership are not supplied as it is feared that persons belonging to a rival group might thereby become members. This is wholly improper and where proved must vitiate the whole election. Please make it clear to all your district committees that persons offering to become members and fulfilling the conditions, must be made members and no obstructions should be placed in their way.

1. AICC. File No. P-1/1931, pp 147-148, N.M.M.L.

III. Future Work—Instructions regarding future work will be issued to you directly by the President or Shri Jairamdas Doulatram from Ahmedabad. I should like to lay stress on the fact, however, that P.C.C.s should impress upon all D.C.Cs, etc. that the terms of the provisional settlement between the government and the Congress should be strictly carried out. It is not becoming or dignified for us to seek shelter in quibbles and the like when the word of our great organisation has been given. When the time comes again for a resumption of our struggle we shall do so with right goodwill. Meanwhile let us abide by the truce.
IV. Volunteers—Large numbers of volunteers were working for Congress committees at the time the truce was announced. Many of these have been disbanded. It is desirable however that groups of trained and disciplined volunteers be kept by each Congress committee both for present work and as nuclei of future volunteer corps. Congress volunteers are particularly necessary at present in areas where any Hindu-Muslim trouble is feared. Our volunteers must protect shops and residential quarters. Their presence will inspire confidence in the shopkeepers and residents. Of course they must be made to understand clearly that the part they play must be an absolutely peaceful one and, if necessary, they must follow the noble example of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi.

Volunteers in order to be efficient must be trained and drilled and should have a distinctive uniform. Without a uniform they cannot be recognised and are lost in the crowd. The uniform may be very simple in rural areas—just a coloured khadi shirt. In towns a slightly more elaborate uniform may be used.

It should be remembered that we cannot pay our volunteers or attract them in any way except by the lure of national service and sacrifices.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

44. To Pattabhi Sitaramayya[1]

April 12, 1931

My dear Pattabhi,
I have your letter. I agree with you that the questionnaire suggested by you should be sent to provincial Congress committees and to the press.[2] I am very much interested in this flag question but I may be away for the next few weeks. I am therefore giving you below some very rough ideas of mine on the subject.

1. Ordinarily I would be greatly averse to changing the present flag which has become very popular but having regard to the circumstances perhaps some change is necessary. This change however should not interfere too much with the present flag.

2. We should make it perfectly clear that our flag is not based on communal considerations. No colour represents or will represent a community.

3. The present arrangement with white at the top is bad as the white does not show unless there is a colour background. Therefore in any event the white should either be put in the centre or should give place to another colour.

4. The present flag is, I believe, identical with the Bulgarian flag. This is undesirable.

5. I am inclined to think that the colour white should give place to a *basanti* colour or light saffron. My reason for this is not that the Sikhs desire it as their colour but because this colour is an old Indian colour and is associated with sacrifice in our past history. Further this colour has been adopted by the women of India and it would be a graceful and deserving tribute to the women to adopt this colour. The exact shade of the colour should be carefully considered. The place of the colour in the flag must also be considered from an aesthetic point of view. Thus it may be either at the top or at the centre.

6. I should like to retain both red and green as they are beautiful colours.

1. A I C C. File No. G-57/1931, pp. 53-55, N M M.L.
2. On 2 April 1931, the Working Committee appointed a committee, which included Jawaharlal and Pattabhi Sitaramayya, to examine the criticism that the colours of the national flag had communal significance and to suggest a new design acceptable to the Congress. Sitaramayya circulated a questionnaire to elicit opinion on the issue.

7. *The final design chosen should be that which satisfies the aesthetic* sense and should be in accordance with heraldic principles.

These are some suggestions made on the spur of the moment just to give you some idea of what I have got in my mind.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

45. To Mustafa Ali[1]

Allahabad
April 14th, 1931

My dear Mustafa Ali,[2]
Yours is to hand. I hasten to reply. If I write a short and business-like epistle I hope you will excuse me. I am awfully busy. I was also delighted to meet you and your friend at the station and am looking forward to seeing you again at Aligarh.

As to your questions:

(1) *There was no Unity Conference at Delhi. The Karachi Congress* had appointed a small committee to meet the Muslim leaders.[3]

The committee met the Muslim leaders who presented their demands in a most uncompromising spirit. Then these Muslim leaders met in an All India Muslim Conference and passed most vile resolutions which have nothing to do with communal demands but which go to show that these friends are working in the interests of a third party.[4]

(2) The Mahatma and in fact all the Hindus (with very few exceptions) are quite willing to give separate electorates to the Mussalmans but the nationalist Muslims oppose this. In our opinion separate electorates will ruin the Mussalmans and give them over to the communal Hindus.

(3) The attitude of the Congress is clear. You should see the Karachi resolution No. 15,[5] a copy of which I herewith enclose.

1. A I C C. File No G 40(KW)(iv)/1931, p 47, N M.M.L.
2. Resident of Aligarh at that time.
3. Mahatma Gandhi, Vallabhbhai Patel and Jamnalal Bajaj were members of the committee
4. On 4 April 1931 the All India Muslim Conference passed a resolution describing the satyagraha as "a mere sham and unclean political stratagem which will lead to a state of civil war in India."
5. Resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Changes which guaranteed the protection of the rights of minorities.

(4) The Muslim nationalists are meeting on the 19th in Lucknow and we hope we shall be able to bring about some satisfactory settlement between the Hindus and Muslims.[6] I should like to hear what happens on the 26th.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. The conference decided that apart from a provision of fundamental rights and protection of personal laws, the future constitution should be federal and representation in the federal and provincial legislatures should be based on universal adult franchise, joint electorates and reservation of seats in the federal and provincial legislatures on the population basis for minorities less than 30 p c with the right to contest additional seats.

46. To M. John[1]

June 28th, 1931

Dear Comrade,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 19th June.[2] I do not remember receiving any letter from you dated the 24th March. I am therefore unable to reply to it. But even without seeing it I can fully appreciate the hardships which hundreds of our comrades who came out on account of strike must be experiencing. I really do not know what can be done to help them. All over India there are large numbers of unemployed today owing to trade depression. You know also that the trade union organisation in the country is as weak as possible. The National Congress is in the middle of a great struggle. Till the Congress gets real power it can do little or nothing.

However if you wish me to place any communication before Mahatmaji I shall certainly do so.

Yours fraternally,
Jawaharlal

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-71/1929, p 53, N M M L.
2. John had written that 500 strikers of the Golmuri Tinplate Workers' Union were still unemployed and wanted Jawaharlal to speak to Mahatma Gandhi about them For more details of this strike, see *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 72-79.

47. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

30/6/31

My dear Vallabhbhai,

In accordance with your directions[2] I went to Benares yesterday and had a long talk with Syt. Bhagavan Das,[3] Sundarlal and Manzar Ali. The other members of the committee were not there but were due to arrive in a day or two.

I am afraid it is not possible to get this enquiry committee to report in time for the Working Committee meeting. At the very earliest they will finish by the 12th July. This report is evidently going to be a historical survey of the Hindu-Muslim question from the earliest times. This requires time for study. Personally my viewpoint is somewhat different and I would not have laid so much stress on past history. But having appointed your committee you must accept what they give you.

The enquiry committee now propose to send you a letter explaining their difficulties and their manner of approach to the question and perhaps sending you a brief abstract of the report. This letter will reach you before the Working Committee meeting.

I enclose a copy of a letter we have received from the Sachin State and my reply to it.[4]

It is just possible that I may have to go to Naini Tal before the Working Committee meeting. Anyhow I hope to reach Bombay on the 7th morning.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC File No. G-60/1931 (Pt. I), p. 123, N.M.M.L.
2. On 20 June 1931, Vallabhbhai Patel had asked Jawaharlal to visit Varanasi and help the committee inquiring into the Kanpur riots of March 1931 to expedite the completion of its report, so that before the House of Commons discussed the matter, the Congress account was published.
3. (1869-1959), founder member of Central Hindu College of Banaras Hindu University, and of Kashi Vidyapith; participated in noncooperation and civil disobedience movements, member, Central Legislative Assembly, 1935-37, and of Constituent Assembly, his publications include *Social Reconstruction of Modern Societies*, awarded Bharat Ratna, 1955.
4. Not available.

48. To Mata Prasad Misra[1]

July 1st, 1931

My dear Mata Prasadji,

I have your letter of the 30th June.[2] I enclose a copy of the letter I have sent to the post master, Rae Bareli.[3] I have also written to the provincial Congress committee on the subject. Please let me know if Kalka Prasad is in Rae Bareli or Lalganj or what his address is.

Just before leaving Rae Bareli I told Sitla Sahai that I did not want him to accept any kind of office in Rae Bareli. I do not want any of our good workers to get entangled in election disputes. Their efficiency suffers. We are trying to build up a convention that good workers keep away from office and can influence work even though they might not be office-bearers. A good worker is bound to be appreciated whether he holds office or not. I would therefore suggest to you also to keep out of office in Rae Bareli. You will find that this will add greatly to your capacity for work and prestige. Some foolish persons may criticise you but that will mean nothing.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-59/1931, p. 41, N.M.M.L.
2. Mata Prasad had written that letters to the Rae Bareli District Congress office had been withheld by the post master as Kalka Prasad, a Congressman of Rae Bareli who held no office, also claimed them.
3. Not printed. In this letter Jawaharlal had asked the post master to deliver all letters, addressed to the Rae Bareli D.C.C., to Mata Prasad Misra.

49. To President, Bangalore City Congress Committee[1]

2/7/31

Dear Friend,

Your telegram reached me this morning. As it has been censored I am quoting it below:

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-145/1931, pp. 61-62, N.M.M.L.

National flag staff newly erected Gandhisagar permanent sixty feet high made of cast iron poles supported by guy wires on which you hoisted national flag entirely destroyed. Hacked to pieces. Guy and staff cut and pieces thrown into tank last night. Flags on private residences also stolen. Great dishonour to Congress and country. Congressmen fasting. Pray make question all India and advise.

I have sent you the following reply:

Your telegram. No good fasting because cowards and miscreants injure flag in secret. Try find out real facts. Inform police also immediately. Put up another flagstaff and arrange guard it by volunteers. Send full particulars.

From your telegram it appears that the destruction of the flagstaff was done in secret at night. And yet it seems strange that the destruction of cast iron poles should be done without attracting attention. I should like to have full particulars after you have enquired into the matter. To fast merely will not help much. I hope you will immediately put up another flagstaff and arrange to have it guarded night and day by volunteers.

The attack on the national flag is annoying but the very method of secret attack shows that people dare not do it in public. It is no dishonour to the Congress or the country if thieves and miscreants misbehave in secret. You should utilise this unfortunate incident to strengthen the Congress organisation and to appeal to people to use and display the national flag even more.

I do not understand what you mean by suggesting that this question should be made into a national question. Unless we have more facts we can do nothing more.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

50. To Secretary, Indian Journalists Association[1]

July 4th, 1931

Dear Sir,
I have your letter of the 1st July.[2] I am afraid I cannot give you any accurate figures of the number of Muslims who suffered imprisonment. The figure 12,000 which has often been mentioned is a rough estimate made by my colleague, Dr. Syed Mahmud. We are now trying to get as accurate figures as possible and they will be incorporated in our annual report. But in no event are we likely to get accurate figures for different communities as our records are not made in this way.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-1/1931, p 31, N.M.M.L.
2. The addressee had asked how many Muslims had suffered imprisonment in the 1930 civil disobedience movement.

51. To Anjani Kumar[1]

Simla
July 21st, 1931

Dear Anjani Kumar,[2]
Your letter of the 30th June reached me many days afterwards in Bombay.[3] I understood from Sitla Sahai that the matter you wrote about had been settled.

It seems to me that you were a little precipitous in your action. We cannot afford to get excited in politics. We must preserve our balance and not rush into any action without proper consideration. Such action

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-59/1931, p. 13, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1905); a Congressman of Bachchrawan in Rae Bareli district.
3. Anjani Kumar had reported that along with some volunteers he went on a hunger strike on 30 June 1931 before the manager's house in the Sheogarh estate in Rae Bareli district in protest against the ill treatment of tenants by the manager.

as we take should not be individual as far as possible. If we do so we lose the benefit of collective action and of an organisation. I hope you will bear this in mind.

Please also remember that the mere fact that you did not get an immediate reply from me did not mean that I had no reply to send or that I approved of everything that had been done. As it happened your letter even did not reach me in time.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

52. To B. S. Ramaswami Iyengar[1]

July 24th, 1931

Dear Friend,[2]
I have just received your letter on return to Allahabad.[3] As you know Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Sir Mirza Ismail regarding the Bangalore flag incident. I do not know what reply he got. I understand, however, Sir Mirza wrote to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. I entirely sympathise with you and appreciate your keen desire to vindicate the honour of the flag. I feel, however, that you must wait for the issue of Mahatmaji's communications with Sir Mirza Ismail. It will always be open to you, other means failing, to resort to satyagraha and the like but this should not be indulged in so long as there are other ways of obtaining redress. Please keep Mahatmaji fully informed of developments.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-145/1931, p. 27, N.M.M.L.
2. President, Bangalore City Congress Committee.
3. Ramaswami Iyengar had written on 15 July 1931 that many were prepared to offer satyagraha if Mahatma Gandhi's negotiations with the Dewan of Mysore on the right to hoist the national flag did not lead to an honourable settlement.

53. On the New Design of the National Flag[1]

The Working Committee has not accepted the recommendations of the flag committee.[2] There is unanimity of opinion in both the committees on the principle that the national flag does not and should not have any communal significance. The Working Committee has recommended a slight change in the flag but that change is in no way derogatory to the prestige of the present flag in whose honour the country has made such immense sacrifices. Of the three flags, namely the old one, the one recommended by the flag committee and the third recommended by the Working Committee, I maintain that the last one is the best as it has three colours representing the aspirations of the Indian nation. Suggestions received from various quarters have been carefully considered and very many of them have been incorporated in the new flag designed by the Working Committee. I hope that now at least the controversy over the flag question will be forgotten.

1. Report of Jawaharlal's speech on a resolution on the new design of the national flag at the A I C C meeting at Bombay on 7 August 1931. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 8 August 1931.
2. The flag committee had recommended that the national flag should be of saffron colour having the charkha on it in blue. But the Working Committee desired to have as little change as possible in the existing flag and decided that the flag be as before, with saffron, white and green colours horizontally arranged from top to bottom, with the charkha in dark blue in the centre of the white stripe.

54. Note on Foreign Branches of the Congress[1]

In compliance with the directions of the All India Congress Committee I am submitting this note to the Committee.[2] I regret, however that owing to the absence of old records in the Allahabad office, I am unable to give all the details and I crave the indulgence of the Committee for not being as exact as I should be in such a note.

1. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 8 August 1931.
2. Acting on this note, the Working Committee disaffiliated the London branch of the Congress on 4 August 1931.

The London branch was formed in the latter half of 1928. In December 1928 affiliation was granted to it. In 1929 the branch paid its affiliation fee. During 1929 I had to draw the attention of the branch on more than one occasion to the fact that its general attitude to the parent body was undesirable. Resolutions were passed by it repeatedly in strong criticism of the Congress and I pointed out to it that it seemed to mistake its function and position in the Congress organization. It was none of its business to dictate policy to us from London.

Soon after the leaders' manifesto which was issued early in November 1929 from Delhi, on the statements made by the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy regarding the proposed Round Table Conference, the London branch passed a resolution of condemnation of this manifesto. The language used was, as usual, very strong and, in particular, violent attacks were made on Congress leaders. The Congress itself was also attacked. Thereupon I wrote to the branch and told them that they had no business to act in this manner and that they could not continue their association with the Congress if they acted in this manner. They continued however their attacks on the Congress and its prominent leaders.

Early in 1930 I wrote to them again and told them that as they were persisting in an attitude of hosblity to the Congress and were carrying on activities contrary to the Congress policy, they could not continue their affiliation to the Congress.[3] I suggested to them that as an independent body, unconnected with the Congress, they would have full liberty to act in any manner they chose and it would be fair to us as well as to them if they would of their own initiative ask us to put an end to the bond that connected them with the Congress. If however they were not prepared to do this, then I asked them, as President of the A.I.C.C., to show cause why they should not be disaffiliated. So far as I can remember no answer came to this letter.

It is difficult to be positive that they did not answer, as our foreign letters were often tampered with by the British Government; a little later the civil disobedience movement started and most of us went to prison.

I have no exact knowledge of what happened during the movement but when I came out of prison for a brief period in October 1930 I have a recollection that the acting Secretary of the A.I.C.C. complained to me of some of the activities of the London branch. I could not take any action as I was re arrested eight days later.

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp 124-128.

The Delhi Settlement in March 1931 was immediately followed by a violent attack by the London branch on the Congress and its leaders, and specially on Gandhiji who appears to be the *bete noire* of the branch. Ever since then there has been a succession of such attacks.

Gandhiji and other prominent Congressmen have been referred to as traitors betraying the interests of the country and the masses.

Syt. S. Saklatwala, a leading member of the branch, has taken a particularly prominent part in these attacks.

A proposal was made in the branch recently to take out a black flag procession to meet Gandhiji on the day of his arrival in London as the sole representative of the Congress. There was some opposition to this and ultimately a compromise was arrived at that there should be no such hostile demonstration but that there should also not be any welcome.

On the 27th June 1931 an Indian Political Congress was held in London under the presidency of Syt. Vithalbhai J. Patel. At this conference Syt. S. Saklatwala and several other members of the London branch created a disturbance and the conference had to be adjourned. Syt. S. Saklatwala circulated a leaflet at the conference in which he referred to "the treachery of the Indian National Congress leaders at Karachi under the arch-hypocrite, Gandhi." The "Congress crowd" is said to have brought about "a betrayal of liberty and a consolidation of the forces of exploitation and profiteering". Their "apostle", it is added, "is the cotton-wool saint, Gandhi, the arch-hypocrite." Further reference is made to "the low and disgusting intrigue of Gandhi, the faithful ally and servant of British suzerainty in the East."

Syt. S. Saklatwala, in spite of his horror at and disgust with the Congress and his open repudiation of the Congress creed and policy, continues and insists on continuing his membership of the London branch. He can do so because he has strong support in the branch, otherwise action would have been taken against him and other members of his way of thinking. Instead of this, however, the president and treasurer of the branch, Syt. S. S. Mohamedi, who disagreed with Syt. Saklatwala, has recently had to resign from his offices as well as from the membership of the branch.

Owing to the activities of the London branch most of the Indian residents of London have kept aloof from it. On behalf of many of these, as well as some members of the branch, Syt. S. S. Mohamedi has requested the President by cable and a letter to disaffiliate the branch.

We have not been in communication with the London branch for a considerable time. We have read of many of their activities in the

public press. I believe we have not received their annual affiliation fee since 1929.

I should like to add to this note that of our foreign branches, the New York branch was disaffiliated early in 1930. I regret to say, however, that a gentleman[4] still describes himself as the president of this branch and it may be that some people in America consider him to be our representative.

The Kabul branch has not functioned at all for a long time past. No action has been taken against it, but it may be considered to have ceased to exist.

Jawaharlal Nehru

4. *Sailendranath Ghose.*

55. To Secretary, Frontier P.C.C.[1]

12/8/31

Dear Comrade,

You are already aware of the decision of the Working Committee regarding future work in the Frontier Province. I trust you and our other comrades in the Frontier will give their cordial cooperation to the new arrangements and will work with all goodwill and earnestness with Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. We have difficult times ahead when all of us will be tested to the utmost. Let us prepare for them so that we may be ready to shoulder all the burdens that come our way.

With all good wishes,

Very sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 A.I.C.C. File No P-17/1931, p. 197, N.M.M.L.

58. To C. Chattur Singh[1]

August 26th, 1931

Dear Mr. Chattur Singh,[2]
I thank you for your letter of the 9th June.[3] It is always a pleasure to have news of our countrymen abroad. I hope, therefore, that you will write to us from time to time and let us know how Indians are faring in Fiji

We are having a critical time here and it is not possible to say what the near future will bring us. Whatever that may be, one thing is certain that India will continue her fight for Swaraj till full freedom is attained. We feel that we cannot do much for our countrymen abroad so long as we are not free here. As soon as India achieves her freedom there will be no difficulty in bettering the conditions of our countrymen abroad.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 15/1929-1931, p. 61, N.M.M.L.
2. An Indian settler in Fiji who collected and sent money for Congress work.
3. Chattur Singh had written that unless the Congress helped the Hindus in Fiji, the Muslims would succeed in securing separate electorates.

57. To Secretary, Bangalore D.C.C.[1]

September 18th, 1931

Dear Sir,
I regret the delay in answering your letter of the 5th September.[2] I wished to consult my colleagues before I answered.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-145/1931, pp. 3-4, N.M.M.L.
2. The secretary of Bangalore D.C.C. wanted to know whether direct action could be taken against the Mysore Government's ban on hoisting the national flag and on the volunteer organisation.

The Mysore Government is not technically bound by the truce between the Congress and the government. Nor are you bound by it so far as the Mysore Government is concerned because the obligations must be mutual or not at all. Therefore it is open to you to take such defensive action as your committee may think fit and proper both in regard to the flag question and the picketing of liquor shops. But I should like you to realise that whatever you may do you will have to do relying on your own strength. You should not expect any help from outside. I say this to you not because you happen to be in an Indian state but because this is our usual advice and policy in other places also. No action can succeed unless there is local strength to carry it on.

In regard to the flag I would suggest that, to begin with, you should not hoist it in a public place but you should encourage private houses and shops to display the flag. You should also encourage the wearing of flags and emblems such as buttons etc. This should be done not in a spirit of bravado and defiance but in the ordinary course of Congress activities. In particular you should do this on the last Sunday of every month, these being flag days.

Thus your committee is given liberty to take such action in regard to picketing and the flag as you may consider necessary for defensive purposes. It is obvious that we cannot agree to the winding up of Congress activities anywhere. We have tried our best to come to some terms with the Mysore State on the matter in dispute and we have given them every chance to alter their policy without any loss of prestige. They have, however, not made any substantial change.

You will please let me know how the situation develops and what you propose to do.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

58. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Delhi
September 24th, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,
I wrote to you yesterday as I was leaving Allahabad.[2] On my journey up here I read long accounts of the Hijli affair in Bengal and I was shocked by it.[3] I have been discussing it with Ansari. He feels also that the matter is too serious a one for us to ignore. Bengal is naturally and rightly very exercised about it. I feel that a visit by you to Calcutta in the near future is very desirable. Ansari agrees with this view. We both of us also feel that perhaps it might be desirable to have the next Working Committee meeting in Calcutta on the date fixed. But this is for you to decide having regard to all the circumstances.

Would it not be advisable for you to write to the Viceroy about Hijli? The demand of the detenus as well as of other people of Bengal is that an impartial inquiry should be held. Nothing could be more reasonable. In the Assembly even men like Sir Abdur Rahim supported this. The government has merely ordered a departmental enquiry. A brutal and bloody assault inside a camp prison resulting in two deaths and serious injuries to about 20 persons is a very grave affair and it is an insult to ask a couple of government officials to enquire into the matter departmentally.

The *Advance* seems to be continuing to write offensively against Subhas and B.P.C.C. Its comment on Subhas's resignation was in the worst of taste. I am afraid Sen Gupta and his party are putting themselves entirely in the wrong. I wish Aney could do something in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-60/1931(Pt. I), p. 79, N.M.M.L.
2. Not printed. The letter dealt with the appointment of a whole-time auditor for the A.I.C.C. office and referred to the organisational difficulties of the Frontier P.C.C.
3. On 16 September 1931, the detenus at Hijli were fired upon following their alleged attack on the sentries. Two persons were killed and 20 injured. An official inquiry held later said that the firing was unjustifiable.

59. To Prithvi Raj Singh[1]

October 2nd, 1931

My dear Thakur Saheb,[2]
I have your letter. I see a great many difficulties in the way of creating the trust you propose. Firstly I am of opinion that no Congress committee should possess zamindari rights and lands. This is bound to lead to difficulty. Secondly so far as I am concerned I would not like to be associated with a zamindari even on a small scale. Thirdly the income from the property is not much and I do not see how much can be done with it. It is quite likely that in the hands of the public trust the villages may become the reverse of income-yielding.

I do not therefore see how this trust is likely to function. Personally I would suggest your helping the Congress with a money donation or your tenants in some direct way.

I am returning the village papers that you sent.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(KW)(i)/1931(Pt. I), p. 115, N.M.M.L.
2. A zamindar in Bareilly district.

60. To Ali Gul Khan[1]

October 3rd, 1931

My dear Khan Saheb,[2]
I have received the copy of your letter dated 20th September which you sent to the President.[3] As he has referred all matters relating

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-17/1931, pp. 153-155, N.M.M.L.
2. Then vice-president of the Frontier P.C.C.
3. It mentioned the difference of opinion between Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Congress workers regarding the Working Committee's resolution to merge Congress and Afghan jirga volunteer organisations.

to the Frontier Province to me I have written today at some length to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan[4] I enclose a copy of my letter to him. This copy was to have been sent to the secretary of the P.C.C. Will you kindly hand it over to him after reading it and informing our other colleagues of its contents.

I had a long talk in Lahore with the friend whom you sent there and I hope he has told you about it. I fully realise your difficulties and I am sure you appreciate our difficulties also. The Frontier Province is of course important enough by itself. It is however doubly important for us today because of the all-India effects of what may happen there. We have therefore to keep many matters in view. I am sure you will realise all this and help us in arriving at a solution of the problems that confront you and us. On you and our colleagues in the Frontier we must necessarily place our full reliance.

You will notice that I have suggested that a provisional committee should be formed and that all the old members of the executive of the Frontier P.C.C. should resign to enable the provisional committee to be formed. There is no other way out of the present difficulty. Whenever there is a transitional stage we have such provisional committees. And a provisional committee can only be formed if the old committee ceases to exist for the moment by formal resignation. This of course does not mean that old members resigning keep away from future work. It simply means that they wish to assist in the reorganisation. Indeed even in the resignation they should, and I hope they will, offer their full cooperation.

I propose asking Rafi Ahmad Kidwai to visit your province for a few days to discuss all these matters with you and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. I am sure he will be a great help.

I was very sorry to learn of the conflicts that arose in regard to picketing in Peshawar.[5] The only way to put an end to them is to have one central directing committee and I hope the provisional committee suggested by me will be this.

4 Not printed. Jawaharlal had suggested in this letter that the organisational problems of the Frontier Congress could be solved in accordance with the "constitution, rules and programme of the Congress".

5. Congress volunteers stopped picketing a cloth shop in Peshawar when the dealer assured them that he would not import foreign cloth in future and he would export his existing stock to Afghanistan. The Red Shirt volunteers later picketed the same shop though they knew of the agreement with the Congress.

I hope you will not hesitate to write to me and to ask for any help that I might be in a position to give.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

61. To Khurshed Naoroji[1]

October 3rd, 1931

Dear Khurshed,

I enclose copy of a letter I have sent to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. This letter is fairly detailed. I hope you will help in elucidating it and in getting the provisional committee formed. As I think I wrote to you the other day I want to send, if I can, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai to the Frontier Province. He may be able to go there in about 10 days' time. He will only stay for a few days. His presence ought to be helpful in bringing about a solution of the present difficulties. The whole matter requires careful handling and tact all round. As I am notoriously deficient in this quality it is up to you to provide it.

In my letter to Khan Abdul Ghaffar I have mentioned that it is open to the Frontier P.C.C. to recognise any other volunteer unit on fulfilling our conditions. What I meant by this was that the existing P.C.C. volunteers may be recognised as a separate unit. They will of course function under the provisional committee. It would be a pity to wind them up formally. However that is a matter for consideration by people there.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No. P 17/1931, p. 131, NMML.

62. To Abdul Ghaffar Khan[1]

October 3rd, 1931

My dear Khan Saheb,

I enclose a formal letter addressed to you in answer to your letter sent to Sardar Vallabhbhai.[2] You have a very difficult task ahead of you and you can rest assured of all the help that we can give. You will not hesitate, I hope, to seek any assistance in our power. I should come myself to give you this assistance personally but you know our difficulties. I am trying to send Rafi Ahmad Kidwai to you. I think he will be a great help to you. He will not be able to stay long but even a few days will enable you, I hope, to put matters on a satisfactory basis.

I have had a letter from Gandhiji. He is anxious to know how matters are proceeding in the Frontier Province. I hope you will write to him direct. His address is Kingsley Hall, Bow, London. You had better send your letter by air mail. If you like, however, you can write to me and I shall forward your letter to him.

A few days ago I wrote to Dr. Khan Sahib. I hope he communicated the contents of my letter to you.

I enclose samples of the saffron and green colours to be used in our flags. We want uniformity in these. Kindly acknowledge this letter.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-17/1931, p. 157, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 9 September 1931 Abdul Ghaffar Khan sought Vallabhbhai Patel's advice as to what he should do about the defiant members of the Frontier P.C.C. who had refused to resign from the committee.

63. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Gonda
7.10.31

My dear Vallabhbhai,
I expected a telegram from you here or at Bahraich but none has come. I am anxious to know the date and place of the Working Committee meeting as my programme will be affected by it. You will remember that I suggested Calcutta. Whether you have Calcutta for the Working Committee or not I hope you will be able to pay a short visit to Calcutta, probably before the Working Committee. There is a very strong feeling of neglect there and a visit from you will do a world of good. I could go of course but my doing so would be almost an individual affair. Your going would have official significance.

It seems to me that Ansari's suddenly called meeting of the Muslim Nationalist Party means that he received a cable from Bapu.[2]

I suppose developments will take place rapidly at the R.T.C. now.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. A I C C. File No 52/1931, pp. 159-160, N M M L.
2. At a meeting of the Working Committee of the Nationalist Muslim Party on 6 October a resolution was passed investing Ansari with full powers of negotiations on the Hindu Muslim question and to take such action as he thought necessary. Mahatma Gandhi, who was very anxious to call Ansari to London despite the opposition of the Muslim delegates to the Round Table Conference, had in a cable sent on 1 October informed him how difficult it had been even to discuss the possibility of his coming to London.

64. To Khan Sahib[1]

October 14th, 1931

My dear Khan,
I was very glad to receive your letter.[2] It is good that after two months of effort you have been able to write. Thank you for the two snapshots. I find that neither you nor your wife has changed much during the last 19 years since we met, terrible long time is not it?

Kailas[3] came to see me yesterday. I am glad that you liked him. He has told us a lot about his visit. I wish I could come too. Perhaps I shall be able to do before very long.

I am sending you a parcel containing 1,000 copies in Urdu of the Congress resolution on Fundamental Rights. Could you pass them on to Utmanzai for distribution?

I hope that you will help in fixing up the office at Utmanzai. An organisation must necessarily have a proper office. Otherwise it exists in the air.

You are perfectly right in saying that there is no proper publicity for you. That is why some competent man must be put in charge of your office and he should have no other work.

Do write to me from time to time.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC. File No. P17/1931, p. 95, NMML.
2. Khan Sahib had written on 6 October about the difficulties in looking after the correspondence of the Frontier PCC and in doing publicity work.
3. Kailas Nath Kaul, brother of Kamala Nehru.

65. To Khurshed Naoroji[1]

October 14th, 1931

Dear Khurshed,
I have received quite a sheaf of letters from you dated September 30th, October 3rd, October 5th and 11th. Some of these Kailas has given

1. AICC. File No. G40(KW)(i)/1931 (Pt. I), p. 23, NMML.

67. Note on the Kanpur Riots Enquiry Report[1]

I have read the Cawnpore Enquiry Report.[2] The Working Committee expressed the opinion some time ago that the terms of reference of the enquiry committee did not contemplate an enquiry or a dissertation on early history. I think that the committee has gone beyond these terms in so far as they have discussed these early periods. I realise that there is a great deal of misapprehension about the spread of Islam in India and it is generally believed that this took place by the sword and that this necessitated a continuous conflict with Hindu India. This widely accepted belief is certainly one of the causes of the present tension between Hindus and Muslims and the sooner it is shown to be incorrect the better. I agree with the main argument of the early chapters of the report, and my own limited reading of history convinced me long ago that the sword played an inconsiderable part in the spread of Islam and Hindu-Muslim relations were generally peaceful, apart from political conflicts, and a common culture was gradually being evolved. Invasions and conflicts, though often given a religious colouring, were almost always due to political reasons.

I should like this point of view to be developed and placed before the public, specially the Hindus. I feel however that the Cawnpore Enquiry Report was hardly the place for it. Apart from the interpretation of the terms of reference, there is some risk of this point of view not being fully appreciated in its present setting. The way it has been done in the report, able and laborious as it is, is not happy. There is too much of quotation. This was perhaps necessary as an argument, novel for many persons, requires substantiation. But none the less it gives too much of a patchwork appearance. It is neither a brief survey nor a detailed history. It is something between the two, and it suffers from obvious disadvantages.

In spite of my agreement with the main historical argument I have had the feeling, while reading the report, that there was an appearance of special pleading for Muslims and that too much stress was being laid on one side. If I had this impression, it is likely that many others

1. Lucknow, 31 October 1931. *AICC. File No. 62/1931, pp 1-5, N.M.M.L.*
2. The Congress Working Committee considered the report of the enquiry committee along with this note of Jawaharlal on 29 December 1931. The report, when published, was proscribed.

would have it in a larger measure and this would defeat the very object in view. It might also detract from the value of, and the impression created by, the part of the report dealing with the actual occurrences at Cawnpore.

I would like to add here that although I accept the general historical argument I do not agree with all the statements made, especially the comparisons between India and the West. It is stated for instance that the idea of territorial patriotism or nationalism, as it existed in Italy in the middle ages or in the city states of ancient Greece, did not exist in India till recently on account of caste and creed divisions. This statement is likely to give an entirely wrong impression of the facts. The modern idea of nationalism is of recent growth not only in India but also the West. In the middle ages there was no such thing as nationalism in Europe. Feudalism and nationalism are incompatibles. The attachment to a particular city which we find in ancient Greece or Italy of the middle ages was very far removed from nationalism. I feel therefore that it is wholly wrong to say that while nationalism of a kind existed in Europe of the middle ages or earlier it did not exist in India on account of caste and creed divisions. Nor am I prepared to accept the assertion made in the report that India exhibited greater diversity in religion, in social division and even in general culture than Europe of the middle ages. I feel that too much stress is laid in the report on what is called "the moral and religious basis of Indian civilization" as compared with "the economic and political basis of western civilization." I do not think there was any fundamental difference between Europe of the middle ages and India. Both had outwardly a moral and religious basis, and both were fundamentally governed by economic laws. The coming of the machine age transformed Europe even outwardly. India remained largely feudal.

There is reference in the report to the untold misery caused to the people of India by wars. And yet it is shown in this very report that Europe was torn into bits by numerous sanguinary conflicts, often religious, while India remained far more peaceful. As a matter of fact India has had less of wars than perhaps any equal area in Europe, certainly of western and south-eastern Europe.

India gradually begins to feel herself a political entity, it is stated in the report, after a century of British rule. This is certainly true in a sense, but only in a limited sense. A common subjection and the impact of the new idea of nationalism has made India a nation in the modern sense. But ever since the dawn of history, India has been in a sense a political and cultural unit and her people have always looked upon her as such, even when she was divided into a hundred

67. Note on the Kanpur Riots Enquiry Report[1]

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2 The Congress Working Committee considered the report of the enquiry committee along with this note of Jawaharlal on 29 December 1931. The report, when published, was proscribed.

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India gradually begins to feel herself a political entity, it is stated in the report, after a century of British rule. This is certainly true in a sense, but only in a limited sense. A common subjection and the impact of the new idea of nationalism has made India a nation in the modern sense. But ever since the dawn of history, India has been in a sense a political and cultural unit and her people have always looked upon her as such, even when she was divided into a hundred

kingdoms. India was more of a unit, in this limited sense, than any area of equal size, and than many a modern nation.

This note has so far dealt with the historical survey in the report. There are many other points touched upon in this survey which provoke thought and sometimes criticism. But the note is already too long. In spite of these criticisms, however, and in spite of my feeling that the historical survey is somewhat out of place in the report, I think it ought to be published.

The principal part of the report dealing with the Cawnpore occurrences has been very well done and the horror of the numerous tragedies and evil deeds is nakedly brought out. The enquiry committee has obviously taken great pains over it and it has succeeded in producing a convincing, though painful, version. It may be that people who read it, whether Hindus or Muslims, will be excited by it and some may have their communal passions aroused. But that is the fault not of the report but of the truth itself. I feel that the truth must be faced whatever the consequences. Probably the result will be good. People should be made to realise how communalism ultimately makes men behave like disgusting brutes. I am clearly of opinion therefore that this part of the report should also be published.

One small point might be mentioned. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi is often mentioned in the report and much is said in praise of him. It might be inferred that he was a prominent Congressman but nowhere is it clearly stated, except to a small extent in Syt. Purshottamdas Tandon's note, that Ganeshji was the leading Congressman in Cawnpore. Outsiders, who had not heard of Ganeshji, might be misled by this reticence. It should have been clearly stated that Ganeshji was not only the leader of the Congress in Cawnpore but was the president of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee and as such the head of the provincial Congress organisation. It is well that this point should be stressed to show how one who was not only our dearly beloved brother but the responsible head of our Congress behaved in this crisis.

I suggest therefore that the whole report should be published as presented. Perhaps some of the appendices might be left out. I would also suggest that the report should be translated and published in Urdu and Hindi.

I have arrived at this conclusion apart from other considerations. But the fact that the Anglo-Indian newspapers have challenged us to publish it makes it doubly incumbent on us to publish it. Non-publication would definitely injure us.

In publishing it I would suggest that the President might state that the report has not been considered by the Working Committee yet

and the Committee does not necessarily accept any statement of fact or opinion contained in it, especially in the historical survey or the remedies suggested.

Jawaharlal Nehru

68. To Saadullah Khan[1]

Allahabad
November 10th, 1931

My dear Saadullah,[2]

In Bombay I met Mr. Bahadurji[3] and also had a long talk with Miss Khurshed Naoroji. Both of them told me that a great deal could be done to improve your publicity and office arrangement. Complaint is sometimes made that enough publicity is not given in this part of the country to what is happening in the Frontier Province. This is perfectly true. But publicity can only be given when we have the material for it and such material is totally lacking. I understand that Mr. Bahadurji made various suggestions in regard to this matter. He wanted some information about certain cases but this was not supplied to him at the time nor has it come to him later. I should like Khan Sahib and you to appreciate that with the best will in the world we *cannot give publicity unless you on your side give us the facts.* Also that such facts must be authentic and capable of substantiation. One wrong or exaggerated statement made by us is immediately pounced upon by the government and the result is that even the true statements we might make lose their value. The National Congress today is a great and powerful organisation with a reputation to keep up and heavy responsibility to shoulder. We have thus to be careful in regard to the statements we make.

In most of our big offices we have gradually trained up people in doing accurate and responsible and efficient work. I remember well that a dozen years ago when our workers were not so trained, exaggerated statements were frequently made by them. A dozen years' strenuous

1 Maharashtra Government records, Police Commissioner's File No. 50134/II/III/1931 42.
2 Son of Dr Khan Sahib and was secretary of the Frontier PCC.
3 D N Bahadurji, a leading lawyer who became the first Indian advocate general of Bombay.

work however, with continuous checks and inspections has made a tremendous difference. In the Frontier Province this type of political work is more or less new and I can well appreciate the difficulties that you must have to face because we ourselves had these difficulties not many years ago. We realised, however, that any great national movement cannot be built up on popular enthusiasm only but that the basis of it must be efficient organisation. We concentrated for this reason on having proper offices and trained and reliable workers and thus built up the great reputation which the Congress possesses today. The Congress today claims to be ready to take charge of the Government of India and I have no doubt that it will before long do so. It can put forward this claim only because it has developed the power of organisation and efficient working. Governments are not run merely by popular enthusiasm but by the organisation at the back of them. Similarly national movements, if they are to be effective and to succeed, must have organisation and efficient workers behind them. You will forgive my laying stress on this repeatedly but I have a feeling that this point is not sufficiently appreciated in your province.

The human material that the Frontier Province has got is splendid. In many ways it is better than the material we have got but full advantage cannot be taken of this material unless there is an efficient organisation at the back of it. So far as political organisation is concerned we have a little more experience than our comrades of the Frontier Province and to some extent we are experts in the job. Because of this we can make even bad material go a long way. I feel therefore, we could help you greatly on the organisational side. But we do not know exactly how to do so. Obviously we do not wish to do anything without consulting Khan Sahib. We could send you good organisers and people who would look after your publicity and help you in office work but we do not wish to thrust any person upon you. As you know Mahatmaji induced Miss Khurshed Naoroji to leave the important work she had been doing here to go to the Frontier. She could be spared with great difficulty from here but we wanted to send our best to you. After some months' work she has come back and apparently the work that she has done will not have any lasting effect as it will not be continued. We sent some others but they also did not fit in with the kind of work that was being done there. Hence our difficulty. I do not know whom to send. I am told that so far as office work is concerned the whole burden is cast on you. This burden, as I know from experience, is very great and requires constant attention. In your case it is much greater because you have to reorganise your whole province from the very beginning and you have

to face too many difficulties. You have to be in continuous touch with all your districts and workers and send frequent letters to them. You have also to keep in touch with us and nowadays you have also to communicate with officials. All correspondence has to be kept in files and copies of letters have to be kept for reference. Ordinarily letters have to be answered immediately without any delay. You have to keep records of official repression and atrocities and to verify them and to report them to us and to the Indian papers. All this requires a tremendous amount of labour. If, however, an office is run methodically and efficiently the work is simplified to some extent. The real difficulty which you have to face is to build up a proper office. Once you have done that you will find an amazing transformation in the whole province. You will feel how much stronger you are and your organisation can then pit itself against the organisation of the government when occasion arises for it.

I have written to you repeatedly about the necessity of applying the Congress constitution in its entirety to the Frontier Province and thus to bring your provincial organisation in line with the rest of the nation. Only in this way can we build up our strength. The greater the uniformity the greater our strength. Hence it becomes necessary to have uniform rules, one flag, uniform slogans and one outlook. The strength of India today is in this uniform outlook. It is necessary that all our common folks must understand this outlook and our techniques of nonviolent struggle. As you know, the time comes when all our leaders are removed and then the rank and file have to act for themselves. It is for this reason that we make the rank and file sign the Congress creed of nonviolence as well as sometimes other pledges. It is also for this reason that we continually keep before the masses the ideal of a common Indian nationality and try to make them forget provincialism and communalism and everything else that divides them into sects and groups. Always we have to lay stress on this and all our slogans and our flag and rules and demonstrations are meant to create this common national outlook. India in the past has had quite enough divisions between province and province, religion and religion, sect and sect. We must put this down and create one strong nationality based on the goodwill and well-being of the masses.

I have been reading in the newspapers about Obaidullah's[4] hunger strike in prison. I have been very much concerned about this, but I do

4 Nephew of Abdul Ghaffar Khan. A hartal was observed in Peshawar on 25 October 1931 as a protest against his conviction and imprisonment for non-payment of land revenue

not know what we can do in the matter. I understand that he has been sent to prison for non-payment of revenue. Is this an individual case or is it a part of a movement of non-payment? If it is an individual case then to that extent it is not political. If on the other hand there is movement for the non-payment of revenue owing to economic distress, I would like to know if your committee has passed any resolution on it and whether you propose to make it a general movement. If such is the case the matter should be referred to the Working Committee.

I have written to you at length because between us there should be absolute frankness. We must understand each other's difficulties and each other's viewpoints. This letter is meant for Khan Sahib. I do not know where he is as he tours about a lot. But I hope you will show it to him as soon as you have the chance. And I hope he and you will write to me fully and frankly. Unfortunately I seldom get a chance of speaking to him at leisure. Whenever he comes south he *has to return quickly. I have repeatedly requested him to come to* the U.P. This was not so much because we wanted propaganda and the like but because I wanted to have the chance of being with him and of having many long talks with him. Unfortunately I have not succeeded so far and I am afraid that the immediate future holds out little hope.

Should Khan Sahib desire us to send any person or persons to help in publicity and office work we shall try to send some one. I would suggest your writing to Miss Khurshed Naoroji about it and also to me.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

69. To Prafulla Chandra Sen[1]

November 16th, 1931

Dear Friend,[2]
Your letter.[3] There are only two ways of proceeding. One is to negotiate with the government and bring such pressure upon them by public agitation as is possible. The other is satyagraha or a no-tax campaign. Before you start such a campaign you must of course exhaust the other method and prepare your people for it. It is not possible for other districts to help you in any local struggle and the burden of it must fall on you You must consult your provincial committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 A I C C File No. P 6/1927 31, p 133, N M M L.
2 (b. 1897); member, Bengal P C C; imprisoned several times during freedom struggle, Chief Minister, West Bengal, 1962 67.
3 P C Sen had written on 12 November 1931 that the government had undertaken settlement operations in Hooghly district against the wishes of the people and asked Jawaharlal for advice as to how to stop the operations.

70. To Sampurnanand[1]

November 21st, 1931

My dear Sampurnanand,
Your letter.[2] I think it is quite clear that Congress office-bearers and members of the executive committees should not stand for the chairmanship of the municipality. The principle applying to membership applies with greater force to the chairmanship. Besides it seems rather absurd for a Congressman to become a chairman when all his colleagues

1 A I C C File No P 21/1931, p. 69, N.M M L.
2 In his letter of 19 November Sampurnanand asked Jawaharlal whether the P C C had barred Congressmen from becoming chairmen of municipalities

not know what we can do in the matter. I understand that he has been sent to prison for non-payment of revenue. Is this an individual case or is it a part of a movement of non-payment? If it is an individual case then to that extent it is not political. If on the other hand there is movement for the non-payment of revenue owing to economic distress, I would like to know if your committee has passed any resolution on it and whether you propose to make it a general movement. If such is the case the matter should be referred to the Working Committee.

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Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

in large numbers. It is stated over a thousand young men have been interned under the old ordinance and the new. The European Association is breathing fire. Dacca recently gave another example of hooliganism encouraged by certain officials and the police.

The joint B.P.C.C. is not functioning with any efficiency. It is merely carrying on.

I could not meet Subhas as he was not in *Calcutta*.

There is going to be a special provincial conference at Murshidabad on the 6th and 7th December. Great stress was laid on some Working Committee member attending this. I think it will be desirable if some one could go. I should have liked to go myself but it seems difficult. Rajendra Babu might perhaps be able to go. I hope there will be no meeting of the Working Committee to clash with this.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

73. To Gopinath Singh[1]

November 26th, 1931

Dear Gopinath,[2]

I have received your letter from prison. I am sorry for the slight delay in answering it.

As regards furnishing sureties and bonds for good behaviour, the President of the A.I.C.C. has recently stated that this is undesirable. He has even said that bail applications should not be encouraged. I would therefore recommend to you not to worry about furnishing sureties etc. or in regard to bail.

As regards your case in the High Court I am sending your letter to the P.C.C. You have every right to defend this case but we are gradually reaching a stage when defence will not be encouraged. However in so far as your case is concerned if we can be of any help we shall certainly help you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G 40/1931(Pt. III), p. 479, *NMML*.
2. (1901-1967); a Congressman and journalist of Kanpur.

who might have supported him in carrying out a forward policy have been kept out.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

71. Telegram to Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

22-11-1931

Bengal arrests under ordinances continuing. Approaching one thousand. Large numbers Congress workers arrested many districts. Dacca recently. Repetition smaller scale Chittagong. Europeans continually demanding more repression.[2] Believe government agreed to this. Great resentment young men. Difficult hold them in check.

Jawaharlal

1 AICC. File No G 60/1931 (Pt. I), p. 60, N.M.M.L.
In reply to Vallabhbhai Patel's telegram of 22 November 1931 which read: 'Bapu wires 'wild rumours prevalent situation Bengal'....can you send me full accurate information?" Jawaharlal was in Calcutta on this day.

2 Following the incidents at Hijli, Chittagong and Dacca, the European Association of Calcutta started a "Royalist Movement" and appealed to the government for retaliatory action against Congressmen.

72. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Allahabad
November 24, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,
I returned from Calcutta yesterday after three strenuous days there. I addressed many meetings and met the new B.P.C.C. Joint Committee. I am afraid conditions in Bengal are very unsatisfactory. On the one hand government repression is very severe and people are being arrested

1. AICC. File No. 54/1931(Pt. IV), p. 403, N.M.M.L.

in large numbers. It is stated over a thousand young men have been interned under the old ordinance and the new. The European Association is breathing fire. Dacca recently gave another example of hooliganism encouraged by certain officials and the police.

The joint B.P.C.C. is not functioning with any efficiency. It is merely carrying on.

I could not meet Subhas as he was not in Calcutta.

There is going to be a special provincial conference at Murshidabad on the 6th and 7th December. Great stress was laid on some Working Committee member attending this. I think it will be desirable if some one could go. I should have liked to go myself but it seems difficult. Rajendra Babu might perhaps be able to go. I hope there will be no meeting of the Working Committee to clash with this.

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November 26th, 1931

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I have received your letter from prison. I am sorry for the slight delay in answering it.

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Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 AICC File No G-40/1931(Pt. III), p 479, N.M.M.L.
2 (1901 1967), a Congressman and journalist of Kanpur.

74. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

November 26th, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a cutting from a Bengali paper—an organ of the Sen Gupta party.[2] It contains a violent attack on me because I am supposed to have run down Bengal.[3] What I had done is this. After praising Bengal a lot I stated at a students meeting that Bengal had suffered greatly by internal dissensions and internecine struggle and on account of these even the great province of Bengal had gone down in the estimation of other provinces. The great response of Bengal last year, great as it was, would have been tremendous if there had been full cooperation between all groups. Therefore I called upon the young men and women to put an end to these quarrels of their elders and put Bengal again in the forefront. Even this gentle rebuke has touched our Bengal friends on the raw. I am afraid I have not added to my popularity in Bengal. Of course I said nothing against any individual or against any party. Probably both parties will join in the game of rending me now. Perhaps it is as well that I keep out of their provincial conference.

At a meeting of the joint B.P.C.C. Council in Calcutta two members of the Sen Gupta group misbehaved very much over a trivial matter. Because they did not agree with an interpretation of the chairman they walked out dramatically although their leaders accepted the interpretation. It was a very simple matter and there was absolutely no occasion for wrath. I must say that I was greatly irritated but fortunately I held my peace.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-60/1931(Pt. 1), pp. 52-53, N.M.M.L.
2. An editorial of the *Advance* of 22 November stated "...the Pandit (Jawaharlal) has told us that he had to hang down his head in shame, whenever reference was made to Bengal. We are not ashamed of Bengal's record...Let him compare Bengal with his own province and also Bombay and he will soon understand where the shame is and what his illusion is about."
3. For Jawaharlal's speech at a students' meeting in Calcutta, see *post*, section 4, item 22.

75. To D.R. Thengdi[1]

December 4th, 1931

Dear Comrade Thengdi,

I have your letter of the 26th November.[2] I am afraid it is not possible for the A.I.C.C. to make grants like the one you suggest. Even when they fully sympathise with an object all they have done is to raise funds privately and not to make official grants. The only exception they made to my knowledge was the grant of Rs. 15000/- for the Meerut Defence Fund. Even that procedure cannot be repeated as we have now got a definite rule that we cannot go outside our budget without special reference to the A.I.C.C. or unless extra provision is made independently. Even apart from this it would be difficult for the Working Committee to take the steps suggested by you as this will give rise to many complications. There are so many political cases today and so many of our comrades are being tried that the Working Committee cannot differentiate. Besides we are now recommending that no defence should be offered.

I am sorry therefore that I cannot be of great assistance to you. I am, however, enclosing on my own behalf a cheque for Rs. 50/-. This is a small amount but I hope it will be of some use to you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC File No. G-40/1931(Pt. II), p. 243, NMML.
2. Thengdi had written: "I would propose that you should grant a donation from the funds of the A.I.C.C. to make up this liability of the C.D. Fund."

76. To Khan Sahib[1]

December 5th, 1931

My dear Khan,
The curtain seems to have fallen on the happenings in the Frontier Province.[2] That these are pretty bad is obvious enough but news seems to be stopped by the censor. We can well imagine that you are having a hard time. Remember that we think of all of you very often and we know that you will face all trials to come without flinching. Very soon we in the U.P. are also going to have a stiff time. All the better.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-17/1931, p. 3, N.M.M.L.
2. The N.W.F.P. Government had sought to suppress the increasing popularity of the Khudai Khidmatgar movement through the imposition of section 144 and other extra-judicial measures. In November 1931, Abdul Ghaffar wrote: "When I hear and see the cases of robbery, dacoity and murder...I arrive at the conclusion that there is certainly the hand of government in it."

77. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

December 7th, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,
Your telegram. It will be a difficult job for me to go to Ahmedabad for the Working Committee and I am afraid most members will find it very inconvenient. At the earliest I can reach there on the 13th night or the 14th morning. As I have wired to you I propose to take

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-60/1931 (Pt. I), p. 12, N.M.M.L.

Kamala to Bombay on the 12th reaching Bombay on the 13th morning. That night I can start for Ahmedabad returning to Bombay for the 15th.

About the celebration of Bapu's arrival I think something should be done but I am not quite clear what can be done. Perhaps we might consider this at the Working Committee meeting. You might call for meetings all over the country to pass an identical resolution conveying our affection and gratitude to Bapu and an assurance to stand by him in the struggle for independence and put up with all the sufferings that the struggle may bring.

Thank you for returning Dr. Datta's letter.[2]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Presumably S K Datta, Indian Christian representative to the Round Table Conference who had written to Jawaharlal from London informing him of the developments there.

78. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Allahabad
8/12/31

My dear Vallabhbhai,
Your telegram correcting the 13th to the 30th. Certainly I shall attend this meeting if all goes well. Probably I shall be in Etawah till the 27th. Would you like me to be in Bombay when Bapu arrives? If so I shall try to get away from Etawah on the 26th.

I propose now to leave Allahabad with Kamala on the 13th morning, or may be the 12th, for Bombay. I hope to meet you there.

I am sorry about Imam Saheb's[2] condition.

1 A I C C. File No 52/1931, pp. 7 8, N M M.L.
2 Imam Saheb Abdul Kadir Bawazir, worked with Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa, joined noncooperation movement in India in 1920 and was imprisoned, participated in the raid on salt depots at Dharasana in May 1930; died in December 1931.

I read in the papers that the Bombay Government has objected to the flag song—*Jhanda uncha rahe hamara*.[3] This is one of our best known songs and is prescribed by us for all flag ceremonies. It is surprising that the Bombay Government should suddenly wake up after we have had this song for a number of years.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

3. Written by Shyamlal Gupta 'Parshad'

4

POLITICAL SPEECHES AND STATEMENTS 1931

1. On the Riots in Kanpur[1]

We the undersigned deeply deplore the terrible tragedy of Cawnpore resulting in a large number of deaths including the death of Syt. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, one of the noblest of workers who was trying to rescue those who were in danger. All accounts go to show that this true servant of the nation was a true nationalist free from any communal taint and respected equally by both the parties. We ask all lovers of peace to work in their respective areas so as to remove every cause of distrust or suspicion and seek occasions for both the communities to meet together and promote the common good.

We are convinced that there are more points of contact and common interest between us and infinitely less of differences. Chief among the former is the economic life which is impossible to be led in isolation. Common birth makes us interdependent in daily life. It is easy enough to see that both must perish if each lived its daily life apart from the other. He therefore who parts the two and sets one community against the other is the enemy of his own and must be treated as such.

At this juncture we cannot lay too much stress upon the necessity of not magnifying every petty quarrel into a communal grievance and using it as a signal for strife. On such occasions a Hindu should make it a point of honour to run to the rescue of his Mussalman brother and a Mussalman in similar circumstances to his Hindu brother and thus by mutual help lay the foundation for a true unity.

1 AICC File No. 34/1931, p. 5, N.M.M.L.
This joint appeal drafted by Jawaharlal was signed among others by Mahatma Gandhi, M. A. Ansari, M. M. Malaviya, Vallabhbhai Patel, Abul Kalam Azad, Sarojini Naidu, Kutubuddin Abdulwali and Sardul Singh Caveeshar and issued early in April 1931.

2. Appeal for Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi Memorial Fund[1]

Shri Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was a veritable ornament of our country. The death of such a beloved and indefatigable public worker in the midst of the shameful communal disturbances at Cawnpore is a matter of deep sorrow to us all; but the rare courage with which he met his end raises the stature of our country. This is the noblest sacrifice that the country has made in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity; and it places before us all a new ideal. The life and death of Ganesh Shankar shall ever be a treasured memory for our countrymen, and shall serve as a beacon light for millions of Hindus and Muslims so that they may keep to the right path in the midst of gloom and darkness. The body of Ganesh Shankar has been reduced to ashes; but his grateful countrymen will keep his memory green. His death imposes upon us certain duties that must be fulfilled immediately. We must shoulder some portion of the responsibilities that were his own, and then we must also give such form to our grateful affection as would perpetuate his memory and be dear to his soul....

1. *The Hindu*, 13 May 1931. Extracts.

3. On Hindu—Muslim Unity[1]

I have attended many a meeting, several of them late in the night, but I have never had such a lively time as I have this night. When I came to the meeting I thought that you must have been tired as it is so late in the night, but I am glad to find you so enthusiastic.

I declare that for me there is no room for the Hindu-Muslim question. My Muslim colleagues and myself, who are fighting for freedom, know that the question does not exist at all for us.

1. Dongri (Bombay), 9 June 1931. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 11 June 1931.

We feel that our fight is for the poor; the Hindu-Muslim question is created and fostered by the monied classes and the educated people who want power for themselves. I had a short span of ten days' freedom when I was released in October last after my first conviction in connection with the civil disobedience movement. I had then said that I would ask the Muslims to write out their demands and I would accept them without the least discussion about them.

The noble part played by the Pathans in the fight for freedom was the best guarantee for Muslims' rights and I repeat it now. I appeal to Hindus and Muslims to stand shoulder to shoulder in the present struggle which is to improve the lot of the poor, to give them bread and to free them from the various disabilities under which they are labouring.

4. On Minorities and Nationalism[1]

In India, the question of minorities is approached in a wrong way. Personally for me the Hindu-Muslim question, as it is understood now, does not exist. I venture to say that in spite of the gravity the problem does not exist because it does not affect the masses. I have once likened it to ghosts. There are foolish people who believe in the existence of ghosts and get frightened, but that does not mean that wiser people should also believe in ghosts. Similarly for me the Hindu-Muslim problem does not exist because it does not affect the masses. The Indian communalists usually demand representation in legislatures and share in the spoils of office. Both these things benefit only a few persons at the top. It is true that they give power to those who go into legislatures or get services. But I do not believe that it is power for their community or a group as such. It only gives them power in their individual capacity. It also gives them a chance for nepotism. However, the ordinary man, the man in the street, the man in the field and the man in the factory is not affected by it.

1. Report of a speech delivered at the Christian Nationalist Party meeting at Bombay on 13 June 1931. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 14 June 1931.

After all, what is it that the average man wants? The average man wants food if he is starving, wants clothes to remove his nakedness, wants a house to live in, money to spend. He aspires for a higher standard of living and comfort. Now in India there is appalling poverty. In the face of that poverty to talk of state jobs is to show the most callous ignorance about the real issue which is economic. In the future India parties will be formed with economic ideals. There will be socialists, anti socialists, zamindars, kisans and other similar groups. It will be ridiculous to think of parties founded on religious or communal basis. Religion ought to have nothing to do with politics and economics.

I repeat that the communal problem does not affect the masses. It only affects the few at the top; if it affects the masses, it is only because the shouting done by those interested few percolates to the masses, and sometimes when their passions are roused they break each other's heads.

The problems of the minority really pertain to freedom of language, script, religion and culture. In western countries the minority problem does not include any political demands. The examples of Germany's tyranny over the French in Alsace-Lorraine and the most recent example of Italy's efforts to "Italianise" the people in the newly acquired Austro-German territory after the Great War, show that in Europe it means the domination of a national majority over a minority. The division of political power will mean the creation of one state within another state, and that will be a most dangerous thing.

Nobody denies that every communal group should enjoy perfect freedom of religion, language, script and culture. The All Parties Committee Report has accepted it. The Congress also has declared it in its Karachi resolution.[2] The only question that remains is of representation in legislatures and share in the spoils of offices. But that is a fundamentally wrong view of the subject.

Where does political power ultimately rest? It rests in the inner strength of a group. If that strength is not there, no amount of paper guarantees will help it. There should be goodwill prevailing among the different groups. It is all the better if there are both; but if there is neither then the weaker must go to the wall.

The system of separate electorates is harmful not only for the nation but also for the minority. Logically it is not conducive for developing a national consciousness.

2. The resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Programme passed at the Karachi Congress on 31 March 1931.

The Congress attitude to the problem has been defined in its Lahore resolution. It has stood by it so far and will continue to stand by it. The attempt made by the All Parties Committee is in my opinion the biggest attempt ever made to solve the question and I doubt if any better attempt were possible unless it is on absolutely national lines without any tinge of communalism.

The Congress stands for a national settlement but it is prepared to accept an agreement arrived at by the parties. I have personally explained to the supporters of separate electorates how foolish it is on their part to put forward that demand. But if they insist on committing that folly I do not want to stand in their way. If one wants to go to the devil he must have that right also, and in order to take the right lead he must be allowed to take the wrong path for some time, if he so chooses.

Personally I am thinking of something quite different from both joint electorates and separate electorates. I am waiting for a chance to sweep away both. What I am aiming at perhaps may be a "Socialist Republic". But, meanwhile, I would prefer the introduction of joint electorates as it would help bring the two communities together.

I maintain that a great majority of thinking Muslims favours joint electorates. A majority of unthinking Muslims demands separate electorates. But the latter should not expect the Congress to sit upon their Muslim colleagues who stand by them and work with them and hand them over to those who sit on the fence, while the fight is on. If they expect that, it will be simply an amazing expectation. Much as the Congress wishes to solve the question, it cannot sacrifice one minority for another.

If there is any difficulty it is only about the classes who are really backward educationally and economically, and I personally hold that when Swaraj comes the resources of the state should be concentrated on their uplift and on bringing them first in line with the advanced section of the community.

I strongly repudiate the mischievous suggestion that Muslims have not participated in last year's fight. It is a gross libel on the community. Our people were shot down in other places but nowhere except in the predominantly Muslim province, namely, the Frontier Province, were they killed in their hundreds. The common suffering has created a feeling of *camaraderie* and if the minority question is left to me and my colleagues it can be solved within a few minutes because in our case there will be no bargaining but every party will be ready to give more and hesitate to accept more.

The difficulty is due to those who sat quiet while the struggle was going on and now are shouting loudly. I appeal to you to realise that

the question is not so grave as is sought to be made out by some people, or as it appears from reading newspapers. I want you to remember that in a country of 330 millions, while a few clashes occur here and there, there are millions and millions who live in perfect peace and amity.

5. *The Congress and Mill Workers*[1]

All communities in every province participated in last year's satyagraha movement. The movement was so strong that it shook the mighty British Empire with all its strength. But the real strength of the Congress lies in the peasants and workers. It is for their freedom that we had fought and we have now become conscious of our strength. Our success is certain, whether it is in the near future or at a little distant date.

The question before you is what you should do. My advice is that you should join the Congress in large numbers and bring it round to your views. The Congress is carrying on a fight for the poverty-stricken masses. It is already influenced by the masses. Still, as it is an all-India organisation, bringing in its fold all classes, its decisions are influenced sometimes by other classes also, and thus they may not be exactly to the liking of the workers in all details. I therefore, want the workers to join the Congress and bring it round to their viewpoint.

The Congress has now really become a mass organisation and if any section of the Indian community keeps aloof from it, it will in no way do any harm to the Congress but it will certainly weaken that section. So wisdom demands that all should join the Congress. The Congress has just come out of a struggle successfully. It may have to resume it if the demand for freedom is not granted. Therefore I appeal to every Indian to strengthen its hands by offering full support and cooperation to it.

I appeal to the workers to join their unions and to strengthen the trade union movement. Workers have to solve their problems and for that a proper organisation is necessary. I deplore the weak state of trade unionism in the country. I regret the present split in the Trade

1. Bombay, 13 June 1931. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 14 June 1931.

Union Congress, and sympathise with the efforts that are now being made for achieving unity.[2] I fear that if unity is not achieved soon all that we have achieved during the last ten or twelve years will be *undone. I feel that if honest and sincere efforts were made by the* trade union leaders, unity is quite possible. I appeal to you to combine your unions and impress upon your leaders the necessity of bringing about unity.

It is my firm conviction that there is nothing like a communal problem in India. All demands for safeguards are put forward on behalf of the minority community by persons who are after power and position. A minority, if represented on the legislatures, cannot become a majority. The real problem before us is economic.

The Congress fight is for Swaraj—for the workers and toilers. Otherwise it cannot be Swaraj. It will be a mockery. The Karachi Congress has definitely stated that the Congress stands for the masses. The Congress is a mighty institution and the Congress power is derived from the workers. The Congress is for the masses. So join and capture the institution. Also join the trade union to strengthen it. Then you will not be denied the fruits of your labours.

2. At this time there were three trade union organisations—the All India Trade Union Congress, the Indian Trade Union Federation and the Trade Union Congress. Efforts were made by trade union leaders like R. R. Bakhale and N. M. Joshi to bring about unity between different sections of the trade union movement.

6. On H.S. Suhrawardy's Allegations[1]

Our attention has only now been drawn to the statement which Mr. Suhrawardy[2] is alleged to have made in the course of his address to the Muslim Volunteers' Conference held at Bombay on June 1. In

1. *The Leader*, 15 June 1931.
Jawaharlal, along with Syed Mahmud and Jairamdas Doulatram, the other General Secretaries of the Congress, issued this statement.
2. H. S. Suhrawardy (1893-1963); leader of the Muslim League; Chief Minister of Bengal at the time of partition; founder of the Awami League in Pakistan; Prime Minister of Pakistan, 1956-57.

the press report it is alleged that Mr. Suhrawardy stated that 'some of those Muslims who supported joint electorates were paid to carry on Congress propaganda though at the same time he acknowledged that there were those who were honest and sincere in their views.' It is good of Mr. Suhrawardy to acknowledge that there are some Muslims in the Congress who are honest and sincere but, evidently, according to him there are others who have been bribed by the Congress to carry on propaganda in favour of joint electorates. This is a statement which we challenge and repudiate and shall be glad to know what grounds Mr. Suhrawardy had for making it. The Indian National Congress works in the open, its accounts are audited and published from time to time and anyone can see that. It is a surprise, therefore, to us to find that any person who claims to be responsible in any way can make a statement like the one attributed to Mr. Suhrawardy.

7. On the Defence of the Accused in the Delhi Conspiracy Case[1]

I had the good fortune to interview the under trials in the Delhi Conspiracy Case in jail.[2] There I learnt of the paltry offer which the government have made to help them financially in their defence, and of the demand put forward by the accused. The government's reluctance to give more shows how little anxiety it has to secure a fair trial for the accused. But in spite of this I ventured to advise the accused not to make receipt or non receipt of petty sums of money a matter of principle and reason for non-attendance in court.

The defence committee also is of the same opinion. I am glad to learn that our comrades ultimately, though not without reluctance, agreed to follow our advice. The defence committee has undertaken

1 Delhi, 23 June 1931 From *The Hindu*, 24 June 1931.

2 The arrest of revolutionaries in connection with discoveries of arms dumps, dacoity in Delhi and the attempt to blow up the Viceroy's train in December 1929 was followed by the Delhi Conspiracy Case The accused refused to appear in the court in protest against the government's refusal to increase the defence counsel's fees. Following Jawaharlal's intervention on 23 June 1931 the accused attended the court.

to make good the deficiency in funds and the lawyers appearing in the case have also agreed, I am glad to say, to cooperate by reducing their fees.

I do not know anything about the probable promulgation of an ordinance for enabling the trial to be proceeded with in the absence of the accused, but any new ordinance will be an excellent commentary on the way the government is living up to the spirit of the truce.

8. On the Congress Attitude towards Harijans[1]

If temple-entry cannot be secured to the untouchables on equal terms, the temples with all their property will lapse to the government. The untouchables will not be subjected to any political disability. This has already been made plain in the Congress resolution at Karachi. There can be no place for communalism in a democracy.

However the policy of the Congress is to show every sympathy to the untouchables and bring them within the Congress fold. The untouchables too must learn to behave as if there was no such thing as untouchability. Temple-entry is an urgent problem and the Congress is doing its best to mould public opinion in favour of it. But the very nature of the question is such that the ultimate solution of the problem must depend on the united strength of the untouchables themselves.

1 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 26 June 1931.
P N Rajbhoj, a Harijan leader, had asked Jawaharlal in an interview at Poona on 24 June 1931 about the Congress attitude towards the temple entry movement and the Congress policy towards the minorities and the Harijans

9. Reply to Depressed Classes' Welcome Address[1]

We are all untouchables because the present government has reduced us to a state of political slavery and made us powerless. There is no reason why you alone should be branded with that label.

I advise you not to labour under an "inferiority complex" simply because you have been branded as "untouchables" by others. Swaraj is the panacea for all your present sufferings and grievances under which you are labouring.

1 Bombay, 9 July 1931. From *The Hindu*, 13 July 1931.

10. On Terrorist Occurrences[1]

Not being a regular reader of the *Pioneer* and similar journals, I am afraid I do not keep in close touch with their attempts at misrepresentation. So far as the Congress is concerned, it is not our habit for each one of us to give expression to our opinion and sentiments whenever anything important occurs. It is enough for us that our leader Gandhiji does so. He speaks not only with the voice of the whole Congress organisation, but with the voice of India, and it would be presumptuous on the part of each one of us to give separate expression to our reactions to current happenings. It is clear enough that if anyone has to regret terrorist outrage in India, it is the Congressman.

1. Allahabad, 30 July 1931. *The Pioneer*, 30 July 1931.
The Simla correspondent of the *Pioneer* had reported that "comment is prevalent that the Congress camp remains strangely quiet" about the assassination of the sessions judge at Alipur.

It is impossible for this peaceful struggle to be carried on simultaneously with a contrary method. Therefore, it becomes essential for us even from the lower ground of expediency, to counteract with all the strength that we have, any attempts at violence. Apart from this, terrorist outrages on individuals are bad from every point of view. They are confessions of despair and only when an individual or a country is full of despair are they indulged in. They demoralise and let loose the spirit of violent revenge. Thus they must be condemned on human grounds as well as on political grounds. I am exceedingly sorry that at a moment when the country is facing a critical situation such unfortunate occurrences should take place, and divert our attention from the real issue.

11. On Political Violence[1]

I am for a clear-cut policy as against methods of "fencing". We can have either nonviolence or violence but certainly we cannot play with both. Last year we have shown our strength in the wonderful fight we have given to the government. We have to decide once for all the exact way by which we want to go. We cannot change our way because the government are changing theirs. If we really believe in nonviolence we must follow it irrespective of what the government do. If we do not believe in it we must have the courage to say so openly.

1 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 7 August 1931.
These were Jawaharlal's remarks at the A I C C. meeting in Bombay on 6 August 1931 when it discussed Mahatma Gandhi's resolution condemning all political murders and deploring the attempted assassination of the acting Governor of Bombay and the assassination of the sessions judge at Alipur.

12. On Protection of Women Workers[1]

Women want "attention" and not "protection". I am personally unconcerned even if the House accepts the amendment in preference to the original article. I will still prefer the original clause. There could be no better instance of inferiority complex than Mrs. Kamaladevi's objection to the word "protection".[2] I do not understand what is humiliating in "protection".

I agree with several of the suggestions made in the amendments. But I do not think it is necessary to include them in the clause. Mr. Munshi[3] has remarked that I am in an awkward position because as a member of the Congress cabinet I have to agree to certain things with which I may not personally agree. But I am not in need of Mr. Munshi's sympathy, at least in this case, although I admit that there were occasions when I personally wanted to go a long way but could not carry the Committee with me.

1. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 9 August 1931.
   Article 4 of the Fundamental Rights and Economic Policy read. "Protection of women workers, and specially adequate provisions for leave during the maternity period" When it came up for discussion at the A I C C. meeting in Bombay on 8 August 1931, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya wished to replace it by "The State shall pay attention to the needs of women workers including the children when their mothers are at work, and adequate provisions during maternity period"
2. Kamaladevi had said that all women would emphatically protest against the word "protection" as it denoted an inferior position, they were not going to tolerate protection from anybody, not even from the State
3. K M Munshi (1881 1971), member, A I C C, 1931-37, suffered imprisonment several times in connection with the freedom struggle, Home Minister, Bombay, 1937-39, founder president, Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, 1938 1971; Union Minister of Food and Agriculture, 1950 52; Governor, Uttar Pradesh, 1952 57, founder member, Swatantra Party; author of many books in English and Gujarati.

13. On Formation of the National Government in England[1]

The breakdown of the capitalist system in England seems to be proceeding more rapidly than the world had expected. It is curious and interesting that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald should be one of its last defenders. India is likely to be little affected by the proposed change so far as we are concerned. A National All Party Government has always existed in England.

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 24 August 1931. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 25 August 1931.

14. Address to Mill Workers[1]

I want Swaraj for the masses—a Swaraj in which the masses will have a hand in the administration.

To me the meaning of Swaraj is to remove the foreigners from our country. There would be real Swaraj only when the reins of administration are in the hands of the kisans and labourers. That is the Swaraj which the Congress aims at and which we are trying to achieve for you. I do not want Swaraj on paper. I want Swaraj which gives you bread.

The kisans and labourers take interest in the fight because they know that several of their grievances will be redressed when they get Swaraj. There can be no final settlement till power is transferred to the kisans and the *mazdurs*.

1 Ahmedabad, 10 September 1931. From *The Tribune*, 13 September 1931.

15. On the Firing at Hijli Detention Camp[1]

The firing at Hijli detention camp has shaken Bengal from one end to the other.

Respectable and educated young men, whose only fault has been their patriotism, have been detained in the camp. They are not charged with any offence nor are they convicted of any specific offence. To shoot down such people is altogether inhuman and unpardonable.

Officials are systematically breaking the truce, and, though we would not like to resume satyagraha while Mahatma Gandhi is in England, yet, if forced, there is every likelihood of our resuming it.

1. Delhi, 24 September 1931. From *The Tribune*, 25 September 1931.

16. On the National Flag[1]

Consider the national flag as a symbol of freedom and not merely a piece of tricolour cloth. It is not the flag of any king or emperor, but it represents unity and strength of the teeming millions of India. I condemn cries of "Down with Union Jack", which have now been stopped by the Congress. The people of the Punjab should organise and discipline themselves to prepare for the next bigger struggle for freedom. India does not lack courage and sacrifice. The greatest need of the day is organisation and discipline. Last year the country sacrificed much at the call of the Congress. You must now prepare yourselves for greater sacrifice to win freedom for the country and this freedom will be won under this national flag.

1 Speech at the hoisting of the national flag at the Punjab Political Conference at Jhang, 26 September 1931. From *The Tribune*, 29 September 1931.

17. Speech at Punjab Political Conference[1]

You have had songs and poems in this conference. But I regret I am neither a singer nor a poet. I therefore will neither sing nor recite any poem. The time for songs and poems will come, and come very soon, when I will also join you in your rejoicings. But today I want to point out some of the defects in your working, not because I live in another province but because I love the Punjab much. I want to remind you that in the capital city of the Punjab we passed the resolution of complete independence. What has the Punjab done to achieve that goal? Certainly you have not done much to fulfil my expectations. I know that the Punjab is a province of brave men and women. I do not like to compare its work with that of other provinces; but I can say without fear of contradiction that next to Bengal this is the province which has made supreme sacrifices for the country. But the Punjab lacks method, organisation and discipline. It is the imperative duty of the Punjab Congress workers to reorganise themselves at once and instil into the minds of the people proper discipline and strength of organisation. This is the greatest need of the province. Those who do not like to follow the creed and principles of the Congress should remain outside its fold. Its door is open to all, but those who enter it must obey and honour its creed and principles. The last year's struggle carried on by the Congress has entirely changed the whole outlook of the people. The country has become new and men and women have been infused with new life and new ideals.

Last year when the Round Table delegates went to England they only displayed their debating skill and forensic eloquence. They made eloquent speeches and came back to India. But the Congressmen and women were suffering in jails. The government was compelled to release them eventually, and invited the Congressmen to the Round Table Conference. The Congress does not like to make a show of its eloquence or debating skill. Therefore, it has sent only one delegate, namely Mahatma Gandhi. This "naked fakir" has galvanised the whole world. His words are being very carefully heard by the whole civilised world. The respect that is being shown to Mahatmaji is only due to our sacrifices.

1. Jhang, 26 September 1931. From *The Tribune*, 30 September 1931.

I condemn communalism and declare that the Congress stands for Swaraj for all the people of India. The time has now gone when the Congress used to pass merely protest resolutions. The Congress is today standing on a footing of equality with the bureaucracy. We should not be afraid of repression. We must bravely face all troubles like brave men and women. Petitions and protests must now cease.

The young men of Naujawan Bharat Sabha are moving in a vicious circle. They are only passing protest resolutions against the arrest and conviction of their comrades and in turn the movers of the resolutions are also going to jails. Some of them are only engaged in collecting money for the defence of the accused in the conspiracy case. This is not enough work for the youth of the Punjab. Then some *Naujawans* have taken into their heads to condemn the Congress and its creed. If they cannot follow its creed let them carry on a vigorous programme. This method of sitting on the fence is wrong. It will lead them nowhere. They claim to speak on behalf of the workers and peasants. But they have done very little work for these people. On the other hand, when the Congress is working for the organisation of the peasants and workers, the *Naujawans* do not support the Congress. I call upon the Punjab Congressmen to immediately reorganise themselves and strengthen our movement. I advise them to stop all useless public lectures for some time and devote all their time to organising their forces. In the United Provinces the whole force of the Congress is being used for the organisation of the peasants. The U.P. Congress has practically become a Congress of the peasants. Let the Punjab prepare itself for the next struggle.

18. On Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday[1]

Not many words are needed to speak on this resolution.[2] At present Gandhiji's name is widely known throughout Europe and America. His fame has reached almost all the civilized world as one who is fighting

1. Allahabad, 2 October 1931. From *The Leader*, 4 October 1931.
2. The resolution sent greetings to Mahatma Gandhi on his sixty third birthday and assured him of the country's loyalty to the cause of independence.

for the cause of truth. I know that Gandhiji has gone to London not with the idea of bringing Swaraj to India but to represent the Congress view. When the late lamented patriot, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, visited South Africa after Gandhiji had left that country, he saw what an extraordinary person Gandhiji was and remarked that he had a wonderful power of making heroes out of clay.

19. On M.N. Roy's Defence[1]

I am interested in Mr. M. N. Roy's defence as a member of the Roy Defence Committee but I do not personally believe in such defence.

In the past, Mr. Roy has often criticised me very strongly but that does not make any difference. I met Mr. Roy in Moscow four years ago and since then I have followed his career with great interest. Whether one agrees with him or not, one has to recognize his great ability and his great sacrifice for India's freedom. I admire Mr. Roy for this and that is why I consented to be associated with the defence committee. I hope that Mr. Roy will get all sympathy and help which he so richly deserves.

The treatment he is receiving in the jail is very bad. He has been deprived of interviews, newspapers and the like. For a man of Mr. Roy's type, it is easy enough to do with physical discomforts but this mental starvation is far worse. It is shameful that government should treat a great opponent in this way and treat him for offences which occurred many years ago.

1 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 9 November 1931
Jawaharlal wanted to interview M. N. Roy in the Kanpur district jail to enquire from him about the disabilities of which he had complained. Jawaharlal was refused permission on the ground of Roy's declared intention to exploit his trial for revolutionary propaganda. Interviews had been restricted to his relatives and legal advisers only.

20. On Hijli and Chittagong Occurrences[1]

It is not our habit to pass mere resolutions. Repression is not a new thing in India. It is to put an end to such things that we have resolved to sever our connection with the British Government and carry on the fight for freedom. To weep and curse the government over such occurrences is becoming of neither man nor woman.

How is it that the Hijli outrage has assumed such an importance? We have heard of the ten commandments of the Bible, but there is an eleventh commandment which was discovered by Moses written on a tablet and it is: "Never be one caught doing anything." Officials thoroughly practise this eleventh commandment. In the case of Hijli, unfortunately they have been caught napping. The authorities tried to dispose of stealthily the bodies of detenus but other prisoners in the camp resisted such a thing. They made it plain they would have to shoot them also if they tried to remove the bodies. The prisoners said the bodies could be passed on to the relatives of the deceased. For twenty four hours discussion between the prisoners and authorities continued and it was only when the authorities found that they would have to enact another tragedy if they forcibly tried to remove the bodies, that these were delivered to their relatives.

We are faced with a new peril these days. Chittagong has shown there is a movement on the part of non official Europeans in some cities, particularly Calcutta and Bombay, to organise *goondas* and pit them against the nationalist forces. It seems to me that we will have to fight this new menace in every city of India sooner or later.

I condemn the new Bengal Ordinance under which the government can arrest anybody they like, even a man with a big moustache, if he appeared disagreeable to them. In this way an attempt is being made to crush the Congress organisation in Bengal or for that matter all national work.

1. From *The Tribune*, 17 November 1931.
At a public meeting in Allahabad on 14 November 1931 a resolution was passed expressing indignation at the Hijli and Chittagong occurrences. The meeting also condemned the Bengal Ordinance and sympathised with the people of Bengal in their sufferings.

21. Harijans and the Congress[1]

I regret the social leaders keeping these poor people aloof from all social connection with the so-called caste Hindus. It is a humanitarian duty to help these people and give them proper education to enable them to realise their position in the country. The time has come when questions of caste and untouchability cannot have any place in the mind of the nation. The Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, who has practically dedicated his life to the cause, is trying to remove this stigma from the country.

Many big men are now coming forward extending high hopes to this wretched lot and one of them is Dr. Ambedkar[2] who has claimed separate electorates for the untouchables at the Round Table Conference. You should not accept this mischievous proposal for it will only divide the country and with the help of that division and disunion, these persons, who have given high hopes, will serve their own purpose.

Everybody is now crying for Swaraj which is certainly not a bird in the air. If they really wanted Swaraj they will have to work for it. If Swaraj is explained as the removal of poverty of every community that object will be fulfilled not by division but by union. Real Swaraj requires the complete removal of poverty and so long as this is not done, Swaraj is far off. The Congress is always by the side of the poor and if they really wish to get Swaraj of this nature they should all come and rally round the banner of the Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

I strongly appeal to the youth and women of the country to get ready for another fight, which is about to take place, to achieve our desired goal. Another fight is inevitable if we really want Swaraj.

I am surprised at the conduct of the Aga Khan, Maulana Shaukat Ali and such other delegates at the Round Table Conference who pose

1 Calcutta, 19 November 1931. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 24 November 1931

2 B R Ambedkar (1891-1956); Harijan leader and one of the principal drafts men of the Indian Constitution, signatory to the Poona Pact, 1932 which rejected separate electorates for Harijans and enabled Mahatma Gandhi to end his fast, member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1942-46; Law Minister, Government of India, 1947-51.

big roar. It was a call given by the entire country. Many of us had heard it but had not tried to know how this came about. Such moments come when the vast masses of a country move to perform some heroic action. Many of us, therefore, while taking part in the great civil disobedience movement last year, realised what the real joy of life was.

I want the young men of Bengal to be live men who can act when the time comes just as you acted last year. The movement during the last year was not confined to certain classes or groups of people but it had permeated all classes and communities in India.

Another aspect of the movement has been that quite unintentionally it has tried to remove numerous social evils that we are suffering from. That it is a live movement, has affected our social customs, in particular, it has affected our womenfolk, is evident from the participation of women in the last movement. The emancipation of women in the last movement was not our objective but the movement swept along with it the evil system of *purdah* and seclusion of women. Many women took charge of the movement and directed it. Men did not feel ashamed to follow them.

If you visit the rural areas you will realise how last year's movement had penetrated into the peasantry who had suffered for long from a variety of evils. No doubt they are the most exploited people of India but none the less they are affected by the movement. Of course, the ultimate solution of their problems depends on the final solution of the Indian question. Still, they could not but have gained something from the national struggle. The movement has therefore affected the whole domain of Indian life. It has affected them culturally, politically, socially and in a variety of other ways. When the urge for freedom becomes apparent, it develops itself in all its aspects.

The movement has affected us yet in another way. There was a time and not so long ago, when an Indian was not given due respect in foreign countries. Today, the situation has changed. He is now respected when he goes out of this country. We may still be slaves in our country. Our position is perhaps worse because of the new ordinances; still an Indian carries with him something of the glory of the last year's struggle when he is in a foreign land. Now the real power is not with the government but with the people. We are definitely nearer Swaraj as a result of the last year's fight. Our main concern should be how to develop our strength so that we are in a better position to face our enemies and make them realise the futility of confronting us.

As regards Bengal, I would say that although Bengal possessed splendid material, it was left far behind by other provinces in the last struggle. Bengal lagged behind even the little peasant of Gujarat. Why was it

themselves to be the sole representatives of the Muslims of India but *oppose the establishment of real Swaraj due to communal considerations.*[3]

These gentlemen certainly are not the real representatives of the entire Muslim population of India and their views cannot be accepted as the views of Muslim India.

3 On 13 November 1931 they had submitted a memorandum to the British Prime Minister demanding, in addition to the maintenance of statutory rights, special representation through communal electorates and a declaration of civil rights.

22. To the Youth of Bengal[1]

Let me at the outset assure the people of Bengal that the Congress Working Committee has not turned a deaf ear to the cries of anguish that are heard in Bengal.

The days of truce are numbered and it is only a question of weeks or days when we give it a decent burial. When the fight is resumed, the underlying basis of the last year's movement will have to be adopted once again. I do not want you to be vegetables; I want you to be live *men going headlong for the joy there is in working for a great ideal.* Personally, I would exchange a place in the Cabinet for the joy I experienced last year while fighting for the national cause.

Soon after the Lahore Congress the country was gradually being prepared for a direct and definite action. Many of us were apprehensive but many of us were also optimistic about the final outcome of the last year's movement. Soon after the salt satyagraha was started by Mahatma Gandhi, many of us thought that it was ludicrous to challenge the mighty empire. There was loud laughter at high places of the government. But that laughter did not last long. Those who took part in the movement heard it as if the noise came from a distant wave. The noise disturbed many of us, but at the same time it found an echo in many a heart; a noise that became louder and louder until it sounded like a

1. Calcutta, 19 November 1931. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 20 November 1931.

Although the number of persons who courted imprisonment during the last struggle was the largest in Bengal, Bengal's record was not bright because of the lack of Congress organisation and also due to factional fights which were not to be found in Bombay and Gujarat.

23. Call to Eschew Violence[1]

Let us seriously think and ponder over the great things in Lala Lajpat Rai's life and draw inspiration from them for more resolute and firmer action to achieve what he wanted.

It is physically impossible for any part of India to be oblivious of what is happening in other parts. It is impossible to forget what Bengal has been to the freedom movement in India. I often remember how, in my younger days, tales of Bengal's heroic achievements thrilled me and filled me with admiration for her young men. Since then the rest of India has looked up to her for political inspiration. Therefore, I say, it is physically impossible for the national workers of any part of India to ignore what is happening in Bengal today. It is impossible to divide India into compartments, either provincially, or, as what is called British India and Indian India. Therefore what happens in one part of the country vitally affects the other parts. It is obvious that if the government succeed in crushing the nationalist movement in one province it will be a terrible thing for the rest of India. Take it from me that it is impossible for India to forget Bengal. Bengal has always been in the vanguard of the freedom movement and it is for her to take the lead again. But if you say that the rest of India or that the Congress Working Committee does not pay much attention to what is happening in Bengal, you must remember that India of today is not the India of Jallianwala Bagh days. India has ceased to pass mere pious resolutions of protest and indignation. The Indian National Congress is today a powerful body—a body which is recognized as powerful not only in India, not only by the British Government, but by other governments and other countries.

You and I all know that it is almost impossible—why should we say almost?—it is impossible to achieve what we want without a fresh

1 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 23 November 1931.
Report of a speech at the meeting held in Calcutta on 17 November 1931, to mark the anniversary of the death of Lala Lajpat Rai.

so is the problem that has to be faced by the youth of Bengal. There was a time when other provinces in India used to look to Bengal for inspiration. Now they find Bengal hopelessly divided. Its chief concern appears to be to form parties and indulge in mutual quarrels. The newspapers of this province have also fanned the fire of factionalism. It is sad and depressing to find even young men and women allowing themselves to be exploited by the people belonging to rival factions. This fight has been carried on for a long time, and by their actions they had defamed this province enough. This should now be stopped. I am not afraid of party politics but this kind of fighting, more or less on personal grounds, is a most degrading spectacle.

The Congress rules over this country not by force but by its service. Gandhiji had once suggested to us that when Swaraj comes, we, the Congressmen, should take the pledge that we shall not hold any office of the State. When the British go away, Congress workers may accept office but in an honorary capacity only. We should set this example before our young men that our motto would be service and not salary.

While in other professions of life, experts are needed for particular jobs, I am bewildered to find that everybody seems to be an expert in politics without the least training although they had to deal with the most difficult material. Public life and public service should be absolutely the expert's job. Lenin's motto was that revolution can be made possible only by experts. I do not know what changes would take place in our country, but I have no doubt that, in future, only the experts will have control over the destiny of the country.

We should also remember that our fight is not against an individual but against a machinery. We differ with our moderate friends because we have found out that when the best type of Englishmen and Indians are thrust into the machine which runs the government, they act and behave alike.

I am not a believer in the motto that if one gave me a slap on the right cheek, I should show him my left cheek. However, from practical experience and from the measure of success that we had gained during the last year's struggle, it is quite apparent to us what a tremendous power nonviolence has proved to be. If there is nonviolent atmosphere in the country, violent activities have no place. On the other hand, if there are violent activities in the country, it would be injurious to nonviolence. I therefore appeal to you that when nonviolence is the creed of the Congress, we should all help in creating an atmosphere of nonviolence in the country so that the Indian National Congress is able to carry out its policies smoothly and without any hindrance.

We do not follow the military method. The beauty is that ne man can fight a whole army. It is a fight of the soul, of the strength. As long as there is even one man left, we shall con- he fight and I am sure the masses will win and destroy the forces loitation.

situated as we are the municipality cannot go very far or do Political conditions must change and power must come into the of the people. Municipal work is important. Much can be done favourable circumstances.

To the People of Gadag[1]

u have gathered in thousands. I do not know whether you have to see me or to hear something from me. I have been touring in province to see how far you are ready for satyagraha. If you are Swaraj will be got for India soon. But if you have simply come of curiosity to see Jawaharlal Nehru, it is of no use. If you greet md shower affection on me it is because I took part in the fight. ember there are hundreds and thousands of others who have done c deeds. Thousands of *sainiks* and *sainikas* have done great ser- . But their names never appear in the newspapers. They are not nded.

e real strength of the movement lies in the fact that thousands of and women in the villages had a share in it. A handful of people ot do very much. The government has realised that the Indian ement today cannot be put down. You know that it is not because ne's personal difficulties that one fights, for Swaraj is not for peo- like me who live in comfort. People may say when you court suf- g and trouble: "Wait for another five years." If you are hungry thirsty can I say to you: "Why such hurry; why not wait for four ive years?" I have seen and you have seen the strength of India. world has seen and the government too knows it.

Gadag, 19 December 1931. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 December 1931.

struggle. We shall have to enter that struggle soon. Therefore the only question now is whether we start the struggle today, next week, next month or thereafter. Of course we should have very much liked to start satyagraha with our captain Mahatma Gandhi with us. But we made it clear to him and he made it clear to the government that we would start satyagraha if we thought it necessary even when Gandhiji was in London. It is however better to start it with our general with us because it is going to be a big struggle. If Bengal wants to start satyagraha immediately it is for her to decide.

I appeal to the youth of Bengal to adhere scrupulously and absolutely to the path of nonviolence. I want you to appreciate my reasoning. I have arrived at this conclusion not because Mahatma Gandhi says it or anybody else says it, not because I am a religious votary of ahimsa but after a process of painful and lengthy reasoning and argument with myself and others, I have arrived at the conclusion that for India today there is no other path open than the path of nonviolence. Individual violence is a ridiculous and discarded method. It is emblematic of despair. Let us face facts because it is not a matter of a few brave words and a few brave acts. You and I have to decide the fate of more people. We cannot act in a fit of emotion or just because we want to figure as heroes on the platform or at the altar. I say and I say it definitely, and I challenge anyone to contradict me, that individual terrorism today in this country or in any other has always been resorted to just to wake up and rouse the people and to remind them that there are some who do not tolerate alien rule; but it has never succeeded in freeing a country.

Satyagraha is not a weapon of the weak. It is a mighty and wonderful weapon which has shaken the foundation of the British empire and drawn the attention of the whole world. Today you will find that in the provinces, where there have been occasional outbursts of violence, the organisational side of the Congress has suffered. You will find that there has been mutual conflict and the like. You will find that the Congress movement has not been able to achieve quite so much though there is excellent material in these provinces. Have you any doubt, *young men of Bengal, that if you had desired, you could have achieved* far greater things than any other province?

Of course it is true that many of us will have to give our lives before India is able to attain freedom. We will give our lives when the time comes and when we can achieve something by that. But do not give your lives in such acts which will not help you to achieve but will actually hinder the national fight.

24. On Bengal's Sacrifices[1]

Certain words of mine uttered at a students' meeting in Calcutta recently appear to have given pain to friends in Bengal.[2] I regret very greatly that anything that I have said should have caused this pain. I do not know how I was reported, but I gather that I was supposed to have drawn comparisons unfavourable to Bengal, regarding the civil disobedience campaign last year. If such was the effect of my words, I can only say that they were ill chosen and that they grievously misrepresented my feelings. When every province did its best and rose bravely to the occasion it would be churlish for any one to make comparisons. In the case of Bengal, with her splendid record of sacrifice last year, it would be foolish and utterly wrong to endeavour to depreciate the gallant fight which her sons and daughters put up. I may be foolish but I am not so ignorant of the great deeds that were performed in Bengal last year as to make a statement which was patently incorrect. In particular it would have been the height of ingratitude for me to run down the brave young men and women of Bengal whose guest I was on the occasion, and who had repeatedly honoured me with their affection and confidence.

In the course of my address to the students I had laid stress on the tremendous sacrifices of Bengal. I had pointed out, however, that the effect of these sacrifices would have been even greater if mutual distrust and dissension had been absent. For many years I have been intimately connected with the Congress organisation and perhaps because of this I have always laid stress on the organisational side of our work. I ventured to point out to the students I was addressing that mutual friction resulted in weakening the organisation and I appealed to them to strengthen the Congress organisation so that they could produce even greater results than they had done in the past from the fine material they had.

1 Allahabad, 7 December 1931. From *The Leader*, 9 December 1931.
2 See *ante*, section 3, item 74

25. Reply to Address of Gadag Municipality[1]

I have come from a thousand miles away. Wherever I have been I have received love from sisters and brothers, comrades and soldiers in India's army of freedom. India is one, no matter where one lives. The fight for India's freedom is also one. You do not greet me because I am great—you will find greater and wiser ones—but because I am ready for the fight. You realise that this is not the time for pleasure but for fighting. I trust you will take the fullest part in it. You know what is happening in the U.P. I can hardly think or speak. Lathis and bullets are being showered on us. I can only say that this fight which has begun in U.P. will spread and involve the whole country.

I have great interest in municipal work and have seen such work in foreign countries. But the time is such that with thousands suffering, I can hardly offer any advice. But you must remember the test of municipal work is judged by the houses and conditions of the poor and not the few mansions of the rich. But unfortunately municipal money goes mostly towards providing more conveniences and comforts for the rich. As long as it does not do something to remove the sorrow and the wretched conditions of the poor, it shows it has failed. So it is with the question of Indian freedom.

Peasants and workers realise today that it is for them that the fight is carried on. It is for the hungry, the naked and the thirsty. The last fight was suspended following the truce, not because we meant to stop the fight. That was to see if our object can be achieved through any other means. We can get some kind of Swaraj even now—a Swaraj where a handful of Indians will gain good positions and become high officers; but the conditions of the masses will remain the same.

Gandhiji is on his way back.[2] What is to happen we do not know. You know what is happening in Bengal, and the U.P. peasants in my province are poorer than most of you. They have been suppressed. We shall not give up this fight until their lives are saved from this misery. Perhaps the same fight will come to your province as well and you will have to follow their example. This is a new kind of fight. On one side is a huge army and facing it stand crowds of hungry and naked

1. Gadag, Dharwar district, 19 December 1931. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 December 1931.
2. Mahatma Gandhi had left London for India on 5 December 1931.

kisans. We do not follow the military method. The beauty is that even one man can fight a whole army. It is a fight of the soul, of the inner strength. As long as there is even one man left, we shall continue the fight and I am sure the masses will win and destroy the forces of exploitation.

But situated as we are the municipality cannot go very far or do much. Political conditions must change and power must come into the hands of the people. Municipal work is important. Much can be done under favourable circumstances.

26. To the People of Gadag[1]

You have gathered in thousands. I do not know whether you have come to see me or to hear something from me. I have been touring in your province to see how far you are ready for satyagraha. If you are ready Swaraj will be got for India soon. But if you have simply come out of curiosity to see Jawaharlal Nehru, it is of no use. If you greet me and shower affection on me it is because I took part in the fight. Remember there are hundreds and thousands of others who have done heroic deeds. Thousands of *sainiks* and *sainikas* have done great services. But their names never appear in the newspapers. They are not garlanded.

The real strength of the movement lies in the fact that thousands of men and women in the villages had a share in it. A handful of people cannot do very much. The government has realised that the Indian movement today cannot be put down. You know that it is not because of one's personal difficulties that one fights, for Swaraj is not for people like me who live in comfort. People may say when you court suffering and trouble: "Wait for another five years." If you are hungry and thirsty can I say to you: "Why such hurry; why not wait for four or five years?" I have seen and you have seen the strength of India. The world has seen and the government too knows it.

1 Gadag, 19 December 1931 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 December 1931.

You will have to carry on a fierce fight, for we have to replace the government machinery. Even if the whole lot of English officers leave and we put in Indians, the poor will not benefit. Only a handful of people will gain. We do not want such big offices. We want government and power in the hands of the poor. We must do away with big governors, Viceroys and other big-salaried officers. We are not out to create rajas, maharajahs and the like. We want the raja and the *praja* to be one. We want a panchayat raj consisting of elected servants of the country who can be removed if they fail to do their duty. We shall replace lathi raj by panchayat raj, and the power will be in the hands of the people. We are waiting for Gandhiji and we shall follow whatever advice he gives.

Remember that on January 26th 1930 we took a pledge that we will fight until Purna Swaraj is won. Suspension of the fight does not mean that it has ended. We may stop sometimes or fight from the right or sometimes from the left. This is only a change of the style of fighting. The responsibility of the coming fight will be on you and not on a handful of leaders who will all be arrested soon. You will have to carry it on until you reach the goal and come to release us from the dark cells where we shall be lying.

27. Reply to an Address at Hubli[1]

I have been presented with many addresses, but due to the pressure of time they were requested to read them. Some of them come from organisations that are dear to me. Trade union workers are old friends of mine. I was once their president. I wish today to say a few words, therefore, to the textile mill workers. No matter in what condition or state of life you may be, you must decide to work for the freedom of the country. Until then your grievances will not be removed. We must see that when freedom comes, it does not bring power to a few. Kisans also need to organise. They are a great power and strength, when formed into an organisation. The trade union movement was once a great organisation, but the trade union leaders themselves quarrelled and today the movement has lost its vitality.

1. 19 December 1931. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 December 1931.

The Congress is out to destroy untouchability. It will not consider India free until it has been done. It is bound to do so when it gets the power. Being long in subjection, we had got into the habit of considering ourselves helpless and looking to others for help. But now we are getting strong and are able to raise our heads in pride. We have gained confidence in ourselves. So we cannot sit quiet. If these depressed classes also gain confidence, they cannot remain long in that state. At the Round Table Conference, the depressed classes' representative demanded separate electorates, but Gandhiji refused it as he did not wish to perpetuate this condition. Their progress and salvation cannot be judged if they attain high offices and get seats in the legislature.

We are plunged today into a terrible fight in order to bring in the rule of the people. Panchayati raj alone will remove the sufferings of the people. So, please stop the cries of Maharaja, *Rajadhiraja*, 'Prince of India', etc. applied to myself and leaders, which I have been hearing for the last two days. Call out only in the name of the country and if you like, 'Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai'. I want you to stop the custom of touching the feet of leaders. We have bowed to others long enough. Let us now learn to stand erect.

28. Imminence of a Struggle[1]

When I was asked to address a meeting here I hesitated to consent thinking that Gandhiji is soon coming and we should leave the speaking to him and prepare ourselves to do what he will ask us to do.

I refute each and every point of the attack against me contained in the U.P. Government circular. I deny the veracity of the facts mentioned in the government communique which contained statements pilfered during transit. The Congress never made a secret of its preparing for a fight; in fact it has declared from the house-tops that in case the Round Table Conference failed there will be a revival of the civil disobedience movement and the fight for freedom. Those who think otherwise are either simpletons themselves or take the Congress to be so But the Congress is not so foolish.

1 Speech at Bombay, *The Leader*, 20 December 1931.

Mr. Sherwani has been charged by the government with having issued a circular asking the Congress workers in U.P. to win over the kisans to the side of the Congress. But that is the object ever in view before the Congress. In fact it was its primary object. To work for the good of the kisans was its first and foremost task and it would never relinquish it. I am personally accused of attempting to establish the rule of peasants. My views on the subject are well known to the country. I am certainly working for a government in which the peasants have an effective voice in the administration of the country, but there was no idea of expropriation of the lands of the zamindars. Mr. Sherwani, the president of the committee, is himself a zamindar. Their secretary is also a zamindar and at least four or five out of the 12 members of the Council are good zamindars. So if Sherwani wants to adopt some other path there are others to prevent him from doing so.

As a matter of fact I always use the phrase panchayati raj among the kisans. I believe that so long as the peasants who formed the bulk of the Indian population had not an effective voice in the country's administration there would be no real Swaraj and, therefore, I am working for that end. That is also the objective of the Congress. As to the zamindari system prevalent in the U.P. even the officials including Sir Malcolm Hailey admit that it cannot work and it is collapsing. The question before them is how best to replace it.

I know what is happening in Bengal. Perhaps the same thing would be repeated in the U.P. My family and I did not originally belong to the U.P. but we have lived in that province for a sufficiently long period. I would only warn the government that it was the U.P. which had seen the greatest battles in Indian history which had decided the destiny of the country. If the final battle for India's freedom is to be fought in that province, the country would only welcome it.

I do not want to indulge in heroics. I feel that the strength of the Congress has immensely increased during the past few months; while if there was any increase in the power of the government it was to do more and more wrong. It is evident from the incidents that the country witnessed at Hijli and Chittagong. I warn the people that such incidents might be repeated at various places but we should in no case swerve from the path of nonviolence which we had adopted. It was relying on the nation's strength and its capacity to suffer that we launched the movement last year and if there be occasion to revive it those will be our weapons again.

29. Message to Karnatak[1]

I came to Karnatak at the invitation of my colleague Dr. Hardikar to attend the convocation ceremony of the Hindustani Seva Dal and to give certificates to the *sainiks* who had undergone the training of the Dal. Owing to the development of the situation in the U.P., I was hard put to it to find time to come. But I am very glad that I could ultimately do so and visit some parts of Karnatak. It was not my intention to undertake a tour of the province but the demands of friends and comrades were so insistent that I could not say 'no' to them. Even so it was impossible to go to all the places I should have liked to visit.

I know that Dr. Hardikar and office-bearers of the Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee had difficulty in arranging my programme so as to include as many important places as possible. They did their utmost but it was in the nature of things impossible to go everywhere, and so at my request, some centres, where good work has been done, have been omitted. The fault, if any, is mine and I must ask forgiveness for it. I could only visit the places on the way to my destination and could not afford to leave the main route for lack of time. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Hardikar, Syt. Karnad Sadashivarao,[2] president of the provincial Congress committee and Syt. R. R. Diwakar,[3] member-in-charge of the Karnatak Seva Dal and all other comrades for the great pains they took over the arrangements for my tour.

My four days in Karnatak have been busy days, full of engagements, but they have also been joyful days as wherever I went I saw enthusiasm and readiness to meet all the trials to come. It was a revelation to me to see the vast crowds that gathered everywhere in towns and countryside and the love and affection they poured on me were overwhelming. I know that this love and enthusiasm was not for a mere soldier like me

1. 20 December 1931. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 22 December 1931.
2. (1881-1937); president, Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee for many years.
3. (b. 1894); a leading Congressman of Dharwar; suffered imprisonment several times during the freedom struggle, member Constituent Assembly, 1946; Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, 1948-52; Governor, Bihar, 1952-57; chairman, Gandhi National Memorial Fund since 1957, author of several books in English and Kannada.

but for the great cause which for the moment I was supposed to represent. I am going away from Karnatak full with memories of that land of ancient glory and achievement and with a conviction that the Karnatakis will not fail in the hour of trial which is soon to descend on us.

May Karnatak add another glorious page to her splendid history!

5

MISCELLANEOUS

1. To C. Chattur Singh[1]

April 9, 1931

Dear Mr. Chattur Singh,

....Please rest assured that our countrymen overseas are always present in our minds. We shall gladly be of service to you whenever we can. We feel however that ultimately the battle of India's freedom as well as the freedom of our countrymen abroad must be fought in India. We are concentrating all our energies on this fight here and when freedom comes to us you will certainly profit by it....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C.C. File No F.D. 15/1929, p. 41, N.M M L. Extracts.

2. To Bharati Sarabhai[1]

Bardoli
8.6.31

My dear Bharati,[2]

You are perfectly justified in your complaint, but then I warned you of my failings! And being a 'public man' I have to cover up these failings from the public gaze and so my friends get the full benefit of them. I am a fairly good letter writer so far as business letters are concerned. But I hate writing personal letters in a hurry and unless I am in the mood for them. So very often, the personal letters get delayed, and while I write trivial and not really important communications to all manner of people, the letters I would wish to write remain unwritten. This is all very involved, is it not?

In Ceylon I had a huge pile of letters to dispose of and I had no typist or secretary. I separated some of my personal letters and attacked the others with considerable success. Just as I was beginning to look forward to writing to the friends whose letters I had kept carefully by,

1. J N Correspondence, N M M L.
2. (b. 1912), daughter of Ambalal Sarabhai, playwright in English and Gujarati.

some accidents happened which prevented me from doing any writing. I was unwell and later we started going about from place to place with a heavy programme everywhere. For nearly a month now we have been constantly on the move, chiefly by car, with speeches and public functions and the like, and no rest. Yesterday we reached Bombay and I found a summons waiting for me from Bapu to come here—and so here I am. *Tonight we go back to Bombay, and later I suppose I shall find myself* in Allahabad

I am glad you are having a quiet time in Simla. It is not an ideal place to live in but at any rate it offers a change from civil disobedience, and let us hope it fits one for another dose of C.D. Go to Narkanda if you can. It is a short trip from Simla and it is worthwhile.

Our travels in Ceylon and South India have been very fascinating. They have not been restful but they have certainly provided a change from the usual routine.

Yes, I have read Isadora Duncan's life.[3] I liked it, because a frank and straight book always appeals to me. But I cannot say that I agree entirely with Isadora's outlook on life. I can well imagine how such a book would interest you. But Isadora's is too personal an outlook. It has its charms and its appeal for all of us, but it is often very limited and rather selfish Most of us can only taste of real greatness if we lose our individual selves in a great task. And perhaps only then can the real joy of life come to us.

I shall try not to be a sinner in future and when your letters come I shall not be too long in answering them. I am a bit of a machine in my work, but with my friends I would like to be human, and that means that I give in to my moods and even to my failings.

My good wishes and love to you and to Mridula.[4]

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3 Isadora Duncan (1878 1927), U S. dancer, the reference is to her autobiography, *My Life*, published in 1927.

4 Mridula Sarabhai (b. 1911); daughter of Ambalal Sarabhai, member, Bal Sena 1920 25 and youth movement, 1925 30; appointed one of the general secretaries of the Congress, 1946, was imprisoned several times from 1930 onwards in connection with the freedom struggle, worked closely with the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference after 1938, organized relief and rehabilitation of refugees including abducted women in India and Pakistan.

3. To Bharati Sarabhai[1]

In Running Train on way to Bombay
6-7-31

Dear Bharati,

What a good writer of letters you are! and how clever you are becoming with all your reading and thinking I feel rather small when you write to me of the books you have read, which I have not read and have no chance of reading. For life has caught me in its whirlpool and tosses me about hither and thither, and leaves little leisure to me to improve my mind or to pay homage to the arts and the softer side of life Long long ago I tried to learn from books and perhaps I learnt something from them. But all my later lessons have been learnt from men and women—humanity in the mass. It is a hard school but an efficient one, but it has little place in it for the graces, and sometimes memories of the days gone by come to me and I hanker after the graces and the arts, but life says no and I pass on and perhaps it is as well for I would hardly feel at home in that distinguished company. But secretly sometimes I steal an hour and go to some book which makes me forget my worries and troubles and I enter another world and let my fancy roam about in its lanes and byeways. But only sometimes.

Why do I delight in warfare? Well, to begin with I do not really delight in it. But I do delight in adventure and in taking risks and in facing danger and it is because I get this adventure and this sense of danger out of the struggle that I like the struggle. And I love the struggle because peace is so welcome and so pleasant when it follows strenuous action. But I am a man of peace, provided peace does not mean stagnation and fear and too much love of doing nothing and taking no risk even for a great cause.

I am glad you liked Rani Rajwade.[2] We have known each other for a great many years and have been good friends. Ever since she drifted to Gwalior I have seen little of her.

Go back to your college if you feel like it. There is no harm in it unless you have to give any objectionable undertaking. You may learn something useful there. Intellectual training is very necessary but by itself it is very barren. As you yourself say, how much you learnt last year in the heat and burden of the fray. How you have grown and

1 JN Correspondence, NMML.
2 Rani G Laxmibai Rajwade, wife of Ganpatrao Raghunath Raja Rajwade, army minister of Gwalior Government in 1931, chairman, sub-committee on women's rights, National Planning Committee of the A.I.C.C., 1938.

felt yourself merge for a while in the larger unit that is Indian humanity, and felt your pulse beat in unison with that of a million others. It is a great feeling and worth having and those who have had it will often hanker for it again. I have no doubt that the time will come again when we shall be tested and it will be a more difficult test than ever before. Keep ready for that time.

I am on my way to Bombay. I am afraid there is little chance of my going to Ahmedabad. I must rush back to the U.P. for millions of peasants are in trouble there and I cannot desert them.

Au revoir—and don't get too frightfully clever.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

4. To Will Durant[1]

As at Sabarmati
July 22, 1931

Dear Friend,[2]

Your letter of 5th June. Your fame had preceded you. Whether it was your publisher or some friend who sent it I had your book which contains references to myself.[3] But the book was taken away from me by an American friend as soon as it was received. Hence I was unable to glance through its pages. Anyway I knew you then to be a well known author.

Now for your questions.

(1) Life for me is real as I believe it to be a spark of the Divine.

(2) Religion not in the conventional but in the broadest sense helps me to have a glimpse of the Divine essence. This glimpse is impossible without full development of the moral sense. Hence religion and morality are, for me, synonymous terms.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. William James Durant (b. 1885); popular writer on philosophy and history; best known for his *The Story of Civilisation*.
3. *The Case For India* (1930); at one place in the book, the author had contrasted the attitude of Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal to civil disobedience and had said that "the younger Nehru, Jawaharlal, destined to be one of the major leaders in 1930, refused to commit himself to the avoidance of violence, laws made by alien tyrants were not to be respected as laws"

(3) Striving for full realisation keeps me going.

(4) This strife is the source of whatever inspiration and energy I possess.

(5) The goal is already stated.

(6) My consolation and my happiness are to be found in service of all that lives, because the Divine essence is the sum total of all life.

(7) My treasure lies in battling against darkness and all forces of evil.

You have asked me to write at leisure and at length if I can. Unfortunately I have no leisure and therefore writing at length is an impossibility.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. To Will Durant[1]

Allahabad
August 20th, 1931

Dear Mr. Durant,

You have done me an injustice by suggesting in your letter that your name is unfamiliar to me. Ignorant as I am of many things that I ought to know, I was not unaware of your books or of you. My only regret is that a somewhat busy life has not left me leisure enough to read all your books. The only one I know is your *Story of Philosophy*. But I hope that the fates and the British Government will combine to give me another opportunity of extending my knowledge and reading some more of the books I have long wanted to read. Most of my reading during the past few years has been done in the peace and quiet of a prison cell. With luck I may visit this again soon and then I hope to have the pleasure of reading your other books.

Your letter raises fascinating questions—fascinating and yet rather terrible. For your argument leads to the inevitable conclusion that all life is futile and all human endeavour worse than useless. You have done me the honour of putting these questions to me, but I feel my utter incompetence to answer them. Even if I had the time and leisure, which unhappily I have not at present, I would find it difficult enough to deal with the problems you have raised.

1. JN Papers, NMML

Indians are supposed to find pleasure in metaphysics but I have deliberately kept aloof from them, as I found long ago that they only confused me and brought me no solace or guidance for future action. Religion in its limited sense did not appeal to me. I dabbled a little in the various sciences, as a dilettante might, and found some pleasure in them and my horizon seemed to widen. But still I drifted and doubted and was somewhat cynical. Vague ideals possessed me, socialistic and nationalistic, and gradually they seemed to combine and I grew to desire the freedom of India passionately, and the freedom of India signified to me not national freedom only but the relief of the millions of her men and women from suffering and exploitation. And India became a symbol of the suffering of all the exploited in the world and I sought to make of my intense nationalism an internationalism which included in its fold all the nations and peoples that were being exploited

I was troubled by these feelings and felt my helplessness. There seemed to be no obvious way of realising my heart's desire. Then came Mr. Gandhi and pointed a way which seemed to promise results, or at any rate which was a way worth trying and afforded an outlet for my pent up feelings. I plunged in, and I discovered that I had at last found what I had long sought. It was in action that I found this—action on behalf of a great cause which I held dear. Ever since then I have used all my strength in battling for this cause and the recompense I have had has strengthened me, for the reward has been a fuller life with a new meaning and a purpose to it.

This is hardly an answer to your question. But not being a philosopher, but just a man who feels at home in action, I cannot give you a very logical or scientific answer. I have believed in science and logic and reason, and I believe in them still, but at times they seem to lack something and life seems to be governed by other and stronger forces—instinct or an irresistible drive towards something—which for the moment do not appear to fit in with science or logic as we know them. History with its record of failure, the persistence of evil in spite of all the great men and great deeds of the past, the present breakdown of civilisation and its old time ideals, and the dangers that lurk in the future, make me despair sometimes. But in spite of all this I have a feeling that the future is full of hope for humanity and for my country and the fight for freedom that we are waging in India is bringing us nearer the realisation of this hope. Do not ask me to justify this feeling that I have for I can give you no sufficient reasons. I can only tell you that I have found mental equilibrium and strength and inspiration in the thought that I am doing my bit for a mighty

cause and that my labour cannot be in vain. I work for results of course. I want to go rapidly towards my objective. But fundamentally even the results of action do not worry me so much. Action itself, so long as I am convinced that it is right action, gives me satisfaction.

In my general outlook on life I am a socialist and it is a socialist order that I should like to see established in India and the world. What will happen when the world becomes perfect I do not know and I do not very much care. The problem does not arise today. There is quite enough to be done now and that is enough for me. Whether the world will ever become perfect, or even much better than it is today, I shall not venture to answer. But because I hope and believe that something can be done to better it, I continue to act.

I am afraid I have avoided your principal question—what is the meaning or worth of human life? I cannot answer it except by telling you how I have looked upon life and what motives have driven me to action.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. To Sri Prakasa[1]

30.8.31

My dear Prakasa,

Please refer to *The Statesman* dated August 28th. The leading article 2nd paragraph asks for an enquiry into "the failure of the Congress committee to take disciplinary action against the Benares branch for the murder of Agha Mohammad Jan." This is a highly objectionable and libellous statement. I do not know how far it is actionable at law. The Benares committee ought to take legal advice and send a notice to *The Statesman*. Gandhiji saw this article and was clearly of opinion that some action should be taken.

I do not know what happened in the case against the captain of the Benares volunteers or his brother, who were arrested after the murder of the Agha. Please let me know.

1 A.I.C.C File No. P-21/1931, p 257, N.M.M.L

I hope to be in Allahabad up to the 5th when I shall go to Muttra and thence to Ahmedabad for the Working Committee meeting.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To George Slocombe[1]

31.8.31

Dear Mr. Slocombe,
The *Free Press Journal* of Bombay of the 29th August 1931 has reproduced an article by you from the *Evening Standard*. The article is on Mr. Gandhi. There are a number of statements in this article which are inaccurate. But I should particularly like to draw your attention to the story of Mr. Gandhi meeting the Prince of Wales. As reported, this story runs thus:

> "The other incident, never until now disclosed is even more characteristic of Gandhi. It happened during the visit of the Prince of Wales to India. Gandhi and Mohamed Ali had proclaimed a boycott of the royal visit. Hartals had been organised in every great city in India. The authorities were helpless. The visit was hastily curtailed and many functions abruptly cancelled. One day in Delhi, Gandhi had called informally at Government House to discuss a private matter with an Indian member of the Government of India. He was in the member's room when the door suddenly opened and in walked the Prince of Wales, followed by an aide-de-camp.
>
> The Minister was aghast. The Prince of Wales looked embarrassed. And then Gandhi did an unexpected thing. He went swiftly forward, bent to the floor and with both hands embraced the feet of the Prince of Wales—the eastern gesture of homage. And, still crouching at the Prince's feet, he appealed to him, "Sir, be kind to India." I am told that the Prince, greatly moved, murmured something inarticulate, shook hands with the kneeling figure and fled. Afterwards it was said that there were tears in his eyes."

1 AICC. File No. 57/1931, pp. 1-2, NMML.

Those of us, who have been associated with Mr. Gandhi, had never heard of this dramatic incident. We did not know that he had met the Prince anywhere, or that he had visited Government House in Delhi in those days, informally or otherwise. Nor were we aware of his indulging in the "eastern gesture of homage"—embracing the feet of another—to anyone. To make sure, however, we enquired from Mr. Gandhi, just before he sailed for Europe, if he knew anything of the incident referred to by you in your article. He was equally ignorant of it and he asked me to write to you and ask you to let us know your authority for the story. May I therefore request you to enlighten me on this point?[2]

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. In his reply George Slocombe expressed regret but added that he had got the story from a reliable source.

8. To S.A. Brelvi[1]

September 7th, 1931

My dear Brelvi,
Your letter.[2] I am afraid I am most unfit for writing an article on Gandhiji. I am surprised at your asking me to do so. No person with whom one is intimately connected in public and private life can ordinarily be made the subject of an intelligent article. Some years ago, however, I did write an article on him for a French symposium.[3] I wrote it in English but my article appeared in French. I have lost the original in English but if you can trace it in French you can publish it in French. The book is called, I think, *Annales de l' Inde*.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(KW)(i)/1931 (Pt. III), p. 559, N.M.M.L.
2. Brelvi had asked Jawaharlal to contribute an article for Mahatma Gandhi's birthday issue of *The Bombay Chronicle*.
3. This article is not available.

9. To S.B. Patel[1]

September 18th, 1931

Dear Patel,[2]
I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of the 7th September.[3] As you know I have been out of Allahabad.

I am certainly interested in M. N. Roy's defence and would like to help him as much as I can. So far as I know there is no central organisation for the defence yet. There are two or three local committees. The T.U.C. has also appealed for funds for the defence. In Cawnpore there is a local committee which elected me as their chairman. I have asked them not to have me as chairman as I shall not be able to give much time to the committee, but I have agreed to serve as a member of the committee. Should you desire to contribute any money to the defence fund you could send it to Dr. Jawaharlal,[4] Civil Lines, Cawnpore. You can rely upon him that the money is properly utilised.

I am acting in this matter of course in my personal capacity and not as Secretary of the A.I.C.C.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC File No P-11/1931, p 37, NMML.
2. Secretary, Bombay PCC
3. The addressee had asked to whom the contribution for the defence fund for M. N. Roy should be sent
4. He was in charge of the defence committee for M. N. Roy set up in Kanpur.

10. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
September 19th, 1931

My dear Bapu,
In my desire to send you duplicates of the letters I send by air mail I am getting into quite a muddle and I am afraid I must have puzzled

1. J N Correspondence, NMML.

you also. Sometimes the copy must have reached you before the original. The enclosures with the original could not all be repeated with the copy. However I shall carry on in this haphazard way in the hope that something reaches you.

I enclose a draft trust deed for Swaraj Bhawan.[2] I shall be glad if you could let me have your approval of it. In particular I should like your opinion on the point raised by Jamnalalji and referred to in my note.[3]

An article on Muttra district sent to Kumarappa for Y.I. is also enclosed for your information.[4] Our district officers, whose salaries and future emoluments you will no doubt be asked to guarantee for ever and ever, are carrying on merrily. Only two hours ago I had a visit from a group of kisans from near Allahabad. They bore signs of injury on their bodies and even their womenfolk had bruises and blood and broken teeth. Those who were more seriously injured could not come to us. All this was merely the result of gentle persuasion to pay up the balance of the rent due. And as I thought of these gentle methods my mind went back to a well remembered clause: "Such picketing shall be unaggressive and it shall not involve coercion, intimidation, restraint, hostile demonstration, obstruction to the public" etc., etc.[5]

It is a strange world we live in and daily we add to our experiences. In London city there is peace and harmony—at any rate I suppose so—and the future of India is being discussed and fashioned out. Here, the future seems so distant. The present absorbs our attention. Enough for the day is the evil thereof, and it is a little difficult to feel vastly interested in the constitutional problems that are being discussed at the R.T.C.—direct or indirect election, second chambers etc. I wonder when you will come to grips with the real question.

I am sending you separately by air mail one Agrarian Report. There are a number of misprints in it. I have not myself read the whole of it yet as it is just out of the press.

I went to see Chintamani yesterday. He is pretty bad and he is hardly likely to be well enough to go to the R.T.C. He is very much cut up at not going as he had apparently set his heart on taking up a strong line in opposition to Sapru

Love,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

2 Not printed.
3. See enclosure.
4 See *ante*, section 2, item 38.
5 Seventh clause of the Gandhi Irwin Settlement.

ENCLOSURE

NOTE ON THE SWARAJ BHAWAN TRUST

Jamnalalji has pointed out that the draft deed of trust may not permit sale of the property should necessity for this arise and he wants this power to be given It is probable that the present draft will not allow this to be done. In any event as the question has been raised it ought to be cleared up, one way or the other.

My own feeling is that it will be very unfortunate if Swaraj Bhawan has to be sold for any reason and I know that father was averse to this also. Swaraj Bhawan has a certain cash value no doubt but its real value is one of association and sentiment. A principal object of creating the trust was that the site itself should remain a national possession and should not go into other hands.

At the same time I feel that I should not allow my sentiment to intrude too much in this matter. It is possible that a contingency might arise when the purposes of the trust might be served better by a sale of the property. As I cannot apply my mind impartially to this question I am requesting the proposed trustees to favour me with their opinions. I am also requesting Gandhiji for his advice in the matter. I am very sorry for the additional delay, but perhaps it is best that the matter be cleared up.

A possible suggestion is the addition of the following clauses to the deed of trust:

> "It shall not be open to the trustees to sell or otherwise alienate the property, but under very special circumstances, if it is clear that the purpose of the trust will be served better by such sale or alienation, the trustees may do so, provided that no such decision will be arrived at unless the trustees are unanimous and unless the Working Committee of the National Congress approves of such a decision.
>
> In the event of such sale or alienation taking place the monies realised shall be invested in other properties for the furtherance of the objects of the Trust."

This is not in legal language but the meaning is probably clear enough.

Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To Jawaharlal Rohtagi[1]

September 22nd, 1931

Dear Rohtagi,
You must know that the superintendent of the Cawnpore jail has refused to allow me to interview M. N. Roy. I enclose a copy of the letter I have received. Will you kindly ask M. N. Roy's lawyer to inform him of this and tell him that I am very sorry I have been prevented from seeing him?

Please also ask the lawyer to tell him that I received a message from Roger Baldwin of New York expressing a wish to help Roy and enquiring from me what he could do in the matter. I have sent a cable to Baldwin suggesting that financial help might be sent. I have also written to him to this effect.[2]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(KW)(i)/1931 (Pt. II), p 311, N.M.M.L.
2 See *ante*, section 1, item 26.

12. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Delhi
24.9.31

My dear Bapu,
I am on my way to the Punjab to attend the Punjab Provincial Conference at Jhang.

Shocking incidents have happened at Hijli in the detenus' camp in Bengal. You may have received cables about them if the censor has not stopped them. I enclose some newspaper cuttings. Bengal is in a bad way and the non-official and official Europeans seem to be making a dead set against Congress activities on the one hand and the detenus and their colleagues on the other. I feel we have been neglecting Bengal and we cannot afford to do so. Subhas has resigned from the

1 Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 17843.

B.P.C.C.—and so have many others.[2] But Sen Gupta's group is not acting very graciously.

I did not send you the U.P. Agrarian Report by air mail after all but sent it by ordinary post. The charge for the air mail was 12/- and this seemed to me to be monstrous. I felt you would not approve of this extravagance.

Love

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

You seem to be shifting your headquarters in London but I am continuing sending my letters to Bow.

The newspaper cuttings are sent separately.

2. On 18 September 1931 Subhas Chandra Bose resigned as president of the Bengal P.C.C. as Mahatma Gandhi had suggested that his resignation would help settle the dispute between him and Sen Gupta.

13. To D.N. Bahadurji[1]

Allahabad
October 14th, 1931

Dear Mr. Bahadurji,

I have just received a letter from Nargis Captain in which she tells me that you are not likely to come this way by the 20th. I shall probably be here till the 24th or 25th. If you can possibly pass this way by that date I shall be happy to meet you. But I do not want to put you to any unnecessary trouble.

When you go north you should first go to Dr. Khan Sahib, 3 Michin Road, Peshawar. He is the brother of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. I cannot give you much information about the places you might visit and the people you should see. I am afraid you will have to find this out after you reach there. Dr. Khan Sahib and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan will be your guides. Khurshed Naoroji will of course be there and she will give you every help. There will be no difficulty about arrangements but I am afraid that you may not have a very comfortable time.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40(KW)(i)/1931 (Pt. I), p. 7, N.M.M.L.

Civilisation has not penetrated very far in the north and you may find many of the habits rather trying. Even more trying will be the childlike and unmethodical nature of the Pathan. He has no conception of offices and method and writing and the like. He can concentrate with difficulty on a particular bit of work or even on a subject. Like most children he gets tired soon of one subject. But he is seldom tired of talking. He has many fine points of course and is often very loveable.

I really have no further suggestions to make. Please write or wire to Khurshed Naoroji the time of your arrival. Her address is C/o Dr. Khan Sahib.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To Chief Secretary, U.P. Government[1]

Allahabad
October 16th, 1931

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,

I am really very sorry to trouble you with so many letters. I am writing this about M. N. Roy whose case is being tried in Cawnpore. Perhaps you know that I was not permitted to interview him in jail. I am a member of his defence committee and am interested in his defence as he has practically no relatives or friends to help him. But not only was I not permitted to see him but all manner of restrictions have been placed on visitors and counsel for him. As the trial is held inside the jail this also keeps out almost everybody interested in him. Roy's letters even in connection with his case are held up and he is harassed in a variety of ways. I am sure that this treatment cannot be due to any orders of the provincial government. Roy is a man of ability and note who has held a very high position and who has an international reputation. Ordinarily he should be treated with every courtesy and given every facility. But he is not even given the facilities given to ordinary undertrials. I hope the local government will consider his case and direct that he be treated with the consideration he deserves.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 A.I.C.C. File No G-40(KW)(m)/1931, p 23, N.M.M.L.

15. To the Manager, Gauhr-i-Hayat Office, Kanpur[1]

October 19th, 1931

Dear Sir,
I have your letter of the 16th.[2] I dislike greatly my name being used for any saleable articles. I object still more to the name being associated with patent medicines. As for my picture appearing on any such articles I have the strongest objection to it.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 A.I.C.C. File No. G-5(KW)(1)/1931, p 107, N.M.M.L.
2 A pharmaceutical company in Kanpur, selling a medicine under the name of Jawaharlal, had sought permission to print his picture also on the label.

16. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Allahabad
21.11.31

My dear Vallabhbhai,
In Calcutta I had a long talk with Rabindranath Tagore about various matters. I also met some of his other people and I found from them that he was in great financial need for Santiniketan. The need was so great that there was danger of the institution collapsing—and yet the immediate amount wanted was only Rs. 10,000/-. I was told that Tagore felt that if Bapu had been here he would have helped him to get this sum. For various reasons Bengal is not helping him at present. What is to be done? It would be a great pity if an international institution like Santiniketan and Viswabharati collapsed. I told them that

1 A.I.C.C. File No. 54/1931 (Pt. IV), pp. 399-401, N.M.M.L.

I would try to introduce them to a few friends in the U.P. but obviously the U.P. could not give much. We are paupers. However we might give him 1000/- or so. He wants me to give letters of introduction for Bombay people. I suggested that this was outside my province and it would be best if he consulted you on the subject. Probably therefore Tagore's secretary will go to see you. I shall give him a brief letter of introduction.[2] There are many people who do not care to contribute to Congress funds but who might give something to Tagore. Anyhow I feel that we ought to help the old man in his troubles.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Not printed

17. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

November 24th, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,
I have today registered the deed of trust for Swaraj Bhawan. I enclose a copy. There has been great delay in doing this. I hurried matters today as I was afraid that in case of my arrest matters might hang over for an indefinite period. I trust you approve of the deed.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC File No G 60/1931 (Pt. 1), p. 55, NMML.

18. To P.R. Lele[1]

26/11/31

Dear Sir,[2]

I am in receipt of your letter.[3] I do not know what has offended you. I am not aware of having made any personal attack against Dr. Ambedkar. I have never met him and till recently I had not heard of him. There is thus no question of my having any personal grudge against him. I strongly criticised his policy and attitude as being injurious to the country and to the depressed classes. I also pointed out that his behaviour to Gandhiji had been exceedingly discourteous.[4] If this fact is incorrect I shall gladly withdraw the remark.

You are probably quite correct in comparing me to my disadvantage with Dr. Ambedkar. Not knowing Dr. Ambedkar I cannot compare, but knowing myself rather well and being very conscious of my many shortcomings, I can well believe that Dr. Ambedkar excels me in many ways. Dr. Ambedkar, as you say, might well have been on the High Court bench. Certainly there never was a chance of my becoming a judge of any court. But Dr. Ambedkar's excellence or my frailty or autocracy should have little to do with the consideration of national problems and should in no event be a substitute for courtesy.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. AICC. File No. G40/1931 (Pt. III), pp. 457-458, N.M.M.L.
2. An advocate of Bombay.
3. He had alleged that Jawaharlal referred disparagingly to Ambedkar in a speech at Calcutta. See *ante*, section 4, item 21.
4. In his speech of 8 October 1931 at the Round Table Conference, Ambedkar had said: "The Mahatma has been claiming that the Congress stands for the depressed classes, and that the Congress represents the depressed classes more than I or my colleagues can do. To that claim I can only say that it is one of the many false claims which irresponsible people keep on making, although the persons concerned with regard to those claims have been invariably denying them." Later, he wrote: "Unfortunately, the Congress chose Mr. Gandhi as its representative. A worse person could not have been chosen to guide India's destiny. As a unifying force he was a failure. Mr. Gandhi presents himself as a man full of humility. But his behaviour at the Round Table Conference showed that in the flush of victory Mr. Gandhi could be very petty minded...."

19. To K.F. Nariman[1]

November 27th, 1931

My dear Nariman,
Thank you for your telegram informing me that you have sent Rs. 1300/- to Cawnpore.[2] If you could add another 200/- this ought to carry them through. Any further money collected will be useful for the future.

I am glad to learn that you are going to the Murshidabad Conference.[3] I am afraid I will not be able to go. On that very day we are holding an important meeting of our Council. Besides I have succeeded unwittingly in irritating many of our Bengal friends. They are very sensitive. I tried to lay stress on the desirability of the youth of the country putting an end to the mutual conflicts that have been going on in Bengal so as to give Bengal its rightful place in the struggle. Even this was too much for them and was taken as a personal affront by many people. I wish you better success.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-40/1931 (Pt. III), p 467, N.M.M.L.
2. The money was sent to the committee for the defence of M N. Roy.
3. The Bengal Provincial Conference held at Murshidabad on 6 December 1931.

20. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

November 28th, 1931

My dear Vallabhbhai,
Your letter of the 25th with its enclosures.[2] I have already written to you about the reactions to my visit to Calcutta.[3] The English newspapers are quite mild. You should read the Bengali papers, specially the cuttings I sent you, to realise fully what a miserable worm I am.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-60/1931 (Pt. I), pp. 41-42, N.M.M.L.
2. Vallabhbhai had written that much financial help for Santiniketan could not be expected from Gujaratis and Marwaris as Tagore had recently called for a boycott of the products of non Bengali mills.
3. See *ante*, section 3, item 74.

I should really have liked to go to the Murshidabad Conference but I feel I cannot leave the U.P. during the next week. I am glad, however, that some one is going on behalf of the Working Committee.

I learnt in Calcutta about the attempted boycott of non-Bengali Indian mills. I did not know that Tagore had recommended it. But I know that Acharya P.C. Ray had delivered a very aggressive speech recommending a boycott of all non-Bengali articles.[4] This created a bit of a furore. Ultimately, I believe, he had to express his regret over his lapse.[5] The fact remains, however, that he feels in this way.

I did not get your first telegram about the date for the Working Committee. In reply to your second I think I suggested the 14th. If I am free till then, which is doubtful, I should like to go to Bombay and from there to Hubli and Bagalkot to inspect the Seva Dal headquarters.

I am delighted to learn of the camps that are being opened for volunteers in Gujarat.

I expect within the next few days a dramatic coup by government rolling most of us in, specially those connected with the no-tax movement here. *The Pioneer* yesterday referred to the possibility of deportations.

We intend publishing the correspondence between the U.P. Government and the P.C.C. Will you have no objection if we include your letter to Emerson in it?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4 (1861 1944); well known scientist, author of *History of Hindu Chemistry*. He held the view that "the Bengali unfortunately has given too wide a scope to idealism at the expense of practicality... taking advantage of (Bengal's) inertitude and weakness, the powerful and enterprising foreign and non Bengali traders and merchants have captured all her avenues of wealth...the Bengali is knocking about here and there for a morsel of bread."

5 In a statement dated 4 October 1931 he said "The only way to save the dying Bengalee race from economic ruin is to organise and develop her own resources .. It is my firm conviction that indiscriminate picketing is bound to degenerate into selfish aggrandisement causing unhealthy rivalry between ourselves and between different provinces... I strongly disapprove of any such picketing on provincial basis as I believe it will be detrimental to our national interest and will ultimately prove advantageous to the foreign exploiters."

21. To K.F. Nariman[1]

December 4th, 1931

My dear Nariman,

...I understand that Kumari Lajjavati[2] of the Punjab has been appointed by Hardikar as the commander of the women's camp. I think this is a good choice. Lajjavati is a capable and enthusiastic woman and she should do well. Kamaladevi of course will be there to help but she was not prepared to take entire charge.

I am afraid it is quite impossible for me to visit Coimbatore. It is difficult enough to be out of the U.P. at present even for 2 or 3 days. Apart from this I have a rule not to preside at conferences now. I try to avoid even attending them, but presiding I bar completely. I also feel that under present circumstances the only conferences that we should encourage officially are conferences under direct Congress supervision and auspices. Not that youth conferences are bad but it is very difficult to draw the line and one does not usually know much about local conditions in the place where the conference might be held. Sometimes it is a counterblast to the Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1 AICC File No G 40/1931, (Pt II), pp 263-265, NMML. Extracts
2 (b 1887), a leading Congress worker and vice president for many years of Arya Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Jullundur

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Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. (1861-1944); well known scientist; author of *History of Hindu Chemistry*. He held the view that "the Bengali unfortunately has given too wide a scope to idealism at the expense of practicality... taking advantage of (Bengal's) ineptitude and weakness, the powerful and enterprising foreign and non Bengali traders and merchants have captured all her avenues of wealth... the Bengali is knocking about here and there for a morsel of bread."

5 In a statement dated 4 October 1931 he said. "The only way to save the dying Bengalee race from economic ruin is to organise and develop her own resources .. It is my firm conviction that indiscriminate picketing is bound to degenerate into selfish aggrandisement causing unhealthy rivalry between ourselves and between different provinces... I strongly disapprove of any such picketing on provincial basis as I believe it will be detrimental to our national interest and will ultimately prove advantageous to the foreign exploiters."

23. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Sultanpur
9.12.31

My dear Mahmud,
I received your letter last evening and was much grieved to read it. Only the day before I had heard of your troubles. I hope that in spite of your pessimism your brother will recover. But whatever may be in store for you, you cannot and must not give in to despair. Misfortunes have to be faced manfully and overcome. Do not talk of 'ruination' and the like. There is no such thing. The wheel of life goes on, blindly and cruelly sometimes, and it is futile to grieve. Each one of us has his job. We do it or do not do it and go our way. Let us then get on with the job and the future will take care of itself and will gradually become the present and then fade off with the past.

I am here for a day. I propose to go to Bombay with Kamala on the 12th morning. From there I have to visit some places in the Karnatak. I shall return on the 22nd and go off immediately to the Etawah Conference. From there I shall probably go to Bombay or Ahmedabad to meet Gandhiji. As you perhaps know the Working Committee meets on the 30th at Ahmedabad.

Kamala is still unwell. One of the reasons why she is going to Bombay is her treatment.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

24. To Syed Mahmud[1]

10/12/31

My dear Mahmud,
I wrote to you yesterday from Sultanpur. I little knew then what news would await me on my return. Kamala and I are deeply grieved to learn of your great loss. But you must bear up. Do not go to pieces. Great work awaits us all and so long as there is work to be done we must carry on.
Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

1 Syed Mahmud Papers, NMML.

25. To the Income Tax Officer, Allahabad[1]

Allahabad
December 23, 1931

Dear Mr. Banerji,
I have just received your letter of December 18 on my return from Bombay. I think there is some misapprehension about what I told you. I said that I would send you Rs. 10000/- within two or three days and would try to send another Rs. 5000/- or so by the end of the month, making Rs. 15000/-.[2] Accordingly I sent you Rs. 10000/- immediately after. The balance would be paid, I stated, as early as I could manage it. I was myself eager to have done with this affair, but not having the necessary cash with me I could only pay after realising money from my securities. I offered to transfer my shares in railway companies to the government at the market rate but you have now informed me that government are not prepared to accept these. Under the circumstances

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-25/1931, p. 133, NMML.
2. Presumably this relates to the income tax arrears of Motilal Nehru.

I have to endeavour to raise the money from sale of property or shares. I have already sent a motor car to Bombay for sale.

I should like to point out to you, however, that in case certain developments take place it may become very difficult for me to pay the balance. On arrival here last night I was served with a notice from the district magistrate restricting my activities in a variety of ways and making me virtually a prisoner in Allahabad city. Further it is quite possible that my property might be attached soon and I may be arrested. It is difficult enough for me to arrange for large payments and if I am arrested these difficulties increase greatly.

There is another aspect of the question which troubles me and which I should like you to consider. If the government treat me as an enemy person and harass me in every way I cannot be expected to cooperate with them in the payment of***[3] Ordinarily, under these circumstances, I would have ****[4] to pay anything at all. But I hesitate to do so because I gave you my word that I would pay. The situation having changed greatly during the last few days by the issuance of the U.P. Ordinance, I must consult my colleagues before I can finally make up my mind. I propose however to lay the matter before the Working Committee of the Congress which meets next week, and to abide by their decision. I shall communicate this to you at an early date.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3 & 4 Moth eaten.

SIXTH CONVICTION[1]

Eleven months after[2]

ırrested at Iradatnagar (Iradatganj?) as we were travel-
' the mail to meet Bapu and attend meeting of Work-
luge crowd to see us off at Allahabad station. Many
'hheoki including mother, Nan, Ranjit, Betty, Uma
i &c. As train was starting from Chheoki we heard
/ould be arrested at Iradatnagar where the Bombay
lly stopped for the purpose.
ırrested us. Rajendra Babu also in the train. Just
Upadhyaya went on to Bombay. We were arrested
ıance which prohibited us from leaving municipal

and elsewhere. Big meeting which had been
onnection with Abdul Ghaffar's arrest.
also reaches Naini. Is kept strictly apart in the
ıre in our old house ın barrack No. 6. Some
but the garden gone.
la. Also wrote to her and Indu. Wrote also

3etty & Ranjit. My trial apparently not
'ly Govt. feeling pulse of country and
to see what happens after Bapu's arrival.

Jawaharlal, in N[illegible] prison from 26 December
reilly jail fr[illegible] February to 6 June 1932
ıne 1932 t[illegible] ecember 1932 is printed.
period hav[illegible] terspersed chronologically.
n the N[illegible] The omission of personal

January [illegible] Naini jail.

they are not going to go back on it, and I shall be sorry if they did. It is well as it is. Measures the S.P., when he brought us from Iradatnagar, was very glum and did not look at all happy.

Tasadduq's old friend, Sohanlal Srivastava, a deputy collector, is going to try us.

Rumours of dissensions among local workers in Allahabad reach us —petty things exaggerated. How poor our leadership is and how difficult for most people to take the larger view!

News of a delightful incident from Bakulia in Rae Bareli district. The police party which went there to attach goods for non-payment received with all courtesy—doors of houses all left open and the police invited to go wherever they wanted to. Some attachments of cattle &c. made. The villagers then offered *pan supari* to the police and revenue officials! Retirement of the police party, looking very small and shame-faced!

The moderates have definitely ranged themselves against us. Even some individual Congressmen lukewarm on the no-tax question. Difficult to be gallant and brave when one's pocket is touched. Gradually, whether one wills it or not, the class orientation creeping in. That is the real measure of the reality of our political struggle.

Poor British Empire! To what a pass it has been reduced. The statements accompanying the U.P. & the Frontier announcements and the Viceroy's brave speeches are illuminating. Behind the show of might one can almost hear the thumping of a frightened heart. When the empire goes what will happen to its soul mate, the Indian moderate? Widowed just when expectation ran high of a closer union. Fortunately the breed is rare.

TO MAHATMA GANDHI[3]

Naini Prison
Dec. 30, 1931

My dear Bapu,

Your letter came this evening and, need I say? both Sherwani and I were delighted to receive it.[4] We have returned to our old haunts, happy in the thought that you are back home. Sherwani's friendship with Naini is even older than mine. It dates back to 1921. We are

3 Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No 18417.

4 Mahatma Gandhi had in his letter of 28 December 1931 written: "your arrest did not come upon me as a surprise"

Dec. 28

Bapu must have arrived. The grand welcome has been given up because of our arrest and Abdul Ghaffar's. It would have been good to have been present and to have a glimpse of Bapu again. No luck!

Another interview. Make the most of the undertrial period and get *as many interviews as possible*—afterwards there will be weary waiting for the मुलाकात का दिन [day of interview].

Tandon & Krishna Kant in barrack 5 where Malaviyaji used to be. Have not seen them.

Dec. 29

Weight on little machine in early morning 124 lbs. Tasadduq's weight 210 lbs.

Had a glimpse of Khan behind the bars in his barrack as I went to the interview yesterday. Strange to meet him here after so many years. Our last meeting was 19½ years ago in July 1912 at Victoria station in London (or was it Charing Cross?) where he came to see me off. I was returning to India after my "education". Awful creature I must have been then with my 'education' and snobbishness.

Often invited Khan to visit me in Allahabad. He has come at last!

Dec. 30th

Had a short letter from Bapu.

At interview Raj and Kunwar came also. Also Rafi.

Dec. 31st

Wrote to Bapu and Kamala. Soon after received letters from Kamala & Indu.

I am told that strong rumour in city—and even among officials—that Tasadduq and I will be discharged on Jan. 4th when our trial comes off. Evidently a case of the wish being father to the thought. The circumstances of my arrest must have been somewhat disconcerting to the officials. They were obviously put in the wrong by stopping me *from going to the Working Committee meeting.* But right or wrong

THE TRIAL[9]

The Magistrate: I would allow you to read the statement only after clearing the public out of the court. Have you anything to say after hearing the prosecution evidence?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I am not at all attentive to what is happening as I have little interest in it. But, I may say something if the court wants me to make a statement.

M: I would permit a statement if it is connected with the charge but if you want to make a statement of a political nature then I would hear it after getting the court room cleared of the visitors.

JN: I consider it an extraordinary procedure. The magistrate has the right to convert a public trial into a private one, but I would make a statement about the basic things.

M: May I request the superintendent of police to ask the visitors to leave the court room?

JN: The morale of the people here is very good. They are not likely to be prejudiced by what I would say. I am, however, not reading my written statement but would only say that I am not particularly interested in the present proceedings against me. But I should like to express my deep gratitude to the peasantry in these provinces who have given me this fresh opportunity of service and I would also like to say that I am proud of my kisan brethren in these provinces, specially in my district of Allahabad.

M: I have had a foretaste of the statement which you are going to read as I perceive from the last sentence of what you have stated that it refers to the kisans and so I cannot permit it.

JN: Have not all the proceedings of the trial and the ordinance under which they are being held the question of the kisans in the background or foreground?

M: The proceedings are concerned with only that part of the ordinance which relates to the disobedience of the order of the district magistrate. As you are going into the basic things, my only course is to clear the court of the audience before I hear you.

9 Allahabad, 4 January 1932. Case No. 16. Records for 1932 in the office of the District Magistrate, Allahabad.

going back gradually to our old routine, as if there had been no interruption. There is just one twinge of regret that we missed seeing you. We were looking forward to it so much. But we shall have plenty of meetings yet.

Kamala's illness worries me a little, but I am very much comforted by her being at 78, Nepean Sea Road.[5] She could not have more loving care and attention anywhere else. I am only afraid that she might decide to dash about in quest of adventure before she is fit enough to do so.

My letters to Indu can rest in a convenient drawer or pigeon hole for a few months or years as the case may be.[6] I am sorry you gave much time to them.

We are delighted to learn that the return voyage has done you good and you are in fit condition. You will need to be!

We are told that our trial will take place on Jan 4th.

With love and all good wishes from Sherwani and myself,

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

New Year's Day 1932

My fourth New Year's Day in prison—not consecutive—1922, 1923, 1931, 1932.

News of moment. We are on the verge of all India C.D.[7] perhaps even before my trial—the die may be cast.

Heard of a political hunger striker in Naini. He is Prag Dat[8] of the Lakhimpur Explosives Case. Because he had not been doing his full task one of the jailers assaulted him. Also punished with fetters and solitary confinement. As a protest he took to hunger strike and today was his eighth day. Has grown weak—was removed to hospital today but even now fetters are kept on. Supt. apparently not even informed that he was on hunger strike till the 6th day.

5 The residence of Jal Naoroji in Bombay.

6. Published as *Glimpses of World History*.

7. The decisions of the Round Table Conference having been found inadequate, the Working Committee on 1 January 1932 called upon the nation to resume civil disobedience.

8. Convicted in Lakhimpur Kheri Conspiracy Case, 1931 and serving a sentence of six years.

Jan. 4th

Bapu arrested—also Vallabhbhai under old regulation and interned.[12]

Our trial by Sohanlal Srivastava. I am given the maximum sentence under the ordinance—2 years R.I. and fine of Rs. 500 in default 6 months R.I. (under Sec. 13 of the U.P. Emergency Powers Ordinance).

Tasadduq gets 6 months R.I. and 150/- fine, in default 3 months R.I. under same Section.

So we can settle down for a while!

Jan. 6th

The 4th of Jan. turned out to be quite a red letter day for Allahabad. Lathi charges, deaths, arrests and from all accounts amazingly peaceful and disciplined behaviour of the people. Poor Allah Bux[13] beaten to death—*survived!* Ranjit, Tewary, Narmada Prasad and many others arrested. Ranjit & Narmada Pd join us in our barrack on January 5th evening. Tewary goes to No. 5. The others remain in Malacca jail.

Four new ordinances on January 4th.[14] Quite a lot happened on that fateful day.[15] Probably lathi charges &c. all over the country.

Allah Bux not dead. He was badly beaten but has survived. Two others died.[16]

Jan. 7th

Extraordinarily good news of Allahabad—Cheered us up tremendously.

Padmaja has sent me some delightful books—Got them today. A feast in store. They are as follows:

12 On his return to Bombay on 28 December 1931 after attending the Round Table Conference, Mahatma Gandhi was arrested on 4 January 1932. Vallabhbhai Patel, the Congress President, was also arrested on 4 January 1932.

13 A Congress volunteer.

14. The Viceroy promulgated four ordinances to meet the situation created by the resumption of civil disobedience. The old press ordinance was reintroduced for the whole of India, the Working Committee of A I C C. was declared unlawful and peaceful picketing was declared an offence.

15 As a protest against the arrest of Congress leaders and in defiance of the ordinances issued on 4 January, hartals were observed on that day in several places.

16 There was a lathi charge on a meeting and a procession organised by the Congress leaders in Allahabad on 4 January in defiance of the prohibitory orders. Two spectators, Madho Prasad and Jagannath Mahajan, were beaten to death.

JN: I wish to lay before the court in a few sentences my motive for what I did and I think that it is necessary for you as the presiding officer to understand what I did and it may also help you to decide about the sentence.[10]

WRITTEN STATEMENT IN COURT[11]

I wish to say nothing about the present proceedings against me. But I should like to express my deep gratitude to the peasantry of these provinces for the fresh opportunity of service that they have given me. And I should like to say how proud I am of my kisan brethren of my province, and specially of my district of Allahabad. They have lighted a fire which will spread and burn brightly till it has consumed and reduced to ashes the British domination and exploitation of this country, which has sucked the life-blood out of them, and till it has put an end finally to the system which has ground them down and deprived them of the fruits of their toil, and reduced them almost to the level of the beasts of the field. For long years I have laboured to this end and so long as any strength is left in me I will carry on this fight. Inside prison walls I shall think of many things but most frequently my mind will dwell on the villages and fields where my kisan brethren live and labour and suffer, and my good wishes will go out to them, and I shall pray that success may come to them in this great struggle, so that their present sufferings and misery may become an evil dream of the past. Till such success comes there can be no compromise and no peace.

Jawaharlal Nehru

Jan. 2nd

Prag Dat induced by Supt. to break his fast.

10. Jawaharlal was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500/-, in default, to six months' further imprisonment. The fine was not paid and it was recovered by attachment and auction of a motor car for Rs. 1,150. Although this sum exceeded the fine, the balance was not returned.
11. 4 January 1932. J.N. Miscellaneous Papers, N.M.M.L. Jawaharlal was not permitted to read this statement.

Jan. 27th

A fortnight since I wrote last. Mohan Bhai has come and joined us for a month or so—I have been on the point of leaving Naini but at the last moment have had to stay on—I have been unwell—and today news comes that Nan & Betty arrested and removed to Malacca jail.[21] Relieved and glad to hear of their arrest. They have worked hard and deserve rest. They have got it at last!

Yesterday was Independence Day—Well celebrated in Allahabad—apparently no great interference by police.

Swaraj Bhawan in possession of police.[22] The Union Jack up—guarded night and day by armed sentries! Yesterday a new national flag put up on Anand Bhawan, high up on a long pole. Challenging the Union Jack across the way.

I was to have gone to Meerut yesterday to give evidence in the conspiracy case today. I was all packed and ready in the evening but at the last moment I was informed that I would not be sent.

For the last five days have been unwell—feverish in evenings—sometimes feel dizzy and weak. Some pain also on the right side. Have given up all exercise for fear that it may cause some activity in lungs.

Leila Row[23] came to see Ranjit this morning. It was she who told him of Nan's & Betty's arrest.

Jan. 30th Saturday

Tasadduq Sherwani gone off to Gonda jail. Narmada Prasad transferred to No. 5 Circle and given 'B' Class treatment. Both of them went on the 28th. Feel rather lonely since they went.

I have been feeling physically a little better. The temperature is down, but I have been somewhat depressed. I heard today that mother had been much upset by an exaggerated account of my ill health. She came to see the superintendent. Later Dorothy Crishna[24] came. The Supt. sent her to our barrack to see me so that she could report to mother first hand. Decent of the Supt.

21. They were arrested in Allahabad for defying the orders against holding of a meeting in connection with the Independence Day celebrations.
22. Swaraj Bhawan, where the Congress office was located, was occupied by the police on 13 January 1932
23. Leading tennis player, married Hareshwar Dayal, India's ambassador in Nepal from 1960 till his death in 1964.
24. Daughter of Man Mohanlal Agarwal, an advocate of Allahabad, was a family friend

Sven Hedin: *Across the Gobi Desert*
Nicholas Roerich :[17] *Altai Himalaya*
Trebitsch-Lincoln : *Autobiography*
Modern Plays: 2nd Volume

Bomford[18] the D.M. visited the jail today. Did not come to our barrack.

I have been reading and reading Bernard Shaw's plays in the collected edition.

Jan. 8th

Our weights		
Mine	:	126½
Sherwani	:	210¼
Narmada Pd	:	169½
Ranjit	:	140

Jan. 12th Tuesday

Interview yesterday—mother, Nan & Betty. Nan looking quite worn out with work and anxiety—will have plenty of rest soon—Allahabad doing well—Lathi charges continue—Uma Bhabi arrested on 9th.[19] A girl of 17 died as result of lathi beating on 9th.[20]

Likelihood of my being transferred to some other jail soon.

Wrote to Kamala, Indu & Padmaja.

Jan. 12th

Ranjit's case—also Narmada Pd's.
Ranjit sentenced to one month's simple—light let off.
Narmada Prasad one year rigorous.

17. (1874-1947); Russian artist and a renowned landscape painter; spent five years exploring the Himalayas, settled down in Kangra valley after 1935.
18. Sir Hugh Bomford (1852-1939); I.C.S., 1906, member, Board of Revenue, 1936.
19. Uma Nehru was sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment.
20. As a result of a lathi charge on a Congress procession, several persons were injured.

AT CHHEONI STATION ON THE EVE OF ARREST, 26 DECEMBER 1931

Ravi Wanchu[25] dashed into our barrack this afternoon. Delightful child, full of beans—He shook us all up. He had come with Mohan Bhabi & Rup[26] &c for an interview with Mohan Bhai.

February 1st Monday

Nan & Betty sentenced to one year rigorous each. Nan also to a fine of Rs. 300—I am told they are very proud!

Bernard Aluwihare suddenly rolls up. Has been transferred from the District Jail.

Feb. 2nd Tuesday

Krishna Kant's case[27]—I gave evidence, so did Tewary & Narmada Prasad. My evidence was trivial and of no importance but it turned out to be quite a field day for interviews. Many people had come to the trial which was held over the jail office. As I went to the office the first person that I saw, to my great surprise, was Indu. She had just come from Poona & Bombay.

The long interview with many friends and the good news from various parts of the country and specially Allahabad district cheered me up tremendously. One gets unused to such long spells and I felt slightly intoxicated with everything! My temperature went up to 99° in the evening.

Feb. 3 Wednesday

Ranjit's interview with mother & Indu & children.

Beltie Shah[28] suddenly transferred to Fyzabad today—probably because he was supposed to give us news of happenings outside—He was very depressed and we all felt his departure.

A crowd of boys have been transferred from Cawnpore to Naini. Almost all under 20, arrested in processions, picketing &c. I have not seen any of them, but from all accounts a fine spirited lot. They have

25. Grandson of Mohanlal Nehru.
26. Daughter of Mohanlal Nehru.
27. Was prosecuted for publishing two poems entitled *Inqilab Zindabad* and *Khatka* in *Abhyudaya*
28. Beltie Shah Gilani (b 1893); a Roman Catholic who sought to promote nationalist feeling among Indian Christians.

got into some trouble already and four have been sentenced to fetters. Every morning they have the *jhanda prarthna* in their barrack. What splendid material we have in our movement!

Feb. 4th Thursday

Gandhi Day—just a month to Bapu's arrest and also a month to Sherwani's and my conviction! It is said that there is hartal—Procession, meeting &c. No obstruction by police. But the day before—on the 3rd—a batch of people arrested while meeting privately—Prabha, Dandekar, Sadiq &c.
The Income Tax Officer visited me in jail today! Told him that I would pay nothing to the enemy govt. and they could do what they pleased—take Anand Bhawan!

Feb. 5th Friday

Supt. informed me that I was going to be sent to Bareilly very soon—probably the next day. He was therefore allowing me an interview today. Mother, Indu, Tara & Rita came. Mother a perfect brick. It is wonderful how she is bearing up. Little Rita asking dismally for her mummie. Tara puzzled at everything!

I sent a letter to the Income Tax Officer.

Today was again supposed to be Frontier Day, fixed by the Moslem Conference[29]—last Friday in *Ramadan*—Wonder what happened.

Feb. 6th Saturday—Father's anniversary

Supt. brought Girdharilal to see me. He had expressly come from Bombay as Kamala was anxious about returning to Allahabad. Sent message to her not to worry or hurry.

Orders to go to Bareilly. I leave this evening.

Left Naini Prison at 4.45 p.m. in a *purdah* lorry with 2 constables. *Amavas* day—Crowds everywhere. Drove *via* Canning Road, Purushottam Park—the scene of many a lathi beating—Stanley Road, Curzon

29. On 24 January 1932 a conference of Muslim leaders called upon all Indian Muslims to protest against the repressive policy of the government in N.W.F.P. by observing the last day of Ramzan as Frontier Day, and described MacDonald's statement after the second Round Table Conference as entirely unsatisfactory to Muslims.

: released from Naini Prison on January 26, 1931

Re-arrested and brought back to Naini

December 26, 1931

Trial & conviction - January 4, 1932

we have the female ward, on the other the civil ward. I understand that there are 7 or 8 politicals in the female ward, all 'C' class. Damodar Swarup is said to be in the civil ward—also 'C' class. He has got one year's simple under Sec 108. *Old case before the new campaign started.*

Our circle contains two long barracks—the usual ones for prisoners with cement tomb-like structures. There is a well, which is good.

Har Govind Pant[30] has been here for three weeks. Probably others will join us soon.

I suppose I shall get used to the new conditions soon enough. I am likely to be much more cut off from the outside world here than I was at Naini. I am far from Allahabad and Anand Bhawan. In Naini Allahabad news trickled through rapidly enough as warders and others were going out and some had an interview every few days. The standard of living will also come down! After many months' stay at Naini last year we had managed to fix up a fairly civilized manner of living. That will have to go here. But that does not mean discomfort. I shall have more quiet here & more time for work of any kind. It is just the psychological aspect which is a little depressing.

The jailer seems to be very keen on obliging me and getting anything I may want. The superintendent—Colonel Newlands?[31]—who is the Civil Surgeon—paid me a visit. I hear his visits are very rare.

Feb. 8th Monday

The sun is a late comer to our ward and barrack. In the wider world outside, they say it rises before seven. It reaches us after half past eight. It has twentyfour feet of wall to cross before it can come to us. And in the evenings, it leaves correspondingly early. Perhaps in summer this may be an advantage.

For the first time after many years—since Nabha—I was locked in my barrack at night. It was done tactfully and so as not to inconvenience, but still there we were, not only locked in the ward but in the barrack also. Previous to my coming it appears locking up was very early and Har Govind Pant used to feed at 4 p.m. in the evening. This

30 (1885-1957), a leading Congressman of Kumaon region, U P; along with Badri Dutt Pande, worked for the abolition of forced labour in Kumaon; swarajist member, U P. Legislative Council, 1923 29, and U.P. Legislative Assembly, 1937 39, deputy speaker, U P. Legislative Assembly, 1952; member, Lok Sabha, 1957 till his death

31 B. E M. Newlands, of the Indian Medical Service; Civil Surgeon, U P. 1920 33.

Bridge and over. At Phaphamow our car waiting with mother, Indu, Girdhanlal & Upadhyaya. They followed the police lorry—We stopped at Sarai Gopal. The train was late and so I had over half an hour with mother & Indu. The police people were very decent and kept right away. Quite a crowd gathered and there were usual *jais*.

I found that the day had been observed by Congress as mourning day with fasting &c. I had not realised this and had not fasted. Mother and Indu had had nothing at all all day and proposed to take nothing till the next morning—a 36 hour fast. I was quite ashamed of myself for having fed in the morning and afternoon. Anyway decided to keep a little fast till next day.

It was good to have a nice long interview with mother & Indu. Learnt that Nan & Betty and others from the District Jail were sent to Lucknow last night.

A first class was converted into a second for us and so we travelled in comfort. My companions were the two constables—one of them a head constable. The smallest escort I have ever had and even these two were asleep most of the time. At most of the stations there were crowds and *jais* up to Rae Bareli.

And so on to Bareilly!

My number in Naini: 11763

BAREILLY DISTRICT JAIL

February 7th Sunday

Arrived here in the early hours, an hour late. Quite a reception by a number of police officers. A couple of hundred yards from the station a strong force of lathi police had been hidden in a building for emergencies. But there was no emergency. Hardly anybody knew that I was arriving.

The outside of the jail, offices &c, new and imposing. But I had a bit of a shock when I entered the ward for 'A' class prisoners. Krishna Kant was here last year and he had told me all manner of good things about it. As soon as the gate was opened I found that I had to descend a good bit into the circle. The level was at least six feet lower than the general jail level. The surrounding walls must be the highest I have seen—at least 24 ft. and probably more. The six feet have perhaps been added to the usual 15 or 16 ft. Our circle was meant for juveniles and is therefore apart from the main prison. There are three circles in a line adjoining the main wall—Ours is the middle one—On one side

There is, or was, a time watch in our ward. Every hour in the day time and every half an hour at night a warder came to give it a twist, or whatever it was, to mark his advent. Fortunately this watch has been taken out of our ward and fixed outside somewhere. In Naini there was no such timing in the day time—at night they did it every hour. But this was at the main wall and not inside a ward.

The money with me—Rs. 21/15/—has been taken away by the jail people. We were allowed to keep it in Naini, though perhaps it was a stretching of the rules.

As I was writing in this book Badri Dutt Pande[35] suddenly burst into our barrack. He had been transferred from Almora. Complained bitterly of the cold there.

Feb. 10 Wednesday

Squirrels abound here. They are bold and venturesome and come right up to one's foot. I am reminded of the Lucknow jail where sometimes they used to climb up my leg.

It was *Id* yesterday—*Id-ul-Fitr*. Among our visitors was the head warder! He looked a mighty person. I am told that he has been in the jail for over forty years and is more or less the boss here. He gets Rs. 22 a month or thereabouts but, on *dit*, that he has purchased landed property worth many thousands and owns a tonga and a variety of other things denoting a measure of affluence!

The Supt. came again today to enquire about my health.

Feb. 11 Thursday

It is *Vasant Panchami* today—the anniversary of our wedding![36]

Last evening our quiet was suddenly disturbed by frenzied shouting. There were the usual slogans and for a little while we thought that some young boys or girls were shouting outside the jail. The 'outside' is quite near us—only twenty four feet of wall separate us. But soon we discovered that the shouting was coming from the female ward adjoining ours. Some women there were evidently greatly excited about

35 (1882-1965), a leading Congressman of Kumaon region in U.P.; swarajist member, U.P. Legislative Council, 1926-29, member, Central Legislative Assembly, 1937-44, member, Lok Sabha, 1955.

36. Jawaharlal was married on 8 February 1916 which was the *Vasant Panchami* day.

was too much for me and I said that it was impossible for me to have my evening meal at 4. The jailer as usual was prepared to do everything to meet my wishes. He has given me a Muslim youth—Ismail by name—to look after me, cook &c. Quite a smart boy. He is a C.O. He was not locked up at the usual hour and so I had my simple dinner of bread & milk and salad at about 7.30 p.m. Soon after nine when I was reading in bed the warder came and quietly locked our barrack. I hardly knew it was locked. In the morning when I got up at 6 I found it locked and had to shout for the warder to open it.

Har Govind is by way of being orthodox. His food, bath &c. everything is in the orthodox style. There is a bathroom but he apparently prefers to bathe—[illegible][32]—in the open by the well. He puts on a tremendous number of clothes. Strange how people from the hills put on layer upon layer of clothes even in the plains.

I have my midday meal with Har Govind.

Morning & evening we go outside our ward for a little walk by the main wall. The walk compares unfavourably with the Naini jail outings. In Naini there was space and expanse even inside jail. Not so here.

On my way to Bareilly I wondered if I would meet M. N. Roy who was also in some jail in Bareilly. On arrival I learnt that he was in the Central Jail. I am in the District.

Wrote a letter to Kamala and a note to Indu with a message for Bebee.

We had a distinguished visitor in our barrack today—Sir Sita Ram![33] He told us that he had found several graduates in 'C' class politicals in this jail. He also went next door in the Female Ward and had an ocular demonstration of the treatment given to the women politicals there. The warders spoke offensively to them in his presence & the jailer's & Sita Ram says he had to remonstrate.

He gave us an instance of Palmer's[34]—the I.G.—innate humanity! Last year Sita Ram described a jailer in his inspection note as a 'humane disciplinarian'. The jailer begged him not to say anything about his humanity as this was at a discount in high official circles. But Sita Ram insisted as he could not imagine that any harm would befall the jailer because of his description. Result: a little later Palmer had the jailer transferred to a distant place. 'Humane' persons were not to be encouraged in the jail department.

32. According to ritual.
33. At this time, president, U.P. Legislative Council.
34. C. E. Palmer, of the I.M.S.; Inspector General of Prisons, U.P., 1926-35.

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Feb. 16 Tuesday

For oak and elm have pleasant leaves
That in the springtime shoot:
But grim to see is the gallows-tree,
With its adder bitten root.

The gallows-tree functioned today in this gaol. An unhappy person who is said to have killed his brother was the victim.

I did not go out for our morning walk. We have to pass up and down opposite the gallows enclosure. We were allowed to go out after a while when the hanging was over but I had no stomach for the walk almost in the shadow of the gallows.

Feb. 17 Wednesday

Letter from Kamala from Bombay.

Also Henry George's[37] book—*Progress & Poverty* which Gregg[38] has sent from America straight to jail!

Feb. 18

Govind Ballabh Pant arrives this evening. He was arrested this morning in Haldwani, tried immediately there, sentenced, and motored over to Bareilly. He is very welcome in our barrack.

Feb. 21 Sunday

Interview today with mother, Indu & Ranjit. Ranjit coming straight from Bombay. I was informed this morning. Was all expectation. The interview took place under the close supervision of not only the jailer but also a police official who stood right near us with pen and paper taking notes. Most offensive and aggressive way of doing it. I was put off and the interview lost some of its savour. Good news generally of Kamala & Nan & Betty. Nan & Betty apparently losing weight. Perhaps this is natural to begin with. Kamala still in Bombay. Wants

37 American economist, and propagator of the 'Single Tax' scheme; author of *Progress and Poverty* published in 1879.

38 Richard Gregg (b 1885), an American disciple of Mahatma Gandhi who lived for some time in Sabarmati, author of *Economics of Khaddar*, *Power of Nonviolence* and other books.

something. It was very painful for us to hear their slogans and not to know what the matter was and not to be able to do anything. No jail official was easily accessible just then. A little later the women tried to speak to us by shouting over the wall. Their grievance appeared to be that one of their number had suddenly been discharged! They said that there must have been some foul play or else why should she be released before her time—which was 3 months. Attempts are made to force apologies out of politicals and hence this fear of foul play.

This morning we asked the jailer. He said that the magistrate had ordered the release and so he had to discharge her. So far as he was concerned there was nothing wrong or irregular and yet he had been sworn at by the other women!

Feb. 12 Friday

I felt rather lively this morning and so I indulged in some mild physical exercises. In the afternoon my temperature was slightly higher than usual—nearly 99°F. I wonder if this was due to the morning exercise—or was it due to a longish discourse I gave to my colleagues! Anyway it was annoying and I am afraid such exercises must be off. I have been taking sun baths also in the mornings.

Our women colleagues in the adjoining ward are singing national songs. Their voices float across to us over the high walls. They are pleasant to hear and they thrill. How wonderful is their enthusiasm. They are C class prisoners and we are in 'A'! The thought of it brings a blush of shame. And yet what is one to do?

Feb. 14 Sunday

I sent a short letter to mother today informing her of the date for my interview. This letter will not be counted as a regular fortnightly letter. I can have the interview any day from the 19th onwards.

Aeroplanes have been buzzing over us all day for the last two days. They are giving joy rides at an exhibition.

Feb. 15

Beautiful fruit and other things from Kamala! Unexpectedly they came this morning. Some one had brought them all the way from Bombay. There was no letter.

Feb. 25 Thursday

Father's *barsi* today—I am fasting the whole day and till tomorrow morning—36 hours. I am not quite clear why I should fast but I was so annoyed with myself on February 6 when even Indu fasted and I did not, that I have to do something of the kind now—my companions are also more or less fasting.

I have been thinking a great deal of father lately. Not because of the *barsi* but because I am in jail. Almost all my latest memories of him are jail memories, and being again in prison my mind goes back to him again and again.

A messenger from Ranjit came from Allahabad today bringing two charkhas and a basketful of beautiful flowers. He has sent his own charkha—Probably mine has disappeared. Also the new box Yeravda one. I shall spin today on charkha after a long interval. I have been spinning on a *takli* for some days.

Two days ago I had a brain wave—I sent *Punch* by post direct to Nan & Betty, District Jail, Lucknow. The Supt allowed it. It is pleasant to think of even this bit of direct touch with them. They will appreciate it also and I shall try to keep it up.

The Supt is evidently a little worried about my health. Morning & evening his assistant comes to enquire about my temperature—I have begun keeping a chart. As a matter of fact I have been feeling fitter although there is a slight rise in the evenings.

Feb. 26—Friday

The fast went off quite well. A 36 hours fast seems to be quite a bagatelle! I fasted yesterday after a long interval—The last longish fast was the Naini one of 72 hours over a year ago.[40]

The fast or something had some remarkable results. My temperature for the first time for many weeks did not go up above 98°F in the evening. But, apparently to make up for it, it went up to 99.2°F this evening.

Many politicals seem to have arrived today. There were cries and *zindabads* and *jais*. Good to hear them. Every evening we hear singing of the flag song and other songs from the Female Ward. It heartens amazingly.

40 He had then fasted for three days from 18 to 21 December 1930 to express sympathy for political prisoners flogged in U.P. jails.

to see me next time here but this will give her little time in Poona. Have suggested that she should stay a month in Poona.

The reaction after the interview rather marked today—a feeling of emptiness! Perhaps because here in Bareilly I am more cut off than in Naini. Also I am not likely to see Indu for a long time now as she is going to Poona—Ranjit will probably be arrested again soon on his return to Allahabad.

Feb. 22 Monday

I behaved like a pig yesterday—somehow everything went wrong and I could not straighten it out. The interview to which I had looked forward to for many days was a disappointment. The sight of the police official, nosing in, put me off completely, and although outwardly nothing happened during the interview, I was feeling miserable all the time. Ranjit apparently had a lot to say about Kamala &c. but under the circumstances he refrained. This put me out still further. I am sure I must have looked disagreeable and given mother & Ranjit the impression that I was unhappy. What a thing to do! Having misbehaved in the morning, I cursed myself all day for it and felt thoroughly depressed. Temperature went up to 99°F probably due to the excitement and subsequent depression. Before going to sleep wrote a long letter to Kamala with a note to Indu—Bad night.

Felt better this morning. The Supt. came and gave me some powders! As if I am in need of powders.

Later three books which Ranjit had brought were sent to me—also a packet of foreign periodicals brought by mother. This cheered me up greatly. A basketful of beautiful roses and other flowers followed—Probably sent by Dwarka Prasad[39] at mother's suggestion. She said she would ask him to send me fruit & flowers regularly. The flowers made a vast difference to our barrack. All of us felt tremendously bucked up. A great difference from yesterday's depression. I felt lively all day and was quite sure I would not have a marked rise in temperature. But at 5 in the evening again 99°F!

I sent my letter to Kamala this morning to the Supt. It contained a rather strongly & sarcastically worded description of the double supervision on my interview yesterday—The police official specially came in for a bit of frank expression of opinion on my part—I wonder if the Supt will object to any part of the letter.

39. (1892-1945); Congressman of Bareilly; imprisoned several times in the freedom struggle; member, U.P. Legislative Assembly, 1937-39.

how one's mood varies and the two months appear an age or but a few days. On the whole I have not been able to settle down this time as I have done in the past. Perhaps a slight touch of ill health—perhaps my transfer—perhaps my missing my old companions—perhaps a certain want of satisfaction with things and happenings in general—perhaps so many other things! The charkha has brought me some peace of mind.

Today also is the anniversary of the "truce"! How well I remember that fateful day in Delhi—or rather night—and inevitably one thinks of the might have beens. Always when thinking of the truce people start guessing what might have happened if father had been there and there appears to be a general consensus that events would have taken a very different turn. Foolishly I said so in Delhi a few hours after the truce—How Bapu was pained at my remark!

If father had been alive! How my mind wanders unconsciously and dwells on him and how empty I feel at the thought that he is not there. For months and years we lived far from each other—when I was in Europe—but it did not matter so much. Always one had the feeling that he was there and one could always go to him for help and counsel. Now there is an emptiness.

I was asked by the jailer today if I wanted to see Jivraj Mehta.[41] Jivraj had written to the Supt. offering to see me. The Supt. apparently does not want him to see me as a doctor but has no objection to his seeing me in a private capacity. I replied that there is no point in Jivraj taking the trouble to come here for a private visit. The Supt. has so far not taken the trouble to examine my chest or indeed any part of me. It is a great favour that he comes once a week to ask me how I am getting on.

Last evening there was a terrible *hou ha* in the women's barrack. Lot of shouting and cursing—After some time one of the politicals—a girl—shouted out to us and said that the C.O. (woman) had cursed them in the vilest language. We told her not to pay much attention to what the wretched *lambardarin* might say. I spoke to the jailer today. He confessed that the C.O. is *offensive* but said that the women politicals are also very aggressive and use strong language. I was much put out last night by this incident. Rumours also reach us that the C Class politicals in this jail are not being properly treated. But we are well isolated and it is very difficult to know anything definitely. Just enough comes through to upset one without giving one the chance to do anything useful. And yet what can one do? Surely the *A & B & C Classes* are an invention of the evil one.

41 (b 1887), a leading doctor and Congressman of Gujrat, imprisoned several times in the freedom movement, Minister, Bombay Government, 1949 60 and Chief Minister, Gujrat, 1960 63, High Commissioner in Britain, 1963 66.

Feb. 29 Monday

Leap Year Day—which means an odd day thrown in extra for prisoners!

March 1 Tuesday

A visit from the Supt. Told me that although the slight rise in my temperature in the evening is somewhat abnormal, in the absence of any other trouble it did not matter and it might be considered as "normally abnormal". That explains everything!

March 2nd Wednesday

Fruit & vegetables in abundance "with the compliments" of D. Prasad! Also a cake of Godrej No. 2 soap.

I sent a postcard today to Dhan Gopal. This was an extra—besides my fortnightly letter. It was in answer to Dhan's letter received here asking me if he could write to me and send me books. The authorities were gracious enough to permit me to send a reply.

3rd March

I am worried at not having received a letter from Kamala or even the acknowledgement receipt of my letter. This should have come at the latest on Monday and it is Thursday today. Perhaps she has gone to Poona. Even so it is late. The day of my interview is approaching and I am not sure yet if Kamala has stayed on in Poona or has come up to Allahabad.

Am feeling rather poorly again. Temp. 98.8 and a slight pain on the right side. I have been gradually increasing my morning exercises and as for sun bathing I am become quite a sun-child and my back is all tanned. The sun is hot enough now and yet I enjoy it.

March 4 Friday

Kamala's acknowledgement came today from Panchgani. Her letter has also come in the office but it has not been delivered to me yet.

Today was Gandhi day—two months to his arrest. I spun more than usual. Today also I complete two months since my conviction—only 22 months remaining, not to mention the fine and its alternative! Strange

Mother bearing up bravely. Indu insisted on going to Bombay travelling 3rd class in the train much to mother's dismay. As a result mother insists on going 3rd also. At her age and specially at night this is bad. She is so weak and frail. But she rejoices in the thought that she is doing her bit and depriving the Govt of revenue.

Our car has gone on account of my fine.[43] Mother is being told by many people to dismiss Baiju, the chauffeur, as also some other servants who are not wanted. But I have asked her to stick on to all our old servants even if they have nothing to do.

Last night I wrote till late to Kamala & Indu. The letters were sent to the jail office this morning. The receipt has not come yet.

I am definitely not feeling well. The pain in my chest continues and the temperature continues about 99°. I have decided to take myself in hand and put an end to these vagaries of my system. From today I shall adhere to a strict programme of rest &c.

Ranjit did not come for the interview yesterday as he was very busy. He is doing good work—I missed him. News of Nan & Betty not satisfactory. I am specially worried about Betty. She must feel terribly bored. And yet it might be good for her. Still it is hard luck on her.

A month today to my coming to Bareilly Jail.

March 9 Wednesday

The Supt. descended on us again this morning and for the first time condescended to examine my chest &c. with a stethoscope, take my pulse &c. Declared that he could hear nothing abnormal.

As a matter of fact I have felt slightly better today—I walked more and was more active than I have been for many a day—Spun also after some days' gap.

A huge basket of fruit came from Allahabad today.

Damodar Sarup, it is whispered, has been transferred suddenly to some other jail. Why this tremendous air of mystery?

Of all the ordinary prisoners with us the lowest in the social scale—the sweeper,—is the smartest, cleanest and most intelligent looking. He is the only person who can read Hindi with some ease. And the most unintelligent and illiterate are the two Brahmans! I have given a Hindi book to Shibbu the sweeper and primers to others—not the Brahmans who are not very keen about learning anything. Every evening after they

43 Jawaharlal's car was attached and removed to the police station to realise the fine imposed on him. Later, it was auctioned for a sum of Rs. 1,150.

March 5 (Saturday)

Kamala's letter has come at last. On the whole good news about her. But she is worrying a lot about me. On March 1st she sent a telegram to the Supt. of this jail enquiring after my health. She got a reassuring reply. In a fortnight's time I may see her—It will just be three months then since we met last.

I wrote to the Post Master General, U.P., about the telephone bill for the Congress office that he had sent me. Just to relieve my feelings and to have the pleasure of telling him that his office is inefficient &c.

I continue to have some pain in my side. Also my temperature tries to misbehave. I must give up all exercise—except a gentle walk—and reduce even the sun bath.

Today was *Shivaratri*—my companions fasted—I was the only protestant. I am afraid I am rather out of my element in my present company and I must get on the others' nerves to some extent. Govind Vallabh is very decent—so indeed are all of them. But Govind Vallabh has a measure of psychological understanding which the others lack. Also he is more intellectual company. He is a lovable person.

March 7 Monday

The interview came off yesterday—mother came and Madan Atal. Madan was not allowed to see me as a doctor. I have the honour of being under the Supt.'s treatment and what right has any other doctor to interfere. True the Supt. has not taken the trouble even to examine me cursorily. But has he not ordered his assistant—a worthy entirely lacking in the rudiments of intelligence—to take my temperature morning & evening?

The interview was more satisfactory this time than on the last. Partly because I was used to the new condition, partly because the police officer who was again present was less aggressive and kept in the background; but chiefly because I was determined that it must not be a failure like the previous one. The general news from outside cheered me up. Jal arrested. Also Janak.[42] Of Jivraj Mehta's arrest I read in the *Bharat* even before the interview—Also Hansa. But it was not the arrests that cheered me—It was the report of the functioning of the organisation in spite of everything.

42. Janak Kumari Asghar (b. 1906); daughter of Ladli Prasad Zutshi.

I refuse to pay anything to a usurping foreign power which is waging war against my country. Besides, I fail to see what the Bombay Collector has got to do with the matter. Have the U.P. provincial officials ceased to function?

March 12 Saturday

Four-thirty a.m.—distant cries awoke us. *Vande Mataram. Mahatma Gandhi ki jai.* Even my name did not sound unlovely in the early morning. Some fresh arrivals, transferred from some other jail.

It was a good beginning to a memorable anniversary—Dandi March day.

The weather changes suddenly here. Less than three weeks ago it was quite cold and three good blankets were hardly enough covering. And now it is like summer and for the first part of the night no covering is needed. In the day time a fan is welcome. And yet early this morning there was a cold snap and I woke up feeling chilly and searched for another covering. The neighbourhood of the hills—cold wind swoops down on us.

March 14 Monday

Another *billet doux* from the income tax people—this time from a person calling himself "Certificate Officer of the 24 Parganas"—After Bombay, Calcutta. I wish them joy of their work and whatever they can seize of mine, they are welcome to. But they will not get a rupee out of me willingly. Strange I have no attachment to property and money as such. It does not worry me in the slightest to think that they can get hold of money belonging to me. I would feel bored if they deprived me of some things which have personal associations. And I do not think I would like the idea of being separated for good from Anand Bhawan. But of this I have no fear for whatever may be done to Anand Bhawan, it cannot be transported or removed. Indeed I would like the British to take possession of A.B. for a while. They would upset all our books & papers & things and many of these will be lost for ever, but still it will be a good thing for them to take possession of the house and drive mother out. Still the thought of police living there & the Union Jack flying from A.B. angers. It is bad enough to think of Swaraj Bhawan with the British flag. But it will not be there for long, not for long!

are locked up Shibbu & the others sit round a miserable lamp and try to read—Shibbu being the teacher. This is done after work hours, after lock up in the barrack for the night. Still the warder objected to it and threatened to report to the jailer!

We are close neighbours to a railway station. A goods siding seems to be right next to the jail wall. All day & night trains pass and engines shunt up and down and whistle, and sometimes make the night hideous with their noise. One might almost be living in the waiting room of a station. To add to the din there is a tube well, apparently belonging to the railway, adjoining the jail wall. This well functions almost all the 24 hours and belches forth smoke. Obviously this is not a place for any one suffering from insomnia—like Sherwani. But I am not a victim of insomnia—fortunately!

March 10 Thursday

The summer is on us—Even the nights are getting warm. Officially summer is supposed to begin on April 1st and we shall probably be allowed to sleep outside the barrack in the open then. Meanwhile, we sit in the open in the evening twilight and large numbers of bats fly over and about us. How silently they fly and one can just see them against the darkening sky. Eerie things. Always I am afraid lest they might hit me in the face. They seem to come so near. I have a horror of them.

The roofs of our barracks seem to shelter a variety of animals—bats, pigeons and squirrels abound. They seem to get on well together. At any rate there is no obvious conflict.

I tried to send two books & some foreign periodicals to Betty to the Lucknow Dist Jail today. I do not yet know if I have succeeded.

March 11 Friday

The Bombay Collector has sent me a demand for Rs. 20839-13-0 plus 2/- fee to be paid within 20 days of receipt of notice—otherwise he will attach and sell my property! It was a surprise to receive this notice from the Bombay Collector. The Allahabad man apparently shies at taking possession of Anand Bhawan or the moveables therein. Perhaps it is the Delage car they are after—I wrote as follows on the copy of the Bombay notice:

March 15 Tuesday

I wage ceaseless war against mosquitoes, bugs &c. A jail is outwardly clean and well swept but no effort is made to keep the prisoners and their clothes and blankets clean. Result bugs. The sight of a bed bug in my bed galvanized me into activity and since then a campaign was opened by me. The bed had a bath of boiling water with potassium permanganate. Also Flit. This process is repeated at intervals. Flit is sprayed in the barrack at least twice a day and thousands of mosquitoes are slaughtered daily. Still they come. This slaughter reminds me of the effect of gases in war time. Why should not men be gassed off in this way? They are worse and more savage I suppose in some ways at least than mosquitoes!

The campaign has extended to the prisoners living with us. I mean the non politicals who are supposed to serve us or keep guard on us or the main wall here. I give each one a cake of soap every week for washing his clothes—Another cake is put out for them to wash their hands and faces and they have been bidden to soap their faces twice a day at least —an unusual experience for them.

It is a sore trial to have to live with people in a barrack. Always together—no privacy—and the same persons from morning to evening—day after day—time without end! It is terrible at times and one is tempted to prefer solitary confinement even. This close association in a barrack has most of the disadvantages of married life with none of its advantages. How people get on each other's nerves and how every little failing of another seems to grow and grow on one till it becomes almost intolerable.

We are only four of us here and I am quite sure that I succeed in making life miserable for the other three. Fact is many things they do upset me and it is difficult not to misbehave. Govind Ballabh is very decent & we get on well together in spite of many differences—Har Govind & I have little in common but we function in different circles to a large extent. . .

Father has been very much in my thoughts. His picture seems to haunt me, and there is an emptiness in the heart.

March 18 Friday

My temper was none of the best when I wrote last in this—I was needlessly hard on one of my companions here.

TO MOTHER[44]

My dear Mother,

Allow the police to search Anand Bhawan if they come there to do so. Do not allow your activities to be disturbed by their arrival. Continue your work—or rest—as usual, but keep someone with the police to go with them wherever they go. If Upadhyaya is there, he could stay with them. If he is not there call in someone like Ladli Bhai, Shyam Bhai or Kishan Prasad Dar. The police should be asked to wait till some one among our relations or friends turn up. You need not go around with the police.

Let the policemen go wherever they want to. You need not keep any room or box open in advance, but whatever box or room they want to be opened should be opened for them.

It is not necessary to send anything out of the house. Let everything remain as usual. If you need anything in particular, pack them in a box and send them to Ladli Bhai or someone.

If the police or magistrate order you to go, or detain you from going out of Anand Bhawan or to any particular part of the city, then tell them quite clearly that you will do as you wish or think proper. Of course, it is a different matter if they arrest you or detain you.

If they occupy Anand Bhawan or ask you to go out, you should arrange to do so at your convenience. There is no need to hurry. It depends on the conditions and the situation. But I can see no reason why you should not move out at your convenience, in two or three days. If this problem arises, call in any one of the above mentioned persons or any friend. In case you have to leave the house, in my opinion, you could stay in the cottage attached to Swaraj Bhawan. If the police do not object, you could calmly take the clothes, tables, chairs, carpet etc., which you consider necessary. Whatever you do, do it openly and after obtaining permission. Do not do anything in secret. If the cottage cannot be got ready at once—or there is any difficulty in shifting—then for some time you could go to Mohan Bhai's house.

Love,

Your son
Jawahar

44. J.N Correspondence, N M M L. Original in Hindi. This undated letter was presumably written from jail in early 1932.

We celebrated *Holi* today, not in the traditional way—tomorrow is the day for that—but by having a feast of *puries* &c. which the Pants provided.

March 29 Tuesday

I have been bored, fed up, angry with almost everything and everybody—with my companions who often get on my nerves, with the country in general for not being as aggressive and active as it might, with Sarojini for having gone and stayed with Fazl-i-Husain in Delhi, with the British Empire (but that is a permanent feeling), but above all with myself.

I have been getting a substantial rise in temperature daily for ten days. Kishan Bhai came some days ago and was given a special interview. He told me that I ought not to work in the evenings—I must rest and contemplate the sky! So I must give up even my gentle evening walks. As for running this is not to be thought of for years—I must get used to living like an invalid. This idea has obsessed me and oppressed me. I will not believe it but there it is! Then there is the feeling that nothing is being done about my treatment. I feel it is *infra dig* to complain to the Supt. He came today after nearly 2 weeks and casually asked me if my pain continued.

The new Commissioner[47] came with the Supt. To my surprise and slight annoyance—as I took it to be not in very good form—he folded his hands—नमस्कार and said in Hindi: मेरी आपसे मुलाकात पहले नहीं हुई है[48] or something to this effect. I answered briefly in Hindi, not over-cordially as I suspected his intention! Then he relapsed into English.

There was a slight flare up this evening when Badri Dutt ventured to suggest that I ought to go out on parole for treatment. I gave him a bit of my mind. This resulted in one good thing at least. I felt relieved and was more cheerful this evening than I had been for some days

For the last three days have been continuing the series of Letters to Indu. Have hardly been in the mood for them or indeed any work, but Indu's enquiry about them made me feel that I must be up and doing. But this compulsion hardly pays. I am not writing well at all.

47 A C Holmes, served in the *U P* Civil Service from *1899 to 1934; retired as* member, Board of Revenue, U P.

48 *Namaskar* I have not met you before.

As a matter of fact we all get on very well—largely because every one else is very accommodating to me and puts up with my idiosyncracies and temper.

The Supt. came two days ago and examined me fairly thoroughly. Said nothing was the matter with me. Yet the doctor continues to come morning & evening to take my temperature which is certainly not normal. But I have been feeling better generally—Sometimes there is a little pain at the side.

The jailer used to come to us daily. He even sent apologies to us if he could not come any day. Now he does not honour us with visits except brief ones every fourth or fifth day.

This jail is fairly efficiently run—so far as the maintenance of discipline is concerned.

I sent a bundle of foreign papers to Betty today—or at any rate I sent them to the office, to be sent on to Betty.

Kamala's letter has come. It is in the office still. I have been eagerly expecting it for four days. And I am looking forward greatly to the मुलाकात [interview] probably next Monday.

March 20 Sunday

Kamala's letter has not been given to me yet—nor has the packet of papers been sent to Betty, although this is the end of the third day. I have deliberately not asked for it. I do not even know if tomorrow is my interview. I expect so & hope so. Kamala ought to be here tomorrow morning.

I finished reading Andre Maurois'[45] *Byron* today. I was strangely fascinated by the story. Disgust and admiration—with disgust preponderating. Harrow & Trinity Cambridge seem to offer links.

March 21 Monday

Kamala's letter came today—and Indu's—And soon after there was the interview with K and mother & Ranjit—Girdharilal & Upadhyaya cooling their heels outside the jail! A good and almost satisfying interview. K looked well. Good news from Bombay & Allahabad. I felt greatly bucked up. Rumour in Bombay that the Lothian Committee[46] wants Bapu & me to come out of jail soon—this month!

45 (1885 1967), French writer, author of *Ariel, Byron, Disraeli* and other works

46 Appointed in 1932 with Lord Lothian as its chairman to continue discussions in India on the electoral franchise

Bebee has sent me Wells'[49] book on biology—*The Science of Life*—It is a mighty opus—I was wanting to read it but when? I find I can do little reading. I have been carrying on with German with no great results and I am getting tired of it. Wells' book which Bebee has sent bears the imprint of a Cape Town bookseller. Sarojini must have bought it there and Bebee promptly deprived her of it and sent the book to me.

Indu, from all accounts, feeling very lonely and depressed. I am worried about her. But even more I am worried about Betty. Poor girl! How terribly bored and fed up she must be in the Lucknow Dist. Jail.

Heigh-ho! I feel better today—But, oh, the contempt in my mind & heart for the chicken-hearted animal called the Indian moderate—the Sivaswamy Iyer breed! It will not be necessary to punish them for their poltroonery and betrayal. They will give up the ghost themselves when their soul mates and protectors—the British—have to depart from India. But they are a lowly breed.

April 1 Friday

Some excitement today—I heard early this morning that the women politicals next door were hunger striking—Indeed that they had been fasting already for over three days.[50] Reason not quite clear except trouble with the *lambardarin* who has been a nuisance for a long time. I was much put out—Asked jailer to come & see me. He would tell me nothing at all. Then I wrote to Supt. Late in afternoon Supt. and Dist. Magte. (Nethersole) came to our barrack. Didn't like the idea of my seeing the girls—Went away to see them but did not succeed in convincing them. Came back to us and ultimately agreed to my seeing the women—I saw two of them. Their grievance, apart from *lambardarin*, was that other politicals had been badly treated—so they had heard. They wanted the Supt. to proclaim publicly that no illegal punishment will be given to the politicals. After some argument they agreed to my request to break their fast. One of their number was very ill and had previously been sent to the Dufferin Hospital. She was being discharged.

49 *The Science of Life* was written by H. G. Wells in collaboration with his son, George Philip Wells, and Julian Huxley and published in 1931.

50 Women political prisoners, who were not separated from the women convicts, went on hunger strike in protest against the abusive language of the *lambardarins*—the female convict overseers.

the usual rise was up to 98.7°F. Later it became 99°, and now it is 99.2°. The pain in the chest and side has also become a little more persistent. Thinking that perhaps resting in the evenings might do some good, I have even given up, for two weeks now, the little evening outing I used to have from the barrack. But this does not seem to have made any difference. I feel sure that with my vitality and general health I ought to be able to get over any internal derangements or troubles. But I am intrigued at not understanding what the matter is with me, and it is naturally not very pleasant to be a passive spectator of the progressive deterioration of my body. All my life I have been used to exercise and not to be able to indulge in this is a novel and painful experience for me.

My present trouble occurred for the first time, though in an even milder form, in January last year. I was examined then repeatedly, and thoroughly, by three doctors—Dr. M. A. Ansari of Delhi, Dr. J. N. Mehta of Bombay and Dr. B. C. Roy of Calcutta. They treated me for it and within a month or two my temperature became normal, that is, it did not use to rise beyond 98.0°F in the evenings, and I had no pain or discomfort in the chest or sides. I kept well for several months and it was only in January this year in Naini Prison that I again experienced a feeling of lassitude and giddiness accompanied by the slight rise in temperature and the pain in the side.

I feel that it might be of considerable help to any final diagnosis or treatment of my trouble if my present condition could be compared to my condition last year. This would help in making it clear if I am having the same trouble now. More important still, it might indicate any deterioration from last year. This comparison can only be made by the doctors who treated me last year. Unfortunately two of them—Dr. M. A. Ansari and Dr. J. N. Mehta—are not available as they are in prison. Dr. Mehta, I believe, wrote to you on the subject but soon after he was arrested. The third doctor, Dr. B. C. Roy, might perhaps be available, although he is a very busy man and in addition to his professional work is the Mayor of Calcutta. I feel that it would be a very desirable thing if it was possible for you to have a consultation with Dr. Roy about me. I would welcome this and my people would also appreciate it greatly. If you think this can be done, you could communicate directly with him, or, if you prefer, I could write to him. His address is: Dr. B. C. Roy, 36 Wellington Square, Calcutta.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

not make out why this special change. Anyway I expected mother & Kamala and got ready for the मुलाकात [interview] and waited and waited —Nothing doing all the morning. After 3 in the afternoon the interview came. It was not the usual interview with mother & Kamala. Raj came as a special favour on her way to Naini Tal. She looked cheerful and better than she was when last I saw her. Talkative as ever.

I received Kamala's letter today. Nothing from Indu.

Our barrack was not locked last night. From April 1st summer is supposed to begin and we are graciously permitted to sleep out. But it is pleasant & cool still in the evenings and at night.

The Supt. is apparently sending a report about my health to Govt. in response to an enquiry.

April 4 Monday

Interview with mother, Kamala & Ranjit. Surprised to see Ranjit. He had just come back from Bombay. A budget of news. The hour passed rapidly enough and it was not pleasant to come back alone to the barrack.

I wrote to the Supt. at some length about my health and suggested Bidhan being asked to examine me.

4/4/32[52]

TO SUPERINTENDENT, DISTRICT JAIL, BAREILLY

Dear Colonel Newland,

I am troubling you with this letter as you are busy and may not be able to come to our barrack for a few days.

I find that my people are very much put out about my health. I have all along tried to assure them not to worry as apart from one or two abnormalities, I was keeping tolerably well. But the persistence of an abnormal temperature in the evenings and the slight pain in the side makes them anxious and I do not know how to assure them that all is well. The very fact that from early boyhood I have kept excellent health makes my present fall from grace somewhat alarming to them. I have now had the rise in temperature for two and a half months almost continuously and judging from the temperature chart there is a slight, but progressive, deterioration. When I came here from Naini

52. J N Prison Papers, N M M L

prescribed iodine (internally) and Kalzana, and iodex massage. The superintendent also seemed to think that perhaps something might be wrong with the base of one of my teeth—some gland might have formed. But it is difficult to be sure without further investigation. About a year ago I had all my teeth x-rayed in Bombay and as a result one was pulled out. Since then I have frequently visited the dentist to have an artificial tooth made for the gap. I lost one of them and so had to visit him again. My teeth were examined by the dentist within a week of my arrest and he told me they were in good condition. I have had no pain or other trouble with them since.

I am not worrying in the least about myself but I would like you very much to examine me. My mother and Kamala would feel greatly relieved if you could do so and assure them not to be anxious. In particular, I would like you to compare my present condition, after examination, with last year's, when you and Ansari and Jivraj Mehta and Sir Nilratan examined me. You would then be able to say if there was any marked change or not. It will be difficult for you to leave your Corporation and hospitals and your other multifarious activities, but perhaps you could fix up a short visit to Bareilly, if an opportunity presents itself.

I suggested to the superintendent therefore that you might be requested to examine me and have a consultation with him about me. For the present he has suggested that I should write to you and ask you to communicate with him direct. Please let him know how I was when you examined me last year. His address is:

Col. B. E. M. Newland I.M.S.
Supt., Dist Jail, Bareilly.

In case you are permitted to visit me and examine me please inform Kamala and she will make the necessary arrangements for your stay here.

I need hardly add that I am leading a regular and restful life here.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Dear Col. Newland,

As suggested by you I have written to Dr. B. C. Roy and I am sending this letter on to you for being passed. I feel however that a personal visit and examination by him would be far more satisfactory and only then could he compare my present condition with last year's. In view

6/4/1932[53]

TO B. C. ROY

My dear Bidhan,

Perhaps you know that I have not been keeping very fit lately. For the last two and a half months I have been running a slight temperature and there has been some little pain at the side. You will remember examining me last year when I had more or less the same trouble. After my visit to Ceylon[54] I seemed to have got over it. Anyway there was no rise in temperature and no pain and on the whole I felt fit. The worry and strain of work, however, before long put an end to this feeling of fitness and I used to get tired rather easily. There was no other apparent trouble and I concluded that I was overworking and tried to take a little rest in the day time whenever I could manage it.

After my arrest on December 26th last I tried to resume my full exercises, running etc. in Naini Prison. For a fortnight I kept well but then I began to feel more tired and eventually I noticed, about the third week of January, that I had a slight rise in temperature in the evenings accompanied as a rule by a pain at the side. I gave up my exercises and was given a tonic and iodex to rub etc. Then I was transferred to Bareilly. I felt a little better for the first few days but the rise in temperature continued. The morning temperature was usually 97°F. The evening temperature at first went up to 98.7° or 98.8°; then it reached 99.0°. Now it goes up to 99.2° as a rule. The maximum temperature in the evening has been 99.4. All these are mouth temperatures. The pain in the side has continued and become a little more persistent, although it is still not much. When taking a deep breath I sometimes feel a slight catch there.

Apart from this there is no other trouble, except a slight feeling of lassitude occasionally. I have absolutely no cough. My bowels move regularly. My weight has remained steady at about 126 lbs since December last when I was arrested. Thus you will notice that apart from this abnormal temperature and the pain in the side I seem to be normal. In regard to these two abnormalities there has been some slight deterioration in the course of the last two months.

The superintendent of the jail, Col. Newland, has examined me several times. He did not at first notice anything wrong inside but today he suspected a little patch in the right side where I have the pain. He has

53. J N Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.
54. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 517-531.

It appears to be a touch of dry pleurisy in the side. Don't worry about me. I shall flourish like the green bay tree in spite of everything.

I have many companions here—apart from human beings. There are pigeons and squirrels and bats and monkeys and mosquitoes and bugs and beetles—to mention some of them. With the squirrels we are friendly and they are getting over-bold. The pigeons are pleasant to see and hear. The bats I dislike but I put up with them. The monkeys amuse me greatly. They growl and make faces—they are used to being ill-treated. But they were surprised to notice that I treated them in a different way. Instead of cursing at them and throwing stones I simply stood and smiled and whistled at them. They are rather put out by this. Then rather fatuously they turn and try to ignore me! With the mosquitoes and bugs &c we wage ceaseless war and daily I slaughter vast numbers with flit. Whenever I use flit I think of the use of gas in modern warfare and of human beings dropping off as mosquitoes do in our barrack!

I am glad Betty is practising shorthand. Do not spend too much time over novels and the like. Some regular hard intellectual work should be done in jail. That is why I took up German.

Bebee has sent me Well's *Science of Life*. It is a tremendous book. Have you read it? You should read all three of Wells—*The Outline of History, The Science of Life* and his latest opus.[56] Of course if you and I live long enough you may get an Outline of History written by me! I shall send you *The Science of Life* when I have finished it. That will not be soon. Hope you are taking exercises.

I have given a big book about Malaya to Ranjit. Get it. It is worth reading. It is called *The Soul of Malaya*. I have ordered *L'illustration* of Paris. So there is something to live for!

Love from your loving brother,

Jawahar

Give my love to Uma Bhabi and Prabha.
Happy New Year to you. It was raining yesterday.

April 9 Saturday

We have been having distinguished visitors! Day before yesterday Nethersole the Dist. Magte suddenly turned up in the afternoon. Was put out by Kamala's intervention in local politics. Apparently she took

56 *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind.*

of your suspicion that I have some chronic trouble in my right side it seems to me all the more necessary for Dr. Roy to be requested to come here.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

April 6 Naoroz

The new *Samvat* 1989 begins today, at least according to the lunar reckoning. According to the Sun it begins on April 14.

Supt. examined me thoroughly today and managed to spot a patch in the side. Has put me on iodine, Kalzana &c., the usual routine. I feel relieved! At least I know what the matter is and now I can devote myself to getting rid of the 'patch' &c.

At Supt's suggestion wrote to Bidhan. But it is not yet clear if he will be allowed to visit me.

7-4-32[55]

Dear Nan & Bets,

I am glad to learn that you are getting on fairly well in the Dist Jail Lucknow—but Betty has no business to lose weight. What is the good of going to jail if one does not improve in health and weight! Prison is the best of universities if only one knows how to take its courses. Physically of course one has the chance of regular and simple living. Mentally, its effect is still more noteworthy. Our age is the Age of Indifference. People have no real beliefs left—nothing sacred—nothing worthwhile almost. And so we suffer from ennui and life itself becomes a burden. We have lost entirely our sense of perspective—well, jail gives it back to us to some extent and we begin to appreciate the little things, which we hardly noticed before. And so the enjoyment of life itself becomes keener. So three cheers for jail!

I am feeding myself up so much that I am afraid I shall get terribly fat. I take milk, *dallia*, *dahi* and cream—Betty, please note and do likewise. This is apart from tonics and the like. My little trouble seems to have been spotted and I hope to rid myself of it before long.

55 Vijayalakshmi Pandit Papers, N M M L.

April 23 Saturday

After the first shock and alarm I have felt greatly elated at the news from Allahabad, *specially at the part mother took—Rumour usually* exaggerates such happenings—But this time rumour was left far behind—Even the cautious and truncated account in the *Bharat* showed that much more had happened than I had imagined. And later at the interview Kamala added fuller details. I was thrilled!

Kamala came alone to the interview. Mother was still laid up owing to her injuries which were not so slight as I had thought.

My temperature has continued—I have had fits of pessimism & optimism—The idea that I am on the way to becoming a permanent *invalid is most depressing and annoying. But I usually suppress it with* vigour.

Today is the day fixed for the 47th Congress at Delhi! Great doings there—Sarojini & Malaviyaji likely to be landed in prison.[58]

Poor Govind Ballabh has been in great pain for the last ten days or more — He can hardly sit or walk.

May 10 Tuesday

A long gap *since* I wrote last. Why should I write. For others to read later or to read it myself in after years? Ridiculous habit — to keep a journal for the purpose of recording futilities. After all there can be little worthwhile to record in prison. And yet it is a bit of a relief at times—My companions are delightful and most accommodating, but Govind Ballabh apart, they are no company.

We have got a new companion—Lala Thakur Das of Bijnor[59]—He *is the father-in-law of Chandrabhal*, Sri Prakasa's brother. After four months as a C class prisoner, he has been promoted to A! They gave him a fine of Rs. 700 and realised it from his zamindari. He is 60 but looks much more because of a patriarchal beard. Very healthy—keen on nature cures and exercise. Gets up at 3 in the morning and runs and jumps and hops and does all manner of turns *to keep fit*. He does keep fit. A likeable man, but no companion!

58 The Congress though declared an unlawful body met for its annual session on 23 April 1932 and in spite of police vigilance about 500 delegates found *their way to the meeting place* Pandit Malaviya, the President-elect, was arrested *en route* at Shahdara, outside Delhi, and Sarojini Naidu at Bombay on 22 April 1932

59 A Congressman from Bijnor; *imprisoned* several times in the freedom movement, died 1942

part in procession or some such thing the day she came for the interview. It was the 4th—Gandhi Day. Nethersole was pleased to say that it was hardly sporting of K to do political work during a visit to me! She should separate the two so that he could take action the more easily. Of course it was no threat, he told me, but it was a broad enough hint! Then he talked of wider issues—Difficult to speak to him. He is narrow & mid-Victorian in his politics and no idea which has become more or less prevalent during the last quarter of a century is likely to enter his thick head.

Whether it was Kamala's doing or not, Bareilly seems to have woken up—Last night, as we were going to bed, loud cries and slogans came from the female ward—Fresh arrivals! It appears that three women were arrested yesterday and brought here. Probably the National Week celebrations, or the after-effects of Gandhi Day.

Our second distinguished visitor—really distinguished!—was the Home Member—Nawab Sir Ahmad Saeed Khan of Chhatari! Expressed concern at my health. Said Bidhan can certainly see me. Also talked about my being sent to some jail in the hills. Mentioned Nan & Betty also in this connection.

I am carrying on vigorously with the various medicines and concoctions— They take quite a bit of time. Now that I am attacking the enemy on all fronts, I feel quite happy.

April 13 Wednesday Jallianwala Day!

We have spent some anxious days. News reached us three days ago that there had been serious lathi charges in Allahabad and firing and deaths, and the city was being patrolled by the military and curfew order was proclaimed & so on and so forth. Also that mother even had got slightly hurt in the scuffle.[57] This must have taken place on the 8th but the *Bharat* is such an up to date paper that the issue which reached us on the 10th contained nothing about it! So we are anxiously waiting for tomorrow's *Bharat*.

I have been anxious about mother and Kamala and others but I have been glad that Allahabad has been carrying on the good fight with vigour. Today was Jallianwala Bagh Day and all over India there must have been demonstrations & lathi charges, and may be in some places, firing

57. Swarup Rani Nehru, while leading a procession in Allahabad on 8 April 1932, had been hit on the head repeatedly with a cane by the police and fainted.

mile! Has fasted frequently for a week and once or twice for two or three weeks—keeping up exercises during fasts. He is in perfect health now at 60! To begin this strenuous life at 57 or 58 and force your body to improve out of recognition at that age is something remarkable.

It appears that Sir Sita Ram spent quite a lot of time in the circle when he came and many politicals complained to him. He has written a strong note of inspection.

19.5.32[60]

Darling Nan & Betty,

This is just to send you my love. I am glad you are both carrying on tolerably in the Lucknow heat, which must be much worse than the Bareilly variety. Don't read too many stories and novels. This becomes terribly boring in the end. The Times Book Club have just sent a bundle of good books to Anand Bhawan. I have asked Indu to take some for you next time.

I am glad Betty is reading economics but the books she has mentioned are not the ideal ones on the subject. You must remember that economics is a very controversial subject—almost everything and every activity today depends on the interpretation of economics. Socialism, capitalism, syndicalism and all other issues are economic. So, much depends on the viewpoint of the writer. However it is as well to get a grounding from the ordinary orthodox textbooks. I do not know if either of you has read Bernard Shaw's *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism, Capitalism, Sovietism and Fascism*. It is worth reading although Shaw is sometimes rather old-womanish.

One of the new books from London is H. G. Wells' *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*—an economic survey. I am asking Kamala to give this to you. It will keep you occupied for a good while!

I have not seen the book on Eugene Debs.[61] If you can send it through Kamala, do so.

L'illustration has started coming. It will be more convenient for you to see it first and then to give it back at the next interview.

Bidhan is coming here on the 27th May. I have been told that government are willing to transfer me to Dehra Dun if I desire it. I have suggested that this question might stand over till after the doctors have done their worst on the 27th! Personally I am not keen on the transfer,

60 Vijayalakshmi Pandit Papers, NMML.
61 (1855-1926). US labour leader and five times socialist party candidate for American presidentship

It is clear now that in March last there was a good bit of beating of our men in this jail. They were given the hardest labour in the 4 oil pumps and beaten for not working hard enough. About a hundred were forced to apologise & were then released. Later there was another such incident and there were some fractures—hunger strikes &c. And yet we knew nothing. It is only now from L. Thakur Das that we have had some information. There was a great deal of point in the hunger strike of the women politicals, and indeed it did good.

I feel settled down here now. It is over three months since I came. Occasionally outside news upsets—like the Allahabad shooting and the holding of the Congress at Delhi. It is hot—But we have *tattis* & a *punkha*!

My temperature continues to go up—It is becoming an old friend—I hardly mind it. Bidhan will probably see me soon. Govt. have allowed him and I have written to ask him to come soon.

Mother came at the last interview on May 2. She had almost got over her pains and injuries. Was full of beans and so proud of having received canes and lathis. Brave little mother!

Kamala not well—the heat and the excitement too much for her. I am asking her to go to Bombay & Panchgani. Indu came at the last interview—Looking rather pale on account of the heat, but otherwise well.

Just had a letter from Dhan. Good to hear from him and see his childish handwriting again. Promises to send me a gift of books—Roger B & he. Books, books, more books! I have so many and I cannot keep up with them. Bebee has constituted herself our book supplier and she sends bundles of delightful books.

Today is the anniversary of the beginning of the 1857 mutiny!

May 17 Tuesday

Interview yesterday. Mother looking very frail and worn out—Kamala and Indu not very bright, but still considering the weather they were bearing up tolerably. Bidhan is coming here on the 27th of this month to examine me.

Lala Thakur Das, who is with us, is a wonder. He is sixty. He says that till two or three years ago he was ailing—had never taken exercise and always kept feeble health. He then began nature cures and exercises and now he is amazingly active and spends four or five hours a day in difficult *asans* and exercises! Runs nearly a couple of miles in the morning and sometimes if he has another few minutes to spare, puts in another

I wish to say nothing , receiving against
me. But I should like while to the
peculiarity of these prisoners of course
that they have given me or any other
friend I am of my human , sources and
especially of my district of Rae ... They have lighted
a fire which will spread and burn brightly till it
has consumed and reduced to ashes the British domination
and exploitation of this country, which has sucked the
life-blood out of them, and till it has put an end finally
to the system which has pinned them down and deprived
them of the fruit of their toil, and reduced them almost
to the level of the beasts of the field. For long years
I have laboured to this end, and so long as any strength
is left in me, I will carry on this fight. Inside
prison walls I shall think of many things, but most
frequently my mind will dwell on the villages and
fields where my kinsmen brethren live and labour and
suffer, and my good wishes will go out to them
and I shall pray that success may come to them in
this great struggle, so that their present sufferings and
misery may become an evil dream of the past.
Till such success comes there can be no contentment
and no peace.

Name Prison
January 4th 1932

Jawaharlal Nehru

le
gl
4/1/32

STATEMENT TO BE READ AT TRIAL, 4 JANUARY 1932

but if the doctors give the word I shall go. Meanwhile I am fairly well—about the same as before.

I am very worried about Bebee. She seems to be very ill but I have little news of her.

Mother was looking haggard and ill at the last interview. Travelling about in this weather for interviewing us does her little good. And yet to drop the interview would be worse still for her.

Keep fit—to give an ancient metaphor, used by the Buddha, like the string of the violin—neither too tight, nor too loose—just right to play the music of life.

Love,

Your loving brother
Jawahar

May 23 Monday

We are to be transferred to Dehra Dun, or at any rate, Pantji & I. So far as I was concerned the choice was given to me—I suggested waiting till the medical board examines me on the 27th. Probably I shall go to Dehra soon after. I shall be rather sorry to leave this jail, or rather our companions here. Strange how one hesitates and dislikes breaking up any routine or habit. But I am almost sure the change to Dehra will do me good. The weather has been getting hotter & hotter—112°F in the shade. Even so I have been keeping tolerably fit—everything considering—the rise in temperature continues—so does the pain.

Govind Ballabhji has started a fast for a week. He began on 20th night—Before that for six days he was on fruit diet—The fast is the chief topic of conversation. He is carrying on well so far—Third day.

Suddenly last night, the women politicals were transferred from this jail to Fatehgarh. Just five minutes notice! At about 9.30 p.m. as we were thinking of sleep, they shouted out and told us that they were going. The little boy Dharmapal, aged six, also gone. For some days past he has been coming to me in the morning and sharing my *dallia*—I shall miss him. He was a bright lad.

This morning G. B. Pant & I examined on commission as defence witnesses in Balkrishna's case.[62] Nethersole, the D.M. came in charge of the commission.

62 Bal Krishna Sharma 'Navin' (1897-1960); a leading Congressman of U.P. and Hindi poet and writer. In 1931, he was prosecuted for an allegedly seditious article that atrocities were being committed by the zamindars in a number of districts in U.P. with the connivance and support of the district authorities Jawaharlal and Pant were among the several defence witnesses.

May 29th Sunday

The great medical board has come and sat on me and has found that, considering everything, I was doing remarkably well! I have even had the indecency to go up in weight again by 2 lbs. Bidhan came—it was day before yesterday, on the 27th—and it was good to see his cheerful face. As he was going away he hinted that we would all be out by the end of June! So say also the astrologers. But I think and say otherwise.

Govind Ballabh Pant's great fast ended yesterday after 7 days and 15 hours nearly—183 hours. But he has taken very little nourishment so far. Just a little fruit juice—He is very weak & has lost about 12 lbs. It is not clear yet if he has profited much by the fast, so far as his pains are concerned.

Badri Datt Pande also started a fast and carried it on for 3½ days. He had a bad time as his inside went wrong just then and he had pains. He was quite frightened, and he has come to the conclusion that fasts are not meant for him.

We miss the evening *Jhanda* song which we used to hear across the wall from the women's barrack. The women politicals have gone to Fatehgarh.

Soon G.B.P. & I will go off to Dehra Dun, but Pant will take some time to get back his strength.

May 31 Tuesday

Interview yesterday—mother, Kamala, Indu and Amma,[63] who had just been discharged from Lahore jail. Kamala tells me that T.B. Sapru says we shall all be out within a few weeks, that Gandhiji was in correspondence with Hoare,[64] and Hoare was quite prepared to let us out—there were just one or two little hitches which would be removed soon enough! This, coming on top of Bidhan's hint—not to mention the astrologers!—cannot be just moonshine. I am troubled. I see no reason why we should be released so soon. Hoare is not clever or wise enough

63. Rajpati Kaul, mother in law of Jawaharlal, arrested on 8 January 1932 and sentenced to three months' simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 50.
64. Samuel Hoare, later Viscount Templewood (1880 1959); British Conservative politician and a Cabinet Minister; Secretary of State for India, 1931-35; Ambassador to Spain 1940-44. Mahatma Gandhi corresponded with Hoare in March May 1932 on the subject of the allotment of separate electorates to Harijans

THE BARRACK IN DEHRA DUN JAIL

know much about them as I have only read very few of them. Victor Hugo's *Quatre Vingt Treize* is a very fine story.

The new English books you seem to have read, or most of them at least. You read much faster than I do, it seems to me! It is not worthwhile reading good books in this way as one forgets them soon enough. Take as many of the English and French books with you to Poona as you like. But during school term you will not have so much time to read other books.

It was hot here last night—There was quite a *loo* blowing till midnight. I wondered what Allahabad would be like when Bareilly was so bad.

I wonder when I shall see you again. You told me, I think, that your next holidays were in October or thereabouts. That is a long way off—anyway I shall hold myself in patience till you come and pay me another visit. Prison teaches patience at least! and meanwhile I shall write to you and I hope you will not forget to write to me.

Give my love to Chand and Tara and Rita and the Vakils. If you meet Jal Naoroji write to me how he is getting on and when he is likely to be quite well.

All my love and kisses,

Your loving
Papu

Love to *Ylang Ylang*[66] and the bunnies.

Don't forget to write to Bernard Aluwihare for the photograph of the Buddha statue at Anuradhapura.

June 6 Monday

It is amazing—the passion for learning how to read which our convict colleagues have got—we gave them some Hindi primers and help them occasionally. They help each other and often when I wake up in the middle of the night, I find some one of them mugging up his primer or first book at 2 a.m.!

Waiting, waiting to be sent to Dehra! It is annoying to be kept waiting in this way and not to know what is going to happen—But this morning the Supt. came and said that we—G. B. Pant & I—would be sent "very soon". He would not tell me exactly when. That is a state secret and cannot even be whispered. We shall probably be told to

66 One of the pet animals.

for it. I am worried about Gandhiji agreeing to any conditions. I wish he would not have any dealings with Hoare & Co. They fill me with anger and I want to stick it out to the end.

Hints of release disturb the placidity of a prisoner's mind. I find myself continually thinking of outside activities now. Meetings & conferences & speeches & resolutions. I fancy myself holding forth!

June 1st

An interesting incident. A baby monkey managed to come down the wall inside our barrack enclosure. He could not mount up the wall again. The warder and C.Os and other prisoners here pursued the poor thing and captured him and tied a bit of a string round his neck. The parents (presumably) of the little one saw all this from the top of the wall, and their anger grew. Suddenly a big monkey jumped down and almost charged right into the crowd which had the little monkey. It was an extraordinarily brave thing for him to do. He succeeded in terrifying the whole crowd, in spite of their lathis, and there was a sudden *sauve qui peut*. The little monkey was also released but the poor thing had the six foot string round his neck and he hauled it along behind him. He sat on the roof of the barrack gnawing at the string. Later he disappeared. Probably the big monkey came down and carried him away. That big one who came down and faced the crowd, regardless of consequences, deserved the V.C. if anybody did!

June 1, 1932[65]

Darling Indu boy,

I am writing this only two days after our interview as I should like it to reach you before you go off to Poona. You will be glad to get away from the heat of Allahabad and Poona during the rains is quite pleasant. There are light showers as in Europe and the weather keeps cool. My experience of Poona during the monsoon is of Yeravda Prison! But I suppose the weather outside is much the same as inside the prison walls.

Mlle. Haemmerlin has sent such a lot of French books to you that you have got quite a library of them. I hope you will read them for they are all sure to be good books. Some will be a little difficult. I do not

65 J.N Correspondence, N M M L.

Pande not far from Moradabad. A two hour drive at night—after four months of seclusion it was a delightful change. Then, long after midnight, we entrained with four police officers—Had to get down suddenly at Doiwala at 5.30 a.m. and motored from there to Dehra.

The Supt.—a young man, Captain[68] somebody, came. Examined me thoroughly and gave his opinion with assurance that I had T.B.! Two patches on the right. Was quite sure of it and was quite ready to start a special treatment that very day—injections &c.—and to put me to bed for complete rest. Took my sputum—no positive result—so he has held himself so far. But today he has taken the sputum again and is bent on finding the bacillus *koch* in its red livery in it. I am hard put to it what to do. Do not fancy injections till I am quite sure of T.B.—even so, am not enamoured of them. Besides so soon after Bidhan's examination it hardly seems right to shift to this treatment without reference to him. The Supt. here is keen and I rather like him for it. He is the kind who cures or kills and does not believe in the conservative methods of dallying with disease! I am all for this outlook. He has himself had T.B.

To Govind Ballabh he said that his trouble was a kind of paralysis and wanted to dose him immediately. After a long fast and fruit diet and abstention from drugs for nearly a month this proposed change took GBP aback. He has suggested putting off this evil day for some time.

What a change from the 24 foot wall of our barrack in Bareilly! Here we have a baby wall—hardly deserving the name of jail wall—barely nine feet. It is easy enough to hop over it. Our enclosure is very narrow and small but the wall is low and one can go out occasionally for a view of the horizon. Over the wall I can see many trees and even a tall palm tree, reminding me of Ceylon and Malabar. Behind this grove lie the mountains and the lights of Mussoorie must twinkle away every night.

And I have privacy here—what a relief!

June 9th Thursday

The Supt—Capt C.V Falvey—came again yesterday. Told me he had spent two hours over my sputum trying hard to find the T.B. bacilli but without success. He was evidently disappointed as he has made up his mind that I have got T B. and must forthwith be treated for it. He examined me again and felt sure of his previous diagnosis. However

68 Captain C V Falvey, I M S

get ready and depart within the hour or so. It may even be tonight. It was just four months ago today that I left Naini for Bareilly.

The *mainas* and the squirrels do not get on very well together. They have frequent little tiffs. But in the afternoons both of them make it up and sit close to each other on the other side of our *khas-ki-tatti*. It is cooler there and the heat makes them forget their petty animosities. They sit there and pant. It has been hot enough. Panting is about the only thing one can do.

But what is this heat to our brave old man L. Thakur Das? He carries on with his exercises & runs from 3 a.m. in the morning. But most wonderful of all—one day he had pain in the back—he cured it by taking a sun bath for 45 minutes at 2 p.m! Temp. in the shade about 110°—Temp in the sun—God knows!

News has just come—at 6 p.m.—that we are to go tonight to Dehra.

June 8 Wednesday Dehra Dun

We are settling down in our new quarters. There is a rushing to and fro and the whole jail staff seems to be eager to make us comfortable. Kunwar Anand Singh[67] of Kashipur, who has been here for some time, superintends these operations. All manner of rickety furniture from a second hand shop is coming on hire. We are really not in the jail proper but just outside it in the warders' old quarters. They are not up to much as quarters go but they are an improvement on a barrack. Dehra has just a little jail and its resources and accommodation is limited. It hardly feels like being in prison here—partly because of the nature of accommodation & partly because of the human factor.

We had a great send off from Bareilly District Jail. The Supt. of the jail, the Supt. of Police, the jail staff and a crowd of police officers were at the jail gate. The Supt. of Police, whom I had not met before, gave me a bundle of old German magazines. Said he had heard that I was learning German and so he had brought them. Rather decent of him. Strange how a sour looking Englishman is sometimes quite decent behind the veil. The Bareilly S.P. was probably named S.R. Mayors. We shook hands with various people and went off in different cars. It was a long drive—it was not considered safe for us to entrain at Bareilly. So we went about 50 miles out *via* Rampur to a place in the wilderness called Munde

67. Congressman who was imprisoned several times during the freedom movement, chief whip of the Congress Party in the U.P. Assembly and Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, U.P., 1937-39.

two of us being transferred. They would not take us to Bareilly station lest people might see us, for we have become *purdahnashins*, and may not be seen! Fifty miles out they drove us by car to a little station in the wilderness. I felt thankful for this drive. It was delightful to feel the cool night air and to see the phantom trees and men and animals rush by in the semi darkness, after many months of seclusion.

We were brought to Dehra Dun. Early in the morning we were again taken out of our train, before we had reached the end of our journey, and taken by car, lest prying eyes should see us.

And so here I sit in the little gaol of Dehra Dun, and it is better here than at Bareilly. It is not quite so hot, and the temperature does not rise to 112 degrees, as it did in Bareilly. And the walls surrounding us are lower and the trees that overlook them are greener. In the distance I can even see, over our wall, the top of a palm tree, and the sight delights me and makes me think of Ceylon and Malabar. Beyond the trees there lie the mountains, not many miles away, and, perched up on top of them, sits Mussoorie. I cannot see the mountains, for the trees hide them, but it is good to be near them and to imagine at night the lights of Mussoorie twinkling in the far distance.

Four years ago—or is it three?—I began writing these series of letters to you when you were at Mussoorie. What a lot has happened during these three or four years, and how you have grown! With fits and starts and after long gaps I have continued these letters, mostly from prison. But the more I write the less I like what I write; and a fear comes upon me that these letters may not interest you much, and may even become a burden for you. Why, then, should I continue to write them?

I should have liked to place vivid images of the past before you, one after another, to make you sense how this world of ours has changed, step by step, and developed and progressed, and sometimes apparently gone back; to make you see something of the old civilizations and how they have risen like the tide and then subsided; to make you realize how the river of history has run on from age to age, continuously, interminably, with its eddies and whirlpools and backwaters, and still rushes on to an unknown sea. I should have liked to take you on man's trail and follow it up from the early beginnings, when he was hardly a man, to today, when he prides himself so much, rather vainly and foolishly, on his great civilization. We did begin that way, you will remember, in the Mussoorie days, when we talked of the discovery of fire and of agriculture, and the settling down in towns, and the division of labour. But the farther we have advanced, the more we have got mixed up with empires and the like, and often we have lost sight of that trail.

after long debate it was decided that he should write to Newland at Bareilly & I should write to Bidhan. So we have some breathing time.

He was apparently anxious that I should undergo the treatment before I get discharged and hence the hurry. He asked me how long I was going to stay in jail—Extraordinary question for a Supt. to put to a prisoner under him. On my telling him that the answer was beyond me and that I was not here of my free will, but that my sentence was two years, he was surprised and perhaps felt that there was no need for hurry.

The resources of this little jail are limited. They have given us a prisoner to serve us. He is with us all day and then we learnt that at night he has to mount guard from 12 to 6. He is a C.O. This is monstrous. He has hardly any time to sleep and the jailer says he can't help it as he is short of C.Os.

I think often of the convicts who served us in Bareilly. How they all tried to do their utmost and how a little kindness was appreciated by them. Our parting was quite affecting and one or two of them had tears in their eyes. Poor underdogs of society. After a long interval a little human element had entered their lives. This was such a pleasant change that they did not mind any amount of work.

Last evening the jailer took us to the jail office above the main gate. From there we could see the whole jail—it is a tiny affair. The barracks had been locked up for the night. But some of the prisoners could see us and we could see them across the bars. Among them was Nardeva Shastri.[69] I felt a trifle ashamed and uncomfortable—I always do when seeing my old colleagues treated in this way when I am being given all manner of privileges.

June 10, 1932

THE QUEST OF MAN[70]

Four days ago I wrote to you from Bareilly gaol. That very evening I was told to gather up my belongings and to march out of the prison—not to be discharged, but to be transferred to another prison. So I bade good-bye to my companions of the barrack, where I had lived for just four months, and I had a last look at the great twenty-four-foot wall under whose sheltering care I had sat for so long, and I marched out to see the outside world again for a while. There were

69 A Congressmen of Meerut.

70 Letter to Indira Nehru, *Glimpses of World History* (1962), Asia Publishing House, Bombay, pp. 176-178.

decisions in various ways. Science gives a doubting and hesitating reply, for it is of the nature of science not to dogmatize, but to experiment and reason and rely on the mind of man. I need hardly tell you that my preferences are all for science and the methods of science.

We may not be able to answer these questions about man's quest with any assurance, but we can see that the quest itself has taken two lines. Man has looked outside himself as well as inside; he has tried to understand Nature, and he has also tried to understand himself. The quest is really one and the same, for man is part of Nature. "Know thyself", said the old philosophers of India and Greece; and the *Upanishads* contain the record of the ceaseless and rather wonderful strivings after this knowledge by the old Aryan Indians. The other knowledge of Nature has been the special province of science, and our modern world is witness to the great progress made therein. Science, indeed is spreading out its wings even farther now, and taking charge of both lines of this quest and co-ordinating them. It is looking up with confidence to the most distant stars, and it tells us also of the wonderful little things in continuous motion—the electrons and protons—of which all matter consists.

The mind of man has carried man a long way in his voyage of discovery. As he has learnt to understand Nature more he has utilized it and harnessed it to his own advantage, and thus he has won more power. But unhappily he has not always known how to use this new power, and he has often misused it. Science itself has been used by him chiefly to supply him with terrible weapons to kill his brother and destroy the very civilization that he has built up with so much labour.

June 10

The Supt. is really bent on finding T.B. bugs in my sputum. He thinks he has spotted it already. The man in the lab disagrees. So I must go on producing sputum daily till the Supt. can convince the other chap that there is the T.B. bug in it!

June 13 Monday

Interview today—Kamala, mother and Sitla Sahai who had been recently discharged. Kamala was somewhat fed up with things outside. Wants to force matters and come to jail. I was not as pleasant as I might have been during the interview. News of the weakness of this

We have just skimmed over the surface of history. I have placed the skeleton of old happenings before you and I have wished that I had the power to cover it with flesh and blood, to make it living and vital for you.

But I am afraid I have not got that power, and you must rely upon your imagination to work the miracle. Why, then, should I write, when you can read about past history in many good books? Yet, through my doubts I have continued writing, and I suppose I shall still continue I remember the promise I made to you, and I shall try to fulfil it. But more even than this is the joy that the thought of you gives me when I sit down to write and imagine that you are by me and we are talking to each other.

Of man's trail I have written above, since he emerged stumbling and slouching from the jungle. It has been a long trail of many thousands of years. And yet how short a time it is if you compare it to the earth's story and the ages and aeons of time before man came! But for us man is naturally more interesting than all the great animals that existed before him; he is interesting because he brought a new thing with him which the others do not seem to have had. This was mind—curiosity—the desire to find out and learn. So from the earliest days began man's quest. Observe a little baby, how it looks at the new and wonderful world about it; how it begins to recognize things and people; how it learns. Look at a little girl; if she is a healthy and wide-awake person she will ask so many questions about so many things. Even so, in the morning of history when man was young and the world was new and wonderful, and rather fearsome to him, he must have looked and stared all around him, and asked questions. Who was he to ask except himself? There was no one else to answer. But he had a wonderful little thing—a mind—and with the help of this, slowly and painfully, he went on storing his experiences and learning from them. So from the earliest times until today man's quest has gone on, and he has found out many things, but many still remain, and as he advances on his trail, he discovers vast new tracts stretching out before him, which show to him far he is still from the end of his quest—if there is such an end.

What has been this quest of man, and whither does he journey? For thousands of years men have tried to answer these questions. Religion and philosophy and science have all considered them, and given many answers. I shall not trouble you with these answers, for the sufficient reason that I do not know most of them. But, in the main, religion has attempted to give a complete and dogmatic answer, and has often cared little for the mind, but has sought to enforce obedience to its

Have you taken any of the new English or French books with you to Poona? Let me know their names. If I want any of them I shall write to you.

My love to Chand and Tara and Rita. Also give my love to the Vakils. *Puphi wrote to me that Sarah, the ayah, was giving some* trouble. I hope you will be able to make her behave. Rita had better continue in Poona and not come to Allahabad.

All my love and kisses,

Your loving
Papu

22/6/32[72]

TO SUPERINTENDENT, DISTRICT JAIL, DEHRA DUN

Dear Sir,

You informed me today that you had received instructions from the higher authorities to the effect that I was not to be permitted to interview my wife and my mother for the period of one month.[73] I understand *that under the jail rules* and regulations interviews are stopped as a punishment for some offence against those rules. I shall be obliged if you will find out from the *local government, or the Inspector-General,*[74] or whoever the person may be who has issued the instructions to you, what the nature of the offence, for which I have been punished, is supposed to be. The local government have been discourteous enough to issue these instructions without any intimation to me. It has been our practice to conform, within the limits of decency and reasonableness, with the jail rules and regulations. If government, however, act *in a manner which is* lacking in courtesy and decency, it may become difficult for us to maintain our present attitude.

It is not clear to me *whether all my interviews* have been stopped for the period of a month or whether this prohibition applies only to interviews with my wife and mother. *In any event this is immaterial.* Even if permitted to meet others, I do not propose to avail myself of any such interview.

72 J N Prison Papers, N M M L.

73 In protest against the insulting behaviour of jail officials towards Jawaharlal's mother, wife and Ranjit Pandit in *Allahabad jail* and the government's condonation of their conduct, Jawaharlal stopped all interviews. He resumed interviews on *12 January 1933*

74 Lt. Colonel Holroyd, retired in 1935.

person, the caution of the other, the quarrelsomeness of a third, irritates and I forget that the fortnightly interview is a precious thing which must not be spoilt by irritation. Poor little girl! She is having a hard time outside. And instead of cheering her up I criticise everything.

Nan and Betty not at all well. Betty has lost a lot in weight. Poor Upadhyaya has been sentenced to six months' extra for a jail offence—for trying to send an unauthorised letter complaining of jail conditions. He is suffering greatly in Rae Bareli jail. The heat is terrible for him—a hill man—and having to sleep in a barrack is hell. On top of this the jail authorities are down on him. The sporting magistrate, or was it the commissioner of Allahabad, gave him class C as he had complained of being beaten by the Supt. of Police.

June 15, 1932[71]

Indu darling,

So you did not know what to write to me and the fortnight went by without any letter. Even mummie did not write. I hope you will make up for it now. For a long time now I shall not see you and a letter from you will cheer me up. Your school will keep you busy and of course you must attend to it. Still find a little time once a fortnight and tell me of the books you are reading, and what else you are doing in Poona.

You must have been glad to get out of Allahabad. It has been so hot in Bareilly and even in Dehra Dun that Allahabad must have been awful. As I listen to the *loo* blowing, I think of the Harrow song: "What a tune, Kind June, you are singing, all the Noon!" But the tune is not a very pleasant one in the Indian plains and one gets rather fed up with it. You are well rid of it and Poona must be a pleasant change.

You know that I am in Dehra Dun now. I was brought from Bareilly rather suddenly and they took us for a fifty mile drive at night to a little station in the wilderness. You see we have become *purdah-nashins* and none may see us! But I enjoyed that long drive by night. It was a long time since I had had a drive.

It is hot enough here but it is pleasanter than at Bareilly. The trees are greener and a palm tree peeping over the wall reminds me of Ceylon and Malabar, where we were just a year ago. Sometimes I can just see the vague outline of the mountains in the distance, and at night I can imagine the lights of Mussoorie twinkling away.

71. JN Correspondence, NMML.

June 24th Friday

This evening, as we were walking up and down in front of the jail, I had a glimpse of Kamala in the distance. Shammie was with her. They came to ask the jailer something. Their car was stopped outside the jail compound. Still we saw each other & waved. Feel cheered up. Tonight she must return to Allahabad with mother.

July 1st Friday

My weight gone up by 2½ lbs in 10 days! This is little short of scandalous. Still the pain in the side and the temperature continues.

I have received the *Golden Book of Tagore*[75] from Amal Home.[76] What wonderful tributes it contains!

July 11, 1932[77]

TO SUPERINTENDENT, DISTRICT JAIL

Dear Sir,

You were good enough to show me today the reply of the officiating Inspector General of Prisons to my letter dated the 22nd June. I am informed therein that, in the course of an interview with Mr. R. S. Pandit in the Allahabad District Jail on May 27th, my wife handed a letter to Mr. Pandit, and the jailer not allowing this, my mother "used insulting language to the jailer and was impertinent."

As this account of what occurred is untruthful and is a perversion of the facts, and further, as the action taken by government raises wider issues, I am writing to you again on the subject and shall be obliged if you will forward this letter to the government.

During the interview with Mr. Pandit on May 27, information was given to him about his three little daughters, aged three, five and eight, who are at a school in Poona. This information was contained in a letter or report from the school. My daughter, who attends the same school and who was spending her holidays in Allahabad, had this report or letter, and she read it out to Mr. Pandit, and later gave it to him

75 A commemoration volume published on the seventieth birthday of Tagore.
76 (1893 1961), editor of *Calcutta Municipal Gazette* for nearly thirty years.
77 J N Prison Papers, N M M L

U.U. CENT. LIB.

As you are aware, my mother and wife have especially come up to Dehra Dun to see me and have been waiting here for the next interview day. Owing to the new instructions received by you their plans will be completely upset and their stay here has been to no purpose. But I suppose governments, dealing with high matters of policy, have little concern with the ordinary canons of courtesy and decency.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

June 23 Thursday

The little gods of Naini Tal have decreed that I am not to have an interview with mother or Kamala for a month! So I was told by the Supt. yesterday—Why? I do not know. I suppose it is because of some incident at Ranjit's interview in the Dist. Jail Allahabad, when a note from Chand's school about the children's health, was read by Ranjit. But this is merely a guess of mine. No explanation was vouchsafed to me. For ten days mother & Kamala have waited here in Dehra Dun for the next interview. And now they are told to go away without it.

I was put out a little—After several days' low temperatures, I had 99° again yesterday. I have written to the Supt. a letter meant for the govt. Have also written to Kamala.

Feel a little better today. It is not a question of an interview. But this impertinence and insult to mother & K hurt. I do not think I shall have any more interviews in future. If interviews are indulgences given and taken away at the sweet will of somebody in Naini Tal, I shall do without such indulgences. If interviews mean insults for mother & K there will be no more of them.

It is nearly six months since I came to jail. I have had interviews every two weeks. A few months without interviews will do me good and it will save people the trouble and the expense of travelling up to see me. Kamala probably will soon land herself in jail. The latest firman of govt. will hasten the process. But poor mother!

The superintendent—Falvey—was himself much put out by the new order. He took the trouble to telephone to the I.G. at Naini Tal today, but, as he said, he merely "burnt his fingers". A G.O. is a G.O., he was told, and it has to be obeyed. Well, well.

I shall be glad if the Offg. Inspector-General will take the trouble to spell my name correctly in future.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

July 17 Sunday

I am settling down again to a peaceful existence. No interview is conducive to peace! It is a month and four days since I had my last interview. How many more months are to pass—perhaps a year or more—before the next meeting takes place!

I am more or less at peace now but I have had a few shocks lately. The first was bad news from Kamala. She has again been very ill. Then came a letter from the I G. in answer to my enquiry about the stoppage of interviews. I was informed that interviews had been stopped because mother had been insulting and impertinent to the Allahabad jailer! I was put out at this cheek and impertinence. I have written to him that I shall have no more interviews as I do not wish to place mother in a position where she might be insulted.

I am going tomorrow to Mussoorie! The Supt. is taking me to have an x-ray photograph taken. I am surprised at the govt. agreeing.

July 26, 1932[78]

Indu darling,
Your letter of July 1st reached me three weeks after it was written! But mummie sent me your card to her and this gave me some more and later information. I do not know how you are now, and what is going to happen to your tonsils. Of course cutting off the tonsils is quite a small operation. Nothing to worry about. If it is quite clear that they must be cut, let them go. I have suggested to Mr. Vakil that if it is necessary you can consult doctors in Bombay and also have the operation there. If you like mummie to be with you at the time, you can send for her.

The doctors tell me now that my insides are more or less right, and what is wrong with me is not the lungs. The teeth are supposed to be the

78 J N Correspondence, N M M.L.

to see for himself. The jailer took objection to this and was generally offensive and particularly so to Mr. Pandit. Apart from the insult to Mr. Pandit, the jailer's behaviour was an affront to my mother and wife. My mother hardly spoke to him.

Three days later, on May 30th, I had my usual fortnightly interview with my mother, wife and daughter in the Bareilly District Jail. I was then informed of what had happened. I was surprised to learn that any one should have behaved so discourteously to my mother and I expected some expression of regret from the jail officials for what had occurred. Instead of that, I now find that the government have chosen to punish my mother and wife. I presume this has been done on some statement made to them by the jailer. No reference was made, so far as I am aware, to my mother or wife to find out what had happened. Without any further enquiry or effort to find out the truth, the government have not hesitated to insult my mother and wife, and have done so in such a way as to cause the maximum of inconvenience to all parties concerned.

It may be that it is an offence under the jail regulations even to show a school report about one's children. Even if it is not a major offence, it may easily become so by virtue of some new ordinance. If therefore government wish to treat even this as worthy of punishment, I have no grievance. Nor shall I object if my interviews are stopped for a month or a year. I have not come to prison for the sake of my health or for pleasure.

But there are certain matters which I cannot pass in silence. I cannot tolerate even the suspicion of an affront or insult to my mother. I have noticed with deep regret that government have not shown my mother the courtesy which I would have expected from them under any circumstances. For the Inspector-General to say that my mother "used insulting language to the jailer and was impertinent" shows that he is strangely lacking in a sense of proportion, knows little of Indian society, and is not happy in the use of language.

The action that government have taken, and the manner of taking it, makes it clear that those who seek to interview me in jail are always liable to be insulted by government officials or by government itself. On no account am I prepared to take the slightest risk of further insult to my mother and wife. Under the circumstances, the only course open to me is not to have any interview, so long as I do not feel that such interviews can be had with dignity and with no fear of discourtesy to those who come to see me. I am therefore informing my people not to take the trouble to come for interviews with me in future, even after the month of punishment is over.

I shall be glad if the Offg. Inspector-General will take the trouble to spell my name correctly in future.

Yours faithfully,
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The doctors tell me now that my insides are more or less right, and what is wrong with me is not the lungs. The teeth are supposed to be the

78 J N Correspondence, N M M L.

root cause of trouble. I had one tooth taken out yesterday and perhaps more may come out soon. So I shall not grow in beauty as the days go by!

I had a nice little trip to Mussoorie to have my x-ray photograph taken. The motor road goes much further now—right up to Sunny View. We started from Dehra Dun after twelve noon and it took us just two hours to reach our destination in Mussoorie—one hour by car to Sunny View and then nearly an hour in a rickshaw, which took us to the Happy Valley, where the doctor lived. We spent three hours there and were back in Dehra Dun jail by seven thirty in the evening. It has been raining here a lot but that day, fortunately, it kept clear.

Keep well, my dear. It is rather silly for anyone to fall ill. I am very annoyed with myself for the trouble I have had myself, and have given others, over my health. But soon I hope to be quite fit.

Lots of love,

Your loving
Papu

Give my love to Chand, Tara and Rita.

July 29 Friday

I feel angry again today. I have seen in the paper that the Govt. have revised their own sentence on Ranjit about stoppage of interviews. Originally it was for a month—Now the stoppage is for three months and correspondence also banned! Heigh-ho! What disgusting meanness Perhaps this enhanced punishment is due to my writing and making a fuss—but I did not write about Ranjit's interviews at all. I wrote only about the insult to mother. Or perhaps Ranjit has himself written a stiff letter to Govt. Feel like swearing. This is the dept. of the noble nawab of Chhatari, Home Member!

I am quite sure now that I shall not have interviews with Kamala, mother & Indu for a long time now—till I am discharged. The Govt. has got too much of a swelled head to confess a mistake; and I have got too much of a swelled head to tolerate any slight. It is already a month and a half since I met Kamala & mother.

But I have had one interview — a medical one. Ansari came to see me as a doctor. It was good to see him but I had a shock. He looked old and haggard. He has been very ill and is going off to Europe for treatment.

Fortunately for my nerves the Supt. and the jail officials are very decent—otherwise the antics of Govt. would annoy me far more. It is comparatively pleasant here, as far as jails go. We walk outside the jail every morning & evening—if it does not rain. Backwards and forwards we go. It is not much of a walk, but it is a delight to see the distant hills and the horizon and the rich vegetation. Between our barrack and the jail proper, there is a space and in this area there stand four magnificent peepuls — one of them surely the highest in Dehru Dun.

It is clear now that there is nothing much wrong with me. No T.B. no lung trouble. The Mussoorie x ray has settled the controversy. Ansari has said likewise. A little touch of pleurisy continues. But the real trouble is in the teeth. So I go to the dentist. He has already pulled out one. *Many more may come out!*

August 13 Saturday

We are only two now—Anand Singh & I. Pantji has departed. He was discharged this afternoon on completion of his six monthly term. It will be a little lonelier without him. The more I knew him the more I liked him—a brave, highly intelligent and absolutely straight man. Always in pain, yet always with a smile.

Anand Singh is a good and cheerful companion. Bit of a faddist but full of beans. Is on friendly terms with everybody, from the jailer to the warder and the convict! Morning & evening, when we have our little stroll in front of the jail gate, he hails every one in a bright and cheery voice with *Bande Mataram.* He has taught every one to say *Bande Mataram*—all the jail staff, Hindus and Muslims. The children of the warders are always shouting it. It is pleasant to hear it.

Kamala has been very ill again, though she is apparently well or better now. Poor girl! She frets because she is ill just when she ought to be up and doing.

August 16 Tuesday

Raksha Bandhan today! *Rakhis* from warden! Also one by post from a girl in Delhi, Sumitra Dutt.

The Supt.—Falvey—is very decent. He has suggested *suo motu* that I might communicate with my dentist in Bombay and send him the x ray charts for his opinion. He is an Irishman, and old pupil of

De Valera, when De Valera was a school master. Naturally he is sympathetic with India's fight, although he does not say so. He is singularly vague and ignorant about politics—Indian or European. Asks rather curious and naive questions occasionally.

I have taken to teaching Hindi to one of the convict overseers attending on us. How hopeless I am as a teacher—utterly impatient and intolerant. I shout at the poor chap and frighten him out of his wits because he makes silly mistakes!

August 18 Thursday

Heigh-ho! What a life! The same round day after day, and nothing to distinguish one day from another. An occasional meal missed—and we miss it pretty often— stands out as almost a remarkable event. And books, books—what would one do without them to escape from ennui and depression?

Today is Nan's birthday—I thought of her and of the day 32 years ago when she was born. And then I thought of myself then, ten years of age, and vastly excited at the idea of having got a sister! How important I felt—I remember how some stupid person—one of the doctors in attendance, I think—in telling me of the new sister suggested that I should rejoice at not having a brother to share my inheritance! Probably he meant well. He thought that I must be disappointed not to have a brother and he wanted to soften the loss. But I felt annoyed with him. What a remark to make when one is feeling excited and elated!

How well I remember the scene — It was in the old Anand Bhawan and I was in the western verandah of father's old rooms. The church clock in the distance marked a quarter to six in the evening — but I am not sure if it was functioning or not. It often stopped. But of this I am sure that it was 5.45 p.m. by the clock.

Inheritance — Anand Bhawan — The police sit in Anand Bhawan that was, and is Swaraj Bhawan now. And I sit in Dehra Dun jail and Nan in Lucknow Central Prison. And life rolls on!

La vie s'en va, madame, la vie s'en va
Helas! la vie non, mais nous, nous en allons![79]

I have been in reminiscent mood today. This morning the thought of Indu came strongly to me and filled my mind. And I saw her at

79. Life goes on, madam, life goes on!
Alas! not life, but we are getting on!

various stages of her growth, and somehow my mind thought of her more as a baby and a tiny little girl than of the big girl she has grown into now. And a desire to see her came upon me.

I was reading the newspaper — There was an account of a ceremony of unveiling a bust or statue of father's at the Hindu Boarding House in Allahabad. Hirday Nath Kunzru did the unveiling. I glanced casually at what he said, but I did not see anything. To my surprise, quite unawares, my eyes were full of tears.

It is two months and a week since my last interview. I am quite used now to having no interviews. I do not look forward to them. How can one look forward to a thing which is not going to come off? And yet how the मुलाकात का दिन [day of interview] stands out in the jail life! From the very day of interview one begins to think of the next, and count the days, as they lessen—13, 12, 11, 10. But now there is no such expectation and no such counting. How easy it is to accustom oneself to almost anything.

And yet there is a disturbing factor left—the fortnightly letter from home. I look forward to it even more now than I used to, as there are no interviews now, and I count the days. If it does not come on the appointed day I worry. It should come on Wednesdays. It did not come on Wednesday on the last occasion, nor on Thursday. I feared that Kamala was unwell. A few lines in the newspaper hinted at this also and made me the more anxious. The letter came at last on Friday and confirmed my fears. But the letter having come, there was nothing more to be said or done, and the mind, though worried, became more tranquil.

Again it is Thursday today and the letter has not come yet.

If letters, like interviews, were stopped altogether, I am sure I would get used to that also. There would be nothing to expect. It will be a little harder, and I would probably become grimmer and more irritable—and my poor companions would suffer!

Meanwhile there are books & books. Just at present I am in the Netherlands with Motley[80] as my guide, and Alva[81] and Orange[82] and a host of others as companions. So back to the Netherlands.

80 John Lothrop Motley (1814-1877); American historian and diplomat; author of the *Rise of the Dutch Republic* published in 1856.

81 Duke of Alva (1508-1582); Spanish general and Viceroy of the Dutch province of Spain

82 William I, Prince of Orange (1533-1584); principal leader of the Dutch rebellion against Philip II of Spain.

23.8.32[83]

Dear Mother,

I learnt from Kamala's letter that indigestion was troubling you a great deal and was relieved to hear that you are now better. I hope that you are well now. It is raining heavily in Allahabad these days and this may have made it somewhat cold. Usually this weather is bad for health. Be particularly careful that you do not get your legs wet.

I am quite well. I am not running temperature nor having any other kind of trouble. So please stop worrying about me.

Does anybody go to see the girls or not? When did the last interview take place? Do you receive letters from them? You or Kamala should please keep me informed about their welfare. You are probably not getting any news of Ranjit for his correspondence also has been very quietly stopped for three months now. But I am confident that he would be well.

I have heard that Birju Bhai and Birju Bhabhi are to return after a month. He wanted to see me but you know I have suspended my interviews. So I am helpless in the matter. Please convey to him my regrets when he comes to see you in Allahabad. I am sorry.

I want you to let me have the *tithis* of the birthdays of all the members of our family. I do not need the English dates. I want Papa's, yours and those of Kamala, Nan, Betty, Indu, Ranjit and myself. You had once written them down for me earlier but that slip is not here with me. I want to note these *Samvat tithis* in my diary.

It has rained heavily here. I have never seen such a downpour anywhere—not even in Naini Tal or Mussoorie. But I have liked it. This has not restricted my movements much. After the rains there will be nice weather here. And then winter in Dehra Dun is very nice.

Love to Bibi.

Much love,

Your loving son,
Jawahar

83. J N Correspondence, NMML. Original in Hindi.

August 24 Wednesday Janmashtami

....Birju Bhai and Birju Bhabhi are coming back from Europe next month. Want to interview me. The Supt. asked me about it and of course I had to say that there was nothing doing so long as I do not receive satisfaction about the insult to mother etc. Falvey has written a very decent reply to Mohan Bhai who had asked for the interview on behalf of Birju Bhai. I should have liked to meet Birju Bhabhi after her two years in Europe. But there are so many things one wants to do!

It is just a month since I started my exercises again—Result 1½ inch less in the waist!—not enough. Have intensified the exercises and from today have started practising the शीर्षासन.[84]

I am giving up the taking of temperature daily. It usually keeps down but sometimes goes up—Anyhow I have had enough of temperature-taking.

August 27 Saturday

What a long, long month August has been! Ever since Pantji went—it is two weeks today—the days pass more slowly. The last ten days might have been a month.

TO S. SOMASUNDARAM[85]

My dear Somasundaram,

It was good of you to think of me and to write about my health.

But do not worry about me. The newspapers have exaggerated accounts about my health. It is quite clear that nothing much is the matter with me. What little troubles me is being attended to, and I am already better. I am sure I shall be quite well soon. I am not of the sick and ailing variety! Dehra Dun is a good and healthy place. I am just at the foot of the Himalayas.

I should of course love to visit Ceylon. *It is a beautiful place and the* memory of its beauty and charm haunts me often enough. But my job is here for the present. When the time for holiday-making comes, rest assured, Ceylon will be remembered.

84 *Shirshasan*, a yogic exercise of standing on one's head.
85 *The Hindu*, 1 September 1932.

23.8.32[83]

Dear Mother,

I learnt from Kamala's letter that indigestion was troubling you a great deal and was relieved to hear that you are now better. I hope that you are well now. It is raining heavily in Allahabad these days and this may have made it somewhat cold. Usually this weather is bad for health. Be particularly careful that you do not get your legs wet.

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Love to Bibi.

Much love,

Your loving son,
Jawahar

83. J N Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

Kapur is interested in astronomy and yoga. Has written some books on these subjects. Also he is interested in good food! He is collecting the raw materials for feasting. He appears to be a good cook.

Kamala is in Bombay—I am so glad. And Indu has not written to me for two months or more. This is terrible. But it appears that her letters have gone astray in the post. The censor or the C.I.D. must have decided to keep them.

Sept. 22. Thursday

What a capacity Bapu has got for giving shocks to people! A week ago—on the 14th—I read about his decision to "fast unto death" in disapproval of the separate electorates given by Ramsay MacDonald's award to the Depressed Classes.[88] Suddenly all manner of ideas rushed into my head—all kinds of possibilities and contingencies rose up before me—and upset my equilibrium completely. For two days nearly I was in darkness with no light to show the way out, my heart sinking when I thought of some results of Bapu's action. The personal aspect was powerful enough and I thought with anguish that I might not see him again. It was on board ship that I saw him last, over a year ago, when he was sailing for England. Was that going to be my last sight of him?

And then I felt annoyed with him for choosing a side issue for his final sacrifice—just a question of electorate. What would be the result on our freedom movement? Would not the larger issues fade into the background? And if he attains his immediate object and gets a joint electorate for the Depressed Classes would not that result in a reaction and a feeling that a result has been achieved and nothing more need be done for a while? And was not his action a recognition and in part an acceptance of the Communal Award and the general scheme of things as sponsored by the Govt? Was it consistent with noncooperation and civil disobedience?

Was there not danger of our movement tailing off into something insignificant after so much sacrifice and brave endurance?

And I felt angry with Bapu at his religious and sentimental approach to a political question. Was he entitled to coerce people in this way? What would happen to this country if the practice spread? And his

88 The award announced on 10 August 1932 recognized the depressed and scheduled castes as a minority and gave each minority a fixed number of seats with separate electorates.

Remember me to all our friends there. How vivid are the pictures of our visit to Ceylon in my mind! And yet, it seems almost like a dream journey, far removed from the dust and heat of life.

September 4 Sunday

We did get through August at last! But it took some doing.

सुबह होती है शाम होती है,
उम्र यों ही तमाम होती है[86]

September 13 Tuesday

We had an eminent visitor yesterday—the honourable Nawab Sir Ahmad Saeed Khan of Chhatari K.C.S.I. &c., Home Member to the U.P. Govt &c. &c. For nearly a week there was commotion in jail—washing & scrubbing & sweeping & painting.

Chhatari came to me—Expressed his sorrow about my stoppage of interviews. Talked in a futile manner. Either didn't seem to grasp the point or avoided doing so. Hinted at the awful things that go on in jails which he cannot get hold of or cure—but immediately told me not to use this remark against him! It is just three months today since I had my last interview.

Chhatari's talk about the interviews rather upsetting. A desire to see Kamala, mother, Indu—all day yesterday I was full of this subject—anger at Govt at their attitude and behaviour—and the desire to have an interview if it could be arranged with dignity. Even at night I dreamt about it. Feel a little better today.

We have got another companion—Diwan Ram Chandra Kapur[87] from Benares. He has been sent because of his ill-health. His trouble seems to be more mental than physical. Conditions in Benares jail are not of the best and any one's nerves might suffer. Beatings and floggings of C class politicals—and A class people not allowed to go outside the barrack compound.

86 Each day the morning comes
And then follows the evening
And thus the span of life
Is reaching the end.

87. A Congressman of Varanasi.

After much thought as to what we should do we decided to make no great change in our mode of life. But in future, or at least till Bapu's fast lasts, we shall not accept anything from outside. We shall live on the jail rations only. This means that we shall do without fruit, extra sugar &c. Not a mighty sacrifice! We have also dropped afternoon tea, and all that went with it, as a meal.

Sept. 25 Sunday

A telegram from Bapu—how good it was to hear from him again after nearly nine months! and at the same time another telegram—from Mohanlal Saksena and Govind[89]—announcing that an agreement has been reached with the so-called "Depressed Class" leaders.[90] I hate such pacts and agreements. The old guard—the Saprus & the Jayakars & the Moonjes & Kelkars &c—rush about, feel important and produce various schemes. How trivial all this is besides the vital matters in issue. But I am very glad that Bapu's fast is likely to end soon. I sent him a long reply by wire. His telegram had been sent many hours before the settlement had been reached.

Bapu's telegram to me:

> During all these days of agony you have been before mind's eye. I am most anxious to know your opinion. You know how I value your opinion. Saw Indu and Sarup's children. Indu looked happy and in possession of more flesh. Doing very well. Wire reply. Love
>
> Bapu

(Sent at 15.30 on 24th—received by me at 13 on 25th Sunday)

My reply to Bapu:

Gandhiji Yeravda Jail Poona

Your telegram and brief news that some settlement reached filled me relief joy. First news your decision fast caused mental agony confusion but ultimately optimism triumphed. Regained peace mind. No sacrifice too great for suppressed downtrodden classes. Freedom must be judged by freedom of lowest but feel danger other issues obscuring

89. Govind Malaviya.
90 A conference of the leaders of all communities was convened at Poona on 20 September to consider MacDonald's Award and the consequent fast unto death undertaken by Mahatma Gandhi. Under the scheme prepared by the conference the Harijans would not accept separate electorates but be part of the general electorate with reserved seats. As a result of this agreement Mahatma Gandhi broke his fast on 26 September 1932.

frequent references to God—God has made him do this—God even indicated the date of the fast &c. were most irritating. What a terrible example to set!

And I thought of Kamala and mother, feeling sure that they would have a terrible shock if Bapu died—Would they survive?

If Bapu died! What would India be like then? And how will her politics run? There seemed to be a dreary and dismal future and despair seized my heart when I thought of it.

So I thought and thought and confusion reigned in my head and anger and despair and love for him who was the cause of this upheaval. I hardly knew what to do and I was irritable and short-tempered with everybody, and most of all with myself.

For two days I felt bad. And then—a strange enough thing for me! —I had quite an emotional crisis and I cried and wept. Somehow the tears took away a great deal of my confusion and worry. I felt calmer and the future seemed not so dark. Bapu had a curious knack of doing the right thing at the psychological moment and it might be that his action—impossible to justify as it was from my point of view—might lead to great results—not only in the narrow field in which it was confined, but in the wider aspects of our national struggle. And even if Bapu died; the great fight will go on. So whatever happened one must keep ready and fit for it instead of behaving like a foolish lovesick girl.

It was strange how rapidly the storm subsided and I felt calm and collected and ready to face the world and all it might offer. I had made up my mind to face even Bapu's death without flinching.

Since then news has come that some settlement will be arrived at and there is no danger of his death. And all over the country there has been an upheaval, the like of which has seldom been seen. On the 20th, when the fast began, there was fasting and hartal all over India—scores of millions must have fasted. Nearly all the jail people—staff, prisoners, politicals, non politicals—fasted; many for 36 hours. And all over the country temples are being thrown open to "untouchables". There seems to be a magic wave of enthusiasm, running through the Hindu society, and untouchability appears to be on its last legs. What a magician is this little man sitting in Yeravda Jail, and how well he knows how to pull the strings that move people's hearts! What can poor logic and intellect and reason do before him!

But I do wish he would not refer so frequently to the Almighty as if God was personal adviser for every act of his. I find this extraordinarily irritating.

Kamala of course celebrated the receipt of news of Bapu's fast by fainting off immediately!

Well, the excitement is over now and Bapu leaves his mango tree and goes back to his cell, and you go back to your school routine, and I, well, I remain where I was! And I read and write and spin and stand on my head. There is a new diversion. We have got baby squirrels. Two of them were picked up one day in our barrack and my companion here took charge of them and became their nurse. I named them Tit and Tat. They were very small and required a deal of care. My friend spent most of the day on them cleaning them and feeding them every two hours and sunning them and playing about with them—I joined in the last activity. Quite a cunning way was devised to feed them and a very serviceable feeding bottle was made out of a fountain pen filler and cotton wool. Cotton wool beddings were made for them, and altogether they got more care than the average baby boy or girl does. We grew quite fond of them and as they grew they became friendlier and used to run up to us. But the place they liked best was a pocket, where they would curl themselves up and rest quite content. But this was not to last long. Little Tit fell ill and began to behave in a strange way. One day it got stuck in a mouse hole and in trying to pull it out, its tail came off! It did not long survive this tragedy, and that was the end of Tit. Curiously enough on that very day a third little squirrel dropped down from a branch in our barrack and was caught. So again we had two. I named the new one Twee. Tat and Twee soon made friends and are now on the best of terms.

Soon you will have your birthday and you will actually become fifteen—what a big girl you are getting. I have been wondering what you would care to do when you grow up, what your special subject or business in life would be. Of course there is no hurry to decide this for many years, but if one wants to do anything it is as well to do it well, and to do it well one has to be trained for it. When one goes to the university one has to choose one's subjects accordingly. Some time or other you would naturally like to go to a university and study some subjects which you like. In India today we are placed in a great difficulty, for almost all the universities are official and neither you nor I would care to have anything to do with them. Besides they are not much good and I do not care for the way they teach. The few non-official universities in India are better in some ways but they are not much good either. No one can say what will happen in our country during the next few years and it is difficult enough to make plans for the future. It seems to me however that it would be a good thing if you went to a foreign university when the time for this comes. A foreign university might mean an English university or a Swiss or French. I would personally like you to spend a little time at both an

only goal. Am unable judge from religious view point. Danger your methods being exploited by others but how can I presume advise magician. Love.

Jawahar

September 27 Tuesday

The fast is broken! The good news came in the paper and three telegrams from Poona—one from Rajagopalachari, another from Mohanlal Saksena, and a third from mother. I am so glad mother went to Poona.

Today is Bapu's birthday *Samvat* style. Good omen!

Oct 3, 1932[91]

Darling Indu,

Your letter was very welcome. I liked reading your vivid account of Bapu's last day of fast. You were very fortunate in being near him during these trying days, though it must have been a great trial for you and all others with him. You were present at his Delhi fast of 21 days also.[92] Do you remember it? That was a much longer fast but it appears that Bapu suffered more this time during his week's fast. I am not surprised at the impression all this must have made on you. Bapu is an extraordinary man and it is very difficult to understand him. But then great men are always difficult to understand, and there can be no doubt that he is among the greatest of men. It is amazing how he conquers his opponents by his love and sacrifice. By his fast he has changed the face of India and killed untouchability at a blow.

You have met, probably for the first time, another great son of India —Rabindranath Tagore. He is very different from Bapu, but he is a great writer and artist and it is a privilege to meet him.

Poona was the centre of India for some days and all eyes were on it. You were in the middle of the excitement. Some little bit of the excitement came here too, as elsewhere, and we followed developments anxiously. I was so pleased to get a long telegram from Bapu. He took the trouble to tell me in it that he had seen you and Chand & her sisters and that you were looking well!

91 JN Correspondence, NMML.

92 It was undertaken in September 1924 to protest against communal rioting.

then there should be no interviews. I have no intention of meeting anyone at all. I have had no interviews for nearly four months, and do not intend to have any for the next twelve months. Nan and Betty are sure to be released before that. There is no need to go and see them. Nor need you see Ranjit. Bibi need not go either.

Tankhas[95] have again started sending fruit and vegetables. You may be sure that I am getting enough to eat. My health is perfect. I am not running temperature and my teeth are all right. The weather here is getting more pleasant.

Here is a letter for Nan. Send it with your letter to her.

Much love,

Your loving son
Jawahar

4.10.32[96]

Darling Nan,

Your letter, coming all by itself, in solitary splendour, was a delightful surprise. A few days later Betty's letter, or rather your joint effort, came, although it had started on its long and tortuous journey long before.

Letters to and from jail are indeed public property and it is not always possible to write everything one has in mind. But then in the world of prison everything is public. The more secluded and cut off one is from the larger world outside, the more publicity one's activities get inside the prison. That is a strange fact which people find it difficult to appreciate. To be cut off from the world is bad enough and has a depressing effect; but it is far worse not to have any privacy, and to be forced to live for the livelong twentyfour hours with people with whom one has little in common, is a trial for the strongest nerves. But I see that you are getting prison-wise and learning from personal experience. You will admit that my experience is fairly considerable—I have had over ten years of it now—and all this time, and even before, I have tried to prepare myself mentally and physically for this kind of life. On the whole I think I have succeeded rather well, better certainly than most people I know. But I know well enough that I am a favourite of fortune and, wherever I happen to be, my luck holds. So I really have never been tested properly. Perhaps the time may come for that also.

95 The family of Kashi Naram Tankha of Dehra Dun. For rendering this service to Jawaharlal, Kashi Naram's name was removed from the list of approved government contractors.

96 Vijayalakshmi Pandit Papers, NMML. Extracts.
This letter was written by Jawaharlal to his sisters.

English and a continental university. But all these are castles in the air at present. I have merely mentioned them because I have been thinking about them and I wanted you to give some thought to the subject. There is just one question which arises now. If one has to go to a university some kind of entrance examination has to be passed for it. If one keeps this in view one can easily prepare for it. I do not like examinations as a rule but to some extent one has to put up with them. The only examination I can think of which is available in India, is the Cambridge Senior. Perhaps there are others which I do not know of. I should like to discuss this matter with Mr. Vakil as he might be able to make a helpful suggestion. Perhaps you might show him this part of the letter and have a talk with him on the subject. Then you can write to me what you and he think about it.

I do not like the snapshots mummie has sent me. They are no good. Send me a better one of yours.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

Tell Padmaja that I have got her letter and I shall write to her when I have the chance. How long will she stay in Poona?

4 October 1932[93]

My dear Mother,

I have received both your letter from Poona and your telegram. I had heard about Gandhiji's fast and I was so happy that you had gone to see him. That would have given you pleasure and Gandhiji too would have been happy. He has suffered a lot and the whole country was greatly concerned but whatever happened was for the good.

You must have been happy to meet Indu, Chand and the others. I do not know where you are now. Kamala is probably still in Bombay. I shall address the letter to her there.

I have received letters from Nan and Betty. They may be released in five to six weeks' time.[94] You are quite right in saying that interviews can take place only in dignity and ease. If this is not the case,

93 J N Correspondence, N M M L. Original in Hindi.

94 They were released at the end of December 1932 after eleven months imprisonment.

obviously this cannot be done all the time. The effort itself might kill us! Indeed what happens often enough is the reverse of this. Too great a public effort to charm is such a strain that in private there is a reaction and one behaves in an unusually harsh manner. Gradually all naturalness goes from our behaviour and we swing about from strained efforts to please to unmannerliness. Such is life. What would you expect in jail? The nervous strain is great and the worst side of a person comes up. There is a good side right enough if one can pull it out. If one can succeed in prison in learning forbearance and the art of getting on with others, who happen to be different from us, then we have learnt the secret of success in public activity, and indeed life itself. And after all what is truth? Who can say with absolute definiteness which is the correct way? The modern scientific spirit therefore is very far from being dogmatic in anything. It gropes for truth and dare not be too positive.

What an essay I have inflicted on you! But soon you will pass through the portals of your prison and your prison life will become almost like a dream—a vivid enough dream against the background of which life will stand out. But even when you go out of prison, we shall not meet for a long time to come yet. For I have no intention of having interviews under present conditions. It is nearly four months now since I had a home interview. I miss them of course. But it is as well. More training, more discipline! So you will not see me and we cannot talk over the matters which you wish to consult me about. Life is sometimes a difficult job and has a way of putting curious posers to us. You will have to decide for yourself. Of course if you feel like writing anything, now or when you are outside jail, do write and I shall give such help as I may. But whatever happens do not worry and smile away and your troubles "will fold their tents like the Arabs and as silently steal away."

About Indu, I have always intended her to go to a university. But the Indian universities of the official variety are most hateful to me. The private universities here are not up to much. So it means her going to a foreign university—English, Swiss or French. The right age to join a foreign university would be, I imagine, 18 or so, not less than 17. I do not know if she can get a sufficient grounding for the university course here. Anyway I have no objection to her preparing for the Cambridge Senior or some such examination. I have written to her about it. I presume you will go to Poona when you come out. You can discuss the question with Indu and Vakil. All plans must necessarily be tentative at present.

But I do firmly believe that prison life for a period is good discipline. Physically it ought to do the body good, that is, if one does not break down under it! It is like the sun. If you do not get sun-stroke you will benefit by it. Mentally it chastens and shows up life in a truer perspective. One's standard of values changes, and little things which had been ignored till then, are prized and valued; and many a bright glittering piece of tinsel shows up for the empty nothing that it is. A new significance attaches to life itself, and satiety and ennui, those terrible modern diseases, give place to a hunger for life's little delights. One's home, children, friends—all become the dearer for the deprivation. And a certain calmness, a peace of the mind comes, and a power to detach oneself a little from the passing show and watch it almost as an outsider And a feeling of satisfaction, of confidence in oneself, the joy of having overcome one fear, one obstacle, and to that extent having brought life in control. And as one goes outside the prison gates the world seems a fair enough place, and one has something of the feeling that one is not wholly a plaything of fate and destiny. Is not prison then worthwhile? Indeed it is if one can take it in the right spirit and profit by it. But if one cannot do that, then comes sun-stroke or prison-stroke and a cracking-up, physically and mentally.

So much for the personal side. Prison also teaches the fundamentals of politics and sociology and morals, and indeed the whole philosophy of life. For it tells us, if we can but learn, what is the basis and foundation of government and society and the existing code of morals. Not the study of all the constitutions in the world will make this as clear as personal experience of this emblem of force and fear and terror on which rest insecurely the present systems of government and society.

You have found it difficult to put up, day and night, with people whose ways and methods and thoughts are totally different from yours. I am not surprised. Is it not often difficult enough to put up with those whose ways are our ways and who are as familiar to us as any one can be? Yet for a while even they become unbearable. How much more so those who are different from us. Yet the test of education and culture is the capacity to get on with all manner of people. If we are to dabble in public affairs one must develop forbearance; public work would otherwise be impossible. Most of our difficulties indeed are due to this lack of forbearance and the absolute incapacity to see the other side. In prison the constant intercourse is a terrible thing. The worst side of one's nature comes up and there is friction and annoyance. Ordinarily in society when we meet people, all of us put on our drawing room behaviour and make an effort to be sweet and charming. But

Insert in letter to Mrs Kamala Nehru

Sehra Dunghail
Oct 3. 1932

FSCO

Darling Indu,

Your letter was very [illegible] I felt reading your vivid account of Bapu's last days of fast. You were very fortunate in being near him during these trying days, though it must have been a great trial for you and all others with him. You were present at his Delhi fast of 21 days also. Do you remember it? That was a much longer fast but it seems that Bapu suffered more this time during his week's fast. I am not surprised at the impression all this must have made on you. Bapu is an extraordinary man and it is very difficult to understand him. But those greatmen are always difficult to understand, and there can be no doubt that he is among the greatest of men. It is amazing how he conquers his opponents by his love and sacrifice. By his fast he has changed the face of India and killed untouchability at a blow.

You have met, probably for the first time, another great son of India – Rabindra Nath Tagore. He is very different from Bapu, but he is great

I think it will be rather silly for you to put Chand in a Swiss school at present. But there seems to be no reason why you should not go to Europe yourself for an airing. India will be no place to rest, and you and Betty both require toning up. I suggested to Betty some time ago that she might go to London and join the London School of Economics for a year. I was quite serious about it, though I am not clear in my mind that she should go. I wanted to know what she and you thought about it. On the whole I am inclined to favour her taking a course in London.

Bapu sent me a telegram on the 4th day of the fast telling me that he had seen Indu and "Sarup's children" and how they looked. How extraordinarily considerate he is and how he thinks of others. In spite of his fast it was he who issued directions as to where mother and Kamala were to stay in Poona. I am so glad mother went. Indu has written to me quite a graphic account of the breaking of the fast. She has been tremendously impressed by these events.

Your German books—which you threatened to send—have not come. Why you should hurl them at me I cannot imagine. If they come I shall send them on to Ranjit. I have sent you four more books which I hope have reached you. There are several books, which I have sent to Ranjit, which I should like you two to read. I wonder if he has sent them on. In particular there is a book on Indian art—the *Civilization of India*[97] by the director of the *Musee Guimet* of Paris.

The subscription of *L'illustration* has expired. I am not renewing it as it is very expensive. I got it especially for you and Betty and now that both of you are likely to be out soon, there is no special need for it. I am quite well. My teeth are going strong and I have no intention of having any more out....

Give up your doubts and misgivings and keep a perpetual smile on your face! It suits you. The right time to go to Europe would be in the New Year. Why not spend a month in Ceylon for a change? You would have no difficulty. I could put you in touch with the right people.

Betty dear,

This letter has become long enough in all conscience and I do not want to tax the patience of the jail people too much. As it is I am a bit of a nuisance. You seem to have attached quite a lot of importance to old Madanji. It was worthwhile if he made you think of Geneva and the long ago. My beauty holds—so you need not worry. Jail always has the effect of toning me up physically and mentally.

97. Written by Rene Grousset and published in 1932.

After a slight attention I have gained control over my body and am now master of all I survey. So I am rejuvenating and whenever necessary I am prepared to become an under grad again. Anyway if I am in trouble about my vanishing youth or beauty I know now where the experts are.

I am glad Prabha got herself bobbed. Give her my love....

I left a 2 volume book on Indian Economics in Bareilly jail. Will you write to Ranjit to get hold of it and send it to me by post—if he can find it and if no one wants it any more. There is no hurry for it.

Love,

Your loving brother
Jawahar

October 16 Monday

.... After a long interval I have had letters from Indu—good letters. How she fills my mind and how I have begun to think of her future. She will be fifteen soon.

Nan and Betty have also been sending delightful letters. Prison has had quite an appreciable sobering effect on both, especially on Betty. But I should like to meet her out of jail. No such luck for a long time. It is over four months now since I had a home interview. I think often of Betty and how I can help her.

Two welcome letters from Bebee. And a host of books! How my mouth watered when I saw them.

Bad news today. Our superintendent, Capt. Falvey, has been transferred to Meerut and will go soon. For over two weeks he has not been to see us. But he has been very decent indeed and we shall miss him. I can't conceive of his successor being as decent.

A parcel came from Kamala today—rugs for the winter, books, soaps, jams &c. I grew quite excited over it. Parcels from the outside world are welcome hnks! The books were from Padmaja.

18.10.32[98]

Priyadarshini bien aimee,

I have your letter. I was very glad to learn of your new fellow pupil — उर्वशी[99] —and of your visit to Bijapur. You went to Bijapur over

98. J.N. Correspondence, NMML
99. Urvashi, one of the two Harijan sisters adopted by the Pupils' Own School, Poona.

'. Monday.

Bapu has begun his twenty-one days fast today.
[illegible] the fi[illegible] of this prolonged fast came a week ag[illegible]
ad [illegible] but I recovered soon. Three days ago
[illegible] letter - a typical cyclone his heart which
[illegible] over, and I had quite an emotional crisis.
[illegible] him a telegram which I did not like at all, [illegible]
[illegible] was in a muddle. This was the telegram:

'Your letter. What can I say about matters
do not understand. I feel lost in strange country
here you are only familiar landmark and I
try to grope my way in dark but I stumble. [illegible]
Whatever happens my love and thoughts will be
with you. Jawaharlal'

I wrote to him also that day.

This evening I felt suddenly that I must send him
another and a more cheerful message. The

good and they are easily learnt when one is young. Later on the body becomes stiff and then it is difficult to bend it.

All my love, darling Indu boy,

Your loving
Papu

Give my love to Chand, Tara and Rita and Ira.[101] Please give the letter following to Bebee. Cut it off.

October 22 Saturday

Falvey the Supt. came to see us—after three weeks. He came to say goodbye—He was rather shy and hurried about it. Curious why he avoided us for three weeks when he used to come every second or third day. There must be some special reason for this sudden transfer. I have seen little of him but I have grown to like him rather—I suspect that the District Magistrate—Acton,[102] who is by no means a delightful person—has helped in getting Falvey transferred.

We have a new companion from today—Abdul Latif[103] from Bijnor transferred from Ghazipur Jail.

October 23 Sunday

The whole Falvey family came to say goodbye—Mr. & Mrs. and three children. In the evening there were sounds of revelry outside—the noise that a local orchestra made was not very agreeable but it was well meant. The staff of the jail were giving a party to Falvey.

October 25th Tuesday

I have had an extraordinary and annoying experience. Night before last, Sunday night, I went to bed about 9.15 p m. I had just dozed off

101 Daughter of Jahangir Vakil

102 T J C Acton, later appointed commissioner, 1944-46.

103 (1894 1970), a Congressman of Bijnor; member, *U P. Legislative Council*, 1923 26 and 1946 52, and member, U P Legislative Assembly, 1952 57, member, Lok Sabha, 1957 62; imprisoned several times during the freedom movement.

two months ago and I did not even know that you had gone. But I am glad you went and saw the old buildings and the wonderful whispering gallery in the Gol Gumbaz. There is a whispering gallery just like this in the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral in London also. But these buildings you saw at Bijapur were not made by the Mughal kings, as you say. You will have to read the history I am writing for you to get all this straight!

About your second language it is really for you to decide because you will have to learn it! You say in your letter that French will probably be easier. I imagine so. Let it be French then. You need not give up Sanskrit entirely, unless you feel it is a bit of a burden. I have always felt rather sorry for myself for not having learnt enough Sanskrit. I have missed so much because of my ignorance of it. But all this depends on one's likes and if you feel that you cannot carry on with French and Sanskrit both, you can drop Sanskrit. I wish I was with you and we could do both French and Sanskrit together! Both of us would get on famously.

I find from your last month's school report that there is some reference to your doing music. What kind of music do you learn? What a fascinating thing is music but unfortunately I know little of it. You can teach me later.

About your Christmas holidays, it is for you and mummie to decide. You say in your letter that mummie has already suggested to you that you might go with the Vakils to Ajanta and Ellora. As you also want to visit these caves, the matter is settled. I shall envy you your visit to these wonderful caves with the carvings and frescoes. I have been to Ellora but I have never been to Ajanta. You might also accompany the Vakils to Santiniketan and see the school and the poet. To go to Santimketan you will probably have to pass Allahabad or at least Chhoki. On your way back you could break your journey for a couple of days at Allahabad and see mummie and Dolamma[100] and perhaps *Puphi* who will be out then. The *Puphis* may be out then but it is quite possible that mummie might be in! So it is difficult to make detailed plans. But for the present you may decide that you will spend your holidays with the Vakils.

What exercise do you take? and what games are played in the school? I hope you do the *Sarvangasana* and the *Shirshasana*. These are very

100 Swarup Rani Nehru.

Purushottam,[104] who was arrested about a week or ten days before me, and for a year, was let off a week ago.

Sometimes the idea of going out of jail is pleasant to contemplate. And yet when such a possibility is mentioned in the papers I get quite put out at the thought that I have not done so much that I must do before discharge. I must finish the series of historical letters to Indu. I could have finished them by this time but I have slacked or not been in the mood for writing for weeks and weeks. Sometimes I feel that I have months and months before me and there is not much left to be done. At other times I fear that I might suddenly be marched out before I have done—and outside I shall not touch them—I have finished the eighteenth century—another hundred & thirtytwo years! Yet somehow the desire to write on is not marked now. Some months back I was quite wrapped up in this period I was writing about and thought of little else. Perhaps even now if I write regularly I might feel that way.

Today is Betty's birthday—*Samvat* style—कार्तिक वदी 12—I sent her a couple of books day before yesterday, timed to reach her today—that is, if the jail authorities are good enough to deliver them. They must have cheered her up. It is pleasant to receive anything from outside in prison—much more so a birthday gift which is not expected.

And soon my birthday will come—how old I am getting! To sit here and watch the days go by and age steal over one—!

This book must end now—For over two and a half years it has been a jail companion. Now it must join the past and become itself a memory—another will take its place.

October 29 Saturday

Diwali—Deepavali—today—an auspicious day to begin a new volume of this journal! It has been an unusual day. There has been feasting and in the evening we had some illuminations, of course on a very modest scale. We invited the jail staff, that is the jailer, doctor and two assistant or deputy jailers, to the midday meal. Kapur and Latif were busy cooking and arranging all the morning, and there was a feast for all of us. It was good that the meal was a Hindu-Moslem affair. Two of our guests were Moslems, three Hindus. I doubt if the jail staff—Hindu & Moslem—had ever fed together previously.

104. Purushottamdas Tandon was arrested on 18 December 1931 under U.P. Ordinance and was released on 18 October 1932.

when I seemed to have had an uncomfortable feeling which is difficult to describe. I got up and tried to light the hurricane lantern. I lit it and just then I seem to have fainted off with remarkable suddenness. Anyway my next recollection was of a taste of grit in the mouth. I was lying on the floor with my mouth on the coir mattress. I got up with some difficulty and managed to lie down on the bed. But for some considerable time I felt queer and light-headed. Gradually I recovered and then I lay awake for hours—till almost 3 a.m. The fainting fit took place at about 9.30 p.m.

It was very curious—the whole thing. I suddenly felt as if I was taking gas or chloroform and I went off. One step back would have brought me to the bed. I had no realisation of the coming fall. I simply must have collapsed rather heavily for I hurt my temple pretty badly and there were also bruises on my arm and shins.

All day yesterday I felt a little light-headed, nothing much but just enough to irritate me! Or perhaps it was just imagination. Today I am normal.

Why in thunder should I misbehave in this way? Immediately my mind went back to a year and five months ago when I performed the same trick in Colombo, only with worse consequences. There I split my skull with my fall and looked a ghastly and bloody sight—bad enough to make Kamala faint! I thought then that I was overworked and overwrought. But here, in Dehra Dun jail, there is no question of overwork—or strain. I am outwardly fit. I am not even worrying overmuch about any thing. Why, why then should I behave like a hysterical girl? This is very annoying and disturbing. If this kind of thing happens a few more times I shall begin to lose confidence in myself.

October 26 *Wednesday*

Still feeling a little groggy—sometimes just a wee bit light-headed—or perhaps it is just imagination. Imagination or something else, it is most annoying. That I should have sunk so low! Is it jail or is it too much reading? I have read more and worked far harder than I do here.

It is just ten months today since my arrest. I am told that I have got sixty days remission. Forty days ordinary remission and 20 special given by Falvey before his departure! Just a little parting gift. So in a way I have completed a year, according to jail standards. Indeed

by Hudson when he was nearly eighty years in far away London. How his childhood lived for him even in his old age! Even the beautiful title of the book—*Far Away and Long Ago*—is full of wistfulness and longing for the days that were past.

As I read Hudson, I began to think, also rather wistfully of my own boyhood and especially of the horses I had had and the fine rides I used to have. How splendid it is to gallop away, the horse's feet spurning the ground, and the cold wind rushing past you! It is long since I have ridden or possessed a horse to ride, and you, my dear, have had no decent chance at all. But if we cannot ride horses we can ride the wind and the whirlwind and they are even swifter, and the excitement is greater!

So visions of boyhood came to me and I thought of the old Harrow song: "Visions of boyhood shall float there before you, echoes of dreamland shall bear you along, twenty and thirty and forty years on." It is twenty-five years since I left Harrow! And it seems but yesterday.

Yes, I think you had better stick to French and Sanskrit will have to be given up for the present. I am sure you will get on well in French. Try to practise talking if you have the chance. The rest will come much easier then. It is a nuisance that we cannot meet and talk over matters. But that can't be helped and it is not easy for me to advise you at this distance and without knowing all the facts. Tell Mr. Vakil that he can write to me direct to the jail if he wants to ask me anything special. But this should not delay any arrangements about your French. He should make such arrangements as he thinks proper.

The weather is perfectly delightful here now and it gets better and better. In another two weeks it will be cold enough for me to take sun baths. I am looking forward to it.

All my love, darling Priyadarshini,

Your loving
Papu

1.11.32[106]

Darling Bets,
Yesterday was *Bhaiya Duj*. Did you forget me? I thought of you and remembered last year when we went to Benares and visited Sarnath, the ancient Isipatana. Heigh ho! A year has gone by already.

106 *Nehru's Letters to His Sister*, (London, 1963), pp 27 28.

The meal was quite a success. Somehow it made us feel in holiday mood today—All our usual programmes were upset. In the evening a number of the little earthen lights made a brave show. The jail staff also, both Hindu & Moslem, took some pains to illuminate their cottages.

Kamala's letter came yesterday—Rather a depressing document—Poor girl! She seems to be unhappy and just a bundle of nerves. I felt that I was partly responsible—My letters to her lately have not been very cheerful or cheering. Suddenly it struck me that *I must write to her* a really nice letter, and I felt sure that this would cheer her up. Since this idea came I have been eager to write but I cannot send the letter *for another four days.*

I have also decided to send Kamala a book by post every week or ten days. I have plenty of books. This sending and receiving of books will add to our contacts and will cheer both of us up.

A letter from Dhan Gopal Mukherji today.

Altogether I have felt rather light-hearted today. Partly because of our unusual day and the holiday feeling, partly, and indeed chiefly, because of decisions to drive away Kamala's melancholy by my letters and books. I must behave in the future—what a pig I am sometimes!

Nov. 1st 1932[105]

Darling Indu boy,

Day after tomorrow is कार्तिक सुदी ५ that is your birthday. This letter will reach you several days afterwards. Not knowing how else to send you my love and good wishes on this day I sent you yesterday a book. It was a book which you yourself had sent, and perhaps you read it before sending it to me. But it was good enough as a messenger of my love, and if you have not read it already, I think you will enjoy doing so. It is the story of a boyhood spent in the Pampa, the great plain of the Argentine in South America. The writer of it, Hudson, was a great naturalist, that is a lover of nature, and flowers and animals. I found it delightful to read his beautiful prose and to gallop with him (in imagination alas!) over the boundless plain, and to rejoice with him when the golden flower sang, and to go in search of birds' eggs and rare flowers, and live in the open air with the sky and the earth as companions and friends. All manner of birds and beasts meet one in his pages—ostriches and flamingoes and strange frogs and curious snakes. Strange that this fascinating book of childhood was written

105. Vijayalakshmi Pandit Papers, N.M.M.L.

Nov 13 *Sunday*

A fortnight of tension—anxiety—worry and latterly of physical pain. The so-called Unity Conference at Allahabad has caused enough annoyance.[107] I have dreaded opening the paper daily, and yet, just to prevent disappointment, I had made up my mind, *right at the beginning*, not to expect anything from it. Still the disappointment is there and the anger at the amazing pettiness of people. Above everything what annoys me is the attitude of the Sind Hindus[108]—the quintessence of protecting privilege and wealth. The wretched conference is still dragging on—gasping for breath—It will die soon enough.

Kamala has given another fright by having heart attacks & fainting and otherwise misbehaving. I wired to her and her reply was a little *comforting*, though not much. Bidhan has examined her and it is settled that she goes to Calcutta—perhaps tomorrow—for treatment. Madan Atal is to accompany her. Strange and unhappy coincidence! As soon as I heard of this my mind travelled back to two years when in this very month of November, father went to Calcutta for treatment, accompanied by Madan. It was on November 17th, I think, the day after 'Jawahar Day' (so I find by referring back to this journal).

Kamala's message to the Unity Conference was a most *moving one*[109] —my last letter to her—I am so glad I wrote as I did for it must have cheered her just when she required cheering. And the book I sent her.

My teeth have been giving trouble—or at least one of them. Had a pretty bad tooth ache for two days with some fever—Couldn't eat or sleep. Yesterday Prakash, the dentist, came and lanced a small abscess. I felt better. Tomorrow the tooth will be pulled out. Prakash indeed wants to pull out two others also but this will take a lot of convincing for me.

Tomorrow is a suitable day for pulling out the tooth—it is my birthday! I have already received presents—books from Mahmud and Bebee. Somehow I felt sure that I would receive something from both of them.

107 The conference, attended by 70 Hindu and Sikh representatives and 40 Muslims, commenced on 3 November 1932. The Muslims were prepared to accept joint electorates on the condition that statutory majority of Muslims in Punjab and Bengal was conceded, secured 32% representation in the Central Legislature, and Sind was separated from Bombay Presidency.

108 They had demanded a considerable subvention for Sind from the Government of India in case of its separation from the Bombay Presidency.

109 In an appeal for unity Kamala Nehru had also expressed surprise that women had not been invited to participate in the conference.

Bets—I sent you a book to reach you on your birthday. As the calculation about the birthday was entirely mine, I am not quite sure that it was correct. Anyway I hope you got it on the right day and I hope you liked the book. What a wonderful woman's head there is *right at the beginning of the book—the early Egyptian period.* There are so many other delightful pictures. Far the best and most fascinating way of learning history is through art. I hope Ranjit sent you the volume on India in this series. I shall get the two remaining volumes on China and Japan as soon as they come out.

I hear that you are not coming out in November but a fortnight later in December. Well, it does not much matter. Ten months or ten months and a half are much the same. What I am more interested in is what you will do when you go out. I have already made various suggestions—a visit to Europe—Ceylon. The proposal about Europe fell through soon after; the Ceylon one still remains to be considered. It is really for you to decide and you need be in no hurry to do so. Decisions taken in jail are not usually adhered to outside. So you can see how you feel—physically and mentally—after your discharge and then decide. In any event it will be a good thing if you spend some little time in Poona and Bombay, after some days in Allahabad of course.

Dhan Gopal has written to me. He complains that Mrs. Pandit has forsaken him. Poor man, he seems to be in a bad way financially although he puts on a brave face over it.

It is delightful weather here. It is fairly cold at night and cool in the daytime—cloudless blue sky—the sunshine not too hot—rather like the Mediterranean climate. I love to gaze at the sky and watch the eagles in their stately flights high up in the air. Soon I hope to begin my sunbaths. I hope both of you will profit by the November weather and go out fit and strong.

Love,

Your loving brother
Jawahar

Nov. 17, 1932[112]

TO SUPERINTENDENT, DISTRICT JAIL, DEHRA DUN

Dear Sir,

I thank you for showing me the letter from the U.P. Government dated Nov. 12, 1932 regarding my interviews and the treatment to be given to my mother and wife. I am obliged to the government for their assurance that it is far from their intention "that any insult should be offered to" my "relations or for the matter of that, to any Indian lady." As this is the official policy of government I should like them to consider why and how it was that insult was offered to my mother and wife on May 27, 1932 by the jailer of the Allahabad District Jail, who shouted at them angrily and offensively for some time and then hustled them out of his jail. In the course of her sixty and odd years of life my mother has not had to face such treatment on any other occasion and from any other person, and I trust that government will appreciate that it is natural for me to resent such treatment of my mother in her old age. The shock to her was considerable, and, although circumstances and domestic affliction have hardened her, she shrinks even now from the idea of having a jail interview. Almost her sole remaining attachments in life are to her children, and all three of them happen to be in prison. Yet for five months now she has not seen them. I have tried to induce her at least to visit my sisters in the Lucknow Central Prison. But she has not agreed, partly because of the Allahabad jail incident and the action government took on it, and partly because of some new jail regulations according to which she must sit far apart and must not touch even her daughters during interviews.

2. I would also request government to consider what actually happened in the Allahabad District Jail on May 27th. In my letter to you of July 11th I gave some of the pertinent facts as I had obtained them from my mother and wife. I believe that they made statements to the press also on the subject about that time.[113] Either this statement of what occurred, as vouched for by my mother and wife, is correct or

112 J.N. Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.

113 In her statement on 25 July 1932, Swarup Rani denied that she had used "insulting language to the jailer and was impertinent." When the jailer forbade Ranjit Pandit from reading his daughter's school report given to him by Indira Nehru and snatched it, she told the officials to be courteous and polite. On Ranjit's asking that the superintendent be summoned, he was told by the jailer that he was the superintendent. She then retorted "You are not only the superintendent but are *lat sahab* and general also." The jailer then terminated the interview.

How people spoil me! But I shall celebrate the day formally by putting on a new *kurta* and dhoti on the seventh day of the dark fortnight of *Margshirsh*—November 20th. That makes me a week younger; so it is worthwhile observing the *Samvat* calendar.

I have been much exercised by the news that large number of B class people from Fyzabad Jail have been degraded to C class and sent in fetters to other jails.[110] An answer by Chhatari in the U.P. Council made me very angry and I am afraid I used very bad language about him privately.[111] I have almost decided to write to Govt. about it. But I wanted to cool down before doing so. I gave myself two days for this. Tomorrow I shall decide finally and perhaps draft a letter.

Tomorrow seems to be a suitable day for many things!

November 14th Monday

Forty—three!

A telegram of good wishes from mother, Kamala and Mahmud. A tooth out—real bad one it was—and some prospect of others following. A letter from government informing me that they have no wish to treat my mother & wife with disrespect, and asking the superintendent to arrange interviews so that there may be no discourtesy to them or words to that effect, I do not remember exactly! This must be the outcome of the noble Nawab of Chhatari's endeavours. A poor result which makes no real difference. I have delayed my letter to govt because of this. I shall have to write differently now.

A bunch of books came today from the U.S.A.—from Roger & Dhan—curious how the gift managed to reach me on my birthday—forty-three! how old I am getting.

110 On 15 October 1932 some Class B prisoners in Fyzabad jail in a meeting held in defiance of orders decided not to obey the jail authorities. 28 prisoners were punished for this by reduction of their status from Class B to Class C.

111 See *post*, pp 427-431.

orders. It is a matter of chance that I am here and not with my lleagues. But if they are guilty and are punished I should also be onsidered guilty, and I invite the same punishment.

10. I should like to make clear that personally I have no *complaint* make against any treatment meted out to me in this or other jails. have been treated uniformly with courtesy for which I am grateful. d when courtesy *is extended* to me I could hardly be churlish ugh to *answer it with discourtesy*. I am also grateful to govern- nt for the facilities they have *given me for consulting* doctors and ying on my treatment. But the courtesy shown to me personally, to a handful of others, makes me feel all the more painfully the ation and deep injury caused to large numbers of my colleagues. n selected perhaps for special treatment because of a certain mea- of notoriety that I have attained in the political sphere. The feudal ples of selection that the Home Member has stated in the U.P. cil do not apply to me for I do not come within the charmed of those who pay a certain amount of land revenue. When cul- and refined women are treated as ordinary prisoners it ill becomes to claim better treatment. I have, however, for selfish reasons I *admit*, not raised this question earlier. My ill health became an for me. But that excuse hardly holds now as my health is much I have still some trouble with my teeth but that need not come way. As it happens, the most prized privilege which a prisoner e right of interview—I have not exercised for over five months

I would therefore request government to give me the same treat- hich they are now giving to my colleagues who were till lately bad jail.

ot that this letter has become so long. I have felt deeply on the referred to in this letter and I have come to the conclusion that it to government and to myself to write fully and frankly. I d to do so after careful thought in what I hope is restrained dorned language. May I beg of you to send this letter of mine U.P. Government and to communicate to me any answer that receive in regard to it?

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

it is wrong. If government consider it wrong, I have nothing further to say in the matter except to request government to supply me with what they consider is a correct account. If, however, the account I gave was the correct account, and the Home Member, during his visit to me in this jail in September, seemed to accept it as such, then I would further request government to consider if the action they took was even remotely or technically justified.

3. I was informed by the Offg. Inspector-General, in his letter dated July 8th 1932, that my mother and wife had been punished because my "wife handed over a letter to Mr. R. S. Pandit" and my "mother used insulting language to the jailer and was impertinent." When writing this the offg. I.G. seems to have forgotten who my mother was and who the jailer was; but apart from this I have endeavoured to point out where the insult and the impertinence lay. As for the letter, it is now clear that there was no such thing. There was a brief school report. Even this was not produced or handed over to any one by my wife. She did not know anything about it till my daughter took it out of her pocket and began reading it out, and later gave it to Mr. Pandit. My daughter did so openly and not surreptitiously and I am not aware that this was in any sense, and even technically, an offence. Even if it was, the person who was guilty of it was my daughter and not my wife or mother, and the outraged majesty of government could have sought reparation from my fourteen year old daughter. But why my mother or wife should be punished, I confess, I entirely fail to understand.

4. My mother and wife were, however, punished. Mr. Pandit also was punished, and later government not considering his punishment of a month sufficient, increased it to three months and even stopped letters during this period. To give the original sentence of one month for no offence seems to me to have been extraordinary enough, but to increase it deliberately to three months and to deprive one of news even of one's children is a matter which warrants serious consideration from any government, unless it has chosen the Gilbertian Mikado for its model.

5. I am writing at length about this incident not merely for a personal reason, although I have suffered enough during the last five months, but on wider grounds also. If government are still of opinion that they have acted correctly in awarding the punishments I have nothing further to say to them. If however they feel, as I think they must, that they were misled and thus made to err, they should at least say so.

6. This little incident has a wider significance. Government rely completely on their jail officials for the conduct of their jails, and each official relies on the one below him. Thus when any untoward occurrence takes place in jail, the government version of it made public or stated

by the Home Member with all due solemnity in the Council Chamber, can be traced back to a petty jail official whose account, having passed through various channels, has at last reached the top and been adopted by it. It is not checked or verified in any satisfactory manner, for the only persons who might help in doing so are the prisoners who cannot be encouraged in this way. So it happens that government often make statements which all the world in jail, including both official and prisoner, know perfectly well to be wholly untrue or largely exaggerated. On the basis of these reports and statements government proceed to punish people in the name of discipline. The other side is seldom even heard and even when it reaches the ears, it is not listened to. The petty breach of discipline may have been provoked by deliberate insult and attempt to humiliate, but this is not known outside the high walls of prison, although it might be notorious enough inside that limited world.

7. I have had during the last twelve years a fairly extended experience of prison conditions in the U.P. and I think I may claim to express an opinion in regard to them. That opinion is shared by a very large number of persons. I have come very regretfully to the conclusion that the jails in this province (I can speak only of the U.P. from personal experience) are steeped in corruption and violence and falsehood. There are undoubtedly honourable and truthful men serving in the jails but they are not many and the whole atmosphere is against them. The person who gets on in the department is usually the worst type. All over the prisons it is believed that the official who is the most ruthless will find favour in the eyes of government, especially if he is hard on the political prisoner. The one who is most corrupt therefore tries to cover this corruption with a reputation for strictness and ruthlessness. It is notorious how many prison officials have deliberately sought to humiliate political prisoners and almost forced them to some act of insubordination so that they might then endeavour to crush them with all their strength. It is also notorious that it is such persons as these who are praised by government and to whom titles are awarded as a mark of favour.

8. Government occasionally refer in their *communiques* to jail riots and the like. I would beg members of government to try to visualise these so-called "riots", especially when political prisoners are concerned. For a prisoner to raise even his little finger against a jail official results in a terrible beating. There is no one to protect him or even to listen to his cry of agony. Jail 'riots' do occur but almost always the rioting is done by the side of law and order on poor defenceless prisoners. And when an investigation is made only one side is heard, a trumped up

story presented, and a false report is published. On the basis of this report fresh punishments are now awarded to those who have already had the misfortune to be beaten. And the punishments awarded have even extended to the barbarous practice of flogging. I do not know if the government fully realise what is being done in their name and with their approval, but I should like them to know that many people, and even those who expected little from government, are amazed and shocked at this rattling back to barbarism. The Home Member and the Inspector General of Prisons visit and inspect prisons with all due pomp and ceremony and their approach is long and loudly heralded. They would know more of prisons if they could manage to come quietly and anonymously as prisoners for a few weeks. They need not come as political prisoners if this is a matter of conscience with them, and besides as ordinary convicts they might get slightly better treatment. Even a short stay in this capacity will reveal to them a state of affairs which will shock them, and their new knowledge will no doubt make them fitter to discharge the duties of their offices.

9. In a recent issue of the newspaper supplied to us, the Home Member is reported to have made a statement in the U.P. Council regarding the reduction from B to C class of 28 prisoners, till lately confined in Fyzabad jail. I have also learnt that these prisoners, or some of them, have been transferred with fetters on them to other prisons. I have no information about the incidents which led up to this, nor is it possible for me here to have further information. But even the limited information contained in the Home Member's statement has pained me greatly. I happen to know almost everyone of the prisoners in Fyzabad jail personally. Many of them have been esteemed comrades and colleagues of mine for many years and I feel sure that they would not act under any circumstances in a manner that is dishonourable. If they came to the conclusion, as was stated by the Home Member, that they could not obey the superintendent, they must have come to this decision for adequate reasons and probably because the superintendent had deliberately tried to humiliate and insult them and left them no other honourable course. Unfortunately I have no knowledge of what happened. But I happen to know very well both the prisoners who are, or were in Fyzabad jail and the average U.P. jail official and, unless the contrary is proved to me, I must believe in the right conduct of colleagues of mine who have survived many a hard test and who have sacrificed their careers and comfort and much that they possessed for the sake of a cause they held dear. I feel therefore that if I had been in their position I would, in all probability, have acted likewise and informed the superintendent that I could not obey

his orders. It is a matter of chance that I am here and not with my colleagues. But if they are guilty and are punished I should also be considered guilty, and I invite the same punishment.

10. I should like to make clear that personally I have no complaint to make against any treatment meted out to me in this or other jails I have been treated uniformly with courtesy for which I am grateful. And when courtesy is extended to me I could hardly be churlish enough to answer it with discourtesy. I am also grateful to government for the facilities they have given me for consulting doctors and carrying on my treatment But the courtesy shown to me personally, and to a handful of others, makes me feel all the more painfully the humiliation and deep injury caused to large numbers of my colleagues. I am selected perhaps for special treatment because of a certain measure of notoriety that I have attained in the political sphere. The feudal principles of selection that the Home Member has stated in the U.P. Council do not apply to me for I do not come within the charmed circle of those who pay a certain amount of land revenue. When cultured and refined women are treated as ordinary prisoners it ill becomes a man to claim better treatment. I have, however, for selfish reasons I must admit, not raised this question earlier. My ill health became an excuse for me. But that excuse hardly holds now as my health is much better. I have still some trouble with my teeth but that need not come in the way. As it happens, the most prized privilege which a prisoner has—the right of interview—I have not exercised for over five months now.

11. I would therefore request government to give me the same treatment which they are now giving to my colleagues who were till lately in Fyzabad jail.

I regret that this letter has become so long. I have felt deeply on the matters referred to in this letter and I have come to the conclusion that I owed it to government and to myself to write fully and frankly. I have tried to do so after careful thought in what I hope is restrained and unadorned language. May I beg of you to send this letter of mine to the U.P. Government and to communicate to me any answer that you may receive in regard to it?

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Nov 17 Thursday

I feel rather lighthearted this evening—News has come that Kamala has reached Calcutta safely and on the whole her condition is not quite so bad as I had thought at first—news of the successful termination of the Unity Conference at Allahabad—and I have written and delivered my letter to government! One bad news however which has made me anxious—Bebee has had a motor accident! What an extraordinary unlucky girl for accidents! I wired to her and her reply has just come. Very cheerful and all that—she is always cheerful whatever happens—but it is clear that she is far from well. It is Bebee's birthday today!

No letter having come from home last week I wired for news. As soon as I learnt that Kamala was going to Calcutta yesterday I wrote to her there. An hour later my home letter came but there was nothing from Kamala. There was a letter from mother and one from Mahmud. Also a separate letter from Nan direct from Lucknow Jail.

So Kamala went to Calcutta on Nov 16, just a day before the anniversary of father's departure. Madan Atal has gone with her and so has her mother.

I have written a long letter to the Supt. today. It is, of course, meant for the government. It is pretty strong but I have tried to use moderate and restrained language. I have asked to be treated as the Fyzabad people have been treated. Wonder what will happen now. I am anxious to finish my letters to Indu before any sudden change takes place. Somehow I have got stuck after the French Revolution and Napoleon. From tomorrow I must concentrate on the letters. I think they will take me another two months.

Govt., probably because of Kamala's illness, have asked if I want to be transferred to Naini. I have no desire to leave Dehra Dun. As I have no present intention of taking interviews it makes little difference where I am. And I prefer the Himalayas.

A parcel came from home today. Odd things that mother has sent for my birthday which I must celebrate on the 20th—*Margshirsh Badi* 7. New clothes etc. and—more books from Bebee! She is determined to bury me almost in books. I have already got a vast number of them.

If the Unity Conference has really succeeded it is really good news, but I have my doubts. Still even to avoid failure has been an achievement and there can be no doubt that there was a strong desire to make up.

Nov 18 Friday

A telegram from Govind this morning announcing success of the Unity Committee. Also press accounts. Almost too good to be true. Burma election news also good.[114]

Nov 21 Monday

Yesterday being *Margshirsh Badi* 7th my birthday was celebrated in jail! Beautiful roses and other flowers, and fruits & vegetables and sweets came from the Tankhas in the city. In the evening there was feasting. The jail staff & Kapur joined in preparing the food & we all fed together, as at the Diwali. There was even a little speech of congratulation and also a *nazm*.

Dehra Dun has been as far removed from a real jail as it is possible for a jail to be. Apart from certain special privileges—like taking exercise in the open outside the jail gate and sitting in the open—the attitude of the jail staff has been very helpful. The jailer is very decent and in his own way is becoming quite devoted to me. Very soon the new superintendent—C.H. Reinhold—will be coming. I wonder what difference this will make. He has not a good reputation.

Nov 25 Friday

I feel weary and tired and stale—Thoughts of Kamala's illness, and Indu, far away, and all the world going awry, and knaves and scoundrels in the seats of authority shouting and haranguing and threatening, and good men silent, and fools, oh! so many of them everywhere!

Nov 26, 1932[115]

TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, DISTRICT JAIL, DEHRA DUN

I am obliged to the U.P. government for the choice of return to Allahabad that has been offered to me. In view, however, of what I

114. In the elections held in Burma, the party led by Dr. Ba Maw had gained a majority. This party favoured entry into the Indian federation on special conditions which provided for secession at some future date on terms to be settled by India and Burma between themselves.

115 J.N. Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.

wrote in my letter dated Nov. 17th 1932, I have little to say in the matter. It is for government to decide. But there is one thing that I might mention. I have been having some trouble with my teeth and this is being attended to here. Two of my teeth have been extracted and the dentist proposes to pull out some more in the near future. There may perhaps be some difficulties in the way of carrying on this treatment elsewhere.

J. Nehru

27.11.32[116]

TO HOME MEMBER, U.P. GOVERNMENT

Dear Sir,

In today's *Pioneer* there is a report of a debate in the U.P. Council on a resolution regarding "the alleged ill-treatment of political prisoners in various jails in the U.P."[117] In the course of this report it is stated that "the Home Member said that men like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru were of great help to them. It was very necessary that the convicts should follow the jail rules like their leaders, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Pandit Krishna Kant Malaviya and there would be no trouble whatever."

I am obliged for the statement that I am a well-behaved prisoner. I should like however to point out that it is hardly fair to exploit my name for the purpose of showing that some of my colleagues are not behaving properly. I am not in a position to place my viewpoint before the public, nor can my colleagues in various prisons give expression to their views. Under these circumstances it is doing me a great injustice to say anything which gives the impression that I disapprove of anything that my colleagues who are in prison might have done. I have no positive information to judge, but such partial information as reaches me, and my knowledge of my colleagues and the usual treatment meted out in prisons, leads me to the contrary conclusion. Indeed I have already written at some length to government on this subject. In view of the somewhat remarkable statement made by the judicial

116. J.N. Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.

117. The resolution asked the government to appoint a committee of the U.P. Council to enquire into and report on the ill treatment of political prisoners in U.P. jails. The Home Member replied that these complaints were mostly exaggerated and in some cases the offenders had been punished.

secretary that those who had been confined in jail being interested parties were unreliable, I presume my opinion is ruled out by government. But as my name has been publicly referred to in support of an argument with which I entirely disagree, it is only fair to me that my viewpoint should be placed before the public. I would therefore request that my letter dated 17 November 1932 be given to the press for publication.

In the course of the debate in the U.P. Council it was stated on behalf of the government that steps had been taken to punish jail officials whenever any misbehaviour on their part occurred. May I know what steps government has taken to punish the jailer of the Allahabad District Jail for his gross discourtesy to my mother and wife on May 27th 1932, about which I have previously written?

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

29.11.32[118]

Indu darling,

I have not heard from you for over a month. I have not even had news of you for mummie has not been well enough to write, and the letters I have had have been from doctors and suchlike persons. I know you are well and happy and so I am content. But you seem so far away, and when letters do not come the distance seems to become greater than ever. It is just six months today since I saw you. What a long time it has been! But I feel happy when I think that you have employed this time well and are growing up, healthy and bright and strong.

Soon your school will be closing for the holidays and you will go on your pilgrimage to Ellora and Ajanta. What a delightful time you will have and how I envy you. Perhaps, as you look at these wonderful sculptures and frescoes, you will catch something of the spirit of the past in India and have a real glimpse into the days of long ago. Boys and girls are taught history in schools by means of dull uninteresting books. But the real way to learn history is to see the nation's art and music and literature. But of course the best way of all for you is to wait for the great history I am writing for you!

Do you know, when I was at Ellora seven or eight years ago, I went for a strange quest. It struck me that all the thousands of statues of

118 JN Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

men there were beardless. Beards were evidently not in fashion in those days. Then I hunted and hunted and discovered one full-grown beard. I wonder if you will find it—or you may do better than I did, and find several.

From Ellora I hope you will go to Daulatabad and see the wonderful fort there. It is the most extraordinary fort that I have seen.

I roll about in the sun in the mornings and my back is getting as brown as a berry. It is pleasant and cold here. I like this climate. Poona I suppose, is never really cold....

Love and kisses from

Your loving
Papu

Nov. 29, 1932[119]

Darling Nan,

I have received your and Bet's letters. Thank you both for the birthday wishes but you ought to know by this time that birthdays after forty are best forgotten. They become rather painful reminders of the horrors of age. I wish also that you would not 'pray' about anything in connection with my birthday! There always seems to me something morbid about prayers.

I wonder where this letter will reach you—in jail or outside. Anyway you will both be out soon and after ten and a half months' seclusion will again have a look at the wider world outside. Do not be too dazzled and do not gad about too much! I am glad both of you like the idea of Ceylon. I am sure a visit will do you good and you will enjoy yourself. January will be a good month to go. You can go by Lloyd Triestino boat from Bombay—the ones that come from Italy —or you can have a quieter and cheaper journey by a Scindia Steam Navigation Co's boat. These are not passenger steamers, but occasionally they do take passengers. They will be very glad to take you. They have no regular sailings. I have not been in them and so I cannot say what they are like. Betty will remember the launching of one of the Scindia boats in Glasgow by father.

When the time comes for you to go I shall, if I am in a position to do so, give you all manner of information about Ceylon. I shall also give you many letters of introduction. Meanwhile, I shall give you one address: S. Somasundaram, 27 New Chetty Street, Colombo. This

119. Vijayalakshmi Pandit Papers, N.M.M.L.

man is a lawyer there. He is a very decent man and he will do everything for you. If you want to find out anything, write to him. When going, ask him to fix up accommodation, and arrange your programme there in consultation with him.

I am not particularly keen about your devoting yourself to untouchability work in Kathiawad. For some time at least you should just rest and get fit. After you come back from Ceylon you can see how the land lies. If you like you can spend some weeks in Kathiawad to pick up the untouchables. But I am not terribly excited over this question. Anyway do not bother about future work now. And do not worry at all about the future. The future is singularly capable of looking after itself, and none of us is a babe and suckling, and we can flourish like the green bay tree whatever happens. So do not be depressed and do not talk of being afraid of *je ne sais quoi.*

Prakash is attending to my teeth now. He pulled out one which was giving trouble. He suggests pulling out two more, which are not giving any obvious trouble, on the ground that their apices are affected and the system is gradually poisoned by them. I have not quite decided what to do yet.

Yes, Akbar reminds me in some ways of father. Bets, this letter, *mutatis mutandis,* is for you also. Cheer up and remember the virtues of plum pudding.

Love,

Your loving brother
Jawahar

Nov 30 Wednesday

Unusual happenings to stir the placid waters of jail. Chhatari, the Home Member, has given me a testimonial in the course of a speech in the U.P. Council in connection with the treatment of political prisoners. I am a model prisoner and I am held up as a model for others —in other words my name is exploited to damn other political prisoners, especially the Fyzabad people! I wonder if he said this after receiving my letter about Fyzabad. Anyway he probably meant to soothe and please me....I felt very angry at this unfair use of my name. I have written to him direct and asked him to publish my letter which I sent about Fyzabad. Of course he will do no such thing.

I have also informed govt., in answer to their enquiry, that they can keep me in any jail they like.[120] It is immaterial to me especially in view of my request to be treated as the Fyzabad people have been treated. But I have added a little rider—that I am having my teeth treated and perhaps I may not have the same facilities elsewhere. Fact is I am not keen on going till the tooth trouble is over. Probably two more will be taken out soon. I want to be here also for another month or so to finish the letters to Indu. I may not have quite so many books to consult in another jail. And thanks to Bebee and the birthday presents *I have got a big case full of books.*

I should like to be sent to Allahabad in January—mid January— provided I decide to take interviews then. Otherwise it does not matter. Kamala is in Calcutta under treatment.

The Supt—Lt. Col. C. H. Reinhold—is however not very keen on keeping me on here. He did not like the rider about tooth trouble that I had added to my reply to govt., and tried to urge me to alter it. Said it was frightfully cold here in winter and Allahabad had a pleasanter climate. When I pointed out that Naini was in the wilderness so far as dentists etc. are concerned he said I might be sent to the Allahabad Dist. Jail. What a prospect! With the scoundrel of a jailer there who insulted mother and Kamala. There will be a devil of a row with him if I am sent there, and certainly there will be no interview. I don't think govt. will send me to Malacca. But I have an idea that I shall be transferred in another three weeks or so.

An S.O.S. from Rafi yesterday!

Tomorrow morning Ram Chandra Kapur is being discharged. He has got quite substantial remission on account of ill-health. I shall be lonely in my barrack from tomorrow. Men may come and men may go but I carry on! Have completed eleven months—twelfth month now running. Including remissions, I have completed nearly thirteen months!

Nov. 1932[121]

TO CARLETON WASHBURNE

An accidental book written by one who is neither a writer nor an educationist, but who comes to realise more and more, during long periods

120 See *ante*, pp. 433 434.

121 J N Correspondence, N M M L. Inscription on copy of *Letters From a Father to His Daughter* sent to Carleton Washburne, an American educationist.

of enforced inactivity, how vital is the question of education, and who has read your book[122] with pleasure and profit.

With all good wishes,

Jawaharlal Nehru

14.12.32[123]

My dear Mother,

I received your long letter and read all about your trips and your work. This touring is all very well, but you should not tire yourself much. At home also, because of guests, you will be having much work.

I do not as yet know whether Nan and Betty have been released. I thought they would probably be released by the 10th.

We have not met for over six months. Obviously I am very eager to see you. Anyway, we shall meet when we are destined to do so. All will be well then; and time passes quickly.

I am concerned about Kamala's health. It is a relief that she is getting the best treatment and I am sure she will be completely restored to health. You did well by asking her mother to join her. Kamala will be comforted by her presence. I do not see any particular need for you

122 Washburne's *Remakers of Mankind* contained the following account: "*Jawaharlal Nehru had moved from his tent in Dr. Ansari's yard and was* staying in Birla House, the beautiful and spacious home of a wealthy nationalist in New Delhi He was just up after an attack of influenza—young, good looking, full of fire, unsparing of himself.

"I believe in a socialistic state", he said, "and should like to develop education toward that goal. At present we must stress nationalism—a country under foreign domination is bound to be nationalistic. Yet I believe that in really fundamental matters, each individual should stand by his own personal ideals. The test of such conscientious convictions is willingness to suffer for them. Under present conditions, I should avoid internationalism of the pacifist type, for it might result in India's sitting by and doing nothing toward her own independence But I should try to avoid the narrow nationalism common to a country in the midst of a national struggle and to stress a broad, international outlook.

You ask how objective I would have the teaching of biography and history. Let us be as objectively truthful as possible. But when we are teaching a young child the life of a hero, let us stress those parts of his character which will be most helpful.

Students must develop the faculty of deciding questions for themselves. Therefore let them discuss quite freely any subjects which interest them, while we furnish them unbiased facts on which to base their conclusion."

123 J N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

to go to Calcutta at the moment. It is better to stay in Allahabad. The girls will be coming and there are various conferences being held.[124]

I am perfectly all right and having no trouble of any kind. The weather here is quite cold. I like it. I received the ointment for the teeth which you sent me. I will apply it when necessary but at present I have no tooth-ache. I had never had much pain at any time. I have had four teeth extracted during the last four months. Now there is no need to pull out any more. But I shall keep the medicine you have sent and use it when necessary.

I read and thought over what you had written about Anand's[125] marriage. I do not agree at all with the old customs of dowry that are prevalent; and specially in the present state of the country, we should not abide by these customs. Whatever we may have, little or much, we should think of using it for national purposes. We may of course give a present to a relative or a friend as a token of affection. But the question of dowry and the price of what was given or not given earlier should not arise. We should not bother about what others will say or think. We have to set the right example for others, rather than be misguided by their stupidity. So I think you should not worry about the old customs.

However, it is true that Anand and the girl should be given some presents as a token of our love. What should these be? In my opinion no ornament of any kind should be given. Giving ornaments and wearing them is, these days, quite contrary to our dignity as well as to the ideals of our work. Apart from that, good jewellery is very costly, and cheap jewellery is often quite worthless. We should, therefore, completely drop the idea of giving ornaments.

What should be given then? Obviously they should be *swadeshi* articles and all the better if they are household goods. Kamala has written to me that she has brought and has with her some very good articles which you and Betty should give to Anand and his wife. This seems to me to be right. Discuss this with Kamala a little more. If you think these articles are inadequate, buy for Rs. 100 or Rs. 200 more. There is no need whatever to consult me. You, Kamala, Betty and Nan can decide. I may send a book from jail as a personal gift.

As to what, apart from this gift, you should give to Anand and his wife separately or together—in my opinion it will be better if you give

124. The last session of the Unity Conference was held at Allahabad on 24 December and the All India Women's Conference was held at Lucknow on 28 December.

125. Anand Kumar Nehru (1903-1947); son of Shamlal and Uma Nehru.

Rs. 100 to each when the two of them come to see you after the wedding—that is Rs. 100 in cash to Anand and Rs. 100 in cash to his wife.

So I have given you my opinion, but in future please consult Kamala and others on such matters and do what you think best. I am not interested in these matters.

You have asked whether you should attend Anand's marriage. It is *difficult for anyone to advise you in this matter. Only you can decide.* Still, I shall tell you what I think. The marriage takes place towards the end of February. So there is plenty of time, and in the meantime anything can happen. It is likely that Gandhiji may undertake a fast again, and there is no saying what may then happen. It is, therefore, difficult to say now categorically what one should do at that time. But, apart from this, I do not think there is any other reason why you should not attend the marriage. My imprisonment and Ranjit's should not, I think, be considered a misfortune. This is contrary to our dignity and to yours. On a festive occasion there should be celebrations. If something more important comes up, then, of course, it is a different matter. I therefore do not see any particular objection to your attending the marriage.

You know attending marriages embarrasses me. I do not like a huge crowd going, with a lot of noise and confusion. I think marriages should be celebrated very quietly and in extreme simplicity. I am happy that Anand's marriage will probably be performed in a sober way. If you go, you need not attend all the ceremonies and feasts. You may go just for a day or two. But only you can take the final decision on these matters; and you should do whatever you think proper after due consideration. I am concerned only with one thing; nothing should make any of us pull a long face and at any cost we should perform our duties.

After a long interval the girls and children will be at home, and it will be a change for you and there will be some cheerfulness in the house. Some part of me will also be hovering nearby. I will reach there in thought.

Much love,

Your son,
Jawaharlal

Dec 15. 1932[126]

Darling Indu,
Mummie has sent me your letter to her. But she forgot to send the programme of your show.

I am sorry to learn that Ira and Mr. Vakil have been unwell and that your trip to Ajanta might not come off. Something always seems to happen when you plan to go to Ajanta! I have been planning for ever so many years but I have not got there yet. Once I did succeed in going to Ellora, and I also got down at a station to go to Ajanta, but no car was to be had.

I have no idea what your programme is likely to be. Perhaps you may go to Calcutta. If you go there, it would be worthwhile to visit Santiniketan for a few days.

I wonder if you received Hudson's book which I sent six weeks ago? If so did you like it?

I wrote to you some months back the story of Tat and Twee. I am sorry to say that the story had a tragic ending. It is difficult to tame wild animals. I am now on friendly terms with a kitten called Moti. She comes and plays with me and scratches me all over my hands and arms and feet. She happened to get locked out of her house one night by a mistake. So, in the middle of the night, she came to me, cold and shivering, and nestled up to my face on the pillow as I lay asleep. I woke with a start. As I raised myself slightly to find out who the intruder was, she pushed herself inside my blankets and made herself quite comfortable without any further reference to me!

I hope you will have a pleasant holiday and enjoy yourself thoroughly wherever you may go to. When does your school re-open again?

Love and kisses from your loving

Papu

December 20—Tuesday

Three weeks since I wrote last in this journal. Three weeks more or less like the other two score or more weeks that have passed. In a few days I shall complete the full year—one ambition achieved at least!

126. J N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I have not been transferred so far but the idea seems to hang in the air. The new Supdt. is evidently not desirous of having me here. He, or rather the district magistrate, suspects all manner of things. Rumours come to me that the C.I.D. is active and reports that some of us here smuggle out letters. Suspicion has even fallen, it appears, on the poor dentist! The jailer is much put out by attitude of the Supt. At the back of it is the dist. magistrate—Acton. Many months ago he came here to visit me. Our meeting was not cordial. Since then he has avoided coming to me even when visiting the gaol. I feel sure that it must have been due to him that Falvey was suddenly transferred.

The Supt. is courteous enough when he meets me. But the atmosphere is oppressive and I want to be sent away now to some other gaol. The business with the dentist will be over soon. He has pulled out two more teeth and little remains to be done.

I felt very fit early this month. The cold suited me and I sat for hours in the sun. I had a definite sense of well-being, more than I have had for two years or so. I could almost imagine my face, as I looked at it in the mirror, growing younger! Vanity! I felt convinced that this was due to the pulling out of the tooth on Nov. 14th. Another dentist assured me that by removing two more teeth the root of all trouble will go and I shall flourish like the green bay tree. So, greedily I consented, and I wrote to Kamala that I was growing in beauty and youth and hoped to look 33 and not 43 when I went out!

And yet hardly had I written when I began to feel rather poorly. Yesterday as I was walking in the evening my legs became heavy under me and I could hardly lift them. The calves pained as if I had marched for a dozen miles. Pride goeth before a fall! I feel a little better today. Perhaps it was the cold and my aggressive behaviour in regard to it...

Kamala continues ill in Calcutta. At the back of my mind I feel that she is bound to get well. I have a habit—is it merely the fear of facing the truth?—of seeing the bright side of things. Still a shadow seems to hang and I feel a little depressed.

But the greatest shadow is the approaching fast of Bapu. January 2nd[127]—what will happen to him and to the country?

What will happen? What will happen? I think and wonder and though the faith is strong in me, so many things seem to go awry. What is the reason for the faith? But one should not reason with faith!

The future is so dark. It is difficult to pierce the veil. And yet I am certain that we shall win through soon enough.

127 It was scheduled to start on 2 January 1933 but was postponed.

December 24 Saturday

Thunder and rain and a piercing cold wind. It is clear that gaol is no fit place under these circumstances. It was bad enough during the rainy season. But with the cold thrown in—sitting in a tiny hole with the wind and rain rushing in—one begins to long for a decent habitation and a little comfort. The limit was almost reached by having a bath in the open under these conditions. No one can be blamed if I do not catch pneumonia!

But there was some compensation. In the afternoon it cleared up for a short while and I saw fresh snow on the distant mountain tops and round about Mussoorie. This must have been about a dozen miles away but it cheered me up tremendously. I thought of Switzerland and skiing and skating and luging.

It is Christmas eve today. Rather a lonely affair for many of us!

Christmas Day

A lovely day with a beautiful view of snow-covered mountains.

27.12.32[128]

TO GIRDHARI LAL

My dear Girdhari,

For many months past I have been worried about your health. The bits of news about you that came to me were not encouraging. I could not make out what the matter was with you. Your letter, which has just reached me *via* Kamala, was very welcome as it gave me some definite information about you. You have had a real hard time of it with months and months in bed. I can hardly imagine a more difficult trial for any one. But you have stuck it out and I am very glad to learn that you have turned the corner and are likely to be well soon.

128. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

When one is ill everything seems to go wrong and worries and troubles accumulate. With the return of health most of these disappear into thin air and I have no doubt that you will find your troubles disappearing or lessening as soon as you are healthy enough to face them. After all life would be rather dull without some worries! As for financial troubles there is seldom any end to them in this topsy-turvy world. Long ago I decided to ignore them and I have been happier ever since, though of course I have not been put to a real test yet. But in my mind I began to think of myself as possessing nothing of money value and since then money has had little attraction for me and the loss of it is of no consequence. If Anand Bhawan went I would not worry for five minutes. I am indeed rather surprised to think that it is still there. So do not trouble yourself about money matters. Get well and the rest will follow. I am glad you are in Deshmukh's hands. He is a reliable and competent surgeon. Give him my love.

Kamala's ill-health is a source of anxiety. But then anxiety is such a foolish thing. I am happy that she is under Bidhan's treatment.

I am quite well. I have a knack of being well wherever I am.

How time goes! It is over a year since I was arrested—and it is nearly eleven months since we met last at the little flag station beyond Phaphamau. We shall meet again when the time for it comes, I have no doubt.

Love and all good wishes for the new year.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

7

PRISON DIARY WITH LETTERS

1933

5.1.33[1]

My dear Bapu,

Your letter is always a tonic,[2] and when it comes after a long interval, it brings a thrill with it and its effect is all the more exhilarating. I recognised Mahadeva's handwriting on the envelope. Yours did not seem as of old. Perhaps your left hand was functioning and I am not so familiar with it.

I am following of course with great interest your campaign against untouchability, as far as I can from the *Statesman* and the *Pioneer*.[3] Anything that you may do is bound to interest and fascinate. The subject itself has tremendous possibilities. Not being a man of religion, my interest is largely confined to the social aspect and to the wider issues involved.

Of course Sarup should do untouchability work if she feels like it. My suggestion about a short holiday in Ceylon was made chiefly in the interest of Krishna. I am a little worried about her. After a year in prison, with our home practically broken up, she feels rather at a loose end and does not know what to do. Ever since her childhood, the poor girl has been deprived of real home life and proper education because of our preoccupations and repeated visits to prison. She grew up a rather lonely girl not having as much friendship and sympathy as she was entitled to.

Father's death shook her up a great deal. I tried to soothe her and win her confidence and I am glad to say that I succeeded to some extent. But 1931 was for all of us a year full of work and worry and anxiety. Then came a long spell of prison for her, and for a young girl this was a far greater ordeal than it could be for most of us. As her release drew near I sensed how she must be feeling and how life

1. J N. Correspondence, N.M M L. In this section the diary kept by Jawaharlal in the Dehra Dun jail, from 5 January to 23 August and in Naini Central Prison, from 24 August to 30 August 1933, has been printed. Letters written by him during this period have been interspersed The omission of personal details is indicated by dots The diary and letters are available in the N M M L.

2 In his letter of 31 December 1932 Mahatma Gandhi had written among other things, "I do not know whether you are interesting yourself in the Harijan work I am having a glorious time with the *shastras*. My knowledge of the letter of the Shastras is better but of true religion they are able to give me but little."

3 Mahatma Gandhi's correspondence with the Zamorin of Calicut over the opening of the Guruvayoor temple to Harijans had been published on 2 January 1933.

in Anand Bhawan, as it is today, would be no joy to her. She would feel out of joint. She would want to do something and yet not know what to do and this would rob her of peace of mind. I was myself not clear what to suggest to her. Latterly she has begun to look upon me almost as a kind of refuge in a friendless world. If I had been out I might have been of help to her but I could do little from Dehra Dun jail.

I felt that a short holiday in natural surroundings would ease her mind and remove the tension. Hence my proposal about Ceylon. Three weeks in Ceylon would not have solved any problem but she would have freshened up and returned with a brighter outlook on life. These were my reasons. I was thinking more of mental health than of physical health. But the proposal seems to have fallen through as nobody seems to be keen on it. For the present therefore Ceylon is off.

Perhaps Krishna will go to Poona to see you and you might be able to advise her about her work. I might see her also. It is easy enough to suggest odd bits of work but this must appeal to the person concerned.

As for my interview, it is now nearly seven months since I had one.[4] I have missed them greatly but the U.P. Government had been very discourteous to mother and Kamala and I felt that I had no alternative; besides I have not yet got rid of my obstinacy—a hereditary failing in me of which you cannot be unaware. The government made some partial amends and the Home Member, the Nawab of Chhatari, came and expressed his concern. All this was more or less beside the point, and the graceful thing and the right thing was not done, but then the right thing is seldom done. I wrote again to government. Still I decided in my mind that should special necessity arise I would withdraw my prohibition and consent to an interview. So matters have stood for the last few weeks. I did not suggest an early interview as there was some talk of my transfer back to Naini prison.

Now that you have also written about it, what can I do but immediately to capitulate to you?[5] So henceforth, and unless something untoward intervenes, I shall take my usual interviews. Kamala may not be able to see me for several weeks still. She is in Calcutta under Bidhan's treatment. But I shall see mother and Indu and Sarup and Krishna or such of them as can find me.

The stopping of interviews has made me retire a little more into myself, but I have had pleasing and friendly neighbours—the Himalayas.

4. Jawaharlal had his last interview on 13 June 1932.
5. Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Jawaharlal: "You still seem to be refusing to see visitors. I wish you would see them if it is at all possible. It will give them satisfaction."

The sight of their outline against the sky, and now their summits and sides covered with fresh snow, have meant a great deal to me. They seem to rouse in me ancient memories of the long ago when perhaps my ancestors wandered about the mountains of Kashmir and played in their snow and glaciers. I have had companions here but largely I have been left to myself, and I have grown a little contemplative, in defiance of heredity and family tradition and personal habit! But that is a thin veneer which I am afraid will rub off at little provocation. How can the Ethiopian change his skin?

I have read a lot, and if wisdom could be had in books I would be wise. But wisdom eludes me, and big question marks confront me wherever I look. Sometimes I think of Prince Siddhartha's old question and no answer comes:

"How can it be that Brahm
Would make a world and keep it miserable
Since if all powerful, he leaves it so,
He is not good, and if not powerful,
He is not God?"

From all accounts in the papers you are as ever the slave of industry and are over-working yourself even in prison. The new industrial system of the west is often criticised and blamed because it makes man a machine for ceaseless work and robs him of all leisure. You are supposed to be no lover of this system. And yet, you seem to personify to me often this very industrial system!

I am intrigued at your remark that eye witnesses have told you that I am keeping fit. The information is correct but who could these eye witnesses be who have managed to reach you? I have had no interviews for a long while and, except for a colleague who was discharged a month ago, I can think of no other likely recent eye witness. It is true that I am poorer by four teeth. I have sacrificed them at the altar of modern science to appease the goddess of physical health.

This is a long letter for gaol. But this I am writing to you after over a year and I have not seen you for over sixteen months. My last glimpse of you was when you were sailing away to the far west and your figure grew smaller and smaller as the ship bore you away and left us, feeling rather lonely and forlorn, on the pier.

With my love to all the happy family of four in Yeravda,[6]

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

6 Vallabhbhai Patel, Mahadeva Desai and Chhaganlal Joshi were with Mahatma Gandhi in Yeravda Jail.

January 8, Sunday

A week of the new year gone—It has been an exciting week for me—little things make a difference in jail. *Felt rather depressed* on New Year's Day. General political outlook depressing enough. Nothing much doing. A long stalemate in prospect. Also, I had been feeling a little poorly for some days and had lost weight.

Then came a letter from Bapu on the 4th and it cheered me up tremendously. There was nothing special in it. First letter after a year. Suggested I might resume my interviews.

For weeks past the question of interviews has been troubling me. The desire to see some persons and obstinacy! Betty's appeal in a letter saying how much she wanted to see me upset me and set me thinking again. I decided to resume interviews even if nothing further done by Govt. But still I wanted to postpone an interview for another month or so till I was in Allahabad or Naini and special necessity arose. A vague and unsatisfactory decision.

Bapu's letter & suggestion suddenly made me feel that I must end this drifting and resume interviews immediately. This decision it was that seemed to remove a burden off me. I felt light hearted all day. Having come to a decision I was all eagerness to have the interview! Having done without it for nearly seven months and not thought of it much—except for a dull aching want of it—now I am full of it. I await Kamala's letter to find out where Indu is. After a day I decide to wait no longer and wire to Kamala. My haste due to fact that Indu has to go back to school to Poona and I did not want to miss her. Kamala of course cannot come yet. But Nan & Betty may come.

Next day a vague phrase in the paper about Kamala's health put me out and I felt depressed again. But yesterday came her letter with better news.

Abdul Latif has gone. He was discharged on the 5th. My other companion Anand Singh is also going. His little son—4½ month old—died suddenly as a result of an accident. His wife is greatly upset and it is said that Chhatari has ordered his release immediately. Anyway his term expires at the end of this month.

So I shall be alone here. There is no mention of my transfer. I shall miss my companions and yet I have had, during this past year, a strange set of companions in prison. Hardly any one of them in Bareilly or Dehra had much in common with me.

It is so cold. When I shiver what must be the condition of the ordinary convicts with their wretched blankets? Fortunately the Supt feels the cold himself very much and he has insisted on extra blankets being distributed.

Today's paper contained the judgment in the Bhatwaria case. Forty five persons sentenced for life in an agrarian riot when a petty zamindar started firing at his tenants who got angry and clubbed him to death. These monstrous sentences haunted me all day.

10.1.33.[7]

TO SYED MAHMUD

My dear Mahmud,

I have not written to you since I came to gaol, not even to answer your letters or to thank you for your birthday gifts. But of course you cannot expect letters from a prisoner. A prisoner has no concern with the doings of the wide world outside; his world is a narrower one and high walls enclose it. There have been some changes in prison rules since you and I were together in Naini two years ago or more.[8] We get some newspapers now—*Pioneer, Statesman* and the like. And so some news of the outside world comes to us though often it is one-sided or perverted; and from this news we can sometimes find out what our friends are doing. Almost I wish that even this news would not come to us to disturb our peace and quiet. I am too much interested in action to be a mere looker on.

And perhaps my mind is better occupied with reading and thinking and looking at the whole picture, than it might otherwise be if I was busy looking at a few trees and thinking they were the forest.

My birthday would not be a real birthday if a parcel of gifts from you did not descend upon me and so I was not surprised when the books you sent came. They were a good selection. But I am so full of books and books that I get rather lost.

I hope your health is better, but that is a vain hope as you have not grasped the elements of treating yourself scientifically. You flit about from doctor to doctor, and doctor to hakim and *vaid* and what not. I envy you your belief in wonderful cures by magic medicines. Unfortunately I have come to the conclusion that there is no magic in this world either for human ailments or society's troubles.

I am flourishing as ever. Abdul Latif of Bijnor was with us here but he was discharged last week. Perhaps I might be transferred soon to Naini or some other jail.

7. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
8. Motilal Nehru and Syed Mahmud had joined Jawaharlal in Naini Prison on 30 June 1930.

Keep fit and strong and cheerful.

With love and all good wishes for the New Year and good luck to you in the work you are doing.

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

Jan. 11, Wednesday

Anand Singh has just gone and I am left alone. For seven months and a week we were together. Not much in common—but it is sad to part I might have felt it more if I had not been full of my interview which comes off tomorrow. How excited I have been over it ever since it was fixed up. Nan and Betty & Indu are coming. What will Indu look like after seven and a half months? How she must have grown.

Jan. 14 Saturday

So the interview has come and gone. It was a great event in my jail life and I have not settled down after it yet I was exuberant and full of light hearted laughter. Partly this was natural for I felt so; but I suspect that it was also partly due to my desire to impress. I wanted them to feel light-hearted and not to worry.

Nan & Betty & Indu & little Chand came. Nan & Betty and Chand I saw after a year—Not much difference. But Indu is becoming a little woman and remarkably attractive and smart looking. And yet I was glad to notice that she was childish enough in her ways. I felt so happy and proud to see her healthy and straight, and growing up apparently without any marked inhibitions.

Nan bustling and full of life and talk as ever—Betty rather quiet and still somewhat childish—Chand staid and well behaved.

It was a long interview as jail interviews go—nearly two hours, and I felt excited and light-hearted for long afterwards. Indeed it was not possible to go back to my routine and I have made more or less holiday ever since, which means that I have read light books.

But now the excitement has worked itself out and there is some depression. I feel a little lonely also; there is no company, except the jail staff! Especially at meal times I feel lonely.

My pain in the right side has returned. I have tried to ignore it for many days or weeks, but today it refused to be ignored.

23.1.33[9]

Nan dear,

Thank you for the money you sent me.

I shall be very glad to have Ranjit's translation of the Rajatarangini[10] to read here. There should be no difficulty about it. The manuscript should be well typed and at least four copies should be made. Ranjit can then carry out his revisions on the typed copy. One of the typed copies can be sent to me.

I am suggesting to mother to come and have an interview with me by herself and not to wait for Kamala. Later I can have an interview *with Kamala alone. In such single interviews I shall have a little* more chance of talking to each separately. It is not my intention to have very frequent interviews. So it is as well to have a relatively satisfactory interview with each. There is no point in mother staying on in Calcutta. She might as well return, visit me, and then go back to Allahabad. After seeing me she will also be free to go anywhere she wants to, like Poona.

If *you meet Bapu you can ask him about mother. Tell him about* your difficulties which you mentioned to me. I am inclined to think that if he asks her to go she should go, provided she herself is not averse to doing so. I shall speak to her myself about it when she meets me.

I have not received any foreign periodical *for about three weeks now.* I do not know what has happened to them. I am inclined to think that it will be better if they are forwarded to me direct and unopened. Otherwise they may get waylaid, especially as you and Betty are going away. Please leave directions accordingly.

I met the Washburne family just before Karachi when I was recovering from influenza in Delhi. He mentions me in his book and of course *praises my beauty!*

My love to the kiddies. Tell Tara *mamuji* was so sorry not to see her.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

Some foreign papers have just come.
25/1 —more foreign papers have come today.

9. Vijayalakshmi Pandit Papers, N.M.M.L.
10 Jawaharlal wrote a foreword to *R. S. Pandit's translation of the Rajatarangini* published in 1934.

23.1.33.[11]

TO EVELYN WOOD[12]

Dear Wood,
Your card came as a breath of fresh air and was very welcome. It brought a picture in my mind's eye of a pleasant afternoon spent in your flat high up in the clouds—or so it seemed—and far removed from the madding crowd. But interruption came, as it always does, and I had to descend from the heights. Some things end soon enough, too soon; others seem to go on and on.

So you are shaking the dust of India off from your feet. I am not surprised. But the whole world seems to be awry and you cannot escape from it even in the pleasant land of Kent. There is one consolation however; whatever happens you can always fall back on hop-picking in Kent. And, perhaps, if your wife promises to be good to me, and to teach me this ancient and honourable science, I may join you in the distant future and wander about for a while in the delightful fields of Kent. Once upon a time long long ago I actually indulged in hop picking there; it almost seems like a fairy tale now, or a story from another's life.

Anyway wherever you may go to, both of you will carry my best wishes.
My homages to madam,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

January 26th—Thursday—Independence Day!

I have been feeling rather thin—a little lonely and bored and not in the mood for any hard work, mental or physical. For a fortnight have had no one to talk to, except for greetings with the jail staff. For a long time I have not spun either. But today in honour of Independence Day I did some spinning.

Even my friend Moti, the cat, has gone. The assistant jailer has been transferred and he took her with him.

11. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
12. (b. 1903), an Englishman settled in India; became interested in *swadeshi* work and was associated with Jai Naorojı; in early forties wanted the Congress to support Britain's war effort.

February 5th—Sunday

Over three and a half weeks of loneliness! I am not exactly enjoying it. My mind wanders a lot and I find it a little difficult to concentrate on any reading. After a little while I suddenly catch myself thinking of something quite different and far removed from the subject of the book. Often I think of what we should do outside when we do go out. How to meet the new situation created by the Round Table Conference.[13] I get very angry at the scandalous and shameful way the Liberals and others have agreed to the monstrous abortions which are the outcome of the R.T.C. It is really amazing how any Indian with least little bit of political sense—not to mention more idealistic motives—could agree to this. I am sure Samuel Hoare and the English people in the conference must have been mightily surprised. But then the question that comes again and again to my mind—how to meet the situation and fight it? Bapu is getting more and more involved in his Temple Entry business.[14] Well, well, why worry? It will be time enough to decide when we are out! That is not going to happen very soon and so there is no hurry. But oh, these Liberals and other Round Tablers! What morons they are—or is it merely that they are a lot of old women?

I have not been keeping well. Slight temperature again.

I have been in this jail for nearly eight months and I calculated today that I must have walked 15000 times up and down the little stretch of ground opposite the jail gate where I take my morning and evening constitutional.

No news of another interview. I want it more than I would care to confess.

13 On 24 December 1932, the third Round Table Conference came to an end with Sir Samuel Hoare's announcement that federation would be brought about "by removing every obstacle as early as possible", the Muslims would have a representation of 33-1/3% in the federal centre, Sind and Orissa would become new provinces, and financial control would be granted subject to safeguards and reservations. Defence was to be the sole responsibility of the British and, like the budget, would be non votable.

14 Mahatma Gandhi had decided to fast on the Guruvayoor temple entry question; but when, on 23 January 1933, the Viceroy disallowed the introduction of a temple entry bill in the Madras Council, he stated that the issue "now broadened from Guruvayoor in the extreme south to Hardwar in the north and my fast though it remains further postponed depends not now upon Guruvayoor only but extends automatically to temples in general."

U. U. GENT LIB.

Feb. 13th Monday

Have been in bed for two days—had some fever etc. Nothing very much but *it is not pleasant to be ill in jail.* However I have shaken off the fever.

I had a sheaf of letters today unexpectedly. One from Kamala not very cheering—one from Nan which rather worries me about Indu. Another letter from the income tax man in Calcutta demanding payment of Rs. 20000 and odd—and a communication from I.G. informing me that female prisoners may be embraced by female relatives under certain conditions! This information was conveyed to me, I suppose, because of a casual remark I made in my letter to Govt., nearly three months ago, pointing out that mother had refused to have interviews with Nan & Betty because, among other reasons, she was asked to sit far away from them. How perfectly ridiculous and pompous Govt. officials succeed in becoming in their efforts to maintain their dignity!

Have just read a collection of Russian short stories—grim, impressive, sometimes rather unpleasant. One story impressed me most—*A Tale about AK and Humanity* by Efim Zozulya.

Feb. 25, Saturday

Several unusual days, or rather days with unusual happenings. On the 17th Ansari suddenly turned up without any previous warning. The Supt gave him permission for a special interview, and there he was to my vast surprise. Freshly returned from Europe full of stories of common friends and memories of old haunts in Switzerland and elsewhere. He looked much better than when he came in July. But his heart still gives trouble. He has wandered all over Europe while I have sat and fed and slept in this same old little cell! How used I have got to it during the last eight and a half months or more.

Ansari examined me thoroughly. Found me generally well but still with the patch of pleurisy on the right side.

Two days later mother came. She looked older and smaller than ever. *Eight months had aged her and her face was full of wrinkles.* But there is energy and vitality in her still.

The two interviews and a cheerful letter from Bapu bucked me up a great deal and I have felt more light-hearted than I have done for a long while. Perhaps this was also due to my gradual recovery from a bad and troublesome cold. Physical health has an extraordinary effect on the mind.

The weather has been dismal. Clouds and rain and wind. I have become such a sun-worshipper that I miss the sun greatly. As I write it is raining away and it is so dark at high noon that I have to sit with a lighted candle.

7/3/33[15]

My dear Bapu,

Thank you for your letter[16] and the first two copies of *Harijan*.[17] I read through the *Harijan* of course with interest, and delighted to see the old rapier touch of overmuch kindness and inexhaustible patience which extinguishes, or as you say neutralises, the opponent. I pity the poor Sanatanists. With their anger and abuses and frantic cursing, they are no match for this kind of subtle attack. And yet the power of stupidity and conservatism and entrenched privilege in this world is amazing. Even mahatmas and saints cannot easily upset this combination unless circumstances have prepared the ground. Have you read Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan*—the play about Joan of Arc? If not I wish you would do so, and especially the preface of the play. It is quite a little thing and will not take much time. A short while ago I sent a copy of the book to Indu and you could easily commandeer it from her.

The tribe of Sanatanists is of course doomed because they are relics of a bygone age. Their very anger shows the extent of the danger that confronts them. Under strain all tolerance disappears, and their intolerance at present is a sign of the great strain you are putting on them. It is all very well for the likes of Sapru and me (a curious combination!) to talk pompously and in a superior way of our tolerance in matters of religion when neither of us has any religion worth talking about, or for us to bless the movement for temple entry when neither has the remotest desire to go within a hundred miles of a temple except, so far as I am concerned, to see the architecture and the statuary! But touch either of us on some particular subject and you will find the raw

15 JN Correspondence, NMML.

16 In his letter of 15 February 1933 Mahatma Gandhi had written, "The fight against Sanatanists [orthodox Hindus] is becoming more and more interesting if also increasingly difficult. The one good thing is that they are men awakening from a long lethargy. The abuses they are hurling at me are wonderfully refreshing. I am all that is bad and corrupt on this earth. But the storm will subside for I apply the sovereign remedy of ahimsa, non-retaliation.... The more I ignore the abuses the fiercer they are becoming. But it is the death dance of the moth around a lamp."

17 The first issue of *Harijan* was published on 11 February 1933.

side and there will be little of tolerance then. Who is more intolerant than you are in certain matters? The fact is real tolerance hardly exists; what goes under the name of tolerance is indifference. What we do not value we make a virtue of tolerating in others. A person who is not prepared to be aggressively intolerant about some thing or another is a pretty useless individual. So I feel a little sympathy—of an inverted kind—for the Sanatanists. They value something for which they are prepared to fight. The issue is clarified. The dangerous people are always those who are dodging and avoiding difficulties in an effort to ignore them or forget them, or are looking at them with one eye only!

Of course, if you will stir up stagnant matters there will be bad smell, and the Hindu social structure has stagnated long enough in all conscience. My own remedy for a stagnant pool would be to drain it completely and let the sun dry and purify the bottom and the sides. Cool fresh water can then be poured in and arrangements made for it to keep running on, so that there may be no stagnation again. Superficial drainage can never clean the accumulations of filth at the bottom. But you are emptying the tank to some extent and may be we shall see the bottom!

The *Harijan*, I take it, will not convert a single bigoted Sanatanist. But it will no doubt influence vast numbers of others whose eyes have so far been closed to our own social evils. We get used very soon to the dirt round us. I wish the *Harijan* would give detailed facts about the suppressed classes—how they are treated in various parts of the country, their disabilities, and especially their economic condition, in so far as this is due to social conditions. This mass of facts will impress the mental person and overwhelm the Sanatanist. There will be no spectacular conversion of the latter in spite of your sweet reasonableness. If I may give you a quotation from an eminently respectable Victorian—John Stuart Mill: "We are the last persons to under-value the power of moral convictions. But the convictions of the mass of mankind run hand in hand with their interests or class feelings. We have a strong faith, stronger than either politicians or philosophers generally have, in the influence of reason and virtue over men's minds; but it is in that of the reason and virtue of our own side of the question. We expect few conversions by the mere force of reason from one end to the other."

You have recently had a criticism of the *Harijan*, or rather your article in it, from an old school master. As you like criticisms, here is another—a superficial one! My first view of the *Harijan* was not agreeable. Suddenly it brought to my mind by its general appearance—size,

get up, type etc.—that old and highly respected organ of pompous futility, the *Indian Social Reformer*.[18] I do not know if this worthy but utterly useless and humourless paper still carries on in its ponderous manner for the edification of the dull and sober. I have no grievance against it if it keeps away from me. Only, the outward resemblance to it of the *Harijan* was not a point in the latter's favour. Of course the resemblance vanished when I started reading the paper.

But I must protest against the apology for an envelope in which your letter came. If Vallabhbhai is responsible for it, much as I love him, I must make it clear that envelope-making is not his strong line. Or perhaps the fault is not entirely his when the raw material he is supplied with comes from the waste paper basket.

Forgive me for my superficiality. I like my diamonds smooth and polished. You have shown us the art and style of living life in the grand manner. That is the real thing, but why should we ignore style and art in the little things of life? Most of us cannot reach the snowy heights. Would you deprive us of the flowers in the valleys?

I have written a long enough letter already and yet many of the things I wished to say remain unsaid. What is the use of my writing about the Harijan movement? You have more than enough of the subject. I would have liked to write to you of some of my interests and occupations, just to divert and refresh your mind. Being prevented from activity in the present I live a little in the future, but largely in the past. I should like to tell you of the delightful civilization of the Gobi desert thirteen hundred years and more ago, where a strange mixture of Indian and Chinese and Russian culture flourished and even Roman culture had a look in, and Sanskrit was the language of learning, and the Buddha legend the golden link that joined these countries of Asia; and of the origins of Gothic architecture in Gandhara or Afghanistan and Persia nearly a thousand years before the Europe of the middle ages, in a passionate fervour of faith, built up those wonderful Gothic cathedrals which go up almost like visible prayers to the sky; and of the vivid life of Central Asia in those early days and the varied caravans, full of rich and beautiful merchandise, and accompanied by many a scholar and a pilgrim, which passed to and fro between western Asia and India and the Far East; and, later, of another world in this very region, the Arab world, also pulsating with life; and, in the Indonesian waters, of the empire of Sri Vijaya,[19] a real bit of India abroad, where Indian culture was supreme and Indian art is said to

18. A weekly started in Bombay in 1890, and edited by K. Natarajan
19. The empire of Sri Vijaya spread from Sumatra to Malaya and parts of Indonesia between the 7th and the 13th centuries. It declined after the 13th century.

have reached its zenith. And I could also accompany you in thought across these vast spaces of Central Asia now and see the changes that time has wrought, and unearth from under the hot sands of the deserts the relics of ancient days which tell us so much of peoples and cultures and civilizations that have been long dead. And so I could go on and on to find an outlet for my suppressed energy till my long letter drives you to distraction and the jail authorities to something worse!

Mother has decided to go to Poona. I saw her a fortnight ago and found her looking older and more shrunk up than before. I hope you will not make her travel about. She wants rest. She was not very happy about her last place of residence in Poona. If it is possible perhaps she might stay elsewhere.

Kamala has at last left Calcutta after three and a half months of treatment there and yet she is more or less on ticket-of-leave. She is at Patna now staying with her brother for a few days. By the end of the month she might manage to reach here. She now intends staying in Dehra Dun for two or three months and Indu can join her during her holidays. We are a homeless and a scattered family!

As I am not a Harijan by birth or adoption I am clearly not entitled to a free copy of the paper. I am therefore asking Sarup to send a year's subscription and arrange to have the paper sent to me here direct. I understand that it is a permitted article.

I have been a sun worshipper during the winter months here and my body has put on the sun's livery. But spring has come now and the sun gets uncomfortably warm, and with the spring have come not only fresh leaves on the trees but hordes of flies, and my faith flags before this onset.

Ansari paid me a visit and thumped me about. It was good to see him again.

I have presumed greatly on the indulgence of the jail authorities by writing such a long letter. But presumption is an old failing of mine.

Love to you and your companions.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

March 10 Friday

Spent nearly two days in writing to Bapu, Kamala etc. Quite long letters. The writing of them kept me in a somewhat tense condition of concentration. When they went off there was a reaction and a general loosening. Felt disinclined to do anything. Recovered the next day.

Kamala suggests that she might spend the summer in Dehra. The idea pleased me greatly for this means that I shall see her every two weeks. Meanwhile I await the next interview with her rather impatiently. It is nine months since I saw her.

References in the papers about the release of political prisoners irritate me. Of course the idea of going out of jail always brings a thrill. But I do not want to go a day sooner than my term. I have just six months more and that is barely enough to finish the work I have in hand. The letters to Indu become longer and longer and the end seems to recede I expected to finish them by the middle of January. I am doubtful now if I shall finish them by May!

I take life easily in jail now and do not overwork myself by any means. The daily regime is followed and by nightfall I am pleasantly tired. Almost I dread what will happen outside. There is sure to be strife and mutual conflict and party rivalry within the Congress, one saying this and the other that Fortunately the last year has driven away from the Congress a number of the parasites and job hunters. But they will begin to fawn again when the time comes.

The future seems so dark all over the world. Conflict and violence everywhere—in the Far East, in Germany.[20] I have almost brought myself to the frame of mind when a ten year sentence of imprisonment will make little difference! Life outside under present circumstances has little attraction, so why should jail frighten?

The fresh new leaves have come out on the trees. The weather is warming up and there is the spell of summer already in the air. Yet strangely the big peepuls here are almost without leaves. I do not remember having seen any peepul so bare at any time of the year.

March 12, Sunday

It is *Holi* today—All through the morning I heard sounds of revelry outside. Shouting and singing and dancing. I felt what a good festival *Holi* was and I felt a trifle lonely to be sitting all by myself when the world was dancing outside. I felt so even though I take no part in *Holi* outside. What then must the average prisoner feel on this day? He must be terribly homesick and lonesome. *Holi* is a holiday in jail which means that the prisoners are kept locked up nearly the whole day, there being no work for them.

20 Jehol in Inner Mongolia was occupied by Japan in March 1933, and the burning of the Reichstag on 27 February 1933 was the prelude to the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship

20 March 1933[21]

My dear Mother,

Received your letter. You had written that your hand shakes, but writing with that hand has not made much of a difference. I am able to read it quite easily. Please do not bother much about this.

I received the money sent by you. It is too much. I will not need any more for some time now.

I heard of your idea of going to Calcutta. It is all right; if you have any work there, go and stay till you think necessary. Go to Poona when you think it proper. There is no need to decide on the date of your return from now itself. It is upto you to decide. Stay as long as you wish and then come and see me. I would very much like to meet you. By then many days will have gone by.

My health is all right nowadays. The weather here is fine and even in summer it is not particularly hot. Even otherwise the summer does not bother me. You do know that I have roamed the villages in summer. Then what is the difficulty in my being here?

I knew, even earlier, the correct date of *Naoroz*. I have a *Samvat* diary which gives all this. Birthdays can also be found with its help. Happy *Naoroz* to you. You write about your difficulties and helplessness. Do not think in that way. This does not suit your dignity nor mine. We are all your children and you are the elder. If the children are a bit petulant or impolite then the elders must understand. There are yet a number of duties and obligations for all of us. So long as the allotted task is not over how can we retire?

Please let me know your Poona address.

I do not require anything in particular. I need a few articles for the summer, for which I have already written to Kamala.

Love,

Your son
Jawahar

March 20, 1933[22]

TO GIRDHARI LAL

My dear Girdhari,

I was glad to get your letter but your long continued illness worries me. You have been laid up now for a year and that is a terribly long

21. J.N. Correspondence, NMML. Original in Hindi.
22. JN Correspondence, NMML

In the afternoon suddenly, as I was dozing, my dhobi (who is not a prisoner) turned up to pay a *Holi* visit to me! It was a surprise, an extraordinarily pleasant surprise. We embraced and he sprinkled some *gulal* on me and presented me with a plateful of really good sweets. I was greatly touched.

Strange how suddenly a physical longing for the soft things of life comes on me—pleasant surroundings, good friends, agreeable women, interesting conversation. Reading a newspaper yesterday I came across some names of old acquaintances—and their pictures were there—and the old days when I was a student in England came before me—and a certain nostalgia—We live in different worlds and I have not seen some of them for a score of years. The dhobi who came to visit me is nearer to me than the princes & princesses of old....

Today we discovered two somewhat unwelcome visitors in my little barrack. There was a tiny snake, a baby one but said to be of a ferocious variety, and an enormous black scorpion, which looked fierce and poisonous. The scorpion was right under my bed. There was a thunderstorm last night. Perhaps this was the reason why they took refuge with us. This afternoon and evening we had hail—bigger than marbles. Falling on the corrugated iron sheets, it sounded like a bombardment going on.

I had never noticed before that fresh mango leaves are reddish-brown —russet coloured—remarkably like the autumn tints on the Kashmir hills. But they change colour soon and become green.

For a week or more one of the Afghan detenus—Amir Ayub Khan's son I think—has been kept in this jail. It appears that he got into a temper with some police official and said that within a few days he would return to Afghanistan. This was reported immediately to the lord of the district, Acton, than whom perhaps even the Indian Civil Service has not produced a more foolish knave. Acton forthwith had him locked up under Regulation III of 1818 or some such thing and so here he has been ever since. He is not allowed to meet his people and—a low down trick—has not even been allowed a change of clothes from his home. I have been seeing him from a distance during my evening walks but I kept my distance lest there might be further complications and the poor chap might get into trouble. This evening I came across him and had a few words with him. He was feeling pretty thin. All by himself—no clothes to change—wretched food etc. I have sent him some odd clothes—a tooth paste and soap, and he is vastly grateful for them!

I would suggest to you that you should try to gather material, as you can, and your note will help you in this. Do it quietly—no advertisement and the like You won't get anything worthwhile by advertisement. This is a big enough job. Having got together the material and classified it, then the time will come to consider how, and what part of it, should be presented in book form.

But for the present your job is to get well. Do this thoroughly and the rest will follow.

Love,

Jawaharlal Nehru
Yours affectionately,

March 20, 1933[23]

Nan darling,

This is to wish you and Betty a happy नौरोज [Naoroz] as well as the *364* और रोज[24]

Some days ago I was surprised and delighted to receive an envelope containing cut flowers from Ranjit. It was a brave thing to do, send cut flowers by post in this way, but many of them survived, and added to the beauty and colour of my little abode for many days. It was obvious that these flowers had been grown by Ranjit himself in his barrack in Bareilly jail. I was glad of this for I have seldom seen a more dismal place than that barrack where I spent four months and Ranjit has spent ten. One of the walls was reminiscent of Golconda or some other ancient fortress. But the flowers must have made a vast difference. And there were so many varieties!

I gather that Ranjit might go to Kashmir for a little holiday. I wish he would. One must freshen and tone up after a long spell of jail. I shall envy him a little; it is seventeen years since we were there, is it *not? I am told that* Hari Singh[25] has laid down *boulevards* near Srinagar and Dal lake is almost a thing of the past. But the call of Kashmir to me does not come from the *boulevards* — why not go to Paris or Berlin or beautiful Vienna, if you want *boulevards* and the like? No, the call comes from the higher valleys leading up to the glaciers and the snows, *and the beautiful spring flowers and the autumn hues, and the lotus in* bloom on the Dal lake. I was a little suprised to notice the other day

23 Vijayalakshmi Pandit Papers, N.M.M.L.
24. Other days.
25. (1895 1961); Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. His state acceded to India in 1947. He abdicated in favour of his son in June 1949.

time to be continuously ill. You have given Bombay a long enough chance and I think it is about time that you had a change. Ansari's advice was quite sound—you should go to Delhi. I am sure this change will do you good. Perhaps you have already gone there.

I am afraid I have no faith in *vaids* and hakims and the like, although I know that some of them are quite good and sometimes bring off astonishing cures. But to talk of curing *Nasur* by local application seems to me silly. Personally I would advise you to consult Ansari before you decide on a change in treatment. He has some knowledge of the *unani* and *vaidic* systems also although of course he is an allopath and practices only as such. Any doctor or *vaid* or hakim who talks of curing anything within a stated time by some patent method irritates me, as this is a most unscientific thing to say.

Kamala will be coming here soon—I have not seen her for nine and a half months now. The rest of the family is likely to be in Bombay or Poona after some days. Mother will be going to Poona. Ranjit is likely to go to Bombay when released.

The idea of writing father's life has occurred to many people—some are friends of ours—and they have asked me for help. I have told them that I shall give them such odd help as I can but it is not likely to be much. It was also suggested by a dear friend to me that I might utilise my time in prison by writing about father. I found myself wholly incapable of doing so. I had certain personal reasons for this But even apart from this it is an extraordinarily difficult task to write biography well. In France and England and Germany this is now done remarkably well. In India I am not aware of any book on such a subject which is even a third rate affair. The books that have appeared on Tilak, C. R. Das, Lajpat Rai and others are painful to contemplate—so poor in workmanship are they. All these made me hesitate to write anything on the subject myself, and naturally I was far from satisfied that others would do it as well as I should like it done. It is not a question of eulogising or praising a person. Anybody can do that. It is most difficult to produce a real picture of an almost living person. And for one who was intimately connected with great movements, the task becomes more difficult still, as it involves a true appraisal of complicated currents and under-currents.

Do not think I am writing this to discourage you in the idea you have got. I am merely pointing out to you some of the difficulties of the job which overwhelmed me. Reading through your analysis of the proposed work I felt quite lost. It read like an encyclopaedia—hardly like a vivid human being. One is apt to lose sight of the wood for the trees.

I would suggest to you that you should try to gather material, as you can, and your note will help you in this. Do it quietly—no advertisement and the like. You won't get anything worthwhile by advertisement. This is a big enough job. Having got together the material and classified it, then the time will come to consider how, and what part of it, should be presented in book form.

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a mango tree here looking reddish brown — a kind of russet. They were fresh new leaves in their youthful colouring and they reminded me of the autumn tints of the Kashmir hills.

So perhaps I shall envy Ranjit a little—not much! I think Ranjit is likely to envy me more. Tell him that I shall await the *Rajatarangini* translation in a typed copy.

The days are getting long and summer hovers in the air. It is pleasant. As a reminder of summer I had a somewhat unwelcome visitor yesterday—a huge black scorpion! I have bottled him up and am trying to feed him. But I can't find out what scorpions feed on. Can you help?

Give my love to Betty. Tell her not to keep late hours if she wants to get fit.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

I hope you have got over your eye trouble.

March 25, Saturday

The Afghan was suddenly discharged on Monday last—the day after I had sent him the clothes etc. He took my clothes with him! Not that I grudge him the clothes but it was rather casual to march off with them without any reference to me. No one has a superfluity of clothing in jail.

Letter writing and receiving in jail are serious incursions on a peaceful and unruffled existence. They produce an emotional state which is disturbing. For a day or two afterwards my mind wanders and I cannot concentrate on the day's work. And sometimes little things in the letters I receive upset me out of all proportion to their importance. If I do not get a letter from home on the appointed day I am worried. And yet when it does come, I almost hesitate to open it. I play about with it as one does with an assured pleasure, and at the back of my mind there is also a trace of fear lest it contain any news or reference which might annoy me.

I am now looking forward to the interview with Kamala. I have no news yet when she will come but the C.I.D. have started visiting the jail already and informing the jailer that she is due!

I have grown very friendly with three puppies whom I have more or less adopted. It was really their mother that I took under my wing.

The poor lady was neglected and forlorn with no one to look after her or feed her. Some one had brought her from Calcutta a year ago and then deserted her. She gave birth to a litter of 8 puppies underneath a culvert in front of the jail gate. And she wandered about with fear and hunger in her eyes. I started feeding her. Most of her puppies were taken away but three remained and they began to share the food. We have all grown friends now. I have named them according to the names of playing cards:— दुरो, तिरो and चौका. The mother is बेगम.[26]

They spend the day mostly in my barrack. At night I used to send them to their culvert—the mother remaining with me—as they were messy and it has not been cold. Last night there was a rain storm and I felt very miserable at having sent them away, and could just imagine the rain driving them out of their shelter. As I was worrying about them, I heard a moaning sound and discovered that they were just outside my barrack gate trying to get in! I induced the warder to open the gate and take them in and they trooped in wet and bedraggled but happy at last. The whole family, mother and children, spent the night in my little room or cell while outside there was thunder and lightning and rain They have established their right to share my abode now.

The scorpion is flourishing in his bottle. All I do is to put some fresh earth in the bottle and a green leaf or two to cheer the brute up!

News has just come that Kamala will be here tomorrow—I am all excitement!

March 26, Sunday

Just as I was picking out a new razor blade to shave my best, news came that Kamala was not coming today but tomorrow. The day suddenly seemed very long. I had a bright idea that I might wash and clean up everything including the *newar* bed which has been given to me and which badly needs a wash. So the day was spent in rubbing and scrubbing, and taking the bed to pieces and washing the *newar* (several hundred feet of it), and generally in fairly continuous physical activity. We—two other convicts & I—began at 8 in the morning. At one I was quite exhausted and we broke off. After an hour or so we started again and did not finish finally till about six in the evening. Far the greater part of the time was spent on the bed or rather in cleaning the *newar* and then drying it & lastly weaving it on the bed.

26 Two, three, four and queen.

Being Sunday, I was fasting from the morning coffee etc. to the afternoon tea. Usually the day passes without my thinking of food, but today I was violently hungry—And the working in the sun gave me a troublesome headache—a most unusual thing for me.

However, the long day is past and with it passes the *Samvat* year 1889 for tomorrow is *Naoroz* and the new *Samvat* year begins. I shall meet it and Kamala with everything washed and scrubbed clean.

I complete fifteen months today!

March 27, Monday

Heigh—ho! She did not come today either. I have waited and waited and waited and no news has come. At last all that I got to know was that she had not even reached Dehra Dun and a crowd of people and a host of policemen returned from the station disappointed. No news —no news. I am full of apprehension and ugly fears about a breakdown in her health during the journey.

What a *Naoroz!*

December 28. Tuesday
March How muddle headed I have become!

She came today, and with her Ranjit who was released from Bareilly jail yesterday. It was good to see them both. I had a long interview. The jailer, as usual, was very decent. There is a feeling of reaction after the tension. I feel calmer and more at peace with the world than I have done for a long time.

March 30, Thursday

A letter from Indu—a real intimate letter. How it comforted me!

April 1st Saturday

News of mother's arrest at Asansol on the 31st morning at 3 a.m. on her way to Calcutta to attend the Congress session.[27] Also Malaviyaji, Rafi, Kesho and Mahmud. I am so glad mother was

27. Swarup Rani Nehru was arrested on 31 March 1933 at Asansol, *en route* to the Calcutta session of the Congress which had been banned by the Government of India. She was released on 3 April 1933.

arrested. She must be pleased. Probably most of the people arrested will be let off in a few days.

It is just a week less than a year to the lathi charges and shooting in Allahabad when mother was hurt.[28]

4 April 1933[29]

My dear Mother,

I received your letter as well as the almonds and other articles you had sent with Kamala.

I came to know from the newspapers that you had started for Calcutta but were asked to get down at night at Asansol. Today I read that you have all been released and that you have left for Calcutta. You did right by going. That was the only thing to do. You must have been uncomfortable in the jail at Asansol. It was probably quite hot there.

I do not know what you intend doing now. Consult friends in Calcutta and then decide. I will know what you decide from the newspapers. You can send a letter to Kamala and I will get it.

I have received letters from Nan and Betty. Both of them are well. On 22 April Indu's school will close for the holidays. I want her to come to Dehra Dun as soon as the holidays start and stay here with Kamala. Kamala is renting a house. Nan has not yet decided where Chand and the others will spend their holidays. She will decide after meeting Ranjit. If she wants to bring them here or take them to Mussoorie, that can easily be arranged. It is possible that she keeps them at Bombay.

I have met Ranjit. He did well by coming here directly and meeting me, for we may not have another opportunity for long. You too may have met Ranjit for a short while on the day you left for Calcutta.

The weather here is very fine. I am well.

Last year in April, you were injured on the head. This April you have had another kind of experience—congratulations!

Much love,

Your son
Jawahar

28 See *ante*, p. 380.
29 J N Correspondence, NMML. Original in Hindi.

April 12. Wednesday

Kamala came yesterday and I had a good interview. I was much agitated by the account of a letter which, according to *The Bombay Chronicle*, Bapu had sent to the Viceroy.[30] It was an amazing letter, some touches which seemed to be his own and yet the statements in it were astounding. I would not have believed in the letter at all but the 'Chronicle' was hardly the paper to publish such a thing without basis. I came to the conclusion that some letter had been sent and the extracts did not do full justice to it. Even so I was angry with Bapu—very angry. I had done him an injustice and today's paper announces that the whole thing was a hoax![31] What a weight off my mind.

Kamala is spoiling me completely. She sends fresh and beautiful roses daily almost and I am surrounded by fragrance and colour and beauty.

My puppies have been causing me a deal of anxiety. They have all been ill. They are thin now and cough away and look miserable, especially one which is my favourite. I have just discovered that they swallowed a small dead snake some time ago. I wonder if this was the origin of all their troubles.

April 21 Friday

One of the puppies— दुरो [*two*]—continues ill and I have been nursing her almost like a child. Sometimes I get up a dozen times in the course of the night to see if I can do anything when she coughs away. My nights have been very disturbed. I am inclined to think that she has past the crisis and will recover. I feel happy about this.

There have been thunderstorms and rain. Our old friend the brain fever bird has turned up. There are so many other birds also, notably the koel.

It is quite cold still. Surprising in the second half of April.

30. In the letter published in *The Bombay Chronicle* on 8 April, Mahatma Gandhi was said to have appealed to the Viceroy "for a great gesture from the government"

31 On 11 April, the Home Member in the Legislative Assembly denied any such correspondence between Mahatma Gandhi and the Viceroy.

5.5.33[32]

My dear Bapu,

Your letter came today.[33] I was half expecting it for your large heart never permits you to forget any one. I have sent you a telegram already.[34]

As my telegram will indicate, I feel utterly at a loss and do not know what I can say to you. Religion is not familiar ground for me, and as I have grown older I have definitely drifted away from it. I suppose I have something else in its place, something other than just intellect and reason, which gives me strength and hope. Apart from this indefinable and indefinite urge, which may have just a tinge of religion in it and yet is wholly different from it, I have grown to rely entirely on the workings of the mind. Perhaps they are weak supports to rely upon, but, search as I will, I can see no better ones. Religion seems to me to lead to emotion and sentimentality and they are still more unreliable guides. Intuition—undoubtedly there is such a thing, though where it comes from I cannot say; perhaps from the stored up experiences at the back of the mind, the sub-conscious self.

The Harijan question is bad, very bad, but it seems to me incorrect to say that there is nothing so bad in all the world. I think I could point to much that was equally bad and even worse. All over the world there is the same Harijan question in various forms. Is it not the outcome of special causes? Surely it is due to something more than mere ignorance and ill will. To remove these causes or to neutralise their effect appears to be the only way to deal with the roots of the matter. But why should I write of these matters now! I do not want to argue in this letter as the stage for argument seems to be past.

It is hard to be so far from you, and yet it would be harder to be near you. This crowded world is a very lonely place, and you want to make it still lonelier. Life and death matter little, or should matter little. The only thing that matters is the cause that one works for, and if one could be sure that the best service to it is to die for it, then death would seem simpler. I have loved life—the mountains and the sea, the sun and rain and storm and snow, and animals, and books

32. J N. Correspondence, N M M L.

33 In his letter of 2 May 1933, Mahatma Gandhi wrote. "The Harijan movement is too big for a mere intellectual effort. There is nothing so bad in all the world and yet I cannot leave religion and therefore Hinduism...but then I cannot tolerate it with untouchability. Fortunately Hinduism contains a sovereign remedy for the evil."

34. See *post*, pp. 474 475.

and art, and even human beings—and life has been good to me. But the idea of death has never frightened me; from a distance it seems fitting enough as the crown of one's endeavour. Yet, at close quarters, it is not pleasant to contemplate.

The last fourteen or fifteen years have been a wonderful time for me, ever since I had the good fortune to be associated with you in various activities. Life became fuller and richer and more worthwhile, and that is a dear and precious memory which nothing can take from me. And whenever the future happens to be dark, this vision of the past will relieve the gloom and give strength.

All my love to you,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

Kamala is staying in Dehra Dun. I shall communicate your message to her.

May 8. Monday

Bapu has begun his twenty-one day fast today.[35] When the first news of the proposed fast came a week ago I had a shock but I recovered soon. Three days ago came Bapu's letter—a typical cry from the heart which bowled me over and I had quite an emotional crisis. I sent him a telegram which I did not like at all. My mind was in a muddle. This was the telegram:

> Your letter. What can I say about matters I do not understand. I feel lost in strange country where you are only familiar landmark and I try to grope my way in dark but I stumble. Whatever happens my love and thoughts will be with you. Jawahar.

I wrote to him also that day.

This evening I felt suddenly that I must send him another and a more cheerful message. The jailer was good enough to agree and I sent the following telegram:

35 On 1 May Mahatma Gandhi announced his intention of commencing a fast for 21 days from 8 May in connection with Harijan work. In a statement issued to the press, Mahatma Gandhi said that the fast was directed against nobody in particular but was prayer for the purification of himself and his associates.

Now that you are launched on your great enterprise may I send you again love and greetings and assure you that I feel more clearly now that whatever happens it is well and *whatever happens you* win. Jawahar.

I feel better after having sent this.

Tomorrow morning he is likely to be released.[36] Whether he lives through his fast or succumbs to it, the old order has ended and India will be different.

I began spinning again today, I had not spun for two or three months.

23.5.33[37]

TO MAHADEVA DESAI

My dear Mahadeva,

I was very happy to receive your letter. It is really wonderful how Bapu has *stood this fast. Somehow, by sheer will power, he has made* an extremely difficult thing look easy. When first I heard of his decision I had, naturally, a shock and it seemed to me almost tantamount to a death sentence. And yet even then, strange to say, it never struck me that he should be dissuaded from it, although you know that I cannot appreciate the religious significance of it. But I felt perfectly sure in my mind that Bapu having decided and proclaimed his decision there was no other way out except through the fiery ordeal. Constituted as he is he could not do otherwise, any other course then would have been a betrayal of one's own nature and one's life record. So I was clear enough that the thing had to be done. And yet I worried of course about the consequences and I also fretted about these strange methods which were beyond my comprehension, and which turned people's attention to, what I would call, the 'magic' way of doing things. This leads people inevitably to give up troubling their minds for solutions of problems and await for miracles. There is so much of this magic in our lives—every person who is ill always tries to get some nostrum, or magic remedy, which *will suddenly* put *him right.* He pays little attention to the causes of ill health or to the rules of nature which he is continually breaking. I have developed a horror

36 *Mahatma Gandhi was released* on 8 May. A government *communique said* that he had been released in view of the nature and object of the fast he was undertaking and the attitude of mind which it disclosed.

37 Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No 21334.

of nostrums and the like. Almost I had sooner be ill than get well by some such fluke. And the same argument carries me to a wider sphere.

I was exceedingly irritated at odd people with too great a conceit of themselves, *from the Dorchester Mansions*[38] *downwards, sending Bapu* cables and telegrams to give up the fast. It was Rajagopalachari's and Devadas's right and privilege to try to induce Bapu. But this other crowd is past my endurance. Why don't they stick to their last or rather *their mess of pottage?*

I have read Rolland's *Le jeu d l'amour et de la mort*. I read it last year during this imprisonment. It is indeed a tremendous little thing. I wish you would send me a copy of the original letter Rolland has sent Bapu. As a matter of fact I have already made a cutting of the English translation appearing in the papers. But Rolland's French is so beautiful that I would like to see it.

I am glad you left Strachey's[39] book with Vallabhbhai. The book was meant for both of you, and even for Bapu if he would spare the time. I knew nothing of the fast then. It contains a remarkably cogent argument pointing almost to an inevitable conclusion. I have read a good many other books bearing on this subject and I must say that it has grown on me. This explanation of the course of events has given a meaning to history—to the past as well as to the future. I have had a lot to do with history during the past eighteen months. Sometimes I share your mood about the future:

Voyez vous pas que la nuit est profonde,
et que le monde
N'est que souci?[40]

Sang a girl when her lover left her for the wars, and the song has a larger significance. And yet this new appreciation of history and man's destiny has given me a great deal of strength and clear headedness. And being somewhat of a vagabond—I notice that Kantilal[41] has been sentenced as a vagrant! a *Behaya*. I worry little about these 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune!'

38 Among others, Sapru and Jayakar cabled to Mahatma Gandhi from London on 5 May 1933: "Deeply concerned news your fasting. Earnestly press reconsideration. Eradication dependent upon your life. Enthusiasm wise leadership"

39 John Strachey (1901 1963); British left wing author and politician His books included *The Coming Struggle for Power, The Nature of Capitalist Crisis, A Programme for Progress.*

40 Do you not see that the night is dark and that the world is nothing but anxiety?

41 Grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, arrested on 8 May 1933.

There is an interesting book which I should like you to read, if you have not read it already. It is Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society*.[42] Shall I send it? and if so where?

For over a year the books that I read, or some of them at least, went a round of other prisons, to Samp and Krishna and Ranjit. This process has now stopped and so I began with you but you have got yourself released! I am having a book sent to Vallabhbhai about the Middle East—Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Palestine etc.—recent events there. It is really extraordinary how the same thing occurs over and over again in different countries.

I have been getting a few foreign periodicals here and for the first time after many years I have had the time to read them carefully and so I have gathered all manner of information and can discourse learnedly about almost any country from China to Peru. For six months I paid homage to German—no good—somehow I made very little progress. And now with the bounder Hitler[43] and his Nazis I have begun to hate the language almost!

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

30.5.1933[44]

TO DEVADAS GANDHI

My dear Devadas,

Thank you for your telegram informing me of the ending of Bapu's great fast.[45] It has been a wonderful thing, the way Bapu has faced and conquered this trial. 'Man doth not yield himself to the angels or even unto death save by the weakness of his feeble will', says an ancient writing, and Bapu has shown how a mighty will can hold together a frail body and bend it to a desired purpose.

I am writing to you after a long time, nearly two years it must be. I have long wanted to tell you how happy I was to learn of your

42 Reinhold Niebuhr, American Protestant theologian and social critic, his book *Moral Man & Immoral Society* was published in 1932.

43 Adolf Hitler (1889-1945), leader of the Nazi party and dictator of Germany from 1933; outlined his policies in his political testament, *Mein Kampf*, written during his imprisonment in 1923, after Germany's defeat in the war of 1939-45, committed suicide in a bunker in Berlin.

44 Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, Serial No. 2015.

45 Mahatma Gandhi broke his 21 days fast on 29 May 1933.

engagement to Lakshmi.[46] I have hardly spoken to her but she struck me, whenever I saw her, as a very dignified and charming girl. You are fortunate and deserve congratulations—and so does she.

For a fortnight or so in January 1932 Bernard Aluwihare was with me in Naini Prison. He told me much that was interesting about Bapu's stay in England and especially about the doings of the members of his family. He has gone and got married now, I understand, and has returned to his ancestral haunts in Ceylon.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

June 4, Sunday

I am writing here after a long gap. The great fast is over and Bapu has survived. On the day of his discharge, which was the first day of the fast, May 8th, he suspended civil disobedience for six weeks. I received this announcement with mixed feelings. A shock—and then a willing acceptance of the fact with some misgivings about the phraseology of his statement.[47]

As I watched the emotional upheaval during the fast I wondered more and more if this was the right method in politics. It is sheer revivalism and clear thinking has not a ghost of a chance against it. All India, or most of it, stares reverently at the Mahatma and expects him to perform miracle after miracle and put an end to untouchability and get Swaraj and so on—and does nothing itself! And Bapu goes on talking of purity and sacrifice. I am afraid I am drifting further and further away from him mentally, in spite of my strong emotional attachment to him. His continual references to God irritate me exceedingly. His political actions are often enough guided by an unerring instinct but he does not encourage others to think. And even he, has he thought out what the objective, the ideal, should be. Very probably not. The next step seems to absorb him.

46 Daughter of C. Rajagopalachari.

47 The decision suspending civil disobedience was taken on Mahatma Gandhi's release on 8 May, after consulting acting Congress President M. S. Aney. Mahatma Gandhi pointed out, "How can I take advantage of this release in order to prosecute the civil disobedience or to guide it, as the purpose of the fast will be frustrated if I allowed my brain to be occupied by any extraneous matter, that is any matter outside the Harijan work."

What a tremendous contrast to the dialectics of Lenin & Co! *More* and more I feel drawn to their dialectics, more and more I realise the gulf between Bapu & me and I begin to doubt if this way of faith is the right way to train a nation. It may pay for a short while, but in the long run?

And then I cannot understand how he can accept, as he seems to do, the present social order; how he surrounds himself with men who are the pillars and the beneficiaries of this order. They talk lovingly of 'Bapu' but do not take any risks. How can we get anything worthwhile with these people as our hangers-on? No doubt they will profit and take advantage of both our movement and of any constitutional changes that may come. They always prosper till the final reckoning comes.

I want to break from this lot completely—I want to place our ideal crystal clear before the people. But Bapu always talks of compromise and his sweet reasonableness deludes people and befogs their minds.

There is trouble ahead so far as I am personally concerned. I shall have to fight a stiff battle between rival loyalties. Perhaps the happiest place for me is the gaol! I have another three months here before I go out, and one can always return.

Meanwhile C.D. is suspended and the next week or ten days will probably decide what will take place in the immediate future. I hope Bapu goes back to Yeravda.

Purushottamdas Tandon has come out and—horror of horrors!—has joined an organisation for the relief of kisans, with Malaviyaji as president and C. Y. Chintamani as vice president![48] This is the way to carry on the fight and these are our comrades in the struggle.

I think often of M. N. Roy. The poor chap is so lonely in the world with hardly any one to give a thought to him. Even his old colleagues the communists have discarded him and run him down. With incipient T.B. he lies in Bareilly Central Prison in this heat, probably in solitary confinement.

After many, many months I have had a chance of talking to an intellectual person in jail. Ever since Govind Ballabh Pant went my conversation with other people in jail has been of the most simple and non-intellectual variety.

The new comer is a Madrasi, one Pandit Anant Narain. He has not come as a civil resister but in some defamation case. He was the

48 Arrested on 9 December 1932 for addressing a meeting on Lajpat Rai day, he was released on 1 June 1933, became the vice president of the Peasants' Relief Committee

editor of a paper—*The Indian States Reformer*, or some such name—and he criticised a massacre of tenants by the State forces in Tehri last year. Result—one year and a heavy fine. Another person, named Chandola,[49] has come with him although his case was a different one. He was the editor of a Hindi paper, a very loyal paper, but the Tehri State has roped him in also. Chandola overflows so much with loyalty that, as a Garhwali, he strongly condemned the Garhwali regiment which refused to fire in 1930 in Peshawar. Naturally he keeps away from me, lest his reputation for loyalty suffer, and I am thankful to him for this mercy.

But Anant Narain & I walk together morning and evening and I have had quite a number of interesting talks. He is well informed and he has told me much about Travancore, where he comes from. For nearly two months he & Chandola were kept inside the jail here & I did not see them. Then they were brought out and put in the European barrack. The stories he has told me of the doings inside the jail surprised me and the jailer has gone down in my estimation. According to A. N. he is the arch hypocrite! The others are outwardly more violent, and all are up to their necks in bribery and corruption. What a sink of iniquity are the jails in India!

I have had a little argument with the jailer. Chandola has been given A class, being a loyalist, Anant Narain (who has been fined 1200/-) has been put in B class. The jailer will not give writing materials to Anant Narain. Everywhere that I know of B class prisoners have been given writing materials. I told the jailer so but he takes refuge in a circular from Govt. dated April 1932 which says that A class prisoners may be supplied with notebooks, writing materials etc. at their expense The inference is that B class not being mentioned in this circular are expressly excluded. As a matter of fact long before this circular A & B class both were getting writing materials etc. The matter will not end here.

The interesting part of it is that the object of the jail authorities seems to be to harass Anant Narain and Chandola, with the object ultimately perhaps of making money out of Chandola. They want to isolate Chandola first.

49. Editor, printer and publisher of a newspaper called *Garhwali*.

June 7, Wednesday

Interview yesterday with Kamala, mother, Indu, Nan and, to my surprise, Prabha. Prabha recently discharged before her time from Lucknow Central Jail. The poor girl had already spent sixteen months there.

Indu going off today to Allahabad and Poona, so I shall not see her again for several months. It has been good to have four successive interviews with her.

Today I spoke to Dr. Bhargava, the acting Supt, about the question of B class privileges. I warmed up rather and the poor jailer seemed to feel a bit small.

I complete a year today in this Dehra Dun jail. June 7th 1932 I came here and since then I have lived in my little room continuously. What a thought-infested place this room must be. And how I know every inch of it, every marking, every hollow on the floor, the walls or the ceiling. Three months and a week more—less than a hundred days —and I march out. Perhaps earlier, though I hope not. Yet somehow I have a feeling that I shall go out earlier.

My series of 'Letters to Indu' goes on and on. I had expected to finish them in December and then in January, and yet here I am in June as far off from the end as ever. Or almost as far off. Perhaps by the end of July I might see the end of them. I sometimes feel a little weary of them, but they have helped me wonderfully in getting through the last fifteen months or so in prison. What will I do when I finish them? Not during this term, as I shall not have much time left, but during my next assay which may not be far off. Why worry about it now?

13.6.33[50]

Betty darling,

I was very glad to get your letter. It is not necessary for you to make a point of writing to me at stated intervals. Regular news of your welfare is enough for me though of course it is a delight to have letters and the personal touch which they bring. But letters should never be made a task or they lose their flavour.

I am glad Mussoorie has suited you and you have flourished, physically at any rate. Physical health is a tremendous help in getting a

50. *Nehru's Letters To His Sister*, (London, 1963) pp. 29 31.

suitable kick-off in life and some degree of mental equilibrium. Of course mental health does not always follow even physical fitness but it is almost never found with bodily illness or unfitness.

As I read your letter I was suddenly made acutely conscious of a contrast. I felt as if I had been pulled out of my familiar surroundings of thought and ideas and dreams—for action is denied me in the present—and taken to a strange place where phantom figures moved to and fro trying to live the 'gay life'. The gay life! The strange quest for something in the market place, something which cannot be measured in terms of gold and silver and is not to be found, search as you may, in the gaily-bedecked stalls; the pursuit of a shadow which eludes us for shadows are always elusive; the frantic attempt to possess the beauty of the living rose by grasping it too tightly and crushing it to death. Mussoorie is but a score of miles away from where I sit and write this letter, and the contrast between life at Mussoorie and life in my little high-walled and thought-infested abode is great enough. But greater still is the contrast, I felt, between the thoughts and desires and passions of the phantom figures that flit on the hilltop and the other phantom that sits and reads and writes and imagines all manner of things. So as I read your letter, reality, if such a thing there is, melted away from me and I fell to musing in a ghostly world of phantoms in which I myself was but a shadow figure. And I saw a procession of Rajas and Ranis and their satellites and parasites dancing away in a veritable *danse macabre* for they danced on a seething mass of hungry and famine stricken humanity, and their dance led to a sudden precipice over which they toppled, and vanished from the scene. They were rather pitiful figures, relics of a bygone age, trying bravely to keep up appearances but doomed to inevitable extinction.

But then, I wondered, what of the other phantoms? Have they a better fate in store for them? And that led me to strange phantasies, full of an incongruous mixture of doubt and assurance. But why should I inflict my phantasies on you?

It seemed to me so strange to read in your letter of people who have no aim in life. Of course, there are many such people but you will find that as a class these people are apt to become or rather to be parasites on society. It is only then that they can afford the luxury of no aim. The vast majority of people have no grand aims but the day to day struggle of life absorbs them. And as for others surely the fault is nobody's but their own if they flit about aimlessly and disconsolately. It is not a question of equipment; equipment helps in making one's activities more effective. It is a question of a twist in the mind. Life is not a very gentle or considerate teacher. If one

allows oneself to drift about on the surface of the waters, the waves and the tides are apt to knock one against the rocks, but a good swimmer can even ride the storm.

I am myself so consumed by my own aim and objective that I find it extraordinarily difficult to appreciate the want of aim of anybody. Even apart from my personal obsession, I find the world today an absorbing and fascinating place to live in. We live in an age of mighty changes and terrible conflicts, when hope and despair fight for mastery in each thinking mind. A person who is not affected by these events and who has no desire to take part in them, is hardly a live person intellectually.

None of us can say with assurance what the future will bring. Within the next few years there may even be another mighty war which will reduce modern civilization to dust and ashes. But whatever may happen and whether our dreams come true or remain but dreams, there are some things which help us to guide life's journey. Life is a short enough affair; it is too short for us to make it petty or cheap. Let us not cheapen ourselves but live in the grand manner for the big things in life, and then the vicissitudes of fortune will matter little, and even if we have to go to the guillotine we shall do so like some of the French nobles a hundred and forty years ago (that is the only decent thing they did!) with grace and dignity and a smile on our lips.

Love,

Your loving brother
Jawahar

June 18. Sunday

I had a special interview last Sunday with Birju Bhai, Birju Bhabhi and Ballo I saw Birju Bhai after three and a half years, also Ballo. How he has grown and changed—I would hardly have known him. There was so much to talk about—their extensive travels in Europe and happenings in India...

A letter from Betty from Mussoorie talking of the 'gay life'—of rajas & ranis etc. Oh, what a subject to write to me about at any time and especially in jail!

I suppose it was this accumulation of unhappiness and nerves that led me to speak angrily to the acting supt—Dr. Bhargava. The subject was the old one of 'B' class privileges—Anant Narain & writing facilities etc. I cursed the whole jail department up and down and called

it a sink of iniquity, and a hotbed of bribery and corruption and violence, and said that if I had the power I would smash it into little bits! He listened meekly enough, rather taken aback, but a day later Anant Narain was transferred from the European barrack to the hospital inside on the ground of ill health—as if the closed-in hospital was a better place for him. The idea apparently was to keep him from seeing me. Last night he was transferred to Fyzabad.

So again I have nobody to talk to.

Aney—what a general to have for a campaign! The six weeks of the suspension of C.D. are nearly over and nobody knows what will happen. And Bapu lies slowly recovering from his fast, very weak still. When I think of all this indecision and patent weakness and submission to wrong doing, I feel very angry. In the Andamans, hunger-striking politicals have died and are dying,[51] and arrests are being made in India of those who protest against this. And Sastri talks of the wonders of the British connection and the British love of fair play and their tolerance. He refers to the barbarities in Italy, Germany & Russia —Not a word about India.

Am I a lunatic or is India full of lunatics that they can tolerate the Sastris and Saprus, not to mention those who grovel even more abjectly before the imperial power?

June 19. Monday

Civil disobedience again suspended for six weeks—to end of July![52] And among the mighty ones so deciding was G. D. Birla! Heigh ho! This is a funny world and not an easy place to live in. Perhaps jail is best.

June 23. Friday

Malaviyaji managed to get a special interview with me today. He was on his way to Mussoorie for rest. He looked a frail shadow—so weak and thin. I saw him after a long time. Brave and indomitable old man!

51. On 12 May twenty-nine prisoners convicted of terrorist crimes went on a hunger strike in the cellular jails, Andamans, to protest against their grievances not being redressed. Three prisoners died between 17 May and 28 May.
52. On 17 June civil disobedience was again suspended for another six weeks "in view of the present state of health of Mahatma Gandhi."

I had quite a long and frank interview with him. The jailer was present but I told him all I had in my heart. I was glad of the opportunity and felt relieved at having spoken to some outsider of importance.

I was not very surprised to learn of the demoralisation outside. It is fairly evident. The nationalist Muslims seem to be most afflicted by it—Ansari, Sherwani, Khaliq. But I was surprised and a bit disheartened to learn that Rafi was of this number—but I refuse to believe this. Malaviyaji must be mistaken. Another amazing piece of news was that these N.Ms took exception to Devadas's marriage with Lakshmi on the ground, apparently, that he should have married a Harijan! This is the most extraordinary objection that could be raised—and from Ansari, Tasadduq etc. It passes one's comprehension. What a curious lot we are.

For the world which seems
To lie before us, like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here, as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.[53]

June 27, 1933[54]

Nan darling,

I gather that you are all descending from the heights tomorrow, so perhaps this letter will catch you on your way. By the time my next interview takes place you will be in Allahabad. I shall therefore not see you again till I am discharged from jail, which in the ordinary course will take place in the second week of September. I hope however that I shall have a glimpse of the children before they go down.

Ranjit's visit to Kashmir has been an extraordinarily short one. He hardly had a week there. I read somewhere that Stein,[55] the archaeologist and translator of the *Rajatarangini*, was in Kashmir this summer. Ranjit would have liked to meet him.

53 From *Dover Beach* by Matthew Arnold.
54 Vijayalakshmi Pandit Papers, N.M.M.L.
55 Aurel Stein, translated Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* which was published in 1900.

Indu is enthusiastic about the new school house in Poona. The address is a bit of a mouthful but so long as the place itself is good, any address can be tolerated.

I have not received my foreign papers for two weeks. I suppose there was no one to forward them after Ranjit left. Will you please push them on? I am a close student of foreign affairs and I do not want to miss any number of these papers.

I saw in the Pioneer Ranjit's notice to the publicity man and the latter's expression of regret.[56] This is all right but he must be made to disclose where he got his peculiar information from. This is not Ranjit's job, but there are many ways of doing so.

I am sending Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* for Betty. This is one of Padmaja's books. It is a Nobel Prize winner but Mann is now a refugee from Germany under the Nazi regime.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

July 4 Tuesday

Interview today with Kamala and mother. To my surprise Jugal Kishore also turned up from Poona. I gave him a bit of my mind about the Congress bosses outside. Quite frank and more than frank. Anyway my viewpoint will be known at the meeting called for July 14 around Poona.[57] I feel glad of this. The outburst relieved me. And then soon after I felt how foolish it all was!

Kamala and mother probably going away soon also—K to Lucknow & Poona and mother to Allahabad. So this was the last interview for a while.

56 For the clerical error made in the publication of the judgement on Meerut Conspiracy Case in the U.P. Government paper, R. S. Pandit, as counsel for the accused in the case, had demanded and secured an apology.

57 The informal conference of Congressmen called by M S Aney, the acting President of the Congress, on 12 July rejected the proposal for the unconditional withdrawal of civil disobedience movement but authorised Mahatma Gandhi to meet the Viceroy for arriving at a settlement. Mahatma Gandhi sent a telegram on 15 July 1933 to the Viceroy asking for an interview. The Viceroy replied that the government would not enter into any negotiations till the Congress withdrew the civil disobedience movement.

There is talk of my release in August. The papers mention Aug 14th. This would be a month before the usual time as, in the ordinary course, my discharge is due on Sept 12th. The idea apparently is that if all goes well from the point of view of Govt., the Supt. should be made to give me an extra month's remission, which he is entitled to. But all is not likely to go well and so I doubt if I shall go out before September. Meanwhile large numbers of Congress prisoners are being released before their time all over the country to show low figures at the end of the month.

After the excitement of the interview felt depressed. Spent the whole day in a cheerless condition. It has been very hot & close also. Perhaps the idea that there was no interview in the near future oppressed me.

A new superintendent took over charge of the jail yesterday from Dr. Bhargava, the acting Supt. The new one also acting for a few weeks or months till Reinhold comes back. He is an I.M.S. Officer attached to some regiment here. He turned out to be an extraordinarily unattractive looking man.

July 6. Thursday

The children came today to see me on their way down from Mussoorie to Allahabad—Chand, Tara & Rita. I had a delightful half an hour's unofficial interview with them. Tara insisted on mounting on my shoulder as she used to do—and Chand was so grown-up and talked so wisely. Rita as usual was distant—She hardly knows me. I was told—the reminder was hardly necessary!—that I was getting old as my hair was mostly grey. As they were leaving I could hardly restrain my tears, and after they had gone there was no restraining them! An unusual occurrence for me. It was the touch of home life that upset me.

Later, I received a letter from Indu from Poona. The little one has got a strange knack of putting in a sentence here and there which pleases me and even tickles my vanity. 'I can never express myself well in letters', she writes. 'But there is a strange pleasure in writing to you. I feel I am in quite another and a very happy world.' How joyous and light-hearted I felt when I read this.

July 9 Sunday

Yesterday Malaviyaji suddenly appeared again, accompanied by the new Supt. He was on his way to Poona from Mussoorie to attend the fateful meeting there. How difficult it is to understand each other. We move in different worlds of thought. I talk to him about the effect of world conditions on India and of the danger of our forgetting this in our preoccupations with petty affairs here. I mentioned that the whole future of England, the British Empire, & Europe was hanging in the balance and so on. Of course, of course, he said, and then went on to make a remark which made it obvious that he had not come within a hundred miles of my meaning. Indian politics still mean for him more or less what they were a generation ago. But he is a brave and persevering person. He looked better after his fortnight's stay in Mussoorie.

I have changed my mind about the new Supt. How first impressions mislead! On this the second occasion that I saw him he did not look at all as unattractive as I had imagined him to be! He sat through our interview trying to follow our conversation in Hindi. Malaviyaji offered, quite unnecessarily, to talk in English but the Supt. told him to carry on in any language he liked. We talked pretty frankly. I wonder if the Supt. got any idea of what I was saying. I doubt it.

July 10. Monday

I was exhibited to some British officers of a Gurkha regiment here today. The Supt. brought them along with him. There was no conversation; we merely looked at each other from a distance. This kind of exhibition makes me feel like an animal at the zoo!

July 18. Tuesday

Today would have been my interview day if Kamala had been here. But it turned out to be a blank day in more senses than one.

I read, a day or two ago, of the result of the Poona Conference, with some relief. It was nothing to shout about but at any rate it was not humiliating. After some days of tension, with my mind full of forebodings, I felt lighter. This morning I read the Viceroy's reply to

Bapu and Bapu's second telegram.[58] This second telegram upset me completely and I have had a bad day. 'Peace', 'Honourable Peace!' What about? With whom & on what basis? It is amazing how flabby-minded our people have got. They meet in Poona at a critical moment after nearly 2 years and they do not even trouble to discuss, much less lay down, the objective before us Only talks of peace with a govt. that has insulted us in every way.

I am getting more & more certain that there can be no further political cooperation between Bapu and me. At least not of the kind that has existed. We had better go our different ways. My way will keep me in jail. That is dull work and depressing, but perhaps it is as well.

July 24. Monday

Had an interview with Kamala yesterday—unexpected. She returned from Poona and Bombay sooner than I had thought she would. Her account of happenings in Poona not very cheering.

Had a letter from Bapu today from Ahmedabad. He enquired about Betty.

Saw a new animal this evening when I was walking up and down outside the jail gate. A forest-dweller was marching along with this—a kind of an enormous lizard two feet long with claws and a tough scaly covering. Bo- बो —he called it.[59] Said he was going to make *bhujji* of it and eat it!

July 25. Tuesday

A shock—to learn of J. M. Sen Gupta's death.[60] My mind went back to the day 25½ years ago in Cambridge when I first met him.

Wrote to Mrs Nellie Sen Gupta[61] and to Bapu.

58. To the Viceroy's reply to his telegram of 15 July 1933, Mahatma Gandhi wrote on 17 July: "I had not expected that the government would take any notice of the unauthorised publications of the confidential proceedings of the informal conference and on the basis of that reject the request for an interview If an interview were granted I could show that the proceedings taken as a whole were calculated to bring about honourable peace."

59 A pangolin

60 He died in detention at Ranchi on 23 July 1933.

61 (1885 1973), wife of J M Sen Gupta, presided over the Congress session of 1933 at Calcutta which had been declared unlawful, awarded the Padma Vibhushan in 1973

25.7.33[62]

TO NELLIE SEN GUPTA

My dear Mrs. Sen Gupta,
I learnt only this morning with a great shock of Sen Gupta's sudden death. For many years now we had worked in close comradeship, but my thoughts went back to a far-off day, towards the end of 1907, when I first met J. M. in Cambridge. I was a new comer there and he was soon to leave. That was nearly 26 years ago, and life brought strange and rich experiences to both of us during these many years, and now that the break of an old bond has come, it is hard to bear. It is harder to think that we shall not have him any more to share the heat and burden of the day and to give wise counsel in times of difficulty.

For you this sudden passing away must come as a terrible shock. Words are but poor consolation, but it is some consolation to think of death coming in the midst of high endeavour, a fitting though still unhappy end to a life devoted to a great cause.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

25.7.33[63]

My dear Bapu,
I received your note yesterday.

Mother's anxiety about Krishna is natural. It is the anxiety of any mother, more specially a Hindu mother, and it concerns itself chiefly with the desire of getting her daughter suitably married. She would have liked to see her married among the Kashmiris and failing that among Brahmans. The idea that Krishna should marry somebody who is not even a Brahman is more than she can comfortably swallow. So far as I am concerned the question of K's marriage does not worry me so much, although I certainly think about it. My views about it are the exact opposite of mother's. I would welcome as wide a break from old custom as possible. The Kashmiri community as a whole

62 JN Correspondence, NMML.
63 JN Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

(there are exceptions of course in it) disgusts me; it is the very epitome of the petty bourgeois vices which I detest. I am not particularly interested in a person being a Brahman, a non-Brahman or anything else. As a matter of fact, I fail to see the relevance of all this; one marries an individual, not a community. And then all this is beside the mark as the decision is going to be Krishna's, not mother's or mine, and it is quite impossible to treat a grown up girl in any other way.

I do not quite know what any of us can do in the matter. From a letter I had from Krishna a few days ago I gathered that she was waiting for me to come out to tell me something on the subject. I can make no definite guess till I know what is in her mind. But she seems to be pleased about it. If she has a clear preference and there is no insuperable objection (and I cannot imagine any such) the matter will, I take it, be settled that way. I shall write to you as soon as I know more.

I do not know if you have heard of a proposed marriage in our family. My cousin Braj Lal's son,[64] who has been studying in the London School of Economics has got himself engaged to a Hungarian girl who is a fellow student of his. His father and mother got rather put out by this news and they hurried to London and later even to Budapest to see the girl's parents. But the girl won them over and they have returned full of praises for her!

There are certain legal difficulties in the way of such mixed marriages. Braj Lal proposes to get the Hungarian girl formally converted to Hinduism and then to get her married by Hindu or *Arya* rites. The girl herself is quite willing. Personally I dislike this change or adoption of a religion to serve another end.

I am becoming more and more hostile to the religious idea. Exceptions apart, (and some of them are big exceptions), it seems to me the negation of real spirituality and only a begetter of confusion and sentimentality. I should like to keep myself away, as far as possible, from all religious rites and ceremonials, all the hallmarks of religion—indeed to be wholly non-religious. Regard for mother and a desire not to hurt her feelings at this time of her life, occasionally make me agree to participation in some ceremony. But even so it is an unwilling and ungracious participation and I am not sure if it is not better to do without it.

I read only this morning of Sen Gupta's sudden death. It came as a shock. Although never very intimate with him, I had known him for nearly 26 years. He was much older than I am but his last term

64 B. K. Nehru.

at Cambridge coincided with my first, and we met for the first time at the end of 1907. How life goes by us and the scene changes as we sit surrounded by our thoughts!

Kamala is staying on in Dehra Dun. Perhaps she will remain till my discharge which is ordinarily due in the second week of September.

I hope you will soon be back to perfect health.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

August 1, 1933[65]

Nan darling,

You seem to suspect that on my discharge I shall so fix up my programme as to have no time left over to talk to you! Do you, by any chance, imagine that twenty months in jail have softened my brain? My dear, you can reserve the very first evening in Allahabad for yourself. What will happen to me I do not know but, so far as I am concerned, I propose to follow this programme: Go to Allahabad immediately on release—spend about three or four days there and then go to Indu at Poona. This visit will not be merely to see her but I want to fix up about her future education. After two or three days at Poona I return to Allahabad and that is as far as I have got, if I get that far.

Ranjit had some notion, did he not? of marching off to Kashmir with you and the children during September. Don't go off just when I propose to visit my home town.

There has been plenty of rain here—over 6 inches one day. I suppose it was one of the final spurts and we shall have clear sky during August.

Love to the children, Ranjit and yourself.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

65 Vijayalakshmi Pandit Papers, NMML.

August 2

Bapu arrested again yesterday.[66] Back to *Yeravda.*

August 6. Sunday

Interview with *Kamala—Amma* & *Purushottam.* Because of *Purushottam* the Supt. insisted on being present. Most unsatisfactory interview so far as Kamala was concerned. Saw Bul[67] yesterday as I was walking in the evening, on her way to Peshawar it seems!

August 9. Wednesday

Today I finished the series of letters to Indira that I have been writing. It turned out to be quite a tremendous task—176 letters running into 1849 foolscap pages! I began this series in Bareilly Jail on March 26th last year and expected to finish in a leisurely way by the end of the year. Instead, I had to work fairly hard, especially during the last six months. I feel relieved now that I have finished—much lighter in mind. I ought to revise them but I don't feel in the mood for it.

THE LAST LETTER TO INDIRA[68]

We have finished, my dear; the long story has ended. I need write no more, but the desire to end off with a kind of flourish induces me to write another letter—the Last Letter!

It was time I finished, for the end of my two-year term draws near. In three and thirty days from today I should be discharged, if indeed I am not released sooner, as the jailer sometimes threatens to do. The full two years are not over yet, but I have received three and a half

66 On 1 August 1933, Mahatma Gandhi was to commence his individual civil disobedience by a march to the village of Rai. He was arrested along with Kasturba, Mahadeva Desai and 32 others early that day.

67 Khurshed Naoroji.

68 *Glimpses of World History*, (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962), pp. 954-957.

months' remission of my sentence, as all well behaved prisoners do. For I am supposed to be a well-behaved prisoner, a reputation which I have certainly done nothing to deserve. So ends my sixth sentence, and I shall go out again into the wide world, but to what purpose? *A Quoi bon?* when most of my friends and comrades lie in gaol and the whole country seems a vast prison.

What a mountain of letters I have written! And what a lot of good *swadeshi* ink I have spread out on *swadeshi* paper. Was it worth while, I wonder? Will all this paper and ink convey any message to you that will interest you? You will say "Yes", of course, for you will feel that any other answer might hurt me, and you are too partial to me to take such a risk. But whether you care for them or not, you cannot grudge me the joy of having written them, day after day, during these two long years. It was winter when I came. Winter gave place to our brief spring, slain all too soon by the summer heat; and then when the ground was parched and dry and men and beasts panted for breath, came the monsoon with its bountiful supply of fresh and cool rain water. Autumn followed, and the sky was wonderfully clear and blue, and the afternoons were pleasant. The year's cycle was over, and again it began: winter and spring and summer and the rainy season. I have sat here, writing to you and thinking of you, and watched the seasons go by, and listened to the pit a pat of the rain on my barrack roof—

O doux bruit de la pluie,
Par terre et sur les toils!
Pour un coeur qui s'ennuie,
Oh! le chant de la pluie![69]

Benjamin Disraeli, the great English statesman of the nineteenth century, has written that: "other men condemned to exile and captivity, if they survive, despair; the man of letters may reckon those days as the sweetest of his life." He was writing about Hugo Grotius, a famous Dutch jurist and philosopher of the seventeenth century, who was condemned to imprisonment for life, but managed to escape after two years. He spent these two years in prison in philosophic and literary work. There have been many famous literary gaolbirds, the two best known perhaps being the Spaniard, Cervantes, who wrote *Don Quixote*, and the Englishman, John Bunyan, the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

69 O soft sound of rain
On earth and on the roofs
For a heart that is piming
Oh! the song of the rain.

I am not a man of letters and I am not prepared to say that the many years I have spent in gaol have been the sweetest in my life, but I must say that reading and writing have helped me wonderfully to get through them. I am not a literary man, and I am not a historian. What indeed am I? I find it difficult to answer that question. I have been a dabbler in many things, I began with science at college and then took to the law, and, after developing various other interests in life, finally adopted the popular and widely practised profession of gaol going in India!

You must not take what I have written in these letters as the final authority on any subject. A politician wants to have a say on every subject, and he always pretends to know much more than he actually does. He has to be watched carefully! These letters of mine are but superficial sketches joined together by a thin thread. I have rambled on, skipping centuries and many important happenings, and then pitching my tent for quite a long time on some event which interested me. As you will notice, my likes and dislikes are pretty obvious, and so also sometimes are my moods in gaol. I do not want you to take all this for granted; there may indeed be many errors in my accounts. A prison, with no libraries or reference books at hand, is not the most suitable place to write on historical subjects. I have had to rely very largely on the many note-books which I have accumulated since I began my visits to gaol twelve years ago. Many books have also come to me here; they have come and gone, for I could not collect a library here. I have shamelessly taken from these books facts and ideas; there is nothing original in what I have written. Perhaps occasionally you may find my letters difficult to follow; skip those parts, do not mind them. The grown-up in me got the better of me sometimes and I wrote as I should not have done.

I have given you the barest outline; this is not history; they are just fleeting glimpses of our long past. If history interests you, if you feel some of the fascination of history, you will find your way to many books which will help you to unravel the threads of past ages. But reading books alone will not help. If you would know the past you must look upon it with sympathy and with understanding. To understand a person who lived long ago, you will have to understand his environment, the conditions under which he lived, the ideas that filled his mind. It is absurd for us to judge of past people as if they lived now and thought as we do. There is no one to defend slavery today, and yet the great Plato held that slavery was essential. Within recent times scores of thousands of lives were given in an effort to retain slavery in the United States. We cannot judge the past from the standards of the present.

Everyone will willingly admit this. But everyone will not admit the equally absurd habit of judging the present by the standards of the past. The various religions have especially helped in petrifying old beliefs and faiths and customs, which may have had some use in the age and country of their birth, but which are singularly unsuitable in our present age.

If, then, you look upon past history with the eye of sympathy, the dry bones will fill up with flesh and blood, and you will see a mighty procession of living men and women and children in every age and every clime, different from us and yet very like us, with much the same human virtues and human failings. History is not a magic show, but there is plenty of magic in it for those who have eyes to see.

Innumerable pictures from the gallery of history crowd our minds. Egypt—Babylon—Nineveh—the old Indian civilization—the coming of the Aryans to India and their spreading out over Europe and Asia—the wonderful record of Chinese culture—Knossos and Greece—Imperial Rome and Byzantium—the triumphant march of the Arabs across two continents—the renascence of Indian culture and its decay—the little known Maya and Aztec civilizations of America—the vast conquests of the Mongols—the Middle Ages in Europe with their wonderful Gothic Cathedrals—the coming of Islam to India and the Mughal Empire—the Renaissance of learning and art in Western Europe—the discovery of America and the sea routes to the East—the beginning of western aggression in the East—the coming of the big machine and the development of capitalism—the spread of industrialism and European domination and imperialism—and the wonders of science in the modern world.

Great empires have risen and fallen and been forgotten by man for thousands of years, till their remains were dug up again by patient explorers from under the sands that covered them. And yet many an idea, many a fancy has survived and proved stronger and more persistent than the empire.

> Egypt's might is tumbled down
> Down a down the deeps of thought;
> Greece is fallen and Troy town,
> Glorious Rome hath lost her crown,
> Venice' pride is nought.
> But the dreams their children dreamed
> Fleeting, unsubstantial, vain,
> Shadowy as the shadows seemed,
> Airy nothing, as they deemed,
> These remain.

So sings Mary Coleridge.

The past brings us many gifts; indeed, all that we have today of culture, civilization, science, or knowledge of some aspects of the truth, is a gift of the distant or recent past to us. It is right that we acknowledge our obligation to the past. But the past does not exhaust our duty or obligation. *We owe a duty to the future also and perhaps that obligation is even greater than the one we owe to the past.* For the past is past and done with, we cannot change it; the future is yet to come, and perhaps we may be able to shape it a little. If the past has given us some part of the truth, the future also hides many aspects of the truth and invites us to search for it. But often the past is jealous of the future and holds us in a terrible grip, and we have to struggle with it to get free to face and advance towards the future.

History, it is said, has many lessons to teach us; and there is another saying that *history never repeats itself.* Both are true, for we cannot learn anything from it by slavishly trying to copy it, or by expecting it to repeat itself or remain stagnant, but we can learn something from it by prying behind it and trying to discover the forces that move it. Even so what we get is seldom a straight answer. "History", says Karl Marx, "has no other way of answering old questions than by putting new ones."

The old days were days of faith; blind, unquestioning faith. The wonderful temples and mosques and cathedrals of past centuries could never have been built but for the overpowering faith of the architects and builders and people generally. The very stones they reverently put one on top of the other, or carved in beautiful designs, tell us of this faith. The old temple spire, the mosque with its slender minarets, the Gothic cathedral—all of them pointing upward with an amazing intensity of devotion, as if offering a prayer in stone or marble to the sky above—thrill us even now, though we may be lacking in that faith of old of which they are the embodiments. But the days of that faith are gone, and gone with them is that magic touch in stone. Thousands of temples and mosques and cathedrals continue to be built, but they lack the spirit that made them live during the Middle Ages. There is little difference between them and the commercial offices which are so representative of our age.

Our age is a different one, it is an age of disillusion, of doubt and uncertainty and questioning. We can no longer accept many of the ancient beliefs and customs, we have no more faith in them, in Asia or in Europe or America. So we search for new ways, new aspects of the truth more in harmony with our environment. And we question each other and debate and quarrel and evolve any number of "isms" and philosophies. As in the days of Socrates, we live in an age of

questioning, but that questioning is not confined to a city like Athens; it is world wide.

Sometimes the injustice, the unhappiness, the brutality of the world oppress us and darken our minds, and we see no way out. With Matthew Arnold, we feel that there is no hope in this world, and all we can do is to be true to one another.

> For the world which seems
> To he before us, like a land of dreams,
> So various, so beautiful, so new,
> Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
> And we are here, as on a darkling plain
> Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night.

And yet if we take such a dismal view we have not learnt aright the lesson of life or of history. For history teaches us of growth and progress and of the possibility of an infinite advance for man. And life is rich and varied, and though it has many swamps and marshes and muddy places, it has also the great sea, and the mountains, and snow, and glaciers, and wonderful star-lit nights (especially in gaoll), and the love of family and friends, and the comradeship of workers in a common cause, and music, and books, and the Empire of ideas. So that each one of us may well say:

> Lord, though I lived on earth, the child of earth,
> Yet was I fathered by the starry sky.

It is easy to admire the beauties of the universe and to live in a world of thought and imagination. But to try to escape in this way from the unhappiness of others, caring little what happens to them, is no sign of courage or fellow-feeling. Thought, in order to justify itself, must lead to action. "Action is the end of thought," says our friend Romain Rolland. "All thought which does not look towards action is an abortion and a treachery. If then we are the servants of thought we must be the servants of action."

People avoid action often because they are afraid of the consequences, for action means risk and danger. Danger seems terrible from a distance, it is not so bad if you have a close look at it. And often it is a pleasant companion, adding to the zest and delight of life. The ordinary course of life becomes dull at times, and we take too many things for granted and have no joy in them. And yet how we appreciate these common things of life when we have lived without them for a while! Many people go up high mountains and risk life and limb for the joy

of the climb and the exhilaration that comes from a difficulty surmounted, a danger overcome; and because of the danger that hovers all around them, their perceptions get keener, their joy of the life which hangs by a thread, the more intense.

All of us have our choice of living in the valleys below with their unhealthy mists and fogs, but giving a measure of bodily security, or of climbing the high mountains, with risk and danger for companions, to breathe the pure air above, and take joy in the distant views, and welcome the rising sun.

I have given you many quotations and extracts from poets and others in this letter. I shall finish up with one more. It is from the *Gitanjali*; it is a poem, or prayer, by Rabindranath Tagore:

> Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
> Where knowledge is free;
> Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
> Where words come out from the depth of truth;
> Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
> Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
> Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action—
> Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

We have finished, *carissima*, and this last letter ends. The last letter! Certainly not! I shall write you many more. But this series ends, and so

Tamam Shud!

Back to
Central Prison Naini Barrack No. 6

August 23rd 1933

After a year and a half's stay in other prisons.[70]

August 24. Thursday

So I am back in Naini—back in the old barrack where I spent so many months in 1930-31-32. I had companions then; I am alone now.

Notice to leave Dehra Dun Jail came in the afternoon day before yesterday. The Supt. came and told me to pack up. It was curious that when he came rather suddenly and unannounced I was actually engaged in rearranging and putting away my books, papers & clothes. Everything was spread out and lying in heaps. An hour or two earlier I had written the last word in some notes and charts to letters to Indu. I had finished with the job finally and this led me to put all the papers etc. connected with it away, securely packed, as they were not going to be required again in jail. I was engaged in this process when the Supt. came and told me that I had to leave the same evening. Almost it seemed that my transfer was being delayed so that I might finish the letters! As soon as this was done came the notice to depart.

I had been in Dehra jail just fourteen months and a half—the whole long year and a quarter almost, spent in one small room without the break of a night elsewhere. This has been by far the longest stay for me anywhere in jail or outside.

Two days earlier I had had my interview with Kamala & *Amma* and that same night K left for Allahabad because of mother's ill health. From Allahabad on the 22nd she sent me a telegram that she was taking mother to Lucknow for an x-ray. As I was travelling down from Dehra under police escort I half expected to pass Kamala & mother going up to Lucknow. I was on the look out for the up mail, and sure enough they were in it. We crossed at Rae Bareli. I saw

70 Jawaharlal had been transferred from Naini jail on 6 February 1932 to the district jail, Bareilly and from Bareilly to Dehra Dun jail on 6 June 1932.

Upadhyaya on the far platform with the other train intervening. He did not see me. And then my train started and as we were picking up speed I had a fleeting glimpse of Kamala's back—she was standing on the other side of her train looking out on the platform. Of course she did not see me. It was tantalising.

Great care was taken that my transfer should remain secret. Even the Superintendent of the Naini Jail did not know who was coming—all he was told was that an 'important A class prisoner' was coming. So I was actually in Naini and Kamala in Lucknow and we had passed on the way and she did not know.

I was taken out at Prayag and the police lorry passed down Church Road opposite Swaraj Bhawan and Anand Bhawan. There was a police man at the Swaraj Bhawan gate.—It was good to see Anand Bhawan with the flag flying bravely at the top.

The Superintendent of Naini—Major Salamatullah—was courteous and took some pains to see that I had what I wanted. He has the reputation of being a hard taskmaster for the jail staff and jail officials are not keen on him.

I will take two or three days to settle down. It hardly seems worthwhile taking much trouble as my discharge is due at the latest on Sept 12th.[71] But it is likely that I shall come back to Naini soon enough.

Meanwhile Bapu is fasting.[72] Today is the ninth day and he grows weaker.

Discharged from Naini Central Prison
on August 30th, 1933.

71 Jawaharlal Nehru was released on 30 August, twelve days earlier than the due date, due to his mother's illness.

72 On his request for facilities to carry on social reform work from the jail being turned down by the Viceroy, Mahatma Gandhi decided to fast from 16 August. The government released him on 23 August when his condition grew worse.

8

ON THE SITUATION IN INDIA

1. On His Release[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru: I am deeply touched by the manifestations of love. It is natural that men who are habituated to remaining in jail should, on release, feel joy on meeting people.

Question: How are you now?

JN: I am in excellent health bodily and mentally and I am stretching myself just to take a deep breath.

Q: What are your views on the political developments in the country?

JN: I have a lot to say but have no time just now.

1. Allahabad, 30 August 1933. From *The Hindu*, 31 August 1933. On release from jail on 30 August 1933 he was taken round the city of Allahabad and then interviewed by press correspondents

2. Interview at Allahabad[1]

I do not find fault with the present situation in India as I think it is the necessary concomitant of a great revolutionary movement at any time and period. I am, of course, dissatisfied with the Liberal ideology and its leaders who need to learn the A.B.C. of political thought and movements in the world today which lay particular stress on the economic issues.

I think all the leading countries are faced with dictatorship. Barring France there is not a single country where the parliamentary government could really be said to be existing at present. In the U.S.A., they have at present, in Mr. Roosevelt, a more intelligent and liberal dictator than the rest. It is noteworthy that there is a struggle between Fascism and Communism for capital or power in every independent country. This is the inevitable result of the failure of capitalism which has created more wealth but left no purchasing power in the hands of the consumers as the result of great unemployment. So, while the

1. Allahabad, 30 August 1933. From *The Tribune*, 1 September 1933.

people are starving for want of the necessities of life, the capitalist countries which have produced them in abundance are busy destroying them. For instance, Brazil has destroyed so much coffee that every man in the world today could get a pound if that coffee was distributed. Even wheat has been destroyed at several places and they were meeting in a conference to restrict its production.

This great economic distress is sought to be relieved by raising high tariff walls but this has created fresh complications because it cuts at the very root of capitalism by uprooting the theory of open markets on which it is based. It has served as a tonic to England but it will provide only temporary relief. This policy of national isolation and international noncooperation in matters of production and consumption will eventually lead to some serious international developments and the establishment of a new order of society. Undoubtedly, statesmen from all parts of the world are meeting over and over again for purposes of international amity and peace but their conferences are meeting the same fate as the conferences for Hindu-Muslim unity in India because they were not prepared to sacrifice their individual interests in favour of others. India is not immune from the effects of these international forces which the Liberal leaders of our country in particular and other thoughtful citizens in general should take into account. England is trying to protect the vested interests of the zamindars, the capitalists and the princes as well as its own vested interests in India, but it is doubtful as to how long this incongruous adjustment vis a vis economic forces governing the rest of the world is likely to endure.

3. Interview to the Pioneer[1]

It is a relief to be able to talk, for, you may imagine, there is not much opportunity for conversation in gaol. My refuge has been in books, of which I was allowed six at a time, and I have done so much solid reading in politics, economics and my own subject, science, that if I cannot say that my education is complete, at least now I realise the gaps that used to exist in it.

1 Lucknow, 31 August 1933. From *The Pioneer*, 2 September 1933.

Solid reading is a necessity in prison; without it the mind stagnates and rots. Novels for a relaxation occasionally, yes, but one must have something more substantial on which to concentrate. My aim and interest has been to study world problems and the recent developments in Germany, America and elsewhere and to estimate their probable effect upon India. For though India's case is a case apart, yet, she is of the world and her future must be affected by what is happening elsewhere.

Q: What is your reading of the world?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I am convinced that the days of capitalism and the privileged classes are over and that a new structure of society is inevitable.

Q: On the Russian model?

JN: Not necessarily on the Russian model, but on the general lines of the Russian conception. The alternative is fascism, to which even England seems to be inclined more readily than is realised, though her fascist revolution, if it comes, will doubtless be a milder affair than that of Hitler. Fascism is the last weapon which vested interests can employ to keep what they have. Its success, in Germany, for example, depends on how far Hitler can solve or postpone the economic embarrassments of the country.[2]

Here, too, the problem is primarily economic and not political. We agitators are accused of upsetting the State. But the truth is that no agitator has such superhuman powers as to be able to do that. The agitator, though he may temporarily direct events, merely gives expression to existing grievances. In India those grievances are agrarian. The zamindari system has broken down; it is as much an anachronism as autocracy in Indian states.

In view of these conditions, I do not expect any improvement under a constitution reformed on White Paper lines. The whole White Paper scheme is obviously unworkable and unprofitable. Our object, in striving for self-government for India, is to reduce the cost of administration and consequently the burden on the peasant. And now, so far from a reduction, we have Sir Malcolm Hailey estimating the increased cost of provincial autonomy in crores of rupees! For my part I am glad that the scheme is wholly worthless. Had it been partly good and partly bad it would have been more difficult to oppose it.

Q: And had it been wholly good and emanated from the same source?

2. In addition to the world depression, the German economy was being crippled by war reparations.

JN: That from my point of view is an impossible conception. I am satisfied that the future prosperity of the masses in India lies in a complete reconstruction of society on a new basis. That means the diversion of profits and property from the 'haves' to the 'have-nots' and it cannot be supposed that vested interests will ever voluntarily agree to that. I cannot believe in any reformed constitution being satisfactorily worked by the British members of the present services. There may be a few individuals who are genuinely enthusiastic; there are some who will undertake the task silently; but the majority will represent, not unnaturally perhaps, a deadweight of the opposition as they cannot escape their traditions.

To illustrate my point that agrarian agitation was spontaneous and not the product of the agitator, I shall tell you how I myself first came to be connected with the movement. It was in 1920. I was staying with my mother and my wife in the Savoy Cecil at Mussoorie. The Afghan peace delegates (after the Third Afghan War) were also in the hotel, but as I was living quietly and they had their own apartments, in a month, I never caught sight of an Afghan. However, the police came and asked me to sign a declaration that I would not communicate with them. Although I had no intention of doing so, I refused and was promptly expelled from Mussoorie. The order was afterwards cancelled by Sir Harcourt Butler but meanwhile I had gone to Allahabad where I found a deputation of 200 villagers from outlying districts awaiting my father and myself.[3]

In those days the Congress was almost entirely a middle class organisation and I knew nothing of the life and difficulties of the peasants. I realised vaguely that they were poor, but that was all. When I went among them (they made roads for my car across their fields and sometimes carried it bodily), I learnt something of their poverty and found that agitation—and purely spontaneous agitation—had reached such a pitch that crowds of 20,000 would walk anything up to twenty miles to attend a meeting. The life tenancy legislation[4] which government hastily introduced restored tranquillity for a time, but my point is that it was the peasant himself and not the agitator who secured it.

Incidentally the first sight that I saw when I returned to Mussoorie was my small daughter, then a year old, in the arms of one of the Afghan delegates. The fact that I had been forbidden to fraternize with them had been quite sufficient to make them friends of the family —in which there lies a lesson for governments!

3 See *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 162-165.

4 The Oudh Rent Act of 1921 and the Agra Tenancy Act of 1926 conferred security of tenure on tenants. See also *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 374-376.

Of the *prison system, apart from the question of physical ill-treatment* of prisoners which I hold to have been established beyond a doubt, I consider that the practice of setting them to obviously unproductive work, of shutting them up for fifteen hours or more in barrack rooms with nothing to do, of denying them writing materials, is calculated, if it is not intended, to degrade them and break their spirit.

A seemingly minor, but really serious injustice, is the matter of interviews. Once every three months a man is allowed to see a visitor. But the interview is restricted to twenty minutes and many such interviews are conducted at a long table with no opportunity for privacy nor time for thought. Moreover, I have known prisoners (illiterate ones and not political prisoners) who have never had an interview with their friends or families for five years. They have the right, but they have neither the knowledge nor the education to exercise it. They cannot write a letter; their families cannot read one, and are in any case frightened to come within the purlieu of a gaol. When they venture, they sometimes sit for days outside, since it is nobody's business to attend to them.

The savage sentences (eight years imprisonment on a youth for writing a threatening letter because his brother had been sent to gaol for life!) and the whole of the prison system call for an impartial examination.

The trouble about the English in India is that they are a prey to their own fears. Brought up on stories of mutiny and on vague and nonsensical ideas of the mysterious East which no European can understand, they imagine that they are sitting on top of a volcano which may blow up at any moment. Every Englishman, whether soldier or civilian, has the military mind and sees himself as one of an army of occupation in a conquered country which is ready to rise at the first opportunity.

That mentality produces the inevitable results and I can understand, even if I cannot excuse, the conduct of General Dyer at Amritsar. It was the product of the fear-complex which is the cause of half the troubles of the world.

Q: What are your plans?

JN: One thing is certain. I have no thought of leaving India.

4. To Aldous Huxley[1]

Allahabad
September 1, 1933

Dear Mr. Huxley,[2]

A short while ago, I read in prison a little book called *Science in the Changing World*. A passage in your broadcast, included in this book, surprised and distressed me a little.[3] According to this, you said that Tolstoyans and Gandhi-ites advocate a 'return to Nature' and want people to abandon science altogether and live like primitives or, at least, in the medieval style. If this advice was followed, you pointed out, it would result in the sacrifice of eight or nine hundred million human lives, a slaughter compared to which the massacres of Timur[4] and Jinghiz Khan[5] sink into absolute insignificance.

I am not competent to say anything about the Tolstoyans but I have been closely associated with Mr. Gandhi and the 'Gandhi-ites' for the last fourteen years and can thus presume to know something about them. Indeed, in a political sense, I have myself been a 'Gandhi-ite' for all these years. I feel that, quite unintentionally, you have done them a grave wrong in the reference you have made. And as Mr. Gandhi is the unquestioned leader of the Indian national movement, it is more than likely that many people who listened to your remarks or read them subsequently, were led to misjudge the nationalist movement

1 JN Correspondence, NMML

2 (1894-1963), well known writer of novels, essays, biography and short stories, visited India in the winter of 1925 and published his diary under the title *Jesting Pilate*

3 Huxley wrote: ".. .Tolstoyans and Gandhi-ites tell us that we must "return to Nature"—in other words, abandon science altogether and live like primitives or, at best, in the style of our medieval ancestors. The trouble with this advice *is that it cannot be followed—or rather that it can only be followed if we* are prepared to sacrifice at least eight or nine hundred million human lives. Science, in the form of modern industrial and agricultural technique, has allowed the world's population to double itself in about three generations. If we abolish science and "return to Nature", the population will revert to what it was—and revert, not in a hundred years, but in as many weeks. Famine and pestilence do their work with exemplary celerity. Tolstoy and Gandhi are professed humanitarians; but they advocate a slaughter, compared with which the massacres of Timur and Jinghiz Khan seem almost imperceptibly trivial."

4 Tartar chieftain who invaded India in 1398 and sacked Delhi.

5 Chengiz Khan (c 1155-1227); a Mongol conqueror who subjugated most of Asia and penetrated into Europe.

by them and to imagine that it stood for a most reactionary and lunatic policy which, if logically carried out, must lead to a frightful catastrophe.

I do not propose to discuss Mr. Gandhi's personality in this letter. He is a complete person and has many aspects which astonish the modern mind. Essentially he is a man of religion and essentially the typical modern is not. Finding, what he considers, too much indulgence about him, he lays stress on the ascetic ideal. In particular, his ideas about sex relations seem extraordinary to most people of our day. All this is, what I might perhaps call, Mr. Gandhi's personal philosophy, and those who look upon him more or less as a religious or moral leader presumably accept it to a greater or lesser extent. Mr. Gandhi no doubt realizes that his strict personal code cannot be followed by more than a handful of people, but he hopes that this handful will set an example which will result in toning up the lives of large numbers of others.

His attitude to science is very far from being hostile. He welcomes it and takes advantage of it in a variety of ways, and often people, wilfully misunderstanding him, accuse him of inconsistency because he does so, as for instance, when he submits to an operation, or rides a motor car, or uses a printing machine, or telegraphs or telephones. None the less it is perfectly true that, being fundamentally religious, his tendency is to seek for the truth inside himself, rather than externally by the methods of science.

Large-scale machine production he does not like but he has never suggested, to my knowledge, that it should be scrapped. He wants, as far as possible, to decentralise industry, to have small units and not large ones, and for this purpose he wants to take the fullest advantage of the scientific method. He thinks that this ought to suit modern conditions but in case it does not, why then, he is perfectly prepared to have something else. In either event there is no question, so far as he is concerned, of ignoring any advantage that science has to offer.

This, in brief, is Mr. Gandhi's personal attitude to science and industry. It may not be a correct attitude; its logic may be faulty. But it does not mean a negation of science or a destruction of machine industry. Possibly it may result in a lessening of production and in this sense it may be a putting back of the clock. Even so it could hardly be madder than the present deliberate restriction of output both in industry and agriculture and the actual destruction of large quantities of foodstuffs and other useful articles which millions lack.

Even this attitude is not necessarily accepted by the political associates and followers of Mr. Gandhi. Personally I do not agree with

4. To Aldous Huxley[1]

Allahabad
September 1, 1933

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Even this attitude is not necessarily accepted by the political associates and followers of Mr. Gandhi. Personally I do not agree

it, and I should like to make it perfectly clear that the Indian Congress and the national movement have not adopted it. Indeed Mr. Gandhi has never asked the Congress, except in one particular, to endorse this attitude. That one particular is, as the world knows, the cottage spinning wheel. The Congress has recommended hand spinning to the agricultural classes of India not because of any hostility to machinery or science, but because of special reasons applicable to the Indian peasant under present conditions. The spinning wheel is not to be *the rival of machinery—it would be absurd to say so; nor is spinning* to take the place of any other occupation. Agriculture, as it is carried on here, is not a full time job for the whole year. There is intense activity at harvest time and some other times and then there are several months of unemployment. The peasant and his family were encouraged to spin during this seasonal unemployment as well as during their leisure hours. It was thus to be a kind of secondary occupation, an auxiliary industry, for him so long as he had no other and better way of employing his spare time. Spinning was also to be a partial stand by for the vast numbers of unemployed who have nothing to do and who are such a burden on the land. It is a remarkable fact that, contrary to the universal tendency, in India the rural population has grown at the expense of the urban during the last hundred years and right up to our day.

The obvious way to absorb these scores of millions of unemployed and *partially employed is to provide other occupations for them* by industrialising the country. Scientific agriculture may lessen the peasant's waste time and increase the yield but the immediate result would be to add to the unemployment. Hand-spinning cannot solve these problems or put an end to unemployment, whole time or seasonal. If we had the state power in our hands we would certainly adopt a host of other methods, including industrialization. As it is we are helpless and can only work in a limited sphere. In the limited sphere there is no doubt that hand-spinning and its associate cottage occupations have brought a small measure of well-being to those who have taken it up. The real objection to widespread cottage spinning is that by bettering slightly the condition of those who adopt it, it helps to prop up a land system and an economic structure which are indefensible and which are in process of breaking down. A radical socialist would rightly object to this attempt at propping up a doomed structure.

In these days of economic nationalism there is one other factor which is worth considering. In the event of a crisis where India has to rely on her own resources, spinning can fill the gap so far as cloth is concerned. A war may stop all imports; the Indian mills may fill the gap

but they are not in the position to do so wholly yet. No doubt they will grow. Meanwhile they have a way of exploiting a crisis to their own great advantage by raising prices, as they did during the Great War, when there is no outside competition. A widespread movement of hand-spinning is some check on this raising of prices and it helps the country to clothe itself when there is a cloth famine.

These are some obvious considerations, and there are others of a political nature such as the boycott of foreign cloth, which induced the Congress to recommend hand spinning. There is also a human side to the spinning-wheel and the weaving of homespun cloth. They have brought the intelligentsia nearer to the peasant masses and reduced the vast gap which our one-sided education had produced between them. I have mentioned these considerations to you not to defend the spinning wheel but so that you may realise that Indian nationalism is not opposed to big scale machinery and much less to science. I have no doubt that when it is in a position to do so, it will industrialize the country as rapidly as possible. Meanwhile, helpless as we are, we have to carry on with such makeshifts as are available.

To touch a personal note. My whole outlook on life and its problems is a scientific one and I have never felt attracted towards religion and its methods. (I took the natural sciences tripos at Cambridge). I entirely disagree with Mr. Gandhi's views on sex, birth control, asceticism, etc. I believe in the machine and would have it spread in India but I believe also in the social control of it. I would like India to have socialism and a widespread industrialization. Believing all this, would it be possible for me, or the large numbers who are like me, to cooperate closely for years with a person who stands for a policy which is inimical to science and industry and which might lead to a dreadful holocaust? And is it for this that we spend long years of our life in prison?

Forgive me for writing at such length to you. One gets rather tired of misrepresentations and propaganda when most of us are shut up in prison and a rigid censorship prevails outside. Often it happens that the most amazing propositions are advanced by our critics and opponents as representing our views and this imaginary and unreal structure is then demolished with great gusto. I know you could not have meant to misrepresent us and that is why I wanted to make you appreciate to some extent what our position was. I do not want you to take the trouble to contradict anything that you have said or to correct yourself.

We met once—an all too brief meeting. It was during the Congress session at Cawnpore in December 1925. I tried to find you and your

wife later but you had gone. You will hardly remember me but I have had many occasions to renew that acquaintance through your delightful books.

I have only just come out of prison after serving out a two year sentence. I hasten to write to you for soon, within a few days perhaps, I am likely to go back again—to muse on the earthly paradise and the various bars, of iron and of the spirit, which prevent us from reaching it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. To Desmond Young[1]

Lucknow
September 1, 1933

Dear Mr. Young,[2]

Thank you for your letter. I was slightly taken aback by the *Pioneer* headlines this morning. Somehow I was not expecting a report of an interview though I ought to have known better. The substance of the conversation we had, as given in the report, is certainly accurate but a few minor errors of fact have crept in. They are not important or worth shouting about, but just to indicate their nature, I shall mention two. The Oudh peasants who came to Allahabad in 1920 did not come in deputation to my father and me. Father was not even in Allahabad then. The peasants came to seek relief from well known public workers and I happened to be one of those who came into contact with them. The other error is that I was allowed only 6 books at a time in prison. This is the rule for A class prisoners and I have had to submit to it during some of my previous terms of imprisonment. But on the last occasion it was relaxed in my favour and I was allowed more books.

I promised to send you a limerick which seemed to me to give a remarkable picture of the forces behind the new *Pioneer*. I understand that the *Pioneer* now represents the ruling princes, the taluqdars and zamindars, British commercial houses in India, and Indian business—a

1 J N. Correspondence, N M.M L
2. At this time the editor of the *Pioneer*; later Chief Press Adviser in Bureau of Public Information.

unique combination of autocracy, the feudal order, British capitalism and Indian capitalism. Applying the Mendelian theory, I wondered of what this very mixed assortment could be the offspring. Or perhaps, in these days of topsy-turvydom, the *Pioneer* had decided to reverse that theory and, starting with the offspring, was trying to incubate the parents, whoever and whatever they might be. Anyhow here is the limerick. Limericks of course are anonymous and I do not know the author's name.

> There was a young fellow called Starky
> Who had an affair with a darky.
> The result of his sins
> Was quadruplets, not twins:
> One black, one white, and two khaki.

As for my retaining my 'freedom' or not for any length of time, I cannot say. My mother's illness is at present a disturbing factor which restricts, to some extent, my activities. But the 'freedom' that one gets outside prison does not deserve that name and personally I find it most distressing and suffocating. There are so many inhibitions, restrictions and prohibitions, so many things we may not do, so many things we must do or suffer the consequences of our disobedience. We are all, like the Chittagong boys and girls,[3] more or less ticket-of-leave men and women, and I am afraid I prefer straightforward prison to this ticket-of-leave condition. My whole nature rebels against this compulsion and terrorism of government, and I feel nauseated at the vulgarity, falsehood and sycophancy that accompany them. Politics is a queer game at times and many a time one doubts and hesitates, but surely loyalty to the principles one holds to be true and to brave comrades who suffer for them can never be wrong. There are very few who do not long for a real opportunity to do the work of building up, but the foundations must be true, and the blue prints on rights lines. It is no pleasure to spend long years in prison cut off from family, friends and most of what life has to offer.

I shall be happy to meet you again, but for the present I am rather vague about my programme. Perhaps we might fix up some time next week.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3 On 24 May 1933, under the Bengal Suppression of Terrorist Outrages Act all Hindu men between the [illegible] of 12 and 25 residing in 4 specified thanas were to carry identity [illegible] and produce them for inspection [illegible] ever required. The act was [illegible] to Midnapur on the assassinat[illegible] Mr. Burge, the district magis[illegible] September 1933.

6. To B.K. Das Gupta[1]

Lucknow
2.9.33

Dear Friend,[2]
I am in receipt of your letter of the 31st August sending me a draft manifesto on the condition of political prisoners in the Andamans, to be issued by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, Sir P. C. Ray and others.[3] Like most of my countrymen, I have been deeply shocked at the terrible tragedy that has been enacted in the Andamans and at the amazingly callous attitude of the government in regard to it. It is extraordinarily painful to realise our helplessness even for the purpose of saving the lives of our comrades. I do not know that any useful purpose can be served by making any request to a government that has acted in this manner and has sought to justify that action. Nor have I any faith in government enquiries. But the demands you put forward in the manifesto obviously embody the very minimum of action required and, if my name is of any help to you, you can certainly use it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J.N Correspondence, N M M L
2 Secretary, Andaman Prisoners League, Calcutta
3 The manifesto demanded enquiry into the death of the three hunger strikers and immediate repatriation of all political prisoners.

7. To T.C. Goswami[1]

Allahabad
September 3, 1933

My dear Goswami,
Thank you for your letter. I agree with you entirely that we must take full stock of the present situation. I should very much like to meet

1. J N Correspondence, N M M L.

friends to do so and subject to my mother's health I shall take advantage of any opportunity that offers itself. Of course there is no question of defeat in a national struggle. I have not the faintest feeling of defeat. I think we have done remarkably well. My one regret is that we have not laid sufficient stress on a proper ideology. The masses always learn from big events rather than from debates and the like. But the way has to be pointed by a proper ideology before the lesson can be learnt. Big events have taken place in this country and in the world and I do not doubt that part of the lesson has been learnt; much more can be done by a proper direction of the mind. Although I have been inevitably cut off from current happenings in India I have given considerable thought to fundamental issues both in our country and abroad and have been fascinated by the ponderous moving of the world forces. I feel that taking everything together events move in the right direction although there may actually be many an apparent setback nationally and internationally. It is of course folly to prophesy but I feel glad that I am alive and kicking in the world at this cataclysmic stage.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. On the Congress Organisation and Programme[1]

It seems to me that there is a great deal of misapprehension about the statements issued by Gandhiji and Mr. Aney regarding the future Congress programme.[2] I should like to meet Gandhiji and other colleagues before saying anything in the matter but some points are quite

1. Statement at Allahabad, 4 September 1933. *The Leader*, 6 September 1933.
2. Mahatma Gandhi had on 20 July 1933 advised a temporary suspension of mass civil disobedience, a cessation of all Congress organisations and secret methods, all India 'dictators' and provincial 'dictators' were however to continue Aney, as acting President of the Congress, endorsed Mahatma Gandhi's directives on 22 July 1933 but added, "All Congress organisations including the office of the A.I.C.C. should cease to exist for the time being"

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1 J N Correspondence, N M M L.

In regard to the other matter, I should, of course, like to consult Mahatmaji and other colleagues before saying anything. I know nothing about the proposed meeting of Mahatmaji with some members of the Round Table Conference.[4] It is obvious there is a world of difference between the objective, methods and ideology of the Congress and the Round Tablers. The Congress definitely adopted the creed of independence at Lahore in 1930 and that remains. The Round Tablers, so far as I understand them, are striving for something entirely different. As for the Congress and the British Government, they are poles apart.

4. There was a press report that Mahatma Gandhi was anxious to meet as many delegates who had returned from the Joint Parliamentary Committee meeting as possible before he took the next step

9. On the World Situation[1]

The old sign posts and familiar pathways in the world situation are being obliterated. I look at the Indian situation only as part of the present day world order or disorder, and am optimistic that out of all this travail and titanic unrest, a new order will be born when nations will breathe a purer air and live under more spacious skies.

I have no regard for men afraid of the present inevitable clash of forces, here, there and everywhere. As Trotsky said: "if one is afraid of strife, disorder and revolution, one has chosen the wrong moment to be born."

There is a need for intellectual and interpretative journalism and of newspapers having the services of good writers and correspondents, who are given time to read and understand world forces and events, and opportunities to interpret their significance. There are only a few such papers in India and I wish them greater success and glory.

1 Allahabad, 4 September 1933 From *The Hindu*, 5 September 1933.

clear and indeed they were cleared up by Mr. Aney himself.[3] The constitution of the Congress cannot be changed by any office-bearer of it and so, obviously the Congress organisation continues as it has always done. That is exactly what Mr. Aney made clear in his second statement. All that has happened is that Gandhiji and Mr. Aney have advised Congress organisations not to carry on organisational office work, because this obviously could not be normally carried on under existing circumstances. That advice has been accepted by Congress committees. As soon as any change occurs or any opportunity offers itself, the officers and the organisations will function as before but it is quite clear that neither the Congress committees nor their office-bearers have ceased to exist or can cease to exist under any circumstances. I was elected the General Secretary of the Congress at Karachi and so long as another election is not made by the Congress, I certainly consider myself as such General Secretary; but under existing circumstances I am not functioning as such or running the All India Congress office. Whenever the time comes I shall act and function as such.

It is manifest under certain conditions of struggle between the Congress and the British Government it becomes exceedingly difficult for the Congress to carry on its normal activities in the normal way. To recognise this is to recognise a fact. It in no way affects the existence or the power of Congress committees under the constitution. It is adaptation to the circumstances prevailing.

A somewhat similar position was recognised by the Working Committee in 1931 during the negotiations with the government. No resolution was actually passed because ultimately provisional settlement was reached. At one stage, however, a break was imminent and the Committee considered and approved of a certain resolution. This resolution contemplated a situation when the government action might make the organisational work exceedingly difficult. It stated that after all members of the existing Working Committee had been removed by government action, no new Committee need be appointed as had been the practice in 1930. It called upon the country to carry on the struggle afresh and in case a situation arose when directions could not be received and even mutual consultation became difficult, every Congressman should consider himself the Working Commitee of the Congress. I quote from memory but, so far as I remember, that was the resolution.

3. In a later statement Aney explained that the phrase "all Congress organisations does not include the A.I.C.C. and other regular organisations but only those which came into existence during the civil disobedience campaign."

11. To Sri Prakasa[1]

Poona
September 10, 1933

My dear Sri Prakasa,

I received your letter in Lucknow. I am very sorry to learn about your ill-health and other difficulties. Of course it is for each of us to decide about his own activities and responsibilities and no one else can presume to interfere. So far as I am concerned I am afraid that I have completely burnt my boats behind me and I cannot conceive of any responsibility, domestic or otherwise, which can keep me away from the political field. Programmes and policies change and come and go but fundamentally the struggle continues. If I disagree with a programme fundamentally the only other alternative for me is to chalk out another programme of activity and to follow it. The fact that large numbers of people follow any programme, or not, is important no doubt but essentially it has little effect on me if I have been in that activity. Ups and downs and lulls and activities are inevitable and every person who has had anything to do with public affairs expects them and goes through them. Indeed such lulls serve a very necessary purpose in a nation's development by teaching the masses many a lesson and by making them distinguish between various groups which have in a moment of enthusiasm put themselves under one banner. They help in making us think clearly about the ideology that should govern our action. Therefore, I for one welcome the present lull and feel sure that out of it will be born a mightier movement with clearer directions.

I wish I had met and had a talk with you. Perhaps we might meet in the near future.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

10. To S.P. Khambatta[1]

Lucknow
September 7, 1933

My dear Khambatta,[2]
I have your letter and the questions.[3] It was my intention to send you some kind of statement from Lucknow but as I am going to Poona to see Mr. Gandhi I have decided not to send you anything of that kind for the present. I may send a statement to you later on to your Bombay address.

But I should like to make one point clear. Obviously in such a statement it is not possible under the existing circumstances for any responsible Congressman to go into details of the terms on which the Congress might agree to meet the British Government. Only the broad principles can be stated. Such a statement cannot be written just to please Lansbury, Henderson & Co. I have no doubt that British Labour as a body wishes us well. I have equally no doubt that the British Labour Party, as at present constituted, has neither the desire nor the ability to do much for India and, in spite of their tall talk and pious platitudes, they are fundamentally opposed to Indian freedom. That however would not prevent my giving a statement for the *Herald*. But my statement cannot be toned down just to please the *Herald*. I have no objection to the *Herald* not supporting it, or even criticising it, if it chooses.

Your questions are a mixed lot and they betray some ignorance of the existing political situation. In case I send you a statement later on it would perhaps be better if I deal with the matter as a whole and from a fundamental point of view rather than deal with your questions separately.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J. N Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Correspondent in India of the *Daily Herald*, a newspaper of the British Labour Party
3. Khambatta had requested Jawaharlal for a statement indicating "some definite policy of action manifesting the goodwill of the Congress to the Commonwealth while bearing foremost the full interest of our people." He also sent a questionnaire.

13. To Bhagavan Das[1]

Poona
September 11, 1933

My dear Babu Bhagavan Das,

Your telegram has reached me and I have shown it to Gandhiji. I am very keen myself on a definition of economic policy for the national movement But I fail to see how an 'all *parties conference*'[2] *can evolve* such a policy. The essential basis of difference between various groups and parties is economic interest. To expect them to agree on a common policy ignores this fundamental difference. I am afraid that conflict between different interests is inevitable. We have seen the failure of numerous efforts in post-war Europe to find a common economic policy for the different nations. During the last 15 years there have been over a hundred international conferences to deal with economic problems in Europe. Not one of them has succeeded.

Apart from this economic difference there is such a vast difference in political outlook between the Congress and various petty groups that I do not think any common ground of action can be found. I have no desire to meet or have any dealing with people whom I consider *cowards and traitors to the cause. In the national struggle some such* groups and individuals have deliberately taken the side of the enemy. They *did not even* remain neutral. They cast their lot with that of our alien rulers. I think they had better remain in the place of their choice and share fortunes with them. Personally I am well content to be rid of them.

Under these circumstances you will observe that so far as I am concerned no purpose whatever will be served by what is usually called an 'all parties conference'.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L
2. In the latter half of 1933 it was suggested that an all parties conference be held to secure *substantial modifications* of the White Paper proposals and devise ways of ending the political stalemate

12. To Kapildeva Malaviya[1]

Poona
September 10, 1933

My dear Kapildeva,
I received your letter in Lucknow and I am dictating this answer on my way to Poona.

I was very glad to receive your letter and would have been gladder still to meet you. I cannot write at length about the present situation but I feel that you have misunderstood to some extent the press interview I gave I realise that my words were perhaps liable to that misconstruction. I shall only say here that it would not have been proper for me under the existing circumstances to express my disagreement with some of the decisions recently arrived at. I confined myself to interpreting them in as favourable a manner as possible. You will appreciate my position at present. In my own mind I am pretty clear about the various issues before the country and am very far from being depressed in regard to them. Obviously we have to face a difficult position but that is inevitable in a great struggle. More I must keep till we meet.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 JN Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
See *ante*, item 8 Malaviya had inquired whether this meant that the Congress organisation had ceased to function and would resume work later in more propitious circumstances.

And because of that I shall not sign myself, *yours in hostility*, as you have done, but live in hopes of converting you to the straight and narrow path which leads to Indian freedom.

In that hope I am,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. The Andaman Prisoners[1]

Sir Harry Haig[2] has done me the honour of referring to me in that august and ponderous assembly, the Council of State. He has mentioned the fact that one of my first public acts after my release from prison was to add my name to the manifesto about the condition of prisoners in the Andaman Islands.[3] Evidently, he expected that a long stay in prisons in India must have dulled my feelings of humanity and my sensibility to human suffering.

I am glad to assure him that I have managed to retain these feelings and sentiments in spite of the course of treatment that the Government in India has prescribed for me from time to time. Indeed, the manifesto expressed very feebly what I felt in the matter.

Personally, I was not very desirous of making any demands on the government however obvious and humanitarian they might be, through this manifesto, for long experience has taught me that humanity or reason has little place in the mental equipment of some of the high officials of the government.

1. Statement to the press, Poona, 12 September 1933 *The Hindu*, 13 September 1933
2. Harry Graham Haig (1881-1956), entered I C S, 1905; Home Secretary, 1926 30, Home Member, 1932 34, Governor of U.P, 1934 39.
3. On 11 September 1933 Haig charged the Congress leaders of encouraging terrorist activities and added, "one of the first public acts of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, after his release from prison, was to include his name among the list of miscellaneous signatures to a manifesto which....must have the effect of keeping alive the feeling of sympathy for terrorist prisoners in the Andamans."

14. To Patrick Lacey[1]

Poona
September 13, 1933

Dear Mr. Lacey,[2]

Your letter came as a pleasant surprise.[3] For nearly two years the *Statesman's* Simla correspondent was my daily companion. The companionship was real and yet it was strangely unreal, for he represented to me not a person or persons in solid flesh and blood but something shadowy and ghostly which materialised itself in cold print. Your letter has brought a touch of reality to this ghostly figure and filled it with flesh and blood and the virtues and frailties of human beings.

Yes, I was at Trinity, Cambridge. But surely you do less than justice to Balliol and Oxford when you say that they might have produced a lifeless dummy figure, a robot, who could but speak and move and act at the bidding of entrenched authority. I have a high regard for Balliol and I would have thought otherwise. Even Balliol could not have made me a greater friend of the English than Harrow and Trinity made me, but that friendship, I am afraid, does not extend to the British Government in England and India.

Perhaps you are right in saying that my English is better than my Hindi. I am glad to find that you take interest in Hindi writing.

Mahadeva Desai is almost beyond the reach of your love. He is somewhere in prison.

I remember the incident at Simla station to which you refer.[4] I am afraid I am a very imperfect follower of Mr. Gandhi's doctrine of satyagraha, but long association with him has at least taught me to try to go through life's journey with as peaceful a motive as possible.

1 J.N. Correspondence, NMML.
2 Correspondent of *The Statesman* at Simla.
3 Lacey had written. "You have the Harrovian manner to perfection....I could take you for a fellow Balliolian, not a mere Cantab from Trinity....but of course, if you had gone to Oxford instead of Cambridge you might now be an ornament of the Government of India and a devoted friend of the English."
4 Lacey, referring to the incident, had written, "I last saw you in the act of giving a most unnonviolent biff in the chest of a Congress volunteer at Simla station when Gandhi left for the R.T.C."

In regard to economic matters, the Karachi Congress, by passing the important resolution on Fundamental Rights and Economic Changes,[2] gave a lead and pointed out the direction in which we should move. I attach great importance to that resolution but I would personally like to go much further and to clarify the position still more.

It seems to me that if we are to improve the condition of the masses, to raise them economically and give them freedom, it is inevitable that vested interests in India will have to give up their special position and many of their privileges. It is inconceivable to me how else the masses can rise. Therefore the problem of achieving freedom becomes one of revising vested interests in favour of the masses. To the extent this is done, to that extent only will freedom come. The biggest vested interest in India is that of the British Government, next come the Indian princes, and others follow. We do not wish to injure any class or group and the divesting should be done as gently as possible and with every effort to avoid injury. But it is obvious that the divesting is bound to cause loss to the classes or groups which enjoy special privileges at the expense of masses. It is also obvious that the process of divesting must be as speedy as possible to bring relief to the masses whose condition, as you know, is as bad as it can well be. Indeed economic forces themselves are acting with amazing rapidity today and breaking up the old order. The big zamindari and taluqdari system in the United Provinces has largely collapsed, though it may be kept up for some time longer by outside agencies. Even the condition of the zamindars is very bad and the peasantry of course are in a far worse position.

We are all agreed that the Round Table Conference and its various productions are utterly useless to solve even one of India's many problems. As I conceive it, the Round Table Conference was an effort to consolidate the vested interests in India behind the British Government so as to face the rising and powerful national and economic movements in the country which threaten their interests. Essentially, in the international parlance, it was a fascist grouping of vested and possessing interests, and fascist methods were adopted in India to suppress the national movement. And because the mere preservation of all these vested interests in India cannot possibly solve our economic ills, whether those of the masses or even of the middle classes, the effort is foredoomed to inevitable failure. Even from the point of view of a democratic nationalism, as you yourself stated at the Round Table Conference, democracy and autocracy can ill go together.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 511-513.

Indeed, I had pointed this out in my letter which apparently was not published, to the originators of the manifesto. Apart from other consideration, I am perfectly happy to have my name included in the "list of miscellaneous signatures", which contains the honoured names of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore and Acharya P. C. Ray.

I am an admirer of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas,[4] but I have not taken my ideas of crime and punishment from them. Sir Harry Haig, no doubt, has taken his ideas from the *Mikado*, that monarch whose "object all sublime" was to "make the punishment fit the crime", and is practising these Gilbertian theories on the unhappy prisoners in Indian prisons and especially in prisons in the Andamans. He will excuse us, I trust, if we are unable to appreciate this royal example and still cling to humanitarian notions and to the belief that all human beings should be treated as human beings and that all imprisonment should be reformatory and not punitive, vindictive and barbarous.

4 Sir William Gilbert, in collaboration with Arthur Sullivan, wrote from 1871 a number of popular light operas

16. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Poona
13 September, 1933

My dear Bapu,

In our recent conversations you will remember that I laid stress on the reiteration and clearer definition of our national objective. The objective of political independence has been finally laid down by the Congress and there is nothing to add to it or take away from it. We stand for complete independence. Sometimes a little confusion arises because of vague phraseology and misleading propaganda and it is therefore as well to remove this confusion by a reiteration of our political demand. Even the word 'independence' is used with a variety of meanings. Obviously it must include, as the Congress has clearly and definitely laid down, full control of the army and of foreign relations as well as financial control.

1 *The Hindu*, 20 September 1933.
The original is not available in the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya and there is no copy in the J.N. Papers. Parts of this letter received wide publicity even at the time.

not prevent Congress workers in any area from cooperating together in an organised way for the furtherance of our programme.

Confusion has also arisen in the country about the implications of individual and mass civil disobedience I appreciate, to some extent, the difference, but this difference does not appear to me to be a fundamental one, as, in any event, civil disobedience is essentially an individual affair. Individual civil disobedience can develop into mass civil disobedience. Besides, you told me that if an organisation felt strong enough to undertake the responsibility and the risk, it could, of its own initiative, take up mass civil disobedience Indeed you were of opinion that a local organisation could in this manner go ahead in any direction which was not contrary to Congress methods or policy.

Stress was laid in your previous statement on the undesirability of secrecy; although you pointed out that there was nothing inherently illegitimate in secret methods. I think that most of us agree, and certainly I am of that opinion, that our movement is essentially an open one and secret methods do not fit in with it. Such methods, if indulged in to any large extent, are likely to change the whole character of the movement, as it has been conceived, and produce a certain amount of demoralization. Agreeing with this, some of us feel that, to some extent as for instance, in communicating with each other or sending directions or keeping contacts, a measure of secrecy may be necessary. Perhaps secrecy is hardly the word for these activities and privacy would suit them better. Privacy of course is always open to all groups and individuals. Secrecy or the avoidance of it, as you said, cannot be made into a fetish.

But secrecy is certainly involved in the production of printed or duplicated news-sheets and bulletins. These bulletins have often served a useful purpose in the past in keeping contact between headquarters and districts and in sending information or directions. You pointed out to me the difficulties and undesirable consequences of running these secret presses and duplicating machines. Many good workers are tied up and have to avoid aggressive action, money has to be invested in such machines and frequently they are taken away by the police. Even from the practical point of view this continuous drain and tying up of workers results in demoralization. You suggested that the best way was to have handwritten copies of bulletins etc. containing the name of the publisher. Generally, I agree with all this and appreciate the force of your argument. But I do feel that under certain circumstances it may be desirable for a local or provincial committee or group to issue bulletins of directions etc. secretly. This must not be encouraged, indeed

Another aspect has to be borne in mind. The problem of Indian freedom cannot be separated from the vital international problems of the world. The present crisis in the world's affairs is having its repercussions in India. At any moment it may result in a complete breakdown or in a violent international conflagration. Everywhere there is a conflict and a contest between the forces of progress and betterment of the masses and the forces of reaction and vested interests. We cannot remain silent witnesses to this titanic struggle for it affects us intimately. Both on the narrower ground of our own interests and the wider ground of international welfare and human progress, we must, I feel, range ourselves with the progressive forces of the world. This ranging ourselves at present can of course be ideological only.

These are some of the larger issues that fill my mind and I am convinced, not only that we ignore them at our peril, but that a true appreciation of them will vitalize and give new meaning to our struggle for freedom which we must continue till the full objective is achieved. These wider issues are of great importance but at present, as you know, the minds of large numbers of our countrymen are greatly exercised over immediate national problems and specially the question of carrying on the struggle. The statements that you and Syt. M.S. Aney issued some time ago to guide the country have, I am afraid, produced some confusion and there has even been some resentment in regard to particular directions contained in them. There is a vague talk, in quarters which ought to know better, that the Congress has been dissolved. *It is obvious that nothing of the kind has been done or could* be done under the constitution. Your directions and those of Mr. Aney were, I take it, in the nature of advice or suggestions to meet a certain position that had arisen. The Congress continues as before but it is clear that it cannot function normally. When the government declares its committees to be illegal, there can be no regular offices or open activity. To recognise this fact and to adapt ourselves to it is not to wind up any Congress committee, much less the Congress organisation as a whole.

A necessary consequence from this was to avoid the possibility of a few newcomers who formed committees when the old members and other reliable workers went to prison, or even individuals, committing the Congress to an undesirable course of action. As is known, we have had to face this risk in the past and unreliable persons have come to the helm of affairs in some local areas with the intention of obstructing and even stopping the very activities they were supposed to further. It thus becomes desirable to prevent such unreliable persons from exploiting the name of the Congress committee. *This of course does*

among political groups. That need not frighten us. Personally I have no fear at all of any disaster or catastrophe in India. There are always ups and downs in a national movement.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. Statement to the Press[1]

Immediately after my discharge from prison, my first thought was the serious illness of my mother, and I hastened to her bedside in hospital. But, though anxiety filled me and my mind was troubled because of her illness, it was inevitable for me to think hard about the present political condition of the country and the course of our struggle for freedom. For over twenty months, I have been cut off from activity. For over two years I had not met Gandhiji, and much had happened during this period. I sought to find out how matters stood from some of my colleagues in the United Provinces; but, above all, I desired to meet Gandhiji after my long separation from him. It was hard for me to leave my mother's bedside; but as soon as I could possibly do so for a few days, I came to Poona. I have now had the privilege of long and intimate conversations with him, and placed my viewpoint before him and listened to his advice. Two questions faced us: the larger national question involved in the freedom struggle, and the personal issue raised by Gandhiji's recent discharge from prison. The latter was a question which Gandhiji alone could decide. It was primarily a matter affecting him, though, of course, any decision of his was bound to have national reaction.

I had come to Poona to see Gandhiji and clear up my own mind about many matters. But I find that considerable public interest has been taken in our conversations and there seems to be the expectation that some public statement should be made with regard to them. It has been thought that a convenient way of placing some of the important points before the public would be by exchange of letters between Gandhiji and myself. It is proposed to exchange and issue these letters to the press in due course.

1. Poona, 14 September 1933. *The Tribune*, 16 September 1933.

it should be discouraged, but a certain latitude in exceptional circumstances might be permitted.

There is one other small matter which seems to me rather ridiculous. It was right and proper, if I may say so, for you to court imprisonment by giving previous intimation of your intention to do so to the authorities. But it seems to me to be perfectly absurd for others, and even Congress volunteers, to send such notices or communications to the authorities. Any person desiring to offer civil resistance should openly carry on activities which further our cause and thus court arrest. He must not forget or ignore these activities and merely ask to be arrested.

This letter has become long enough. I do not mention here the many other matters which I had the privilege of discussing with you.[3]

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

3 Mahatma Gandhi in his reply of 14 September 1933 emphasised the importance of means as well as ends, and stressed the distinction between individual disobedience and mass movement in that the former, if a failure, did not "affect others adversely". He reiterated his dislike of secret methods, and was ready to forego any advantage in order to educate the masses in fearlessness.

17. To J. Makhmoor[1]

Poona
September 14, 1933

Dear Mr. Makhmoor,[2]

I have your letter for which I thank you. There are no riddles in my mind except such as every person dabbling in public affairs has to face. I am fairly clear and definite. None the less a politician has to work with the human material he finds. Unity of course is good and desirable but such unity must be real unity of ideas and objectives. Anything else is bound to fall. Therefore I think it is important to lay stress on a definite objective and ideology. This will clear up the position and make the public realise where various groups and individuals stand. To begin with it may result in an apparent disunity

1 JN Correspondence, NMML.
2. Editor of *Muflis*, an anti communal weekly, published in Bombay.

19. Interview to the Press[1]

Question: How is your health now?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I am all right.

Q: You look pulled down.

JN: I was better immediately after coming out of jail. I think that the sudden change from two years' regular routine life in jail has affected me a little.

Q: Would you answer a few questions?

JN: It would be better if I am interviewed after the publication of the letters exchanged between Gandhiji and myself.

Q: Would you explain the last paragraph of your yesterday's statement, in which you say there are certain difficulties in the way of convening a meeting of the A.I.C.C.

JN: It is obvious. Several of the A.I.C.C. members are still in jail, and besides, it is not known whether the government would allow a meeting of the A.I.C.C.

Q: But has not the A.I.C.C. been declared an unlawful association?

JN: No, the Congress was also not declared unlawful, but there was a ban against holding the Congress at Calcutta.

Q: But at a time like this the government might not ban a meeting of the A.I.C.C. The conference at Poona was not banned.

JN: It might be possible to hold a meeting of the A.I.C.C. some time in the near future. But on all matters I would like to wait till the letters are published before saying anything further. The summary that has been published is inadequate.

Q: Will you deal with a few questions regarding convening of the A.I.C.C. meeting?

JN: So far as I know only Pandit Malaviya had asked for a meeting of the A.I.C.C. I am bound by the constitution to call a meeting of the A.I.C.C. if the required number of members ask for it. Or if I think a meeting ought to be called soon, I will certainly convene a meeting.

1 Bombay, 15 September 1933. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16 September 1933.

It has been my privilege, in common with a vast number of my countrymen and countrywomen, to take part in the struggle for India's freedom during the last memorable thirteen years under the leadership and inspiration of Gandhiji. My own viewpoint has always been political and economic; and I have seldom been influenced by religious or other like considerations, though the moral and practical aspect of satyagraha has always appealed to me. Gandhiji, as is well known, is essentially a man of religion and his outlook is governed by this. Despite this difference in outlook, many of us have found numerous points of agreement with him, and have most willingly and joyously followed his lead in action. India knows, and the world knows, how great a leader in action he is and how he has infused the breath of life and hope in our suffering and toiling masses.

Politically, and to some extent economically, the objective he had had in view appealed to us and we worked to the best of our ability to achieve it. I feel that the methods he taught us to follow are fundamentally right for us and we must continue to pursue them till we gain that objective and that for these methods his leadership is essential. Freedom can have no real meaning for us unless it is the freedom of the lowest and the most exploited in the land. Gandhiji has always laid stress on this and it is from these down-trodden classes that he has drawn his strength.

I feel, however, that it would be desirable to define our objective more clearly so that there may be no misapprehension in India and abroad. In particular, I feel that in these days of the economic breakdown of the capitalist order, it is essential for us to lay down a clear economic policy for the national movement.

I have had a request from a respected colleague to convene a meeting of the All India Congress Committee. I would gladly take this step, as indeed I am bound to do, if there is a requisition demanding such a meeting. But I feel that under the present circumstances there are considerable difficulties in the way of convening a meeting of the All India Congress Committee.

and they result in removing the weaker elements and thereby really strengthen it in the end. It is true that certain groups and classes have now definitely ranged themselves against the Congress. That also is a desirable result, because it separates those classes which are fundamentally against a really democratic India in which the Indian masses have their full say. Such groups only weaken the movement.

Q: Will you please tell me why you are not calling a meeting of the A.I.C.C.?

JN: As I have stated in my statement I would gladly call a meeting of the A.I.C.C. if I receive a requisition. Personally I do not consider that a meeting at the present moment would serve any useful purpose. I take it that some of the people who desire a meeting of the A.I.C.C. to be convened might wish for a revision of the programme, but so far as I am aware there is no such widespread desire and most Congressmen are quite happy and willing to carry on the present programme.

Q: The whole Indian press, whether nationalist or moderate, has demanded it and why should the wishes of the public in the matter be ignored?

JN: I have noticed some newspaper criticisms about the vagueness of the programme and about the nonconvening of a meeting of the A.I.C.C. at present. The attitude of these newspapers has for long been one of disagreement with some of the aspects of the Congress policy.

So far as I know both Congress workers and the masses are perfectly certain that these newspapers live in an atmosphere of their own and know little about the mentality of the masses and specially of Congressmen in general. Great publicity is given to some individuals who propose some change in the programme but the vast majority of others who are silently carrying on the work receive no publicity at all. Even during the fortnight or so that I have been out of prison I have come in sufficient contact with my colleagues of the Congress to know that fundamentally they desire no change in the present programme. In these circumstances I fail to see what purpose will be served by calling a meeting of the A.I.C.C. and discussing a possible revision of the programme which has been approved and which is being carried on by most of the Congressmen.

Q. How long do you think the present state of affairs will continue?

JN: It is impossible for me to peep into the future, but so far as I can see, it will go on till the objective is achieved. It is possible, of course, that events may sometimes need truces and provisional settlements, as in 1931; but that is a possibility, it seems to me, highly unlikely in the near future.

20. Interview to the Press[1]

Question: The country expected a definite lead from you, but instead you seem agreeable to let things remain just as they are?

Jawaharlal Nehru: So far as I am concerned I am perfectly happy to know that the Congress and the country are carrying on the struggle both for political independence and economic change in favour of the masses. I am also perfectly happy about the general methods adopted by us for the struggle. I would like, as I have stated, a more detailed economic programme for the masses. To some extent, a clear indication has been given in the recent correspondence with Gandhiji. It seems to me that those people who talk about a more definite lead have not given sufficient thought to the lead that has already been given. That can be amplified and the details can be filled in otherwise. I fail to see what more the most militant of individuals can want. For those whose conception of a lead is a lead backwards, I have nothing to say except that they will always be disappointed in me.

Q: Do you not think that civil disobedience as a movement has exhausted itself?

JN: The question exhibits an extraordinary ignorance of the civil disobedience movement, the Indian people and myself, as well as what has been happening in the country, and is happening now. It is patent that if we had thought that civil disobedience had exhausted itself we could not recommend its further carrying on. There would be no question of making any recommendation either way. Civil Disobedience is not only continuing, but it can never exhaust itself till its object is achieved.

Q: Do you not think that a continuance of the present conditions will destroy the influence of the Congress and drive many people's activities into other and less desirable channels?

JN: The influence of the Congress among the masses has never been so great as it is today, though it is a fact that there is a certain demoralisation among many people which prevents them from showing their true feeling. Such ups and downs always occur in any great movement,

1 Bombay 17 September 1933 *The Bombay Chronicle*, 18 September 1933.

I am not concerned with hypothetical questions or empty theories in the air; but I am concerned with a scientific consideration of the question of how these hungry stomachs can be filled. It is not a matter of giving alms, but of organising society on a scientific basis so that poverty should be wiped out and the wealth and good things of the world should be evenly distributed.

This cannot be done by piously wishing it or by haphazard methods but by a close and scientific study of the present conditions. Inevitably this leads to the formulation of theories, ideology and methods of bringing about a change. My own experience is that a common illiterate peasant understands the realities of politics and economics, so far as they affect him, more than many of the wise and learned gentlemen who go to the Round Table Conferences and the like, because the latter live entirely in the upper regions, and know little or nothing of the soil, and those who live on it.

The urgent and definite action that is called for today to give bread to the masses is the achievement of independence and divesting of the vested interests. In no other way will the masses have relief.

Q: What is your immediate programme? Are you content that the Congress should drift as at present?

JN: My correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi has made it clear that generally he agrees with the objective of bringing about an equalisation in the social order by the divesting of vested interests. It is true, as pointed out by him, that our outlook is temperamentally not alike but fundamentally we aim at the same thing. Gandhiji is far more interested in methods and believes that if right methods are pursued inevitably the right result will follow. Personally I feel it is also necessary to have the full objective always in view. As far as the methods are concerned, I have agreed in the past and I agree now wholly with the fundamental basis of Gandhiji's methods of carrying on the struggle. Personally I would like to develop the economic programme in greater detail so that people may have a clear vision. Our struggle is fundamentally a national struggle because all countries under foreign domination are bound to be nationalistic before anything else.

But nationalism often covers a multitude of conflicts and even, I am sorry to say, self-seeking groups and individuals. An economic programme helps in clearing issues and allowing everyone to realise exactly where he and his class and groups stand. Gandhiji has repeatedly made it clear that the struggle should be continued till the full objective of the Congress is achieved. He has also said that he is always willing to explore the avenue of peace. Some people think that there is a

Q: Is Gandhiji negotiating with Simla through the moderates? Or are certain moderates using their influence to bring about peace between Gandhiji and the government?[2]

JN: Newspapers have been giving prominence to the possibility of peace talks. Personally I am aware of no such talks now nor do I think there is likely to be any such talk in the near future. So far as I know Gandhiji is also not aware of that but whatever the position may be, as I have already said, Gandhiji is always open to discuss the matter with anyone desiring to do so. That is his basic moral position. That does not, I will repeat, make any difference in regard to the objective which remains as defined. Personally I am convinced that the two forces that are in conflict today, that is to say imperialism and nationalism, are fundamentally opposed to each other and between them there can never be peace except on the basis of an ending of imperialism. Any compromise which leaves even a trace of imperialism can only be a makeshift. It is not, and I should like to make it clear, a question of a quarrel between the Indian people and the English people.

With the English people as a whole we have not the least quarrel but in India, as in many other countries of the East, these two world forces, nationalism and imperialism, are in conflict and a solution of that conflict can only be a complete victory of nationalism over imperialism. That is what is involved in the political ideal of the Congress, that is national independence. Even apart from this political ideal, as we have stated in our correspondence, economic questions inevitably force themselves to the front and must be settled in favour of the masses. But all the great movements we have had in recent years are fundamentally the product of economic discontent of both the middle classes and the masses. No constitution, no compromise, no so-called peace that does not remove that economic discontent can be stable or can be a solution of the Indian problem.

Q: Do you think the masses are concerned with the theories propounded by you or by Gandhiji, unless it gives them a little bread and some freedom to earn it? Is it not a waste of time to discuss these hypothetical questions, when some urgent and definite action is called for, since the country is drifting into despondency and stagnation?

JN: This question seems to me to be misconceived. The whole question of freedom is ultimately a question of filling hungry stomachs. It is not a question of paper constitutions or pacts and compromises.

2. It had been reported that some non Congress leaders were urging the government to negotiate with Mahatma Gandhi.

22. On Gandhi Jayanti Celebrations[1]

During this Gandhi Jayanti fortnight[2] that the country is celebrating I should like to remind my comrades of the Congress and all others interested in the international movement that khadi continues to be the only dress and uniform for us. During the last three years the Congress came to an understanding with a large number of cotton mills in *this country and those of the mills that pledged themselves to further the national programme and agreed to a number of conditions*, were given certificates. Even this did not displace khadi from its premier place. All it was meant to do was to consolidate the national activities in order to keep out foreign cloth. As a matter of fact many of these mills that had pledged themselves in this way forgot or deliberately ignored these pledges and broke the condition under which they had promised to function. Some of them even opposed openly the national movement and also tried to compete with khadi. It is quite possible that these mills may come to some agreement with foreign cotton interests and thus try to exploit jointly with the foreign capitalist, the Indian market and the Indian consumer.[3]

Under these circumstances, these mills can hardly be considered national concerns and all those who desire national advancement, political and economic, should concentrate on the purchase and use of khadi. I hope that during this fortnight especially khadi sales and purchases will be encouraged in every way as a small tribute to our great leader whose birthday we celebrate.

1 Lucknow, 20 September 1933 *The Leader*, 22 September 1933.
2 From 16 September 1933 to 2 October 1933.
3 Talks were going on at this time between the millowners of India and Lancashire which ultimately culminated in an agreement on 30 October 1933.

contradiction in these two statements but this has always been Mahatma Gandhi's attitude. Even at the height of the struggle he has always said that he is prepared for peace because he is a man of peace as well as a born civil resister. This can only mean that any final peace can only be achieved when the full objective is gained. There may of course be what may be called provisional settlements or truces such as the Delhi truce.

Some people are accused of fomenting class struggles. Usually this accusation is made by those fortunate individuals who happen to belong to the classes on top and are prosperous. As a matter of fact, class struggles have always existed and exist today, all over the world. People interested in maintaining the *status quo* try to hide this fact. In order to understand the present position in the world, or in any country, this cloak has to be removed, and the real facts seen. These facts disclose that some classes dominate the social order, and exploit other classes. Class struggle is not thus created but recognised, and the remedy for it is then sought in the ending of that exploitation.

21. Interview at Kanpur[1]

There is not the slightest difference between Gandhiji and myself. As a matter of fact, our recent conversations made it perfectly clear that there is a fundamental unity in regard to our line of action.

I am also surprised to learn that I am contemplating forming a new party along with my friends.[2] So far as I am concerned, this is totally untrue. In all important matters, as before, Gandhiji is the only possible leader of the Indian struggle, and I am happy to be one of his numerous soldiers.

Some newspapers are giving prominence to so-called peace efforts. I know nothing about them. Before leaving Bombay, I asked Gandhiji about them, and he also knew nothing. Evidently, the so-called peace move largely resides in the minds of editors and newspapermen and has no foundation in fact.

1 19 September 1933. From *The Leader*, 22 September 1933.

2 On 13 September 1933 a newspaper had reported that if, after Jawaharlal's return from Poona, it was found impossible to follow Mahatma Gandhi, a new party with complete independence as its goal and a programme based on socialism would be considered.

especially to a definition of the qualifications of legislators. In my own way, which is perhaps somewhat different from yours, I have also desired *an economic orientation of our policy and objective.*

I find it quite amazing how extraordinarily vague are the ideas of many of our closest colleagues in regard to our objective. Perhaps that is inevitable for nationalism hides a host of differences under a cover of anti-feeling against the imperialist oppressor. That has been the case in every country under alien domination and I do not suppose that we shall escape this confused thinking till we are free politically. In spite of this, however, I have endeavoured to lay stress on the economic side and *world events are gradually forcing people to think on those lines.*

I am sure that the more clear thinking we have, the more it will result in cleavages and apparent disunity among various classes. People talk of not encouraging class warfare but the whole world today is based on domination of one class by another. To recognise this is to recognise *an obvious fact. Not to do so seems to me not only folly* but a perilous course. Facts will not fit in with our theories. It is for our theories to fit in with the facts as they are.

It is a little difficult in the course of a letter to deal fully with my views on social and economic problems. If I have the opportunity I shall try to develop them in the press. Briefly they are socialistic and my interpretation of history is what is commonly called the Marxist view. That view limits private property but of course some private property still remains.

It seems to me that you lay more stress on the individual than on the social group in your conception of swaraj. The so-called modern *view is to lay greater stress on the social group* and its organisation, hoping that a better environment will produce the better individual. Of course both views are to some extent right and the individual and the social group act and react on each other. *It is a question of stress.* Always the method of securing wise and unselfish legislators has been a vital problem. Plato, as you know, wanted philosophers to be rulers. The difficulty always has been to find a method of picking out these supermen and placing them in seats of power. Much will depend on the objective that one aims at. Even apart from this it is an extraordinarily difficult thing to get the right men at the top and I do not see how the laying down of qualifications for legislators will help it, for such list of qualifications, *it seems to me,* will permit undesirables to come in. Ultimately one can only rely on a sufficiently enlightened wide-awake public opinion.

If what is desired is to preserve *an existing order,* obviously the older and more conservative should be the legislators. If on the other hand

23. On the Treatment of Political Prisoners in Rae Bareli Jail[1]

Complaints and charges against the treatment of political prisoners in Rae Bareli jail have piled up. Cases have gone to courts and Miss Ellen Wilkinson paid a special visit to the jail and after a close inspection presented a very damaging report.

It is reported that the Home Member has also paid a visit to enquire into the conditions. In spite of all this, there appears to have been little change and the latest news is that Chandrika Prasad,[2] a political prisoner, has been on hunger strike for the last eight or nine days as a protest against ill-treatment. Those who have any knowledge of jail conditions know what this terribly painful ordeal signifies.

High officials may come and go but Rae Bareli jail administration carries on in its old way regardless of public protest and even official frown. Such is the steel frame under which we live in this country. Our sympathy goes out to our brave comrades and we realise how even Home Members are powerless under the present system to get rid of obvious and patent abuses under the laws that function today.

1 Lucknow, 21 September 1933. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 22 September 1933.
2 A Congressman from Bachcharawan in Rae Bareli district; sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment in 1932, went on a hunger strike on 14 September 1933 in protest against the beating of two political prisoners.

24. To Bhagavan Das[1]

Lucknow
September 23, 1933

My dear Babu Bhagavan Dasji,

I am sorry I could only send you a brief letter from Poona. I have now received your letter. I have read it with care. I note well that you have attached the greatest importance to a definition of swaraj and

1 J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

25. Appeal for Khadi[1]

I find that Gandhi Ashram, Meerut, which is in charge of khadi *bhandars*, and production centres in the United Provinces, Delhi and Hindustani Central Provinces, has made great progress in khadi work. They not only produce beautiful designs and improved quality but have reduced the prices. In some lines they are competing on equal terms in the open market with mill products. 'Buy khadi' is thus not the work of charity but of enlightened national and individual self-interest. To compromise with the so-called swadeshi mill cloth after all that has happened and is happening today is merely to delude oneself into believing that this also may be serving the national cause. To all our sympathisers in the United Provinces especially, therefore, I make this appeal that they will not make this weak and ineffective compromise and instead stand for khadi and khadi alone.

1. Lucknow, 23 September 1933. *The Tribune*, 25 September 1933.

26. On the Congress Programme[1]

I do not wish to enter into a profitless controversy or to repeat myself again and again. There is obviously a radical difference in outlook between me and those who criticise me in some newspapers and when the outlook and objective are different it is natural that there should be disagreement about the methods to be adopted.

The first question before the country and before each individual is whether they are struggling for a change in the regime or for what is called reforms. So far as I am concerned I want and am working for a complete change in the regime. States all over the world, as well

1. Interview to the press, Lucknow, 24 September 1933. From *The Tribune*, 27 September 1933.

27. Speech at Lucknow[1]

Nations, like individuals, have only two alternatives in which to live: they can live either in a complacent satisfaction with their present lot believing despairingly that this is the best life they can have under the circumstances or they can live in ceaseless strife against all injustice, oppression (physical, mental or even spiritual) and handicaps of life. The first alternative is comparable to living in a *khud*, down below in the valleys of mountains, where the diseases and dirt of mountains perpetually fall, whereas the second is an ever optimistic ascent towards the loftiest pinnacles. Dr. Besant's is a life of the second category. She hated with all her might those existing conventions which disagreed with her ideals and gave them an endless battle, irrespective of the fact whether she scored or lost. She might have lost in some but that constant endeavour, like the repeated ascents of a mountain, had its own pleasure; and she persisted in it with a courage and patience rarely to be met with. That is perhaps the greatest lesson of the life of that lofty character.

But there are people who really believe in the *khud* life as the most satisfactory from several points of view. Most Indians today share that belief. They might be right but they must not forget that their homes in the *khud* cannot remain immune from the effects caused by the upheavals going on in the mountains. The whole world today is quaking and the future is full of anxiety. How then can you in India hope to live in peace when there are unmistakable signs of an earthquake above? You should decide whether you should attempt an ascent, notwithstanding its attendant hardships, or be crushed in your *khud* homes without moving a hand to shield yourselves from the falling stones. And you should decide soon lest the world events decide the issue for you. You must also note that when the world events decide an issue the decisions leave no alternative.

Religion, I feel, is the bane of India. Religious customs, conventions and traditions have all to be given battle if they impede our advancement. And there are many of them which make us lethargic. Should we be made a prey to them?

1 Lucknow, 24 September 1933 *From The Leader*, 27 September 1933.

as India, today are involved in fundamental changes in the regime. If this fact is once grasped, then it would be easier to lay down an effective policy for achieving such a basic change in the regime. In these days of the collapse of the social structure of Europe and America, it is surprising that people should imagine that economic theories put forward by some others would take decades to be put into practice.

So far as I am concerned the Congress programme can be put in a nutshell thus:

(1) Objective—Complete independence and revision of the social structure in favour of the masses. The Congress is committed to the Karachi resolution and rather vaguely to further economic changes. I feel, however, that the Congress mentality has now advanced further in favour of greater economic changes to put an end to the exploitation of the masses.

(2) Methods—Peaceful civil disobedience in its various forms as the primary and most effective way of carrying on the struggle. For those Congressmen who, for some reason or other, are unable for the moment to carry on civil disobedience, there are certain subsidiary activities such as the removal of untouchability, khadi, swadeshi etc. As India consists very largely of villages, our activities must also largely be rural to reach the villages so that we may work with and for the masses. Of course, the towns including those of the middle classes and working classes are also an important field. If we are proposing a policy of radical economic change, we are also to propose radical means to achieve it, and I am quite sure that we shall achieve it before our critics and we are very much older.

Question: What about convening the meeting of the A.I.C.C.? Jawaharlal Nehru: I have consulted many colleagues during the last fortnight, and as I have already stated, I am perfectly willing to convene a formal meeting of the All India Congress Committee, if so desired by the members. There is no wish on our part to prevent such a meeting or any other form of consultation between Congressmen, but there is a definite and determined will on our part to carry on the struggle till we have achieved our full objective.

seems to be marching to a tremendous breakdown of the existing conditions. This breakdown can only profit us if the workers are organised and have the correct ideology. I hope therefore that our worker comrades will try to develop this ideology and will organise themselves to achieve the socialist order. The day for petty reforms is past and only a fundamental change can solve our difficulties. The ideal must therefore be full socialism. At the same time in India the worker cannot keep apart from the national struggle. He cannot keep apart from politics. Trade union activities are essential for him as also his political activity because the ultimate objective must be political power for the masses. The working class should therefore try to build up their strength and also try to influence in their favour the national policy by associating themselves wherever possible with the national movement. They must try to build up a strong platform of unity among various groups of workers on the basis of a full socialistic programme with political action in alliance and cooperation with the national movement. I wish the workers of South India all success in their efforts to achieve this.

29. To S.K. Mukerji[1]

Lucknow
September 26, 1933

Dear Dr. Mukerji,[2]

I have your two letters. As regards my mother's condition she is a little better and we hope that the improvement will continue. The doctors attending on her are definitely of the opinion that an operation is not desirable. Ordinarily, of course, such an operation would be indicated but her age and general weakness seem to be against it.

I quite realise that we have to contend against the views of society, customs and prejudices in our social organisation which have made us a decadent race. It was indeed with a view to break down this defeatist and stagnant condition that the whole noncooperation movement was conceived and it has worked wonders in stiffening the backbone of the people and inspired them with hope Social evils are ultimately the result of economic exploitation and poverty as also of a wrong ideology.

1. J. N. Correspondence, NMML.
2 A physician at Allahabad

28. To A.G. Venkatachari[1]

Lucknow
September 25, 1933

Dear Comrade,[2]
I have your letter. I am afraid I have little time to send you articles but I give below a message for our worker comrades in South India.

I fully realise that the working class movement is in a bad state at present in India. Having been in jail for so long I am not in touch with the latest developments. But I know that the trade union movement is in a bad way. To some extent that is so all over the world. That of course is only an additional reason for us to organise the workers, infuse a correct ideology in them, and make them not only class conscious but also politically conscious. I should like the working class to act politically but I am by no means sure that they can do so effectively at this stage. Very probably a separate political organisation for them would only result in their exploitation by a few non-worker leaders. Under the present conditions in India the national political struggle must dominate the situation. That is so in every country under alien rule. It is no good ignoring this or opposing this. The right way is to accept it and to try to orient it in favour of the workers. At the same time the workers should certainly keep their separate platform which is obviously international.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

MESSAGE TO THE WORKERS OF SOUTH INDIA

Indian workers today are disorganised and many rival groups are trying to capture their sympathies. Most of these groups spend their energies in fighting among themselves and forget the real fight against the capitalist order which exploits the workers. At the same time conditions all over the world point to a collapse of the capitalist system. The world

1. J. N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. A journalist and writer of Madras; associated with labour and socialist movements.

30. To V.V. Giri[1]

Lucknow
September 30, 1933

Dear Comrade Giri,

I was very glad to receive your long letter and to read detailed suggestions about village organisation.[2] In the main I agree with you and indeed in the past we have tried to work to some extent at least on these lines in our villages. As you know it is always an extraordinarily difficult task to organise the peasantry. Geographically they are spread out and ideologically they are individualistic. At the present moment I fear it is not possible to proceed with any constructive programme of the kind you mention. Every step that we take brings us into conflict with the government. All we can do is to connect this conflict as far as possible with propaganda work in the rural areas. The last three years have helped greatly in changing the outlook and the ideology of the peasantry. We can push on this process. We are living in India today, as well as in the rest of the world, in a period of intense social change and there is no stability about anything. Under these circumstances it is not possible to do real constructive organisational work. It is not a question of spending a few years in such activity but of being unable to function at all in that way. Even if we withdrew the aggressive direct actionist activity of the Congress—and I am entirely opposed to this for various reasons—we would not have an opportunity for quiet and effective work. We have to face the struggle here and now and to shape ourselves accordingly.

As regards the elections for the Councils and the Assembly I do not think that the question arises for decision at this stage. Certainly under certain circumstances it may be desirable to use the Councils as another front to fight government. But always this will depend on the existing objective facts and conditions, both national and international. The situation changes so rapidly nowadays that it is impossible to lay down a detailed programme of such a kind too far ahead. We have to take advantage of this changing situation and fashion ourselves accordingly.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J. N. Correspondence, NMML.
2. He had suggested a strong network of peasant organisations, on the lines of trade unions, in the villages throughout India.

So far as I am concerned I am perfectly aware that we must fight this ideology and the social evils but to fight them with the state power obstructing us and strengthening those very evils is a waste of energy and a hopeless task. The fight must therefore be fought on all the fronts and especially on the economic and political fronts. There is no question of getting any power without developing the sanction for it. It is that sanction we are developing and I can assure you that I am quite certain about success. I am not fighting a losing battle anywhere. I fight to win and that too before very long. Only a complete change of regime will enable us to rid ourselves of our many evils and disabilities.

Your suggestions about certain basic demands strike me as wholly insufficient.[3] If you will turn your attention to other countries in the world you will find that they were in as bad a condition as we are and sometimes much worse and yet as soon as they had the political and the economic power in hand they made tremendous progress. Look at Central Asia today across the border of Afghanistan. A dozen years ago this part of the world was perhaps the most backward and superstitious. Women there were kept in a hopeless state of subjection. Today the country has progressed amazingly. Women are not only free but are taking a great part in education, in medical and sanitary work as well as in other occupations. There are innumerable schools and colleges, hospitals and dental clinics, all of them manned largely by the people of the country itself.

The British Government in India, in spite of its professions to the contrary, helps and stands behind every backward and conservative interest in the country including the most orthodox and bigoted religious people. To fight the government has now become synonymous with fight of these interests. Political freedom will thus inevitably mean economic and social freedom.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

[3] Mukerji had suggested Congress entry into Councils, rights for women and stress on truth and cooperation.

9

GENERAL
1931-33

1. Foreword to a Biography of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi[1]

It was at Lucknow station in the month of March. The satyagrahi prisoners had been released following the Delhi Agreement and Gandhiji was also among them. We went to the station to give welcome to the leader of our province and were happy to see his smiling face after one year. We had to discuss many things and prepare several plans but there was very little time. We discussed a few things but decided to continue our talks later. But this 'later' never came!

The Working Committee was in session at the Karachi Congress. A telegram came and it broke our hearts—there was sudden darkness before our eyes. One could not believe that Ganeshji had expired. Even in the Congress crowd a strange void and hush was felt. It was very sad and nothing could console us. But why feel sorry?

Ganeshji had died as bravely as he had lived. And if anyone among us were to pray to see his best wish fulfilled then what more can he demand than the courage to face death while serving one's brethren and one's country; and be fortunate enough to die like Ganeshji. He lived and died in glory. The lesson that he has taught us by his death, we shall not be able to teach even if we lived much longer.

It is proper that we should all read the story of his life and learn from it as to how one should live. We should also read the account of his death and learn as to how one should die. A bright star of our nation has gone. But the lustre it shed is still aglow. It illumines the country and its warmth is rejuvenating the hearts which are drooping So why be sad?

Thinking about Ganeshji's life, I feel that he enjoyed real life as George Bernard Shaw wrote:

> This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of nature, instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1 Allahabad, Vijayadashmi, Samvat era 1988 JN Papers, NMML. Original in Hindi. Written for Devavrat Shastri's book on Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi published in 1931.

features. Even this is welcome for it leads people to think of the subject and out of this consideration and discussion something good may emerge. Many of the reforms he has urged I agree with. They will lighten the heavy burden of many a man who was my fellow prisoner and whom I grew to like and appreciate, and a touch of much needed humanity will enter the portals of the jail. Some of his suggestions I do not appreciate greatly. One of these is that the condemned prisoners' cells may be converted into a picture gallery of the apostles and avatars, and that other prisoners should be ceaselessly reminded of the error of their ways, and the straight and narrow path of virtue should ever be pointed out to them. I have no objection to the picture gallery as such but, if I happened to be a prisoner again, I doubt if I would fancy too much moralising or preaching. The straight and narrow path is not so difficult if one is well fed and has a motor car to help one to glide along it. But with an empty stomach and the world against you, it becomes hard and slippery.

It is immaterial, however, how much one approves or disapproves of the suggestions made. The real thing is that people should realise that immediate and vital reforms are necessary in our prisons. I hope this little book will help them to realise this.

Jawaharlal Nehru

3. The Defence of India[1]

The decision of the Lahore Congress accepting independence as our immediate objective necessarily involved the control by free India of the defence forces of the country. This point was brought out clearly last year in the Yeravda prison negotiations between the government and Mahatma Gandhi and some other Congress leaders. The Karachi

1 Ahmedabad, 9 September 1931. Published in *Young India* in two instalments on 24 September and 1 October 1931.

2. Foreword to a Book on Prison Reforms[1]

The last ten years have produced many an expert in prison matters in India. Of the scores of thousands who went to prison for political offences a few had some special privileges, but the vast majority had to suffer all the hardships which are the lot of the ordinary prisoner. It is well that the light of day has entered the dark recesses of the prison cell and revealed some of its miseries and horrors. It is well that people in the outer world should think of those who live in that other world behind high walls and iron bars, whom society has seen fit to ostracise and confine and punish, sometimes with a ruthlessness that is amazing. We of the outer world are apt to feel very virtuous and superior when we see these people beyond the pale, and we preach to them and point out to them the error of their ways, and seldom think that our virtue is largely due to circumstances and chances, and their fall from grace is due to pressure of economic forces or lack of education and training or a bad environment.

The fundamental fact about crime is that it is largely the outcome of a bad social order and the fault lies chiefly with society and little if at all with the individual who sins. Jail conditions may be improved and should be improved, but the real improvement that is needed is an improvement of the social order which exploits and starves and thus drives a man to crime.

Most of us who have spent some time in Indian prisons have met many a fine man there condemned for life or for ten years or more to prison. It is amazing how many 'lifers' one comes across. Most of these, with a little help and training, would develop into fine citizens. The impression I have gathered from my contacts with the prison population has been that a large portion of it is very far from being of the criminal type. But society, as it is today, recks little of the good or bad and makes both of them suffer for its own failings.

Mr. Raghubir Sahai[2] has not touched upon this fundamental aspect of crime and prison life, but has laid stress on some of the more obvious

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
Written on 6 July 1931 to a book, *Life in an Indian Jail*, by Raghubir Sahai, published in 1937.
2. A Congressman and an advocate of U.P; at one time member, U.P. Legislative Council.

every other country is weak as compared to them. Many countries like Czechoslovakia, Poland, Austria and the Balkan States, can be crushed easily by any one great power. But they retain their independence because of the rivalry of others. India's position is far stronger. Geographically she is as safe as almost any country, and politically the world situation favours her and makes an invasion of her extremely unlikely.

It is a well known fact, and an axiom in international politics, that the possession of India has given England her pre-eminence and commanding position in world affairs. From the time of Peter the Great[2] of Russia this fact has been stressed by statesmen and politicians and world policy has been largely governed by it. Every great country has been jealous of England because of her lordship over India. But the thing had been done, gradually and almost imperceptibly, and it was very difficult to undo it. So the other powers resigned themselves to what they considered an unkind fate and accepted the accomplished fact.

If the domination of England over India ceases and India becomes free, what will be the reaction of other powers? It may be that some will covet her, but the master desire will be to prevent any other nation from possessing India. No country will tolerate the idea of another gaining dominion over India and thus acquiring the commanding position which England occupied for so long. If any power was covetous enough to make the attempt, all others would combine to prevent this and to trounce the intruder. This mutual rivalry would in itself be the surest guarantee against an attack on India.

But let us examine this question further. What country would threaten us? The countries of western Europe are too much involved in their mutual hates and jealousies to trouble us much. The United States of America are too far away for effective action. Japan has her hands full with the new developments in China and the latent, and sometimes apparent, hostility of the United States. In any event, western European powers will not permit her to embark on any such adventure. China will have to face her own great difficulties for a long time to come, and besides, it is difficult to imagine that our relations with her will be anything but friendly. Thus no danger threatens us from any of these countries. There remain for consideration two countries—the little state of Afghanistan and Russia.

Afghanistan in the past has had the closest bonds with India and it should be our endeavour to revive them. Even if we do not succeed

2 Tsar Peter (1672 1725), made Russia one of the great powers of Europe and opened the "window to the West"

Congress also resolved that Purna Swaraj must "give the national control over the defence forces." Thus the Congress position in regard to defence is clear and unambiguous. Under the Swaraj we are working for, there can be no foreign army, in any shape or form, in the country, and the military, naval and air forces will have to be fully under the nation's control.

This would seem obvious enough, but it is necessary to stress the point in order to remove all doubts and misapprehensions. With an alien army in India there can be no national freedom or even internal freedom in the country. Such an army can only be an army of occupation, and must be a standing menace to our freedom. Even if our own armies are controlled by foreign authority, we shall have to face the same danger, and the ultimate authority will always rest with this alien authority The nominal liberty we may possess will be hedged and circumscribed and not worth many days' purchase. Indeed it may be that our own armies, controlled by foreign authority, are used, as they have been so often used in the past, to thwart and oppress us. They will become tools in other's hands meant to protect other's interest against ours.

Suggestions have been made by some people that while a part of the Indian army will be under the nation's control, another part, perhaps a smaller part, might continue for a while under foreign control. This is an equally untenable position. It would of course be a negation of independence. But even apart from this fundamental objection, the imposition of a dual authority on the army is certain to lead to friction and may result in disaster. Dyarchy has wholly failed on the civil side; in matters of defence it is unthinkable. If political power cannot be divided, much less can power over the defence forces be parcelled out. Any attempt to lessen the central national responsibility for the country's defence is bound to lead to intrigue and weakness, and it will become impossible to build up a really national and effective army and navy and air force.

Thus it is clear that the only position that can be accepted is that the nation should have complete control over all the defence forces, and that this control must be vested in the central authority. Some people, however, seem to doubt the capacity of India to defend herself against foreign attack, especially during the first few years of freedom. It is necessary, therefore, to see if there is any foundation for these doubts and fears.

The strength of a country in defence is always relative to the strength of other countries and to the world situation. No country in the world, with the possible exception of the United States of America, can withstand a combination of powers. Apart from half a dozen great powers,

We are inevitably led to the conclusion that the position of free India in the world would be a favourable one and the chances of external attack on her are remote. But none the less we will have to prepare for all contingencies and devote ourselves to the speedy reconstruction of our defence forces. The present Indian army, which is recognised by every one to be highly efficient, will form the nucleus. There will, however, be a lack of officers. Many of the non-commissioned officers can be promoted to commissioned ranks, and, pending the training of other officers, we can have the aid of foreign officers as experts. English officers may be engaged for this purpose and we may also have French, German, Russian or Japanese. There is no lack of them since the Great War. India with her manpower and tremendous resources can solve the problem of defence in a year or two. A free nation faced with the immediate responsibility for protecting the country will do more within twelve months than the British Government would do within half a century. Not long ago, when Europe was convulsed by the Great War, we saw huge armies grow up and officers by tens of thousands were trained almost within a few months in many countries. There were no academical committees appointed then to take a leisurely view of affairs and make recommendations for the generations to come.

Our present army is efficient, but we must bear in mind that we shall have to reorganise it completely and create out of it and out of fresh material a truly national army, with a national purpose and a national outlook. We shall also have, as the resolution on Fundamental Rights has laid down, a national militia as a second line of defence. We have to remember, however, that modern defence and attack are not questions of numbers, but of efficiency and the latest scientific devices. The aeroplane, the tank and other forms of mechanised warfare are replacing the old methods, and soon the modern infantry and cavalry may be as out of date as the men with bows and arrows. We shall have to concentrate, with the help of foreign experts, on building up a highly efficient mechanised defence force.

All these precautions we shall have to take, but above all, we shall have to develop the spirit of our people. If the common people, the workers and the peasants, are real sharers in the freedom that will come they will fight in defence of their country and their newly won freedom with a doggedness and valour that come from a new hope. History gives us many examples of this. But history does not give us a single instance of an alien power teaching its subject people how to defend themselves and thus get rid of foreign domination.

India has thus nothing to fear if the foreign army of occupation is removed and she is left to her own resources for defence. Even if

in doing so, we have little to fear from her. The strength of her people lies in defence in their mountain fastnesses and not in a serious attack. Her people are brave fighters but their resources are very limited. She is having her own troubles and wants peace to develop her resources and consolidate her position. But at the worst, if war came, it is quite possible that she may carry out a number of successful raids before we can defeat and hold her in check. It is not conceivable that Afghanistan can succeed ultimately against us.

Russia then remains the sole country that may threaten our freedom. She is large and is in a favourable position to attack us. But it is a well known fact that although she is strong and almost invulnerable in defence, she is weak in attack. The Soviet Government has made good against a host of external enemies, and an abundance of difficulty and misfortune at home. These difficulties and enmities continue and it is exceedingly unlikely that it will embark on an aggressive campaign with so many dangers to face at home and abroad. Such a venture would inevitably expose Russia's flanks to a host of enemies who have long been waiting for a chance to swoop down on her. In spite of her growing strength and self-confidence, Russia is haunted by fear of the combination against her in western Europe and she dare not imperil her existence by attacking India and leaving her long frontiers exposed.

It is notorious that Russia is full today of her Five Year Plan. She can think of nothing else except the building up of her industries and utilising her resources to the full. Probably the Five Year Plan may be followed by another requiring a similar expenditure of energy.

There is also no economic urge for Russia to covet India. Both countries are still mainly agricultural and are being industrialised. Both have enough raw material and need capital and machinery and experts. They are too similar to be of much help to each other. India has been and is useful to England because the latter is highly industrialised and has a great deal of surplus capital. Russia has no such capital and will not have it for a long time.

There has been traditional rivalry between England and Russia for generations past and, under English influence, we have been made to fear the bogey of a Russian invasion. Why should we inherit this hate and fear of Russia from England? It does not concern us. Russia will have nothing to fear from a free India and we need have no fear of her. The danger from Russia, such as there is, is caused solely by this rivalry between her and England. It ceases for us as soon as British domination is removed and we are free. Our position thus, in a military sense, is better and stronger as an independent country than it would be if we continued to be involved in British imperial policy.

It was a pleasant thought that when all the rest of the world was awry and many of its thinkers were on the verge of despair and did not know where to find a remedy, there was in India this green oasis of self-confidence and self-praise amongst our rulers, and thought and new ideas were considered undesirable and unnecessary commodities. Such was the general view we had in prison through our little window.

Sometimes, not infrequently, humour came to us to lighten the burden of our days, in the shape of speeches and addresses by governors; for our governors, though stronger than ever, are no longer silent. Having hushed other voices, they feel it their duty to shout loud and frequently and give us their views on life and its many problems. These solo performances became particularly amusing when economics and modern social problems were touched upon, and a measure of sympathy went out to the performers at this addition to their many burdens, for which they had received no training. Perhaps the sympathy was wasted, for in their own opinion the performances may have been adequate.

Still I shall venture to make a suggestion. Sir Malcolm Hailey is considered, with justification, to be a successful performer on the platform, and perhaps there is no other among the tribe of governors. Sir Malcolm is already considered almost too big and too wise a person for a governorship. Why not make him a kind of super governor for the training of selected candidates for governorship? These aspirants might go through a brief course and learn how to deliver a vice-chancellor's address with occasional classical references and many pious platitudes, and a special dissertation on the danger of students or teachers dabbling in politics (all pro-government activities of course not being considered politics); how to answer an address from a municipal board and criticise its finances, with a special dissertation on the undesirability of municipalities mixing civics with politics (this has of course nothing to do with municipal teachers and other employees joining Aman Sabhas and similar organisations, as the Congress. Such public work should be commended); how to praise the police for their loyalty, efficiency, self-sacrifice, patriotism, gentleness, nonviolence, amiability, sweet reasonableness, and purity of conduct, and tell them how they are above politics and their sole duty is to preserve law and order so that the nation may live peacefully and contentedly under the shadow of their protection; how to address legislative councils and praise the members for the high statesmanship they have shown in supporting government and the real moral courage they have exhibited in holding on to their seats in spite of popular disapproval, and further to tell them that the British Government stands for and has always stood for democracy as against

dangers come and risks have to be faced we cannot submit to the humiliation of depending on foreigners for defence. We shall face these dangers and risks and the strength which enabled us to gain our freedom will also enable us to retain it.

4. A Window in Prison[1]

The high walls of a prison shut one off effectively from the outside world of change and movement. A prisoner's horizon is the top of these walls and the only expanse he sees is the blue expanse of the heavens above him. But sometimes a benevolent and considerate government provides him with little windows from which he can survey the wide world beyond. They are narrow and coloured, these tiny windows in prison, and they are apt to give a restricted and distorted vision. But none the less they afford some amusement and are welcome in the dull monotony of prison life.

One such window is *The Statesman*, the "most widely read newspaper in all India". Daily, Mondays excepted, it used to bring an air of romance to us, a breath of optimism to cheer us up. And through this many coloured window we saw a distressed world struggling in the octopus-grip of depression and conflict and doubt and uncertainty; but in this sorry world there was one bright spot, the land of India, sheltered from all ills by the British Government. Here was the fabled and far-famed land of Cockaigne,[2] where every crow was a peacock and every goose a swan; here strong silent men, floating serenely and majestically in the upper regions, like imperial eagles, protected the land and only swooped down occasionally to rid it of human rats and other noxious animals; here every man in authority was a Solon,[3] and every knighted fool a statesman; here, one could almost feel, but for the irritating antics of certain miserable, blind and ungrateful human beings, that all was for the best under this best of all possible governments.

1. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 10 September 1933.
2. Legendary country of prosperity.
3. Solon (c.639-559); Athenian statesman, best known as a giver of laws and a reformer.

few wild men of the Congress were dragging Mr. Gandhi along, although all he wanted was peace and quiet and an opportunity to do solid constructive work. And then, almost as if to spite the correspondent, Mr. Gandhi changed places with the wild men and became as wild and aggressive as ever, dragging the peaceful Congress along with him. This was obviously not a sporting thing to do; it was not cricket.

But the true charm of the Simla correspondent lies in his inimitable style, which tells us something and yet does not tell it, which hints and suggests and indicates and insinuates and alludes and yet gracefully avoids definite statement, which says something (and yet does not say it) in a score of sentences which an unlearned and unsophisticated person would say rather bluntly in one short sentence. Perhaps the credit for this coy and coquettish style does not wholly belong to the correspondent, and it should rightly go to Gorton Castle[5] where sit the mighty men weaving the web of India's destiny.

Sometimes the Simla correspondent excels even his own high standard. What could be more delightful than the brave comparison of the air-bombing of the frontier villages with the far worse tale of death and disaster by motor accidents in England's green and pleasant land! Or the silencing of ignorant and vulgar critics by the demonstration that no real damage is done by these air raids;[6] the inhabitants simply walk out of their huts or houses with their wives, goods and chattels, as soon as they receive warning, the empty huts are destroyed, and back come the residents to build their huts anew and perhaps after a better fashion, and life goes on again with scarce a ripple on its placid surface. There is little ill-feeling in the matter and no doubt, with the resumption of normal relations, the Khan of Kotkai will lead a deputation to the British authorities or the R.A.F. to convey their thanks for the opportunity given them to rebuild their little towns on more modern principles of town-planning. Or perhaps the Khan will request that new organisation with a fine resounding name, dear to the heart of *The Statesman*, the "Central Muslim Federation of Delhi" to undertake this pleasant task, provided the Khan can locate the federation. But, no doubt, the Delhi office of *The Statesman* will help in the search; and later we shall read all about the deputation in the principal page of the newspaper, and the editor will write a learned and philosophical article on the hidden virtues of air-bombing.

5. Headquarters of the secretariat in Simla.
6. In the first week of August 1933, Kotkai village in Bannu district in N.W.F.P. was bombed for alleged harbouring of two agitators. The Khan of Kotkai was believed to be assisting a claimant to the Afghan throne.

dictatorship (it being made clear that the Viceroy's and governor's vast powers and ordinances and the like, are not in the nature of dictatorship but are meant only to safeguard special responsibilities); how to attend princes' banquets and reply to toasts praising the progressive regime of the prince, who, in the course of a brief decade, has succeeded in establishing one secondary school, two primary schools, two dispensaries, a zoo with a monkey house, three game preserves, ten large motor garages, five stables for polo ponies, kennels for a large number of dogs, and a jazz band, and has built six new palaces to give employment to labour; and that, in further consideration for his peoples' welfare, keeps away in Europe for most of the time;—in the reply to the prince it should be pointed out that autocracy is obviously suited to the genius of India; how to address an association of business men and merchants and point out to them that politics must not be mixed up with business and trade and true success and prosperity lie in the business-man sticking to his own job and cooperating with the government and the city of London so that India's credit may stand high; how to address zamindars and taluqdars and, agreeing with them that they are the salt of the Indian earth, encourage them in every way to organise themselves and take part in politics, so that the semi feudal zamindari system, which is ideal for India, might continue and vested interests may be protected, and the constitution have stability; and so on. This list has become long enough and must be ended. But it will show that the subjects are endless and each one has to be dealt with separately from its own angle.

I have referred to governors' speeches bringing a touch of humour to our prison lives. But sometimes they were not humourous or amusing, as when Sir Malcolm Hailey referred at Muttra to the Congress "hiring young girls and old women to go to gaol as political martyrs."[4]

To go back to our little window—*The Statesman.* A source of delightful romance that seldom failed was its Simla correspondent. In measured language, which gave us a glimpse of the powerful mind working behind it, the Indian political scene was surveyed and the inner workings of Gandhiji's and the Congress mind were laid bare before us. We were told what they were thinking and what they were going to do to extricate themselves from the morass in which they had got stuck. Subsequently, when Mr. Gandhi or the Congress were foolish enough not to act in the manner forecasted, it was pointed out with evident truth how inconsistent they were. They had evidently changed their minds at the last moment and thus played a rather low trick on the Simla correspondent. It had been obvious enough before that a

4 On 25 January 1933.

5. Prison Land[1]

A writer in a recent issue of an English periodical stated that the stress and strain of politics and prison life had broken me up. I do not know what his sources of information were, but I can say from a fairly intimate knowledge of my body and mind, that both of them are tough and sound and are not in any danger of a break-up or collapse in the near future. Fortunately for myself, I have always attached importance to bodily health and physical fitness, and though I have often enough ill-treated my body, I have seldom permitted it to fall ill. Mental health is a more invisible commodity but I have taken sufficient care of that also and I am vain enough to imagine that I possess more of it than many a person who has not had to suffer the strain of active Congress politics and passive gaol life.

But my health or ill health is a small matter which need not worry any one, although friends and newspapers have given it undue prominence. What is far more important, from the national and social point of view, is the state of the prisons and the bodily and mental conditions of the vast population that they house in India. It is a notorious fact that strong and brave men have suffered greatly and even collapsed bodily under the terrible strain of prolonged gaol life and detention. I have seen my nearest and dearest suffer in prison and the list of my personal friends who have done so is a long and painful one. Only recently a dear and valued colleague, a friend whom I met in Cambridge more than a quarter of a century ago, and who was among the bravest of the brave in this unhappy country of ours, J. M. Sen Gupta, met his death while under detention.

It is natural that we should feel the sufferings of our colleagues, and those whom we have known, more than the misery of the thousands who are unknown to us. And yet it is not about them that I am writing these few lines. We, who have willingly sought to pass the forbidding iron gates of prison, have no wish to squeal or to complain of the treatment given. If any of our countrymen are interested and wish to raise the question, it is for them to do so. Such questions are frequently raised, but as a rule they relate to well known individuals and

1 First published 18 September 1933, later reprinted in *Recent Essays and Writings*, (Allahabad, 1934), pp. 88-107.

The Simla correspondent occupies a class by himself; he defies comparison. But perhaps one may venture to place, not far below him, some of the Indian contributors to *The Statesman*. Long research and patient study have made them grasp the full significance of the Battle of Plassey. They possess a deep and profound knowledge of all its implications and consequences, and this learning helps them greatly to understand the course of current events. It would perhaps not be correct to say that they have paid no attention to happenings subsequent to Plassey. Occasional flashes, lighting up the interior of their minds, have disclosed that they are also fully aware of the fact that early in the nineteenth century, India took to English education and her chosen sons plunged into the wells of English political thought. Indeed they could hardly ignore this alliance as they themselves are the choice fruits of this early marriage. It is also obvious that they have heard of the fact that some time in the eighteen-seventies Queen Victoria became Empress of India.

It is by no means clear whether these learned Indian contributors of *The Statesman* have paid any heed to recent events such as those that have occurred during the last half century or so. Perhaps they feel, lost in the full contemplation of Plassey, that a mere fifty years of recent history can have little fundamental importance. It may be that they are right and we of a later day, without such deep roots in the past, and ignorant of the far-reaching significance of the Battle of Plassey are apt to attach too much importance to recent events.

Truth, it is said, lives at the bottom of a well. But what is a well to eagle eyes of *The Statesman* correspondent! One such correspondent told us once the "Truth about the Andamans", those far off islands with an unsavoury reputation. Reading his account our fears vanished and we began almost to envy those fortunate persons who were made to live in these delectable islands. We were told that the Andamans were an ideal health resort for the convicts. The Punjabis thrive there, and, as for the Bengalis, "the settlement is climatically a 'home from home'". "One may wonder," continued the correspondent "why anarchist activities should be considered to qualify a man for all these advantages offered him by detention in the Andamans." Indeed, one may well wonder that even in this paradise some people are mad and foolish enough to starve themselves to death!

And perhaps it is fitting that with this exclamation of wonder and amazement we should close this window that gave us so many glimpses in prison of the wonderful world outside.

Peshawar or Charsadda. Four arrests were made at the same time: Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, his brother Dr. Khan Sahib, Dr. Khan Sahib's young son, and a colleague of theirs. They were all brought down by special train and distributed in four separate prisons in four different cities. It was easy enough to keep all of them, or father and son or brothers together. But this was deliberately avoided and each one was, I believe, kept alone and by himself without any companion. At any rate I know that Dr. Khan Sahib was so kept in Naini prison. For over a month I was also in Naini then but we were kept apart and not allowed to meet. It was tantalising for me, for Dr. Khan Sahib was a dear friend of my student days in England and I had not met him for many years.

It is not a question of favoured treatment for political prisoners. I know perfectly well that the treatment of politicals will grow progressively worse, as it has done in the course of the last dozen years. The only possible check is that of public opinion, but even that does not count in the last resort unless it is so strong as to ensure victory.

Thus it is obvious that political prisoners must expect progressively bad treatment. In 1930-31 the treatment was worse than in 1921-22, in 1932 it was worse than in 1930-31. Today an ordinary political prisoner is certainly worse off in gaol than a non-political convict. Every effort is often made to harass him into apologising or at least to make him thoroughly frightened of prison.

It has been stated on behalf of Sir Samuel Hoare in the House of Commons that "over 500 persons in India were whipped during 1932 for offences in connection with the civil disobedience movement."[2] The existence or otherwise of whipping is often considered a test of the degree of civilization in a State. Many advanced States have done away with it altogether and even where it has been retained, it has been kept for what are considered the most degrading and brutal crimes, such as violent rape on immature girls. Some months ago, I believe, there was a discussion in the Assembly on the question of retaining the punishment of whipping for certain (non political) crimes. It was pointed out by the government spokesmen that this was necessary for some brutal crimes. Probably every psychologist and psychiatrist is of a contrary opinion and holds that a brutal punishment is the most foolish of methods for dealing with brutal crimes. But, however that may be, in India we see that it is quite a common occurrence now

2. On 26 April 1933, he stated that whipping was awarded mainly for joining 'unlawful' assemblies. There was a discussion on the same subject in the Legislative Assembly on 22 August 1933.

special treatment for them is sought on the ground of their social position. To meet the clamour, a small handful are given what is called 'A' and 'B' class treatment; the great majority, probably over 95 per cent, face the full rigours of gaol life.

This differentiation into various classes has often been criticised and rightly criticised. To a slight extent it might be justified on medical grounds for it is highly probable that some people, used to a different diet, may develop the most violent disorders, as indeed many do, if they have to subsist on gaol diet. It is also obvious that some persons are physically incapable of the extreme forms of manual labour. But, apart from this, it is a little difficult to imagine the justification for depriving 'C' class prisoners of the so-called privileges given to others. A higher class is supposed to be given because of higher 'social status' or a higher standard of life. One of the tests laid down, I believe, is the amount of land revenue a person pays. Does it follow from a higher revenue that the person is more attached to his family and is therefore entitled to more interviews or letters? Or that greater facilities should be given for reading and writing? Those who pay large sums as land revenue are not usually noted for their intellectual attainments.

I do not, of course, mean to imply that those who get special facilities for interviews or letters or reading and writing should be deprived of them. Those so called privileges are poor enough as they stand, and it is well to realise that in most other countries the worst and lowest type of prisoner gets far more 'privileges' of this kind than even an 'A' class prisoner in India. And yet these 'A' and 'B' class privileges are given to such an insignificant number that they might well be ignored in considering the Indian prison system. Fundamentally, 'A' and 'B' classes are meant as something to show off and soothe public opinion. Most people who do not know the real facts are misled by them.

Some of the 'A' class prisoners, as also especially some of the detenus or state prisoners, have often to undergo one experience which is peculiarly distressing. They are kept alone without a companion for many months at a time, and, as every doctor knows, this loneliness is very bad for the average person. Only those who have strictly trained and disciplined their minds and can turn inwards, can escape ill effects. It is true that the prisoner or detenu is given the advantage of a few minutes' conversation daily with a member of the prison staff, but this is an advantage which is not seized with cheering and acclamation. This policy of more or less solitary confinement is apparently quite deliberate on the part of the government. I remember that about the time I was arrested in December 1931, Khan Abdul Ghaffar was also arrested in

nature. The arguments lead us to certain conclusions which perhaps did not occur to the Home Member. If a dacoit is prepared to leave his profession and go to gaol, if goal is not too harsh, it follows that he will be much more prepared to quit dacoity and crime if a minimum of security and life's necessaries come to him outside gaol. That is, the urge to dacoity is the economic urge of hunger and distress; remove this urge and dacoity goes. The cure for dacoity and crime is thus not heavy punishment but removal of the basic cause. But I have no desire to make last year's Home Member responsible for such far-reaching and revolutionary notions, although they may logically follow from what he said. From another and a higher office[3] he has been letting us have occasional glimpses of his deep knowledge of the laws of economics and no doubt he would repudiate such heresy.

Reference is often made to political prisoners and the government has refused to classify them separately. I think, under the circumstances, government has been right. For who are the politicals? It is easy enough to separate the civil disobedience prisoners, but there are many other ways of catching an inconvenient political agitator than under the so-called political sections of various laws and ordinances. It is a common occurrence in rural areas for peasant leaders and workers to be run in under the preventive sections of the Criminal Procedure Code or even for more serious offences. Such persons are as much political prisoners as any others and there are large numbers of them. This procedure is not usual in the larger towns because of the publicity involved.

High walls and iron gates cut off the little world of prison from the wide world outside. Here in this prison world everything is different; there are no colours, no changes, no movement, no hope, no joy for the long term prisoner, the 'lifer'. Life runs its dull round with a terrible monotony; it is all flat desert land with no high points and no oases to quench one's thirst or shelter one from the burning heat. Days run into weeks, and weeks into months and years till the sands of life run out.

All the might of the State is against him and none of the ordinary checks are available. Even the voice of pain is hushed, the cry of agony cannot be heard beyond the high walls. In theory there are some checks and visitors and officials from outside go to inspect. But it is rare for a prisoner to dare to complain to them, and those who dare have to suffer for their daring. The visitor goes, the petty gaol officials

[3] The Nawab of Chhatari acted as governor of the United Provinces from April 1933.

for flogging to be administered for purely political and technical offences, admittedly involving no moral turpitude, or for petty offences against prison discipline.

Yet another advance has been recorded in the treatment of women political prisoners. Many hundreds of women were sentenced and an extraordinarily small number of them were put in 'A' or 'B' classes. As it happens, the lot of women in prison—political or non-political—is far worse than that of men. Men do move about within the gaol in going to and fro in connection with their work; they have change and movement and this is helpful in refreshing their minds to some extent. Women, though given lighter work, are closely confined in a small place and lead a terribly monotonous existence. Women convicts are also as a rule far worse as companions than the average male convicts. Among men there is a large proportion of thoroughly non-criminal types, decent village folk who had a brawl over a land dispute and managed to get long sentences as a result. The criminal element is proportionately much higher among the women. The great majority of women political prisoners, most of them bright young girls, had to endure this suffocating atmosphere. It seems to me that hardly anything that has taken place in our prisons or outside is quite so bad as the treatment of our womenfolk.

I would not have any woman, whether she belongs to the middle classes or the peasantry or the working classes, subjected to the treatment that has been accorded to them in our prisons. As it happens, the great majority of women political prisoners have been from the bourgeois or middle classes. The peasant may go to prison for a political purpose but his wife goes very seldom. Considered from the standpoint of the government, the social standards of the women politicals were relatively high. Wives of vakils, bank managers and the like were placed in 'C' class. Ladies who had been my honoured hostesses and in whose houses I had stopped, were sent to the 'C' class.

In the course of a speech in the U.P. Legislative Council last year, the then Home Member made the flesh of members creep by suggesting that if conditions in gaols were improved for politicals, all the dacoits would forthwith come to gaols as political prisoners. I believed he advanced some similar argument against improving the condition of women prisoners. No doubt these arguments were up to the intellectual standards of the majority of his audience and they served their purpose. For those of us who live in the outer darkness, it is interesting to plumb the depths of knowledge and understanding which the Home Member's statement revealed—understanding of the nature of dacoits and the like, knowledge of criminology, psychology and human

We must have the trial;
For really this morning
I've nothing to do!"
Said the mouse to the cur,
"Such a trial, dear sir,
With no jury or judge,
Would be wasting your breath."
"I'll be judge, I'll be jury,"
Said cunning old Fury;
"I'll try the whole cause
And condemn you to death."

I had a personal experience last year which has a certain wider significance. The jailer of the Allahabad District Jail insulted and hustled out my mother and wife when they were having an interview with my brother-in-law. I was angry when I heard this. And yet I did not attach much importance to the incident for all it signified was that an ill trained and ill-mannered official had misbehaved. I expected some expression of regret from some higher official. Instead, punishments were awarded by government to my mother, wife and brother-in-law, of course without the slightest reference to them. Indirectly I was punished by not being allowed to see my mother or wife for a period. An enquiry from me to the Inspector-General brought a brief reply containing an unmannerly reference to my mother. It was only at this stage that government found out the true facts from me and from statements made by my mother and wife.

It was obvious that they had erred egregiously. In spite of my asking them repeatedly they have not pointed out any error in our statements and I must therefore take it that they accept those versions as indeed they must. If so, they had acted very foolishly in the first instance and the least they could do was to express regret. I am still waiting for that straightforward expression of regret.

If such treatment can be accorded to my mother and wife and can be followed by the strange behaviour and obstinacy of government, it can well be imagined what the average less known prisoner and his people have to put up with. Our whole system of government, superimposed as it is from above and without any roots in the people, can only hang together so long as one peg supports the other. That is its strength, and that, fortunately, is its weakness, for when the collapse of such a system comes, it is complete.

Last year I ventured to write to the Home Member from prison and I told him that after twelve years of a fairly extended experience of prison conditions in the U.P., I had come very regretfully to the

remain, and it is with them that he has to pass his days. It is not surprising that he prefers to put up with his troubles rather than risk an addition to them.

The coming of political prisoners in large numbers threw some light into the dark corners of prison-land. A breath of fresh air came in bringing with it some hope to the long-term prisoner. Public opinion was stirred a little and some improvements followed. But they were few and essentially the system remains as it was. Sometimes one hears of 'riots' in gaols. What exactly does this signify? Perhaps the prisoners were to blame. And yet it is a mad thing to do for unarmed, helpless prisoners, surrounded by high walls, to challenge the armed might of the gaol staff. There can only be one outcome of it, and inevitably one is led to think that only extreme provocation could induce the prisoners to this act of folly and despair.

There are enquiries, either departmental or perhaps by the district magistrate. What chance has the prisoner? On the one side a fully prepared case supported by the staff and the numerous prisoners who must do their bidding; on the other, a frightened shivering outcaste of humanity, manacled and fettered, who has no one's sympathy and whom no one believes. The Judicial Secretary of the U.P. Government stated in the local Council last November that those who had been confined in gaol, being interested parties, must be considered as unreliable. So the poor prisoner being very much an interested party when he is himself beaten or ill-treated cannot obviously be believed. It would be interesting to find out from the U.P. Government what evidence, short of the testimony of the invisible and supernatural powers, a prisoner could produce under the circumstances.

But for the tragedy behind them one might appreciate the humour of private governmental enquiries. Sir Samuel Hoare grows righteously indignant whenever any charge is made against the police or the gaol staff and is consistent in refusing all public or impartial enquiries. I seem to recollect that there was a departmental enquiry in the Hijli affair about two years ago, and shortly afterwards an official enquiry held that the official version of the occurrences had been entirely wrong. But then that was an unusual affair. Most departmental enquiries are not checked in this way. One feels like having recourse to the delightful plays of Sir William Gilbert for an analogy, or perhaps that classic of English childhood, the immortal Alice, is even more suitable:

> Fury said to a mouse,
> That he found in the house,
> "Let us both go to law:
> I will prosecute you.

of them. Anywhere else, except in Nazi Germany, such sentences would create a tremendous outcry.

And justice is not entirely blind in India; it keeps one eye open. In every agrarian brawl or not large numbers of peasants get life sentences. Usually these petty riots take place when an exasperated tenantry are goaded beyond endurance by the agents of the landlords. A simple process of identifying all those who are supposed to have been present on the scene is enough to condemn them for life or to long terms of imprisonment. Hardly any attention is paid to the provocation and even the identification is usually of the feeblest kind. It is easy to drag in any individual who is in the bad books of the police. If the affair can be given a political tinge or connected with a no-rent campaign a conviction is all the easier and the sentences the heavier.

In a recent case a peasant who slapped a tax-collector was awarded a year's imprisonment. Another instance is somewhat different. It took place last July in Meerut. A *Naib-Tahsildar* went to realise irrigation dues from the residents of a village. One peasant was carried by the peons to where the *Naib* was seated and the peons complained that this man's wife and son had beaten them. A somewhat remarkable story. However the *Naib* ordered that the peasant should be vicariously punished for his wife's offence and the three of them, the *Naib* and the two peons, beat the unhappy man with sticks. As a result of the beating the man died later. The *Naib* and the peons were subsequently tried and convicted for simple hurt but they were forthwith released on probation of good conduct for six months The good conduct I suppose signified that they must not beat another man to death within the next six months. The comparison of these cases is instructive.

So the question of prison reform leads us inevitably to a reform of our criminal procedure, and, even more so, a reform in the mentalities of our judges who still think in terms of a hundred years ago and are blissfully ignorant of modern ideas of punishment and reform. That of course leads, as everything else does, to a change of the whole system of government.

But to confine ourselves to the prisons. Any reform must be based on the idea that a prisoner is not punished but reformed and made into a good citizen. (I am of course not considering politicals. Most of them are so much steeped in error that they may be considered past reform). If this objective is once accepted, it would result in a complete overhauling of the prison system. At present few prison officials have even heard of such a notion. I have a recollection that the old U.P. Jail Manual had a paragraph pointing out that the prisoner's work was not meant to be productive or useful; its object was punitive. This was

conclusion that the gaols in the province were steeped in corruption and violence and falsehood. Many years ago I pointed out some of the abuses to a superintendent of my prison (he became Inspector-General afterwards). He admitted them and said that when he first joined the Prison Department he was full of enthusiasm for reform. Later he found that little could be done, so he allowed things to take their course.

Indeed little can be done by the best of individuals—and many of those in charge can hardly be considered shining examples. An Indian prison is after all a replica of the larger India. What counts is the objective—is it human welfare or just the working of a machine or the preservation of vested interests? Why are punishments given—as society's or government's revenge or with the object of reforming?

Do judges or prison officers ever think that the unhappy wretch before them should be made into a person capable of filling his place in society when he comes out of prison? It almost seems an impertinence to raise these questions, for how many people really care?

Our judges are, let us hope, large-hearted; they are certainly long-sentencing. Here is an Associated Press message from Peshawar dated December 15, 1932: "For writing threatening letters to the Inspector General of Police and other high officials of the Frontier soon after the Coldstream murder,[4] accused named Jamnadas[5] has been sentenced by the City Magistrate of Peshawar to eight years' imprisonment under Section 500-507 I P.C." Jamnadas was apparently a young boy.

Here is another remarkable instance—also an A.P. message, dated April 22, 1933 from Lahore: "For being in possession of a knife with a blade seven inches long, a young Muslim named Saadat was sentenced by the City Magistrate under Section 19 of the Arms Act to 18 months' rigorous imprisonment."

And a third instance from Madras, dated July 6, 1933. A boy named Ramaswami threw a harmless cracker in the court of the Chief Presidency Magistrate as he was engaged in a conspiracy case hearing. Ramaswami was sentenced to four years, apparently in a juvenile prison.

These are three not unusual instances. They could easily be multiplied and there are worse cases. I suppose people are long suffering in India and past all astonishment at such amazing sentences. Personally I find that no amount of practice can prevent my gasping when I read

4. Capt Coldstream, the civil surgeon of Peshawar, was murdered on 22 July 1932.

5. A brother of Hari Krishan who shot at the Governor of Punjab on 23 December 1930.

After a hard eight hour day's work the prisoners should be encouraged to cooperate together in various activities—games, sports, reading, recitals, lectures. They should above all be encouraged to laugh and develop human contacts with the prison staff and other prisoners. Every prisoner's education must be attended to, not only in just the three R's, but something more, wherever possible. The mind of the prisoner should be cultivated and the prison library, to which there must be free access, should have plenty of good books. Reading and writing should be encouraged in every way and that means that every prisoner should be allowed to have writing materials and books. Nothing is more harmful to the prisoner than to spend 12 to 14 hours at a stretch every evening locked up in the cell or barrack with absolutely nothing to do. A Sunday or holiday means for him a much longer period of locking up.

Selected newspapers are essential to keep the prisoner in touch with the world and interviews and letters should be made as frequent and informal as possible. Personally, I think that weekly interviews and letters should be permitted. The prisoner should be made to feel as far as possible that he or she is a human being and brutal and degrading punishments must be avoided.

All this sounds fantastic when compared with present day prison conditions in India. And yet I have only suggested what the prisons of most of the advanced countries already have. Indeed they have much more. Our present administration, and indeed our government itself, cannot understand or appreciate this as they have successfully imprisoned their own minds in prisons of dull routine. But public opinion must begin to demand these changes so that, when the time comes, they might be introduced without difficulty.

It must not be thought that these changes will involve much extra expenditure. If properly run on modern industrial lines the prisons can not only be self-supporting but can actually make a profit after providing for all the additional amenities suggested. There is absolutely no difficulty in introducing the changes except one—the absolute necessity of having a competent, human staff fully understanding and appreciating the new angle of vision and eager to work it.

I wish some of our people would study and, where possible, personally inspect, prison conditions in foreign countries. They will find how our prisons lag far behind them. The new human element is imposing itself everywhere, as also a recognition of the fact that a criminal is largely created by social conditions and, instead of being punished, has to be treated as for a disease. Real criminals are infantile in mind and it

almost an ideal statement of what a prison should not be. That paragraph has since gone but the spirit still remains—a spirit that is harsh and punitive and utterly lacking in humanity. The list of prison offences in the U.P. Jail Manual is an amazing one. It contains all that the wit of man can devise to make life as intolerable as possible. Talking, singing, loud laughing, visiting latrines at other than stated hours, not eating the food given, etc., etc., are among the offences. It is not surprising that all the energy of the gaol staff goes in suppressing the prisoner and preventing him from doing the hundred and one things forbidden him.

Ignorant people imagine that if the punishment is not severe enough crimes will increase. As a matter of fact, the exact reverse is the truth. A century ago in England, petty thieves were hung. When it was proposed to abolish the death penalty for thieves, there was a tremendous outcry and noble lords stated in the House of Lords that this would result in thieves and robbers seizing everything and creating a reign of terror. As a matter of fact the reform had the opposite effect and crime went down. Crime has steadily gone down in England and other countries as the criminal law and prisons have been bettered. Many old prisons in England are not required as prisons now and are used for other purposes. In India, it is well known that the prison population goes on increasing (quite apart from political prisoners) and the executive and judiciary help in this process by encouraging long and barbarous sentences. The imprisonment of the young is universally considered to be a most demoralizing system and is avoided. Here in India gaols are full of young men and boys and frequently they are sentenced to whipping.

Another error which people indulge in is the fear that if gaol conditions are improved people will flock in! This shows a singular ignorance of human nature. No one wants to go to prison however good the prison might be. To be deprived of liberty and family life and friends and home surroundings is a terrible thing. It is well known that the Indian peasant will prefer to stick to his ancestral soil and starve rather than go elsewhere to better his condition. To improve prison conditions does not mean that prison life should be made soft; it means that it should be made human and sensible. There should be hard work, but not the barbarous and wasteful labour of the oil pumps or water pumps or mills. The prison should produce goods either in large scale modern factories where prisoners work, or in cottage industries. All work should be useful from the point of view of the prison as well as the future of the prisoner, and the work should be paid for at market rates, minus the cost of maintenance of the prisoners.

at home. In the latter event the mother is allowed to go home several times a day to feed it!

There were flowers, pictures and photographs in the cells. Prisoners were regularly examined by psychiatrists to find out if their mental condition was satisfactory. Whenever necessary, prisoners were removed to mental hospitals for treatment. Solitary confinement was very rare.

Hardly credible. And yet there it is and the results of this humane treatment have been surprisingly good. The Russians hope to reduce crime substantially and to shut up most of their prisons. So the good treatment does not eventually fill up the gaols but empties them provided the economic background is suitable and work is to be had.

A short while ago there was a meeting in the House of Commons to consider the protection of animals in India. A very laudable object. But it is worth remembering that the two legged animal, *homo sapiens*, in India is also worthy of care and protection—especially those who undergo the long physical and mental torture of prison life and come out impaired of the capacity for normal life.

Every prison cell in Norway has an inscription on its walls. It is a quotation from a speech of a famous Norwegian prisoner, Lars Olsen Skrefsrud,[7] who served a long sentence for theft when drunk, came out to India afterwards and founded the Scandinavian Santal Mission. He became a great linguist knowing seventeen languages, ancient and modern, and among them of course was the Santal language. The passage in his speech which is exhibited in the prison cells runs as follows:

"Nobody can imagine what a prisoner feels but one who has at some time felt what it is to be a prisoner. Some idea of it may be formed, but this cannot express the feelings of the man who sits, sad and forsaken in his cell."

It is well that those whom fate or fortune keep out of the prison cell give thought sometimes to that sad and forsaken figure.

7 (1840-1910); a missionary and linguist, author of *Grammar of Santal Language*.

is folly to treat them as grown ups. A delightful book which stressed this point humorously long ago is Samuel Butler's *Erewhon.*

In the prisons of the little country of Latvia even, we are told that "everything is done to create a homely atmosphere in the rooms and cells with plants, flowers, books and such personal belongings of the prisoners as photographs, handicrafts, and wireless sets." Prisoners are paid for their work, half the earnings accumulating and the other half being spent by prisoners on extra food, tobacco, newspapers, etc.

Russia, that terrible land of the Soviets, has perhaps gone farthest ahead in the improvement of prison conditions. Recently a competent observer inspected the Soviet prisons and his report is interesting. This observer was an eminent English lawyer, D. N. Pritt,[6] K. C. who is also the Chairman of the Howard League for Penal Reform—an organisation which has been the pioneer of prison reform in England for more than sixty years. Pritt tells us that the punitive character of punishment has been entirely removed and it is considered purely reformatory now. The treatment of prisoners is humane and remarkably good.

There are two types of prisons: (1) Semi open camps or fully open communes or colonies. These are really not prisons at all; prisoners live a village life subject to certain restrictions. (2) Closed prisons. These are the hardest type of prisons and yet even here there is a surprising amount of freedom for the prisoners. There is a feeling of equality between warders and prisoners and unrestricted intercourse, except in working hours, with other prisoners or with guards. There is normal factory work for eight hours a day at normal wages. For the rest there are games, education, gymnastics, lectures, wireless, books, and amateur dramatic performances by the prisoners. The prisoners also produce a wall newspaper and do not hesitate to criticize warders and other prison officials in it "for having forgotten that a prison is not for punishment, but for reformation."

The principle of self-government, which is encouraged in all institutions in Russia, is even practised to some extent in the prisons, the prisoners imposing penalties on themselves. Smoking is allowed except when at work Frequent interviews are permitted, and a virtually unrestricted and uncensored writing and reception of letters. And, most remarkable rule of all, almost always the prisoner is allowed a fortnightly summer holiday to go home to look after the harvest, etc. In the case of a woman prisoner who has a baby, she can either keep the baby in the prison creche, where the baby will be properly looked after or leave the baby

6 (b 1887); leading British lawyer and politician, Labour member of Parliament, 1935 40, member, Labour (Independent), 1940 50

APPENDIX

To K.M. Munshi[1]

Bombay
April 29, 1940

My dear Munshi,
Thank you for your new book *I Follow the Mahatma* which I have just received. I have dipped into it here and there already and I am sure that I shall find it very interesting reading.

I have come across accidentally a passage to which I should like to draw your attention. This is at page 115 at the beginning of chapter 26. It runs as follows:

"Before Gandhiji returned to India, Lord Willingdon (the then Viceroy) had made up his mind to force a fight on the Congress. So had Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. An appeal to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to stay his hand, till Gandhiji returned, was met by a prompt and indignant rejection; and just a few days before Gandhiji returned, the policy of non-payment of revenue was adopted by the U.P. Congress Committee."

This passage seems to me to be full of mis-statements. The assertion that I had made up my mind to force a fight on the Congress, either before or after Gandhiji returned, is completely untrue. Then again I do not remember any appeal from any one made to me, nor my meeting any such appeal or suggestion by a prompt and indignant rejection. *The U.P. Congress Committee did not in fact start any policy of non-payment of revenue.* Revenue was not in question. It was rent that was in issue. Even so, there was no no-rent campaign started by us but a fair rent campaign, as was admitted by the high officials of the U.P. Government. I need not go into this question in detail here. I have dealt with it, in some measure, in my *Autobiography*. As a matter of

1 J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

GLOSSARY

Amavas	the night of the new moon
Amin	an officer of the court
Asana	a yogic exercise
Barsi	anniversary
Basanti	yellowish red colour
Behaya	shameless
Bhaiya Duj	the second day of the fortnight when the moon waxes in the month of Kartik, the eighth month of the Hindu lunar calendar. On this day sisters are expected to demonstrate attachment to their brothers.
Bhandar	store
Bhujji	a roasted or fried article of food
Bigha	approximately five-eighths of an acre
Fasli	agricultural year starting from the months of June-July
Goondas	hooligans
Gulal	red powder used by Hindus during the Holi festival
Jawar	a kind of barley
Jhanda	flag
Jhanda prarthana	salutation of the flag
Jhanda Uncha rahe hamara	let our flag fly high
Kanungo	a revenue official
Karinda	an agent
Kartik Purnima	full moon day in the month of Kartik
Khalyan	a granary, a barn
Khas-ki tatti	screen made of cuscus
Khud	pit
Kurk amins	bailiffs
Lat Sahib	the Lord Saheb (Viceroy)

fact, every conceivable step that was open to us was taken by the U.P.P.C.C. to avoid a struggle till Gandhiji returned and we could have his advice. So far as I am personally concerned, I played a very secondary part in the matter. I functioned as a member of the Executive, our chief being Sherwani, who was not only what might be called a moderately inclined Congressman, but a zamindar himself. It was he who took the lead in the matter, but essentially the decisions were of the committee, as in the U.P. individual members play a subordinate part only in all decisions.

The U.P.P.C.C. had made certain demands about the reduction of rents for that year owing to very severe economic crisis. While we were pressing these on government, the government took action to hasten the full collection. We protested to them and asked them to delay matters. Finally we asked the tenantry to withhold payment of the full rent demanded till an equitable settlement was arrived at. We were in fact corresponding on the subject with the government and even meeting government officials. It was manifestly impossible for the tenantry to pay fully, and in fact, soon after Sherwani's and my arrest, the U.P. Government actually allowed the remissions which we had claimed from them, and, in fact, went a little further in a few districts. If they had done this a week or two earlier, there would have been no question of this struggle then. But they were bent on this struggle and in spite of our attempts to avoid it, forced it upon us. I might mention that the demands for remission that we made were largely based on the advice given by Gandhiji before he left for the R.T.C. Further that Gandhiji was kept informed of the developments in the U.P. by air mail and cable and his advice was always sought.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

INDEX

(Biographical footnotes are italicized)

Abdullah, M, 201 & fn
Abdulwali, Kutubuddin, 281 fn
Abhyudaya, 352 fn
Academy of Physical Culture, 233
Across the Gobi Desert (Sven Hedin), 350
Acton, T J C., 419 & *fn*, 443, 464
Aden, 42
Advance, 134 & fn, 256, 274 fn
Afghanistan, 258 fn, 461, 464, 548, 557, 558
Afghan Jirga, 134 & fn, 135, 257 fn
Afghan Peace Delegation, 508
Aga Khan, 299
Agarwal, Jagannath Prasad, 161
———, Man Mohanlal, 351 fn
Agra, 62, 71, 76, 174, 205
Agra Tenancy Act, *146, 508* fn
Agras (Bareilly), 132
Ahmedabad, 22, 31 33, 42, 44, 219, 226 & fn, 241, 276, 277, 318, 322, 337, 489
Ahmed Shah, 135 & fn
Ajanta, 418, 435, 442
Ajmer-Merwara, 179 fn
Ajodhya—see Ayodhya
Akbar, 437
Akbarpur (Fyzabad), 108, 116 fn
Alam, Mohammad, 48
Ali, Barkat, 109 & fn, 116
———, Manzar, 245
———, Mohamed, *322*
———, Mustafa, 243 & fn
———, Sadiq, 353
———, *Shaukat*, 29, 32, 48, 299
———, Yusuf, 120
Aligarh, 243 & fn
Alipur, 290 fn, 291 fn
Allahabad, 8, 19 fn, 21, 27-30, 32, 37, 42, 49, 57 59, 64-69, 71 & fn, 73, 75-79, *81 & fn*, 91, *96, 98 100*, 103 fn, 104 107, 109, 111, 114, 115, 117-119, 126 & fn, 127 & fn, 133-137, 139, 143, *144 & fn*, 146, 149 151 *fn*, 154 160, 164-169 fn, 173-176, 179 fn, 180, 182 186, 190, 192, 193, 197-199, 204 & fn, 205, 207, 219 221, 223, 227-230, 235, 240, 243, 249, 250, 256, 267, 272, 277, 298 fn, 316, 319, 322, 324, 325, 330, 336, 338, 339, 343-345, 347-351 & fn, 353, 355, 360-362, 365, 366, 370, 380 & fn, 381, 386, 387, 394, 395 & fn, 397, 399, 403, 404, *418, 424, 425*, 427, 433, 435, 438, 440 & fn, 452, 455, *471, 481, 485-487, 492, 500, 505* & fn, *508, 514, 516, 547 fn, 571*
Allahabad District Kisans Conference, 162
Allahabad Gazetteer, 143, 145
Allahabad University, 43 fn
Allah Bux, 349
All India Congress Committee, 9, 15 fn, 21, 22, 28, 30, 37, 44, 105, 151, 159, 168, 169, 182, 185, 192, 193, 197, 199, 200, 223, 250 & fn, 251, 256 fn, 273, *275* & fn, *291 fn, 292* & fn, 317 fn, 324, 336, 349 fn, 517 & fn, 518 & fn, 532, 533, 535, 544
All India Muslim Conference, 243 & fn
All India Spinners Association, 212 fn, 217 fn, 240
All India Trade Union Congress, 287 fn
All India Volunteer Conference, 232
All India Women's Conference, 440 fn
All Parties Committee, report of, 284, 285

Loo	hot winds
Makka	maize
Margshirsh	ninth month of the Hindu lunar calendar
Mar pit	assault
Mazdur	labourer
Mukhtar	attorney
Munsiff	subordinate judge
Murga	cock
Nasur	sinus
Naujawans	young soldiers
Nazm	poem
Panchas	elected representatives of the village
Pan supari	betels and betel nuts
Pargana	an area comprising several villages
Praja	people, subjects
Punkha	fan
Puphi	father's sister
Puries	fried unleavened flat bread
Qassab	butcher
Rajadhiraja	emperor
Sainiks	volunteers
Sainikas	women volunteers
Sarvangasana	a yogic exercise
Shastris	those who have learned shastras
Shivaratri	a Hindu religious festival in *Magh* (February-March)
Shraddha	commemoration ceremony
Tamam Shud	it is finished
Tatti	screen
Thekedar	lessor
Tithi	date
Unani	Greco-Arab system of medicine
Upanishad	Hindu scriptures
Vaid	doctor
Vasanta Panchami	fifth day of the eleventh month of the Hindu lunar calendar, when the moon is waxing

Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, dispute in and Aney's award, 134 & fn
Bengal Suppression of Terrorist Outrages Act, 515 fn
Besant, Annie, 545
Bhagavan Das, 245 & fn, 523, 540
Bhaila (Allahabad), 110, 117
Bharat, 364, 380, 381
Bhargava, Dr., 481, 483, 487
Bhatwaria Case, 453
Bijapur, 417, 418
Bijhari (Mathura), 112 & fn, 120, 129, 149
Bijnor, 381 & fn, 419 & fn, 453
Birla, G D, 135 & *fn*, 484
Birla House, 439 fn
Bodh Prasad, 130
Bombay, 1, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 18, 20, 23, 29, 32 fn, 41 fn, 46, 59, 68, 98, 102, 105, 108, 111, 113, 114, 181, 186, 190 192, 198, 199, 212, 216, 218, 221, 236 fn, 237 fn, 245, 267 & fn, 277, 278, 283 fn, 287, 291 fn, 298, 316 318, 322, 331, 332 fn, 334, 337, 339, 343, 346 fn, 352, 353, 358, 359, 365, 366, 370, 374, 375, 377, 381 fn, 382, 390 fn, 399, 401, 407, 410, 424, 436, 461 fn, 466, 471, 489, 530 fn, 538, 579
Bombay Chronicle, 323 fn, 472 & fn
Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, 9, 198, 212, 216 & fn, 218, 324 fn
Bombay Swadeshi League, 217, 218 & fn
Bomford, Hugh, 350 & fn
Bose, Subhas Chandra, 31 fn, 256, 273, 327, 328 fn
Brazil, 506
Brelvi, S.A., 323 & fn
British India Corporation, 201 fn
Brockway, Fenner, 17 & fn
Budapest, 491
Buddha, Gautama, 384, 387, 451
Bulandshahr, 165
Bundelkhand, 145
Bunyan, John, 494
Burge, 515 fn
Burma, 433 & fn
Butler, Harcourt, 508
———, Samuel, 576
Byron (Andre Maurois), 370 & fn
Byzantium, 496

Calcutta, 134 fn, 201 fn, 256, 261, 272 274 & fn, 298, 303 fn, 305, 330, 332 fn-334, 367, 375, 425, 432, 438, 440, 442, 443, 450, 455, 458, 462, 465, 469-471, 489, 516 fn
———, Congress session at, 470 & fn, 489 fn, 533
Calcutta Municipal Gazette, 397 fn
Calicut, Zamorin of, 449 fn
Cambridge, 370, 489, 490, 492, 513, 524 & fn, 565
Cape Town, 372
Captain, Nargis, 198 & fn, 328
———, Perin, 135 & fn
Caveeshar, Sardul Singh, 281 fn
Cawnpore—see Kanpur
Central Hindu College (Varanasi), 245 fn
Central Muslim Federation, 563
Cervantes, 494
Central Swadeshi Board, 200
Ceylon (Sri Lanka), 2, 68, 91, 201, 315, 316, 376, 389, 391, 394, 405, 406, 416, 424, 436, 437, 449, 478
Chail (Allahabad), 100, 110, 145
Chandola, 480 & fn
Chandrabhal, 381
Chandra, Krishna, 183 & fn
Charing Cross (London), 344
Charsadda, 567
Chata (Allahabad), 118
Chhatari, Nawab of, 55 & fn, 380, 400, 406, 426, 437, 450, 452, 569 fn
Chatterji, Ramanand, 31
Chattopadhyaya, Kamaladevi, 292 & fn, 335
Chaumuha (Mathura), 112, 129, 149
Chheoki (Allahabad), 192, 343, 418
China, 557
Chintamani, C.Y., 325, 479
Chittagong, 43 & fn, 134, 272 & fn, 298 & fn, 310, 515
Christian Nationalist Party, 283 fn
City and Cantonment League (Meerut), 130
Civil and Military Gazette, 29 fn
Civilization of India (Rene Grousset), 416

All Parties Conference, 523 & fn, 542
All Party Sikh Conference, 47
Almora, 357
Alsace Lorraine, 284
Altai Himalaya (Nicholas Roerich), 350
Aluwihare, Bernard, 352, 387, 478
Alva, Duke of, 403 & *fn*
Ambedkar, B.R., 299 & *fn*, 332 & fn
Amritsar, 509
Anant Narain, 479, 480, 483, 484
Andamans, 484 & fn, 516, 525 & fn
Andaman Prisoners' League, 516 fn
Andrews, C F., 23
Aney, M S, 134 & fn, 256, 478 fn, 484, 486 fn, 517 & fn, 518 & fn, 528
Anjani Kumar, 248 & *fn*
Annales de l'Inde, 323
Ansari, M A., 3, 31, 48 & fn, 135, 137, 206 & fn, 261 & fn, 281 fn, 375, 377, 401, 439, 458, 462, 466, 485
Anuradhapura (Sri Lanka), 387
A Programme for Progress (John Strachey), 476 fn
Argentine, 422
Ariel (Andre Maurois), 370 fn
Arkha (Rae Bareli), 119
Arnold, Matthew, 485 fn, 498
Arya Kanya Mahavidyalaya (Jullundur), 335 fn
Asansol, 470 & fn, 471
Asghar, Janak Kumari, 364 & fn
Associated Press, 572
A Tale about AK and Humanity (Efim Zozulya), 458
Atal, Madan, 364, 425, 432
Athens, 498
Austria, 557
Autobiography (Trebitsch Lincoln), 350
Avadh, 71, 75, 91, 140, 174, 514
Awami League, 287 fn
Ayodhya, 109
Azad, Abul Kalam, 281 fn
Aztec Civilisation, 496

Babylon, 496
Bachchrawan (Rae Bareli), 113 & fn, 118, 248 fn, 540 fn
Badalpur (Allahabad), 127 & fn
Bagalkot, 181, 186, 233, 334
Bahadurji, D N, 35 & fn, 267 & fn
Bahadurji Committee, 35 & fn
Baheri (Bareilly), 132
Bahraich (U.P.), 97, 99, 133, 138, 139, 141, 149, 261
Baiju, 465
Baiti (Rae Bareli), 130
Bajaj, Jamnalal, 135, 243 fn, 326
Bajaur (N.W.F.P.), 563 fn
Bakarganj (Allahabad), 110
Bakhale, R R., 287 fn
Bakuha (Rae Bareli); 345
Baldwin, Roger, 41, 43, 327, 382, 426
Balkan States, 557
Balha (U P.), 111, 132
Balliol College (Oxford), 524 fn
Balrampur (Gonda), 97, 140, 141, 154
Bal Sena, 316 fn
Baluchistan, 47 fn
Balwant (a peasant), 122
Ba Maw, 433 fn
Banaras Hindu University, 245 fn
Bangalore, 246, 249 & fn, 254 & fn
Banerji (Income tax officer) 338
Banker, Shankarlal, 198, 212, 213
Bank of England, 35
Bannu, 263
Bans Gopal, 189, 181
Bara (Allahabad), 145
———, Raja of, 58, 63
Bara Banki (U.P.), 19 fn, 97, 99, 125, 133, 141, 165
Baraipur (Gonda), 140 & fn, 141, 149, 154
Bardoli, 2, 11, 14, 15, 20, 21, 23, 25, 108, 158, 315
Bareilly, 129 & fn, 132, 149, 175, 257 fn, 353, 354, 356, 360 & fn, 365, 373, 374, 377, 380, 383, 387-391, 394, 398, 417, 452, 467, 479, 493, 500 fn
Basti (U P.), 149
Bawazir, Abdul Kadir, 277 & fn
Benares—see Varanasi
Bengal Nationalist Muslim Conference, 206 fn
Bengal Ordinance, 187 fn, 239, 298 & fn
Bengal Provincial Conference, 181
Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, 134 fn, 230, 236, 256, 271 & fn, 272, 274, 328 & fn

Disraeli (André Maurois), 370 *fn*
Disraeli, Benjamin, 434
Diwakar, R.R., 311 & *fn*
Dorsali (Dehra Dun), 359
Dongri (Bombay), 3
Don Quixote (Cervantes), 434
Dorchester Hotel (Mansion), 476
Doulatram, Jaisamdas, 22, 123, 197, 198, 241, 287 *fn*
Dover Beach (Matthew Arnold), 485 *fn*
Drake—Brockman, 144 & *fn*, 145
Duncan, Isadora, 316 & *fn*
Durant, W.J., 315 & *fn*, 319
Dutt, Sumitra, 401
Dyer, General, 509

Economics of Khaddar (Richard Gregg), 359 *fn*
Egypt, 29 & *fn*, 136 & *fn*, 477, 496
———, minority problems solved in, 29
Elkra, 415, 435, 436, 442
Emerson, H.W., 10 & *fn*, 19 *fn*, 24 & *fn*, 42, 44, 45, 47, 62, 70, 71, 118, 123, 134, 136, 192 & *fn*, 150, 153-155, 334
England, 3, 20, 26, 27, 33-35, 38, 39, 43, 46, 106, 128, 136 *fn*, 162, 293-295, 363 *fn*, 456 *fn*, 464, 475, 506, 507, 524, 557, 558, 567, 574
———, crisis in, 35
———, national government formed in, 35 & *fn*
Eroica (Samuel Butler), 576
Erwadi, 50, 146, 151, 156, 190, 191 *fn*, 277, 337
European Association (Calcutta), 272 & *fn*, 273
Evening Standard, 322

Fabry, C.V., 169 & *fn*, 394, 421, 425, 427, 428, 433, 448
Far Away and Long Ago (W.H. Hudson), 423
Faridpur (Bengal), 112
Farmer's Island, 144 *fn*, 148, 223 *fn*
Fatehgarh, 554
Fatehpur, 55, 144, 146, 150
Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry, 215 & *fn*
Fig, 254 *fn*
Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee, 216
Forman Christian College (Lahore), 49 *fn*
Free Press Journal, 322
French Revolution, 432
Frontier Provincial Congress Committee, 134 & *fn*, 255, 256 *fn*, 257 *fn* 259, 262 *fn*, 263 *fn*
Furuqganj (Rae Bareli), 164 *fn*
Fyzabad, 59, 60, 99 *fn*, 105, 107 & *fn*, 116 *fn*, 144 *fn*, 332, 426 & *fn*, 430 432, 437, 438, 451

Gadag, 211, 212, 366, 367
Gamalata (Allahabad), 117
Gandhara, 451
Gandhi, Devadas, 26 *fn*, 45 *fn*, 476, 477, 485
———, Kasturba, 493 *fn*
———, Mahatma, 1, 3 15 *fn*, 12, 14, 20-22 *fn*, 31, 32 & *fn*, 41, 42, 45, 46, 48 & *fn*, 49 & *fn*, 61 & *fn*, 62, 65, 67 & *fn*, 69-71, 81-86, 88-91, 93, 95, 100, 104 & *fn*, 106, 113, 115, 116 *fn*, 120, 125, 131, 137, 142, 147, 151, 155 & *fn*, 156, 158, 159, 162 & *fn*, 171, 176, 181, 184, 187, 189-192, 202, 215 & *fn*, 234, 243 & *fn*, 244 & *fn*, 248 & *fn*, 252, 260, 261 & *fn*, 268, 277 & *fn*, 281 *fn*, 290, 291 *fn*, 294-297, 299 & *fn*, 300, 302, 304, 306 & *fn*, 308, 309, 316, 320-321 *fn*, 324, 327, 330, 332 & *fn*, 337, 341-345, 349 & *fn*, 353, 355 & *fn*, 363, 366 & *fn*, 368, 407, 411, 442, 442, 443, 445 & *fn*, 450 *fn*, 451 *fn*, 452, 456, 457 & *fn* 459, 462, 472 & *fn* 477 *fn*, 486 & *fn*, 489 & *fn*, 490, 493 & *fn*, 501 & *fn* 502 & *fn* 512, 517 522, 524 & *fn*, 526, 533 *fn* 534, 536 538 & *fn*, 558, 565, 566, 568, 575, 580
Gandhi Ashram, 141
Gandhi Day, 313 336

Cocanada—see Kakinada
Coimbatore, 335
Coldstream, Capt., 572 & fn
Coleridge, Mary, 496
Colombo, 420, 436
Communist Party (India), 41
Congress, Indian National, 1, 3 13, 15-21, 23 28, 29 fn, 33, 36 fn, 40, 41, 45, 50 & fn, 51, 60 65, 67 & fn, 69-71, 73, 77, 79 fn 81, 83 93, 95 fn, 97-100, 105 110, 113 fn, 116-118, 120-127, 130-132, 135 fn, 138, 139, 141, 147, 149 151 fn, 154-157 fn, 160 164 fn, 166 fn, 168 176, 178 181, 184 fn, 188 & fn, 189, 192, 197 fn, 199-202, 204, 205 & fn, 208 fn, 209, 213 fn, 214 fn, 218 fn, 219 226, 231-234, 236 238, 240, 241, 245 fn 250 fn, 252, 263, 266-269, 271, 284-290 fn, 292-299, 303-305, 309, 310, 316 fn, 321, 326, 327, 331, 332 fn, 335 & fn, 339, 349 fn, 350 fn, 354, 364, 381 fn, 388 fn, 456 fn, 463, 486 & fn, 487, 489 fn, 508, 512, 513, 517 520, 522 fn, 523, 525 fn, 530, 533 535, 537, 539, 544, 548 fn, 553, 555, 556, 561-563, 579
———, session at Calcutta, 470 & fn, 489 fn, 533
———, session at Delhi, 381, 382
———, session at Karachi, 527
———, session at Lahore, 555
———, session at Puri, 181
Congress Working Committee, 8, 12 16, 18, 20, 26 fn, 28, 29, 31-33, 37, 42-44, 47, 48, 60, 62, 80, 81, 90, 98, 99, 104, 105, 113, 134 fn, 135, 137, 157-159, 162-164, 166, 168, 170, 184, 187, 191 & fn, 192, 198 200, 208, 209, 215, 217, 218 & fn, 221 224, 225 fn, 226, 232 236, 238, 239, 242 fn, 245, 250 & fn, 253, 256, 261 & fn, 264 & fn, 266, 270, 273, 275 277, 300, 303, 322, 334, 336, 337, 339, 343, 344, 346 fn, 349 fn, 518, 553
———, on defence of India, 33, 34; on economic policy and finance, 34, 35; on fundamental rights, 36
Congress Bulletin, 8, 28
Congress Textile Mills Exemption Committee, 212 fn
Crerar, James, 10
Crishna, Dorothy, 351 & fn
Czechoslovakia, 557

Dacca, 272 & fn, 273
———, terrorism in, 167 & fn
Dadauli (Allahabad), 78 & fn
Daily Herald, 30 fn
Dal Lake (Jammu & Kashmir), 467
Dammilal, 59
Dandekar, V.S., 353
Dandi (Gujarat), 367
Dandi March Day, 367
Dar, Kishan Prasad, 368
———, S S L., 96
Das, C R., 466
Das Gupta, B K, 516 & fn
Datta, S K, 49 & fn, 277 & fn
Daudi, Shafi, 48 fn
Daulatabad (Maharashtra), 436
Dayal, Hareshwar, 351 fn
Debs, Eugene, 383 & fn
Dehra Dun, 211 fn, 343 fn, 383-385, 387-389, 391, 394-396, 400-402, 404, 405, 410 fn, 420, 426 fn, 427, 432, 433, 449 fn, 450, 452, 462, 463, 470, 471, 474, 481, 492, 500 & fn
Delhi, 32, 42, 58, 59, 67, 68, 105, 128, 137, 157-159, 211, 218, 256, 288 fn, 323, 363, 371, 375, 381 & fn, 382, 401, 411, 455, 466, 543, 563
———, Congress session at, 381, 382
Delhi Conspiracy Case, 288 & fn
Delhi Settlement, 5, 8, 10, 12, 14 fn, 15, 24 fn, 28, 44, 45, 50, 106, 112, 130, 133, 146, 153, 169, 173, 175, 188 & fn, 233, 237, 252, 325 fn, 538, 553
Desai, Bhulabhai, 35 fn
———, Mahadeva, 42, 48, 137, 449, 451 fn, 475, 493 fn, 524
Deshmukh, Dr., 445
De Valera, Eamon, 402
Dharasana (Gujarat), 277 fn
Dhariwal Woollen Mills, 200
Dharmapal, 384
Dharwar, 211, 311 fn

Imam Saheb—see Bawazir, Abdul Kadir
Indian Journalists Association, 248
Indian Political Congress, 252
Indian Merchants Chamber, 217, 218 & fn
Indian Social Reformer, 461
Indian States Reformer, 480
Indian Trade Union Federation, 287 fn
Indonesia, 461 fn
Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism, Capitalism, Sovietism and Fascism (Bernard Shaw), 383
Iradatnagar (Allahabad), 343, 345
Iraq, 477
Ireland, 49 fn
Irwin, Lord, 188 fn
Isipatana (Sarnath), 423
Ismail, Mirza, 249
Italy, 265, 284, 484
Iyengar, B S Ramaswami, 249 & fn
Iyer, P.S. Sivaswamy, 372

Jagannath, 110
Jagdishpur (Allahabad), 110
Jalalabad (Farrukhabad), 161
Jallianwala Bagh, 303
Jallianwala Bagh Day, 380
Jammu and Kashmir, 467 fn
———, Maharaja Harisingh of, 467 & fn
Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, 316 fn
Jamnadas, 572
Jan, Agha Mohammad, 321
Janka (Allahabad), 110
Japan, 83, 114 fn, 463 fn, 557
Jawahar Day, 425
Jayakar, M R., 409, 476 fn
Jehol, 463 fn
Jesting Pilate (Aldous Huxley), 510 fn
Jhang (Pakistan), 44-46, 294 fn, 327
Jhansi, 71, 229
Jharwahi (Mathura), 122, 129
Jingiz Khan—see Chengiz Khan
Jinnah, M.A., 32 & fn, 47 & fn, 137
John, M., 244 & fn
Joint Parliamentary Committee, 519 fn
Joshi, Chhaganlal, 451 fn
———, N.M., 287 fn
Jugal Kishore, 486
Jullundur, 335 fn

Kaaba, 29
Kabul, 253
Kadampur (Bareilly), 132
Kaira (Gujarat), 18 fn
Kakinada (A.P.), 232
Kalhana, 485 fn
Kalka Prasad, 246 & fn
Kalyanpur (Allahabad), 58, 112
Kanauj, 59
Kangra, 350 fn
Kanpur, 48, 136, 186, 205, 238, 245 fn, 264 266, 273 fn, 281, 297 fn, 324 & fn, 327, 329, 330 & fn, 333, 352, 513, 538
Kanpur Conspiracy Case, 41 fn
Kanpur riots, 167
——— Enquiry Committee, report of, 264 & fn
Kantilal, 476 & fn
Kapur, Diwan Ram Chandra, 406 & fn, 407, 421, 433, 438
Karachi, 45, 59, 67-69, 198, 252, 455, 518, 527
———, Congress session at, 284, 287, 553, 555
——— resolution, 33, 243, 284, 289, 544
Karari (Allahabad), 110
Karchchana (Allahabad), 57, 127 & fn
Karhon Lal, 59
Karnatak, 184, 223, 224, 233, 311, 312
——— Provincial Congress Committee, 311 & fn
——— Seva Dal, 311
Kashipur (Allahabad), 358
Kashi Vidyapith (Varanasi), 245 fn
Kashmir, 451, 467, 468, 455, 492
Kathiawad, 437
Katju, Kailas Nath, 198
Kaul, Kailas, 29, 134, 262 & fn, 263
———, Rampati, 355 & fn
Kehla (Fatehgarh), 58 & fn
Kelkar, N C, 409
Kent, 456

JU, G, CENT.

Gandhi Jayanti, 539
Gandhian Economic Thought (J.C. Kumarappa), 32 fn
Gandhi Irwin Settlement—see Delhi Settlement
Gandhi National Memorial Fund, 311 fn
Gandhi Sagar (Bangalore), 247
Garhwali, 480 fn
Gaur, Madan Mohan, 182, 183
Gauhr i Hayat, 330
Gaura (Allahabad), 110
Gautam, Mohanlal, 42 fn
Geneva, 42, 416
George VI (England), 115 fn
———, *Henry*, 359 & *fn*
Germany, 83, 284, 463, 484, 486
Ghazipur, 419
Ghose, Sailendranath, 253 *fn*
Ghure Lal, 120, 121
Gilani, Beltie Shah, 352 & *fn*
Gilbert, William, 526 fn, 570
Gilbert and Sullivan, 526
Girdharilal (Girdhari Lal), 353, 354, 444, 465
Gitanjali, (Rabindranath Tagore), 499
Glimpses of World History (Jawaharlal Nehru), 346 fn
Glasgow, 436
Gobi (desert), 461
Gokhale, G.K., 297
Golden Book of Tagore, 397
Golconda, 467
Gol Gumbaz, 418
Golmuri Tinplate Workers Union, 244 fn
Gonda, 79, 97, 99, 133, 140, 141, 149, 154, 261, 351
Gorakhpur, 79, 99, 130, 136
Gorton Castle, 563
Goswami, T.C, 516
Greece, 265
Grammar of Santal Language (Lars Olsen Skrefsrud), 577 fn
Great War, 513, 559
Gregg, Richard, 359 & *fn*
Grotius, Hugo, 494
Grousset, Rene, 416 fn
Gupta, Bishambhar Nath, 203 & fn
———, Shyamlal 'Parshad', 278 fn
Gwalior, 317 & fn
Guruvayoor (Kerala), 449 fn, 457 fn

Habeeb Ullah, Sheikh, 161 & fn
Haemmerlin, Mlle, 387
Haig, Harry Graham, 525 & *fn*
Hailey, Malcolm, 98, 105, 310, 507, 561, 562
Handia (Allahabad), 57, 110, 145
Hanoi, 114 fn
Hardikar, N.S, 221 *fn*, 223, 224, 226-228, 230, 311
Hardwar, 457 fn
Harijan, 459-461
Hari Krishan, 572 fn
Harrow, 370, 394, 423, 524
Har Swarup, 73
Hedin, Sven, 350
Henderson, Arthur, 520
Hijli, 134 & fn, 256 & fn, 294, 298 & fn, 310
Hindu Boarding House (Allahabad), 403
Hindustani Seva Dal, 91, 181, 186, 220-227 fn, 229 fn 231, 233-239, 311, 334
History of Hindu Chemistry (P.C. Ray), 334 fn
Hitler, Adolf, 477 & *fn*, 507
Hoare, Samuel (Viscount Templewood), 385 & *fn*, 386, 457 & fn, 567, 570
Holmes, A.C., 371 & fn
Holroyd, 395 & fn
Home, Amal, 397 & *fn*
Hooghly, 271 fn
Howard League for Penal Reforms, 576
Hubli, 181, 186, 223, 224, 308, 334
Hudson, W.H, 422, 423, 442
Hugo, Victor, 387
Husain, Fazl i-, 371
Hussain, Muhammad, 204 fn, 205, 208 & fn
Huxley, Aldous, 510 & *fn*
———, Julian, 372 fn

I Follow the Mahatma (K.M. Munshi), 579

381 fn, 470, 479, 484, 485, 488, 533
Malaya, 379, 461 fn
Mango (a peasant woman), 122
Manjhanpur (Allahabad), 110, 117, 145
Mann, Thomas, 486
Marx, Karl, 497
Mashobra (Simla), 9
Mathura, 31-33, 62, 71 fn, 76, 97, 99, 112, 123, 129, 133, 149, 152 fn, 183 fn, 325, 562
Maurois, Andre, 370 & fn
Mauritius, 114 fn
Mauza Gulupur (Rae Bareli), 79
Maya civilisation, 496
Mayors, S.R., 388
Measures (Supdt. of Police), 343, 345
Meerut, 62, 130, 133, 212 fn, 213 fn, 351, 390 fn, 543, 573
Meerut Conspiracy Case, 41 fn, 486 fn
Meerut Defence Fund, 275
Mehta, Jivraj, 363 & fn, 364, 375, 377
———, Hansa, 364
———, V.N., 126 & fn, 128, 158, 165
Meja (Allahabad), 145
Mein Kampf (Adolf Hitler), 477 fn
Mieville, E.C., 115 & *fn*, 152, 182
Mikado, 428
Mill, John Stuart, 460
Miraben, 23
Mirzapur, 205
Misra, Mata Prasad, 246 & fn
M.N. Roy Defence Committee, 297
Modern Review, 31 fn
Mohamedi, S.S., 252
Mongolia, 463 fn
Moonje, B.S., 409
Moradabad, 389
Moral Man and Immoral Society (Reinhold Niebuhr), 477 & fn
Motley, J.L., 403 & fn
Mountbatten, Lord, 115 fn
Mudie, R.F., 143 & *fn* 146, 159
Muflis, 530 fn
Mukerji, S.K., 547 & fn, 548 fn
Mukherji, Dhan Gopal, 362, 382, 422, 424, 426
Munde Pande (Moradabad), 389
Munje—see Moonje
Munshi, K.M., 5 fn, 292 & *fn*, 579
Murshidabad, 273, 333 & fn, 334
Muslim League, 206 fn, 287 fn
Muslim Nationalist Party, 137, 261 & fn
Muslim Volunteers' Congress, 287
Mussalman, 201 fn
Mussoorie, 389, 391, 394, 399-401, 404, 444, 471, 481-484, 487, 488, 508
Muttra—see Mathura
Muzaffarnagar, 71, 214 fn
My Life (Isadora Duncan), 316 fn
Mysore, 254 fn, 255

Naapara (Bahraich), 149
Nabha, 355
Naidu, Padmaja, 343, 350, 356, 372, 379, 382, 384, 413, 417, 419, 425, 432, 486
———, Sarojini, 281 fn, 371, 372, 381 & *fn*
Naini, 343 & fn, 345, 346, 351-357, 360, 361, 375, 376, 378, 438, 450, 452, 453 & fn, 478, 500 & fn, 501, 567
Naini Tal, 92, 245, 374, 396, 404
Nambudripad, Kurur, 216 & *fn*
Naoroji, Dadabhai, 134 fn, 135 fn, 198 fn
———, Jal, 198, 218, 346 fn, 387, 456 fn
———, *Khurshed*, 134 & *fn*, 259, 262, 268, 270, 328, 329, 493 & fn
Napoleon (Bonaparte), 432
Narayan, Jaya Prakash, 135 & fn
Nariman, K.F., 23, 333, 335
Narkanda (Simla), 316
Natarajan, K., 461 fn
Nationalist Muslim Conference, 48
National Planning Committee, 317 fn
Naujawan Bharat Sabha, 296
Nehru, Anand Kumar, 440 & fn
———, Balwant Kumar (Ballo), 483
———, B.K., 491 & fn
———, Brajlal, 404, 405, 483, 491
———, Indira, 343, 346, 352-354, 356, 359, 360, 365, 370-372, 374, 382, 385, 386, 390 fn, 394, 399, 400, 403, 404, 406, 409, 411, 415, 417, 419, 422, 423, 427 fn, 433, 438, 442, 452, 454, 462, 470, 471, 481, 486, 487, 492, 493

Khaksars, 135 fn
Khaliquzzaman, Chaudhri, 485
Khambatta, S P., 520 & fn
Khan, Ali Gul, 257 & fn, 263 & fn
———, Amir Ayub, 464
———, Faiz Mohamad, 130
———, Kadir, 91
———, Khan Abdul Ghaffar, 3, 29, 49, 134 & fn, 135 & fn, 177, 188 fn, 225 fn, 253, 257 fn-260 fn, 263 & fn, 269 fn, 276 fn, 328, 343, 344, 566, *567*
———, Obaidullah, 269 & fn
———, Saadullah, 267 & fn
———, Shafaat Ahmad, 43 & *fn*
Khan Sahib, 29, 134, 177 & fn, 260, 262 & fn, 263, 267 & fn, 268, 270, 276, 328, 329, 343, 344, 567
Khanna, G R, 214 & fn
Khudai Khidmatgars, 134 & fn, 135 fn, 225 & fn, 263, 276 fn
Kidwai, Rafi Ahmad, 42 fn, 49, 135, 167 fn, 258 260, 263, 344, 438, 470, 485
Kingsley Hall (London), 260
Knox, K N, 169 & fn
Kohkharaj (Allahabad), 81 fn
Kosari (Bareilly), 132
Kosi Kalan (Mathura), 121, 129
Kotkai, 563 fn
———, Khan of, 563 & fn
Kumaon, 355 fn, 357 fn
Kumarappa, J C, 32 & *fn*, 35 fn, 325
Kunwar, 344
Kunzru, Hirday Nath, 403

Labour Party (British), 520 & fn
Lacey, Patrick, 524 & fn
Lahore, 47, 49 fn, 134, 164, 258, 385, 519, 572
——— resolution, 33, 35, 285, 300
Lajjavati, Kumari, 335 & fn
Lajpat Rai, Lala, 303 & fn, 466
Lajpat Rai Day, 479 fn
Lakshmi, 478 & fn, 485
Lakhimpur Explosives Case, 346 & fn
Lal, Brijnandan, 73
Lalganj (Rae Bareli), 88 fn, 91, 246
Lancashire, 539 fn
Lansbury, George, 520
Latif, Abdul, 419 & *fn*, 421, 452, 453
Latvia, 576
Leader, 29, 58, 73, 128, 139 & fn
Lele, P.R., 332 & fn
Lenin, 302, 479
Letters from a Father to His Daughter (Jawaharlal Nehru), 438 fn
Life in an Indian Jail (Raghubir Sahai), 554 fn
L'illustration, 379, 383, 416
Lloyd Triestino, *436*
Lokhare, B.G., 227
London, 9-14, 17, 18, 20 23, 32, 41, 48 & fn, 93, 108, 137, 155, 157, 173, 250 fn 252, 260, 261 fn, 277 fn, 297, 304, 306 fn, 325, 328, 344, 383, 416, 418, 423, 476, 491
London School of Economics, 416, 491
Lothian, Lord, 370 & fn
Lothian Committee, 370 & fn
Lucknow, 55, 63, 91 fn, 102, 103, 108, 112, 124, 137, 164, 167, 181, 186, 187 fn, 189, 244, 354, 357, 361, 366, 372, 378, 383, 402, 427, 432, 440 fn, 481, 486, 500, 501, 514, 516, 521, 540, 545-547, 553

MacDonald, Ramsay, 162 fn, 293, 353 fn, 407, 409 fn
Madan, 416
Madho Prasad, 349 fn
Madras, 546 fn, 572
Mahajan, Jagannath, 349 fn
Maharajganj (Rae Bareli), 79, 130
Mahesh Narain, 124 & *fn*
Mahmud, Syed, 181, 248, 287 fn, 337, 338, 425, 426, 432, 453 & fn, 470
Mahmudabad (Sitapur), 161 fn
Mahoria (Sultanpur), 160 fn
Mainpuri, 60
——— Conspiracy Case, 59 & fn
Makhmoor, J, 530 & fn
Malacca (Allahabad), 349, 438
Malaviya, Govind, 409 & fn, 433
———, Kapil Deva, 522 & fn
———, Keshava Deva, 470
———, Krishna Kant, 344, 352, 434
———, Madan Mohan, 281 fn, 344,

564, on justice in India, 573, on Kanpur riots enquiry report, 264 267, 281; on *life in jail*, 369, *on Mahatma* Gandhi's fast, 407-411; and his attitude to science, 511; on marriage, 490, 491; on minorities and nationalism, 283; on Mathura atrocities, 120 123, 129, On M N. Roy, 297, 329; on Muslims' role in national movement, 4, 285, on national flag, 242, 250, 255, 294, on nationalism, 2, 6, on need for *preparedness*, 8, *courage*, 86, *forbearance*, 414; strengthening the Congress 1, 28; training, 220-223, 231, 232, 237, 238; and unity, 87, 90, 269, *on* nonviolence, 69, 84, 104, 302, 304, on Pathans, 329, on planning and efficiency, 230, on politicians, 495; on prayers, 436, on prison reforms, 509, 554, 555, 574-576; on public morality, 125, 126, on recruitment of volunteers, 226, *on religion* and morality, 318, on religious practices 202, on resumption of no rent campaign, 148, 154, 155 & *fn*, 163 & *fn*, 176 & fn, 178, 181, 190, 191, 580, on Round Table Conferences, 9 12, 27, 106, 147, 157, 162, *on scientific attitude*, 393, 513; on separate electorates, 285, on settlement with England, 33 36, on *solitary confinement*, 566; *on* support to progressive forces, 528; on swadeshi, 213; on terrorism, 290, 291, 515; on *U.P.* ordinances, 187 & *fn*; *on* women, 95, 292 & fn; on women prisoners, 568, on world situation, 519; views on crime, 554, *on zamindars*, 74, 75, 86, 102, 105, 171, 172, 257; and their attitude to kisans, 57, 76, 78, 79

———, Kamala, 29, 134, 135, 182, 186, 262 fn, 277, 337, 338, 343, 344, 346, 350, 353, 356, 358-360, 362, 364, 365, 370, 374, 377, 379-383, 385, 393, 396, 397, 399 401, 403, 404, 406-408, 410, 416, 417, 420, 422, 425 & fn, 426, 432, 433, 438 441, 443 445, 450, 452, 455, 458, 462, 463, 465, 468-472, 474, 481, 486, 488, 489, 492, 493, 500, 501

———, Kishanlal, 371

———, Krishna Kumari, 30, 343, 350 352, 354, 359, 361, 365, 366, 370, 394, 404, 410, 413, 416, 417, 421, 423, 424, 436, 437, 439, 440, 449, 450, 452, 454, 455, 458, 467, 468, 471, 477, 481, 489-491

———, Mohanlal, 351, 352 & fn, 368, 405

———, (Mohan Bhabhi), 352

———, Motilal, 318 fn, 338 fn, 453 fn

———, Rameshwari, 404, 405, 483

———, Rup, 352 & fn

———, Shyam Kumari, 397

———, Shyamlal, 343, 368, 440 fn

———, Swarup Rani, 380 fn, 418 & fn, 427 fn, 470 fn

———, Uma, 343, 350 & fn, 379, 440 fn

Nehru Report, 43

Nellore, 208

Nepal, 351 fn

Netherlands, 404

Nethersole (district magistrate), 372, 379, 380, 385

New Delhi, 439 fn

Newham, *Charles E.*, 29 & *fn*

Newlands, B E M, 355 & fn, 373, 374, 376, 377, 390

New York, 42, 253, 327

Niebuhr, Reinhold, 477 & fn

Nineveh, 496

Nobel Prize, 486

Nohjhil (Mathura), 129

North West Frontier Province, 26 & fn, 47 fn

Norway, 577

Orange, William *of*, 403 & *fn*, 404

Orissa, 51

Oudh—see Avadh

Oudh Rent Act, 150, 508 fn

Outline of History (H G. Wells), 379

Oxford, 524 fn

Pakargaon (Rae Bareli), 130

Palestine, 477

———, Jawaharlal, 5 fn, 9 & fn, 10 & fn, 11, 13, 15-17 fn, 19 fn, 22, 26, 28, 30, 32 & fn, 33, 41-48 fn, 49, 50, 59 61 fn, 65 & fn 68, 70, 80, 81, 96, 98 100, 102, 103, 105, 106 fn, 108, 111, 113-115, 118 fn, 119, 123-127, 130, 133, 136, 137, 139 & fn, 146, 151 & fn, 155, 157-161, 163, 164 fn, 166, 167 & fn, 170, 172, 177 & fn, 179 fn, 181-184, 186, 188 fn, 190, 191, 193, 197 & fn, 198, 200, 201, 203 & fn, 208 & fn, 210 214, 216 & fn, 217, 219, 221 fn, 224, 225 fn, 227 231, 235, 236, 239, 241 249, 253-264, 267, 270-278, 281 fn, 287 fn, 288 fn, 289 fn, 291 fn, 297 fn, 307, 315, 316, 318 & fn, 319, 321-339, 343 fn, 346-348 fn, 357 fn, 365 fn, 368, 373, 375, 377-379, 384 & fn, 385 fn, 395 fn, 396, 399, 404, 410 & fn, 411, 413 fn, 417, 424, 431, 434, 435, 437, 439 & fn, 441, 445, 449 fn-451, 453 fn 456, 462, 467, 468, 471, 474, 475, 478, 483, 486, 490, 492, 501 fn, 505, 507, 508, 514 517, 520 523, 525 & fn, 530, 531, 533 535, 538 fn, 542, 544, 546, 548, 553, 555, 579

———, disagrees with Mahatma Gandhi, 513, 529, 530, dislikes presiding over conferences, 335; dissatisfied with Liberal ideology, 505; favours machinery, 513, is a man of peace, 317, *is proud of kisans*, 347; is unattached to property, 445, likes adventures and risks, 317; seeks action, 319, 320, 321; wants complete change in regime, 543

———, in jail, 343-501; arrested (sixth time), 343; completes Letters to Indira, 493, dislikes shifting from Dehra Dun jail, 434, fasts for 36 hours, 361; impatient at teaching, 402, locked in jail, 355; misses father, 363, 369, moves away from Mahatma Gandhi, 478, 489; released from jail, 501 & fn, stops interviews in jail, 395, 396, 398, 400, and capitulates to Mahatma Gandhi's suggestion for interviews, 450, 452

———, on advantages of jail life, 413-415; on Ambedkar's conduct, 332; on atrocities in jails, 569; on Bareilly happenings, 129; and government's denial, 129 & fn; on Bengal Congress disputes, 302; on Bengal's reaction to his advice, 274; on Bengal's sacrifices, 305; on boycott of foreign cloth, 94, 199 & fn, 212, 214; and its effect on weavers, 204 207; on breaches of Delhi Settlement, 51; on British national government, 293; on civil disobedience, resumption of, 87, 114, 128, 137, 309; and its success, 83, 301; on classification of prisoners, 566; on communalism, 205 207, 281 284, 296; on Congress, 286, 528; branches abroad, 17 & fn, 250 253; on Congress and harijans, 289, 299, 309; and kisans, 64, 171, 310; and mill workers, 286; on Congressmen accepting offices, 246; on Congress organisation, 517; on constituent assembly, 542; on cooperation among kisans, 77; on dangers of an alien army, 556; on defence of India, 555 560, on Delhi Settlement, 1, 16, 20, 65, 88, 89, 90, 94, 103; on discipline, 87, 295; on distress of peasants, 19, 56, 57, 62, 63, 67, 73, 79, 81, 92, 109, 115, 119, 141, 142, 152 & fn, 155, 156; on divesting of vested interests, 527, 532, 536, on economic changes, 505, 527; on education, 439 fn; on fear as the cause of world troubles, 509; on fighting forces of evil, 319; on first experiences with kisans, 508; on futility of grief, 337; on government's attitude to Congress, 79, 109, 117, 131, 132; to peasants, 18, 97, 127; and to truce, 71 & fn, on hand spinning and weaving, 512; on Hijli firings, 134 & fn, 294, on Hindu society, 460; on Hindustani Seva Dal, 238, 239, on hooliganism, 3, on income tax, 353, 367; on imperialism, 536; on incidents in Semri and Baraipur, 140 & fn, 154; on India and socialism, 320, 321; on Indian states and federation, 36, 39, 40, on jail 'riots', 429, and treatment of prisoners, 430,

Puri, Congress session at, 50, 51
Pushkar, 179 fn

Qadri, Rahman Baksh, 109
Quatre Vingt Treze (Victor Hugo), 387

Rae Bareli, 19 fn, 61 & fn, 75, 79, 80, 88 fn, 93, 95 & fn 97, 99 101, 113 & fn, 118, 119, 123 125, 128, 130, 133, 141, 163 & fn, 201, 246 & fn, 248 fn, 275, 299, 309, 325, 332 fn, 345, 354, 394, 501, 540 & fn
Rahim, Abdur, 256
Raj, 344, 374
Rajagopalachari, C, 410, 476, 478 fn
Rajatarangini (Kalhana), 455 & fn, 468, 485 & fn
Raj Bahadur, 130
Rajbhoj, P N, 289 fn
Rajey Sultanpur (Fyzabad), 109 fn
Rajwade, Laxmibai G, 317 & fn
———, Ganpatrao Raghunath, 317 fn
Ramaswami, 572
Ramchand, 122
Rampur, 113 fn, 389
Ranchi, 489 fn
Rangaswami, 240
Ray, P.C., 334 & fn, 516, 526
Rayah (Mathura), 120 & fn
Red Shirts, 258 fn
Reichstag, 463 fn
Reinhold, C H, 433, 438, 487
Remakers of Mankind (Carleton Washburne), 439 fn
Rise of the Dutch Republic (J L Motley), 403 fn
Roerich, Nicholas, 350 & fn
Rohilkhand, 131
Rohtagi, Jawaharlal, 324, 327
Rolland, Romain, 476, 498
Rome, 496
Roosevelt, Franklin D., 505
Round Table Conference, 3 7, 11,13, 15 fn 17, 20, 25 fn 27, 33, 37 & fn, 49 fn, 93, 147, 151, 155, 157, 162, 206 fn, 239, 251, 261 & fn, 277 fn, 346 fn, 349 fn, 353 fn, 457 & fn, 519, 524 fn, 527, 537, 580
———, Federal Structure Committee of, 43 & fn
———, Minority Committee of, 35, 162 fn
Row, Leila, 351 & fn
Roy, B C, 135, 375-378, 380, 382, 383, 385, 386, 389, 390, 425, 450
———, M N, 41 & fn, 42, 186, 297 & fn, 324 & fn, 327, 329, 333 fn, 356, 479
Royalist Movement, 272 fn
Russia, 484, 557 & fn, 558, 576

Saadat, 572
Sabarmati, 229, 318
Sachin state, 245
Sadashivarao, Karnad, 311 & fn
Sahai, Raghubir, 554 & fn
———, Sitla, 68, 123, 125 & fn, 128, 139 & fn, 163, 165, 170, 246, 248, 393
Sahay, A, 114 & fn
Saint Joan (Bernard Shaw), 459
Sakarwal (Allahabad), 127
Saklatwala, S., 252
Salamatullah (Major), 501
Salon (Rae Bareli), 119
Salt Act, 60, 66
Sampurnanand, 229, 271 & fn
Santniketan, 330, 333 fn, 418
Sapru, T B., 325, 385, 409, 459, 476 fn, 484
Sarabhai, Ambalal, 315 fn, 316 fn
———, Bharati, 315 & fn, 317
———, Mridula, 316 & fn
Sarah (ayah), 395
Sarai Gopal (Allahabad), 334
Sarnath, 423
Sastri, V.S., 484
Saxena, Mohanlal, 409, 410
Scandinavian Santal Mission, 577
Schuster, George, 10 & fn
Science in the Changing World (Aldous Huxley), 510
Science of Life (H G Wells), 372 & fn, 379
Scindia Steam Navigation Co., 436
Seman (Gonda), 140 & fn, 149, 154

Paliwal, S. K. Datt, 210
Palmer, G E, 356 & fn
Panchgani (Poona), 362, 382
Pande, Badri Dutt, 355 fn, 357 & *fn*, 371, 385
Pandit, Chandralekha, 387, 395, 396, 400, 411, 416, 419, 454, 471, 487
———, *Nayantara*, *353*, *387*, *395*, 400, 419, 455, 487
———, Ranjit, S., 343, 349-352, *359-361*, *365*, *370*, *374*, *379*, *395 fn-398*, *400*, *404*, *410*, *416*, *424*, *427 fn*, *428*, *441*, *455 & fn*, *466-468*, *470*, *471*, *477*, *485*, *486*, *492*
———, Rita, 353, 387, 395, 400, 419, 487
———, Sita Ram, 356 & fn, 383
———, Vijayalakshmi, 343, 350-352, 354, 359, 361, 365, 378, 380, 383, 394, 402, 404, 409-411, 413, 416, 417, 424, 432, 436, 439, 440, 450, 452, 454, 458, 462, 467, 471, 477, *481*, *485*, *492*
Pandri Ganeshpur (Rae Bareli), 130
Pant, Govind Ballabh, 42 fn, 55, 59, 63, 64, 106 & fn, 108, 112, 114 & fn, 167 fn, 359, 364, 369, 381, 384 & fn, 385, 387, 389, 401, 405, 479
———, Har Govind, 355 & *fn*, 356, 369
Paris, 416
Parkham (Mathura), 122, 129
Partabgarh (U P), 58 & fn
Pasha, Mustapha Nahas, 136 & fn
———, Madame Zaghlol, 136
Patel, S B, 324 & fn
———, Vallabhbhai, 3, 29, 31, 42, 45, 48, 50, 115, 123, 133, 134, 136, 152 & *fn*, *154*, *155*, *157 159*, *166*, 167, 176, 180, 183, 184 fn, 185, 189 & fn, 191, 197, 217, 226, 236 fn, 243 fn, 245 & fn, 249, 256, 260 & fn, 261, 263, 272 & fn, 274, 276, 277, 281 fn, 330, 331, 333 & fn, 349 & fn, 451 fn, 461, 476
———, *Vithalbhai*, 292
Patiala, Maharaja (Bhupindra Singh) of, 37 & *fn*, 43
Patna, *462*
Payagpur (Bahraich), 149
Peasants and Workers *Republic*, *189*
Peasants Relief Committee, 479 fn
Persia, 461
Peru, *477*
Peshawar, 49, 134, 258 & fn, 269 fn, 328, 480, 567, 572 & fn
Peter, the Great, *557 & fn*
Phaphamau (Allahabad), 354, 445
Philip II (Spain), 403 fn
Phulpur (Allahabad), 110, 117, 118, *145*
Pioneer, 29 & fn, 290 & fn, 334, 449, 453, 486, 506, 514 & fn, 515
Pipri (Unao), 97 fn
Plassey, *battle of*, *564*
Plato, 495
Poland, 557
Poona, 4, 181, 186, 289 fn, 352, 360, 362, 386, 394, 395, 397, 409, 410, 415, 416, 417 *fn*, 424, 436, 450, 452, 462, 465, 466, 481, 486-489, 492, 520, 521, 526, 530, 531, 538 fn, 540
Poona *Conference*, 486 *fn*, 488
Poona Pact, 299 fn
Port Said, 29
Power of Nonviolence (Richard Gregg), 359 fn
Prabha, 353, 379, 417, 481
Prag Dat, 346 & fn, 348
Prakash, *425*, *437*
Prasad, Chandrika, 540 & *fn*
———, Dwaraka, 360 & *fn*, 362
———, Jagdish, 30 & *fn*, 55 & fn, 56, 79, 96, 105, 106, 108, 109, 111, 115, 128, 133, 136, 143, 148, 156, 159, 160, 164, 169, 176, 329
———, Rajendra, 181, 273, 343
Prayag, *65*, *501*
Pritt, D N, 576 & *fn*
Progress and Poverty (Henry George), 359 & fn
Public Debt of India, 35 & fn
Punch, 43, 361
Punjab Political Conference, 294 fn, 295
Punjab Provincial Conference, 327
Punjab *Provincial Congress Committee*, 46
Pupils Own School (*Poona*), 417 *fn*
Puri, 50 & fn, 51, 181

Tehri, 480
Tewary—see Twary
Textile Mills Exemption Committee, 215 fn, 217 fn
Thailand, 114 fn
Thakur Das, Lala, 381 & *fn*, 382, 388
The Case for India (Will Durant), 318 fn
The Coming Struggle for Power (John Strachey), 476 fn
The Magic Mountain (Thomas Mann), 486
The Nature of Capitalist Crisis (John Strachey), 476 fn
Thengdi, D R, 275 & fn
The Pilgrim's Progress (John Bunyan), 494
The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind (H G Wells), 379 fn, 383
Third Afghan War, 508
Tilak, Bal Gangadhar, 466
Times Book Club, 383
Times of India, 18 fn, 23
Timur, 510 & fn
Tivary, Venkatesh Narain, 42 fn, 55, 73, 127, 164, 167 fn, 349, 352
Today, 182
Tolstoy, Leo, 510 fn
Trade Union Congress, 41, 286, 287 & fn, 324
Travancore, 480
Trebitsch—Lincoln, 350
Trichur, 216 fn
Trinidad, 114 fn
Trinity College (Cambridge), 370, 524 & fn
Trotsky, Leon, 519
Tyagi, Mahavir, 211 & *fn*

Udra (Bareilly), 132
Unao (U.P.), 19 fn, 97 & fn, 99, 181
United States of America, 41, 83, 253, 296, 359, 496, 497, 505, 507, 544 556, 557
Unity Conference, 243, 425 & fn, 432, 440 fn
Upadhyaya, S D, 343, 354, 368, 370, 394, 501
U.P. Government Rent and Revenue Committee, 30, 114, 125 & fn, 139 fn, 169
U P. Instigation and Emergency Powers Ordinance, 187 & fn, 190, 192, 239, 339,
U P. Provincial Conference, 181, 184, 190, 191 & fn
U.P Provincial Congress Committee, 19, 123, 131, 140, 142, 149, 158 159 & fn, 163, 164, 166-169, 173 175 fn, 176, 178, 180, 181, 183 185, 187, 188, 190, 191 fn, 193, 266, 334, 579, 580
———, Agrarian Committee, 42 & fn, 123, 173
Urvashi, 417 & fn
Utmanzai (*N W F P*), 262

Vaikom (Kerala), 216 fn
Vakil, Ira, 419 & fn
———, Jahangir, 399, 413, 415, 419 fn, 423
Varanasi, 186, 205, 228 231 & fn, 245 & fn, 321, 406 & fn, 423
Venice, 496
Venkatachari, A G., 546 & fn
Victoria, Queen, 564
Vidyarthi, Ganesh Shankar, 238, 241, 266, 281, 282
Vienna, 467
Visvabharati, 330

Wafd Party, 136 fn
Wall Street, 43
Washburne, Carleton, 438 & fn, 439 fn, 455
Wanchu, Ravi, 352 & fn
Wells, George Philip, 372 fn
———, H.G, 372 & fn, 379, 383
Willingdon, Lord, 9, 579
Wood, Evelyn, 456 & *fn*

Yeravda (Poona), 4, 361, 386, 408, 409, 451, 493, 555

Sen Gupta, J M, 31 & fn, 43, 134 fn, 274, 328 & fn, 489 & fn-491, 565
———, *Nellie*, 489 & *fn*, 490
Sen, Prafulla Chandra, 271 & *fn*
Seth, Damodar Swarup, 129 & fn, 175, 355, 365
Shah, K.T., 35 fn
Shahdara (Delhi), 381 fn
Shahjahanpur, 60
Shahpur (Pakistan), 44-45
Sharma, Balkrishna 'Navin', 384 & *fn*
Shastri, Devavrat, 553 fn
———, *Lal Bahadur*, *164 & fn*
———, Nardeva, 390 & fn
Shaw, G B, 38, 350, 383, 459, 553
Sheodarshanganj (Rae Bareli), 79
Sheogarh (Rae Bareli), 248 fn
Sheopuri (Bareilly), 132
Sherwani, T.A K, 18, 101, 114 & fn, 158, 159 & fn, 164, 165, 167 fn, 170, 174, 176 & fn, 180, 184 & fn, 185, 191, 310, 343 346, 349-351, 353, 356, 485, 580
Shibbu, 365, 366
Shukla, Pandit Badri, 160 & fn
Sidh Gopal, 59
Sikh League, 47
Simla, 8, 9 fn, 10 fn, 11, 21-23, 29 fn, 47, 105, 106, 118 fn, 210, 248, 316, 524 & fn, 536, 562-564
Simla Agreement, 27, 166 fn, 168, 176
Sind, 45, 47 fn, 425 & fn
Singh, Anand, 388 & fn, 401, 452, 454
———, Bhagwan Baksh, 113 fn
———, Thakur Bhaktawar, 132
———, C. Chattur, 254 & fn, 315
———, Dharm Pal, 132
———, Gajadhar, 163
———, Gopinath, 273 & *fn*
———, Kanhaiya Baksh, 117
———, Maharaj, 66
———, Matabhik, 110, 117
———, Narmada Prasad, 349 352
———, Prithvi Raj, 257 & fn
———, Rampal, 124 126, 128, 139, 170 & fn
———, Uday Bhan, 118
Sirathu (Allahabad), 145
Sircar, Nilratan, 377
Sitapur, 161 fn
Sitaramayya, Pattabhi, 242 & fn
Skrefsrud, Lars Olsen, 577 & *fn*
Slocombe, George, 30 & fn, 322, 323 fn
Social Reconstruction of Modern Societies (Bhagavan Das), 245 fn
Socrates, 497
Solon, 560 & *fn*
Somasundaram, S, 405, 436
Soraon (Allahabad), 57, 58, 75, 78, 103 & fn, 107, 110, 145
Soul of Malaya (H. Fauconmer), 379
South Africa, 43 fn, 277 fn, 297
South Sea Islands, 47
Spain, 403 *fn*
Srinagar, 467
Sri Narain, 130
Sri Prakasa, 321, 381, 521, 542
Srivastava, Sohanlal, 345, 349
Sri Vijaya, 461 & fn
Statesman, 321, 449, 453, 524 & fn, 560, 562 564
Stein, Aurel, 485 & fn
Story of Civilisation (Will Durant), 318 *fn*
Story of Philosophy (Will Durant), 319
St. Paul's Cathedral, 418
Strachey, John, 476 & *fn*
Suhrawardy, H S, 287 & *fn*, 288
Sulahpore (Allahabad), 81
Sullivan, Arthur, 526 fn
Sultanpur, 160 & fn, 165, 337, 338
Sumatra, 461 fn
Sunderlal, Pandit, 167, 245
Surajkunda (Rae Bareli), 119
Surat, 15 fn, 18 fn, 25 fn
Swadeshi Committee, 216
Swaraj Bhawan Trust, 135
Swaraj Party, 63
Switzerland, 444, 458
Syria, 477

Tagore, Rabindranath, 134 & fn, 397 fn, 499, 516, 526
Tanda (Fyzabad), 109
Tandon, Purushottamdas, 19 fn, 59, 65 fn, 66, 127, 158 & fn, 164, 167 fn, 344, 421 & fn, 479
Tankha, Kashi Naram, 410 & fn, 433

Young, Desmond, 514 & fn
Young India, 32 & fn, 97, 325
Zorulya, Efim, 458
Zutshi, Ladli Prasad, 364 fn, 368

Young, Desmond, 514 & fn
Young India, 32 & fn, 97, 325
Zorubja, Efim, 458
Zutshi, Ladli Prasad, 364 fn, 368

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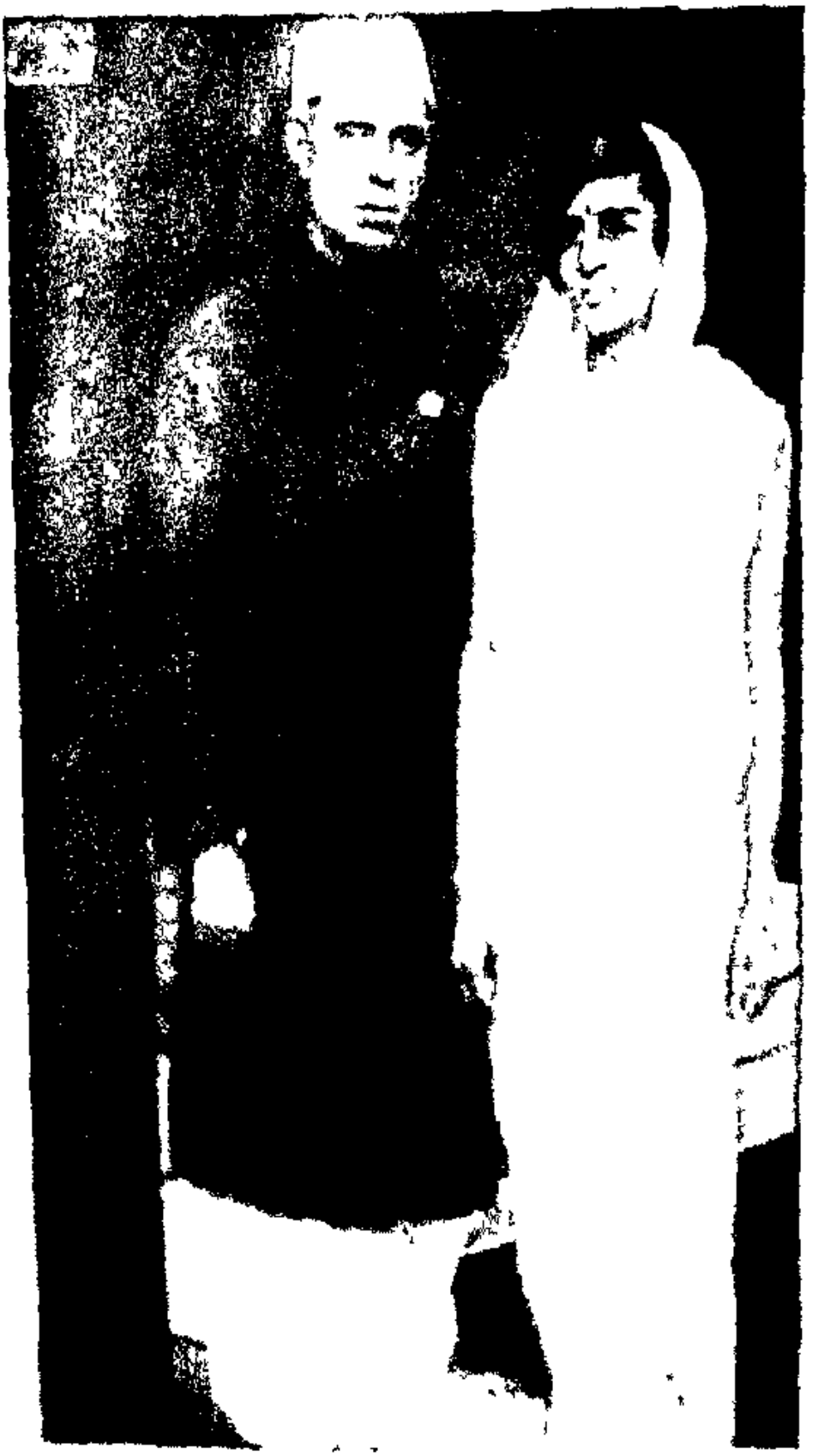

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FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps, outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling — these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of the East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles,

both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know *is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international* audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the 'third world' as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was *not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely* integrated human being.

Indira Gandhi.

New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

EDITORIAL NOTE

In October 1933, in his articles *Whither India?*, Jawaharlal Nehru analysed clearly the Indian situation and stressed the appropriateness of socialism as the goal. But in the following months the growing disintegration of the Congress organisation and the counterpart of increasing official repression made obvious that Jawaharlal Nehru's hopes lay very far in the future. He himself was arrested on 12 February 1934 immediately after his visit to various places in Bihar which had been devastated by an earthquake.

Jawaharlal Nehru remained in prison for over 18 months, till his release, because of his wife's illness, on 3 September 1935. The diaries maintained by him in these years and the letters he wrote at this time, reveal his distress with the trends of Congress policy and the seeming failure of Mahatma Gandhi's leadership as well as his concern with his wife's health.

A few letters which belong chronologically to earlier volumes but which were located after those volumes had been published have been included in an appendix.

Much of the material included in this volume has been selected from the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru. The cooperation extended by the Director and staff of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library is acknowledged.

The Maharashtra Government, the U.P. Government and the National Archives of India have kindly allowed us to utilise material in their possession. Letters and texts of speeches and statements published in *The Hindu, The Leader, The Hindustan Times, The Times of India, The Bombay Chronicle, The Tribune, Amrita Bazar Patrika, The Pioneer, The Searchlight, Advance, Visva Bharati Quarterly* and *Aaj* are reprinted with their consent. The Asia Publishing House has permitted the reprinting of two letters from *A Bunch of Old Letters.*

CONTENTS

1. Whither India?

1	Whither India?	9–11 October	1933	1
2	To Charles Mascarenhas	10 November	1933	17
3	Some Criticisms Considered	21 November	1933	18
4	Further Criticisms Considered	27 November	1933	27
5	To the Editor, The Pioneer	23 November	1933	31

2. Out of Prison

THE CONGRESS PROGRAMME

1	Exploitation of India	2 October	1933	35
2	To A.L. Simha	7 October	1933	40
3	To Asaf Ali	12 October	1933	42
4	To Nabakrushna Chaudhuri	15 October	1933	44
5	To H.K. Hales	17 October	1933	46
6	To Swami Govindananda	26 October	1933	47
7	To N.S. Hardikar	28 October	1933	49
8	To H.K. Hales	28 October	1933	49
9	To Secretary, Bikaner Political Case Committee	29 October	1933	51
10	To J.T. Gwynn	2 November	1933	52
11	To Kakalbhai Kothari	2 November	1933	58
12	On the Formation of the Democratic Swaraj Party	2 November	1933	58

13	To Mahatma Gandhi	8 November	1933	59
14	To K.F. Nariman	8 November	1933	61
15	To H.K. Hales	9 November	1933	62
16	On the Agreement with Lancashire Mills	9 November	1933	65
17	To K.R. Lucknidas	10 November	1933	66
18	On the Congress Programme	11 November	1933	67
19	To P. Nageswara Rao	14 November	1933	68
20	To Mahatma Gandhi	20 November	1933	68
21	To Roger Baldwin	23 November	1933	70
22	Interview to the Press	23 November	1933	72
23	To The Editor, Amrita Bazar Patrika	24 November	1933	73
24	To Members of the A.I.C.C.	24 November	1933	75
25	To Rev. Dan Singh Chowdhury	24 November	1933	77
26	To Rangildas M. Kapadia	24 November	1933	77
27	Speech to the Kanpur Swadeshi League	30 November	1933	78
28	Address to the Students of Kanpur	30 November	1933	79
29	To Lala Dunichand	2 December	1933	79
30	On the Repressive Policy of Government	5 December	1933	80
31	Interview at Allahabad	7 December	1933	80
32	Statement to the Press	16 December	1933	81
33	On Arrests of Congressmen in the U.P.	25 December	1933	81
34	Message to the Rajputana States' People's Convention	1 January	1934	83
35	To Sri Prakasa	11 January	1934	84
36	A Shadow Conference	11 January	1934	87
37	On Social and Village Uplift Work	12 January	1934	89
38	Interview to the Press	16 January	1934	89
39	The Character of the National Struggle	17 January	1934	91
40	The Futility of Terrorism and the Nature of the Mass Movement	18 January	1934	95
41	On Independence	26 January	1934	109

SOCIALISM AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

42	To T. Viswanatham	2 October	1933	110
43	To Bhagavan Das	2 October	1933	111
44	To Bagh Singh	2 October	1933	112
45	To Bhagavan Das	17 October	1933	113
46	To S. Ramanathan	21 October	1933	114
47	On Fascism and Democracy	28 October	1933	115
48	To R.W. Fulay	28 October	1933	116
49	Thirteen Years	28 October	1933	117
50	To Abdur Rahim	30 October	1933	118
51	Labour and the Congress	November	1933	119
52	To Arjun Arora	9 November	1933	121
53	To Bulaki Rama	24 November	1933	121
54	Civics and Politics	25 November	1933	122
55	The Civic Ideal	1 December	1933	123
56	To Onkar Nath Verma	2 December	1933	125
57	To Beltie Shah Gilani	3 December	1933	126
58	To Amar Kishor Sinha	8 December	1933	127
59	To Dinkar Mehta	9 December	1933	128
60	Speech at Delhi	12 December	1933	129
61	Speech at Aligarh Muslim University	15 December	1933	131
62	Fascism and Communism	18 December	1933	133
63	To M.R. Masani	19 December	1933	135
64	To Trade Union Congress	23 December	1933	137
65	To J.T. Gwynn	27 December	1933	138
66	On the Municipalisation of Services	29 December	1933	139
67	To E. Raghava Reddi	12 January	1934	140
68	Message to All India Textile Workers Conference	28 January	1934	141
69	To A.H. Khan	2 February	1934	142

OFFICIAL REPRESSION

70	M.N. Roy	17 October	1933	143
71	Statement on Fyzabad Prisoners	26 October	1933	145
72	On the Ill treatment of Fyzabad Prisoners	8 November	1933	145

73	To the Superintendent, District Jail, Allahabad	31 December	1933	147
74	To Purnima Banerji	11 January	1934	149
75	Earthquakes—Natural and Political	31 January	1934	151

THE COMMUNAL PROBLEM

76	To Mohammad Alam	29 October	1933	156
77	The Hindu Mahasabha and Communalism	12 November	1933	157
78	On His Criticism of the Hindu Mahasabha	21 November	1933	158
79	To Bhai Parmanand	26 November	1933	160
80	Hindu and Muslim Communalism	27 November	1933	161
81	To Mridula Sarabhai	1 December	1933	171
82	To S.A. Brelvi	3 December	1933	172
83	A Reply to Sir Mohammad Iqbal	11 December	1933	173
84	Statement to the Press	16 December	1933	179
85	Reality and Myth	5 January	1934	180

THE BIHAR EARTHQUAKE

86	Appeal for Relief	19 January	1934	186
87	A Report on Muzaffarpur	24 January	1934	186
88	Appeal for Contributions	24 January	1934	190
89	Advice on Contributions	29 January	1934	191
90	The Organization of the Allahabad Relief Fund	31 January	1934	192
91	On Conditions in Sitamarhi	6 February	1934	193
92	Conditions in North Bihar and Monghyr	10 February	1934	195
93	The Inefficiency of Official Relief	12 February	1934	196

MISCELLANEOUS

94	On the *Understanding of History*	8 October	1933	199

95	On the Death of Vithalbhai Patel	24 October	1933	201
96	To Mahatma Gandhi	27 October	1933	201
97	To Bharati Sarabhai	28 October	1933	203
98	To E.G. Nair	9 November	1933	204
99	To Gangadharrao Deshpande	9 November	1933	205
100	On Hindi Literature	12 November	1933	205
101	To Indira Nehru	14 November	1933	206
102	To Horace Alexander	20 November	1933	208
103	Rammohan Roy	23 November	1933	210
104	To Syed Mahmud	24 November	1933	211
105	To C.K. Narayanaswami	2 December	1933	212
106	To Indira Nehru	16 December	1933	213
107	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	25 December	1933	213
108	To Indira Nehru	1 January	1934	214
109	To Syed Mahmud	4 January	1934	214
110	To Indira Nehru	12 January	1934	215
111	To Indira Nehru	19 January	1934	216
112	Address to the Prayag Mahila Vidyapitha	20 January	1934	217
113	To Krishna Hutheesing	21 January	1934	221
114	To Indira Nehru	25 January	1934	222
115	To Indira Nehru	29 January	1934	223
116	Five Months and Thirteen Days—166 days		1934	223

3. Prison Diary with Letters
12 February 1934—12 August 1934

Prison Diary with Letters 227

4. On Parole
12 August 1934—23 August 1934

1	To Mahatma Gandhi	13 August	1934	277
2	Statement to the Press	18 August	1934	283

3	To Jairamdas Doulatram	19 August	1934	284
4	To Sampurnanand	22 August	1934	285

5. Prison Diary with Letters
23 August 1934—3 September 1935

Prison Diary with Letters 289

6. Articles Written in Prison

1	Foreword to Rajatarangini	28 June	1934	431
2	The Past and the Present	August	1934	434
3	Our Literature	28 July	1935	439
4	Literature in Hindi and in Other Languages	29 July	1935	442
5	The Meaning of Words	1 August	1935	445
6	Bhai Parmanand and Swaraj	6 August	1935	450
7	Two Mosques	7 August	1935	456
8	Quetta	19 August	1935	462
9	The *Solidarity of Islam*	20 August	1935	468
10	His Highness the Aga Khan	21 August	1935	470
11	Orthodox of All Religions, United	23 August	1935	474
12	The Mind of a Judge	1 September	1935	479

Appendix

1	To S. Srinivasa Iyengar	20 November	1926	491
2	To Indira Nehru	23 January	1933	496
3	To Indira Nehru	7 February	1933	498
4	To Indira Nehru	21 February	1933	500
5	To Indira Nehru	2 May	1933	502
6	To Indira Nehru	16 May	1933	503
7	To Indira Nehru	1 August	1933	506

ILLUSTRATIONS

Probably the last photograph taken with Kamala *frontispiece*

Addressing a meeting at Banaras, November, 1933

Earthquake relief operation in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, 22 January 1934 *between pp.* 160—161

The Bihar earthquake: photograph taken by Jawaharlal

The Bihar earthquake; photograph taken by Jawaharlal 208—209

Talking to students at Santiniketan, January, 1934

A page from the jail diary 352—353

1

WHITHER INDIA?

1. Whither India?[1]

The newcomer from prison has long been cut off from the rough and tumble of life and politics, and yet he has a certain advantage on his side. He can take a more detached view; he is not so much wrapped up in the controversies of the moment; he may be able to stress principles when others argue about petty tactics; he may actually see the realities under the surface of ever-changing phenomena.

Many people ask: What are we to do? The mouths of most of those who could answer, or help in framing the answer, are shut either in prison or outside. But free advice, often accompanied by threats, comes to us in an unending stream from those who rule us and their faithful followers in this land. They warn us and threaten us and cajole us and offer us good advice by turns, anxious to influence us and yet uncertain of the right approach to us. Let us leave them and their advice for the moment; such gifts, even when free, are apt to be suspect.

Right action cannot come out of nothing; it must be preceded by thought. Thought which is not meant to lead to action has been called an abortion; action which is not based on thought is chaos and confusion. It is worthwhile therefore to clear our minds of all the tangled webs that may have grown there, to forget for the moment the immediate problems before us, the difficult knots we have to unravel, the day to day worries, and go back a little to basic facts and principles. What exactly do we want? And why do we want it?

I write with diffidence because I have for long been cut off from the nationalist press, but I have a feeling that little attention is paid to these basic facts and principles. The censorship may be partly to blame for this, or the fear of it, but even that, I think, is not a sufficient explanation. Attention seems to be concentrated on the most trivial of issues and vital matters are ignored. Should Gandhiji see the Viceroy or not?[2] Will Stanley Baldwin triumph over Winston Churchill?[3]

1. Published as a series of articles in the Indian press on 9, 10 and 11 October 1933 and later reprinted as a pamphlet along with *post* items, 3 and 4.
2. After his release, Mahatma Gandhi said that he desired to meet the Viceroy 'to explore avenues of peace'.
3. Churchill was a strong critic of Baldwin's India policy and this became an issue in the contest for leadership in the Conservative Party.

What has Sir Samuel Hoare said or not said?[4] Are we going to get that wonderful thing called "Central Responsibility" or not? Hardly a reference to what we are driving at, hardly a thought of real issues.

Never in the long range of history has the world been in such a state of flux as it is today. Never has there been so much anxious questioning, so much doubt and bewilderment, so much examining of old institutions, existing ills and suggested remedies. There is a continuous process of change and revolution going on all over the world, and everywhere anxious statesmen are almost at their wits' end and grope about in the dark. It is obvious that we are a part of this great world problem and must be affected by world events. And yet, judging from the attention paid to these events in India, one would not think so. Major events are recorded in the news columns of papers but little attempt is made to see behind and beneath them, to understand the forces that are shaking and reforming the world before our eyes, to comprehend the essential nature of social, economic and political reality. History, whether past or present, becomes just a magic show with little rhyme or reason, and with no lesson for us which might guide our future path. On the gaily-decked official stage of India or England phantom figures come and go, posing for a while as great statesmen; Round Tablers flit about like pale shadows of those who created them, engaged in pitiful and interminable talk which interests few and affects an even smaller number. Their main concern is how to save the vested interests of various classes or groups; their main diversion, apart from feasting, is self-praise. Others, blissfully ignorant of all that has happened in the last half a century, still talk the jargon of the Victorian Age and are surprised and resentful that nobody listens to them. Even the nasmyth hammer of war and revolution and world change has failed to produce the slightest dent on their remarkably hard heads. Yet others hide vested interests under cover of communalism or even nationalism. And then there is the vague but passionate nationalism of many who find present conditions intolerable and hunger for national freedom without clearly realising what form that freedom will take. And there are also here, as in many other countries, the usual accompaniments of a growing nationalism—an idealism, a mysticism, a feeling of exaltation, a belief in the mission

4 The Secretary of State for India, Sir Samuel Hoare, said in the House of Commons that the government had no intention of negotiating with the Congress. He added, "...I repeat that there can be no question of making a bargain with the Congress as a condition for their accepting the ordinary obligations of law abiding citizens."

of one's country, and something of the nature of religious revivalism. Essentially all these are middle class phenomena.

Our politics must either be those of magic or of science. The former of course requires no argument or logic; the latter is in theory at least entirely based on clarity of thought and reasoning and has no room for vague idealistic or religious or sentimental processes which confuse and befog the mind. Personally, I have no faith in or use for the ways of magic and religion and I can only consider the question on scientific grounds.

What then are we driving at? Freedom? Swaraj? Independence?. Dominion Status? Words which may mean much or little or nothing at all. Egypt is 'independent' and yet, as everybody knows, it is at present little better than an Indian state, an autocracy imposed upon an unwilling people and propped up by the British. Economically, Egypt is a colony of some of the European imperialist Powers, notably the British Ever since the World War there has been continuous conflict between Egyptian nationalism and the ruling authorities and this continues today. So in spite of a so-called 'independence' Egypt is very far from even national freedom.

Again, whose freedom are we particularly striving for, for nationalism covers many sins and includes many a conflicting element? There is the feudal India of the princes, the India of the big zamindars, or small zamindars, of the professional classes, of the agriculturists, of the industrialists, of the bankers, of the lower middle class, of the workers. There are the interests of foreign capital and those of home capital, of foreign services and home services. The nationalist answer is to prefer home interests to foreign interests but beyond that it does not go. It tries to avoid disturbing the class divisions or the social *status quo*. It imagines that the various interests will somehow be accommodated when the country is free. Being essentially a middle class movement, nationalism works chiefly in the interests of that class. It is obvious that there are serious conflicts between various interests, in a country, and every law, every policy which is good for one interest may be harmful for another. What is good for the Indian prince may be thoroughly bad for the people of his state, what is profitable for the zamindar may ruin many of his tenants, what is demanded by foreign capital may crush the rising industries of the country.

Nothing is more absurd than to imagine that all the interests in the nation can be fitted in without injury to any. At every step some have to be sacrificed for others. A currency policy may be good for creditors or debtors, not for both at the same time. Inflation, resulting in a reduction or even wiping off of debts, will be welcomed by all debtors

and by industry as a rule, but cursed by bankers and those who have fixed incomes. Early in the nineteenth century, England deliberately sacrificed her agriculture for her rising industry. A few years ago, in 1923, by insisting on keeping the value of the pound sterling at par she sacrificed, to some extent, her industry to her banking and financial system, and faced industrial troubles and a huge general strike.[5]

Any number of such instances can be given, they deal with the rival claims of different groups of the possessing classes. A more vital conflict of interest arises between these possessing classes as a whole and the others; between the 'haves' and 'have-nots'. All this is obvious enough, but every effort is made to confuse the real issue by the holders of power, whether political or economic. The British Government is continually declaring before high heaven that they are trustees for our masses and India and England have common interests and can march hand in hand to a common destiny. Few people are taken in by this because nationalism makes us realise the inherent conflict between the two national interests. But nationalism does not make us realise the equally inherent and fundamental conflict between economic interests within the nation. There is an attempt to cover this up and avoid it on the ground that the national issue must be settled first. Appeals are issued for unity between different classes and groups to face the common national foe, and those who point out the inherent conflict between landlord and tenant, or capitalist and wage labourer are criticised

We may take it that the average person does not like conflict and continuous tension; he prefers peace and quiet, and is even prepared to sacrifice much for it. But the ostrich-like policy of refusing to see a conflict and a disorder which not only exist but are eating into society's vitals, to blind oneself to reality, will not end the conflict and the disorder or suddenly change reality into unreality; for a politician or a man of action such a policy can only end in disaster. It is therefore essential that we keep this in mind and fashion our idea of freedom accordingly. We cannot escape having to answer the question, now or later: for the freedom of which class or classes in India are we especially striving for? Do we place the masses, the peasantry and the workers first, or some other small class at the head of our list? Let

5 After the war the British Government adopted a deflationary policy to protect the value of the pound sterling In 1923, the attempts of Baldwin's government to introduce a protective tariff to help British industries were foiled by the bankers and the financiers and this led to labour unrest and unemployment.

us give the benefits of freedom to as many groups and classes as possible, but essentially whom do we stand for, and when a conflict arises whose side must we take? To say that we shall not answer that question now is itself an answer and taking of sides, for it means that we stand by the existing order, the *status quo*.

The form of government is after all a means to an end; even freedom itself is a means, the end being human well being, human growth, the end of poverty and disease and suffering and the opportunity for everyone to live the "good life", physically and mentally. What the "good life" is, is a matter we cannot go into here, but most people will agree that freedom is essential to it—national freedom so far as the nation is concerned, personal freedom so far as the individual is concerned. For every restriction and inhibition stops growth and development and produces, apart from economic disorders, complexes and perversions in the nation and individual. So freedom is necessary. Equally necessary is the will and the capacity for cooperation. Modern life grows so complex, there is so much interdependence, that cooperation is the very breath that keeps it functioning.

The long course of history shows us a succession of different forms of government and changing economic forms of production and organisation. The two fit in and shape and influence each other. When economic change goes ahead too fast and the forms of government remain more or less static, a hiatus occurs, which is usually bridged over by a sudden change called revolution. The tremendous importance of economic events in shaping history and forms of government is almost universally admitted now.

We are often told that there is a world of difference between the East and the West. The West is said to be materialistic, the East spiritual, religious etc. What exactly the East signifies is seldom indicated, for the East includes the Bedouins of the Arabian deserts, the Hindus of India, the nomads of the Siberian steppes, the pastoral tribes of Mongolia, the typically irreligious Confucians of China, and the Samurai of Japan. There are tremendous national and cultural differences between the different countries of Asia as well as of Europe; but there is no such thing as East and West except in the minds of those who wish to make this an excuse for imperialist domination, or those who have inherited such myths and fictions from a confused metaphysical past. Differences there are but they are chiefly due to different stages of economic growth.

We see, in north-western Europe, autocracy and feudalism giving place to the present capitalist order involving competition and large scale production. The old small holdings disappear; the feudal checks

on the serfs and cultivators go, and these agriculturists are also deprived of the little land they had. Large numbers of landless people are thrown out of employment and they have no land to fall back upon. A landless, propertyless proletariat is thus created. At the same time the checks and the controlled prices of the limited market of feudal times disappear, and the open market appears. Ultimately this leads to the world market, the characteristic feature of capitalism.

Capitalism builds up on the basis of the landless proletariat, which could be employed as wage labourers in the factories and the open market, where the machine-made goods could be sold. It grows rapidly and spreads all over the world. In the producing countries it was an active and living capitalism; in the colonial and consuming countries it was just a passive consumption of the goods made by machine industry in the West. North western Europe, and a little later, North America, exploit the resources of the world, they exploit Asia, Africa, East Europe and South America. They add vastly to the wealth of the world but this wealth is largely concentrated in a few nations and a few hands.

In this growth of capitalism, dominion over India was of vital importance to England. India's gold, in the early stages, helped in the further industrialisation of England. And then India became a great producer of raw material to feed the factories of England and a huge market to consume the goods made in these factories. England, in her passionate desire to accumulate wealth, sacrificed her agriculture to her industry. England became almost a kind of vast city and India the rural area attached to her.

The concentration of wealth in fewer hands went on. But the exploitation of India and other countries brought so much wealth to England that some of it trickled down to the working class and their standards of living rose Working class agitations were controlled and soothed by concessions from the capitalist owners, which they could well afford from the profits of imperialist exploitation. Wages rose; hours of work went down; there were insurance and other welfare schemes for the workers. A general prosperity in England took the edge off working class discontent.

In India, passive industrialisation meant an ever growing burden on land. She became just a consumer of foreign machine made goods. Her own cottage industries were partly destroyed forcibly, and partly by economic forces, and nothing took their place. All the ingredients and conditions for industrialisation were present, but England did not encourage this, and indeed tried to prevent it by taxing machinery.

And so the burden on the land grew and with it unemployment and poverty, and there was a progressive ruralisation of India.

But the process of history and economics cannot be stopped for long. Although general poverty was increasing, small groups accumulated some capital and wanted fields for investment. And so machine industry grew in India, partly with Indian capital, very much more so with foreign capital. Indian capital was largely dependent on foreign capital and, in particular, could be controlled by the foreign banking system. It is well known that the World War gave a great push to Indian industry and afterwards, for reasons of imperial policy, England changed her policy towards Indian industry and began to encourage it, but mostly with foreign capital. The growth of so-called *swadeshi* industries in India thus represented, to a very great extent, the increasing hold of British capital on India.

The growth of industries and nationalist movements in all the countries of the East checked Western exploitation and the profits of Western capitalism began to go down. War debts and other consequences of the war were a tremendous burden for all the countries concerned. There was not so much money or profits of industry to be distributed to the working class in the West, and the discontent and pressure of the workers grew. There was also the living incentive and inspiration of the Russian Revolution for the workers.

Meanwhile two other processes were working silently but with great rapidity. One was the concentration of wealth and industrial power in fewer hands by the formation of huge trusts, cartels, and combines. The other was a continuous improvement in technique in the methods of production, leading to greater mechanisation, far greater production, and more unemployment as workers were replaced by machinery. And this led to a curious result. Just when industry was producing goods on the biggest mass scale in history, there were few people to buy them as the great majority were too poor to be able to afford them. The armies of the unemployed were not earning anything, so how could they spend? And even the majority of those earning had little to spare. A new truth suddenly dawned on the perplexed minds of the great captains of industry (this dawning process has not yet taken place among the leaders of industry in India), and the truth was this: that mass production necessitates mass consumption. But if the masses have no money how are they to buy or consume? And what of production then? So production is stopped or restricted and the wheels of industry slow down till they barely move. Unemployment grows all the more and this again makes consumption diminish.

This is the crisis of capitalism which has had the world by the throat for over four years. Essentially it is due to the ill-distribution of the world's wealth, to its concentration in a few hands. And the disease seems to be of the essence of capitalism and grows with it till it eats and destroys the very system which created it. There is no lack of money in the world, no lack of food stuffs, or the many other things that man requires. The world is richer today than it has ever been and holds promise of untold advance in the near future. And yet the system breaks down and while millions starve and endure privation, huge quantities of food stuffs and other articles are destroyed, insect pests are let loose on the fields to destroy crops, harvests are not gathered, and nations meet together to confer how to restrict future crops of wheat and cotton and tea and coffee and so many other articles From the beginning of history man has fought with nature to get the barest necessities of life, and now that nature's wealth is poured out before him, enough to remove poverty forever from the world, his only way of dealing with it is to burn and destroy it, and become poorer and more destitute in the process.

History has never offered a more amazing paradox. It seems clear enough that the capitalist system of industry, whatever its services in the past may have been, is no longer suited to the present methods of production. Technical advance has gone far ahead of the existing social structure and, as in the past, this hiatus causes most of our present-day disorders. Till that lag is made up and a new system in keeping with the new technique is adopted, the disorders are likely to continue. The change-over to the new system is of course opposed by those who have vested interests in the old system and though this old system is dying before their eyes, they prefer to hold on to their little rather than share a lot with others.

It is not, fundamentally, a moral issue, as some people imagine, although there is a moral side to it. It is not a question of blaming capitalism or cursing capitalists and the like. Capitalism has been of the greatest service to the world and individual capitalists are but tiny wheels in the big machine. The question now is whether the capitalist system has not outlived its day and must now give place to a better and a saner ordering of human affairs, which is more in keeping with the progress of science and human knowledge.

In India, during this period, the tremendous burden on land continued and even increased, despite the growth of industry in certain areas. Economic discontent increased. The middle classes grew up, and finding no sufficient scope for self-development, demanded political changes and took to agitation. More or less similar causes worked all

over the colonial and dependent East. Especially after the war, national movements grew rapidly in Egypt and most of the countries of Asia. These movements were essentially due to the distress of the masses and the lower middle classes. There was a strange similarity even in the methods employed by these movements—noncooperation, boycotts of legislatures, boycotts of goods, hartals, strikes, etc. Occasionally there were violent outbreaks, as in Egypt and Syria, but stress was laid far more on peaceful methods. In India, of course, nonviolence was made a basic principle by the Congress at the suggestion of Gandhiji. All these national struggles for freedom have continued till now and they are bound to continue till a solution of the basic problem is found. Fundamentally, this solution is not merely a question of satisfying the natural desire for self-rule but one of filling hungry stomachs.

The great revolutionary nationalist urge in Asia of the after-war years gradually exhausted itself for the time being and conditions stabilised themselves. In India this took the form of the Swarajist entry into the Assembly and the Councils. In Europe also the middle nineteen-twenties was a period of settling down and adaptation to the new conditions created by the World War. The revolution that had hovered all over Europe in 1919 and 1920 failed to come off and receded into the background. American gold poured into Europe and revived to some extent the war-weary and disillusioned peoples of that continent and created a false appearance of prosperity. But this prosperity had no real basis and the crash came in 1929 when the United States of America stopped lending money to Europe and South America. Many factors, and especially the inherent conflicts of a declining capitalism, contributed to this crash, and the house of cards of after war capitalist prosperity began to tumble down. That process of tumbling down has been going on at a tremendous pace for four years and there is no end to it yet. It is called the slump, trade depression, the crisis, etc., but it is really the evening of the capitalist system and the world is being compelled by circumstances to recognise this. International cooperation has failed, the world market which was the essential basis of capitalism is disappearing, and each nation is trying frantically to shift for itself at the cost of others. Whatever the future may bring, one thing is certain: that the old order has gone and all the king's horses and all the king's men will not set it up again.

As the old capitalist order has tottered, the challenge to it by the growing forces of labour has grown more intense. This challenge, when it has become dangerous, has induced the possessing classes to sink their petty differences and band themselves together to fight the common foe. This has led to fascism and, in its milder forms, to the formation

of so-called national governments. Essentially, these are the last ditch efforts of the possessing classes, or the "kept classes" as they have been called by an American economist, to hold on to what they have. The struggle becomes more intense and the forms of nineteenth century democracy are discarded. But fascism or national governments offer no solution to the fundamental economic inconsistencies of the present-day capitalist system and so long as they do not remove the inequalities of wealth and solve the problem of distribution, they are doomed to fail. Of the major capitalist countries the United States of America is the only place where some attempt is being made today towards lessening, to a slight extent, inequalities of wealth by state action. Carried to a logical conclusion, President Roosevelt's programme[6] will lead to a form of state socialism; it is far more likely that the effort will fail and result in fascism. England, as is her habit, is grimly muddling through and waiting for something to happen. Meanwhile she has derived considerable help from India's gold resources. But all this is temporary relief only and the nations slide downhill and approach the brink.

Thus, if we survey the world today, we find that capitalism, having solved the problem of production, helplessly faces the allied problem of distribution and is unable to solve it. It was not in the nature of the capitalist system to deal satisfactorily with distribution, and production alone makes the world top-heavy and unbalanced. To find a solution for distributing wealth and purchasing power evenly is to put an end to the basic inequalities of the capitalist system and to replace capitalism itself by a more scientific system.

Capitalism has led to imperialism and to the conflicts of imperialist Powers in search for colonial areas for exploitation, for areas of raw produce and for markets for manufactured goods. It has led to ever increasing conflicts with the rising nationalism of colonial countries, and to social conflicts with powerful movements of the exploited working class. It has resulted in recurrent crises, political and economic, leading to economic and tariff wars as well as political wars on an enormous scale. Every subsequent crisis is on a bigger scale than the previous one, and now we live in a perpetual state of crisis and slump and the shadow of war darkens the horizon.

And yet it is well to remember that the world today has a surfeit of food and the other good things of life. Terrible want exists because the

6 Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882-1945), Democrat President of the U.S.A., 1933-45. The New Deal programme tried to increase production, create employment and stabilise prices.

present system does not know how to distribute them. Repeated international conferences have failed to find a way out because they represented the interests of vested interests and dared not touch the system itself. They grope blindly in the dark in their stuffy rooms while the foundations of the house they built are being sapped by the advance of science and economic events. Everywhere thinkers have recognised the utter inadequacy of the existing system, though they have differed as to the remedies. Communists and socialists point with confidence to the way of socialism and they are an ever growing power for they have science and logic on their side. In America a great stir was caused recently by the technocrats, a group of engineers who want to do away with money itself and to substitute for it a unit of energy, an erg. In England the social credit theories of Major Douglas,[7] according to which the whole production of the nation will be evenly distributed to the whole population—a kind of "dividends for all"—find increasing acceptance. Barter takes the place of trade both in the domestic and the international market. The growth of these revolutionary theories even among the well-to-do classes, and especially the intellectuals, is in itself an indication of the tremendous change in the mentality that is taking place in the world. How many of us can conceive a world without money and with the invisible erg as its measure of value? And yet this is soberly and earnestly advocated not by wild agitators but by well known economists and engineers.

This is the world background.

The Asiatic background is intimately related to this and yet it has its peculiar features. Asia is the main field of conflict between nationalism and imperialism. Asia is still undeveloped as compared to Europe and North America. It has a vast population which can consume goods if they had the necessary purchasing power to do so. To the hard pressed imperialist Powers seeking frantically for areas of economic expansion, Asia still offers a field, though nationalism offers many obstructions. Hence the talk of a "push to Asia" to find an outlet for the surplus goods of the West and thus stabilise Western capitalism for another period. Capitalism is a young and growing force in the East; it has not, as in India, wholly overthrown feudalism yet. But even before capitalism had established itself, other forces, inimical to it, have risen

7. Clifford Hugh Douglas (1879-1952), British engineer and social economist who formulated the theory of social credit. This held that economic depressions were caused by maldistribution due to insufficient purchasing power. It proposed the redistribution of purchasing power by issuing dividends to every citizen

to challenge it. And it is obvious that if capitalism collapses in Europe and America it cannot survive in Asia.

Nationalism is still the strongest force in Asia (we can ignore for our present purpose the Soviet territories of Asia). This is natural as a country under alien domination must inevitably think first in terms of nationalism. But the powerful economic forces working for change in the world today have influenced this nationalism to an ever increasing extent and everywhere it is appearing in socialist garb. Gradually the nationalist struggle for political freedom is becoming a social struggle also for economic freedom. Independence and the socialist state become the objectives, with varying degrees of stress being laid on the two aspects of the problem. As political freedom is delayed, the other aspect assumes greater importance, and it now seems probable, especially because of world conditions, that political and social emancipation will come together to some at least of the countries of Asia.

This is the Asiatic background.

In India, as in other Asiatic colonial countries, we find a struggle today between the old nationalist ideology and the new economic ideology. Most of us have grown up under the nationalist tradition and it is hard to give up the mental habits of a lifetime. And yet we realise that this outlook is inadequate, it does not fit in with existing conditions in our country or in the world; there is a hiatus, a lag. We try to bridge this hiatus but the process of crossing over to a new ideology is always a painful one. Many of us are confused and perplexed today because of this. But the crossing has to be made, unless we are to remain in a stagnant backwater, overwhelmed from time to time by the wash of the boats that move down the river of progress. We must realise that the nineteenth century cannot solve the problems of the twentieth, much less can the seventh century or earlier ages do so.

Having glanced at the general background of Asia and the world we can have a clearer view of our own national problem. India's freedom affects each one of us intimately and we are apt to look upon it as a thing apart and unconnected with world events. But the Indian problem is a part of the Asiatic problem and is tied up with the problems of the world. We cannot, even if we will it, separate it from the rest. What happens in India will affect the world and world events will change India's future. Indeed it may be said that the three great world problems today are: the fate of capitalism, which means the fate of Europe and America, the future of India, and the future of China, and all these are interrelated.

India's struggle today is part of the great struggle which is going on all over the world for the emancipation of the oppressed. Essentially,

this is an economic struggle, with hunger and want as its driving forces, although it puts on nationalist and other dresses.

Indian freedom is necessary because the burden on the Indian masses as well as the middle classes is too heavy to be borne and must be lightened or done away with. The measure of freedom is the extent to which this burden is removed. This burden is due to the vested interests of a foreign government as well as those of certain groups and classes in India and abroad. The achievement of freedom thus becomes a question, as Gandhiji said recently, of divesting vested interests.[8] If an indigenous government took the place of the foreign government and kept all the vested interests intact, this would not even be the shadow of freedom.

We have got into an extraordinary habit of thinking of freedom in terms of paper constitutions. Nothing could be more absurd than this lawyer's mentality which ignores life and the vital economic issues and can only proceed on the basis of the *status quo* and precedents. Too much reliance on past practice has somehow succeeded in twisting the lawyer's head backwards and he seems to be incapable of looking ahead. Even the halt and the lame go slowly forward, not so the lawyer who is convinced, like the fanatic in religion, that truth can only lie in the past.

The Round Table scheme is almost as dead as Queen Anne and hardly deserves notice. It was not meant to give an iota of freedom to the Indian people; it sought to win over certain Indian vested interests to the British side and in this it succeeded. It answered, to the satisfaction of its votaries, the question I had formulated at the beginning of this essay: whose freedom are we striving for? It gave greater protection and assurance and freedom to the British vested interests in India. It was Home Rule for the Viceroy as Mr. Vithalbhai Patel said. It confirmed the interests of British capital and British services and, in some cases, gave them even more than they have now. It tried to perpetuate the alien military occupation of India. Further, it gave greater freedom and importance to the vested interests of the princes and the semi-feudal magnates. In brief, the whole scheme was meant for the protection and perpetuation of the numerous vested interests that exploit the Indian masses. Having done this useful and, to themselves, profitable piece of work, the originators of the scheme

8 In his letter of 14 September 1933, Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Jawaharlal, "I am also in whole-hearted agreement with you, when you say that without a material revision of the vested interests the condition of the masses can never be improved."

told us that autonomy was a costly affair and would mean the expenditure of many millions for each province! Thus not only were all the old burdens on the masses to be continued but many new ones were to be added. This was the ingenious solution discovered by the wise and learned men who foregathered at the Round Table Conference. Intent on protecting their class privileges they happened to forget an odd three hundred and fifty million people in India.

Even a child in politics can point out the folly of this procedure. The whole basis and urge of the national movement came from a desire for economic betterment, to throw off the burdens that crushed the masses and to end the exploitation of the Indian people. If these burdens continue and are actually added to, it does not require a powerful mind to realise that the fight must not only continue but grow more intense. Leaders and individuals may come and go; and they may get tired and slacken off; they may compromise or betray; but the exploited and suffering masses must carry on the struggle for their drill-sergeant is hunger. Swaraj or freedom from exploitation for them is not a fine paper constitution or a problem of the hereafter. It is a question of the here and now, of immediate relief. Roast lamb and mint sauce may be a tasty dish for those who eat it but the poor lamb is not likely to appreciate the force of the best of arguments which point out the beauty of sacrifice for the good of the elect and the joys of close communion, even though dead, with mint sauce.

India's immediate goal can therefore only be considered in terms of the ending of exploitation of her people. Politically, it must mean independence and the severance of the British connection, which means imperialist dominion; economically and socially it must mean the ending of all special class privileges and vested interests. The whole world is struggling to this end, India can do no less, and in this way the Indian struggle for freedom lines up with the world struggle. Is our aim human welfare or the preservation of class privileges and the vested interests of pampered groups? The question must be answered clearly and unequivocally by each one of us. There is no room for quibbling when the fate of nations and millions of human beings is at stake The day for palace intrigues and parlour politics and pacts and compromises passes when the masses enter politics. Their manners are not those of the drawing room, we never took the trouble to teach them any manners. Their school is the school of events and suffering is their teacher. They learn their politics from great movements which bring out the true nature of individuals and classes, and the civil disobedience movement has taught the Indian masses many a lesson which they will never forget.

Independence is a much abused word and it hardly connotes what we are driving at. And yet there is no other suitable word and, for want of a better, we must use it. National isolation is neither a desirable nor a possible idea in a world which is daily becoming more of a unit. International and intra national activities dominate the world and nations are growing more and more interdependent. Our ideal and objective cannot go against this historical tendency and we must be prepared to discard a narrow nationalism in favour of world cooperation and real internationalism. Independence therefore cannot mean for us isolation but freedom from all imperialist control, and because Britain today represents imperialism, our freedom can only come after the British connection is severed. We have no quarrel with the British people, but between British imperialism and Indian freedom there is no meeting ground and there can be no peace. If imperialism goes from Britain we shall gladly cooperate with her in the wider international field, not otherwise.

British statesmen of the Liberal and Labour variety often point out to us the ills of a narrow nationalism and dwell on the virtues of what used to be known as the British Empire and is now euphemistically called the British Commonwealth of Nations. Under cover of fine and radical words and phrases they seek to hide the ugly and brutal face of imperialism and try to keep us in its embrace of death. Some Indian public men, who ought to know better, also praise the virtues of internationalism, meaning thereby the British Empire, and tell us in sorrow how narrow minded we are in demanding independence, in place of that wonderful thing (which nobody offers us) Dominion Status. The British, it is well known, have a remarkable capacity for combining their moral instincts with their self interest. That is perhaps not un natural, but it is remarkable how some of our own countrymen are taken in by this unctuous and hypocritical attitude. Even the light of day is wasted on those who keep their eyes shut. It is worth noting however that the foreign policy of England has been the greatest stumbling block to international cooperation through the League of Nations or otherwise. All the European and American world knows this but most of us, who look at foreign politics through English spectacles, have not grasped this fact yet. Disarmament, air bombing, the attitude to the Manchurian question,* are some of the recent

9 Japanese troops, guarding the South Manchurian Railway in accordance with treaty rights, used an explosion on the railway as an excuse for seizing the city of Mukden (18 September 1931) Within five months, despite the condemnation of the Great Powers and in defiance of the League of Nations, the Japanese had established control over the whole of Manchuria.

witnesses to England's attitude. Even the Kellogg Briand Pact of Paris, which was to have outlawed war, was only accepted by England subject to certain qualifications and reservations regarding her empire, which effectively nullified the pact. The British Empire and real internationalism are as the poles apart and it is not through that empire that we can march to internationalism.

The real question before us, and before the whole world, is one of fundamental change of regime, politically, economically, socially. Only thus can we put India on the road to progress and stop the progressive deterioration of our country. In a revolutionary period, such as exists in the world today, it is foolish waste of energy to think and act in terms of carrying on the existing regime and trying to reform it and improve it. To do so is to waste the opportunity which history offers once in a long while. "The whole world is in revolution" says Mussolini. "Events themselves are a tremendous force pushing us on like some implacable will." Individuals, however eminent, play but a minor role when the world is on the move. They may divert the main current here and there to some slight extent; they may not and cannot stop the rushing torrent. And therefore the only peace that can endure is with circumstances, not merely with men.

Whither India? Surely to the great human goal of social and economic equality, to the ending of all exploitation of nation by nation and class by class, to national freedom within the framework of an international cooperative socialist world federation. This is not such an empty idealist dream as some people imagine. It is within the range of the practical politics of today and the near future. We may not have it within our grasp but those with vision can see it emerging on the horizon. And even if there be delay in the realisation of our goal, what does it matter if our steps march in the right direction and our eyes look steadily in front. For in the pursuit itself of a mighty purpose there is joy and happiness and a measure of achievement. As Bernard Shaw has said: "This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of nature, instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy."

2. To Charles Mascarenhas[1]

Allahabad
November 10, 1933

Dear Comrade,[2]

I have just received your letter. I would gladly have agreed to your publication of my articles entitled *Whither India?* But I have already given the publication rights to a firm here and they have issued them in pamphlet form. These articles are also coming out very soon in Hindi and Urdu and, a little later, probably in Bengali and Marathi. If you would care to bring them out in Gujarati you can do so.

I am sending you two copies of the pamphlet. Should you desire more, please communicate with Kitabistan, City Road, Allahabad. If you wish to have any considerable number of copies some special terms could be arranged with Kitabistan.

It was my desire to write some more articles partly to answer criticism and partly to continue the argument but I have had no time so far. Perhaps I may do so yet. But criticism on the whole has been singularly pointless. On the one side there is the purely nationalist criticism which does not even try to understand the argument; on the other side it is pointed out that I do not go far enough and that I avoid the implications of what I say. Further I am personally denounced for my contradictions. The critics forget that I write for an audience which is not used to these ideas and to technical terms. Further that I have to carry the audience and not merely to make a brave show. No doubt it is easy to find contradictions and most of us grow and develop their ideas. But many of my so-called contradictions are due to my dual capacity—the personal one in which I say exactly as I feel and the second one as General Secretary of the Congress. In the latter capacity I can at most express opinions which are not in conflict with Congress resolutions. I have felt and I still feel that it is worthwhile to carry the Congress as far as it will go. A time may come, sooner rather than later, when the new ideas may cause a split in the Congress. When that comes it will be faced. But till then I see no reason why I should isolate myself from the

1. J.N. Correspondence, NMML.
2. A follower of M N Roy; founder member of the Congress Socialist Party; expelled from the party in 1937 along with other supporters of Roy.

Congress and leave the organisation which has so much influence over people's minds in India to other people with a reactionary outlook.

With all good wishes for your work,

Yours fraternally,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Some Criticisms Considered[1]

My articles entitled *Whither India?* have had a mixed welcome. But they have amply justified the labour spent on them for they have directed the public mind to certain basic problems which are seldom considered in India, and have perhaps made some people think on novel lines. There have been two types of criticisms: the left criticism which accepted the main line of thought but said that it did not go far enough, and the right criticism which attacked the very premises of my argument and rejected with anger my conclusions. On both sides the personal element was brought in and my seeming contradictions and weaknesses were pointed out.

I had attempted to deal with the problem as impersonally and objectively as it was possible for me and I had hoped that it would be so considered Personalities count in politics but they should not intrude themselves when world problems and world forces are analysed and a meaning is sought to be drawn from them. It is therefore desirable that my many failings and deficiencies might be forgotten for a while for they do not affect these problems Personally I am not conscious of any glaring inconsistencies in my ideas or activities during the last thirteen years or so but no doubt I am a partial observer. It is perfectly true that I have grown mentally during this period and many a vague idea has taken shape and many a doubt has been removed. It is also true that as an active politician, having to face day to day problems, I have sometimes had to make compromises with life and the conditions that I found existing at a particular moment. But even

1 Published in the Indian press, 21 November 1933.

so I am not aware of any betrayal of the ideal that drew me on or the principles I held.

I have not seen all the criticisms of my articles and even those that I have seen are too many to be dealt with here. I shall therefore confine my reply to two lengthy and anonymous criticisms—one by "G" which appeared in a number of newspapers in northern India[2] and the other entitled "Into the Pit..." which was published by *The Pioneer*. Both these deal with the problem from the extreme "right" point of view. I have already replied separately to the "left" criticism. Reading these two anonymous articles, I marvelled at the extreme ignorance of the writers of the accepted commonplaces of history and economics and modern thought, and the amazing confusion that existed in their heads. I am not vain enough to imagine that I shall succeed in illumining the dark corners of their brains or make them understand the most obvious and elementary facts. But I should like to inform them that there was nothing novel in my survey of history and present-day conditions, although to them it might have appeared strange enough; it was a repetition of what practically every thinker and intelligent writer of today says The conclusions drawn from this survey might differ, but the facts themselves are beyond dispute for all except those who have a horror of facts or an incapacity or unwillingness to see straight. *The Statesman* is no friend of communism or socialism. It has given me fair warning that if I carry on in the way I am doing I shall have to be suppressed.[3] And yet *The Statesman* said, after reading the first two of my articles: "With the Pandit's analysis of the problem we are largely in agreement, indeed substantially the same picture has often been presented in these columns." When, however, *The Statesman* saw my third article, in which an attempt was made to apply the conclusions it had largely accepted to India, it drew away in fear and anger.

I have been told that the "programme" I had laid down in my articles was wanting in clarity and details. As a matter of fact I had

2. 'G' in his criticism of 19 October 1933 questioned the very idea of classifying the people into two classes viz, 'haves' and 'have nots' and the methods adopted to remove the disparities between the two He contended that there were no conflicts among the classes, upper and lower middle class, zamindars and peasants, and the very thought of the existence of such conflicts was an illusion

3. On 13 October 1933 *The Statesman* commented: "He preaches the class war and the necessity of divesting them. .We may be quite sure that the propertied classes will be no more reconciled . .Once it is realised that a communist revolution is afoot, the answer to attempted revolution is always suppression by force."

laid down no programme at all, much less a detailed programme, although a certain programme would follow inevitably if my premises and argument were correct. I had merely endeavoured to trace the course of the historical development of capitalism and to point out how economic forces were dominating and changing the world. Both the criticisms I am dealing with have ignored this and have branched off into wholly irrelevant questions. What has the Gandhi-Irwin Pact to do with the subject I was considering? Soviet Russia, like King Charles' head, also seems to have become an obsession with the two anonymous critics and this nightmare has, I am afraid, seriously diminished their capacity for clear thought.

I have not defined "capitalist" or "capitalism", I am told, and, mortal sin, I have assumed the existence of British imperialism without proving it! I plead guilty to the charge and await sentence. Science is a revolutionary product (I agree) and must be avoided, and is not today's magic tomorrow's science? In any event my science is nescience leading straight "to a Soviet hell". "Into the Pit..." of this close reasoning let us for the moment leave the author of this rigmarole.

But "G" runs him close. In a "scientific" world we are told "the wife may be regarded as sheer luxury." History has been ransacked by him to show that "no example could be produced to prove that the lot of the masses has ever been improved by violent means." It would be interesting to find out where "G" derived his knowledge of history. Then we are given an insight into European politics by being told that Germany and Italy have adopted Bolshevik methods. We await enlightenment as to what these methods are. But to judge of the efficacy of these methods we must wait for another hundred years! It is some comfort to know that we are in a position to judge the effects of the French Revolution now.

It is a little difficult to say much about this ignorant jumble of crude ideas and prejudices. But we can draw this conclusion from it that when interests are at stake the mind and the intellect are forced into the background and passions hold the field. "There is nothing so passionate," says Yeats,[4] the Irish poet, "as a vested interest disguised as an intellectual conviction."

When the word "capitalism" is used intelligently it can mean only one thing: the economic system that has developed since the Industrial Revolution which began in England a century and half ago. It

4 William Butler Yeats (1865-1939); poet of Irish nationalism who was greatly influenced by Indian thought, friend of Rabindranath Tagore.

means industrial capitalism. To give a recent definition (by G.D.H. Cole[5]): Capitalism means the developed system of production for profit based on private ownership of the means of production. It makes fundamentally for scarcity and not abundance, though the capitalist is often led to seek ways of cheapening individual products. For it the making of profit is the end of production, and it necessarily treats wages as a cost to be kept down as low as possible, and therefore tends to restrict mass purchasing power.

It is this system that we have to consider and not the merits of individual capitalists, some of whom according to "G", are even prepared to make a big sacrifice, but with a proviso attached. I endeavoured very briefly to trace in my previous articles the growth and decline of this system and to point out that it was breaking up today. This process of disruption, owing to economic causes, has nothing to do with the goodness or otherwise of capitalists or our own wishes in the matter. If the diagnosis is correct then the disease must have a speedy and a fatal end, however much some of us might desire a continuation of the present system.

The anonymous gentleman (or is it a lady?) from the 'Pit' appears to think that the French Revolution and the Russian Bolshevik Revolution were the same kind of phenomena and represent an identical or similar conflict between social forces. There could be no greater error. The French Revolution was a continuation on a more thorough and far-reaching scale of the English Revolution which cost Charles I his head and James II his crown, and which brought the middle classes to the seats of power. These middle class revolutions largely ended the feudal period when political power was an inherited privilege.

In England the process was not as thorough as in France and hence relics of feudalism still linger in England and there are more class distinctions, in England today than in almost any country of Europe or America. Napoleon carried on the work of the French Revolution and was instrumental in establishing the capitalist middle class regime all over western Europe. The whole of 19th century civilisation in Europe was based on the ideology of the French Revolution. This ideology in its turn derived from the ideas of Montesquieu, Voltaire,[6] Rousseau[7]

5. (1889 1959); British economist and social theorist; member of the Labour Party; wrote a large number of books including *History of Socialist Thought* in six volumes.
6. (1694 1778); the great French philosopher and author of *Candide*.
7. Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712 1778); author of *Social Contract*.

and the Encyclopaedists[8], that is to say from the period before the Industrial Revolution. This ideology, with its slogan of political liberty, equality and fraternity, became completely out of date with the growth of industrial capitalism.

Political liberty brought the vote but it was gradually discovered that this was of little use when there was so much economic inequality. A starving man could do little with his vote and could be easily coerced and exploited. This gave rise to new theories and ideas based on the economic relations of various groups, and socialism saw the light of day. A vague and idealistic socialism developed later into the scientific socialism of Karl Marx. The Russian Revolution was the direct product and justification of the Marxist theory—the first revolution of March 1917 being a middle class turn-over, the second one, in November 1917, a proletarian victory.

The French Revolution was based on the idea of the sacredness of private property. The writer in *The Pioneer* does not seem to approve of the *sans-culottes*.[9] Perhaps it will surprise him to learn that they fought for the Declaration of the Rights of Man which in Article 17 declared: "*La propriete etant un droit inviolable et sacre, nul ne peut etre prive de ses proprietes....*"[10]

It became evident, however, during the 19th century, that a theoretical equality before the law or the possession of a vote did not bring real equality. Economic inequality, the maldistribution of wealth, which capitalism progressively increased, made equality impossible of attainment; and exploitation of man by man and group by group increased. Thinkers therefore came to the conclusion that economic equality should be aimed at and at the root of this was the control of the means of production by society as a whole and the severe restriction of private property.

No one has said, as *The Pioneer* article seems to imagine, that all men are physically or mentally equal, or that all nations are similarly situated. What has been said, and what is admitted by the great majority of intelligent men, is that all human beings should have an

8 The authors of the *French Encyclopaedia* edited by Diderot and published during 1751 1772 They included Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Quesnay, D'Alembert and others

9 Term applied to the lower classes in France during the French Revolution. (The name derived from the fact that these people wore long trousers instead of knee breeches—*culottes*).

10 Property being an inviolable and sacred right, no one can be deprived of his property.

equality of opportunity. The present capitalist system does not and cannot in the nature of things provide this equality of opportunity.

The famous 19th century saying about "government of the people, by the people and for the people" failed to materialise in practice because under the capitalist system the government was neither by the people nor for the people. It was a government by the possessing classes for their own benefit. The people, according to them, were themselves; all others were in the outer darkness. A real government by the people and for the people can only be established when the masses hold power, that is under socialism when all the people really share in the government and the wealth of the country.

The Pioneer writer informs us that if the State becomes the sole capitalist then the lot of the workers will be worst of all because the State will exploit them mercilessly. This is a remarkable argument. What is the State under socialism and who benefits by the exploitation? If the people as a whole choose to exploit themselves they are perfectly welcome to do so, but even so the benefits go to them as a whole and not to selected groups or individuals.

Where will the surplus go, he further asks in an agony of apprehension? He cannot get out of the old rut of thinking along the lines of the capitalist economics of scarcity. There will be no surplus in a properly ordered and planned society and whatever is produced will go towards raising the standard of living of the people. Certainly, a man should be allowed the fruits of his labour. It is because these fruits are forcibly taken away from him under the capitalist system that we object to that system. Only under socialism will he have the full enjoyment of these fruits of his toil.

It is perfectly true that there can be no perfect freedom for an individual or nation when there is cooperation or interdependence with others. Every form of social life involves a restriction of individual freedom. But it is the merest quibbling to say that there can be no such thing as national freedom within the framework of an international socialist federation. When a measure of national freedom is given up willingly for the purposes of international cooperation this is not usually considered as a loss of freedom for the individual or the group. Is Wales less free because it forms part of Great Britain?

"G" tells us that the "very idea that the interests of the upper and middle classes conflict with those of the peasantry and the workers seems to be untenable." And yet, strange to say, this untenable idea is held by almost every thinker or intelligent person in the West where a great deal of thought has been given to this subject. If he will study a little history or any modern book on the subject it may help him to

clear up his ideas. Or it might even be helpful to visit a factory to find out what the owners and the workers think about each other's interests.

Both the critics seem to be greatly interested in my views on non-violence. Am I for coercion or conversion? "G" seems to thunder out, and he tells me, quoting Gandhiji as his authority, that the method alone is the deciding factor. I was not aware that Gandhiji had made any such one sided statement although he has always laid stress on the methods to be employed.

None of these questions arise from my articles for I had dealt only with a historical process and the ideal to be aimed at. I had not referred to any methods. But it is desirable none the less to answer the questions.

However important the method may be I entirely fail to understand how it can take the place of the objective. It is essential to have the objective and know the direction before a single step can be taken. As for the method, I might clear the ground by saying that, so far as I am concerned, it does not consist of preaching religion or philanthropy. I have no use for either and I have often found that they cover the rankest hypocrisy and selfishness. I certainly believe in ethics and morality and truthfulness and many other virtues but my belief in them does not turn them into methods; they can only be attributes of a method.

Coercion or conversion? What is the whole principle of the State based on? And the present social system? Is not coercion and enforced conformity the very basis of both? Army, police, laws, prisons, taxes are all methods of coercion. The zamindar who realises rent and often many illegal cesses relies on coercion, not on conversion of the tenant. The factory owner who gives starvation wages does not rely on conversion. Hunger and the organised forces of the State are the coercive processes employed by both. Is a lock-out or an attempt to reduce wages a method of conversion? It is well to realise that those who belong to the favoured and possessing classes retain these positions by methods of coercion alone and it does not lie in their mouths to talk of conversion. The principal moral argument against the present system and in favour of socialism is that the latter reduces the element of coercion and will, it is hoped, ultimately do away with it altogether.

How are we to change over to a new system based on cooperation? And how are we to divest vested interests? We are told by *The Pioneer* writer, and I think rightly, that the capitalist will not "tamely submit to be robbed of his wealth, or vested interests tamely submit to be divested" History also shows us that there is no instance of a privileged

class or group or nation giving up its special privileges or interests willingly. Individuals have done so often enough but not a group. Always a measure of coercion has been applied, pressure has been brought to bear, or conditions have been created which make it impossible or unprofitable for vested interests to carry on. And then the enforced conversion takes place. The methods of this enforcement may be brutal or civilized.

I have no doubt that coercion or pressure is necessary to bring about political and social change in India. Indeed our nonviolent mass movements of the past thirteen years have been powerful weapons to exercise this pressure. Undoubtedly they convert stray individuals from the opposing group and partly weaken the resistance of that group by removing the moral justification for domination and repression. But essentially they are processes to coerce the opposing nation or group.

It is perfectly true that this method of coercion is the most civilized and moral method and it avoids as far as possible the unpleasant reactions and consequences of violence. I think that it does offer a moral equivalent for violent warfare and, if civilization does not collapse, it will gradually adopt this peaceful method of settling its disputes. But it seems to me a fact that cannot be disputed or challenged that a nonviolent mass struggle coerces and is meant to coerce the other party. The boycott of goods is an obvious instance.

Personally I have accepted the nonviolent method because not only did it appeal to me in theory but it seemed to be peculiarly suited to present conditions in India. That belief has grown in me. But I have made it clear on many occasions that nonviolence is no infallible creed with me and although I greatly prefer it to violence, I prefer freedom with violence to subjection with nonviolence. That choice does not arise for me today because I believe that for a long time to come our most effective methods must be nonviolent. I might add that I do not look upon nonviolent noncooperation or civil disobedience as a negative and passive method, a kind of pious and static pacifism, but as an active, dynamic and forceful method of enforcing the mass will.

The question of violence or nonviolence may arise, and indeed is bound to arise, in another form after the conquest of the State power. There may be attempts to upset the new form of government by reactionary groups. Will "G" advise the new government to use the resources of the State to coerce these elements into submission or does he think that the religions and philanthropic argument should be used to convert them? Then again the new government may pass laws, which, carrying out the will of the great majority of the people, seek to divest privileged groups. Will "G" then advise these groups to

submit to the majority opinion or to resist, and if the latter, how should their resistance be met?

There is one other subject on which I should like to touch and that is khaddar. I believe in industrialisation and the big machine and I should like to see factories spring up all over India. I want to increase the wealth of India and the standards of living of the Indian people and it seems to me that this can only be done by the application of science to industry resulting in large scale industrialisation. Quite apart from my own desires, I think that present-day conditions are bound to result in the progressive industrialisation of the country. And yet I support hand-spinning and khaddar under existing conditions in India

For me this has today an economic, a political and a social value. It fits in with the present peasant structure, brings them some relief and makes them self-reliant. It helps to bring us into touch with the peasant masses and to organise them to some extent. It is an effective political weapon in that it helps in the boycott of foreign cloth, and at the same time it acts as some check on the Indian mills, preventing them raising their prices too much. During the Great War foreign imports of cloth fell greatly and there was a cloth famine. Indian mill owners made vast profits by raising their prices and exploiting this more or less protected market. They will no doubt exploit every such opportunity.

But khaddar can now fill the gap during times of crisis and prevent this exploitation to a large extent There can be no doubt that khaddar has justified itself in some ways. At the same time it is equally true that it is an out-of-date form of production and it will not be possible, through it, to increase the wealth of the country greatly or raise the standard of living of the masses. Therefore, I think that the big machine must come and I am sure that khaddar will not prevent its coming. It may be that the big machine itself gets decentralised to a large extent in the course of the next few years. The enormous growth in the use of electric power has revolutionised world industry during the last thirty years and it will no doubt revolutionise it still further.

In conclusion may I assure the writer in *The Pioneer* that I have not the least desire to get England strafed. I have too much regard for many of the fine things that England has stood for to nurse any such wish and I believe that the great majority of the English people are themselves exploited by small groups. But I do believe that natural laws will speedily put an end to the British Empire and imperialism and capitalism and I wish to help in the process.

4. Further Criticisms Considered[1]

Some time back the *Advocate* of Bombay did me the honour of criticising my articles entitled *Whither India?* as well as some other statements of mine. I was unfortunately fully engaged at the time and could not explain my position further. But the criticisms have a certain wider importance and it is perhaps worthwhile to deal with some of them even at this late stage.

To begin with, it is well to bear in mind that news agencies and newspapers are functioning today in a peculiar way and live in continual fear of government displeasure. They seldom publish all the news sent to them and it is very unsafe to pass judgment on the incomplete data provided by them. To give an instance: the *Advocate* criticised me for not giving a clear opinion on what is called 'individual civil disobedience' and inferred, from an incomplete press account, that last month's conference of U.P. Congress workers held at Allahabad avoided this delicate subject. As a matter of fact I have expressed my opinion in favour of such civil disobedience clearly and rather aggressively in a number of public statements, and the Allahabad conference passed a detailed resolution on the subject also favouring individual civil disobedience and advising workers how to do it. This resolution (which was subsequently published in the *Advocate*) was quietly ignored by the news agencies and most newspapers.

Under the present circumstances I am wholly opposed to a withdrawal of civil disobedience because this inevitably means liquidating our present struggle and turning mass attention to some form of compromise with British imperialism. I think that under present conditions in India and the world this would be a betrayal of the cause. Small groups here and there who talk in terms of an advanced ideology will have little, if any, effect on the mass demoralization which will be produced by our abandoning the civil disobedience movement. We would then drift away from the current of world change, which grows more powerful day by day, and settle down in a stagnant backwater. The opportunities that may come our way will find us lacking and unprepared.

1. Published in the Indian press, 27 November 1933.

Even from the point of view of consolidating and preparing our organizations and position for a mass struggle, it seems to me to be folly to expect that a withdrawal of the civil disobedience movement will give us this opportunity, unless this consolidation means parlour talk and no action. Surely, the government will not willingly give us a chance of building up our strength and will pick out all our active and effective workers and try to disable them. This process of individual disablement, added to the loss of morale involved in a giving up of the present struggle, must result in utter mass demoralization and an inability to do anything effective for a considerable time. It is far easier to build up and consolidate our position and develop an ideology in course of a struggle than in the demoralized condition that follows an ending of it. Events teach the masses more than individual effort, and a struggle, whether national or social, produces these mighty teachers. But, of course, there must be right direction.

I am quite sure that the only alternative to a continuation of our present struggle is some measure of cooperation with imperialism. Individuals and groups here and there may talk bravely, but their talk will end in empty nothing so far as mass action is concerned. Personally I am not prepared, and there are many who think like me, for any such compromise, whatever happens. It is better for the cause, I am convinced, that we should carry on the fight and even be crushed to atoms—rather than that we should compromise with imperialism. But we have no intention of being crushed.

An ideology is presumed to lead to action and action on a mass scale. If such action is meant for the whole of India, the ideology cannot (except as the ultimate aim) ignore present-day objective facts and conditions all over the country. The question each one of us has to answer is this: Are we to prepare for some distant future struggle for a problematic freedom in the hereafter, or do we consider that objective conditions in the country and the world are such that the struggle is here and now, or in the near future, and we have to face it. If we adopt the latter answer, as I think we must, then we must carry on the struggle and try to shape it and try to develop a new ideology through it and in the course of it.

World events of the past decade or more have many lessons to teach us. There is the pitiful and miserable failure of social democracy in England, Germany and other countries. There is also failure to make good or to rouse the masses, in spite of suitable economic conditions, of the communist parties of various countries (excluding the Soviet Union). In most countries communism is represented by three or four different groups or parties, each cursing and slandering the

other, wholly incapable of united action, and often forgetting the common foe in their mutual hatreds. It is perfectly clear that, however correct the ideology of the Communist International may have been, their tactics have failed.

In India we see, during the past thirteen years, a subservient and demoralized people, incapable of any action and much less united action, suddenly develop backbone and power of resistance and an amazing capacity for united action, and challenge the might of a great and entrenched empire. Is this a little thing that we have achieved? Or is it not one of the most remarkable examples of mass regeneration? And are we not entitled to claim that the methods that brought about this great change were worthy and desirable methods? Those who criticise these methods might well compare the achievement of India during these years with that of any other colonial and semi-colonial country. They might also compare the achievements of others in India trying to work differently or with a braver ideology.

It would be a good thing if some of our critics made a grand tour of India from the Khyber Pass in the north to the south and the east and the west and studied the situation for themselves. They would find that the Congress is not only not defunct, but is very much alive and functioning in many areas, and is going to function despite anything that might happen. They would discover the strange ferment in the peasantry and the new temper of the army. One is a little apt to misjudge India by conditions prevailing in a city, especially when our newspapers do not even publish the news. How many people know of the recent extraordinary happenings in the Frontier Province? Or of the fact that many hundreds of people have gone to prison in Behar alone during the last two months or so? Or of the stream of individuals that are offering civil disobedience in other provinces? Or of the *Sarkar Salaam*[2] and other barbarities that are taking place in Bengal? I could add to the list. The mere fact that these amazing methods of repression are being resorted to still is proof enough of the strength of our movement and the nervous and fearful state of the government. Why should it resort to these extraordinary methods if it felt that there was no life left in our movement?

I have been told that I stand for a federation with the princes and feudal lords without in any way questioning their despotism. This is a somewhat remarkable interpretation of what I have said. Certainly I think that a federation is likely to be established in India that is

2. In Hijli jail political prisoners had to carry heavy bar fetters for refusing to salute the superintendent of police

to be, but I cannot conceive of any stable federation, certainly not one to which I can agree, to which the feudal chiefs are parties. I believe that the whole Indian state system must go root and branch.

Probably reference was made to the Delhi Provisional Settlement of 1931. A federation was certainly agreed to there, but the nature of it was not defined. In any event the Delhi Settlement is no more. The government has put an end to it and we are no longer bound by its terms.

It might be as well to remember that I am not the Congress and the Congress is not Jawaharlal Nehru. It has been my great privilege to work in the Congress for the best years of my life and perhaps sometimes I have had a little influence over its decisions. But I am not presumptuous enough to imagine that I can carry the Congress with me wherever I will; I have long felt that the Congress is far the most effective radical organization in the country and it is easier to work great changes in the mass mentality through it rather than through any other means. So long as I feel that, I shall gladly and most willingly work with this great organization, which has done so much for the country, even though it may not go far enough from my point of view. And so long as that is the case no question can arise of my thinking of another organization.

I have been told that the breaking of laws fundamentally implies a defence of the breaker. I am afraid I am unable to grasp the significance of this statement. But I am certainly of opinion that a general strike involving a paralysis of the transport and other machinery of the forces of oppression is a powerful weapon which should be prepared for and used when the time for it is ripe.

The *Advocate* has criticised me for not convening a meeting of the A.I.C.C. May I point out that I have repeatedly stated that I am perfectly willing to convene it if some members requisition it? It is only necessary for about eight per cent of the members to send a requisition and I am fully prepared to waive any technicalities in their favour. If not even eight per cent demand it, does the fault lie with me? As a matter of fact, in spite of newspaper statements and criticism, hardly a single member has written to me formally about it. Personally I am well content with the programme of action before us and I feel that it enables those of us who wish to do so to carry on work. It is the business of those who are dissatisfied or those who want a change in programme to ask for an A.I.C.C. meeting, instead of hurling vague criticisms in the air. If this demand is not made even by these people, is it not a legitimate inference that the great majority of Congressmen do not desire a change of programme?

People forget sometimes that we are functioning abnormally. They discuss the constitutional issue in terms of normality or they criticise the Congress for its seeming inactivity, forgetting that the Congress has arrived at a certain stage of historical growth. It is not at present a constitutional or legal body and many of the safe and brave deeds that are performed on public platforms are no longer in its line. Constitutionalists naturally dislike this; they cannot function in an illegal atmosphere. But why should those who think in terms of revolutionary change object to this inevitable and desirable development?

This article has grown long, but I have not yet dealt with many other points that have been raised. I hope to come back to them, and especially to the questions of nonviolence and khaddar, in a subsequent article.

5. To the Editor, The Pioneer[1]

Sir,

To controversy on current public issues there is no end, but perhaps you will permit me to say something to elucidate certain points raised by you in today's leading article.[2]

To do away with the class division of society necessarily implies the ending of the caste system which is only a petrified form of class division. It is obvious therefore that I am for the ending of the caste system. So far as religion is concerned I am for complete freedom of conscience and religious belief. Each individual should be perfectly free to believe in and follow any religion, and those who are not religiously inclined should also be free to spread their ideas. But religion should be a personal affair and must not interfere in political or economic questions.

I regret to say that I have not so far read either G.D.H. Cole's *Intelligent Man's Guide Through World Chaos* or Strachey's *Menace of Fascism*, though I hope to do so as soon as I have the opportunity.

1. *The Pioneer*, 23 November 1933.
2. The editorial claimed that most of Jawaharlal's views in *Whither India?* were second hand and taken from volumes which are "among the sacred books of the Bloomsbury intellectuals or 'Parlour Bolsheviks'" and, on Jawaharlal's own confession, "laid down no programme at all much less a detailed programme," still less answered such questions as how he proposed to secure "social equality" without abolition of caste

But of course I have read many similar books and my ideas are, as you have pertinently observed, largely second-hand. I claimed no originality for them. Indeed I tried to lay stress on the fact that they were commonplaces in intelligent circles.

My point was that the capitalist system was collapsing because of its inherent contradictions and world conditions. Undoubtedly the World War has hastened this process but the war itself was an inevitable consequence of capitalism and imperialism. It is quite possible that another world war will put the finishing touches to the work of the last war and finally end the capitalistic system. The fact remains and, I submit, cannot be challenged that, whatever form the new social order might take, the capitalist order is doomed. Any further argument must proceed on this assumption.

As to what the new order is going to be or should be we may differ. I think it will be the socialist order. To my knowledge no other consistent theory has so far been suggested (if we may ignore Major Douglas, the technocrats and some others whose schemes are sufficiently revolutionary). But socialism does not mean just a duplication of what has taken place in Soviet Russia. It may, and probably will, evolve on different lines in different countries. It must always be remembered that Czarist Russia was one of the worst places to try the socialist experiment because of her backward condition. An advanced industrial country like England or Germany would have been far more suitable and would have yielded swifter and richer results. It is easy enough to criticise Russia. In a vast country launched on a vast and unprecedented experiment there are bound to be innumerable lapses and even failure. But the point is that in Russia these lapses and failures are recognised and an immediate effort is made to remedy them. In the capitalist countries, on the other hand, there is a helpless wringing of hands and a policy of waiting and seeing, for every avenue of growth and every effective remedy leads to a change of the system.

I do not admire all that has occurred in the Soviet Union but I do admire their objective and the vital urge that is driving them to it. I think also that in spite of many mistakes and failures the Soviets have an amazing amount of success to their credit.

My programme? The objective is political independence for India and a rapid social change to establish a socialist state. The method of action and exercising pressure is at present chiefly civil disobedience, and I invite you, Sir, and your readers to participate in this.

Yours etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2

OUT OF PRISON

THE CONGRESS PROGRAMME

1. Exploitation of India[1]

It is not easy to write briefly on the Indian situation for the information of the British public. Partisan and one-sided propaganda has held the field there for so long that every vital issue has been confused and a totally false impression created of conditions in India. Even in India, during the last three or four years, ordinance rule, which is close cousin to martial law under certain legal forms, and a rigid censorship of the press have suppressed not only expressions of opinion but even news that was unpalatable to the British authorities in India. The newspaper press is bound hand and foot, public meetings on political issues are not allowed to be held, books and pamphlets, even those giving admitted facts, are proscribed, letters and telegrams are censored and sometimes do not reach their destination. It is an offence in many parts of the country to publish the names or photographs of people arrested under the ordinances. Some months back even a memorial meeting on the anniversary of the death of Pandit Motilal Nehru was banned though it was convened largely by non Congressmen and a peaceful moderate like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was to have presided over it. In some parts of Bengal and in the Frontier Province there is a military occupation and an interference with the day to day activities of every citizen which is far severer than if the country had been invaded by a foreign army during war time. Even children in Chittagong and Midnapore have to carry about cards of identity. The movements of people are strictly regulated, even their dress has to conform to official directions, and heavy fines are imposed on whole towns and villages to

1 *Daily Herald* (London), 2 October 1933, later reprinted under the title *The Indian Struggle for Freedom* in *Recent Essays and Writings*, (Allahabad, 1934), pp. 113-120.

which the residents are made to contribute, regardless of guilt or innocence. Every hint of police or military barbarity is suppressed and punished and even official enquiries are denied. An occasional act of terrorism by a youth is answered by the organised and continuous terrorism and reprisals of the State.

British newspapers attack the Indian national movement from a variety of fronts, regardless of the obvious inconsistency of their statements. On the one hand, the Congress is said to be a reactionary body controlled by millowners and the like; on the other, no-rent campaigns are said to be the work of Bolsheviks and their kind rousing up the peaceful peasantry by their artful agitation. Even well-informed newspapers give currency to statements which are entirely wrong and have no relation to facts. Some time ago one of the best of the English weeklies stated as a fact that the movement against untouchability and for the raising of the depressed classes was started by Mr. Gandhi's fast last year and that the Congress had closed its doors to these classes. As a matter of fact the movement is an old one and it has been one of the biggest movements in India since 1920 when the Congress, at Mr. Gandhi's instance, made it a major plank in its programme. The Congress has never kept out the depressed classes and during the last thirteen years it has insisted on representatives of the depressed classes being elected to its highest executive committee. Mr. Gandhi's fast undoubtedly gave the movement a tremendous push.

India and the East generally are supposed to be mysterious lands where strange people work in strange and peculiar ways and no real attempt is made to understand them. This magic view of history and geography may perhaps fit in with the somewhat romantic and unworldly, and yet profitable, outlook of the average conservative or liberal politician who has no other standards to go by. But labour believes in a scientific and economic interpretation of history and current events and it is surprising that British labour should suffer under the same delusion. Perhaps generations of imperialist domination have affected the ideology of British labour and made it unable to take a correct and objective view where British imperialist interests are concerned. We are told by labour leaders that nationalism is a narrow creed and therefore Indian nationalism is reactionary. Under cover of this doctrine they seek to perpetuate British imperialism calling it by the high-sounding title of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Nationalism is of course a reactionary force in the modern world, whether it functions in England or India, but it is an inevitable reaction to imperialism in colonial countries, and a step which cannot be avoided in the march to real internationalism. To defend any

kind of imperialism by calling colonial nationalism as reactionary is sheer hypocrisy.

It is a commonplace that great movements are not caused by individuals or a handful of agitators but are due, in the main, to economic forces. The Indian national movement arose in this way and in its early days was controlled by the upper middle class. It was not essentially hostile to imperialism as this class itself was a product of British rule and wanted to fit itself into the fabric of imperialism. The march of economic events, however, wrought a change in it and the lower middle class and the *declasse* intellectuals began to dominate it. India played an important part in the great national wave that shook the whole of Asia after the Great War. A great national leader inspired the people and for the first time the masses, and especially the peasantry, took an effective part in the national struggle. In the after war years the association of the masses with the Congress increased progressively and in some provinces the peasantry played an important role in formulating policy and in participating in direct action. The industrial workers, especially in Bombay, built up a trade union movement and developed a revolutionary ideology. As an organized group they did not cooperate with the Congress but they were powerfully influenced by it and many took part in the Congress campaigns. At the same time Indian labour carried on its own fight against capitalism by means of strikes.

As the Congress became more radical and dependent on mass support, the Indian vested interests that were represented in it became frightened and some of them dropped out. It was out of these leavings that the small and ineffective moderate or liberal group was formed. Association with the masses forced economic issues to the front in the Congress and a socialist ideology began to develop. A number of vaguely socialist resolutions were passed from time to time and in 1931 the Congress took a more definite step in this direction by adopting an economic programme at Karachi.

The direct action struggle of the Congress during the last four years, and the slump and a rapid march of economic events in the world during this period, have resulted in influencing the Congress powerfully in a socialist direction, and the struggle for independence has come more and more to mean a radical change in the social order to bring relief to the suffering masses. In a recent correspondence Mr Gandhi declared that real independence must mean the devesting of the vested interests in India. The Congress still continues to be a national organisation and as such includes in its fold many groups and classes which have conflicting social interests. But recent events

have forced the economic issue to the forefront and, as a result, the Congress has become even more a mass organisation and the Indian vested interests, from the princes downwards, have joined hands with British vested interests in India to resist all real political and social change. The Round Table Conference in London was such a grouping of vested interests. Thus inevitably our struggle for independence is also becoming a struggle for social freedom.

The word independence is not a happy word for it signifies isolation and there can be no such isolation or independence in the modern world. But the word has to be used for want of a better one. It must not be understood, however, to mean that we want to cut ourselves off from the rest of the world. We do not believe in a narrow and aggressive nationalism. We believe in inter-dependence and international cooperation, but at the same time we are convinced that there can be no dependence whatever and no real cooperation with imperialism. Thus we want complete independence from every kind of imperialism. But that does not rule out the fullest cooperation with the British people or other peoples who do not wish to exploit us. With imperialism there can be and will be no compromise under whatever guise it may come.

Essentially therefore our struggle for freedom is a struggle for a radical change of the social structure and the ending of all exploitation of the masses. This can only be done by the devesting of the great vested interests in India, and the biggest of these is that of the British Government. A mere process of changing officials, of 'Indianisation', as it is called, of giving a high office to an Indian instead of an Englishman, has no interest whatever for us. It is the system which exploits the masses of India that we object to and which must go before any effective relief comes to the masses.

The Round Table Conferences in London have proceeded on an entirely different basis Almost their sole concern has been to protect every conceivable vested interest and make it impregnable and to this crowd of parasites they wish to add others. Thus the whole Round Table scheme instead of lessening the exploitation of the masses actually puts fresh burdens on them. We are told by the Secretary of State for India that the constitutional changes will involve extra expenditure of many millions and therefore must wait till the world has got over its present economic discontents and India is more prosperous! He may have to wait a long time if he wishes these discontents to be solved according to his liking. His statement shows a singular lack of appreciation of what is happening in the world and

what is likely to happen in the future. But even apart from that it is an extraordinary instance of the powerful reasoning powers of Whitehall and the India Office. India is in a state of revolt because the working classes, the peasantry and the lower middle classes are crushed by various kinds of exploitation. They want immediate relief; they want bread for their hungry stomachs. Even the great majority of the landlords are being reduced to beggary as the land tenure system is breaking down. The remedy for this collapse and widespread misery is sought in propping up all the vested interests that have brought it about and in attempting to strengthen a semi feudal order which has long outlived its utility and is an obstacle to all progress. In addition to this further burdens are cast on the masses. And then we are told that when conditions right themselves of their own accord, it will be time enough to introduce changes.

It is manifest that this method of procedure is the sheerest quibbling with a great problem affecting vast numbers of human beings. The Round Table scheme, whether it is adopted by the British Parliament as it is, or varied, will not solve a single problem in India. Much is made in England of the so-called 'die-hard' opposition to it, of the attacks of the Churchill-Lloyd group and of the defence bravely put up by Mr. Baldwin and others. So far as India is concerned it views these mock battles with supreme unconcern for, whatever the result of these may be, it will not affect her attitude to a scheme which is reactionary, absurd and unworkable to an extraordinary degree. The British Government may succeed in grouping round itself all the backward, feudal and reactionary groups in India, including even the bigoted religious obscurantists who have been frightened by Mr. Gandhi's attacks on their strongholds. If it finds pleasure in this varied company we have no complaint. It makes our task easier in bringing about a social change together with a real political change.

Thus so far as the Congress is concerned the Round Table Conferences and the Joint Select Committee have made no difference whatever to our struggle for freedom, except in so far as they have cleared issues and demonstrated that British imperialism stands for all that is reactionary in India. Under these circumstances the struggle for independence and social change must go on. Indeed it is not in the power of any individual or group to end this struggle. Even the Congress cannot do it for the struggle for freedom is the natural result of economic conditions, and so long as these conditions continue they must find an outlet in such a struggle. If the Congress leaders withdraw, other people and other organisations will take their place.

A political solution of the struggle can only come when the Indian people can settle their own constitution in a popularly elected constituent assembly. Such an assembly would also, I have no doubt, solve the minority and other problems, which have assumed so much prominence because their solution has been entrusted not to popularly chosen spokesmen but to official nominees. It is these reactionary nominees who have refused to agree among themselves and made it appear that the Indian people cannot agree. The Indian people have never been given a real chance to solve the problems for themselves. So far as the Congress is concerned it has little difficulty as it has long been prepared to guarantee minority rights.

The Congress does not want any power for itself. I am sure that it will willingly abide by the decision of the constituent assembly, and even dissolve itself as soon as Indian political independence is achieved. It is doubtful, however, if under existing conditions, or in the near future, such a constituent assembly can be held. The more this is delayed the more will the political problem of India become an economic one and the ultimate change will be social as well as political. The struggle for Indian freedom is essentially a part of the world struggle for the emancipation of the exploited everywhere and for the establishment of a new social order.

2. To A.L. Simha[1]

Lucknow
October 7, 1933

Dear Simha,

I have your letter.[2] It is perfectly true that some efforts are being made in various parts of the country to form groups and parties within or without the Congress. That is quite natural in a living organization It would be absurd to say that the situation in the country is a perfectly satisfactory one or that all is well with the Congress.

1 JN Correspondence, NMML

2 A L. Simha, a physician of Madras, had suggested that a new party called the National Socialist Party be started by Jawaharlal He also asked him to define the Congress attitude to the White Paper, council entry and communal parts.

Nobody can make such a claim. We are up against a hard job and we expect difficulties at every step But all this does not justify in my opinion what you said in your previous letter about the Congress. If the strength of an organization is to be judged by its hold on the mass mind then the Congress is more powerful today than it has ever been, despite the criticism of a number of people. And the long shadow of the Congress continually darkens the horizon of our Viceroys and Secretaries of State.

I propose, if I have the time, to write a number of articles in the public press on the present situation and I will refer you to them for my views. The three questions that you put in your letter betray a great deal of ignorance of the Congress policy. But I shall answer them briefly.

1. 'The Congress attitude towards the White Paper[3] is one of supreme contempt

2. The Congress is committed to a programme of direct action against the government which takes the shape of civil disobedience. Direct action and so-called constitutional action do not go well together though it may be possible to combine them to some extent under certain circumstances. Council entry being a form of constitutional action is thus not compatible with the present policy of the Congress. Indeed the Lahore session of the Congress called for a boycott of the councils and that decision stands today. Apart from this I fail to understand how the question arises. Estimates vary But it appears that under no circumstance will the new councils function before another three or four years Personally I do not think they will ever function Long before they appear on the scene much will have happened in India and the world to put them out of action I do not understand how any practical politician can lay down any definite programme in regard to the councils so long ahead when Indian and world conditions are changing so rapidly.

3. Regarding communal pacts, the Congress has not sanctioned or approved of any pact The Lahore session laid down that a national solution should be found for this question At the same time the Congress has always expressed its readiness to accept any scheme that is agreed to between the parties The Congress is further willing to go to the utmost length to assure the minorities that all their rights will be protected Presumably in referring to communal pacts you mean the Poona Pact of last year The Congress as an organization has not even considered this but it is perfectly true that many

3 Setting out British constitutional proposals for India

noted Congressmen headed by Gandhiji have accepted it as it stands. The essence of this Pact, as I understand it, is to give assurance to the depressed classes that they will be given considerable representation under the new scheme. So far as this principle is concerned I have no doubt that the Congress will agree to it, and it may even agree to the figure given in the Pact because it has all along been the Congress policy to adopt a generous policy to minorities and backward groups. But as I have said above the Congress has had no chance of considering this so far.

I do not know what you mean by a fascist programme. Fascism has a certain technical meaning. It means a grouping together of the possessing classes to keep down the working classes. If that is what you desire I am entirely against it. Indeed we see a brand of fascism already in the country grouping itself round the British Government. They are the greatest enemies of the movement for national freedom.

You may certainly publish this letter if you so wish.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To Asaf Ali[1]

Allahabad
October 12, 1933

My dear Asaf Ali,[2]

I have your letter.[3] You will forgive me if I send you a brief reply as my mother's illness and various other matters are filling up my time. Any real reply to your letter would develop into a long essay. You will perhaps get some idea of how my mind is working from certain articles

1 J.N Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2 (1888-1953); leading Congressman of Delhi, secretary, Congress Parliamentary Board, 1934, member, Congress Working Committee, 1940-42, imprisoned during 1942-45, deputy leader, Congress Party in the Central Assembly, 1945, member, Interim Government, 1946-47; ambassador, U.S.A., 1947-48, Governor of Orissa 1948-52, ambassador, Switzerland, 1952-53.

3 Asaf Ali in his letter of 30 September 1933 wrote that he felt the need for a positive programme as "unity, removal of untouchability, khaddar... did not evoke any dynamic enthusiasm."

which I have been sending to the press. If I have the time and the opportunity I shall write more for the press.

Personally I think that a withdrawal of civil disobedience would be a blunder of the first magnitude. Having regard both to the Indian situation and the international situation I feel that our direct action struggle must be carried on even though at a low level.

From the point of view of the struggle I do not attach importance to what are called the constructive activities of the Congress. I am, therefore, not interested at present in any such activities or rather it would be more correct to say that I am not prepared to give any time or energy to them.

I am not at all enamoured of Harijan work though of course I am very keen on the abolition of untouchability. I realise that there is some feeling among the Mussulmans that the Harijan movement is aimed at strengthening the Hindus politically. This is of course without foundation but none the less it is there As a matter of fact the aspect of the Harijan movement which appeals to me most is that it will weaken the Hindus in the sense that it will create a split among them. I like such splits because they clear up the position and bring real issues before the public. It is a good thing that the orthodox section of the Hindus is showing its true colours and behaving politically as a most reactionary group.

As for unity—communal unity—I agree with you that there is no room for any attempt to bring about a compromise to replace MacDonald's Communal Award.

I do not see how the question of council entry arises now. According to the most optimistic estimates any new council will not begin functioning for three or four years. Practical politicians do not lay down their immediate programme for a contingency which may occur three years later or may not occur at all. Personally, I doubt if the Round Table scheme will ever function in India.

I do not think it is possible for us now, even if civil disobedience is withdrawn, to organise the peasantry and others properly. All manner of obstructions are being and will be put in the way of such real work. It seems to me almost easier to do some organisational work in the rural areas through civil disobedience than otherwise.

I do not attach much importance to the particular Maharashtra group which is said to have organised a new party.[4] But I know well that

4 Jamnadas Mehta, Kelkar and other leaders of Maharashtra decided on 30 August 1933 to form the Democratic Swaraj Party to work for the attainment of full independence by all legal and constitutional means.

individuals here and there think on those lines and may drop out of the Congress if the Congress carries on an aggressive direct action policy. I think that need not worry us much. It is an inevitable development. Such groups will not injure our cause but might even strengthen it because the issues will become clearer before the country.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Nabakrushna Chaudhuri[1]

Allahabad
October 15, 1933

Dear Comrade,[2]
I am glad to receive your two letters[3] I have read them with the greatest interest In many things that you say I am in entire agreement with you I do not agree with what you say regarding a secret organisation to carry on the work. I think that secrecy is a possible and an effective method under certain circumstances. I have no moral objection to it at all but under present circumstances I do not think that secret methods will help us at all. Of course this does not mean that we should not have private methods of consultation and work. This is always permissible Our fight is essentially based on mass morale and I am sure that secret methods undermine this morale. If our movement is to be essentially a mass movement it cannot help being an open movement There is a certain inconsistency between the satyagraha method of open defiance and secret methods which involve an avoidance of conflict by numerous individuals. I can quite conceive our adopting knowingly secret methods of organisation as, for instance, exist in Germany today; but that will involve an entire change of tactics for us It will also mean winding up the open struggle This kind of secret activity is usually indulged in when

1 JN Correspondence, NMML
2 (b 1901), participated in the noncooperation movements, founder member of the Congress Socialist Party in Orissa, 1934, Chief Minister, Orissa, 1951 53
3 In these letters written on 8 September and 9 October 1933 he advocated "a network of sound secret bodies".

large scale activities are impossible. It is only a preparation for something big later. In our country the whole basis of our struggle having been open defiance in order to inculcate character and backbone in our people—and in this it has succeeded to a remarkable extent—it is very difficult to switch on to an entirely different method. This really means ending the present struggle and laying the foundations for a different type of struggle. I feel that in spite of the lull that prevails we are still strong enough to carry on the struggle, though at a lower pitch. Both on national and international grounds it is essential for us to carry on the struggle at present. We cannot afford to be quiescent when at any moment a great international crisis may develop. Therefore, I think that our work must be of an open and aggressive character. At the same time it is perfectly open to us to have private consultations and group action This is what Gandhiji himself said in his letter to me in Poona I am sending a copy of my correspondence with Gandhiji[4]

I agree with you that it is necessary to organise nuclei of Congress workers in all provinces who are ready for a sustained and prolonged fight That is exactly what we have been doing in our province We have discussed very fully with our provincial workers and district leaders the present position in India and the world and we have asked them to have similar discussions in each of their districts. I am sending you a copy of the resolutions passed by us. We propose to issue more detailed instructions within a few days to our districts.

It comes to this then that we must carry on the struggle aggressively and openly in the form of civil disobedience and in the course of this organise and consolidate our position as well as try to change the ideology of our workers This is a difficult task of course but it seems to me the only way to do it Some people imagine that we can organise better if we stop the fight. I think this is wrong and the government will not let us organise openly even then, quite apart from the fact that winding up of the fight will bring utter demoralisation

As you say, in every great fight there is bound to be an ebb and flow This need not discourage us in the least and I am not discouraged by the state of affairs in India at present The tall talk of British officials is largely bluff and the whole international situation is in our favour. But to take advantage of it we must not give in I do not think it is possible for us to switch on the struggle for national power to local economic issues as suggested by Gandhiji in the article you have sent

4 See *Selected Works*, Vol 5, pp 526 530

me.[5] There is exhaustion today both among the workers and the peasantry and little can be done immediately to rouse them up even on an issue that affects them immediately. Where possible of course this should be done but essentially the national fight must continue and we should try to make it a social and economic fight as well for the broad masses. Fundamentally this means the development of a new ideology. I am trying to help in this process by writing articles in the press which you may have perhaps noticed.

You can rest assured that we do not forget your province. But, as matters stand, it is not easy to give anything more than sympathy.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5 In his article *Substance not Shadow* published in *Young India* on 18 June 1931, Mahatma Gandhi suggested that in the event of a failure to reach an agreement at the Round Table Conference it was better not to "force Swaraj through highly artificial surroundings" and meanwhile the Congress could "fulfil its mission" of representing the masses by fighting for their economic relief

5. To H.K. Hales[1]

Allahabad
October 17, 1933

Dear Mr. Hales,[2]

Thank you for your letter.[3] I am sorry for the delay in answering it.

There is no present intention of calling a meeting of the National Congress A meeting of the All India Congress Committee, however, may be held if a proper requisition for it reaches me.

National struggles against an alien domination invariably give rise to bitter feelings That is unfortunate And yet, I think, it may

1 JN Correspondence, NMML
2 Conservative member of the House of Commons, had contacts with British manufacturing interests in India
3 In his letter of 6 October 1933, Hales had appealed to Jawaharlal to base future Congress policy on "love, not hatred"

be said with some confidence that we have tried in India to avoid this bitterness as far as possible and to base our struggle on love for the cause and not hatred for the opponent. Personally I feel that it is inevitable that India should sever her present connection with the British Empire because such connection can only be based on the domination of England over India. That of course does not mean that we should break all contacts with England or that we should remain opponents. Indeed I feel sure that the only true comradeship that can exist between the two countries can only come when both are free of each other and can meet on a basis of equality.

I agree with you that construction and not destruction should be our motto. But to construct properly one has often to remove the debris of an old structure.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. To Swami Govindananda[1]

Allahabad
October 26, 1933

Dear Friend,
I received your letter of the 12th October about four or five days ago.[2] I regret the delay in answering it. I have today sent you a telegram to the following effect:

> Reference your letter. Suggest your sending requisition for meeting. Signatures may come separately.

With much that you say in your letter I am in agreement but I also disagree with a great part of it. I do not think it will serve any useful purpose to reply in an argumentative manner. There are one or two points however to which I should like to refer. You mentioned that "there is a deep resentment in the whole country against this effort

1. J N Correspondence, NMML
2. Swami Govindananda feared that the Congress leadership would meet the same fate as Kerensky in Russia and felt that the situation demanded the convening of the AICC

to decide the fate of an old nation behind closed doors in Poona between you and Gandhiji" I was not aware that I was a party to any such decision as you refer to Nor have I seen anywhere signs of any such resentment. I went to Poona soon after my discharge from prison to consult with Gandhiji about various matters and subsequently we issued a resume of our conversations in the form of letters addressed to each other. I fail to see how this can cause resentment to anybody or how it can be interpreted as deciding the fate of nations.

If the state of India today is similar to the one obtaining in Russia in the last quarter of 1917, as you suggest, surely this is not a matter for regret for the last quarter saw the beginnings of a great revolution. If we are on the eve of such a revolution, let us welcome it by all means. Personally I do not think there is any analogy whatsoever between 1917 in Russia and 1933 in India.

I am not interesting myself in the Harijan movement as it is being carried on, and, so far as I am concerned, my energy will be utilised for political work alone The name Harijan is new but you will remember that the abolition of untouchability has been a fundamental part of the Congress programme for many years

Regarding the AICC meeting you must be aware that I have repeatedly invited a requisition and have stated that immediately on receipt of it I shall convene the meeting. I am placed in a somewhat difficult position and in order to gauge the feeling of the members of the AICC. I took the only course open to me, i e, asked for a requisition if a sufficient number of members desire the meeting. For the last five weeks I have been patiently waiting for such a requisition but none has come. It is rather strange that there should be this delay in a requisition coming if, as you say, an overwhelming majority of members desire a meeting It is very easy for them to write to me as you have done I can assure you that I want to put no obstacles whatever in the way of a meeting As, however, there appear to be two sets of opinions, one desiring a meeting and the other definitely not desiring it, I left it to those members who wanted the meeting to take the initiative I might add that to remove any technical difficulties that may stand in the way of members living in different places I am perfectly prepared to accept as a requisition if the requisite number of members, that is, 30, write to me even separately If even this number do not wish to do so, and this number represents about 8% of the total membership, then I can only conclude that the great majority of members do not desire a meeting at present

I would therefore suggest to you, as I have done in my telegram, that you and those who think with you should write to me formally

on the subject. If your demand for the meeting is supported by others even though they write independently to me I shall immediately convene a meeting.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To N.S. Hardikar[1]

Allahabad
October 28, 1933

My dear Hardikar,
...I have just seen that Kamaladevi has been arrested in Gudivada.[2] This was rather unexpected. I suppose that probably she will be let off soon. But one never knows. This kind of thing is bound to continue. People talk of our withdrawing our offensive but they forget that the other party's offensive is continuous and unrelenting.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. Arrested on 27 October 1933 while delivering a speech.

8. To H.K. Hales[1]

Allahabad
October 28, 1933

Dear Mr. Hales,
I thank you for your letter of the 25th October.[2] I am afraid there is a vital difference in our viewpoints and there is not much meeting

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Hales thought a dissolution of Indo-British relations was 'unthinkable' and wished to meet Indian leaders to discuss the White Paper.

ground. I can assure you that I feel convinced that the policy I suggested will succeed not only in my lifetime but before I am very much older. As for those who agree with my viewpoint I can also assure you that they are a very large number.

It is not a question of a husband and wife separating but one of, if I may use a similar analogy, the perpetrator of a rape being made to part company with his victim. There can be no normal relations after a forcible rape. That rape must be atoned for before cooperation can arise, for this has to be based on mutual respect and mutual freedom.

I have no fear that India will be placed in a position of insecurity after her separation from Great Britain. Some Liberal politicians in India may desire protection from external invasions through the British armed forces but so far as the Congress is concerned the very first and the most vital thing that we want is the ending of this so-called protection.

I should like you to consider the measure of security we have in India today. You invited Mr. Gandhi some time back to visit Midnapore. I do not know if you have yourself visited Midnapore or Chittagong I think a visit to these places and an impartial enquiry would reveal to you that whatever else Indians may have or may not have, they have not got the least measure of security under British rule. I have never heard of any other incident in war time or in peace time or even in territory occupied by a hostile army, when children were called upon to keep cards of identity as they are required to do in Chittagong and Midnapore. I refer only to one incident. I can add to it but no doubt you can easily find out what British rule means to us by studying the record of happenings in these two districts of Bengal as well as in the Frontier Province.

If I may quote Arthur Griffith,[3] the founder of Sinn Fein, "England has one of her hands at our throat and the other hand in our pockets." So long as both these hands are not removed there can obviously be no talk of peace between England and India.

You are perfectly right in saying that the White Paper is unwelcome to every community in India. So far as the Congress is concerned it is totally indifferent to the fate of the White Paper because in its opinion it is wholly misconceived and incapable of improvement. We are not prepared to accept the dictum that we must leave the decision of the fate of our country into the hands of any foreign body or group of individuals. That fate must be settled by Indians themselves. This cannot be done by a few odd individuals, some of whom represent

3 (1872 1922), President of the Irish Republic, 1921 22

nobody but themselves, discussing and coming to an agreement with the opposite party. The right way to proceed is for a constituent assembly, elected by the people as a whole on the broadest franchise, to be held in India. I think it should be realised by our friends in England that the one certain way to court failure in India is to imagine that they could coerce the Indian people to act in the way they desire. It is impossible to coerce for any length of time any country or people with a flicker of life in them. And India has a bright enough flame which cannot be put out. So long as the element of coercion lasts it seems very much out of place to talk of cooperation.

I am perfectly willing to meet any individual or group, subject to my engagements, to discuss the present and the future in India. But personally I do not think that a meeting of the small group suggested by you would serve any useful purpose.

I have written to you quite frankly because I think it would be unfair to you if I clothed my thoughts and ideas in ambiguous language.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. To Secretary, Bikaner Political Case Committee[1]

Allahabad
October 29, 1933

Dear Sir,

I have your letter as well as a copy of your telegram to the Maharaja of Bikaner. It seems to me from the facts you have stated that grave injustice is being done in the case referred to.[2] You have my full sympathy in the matter. I feel, however, that what is really wrong is the whole Indian states system. Anything more incompetent, corrupt and autocratic it is difficult to imagine. I have no doubt in my mind

1 J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2 Seven subjects of Bikaner state had been charged with sedition and held for two years without trial. The Bikaner Political Case Committee was formed on 18 August 1933 to assist the accused.

that it must go completely before any proper solution of the Indian problem can be found.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. To J.T. Gwynn[1]

Allahabad
Nov. 2, 1933

Dear Mr. Gwynn,
I received your letter some days ago and I read it with great interest. I am glad you have written frankly and fully. I believe in frankness in politics and I have always endeavoured, within the limits that an active political worker has sometimes to face, to express my thoughts freely. Sometimes indeed both my colleagues and opponents have been somewhat embarrassed by my frankness.

I am perfectly willing to write to you from time to time or to answer any questions that you may put to me, if they are capable of an answer. Unhappily intelligent argument does not go very far when interests are at stake but none the less it makes a difference and the more of it we have the better. I know that there are a large number of people in England who want to know and understand the other side and if I can be of the slightest help to them in doing so I shall gladly make the attempt. As for the *Manchester Guardian* I have always had a soft corner in my heart for it in spite of occasional irritation at what I consider its perverted and wrongheaded Indian policy.

But there are some difficulties in my way. The lives of many of us are spent largely in Indian prisons with brief intervals spent in the wider world outside. We come out and have to face difficult political and economic problems and domestic upsets and illness. We try to do what we can in a rush and hurry and before we are even half way through the immediate problems that demand attention, back we go to prison. This kind of life is not helpful in carrying on a long distance correspondence. There is neither the time nor the inclination to write.

1. JN Correspondence, NMML. Extracts from this letter were published in the *Manchester Guardian* of 15 December 1933

Indian newspapers may help you to form some vague idea of conditions in the country. But that idea will be wholly inadequate. Partly this is so because they dare not give even the facts for fear of consequences, much less can they give expression to radical opinions. Partly, I must confess, it is due to a singular lack of comprehension of the major forces and events that are shaping the world and India today. I wonder if you have any notion of what is happening even now in parts of Bengal, notably the Midnapore and Chittagong areas, and the Frontier Province. The most amazing reprisals on a mass scale are indulged in by the government forces and yet little of this is allowed to appear in the press.

I cannot write to you, I am afraid, a long letter at present as I am hard pressed for time. If I attempted to deal with all the points you have raised and to answer your questions at all adequately I would have to write a long essay. I shall deal just with a few of the points briefly. I have recently written some articles in the Indian press and these have appeared in pamphlet form.[2] I am sending you these pamphlets separately. They will give you some idea of how my mind is working. I am also sending you a copy of an article which I gave *to a correspondent of the London Daily Herald.*[3] *I have no idea if* this article has appeared or is going to appear in the *Herald.*

I think you are right in saying that Mr. Gandhi has suppressed to some extent independent thought and initiative. Is that not inevitable when a great personality with a magnetic and extraordinary power of mass appeal arises? And yet, fundamentally, I think your statement is not wholly correct. There was very little independent political thought before what might be called the Gandhi era. Our middle class politicians and intellectuals merely repeated some phrases which they had learnt from the 19th century English liberal writers, regardless of their applicability to Indian conditions. Gandhi for the first time succeeded in pulling some of them out of these ruts and made them think along different lines, or rather to act along different lines. This action and the course of events gradually forced a newer ideology—vague and confused no doubt but with some relation to facts. But Gandhi's real contribution was not this change in the horizon of the intelligentsia or part of it, important as this was. It was the vast change he wrought in the mentality of the Indian masses. This was not just a Messiah worship, as is often stated. There was certainly a great deal

2. See *ante*, section 1.
3. See *ante*, item 1.

of the idea of a Messiah in the popular mind and yet there was something far more. India has had and has today no lack of people who are called mahatmas and reverenced, and even blindly obeyed by their followers. But the awakening that Gandhi brought about was definitely a political awakening of the masses. Gandhi was the political leader of India, not a religious one. Political subjects began to be discussed in the villages and the bazaars, quite divorced from religion and communalism. Thus, instead of suppressing political ideas, Gandhi actually did the reverse from a mass point of view. This sudden release from long continued suppression, and the programme of open and defiant action that Gandhi put forward, worked an amazing change in the masses. A helpless and demoralized people looked up and gathered strength and confidence in themselves and began to hope.

It is true that the new thought and action all ran along one channel. That was bound to happen in a mass movement. Some intellectuals who opposed the new trend were swept aside by the current, but this was largely because they had proved themselves bankrupt in ideas, ineffective in action, and hopelessly out of touch with realities.

Gandhi thus released thought from its old bondage and did not suppress it. The mass movement however tended to enforce conformity. Even this conformity did not and could not stop the growth of new ideas. What it did was to kill or smother the lifeless ideology of the Indian moderates. To some extent it is true that other ideas more in fitness with modern conditions were also partly smothered in the process but they were bound to survive and they have grown.

Today there is nothing more pitiful than the wail of the Indian moderate that nobody will listen to him He is so badly stuck in the ruts that it is impossible for him to come out and face facts. I am quite convinced that an intelligent peasant is more in touch with economic and political realities, though in a very limited way, than the highly intellectual (?) moderate leader. Talking to a group of moderates one feels that one is in a monastery and the monks have been completely cut off for long years from the world of thought and action.

Gandhi of course did not function in the air. The conditions were such that he could utilise them and work with them. It was a union of a great personality with objective conditions and the result was powerful mass movements.

The fundamental problem of India today, quite apart from independence and the like, is the incompatibility of the political and economic structures with existing conditions. The political structure is terribly expensive and top-heavy; it is toppling over through sheer financial

instability. There are of course other reasons also. The condition of the peasantry and the industrial workers is steadily deteriorating and no real relief seems possible under existing conditions. The zamindari system, which prevails in some of the provinces, is hard hit. The British Government is in a quandary. Politically it supports the zamindars in order to draw them to itself. Economically the zamindars are a nuisance to government and are no longer required. The government would like to increase its own revenue from land and this can come only at the cost of the zamindar. The government would also like to better the lot of the peasantry, partly in order to soothe them and prevent them from aggressive mass activity, and partly to increase their purchasing power so that they might consume foreign, and especially British, goods more. This would help British trade and also increase the customs revenue of the central government and thus give it much needed relief. The poor zamindar does not fit in with this scheme of things and yet for reasons of state policy he has to be patted on the back.

About the British connection I hold somewhat radical views. I cannot conceive of it, under present conditions, except in terms of imperialist domination and exploitation of India. I do not think that any fair cooperation on equal terms is possible so long as England does not change her own form of government radically. Nor do I think that the British Commonwealth of Nations is itself stable enough to survive for long. But whatever may be the fate of the dominions, India stands apart from them and she cannot fit in as others have done. I have touched upon this in my pamphlet.

The White Paper seems to me to be an utterly bad thing designed entirely to perpetuate and consolidate British domination, both directly and through the most backward and reactionary groups in India. I do not think it is even capable of improvement and personally I doubt if the proposals in it will ever be applied to India in that form. In any event such an application is so distant still that the question what we should do then does not arise now.

As in the West, the economic problem overshadows everything—the condition of the peasantry and the petty zamindars, the landless proletariat, the industrial workers, the *declasse* intellectuals and the large numbers of middle class people without the possibility of employment, and the extraordinarily expensive and out of date structure of government. To solve this problem with any success means the ending of British rule and something more, and so the problem is not faced at all, even though conditions deteriorate.

The problem of the army does not trouble me at all. Of course in all great changes there is a certain amount of risk which must be undertaken. I do not want the least bit of army control by the British and I should like to see the British army of occupation depart as soon as possible. If this was agreed to peacefully by both parties there would be no difficulty in making the necessary arrangements for the change-over and for the security of India. But such things are unhappily never agreed to peacefully. Inevitably, a struggle has to decide the issue and a successful struggle in itself creates the strength to protect the country from outside aggression as well as internal disruption.

I am strongly attracted towards communism and I feel that the only reasonable and scientific explanation of history is the communist one. I do not approve of many things that have taken place in Russia nor am I a communist in the accepted sense of the word. But taking everything together I have been greatly impressed by the Russian experiment. As you say communism was not given a fair chance in a backward country like Russia. It would have been far different and far more successful in a country of western Europe. And yet Russia seems to have made good and the new generation that is rising up there is an extraordinarily promising one.

I have a weakness for Oxford and what it stands for myself. If something like it, only with a broader base, could be retained, well and good. But even Oxford and its like are not worth the sacrifice of the wider mass culture and initiative that the right kind of communism should bring forth.

After all, the ultimate choice seems to lie between some type of communism or fascism; the middle forms seem to fade off. Between these two all my mind and heart is for the former.

I am all against organized religion even in its social aspect. Much more so do I object to it in its political manifestations. Communal representation may have to be put up with because of various factors, the principal reason being that a denial of it actually increases the disease. But I have no doubt that the British Government have deliberately aggravated this disease by their policy. Even today I would say that the disease is not nearly so bad as the government makes it out to be. It is there of course. But the government nominees to the R.T.C. were a thoroughly bad lot from the communal point of view and every effort was made to suppress the other party. Ultimately, I suppose, communalism will go by the diversion of interest to economic issues. Even now one can see this happening in the agrarian movements. Even from the purely nationalist point of view, the younger generation of Moslems is leaving its old moorings and has already discarded its

so-called leaders. These leaders, by the way, are more or less *purdanashin* people who seldom go to the public. They meet in private and issue long statements which interest very few persons even among their own co-religionists.

Essentially the Moslem communalist belongs to the middle class and is out for a job, and his prototype of the Hindu Mahasabha is exactly the same, with this difference that the latter organisation is confined largely to a group of the richer people—landlords, a few capitalists and even a few princes. Both the communalists are political reactionaries.

Many of the younger Moslems, and of course the younger Hindus and others also, are beginning to think on socialistic and communistic lines.

There is a slight tendency in Bengal to keep itself apart from India, culturally and politically. I think this is largely due to a feeling that the rest of India does not fully appreciate the great sacrifices of Bengal in the struggle for freedom. This feeling is not a correct one. At the same time there are many other forces at work knitting the various provinces closer together and I think that the momentary irritation in Bengal will pass off.

I am afraid I cannot discuss individuals in this letter. That is far too delicate a subject for an active politician.

I began this letter by saying that I would not write a long one. And yet I was drawn on, page after page, and I find that I have imposed quite a long letter on you. There is nothing confidential in what I have written to you and you can certainly make such use of it as you think proper.

Was it not you who paid me a visit in the Lucknow gaol in 1922?[4]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4 Gwynn had visited Jawaharlal in jail on 14 October 1922, see *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 346.

11. To Kakalbhai Kothari[1]

Allahabad
November 2, 1933

Dear Friend,[2]
I am in receipt of your letter. I wish the Kathiawar States' People's Convention, which is going to meet at Amreli, all success. Personally I feel that the States' People's Conferences have seldom faced the issue directly. They have discussed all manner of side issues and avoided the main one. In my opinion the present autocratic form of government in the Indian states is an absurd and dangerous relic of feudal times and should be done away with as speedily as possible. The proposed All India Federation according to the White Paper is an attempt to bolster up this autocracy and to consolidate themselves not only in the states, but also in India as a whole. Neither the people of the states nor of the rest of India can tolerate this imposition. I think the time has come when the people of the Indian states should take up a definite and clear attitude on the subject and should work with the rest of India for the realisation of the common goal of full freedom.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 JN Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2 (1900-1966); at this time secretary, Indian States' People's Conference for Kathiawar and Kutch states.

12. On the Formation of the Democratic Swaraj Party[1]

Democratic Swaraj Party seems to me to be a misnomer; although, so far as I am concerned, they are welcome to any name, the more resounding the better, for it is likely to consist chiefly of a name.

It is not democratic and it obviously has no real public support. It has little to do with Swaraj

So far as I can see it is not much of a party.

1 Interview to the press, Allahabad, 2 November 1933 *The Pioneer*, 5 November 1933.

The one aim that has brought a number of individuals together is the desire to enter the councils. So long as the Congress is a dangerous body they will keep far away from it. But they assure us most generously that if in the fulness of time the Congress becomes a perfectly safe, legal and constitutional organisation, they will be willing to join it.[2] That is something to be thankful for.

Mr. Kelkar's address as well as the other proceedings of the party, so far as they have been published in the press, are interesting revelations of the mentality that prevailed in India a couple of generations back.[3] I would suggest to the new party that a school of politics, economics and current affairs be opened for the benefit of its members.

2 At the Maharashtra Political Conference on 28 October 1933 it was decided that the members of the Democratic Swaraj Party would also be members of the Congress but this condition would not be enforced till the ban on the Congress had been lifted

3 Kelkar had wanted "an effective manipulation of the legislative machine," and thought noncooperation was only a "sullen, static aloofness from the political machine."

13. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
November 8, 1933

My dear Bapu,

I have not written to you for three or four days although there was plenty to write about. I expected to go to Wardha and to see you. But this visit has fallen through now.

The effect of my telegram to Nariman was to make him pack up and come here.[2] Brelvi also turned up. We had long talks. It was evident that we held conflicting views about most matters however much we might seek to cover them in soft language. Nariman wanted to carry on open and aggressive propaganda for his view—indeed he

1 Maharashtra Government, Home Department (Special), Intercepted Letters

2 The telegram of 3 November 1933 read: "Surprised at your public statement criticising colleagues Working Committee without reference to them Regarding your criticism suppression democracy what course do you suggest? Do you desire meeting Working Committee?"

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had already begun this.[3] It seems to me ridiculous and impossible for the Working Committee members to carry on such propaganda against each other on vital matters of Congress policy. The only way out was for the A.I.C.C. to decide and it was up to those who wanted a change of programme to requisition a meeting. I suggested that the members of the old Working Committee should meet informally to consider the situation and if necessary to convene an A.I.C.C. meeting. Nariman agreed and hence my telegram to you.[4] It was obvious that such a consultation would not do much good. We all of us know more or less each other's views and a mere repetition would not convince anybody. Yet a measure of formality was required and there was no other way out. The date you fixed was a most inconvenient one for me as it conflicted with some rather important engagements. But I sacrificed them. Yesterday a telegram came from Abul Kalam Azad to say that he was very ill and suggesting that the consultations might be postponed for a few days. I wired to him that this could not be done. Then came Mahmud's telegram also saying that he could not come on this date. I was going to ignore this also when a sheaf of telegrams came from Bombay. Ansari could not come and hence Sarojini and Nariman suggested a date as soon after the 22nd as possible. The arrangement about the 11th thus fell through. I do not know when and where you can spare the time again. Nariman etc. suggest two clear days I shall await your reply.

This proposed consultation is a most futile affair but what else can be done? I have suggested to Nariman that instead of this he and those who think with him should demand an A.I.C.C. meeting and I shall convene it. They waste time and energy over preliminaries. It may be that some of us have come to the parting of the ways. If so let us face it and the consequences.

If an A.I.C.C. meeting is held it seems to me that some place in the C.P. would be the most suitable for it. Probably Jubbulpore would suit you and others.

Malaviyaji returned from Mussoorie today and we had a long talk. The talk will be continued tomorrow morning. He was looking much better than when I last saw him.

3 Nariman, on 2 November 1933, objected to brushing aside the differences in the Congress and criticised the "tendency of some Congressmen to place individuals howsoever great above the organisation and party." He also issued a pamphlet *Whither Congress?* to give publicity to his views

4 Dated 6 November 1933, the telegram read: "Nariman and I consider informal consultation with you, Azad, Ansari, Sarojini, Mahmud and others desirable within next 10 days or so Suggest your fixing day, place suitable to you"

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I have received your letter of Nov. 3 with its enclosures. The account of *sarkar salaam* is horrible and the mere reading of these barbarous doings upset me. We have had no such thing in the U.P. I feel quite sure that not all the might of the British Government can force us to submit to it here.

As for the Frontier Province note[5] I would rather not approach Sapru about it. I have given a copy of it to Malaviyaji.

Mother's progress is not as fast as it ought to be. And yet it is much to be thankful for that she is improving slowly.

I have just had a telegram from Jamnalalji asking me to stay for a few days at Wardha or the neighbourhood. I am afraid the trip is off.

Love,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

5 This note stated that 300 Congress volunteers were being kept as under trials for long periods followed by severe punishment and nearly Rs 80,000/ had been extorted from the villages under one pretext or the other It demanded an urgent enquiry into the repressive policy

14. To K.F. Nariman[1]

Allahabad
November 8, 1933

My dear Nariman,

I have just received Ansari's and your telegrams In accordance with your desires I have postponed the proposed consultation and have wired to Gandhiji accordingly. This sudden change is rather unfortunate. However, I suppose there is no help for it.

If Gandhiji suggests any other date I shall of course let you know. But personally I feel that the situation is developing too rapidly to permit of delay. All that a consultation with Gandhiji can result in is the decision to hold an A.I.C.C. meeting. Obviously no other decision can be arrived at by us Delay now means a growth of the disruptive tendencies and unfortunate mutual criticisms which you deprecate. Personally, I do not wish to take the slightest part in such arguments. I feel, therefore, that the sooner we, as members of the Working Committee, know where we stand the better. Only the A.I.C.C.

1 AICC File No G 30/(1933 36), p 288, NMML.

can decide this one way or the other. Why then should we not decide to hold it without further ado. Of course the members of the Working Committee should meet a little before the A.I.C.C. for mutual consultation

I should prefer receiving a requisition for the A.I.C.C. meeting to having to take the initiative myself. I explained to you the reason why. In the alternative I can state that as some members of the Working Committee desire it, we have called the A.I.C.C. meeting. If this is settled all that remains is to fix up the date and place. Both these would partly depend on Gandhiji, that is, if we wish him to be present. Personally I would like him to be there. Even apart from Gandhiji there are certain advantages in having the meeting in the C.P. The atmosphere is quieter there and there is likely to be less obstruction.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. To H.K. Hales[1]

Allahabad
November 9, 1933

Dear Mr Hales,

I have just received your letter of November 7th.[2] It is not signed but I presume that this is due to inadvertence.

It is always a little difficult, even in normal conditions, to judge the extent that a particular view prevails in a country. In a fully democratic country this can be done, to some extent, although even there very often economic pressure on various groups makes them vote contrary to their own convictions. In India there being no democracy or democratic institutions there is no such test. A rough and ready way of judging popular sentiment is from newspapers, public meetings and the like But this is obviously very incomplete and often deceptive because nationalist newspapers represent particular groups. There is certainly a common nationalist viewpoint which unites the people of a country which is under foreign domination Under cover of this nationalism, however, various upper class groups lay stress on their own interests

1. J N Correspondence, N.M M L.
2 Hales suggested to Jawaharlal that as he was the "leader of a hopeless minority" he should recognise "the necessity of close cooperation with Britain."

far more than on the interests of the masses. Thus even under normal conditions there is no expression of views of the very great majority of the population.

This discrepancy between real feelings and their public expression becomes very marked under the abnormal conditions that have prevailed in India during the last two years or so. Strict censorship and special laws to prevent freedom of the press and meeting and other expression of opinion, make it quite impossible for an outsider to judge what is happening and even more so what people are thinking and feeling. Many people avoid saying what they really feel. Others who are prepared to face the consequences of frank statement do not find newspapers or presses who will help them in the process.

Thus it is not possible for anyone to say at a particular moment which viewpoint will prevail if perfect freedom of expression was given. We can only go by our general knowledge of the country and her people. From such knowledge as I possess of my countrymen and countrywomen, both of the middle classes and the working and agricultural classes, I am quite convinced that never, at any rate since the revolt of 1857, has there been such extraordinary bitterness against the British Government and such a passionate desire to be rid of it as exists today. For reasons of tactics some people may express themselves in a moderate or in an ambiguous way but their feelings are not fundamentally different from those of others. I admit that there are small groups who are afraid of real democracy in India because they fear that their special privileges and interests will suffer thereby. But these small groups apart, there is a universal desire for Indian independence That is to say, a complete elimination of every vestige of imperial control.

This is very natural and you can find similar phenomena in many other countries where nationalism has grown as a reaction to imperialism. Thanks to Mr. Gandhi, the bitterness of nationalism has been largely toned down and specially there is hardly any feeling against individuals. But all history shows us that nationalism and imperialism are conflicting forces and there can be no compromise between them.

I should like you to appreciate that this is not a conflict between India and England, much less is it one between the Indian people and the British people. The conflict is with a certain system called imperialism which the British Government represents today in India and elsewhere. With that system, in the very nature of things, India cannot make peace because that system is based and exists solely by the exploitation of a subject country. If England changed her form and method of government and dropped all taint of imperialism from it there would

be little difficulty in the two countries cooperating for a common purpose. But the purpose must be a common one before there can be cooperation. Between imperialist England and nationalist India there is no common ground. It is from this point of view that I said that it was inevitable that India should sever her present connection with the British Empire.

I think that is the view of the vast majority of my fellow countrymen. Personally I am perfectly prepared to have a referendum or a plebiscite taken on this point and to accept its decision. But I want you, for a moment, to eliminate personal views and to consider the question historically and objectively. If you do so, I am sure that, inevitably, you will arrive at the conclusion I have done. We are living in the midst of great movements and vast economic and other forces which seem to be almost beyond human control. To imagine that a few odd individuals can change the destiny of nations by what they think or what they do not think is an out of date notion.

You told me that by no possibility can I achieve the object I have in view; nor can I have more than an infinitesimal proportion of the Indian population to support me. It is not a question of people supporting me or anyone else but of standing for an idea or an objective which for the moment some of us may represent. We may come or go but that idea remains and continues to move masses. I can only assure you of my conviction that that idea is bound to triumph within a reasonable time and the more the triumph is delayed the more radical and far-reaching it will be.

I have not the slightest feeling of hostility to the English people. As you perhaps know I was educated at Harrow and at Trinity College, Cambridge, and I have always had a warm corner in my heart for English friends and English ways. It can be no pleasure to me to carry on in a way which brings conflict and suffering. But the conflict is not of my creation nor indeed do I say that it is a British creation. It has been created by the march of events. If we want to resolve it and to end it we have to approach the question with a right historical and economic perspective and to face facts as they are and not as we would have them to be.

I am glad that we agree on two points: that the White Paper is thoroughly unwelcome to the people in India and secondly that the fate of India must be settled by the Indians themselves. This is indeed a common ground for meeting. I am prepared to cooperate with anybody *anywhere* on this basis If the British Government also approached the Indian problem on this basis I have no doubt that a solution would be found, of the nationalist problem at least, without much difficulty. It is

the denial in theory and in practice of the right of Indians to settle their future that has given rise to so much trouble.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

16. On the Agreement with Lancashire Mills[1]

I think I have no right to say anything from the Swadeshi Exhibition platform as I did not take any part in its organization. My non-participation in its activities did not mean that I did not take interest in *swadeshi*. I am very much interested in *swadeshi* but since I am engaged in the struggle for freedom, I feel that I should concentrate my full energy in that struggle and should not divert my attention by associating myself with any other movement, however good it might be for the country.

Of late a question has arisen whether the Indian mill cloth should be allowed to be exhibited and sold in the *swadeshi* exhibitions or not. Some years ago, the Congress issued certificates to the Indian mills on their agreeing to certain conditions, one of which was that they would cooperate in the country's struggle for freedom. About 90 per cent of the mills signed those conditions, but it was discovered subsequently that the proprietors of many of the mills forgot the conditions and acted against them; and the latest instance of their deplorable conduct is the action of the millowners of Bombay in entering into a pact with Lancashire.[2] How far that agreement was fair is not the question, but the mere fact of their entering into a pact with Lancashire when the struggle for freedom was on, amounted to their being opposed to the interests of the country. It is, therefore, necessary that the

1 Speech at the All India Swadeshi Exhibition, Allahabad, 9 November 1933 *The Leader*, 11 November 1933.

2 H.P. Mody, on behalf of the Bombay millowners, signed an agreement with Sir William Clare-Lees, the representative of Lancashire interests. It conceded that India would not seek the same degree of protection against Britain as against other foreign interests and Indian millowners agreed not to make fresh proposals regarding duties on imports of British goods if the general surcharge imposed in October 1931 were removed.

traders dealing in cloth should express their resentment against the act in question of the Bombay millowners.

Such a conduct of the proprietors of the mills has given rise to the question whether mill cloth should be allowed in *swadeshi* exhibitions or not and the Charkha Sangh decided not to permit khaddar *bhandars* to participate in exhibitions, which allowed the sale of mill cloth. But as the Allahabad Swadeshi Committee had already given stalls to the dealers of mill cloth also beforehand, special permission was given to the khaddar *bhandars* to participate in the exhibition this year on the understanding that in future mill cloth would not be allowed in the exhibition.

I am not against the Indian mill cloth or other Indian industries but the point is that those who are opposed to the interests of the country should not be helped.

17. To K.R. Luckmidas[1]

Allahabad
November 10, 1933

Dear Mr. Luckmidas,[2]

I have your letter with its enclosures.[3] What I said about the Indian states system represented my exact and well thought out views on the subject. I do not think the system can be reformed. It must be and will be ended.

As for your scheme of constructive work, I do not think it is possible to undertake any scheme of the kind in the midst of a national struggle of life and death which is going on in India at present.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Correspondence, NMML.
2. Editor, *Modern India Thinks*, (1932).
3. In his letter of 6 November 1933 he suggested a scheme of constructive work such as improving the conditions of the depressed classes and granting financial assistance to educational institutions with the cooperation of the states.

18. On the Congress Programme[1]

The programme of the Congress is dynamic enough, but it is perfectly true we are passing through a period of lull and the masses are not participating in direct action. As a matter of fact a large number of persons, far larger than is stated in government statements, have offered civil disobedience in the course of the last two months or so and gone to prison. In the province of Bihar, my information is, and this is not up to date, that over 800 such persons have gone to prison. In the United Provinces and other provinces also, in numerous places individuals continue to offer satyagraha. The number of all these taken together is considerable, but the question of number is not very important at this juncture.

We realise that we cannot suddenly develop a mass movement which can upset the machinery of government. The choice before us and the country is between the struggle even at a low pitch and gradual drifting towards some form of cooperation with government. There is no middle way. So far as the Congress is concerned it is today committed to the former policy and it stands for no compromise with imperialism

Those who criticise the Congress programme have so far made no suggestion of an effective alternative programme. There are some, of course, who are pining away to enter the stately portals of the council chamber, but we leave these gentlemen out of consideration for the moment because it is obvious that the question does not arise at present and will not arise for some years. The cry that a change of programme is needed means only one thing, that the only programme we have should be scrapped. The slogan that we should fight on all fronts also means just one thing and that is that we should give up the struggle on the front we are fighting. All these are negative policies and cannot even be considered so long as there is any fight in the country.

I should like to assure our friends and critics that there is plenty of fight and life left in large numbers of us and we shall carry on in an aggressive, persistent and defiant way so far as the struggle with imperialism is concerned and that we will not compromise with it. If they can suggest any effective programme of struggle we shall willingly consider it. It is easy enough for those who want a change of programme to take the necessary steps to bring this about. For many weeks I have been inviting them to do so but my invitation has not been accepted.

1 Interview to the press, Allahabad, 11 November 1933 *The Tribune*, 17 November 1933

19. To P. Nageswara Rao[1]

Allahabad
14.11.33

Dear Mr. Nageswara Rao,[2]
I have your letter with its enclosures. I do not understand what you mean by asking me to give permission to Mr. Giri to carry on work. He does not require permission from me for any work. He can certainly carry on as he thinks right.

India has entered a certain historical stage in her struggle for freedom. That stage is a revolutionary stage when the usual constitutional and legal activities are not possible. People who talk about these organisational activities do not realise where we stand today.

There is no question of my going on tour all over India. This suggestion itself betrays an ignorance of present-day conditions in India.

Most of my work has been in rural areas. A recent conference of the U.P. Congress workers decided to devote its energies almost entirely to rural areas.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Home Department (Political) File No 4/19/33, National Archives of India.
2. A resident of Machilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh

20. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
20.11.33

My dear Bapu,
I am sorry for the delay in writing to you. It is difficult to know where to write as you are moving about, and I have recently had a full share of work which has given me no breathing time—meetings, consultations, workers coming, peasants etc., and there is a huge correspondence without any staff to deal with it. I am afraid I am guilty

1 Home Department (Political) File No 4/19/33, National Archives of India.

or have been guilty of not answering letters promptly and Jamnalalji is entitled to complain. But I thought that my letters to you were bound to be shared by him.

About the Swaraj Bhawan Trust matters[2] you are perfectly right that I should refer to the trustees. It was my intention to do so and I shall now take the necessary steps.

I am very sorry to learn that you cannot find time—except three hours on a Monday afternoon—to give to a consultation with some of us. I suppose we must be content with that. I feel that we must meet to clear up certain matters—not fundamental policies but procedure. I was waiting to hear from Ansari. As he did not write I wired to him and he replied that we might meet on December 4th at Jubbulpore but he preferred December 10th at Delhi. I sent an answer to him that December 4th was late enough and we should meet then. To that I have had no reply. I am now provisionally fixing 4th and informing others accordingly.

As for the A I C.C. it still hangs in the air though a requisition is threatened from time to time. I think it will materialise. I feel that you should attend it even though you may not take an active part in it. If necessary your tour programme might be varied to fit in with it. Changes in the programme have already been made and this is not impossible. However it is for you to decide.

I have just received intimation that some old railway and other shares standing in my name have been attached on account of my income tax. The value at par of these shares was about Rs. 20,000. I suppose the present value is much less—probably about 13,000/- or 14,000/-. Previously they had realised other moneys from a sale of a car etc.

I wonder if you have noticed my gentle comment on the Hindu Mahasabha and the still more gentle rejoinder.[3] I have enjoyed them greatly.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

2 Concerning the working and financial position of Swaraj Bhawan Hospital, see *post*, item 95.
3 See *post*, items 77 and 78.

21. To Roger Baldwin[1]

Allahabad
November 23, 1933

My dear Roger,

It is good to hear from you again after a long interval and I was glad to receive your letter of October 19th together with a copy of the letter you had sent many months ago to Mr. Gandhi.[2]

No arguments of yours are necessary to convince me of the desirability of having a responsible and capable Congress representative in America who can keep in touch with developments in India. I am prepared to do a great deal to bring this about and, if it is at all possible, I shall get it done whenever an opportunity arises.

But I must not give you a wrong impression of what I can do. In regard to this matter we are rather helpless at present. Our organisations and committees are illegal and cannot function normally. This of course does not mean that we cannot function, and this by itself would not be a bar to our taking any step abroad. But this does mean that we have to carry on a hard struggle at home and most of our good people are usually in prison. It is highly unlikely that any prominent colleague of ours would be given passport facilities to go abroad. Then again the censorship of mails makes it difficult to communicate with the outside world.

There is another vital difficulty. The growth of our national movement has reached a stage when it is likely to be in permanent and intensive conflict with imperialism. As the struggle grows more intense the weaker elements fall away and a seeming disruption goes off. As a matter of fact this makes for real strength. But it does create a certain confusion in people's minds. It is a conflict between those who can only work on constitutional and legal lines and those who have come to the conclusion that it is impossible to go ahead within the framework of the existing political order.

That is the political side. Then there is the social and economic aspect. World events as well as our national struggle itself have led to a rapid development of social forces in India. Class cleavages are becoming more apparent. The nationalist ideology is being partly

1 JN Correspondence, NMML.
2 In his letter of 17 February 1933, Baldwin had suggested that a representative of the Congress be sent to the United States

replaced by a social ideology, generally vague but here and there definite and clear. This also helps to produce cleavages.

You will thus see that we are in a curious state of flux. On the one side the civil disobedience movement is going on, though at a much lower pitch than before, on the other there are various groups pulling in different directions. Ordinarily the full Congress would meet and arrive at a majority decision. But the Congress cannot meet today in a normal manner owing to government restrictions. All attempted meetings have really been occasions for civil disobedience when delegates have been forcibly dispersed by the police or arrested and convicted. It is possible that the All India Congress Committee might meet in the course of the next month and perhaps this will help to clarify the situation. It might on the other hand make the confusion worse confounded.

Under these circumstances it is not easy to say what exactly the Congress would stand for if it has the chance to express its opinion. Mr. Gandhi's recent fasts and decisions have added to the confusion and many of us do not follow his logic or understand his reasoning for them. None the less he remains, as before, the dominating personality so far as the masses are concerned.

Thus the question resolves itself into this. We are not in a position to nominate a person who can be called a representative of the Congress. Even if we could do so, he could only represent one set of opinion in the Congress and anyhow he is not going to be permitted by the British Government to leave India.

I feel that what I have written above will not throw much light on the Indian situation and might even succeed in confusing you more than enlightening you. But the fault lies with the situation itself which is confusing. I look upon all this as a real sign of growth and am in no way perturbed.

My sister got married last month[3] and has gone off to live in Bombay.

With all good wishes,

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3 Krishna Nehru was married to G. P. Hutheesing on 20 October 1933

22. Interview to the Press[1]

I do not know anything about the letter referred to in the message from Karachi.[2] There can be no question of Gandhiji or my being 'brought round' to call a meeting of the A.I.C.C. because we were 'round' all the time. The meeting would have been held long ago if but a handful of members had asked us to do so. In spite of my repeated invitations for a requisition, I have so far received just one postcard from a member of the A.I.C.C. from Bihar asking me to add his name to a requisition for the meeting. Some others, like Swami Govindananda, have made statements in the press but have not followed it by any written demand to me. I telegraphed to Swami Govindananda asking him to send the requisition even on his own behalf and suggested that names could be separately added to it later, but he has not even acknowledged my letter or telegram. Quite apart from an ordinary requisition, a member of the Working Committee stands on a special footing. He has only to ask me in his individual capacity to summon a meeting and I, as General Secretary, am prepared to do so without any further requisition. I do not see, therefore, why any member of the Working Committee should take the trouble to issue circular letters as mentioned in the Karachi message. All he needs to do is to write or wire to me and his wishes will be fulfilled. I do not know what truth there is in the Karachi message. It seems to me rather extraordinary that any member of the Working Committee should carry on a propaganda in this way behind the back of the executive of which he is a member. It is still more extraordinary for anyone to talk about unanimity over a resolution of the kind suggested in the Karachi message, when it is notorious that such a resolution is not only against the present policy of the Congress for which, in theory at least, the Working Committee is responsible but which has also been openly supported by large numbers of prominent Congressmen. If anyone, whether he is a member of the Working Committee or not,

1. Allahabad, 23 November 1933 *The Leader*, 25 November 1933.
2. A press report from Karachi on 24 November 1933, based on letters from Nariman to prominent Congressmen, stated that Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal had been 'brought round' to call a meeting of the A.I.C.C. the following month.

is labouring under this delusion I can only say that he is grievously mistaken and will have a rude awakening.

Again I repeat that the meeting of the A.I.C.C. will be convened as soon as a requisition reaches me or even a single member of the Working Committee demands it.

Question: Can't you, as General Secretary, convene a meeting of the A.I.C.C. on your initiative?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Of course under the constitution a member of the Working Committee cannot force the hands of the General Secretary in this way but I do not wish to stand on legal formalities or to raise any obstructions in the way of those who desire a change in the programme of the Congress. But I do feel that the initiative should come from those who desire such a change and not from me when I am not in favour of the change I trust that any A.I.C.C. member who wants this change will take the obvious and the normal course of asking me to convene the meeting instead of avoiding the step and criticising me for his own avoidance and also at the same time carrying on a propaganda which is not very fair to the Working Committee and is obviously subversive of discipline and organised activity.

23. To the Editor, Amrita Bazar Patrika[1]

Allahabad
November 24, 1933

Sir,

I feel that you have done me, perhaps unwittingly, an injustice in a reference to me in your leading article of November 23rd.[2] You say that "Pandit Jawaharlal seems to think that those who think in terms

1 *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 28 November 1933.

2 The editorial demanded that Jawaharlal call the A.I.C.C. on his own initiative. It could either endorse the present Congress policy, or lead to the abandoning of individual civil disobedience, which in any case served only to put the Congress under an official ban

of revolutionary change should not object to such secret functioning of the Congress." The average reader will naturally think that you have quoted my words within the inverted commas. As a matter of fact I never said anything about secret functioning, and even an inference was unjustified. What I said in the course of an article[3] was as follows.

> People forget sometimes that we are functioning abnormally. They discuss the constitutional issue in terms of normality or they criticise the Congress for its seeming inactivity, forgetting that the Congress has arrived at a certain stage of historical growth. It is not at present a constitutional or legal body and many of the safe and brave deeds that are performed on public platforms are no longer in its line. Constitutionalists naturally dislike this; they cannot function in an illegal atmosphere. But why should those who think in terms of revolutionary change object to this inevitable and desirable development?

I was not thinking at all of any secret activity when I wrote this. I was merely pointing out that when a national movement grows it reaches a stage when it must cease to be a constitutional movement, in the limited and governmental sense of the word, and come into conflict with various laws made to suppress it. Having arrived at that stage it cannot go back except by rendering itself wholly ineffective. My argument was addressed to the 'left' or advanced socialist criticism of some of my previous articles.

About the A.I.C.C. meeting may I inform you that in spite of my repeatedly declaring that I await a requisition or even separate signatures for a requisition, I have so far received only one postcard from a member in Bihar asking me to add his name to a requisition. Not a single other member has written to me definitely about it. Some individual members have certainly made statements in the press but they have refrained from following them up by accepting my invitation to write to me formally. Swami Govindananda, to give an instance, has made more than one press statement, and I wired and wrote to him to send me his *requisition or even separate names for a* requisition. But he has not even acknowledged my telegram or letter. I really fail to understand this extraordinary modesty and reluctance

3 See *ante*, section 1, item 3.

to adopt the natural and normal course. There seems to be some mystery about it. Is it that our friends who sometimes talk of the desirability of an A.I.C.C. meeting really do not want it?

Bengal's quota of A.I.C.C. members is 48. Even some of these members, if they were so inclined, could send me the requisition. Why has not one of them written to me on the subject though I have invited them to do so? Perhaps, Sir, it might be worthwhile for you to try to convert some of our Bengal colleagues of the A.I.C.C. to your viewpoint.

I might repeat what I have already stated separately that I shall also convene an A.I.C.C. meeting if a single member of the Working Committee desires me to do so. The constitution may not compel me to do so but the wishes of a Working Committee colleague naturally weigh with me, as General Secretary, and I shall carry them out.

So far, however, the position is this: I have only a postcard from Bihar, and with all respect to the member who sent it, a single postcard is hardly evidence of a passionate desire among A.I.C.C. members to have a meeting.

Yours etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

24. To Members of the A.I.C.C.[1]

Dear Comrade,

Some controversy has arisen about the desirability of holding a meeting of the All India Congress Committee, and I venture to address you on the subject so that you may be informed of the existing position. Ordinarily it would have been my duty and privilege to convene such a meeting as we have not met for a long time now and much has happened during the past two years which demands attention. But, as you are aware, we are not living under normal conditions. A national struggle is being carried on and the Congress organisation

1. Allahabad, 24 November 1933. *The Tribune*, 26 November 1933

has been functioning in an abnormal manner. Under these circumstances the responsibility for convening or not convening a meeting of the A.I.C.C. seemed to me to be a great one and naturally I took the advice of respected colleagues. The advice was conflicting. Under these circumstances it seemed to me, as General Secretary, to be the right course to leave the decision and initiative in the hands of the members themselves.

The constitutional way of doing so was to invite a requisition from thirty members as laid down by our rules. I made repeated statements in the press suggesting that such a requisition might be sent to me by those who desire a meeting to be held. In order to remove any technical difficulties in their way I went so far to suggest that individual members of the A.I.C.C. might send me their signatures separately. In spite of this invitation no requisition has been sent to me and only one solitary member from Bihar has written to me asking that his name might be added to any requisition that might be received.

I have further made it clear that if even a single member of the Working Committee wants me to convene the A.I.C.C., I shall do so in deference to the wishes of a respected colleague. This is the position.

I have not desired, and I do not desire, to place the slightest obstruction in the way of those who wish to have a meeting under the peculiar circumstances of today. I wished to have the direction of A.I.C.C. members themselves in the matter and I have made the path clear for such direction.

We do not wish to enter into the controversial aspects of the question or of vital issues that the A.I.C.C. may have to consider when it meets. My function, as General Secretary of the A.I.C.C. and a member of the Congress executive, is to carry out the Congress policy and take my directions from the majority of the members of the A.I.C.C. I trust that other members will also avoid a needless and harmful controversy. It is possible that many members have changed their addresses during this long period. Many are in prison. I shall be grateful if those who are in a position to do so will intimate to me their correct addresses.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

25. To Rev. Dan Singh Chowdhury[1]

Allahabad
November 24, 1933

Dear Mr. Chowdhury,
Thank you for your letter and good wishes. It may be that merely courting imprisonment does not carry us far. But it seems to me that we have arrived at a stage when every effective action involves the risk of imprisonment. To avoid that risk leads to ineffectiveness.
With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 JN Correspondence, NMML.

26. To Ranglidas M. Kapadia[1]

Allahabad
November 24, 1933

Dear Mr. Kapadia,[2]
Forgive me for the delay in answering your letter. I was glad to read about your general views on the political situation. This situation seems a little complex and confusing but essentially it is clear enough. The very fact that it appears confusing is a sign of growth. We are growing out of a narrow and purely nationalist ideology.
My mother is better now and she is making slow progress.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 JN Correspondence, NMML.
2 Editor, *The States People*, the journal of the All India States' People's Conference

27. Speech to the Kanpur Swadeshi League[1]

It is not without hesitation that I have accepted the invitation of the Swadeshi League to visit the exhibition and to receive a welcome address I have no time to waste over *swadeshi* exhibitions but that does not mean that I have no sympathies with the aims and objects of the Swadeshi League. There is one thing which is very much responsible for my taking no part in the Swadeshi League movement and the Swadeshi League exhibition. That one thing is the presence of the mill cloth shops in the exhibition. I want you to remember those days when the satyagraha movement was at its height and the millowners willingly or unwillingly had to sign the Congress pledge to the effect that they would do their best to promote the cause of Indian nationalism. Now as the Congress fight has become a bit slack they have taken advantage of it and have not only broken their pledges which they had given upon their word of honour but have also begun to do things and enter into agreements which are directly opposed to the interests of the country.

I wish to point out to you the recent agreement entered into by the Millowners' Association represented by Mr. Mody on the one hand and the Lancashire Mill Association on the other hand. I recall those days when Mr. Mody visited my place often for certain alterations in the Congress pledge. Those days were when the Congress programme of foreign cloth boycott was at its height and Mr. Mody would not have dared to enter into such treacherous agreements as he has done recently. All these things are responsible for my attitude in treating the mill cloth on the same footing as any other foreign cloth. Consequently I do not subscribe to the policy of encouraging exhibitions where mill cloth is allowed either for sale or for display. I have no sympathy for millowners. They try to fill their pockets at the expense of labourers.

1 30 November 1933 From *The Searchlight*, 6 December 1933

discuss the question of holding a meeting of the All India Congress Committee. The meeting was held simply to enable some friends to see one another and to exchange views on some important matters. For instance, I had not met Maulana Abul Kalam Azad since his release from jail, and the Jubbulpore meeting brought us together.

32. Statement to the Press[1]

A casual remark made in lighter vein by Gandhiji has apparently been taken very seriously by the gentlemen of the press. At a meeting of Delhi Congress workers, when Gandhiji was pressed for time and had to go away and many questions were still being put to him, he remarked that these questions might be put to me, as he had given a general power of attorney to me. This remark has been given prominence in the press and all sorts of inferences have been drawn from it. As a matter of fact it has little significance. Gandhiji has been pleased to make similar remarks about me and others on many previous occasions. Even leaders of great movements must be permitted to relax occasionally and indulge in humour.

The Congress is not something that can be handed over by anybody to anyone else. Gandhiji no doubt is our respected leader and I have the honour to be the General Secretary of the Congress. As such, I have certain duties to perform and Gandhiji referred to these in his remarks.

1. Allahabad, 16 December 1933 *The Tribune*, 18 December 1933.

33. On Arrests of Congressmen in the U.P.[1]

The recent convictions of some Congressmen in Allahabad,[2] Shri Sheo Murti Singh, Shri Feroze Gandhi[3] and others, for alleged no-rent

1 Statement to the press, Allahabad, 25 December 1933 *The Leader*, 28 December 1933

2 Feroze Gandhi was arrested on 8 December 1933 and Sheo Murti Singh on 13 December 1933 for "instigating" people not to pay rent and taxes. Both denied the charge of instigation but were sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment each

3. (1912 1960), married Indira Nehru, 1942, member, Lok Sabha, 1952-60.

It is true that there is a great deal of political depression in the country at present but I do not think that conditions are quite so bad as you suggest. We are passing through an inevitable period of lull. It is perfectly true that under present conditions the existing programme of the Congress is not attractive or dynamic in the sense that it moves large numbers. No programme can be dynamic during a period of depression. But there can be programmes which are potentially dynamic and which can develop rapidly as soon as conditions change. I think the Congress programme of direct action has that potentiality in it....

30. On the Repressive Policy of Government[1]

So long as the bread and unemployment problems of the millions of poverty stricken peasants and educated youth remain unsolved, the freedom fight cannot be stopped even by Mahatma Gandhi.

I admit the temporarily prevailing dullness but am satisfied at the public zeal, activity and enthusiasm, considering the same as the very sign of Congress immortality. Although the continuous ordinance regime has paralysed the fight for freedom and outward activities it has failed to kill the Congress, which still breathes.

The present fight has taught us to distinguish between the true patriots and black legs who in peace time posed as nationalists but deserted the camp when the fight began.

I am sure the country's prestige will never be lowered and the flag will fly as high as ever.

1 Speech in reply to the address of welcome presented by the Jabalpur Municipality, 5 December 1933. From *The Leader*, 7 December 1933

31. Interview at Allahabad[1]

It is a wrong impression that appears to have been formed in the public mind, that the meeting was held at Jubbulpore principally to

1 7 December 1933. From *The Hindu*, 7 December 1933.

by the government or the local authorities. It is clear that the official world is mightily afraid of the truth reaching the rural areas and wishes to isolate them from the rest of the world and prevent them from organising and thus to hold them in its grip.

34. Message to the Rajputana States' People's Convention[1]

Recent events in India and England have made it clear that all the reactionary forces, British and Indian, are combining together to prevent or delay the freedom of the Indian people. These forces have tried to suppress our freedom movement and the White Paper is an attempt to consolidate the hold of all these vested interests. Nothing is more significant than the utterly reactionary attitude of the Indian princes and the backing it received from the government.

It is probable that free India will be a federation but it is quite certain that nothing even remotely resembling freedom can come out of the federation that has been suggested in the White Paper. This proposed federation is merely meant to prevent India's growth and enchain her still further to feudal and out of date systems. It is quite impossible to progress from this federation to freedom without breaking the federation to pieces

It seems to me, therefore, that all of us, whether in the Indian states or the rest of India, must appreciate this position clearly and realise that our only course is to reject utterly any such bogus federation. We must stick to the completest form of independence which means complete absence of foreign control as well as a fully democratic form of government. The Indian states system, as it exists today, must go root and branch There can be no compromise with these relics of a barbarous age.

Your convention will deal with many matters of present-day importance such as the States' Protection Bill[2] and the repression that is going on in the Indian states. These loom large before you but they are, after all, the inevitable products of the system as it exists today. Therefore,

1 *The Bombay Chronicle*, 1 January 1934, reprinted in *Recent Essays and Writings*, (Allahabad, 1934), pp 138 139 The convention was held in Beawar on 29 December 1933

2 This bill sought to prevent criticism in British Indian newspapers, of the administration in Indian states and entry of demonstrators into the states

activities raise interesting issues and throw a revealing light on the mentality and attitude of the British authorities. Convictions of Congressmen have been common enough for many years and those who defy the law do so with a full knowledge of the consequences. But often enough these convictions are brought about in such a manner as to deserve public notice and the recent convictions are particularly deserving of this notice. My colleague, Shri Purushottamdas Tandon has already drawn attention to Shri Sheo Murti Singh's case. His argument is further strengthened by Shri Feroze Gandhi's case.

In both the cases there was a clear denial on the part of the parties concerned and they said that they had not preached non-payment of rent or revenue as this formed no part of the present Congress programme. Congressmen do not usually hide their light or their programme under a bushel and when non-payment of rent and revenue was their programme they proclaimed it openly enough. When this part of the programme was given up or suspended they proclaimed this fact also openly. It is obvious that such programmes are mass programmes and are not and cannot be confined to individual effort. The trying magistrate accepted the fact that the no-rent campaign was no part of the present Congress programme. But he preferred to believe the halting statement of a shivering and frightened *chowkidar* (who could not even recognize Feroze Gandhi) and another village witness in the face of the clear denials of responsible and well-known public workers. I suppose he is entitled to believe or disbelieve any witness however unreasonable this may appear to be. We have grown accustomed to this, and certainly no Congressman complains of being sentenced and sent to prison. We have trained ourselves for that and prison has become a part of the day's work.

But what deserves notice is this: under cover of stopping a no-rent campaign every other activity in the villages is attempted to be stopped. The law as it prevails in our province may be bad enough but where even this extraordinary legislation does not go far enough, it is extended to meet every contingency. It is so easy to put up a couple of policemen or village folk to say that a certain person said that rent or revenue should not be paid It is immaterial what they actually said or did. The weapon is good enough for any purpose.

Thus we have it that any activity, any approach to the rural areas, is to be stopped by the plea that it is part of the no-rent campaign. Congressmen do not mind this for they will carry on their work and willingly face the consequences. And on no account will they leave their helpless and downtrodden village comrades in the lurch. But it is well for the public to realise the inner significance of the action taken

little choice left to us, though it is little enough. We can avoid immediate trouble sometimes, though not always. The question therefore that each one has to consider, leaving out the larger issues, is how are we going to face the issue—defensively or aggressively, unwillingly or willingly. The result from the personal point of view is much the same. Ultimately the decision is not the result of pure logic but of instinct or the inner urge. Each person will answer according to his or her temperament and each one will have to answer for himself or herself.

In Bengal today it is hardly possible for anyone to be even quietly sympathetic with the national movement. They are forced to repudiate it openly, to salute the Union Jack, to offer welcomes and *dalis* to British troops, and to humiliate themselves in a variety of ways. This will happen in the rest of India also and the more defensive we are the sooner will it happen. What then are we to do? To retract and recant and forswear? We may not be faced with this alternative today but to some extent it is there even now. The choice is clear-cut and it is becoming increasingly difficult to remain in the middle.

I think the best course for you now would be to carry on for the next month in an unobtrusive way. You can see that the office papers and accounts are put in proper order. For the rest Ramsaran[3] should do the active work. If you do not indulge in any overt act I do not think that there is much chance of your being arrested. An odd risk of course is always there. At the end of the month, when there is another meeting, you might explain your position frankly and ask to be relieved of the secretaryship. Absolute frankness, I think, is best and we who have been associated with each other for so many years can fully appreciate each other's difficulties.

As for the new arrangements, I doubt if it will be desirable to make Mohanlal secretary as soon as he comes out of prison. Of course he will work and help in a variety of ways, but he should be given some chance of looking round before he goes back again. It is obvious that the person who takes up the secretaryship must be prepared to go off to prison at any moment. He cannot be a secret secretary. He has to announce the fact and face the consequences.

I feel that under the circumstances Narendra Deva might be asked to take up the secretaryship (in spite of my jocular remark to the contrary). He may not be able to travel about much but otherwise

3 A Congress worker of Moradabad, joined Kashi Vidyapith in 1923 as professor of economics, member, U.P. Legislative Assembly, 1937 52, member, Lok Sabha, 1952 62.

I hope, you will frame your objective clearly and uncompromisingly and draw up your programme accordingly.

The struggle of the Indian states' people is peculiar to them but essentially it has a great deal in common with the national struggle for Indian freedom. And this national struggle again has much in common with the world struggle for the freedom of the oppressed and exploited. I hope your convention will take the larger viewpoint and face the issues bravely, taking up the side of those oppressed and exploited everywhere.

35. To Sri Prakasa[1]

Allahabad
Jan. 11, 1934

My dear Prakasa,

Your letter has just reached me and I hasten to reply so that Nageshar can go back by the day train.

I am sorry we could not have a fuller talk when you were here. But your letter has made the position clear. It was not quite clear to me when the question of secretaryship arose.[2] I had not previously thought of your undertaking the job at present but when your name was proposed and you were agreeable, I concluded that you were willing to shoulder the burden and the inevitable risk involved. That risk followed from your acceptance of the office, not from the subsequent publication of your name. Under the circumstances it would have been better for you to keep out of office for there can be no mere figure-heads today and even figure heads have to face the risk, sometimes even more so than others who work in the background. I appreciate your difficulties. The difficulties are personal in the case of each one of us but essentially they are impersonal. We are all crushed in the mill of existing conditions—most of us, like the peasantry who suffer most, are unwilling victims. But willing or unwilling, they get crushed and there is no way out for them except the way of revolution. Revolutions occur because of this. Some of us have a

1 Sri Prakasa Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Sri Prakasa was the general secretary of the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee from 1928, but now wished to relinquish it for personal reasons.

he ought to be an excellent choice. He can be helped of course by Ramsaran and Birbal Singh.[4] You might speak to Narendra Deva about this and tell him of my suggestion. It is unlikely that I shall be available for the next meeting.

As for myself, please do not trouble yourself, and ask Shiva Prasad not to do so. I am quite clear as to what I should do and this gives me peace of mind. I have been perfectly prepared to go back to prison from the day of my discharge. Now, I am not only prepared but I am eager to do so. My instinct tells me that I must take a step forward and instinct in this matter is a safe guide for me.

Few things have pleased me in recent months quite so much as the riddance of the jewellery.[5] I have developed a horror of such things and I would prefer throwing them away to keeping them. It is true that we have sold them at a fraction of the original price. That was inevitable.

I am afraid I cannot offer you any useful advice about your boys' education. Even in normal times this is a difficult enough problem, now it is almost insoluble, at any rate satisfactorily. Greenlees is a curious person and he seems to have got stuck up in the C.P. I cannot say how suitable he is for the work you have. Perhaps he might be good at it. But for the moment he seems to be out of reach. Your idea of starting a school is a good one if it can be arranged. Only, such undertakings absorb so much time and energy.

The school Indira is at in Vile Parle, Bombay, is fairly good but being a small private affair it is expensive. The monthly bill, including board and some extra tuition, comes up to about Rs. 100/-. The boarding part is the expensive part. Good food is given and there is plenty of attention. The people who run it are not only nationalists but socialists and some modern methods of teaching are employed, such as the pupils being taken individually and helped to grow mentally. Examinations are not stressed, though, when necessary, they are kept in view. If you sent your two boys there the expense would probably be about Rs. 160/- a month but I am not sure. Then there would be travelling expenses during holidays etc. If you like you can write direct and enquire from Jahangir J. Vakil, Pupils' Own School, 22 Ghorbunder Road, Vile Parle, *via* Bombay.

4 (b 1899), participated in noncooperation movement, member, U.P. Legislative Assembly, 1937 52, and Lok Sabha, 1952 57

5. In his *Autobiography* Jawaharlal wrote, "To improve the immediate financial situation we decided to sell off my wife's jewellery, the silver and other similar articles that we possessed"

I am glad you wrote to me fully and frankly. I appreciate your position thoroughly and I am only sorry that I was partly responsible for placing you in an awkward position.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

36. A Shadow Conference[1]

Some friends have asked me for my opinion on the proposed "All Parties Conference" which has been suggested in Bombay. I should have thought that so far as Congressmen were concerned, or those who think along Congress lines, there was no room for doubt. We stand for independence and the fullest self-determination by the people of India without any interference by an alien authority. It is obvious that any attempt to consider the White Paper and to try to improve it, is incompatible with independence and self-determination. It is also incompatible with what is termed Dominion Status or even a small measure of political or economic freedom. Only those who are prepared to give up their oft repeated objective, forget their pledges, and accept, not for today and tomorrow but for the distant future, the steel chains of British imperialism and political and financial and military control, can discuss the White Paper and its offshoots. For Congressmen and others who work for a fundamental change in India there is going to be no compromise on this issue whatever happens. For them therefore to associate themselves with any attempt to modify the White Paper would be a betrayal of all they stand for and a strengthening of the reactionary elements in the country. Whatever the motives of those who are sponsoring the so-called All Parties Conference may be, there can be no doubt to any political realist that their action is harmful to the country and in the interests of British imperialism.

The White Paper, even with all the modifications that have been suggested by its liberal critics, would be worthy only of the waste-paper basket, where no doubt it will find a refuge sooner or later. But

1 Statement to the press, 11 January 1934. *The Tribune*, 13 January 1934

it is well known that no modifications are likely to materialize and yet those very gentlemen who tell us so, meet together solemnly to discuss modifications. Self-deception could hardly go further; or is it that their urge somehow to cooperate with British imperialism is so great that it dims their vision?

It seems to me clear that between those who continuously think of this cooperation and are always prepared to submit to every decision of the ruling power, and those who aim at independence, there is nothing in common. What are we to discuss if we meet together?

Some newspapers, who have done me the honour of publishing my recent article on the constituent assembly, have put me a question. All this is very well, they say, but what of the present? I am afraid I can give no answer that can satisfy those who can think or act only in terms of an impotent constitutionalism. Constitutionalism is dead and worms have already been at it and there is going to be no resurrection Not even the National Congress can revive it by resolution for we have passed that historical stage of growth. Every national movement, every social movement, when it is strong enough to endanger the existing order, passes that stage and cannot go back, though individuals and groups may collapse or retire. An impasse is created and this continues till the existing order breaks down. To suggest that the impasse should be resolved by an attempt to revive the corpse of constitutionalism is to ignore both historical precedent and existing facts, for the conditions that created the impasse continue and function more intensely and thus bring about a worse impasse. The only way out is to struggle through to the other side. Therefore the only possible answer to the question, 'What of the present?' is: Carry on the struggle for freedom without compromise or going back or *faltering*.

No person who understands the implications of a constituent assembly imagines that it can meet under the distinguished patronage of the British Government. Its patrons can only be the people of India. And because today the Indian people are held down by the imperialist machine, speaking and writing and meeting and the press are suppressed and only a faithful echo of our rulers' wishes is permitted, there can be no constituent assembly. It will come in good time when the Indian people gain the upper hand. Not till then. And meanwhile all talk of "All Parties Conference" and "Conventions" is so much shadow talk not even resulting in shadow action.

37. On Social and Village Uplift Work[1]

I find from some newspapers that I am supposed to have recommended social and village uplift work to my colleagues and that I myself propose to indulge in this activity. I have no such ambition nor have my colleagues of the United Provinces. This kind of safe and pious activity can well be left to old ladies. My colleagues and I work for the freedom of India and for the ending of all political and economic domination of the Indian masses, and we are prepared for the consequences of our action. We do not believe in safety first.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 12 January 1934 *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13 January 1934

38. Interview to the Press[1]

Question. What is the object of your visit to Calcutta?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I have come to Calcutta partly because of my wife's ill health in order to consult doctors and partly to meet old friends and colleagues to find out how matters stand in Bengal. We in other provinces feel keenly the misfortunes of our countrymen in Bengal, although the whole country is at present in the grip of repression of the severest type. There is no doubt that Bengal has had to bear the brunt of this in common with the North West Frontier Province. I should like to convey to our brothers and sisters of Bengal, in so far as a single individual can do so, how very much the rest of India is watching with anxious interest the happenings in Bengal and how much they desire to show their solidarity with this province.

1 Calcutta, 16 January 1934 From *Advance*, 17 January 1934.

Q: Does not the present-day talk of internationalism stand in the way of our national struggle for freedom?

JN: That all depends on what one means by internationalism. I am myself a convinced internationalist because the world today is international in character and I do not think it is possible for nations in these days to function separately. There is an attempt at present at what is called economic internationalism, but I doubt very much if it can succeed. I think any attempt to reduce the international character of the world is a step backward, progress can only come through more and more internationalism. But there can be no real internationalism unless the component parts are entirely free. Therefore, the essential preliminary to internationalism is the ending of all foreign exploitation of one nation by another.

So far as we are concerned it is folly to talk of internationalism when our country is dependent and exploited. Only an independent India can take an effective part in an international order. Thus though we must look forward to an international order, we can only reach it by achieving national independence first. Any talk of internationalism, which ignores this issue, is merely weak and sentimental talk which means nothing at all. It may even result in further exploitation of India by the international organisations. Thus the League of Nations, which is supposed to be an international organisation, but is really controlled by a few governments of great powers, in effect, helps and tries to perpetuate the exploitation of subject nations.

Q: What do you think of the Harijan movement?

JN: There can be no two opinions about the desirability of putting an end to all such things as untouchability and the like, and because the Harijan movement aims at this it must be welcome. Personally, as I consider the political struggle to be of great importance, I devote all my energies to that as well as to the economic struggle.

Q: Would you please give a message for young Bengal?

JN: My message to young Bengal is the same message that I wish to give to the whole of India. All of us stand or fall together, or, to quote a famous writer, "Let us hang together or else we hang separately." The struggle must and will be carried on and young Bengal will, I have no doubt, play the same leading part in it as old Bengal has done in the past.

The problem of India is one and indivisible. It cannot be separated into provinces, or even as between Indian states and the rest of India. The sorrows and misfortunes of one province are the sorrows and misfortunes of the whole of India, likewise the triumph of one province is the triumph of all India. Therefore, though we may function in separate areas and spheres we work for the same ideal, namely, the salvation of the motherland.

Q: When are you going to Santiniketan and how long do you propose to stay there?

JN: I propose leaving for Santiniketan on the 19th instant, and the object of my visit is to pay my respects to the Poet.

Q: Is there not a danger that a large number of communalists will come in and spoil the object of the constituent assembly which you are ushering in?

JN: There is certainly the chance of some communalists coming in but they will undoubtedly find themselves in a minority and will be consequently powerless to act contrary to the country's interests. The majority of members of such an assembly elected on the largest franchise must necessarily be men who will be more representative in character than the so-called members of any self-styled group or party as they will have to come through the votes of the starving masses who will make it a point to see that their interests are safeguarded.

39. The Character of the National Struggle[1]

Mr. President and Friends,
Chance has brought me to Calcutta to be present at this meeting today. I welcomed that chance because I wished to associate myself with this meeting and when I was invited I gladly acceded to that request—not, I take it, that it was necessary for me or for any person coming from

1 Speech at the Albert Hall, Calcutta, 17 January 1934 This and the following item are based on reports of the speeches prepared by police reporters and filed at Jawaharlal's trial on 12 February 1934.

outside Bengal to assure you that we feel with you and that I am entirely at one with you on this question. But, still, I think it was desirable that someone should tell you something of the feelings of other people too, who live in the other provinces of India in regard to what is happening in Bengal, and I think, although I speak as an individual, I may well claim to represent the feelings of other people in other provinces and specially I think I claim to represent the feelings of my own colleagues of U P. And I tell you that when the news of these occurrences at Midnapur, Chittagong and other places came to us, it filled us with anger—flaming and blazing anger—which finds a very poor echo, if I may say so, in the resolution that has been put before you[2] There is nothing wrong in the resolution. I am not saying that the resolution is not correct but somehow I have been feeling so, sitting here and partly following the speeches and partly not, because to my misfortune I do not know your beautiful language well enough to follow it—but I have been thinking all this time about this attempt of an arrogant imperialist power to humiliate us—mind you, not the city of Midnapur, not the few people of Midnapur—to humiliate not Bengal but the whole of India—because it is a matter of the utmost humiliation to every Indian from Khyber Pass to Cape Comorin—how are we to meet this arrogant attempt? It is right that you and I should protest, and protest vehemently; and yet one feels a sense of helplessness and one's anger reacts and makes one fret and the desire to seek a remedy forces one to think as to what one should do. After all, you may here pass this resolution and perhaps appoint a committee to investigate and suggest measures, but do you feel that you have to meet something that is bigger than a mere resolution—something that requires more than a resolution of protest—something really that is beyond the power of individuals who may come in your way and touch you, because, remember, it is not a question of certain individuals in Midnapur or certain individuals in other parts of Bengal, of a certain individual whether he is the Governor or a constable—it is not a question of these people ill-treating you but it is ultimately a question of a system, a cruel and a vicious system that afflicts you, and anybody that fits himself into this system whether he may be His Excellency the Governor of Bengal or the *panch* or the *chowkidar*—they are all screws of the same machine. It is the machine that crushes you and crushes India. That is the problem before you. Why not face it and understand it? You simply pass a resolution of protest and you go to that machine and ask for redress —go to them and tell them that 'you are ill-treating us!' Do you think

2. The resolution protesting against the "enforced saluting of the Union Jack".

that is consistent with your dignity? I have nothing to do with that. If you have any self respect, seek a remedy with your own strength and your own people.

The other day I read and took the trouble to read 5 columns of a speech that was delivered by the commissioner of Burdwan—Mr. Burrows.[3] I was glad I read it because it was a most extraordinary and most amazing document that I ever came across. I felt when I read it what an excellent thing it would be for some nationalist organisation to publish it in a pamphlet form for wide distribution. I hope the suggestion will be taken up by somebody or perhaps by the committee you appoint, because that speech as well as other speeches display the mentality—the brutal, disgusting, vulgar mentality—which governs India today. It is well that you and I should understand the mentality which controls the destiny of India, and, after all, it is not the fault of that gentleman Mr. Burrows—he is again but a cog in the machine. What is he to do? He simply moves with the machine. He may be perhaps a little less discreet, a little more given to fits of nerves—but whatever the reason, I tell you that what he said does represent today the mentality of the power that governs us. And not only that, but look around you again—look at this, a friend of ours was just complaining against the nationalist papers in Calcutta.[4] Well, I am not in a position to judge. I have not been able to read these papers for a long time, but we had the honour and the privilege, even in the jails of U.P., to be supplied with some other papers of Calcutta and even outside the jails I had occasion to read them. The extraordinary manner in which they sometimes treat us and the way in which they justify it, is really an eye-opener. It is not a question of nationalism or imperialism. To any man with the least sensitivity, with the least education, with the least culture, it comes as a shock that people claiming to be above ordinary vulgarity, should behave in this manner. That is what we find in Bengal and the rest of India in a greater or lesser measure. It is an extraordinary vulgarity of imperialism. Why is that so? Because imperialism of today, in spite of the strength that it seems to possess, is in a tottering condition, and when a great system like this totters, when it is afraid of falling, then it loses all control, its culture

3 L D Burrows stated on 10 December 1933 that, owing to a lack of strong public opinion, the government had to rely on their own resources to fight terrorism

4 The reference was to a young man who complained against the nationalist papers of Calcutta for not publishing the news of the rough handling of an Indian girl by the management of the Hagenbeck circus

and education and everything else goes. It becomes vulgar and it becomes abusive. That is the position today. Of course, do not think that it is going to collapse suddenly, but these are the signs of a decadent system. That system is utterly decadent. Therefore you find utter cruelty, utter vandalism. That is what is happening specially in Bengal and the Frontier Province.

Well, a friend has suggested that there should be, as far as I can understand his Bengali, an All India agitation over this. Undoubtedly it would be a very good thing if there was an All India agitation over this, but I feel that he is missing a point. If by agitation is meant public meetings and the like and the passing of resolutions, it does seem to fall very much short of the mark, because agitation is meant to impress the will of the people on an individual or government. But when that individual or government becomes utterly callous and utterly shameless, without any care as to what people think of it, in fact when it loses all sense of decency, then you have to think what other effective means you can adopt to impress your will. Ultimately you arrive at the same question, which is the final question so far as we are concerned: what are the means to enforce the will of the Indian people in Bengal, in Midnapur, in India? That is the final question and there is no half way house to it. You cannot stop half-way, because today the two forces in India—imperialism and nationalism—have come to close grips When two forces are in close grip then there is no giving way on either side. Then you miss gentle chivalry. That chivalry, to some extent, our movement has attempted. Our leader has constantly reminded us not to forget that chivalry and the basis of our movement has been, to a large extent, chivalrous. Of course, it would be vain to deny that we are moved with extreme anger on occasions. But so far as the imperial power is concerned, there is no doubt that it has given up all pretences of chivalry. Therefore, do not expect anything from appeals to chivalry or appeals to justice or the like. We are today in the midst of a historic struggle, which all nations have to face at a particular time and from that there is only one escape—victory of one side or the other I hope you will realise that and work for that.

40. The Futility of Terrorism and the Nature of the Mass Movement[1]

Young men and women of Bengal,

You have just been reminded of an occasion over two years ago when I addressed you in this very hall.[2] My mind travels back to that time, two and a quarter years ago and then I think of what has taken place during this long interval. Two years is not a very long period of time even in the life of an individual, much less in the life of a nation. But sometimes the years drag themselves out and even a year or a month seems to be an enormous period of time, and these two years have been long years. Through these two years we have experienced moments of exultation and we have experienced also moments of depression. We have gone through, as all great movements must go through, the valley of the shadows; and we are yet in these valleys and no one can say when we shall be able to emerge from them into the light of freedom. So I thought of these two years with varying emotions, I thought of the great things that we had accomplished in this country, I also thought of the many weaknesses that are ours still, for, after all, whatever we may have failed to accomplish, is ultimately and fundamentally due to our own weakness.

I have been asked by a friend who has preceded me to endeavour to inspire you—well, I do not know if it is in my capacity to inspire anybody by any words that I might use, but it seems to me that if anyone has survived and is surviving the various events that are happening in India and has failed to be inspired by them to action, it will be very difficult for him to be moved by any words of any individual.

What do you see in India today? What do you see in the world today? And what do you see in your own province of Bengal? You see an amazing number of problems—you see the greater statesmen of the world lost in a morass, in a fog and not knowing how to come out of it. Do you know that in the course of the last fifteen years or so, roughly, I believe, 133 world conferences have taken place in order to solve the various problems which afflict the world and each one of these 133 conferences has been a total failure? Why was that so? Not because the people who met there did not want to succeed

1 Address to the students of Bengal at the Albert Hall, Calcutta, 18 January 1934

2 See *Selected Works*, Vol 5, pp. 300 303

—they did; not only so, but they were convinced and they proclaimed to the world that "if we do not succeed in these conferences, there will be a disaster, there will be a world revolution", and so on and so forth. You will remember some months back when there was a World Economic Conference[3]—one of these 133—that met in London, everybody proclaimed that "if this conference fails, the end of the present order is in sight and there will be an enormous catastrophe." Well, this conference failed. Now, you see the last gasping efforts of the Disarmament Conference in Geneva[4]—that, too, is collapsing.

Well, I mention these to you to make you realise how extraordinarily knotty the problems are today in the world and how difficult it is for the world to solve them, because today I shall address you in a few moments in regard to our present position in India and I do wish you to feel that our present position in India is a part of the international situation. Our movement is a freedom movement. We desire the independence of India, but it is a part and parcel of the great world movement, the great revolutionary urge that is shaping the world today; and unless you understand and appreciate that, you will never be able to get the key to the Indian situation.

Then, again, to take a jump and to come back to your own province of Bengal—to come to certain parts of Bengal—we find the most amazing and the most extraordinary occurrences taking place here. Last evening, in this very hall, a meeting of protest—'of emphatic protest!', as they said—was held here against what was happening in Midnapur district. Well, I had the honour to be present there and I said a few words—a very few words to express the anger that was in my heart, because what happens in Midnapur, or Chittagong, what has taken place and is taking place there is not merely the humiliation *of Midnapur or Chittagong or the particular area where it takes place,* but it is a deliberate insult of the Indian people, it is a humiliation of the whole of India, and it is well that each one of us should realise that those orders, those humiliating restrictions, commands and behests that have been issued in Midnapur, apply to each one of us, however high or low he may be, in the whole of India. Well, some

3 The World Economic Conference opened in London on 12 June 1933. Roosevelt's repudiation of the formula devised to ensure stable currencies in the world made the Conference ineffective.

4. The Disarmament Conference which began on 2 February 1932 in Geneva failed to reach any agreement France refused to disarm unless she was assured of "security" and Germany demanded the right to rearm if nations like France were to retain their arms The Conference adjourned on 11 June 1934

of us, it is very natural, feel very angry about that and some of us should perhaps get angry with the individual officers who might have issued those orders. But the fact remains that it is not a question of individual officers here and there doing such things but of a certain enormous machine that moves on, crushing everything that comes in its way. Officers, whether they happen to be Viceroys or Governors or happen to be red-coated *chaprasis*, they have little say in the matter in spite of the pomp that may accompany them wherever they may go. What we are up against is not an officer however high he may be, but we are up against a certain system, against a machine which crushes the Indian people today, which exploits them and tries to humble and humiliate them. And today because the Indian people have risen and have put up a very gallant and a very effective fight for freedom, shaken up that machine and almost made it totter, that machine reacts as all such machines have reacted in the past and present. It reacts even forgetting the ordinary canons of war, because when one's life is threatened one is apt to be terribly nervous, terribly forgetful of all ordinary precepts of humanity. When the life of British imperialism was threatened by our freedom movement, it has reacted in the peculiar way in which all such monsters react. We see that in Midnapur, Chittagong and Dacca. You know that one of the tremendous excuses for all that is happening in these areas—one of the reasons which the government puts forward—is that it has to meet the terrorist menace in Bengal.

You know my views about such individual acts of terrorism, because I spoke to you about them on the last occasion and I tried to show to you how it is a completely ineffective, wrong and harmful move for us in our present stage of growth. I did not tell you that merely as a pious platitude. What I tried to tell you, whatever I propose to tell you now is not going to be, in spite of what my friend has asked me to say, an appeal to your emotions or an attempt to inspire you, because that is a thing I am not capable of doing, but I certainly prefer to appeal to your minds instead of to your emotions for the time being It is good to have emotions, to use them and to be impelled by fine emotions—I do not wish to decry them. It is good to have emotions, but still behind emotions there should be minds functioning. Therefore I want to appeal to your minds and as I said on the last occasion when I addressed you here I told you in regard to these individual sporadic acts of terrorism that they were weak, ineffective, futile, harmful and completely out of date. Personally speaking, I take pride in the fact that I claim myself to be a revolutionary and I want revolutionaries in this country. I think every

person who has any spirit in him, who feels that he must take a part in upsetting the evil order in this country, he must be a revolutionary or nothing else. What is the meaning of the word 'revolutionary'? You must try to understand that. Merely an individual act does not make that act—whatever that act may be—a revolutionary act. The only test of a revolutionary action is this—that it helps in promoting a revolutionary atmosphere, that it creates a spirit, a militant spirit in the masses. That is the test of a revolutionary act, not any other test. And I tell you that if you judge it from this test, these individual acts are counter-revolutionary, they are not revolutionary. You think in terms of either mass action or individual action. If you understand at all—if you have studied at all the technique of revolutionary action, you will know that it is based today completely on mass action; and if you indulge in mass action, fundamentally that mass action must be peaceful action. It cannot be otherwise, it may be otherwise but today the technique of revolutionary action is fundamentally peaceful action, whether it is a general strike or a labour strike or other forms of civil disobedience etc., etc. For the moment I am not discussing the question of *himsa* or *ahimsa* from a political or moral standpoint. I wish you to consider that today the only effective means of action in order to impress the will of the people on any group or any power that oppresses them is mass action, and there is no other method And if you want to approach the masses, to organise the masses, you cannot do so by individual acts of terrorism That shows an extraordinary misconception of the situation. In spite of claiming to be a revolutionary act, it really becomes a counter-revolutionary act, because that action brings in its train consequences which produce an atmosphere contrary to what you ought to produce, and you see today that though individuals may become militant, the masses do not.

I do not wish to repeat the arguments I told you two years ago. You must consider this problem not in a hurry, in a mood of sentiment but try to reason it out, because it is a problem of life and death for all of us in this country, as to what road we should adopt. And now what do we see? These occasional, sporadic acts of terrorism which still take place unfortunately in some parts of Bengal—this has been made an occasion by the British Government for trying to crush every kind of public—effective or ineffective—activity in Bengal. They have tried in those parts of the province not only to crush the activity of the people, but they have tried to humiliate, humble and insult the people of those places in every possible and conceivable manner, where every boy and girl above 12 years is a suspect, where

you may not ride a bicycle or where your houses are searched from morning till evening, where you are asked to come and salute the Union Jack forcibly, where you are asked to come with presents of *dalis* to the "respected" district magistrate when he arrives at the station, and you are informed in writing that disobedience will be construed into an act of disloyalty.

Is any of you here loyal to the British Government? I say if you are loyal then I have nothing to say. In the Congress we have nothing to do with loyalty. We are disloyal, not once but hundred times, and it is our business to preach disloyalty wherever we go. Today you and I have to choose loyalty or disloyalty. Loyalty is a fine word in the English language—but loyalty to whom? Are you going to be loyal to those people who humiliate your people, who degrade your country, or are you going to be loyal to your own country, to your own people? I am proud to be loyal to my own country and not to anyone who is going to insult my country and my people. I have no quarrel with any foreign country or any foreign flag, but if I am asked and forced to salute any flag and specially the Union Jack, I hope I shall have the strength to die a thousand deaths. That is happening in our country and there is no lack of men in this country who in spite of what is taking place in Midnapur and elsewhere go and consort with these men and shake hands which are dripping with blood. I do hope that most of us will realise that we shall have nothing to do with those people, whether they are Englishmen or Indians. It may be that the latter have become so frightened that they cannot give expression to their views. So the British Government has used all its strength—has made this terrorist movement an excuse for crushing the life of Bengal. Of course, it cannot crush all life in Bengal but it has tried to do so and is trying to do so. The way in which it is trying to crush the freedom of the press, the freedom of meeting and the usual activities that take place ordinarily in this province, is probably better known to you than to me. Today, you have as much freedom as the freedom not to use that freedom. You are free so long as you do not use any freedom. If you use it, *there your freedom ends That is the position not only in this province* but in the whole of this country.

Well, that is the situation from a national point of view, if I may say so, facing us. But I want to delve a little further and consider the reality behind this, because after all there are bigger things behind this which make individuals and nations act in the manner they do. I told you just a short while ago what we are up against—not an

individual officer or a group of people but a machine which is crushing us and exploiting us. Why is that so and how can we get rid of it—that, after all, is the problem before you. If you go still further you will find that today even your national movement has at the back of it the economic discontent of the people. You and I, who presume to be intellectuals to some extent, perhaps think that freedom is an idealist conception which comes out of our heads. We desire freedom because it is good. No doubt that is true, but fundamentally nations desire freedom because of economic causes. Fundamentally the Indian masses move and have moved because of the economic discontents they are troubled with, and therefore, if you study these causes you will come to the conclusion that today the dominant and the predominant feature of the situation in India as well as the world is the economic factor.

It is the economic factor that has troubled the European countries and is bringing them near disaster; and it is the economic factor which is at the back of your movement. Unless you understand that, you will not be able to understand the present situation, and because it is the economic factor, no solution will be a proper solution till we find a solution of the economic problems of this country and the world.

I have tried, during the last three or four months that I have been out of prison, to lay some stress on these economic considerations. Perhaps some of you may have come across those articles and writings of mine and most of you may know that the way I look upon these problems is the socialist way. I think there is no other solution and the socialist solution is bound to come sooner or later; and so long as that solution does not come, you will find no political solution of these problems either in India or in the larger world outside.

Now if you think along these lines, if you think at all, you will gradually come to those views because there is no escape from those views. You will have to fashion your own activity accordingly and you cannot act merely in the air, purely on political, national lines. Your nationalism must solve the economic problems, your nationalism must take on an economic tinge, it must, in other words, become socialist. I do not refer to national socialism which is an emotional word for fascism, because personally I have the extremest dislike for fascism. I think it is a most undesirable thing and I should like to combat it if it came to India. But when I say your nationalism should become economic, I mean that nationalism must remain with us because we cannot escape from the nationalist outlook, so long as

there is foreign domination in this country. But that is not enough. You have to think along economic lines and solve economic issues, and I hope you will solve them. So you will come to the conclusion that I have come to, namely, that the only solution lies in the way of socialism and in the ending of the present extraordinary feudal and other relics in this country. I do not think any real progress is possible as long as you are saddled with these feudal relics; and, having come to that conclusion, you will draw up a programme of activity which will help you in ending them.

Now any effective movement, I told you, must be a mass movement. You people living in the city of Calcutta or studying here, for the time you are here, you have largely to deal with city problems and are keeping yourselves aloof from the village folk. You have to understand that India is after all an agricultural and village country. So any big mass movement must fundamentally be a peasant movement in this country. Of course, industrial workers must also play a big part in it, as also the lower middle class, but a really big mass movement must essentially depend on the agriculturists and peasants. And, therefore, the problem before us becomes one of working in those village areas, taking not only the message of freedom but making them understand how their economic ills can find solution, as also organising them and helping them. We are not organising them to help us, though we are too often tempted to talk in such terms, but rather going and helping them in their freedom movement. Is it going to be their freedom movement in which you could help them or is it going to be your freedom movement in which they could help you? Therefore, you have to go to them and help them to realise their own strength and to organise themselves and specially to appreciate their economic troubles and try to get rid of them.

You will tell me that under the present conditions it is not at all possible. It is not easy at any rate to function in this way, because our benign government comes in the way wherever we go. If we go to the villages it comes in the way, if we function at all it comes in the way. That is perfectly true, but what is the conclusion you draw from this? Some of our friends draw the conclusion that we should give up our aggressive tactics and resort to certain non-aggressive defensive tactics so as to avoid conflict with the government and thereby gradually develop our organisation and then, perhaps later on, think of aggressive tactics. That is the suggestion put forward by some of our friends. But those friends seem, to me, to ignore certain fundamental aspects of the question. Every national movement, every social and economic movement, when it begins and is weak, is tolerated

by the ruling power or the ruling group. As it grows an attempt is made to suppress it, but still it grows, because behind it there are certain economic causes which push it on. But the time comes when it grows so strong as to actually endanger the existing social order. When that nationalist or socialist movement becomes so strong as to endanger and threaten the existence of the ruling power, then that ruling power tries to crush it with all its might. Then there is no room left for any forbearance and courtesy between the two groups. Then they come to close grips with each other and then the historical stage is reached when that nationalist or socialist movement ceases to be constitutional or legal. It is not a matter merely of the government declaring a certain organisation illegal but rather a historical development of a certain movement when it automatically becomes unconstitutional and illegal; and that, mind you, is the sign of its strength. When it becomes strong enough to threaten the existing order then it cannot alter that and function as a constitutional and legal movement.

The Congress has been declared illegal, thousands of Congress bodies and allied organisations have been declared illegal. But that is only an outward indication of that historical stage that we have reached. We reached that stage in 1930 and ever since then we have been hovering about the verge of it. When I say 'we' I mean principally the Congress of course, but I also refer to something bigger than the Congress i.e., the whole national movement of India. Now, having reached that stage, there is no going back from it. I say if tomorrow the All India Congress Committee passes a resolution "let us withdraw the civil disobedience movement", it would have some effect of course. It may stop the movement as it is being carried on today—it may also perhaps result in the ban of illegality being removed from the Congress. That is a possibility, though I doubt it. But even so we cannot go back from that historical stage that we have reached, because the nation has reached it, not the All India Congress Committee even if it has certainly helped to carry us to that point And the result will be that, although a certain organisation, by cooperating, by compromising, by showing weakness, or whatever the reason may be, may become temporarily legal, the movement itself will always hover on the verge of illegality. That is to say, that any person doing any effective work, whether it is really effective work among peasants and workers, even effective social work, if it goes far enough, it is immediately stopped by the government because government cannot tolerate any effective work after that historical stage in the nation is reached.

Today, I see a great deal of Harijan work is being done in various parts of the country. Speaking of my own province wherever there is Harijan work,—I am not personally in Harijan work—but wherever that work is being done with any real strength behind it, it has come in conflict with government immediately. Harijan workers sent to villages have been arrested in some parts of the U.P. Although their object is purely Harijan work, yet the government is afraid of allowing them to go to rural areas.

So, the point I wish you to appreciate is this—we have arrived at a stage when fundamentally our strength remains on the edge of illegality and unconstitutionality, and there can be no going back from it. Of course, I do not mean that many of our activities are not legal and constitutional. The point is that any effective activity we indulge in, is immediately made illegal and unconstitutional by the government. It is easy enough to make it so—a little interpretation will make it. And as a matter of fact the present ordinances, ordinance laws and various other laws in force in this country are so extraordinarily comprehensive that any single activity can be construed as being against the law, and every individual, whoever he may be, if nothing else, can be considered a *badmash* and under preventive sections can be sent to jail. That is a frequent occurrence. They are sending a large number of workers to jail under sections which are meant for bad characters and these friends of ours are never mentioned in newspapers as civil disobedience prisoners. There are so many thousands in various provinces because those gentlemen go in as bad characters, who are not counted as such, of course the badness of their character being the undesirability of their politics in the eyes of government. So we have arrived at that stage and having arrived at that stage, in our national movement the only choice that is left to us is either to go ahead or to withdraw—either to do nothing, to become ineffective or act effectively and thus come into conflict with the government. There is no other third way. People delude themselves into suggesting various ways.

Now, the choice before us is either effective action which brings us into conflict with government or no action at all. Some people tell us "let us fight on all fronts", which, if analysed, means withdrawal from fighting on any front. Sometimes you may have heard a very peculiar argument that we have been struggling for freedom in this country in a particular way for the last fourteen or fifteen years and our condition is worse than it was. We have got ordinance laws, censorship and the rest of it—our condition is far worse than it was fifteen years ago. This is an argument which specially our

moderate friends have advanced. They say that "we seem to be going from bad to worse by our methods and tactics." That is a fundamentally wrong view of the situation. If you fight for the citadel of power, if you fight for the real thing and not merely for some shadow of power, then there can be no getting of power in bits. If, suppose, you are marching on to a citadel or fortress which is occupied by another army, well, do you conceive of bits of the citadel or fortress falling in your hands and for the rest living in amity and friendship with the enemy army? That does not happen. As you approach the fortress, instead of your condition becoming better your condition will become worse and worse. So, I want first to say a word or two as to the extreme falsity of this argument. The more your strength increases, the more you approach the citadel of power, the more fierce is the fighting going to be. It does not lessen as you approach, it becomes worse and when you are actually at the citadel near the walls of the fortress, fighting will be the fiercest and your condition will be the worst conceivable. Indeed, the day before you seize power and get into the citadel, that evening your condition will be the worst of all. To think in terms of getting two annas or four annas of the possession of the fortress is really to misunderstand history and human nature completely. It is possible, I can conceive of a compromise coming between one group which desires to go forward and the group in the fortress, the compromise being that the group in the fortress allows the other group the possession of the area outside. That is a possibility, you may consider that as getting two annas power. But if it is a question of your taking possession of the citadel, there is not two annas or four annas—either one will prevail or the other. Two powers cannot exist in the same country and at the same time. Of course, you may have dual authority during the transition period when power is shifting from one party to the other.

People who imagine that they can gradually get the freedom of India, either they delude themselves or are thoroughly ignorant of history, because such a thing never happens and will never happen in India. How and when we shall achieve power I cannot say—I am not a prophet—but I cannot conceive of power coming to you bit by bit. As far as I can see, Indian nationalism and British imperialism are at close grips with each other. British imperialism may succeed in suppressing Indian nationalism, but remember this also: that while Indian nationalism may be suppressed many a time by British imperialism Indian nationalism will grow again, but British imperialism will be suppressed once for all by Indian nationalism and it cannot grow up after that, because it is fundamentally and historically a

receding phenomenon. Indian nationalism is bound to come up again and again because the basis of it is the national urge of India. But at the same time there is the economic discontent of India and no amount of *repression and no amount of forcible salutation of the Union Jack fills* the hungry stomach. No amount of orders and ordinances will make hungry people contented. You can satisfy a hungry man for a short while, but his hunger will drive him into action and so today in India, even if leaders and organisations weaken, compromise and betray, this economic urge remains and will continue to push the masses on; that pushing process is bound to continue till a solution is found for economic troubles and that solution will not be a sufficient solution if it is merely a political solution.

Now, therefore, if you consider the situation in the world which is on the verge of revolution, you will find there has never been a period in the history of the world more full of revolutions and changes than this 20th century of ours. If anybody dislikes changes and revolution all that can be said is this that he has chosen a very wrong moment to be born, because he cannot escape from it. You see all over Europe and America, in fact everywhere that the most extraordinary changes have taken place and still greater changes are hovering in the future. You hear talk of war, international war, terrible war which may come off sooner or later and which seems bound to come off. I confess to you that sometimes I welcome the idea of war, and yet at the same time the idea frightens me sufficiently because the next war is going to be such a terrible affair and what will survive from the war, it is very difficult to say. We have merely to take an objective view of the situation and we find today all over the world and in India these revolutionary conditions existing. They may continue for years and no terrible crisis may come off, but, as far as one can see objectively, the whole trend of affairs is drifting towards a tremendous catastrophe.

What then are you going to do in India, how are we to fashion our struggle so as to achieve freedom the soonest? If conditions are revolutionary, in some measure they should help us because we want revolutionary changes in this country. If Indian conditions had been more or less stable, of course we would have to work for a long distance change but today we cannot afford to do that. Therefore we have to carry on our campaign, our struggle for freedom aggressively—at whatever level it may be it does not matter. We are not ashamed to confess our weakness. You and I ought to know both our strength and our weakness We should neither exaggerate our strength nor minimise our weakness. It is true that today the British Government has to a

large extent suppressed our movement, that is to say, suppressed the outward manifestations of our movement—it is perfectly true. But it is also true that the British Government with all its might and main has not been able to suppress it quickly. And it is equally obvious to the British Government as well as to the Indian people that it is a physical impossibility for the British Government to suppress this movement completely. Every mass movement goes up and down. You cannot keep up a mass movement at a certain pitch for ever, it cannot be done. But that does not mean that the movement has been suppressed or crushed. I read the other day in an Anglo-Indian newspaper of Bombay, *The Times of India*—it was a review of the situation—and it said that "we have crushed the Congress, it does not function." Then there is an 'if' and it was a very big 'if'—'if Congress was allowed to function for a fortnight it would become stronger than ever all over the country'! An extraordinary remark of *The Times of India*—to say that a thing which has been crushed will suddenly become a powerful organisation all over India after a fortnight's work! Now our movement which has come down to a low level today and which is not a mass movement yet has all the potential strength in it and at any moment it will grow up and it will grow up not because of you and me but because of the inherent force at work today. You and I can push it on as far as possible by effective work. Aggressive work, you will remember, will inevitably bring us to conflict with government. If conflict comes I will welcome it. It is not merely a question of going to jail mechanically. If in the course of our work we come into conflict with government, well and good, if not, we carry on our work with more aggressiveness and more effectiveness.

Now, I should like to say a few words in connection with another matter. Many of our friends have asked me in other parts of the country as well as here—"We want to do no aggressive political work but we want to do other social work, i.e., village work, organisation work etc. What are we to do?" The other day—only a few days ago—in the course of a press interview I said something for which I am rather sorry because it was a great slur on a respected class or group. I said that while referring to village work. Some news agency—the Associated Press I think—had sent a message saying that Jawaharlal proposes to devote himself in future to quiet village work. I am not against village work but the impression gathered from reading that passage seemed to be that I was going to retire behind the *purdah* and not to do any aggressive political work. So in the course of a press interview I said "I have no intention of retiring behind the *purdah*, and doing this kind of constructive work, as this could very well be done by old ladies, and

I do not believe in the safety first principle".[5] I apologise in all humility to old ladies because it is really unfair to them. We have seen some wonderful old ladies in this country and still we have them and they still play a very important part in our movement. Also, I really do not wish to run down village work. There you come into contact with villagers and workers. It is far better than doing nothing and sitting idle. I do think that even village work, if it is effective, brings us into conflict with government and you must be prepared for that. That is your look-out.

Two or three words more and I shall finish. Recently, I made some remarks about communalism in India and they gave rise to a controversy.[6] I am not averse to controversy. I took a fair and aggressive part in that controversy and I feel—I hope I am not taking undue pride in this fact—I emerged triumphant from that controversy. The fact remains that it is a matter for you to consider, because this communal question, I say and I do repeat before you, is a bogus question. It is not a communal question. It is purely a reactionary question. It is a question raised by political reactionaries to cloud the other real and effective political issues in the country. I tell you there are of course—I do not challenge them—many good people, many honest people, even people who have taken a brave part in the fight for freedom, in communal movements and organisations. They have unfortunately been deluded—they have not really understood what the communal organisations stand for. But fundamentally the communal organisations in India, whether they are Hindu or Moslem or any other, they stand for political reaction and their leaders stand for political reaction. If you analyse their statements and their repeated speeches and their policies and methods, you find each one of them trying his utmost to gain the favour of government. Inevitably they have to become more and more reactionary. It is about time that young men exposed these facts. It is not communalism. I dislike this political reaction, this bogus thing, going about under the mask of communalism.

Friends, I do not know whether what I have told you is connected or disjointed, because I came here in a very disjointed frame of mind, because a very hurried programme, one function after another, does not allow me to think about anything. I was worried, I am still worried but now it is a different kind of worry. Many things I might have told you—some perhaps I have said in a peculiar way, a disjointed way and I am not going to say more because my time is up. But I do

5 See *ante*, item, 37.
6 See *post*, subsection on communalism

wish to say one thing, that when we talk about our sacrifices and sufferings for the cause and all that, we do not really do adequate justice to the tremendous sufferings that our people have undergone. After all, our suffering is a mere flea-bite. If we compare it with what other nations have gone through—at any rate it is not easy to compare it with many nations—you will find that they had to go through something tremendously more and we must not flinch because of this little measure of repression or oppression or humiliation that we may have to put up with. If we desire freedom we shall have to pay in full measure the price for freedom. I honestly tell you that it rather annoys me when people talk so much of my sacrifice. What have I sacrificed? I have sacrificed nothing. I lead the life of a man now and I feel happy about it. Sometimes I may misbehave, I may lose my temper, but I tell you I have peace of mind which I did not have before. I think it is absurd, it is a calumny to go about saying that "I have sacrificed this or that". I have sacrificed nothing that I consider worthwhile, and it is a tremendous thing, I tell you, because after all the real joy in life comes from the knowledge that you are serving in a mighty cause—a cause that you know to be a great cause and if you devote yourselves to it you get something which is worth having. Specially if the cause has some relation to the masses, this huge conglomeration of humanity. You forget the little worries of life, the hundred and one little things that trouble you—the illnesses and sickness. So many of us are complaining of these troubles and thinking that the world is conspiring against them. I want you young men and women to look upon this really as something which will bring joy to you and make you feel that you are really acting as men and women should act and that it is no sacrifice.

Well, I shall now take leave of you and say farewell for a time at least. Perhaps that time may be a long time. I have come back after two and a quarter years and I do not know how many years it may be before I come back again. But whether it is long or short it does not matter, because you can take it from me that we shall meet again and again. We shall meet perhaps here, perhaps, and I hope so, many of you and I will meet in the battle-field of action in the struggle of ours and certainly I hope that we shall all meet one day to celebrate the freedom of India.

41. On Independence[1]

What we are having today is not a proposal but a vow. Despite great hardships our flag is still flying The government has failed to crush the movement.

Do not be under any delusion that by getting more seats in the councils or by any Indian becoming a great officer the situation will improve.

An Indian has been appointed as Governor in U.P.,[2] but there is no relaxation in repression nor has the province benefited in any way due to his appointment. They are all alike, parts of a big machine, and mere white or black parts do not make any difference in the action of the machine.

The question before you is how to fill your starving bellies. Several people who are patted by the government have issued notices to the effect that Congress is responsible for the fall in prices. If the Congress had such power it could have wiped out British rule in India.

It must be stressed that the administration under the White Paper will be much more costly than at present, a fact which has been admitted even by Sir Malcolm Hailey. I would warn you not to be deceived by the talk of reforms.

The question is not one of two or three annas but a basic one. It is a question of full independence.

Take the example of two warring armies. One of the two is bound to remain in the fort while the other might perhaps get a place in the stable. Those who talk of getting two or three annas want to live in the stables, but I think all Indians are not animals, there are also men among them. The last stages of the fight are bound to be grave.

You all know what is happening in Bengal, particularly in Midnapur and Chittagong.

The question of freedom is one of life and death. It is a question of hunger which cannot be solved by any leader entering into a compromise with the government; nor can repression satisfy the hunger of the people.

1. Speech at Allahabad on Independence Day, 26 January 1934 From *The Tribune*, 29 January 1934.
2. The Nawab of Chhatari

SOCIALISM AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

42. To T. Viswanatham[1]

Lucknow
October 2, 1933

My dear Viswanatham,
It is good to hear from you again. I do not personally think that the political condition of our country at present is at all unsatisfactory. There are of course numerous difficulties in our way and there is a lull in our activities. But all this is natural and nothing to be surprised or annoyed at. There is a certain amount of confusion in the minds of people. This is due not so much to what any individual has done but to the fact that world conditions and objective facts are forcing the country to adopt a new way of thinking. To give up an old ideology to which we are accustomed is always a painful process.

The real difficulty in India as well as in the world today is that ideas as well as the social and political structure lag far behind existing conditions, hence the conflict and confusion. Till that lag is made good this conflict will continue. Human nature being what it is there is little chance of the lag being made good by means of peaceful efforts and gradual change through the cooperation of various groups. Because this does not happen, revolution takes place.

The world conditions today are forcing big changes whether we are mentally ready for them or not. Our social system may be thousands of years old but that will not save it nor will it delay a change when it comes. It will only result in the change being sudden and far reaching. Therefore we cannot afford today to have a gradual long-distance programme. Tact of course is always good but if tact means an attempt to confuse issues it is bad. The greatest need of the day is clear thinking even at the cost of tact.

You refer to the need of propaganda and invite me to go to Andhra. I would love to visit Andhra but I am a bit surprised at your making

1 J N Correspondence, N M M L.

such a suggestion. We are in the midst of a struggle and all such peace time activity is barred. Long before the date you mention I hope to be back in prison.

With all good wishes,

Yours fraternally,
Jawaharlal Nehru

43. To Bhagavan Das[1]

Lucknow
October 2, 1933

My dear Babu Bhagavan Dasji,

Thank you for your letter. I have also read the letter published in *The Leader* of the 25th to which you refer.[2] It is my intention to write something on the subjects you mention or at any rate on some of them. But I have not yet adapted myself to life outside jail and I find that numerous little things and worries come in the way of my writing seriously. However, I shall try.

My one idea is that the present confusion in thought which we see all around us in India is due to the fact that our old ideology does not fit in with existing facts. There is a tremendous lag between the two and this causes confusion and conflict. We live between two ages. We think in terms of the old and try to act in terms of the new. This is natural enough and to some extent we see it all over the world today.

There is of course no such thing as absolute independence for a nation or an individual. The modern world especially is based on cooperation and interdependence. Indeed many of the world's troubles are due to non-recognition of this fact and yet personally I have laid stress on the term "Independence" for India because it brings out rather aggressively one important aspect of our national problem—complete freedom from British control. Every other word that we may use is misinterpreted, and leads to loose thinking and vague ideology and compromise. It forces people to face the real national issue. You may remember that some time back the Oxford Union passed a resolution which created something of a sensation. This resolution said, so far as I remember,

1. J.N Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In this letter, signed by "Enquirer", a clear statement of economic policy had been demanded from the Congress

that *under no circumstance would they fight for their King* and country. On the face of it this resolution was extravagant and could hardly represent the true feelings of those who voted for it. And yet it was a truer one than any vague slipshod appeal to peace and condemnation of war which almost anybody could have supported. It is for this reason that I adhere to the word "Independence". It is also for this reason that I think it is desirable to deal with economic problems rather brutally and not tone them down in order to soothe some people's susceptibilities. Facts themselves are brutal in this world and soft words do not alter them; they only help to delude ourselves and others. At the same time of course it is always desirable to use the language of peace wherever this does not produce confusion and a false impression.

My mother's condition is very unsatisfactory but I hope to take her to Allahabad day after tomorrow.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

44. To Bagh Singh[1]

Lucknow
October 2, 1933

Dear Friend,[2]

I have your letter. Not knowing the details of your scheme of work I can say little about it. But I feel sure that the idea of starting a *bank for the development of agriculture and industry involves* all manner of difficulties at present If you will study the situation in Europe and America you will find that the tremendous trade depression which is breaking down the capitalist system in the West has been caused by certain fundamental causes which go to the root of the matter. There is no lack of banks in Western countries but large numbers of them have failed during the last four years. The whole system has broken down and it cannot be propped up. We are living through a period of intense social change.

Your reference to the crore of rupees that the Congress collected in 1921 *shows some ignorance* of the matter. The *money* was not

1. J.N Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2 A retired headmaster of Khalsa High School, Gujranwala.

collected for khadi although khadi had some part of it. This khadi part of the fund is still almost intact and finances the widespread operations of the All India Spinners' Association. Part of the rest of the money went in carrying on national universities and schools. The greatest part, however, was spread out all over India and used by thousands of Congress committees for political work. Far from being lost this money yielded great results. I doubt if such a comparatively small sum has ever gone so far in any country.

You must keep in mind the objective conditions of this country and of the world at present and try to discover the great forces that are shaping world events before you can draw up an effective scheme of work.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

45. To Bhagavan Das[1]

Allahabad
October 17, 1933

My Dear Babu Bhagavan Dasji,
Many thanks for your enlightening letter which I have read with great interest.[2] I am glad you liked my recent article. You will forgive me if I do not write at length just at present. The subjects you touch upon—communism, fascism, economic conditions, social conditions, sex, functional organisations of the society etc.—require elaborate treatment.

Briefly I will say that though there may be outward similarity between the communist state and the fascist state there are fundamental differences. Both are dictatorships but in the former society as a whole profits by it and no special class is a favoured one except in a very minor degree. In the fascist state the dictatorship stands for certain possessing classes who profit by it. Russia is deliberately and scientifically going towards a definite and well thought-out goal. It

1. JN. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 13 October 1933, Bhagavan Das had written that there was "much in common" between fascism and communism. He also stated that he had read that Stalin received a monthly salary of 700 roubles or 1100 rupees

is perfectly true that at the present moment many things exist that conflict with pure socialism but the whole tendency is towards a socialistic state. Fascism has no philosophy and no scientific outlook and no clear goal. Under fascism, as in Germany, the working class and liberal elements generally have been crushed out.

I think the figure you give about salaries in Russia are not quite correct. Stalin probably gets the same salary as any other communist in any position and that does not usually exceed 300 or 400 rupees per month. Of course he has a number of other advantages.

The sex problem in Russia seems to have been solved more satisfactorily than elsewhere.

Russia presents today any number of inconsistencies and disagreeable features and yet so far as I can see its general aim is correct and its methods are also not far wrong. It is a living nation full of youth and energy and inspired by great faith and hope, while other nations sink deeper and deeper into a morass of doubt and despair. Italy is in a very bad way economically at present.

It is impossible to say what the exact future of India is likely to be. But this future cannot divorce itself completely from our past inheritance and ideology though I have no doubt that there will be great changes.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

46. To S. Ramanathan[1]

Allahabad
October 21, 1933

Dear Sir,[2]

I received your letter some time ago. I heard about the self-respect movement[3] when I passed through south India two years ago. I do

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Editor of *The Rationalist*, the journal of the Self Respect League founded in south India in 1925, Minister, Government of Madras, 1937-39
3. Organised by E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker in 1925 to remove all "superstitious belief" based upon religion or tradition and to end caste domination

not know very much about it. I have personally every sympathy with any newspaper which publishes any rationalist view of life. I have found, however, that rationalism covers many kinds of dogmas which are as bad as religious dogmas of old. I hope your paper will be truly rationalist in every respect.

I am afraid I have no time to contribute an article as suggested by you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

47. On Fascism and Democracy[1]

The democratic system of government everywhere in Europe and America is collapsing. The nearest approach to it is in France and in England, more so in the former than in the latter. Even in these countries, the old style of democratic form has ceased to exist. All this shows that the old system is collapsing rapidly. Fascism is itself proof of the strength of the working class movement in Europe. Wherever the challenge to the possessing classes has been the greatest, they have huddled themselves together in the form of fascism to meet it In Germany, the only alternative today to Hitlerism, as Hitler himself says, is communism.

There is certainly the possibility of the rise of fascism in India. Indeed, signs of it are already visible. But fascism cannot solve in Europe or India the real economic problem. And therefore it must inevitably fail some time or other.

1 Interview to the press, Allahabad, 28 October 1933. From *The Hindu*, 28 October 1933

48. To R.W. Fulay[1]

Allahabad
October 28, 1933

My dear Fulay,[2]
Thank you for your letter.[3] While I welcome the idea of labour unity I do not at present see how it is to be brought about. I am not in sufficient touch with present-day labour politics to give a definite opinion but I know enough to feel that there are radical differences which it will not be easy to bridge over. If there is anything that I can do to strengthen the labour movement in India I shall gladly do it. But I do not wish to make confusion worse confounded by suddenly entering the labour arena. I also do not wish to attach myself to any group.

My own sympathies and my ideology fit in far more with the advanced groups than with the moderate labour groups. At the same time I do not like some of the activities of these advanced groups. Moderate trade unionism is to my mind hopelessly inadequate under the existing circumstances. I think that trade unions must have an aggressive programme and at the same time labour should definitely have a political programme. How exactly this is to be brought about under existing circumstances is by no means clear. I am afraid I have no respect for people who talk tall and do nothing and there seems to be a good number of this kind in the labour movement.

I hesitate therefore at this juncture to take the initiative in this matter but I shall watch with interest developments in the Indian labour world and at any moment that I feel that I can be of help in the matter I shall certainly offer my services.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary, Nagpur Trade Union Congress, member, Legislative Council, Central Provinces.
3. He had asked Jawaharlal whether he could settle the differences between the trade union leaders

49. Thirteen Years[1]

"There is a vacant throne in every country of Europe for someone to occupy." So said Mussolini, having taken possession of one such throne. Unhappily for some aspirants for the seat of honour and authority, there is no such vacancy in India. For thirteen years the throne has been occupied in India by a person, who despite himself, cannot get out of it. Mr Jamnadas Mehta, however, objects to this monopoly and would fain end it. And so, finding other means of no avail, he has adopted the curious and unusual expedient of asking him who occupies the throne to vacate it and give other aspirants a chance of honour and glory. Evidently political India is not big enough to contain both Gandhiji and Mr. Jamnadas Mehta.

Mr. Jamnadas Mehta is a leader of the working class movement in India. Now that he has challenged the succession to the political *gaddi* in India, he will tell us, I hope, what he aims at, what his ideology is, and how he intends to reach his goal. He is dissatisfied with our methods and activities of the past thirteen years and is of opinion that they have failed. How would he have acted during this period and what does he imagine that he would have achieved? The labour movement almost everywhere stands for socialism and its ideology is Marxist. Is Mr. Mehta a believer in Marxism and what is called the materialist interpretation of history? If so what brand of Marxism does he favour—social democracy or Leninism—and how does he intend applying it to India? Is his socialism a kind of heaven which has little to do with this earthly world of ours, a hereafter, the thought of which consoles and intoxicates and makes us forget for a while the sorrows of the world, or is it something more earthly and of the present? Is it of the brand that finds favour with Messrs. Ramsay MacDonald and Thomas, or of the fiercer variety known as national socialism of which Mussolini and Hitler are the major prophets?

1. J.N. Papers, NMML. This note was presumably written some time after 28 October 1933 when Jamnadas Mehta, at the Maharashtra Political Conference, declared that the "first and foremost duty of the country . is to break the spell of Mahatma Gandhi".

50. To Abdur Rahim[1]

Allahabad
October 30, 1933

My dear Abdur Rahim,
I was glad to hear from you after a long while. I should like to discuss the questions you suggest in your letter.[2] But for the present I do not propose to go to Calcutta. It is just possible, however, that I may go there some weeks later, if I remain outside gaol till then. I have no fear of Bengal or any other part of India not being the place for me. I can feel at home anywhere and as for Bengal, it is after all the elder brother of all the provinces so far as political work is concerned and I have always had a soft corner in my heart for it.

I do not think that the Congress as constituted is likely to become a full fledged socialist organisation. But I do think that it will become more and more socialistic and as it does so, little groups interested in present social conditions will gradually drop out. That will be all for the good I do not see why I should walk out of the Congress leaving the field clear to the social reactionaries. Therefore, I think it is up to us to remain there and try to force the pace, thereby either converting others or making them depart. Separate organisations may be desirable. For instance industrial labour must have a separate organisation and as far as possible the peasantry should also have a separate organisation but I do not think it is desirable to have purely political organisations, counter or parallel to the Congress. There is a great talk of the socialist party or the like but I am convinced that much of this talk is merely meant to cover ineffective action and also as a means of self-aggrandisement.

More when we meet.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Abdur Rahim had asked how the Congress, composed of different interests and groups, could propagate socialism and whether a parallel organisation would not invite an early clash.

51. Labour and the Congress[1]

During the great social and economic crisis that the world is passing through today, labour has a very special duty before it. For, inevitably, the burden of ideological leadership must remain with labour. In India, the national struggle covers and hides social differences. That is natural. But world events themselves are today forcing the pace and making even national movements more and more economic and social movements All over the world there is a great struggle between the forces of labour and the forces of entrenched vested interests. The stakes are high and therefore we cannot afford either in our national struggle or in our social struggle to compromise with petty changes. If we are to profit by the world situation, we must make up our minds to struggle for a complete and fundamental change of regime. Nothing else should satisfy us, nothing else can solve our problems.

India is today in a somewhat confused state of mind. She finds that her old nationalist ideology does not fit in with the existing circumstances in the world So she struggles to adopt a new way of thinking and this attempt to change over from the old to the new is a painful and confusing one But the attempt must be proceeded with, for only thus, by adopting a progressive ideology of social revolution, can India take an effective part in the freedom struggle as well as in the world struggle.

In such a social struggle labour has always occupied the foremost place. Indian labour therefore must wake up out of its lethargy, close up its ranks, and face the situation bravely and with confidence. It must give up its timid attitude and its demands for petty reforms and seek to play a part in the wider issues which confront it and the world. Such opportunities come rarely. Our national struggle and our social and economic struggle must join hands for the emancipation of the people of India.

Labour represents the productive working class, that is to say, the class which economically and historically is the most important class of the future. It is therefore possible for labour to have a much

1. Message sent to the *Indian Labour Journal* on its eleventh anniversary in November 1933. Reprinted in *Recent Essays and Writings*, (Allahabad, 1934), pp 131-134.

clearer ideology than for the Congress. Labour in theory is the most revolutionary group in a country because it represents the forces of the future. But in India today, as in every country under alien domination, the national problem overshadows social problems and nationalism is more revolutionary than the social struggle. World events are, however, pushing economic issues more and more to the front and even national organisations are becoming infected by such issues.

I am quite clear that labour should organise itself in trade unions and the like quite separately. Otherwise it will get lost in mixed nationalist groups At the same time labour must recognise that nationalism is the strongest force in the country today and it must cooperate with it fully. It should also of course try to influence it on the economic issues.

I am not in theory against a labour political party apart from the Congress, but I fear that any attempt to make such a party today will only result in the exploitation of labour by a number of individuals who will try to advance themselves at the cost of labour.

The National Congress is, as its name implies, a national organisation. Its purpose is national freedom for India. It includes many classes and groups which have really conflicting social interests, but the common national platform keeps them together for the moment. During the past years it has inclined towards a socialist programme, but it is far from being socialist.

I should personally like the Congress to go very much further and to adopt a full socialist programme. I recognise also that there are many groups in the Congress today which are ideologically very backward and desire to prevent the Congress from going ahead. Recognising all this, I have no doubt whatever, that the Congress has been far the most militant organisation in India during recent years. It seems to me perfectly ridiculous for people who do nothing effective themselves to accuse Congress of lack of militancy There is a grave danger of most of our so-called socialists confining their militancy to catch phrases and drawing-room parlours

For Congressmen who are also interested in labour affairs, the course of action should be as follows· They should function separately in labour organisations, trade unions, etc, and help them to develop an ideology and programme of activity as militant as possible, even in advance of the Congress programme. In the National Congress they should try to push on an economic orientation in consonance with the labour programme Inevitably the Congress programme, so far as ideology goes, will not be as advanced as the labour programme But it is quite possible to have cooperation in militant activity.

52. To Arjun Arora[1]

Allahabad
November 9, 1933

Dear Sir,[2]
I have received your letter and your manifesto. I am glad to learn that you and your colleagues are trying to think along socialist lines. In reading your manifesto, however, I do not see anything that is definitely socialistic. The bills that you propose are given in this but most of them are what might be termed liberal. I must however make one exception and that is the "Factory and Railway Soviet Establishment Bill".

Socialism as understood in this country usually means a vague idealism demanding justice for the underdog but modern socialism is something far more than this. It is called scientific socialism. It interprets history, economics, politics and indeed all branches of life in terms of certain fundamental laws. I would suggest to you to study this scientific socialism and to develop its ideology among your fellow students.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J N. Correspondence, N M M L.
2. (b. 1912); general secretary, Textile Labour Association; editor, *Mazdoor Samachar* since 1951, member, Rajya Sabha, 1960 72

53. To Bulaki Rama[1]

Allahabad
November 24, 1933

My dear Bulaki Ramaji,
Please forgive me for the delay in answering your letter.[2] I appreciate what you have said about choosing a narrow issue. To some extent that has to be done and is indeed being done in local areas.

1. J N. Correspondence, N M M L.
2. In his letter of 6 October 1933, he suggested that the Congress agitate on narrow issues such as taxation of agricultural surplus.

But present-day conditions are such that broader issues have to be faced. I have written considerably on these latter issues in the press and I do not wish to repeat what I have said there. I would gladly associate myself with any demand for minimum agricultural income being assured to the peasantry. I think this is a perfectly sound position to take up. The first charge on the land must be the peasant's but I am equally sure this cannot be brought about either under the present political system or the present economic system. We are, however, laying stress on this aspect in our work in the villages here

Your cooperation and help are always welcome. But conditions are so abnormal today that any of us may go back to gaol at any moment and I do not want to trouble you to change your place of residence under this condition.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

54. Civics and Politics[1]

Politics today are in a sorry mess all over the world and distraught politicians seek in vain for a remedy. Their old methods have failed completely and events have marched ahead leaving the old guard of politicians far behind. With the passing of politics from the centre of the world's stage, economics has appeared from behind the scenes and has dominated men and events. The old style of politician feels helpless before this transformation, but in the West, at any rate, he has been forced to bow down before the new gods and pay them homage Not so in India where many of us still cling to outworn theories and discredited methods

The dominance of economics has brought new ideas and new theories in its train and the problems of the world are viewed in a new perspective. Out of this welter of ideas and theories has grown the scientific interpretation of history and politics and economics that is known as scientific socialism or Marxism or communism. Many

1 First published in *Calcutta Municipal Gazette*, 25 November 1933. Reprinted in *Recent Essays and Writings*, (Allahabad, 1934), pp 140 141.

learned books have been written on this subject and passions have been roused and bitter conflicts have taken place.

There is one aspect of communism however which is easy to understand for the man in the street. Communism is in a way the municipalization of the country or the world. Of course this is a wholly insufficient definition. None the less it does give us a glimpse of what underlies communism. The true civic ideal aims at common possession and common enjoyment of municipal amenities, and these amenities go on increasing till they comprise almost everything that a citizen requires. Roads, bridges, lighting, water supply, sanitation, hospitals and medical relief, libraries, education, parks and recreation grounds, games, proper housing, museums, art galleries, theatres, music —these are some of the activities that a modern up to date municipality should be interested in, and some of the amenities which it should provide free of cost to all its citizens. Communism means the extension and the application of this civic ideal to the larger group of the nation and ultimately to the world. And so the civic ideal becomes the national and the international ideal, and, with the passing of pure politics, civics becomes merged in the communist ideal of a scientific ordering of the world's affairs and a proper planning and control, on behalf of and for the benefit of the masses, of production and distribution and the many other activities of the modern world.

55. The Civic Ideal[1]

In the old days the state was looked upon almost as the private possession of the sovereign. His chief business was to tax his subjects and to protect them from external invasion and internal disorder from robbers and the like. Having given a certain measure of security to his people, his job was done. If he did this and did not impose too crushing a burden of taxation, he was looked upon as a good sovereign. Such states have been called 'police states' as the principal duties of the government were in the nature of police duties. Our Indian states today are more or less of this type, with this essential difference that

1. 1 December 1933. *The Citizen*, December 1933 Reprinted in *Recent Essays and Writings*, (Allahabad, 1934), pp 142 144.

they have not to protect themselves from external invasion. The British Government in India during the nineteenth century was also largely a police government. It did very little for the educational, cultural, industrial, medical and sanitary development of the state. Gradually, however, it was forced by circumstances to interest itself in some of the multifarious activities of the modern state, though its interest did not go far and it produced very little in the shape of actual results.

It was in the cities that the idea of providing something more than protection for the citizens first developed. The close association of a large number of human beings in cities resulted in the growth of cooperative activities and of culture. With the civic ideal began to emerge the idea, that amenities for the common enjoyment of the citizens should be provided for. Roads and bridges which were privately owned and subject to tolls, became public property and free to all without payment. Sanitation, lighting, water supply, hospitals and medical relief, parks and recreation grounds, schools and colleges, libraries and museums, became the functions of the municipality. Today it is considered the function of a municipality not only to provide all these free of any charge to all its citizens, but also to provide art galleries, theatres, music and, most important of all, proper housing for everybody. But obviously the basic need is for food and to present art and culture to a man who has no food is to mock him. Hence it is the business of a modern municipality today to see to it that no one starves within its confines, to provide work for those who are workless, and, if no work is to be had, to provide food. That is the civic ideal today, although few municipalities approach it. In India, of course, we are still very far from even having a glimpse of the ideal.

This civic ideal gradually captured the state and with it the activities of the state grew in all directions. The police state transformed itself into the modern state, a complex, paternal organism with a large number of departments and spheres of activities, and innumerable contacts with the individual citizen Not only did it give him security from external invasion and internal disorder, but it educated him, taught him industries, tried to raise his standard of living, gave him opportunities for the development of culture, provided him with insurance schemes to enable him to face any unforeseen contingency, gave him all manner of amenities, and made itself responsible for his work and food. The civic ideal was spreading. Today it has spread as far as it can under the existing social structure and it finds its further progress stopped so long as that structure remains what it is.

The true civic ideal is the socialist ideal, the communist ideal. It means the common enjoyment of the wealth that is produced in nature

and by human endeavour. That ideal can only be reached when the present social structure is changed and gives place to socialism.

56. To Onkar Nath Verma[1]

Allahabad
December 2, 1933

Dear Comrade,[2]
I have your long letter.[3] It is a little difficult to reply in detail because that would involve writing a long essay. I might point out however that I have not attacked communists all over the world (except those of Russia). What I have stated is that communist tactics, that is to say, the tactics of the Comintern have not succeeded in other countries so far. As you must know that is the view of some prominent communists also, like Trotsky.

You are also wrong in thinking that I expect very much from the peasantry. But I do think that the next step will be influenced very greatly by the attitude of the peasantry. I should like the industrial workers to develop the most advanced ideology and to take the lead both of the peasantry and the freedom movement. But at the present moment in India the industrial workers have no such influence over the rest of the country. One has, therefore, either to wait till the workers become class conscious enough and take the leadership or one has to work up the rest of the country so that the two processes might combine and lead to big results.

It is absurd to call the Karachi or the Allahabad resolutions communistic or even socialistic. Nobody has described them as such. They were passed by a national organization and not by a proletarian organization. They merely indicate that our national movement is gradually turning towards the left. I think this is a desirable development and that this in itself will help the fuller development of an advanced ideology in groups. It will provide a background out of which that

1. JN. Correspondence, NMML.
2. A resident of Mirzapur district.
3. In his letter of 30 November 1933, he alleged that Jawaharlal had been "long neglecting" the proletariat and now found it "convenient" to build his hopes on the "peasantry alone". He also suggested that Jawaharlal had confused communism with "state socialism".

ideology can develop. Without that background the workers' struggle would have far greater difficulties. You must remember that the industrial workers are still only a very small part of the Indian population and their influence is far less than that of the workers of Russia was.

Personally I have never put any obstruction or condemned in any way any worker who stands for an advanced ideology. But taking objective conditions as they are I think we ought to take advantage of the national movement as far as it can go.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

57. To Beltie Shah Gilani[1]

Allahabad
December 3, 1933

My dear Beltie Shah,

Thank you for your letter.[2] Your suggestions provoke thought but I must say that a reading of your letter leaves a confused impression of what you are driving at. There seems to me to be no reason why scientific socialism should ignore psychology and human nature. If it does so it will cease to be scientific. It is quite possible that the Russian experiment may fail, partly because Russia was a very backward country and partly it may be because of wrong methods. That would simply show that different methods should be employed.

I would not say that Marxism necessarily means swift and ruthless blows and certainly it does not imply chaos. I would put it this way: that it suggests a method of defence against the ruthlessness of present-day society. As vested interests never agree to give what they have got they prefer to create chaos and disruption rather than face the inevitable change.

The importance of Russia today is not that something has been done there which is worthy of imitation all along the line but because

1. JN Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 28 November 1933, Beltie Shah held that the Russian experiment, where the "irrepressible human element was having the better of the economic determinist", was not a classical application of scientific socialism.

something worthwhile has been attempted there and this attempt in itself is full of lessons.

I suppose it is at your instance that Father Lyons[3] of Kurseong has been sending me large numbers of foreign periodicals. I welcome them but it is quite impossible for me to find the time to read all he sends me. It would be far better if he could send me just one or two periodicals.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Of St. Mary's College, Kurseong

58. To Amar Kishor Sinha[1]

Allahabad
December 8, 1933

Dear Friend,[2]

I have your letter.[3] The condition of the peasantry is very bad all over India. Certainly we should try to help them by reviving hand-spinning as well as other village industries. But the real problem cannot be solved in this way. The only way to solve it is to change the whole land system and to write off the burden of debt. There is no other way out and therefore while we should try to give as much relief as possible we should really concentrate on organising the peasantry to fight for a radical change in the land system so that power may come into their hands. That means Swaraj

If you want to enquire about hand-spinning please write to the Provincial Charkha Sangha, Muzzafarpur (Bihar).

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J N Correspondence, N M M L.
2. A resident of Champaran
3. In his letter of 3 December 1933, he urged the revival of cottage industries in the villages, especially hand spinning and weaving

59. To Dinkar Mehta[1]

Allahabad
December 9, 1933

Dear Mr. Mehta,[2]
Thank you for your letter.[3] I quite agree with you that the future trend of the Congress must be socialistic. Not only the trend but the actions also. Apart from the ideology the spread of which is essential to right action, the action, if it is of a revolutionary or direct action nature, inevitably releases mass forces In addition to this I should personally like Congress activities to concern themselves much more with the peasantry and the workers.

It is true Czarist Russia was an even more agricultural country than India today. But there is this difference: power was concentrated in the hands of an effete aristocratic group which had its headquarters in two centres—Petrograd and Moscow. In both these centres the industrial workers were strong and they could therefore influence tremendously and even upset the system of government. It is somewhat different here. Power is not so concentrated and we have to deal with a very powerful opponent who has his hold all over the country and whose sources of strength lie outside the country. Apart from this a perfectly extraordinary set of circumstances prevailed in Russia in 1917. No country can bank on a repetition of these circumstances.

My articles were written for those who do not know much about modern conditions or socialism. But it is perfectly true that a person who is wholly ignorant of these subjects will find some difficulty in understanding them. It is not possible to write something which will meet the level of the average intellectual as well as ignorant person. From what I have discovered of them, the articles were certainly not above the knowledge or intelligence of the average intellectual.

I am glad to learn that you have got over your illness.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Correspondence, NMML.
2. (b 1907), participated in Bardoli satyagraha, 1928, and civil disobedience, 1930, member, Congress Socialist Party, 1934, and Communist Party of India, 1935-64, at present secretary, Gujarat Committee of Communist Party (Marxist)
3. He had desired a clear statement from the Congress showing that its future trend was to be socialistic. He thought there was great need for socialist propaganda and not a mere development of ideology.

60. Speech at Delhi[1]

I am no stranger to Delhi and require no address. But I know that the address is not to me personally but to the cause I am deemed to represent. Freedom means the end of poverty and economic exploitation. The main problem before us today *is to provide food and* clothing to the millions of people who are being victimised by vested interests. Swaraj means the power to end unemployment, starvation and oppression, and not the winning of a few honours and jobs. Swaraj is not a beautiful word for which we are sacrificing our lives. The heaviest burden on the country today is the burden of foreign domination. Swaraj does not mean change of masters or replacement of white by brown bureaucracy. The majority of the people are being exploited by a few classes and the chief fight is against these classes.

Politics are never taught by books or merely by speeches, but facts and events teach politics to the millions. Only a selected few can read books, but the masses can learn from events. Repression, as we have experienced, frightens some people and makes others stronger and more determined. I am now trying to judge whether we have been suppressed or have become stronger. The pessimist amongst us occasionally comes out with arguments that with all the sacrifices we are yet far off from Swaraj. Oppressive measures, ban on freedom of the press and platform have taken us further off from Swaraj. But I am an optimist and *disappointment is an unknown word in my dictionary of politics.*

As for Sir Harry Haig's ban—on the meeting of the A.I.C.C.—I am immensely pleased to read the proceedings of the Assembly on the subject which still continues to exist in spite of our not taking any interest in it. The assertion of the government that it has wiped out the national movement and crushed the spirit of the people is only a proof of the fact that the government is trying to cover its moral defeat by mere words. Real freedom cannot be won until real power passes into the hands of the people to enable us to redress our grievances.

Apparently two classes of people have come into existence during recent years: those who are continuously going to jails and others who are *making repeated pilgrimages* to London as members of the R.T.C. and Joint Committee delegates, year after year, for the last four years. Tremendous volumes of evidence and records which can fill a number

1 12 December 1933 *From The Bombay Chronicle,* 18 December 1933.

of cellars have been published and songs of praise of Sir Samuel Hoare and his colleagues are being daily sung by those who have been to London. The government has really created this class of henchmen who are like clay in their hands. All the talk about federation has resolved into the fact that only a ceremonial show need be made of some sort of self-government with real power left in the hands of England, and all this apparatus is expected to add to the burden of taxation under which the poverty stricken people of India are already groaning. Under no circumstance can this game satisfy the people of India.

The various countries of the world are almost on the verge of collapse and are on the brink of war. We may hear any day that a world war has broken out. The world is in a great whirlpool of economic revolution today. It is true that Britain has been a dominating power for a century. This is largely due to her early industrialization and to the economic exploitation of India. Before the Great World War, America and Germany were powerful industrial rivals and the rivalry of Germany precipitated the World War; and although England won the war, economic miseries have followed and brought all the countries of the world to the verge of collapse. During the last 15 years no less than 130 great conferences have taken place in order to bring about peace in the world, but the maze of difficulties into which the world powers have wandered into has led to the collapse of the economic system today.

So far, England was only an island and was protected by the navy but with the change in the methods of war and invention of aeroplanes and poisonous gases it is no longer left in isolation. A war in the air, the possibilities of which are not very remote, has ended England's previous safety. British imperialism is in the process of disintegration but how long that agony will last is not easy to say. But do not think England has become helpless, because a whole century or more of exploitation of India and the rest of the world has supplied her with enough resources to last a while longer.

As for the public debt of India, my personal view is that not a pie from the so-called national debt should be paid to England. England, which was a creditor country so long, has now become a debtor country and while trying to repudiate its debts, or at any rate struggling to get remission of debts, is insisting that the poorest people of the *earth should not put forward a claim to cancel the so-called national* debt. Wherever in the course of my speech I have used the word, England and English, I mean British imperialism, because even in England there are the poor and the labourers who are equally being victimised and exploited by imperialist policy.

Reverting to the question of convening the A.I.C.C., the government's decision to ban the A.I.C.C. meeting is rather amusing since those who want suspension of civil disobedience are the people anxious to convene a meeting of the A.I.C.C.; and still the Home Member has not the courage to allow such a meeting. As far as the question of holding the meeting is concerned, officially, I can say that the question does not arise because 30 members have not yet made the requisition in accordance with the constitution.

As for the future programme, the programme is there for those who want to work it. They have a definite programme of constructive work in lakhs of villages of India. Do your duty to these struggling peasants, serve them to your best. Those who cannot carry on this mission can carry on the campaign against untouchability but I am personally interested at present only in the political and economic struggle of India, and I want others not to sit idle in this connection. The political struggle must always have the first place in your hearts.

61. Speech at Aligarh Muslim University[1]

Mr. Vice-Chancellor and young men of the University,

You, Sir! have set up an example by addressing the House in English, and perforce I have to follow that example. I wanted to meet you because I have heard from my childhood of what Aligarh has done and of the large place its products occupy in our national life.

Friends! I was going to tell you some of the ideas that have moved me in the past and move me still. I have been a dreamer of dreams. I am called a dreamer. I wish you were called dreamers too, provided your dreams have some relation to reality. There are not many in the country who are endowed with such a gift. If youth will not dream, do you expect these crabbed and aged people to dream? Age has its advantages. It is remarkable for its store of wisdom but there is hardly any activity in old age.

Read of what fascism is doing in Italy and Hitlerism in Germany, the continuous revolution in Spain and of that most marvellous and unprecedented work of construction in history. I mean the unique

1. Aligarh, 15 December 1933. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 19 December 1933.

and unparalleled economic reconstruction in the U.S.S.R. Think of the revolutionary changes and turmoil in this world. Think of what has happened and what is happening under our own eyes. What do you think you would do if you get power to influence the world and national events? Look how the world is changing. It is an extraordinarily fascinating and cheerful prospect for a big mind; for little minds it is not cheerful at all. It is, I think, Trotsky who says that there has been no such revolutionary period as the present in the history of the world, if anyone disapproves of this period, all I can say is that he has chosen an unfortunate moment to be born. The world today is being moved by large forces, almost like an earthquake. It is trembling with fundamental changes. Your country is engaged in a battle for freedom. Don't you think it is a cause you should espouse? I repeat again. Do you dream, and do your dreams point towards action? Do you ever think in these universities of the starving and bare skeletons of our countrymen moved by the elemental force of hunger? Do you ever ask yourself the question—what has happened to them, and if they are going to remain starved and poor for ever? What is going to be your contribution in their struggle? Even if you wish to, you cannot escape these questions. What are the university men going to do about it? Do they seek the solution through government jobs? Are our vast numbers of graduates, the great many of the prospective unemployed, too proud for manual work, going to be an additional burden on our country and people? I am deeply interested in seeing how you solve these problems.

I wonder what is your view of history. You seem to have images of big men as your heroes. Your view of history seems to present a pageant show which throws a light on the past, but does not give you a key to the understanding of the present. Unless you understand the forces which are working beneath the surface, the tremendous forces of hunger and want which have changed the face of the earth—you cannot get the connecting link.

Mr President, you have referred to the unity of communities in India and to the diversity of cultures. I believe this diversity of cultures has given us the richness which we should preserve. Unless we have unity of outlook, we cannot achieve anything and I admit that these diversities may be a hindrance. It is amazing to note how the cultural unity of the masses has survived even now. That unity is going to endure.

Europe has to face basic and fundamental problems which is not the case with our communal question. Our question is a ghostly thing, and of no substance. It is the result of political reaction. I

admit there may be honest communalists who want to protect their community, that is understandable. Nevertheless communalists take shelter behind political reaction. I submit that if the question is placed before the masses, the solution will be found readily enough.

International conferences have failed because the whole structure of European society is diseased. There are certain conditions and forces that go to destroy the present social structure. The society in its growth wants to break and tear its old dress, and put on a new one. This process in history is called revolution. It is not a question of a few agitators and revolutionaries. It is a tremendous elemental force *from below. Politicians do not bring about these revolutions. It* is social development that brings them.

You know the history of the noncooperation movement. It began some twelve years ago. Some people thought it was peculiar to India. But it was not a disconnected fact There were similar movements in western Asia. Gandhi was not there. But the people used fundamentally more or less the same methods. It is difficult to explain. There was something in the air. Elemental forces were at work. There was something much bigger than the human material it used.

When we stress diversities, we ignore the fundamental unity of the country. We of the middle class arrogate to ourselves the exclusive right of being Indian. Outside these walls, there is the real India and if we do not march with the events, it is possible that real India may take things in its hands and march ahead of us.

62. Fascism and Communism[1]

The Indian press has been very kind and considerate to me and has given me numerous opportunities of giving publicity to my opinions. I must express my gratitude to it. But sometimes it gives me a shock and one of the biggest shocks that I have recently had has come today from the report of a so-called interview in Delhi given to certain

1. Statement to the press, 18 December 1933. *The Leader*, 20 December 1933 Reprinted in *Recent Essays and Writings*, (Allahabad, 1934), pp 129 130

foreign visitors. *The National Call* of Delhi first gave publicity to this and I was amazed to read what I was supposed to have said. *The Free Press Journal* of Bombay has now gone a few steps further and in a seven column headline announces that I have put my cards on the table and declared that I prefer fascism to communism. I did not know that I had so far kept any cards up my sleeve. I have endeavoured during the last three months to give expression to my views in writings and speeches with as much clarity as I am capable of. Those views may be right or wrong but I had at least hoped that they were clear enough and no one could mistake them. To find that they were misunderstood and to be made to say the exact opposite of what I believe and mean to say comes as a shock and a disappointment.

The report of the Delhi interview is so full of errors and mis-statements that it is a little difficult to correct, short of rewriting the whole of it afresh. I do not propose to do so. I shall refer those who are interested in what I believe to read my writings on the subject. But one thing I wish to clear up and that is my attitude to fascism and communism. I do believe that fundamentally the choice before the world today is one between some form of communism and some form of fascism, and I am all for the former, that is communism. I dislike fascism intensely and indeed I do not think it is anything more than a crude and brutal effort of the present capitalist order to preserve itself at any cost. There is no middle road between fascism and communism. One has to choose between the two and I choose the communist ideal. In regard to the methods and approach to this ideal I may not agree with everything that the orthodox communists have done. I think that these methods will have to adapt themselves to changing conditions and may vary in different countries. But I do think that the basic ideology of communism and its scientific interpretation of history is sound.

I hope I have made myself clear. Only a person of unsound mind could express himself in the self-contradictory way which the reported interview makes out. Only a lunatic could favour communism one day and fascism the next day. I flatter myself that I am neither and claim to be sane and, perhaps, sober.

63. To M. R. Masani[1]

Allahabad
December 19, 1933

Dear Masani,[2]
I have your letter. I would welcome the formation of socialist groups in the Congress to influence the ideology of the Congress and the country. As you are aware, I have been laying stress on the socialist ideal very much in my recent speeches and writings. I feel that the time has come when the country should face this issue and come to grips with the real economic problems which ultimately matter. All over the world today people are being forced to think in terms of economic and social change and we in India cannot afford to remain in the backwater of pure politics.

The Congress is, as its very name implies, a nationalist organisation and it has so far functioned on the nationalist plane. That was inevitable because in a country under alien domination the problem of political independence has always taken first place. So long as the Congress remains the nationalist Congress this nationalist outlook is bound to dominate the situation. But the world events as well as the natural consequences of our mass struggles have forced the Congress to think, to some extent at least, in terms of economics. Our direct action struggles were, to begin with, purely political; however, the political aspect became tinged with the economic. The Congress, nationalist as it was, began to talk rather vaguely and idealistically in terms of some social change. That process of change of ideology is proceeding apace and is being hastened by economic conditions as well as the continuation of direct action.

The time has undoubtedly come now when we must think more clearly and develop a scientific ideology. This is, so far as I am concerned, one of socialism and I would, therefore, gladly welcome the formation of groups to spread this ideology. But it is not enough to talk merely in terms of an academic ideology, especially at a moment when our country is in the midst of a struggle for freedom. This ideology must be tacked on to action and this action, if it is to bear fruit, must be related to the Congress struggle. Otherwise the socialist group will

1. Maharashtra Government Records, C I D File No. 1/C S P /33.
2. (b 1905); joint secretary, Congress Socialist Party, 1934 39; member, Constituent Assembly, 1947-48, and Lok Sabha, 1949 52, 1957 62 and 1963-71; president, Swatantra Party, 1970 71, author of *Our India*

become an ineffective, academic and sterile study centre. Even to spread the ideology the effective method is through action which is coordinated to the direct action of the Congress and labour and peasant organisations.

I lay stress on this because I have had sad experience of individuals and groups putting on the colours of socialists and advancing a brave ideology and then doing nothing or, what is worse, just criticising and condemning others who are carrying on the struggle. If a group is meant to give shelter to such persons it is obvious that little can be expected from it. It has become the fashion for some people to cover their own ineffectiveness by strong criticism of the Congress activities. Criticism of ideology or methods must of course be free and welcome but it must not be allowed to become an anti revolutionary weapon. Although ideologically backward, the Congress is undoubtedly today the most advanced revolutionary organisation in action in India. It must be strengthened and at the same time directed towards newer channels.

I hope therefore this socialist group you suggest will take part in action as well as thought and will join the vanguard of the struggle. I should like to make clear that in the last but one paragraph of this letter I do not refer to people who may differ as to the present Congress programme. Personally I hold that under existing circumstances the present programme is suitable and gives us scope to develop our struggle. But I know that other comrades are of a different opinion and I respect these comrades. In any socialist group both these sets of opinion as well as others must have full scope. What I referred to was the person who has no notion of indulging in any action now or later and finds satisfaction in brave talk only. I attach considerable importance to action as I feel that out of it alone will the masses imbibe revolutionary ideas.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

64. The Trade Union Congress[1]

I am addressing this congress after about four years. These four years have seen great changes in India both in the national and trade union movements. A great struggle for freedom has been carried on and is still continuing. The trade union movement has been split up into various parts and I am not yet clear as to what each part stands for. During my period in prison I was unable to follow the various developments in the labour world. I tried to find out some facts recently but am still not in a position to know the exact situation. While I deplore the lack of unity I feel that to some extent it is inevitable as the struggle proceeds. On one side there are the reformists and constitutionalists, and on the other, revolutionary elements that want a radical change in the social and political structure. Much the same thing is happening in the national movement.

The present position of labour in India is deplorable. There is tremendous unemployment and the wages are cut down and living standards are reduced. Labour only meets these attacks by presenting a united front. World conditions are such that mere crumbs fall from the imperialists' and capitalists' table to the labour masses. As these conditions have deteriorated there is less and less to distribute. Therefore, the only way out for labour is to fight for a radical change which would give power. The labour method of fight is organisation and strike. Many petty strikes are taking place all over the country because of the attempts to lower wages. These individual strikes are bound to fail. If they want them to succeed there should be coordination and organisation, resulting, when time comes, in a general strike to prevent the progressive cutting down of the wages. As a matter of fact the labour problem and the national problem are both coming nearer to each other and have to face the ultimate issue—that is to say, the removal of British imperialism from India. No other solution will satisfy both or bring relief to the masses. I hope, therefore, that there will be an increasing amount of cooperation between the two great movements. The national movement cannot of course, drop its national character and become a purely labour movement. Nor can the labour movement become just a part of the national movement because it represents

1. Speech delivered at the 13th session of the All India Trade Union Congress at Kanpur on 23 December 1933 From *The Tribune*, 30 December 1933. Reprinted in *Recent Essays and Writings*, (Allahabad, 1934), pp 135 137.

technically the class-conscious workers who are the most revolutionary elements in the population. But there is no reason why the two cannot cooperate wherever possible.

Some people say that after years of struggle our condition is worse than it was before. That is always so when a fight takes place about fundamental matters. Today imperialism and capitalism all over the world are fighting a last-ditch battle to preserve themselves and it is up to labour to organise and strengthen themselves and put their whole weight in the struggle. If they do so and at the same time cooperate with the national movement and influence it, I have no doubt that victory will come to you and not only will thereby bring political freedom in India but social freedom also.

65. To J. T. Gwynn[1]

Allahabad
December 27, 1933

Dear Mr. Gwynn,

I have received your two letters dated the 15th and 28th November. I have not seen what has appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* from my letter, but as I wrote to you, there was nothing private in what I wrote.[2]

Of course I shall not take it ill if you criticise me at any time.

As regards communism I think I wrote to you that I do not look upon it as a dogma which must be accepted in its entirety but rather as a general outlook on history and on current events as well as on the future. It is this outlook that appeals to me. As for details and methods, I am sure that many changes will have to be made from time to time and from place to place. I would hate to live in a world which is purely mechanical and which does not give individual freedom or rejoices in the infliction of suffering and the suppression of human kindness. I feel that in the modern world the qualities that make life worth living are at the most confined to a few and the vast majority have no chance to indulge in them. It is possible that a communist society while levelling up the masses may do injury to some of these

1. J.N Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, item 10

qualities. The risk has to be taken. But we can certainly try to preserve these qualities as far as we can and bring them within the reach of all.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

66. On the Municipalisation of Services[1]

I thank you for the honour you have done to me. I am no stranger to Cawnpore, and, even before my time, my father had been intimately connected with the city both as a student and as a lawyer. I am proud to think that I occupy a corner in the hearts of the people of Cawnpore.

Why is this address then given to me now? I think it is not a personal tribute to me but it is a way of expressing sympathy for certain ideals I happen to represent. Some people say that municipal boards should keep away from politics and the like. But if the municipality represented the people how could it ignore the feelings and passions which moved them and stirred them.

I am glad to learn from the address that the board has done something for the improvement of the labourers and the Harijans in regard to the housing conditions and education. A few years ago, I visited the labour quarters in Cawnpore and was shocked and horrified. Nowhere else had I seen anything so bad in housing conditions. I hope that improvement has been made regarding them during the last few years. The municipal board might take some pride in its achievements but the test is not what little has been done but what a great deal remains to be done.

No board can be said to have done its duty so long as any of its citizens are unemployed, starving, homeless or living in a miserable condition. It is often said that financial difficulties come in the way. That is no doubt true under existing circumstances, but it is no excuse for ignoring the essential claims of any group of citizens. A board's duty is to

1. Reply to the welcome address presented by the Kanpur Municipal Board *The Bombay Chronicle*, 29 December 1933.

provide, among other things, education, sanitation, housing and recreation for all its citizens. A board cannot be judged by the houses of the rich but by the living conditions of the poor.

A much feared word, namely, communism or socialism, means largely municipalization of services and the activities of the country.

67. To E Raghava Reddi[1]

Allahabad
January 12, 1934

Dear Friend,[2]

I thank you for the copy of your article which I have read with interest. It contains an interesting analysis of past and present-day conditions. I feel, however, that you have ignored certain important factors in comparing the East with the West. What you call the old Indian economy was not essentially different from the old Western economy. The differences have arisen during the last two hundred years or more by the introduction of new methods of production in the West and now we notice a vast difference between the West and the East. This difference is not between the West and the East as such but between industrial and agricultural economy. It seems to me inevitable, whether one likes it or not, that the agricultural economy should give place to an industrial one. In doing so it has brought many evils in its train but it is possible to separate these evils and keep the good only.

You say that the Indian sages laid stress on the principle that political units must be coterminous with economic units. More or less this was so all over the world in pre-industrial times. But the new industrialism brought the world market and gradually the real economic units became the whole world. Thus today it is impossible to find a solution which is not a world solution based on the world being treated as one unit.

You will also find in the middle ages in Europe the same attempt to regulate prices, to prevent profiteering and insure fair exchange as far as possible, such as you find in India in olden times. But this solution cannot apply now because of the new conditions that have arisen all over the world. Therefore the solution must be of a different kind, something which recognizing the benefits of capitalism and keeping

1 J.N Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2 An advocate of Nellore.

them yet does away with the profit motive of capitalism. The only way seems to me socialism. Charity under present conditions is quite ineffective and usually harmful. It can only function with any measure of success in a limited rural economy

It is easy to say that a spirit of humanity should pervade individual and national activities. One might as well say that all human beings should become saints and sages. Unhappily our wishes remain in the air and if we are to be effective we have to deal with conditions and the human material as we find them.

You say that India is a land of small holdings. This is not true today, although it was certainly true in pre-British times. At present the whole of Bengal, Bihar and the United Provinces are zamindari areas full of enormous holdings

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

68. Message to All India Textile Workers Conference[1]

I would have gladly attended your conference, because I feel that it is dealing with one of the most important problems that faces us today, a problem that not only faces the textile workers and the labour movement, but also affects the freedom struggle in India. I regret, however, that I shall be unable to attend. It is extraordinarily difficult for me to leave Allahabad for the next few days.

It is clear that the textile workers' conditions are progressively deteriorating and attempts are being made to reduce their wages and lower their standards. Many sporadic strikes are taking place all over the world. It is obviously desirable to have concerted action instead of this sporadic action I hope, therefore, your conference will succeed in evolving a common line of action. Merely submitting to the offensive of the owners of the textile mills will inevitably result in great misery for the workers and in the break up of the trade union organisation. This offensive, therefore, must be combated in an organised and united manner by the workers.

I wish you all success in your labours.

1. Allahabad, 28 January 1934 *The Bombay Chronicle*, 29 January 1934

69. To A. H. Khan[1]

2nd February 1934

Dear Mr. Khan,
I have your letter.[2] I am afraid it is quite impossible to give effect to your proposal. Firstly, because all manner of people are subscribing to the fund and one cannot impose a radical solution on them. Secondly, because the Congress itself as a whole is not a convinced socialist body. Thirdly, because numerous past instances teach us that it is not possible to build up socialist colonies in a capitalist state. All such attempts in Europe and America have failed hopelessly. Fourthly, there is bound to be a great deal of opposition from the government as well as the various groups in the community.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Maharashtra Government Records, Bombay Police Commissioner's File No 3590/II/II.
2. Khan's letter is not available

OFFICIAL REPRESSION

70. M.N. Roy[1]

I met him first in Moscow in November 1927. I had heard a great deal about him and had read his brilliant book[2] on Indian problems and so I looked forward with interest to this meeting, and I was not disappointed.

Six feet tall and well built physically, M.N. Roy was a fine specimen of Indian humanity. Intellectually, he was alert and keen and even a few minutes' conversation impressed me with his unusual ability. He was obviously a man of intellect, and yet he was something more. He was a man of action also, trying always to fit his action to his thought and ever eager to seize any opportunity that might offer itself. Firmly convinced of the Marxist view of economics and politics and life, he was devoted to the great cause as he conceived it. But he had the pride of intellect also and he was not of the sort that follows another blindly and without questioning.

I was impressed by him. Evidently he was not impressed by me and during the years that followed he wrote many an article in bitter criticism of me and my kind, whom he dubbed, with considerable truth, as petty *bourgeois*. He used hard words which stung, but the memory of our brief meeting remained fresh in my mind and I retained a partiality and a soft corner in my heart for him.

Years passed. One day in 1931, I was surprised to find that a stranger who had called on me was none other than M.N. Roy. I had not expected him, I did not even know that he was in India, but I recognised him immediately and was delighted to meet him.

He had come back to his homeland, after a long absence of about fifteen years, under strange circumstances. He was one of those who were bitterly disliked by the British authorities and a return to the

1. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 17 October 1933. Reprinted in *Recent Essays and Writings*, (Allahabad, 1934), pp. 113-115
2. Presumably *The Future of Indian Politics*, published in 1926.

land where the Union Jack was supreme meant, almost certainly, prison and suffering. He knew this full well and yet he came. He had disagreed on some grounds of policy and tactics with the predominant Stalin group in the Soviet Union and any pronounced disagreement was not welcomed there. So he left Russia.

But he was not the man to remain idle. The cause called him and the call was too powerful to be ignored. All the pent up energy of the man of intellect and action pushed him inevitably to his homeland though he knew the fate that awaited him there.

That fate met him some months after his return. None of us could do much for him and yet I wanted to be of some service to him, to show somehow in what regard I held him. I joined his defence committee[3] because of this desire of mine though I knew that such committees are of little real use in India at present and I had little faith in them.

Today he lies in the Bareilly Central Prison and for nearly two years and a half he has been in gaol. He is ill and is said to suffer from a serious constitutional disease. For long unused to a hot climate, he has had to endure the terrible summer heat of northern India in the hard and painful surroundings of a prison. The usual facilities which were granted to some of us in prison are denied to him and, it appears, that even books and writing materials are severely restricted. For an intellectual that is the hardest trial of all.

And so he wastes away and his bright young life, which had already shown such rich promise, slides downhill to the brink. Such is the fate of one of the bravest and ablest of India's sons of the present generation. We are poor enough in human material and it is a tragedy to see the waste of the lives of those who have the ability and capacity to do so much for their country, while others whom nobody can accuse of possessing any intellect or ideals or even decent feelings occupy the seats of power and authority But it is wrong to think that their lives are wasted. They serve the cause better in this silent way than many who shout from the house tops.

3 See *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p 297

71. Statement on Fyzabad Prisoners[1]

Over a month ago I drew the attention of the public to the state of affairs in the Rae Bareli jail and to the hunger strike of two political prisoners because of ill treatment.[2] About three weeks later the superintendent (who I believe has been transferred to some other place since then) was good enough to issue a brief contradiction which ignored some of the facts that had been stated.[3] Truth apparently is not easy of access in the Rae Bareli jail and it took the superintendent three weeks to discover it, or rather what he considered a plausible semblance of it.

News comes now from the Fyzabad jail that the jail staff is again on the move and some repetition of last year's notorious occurrences is taking place.[4] The 'B' class prisoners there have again been punished in various ways and have been put in separate cells and pushed and dragged and beaten in the process. Some of them have been transferred to other prisons with fetters on. The condition of one prisoner, who had been ill, became so bad because of this treatment that he had to be discharged suddenly. Letters and interviews have been stopped and those who had gone for an interview had to return disappointed.

Such is the fragmentary news that has come about the happenings and sufferings behind the forbidding walls of the Fyzabad jail. Are we going to have a repetition of last year's long agony?

1. Allahabad, 26 October 1933 *The Leader*, 28 October 1933.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol 5, p 540.
3. Issued on 14 October 1933, he contended that the hunger strike was a one day affair and that the convicts, in whose favour the hunger strike was started, had denied being flogged
4. See *Selected Works*, Vol 5, pp 430-431

72. On the Ill-treatment of Fyzabad Prisoners[1]

A certain gentleman of Fyzabad, rejoicing in the title of Khan Sahib, has issued a contradiction of my statement regarding the recent

1 The *Leader*, 8 November 1933

ill-treatment of 'B' class prisoners in the Fyzabad jail. I do not know his interest in the matter or his source of information but I take it that he is a faithful mouthpiece of the Fyzabad jail staff who hesitate to take the responsibility of making a public statement themselves. Long association with and experience of jail officials in the province has convinced me that from want of practice they develop a constitutional inability to tell the truth, and, especially in any matter concerning themselves, their testimony is useful only in that it helps us to some extent to arrive at a contrary conclusion. I would not ordinarily take the trouble to contradict such statements for they have no value and require no contradiction. But it is desirable that the public should not be misled.

I am assured from reliable sources that the facts I had stated previously, with one exception, were perfectly correct. That one exception was my reference to the transfer of certain prisoners in bar-fetters. I made this statement under an error and I greatly regret it. No bar-fetters were used.

It is entirely untrue to say that the trouble arose because of the refusal of the 'B' class prisoners to sleep inside their barrack from October 1. As a matter of fact they would have been justified in such a refusal as, on the occasion of the settlement following previous trouble last year, it was, I understand, definitely agreed by the jail staff in writing that open air sleeping would be allowed till the end of October. But in spite of this assurance they were locked in from the night of October 1. They submitted to this and there was no trouble of any kind. They used to be locked up at 7-30 p.m. Many days later, on October 9, one of the 'B' class prisoners was asked to see the superintendent in the office. He went but did not return. He was put in a separate barrack as a punishment. When the other politicals learnt of this they requested the superintendent to grant some of them an interview. This was refused. That evening however he came to the 'B' class barrack at 6 p m and ordered the prisoners to be locked up at that time. The prisoners were surprised and pointed out to him that their locking up time had so far been 7-30 p.m. and they were not prepared to agree to this sudden change without any reason. Thereupon they were dragged and beaten and about 21 were forcibly locked in the cells and a dozen or so in other barracks. During this assault many received considerable injuries. At least one prisoner fainted in the process. The prisoner whose condition became very bad had undoubtedly been ill but in spite of this he was locked in a hospital barrack without light or water. In the course of this night he grew much worse.

I am told it is stated on behalf of the jail authorities that the prisoners then went on hunger strike. This is entirely untrue. My information is that the jail staff did not supply them with food for five days, till October 14. Thus they were forcibly made to starve for this period.

On October 15 four of the 'B' class prisoners were transferred to other prisons. The so-called minor punishments included, apart from the assaults on the 9th and the subsequent starvation, the reduction of a number of prisoners to 'C' class and stoppage of letters and interviews.

These are some of the facts which I think are reasonably established. There are others also but I do not wish to lengthen this statement. No doubt the jail staff and the very convenient and obliging Khan Sahib may not approve of facts, and it is easy enough to sit entrenched in the jail office, prevent a fair enquiry, and deny everything.

73. To the Superintendent, District Jail, Allahabad[1]

Allahabad
December 31, 1933

Dear Sir,

In the course of the last few days a number of our colleagues and friends have been arrested and kept in the Allahabad District Jail as under trial prisoners. Attempts to interview them or to send them food or other belongings from outside have failed because the jailor would not permit these. I do not know under what rule this permission was refused because so far as I am aware under trial prisoners are allowed interviews as well as certain facilities in regard to food, clothes and beddings. Further, I understand that friends other than relatives are also permitted to interview under-trial prisoners at frequent intervals. I have myself had experience of being an under trial prisoner on many occasions and the superintendents of the jails in which I happened to be kept told me so on several occasions and allowed these facilities to me. I have also personal knowledge of these facilities being allowed to many other under trial prisoners of various classes.

1. J N. Correspondence, N.M.M L.

India Bulletin.[5] The full statement however might be shown to individuals and even to high officials in London. The position that might be taken up is that very grave allegations have been and are being made. These may be exaggerated here and there and it may be difficult under the existing circumstances to substantiate them, but responsible people, who have met some of the sufferers believe that there is a great deal of truth in them. An independent enquiry should therefore be demanded. Before a public demand is made, private efforts might be made. If these fail, a public demand can be made.

Personally I am convinced, after meeting people from the Frontier, that a disgusting and cruel terrorism has been rampant there on behalf of the authorities But I can have no personal knowledge of these events. I can only rely on the odd evidence that reaches me. In a legal sense this may not be sufficient, and in any event, when allegations are denied, it becomes a question of word against word.

As for the question—sections 107, 108, 109 are the preventive sections of the Indian Penal Code (or probably the Code of Criminal Procedure). They can be easily referred to anything. These sections are not meant for those who have committed offences but for bad characters who are likely to commit offences. The English law, and most of the legal systems, have no such provisions. Ordinarily these sections are meant for those who are considered bad characters by the police. The sections have been used for political bad characters in recent years. Sureties and bonds are demanded for stated periods, usually one year, and if those sureties and bonds are not forthcoming, the person concerned is sent to prison for the full period. In the Frontier Province this one year seems to be extended to three years. Usually such heavy sureties are demanded that it is quite impossible to find them, even if the person was willing enough to furnish them. Thus people have to spend as much as three years in prison, not for an offence committed but for fear lest they might commit an offence. I have not the sections before me as I write but a reference to them will clear up the position. Sec. 108 is, I believe, for politicals or those who are seditiously inclined.

These preventive sections have been largely used all over India and Congressmen have been roped in as *badmashes* and bad characters. It is worthy of note that these prisoners are not considered politicals and are not included in the official returns of civil disobedience or

5 Published from February 1931 as the journal of the Friends of India Society in London.

other political prisoners whose number is brought down by treating them under the preventive sections as bad characters.

Captain Cole[6] has a very bad reputation and there are many complaints about him but under existing conditions nothing can be substantiated. This applies also to Haripur jail which has been notorious for its ill-treatment. I must give the same answer about the six months' solitary confinement. Allegations to this effect have reached me and names have also been mentioned but I am quite unable to authenticate them. What probably happens is that technically there is a break in the solitary confinement but in effect it continues for long periods.

I am sending you copies of two notices and two statements about *happenings in Midnapur in Bengal.*[7] *Both these were sent by me to* various papers here. The notices were published by most of them. The statements have only appeared in one or two newspapers. The others were afraid. The statements, you will observe, are signed. There is no doubt that they give a correct account of what is taking place round about Midnapur.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. Captain G.A. Cole, assistant commissioner, Peshawar, 1932-35.
7. The notices were served by the government on Congress workers directing them to welcome Garhwali soldiers at Contai on 16 December 1933 and ordering them to salute the British flag On refusing to do so, the Congress workers, *according to their statement, had been beaten up.*

75. Earthquakes—Natural and Political[1]

The Indian people have been stirred, as seldom before, by the tragedy of the earthquakes in Bihar and Nepal.[2] The poorest, in spite of their dire poverty, and the lower middle class, which has suffered so much

1 31 January 1934, JN Papers, NMML. This was the heading given by Jawaharlal The article was published in *Vartman*, 6 February 1934, under the title *Political Earthquake in East Bengal* and also in Nation, New York, 11 April 1934, under the heading *The Humiliation of India.*
2 See *post*, item 86.

which told us more of the way despotic governments function than all the professors and text books could have done. I ventured to suggest in Calcutta that this speech of the commissioner should be widely distributed in pamphlet form so that people may know to what depths of vulgarity and bluster even a seemingly powerful government can sink when it has lost all moral hold on the people it governs.

But all this has not been enough. And now we are told of new laws extending the penalty of death for certain offences under the Indian Arms Act[5] (apparently the carrying of unlicensed arms), for a still further muzzling of the press,[6] so that the Indian press cannot publish anything at all disapproved by the local government. There must be no expression of undue concern or sympathy for detenus in detention camps or for convicts in the Andaman Islands. We may not show that it matters to us in the least whether they live or die, whether they are ill or well, whether they are treated humanely or inhumanly. They have been hunted down and cast out of the human pale, and human considerations must not apply to such castaways.

We have been long used to the proscription of books. But this was not enough. In future not merely individual books but whole 'classes of literature', specified by the government are going to be proscribed. Why take the trouble to read and judge a book when it is far easier to stop the source at the base by condemning whole groups and classes of literature? The next step presumably should be to attack the root of the problem by declaring that all reading of books and newspapers, except those produced through government agencies, is illegal.

Determined to improve the morals of our youth, the government wants to arm its district magistrates with still wider powers to control and restrict the movements of young persons, even though such persons have done nothing to bring them in touch with the wide-flung net of the laws and ordinances. So the district magistrate must be empowered to take action as soon as he suspects that someone might keep bad company. And then again government has to face a difficult problem. To send them to gaol, or to intern them, is the obvious way to treat those who look suspicious. But they become worse in

5 The Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Bill of 1934 provided for death penalty for possession and manufacture of arms

6. The Act also demanded the forfeiture of security for publication of prohibited information expressing "undue concern and sympathy for detenus and convicts in Andaman Islands or the publication of identity of witnesses before special courts."

gaol because of their association with other undesirables and to let them loose on society when they come out of prison would obviously be a risky business. Therefore the safest place for them is the prison or the detention camp, or at any rate their movements should be severely restricted.

Breaches of various orders apparently continue even though the penalty is two years' imprisonment. What can a government do except to increase the penalty? And so the proposed legislation increases the two years to seven years.

And finally the temporary repressive laws which were due to expire in 1935 are to be made permanent. This will no doubt be some consolation to those who grumble about the delay in the coming of the 'Reforms'. They will realise that the 'Reforms' are coming, if they have not already arrived.

There seems to be just one lacuna in these schemes of 'Reforms'. It is just possible that some people may be left out in spite of all the careful thought that has been given to the framing of the existing and the proposed legislation. Instead of a variety of laws and ordinances and orders and rules, it would be simpler to have one comprehensive enactment laying down that every Indian must consider himself as if he was in prison (C class), all schools and colleges to be abolished, all newspapers and books suppressed, and every morning we must all salute the Union Jack, divine service twice a day should consist of the singing of the British National Anthem, and the afternoon might be profitably devoted to listening to an inspiring address on the virtues of the British rule. This arrangement would have much to commend it In these days of world-wide depression and deficit budgets there would be much saving of money by the stoppage of educational and many other services and the employment of free labour by government. Many offices could also be combined in single individuals. Thus the district magistrate could also become the prison superintendent for the whole district.

Are we drifting to this? And is it not a mockery for us to talk of constitutions and All Parties Conferences and 'Reforms' and elections and the like when this grim tragedy faces us?

THE COMMUNAL PROBLEM

76. To Mohammad Alam[1]

Allahabad
October 29, 1933

My dear Alam,
Your letter. I do not seem to have received the articles from your paper which, you say, were sent to me.[2] It is just possible that I may have missed them in the prevailing confusion in our house. I have, however, been following your speeches as reported in the press from time to time. I confess that I feel that little can be done in this way. I think the communal problem does not stand by itself but is part of the larger social problem of India and the world. I have given expression to some of my views on the larger issues in the recent newspaper articles. Looked at from the national point of view I think that the most important thing for us is to carry on our civil disobedience struggle Only through that can we divert attention from the wretched communal wrangles of today. I have been feeling very angry at the proceedings of the Hindu Mahasabha and like bodies in Ajmer recently.[3] It is scandalous the way these people of the Mahasabha cover their extremely narrow and selfish mentality under a cloak of so-called nationalism. As a matter of fact they represent, as the resolutions show, a group of upper middle class, Hindu capitalists, landlords and hangers-on of princes. If I have the time I shall write about them.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Correspondence, NMML.
2. Alam had sent a copy of the constitution of the Anti Communal League along with his articles published in *Tiryak*.
3. On 14 October 1933 the Hindu Mahasabha passed a resolution which strongly disapproved of any movement advocating extinction of capitalists and landlords as a class.

77. The Hindu Mahasabha and Communalism[1]

I have long been of opinion that the Hindu Mahasabha is a small reactionary group pretending to speak on behalf of the Hindus of India of whom it is very far from being representative. None the less misapprehensions have been created by their high-sounding titles and resounding phrases and it is time that these misapprehensions are removed. Nothing in recent months has pained me quite so much as the activities of the Mahasabha group culminating in the resolutions passed at Ajmer.

Going a few steps further, the Arya Kumar Sabha, which is presumably an offshoot of the Hindu Mahasabha, has proclaimed its policy to be one of elimination of Muslims and Christians from India and the establishment of a Hindu Raj.[2] This statement makes it clear what the pretensions of the Mahasabha about Indian nationalism amount to. Under cover of seeming nationalism, the Mahasabha not only hides the rankest and narrowest communalism but also desires to preserve the vested interests of the group of big Hindu landlords and the princes. The policy of the Mahasabha, as declared by its responsible leaders, is one of cooperation with the foreign government so that, by abasing themselves before it, they might get a few crumbs. This is a betrayal of the freedom struggle, denial of every vestige of nationalism and suppression of every manly instinct in the Hindus. The Mahasabha shows its attachment to vested interests by openly condemning every form of socialism and social change. Anything more degrading, reactionary, anti national, anti progressive and harmful than the present policy of the Hindu Mahasabha is difficult to imagine.

The leaders of the Mahasabha must realise the inevitable consequences of this policy of their lining up with the enemies of Indian freedom and most reactionary elements in the country. It is for the rest of India, Hindu and non Hindu, to face them squarely and oppose them and treat them as enemies of freedom and all that we

1 Speech delivered at the Banaras Hindu University on 12 November 1933. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 15 November 1933. Reprinted in *Recent Essays and Writings*, (Allahabad, 1934), pp 45-46

2. The report of the resolution passed by the Arya Kumar Sabha, the youth wing of the Arya Samaj, was later found to be incorrect.

are striving for. It is not a mere matter of condemnation and dissociation, though of course there is to be both these, but one of active and persistent opposition to the most opportunist and stupid of policies.

78. On His Criticism of the Hindu Mahasabha[1]

I am glad that the remarks I made at Banaras regarding the Hindu Mahasabha have galvanized a number of people and made them think furiously. This thinking has even taken the form of personal denunciation of me.[2] This personal aspect is unimportant and will pass because the question is far too important and vital to be considered in relation to personalities. I hope to say something in reply to the criticisms later. But I should like to point out that my criticisms related to the Hindu Mahasabha chiefly because I was addressing a purely Hindu audience. There was no point in my tracing Muslim or other non Hindu communalism there as the average Hindu is sufficiently aware of the feelings of others. It is always difficult to appreciate fully the weaknesses of oneself or one's own community. As I have stated, my remarks against communalism and anti national activities apply in an equal measure to all communal organizations in India —Muslim, Hindu, Sikh etc. There seems to be a race between them as to which can be more communal than the other. For a long time past I had remained quiet on the subject because I wished to ignore this aspect of Indian public life and hoped that national activities would gradually divert people's attention from it. But matters have come to such a pass that I felt silence on the subject was in itself a compromise and acceptance of this evil. We all know of the amazing communal and reactionary outlook and activities of the Muslim

1. Interview at Allahabad, 21 November 1933. From *The Leader*, 23 November 1933.
2. In a letter published in *The Leader* of 20 November 1933, Bhai Parmanand attributed Jawaharlal's criticism of the Mahasabha to the fact that owing to his "early training" and upbringing abroad "he is incapable of thinking as a Hindu."

communalists in India. These require no publicity but there is a misapprehension in some quarters that the Hindu communalists are of a greyer colour and not quite so black as the others. This notion is thoroughly unjustified as the attitude of the Hindu Mahasabha and the many other Hindu organizations, specially in north India, connected or unconnected with the Mahasabha, has conclusively demonstrated during the last year. The statements and evidence before the Joint Select Committee in England as well as numerous speeches and resolutions chiefly in the Punjab show this.[3] Leading members of the Hindu Mahasabha and other communalists have deliberately advocated cooperation with British imperialism in the hope of getting some odd favour. This attitude is both anti-national and reactionary, and even from the narrow point of view of Hindus, foolish and short-sighted.

There seems to be some mystery about the resolutions passed by the Arya Kumar Sabha at Ajmer. My reference to a certain resolution has called forth denials, although the denial does not tell us exactly what the resolution was. This can easily be verified and I shall be very glad indeed to learn that my information was wrong. I received a copy of that resolution apparently from some official of the Sabha for my information. This resolution was also received by others and Dr. Mahomed Ullah Jung[4] has given publicity to the text of it.[5] I shall be glad if the Arya Kumar Sabha will publish their resolutions and if it appears that we have been victims of a hoax I shall gladly and willingly express my regret to the Arya Kumar Sabha. But apart from this my main criticism would hold as it is based specially on the activities of Hindu communalists during the last many months.

3 On 31 July 1933, they protested that the government's decision on the communal problem was unjust to the Hindus and the separation of Sind was an "*ex-parte* judgement"

4 A resident of Allahabad

5. In a letter to the editor published in *The Leader* of 20 November 1933.

79. To Bhai Parmanand[1]

26/11/1933

My dear Bhaiji,[2]
Thank you for your letter of Nov. 24th.[3]

I recollect now the incident you refer to. It was in 1921 probably in the month of May or June. Shaukat Ali and I were visiting a number of towns in the eastern districts of the U.P. on a Congress tour. There had been some mention in the press about the abduction of a Hindu girl and some excitement had been caused thereby. As we were likely to pass near the village in question during our tour, Gandhiji asked us, if possible, to visit the village and enquire into the matter.

The village was, I think somewhere near Mau and on our way from Azamgarh to Ballia our train stopped for nearly two hours at Mau, or perhaps we had to change there. That very evening we had to address a meeting at Ballia so we could not stay at Mau long. We decided to pay a hurried visit to the village during the two hours at Mau. . When we reached Mau we found that the village was five miles or so away and the only conveyance available was an *ekka*. It was the middle of the day in midsummer and it was very hot. Shaukat Ali said that it was impossible for him to mount a rickety *ekka* as it was bound to break, and he could not possibly walk ten miles. He was fasting on account of the *Ramzan*. I decided to go by myself on the *ekka*. I reached the village and met the girl and talked to her for about a quarter of an hour. She was a grown up young woman and she told me (as far as I remember I spoke to her apart from the others) that she had left her home of her own free will and had come away willingly with the Muslim youth in question. Further that she had accepted Islam and married the Muslim youth and was not prepared to go back to her old house I tried to assure her that she need not be afraid of anybody but should tell me the truth and her

1. J N. Correspondence, N M M L
2 (1874 1943); prominent Arya Samajist and Hindu Mahasabha leader; sentenced in connection with the first Ghadar Conspiracy to life imprisonment, 1915, released in 1929, Chancellor of Punjab Vidyapith in 1934.
3 In reply to Jawaharlal's telegram drawing attention to a newspaper report that Bhai Parmanand had called him a coward, Bhai Parmanand denied it but said he had referred to an incident of 1921. For details of this incident, see *Selected Works*, Vol 1, pp 174 176

EARTHQUAKE RELIEF OPERATION IN MUZAFFARPUR, BIHAR, 22 JANUARY 1934

real feelings. Still she repeated what she had said before. I felt helpless in the matter and could do nothing more.

My conversation with the girl and the others were so prolonged that I could not come back to Mau in time for the train. So I tried, by dashing across the fields, to catch the train at the next station which was not far. But I missed the train. There was no other train and the station master was good enough to provide me with a trolley which took me quite twenty or thirty miles. I could not reach Ballia but I just managed to catch up Shaukat Ali on his way back from Ballia. The poor station master, I think, was subsequently dismissed for his courtesy to me in allowing me the use of a trolley.

On my return to Allahabad I wrote an account of what had happened and sent it on to Gandhiji. So far as I remember, I did not issue any statement to the press.

The incident took place over twelve years ago and naturally my recollection of it is a little vague. I may be wrong in some minor particulars but I think I have given the facts correctly. I do not know anything (or have forgotten) about the girl's suicide.

As for the report that you had called me a 'coward', please do not attach any importance to it. I can assure you that I do not. As you say you did not say the word, there the matter ends. But even if you had mentioned the word in a moment of excitement it would have had little significance. All of us, who feel strongly about anything, are apt to be a little vehement at times. I know that I am often guilty of this and, knowing my own weakness, I try to be tolerant in this respect to others Those in public life cannot afford to be thin-skinned. So please dismiss this matter from your mind.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

80. Hindu and Muslim Communalism[1]

My recent remarks on Hindu communalists and the Hindu Mahasabha have evidently touched a sensitive spot of many people and

1. 27 November 1933. *The Tribune*, 30 November 1933. Reprinted in *Recent Essays and Writings*, (Allahabad, 1934), pp 47-61

have produced strong reactions. For many days every morning the newspapers brought me a tonic in the shape of criticisms and condemnations and I must express my gratitude for these, to all who indulged in them. It is not given to everybody to see himself as others see him, and since this privilege has been accorded to me and my numerous failings in education, up-bringing, heredity, culture, as well as those for which I am personally responsible, pointed out to me gently, I must need feel grateful. I shall try to profit by the chiding I have received but I am afraid I have outgrown the age when the background of one's thought and action can be easily changed.

I have not hastened to reply to the criticisms because I thought it as well for excitement to cool so that we might consider the question dispassionately and without reference to personalities. It is a vital question for all of us Indians, and especially for those who from birth or choice are in the Hindu fold.

But I must begin with an expression of regret and apology. It is clear that some of us were the victims of a hoax in regard to the alleged resolution of the Arya Kumar Sabha which was sent to us and in which it was stated that there could be no peace in India so long as there were any Muslims or Christians in the country. It has been demonstrated that no such resolution was passed by the Arya Kumar Sabha at Ajmer or elsewhere; indeed no resolution of a political nature was passed by that body at all I am exceedingly sorry for having permitted myself to fall into a trap of someone's devising and I desire to express my deep regret to the Arya Kumar Sabha.

I must also express my regret both to the Arya Kumar Sabha and the Hindu Mahasabha for having presumed that they were associated with each other.

In regard to my main contention, however, I confess that I am unrepentant and I still hold that the activities of Hindu communal organizations, including the Mahasabha, have been communal, anti-national and reactionary. Of course this cannot apply to all the members of these organizations, it can apply only to the majority group in them or the group that controls them. Organisations also change their policies from time to time and what may be true today may not have been wholly true yesterday. So far as I have been able to gather, Hindu communal organizations, especially in the Punjab and in Sind, have been progressively becoming more narrowly communal and anti national and politically reactionary.

I am told that this is a consequence of Muslim communalism and reactionary policy and I have been chided for not blaming Muslim

communalists. I have already pointed out that it would have been entirely out of place for me, speaking to a Hindu audience, to draw attention to Muslim communalists and reactionaries. It would have been preaching to the converted, as the average Hindu is well aware of them. It is far more difficult to see one's own fault than to see the failings of others. I also hold that it serves little purpose, in the prevailing atmosphere of mutual suspicion, to preach to the other community, although of course, whenever necessity arises, facts must be faced and the truth stated.

I do not think that the Muslim communal organizations, chief among whom are the Muslim All Parties Conference and the Muslim League, represent any large group of Muslims in India except in the sense that they exploit the prevailing communal sentiment. But the fact remains that they claim to speak for Muslims and no other organization has so far risen which can successfully challenge that claim. Their aggressively communal character gives them a pull over the large number of nationalist Muslims who merge themselves in the Congress. The leaders of these organizations are patently and intensely communal. That, from the very nature of things, one can understand. But it is equally obvious that most of them are definitely anti national and political reactionaries of the worst kind. Apparently they do not even look forward to any common nation developing in India. At a meeting in the British House of Commons last year, the Aga Khan, Sir Mohammad Iqbal and Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan are reported (in *The Statesman* of December 31, 1932) to have laid stress on "the inherent impossibility of securing any merger of Hindu and Muslim, political or indeed social, interests." The speakers further pointed out "the impracticability of ever governing India through anything but a British agency." These statements leave no loophole for nationalism or for Indian freedom, now or even in the remote future.

I do not think that these statements represent the views of Muslims generally or even of most of the communally inclined Muslims. But they are undoubtedly the views of the dominant and politically clamorous group among the Muslims. It is an insult to one's intelligence to link these views with those of nationalism and freedom and of course any measure of real economic freedom is still further away from them. *Essentially, this is an attitude of* pure reaction—political, cultural, national, social And it is not surprising that this should be so if one examines the membership of these organizations. Most of the leading members are government officials, ex-officials, ministers, would be ministers, knights and title-holders, big landlords, etc. Their leader is the Aga Khan, the head of a wealthy religious group, who

combines in himself, most remarkably, the feudal order and the politics and habits of the British ruling class, with which he has been intimately associated for many years.

Such being the leadership of the Muslims in India and at the Round Table Conference it is no wonder that their attitude should be reactionary. This reactionary policy went so far as to lead many of the Muslim delegates in London to seek an alliance with the most reactionary elements in British public life—Lord Lloyd and company. And the final touch was given to it when Gandhiji offered personally to accept every single one of their communal demands,[2] however illogical and exaggerated they might be, on condition that they assured him of their full support in the political struggle for independence. That condition and offer was not accepted and it became clear that what stood in the way was not even communalism but political reaction.

Personally I think that it is generally possible to cooperate with communalists provided the political objective is the same. But between progress and reaction, between those who struggle for freedom and those who are content with servitude, and even wish to prolong it, there is no meeting ground. And it is this political reaction which has stalked the land under cover of communalism and taken advantage of the fear of each community of the other. It is the fear complex that we have to deal with in these communal problems. Honest communalism is fear; false communalism is political reaction.

To some extent this fear is justified, or is at least understandable, in a minority community. We see this fear overshadowing the communal sky in India as a whole so far as Muslims are concerned; we see it as an equally potent force in the Punjab and Sind so far as the Hindus are concerned, and in the Punjab, the Sikhs.

It was natural for the British Government to support and push on the reactionary leaders of the Muslims and to try to ignore the nationalist ones. It was also natural for them to accede to most of their demands in order to strengthen their position in their own community and weaken the national struggle. A very little knowledge of history will show that this has always been done by ruling powers. The Muslim demands did not in any way lessen the control of the British in India. To some extent they helped the British to add to

2 At the meeting of the Minorities Committee from 1 to 8 October 1931, Mahatma Gandhi agreed to accept all the demands of the Muslim representatives

their proposed special powers and to show to the world how necessary their continued presence in India was.

I have written all this about the attitude of the Muslim communalist leaders not only to complete the picture but because it is a necessary preliminary to the understanding of the Hindu communal attitude. There is no essential difference between the two. But there was this difference that the Congress drew into its ranks most of the vital elements of Hindu society and it dominated the situation and thus circumstances did not permit the Hindu communalists to play an important role in politics. The Hindu Mahasabha leaders largely confined themselves to criticising the Congress. When however there was a lull in Congress activities, automatically the Hindu communalists came more to the front and their attitude was frankly reactionary.

It must be remembered that the communalism of a majority community must of necessity bear a closer resemblance to nationalism than the communalism of a minority group. One of the best tests of its true nature is what relation it bears to the national struggle. If it is politically reactionary or lays stress on communal problems rather than national ones then it is obviously anti-national.

The Simon Commission, as is well known, met with a widespread and almost unanimous boycott in India. Bhai Parmanandji, in his recent presidential address at Ajmer, says that this boycott was unfortunate for the Hindus, and he approvingly mentions that the Punjab Hindus (probably under his guidance) cooperated with the Commission. Thus Bhaiji is of opinion that, whatever the national aspect of the question might have been, it was desirable for the Hindus to cooperate with the British Government in order to gain some communal advantages. This is obviously an anti-national attitude. Even from the narrow communal point of view it is difficult to see its wisdom, for communal advantages can only be given at the expense of another community, and when both seek the favours of the ruling power, there is little chance of obtaining even a superficial advantage.

Bhaiji's argument, repeatedly stated, is that the British Government is so strongly entrenched in India that it cannot be shaken by any popular movement and therefore it is folly to try to do so. The only alternative is to seek its favours. That is an argument which I can only characterise, with all respect to him, as wholly unworthy of any people however fallen they might be.

Bhaiji's view is that the cry of Hindu-Muslim unity is a false cry and a wrong ideal to aim at because the power of gift is in the hands of the government. Granting this power of gift, every cry other than one of seeking the government's favours is futile. And if the possibility

combines in himself, most remarkably, the feudal order and the politics and habits of the British ruling class, with which he has been intimately associated for many years.

Such being the leadership of the Muslims in India and at the Round Table Conference it is no wonder that their attitude should be reactionary. This reactionary policy went so far as to lead many of the Muslim delegates in London to seek an alliance with the most reactionary elements in British public life—Lord Lloyd and company. And the final touch was given to it when Gandhiji offered personally to accept every single one of their communal demands,[2] however illogical and exaggerated they might be, on condition that they assured him of their full support in the political struggle for independence. That condition and offer was not accepted and it became clear that what stood in the way was not even communalism but political reaction.

Personally I think that it is generally possible to cooperate with communalists provided the political objective is the same. But between progress and reaction, between those who struggle for freedom and those who are content with servitude, and even wish to prolong it, there is no meeting ground. And it is this political reaction which has stalked the land under cover of communalism and taken advantage of the fear of each community of the other. It is the fear complex that we have to deal with in these communal problems. Honest communalism is fear; false communalism is political reaction.

To some extent this fear is justified, or is at least understandable, in a minority community. We see this fear overshadowing the communal sky in India as a whole so far as Muslims are concerned; we see it as an equally potent force in the Punjab and Sind so far as the Hindus are concerned, and in the Punjab, the Sikhs.

It was natural for the British Government to support and push on the reactionary leaders of the Muslims and to try to ignore the nationalist ones. It was also natural for them to accede to most of their demands in order to strengthen their position in their own community and weaken the national struggle. A very little knowledge of history will show that this has always been done by ruling powers. The Muslim demands did not in any way lessen the control of the British in India. To some extent they helped the British to add to

2 At the meeting of the Minorities Committee from 1 to 8 October 1931, Mahatma Gandhi agreed to accept all the demands of the Muslim representatives

individual capacity. Subsequently of course the Mahasabha took full part in the London conferences and committees.

Of the part taken by the Mahasabha representatives in these deliberations, especially by those from the Punjab and Sind, I wish only to say that it was a most painful one. Politically it was most reactionary and efforts were made to increase the reserved powers and safeguards of the British Government or the Governors in order to prevent the Muslim majorities in certain provinces from exercising effective power. The identical policy and argument of the Muslim communalists in regard to the whole of India were repeated by Hindu communalists in regard to certain provinces. But of course the special powers of Governors were not going to be confined to some provinces. They would inevitably apply to all the provinces. The reason for this reactionary attitude in both the cases was of course fear of the majority. Whatever the reason, this played entirely into the hands of the British Government.

The whole of the case of the Sind Hindu Sabha is a negation of the principle of democracy,[4] except in so far as joint electorates are demanded. It is an attempt to prevent the will of the majority from prevailing because the minority might suffer. The anti-social arguments of greater wealth and education of the minority are advanced, and financial reasons based entirely on the continuation of the top-heavy British system are made a prop. Wealth and economic control are not only sufficient protection under modern conditions, but have to be protected against. Almost every argument that has been advanced by the Sind Hindu communalists can be advanced by the Muslim minority in India as a whole with this difference that the Hindus are generally the richer and more educated community and have thus greater economic power.

In their attempts to show the backwardness of the Muslims in Sind, the Sind Hindu Sabha memorandum to the Joint Parliamentary Committee has made sweeping statements about Muslims which are astonishing and most painful to read.[5] They remind one of Katherine Mayo's methods of denunciation.

I do not know what the Punjab Hindu Sewak Sabha is. Probably it is not connected with the Hindu Sabha, and it may only be a

4. Its contention was that Sind, whose connection with Bombay had proved beneficial, was now being made over to a Council "dominated by a .. medieval oligarchy"

5 The memorandum of 17 July 1933 stated that "the organised gang dacoities in the Sukkur district show that the Sind Muslims continue to be almost as intolerant as they were in the forties of the last century."

(Anandi Thakore etc.) who have written to me on the subject and asked me for the facts. I have given them permission to publish this correspondence if they so wish it. You can also make any use of it that you desire.

Yours etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

82. To S. A. Brelvi[1]

Allahabad
December 3, 1933

My dear Brelvi,

Thanks for your letter.[2] I am now receiving the *Chronicle*.

I am going to Jubbulpore tomorrow. I do not think there is much chance of my going to Bombay in the near future. But one never knows.

As regards the communal issue it is true that I have not said much about it in the past though I have made frequent brief references to it. This was not because I wanted to ignore it but because I felt that mere talk of Hindu Muslim unity in the air was rather pointless. What was far more important was the positive side of our struggle, political and economic, as this would necessarily divert public attention. Now that there is a lull in the political activities the position is somewhat changed and I felt compelled to come out strongly. People accuse me of using strong language but one has to be vehement to force public opinion on an issue. Milk and water utterances full of noble sentiments and piety do not carry one very far. I think I have succeeded, at any rate, in drawing attention to the growing danger. I have felt also in the past that attempts to bring about superficial pacts and compromises could be of little help. Under the present circumstances, I think, it is even more difficult to succeed in this way. Therefore, I would not be eager to encourage such an attempt. But certainly the time has come, if it was not long overdue, to attack communalism root and branch. I think the right line to take is that communalism is merely a cover for political reaction.

1. J.N Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 29 November 1933, he congratulated Jawaharlal on his stand on the communal question.

Bhai Parmanand's rejoinder to my long statement seems to me to be particularly feeble.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

83. A Reply To Sir Mohammad Iqbal[1]

11-12-33

I have read with care the frank and courteous statement that Sir Mohammad Iqbal has issued to the press[2] and I gladly accept his invitation to answer the question he has formulated. But first I must refer to the incident during the communal negotiations at the second Round Table Conference, which has been mentioned by Sir Mohammad. I am obviously not in a position to say anything about it from my own knowledge, and others, who are in a better position, will no doubt clear up any misapprehensions that may have arisen. But when Sir Mohammad refers to any condition laid down by Gandhiji as an "inhuman condition", I am quite sure that he is under a serious misapprehension.

Sir Mohammad says that Gandhiji was prepared to accept, in his personal capacity, the demands of the Muslim delegates to the Round Table Conference, but that he could not guarantee the acceptance of his position by the Congress. It seems to me obvious that Gandhiji, or any one else in his position, could not possibly adopt any other course. No representative of a democratic organization could do so. Even the Working Committee of the Congress could not go behind the Congress resolution; it could only refer the question to the All India Congress Committee or the open session of the Congress which is the final authority. Quite apart from the general Congress attitude, it was

1 Statement to the press, 11 December 1933. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 14 December 1933 Reprinted in *Recent Essays and Writings*, (Allahabad, 1934), pp 62-71

2. In a statement issued on 6 December 1933, Iqbal contended that the Aga Khan had offered Mahatma Gandhi Muslim cooperation if the Congress agreed to accept the Muslim demands and regarded Mahatma Gandhi's condition that the Muslims should not support the claims of the depressed classes as "inhuman".

(Anandi Thakore etc.) who have written to me on the subject and asked me for the facts. I have given them permission to publish this correspondence if they so wish it. You can also make any use of it that you desire.

Yours etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

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1 J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 29 November 1933, he congratulated Jawaharlal on his stand on the communal question.

difficult to meet a suspicion and a prejudice which has little reason behind it, but anyone who knows Gandhiji at all will consider the suggestion that he is working for the Harijan movement with a political motive as absurd. Personally, I am not interested in religious labels and I am sure that they will soon disappear, or, at any rate, cease to have any political significance. Sir Mohammad evidently still attaches political significance to them Gandhiji, to my knowledge, does not, but he is *certainly a man of religion and he believes in the essentials of the Hindu* faith. He wants to restore these essentials and to sweep away the accretions. It is because he feels that untouchability is a degrading and a disgusting accretion that he fights against it. It is quite wrong to say that he does not want a fusion between the depressed classes and caste Hindus. Indeed he wants this as well as a fusion between both of these and the other communities in India. But, like Sir Mohammad, he is enamoured of certain basic essentials of culture and he wants to preserve these and at the same time to give perfect freedom to other cultural forms

Personally my outlook is different. It is not religious and I find it difficult to think of groups in terms of religion. Sir Mohammad evidently does so to the exclusion of other and more modern ways of thinking, and I am afraid he confuses religion with race and culture. Perhaps it is because of this that he advances a biological argument which I entirely fail to understand. Having condemned Gandhiji for a fancied attempt to prevent the fusion of the depressed classes with other communities he says that in his opinion a fusion of the different communities in India is a chimerical notion and the sooner the idea is given up the better

The question whether biological fusion of different groups in India is going to take place or not raises a host of issues and is chiefly interesting from the point of view of eugenics and culture. It is not, directly, *a political question and present interest in it can only be academic.* I think that it is inevitable that we should go towards such fusion but I cannot say when it is likely to become an accomplished fact.

But what has this got to do with the communal issue? Are Muslims or Sikhs or Indian Christians, as religious groups, biologically different from the Hindus as a group? Are we different species of animals or of *homo sapiens?* There are racial and cultural differences in India but these differences have nothing to do with the religious divisions, they cut athwart the lines of religious cleavage. If a person is converted to another religion he does not change his biological make up or his racial characteristics or to any great extent his cultural background. Cultural types are national, not religious, and modern conditions are helping in

well known that a considerable section of Muslim opinion in India, the Muslim nationalists, were opposed to some of those demands. Gandhiji had repeatedly stated in India, prior to his departure for England, that he would accept the decision of Dr. M.A. Ansari as representing the Muslim nationalists, on this question. He had further stated that if the two Muslim groups could arrive at an agreement, he would unhesitatingly accept it. In order to facilitate this he had pressed hard for the inclusion of Dr. Ansari's name among the delegates to the Round Table Conference, but this repeated request was apparently strenuously opposed by the Muslim delegates in London. In spite of all this and as a last effort to bring about some agreement, Gandhiji went to the length of committing himself personally. It is obvious that although he could not bind the Congress, his comment and pleadings would have gone a tremendous way in converting the Congress.

The second condition said to have been laid down by Gandhiji was that Muslim delegates should not support the special claims of the depressed classes. This, according to Sir Mohammad, was "an inhuman condition" as it meant that the depressed classes should continue to be kept down. This is an extraordinary conclusion. If there is one thing more than any other that Gandhiji has stood for and stands for today, it is that the depressed classes should cease to be depressed or exploited or handicapped in any way, and that they should be on a perfect level with every other group. It was because he felt that if they were placed in a separate compartment by themselves they would have a stigma attached to them and fusion with others would become more difficult, that he opposed their separation. It is well known that a certain alliance was formed in London during the second Round Table Conference between the delegates of some minority groups and British Conservatives. Gandhiji evidently wanted the Muslim delegates not to support the demand for the separation of the depressed classes into a distinct group. So far as I know, he has never opposed the grant of special and additional representation to the depressed classes. Indeed, he holds that every facility must be given them to advance and catch up to the more advanced groups and communities. Subsequent events have demonstrated how far he is prepared to go in this direction. Socialist as I am, I fail to see any flaw or any impropriety in this reasoning.

Sir Mohammad evidently suspects a sinister design on Gandhiji's part. He hints that what Gandhiji is after is not so much the raising of the depressed classes, but the prevention of their fusion with the other communities, especially, I suppose, the Muslims in India. It is

I now come to Sir Mohammad's 'straight question'[3] to me. There is a great difference in his outlook and mine and I am unable to think in terms of religious majorities or minorities. It is possible, therefore, that we may talk round each other and use words and phrases in different senses. But for the present I shall try to use these words in Sir Mohammad's sense.

I am not prepared to leave the decision of any vital matter affecting India or the Indian people to any outside authority, and certainly not to the imperialist power that governs us and exploits our weaknesses and differences. I agree that the majority community should 'concede the minimum safeguards necessary for the protection of a minority'. But what are these minimum safeguards and who is to decide them? The minority itself? As a general rule I am prepared to agree to this also, though there may be exceptions where vital matters affecting the nation are concerned. We may, for the present, rule out these exceptions. How then are we to know what the minority community really desires? Are we to take the opinion of any small group claiming to represent the community? And when there are several such groups, what are we to do? Neither the Muslim League nor the Muslim Conference can claim to be a democratic or representative body and a considerable number of Muslims are opposed to their demands. The council of the Muslim League—apparently the council exists in the air and there is no other body behind it—is a more or less permanent, self-electing or nominating body. The Muslim Conference is dominated, by its very constitution, by the Muslim members of the official legislatures. How can these bodies claim to represent the Muslims generally in India and, more specially, the Muslim masses? They may occasionally give expression to a prevailing sentiment. Then again are we to consider a group of persons, chosen by the ruling imperialist power for the Round Table Conference, as representatives of the Muslim masses? They may be estimable persons, but they certainly have no representative capacity.

The only way to find out the wishes of the Muslims of India is to consult them and the democratic method is for them to elect representatives for the purpose on as wide a franchise as possible, preferably adult franchise. I am perfectly prepared to abide by any decision of theirs so arrived at.

3 Iqbal asked Jawaharlal how India's problem could be solved if the majority community was prepared neither to make concessions nor to accept the award of a third party. Iqbal thought that there were only two alternatives, either to allow British imperialism to continue permanently or to redistribute India on the basis of religious, historical and cultural affinities.

I should like Sir Mohammad Iqbal to consider his fourteen points which are supposed to provide the minimum safeguards necessary for the protection of the Muslims, and to spot anything in them which benefits or raises up the Muslim masses. As he knows, my chief interest in politics is the raising of the masses and the removal of barriers of class and wealth and the equalization of society. This point of view was apparently never considered by the framers and advocates of the fourteen points. It is natural that I should not feel enthusiastic about them. But if the Muslims declare for them in the democratic way I have suggested, I shall accept these demands and I am quite sure that they would be accepted by the nation as a whole. I imagine, however, that when the Muslim masses are consulted they will lay far more stress on economic demands which affect them as well as the non-Muslim masses intimately rather than on such demands as interest a handful of upper class people.

The political problem of India can only be decided by the Indian people themselves without the intervention of an outside authority, so also the communal problem. And the only way to proceed in regard to both of these is to go to the people themselves. A constituent assembly elected on an adult or near-adult franchise alone can decide the political issue. I am personally prepared to have elections for this assembly by separate electorates for those minorities who so desire it. The representatives of these minorities, so elected, will have every right to speak for them and no one can say that the majority community has influenced their election Let these people consider the communal question and, as I have stated above, I shall accept the demand put forward by the Muslim representatives.

Sir Mohammad will observe that I am placing before him a democratic and feasible solution of the problem and I am even keeping the Congress out of it. I am sure the Congress will gladly efface itself if this solution is put forward

My answer to Sir Mohammad Iqbal's question therefore is this. I do not think that these are the only two alternatives he mentions. There are many other avenues. In any event he ought to know full well, that if any community, majority or minority, seeks an alliance with imperialism, it will have to face the unrelenting and continuous opposition and hostility of Indian nationalism. As a matter of fact, no community or minority can do so Only a few leaders and upper class people may do so, for every community as a whole suffers from it. The masses can never compromise with imperialism for their only hope lies in freedom from its shackles.

Nor do I believe in the religious redistribution of India. Such divisions are most undesirable and cannot take place in the modern world. But

I am not against redistribution or reshaping of different provinces which will give different cultural groups the fullest opportunity for self-development.

84. Statement to the Press[1]

I am glad Sir Mohammad Yakub[2] has appreciated the suggestion made by me in my reply to Sir Mohammad Iqbal about a decision on the political and communal problems by means of a constituent assembly. But he is labouring under a misapprehension if he thinks that the present and intended legislatures can take the place of a constituent assembly. That is far from my meaning, and I do not think these legislatures can be really representative of any section of opinion.

The ideas underlying a constituent assembly are (1) full self-determination by the people of India without the imposition of the will of any outside authority and (2) decision by the mass of people through their representatives elected on adult franchise.

To facilitate a decision on the communal problem and remove all suspicion from the minds of minorities, I have suggested that such minorities as desire it might elect their representatives through separate electorates.

The only business of the constituent assembly will be to draw up a constitution and then dissolve itself, new elections taking place under the new constitution so drawn up.

It is clear that the White Paper and the Round Table Conference schemes have nothing to do with all this, and they must be ignored till the time comes for a constituent assembly to be summoned. The struggle for freedom of the Indian people which is being carried on by the Congress will continue till then.

1. Allahabad, 16 December 1933 *The Hindu*, 17 December 1933.
2. (1879-1942), president, U P Muslim League, 1926, member, Legislative Assembly, 1924-38.

85. Reality and Myth[1]

The suggestion made by me that both political and communal problems in India should be solved by means of a constituent assembly has met with considerable favour. Gandhiji has commended it and so have many others. Others again have misunderstood it or not taken the trouble to understand it.

Politically and nationally, if it is granted, as it must be, that the people of India are to be the sole arbiters of India's fate and must therefore have full freedom to draw up their constitution, it follows that this can only be done by means of a constituent assembly elected on the widest franchise. Those who believe in independence have no other choice. Even those who talk vaguely in terms of a nebulous Dominion Status must agree that the decision has to be made by the Indian people. How then is this decision to be made? Not by a group of so-called leaders or individuals. Not by these self-constituted bodies called All Parties Conferences which represent, if any body at all, small interested groups and leave out the vast majority of the population. Not even, let us admit, by the National Congress, powerful and largely representative as it is. It is of course open to the Congress to influence and largely control the constituent assembly if it can carry the people with it. But the ultimate political decision must be with the people of India acting through a popularly elected constituent assembly.

This assembly of course can have nothing in common with the sham and lifeless councils and assemblies imposed on us by an alien authority. It must derive its sanction from the people themselves without any outside interference. I have suggested that it should be elected under adult or near adult franchise. What the method of election should be can be considered and decided later. Personally I favour the introduction, as far as possible, of the functional system of election as this is far more representative of real interests The geographical system often covers up and confuses these interests But I am prepared to agree to either or to a combination of both. I see no difficulty, except one, and that is an important one, in the way of such a constituent assembly being

1 Statement to the press, Allahabad, 5 January 1934 *The Tribune*, 8 January 1934 Reprinted in *Recent Essays and Writings*, (Allahabad, 1934), pp. 72-81.

elected and functioning. This functioning will be limited to drawing up of a constitution and then fresh elections will have to be held on the basis of the new constitution.

The one difficulty I referred to is the presence and dominance of an outside authority, that is the British Government. It is clear that so long as this dominance continues no real constituent assembly can meet or function. So thus an essential preliminary is the development of sufficient strength in the nation to be able to enforce the will of the Indian people. Two opposing wills cannot prevail at the same time; there must be conflict between them and a struggle for dominance, such as we see today in India. Essentially, this struggle is for the preservation of British vested interests in India and the White Paper effort is an attempt to perpetuate them. No constituent assembly can be bound down by these chains, and so long as the nation has not developed strength enough to break these chains, such an assembly cannot function.

This assembly would also deal with the communal problem, and I have suggested that, in order to remove all suspicion from the minds of a minority, it may even, if it so chooses, have its representatives elected by separate electorates. These separate electorates would only be for the constituent assembly. The future method of election, as well as all other matters connected with the constitution, would be settled by the assembly itself.

I have further added that if the Muslim elected representatives for this constituent assembly adhere to certain communal demands I shall press for their acceptance. Much as I dislike communalism I realise that it does not disappear by suppression but by a removal of the feeling of fear, or by a diversion of interest. We should therefore remove this fear complex and make the Muslim masses realise that they can have any protection that they really desire. I feel that this realisation will go a long way in toning down the feeling of communalism.

But I am convinced that the real remedy lies in a diversion of interest from the myths that have been fostered and have grown up round the communal question to the realities of today. The bulwark of communalism today is political reaction and so we find that communal leaders inevitably tend to become reactionaries in political and economic matters. Groups of upper class people try to cover up their own class interests by making it appear that they stand for the communal demands of religious minorities or majorities. A critical examination of the various communal demands put forward on behalf of Hindus, Muslims or others reveals that they have nothing to do with the masses. At the most they deal with some jobs for a few of the unemployed intellectuals but it is

obvious that the problem even of the unemployed middle class intellectuals cannot be solved by a redistribution of state jobs. There are far too many unemployed persons of the middle class to be absorbed in state or other services and their number is growing at a rapid pace. So far as the masses are concerned there is absolutely no reference to them or to their wants in the numerous demands put forward by communal organisations. Apparently the communalists do not consider them as worthy of attention. What is there, in the various communal formulae, in regard to the distress of the agriculturists, their rent or revenue or the staggering burden of debt that crushes them? Or in regard to the factory or railway or other workers who have to face continuous cuts in wages and a vanishing standard of living? Or the lower middle classes who, for want of employment and work, are sinking in the slough of despair? Heated arguments take place about seats in councils and separate and joint electorates and the separation of provinces which can affect or interest only a few Is the starving peasant likely to be interested in this when hunger gnaws his stomach? But our communal friends take good care to avoid these real issues, for a solution of them might affect their own interests, and they try to divert people's attention to entirely unreal and, from the mass point of view, trivial matters.

Communalism is essentially a hunt for favours from a third party—the ruling power. The communalist can only think in terms of a continuation of foreign domination and he tries to make the best of it for his own particular group. Delete the foreign power and the communal arguments and demands fall to the ground. Both the foreign power and the communalists, as representing some upper class groups, want no essential change of the political and economic structure; both are interested in the preservation and augmentation of their vested interests. Because of this, both cannot tackle the real economic problems which confront the country for a solution of these would upset the present social structure and devest the vested interests. For both, this ostrich-like policy of ignoring real issues is bound to end in disaster. Facts and economic forces are more powerful than governments and empires and can only be ignored at peril.

Communalism thus becomes another name for political and social reaction and the British Government, being the citadel of this reaction in India, naturally throws its sheltering wings over a useful ally. Many a false trail is drawn to confuse the issue; we are told of Islamic culture and Hindu culture, of religion and old custom, of ancient glories and the like. But behind all this lies political and social reaction, and communalism must therefore be fought on all fronts and given no quarter. Because the inward nature of communalism has not been sufficiently

realised, it has often sailed under false colours and taken in many an unwary person. It is an undoubted fact that many a Congressman has almost unconsciously partly succumbed to it and tried to reconcile his nationalism with this narrow and reactionary creed. A real appreciation of its true nature would demonstrate that there can be no common ground between the two. They belong to different species. It is time that Congressmen and others who have flirted with Hindu or Muslim or Sikh or any other communalism should understand this position and make their choice. No one can have it both ways, and the choice lies between political and social progress and stark reaction. An association with any form of communalism means the strengthening of the forces of reaction and of British imperialism in India; it means opposition to social and economic changes and a toleration of the present terrible distress of our people; it means a blind ignoring of world forces and events.

What are communal organisations? They are not religious although they confine themselves to religious groups and exploit the name of religion. They are not cultural and have done nothing for culture although they talk bravely of a past culture. They are not ethical or moral groups for their teachings are singularly devoid of all ethics and morality. They are certainly not economic groupings for there is no economic link binding their members and they have no shadow of an economic programme. Some of them claim not to be political even. What then are they?

As a matter of fact they function politically and their demands are political, but calling themselves non-political, they avoid the real issues and only succeed in obstructing the path of others. If they are political organisations then we are entitled to know, exactly where they stand. Do they stand for the complete freedom of India or a partial freedom, if such a thing exists? Do they stand for independence or what is called Dominion Status? The best of words are apt to be misleading and many people still think that Dominion Status is something next door to independence. As a matter of fact they are two different types entirely, two roads going in opposite directions. It is not a question of fourteen annas and sixteen annas but of different species of coins which are not interchangeable.

Dominion Status means continuing the steel framework of British finance and vested interests; from this stranglehold there is no relief under Dominion Status. Independence means a possibility of relief from these burdens and the freedom to decide about our social structure. Therefore whatever measure of limited freedom we may get under Dominion Status it will always be subject to the paramount claims of the

Bank of England and British capital, and it will also be subject to the continuation of our present economic structure. That means that we cannot solve our economic problems and relieve the masses of their crushing burdens; we can only sink deeper and deeper into the morass. What then do the communal organizations stand for: independence or Dominion Status?

We need not refer to that travesty of a constitution which the White Paper is supposed to embody. It is only an ungentle reminder to us that British capital and interests in India will be preserved at all costs, so long as the British Government has power to preserve them. Only those who are interested in the preservation of these British vested interests or those who are very simple and unsophisticated can go anywhere near the White Paper or its offshoots.

Even more important than the political objective is the economic objective. It is notorious that the era of politics has passed away and we live in an age when economics dominate national and international affairs. What have the communal organizations to say in regard to these economic matters? Or are they blissfully ignorant of the hunger and unemployment that darken the horizon of the masses as well as of the lower middle classes? If they claim to represent the masses they must know that the all-absorbing problem before these unfortunate and unhappy millions is the problem of hunger, and they should have some answer, some theoretical solution at least for this problem. What do they propose should be done in industry and in agriculture? How do they solve the distress of the worker and the peasant; what land laws do they suggest? What is to happen to the debt of the agricultural classes; is it to be liquidated or merely toned down, or is it to remain? What of unemployment? Do they believe in the present capitalist order of society or do they think in terms of a new order? These are a few odd questions that arise and an answer to them, as well as to other similar questions, will enlighten us as to the true inwardness of the claims and demands of the communalists. Even more so I think will the masses be enlightened if the answers manage to reach them. The Muslim masses are probably even poorer than the Hindu masses but the 'fourteen points' say nothing about these poverty stricken Muslims. The Hindu communalists also lay all their stress on the preservation of their own vested interests and ignore their own masses.

I am afraid I am not likely to get clear, or perhaps any answers to my questions, partly because the questions are inconvenient, partly because communal leaders know little about economic facts and have never thought in terms of the masses. They are experts only in percentages and their battle ground is the conference room, not the field or factory

or market place. But whether they like them or not the questions will force themselves to the front and those who cannot answer them effectively will find little place for themselves in public affairs. The answer of many of us can be given in one comprehensive word—socialism—and in the socialist structure of society.

But whether socialism or communism is the right answer or some other, one thing is certain—that the answer must be in terms of economics and not merely politics. For India and the world are oppressed by economic problems and there is no escaping them. So long as the fullest economic freedom does not come to us there can be no freedom whatever the political structure may be. Economic freedom must of course include political freedom. That is the reality today; all else is myth and delusion, and there is no greater myth than the communal myth.

To go back to the constituent assembly. If a really popular assembly met with freedom to face and decide the real issues, immediately these real economic problems would occupy attenion. The so-called communal problem will fade into the background for the masses will be far more interested in filling their hungry stomachs than in questions of percentages. This assembly will release the vital forces in the country which are at present suppressed by our foreign rulers as well as by Indian vested interests. The lead will go to the masses and the masses, when free, though they may sometimes err, think in terms of reality and have no use for myths. The workers and the peasantry will dominate the situation, and their decisions, imperfect though they may be, will take us a long way to freedom. I cannot say what the constituent assembly will decide. But I have faith in the masses and am willing to abide by their decision And I am sure that the communal problem will cease to exist when it is put to the hard test of real mass opinion. It has been a hothouse growth nurtured in the heated atmosphere of conference rooms and so-called All Parties Conferences. It will not find a solution in that artificial environment, but it will wilt and die in the fresh air and the sunlight.

THE BIHAR EARTHQUAKE

86. Appeal for Relief[1]

The terrible earthquake catastrophe that has overwhelmed Bihar and stricken thousands of homes, has, for the moment, shaken and numbed us all.[2] Many of us of the Congress fold are engrossed in our struggle for freedom. But even so the call of the suffering and afflicted humanity must be attended to.

I hope Congressmen will give every help, personal service, money and material to those that have been rendered helpless. There must be hundreds or thousands of orphan children to be looked after. That should be the special province and privilege of our women.

As was done in Japan during the earthquake disaster, I hope each householder will offer at least temporary welcome to one or two orphan boys and girls. The burden of relief will naturally fall heavily on Bihar, but I hope other provinces will help her and gladly share it with her.

1 Statement to the press, Santiniketan, 19 January 1934. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 January 1934

2 The earthquake in Bihar on 15 January 1934 damaged all buildings in an area of about 6000 square miles and caused considerable loss of life. Darbhanga, Champaran and Muzaffarpur were the worst hit.

87. A Report on Muzaffarpur[1]

Muzaffarpur was in ruins Thousands of houses had collapsed and many that remained standing were cracked and dangerous of approach.

1 Statement to the press, Allahabad, 24 January 1934. *The Tribune*, 27 January 1934 Jawaharlal visited Muzaffarpur on 22 January 1934.

The streets were full of bricks and debris. Many of the smaller lanes were wholly blocked by the fallen material and one had to mount up ten feet or more to cross it. The roads were full of cracks and fissures through which large quantities of sandy water had come out leaving a covering of sand behind. In one place the road had sunk several feet and a wide gaping chasm separated it from the rest of the road.

The surviving population was living in improvised shelters; most of them could hardly be called shelters as there was only a white sheet as a covering. *There they lived with an utter lack of privacy and* without the most elementary necessities, shivering in the cold and not daring to approach the tottering walls. Many of these encampments in the city were isolated islands, surrounded by debris and ruined houses, and difficult of access. Sanitation, in these inside areas especially, was most defective, and the fear of an epidemic breaking out was always present. The water supply was very scarce.

The debris still covered many corpses. I saw corpses being carried away for disposal. I saw also a corpse emerge as the debris was being removed to clear a lane. It was that of a young man. His arm was up, apparently to protect himself from a falling wall. But the attempt failed and the raised arm remained petrified in that position, in mute testimony of his desire to save himself from the approaching doom.

There was no escape for those who lived in the crowded quarters of the city with its narrow lanes, no escape especially for the womenfolk. If they rushed out in the lane, even there the falling walls buried them. *Those who were buried and still lived, lived only to die a lingering* and terribly painful death for no rescue came for days. A few, with an amazing persistence, were taken out three days after and survived.

One of the most painful and distressing aspects of a painful occurrence was the delay in beginning relief work. It was natural for the people concerned to be numbed by the shock. It was natural for the nerves of the district officials to give way to some extent. But nerves have to be controlled in emergencies, and when every hour is precious, every moment may mean life or death to many, a cool and clear head is necessary. There were apparently no such heads in Muzaffarpur when they were most needed. And so it happened that while Muzaffarpur lay in ruins and large numbers of men and women and children hovered between life and death, the world knew nothing about it. Not even Patna, a bare forty miles away, knew of it. Nor did any outsiders know of the worse fate of Monghyr or of Darbhanga or many other places. It took three days for the terrible news to leak out. The usual swift means of communication—the telegraph and the railway—had no doubt

failed, but these cities lay within a day's journey on foot of each other. Government collapsed during these three days as surely no other government of modern times has done. Mr. K.P. Jayaswal,[2] writing of Darbhanga, truly says that such a state of affairs was unthinkable under any modern government. The first step that the government should have taken was to facilitate telegraphic and other communications to relieve the anxiety of friends and relatives in other places, and immediately to organise rescue work. Instead of this the telegraph worked in the most leisurely way and no steps were taken to add to the staff. Telegrams were usually accepted but not sent for days.

It is only three or four days after the event that the government seem to have woken up from their torpor and realised the gravity of the disaster. After the Bihar Governor's flying tour of the affected areas, relief work was pushed on by official agencies.

When I reached Muzaffarpur I went straight to one of the camps of the refugees in the court compound. Immediately I was surrounded by many of these unhappy people who complained that they were being forced by the police to take down their huts and encamp elsewhere as the compound was needed for the military. Many huts had already been brought down. This struck me as a curious way of offering relief—to turn out these people unceremoniously and without helping them or making other arrangements. A reference was made to some of the district authorities present, whereupon the order was apparently varied and most of the people who had encamped there were allowed to remain.

I next visited the hospital nearby. It was carrying on its work in the open. There were, I was told, eighty to ninety indoor patients and 50 to 60 outdoor patients. These figures apply to the earthquake patients only. It seemed to me that these figures were very low, considering the magnitude of the disaster. And I found, subsequently, large numbers of injured people in the various shelters round about the city who were not receiving any or sufficient medical attention. The hospital staff was working at high pressure and it was apparent that they were in need of further help. In spite of this, however, I was informed that qualified doctors from outside were not officially welcomed in Muzaffarpur, nor were the local doctors encouraged in any way.

Both in regard to medical and other relief, I gathered the impression that the officials in charge disliked the idea of any activity that was not completely under them. A Marwari Relief Committee that

2. (1871-1937); historian and author of *Hindu Law* and *Hindu Polity*.

was doing good work complained of the difficulties they had faced from official red tape and discouragement.

This attitude, typical as it is of officialdom in India, was none the less completely out of place in the face of a great disaster calling for every effort, official and private. It had been made perfectly clear on behalf of non-official agencies that they were there to cooperate with official agencies, as far as possible, in the relief work. But it was also stated that they could not place themselves under the control and direction of the official agencies as this would make them as expensive, slow-moving and unresponsive to public needs as official agencies usually are. Non-official effort should be far more efficient and speedy, and should make the most of every rupee spent.

The present needs of the survivors of Muzaffarpur are food, clothing, blankets, good shelters against rain, and medical relief. At least one more hospital should be started in a big shed, and arrangements made for medical attendance in the various camps. Splints and first-aid materials are badly needed. Cases of delivery are taking place in these camps with no doctors in attendance. A thorough cleaning up of the areas surrounding the camps is urgently needed to prevent an epidemic. The lack of water is causing great distress as the old water supply has failed and the wells have become choked up with sand. The government is taking steps to open a number of tube wells.

Something is now being done, both by official and non-official agencies, to relieve the survivors of Muzaffarpur. But the villages round about are sadly neglected. They suffer also from a lack of water and their fields are partly covered by the sand that came up when water gushed out from the fissures in the ground. The disaster is terrible enough but wild rumour makes it even worse. All manner of extraordinary stories are about. *The Pioneer* gave currency to an amazing tale of the Ganges drying up and playing various other tricks in Patna. No one in Patna, that I came across, had heard of this extraordinary occurrence.

Figures for casualties vary from a few thousands to tens of thousands. Official figures, as usual, err greatly on the one side, rumour errs on the other.[3] Perhaps the truth lies between the two. It is obvious, however, that a very large number of people died as a result of this terrible visitation. And most of their bodies still lie buried under the ruins of the houses they once inhabited.

3. The official estimate was that 7,253 lost their lives.

88. Appeal for Contributions[1]

My visit to Muzaffarpur has convinced me—if further conviction was necessary—that help in the shape of money, blankets and clothes is most urgently required. Various official and non-official agencies are at work in organising relief and there is some danger of duplication and waste of effort although every attempt will undoubtedly be made for cooperation in the common task. Official agencies are heavy of movement, expensive and surrounded by red tape. They seldom reach fully or effectively the masses who are most affected. Therefore it is desirable for us to concentrate on the non-official agencies that are functioning and to send our help to them. These agencies are gradually consolidating themselves under the Central Relief Fund of which Babu Rajendra Prasad is the president, and many representative persons in Bihar the members. I earnestly appeal therefore for help to be sent direct to Babu Rajendra Prasad or to the Bihar Bank, Patna, for this Central Relief Fund. It is inadvisable for individuals and groups to attempt to carry relief directly to the areas affected. They should communicate first with the Central Relief Committee at Patna who will direct their efforts in the right direction. Above all, it should be remembered that delay defeats the object in view. Urgent and immediate help is wanted—blankets, old and new, clothes, used and unused, and, above all, money. First-aid appliances are also needed.

Bihar has been struck down by a terrible natural calamity. We in other provinces have escaped. A slight turn in fortune's wheel and we, of other cities and areas, might have had to face disaster and the loss of our loved ones. We have escaped but many of our brethren and sisters have been stricken down and call, in suffering and agony, to us, the fortunate ones, for help. The dead are beyond our reach, but the living and the maimed lie in the shadow of death and fight for life. Their strength fails them but their feeble cry has reached the hearts of India's millions. The call has been heard and all our strength and resources must go out in answer to it.

1 Statement to the press, 24 January 1934. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 28 January 1934.

89. Advice on Contributions[1]

Babu Rajendra Prasad writes to me that relief work is proceeding apace; but the problem is, of course, an enormous one. He says that blankets and clothes are not so much needed now as money for shelters and other work. It is therefore desirable not to pay much attention to the collection of clothes and blankets. And in no event should food-stuffs be sent. Some grain merchants of Allahabad have collected rice, dal and other food stuffs and tried to send them to Patna. I have pointed out to them that this is a very wasteful method of giving relief as such articles can easily be purchased on the spot, and the freight, *thela* and other charges may even exceed the price of the food-stuffs sent. Such provisions when collected, should be sold and the money sent to Patna. All energies must therefore be concentrated on the collection of money.

Young men have come to me offering their personal services for relief work. Their idea of relief usually is to collect money and material and to distribute them in the affected areas. The work of distribution can obviously be done only by a select few and it is not possible to increase the number of workers of this kind indefinitely without a loss of efficiency. Babu Rajendra Prasad has also stated that he does not require workers from outside at present.

But may I commend to our eager young men a suggestion put forward by Sir Courtney Tyrell, the Chief Justice of the Patna High Court? He has suggested that small groups of young men, about six in number under a leader or foreman, should go armed with spades, shovels and baskets and help in clearing the debris. In this way, working as voluntary labourers, they could give valuable help to the poor and to persons of moderate means to recover their household goods, and sometimes even the bodies of their dear ones, from the debris and rubbish that cover them. This requires hard work but it is most useful work and profitable alike to the sufferers in the affected areas and to those who undertake it. Does the enthusiasm of our young men run to this kind of physical labour, or is it merely a clerkly enthusiasm which looks to a desk?

1. Allahabad, 29 January 1934 *The Leader*, 31 January 1934

90. The Organization of the Allahabad Relief Fund[1]

Many of our colleagues and members of our Earthquake Relief Committee who have been making collections for the Relief Fund have told me that all manner of groups and individuals are collecting money for relief in the city. Some of these groups are no doubt *bona fide* groups, about others we cannot say whom they represent and for whom they collect. It appears that quite a large number of communal, sectional and even caste groups are collecting money for their special funds. That is unfortunate enough but what is even sadder is the opportunity that this indiscriminate collection gives to unscrupulous individuals to exploit the earthquake disaster to their own personal advantage. If there could be anything that was non-communal and non-sectional it was the earthquake that struck down high and low and people of every community and religion and class and group. And if there is any form of activity that must be above communalism and party and sectionalism and petty group feeling, it is the relief work to lessen the suffering of the survivors. It is tragic to think and act in our narrow groups in the face of such a terrible and all embracing disaster. And it is criminal for anyone to endeavour to profit by this catastrophe.

It was to prevent this and to avoid the duplication of energy and waste of effort, and to make the city of Allahabad pull together in one mighty effort to render relief, that the Earthquake Relief Committee, Allahabad, was started. Every attempt has been made to make this committee a thoroughly representative one of the city by the inclusion of people from various groups and communities, and if any further suitable names are suggested for inclusion, they will be gladly added to it As chairman of the executive of this committee I appeal to our fellow citizens to concentrate on all relief going through this committee, and not fritter away their energies and their money by distributing them in various directions

I should also like to warn them not to give money to any collectors whom they do not know Those who are collecting on our behalf possess our receipts and we are not responsible for money collected for which our receipts are not given. Lists of donors of Re. 1 and upwards are sent to *The Leader* for publication If any donor does not

[1] Statement to the press, Allahabad, 31 January 1934. *The Leader*, 31 January 1934

find his name in any list or has not received a receipt from us he is requested to make enquiries from us. We want our accounts to be in perfect condition so that they can be audited later and placed before the public.

I should like to express my deep regret to some members of our committee for their not receiving the notice of our last meeting in time. Some of these notices were insufficiently addressed and came back through the post. We are certainly responsible for this mistake. But may I also point out that a very heavy burden of work has had to be borne by some of us, and especially by our secretary, Pandit Mohanlal Nehru, during the last few days. He has not only given much time to collections but has, almost unaided, done a great deal of office work and account keeping in connection with the collections made. We have received, besides money, about thirty maunds of blankets and clothes and most of these have been despatched to Patna.

In conclusion may I, on behalf of the Earthquake Relief Committee, appeal again for generous donations of money for relief. Allahabad has begun well and it is obvious that there is widespread sympathy and a desire to help It has been most heartening to see the poorest giving what were to them quite substantial sums. But Allahabad has still to catch up with other cities. I am sure it will—but meanwhile men and women and children suffer dire agony in stricken Bihar.

91. On Conditions In Sitamarhi[1]

The crops are gone and there are large sheets of water all round. The future is threatened with a dangerous situation. In some places roads are passable while in others one has to go in boats for three miles at a stretch. It is monstrous to think of collecting rent now from the peasants. Rent must be remitted I am amused to learn of the attachment of a peasant's property in Vedual (Katna Thana) for *chowkidari* tax after the earthquake His *lota* and bedding were attached. It is extraordinary that such things should happen. Obviously, when one talks of relief it means that a person has no

1 Interview to the press, after his tour of the Sitamarhi sub-division of Muzaffarpur district, 6 February 1934 From *The Searchlight*, 9 February 1934

resources to live upon and to ask him to pay any kind of tax is absurd. The question is not how much he is to pay but how much he is to be paid by us. Probably, in most instances officials are discouraging such tendencies but this is not a matter to be left to the discretion of individuals at such a time. Formal orders might be issued postponing all pending suits and definitely laying down that no other suits must be instituted for a definite period of some length. The situation in Sitamarhi sub-division seems to me to be full of dangerous possibilities in view of the almost total failure of the crops which have come after all these days of dead harvests and floods.

As for the complaint of the middle classes that they have not received adequate relief, I have not looked into the matter, but I am inclined to think that this complaint, while partly true, is wholly unjustifiable It can be true in the sense that the immediate need was that of the poorest classes which had no food and which lacked the immediate necessities of life. In the case of the middle classes this was not so acute, although in individual cases it was bad. Naturally, relief agencies supplied the necessities first to those who lacked them, including members of the middle classes. The real demand from the middle classes which has not so far found fulfilment is for loans and other kinds of assistance such as help to start some kind of business etc. Some such kind of help will no doubt have to be given but it is bound to take second place during the first few weeks of urgent relief.

Compared to the town the village problem is much more important and it is increasing daily to such an extent that in two or three months a terrible famine is expected. It is a problem of supporting about 20 lakhs of men with food, clothing etc. We have to do something to prepare ourselves to face this emergency. The relief agencies plan to give support for a few months and then, feeling that things have been restored to normal conditions, the workers may return to their houses to resume their own business. We must be prepared for the terrible situation that is going to face us after two or three months.

The village problem should be carefully studied and I am convinced that immediate relief should be given there. One is frightened by looking at the condition of the villages. Sitamarhi was the granary of Bihar till now and even used to send grains to other places. The condition of the peasant here was complete nakedness before the earthquake For the last two or three months it has been very bad because of floods, and now the earthquake has made it worse. The granary has gone underground I have seen the inside of houses where, due to water coming from underground, sands five to six feet high have accumulated Now the rains will come and the road problem will

become very acute. There are already large sheets of water and with the rains the villages will become absolutely unapproachable. In some of the villages all the houses have been razed to the earth. In one place, where there was very little sand, the removal of the same for one *bigha* of land cost nearly eighteen rupees, which means that lakhs of rupees are required to make the land cultivable. In other places the removal of sand results in the finding of water. As I was going on the road, I saw one cow sinking under the sand neck-deep, due to water under the sand.

A moderate estimate shows that a sum of four to five crores of rupees is required for purposes of loan. The government will have to give loans from famine funds lying with them and it is the duty of the government, not only the right of the people, that they should utilise these funds for this purpose, because neglecting this problem at present will result in acute famine

Public works, being the best means of relief, must be created on a very wide scale, and if these are forthcoming much work could be done Cheap grain shops, cloth shops and building materials shops should also be opened.

I feel that the villagers should be made to do cooperative relief work. Until and unless the peasants and masses do cooperative work, the relief agencies cannot carry on relief work. Relief should be given through a proper channel: form volunteer corps of able-bodied men of each village in various places, so as to make them tackle the problem of clearing wells, debris etc. Giving relief in grain and clothes is all right but that will only be making them weak and even creating a class of beggars and idlers, and unless they are organised nothing substantial can be achieved.

92. Conditions in North Bihar and Monghyr[1]

I have returned after a week's wandering over the earthquake areas in north Bihar, impressed more than ever with the havoc caused by this terrible disaster and the vastness of the problem which we have to face I had read a great deal about the results of this earthquake, I had seen

1 Interview to the press at Patna, on his return from a tour of the north Bihar and Monghyr areas, 10 February 1934 From *The Leader*, 12 February 1934

many pictures; I had even visited previously the ruined city of Muzaffarpur; I had thought that I had a fair idea of the conditions prevailing in the affected areas But the actual sight of mile after mile of desolate sand-covered land, full of cracks and fissures and petty crater-like protuberances in the Sitamarhi area and elsewhere in the north, is one which I will never forget. And Monghyr—all that I had heard and read had not prepared me for the fearsome sight that met my eyes. I stood staggered and appalled at the heap of utter ruin and desolation that was once a rich and flourishing city.

I have come back with many impressions. I hope to put them down in a report which I shall submit soon to the Earthquake Relief Committee, Allahabad, and the Bihar Central Relief Committee. But I should like to pay my tribute of admiration to the numerous groups and workers from all over India, who are giving their personal service to the cause of relief. It would not have been surprising if friction had developed in this mixed and heterogeneous crowd, engaged in a novel undertaking Some petty cases of friction have taken place but, on the whole, there has been a remarkable and most pleasing cooperation and coordination of activities. I could not discover any instance of communal or sectional activity in any group or even individual worker. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others have pulled together and tried to work as Indians, face to face with a common disaster. It is well that the country should realise and appreciate not only the real spirit of service that our people have shown but also their powers of organization and mutual cooperation, and take pride in this.

93. The Inefficiency of Official Relief[1]

Nine gentlemen of Bihar have given a chit to the Government of Bihar for what is called their prompt action in dealing with the earthquake situation[2] They have expressed their admiration and gratitude for this and have deprecated that anything should have been said to give a contrary impression. Sir Samuel Hoare has not failed to take advantage

1 12 February 1934 *The Leader*, 15 February 1934
2. The statement commending local officers from the "commissioner down to the ordinary constables" was published on 11 February 1934.

of this statement and has, after his wont, paid another tribute to the "magnificent services" that rule us.

In giving the certificate of good behaviour, the nine gentlemen perhaps had in view a certain statement made by me recently. I have no desire to deprive the Bihar Government of this chit, nor have I got the least wish to find fault with the government or anyone at a time of great difficulty. But in the face of an unparalleled disaster vital facts cannot be ignored or slurred over, especially when they affect future action. Individuals, on the spot, whether officials or non-officials, must have received a great shock and it would be ungenerous to judge them by standards meant for normal times. No one of us can say how he or she will behave in the face of such an overwhelming catastrophe. But governments cannot be judged by individual and personal standards. If they claim to be efficient, they have to be judged by standards of efficiency. The government we have has a measure of efficiency in certain departments—in collecting taxes, in repressing political activity, in running its bureaucratic machine, etc. It takes action swiftly and often ruthlessly when its interests are at stake. It passes new laws overnight to strengthen its position whenever that is required. But is it equally efficient and *swift in other forms of activity? Was it efficient in the days immediately* following the earthquake? I am sure that the Bihar Government knows in its own heart that it was not so. And I am surer still that public opinion of every shade in the affected areas thinks so, though this may not find expression in newspapers. Habitual supporters of the government, title-holders and the like, have told me so in plain enough language.

No one blames the government for the earthquake. But if the government fails to act at the right moment, it is inefficient, and if this failure results in serious loss to the community, it must be held responsible for this loss. The government we have has a long record of inefficiency in many matters and a classic description of this was given by the late Mr. E.S. Montagu in connection with the Mesopotamian muddle.[3]

The first step that the government had to take immediately after the catastrophe was to act swiftly, measure up the situation, restore communications, and try to save life and lessen human suffering and loss A study of the earlier *communiques* of the Bihar Government will show how erroneously they viewed the situation and how they tried to minimise

3. Montagu had attributed the military failure in Mesopotamia in 1916 mainly to the machinery of the India Office which "produces an apotheosis of circumlocution and red tape"

the loss. Even district officers who wanted to take quick action had no assistance then from their government. Large numbers of living persons were lying under the debris suffering untold agonies and dying the most painful of deaths. What steps did the government take to rescue them in these vital early days? What has it done since in regard to this? So far as I know the government has not attempted to remove the debris from any considerable number of houses. Some roads have certainly been cleared, and this was an important matter, but the houses with their dead and half-dead remained. It was not a very difficult matter to rush troops to clear this debris, or to utilise the services of the thousands of railway workers at Jamalpur or Monghyr, or to engage an army of labourers for this special purpose. No such step was taken and the debris remains still, except where it has been removed to a small extent by private agencies. But private and non-official agencies have many difficulties to face, some of these of the government's making, some due to the sacrosanct laws of private property.

A fact, which has a terrible significance, is the recovery of living persons from under the debris, day after day, right up to the thirteenth day after the earthquake. Many bodies were also recovered which doctors testified to having died a day or two earlier. How many died during that fateful period when they might have been rescued alive if real efforts in that direction had been made?

The government has demonstrated that it can produce special laws and ordinances at a moment's notice. Could it not declare a state of emergency in the affected areas and pass special measures to deal with the new conditions swiftly as other governments have done under similar circumstances? But its energy and ingenuity seem to be exhausted in dealing with Chittagong and Midnapur and the like.

I have no desire to go back to past events and to cry over spilt milk. But if the government wants to surround itself with the halo of sanctity and to gather chits of good character, it will have to face criticism. And the purpose of this criticism is not to waste time and energy over past happenings, which are beyond remedy, but to take a lesson for the future. The situation cannot be met by pious phrases and platitudes or by the wooden methods of a red tape-ridden officialdom living in the ruts of routine. Vision is necessary, and courage, and an organic view of the present situation, so that even out of the disaster something worthwhile might emerge. I know that many officers of the government are devoting themselves to the work of relief with commendable energy. But that energy will not carry them far unless the mind of the government behind them functions with speed and efficiency.

MISCELLANEOUS

94. On the Understanding of History[1]

When my friend and colleague, Acharya Narendra Deva of Kashi Vidyapeeth,[2] asked me to write a foreword to this book, I hesitated a little. I had little time and having recently come out of jail was very busy. Then I saw what the book was about and I gladly agreed to write something. After reading part of the book I became more convinced that I should write because I desired that this book should be widely read. I have not finished reading the book as yet and therefore do not want to say anything about it in detail. But I have seen enough to know that Shri Mukundilal Srivastava[3] has written extremely well on various aspects of imperialism and has thrown considerable light on a major problem of our present-day world.

There are several ways of reading history and understanding it. One view is that a variety of events takes place, and great men appear and leave their powerful impact on the country and on the world. Any event is not specifically related to any other; sometimes events occur suddenly and sometimes they are coincidental. The other interpretation of history is that events are all closely inter-related. One event affects the other and if all the developments of world history are taken together then some sort of laws and causes emerges and we can understand the course and significance of world history. By knowing this, some light is thrown on all the events of world history and we can see our course ahead.

1. 8 October 1933. Foreword to *Samrajyavad Kya Aur Kaise Phaila* by Mukundilal Srivastava, published in 1933. Original in Hindi.
2. With the object of providing higher education, through the medium of Hindi, to students who had left government recognised institutions, Shiv Prasad Gupta started the Kashi Vidyapith. It was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi in 1921. Dr. Bhagavan Das was the first chancellor and Acharya Narendra Deva, the first principal.
3. (b. 1896), journalist, his published works include *Brihat Hindi Shabda Kosh* and *Jnana Shabda Kosh*.

In our country and in many others, history is still mostly interpreted in the first way. Everywhere are to be found people who consider their own country the best, and regard it as sacred soil. They study their ancient history and award it a high place—it becomes *satyayug* or *Ramarajya*; and the hope remains that the same may be restored. They do not ponder over the real reasons that cause national progress and decline and revolutions. But the advanced communities in Europe do not now understand history in this way. They prefer the other viewpoint and thereby gain a proper understanding of history and the present-day conditions of the world.

Many people in India these days are perplexed as to what to do and how. The present-day world and the condition of our country look strange and meaningless to us. The reason for this confusion is that we have not understood the real meaning of history. When we secure this understanding our way will be clear and no event of today will seem meaningless

In this book an attempt has been made to view history in a new perspective. There have been vast empires for thousands of years, but modern imperialism is a new concept developed for the first time in recent years. At present almost all the countries of the world (except Soviet Russia) are in its grip. We fight against it in India and want to be free of it. But very few of us have understood its real import and often mistake it for the imperialism of old. Unless we understand this new imperialism properly and discern its roots and branches, we cannot grasp the conditions of the present-day world and cannot properly wage our battle for freedom

So, because the various aspects of modern imperialism are explained in this book, I welcome it This is not a book for a few persons or even for one or two thousands, but for millions Anyone who works for the country should pay attention to this issue and understand it.

I am, however, sorry that the language used in this book seems a bit too difficult and many people will not be able to understand it. I could not understand many words but, unfortunately, I am almost illiterate in Hindi. It seems to me that such books should be written not for a few scholarly persons but should be such that a person with very limited reading—a farmer or a labourer even—should be able to understand it. Unless the masses understand it, our labour will be in vain.

95. On the Death of Vithalbhai Patel[1]

One by one the old guard of leaders and fighters for India's freedom pass away, leaving terrible emptiness behind.[2] The strain of fighting breaks up their physical strength. Prison life at an advanced age ruins their health but the call of the great cause continues to beckon them and they go forward till the end in health and sickness in India and abroad. Mr. Vithalbhai Patel was a fighter for this cause, a warrior of the battalion for India's freedom and even in death the last words that came from his lips echoed the passion that had consumed him. It is idle and somewhat presumptuous for me to pay the usual tribute to Vithalbhai, but I can say with assurance that we of the younger generation will treasure his memory and draw inspiration from his example. The great cause of freedom has consumed many brave warriors in its fire and it will consume many more of India's sons and daughters That cause remains, the fight continues and shall continue till the goal is reached. We, who had the privilege of working with Vithalbhai Patel in the common undertaking, have learnt of his passing away with deep pain and sorrow. What must be the shock to his brother, Sardar Vallabhbhai, as he lies in his lonely cell in Nasik Jail![3]

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 24 October 1933 *The Tribune*, 26 October 1933.
2. Vithalbhai Patel died on 21 October 1933 in Geneva
3. He had rejected the government's offer of parole for two days to perform the cremation.

96. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
October 27, 1933

My dear Bapu,
I should like to have your advice in the matter of the Allahabad Congress Hospital. This hospital was situated in Swaraj Bhawan and functioned successfully till the end of 1931 when Swaraj Bhawan was seized

1. JN Correspondence, NMML.

by the police. All our expensive equipment and medicines—there were even six unopened cases of fresh medicines worth Rs. 2000/—were taken possession of by the police. An ambulance car had the same experience. After some interval, the British authorities, more for show purposes than for anything else, proclaimed that they would continue to keep a dispensary open in Swaraj Bhawan for the public. For the last year or two this dispensary has been supposed to function. But there is no evidence that even a single member of the public has ever taken advantage of it. Some policemen go there occasionally for treatment. Anand Bhawan overlooks Swaraj Bhawan and no one here has seen any patient enter or come out of the place. And yet I am told false entries are made in their books to show that many patients are being treated. However, I am not interested in this.

The Congress Hospital after being turfed out of Swaraj Bhawan had no home and for some weeks it established itself under a big tree in a public park nearby. Medicines were distributed from this open place and in the course of two months under the tree it treated 2500 outdoor patients.

In April 1932, the hospital was established in a cottage belonging to me. This little house adjoins Swaraj Bhawan on the side away from Anand Bhawan. Previously this house had been rented out As soon as we could get it vacated we established the hospital there and it has been functioning there ever since. Some threats were made by the authorities but they were ignored It was also suggested by them that if the word Congress was dropped from the name they would not interfere. This proposal was rejected and the hospital continued to be described on its board as the Congress Hospital and it continued to display the national flag. The government did not then interfere with it.

Indoor patients were not taken but during the year ending 31st March 1933, as many as 58,000 outdoor patients were treated. During the six months ending 30 September 1933, 37,034 outdoor patients have been treated We have reduced our maintenance charges very greatly and have spent during the last 18 months Rs. 8,360/- over the hospital. This works out to about Rs. 465/- a month. A great part of these funds has been received from the profits of the Allahabad Swadeshi Exhibition. We have not received much directly from the public except medicines and surgical appliances from some firms in Bombay. But a great part of the latter went to the government. We have now almost exhausted our present resources. Some little money may come to us from the next Swadeshi Exhibition but such an existence is rather a precarious one and I should have liked to provide for the hospital for at least the next two

years. It is doing good work and it has kept the flag flying during a period of considerable difficulty.

Would you advise us to make a public appeal for funds giving the above facts? I am afraid that many people who might otherwise help may not be keen on doing so openly under the existing circumstances although the hospital as such has nothing whatever to do with politics. If a public appeal has to be made who is to make it? The person who is most intimately connected with the hospital is my cousin Mohanlal Nehru Kamala has also been much interested in it. Of the local committee there is no one of real importance and some of them have practically dropped out during the last two years of storm and stress.

I might mention that in calculating the expenditure of the hospital I have not included house rent. The rent of the house, which used to be Rs 75/- p.m, is my own contribution to the hospital expenses.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

97. To Bharati Sarabhai[1]

Allahabad
28.10.33

My dear Bharati,

I received your note soon after my discharge from gaol but I delayed answering it as I wanted to send you the photograph you wanted. I searched for it and could not find a spare one. The latest photograph —apart from snapshots—was one taken in Ceylon in the summer of 1931, that is, nearly two and a half years ago. It makes me look much younger than I am now but that perhaps is not such a bad thing after all. Not possessing a spare copy of the photograph I have written to Ceylon for it. As soon as it comes I shall send it to you. I shall also try to send a copy for Suhrid.[2] Both will be sent to your address and you can hand one of them to Suhrid.

1 J N. Correspondence, N M M L.
2 (1913 1942); son of Ambalal Sarabhai and brother of Bharati Sarabhai

You must be full of Oxford and your new life there. It is a fascinating place with an extraordinary charm, and, in spite of its narrow outlook on life, it gives something to its votaries that is hard to find elsewhere. Much the same can be said of Cambridge. But however much Oxford may absorb you, you will not, you cannot, forget what is happening in India. And I know that the call of India will grow and fill your mind.

Mridula wired to me on her discharge. I have asked her to pay us a visit here. I wish she would come but she is so shy and reserved that I doubt if she will do so.

Give my love to Suhrid and keep a lot of it for yourself. I have a fairly long memory for my friends but for you it is a little longer and more vivid than for many others.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

98. To E.G. Nair[1]

Allahabad
November 9, 1933

Dear Friend,[2]

Your letter. To bless a new periodical before one has seen what it is like, seems to be a precarious undertaking. I am afraid I am no admirer of Indian periodicals. They are extraordinarily poor compared to foreign ones. If you can bring out something which shows that it has intellectual efficiency behind it and not merely the dull routine work of schoolmasters and old world politicians ignorant of the present conditions then indeed I shall welcome your *Review*, not otherwise.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Correspondence, NMML.
2. He planned to edit a monthly journal, *The Standard Review*, on the lines of the *Modern Review* and asked Jawaharlal for a message.

99. To Gangadharrao Deshpande[1]

Allahabad
November 9, 1933

My dear Gangadharraoji,
Your letter about the Bellary exhibition.[2] I am not going to Madras for the youth conference or anywhere else for exhibitions and the like. I have even refused to open the exhibition being held in my own city of Allahabad. I feel that those of us who are carrying on the political and aggressive activities of the Congress must not divert their energies to the side shows. It is not merely a question of time and energy but one of creating a psychological atmosphere. I have, therefore, informed the Bellary exhibition people that I cannot come. I am sure you will understand me.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 JN Correspondence, NMML.
2 He invited Jawaharlal to open an exhibition at Bellary sometime in December 1933

100. On Hindi Literature[1]

We may regard ancient Hindi literature as court literature. Most often poets and writers produced literary pieces in order to please the court under whose patronage they lived. Days have now changed. Literature can become effective only if new vigour and life is infused and contemporary ideas absorbed.

The manner in which the Hindi-Urdu controversy is being posed is not correct. It is generating among the Muslims the feeling that this is being done to oppress and suppress Urdu.

1. Banaras, 12 November 1933 From *Aaj*, 14 November 1933 Original in Hindi

While Hindi lags behind, Bengali, Marathi and Gujarati have advanced further because we find that they incorporate progressive ideas of the modern world. I know of people who in their desire to read Bengali literature have learnt the language but I know none who with the sole aim of reading Hindi literature have learnt the language.

If we were independent and I had the authority, I would first of all make arrangements to translate into Hindi 300 or 400 well-known literary works of the world.

101. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
14.11.33

Indu sweetheart,
We returned from Benares last night after a very strenuous and tiring visit. This morning I received your letter, well timed to reach me on my birthday When one gets so old as I am, birthdays are not quite so welcome as they used to be But a birthday letter from you is always very welcome and your few lines made me happy.

But why did you suddenly think of apologising for something that I do not know? 'Forgive and forget'—what am I to forgive and forget? There is seldom any question of forgiving and forgetting between friends, and I hope you and I are friends, though you happen at the same time to be a dearly loved daughter What is far more important is for people to understand each other

I sent you your books from Benares There were two small French dictionaries. You wanted an English-French one. I could not find any good one here. The pocket one I have sent is not much good I think you had better get Cassell's French-English and English-French in one volume This is the best students' dictionary that I know of and it is not expensive. I used it in Harrow! Of course since then there have been many later editions. You can easily get a copy in Bombay.

1 Indira Gandhi Papers, N M.M L

I enclose some stamps, stamped envelopes and postcards. About the torch—I can't find a decent one here. There is no point in my buying a new one here and sending it to you The postage will be nearly as much as the cost of the torch and there is a possibility of its breaking on the way. I am therefore asking Jal to get a new torch for you He will send it to you or give it to you.

My age is becoming a delicate subject, not fit for public reference. I was born on the 14th November 1889—so you can calculate it. The date is a hundred years after the storming of the Bastille, which took place in 1789 and began the French Revolution. That is something to help you to remember it by if you think it worth remembering.

Chhoti puphi is apparently still in Ahmedabad. Her address there is: Ghikanta Wadi, Ahmedabad. If she goes to Bombay she will of course let you know. Raja's[2] address there is: 21, New Marine Lines, Fort.

I am glad you like your new school Why do you say that there is little possibility of your passing this year? Of course you will pass and pass well

I am afraid there is little chance of my going to Bombay. Jal wires to ask me to come down but I doubt if I can go.

We have had a French couple here in Allahabad. They brought a letter of introduction from a certain Prof. Alba who wrote to say that he had come here last year, when I was in gaol and had met Miss Nehru who talked in French to him. Was it you who met him? I have had a chance of French conversation with the couple who came. It was a very halting affair but they were perfectly delighted to hear French and to talk it after a long interval. They did not know much English. Poor Madame got malaria and was laid up for a week. They have gone now to Benares and may go on to Bombay. Their names are M. and Mme. Deleplanque. *Bari puphi* has had the Poona photographs.

I learn that *chhoti puphi* has gone to Bombay.

I shall send you typed copies of the letters[3] for yourself and Mr. Vakil after a few days. I want to revise them before sending them, to correct typing mistakes.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

2 G. P. Hutheesing (b. 1906), married Krishna Nehru in 1933, secretary, National Planning Committee and China Aid Committee appointed by the Congress, honorary Planning Adviser to the Ministry of Rehabilitation, 1947

3 Published as *Glimpses of World History* by Kitabistan, (Allahabad, 1934)

102. To Horace Alexander[1]

Allahabad
20/11/33

Dear Mr. Alexander,[2]
Thank you for your letter of the 25th October which I have only just received. Also the pamphlet on the Indian prisons. I shall read it and if I have any suggestions to make I shall certainly let you know. My own articles on the subject dealt rather vaguely with the problem.[3] These have now appeared in pamphlet form and I am sending these to you separately.

I had several long talks with C.F. Andrews when he was here and he will no doubt tell you about them. But I should very much like to keep in touch with you and your group which is working so bravely for our cause. Of course these contacts come to a sudden end when any of us disappears for a while behind prison walls—and that happens frequently enough

About my letters to my daughter, I shall welcome publication in England. But there are quite a lot of them. Some of them were published here some years ago and they had a good reception.[4] My daughter was then about ten years old and naturally the letters were written for her age Later on I continued them in prison but my discharge in January 1931 interrupted this. I gave a set of these letters to Gandhiji and perhaps Miss Harrison[5] saw them. When I went back to prison I continued my self imposed task because I found it interesting and my daughter asked me to do so. I had a long period in prison and gradually the letters grew in volume. They were also far more advanced as Indira (my daughter) had also grown Within a week of my discharge I finished the series and brought it up to date and when I came out I brought this mountain of letters with me.

1 Horace Alexander Papers, N M M L.
2 Member of the Society of Friends; professor at Selly Oak College at Woodbrooke in Birmingham and associate of Mahatma Gandhi, author of *The Indian Firmament* and *India Since Cripps*
3 See *Selected Works*, Vol 5, pp 560 577
4 *Letters from a Father to His Daughter*, (1928).
5. Agatha Harrison (1885 1954), English woman who was a friend of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal and actively supported the Indian freedom movement.

Kurzaffaefun

Collapse road – about
four feet – and fissures
through which water forced
out forming a little
river. The bed is dry
now but is covered
with sand.

Taken on 22.1.43

[illegible]

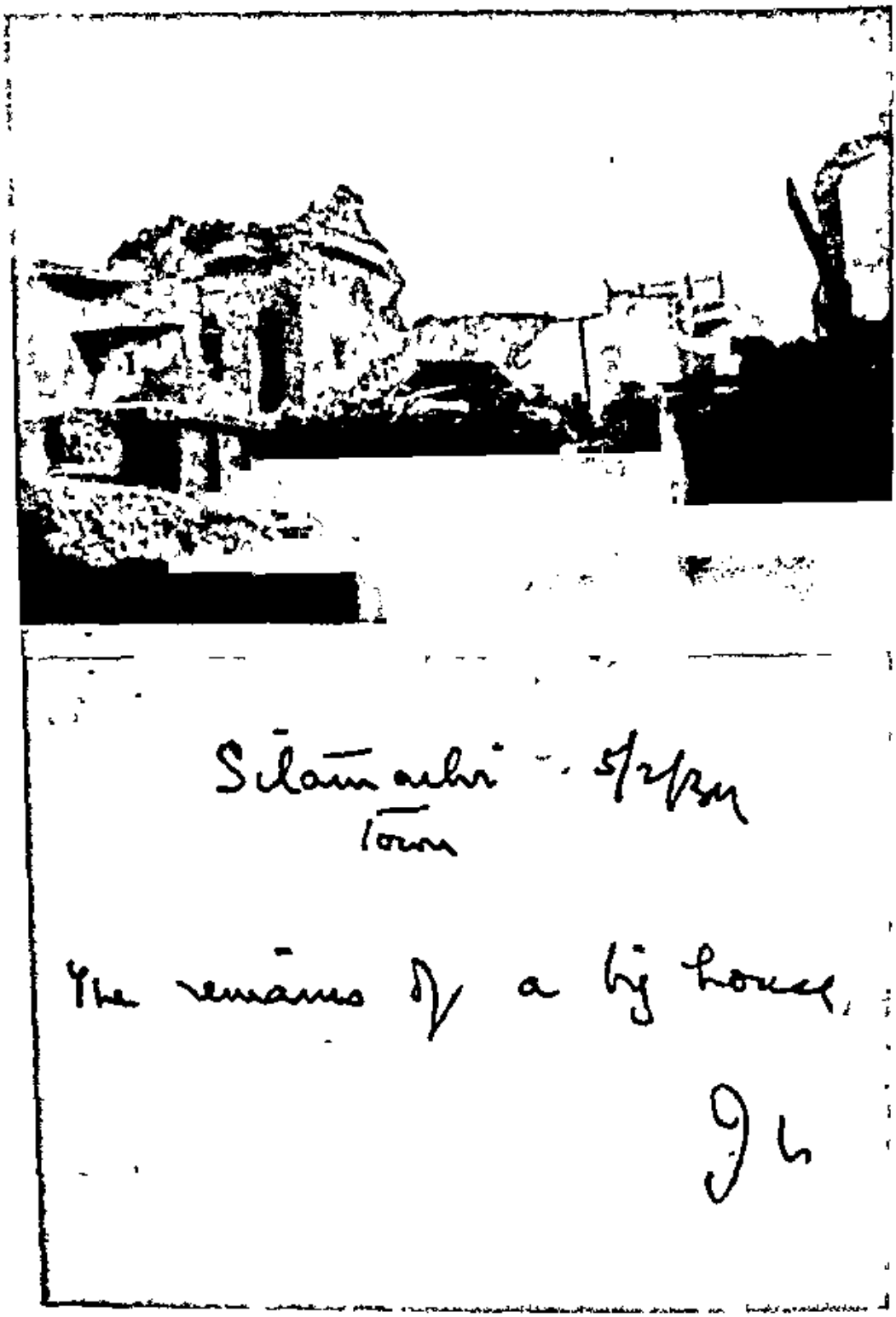

THE BIHAR EARTHQUAKE PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY JAWAHARLAL

I have had little time to attend to them so far but the thought of publication has often occurred to me. It is difficult for me to judge of their value. They deal with world history in a sort of jumpy way with a connecting link, and there are many personal and intimate touches in them. Recently I enquired from Indian publishers and many of them were keen on publishing them. The Indian office of the Oxford University Press also have said that they are prepared to consider them. So far I have not sent the manuscript or typescript to any firm. I am having the letters typed.

There are certain obvious advantages in having them published by a good English firm rather than in India. I am by no means sure that the Oxford University Press will finally agree to do the job. Their Indian office is not very enterprising and largely deals with school textbooks, so it might be worthwhile to approach Allen & Unwin or Gollancz or some other well known firm. I shall be grateful indeed if you or Miss Harrison could do so.

I shall send you in a few days a copy of the old letters which were published in book form as well as the typescript of some of the new ones. If it is considered worthwhile to issue an English edition of the old letters (which have already been published), I shall gladly agree to it. My publishers here have no objection to it.

The publication of the new letters is a much bigger task. To give you some idea of their length: there are about 2000 foolscap pages of manuscript. I enclose a list of these letters to enable you to form some idea of the subjects dealt with.

In case the letters are to be published in England would it be desirable to have a separate Indian edition published here? I am not quite sure how these things work out. Of course there are going to be editions here in some of the Indian languages—Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Bengali etc. But I am not quite clear if the English language edition should be printed and published in both England and India at the same time.

There is always a possibility of my going back to prison suddenly. In case this happens I think it would be best if you communicated with my sister, Mrs. Pandit, 6, Cawnpore Road, Allahabad. She will know what I want done

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

103. Rammohan Roy[1]

An age of transition is always a difficult period to pass through. Human nature is terribly conservative and sticks to the old ruts. But life is dynamic and ever-changing, and so it happens from time to time that life goes ahead leaving social forms and customs far behind. There is a tremendous lag which prevents society from progressing, but as life must go ahead the lag has to be made good speedily.

Rammohan Roy[2] came during such a period of transition in India. Indian political forces had broken down and society was stagnant. There was decay and degeneration everywhere and yet the people generally remained in the old grooves. It required the vision of a really great man to sense that the old order had had its day and to have glimpses of the future. And it required great strength of will to fight for this change and to oppose the entrenched armies of reaction. Rammohan Roy had that vision and strength and he has rightly earned for himself the title of 'father of modern India'. Wise and learned in the ways of the old world as well as of the new, he formed the ideal link between the two, and he started India on the path which she has followed with growing speed ever since.

This path has now brought India to another and a greater period of transition. Again, life pushes ahead while reaction holds back, fearful of change. As always, life will win but there will be many a hard struggle before the change is made. And in these days of struggle and change it is inevitable that our minds go back a hundred years and think of our great countryman who fought the battle of progress on a number of fronts almost single-handed, and draw inspiration from his example.

1. Message on the centenary of the death of Rammohan Roy, 23 November 1933. J.N. Correspondence, NMML.
2. (1772-1833); founded the Brahmo Samaj, 1828, prominent in the agitation for the abolition of sati, pioneer of Indian journalism

104. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Allahabad
24.11.33

My dear Mahmud,
Thank you so much for your gift of books. Some of them are specially welcome. There were two or three which I already possessed. As it happened, Tewari was going to Calcutta that day and I decided to send these three books back to the Book Company with him. I shall get other books instead. I hope you do not mind.

As for the razor it is very beautiful and all that but you seem to have overlooked the fact that it was British-made. For a long time past I have not purchased or used any British articles consciously, with the exception of books and very special medicines. Indeed I try not to use foreign articles as far as possible. As for razors I have just invested in a seven anna Indian made safety razor which I intend using. I am also using Indian blades. What then am I to do with your beautiful English razor? I think you had better take it back and give it to some of your friends who use such things. I have no use for a British razor.

The Jubbulpore meeting[2] is definitely fixed for December 4th. So please turn up there.

You need not feel put out about forgetting my birthday. If a person is worried such things are bound to happen. There are bigger things than birthdays.

Yes, we did not discuss personal matters You ought to know me sufficiently to realise that I never discuss them unless the other party takes the initiative I would not do so even with Kamala or Indu. Such has been my training.

Thank you for your translation of the letters. I have sent it on to Kitabistan.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

1 Syed Mahmud Papers, NMML.
2 The informal meeting of Congress leaders See *ante*, item 31.

105. To C.K. Narayanaswami[1]

Allahabad
December 2, 1933

My dear Narayanaswami,[2]
I have your letter.[3] It is really extraordinary how people talk tall and do nothing. I should have thought Bombay at least would provide an active and aggressive group of workers but so far there is no evidence of that

I am very sorry to learn about your eye trouble and your domestic difficulties I really do not know what I can advise you from here. There are so many of my colleagues who are in similar difficulties and there seems to be no way out. Indeed there can be no way out and the more our struggle assumes a revolutionary character the more these difficulties will increase When I see scores of thousands of peasants who have been deprived of everything they possessed and are utterly helpless I feel ashamed of my own condition and yet all of us are powerless till the system itself is changed. A time is coming when every person who takes an active part in the movement must not merely go to prison but take the definite risk of losing every single thing he possesses Of course, this will result, and is resulting, in thoroughly frightening the possessing class

The Servants of the People's Society is a small group. So far as I know it is in considerable financial difficulties and can meet its present liabilities with some difficulty. It stopped long ago asking for new recruits. I do not think you can expect any help from it

I am sending you two pamphlets containing some of my articles. I have no present intention of going to Bombay. If something extraordinary turns up I shall go there.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 JN Correspondence, NMML.
2 Journalist; director of publicity, Khadi and Village Industries Commission, Bombay, 1961
3 He complained that Congressmen had not actively organized the discontented tenants.

106. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
16.12.33

Darling,
I have just come back from Delhi and Aligarh. I am sending you Rs. 20/- for your petty expenses. Of course you will want more for your travelling expenses to Allahabad. I shall send this soon.

Do come for a few days during Christmas or else you may have to visit me in Naini! Even now it is doubtful if you will find me here.

Jamnalalji is here and he sends you his love.

Love,

Papu

1 Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML.

107. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit[1]

Allahabad
25.12.33

Nan darling,
I have had some scrappy news of you since you all left. But I have presumed that you are having a good and restful holiday and the children are enjoying themselves. I have just returned from Cawnpore Indu, as you know, is here for a few days. So is Raja.

Allahabad seems to be very quiet on this Christmas day and the sun is shining brightly and almost one could imagine that India and the world were at peace. Almost—but behind the thin veil is turmoil and conflict and suffering.

I write these few lines to you to wish you all the best of new years and joy and fulfilment of your purposes.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

1. JN Correspondence, NMML.

108. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
January 1, 1934

Indu sweetheart,
Today is New Year's Day and my thoughts travel to you and I want to send you all my love and good wishes. We did not see very much of each other during your brief stay here but it was a delight to have you even for a few days. I am afraid we shall not meet for three or four months and even when we meet then it will be perhaps for a twenty-minute interview! But I shall feel happy in the thought that you are growing up in mind and body and fitting yourself for the great work you will have to do in after-life.

There is some chance of mummie and I going to Calcutta about the middle of this month. If we go there we shall certainly pay a visit to Santiniketan.

We are expecting Psyche[2] and Perin here for a day or two on their way back from Lahore where they had gone to see Bul. Padmaja may also come here on her way back from Calcutta.

Please remember to send me volume 10 of the letters which you have got.

Mummie sends her love.

Love and kisses from

Your loving
Papu

1 Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML.
2 Goshiben Captain, grand-daughter of Dadabhai Naoroji

109. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Allahabad
4/1/34

My dear Mahmud,
You seem to have a way of worrying about the most trivial matters. I must say that your letters, containing references to my impending arrest,

1 Syed Mahmud Papers, NMML.

surprise me. You seem to forget what is happening in India and talk in terms of petty domestic troubles. I wish you would appreciate that I think somewhat differently.

Do come here when you can. I hope to be here for at least another week, and maybe ten days.

Kamala wants me to thank you for the ghee and the eatables you have sent.

Mother is getting on fairly well.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

110. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
12.1.34

Bien amee,
Your letter has just come. It does seem a pity that you should live so near the sea and yet not have a swim in it. I am writing to Mr. Vakil. Of course there are bad patches but it should be possible to choose a good place in Juhu. It is better to go some distance to a safe and good place than to choose a bad one. On Sundays plenty of our friends go to Juhn to have a dip and swim. I suppose you know some of them like Psyche etc. You could always go then. You could also go to Juhu on another day of the week and if necessary someone could go with you. I don't think there will be much difficulty about making the arrangements.

I sent you Marguerite Agnid's book with *chhoti puphi*. I hope she gave it to you I do so want you to develop your body for this is the foundation of health and beauty. You are too weak at present. Your back is not at all strong—and don't you want to have a stiff backbone?

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

I have felt that a little exercise makes all the difference in the world. The day seems brighter and we are more cheerful and lighter on our feet.

When you swim, run a little in the sand afterwards. This takes the chill off.

Mummie sends her love.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

111. To Indira Nehru[1]

Santiniketan
January 19, 1934

Darling Indu boy,

We had three and a half very strenuous days in Calcutta and now we are at Santiniketan. We arrived here this evening and were welcomed by the Poet and all the students and staff who had gathered together. The Poet read out some lines in welcome which were very beautiful.

We have been put up in the Poet's own house. We have got delightful little rooms with fascinating furniture—low chairs and tables and little artistic knick-knacks. Art is of course the strong point of this place and everything has the artistic touch.

The electric lights have all gone out and I am writing this by the light of a hurricane lantern It is nearly midnight and mummie is asleep Although I am tired I wanted to send you a few lines for I have not written to you for many days and I may not be able to write again soon. We shall be travelling for another three days before we reach Allahabad.

Tomorrow we shall go over Santiniketan and Sriniketan where the farm is. I shall have a talk with the Poet and later with the students and staff And at night we shall again take to the train and journey on Our next halt will be Patna. We are staying there for the day to see Rajendra Babu and confer with him about relief work for the earthquake areas. There has been terrible destruction and loss of life and large numbers of children are homeless

1 Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

We felt the earthquake distinctly in Allahabad on the 15th. I was standing at the time in the verandah speaking to a crowd of kisans. Suddenly I started wobbling and when I discovered that it was an earthquake I was interested and greatly amused. Nothing much happened in Allahabad but in Bihar it has not been a matter for amusement. Whole cities have been destroyed. Did you feel the earthquake?

We hope to be back in Allahabad on the 22nd.

I have given the Last Letter[2] of the series I wrote to you in prison to the *Modern Review* to be published in the next number. A Hindi translation will also appear in February in the *Saraswati*.

I must go to bed now for we have to get up early to have tea with the Poet.

All my love (and mummie's also, although she is asleep!)

Your loving
Papu

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, pp 493-499.

112. Address to the Prayag Mahila Vidyapitha[1]

Many years ago—so much has happened during recent years that I have almost lost the exact count of time and even a few years seem long ago —I had the honour of laying the foundation stone of the hall of the Mahila Vidyapitha.[2] Since then I have been engrossed in the dust and tumble of politics and direct action, and the struggle for India's freedom has filled my mind. I have lost touch with the Mahila Vidyapitha. During the last four months that I have been in the wider world outside the prison walls many a call has come to me and I have been invited to participate in a variety of public activities I have not listened to these calls and have kept away from these activities, for my ears were open to only one call and all my energy was directed to one end. That

1 *The Leader*, 24 January 1934 Reprinted in *Recent Essays and Writings*, (Allahabad, 1934), pp. 148 153 As Jawaharlal could not be present, the address was read out on his behalf on 20 January 1934

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol 3, p 361

call was the call of India, our unhappy and long oppressed motherland, and especially of our suffering and exploited masses, and that end was, the complete freedom of the Indian people.

I have refused therefore to be drawn away from the main issue to other and minor activities, important as some of these were in their own limited spheres. But when Shri Sangam Lal came to me and pressed me to address the convocation of the Mahila Vidyapitha, I found it difficult to resist his appeal. For behind that appeal I saw the girls and young women of India, on the threshold of life, trying to free themselves from an age-long bondage and peeping into the future with diffidence and yet, as youth will, with the eyes of hope.

I agreed, therefore, provisionally and diffidently for I was not sure if a more urgent call would not call me elsewhere. And now I find that urgent call has come from the sorely afflicted province of Bengal[3] and I must go there and I may not be back in time for the convocation of the Mahila Vidyapitha. I regret this and all I can do is to leave this message behind.

If our nation is to rise, how can it do so if half the nation, if our womankind, lag behind and remain ignorant and uneducated? How can our children grow up into self-reliant and efficient citizens of India if their mothers are not themselves self reliant and efficient? Our history tells us of many wise women and many that were true and brave even unto death. We treasure their examples and are inspired by them, and yet we know that the lot of women in India and elsewhere has been an unhappy one. Our civilization, our customs, our laws, have all been made by man and he has taken good care to keep himself in a superior position and to treat woman as a chattel and a plaything to be exploited for his own advantage and amusement. Under this continuous pressure woman has been unable to grow and to develop her capacities to her fullest, and then man has blamed her for her backwardness.

Gradually, in some of the countries of the West, woman has succeeded in getting a measure of freedom, but in India we are still backward, although the urge to progress has come here too We have to fight many social evils; we have to break many an inherited custom that enchains us and drags us down. Men and women, like plants and flowers, can only grow in the sunlight and fresh air of freedom; they wilt and stunt themselves in the dark shadow and suffocating atmosphere of alien domination.

3 Jawaharlal had been invited to address a public meeting at Calcutta to protest against the repression in Chittagong and Midnapur For a report of this speech see *ante*, item 39.

For all of us, therefore, the first problem that presents itself is how to free India and remove the many burdens of the Indian masses. But the women of India have an additional task and that is to free themselves from the tyranny of man made customs and laws. They will have to carry on this second struggle by themselves for man is not likely to help them.

Many of the girls and young women present at the convocation will have finished their courses, taken their degrees, and prepared themselves for activities in a larger sphere. What ideals will they carry with them to this wider world, what inner urge will fashion them and govern their actions? Many of them, I am afraid, will relapse into the humdrum day to-day activities of the household and seldom think of ideals or other obligations; many will think only of earning a livelihood. Both these are no doubt necessary, but if this is all that the Mahila Vidyapitha has taught its students, it has failed in its purpose. For a university that wishes to justify itself must train and send out into the world knight errants in the cause of truth and freedom and justice, who will battle fearlessly against oppression and evil. I hope there are some such amongst you, some who prefer to climb the mountains, facing risk and danger, to remaining in the misty and unhealthy valleys below.

But our universities do not encourage the climbing of mountains; they prefer the safety of the lowlands and valleys. They do not encourage initiative and freedom; like true children of our foreign rulers, they prefer the rule of authority and a discipline imposed from above. Is it any wonder that their products are disappointing and ineffective and stunted, and misfits in this changing world of ours?

There have been many critics of our universities and most of their criticisms are justified. Indeed hardly anyone has a good word for the Indian universities. But even the critics have looked upon the university as an upper class organ of education. It does not touch the masses. Education to be real and national must have roots in the soil and reach down to the masses. That is not possible today because of our alien government and our old-world social system. But some of you who go out of the Vidyapitha and help in the education of others must bear this in mind and work for a change.

It is sometimes said, and I believe the Vidyapitha itself lays stress on this, that woman's education should be something apart from that of man's. It should train her for household duties and for the widely practised profession of marriage. I am afraid I am unable to agree to this limited and one-sided view of women's education. I am convinced that women should be given the best of education in every department

of human activity and be trained to play an effective part in all professions and spheres. In particular, the habit of looking upon marriage as a profession almost and as the sole economic refuge for woman will have to go before woman can have any freedom. Freedom depends on economic conditions even more than political and if woman is not economically free and self-earning she will have to depend on her husband or someone else, and dependents are never free. The association of man and woman should be of perfect freedom and perfect comradeship with no dependence of one on the other.

What will you do, graduates and others of the Vidyapitha, when you go out? Will you just drift and accept things as they are, however bad they may be? Will you be content with pious and ineffective expressions of sympathy for what is good and desirable and do nothing more? Or will you justify your education and prove your mettle by hurling defiance at the evils that encompass you? The *purdah*, that evil relic of a barbarous age, which imprisons the body and mind of so many of our sisters—will you not tear it to bits and burn the fragments? Untouchability and caste, which degrade humanity and help in the exploitation of one class by another—will you not fight them and end them and thus help in bringing a measure of equality in this country? Our marriage laws and many of our out-of-date customs which hold us back and especially crush our womenfolk—will you not combat them and bring them in line with modern conditions? Will you not also fight with energy and determination for the physical improvement of our women by games in the open air and athletics and sane living so that India may be full of strong and healthy and beautiful women and happy children? And, above all, will you not play a gallant part in the struggle for national and social freedom that is convulsing our country today?

I have put these many questions to you, but the answers to them have already come from thousands of brave girls and women who have played a leading part in our freedom struggle during the last four years. Who has not been thrilled at the sight of our sisters, unused as they were to public activity, leaving the shelter of their homes and standing shoulder to shoulder with their brothers in the fight for India's freedom? They shamed many a person who called himself a man, and they proclaimed to the world that the women of India have arisen from their long slumber and would not be denied their rights

The women of India have answered, and so I greet you, girls and young women of the Mahila Vidyapitha, and I charge you to keep that torch of freedom burning brightly till it spreads its lustre all over this ancient and dearly loved land of ours.

113. To Krishna Hutheesing[1]

Allahabad
21.1.34

Betty darling,

Nan has given me some news of you which is not very satisfying. You are not well, I understand, and not very cheerful. I hope you have got over your indisposition. It is not worthwhile to be unwell in mind or body.

If reports and portents are to be believed I am likely to leave the shelter of Anand Bhawan soon for another place. It does not matter overmuch to me for I have learnt to be moderately happy under almost any circumstances. But before I go, I want to send you these few lines conveying, if ink and paper can convey such precious but insubstantial material, all my love and good wishes for your happiness. You will often be in my thoughts and to know that you are bravely facing the little and big difficulties that life has a way of placing before each one of us, will make me happy. We worry about little matters that do not count. Why worry then? Better to hitch our wagon to a star and live in the cooling light of its rays.

Give my love to Raja and keep a lot of it for yourself.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

1 JN Correspondence, NMML.

114. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
25.1.34

Darling,
It is the eve of our Independence Day and I am sitting down to write to you wondering when I shall write to you again from Anand Bhawan and from this library table where I have sat, surrounded by my books, for so many long hours, month after month. I love the company of books, even when I have no time to read them. They stand there, row after row, with the wisdom of ages locked up in them, serene and untroubled in a changing and distracted world, looking down silently on the mortals that come and go. I shall miss them for a while if I go away and I shall remember them. But it really does not matter either way for I try to fit in with my surroundings wherever I may find myself.

I rather liked Santiniketan and so did mummie. I think it will be a good thing if you spent a year or so there. You may not have comforts there but that is a little matter and one should get hardened a little. It is a remarkably peaceful place. There is a German there who is a Buddhist monk. He teaches both French and German. I do not know how good he is at his work but he had an attractive face, as Buddhist monks often have. The art section is of course very good. If you go there I think it would be a good thing if you took up painting. Nand Lal Bose,[2] the man in charge of the art section, is one of the leading Indian painters of today, and he is a good teacher. But all this is rather premature. We can discuss it later when the time comes.

One idea, however, appeals to me. I want you to get to know the various peoples of India and if you go to Santiniketan you will pick up Bengali and get to know the Bengalis a little better. You know some Gujarati now and perhaps a little Marathi.

And now, I must say *au revoir* and end this letter with my love, which indeed you always have.

Your loving
Papu

1 Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2 (1883-1966), distinguished painter of the Bengal School, taught for many years at Visvabharati, Padma Vibhushan, 1955.

115. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
29.1.34

Indu dear,

I have survived Independence Day although I did my best not to do so! What is to be done?

Your letter came today. No, I am not at all superstitious about the 13th. *I think it is as good or bad as any other day. You must be,* of course, a little excited about your preliminary examination. But examinations are not worth getting excited over. They seem rather terrible at a distance but if one takes them coolly there is nothing exciting in them.

I have received volume 10 of the letters. Thanks.

We are all busy collecting money for Bihar relief. Anand Bhawan is full of blankets and clothes which people are sending.

Dolamma is getting on well. Mummie is terribly busy going from house to house and shop to shop collecting money.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

1 Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

116. Five Months and Thirteen Days—166 days[1]

August 30th 1933 to February 12th 1934

Allahabad	
Lucknow	*31/8 to 2/9*
Allahabad	

1. Itinerary for the period Jawaharlal was out of prison Jail Note Book No 20, pp 13 14 N.M.M.L.

SEVENTH CONVICTION[1]

February 12th 1934

5.30 p.m.—Anand Bhawan—just finished a rather late tea. Kamala—Tandon—and one or two others standing in the east verandah.

A police car comes—the new City Supt. appears and I know that the time has come. He produces a warrant of arrest from Calcutta. बहुत दिनों से आप का इन्तजार था,[2] I said but he excused himself saying that the warrant was from Calcutta—It was not his handiwork. As if in any event it could be his handiwork!

Kamala stood it well to begin with—Tandon couldn't grasp the situation for a while. Then I went to mother but Bibi had forestalled me and mother was breaking down. I consoled her and she pulled herself up a little—brave little woman Then packing. Suddenly Kamala broke down. Others started arriving—Uma Bhabi, Vidya, Shammi, Shama Bhai (his first outing since his attack of paralysis), Nan, Ranjit and the children. Ladli Bhai, Janak, Muzaffar & Kashi Prasad were there when the warrant of arrest came. Kishan Dar & Mohan Bhai, Mohan Bhabi &c.

I drafted telegrams to Indu, Bapu & Rajendra Babu. Indu's exam begins today so the news of my arrest must have reached her just before the exam.

We started about 6.30 p m We thought we were going to Naini *prison but on the way we were told that we were going to Naini* station to catch the mail to Calcutta. Kamala, Ranjit & Mohan Bhai accompanied me—also Tandon—to the station. And there we said good bye and off I went in a 2nd class compartment.

At Mirzapur station I was surprised—and so was he—to find Santanam. He was also travelling in the same train to Calcutta. He gave me some welcome books

The inspector accompanying me was a tenant of Kalakankar. Wanted me to give him a chit for Kalakankar putting in a good word for him for something or other!

1. In this section and section 5 extracts from the diaries kept by Jawaharlal in jail from 12 February 1934 till his release on 3 September 1935, (with a break on parole for 12 days) have been printed. Letters written by him during this period have been interspersed The diaries are available in N.M.M.L.
2. I had been long expecting you.

Lucknow	5/9 to 8/9
Poona	9/9 to 14/9
Bombay	15/9—17/9
Lucknow	19/9—Oct.
Allahabad	October
Banaras	
Allahabad	
Cawnpore	
Allahabad	
Jubbulpore	
Allahabad	
Delhi	
Aligarh	
Allahabad	
Calcutta	16/1/34—19/1
Santiniketan	20/1
Patna	21/1
Muzaffarpur	22/1
Allahabad	
Patna	3/2
Muzaffarpur—Motihari	4/2
Sitamarhi	5/2
Samastipur—Darbhanga—Madhubani	6/2—7/2
Monghyr	8/2—9/2
Patna	10/2
Allahabad	11/2

3

PRISON DIARY WITH LETTERS

12 February 1934–12 August 1934

And so Calcutta on Tuesday morning Feb. 13th. I was taken to the Lalbazar jail or lock-up. I sat there for two hours and then I was taken to the Chief Magistrate's court—Sinha,[3] the Hon'ble. He told me what the charge was—showed me the report of my speeches which I had delivered in Calcutta last month. Charge under sec. 124A, sedition. He said that he was seeing me in his chambers in consideration for my feelings! He fixed Feb. 15th Thursday for the trial and wanted me to decide if it was going to be in camera or in public—Of course I told him I wanted nothing in camera.

And then I was brought to the Presidency jail in Alipur. Kept waiting at the gate. My goods & chattels examined. Money, watch, fountain pen, safety razor, knife, scissors &c. &c. taken away. Cigarettes allowed. All books & writing materials kept in office.

Shown to my cell. A small yard. Had nothing whatever to do as I had no books or writing materials. Nothing to read. No watch to give some idea of the passing of time. Fell asleep and slept rather heavily for a long time till the jailer turned up and said he would send me some reading & writing materials.

These came later in the evening—also my watch. At 6 30 I was locked in my cell and now at 7 I am writing this.

On my way from the Magistrate's court to the Presidency jail I was accompanied in the police lorry by four or five constables inside the lorry —The sergeants were outside. The constables were U.P. or Bihar men— They seemed to be much affected and looked sad. One or two of them asked me a few simple questions. Told me that I was being taken to the Presidency jail because they dared not keep me in Lalbazar which was full of policemen from the north, and they were afraid of my contaminating them. Suddenly one of the constables broke down and started blubbering!

This is a big prison. Pop. over 2000. The Supt. is a Punjabi—some Singh.[4]

And so begins my seventh term.

Gandhi caps not allowed inside jail. These as well as my khaki shorts & shirts kept in office....

3. Sushil Kumar Sinha, I.C.S. (1895-1937), appointed chief presidency magistrate, Calcutta, 30 September 1933.
4. Major M.A. Singh, officiating inspector general of prisons, 1931-37.

13.2.1934[5]

Betty darling,
So the long expected has happened and I am back again in prison. Very soon I shall fit myself into the new surroundings and carry on more or less contentedly. I am fortunate in having discovered, to some extent at least, the art of adapting myself to new environments.

My trial takes place day after tomorrow and you will probably know the result of it before you get this letter. But such results are not awaited with any excitement. One gets used to them—and this is my seventh experience of them. I am becoming quite an expert at this kind of thing!

I had a letter from you about two weeks ago and then I went off to Bihar and spent a very strenuous nine days there. I returned fagged out day before yesterday to Allahabad. I have had no more recent news from you except that Fory[6] was going to stay with you.

I was glad to learn that Raja and you intend shifting to a separate flat. I think it is always better for small families and individuals to live separately as far as possible. Large family groupings do not fit in with present-day conditions.

How did you like Fory? I am sorry I have missed seeing her. I wrote to her to Budapest long ago. As no reply came I wonder if my letter reached her.

Give my love to Raja and keep a lot of it for yourself. And do not permit yourself to develop the blues!

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

Feb. 13th, 1934[7]

Nan dear,
I have survived the journey and I have established myself in one of the safest places in Calcutta—the Presidency jail. I am a newcomer yet to this abode of safety but I shall settle down soon enough here or elsewhere. Day after tomorrow—the 15th—my trial takes place before the Chief Presidency Magistrate—the Hon. Sinha. I was produced before him today in chambers and he told me what the charge was and showed me the reports of my speeches. He left it to me to choose

5. *Nehru's Letters to His Sister*, (London, 1963), pp. 39-40.
6. Mrs B.K. Nehru.
7. Vijayalakshmi Pandit Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

if I would like a trial in camera or in public. Naturally I preferred the latter.

As I can write a few letters as an under trial, I have written today to Horace Alexander about the letters and to Anil Kumar Chanda[8] about Ghani.[9] I think you had better write to both also. Ranjit should also write (as I have told him) to Dr. Khan Sahib about Ghani. I want Ghani's father to feel that Ghani is being well looked after and not to worry. In the event of some difficulty arising about Ghani's entry into Santiniketan, I do not quite know what should be done. Anyway, he should stay on in Anand Bhawan. Perhaps some temporary arrangements could be made for him to continue his German and some other subject in Allahabad. This will give him something to do.

Look after mother and see to it that she keeps cheerful and does not worry. She must continue her treatment. Her little wound will probably take another month or two to heal up but she can gradually walk about a little in the verandah. An occasional drive might also be given. With the coming of summer we shall have to decide where to keep her. But that is still far off....

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

Feb. 13, 1934[10]

Indu *bien aimee,*

So I am back again to my other 'home', as I wired to you. It was time I came for I was very tired with the various activities I indulged in and badly wanted a respite. My nine days in Bihar, touring the earthquake areas, were a tremendous strain and I reached Allahabad day before yesterday dead tired. I shall have plenty of rest now—perhaps too much of it!

I thought of you a great deal today. Today was the day of your examination and just before it began, the news of my arrest must have reached you I hope this did not worry you in the least. It should have acted as a fillip!

My trial has been fixed for day after tomorrow, the 15th. I do not know what will happen afterwards and whether I shall be kept in this

8. (b. 1906); secretary to Rabindranath Tagore; Deputy Minister, Government of India, 1952 62.
9 Abdul Ghani (b 1913), son of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, founder of the Zalme Pakhtun Party, N.W.F.P., in 1947.
10. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

gaol or elsewhere. When you write to me, send your letter to mummie and she will forward it on.

You will be busy during the next two months or so with your examinations. I am sure you will do well in them. Take them easily without worrying at all. And then I hope to see you, wherever I may be at the time.

I have missed seeing Fory—just missed her. You met her. How did you like her?

All my love, *cara mia,*

Your loving
Papu

February 14th Wednesday

Had a fair night though I woke up repeatedly because of the visits of night watchmen and jail night inspectors. I was locked in at 6.30 p.m., unlocked this morning at 5.50 a.m. I expected the Supt. but he did not come. Most of the time I read Feuchtwanger's *The Oppermanns.*

Some Khanna of K.C. Khanna & Co., 162 Harrison Road sends me food. (It was Kapur.)

The text of my three speeches in Calcutta on 17th & 18th January has been sent to me.[11] This is the seditious matter I am going to be tried for.

And so the day has passed, and I have been locked in again.

I have written a statement for the court. But I doubt if I shall read it or give it to the Magistrate.

Lessing:[12]

> Go thy viewless ways, eternal Providence. But let me not despair of thee because thou art viewless. Let me not despair of thee even when thy steps seem to turn back. It is not true that the shortest line is always the most straight. Thou must have much to take with thee on thine eternal journey, and often turn aside.

11. See *ante*, section 2, items 39 and 40. The third speech is not printed as Jawaharlal thought the reporting was very inaccurate.
12. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729 1781); German philosopher, dramatist and critic.

Feb. 15, Thursday

The trial came off today—Before I left the jail, I was searched. The jailer did it and he was as courteous about it as possible but anyway I was searched.

A little crowd in the street opposite the gate of the Pres. Magte's court. As my lorry turned in there was a faint attempt at a cheer. Quickly suppressed by a number of policemen who dispersed the lot.

Then waiting in the corridor. I am asked on behalf of the P. Magte. if I want to stand in the dock or have a chair. Curious questions the fellow puts! I get a chair. Have to go under a thickly wired passage and sit far from the Magte. Crowded room, chiefly black-coated lawyers and policemen. Not a single familiar face. Perhaps there may have been some in the background whom I could not see. Later Jogesh C. Gupta[13] came and sat not far from me across the barrier. No words were exchanged.

How different to the free and easy atmosphere, the presence of friends and relatives, at all my previous trials. Not a pleasant feeling to be isolated in this way with two European sergeants standing behind me.

I ought to be used enough to trials. I think I am and seldom worry as to what is going to take place. And yet, as I sat waiting in the court balcony before the trial began, my pulse must have quickened a little and inwardly I was not quite so composed as I might have been or as I probably appeared. And it struck me then that if even I reacted abnormally to this situation, how much more must young & inexperienced people do.

In the dock the same feeling continued—Soon, however, as I listened to the monotonous evidence of the reporters I attained normality. Later when I got up to make my statement I felt perfectly cool and collected. I did not read the statement but made it orally. I was stopped when I was about half way through by the Magte and so there it ended. But even the few sentences I said sobered the quibbling crew of lawyers who were present as well as the policemen. Judgment tomorrow.

Back again in the lorry—which is a far more formidable affair than the U.P. lorries. Small groups in the streets try to cheer. I recognise some Punjabi girls....

What is my sentence going to be? Two years? Four years? Or more? Not less than two—probably three or four.

13 A Congressman from Bengal; follower of J.M. Sen Gupta.

DRAFT STATEMENT FOR TRIAL[14]

I do not desire to offer any defence or to take any other formal part in this trial. But, if I am permitted, I should like to say a few words regarding the reports of the three speeches of mine, which have been made the basis of this action, and the matter contained in them. I am grateful to the court for letting me have copies of the reports of these speeches. I have read them. In so far as the reports of the two speeches delivered in the Albert Hall on the 17th and 18th January are concerned, I should like to congratulate the shorthand reporters on producing a good report. There are minor errors in these reports, some words have been omitted and some wrongly transcribed, but this was perhaps inevitable in speeches rapidly delivered extempore. On the whole, however, these two reports are substantially correct and represent what I said. These two speeches were in English. The third one, delivered at Maheshwari Bhawan on January 18th, was in Hindi, and I cannot congratulate the reporters and translator of this speech on their production. The report is scrappy and full of omissions and serious errors. Read in translation, it makes little sense and conveys a very wrong impression of what I said. Whatever I may say in my speeches, whether it is sedition or not, has, I hope, some sense, some consecutiveness, some logic about it. The report of the Hindi speech, however, does me no justice at all and misrepresents me greatly. I do not propose to point out its many errors and omissions for that would mean re-writing the whole speech. That is perhaps unnecessary as the court has already two other speeches of mine, which, as I have said above, have been reported more or less correctly, to go upon. If, however, the court wishes to understand any phrase or sentence of the Maheshwari Bhawan speech, I am prepared to correct it.

This statement of mine will perhaps lighten the burden of decision resting on the court. That burden will further be lightened by my assuring the court that my activities in the past have been seditious, if by sedition is meant an attempt to achieve the independence of India and to end completely all traces of foreign domination in this country. For many years I have laboured for this and given all my strength and energy to it, and, as the years have gone by, my conviction has gained strength that only by the elimination of all British control and the establishment of independence, can the Indian people free themselves from the terrible exploitation that has sucked them

14. 15 February 1934, J N. Papers, NMML.

dry and made this rich country a land of poverty-stricken and miserable men and women. For that ideal I hope to struggle on, in common with vast numbers of my countrymen, till success comes to us. And if that is sedition, then sedition will be, as it has been, the very life-blood which animates us and moves us to fresh endeavour. There can be no compromise, however long the struggle may last, between those who want freedom for the Indian masses and those who want to hold them down and exploit them.

I must express my gratitude to the Bengal Government for this proceeding for thereby they have associated me, in a small measure, with the past and present sufferings of the people of Bengal. That is a privilege I shall treasure. My two speeches in the Albert Hall dealt with the present situation in certain parts of Bengal and the words I uttered there gave some indication of the fire in my heart. Individuals sometimes misbehave in this imperfect world of ours; so also officials and those in power. Crowds and mobs of people also lose control of themselves sometimes and misbehave. That is regrettable. But it is a terrible thing when an organized government begins to behave like an excited mob, when brutal and vengeful and uncivilized behaviour becomes the normal temper of a government. That is what we are seeing in Bengal and in India today, and pricked by a guilty conscience, the government tries to suppress all criticism, all freedom of thought and speech and press and public assembly. Deliberately and with utmost callousness, it seeks to perpetrate the greatest sin against any people, to injure human dignity, to crush the dignity of the Indian people. That is the vital problem we have to face today in India and, for the moment, even larger issues take second place before it. Whatever happens, whatever fate may befall us, we cannot and will not submit to this national degradation and humiliation of a great people. I welcome, therefore, this opportunity that has come my way, in common with many thousands of my countrymen and countrywomen, to resist and refuse submission to this brutal spirit of official terrorism. And I trust that though my voice may be silenced for a long while, as so many voices have been silenced, we shall remain unyielding and uncompromising emblems of the spirit of the Indian people, which will not be coerced by the mightiest of governments, and which will fight its way to full freedom.

STATEMENT TO THE COURT[15]

I do not wish to take any part in these proceedings. I have no plea to make and I do not wish to enter into any defence, but I would like to say something in respect of those three speeches, about the reporting and the contents. With regard to the two speeches in English I congratulate the reporters on their excellent reports; they are substantially correct and do represent what I said. The third speech is not so well reported; it is a travesty of what I said.

For many years my activities have certainly been seditious if by sedition is meant the desire to achieve the independence of India and to put an end to foreign domination. I have laboured to that end with all my strength and energy for many long years; my conviction has grown stronger within me as the years go by that there can be no freedom for the Indian people or its politicians so long as there is a trace of British rule here. Therefore, I have attempted in a small degree to put an end to the British rule in this country; if that is seditious, I have been seditious for many years.

I should like to express my gratitude to the Bengal Government for the opportunity accorded me by taking these proceedings against me in associating me in a small measure with the past and present sufferings of the people of Bengal. That is a privilege which I shall always treasure. In the course of the speeches I delivered at the Albert Hall I was largely concerned with events in Bengal, Midnapur, Chittagong and elsewhere; I gave some indication of the fire in my heart. Individuals sometimes misbehave; officials also sometimes misbehave; crowds and mobs get excited and misbehave; all that is very regrettable; but it is a much more terrible thing when an organised government begins to behave like a wild mob. It is a terrible thing when brutality becomes a method of behaviour....

February 16—Friday

Two years' simple imprisonment—Division I. So that settles it for a while and I feel lighter now that all is over.

I was taken early to court. Search before going—search on return. My lorry passed Narajole House, 3 Minto Park—It is almost next door to the jail. Just a month ago I was staying there.

Upadhyaya was standing in the balcony of the court house Looking rather miserable. I sat down and waited. Then came the Pres. Magte.

15. 15 February 1934. J N. Papers, N.M.M L

On my way to court today we passed machine guns, armoured cars, lorries full of soldiers, & troops on the march. I do not know what they were all up to. How ugly an armoured car is! It reminds one of the prehistoric monsters. The tank is worse.

I have written another letter to Kamala & sent it on to the Supt. I do not know if it will be sent. Tonight is my last night in this jail. Tomorrow I change prison and go to Alipore Central Prison, which is almost next door. It is a newer affair. The Presidency jail is said to be the oldest jail in Bengal.

I have been getting *The Statesman* for the last 2 days. The tremendous civil war in Vienna[16] has been a shock. War, revolution, death, destruction all round! Every country on the verge. What will happen to the world? What to India? What a brave fight they put up in Vienna against the massed forces & artillery of Govt. And we talk loudly of our sacrifices here!

Much is going to happen during the 2 years of my sentence and I shall merely be a distant onlooker of great deeds—Will I merely be an onlooker all this time? I doubt it....

23.2.34

My books and papers were kept in the Alipore jail office when I came here. For several days they were not given to me and so I could not write my impressions I have now been given books (five is the maximum allowed including dictionaries etc.) and one notebook. Also as a special favour, I suppose, this diary.

On the 17th Feb. I was brought from Presidency jail to Alipore Central Jail in a taxi with one sergeant or European warder accompanying me. It was pleasant to come in a taxi, normally, and not in the prisoners' lorry. Upadhyaya was at the gate.

I had been told by many persons that Alipore would be a much better place. Companions etc. I was not however exactly enchanted by my new cell and yard. The cell is about 10 x 11 ft. as in the Presidency. The yard is a much smaller affair. It is an irregular shape—the longest diagonal being about 25 steps. It is all *pucca* and looks clean—but so bare and barren and cheerless. No flowers or greenery as I had at the Presidency. There are four cells with a verandah in front. Single storey. The wall round the yard is low—about

16 In February 1934, Chancellor Dollfuss of Austria attacked the residential areas of the socialists, crushed them after five days of civil war and promulgated a virtually fascist constitution

7 ft. and, looking over it, a strange sight confronts one. All manner of odd buildings—single storey, double storey, round, rectangular, curious roofings—rise all round, some overtopping the others. It seems that these structures had been fitted in anyhow to take advantage of all the available space—They had grown. Almost it looked like a jig-saw puzzle, or a futurist attempt at the fantastic. And yet I was told that all this was built very methodically with a central tower (which is a church!) in the centre and radiating lines. The area covered by the jail is not much but its population is nearly 2000 and so it is very crowded.

An oppressive and terrifying sight greeted me—adjoining my yard, both in front and to the right, two chimneys belched out black smoke and sometimes the wind carried this right into my cell. These were the chimneys of two kitchens—the 2nd Div. kitchen and the European kitchen.

I was the only resident of the yard. So it was solitary confinement. A boy convict was sent to serve me. We do not understand each other easily but we get on. He is a most innocent-looking youth—Has got 6 months for some riot. Can't conceive of him rioting!

I felt rather lonely especially as the evening drew near. The sight of the new moon, 3 or 4 days old, cheered me like that of an old friend. Then appeared the Dog Star and some others gradually became visible. But time for lock-up had come—6-30 p m and I entered my shell. One disadvantage of these early lock ups—I can hardly see the stars. As they come out I go in.

The night was disturbed with the frequent tramping of the night guards and at 3 a.m. there was a great din—The kitchens had begun functioning! This is a daily or nightly occurrence.

At 6-30 we get locked up and the lights go out at 10 p.m. The long evenings are not frightfully exciting. I think of people in great cities complaining of boredom in the evenings and trying frantically to find amusement. How would they fare here?

The Supt. has sent a 2nd Div. convict—Suren Ghosh (not a political—he was a chief railway booking clerk—and was sentenced for embezzlement) to keep me company in this yard. He is in charge of the 2nd Div. kitchens. Not much real company but even he is welcome.

I was surprised to find that daily newspapers are not allowed to Div. I people—only the weekly *Statesman*. Fortunately the Supt. lets me have my foreign periodicals.

Newspapers and slips of paper are considered most dangerous commodities here. Daily searches are supposed to take place—I suppose because of fear of the 'terrorists having arms'....

Sarkar salaam flourishes here, and I suppose in all Bengal jails. I have not seen the way it is done but voices reach me daily over the wall—*sarkar*.....*salaam*...

The C Class (3rd Div.) food seems to be quite good. Rice or *chapathies*, dal and vegetables. On alternate days some fish. Also sometimes meat. In the morning लपसी,[17] a mixture of dal and rice or gram and *gur*—aluminium *thalis* and *katoras* provided as to Div. II etc.

I have been doing Muller's exercise morning and evening. Am anxiously looking forward to reducing my tummy.

Supt. told me of hunger strike of Div. III politicals (so-called terrorists). This began on 14th Feb. Nalinidas (co-accused of Dinesh Mazumdar) leader.[18] Many others joined. Now 19, including one T.B. patient. Also some troubles with Div II politicals over wearing of jail cap, which is a new innovation.

27.2.34

I have been getting rather stale and bored. It takes a little time to settle down and adapt oneself to jail—and especially to a new gaol in a different province. I do not sleep enough at night—too much noise and disturbance. So I sleep a little in the day time and usually have a nightmare, or a daymare!, and am far from refreshed. Perhaps it is the climate, perhaps a certain blankness about the future. Partly it is the hunger strike that is going on and spreading.

The new ways and restrictions here irritate me. And yet people are decent enough.

I have been expecting a letter from Kamala but it has not come.

This evening I felt more cheerful. The *Living Age*, foreign paper, came. I had a busy talk with the Supt. about nothing in particular. My fellow convict here tells me that the papers say that I am likely to be sent away for another case to the U.P.—hardly likely—but the idea of going to a U.P. prison agreeable. Without fully realising it, I have been wanting this to happen. There will be some trees and green patches to be seen there—not merely the brick and cement of this jail. How little things change one's mood in prison! A fortnight since my arrest.

17. *Lapsi*.
18. Implicated in the Dalhousie Bomb Case in 1930, in March 1933 they were arrested in connection with the murder of the police commissioner of Chandernagore. Nalinidas was transported to Andamans on a life sentence; Dinesh Mazumdar was executed on 9 June 1934.

I am tired with so much writing of closely written sheets. The I.G. is said to have come today to see the hunger-strikers. An unusual and slightly exciting day because of the meeting.

1.3.34[19]

Betty darling,
I have changed my abode and shifted from the Presidency jail to its cousin and neighbour of Alipore. And presumably I remain here for a lengthy period. *J'y suis, J'y reste.*[20] There is apparently no question of my being sent elsewhere.

Of course you can come and have an interview with me whenever you feel like—subject to the jail rules of course. Interviews are fortnightly as in the U.P. and so are letters When you intend coming this way, fix it up with Kamala. Probably she will be coming here soon for her treatment and is likely to remain in Calcutta for a month or two. Any letters for me should also be sent to her, and not to me direct.

I shall read a lot here for indeed there is little else to do—just to read and think and go through the day's routine. And so when I come out—and that is a long way off—I may be a little wiser than I am. Perhaps and perhaps not. Wisdom is a very elusive thing and difficult to seize. And yet sometimes it comes suddenly and unawares. Meanwhile, I shall be a faithful votary and seek her goodwill. Some day she may show me favour. Anyway, jail is not an unsuitable place to woo her. The hurly burly of life seems far off and does not distract and it is good to see life of everyday from a little distance, detached.

In your new experience of married life you will also view life from another angle and gain wisdom thereby. But wisdom comes often at the cost of so much, so many years that slip by and do not return. Those who have had the advantage of prison experience know at least the value of patience, and if they have profited by their experience, they have learnt adaptability, and that is a great thing.

I suppose Fory is now going the round of the numerous relatives of the clan Nehru. In spite of all goodwill, this will be some task, and I hope she survives it. I wonder when I shall see her. Perhaps not till she too has formally joined the clan. It seems to me that Birju Bhai and Birju Bhabi are trying to envelop and enwrap her too much, in

19. *Nehru's Letters to His Sister*, (London, 1963), pp 41-42.
20. Here I am, here I stay.

their desire to make her one of themselves. There can be too much of this kind of thing. Overmuch aggressive kindness and affection begins to cloy and a touch of casualness is useful. But of course, that depends on the person concerned and I do not know Fory. Personally, I am a believer in restraint in such matters.

My love to Raja and yourself and keep cheerful. When I come out and visit Bombay you will have to put me up in your new home. So be prepared for it. I am giving you fair notice!

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

March 1, 1934[21]

Indu *bein aimee,*
So you have had your first examination and must be feeling tremendously relieved. But then the other one hovers in the distance and perhaps worries you a little. These first examinations are troublesome little things, simply because one is not used to them. There is really nothing much in them but it is quite natural for one to feel a little nervous about them. I hope that after your first experience this nervous feeling has worn away to some extent and you do not worry. Take it quietly and you are bound to do well.

The line of work I have chosen for myself in life is such that I can never settle down safely into a rut. Always I have to face novel situations and I have frequently the sensation of appearing repeatedly at the examinations that life has a way of thrusting on us. They come suddenly and there is no course laid down which one can prepare! And life has become for me a long succession of tests. Sometimes I succeed and sometimes I am not so successful. But the curious thing is that the final and real judge of this success or failure is oneself. Others, of course, pass their opinions on it, and often they praise when there is little to praise, and often they condemn or are indifferent when a real victory has been won. But in one's heart one knows, or ought to know, the real measure of success or failure. What occurs on the surface is not so important, and those who have to face life's tests develop restraint in expression, for they do not wish to give themselves away. Indeed all our education and training teach us some form or other of restraint. We can have little regard for those weaklings who get buffeted about hither and thither and have no control over themselves.

21 Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

What a bad habit I have got into! I have allowed myself to muse and philosophize. That shows that at any rate I have not got much self-restraint! But the subject of examinations set me thinking and all life seemed to me an examination—a stiff one which few succeed in.

So now you must be preparing for your next effort six weeks hence. And then you will come to see me, I hope, about the end of April, and have a good holiday (not with me!) which you will have earned. It is delightful to have rest after hard work. Where you will go for your holiday I do not know. Perhaps mummie will have finished her treatment here by then. I have asked her to come here for it immediately and she may remain here for a month or two. You can then go off with mummie to some odd corner. And afterwards? We shall talk of that when we meet.

I was interested to learn of Goshiben's dream. Give her my love and tell her to dream of better and more useful things than my arrest.

Do not write to me direct Send your letters to mummie and she will enclose them with hers. If you write soon on getting this, you will be in time for the next lot.

Give my love to the Vakils. Today is *Holi!*

Love and kisses from

Your loving
Papu

8th March 1934

(Shri & Chander Handoo at 5 p.m.—an extra interview unasked)

Interviews with Lado Bhabi, Chander, Rup & Chand—half an hour —Good to see them And yet I was slightly depressed afterwards. For last two days I have been worried about Kamala's health and often my mind has travelled to her. No satisfactory news yet. Why does she not come here?

9th March 1934

I have felt flat & stale today. Not an unusual feeling in prison! It is raining and that is a change.

The detailed account of the Austrian bloodshed has depressed me. What an awful and bloody place this world is and how barbarous is man when he wants to protect his vested interests.

Locks & bars and walls. Locks & locks and locks. There are four solid locks between me (and every other prisoner) and the fresh air outside the prison. How I shall hate all locks in future.

13th March 1934

I have no trees in my yard—no greenery of any kind except some pots the Supt. has sent me. But there are some trees in other yards and I can see their tops, especially one which adjoins my yard. All these trees were bare and barren of leaf or flower when I came. A week ago I was startled to find little bits of green peeping out all over them. Leaves were coming out of the buds. It was a gay and cheering sight with a touch of mystery in it. And now the leaves are grown up and their pleasant green is delightful to the eye. How sudden is the change from bud to leaf and how wonderful!

15th March 1934

Weight—135 lbs. Drop of 3 lbs. since 2/3 and 5½ since 17/2.

I have been rather conceited about my eye sight. But today doubts began to assail me. My eyes got tired repeatedly after a bit of reading and I developed a slight headache. Does this mean spectacles? Awful prospect!

No letter from Kamala yet.

16th March

(Day for sending letter to office).

Today was or is *nauroz*. I forgot about it although I had received the new *kurta* and *dhoti* yesterday. I remembered suddenly in the afternoon. So the *nauroz* went by without my putting on new clothes for the first time for many years.

One innovation today—a good beginning for the new year. This evening I was told that the Supt. has said that I can go out of my yard every morning & evening for a little walk outside. So I went out this evening There is no decent place to walk about in. A few flowers here & there and mostly red brick buildings. Still it was a very pleasant change.

Still no letter from K.

18th March

There is a yard in this jail known and referred to both by the staff and the prisoners, as the 'Bomb Yard'.

Conspiracy case prisoners were kept there and perhaps are still kept there.

'Search, search and yet again search' might well be the motto of Bengal jails. The amount of searching that goes on here is prodigious. The conspiracy case under-trials are personally searched thoroughly four times a day, when they go to court, twice by the jail people on coming and going and twice by the police outside. Then there are daily searches in the barracks. Even ordinary prisoners are searched repeatedly every day.

21st March 1934

Got a telegram from Shammi at 2 in the afternoon to say that Shama Bhai had expired yesterday after a second stroke of paralysis. Only two days ago I read in Kamala's letter he was well now and had visited Anand Bhawan and even climbed up stairs. Felt rather shaken up at the news. All kinds of memories, and a feeling of helplessness and weariness. The old family in bits and how changed. Mother must have had a great shock and so also Kamala. She had grown very fond of him. Heigh ho!

22nd March 1934

A little storm in a tea cup last evening because I happened to go inside the kitchen when I went out for my evening walk!

Supt. told me that Kamala & mother were to have come to Calcutta this morning but owing to Shama Bhai's death they have postponed their departure from Allahabad.

My letter to K. only posted today—2 days late.

No book left (barring the German Grammar!) except a novel by Rider Haggard[22] from the jail library—I tried to read it, got disgusted and hurled it away. Later having nothing to do again tried it and again hurled it back! This process has been repeated four or five times.

28th March 1934

J.S. Barnes[23]—Reuter's new representative to India has sent me a letter. Wants to have an interview. Has also written to the Supt. &

22. Sir Henry Rider Haggard (1856-1925), writer of popular novels including *King Solomon's Mines* and *She*.
23. Barnes was a theorist of fascism and his declared purpose in seeing Jawaharlal was "to convert him from communism and disloyalty to the crown and persuade him to adopt a different frame of mind and attitude towards government".

told him that he has already taken permission from the Home Member, the Commissioner of Police and a few others! He tries to be very friendly in his letter to me—Cambridge—Lord's etc., same age & so on. Seems to have been afraid that I may refuse to see him.

The Supt. seldom comes to me, not even once a week. But he passes in front of my yard at least twice a day. The shouts of *sarkar salaam* announce him, and over the wall I can just see the huge white umbrella of state under which he waddles.

March 30, 1934[24]

Darling Indu boy,

I have not had a letter from you for about six weeks. I suppose you have been well occupied with your work and other things. Some news of you has come to me from other people and I am glad to know that you are keeping well. Soon you will have your examination and I am sure you will do well in it and deserve a good holiday. Will you let me know the dates of your examination and when it will be over? When does the result come out? *Chhoti puphi* wrote to me that she wanted you to stay with her for a week after the exam. Of course you could do so if you liked. But there is another proposal which I want you to think over. *Bari puphi* and Ranjit *pupha* and the children are going to Kashmir at the beginning of May for six weeks and they suggest that you might accompany them.

Kashmir is a place well worth visiting and as you know it is our old homeland and has a special claim on us. Long, long ago we left it and since then the whole of India has been our home. But the little corner of India which is Kashmir draws us still both by its beauty and its old associations. We have not been there for seventeen years or more and you have not been there at all. It is worth visiting when you have the chance. I should have liked mummie and you both to go there but I do not know if she will agree as this will mean leaving Dolamma by herself. If you decide to go with *puphi*, you had better come away from Bombay as soon as the examination is over. There will be time for you to spend a week with *chhoti puphi* then. You will first go to Allahabad and have a look at your old room—I am told it has developed cracks in the ceiling—and meet people there. Especially you have to visit Ummi *chachi*. Then you can come to Calcutta for a little peep at your old Papu. Mummie and Dolamma are likely to be here

24 Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML.

then also and you should spend some days with them. We shall also have to fix up about the future.

I heard of your appearance at the show[25] at the Royal Opera House. Girdhari Lal has sent me a newspaper cutting containing a picture. I am told there was quite a lot about it in the press.

I had an interview a few days ago with *bari puphi*, Bijju *chachi* and Fory. I liked Fory. She seemed to me a bright and lovable little girl.

Give my love to *chhoti puphi* and Raja when you see them.

All my love,

Your loving
Papu

4th April

To interview J.S. Barnes of Reuter's at 4 p.m.

Had a long interview with Barnes. He is an admirer of fascism and we discussed this and other world problems for long. Seems rather naive & simple in his economic theories. But our talk was friendly.

Finished Tolstoy's *War & Peace* today. An amazing book. Parts of it haunted me and I woke up in the middle of the night thinking of them.

9th April 1934

Interview with Kamala at last today. Upadhyaya also present. She arrived with mother yesterday. Both staying in Seva Sadan. Kamala looked fairly well. Felt greatly cheered at seeing her. I am much too fond of her!

The flowers she brought not allowed. (They were allowed in the next day!)

13th April 1934

I read in the weekly *Statesman* today Bapu's statement about the withdrawal of C.D.[26] I had heard of this before—from Kamala & the Supt.

25 In the spring festival dance in Tagore's drama *Phalguni*, on 10 March 1934.

26 "I must advise all Congressmen to suspend civil resistance for Swaraj as distinguished from specific grievances. They should leave it to me alone. It should be resumed by others in my lifetime only under my direction, unless one arises claiming to know the science better than I do and inspires confidence." The statement, released at Patna on 7 April 1934, was written by Mahatma Gandhi on 2 April 1934.

—but had no idea of the text. The reading of it bowled me over. I have spent an unhappy day feeling rather lost. I read & re-read it.

It marks an epoch not only in our freedom struggle but in my personal life. After 15 years I go my way, perhaps a solitary way leading not far—But meanwhile there is prison and its lonely existence.

And so good bye to this little book which has kept me company for a year in 2 prisons.

21st April 1934

Interview with Muriel Lester.[27] She was on her way from China & Japan and America—a world tour.

Interview also with mother & Kamala (and Upadhyaya). Mother was brought in an invalid chair from the car. A doctor came with her. She looked very old and weak—at least 10 years older than she is.

27th April 1934

Last night I felt something crawling on my foot as I lay in bed at about 1 a.m. I pressed the torch and saw some kind of a centipede on the bed. I vaulted out of bed with amazing rapidity. I chased the brute about but ultimately it escaped me and disappeared. Not knowing where it was I spent a very uncomfortable time till the morning. This morning a thorough washing and cleansing and airing of cell etc....

April 27, 1934[28]

TO A.K. CHANDA

My dear Chanda,

When we were in Santiniketan, my wife and I, last January, I mentioned to Gurudev the possibility of my daughter Indira joining Santiniketan.[29] Since then I have not had the chance of meeting Indira. She has now just come from Bombay after appearing for the Matriculation examination there and I hope to see her soon. We have now to decide about her future education. We have no desire whatever to send her to the official universities. I dislike them greatly. I had

27. Founder of Kingsley Hall, a welfare workers settlement in the East End, London, where Mahatma Gandhi stayed during his visit to London in 1931.
28 *The Visva Bharati Quarterly*, (1963 64, Vol. 29), pp 145 146.
29 Indira Nehru was in Santiniketan from July 1934 to April 1935.

intended sending her to Europe, probably Switzerland, but events have a way of taking the initiative out of our hands, and for the last many years we have lived, in many ways, a hand to mouth existence, finding it difficult to plan out the future. My repeated and frequent visits to prison disturb domestic arrangements. There is much to be said for this of course as it prevents our falling into grooves.

The result of all this is that we hop along merrily from day to day not knowing what the morrow will bring. So far as Indira's education is concerned there is no chance of her going to Europe in the near future. For the present therefore arrangements have to be made for a year or so at least, and perhaps for more, and I should like her to go to Santiniketan. I shall discuss this with her when I see her, for of course decisions must not be imposed on the modern girl! I should like you to tell me what steps I have to take, what formalities to go through to have her join Santiniketan. When does your next term begin? Is that the commencement of the academic year? I presume she will join the university section.

As to her subjects etc. I shall write to you after I have had a talk with her. She must choose. She may even choose them after she goes there. My own ideas of education are rather peculiar. I dislike the education which prepares a girl to play a part in the drawing room and nowhere else. Personally, if I had the chance I would like to have my daughter work in a factory for a year, just as any other worker, as a part of her education. But this I think is quite impossible at present in India. Could you send me (or rather send my wife at the Seva Sadan) a prospectus of the university? Also the necessary forms of admission etc. and information as to whom they are to be sent. Indira is just about 16½ years old at present.

I should have liked her to visit Santiniketan for a day as she is in Calcutta now. But I do not know if your vacations have begun or not. If you happen to be in Calcutta do send for her and present her to Gurudev. My wife is undergoing treatment at the Seva Sadan, 148 Russa Road, and she will be unable to go to Santiniketan, but you are still there and Indira might go accompanied by Upadhyaya.

Please send your reply to my wife who will forward it on to me. Have you managed to get on with Ghani? Is he doing fairly well?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

28th April 1934

Amazement! Read in the *Nation* of 4.4.34 that 'among the distinguished writers whose work the *Nation* will publish during the coming year are—J. Nehru—etc.!' The editor seems to be both a prophet and an optimist for during the 'coming year' I ought to be in prison. The announcement made without any reference to me.

5th May 1934

Interview with mother, Kamala and Indu. My last interview here, so the Supt. told me, for I am likely to be transferred soon.

Mother looking better. She has certainly improved by the treatment here. But Kamala looked thoroughly washed out. She has been deteriorating in spite of all manner of injections etc. I feel rather upset about her. I am sure I could pull her round and make her much healthier if I could be with her. But that is not to be for a long time!

7th May 1934

I am to be sent from this jail today, or so it appears. The Supt. said good-bye to me this morning. He did not definitely say that I was to leave today, but I guess it is so. Wrote to Kamala—Indu—Bidhan.

Good bye to Alipore Jail. Leave it at 9 p.m.

We reached Howrah station over an hour before the departure of the train to find that no reservation had been made! The police had expected the jail people to do so & the jail relied on the police. However the police & the station staff managed to get a second class compartment by asking an occupant to get out of it!...

The crowds at the station were interesting after 3 months of seclusion. Big railway stations are always fascinating. And the drive in an open taxi from Alipur to Howrah was delightful.

8th May 1934

In train.

At Lucknow station met Mohanlal Saksena, Madan—Dhanraj[30] & Nan, Kailas & many others.

30 Shrimati Dhanraj Bakshi, a close friend of the Nehrus.

May 9th Wednesday

Get off at Harawala

I am put in the old cattle shed of the jail—cleaned up, whitewashed & repaired. Also fitted up with electric light. Quite a decent place but! The 10 ft. wall has been raised to 14 ft. or so and I have no view of the hills. I can only see a few tree tops.

The new Supt.—A Rai Bahadur chap—crawls in with many apologies. An embodiment of fright, fear of the I.G., fear of me.

I get to know casually that I am not going to have many of the privileges that I have previously had. I can't go outside my little barrack at any time. No walking outside as I used to. No keeping of more books than the regulation 6 at a time. &c. &c. Also no smoking as at Alipur. The effect of all this is to irritate me greatly and some of this irritation flows out to the Supt. I feel a little sorry for him afterwards, but why be sorry for worms.

The various jail officials obliging & try to please. But the recent visit of Palmer the I.G. has evidently frightened them & left them little choice. The R.B. (Supt.) even expected me to be locked up at night in my cell although this is not done in the U.P. after April 1st.

May 10th Thursday

Feel a little better today. But rather listless and disinclined to exercise. At Alipur I walked a measured 6 miles a day—3 in the morning, 3 in the evening. Here one can't walk up & down for long in a 50 foot barrack & stare at the walls.

May 12, Saturday

I have felt poorly, was feverish today. Haven't settled down here yet. Various unexpected restrictions have upset me. Not being able to go out of my tiny yard of 50 x 20 ft. or so, with its high walls, is a trying ordeal. Can't stretch my legs. Walking up and down the yard is far from exhilarating.

Still in many ways I am far better off than at Alipur. And it is much cooler.

I read the full text of Bapu's statement suspending C.D. It upset me again. The whole argument is most irritating. Not that I mind so much the suspension but the way it has been brought about & the reasons given are amazing. How can one work with Bapu if he functions in this way & leaves people in the lurch?

An article by Horace Alexander on *India* in the N.S. also most annoying.[31] These are the 'friends of India'. Heaven preserve us from them!

May 13, Sunday

I have seldom felt quite so lonely and cut off from the world as I have felt here. It is solitary confinement with a vengeance. Last year I was alone for nine months here but I went out in the mornings & evenings, and saw the trees & flowers & the horizon and people in the distance going up & down the public road. Even in the Alipur jail there was noise & bustle & many prisoners moving about to be seen when I had my morning & evening walks under the main wall. I could stretch my legs & neck & the eyes saw some variety although this variety itself was monotonous & much the same everyday. Here I see only the high walls & the warders. The jail officials visit me for a minute or two daily.

There is one old friend whom I cannot see but can hear. This is the Indian cuckoo, the brain fever bird.

There was a pleasant incident today. I found a tiny baby squirrel crouching in a corner of my cell. Evidently it had gone astray, probably fallen out of its nest. I put it in a little basket in the verandah with the lid on and put some milk with it. A little later I noticed a big squirrel, probably the mother, going about on the rafters of the roof evidently looking for her young one. She came to a nest of mynas and the mynas offered battle and drove her away. Some time later the mother squirrel traced her offspring to the little basket—it was squeaking away. The mother managed to upset the basket and the lid rolled off. Just then the myna came and tried to attack the squirrel. There was a running & retiring tussle between them till the myna retired. The mother squirrel went again to the basket and very carefully got hold of the little one by the mouth and started carrying it away. The myna came again & attacked but the squirrel dodged her and succeeded in reaching a little hole in the wall meant for the drain. And so to freedom The rescue had been effected! I hope the mother & the baby reached home safely. It was all bravely and cleverly done and I watched the scene fascinated with all my sympathy for the squirrel.

31. In his article published on 14 April 1934, Alexander, while stressing the importance of Gandhi and the need to convene a constituent assembly, had some kind words to say about Irwin and the Liberals.

May 14, Monday

I have been in a temper today. I found that the R.B. Supt. has been trying to justify his existence by passing all manner of new orders. The door of my yard is now locked (padlocked) both from inside & outside —two hefty locks! Two locks or one should make little difference and really I don't much care. But what a mentality this displays. Does the fellow think I shall run away? This double locking makes it impossible for one to communicate with the jail office—to send for my books &c.— unless someone happens to come from outside to open the door. I had to wait for some books for several hours today.

There were several other matters which upset me and if the Supt. had come to see me this afternoon (he came in the morning before I knew of the new orders) I would have been very rude to him. I feel a little calmer now having partly exhausted myself on the junior jail officials!

May 15, Tuesday

Told the R.B. Supt. a small part of what I thought. All manner of explanations & apologies forthcoming. I am to have an electric bell connecting with the jail gate so that I can communicate with headquarters! This in answer to my complaint that owing to the new double locking of my door—both from inside & outside—I was unable to send a book or get a new book, or get into touch with the jailer when I wanted him. The cage remains double locked but it will be gilded in some ways. It is really extraordinary. Does the fellow really think that I might run away?

The talk with the Supt. relieved me & cooled me. A little outburst may not be good satyagraha but it has its uses.

A bunch of foreign papers & a copy of my *Recent Essays* also came & I was cheered up. Little things make such a difference in prison. A prisoner becomes a bundle of nerves or else sometimes he is reduced to a state of non feeling.

May 25, Friday

Ranjit turned up today. On his way by car to Kashmir. He had left Allahabad on the morning of the 23rd and did not get the Supt.'s telegram but Kamala wired to him to Agra & so he made the diversion to Dehra.

I had a good talk with him but something put me off. The account of Patna &c. for one thing.[32] And then he said that Kamala had decided not to stay in Dehra for part of the summer. She wants to remain in Allahabad and only to come here for interviewing me. She was outwardly well at Patna but the late nights & irregular hours &c. there upset her and she has got back her cough. All this upset me and I felt angry with her for giving up the idea of a Dehra stay. Had a heavy and depressing afternoon.

16.34[33]

Betty darling,
Your letter of the 12th May reached me two days ago. Your previous letter also reached me, though long after you wrote it. I am afraid I have been negligent over my letters to you. But somehow, although I have been in prison this time for over three and a half months, I have not quite settled down yet. In Calcutta I was always expecting a transfer. There was little regularity in letters and interviews. The letters from Kamala (with yours) that reached me two days ago came after five weeks One of my letters to her went astray. On the other hand, I had quite an unusual number of interviews in Calcutta. I had asked Indu to send you a message but I suppose, as is usual with her, she did not do so.

I had an idea at first that you were coming to Calcutta. Then I learnt that probably you would come to Dehra. I do not know what your plans are now. I had suggested (this was the message to Indu) that Raja and you might make a little stay in Dehra on the supposition that Kamala was going to take a house there. But her illness has rather upset matters and now she proposes to remain in Anand Bhawan for most of the time. She may just come to see me when she is a little fitter.

So far as I am concerned I am likely to be a fixture here in Dehra for a long time, as I was in 1932-1933. Indeed, nowhere else in India or outside, have I spent quite such a long time without a change. I am not exactly in the old place but near it. One thing I miss is the sight of the mountains. I cannot see their noble outlines against the sky, or the twinkling lights of Mussoorie, as I used to last year. But I imagine

32 The AICC meeting at Patna on 18 and 19 May 1934 endorsed Mahatma Gandhi's statement of 7 April 1934 suspending civil disobedience by individual Congressmen excepting himself A resolution sponsored by Mahatma Gandhi was passed allowing Congressmen to enter Councils and a Parliamentary Board was constituted under Malaviya and Ansari.

33 *Nehru's Letters to His Sister*, (London, 1963), pp. 43-45.

them and I have a powerful enough imagination! I am keeping fit—it is warm enough here now, but, of course, this cannot be compared to the heat of the plains.

About Toller's book, you have been rather slow! Have you forgotten that I try to be up to date as regards books even in prison? So as soon as I heard of the book in Calcutta I tried to get it. Not getting it locally, I had it ordered from England. All this was before your previous letter came. The order had already gone when I knew that you had it. The book came a few days back and I read it yesterday. It is a strangely moving book and Toller is such a lovable creature. A little before my arrest I had a letter from him (in answer to mine).

You must be shifting today to your new flat in Warden Road.

Love to Raja and yourself.

Do you know Nanu's latest address? He was in great difficulties and had been driven out of Germany by the Hitlerites. He was in Prague. I should like to do something for him, if possible.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

June 3, Sunday

I am definitely below par, physically & mentally. For many days have been feeling very depressed & poorly. This little yard with its high walls is irritating and so flat & stale. Once a fortnight I go to the jail office to be weighed and this means a little outing from the yard and a walk of fifty yards or so in the fresh air outside. What a change it is! There is freshness & fragrance, & the cool smell of grass & soft earth, and distant vistas.

I suppose it is this close confinement that affects the nerves. And then when any news comes in letters or newspapers that I do not like it upsets me far more than it should. Kamala is again in the grip of her old disease and this news has oppressed me. Indu does not write to me and I get very angry. So during the last few days I have been full of irritation against Kamala & Indu & the world generally. Curious when one is in a bad mood how one finds excuses for it and picks at otherwise trivial matters in the past. It is not Kamala's fault that she is again laid up. What is the poor girl to do? But this means that I shall be lonelier here than ever. And my mind goes back to all the petty grievances I have had against her in the past and dwells on them and this increases my ill humour. I fight against this with little success while it lasts. Gradually it goes away. If I have to write a letter during this fit of ill humour the letter is bound to be

a harsh and unfriendly one. I wrote yesterday to Kamala & others. *I had not quite recovered and in spite of all my efforts my letter was* harsh and I am afraid will pain her.

Indu has passed her exam and must be excited and expecting congratulations & the like. Instead I have not even written to her!...

Back of all this in my mind I suppose is dissatisfaction at the political situation and this finds its way out in domestic entanglements & worries which I would hardly notice otherwise.

Last night I lay awake for hours—a most unusual occurrence. I could not go to sleep and was in considerable discomfort.

4th June 1934

Hallowes, the Supt. of the Dun, visited me. Reminded me of the correspondence we had about famine relief when he was D.M. of Gonda.[34] आज *In and Out of Prison* लिखना शुरू किया।[35]

15.6.1934[36]

Indu darling,

I was glad to receive your letter after a long time.

About Vakil's suggestion that you might take Soniben's cottage at Santiniketan and set up a separate establishment there with a cook etc., I am afraid I do not agree at all. I dislike very much the idea of your keeping apart from the 'common herd' and requiring all manner of special attention, just as the Prince of Wales does when he goes to school or college. This seems to me to savour of vulgarity and snobbery. It is a bad beginning to make in any place to shout out to the people there that they are inferior beings and you are a superior person requiring special and particular treatment. Do you think any self-respecting boy or girl would care to make friends with you under these circumstances? And what would the teachers and professors, who run the college there, feel? Would they not feel that they had been insulted to some extent by our having made our own arrangements over their heads? No, this kind of thing will never do. Wherever we go we must keep on a level with our surroundings and not imagine that we are better or superior. It is better not to go to a place than to go as a superior

34. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp 103 105.
35. Today started writing In and Out of Prison [Published as *Autobiography* in April 1936]
36. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

person. If you ever desire to work among village folk or for factory workers, how do you think you would live with them or visit them? As a society lady with a scented handkerchief to keep off the bad smells, occasionally patronising them or doling out charity to them? That is not the way to meet your kind or to do human service. This method of charity and condescension irritates me exceedingly and I have no use for it.

I think I have told you that it has long been my desire that a part of your education—and every boy's and girl's education—should consist of real honest work in a factory or in the fields. Unfortunately this cannot be arranged in India under present conditions but this idea of mine will give you some notion of what I think of education. If you want to work in a factory, do you think you could do so as a superior person living apart and in a much better way than the others? The idea is absurd. The very object of going there is to learn from the sufferings, discomforts and misery which surround and wrap up the great majority of people, to see the drama of real life; to become akin to a small extent at least with the masses, to understand their viewpoint; and to get to know how to work so as to raise them and get them out of their misery. This cannot be done by people who live in cotton wool but by those who can face the sun and the air and hard living. However, all this does not arise at present and much will depend on what ideals in life you have. I cannot impose my ideals on you. If you want to make your life worthwhile you will have to decide for yourself what your life philosophy should be.

There is no question of any such great decision before you go to Santiniketan. As a matter of fact that is a delightful place and I am sure you will have no physical discomfort there. I think you should stay wherever the college authorities put you. If it is the boarding house, certainly you should remain there. Why shouldn't you? Take the food also as it comes. If it does not agree with you, you can say so to the matron or other friends there and get it changed or added to. There will be no difficulty about this. My fear is that you will be too much looked after there, not too little That can't be helped because you happen to belong to a notorious family. But you must not put a barrier between yourself and the other students. Many of the girls there are very decent and you will soon be friends with them.

You seem to have an idea that you will have to spend a lot of time in washing clothes! I do not know but I think you are mistaken. A little washing is rather good for one.

Do you know what I had to put up with at Harrow? We never had a full meal at school unless we bought it for ourselves. As junior

boys we had to wait on the seniors as fags, get their food, clean their places up, sometimes clean their boots, carry messages for them etc. and be continually sworn at by them and sometimes beaten.

So I think you had better go to Santiniketan without making any special arrangements. I have already written to them there and they will fix you up. Mummie can accompany you when you first go. There is a young girl there, Mrs. Chanda, the wife of the Poet's secretary, who is a bright little thing and is a good artist. She will help you in every way. There is no question of your falling ill. If anything disagrees with you, say so.

The college opens on July 1st but they have said that you can reach there by July 7th. You should try to do so. This means leaving Allahabad on July 6th at the latest. You should spend a few days in Allahabad before going. Yesterday I had an interview with mummie and she suggested that you should leave Kashmir so as to reach Dehra Dun on June 30th (Saturday). On that day you can have an interview with me and leave for Allahabad the same night. The date for the interview must be definitely fixed as it is just possible that *chhoti puphi* might come on the same day. Or perhaps Fory. If Fory comes she could join you at Lahore.

Two weeks ago I wrote to big *puphi* that you need not take the trouble to come to Dehra Dun on your way back as this would take an extra day and reduce your stay with mummie at Allahabad. Mummie however wants you to come to Dehra and if you feel that way, you can certainly do so.

I am sending you a prospectus of Santiniketan. This will give you a great deal of information. On p. 13 the subjects are given. Among the compulsory subjects, I think, you should choose Hindi (as an Indian language) and French (as a modern language).

There are several interesting optional subjects—the three sciences, botany, physics, chemistry, and music, fine arts etc. You must choose two of these. I am rather partial to science as the modern world is based on science. At the same time the fine art department of Santiniketan is very good and if you have any inclination that way you should join it. You need not decide yet. Go there and see for yourself and then decide.

Do not be prejudiced before you even go to Santiniketan. It has its faults but it has its good points also and I think the latter far outweigh the former. I am sure you can learn a great deal and develop rightly there. After three months there will be the long *puja* vacations. And remember that the place is easily accessible from Allahabad, at least compared to Poona or Vile Parle. It is practically a night's journey.

I am glad you are enjoying your visit to Kashmir and are growing fond of the place. You will be sorry to come away so soon leaving the others behind. What is a month in Kashmir? But look upon this month as an introduction to the place. Let us hope that later on you *can renew the friendship and stay longer.*

I hope you have been able to meet some good Kashmiri families—some people besides the *manjhis* etc. I am told that better class Kashmiri women have now all taken to the sari. Only a few years ago they wore the फिरन.[37]

I enclose a picture taken from a paper. Is this how you people hike? With little Rita also carrying a rucksack on her back?

My love to all your party and to you.

Your loving
Papu

June 20, Wednesday

"The Working Committee—is of opinion that confiscation and class war are contrary to the Congress creed of non-violence."[38]

To hell with the Working Committee—passing pious and fatuous *resolutions on subjects it does not understand—or perhaps understands* too well!

"At the same time the W.C. is of opinion that Congress does contemplate wiser and juster use of private property so as to prevent it from exploiting the landless poor." Gracious of the W.C. & the Congress.

21/6/34[39]

TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, DEHRA DUN JAIL

Dear Mr. Superintendent,

I notice from a report in today's *Statesman* newspaper that the Home Member of the U.P. Government stated in the Provincial Council that I had been allowed a "hand fan".[40] I am grateful to the U.P.

37 *Phiran*, a woollen overall worn by Kashmiri women

38 The Working Committee resolution on socialism was drafted by Mahatma Gandhi and passed on 18 June 1934

39. J.N. Prison Papers, NMML

40 On 19 June 1934 the Home Member, questioned in the U.P. Council if it were a fact that Jawaharlal Nehru had not been given a fan, replied that he had been allowed a hand fan.

Government for their solicitude for my physical condition during the summer heat and for their generosity in allowing me the use of a "hand fan". I trust you will convey my gratitude to the Home Member. As it happens, however, that I possess such a "hand fan" of my own I have not been able to make use of the "hand fan" you kindly sent me. I am therefore returning it so that the government's generosity might be exercised afresh on another prisoner who may perhaps be in greater need of the "hand fan" than I am.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

June 25, Monday

I have been unwell since yesterday. Nothing much but it is troublesome. Pain in the back. Could not turn in bed or get up without great difficulty. Don't know why this has happened. Perhaps a chill, perhaps got a sprain in my stretching exercises.

Ailments in gaol are not at all pleasant. They make the loneliness greater.

It has been raining hard & the monsoon has broken. We have had over 12 inches during the last week. The heat is less but the eyes have no relief. I have to stare all day at the high brick walls. But on the other side of them, I know, lie green fields and trees, bright with colour and glistening with drops of rain. Sometimes for a second or two I have a sudden glimpse of them when the iron door of the yard is opened, and equally suddenly it vanishes—like the flash of lightning. The warders have special instructions not to open the door if I am anywhere near it, and even when they open it, to do so just a little.

Often the door is opened and I do not even look that way. That sight of fresh greenery produces nostalgia—a heart-ache...

June 26, Tuesday

The pain is better but it continues.

How old I am getting! My hair is turning grey at a great pace, it is already mostly grey and I have developed quite a distinguished(?) elderly look. The world passes on and goes ahead, while I and so many like me—sit silent and inactive and grow older & older. Life stops in jail in many ways but age creeps on. My eyes grow dull from staring at the walls. They are beginning to sag—like father's.

June 28, Thursday

Last night I was sitting reading in the verandah near my bed. I took some books to my cell passing the narrow space between the bed and the wall. On returning the same way I suddenly stopped within two feet of a little snake lying coiled up at the base of the wall opposite my bed. I must have passed it in the first instance, within six inches of it.

The decency of the snake in not attacking me had a favourable effect on me and I sat on my bed for long watching it. The warder came & suggested killing it. I told him to give the poor thing a chance. But it would not take advantage of the chance and only moved about a little in the small verandah. I tried even to push it on with the help of a mosquito net pole—I do not use the net but this bamboo was there—but it would not make an effort to escape. There was only one way in & out from my little yard—a small hole for a drain. It must have come that way.

After nearly an hour another warder came for the night and the time for lights out approached. It was difficult to allow the snake to remain in the yard with two warders, apart from myself. A proposal was again made to put an end to it & I reluctantly agreed. It was stunned—I thought it had died—and I promptly put it in a glass jar. This morning to my surprise I found it very much alive. I tried to feed it with milk. I compared its marks with those on the chart and came to the conclusion that it was a krait, a very poisonous snake. It was about 20 inches long & not fully grown. This evening it died after making violent efforts to get out of the jar. I propose keeping it in spirit.

June 30 Saturday

The interview! I expected Indu and perhaps Fory. But to my surprise Kamala turned up with Indu.

Indu looked fairly well but tanned & dark with exposure. She enjoyed her visit to Kashmir.

Kamala full of Allahabad trouble & bickerings. I told her to keep out of them. How our people go to pieces at the least provocation. I am glad I am not out and yet this imprisonment is telling on my nerves. I don't think I have ever before in gaol felt quite so helpless before. Partly no doubt due to the conditions prevailing here. No fresh air or wide outlook as I used to have when I was allowed to go out of my yard last year. A narrow yard with high walls & little possibility of exercise. I get bored with walking up & down, up and down,

17 or 18 steps one way. Then the loneliness. But at the back of all, & overshadowing the rest, is the situation outside & especially Bapu's amazing statements. There was one in today's paper which upset me.[41]

The future, the future—what of the future? It looks dark and I feel weary. There is little 'pep' in me left just at present. The days drag through slowly and reluctantly and I find it difficult to do any solid work.

July 5, Thursday

Yesterday there was some commotion in the jail office. Some newspapers had come out with a story of the snake that had visited me, and there were headlines of my 'narrow escape'. A newspaper man wrote to the superintendent asking for confirmation of the news. He had paid no attention to the matter previously. He had not visited me since the snake incident and he had casually heard about it from some jail official. The sudden newspaper publicity upset him. Evidently the papers got hold of the story from Kamala or Indu who saw the snake in the bottle when they came to interview me.

The Supt.'s first reaction was to give vent to his anger against the jail staff (by telephone) for not telling him all the facts. The next morning (yesterday) he came to me, heard my account, & then examined the snake, with the help of the chart, for an hour. He came to me again to prove to me that the snake was not poisonous. Perhaps he was right.

Curiously enough that very night (last night) as I was preparing to go to bed I saw an enormous black scorpion just above my table. I caught him & put him in a bottle and this morning I sent this to the jail office for the Supt.'s edification.

For some days I have had some shoots planted. These were creepers & were sent to me from outside. Yesterday the Supt. had them ruthlessly pulled out! Technically I suppose he was right for creepers are not suitable plants in a prison. But I was much pained at the way the plants were pulled out & slaughtered.

41. Mahatma Gandhi said on 29 June 1934 at Ahmedabad that all labourers were capitalists but did not know how to use their capital intelligently. "I do not wish the destruction of capitalists. In that destruction I visualise our own destruction. What is required is an excellent combination of the two."

July 12, 1934[42]

Indu sweetheart,
I was very glad to receive your letter and have your first impressions of Santiniketan. The letter came with mummie's, only yesterday.

I knew you would like the place and I think your liking will grow with time. Some people dislike it because of various reasons. They are so used to the official universities that anything new strikes them as undesirable; or they don't like the Poet; or they think that too much freedom is given to the students. Curiously enough it is the Bengalis themselves who criticise it most. Bengalis, in spite of being advanced and cultured in many ways, are very conservative folk. The Poet gets very little money for Santiniketan from Bengal. He has to go to Bombay and Gujarat for it!

My own feeling about Santiniketan is that it is a good place with one thing lacking. It does not give quite an up to date education for the modern strenuous life. It concentrates too much on the artistic side. This is of course good in itself but the other departments of life get rather left behind. And this is the great difference between it and the other universities for the latter are absolutely and totally devoid of anything that can be called art. Nor indeed is there any culture there, only a smattering is given for the purpose of passing examinations. Art and culture are very necessary to make a complete man or woman. They not only add to the graces of life but give us a view of life as a whole and prevent us from becoming narrow one-sided persons.

But art and general culture without anything else are apt to make us rather helpless persons in the present-day world. To understand it we have to possess technical knowledge, for the modern world is based on science and technical appliances. No person can call himself educated today unless he or she knows something of science and economics and technology.

It was because of this that I suggested your taking up two science subjects—chemistry and another. I was very glad to learn from you that you had done well in your chemistry paper at Bombay. This shows that you have a bent that way and it is desirable to keep it up. My own subjects at college, as you perhaps know, were scientific ones —chemistry, botany and geology with some physics. Physics is the oldest of sciences, the basic one. Then comes chemistry and then biology

42. Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML. Extracts.

which is popular now. We should know something of all three of these and then we can specialise later.

I suppose it will be possible for you to take two sciences as well as fine art, if you so wish it. You will have some difficulty to begin with about the language—Bengali. But you will soon get over it.

I do not know what your daily programme is. Usually, when one goes from school to college, the actual class time is reduced and more work has to be done by the student by herself. As one goes up in the university more and more work has to be done privately with just an occasional tip from the professor.

I wonder if you have got with you your examination papers of Bombay. If so, I would like you to send them to me by post direct. I should like to see them.

The early rising bell must be a bit of a nuisance. But it all depends on when one goes to bed and one soon gets used to early hours. I get up at about 4.30 every morning. In summer this is very pleasant.

Your journeys from Santiniketan to Allahabad will not be so long as the Poona or Bombay ones. From Burdwan it is just a night's journey. But your ill-luck in travelling seems to have accompanied you as the engine broke down!

If you write to Mr. Vakil, tell him that I liked his poems, especially the one on the Nishat Bagh....

This morning I had an interview with mummie, *chhoti puphi* and Raja Bhai. Mummie gave me some news of you. She told me that you were rather put out at first and wandered about helplessly from place to place finding neither classes nor teachers! Later I understand you were feeling more contented. I hope you have settled down now and have discovered the teachers and the classes. Santiniketan is a strange casual place. One has to shift for oneself and push one's way a little. I learnt that there was no French teacher at present. Is this so? If so, I am sorry. What has happened to the German, who was a Buddhist monk, and who taught French? I think you should definitely ask for French and science teaching and it is up to the authorities there to provide it.

Don't worry yourself about little things that annoy. That is always the first experience in strange and new surroundings. One feels like a square peg in a round hole. Life is like that when we leave the shelter of our homes and friends and the sooner we accommodate ourselves to it the better.

I was interested to learn that there was some talk of your accompanying Gurudev to Palestine next October. Is there any basis in this? October is a long way off yet and we shall see what happens meanwhile.

But it does not seem to me to be a bad idea. What do you think of it? See the world while one has the chance. In later life, the chances do not come often.

Do you ever write to Mlle. Hemmerlin? I think you ought to keep in touch with her. This will be of great help to you if and when you go to Suisse.

Keep smiling, bien aimee.

Love from

Your loving
Papu

July 13, Friday

Great news! The Supt. comes in a state of excitement and tells me that Govt. permits me to go out of my yard for exercise. But— there is a big but!—it is to be every other day! I glance through the I.G.'s letter and find that these words have been added in handscript—probably by the great one himself—in a typewritten letter. I got rather put out and indeed lost my temper a little. Spoke rather wildly about the Govt. & all its works and refused to take advantage of the offer. Felt rather sorry for my language afterwards. It was decided that I should write to the Supt. about offer and my rejection so that he could forward my letter to the I.G.

14.7.34[43]

TO SUPERINTENDENT, DISTRICT JAIL, DEHRA DUN

Dear Sir,

You were good enough to inform me yesterday that the local government has issued orders permitting me to have half an hour's exercise outside my enclosure "every other day". Any relaxation of confinement, especially such as leads to fresh air and exercise, must of necessity be welcome to a prisoner, and I would request you to convey to the local government my gratitude for the solicitude they have shown for my physical and mental well being. But I feel that they have acted under some misapprehension. The direction that I should have the fresh air and exercise "every other day" must have been based on an assumption that I differ on alternate days, perhaps after the fashion of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and that only one part of me

43. JN Prison Papers, NMML

should be favoured. But I am not aware of possessing a dual personality, or of feeling more virtuous on alternate days.

I regret to say that considerable experience of living in solitude, cut off from human companionship, like the early Christian hermits as well as unlike them, cut off from nature and fresh air, has not, to my knowledge, increased my stock of virtue. And such virtue as I possess is evenly divided over me both in point of time and space. I feel therefore that it will be difficult for me to fit in with the proposed arrangement for "every other day". I have also not been accustomed so far to taking exercise on alternate days and I imagine that this can only interfere with the day's routine. It may also result, perhaps, in adding to the burdens of the gaol staff by requiring them to keep a register, or at least some kind of note, of the days when I may take exercise and the days when I may not.

Under these circumstances, I feel that it will be better for me not to take advantage of the new directions of the government about my taking exercise on alternate days, and I shall be obliged if you will kindly convey this information to the authorities concerned.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

July 15, Sunday

Last evening, as I was reading, I felt very tired and sleepy. No special reason for it. It was only 8.30 and too early to retire. I struggled on till about 9 and then found it impossible to carry on. Felt so sleepy that I could hardly get up to put out the lights or wind my watch &c. The putting out of the lights means taking out the bulbs from their sockets, there being no switches inside. The switch is outside my yard and is supposed to be turned off at 10 p m.

I have hardly ever felt so sleepy in my life. It almost seemed as if I was drugged! I fell asleep and about an hour and a half later I woke up with a start. The two warders were asking me what the matter was. I had been shouting in my sleep. I had had a nightmare & it was vivid enough when I woke but now I have almost forgotten it. But I still remember that it ended with someone trying to strangle me and my yelling out.

Sometimes, even at home I have mumbled in my sleep, sometimes shouted a little. But this time apparently I shouted more vigorously. Nothing wrong with me inside—no indigestion. The book I was reading when I fell asleep was Aldous Huxley's Mexican travel diary.

I feel tired out today. Took no exercise.

July 23, Monday

The magisterial visitation today, but instead of Hallowes the District Magistrate, his assistant the Joint Magistrate one Lobo Prabhu(?)[44] came..... Argued with me for over an hour. Foolishly I entered into an argument but he was absolutely impervious to any ideas except his own, which centred round the I.C.S. being the finest collection of human beings on earth—the British Empire a wonderful & beneficent affair—was it not better than any empire of the past e.g. the Roman Empire, Chengiz Khan's & Timur's? Amazing to find people of this kind still—and an Indian! I was greatly irritated and said many hard things. I wish I had refused to argue with him.

The Supt. is a thorough coward. He cows down to every I.C.S. man. Prabhu lords it over him.

July 27, 1934[45]

Darling Indu,

Your letter came a few days ago. I am very glad you are settling down and gradually fitting in with life there. You will pick up Bengali soon enough to carry on.

I think you have done well to take chemistry instead of logic. It is true that one science by itself is somewhat out of place but no science would have been worse. It is my belief that a person who does not know something about science is incomplete in the modern world. All your subjects are interesting and, if the teaching is good, you should soon be absorbed in them. But you have not mentioned French. What about it? It would be a pity if you cannot keep this up for this would mean your forgetting the little you know. And further it would mean trouble when you go to Europe.

I suppose your various subjects will keep you pretty well occupied. If you have any leisure and wish to read books outside your course, I can suggest some to you, or even send them.

What about exercises? You do not mention any. Don't become like the much too-lady like Bengali girls who are so delicate and willowy and incapable of hard exercise. If you can't get anything else have a run in the morning....

44. J M Lobo Prabhu (b 1906); retired from I C.S in 1959, joined Swatantra Party, editor of *Insight* since 1961.
45. Indira Gandhi Papers, N M M L. Extracts.

We have had a tremendous deal of rain here—56 inches during the last 5 weeks. As in any event I can't go out I do not mind it. Indeed I rather like it.

29 7-34

This morning I had an interview with Dolamma, *puphi* and *pupha*. From them I learnt that mummie was again ill and bed-ridden. I am anxious but what can I do from here?

Let me know what books in history and civics you are reading.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

Monday, 30 July

Yesterday morning I learnt that mother, Nan & Ranjit had come to interview me. My spirits went up. I felt quite light hearted. Then came the morning paper and I read something that Bapu had said to the Congress Socialists in Benares.[46] This upset me a little—However the interview went off well. Mother looked so frail and shrunk-up. But she could walk a little more than she could 3 months ago in Calcutta

Kamala was ill again & bed ridden, I was told, and so could not go to Benares. This filled my mind all yesterday—I was angry and upset because she had taken no precautions & tired herself out at meetings of the wretched Allahabad Congress leaders.

I wrote to her my usual fortnightly letter & this reflected my irate & nervous state of mind. I did my best to tone it down but could not succeed. And my letter is going to reach her day after tomorrow on her birthday—Aug 1st.

I have not recovered today. It has been a miserable day and I have found it quite impossible to do any work. A completely wasted day.

10th August 1934[47]

Nan darling,

Thank you for the copies of *Letters from a Father* &c. which reached

46. On 27 July 1934 Mahatma Gandhi told a socialist deputation either to stop unwarranted attacks on the Congress executive or to take over the Congress organization.

47. Vijayalakshmi Pandit Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

me. I am glad the press is waking up. Somehow I am a little doubtful about their assurances. Anyway, I have to put up with them as with many other things I do not approve of

I want you to ask Upadhyaya to send me the little pamphlet by Horace Alexander on Indian prisons This used to be on the library table or in one of its drawers. This can come at an interview or by post. Also ask Upadhyaya to get for me the new edition of Gandhiji's *Self Restraint and Self-Indulgence*. If this is not obtainable in Allahabad, it should be ordered either directly or through a bookseller.

I find I have missed a number of the Living Age and I dislike doing so. It is a magazine I value greatly. It appears that there was an article in this number by Harold Laski on me.[48] Naturally I am interested in what Laski has to say on such a subject. If it is possible for Upadhyaya to discover the number, ask him to send it. Probably it is the June number. I have already seen and returned the July number and before that I saw the 90th anniversary number ..

About Chand's education it is very difficult for me to advise. I hardly know how Chand has developed during the last few years. I know nothing about Vakil's new school or about Woodstock, except what you have written. And then the real question always is: what are you aiming at? Few people think clearly on this point or even bother themselves about it. It is true that even if they did think the problem out and arrived at certain conclusions, we could not act up to them because of the lack of suitable institutions. We have to live and function under many limitations. There are, to begin with, certain common factors. Proper intellectual and physical growth should be provided for without unnecessary repression or conflict between the teacher and the taught. Character and habit formation have to be attended to. The company should be suitable and so on and so forth. All this is common ground But then two vital issues have to be faced: 1. Should the education given be a completely class education separating the pupil and creating a barrier between him or her and the great mass of the people? and 2. What part should the national genius have in the education?

As regards the 1st issue, it is obvious that in a country where education is confined to the top few, inevitably it becomes a class affair

48 Laski wrote: "Swaraj is in his blood... He no longer believes in the *bona fides* of the British raj"

which creates barriers. We can't avoid that, in India especially. But we can try to bring some counter-influences which tone down this unfortunate effect. The ideal class education, of course, is the English public school system.

As for the 2nd issue, I do not mean the teaching of aggressive and blind nationalism. But I do feel that a person who cuts himself off from the cultural genius of the country he lives in, creates a barrier which makes it difficult for him to function there effectively. Even the breaker of old customs must approach his job as an insider, not an outsider. There is a story in a book I have been reading (and which I shall send you soon) about a young and obscure Chinese poet who diffidently approached Li Po,[49] one of the greatest of China's poets, and asked him: "Master! tell me how I may become a great poet!" And Li Po answered him: "First learn the rules of poetry, then break away from them at will."

I realise the value of both these vital points because I have myself suffered, and still suffer, in regard to both of them.

So now I leave you to decide about Chand. I need hardly say that I have a horror of the drawing room type of education for girls. And I am quite sure that Chand is much too earnest and serious to take to it. Indeed she is perhaps too serious for her age and some attention to games and exercise and the company of others of her age will be good for her. I agree with you that a boarding school is more desirable than a day one. But which boarding school—I am not in a position to say.

Give my love to her and the other children.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

Aug. 11th Saturday

I leave Dehra jail under police escort for Allahabad.

DRAFT NOTE ON THE CONGRESS PROGRAMME[50]

For the past fifteen years or so it has been my privilege to work under Bapu in the Congress, and although I held clear and definite views

49 Li Tai Po (c 700-762); Chinese poet of the Tang dynasty.
50. JN. Papers, NMML. Presumably written sometime in August 1934, before his release on parole. The draft is incomplete.

about many matters, I tried to subordinate them to what I conceived to be the larger loyalty—the cause of national freedom for which the Congress seemed to be working. I tried to be loyal and faithful to my leader and my colleagues, for in my spiritual make up, loyalty to a cause and to one's colleagues holds a high place. I fought many a battle within myself when I felt that I was being dragged away from the anchor of my spiritual faith. Somehow I managed to compromise. Perhaps I was wrong for it can never be right for anyone to let go of that anchor. But in the conflict of ideals I clung to my loyalty to my colleagues and hoped that the rush of events and the development of our struggle might dissolve the difficulties that faced me and bring my colleagues nearer to my viewpoint.

It is clear to me now that I was mistaken in this hope and that there is hardly any common ground between me and Bapu and the others who lead the Congress today. Our objectives are different, our ideals are different, our spiritual outlook is different and our methods are likely to be different. It appears that we even understand or interpret the English language differently in so far as it embodies the resolutions of the Congress. "Independence" is almost a forgotten thing so far as our leaders are concerned—a brave plain word submerged under various 'points', interpretations, speeches, safeguards and assurances That has been the fate of our political ideal.

Those of us who had an economic and social ideal have now been told very rudely that we must shift for ourselves—there is no room for us in the Congress. Of course that resolution of the Working Committee will be interpreted in a variety of ways. Interpretation is our strong point after we have made equivocal statements. Having decried intellect and all its works we seem to have lost the art of clear thinking and clear expression. Our language, like our minds, grows more and more mystical and meaningless.

And yet the meaning is clear enough. It is doubtful if a single member of the Working Committee that passed the resolution has ever given thought to socialism or communism and studied it. But without caring to know what this thing is for which millions have given their lives, instinctively it passed a resolution which might result in driving away the most advanced ranks in the struggle for freedom. *The resolution was no doubt passed at the instigation of* the Parliamentary Board or its leaders who want to keep on the soft side of the people who have money.

Nobody called the Congress socialist. But it has now ceased to be neutral on the subject. It is aggressively anti socialist and politically

it is more backward than it has been for fifteen years. Among its leaders are people who have taken no part in our campaign; who in the midst of our struggle have drawn down the flag and tried to sabotage the movement. It welcomes to its ranks people who defied its mandates. It tries to compromise with the communalists though *some of these openly side with the government.*[51] A secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha publicly approves of the government ban on the Frontier Red Shirts and there is no one to denounce him and his kind. This is what we have come to after all our high ideals and brave talk. Some of us talk of social reforms and religion and superstition, others are openly opportunist. In the latter it is a question of how many carrots for how many donkeys.

We have seen the disgusting antics of the Calcutta Corporation under Congress control.[52] One Congress party there cooperates with the officials and the European group against another Congress party. That party might well be called the Society for the Advancement of Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar.[53] Other parties in Calcutta and elsewhere seek other people's advancement. The whole Congress is now likely to go the way of the Calcutta Corporation.

When I read Bapu's statement recommending withdrawal of civil disobedience I had a great shock; not because of the withdrawal but because of the reasons given and his general outlook. That statement seemed to me to be an insult to the nation, to the Congress and to any person with a grain of intelligence. I felt with a stab of pain that the chords of allegiance that had bound me to him for many years had snapped. For long a mental tussle had been going on within me. Bapu's fasts and his concentration on issues other than the political and civil disobedience issue, his desertion (whatever the reasons) of his comrades in the middle of the struggle, his personal and self-created entanglements which led him to the extraordinary position that—while out of prison he was yet pledged to himself not to take part in the

51. The Working Committee held discussions on 28 and 29 July 1934 with Aney and Malaviya, who had wanted to resign on the Communal Award question, and reiterated that the Congress should reject the Communal Award and grant Hindu members in the Assembly freedom to vote against the Award.

52. N. R. Sarkar was elected mayor on 4 July 1934, defeating Fazlul Huq, with the European members voting on his side.

53. (1888-1953), mayor of Calcutta, 1934, Finance Minister, Government of Bengal, 1938-39 and 1941-42, member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1942-43, acting Chief Minister, West Bengal, during B. C. Roy's absence in 1949.

civil disobedience movement—all these were fatal kicks at the civil disobedience movement. No doubt the movement was decaying. But for the leader to act in this casual manner was to me an amazing thing. I cannot judge what the Harijan movement has achieved. It has no doubt done much good. It has also certainly done some harm. But the good or bad of the Harijan movement seems to me beside the point. There is such a thing as loyalty to a job undertaken and to one's colleagues in it and it was painful to find that Bapu attached little value to it. He talked of other loyalties, promises, pledges. What of the previous pledge***

4

ON PAROLE

12 August 1934—23 August 1934

1. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
13th August 1934

My dear Bapu,
Thank you for your telegram—we are all happy to think that you have successfully passed through—or will pass through in a few more hours—your latest self-imposed ordeal.[2] My temporary discharge has undoubtedly done good to Kamala. Fundamentally she may not be much better but the psychological effect has been marked and of course this is a great help in her treatment. She has really been continuously ill, more or less, for the last year or so*** I am in a peculiar position. On arrival at Allahabad I was met by the district magistrate who told me that the U.P. Government had ordered that I should be permitted to visit my wife and remain with her for two days, and for a longer period if the doctors considered that her condition was still one of serious illness. There were no conditions, he added, only my parole and that I would go back to prison at the end of this period. I told him that I was grateful to the U.P. Government for their courtesy in permitting me to visit my ailing wife but I regretted that I was quite unable to give any undertaking on parole however this might be put. As for going back to prison it was open to them always to take me there. I was not likely to run away or hide myself, nor was I interested in raising legal quibbles. This answer of mine put the magistrate in a quandary. Eventually he allowed me to go home for the night and said that he would communicate with the Chief Secretary by telephone and let me know the next day (that is today). I reached home at about 8.45 p.m. last night. The same night at about 10 p.m., I sent a letter to the district magistrate repeating what I had told him orally. The answer to that came this afternoon. He said that he quite understood my difficulty in giving any undertaking. But I had recognised the courtesy of the U.P. Government in allowing me to visit my wife "and in a similar manner I rely on your courtesy and good sense to do nothing to compromise the present position. The present undertaking will remain in force at least till Wednesday morning, by which time I hope to have

1. Home Department (Political) File No. 3/XI/1934, National Archives of India. This incomplete version is the fullest one available.
2. On 7 August 1934 Mahatma Gandhi commenced his seven days fast as a penance for the acts of violence committed on the *sanatanists* at Ajmer and thought that self purification was necessary for the removal of untouchability.

received further instructions from the U.P. Government." So that is how matters stand. I am somewhere in mid-air.

It is clear that the government do not wish to have me out of prison at any rate till the next Congress is over. I am inclined to think that I shall be taken back to prison soon. I shall be kept in Nainital this time and can be easily accessible in case of need. I am very glad, however, that I was given this opportunity of seeing Kamala, mother and the others. This has done her good and done me good. Mother has been down with dysentery*** After just six months of absolute seclusion and anxiety, excitement and activity of the past 27 hours, I feel very tired. I am writing this letter to you at midnight. All day there have been crowds of people coming. If I have the chance I shall write to you again but I doubt if I shall be able to do so for some months. I am therefore going to indicate to you briefly how I have reacted to the various major Congress decisions of the last five months or so. My sources of information have naturally been strictly limited but I think that they were sufficient to enable me to form a fairly correct idea of the general trend of events.

When I heard that you had called off the civil disobedience movement, I felt unhappy. Only the brief announcement reached me at first. Much later I read your statement and this gave me one of the biggest shocks I have ever had. I was prepared to reconcile myself to the withdrawal of civil disobedience. But the reasons you gave for doing so and the suggestions you made for future work astounded me. I had a sudden and intense feeling that something broke inside me, a bond that I have valued very greatly had snapped. I felt terribly lonely in this wide world. I have always felt a little lonely almost from childhood up. But a few bonds strengthened me, a few strong supports held me up. The loneliness never went, but it was lessened. But now I felt absolutely alone, left high and dry on a desert island.

Human beings have an enormous capacity for adapting themselves and so I too adapted myself to some extent to the new conditions The keenness of my feelings on the subject, which amounted almost to physical pain, passed off, the edge was dulled. But shock after shock, a succession of events sharpened that edge to a fine point, and allowed my mind or feelings no peace or rest. Again I felt that sensation of spiritual isolation, of being a perfect stranger out of harmony, not only with the crowds that passed me, but also with those whom I had valued as dear and close comrades. My stay in prison this time became a greater ordeal for my nerves than any previous visit had been. I almost wished that all newspapers might be kept away from me so that I might be spared these repeated shocks.

Physically I kept fairly well. I always do in prison. My body has served me well and can stand a deal of ill treatment and strain. And being vain enough to imagine that perhaps I might yet do some effective work in this land to which fate had tied me, I looked after it well.

But I wondered often enough if I was not a square peg in a round hole, or a bubble of conceit thrown about hither and thither on an ocean which spurned me. But vanity and conceit triumphed and the intellectual apparatus that functions within me refused to admit defeat. If the ideals that had spurred me to action and had kept me buoyed up through stormy weather were right—and the conviction of their rightness ever grew within me—they were bound to triumph though my generation might not live to witness that triumph.

But what had happened to those ideals during these long and weary months of this year when I was a silent and distant witness, fretting at my helplessness? Setbacks and temporary defeats are common enough in all great struggles. They grieve but one recovers soon enough. One recovers soon if the light of those ideals is not allowed to grow dim and the anchor of principles holds fast. But what I saw was not setback and defeat but that spiritual defeat which is the most terrible of all. Do not imagine that I am referring to the council entry question. I do not attach vital importance to it. Under certain circumstances I can even imagine entering a legislature myself. But whether I function inside or outside the legislature, I function as a revolutionary, meaning thereby a person working for fundamental and revolutionary changes, political and social, for I am convinced that no other change can bring peace or satisfaction to India and the world.

So I thought. Not so, evidently, the leaders who were functioning outside. They began to talk the language of an age gone by before the heady wine of noncooperation and civil disobedience had fired our heads. Sometimes they used the same words and phrases but they were dead without life or real meaning. The leading figures of the Congress suddenly became those people who had obstructed us, held us back, kept aloof from the struggle and even cooperated with the opposite party in the time of our direst need. They became the high priests in our temple of freedom and many a brave soldier who had shouldered the burden in the heat and dust of the fray was not even allowed inside the temple precincts He and many like him had become untouchables and unapproachables. And if he ventured to raise his voice and criticize the new high priests, he was shouted down and told that he was a traitor to the cause because he spoilt the harmony of the sacred precincts.

And so the flag of Indian freedom was entrusted with all pomp and circumstance to those who had actually hauled it down at the height

of our national struggle at the bidding of the enemy; to those who had proclaimed from the house-tops that they had given up politics (for politics were unsafe then), but who emerged with a jump to the front ranks when politics became safe.

And what of the ideals they set forth before them, speaking as they did on behalf of the Congress and the nation? A pitiful hotch-potch, avoiding real issues, toning down, as far as they dared, even the political objective of the Congress, expressing a tender solicitude for every vested interest, bowing down to many a declared enemy of freedom, but showing great turbulence and courage in facing the advanced and fighting elements in the Congress ranks. Is not the Congress being rapidly reduced to a magnified edition of that shameful spectacle, the Calcutta Corporation, during the last few years? Might not the dominant part of the Bengal Congress be called today "the society for the advancement of Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar", a gentleman who rejoiced to entertain government officials, Home Members and the like when most of us were in prison and civil disobedience was supposed to be flourishing? And the other part probably a similar society for a similar laudable object? But the fault does not lie with Bengal alone. Almost everywhere there is a similar outlook. The Congress from top to bottom is a caucus and opportunism triumphs.

The Working Committee is not directly responsible for this state of affairs. But none the less the Working Committee must shoulder the responsibility. It is the leaders and their policy that shape the activities of the followers. It is neither fair nor just to throw the blame on the followers. Every language has some saying about the workman blaming his tools. The Committee had deliberately encouraged vagueness in the definition of our ideals and objectives and this is bound to lead not only to confusion but to demoralization during periods of reaction, and to the emergence of the demagogue and the reactionary.

I am referring especially to the political objectives which are the special province of the Congress. I feel that the time is overdue for the Congress to think clearly on social and economic issues but I recognize that education on these issues takes time and the Congress as a whole may not be able to go as far at present as I would like it to. But it appears that whether the Working Committee knows anything about the subject or not it is perfectly willing to denounce and excommunicate people who happen to have made a special study of the subject and hold certain views. No attempt is made to understand those views, which, it is notorious, are held by a very large number of the ablest and most self sacrificing people in the world. Those views may be right or wrong but they deserve at least some understanding

before the Working Committee sets out to denounce them. It is hardly becoming for a reasoned argument to be answered by sentimental appeals or by the cheap remark that conditions in India are different and the economic laws that apply elsewhere do not function here. The resolution of the Working Committee on the subject showed such astounding ignorance of the elements of socialism that it was painful to read it and to realise that it might be read outside India. It seemed that the overmastering desire of the Committee was somehow to assure various vested interests even at the risk of talking nonsense.

A strange way of dealing with the subject of socialism is to use the word, which has a clearly defined meaning in the English language, in a totally different sense. For individuals to use words in a sense peculiar to themselves is not helpful in the commerce of ideas. A person who declares himself to be an engine-driver and then adds that his engine is of wood and is drawn by bullocks is misusing the word engine-driver.

This letter has become a much longer one than I expected and the night is already far spent. Probably I have written in a confused and scrappy way for my brain is tired. But still it will convey some picture of my mind. The last few months have been very painful ones for me and, I take it, for many others. I have felt sometimes that in the modern world, and perhaps in the ancient world also, it is often preferred to break some people's hearts rather than touch others' pockets. Pockets are indeed more valuable and more cherished than hearts and brains and bodies and human justice and dignity!

There is one other subject I should like to mention. That is the Swaraj Bhawan Trust. I understand that the Working Committee recently considered the question of the upkeep of Swaraj Bhawan and came to the conclusion that it was not responsible for it. As however it had already made a grant about three years ago and this had not been paid yet, although expenses were incurred on the strength of it, a fresh grant was sanctioned.[3] This will probably be enough for some months. In regard to the future the Working Committee was evidently anxious not to be saddled with the burden of maintaining the house and grounds. This burden amounts to Rs. 100 a month, which includes taxes, etc. The trustees, I understand, were also a little frightened of the burden and suggested that parts of the house might be let in the ordinary way to raise money for maintenance. Another suggestion was made that part of the grounds might be sold off for this purpose.

3. On 28 July 1934, a resolution was passed granting money for maintenance and repairs as a special case.

I was surprised to learn of these suggestions, as some of them seemed to me to be contrary to the letter of the trust and all of them against its spirit. As an individual trustee I have only one voice in the matter but I should like to say that I have the strongest possible objection to any such misuse of the trust property. The very idea of the wishes of my father being flouted in this way is intolerable to me. The trust represented not only his wishes but was also in a small way a memorial to him and his wishes, and his memory is dearer to me than a hundred rupees a month. I should, therefore, like to assure the Working Committee and the trustees that they need have no anxiety on the score of the money required for maintenance of the property. As soon as the present funds, now granted by the Working Committee for some months, are exhausted, I shall make myself personally responsible for the maintenance and no further grant need be made by the Committee. I would also beg the trustees to respect my feelings in this matter and not to break up the property or to hire it out for the sake of hiring it out. I shall endeavour to maintain the Swaraj Bhawan till such time as it is put to some worthy use.

I have not the figures by me but I believe that even thus far the Swaraj Bhawan has not been, in any sense, a financial burden on the Working Committee. The grants that have been paid to it will probably not be much in excess of reasonable rent for the quarters occupied by the office of the A.I.C.C. This rent could have been reduced by occupying smaller and cheaper quarters. At the same time in the past the A.I.C.C. has paid as much as Rs. 150/- a month for rent of an upper floor only in Madras.

Perhaps some parts of this letter might pain you. But you would not have me hide my heart from you.[4]

I received your short note in Alipore jail and I sent an answer. But the superintendent suppressed that answer.

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

4. In his reply of 17 August 1934, Mahatma Gandhi said that a dispassionate reading of the Working Committee's resolution on socialism would show that the "greatest consideration has been paid to the socialists...but I have found them as a body to be in a hurry. If I cannot march quick, I must ask them to halt and take me along with them. That is literally my attitude". Regarding the Swaraj Bhawan Trust, he asked Jawaharlal not to take it "so personally" but allow the nation to be the custodian of his "father's memory".

2. Statement to the Press[1]

I have just noticed in some newspapers a long report purporting to give my present views on current political problems.[2] It has never been my misfortune to come across any press report which was so entirely false and imaginary as this one. I have neither the time nor the inclination to deal with it in any detail but before I go back to prison I should like to express my resentment at various attempts that seem to have been made to misrepresent me. During the last few days that I have been out of prison I have issued no press statement of any kind except one or two brief contradictions. My main preoccupation has been my wife's illness and in any event I would have considered it an impertinence on my part to rush to the press immediately after coming out of prison without acquainting myself fully with the existing situation and conferring with my colleagues. But though I have been completely silent there seems to have been a conspiracy to misrepresent me. I have already contradicted some false reports concerning me and now this long report appearing in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika, The Tribune* and other papers has astounded me beyond measure. These reports have not a shadow of foundation and I cannot conceive how any honourable press correspondent could have even imagined such a thing Apart from current topics they have even ventured to discuss my beliefs relating to certain fundamental principles which hold true regardless of changed circumstances. And in this too they have made me express an opinion which is in direct and absolute contradiction to what I have always stood for. I had and have no desire whatever to issue press statements or to enter into controversies. But I have been compelled by this misrepresentation to issue this total denial of what has been attributed to me. I should like to warn the public against all such imaginary outpourings of press correspondents. Whenever I have the opportunity to study the situation and to consult all my colleagues I shall no doubt give expression to my views directly and above my signature. I shall not then leave pressmen and others to guess what my views are.

1. 18 August 1934. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. It had been stated that Jawaharlal had endorsed Mahatma Gandhi's policies and felt that Vallabhbhai Patel was correct in 'rebuking' some socialists who understood neither the theory nor the practice of socialism.

3. To Jairamdas Doulatram[1]

Allahabad
August 19, 1934

My dear Jairamdas,

I have your letter. I was a little surprised to find that you suggest my taking charge of the office here. I might be taken to Naini prison any moment and indeed I expect to go there soon. Under these circumstances no question of my doing office work can arise. Besides, whenever I have the chance to do so I must first see Gandhiji as well as my colleagues of the Working Committee and have a good talk with them before I indulge in any public activity. I cannot even make a public statement without first consulting my colleagues. Certain statements have appeared in the public press attributed to me but these are entirely imaginary and concocted. I am greatly annoyed about them, partly because I have not made those statements in public or even in private and partly because they misrepresent me. I shall issue no statement of any kind till I have had the chance of seeing you all, whenever that might be. Please inform Vallabhbhai of this.

You had better, therefore, keep the A I C C. staff with you. They will be of little use here. Raja Rao is still ill and bed-ridden and I have not seen him yet.

Kamala is just a little better but these little changes from day to day do not mean much. I am afraid she will be bed-ridden for a long time.

I am glad Vallabhbhai is getting on well. I hope he will be quite fit soon. Please give my love to him.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Correspondence, NMML.

4. To Sampurnanand[1]

Allahabad
22.8.34

My dear Sampurnanand,
Thank you for your letter. I have been living a curious existence from day to day, expecting to be taken off at any moment to Naini. But the summons has not come and here I am still. I am yet quite *uncertain about it.*

Kamala has been just a little better during the last four days. She has had no heart attack and this has enabled her to pick up a little. The pleurisy is also subsiding. But, in the best of circumstances, she is likely to be bed ridden for a long time.

I followed in prison through *The Statesman* the activities of the new Socialist Party.[2] The data supplied to me was limited but I could form some idea of what was happening. Since my release I have had a talk with Jayaprakash and he must have told you about it.

I do not know when we shall meet. Perhaps it may not be long before we do so.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Sampurnanand Papers, National Archives of India.
2 The Socialist Party held its first All India Conference at Patna on 17 May 1934 under the presidentship of Acharya Narendra Deva.

5

PRISON DIARY WITH LETTERS
23 August 1934—3 September 1935

5

PRISON DIARY WITH LETTERS
23 August 1934—3 September 1935

30th August, 1934[55]

Indu sweetheart,

I do not know if you have gone back or are still here. I fancy you must be back. Your visit here in the midst of term and stay for a fortnight must have broken the continuity of your work and come in the way of your settling down in Santiniketan. I know the feeling for, in another sphere, I had a similar experience and I am taking some time to adjust myself again to my new surroundings. But I was very glad indeed to have those eleven days in Anand Bhawan, to see mummie and to have a chance of being with you for a brief while. That interlude refreshed me greatly and I have something to look back to when I feel a little stale and weary.

It won't be very long, I hope, before I see you again—six or seven weeks when your *puja* holidays begin. I am hoping that by that time mummie will be well enough to go to the hills.

I should like her to spend October and November, and if she likes, the whole winter, in the Almora hills. I shall not be able to see her for I shall be at Naini, but then I can't see her even when she is at Anand Bhawan.

You could be with her for some weeks in the hills but you will have to come back for your college. Perhaps Bul might agree to stay with her. However, we need not worry ourselves about this future programme yet.

I was not at all happy to find how weak physically you were when you could not do some simple exercises. I was quite surprised. I wish you would not allow yourself to grow limp and flabby. Not to be physically fit seems to me one of the major sins that a person can be guilty of.

Write to me and tell me of your experiences at college. I suppose you will begin your French afresh now as Kripalani[56] suggested.

Your loving
Papu

55. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
56. Krishna Kripalani (b. 1907); taught at Visvabharati, 1933-46, secretary of the Sahitya Akademi, 1954-71; Padma Bhushan, 1969, nominated member of Rajya Sabha, 1974, his works include *Rabindranath Tagore: A Biography*.

Sept. 1, Saturday

Had a visit from the Collector today. When I saw him coming for a moment I thought his visit might be in connection with Kamala's illness. Perhaps there were some special orders of Govt. Perhaps I was to be allowed to see her..... Nothing of the kind! He asked me in his best official way if I wished to make any representation to Govt. about facilities for special interviews &c!

The daily bulletins get worse & more alarming. I find it difficult to concentrate on anything.

2nd September 1934

नन्नी की सालगिरा सवत भाद्रपद बदी ९ ।[57]

6th September 1934

Spratt discharged today after 5½ years! Saw him for a while in the jail office.

Sept. 13, Thursday

...In the afternoon I had a visit from the Asst. Jailer informing me that the *Bara Sahab* was of opinion that I was writing too many letters. He further enquired who Mr. Bett was and if Feroze was the Feroze Gandhi who used to be in Fyzabad jail. I explained that Feroze was indeed that very person and Mr. Bett was my sister whom I called Betty.

I do not know the fate of my letters...

16th September 1934

Jivraj Mehta, Madan Atal and Col. Townsend[58] came and examined me. Bad news of Kamala.

Sept. 18, Tuesday

The days seem to be intolerably long—and the nights. Time seems almost to stand still or move terribly slowly. I have never had this

57. Nan's birthday, *Samvat*, 9th day of *Bhadrapad* when the moon is waning
58 R S. Townsend, I M S (b. 1882), inspector general of civil hospitals, U P., 1934, civil surgeon, Lucknow, 1937.

feeling in this acute degree before. Every hour is a burden and a horror. I count the days I have already been and the days I have still to be here. And my mind wanders to Kamala and I fret. And then I think of Indu.

19th September 1934

Interview with Birju Bhai, Birju Bhabi and Ranjit.

Interview with Amiya C. Chakravarty[59] (of Santiniketan, address Balliol—Oxford).

Sept. 22, Saturday

It is getting more and more difficult to carry on. On the 19th I had an interview with Birju Bhai, Birju Bhabi, & Ranjit—Bad news of Kamala—also some other matters that irritated me. That night I could not sleep and I sat up in bed or walked up & down for hours.

The next day I wrote to Kamala. The letter was not due but I asked for special permission & this was given. I thought that writing of this would relieve me and might perhaps cheer Kamala.

In any event I am likely to be released six or seven weeks later—after the Congress.[60] Ordinarily these few weeks would have gone all too swiftly. But now they seem almost an eternity and every day seems a long & painful affair. I find myself sometimes counting the hours! There is also just a chance of my being released soon. If so, this will come off in another three days or not at all. Probably not.

Sept. 23, Sunday

How much better I feel today. I feel refreshed, full of vitality and almost light hearted. This forenoon the D.S.P. came along with the jailer and told me that he had come to take me away. Was it my discharge, I wondered. I asked him. No, I was to go home for a few hours and then I was to come back to prison. I was thankful for this chance.

59 (b 1901), lecturer at Santiniketan and secretary to Rabindranath Tagore, 1926-33, professor at Boston, U.S.A since 1953.

60. The 48th session of the Indian National Congress which was to be held on 26 and 27 October 1934.

And so I went and saw Kamala & mother & Nan & the others and remained in Anand Bhawan just three hours and then came back.

K was distinctly weaker & thinner but she looked cheerful when I first saw her—not so when she had a little heart attack later. I think my visit did her some good. And to mother also—how aged she was looking. Certainly it has done me good. Probably I shall be taken to see her twice a week.

I have had such a pleasing letter from Indu.

Sept. 29, Saturday

It is six days since I saw her—Monday went by easily. Tuesday brought a report which was not good. On Wednesday I hoped to see her again—More or less I had been given to understand that I would be taken twice a week to see her—even the hour had been fixed, between 8 and 9 in the morning. Wednesday, the middle of the week, was thus the likely day, and if not Wednesday then surely Thursday was a certainty.

So on Wednesday morning I got quite ready earlier than usual. I took greater pains over my shave &c. and sat waiting for the summons to come. I could not concentrate on reading or writing—My attention wandered continually to the gate of the barrack, and every little noise made me look up. But no one came, at any rate no one to fetch me.

The day before I had written a long note for the doctors intending to take this with me when I went. On Tuesday morning I had sent it to the Supt. for his permission to take it away. He had kept it—probably took it with him to show it to the Dist. Magte. He returned it to me—passed—on Wednesday afternoon.

Wednesday evening I was told that Madan Atal had come to the jail gate. He had tried to have an interview with me but was not allowed, I was permitted however to send him my note.

Why was I not allowed to see him, I wondered? An interview was due in the ordinary course if my visit to Kamala was not taken into account. There must be something in it. Perhaps I am going to be taken to Kamala tomorrow—Thursday. Perhaps I am going to be left with her again for ten days or so as before. The D.S.P. had hinted on Friday that this would be a good arrangement, better than my going backwards & forwards from prison. Of course he knew nothing & had no authority but one clutches at straws in gaol.

Thursday came and again I waited for the summons—No one came.

The day's temperature report came. 104°F. I gasped with the shock of it. She seems to be going, going, and I sit here helpless. Is her young life to end so soon.

A terrible day.

Today—Saturday—will they not take me to her even now? Even the Supt. has not come to me for four days.

Sept. 30, Sunday

The Supt. came yesterday—Looked ashamed of himself & miserable—asked me if I would like to see Dr. Atal— yes, yes I shall see Atal or anybody—but I want to see Kamala and that obviously is not to be. They did not even take me today—Sunday—I had a faint hope that they might. Why did they tell me last week that they would take me twice a week? What a joke to play on me!

This damned month of September is at last over. It has been the longest & the most miserable month I have had.

"The days of that month.....were blood drops, one by one..... coldly gathered.....hanging pendent to the twist of midnight....."

It has been awful

This afternoon I was reading about the World War. About the terrible sufferings of the people—the deaths—the mangled wounds—the desolation at home—and also of the gross bungling of the generals—their mutual quarrels & incompetence. All this had a curious effect on me. It cheered me up! After all what are we going through? Personal loss, national failure & humiliation. How much more have others suffered. Are we to lose heart so soon? What absence of nerve. Why all this can be pulled round, will be pulled round. We must face it bravely. I have written about it as if I questioned myself & pulled myself up. But the feeling stole upon me unawares and filled me with strength.

October 2, Tuesday

The feeling of strength did not last long. It oozed out during the night and October found me unhappy & miserable.

In the afternoon yesterday a surprising interview—Indu, Psyche & Bul. I had no idea that any of these three was in Allahabad. Felt very glad they were here. But their news of Kamala alarming. Her temperature mounts up.

Bad night & worse morning. Felt bad today. Then Madan Atal came and I had a long talk with him which slightly reassured me.

Expect Bidhan tomorrow & then it will be settled where & when Kamala is to be moved.

A suggestion sent to me—Hailey, Sapru, Nan, Psyche that if I could say to a third party, say Higginbottom[61] that I would not indulge in politics I would be released to attend on Kamala. Not possible.

I have been feeling much better since Madan's visit & talks.

October 3, Wednesday

I was taken to her today again for 3 hours because Bidhan had come —How much weaker she looked—a shadow. Gone downhill since last I saw her ten days ago. Bidhan seeing her after ten days, said her condition had greatly deteriorated. She is to wait no longer here in the hope of getting better & then going elsewhere for treatment. She is going soon to Bhowali—perhaps in another four or five days. When will I see her again? Will I see her at all? Brave little girl. She smiled at me as I was coming away though her temperature was 103.4 and she was in a daze. And even in this condition she said: do not give an assurance to Govt.! How she longs to have me out and by her but not even that at the price of undertakings to the Govt.

I feel both heavy and empty since my return to my barrack—and so lonely & weary.

I gave Kamala today Edgar Allan Poe's lines:[62]

Thou wast all that to me, love,
  For which my soul did pine—
A green isle in the sea, love,
  A fountain and a shrine,
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
  And all the flowers were mine.
And all my days are trances
  And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy grey eye glances,
  And where thy footstep gleams—
In what ethereal dances,
  By what eternal streams.

They seemed to represent my feelings.

61. S Higginbottom was an American who was the principal of the Agricultural Institute at Allahabad
62. The lines quoted are from *To One in Paradise*.

Oct. 9, Tuesday

Yesterday to my surprise, I was again taken to Anand Bhawan. This time it was in the morning and I found Kamala looking bright & cheerful. She is usually well in the mornings, the temperature going up in the afternoons. But on the whole she has kept just slightly better for the last four or five days. Temperature kept below 103. Nothing to shout about and yet even this a relief.

I was taken to bid goodbye to her as she is going to be taken to Bhowali. She is due to go tomorrow—the 10th with Madan and Bul. Today a day in advance, Indu must have gone with Amma & servants, to make arrangements.

Kamala's bright face and the knowledge that all arrangements have been made at Bhowali has cheered me up greatly and the sense of strain has gone. I feel more normal now and prison life is just what it usually has been to me—a dull and monotonous routine. Already nearly a third of October has gone. This month will pass more swiftly.

There is some talk of my being transferred to Naini Tal but I don't think this can be true, unless Kamala's condition grows worse.

I met Kripalani yesterday at Anand Bhawan.

Oct. 15, Monday

I complete 8 months today not taking into account the 11 days outside in between. That is just a third of my full sentence of 2 years. I wonder how much longer I shall have to serve this sentence. Seven weeks more according to my reckoning of 100 days from 23rd August when I came back!

The month is not going as fast as I thought—I feel greatly bored but on the whole I am not unhappy in an acute way. Chiefly this is due to a more satisfactory feeling about Kamala, though I have had no news of her for three days. Last news that she had reached Bhowali & was doing fairly well.

Salamatullah suddenly departed again. It was rumoured that he had gone to Simla. Manoeuvres perhaps to get the I G.ship This evening he is suddenly back & a whisper runs through the jail that he is here again.

Oct. 16, Tuesday

Several unusual happenings—The morning began with bad news—a telegram from Bhowali to say that Kamala had had a severe heart attack....

19th October 1934

आज मदन का तार मिला कि १७/१० को यानी परसों (pneumothorax) कमला पर किया गया।[63]

20.10.34[64]

TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, NAINI JAIL

Dear Major Salamatullah,
I was surprised to learn from you today that I was supposed to have been receiving letters frequently, and sometimes every two or three days. You told me that in future the rules should be followed in this respect. I entirely agree that in this matter as in others the rules should not be stretched in my favour or special exceptions made. The U.P. Government has been good enough to afford me special facilities to see my wife and to get news of her and I am grateful to it for this. It would be improper of me to try to have other facilities and privileges thrown in and I certainly do not desire to have any.

As for letters received by me, I had a home letter from my sister and daughter on September 3rd. On the next day—September 4th—a letter from C.F. Andrews was sent to me. I did not know why it had been passed by you so soon after my home letter. I was pleased to get it of course but if I had known that it was counted as an ordinary letter I would not have taken it. I could not very well return it when you had been good enough to pass it.

For five weeks after that no letter of any kind came to me. On October 9th I requested the acting superintendent to send word to my people that a letter should be sent to me from Bhowali immediately after my wife's arrival there. She was leaving on October 10th. Mr. Sahi was good enough to send this message and I expected the letter on

63. Received Madan's telegram today that on 17/10, i.e., day before yesterday, Kamala had her pneumothorax.
64. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

the 14th or 15th October. Mr. Sahi himself told me on the 14th that he was surprised the letter from Bhowali had not come yet.

Meanwhile, on the 10th October I received unexpectedly a letter directly from my sister in Bombay. This came to me five weeks after my previous letter and I imagined that it was due to me and could not interfere with the letter I was expecting from Bhowali. Mr. Sahi, knowing of my anxious wait for the letter, had passed and sent my sister's little note.

When no letter came from Bhowali till the 18th I wrote at last. It appears now that the letter had crossed mine in your office. If I had known this I would have preferred to delay my own letter by a day or two, as now my complaint at not receiving my daughter's letter will only mystify and worry my people. Probably the Bhowali letter was despatched on the 14th or 15th and in the ordinary course they would have expected it to reach me by the 18th.

I am informing you of these facts because you have been away and apparently wrong entries have been made in my ticket. As it happens, I have not received or written so few letters in prison during the last nearly three years as I have done during the last 8 weeks here.

I am enclosing for your information Mr. Andrews' and my sister's letters—the only two I have received since September 4th, 1934. As my sister's letter was delivered to me on October 10th I imagine that the fortnight might be counted from that time, and the next letter should be due to me on the 24th October. If that is the rule I do not wish it to be varied in my favour even by a day. Besides there is no particular point now as my own letter has gone already. I was anxious to have the Bhowali letter before I wrote mine.

Perhaps it will be better to return my daughter's letter to her by post and ask her to write another and a fresher letter. I would get this in time for my next reply. Otherwise our letters will be crossing *en route* and will always be out of date, as in the last instance.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

24th October 1934

आज शाम को आखिर, इन्दु का ख़त और मदन का मुझे दिया गया। १ हफ्ते बाद। कुछ तबीयत ढीली रही—हरारत सी मालूम हुई।[65]

65. At last, this evening, I was given Indu's and Madan's letters—after a week. A bit indisposed—felt slightly feverish.

Oct. 28th, Sunday

Here I am established in Almora in an enormous empty barrack & locked up in it.

I had an uneventful journey yesterday. S took some trouble to inform Nan that I was leaving but failed in the attempt! A little before I left Naini he telephoned to Anand Bhawan & got Upadhyaya.

I was taken to Prayag—Five minutes or less after my arrival there, Nan & Ranjit & Chand & Upadhyaya arrived and we were together for ten or fifteen minutes.

At Lucknow station Madan &c. Upadhyaya had phoned to him & Feroze had also wired from Bhowali.

At Bareilly Dwarka Prasad & his wife. Five hours stay there on the platfrom. Very tiring. The sergeant who was supposed to look after me (his name: Hanbins) took his duties very lightly. Left me by myself and found a sister of his somewhere near the station. Fed with her & then came back late in the evening. At Kathgodam he decided to shed the two constables. What was the use of carting them about to Bhowali & Almora. Wisely he left them at Kathgodam. It would have been wiser still if they had been left at Allahabad.

Bhowali—Kamala looking well & cheerful. Bright little cottages—a bit too small. Indu, Bul &c. all seemed to be flourishing. Had a long talk with Kacker. He has a grievance that he was not thought of earlier. The grievance is justified and there can be no doubt that *there has been a deal of messing with K's treatment. We are both* to blame K & I—though I have been in gaol. But I feel Bidhan must share the blame also for his casual treatment of K in April in Calcutta. If I had had an inkling of the fact that he had discovered T.B. germs I would have acted very differently even from gaol. And Bidhan did not even have radiographs taken then! He was too busy with his politics.

The Alipore jail also to blame. I wrote to Bidhan and they suppressed my letter without informing me of it.

But all this is the past and just at the moment things are brighten*ing up. Kacker said that when he took K's radiograph & saw it he had* a shock for it looked a hopeless case. The left side all a blank! (Indeed it looked so to me when I saw the X-ray). With great reluctance he began the A.P. (artificial pneumothorax) and lo & behold, a wonderful response! It was perfectly extraordinary, he said, how

she improved. It almost seemed as if there was a trick somewhere. So for the moment she is doing well, but—there are so many buts, and one dare not be sure.

Journey to Ranikhet good—afterwards dusty and tiring. But nearing Almora a glimpse of a huge pyramid of a snow-covered peak towering above the clouds—rather thrilling.

What with K's improvement and the mountain scenery & the glimpse of the snow I felt happy and contented. Little ill will against anybody. Suddenly I remembered that the Congress was meeting just then in Bombay in the midst of turmoil & distrust. And here I was so peaceful and detached and feeling as if so very far away from it.

Almora—the District Jail. A poor affair. The jailer sprawling on his chair in a little office which shouted out its incompetence & inefficiency & uncleanness.

Shown my barrack where till lately M.N. Roy dwelt. Not to my liking and being locked up gets on my nerves always. But a new jail never appeals to me. I have to get used to it. There is a fairly agreeable place attached to my barrack for exercise &c.

It is barely seven and I am feeling very tired and sleepy. I propose to sleep. There is nothing else to do No proper arrangements made yet for any work &c.

30.10.34[66]

Betty darling,

I have moved up in the world since I wrote to you last and here I am in the Himalayas, perched up on a ridge, communing with the sky and the clouds. It is fairly cold here but not nearly as cold as I expected. I have taken to my sun-baths in the morning and they will grow pleasanter as the cold increases.

On our way up I spent a few hours with Kamala at Bhowali. I found her much better than when I saw her last at Allahabad. It is obvious that the change and treatment are doing her good. She is likely to stay up right through the winter but much depends on future progress.

Nan told me something about your difficulties regarding the hospital which is the most unattractive place that I have seen; I am sure you

66 *Nehru's Letters to His Sister*, (London, 1963), p. 50. Extracts.

will not be happy there. At the same time I do not think that confinements should take place at home. This is an old fashioned notion which must be given up. A nursing home or a hospital is far better, and of the two, the hospital is preferable. Nursing homes are rather fancy places, the distinguishing feature being the heavy charges made. But, of course, I cannot advise from here and you and Raja will no doubt fix up everything satisfactorily....

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

5th November 1934[67]

TO KUNWAR JAGDISH PRASAD

Dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,
An item of news in *The Pioneer* of November 4th, which I have just seen, has distressed me greatly and I am therefore taking the unusual course of writing to you from gaol.

About a month ago, when I was in Naini Prison, I read in *The Pioneer* that Mr. Girdhari Lal Agarwala,[68] an advocate of the Allahabad High Court, had presented an application to the High Court as *amicus curiae* urging my release on the ground of some legal technicality.[69] I was greatly surprised and put out at this and I learnt with relief that the High Court had rejected his application. I need hardly say that Mr. Girdhari Lal Agarwala had absolutely no authority from me or any member of my family or friend, to take this step. I considered it a highly improper step both from my personal point of view and having regard to the circumstances. To endeavour to take advantage by a legal quibble of the courtesy shown to me by the government seemed to me a very undesirable course to adopt. I would have repudiated it at the time if I had been in a position to do so.

I now find that Mr. Girdhari Lal Agarwala has gone a step further and has submitted a memorial to the Viceroy[70] urging my release on

67. *J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.*
68. (b. 1878); advocate, High Court, Allahabad; secretary, U.P. Hindu Sabha; member, U.P. Assembly, 1937-39.
69. On 25 September 1934 Agarwala presented an appeal on the ground that Jawaharlal's rearrest, after a parole of 11 days, without a fresh trial was illegal.
70. It was reported on 1 November 1934 that Agarwala had submitted a memorial to the Viceroy. This was later denied by the government.

the ground of my wife's illness. I really do not know why Mr. Agarwala should persist in these tactics which, if he had known us at all well, he would have realised could only distress and annoy me and my wife. I hardly know him and I have not seen him ever since I gave up legal practice fifteen years ago. His motives may be of the best but I must resent his repeated interference in my personal affairs. I do not know if it is possible for you to do so, but I would be grateful if you could have the memorial returned to him and inform him that I object to his intrusions in my personal affairs.

May I add that I am very grateful to the Provincial Government for the facilities that have been granted to me during the last three months for spending some days with my wife, seeing her occasionally later on, and receiving reports of her condition. I am particularly grateful to Sir Malcolm Hailey for the personal interest he has taken in the matter. It was very good of him to direct, as I learnt later, that everything should be done to facilitate my wife's journey to Bhowali.

Quite frankly I feel that the U.P. Government has gone very much out of its way to meet an individual case and I am somewhat embarrassed by this special consideration. It would be wrong and absurd to expect the government to vary state policy because of individual cases; personal reasons cannot and should not interfere with principles and larger issues. I have myself endeavoured to act in that way, and, if I may say so without impropriety, I thoroughly appreciate that government cannot do so.

May I also thank you personally for the courtesy you and the Kunwarani showed my wife?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8th November 1934

इन्दु आज भवाली से इलाहाबाद और फिर शान्तिनिकेतन जावेगी।[71]

Nov. 14, Wednesday

My Birthday—45! One of the blankest birthdays I have had. I expected to hear from Bhowali—flowers at least—and from mother—she

71. Today Indu will be going to Allahabad from Bhowali and then to Santiniketan.

always sends a telegram—and Betty had actually written that she was sending something—and Bebee and Mahmud. I waited in the morning. Nothing came—Afternoon also blank. Curiously enough not even the jailer, who comes almost daily, turned up. I thought of my last birthday at home—and the one before in Dehra jail where I had companions and the one before that (1931) at home—and in 1930 in Naini Prison with Mahmud showering gifts on me!

Late in the afternoon my loneliness was broken into. Flowers & fruits arrived from Bhowali & a doctor's report which was not good. Also a telegram from Betty & Raja.

My loneliness did not go and the bad news rather depressed me. And so I launch out on another year.

The early election news is good. Shanmukham Chetty[72] has been defeated. So have two or three Nationalists & Hindu Sabhaites. I am specially interested in the defeat of Munje, Parmanand, Nanak Chand[73] of Delhi (because Parmanand supports him) Hari Singh Gaur, Bagla, Mohammad Yakub & Shafaat Ahmad.

Nov. 19, Monday

Indu's birthday today—seventeenth! I thought a lot about her.

The acting Supt.—Dr. Mehta—told me today that I shall have to pay a visit to Bhowali soon. I am glad. It is over three weeks since I saw Kamala.

I had a reply from Jagdish Prasad to my letter today.[74] Brief, noncommittal, but generally decent. What I expected.

It is over nine months now since my conviction. Already this has become my longest term bar the last. Vague talks of my impending release have an unsettling effect. If I knew definitely one way or the other I could settle down. Unconsciously I begin to make plans as to what I shall do when I get out—expecting of course to be out soon.

The elections are nearly over. Another three or four days and all the excitement will have died down. Congress candidates have done

72 (1892-1953), for some time member of the Swaraj Party, member, Central Legislative Assembly, 1923-34, Dewan, Cochin state 1935-41; Finance Minister, Government of India 1947-48, vice-chancellor, Annamalai University 1951-52.

73. Rai Sahib Nanak Chand stood against Asaf Ali and was defeated

74 Jagdish Prasad wrote on 15 November 1934 that he had ascertained from the secretariat that no memorial had been received regarding his release and that if any such memorial were received the U.P. Government would act according to Jawaharlal's wishes in this matter.

well. I was so pleased to find that Abhyankar[75] had defeated Munje. Many other undesirables also gone.

Sometimes I feel that I am bound to be released within the next fortnight or so. At other times I feel the opposite! Well, well—two or three weeks will show—Our new boss—Haig is coming soon and he is likely to prefer my remaining in gaol.

Nov. 24, *Saturday*

...Kamala was not looking so well as when I saw her 3½ weeks before. Her temperature was going up and other complications. I had a long talk with Kacker—not very satisfactory. I fussed about a lot, interfered with various arrangements, probably irritated some people a little—my usual unhappy procedure! But I think I did Kamala good and the sight of her and long outing did me good. I had a long talk with her last evening.

I spent the night at Bhowali. What a tremendous help Bul & Feroze have been to us.

At 11.30 a.m. today I left Bhowali with my police escort and I was back here again soon after 3 p.m. Back again in my huge solitary barrack! How terribly lonely it feels. I have been feeling very lonely and depressed. These outings, as everything else worth having, have to be paid for, and they are not cheap. It is difficult to get back to the gaol routine.

26th November 1934[76]

Indu *bien aimee*,

I have had a little outing from gaol and have visited Bhowali and seen mummie. I went on Friday last, spent the night there, and returned on Saturday morning. I was very glad to see mummie again after nearly a month but I wish I had found her better than she was. She has not been keeping well lately.

Your letter from Santiniketan, written soon after your arrival there, has reached me. I am glad you have decided to have a more sensible breakfast than *puris* and dal. *Puris* may be excellent but at 6 in the morning they are not very inviting.

75 M.V. Abhyankar (1886-1935); follower of Tilak, joined Swaraj Party in 1922; president of the Harijan Seva Mandal.

76 Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

I sent you a book—*Humanity Uprooted* by Hindus[77]—for your birthday. It must have reached you many days after the birthday. This was partly my fault and partly the gaol's. It was not a book that I would have particularly selected for you but I had no choice in the matter. It came to me just then and I had no other more suitable book. I had read it two or three years ago and found it good, and so I hastened to send it on to you. It is supposed to be one of the best books on changing Russia. One must remember, however, that Russia is changing so rapidly that books get out of date very soon.

Padmaja sent me a number of books for my birthday and so did Dr. Mahmud. I am always sure of birthday presents from these two! One of the books that Padmaja sent was a beautiful one about Pavlova[78] with scores of fine pictures. In my student days in England I had often seen her and I was very fond of her dancing. She was probably the best dancer of the Russian classical school. The book brought back the old days very vividly to me. I wish you would write to Bebee—as I cannot do so from here—and tell her how happy I was to get her books and especially how much I enjoyed the Pavlova book. I looked through its pictures again and again and, when I had read it, I took it to mummie and left it with her.

About Hindi, I think it will be a good thing for you to take some private tuition, as you suggest. You can consult your Panditji about this and Mr. Chanda.

I hope you will enjoy your little excursion. I have no idea where you are going to.

All my love,

Your loving,
Papu

Dec. 3, Monday

Another month gone and soon the year itself will end. News from Kamala not good. It is terrible for the poor girl—4½ months in bed and not even getting better. I don't suppose I could do much and

77. Maurice Gerschon Hindus (1891-1969); Russian born journalist and author, emigrated to the U.S.A., 1905, his works include *Russia and Japan* and *The House Without a Roof*

78. Anna Pavlova (1881-1931); Russian ballerina, best known for her performance in *The Dying Swan*

yet I would make a difference. But I wait, not knowing what will happen to her and to me. How bad this uncertainty is. I had made a rough guess, when I came back to prison in August, that I would not remain here for more than a 100 days. And so I had told K. Today is the 102nd day!

I read in the paper two days ago that Subhas's father was dying & Subhas had been sent for. He was to come by aeroplane. Then yesterday I read that the Govt. is not going to permit his return![79] Amazing. If they behave like this to Subhas, why should they release me before my time?

Dec. 6, Thursday

So that's that! Samuel Hoare has stated clearly that he is not prepared to recommend to the Govt. of India to give me more concessions, that is, regarding release.[80] I am not to be discharged. Strange how on reading this my prospect of the future changed. Immediately I began to think of the many books I can read in prison and the other things I can do. The outside world receded into the distance.....I had been toying too much with the idea of going out soon.

Dec. 7, Friday

I feel very depressed today. I read this morning of the restraint orders served on Subhas on arrival at Calcutta. What a savage & brutal order! Served on a person returning with all haste to see his ailing father, to find him dead

This afternoon, the Supt gave me Kamala's letter with a number of enclosures. I had been waiting for it for some time. I was told that in future I must write one letter only & send no enclosures as I have done in the past, and so also about receiving letters. The matter had been referred to the I.G. (Salamatullah) and these are his orders or rather he has simply said that rules must be followed. So a four

79. Bose arrived at Karachi on 3 December 1934 The restraint order prohibited him from leaving his residence, addressing public gatherings, interviewing visitors or corresponding with anybody.

80 On 3 December 1934, in reply to a question by H K Hales in the House of Commons to reconsider the question of Jawaharlal's release in view of Kamala's serious illness, Hoare stated that considerable concessions had already been granted in transferring him to a jail near the sanatorium and he was not prepared to recommend any further concessions

years' practice ends and I may not write or receive letters from Indu or Nan or Betty or mother for my fortnightly letters will go to Kamala. This is going to be a harder infliction than many others have been. I have felt very lonely this evening, remote from everybody and everything.

Dec. 21, Friday

How I have been counting the days to my next visit to Bhowali! And yet I do not know when it is likely to be. Perhaps between Christmas & the New Year. But Kacker is going away just then and he might make no proper arrangements. I hope Nan & Indu are there when I go.

The last week has been dismal—rain, mist, no sun. I have sat all day inside shivering, all wrapped up. On two evenings I even had a brazier of charcoal. And yesterday I acknowledged the onset of age by having a hot water bottle in my bed. I think this is the first time I have voluntarily had one.

Today for a change was a bright cloudless day. All day I sat in the sun. Perhaps I overdid this sunning for my skin is chapping off in places. But it was very pleasant.

Heigh ho! And so the year is almost past and soon we shall have another.

Dec. 24, Monday

...Christmas tomorrow—these festivals make one feel lonely in jail. The papers full of festivities and shows and fancy shopping.

I have felt particularly cheerless today—my mind repeatedly wandering back to my student days in England. And I have quite longed for a smoke today.

1935

January 1st—Tuesday

The New Year has begun well for me—yesterday I went to Bhowali and saw the New Year in with Kamala. Hardly ever before have I had such a long and comforting time with her. We talked and talked about the past, present & future and I think we succeeded in unravelling many a knot. I have left her today full of peace and goodwill for the future. And it really surprises me how attached we are to each other. How much she means to me and I to her.

One little regret. I just missed Ranjit. He must have arrived in Bhowali soon after I left today. But I shall see him here soon at a jail interview. Still a meeting outside jail would have been so much better.

Kamala was much the same. Holding on, even making some progress, but the disease has a terrible grip and does not seem to weaken much. It is a long, long struggle.

How long will I be permitted to visit her every two or three weeks? Perhaps not for long if she gets a little better. And even if am allowed to go sometimes, it will not be for 24 hours including the night. Well, well, it has been good to visit her—three times I have gone during the last two months and these visits have meant much to me and to her. If future visits are stopped or curtailed we shall carry on without them.

And Indu—she seems to get on well with the Santiniketan people. On the whole she is growing up well....

I learnt that Bapu is likely to return to prison before very long—probably some time this month.[81] It will be a good thing. But that of course means a tightening up still further of the coercive apparatus of Govt. That too is well. 1935 is likely to wax and wane & pass away before I get out of prison.

But today is New Year's Day—my sixth in prison—and the troubles that the future may hold seem far off. Why worry about them? Enough for the day &c. But today I feel strong & capable of carrying on. Today I feel light hearted. Is that not enough and something to be thankful for? A good beginning for the New Year!

Jan. 10, Thursday

The interview came off today—Ranjit & Chand. It was a long interview, over two hours. Good news & bad but on the whole good. This rush of news, domestic & others, fills the mind and disturbs the detachment which jail produces. I have felt excited & disturbed ever since. It will take a couple of days at least before I settle down again. Meanwhile, I feel a little involved inevitably in various affairs and there is a longing to see Kamala again. I count the days.

81. Bhulabhai Desai was reported to have had talks with Mahatma Gandhi on the undesirability of his visiting the Frontier, even though no ban had been imposed on his entry. As early as 15 November 1934 Mahatma Gandhi had been in correspondence with the Viceroy who had expressed the undesirability of such a visit

Madan & Shamji Mushran also visited Bhowali on Jan. 1st. What a pity I missed them. The fault was Madan's. He insisted on staying on at Kathgodam for his midday meal & so delayed the departure of the whole party including Ranjit. Of course they did not know that I was at Bhowali. Chand did not accompany Ranjit. She was sent on later when the snow fell. Kailas also came & the poor boy developed typhoid and was sent back to Lucknow in this condition.

Kamala doing fairly well, putting on weight &c. but still the A.P. treatment is not very successful.

Chand looked well.

Jan. 12, Saturday

A terrible and unexpected shock. Early in the morning a telegram came from Nan from Allahabad that Jivraj Mehta had telephoned from Bombay to say that mother had had a stroke of paralysis and was unconscious. Nan was going immediately to Bombay. I held together for a while and then came the thought that I had seen the last of mother. Her face, charged with pain and emotion, as she said good-bye to me on Aug. 23rd, when I was rearrested and carried off to Naini, rose up before me vividly. As I was getting in the police car she ran up again to me with arms outstretched. That face haunted me. How she loved me and was wrapped up in me. She would ask my advice in the most trivial things and hold on to even a suggestion as if it was the final and inescapable truth. How she had suffered because of my long absences in prison and how she had bravely faced & endured not only this agony but the physical pain of a police lathi charge. She did this more for her love of father and me than for any principle. And yet there was also the pride not to submit.

I collapsed and wept and found some difficulty in pulling myself together. Poor little mother—what a tortured life she had led for many years—all her children in prison and so much happening that was painful. And now the end had come suddenly. Perhaps it was as well that it was sudden and perhaps painless. She would not recover from this stroke of paralysis at her age and in her weak state.

But it was hard to think that I would not see her again. I grow lonelier than ever. The home that father had built up so lovingly goes to pieces. Kamala lies ill in Bhowali—a long long illness with no cure in prospect, mother lying unconscious in Bombay, I in Almora jail.

What effect will this news have on Kamala!

Another telegram came from Bombay and it was slightly reassuring. But.....

Ranjit, I learnt, was still in Almora. He had visited Binsar yesterday and was now returning to Bhowali & thence to Allahabad. I sent him the two telegrams to see.

What will be Kamala's reaction? Will the bad news upset the slow building up of the last three months?

And even if mother holds on to life will it be as a semi-paralytic? That would be terrible. If she recovers consciousness, she will think of me and long to see me. But I am here at Almora.

I have shivered all day although it has not been as cold as usual. The wind is moaning through the pine trees a dismal note full of desolation. Or is it my mind that is desolate? I am losing most of the footholds I had. India, Allahabad—the mental bonds that tied me to them seem to loosen and I feel like an exile who cannot even look forward to a home anywhere. The moaning wind is a fit accompaniment to my mood. I am weary but there is no rest.

Jan. 16, Wednesday

Have been to Bhowali. A day of the outside world and then back again to Almora jail and my long and cheerless barrack which is so cold and bare and empty.

Kamala does not progress. The most she is doing is just to hold on. It is a brave fight with the odds against.

What a brick Feroze has been! Without him it would have been a terrible job to arrange for Kamala's stay in Bhowali.

Better news of mother. She is improving. I am told that Tej Bahadur Sapru sent a telegram to the Viceroy requesting that I should be transferred to Bombay. Today on my return to Almora from Bhowali I was asked by the superintendent if I would like to be sent to Bombay in case mother's condition was serious. The enquiry was being made by the Judicial Secretary of the U.P. Govt. I told him that certainly I would like to be by her side under these circumstances. Perhaps I shall not be sent just yet as she is said to be improving. And if I go what of Kamala? She has few companions now—indeed only Feroze & the nurse. Even her mother has gone accompanying Kailas when he fell ill.

If I go to Bombay how long will I be kept there? Today I finish eleven months—another thirteen months more! Am I going to be treated like a shuttlecock for these long months? What a life has fallen to my lot! Indu is full of dissatisfaction at the present college course at Santiniketan Wants to chuck it up & devote more time to the Kala Bhawan & languages. I am sending her word to follow her bent....

How cold it is. Last night at Bhowali it froze hard. It is likely to do so here tonight. But Madan has sent me a gorgeous pair of khadi fur-lined slippers and gloves, and here I sit with them on and with an overcoat hugging a brazier full of cheerful warmth. And yet I shiver. I have also been told by Madan to swallow cod liver oil!

I am to go to Bhowali again on Jan. 31. The date has already been fixed. So to wait again for a fortnight and then have a brief vision and back again. Or perhaps before that I am shunted to Bombay.

Jan. 22, Tuesday.

Bad news of Kamala. She seems to be going down and down, slowly but unmistakably. The only treatment they have is failing. We carry on hopelessly....

I have felt miserable today and a longing to see her has obsessed me. Can I not be with her during these days which go by inexorably bringing the end nearer?

The brief visits I have paid her have been very precious to me and perhaps to her. We came nearer to each other than at any other time. We approach only to be parted—and parted for good? The possibilities of her bright young life stare me and mock at me. How much she could do for the larger cause, how much for me! Is that not to be? I could have her as a companion even if she remained an invalid if that were possible.

I have never felt quite so much the desire to go out of gaol, to be released.

What a terribly long time a fortnight is!

25th January 1935

बिज्जू फ़ोरी की शादी। मैंने तार भेजा।[82]

Jan. 29, Tuesday

I have felt put out today by an item of news in the paper. Secret *confabulations going on between the Congress & Jinnah representing* the Moslem League.[83] Will people never learn?

82. Marriage of Bijju and Fory I sent a telegram.
83. Newspapers reported that the Congress, the Muslim League and other parties were in close touch with each other to form a united front in order to reject the Joint Parliamentary Committee's Report.

...It has been raining all day and has been dark & dismal. Day after tomorrow I am to be taken to Bhowali—At last!

Feb. 1, Friday

I am back from Bhowali—an unhappy visit. I felt terribly miserable yesterday & this morning. Somehow things went wrong. Kamala was much the same physically—ups & downs in temperature but gaining weight slowly. But I felt there was a psychological change. She seemed reserved. I ignored this & talked on to her for long, read some of the stuff I had written, recited some favourite poems, and then she told me of her desire to give away to charity part of the proceeds of the sale of her jewellery. I was a little surprised as she had always looked upon this more or less as belonging to Indu. But of course I did not mind it in the least, only I criticised the proposed objects of her charity and suggested that she should give the matter more consideration.

And then she said that she wanted to realise God and give her thoughts to this, and as a preparation for this our relations should undergo some change. Apparently I was not to come in the way of God.

I was taken aback. I had known for long that she had been religiously inclined for some three years or more but it was all rather vague. It seemed to me very far from religion or search for God, whatever that may be, and much more a type of hysteria. This had long irritated me partly because this kind of thing does not appeal to me, partly, I suppose, my vanity was hurt when I found that I counted for less and less in her mental make-up. I seemed to be losing her—she was slipping away and I resented this and felt miserable. Many of our little tiffs during the past two years were due to this background of conflict. Even when I was out of jail for five months this shadow seemed to lie between us. It was not so much religion as such but a type of it which irritated me. I was kept very busy and could do nothing & indeed tried to do nothing. Naturally I told her that she had perfect freedom to think & act as she wanted to. I said so but I did not feel like it.

I came back to prison & the matter receded into the background. Then she fell ill.

Ever since I have been going to Bhowali, I have tried as gently but as persistently as possible to approach her mind, to explain to her my outlook. We have talked of science, psychology, religion, politics & economics in the larger sense, and I was beginning to hope that we were drawing nearer to each other. I looked forward tremendously to each visit. I felt attracted to her and a little fascinated by this mental adventure.

And then suddenly I saw that all my efforts had been wholly in vain. She was further away than ever from me and an almost unbridgeable chasm stretched out between us. She hardly seemed to realise the significance of what she had said. But I was struck dumb and an utter loneliness took possession of me. I left her early in the evening. She had nothing to say to me though I waited for some words, and I found it impossible to carry on our old conversations. What was the good when she hardly heeded them? And what was the good of protesting and arguing?

For long I sat on my bed. I wrote some letters. Then after midnight I left the house and wandered down the hill-side. It was very dark—a moonless night—but the stars were shining brightly, and after a while I could just grope my way about. There was an absolute and almost oppressive silence. Not a sound, not a breath of wind, only the faint humming of telegraph wires. It was cold but not very cold. I stumbled and groped along slowly gazing at the faint shapes of the mountains towering on every side and especially at the stars—how bright and changeless they were in a changing world!

The star-lit night gave me some peace but not much. I returned and sat & thought of the curious muddle my life was getting into. In politics I was an unhappy, lonely figure, and now even my home life was ending for me. Loneliness everywhere. Nothing to hold on to, no life-boats or planks to clutch while I struggled with the rising waters.

The morning brought no relief and it was a somewhat haggard looking and very miserable person who presented himself to Kamala. Later I told her something of what I had in my heart—a small part of it. I felt excessively sad and I communicated my misery to her. And then, as the time for my departure drew near, I thought it was all wrong to part with fearful faces. I made a brave effort to smile; it must have been a wan smile. Anyway we parted with cheerful words. But words do not take one far—The sting remained & is likely to remain. What am I to do? What is to be done?

There is nothing to be done for the present except to sit in this long prison barrack, all alone, and think what a dreadful thing life can be.

On my arrival here this afternoon from Bhowali a telegram was given to me. This morning Betty was delivered of a son in Bombay—Both doing well. I am glad this is over. And I am also glad it is a son. We have had too many daughters in the family.

February 4th, 1935[84]

Indu darling,

I have your letter. I am glad you had a pleasant little holiday on the island in the Ganges and enjoyed yourself swimming about in the river and wandering among the ruins of ancient temples. I had imagined, from something you had written, that you were going to Nalanda, the old university town in Bihar, where Hiuen Tsang went in the days of Harshavardhana.[85] Hence my mistake.

The snow was very pleasant to see and feel but it was a very temporary visitor and, like most good things, it left us too soon. The deodars and other trees laden with snowflakes were very beautiful and fairy-like. Snow whitens and beautifies even the ugly things of life, what then of those that have their own grace and beauty? But it vanished into nothing and it has not come again, and perhaps will not come again this winter, and we can only dream with the poet: Where are the snows of yester-year?

I thought so much of you and of Switzerland with the snow covering all my prison surroundings—the Hotel Mirabeau and you lying ill, and the Danish lady who sent you flowers (she was Danish not French). I sent her some flowers also and quite by accident I chose the Danish national colours—I did not even know at the time what they were. The old lady was so pleased at what she considered my delicate and graceful compliment to her nationality! And then Geneva with our flat there (I have forgotten the name of the street but I think the number was 46) and the Ecole Internationale; and Chesieres and Villars; and Montreux with its picture-like beauty with the Deuts du Midi towering high up beyond the castle of Chillon; and Chamonix and Mont Blanc; and your American camp by the lake-side (what was the name of the lake? How my memory fails me!) where you tried to learn swimming; and Bex; and the Etablissement Stephani at Montana.

How small you were then and how you have grown since, and what a lot has happened since then to all of us! Memories crowd back and fill the mind, memories of the past, especially in jail, where the present is too flat to offer any grip to the imagination and so the mind wanders back to the past or sometimes dreams of the future and builds magic

84. Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML.
85. (c. 590-648)]; king of Kanauj who became the most powerful ruler in north India.

castles in the air. Alas that these castles should be so ephemeral and, like the snow, should vanish so soon, leaving no trace behind!

I had quite forgotten that incident of the walking stick which you mention. But now I remember it and that village fair comes back to my mind, our climb up the mountain, and the people carrying their skis, and the crowds of holiday-makers in that expanse of snow.

There was much more snow round about Bhowali than here at Almora and Feroze had some exciting adventures. Ranjit *pupha* was there also then and Madan Bhai and they used to go out for long walks. At one place a pond was frozen over and Feroze tried to skate or rather slide on it. The ice broke up under his weight and he disappeared suddenly up to his waist in freezing water. It was a job to come out.

The winter seems to be passing and there is already a faint smell of the spring in the air. In another four days it will be *Vasanta Panchami*. Last year on this day mummie and I were in Santiniketan and the Chandas gave us a pretty little present for you must know that this is an important anniversary for both of us—we were married on that day! A year ago that was, and within a few days I was in prison and here I have been since then. Another year gone, another year still to pass. Heigh-ho!

The clouds are my favourite companions here and I watch them daily. Sometimes they pay me a visit in the shape of mist and they fill my barrack with a damp and sticky feeling, but it is not so bad. Usually they are high up assuming the most fantastic shapes. I fancy I see shapes of animals in them, elephants and camels and lions, and even little pigs. Or they resemble the porpoises that hop about in the sea, or fish lying side by side, almost like sardines in a tin. And then they would change suddenly and coalesce and look like a mighty ocean, and at other times like a beach. The wind rustling through the deodars helps the illusion for it sounds like the tide coming in and the waves breaking on a distant sea front. It is a great game this watching of the clouds. Once I saw some whiffs of them floating about and I was immediately reminded of Sir Prabhashankar Pattani's[86] peroxide beard. It was really a remarkable likeness and I was highly amused and laughed to myself for a long time. Have you seen this famous beard? It is worth seeing. *Puphi*—the elder one—knows it well and so you had better tell her of my experience here.

86 (1862 1938); member, Bombay Legislative Council, 1916, Dewan, Bhavnagar state, 1902 12; attended the Round Table Conferences in 1930 and 1931.

We shall have flowers soon, the dainty gifts of the spring season, and the hill-sides will be covered with them, especially at Bhowali. Even here in my barrack-yard I hope to raise a few. Just at present last year's plants and shrubs look shrivelled up on account of the cold.

Some time back, when I was at Bhowali, mummie told me that you wanted to change your subjects and give up your present course. You were keen on giving more time to the Kala Bhawan and to languages. I asked Feroze to send you a message and also to write to Anil Kumar Chanda. I suggested that you might discuss the matter with Chanda and then make such alterations in your subjects as you think fit. I do not know if you got this message.

I am quite clear that if you have a clear bent in any direction, you should follow it. It is all wrong to spend too much time on subjects which do not interest. That is almost time wasted. Of course every cultured person must have some general knowledge about the world we live in and its problems. I have always attached importance to the study of science because without it, it is hardly possible to understand the modern world. But, as far as I can make out, you cannot do much in the way of science at Santiniketan. If you can carry on with chemistry, do so, but it is for you to decide. Biology is really more important than chemistry but they are all related together. I sent you a fat tome on biology by Wells a month ago.

If you are attracted to the Kala Bhawan I think it advisable for you to give more time to it. It is better to do something well than many things indifferently. There is also this to be said for it that art is the speciality of Santiniketan and Nandlal Bose is a fine artist and teacher. If the मास्टर मोशाय[87] thinks you are a promising pupil you should profit by his teaching as much as possible. This is a thing which you cannot easily have elsewhere.

Languages are also desirable and languages are tricky things after a certain age. You will find it far easier to learn a new language now than say five years later. As one grows the capacity for learning languages weakens tremendously. The best time of course is babyhood. As Miss Spiegel[88] (I refuse to call her by any other name. Why should people's names be changed?) is a good linguist, take advantage of this. I do not know what languages you are doing at present. Of the Indian languages I understand you are taking up Bengali and Hindi. French

87. Master mosha, respected teacher.
88. Dr. Margarete Spiegel, German lady who taught for some time at Santiniketan; she was a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi who renamed her as Amala.

of course you are taking and presumably English literature. Are you doing German also? I had no idea you were doing so but a mention of it in one of your letters made me think that you had taken it up. If you want to take it, do so by all means. It is for you to decide.

So you can build up your studies round the Kala Bhawan and languages and any other subjects you choose. It will be a good thing if you could discuss the matter with A.K. Chanda. He might be of help in making up a programme.

I am not at all keen on your taking any particular examination at Santiniketan. If they come in your way take them. You need not go out of your way for them. I look upon all these studies of yours as preparatory to specialization, probably in Europe, for some particular line of work. I do not yet know what your own desires are in regard to this or whether they are clearly formed yet. In the ordinary course you will remain at Santiniketan till the summer of 1936. If possible I should like to go with you and mummie then to Europe but it is quite impossible to make any plans so far ahead. There are so many indeterminate factors—mother's health, Dolamma's condition, my own entanglements etc. So for the present you had better not bother too much about the distant future and carry on at Santiniketan and learn as much as possible there.

You must have had news of Dolamma. She has been through a big crisis and although she is much better now, she has to be carefully watched and taken care of. At one time there was some talk of my being transferred to a Bombay jail so that I might see her. But now that she is a little better there is no immediate chance of my being sent. It is proposed to keep her in Bombay till the end of March and then to bring her to Allahabad. After ten days or so there the idea is to take her to Bhowali. If all goes well she ought to come up about the middle of April.

It is quite possible that Ranjit *pupha* and *puphi* and the children might also come up for the summer to these hills, probably somewhere near Almora. Ranjit has taken a fancy to a house in a beautiful spot about 14 miles from Almora. It is much higher up and commands a magnificent view of the snows but it is far from civilization and rather desolate.

Perhaps Raja and *chhoti puphi* might also come up. They will certainly come to see me for I have not had a glimpse of them for a long time. And then there is the bawling infant who has to be displayed. You know of course of the new arrival who appeared in this

world on the morning of February 1st. *Bari puphi* must have been greatly relieved that the newcomer was a son. Our family has had too many daughters already for her taste!

Your next holidays, I suppose, begin in May. It is so long since I saw you and May seems to be a terrible distance off. However the months will pass and then I hope you will come up to Bhowali and pay a visit to your Papu in Almora jail.

Upadhyaya will probably be coming up to Bhowali soon.

I hope you are keeping well. I want you not merely to keep well but to be aggressively fit and, as far as possible, to make yourself impervious to disease. What a terrible waste of energy is illness and how it disables us from doing useful work! One does not think about it much in one's youth but it is worthwhile doing so. A little care now might make such a lot of difference later on. Many people take various tonics but really the best thing, especially in youth, to build up a strong body is cod liver oil. Horrible stuff you will say and I entirely agree with you. But there is a very good substitute—halibut liver oil. This is as bad but the great advantage is that one has only to take two or three drops of this instead of the huge quantities of cod liver oil. It is quite easy to put these drops in any liquid or solid and not feel the taste. Even I have started taking them regularly! I would be glad if you followed your father's example in this respect at least. Ask your doctor there and tell him to get it for you from Calcutta. You can also get it in capsules or in a malt mixture. It is called Crooke's Colossal Halibut Liver Oil. I am sure it will do you a deal of good and make you strong and capable of resisting any disease.

I am glad you read *The Art of Thinking*. It is by an Abbe (Dimnet I think), is it not? I read it some time ago and liked it. Do let me know from time to time what books you read. I am interested in books. And should you at any time want me to send you interesting books I shall gladly do so. Even from Almora jail I can reach out for them.

Is Leena Sarabhai[89] studying at Santiniketan? Or did she merely come to dance? I saw her dance four years ago in Ahmedabad and liked it very much. She must have grown a lot since then. She was plump enough then.

Gurudev must be going to Allahabad soon. When he returns give him my regards and love.

89. Daughter of Ambalal Sarabhai

Who pays your college account? Is this done from Bombay or Allahabad? Mummie doesn't know And do you get any pocket money? You must not run short of pocket cash.

This is a fairly long letter but then I don't write to you very often, do I?

With all my love,

Your loving
Papu

5th February 1935

इन्दु को खत भेजा (कमला के मारफत)[90]

February 6, 1935, Wednesday

Father's death anniversary—Four years!

I have felt a little calmer and more composed. I went back to the writing of *In and Out of Prison* and the concentration of mind necessary for this made me forget my own troubles and worries. I feel better but still sad and weary.

I had a strange dream last night. We were living in the old Anand Bhawan—(Swaraj Bhawan now) and Kamala was unwell. Something happened—I have forgotten already what this was—and Kamala decided to leave me! Indeed she went off. I am not clear if she went alone or *with someone. I followed* her to the Allahabad station but I do not seem to have met with success there. What a curious mix-up is one's mind!

I read in the *Manchester Guardian today Hoare's answer to Maxton* about my release. He repeated that he did not see his way to it. I was given every facility to see my wife—once or twice a week. I wish I was.

Well, I suppose another year will go by somehow just as one year is almost past. What could I do if I was out? Nothing much. I would sit quietly at Bhowali. But that would be good for Kamala and for me.

Meanwhile Sastri grows lyrical & hysterical over the virtues of the British connection, & Sapru chants the praises of King George & blesses the jubilee. It takes all sorts to make this world!

90 Sent letter to Indu (c/o Kamala).

12th February 1935

Anniversary of my arrest!—one year over

February 14, Thursday

News of Kamala has not been good and I have been depressed. Yesterday slightly better news, not much but enough to cheer me a little.

I have hardly read since my return from Bhowali. *In and Out of Prison* has absorbed my attention. I decided to push on with it and during the last 12 days I wrote 92 pages, and today, at last, I finished it! 976 pages of manuscript in all. I feel as if a weight was off me. How it has kept my mind busy for many months! What shall I do next? Reading by itself is not good enough. But for some weeks I shall read and read—I have been neglecting books lately. I have ordered a large supply.

A letter from Indu came today, it cheered me—also one from Nan—all about the advent into the world of my new nephew!

Altogether I feel much better today and I am looking forward eagerly to my next visit to Bhowali. It will be two weeks tomorrow since my return but no fresh date has so far been fixed.

February 17, Sunday

I am fed up. Waiting, waiting for the summons from Bhowali, but no message has come. I felt distracted today and could not do any serious work. Spent the day in a general clean up of everything. Feel very lonely.

February 18, Monday

The call has come. I go to Bhowali tomorrow morning. For days past I have revolved in my mind how to meet Kamala—what to say to her. As my moods changed my imaginary conversation changed also. I feel in good mood this evening and I hope that I shall behave tomorrow.

Feb. 21, Thursday

I went to Bhowali on Tuesday & returned yesterday. A curious visit —Long talks with K—sometimes irritating and disturbing; at other times soothing. How very child-like she is! Feroze suddenly developed

violent pains early in the night and I sat up with him for several hours. A tiring night with little sleep.

Visited the sanatorium the next morning and more or less decided that K was to move there next month. Probably I shall have to go to Bhowali soon again—on the 1st March—to fix this transfer up.

Reached Almora very tired and sleepy.

A number of new books have come. Interesting and attractive.

February 22, 1935[91]

Darling Indu,

I have your letter. I am glad you have fixed up your subjects in consultation with Kripalani. Your choice seems to be as good as was possible in Santiniketan. I do not quite understand what you mean by reading history by yourself. It is such an enormous ocean that one is rather apt to get lost in it without some expert help. Perhaps you will get this help from some of the professors there. Classes are really far less important than this personal guidance from good professors. Indeed at Cambridge we attached little importance to the university lectures; far more helpful is the help given by college tutors, as they are called. This really applies to every subject—literature, politics, economics. I do not know if there is any such system obtaining at Santiniketan or whether the professors do this job apart from professing in classes. Even if the system does not prevail there is no reason why you should not seek help from time to time from your professors. Kripalani, for instance, will always be helpful.

You have accepted my suggestion that I should send you books from time to time. I shall do so. And yet when I came to think what I should send you, I was a little puzzled. Most of the books I get here are new books, just published. Some of them are good, and yet I wonder how many will survive after a few years. There was an old rule that was dinned into me when I was about your age: don't read books less than fifty years old. The idea obviously was that a lapse of that period will sift the good from the bad and the indifferent, and if a book survived, it was likely to be worth reading. It was a good rule. It cannot of course apply to scientific, historical, political, economic and similar subjects, in which continuous research work is resulting in an addition of knowledge. In these subjects such rapid changes are being made nowadays that a book written a generation

91. Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML

back is completely out of date, though it may be interesting and important from other points of view. But in pure literature it is perfectly true that the avalanche of books that is descending on us in these days is very largely trash and it is not easy to separate the chaff from the grain. It is far safer to read the famous classics of old which have influenced thought and writing for so long. With that background it is easier to exercise a wise choice in modern literature. We must not of course ignore modern books for without them we cannot understand our own age and its inner conflicts.

Then again the reading of books depends so much on the individual—his or her general tastes as well as special moods. To enjoy a book one must not be forced to read it as a duty. That is the surest way of disliking it as well as developing a prejudice against all reading. Our examinations and text-books often have this result. Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Molière, Victor Hugo etc. become terrible bores because of this association with examinations. And yet what wonderful stuff they have written!

I have yet another difficulty. Youth likes one kind of book, middle age another kind, and old age yet a third kind. As a boy I loved Scott's novels and Tennyson's poems. I could hardly stand them now. Then I became passionately fond of Swinburne and Shelley; my enthusiasm for them has considerably abated Must I therefore, in recommending books to you, think of my youthful tastes or my present tastes? Probably neither would be a safe guide. What I would like to know is what books you read and how you like them. Do you like poetry and if so who are your favourite poets? Do you like history—sociology—current affairs—economics? Fiction—historical novels—utopias—essays? And so on. If you would write to me about these matters I could keep in touch with your mental moods and development and I would then find it easier to suggest further reading. I do not want to thrust books on you which you do not like.

Any outstanding new book that I come across, and that I think will interest you, I shall send you. Meanwhile I shall mention a number of good books and leave you to choose from them. As they are all well-known classics you ought to have them in your college library. If they are not there I can have any you want sent from Allahabad.

Most of Plato's books are very interesting and thought provoking. Try one of them—say the *Republic*—and see how you like it. The old Greek plays are also fascinating. Some of them are so powerful that they make one shiver almost. Sophocles, Euripides, Aeschylus for tragedies—Aristophanes for delightful comedies. The plays are short and easy to read. There are many good English translations. And

talking of plays—have you read *Shakuntala?* Not of course in Kalidas's[92] original but in translation. It is worth reading.

Shakespeare again makes fascinating reading if one takes to him for pure pleasure and not for examination stunts. And his sonnets are extraordinarily beautiful.

I do not know if you are keen on poetry. I see that you have been studying Walt Whitman and Browning—excellent persons but not poets after my heart. Modern poetry is very different—some good, some totally incomprehensible to me. The most lyrical and musical of modern English poets is Walter de la Mare. I have just been reading him.

When we were together in Anand Bhawan last August you told me that you would read Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. Did you read it? It is supposed to be one of the greatest of novels. Another great novel by Tolstoy is *Anna Karenina*. Have you read much of Thackeray or Dickens? They are rather old-fashioned now but I remember how I used to enjoy them in the old days. You should certainly read Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, a story of Waterloo days.

I have always been interested in utopias and books peeping into the future. William Morris's *News from Nowhere* was an early favourite of mine. Then there is Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, and a fairly recent book by H.G. Wells: *Men Like Gods*.

Bernard Shaw you have read a little. Read more of him. Almost all his plays are worth it and his prefaces to these plays are equally important.

A favourite author of mine is Bertrand Russell. He writes beautiful English and he is eminently sensible. I think you will like him. Except for his philosophical and mathematical books, you can take up any of his works.

This is just a brief list which strikes me at the moment. I can go on adding to it but for the time being I shall stop and leave you to make your choice. Probably within a few days you will get the 2nd volume of *Glimpses* and you might honour it with a perusal, though I am told it is unconscionably long. Perhaps, if I am provoked, I might write another book for you!

Why does one read books? To instruct oneself, amuse oneself, train one's mind etc. etc.—Certainly all this and much more. Ultimately it is to understand life with its thousand facets and to learn

92. Dramatist and poet of the fifth century A.D. who wrote the Sanskrit dramas, *Shakuntala*, *Vikramorvasi* and *Malavikagnimitra*, and two long poems, *Raghuvamsha* and *Kumarasambhava*.

how to live life. Our individual experiences are so narrow and limited, if we were to rely on them alone we would also remain narrow and limited. But books give us the experiences and thoughts of innumerable others, often the wisest of their generation, and lift us out of our narrow ruts. Gradually as we go up the mountain sides fresh vistas come into view, our vision extends further and further, and a sense of proportion comes to us. We are not overwhelmed by our petty and often transient loves and hates and we see them for what they are—petty and hardly noticeable ripples on the immense ocean of life. For all of us it is worthwhile to develop this larger vision for it enables us to see life whole and to live it well. But for those who cherish the thought of rising above the common herd of unthinking humanity and playing a brave part in life's journey, this vision and sense of proportion are essential to keep us on the right path and steady us when storms and heavy winds bear down on us.

'Hear, hear', I seem to hear you say, 'to these pious and noble sentiments, but why inflict them in a letter?' I agree with you—my pen strayed and it is admonished.

We shall return to a more profitable subject. I have been watching the kites here a good deal. There is a wide expanse of sky and quite fifty kites round about here. Every day they crowd right over this little gaol, when the prisoners are fed, in the hope of getting scraps of bread. What is more interesting is to watch them glide gracefully high above almost without effort. Sometimes they rush past at amazing speed borne by a current of air, or they go up and up, or swoop down at quite a tremendous pace. They seldom exert themselves, except to steer by their tails, and to balance themselves. The rest they leave to the wind. I can almost chalk the air currents above me by watching these kites. Do you know much about 'gliding'—the new form of flying on light little aeroplanes without engines? This is based entirely on the knowledge and use of these air currents. There being no engine, there is no motive power behind the plane. It has to rely entirely on the wind and air currents. It is very light and usually has a single pilot, or at most two, whose function is to balance and to nose out the currents which lift him up. Then he gradually glides down till he is fortunate enough to pick up another upward current. People have flown twenty and thirty miles or more in this way. It is perfectly soundless flying—there being no engine—very like a bird. There is not very much danger in it as usually the plane glides down slowly to the ground. There is just a chance of course of a collision against a tree or telegraph wires or a house. This gliding is now taught in a large number of schools in Europe and America,

especially in Germany. It is fairly cheap, as the simple planes cost little. It is excellent training for boys and girls, both for their nerves and to make them efficient pilots of real aeroplanes later on. Why should not Santiniketan start a gliding class? Suggest it to the authorities. But I am afraid this innovation will not be welcomed by them.

Perhaps you are right about the cod liver oil. The summer in the plains is not a suitable time for it. Why not swallow pangaduine instead?

I went to Bhowali a few days ago. We have almost fixed on certain changes. The final touches will be given when I go there next. It is proposed to transfer mummie from Chandra Bhawan to a cottage in the sanatorium itself. I visited the sanatorium and liked their little cottage. I think the sanatorium regime will be good for mummie and I hope she will improve rapidly there. She will not have quite so much company there and might feel a little dull but her treatment will benefit. The nurse will live with her there and if necessary one other person can share the nurse's room. It is probable that quite a number of our family members will be coming up in summer and it will be better for them, as well as for mummie, if she lived quietly in the sanatorium and saw visitors at fixed hours every day.

We are thinking of leaving our present cottages—Chandra Bhawan etc.—and taking two other cottages. These latter are just above the Royal Oak Hotel. They are not so well situated but there are certain advantages. They are situated on a good bit of level ground and there is a plentiful water supply. And then they are much cheaper. They are just the same size as the old cottages. Dolamma when she comes up in April can occupy one of these cottages and *chhoti puphi* (with the brat) the other. You and others who come can fit in either of these. I should like *chhoti puphi* to stay in Bhowali for some time. This will be good for her and the kid. I do not know if she will like making a long stay in such a quiet place. Ranjit *pupha* intends, I believe, taking a house in Binsar, high up above Almora. It must be delightful there but it is a wilderness. I have suggested to him to make a trip to the Pindari glacier. If he fixes this up I hope you will also go, and I shall renew my acquaintance with it vicariously through you. It is thirty five or thirty six years since I went there! I was about nine years old then.

I understand there is a great argument going on in Bombay as to what name should be given to the son and heir. Two names have been especially selected: Rahula and Harsha. I like both. I think Harsha is better in some ways; I like its meaning and its sound. But it is fairly common. Rahula has the advantage of being rather uncommon

and its association (being the name of Buddha's son) is in its favour also. I know only one Rahula and he is a very delightful and learned scholar who is a Buddhist monk and knows any number of out-of-the-way languages. So I find it a little difficult to choose. Harsha reminds me of some famous lines by Blake[93]—Do you know them?

'I have no name:	Pretty joy!
I am but two days old.'	Sweet joy but two days old,
What shall I call thee?	Sweet joy I call thee:
'I happy am,	Thou dost smile,
Joy is my name.'	I sing the while
Sweet joy befall thee!	Sweet joy befall thee!

Send these lines to *chhoti puphi* and tell her that I have so far been unable to choose between the two names. If she and Raja have no marked preference, why not toss for it?

When does your term end? Early in May I suppose. Do you have any terminal examinations?

All my love,

Your loving
Papu

March 3, Sunday

Went to Bhowali on Friday—returned Saturday (yesterday). Madan there. Visits to sanatorium. Tremendous to-do as to whether K was to shift there or not. Suddenly she developed a strong disinclination to change over, just when it was the decided opinion of doctors and others that she should go. I would place all the reasons why she should shift, and they seemed to me overwhelming and quite unanswerable. She would agree unwillingly and five minutes later some irrepressible instinct would make her change her mind. It was curious how strong this desire of hers was. It would bubble up repeatedly, hop out in spite of all attempts at reason. Ultimately she agreed. I presume she will stick to this decision.

How curious is life! I seem to be learning its mysterious ways still and my wonder grows. It is overwhelming at times and how it mocks! I have returned from Bhowali full of strange thoughts and feelings which I hardly dare put down in black & white. There is a sense of emptiness & loneliness and yet there is also some relief from the tension of past days. At least I feel I know what the trouble is which

93. William Blake (1757-1827); English mystic, poet and artist. The quotation is from *Songs of Experience* (*Infant Joy*).

caused this tension. Understanding is often painful but it is better than a blind search for something which eludes one. And yet I do not know—so many fresh mysteries crop up. So many dark alleys leading I know not where. What can one do except to keep calm and preserve *an untroubled exterior and wait for life's playful fantasies* to develop? What can one do anyway in prison? At least one can read Blake:

Never seek to tell thy love,
Love that never told can be;
For the gentle wind does move
Silently, invisibly.

The flowers are in evidence everywhere. The plum trees are covered with white blossoms—the whole tree looks like a bouquet from a little distance. So also the peach tree with its mauve-coloured flowers. And then there is an extraordinary flower, red as blood, growing in bunches on big trees and hanging like a Japanese lantern. It looks so artificial. It is vivid against the greenery of the leaves and one can spot the tree from a considerable distance. There are so many other flowers appearing—buttercups and daisies and *sarson* and others whose names even I don't know.

New birds also are appearing—Sometimes strangers visit my barrack—on my way to Bhowali I pass very beautiful Himalayan birds.

Human beings, birds, flowers—each growing in its own way, mysteriously fitting in into this strange pattern that is life.

March 5, Tuesday

A thought came to me yesterday that Madan Atal should accompany Kamala to Europe if she has to go soon. The problem of a companion had seemed insoluble and I had previously imagined that I was the sole possibility. And I was in prison. Madan had suggested that Govt. might be informed, informally and through the 'friends' who delight in such tasks, of the position. On some previous occasion Andrews had said that Govt. were willing to let me out for the purpose of accompanying Kamala to Europe. I was alarmed at Madan's suggestion and I begged him not to whisper it to anyone. Even hints of this kind assume extraordinary shapes.

But the question troubled me. What if it is desirable for K to be sent over soon—in May before the monsoon? There was a chance of this if her condition deteriorated during the next 2 months. That was the upshot of the conversation I had with Kacker & Madan.

What was to be done? There was me—and Indu—and mother, weak and ailing and liable at any moment to a relapse. And then the brilliant thought struck me that Madan might go with K. This resolved most of my present difficulties. Indeed I preferred his going to my going, even if I was free to do so. I think it will be a good thing for me to be away from K for a while. But if I am let out I can hardly remain behind and let her go with someone else. I want to go of course—I want very much to be with her and yet.....perhaps it would be well if I kept away from her for a while. And yet I don't know. I feel at sea in this strange world.

However all these questions do not arise at present and so long as I am in prison. I was eager to write to Madan and tell him of my new idea. I asked the Supt. for permission to write a special letter to him. On this being granted, I wrote to Madan today. I feel a little lighter.

It is three days since I came back from Bhowali. It seems such a long time ago. I want to go there again and yet there is not quite the same desire to do so as I used to have.....

Heigh-ho!

How could I dream that I
With my two hands should touch the sky?

March 6, Wednesday

Another earthquake experience! Early this morning I woke up with a start. I felt that somebody was shaking me and I was rolling in bed. I soon realised that it was an earthquake. A shower of loose earth descended on my bed from the roof, also a few small pebbles. The sparrows made a great noise and fluttered about in the dark. One of them fell quite near my bed and I found in the morning that it had deposited an egg.

For an instant I thought that I ought to get up for safety's sake. But where was I to go? I was locked up and the danger, if any, would not be less in any other part of my barrack. So why trouble to leave my bed when I was warm and comfortable? If anything was going to happen I might as well face it calmly and comfortably in bed. So I remained where I was and for a minute or two covered my head to protect myself from the loose earth and pebbles that were falling. Probably it would have been somewhat safer to get *under* the bed. But that seemed undignified and anyway it could make little difference.

Probably the shocks lasted a minute or two or perhaps more, as I may have been asleep for part of the time. When it passed off I saw the time. It was 3.48 a.m. And then I wondered what other places had experienced. It was a fairly severe shock here. It might have been *far worse elsewhere—What of Kamala? What of the cities in* the plains? Was this another great catastrophe like the one a year ago? I was troubled and then I dozed off. I must wait for two days before the paper brings definite news.

I have received a large number of flower seeds and bulbs from Pochas[94] and I am taking more interest in gardening. My yard ought to blossom out in many colours after a few months. Will I be here then?

Time seems to go slowly. It is only four days since I was at Bhowali and already it seems an age. I want to go back so much.

March 10 Sunday

No news of Kamala although it is eight days since I left her and the doctor is supposed to write to me twice a week. I am worried—I do not know if any hitch has occurred in the carrying out of her transfer to the sanatorium.

Today's paper contained many references to me. Questions in the Assembly—an A.P. message that the U.P. Government are prepared to release me if I want to accompany Kamala to Europe. Ifs & buts. I don't want to go out on any such condition—but what am I to do? I want to go to Europe—out of India—for a while for my own sake and even apart from Kamala. But there is mother and I would hate to leave her in her present condition. Then Indu—what of her? Another thought worries me—the political situation. It is not a pleasant thought that so many of my colleagues are in trouble, in jail and outside, and I am deserting them. I don't suppose I could do anything, but one's presence and accessibility is something after all. Ordinarily I would have liked to be out for a few months and to meet friends and colleagues and have good discussions with them. Meanwhile mother might improve and Kamala get a little stronger. In October or thereabouts *K and I and Indu might have sailed.*

I have developed quite a passion for gardening. For many days I have spent the whole morning and a good part of the afternoon digging or transplanting or generally messing about the yard that is attached to my cell. The immediate provocation was the arrival of

94. A well known seed merchant in Poona.

bulbs & seeds from Pochas. Probably I shall not remain here to see the flowers come out. Meanwhile I tire myself out and feel much fitter than I have done for long. How much better is this kind of natural exercise than jerks and other artificial exercises!

I have been doing little reading. I have revised *In and Out*—I have also read Vivekananda's *Jnana Yoga*—lectures delivered in Europe. I was much interested in him and should like to read more of him.

March 12, Tuesday

Still no news from Bhowali. I wonder if Kacker is annoyed and shows his resentment in this way. There is also no mention of the date of my next visit.

Govt. have contradicted the press statement that they are prepared to release me to accompany Kamala to Europe. That does not mean much and I think that if occasion arose they would let me go. Still I was a little irritated by the announcement.

But then I welcomed it. It saves me from an embarrassing position. It is becoming clearer to me that I have no business to leave India at this stage. It is almost like deserting one's colleagues. Speeches by Aney & Bhulabhai Desai[95] in the Assembly make most painful reading.[96] And Bapu? He is writing long articles on the relative merits of cow's milk & buffalo's milk! And of course the injury done by eating mill-ground rice and sugar. These are the great planks of village uplift.

March 19, Tuesday

I went to Bhowali on Friday last, the 15th, and returned the next day. Kamala in the sanatorium. I spent the night in the sanatorium guest house.

95. (1877-1946); leading lawyer of Bombay; advocate general, 1926, joined Congress in 1930, member, Congress Working Committee, 1934-35, leader of the Congress Party in the Central Legislative Assembly, 1934-39; played a prominent part as defence lawyer in I.N.A. trial in 1946.

96. Aney stated in the Legislative Assembly on 8 March 1935 that the continuance of repression by the government in the face of the withdrawal of civil disobedience would create a "spirit of hostility" and retard the "day of reconciliation and mutual cooperation". Bhulabhai stated that the establishment of self-government in India "consistent with the interests of India and England" would make direct action "a thing of the past".

Found K fairly well. Her weight well up. She has actually gained 16 or 17 lbs. since she came up in October. A hopeful sign. Oddly enough I have lost about the same amount since I came to gaol last year in Alipore. I am about 124 lbs. now. So we are approaching each other!

K. fairly cheerful. Had a good talk with her. She is keen on going to Europe. If she improves, as I hope she will, this may not be necessary in the near future. But I am making arrangements nevertheless in the event of a contingency arising. Madan is agreeable to accompanying her. At first I did not think that Indu should go with her but now I am inclined to change my opinion. She might as well go now as later. Her company will be helpful to K. And the expense of sending a nurse will be saved.

What a child K is! That irritates me often enough and yet I think that is partly her charm. How my moods change when I think of her. How much she means to me and yet how little she fits in or tries to fit in with my ideas. That is really the irritating part, that she does not try, and so she drifts apart.

I have been feeling somewhat unhappy for the last two or three days. This morning I was peculiarly ungracious to my prison helpers, for no fault of their own. I feel better this evening.

Partly my depression is due to physical reasons, I suppose. I have not been feeling up to the mark lately. Little exercise. The digging has ended as there is nothing left to dig. It is much warmer too and the sun is unpleasantly warm to work in or even to walk about in the open. My poor flowers are wilting for lack of water, for water is already scarce here.

It is pleasant in the early mornings when I am unlocked at 6 a.m. Just before the sun comes out it is cool and delightful. In the evening locking up time is still about 5-30 p.m. when the sun is blazing away. It is hardly possible to walk much before I am confined to my barrack.

How ignorant I am! The big red flowers I had admired so much on my way to Bhowali are the rhododendrons. I had heard and read of these often enough but I did not know what they were. The trees are full of them now and they stand out brightly on the hill-sides—patches of vivid colour, to be seen from long distances. The peach and the plum continue to be in evidence—mauve and white bouquets lining the road, or peeping out from a distance. The fresh leaves are coming out on many of the trees. Pinky-red and delicate-looking, they are like human babies, rather like the autumn tints. But these shades pass rapidly as the leaves grow older and become green.

I have grown very lazy. I sleep a lot and read casually. Having finished my writing job I seem to be at a loose end. Shall I take on some other writing work? But what shall I write about? For the present I shall drift along and concentrate on reading.

No letter from Indu for a long time. How she forgets me! And then she sends a delightful letter which pleases me immensely.

Thirteen months gone—eleven more to get through. It is a long time. When will I go out? And what will I do when I am out? Subhas seems to be writing a deal of nonsense. He can only think in terms of being himself a Mussolini.

Tomorrow is *Holi*.

March 22, 1935[97]

Darling Indu,

It is just over five weeks since I received your last letter, and because yours is the only letter mummie sends on to me here, I have received no letter at all, from her or through her, for this period. It is rather odd that I cannot take advantage even of the privilege of receiving letters every fortnight that I am allowed. Fortunately I have been able to see her twice during this period and so have had some news. But for this I would have been completely cut off from the family.

These visits to Bhowali are very precious to me and I look forward to them and count the days. It is a tiring journey but every fortnight the change in the weather brings changes in the trees and vegetation. The rhododendrons appeared about six weeks ago—large groups of beautiful blood red flowers hanging on to the branches of big green trees. Almost artificial they seemed, like Japanese or Chinese lanterns hung to decorate the tree. I did not recognize them at first—foolish me!—although I had read often enough about them. But then a Cambridge degree in botany is not much of a passport to a knowledge of flowers! We are told all about the families and natural orders of these flowers, and we mess about with algae and fungi, and watch weird minute animals through the microscope; but in this preparation for examinations and quest for a degree we miss often enough the beauty and radiance of flowers. Do you know the lines:

> A primrose by the river's brim,
> A little primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more.

97. Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML.

But to go back to the rhododendrons. There were few flowers at first in the trees and that gave an air of artificiality. But now they crowd the branches and vivid patches of red stand out on the distant hill sides. There are other colours also—the whitish plum blossoms and the mauve flowers of the peach, both spurting out almost directly from the stem and looking like giant bouquets. And then there are so many odd flowers just peeping out at a strange world. There are daisies and buttercups, or something like them. And yellow *sarson* (सरसों)[98] flowers, emblems of *Vasanta*. Unhappily I do not even know the names of most of the flowers I see growing wild. That does not lessen my enjoyment of them but to know a flower by name does add to the intimacy and gives a sense of companionship.

I had a bright idea over a month ago. Why not stick flower seeds in my yard here and bring colour and variety to it? So that when you come to see me next time you may have an agreeable surprise and take away a bouquet of fresh flowers. So I asked Upadhyaya to write to your friend the Pochas for a packet of seeds to be sent to me direct and another packet for Bhowali. Pochas sent these packets and added as a gift to me, it appears, some valuable dahlia and gladioli bulbs. We stuck some of these seeds and bulbs in boxes and beds here and the superfluous ones I passed on to Bhowali. They have got a big collection of these there now and I suppose the sanatorium will profit by most of them. I have asked them to stick them round about mummie's cottage. Some will go to the two new cottages we have engaged.

Here in the Almora jail, as soon as the seeds arrived, there was a mighty digging in my yard. I spent nearly the whole day with spade or shovel, or some other appropriate gardening tool, digging away and messing about with the cool soft earth. There were a vast number of stones unearthed, naturally enough as this is hilly country. And so we prepared the beds for the flowers that were to come and waited patiently for them to grow in their little wooden boxes. This energetic digging and gardening was quite heavy physical labour for some days and I was tired out in the evenings. I hardly read for sometime. The hard part of the job is done now and we wait and wait. I am afraid most of the flowers will not be in evidence till the rains. So don't look forward to too much of a surprise when you visit me next.

The spring has not only brought flowers to the hill-sides, it has brought also many birds, some of them very beautiful Himalayan varieties which are quite unknown to me. I pass them sometimes on my way to Bhowali, and the tamer varieties visit my prison yard occasionally.

98. Mustard.

There is one delightful creature, daintiness and liveliness and 'spirit' personified. Various shades of delicate grays run along its body, and a black collar surrounds its neck, and there is a little white cap with two sparkling black eyes staring out of the rim of this cap. The whole shape of the bird is rather like the outline of a human eye, and as it hops about incessantly, a merry and roving eye it seems. I do not know the bird's name but the villagers call it *khanjan* or vulgarly and very unpoetically the *dhobin* धोबिन because it comes to the plains just before the monsoon. I remember its visits in our barrack in Naini prison nearly five years ago and since then I have seen it in other gaols. And yet, strangely enough, I do not remember seeing it outside prison! Probably I am too much occupied with other affairs when I am outside to pay attention to flowers and birds. But in prison they come back to me and chide me for my inconstancy, but do not punish me for it, and we become friends again.

I am told that a report about my narrow escape from sudden death has been broadcast in some of the papers. What an amazing capacity these newspapers have for making a mountain out of a mole-hill! A telegram offering thanks to the Almighty for my providential escape was even sent to me by Kasturbhai Lalbhai.[99] It was a needless waste of thanks which Kasturbhai's keen business instincts should have prevented him from indulging in. I was and am perfectly sound and fit. On the night we had the earthquake shock—it was the 6th March—I woke up suddenly and felt as if I was being shaken up by someone. There being no one about, and indeed there could be no one as I was locked up, I realized soon enough that our mother earth was shivering slightly. Even a slight shiver however might have unhappy consequences. A little loose earth, some plaster, a few tiny pebbles got detached from the roof and fell on my bed. It was nothing much but the idea did occur to me that the roof itself might choose to improve its acquaintance with me by descending upon me and having a look at me at closer quarters. This was not unlikely as the roof is a moth-eaten and rickety affair. For an instant I thought of getting out of bed—foolish thought. I was locked in and could not go out and bed was as good and safe a place as any other corner of my barrack-room. And it was certainly more comfortable. So I snuggled in and covered my head with a sheet, because of the loose earth coming down, and awaited developments. Having made a virtue of necessity, I patted myself, metaphorically, on the back for the calmness and

99. (b. 1894); an industrialist of Ahmedabad.

clear headedness with which I awaited the collapse of the roof. But all in vain. The wretched roof refused to collapse and soon the shock passed by and, regretfully, I fell asleep again.

I was reading the other day about a diary of an infant prodigy. She was a little girl, Margaret Fleming,[100] who lived over a hundred years ago, and was a favourite of Sir Walter Scott. She knew a great deal of Shakespeare, the Bible, Burns, Swift and Gray by heart and was herself a bit of a poet. She also wrote a diary, which has recently been published, and this is quite a unique little book as tiny girls do not usually write down their thoughts in a diary. And she did all this before she was eight, for she died at the age of eight! A couplet she wrote has become quite famous. This was an epitaph on the untimely death of three small turkeys and it described the imperturbability of the mother turkey at the death of her progeny. The last two lines of this epitaph are:

> But she was more than usual calm,
> She did not give a single dam.

Having filled a number of sheets with wholly unnecessary and unimportant chatter about flowers and birds and digging and earthquakes and a prig of a girl, I now come to more important matters which concern you and me. But sometimes, I wonder if the so-called unnecessary things of this world are not more important after all than those which seem to loom large before us. Life would be dull without them, a dreary business always occupied with 'practical' ends which seldom give much joy.

Mummie, you know, is now in the sanatorium. Perhaps you saw in the papers that there was some talk of her going to Europe for treatment in the near future. This was mostly talk and it is all very indefinite. The doctors were of opinion that although she had made substantial progress since she came to Bhowali, there was a possibility of the progress stopping as they were unable to continue the A.P. treatment. They still hoped to push her along the road to health and, in particular, they were going to try a new treatment which had come by air mail from Europe. It was just possible that this treatment might do her much good. There was the possibility, however, of nothing much happening and, in such an event, the next step in treatment, perhaps involving an operation, would lie in Europe. They said that the next two months would show how she was progressing and we could decide finally then.

100 Margaret or Marjorie Fleming (1803-1811).

I hoped and hope that she would progress rapidly and not be compelled to go to Europe rather suddenly this summer. Her having to go soon was far from convenient for me and my plans. But if her treatment required it, it was obviously desirable that she should go without delay. As there was this possibility I set about making some provisional and preliminary arrangements. The first question was about her companion. As I was out of the question, the only other person I could think of was Madan Bhai. Both as a doctor and a friend, he seemed to be a suitable person, and so I asked him to keep ready in case of need.

Then I thought of you. Should you accompany her? There were advantages and disadvantages and I was at first inclined to think that perhaps you had better stay behind for the present. You could of course go immediately if any special necessity arose. The journey takes less than a week now by air. On reconsideration I changed my opinion. You would be of help to her on the way and if you did not go, it might be necessary to send a nurse with her. That would be additional expense. So I was inclined to the view that, if she went, you should also go. But I was by no means sure and I discussed the matter with mummie and we decided to find out from you what you thought of it. Of course if you went this would be in addition to Madan Bhai.

If there was to be an operation it would be a good thing if you were by her. I do not particularly fancy your spending a long time in a sanatorium. They are not healthy places for anyone, more especially young and growing people. Of course if you went and mummie's health allowed, you could leave her and join temporarily a school or university in Suisse. We could consult Mlle. Hemmerlin about it. I do not call this a permanent arrangement for that will have to wait till I am available.

However, all this is in the air and it is quite possible, and even probable, that the necessity for an early visit may not arise. The latest news from mummie is good and she seems to be progressing definitely. One of the best signs is that she has put on a fair amount of weight. Since she came to Bhowali she has added 16 or 17 pounds to her weight—oddly enough I have lost just that much since I came to jail this time (in Alipore). So we are approaching each other and the difference in our weights is less by about 33 pounds. At this rate we might be level sometime in the future. I can well afford to go down.

So it is probable that mummie need not have to go to Europe this summer. That ultimately she will have to go I have little doubt. It may be in autumn or at the latest next spring. It is as well, however, to keep ready for all emergencies and I am therefore writing to you to prepare your mind and to find out from you how you feel about it.

I should also like you to keep in touch with Mlle. Hemmerlin. She will be of great use to us if you go.

I have mentioned to you that Madan Bhai might accompany mummie, but so far I have not mentioned this to others as I dislike publicity being given to our plans. Probably in another three or four weeks we shall be in a position to know definitely how matters stand. There is one difficulty. If mummie goes she ought to go before the monsoon sets in, that is, at the latest by the second half of May. This is a busy time and it may be very difficult to get passages.

I do not want this possibility of your going to upset your present life and programme. Carry on in the usual way till something more definite is decided. In the ordinary course, I suppose, you will come to Bhowali early in May. I am looking forward to that visit. The two new cottages have been taken. They are not so well situated as the other ones but they are more comfortable and better furnished. I expect that *chhoti pupli* will turn up there early in April and Dolamma soon after.

The second volume of *Glimpses* seems to be a mighty long time in appearing. It has been on the verge, so I have been told, for the last two months.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

March 24, Sunday

Tasadduq Sherwani dead. He died day before yesterday in New Delhi. Painful and upsetting news. A quarter of a century ago I first met him at Cambridge. Last time I saw him, for a short while, was in Lucknow in September 1933 soon after my discharge from gaol. And before that we parted company in Naini prison towards the end of January 1932 when he was being transferred to Gonda or some other prison. We had been arrested together on Dec. 26, 1931, and had spent a month together in barrack No. 6. That month and the preceding months during the strenuous truce period we had had a great deal to do with each other and my liking for him had progressively grown. When he went to Europe with Ansari in the summer of 1932 for treatment he wrote to me to prison almost an apologetic letter for leaving the country at that juncture. A brave, true man, rather limited in outlook as all of us are, but not to be frightened or bullied.

Kalakankar,[101] Gidwani[102] and now Tasadduq—all gone within a few months! Youngish men. The old guard holds on. It could be better spared. I feel lonely.

March 31, Sunday

Tomorrow I go again to Bhowali. Not very satisfactory news of Kamala and definitely bad news of mother who is at Allahabad and seems to have had some kind of an attack. Perhaps the question of K going to Europe this summer will be discussed and partly decided this time. Madan is expected to be in Bhowali.

I have been reading through Bernard Shaw's *Collected Prefaces*. How well they read even after the lapse of thirty years or so and how stimulating they are! The old man is nearly 80 now and the idea that he will not be long in this world is not a pleasant one.

There are going to be many changes in this gaol. The jailer is being transferred, so also the doctor, and a new superintendent is coming. The doctor—Jivanand Pant—has been very decent to me. He was at Dehra Dun also last summer. He has visited me daily and a little talk with him has been diverting, though sometimes irritating. The jailer—Ganga Prasad, is a religious type of person with all the limitations of this type but with one marked good point. He is considerate to the prisoners and as far as I know, straight and not corrupt as nearly all jail officials are. Indeed this gaol has been the quietest and most peaceful one I have so far come across. I have hardly heard any complaints from prisoners about beating or other maltreatment. Food usually tolerable. Not only the jailer but his assistants seem to be decent. The prisoners are sorry and a little apprehensive at the coming changes. They are loud in praise of this jailer.

4th April 1935

नौरोज[103]

101. The raja of Kalakankar died on 20 September 1934.
102 Acharya Gidwani died on 14 January 1935
103 *Nauroz.*

April 4, 1935[104]

Darling Indu,

I have got your letter and I was happy to read it. *Puphi* also sent a description of the *Vasanta Utsava* and of the visit to Calcutta to see Uday Shankar.[105] *As you are by way of becoming an expert in matters* relating to art and dancing I must bow down to your opinion about Uday Shankar. Besides I have not seen Gopi Nath[106] dance. I liked Uday Shankar *not so much because of his individual dancing as for* the whole ensemble which was very pleasing.

So in about a month or so you will be leaving Santiniketan for the *vacation* and a *little later I shall see you. Or if the water famine per*sists you may depart earlier. I have something in common with you there; for here also, in Almora, there is a great scarcity of water at *present and I am troubled because of it as my seedlings and flower trees* want plenty of water. I have to conserve the little water we get and pour it out gently on my thirsty little ones.

Gurudev's birthday is on the 7th May, you say. At one time I was under the mistaken impression, due to a misprint in a book, that it was on the 4th May. This struck me as a curious coincidence for that was *the exact day and month and year (1861) when Dadu was born.* But now it appears that Gurudev was born three days after Dadu.

I am inclined to agree with the U.P. boys at Santiniketan about the *Hindi translation of the Glimpses. There are some obvious howlers* in it. I noticed सफेद चींटी[107] myself and some others. I do not know what to do in the matter, especially from jail. I hesitate to interfere as I am no scholar of Hindi. The only thing that can be done is to draw Tewari's attention to some of the obvious mistakes. Most of these, I think, creep in because of a certain journalistic touch that Tewari has got. He does his work rapidly and sometimes carelessly. Very few writers in Hindi, as far as I can make out, pay real attention to the artistry of language, the beauty and significance of words and the images they convey. They get lost in high sounding and vague language; there is little precision about it, and hence there is always a want of sincerity in the written word. They have not realised yet that

104. Indira Gandhi Papers NMML.

105. (b. 1909), won an international reputation between the wars for his Indian dances, partnered Pavlova, has created a number of dance-dramas and two shadow plays, *Ram Leela* and *Lord Buddha*, Padma Vibhushan, 1971

106. (b. 1908), *Kathakali dancer.*

107. Lateral translation of white ant. Should have been *deemak*.

true style comes from simplicity and sincerity. Nearly two years ago I pointed out to a small private gathering of Hindi writers in Benares that modern Hindi literature suffered from a दरबारी [*darbari*] style and as long as this continued it could not have real beauty or a mass appeal. My remarks were given publicity in the Hindi press and created quite an uproar. I was cursed and denounced for being an impertinent ignoramus. Nevertheless I hold to that opinion. All languages have passed through that stage and till they have shed it, they have not grown. *Another great drawback in modern Hindi is the ignorance of* most of its writers of world literature and new ideas. There must be something worthwhile at the back of what one writes. One must have *knowledge* and ideas. Just a mere spinning of words gracefully does not take one far.

You ask me about your reading Hindi literature. Why, of course you should do so. Hindi poetry is very beautiful but I find it a little monotonous and it seems to deal with a few limited topics. Old Hindi literature is good and it is not only desirable but necessary that we should know it. Only then can we build on it and develop it and make it absorb modern ideas. My own limited knowledge of that literature has been a great drawback to me and I hope you will not suffer thus. I could have improved that knowledge in prison—perhaps I shall still do so—if my mind was not full of the modern world with its problems. I want books dealing with these problems, with new ideas, with history, *science, sociology and economics. And Hindi hardly has any decent* books on these subjects. At most it has a few second-rate translations. But I am glad to find that new and interesting books are coming out.

As for novels and plays and the like modern Hindi is quite extraordinarily backward I have made a great effort to read some of these novels and plays and almost invariably I have found them to be quite amazingly bad. Compare them to Tolstoy! The one Hindi writer who seemed to me hopeful as a novelist is Prem Chand[108] (he translated the *Letters from a Father to his Daughter* and a good translation it was). But then I know so little of Hindi literature that I have no business to make generalisations. Lately I have often read Hindi magazines. I find them a poor lot.

To revert to the *Glimpses*. So far as I know no one has undertaken the Tamil translation and I have no objection to your Madrasi professor undertaking it. Being a professor I suppose he is good enough for the job. I think the professor had better write to *puphi* about it to fix it

108. Premchand, pseudonym of Dhanpatray (1880 1936); well known Hindi writer, his works include, *Gaban*, *Godan* and *Seva Sadan*.

up finally. Usually the arrangement for the publication of a translation is made with a publisher and not with a translator direct. I suppose your professor has some publisher in view. There is no point in translating a book and then holding it up for want of a publisher.

I notice that you did not like the Soviet plays. None of them was great but I thought some fairly good in the modern style. But the main purpose of reading them was to understand the present atmosphere of Russia.

I am glad you like Hardy, though (may I whisper it to you?) I have hardly read him. My neglect of him is strange for I am tolerably well read in that class of books. I think you will also like Meredith, one of my favourites. He is a little heavy, but if one overcomes this initial difficulty, he is altogether delightful. You will find all his books in Anand Bhawan. *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* is a good book to begin with. When one reads these books how strange their world seems when compared to today! They were not so strange in my boyhood but the last twenty years or more have made all the difference. And the changes continue at an amazing pace and the differences grow, and when you attain the advanced age in which your father does not rejoice in at present, no doubt you will look back on a changed world.

You have been now nearly a full year at Santiniketan and I am very glad you went there. You have had, on the whole, a happy time there and have grown physically and mentally. Perhaps you are gradually finding your bent. It was my wish that you should spend two years there and then go to Europe. But I am beginning to doubt if that will be possible. I can quite understand that you are not keen on leaving Santiniketan in the near future. Nor am I. It would be a pity for you to interrupt or put a stop to some of your activities there. But there is that possibility of your having to go off soon with mummie and that possibility grows. Nothing has so far been decided and I am in a hopelessly vague state of mind—a condition I dislike intensely. But the fault is hardly mine as the doctors have a major say in the matter. Perhaps we shall know more in a fortnight and certainly we ought to know definitely within a month.

It seems to me practically certain that mummie will have to go—the only question is whether she is to go just before the monsoon or just after it is over. That is to say is she to go in May or September. May is very near, dreadfully near, and I am by no means sure that we can even get passages then. But if mummie's treatment demands it, it is clear that go she must. And I feel clearly now that you should accompany her. You will be of the greatest help to her during the voyage

and it is obviously desirable that you should be near her if operations have to be performed. As I wrote to you last time, I would not like you to stay long in a sanatorium. But that is a matter that can be attended to later. Meanwhile there is just the possibility of your being asked to pack up your tooth brush and march off!

I shall feel rather lonely here with both mummie and you far away and inaccessible. But that cannot be helped and I shall at least look forward to mummie at last recovering her health And perhaps, if all goes well, I may fly over to you next year! Indeed I would have suggested that mummie and you might go by air also but the doctors will not permit this.

But all this is about a problematical future. At present the question is: to go or not to go, and I await impatiently for the doctors' final advice in the matter. In the meantime I am making a few preliminary arrangements, like the taking of passports etc. It is possible that you may have to sign some papers in this connection. It is as well to be prepared for contingencies.

You have asked me about your old books in Anand Bhawan. I do not know if you have thought of any special use for them. If not, why not leave them where they are? They are doing no harm. Some of the utterly useless ones may be weeded out. I have a sentimental attachment to old books which I have liked sometime or other and I suppose you have some such feeling also. They bring back old memories and visions of times gone by. But much as I love old books I prefer that they be used to their not being used, and if you want to give any of your books to some place or someone who will put them to use, why, go ahead and give them.

Dolamma has not been well. If she recovers sufficiently she may come up to Bhowali with *puphi* about the middle of April. *Chhoti puphi* and Raja Bhai are also coming up soon after. And probably the whole Pandit *khandan* will follow in May when the school closes. Perhaps you know that Ranjit *pupha* has bought some property high up above Almora right away from civilization By the time you come back from Santiniketan there may not be any of the family in Allahabad and the sooner you come up to Bhowali the better.

I continue to amuse myself with my gardening operations. I am waiting impatiently for the seedlings to grow. It is very fascinating to watch the little shoot come out of the soil. One notices at first just a slight protruberance in the soil, something is obviously pushing it up from below. And then the tiny upstart breaks through and peeps out bravely at the strange wide world. It grows rapidly and is soon

waving gracefully in the breeze. Some of the shoots resemble little swords or daggers cleaving through the earth. I don't think I had ever before quite realized this mystery of plant growth. And two other mysteries that prison has made me appreciate are: the sudden breaking out of leaves all over a banyan tree in spring, and the equally sudden blossoming of trees.

I wrote to you a fortnight ago of the peach and plum blossoms. Already they are disappearing. Even the red rhododendrons are not aggressively noticeable now. The tender pink leaves have turned green and the look of childhood and early youth is giving place to one of maturity. In the Bhowali sanatorium there are some perfectly marvellous wistaria creepers. I had often read about these creepers but I had no clear idea what they were. Now I know and I am not likely to forget.

I have a number of iris plants in my yard here and I am greatly looking forward to their flowering for I like the iris flower. And then there is canna, that old native of India, a favourite even in the villages. Some of the so-called English flowers grow wild round about here. Do you remember the creeper—morning glory—which put up a brave show at 6, Cawnpore Road? It seems to be all over the place here, appearing even where it is not wanted.

There are very beautiful flowers all over the plains, probably not unlike the Birbhum varieties you mention, but unfortunately they have a short life because of the heat, unless special care is taken. Here in the hills flowers survive and are longer-lived.

Today is *Naoroz* and the new *Samvat* 1922 begins. And so a happy new year to you. I have celebrated it by putting on a new *kurta* which has been exceedingly uncomfortable as the stuff was almost unbleached and unwashed khadi and it irritated the skin. I hope you had better luck. The Bengali new year will come ten days later and then you will have your great gathering of Hindi highbrows. I suppose you are an ornament of the Santiniketan Hindi Samaj.

Do you know if the Bengali translation of *Glimpses* is getting on? Chanda was supposed to be doing it. The second volume of *Glimpses* is not out yet. It has taken a mighty long time. But the first volume has resulted in the press conferring the wholly undeserved title of 'historian' on me. I claim no such distinction and I warned you of this in my letters. But such verbal honours come easily when one is supposed to have gained a measure of distinction in public affairs It is so easy (and often so disastrous) for the politician to claim and receive distinction in a variety of fields!

Did I tell you that Manishy Dey,[109] who is I believe Rani Chanda's[110] brother, presented a vast number of his sketches to mummie, in Bhowali? Some of these are good and I like them. I liked Manishy. Like all artists he is most unbusiness-like and emotional and he parted with two months hard work although he is usually very hard up.

Love from

Your loving
Papu

April 5, Friday

I went to Bhowali on Monday and returned the next day. Madan was there and I had a heart to heart talk with him about personal matters. Some relief to talk to anyone.

The question of Kamala's going to Europe still undecided. Kacker gets a little irritated if it is raised and yet this uncertainty is annoying. On my return here I decided to write to him fully and my letter went off today.[111]

Kripalani & Feroze were also at Bhowali.

One of the prisoners attending on me—Ami Chand—had not heard from his family for 18 months. Once, many months ago, he asked the jail officials to send a letter to them but no answer came. Very probably the letter was not sent at all. It appears that for a long time past prisoners' letters have not been sent by the jail office. They have simply sat upon them, though why they should do so passes my comprehension.

At Ami Chand's request I sent word to his family through Upadhyaya during one of my visits to Bhowali. An answer duly came full of joy at the news of a dear one of whom they had heard nothing for a year and a half. I communicated this answer to Ami Chand and he was overjoyed. A little human touch made a world of difference to him and he told me that he could not measure his happiness.

The new superintendent has come—Dr. Pande.[112]

109. Brother of Mukul Dey, studied painting under Abanindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose.
110. (b. 1912), wife of Anil Kumar Chanda; educated at Dacca and Santiniketan.
111. This letter, which dealt with the further treatment of Kamala Nehru and plans for treatment in Europe, is not printed.
112. Bala Dat Pande—assistant civil surgeon.

April 10, Wednesday

Rarely, rarely, comest thou,
Spirit of Delight!
Wherefore hast thou left me now
Many a day and night?
Many a weary night and day
'Tis since thou art fled away.
How can ever one like me
Win thee back again?

12th April 1935

मदन अटल से मुलाकात – कमला के यूरोप जाने के मसले पर बातें। करीब करीब तय हो गया। [113]

April 12, Friday

Suddenly Madan Atal turned up this morning. I was vastly surprised. Why should he take the trouble to come all the way to Almora? If he wanted to see me could he not do so at Bhowali on the 15th? There must be something urgent. I wondered what this could be? Had he been approached by some govt. official and asked to see me about Kamala's proposed departure for Europe? Perhaps there was some suggestion about my accompanying her—Some ridiculous conditions attached which I would not agree to. So I wondered. And then he came.

It was all about the passages. Jal had got into a muddle about them and Madan wanted to fix matters up definitely with me. Good of him to take all this trouble to come. What a decent chap he is. Kamala had wired to him on receipt of Jal's letter. She is evidently greatly excited at the prospect of going.

Anyway it is practically settled that she goes now on May 23rd subject to passages being available. All day today I have been writing long notes for Madan, Indu etc. about arrangements in India and in Europe, giving detailed directions. Most of the directions were perhaps needless but I had to employ my superfluous energy. Soon I shall have to bottle this up completely when Kamala goes and my fortnightly outings stop with it. Only two more visits to Bhowali—on the 15th April and on May 1st. And then the unbroken solitude of Almora jail!

113. Interview with Madan Atal. Discussion about Kamala's departure to Europe—almost decided.

It is the 12th today. No summons yet from Kacker for the 15th. He is evidently rather bored with me.

I feel tired and weary. Life is dull and is there much point in it? Soon I shall complete six months here in this gaol, and 14 months of this sentence. Ten more months.

April 13, Saturday—Jallianwala Bagh Day!

Last night, weary and feverish, I went to bed and after a long wait fell asleep. I seem to have had nightmares. There was much shouting and groaning and the noise grew. I woke up, troubled and thirsty and exhausted, to find that the shouting and groaning had been done by me.

13th April 1935

कमला का ख़त मिला—भवाली से।
यह किताब ख़तम—एक साल और पूरा—अलीपुर जेल—देहरा जेल—आनन्द भवन—नैनी जेल—अलमोड़ा जेल—और बीच बीच में भवाली! अजीब जिन्दगी है! दस महीने और सजा के पूरा करने को है। इन दस महीनों में क्या क्या होगा और मेरा क्या हशर होगा? और उसके बाद? अंधेरा दिखता है...[114]

16 April 1935[115]

TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Dear Gurudev,

It has been decided that my wife must proceed to Europe for further treatment which might involve operations. She will probably sail in the third or fourth week of May. As I am incapacitated from accompanying her, it has become all the more necessary that Indira should go with her. *I have informed Indira of this.*

This new development distresses me in many ways but I see no way to avoid it. I do not know how matters will shape in the future and what Indira will do. Meanwhile, she has to cut short her career at Santiniketan and I am exceedingly sorry that she should have to do so. I have seen very little of her during her year at Santiniketan—the last time I had a brief glimpse of her at a gaol interview was nearly six

114 Received Kamala's letter—from Bhowali
Finished this book—one more year over—Alipur jail—Dehra jail—Anand Bhawan—Naini jail—Almora jail—and in between Bhowali! Life is strange! Ten months yet to finish sentence—what will happen in these ten months, and what will happen to me? And after that? I see darkness

115 Nehru File, Visvabharati, Santiniketan

months ago. But even these brief glimpses, as well as the reports I have had from friends, have convinced me how well she was getting on there. Her own testimony, and that is important enough, is clear and she has been very happy at Santiniketan and has no desire whatever to leave it. I was looking forward to her remaining there for a longer period and growing in mind and body under your sheltering care and guidance. It was a great consolation to me in prison that my daughter was surrounded by loving and capable friends who were gently helping in her development in the right direction, and I felt infinitely grateful to all of them for the love and kindness they showered on her. I rejoiced that I had been fortunate enough to choose Santiniketan for her education at this stage of her life.

My plans and expectations in this matter, as well as in many others, have been cut short and twisted by untoward circumstances and I must perforce bow to them. But you will permit me, I hope, to express my deep gratitude to you and to other friends at Santiniketan, and to wish your great institution all the success it so richly deserves.

I write these few lines from the sanatorium at Bhowali where I have been brought for a day to visit my wife. From here I go back to my present habitation, the Almora jail.

With affectionate regards,

Yours,
Jawaharlal

April 17, Wednesday

I have been to Bhowali and back, returning yesterday. A cheering visit. Met mother, Nan, Betty & the babe. Kamala looking much the same but seemed more cheerful than before. Full of the idea of going abroad. Plans of going discussed—letters and telegrams sent. Kamala is to sail on the Italian Lloyd Triestino on May 23rd. Accommodation reserved but it is not at all good. This is troubling me as it will mean a painful voyage. I am hoping that a transfer to a better cabin will be made later. Another matter that worries—will K be strong enough to walk a little—to the ship, from cabin to deck? So far she cannot walk at all. It will be bad if she has to be carried about.

Wrote to Rabindranath Tagore about Indu's leaving Santiniketan.

How old and worn-out mother looked!

Various activities—making plans, arrangements, meeting family people after nearly 6 months—filled the day and kept me a bit exhilarated. A change from the jail routine. I returned in a fairly contented frame

of mind. Only one or perhaps two more visits to Bhowali and then K goes off and Indu—And then? When will I see them again?

Saw Jamnalalji also at Bhowali.

What a horrible tragedy at Firozabad.[116] Eleven persons, a doctor and his ten patients, burnt to death in a house by an infuriated Muslim mob. What a disgusting, savage people we are. Politics, progress, socialism, communism, science—where are they before this black religious savagery?

April 18, Thursday

A huge black centipede appeared today. He was trying to carry off a black beetle which he had seized. I had the two separated when a myna came and picked up the centipede and swallowed him with relish!

April 20, Saturday

Interview with Nan & Ranjit How haggard Ranjit looked? He is evidently seriously ill. For a person like him to be told not to ride, run, take exercises, drive a car, go up in an aeroplane or indeed to do anything that a physically active man does is a tragedy.

The account of the Khali property which he has almost purchased reminded us repeatedly of father. How it would have suited him!

Wrote to Kamala.

April 30, Tuesday

I have had a thin week. Felt weary and stale and rather disgusted with everything. With this background small matters have tended to upset me. The report of the proceedings of the A.I.C.C. meeting[117] was disagreeable reading—not so much what was done—nothing much could be done—as the spirit behind it. It was a spirit of terrible caution and of

116. On 14 April 1935, in a communal riot 42 persons were injured and a house set on fire.

117. The Working Committee resolution only drew "the attention of the country to the continuance of the ban on Congress organisations in the N.W.F.P. and Bengal and on affiliated and allied bodies... like the Khudai Khidmatgars and Hindustani Seva Dal ... and the recent suppression of labour and youth league organisations...on the plea of alleged tendencies without reference to any overt acts".

The A.I.C.C. was even afraid of protesting against the bans against the Congress in the Indian states. This was considered interference in their internal affairs!

A small matter which upset me yesterday was the beating of a prisoner by a warder. This took place in my yard though not, fortunately, in my presence. I would have flared up if I had been there. As it was I was greatly troubled and decided to report the matter to the supt. who was to have come to me that day, it being parade day. But he did not come. Later I told the acting jailer. Probably he remonstrated mildly with the warder. Curiously the warder in question has always struck me as rather a decent person. If the matter had gone up to the supt. he would have had to take formal notice and probably fined the warder. Would I then have felt sad about this?

Water is very scarce nowadays and my little garden is suffering greatly. The heat is increasing and my seedlings shrivel up. I have developed a great interest in them, almost amounting to affection and I watch their troubles with anxiety. I have never before felt quite so close to them. The little things seem to have an individuality. The other day in transplanting a little canna shoot I broke off the head rather clumsily. I was hurt by this and for some days the idea pained me although there is no lack of cannas here. My sunflowers have developed a strange disease which has killed off a few. Fortunately it has been checked. The dahlias and gladioli and irises and amaryllis are doing well. But the little zinnias are in a bad way. The amaranthus has expired in the womb.

How much of my thoughts these little flowers and seedlings occupy! I find myself thinking of them at night and what I should do to help them and improve them. If an idea strikes me I look forward to the next day and grow almost impatient in order to give effect to it. I spend hours in pottering about my yard. I find that I think more of my little garden than of political and other problems! Perhaps it is as well and it is certainly more soothing.

At the back of my mind always is the thought of Kamala's departure for Europe. This draws near and although I am glad, vague fears fill me. When will I see her again? And what of Indu? She is in Bhowali now and tomorrow I go there. I shall see her after nearly six months.

I have got to live in a [illegible] some weeks. My barrack roof is going to be repaired. T[illegible] pnt [illegible] y yard today and I found it better than I had [illegible] h[illegible] ward to a *choldari* but it was a double fly [illegible] ing like it, about 8 ft. x 9 ft. The prospe[illegible] exciting. It will be a change after fu[illegible] locked up

every evening. For I have now been in Almora over six months. What a long time it has been!

When I went back to prison in Naini last August I told Kamala that I would be back in a hundred days. I calculated that I would be out after the Bombay Congress and the Assembly elections. My calculations were all wrong. I have already been 253 days in prison since then, and another 291 days remain before my term ends naturally. Perhaps I may not have to go to the very end of this period. I put it therefore approximately at another 250 days.

But again there is a vague rumour that I might be let out to go with Kamala. Probably there is absolutely nothing in it, only hints thrown out by newspaper men. And yet even a rumour of this kind, which I do not believe in, excites me a little and automatically I begin to plan. I want to be out of this damned hole but still I had rather not be beholden to govt. for their grace. If I have survived nearly 15 months of this sentence I might as well carry on to the end of the 24th. Only there is Kamala and her condition—and Indu.

I feel in better mood this evening. Perhaps because of tomorrow's visit to Bhowali, perhaps because of the tent!

Tomorrow is May Day—a poor anniversary for labour all over the world, except in the Soviet lands. And even Soviet Russia seems to be going backward and adapting itself to the imperialist world. A toast to King George in Moscow!

Well, well, anyway I shall celebrate this day in the Bhowali sanatorium and see Kamala and Indu and mother and Betty.

2.5.35[120]

TO DR. SAH

Dear Dr. Prem Lal Sah,[121]

You have been not only a doctor but such a good friend to us during the last seven months at Bhowali that I must express my real gratitude to you for all you have done for us. My wife is now leaving Bhowali for Europe and one chapter of our connection with Bhowali will soon close. The connection will however continue in other ways. Meanwhile I wish to tell you how grateful I am to you.

120 J.N Correspondence, N.M.M.L
121. A physician at Bhowali.

student, his first job was digging in the garden, his second, observation of the sea and the country from a watch tower and by wandering about and then came intellectual study.

I sometimes console myself that I am in my own topsy-turvy way following Geddes' course and so trying to develop that integrated personality. Having become somewhat of a highbrow I have tried to lay more stress on the hands. Whether the result is going to be satisfactory it will be for others to judge. Let us hope it will not be too much of a mongrel type, neither here nor there! To a large extent Tolstoy and Ruskin advocated manual labour for this purpose. And the real psychological basis of Bapu's charka is also this.

Are you not tired of me, Indu-boy, writing all this stuff to you and wearying you even at this great distance with my wordy chatter? Once a fortnight I have the chance and I let my pen run on. You will have to bear with me. But I have written so much already today that I really must put a brake on, though my pen protests and wants to scratch on. Share this letter with mummie and Madan Bhai.

I am sending separately to mummie 3 snaps of Anand Bhawan and Swaraj Bhawan. Someone whom I don't know sent them to me (having signed them!). Perhaps they might interest you so I am sending them.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

July 18, Thursday

For two weeks I have not written in this book. I have not felt cheerful—far from it—and the days have dragged on heavily and wearily. Yet the monsoon is firmly established and even my little garden looks bright and gay. I have been reading very little. I am still in the tent.

Yesterday a cable came from Madan from Badenweiler to say that no letters had been received from me for five weeks. Extraordinary—what has happened to the long screeds I have been writing? I wired back that I had sent letters c/o Cook, Geneva. Today another cable came from him to say that Cook's letters had been received by them but none from me has come for five weeks. This means that my last three letters have gone astray. I have felt upset and depressed because of this. And how worrying it must have been for Kamala to wait for letters daily and wait in vain!

Inquiries at the post-office here elicited the fact that my letters had been despatched. Nothing more doing. The jail people have

been decent enough about it and don't think they are to blame. What does it matter who is to blame? The fact remains that my letters disappear somewhere.

The eighteenth month has begun! Only six months and a bit more.

July 19, 1935[140]

Indu dear,

I sit down to write to you and cover sheet after sheet of thin air mail paper, trying somehow to bridge the many thousand miles that separate us. I hope that my letters will carry with them, somewhere hidden away between the lines, a bit of me to you, and that if you care to look for it, you will find it, just as I seek for you in your letters, behind and between the lines that you have written. What indeed are letters? Not surely just budgets of news, although they contain news. Not a record of illness and birth and marriage and death and humdrum domestic happenings, such as are most of the letters that people write. They are something far more; they are, or ought to be, bits of the personality of the writer, quivering shadows of the real self. They are also, or they at least endeavour to represent and to mirror, something of the personality of the person written to, for the writer is full of the person he is writing to. Thus a real letter is a strange and revealing amalgam of the two—the one who writes and the one who receives. If it is such a real letter, it has considerable value for both the persons concerned.

I have been led to this musing on letters because I have learnt that my letters have not been reaching you and I have been pained at this unexpected and unwelcome news. Cables from Madan Bhai have informed me of it and I am at a loss to know why this has happened. I have been pained at the thought of mummie and you expecting my letters, waiting day after day for them, and waiting in vain. Few things are more distressing than to expect something which does not come. It upsets one, irritates and worries. So you must have been put out. I was pained also at the thought that my letters, which I had sent out with so many messages and loving thoughts, to fly over two continents to you, should have gone astray. I felt almost as if I had been physically hurt. And then it was disheartening. To have to write once a fortnight only is a poor enough bond, but if even that snaps?

140. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

I can't make out what can have happened to my letters. They have been sent regularly every fortnight. Ever since you people went away I have written to no one in India. Every two weeks my letter has gone addressed to mummie with a long enclosure in it for you. They were addressed care of Thos. Cook, Geneva, but the last one went care of the American Express, Berlin, as desired by Madan. I am a methodical person as a rule anywhere; in prison I am even more so and my life is governed by a routine. As for letters etc., I write them with the regularity of a good clock. You may rest assured that I have sent my letter on the appointed day whether you receive it or not. And you may also rest assured that not receiving a letter cannot mean that I am unwell for in that event also I shall write to you or have a message sent So far as I can make out my letters have been despatched regularly from here. Inquiries were made at the post-office also. The probability therefore is that something went wrong at the other end. You have been moving about. Perhaps Cook's forwarded the letters to Vienna or Berlin after you left, in spite of your instructions. Such mistakes are often made. You should always take care to leave your address at every hotel you stay at....

To get on to your last letter. Yes, I was a little surprised to see the superscription—Hotel Adlon. I had expected you to be in Badenweiler. Also I was a little surprised at the choice of hotel for the Adlon is supposed to be the most expensive hotel in Berlin and rather a flashy kind of place, frequented by the newly-rich intent on display. It is not considered a select place. Probably the Kaiserhof is better in that respect. But these are very petty considerations and for a short stay of one or two persons there is not much difference in the charges so far as the ordinary rooms are concerned. The real difference comes in the suites and above all in food. Personally I think it is always safer in a new city to go to a good well-known hotel even though it may be expensive. If necessary feed outside more cheaply. If a longer stay has to be made then one can shift to less expensive quarters. So I am glad you went to the Adlon rather than to a cheaper hotel. I am also glad you stayed on in Berlin for a few days after mummie left and had a look round. I want you to shift for yourself as much as possible.

I am not very happy about your health. Madan Bhai wrote to me that the doctors were of opinion that there was nothing fundamentally wrong with you. So far so good; but it is not good enough. You must not feel weak and headachey and have frequent pains. This has to be seen to or otherwise both your physical and intellectual development will be interfered with. My own attitude to ill-health is, I am

afraid, rather intolerant and aggressive—it is, as I wrote to you in a previous letter (which you have not got!)—the very opposite of the usual valetudinarian attitude prevalent in India. I dislike it, consider it almost indecent and do not feel much sympathy for the person who willingly indulges in it. Perhaps this is due to my own youthful record. After I had got rid of certain infantile ailments I developed a healthy body and during all the long years I was at Harrow, Cambridge and in London I never spent a day in bed owing to illness. My one visit to a doctor was at Harrow when my shins had been rather badly kicked at football. I paid no special attention to my health. I simply lived a normal life and looked down upon those who were often ill or who frequently complained of their bodily troubles. (One of the trials of my existence in India is that people will insist on discussing their physical ailments when I am not at all interested in them.) So I grew up rather conceited about my bodily fitness and with the belief that anybody who wanted to be fit could certainly keep so. Illness only came as a rule when invited to do so. In later years in India I taxed my body very hard and took a lot of physical and intellectual work out of it and I must say that it behaved very well.

During the last four or five years, however, that conceit and assurance of good health have partly left me. This has been so ever since I have had some pleuritic trouble. But I do believe that it has been my general good health and habits of life that have kept down this trouble to very small proportions. In another person not so fit or not so aggressively disliking illness as I do, the trouble would have probably grown. Even now I am confident that I can keep it in check and carry on normally for a long time to come.

Now I do not want you to worry or grow morbid about your little physical troubles. These growing pains do not mean much. But at the same time they should be attended to so that they may not weaken your constitution. Doctors will advise you and you should follow their advice, but personally I attach far more importance to healthy surroundings and healthy life and habits. Live in a good place with decent food, exercise etc. and devote yourself to intellectual and other pursuits without thinking too much of the body. But do not overdo anything—do not tire yourself.

Regarding your future studies, the question of your health has to be borne in mind, and this was one of the reasons why I wanted you to stick to Suisse. There were other reasons also. I did not fancy most of the other possible university towns. Germany seems to be out of the question even if it be true that Berlin has the best professors. But I doubt that statement now—the best German professors are out of

Germany and the whole atmosphere of German education today is oppressive and stifling and altogether wrong. You mention Rome—why you thought of it I do not know for there is no special argument in its favour and there are many against it. Then there is Paris and much can be said for it but I am sure that for the present it must be ruled out. I do not fancy these great big cities as educational centres. There is too much else doing there. But the reason that weighs with me more is the one of health. Paris is not a particularly healthy place. For the moment I am not thinking of the English universities. You may of course go to them later. So we are left with Suisse. I am not a particular admirer of the very middle class, bourgeois, stodgy Swiss character. It is rather commonplace, but then it is so easy to criticize everybody and everything!

I feel sure that Switzerland is indicated for you at present and at least for a year or so. Afterwards we shall see. I have got out of the habit of making long-distance decisions. Suisse is certainly more expensive than neighbouring countries but for a student this will not make much difference; and then in these days of currency fluctuations one can never tell which country will be more or less expensive. Another reason why I prefer Suisse is because of Mlle. Hemmerlin (there are 2 ms and not one m as you told me!). It will be better if you are within easy distance of her and can consult her from time to time.

In Suisse there are three possible universities—Geneva, Lausanne and Zurich, the two former more French, Zurich more German. You will find that people connected with Germany will naturally favour Zurich while those connected with France will recommend Geneva and Lausanne. In this matter I think you had best follow Mlle. Hemmerlin's advice. It is always possible on the Continent to change universities—it is a good practice.

As for the course you should take, I should not bother very much just at present. Nanu's advice was good that you should join a university and give the entrance exam later. But Mrs. Geissler's criticism is sound. The burden on you will be too much—to attend lectures and at the same time to prepare for the entrance exam—and all this in new languages. Therefore you must not bother about the entrance exam or even regular courses of lectures. Your first job is to feel at home with the languages and get healthy. When you can easily combine with these the attendance of lectures or any other work, do so. But not till then. Remember that students on the Continent—both at school and university—have to work far harder than students in England I do not want you to join this tread mill too soon. Take your time and fit yourself for it before you do so. I am not keen on

examinations and I do not believe that true education consists in passing them. To some extent one has to face them in the modern world as it is, but let us not make a fetish of these.

Therefore do not worry about exams at present. Have an easy time and stick to languages. Where are you staying for this? Certainly you can stay at Badenweiler near mummie and work with Mrs. Geissler at the languages. From the health point of view this would be good. Or you can go to Mlle. Hemmerlin. Or you can spend part of your time at one place and part at the other. Decide for yourself in consultation with Mlle. Hemmerlin. You have other people to advise you too—Nanu and others—and you should consult them whenever you feel like it, but on the whole it would be desirable to follow Mlle. Hemmerlin's advice.

I am very glad mummie is pleased with her new companion, Mrs. Geissler. The name seems to be familiar to me. I wonder where I came across it before.

Puphi told me that a letter had come for me from Mlle. Hemmerlin. I am asking *puphi* to write to her. When you meet Romain Rolland and his sister give my regards to them.

I am sending you through mummie a little book—J.F. Horrabin's *Atlas of European History*. This is an excellent collection of historical maps and it will help you with the *Glimpses*. Horrabin has also prepared a very good *Atlas of Current Affairs* which I would advise you to get. It is a cheap book but it helps greatly in understanding current problems. If Horrabin would bring out similar atlases for Asia and America the whole of *Glimpses* would be covered!

I have asked Upadhyaya to send you lists of corrections in volumes 1 and 2 of *Glimpses*—There are crowds of errors and some of these are extraordinary and misleading. When you get them it would be worthwhile for you to make the corrections in the body of the book. The petty corrections can be ignored.

Betty has sent me some snaps taken by Raja at the sanatorium. They are rather good, especially one of yours standing. Probably she has sent you copies also Why not get yourself photographed at a decent photographer's? I should love to have a good photograph.

My future letters will be sent to Badenweiler, Hans Waldeck, addressed to mummie, till I hear to the contrary.

I hope the pine-clad hill sides of the Black Forest have done you good—and the swimming. You are in Baden at the best time of the year.

It was the full moon two or three nights back and the magic of its radiance drew me out of my little tent (for I am still encamped).

For a long time I watched it playing hide and seek in the clouds, seemingly hurrying away at times and then standing serenely still, peeping at me through a rift in the clouds or over their edge, sometimes so near and dazzling and then far away, distant and vague, behind a dark veil. It was a great game. In the moonlight even the ugly jail walls toned down and lost their hardness. Everything was soft and dreamy—I thought of some lines of a vagabond or hiker's song:

> Heigh! brother mine, art a waking or a-sleeping;
> Minds't thou the merry moon a many summers fled?
> Minds't thou the green and the dancing and the leaping?
> Minds't thou the haycocks and the moon above them creeping?

I suddenly thought of you and wondered if you might not also be enjoying the moonlight and looking up at the same old moon. But, foolish thought! While it was night here, it must have been the late afternoon in Baden with the sun shining brightly and the moon and the stars invisible, awaiting the coming of night.

With the full moon passed the month of आषाढ[141] and श्रावण[142] began, the typical month of the rainy season. With it also ended my seventeenth month in prison this time!

Love,

Your loving
Papu

August 2, 1935[143] Letter No. 6

Darling Indu,

Fridays are special days for me. On Fridays, alternate ones, I write to you and mummie, and on the intervening Fridays I expect your letters. And so, last Friday I waited for your letter and my desire for it was greater even than usual for I was worried about the disappearance of my letters to you people and hoped to have some information on this point. Also an item of news in the papers about mummie's health had been disturbing. Your letter however did not come on that day and I was a little disappointed. It came, however, three days later. It was dated July 18th but had evidently been posted much later for it bore the postmark 22nd July. Fortunately now even missing an air mail does not mean much delay. I believe there

141 *Ashadh*, the fourth month of the lunar year.
142 *Sravan*, the fifth month of the lunar year.
143 Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

are at least five air mail services every week from Europe to India and beyond—two British, two Dutch, and one French. They all pass through Allahabad. But I suppose our letters are carried only by the British line.

You will note, perhaps with some surprise, the superscription: Letter No. 6. This is to indicate that this is the 6th letter I have written to you *since your departure, and I propose to number my subsequent* letters also accordingly, so that if any letter is missed by you, you can *immediately tell. Indeed you could have presumed as much, but after* the unfortunate experience we have had I propose to take no risks. Of the letters I have already sent you it appears that you have not received Nos. 2 and 3, dated June 7th and 21st. The first of these must have reached Cook's in Geneva while you were still in Vienna and it is quite possible that it was forwarded to your Vienna address —Hotel Bristol. The second might have also gone there by mistake or to Berlin. You should enquire at both places. Cook's are no doubt to blame but you should also be more wide awake in such matters. Wherever you may go to, even for a day, you should leave your address for letters and special instructions.

I am very happy to learn of your progress in the German language. Evidently you have a linguistic bent which certainly you have not inherited from your father. German is a fine language and the Germans are in many ways a fine people—brave, hard-working, disciplined, learned. But—there are always buts of course—learning does not sit lightly on them, nor is humour a failing of theirs. They are apt to *be a little heavy, slow in the uptake, as the Americans say. I hope you will imbibe the many virtues of the Germans but there is no* reason why you should also follow them in their failings and become mentally a little obese. In this respect the mental quickness and lightness of touch of the French is preferable.

You will wonder why I am indulging in this digression. Your last letter is the immediate cause of it. It made me feel that you did not display what might be called the qualities of a Sherlock Holmes in regard to the non receipt of my letters, and even after my telegram you seem to take it for granted that I had written after five or six weeks. You chide me gently: '26th May to 5th July is rather more than a fortnight, is it not?' Yes it is, my dear, even my arithmetic is capable of *that intricate calculation. But, I wondered, did* you know me so little as to think that I would refrain from writing to you and mummie for five weeks? And, even so, did the idea not strike you when you received my letter after all this interval, that I would at least explain the delay? And then in my cable I had said that 'letters' sent care

Cook's—that meant more than one letter, and you have so far received only one letter from Geneva. Finally if you read my letter dated 5th July carefully you will find internal evidence in it that previous letters were sent. I must confess to having sent much too brief and vague a cable in reply to Madan Bhai's. I wish I had sent a clearer message; but the desire to be economical influenced me at the wrong time.

As you are evidently linguistically inclined it is as well for you to encourage this bent and acquire languages. We lack linguists in India and we need them. It is one of my secret sorrows that I am not good at languages. The amount of trouble I have taken over French and German ought to have made me know them far more than I do. I have nourished a grievance against my old childhood tutor, F.T. Brooks,[144] who might have easily taught me French well at the right age. His mother was French and he knew the language perfectly. At that age I could have picked it up rapidly and naturally. But he thought otherwise. In prison I have laboured fairly hard at German and I have gone through carefully and laboriously Otto's fat grammar. After that, in theory at least, I ought to be able to read and write German with some ease. As a matter of fact I seem to have forgotten most of it and I can't read the simplest book in it. Perhaps the labour has not been wasted altogether and somewhere at the back of my mind there is buried a vague knowledge of German which can be unearthed with a pick and shovel, if real need arises. However that may be, it is clear that I am no linguist and I rather admire those who are—at the same time I have a suspicion that people who dabble in many languages are often rather superficial and lack depth. They become Jacks at many tongues and master none.

So, by all means, concentrate on languages—German and French for the moment. I should not trouble myself, if I were you, about the university entrance exam at this stage. Certainly you can attend lectures in subjects of your interest as soon as you can follow them. But if you prepare for the exam you may have to do all manner of subjects—perhaps Latin for aught I know. I really don't see why you should learn Latin. You will do a good year's work if by next summer you have got a fairly good knowledge of the languages plus such odd knowledge of special subjects as you may acquire. I suppose I shall meet you before then. Somehow I cannot imagine your spending the next three or four years at a Swiss university. Therefore the exam is less important than the languages etc.

144. An ardent theosophist and tutor of Jawaharlal at Allahabad from 1902 to 1904.

I like Nanu's suggestion (or was it your idea?) that you might learn Russian at Praha or elsewhere. Among present-day languages it is one of the most important and it grows in importance. Remember that it is the language of a territory bordering our country—our neighbours speak it. Its past literature is fascinating, its new literature is unique of its kind. Sometime or other I would like you to go to the country from the educational point of view and a knowledge of the language would of course make a tremendous difference. The education there is the most scientifically up to date that can be found anywhere. This really applies not to the university stage but to the very early stages beginning from babyhood and the creche period. The best time to learn anything is, it is said, when the babe begins to crawl! I am afraid you are too old for that now! What I like about Russian education is the attempt at producing harmony between hand and mind and heart. They want to produce harmonized, integrated, poised human beings, not the lop-sided people, unhappy and irritable persons that are so often met with. The ultimate success of this education remains still to be seen but already rather remarkable results have been obtained. Neurosis, the common disease of our civilization, is very rare in Russia now. Partly no doubt the change is due to a new and fairer social structure.

It surprises me more and more how people go through life with their eyes shut to its varied beauty as well as its terrible misery. It is extraordinary how blind and insensitive they can be, and I imagine that our middle classes in India take the cake in this respect. Which reminds me of a bright little poem which might interest you. It is a modern poem—I forget the name of the author. It is said to have been written to a woman seen from a train:

O why do you walk through the fields in gloves
  missing so much and so much?
O fat white woman whom nobody loves
Why do you walk through the fields in gloves
When the grass is soft as the breast of doves
And shivering sweet to the touch?
O why do you walk through the fields in gloves
  missing so much and so much?

No doubt you see plenty of such men and women in Badenweiler. But, though gloves are not sported in India, such people swarm here.

In one of my letters I asked you to subscribe to the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*. Perhaps that was one of the letters you missed.

It is really awful for you to be cut off regarding news from India as well as the rest of the world and have to rely on the stodgy and heavy *Daily Telegraph*. Most other English papers would be more interesting than this, but as you point out, many of them are *verboten*.[145] I have now sent instructions to Upadhyaya to arrange the supply of a number of papers to you from India and England. The Indian periodicals are: *The Hindu Illustrated Weekly* (from Madras), *The Times of India Weekly* (this is *not* the *Illustrated Weekly*), the *Pratap* (Hindi weekly of Cawnpore), the *Modern Review* and the विशाल भारत.[146]

This bunch will give you some Indian news. I am not entirely satisfied with it but I can think of no better. It is rather silly getting a daily from India. All these papers will be addressed to mummie.

The Times Book Club, London, is being asked to send mummie: *The Times* (weekly edition), the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* and *The Listener* (weekly)—but I am not sure if the *Manchester Guardian* is permitted in Germany. Anyhow you will get a fair bunch every week. *The Listener* is the organ of the British Broadcasting Corporation. It contains broadcasts and articles and many of these are good. I wonder if you can get the British broadcasts in Badenweiler. Probably you have no private radio at your disposal and the public radios are full of German broadcasts.

All these papers from India and England will be addressed to mummie to the Badenweiler address. Whenever an address is going to be changed you must write to Upadhyaya to inform the Indian periodicals concerned, and you should yourself write directly to the English papers or the Times Book Club (address: 42 Wigmore Street, London W 1). The Times Book Club can also supply you with books or other papers. If you feel like it you can open an account with them. Or I could authorise you to operate my account with them. I have dealt with them since they began 25 years ago or more. Probably it would be best if you dealt with them independently.

I do not know anything about the Rendezvous of East and West at Ascona. It sounds inviting enough and it would be worthwhile your going. Even if the people are uninteresting, the neighbourhood—the lago Maggiore and Lugano etc. are enchanting in their beauty. Where mummie will go when she leaves the sanatorium I cannot say. It will be for the doctors to decide. My own feeling is that during winter she ought to be on the hills and in the snows. The crisp and

145 Forbidden
146 *Vishal Bharat*

dry Alpine winter is far more beneficial than the gentle summer of the health resorts.

I am alarmed to learn that mummie is described as *Princezzin* (is this spelling you give correct?) in the sanatorium register. This is bad *enough anyhow and I dislike it. Apart from my likes and dislikes, it* is likely to mean higher charges everywhere. So you had better beware!

I am still in Almora jail in the little tent and outside—the rain, it raineth every day. I know nothing yet about my transfer. Of course you will be informed as soon as this takes place.

Your account of the grasshopper and the angry little bird reminds me of a somewhat similar incident here. Sometime back I caught a huge black centipede. I did not know what to do with it when a myna came and put an end to my mental debate by swallowing it with great relish.

I hope that now that you have got rid of your flu you will soon get quite fit. Has Nanu been in Badenweiler?

What about your sending me a photograph?

Love,

Your loving
Papu

August 8 Thursday

This diary is much neglected and I seldom write in it. What am I to write? A record of my depressions and unhappiness? Some thoughts one may not put down even in the privacy of a diary. What a coward man is!...[147]

Yesterday Savitri Devi (Mrs. Jafar Ali) was discharged nearly a year before her term was up. She had served nearly 3 years & 3 months out of 5 years. For some months she & I were in this jail but we could not see each other, not even when she lay seriously ill of typhoid.

I have taken to practising writing in Hindi. I write short essays or articles. I am on the whole pleased with my productions. Ideas come off, the pen moves but words are often lacking. I wish I had a better vocabulary.

Vague talk of my transfer from Almora has a somewhat unsettling effect. A year ago today I was in Dehra jail, so also two years ago and three years ago! Last August I was transferred from Dehra to Naini—also the August before in 1933.

147 Personal comments omitted.

August 10 Saturday

Early this morning glancing at some zinnias I was suddenly taken aback by a sight of extraordinary beauty. The dew on a spider's web had made it look like a wonderful pearl necklace, shimmering and full of lustre in the half-light of the dawn. A prisoner was passing by and I felt like sharing my joy with him. I drew his attention to the glistening wonder. He said something stupid which jarred upon me and almost upset me How necessary it is to have the same emotional background (not to mention intellectual) to have any real mental contact.

The moon is faintly visible today after a long absence. It is the 11th day of the bright fortnight and every night I have searched for it in vain. The clouds covered it. I had almost a sense of resentment at not seeing it day after day, or rather night after night, when the calendar told me that the moon ought to be shining brightly and growing fuller nightly.

August 14, Wednesday

It was रक्षा बन्धन[148] today I half expected to get राखी[149] from Nan or Betty. Betty sent one to me last year to Dehra jail. None came from them however But the day was not a blank one for a little note and a *rakhi* came from Prabha from Wardha. I felt grateful to her for having remembered me.

A letter from Indu & Kamala is long overdue. For the last five days I have waited for it.

Today is the last day of श्रावण.[150] The full moon is presumably visible from some places far from Almora. Here we are enveloped in clouds and only a faint dull light comes through

Today, or rather tomorrow, I complete eighteen months of my sentence—Another six months—It is a lot of time and I feel a little tired.

Three months ago I made a chart of my various sentences etc. I might as well bring it up to date—so on the next page are some statistics of my jail life.

Total period for which I have been sentenced at various times from 1921 to 1935	10½ years
Period actually served so far (15-8-35)	5 years

148 *Raksha Bandhan.*
149 *Rakhi.*
150 *Sravan*

Period served including usual remissions	about 5½ years
Still to serve of present sentence	6 months
Nabha sentence—suspended still?	2½ years
Quashed by court 1922—3 months	
General amnesty 1923—7 months	2 years one month
Premature release 1931—15 months	

and 9½ months in Almora jail to August 15, 1935.

August 15, Thursday

A letter came from Madan from Badenweiler—Bad news of K. She is definitely worse and what is equally bad, she is losing heart. I felt very miserable today. Kamala's child like face kept dancing before my eyes.

My own grip on life seems to be weakening, if absence of interest in many of my usual activities and mental preoccupations is any test. Perhaps this is a passing phase. But life has a terribly unattractive look about it.

August 16, 1935[151] Letter No. 7

Darling Indu,

There has been no letter from you for nearly three weeks now. Yesterday I had a brief note from Madan Bhai giving me some information about mummie. He said nothing about you, as apparently he expected you to write to me separately and give me all the other news.

It is sad that mummie has not been making good progress lately. I hope the setback was not of long duration and she is pulling up again. These ups and downs are inevitable but nevertheless they annoy and I can quite understand mummie feeling rather fed up occasionally. But she must not lose heart or allow herself to feel depressed. What a long time it is since she was confined to bed! Just a year ago I was with her in Anand Bhawan for eleven short days. That brief period together was ended all too suddenly and ever since we have continued in our respective prisons, and hers is far the narrower and worse one.

I wonder if you have remained at Badenweiler all the while or paid a visit to Bex and Villeneuve and Zurich as you intended to. I have been so much cut off from modern educational developments in Europe that I find it difficult to advise you. Indeed I never knew much about Continental universities. Being myself a product of one of the older

151. Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML.

British universities, I am unconsciously partial to them for the simple reason that I know something about them. In my last letter, or was it in the one before? I said that I could not readily imagine your spending several years at Zurich or any other Swiss university. What I meant was that I did not look forward to your education being confined to some such place. My own idea was, and vaguely is, that a period in an English university is desirable from many points of view. To confine oneself to an English university has its drawbacks for it means ignoring almost the non-British viewpoint in life and affairs. That difficulty crops up in another way if you confine yourself to a Swiss or other Continental university. How can we have the best of both? A difficult job.

When you were at Bhowali you will remember that I mentioned the possibility of your going to Oxford sometime or other. At that time I was thinking that after a year or so spent at a Continental university, you might shift to Oxford. I do not believe in people joining universities like Oxford or Cambridge—I do not know much about the Continent—at too early an age. I myself went too early as I was under eighteen at the time. I think 19 or 20 is a better age to join and one can profit more by the opportunities one gets then. As between Oxford and Cambridge I would slightly prefer the former for you. I think it has a better economics school. There is also a well-known place for economics in London—the London School of Economics. Then again I would prefer the life of Oxford to London and, I am sure, so would you.

I had all this background to my thought when I told you not to bother about appearing or even preparing specially for the entrance examination of a Swiss university. This would mean an unnecessary burden for you. You can attend any lectures you choose to without this exam and in particular you should try to improve your knowledge of languages, French, German and, if possible, Russian. There's a stiff year's work for you.

What is to follow? There are so many uncertainties in our life that I am unable to say definitely. But we can and should be prepared for various contingencies. One of these is the possibility of your joining an Oxford college. Probably this will involve also your having to pass some kind of an entrance examination though this is likely to be easier than the Zurich one, even apart from the question of language. Another fact to be remembered is that Oxford colleges do not take an unlimited number of persons. One has therefore to make sure some time ahead. There may be other difficulties, especially for Indians. I think you might

write to Bharati Sarabhai and find out from her what is supposed to be done. She can enquire from her own college people—Somerville College. There are, I believe, only two women's colleges at Oxford and so there is not much choice. Tell Bharati that there is a possibility of your going to Oxford next year—that is October 1936. Till then you are likely to remain on the Continent learning languages and odd subjects. Will it be possible for you to join Somerville College then? And if so, on what conditions of passing examination etc. Tell her that you have passed the Bombay matriculation and then spent a year at Santiniketan and now intend spending a year at Zurich. All this will not let you off the Oxford entrance—Responsions I think it is called. If you had gone in for the Cambridge Senior you might have got off Responsions.

Find all this out from Bharati and if it is possible ask her to get your name provisionally entered at Somerville for next year. This will not bind you in any way. Also find out details about the entrance exam etc. so that you may know what it is like. You might inform Bharati also that you propose to take up economics and allied subjects.

I do not know where Bharati is likely to be now for it is vacation time at Oxford. For aught I know she might be in India with her parents. Anyway she is likely to return to Oxford next month for the new term which begins early in October. If you address your letter to Somerville College, Oxford, it will find her.

Having dealt with the important subject of your education, I must now come back to my usual topic—jail gossip. What am I to do? The range of my subjects is limited here and so I seek to interest you in my birds and flowers. Or at any rate I try to find an excuse in them for writing to you. Morning and evening a crowd of birds—they are mostly mynas and sparrows—sit in front of my little tent waiting for their food. If there is delay in supplying it they make their presence and their impatience obvious enough by their noises. I share my morning *dallia* with them and bread crumbs of course. The sparrows and I are old friends for we shared the barrack building for many months. Thirty or forty of them lived in the old roof and when this roof was taken down there were some tragedies. But fortunately most of them escaped and now I find that they have made themselves at home under the eaves of the new roof. Some of them have become greatly daring. They come quite near to me and even enter my tent. Then there are swallows and bulbuls and other birds that I do not know. The other day a new visitor—a charming little creature—came and sat down within 3 or 4 feet of me as I sat reading in the tent and had a good look at me. I do not know if I was approved or not. I gazed at it fascinated

and delighted and when it flew away to another part of my yard I followed at a respectful distance. I did not know its name and no one could tell it to me. And then it flew right away and has not returned again.

I am afraid my companions here are not exactly noted for bird-lore. Some time back I wanted to find out the name of a strange bird. I asked a warder—for warders are my constant companions—if he could recognise birds and knew their names. 'Well,' he replied after some hesitation, 'कौओं को हम पहचानते हैं!'[112]

There was a swift tragedy two days ago. I was standing some distance away from my tent, looking away. Suddenly there was a noise in front of the tent. There was a whirr and a squeak—and that was the end of the story. A hawk had swooped down and seized and carried away a bird. It was done so swiftly that I could not even see what kind of bird it had got or do anything else in the matter. The story had ended, but the aftermath continued for long, for the other birds sat in rows on the barrack roofs and walls, terrified at this strange fate and croaking out their warning cry.

I saw another sight—this was last year in Dehra jail—which surprised me. A crow came down into my yard and carried off with ease quite a decent sized frog. It was all done very smartly as if the old villain had practised at the job He came down, tipped the frog over on his back, so as to prevent him hopping away, and then seized him by a leg and flew away.

You write to me of the pines that surround you in Badenweiler and of the delicious pine smell. There are pines enough round about here too, as you know, but the smell is not so marked. Or it may be that I have got used to it. For the last month or so I have been living on top of pine needles. A thick layer of them has been spread in my tent to prevent the damp from creeping up. These needles give a faint but pleasant smell. You must have a variety of pines and firs in the Black Forest. Have you got the monkey puzzle tree anywhere about there? I like this tree and its name always amuses me. It is hardly native to those parts but I remember seeing it on the promenade at Montreux.

A few days ago I had a curious experience. I was looking at my zinnias early in the morning when I was taken aback and I almost gasped at a sight of extraordinary beauty. It was just a spider's web with the dew-drops hanging on to it but in that half-light of the dawn it seemed like a wonderful pearl necklace, shimmering and full of lustre. Why

152. We do recognize the crows

do I compare it with a pearl necklace? *It was far more beautiful.* I gazed at it much moved, and then after a while I felt like sharing my emotion with a prisoner who was passing by. I drew his attention to the glistening wonder. He said something excessively stupid and banal which jarred upon me and almost upset me. The magic moment passed and I came down from the heavens and bumped on the too solid earth.

I felt irritated at my companion's blindness and indifference. Yet it was *no fault of his. What chance had he had, poor fellow, to develop* his artistic and aesthetic self? For generations he and his kind had been crushed, sat upon, till the light had gone out of their eyes and on their faces had come the "emptiness of ages". And I thought that for any real understanding or contact with another how essential it was that there should be not only a similar intellectual but an emotional background. Individuals and nations grow up with different backgrounds and then fail to understand each other.

To come back to earthly topics. I hope you are keeping physically fit now. You swim and walk and both of these exercises are excellent. I imagine that swimming is probably the best all-round exercise; it tones up every part of the body. But only if you swim enough. In small swimming pools little real swimming is possible and one is apt to laze more than swim. Apart from these open air exercises, I wish you would keep up some of the *asans*, especially the *shirshasana* and the *sarvangasana. I am a great believer in both of these.* They are good for the back, the shoulders, the head and the eyes. The back is really very important, and a really strong and at the same time supple back is not only good for health but helps in a graceful carriage. Swim*ming is good for this. But it is not always possible to get a swim.* If you practise these two *asans* and a few bending and stretching exercises daily for say 10 minutes, you will feel delightfully supple and fit. Your back is not strong enough physically, though metaphorically you may have a stiff backbone. At your age *it should be very easy* to get absolutely supple but if you are not careful a gradual stiffness creeps on as one grows older.

I do not want you to overdo these indoor exercises. Spend as little time over them as you like but try to give a few minutes daily. Remember not to strain or tire yourself in the least, and this applies very specially to the *asans*. The point is to do them, not to overdo them. The test of any exercise is that you should feel fresh and energetic afterwards. If you feel tired there is something wrong with you or the exercise, or you are overdoing it. Begin with only half a minute of the *shirshasana* and see how you feel. Apart from all this try to keep up your swimming. If you have the chance go in for lawn tennis.

A line at the end of Madan's letter informs me that my two old letters which had gone astray have reached you. He does not mention if my 5th letter dated 20th July reached. I presume it did.

When you write to me ask mummie to dictate to you a line or two to me—write them down in Hindi—this will cheer me and it might also cheer her.

Let me know what periodicals you are getting from India and London.

Love from

Your loving
Papu

August 25 Sunday

Yesterday, after long waiting—almost a month—I received a letter from Indu. It came from Locarno. She had gone from Badenweiler to Bex and then to Ascona. I was soothed by the letter and felt happier than I had done for many days.

No further news of Kamala.

Three days ago as I was digging to prepare the ground for some flower seedlings, I came across a stone. Nothing unusual as stones abound here. But all my efforts to move that stone proved unavailing. It wouldn't budge. I dug more and more and eventually an enormous piece of rock, about 6 feet in height and at least 20 maunds in weight, was disclosed. It was a problem what to do with it. Eventually I decided to have it stood up on end, emerging from the ground as a kind of monument. This was a difficult enough matter and it took a dozen men or more and much shouting to get it heaved up to position. There it is now, looking rather distinguished and elemental and there it is likely to remain for a very long time unless the jail authorities interfere. I hope to plant flowering shrubs round it. But the flowers and plants will wither and fade, the stone will remain—a monument to my long stay in this prison. I am quite fascinated by it and I gaze at its fine outline from various angles.

I read in the papers about the disgraceful squabbles for office in the Lucknow Reception Committee[153] for the next Congress. Not being able to agree on any other name they elected me chairman—a transparent and stupid device to hide their disagreements. But immediately after, they quarrelled over the general secretaryship. Disgusting! I dislike intensely being exploited by others in this or any other way.

153. The election for the general secretaryship had to be invalidated because of violent behaviour.

Absurd to elect me as chairman when I am not likely to be released till the eve of the Congress. Indeed this election makes it practically certain that govt. will not release me till the last possible moment.

I am also suggested for the Congress presidency.[154] How I can be elected in my home province, unless the constitution has been changed, I do not know. That apart, I should hate to be pitchforked into the presidentship soon after release. I must have a few months to make my soundings, to find out if I fit in with what is happening. My present feeling is that I do not fit in with anybody or almost anything in India. And then I want to go to Europe to K.

How extraordinarily poor we are at present in outstanding persons! The only two other names suggested so far for the presidentship are: Rajagopalachari and Bhulabhai Desai.

August 28, Wednesday

A cable from Madan (via Allahabad) today that K's condition unsatisfactory—nausea and vomiting. I felt thoroughly upset and the bad news seemed as if it was a prelude to something worse. She is slipping away and the thought of it is unbearable, hellish. Last year the month of September was a damnable month for me. Again September is coming.

August 30, 1935[155] Letter No. 8

Darling Indu,

So at last your letter came to me, a month after the one that preceded it, a fortnight after it was due. You began it in style on August 1st but it took you two weeks to finish it and it was not posted till the 15th August at Locarno. I did not even know, till your letter came, that you were travelling or else I would have made allowances for the delay. Madan Bhai had written to me but he had not mentioned that you were away.

I am glad you have visited Bex and met Mlle. Hemmerlin. I have only met her on three or four brief occasions but she has always struck me as a very fine woman. You will have many friends in Europe and

154. *The Tribune* of 25 August 1935 reported that the provincial Congress leaders who had assembled at Lucknow favoured Jawaharlal for the presidentship.

155. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

you will never lack for advice and help. But somehow what comforts me most is the presence of Mlle. H.

I do not know yet if you have come to any decision about your future studies. Probably you are back now in Badenweiler after your jaunt: Bex-Ascona-Zurich, and have met the people you wished to consult. I am still inclined to think that you should concentrate on languages during the next year and not bother yourself about the entrance exam of Zurich or elsewhere. European and for the matter of that world conditions are peculiarly unstable at present and it is impossible to tell what the near future holds. It is quite possible that you may find it undesirable or impracticable later on to stick to a Continental university. The labour involved in an entrance exam would then be largely, or at least partly, wasted. But a knowledge of languages acquired will always be a gain. Of course the two cannot be separated. In any event you have to spend the next year on the Continent and the choice seems to be confined to Zurich or Lausanne. Zurich is probably the more advanced university centre but for the present and for my purpose, as suggested above, it does not matter much which you prefer. It is the choice between a German-language background and a French-language one. Fix up whichever you fancy.

In my last letter, I think, I suggested your writing to Bharati about the Oxford college. Later on I found from your letter that she was in India for her holidays. I suppose she will be going back soon for term begins at Oxford early in October. Zurich and Lausanne are all very well in their own way but they are, after all, rather narrow places with a limited outlook. For a wider world outlook, Paris, Oxford or some of the American universities are better. I rule out Berlin for the present. You might therefore write to Bharati anyhow and get all the facts. Later on, if we consider necessary, we can take a more formal step.

The papers are full of war rumours. For the time being there is talk of an Italo-Abyssinian war and it is possible that the next two or three weeks might see the beginning of this. I don't think there is any immediate danger of war in Europe. But one can never be certain and, in any event, war in east Africa will produce a continuing crisis in Europe. This will inevitably affect almost all activities there and foreigners, whether they are students or not, cannot escape this. *Mummie's treatment may be affected, so also your educational course.* The plan you may carefully lay down now may have to be altered materially then. So you must all keep wide awake and not be caught in any of the little difficulties that crop up during times of crisis. If such a crisis arises you and Madan Bhai had better consult the

American Express people and Thomas Cook about money transfer etc. It is possible that our correspondence may also be affected, though I imagine that air services will continue.

I have made arrangements from time to time for various newspapers and magazines to be sent to mummie from India and England. But not a mention of them is made in your letter. I am intrigued. Are you not receiving them? In the event of your leaving mummie to go to Zurich or Lausanne you might arrange that a weekly packet of these papers is sent to you from Badenweiler after mummie and Madan Bhai have seen them. You can choose the papers you want. Perhaps others—Indian students there—might also be interested in the Indian papers. They are rare enough on the Continent and you could arrange to send them on to some students' centre. It would be a pity to throw these papers away when others would welcome them.

I am rather vague about the purpose of your visit to Ascona, although the desire to visit a beautiful place is purpose enough. Still I have an idea that you mentioned some kind of a reunion of East and West. What this is I do not know and I await your next letter to find out all about it, and whom you found there.

It is sad that mummie is not making as good progress as she ought and odd complications are turning up. I was hoping that by this time she would be up and about, and looking forward to an autumn and winter in Suisse to set her up. But it appears that she must stay on in Badenweiler for the present and till she gets better. It is a pity that Mrs. Geissler has left her. If the new arrangement at Badenweiler is satisfactory well and good, but later on some other arrangement will be necessary. I do feel so helpless sitting here, all enclosed, in the mountains, unable to be of much use to you or to mummie or to anyone else. Dolamma, it appears, is again unwell and her blood pressure has gone up.

You were quite right in not getting mummie involved in the proposed home for Indian convalescents in Berlin. It is best to keep at a safe distance from all public activities in Germany. Mummie is there for her treatment and for nothing else. Mrs. Goering,[156] as of course you know, is one of the big women of the Third Reich. I read about her marriage some months back. Was she not an opera singer?

Dhan Gopal Mukerji's New York address is 325 East 72nd Street, New York City. In summer he lives in a cottage elsewhere but I

156 Wife of Herman Wilhelm Goering, the German Nazi leader.

suppose he will be back in N.Y. soon, if he has not gone over to Europe as you suggest, on the strength of Mlle. Hemmerlin.

This address reminds me of your address. This is going to continue, so far as I am concerned, to be Badenweiler until I am definitely told to write elsewhere.

Some days back I had a card from Ratan and Rajan[157] from somewhere in the Arctic Circle—latitude 80.10° it said, and you can look up in an atlas to find out how far from the North Pole this is. They had been to Iceland and Spitzbergen on a pleasure cruise and they wrote, facing the great ice barrier and with the midnight sun shining down upon them, or rather sideways, for the midnight sun is just over the horizon. The picture card of a semi frozen sea brought a sense of nostalgia to me. It reminded me of my own visit to Norway just twenty five years ago. I had just taken my degree at Cambridge and I went with a friend on a modest trip to the Norwegian fjords. I did not go nearly as far as Ratan and Rajan but I loved those fjords and the blue ice coming right down to the sea. And though I did not see the midnight sun, I saw it set at 11.30 p.m. and pop out again an hour or so later. I made up my mind to return soon and do the grand trip to Spitzbergen, that is, as far as ordinary travellers can go. Beyond that is the preserve of Arctic explorers. But this ambition and desire of my heart, like so many others, remains unfulfilled. I am far enough from the Arctic seas in point of space, I am even further away if opportunity to visit them is a criterion. Ratan writes: 'You must do this wonderful trip before you resume work.' 'Must', indeed! How I would love to go there with mummie and you and sail those silent and unruffled waters of the fjords, winding in and out between the high mountains, every turn bringing a new surprise. Indeed I would like to go further north still; it will be cold there of course with chunks of ice floating about in the sea, and icebergs, but the sun puts in a double shift of work and shines away night and day.

The Arctic regions have attracted me ever since I was a kid and read Fridtjof Nansen's[158] *Farthest North*—the Pole had still to be reached then. The polar regions and the Himalayan glaciers, these have beckoned to me for long years past. How many plans I have made to wander about in Ladakh and Skardo and Baltistan and Central Asia, and pass on to Tibet, to visit Manasarovar and Kailas! But so far my nearest approach to Kailas and Manasarovar is Almora jail—for

157 Rajan Nehru, daughter of K. N. Haksar and wife of R. K. Nehru.

158 (1861-1930), Norwegian explorer, scientist and statesman. *Farthest North*, an account of his journey across Greenland on skis in 1888, appeared in English translation in 1897.

the pilgrim route passes through Almora and it is a bare three weeks' journey from here to that wonderful lake.

The rains continue here but they are less frequent and when the sun comes out it is very hot. But the nights are cool and there is often a bite in the air in the early mornings. The weather is slowly changing with autumn, but of course the rainy season does not allow the real autumn to develop till October. Meanwhile I live in my tent and watch my flowers and feed my birds. The other day as I was digging with the intention of making a new flower plot, I came up against a stone. It was no ordinary stone and I dug, and others dug, and we all dug, and the more we dug the bigger appeared the stone. At last we uncovered it; it was a hefty affair about six feet in length and broad and strong. With the help of numerous men, it was made to stand up on one end and then nearly half of it was covered up with the loose earth. The rest stands out of the ground now, a worthy sight with graceful curves and jagged corners, an embodiment of quiet strength. I hope it will remain there for many a long day, a reminder of my long stay in this jail! It is over ten months now since I came here! What a long time it has been, especially since you people sailed away from Bombay to the far west and my fortnightly visits to Bhowali ended.

Some of my friends, the birds, are sitting or standing near me as I write trying to draw my attention to the fact that it is time I fed them. It is the new generation and it has not been properly trained. I am afraid I am partly responsible for their bad habits, for they want to be fed at odd hours and I humour them.

Some of the phrases in your last letter amused me. They bear evidence of your German or French background, and the 'wills' and 'shalls' get rather mixed up. It is a small matter and is bound to happen when one changes over from one language to another. *Chhoti puphi*, you tell me, was 'fed up of the rain.'

I learned about Romain Rolland's marriage to his secretary some time ago. Rather late in the day for a marriage, I should have thought, but the parties concerned are the best judges. I have just been reading one of his later books in translation. He writes beautifully. I have now sent for some more of his books in the original French from the Times Book Club, London.

I hope you gave my love to Mont Blanc and the Deuts du Midi, and Lac Leman and our many friends in that part of the world.

Puphi has sent me, at my request, an enlargement of the snap of you that Raja took at Bhowali. It is quite good.

I have also got a copy of the photograph someone took of Bapu and you in Bombay. You are grinning in it and the picture is good. Bapu has his back to the camera.

I wish you would let me know if the books I have sent to mummie have reached her. Also the cable I sent on July 31st. I like to be definite about these matters. Uncertainty is not a pleasant sensation.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

September 2, Monday

I was just getting down again after the emotional upheaval. A letter came from Madan which, though disturbing, at least assured me that there was no immediate danger.

This morning came the thunderbolt—a cable from Dr. Steffan of the Badenweiler sanatorium saying that Kamala's condition was critical and that he had wired to the India Office and the Viceroy, urging my release. So this is the end.

I felt broken up all day—and then realising that whether I am released or not I am sure to be transferred from here, I tried to occupy myself with arranging my books and papers.

This evening at about 8 p.m. D. Vira,[159] the joint magistrate, came to me with the following message from the Chief Secretary, U.P.

> In view of news received from doctor in Germany of the serious illness of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's wife, the Governor General in Council have decided to allow Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru to proceed at once to Germany to enable him to join his wife, and for this purpose have suspended his sentence under section 401 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

I gave Vira a note[160] in reply which he has now gone to telephone to the Chief Sec. He will come back to give me his reply. In my note I made it clear that I certainly intended going to Germany at the earliest possible moment but for the rest I bound myself down to nothing—of course they could arrest me on my return if they chose.

So perhaps this is my last night in jail! In a day and a half I may be in Allahabad. Within ten days in Badenweiler! How will I find Kamala? Or will I see her at all?...

159 (b 1906), joint magistrate, Almora, 1934-36, ambassador to Czechoslovakia, 1954-56, cabinet secretary, 1964-66, Governor of Haryana, 1966-67, Governor of Bengal, 1967-69, Governor of Mysore, 1969-70.

160 See following item.

2-9-35[161]

TO THE CHIEF SECRETARY

I have just received a message to the effect that in view of the serious illness of my wife in Germany my sentence has been suspended under sec. 401 of the Cr. P. Code by the Governor-General in Council to enable me to proceed at once to Germany. I do not know what this section of the Cr. P. Code is and I have no means of referring to it here. I am told, however, that this message means my having to go back to prison in the event of my returning to India before the time fixed for the expiry of my sentence, that is, February 1936, and till that date.

I appreciate the courtesy of government in thus permitting me to go to my wife and also in informing me that in the event of my early return I shall have to go back to prison. But I should like to make it clear, if I may, that the second part of this proposal has nothing to do with my willingness or otherwise. I certainly want to go to Germany as soon as possible and I shall return in the ordinary course when I am not wanted there. If on my return government choose to arrest me and send me back to prison, they do not require my permission to do so.

I understand that on my discharge there will be no restrictions on me either in India, during the few days before I go off by air, or abroad. I presume also that I can travel if necessary to the usual western and central European countries, i.e., Germany, Switzerland, France, Austria, Italy, Czechoslovakia, England etc. This may be necessitated by my wife's treatment, or on account of my daughter who is studying in Switzerland, or otherwise.

I have already a passport which is valid till April 1936. I should be informed if this can be used by me or whether a new one will be issued.

2/9/35

9 p.m. D. Vira came back and told me that the Chief Sec. is referring the question of sentence, as well as restrictions in India, to the Governor. The reply will come tomorrow. In Europe, I am told, I can go where I like on my old passport and there are no restrictions. Here, before I go off, govt. would not like me to indulge in public political activity —hold forth at meetings etc.—but they do not want to lay it down in

161 JN Papers, NMML.

writing. More or less they want to leave it to my good taste—a kind of gentleman's agreement.

The question of sentence arises thus—will I have to serve the balance of my sentence whenever I might come back, or only the part up to February 15 if I return earlier. Vira had insisted that the latter was meant, but evidently Chief Sec. was not clear about this.

STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[162]

.... I do not remember the wording of this section but in any event it seemed that in view of the decision of the Governor-General in Council my imprisonment has automatically terminated for the present at least. I was further told that there were no conditions or restrictions but in the event of my returning to India before the date on which my sentence would have expired in the ordinary course, that is, February 1936, I would have to return to prison. I expressed my appreciation for the courtesy extended to me by government but several matters seemed to me to require elucidation and in order to avoid all chance of misunderstanding I made certain enquiries. In answer to these enquiries I was given the following message at about midday of September 3:

1) In any event, that is, if I returned earlier than February, 1936, imprisonment would not go beyond February next year.
2) In Europe there would be no restrictions on travel.
3) As regards the few days intervening between the date of my release and the date of my departure from India by air there would be no restrictions on me. But the Governor General in Council trusted to my honour not to make any political speeches during this period.

I left Almora jail within half an hour of this message and came direct to Allahabad.

I might add that the burden on my honour is not a heavy one. After over nineteen months of seclusion it would be extraordinary vanity and folly on my part to rush suddenly to the platform and presume to give advice on public questions to my colleagues or others. Even if I had been released in the ordinary course after completing my sentence, I would have taken some time to adjust myself to the new conditions and to acquaint myself with all that has happened during the period of my seclusion, important and of vast consequence

162 3 September 1935. *The Hindu*, 4 September 1935.

as much of this has been. It would have been an impertinence on my part and unfair both to myself and to my colleagues, to come to any decision without the fullest consultation with them. My sudden and unexpected release makes it even harder for me to make the necessary adjustment, and the immediate cause of my release is such as to fill my mind with anxiety to the exclusion of much else. It is my intention to proceed to Europe by air as soon as arrangements can be made and to join my wife there.

WHY I WENT TO PRISON[163]

Why did I go to prison the last time? Why, of course, because a magistrate of high degree sentenced me to two years imprisonment! That was an all sufficient reason and I have no doubt that the magistrate felt convinced that he had to convict me of sedition and sentence me to a long term. I believe he was rather sorry for me and did not look forward to the prospect of sending me to prison for a long term so soon after my discharge on a previous two years term. I felt grateful to him for his attitude but, being where he was, he had no choice in the matter. I would not presume to argue with him the legal implications of my conduct and of what I had said. My knowledge of the law has grown rusty and he was presumably an expert in it. Indeed the vague memories of my legal days convinced me long ago that it is no easy matter to escape the widespread tentacles of the Indian law of sedition. And I had no desire to do so and by my statement in court I endeavoured to make the path of the law as smooth as possible.

I was sentenced for sedition, not for civil disobedience as such. Sir Samuel Hoare and other high placed authorities quite rightly laid stress on this. Civil disobedience was at the time still in theory, though little enough in practice, the Congress programme; but I had consciously avoided indulgence in it during my brief stay outside. I did not thus court imprisonment in the old style Congress way; I had no particular desire to rush back to prison. I did not go as one of an army marching in step, but as an individual, one of the numerous odds and ends who are continually being picked up and deprived of liberty for long or short periods.

I had been convicted previously on many and varied counts, sedition included. There was the first conviction of distributing handbills advocating a hartal, and then for criminal intimidation and extortion

163. JN. Correspondence, NMML. This incomplete note was presumably written after his release.

(fear some charge—they related to picketing foreign cloth shops), and for not disappearing into thin air when ordered to do so (this was in Nabha where I was told to disappear when there was no obvious means of doing so at hand), and conspiracy (I forget what this conspiracy was about, this was also in Nabha), and breach of the Salt Act, and later a multitude of ordinances, and non compliance with an order interning me in Allahabad. Right through these charges ran the stout wire of sedition, sometimes in the background, sometimes as a separate and additional charge. I had survived these various charges and convictions, though the suspended Nabha sentences sometimes make me wonder if I have them still in store for me. I had thus a black enough record when I appeared before the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta.

I was not hungering for prison and yet I was in a curious state of mind and prison seemed inevitable. It hung like a black cloud over me ready to envelop me at any moment...

BOOKS READ IN PRISON

PRESIDENCY JAIL—CALCUTTA

1.	Lion Feuchtwanger: *The Oppermanns*	15/2/34
2.	J.B. Priestley: *Wonder Hero*	16/2

ALIPORE CENTRAL JAIL—CALCUTTA

3.	G.K. Chesterton: *The Everlasting Man*	18/2
4.	J. Conrad *Lord Jim* (Jail Library)	21/2
5	E.P. Oppenheim *The Mystery of Mr. Bernard Brown* (Jail Library)	22/2
6	Sir James Jeans: *The New Background of Science* (1933)	23/2
7.	John Strachey: *The Menace of Fascism* (1933)	24/2
8	Michael Arlen: *Piracy* (J.L.)	2/3
9	Henri Barbusse. *Inferno*	3/3
10.	G.D.H. Cole: *The Intelligent Man's Guide Through World Chaos* (1933)	4/3
11.	Mark Twain. *The Prince & the Pauper* (J.L.)	5/3
12.	P.G. Wodehouse: *Money for Nothing* (J.L.)	8/3
13.	Cole: *The Intelligent Man's Review of Europe Today*	9/3

14. *What Would be the Character of a New War?* various authors—League of Nations (Gollancz) 12/3
15. Joseph Conrad: *Typhoon & Other Stories* (J.L.) 13/3
16. Andre Siegfried: *La Crise Britannique au XX Siecle* 14/3

Second Month

17. W. Trotter: *Instincts of the Herd in Peace & War* 16/3
18. A. Conan Doyle: *The Land of Mist* (J.L.) 17/3
19. Arnold Bennett: A Great Man (J.L.) 18/3
20. Douglas Christie: *Terry of Tangistan* (J.L.) 19/3
21. Stephen Leacock: *Over the Footlights & Other Fancies* (J.L.) 22/3
22. Hans Kohn: A History of Nationalism in the East 26/3
23. R.D. Charques & A.H. Ewen: *Profits & Politics in the Post War World* 3/4
24. Leo Tolstoy. *War & Peace* 4/4
25. Stephen Leacock: Some Nonsense Novels (J.L.) 4/4
26. Ella Winter: *Red Virtue* 6/4
27. Winston Churchill: *Thoughts & Adventures* 8/4
28. P.G. Wodehouse: Meet Mr. Mulliner (J.L.) 9/4
29. Vicente Blasco Ibanez: The Intruder 10/4
30. Romain Rolland: *Life of Ram Krishna* 10/4
31. E.B. Havell: *Ancient & Medieval Architecture of India* 12/4
32. F.W. Champion: *The Jungle in Sunlight & Shadow* 13/4
33. Mukul Chandra Dey: *My Pilgrimages to Ajanta & Bagh* 14/4
34. Bertram Thomas: *Arabia Felix* 15/4

Third Month (16/4—15/5)

35. Capt. G.V. Modak: *Indian Defence Problem* 16/4
36. H.G. Wells: *The Shape of Things to Come* 19/4
37. Upton Sinclair: *The Book of Life* 21/4
38. Casanova: *Life & Adventures* 24/4
39. Bernard Shaw: *Too True to be Good; Village Wooing; On the Rocks* 24/4
40. Ivan Bunin: *The Gentleman from San Francisco & Other Stories* 24/4
41. Y.Z.: *From Moscow to Samarkand* 25/4/34
42. Parmenas Githendu Mockene: *An African Speaks for His People* 26/4
43. Eleanor F. Rathbone: *Child Marriage; The Indian Minotaur* 28/4
44. Samuel Butler: *The Way of All Flesh* 30/4

45. Buschke & Jacobsohn: *Sex Habits* 30/4
46. *Famous Plays of 1932* 1/5
47. Peter Quennell: *A Superficial Journey Through Tokyo & Peking* 3/5
48. I. Babel: *Red Cavalry* 4/5
49. Gurumukh Nihal Singh: *Landmarks in Indian Constitutional and National Development 1600-1919*
50. Ralph Fox: *Colonial Policy of British Imperialism* 7/5

EN ROUTE A C J. TO D.D.J.

51. Gorki: *On Guard for the Soviet Union* 8/5

DEHRA DUN DISTRICT JAIL

52. Chowdhry Mukhtar Singh: *Rural India* 12/5
53. S. Radhakrishnan: *The Philosophy of the Upanishads* 12/5

Fourth Month (16/5—16/6)

54. Courthope's *History of English Poetry*, Vols. I, II & III 20/5
55. Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*—Ranjit's translation *Tarangas* I to VII 21/5
56. Courthope's *History of English Poetry*, Vols. IV, V, VI 25/5
57. J.C. Winslow & Verrier Elwin: *The Dawn of Indian Freedom* 26/5
58. J.S. Barnes: *Fascism* 28/5
59. Walter Pater: *Marius the Epicurean* 28/5
60. Maurice Hindus: *Red Bread* 30/5
61. Joseph Husslein: *The Christian Social Manifesto* 31/5
62. Ernst Toller. *I was a German* 31/5
63. C R. Haines. *Fragments from Sappho etc.* 1/6
64. Sean O'Faolain: *Midsummer Night Madness* 3/6
65. Brown Book of the Hitler Terror 8/6
66. Maxim Gorki: *My University Days* 10/6

Fifth Month (16/6—15/7)

67. Sean O'Faolain: *A Nest of Simple Folk* 18/6
68. Julius F. Hecker. *Moscow Dialogues* 23/6
69. Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* (Ranjit's translation) *Taranga* VIII etc. 27/6

70. *India Analysed*, Vol. I 28/6
71. H.G. Wells: *The Work, Wealth & Happiness of Mankind* 4/7
72. Brian O'Neill: *The War for the Land in Ireland* 6/7
73. Sidney Hook: *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx* 9/7
74. Ralph Fox: *Lenin* 13/7

Sixth Month (16/7–15/8)

75. Aldous Huxley: *Beyond the Mexique Bay* 16/7
76. Ernst Toller: *The Blind Goddess* 16/7
77. Lewis E. Lawes: *Twenty Thousand Years in Sing Sing* 17/7
78. J.F. Horrabin: *Atlas of Current Affairs* 18/7
79. Oswald Spengler: *The Hour of Decision* 21/7
80. *My Best Thriller*: An anthology 24/7
81. Finished: *Otto's German Conversation, Grammar* 25/7
82. H.N. Brailsford: *Property or Peace* 26/7
83. Gerald Heard: *These Hurrying Years* 28/7
84. Ernst Henri: *Hitler Over Europe?* 5/8
85. L. Cranmer-Byng: *The Vision of Asia* 10/8

Transferred from Dehra Jail—11/8/34
Out of prison—12/8 to 23/8
In Naini Central Prison—23/8/34

Seventh Month

86. Karel Capek: *President Masaryk Tells His Story* 27/8
87. Erich Maria Remarque: *The Road Back* 30/8
88. G.D.H. Cole: *What Marx Really Meant* 31/8
89. Karl Marx: *Selected Essays*—Translated by H.J. Stenning 5/9

Eighth Month 16/9–15/10

90. Gerald Heard: *Social Substance of Religion* 18/9
91. M.K. Gandhi: *Self Restraint vs Self-Indulgence* 20/9
92. C.K. Ogden: *Basic English* 21/9
93. Edited by F.H. Pritchard: *Great Essays of all Nations* 22/9
94. *International Literature No. 5* 1933-34 22/9/34
95. *Duranty Reports Russia* 28/9
96. Goad & Currey: *The Working of a Corporate State* 29/9
97. Balzac: *Catherine de' Medici* 7/10
98. Lewis Carroll: *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (J.L.) 9/10
99. Bukharin: *Imperialism & World Economy* 10/10

100.	P.G. Wodehouse: *Something Fresh* (J.L.)	10/10
101.	C.K. Ogden: *Debabelization*	12/10
102.	B.D. Basu: *Consolidation of the Christian Power in India* (J.L.)	15/10

Ninth Month

103.	P.G. Wodehouse: *Short Stories* (J.L.)	16/10
104.	Thomas Paine: *Rights of Man* (J.L.)	10/10
105.	Mark Twain· *Innocents Abroad* (J.L.)	24/10
106.	Prescott· *Conquest of Peru* (unfinished) (J.L.)	26/10

ALMORA DISTRICT JAIL

107.	Leonard Woolf. *Empire & Commerce in Africa*	1/11/34

Tenth Month

108.	C.K. Ogden & I.A. Richards: *The Meaning of Meaning*	19/11
109.	Balzac: *Lost Illusions* etc.	20/11
110.	W. Somerset Maugham: *Ah King!*	20/11
111.	V. Dandre: *Anna Pavlova*	22/11
112.	Zur Muhlen *The Wheel of Life*	22/11
113	*Famous Plays of 1933-34*	
	1. *Clive of India* by W P. Lipscomb & R J. Minney	
	2. *The Wind & The Rain* by Merton Hodge	
	3 *Reunion in Vienna* by Robert E. Sherwood	28/11
	4. *The Laughing Woman* by Gordon Daviot	
	5 *Sixteen* by Aimee & Philip Stuart	
	6. *The Distaff Side* by John Van Druten	
114.	*India Analysed*—Vol. III	4/12
115.	Hans Fallada: *Little Man What Now?*	5/12
116.	S. Tretiakov: *Chinese Testament*	8/12
117.	C F. Andrews: *The Zanzibar Crisis* (pamphlet)	12/12

Eleventh Month 16/12/34—15/1/35

118.	John Dos Passos *In All Countries*	22/12
119.	Glomey Bolton: *The Tragedy of Gandhi*	24/12
120.	Wells etc. *The Science of Life*	26/12
121.	Sherwood Eddy *Russia Today*	30/12

1935

122.	Compton Mackenzie. *Extremes Meet*	3/1/35
123.	Agnes Smedley: *Chinese Destinies*	4/1

124.	Andre Malraux: *Man's Fate*	6/1
125.	*Famous Plays of 1934:*	
	1. *Touch Wood* by C.L. Anthony	
	2. *Men in White* by Sidney Kingsley	
	3. *The Maitlands* by Ronald Mackenzie	8/1
	4. *Queen of Scots* by Gordon Daviot	
	5. *The Old Folks at Home* by H.M. Harwood	
	6. *Family Affairs* by Gertrude Jennings	
126.	Dennis Wheatley: *The Forbidden Territory*	8/1
127.	H.G. Wells: *Autobiography* Vol. I	14/1

Twelfth Month

128.	Victor A. Yakhontoff: *The Chinese Soviets*	18/1/35
129.	H.G. Wells: *Autobiography*, Vol. II	22/1/35
130.	Somerset Maugham: *Ashenden*	27/1/35
131.	Thornton Wilder: *Heaven's My Destination*	27/1/35
132.	Franklin Roosevelt: *On our Way*	28/1
133.	S. Radhakrishnan: *An Idealist View of Life*	29/1
134.	G.R. Mitchison: *The First Workers' Government*	10/2

Thirteenth Month

135.	Lewis Watt (S.J.): *The Future of Capitalism*	18/2
136.	Robert Graves: *I, Claudius*	22/2
137.	Olaf Stapledon: *Last and First Men*	25/2
138.	Walter de la Mare's Poems 1901 to 1918. 2 Volumes	26/2
139.	*Six Soviet Plays:*	
	Michael Bulgakov: *Days of the Turbins*	
	Valentin Kataev: *Squaring the Circle*	
	Nikolai Pogodin: *Tempo*	27/2
	Anatole Glebov: *Inga*	
	A. Afinogenyew: *Fear*	
	Vladimir Kershon: *Bread*	
140.	Swami Vivekananda: *Jnana Yoga*	10/3/35
141.	*The Berlin Diaries*—Journals of a General in the German War Ministry edited by Dr Helmut Klotz	13/3
142.	Bertrand Russell: *Freedom & Organisation*	14/3

Fourteenth Month (16th March 1935 to 15th April)

143.	Sherwood Eddy: *The Challenge of the East*	19/3/35
144.	R. Palme Dutt: *Fascism & Social Revolution*	22/3
145.	Webster & Heys: *Keeping Fit at Forty*	25/3
146.	Gore Graham: *War & Peace and the Soviet Union*	26/3

147. Bernard Shaw: *Collected Prefaces* 31/3
148. A.N. Whitehead: *Adventures of Ideas* 8/4
149. J.B.S. Haldane: *Possible Worlds* 11/4
150. आज का रूस—नित्यनारायण बानर्जी, हिन्दी मे अनुवादक : बजमोहन वर्मा 14/4

Fifteenth Month (16th April to 15th May 1935)

151. Georges le Fevre: *An Eastern Odyssey* 19/4
152. Frankwood E. Williams: *Russia, Youth and the Present Day World* 22/4
153 W.R. Hiskett: *Social Credits or Socialism* 23/4
154. A. Pinkevich: *Science & Education in the U.S.S.R.* 25/4
155. G.D.H. Cole & others: *What Everybody Wants to Know About Money* 28/4
156. *The Best Short Stories of 1934*—English & American 29/4
157. E.F. Griffith: *Modern Marriage & Birth Control* 5/5
158. Ludendorff: *The Coming War* 5/5/35
159. Ernst Toller: *Seven Plays* 10/5
160. Sven Hedin: *Jehol, City of Emperors* 11/5
161. Suraj Krishen Munshi: *Morning Shadows* 12/5
162. F.S. Marvin: *India & the West* 13/5

Sixteenth Month (16th May to 15th June 1935)

163. Coates: *The Second Five-Year Plan of Development of the U.S.S.R.* 18/5
164. Richard B. Gregg: *The Power of Non-Violence* 22/5
165. Moeller van den Bruck: *Germany's Third Empire* 29/5
166. श्री रामनाथ 'सुमन' : हमारे राष्ट्रनिर्माता 1/6
167. Kropotkin: *The Conquest of Bread* 3/6
168. Romain Rolland: *The Combat* 4/6
169. R.M. Rayner: *The Story of Trade Unionism* 8/6
(and *Glimpses of World History* Vol. 2) 15/6

Seventeenth Month (16 June 1935 to 15 July)

170. E. Alexander Powell: *The Last Home of Mystery* 24/6/35
171. Mulk Raj Anand: *Untouchable* 25/6
172. प्रेमचन्द : गबन 1/7
173. Almora District Gazetteer
174. Stanley Jones: *Christ & Communism* 6/7
175. Boswell's Johnson Vol. I. 8/7
(and *Glimpses of World History* Vol. I.) 14/7

Eighteenth Month (16 July to 15 August 1935)

176.	राहुल सांकृत्यायन : साम्यवाद ही क्यों ?	18/7
177.	J.F. Horrabin: *An Atlas of European History*	18/7
178.	R. Boleslavski & Helen Woodward: *Lances Down*	21/7
179.	A.M. Field: *Protection of Women & Children in Soviet Russia*	27/7
180.	प्रेमचन्द : कर्मभूमि	27/7
181.	Rene Fulop-Miller: *The Power & Secret of the Jesuits*	5/8/35
182.	G.K. Chesterton: *The Outline of Sanity*	11/8
183.	Sir James Jeans: *The Mysterious Universe*	12/8

Nineteenth Month (16 August to 15 September 1935)

184.	Gorki: *Reminiscences of Tolstoy, Chekhov and Andryev*	17/8/35
185.	Louis Golding: *Five Silver Daughters*	25/8
186.	श्रीराम शर्मा : शिकार	29/8
187.	Gilbert Murray—Tagore: *East and West*	30/8
188.	T.H. Wintringham: *The Coming World War*	2/9

6

ARTICLES WRITTEN IN PRISON

1. Foreword to Rajatarangini[1]

Nearly four years ago, when we were both together in Naini Central Prison, Ranjit Pandit told me of his intention to translate Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*. I warmly encouraged him to do so and saw the beginnings of this undertaking. We came out of prison and went back later and so, in and out, and mostly in, we have spent the last four years. But we were kept in different gaols and many high walls and iron gates separated us, and I was unable to follow the progress of the translation. It turned out to be a much vaster undertaking than I had imagined and I was glad that the translator persevered with his work in spite of the difficulties and delays inseparable from a residence in gaol.

It was Ranjit Pandit's wish, in those early days when he began the translation, that it should be introduced to the public by a preface or a foreword from my father, Pandit Motilal Nehru. Indeed one of the reasons which led him to translate this ancient story of our old homeland was to enable my father to read it, for he knew no Samskrit. But that was not to be, and now I am told that, in his absence, the duty of writing that foreword devolves upon me. I must play the substitute however poorly qualified I may be for the task.

It is for scholars and learned men to appraise and judge this translation. That is not my task. I feel a little overwhelmed by the ability, learning and tremendous industry that Ranjit Pandit has put into this work. It was a work worth doing. Nearly half a century ago, Mr. S. P. Pandit[2] wrote of the *Rajatarangini* that it was "the only work hitherto discovered in India having any pretensions to be considered as a history." Such a book must necessarily have importance for every student of old Indian history and culture.

It is a history and it is a poem, though the two perhaps go ill together, and in a translation especially we have to suffer for this combination. For we cannot appreciate the music of the poetry, the charm of Kalhana's noble and melodious language, only the inexactitude and the extravagant conceits remain. The translator has preferred

1. Dehra Dun District Jail, 28 June 1934. JN Papers, NMML. RS Pandit's translation of *Rajatarangini* was first published in 1935. The book is an analysis of the dynasties which ruled Kashmir from the earliest period when Gonanda ruled as a vassal of the Pandavas to Kalhana's time, i.e., 1149 AD
2. (1840-1894); a distinguished Sanskrit scholar and editor of Sanskrit works

a literal rendering, sometimes even at the cost of grace of language, and I think he has chosen rightly, for in a work of this kind exactitude is necessary.

Written eight hundred years ago, the story is supposed to cover thousands of years, but the early part is brief and vague, and sometimes fanciful, and it is only in the later periods, approaching Kalhana's own times, that we see a close up and have a detailed account. It is a story of medieval times and often enough it is not a pleasant story. There is too much of palace intrigue and murder and treason and civil war and tyranny. It is the story of autocracy, and military oligarchy here as in Byzantium or elsewhere. In the main it is a story of the kings and royal families and the nobility, not of the common folk—indeed the very name is the 'River of Kings'.

And yet Kalhana's book is something far more than a record of kings' doings. It is a rich storehouse of information, political, social and to some extent economic. We see the panoply of the middle ages, the feudal knights in glittering armour, quixotic chivalry and disgusting cruelty, loyalty unto death and senseless treachery; we read of royal amours and intrigues and of fighting and militant and adulterous queens. Women seem to play quite an important part, not only behind the scenes but in the councils and the fields as leaders and soldiers

Sometimes we get intimate glimpses of human relations and human feelings, of love and hatred, of faith and passion We read of Suyya's[3] engineering feats and irrigation works; of Lalitaditya's[4] distant wars of conquest in far countries; of Meghavahana's[5] curious attempt to spread nonviolence also by conquest, of the building of temples and monasteries and their destruction by unbelievers and iconoclasts who confiscated the temple treasures. And then there were famines and floods and great fires which decimated the population and reduced the survivors to misery.

It was a time when the old economic system was decaying, the old order was changing in Kashmir as it was in the rest of India. Kashmir had been the meeting ground of the different cultures of Asia, the western Greco-Roman and Iranian and the eastern Mongolian; but essentially it was a part of India and the inheritor of Indo-Aryan traditions.

3 In the reign of Avantivarman (855 883 A D) Suyya regulated the course of the river Vitastha with a view to improve the drainage of the valley

4 (c 700 736 A D), a celebrated king of Kashmir who took the city of Kanauj and extended his conquests to the far south

5 Meghavahana's conquest was motivated by the imposition of ahimsa upon other kings.

And as the economic structure collapsed it shook up the old Indo-Aryan polity and weakened it and made it an easy prey to internal commotion and foreign conquest. Flashes of old Indo-Aryan ideals come out but they are already out of date under the changing conditions. War-lords march up and down and make havoc of the people. Popular risings take place—Kalhana describes Kashmir as "a country which delighted in insurrection!"—and they are exploited by military leaders and adventurers to their own advantage. We reach the end of that period of decay which ultimately ushered in the Muslim conquest of India. Yet Kashmir was strong enough because of its mountain fastnesses to withstand and repulse Mahmud of Ghazni, the great conqueror, who made a habit of raiding India to fill his coffers and build up an empire in Central Asia.[6] It was nearly two hundred years after Kalhana wrote his history that Kashmir submitted to Muslim rule, and even then it was not by external conquest but by a local revolution headed by a Muslim official of the last Hindu ruler, Queen Kota.[7]

I have read this story of olden times with interest because I am a lover of Kashmir and all its entrancing beauty; because, perhaps, deep down within me and almost forgotten by me, there is something which stirs at the call of the old homeland from where we came long, long ago, and because I cannot answer that call as I would, I have to content myself with dreams and fantasies, and I revisit the glorious valley girt by the Himalayan snows through books and cold print. As I write this my vision is limited by high walls that seem to close in upon me and envelop me and the heat of the plains oppresses me. But Kalhana has enabled me to overstep these walls and forget the summer heat, and to visit that land of the Sun God "where realizing that the land created by his father is unable to bear the heat, the hot rayed sun honours it by bearing himself with softness in summer," where dawn first appears with a golden radiance on the eternal snows and, in the evening, "the daylight renders homage to the peaks of the towering mountains," where in the valley below, the lazy sleepy Vitastha winds slowly through smiling fields and richly-laden fruit trees, and creeps under the lordly *chenars*, and passes through still lakes covered with lotus blooms, and then wakes up and rushes down the gorges to the plains of the Punjab below. Man has sunk low there in his poverty but nature remains cruel and unfeeling, yet soft and smiling to

6 He undertook seventeen expeditions to India during the years 1000 to 1026

7. The widow of Udayana Deva, the last ruler of Kashmir, was overthrown by her minister, Shah Mirza. The latter ascended the throne in 1346 A.D.

the eye and the senses. "The joy of plunging into the Ganga is not known to those who reside in the sandy deserts," writes Kalhana; how can the dwellers in the plains know of the joys of the mountains, and especially of this jewel of Asia, situated in the heart of that mighty continent?

The translator has used, as he should, the scholar's method of transcription for Samskrit names and words. He must forgive me if, being a layman, I do not fancy this, and so, with all apologies to the International Congress of Orientalists, I propose to continue to write Samskrit and Krishna and not Samskrta or Krsna. I do not like an old friend to develop an alien look, and what seem to be five consonants all in a bunch are decidedly foreign and strange-looking to me.

It is not for me to congratulate the translator, who is both my brother-in law and a dear comrade, but I should like to commend especially his valuable notes and appendices.

2. The Past and the Present[1]

I am grateful for the privilege accorded to me of contributing to the *Janam Ashtami* number of the *Tej*, but I am afraid I cannot throw any light, as has been suggested, on the old Aryan civilisation or on the glorious past of the Hindus. That is the work of the scholar and the historian, and I am neither. I am but a student, a seeker after knowledge, whose great regret is that the business of politics does not encourage this quest. George III of England once defined politics as a trade for a rascal and not for a gentleman. If that is a correct definition, then indeed I am specially rascally and have wandered far from the ways of gentle folk.

But sometimes the fates are kind and little opportunities occur of dipping into the past and reading of the doings of the giants of old. It is an absorbing study. The more I read of the Aryans of old the more I wonder at their many sided excellence. Fresh from their cradle in Central Asia they came down to India and swept over western Asia and Europe. They were full of life and the joy of life, and the burden

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. Presumably written in August 1934. This article does not seem to have been published.

of the world sat lightly upon them. It was indeed the *Satyayuga*, the dawn of history, and the long ages of sin and sorrow had yet to come. Warriors they were who rejoiced in battle and yet bowed down to knowledge and virtue. They loved to fight and conquer but the greatest quest for them was the search for knowledge. They loved freedom and honour and preferred death to dishonour of the Aryan name. "Never shall an Arya be subjected to slavery" was their proud charter. And so they marched into India singing songs in praise of the high gods, with faith in themselves and, like the Saracens thousands of years later, in the firm belief that heaven was guiding them in their divine mission.

It is good to think of the past and to gather strength and courage from the examples of the great men of old. But it is also dangerous, and in India we are specially liable to this danger. We are prone to think too much of it and to endow the ancients with every virtue under the sun. And instead of any desire to emulate them and to gird up our loins for the purpose, we sink further into apathy and bemoan our miserable lot. We have vague ideas of past splendour and a golden age when the land flowed with milk and honey, and sorrow and suffering hid themselves away from the haunts of men. We do not analyse the springs of past greatness or try to find out what qualities we lack which our ancestors possessed. I think that we can learn a great deal from them; none the less let us remember that the world has not remained stationary during the last few thousand years. The world progresses and advances in knowledge and culture even though there are occasional lapses and retrogression. All history teaches us this lesson of general progress, and indeed life would be a burden difficult to carry if we did not believe that a better order of things is gradually evolving itself in this world of sorrow. To that order our ancient civilisation can contribute a great deal, but only if we understand its essentials and live up to them and not lose ourselves in a forest of empty forms and symbols, forgetting the core and the essence.

I shall not venture to enumerate the essentials of that ancient civilisation. I am not competent to do that. But I shall touch briefly on some obvious points. It seems to me that the old Aryans were a very 'positive' people. They were active and inquisitive and adaptable. They loved freedom and would suffer no restrictions on their physical or mental liberty. They were not afraid of thinking, of "looking down into the pit of hell", if necessary, and of arriving at novel and disconcerting conclusions. They looked forward in the realms of thought, as well as towards the countries of the earth, for fresh advances and conquests. They had the spirit of adventure in them and life was

to them a wonderful game, a quest after the knowledge of this world and the next.

And we, their puny descendants, who pride ourselves in our high ancestry, what are we? A passive, inactive and indolent race forgetful of the idea of freedom or honour. Our guiding principles in life are a number of restrictions. Thou shalt not eat or drink with another, thou shalt not touch such and such, thou shalt not cross the seas and so on and so forth. The one great restriction of old we have forgotten: "Thou shalt not be subjected to slavery" We have little time to think of it, I suppose, for we are too busy with our cooking and our other ceremonial practices. Like the frog of old we sit in our stagnant pool and imagine that it is the centre of the universe and all knowledge and virtue are in us and there is nothing more to seek or discover. And nature has had its revenge on us. The world has marched on and left us far behind immersed in our superstitions and observances which we do not even understand. Like our old architecture, our faith has lost its ancient purity and simplicity and has been covered up with a mass of abuses and crude symbols and orientation. Today the keepers of our consciences are men, narrow and bigoted and with no knowledge of anything except empty forms and ceremonials. There is nothing more frightful, said Goethe, than a teacher who only knows what the scholars are intended to know. But here the teacher is far more ignorant than the scholar.

We must get rid of this inertia and woodenness and recover some elasticity of thought and movement. We must honour reason more and test everything by the light of that reason, however feeble it may be. There is no room for bigots in the modern world. We must cultivate the spirit of enquiry and welcome all knowledge whether the source of it is the East or the West. Above all we must get rid of the gross abuses that have crept into us and threaten to poison our whole system. If we cannot conquer these weaknesses of ours then we sink deeper and deeper into the morass and perish.

But I feel that we can and will survive. A great deal is being said now about the strengthening and purification of Hinduism as practised today. Every person, whether he is a Hindu or not, must welcome any such movement in the interests of a wider culture and human progress. Much more must a Hindu welcome it. Everything that removes the barriers that keep apart one man from another and make a common humanity possible, everything that raises large numbers of human beings and makes life more endurable for them; everything that substitutes reason for ignorant and blind bigotry is ever welcome. We must therefore welcome the movement to broaden the basis of Hinduism

and to rid it of its abuses. But I have noted with sorrow that the motive force behind it is not so much the good of Hinduism as the distrust and fear of the Mussulmans. I have come back from the Hindu Sabha meeting in Benares[2] with this conviction strengthened. The motive is almost entirely political. With this I cannot agree for it can end in only one thing and that is disaster for all the communities in India. No great movement of reform ever flourished if it was based on fear and fed on hatred. Logically a movement of this kind can end in only one way. Fear and distrust will multiply and will call out their sister qualities in the other community. Gradually India will be converted into armed camps and every man's hand will be raised against his brother. That can end only in a terrible catastrophe. That is a prospect which cannot be tolerated and which we must avoid at all cost.

This is the reason why I ventured to question the appropriateness of carrying on the *shuddhi* movement on a mass scale. I believe in giving full liberty to every man to adopt the faith of his choice. I also believe that it should be open to anyone, whoever he may be, to join the Hindu fold, should he desire to do so. But the present *shuddhi* movement,[3] so far as I understand it, is based on different reasons and is proceeding on undesirable lines. And instead of peace and harmony it has created hatred and distrust and bitterness. Toleration has almost ceased to exist and the best of us are not free from ignoble suspicion.

Hinduism has ever prided itself on its toleration. But today it stands in need of a reminder. "All sects deserve reverence for one reason or another," said the great Asoka. "By thus acting a man exalts his own sect, and at the same time does service to the sects of other people..... His Majesty cares not for donations or external reverence as that there should be a growth of the essence of the matter in all sects."

There is a common belief among the Hindus that Islam is an intolerant religion and that it has spread by means of the sword. Most of them would mention the names of Chenghiz Khan and Timur and Mahmud of Ghazni as examples of Muslim tyrants. I wonder how many know that Chenghiz Khan was not even a Mohammedan? Or that Timur was as fond of erecting his favourite pyramids of heads in western Asia where Islam flourished as in India? Or that Mahmud of Ghazni threatened the Khalif at Baghdad with dire penalties? No great

2. Jawaharlal probably had in mind the meeting at Varanasi in November 1933 when he criticised the Mahasabha severely.
3. On 16 October 1933, the Hindu Mahasabha resolved to take steps to prevent the conversion of Hindus to Christianity. Also see *Selected Works*, Vol 1, pp. 356-358.

religion has prospered by forced conversion and the history of Islam shows that its tremendous initial success was due to its toleration as compared to the intolerance of the Christian sects which flourished then in western Asia and Africa. It may surprise many that one of the main charges actually brought forward in Spain against the Saracens by the Christian King Philip III[4] was their spirit of toleration. Among the "apostacies and treasons" of the Saracens in Spain, wrote the Archbishop of Valencia in 1602, was "that they commended nothing so much as that liberty of conscience, in all matters of religion, which the Turks, and all other Mohammedans, suffer their subjects to enjoy", and on this ground, among others, he recommended that they be expelled from Spain. The recommendation was accepted and vast numbers were brutally expelled.[5] It is most interesting to read of a Spanish Moulvi, being driven out of the country more than 300 years ago, speak thus to his tormentors of the Inquisition:

> Did our victorious ancestors ever once attempt to extirpate Christianity out of Spain when it was in their power? Did they not suffer your forefathers to enjoy the free use of their rites at the same time that they wore their chains? If there have been some examples of forced conversions, they are so rare as scarce to deserve mentioning, and only attempted by men who had not the fear of God and the Prophet before their eyes, and who in so doing have acted directly and diametrically contrary to the holy precepts and ordinances of Islam which cannot, without sacrilege, be violated by any who would be held worthy of the honourable epithet of Mussulman. You can never produce, among us, any bloodthirsty, formal tribunal, on account of different persuasions in points of faiths, that anywise approaches your execrable Inquisition. Our arms, it is true, are ever open to receive all who are disposed to embrace our religion; but we are not allowed by our sacred Quran to tyrannise over consciences.

These are the traditions of toleration in Hinduism and Islam. But now, in the twentieth century, when Europe after centuries of slaughter and persecution has established religious toleration, our unhappy country is going backwards and forgetting the very lesson it taught to the world in the olden time. Intolerance is always due to want of understanding and ignorance of each other. Let us therefore try to learn

4. (1578-1621); king of Spain, Naples and Sicily.
5. On 22 September 1609, it was decreed that, with the exception of six of the oldest and most Christian Moriscos in each village who were to be retained to teach their system of cultivation, every Morisco man and woman was to be expelled.

each other's history and understand each other's past culture. The future can only hold out its promise to us if we learn to march together. Our chief enemy today is absence of reason, and its necessary consequence—bigotry. Let those therefore who believe in reason, and in freedom for this country and in human progress fight and conquer this enemy wherever and whenever it is found. There will then be few obstacles to unity and progress.

3. Our Literature[1]

A little over two years ago when I was out of prison for a few months, I had been to Benares to see Bhai Shiv Prasadji. I had then the opportunity to meet some friends who were connected with Hindi literature and I naturally took advantage of it. We had a brief discussion on literature. I spoke with hesitation because my knowledge was very limited and therefore I lacked the courage to say very much. Later on I found to my surprise that someone had reported our discussions in the newspapers. I did not see what was published. So I cannot say whether the account was accurate. I also heard that Hindi newspapers were very annoyed with me and heated discussions were taking place with regard to my statements at Benares.[2] I was occupied with other things and could not pay any attention to this and, soon after, I went to prison again.

There is no need to repeat what I had said two years ago. There is nothing special about it. It is futile to argue about my knowledge of Hindi literature. It is very limited. I have read a bit of ancient and modern literature and tried to grasp the trend of ideas in contemporary Hindi literature, the kind of questions it poses and its source of inspiration. This meagre reading and thinking does not entitle me to voice my ignorant opinion in the presence of experts. Under these circumstances it would be very improper on my part to criticise others. Still, with insolence, I shall try to write a few lines on this subject, hoping to profit by the opinions of others.

A few days ago I read in an article in *Vishal Bharat* that "in the opinion of many its (Hindi) literature has developed considerably.

1. Almora District Jail, 28 July 1935. J N. Papers, N.M M L. Original in Hindi.
2. See *ante*, section 2, item 100.

Its writers have been compared from time to time with Shakespeare, Tolstoy and Bernard Shaw." I was pleased to read it. I was aware that there had been a new awakening in Hindi literature and it was progressing but I did not know that it had reached such heights. I was very keen to read the works of writers who merit comparison with writers like Shakespeare and for this purpose I requested some friends to send me those books. Some books did reach me. I read them but my expectations remained unfulfilled. Probably I did not receive the right books and others might be able to help me in this matter. If the editor of *Vishal Bharat* and some scholars of Hindi literature could prepare a list containing 50 or 100 selected books, it would be of help to many These books should have been written during the last thirty five years, that is, during this century.

What is literature? This is a subject of discussion in every language and opinions vary. I do not want to enter into this discussion. But most people may agree that in this connection two questions arise—the subject matter and its treatment. Both are equally necessary.

The primary difficulty is that so far I have received only a few books in Hindi on the subjects which interest me. I desire to understand the contemporary world, to probe beneath the surface of events, about some of which we read in the newspapers, and understand their causes. What are the mysterious forces that are tossing man this way and that, what thoughts and feelings move them and what are the major problems that are besetting our country and the world? My mind, bogged down by these troubles, seeks answers by trying to untie these difficult knots. I am in constant search of light which will illuminate the pervading darkness and show the correct path along which we may progress with confidence.

To understand the world, a mere understanding of politics is not sufficient. Often politics is like a puppet show, controlled, more often than not, by hidden powers. It is necessary to understand all aspects of economics, the strange games played by gold, silver and other currencies, the mighty revolution caused by big machines and factories. What are nationalism, democracy, capitalism and communism—and their influences on the world? What is the progress of the sentiment of internationalism? These are all practical matters on which many persons may be willing to speak or write. But it is not of much use repeating the obvious things. If it is our desire to genuinely understand the phenomena then we shall have to delve deep, and for this we need the right books

It has also become necessary that we read and know about the present state of other countries—the European countries, Russia,

America, China, Japan, Egypt and many others. It is impossible to understand the present state of affairs without a knowledge of the past. All the questions we face today have their roots in the past. So the knowledge of history becomes necessary, and not merely the history of a nation or two but of the whole world.

We also have to keep in mind that the present day world and our lives are yoked to science. Therefore, we have to understand the basic principles and the new ideas of science. I have been very interested in this, particularly physics and its new theories—relativity and quantum theory—biology, sociology, psychology and psychoanalysis.

On all these subjects thousands of books are being brought out these days in America and Europe. A good many of them are very ordinary, some are useless but a fair number of them are of a reasonably high standard. In foreign newspapers and magazines also, many articles appear on these topics. I hope a list of the new books in Hindi on these subjects will be prepared. It is clear that books for school and college students written for the purpose of passing examinations should not be included in this list.

I have not mentioned poetry, fiction, drama and other writings which may be classified as pure literature. Names of such books also need inclusion in the list. I have read some of these books and appreciated them. Hindi poems are often very good and beautiful. But at times the sweetness is so excessive that it becomes cloying, like syrup. The choice of subjects is few and rarely involves going beyond these limits. Unfortunately, I have not yet come across any novel in Hindi which could be compared with the famous well known foreign novels. So far I have not read any play that has satisfied me. My ignorance and unawareness merely demonstrate the deficiency in my education and I desire to make up for it with the help of others.

I also need help in one other matter. What are the contemporary trends of ideas in the Hindi world? Hindi newspapers and magazines indicate a growing spirit of awakening and enquiry in literature but do not provide a clear answer to the above question. I was under the impression that all these matters would be discussed in the Sahitya Sammelan. I am unaware of the extent of the discussions. In the 1935 Sammelan the newspapers revealed that the most important question raised concerned a sum of one lakh.[3] Thus, I have not, to my

3. The All India Sahitya Sammelan was held in Indore on 20 April 1935 Mahatma Gandhi in his presidential address pointed out that in order to spread knowledge of Hindi a collection of one lakh of rupees was necessary to augment the resources of the institutions established in southern India.

shame, been able to understand the important problems which constitute the vital element in any literature. I can say something about the kinds of problems in literature which are under discussion in other countries like America, England, Russia, France, Germany, China and Turkey, but about my own country and my mother tongue I am ignorant.

Let me clarify by elaborating the type of queries that is dealt with in foreign literature. In other countries, there are associations and conferences of creative writers. While many are national, some are international Sometime back in June 1935, there was a big international literary conference in Paris to which representatives from the whole of Europe and the U.S.A. had come. Its name was International Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture. The agenda of the Congress shows the questions on which the literary world of Europe and America is deliberating.[4] I attach a copy of this agenda.[5] I have given it in English for I cannot translate it properly. I hope the editors will get it translated.

I and many others would benefit by knowing the opinions of eminent Hindi literary writers on these topics. I hope they will express their opinion.

4 Among the subjects proposed for discussion were the writers' role in society, and literary creation

5 Not printed

4. Literature in Hindi and in Other Languages[1]

Once, at an informal discussion, I had said that in the last forty or fifty years, among our provincial languages, Bengali, Marathi and Gujarati had progressed more than Hindi. This statement upset some Hindi writers and they were annoyed with me. I had absolutely no intention of saying anything against the richness of Hindi, but perhaps my meaning was not clear and it might have been misunderstood by some. Later I learnt that many who knew more than I did, held the same opinion. So I am being bold enough to write about this.

1. Almora District Jail, 29 July 1935. J.N. Papers, N M M L. Original in Hindi.

I was not thinking of ancient Hindi literature. I am also aware that there has been an awakening and progress in modern Hindi literature. What I meant was that among our provincial languages this awakening first took place in Bengali, then in Marathi and Gujarati and only later in Hindi. Because of this, initially Bengali, Marathi and Gujarati progressed a little ahead. Why is this awakening in all languages taking place? There are various reasons, but the primary one is the influx of new ideas. The literature, culture and political condition of any country are closely knit. It was perhaps the English poet Milton who had written somewhere that if shown the language of any country, without knowing anything else about it, he could tell the type of country it was, free or subject, civilized or uncivilized, strong or weak, brave or timid.

With the decline of our country, our literatures also deteriorated and remained in this condition for a long time. But they began to make progress with the rise of national consciousness. This started first in Bengal. New ideas poured in mostly from Europe and they infused a new life. Our political associations conducted all their work in English. Besides this, their influence filtered into the provincial languages—first Bengali, then Marathi and Gujarati, followed by Hindi. Hindi lagged behind, not because of its ancient literature but because of the late development of political consciousness in Hindi speaking areas. Besides, as there was no proper communication between the languages, we could not take early advantage of the awakening in other regions.

We should benefit by this experience and establish some relationship among all the languages of the country. Men of letters should form an association and meet occasionally. Then, instead of fostering competition and rivalry, there will be harmony among them and they can help in each other's progress. Ideas will spread fast throughout the country and there will be a growing sense of unity. I have learnt that some attempt is being made to initiate this, but I do not know much about it.

I cherish the hope that such an Indian literary association will include all the languages of India. Hindi and Urdu are not just sister languages, but are two facets of the same body. They have to be merged. Bengali, Marathi and Gujarati are younger sisters of Hindi. The languages of the south are the oldest in our country. Apart from these, other sundry languages should be included in the association. I would even recommend that English be granted a place. It is not one of our languages but it is of considerable importance in the life of our country. It has become a kind of foster language.

There can be considerable disagreement in such an association, especially on the question of script. Some day we will have to resolve such issues, but at the moment it cannot be done, and any effort to do so will result in a lot of heart burning. On the question of script, the first major step in my opinion would be to decide on a common script for Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati. It can only be achieved by mutual understanding and cooperation There is hardly any scope for the least bit of coercion.

I am absolutely certain that Hindi or Hindustani should be our national language and it will be so, even though there are two scripts. I also know this—that the major languages of our provinces will make considerable progress and that we should promote them. There is no clash between their advancement and that of adopting Hindi as the national language Those who in their fervour try to create a conflict will harm both.

Our litterateurs should also maintain contact with the literature of the world and participate in international literary organisations. Without this we cannot rank among the progressive nations of the world. We have to admit that in this modern age, there is an influx of new ideas from America and Europe. Without an understanding of them we cannot confront the present-day world. The primary thing this modern age teaches us is that the world is one and cannot be fragmented and those who wish to remain separate will lag behind.

A number of us should learn foreign languages. They will be the windows through which we can look at the world and through which sunlight and fresh air will come in. Many of us know English and we should take advantage of this as this language is constantly expanding. It is mainly because of the United States—the wealthiest and the most powerful nation at present. But a mere knowledge of English is not enough, and this has resulted in our being often deceived. We have begun to see the world through English eyes, not realising that they are biased. Despite our political struggle against the British rule, we remain slaves of British thought. It is only their books that we read, their newspapers and the news communicated by them that we obtain. This does have a strong effect on us. If we read French, German and Russian books or newspapers we would realise that there is more to the world besides the English and we would not give disproportionate importance to them It is therefore imperative that some of our boys and girls learn foreign languages other than English—specially French, German, Russian and Spanish (which is spoken all over South America). It would also be worthwhile for some of our people to learn Japanese and Chinese. There are still

quite a few people knowing Persian in our country.

In Europe it is presumed that an educated person knows at least two or three languages; and this is often the case. It will be a little more difficult for us, and not many can learn foreign languages. It would therefore be better if well-known books in foreign languages are translated into Hindi. This seems all the more necessary, if we desire to understand the current trend of thoughts in the world. Such books are very few at present and even those are not well translated. Our translators—especially those employed in newspapers—make literal translations, rarely concerning themselves with the inner meaning of words and phrases. Those who love words know that every word has life, a soul and a history and this makes it difficult to explain, let alone translate. Our university students bravely go on translating in a hurried manner, unthinkingly—words are just plucked out of the dictionary and thrust in. This turns the throbbing, pulsating and lively word into a lifeless corpse and that which had sense becomes meaningless. This massacre of the innocent causes sorrow.

5. The Meaning of Words[1]

To translate from one language to another language is a very difficult task. The fact is that real translation of even slightly profound thought is just impossible. What is the function of a language? It helps us to think. Language is semi frozen thought—imagination converted into statues. Its second function is to enable one to express one's ideas and convey them to others, so that we may exchange thoughts. There are other uses of language too, but we need not now go into them. A word or a phrase comes to our mind in the form of a certain image. Simple and straight words like table, chair, horse and elephant form easy and clear images and when we utter these words listeners also form in their minds images, almost of the same type. We can then say that they have understood our meaning

But the moment we step ahead of these simple and easy words complications at once set in. Even an ordinary phrase produces many pictures in the mind and it is possible that in the listener's mind

1 Almora District Jail, 1 August 1935. J N. Papers, N M M L Original in Hindi

different pictures are produced. Much depends upon the mental faculties of the speaker and the listener—their education, their experiences, knowledge, inspirations and feelings. Now proceed a step further and take abstract and complicated words such as truth, beauty, ahimsa, dharma, *mazhab*. So very often during the day do we use these words, but if asked to explain their meaning fully we may face a lot of difficulty. Such words will sometimes not produce identical images in the minds of two people. It means we could not bring home to the other what we meant and although both of us uttered the same word we meant different things. The more complicated and abstract the ideas we put forward, the more these difficulties increase. It is also possible (and it has happened) that because of such misunderstandings we may quarrel and smash each other's skulls.

This difficulty can arise between two persons who speak the same language, are literate and civilised and brought up in the same culture. If one is literate and the other illiterate and crude, then the difference between them is wider and it is impossible to understand each other fully. They live in two worlds. But these difficulties look small when compared to those of two persons who speak two different languages and do not know much about the cultures of each other. Their mental ideas and images differ as heaven and earth. They hardly understand each other. What surprise, then, if they do not trust each other and are afraid of and quarrel with each other?

A philologist, Professor J.S. Mackenzie, who has deeply studied languages and their relations, has written, "an Englishman, a Frenchman, and an Italian cannot by any means bring themselves to think quite alike, at least on subjects which involve any depth of sentiment: they have not the verbal means." This despite the fact that an Englishman, a Frenchman, a German and an Italian are the products of one culture and their languages are closely related. Even so, it is said that on any abstract topic, they cannot by any means think alike because their languages differ! If this is their condition, what will be the relation between the languages of an Indian and an Englishman? By wearing a *dhoti* and *kurta* an Englishman does not start thinking like an Indian just as the latter cannot understand the civilisation of Europe by putting on a coat and trousers and by eating with knife and fork.

When such are the problems in understanding each other, what should the poor translator do? How should he deal with these problems? He should first of all realise these difficulties and know that translation does not mean looking at words in the dictionary. He has to know the two languages very well and also the cultures behind them.

He should try to forget himself and become one with the ideas of the author and then put these ideas in his own words in the other language.

I think our translators rarely try to reach this depth and mostly translate as in the newspapers. Often I have come across such words and phrases in Hindi that have stunned me. I saw trade union translated as *vyapar sangh*—perfectly correct from the literary point of view. But can anyone, who does not know, understand that *vyapar sangh* stands not for traders but for labourers? The phrase, trade union, has behind it a history of over a hundred years. Those who know will realise how this name was given. In France this is not the name, nor is that the translation. They call it *syndicat* (from which syndicate has been adopted in English). Suppose we are translating from French to Hindi, shall we translate it as syndicate or something like that? This is a simple example—the real problem arises when more complicated words occur.

Secondly, translators should, as far as possible, use easy and simple words which do not have many meanings and do not decieve. Long phrases should be avoided. Well known literary works of all the existing languages of the world have been translated, and translated very well, in many languages. There is no reason why in Hindi also there should not be such good translations. I am sure when our translators give their attention to this matter, this urgent work also will be successfully done. Our big problem is that the B.As and M.As of our universities know very little English and no other foreign language at all.

Ordinary literary books can be translated but the correct translation of books of religion, philosophy and such abstract subjects seems to be impossible. There the words carry very different meanings, like a dress that is worn by dozens of men; how is one to make a distinction between the various meanings? It is one word but still not one, and conveys different images in the mind—such as beauty, truth, religion, *mazhab*. Take beauty for example—the beauty of a woman, of nature, of an idea, of art, of truth, of a phrase, of character, of a novel and so many more can be added—what is common between them all? Stating that a thing that is liked by persons that pleases them is beauty will be somewhat confusing; and there is no agreement on this.

There are many such confusing words which can convey many meanings, in every language. There are some words which are obsolete and mean nothing. Some words are mendicants and about them Matthew Arnold had said—"terms thrown out, so to speak, at a not fully grasped object of the speaker's consciousness." Some words are

known as 'nomads', they wander, and do not mean anything in special. Such words are to be found in every language and those persons specially who have no clarity of thought use them. They hide their weaknesses in long, confusing and to some extent meaningless words. That prose in which such words are used profusely (I do not at the moment mean such words as beauty, truth) becomes weak. Such writing has not a razor's edge nor can it attain its objective as does an arrow from a bow.

We can try to see that these obsolete, mendicant and nomad words are not used, as far as possible, in our speech and writing. The fault is not of the poor words, but of our minds, semi-learned and less disciplined. One affects the other. Those who speak and those who write make the language, but, then, it leaves a similar effect on those new persons who use it. In old languages like Sanskrit, Greek and Latin, looseness of thought or word is rarely allowed. They seem well knit, sharp as a weapon and devoid of useless words. This gives them a glamour and a dignity which leaves a peculiar impression. Of current languages, French perhaps is the most trim and the French people are known for their mental discipline and chastity of expression.

The somewhat useless words, then, can be tackled in this way, but what are we to do about our abstract words of a higher level? We love them, they are necessary for us and often help make us prominent But still, they are confusing and sometimes mean so much that they become meaningless. Take for example the idea of God. In every religion and language thousands of words are attributed in His praise It looks as if man's mind could not comprehend this idea and to hide its weakness, opened the dictionary and hurled all the turgid and impressive words that one could lay one's hands upon, over His head. It was beyond the mental faculty to understand the meanings of those words, but having said and written a lot, a sort of consolation was gained that we have done our duty and that God should have no grudge against us at least. Thousands are the names of Allah, as if by adding the names the reality becomes clearer. In English they describe God as absolute, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, perfect, ultimate, immutable, eternal, etc. All this no doubt sounds frightening, but if impertinently one ponders over these words, one gets nowhere. The renowned American philosopher William James[2] has written thus about it. "The ensemble of the metaphysical attributes imagined by the theologian is but a shuffling and matching of the pedantic dictionary adjectives. One feels that in the theologian's

2 (1841 1910), author of *The Varieties of Religious Experience.*

hands they are only a set of titles obtained by a mechanical manipulation of synonyms; verbosity has taken the place of vision, professionalism that of life."

Similarly the Italian philosopher, Croce,[3] in disgust, explained the word—sublime—thus: "The sublime is everything that is or will be so called by those who have employed or shall employ the name." There is hardly anything left to say after this and everyone should be convinced.

These high-class sublime matters are undoubtedly beyond a layman's reach; and let the pundits and learned decide, when to use the abstract words and how to translate them. All the same, we laymen should not forget that words are dangerous things and the more abstract, the more deceiving. And the most dangerous words, perhaps, are dharma and *mazhab*. Everyone in his heart understands them in his own way. In everyone's heart they form new impressions. Some will think of a temple, mosque or church; the others of a few books, or of some religious oblations, statues, philosophy, customs or of mutual disagreements. In this way one word will produce hundreds of different pictures in the minds of men, and that will bring out a variety of thoughts. It seems to be the weakness of the language that one word can produce such a varied effect. A word should, actually, connote just one picture. It means that dharma or *mazhab* has a hundred facets, each of which should have a separate word for it. They say there were more than two hundred words used for making love in the old American Maya language. How can we now translate all those words correctly?

In the use of words Mahatma Gandhi too is guilty to some extent. In general whatever he speaks or writes is precise and effective—no superfluous words and no attempt at a flowery style. This trimness is his power. But whenever he talks of God, the truth or ahimsa—and that he does very often—then that mental precision is lessened. God is truth, truth is God, nonviolence is truth, truth is nonviolence—all this he has said. It must mean something but it is not quite clear what. To me at least, such use of words suggests that injustice is being done to them.

3. Benedetto Croce (1866-1952).

6. Bhai Parmanand and Swaraj[1]

I have just read an article by Bhai Parmanandji, *What is Swarajya?* (*Saraswati*,[2] August, 1935). I read it with much hope that it will, to an extent, help in understanding and solving this difficult question. But on reading it, I was taken aback. Bhaiji is a prominent leader of the Hindu Mahasabha and he has every right to explain its object and aim In fact, he can do so with unique authority. But his understanding of the political aim of the Congress, which is not a secret matter, is really strange. If some others also have understood it the way Bhaiji has done, then is it a surprise that there is so much of misunderstanding?

Bhaiji has interpreted Swarajya in two ways—the first way, in short, is sticking to one's *swa* or self, that is following one's religion, civilisation, culture and rituals and the second way is giving up one's own self and accepting that of the ruling power—abandoning our religion, forgetting our ancestors and quitting our caste. As examples, he has given the time when Islamic rule prevailed in India and the cases of Egypt and Iran. Then he has told us that the Hindu Mahasabha is trying for the Swarajya of the first kind, i.e., the preservation of religion and caste and the Congress is making efforts for securing the second type of Swarajya, i.e., to abolish one's own caste and adopt that of another. Bhaiji also says that the easiest way of getting such Swarajya is for all of us to give up our religion and adopt Christianity in which case we will become English and we shall become free.

While commenting on any article it is always good to understand and state correctly our adversary's views; otherwise we flail the air. I have never heard before such criticism as Bhaiji has made about the Congress, and I fail to understand how any responsible man like him could make such a baseless allegation. Even a child in India could tell him that this charge is entirely wrong.

In a short article Bhaiji has, in my opinion, written something very controversial and wrong and one feels like saying something about it. With due regard to him, I want to bring to his notice that there are a few in the Congress also who know a little of 'Hindu' history and world history (how history becomes 'Hindu' or 'Muslim,' I cannot

1 Almora District Jail, 6 August 1935 J N. Papers, N M.M L. Original in Hindi.
2 Hindi monthly, established in 1900 and published from Allahabad.

understand—but he perhaps means the history of the Hindus of India). The example of Egypt and Iran that Bhaiji has cited does not seem to be correct to me but it is not possible here to enter into all those details. So also, I shall not deal with many of the other matters dealt with by him. I hope Bhaiji will write this article in greater detail and will cite there the events and proofs on which he has based his conclusions.

In particular, he should provide evidence for his opinion about the aim of the Congress because it is not right to frame any charge without sufficient proof and evidence. It is very strange that the Congress should noncooperate, perform satyagraha and fight British rule, in order to become like the British (or the Christians), while the Hindu Mahasabha, to maintain our old traditions and integrity, should support the government.

Bhaiji has just not paid any attention to the main topic in his article. He was caught up in the general weakness—verbosity—and forgot the main point. The question "What is Swarajya?" is a very common as well as an extremely important one. For a long time Babu Bhagavan Dasji has been trying to find an answer to it but very few others have paid any attention to it. The result has been a general confusion and everyone is interpreting Swarajya in his own way. This explains Bhai Pannanand's far-reaching conclusions—no one else has ever gone that far. I cannot touch at the moment on all the aspects of Swarajya nor am I rightly entitled to speak for the Congress. But still I want to draw attention to some elementary but basic facts which most people know.

Firstly, the word Swarajya is concerned with the relations of one country with another country or countries and this relationship is generally political, economic, cultural and social. If a country is not dependent upon others economically and politically, it is then called independent. Here also there is often a deception—countries politically free are, behind the screen, economically slaves to some other country. It should also be kept in view that in the present-day world, due to international trade, fast communications, aeroplanes, telegraph and radio, all countries have become so closely knit that none of them could be said to be completely free, and each influences the other. Still, we can say that countries that are politically and economically free are independent. In such an independent country there does not arise any question of social and cultural freedom, for that is implied. The government or people of that country may do whatever they like in this respect. If they want to stick to their old customs and civilisation,

nobody can replace these. If the government want to change these customs and civilisation, who can stop them?

There is yet another aspect of the word Swarajya—what should be the relation—political, economic, social and cultural—between the people within the country? This leads to many complicated issues and there are varied opinions on this. In the present-day world, in most countries (excepting those which are fascist) the people would opt for democracy. This also is of different types—should it be mere political democracy or economic and social democracy too? Such questions as capitalism and communism arise here.

What is the aim of the Congress? First, naturally, that our country be independent, politically and economically, as other countries are. This means our cultural, social and religious freedom is included in it and no outsider has any right to interfere with them. Our country will decide for itself what it wants.

What is the aim of the Congress within India? It is a bit more difficult to reply, except that it is in favour of political democracy. It has not decided anything further, which to a great extent means that it does not want to make any change in the present set-up. The Congress is before the country in the form of a big institution, which in fact is an all party conference consisting of men of different opinions, united only on political independence. On economic and social problems some Congressmen favour communism, some capitalism and some others something else. Most of the Congress leaders favour modern capitalism and do not want much change in that.

But where does Bhai Parmanand's question of giving up one's 'self' arise? Where arises the question of leaving our culture, religion or caste? What is this 'self', and what is Hinduism in the opinion of Bhaiji? Once his views are known correctly then these questions can be tackled. Among the Hindus, casteism is deep rooted. Would Bhaiji retain it in Hinduism? As far as I know he is against it and is a member of Jat Pat Torak Mandal[3] for the abolition of caste. Then we have many customs—regarding widows, succession, marriage, death, worshipping, eating, untouchability, dress and many other matters. Which of these are to be included in Hinduism? It can be argued that these are all spurious rules and to know the real ones we should go to the Vedas or to our philosophy. Many Hindus will not agree that these spurious rules be given no importance. They think them

3 The Jat Pat Torak Mandal of Lahore was an organisation which sought the abolition of caste barriers and promotion of intercaste dining and intercaste marriage.

to be more significant than the Vedas. And if you proceed beyond the Hindus proper and include Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains, (which I am glad the Hindu Mahasabha is trying to) then the complications grow more intense. There is a lot of difference between Buddhist philosophy and Hindu philosophy. The Buddhists attach no significance to the Vedas. They do not believe in God even. In such a state, is it surprising if laymen like me get confused? It is, therefore, necessary that both Bhai Parmanand and the Hindu Mahasabha should clarify their stand about 'self'; which Hinduism do they want to maintain in our country? It should also be stated frankly in what way, in their opinion, the Congress is sacrificing this 'self'. Those who think, try to come out of the web of words and talk and write distinctly. Only then can these matters be considered; otherwise they are words merely for provocation.

I had an inkling—maybe I am wrong—that the 'self' in which the Hindu Mahasabha is specially interested relates to official jobs and membership of the councils—the number of posts of tehsildars, deputy collectors, police officers that should be reserved for Hindus.[4] I have also noted that the Hindu Mahasabha has very great affection for rajas, talukdars, big zamindars and bankers and is worried about the protection of their rights. It opposed laws relating to rent on the ground that they were harmful to the money-lenders,[5] although they might be beneficial to the farmers and small zamindars. Are all these matters a part of Hinduism? Is the extraction of interest by the bankers also a part of our 'self' which we have to protect?

One more point is worth considering. Historians are of the opinion that with the establishment of Muslim kingdoms the centre of Hindu civilisation and culture shifted towards the south of India. There the Muslim penetration was less. The old Hindu *varnashram dharma* is the strongest in the south even now. It may be weakest in the Punjab. The reason for it is obvious. In our country the Punjab and Sind had the closest relations with the Muslim kings and kingdoms. But today the Hindu Mahasabha has the Punjab as its stronghold and in the south it is hardly known.

4. On 31 July 1933, the All India Hindu Mahasabha, in a memorandum to the Joint Parliamentary Select Committee, drew attention to the reduction in the representation of Hindus in the Punjab, Bengal and the central legislature. The Hindus of North West Frontier Province demanded the appointment of a public service commission and the reservation of seats in the district boards
5. The Punjab Provincial Hindu Sabha was reported on 25 May 1934 to have opposed the legislation on rural indebtedness.

I have been very fond of the history of culture and civilisation and that actually is history, the rest being merely the accessions, wars and deaths of kings. Whenever there is a talk of culture and civilisation I become attracted and try to learn and understand a little. Sir Mohammad Iqbal often talks of Islamic culture. I felt confused and so I put several questions to him seeking clarification. He kept silent and did not reply. Bhaiji's saying that if we all become Christians, then our 'self' will become the 'self' of England, she will own us and we shall become free like them, is very similar. It is surprising that any one can have such ideas. It means that Bhaiji thinks that modern European imperialism is for propagation of Christianity! Even a school child would not commit such a folly. How are imperialism and religion related? Abyssinia is a Christian country, the oldest Christian country, converted long before Europe. Why then did Italy attack her?[6] Why also did the last Great War take place between the Christian countries of Europe? Ireland also has been a Christian country for more than a thousand years. Why has British imperialism been suppressing Ireland for the last seven hundred years?

Take the civilisation and customs of these countries. Bhaiji talks of Egypt and Iran who lost their identity and absorbed themselves in the foreign community. Egypt was carrying on for thousands of years, full of ups and downs, transformations, attacks and conquests;—then, about 2,200 years back, Alexander conquered Egypt and after his death one of his generals, Ptolemy, became the king there. He accepted the gods and rituals of Egypt, only mixing a few of his own gods of Greek origin with them. Egypt became a great centre of Greek culture and civilisation. Then after many years it came under the sway of the Roman Empire. Christianity spread there in the very beginning, earlier than in Europe and remained for several hundred years. Later Islam came and won easily. The majority of the Egyptians are now Muslims. Some Christians, also known as Copts, have been there before the Mohammedans. Islam is there for the last 1300 years. In saying that Egypt has lost its identity, what does Bhaiji mean? Of the last 7,000 years of history which period does he consider as the era of the real Egyptian identity?

In Iran also Islam had an easy victory. But people who know say that it did not curb the culture and civilisation of Iran, but on the contrary overpowered even the Arab Muslims and Arab Caliphs, who took over many customs of the old Iranian emperors. This Iranian culture was so impressive that it had its incessant influence from West

6. On 3 October 1935 Italy under Mussolini attacked Ethiopia.

Asia to China. Today this pre-Islamic culture of Iran is gaining much popularity.

Now let us have a quick look at the ancient history of our own country. Hundreds of years before the Aryan entry, here flourished a high-class culture, a sample of which we get at Mohenjodaro. Perhaps it was connected with the Dravidian civilisation which was of an earlier period than that of the Aryans. Then came the Aryans, who defeated the Dravidians and ruled over them. They compromised on customs, religion and gods. This gave rise to a mixed culture with Aryans having a lion's share in it. Then many races, specially the Turkish, invaded this land and settled here. In Rajputana and Kathiawar, many of our royal families have Turkish blood. There was no question of any other religion in those days, because all these Turks were Buddhists from Central Asia. Still they brought many customs and usages from there. In this way in India (in every country for that matter) many rivulets and rivers of culture from different countries flowed in and affected our culture. Islam then came in the garb of a victor and to save ourselves from it we became inward-looking and the ever-open windows of our culture were closed.

When does Bhaiji think our Hindu 'self' started? On the coming of the Aryans? Why so? Why should we abandon the earlier Mohenjodaro; and then what happens to the Dravidian period? Are the Dravidians not entitled to say that the Aryans are outsiders who have forcibly settled here? Many such questions can arise, for in history culture, civilisation and ideas flow from one country to the other and influence each other. A line of demarcation is difficult to draw. The sign of any living thing lies in its capacity to grow and change. The moment its growth is stopped it is dead. Similarly, cultures and civilisations also are alive only so long as they have the spirit to change with the ever-changing world. The greatest lesson that history teaches us is that nothing remains static. All the time there is expansion, contraction, revolt and upsurge. Any race that tried to escape change and immobilize itself became a prisoner caught up in its own trap and decayed.

In the olden days when distances were very great and travelling was difficult, countries differed. As communications increased so too did mutual impact. In the modern world, trains, cars and aeroplanes have almost abolished boundaries and built world unity. Books, newspapers, the telegraph, radio, and cinema influence us and gradually change our ideas. We may like them or not, there is no escape from them. They should, therefore, be understood and mastered.

I want to know from Bhaiji what is the stand of our old Hinduism on all these matters? He talks about religion and caste civilisations. But the civilisation of the modern world is that of mighty machinery and gigantic workshops. What have they to do with religions? And without seeking consent or discussing, this civilisation proceeds on its way overthrowing the old institutions. So many movements were afoot to remove casteism among Hindus but the greatest revolution was caused by the railway, the tram and the lorry. Who bothers about the caste of fellow-passengers there?

While pondering over the old history and politics of the modern world, a mass of ideas lights up the mind. The pen fails to keep pace with them, it merely draws black lines on the paper and lags far behind in the race with ideas. Its slow speed creates confusion. Anyway, this article has now become long enough and though still not sufficient and incomplete I shall stop here. It is possible I may again take the help of paper, pen and ink and give shape to my roaming thoughts on these topics. I repeat earnestly—Bhai Parmanand should explain himself and clarify the points I have hinted at in this article.

7. Two Mosques[1]

The Shahidganj Masjid of Lahore is daily in the news these days.[2] There is quite an excitement in the city and religious fervour seems dominant on both sides. Attacks on each other, complaints of evil designs of the other and, in between, British rule showing its might as the judge. I do not have an accurate version of the incidents—who started it, who was at fault etc.—and I have no real intention of finding out. Such kinds of religious enthusiasm do not interest me much. But unfortunately, once it is aroused, you have to face it, interest or no interest. I was thinking how backward we are in this country, that we are prepared to sacrifice our lives for such trivial matters and are ready to endure slavery and hunger.

1. Almora District Jail, 7 August 1935. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.
2. A dispute between Muslims and Sikhs over possession of lands attached to the Masjid was settled in favour of the Sikhs by the High Court on 19 October 1934. On acquiring possession of the land the Sikhs decided to renovate the building and the Muslims thereupon started an agitation.

From this mosque my attention wandered to another mosque. It is a very famous historical mosque and for the last fourteen hundred years or so, crores of eyes have seen it. It is older than even Islam and in this long life it has witnessed many things. Many empires toppled before it, old kingdoms were destroyed and many religious changes took place. In silence it witnessed all and at every change and revolution changed its dress too. Fourteen hundred years of storm this majestic building faced; the rains washed it, the air scrubbed it with its particles and the dust covered some of its parts. Every stone speaks out its age and magnificence and it seems as if fifteen hundred years have injected the history of the world into its veins and capillaries. It was difficult to stand the tricks and storms of nature for such a long period, but more difficult than this was to endure the crimes and brutality of man. This also, however, it sustained. Before the still eyes of its stones, empires came up and dwindled, religions spread and collapsed, mighty emperors, beautiful women and many talented persons came into existence, lived and then disappeared. It witnessed bravery, baseness and meanness. Big and small, good and bad, all have gone; but those stones still stand. While looking down from their heights even now, I wonder what those stones think of the multitude below—the games of the children, the quarrels, the deceit and the foolishness of the elders—how very little have they learned these thousand years! How much more would it take them to learn and be wise?

A narrow arm of the sea, like a broad river, separates Europe from Asia there. The Bosphorus flows and keeps the two worlds separate. On the hillsides of its European bank there was an old settlement of Byzantium. For long it was part of the Roman Empire, the eastern border of which, up to the early centuries of the Christian era, was in Iraq. But from the eastern side this kingdom was often attacked. The power of Rome was declining and it was not able to protect its far-off borders properly. Sometimes from the west and north, the German barbarians (as the Romans called them) would overrun it and it was a problem to push them back. Sometimes from the east, from Iraq or the Arab side, the Asians would attack and defeat the Roman armies.

The Roman Emperor, Constantine, decided to shift his capital to the east, so as to protect the empire from the eastern onslaught. He selected the picturesque bank of the Bosphorus, and on the tiny hills of Byzantium established a huge city. When Constantinople (or Kustuntunia) came into being, the fourth century of the Christian era was coming to an end. The Roman Empire no doubt became well

established in the east; but now the western border became more remote. After some time the Roman Empire got divided into two parts—the Western Empire and the Eastern Empire. Some years later the Western Empire was destroyed by its enemies. But the Eastern Empire lasted for over one thousand years thereafter and was known as the Byzantine Empire.

The Emperor Constantine not merely changed the capital but brought about yet another change. He accepted Christianity. Earlier the Christians in Rome were greatly tortured. Anyone of them who did not worship the Roman gods or the statue of the emperor could be done to death. They were often thrown before the hungry lions in the arena. It was a favourite sport of the Romans. It was very dangerous to be a Christian in Rome. They were considered as rebels. Now suddenly the situation changed greatly. The emperor himself embraced Christianity and Christianity now became the most honoured religion. Those who worshipped the old gods were now in great difficulty and were tortured by the authorities. Later, only one emperor (Julian)[3] gave up Christianity and again became the worshipper of the old gods but by now Christianity was well established and the old gods of Rome and Greece had to take shelter in the jungles from where also they gradually disappeared.

In this city of Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, massive buildings were built by the orders of the emperors and very soon it developed into a very big city. No other city in Europe could stand comparison with it—even Rome fell far behind. The buildings were erected in a new style—an architecture where the arches, domes, towers and pillars had a style of their own with minute mosaic work on the pillars and towers. This architectural style is known as Byzantine art. In the sixth century a magnificent cathedral was built in this style It was known as Sankta Sophia or Santa Sophia. It was the most massive church of the Eastern Roman Empire and the emperors desired that it should, by its high quality of art, be unique and suited to the empire. Their desires were fulfilled and even today it is considered the greatest achievement of this Byzantine art.

Later on the Christian religion split into two parts. In fact, there were many divisions but two were major. Rome and Constantinople were engaged in religious wars and became separated from each other. The Bishop of Rome (the most senior) became the Pope and in the western countries of Europe he was regarded as the head. But the

3 (331-363); emperor from 361 363 A.D. He granted freedom of worship to non-Christians and reorganised their priesthood.

Eastern Roman Empire did not recognize him and their Christian community became separate. It was known as the Orthodox Church or sometimes the Greek Church, for the language there had become Greek. The Orthodox Church held sway also in Russia and the nearby regions.

The Cathedral of Santa Sophia was the centre of the Greek Church and so it remained for nine hundred years. Once, in between, the Christians of Rome (who had come to fight the Muslims in the Crusades) attacked Constantinople and overpowered it, but they were soon turned out.

At last, when the Eastern Roman Empire had lasted for more than a thousand years, Santa Sophia also being about nine hundred years old, a new invasion took place which ended that old regime. In the fifteenth century the Osmanli Turks[4] conquered Constantinople and the greatest cathedral there now became the chief mosque. Santa Sophia was named Apa Suphea. In this new form it lasted for hundreds of years. That splendid mosque in a way became a landmark gazed at from long distances with aspirations. In the nineteenth century the Turkish Empire was weakening and Russia gaining ground. Russia was a very big country but a closed one and all over her empire there was not one warm-water port. She therefore cast a covetous eye on Constantinople. More than this was the spiritual and cultural attraction. The czars of Russia used to consider themselves successors to the Eastern Roman emperors and wanted to bring their old capital under their domination. Both were of the same religion, the Orthodox Greek Church, of which the centre was the famous Santa Sophia. For long it had been a mosque. How could that be tolerated? The Greek cross instead of the Islamic mark, *hilal* or the crescent, should be on its dome.

Gradually the Russia of the czars started expanding towards Constantinople. When she came nearer, the other powers of Europe were puzzled. England and France put obstacles, a war ensued and Russia stopped her advance for a while. But again, soon after, the same activity and political manoeuvres began. At last the Great War of 1914 started and in that, England, France, Russia and Italy made secret treaties.[5] Before the world were placed the high ideals of freedom and independence of small countries, but behind the curtain, like vultures waiting for the corpse, the partition of the world started.

This wish also remained unfulfilled. Before that corpse could be reached the Russia of the czars itself came to an end; a revolution took place there which changed the government as well as the social structure.

4. Ancient name of the Turks of the Ottoman Empire.
5. The alliances recognised their spheres of interest.

9. The Solidarity of Islam[1]

Some time back I read with great interest an article by Sir Mohammad Iqbal on the *Solidarity of Islam*.[2] Sir Mohammad's writings always attract me, for they give me some insight into a world which I find difficult to understand. So far as religion and the religious outlook are concerned, I live in the outer darkness, but, in spite of this deficiency in me, I am sufficiently interested in the historical, cultural and even the philosophical aspects of religion.

In his article Sir Mohammad dealt with the issue created between the *Qadianis* and the orthodox Muslims and considered this as 'extremely important' and affecting the integrity of the parent community. The *Qadianis*, according to him, had discarded the basic idea of Islam—the finality of prophethood—and had reverted to some extent to early Judaism and the pre-Islamic Magian culture. He was therefore of opinion that this 'rebellious group' should not be allowed to carry on its subversive propaganda, and, in any event, should not be permitted to masquerade as Muslims. *Qadiani* leaders did not accept Sir Mohammad's argument and vigorously repelled some of his statements.

Sir Mohammad's article raises a host of issues and makes one furiously to think in many directions. I hope that he will develop some of his points in future writings, for they deserve a full discussion. For the moment I am concerned with one aspect of his argument only. It would be impertinent of me to discuss the validity or otherwise of this argument from the point of view of Islam. That is a matter for erudite Muslims. For me Sir Mohammad is an authority on Islam worthy of respect and I must assume that he represents the orthodox viewpoint correctly.

If that is so, I presume that Turkey under the Ataturk Kemal has certainly ceased to be an Islamic country in any sense of the word. Egypt has been powerfully influenced by religious reformers who have tried to put new garments on the ancient truths, and, I imagine, that Sir Mohammad does not approve of this modernist tendency. The

1 Almora District Jail, 20 August 1935. Published in *Modern Review*, November 1935, pp. 504-505.

2 Iqbal published in 1934 the article called *Qadianis and the Orthodox Muslim*. The religious movement of *Qadianism* was started in 1889 by Mirza Ghulam Ahmed who claimed to be the "promised Prophet of every nation".

Arabs of Syria and Palestine more or less follow Egyptian thought-currents and are partly influenced by Turkey's example. Iran is definitely looking for its cultural inspiration to pre-Islamic Magian days. In all these countries, indeed in every country of western and middle Asia, nationalist ideas are rapidly growing, usually at the expense of the pure and orthodox religious outlook. Islam, as Sir Mohammad tells us, repudiates the race idea (and of course the geographical idea) and founds itself on the religious idea alone. But in the Islamic countries of western Asia we find today the race and geographical ideas all powerful. The Turk takes pride in the Turanian race; the Iranian in his own ancient racial traditions; the Egyptian and Syrian (as well as the people of Palestine, Trans-Jordan and Iraq) dream of Arab unity in which the Muslim and Christian Arabs will share.

All this clearly shows that these nations have fallen away from the ideal of Islamic solidarity which Sir Mohammad lays down. Where then does this solidarity exist at present? Not in Central Asia, for in the Soviet parts the breakaway from orthodoxy is far greater; in the Chinese parts the predominant currents are probably nationalist (Turanian) and Soviet. Afghanistan and Arabia proper remain in Asia, and then there are a number of Islamic countries in North Africa, apart from Egypt. How far this orthodox outlook of religious solidarity is prevalent there, I do not know, but reports indicate that nationalistic ideas have penetrated even there. And nationalism and the solidarity of Islam do not fit in side by side. Each weakens the other.

From Sir Mohammad's viewpoint this situation in the Islamic world must be a deplorable one. The question of the *Qadianis*, important as he considers it, sinks into relative insignificance before these world happenings. He stresses the need of a real leader to rise in the Punjab apparently to combat the '*Qadiani* menace'. But what lead does he give in regard to the wider menace? The Aga Khan, we are told, is the leader of Indian Muslims. Does he stand for this solidarity of Islam as defined by Sir Mohammad Iqbal?

These questions are relevant even for a non-Muslim; for on the answer to them depends the political, social and economic orientation of Indian Muslims and their reactions to modern ideas and thought-currents, in which some of us are interested. Islam being a world community, its policy must also be a world policy if it is to preserve that sense of solidarity. Sir Mohammad should give us some hint of this policy to meet the nationalist, social and economic problems that confront each country and group.

The only hint he gives in the article is a negative one: that religious reformers should be put down. In this, he tells us, he cordially agrees with the orthodox Hindus, and religious reform is supposed to include all social reform. He makes a provisional suggestion also that the distinction of rural and urban Muslims be abolished, as this interferes with the unity of Islam in the Punjab. Presumably the fact that some Muslims cultivate the fields, some are big landlords and live on rent, some are professional people living in cities, or bankers, or artisans or captains of industry, or labourers, some have an abundance of good things of life while most others starve, will still remain and will not interfere with Islamic unity.

Perhaps it is the object of the recently formed "Council of Peers and Moslem Leaders", of which Sir Mohammad Iqbal is a member, to further this unity and the solidarity of Islam. To an outsider it seems a little odd that Christian members of the British House of Lords should be so interested in the progress and solidarity of Islam. But at the lunch at Claridge's in London that followed the formation of this Council, the Aga Khan, we are told, "developed the theme of Anglo-Moslem unity." Perhaps the two unities lead into one another, and build up a wider and more embracing unity. It is all very confusing. I wish Sir Mohammad would explain and enlighten us.

10. His Highness the Aga Khan[1]

Sir Mohammad Iqbal's earnest plea for the solidarity of Islam and his protest against fissiparous tendencies led me to wonder as to where the line should be drawn. His Highness the Aga Khan is today considered the outstanding leader of the Indian Muslims. The government treats him and honours him as such, orthodox Muslim leaders, whenever in trouble or faced with difficulty, seek refuge under his sheltering wings. Even Sir Mohammad might, so to speak, be said to march under his political banner. From the point of view of orthodox Islam and its unity of conception, politics, sociology and economics can hardly be separated from religion. One would think therefore that the Aga

1 Almora District Jail, 21 August 1935 Published in *Modern Review*, November 1935, pp. 505 507.

Khan was the ideal representative of this unity and solidarity of religious belief.

Whether this is so I do not know and I should welcome wiser people to inform me. I have long had a vague kind of idea, however, that he hardly belongs to the inner orthodox fold, and I have admired him for the truly wonderful way in which he manages to combine, and gracefully carry in his own person, the most contradictory qualities, and to take part in multifarious activities which appear to be mutually antagonistic and irreconcilable. He is the head and spiritual leader of a widespread and wealthy sect and, I am told, that almost divine attributes are assigned to him by his devoted followers. He is said to derive a vast ecclesiastical revenue from the faithful, and one of his sources of income is supposed to be the granting of spiritual favours and indulgences. It is interesting to find these old-world practices being continued today in an intensive form. But the really remarkable fact is that the spiritual head who supports and encourages these practices is a modern of moderns, highly cultured in western ways, a prince of the turf, most at home in London and Paris. Only a remarkable personality could successfully carry this double burden. The Aga Khan not only does so with supreme ease, but he adds to it many public and political activities as well as the leadership of the Indian Muslims. That is an astonishing feat which, even though one may disagree with the Aga Khan, fills one with admiration for him.

But the question that is troubling me, as a result of reading Sir Mohammad Iqbal's statement on the solidarity of Islam, is how all this fits in with that solidarity. It may be perfectly justifiable to spend the money of the faithful on racing; that, after all, is a minor matter. But is the Aga Khan's sect a partner in that Islamic solidarity or not? I remember reading long ago Mark Twain's account of a visit paid by the Aga Khan to him in Bombay. Mark Twain's Indian servant burst into his hotel room one day in a state of extreme excitement and announced that God had come to pay a call on him. Many pray to God daily—and Mark Twain was a religious type of man—and each one of us, according to his early teaching or mental and spiritual development, has his own conception of God. But the best of us are apt to be taken aback by a sudden visitation of the Almighty. Mark Twain, after he had recovered from his initial surprise, discovered that God had come to him in the handsome and corporeal shape of the Aga Khan.

This characterization of the Aga Khan as God was no doubt a foolish error of Mark Twain's servant—and the Aga Khan cannot be held responsible for it. So far as I know, he does not claim divinity. But

there seem to be a large number of foolish persons about who ascribe certain divine or semi-divine attributes to him. Some of the propagandists of the sect describe him as an avatar or incarnation of the divinity. They have every right to do so if they believe in it. I have absolutely no complaint. But how does all this fit in with the solidarity of Islam?

A story that has long fascinated me is the account of the Aga Khan giving chits or notes of introduction for the archangel Gabriel to his followers, or some of them. This, so the tale runs, is to ensure their comfort and happiness in the next world. I cannot vouch for the truth of this story, but I do hope that it is based on fact. There is little of romance left in this drab and dreary world, and to correspond with an archangel is a captivating idea. It seems to bring heaven nearer, and even our life here down below assumes a rosier hue.

Then there is another story, not so attractive, but nevertheless extraordinary enough. I had heard of it previously and lately I read an account in a book by an American traveller. Colonel E. Alexander Powell, in his *The Last Home of Mystery*, referring to the Aga Khan says:

> His sanctity is so great, indeed, in the eyes of his followers, that the water in which he bathes is carefully conserved and sold annually to the representatives of the various Mohammedan sects at a ceremony held once each year at Aga Khan Hall in Bombay. The price paid for this holy water is the Aga Khan's weight in gold, the scales used for the weighing ceremony being adjusted to the fraction of an ounce troy. As the Aga Khan is a plump little man, the price paid for his used bath water is a high one.

Colonel Powell has probably added some journalistic and fancy touches of his own to this account. But the story is an old and oft-repeated one and, to my knowledge, has never been contradicted. If the Aga Khan can find a profitable use for his bath water and at the same time serve and exalt faith, surely it is no one's business to object. Tastes differ and it takes all sorts to make this world of ours. But again I am led to wonder if all this furthers the solidarity and 'democracy of Islam'.

Another incident comes to my mind It was after the War when Kemal Pasha had driven out the Greeks and established himself firmly in power in Turkey. His casual treatment of the new Caliph, appointed by him, drew forth a protest[2]—a very polite protest—from the Aga

2. Along with Sayeed Amir Ali, the Aga Khan wrote a letter to Ismet Pasha, Prime Minister of Turkey, protesting against the threatened attacks on the powers of the Caliph. The letter was condemned as British propaganda.

Khan and Mr. Amir Ali.[3] Kemal Pasha scented an English conspiracy and suddenly started a fierce attack on England, the Aga Khan, the Caliph and some Constantinople journalists. He was not very polite to the Aga Khan and drew all manner of unjust inferences from his long and intimate association with the British Government and the ruling classes. He pointed out that the Aga Khan had not been keen on following the previous Caliph's religious mandate when war had broken out between Turkey and England. He even stressed that the Aga Khan was no true Muslim, or at any rate, not an orthodox one, for did he not belong to a heretical sect? All this and much more he said, keen on gaining his end, which was to discredit the Aga Khan and make him out to be an accomplice of British foreign policy. And making the Aga Khan's move a pretext, the Ataturk put an end to the ancient Khilafat.

Kemal Pasha can hardly be said to be an authority on Islam, for he has deliberately broken away from many of its tenets. His motives were purely political, but his criticisms were not wholly without apparent force.

As I write this, another aspect of the Aga Khan's many sided personality comes up before me. It is given in an intimate, every day account and is thus all the more valuable and revealing. It appears in the *London Bystander* and I have come across it in a quotation in the *New Statesman*. This tells us that,

> Although the Aga Khan loves the good things of life—he is a great gourmet and has his own cook—there is a very considerable spiritual side to his life. It is hard to pin him down exactly on this point. But he will admit to a strong feeling of the battle between good and evil. At any rate, he is a wonderfully good sportsman, and when Jack Joel offered him a blank cheque the other day for Babram he refused because he said he wanted in his decrepit old age to be wheeled alongside his Derby winner and say, 'Well, that was a jolly day!'

Much to my regret I have never met the Aga Khan. Only once have I seen him. This was in the early noncooperation days at a Khilafat meeting in Bombay, where I sat not far from him on the platform. But this glimpse of an attractive and remarkable personality was hardly satisfying, and I have often wanted to find out what curious quality he possesses which enables him to fill with distinction so many and such varied roles, combining the thirteenth century with the

3. (1849 1928); member, Bengal Legislative Council, 1878, judge, Calcutta High Court, 1890, appointed to the judicial committee of the Privy Council, 1909

twentieth, Mecca and Newmarket, this world and the next, spirituality and racing, politics and pleasure. Wide indeed must be the range of Islam to include all this in its unity and solidarity.

But looking at Sir Mohammad Iqbal's statement I am again led to doubt, for Sir Mohammad seems to have little love for the non-conformists. He believes in the straight and narrow path of true orthodoxy and those who stray from this must forthwith remove themselves from his ken. How then am I to remove this doubt and difficulty? Will Sir Mohammad help in solving the riddle?

11. Orthodox of All Religions, Unite![1]

Some years ago I happened to be in Benares and as I was driving through the narrow city streets, my car was held up by a crowd. A procession was passing through and, apart from the processionists, there were many sightseers and little boys intent on sharing in the fun. Crowds interest me and I got down from the car to find out what was afoot. The procession was certainly an interesting one and it had certain unique features. We saw Brahmans, the most orthodox of their kind, with all manner of caste marks proudly displayed on their foreheads, marching shoulder to shoulder with bearded *moulvies*; the priests from the *ghats* fraternized with the *mullahs* from the mosques, and one of the standards they carried in triumph bore the flaming device: 'Hindu Mussalman *Ekta Ki Jai*'—Victory to Hindu-Muslim Unity! Very gratifying, we thought. But still what was all this about?

We soon found out from their cries and the many other standards they carried. This was a joint protest by the orthodox of both religions against the Sarda Act (or perhaps it was a Bill at the time) which prohibited marriages of girls under fourteen. The pious and the holy of both faiths had joined ranks and hands to declare that they would not submit to this outrage on their deepest convictions and most cherished rights. Were they going to be bullied by the threats of so-called reformers into giving up their right to marry child-wives?

1 Almora District Jail, 23 August 1935. Published in *Modern Review*, December 1935, pp. 625-631.

Never! Law or no law they would continue to marry little immature girls—for was not post puberty marriage a sin?—and thus enhance the glory of religion. Had not a noted *Vaidya* (physician) of Benares stated that in order to proclaim his adherence to the ancient *dharma* and his abhorrence of new fangled notions like the Sarda Act, he, even he, although he was round about sixty years of age, would *marry afresh* a girl under the prescribed legal age? Faith and religion had built up their great structures on the sacrifice of their votaries. Surely the movement against the Sarda Act would not lack its martyrs.

We mixed with the crowd and marched along for some distance by the side of the procession. Devadas Gandhi was with me and some Benares friends and soon we were recognized by the processionists. They did not welcome us or shower greetings on us, and I am afraid we did not encourage them to do so. Our looks and attire separated us from the ranks of the faithful—we had neither beards nor caste-marks—and we carried on an irreverent and somewhat aggressive commentary on the procession and its sponsors. Offensive slogans were hurled at us and there was some jostling about. Just then the procession arrived at the Town Hall and for some reason or other started stone throwing. A bright young person thereupon pulled some crackers and this had an extraordinary effect on the serried ranks of the orthodox. Evidently thinking that the police or the military had opened fire, they dispersed and vanished with exceeding rapidity. A few crackers were enough to put the procession to flight, but not even a cracker was required to make the British Government in India surrender on this issue. A little shouting, in which oddly enough the Muslims took the leading share, was enough to kill and bury the Sarda Act. It was feeble enough at birth with all manner of provisions which hindered its enforcement and then it gave six months' grace which resulted in a very spate of child marriages. And then, after the six months were over? Nothing happened; child marriages continued as before and government and magistrates looked the other way while the Sarda Act was torn to shreds and cast to the dogs. In some instances the person who ventured to bring a breach to a court, himself got into trouble for his pains and was fined. True, in one instance a Punjab villager who had given his ten year daughter in marriage and deliberately broken the provisions of the Sarda Act despite warning was sentenced to one month's imprisonment. But this error on the part of the magistrate was soon rectified by the Punjab Government who hastened to send a telegram ordering the release of the offender against the Act. (This case has been taken from Miss E.F. Rathbone's interesting little book, *Child Marriage*.)

What were we doing all this time? We were in prison. For six years now we have been mostly in prison, sometimes as many as sixty or seventy thousand at a time. Outside, a strict censorship prevailed, meetings were forbidden and an attempt to enter a rural area was almost certain to lead to prison, if not worse. The various emergency laws and denial of civil liberties were certainly not aimed at preventing support of the Sarda Act. But in effect they left the field clear to the opponents of that measure. And the government in its distress at having to combat a great political movement directed against it, sought allies in the most reactionary of religious and social bigots. To obtain their goodwill the Sarda Act was sat upon, extinguished. 'Hindu Mussalman *Ekta Ki Jai*'—Victory to Hindu-Muslim Unity!

The Muslims deserve their full share in this victory. Most of us had thought that the child wife evil was largely confined to Hindus. But whatever the early disproportion might have been, Muslims were evidently determined not to be out-distanced in this matter as in others, by Hindus. So while on the one hand they claimed more seats in the councils, more jobs as policemen, deputy collectors, tahsildars, *chaprasis* and the like, they hurried on with the work of increasing their child-wives. From the most noted taluqdars in Oudh to the humble workers, they all joined in this endeavour, till at last the 1931 census proclaimed that victory had come to them. The report of the Age of Consent Committee[2] had previously prepared us to revise our previous opinion but the census went much further than had been expected. It told us that Muslims had actually surpassed the Hindus in the proportion of their child-wives. In Assam "Muslims have now far the largest proportion of child wives in all the early age groups," in Behar and Orissa the census tells us that "whereas the proportion of Hindu girl-wives (including widows) below the age of ten has increased since 1921 from 105 to 160, among Muslims it has increased from 76 to 202." Truly a triumph for the Sarda Act and the government that is supposed to enforce it.

Lest it be said that our enlightened Indian states lag behind on this issue, the Government of Mysore has recently made its position clear. A venturesome member sought to introduce a Child Marriage Restraint Bill, on the lines of the Sarda Act, in the Mysore Council. The motion was stoutly opposed by a Dewan Bahadur on behalf of the Muslims. The government generously permitted the official members to vote as they liked, but, oddly enough, the entire official bloc, including two

2. The Age of Consent Committee was appointed by the Government of India on 25 June 1928 and its report was published on 26 August 1929.

European members, voted against the motion and with their votes helped to defeat it. Religion was again saved.

This instance of the Sarda Act was a revealing one, for it showed that all the shouting about Hindu-Muslim friction and disunity was exaggerated and, in any event, misdirected. That there was such friction nobody could deny, but it was the outcome not so much of religious differences as of economic distress, unemployment, and a race for jobs, which put on a sanctified garb and in the name of religion deluded and excited the masses. If the difference had been essentially religious, one would have thought that the orthodox of the two faiths would be the farthest removed from each other and the most hostile to each other's pretensions. As a matter of fact they combine frequently enough to combat any movement of reform, social, economic, political. Both look upon the person who wants to change the existing order in any way as the real enemy, both cling desperately and rather pathetically to the British Government, for instinctively they realise that they are in the same boat with it.

Nearly twenty two years ago, before the War, in January, 1914, the Aga Khan wrote an article in the *Edinburgh Review* on the Indian situation. He advised the government to abandon the policy of separating Hindus from Muslims and to rally the moderate of both creeds in a common camp so as to provide a counterpoise to the radical nationalist tendencies of young India, both Hindu and Muslim. In those days extremism was confined to nationalism and did not go beyond the political plane. Even so the Aga Khan sensed that the vital division lay not along religious lines but along political—between those who more or less stood for British domination in India and others who desired to end it. That nationalist issue still dominates the field and is likely to do so as long as India remains politically unfree. But today other issues have also assumed prominence—social and economic. If radical political change was feared by the moderate and socially backward elements, much more are they terrified by the prospect of social and economic change. Indeed it is the fear of the latter that has reacted on the political issue and made many a so-called advanced politician retrace his steps. He has in some cases become frankly a reactionary in politics, or a camouflaged reactionary like the communalists, or an open champion of his class interests and vested rights, like the big zamindars and taluqdars and industrialists.

I have no doubt that this process will continue and will lead to the toning down of communal and religious animosities, to Hindu Muslim unity, of a kind. The communalists of various groups, in spite of their mutual hostility, will embrace each other like long-lost brothers and

swear fealty in a new joint campaign against those who are out for radical change, politically or socially or economically. The new alignment will be a healthier one and the issues will be clearer. The indications towards some such grouping are already visible, though they will take some time to develop.

Sir Mohammad Iqbal, the champion of the solidarity of Islam, is in cordial agreement with orthodox Hindus in some of their most reactionary demands. He writes: "I very much appreciate the orthodox Hindus' demand for protection against religious reformers in the new constitution. Indeed this demand ought to have been first made by the Muslims" He further explains that "the encouragement in India of religious adventurers on the ground of modern liberalism tends to make people more and more indifferent to religion and will eventually completely eliminate the important factor of religion from the life of the Indian community. The Indian mind will then seek some other substitute for religion which is likely to be nothing less than the form of atheistic materialism which has appeared in Russia."

This fear of communism has driven many liberals and other middle groups in Europe to fascism and reaction. Even the old enemies, the Jesuits and the Freemasons, have covered up their bitter hostility of two hundred years to face the common enemy. In India communism and socialism are understood by relatively very few persons and most people who shout loudest against them are supremely ignorant about them. But they are influenced partly instinctively because of their vested interests, and partly because of the propaganda on the part of the government, which always stresses the religious issue.

Sir Mohammad Iqbal's argument, however, takes us very much further than merely anti-communism or anti socialism and it is worthwhile examining it in some detail. His position, on this issue of suppression of all reformers, is, it should be remembered, almost the same as that of the *sanatanist* Hindus. And even a party which presumes to call itself democratic or nationalist (or perhaps some other name—it is difficult to keep pace with the periodic transformations of half a dozen worthy gentlemen in western India)—declared recently in its programme that it was opposed to all legislative interference[3] with religious rights and customs. In India this covers a wide field and there are few departments of life which cannot be connected with religion. Not to interfere with them legislatively is a mild way of saying that

3 The Democratic Swaraj Party, at a meeting held at Alola on 1 August 1935, passed a resolution advocating a policy "of non interference by legislatures in religious matters"

the orthodox may continue in every way as before and no changes will be permitted.

Sir Mohammad would go further, for Islam, according to him, does not believe in tolerance. Its solidarity consists in a certain uniformity which does not permit any heresy or non-conformity within the fold. Hinduism is utterly different because in spite of a common culture and outlook, it lacks uniformity and for thousands of years has actually encouraged the formation of innumerable sects. It is difficult to define heresy when almost every conceivable variation of the central theme is held by some sect. This outlook of Islam is probably comparable to that of the Roman Catholic Church. Both think in terms of a world community owing allegiance to one definite doctrine and are not prepared to tolerate any deviation from it. A person belonging to an entirely different religion is preferable to a heretic, for a heretic creates confusion in the minds of true believers. Therefore a heretic must be shown no quarter and his ideas must be suppressed. That essentially has always been and still is the belief of the Catholic church, but its practice has been toned down to meet modern 'liberal' notions. When the practice fitted in with the theory it led to the Spanish Inquisition, the *autos da fe*, and various crusades and wars against Christian non-conformists in Europe. The Inquisition has a bad odour now and we shiver to think of its cruelties. Yet it was carried on by high-minded, deeply religious men who never thought of personal gain. They believed with all the intensity of religious conviction that the heretic would go to hell if he persisted in his error, and with all their might they sought to save his immortal soul from the eternal pit. What did it matter if in this attempt the body was made to suffer?

12. The Mind of a Judge[1]

The days when I practised at the bar as a lawyer seem distant and far off, and I find it a little difficult now to recapture the thoughts and moods that must have possessed me then. And yet it was only sixteen years ago that I walked out of the web of the law in more ways than

1 Almora District Jail, 1 September 1935. Published in *Modern Review*, January 1936, pp 8-12 Reprinted in *India and the World*, pp 130-145

one. Sometimes I look back on those days, for in prison one grows retrospective and, as the present is dull and monotonous and full of unhappiness, the past stands out, vivid and inviting. There was little that was inviting in that legal past of mine and at no time have I felt the urge to revert to it. But still my mind played with the ifs and possibilities of that past—a foolish but an entertaining pastime when inaction is thrust on one—and I wondered how life would have treated me if I had stuck to my original profession. That was not an unlikely contingency, though it seems odd enough now; a slight twist in the thread of life might have changed my whole future. I suppose I would have done tolerably well at the bar and I would have had a much more peaceful, a duller, and physically a more comfortable existence than I have so far had. Perhaps I might even have developed into a highly respectable and solemn-looking judge with wig and gown, as quite a number of my old friends and colleagues have done.

How would I have felt as a judge, I have wondered? How does a judge feel or think? This second question used to occupy my mind to some extent even when I was in practice conducting or watching criminal cases, lost in wonder at the speed and apparent unconcern with which the judge sent men to the scaffold or long terms of imprisonment That question, in a more personal form, has always faced me when I have stood in the prisoner's dock and awaited sentence, or attended a friend's trial for political offences. That question is almost always with me in prison, surrounded as I am with hundreds or thousands of persons whom judges have sent there. (I am not concerned for the moment with political offenders; I am only referring to the ordinary prisoners.) The judge had considered the evil deed that was done and he had meted out justice and punishment as he had been told to do by the penal code. Sometimes he had added a sermon of his own, probably to justify a particularly heavy sentence. He had not given a thought to the upbringing, environment, education (or want of it) of the prisoner before him. He had paid no heed to the psychological background that led to the deed, or to the mental conflict that had raged within that dumb, frightened creature who stands in the dock. He had no notion that perhaps society, of which he considers himself a pillar and an ornament, might be partly responsible for the crime that he is judging.

He is, let us presume, a conscientious judge and he weighs the evidence carefully before pronouncing sentence. He may even give the benefit of the doubt to the accused, though our judges are not given to doubting very much But, almost invariably, the prisoner and he belong to different worlds with very little in common between them

and incapable of understanding each other. There may sometimes be an intellectual appreciation of the other's outlook and background, though that is rare enough; but there is no emotional awareness of it, and without the latter there can never be true understanding of another person.

Sentence follows, and these sentences are remarkable. As the realization comes that crime is not decreasing, and may even be increasing, the sentences become more savage in the hope that this may frighten the evil-doer. The judge and the power behind the judge have not grasped the fact that crime may be due to special reasons, which might be investigated, and that some of these may be capable of control; and further that in any event a harsh penal code does not improve the social morals of a group or a harsh sentence those of an individual who has lapsed from grace. The only remedy they know, both for political and non political offences, is punishment and an attempt to terrorize the offender by what are called deterrent sentences. The usual political sentence now for a speech or a song or a poem which offends the government is two years rigorous imprisonment (in the Frontier Province it is three years), and a lavish use of this is being made from day to day; but even this seems trivial when compared with the cases of large numbers of those people who are kept confined for four or five years or more, indefinitely, without conviction or sentence.

Political cases, however, depend greatly on the moods of government and a changing situation, and do not help us in considering the ordinary administration of the criminal law. To some extent the two overlap and affect each other, for instance, many agrarian and labour cases in courts are often definitely political in origin. It is also well-known that many people, who are considered politically undesirable by the police, are proceeded against under the bad livelihood or similar sections of the code and clapped in prison as bad characters with no special offence being brought up against them. Ignoring such cases and considering what might be called the unadulterated crimes, two facts stand out: both the number of convictions and the length of sentences are growing. Every year the various provincial prison reports complain of the increasing number of prisoners and the necessity of additional accommodation. The peak years, when the civil disobedience movement sent its scores of thousands to prison, become the normal years even without this special influx of politicals. Occasionally the difficulty is overcome by discharging a few thousand short-timers before their time, but the strain continues.

The central prisons are full of 'lifers', prisoners sentenced for life, and others sentenced to long terms. Most of these 'lifers' come in

huge bunches in dacoity cases and probably a fair proportion are guilty, though I am inclined to think that many innocent persons are involved also, as the evidence is entirely one of identification. It is obvious that the growing number of dacoities are due to the increasing unemployment and poverty of the masses as well as the lower middle classes. Most of the other criminal offences involving property are also due to this terrible prospect of want and starvation that faces the vast majority of our people.

Do our judges ever realize this or give thought to the despair that the sight of a starving wife or children might produce even in a normal human being? Is a man to sit helplessly by and see his dear ones sicken and die for want of the simplest human necessities? He slips and offends against the law, and the law and the judge then see to it that he can never again become a normal person with a socially beneficial job of work. They help to produce the criminal type, so-called, and then are surprised to find that such types exist and multiply.

The major offences lead to a life sentence or ten years or so. But the petty offences and the way they are treated by judges are even more instructive. The vast majority of these are buried in court files and get no publicity; only rarely do the papers mention such a case. Three such cases, taken almost at random from recent issues of newspapers, are given below:

> Rahman was an old offender with 12 previous convictions, the first of which dated back to 1913. The present offence was one of theft of clothes valued at a few rupees. Rahman pleaded guilty and requested the court to send him to a reformatory or some such place from where he could emerge thoroughly reformed. The judge, who was the Judicial Commissioner in Sind, refused this request and sentenced him to seven years, adding: "If this seven year sentence of hard labour does not reform you, God alone must come to your aid." (Karachi, May 23, 1935).
>
> Badri, who had four previous convictions, was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment under section 411/75 I.P.C. for having dishonestly received a stolen *chaddar* (cloth sheet). (Lucknow, July 3, 1935).
>
> Ghulam Mohammad, an old offender, was sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment for stealing one rupee by picking the pocket of a man. (Sialkot, July 15, 1935).

These and similar sentences may be perfectly correct from the point of view of the Indian Penal Code but it does seem to me astonishing that any judge should imagine that by inflicting such sentences he is

reforming the offender. Evidently the Judicial Commissioner in Sind had himself some doubts about the efficacy of his treatment for he hinted that God might be given a chance on the next occasion.

There they sit, these judges, in their courts, and a procession of unfortunates passes before them—some go to the scaffold, some to be whipped, some to imprisonment, to which may be added solitary confinement. They are doing their duty according to their abstract ideas of justice and punishment; they must consider themselves as the protectors of society from anti social criminal elements. Do their thoughts ever go beyond these set ideas and take human shape considering the miserable offender as a human being with parents, wife, children, friends? They punish the individual but at the same time they punish a group also, for the ripples of suffering spread out and go far. Those who have to die at least die swiftly, the agony is brief. But the agony is long for those who enter prison.

Behind the door, within the wall
Locked, they sit the numbered ones.

Two years, three years, seven years stolen from life's brief span—each year of twelve months, each month of thirty days, each day of twenty-four hours—how terribly long it all seems to the prisoner, how wearily time passes!

All this is very sad and deplorable no doubt, but what is the poor judge to do? Is he to wallow in a sea of sentimentality and give up sentencing offenders against the laws? If he is so soft and sensitive he is not much good as a judge and will have to give place to another. No, no one expects the judge to embrace every offender and invite him to dinner, but a human element in a trial and sentence would certainly improve matters. The judges are too impersonal, distant, and too little aware of the consequences of the sentences they award. If their awareness could be increased, as well as a sense of fellow-feeling with the prisoner, it would be a great gain. This can only come when the two belong to more or less the same class. A financier who has embezzled vast sums of public money will have every sympathy from the judge, not so the poor wretch who has picked up a rupee or stolen a sheet to satisfy an urgent need. For the judge and the average offender to belong to the same class means a fundamental change in social structure, as indeed every great reform does. But even apart from and in anticipation of that, something could certainly be done.

It was Bernard Shaw, I think, who suggested that every judge and magistrate, as well as every prison official, should spend a period in prison, living like ordinary prisoners. Only then would they be justified

in sentencing people to imprisonment, or to governing them there. The suggestion is an excellent one although it may be difficult to give effect to it. I ventured to suggest it once to the Home Member and the Inspector-General of Prisons of the U.P. Government for their personal adoption, but they did not seem to favour it. At least one well-known prison official, however, has adopted it. This was Thomas Mott Osborne of the famous Sing Sing Prison in New York. He trained himself by undergoing a term of voluntary imprisonment and, as a result of this, he introduced later on many remarkable improvements in the social rehabilitation and education of the prisoners.

Such a term of voluntary imprisonment will do a world of good to the bodies and souls of our judges, magistrates and prison officials. It will also give them a greater insight into prison life. But obviously no such voluntary effort can ever approach the real thing. The sting of imprisonment will be absent as well as the peculiarly helpless and broken feeling before the armed and walled power of the state, which a prisoner experiences. Nor will the voluntary prisoner ever have to face bad treatment from the staff. The essence of prison is a psychological background of having been cast off from society like a diseased limb. That will necessarily be absent. But with all these drawbacks the experience will be worthwhile and will help in making the administration of the criminal law more human and beneficial. The great invasions of our prisons by middle class people during the noncooperation and civil disobedience movements had indirectly a marked effect. As the prison goers did not become judges or prison officials the direct effect was little. But a knowledge of prison conditions and a sympathy for the prisoner's lot became widespread, and public opinion and the crusading efforts of some Congressmen bore substantial results.

I do not know whether I am over-soft but I do not think I err on the mushy and sentimental side. Other people and even many of my close colleagues have considered me rather hard. Mr. C.R. Das once referred to me at a meeting of the All India Congress Committee as being 'cold blooded'.[2] Perhaps it all depends on the standard of comparison as well as on the fact that some display their emotions more than others. However that may be, I do hate the idea of punishment and especially 'deterrent' punishment and all the suffering, deliberately caused, that it evolves. Perhaps it cannot be done away with completely in this present-day world of ours, but it can certainly be minimized, toned down and almost humanized.

2 At the meeting held at Nagpur in July 1923.

At one time I was strongly opposed to the death penalty and, in theory, my opposition still continues. But I have come to realize that there are many things far worse than death, and if the choice had to be made, and I was given it, I would probably accept a death sentence rather than one of imprisonment for life. But I would not like to be hung; I would prefer being shot or guillotined or even electrocuted; most of all other methods I would like to be given, as Socrates was of old, the cup of poison which would send me to sleep from which there was no awakening. This last method seems to me to be far the most civilized and humane. But in India we favour hanging, and last year the official mind showed us the texture of which it was made by organizing public hangings in Karachi or somewhere else in Sind. This was meant to terrify would-be evil-doers. It turned out to be a huge *mela* where thousands gathered to witness the ghastly spectacle. I suppose the mentality behind such public exhibitions bears a family resemblance to that which prompted the *autos da fe* of the Spanish Inquisition.

A friend of mine who became a High Court Judge had a 'crisis of conscience' when he had first to sentence a man to death. The idea seemed hateful to him. He overcame his repugnance, however, (he had to or else he would not have long continued in his job) and I suppose he soon got used to sending people to the scaffold without turning a hair. He was an exception and I doubt if many others in his position have ever had such scruples. It is probably easier to sentence a man to death than to see the sentence carried out. And yet even sensitive people get used to this painful sight. A young English member of the Indian Civil Service had to attend hangings in the local gaol. At his first hanging, he told me, he was thoroughly sick and felt bad all day. But very soon the sight had no unusual effect on him whatever and he used to go straight from the execution to his breakfast table and have a hearty meal.

I have never seen a death sentence being carried out. In most of the gaols where I have lived as a prisoner executions did not take place, but on three or four occasions there were hangings in my gaol. These took place in a special enclosure, cut off from the rest of the prison, but the whole gaol population knew of it, perhaps because the unlocking of the various barracks and cells took place at a later hour on those mornings. I experienced a peculiar feeling on those days, an ominous stillness and a tendency for people to talk in low voices. It is possible that all this was the product of my own imagination.

And yet with all my repugnance for executions, I feel that some method of eliminating utterly undesirable human beings will have to

be adopted and used with discretion. The real objection to the infliction of capital punishment as well as other punishments is of course not so much the resultant suffering of the person punished, as the brutalization of the community that authorizes such punishment, and more particularly of the individuals who carry it out. This is especially noticeable in the case of whipping, which is widely prevalent in India. The official defence for the punishment of whipping is that it is meant for horrible crimes, like rape with violence. In practice it has a much wider range and in 1932 (as was stated in the British House of Commons) five hundred civil disobedience prisoners were whipped. This was the official figure, unofficial jail beatings not being included. These political prisoners were whipped either for purely political offences or for breaches of gaol discipline. No violence or crime was involved. It has now been laid down officially that in serious cases of hunger strikes in gaol whipping may be resorted to.[3] We thus have it that in the opinion of the British Government in India a hunger strike or breaches of gaol discipline stand on the same level as rape with violence.

Whipping is usually administered in prisons by some low-caste prisoner. No prisoner likes the job but he has little choice in the matter. The higher caste prisoners would in any event refuse to whip, and even the warders are reluctant to do so. A case came to my notice once when a warder was asked to whip. He refused absolutely and was punished for this contumacy. It is interesting to compare the sensitiveness to whipping of the prisoners and warders with that of our judges and prison officials who order it, and our government which authorizes and defends it.

I was reading the other day about the film censorship in Britain. It was stated that one of the grounds for censorship was the avoidance of cruelty scenes. In animal films no kill was to be shown. Films "showing pain or suffering on the part of an animal, whether such pain is caused by accident or intention", are not allowed as these are supposed to have a bad effect on spectators, especially children, and "undermine moral character."

We also in India have our film censorships and an active Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Unfortunately human beings are not included in the category of animals and so they cannot benefit by the activities of the Society. And our film censorship justifies itself by banning films dealing with "Quetta Earthquake Topical" or

3. On 21 December 1934 the Government of India permitted the Government of Bombay to sanction whipping of state prisoners for "continued recalcitrant conduct."

"National Congress Scenes" or "Departure of Mahatma Gandhi for the Round Table Conference" and similar dangerous topics.

Sentences of death and whipping impress us and pain us, but, after all, they affect only a very small number of the scores of thousands who are sentenced by our courts. The vast majority of these go to prison, mostly for long periods over which their punishment is spread out. It is a continuing torture, a never-ceasing pain, till mind itself grows dull and the body is blunted to sensation. The criminal type develops, the ugly fruit of our gaols and our criminal laws, and there is no fitting him in then with the social machine outside. He is the square peg everywhere, with no roots, no home, suspicious of everybody, being suspected everywhere, till at last he comes back to his only true resting-place, the prison, and takes up again the tin or iron bowl which is his faithful companion there. Do our judges ever trouble to think of cause and effect, of the inevitable consequences of an act or decision? Do they realize that their courts and the prisons are the principal factories for the production and stamping of the criminal type?

In prison one comes to realize more than anywhere else the basic nature of the state; it is the force, the compulsion, the violence of the governing group. "Government", George Washington is reported to have said, "is not reason, it is not eloquence—it is force! Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master." It is true that civilization has been built up on cooperation and forbearance and mutual collaboration in a thousand ways. But when a crisis comes and the state is afraid of some danger then the superstructure goes or, at any rate, is subordinated to the primary function of the state—self-protection by force and violence. The army, the police, the prison come into greater prominence then, and of the three the prison is perhaps the nakedest form of a state in miniature.

Must the state always be based on force and violence, or will the day come when this element of compulsion is reduced to a minimum and almost fades away? That day, if it ever comes, is still far off. Meanwhile, the violence of the governing group produces the violence of other groups that seek to oust it. It is a vicious circle, violence breeding violence, and on ethical grounds there is little to choose between the two violences. It always seems curious to me how the governing group in a state, basing itself on an extremity of violence, objects on moral or ethical grounds to the force or violence of others. On practical grounds of self-protection they have reason to object; but why drag in morality and ethics? State violence is preferable to private violence in many ways, for one major violence is far better than numerous petty private violences. State violence is also

likely to be a more or less ordered violence and thus preferable to the disorderly violence of private groups and individuals, for even in violence order is better than disorder, except that this makes the state more efficient in its violence and powers of compulsion. But when a state goes off the rails completely and begins to indulge in disorderly violence, then indeed it is a terrible thing, and no private or individual effort can compete with it in horror and brutality.

"You must live in a chaos if you would give birth to a dancing star", says Nietzsche. Must it be so? Is there no other way? The old difficulty of the humanist is ever cropping up, his disgust at force and violence and cruelty, and yet his inability to overcome these by merely standing by and looking on. That is the recurring theme of Ernst Toller's plays:

> The sword, as ever, is a shift of fools
> To hide their folly.
> By force, the smoky torch of violence,
> We shall not find the way.

Yet force and violence reign triumphant today everywhere. Only in our country has a noble effort been made to combat them by means other than those of force. The inspiration of that effort, and of the leader who lifted us out of our petty selves by his matchless purity of outlook, still remains, though the ultimate outcome be shrouded in darkness.

But these are big questions beyond the power even of judges. We may not perhaps be able to find an answer to them in our time, or, finding an answer, be unable to impress it on wayward humanity. Meanwhile, the smaller questions and problems pursue us and we cannot ignore them. We come back to the job of the judge and the prison governor and we can say this, at least, with certainty: that the deliberate infliction of punishment or torture of the mind or body is not the way to reform anyone, that though this may break or twist the victim it will not mend him, that it is much more likely to brutalize and deform him who inflicts it. For the inevitable effect of cruelty and torture is to degrade both the sufferer and the person who causes the suffering.

APPENDIX

1. To S. Srinivasa Iyengar[1]

Montana
20.11.26

Dear Mr Srinivasa Iyengar,
May I send you from distant Switzerland my congratulations on your election to the Congress presidentship? It is hardly an enviable office in these days of storm and internal conflict and yet I have a strong hope that during your year of office Indian affairs will take a turn for the better and the madness of communalism will gradually subside. My great regret is that I have not been in India during these months. I do not suppose I could have done much good to anybody but still it is good to be in a fight and to give and receive hearty blows. My sympathies during the present conflict are of course with the Swarajists and yet I cannot raise any enthusiasm even for their programme. I have to fall back on them largely because the other groups—the Responsivists and the much advertised but singularly puerile party, the Independent Congress Party—are according to my thinking utterly in the wrong. I regret even more my inability to attend the Gauhati Congress. It will be the first Congress I shall miss for many years, excepting the sessions I could not attend when I was in jail.

The scrappy news that one gets here about Indian affairs is usually highly coloured and it is difficult to get at the true facts. I gather however that the Swarajists are doing well in the elections—in a few days probably the full results will be out. Indian papers make sorry reading and almost invariably make one feel despondent or angry. And yet after some months in Europe I have begun to feel far more optimistic about India's future than I have done for the last three years or more. Every country in Europe has problems quite as difficult as ours and in some cases far worse. Even the communal trouble has its counterpart in religious differences and parties here. There is absolutely no chance of Europe settling down for many years to come and there is every probability of another big break-up within a few years. The League of Nations and all foreign policies and pacts are really being used as a preparation for this coming conflict. England has managed to get hated all over the Continent and hardly anybody here has a good word to say. But the diplomatic tradition is strong in England and they have still a knack of playing off their opponents against each other. Added to this they have the advantage of utilising the undoubted fear of Bolshevism which exists in most European countries. It is generally

1. Srinivasa Iyengar Papers, NMML.

taken for granted that the main protagonists in a future conflict will be England and Russia and the latter will certainly have the support of some other nations. In such a war Asia is likely to play a very big part and India will automatically become a dominating factor in the situation. It will make all the difference in the world to England whether India is contented or hostile to her. It is thus very much to England's interest to come to terms with Indian nationalists and perhaps English statesmen are really more desirous for peace in India than even our rather weary and tired politicians. But as there is no immediate danger England can afford to wait for a favourable opportunity when even small concessions will be eagerly swallowed by our leaders. She may even assume a generous role and give a little more than the situation may demand. The only thing that really frightens me is the prospect of our continuing to reduce our demands. And the fear is a very real one as the record of the last four years shows. From something which was akin to independence we came down to dominion rule and then to some bravely worded resolutions of the Legislative Assembly meaning ultimately not very much; later we practically accepted provincial autonomy and now with Lajpat Rai and the like producing a hybrid abortion of a programme I really do not know where we are and what we want. This is a fatal descent and can only end in disaster. There should be no talk or thought of making terms so long as we are down. The only terms we can get are those the victors give the vanquished. Unhappily our leaders are tired out and want rest and because of their weariness the national cause must suffer. If we are unable to do anything effective at present let us give up demands and threats but on no account must we talk of compromise on any terms except the best. Our present weakness must be no measure of the freedom we want. This should be so in any event, regardless of other possibilities. As a matter of fact, however, the position of India is a very strong one if a longer view is taken and if world politics are considered.

Personally, I have long regretted that the Congress did not definitely adopt independence for its goal. I wish it had done so at Ahmedabad. Since then there has not been a suitable opportunity and the various attempts made have made matters worse. I cannot conceive that India can even have full Dominion Status with all it implies. Our interests are so antagonistic to those of England in almost every sphere that Dominion Status would immediately and automatically lead to independence. What is possible however is that we may be given something called Dominion Status but very different and limited. For the matter of that even a so-called independence may be a trivial affair

as in the case of Egypt. I think we should not lose ourselves in these vague terms but concentrate on something definite and clear like full control of the army and finances. If we have this control it does not matter by what name it is called. So far as I am aware very little is said about the control of the army in our utterances and propaganda. Almost like the liberals most of us seem to think that it will be too big for us to swallow and even if we swallowed it, it might cause indigestion. From the point of view of world politics however it is essential that we should lay stress on the immediate withdrawal of the British army and our control of the Indian army. The English are of course continuing their propaganda of the danger of an invasion from the north west and frightening all our *banias* and old women, and when the crisis comes there is little doubt that they will stampede our politicians into voting supplies and otherwise supporting the English in a war, unless effective steps are taken to educate not only the general public but our leaders on the right lines. In the event of war between Russia and England, the N.W. Frontier will become perhaps the most important area of struggle and India will have a difficult problem before her. We cannot look forward with any complaisance to a Russian and Afghan invasion of India, still less can we assist British imperialism in such a war. If we have the courage and our people have been accustomed to the idea, we can take affairs in out own hands and try to keep out of the conflict, though this will be difficult. Or we can almost dictate our terms to the British. I wish therefore that sufficient stress might be laid on this aspect. The very first thing is to carry on incessant propaganda against the use of Indian troops anywhere outside India, specially against the Chinese or in Western Asia. From this it follows that the Indian army must not be used for furthering the imperialistic designs of England or indeed for any war without the express consent of the Indian people or their representatives. And lastly that the British army must leave India and the Indian army put under the control of the elected Indian government. One other matter I should like our leaders to bear in mind. In future whenever terms or compromise is discussed all promises must be ruled out. We cannot trust in any promises. Whatever our demand may be, must apply to the present and must be given effect to forthwith.

I am afraid you will probably consider these effusions of mine uncalled for and without any bearing on the present situation. Very likely this is so. Most of your time and energy at Gauhati will be taken up in rebutting the attack of the medley crew ranged against the present Congress policy. Most of them—like Lajpat Rai—have lost all faith in any substantial advance and therefore want to work for something

communal or otherwise trivial. Lajpat Rai's ideas of world politics are, I imagine, derived from a few friends he has in the moderate Labour ranks in England. And the Labour Party in England is a most useless body so far as India is concerned. Ramsay MacDonald has made it clearly known to his friends that he will do nothing for India. A few members of the Independent Labour Party have made more promises to India but they represent nobody in particular and are not likely to be an effective force in British politics for a very long time. Besides, at heart almost every Englishman is a bit of an imperialist. I wish our leaders will forget everything about the British Labour Party and try to understand what is happening elsewhere in the world.

The victory of the Canton Government in China is one of the facts which is likely to have a tremendous effect on our future. I hope the Congress will warmly welcome it and extend their congratulations to the Kuommtang—the Chinese Nationalist Party. Also that they will strongly condemn the use of Indian soldiers and police in Shanghai and elsewhere. You might be surprised to know how much interest is taken in India and our nationalist movement in all manner of places—England excluded—and such expressions of sympathy and condemnation have considerable value.

There is one other matter I wish to write about. A league has recently been formed against oppression in the colonies. The name is rather deceptive but it is really a league against all forms of imperialism. Its headquarters are in Berlin, and in Germany their propaganda is directed against Germany taking any colonies. But naturally most of their work will be against the imperialistic tendencies of countries already possessing colonies and dependencies and specially England, the arch-imperialist. They are holding a world conference in Brussels towards the end of January and it appears that this conference will be a very representative assembly. An invitation was sent some time ago to the Indian National Congress but I suppose little attention was paid to it. I am told that about 400 organisations in various parts of the world will be represented China is sending a strong contingent. The Kuommtang and the Canton Government will be officially represented and so will a number of universities and other bodies The Government of Mexico will also be represented probably because they have a grievance against the United States I enclose some papers which will give you some information on the subject. I think it would have been very desirable for the Congress to send some competent representatives. I do not know if it is possible now owing to the shortness of time and also owing to your other internal difficulties but if it is at all possible, it should be done. Some of the people connected with the conference may not

be very desirable but this does not take away from it its utility. The conference may also have a communist tinge. I should not like our Congress to identify itself with communism but I think that participating in the Brussels conference will in no way result in this. The Congress delegation should consist of at least three persons, one of whom should be well up in economics and the military policy of the Indian Government. It would be desirable if there was a Mohammedan also. I should have thought that a delegation consisting of Sarojini Naidu, Shuaib Qureshi and a third who is an economist of the right kind would be a good one. As I am here I might join it but I should not like to go all by myself. The opportunity is too good to be lost. We shall have an excellent chance of getting into touch with interesting people from other countries.

I am writing on this subject to my father also and to Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. If all of you really think it worthwhile, some steps will have to be taken even before the Congress meets at Gauhati, otherwise it may be too late. At the latest people should arrive in Brussels by the end of January.

There is an exhibition also in connection with the Brussels conference. I wonder if anything could be sent from India. I cannot think of anything except books—Martial Law Reports, Guru ka-Bagh etc. Perhaps there may be some films also.

I am told that the Trade Union Congress of India is sending a representative to Brussels. Also the South African Indian Congress. Probably Andrews will be one of the representatives but I am not sure.

The Brussels Conference Committee have collected some funds to meet the expenses of the conference. The Mexican Government has given them money, so also other organisations. They are prepared to help a little towards meeting the expenses of delegates but obviously they cannot be expected to pay everything including travelling expenses. Besides, it would be derogatory for the Congress to ask for such expenses. It is possible however to have the actual expenses incurred by delegates in Belgium met by the conference, if the travelling expenses are paid by the organisation sending delegates.

I hope you will forgive me for sending this long letter to you. I wanted to put some ideas before you even at the cost of boring you. Would you mind showing this letter to Rangaswami Iyengar? It is difficult to write all this again to him.

With the best of wishes for the Congress,

I am

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To Indira Nehru[1]

Dehra Dun Jail
Jan. 23, 1933

Indu darling,

Our interview after seven and a half months has come and gone, you are again far away in Poona. It was good to see you looking healthy and well, but what is the good of having brief interviews and trying to rush through all one has to say with one eye on the watch all the time? Of all the many things I wanted to tell you and ask you, very few came to my mind at the time. I shall not see you again for many months.

I have written to Mr. Vakil suggesting that you might prepare for the Cambridge Senior and not for the matriculation. The Senior will probably fit in better with a future course of study in Europe. Where this future course is going to be I do not know. We shall have to consider this later on together. There is no hurry. Much will depend on what you want to be. Have you thought of this ever? Last year you wrote to me once that you wanted to be a teacher. To teach others is a very wonderful thing but of course one can only teach after one has learnt a lot oneself. There are many other fascinating kinds of work in the world but to do anything well a great deal of training is necessary. Boys or girls in India have not had many professions or lines of activity open to them. Large numbers of boys want to become lawyers or take service and even girls are trying to go the same way. But this is just a way to earn money. It is not good enough just to earn money, although in our present world some money has to be earned. What is far more important is to do something that is worthwhile and that does good to the larger society we live in. I dislike intensely my own old profession, that of a lawyer. I call it an unsocial profession for society does not profit by it. It makes people selfish and just clever enough to exploit others. I would not therefore call the lawyer's profession a worthwhile one. He does not create anything or add to the good things of the world. He merely takes a part of other people's belongings.

There are other unsocial professions also like the lawyer's. Indeed the most honoured people in India still are those who do nothing at all and merely live in luxury on what their parents have left them. We need not consider all these unsocial people.

1 Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML.

What are the social and useful forms of activity? There are so many, I cannot even give a list of them. Our present-day world is so complicated that thousands of kinds of activities are necessary to keep it going. As you grow and study and your circle of knowledge widens you will have some glimpse of these varied activities—millions of people in different parts of the world producing goods—food, clothing and innumerable other things; millions of others carrying these goods to others and distributing them. You buy something in a shop. Behind the shop there are all manner of factories and machines and workers and engineers, and behind the factories are the fields and mines supplying materials. It is all very complicated and fascinating, and the worthwhile thing to do is for each one of us to help in this useful work.

We may be scientists for science today is at the back of everything; or we may be engineers or those who apply science to man's everyday needs; or doctors who apply science to lessen human suffering and root out diseases by hygiene and sanitation and other preventive measures; or teachers and educationists training all ages from babies up to grown men and women; or up to date modern farmers on the land increasing the yield of the land by new scientific devices and thus adding to the wealth of the country, and so on.

What I wanted to tell you was that we are all members of a huge living thing called society, which consists of all manner of men and women and children. We cannot ignore this and go our way doing just what we please. This would be as if one of our legs decided to walk away regardless of the rest of the body! So we have to fit in our work, so as to help society in functioning. Being Indians we shall have to work in India. All manner of changes are going to take place in our country and no one can say what it will be like a few years hence. But a person who is trained to do something that is worthwhile is always a valued member of society.

I have written all this just to make you think on the subject. Of course I want you when you grow up to be strong and self-reliant and well trained for useful work. You do not want to depend on others. There is no hurry to decide.

If you go to Europe to carry on your studies you must know French well. I should have liked you to know German too as this is very useful in many things. But that can wait. The younger you are the easier it is to learn languages.

Do you know, you are just about the age now that I was when I first went to England with Dadu and was put in Harrow school. That was long long ago—28 years ago!

We had hail here today and all the mountains are covered again with snow. You were not lucky enough to see this fine sight.

All my love and kisses,

Your loving
Papu

3. To Indira Nehru[1]

Dehra Dun Jail
February 7th, 1933

Indu darling,

I have your letter. You need not trouble to keep an accurate record of the dates when you have to write to me. Write to me roughly once a fortnight—say at the beginning of the month and the middle—and your letter will be delivered to me whenever it is due. Or you can answer my letters when you receive them

You must have been not a little surprised to find from the postcard I sent to Mr. Vakil that I had changed my mind about your appearing for the matric. I must apologise to you for this quick change! When you came here we hardly talked on this subject. I dislike the matric as an examination simply because it is meant to open the door to some of the universities here which I do not fancy. So I told you not to bother about it. I also wrote accordingly to Mr. Vakil. Two days after writing to him I received a letter from him. In this letter he mentioned several things which made me change my mind. The first was that many of your fellow students were preparing for the matric and it would make it pleasanter for you to study with them and have a common aim To work singly and on one's own account is apt to get rather boring. The preparation for the matric would not come in the way of your Senior later on but would be a help. And then exams are funny things. If one is not used to them, one gets worried and flustered at the time and is unable to put down even what one knows. This is just a question of getting used to it, as there is no reason why one should worry. Mr. Vakil suggested, and I think rightly,

1 Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML.

that a simpler exam like the matric would help you in getting used to exams and then later when you appear for the Senior you would feel much more at home. These were the reasons which made me change my mind. I hope you agree. I gathered from Mr. Vakil's letter that you were quite agreeable to take the matric. So go ahead! By the way when is this matric?

I understand that you feel a little crowded and would like a little privacy for your study. I quite appreciate this. It is not easy to work in a crowd, and besides one likes to sit by oneself occasionally. I hope something will be arranged. I understand that your school is going into bigger quarters in July. But even before that some arrangement might be made. Now that Kamal Nayan also has joined your school as a boarder, you must be a tight fit. Where does he live? I suppose it would be easy to fit up tents if necessary. Anyway as mummie is in Calcutta and I am in Dehra Dun, you might speak to *puphi* of anything that you may want and she will try to fix it up.

Your school, as you know, is a private school. One might almost call it something between a home and a school. As such, it has certain advantages which an ordinary school has not got and at the same time there are certain disadvantages. The advantages are that you get more care and attention and affection and a kind of home life. That is a very great thing and it has made me happy to know that you are with friends and are well looked after. If you had been at an ordinary school I would have been anxious about you. The disadvantages of a private school are that you have few companions. A big school is a world in itself and prepares one in a way for the wider world, or at any rate for the university. At present you may feel rather cooped up occasionally and wish to have more companions. But soon enough you will enter the wider sphere of a university or wherever you go to continue your studies and you will have crowds of companions there. You have a bare year more for your present school work. After the Senior you will naturally have to work in a wider sphere. A year is not a very long time. Employ it to fit yourself mentally and physically for the bigger world you may enter next year.

I presume you are carrying on your French lessons with the Mlle. How do you go to her? Do you go walking or by a conveyance? It depends on how far she lives. If she lives any distance away it might be convenient for you to go by bicycle. If so we could easily arrange to get a bicycle for you in Poona or Bombay. You are not used to cycling but you can soon get used to it. One should know it.

I am glad you have got a matron to look after the kids now. This will give more time to your auntie to do other things.

I am interested to know that now you are the न्यायाधीश[2] of your school society. If this means less work for you, your school children must be very well behaved.

I hope you enjoyed your picnic to Vithabhadi.

Love from

Your loving
Papu

2 *Nyayadhish*, a prefect.

4. To Indira Nehru[1]

Dehra Dun Jail
February 21, 1933

Darling Indu,

Yesterday I sent you two books. One was a child's book *Tootleoo*—I hope you will not think it beneath your grown up dignity to receive a book for children! I sent for it as I had read somewhere that it was very good and comparable to *Alice in Wonderland*. Alice being an old favourite of mine I could not resist the temptation of sending for a book which was thought good enough to be compared with immortal Alice. *Tootleoo* was of course quite different but I enjoyed it and could not help laughing at many of the pictures. I hope the book amused you and the other children.

The other book was Bernard Shaw's play *Saint Joan*. Do you remember seeing this play in French in Paris when a little Russian woman made a charming Jeanne? We also saw the play in English later but I do not remember if you were with us then. It is a very fine play—some parts of it may strike you as a bit dull. But the story is a great one and it bears reading and re-reading. As Jeanne is an old favourite and heroine of yours, you will like it. The book also contains another play which perhaps you may not like. The two long prefaces also might prove a bit dull for you.

You must be busy with your work and your preparation for the examination. Still I suppose you do have some time occasionally for other reading. That is why I sent you *Saint Joan*.

1 Indira Gandhi Papers, N M M L

Mummie writes to me that someone from Austria came to see her accompanied by Birju Bhai and he offered to take you away immediately to Vienna for schooling! Vienna is a very beautiful place; it is the home of music. The Viennese are delightful people but their country is having a terrible time at present. *Pupli* told me that a German lady, who stayed in Anand Bhawan recently, was keen on making arrangements for your education in Germany. Plenty of people seem to be interested in your future education besides your father and mother! Well perhaps some day, before very long, you will go away to a far country to carry on your education, leaving us rather lonely here. We have trained ourselves for it by long spells in jail! Anyway we shall put up with it of course for it is more important that you should have good training and every opportunity to fit yourself for the work that may lie ahead of you, than that we should have the selfish joy of seeing you frequently and having you near us.

But all this is still a part of the future and we need not worry ourselves about it just yet. For the present you have to carry on with your present work and to do it well so that you may easily triumph over any examinations or anything else of the kind that may come your way. And for the present I have to carry on in Dehra Dun Jail!

But I should like you to write to me your own ideas about your future. You will remember my asking you about this in one of my recent letters. What would you like your job in after-life to be? What subjects and what work interest you? Of course as we grow we change our opinions about this very much. The little boy's ideal in life is to be an engine driver! But still if you will write to me from time to time what ideas you have in your little head I should be so glad.

I gather that you were vaccinated again in Bombay. I dislike vaccination but I suppose it has to be done.

Dolamma or Dadi—what do you call her now?—will probably go to Poona next month. Bapu wants her to stay there for a while near him.

Yesterday as I was writing this letter it was snowing on the hills round Mussoorie and when I went out in the evening the hill tops were radiant with snow.

Love from

Your loving
Papu

5. To Indira Nehru[1]

Dehra Dun Jail
2.5.33

Indu darling,
You were not looking the picture of health when I saw you that day! I hope you have got rid of your pain and fever. You must have caught a chill. The weather is so changeable here and one must be careful. If you have still any pain in the neck have it massaged with the almond oil I gave mummie.

I am glad you are corresponding with your old French school mate. Why not write to her in French and ask her to do so also? Is she still at Bex? And how is Bex getting on?

Don't read too much here—walk and run and generally live a physical life. Of course too much of the physical life is apt to be boring and the mind must be kept well-oiled and functioning. But the holidays are not meant for hard mental work. Also I have often felt that you read rather fast. In doing so, one is often liable to miss much in a book. Some light books of course have to be read fast; there is little in them. But a worthwhile book deserves a little more time and attention Think of the pains and the great deal of thinking that the author has put behind what he has written, and when we just rush through it we miss his real meaning, and forget soon enough what we read.

A very good habit to develop is to keep a notebook in which we can jot down anything that pleases us or strikes us specially in a book we read. These notes of ours help us to remember much and we can always go back to them with interest. In jail I have specially developed this habit and I am now running my seventeenth notebook!

I hope anyway that you will read my series of letters to you rather slowly and a bit at a time Don't rush them; otherwise they will bore you tremendously. They are not very light reading.

I suppose you have enough books to read. If not, just let me know and I can suggest or send some.

During our last interview I talked and talked and talked. Terrible was it not? Like a tap left open! Next time you will have to do the talking and I shall listen, and if I try to talk too much, stop me. I keep bottled up for two weeks and then when I get a chance I am apt to rush away with it.

1 Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

There are plenty of birds in Dehra Dun at present. I wish I knew all their names. I suppose your garden has many of them. There is the koel of course, and the 'brain fever' bird, I think that is the name. Why this curious name has been given to it I don't quite know, unless it is because its persistence is likely to give people brain fever! I must say that it is very trying sometimes. Its four notes are pleasant enough but ceaseless repetition night and day—rain or sunshine—is too much of a good thing. It goes on hour after hour. I do not know its Hindustani name but it is referred to in a variety of ways. People here say its four notes mean मैं सोता था[2]—up in the hills they say the bird sings काखल पाको[3] —*kakhal* being something grown in the fields. This is the time for it to ripen and so the bird announces it! You can imagine almost anything out of the four notes—उठो जागो[4] etc. A powerful noise it makes—it carries a good way.

Bapu has hurled another thunderbolt at us and I do not know what is going to happen.[5]

I have no news of the *puphi* and the children. They ought to be in Mussoorie today.

Au revoir bien aimee and love,

Your loving
Papu

2. I was sleeping.
3. *Kakhal* has ripened.
4. Awake and arise.
5. Mahatma Gandhi's announcement of a fast of 21 days.

6. To Indira Nehru[1]

Dehra Dun Jail
16.5.33

My darling Indu,

I was just thinking that you ought to pay a little visit to Mussoorie, and had decided to write to you about it, when news came that you were going to do so. I am glad you are going or perhaps have already gone. Dehra Dun is at the best of times rather a quiet and dull place and I don't suppose you have many acquaintances here. A little change now and then will do you good and cheer you up.

That is as it should be. We are all sometimes rather apt to get hot and bothered. But it is rather silly, don't you think? And it makes us

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML.

look a bit ridiculous to others. No one who is excited and worked up looks his best. Of course we can't always help getting a little excited but it is always a sign of a crack in our education or training. After all what is the whole end and aim of education—from one point of view at least? It is: not to be hot and bothered whatever happens and to fit oneself to the people one comes across and try to cooperate with them. In India, I am afraid, one is always coming across people who are losing their tempers and generally making a nuisance of themselves. Perhaps they think that they cut a fine figure, not realising how silly they look. They shout and curse at servants, a thing you hardly ever see in the West. In England, among decent people, it is considered the limit of bad form to shout at a servant, for the poor servant is not in a position to answer back. It is like kicking a person who is down. And yet in India most people indulge in this degrading habit. If people only realised that they injured themselves more by such habits than they do others, probably they would behave better.

I did not know about Shama joining a film company till I read about it in your letter. I agree with you. It would have been far better if she had joined a good company once she was about it. As a matter of fact it would have been an easy thing to arrange and, strange as it may seem, I might even have helped from here! I don't suppose Ladli *chacha* is very happy about this.

You seem to have frightened Bebee about my health and she has sent me a letter full of worry and anxiety. How did you think, my dear, that I was languishing away? Perhaps the long stream of talk that I indulged in! I am keeping remarkably well and little things like applying iodine for an old pain at the side, have nothing to do with it. In your letter you tell me that you had a terrible headache. Do you know that I hardly know—in spite of my 43 years—what a bad headache is, or for the matter of that even a mild one?

We have had two interviews, you and I, and on both the occasions I have done most of the talking. A jail interview is not a natural way of meeting; one feels a little constrained and the time limit oppresses one. Still I would like you next time to tell me something about yourself and your school and what you would like to do. If you do not tell me how you feel how can I help you? The secret of doing a thing well, whatever it may be, is to cooperate with others in the doing of it. Do you know that in schools and in homes there are supposed to be two kinds of children who do not make good progress and who give a lot of trouble They are called problem children. One is the spoilt child who has been used at home to getting everything

he or she wants without working for it or any other trouble. The *other is the neglected child* whom people at home, usually in large families where there are many children, ignore and who is thus not properly looked after. Both the spoilt child on the one hand and the neglected one on the other get little chance of cooperating with others, of working together with others in a common undertaking. So they do not develop the habit of cooperation and all their subsequent troubles are said to be due to this. It is because of this that they become what are called problem children who offer special problems to their teachers as to how to deal with them. The spoilt child when he or she goes out into the world expects everyone to pat him on the back all the time as he was patted at home. Of course nobody does so and the spoilt child gets very angry and blames everybody when really the fault is his own and not other people's. The neglected child has been badly treated at home and is not used to meeting people. So when he goes out, he keeps apart from others and feels dissatisfied and angry and blames everybody.

This is not so with children only, but with grown ups also. Most of us are either spoilt or neglected and so have grown up rather crooked and we are always blaming others for our own faults. The right thing of course is to be neither; to be something in between the two, healthy in mind, meeting others and always trying to cooperate with them and doing one's own share of the job without expecting others to do it.

Children, naturally, do not and cannot understand all these niceties. They behave as they have been taught to behave or as they have seen others behave. I am writing all this because you are a sensible girl and I can speak to you more as a friend than as a daughter of mine. I know you will understand. Your father was himself a bit of a spoilt child. For many years he was the only child, for his sisters came long afterwards, and only children are apt to be spoilt by their parents by too much affection. I suppose he still bears traces, and very evident traces, of having been spoilt not only by his parents but by so many other people! You are an only child also and a dearly loved one, and perhaps unconsciously your parents and grandparents have spoilt you just a wee bit also and made you expect much in the world that you may not find there. I cannot judge, neither can you, for we are both partial and we are too near each other to have a good view. But I imagine that however much we may have erred, led away by our exceeding love for you, recent events or rather public happenings since your childhood upwards, have strengthened you and stiffened you and pulled you up from the spoilt variety which always thinks of itself and little of others.

I do not know why I am writing on like this. It is more of a talk —as if you were sitting by me. What I began with was this—that I should like you during our next interview to have a talk with me about yourself and your school and your ideas in general about the future. As you know, your time in your present school will end before long. What is more important is the next step and we must have a talk about that and discuss it among ourselves and cooperate together to make this step a real good one. So my dear, that must be the programme for May 23rd, 9 a.m. But only if you are willing and will cooperate.

I hope Rust will make some good pictures of you both in a frock and in a sari.

There is a delightful story about a lion cub in the *New Statesman* I am sending. *It is on page 503 and is called The Lion that Lost its Way.*

Love

Your loving
Papu

7. To Indira Nehru[1]

Dehra Dun Jail
Aug. 1, 1933

Indu *bien aimee,*

Your letter reached me a long time after it was written, and now I am writing a week later than I might have done. It is three weeks since I wrote to you. Mummie's visit to Poona has resulted in my interview days and letter-writing days being changed and pushed on by a week.

Now about your health. I am glad you are going to the clinic and taking natural treatment for your digestive and other troubles. This kind of treatment takes longer than the usual methods of swallowing large doses of medicine but it is much better in the end. Most of us treat our bodies very badly, we ignore the simple rules of health and especially upset our digestion, and otherwise shake up our systems. The body, as you know, is a fine and delicate machine, and yet it is remarkable how much misuse it puts up with. As the body happens to be a big bit of ourselves we might as well try to understand it and be friends with it and treat it with consideration. Do not get impatient

1 Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML

or worried if you have any pains or ailments. Get to the bottom of the matter and root them out and then you will know radiant health and feel the *joie de vivre*. Nature treatment is cooperation with the body and so I like it better than too much dosing with medicine. It is possible of course to make a fad of it sometimes.

Most of our bodily troubles are due to 'little tummy' going wrong, constipation etc. If this habit develops in childhood it persists sometimes through life. People take to using laxatives and become slaves to them and that is bad. With a good digestion one can face almost any body trouble. You tell me that Dr. Mehta made you take only orange juice for a few days. This semi starvation must have been a little hard for you. But it is good to give the inside a rest.

You know that I am rather conceited about many things! One of these is my health. For years and years, when I was at school and college in England, I never had occasion to consult a doctor. For about a dozen years or more I never took a laxative because I did not need it. My general health was good because my tummy functioned properly.

I received a telegram and a card from Mr. Vakil and I answered them. I am not writing to him today because I must not write too many letters, but you can give him my message. I don't like the idea of plague appearing in the Poona cantonment area but I suppose one has to put up with this kind of thing. Anyway where you live is a fine open place and I have no doubt that all precautions are taken. About plague inoculation I accept it only as a necessary evil. The idea of having dead disease microbes stored into you is not a pleasant one but if a competent doctor considers this essential then I am not prepared to come in the way. I was myself inoculated when I was 12 or 13 years old. I suppose the effect of that has passed off long ago.

I have told Mr. Vakil that I leave it to his discretion (taken in consultation with the doctor) as to whether you should be inoculated. I would prefer if you are not inoculated, and as the few odd cases of plague in the cantonment area have stopped now, perhaps this may be possible.

It is extraordinary how one puts on weight by reducing one's food. Some months ago I lost a little weight. Then for various reasons, unconnected with my health, I gave up one of my daily meals. Since then I have been putting on weight! It is possible that one eats more at the remaining meals, or it is more likely that there is better assimilation of what one eats.

Is your throat well now? What does the doctor say about the tonsils?

I am rather sorry Chand did not go to Poona. When she came to see me, on her way down from Mussoorie, she seemed to be quite agreeable to doing so. It is difficult to advise others without knowing all the facts. Home life is a complicated affair where many things have to be considered and so perhaps *puphi* and *pupha* decided to keep the children for a while with them.

About my dogs I shall make some arrangement for them here. I cannot carry them away with me. Travellers should have as little luggage as possible, especially those who wish to travel far.

I have just received a book called *The Girl Through the Ages.* Perhaps it may interest you. I may send it on after some days.

You have not told me yet, although I asked you, whether that book of mine—Hans Kohn's book on the Hither East—reached Vallabhbhai Patel. I should like to know.

Today is the anniversary of many international and national events of importance—August 1st. It is also mummie's birthday according to the Gregorian calendar. According to the *Samvat* era the birthday has already taken place.

There was a paper attached to your letter containing some limericks. They were not very brilliant and some lines were difficult to understand. Here are some interesting and famous limericks. Tell me which you like.

There was a young fellow named Lloyd,
Who was seldom, if ever annoyed,
And though you might choke him,
You could not provoke him,
His *sang* was so terribly *froid.*

There was a faith-healer of Deal
Who said, "Although pain isn't real,
If I sit on a pin
And it punctures my skin
I dislike what I fancy I feel."

The famous scientist Einstein has discovered a theory which is known as Relativity. It deals with time and space and mixes the two up and calls them space-time. Here is a limerick on this theory:

There was a young lady named Bright
Who could travel much faster than light.
She started one day
In the relative way,
And came back the previous night.

And here are two curious ones—the second one being in answer to the first:

There once was a man who said "God
Must think it exceedingly odd
If he finds that this tree
Continues to be
When there is no one about in the Quad."*

The reply:

Dear Sir,
Your astonishment's odd:
I am always about in the Quad.
And that's why the tree
Will continue to be,
Since observed by
Yours faithfully,
God.

All my love,

Your loving
Papu

*A quad is short for quadrangle—Oxford college courtyards are so called.

GLOSSARY

Ashvin Badi	the fortnight of the seventh month of the lunar calendar when the moon is waning
Bari	elder
Barsat	rain
Bhadrapad	the sixth month of the lunar calendar
Chachi	aunt, the wife of the father's younger brother
Chapathies	unleavened flat bread
Chenar	Persian name of the oriental Plane-tree found mostly in Kashmir
Chhoti	younger
Dalis	gifts
Darbari	courtly
Dhobin	washerwoman
Gaddi	throne
Gora	the 'whites'
Himsa	violence
Jumma	Friday
Kartik Badi	the fortnight of the eighth month of the lunar calendar when the moon is waning
Katora	bowl
Khandan	clan
Khanjan	wagtail
Kholo	open
Manjhis	boatmen
Mantra	an invocation
Mazhab	religion
Moulvi	a Mohammedan well learned in Arabic and Persian literature
Namaz	prayer
Peshis	produced in court or in the presence of authority

Phalgun	twelfth month of the lunar calendar
Puja Holidays	vacation for the religious festival, *Dushera*
Pupha	uncle, the husband of the father's sister
Ramzan	the month when Muslims fast
Sanatan Dharma	the orthodox Hindu religion
Sanatanists	orthodox Hindus
Satsang	gathering of devotees
Satya Yuga	also known as *Krta Yuga*, the first of the four ages according to Hindu mythology
Sravan	fifth month of the lunar calendar
Stupa	a Buddhist monument containing relics
Thali	plate
Thana	police station
Thela	cart
Varnashrama Dharma	duties relating to the four stages of life according to Hindu scriptures
Vasanta Utsava	festival of Spring

INDEX

(Biographical footnotes are italicized)

Abhyankar, M. V., 304 & *fn*
Abyssinia—see Ethiopia
Aden, 368, 371
Adventures of Ideas (A. N. Whitehead), 426
Advocate, 27, 30
Aeschylus, 322
Afghanistan, 469
Afinogenyew, A., 425
Aga Khan, 163, 173 fn, 470-473
Agarwala, Gadhari Lal, 301 & *fn*, 302
Agnel, Marguerite, 215
Agra, 253
A Great Man (Arnold Bennett), 421
Agricultural Institute (Allahabad), 295 fn
Ah Kingi (Somerset Maugham), 424
Ahmedabad, 171, 207, 318, 334, 492
Ahmedabad Youth League, 171
Ahmed, Mirza Ghulam, 468 fn
Ajmer, 156, 157, 162, 165, 169, 170, 277 fn
Alam, Mohammad, 156 & fn
Alba, 153
———, professor, 207
Albert Hall (Calcutta), 233-235
Alexander, the Great, 454
———, Horace, 208 & fn, 230, 252 & fn, 269
Ali, Aruna Asaf, 149 fn
———, Asaf, 42 & fn, 303 fn
———, Mrs. Jafar—see Savitri Devi
———, Shaukat, 160, 161
———, Syed Amir, 472 fn, 473 & fn
Alice in Wonderland, 356, 500
Alice Through the Looking Glass (Lewis Carroll), 423
Aligarh, 213, 224
Aligarh Muslim University, 131
Alipur (Alipore) (Calcutta), 228, 237, 238, 241, 250-252, 282, 299, 331, 336, 346 & fn, 358, 420
Allahabad, 17, 27, 42, 44, 46, 47, 49, 51, 52, 58, 59, 62, 66-68, 70, 73, 77, 79, 81, 84, 112-114, 116, 118, 121, 125-128, 138, 140, 141, 147, 159 fn, 171, 172, 192, 193, 196, 201, 203, 205-209, 211-215, 217, 221-224, 229, 230, 237, 245, 246, 253, 254, 258, 261, 264, 268, 270, 277, 284, 285, 299-302 *fn*, 309, 310, 317-319, 322, 342, 349, 352, 353, 356, 365, 369, 371-374, 380, 381, 390, 399, 400 fn, 411, 416, 418, 420
Allahabad Congress Hospital, 201, 202
Allahabad District Jail, 147
Allahabad Earthquake Relief Committee, 192, 196
Allahabad Swadeshi Committee, 66
Allahabad Swadeshi Exhibition, 202
Allen & Unwin (publishers), 209
All India Congress Committee, 30, 46, 47 fn, 48, 60-62, 69, 71-76, 79 fn, 81, 102, 129, 131, 173, 254 fn, 282, 284, 348-350, 484
All India Sahitya Sammelan, 441 & fn
All India Socialist Party Conference, 285 fn
All India Spinners Association, 113
All India States Peoples Conference, 77 fn
All India Swadeshi Exhibition, 65
All India Textile Workers Conference, 141

All India Trade Union Congress, 495
All Parties Conference, 87, 88, 155, 180, 185
Almora, 290, 299, 300, 309, 310, 315, 317, 318, 333, 339, 342, 345-347, 350, 353, 364, 366, 367, 369, 376, 381, 382, 403, 404, 414-416 fn, 418
Amala—see Margarete Spiegel
Ami Chand, 344
Amrita Bazar Patrika, 73, 283
Amritsar, 152
An African Speaks to His People (Parmenas Githendu Mockene), 421
Anand, Mulk Raj, 426
Anandi Thakore, 172
Ancient & Medieval Architecture of India (E B Havell), 421
Andaman Islands, 154 & fn, 240 fn
Andrews, C F., 208, 297, 298, 327, 495
An Eastern Odyssey (Georges le Fevre), 426
A Nest of Simple Folk (Sean O' Faolain), 422
Aney, M S., 330 & fn
An Idealist View of Life (S Radhakrishnan), 425
Anna Karenina (Leo Tolstoy), 323
Annamalai University, 303 fn
Anna Pavlova (V. Dandre), 424
Ansari, M A, 60 & fn, 61, 69, 174, 254 fn, 337
Anthony, C. L., 425
Anti-Communal League, 156 fn
Anuradhapura, 367 & fn
Apa Suphea—see Santa Sophia
Arabia Felix (Bertram Thomas), 421
Aristophanes, 322
Arlen, Michael, 420
Arms Act, 154
Arnold, Matthew, 447
Arora, Arjun, 121 & fn
Art of Thinking (Abbe Dimnet), 318
Arya Kumar Sabha, 157 & fn, 159, 162
Arya Samaj, 157 fn
Ascona, 402
Ashenden (Somerset Maugham), 425
Asoka, the Great, 437
Atal, Madan, 250, 291, 293-299, 309, 311, 315, 326-328, 331, 336-338, 344, 345 & fn, 357, 364, 371, 373-375, 377-379, 382, 383, 392-394, 400, 410-413, 416
Ataturk, Kemal Pasha, 460, 461, 468, 472
Atlas of Current Affairs (J F. Horrabin), 397, 423
Atlas of European History (J. F Horrabin), 397, 427
Austria, 238 fn, 368, 417, 500
Autobiography (Jawaharlal Nehru), 86 fn, 256 & fn, 319, 320, 330
———, (H G Wells), 425
Avantivarman, 432 fn
Azad, Abul Kalam, 60 & fn, 81
Azamgarh, 160

Babel, I, 422
Bad Ems, 387
Baden Baden, 388
Badenweiler, 383-385, 387-389, 392, 394, 397, 401-403, 410, 412-414, 416
Badrinath, 367
Baghdad, 437
Bajaj, Jamnalal, 61, 213, 348, 381
———, Kamal Nayan, 499
Bakshi, Dhanraj, 250 & fn
Baldwin, Roger, 70 & fn
———, Stanley, 1 & fn, 4 fn, 39
Balha, 160, 161
Balliol College (Oxford), 292
Baltistan, 414
Balzac, 423, 424
Banares (Benares)—See Varanasi
Banerji, Purnima (Nora), 149 & fn
Bank of England, 184
Bannerji, Nityanarayan, 426
Barbusse, Henri, 420
Bardoli, 128 fn
Bareilly, 299, 382
Bareilly Central Prison, 144
Barnes, J S, 245 & fn, 247, 422
Basic English (C. K. Ogden), 423
Basle, 389
Bastille, storming of the, 207
Basu, B D., 424
Beawar, 83 fn
Belgium, 388, 495

Bellary, 205 & fn
Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 154 fn
Bennett, Arnold, 421
Berlin, 373, 374, 377, 379, 382, 385, 388, 395, 494
Berlin Diaries (Helmut Klotz), 425
Berne, 389
Bex, 314, 410-412, 502
Beyond the Mexique Bay (Aldous Huxley), 423
Bhagavan Das, 111, 113 fn, 451
Bhai Parmanand, 158 fn, 160 & *fn*, 165, 166 & fn, 171, 173, 303, 450-456
Bhavnagar, 315 fn
Bhowali, 295-300, 302 & fn, 304, 307-313, 315-321, 325, 326, 328-330, 332, 333, 335-338, 342, 344-348, 350-352, 357-358, 364, 365, 367, 373, 381, 415
Bihar Central Relief Committee, 463 fn
Bikaner, 51 & fn
———, Maharaja of, 51
Bikaner Political Committee, 51 & fn
Binsar (Almora), 310
Birbhum, 343
Birmingham, 208 fn
Black & Tan (regiments), 152 & fn
Blake, William, 326 & *fn*, 327
Blind Goddess (Ernst Toller), 423
Bloomsbury (London), 31 fn
Boleslavski, R., 427
Bolton, Glorney, 424
Bombay, 27, 37, 60, 65 & fn, 66, 71, 86, 87, 134, 167 fn, 172, 202, 206, 207, 212 & fn, 224, 242, 246, 248, 263, 264, 298, 300, 309-311, 313, 317, 319, 330 & fn, 358, 365, 367, 368, 371, 374, 379, 415, 416, 471, 473, 499
Book of Life (Upton Sinclair), 421
Bombay Chronicle, 172, 369
Bombay Standard, 465 fn
Bose, Nandlal, 222 & *fn*, 316, 344 fn
———, Subhas *Chandra*, 386 & fn, 332, 377
Bosphorus, 457
Boston, 292 fn
Boswell, 426
Brahmo Samaj, 210 fn
Brailsford, H. N., 423
Bread (Vladimir Kershon), 425
Brelvi, S. A., 59, 172
Brihat Hindi Shabda Kosh (Mukundilal Srivastava), 199 fn
British Commonwealth of Nations, 15, 36, 55
Brooks, F. T., 400 & fn
Browning, Robert, 323
Bruck, Moeller van den, 426
Brussels Conference, 495
Budapest, 229
Buddha, Gautama the, 367, 370, 371
Bukharin, 423
Bulgakov, Michael, 425
Bunin, Ivan, 421
Burdwan, 93, 264
Burns, Robert, 335
Burrows, L. D., 93 & fn
Buschke, 422
Butler, Samuel, 323, 386, 421
Byron, George Gordon, Lord, 368
Byzantium, 432, 457

Cano, 375, 377
Calcutta, 89, 93 & fn, 101, 118, 149 & fn, 154, 211, 214, 216, 218 fn, 224, 227-229, 231, 236, 241, 246, 249, 254, 255, 268, 272, 299, 306, 318, 339, 420, 473 fn, 499
Calcutta Corporation, 280
Cambridge, 204, 246, 321, 332, 337, 395
Candide (Voltaire), 21 fn
Canton government, victory of, 494
Cape Comorin—see Kanyakumari
Capek, Karel, 423
Captain, Goshiben, 214 & fn, 215, 243, 290, 294, 295, 371
———, Nargis, 214
———, Perin, 214
Carlsbad, 388
Carroll, Lewis, 423
Catherine de Medici (Balzac), 423
Caucasus, 464
Cawnpore—see Kanpur
Ceylon—see Sri Lanka
Chakravarty, Amiya C., 292 & *fn*
Challenge of the East (Sherwood Eddy), 425

Chamonix, 314
Champaran (Bihar), 127 fn, 186 fn
Champion, F. W, 421
Chanda, Anil Kumar, 230 & *fn*, 248, 305, 315-317, 343, 344 fn
———, Ram, 258, 344 & fn
Chandernagore, 230 fn, 240 fn
Charkha Sangh, 66
Charles I (England), 21
Charques, R. D., 421
Chattopadhyaya, Kamaladevi, 49
Chaudhuri, Nabakrushna, 44 & *fn*
Chengiz Khan, 267, 437
Chesteres, 314
Chesterton, G. K, 420, 427
Chetty, R. Shanmukham, 303 & *fn*
Chhatari, Nawab of, 109 fn, 382
Child Marriage (Eleanor Rathbone), 421, 475
Child Marriage Restraint Act, 474, 475
Chillon, 314
China, 5, 12, 248, 441, 442
China Aid Committee, 207 fn
Chinese Destinies (Agnes Smedley), 424
Chinese Nationalist Party, 494
Chinese Soviets (Victor A Yakhontoff), 425
Chinese Testament (S. Tretiakov), 424
Chittagong, 35, 50, 53, 92, 96, 97, 109, 152, 153 & fn, 198, 218 fn, 235
Chowdhury, Rev. Dan Singh, 77
Christ & Communism (Stanley Jones), 426
Christian Social Manifesto (Joseph Husslein), 422
Christie, Douglas, 421
Churchill, Winston, 1 & fn, 39, 421
Cite Universitaire (Montpellier), 391
Cities in Evolution (Patrick Geddes), 391 fn
Clare Lees, William, 65 fn
Clive of India (W P. Lipscomb & R. J Minney), 424
Coates, 426
Cochin state, 303 fn
Cole, Capt G A., 151 & fn
———, G D H., 21 & fn, 31, 420, 423, 426
Collected Prefaces (Bernard Shaw), 338, 426
Cologne, 387
Colombo, 369
Colonial Policy of British Imperialism (Ralph Fox), 422
Combat (Romain Rolland), 426
Coming War (Ludendorff), 426
Coming World War (T. H. Wintringham), 427
Communal Award, 43, 168, 169, 272 fn
Communist International, 29, 144 fn
Communist Party of India, 128 fn
Conan Doyle, Arthur, 421
Congress, Indian National, 2 fn, 9, 17, 18, 29 31, 36-46 fn, 47 fn, 48, 50, 59-61 fn, 65, 67, 70 & fn, 71, 73-75, 78, 80-82, 87, 88, 99, 102, 106, 109, 111 fn, 112, 118-121 fn, 128 & fn, 135, 136, 142, 151 fn, 160, 163, 165, 166 fn, 173 & fn, 174, 178-180, 186, 202, 205, 207 fn, 211 fn, 259, 268 & fn, 270 272 fn, 278 280, 292 & fn, 300, 303, 311 & fn, 330 fn, 348 fn, 350, 410, 411 fn, 450-453, 463, 467, 491, 492, 494, 495
———, session at Gauhati, 491, 493, Karachi, 125, Lahore, 41
———, Working Committee of, 42 fn, 59 fn 62, 72, 73, 75, 76, 173, 259 & fn, 271, 272 & fn, 280 282 fn, 284, 330 fn, 348 fn
Congress Socialist Party, 17 fn, 44 fn, 128 fn, 135 fn, 285 & fn
Conquest of Bread (Kropotkin), 426
Conquest of Peru (Prescott), 424
Conrad, Joseph, 420, 421
Consolidation of Christian Power in India (B. D. Basu), 424
Constantine (Roman Emperor), 457, 458
Constantinople—see Istanbul
Contai, 151 fn
Courthope, 422
C. P Hindu Conference, 166
Cranmer Byng, L., 423
Croce, Benedetto, 449 & *fn*
Currey, 423
Czechoslovakia, 388, 416 fn, 417

Dacca (Bangladesh), 97, 344 fn
Daily Herald, 53
Daily Telegraph, 402
D' Alembert, 22 fn
Dalhousie Bomb Case, 240 fn
D' Alvis, E. H., 370
Dandre, V., 424
Dante, 377
Darbhanga, 186 fn 188, 224
Das, C. R., 454
Davidot, Gordon, 424, 425
Dawn of Indian Freedom (J. C. Winslow & Verrier Elwin), 422
Days of the Turbins (Michael Bulgakov), 425
Debabilization (C. K. Ogden), 424
Dehra Dun, 253, 254, 256, 258, 265, 270, 289, 338, 346 & fn, 358, 365, 382, 403, 404, 408, 496, 498 503, 506
De la Mare, Walter, 323, 425
Deleplanque, M., 207
Delhi, 42 fn, 81, 129, 133, 134, 213, 224, 303, 381
Democratic Swaraj Party, 43 fn, 58, 59 fn
Desai, Bhulabhai, 308 fn, 330 & fn, 411
Deshpande, G. B., 205
Deuts du Midi, 314, 415
Deutsches Museum, 388
Dey, Manishi, 344 & fn
———, Mukul Chandra, 344 fn, 421
Dharma Vira, 416 & fn, 417, 418
Dickens, Charles, 323
Diderot, 22 fn
Dimnet, Abbe, 318
Disarmament Conference, 96 & fn
Distaff Side (John Van Druten), 424
Djibouti, 368
Dollfuss, Engelbert (Chancellor of Austria), 238 fn
Don Juan, 349 & fn
Douglas, Clifford Hugh, 11 & fn, 32
Doulatram, Jairamdas, 284
Do What You Will (Aldous Huxley) 349 fn
Druten, John, Van, 424
Dunichand, Lala, 79 & fn
Duranty Reports Russia, 423
Dutt, R. Palme, 425
Dwarka Prasad, 299
Dyer, General, 462 & fn

East and West (Gilbert Murray—Tagore), 427
Ecole Internationale, 314
Eddy, Sherwood, 424, 425
Edib, Halide, 357 & fn
Edward VII (England), 388
Egypt, 3, 9, 176, 441, 451, 493
Einstein, Albert, 508
Elwin, Verrier, 422
Empire & Commerce in Africa (Leonard Woolf), 424
Encyclopaedists, 22 & fn
England, 2, 4, 6, 10, 11, 15, 16, 20, 21, 23, 28, 32, 36, 47, 49 fn-52, 55, 63, 64, 83, 115, 130, 159, 166, 168, 208, 209, 255, 305, 307, 386, 387, 396, 413, 417, 442, 459, 460, 491-494, 497, 504, 507
Erewhon (Samuel Butler), 323, 386
Etablissement Stephani, 314, 378
Ethiopia, 454 & fn
Euripides, 322
Everlasting Man (G. K. Chesterton), 420
Ewen, A. H., 421
Extremes Meet (Compton Mackenzie), 424

Fallada, Hans, 424
Family Affairs (Gertrude Jennings), 425
Farthest North (Fridtjof Nansen), 414 & fn
Fascism (J. S. Barnes), 422
Fascism and Rural Reconstruction (Palme Dutt), 425
Fear (A. Afinogenyew), 425
Feuchtwanger, Lion, 231, 420
Fevre, Georges le, 426
Field, A. M., 427
Firozabad, 348
First Workers' Government (G. R. Mitchison), 425

Five Silver Daughters (Louis Golding), 427
Fleming, Margaret, 335 & fn
Forbidden Territory (Dennis Wheatley), 425
Fox, Ralph, 422, 423
Fragments from Sappho (C. R. Haines), 422
France, 96 fn, 417, 442, 459, 460
Freedom & Organisation (Bertrand Russell), 425
Free Press Journal, 134, 465 fn
Freiburg, 387, 389
French revolution, 20-22 fn, 207
Friends of India Society, 150 fn
From Moscow to Samarkand (Y.Z.), 421
Fulay, R. W., 116 & fn
Fulop-Miller, Rene, 427
Future of Capitalism (Lewis Watt), 425
Future of Indian Politics (M. N. Roy), 143 fn
Fyzabad, 145, 146, 291

Gaban (Premchand), 340 fn, 426
Gandhi, Devadas, 475
———, Feroze, 81 & fn, 82, 237, 291, 304, 310, 315, 316, 320, 344
———, Mahatma, 1 & fn, 9, 13 & fn, 24, 36, 37, 39, 41, 45, 46 fn, 48, 50, 53, 54, 61-63, 68, 70 72 fn, 80, 81, 117 & fn, 133, 160, 161, 164 & fn, 166, 173 fn 175, 180, 199 fn, 201, 208 & fn, 227, 237, 247 & fn, 248 fn, 251, 252 fn, 254 fn, 259 fn, 262 fn, 268 & fn, 270, 272, 277 & fn, 282 284, 308 & fn, 316 fn, 330, 349, 367, 381 fn, 392, 416, 423, 441 fn, 449, 462-464, 467, 487, 501, 503 & fn
Gandhi Irwin Pact, 20, 30
Ganga Prasad, 338, 364
Gauhati, Congress session at, 491, 493
Gaur, Hari Singh, 303
Gautam, Mohanlal, 85, 148
Geddes, Patrick, 391 & fn, 392
Geissler, Mrs., 396, 397, 413
Geneva, 96 & fn, 201 fn, 314, 356, 379, 392, 394, 396, 400
Gentleman from San Francisco (Ivan Bunin), 421
George III (England), 434
——— V (England), 319, 351, 358 fn
Georgia, 464
Germany, 20, 28, 32, 44, 96 fn, 114, 115, 130, 131, 255, 325, 387, 396, 402, 416, 417, 442, 461, 494
Germany's Third Empire (Moeller van den Bruck), 426
Ghadar Conspiracy Case, 160 fn
Ghani, Abdul, 230 & fn, 237, 249
Ghazni, Mahmud of, 433, 437
Ghosh, Suren, 239
Gidwani, Acharya, 338 & fn
Gilani, Beltie Shah, 126 & fn
Gilbert, 377
Girdhari Lal, 247
Giri, V.V., 68
Girl Through the Ages, 508
Glebov, Anatole, 425
Glimpses of World History (Jawaharlal Nehru), 323, 337, 339, 340, 343, 356, 357, 370, 372, 379, 397
Goad, 423
Godan (Premchand), 340 fn
Goethe, 322, 436
Goering, Marshall, 413 fn
———, Mrs., 413 & fn
Golding, Louis, 427
Gollancz, Victor, 209
Gonanda, 431 fn
Gonda, 256, 337
Gopi Nath, 339
Gorki, Maxim, 422, 427
Govindananda, Swami, 47 & fn, 72, 74
Graham, Gore, 425
Graves, Robert, 425
Gray, Thomas, 335
Great Essays of All Nations (T. H. Pritchard), 423
Greece, 368, 458, 460
Greenland, 414 fn
Greenlees Duncan, 86

Gregg, Richard B., 426
Griffith, Arthur, 50 & *fn*
———, E. F. 426
Gudivada (Andhra Pradesh), 49
Gujranwala, 112 fn
Gupta, Jogesh C., 232 & fn
———, Shiva Prasad, 86, 199 fn, 439
Guru ka Bagh, 495
Gwynn, J. T., 52, 57 fn, 138

Hagenbeck Circus, 93 fn
Haggard, Sir Henry Rider, 245 & *fn*
Haig, Sir Harry, 129, 304
Hailey, Sir Malcolm, 109, 295, 302
Haines, C. R., 422
Haksar, K. N., 414 fn
Haldane, J. B. S., 426
Hales, H. K., 46 & fn, 49 & fn, 62 & fn, 306 fn
Hallowes, B. J. K., 256, 267
Hamburg, 387
Hanbins (sergeant), 299
Handoo, Chander, 243
Hans Waldeck, 397
Harawala (Dehra Dun), 251
Hardy, Thomas, 341
Harijan Sevak Mandal, 304 fn
Harilal (Han), 381
Harrison, Agatha, 208 & *fn*, 209
Harrow, 64 206, 257, 368, 387, 497
Harsha, 325, 326
Harshavardhana, 314 & *fn*
Harwood, H. M., 425
Havell, E. B., 421
Heard, Gerald, 423
Heaven's My Destination (Thornton Wilder), 425
Hecker, Johns F., 422
Hedin, Sven, 426
Hemmerlin, 265, 336, 337, 356, 379, 389, 396, 397, 411
Henri, Ernst, 412, 414, 423
Heyr, 425
Higginbottom, S, 295 & fn
Hijli, 29 fn
Hindu Illustrated Weekly, 369, 402
Hindu Law (K. P. Jayaswal), 188 fn
Hindu Mahasabha, 57, 69, 156 & fn-162, 165-171, 272, 437 & fn, 450, 453 & fn
Hindu Polity (K. P. Jayaswal), 188 fn
Hindus, M. G., 305 & *fn*, 422
Hindustani Seva Dal, 348 fn
Hiskett, W. R., 426
History of English Poetry (Courthope), 422
History of Nationalism in the East (Hans Kohn), 421
History of Social Thought (G.D.H. Cole), 21 fn
Hitler, Adolf, 115, 117, 377
Hitler Over Europe? (Ernst Henri), 423
Hiuen Tsang, 314
Hoare, Sir Samuel, 2 & fn, 130, 196, 306 & fn, 319
Hodge, Merton, 424
Holland, 388
Hook, Sidney, 423
Horrabin, J. F., 397, 423, 427
Hour of Decision (Oswald Spengler), 423
House Without a Roof (M. G. Hindus), 305 fn
Howrah, 250
Hugo, Victor, 322
Humanity Uprooted (M. G. Hindus), 305
Hunter Committee, 462
Huq, Fazlul, 272 fn
Husslein, Joseph, 422
Hutheesing, G. P, 71 fn, 207 & *fn*, 213, 221, 229, 242, 247, 254, 255, 264, 317, 326, 342, 371, 397, 415
———, Krishna, 71 & fn, 207 fn, 229, 241, 246, 247, 254, 258, 264, 300, 303, 307, 313, 317, 371, 397, 404
Huxley, Aldous, 266, 349, 423

Iago Maggiore (Ascona), 402
Ibanez, Vicente Blasco, 421
Iceland, 414
I, Claudius (Robert Graves), 425
Imperialism and World Economy (Bukharin), 423

In All Countries (John Dos Passos), 424
In and Out of Prison—see *Autobiography*
Independent Congress Party, 491
Independent Labour Party (England), 494
India Analysed, 423
India & The West (F. S. Marvin), 426
India Bulletin, 150 & fn
Indian Defence Problems (Capt. G. V. Modak), 421
Indian Minotaur (Eleanor F. Rathbone), 421
Indian National Army, 330 fn
Indian States Peoples Conference, 58 & fn
India office (London), 39, 197 fn
India Since Cripps (Horace Alexander), 208 fn
Inferno (Henri Barbusse), 420
Inga (Anatole Glebov), 425
Innocents Abroad (Mark Twain), 424
Indore, 441 fn
Inside India (Halide Edib), 357 fn
Insight, 267 fn
Instincts of the Herd in Peace & War (W. Trotter), 421
Intelligent Man's Guide Through World Chaos (G.D.H. Cole), 31, 420
Intelligent Man's Review of Europe Today (G.D.H. Cole), 420
International Congress of Orientalists, 434
International Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture, 442
Intruder (V. B. Ibanez), 421
Iqbal, Mohammad, 163, 173-179, 454, 468-471, 474
Iran, 469
Iraq 197, 457, 469
Ireland, 152, 454
Irwin, Lord, 252 fn
Istanbul, 457, 461, 473
Italo-Abyssinian War, 412
Italy, 20, 131
Ithaca, 368
Iyengar, Rangaswami, 495
———, S. Srinivasa, 491
Jabalpur, 80 & fn, 81, 172, 211, 224
Jacobsohn, 422
Jallianwala Bagh, 152, 346, 462
Jamalpur (Bihar), 198
James, William, 448 & fn
Janak Kumari, 227, 248
Japan, 5, 186, 441
Jat Pat Torak Mandal, 452 & fn
Jayaswal, K. P., 188 & fn
Jeans, Sir James, 420, 427
Jehol, City of Emperors (Sven Hedin), 426
Jennings, Gertrude, 425
Jinnah, M. A., 31
Jnana Shabda Kosh (Mukundilal Srivastava), 199 fn
Jnana Yoga (Swami Vivekananda), 330, 425
Jones, Stanley, 427
Jubbulpore—see Jabalpur
Juhu (Bombay), 215
Julian (Roman Emperor), 458 & fn
Jung, Mahomed Ullah, 159 & fn

Kacker (Dr.), 299, 304, 307, 327, 330, 344, 346, 378
Kaiserhof, 394
Kala Bhawan (Santiniketan), 310, 316, 317
Kalakankar, raja of, 227, 338 & fn
Kalhana, 422, 431 & fn-434
Kalidas, 323 & fn
Kanauj, 314 fn
Kanpur, 79, 139, 213, 224, 402
Kanpur Swadeshi League, 78
Kanyakumari, 92
Kapadia, Rangildas M., 77 & fn
Kapur, 231
Karachi, 37, 72 & fn, 125, 306 fn, 485
———, Congress at, 125
Kashi Prasad, 227
Kashi Vidyapith, 85 fn, 199 & fn
Kashmir, 246, 253, 258, 259, 262, 431 fn-433 & fn
Kataev, Valentin, 425
Kathgodam, 299, 309, 364
Kathiawar, 58 fn
Kathiawar States Peoples Convention, 58

Katju, Kailas Nath, 381
Kaul, Kailas Nath, 250, 309, 310
———, Rajpati, 296
Kedar Nath, 148
Keeping Fit at Forty (Webster & Hays), 425
Kelkar, N. C., 43 fn, 59 & fn
Kellogg Briand Pact, 16
Kerensky, A. F., 47 fn
Khadi and Village Industries Commission, 212 fn
Khali (Almora), 348, 380, 381
Khalsa High School (Gujranwala), 212 fn
Khan, A. H., 142 & fn
———, Khan Abdul Ghaffar, 230 fn
———, Shafaat Ahmad, 163, 303
Khanna & Co., 231
Khan Sahib, 230
Khudai Khidmatgars, 348 fn, 349
Khyber Pass, 29 92
Kidwai, Rafi Ahmad, 148
Kingsley, Sidney, 425
King Solomon's Mines (Rider Haggard), 245 fn
Klotz, Helmut, 425
Kohn, Hans, 421, 508
Kota (Queen), 433 & fn
Kothari, Kakalbhai, 58 & fn
Kripalani, J. B., 296, 344
———, Krishna, 290 & fn, 321
Kropotkin, 426
Kumarasambhava (Kalidas), 323 fn
Kuomintang, 494
Kurseong, 127 & fn
Kustantunia—see *Istanbul*
Kutch, 58 fn

Labour Party (England), 494
Lac Leman, 415
La Crise Britannique au XX Siecle (Andre Siegfried), 421
Ladakh, 414
Lahore, 79, 168, 214, 258, 452 fn, 456
———, Congress at, 41
Lahore Conspiracy Case, 358 fn
Lajpat Rai, Lala, 493, 494
Lalbazar (Calcutta), 228
Lalbhai, Kasturbhai, 334 & fn
Lahtadaya, 432 & fn
Lancashire, 65 & fn, 466
Lancashire Mills Association, 78
Lances Down (R. Boleslavski & Helen Woodward), 427
Landmarks in Indian Constitutional & National Development 1600-1919 (Gurumukh Nihal Singh), 422
Land of Mist (A. Conan Doyle), 421
Lasky, Harold, 269 & fn
Last and Fast Men (Olaf Stapledon), 425
Last Home of Mystery (Alexander Powell), 426, 472
Laughing Woman (Gordon Daviot), 424
Lausanne, 356, 379, 389, 396, 412, 413
Lawes, Lewis E., 423
Leacock, Stephen, 421
Leader, 111, 158 fn, 192, 369
League against Imperialism, 494
League of Nations, 15 & fn, 90, 421, 491
Leipzig, 386
Lenin, 237
Lenin (Ralph Fox), 423
Lesseps, Ferdinand De, 368 & fn
Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim, 231 & fn
Lester, Muriel, 248 & fn
Letters from a Father to His Daughter (Jawaharlal Nehru), 208 fn, 268, 340
Leysin, 378, 379
Life & Adventures (Casanova), 421
Life and Work of Sir Jagdish C. Bose (Patrick Geddes), 391 fn
Life of Ram Krishna (Romain Rolland), 421
Lion That Lost its Way, 506
Lipscomb, W P, 424
Li Tai Po, 270 & fn
Listener, 402
Little Man, What Now (Hans Fallada), 424
Living Age, 240, 269
Lloyd, Lord, 39, 164
Lloyd Triestino, 347
Lobo Prabhu, J.M., 267 & fn
Locarno, 410, 411

London, 38, 96 & fn, 129, 130, 150 & fn, 164, 167, 174, 248 fn, 395, 402, 410, 415, 471
London Bystander, 473
Lord Jim (Joseph Conrad), 420
Lord's (London), 246
Lost Illusions (Balzac), 424
Luckmidas, K.R., 66
Lucknow, 57, 110-112, 223, 224, 250, 291 fn, 299, 309, 337, 369, 411 fn
Ludendorff, 426
Lugano (Ascona), 402
Lyons, Reverend, 127

MacDonald, Ramsay, 43, 147, 494
Mackenzie, Compton, 424
———, J.S., 446
———, Ronald, 425
Machilipatnam (Andhra Pradesh), 68 fn
Madhubani, 224
Madras, 40 fn, 205, 369, 402
Maharashtra Political Conference, 59 fn, 117 fn
Maheshwari Bhawan (Calcutta), 233
Mahmud, Syed, 60 & fn, 211, 214, 303, 305
Mainz, 387
Maitlands (Ronald Mackenzie), 425
Malavikagnimitra (Kalidas), 323 fn
Malaviya, M.M., 60, 61, 149 & fn, 254 fn, 272 fn, 289
Malraux, Andre, 425
Manchester Guardian, 52 & fn, 138, 319
———, *Weekly*, 369, 401, 402
Manchuria, 15 & fn
Mansarovar, 414
Man's Fate (Andre Malraux), 425
Marienbad, 388
Marius the Epicurean (Walter Pater), 422
Marvin, F.S., 426
Marx, Karl, 22, 367, 423
Masani, M.R., 135 & *fn*
Mascarenhas, Charles, 17 & fn
Mau, 160, 161
Maugham, Somerset, 424, 425
Maxton, 319
Mayo, Katherine, 167
Mazdoor Samachar, 121 fn
Mazumdar, Dinesh, 240 & fn
Meaning of Meaning (C.K. Ogden & I.A. Richards), 424
Mecca, 474
Meet Mr. Mulliner (P.G. Wodehouse), 421
Meghavahana, 432 & fn
Mehta, Dinkar, 128 & *fn*
———, Jamnadas, 43 fn, 117 & fn
———, *Juraj*, *291*, *309*, *507*
Menace of Fascism (John Strachey), 31, 420
Men in White (Sidney Kingsley), 425
Men Like Gods (H.G. Wells), 323
Meredith, George, 341
Mesopotamia—see Iraq
Mexico, 494
Midnapore (Midnapur), 35, 50, 53, 92, 94, 96, 97, 99, 109, 151, 152, 198 218 fn, 235
Midsummer Night Madness (Sean O' Faolain), 422
Milan, 389
Millowners' Association, 78
Milton, John, 322, 443, 456
Minney, R.J., 424
Mirzapur, 125 fn, 227
Mirza, Shah, 433 fn
Misra, Gauri Shankar, 171
Moclerne, Parmenas, Githendu, 421
Mitchison, G.R., 425
Modak, G.V., 421
Modern India Thinks, 66
Modern Review, 204 fn, 217, 369, 402
Modern Marriage & Birth Control (E.F. Griffith), 426
Mody, H.P., 65 fn, 78
Mohenjodaro, 455
Moliere, 322
Money for Nothing (P.G. Wodehouse), 420
Monghyr, 187, 195 & fn, 196, 198, 224
Mongolia, 5
Montagu, E.S., 197 & fn
Montana, 314, 378, 491
Mont Blanc, 314, 415
Montpellier, 391
Montesquieu, 21, 22 fn

Moutrux, 314
Moonje, B.S., 166, 303, 304
Moradabad, 65 fn
Morning Post, 462
Morning Shadows (Suraj Kishen Munshi), 426
Morris, William, 323
Moscow, 128, 143, 351
Moscow Dialogues (Julius F. Hecker), 422
Motihari, 224
Mohlen, Zur, 424
Mulden, 15 fn
Muller, Johannes, 240
Munich, 358
Munshi, Suraj Kishen, 426
Murray, Gilbert, 427
Mushran, Shamji, 309
Muslim All Parties Conference, 163, 177
Muslim League, 163, 170, 177, 311 & fn
Mussolini, Benito, 117, 332, 377, 454 fn
Mussoorie, 60, 254, 381
Muzaffar, 227
Muzaffarpur, 196
My Best Thriller, 423
My Pilgrimages to Ajanta & Bagh (Mukul Chandra Dey), 421
Mysterious Universe (Sir James Jeans), 427
Mystery of Mr. Bernard (E.P. Oppenheim), 420
My University Days (Maxim Gorki), 422

Nabha, 420
Nageshar, 84
Nagpur, 484 fn
Nagpur Trade Union Congress, 116 fn
Naicker, E. V. Ramaswamy, 114 fn
Naidu, Padmaja, 214, 303, 305, 504
———, Sarojni, 60 & fn, 349, 495
Naini (Allahabad), 213, 227, 284, 289, 290, 297, 299, 301, 309, 337, 346 & fn, 351, 358, 372, 373, 403
Naini Central Prison, 431
Nainital, 278, 296
Nair, E. G., 204
Nalanda, 314
Nalinidas, 240 & fn
Nambiar, A.C.N., 255, 388, 396, 397, 401, 403
Nanak Chand, 303 & fn
Nand Gopal, 148
Nansen, Fridtjof, 414 & *fn*
Naoroji, Dadabhai, 214 fn
———, Jal, 207, 345, 379
———, Khurshed, 290, 294, 296, 299, 304
Naples, 375, 438 fn
Napoleon I, 21
Narayole House (Calcutta), 235, 237
Narayanaswami, C. K., 212 & fn
Narayan, Jaya Prakash, 285
Narendra Deva, Acharya, 85, 86, 199 & fn, 285 fn
Nariman, K.F., 59 & fn-61, 72 fn, 349
Nasik, 201
Nation, 250
National Call, 134
National Planning Committee, 207 fn
National Socialist Party, 40 fn
Nayar, Sushila, 381 & fn
Nehru, B. K., 229 fn, 311 & fn
———, Mrs. B. K., 229 & fn, 231, 241, 242, 247, 258, 261, 311 & fn
———, Brijlal, 241, 292, 501
———, Mrs. Brijlal, 241, 247, 292
———, Indira, 81 fn, 86, 206-208, 211, 213-216, 222, 223, 227, 230, 242, 246, 248 & fn, 250, 254, 256, 261, 263, 267, 290, 292-294, 296, 298 & fn, 299, 302 & fn, 304, 307, 308, 310, 312, 314, 319 & fn-321, 328, 329, 331, 332, 339, 345-347, 351, 352, 364, 371, 373, 374, 382 385, 393, 398, 404, 410, 411, 496, 498, 502, 503, 506
———, Jawaharlal, 13 fn, 19, 30, 31 fn, 40 fn, 46 fn, 57 fn, 62 fn, 73 & fn, 86 fn, 89 91, 106, 116 fn, 125 fn, 158 fn, 160 fn, 172 fn, 177 fn, 186 fn, 208 fn, 217 fn, 218 fn, 231 fn, 245 fn, 250, 259 fn, 282 fn, 283 fn, 301 fn, 303 fn, 306 fn, 400 fn, 411 fn, 416, 437 fn

———, in jail, 227 273; 289 427; admires objectives of Soviet Russia, 32, annoyed at interference in personal matters, 301, 302, arrested (seventh time), 227; commends non-official relief work, 196; completes writing *Autobiography*, 320; disgusted with squabbles inside U.P. Congress, 410; his beliefs, 24, 52, 84, 85; his scientific approach, 3; interest in gardening, 329, 333, 342, 343, 350, 383, 391, 410, not allowed to complete oral statement in court, 235; not hostile towards English people, 64; refuses to apologize, 236, and to give undertaking to government, 417, refuses attention to minor activities, 218, suggested for Congress presidentship, 411 & fn, supports cottage industries, 26, 90, 103; upset by A.I.C.C. decisions, 348

———, on Aryans, 435, on Austrian rebellion, 238, 243, on Bengal Congress, 272, on Bengal jails, 239, 245; on Bihar earthquake, 186 198; on books and reading, 321, 322-324, 502; on British capitalism, 7; on British government in India, 54, 149, 150, 234, 464, 466, 467, on capitalism, 5 10, 21; on civic ideal, 124, 139, 140, on communalism, 56, 107, 156-185, on community life, 257, 384, on Congress, 102, on Congress and labour, 119, 120, on Congress representation abroad, 70, on Congress Working Committee, 259; on constituent assembly, 40, 51, 64, 65, 88, 177-181, 185, on crime and punishment, 479-488, on Democratic Swaraj Party, 58, on Dominion Status, 183, on dress habits, 377, on education, 79, 219, 249, 256, 257, 263, 269, 270, 316, 317, 321, 354, 389, 496, 504, on European political situation, 412, on examinations, 242, 396, 397, on events in Allahabad jail, 147, 148, in Chittagong and Midnapur, 50, 92, 93, 96-99, 152, 153, and in Fyzabad jail, 145, 146, on family ties, 355, on fascism, 42, 113 & fn, 115, 134; on federation 13, 83, on freedom, 5, 13, 39, 233, on gliding, 324; on *Glimpses of World History*, 339, 356, 370, 372, 379, on government's inefficiency, 187, 197, 198; on Harijan movement 89, 103; on health, 215, 318, 377, 378, 386, 395, 507; on Hindi literature, 340, 439-442; on Hinduism, 437; on Hindu Mahasabha, 157-159, 162; on his mother's illness, 309; on his wife's illness, 255, 294, 295, 299, 335; on imperialism, 38, 47, 63, 64, 92 94, on Indian politicians, 271, 319, 330, 349, on Indian states, 30, 58; on industrialisation, 26, on internationalism, 15, 90, 111; on Islam, 438; on Jinnah's fourteen points, 178, 184, on letter writing, 393, on liberals and moderates, 54, 88, 169; on Mahatma Gandhi, 251, 262, 272, 273, 349, on medicines, 385; on M.N. Roy, 143-144; on nationalism 12; on national language, 444; on nature of mass action, 14, 106; on need for developing strength, 93, 181; on need for fighting for Swaraj, 14, 77, 79, 106; on need for studying science, 258, 263; on need for writing in simple language, 200, on nonviolence, 25; on nursing homes, 301; on parenthood, 353; on Persian culture, 176, on political objectives, 32, 39, on prisons, 363, 364, 382, on proscription of books, 154, on public debt of India, 130, on Purushottamdas Tandon, 349, on Quetta earthquake, 462-467; on *Rajatarangini*, 431 433, on religion, 24, 56, 175, on revolution, 98, 110, on Round Table Conferences, 13, 14, 38, 39, 179, on Santiniketan, 258, 263; on secret organisations, 44, 82; on socialism, 16, 23, 56, 100, 101, 113 & fn, 123, 126, 138, 185, on social work, 497, on solidarity of Islam, 468 470, on suppression of civil liberty, 35, on T.A.K. Sherwani, 337, on terrorism, 97, 98, on textile mill owners agreement with Lancashire mills, 65, 78, on trade unionism, 116,

137, 141; on translations, 445-449, on unity of India, 132; on untouchability, 43; on use of British goods, 211; on village uplift, 89, 107; on whipping, 486, on why he went to prison, 4, 19, 420, on withdrawal of civil disobedience, 27, 28, 43, 278; on women's education, 218-220, on youth, 376
———, Kamala, 203, 211, 215, 227, 236, 238, 240, 241, 243-245, 247, 248, 250, 253-256, 261, 262, 268, 277, 278, 284, 285, 289, 291-297 & fn, 299, 300 304-313, 319-321, 326-331, 338, 344-348, 350, 351, 358, 364, 365, 367, 371, 373, 374, 381-385, 392, 404
———, Krishnakumari—see Krishna Hutheesing
———, Mohanlal, 193, 203, 277
———, Mrs. Mohanlal, 227
———, Motilal, 35, 339, 387, 431, 497
———, Rajan, 414 & fn
———, Ratan Kumar, 414 & fn
———, Shyam Kumari, 227, 245, 381, 504
———, Shyamlal, 227, 245
———, Shridhar, 387
———, Swaroop Rani, 246, 268, 317, 501
———, Uma, 227, 246
Nellore (Andhra Pradesh), 140 fn
Nepal, 151
New Background of Science (Sir James Jeans), 420
New Deal (in U.S.A.), 10 fn
New Delhi, 337, 464
Newmann, professor, 378
News from Nowhere (William Morris), 323
Newmarket, 474
New Statesman, 252, 473, 506
New York, 413, 414, 484
Nietzsche, 488
Nishat Bagh, 264

O'Faolain, Sean, 422
Ogden, C.K., 423, 424
Old Folks at Home (H.M. Harwood), 425
On Guard for the Soviet Union (Maxim Gorki), 422
O'Neill, Brian, 423
On the Rocks (Bernard Shaw), 421
On Our Way (Franklin Roosevelt), 425
Oppenheim, E. P., 420
Oppermanns (Lion Feuchtwanger), 231, 420
Ordeal of Richard Feverel (Meredith), 341
Osborne, Thomas Mott, 484
Otto, Rudolf, 400
Our India (M. R. Masani), 135 fn
Outlines of General Biology (Patrick Geddes), 391
Outline of Sanity (G.K. Chesterton), 427
Over the Footlights & Other Fancies (Stephen Leacock), 422
Oxford, 56, 204, 292, 412, 509
Oxford Union, 111
Oxford University Press, 209

Paine, Thomas, 424
Palestine, 264, 469
Palmer, 251
Pande, Bala Dat, 344 & fn
Pandit, Chandralekha, 243, 269, 270, 299, 308, 309, 371, 372, 380, 508
———, Jagat Narayan, 374
———, Nayantara, 371, 372, 380
———, R.S., 227, 230, 246, 253, 268, 289, 292, 299, 308 310, 315, 317, 325, 348, 371, 380, 431 & fn, 508
———, Rita, 371, 372, 380
———, S. P., 431 & fn
———, Sunderlal, 237
———, Vijayalakshmi, 209, 213, 227, 229, 246, 247, 250, 258, 268, 291 & fn, 293, 295, 299, 300, 307, 309, 315, 317, 318, 320, 348, 371-373, 381, 404, 501, 508
Pant, Jivanand, 338

Paris, 16, 357, 389, 396, 412, 471, 500
Pasha, Ismet, 472 fn
Passos, John Dos, 424
Patel, Vallabhbhai, 201, 283 fn, 284, 349 & fn, 508
———, Vithalbhai, 13, 201 & fn
Pater, Walter, 422
Patna, 189, 191, 216, 224, 254 & fn
Pattani, Prabha Shankar, 315 & *fn*
Pavlova, Anna, 305 & *fn*, 339 fn
Persia, 176
Peshawar, 151 *fn*
Petrograd, 128
Phalguni (Rabindranath Tagore), 247 fn
Philip III (Spain), 438 & *fn*
Philosophy of the Upanishads (S Radhakrishnan), 422
Pinkevich, A., 426
Pioneer, 19, 22-24, 26, 31, 189, 301
Piracy (Michael Arlen), 420
Plato, 322
Pochas, 329, 330, 333
Poe, Edgar Allan, 295
Pogodin, Nikolai, 425
Pompeii, 375
Poona, 45, 48, 207, 224, 258, 264, 499, 501, 506-508
Poona Pact, 41
Port Said, 368, 374, 377
Possible Worlds (J.B.S. Haldane), 426
Powell, E. Alexander, 426, 472
Power of Non Violence (Richard B. Gregg), 426
Power & Secret of Jesuits (Rene Fulop-Miller), 427
Prabha, 404
Prague (Praha), 255, 388, 401
Prasad, Kunwar Jagdish, 301, 303 & fn
———, Kunwaram Jagdish, 302
———, Rajendra, 190, 191, 216, 227, 349, 463 & fn, 464
Pratap, 402
Prayag (Allahabad), 289, 299, 388
Prayag Mahila Vidyapith, 217-220
Premchand, Munshi, 340 & *fn*, 426, 427
Prescott, 424
Press Act, 465 & fn
Priestley, J. B., 420
Prince & the Pauper (Mark Twain), 420
President Masaryk Tells His Story (Karel Capek), 423
Pritchard, F.H., 423
Profits and Politics in the Post War World (R.D. Charques & A.H. Ewen), 421
Property or Peace (H.N. Brailsford), 423
Protection of Women & Children in Soviet Russia (A.M. Field), 427
Ptolemy, 454
Punjab Hindu Sewak Sabha, 167
Punjab Hindu Youth League, 168
Punjab Vidyapeeth, 160 fn
Pupil's Own School, 86
Pyarelal, 381

Quami Gazette, 465 fn
Queen of Scots (Gordon Daviot), 425
Quennell, Peter, 422
Quesnay, 22 fn
Quetta, 367 & fn, 369, 462-467
Quetta Central Relief Committee, 463 fn
Qureshi, Shuaib, 495

Rabindranath Tagore—A Biography (Krishna Kripalani), 290 fn
Radhakrishnan, S, 422, 425
Rae Bareli, 145
Raghuvamsha (Kalidas), 323 fn
Rahim, Abdur, 118 & fn
Rahula, 325, 326, 357
Rajagopalachari, C., 349, 411
Rajatarangini (Kalhana), 422, 431 & fn
Rajputana States Peoples Convention, 83
Rama, Bulaki, 121
Ramanathan, S, 114 & fn
Ram Leela (Uday Shankar), 339 fn
Ramsaran, 85 & fn, 86
Ranikhet, 300
Rao, P Nageswara, 68 & fn
———, Raja, 284

Rathbone, Eleanor F., 421, 475
Rationalist, 114 fn
Rayner, R.M., 426
Recent Essays and Writings (Jawaharlal Nehru), 253
Red Bread (Maurice Hindus), 422
Red Cavalry (I. Babel), 422
Reddi, E. Raghava, 140 & fn
Red Virtue (Ella Winter), 421
Remarque, Erich Maria, 423
Reminiscences of Tolstoy, Chekov and Andryev (Maxim Gorki), 427
Rendezvous of East and West, 402
Republic (Plato), 322
Responsivists, 491
Reunion in Vienna (Robert E. Sherwood), 424
Richards, I.A., 424
Rights of Man (Thomas Paine), 424
Road Back (Erich Maria Remarque), 423
Rolland, Romain, 415, 421, 426
Rollier, Dr., 378
Rome, 396, 457, 458
Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, 10 & *fn*, 96
Round Table Conference, 13, 14, 38, 39, 46 fn, 56, 129, 164, 166, 173, 174, 177, 179, 315 fn, 487
———, Joint Parliamentary Committee of, 159, 167, 168, 311 fn, 453 fn
———, *Minorities Committee of*, 164 fn
Rousseau, Jean Jacques, 21 & *fn*, 22 fn
Roy, B.C., 236, 250, 272 fn, 295, 299
———, M.N., 17 fn, 143, 144, 300
———, Rammohan, 210 & *fn*
Royal Opera House (Bombay), 247
Rup, 243
Rural India (Chowdhry Mukhtar Singh), 422
Ruskin, John, 392
Russell, Bertrand, 323, 425
Russia, 20, 28, 32, 47, fn, 48, 132, 305, 351, 372, 401, 440, 442, 459, 460, 492, 493
Russia and Japan, (M.G. Hindus), 305 fn
Russian revolution, 7, 21, 22
Russia Today (Sherwood Eddy), 424
Russia, Youth and Present Day World (Frankwood E. Williams), 426

Sah, Premlal, 351 & fn
Sahi, 298
Saint Joan (Bernard Shaw), 500
Saksena, Mohanlal, 250
Salamatullah (major), 296, 297, 306, 364, 373, 381
Salt Act, 420
Samastipur, 224
Sambuck, 383
Sampurnanand, 285
Samvayavad Kya Aur Kaise Phaila (Mukundilal Srivastava), 199 fn
Samurai, 5
Sangam Lal, 218
Sankirtyayan, Rahul, 427
Sankta Sophia—see Santa Sophia
Santanam, K., 227
Santa Sophia, 458, 459, 461
Santiniketan, 91, 214, 216, 222, 224, 237, 248 & fn, 249, 256-258, 263, 264, 290, 292 & fn, 302 & fn, 304, 308, 310, 315-318, 321, 325, 339, 341, 342, 344 fn, 346, 347
Santiniketan Hindi Samaj, 343
Sapru, Tej Bahadur, 35, 61, 295, 310, 319
Sarabhai, Ambalal, 203 fn, 318 fn
———, Bharati, 203 & fn, 412
———, Leena, 318 & fn
———, Mridula, 171, 204
———, Subrid, 203 & fn, 204
Saraswati, 217, 450 & fn
Sarda Act—see Child Marriages Restraint Act
Sarju Prasad, 148
Sarkar, N.R., 272 & *fn*, 280
Sastri, V. S. Srinivasa, 319
Savitri Devi, 358 & *fn*, 373, 374, 403
Schwazwald, 387
Science & Education in the U.S.S.R. (A. Pinkevich), 426
Science of Life (H.G. Wells), 424
Scott, Walter, 322, 335
Second Five Year Plan of Development of the U.S.S.R. (Coates), 426

Selected Essays (Karl Marx), 423
Self Respect League, 114 fn
Self Restraint vs Self Indulgence (Mahatma Gandhi), 269, 423
Selly Oak College (Birmingham), 208 fn
Sen Gupta, J.M, 169, 232 fn
Servants of People Society, 212
Seva Sadan (Premchand), 340 fn
Seva Sadan (Calcutta), 247, 249
Seven Plays (Ernst Toller), 426
Sex Habits (Buschke and Jacobsohn), 422
Shahidganj Masjid, 456 & fn
Shakespeare, William, 322, 323, 335, 440, 466
Shakuntala (Kalidas), 323 & fn
Shanghai, 494
Shape of Things to Come (H.G. Wells), 421
Sharma, Shriram, 427
Shastri, Lal Bahadur, 237
Shaw, George Bernard, 16, 323, 338, 353, 440, 483, 500
She (Rider Haggard), 245 fn
Shelley, P.B, 322
Sherwani, T.A.K., 337, 338
Sherwood, Robert E, 424
Short Stories (P. G. Wodehouse), 424
Sicily, 438 fn
Siegfried, André, 421
Shukla, 237
Sinha, A.L, 40 & fn
Simla, 296, 464
Simon Commission, 165
Sinclair, Upton, 421
Sind, 167 & fn
Singh, Anand, 382
———, Bagh, 112 & fn
———, Bhagat, 148
———, Bubal, 86 & fn
———, Fatehbahadur, 148
———, Gurumukh Nihal, 422
———, M A (major), 228 & fn
———, Kunwarani Maharaj, 381
———, Chowdhry Mukhtar, 422
———, Sheo Murti, 81 & fn, 82, 237
Sing Sing Prison (New York), 484
Sinha, Amar Kishor, 127 & fn
———, Sushil Kumar, 228 & fn, 229, 236, 237
Sinn Fein, 50
Sitamarhi, 193 & fn, 194, 196, 224
Sixteen (Aimee & Philip Stuart), 424
Skardo, 414
Smedley, Agnes, 424
Social Contract (Rousseau), 22 fn
Social Credits or Socialism (W.R. Hiskett), 426
Social Substance of Religion (Gerald Heard), 423
Society of Friends (England), 208 fn
Socrates, 485
Some Nonsense Novels (Stephen Leacock), 421
Something Fresh (P.G. Wodehouse), 424
Songs of Experience (William Blake), 326 fn
Sophocles, 322
South African Indian Congress, 495
Spanish Inquisition, 485
Spengler, Oswald, 423
Spiegel, Margarete, 316 & fn
Spitzbergen, 414
Spratt, Philip, 291
Squaring the Circle (Valentin Kataev), 425
Sri Lanka (Ceylon), 203, 367 fn
Sriniketan, 216
Sri Prakasa, 84 & fn
Stalin, Josef, 114, 144 & fn
Standard Review, 204 & fn
Stapledon, Olaf, 425
Statesman, 19 & fn, 238, 239, 247, 259, 285, 464 fn
States People, 77 fn
States Protection Bill, 83 & fn
Steffan, Dr, 416
Stenning, H J, 423
St Mary's College (Kurseong), 127 fn
Story of Trade Unionism (R M Rayner), 426
Strachey, John, 31, 420
Stuart, Aimee 424
———, Philip, 424
Substance, not Shadow (Mahatma Gandhi), 46 fn
Suez, 374, 375

Sullur, 167 fn
Suman, Ramnath, 426
Superficial Journey Through Tokyo & Peking (Peter Quennell), 422
Suyya, 432 & fn
Swaraj Bhawan Hospital, 69 fn
Swaraj Bhawan Trust, 69
Swaraj Party, 303 fn, 304 fn
Swarajists, 491
Swatantra Party, 135 fn, 267 fn
Swift, Jonathan, 335
Swinburne, A.C., 322
Switzerland, 42 fn, 249, 265, 314, 352, 353, 356, 384, 383, 396, 491
Syria, 9, 469

Tagore, Abanindranath, 344 fn
———, Rabindranath, 20 fn, 230 fn, 247 fn, 249, 258, 263, 264, 318, 339, 346, 347, 358
Tandon, Purushottamdas, 82, 227, 349 fn
Tauchnitz, 386, 387
Tej, 434, 465 fn
Tempo (Nikolai Fogodin), 425
Tennyson, Alfred, 322
Terry of Tangistan (Douglas Christie), 421
Tewari—see Tivary
Thackeray, W.M., 323
These Hungry Hours (Gerald Heard), 423
Thomas, Bertram, 421
———, Henry, 117
Thoughts & Adventures (Winston Churchill), 421
Tibet, 414
Tilak, B.G., 304 fn
Times, 402
Times Book Club, 402
Times of India, 106
Timur, 267, 437
Tiryak, 156 fn
Tivary, Venkatesh Narayan, 211, 339, 356
Tiwari, Jairam, 148
Toller, Ernst, 255, 358, 422, 423, 426
Tolstoy, Leo, 247, 323, 340, 392, 421 440
To One in Paradise (Edgar Allan Poe), 295 fn
Tootleoo, 500
Too True to be Good (Bernard Shaw), 421
Touch Wood (C.L. Anthony), 425
Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx (Sidney Hook), 423
Townsend, R.S., 291 & fn
Tragedy of Gandhi (Clorney Bolton), 424
Trans Jordan, 469
Tretiakov, S., 424
Tribune, 283, 411 fn
Trieste, 368
Trinity College (Cambridge), 64
Tripathy, Rup Narain, 148
Trotsky, Leon, 125
Trotter, W., 421
Turkey, 176, 442, 460, 468, 472 fn
Turkish Ordeal (Halide Edib), 357 & fn
Twain, Mark, 420, 424, 471
Twenty Thousand Years in Sing Sing (Lewis A. Lawes), 423
Typhoon and Other Stories (Joseph Conrad), 421
Tyrrel, Courtney, 191

Udayana Deva, 433 fn
Uday Shankar, 339 & fn
Ukraine, 464
United States of America, 9-12, 21, 42 fn, 70 fn, 112, 115, 130, 142, 248, 292 fn, 324, 387, 442, 494
Untouchables (Mulk Raj Anand), 426
Unverricht, professor, 382, 383, 389
Upadhyaya, S.D., 235, 236, 238, 247 249, 269, 299, 318, 333, 334, 397, 402
U.P. Provincial Kisan Conference, 349 fn

Vakil, Jahangir, 86, 207, 215, 243, 256, 264, 269, 496, 498, 499, 507

Valencia, archbishop of, 438
Vanity Fair (Thackeray), 323
Varanasi, 149 & fn, 158, 206, 224, 268, 340, 437 & fn, 439, 474, 475
Varieties of Religious Experiences (William James), 448 fn
Vedul (Bihar), 193
Venice, 367, 368
Verma, Brajmohan, 426
———, Onkar Nath, 125 & fn
Vesuvius, 375
Vidya, 227
Vienna, 238, 367, 371, 374, 388, 394, 399, 501
Vikramorvasi (Kalidas), 323 fn
Vile Parle (Bombay), 258
Village Wooing (Bernard Shaw), 421
Villars, 314
Vishal Bharat, 369, 402 & fn, 439, 440
Vision of Asia (L. Cranmer Byng), 423
Visvabharati, 222 fn, 290 fn
Visva Bharati Quarterly, 370
Viswanatham, T., 110
Vithalwadi (Bombay), 500
Vivekananda, Swami, 330, 425
Voltaire, 21 & *fn*, 22 fn
What Would be the Character of a New War, 421
Wheatley, Dennis, 425
Wheel of Life (Zur Muhlen), 424
Whitehall, 39
Whitehead, A.N., 426
Whitman, Walt, 323
Wilder, Thornton, 425
Wilham (of Orange), 153
Williams, F.E., 426
Wind and the Rain (Merton Hodge), 424
Winslow J.C., 422
Winter, Ella, 421
Wintringham, T.H., 427
Wodehouse, P.G., 420, 421, 424
Wonder Hero (J.B., Priestley), 420
Woodbrooke (Birmingham), 208 fn
Woodstock, 269
Woolf, Leonard, 424
Work Wealth and Happiness of Mankind (H.G. Wells), 423
Working of Corporate State (Goad & Currey), 423

Wales, 23
War and Peace (Leo Tolstoy), 247, 323, 421
War and Peace and the Soviet Union (Gore Graham), 425
Wardha, 59, 61, 404
War for the Land in Ireland (Brian O'Neill), 423
Watt, Lewis, 425
Way of All Flesh (Samuel Butler), 421
Webster, 425
Weisbaden, 387
Wells, H.G., 316, 323, 421, 423-425
What Everybody Wants to Know About Money (G.D.H. Cole), 426
What Marx Really Meant (G.D.H. Cole), 423
World Economic Conference, 96 & fn
Wurtemberg, 388
Yakhontoff, Victor A., 425
Yakub, Mohammad, 179 & *fn*, 303
Yeats, W.B., 20 & *fn*
Young India, 46 fn
Young Turk revolution, 357 fn
Yorkshire, 466
Y.Z., 421

Zalme Pakhtun Party, 230 fn
Zanzibar Crisis (C.F. Andrews), 424
Zurich, 412, 413
Zutshi, Ladli Prasad, 227, 504
———, Lado Ram, 243

The A.I.C.C. was even afraid of protesting against the bans against the Congress in the Indian states. This was considered interference in their internal affairs!

A small matter which upset me yesterday was the beating of a prisoner by a warder. This took place in my yard though not, fortunately, in my presence. I would have flared up if I had been there. As it was I was greatly troubled and decided to report the matter to the supt. who was to have come to me that day, it being parade day. But he did not come Later I told the acting jailer. Probably he remonstrated mildly with the warder. Curiously the warder in question has always struck me as rather a decent person. If the matter had gone up to the supt. he would have had to take formal notice and probably fined the warder. Would I then have felt sad about this?

Water is very scarce nowadays and my little garden is suffering greatly. The heat is increasing and my seedlings shrivel up. I have developed a great interest in them, almost amounting to affection and I watch their troubles with anxiety. I have never before felt quite so close to them. The little things seem to have an individuality. The other day in transplanting a little canna shoot I broke off the head rather clumsily. I was hurt by this and for some days the idea pained me although there is no lack of cannas here My sunflowers have developed a strange disease which has killed off a few. Fortunately it has been checked. The dahlias and gladioli and irises and amaryllis are doing well. But the little zinnias are in a bad way. The amaranthus has expired in the womb.

How much of my thoughts these little flowers and seedlings occupy! I find myself thinking of them at night and what I should do to help them and improve them. If an idea strikes me I look forward to the next day and grow almost impatient in order to give effect to it. I spend hours in pottering about my yard. I find that I think more of my little garden than of political and other problems! Perhaps it is as well and it is certainly more soothing.

At the back of my mind always is the thought of Kamala's departure for Europe. This draws near and although I am glad, vague fears fill me. When will I see her again? And what of Indu? She is in Bhowali now and tomorrow I go there. I shall see her after nearly six months.

I have got to live in a tent for some weeks. My barrack roof is going to be repaired The tent was put up in my yard today and I found it better than I had expected. I had looked forward to a *choldari* but it was a double-fly Swiss cottage or something like it, about 8 ft. x 9 ft. The prospect of living in the tent is quite exciting. It will be a change after full six months of this barn in which I am locked up

every evening. For I have now been in Almora over six months. What a long time it has been!

When I went back to prison in Naini last August I told Kamala that I would be back in a hundred days. I calculated that I would be out after the Bombay Congress and the Assembly elections. My calculations were all wrong. I have already been 253 days in prison since then, and another 291 days remain before my term ends naturally. Perhaps I may not have to go to the very end of this period. I put it therefore approximately at another 250 days.

But again there is a vague rumour that I might be let out to go with Kamala. Probably there is absolutely nothing in it, only hints *thrown out* by newspaper men. And yet even a *rumour of this kind*, which I do not believe in, excites me a little and automatically I begin *to plan. I want to be out of this damned hole but still I had rather* not be beholden to govt. for their grace. If I have survived nearly 15 *months of this sentence I might as well carry on to the end of the* 24th. Only there is Kamala and her condition—and Indu.

I feel in better mood this evening. Perhaps because of tomorrow's visit to Bhowali, perhaps because of the tent!

Tomorrow is May Day—a poor anniversary for labour all over the world, except in the Soviet lands. And even Soviet Russia seems to be going backward and adapting itself to the imperialist world. A toast to King George in Moscow!

Well, well, anyway I shall celebrate this day in the Bhowali sanatorium and see Kamala and Indu and mother and Betty.

2.5.35[120]

TO DR. SAH

Dear Dr. Prem Lal Sah,[121]
You have been not only a doctor but such a good friend to us during the last seven months at Bhowali that I must express my real gratitude to you for all you have done for us. My wife is now leaving Bhowali for Europe and one chapter of our connection with Bhowali will soon close. The connection will however continue in other ways. Meanwhile I wish to tell you how grateful I am to you.

120. J N. Correspondence, N M M L.
121. A physician at Bhowali.

I shall be glad if you will kindly let me know what I owe you on account of your fees. Please do not hesitate to charge me your fees on the ground that I am a politician who has gained some public approval.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

May 6, 1935[122]

Darling Indu,
As I write this letter to you on the evening of May 6th you must be speeding to Allahabad. Probably you will not have returned to Bhowali by the time this reaches there. But that does not matter. You will get the letter a day or two later on your return. I feel like writing to you this evening and the thought strikes me that in all likelihood this will be my last letter to you before you sail with mummie. When I write again probably you will be on the high seas and my letter will be addressed to some place in Switzerland. How far you will be from me then, moving away rapidly across the Arabian Sea, even further away from this little corner of the world which I inhabit at present! And I wonder when and where I shall see you again. We create these distances in our minds, physically they are not really great The world grows narrower daily and you in Switzerland will only be four or five days flight from Allahabad. And as for meeting you, we have not seen too much of each other during these years, have we? We met at Bhowali last week after nearly six months. And yet old habit and our early ideas persist and Switzerland does seem a long way off and your going there makes you much more inaccessible. Perhaps all this is for the good, good for you and good for me. You will have to shift for yourself a little more and not rely on me or on others. .Home is good but it has a tendency to narrow one and make one too much of a hothouse growth. It does not prepare one sufficiently for wider contacts and interests and when one goes out into the bigger world, it is apt to hurt. Other people do not take so much interest in us and we are apt to resent this. That of course is an unreasonable attitude and the fault lies not in others but in our own narrowness and selfishness, the product of a constricted home life. The sooner we get used to cooperation with others the better fitted we are for the ways of the world. It takes all sorts to make this world and it is folly to expect others to be after our fashion.

122. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

TALKING TO STUDENTS AT SANTINIKETAN, JANUARY 1934

या भारी व्यापारकी, उन्नति कहाँ समाय ।

१० चैत्र (मीन) १९९१ चैत्र सुदी १०

१०-१२-९१ शनि १३ अप्रैल

कमला का खत मिला . मजाल है

यह कितना रवतन - एक साल और पूरा - अलीपुर जेल - देहरा जेल - आनन्द भवन - नैनी जेल - अलमोड़ा जेल और बीच बीच में मजाल ! अजीब जिन्दगी है ! दस महीने और सजा के पूरा काटने को है - इन दस महीनों में क्या क्या होगा और मेरा क्या हाल होगा ? और उसके बाद ? अंधेरा दिखता है . . .

A PAGE FROM THE JAIL DIARY

This letter is taking the shape of a farewell epistle but fortunately I shall see you once again to bid you farewell. But many thoughts come to my mind and it soothes me to put some of them down in black and white. I shall of course write to you more or less regularly to Switzerland within the limits of jail rules and regulations. These are not very liberal as you know and a curious difficulty arises. If I send mummie and you my usual fortnightly letter, as I propose to do, and receive letters from you, I shall be cut off from people in India. Except for possible interviews, I shall not be in touch with them. Even interviews are not easy to arrange in Almora jail. Thus in July when Dolamma and the *puphis* leave Bhowali for Allahabad these interviews will stop and I do not quite see how I am to have even news of them after that. As for Dolamma she is too weak even to come from Bhowali to Almora for an interview. However, I suppose we shall manage to fix up something when the time comes. We need not worry about it now. So far as you and mummie are concerned I shall write to you by air mail every fortnight and I expect you to do likewise. Mummie is not strong enough to write much for some time at least. So I am afraid the burden of writing will fall on you.

I want you to leave India in a happy and expectant frame of mind. Do not worry at all about me. I am all right. I can manage to find a fair measure of peace of mind wherever I might be. The mind cannot be enchained and I have developed the habit of undertaking great journeys mentally. I am quite sure that I am happier and freer here than great numbers of people who are not physically restricted. My peace of mind would be almost complete if I was assured that mummie and you were faring well in Europe.

Parents are a curious phenomena. They seem to live their lives again in their children. I have many wider interests in life which sometimes envelop me and make me forget much else, but still I am not free from that preoccupation of parenthood and I am vastly interested in your growth and preparation for life. The fact that I cannot help you much personally does not lessen this preoccupation. Parents, again, have a tendency to mould their children after their own fashion and to impress them with their own ideas. To some extent I suppose this is inevitable, and yet the fact is that each individual stands out by himself or herself as a new experiment which life is working out. To force a growing person into a particular mould is to stultify him or her and to prevent growth. Bernard Shaw has called this the greatest of crimes. And so I have tried, with what success I cannot say, not to force my ideas and pattern of life on you. I want you to grow and develop after your own fashion and only so can you fulfil your life

purpose. Inevitably you will carry through life certain hereditary habits and ideas which your home life has impressed upon you in your early days, and I am conceited enough to think that your hereditary background is rather good. But the foreground must be your own creation. I have often asked you what particular subjects of study interest you. The object of my questions was not so much to determine these subjects as to find out how your mind was working. It matters little what subjects you specialise in, provided they are such as interest you. What I *am far more interested in, is yourself. All round us we see* people who have had brilliant academical careers and yet who are somehow unable to fit in anywhere. Partly the fault is theirs, but certainly there is something seriously lacking in such a one-sided education.

Right education must be an all-round development of the human being, a harmonising of our internal conflicts and a capacity to cooperate with others. We are the mirror through which we see others and generally we shall find in others what we look for and expect. If we keep this mirror of our minds and hearts bright and clean, the world and other men and women will have a pleasant aspect to us and we shall be agreeable companions and comrades to them. But if we cloud our mirror and make it murky and smoky how shall we see straight? We shall then become self-centred and selfish, oblivious of our own failings and always finding fault with others. And the others will come to the conclusion that we are highly disagreeable persons and pass us by.

I am afraid I am writing like a professor. Forgive me this while. I do not want to preach or profess but I do want to take you into my confidence. As I grow older and perhaps wiser I attach more and more importance to real education, and by that, you know, I do not mean examinations and the like. I think a proper intellectual training is essential to do any job efficiently. But far more important is the background of this training—the habits, ideals, ideas, objectives, the internal harmony, the capacity for cooperation, the strength to be true to what one considers to be right, the absence of fear. If one attains this internal freedom and fearlessness it is difficult for the world, harsh as it is, to suppress one. One may not be happy in the narrow sense of the word for those who are sensitive can seldom be crudely happy, but the loss is not great for something that is worthwhile takes its place, a sense of inner fulfilment.

For you these questions and problems are yet of the future. Do not trouble about them. It is a little foolish of me to write of them even and thus perhaps to burden your mind when it should be as free of burdens as possible. At your time of life you should grow in happiness for otherwise your youth would be darkened with care and worry.

I want you to be happy in your youth for so I renew my own youth and participate in your joy. I do not want you to be a quarrelsome and disgruntled specimen of humanity!

You cannot help carrying the burden of your family with you, not so much in Europe but very much so in India. As it happens, your family has attained a great deal of prominence in the Indian world and this has its advantages and disadvantages for you. I am proud of my father and the example of his life has often inspired me and strengthened me. Trying to judge him not as his son but independently of it, I believe he was a really great man. If your grandfather's example strengthens and inspires you in any way that is your good fortune. If your feelings towards your father or mother also help you in that way, well and good. But your grandfather and father and mother, whatever their virtues may be, have many failings also like all human beings. The public mind, however, especially in India, has a habit of idealizing and dehumanizing the persons it likes and this is apt to irritate, in particular those who are supposed to live up to these imaginary standards. The family and one's forebears thus become a nuisance and a burden. I do not want you to feel this way about us! Do not imagine that the family or family tradition wants you to do this or that or to refrain from doing something else.

You should go the way you think proper and right and if the thought of family tradition helps you in this, well stick to it. Not otherwise. To some extent you cannot get rid of the family tradition for it will pursue you and, whether you want to or not, it will give you a certain public position which you may have done nothing to deserve. That is unfortunate but you will have to put up with it. After all it is not a bad thing to have a good-family tradition. It helps us to keep looking up, it reminds us that we have to keep a torch burning and that we cannot cheapen ourselves or vulgarise ourselves.

There is a terrible lot of vulgarity in the world and we see it everywhere in India. And when I talk of vulgarity I do not refer to the poor; they are singularly free from it for they do not try to pose and appear to be something other than they are. It is our middle class that is often vulgar. It has no artistic standards and it has got rather lost between Eastern and Western culture. It is hardly to blame for it for circumstances have forced this unhappy state of affairs on it. Political circumstances have largely made us what we are and then there is our narrow domestic life. And so when we go out into the world we are often making false gestures which jar on the sensitive. I confess that I find this very painful.

But enough of this professorial theorising! My pen runs away with me. I have little to say about your studies in Suisse. We have discussed them already and you will fix up with Mlle. Hemmerlin. If unhappily Mlle. Hemmerlin is not available then you will be at a loose end. I think you had better consult Mlle. Rolland then. As you suggested, I think you had better take, besides languages, history and economics. If you join the university at Lausanne or Geneva you will have to choose some fixed course.

I don't think you will have any difficulty about opening a bank account in Switzerland. At any rate I had none in Cambridge although I was a minor—I was under 18 then, about your age.

I do not know how you will fix up things at Allahabad. I hope you will finish with most of mummie's packing so that she may have no trouble when she goes there. I suppose you know that *puphi* and *pupha* will occupy Anand Bhawan when you leave. I am very glad we have made this arrangement for it takes a burden off my mind and the house will be well looked after. The whole house will be at their disposal and no changes need be made. So far as mummie's and my room upstairs is concerned it had better be kept for me whenever I might need it—that won't be for a long time yet. If you want to put any of your personal effects apart you can put them in our room. But I do not think it is necessary or desirable for you to shift many of your things across. They will be better off where they are and *puphi* can look after them. I do not want my room to be converted into a luggage room! As for the other rooms in Anand Bhawan they should remain as they are. *Puphi* and *pupha* can make such changes in them as they like when they come.

You will remember that I told *puphi* about the Hindi translation of the *Glimpses*. I have thought over this again and I am quite clear that the Tewari arrangement should continue. I am not very satisfied with this and some of the errors are very irritating but we cannot make a change now. This would mean my breaking my word and I think this would be improper. Besides, Tewari must have entered into arrangements and contracts with publishers and printers and obviously we cannot upset the whole apple cart at this stage. One message, however, I should like to be conveyed to Tewari. This relates to the notes that are being given at the end of each monthly part. These notes are very copious and are entirely out of keeping with the spirit of the book. Some brief notes are necessary. For instance when I refer to *Alice in Wonderland* the Hindi reader ought to be told something about it. The notes should be briefly explanatory, *not* additional. As it is they are long extracts from some encyclopaedia giving all manner of dates

and utterly unnecessary information. The whole purpose of my writing as I did was to ignore this useless information. Why then add it? It would seem that the gentleman who is thus reproducing pages of an encyclopaedia thinks that I had not done my job properly and is improving upon it. As a matter of fact he does nothing of the kind and his notes have little or no relation to the text. Please write to *puphi* about this. You can quote this paragraph from my letter....

Mummie or you need not write to me now from Bhowali as I am likely to see you on the 14th. I want you to write to me from Bombay prior to sailing and then from the ports of call....

I do hope you will be able to take with you volume 2 of the *Glimpses*. It is really amazing how long this has been in the press. I was told in January that it was almost ready—and here we are in May. Please take three copies—one for yourself, one for mummie and one for Madan Bhai. Even if the book is not quite ready, take it in an incomplete stage. But there is no reason why it should not be got ready within a few days. If this has not been fixed up already please write to *puphi* to shake up Kitabistan and the A.L.J. press. Also have a copy sent to me.

I have written more than enough and it is time I ended. My next letter will fly to you across the gardens and deserts and ruined cities of western Asia.

Give my love to Dolamma and *puphi* and the infant. I am afraid I am not enamoured of the infant's name. I did think Rahula a lordly name.

I hope you will give a good deal of time during your last days at Bhowali to Dolamma. She will not see you again for a long time. Did I give you Halide Edib's[123] address in Paris? It is as follows: Halide Edib Hanum, 2 rue Georges de Porto Riche, Paris (14).

Love,

Your loving
Papu

May 7, Tuesday

I have not felt in the mood to write and yet my head has been full of ideas and worries—chiefly the latter. Why do I worry about little things? But are they little when they affect one so?

123. (1884-1964); Turkish feminist leader, played a prominent role in the Young Turk revolution, 1908-09 and in the nationalist revolution, 1919-24; her works include *The Turkish Ordeal* and *Inside India*.

I was happy to see Indu at Bhowali. She is growing up and yet is curiously and delightfully child-like. Rabindranath Tagore wrote to me, in answer to a letter from me, that he had observed her closely and he congratulated me on the admirable way I had brought her up. Which was very pleasing to read both because of Indu and myself. And yet my bringing up has been strangely distant—from gaol with infrequent interviews and letters. I have thought of her enough and tried hard enough even from a distance to help her gently and without pressure to grow up as I would like her to grow.

Yesterday I wrote to her a long letter—my last letter before she sails for Europe with Kamala. I shall see her once more before she goes for I am due at Bhowali again on the 14th. On the 15th Kamala and she leave Bhowali for Allahabad and then to Bombay and away.

I have felt very weary and tired for some days. At last I took my temperature and found it to be 99.4°F. in the evening. Since then I have found that there is a rise every evening to above 99°F.

I have moved to the tent in my yard today. From tomorrow the roof of my barrack will be taken down and replaced by another. It is far pleasanter in the tent. I cannot be locked up here and I feel free. I spent nearly two hours after sunset in walking about and watering my flowers, for water comes slowly through the tap just about then.

The jubilee celebrations are on.[124] Yesterday the prisoners were given some sweets, a worthy local philanthropist paying. But there is general discontent at the absence of releases and remissions. They had looked forward to some such gesture for long. Ever since I was at Naini last year I was asked by prisoners, especially long-term ones, when the *jugli* was coming and whether it would bring them remissions and discharges. Even the warders curse. Instead of some reward which they feel is their due on such occasions, they were asked to contribute to the jubilee fund!

It is just a year today to my leaving Alipore jail for Dehra Dun.

I am told that Mrs. Jafar Ali[125] (Savitri Devi) was to have reached this gaol today. She is being kept in the woman's barrack. Her sentence is five years(?), a terrible long time.

I have been reading Toller's plays. How moving in their intensity they are and how lovable is Toller.

124. 6 May 1935, the silver jubilee of George V's accession.
125. Alyce Nisbet Wright; an Irish woman converted to Hinduism and a prominent Congresswoman and revolutionary; sentenced in January 1932 to five years rigorous imprisonment for harbouring an absconder in Lahore Conspiracy Case.

May 8, Wednesday

One of the prisoners, recently sentenced for counterfeiting coins, is an extraordinarily cheerful person. He sings at his work and in the evening and he sings well. But what attracts is the care-free voice—it has a tone and a ring in it which is very unusual in prison.

Some time back there was a lunatic under observation in one of the cells. He sang and shouted and conversed with himself in a loud voice unendingly. It was amazing how he could carry on without stopping for long hours of the day and night. He was not amusing at all but somehow his voice fascinated me. I never saw him. He was sent on from here to a lunatic asylum.

As the roof of my old barrack is taken off numerous sparrows' nests appear, some with eggs, some with young ones. A few of the little ones have survived so far and we have been taxing our ingenuities in order to feed them and keep them going. It is a hard job and I am afraid we shall fail.

There has been great commotion in sparrow land. There is no less of a commotion among the human beings in the prison—prisoners and warders—since the new supt. and jailer took charge. The old order, mild and fraternal, is no more. There are continual searches, traps for the unwary, *peshis* and stiff punishments. Today a prisoner, I was told, had to undergo stand-up handcuffs, or whatever this inhuman punishment is called.

It is very peaceful in this tent under the starlit night with a pale quarter-moon in the sky. Only the jail cries and countings are nearer and they jar. And every now and then the warders come by on their rounds.

May 11, Saturday

I have been jotting down today some figures about my previous convictions, sentences, prisons etc. I have to rely entirely on my memory and it is surprising how weak it is in regard to these. It is evident that the sentences did not create a powerful impression on me. Still for what it may be worth I am noting down here some of the vague and uncertain facts dug out of an elusive memory.

50 [illegible] 57

Year of sentence	Offence	Place of detention	Period of	Actually served	Jail	Remarks
(1) 1921	Distributing leaflets asking for relief in connection with [illegible] [illegible] Dec 1920	Lucknow	6 months	2 months (Dec 1921 to March 1922)	Lucknow District	Sentence passed [illegible] by superior court after 2 months
(2) 1922	Government intimidation and sedition – sedition and many charges	Allahabad	18 months and fine	9 months (April 1922 to January 1923)	Allahabad District and Lucknow District	Long and [illegible] trial on publishing [illegible] articles. Released in January 1923 owing to general amnesty of political [illegible] in the U.P.
(3) 1923	Breach of Sec 108 under Conspiracy [illegible]	Meerut	2½ years	15 days (no indication)	Meerut Central	Sentence suspended on [illegible] [illegible]
(4) 1930	Breach of Salt Act	Allahabad	6 months	6 months (April to October 1930)	Naini Central Prison (including 10 months)	Fight [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
(5) 1930	Sedition & breach of various ordinances – many charges	Allahabad	18 months and fine	2½ months (Oct 1930 to January 1931)	Naini Central	Released [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Committee [illegible]
(6) 1932	Breach of ordinances when [illegible] [illegible] in Allahabad [illegible]	Allahabad	2 years and fine Rs 1000	20 months (Dec 1932 to August 1933)	Naini Central, Lucknow District, Sitapur District, Bareilly Central, Meerut Central, Dehra Dun District, Meerut Central & Meerut Dist.	Dacoit [illegible] Sentence [illegible] [illegible] 13 days, [illegible] by [illegible] Released for a [illegible] in August 1933. [illegible]
(7) 1934	Sedition in speeches	Calcutta	2 years	13 months (Sentence fine) (Feb 1934 to May 1935)		

Total of sentences amounts to — 10½ years

Period actually served so far (Mid-May 1935) — 4 years 9 months

Still to serve of present sentence — 9 months.

Nathu Sentence suspended (still!) — 2 years 6 months

Quashed by court — 3 months
Amnesty — 7 months
Remissions — 5 months
Premature release — 15 months
. . . 2 years 6 months

10 years 6 months

Thus including remissions I have so far served over five years. → 11 May 15th. 1935.
↳ 5 years 2 months.

Prisons where I have been kept.

approx. periods.

Lucknow District Jail	12 months	1921, 1922, 1923
Allahabad District Jail	10 days	1922
Naini Central Jail	15 days	1923
Naini Central Prison	12½ months	1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934.
Yeravda Central Prison Poona.	10 days	1930
Bareilly District Jail	4 months	1932
Dehra Dun District Jails	17½ months	1932, 1933, 1934
Presidency Jail Calcutta	4 days	1934
Alipore Central Jail Calcutta	2¾ months	1934
Almora District Jail	6½ months	1934, 1935
	(to mid May) →	
	4 years 8½ months approx.	
walking under custody (railway journeys)	13 days	
detained in Anand Bhawan in August 1934	11 days	
Total.	4 years 9½ months approx.	

May 12, Sunday

The ways of prison. My old barrack has been partly broken down. The whole roof is off—On one side a large hole has been made in the wall where a new door will be put in. The hole is big enough to allow three persons to march in abreast. But still the old barred door on the opposite side is solemnly locked up every evening! It is immaterial, so far as the gaol authorities are concerned, that the opposite wall hardly exists and people can march in and out with the greatest ease through it, although the old door is locked. Inside there is nothing but broken stones etc. But the routine must be observed!

Another instance of gaol efficiency. The estimate for my barrack repairs was made originally before I came to Almora jail. It was based naturally on measurements of the length and breadth taken with an ancient tape in the office. Even after my arrival this tape was produced and used to measure it. The estimate was high and the I.G. protested and wanted it revised. The jail people protested that on the basis of those measurements it could not be revised or lowered. They had given the lowest figure. After months of correspondence—in the course of which the P.W.D. was consulted and the district engineer visited the barrack—the I.G. sanctioned the repairs. His hands were forced by the threat that the roof might come down on me at any moment and would in no event survive the monsoon.

A huge quantity of stones were collected for this work—iron sheets for the roof were ordered. The stones had to be paid for by cubic area and the question of their measurement arose. The contractor claimed that he had brought about 2200 c.ft. of them. This seemed a lot and the jail officials haggled with him and almost tried to strike a bargain for 1600 c.ft. Ultimately the bright idea struck them that they might themselves measure the stones collected near my barrack. They brought their ancient tape and were in some difficulties with it. I came out of my barrack and offered them a small 5 ft. tape which I possessed. With the help of this and extensive calculations they came to the *conclusion that the stones amounted to about 900 c.ft. only!*

When I suggested that they might invest in a new tape the jailer complained of the high prices in Almora where such a tape would cost Rs. 3/8. The result of using my 5 ft. tape was a revelation to them. They examined their old tape again and found that it had been cut *across and the two ends tied up but in between over 40 ft. were missing!* So that all their measurements were 40 ft. or more in error. Such an obvious and enormous error had so far passed unnoticed.

Thus my barrack which was patently not more than 50 or 60 ft. long had been put down by them as over 100 ft. long and all their calculations had proceeded on this basis. No one with any eye for distance or length could make such an extraordinary error. Long ago I had myself noted down in my diary that the length inside was about 52 ft. But I had never been asked or told what their measurements were.

So that all their calculations were 40% in excess of requirements and orders for material—iron sheeting, stones etc—have already been sent out on this basis. The error has only now been found out and the jail officials are not happy about it, though the new jailer probably feels that the fault is not his as he is a newcomer. Still there is consternation, for the I.G.—Salamatullah—is known to be a wrathful person.

One good result—a new tape has at last been bought even though it cost Rs. 3/8!

Such minor lapses may occur. But jail discipline must be enforced at all costs. Since the new jailer came there have been scores of *peshis* of prisoners and warders and punishments. There is a general atmosphere of resentment and everyone remembers, with a sigh, the good old days of the old jailer, Ganga Prasad. There is a deal of sneaking and spying and of one warder trying to get another into trouble going on.

Am I deteriorating in gaol? I must be. I am dull and lazy and I seem to feel less interest in the world and its doings. It is not unhappiness, though of course there is a good deal of it. But I have been far more unhappy at other times. It is just flatness, want of pep—Events recorded in the papers sometimes anger me and then I forget them and return to my petty jail routine. Is it age? Or jail life, or both? The keenness seems to be going from life.

Day after tomorrow I go to Bhowali for the last time to bid farewell to Kamala and Indu! And I return here to begin my sixteenth month of my present sentence.

May 16, Thursday

Yesterday at 3.30 in the afternoon—Kamala & Indu & Madan left the Bhowali sanatorium for Kathgodam by car. I bade goodbye to them and immediately started for Almora. I took the high road and she took the low. When will we meet again? And where? My visits to Bhowali have ended and the changeless routine of the Almora jail now confronts me. After nearly seven months of it I am used enough to it. Coming back to it there is a feeling of returning to my normal abode.

I have the flowers at least for company and they are coming out bravely to lighten the burden of my loneliness and separation.

Perhaps I might get transferred to some other jail. There are rumours that I am to be sent to Dehra Dun. Why Dehra? I dislike the place now with its high walls and narrow enclosure. Anyway I have nine months more almost to a day before I finish my term and one jail is not very different from another.

Mother was present at the parting at Bhowali sanatorium. She was terribly affected. Poor brave old lady.

Kamala must have reached Allahabad today. It has been so hot here today and the thought of Kamala having to face the Allahabad heat after eight months of Bhowali has unnerved me. What will be her condition when she sails?...

May 19, Sunday

No news of Kamala except a news item in the papers that she reached Allahabad and was removed from the train in a stretcher! I am sending a telegram to Bombay where she ought to have reached this evening —to enquire.

It is cool at night and hot in the day time. The tent becomes very close and stuffy in the middle of the day. I go to bed later than usual and walk in my little garden in the moonlight. I am up earlier too, sometimes soon after four or at 4.30 a.m. I make up for the short night's rest by sleeping in the day time—a disturbed sleep in an oppressive atmosphere. Today, during my afternoon siesta I had a curious dream. I saw father standing in front of me. This is not an unusual dream and previously I took him for granted and there was no surprise. But this time I was surprised. I remembered that he had died and wondered how he had appeared. I looked hard at him and then his features gradually changed and instead of him there was mother standing! I woke up weeping copiously.

May 20, Monday

I had news of Kamala's arrival in Bombay today. Still I felt disturbed and upset all day. A number of petty occurrences added to the strain and my ill humour. Water was scarce today and my plants wilted. Some young ones are drying away. A good part of my labour on them seems to be wasted. Then in the morning a large number of goats

appeared carrying loads for the repair work going on in the old barrack. Some of the goats, in spite of precautions, swallowed some of my flowers and a particular cosmos plant in which I was taking special interest. Later someone inadvertently almost ended a young *zinnia plant*. A chapter of disasters!

It is hot all day and stuffy. The sun is strong. And all day there is shouting going on among the prisoners who are working as masons and labourers. They have to pass to and fro from my yard to the other parts of the jail. A locked gate intervenes and every time there are long and repeated shouts of *jamadar kholo*, before the gate is opened. Sometimes this shouting goes on for half an hour at a time. The gate is about 15 feet from my little tent so I get the full benefit of it.

So all day I was in an irritated mood. As it grew cool in the evening I cooled down also to some extent. But I feel weary and discontented. There is no looking forward to my next visit to Bhowali, no counting of days. One can hardly count them when they run into hundreds! Two hundred and seventy one days still to the end of my term.

June 3, Monday

For two weeks I have not written in this book. Two dull weeks, sometimes with various thoughts gnawing within me, sometimes feeling unhappy, but on the whole I have kept together and more or less peaceful. I have busied myself with my little garden, spending hours daily over it; not doing much but it was a good excuse to occupy myself. Water grows scarcer than ever and it is a daily problem how to ration my limited supply. In Almora city, I am told there is considerable suffering for want of water and petty riots occur at the public pumps where crowds gather and wait for hours. The municipality, or whoever is responsible, must be thoroughly incompetent. There is water enough 6 or 7 miles away and the least that might have been done was to get one or two lorries and cart the water.

On the whole the jail people have been good to me as regards the water and perhaps I get more than my proper share. I feel guilty of using it for plants when people suffer the lack of it. But I console myself that these people would not get it anyhow.

It has been very hot and the tent is almost unbearable in the middle of the day. I have been nearly a month in this tent and with all this heat I prefer it greatly to the barrack. The evenings are very pleasant

and I walk about till late at night under the stars. Today there was the new moon in all its beauty.

My care and constant attendance has not been wasted. The flowers appear, even though they are starved of water. Some of the sunflowers are enormous. One of them is 10½ inches across The dahlias are also beautiful and large. Zinnias are coming out and so also canna and gladioli. If only it would rain! I scan the skies morning and evening but there is no trace of cloud. It has hardly rained at all for two months now.

I follow Kamala's journey. She must be nearing Venice now and in another two days she ought to be there. I had a cable or rather wireless from Indu from the Arabian Sea. No news since then. Also letters from her and Kamala from Bombay.

Yesterday there was an unusual sound and sight for Almora—the humming of an aeroplane. Probably someone flying to Badrinath.

Today's papers brought the news of the Quetta earthquake[126]—a terrible affair. With all the shock it produced, it had a soothing effect on me. Before a great calamity one's own troubles seem to become trivial and unimportant.

I have come across a sonnet on the Buddha which I like and, with the picture of the Anuradhapura[127] Buddha before me, I have read it every evening. Strange how Buddha appeals to me. There is a physical appeal of even the statue in the conventional pose. Buddha —Marx—Gandhi—a strange medley!

June 7, 1935[128]

Indu darling,

On the 28th May I received your cable, probably sent from Aden or thereabouts, and forwarded to me from Bhowali. Day before yesterday came the cable informing me of your safe arrival in Vienna. I was half expecting news that day but I thought the cable would come from Venice. That you had all already reached Vienna was a surprise. I am afraid I am getting a bit out of date and am not keeping up with new developments in world travel.

126. On 31 May 1935, there was a severe earthquake in Quetta and the surrounding areas. Thirty to forty thousand people were reported dead.
127. Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka, established in 500 B.C., was the capital of ancient Sinhalese kings. Its famous archaeological remains are the pyramidal *dagobas* or Buddhist *stupas*.
128. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

So you have arrived at the end of your sea journey and are in Vienna now. You will stick to the land now and may not have to cross the ocean again for a long time. I have followed the course of the *Conte Rosso* since it bore you away from Bombay, and have tried to find vicarious joy in the voyage. Did not the dark water of the Indian Ocean sparkle with phosphorescence in the night? And then Aden, drab and dull, with the white glare of the hot sun, and little to see or do, except to visit the old tanks which are not worth a visit. Do you remember Djibouti near by? That was bare enough and dreary, but it had some romance for it is the gateway to Abyssinia and the interior. The only thing worth seeing was sometimes the magnificent body of a negro, like an ebony statue.

From Aden I accompanied you through the Red Sea and I could well imagine the heat. It could not have been much hotter there than in Almora at present. The *Conte Rosso* enters the Suez Canal with its sandy stretches on either side and an occasional camel going by, slouching along with its soundless feet. And Port Said with the statue of Ferdinand De Lesseps[129] pointing towards his great achievement.

It was pleasant to enter the cool, blue Mediterranean with all its memories of early civilizations. The Isles of Greece—'where burning Sappho loved and sung' (Byron's lines come back to me from the old days in Harrow when I had to learn them by heart)—and Ithaca, home of Ulysses. Your boat must have passed quite near to Ithaca, with its bare rock standing out of the sea, but I doubt if anyone pointed it out to you. Up the Adriatic, a troubled sea with rival nations on either side glaring at each other. And Venice, queen of that sea, which once 'held the glorious East in fee'. But you could only have a fleeting glimpse of her for you were bound for Trieste. I have never been to Trieste but I imagine that it has dwindled since the days before the war when it was Austria's chief port.

So we travelled together, you and mummie and I, but now I do not know what your programme is and so I have to stay in Almora jail. I am still in the tent—there is not a drop of rain and not a cloud in the sky, and the heat seems to grow worse. If it is so bad here what of the plains? *On dit* that this has been a record summer all over India and the heat has not been so intense and continuous for a long, long time. There is a permanent heat wave on and large numbers of people collapse daily unable to bear this gift of the sun god. Soon after you sailed from Bombay temperatures went up everywhere and they have continued up ever since. Even in Almora it has been 100°F. in the

129 (1805-1894), French diplomat and engineer, who constructed the Suez Canal.

shade, and in Allahabad and Lucknow 115° and 116° have been touched.

It is June 'What a tune, kind June, you are playing all the noon', says the Harrow song. But June is not kind here and the tune it plays is not pleasant or soothing. There is one consolation: the monsoon is slowly creeping up from Colombo and the south and perhaps in another two or three weeks we shall emerge from the Turkish bath and feel cool again.

But all this grousing about the heat seems trivial and out of place in view of the appalling catastrophe that has overwhelmed Quetta and north-west India You must have heard of it. On the last day or night of May a terrific earthquake laid a fine city and numerous towns and villages low, and where Quetta stood is now a heap of ruins, a wilderness of brick and plaster and dust covering thousands of human bodies. These mighty disasters move us and yet, as a rule, they seem far removed from us. But last year's Bihar earthquake brought them very near to me and that insight has made me realise their horror far more than I had ever done before. The Quetta earthquake is evidently on a vaster scale even than the Bihar one and estimates of the dead alone exceed fifty thousand.

And this reminds me that you must feel rather cut off from India without Indian newspapers. It seems rather silly to get a daily from India and I am not aware of a decent weekly which gives a good summary of news. There is the semi weekly *Leader* which is a perfect rag. I do not know if you or mummie made any arrangements for papers before you left. Anyway I am arranging to have some periodicals sent to mummie. They are not newspapers in the narrower sense and they cannot take the place of one. They are the *Hindu Illustrated Weekly* of Madras, the *Modern Review* and the *Vishal Bharat* (Hindi magazine). Besides these you might get an Indian paper, perhaps *The Bombay Chronicle*, but I leave that to you and mummie.

Apart from Indian papers I would advise you to subscribe to the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*. This is cheap and good and will keep you in touch with important world happenings. You can order it through any news agent on the continent or send for it direct. You ought of course to read the local papers wherever you may be.

My flowers are fighting bravely for life but their thirst is seldom quenched. I ration out the little water I can get. I cannot complain when I know that people in Almora city have sometimes to fight for small quantities of water. Still we carry on, my flowers and I. Some of the sunflowers turned out to be enormous—nearly a foot across in diameter. The dahlias have also been a success and so also the zinnias and morning glory. Impatiently we all wait for the rains and scan the

sky for signs of clouds. Meanwhile the flowers and plants wilt and dry up.

Perhaps *en route* you looked through the second volume of *Glimpses*. It is a fearsome object, enough to frighten the bravest. Yet I hope that the inside is not so bad or heavy, though it is long. I should like to know what parts of it interested you and what parts you found difficult to follow. Probably the letters dealing with economics and financial affairs you found dull. It is a new subject for you and it takes time to get one's bearings. My own private belief is that some of my last letters dealing with the world financial situation are rather good. I have tried to explain a rather complicated process in as simple language as I could. They are very elementary of course and yet, strange as it may sound, most of our big politicians and the like are hopelessly ignorant of the subject. If you read through those two volumes you will have a better knowledge of world history and affairs and the economic and financial basis of the modern world than many a well-known politician who holds forth eloquently on the platform. Nothing like blowing one's own trumpet! But remember that the world changes so rapidly nowadays that even these last two years, since I finished writing those letters, have made them a little out of date. So much has happened and is happening before our eyes.

Among my companions in this little tent—besides you and mummie—is a picture of the Anuradhapura statue of the Buddha. For nearly three years I have had it with me and I gaze at it often finding comfort in its amazing strength and calm. You gave me a number of the *Visva Bharati Quarterly* and in this I read a sonnet on a Buddha statue which I rather liked. I wonder if you read it. In case you did not, I shall quote it here. It is by E.H. d'Alvis who is apparently a Sinhalese Buddhist.

Nay, do not mock me with those carven eyes:
    I too might grow, beneath that gaze of thine,
Desireless, immortal, unerringly wise,
    Disdaining human dreams. Lo, by thy shrine
A multitude slow-worshipping still goes
    Unsandalled, bearing perfumed offerings,
While down the avenues of time still flows
    The splendid pageant of all timeless things.
Nay, do not mock me with that ecstasy,
    Born of a peace abstracted from life's pain:
Love and its futile dream shall trouble me
    Too briefly—I shall find myself again,
And look on thee impassioned, mute, alone,
    An agelessness invincible in stone.

I am afraid I have no desire to be 'desireless, immortal, unerringly wise' and I certainly do not want to disdain human dreams. Indeed I do not believe that Gautama himself disdained them. But there is something extraordinarily attractive in that 'ecstasy, born of a peace abstracted from life's pain'. Of all the great men of the past, the Buddha attracts me more and more.

I have had no interview since I wrote to you last, nor have I had any news from anyone in India. My letters only go to and come from beyond the seas now! Day after tomorrow I am told *chhoti puphi* and Raja Bhai will come to see me. I had expected the big *puphi* also and Ranjit Bhai but apparently they are not yet at Bhowali. What they are doing in Allahabad with the children in this heat I cannot imagine.

Soon I hope a letter will come from you from Aden bringing me more news than the brief telegrams have done. Meanwhile I shall think of you in far away Europe busied with a hundred things, with new sights to engage your attention, while I go through my daily round and walk up and down my little yard and gaze at the young moon waxing bigger nightly.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

June 9, Sunday

Interview today with Betty, Raja, Chand, Tara & Rita. Ranjit it appears has been very ill—a touch of the *loo*—and he & Nan are still in Allahabad His health, which I used to envy so much, seems to be broken up. I feel sad about it.

Betty & Raja go back to Bombay soon. I suppose I shan't see them for many months.

News of Kamala's arrival in Vienna came sooner than I expected—on the 5th morning. She reached Vienna on the 4th—12 days after her departure from Bombay. The Italian Lloyd seems to have speeded up. I am now waiting for more detailed news about K's treatment. Also her letter & Indu's from Aden.

Madan, from all accounts, behaved like a child with a new toy in Bombay. He was evidently bucked up at the prospect of going to Europe and some new silk pyjamas & 'Russian' shirts, whatever they are, filled his mind to the exclusion of all else. Psyche writes that Indu

was the "business head of the party". Good for Indu but what of Madan?

What an arid waste is Indian humanity with few cases of intellect & character—very few. I feel depressed when I read the paper daily and notice the vulgarity all round. I cling to a hope, based on no sufficient reason, that great things can be done in India and rapidly. But doubts arise—with this material! And happenings all over the world are also depressing. Soviet Russia seems to be changing for the worse. The fine idealism that moved her is no longer apparent.

The sight of Chand, Tara & Rita today cheered me up—Chand I saw after five months, the others after nine and a half months—August 23—the day I was taken back to Nami. Rita insisted on my going out of jail with her. She would not go without me!

Sad winds where your voice was;
Tears, tears where my heart was;
And ever with me,
Child, ever with me,
Silence where hope was.

June 13, Thursday

Yesterday came a bundle of new books from Bebee. I felt cheered up not only at the books but at the thought of how she remembers me.

I have been reading, laboriously and painfully, my own production —volume 2 of *Glimpses of World History*. How tiring it is to read one's own writings—passages here and there interest and I am sometimes full of admiration for them! But to read through the whole thing is quite another story. I am doing so to correct mistakes. I had no chance of seeing the proofs—I did not even read the typescript. Indeed I never read the stuff in original or otherwise after the writing of it. Result: the book is chockfull of errors and misprints. It is really shocking how badly it has been supervised. Evidently care was not lacking, but what is one to do with sheer, unadulterated ignorance? I feel ashamed that such a production should be associated with my name.

I read this evening in the papers that Nan had been involved in a motor accident. Her car for some reason capsized in Fort Road in Allahabad and threw her out violently. The news item says that she had a narrow escape from death and that she had only a few scratches. It was comforting to know that she had escaped and yet I have felt

upset this evening. Tomorrow I shall try to send a telegram. Nan shaken up and perhaps injured—Ranjit ill—mother ill and weak—Kamala ill and far away—Indu also inaccessible—and I sitting in prison helpless and incapable of helping others!

June 19, Wednesday

For three days a great to-do in this jail—washing and scrubbing and shouting and cursing. The I.G. was coming for his annual inspection and the whole jail staff was in a state of fever at the prospect. Every such जनहंसी[130] seems to be a fearsome affair for jail officials but with Salamatullah the fear is, if anything, greater. He has a terrible reputation for strictness among the staff.

He came at last at about 7-30 this morning and suddenly the noises and the shouting stopped all over the place and a hush descended upon the jail. He spent nearly six hours in the prison making a fairly thorough inspection of the little jail and probably thoroughly exhausting the supt., jailer and assistant jailers. I do not know what the result of the inspection was.

The procession came to my little tent in the course of the morning and Salamatullah spent a quarter of an hour or so with me. He does not like at all the idea of my being in jail! Told me that the jail dept. was tired of keeping me and yet there was no way out—they could not even give me remissions for my imprisonment was simple.

He asked me to send books and papers to Savitri Devi. I gladly agreed. Poor woman. She has been suffering from typhoid now for over five weeks and, although she is a little better, it must have been a terrible ordeal. I suggested that I might be allowed to see her—He was agreeable but referred me to the supt.

Asked me if I would like a transfer. I told him that my only consideration was my mother and I would like to be accessible to her. As she will be going to Allahabad next month it seems possible that I might also be transferred to Naini in July or August. So I think—He said nothing about it.

Another surprise—Before midday today a telegram came from Bhowali forwarding a message from Madan. "Atal wires from Berlin Kamala stood operation well eighteenth evening." That is, she was operated upon last evening. It was fairly quick work my getting to know of it so soon *via* Bhowali.

130. *Jandalli*, demonstration of authority.

The cable brought a sense of relief. So the operation was over. Which of the various possible operations it was, I do not know. I had no idea that Madan would be so quick about it. I am glad he did not inform me before the operation.

Two days ago I received the first letters from Kamala & Indu since their departure from Bombay. They came from Port Said or Suez and I was cheered to read them. It interested me to learn that Indu had made a great hit with *chacha* (Jagat Narayanji). He considers her an eminently sensible and well brought up girl.

I am now in my seventeenth month—16 months have been completed and less than eight months remain or to be accurate 240 days from today, fixing February 15th as the last day Today I complete 300 days since my re-arrest on August 23rd, 1934. How a prisoner counts the days!

June 20, Thursday

Another surprise! A second letter from Indu within four days—from Vienna by air mail. A pleasing letter, long & full. It was good of the Supt. to let me have it so soon after the last

The Supt. is not at all pleased with the I.G. I am not surprised. He was kept in the jail office for six hours continuously yesterday and then had to look after his own civil surgeon's work etc. Poor man had no rest at all while the I.G. went and had a good sleep.

I may not see Savitri Devi—It appears that all questions of interviews —letters etc. relating to her have to be referred to the C.I.D. office in Allahabad and at such interviews a C I.D. man is present.

June 21, 1935[131]

Darling Indu,

I feel rich, rich beyond the dreams of avarice. Have I not had within a few days two letters from you and mummie and a cablegram? Truly in gaol this is unexpected wealth, an *embarras de richesse*, for which I am grateful to all concerned. But can I ever be embarrassed by this variety of riches?

First *came your long-expected letter from en route—Suez, as it hap*pened to be. Soon after, day before yesterday, I had the cable from Berlin informing me of the operation, and yesterday came your letter from Vienna. These frequent messages, and the speed with which

131. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

they came, brought you all very near to me. The sense of distance vanished and I realised more than ever how modern methods of communication and transportation make the world shrink. Madan's telegram was forwarded on to me from Bhowali and yet I received it on the forenoon of the 19th, within a few hours of the operation. Your air mail letter took just eight days to reach me. Almora is of course far from the high road and then I happen to be in prison.

I learnt of the operation with some surprise for I had not expected it quite so soon, but I felt relief also. It was well that it was over and done with. So far I have no details and do not know how successful the operation was in reaching the seat of the trouble. I am awaiting them. Meanwhile I console myself that one big hurdle has already been taken with success on the way to mummie's recovery.

As far as I can make out from your letters you had a rather thin time on board and kept largely to yourself. I was sorry for this for I had hoped that you would meet many people and would enjoy yourself. Of course, necessarily, much of your time was taken up in looking after mummie. And it was perhaps inevitable that you should not pay a visit to Cairo from Suez. Do you know that I have crossed the canal eight times and yet have never managed to visit Cairo or the Pyramids etc? Not because I was not keen on doing so—I was and am terribly keen on going there. Indeed it is partly my very desire to see them that has kept me away, strange as it may sound. I hated the idea of rushing to them like a whirlwind tourist. It seemed an insult to the Pyramids, an impertinence to the Sphinx. I wanted to go to them at leisure, in proper company or none, in proper mood, so that I might lose myself for a while in the atmosphere of the days when the Sphinx was young and the Pyramids grew up on the face of the desert. Alas, that was not to be, and life has a way of not repeating too often its opportunities.

And then Naples—I was there for nearly three days—I visited Pompeii and Vesuvius and various odd places, but not the museum. I had kept that rare delight to the last and then something happened which prevented me from going. Even then I could have paid a brief visit but that seemed to me unbecoming, for the Naples museum is one of the famous world museums, full as it is of the wonderful statuary of the early Greeks. I promised myself to return to Naples to see the museum and wander about the enchanting neighbourhood—a promise that has not been kept so far.

And now I have come to the conclusion that it is not wise to tempt life too much by passing by opportunities that may not occur again. It is always worthwhile to see a place that is worth seeing and to

meet people who are worth meeting. I may visit Italy again, I certainly hope that I shall do so, and when I go there I shall take joy from the many beautiful things that Italy contains. But now I shall go with the burden of thought and worry, with occasionally a certain fictitious importance which forces me to pose, to be unnatural, to guard my spoken word, to check almost my thoughts. To enjoy the magic beauty of Italy one must have the insouciance of care free youth. But indeed to enjoy anything to the utmost, youth is necessary, youth not so much in years as of the spirit. According to a modern philosopher the deepest definition of youth is, life as yet untouched by tragedy; and the finest flower of youth is to know the lesson in advance of the experience, undimmed. To see the beauty of nature and of art with those undimmed and sparkling eyes is the glory of youth and the joy of life and an experience that is wonderfully worth having.

Fortunately, in spite of all its tragedy, there is plenty of beauty and art in the world. Every country, every little corner has its share. But in some ways Italy has been particularly gifted and nature and man-made art have joined hands to cast a spell on the land, an enchantment which is almost intoxicating like hashish, a smell of ancient days and a *dolce far niente* feeling which makes one forget for a while the troubles of this world.

I have, rather needlessly and completely irrelevantly, grown enthusiastic over the beauties of Italy. Partly, as you know, it is an old habit of mine to leave the high road and wander along the shady and deserted lanes and by-ways. Partly there is another and a psychological reason. What am I to write to you about from Almora jail? You have the advantage over me for you can tell me of fresh experiences, new sights, new people and all manner of other things. My life at present is not so frightfully exciting as to bear reporting. There is a severe uniformity about it, but though serenity and uniformity may be all very well in their own way, one cannot dilate on them or grow eloquent over them. The days are singularly like each other and so are the weeks and months. My chief diversion is to count the days backwards and forwards. Almost I might say that, like Robinson Crusoe, I make a notch for a day, but possessing a calendar, every evening I cross out a date with obvious satisfaction.

Am I to tell you of my daily routine?

> Rising early in the morning
> We proceed to light the fire,
> Then our majesty adorning
> In our work-a-day attire...

Of course I don't light the fire—it is fiery enough without artificial aid. But then Gilbert's lines came into my mind and I thought I might as well inflict them on you.

To go back. So you did not visit Cairo! Well, don't miss the chance next time you are round about it. You need not try to imitate your Papu in his errors of judgment and lapses. On this occasion, of course, you were perfectly right in not leaving mummie.

And your midnight shopping at Port Said and the Sindhi gentlemen who helped. How spoilt you will all get with all this care and kindness, when even the local fascists roll up, as you touch Italy, and present bouquets and harangue you in Dante's language (with modern improvements!). It is unfortunate not to appreciate all this because of one's ignorance of the language. French helped you to make a feeble bridge but you might have known that the easiest and speediest way of reaching the hearts of the visiting fascists was to salute them, fascist-fashion, with arm uplifted, and shout out: *Evviva Italia! Evviva Mussolini!* And if you felt musically inclined, to break forth into song *Giovinezza!...primavera...* (or whatever the words are)—you should have seen the effect of all this on your visitors. With tears in their eyes and voice breaking with suppressed (or not suppressed) emotions, they would probably have insisted on embracing you all, including Madan Bhai.

But now you are in Berlin and you must fashion yourself accordingly. The old recipe holds with only slight variation. The salute is the same—the cry is different: *Heil Hitler!* You must have heard plenty of *evvivas* when the Italian troopships passed you on their way to Abyssinia, and now in Naziland no doubt you have heard the *heils*.

To revert to more serious topics—your dress and your hair. I am glad you have shed most of your hair. It is curious how people's ideas change with changing habits and customs. I have long been very much opposed to men's beards. I have a horror of them. I dislike moustachios even. But now even women's long hair gives me a slight feeling of uncleanness. Subhas, or for the matter of that any Bengali, will be shocked to learn this for is not hair the glory of Bengal? In the matter of dress also you had better stick to frocks, of course sporting a sari occasionally. It is not a question of the beauty of the sari but of its suitability for particular occasions. Decidedly it is not a worker's dress, it is a lounger's costume. Lounge by all means in it, but don't ski or skate or play tennis or do a host of other things in it.

Don't bother about your health or about putting on weight. One must of course follow certain well-established rules of health but for the rest of it forget your body. A healthy body does not think of

itself. To bother oneself about one's health brings about a morbid outlook—unfortunately this is pretty common in India. Most people here are valetudinarians—a long word—I wonder if you know it.

And do not trouble yourself about dieting—the very word reminds one of aged invalids. What has a young girl to do with this kind of thing. Eat what you will. Do not imagine that too much meat eating adds to one's weight or strength. Meat makes one thin. Lead a sane healthy life full of intellectual interests and suitable bodily exercise and think no more of diet, weight and the like.

I am glad that Prof. Newmann has suggested that mummie should go to Leysin after her operation. Leysin is easily accessible from Lausanne; it is even nearer than Montana and you can just see it from parts of Montana. Leysin would fit in with our programme very well and would suit you also Indeed this was why I have been stressing all along the claims of Montana and Leysin—and I preferred the latter for various reasons. Dr. Kacker also recommended Leysin and gave letters for it. I was surprised and amused to read in your letter or mummie's that because some woman on board ship had said that Leysin was only known for treatment of bone T.B and for children therefore you had all come to the conclusion that poor Kacker was out of date. As a matter of fact this very subject was discussed by Kacker with Madan Bhai and Kacker pointed out that there were two Leysins (or rather two distinct parts of Leysin) each with many sanatoria, hotels etc. One part deals with bone T B. and some cures made famous by Dr. Rollier; the other part deals with the lungs etc. and has famous doctors attached to it. It was to the doctors of this other part that Kacker gave letters of introduction. Kacker is, as a matter of fact, fairly up to date in this matter as he visited Switzerland last year. Evidently Madan Bhai forgot our talk completely and was led astray by the woman on board.

As between Montana and Leysin, the latter would be preferable as it is lower than Montana. Also I think a new place would please mummie more than the old Etablissement Stephani (which, I hear, has been enlarged and modernised).

The advice I give can be of little use for it must reach you late and besides I cannot know all the facts here. You must all decide on the spot. If it is decided to go to Leysin presumably you will pass through Lausanne. In case you stop there I think it might be worthwhile to consult the physician for whom Kacker gave a letter. He gave several letters for Lausanne. Now that the operation has taken place the surgeons can be eliminated. The best known physician of Lausanne might be consulted chiefly to get into touch with him as mummie will

be staying nearby at Leysin. But of course it is not necessary to go to Lausanne for this purpose—the Leysin man is good enough. This is merely a suggestion. Madan Bhai must decide.

I have not heard from Mlle. Hemmerlin. Probably her letters went to Anand Bhawan. You must remember that I do not get any letters now except yours and mummie's from abroad. Perhaps at my next interview *puphi* may tell me about Hemmerlin's letters.

I am glad Jal was wise enough to retain the extra volumes of *Glimpses in Bombay*. One is enough of a burden for you. I have myself been laboriously and painfully reading through volume 2. Laboriously, because it is an effort to read what one has oneself written; bits here and there interest but to read through the whole is a trial. Painfully, because it is full of mistakes. There are even more errors than I had imagined. I am afraid nothing can be done now. I have corrected my copy of the book marginally and it looks like a bundle of proof sheets full of corrections. I am asking Upadhyaya to send a list of the major corrections to the translators. He will also send you a copy of this for reference.

Yes, I received the mangoes you sent from Bombay. I have also received other mangoes since. So in this respect I am better off than you.

You must be still in Berlin when this letter reaches there and I am tempted to send it direct there. But I must resist the temptation and follow instructions. So it will go to Geneva. You expected to be in Berlin for a fortnight after the operation. I hope you can get away so soon. But I fear the stay may be prolonged.

I am still in the tent and no rain has come so far, though the clouds sometimes appear to mock us. In Bombay the monsoon has broken with a great flourish. Here it is hot and dry. Still I carry on with my faithful flowers and, since they have appeared, numbers of butterflies and moths and crowds of bees hover round them. I am reminded of a dainty Chinese story. A Chinese emperor, desiring to choose a bride, collected the most beautiful women to choose from. And each was wondrously beautiful. It became difficult to choose. So the emperor had recourse to a strange device in this beauty contest. He took them to a garden and left the choice to the butterflies! He waited to see on whom the butterflies would alight mistaking her for the most beautiful of flowers. And so the prize was awarded. A charming and artistic conception and yet imagine the embarrassment of the beautiful one pursued by butterflies, moths and bees!

Writing about the Chinese a nursery rhyme of theirs comes into my mind. It is addressed to a little girl. It describes the various good

points and uses of a number of animals—horses, dogs, cats, mice etc. and then it finishes up with the enquiry:

> But what are we to do
> With a little girl like you?

Of course this is a translation I am afraid you are not quite so little now as you were and I hardly dare address you in this manner. And then you have made yourself so useful that you can stand comparison with the various animals of the Chinese poem. When you have even won the goodwill of *chacha* what more need be said?

My last interview, 12 days ago, was with *chhoti puphi* and Raja and the children—Chand, Tara and Rita. I was expecting *bari puphi* but she was still in Allahabad. Ranjit had got a bad attack of *loo* and ran a very high temperature—between 104° and 105°—for some days. Then suddenly I saw in the papers one day that *puphi* had had a toss from her car in Fort Road in Allahabad. The car had overturned and thrown her out. It was a miraculous escape for her. She and Ranjit are now at Bhowali or perhaps at Khali—I hope to see them day after tomorrow.

I was delighted to see the children—Chand I had seen in January, when the snow had fallen here, but Tara and Rita I saw after nine and a half months. They looked well—only Tara had indulged in a fall down the hill-side and had scratched herself all over. Rita was disgusted at my staying on in prison and told me so—she said it was about time I came out and indeed insisted, to the point of crying, that I should accompany her out.

Well, well, this letter must end before your patience does so. You will share it of course with mumme and parts with Madan Bhai. Having had a mental outing I must revert to my shell and resume my daily routine, to be broken again fourteen days from today. Nights, I gaze at the sky and at the pale moon as it wanes away during the dark fortnight of the month, and I wonder what you are up to, and how mumme is, and how wide the world is and yet how narrow. Time passes, though sometimes it goes very slowly, and it may be that one day, many months hence, I may join you and wander about with you on the green hill-sides of the Alps, capped with snow. Or will it be winter—then, all white and dazzling, with its invitations to ski and skate and luge?

> The stars come nightly to the sky,
> The tidal wave into the sea;
> Nor time nor space nor deep nor high
> Can keep my own away from me.

I must add that soon after I finished this letter it began to rain and rain with some abundance. This is our first rain since the beginning of April—two and a half months ago It is most welcome and things are brightening up all round me.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

June 23, Sunday

I wrote to Kamala and Indu yesterday—This morning an interview—an extra one with Jamnalalji, Kailas Nath Katju & a girl whose name I forget—(Sushila,[132] Pyarelal's sister—apparently treated as a daughter by Jamnalalji. She is appearing for her M.B. at Delhi soon)—day after tomorrow Ranjit & Nan will come, on their way to Khali.

June 25, Tuesday

Interview with Nan & Ranjit and Hari—Ranjit looking pulled down, Nan fairly well. The children all unwell at Bhowali. Ranjit going to spend a month by himself at Khali....[133]

Nan gave me some news of the Indian world. Of Padmaja and how she has decided to pay a visit to Allahabad as soon as I am discharged—and that is a long time off yet, 235 days more to be accurate. Of Shammie and how excited she was in Mussoorie, meeting for the first time 'high society' of the type that flourishes there. Of the Kunwarani Maharaj Singh and her pride and great conceit in her new position—wife of the Home Member.

June 26, Wednesday

My little jail garden has got quite a reputation, at any rate in Almora town. I am told that people in the bazaars talk about it. The warders probably boom it up. The Supt, whenever he comes casts longing eyes on the zinnias and dahlias and hopes that he will share in the seeds. Salamatullah, the I.G., was also struck by some of my flowers. He rather fancies himself as an amateur gardener.

132. Dr. Sushila Nayyar attended on Mahatma Gandhi till his death Minister, Delhi state, 1952-57; Minister for Health, Government of India, 1962-66

133. Personal comments omitted.

A head warder has recently been transferred here from Bareilly District Jail. He was asked one day by the Supt. there, the civil surgeon, to whip a person. It was a court punishment. He refused and said that this was not his job. He was a Brahman etc. He persisted in his refusal and was fined Rs. 5/- and transferred immediately.

One of the warders who is supposed to look after me brought a slate and suggested that I might teach him the English alphabet etc. I tried to dissuade him as I thought he could not learn much within a few weeks or months He was a retired soldier and had been made to learn 'Roman' in the army but he had forgotten. After a day or two his slate was noticed by the Supt, in the warder's absence (when another was on duty). The slate has been confiscated.

There have been a few showers of rain which have definitely eased the situation so far as the garden and the water supply are concerned. But the jail officials have not woken up to the fact yet. Although there is plenty of water available in the jail, prisoners are still sent with fetters to some spring miles away to fetch water. Several times the water they brought with tremendous trouble up hill—two big tins per person—was not wanted by anybody here. Human labour has no value in jail.

An interesting way of creating 'work', I am told, is to bang with a pole at the branches of a neem tree so that large numbers of leaves and seeds fall to the ground—and then making a prisoner pick them all up. The process to be repeated.

June 28, Friday

I complete eight months today in the jail!

A letter from Madan Atal from Berlin dated June 21st. Just a week from Berlin to Almora—good going

Madan describes Kamala's operation by Prof. Unverricht, who apparently is the biggest man for this particular operation—cauterization of the adhesions. The description of the operation shows what great progress modern surgical technique has made. An electric bulb being introduced through a small wound, thus lighting up the inside—Also an eye piece... . The operation was successful.

But now another development. Indu has not been well and she was diagnosed as having a chronically inflamed appendix. So perhaps she has already been subjected to an operation also.

In today's paper there is a long list of the guests invited by the Nawab of Chhatari to meet the Governor at lunch at Nami Tal. Among them are Kunwar Anand Singh & the Kunwarani! Visions of Dehra jail!

July 4, Thursday

Indu is not to be operated upon—So I learn from a cable and letter from Madan. The cable came from Badenweiler which means that Kamala has settled down there for some time.

There has been no letter from Indu so far.

What a strange thing is the growing tip of a creeper—full of energy and life, animal like and almost sinister looking. Even the feel is that of an animal. Sometimes it stands up erect, like a snake, and it is not difficult to imagine a snake's face and especially the eyes; sometimes it coils up or, more often, catches something in its coils. I watch these tips daily with fascination.

July 5, 1935[134]

TO MADAN ATAL

My dear Madan,

I have had your two letters of the 21st and 25th June and your cable about Indu. Your full account of Kamala's operation was most interesting. This successful operation is a good and comforting beginning to Kamala's treatment in Europe and I hope her recovery now will be steady and rapid. Perhaps she is already out of bed. After so many long months of it, this itself must have an inspiring effect.

You were indeed fortunate in going to such an expert as Unverricht for the operation and it is only right that you follow his advice now regarding future treatment. You propose to stay, you write to me, two or three months at Badenweiler, that is, till the end of September. This period should enable you and Unverricht to form a clear opinion of Kamala's progress. If all goes well and no fresh operation for cauterizing another adhesion is indicated, I take it that the A.P. treatment will continue, the periods when the A.P. is given being lengthened out. Presumably in such a case the question of the other operation (Sambuck's) does not arise.

In September you will presumably decide, with Unverricht's advice, whether to stay on in Badenweiler or go elsewhere. Naturally there is no question of trying experimental remedies, nor should Kamala go to a place where good medical advice is not available. But there are plenty of places to choose from and ultimately you had better abide by Unverricht's advice, unless he is indifferent. I have an idea, and I give it

134 J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

to you for what it is worth, that a winter in a hill station where there is plenty of snow is very good for a T.B. patient. Ordinarily one winter is supposed to be equal to two summers. Badenweiler is probably not suitable for the winter.

About Indu, I can say nothing from here. I note that the suggested operation for appendicitis is off. Well and good. If, however, at any time the doctors there think that an operation is necessary then it must be faced. It is curious how nothing radically wrong has ever been found with Indu and yet she does not prosper. I remember, when we were last in Switzerland, I had her thoroughly overhauled by children's specialists and other doctors and they were all rather surprised at finding nothing wrong with her. And yet obviously she was below par. It was then, as now, a question of tonics etc. I am not worried about her health. I think she will get over these infantile weaknesses. Anyway, you have the best medical advice available and you must seek it whenever necessary.

There is one aspect, however, which doctors do not often pay attention to, and that is the psychological. I am convinced that to give psychological satisfaction is far more necessary than the physical satisfaction of tonics. This, in my opinion, requires a life of mental and physical activity in a pleasant atmosphere with companions and fellow students. This leads to growth, physical and mental, the lessening of the feeling of self-consciousness and self-centredness, and the development of the spirit of cooperation. I am no believer in our present-day home life for children except from time to time in the shape of holidays. This is especially so in the case of only children who have no companions at home and who are apt to get terribly self-centred and maybe even morbid.

Of course I do not mean to imply that Indu is at all morbid or given that way. I am happy to know that her outlook is fairly sane and healthy but she has just a tendency to introspection which is not to be encouraged at her age. It is all very well for me sitting in Almora jail to be introspective. For her, life should beckon out—she should be an extrovert not an introvert, and for this purpose it is desirable and necessary for her to live as much as possible in large, cooperative and educational surroundings. It is a curious fact worth noticing that almost always Indu has kept better health in school or college than at home, although she had far better food at home. The moral is obvious. Away from home she lived more of a community life and was less conscious of herself and so she prospered. At home, inevitably there was coddling and arguing and an attempt to feed up and consequent disinclination to eat and a want of suitable companions etc.

That Indu will get over her petty physical short-comings I have no doubt. My chief concern is that she should not acquire at this age the invalid's mentality, which is so common in India. And the best way to escape from it is to keep busy and not to pay too much attention to diet and the like.

I am writing to Kamala and Indu regularly every fortnight by air mail and so you will get news of me. Whenever necessary I shall write to you also. I hope you will also write to me from time to time to tell me how Kamala is getting on.

You have asked me to send letters for some time c/o American Express, Berlin, and this letter will therefore go to that address. But if you are settled down at Badenweiler, why should I not write direct to that address?

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

July 5, 1935[135]

Darling Indu,

The last fortnight has been a blank one so far as any letter from you is concerned. I suppose you wanted to make up for your extravagance of the fortnight before. Mummie of course could not write because of her operation. I have had, however, two letters from Madan Bhai from Berlin. He has given me a full account of the operation. He also told me that you were not exactly flourishing like the green bay tree. You have been made to swallow bismuth meal and have been screened and radiographed, and your appendix has been held to blame, and a threat to cut it off has been held forth. Poor appendix! But the latest news is that a reprieve has been granted to it, and you are *going to be (or more probably, are being at the present moment) stuffed* with tonics and powerful foods and drinks.

I do not particularly fancy your hob-nobbing too closely with the tribe of doctors. They are excellent people and I admire them greatly, but, on the whole, I prefer to keep at a distance from them professionally, and I have a feeling that medicine is usually better outside me than inside me. Of course under certain circumstances one must go to them and even swallow medicine, or get cut up. Surgery attracts me rather more than medicine. You can yourself form some idea of

135. Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML

what wonderful progress it has made. For the matter of that even medicine has gone ahead pretty fast in a variety of ways—but not so far in our beloved country.

However, all this is an aside. You must of course follow doctors' advice and if they insist on cutting you up, submit to their will. An operation for appendicitis is not very terrible after all. When I was a student in England it used to be quite fashionable especially among society women, and even quite healthy women would, perfectly needlessly, have their appendices cut out, paying heavily for this gratification of their desire to be up to date and smart Probably there is no such passion for this operation now but nevertheless it is common enough. Medical men have come to the conclusion that the appendix is a totally useless organ. There is a theory, I believe, that it is remotely connected with a tail which our simian ancestors had—a perpetual reminder of what we were. The tail has gone but the appendix still carries on uselessly. Perhaps in the course of a few thousand years this also will go.

Still I am glad that no present operation is indicated for you. I am afraid I have no use for such 'fashion' and to cut up the body is not to be encouraged unless necessity compels one. More and more I feel that health comes from inside rather than outside, from the observance of simple rules of life and activity, and at the same time from almost forgetting the body rather than tending it carefully like a hothouse plant. The body must be looked after, that is its due and is essential for our proper functioning. But to make of it an invalid and to think and speak continually of its pains and troubles is not only a most distressing habit (alas, so prevalent in our country!) but is calculated to make its condition worse. I sometimes feel that speaking about disease and illness, except in the case of necessity, should be forbidden by law. If such a law was passed in India, I am afraid quite fifty per cent of our subjects for conversation and small talk would disappear and many of our middle class folk would be tongue-tied. Is it not terrible how they discuss repeatedly and at length their painful and unsavoury ailments?

I remember a book, a famous one—Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*—in which a society is described where illness itself was made a crime; the more serious the illness, the heavier the sentence. On the other hand, crime, so-called now, was treated as a social disease to be treated by experts and not to be punished. The idea was carried to an extreme in the book, with some inevitable absurdities, but the way it pointed was correct. Read the book, it is worth it.

Where are you to get the books I suggest to you, you might well ask. You must know the Tauchnitz edition of English and American works published, I think, in Leipzig and for sale all over the Continent.

This is a wonderfully complete edition of almost all worthwhile books in the English language and it is far cheaper than the original edition in England or America. Any local bookseller will get Tauchnitz books for you and you can keep their fat catalogue.

So you are all in Badenweiler now and likely to remain there for two or three months more. I do not know that little town but I know well enough that all that neighbourhood is very beautiful, perhaps the best part of Germany, from nature's point of view. Very near you is the Black Forest, the Schwazwald, full of beauty spots. Not far is the Rhineland and the banks of the Rhine must be covered with the vine in these summer days (or am I mistaken about the season?). You were with us, were you not, when we steamed up the Rhine, following its winding course through town and countryside, passing its great rocks with frowning castles seated atop of them, and legends of long ago clinging to them. There was the great rock where the Lorelei[136] used to sit and sing and lure unhappy sailors to their destruction. And so we passed from Cologne to Mainz and thence to the old delightful city of Heidelberg. Do you not remember it, and the river Neckar and the professor of geology who took us reverently and proudly to his cabinet to show the ancient skull of the Homo Heidelbergiensis, that half-ape, half-man, one of the links in the missing chain of early human development? I am very fond of Heidelberg and several times I have been there, once with Dadu so long ago as 1909 to pay a visit to Shridhar *chacha* who studied there and lived in a pension run by a professor over 80 years old. That professor's one consuming passion was hatred for England and I believe he died during the war years through very excess of anger and hatred.

Freiburg is of course your very near neighbour and I suppose Wiesbaden cannot be far off. Bad Ems and Hamburg, if I remember aright, must also be round about somewhere. To both these places Dadu and Dolamma went when they first put me at Harrow. It was at Ems that *puphi's* (the elder one's—there was only one then) fifth birthday was celebrated, and Dadu gave a party to all the municipal school children of the place and the mayor or burgomaster, or whatever he is called, attended in state. Old memories come back to me and I write them down, thinking that they might interest you.

So you are in a beautiful land and the early summer must have covered the hill sides with flowers. I hope you will take some advantage of your position and have an occasional excursion. I am sure

136. On this cliff on the Rhine, according to German legend, lived a siren who by her singing lured sailors to their death

you will give pleasure to mummie if you do so, rather than if you remain with her all the time.

You have been now just over a month in Europe and you have seen something—not much I am afraid—of two of its great capitals. How did you like them, Vienna and Berlin? Berlin, with all its pomp and circumstance, is not very impressive. Munich, I think, is a more fascinating German town, and the Germans themselves have a saying: see Munich and die. Apart from its old fascination it has got a new and a wonderful appeal—the great Deutsches Museum built since the war. This is really something magnificent and worth going all the way from India to see.

When you were in Vienna it struck me how foolish I had been in omitting to have Czecho-Slovakia added in your passports. I hope you will get this defect remedied at some British Consulate. There will be no difficulty and it is as well to be prepared. You might also add Belgium and Holland. Suppose you want to pay a visit to Nanu at Prague or Praha as they call it? The city is said to be very beautiful. I have never seen it although I spent a month quite near it with Dadu at Carlsbad. Dadu wanted to go there because he said a resident of Prayag in India ought to visit this Prague of Europe! But he couldn't manage it. He was taking the 'cure' then at Carlsbad for his asthma etc.—Most people there come to get thin—So did old King Edward VII who used to visit Marienbad nearby regularly. It was rather comic to see crowds of people moving up and down every morning and evening before the springs with little mugs sipping the particular spring water that had been prescribed for them. I tasted this stuff once and turned away from it in disgust.

Then there were the baths at Carlsbad, a tremendous variety of them. One of the popular baths for getting thin was a mud bath. Another bath, and I tried this for the fun of it, was a carbonic acid bath, that is, soda water. This was a delightful affair and I must say that it filled one with energy.

I suppose Badenweiler has also got, on a smaller scale, its baths and springs. All these 'Bads' have them. I remember to have read in stones and accounts of central and western Europe in the old days how the feudal lords and the Jewish financiers and the petty chiefs of German principalities—there were so many of these then—used to crowd at Baden Baden.

I read the other day in the papers with immense surprise that there had been an earthquake shock in Wurtemberg and west Switzerland; I wonder if you in Badenweiler felt it.

It is 17 days since mummie's operation and I hope that she can walk about a little now. I am very keen on her leaving her bed and getting out of the perpetual invalid atmosphere which bed always carries with it. *Of course she must take care for a long time and carry out carefully* doctors' orders and in this matter Professor Unverricht, the surgeon who operated, must have the last word. He is now more or less in charge of mummie and his advice should therefore be taken. I hope she will *make good progress and by next month go about a little.*

This stay in Badenweiler is somewhat different from what we had anticipated and I do not quite know how it will affect your programme. But in this matter I must not interfere, for any advice that I may give *is sure to be belated and out of place. You must yourself decide having* regard to mummie's condition, your own health and other factors. There is of course no hurry for you to leave mummie. Remain with her as long as necessary. From your own health point of view I think regular *mental occupation and companionship of fellow students is more* important than tonics and the like. Such occupation and companionship draw us out of ourselves and we forget our narrow selves in cooperative habits and wider questions. We grow and health comes to us unasked. I am convinced *that the mind plays a most important part in our physical* make-up.

Badenweiler is near the Swiss and French frontiers, but still it is a longish journey to Lausanne. I imagine you will have to go to Basle *and then to Berne, the Swiss federal capital, a delightful city with arcades* and covered foot paths. I have an idea that a light railway goes from Berne to Lausanne over the mountains and the route is a very beautiful one. I have passed through it both in winter and summer. So although near on the map, you are really further away from Lausanne or Bex than you would be if you were in Paris or Milan. Still you are not very far. It might be worthwhile for you, when you can conveniently manage it, to pay a week-end visit to Mlle. Hemmerlin.

Should you be staying on in Badenweiler for a considerable time why not utilise your time there to pick up some German and improve your French? If not at Badenweiler, you could go to Freiburg for it. The best way to learn a new language is to grow up with it, almost like a child does. If you could get to know some German family, make friends with a *Fraulein*, you could not only have some lessons from them but mix with them and listen to their talk. Indeed such friendship would be good in many ways. You could have companions of your age to go about with and the way to know a country is to know its people and *try to understand them. It is an English habit to live in a stuck-up* stand-offish way in foreign countries. It is not a good habit. We should

indeed go out of our way to make friends. That is a courtesy we owe to the country we are in and it pays well for it brings us intimate glimpses and friendship, and it helps us to grow out of our narrow national selves.

To come to a less interesting topic—myself. Here I am still in my little tent and the big *barsat* seems to have come. We have had only one really heavy rain so far here but probably there will be plenty more soon to follow, and I shall get fed up with it and yearn for a clear sky. The air has definitely changed, it is the atmosphere of the चौमासा[137] as the monsoon season is called in our countryside. In Allahabad, reports say that the monsoon gave a grand kick-off with over 4 inches of rain, with the result that George Town was overwhelmed and half its streets are cracked and sunk in.

The delayed monsoon and the long hot weather was favourable for mangoes, on *dit*, and the mango crop has been most abundant. I tell you of this just to make you green with envy.

What do I do? Perhaps you have heard the story of the old villager who when asked how he spent his time after he had been pensioned off, made answer: 'Well, Miss, sometimes I sits and thinks, and sometimes I just sits.' That is the favourite occupation not only of our peasantry but of most of our so-called educated classes and mostly, I imagine, 'they just sit'. I have not quite got to the stage of just sitting, even though I am in prison, but a subtle change has come over me during the past few months. It has not come univited. I asked for it. The change consists of a diversion of interest from purely intellectual pursuits to manual ones. I had become too much of a bookworm, reading, reading and writing for most of my time. Outside, strenuous activity and moving about prevented my from becoming too lop-sided. In prison that activity being denied my interests became too intellectual. Of course I had relief in the past by spinning and weaving etc. I liked them but they seemed to be extraneous activities, my main function being reading and writing, and as you know to your cost I produced 1500 printed pages during my last term! That is not so now. I have read relatively little and at the slightest pretext I put aside my book. Living in the tent has helped in the process and the cloudy weather has also lured me out. When I used to be locked up soon after five in the evening I had no alternative but to read. Now I can stroll up and down my yard usually armed with a खुर्पी[138] messing about my flowers.

137. *Chaumasa.*
138 *Khurpi*, a trowel.

I have always been a bit of a student, trying to learn to understand, but largely this effort was intellectual. There was also the emotional element in it, the learning from crowds, the appreciation of mass psychology. Latterly I have felt drawn more and more towards nature—to plants and animals. Maybe it is a relief and an escape from human folly, human cowardice and human knavery! I feel more in tune with nature. I notice little things that I had not noticed before. I sense the pulsating and throbbing life round about me. I notice the sensitive growing tip of a creeper plant, how full of life and energy it is! Animal-like it seems and sometimes almost sinister looking; even the feel is hairy as that of a young animal. It stands up seeking for something to catch hold of. See, it looks just like a snake, with a snake's rounded nose and small eyes! Or it coils up, catching something in its grasp. Fascinated, I watch it.

I feel that this is a hopeful sign in me. I am growing still, getting more educated, more in harmony with life. If only human beings were not such spots of disharmony! Three years ago died a very great man, though he is not very well known. He was a Scot, Patrick Geddes[139] and he was a genius in many fields. He even came to Allahabad once and drew up a scheme for its town planning! He was a great educator and instead of the three Rs he used to lay stress on the three Hs—heart, hand, head. He wanted children to grow up with a first hand knowledge of the worlds of nature and of man and to develop an unspoiled appreciation of life, the beauty of nature, of the human mind etc. The first approach for the child thus came through the heart, through the emotions—the affection of parents, the enjoyment of fresh air, sunshine etc. Then came the hand as the child grew older. Petty manual tasks in the garden or some craft. Then at last came the head, and curiously, the intellectual development of the child, who had gone through the course of heart and hand, was very rapid—far quicker than the child who began with intellectual teaching only. More important still, such children developed what is called a well-integrated personality, something in harmony with life and nature, the very reverse of the quarrelsome, dissatisfied, ever-complaining type that we see so often today.

Towards the end of his long life Geddes started a 'Cite Universitaire' at Montpellier in the south of France, where every type of student came to him—the Ph.D., graduate and undergraduate. However learned the

139. (1854-1932), professor of sociology and civics, university of Bombay; took an interest in city improvement and town planning and tried to relate biological knowledge with civic welfare; author of *Outlines of General Biology*, *Cities in Evolution* and *The Life and Work of Sir Jagdish C. Bose*

student, his first job was digging in the garden, his second, observation of the sea and the country from a watch-tower and by wandering about and then came intellectual study.

I sometimes console myself that I am in my own topsy-turvy way following Geddes' course and so trying to develop that integrated personality. Having become somewhat of a highbrow I have tried to lay more stress on the hands. Whether the result is going to be satisfactory it will be for others to judge. Let us hope it will not be too much of a mongrel type, neither here nor there! To a large extent Tolstoy and Ruskin advocated manual labour for this purpose. And the real psychological basis of Bapu's charka is also this.

Are you not tired of me, Indu-boy, writing all this stuff to you and wearying you even at this great distance with my wordy chatter? Once a fortnight I have the chance and I let my pen run on. You will have to bear with me. But I have written so much already today that I really must put a brake on, though my pen protests and wants to scratch on. Share this letter with mummie and Madan Bhai.

I am sending separately to mummie 3 snaps of Anand Bhawan and Swaraj Bhawan. Someone whom I don't know sent them to me (having signed them!). Perhaps they might interest you so I am sending them.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

July 18, Thursday

For two weeks I have not written in this book. I have not felt cheerful—far from it—and the days have dragged on heavily and wearily. Yet the monsoon is firmly established and even my little garden looks bright and gay. I have been reading very little. I am still in the tent.

Yesterday a cable came from Madan from Badenweiler to say that no letters had been received from me for five weeks. Extraordinary—what has happened to the long screeds I have been writing? I wired back that I had sent letters c/o Cook, Geneva. Today another cable came from him to say that Cook's letters had been received by them but none from me has come for five weeks. This means that my last three letters have gone astray. I have felt upset and depressed because of this. And how worrying it must have been for Kamala to wait for letters daily and wait in vain!

Inquiries at the post-office here elicited the fact that my letters had been despatched. Nothing more doing. The jail people have

been decent enough about it and don't think they are to blame. What does it matter who *is to blame?* The fact *remains* that my letters disappear somewhere.

The eighteenth month has begun! Only six months and a bit more.

July 19, 1935[140]

Indu dear,

I sit down to write to you and cover sheet after sheet of thin air mail paper, trying somehow to bridge the many thousand miles that separate us. I hope that my letters will carry with them, somewhere hidden away between the lines, a bit of me to you, and that if you care to look for it, you will find it, just as I seek for you in your letters, behind and between the lines that you have written. What indeed are letters? Not surely just budgets of news, although they contain news. Not a record of illness and birth and marriage and death and humdrum domestic happenings, such as are most of the letters that people write. They are *something far more; they are, or ought to be,* bits of the personality of the writer, quivering shadows of the real self. They are also, or they at least endeavour to represent and to mirror, something of the personality of the person written to, for the writer is full of the person he is writing to. Thus a real letter is a strange and revealing amalgam of the two—the one who writes and the one who receives. If it is such a real letter, it has considerable value for both the persons concerned.

I have been led to this musing on letters because I have learnt that my letters have not been reaching you and I have been pained at this unexpected and unwelcome news. Cables from Madan Bhai have informed me of it and I am at a loss to know why this has happened. I have been pained at the thought of mummie and you expecting my letters, waiting day after day for them, and waiting in vain. Few things are *more distressing* than to *expect something* which does not come. It upsets one, irritates and worries. So you must have been put out. I was pained also at the thought that my letters, which I had sent out with so many messages and loving thoughts, to fly over two continents to you, should have gone astray. I felt almost as if I had been physically hurt. And then it was disheartening. To have to write once a fortnight only is a poor enough bond, but if even that snaps?

140. Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML. Extracts.

established in the east; but now the western border became more remote. After some time the Roman Empire got divided into two parts—the Western Empire and the Eastern Empire. Some years later the Western Empire was destroyed by its enemies. But the Eastern Empire lasted for over one thousand years thereafter and was known as the Byzantine Empire.

The Emperor Constantine not merely changed the capital but brought about yet another change. He accepted Christianity. Earlier the Christians in Rome were greatly tortured. Anyone of them who did not worship the Roman gods or the statue of the emperor could be done to death. They were often thrown before the hungry lions in the arena. It was a favourite sport of the Romans. It was very dangerous to be a Christian in Rome. They were considered as rebels. Now suddenly the situation changed greatly. The emperor himself embraced Christianity and Christianity now became the most honoured religion. Those who worshipped the old gods were now in great difficulty and were tortured by the authorities. Later, only one emperor (Julian)[3] gave up Christianity and again became the worshipper of the old gods but by now Christianity was well established and the old gods of Rome and Greece had to take shelter in the jungles from where also they gradually disappeared.

In this city of Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, massive buildings were built by the orders of the emperors and very soon it developed into a very big city. No other city in Europe could stand comparison with it—even Rome fell far behind. The buildings were erected in a new style—an architecture where the arches, domes, towers and pillars had a style of their own with minute mosaic work on the pillars and towers. This architectural style is known as Byzantine art. In the sixth century a magnificent cathedral was built in this style. It was known as Sankta Sophia or Santa Sophia. It was the most massive church of the Eastern Roman Empire and the emperors desired that it should, by its high quality of art, be unique and suited to the empire. Their desires were fulfilled and even today it is considered the greatest achievement of this Byzantine art.

Later on the Christian religion split into two parts. In fact, there were many divisions but two were major. Rome and Constantinople were engaged in religious wars and became separated from each other. The Bishop of Rome (the most senior) became the Pope and in the western countries of Europe he was regarded as the head. But the

3 (331-363); emperor from 361 363 A.D. He granted freedom of worship to non-Christians and reorganised their priesthood.

Eastern Roman Empire did not recognize him and their Christian community became separate. It was known as the Orthodox Church or sometimes the Greek Church, for the language there had become Greek. The Orthodox Church held sway also in Russia and the nearby regions.

The Cathedral of Santa Sophia was the centre of the Greek Church and so it remained for nine hundred years. Once, in between, the Christians of Rome (who had come to fight the Muslims in the Crusades) attacked Constantinople and overpowered it, but they were soon turned out.

At last, when the Eastern Roman Empire had lasted for more than a thousand years, Santa Sophia also being about nine hundred years old, a new invasion took place which ended that old regime. In the fifteenth century the Osmanli Turks[4] conquered Constantinople and the greatest cathedral there now became the chief mosque. Santa Sophia was named Apa Suphea. In this new fonn it lasted for hundreds of years. That splendid mosque in a way became a landmark gazed at from long distances with aspirations. In the nineteenth century the Turkish Empire was weakening and Russia gaining ground. Russia was a very big country but a closed one and all over her empire there was not one warm-water port. She therefore cast a covetous eye on Constantinople. More than this was the spiritual and cultural attraction. The czars of Russia used to consider themselves successors to the Eastern Roman emperors and wanted to bring their old capital under their domination. Both were of the same religion, the Orthodox Greek Church, of which the centre was the famous Santa Sophia. For long it had been a mosque. How could that be tolerated? The Greek cross instead of the Islamic mark, *hilal* or the crescent, should be on its dome.

Gradually the Russia of the czars started expanding towards Constantinople. When she came nearer, the other powers of Europe were puzzled. England and France put obstacles, a war ensued and Russia stopped her advance for a while. But again, soon after, the same activity and political manoeuvres began. At last the Great War of 1914 started and in that, England, France, Russia and Italy made secret treaties.[5] Before the world were placed the high ideals of freedom and independence of small countries, but behind the curtain, like vultures waiting for the corpse, the partition of the world started.

This wish also remained unfulfilled. Before that corpse could be reached the Russia of the czars itself came to an end; a revolution took place there which changed the government as well as the social structure.

4. Ancient name of the Turks of the Ottoman Empire.
5. The alliances recognised their spheres of interest.

To expose the cunning of the major imperialistic powers of Europe, the Bolsheviks annulled all the secret treaties and declared that they were against imperialism[6] and did not wish to annex any other country. All had a right to live in freedom.

The victorious powers of the West did not like this clear stand and sane attitude of the Bolsheviks. In their opinion, to bring to light the secret pacts was *not a sign of civility. But even if the new regime in* Russia was wicked, where was the sense in losing such a prized plunder? They, specially the English, took over Constantinople. After a lapse of fourteen hundred and sixty six years the administration of this old city again changed hands from Muslims to Christians. The Sultan Caliph was there all right, but he was just a tool to be used at will. Apa Suphea was there too, intact and in the shape of a mosque; but that glamour of *freedom, with the Sultans going for prayers, was no longer there.*

The Sultan bowed, the Caliph accepted European sovereignty; but a handful of Turks refused to accept it. One of them was Mustafa Kemal who preferred to revolt rather than to serve.

In the meantime there came up a new successor and claimant to Constantinople. These were the Greeks. After the War, Greece was awarded vast lands and started dreaming of her old Eastern Roman Empire. Till now Russia had been in the way, and also naturally Turkey. Now Russia was no longer in competition and the Turks were defeated and deflated. The passage looked open. Influential persons of England and France had been brought round too. There was therefore no apparent hitch.

But there was the great difficulty, the difficulty of Mustafa Kemal Pasha. He faced the Greek onslaught and ruthlessly drove out the Greek army from his country. He turned out the Sultan-Caliph who had backed the enemies of the country. He abolished the institutions of the Sultanate and Caliphate. He raised his prostrate and lifeless country, ravaged by a multitude of problems and enemies, and gave it fresh vigour. His greatest reforms were, however, in the religious and social fields. He pulled the women out of the veil and gave them a leading position in society. He crushed bigotry in religion never to raise its head again. He propagated modern education for all. He put an end to customs and rituals of a thousand years.

From the old capital, Constantinople, he took away its status. For the last fifteen hundred years it had been the capital. Now Ankara, in

6 On 8 November 1917, a day after they assumed power, the Bolsheviks issued a peace decree which proposed an immediate opening of negotiations for a just peace and declared the abolition of secret diplomacy.

Asia, became the capital—a small town, but an emblem of the new Turkish power. The name of Constantinople was also changed. It became Istanbul.

And Apa Suphea—what was its fate? Looking on at the ups and downs of life, that old building of fourteen hundred years stands still in Istanbul. For nine hundred years, it witnessed Greek services and smelt all the incense used in Greek worship. Then for four hundred and eighty years, it heard the *azan* in Arabic and lines of devotees for *namaz* stood on its floor stones.

And now?

One day, in this year 1935, only a few months back, by the orders of Gazi Mustafa Kemal (who has been now given a special title of Ataturk) the Apa Suphea mosque was no more a masjid. Quietly the *hojas*, *mullahs* etc. were replaced and sent to other mosques. Now it has been decided that instead of being a mosque, Suphea be converted into a museum—specially that of the Byzantine period—an era of Christians before the arrival of the Turks. With the Turkish occupation of Istanbul or Constantinople in 1452 A.D., it is understood, the Byzantine art ended. Thus Suphea, now, in a way, went back again to the Christian era—and that on the orders of Kemal.

Great excavations are going on there these days, the mounds of earth are being removed and old mosaics being seen again. Work is going on under the supervision of experts of Byzantine art who have been called from America and Germany.

On the gate is the signboard of the museum and the gate-keeper in his seat. Hand him over your umbrella and stick, take your ticket and have a view inside of the samples of this well known ancient art. And while going round, think of the peculiar history of this world and let your mind roam thousands of years back and onwards. Strange are the pictures, the spectacles, the tortures and terrors that one comes across. Ask those walls to relate to you their story, and narrate their experiences to you. Maybe the study of yesterday and today will enable you to remove the curtain and peep into the future.

But those stones and walls are silent. They had seen a lot of *jumma namaz* and Sunday services. A daily exhibition is now their lot. The world keeps changing, but they stay. On their worn-out faces is an apparent smirk and a mellow voice as if whispering: how ignorant and foolish is this human creature who does not learn by his thousands of years of experience and repeats the same follies.

8. Quetta[1]

It is curious how sometimes a relatively minor event impresses one more than a major happening. Trivial words or gestures are apt to reveal an individual far more than his studied poses and utterances. So also with nations and peoples and governments. I suppose most people will agree that one of the outstanding events of recent times in India was the shooting down of large numbers of unarmed men and women by General Dyer and his soldiery in the Jallianwala Bagh, and the consequences of this deed were far-reaching. Amritsar, indeed, has become something more than a city of the Punjab, or even the holy place of Sikhism. It typifies the world over a particularly brutal method of dealing with subject peoples. And yet ghastly as all this was, I have never had much difficulty in understanding the mentality of a Dyer, and because of that feeling of at least partial understanding, my resentment against him personally has probably been far less than that of most other Indians. It is true that he made his case unpardonable and wholly inexcusable by his arrogance and vulgar bragging[2] before the Hunter Committee of Inquiry. But even that had a psychological explanation and, granting the vulgarity and the jingoism, the rest more or less followed.

What affected me far more, and I imagine there were many others who felt this way, was the reaction in England to Dyer's deed and his evidence. Officially he was mildly reprimanded and there were no doubt many individuals who condemned him and some newspapers that criticized him strongly. But the real reaction of the British ruling classes was never in doubt. It was clear as daylight, and the *Morning Post* and the House of Lords and the subscription raised for General Dyer shouted it out to the world. This cold-blooded approval of that deed shocked me greatly. It seemed absolutely immoral, indecent; to use public school language, it was the height of bad form. I realized then, more vividly than I had ever done before, how brutal and immoral imperialism was and how it had eaten into the souls of the British upper classes.

My mind went back to this revealing instance the other day when I read about the refusal of the Government of India to allow Gandhiji

1 Almora District Jail, 19 August 1935. J N. Papers, N M.M.L. Published in *India and the World* (1936), pp 146-155.

2 General Dyer had stated "If more troops had been at hand the casualties would have been greater in proportion."

and Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Congress for the year, to visit Quetta after the great earthquake.[3] That refusal, a trivial enough affair, was yet most revealing of the mentality of the government. Inevitably, one thought of the contrast when last year, in connection with another great earthquake, Gandhiji had offered, on behalf of the committee of which Rajendra Babu was the honoured head, whole-hearted and 'respectful' cooperation to the government.[4] That cooperation was worth having as Rajendra Prasad's committee had almost as big a fund at its disposal as the government, with all its resources in India and England, had managed to collect; even more it was valuable because of the fine village organization of workers behind Rajendra Babu and his colleagues. It is also worth remembering that this cooperation was offered *even though in theory civil disobedience of a kind continued* and many prominent Congressmen were in prison.

That contrast was marked. But even apart from that the obvious course for any sensible government would have been to invite the cooperation of Rajendra Prasad after the fine work he did in the Behar earthquake and the great experience he gained thereby. There must be very few persons in India today who can rival him in knowledge of earthquake relief work. In all probability he knows far more of the subject than all the members of the Governor-General's Executive Council and their various secretaries taken together.

Another equally obvious thing to do, in order to gain public support and cooperation, was to take a number of public men and newspapermen into the government's confidence, give them full facilities to visit the earthquake area, and discuss the situation frankly with them. This would not have tied the hands of government in any way and it is absurd to say that some additional arrivals in the affected area would have upset the food situation or the sanitary measures that were being taken. Such newcomers would have made their own food arrangements and if they risked catching an infectious disease that was their look out. It was not a question of crowds of outsiders rolling in and interfering with all arrangements.

3. The city of Quetta was sealed under military guard on 2 June 1935, and the *request of Mahatma Gandhi and Rajendra Prasad for permission to visit* Quetta and conduct relief operations was rejected. The Quetta Central Relief Committee formed under the presidentship of Rajendra Prasad had to restrict its assistance to helping refugees in Sind, the Punjab and the North West Frontier Province.

4. Mahatma Gandhi visited the afflicted towns and villages and helped the newly formed Bihar Central Relief Committee to draw up its plan of work.

But our benign government has an astonishing knack of doing the wrong thing, and even on the rare occasions when it does the right thing it does it in a wrong way. And then it is painfully surprised when it finds that the purity of its motives is suspected and cheering crowds do not welcome its efforts with enthusiasm.

> This makes a man unsocial, impolite;
> Odious when wrong, and insolent if right.

There was no room for Gandhiji or Rajendra Babu or other popular leaders and well-known relief workers in Quetta but boy scouts could be sent without danger of their catching disease or lessening the stock of food. If Gandhiji had gone, there might indeed have been a shortage of goat's milk and dates.

Quetta became one of the battle fronts, enveloped as it were in the fog of war, a no-man's land which was cut off from the rest of the country. The official megaphone boomed out its version of the news to us and told us of the wonders that were being performed by the official agency alone and unaided by others.

> I am the blessed Glendoveer,
> 'Tis mine to speak and yours to hear.

True there were also the Simla correspondents of certain favoured newspapers, those wise and clever mortals who are not like unto other men, and who can even glimpse, as through a glass darkly, the mysterious workings of the godlike mind of the Government of India.[5]

It was not unnatural or unexpected that these arrangements should meet with the disapproval of less favoured newspapermen and others. Nor was it at all surprising that they should, under the circumstances, give credence and publicity to vague rumours, many of them exaggerated or even unfounded. That was very wrong of course, but human nature is weak and it is not possible for all of us to live up to the high and noble standards set in Simla or New Delhi. Exclude a newspaperman and you make him suspicious and capable of believing almost anything. Two or three years ago the Soviet Government prevented all newspapermen from going to the Caucasus. The journalists scented trouble, something that the Soviets wanted to hide. It was a huge famine, said some; others inclined to the view that a nationalist rebellion had broken out in Georgia and parts of the Ukraine. The argument is still going on and it is by no means clear what took place then in those forbidden regions. Most people very rightly imagine that something not

5. *The Statesman* of 2 July 1935 reported that rescue work "was completed with the incomparable efficiency and expedition of the army in India."

creditable to the Soviet Government must have occurred, else why this hush-hush policy? And the Soviets can hardly complain if rumours and exaggerated accounts are believed.

So also a number of Indian newspapers, excited and displeased at the official attitude about Quetta, gave publicity to such scraps of news as rumour brought them. And then the Press Act and various emergency measures descended heavily on these hapless papers with their forfeits and securities.[6] A large sum of money went from the newspapers to the provincial governments. The majesty of the government had been vindicated. Truth had prevailed, as it was bound to in the end, and the serpent of falsehood had been crushed by the swift action of various magistrates and governors and the like.

I have absolutely no idea what these items of news or comments were to which government objected. It really does not much matter what they were and I am prepared to assume that they were thoroughly objectionable. What seems to me much more important is the extraordinary attitude of the government throughout this Quetta business. They took one false step after another—perhaps each subsequent step was made inevitable by the previous one—and made a horrid mess of a simple business. Who could have thought that even an earthquake could be bungled in this manner? And it is this bungling that reveals as in a flash that curious compound of conceit, ideas of prestige, intolerance, a certain cleverness, distrust, fear and stupidity which go to make up the mind of the Government of India.

I do not mean that the actual relief work in Quetta was bungled. I have no knowledge of that but I am inclined to think that official agency, even when efficient, lacks the human touch and is often wasteful. I imagine that the addition of non-officials to the workers, especially in the villages round about Quetta city, would have gone a long way to supply this human touch. Personally I am not a believer even in the efficiency of official processes. But as the relief work was in charge of the military it was probably far more efficient than the civil side of government would have been.

It was indeed fortunate for Quetta that a large force of military was stationed there and they could immediately start relief operations. Disciplined soldiers are the best workers in such an emergency, especially in the early days In any event the British and Indian soldiers would have

6 The government proceeded against four newspapers, viz, *Free Press Journal*, *Bombay Standard*, *Tej* and *Quami Gazette*, under the Press Emergency Powers Act for publishing articles criticising their Quetta policy.

worked hard and earnestly at the task; the fact that their own comrades had perished in the catastrophe must have added to their zeal. Unfortunately, but very naturally, the army is not popular with the people. It is looked upon as something foreign, meant and used from time to time to keep them down. The Indian soldiers are definitely mercenary, the British troops foreigners, wholly ignorant of the land they are serving in, and both of them are looked upon with fear and dislike by the people; specially is the Tommy, the *gora*, the object of this distrust. There are no points of contact between him and the people and there are numerous barriers separating them. Even our B.As and M.As, on the rare occasions when they meet Tommies, find it difficult to get over the language difficulty. Their training in Shakespeare and Milton has not qualified them to understand the cockney speech or the broad Lancashire and Yorkshire dialect or English as she is spoken across the Tweed.

This gulf and the fear and distrust of the military are unfortunate. The Indian soldier is very much the peasant we know with a thin veneer of soldiering over him; the British Tommy is a very simple and likeable creature, rather shy and afraid of himself in strange surroundings, but always willing to expand and grow friendly if approached in the right way. The two, with the discipline and organization behind them, were ideal workers in the earthquake area and it was well that they were utilised immediately. But however good they might have been, they could not supply all the human needs of the people, nor could they easily get rid of the distrust which had long been associated with them.

It seems to me that it was also very proper on the part of the government to regulate the entry of people into the earthquake area. Large numbers of odd people, bent on doing relief work after their own fashion, might easily have created confusion and hindered work rather than helped it. But to regulate entry is one thing, to close and seal the area as if it was a theatre of war, is quite another. I do not know if any military considerations prompted this secretive policy, for the frontier is not far from Quetta. But no considerations could possibly justify the deliberate and offensive exclusion of noted public men who were offering their services in a spirit of cooperation. It is quite inconceivable that any such attitude could have been taken up in any other country that is supposed to be civilized. Only a government arrogantly irresponsive to popular feeling could have acted in this way.

Why did the Government of India act in this manner, I wondered, for whatever its actions might be, it has to bow down to some extent to the spirit of the times, and to talk of cooperation and the like. The

only answer I could find was that the government had Gandhi and the Congress on the brain. It is not for me to object to this obsession of theirs; I think they have some justification for it. But it seems to lead them into curious corners. A psychologist would probably give a satisfactory explanation of this by reference to some complex. Gandhi and the Congress are both nuisances; therefore let us ignore them, sit on them. If our superiority is not sufficiently recognized, let us proclaim it ourselves and compel people to listen to us; let us collect chits emphasizing this superiority and praising our good work. If we are not tall enough, let us stand on tip-toe; people will surely be impressed.

Perhaps it is some such unconscious functioning of the mind that *forms the background of much that the government does. The old* desire to keep up prestige means in the end some kind of attempt to stand on one's toes, in the vain hope of adding to one's size. But this is hardly a dignified procedure and seldom deceives. Often it has the opposite effect.

So it was in this Quetta business. The attempt of the government to snub Gandhi and the Congress resulted in the government being shown up for what it was, through its hurried attempts to justify itself, and its unseemly anger at its critics. The Congress and Gandhi did rather well. There was dignity in their attitude; there was no shouting, no outward anger, no official remonstrance even.

Our high officers of government move about with pomp and circumstance, their surroundings impress us, their gilded liveries of office dazzle us, they address us from time to time in stately, if somewhat trite, phrases pointing out the error of our ways. They cultivate the calm, and dignified demeanour of the great.

> They think that dignity of soul may come,
> Perchance, with dignity of body.

Perhaps it helps a little. But even dignity of body is not very evident when one is standing on one's toes.

Selected
works of
Jawaharlal
Nehru

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Volume Seven

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FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps, outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling — these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of the East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles,

both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the 'third world' as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being

Indira Gandhi.

New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

EDITORIAL NOTE

Reaching Badenweiler in September 1935, Jawaharlal stayed in Europe for six months, watching by his wife's bedside and, when her health permitted, paying visits to England and France. Although under intense personal stress, he clarified and analysed his political and economic ideas.

After Kamala's death in February 1936, Jawaharlal returned to India to take up the presidentship of the Congress and guide the party in its election campaign. The speeches and correspondence reprinted in this volume, covering the period from the Lucknow session of the Congress in April 1936 to the Faizpur session in December 1936, reveal his new ideas and emphases. Covering almost every part of India, he conducted the election campaign on an impersonal basis of principle. The Government of India Act of 1935 had to be rejected and the Congress was contesting the election in order to combat the Act effectively. Socialism was bound to come but could only follow independence. The Communal Award was unacceptable, but nationalist forces should not fritter away their energies on such a minor issue. It was more important to work for India's freedom, and this problem had to be seen in the context of the growing world crisis. The forces of imperialism and fascism were ranged against those of freedom and socialism. So the overthrow of British imperialism was important in every sense, and the Congress was the only party which could achieve this.

The election, however, did not monopolize all Jawaharlal's thought and activity. He sought the cooperation of non-Congressmen in the establishment of a Civil Liberties Union. He kept up a dialogue with those who commented on the ideas and viewpoints set forth in his *Autobiography*, which had been published in the spring of 1936.

Much of the material included in this volume has been selected from the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru. The cooperation extended by the Director and the staff of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library is acknowledged.

The Maharashtra Government, the U.P. Government, the Tamil Nadu Archives and the National Archives of India have authorized us to utilize material in their possession. *The Bombay Chronicle, The*

Hindustan Times, The Tribune, The Leader, The Hindu, The Statesman, Amrita Bazar Patrika, The Times of India, Aaj and *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* have allowed us to reprint the texts of speeches and statements first published by them. The Asia Publishing House has permitted us to reprint two letters from *A Bunch of Old Letters*. The Hogarth Press Ltd., London, has allowed us to reproduce the photograph of Jawaharlal Nehru with Leonard Woolf from Woolf's book, *Downhill all the Way*.

CONTENTS

1. In Europe

GENERAL AND PERSONAL

1	En Route to Europe	5 September	1935	1
2	To Horace Alexander	17 September	1935	2
3	To Rabindranath Tagore	19 September	1935	3
4	Message to the People of India	28 September	1935	4
5	To Bharati Sarabhai	19 October	1935	5
6	To Bharati Sarabhai	24 October	1935	5
7	To Bharati Sarabhai	21 November	1935	6
8	To Vincene Lesny	22 November	1935	8
9	To Bharati Sarabhai	25 November	1935	9
10	To Indira Nehru	27 November	1935	10
11	To Amiya Chakravarty	29 November	1935	12
12	To Indira Nehru	3/4 December	1935	14
13	To V.K. Krishna Menon	9 December	1935	15
14	To Goshiben Captain	28 December	1935	16
15	To Madan Atal	5 January	1936	19
16	To Horace Alexander	17 January	1936	21
17	To Mother	20 January	1936	21
18	To Rajendra Prasad	23 January	1936	22
19	To Horace Alexander	27 February	1936	23
20	To Amiya Chakravarty	4 March	1936	24

POLITICAL

21	To Agatha Harrison	25 September	1935	25
22	Reply to the Address of Welcome at London	31 October	1935	30
23	On Service to India	2 November	1935	31
24	Interview with Students	4 November	1935	33
25	On the Indian Situation	12 November	1935	35

26	To Rajendra Prasad	20 November	1935	38
27	To Mohanlal Saxena	6 December	1935	44
28	Message for the Jubilee of the Congress	6 December	1935	45
29	*On the Allegation of the Bengal Government*	6 December	1935	46
30	To the Editor, Manchester Guardian	7 December	1935	47
31	To Lord Lothian	9 December	1935	49
32	Congress the Voice of India	28 December	1935	52
33	India and the World	6 January	1936	52
34	To the Editor, Manchester Guardian	9 January	1936	58
35	The Congress and Socialism	13 January	1936	60
36	To Lord Lothian	17 January	1936	62
37	Mahatma Gandhi	20 January	1936	75
38	Interview on His Second Visit to London	26 January	1936	78
39	On the 1935 Act	27 January	1936	79
40	On a Common Script for India	28 January	1936	83
41	*No Compromise with Imperialism*	29 January	1936	84
42	Interview to the Press	29 January	1936	84
43	On Conditions in India	1 February	1936	86
44	On His Election as President of the Congress	1 February	1936	87
45	Speech at a Labour Party Reception	3 February	1936	88
46	On the *Indian Problem*	4 February	1936	90
47	On the New Constitution	5 February	1936	112
48	In the Vast Prison of India	6 February	1936	113
49	To Rajendra Prasad	10 February	1936	113
50	India's Problems	21 February	1936	114
51	A Visit to England	22 February	1936	117
52	The Way to Peace	24 February	1936	122
53	A Constituent Assembly for India	25 February	1936	126
54	The Soviet Union	25 February	1936	128

55	The Example of Ireland	25 February	1936	129
56	To Romain Rolland	4 March	1936	130

2. Reactions to the Autobiography

1	To the Editor, The Leader	8 June	1936	133
2	To Rabindranath Tagore	10 June	1936	134
3	To the Editor, The Servant of India	13 June	1936	134
4	To Ellen Wilkinson	15 June	1936	139
5	An Author Replies	16 June	1936	139
6	To Syed Mahmud	17 June	1936	144
7	To the Editor, The Leader	22 June	1936	145
8	On His Criticisms of the Liberals	3 July	1936	148
9	To N.C. Kelkar	7 July	1936	151
10	To Charles Trevelyan	15 July	1936	153
11	To Ernst Toller	10 August	1936	153
12	To O. Urchs	3 September	1936	154
13	To A.C. Fernandes	3 September	1936	155
14	To Gobind Behari Lal	3 September	1936	156
15	To Buona Barnes	22 September	1936	157
16	To A.W. Breolin	29 October	1936	158
17	To Martand Upadhyaya	29 October	1936	159
18	To A.G. Sayers	20 November	1936	160

3. The Lucknow Congress

1	Interview to the Associated Press	14 March	1936	163
2	The Task of Youth	15 March	1936	163
3	On the Death of Kamala Nehru	17 March	1936	164
4	On the Need for Discipline	18 March	1936	164
5	To Rabindranath Tagore	1 April	1936	166
6	On Proportional Representation	10 April	1936	166

7	On Acceptance of Office	11 April	1936	167
8	The Meaning of Independence	12 April	1936	169
9	Hoisting of the National Flag	12 April	1936	169
10	The Presidential Address	12 April	1936	170
11	Concluding Remarks at the A.I.C.C.	14 April	1936	196
12	On Industrialization	14 April	1936	196
13	Concluding Remarks at the Congress Session	15 April	1936	197
14	On the Selection of the New Working Committee	15 April	1936	197
15	Statement on the New Working Committee	16 April	1936	199
16	On Mass Action	19 April	1936	200
17	Circular to P.C.Cs	22 April	1936	203
18	Interview to Railwaymen	25 April	1936	205
19	Subhas Bose and Foreign Propaganda	28 April	1936	205

4. The Election Campaign I

1	Vote for Congress and Independence	25 April	1936	211
2	On the Dissensions in the Congress	4 May	1936	212
3	To Syed Mahmud	5 May	1936	214
4	On the Strike of Sweepers in Broach	6 May	1936	215
5	To the Secretary, Bombay P.C.C.	6 May	1936	216
6	Homage to M.A. Ansari	10 May	1936	216
7	On the Strike of Steamer Workers	12 May	1936	217
8	Appeal for an Anti-imperialist United Front	15 May	1936	218
9	Interview to the Press	15 May	1936	223
10	Address to the Indian Progressive Group	15 May	1936	229

11	Socialism will Dissolve Communalism	17 May	1936	231
12	The Need for Congress Unity	18 May	1936	232
13	On the Duty of Businessmen	18 May	1936	234
14	Address to Women	18 May	1936	235
15	Address to the All India Trade Union Congress	18 May	1936	237
16	Challenge to Critics of Socialism	18 May	1936	238
17	Reply to Shroff's Rejoinder	19 May	1936	242
18	The Case for Socialism	19 May	1936	246
19	Nationalism and the Class Struggle	19 May	1936	247
20	Socialism the only Way	19 May	1936	250
21	The Role of Big Business	20 May	1936	251
22	Socialism — the Need of the Hour	20 May	1936	254
23	On the Bombay Visit	20 May	1936	257
24	On the Debate on Socialism	20 May	1936	257
25	Socialism and Religion	22 May	1936	259
26	Interview to The Bombay Chronicle	22 May	1936	259
27	The Fascist Mentality	22 May	1936	262
28	To Mahatma Gandhi	25 May	1936	263
29	To P.V. Gadgil	26 May	1936	265
30	The World wide Struggle Against Imperialism	28 May	1936	265
31	On the Ideological Conflict	29 May	1936	268
32	Unimportance of the Communal Award	31 May	1936	270
33	The Inevitability of Socialism	1 June	1936	271
34	Businessmen and Socialism	1 June	1936	272
35	The Congress and the Masses	2 June	1936	275
36	Parting Message to the Punjab	2 June	1936	278
37	On the Punjab Tour	4 June	1936	279
38	Reply to Critics of Socialism	5 June	1936	280

39	On the Need for Trade Unions	11 June	1936	285
40	The New Offensive	15 June	1936	286
41	To V.K. Krishna Menon	18 June	1936	288
42	To Secretary, Lyallpur City Congress Committee	21 June	1936	289
43	Fundamental Problems	23 June	1936	290
44	To Satyapal	26 June	1936	292
45	The Need for Panchayati Rule	27 June	1936	292
46	To S.M. Abdullah and Prem Nath Bazaz	30 June	1936	308
47	To Mahatma Gandhi	5 July	1936	309
48	On the Women's Movement	6 July	1936	313
49	To Secretary, Punjab Traders Association, Lyallpur	7 July	1936	314
50	Congress and Socialism	15 July	1936	317
51	In a Train	17 July	1936	325
52	Message to Students	18 July	1936	328
53	Address to the Congress Socialist Conference	20 July	1936	329
54	The Election Campaign in U.P.	1 August	1936	329
55	On the Punjab Tour	3 August	1936	330
56	To Agatha Harrison	6 August	1936	332
57	To George Joseph	7 August	1936	332
58	Reality	9 August	1936	333
59	To Prem Nath Bazaz	9 August	1936	335
60	Speech at the All India Students Conference	12 August	1936	335
61	Industrialisation and Socialism	18 August	1936	343
62	The Example of Abdul Ghaffar Khan	23 August	1936	344
63	To Agatha Harrison	3 September	1936	346
64	On Minoo Masani's Arrest	6 September	1936	347
65	A Roadside Interlude	16 September	1936	348
66	This Touring Business	16 September	1936	350
67	To the Editor, The Leader	20 September	1936	352
68	To Prema Kantak	25 September	1936	353

69	To Chimanlal C. Shah	25 September	1936	354
70	To V.K Krishna Menon	19 November	1936	355

5. The Election Campaign II

1	To Madan Mohan Malaviya	20 April	1936	359
2	Address to the Punjab Political Conference	30 May	1936	360
3	On the Communal Award	2 June	1936	362
4	To Mohammad Iqbal	18 June	1936	363
5	Negotiations with the Nationalist Party	22 June	1936	365
6	To Satyapal	10 July	1936	366
7	To the Editor, The Times of India	15 July	1936	367
8	To Mahatma Gandhi	15 July	1936	368
9	To Sarat Chandra Bose	26 July	1936	368
10	To Suresh Chandra Majumdar	6 August	1936	372
11	To J D. Jenkins	8 August	1936	374
12	To Sarat Chandra Bose	14 August	1936	376
13	Congress Attitude to the Communal Award	22 August	1936	377
14	To Sarat Chandra Bose	3 September	1936	378
15	To the Secretary, Bengal P C.C.	5 September	1936	380
16	To Master Tara Singh	16 September	1936	383
17	To Syed Mahmud	24 September	1936	385
18	To Mahadeva Desai	24 September	1936	393
19	To Sarat Chandra Bose	26 September	1936	394
20	To Jagat Narain Lal	30 September	1936	395
21	To Syed Mahmud	5 October	1936	397
22	Address to the Hindi Prachar Sabha, Madras	7 October	1936	398
23	To S.A. Brelvi	12 October	1936	399
24	On the Bombay Riots	19 October	1936	400
25	Address to the Arya Samajists	24 November	1936	400
26	To Habib-ur Rahman	25 November	1936	401
27	To Habib-ur Rahman	13 December	1936	402

6. Civil Liberties

1	To Subhas Chandra Bose	26 March	1936	407
2	Message to The Bombay Chronicle	27 March	1936	408
3	To Subhas Chandra Bose	30 March	1936	408
4	On the Arrest of Subhas Chandra Bose	9 April	1936	409
5	All-India Protest Day	22 April	1936	409
6	Circular on Civil Liberties	22 April	1936	410
7	To Ronald Kidd	22 April	1936	411
8	To Tej Bahadur Sapru	9 May	1936	412
9	Subhas Day	10 May	1936	414
10	On the Proposed Civil Liberties Union	12 May	1936	415
11	To T.C. Goswami	25 May	1936	417
12	To the Editor, The Leader	16 June	1936	417
13	Creation of the Civil Liberties Union	8 July	1936	419
14	To Rabindranath Tagore	21 July	1936	420
15	To Jal Naoroji	23 July	1936	421
16	To K. Punniah	23 July	1936	422
17	On the Lot of Indian Journalists	27 July	1936	423
18	*Inauguration of the Civil* Liberties Union at Bombay	24 August	1936	425
19	On the Role of the Press	24 August	1936	428
20	To V.K. Krishna Menon	3 September	1936	429
21	To Mulk Raj Anand	3 September	1936	430
22	Congressmen and Free Speech	4 September	1936	431
23	*Inauguration of the Civil* Liberties Union at Madras	8 October	1936	432
24	To V.K. Krishna Menon	29 October	1936	438
25	On the Freedom of the Press	5 November	1936	439
26	Address to the Civil Liberties Union in Calcutta	7 November	1936	442
27	On Suicides by the Bengal Detenus	27 November	1936	444
28	To Frank P. Manley	5 December	1936	445

7. The Congress and the States

1	To M.C. Mallappa	9 July	1936	449
2	Congress and the Indian States	18 July	1936	450
3	To Kanhaiyalal D. Vaidya	12 August	1936	451
4	To N.S. Hardikar	3 September	1936	452

8. The Election Manifesto

1	The Task of the Congress	22 August	1936	457
2	The Congress Election Manifesto	22 August	1936	459
3	Concluding Address to the A.I.C.C.	23 August	1936	464
4	Full Steam Ahead	25 August	1936	465
5	To Ammu Swaminadhan	2 September	1936	466
6	Line up with the Congress	18 September	1936	468
7	Circular to P.C.Cs	23 September	1936	469
8	To V.K. Krishna Menon	28 September	1936	470
9	On the Selection of Congress Candidates	17 November	1936	472

9. The Election Campaign III

1	Students and Politics	1 October	1936	475
2	To Sarat Chandra Bose	4 October	1936	477
3	Message to Karnataka	5 October	1936	478
4	Women and the Freedom Movement	6 October	1936	479
5	On Industrial Training	6 October	1936	483

6	On the Hanjan Problem	6 October	1936	485
7	Speech at Gokulam Ashramam	6 October	1936	487
8	Two Messages	6 October	1936	488
9	Labour and Socialism	6 October	1936	498
10	The Congress in Perspective	7 October	1936	502
11	On the Importance of the Land Problem	7 October	1936	510
12	*For Unity in the* Labour Movement	7 October	1936	513
13	Socialism and Nationalism	8 October	1936	517
14	Socialism and the Indian Struggle	8 October	1936	522
15	Trade Unions and the Congress	16 October	1936	526
16	A Pudukottah Reception	16 October	1936	529
17	*Farewell Message to* Tamil Nadu	18 October	1936	530
18	Impressions of Andhra Tour	20 October	1936	532
19	Observance of Anti-War Day	29 October	1936	533
20	To N.G. Ranga	31 October	1936	534
21	The Congress and the World Crisis	5 November	1936	535
22	Poverty and 'Culture'	6 November	1936	539
23	Capitalism, Imperialism and Socialism	7 November	1936	541
24	Municipalisation and Socialism	9 November	1936	545
25	The Need for a Larger Perspective	9 November	1936	548
26	Calcutta	9 November	1936	553
27	Message to Utkal	12 November	1936	555
28	The Importance of the Election Manifesto	1 December	1936	556
29	The Need for More Women Candidates	1 December	1936	557
30	To Beohar Rajendra Sinha	1 December	1936	558
31	To B.C. Roy	3 December	1936	559
32	To Vidyagaun Nilkanth	7 December	1936	560
33	Message to Congress Candidates	7 December	1936	561
34	A Message to Socialists	20 December	1936	562
35	To Mohanlal Saxena	21 December	1936	563

10. The World Outside

1	Observance of Abyssinia Day	5 May	1936	567
2	Reply to Italian Consul-General	8 May	1936	567
3	The Lessons of Abyssinia	9 May	1936	569
4	To Robert O. Jordan	12 May	1936	571
5	The Arabs and Jews in Palestine	13 June	1936	572
6	The Arab National Struggle	18 July	1936	575
7	To V.K. Krishna Menon	6 August	1936	576
8	Message to the World Peace Congress	2 September	1936	576
9	The Importance of the World Peace Congress	2 September	1936	578
10	To Sheila Grant Duff	3 September	1936	579
11	Observance of Palestine Day	21 September	1936	580
12	To I. Olsvanger	25 September	1936	581
13	Spain and Palestine	27 September	1936	582
14	To the Editor, The Leader	2 October	1936	586
15	To V.K. Krishna Menon	14 December	1936	587
16	To Raja Rao	14 December	1936	588

11. The Faizpur Congress

1	On the Choice of the Congress President	20 November	1936	591
2	Further Thoughts on the Presidentship	28 November	1936	593
3	The Congress and the Elections	25 December	1936	595
4	Message to the Nation	27 December	1936	597
5	Presidential Address	27 December	1936	598
6	Concluding Address	28 December	1936	614
7	Selection of the Working Committee	29 December	1936	615

8	On the Success of the Congress Session	29 December	1936	617

12. Miscellaneous

1	To T.R. Deogirikar	26 March	1936	621
2	To Sri Prakasa	3 May	1936	622
3	On the Training of Volunteers	6 May	1936	623
4	To Dharam Prakash	8 May	1936	624
5	On Congress Finances	8 May	1936	625
6	To Indranarayan Sen Gupta	9 May	1936	627
7	To Rajendra Prasad	13 May	1936	628
8	Democratic Functioning of the Congress	14 May	1936	629
9	To V.K. Krishna Menon	25 May	1936	630
10	Before India is Reborn	June	1936	631
11	To Basanta Kumar Mallik	18 June	1936	642
12	To Secretary, Bengal P.C.C.	20 June	1936	644
13	The Agrarian Problem in India	8 July	1936	646
14	On Criticisms of Congress Accounts	9 July	1936	648
15	To N.R. Malkani	9 July	1936	649
16	The Need for Good Books on India	11 July	1936	650
17	To Roger Baldwin	6 August	1936	652
18	To Jehangir Vakil	9 August	1936	653
19	Appeal for Flood Relief in U.P.	14 August	1936	654
20	To Ellen Gottschalk	29 August	1936	656
21	To Govind Ballabh Pant	29 August	1936	657
22	To K.T. Shah	2 September	1936	658
23	To Vallabhbhai Patel	2 September	1936	659

24	Homage to Jatindranath Das	3 September	1936	660
25	To Patrick Lacey	5 September	1936	661
26	Gandhi Jayanti	21 September	1936	662
27	Message to Burmese Students	22 September	1936	664
28	To the Chairman, Allahabad Municipal Board	24 September	1936	664
29	To the District Magistrate, Allahabad	26 September	1936	665
30	To Purnima Banerji	September	1936	668
31	To K.T. Shah	3 October	1936	668
32	To Khurshed Lal	28 October	1936	670
33	To Jack C. Winslow	29 October	1936	671
34	To H.R. Varadarajan	3 November	1936	673
35	To Edward Thompson	3 December	1936	673
36	To J.N. Gupta	7 December	1936	675

ILLUSTRATIONS

In Europe, 1935 *frontispiece*

Kamala Nehru in Vienna, 1935
At Victoria station with Indira *between pp.* 64–65

With Leonard Woolf in London
With his daughter in Europe 112–113

Arrival at Karachi airport, March 1936
Letter to Rabindranath Tagore, 1 April 1936 176–177

At the Lucknow Congress, April 1936
At the Lucknow Congress, April 1936 208–209

Nagpur, April 1936
Bombay, May 1936 304–305

Touring southern India, October 1936
On the election campaign 400–401

Reception at Madras, October 1936
At Gokulam Ashramam, Madras, October 1936 544–545

At the Faizpur Congress, December 1936
At the Faizpur Congress, December 1936 619–620

IN EUROPE

GENERAL AND PERSONAL

1. En Route to Europe[1]

It is dawn. We started from Jodhpur with the stars shining brightly over us and darkness spread out over the land. As we flew westward, cleaving the air, the dawn pursued us and gradually snuffed out the million stars The land appeared, bare and cheerless, and as the sun came out, we saw spread out, far below us, large patches of cloud like snow or cotton wool. Sometimes the clouds are broken up into little bits and one can see the land below through the open spaces or as through a veil. At other times—and now as I write—they are piled up thickly and the ground is completely hidden and it is easy to imagine that we are over a vast snowfield, all shaken up by a storm. We are flying at nearly 10,000 ft. height. Above us is a clear and cloudless sky.

Many friends came to meet me at Cawnpore and Delhi. There was Ba at Delhi and Ansari and Zohra[2] and crowds of others. We had dinner there and left soon after. New Delhi was a blaze of illumination. We reached Jodhpur at 12.30 midnight and were taken to the state hotel nearby, a very up to date affair A card was handed to each one of us informing us that we would be called at 3.30 a m., *chhota hazri*, luggage to be put out at 4 a m, departure from hotel at 4.15 a.m., plane starts at 4.30 a m. I found it difficult to sleep for a long time, and it seemed that very soon after I had dozed off, I was called. I managed to shave, have a good hot bath—there was running hot water and an English bath—and to get ready at the scheduled time. Not so our friend Mr. Perrin. After some reminders, however, he emerged with a collar in one hand and a tie in the other. And so we were off in the starlight.

Soon we shall be flying over the Indus and then Karachi, where we change over to a larger plane. We are only three passengers in this plane—one other, an Australian I think, besides Perrin and me.

By night flying we have made up for part of the delay. From Karachi the air mail will go just a day late

1 5 September 1935 JN Papers, NMML
2 Daughter of M.A Ansari

1. To Horace Alexander[1]

Badenweiler
Sept. 17, 1935

Dear Mr. Alexander,

Thank you for your letter and your invitation. My wife's condition continues to be grave and it is difficult to say how matters will shape themselves in the future. Because of this, it is difficult for me to fix up any programme for myself. Even apart from this I feel somewhat unsettled and tired in mind and body. The change from long seclusion was sudden and unexpected, and the rapid air journey across two continents and a wholly new atmosphere require some adjustment. No doubt I shall adjust myself after a while.

Certainly I propose to visit England if my wife's health permits it and I hope to have my daughter, Indira, with me when I go there. I imagine that in any event this visit is not likely to materialise before the middle of October How long I shall be able to stay there I do not yet know but, if it is at all possible, we would very gladly avail ourselves of your kind invitation to visit Birmingham and stay with you.

Prison life becomes intolerable without some definite occupation and variety. It is not given to everyone, I am afraid, to be able to compose poetry even under the stress of gaol and to inscribe it on the walls with the help of an improvised utensil[2] But I think that most people can learn to stand on their heads. I have commended this strongly to my friends not so much for their physical health as their mental fitness. It has the virtue also, in these days of social questions, of not being confined to a select few. Almost, one might call it a proletarian diversion!

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 Horace Alexander Papers, NMML

2 The reference is to Lars Skrefsrud See also *Selected Works*, Vol 5. p 577 for Jawaharlal's reference to him

3. To Rabindranath Tagore[1]

Badenweiler
Sept. 19, 35

My dear Gurudev,
My sudden transition from Almora jail to Germany, after a long period of seclusion and rest, has unsettled me and I find it a little difficult to adjust myself to my new environment. I suppose I shall adapt myself to it soon. I hardly stayed in Allahabad. It was one continuous rush from the moment I left Almora to my arrival in Badenweiler. The plane I came by was a slow one as aeroplanes go and did only 60 to 90 miles per hour, but in order to make up for lost time, it flew night and day. The day after we left Karachi we were in Cairo. It was difficult to realise that I had been in India the day before and in Almora jail only four days earlier.

I found Kamala very much changed for the worse. She was suffering from an acute inflammation of the pleura and was running very high temperature, going up in the evenings to 104°F. There was a slight change for the better after I came and she could take more nourishment. But on the whole there was no marked change either way. The inflammation seems to be no better and pus has to be taken out every few days by aspirations; the high temperatures continue. The acute condition has almost become semi-chronic which is strange and disturbing. It is surprising how she has been able to withstand all that she had gone through. Slightly reassuring features are her heart and pulse which are both good and one lung is wholly unaffected. It is difficult to say how matters will shape themselves. She has made a gallant fight of it and the chances are still evenly balanced.

Indira has been here. But I do not fancy her remaining too long continuously in an atmosphere of illness and anxiety. Perhaps she may go soon to a place in Switzerland. She seems to have a special aptitude for picking up languages and I want to encourage this. She is likely to remain in the Continent for the whole of next year and I am suggesting to her to devote herself chiefly to French and German during this period. After that I am vaguely thinking of her joining an Oxford college but nothing is definite. Charlie Andrews, who was here for a few hours last week, encouraged this notion.

I hope you are keeping well and I further hope that you will not have to undertake long journeys for the purpose of collecting funds for

1. Nehru Files, Nehru Memorial, Santiniketan

Santiniketan. It seems monstrous that you should have to shoulder this burden instead of resting and doing creative work.

I have no programme here and I can make none till Kamala's condition improves. If her health permits it, I shall visit a few friends round about and go to England for a while.

Your letter, which you sent me to Bhowali some months back, reached me and gave me great pleasure.[2]

With affectionate regards,

Yours,
Jawaharlal

2. Tagore in his letter of 20 April 1935 wrote, "Indira had been an asset in our place I have watched her very closely and have felt admiration for the way you have brought her up. Her teachers all in one voice praise her and I know she is extremely popular with the students."

4. Message to the People of India[1]

I was in Allahabad for such a short time and I left so suddenly that I could hardly see the host of messages that had come for me from friends and comrades all over the country. I learn now from letters and newspapers received from home that a great number of further messages of welcome and good wishes reached Allahabad after my departure. It is difficult for me to say or put in words what this outpouring of love and affection from innumerable people, friends whom I treasure and comrades who have become dearer to me than brothers in the sharing of joys and sorrows and the facing of common perils and anxieties for many years, and also those whom I have not the privilege of knowing personally, has meant to me during these past few weeks. They will forgive me for this belated acknowledgment and expression of my deep gratitude, and for not writing to them separately. All I can say is that the old bond holds and will hold whatever may befall us.

1. Badenweiler, 28 September 1935. *The Hindu*, 8 October 1935.

5. To Bharati Sarabhai[1]

Badenweiler
19.10.35

My dear Bharati,
It is a little difficult for me to think of you as anything but the little girl you were, full of enthusiasm—sometimes misplaced perhaps—and so I do not find it very easy to write to you. I do not know how you have grown and what you are now; it is four years since we met, four more or less static years for me, and for you years of physical and mental and emotional growth. What has Oxford made of you? I am told you have liked Oxford and been happy there. That is as it should be. But that does not convey much, except to me a vague nostalgia, almost, shall I say, envy of youth and its glory. You were on the threshold of life in those old days, you tell me. Do you imagine that you have passed it now and tasted of life in its fullness? Linger awhile on the threshold, do not hurry.

I shall see you soon, I hope, and Suhrid. Kamala is just a little better and I intend paying a short visit to England. Indira will accompany me. We expect to reach London on the 29th October afternoon and probably we shall spend a week or so there. A day at least will be spent at Oxford. Suhrid and you would have drawn us there anyhow. Also I want to find out if it is possible and desirable for Indu to go there next year. I have been vaguely considering this possibility.

Love to Suhrid and you,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

6. To Bharati Sarabhai[1]

Badenweiler
24.10.35

My dear Bharati,
Your enthusiasm is infectious and I feel eager to enter into the spirit of the game and join you in the 'wild plans' you are hatching. How

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I would love to! But I cannot start earlier than the 28th, and after all what does it matter? Any day can become *Diwali* and New Year's Day if we know how to make it so. But there is another ordeal which I have to face. I am told that there is—horror of horrors!—a 'Nehru Reception Committee'[2] in London and I am to be exhibited and carried about from place to place and generally made pretty miserable. And then I must meet and hold solemn converse with many earnest and excellent persons and hollow-eyed politicians (my own kind) and behave in a dignified and leader like manner. The 'wild plans' seem rather far off, like so many things that we desire.

And so, little woman, I must refashion the picture of you in my mind. There will not be many changes, I fancy, and yet the nuances go a long way to change the exterior. But the picture remains a little vague and undefined though it is pleasant to contemplate. Must I also teach myself how to behave as 'heroes' are supposed to, so that I might impress your friends? That is a tiring prospect and, in any case, is not likely to be a successful attempt for I am only a bogus hero. The heroes of our childhood days stand unmasked when we grow up, and we look at them disenchanted and disillusioned.

We shall stay at Mount Royal (near Marble Arch) in London. We reach there on the 29th afternoon.

Love,

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Formed on 21 October 1935 by various political organisations to welcome Jawaharlal on his arrival at London.

7. To Bharati Sarabhai[1]

Badenweiler
21.11.35

Bharati dear,

While you were busy with your second chambers, I returned to a huge pile of letters which had accumulated and many parcels of books. I am greedy about books and I buy them rather extravagantly and many friends pamper me by sending them. So I sat surrounded by this pile, glad of the books and also rather envious of them and of the lore they

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

contained, for I doubted if I would have the time to read many of them. And then to the letters.

My present surroundings faded off, my recent memories, powerful as they were, grew dim, and I entered another world—a world of conflict and unhappiness and sordid manoeuvring and gallant endeavour wasted and helpless impotence and doubt and indecision and mutual recrimination—and yet, through all this misery, one could glimpse something that was worthwhile. And out of all the jumble of thoughts and emotions that rose within me I began to feel a pull and a call which ever grew stronger. It was the call of India, whatever this may be. And I wondered at this pull and how strongly it influenced me, even though spiritually I often felt a stranger in my own country.

I sent you two books. In a measure they represent me in various stages of my existence, and, as we had talked of them, I thought they might interest you. I am very far from Pater[2] today, though parts of me still echo to his prose. But in my youth, when I was a student like you, I liked him greatly and imagined that I found an echo of some of my moods in his writings. But that was long, long ago and that soft egotistical mood retired into the background or into the depths of the unconscious (to peep out occasionally) and gave place to something harder, sterner, something perhaps more in conformity with this hard stern life of ours. Many years after, I found an echo of my moods and inner conflicts in some of Toller's plays. Those moods and conflicts have not left me yet.

I went to London in a strange frame of mind. Purposely I made myself receptive and tried to remove the veil which covers what has been and to look back to what I had been in the old days. The charm worked to some extent, helped by others no doubt, and behind my political talks in London, Oxford and Cambridge, my mind was wandering and exploring strange and half-forgotten by-ways of my past being. The charm worked, to my own pleasant surprise, but no charm could get over the bars of my own temperament or remove the steel barriers that my contacts with life had provided me with. We are strange mixtures, are we not?, of the soft lotus bloom and the mud in which it grows, of putty and iron, of earth and sky.

You have got Sappho[3] all wrong. So far as I remember the lines run thus:

2. Walter Pater (1839-1894); English essayist and critic. His famous books are *Marius the Epicurean* and *Plato and Platonism*.
3. 600 B.C.; she was one of the early Greek lyric poets.

The moon has set and the Pleiades,
It is the middle of the night and time passes
And I lie awake and alone.

Do you know Walter de la Mare's[4] lines 'Very old are we men'?[5] Look them up when you have the chance.

Yours,
Jawahar

4. (1873-1956); English poet and novelist. His famous works are *The Listeners*, *Memoirs of a Midget* and *On the Edge*.
5. "Very old are we men,
Our dreams are tales
Told in dim Eden
By Eve's nightingales;
We wake and whisper awhile,
But the day gone by,
Silence and sleep like fields
Of amaranth lie."

(From *All That's Past*)

8. To Vincenc Lesny[1]

Badenweiler
22.11.35

Dear Professor Lesny,[2]
I am obliged to you for your letter[3] of the 19th Nov.

I am happy to know that you have found some of my books interesting. You must remember that I am no expert at any subject and that I write as a layman who has picked up odd bits of knowledge during his journey through life. To have, therefore, the commendation of a scholar and expert like you is naturally very gratifying to me.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1882-1953); professor at the University of Prague; visiting professor at Santiniketan, 1923 and 1927, president, Indo-Czechoslovak Society set up in June 1934.
3. In his letter of 19 November 1935, he wrote that he was "specially struck" by Jawaharlal's "comprehensive grasp of the main currents of world history" and his personal attitude towards them. He hoped that with his help the Indo-Czechoslovak Society would promote relations with India.

I hope that the contact between the Indo-Czechoslovak Society and the Indian National Congress will grow and will prove advantageous to both the countries and their peoples.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. To Bharati Sarabhai[1]

Badenweiler
25.11.35

Bharati dear,

To write is difficult, you say, to speak equally so. How limited are words and how they hide us from ourselves. Sometimes we seek refuge in their triteness, at other times we lose ourselves in their muse, and ever the reality eludes us, pursue it how we may. And yet, do we really pursue it and seek it? Very few, I suppose, have the courage to do so, for reality includes the pit of hell as well as heaven. We avoid it in spite of our brave talk and to escape from it we build up illusions and fanciful castles in the wide expanses of our imagination. Why blame words then? It is we who do not know how to use them rightly or dare not do so.

Does a person ever understand another, or does he understand himself? Individuals meet and pass each other with eyes closed, unknowing and unknown, their drab exteriors covering a deep mystery. Sometimes there is a flash of understanding, a strange revelation, and then darkness, though it can never be quite so dark again. And sometimes, as a French poet once said, as we gaze into the eyes of our dearest and nearest we find that a stranger is looking at us.

How to bridge the gap between the dreams that fill us and the reality *that is so different? How to do it? How? It seems easy when one is* young and full of enthusiasm. In our pride of youth we care little for walls and obstacles. It is good that we should feel that way for a while at least during our span of life before weariness and dissolution come. It is good to cling to and lengthen that period of youth. And therefore I wrote to you some time back not to hurry, to linger awhile on the way. And when you pass on to a fuller and more complex life, carry something of the breath of youth with you, something of its idealism, but in place of its egotism try to widen your humanity. Only

1. JN Correspondence, NMML.

then can we endeavour to bridge that gap. At best that bridge is a ramshackle affair, liable to collapse at the first touch of storm and tempest. But the effort is always worthwhile; it brings its own reward. And there seems no other way.

It was good for me to see your bright young face and to sense your enthusiasms Some of the weariness and the fret, that is our common lot, left me for a while and I kept company again with thoughts of long ago. My mind was filled with ideas, old and new, a strange medley, and I wondered what I was and what you were and what you were going to be.

Where am I going for the Christmas vacation? I have no such vacations. Sundays and week days, term time and vacation are all alike to me I suppose I shall remain here in Badenweiler, unless, it is a very remote chance, I take Kamala to Switzerland before Christmas. In the latter event I shall be with her probably round about Lausanne. There was at one time just a chance of my going to Prague then but I doubt it. I would of course love to see you—need I say it? But you should go to the Engadine or to the Tyrol and take your fill of snow and ice and joy there, and ski, and luge, and skate, and indulge in the hundred other delights of a winter in the mountains.

Yours,
Jawahar

10. To Indira Nehru[1]

Badenweiler
27.11.35

Darling Indu,

Your letters of various dates came this evening.

I can quite understand your feeling about the time table. School time-tables are apt to irritate as one grows up and especially when one has special work to do. Still they have their uses and when one lives in any establishment a disciplined life in harmony with the other residents is helpful and desirable. Otherwise one becomes an odd number not fitting in with the others This does not produce much peace of mind The real difficulty is that you are both educationally and physically in a transition stage—between school and university.

1 Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML.

You are just beyond school and not quite of the university standard. You could of course have gone to a university straight off but you would have felt somewhat out of it for a while. It is far better to go there when you can take a leading part in the intellectual and social life there. That time will come soon enough—nine or ten months will go rapidly enough. Meanwhile I think it would be a good thing if you tried to fit in with the routine of La Pelouse in so far as you can do so conveniently.

This of course does not mean that you must do everything that the other girls or boys do. Anything that does not fit in, you can avoid. Usually, I imagine, it will be pleasant for you to go for the communal walks. Is it not better to go in a group than alone? When you do not feel like it, you need not go. As I have often said, a very desirable habit to cultivate is the habit of cooperation, and culture is partly the capacity to fit in with any new environment. If we are too individualistic we do not develop the social and communal virtues.

But the point is that you should decide for yourself what you can do and what you cannot without interfering with more important work. This applies to the subjects you have taken up. I am sure that Mlle. Hemmerlin will help you in rearranging your time table in order to make it most profitable to you. After a few days you will know better how to readjust this time-table and you can then speak to Mlle. H.

Of course if you want me to I shall write to Mlle. H. But it would be so much better if you had a talk with her and pointed out your difficulties. Obviously your main preoccupation should be preparation for Responsions and languages. Music and painting are very desirable in themselves and add to our joy of life. Whether you can carry on with them or not it is for you to decide. Perhaps you can stick to one.

Anyway it will be a good thing if you had a little free time for reading etc. For the rest a strict time table is really very necessary to get work done regularly and efficiently. Otherwise one drifts. One of my virtues (so I think!) is that I work to a time-table.

Mummie is much the same though her temperature was slightly higher today—not much but still I don't fancy it.

Madan Bhai has gone to Paris today and I suppose he is there by this time.

I enclose a letter for Lou Geissler—or rather two letters, one from me and one from another person. Will you please send them to her? Tell her that she can either reply to me direct or through you, as she prefers.

I have heard from Eva about the typewriter. I expect to get the machine soon.

Do not forget to let me know what bank you have finally selected. You will then have to write to India.

Today I had a visit from Raja Rao,[2] a young south Indian, who lives near Paris and has married a French girl. He came alone from Mulhouse across the Rhine where he is spending some days. I liked him. I am thinking of going over to Mulhouse one afternoon for a few hours as I am told that it is a very enterprising municipality and has got all manner of socialistic and communal schemes working. Probably I shall go on Saturday next.

If you want any more books for your course you will let me know. We have been having delightful weather here—cold and dry and sunny. This evening there was a little snow but it turned to sleet.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

2. (b. 1909), author of *Kanthapura* and *The Serpent and the Rope.*

11. To Amiya Chakravarty[1]

Badenweiler
29.11.35

My dear Chakravarty,

...My wife continues to have ups and downs. It is hardly correct to call these setbacks relapses. As the liquid or pus accumulates in the pleura she has a high temperature. Then this is taken out by aspiration and immediately the temperature goes down and is almost normal for 10 or 12 days. Then again the liquid accumulates and the temperature goes up. Gradually however the normal period is increasing and this indicates that the inner inflammation is slowly subsiding. Probably this swing will go on for some time. Since I wrote to you she was keeping well but again yesterday and today her temperature shot up. Apart from this, however, she is tolerably well and looks better than the temperature would indicate.

1. J.N. Correspondence. N.M.M.L. Extracts.

It is gratifying to know that I have "profoundly impressed" anybody[2] but then I almost suspect your affection and personal feelings for me colour your views! The question you or they put to me, however, is not very complimentary to me as a socialist. Have I any use for English socialists? Most certainly I have, realising of course that individuals cannot, as a rule, move governments or work wonders unless circumstances help them. In many ways I have far more in common with English and other non-Indian socialists than I have with non socialists in India. I am quite convinced that any real solution of our Indian problems is vitally connected with the world solution of present-day problems. It has become difficult for me to think of India apart from the world. That, I take it, is the socialist attitude and I hope I can lay claim to be a socialist in thought and ideology. For a socialist to keep aloof from other socialists on grounds of nationality is hardly consistent with the fundamentals of his belief. Even apart from socialism I feel drawn towards international contacts, cultural and otherwise, and I do think that these help greatly in bringing worthwhile people nearer to each other. The real difficulty in the past has been the ingrained suspicion in our minds that most English socialists are not really socialists where India is concerned. The old tradition and kink of imperialism comes in the way, as well as the difficulty of understanding the curious complex that is India. The British Labour Party is mainly responsible for this suspicion in our minds. But I am quite sure that there are individual English socialists, and they are a growing number, who have got over this imperialist complex and who can think of India on real socialist lines. They may not be many so far but it is a comfort to know that they are there.

What claims can we make on them? It is hardly for us to tell them, although the claims are there right enough, and both as sensitive human beings and socialists they must be aware of them. Action, in speech or writing or otherwise, must necessarily be decided by them. They know the environment better than we do and if they are really interested they will find ways and means. It is not good enough to feel that the whole Indian problem is too complex and delicate for them to touch, or to be irritated with Indians as a group or with individuals and make this an excuse for inaction. Nor is it sufficient to say that they are afraid of rubbing some of us the wrong way and

2. In his letter of 26 November 1935, Amiya Chakravarty wrote that those who had come into contact with Jawaharlal's ideas were "profoundly impressed" and were trying to find out whether they could "individually or in small groups do something—purely as friends, as fellow thinkers and human individuals... to help us at the other end", and if so, they wanted to hear from him on this

therefore they prefer to be silent. It is true we are sensitive, especially when Englishmen begin to preach to us, but we can distinguish between *sincerity and hypocrisy, and anything* that proceeds from sincere socialist belief will always be welcome. But for one thing, our patience, or at least mine, is exhausted. That is the pious attitude of doing good to us, the motive of the well-meaning society lady who goes slumming Nor do I think that mere courtesy and good manners and smiling at each other will carry us any distance, desirable as they are in all social intercourse. Vital political and economic problems and conflicts, like mathematical problems, do not get solved by good humour and smiles alone.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. To Indira Nehru[1]

Badenweiler
3/4.12.35

Darling,
I have not written to you for some days. Indeed I have not written to anybody. I have created quite a record by not going to the post-office for five days. I have been working very hard. A great deal of *my time has been spent with mummie who has not been well at all* and as Madan Bhai also is not here I have to spend practically the whole day with her. Yesterday I did not even come back for lunch. Today I went back after a hurried dinner and returned at 9 30. The aspiration took place this evening. I hope she will be better tomorrow. Her temperature has been keeping up and she has had several sleepless nights.

The rest of my time has been given, almost every minute of it till late *at night, to revising my manuscript of In & Out. This has* become a terrible job. I have got through over half of it and I hope to finish it in another week. Meanwhile letters and other work are accumulating. I feel rather tired and am already looking forward to a brief holiday at Christmas time when you will be here. In between I propose to go to Paris for a week if mummie's health permits.

Frau Ehrhardt gave me quite a lecture two days ago She told me that I was not eating enough or sleeping enough and was developing

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

nerves as a result of over-work. She said she had observed that I shook my head unconsciously during meals!

On Sunday I went to Mulhouse or Mulhausen. It was the very worst day I could have chosen. It rained hard continuously and the wind blew as if it wanted to blow us off. When I reached there I found that my host Dr. Dumesnil had developed influenza. Still I was glad I went and I saw a very interesting municipal school for poor and weak children Madame Dumesnil asked me about you and when I mentioned Bex, immediately she asked if you were with Mlle. H. She praised H. greatly and said that I had chosen excellently and could not have done better. She has never met Mlle. H. but they correspond with each other.

Mummie wants me to remind you to send some present to the girl in Paris who frequently sends you gifts.

You can throw away *The Statesman* and *Manchester Guardian* and *Times* after you have finished with them.

Hari is standing for election to the Allahabad Municipality on behalf of the Congress! The local lawyers etc. are furious.

Love from

Your loving
Papu

13. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Badenweiler
Dec. 9, 1935

My dear Menon,[2]

I sent you this morning the remaining part of *In and Out of Prison*. This completes the work. I have hurriedly read through the manuscript and made a number of changes.

... I would like the book to appear as early as possible. It has a certain political significance for India at present, but later on it may be a little stale, from this point of view at least....

The feeling has been growing upon me that I must go to India for the Congress—this is quite apart from the question of the presidentship.

1. JN Correspondence, NMML. Extracts.
2. (1896-1974), secretary of the India League in London, 1929-47, borough councillor of St. Pancras, 1934-47, high commissioner for India in England 1947-52, Indian delegate, United Nations General Assembly, 1952-62, Minister without portfolio, 1956-57, Minister for Defence, 1957-62

I would, from many points of view, prefer not being president. However, I propose to do nothing in the matter and to await the course of events. But I must attend the next Congress session, and it is desirable that I reach India about a fortnight before the session begins. This means that I must sail from Europe—I cannot afford another air journey—about the 10th of February. This means that I cannot go to England in February as I would like to spend my last days in Europe with my wife. It is not very easy for me to leave her in her present condition, but to remain here indefinitely is still more difficult. I would prefer to go to India and return after some months, if that was necessary.

At the latest therefore I can visit England in the last week of January, and for not much more than a week. During such a short visit, I doubt if it will be desirable to have any public functions, workers' meetings etc, which you suggested. Besides they do not seem to fit in with the role I imagine I am playing just at present. I realise the importance of what you told me and, under different circumstances, I would gladly indulge in this kind of activity. But pure propaganda does not seem to me to be indicated from now.

Drop the Pandit if you value my good opinion!

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To Goshiben Captain[1]

Badenweiler
28-12.35

My dear Psyche,

A guilty conscience is not a pleasant companion And in writing to you I feel a little ashamed—shameless as I otherwise am. For some two weeks past two letters of yours have lain with me and I have often thought of them and of you. I was happy to get them, though it is no easy matter always to decipher what you have written and the Nepalese paper of your choice is not helpful in this task. But one wants leisure and some peace of mind to write decent letters and I have lacked both these I thought also that you would be getting news of Kamala from my letters and cables to Jal and others I am surprised to find how much I have to do here Kamala is of course the first concern and I spend most of the day with her, and sometimes,

1 JN Correspondence NMML

lately, part of the night. In odd hours that I scrape together I deal with other work including a terrifying correspondence.

The other work has also included my new book which I wrote in prison last time. The task of authorship is like blood to the tiger and I am beginning to think of myself sometimes as a writer. Have I not joined the P.E.N. club?[2] As you know, one has to give one's profession all over the place—in every hotel, pension etc. I am hard put as to how to describe myself. Subhas Bose, I found, had taken to describing himself as a writer. Being more modest, I could not quite bring myself to do that. But what am I? In a recent application for a passport, I decided to call my profession 'public affairs', whatever that might mean. I suppose the term is wide enough to cover a multitude of activities, good and evil. And yet, in spite of public exhibitions and the like, I have never ceased to feel a singularly private person.

One of my recent trials has been an attempt to come to terms with a publisher in London. I realised for the first time the difference in the mentality and outlook of a publisher and an author and how the two clash. I would of course have been worsted in the duel, but the idea that I might be exploited by the publisher irritated me. I saw no reason why the publisher should profit handsomely by my efforts and I should remain in the outer darkness. Not being a satyagrahi pledged to living on Rs. 12/- a month, I decided to get the best terms I could get. But all this business was so utterly distasteful to me that I almost felt like hurling the manuscript into the fire. As an alternative I changed the publisher[3] and accepted a much better offer. So to some extent I have peace now on this point.

What shall I write to you about Kamala? You must have learnt of the recent crisis through which she passed. It was pretty bad and the wonder is that she survived it. This evening as I looked at her and found her quite bright and cheerful, the last week with its horrors seemed almost like a bad dream. Was it the same Kamala who was on the brink of life only a few days ago? Her face changes remarkably from day to day and deludes us into imagining many things which have little foundation. And so my reactions change; if you could see the letters I have written during the last week and compare them, you will be astonished at my changing moods. I am not exactly mercurial.

2 International association of poets, playwrights, editors, essayists and novelists.
3 Jawaharlal's *Autobiography* was published by John Lane, and not by Stanley Unwin, with whom he had been negotiating earlier.

I have always considered myself pretty stolid and in a crisis I usually hold together. But the relaxation of a strain brings curious reactions.

Kamala has got over this last crisis and she has reverted to the *status quo ante crisis. But this is bad enough and she is so terribly weak.* One finds it hard to hope and yet I must say that I am not hopeless. Both Kamala and I have a hard core which carries on and it is difficult for us to admit or imagine defeat. I cannot describe her present condition—it is much too complex for description and there are so many factors, psychological and immaterial, which elude analysis. Even one expert doctor's report cannot deal with them. And so when I have to cable I find it extraordinarily difficult to say the right thing in a few words. Jal has developed a habit of putting me in this difficulty—as I sat down to write to you a fresh cable came from him.

And so all I can say is that Kamala is in no immediate danger, and she is far better than we could have dared to hope a week ago. But the disease has got strong hold of her and her weakness is so great that recovery at best seems to be a distant affair. Meanwhile danger always *hovers.*

I was greatly interested in your psychic effort—you must of course justify your name. Indu had told me of it earlier. I suppose it was not quite so extraordinary after all for everyone was expecting my arrest and your subconscious mind must have been full of the idea. You see I am reluctant to plunge into the unknown.

I was fully conscious of November 14. I try in vain to forget it as it comes round year by year, painfully reminding me of a fact I would fain forget वक्त का तकाजा[4] as we say in the north.

Thank you for the snap you sent. It is not very good but it is precious and I have carried it about, in my pocket book.

Indu has gone back to her old school in Switzerland—at Bex. She will remain there for a year, chiefly doing languages and, I hope, getting physically stronger. After that she ought to go to a university. I am not yet sure where she will go The choice in Europe is singularly limited at present. Most European countries have to be ruled out—Germany, Italy etc. We are left with Switzerland, France and England. Switzerland, though good for the school stage, does not appeal to me for university work. It is such a tight and narrow-minded place—the typical bourgeois. So we fall back on France and England—meaning thereby Paris and Oxford I should like her to spend some time at both these places.

4. Natural effect of age.

I am afraid there is no chance whatever of my going to Poland. It is entirely outside my ken. England I shall go to again and, if I can manage it, I shall try to find out your friend of Sunningdale Gardens —I can't quite make out her name as you have written it. But I want to give you a faint idea of how I am likely to function during my stay in London. On the last occasion I was rushed about all day till I was almost in a daze. I am now told that my last visit was not properly organized and I managed to waste several minutes and seconds between engagements. This must be avoided on the next occasion.

In a sense I liked my visit to Paris better. There was not so much of a rush, though I had little leisure. I met a different type of person there—authors, journalists and the like, mostly left-wing people, like Andre Gide,[5] Malraux[6] etc. I like the French intellectual type.

I love the line you quoted—'And the old ocean in an unquiet slumber lay'. I sometimes feel like envying the old ocean. Slumber, even though unquiet, is very welcome at times.

Madan Atal is flourishing—torn between his desire to reduce himself and his love for good and plentiful food, especially whipped cream. It is a Homeric conflict. Hitler has partly intervened in it by some new regulations rationing cream. Anyway it is not to be obtained easily here now. Even eggs are becoming rare!

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

5. (1869-1951); French novelist who was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1947; among his best known works are *Strait is the Gate* and *La Symphonie Pastorale*.
6 (b. 1901); French novelist and critic; among his best known works are *La Condition Humaine* and *The Voices of Silence*; member of de Gaulle's cabinet; received the Nehru Award for International Understanding in 1972.

15. To Madan Atal[1]

Badenweiler
5.1.36

My dear Madan,
Kamala's temperature has kept high as usual and she had shivering fits. Otherwise she is much the same. She was very depressed this morning and talked to me, off and on, several times. She told me

1 JN. Correspondence, NMML.

again and again that she had long been convinced that she could never get well here. She had said so, so many times and asked us to take her away. Piteously she begged me to take her away to Switzerland. She pointed to her body, how wasted it was and told me not to be misled by her face. She was in her last stages. What could I say to her?

It was very distressing to hear her and my mind has been troubled since. It has been troubled with the thought that we have been unable to grant an overpowering wish of hers, which she has repeated so often. Whether she lives or not I do not know. The chances of her recovering are remote. But the thought that we could not fulfil such a deeply felt wish of hers oppresses me.

Her condition is of course very grave and as far as I can see, very little can be done for her. I am certain that any major operation will be the death of her and I have no faith left in doctors with big names and reputation. Even for an operation she must have more vitality than she possesses now. It seems to me that one of the most important factors is the psychological factor and this is more important now than before for she is losing the will to live. This factor and careful nursing with competent medical attendance is about all we can trust to pull her gradually up. It is just possible that the psychological factor might be strengthened greatly if she could be taken to Switzerland. Switzerland is a magic name for her and the mere change will put new life in her. But whether it is at all possible to shift her now is more than I can say. It seems a tremendously risky undertaking. However I should like you to discuss this matter also with Unverricht.

About nurses you might enquire in Berlin, but I feel it is dangerous to take the risk of bringing new nurses who are not used to her and to whom they might not take kindly. Unless I am absolutely sure that the change will be for her good I would not support it. Apart from Anna, the only other tried person is Annette. A totally new nurse will always be a risk.

The new nurse has sent a bill charging at the rate of Rs. 9 a day!

Yours affly,
Jawahar

16. To Horace Alexander[1]

Badenweiler
17.1.36

Dear Alexander,
I wish you would yield to your temptations. It is far the easiest way of getting rid of them. Anyway I dislike formality and we have known each other long enough to do without it.

My wife is far from well but I have decided to go to London on the 25th—reaching there on the 26th. I have left the programme in Menon's hands—he can consult others—as it is impossible to fix up anything from this distance. I would gladly meet the Cambridge economists but I must confess that the prospect of talking economics with this very learned crowd rather terrifies me. As for Sir George Schuster, I met him once in India and, if it can be easily arranged, I would have no objection to seeing him in London—but not to discuss Indian finance. I hardly know anything of the details of this and a discussion would not be profitable.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Horace Alexander Papers, N.M.M.L.

17. To Mother[1]

Badenweiler
20.1.36

Dear Mother,
When I last wrote to you, Kamala's condition had deteriorated badly. Since then she has improved slightly. Not much, but still she is better than before. Now for some time there has been no change in her condition. The temperature shoots up and she has become very weak. It is a good thing that she eats well, without a fuss. But her condition remains critical. We have now decided to take her from here to Switzerland in a few days. It is not far from here but travelling is not easy in her weak condition.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

I am going to London for two or three days. On my return I will stay with Kamala for two or three weeks and then return to India. I shall probably come by air. So, I shall soon be meeting you.

Nan gave me the details of the Congress Jubilee.[2] It was a good show.

Indu is in school Vidya[3] returned to London.

Love,

Your son,
Jawahar

2. The Golden Jubilee of the Indian National Congress was celebrated on 28 December 1935.
3 Daughter of Kishanlal Nehru, a cousin of Jawaharlal.

18. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Badenweiler
23.1.36

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Many thanks for your two cables and letter. The second cable came this afternoon I am very glad to learn that the Congress dates have been fixed from April 7th to 14th. This gives me ample time and I hope I shall now be able to get to India well ahead of the Congress session. I was under the impression that under the constitution the Congress must be held in February or March. I suppose the Working Committee has stretched the constitution a little. I am personally glad it has, for it suits me. But I imagine that it will be rather warm in Lucknow then—though it will not be uncomfortably so. Perhaps a reason for your extending the dates was Bapu's ill health. Let us hope that he will soon be well. Also, I imagine that the Assembly members wanted to avoid a clash with their Assembly meetings.

As I cabled to you, I live in a state of uncertainty owing to Kamala's varying condition. After passing through the severe crisis of last month she has been in a peculiar state. There is no immediate crisis but there is a kind of continuing semi-crisis and certain complications appear to have set in, due largely to extreme weakness. Her heart is not as good as it was. This present state cannot continue for long. It will either grow worse or better, within the next three or four

1. AICC File No. G-43(KW)(i)/1935, p. 21, N.M.M.L.

weeks at most. I mean a fairly definite change either way, for minor changes are constantly occurring. Latterly she has been slightly better. During this fairly critical period I should like to be with her or at least near her. The new Congress dates give me that chance and I am grateful to you.

We have decided to shift Kamala to Lausanne in Switzerland. She will probably be removed in about a week's time. The change, I hope, will do her good.

It is difficult to leave Kamala just at present but I have decided to adhere to my London programme. I am leaving for London day after tomorrow and may stay there ten days if I am not suddenly called back earlier. It is a very heavy and complicated programme and I am supposed to meet a variety of persons—politicians, writers, critics, economists etc.—mostly English people. I think these contacts are useful and I find these personally stimulating. Unfortunately, the organisations interested in India in London, find it difficult to cooperate with each other and they suspect each other of stealing a march over the other. I have tried my best not to associate myself with one to the exclusion of another but I have not wholly succeeded in removing suspicion and ill will. It is extraordinary how people make mountains out of molehills.

I cannot say definitely when I shall be back in India but I shall certainly try to get there a clear month before the Congress.

As we are leaving Badenweiler our address will be changed. I cannot give you a definite address yet. For the time being the best address will be c/o Thomas Cook & Son, Rue du Mont Blanc, Geneva.

Congratulations on the splendid success of the Congress Jubilee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

19. To Horace Alexander[1]

Lausanne
27.2.36

Dear Alexander,

I have your letter. My plans have been suddenly upset by a sad turn for the worse which my wife has taken.[2] I have postponed my departure

1. Horace Alexander Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts
2. Kamala Nehru died on 28 February 1936.

to India by 11 days. So for the present I am here but my mind is not functioning very clearly....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. To Amiya Chakravarty[1]

Montreux
4.3.36

My dear Chakravarty,
Your card has reached me here, where I have been for the last two days. Day after tomorrow I leave for India *via* Marseilles (by air).[2]

I have made it as clear as I could that I want no interviews in Rome. But the Duce is evidently interested in me. Yesterday the Italian Consul at Lausanne travelled up here to give me Signor Mussolini's personal message of sympathy and condolence.[3]

Indira will appear for Responsions next June and presumably for the Somerville entrance next March. It is a little difficult for me to be positive and definite as I live an unsettled life. The only thing that was worrying me was the extra year that Indira would have to spend. If that is unavoidable then it has to be faced. With all my attractions for Oxford I am not frightfully keen on it; there is just an element of ineffectiveness in it.

Why does the principal of Somerville try to find out about my plans through others? A direct approach might be more satisfactory. I have yet to receive any acknowledgement in writing from Somerville of the letters I wrote in November last. I dislike writing to people who do not answer and I propose to write no further letters to the Somerville people, unless I am provoked. Indira will communicate with them when she goes for Responsions in June.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, NMML.
2. Jawaharlal left Marseilles on 7 March and arrived at Karachi on 10 March 1936.
3. Jawaharlal refers to his refusal to meet Mussolini in *The Discovery of India*: "Normally I might have got over my distaste for meeting him, for I was curious also to know what kind of man the Duce was. But the Abyssinian campaign was being carried on then and my meeting him ...was bound to be used for fascist propaganda."

POLITICAL

21. To Agatha Harrison[1]

Badenweiler
Sept. 25th, 1935

Dear Agatha Harrison,
Thank you for your letter. Certainly, we might do without prefixes and the like. I have no liking for them and I have a peculiar dislike to "Pandit". It sounds so pompous and I hope that whatever my other demerits might be I am not pompous.

C.F. Andrews is still presumably somewhere in Switzerland, terribly busy of course, as he always is. His amazing industry astonishes me He sent me a few lines to say that he might turn up here on Tuesday or Wednesday. Today is Wednesday and I have had no further news of him.

Kamala is much the same. Yesterday there was another aspiration followed by a fairly thorough cleaning out and some disinfecting stuff was put in. The job was a painful one but on the whole the patient bore it well and her temperature came down immediately. She feels exhausted today. I am inclined to think—perhaps it is my imagination—that she is just slightly better since I came. But one cannot count on this much and the way her temperature shoots up to extraordinary heights frightens me. It went up as high as 105.8°F. the other day when the evening before it was under 98°F. She is taking her nourishment much better. I am spending more time with her now as she expressed a wish that I should do so. My presence is a help in her taking food.

Do not trouble to send me any cuttings from Indian papers. I get *The Bombay Chronicle* and *The Hindustan Times* as well as some of the weeklies.

Your suggestion that I should "talk with some of the people with special responsibility for India" during my visit to England has set me thinking. It was almost a new idea for me and so far I had not thought of it as a possibility. I shall discuss the matter with C.F.A.

1. JN. Correspondence, NMML.

when he comes here. But I think I should let you know my first reactions to the proposals and I know you will not mind if I am perfectly frank.

I was and am looking forward to my visit to England as an entirely private affair with nothing in the nature of public engagements. I do not yet feel in the mood for any public function and I have so far not succeeded in getting rid of what might be called the gaol atmosphere. I have absolutely no feeling about taking unfair advantage of my early release so far as the government is concerned. I made it perfectly clear to the government before my discharge that I would consider myself perfectly free to indulge in any activity in Europe or elsewhere. The clause about leaving some matters to my honour which they added referred to the few days which might have elapsed before I left India.[2] These days were ultimately reduced to a few hours only as I left the very day of my arrival in Allahabad. Anyway that is over and I have no questions of honour or good form to face now. But though there are no external inhibitions, I feel reluctant to come out of my shell. Partly, it is a question of mood and I may change that mood later on. More important still is the feeling that I must take no definite step without knowing much more fully than I do now the position in India in regard to particular individuals and groups, and without consulting my colleagues there. You must remember that during the last four eventful years I have been mostly in prison and no one in prison can ever be in real touch with developments outside. The personal touch and the psychological link are absent. One lives in a world apart, viewing external happenings as through a glass, darkly, with phantom and almost unreal figures moving hither and thither. But even these phantom movements produce emotional reactions which are stronger than they might otherwise be, as the outlet of action is denied.

I want of course to meet as many friends in England as possible and to get into personal touch with many whom I have desired to meet for long. I am also prepared for frank talks about Indian affairs. It is not the subject that I wish in any way to avoid. How can I do so when I am wrapped up in it? Nor am I usually afraid of any kind of publicity; I am too accustomed to moving about in crowds, except in my periods of seclusion. But the light does dazzle one, after a long darkness.

All this however has only an indirect bearing on the proposal you have made. That proposal affects me in a different way. I think it

2 See *Selected Works*, Vol 6, p. 418.

is always good to meet people on the other side. Personal contacts do not remove difficulties or solve hard problems but they do help in bringing a certain very desirable human element in an otherwise impersonal and inhuman atmosphere. So ordinarily I would welcome such contacts. But just at present my mind rebels against any such step and it is very difficult for me to explain just why this is so. You tell me that talks can be arranged naturally and without publicity. I do not quite understand who the other parties are likely to be. I can only vaguely guess, and though I would naturally prefer an absence of publicity, I doubt if this is feasible. Anyway if publicity somehow was given to what happened, I would not care very much. But what would I say and how could I presume to represent anybody? Am I to discuss the new Act that has been passed?[3] It occupies a very small corner of my mind, which is troubled and distressed by a host of other happenings. How can I tell you or anyone else what my mind has gone through during the last few years? I do not consciously think that I have any grievance against particular individuals, but I do find a certain hard core inside me against the system that functions in India. I suppose most of us have been hardened during these last few years and the iron has entered our souls. We may not bark as we used to do and as Sir Samuel Hoare so chastely put it, but silent dogs have also their feelings.[4] We expected oppression and cruelty and we got our full measure of them, but it is harder to bear them when they are accompanied by ostentatious vulgarity and a sickening hypocrisy. It is this atmosphere that has strangled and suffocated us and made it almost impossible for us to consider anything but the hands at our throats and the foul air we have to breathe. Insult and injury have been heaped on those we love and cherish while everything that is evil and bad in India has been encouraged and fostered. The very thought of the lap-dog breed in India makes me feel almost physically sick and it is this breed that is made to flourish under the present dispensation. I am afraid I am very far from being a true satyagrahi and I am neither humble nor

3. The Government of India Act of 1935 retained the subordination of the government of India to the British Parliament, through the Secretary of State, to whom the Viceroy was responsible It provided for a federation of British India and princely states, a dyarchical executive at the Centre and provincial autonomy

4 Sir Samuel Hoare, in a broadcast on 28 January 1932, had claimed that Congress threats did not worry the government "though dogs bark, the caravan passes on."

devoid of pride. There are things I cannot tolerate whatever the consequences and many of these have happened and are happening in India.

My father once said that the British Government in India was the greatest terrorist organisation in the country. How many people outside, who talk so glibly of terrorism in Bengal, realise this, I wonder. I hate terrorism in all its forms but to me the most monstrous thing is a powerful and organised government trying to crush the spirit of a nation and to break its finest children in an endeavour to protect its own vested interests as well as those of its reactionary hangers-on. That is a crime against human dignity which no nation which has a spark of life in it can tolerate.

The Indian newspapers give little enough expression to the real feeling of India. They dare not. But even they give some occasional glimpses. Are we to discuss "reforms" when the Viceroy certifies the new bill[5] continuing all the extraordinary and emergency powers of the government and the magistrates and the police? There was a huge outcry in England when a very feeble (judged by Indian standards) seditious bill was proposed early this year.[6] Where are those lovers of liberty when India has to face something far more terrible and which we know from past experience will be ruthlessly worked? The *Manchester Guardian* and its like work themselves into a rage over Germany or Austria, but they try to be amusing and cynical when India comes into their ken. A sense of humour is always worth cultivating but it is difficult to be amused when one is sat upon and badgered and crushed. Many of our friends in England, who sincerely feel for us, put in a good word for us occasionally. But they often remind me of the lady who, out of the goodness of her heart, goes slumming and doles out charity to individuals. Sometimes that charity hurts more than it heals and, in any event, it is a singularly ineffective way of dealing with the problem.

I can't get rid of the idea that there is no real appreciation of the problem even among most of our friends. Their occasional writings astonish me for they deal with side issues and superficialities and ignore

5. The Criminal Law Amendment Bill sought to give permanent effect to the Act of 1932 which was to be in force for three years and had provided for measures against picketing and unlawful associations. The Bill was rejected twice by the Legislative Assembly, but was passed by the Council of State. The assent of the Viceroy was announced on 17 October 1935.

6. The Incitement to Disaffection Bill of 1934 providing for the "prevention and punishment of endeavours to seduce His Majesty's forces from their duty or allegiance" was opposed by about four million organised workers.

the real thing. Is it possible to bridge this gulf? I wonder. Can there not be at least mutual comprehension even though there may not be agreement or any effective action? Are we in India blinded by our nationalism, or whatever it is, or are the English people so full of the imperialistic spirit as not to be able to view their dependencies in proper perspective? I do not know.

What can I say to anybody in authority? I represent nobody and I am completely out of touch with recent happenings. Yet, strangely enough, I am still the General Secretary of the Congress. The only person who represents India more than anyone has done or can do is Gandhi. I may differ from him in a multitude of things but that is a matter between him and me and our colleagues. So far as I am concerned he is India in a peculiar measure and he is the undoubted leader of my country. If anybody wants to know what India wants, let him go to Gandhi. But the British Government has tried deliberately to insult him and ignore him. That does not matter to him or to India greatly, though many will not forget the treatment accorded to their beloved leader. For the insult seemed to them to be directed to India herself. But if Gandhi is to be ignored and insulted where do we come in? Are we to raise ourselves by stepping over his body? Many will prefer the earth with him to the height without him. They have their own conception of loyalty.

I do not know what Gandhi or the Congress will do in India, nor have I any clear idea yet of what I am likely to do on my return. It may be that I may differ from him in thought and activity. But if anyone wants to know what nationalist India stands for, as a Congressman, I can only refer him to Gandhi.

Probably most of us suffer from a number of complexes, national and individual. That was inevitable in a subject country and the abnormal period we have passed through has added to the number and their intensity. The cure is likely to take time. It has not begun yet.

Meanwhile it is comforting to know that the Viceroy after certifying the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and doing a few other odd jobs to put us in our places, and bombing, or rather having bombed, a few score villages on the north-west frontier, will proceed to Calcutta to take part in a magnificent period costume ball which he is giving. Great preparations have been made for this for months past. Curiously enough, the period chosen is pre-revolutionary France of the 18th century. The Viceroy is going to represent Louis XVI and Lady Willingdon, Marie Antoinette.

The writing of this letter was interrupted as I had to go to the sanatorium. I found that my wife's temperature had gone up again.

She was slightly delirious. Later in the evening she was somewhat better. I asked the doctor if it will be possible for me to go to England a month later. He could not give a definite answer. Perhaps, he said.

This letter has become longer than I intended and I have written about matters I do not usually write about. I hope you will not mind.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

22. Reply to the Address of Welcome at London[1]

I cannot find words, not because I am unused to facing large audiences or public speaking, but because something has happened during my long "seclusion".

Some strange change takes place when one is remote from all colleagues and most human contacts during long seclusion in prison. It is something psychological and it leaves a man like myself with the feeling that words have little or no meaning and thoughts become much more important. Even if I wished to speak about the situation in India I could hardly do so because, as you know, I came away so hurriedly. For long months I had been shut off from the world and even before then—you know my record—it seemed to me that I was very rarely in contact with my closest colleagues in India. You will understand that, when I say that normally we had to travel long distances to meet, and again it was our common experience that when one was "out" the other was "in". When I came from my seclusion I felt that much had happened but it was not easy to find out exactly what had occurred. It was my intention when coming to England merely to renew old acquaintances and visit scenes of which I had the fondest recollection, and I did not expect to attend anything in the nature of a public gathering. It would, however, have seemed churlish to have refused the hospitality offered to me today and you are all extremely kind to receive me.

1. Speech at the Stewart Restaurant, Piccadilly, London, 31 October 1935. From *The Hindu*, 11 November 1935.

I do not agree with references to the sacrifices I have made, because I have found myself with a job to do, and when one does the job one wants, there is no sacrifice in doing it. I think of the vast numbers of our people in India, who get no garlands, receptions or mention in newspapers. They serve. They have made the sacrifices and they continue to do so. When I think of the burden that these millions of Indians carry then I begin to feel myself quite humble, and here in London, this great city of immense wealth, something happens to me. The magnificent buildings and all the signs of civilisation disappear and I see in their place the millions of little mud huts back in the motherland. Then I look around the world as it is today and notice the concern of people for what is happening here and there and it seems to me that the only way one can get things in true perspective is to stand on one's head. When I think of what is happening here in England today I think of Buddha who once said that the tears that have been shed in the world would fill up all the waters. Some of us have had a strenuous and arduous time in our country, but in other countries also people find it hard, and though it may be difficult not to be bitter, I can assure you there is no bitterness in me, certainly not towards individuals. What bitterness there is in my heart, or in those of my colleagues, is never directed against the human individual but always against systems and machines.

The real job of India lies there, in our country. It is our job and it is absurd to expect others to undertake it. We have to look at our job from our own point of view, but that it is our job does not prevent us from gaining tremendous consolation when we find in England and elsewhere so large a number of people who take their stand for what we consider a righteous cause.

23. On Service to India[1]

I am talking to you in Hindustani as when we meet our brothers we talk in our own language. This does not mean that I dislike the use of the English language, which is a good language. In my opinion in the modern world it is a good thing to know different languages. I ask the indulgence of my listeners not to expect from me a discussion

1. Address at Indian Students Hostel, London, 2 November 1935 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13 November 1935.

of current politics of my country, for, as you know fairly well, I had hardly any contact with the developments that have taken place during the past four years, the period which I have more or less spent in jail.[2]

It is a long time since I left the banks of the Thames after completing my studies here. In spite of this long passage of time I am not still old. I think there is something of that spirit of youth in me, and I therefore find it a pleasure to mix with young men and women of my country. For I try to get something from their energy. To my great regret many of our younger people are terribly old in their hearts and in their minds. Sometimes I have come to the conclusion that they are born old. But it is a truism that the next generation will have to come from the youth of a country and I think it is to them that we shall rightly look for the future.

As for the tribute paid to me for my spirit of sacrifice and services rendered to the country, I thank you for your affection; but we cannot turn ourselves here or even in our country into a mutual admiration society, for we must face our work, however difficult it may be, with courage and laughter. Many young speakers have assured me that they will return to India to work for the emancipation of our country. It is not a dignified thing to use such a language. Unless you know perfectly well that you can live up to the language used by you, you should not use such language. Although there has been no lack of brave sons and daughters in India to serve the motherland, I still think that many of you do not come up to the mark that is expected by the nation. I have a strong feeling in me that Indian students have acted strangely in the past. They have talked big things but have acted little. Similarly it is not pleasant for me to hear about our work for India. For anyone with any measure of self-respect cannot fail to realise that it is his duty to work for his country. I do not mean that every young man should forego the pleasures of life to which youth is entitled, but I cannot forget what is happening in our country. Similarly, no young Indian can forget what is happening in India at the present moment. India today is as heavily manacled as she was ever in the past. She is suffering as much as she had suffered in the past. What I, therefore, want is not a large gathering to talk heroic things but a nucleus of even five students to create a better and different situation in India.

With so many issues round about us what we have to consider is the solution of the problems in India. Let us try to translate our

2. He continued the speech in English from this point.

thoughts into facts and realities. The most obvious problem of India today is her poverty, her exploitation. Does that not appear to you as a very major problem of our country? If that problem is not solved what is the use of getting other things done? In applying our efforts to the solution of this problem think in terms of independent India, at least of India free from foreign rule. Do not think in terms of the Chamber of Princes and federation or in terms of the Round Table Conferences. Do you think India has gone through the fire to make the princes of India the rulers of the country? Or do you imagine that with the process of Indianisation the problem of India is solved? Are we to tolerate exploitation and suffering? To me that is utterly impossible. It would be better for us—and for the ancient country of ours which has such a glorious past—to be obliterated from the face of the earth rather than to continue as a worm amongst the nations. So do your duty, do not follow those who say, "They also serve who stand and wait." I do not believe in that.

24. Interview with Students[1]

Question: What is the Congress attitude to socialism and communism?

Jawaharlal Nehru: In India today there is a tremendous clash of ideas and nationalism is bound to be a dominating influence. But it is essentially an anti imperialist urge. It is perfectly correct to say that the backbone of the Indian National Congress is the lower middle class and that it has got mass support from the peasantry. The movement in India is likely to develop with a large peasant movement and Mahatma Gandhi essentially represents a vast mass of peasantry. The Congress is a dynamic and a moving organisation. It is moving towards socialism, though it might be vague and utopian. But the Congress socialist group is a scientific socialist party with a Marxist outlook.

Q: How far is the terrorist movement organised in India?

1 London, 4 November 1935 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13 November 1935.

JN: A terrorist movement hardly exists in India. As a matter of fact there are hardly any people who think in terms of terrorist activity. It is more an individual affair than an organised one.

Q: Do you think there will be a change in the Congress ideology in the near future?

JN: It is quite conceivable that the Congress may have to face the problem in the near future of whether to shed its reactionary past. Or a time may even come when it may be called upon not only to shed the reactionary past but also to split itself. It is quite possible that some such cleavage may take place, though I am in no position to say if it will be in the near future or not.

Q: What has been the role of the millowners?

JN. It is absurd to say that the millowners are behind the Congress although some of them have exploited the Congress movement for their own benefit. Yet though they exploited the Congress they did not help it financially.

Q: Are there any moderates in the Congress?

JN: Yes, there is some moderate element in it. But the Congress stands for independence. That is quite clear.

Q: What is Mahatma Gandhi's attitude towards the princes and the capitalists?

JN: Gandhiji is a very great and complex person. I do not mean that in a humorous sense. He has performed miracles in India. We must realise the tremendous change he has brought about in India. The first object of Gandhiji was somehow to change the character of the Indian masses. He changed their outlook. He changed their character. India is changed and she cannot forget that it is due to Mahatma Gandhi. He is entirely a revolutionary man of action. He is a dynamic figure and not static. He continues to grow.

So long as he is alive, Mahatma Gandhi will remain a tremendous personality. Though theoretically he may not be a political leader his influence would always be felt.

Q. What is the influence of fascism on the Congress?

JN: A section of the Congress is definitely fascist. It cannot help being otherwise as events in Europe must have their repercussions in India. But I *think that real fascism in India is bound to be against* British imperialism. It is bound to be strongly nationalist in outlook.

Q: Are any of the princes fascists?

JN: I know that a good many ministers of the Indian princes are definitely fascists.

Q: How far would you support the Congress socialist group?

JN: I am in general agreement with the Congress socialist group which has adopted scientific socialism with the Marxist outlook as its goal. Of course I cannot say that I wholeheartedly support it because I have not sufficiently acquainted myself with its work to warrant such a support.

25. On the Indian Situation[1]

Owing to my long absence from public affairs and want of contact with my colleagues in India, I am unable to judge the situation in India in any detail or to suggest any immediate course of action. That will be unfair both to my colleagues and to myself, but the main developments are clear enough. Nationalism, which has been inevitably the greatest urge in India, like in all subject countries, is still the dominant urge; but other forces, mainly economic, have also played a growing part there. Socialistic ideas are becoming more and more important and a feeling is arising among large numbers of the middle class intellectuals that scientific socialism is the only course open to India as well as the rest of the world. This has taken shape in India in the formation of the Congress socialist group which seems to represent a working alliance between socialism and nationalism.

I do not know much about the Congress Socialist Party because it was formed during my period of imprisonment and therefore I cannot

1 London, 12 November 1935. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 19 November 1935.

discuss its programme and policy. But as I am myself a confirmed believer in a socialistic solution of our problems I welcome the effort to bring this to the forefront in India.

It seems to me also that there are definite indications of a fascist spirit growing in the country even among the ranks of the Congress. This is vague and unorganised so far. It is inevitable, perhaps, as a reaction to the fascism of the government and the Indian princes. Indeed, the whole background of Indian politics today is one of struggle against fascism. Questions about the constitution and the like are, in my opinion, very secondary when the mass of the people have only one feeling—that of economic helplessness. Questions regarding the working of the new Act, therefore, are very secondary. The recent certification by the Viceroy of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the bombing on the frontier, and the attitude of the official element all over the country, are significant preliminaries to the introduction of the new constitution which Sir Samuel Hoare praised so unctuously at Geneva[2] and elsewhere.

A very noticeable feature of the Indian situation is the progressive deterioration, both moral and intellectual, of the higher services in India, including English and Indian officers alike. It is the sergeant-major's attitude that is in evidence or the policeman's everywhere and the official who represents this attitude best is promoted to the upper ranks. Thus the major problem that confronts the country is how to deal with this development. All other problems have to be fitted in with this. The Indian National Congress as a whole does not represent a definite party or group. It is much more of a popular front against imperialism comprising all manner of varying groups with differing ideologies It may be compared to the *Front Populaire* in France.[3] It is difficult to say how matters will develop in the country. On the one hand, the desire to keep a joint anti-imperialist front is strong in most groups. On the other hand, the growth of socialist ideologies brings social and economic issues to the forefront and thereby causes fissures in the common nationalistic front.

2. At the Assembly of the League of Nations on 11 September 1935, Hoare declared that Britain would be "second to none" in upholding the League covenant and that, with the British Government's resolve to promote self-government in their own territory, "only a few weeks ago, I was responsible for helping to pass through the Imperial Parliament a great and complicated measure to extend self-government to India"

3. An alliance of liberals, socialists, communists and other centre and left wing parties against fascism, which was proposed by the Communist International in 1935 and adopted in France and Spain

Nationalism as such, though inevitable under the present conditions, offers no solution of the basic economic problems of the country. The greatest problem today is probably the agrarian problem and nationalism has no real solution to it. It is more or less based on maintenance of the *status quo* with minor ameliorations. Socialism, on the other hand, directly tackles all such problems. I, for one, am convinced that only a basic and fundamental change in a collectivist direction can meet the agrarian situation and petty efforts at reforms are doomed to fail. It is difficult to say what the exact steps in this direction will be as so much will depend on the growth of the struggle in India and on international factors. Together with cooperative and collectivist farming a progressive industrialisation of the country is highly desirable in order to raise the standard of living and provide employment for the unemployed masses. So far as I know, all these problems are only being considered in a scientific spirit by the socialist element in the country.

As for the new constitution, it is almost unanimously admitted in India that it is a monstrosity. No one likes it. The vast majority of the anti imperialist forces in the country are quite clear that there cannot be a shadow of cooperation in this further attempt to add to our shackles and to convert India even more than it is at present into a feudal dominion.

What the exact steps would be or should be taken in rejecting this constitution I am not prepared to say at present without consultations with my colleagues.

The Communal Award has been strongly objected to and the Congress attitude criticised. It seems to me that the main thing about the Award, which is fatal to its consideration, is not so much the fact of its giving more or less to certain groups but that it divides the people of India into a large number of different religious compartments and thereby makes it exceedingly difficult for us to grow democratically or to consider real social problems. No democrat and no socialist can ever accept such a division of our country which can only perpetuate our bondage.

At the same time obviously the solution of the problem lies not in one community attacking another but in a joint effort. Such a joint effort will have nothing to do with pacts and compromises between a few odd people whose interests lie in stressing communal differences and the basis of whose political existence is communalism. Communalists in India are inevitably political reactionaries. The joint effort will come from the direction of the public mind towards the social issues which are the real issues that count.

26. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Badenweiler
20.11.1935

My dear Rajendra Babu,
On my return from London I received your two letters dated 18th and 26th October.

As for Swaraj Bhawan I knew there had been some misunderstanding on the part of Mohanlalji[2] but I am really surprised at the extent of this misunderstanding. I am grateful for the steps you have taken in the matter and I am sure that everything that is necessary will be done at your instance. I am sorry that this confusion arose, partly at my instance, and caused you unnecessary trouble.

The question of building a hospital in a part of the Swaraj Bhawan compound is no urgent one and had better be left over for the present. In any event I do not see how it can be considered even unless there is a tangible scheme before us with definite promise of financial backing. It seems to me rather absurd for us to agree to a vague proposal which might later fall through for lack of support.

The question of foreign propaganda is an intricate one and involves all manner of considerations.[3] At the same time it is important and I think the Working Committee cannot ignore it.[4] My own viewpoint in regard to it is perhaps a little different from others. It is often said, with perfect justice, that there is colossal ignorance about India in foreign countries. I would add that there is almost equally great ignorance about foreign countries in India. For me it is quite impossible to isolate the Indian problem from world problems. They are ultimately and even presently one and the same though naturally there are local differences. In order therefore for us to understand fully and endeavour to solve our own national problems it is quite essential for us to see them in relation to international affairs. I am afraid this is not the outlook of most of our Congress leaders, including perhaps Bapu. For a member of the Working Committee to say

1. Home Department (Political) File No 1/2/36, National Archives of India.
2. Mohanlal Saxena
3. In his letter of 26 October 1935 he had asked for Jawaharlal's advice and opinion regarding the setting up of agencies in foreign countries
4. At the A.I.C.C. meeting in Madras on 18 October 1935 it was proposed that "in view of the anti-Indian propaganda by the imperialist powers carried on abroad, the Working Committee be authorised to take such action as it considers proper and feasible to undo the evil"

he is ignorant of or is not interested in international currents and affairs seems to me an extraordinary thing. If even the chosen executive of the Congress is ignorant of these how can it guide the nation? It is not good enough to say that we can consult experts about such matters. Experts do not shape wide policies or ought not to do so. And, in any event, it is the job of the Working Committee members and leading Congressmen to become experts in these vital problems if they are to guide aright.

Therefore I think it very necessary that we should develop as many international contacts as possible, more for our education than for the purpose of counteracting false propaganda. It is desirable for leading Congressmen to visit foreign countries from time to time to get into touch with worthwhile personalities there in the political, economic and cultural fields. It is also desirable for us to employ young men in this foreign work so as to train them for it. All this may sound ambitious and expensive and there will be all manner of difficulties, governmental and others. But it is the viewpoint that counts. If this is accepted it can be given effect to as circumstances permit.

Foreign propaganda as such in the restricted sense of the word cannot carry us far. There is no real field for it as people in other countries are too much occupied with their own troubles. What is more important is more publicity than propaganda. This helps in supplying facts and figures to people interested, and they are many, and also brings us international contacts. Publicity work and contacts must primarily be based on a strong and ably-staffed foreign department of the Congress in India.[5] With the help of the air mail much can be done. But it is important that the person in charge must himself have intimate knowledge of politics and personalities abroad. The present bulletin, issued by the A.I.C.C. office, does some good, but it does not take us far.

The second step might be the establishment of publicity and information bureaus in suitable countries abroad. These can be of great help and their cost need not be prohibitive. If such a step were contemplated I would suggest a bureau in Prague in Czechoslovakia. This is at present the best centre for Europe. The fascist countries are out of the question. Russia would present difficulties. London is in some ways a desirable centre but it does not touch the Continent, and it is a very difficult place to work in owing to the mutual rivalries and jealousies of the large number of Indians there. New York would be a good centre, and the Far East ought to have a centre.

5. Jawaharlal established such a department when he became President in 1936.

If the Congress thought of starting such centres I would suggest that a beginning might be made with one and that one at Prague. Such a centre should have a reference library and Indian newspapers etc., and the man in charge should be fully competent for the job.

The idea of having regular branches of the Congress abroad, as we used to have,[6] is I think wrong. You cannot control them and there is bound to be conflict. The Congress can appoint an individual to represent it in a foreign country if it so chooses, or more modestly, have an information bureau. This can be controlled.

Indians and others in foreign countries can of course start their own groups and societies in sympathy with the Congress. We can even encourage this and cooperate with them in some measure but on the clear understanding that they are no formal part of our organisation. We cannot affiliate them or allow ourselves to be committed by them. It is desirable that such groups and societies do not call themselves "Congress" or "National Congress" as this is likely to mislead.

In London recently a handful of persons have started what they call "The Indian National Congress in Great Britain". Some of these persons may be desirable, others not so. I do not know any of them sufficiently to judge them. But I had a feeling that they were exploiting the name of the Congress. On my arrival in London they distributed a leaflet condemning the organisers of the reception and stating that these people were anti Congress and were merely pushing themselves forward on this occasion to gain notoriety. The leaflet was not against me, it was only against the reception committee. I believe Reuter cabled to India on the basis of this leaflet that the Congress in London condemned the reception or its organisers.[7] This is a good instance of the way petty mischief can be done by individuals in the name of the Congress. This affair was a trivial one but it is quite possible that similar contingencies may arise again.

This group of protesters came to see me several times. They wanted me to go to a special function which they wanted to hold in my honour. I did not consent to it as I felt I was likely to be exploited. I also told them that it was very improper for them to use the Congress name for their activities whatever they might be. They were free and welcome to have a separate group working for India but this

6. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 250-253.
7. Reuter reported on 31 October 1935 that the "Congress" presented Jawaharlal a printed address denouncing "the violent anti Congress propaganda of the so-called friends of India," and alluding to the reception by these "anti Indian propagandists" expressed the hope that "the Pandit would not associate himself with the dishonest manifestations of self seeking weathercock politicians"

could not be in the name of the Congress. Further that their station leaflet had been most objectionable. I enclose a letter from them to give their address. The letter gives a wrong impression of what I told them.[8] One would imagine I approved of their organisation (I doubt if there is really an organisation) when I strongly urged them to drop the name and give up attacking others.

To avoid misconceptions I would suggest that the A.I.C.C. office might write to these people informing them that, while they welcomed the formation of Indian organisations abroad in the cause of Indian freedom, such organisations should not use the Congress name or make it appear in any way that they are a Congress agency. The present policy of the Congress is not to have branches abroad or to affiliate outside committees. Any organisations, however, that support Congress policy will have the cooperation of the A.I.C.C. office in the measure that is considered necessary and desirable. In pursuance of this policy the A.I.C.C. office has cooperated with some existing groups in London although they have represented varying outlooks. People who wish to help our cause should concentrate on the work before us and not go out of their way to attack other groups who might be working on slightly different lines. In the event of the Congress deciding to have accredited representatives or agencies abroad formal steps on this behalf will be taken. This cannot be done casually by individuals or groups. Therefore the name of the Indian National Congress they have adopted should be dropped and another non-committal name taken.

Some such letter might be sent to them. Also I think a brief statement might be issued somewhat as follows:

> It has been stated in the press and in messages from London that an organisation has been formed in London bearing the name "The Indian National Congress in Great Britain". The A.I.C.C. office has no knowledge of this and it deprecates the use of the Congress name in this way without any official authority. The Congress has at present no official agency abroad though it gladly cooperates with and welcomes the formation of Indian or non-Indian groups abroad to serve the cause of India and the Congress. But such groups cannot use the name of the Congress or commit it in any way. As has been stated, the President and the Working Committee are earnestly engaged in considering the problem of international contacts and

8 The letter thanked Jawaharlal for the interest shown by him in their organisation and assured him of their determination to carry on Congress propaganda in England.

foreign publicity. Any steps that they may decide upon to take in this connection will be placed before the public in due course.

In London I met the members of the various India groups individually and severally You know about them. There is the Conciliation Group[9] (Carl Heath and Agatha Harrison etc.). These are good people, mostly Quakers, who believe in bringing about contacts between prominent Indians and men in authority. They work quietly and individually, frequently approaching the big noises. I like these people, but I must say that I do not attach much importance to this trend of work I do not think it takes us anywhere and sometimes it may add to our difficulties by creating confusion of issues. Vital questions of national policy become converted into personal affairs and the merits and demerits of particular persons. To me it is wholly immaterial what the personal virtues or failings of an Irwin, a Willingdon, or a Linlithgow[10] might be. We have to deal with the policy of British imperialism. Not so with the Conciliation Group.

Then there is the "Friends of India" group.[11] Also good and doing useful work in publicity, but generally ineffective. There are no outstanding personalities among them, so far as I can see. Reginald Reynolds is one of them, but even he felt that they were becoming ineffective.

A third group is the "India League".[12] This has become connected with the left wing of Labour and has some prominent men in it, like Harold Laski. Because of this it is definitely socialistic in outlook. Of the three it is the only really political organisation. The man who runs it is V. K. Krishna Menon whom perhaps you know. I met him for the first time He is very able and energetic and is highly thought of in intellectual, journalistic and left-wing Labour circles. He has the virtues and failings of the intellectual. I was very favourably impressed by him. Unfortunately he has been very ill and has spent the last six months in the hospital

9 Started in 1931 on the initiative of Mahatma Gandhi during his visit to London, it sought to promote mutual understanding between India and Britain. Carl Heath was president and Agatha Harrison secretary.

10 (1887 1952); chairman, Joint Select Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms, 1933, Viceroy of India, 1936-43

11. The Friends of India Society was formed on 11 August 1930 by Reginald Reynolds and others to "create and organise opinion in Great Britain in favour of India's right to self-determination" and to make known the significance of Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolence movement

12 Started by V K. Krishna Menon in 1930

I do not know if this letter, in spite of its growing length, will be intelligible. I am afraid it is patchy, and I have just jotted down odd ideas without arranging them in proper order or giving a real answer to your question. You point out two difficulties in the way of foreign work—personal and finances. Both are formidable. There is a third. The Congress is such a vague and inchoate body today that it will be exceedingly difficult to find anyone to represent it properly. Such a representative, apart from general competence, must be in harmony with the Congress policy and must speak in the mental language of the West. It is quite possible to imagine that some of our prominent Congress leaders might be so out of tune with the thought of the West as to be hardly comprehensible here. I myself, with all my knowledge of men and events in India, find it very difficult at times to understand our own leaders. It almost seems to me that they are speaking in an unknown language. If I feel this way you can appreciate how much more a Westerner will feel.

This is a general consideration. Coming to the particular—I feel that the Congress today is in a state of ideological flux and does not quite know its mind. Take the recent A.I.C.C. meeting in Madras. All the major decisions were no decisions[13]—they were merely a putting off of the decision or a delicate balancing on the fence. Our policy all along the line, even mentally, is becoming more and more one of non action and non thought. Constitutionally I am unable to appreciate this as I hold definite views about most matters, and am the reverse of a passive individual. Nonviolent noncooperation and civil disobedience were not to me mere non resistance but the height of active resistance to evil doing This dynamic quality seems to have disappeared now and we have a lifeless body which neither thinks nor acts and over which old incantations are repeated to give it the semblance of life.

Suppose you appointed me a Congress agent abroad—and I have certain qualifications which many others do not possess—what could I do. Apart from acting as a post office I would have no functions. The Congress having no clear policy on any matter which interests the West, I would simply have to keep mum.

Subhas Bose is in many ways an excellent person to have. He has considerable knowledge of foreign affairs and has many contacts. He would carry weight. But he would have the same difficulty as I would have, perhaps, more of it.

13 The resolution on office acceptance deferred the decision to the Lucknow Congress, and that on the Indian states merely reiterated an earlier resolution that the burden of the struggle "must necessarily fall on the states people themselves"

These are some odd thoughts for you to consider. I cannot go on as this letter is already unconscionably long.

Kamala's condition has been slowly improving but occasionally there are setbacks which dishearten. I am afraid that in any event she will be bed-ridden for long. I should certainly like to return to India in time for the Congress and I shall try to do so if I can possibly manage it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

27. To Mohanlal Saxena[1]

Badenweiler
Dec. 6, 1935

My dear Mohanlal,

Your letter came some little time ago but I have been so terribly occupied with various activities that I could not answer it earlier.

Congress Jubilee[2]—I am afraid I cannot send you a fervent appeal such as you suggest. These appeals have grown very stale and they bore me. However, I am sending you a message of greeting. You can make such use of it as you like. I am also sending a copy of this to Kripalani. A large number of newspapers in India have also asked me to send Jubilee messages for their special numbers. I am not sending any. I suppose you will issue my message of greeting to them.

As for foreign messages, I am afraid I cannot do anything. There is no time.

I have been thoroughly ashamed and humiliated at the disgraceful state of affairs of our provincial Congress and reception committee.[3] More I cannot say, nor indeed am I in a position to know.

Kamala's condition continues to be unsatisfactory. A slight improvement is followed by a setback.

With love,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. AICC. File No 20/1935, p 3, NMML.
2. The golden jubilee of the Indian National Congress was to be celebrated on 28 December 1935.
3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 410-411.

28. Message for the Jubilee of the Congress[1]

It is snowing outside as I write, and the landscape is all white and glistening. Snowflakes float in the air and glide down soundlessly and cover everything with the beautiful garment of winter. Evergreens hold out their branches to catch the flakes and even trees which were but yesterday cheerless, devoid of leaf and flower, now cling to them and transform themselves into fairy objects holding up their delicate tracery against the sky. The scene is one of surpassing loveliness and one gazes at it overwhelmed with its beauty.

But sitting here in Badenweiler on the edge of the Black Forest with the Rhine and the frontier of France in the far distance, my thoughts cross the seas and the continents and go to my homeland. And I think—specially in this year and month of the Congress Jubilee—of that great organisation, and what it has meant to India and to each one of us, what it has been, what it was and what it may be in future.

Fifty years are not much in the life of a nation, a mere flash in the millennia of India's long past. Yet fifty years are a long period in a human life and within their span can be crowded a world of endeavour and achievement. These fifty years have seen the end of an era and mighty transformation everywhere. How have we fared in this period? Have we moved with the ever-rushing river of life and adapted ourselves to the changing conditions, or do we remain in backwaters that move not and change little, entangled in weeds that paralyse us and benumb our mind and spirit? The real change and growth is of the spirit and the mind, the rest merely follows it.

Fifty years of the Congress tell us where we were and what we are. Read the reports of the early Congress and the astounding and hardly comprehensible new mentality that they now exhibit. And then go through its later tribulations and conflicts, its splits and divisions, when those who lived in the weeds and backwaters wanted to hold it back but could not do so.

With much travail it emerged to freer waters and much to its own surprise found itself younger and stronger than ever. A time came when, under the inspiration of a great leader, it tried to break all shackles which still held it back and hurled itself forward with the pride and confidence of youth.

1. Badenweiler, 6 December 1935. *The Tribune*, 28 December 1935

There were greater difficulties and obstacles than it had expected and many a time it stumbled and staggered, but ever it kept its eyes on the *star of freedom that beckoned. It became a symbol* to millions of their hearts' desire and they gave it a willing allegiance. As the struggle became fiercer and difficulties greater ever it kept in the forefront and in its darkest hours never gave up hope.

What of us who have grown up under its wings and caught sometimes the reflection of its greatness? We are of it, how can we think ourselves as apart from it? What we have done has been under its inspiration; our achievement has not been the achievement of individuals but of a vast multitude spread out all over our great country and bound together with the invisible link of the Congress. We have felt strong and brave because of that bond and we have greatly dared because of it.

On the Jubilee occasion of the Congress I should like to send from a far country greetings to those innumerable links that make up the strong chain of the Congress, to comrades who have many a gallant struggle to their credit and many another to face in the future, to the innumerable men and women of India who have fought a brave fight for freedom under the Congress flag. In the past, the Congress has stood for full freedom and it has widened its horizon and looked to the masses May it never falter or forget its mission and may it become even more than it has been the real representative and the voice of millions, who toil and suffer in our country and seek to remove all shackles, political, social and economic, that prevent them from rising to the height of their destiny.

29. On the Allegation of the Bengal Government[1]

A friend[2] has just drawn my attention to the following paragraph appearing in the Bengal Government's Administration Report for 1934-35... [3]

1 Statement to the press, Badenweiler, 6 December 1935 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 17 December 1935

2. Mahadeva Desai had wired to Jawaharlal about the Bengal government's reference to him

3 See paragraph as quoted in the following item

This paragraph contains a number of errors and insinuations, but, realising as I do that the Bengal Government and I are as the poles apart in regard to ideas and outlook, it would serve little purpose for me to argue these matters with them. But there is one specific statement in it—that I was attempting to carry on an agitation under the false cloak of anti untouchability activities and with the money collected for Harijan work—which I cannot, in fairness to my colleagues in Bengal, Harijan Seva Sangh, and myself, allow to pass uncontradicted. That statement is an absolute falsehood which neither had nor could have had the shadow of a foundation. Whatever else I might be guilty of, I hope that I have never indulged in duplicity in my work.

A definite and unequivocal statement having been made by Sir John Anderson's[4] government in Bengal and having been contradicted by me, it is desirable in the interests of public morals for them either to justify it or to withdraw it publicly and express regret for it. I do not know what the Bengal Government's standard of morality is, but I do know that there are certain things which are not done by decent people, and if an error is committed, an apology is forthcoming An error in my case may not matter much, for the opinions that my countrymen form of me are not based on the Bengal Government's views on the subject. But a government has the tremendous power of the state's apparatus of coercion behind it and its errors are likely to affect the lives and liberties of vast numbers of people.

4. (1882 1958); Governor of Bengal, 1932-38, member of the War Cabinet, 1940-45.

30. To the Editor, Manchester Guardian[1]

Sir,

The Bengal Government, faced, according to it, by the twin spectres of terrorism and sedition, and bravely grappling with them, and in doing so having to suppress its inherent love of liberty and civil freedom, must provoke the sympathy and indulgence of many people in England. What can be more distasteful to it than to be compelled by force of circumstances to keep a few odd thousands in prisons and internment camps

1. Badenweiler, 7 December 1935 *Manchester Guardian*, 10 December 1935.

without trial or conviction and to enforce a host of laws which prevent free speech or assembly and the normal functioning of the press and even ordinary political and labour activities?

A recent instance of the working of the Bengal Government's mind will perhaps interest you, Sir, as it gives us a glimpse of how this mighty machine grapples with the difficult problems it has to solve. A friend of mine in India has drawn my attention to a paragraph in the Bengal Government's Administration Report for 1934-35. This reads as follows:

> During the third week of January Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru paid a short visit to Calcutta and after consultations with the leaders of most of the subversive movements in Bengal prescribed a militant programme based mainly on his own extreme socialist views and designed primarily to attract the peasant masses. This agitation was to be carried on under the guise of anti untouchability activities and with the money collected for Harijan work. He was eventually prosecuted before the Chief Presidency Magistrate in respect of three violent and provocative speeches delivered during this visit. The Pandit did not defend himself, beyond attempting to deliver a further seditious speech from the dock, and was sentenced to two years simple imprisonment on 16th February. His arrest and conviction aroused little excitement. In Calcutta a partial hartal was observed by Hindu shopkeepers, though vehicular traffic was not interrupted. Elsewhere in Bengal there was no demonstration. This indifference can be attributed partly to the alarm felt about his expropriatory views by the average propertied Congressman, and partly to the general dissatisfaction with the lack of initiative shown by the leaders of the Congress.

I would not presume to argue with the Bengal Government about my activities—subversive, militant or socialistic—or about the character of my friends and comrades I realise that we differ in outlook. But there is a specific statement in this paragraph which refers to my attempt to carry on an agitation under the guise of anti untouchability activities and with the money collected for Harijan work. I do not remember, during a fairly long experience of public affairs, to have come across a more amazing and astounding lie which has not the shadow of a foundation. I have many failings but I had hoped that duplicity was not one of them I realise that it is an impertinence for an ex-convict and a sedition-monger to contradict a statement emanating from the innermost sanctum of the Bengal Government, even though that may be based on information received from not over-intelligent spies and informers. In the normal course of events I would have been in prison now

and unable to have my say. But, being out, I cannot allow a falsehood of this kind to go unchallenged and, being subjected to long periods of suppression, it is a relief to have my say occasionally. I owe it also to the Harijan Seva Sangh (the Anti-Untouchability Society), that most cautious and respectable body, to clear them, as far as I can, from the imputation.

The personal aspect of this question is of little importance. My own fate does not matter overmuch. But the fate of thousands of young men and women, wasting their bright young lives in prisons and concentration camps, is of far greater consequence, as also the suppression and suffocation of a great and sensitive people. It is interesting to note on what this is based—the information supplied by the unlovely tribe of informers whose trade it is to spy and betray. That information goes through various offices and departments and becomes ultimately the voice of government, the considered opinion of those who hold, unchecked and without bending, the reins of authority, and the basis for government action. The victim seldom knows what, if any, is the charge, and has no opportunity to meet it and rebut it. During the long and weary hours and months and years of his seclusion he can only wonder at the august and mysterious ways of governments.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

31. To Lord Lothian[1]

Badenweiler
December 9, 1935

Dear Lord Lothian,[2]
Your letter[3] of the 6th has only reached me today. I do not know why

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Reprinted in *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1958), pp. 127-129.
2. *Marquess of Lothian* (1882-1940), Liberal politician, editor, *Round Table*, chairman, Indian Franchise Committee, 1932; ambassador to Washington, 1939-40.
3. Lord Lothian had invited Jawaharlal to stay with him at his residence, Blicking Hall. He proposed to invite Lord Halifax (Lord Irwin) also and hoped that though their views on recent events in India and on political questions were divergent, a meeting was desirable, as "for good or for evil the destinies of India and England are still closely interlocked."

even air mail letters should take so long in transit. Anyway I hasten to reply to it.

I have been looking forward to meeting you greatly and I have been considerably interested in various writings of yours that have come my way. Often I could not agree with your approach to a question or to your conclusion, but invariably I found them provoking me to think and there was also sometimes a measure of agreement. It is always a pleasure to meet people who open out new avenues of thought and help one to see a little more than the tiny corner of the world which is the average person's mental beat. As you say, few people see more than this little corner, and the agonising conflicts of today are certainly made worse by this narrowness of approach. This would be unfortunate at any time; in the present revolutionary epoch it is far more so. I do not think it is possible to charm away the conflicts merely by friendly contacts between well-intentioned persons. The conflicts are obviously deeper and the best of individuals seem to me to play a relatively unimportant role when vast elemental forces are at play against each other. We can try to understand the root causes of these conflicts, as far as we can, and then seek to remove them. But it is so very, very difficult to consider them apart from our own prejudices and sectional interests The pleasantest of smiles does not get over these ingrained prejudices and the varying world-outlooks that they produce. Still, the attempt must be made to cultivate friendly contacts for without them the world would be a dreaner place even than it is. They do certainly help, to a certain extent, in creating an atmosphere which makes understanding possible later on; they lessen the bitterness of individuals and groups; they widen the individual's horizon; and it is one of the chief delights of life to meet worthwhile persons.

All this, surely, is very much worth having and so I am all in favour of developing such contacts. Personally, in spite of my strong convictions, I am not devoid of the student's approach to life and its problems. Dogmas irritate me, whether they are religious or political or economic, and my mind is always searching for the path I should follow. I try not to close it. This makes me welcome all the more personal contacts. Books help, and they have been an unfailing solace to me for many years; but personal touch with the people behind books and ideas and actions has something vital about it which even books do not have.

I should have liked to meet you. Your friendly and welcome letter has increased my desire to do so. I like the beautiful houses and countryside of England and your superlative description of Blickling attracts me, but it is really the man whom I want to see, not the house he owns. I should have liked to meet Lord Halifax also, though I must confess

to you that I feel a certain hesitation in meeting people who have been officially associated with the Government of India during the past nightmare years. That period is full of horror to us and it is very difficult for me to understand how any sensitive person could tolerate it, much less give his approval to it. It is not so much the repression and suppression of much that was best in India that I refer to, but the manner of it. There was, and is, in it an indecency and vulgarity that I could hardly have conceived. And the wonder of it is that hardly anyone in England realizes this or has any idea of what is happening in India's mind and heart.

I suppose ultimately this will pass. But with this overpowering background it is a little difficult to think in terms of personal contacts. It is not easy to shake hands with a person who is endeavouring to strangle you. In spite of this, I am sure the time will come when we will shake hands and it is up to us to hasten that time.

I have been sorely tempted to fall in with your proposal and to visit England specially to see you at the beginning of January. It is exceedingly good of you to offer to postpone your departure for America by a few days in order to meet me. But with all my desire to do so, I feel that I cannot manage it without upsetting many arrangements which I have already made. The major reason is my wife. I had particularly promised to be with her about that time as our daughter will also be with us then. Some friends from other parts of Europe are also expected. *Then again, if I go to England early in January I cannot go again later* in the month as I had intended to do, and this would disappoint many friends there. Probably I shall leave for India early in February.

I must regretfully, therefore, give up the idea of seeing you before you sail for America. It is a real disappointment for me. It is just possible that I may return to Europe in the late summer. If I do so I shall make a point of seeking you out.

Miss Agatha Harrison writes to me *that I might have met Mr. Alex.* Fraser[4] at your house. To miss seeing him is an additional regret for I have followed with interest, though rather vaguely and from a distance, the good work of his unique college in West Africa.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4 (1873-1963); member of the Church Missionary Society, served on the Indian Village Education Commission, 1920-21; principal, Prince of Wales College, Accra, Ghana, 1924-35.

32. Congress the Voice of India[1]

I am happy to learn that our countrymen in England are joining in celebrating the jubilee of the Indian National Congress. The Congress claims allegiance from every Indian wherever he or she might be. In the course of fifty years, through struggle and sacrifice, it has established its unchallengeable right to represent the Indian people; it is the voice of India, and behind that gentle voice lie the fire and iron will of a nation determined to be free. Six years ago it took the pledge of independence. That pledge holds and will hold till it is redeemed.

I send my greetings to comrades and friends on this occasion and join with them in our homage to the Congress and to the ideal of freedom for the Indian masses.

1. Message read at a function in London, 28 December 1935. *The Tribune*, 9 January 1936

33. India and the World[1]

Faced by repeated crises and engrossed in their domestic troubles, it is not surprising that the people of the West should pay little attention to India. A few may feel drawn to the rich past of India and admire her ancient culture, some may feel an instinctive sympathy with a people struggling for freedom, others may have the humanitarian urge to condemn the exploitation and brutal suppression of a great people by an imperialist power. But the great majority are supremely ignorant of conditions in India. They have troubles of their own; why add to them?

And yet every intelligent dabbler in public affairs knows that the problems of the modern world cannot be kept in watertight compartments; they cannot be dealt with successfully separately and without regard to the others; they run into each other and, in the final analysis, form one single world problem with many different facets. Events in the deserts and waste lands of East Africa echo in distant chancelleries and cast their heavy shadow over Europe, a shot fired in eastern Siberia may set

1. Badenweiler, 6 January 1936. First published in *Vendredi*, Paris, 1936. Reprinted in *India and the World*, (London, 1936), pp. 200-209.

the world on fire. Many difficult problems trouble Europe today, and yet it may well be that the future historian, with a truer perspective, will consider China and India as the most significant problems of today, and as having a greater influence on the future shaping of world events. For, essentially, India and China are world problems, and to ignore them, or to minimize their significance, is to betray a woeful ignorance of the trend of world affairs and to fail to understand completely the basic disease from which all of us suffer.

The problem of India is thus of the present, of today. To admire or condemn her past does not help us much, except in so far as an understanding of the past helps us to understand the present. We have to realize that any big thing that will happen there will affect the larger world to a great extent, and none of us, wherever we may live and whatever national or other allegiance might claim us, can be unaffected by it. It is, therefore, from this wider point of view that we must consider it, as a part of the more immediate problems that confront us.

It is well known that the possession of India has for more than a century and a half vitally affected British foreign and domestic policy; the wealth and exploitation of India gave England the needed capital to develop her great industries in the early days of the industrial revolution and then provided her with markets for her manufactured goods; India was ever in the background in the Napoleonic wars as well as in the Crimean war,[2] and the desire to safeguard the routes to India led England to interfere with Egypt and the countries of the Middle East. That governing policy has continued in the post-war world, and England still clings tenaciously to these routes. Soon after the Great War there even came a grandiose vision to British statesmen of founding a great Middle Eastern empire stretching from Constantinople to India. But that vision faded chiefly because of Soviet Russia and Kemal Pasha, and the rise of Reza Shah[3] in Persia, and Amanullah in Afghanistan, and the establishment of the French mandate in Syria.[4] The great idea did not materialize, but, even so, England managed to keep a fair measure of control over the land route to India and, because of this, came into

2 Fought between Russia on the one hand and Britain, France and Turkey on the other from 1854 to 1856.

3. (1877-1944); Shah of Iran, 1925-41. He carried out reforms largely on the model of Kemal Ataturk in Turkey.

4. The French mandate in Syria, which gave France virtual control of internal affairs, was established on 25 April 1920 and approved by the League of Nations on 24 July 1922.

conflict with Turkey over Mosul.[5] It is that governing policy which has induced England suddenly to become a champion of the League of Nations in Ethiopia. Her moral instincts were not so much roused when the League was flouted in Manchuria.[6]

The world problem is ultimately one of imperialism—the finance-imperialism of the present day. In Europe and elsewhere the rise of fascism is one very important aspect of the problem, as well as the rise and growing strength of Soviet Russia, as representing a new order fundamentally opposed to that of imperialism. The lining up of Europe in mutually hostile and anti fascist groups represents the conflict of that imperialism with the new forces that threaten it. In the colonial and subject countries the same conflict takes the shape of nationalist movements struggling for freedom, with an ever-developing social issue colouring and influencing nationalism. Imperialism functions increasingly in a fascist way in its colonial dependencies. Thus England, proudly laying stress on its democratic constitution at home, acts after the fascist fashion in India.

It is clear that any breach in the imperialist front anywhere has its repercussions all over the world. A victory of fascism in Europe or elsewhere strengthens imperialism and reacts everywhere, a setback to it weakens imperialism. Similarly, the triumph of a freedom movement in a colonial or subject country is a blow to imperialism and fascism, and it is therefore easy to understand why the Nazi leaders frown on Indian nationalism, and express their approval of the continuation of British domination in India.[7] The problem, considered in its basic aspects, is simple enough, and yet, in the intricate play of various world forces, it sometimes becomes very complicated, as when two imperialisms confront one another and each tries to exploit the nationalist or anti-fascist tendencies in the subject countries of the other. The only way to get over these complications is to consider the fundamental aspects and not to be led away by opportunist motives of gaining a temporary advantage. Else the temporary advantage is apt to prove a grave disadvantage and a burden later on.

5 The inclusion of Mosul in Iraq had been disputed by Turkey for many years after the first world war.

6 When Japan invaded Manchuria the major powers at the League took no action apart from condemning Japan But in 1935 England took the lead in imposing sanctions against Italy

7. Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf* that "England will lose India only when the English administrative machinery in India will be composed of both the races . or when the sword of a powerful enemy will compel her to do so Indian revolutionaries will never be able to do this .I would always wish to see India under English domination rather than under any other."

India, both historically and by virtue of its importance, has been and is the classic land of modern imperialism. Any disturbance of the imperialist hold on India is bound to have far-reaching consequences in world affairs—it will make a tremendous difference to the world position of Great Britain, and it will give a great impetus to the freedom movements of other colonial countries and thus shake up other imperialisms. A free India would inevitably play a growing part in international affairs, and that part is likely to be on the side of world peace and against imperialism and its offshoots.

Some people imagine that India may develop into a free dominion of the British group of nations like Canada or Australia. This seems to be a fantastic idea. Even the existing dominions, in spite of their numerous links with Great Britain, are gradually drifting apart as their economic interests conflict. The drift is greatest in the case of Ireland, partly for historical reasons, and South Africa.[8] There are few natural links between India and England, and there is a historical and ever-growing hostility between them. In many parts of the empire there is racial ill treatment and a policy of exclusion of Indians. But more important still, there is a conflict of economic interests. So long as India is controlled by the British Government this conflict is resolved in favour of Britain, but the moment India becomes a real dominion the two will pull different ways and a break would become inevitable, if the present capitalist order survives till then. There is another interesting aspect to this question. India, by virtue of her size, population, and potential wealth, is far the most important member of the British Empire. So long as the rest of the empire exploits her, she remains on the imperial fringe But a free India in the British group of nations would inevitably tend to become the centre of gravity of that group; Delhi might challenge London as the nerve-centre of the empire. That position would become intolerable for England as well as the white dominions. They would prefer to have India outside their group, an independent but friendly country, rather than to be boss of their own household.

It seems likely, therefore, that there will be no real half-way house to Indian freedom. When India is strong enough, or when world events force the pace, she will emerge as a completely free country. What

8. In southern Ireland de Valera's ministry formed in 1932 demanded the removal of the oath of allegiance to the Crown and abolition of the Governor Generalship In South Africa the Minister of Defence warned on 5 February 1935 that attempts to "rashly commit South Africa in overseas war" would lead to civil war.

form that freedom will take and how far political freedom will be accompanied, or followed soon after, by social freedom and a new economic order, it is difficult to say, for this depends on so many factors. Inevitably world crises will affect her and hasten or delay that freedom and shape the social content of it. It is probable that the longer political freedom is delayed the more will the social question dominate the situation; even now it is in the forefront of Indian affairs. Economic conditions are forcing this issue forward, as well as the successful example of Soviet Russia.

When will Indian freedom come? It is dangerous to prophesy. But the world is moving rapidly and crisis succeeds crisis, and the weakening of the whole of British imperialism may be nearer than many people imagine. Within India the national movement has grown tremendously during the last sixteen years, ever since Mahatma Gandhi took its lead and inspired the millions to united effort and sacrifice. During these sixteen years it has continued without a break, though with ups and downs, and three times—in 1920 22, 1930-31, 1932-34—it has functioned through powerful movements of noncooperation and civil disobedience which shook the fabric of British rule in India. The strength of these movements can be judged from the British reaction to them. This took the shape of fierce repression of the typical fascist kind, with suppression of civil liberties, of press, speech, and meeting, of confiscation of funds, lands, and buildings; of the proscription of hundreds of organisations, including schools, universities, hospitals, children's societies, social work clubs, and of course political and labour organizations; of the sending to prison of hundreds of thousands of men and women; and of barbarous beatings and ill-treatment of prisoners and others. On the other hand, an attempt was made to create divisions in the nationalist ranks by offering bribes and inducements to minority groups, and by consolidating all the feudal, reactionary, and obscurantist elements in the country behind the British Government. The outward symbol of this joining together of the reactionaries was the Round Table Conference in London, and the result of this union was the new "constitution" Act passed by the British Government, which in effect tightens the hold of British imperialism and gives greater importance to the reactionary element in the country.

Meanwhile new social forces have gathered strength in India and socialistic and Marxist ideas have spread, in both the ranks of organized labour and the National Congress. The Socialist Party forms an important minority in the National Congress and has an increasing influence. This rise of socialistic ideas has resulted in the development of certain fissiparous tendencies within the Congress, and further developments are

likely to make this ideological cleavage more marked. On the whole, the Congress functions as a kind of joint front (including many groups) —a *front populaire*—against British imperialism, whilst in opposition to it is a joint front of the reactionary and feudal elements with that imperialism. The situation is comparable to the anti-fascist and fascist groupings in Europe. In between the two main groups are smaller groups of people who vacillate, though their sympathies are with the national movement.

The present position in India appears to be complex because the country is recovering from the exhaustion of the last civil disobedience movement, and during such periods a certain confusion is inevitable. New ideas find ready acceptance by many and frighten others. In spite of the fact that there is no civil disobedience movement functioning and conditions might be considered normal, the British Government are continuing their severe repression and suppression of civil liberties. In the name of suppressing communism, the labour movement is harassed,[9] many trade unions are declared illegal, labour leaders sent to prison; in the name of suppressing terrorism, political work is stopped in some parts of the country. Many important organizations, political and labour, continue to be banned. A law, which was contemptuously thrown out by the legislature, has been enacted by the Viceroy's executive authority, giving enormous powers to the executive and the police to suppress every form of civil liberty and public activity. Thousands are kept permanently in prison without trial or charge, many other thousands are sent to prison for sedition or other political offences. This is the functioning of British rule in India in normal times. This is also the measure of the strength of the freedom movement in India, as well as of the fear of the British Government of it. For the British Government lives in a continuous state of alarm, and when a government is afraid it acts strangely and wildly.

It is clear that the British Government cannot succeed in putting an end to the freedom movement, it can only keep it down for a while when the nation is exhausted. It is also clear that the new Act has displeased and irritated all active elements in the country, and they can never submit to it willingly. There is more resentment and hostility against imperialist domination in India than at any previous time. Gandhi

9 The Bombay Special (Emergency) Powers Act was invoked to suppress the strike in the textile industry on 23 April 1934 Legally registered trade unions such as the Young Workers League were banned and the strike leaders were arrested In July 1934 the Communist Party of India was banned.

has for the time being retired from active politics,[10] but he continues to be, and will continue to be, far and away the most dominant and influential figure in India, capable of moving millions, and he might return to the political field at any crucial moment. To imagine that he is a back number in Indian politics is the most futile of errors. There are conflicts of ideologies in India and a pulling in different directions, as is natural in a living movement in a great country, but there is unity in the opposition to British imperialism, except in those classes which profit by it, or are the creation of that imperialism. There can be little doubt that the not distant future will see great changes in India, and the approach to freedom.

All over the world today, behind the political and economic conflicts, there is a spiritual crisis, a questioning of old values and beliefs, and a search for a way out of the tangle. In India also, perhaps more so than elsewhere, there is this crisis of the spirit, for the roots of Indian culture still go down deep into the ancient soil, and though the future beckons, the past holds back. The old culture offers no solution of modern problems: the capitalist West, which shone so brightly in the nineteenth century, has lost its glamour, and seems to be inextricably involved in its own contradictions, the new civilization being built up in the Soviet countries attracts, in spite of some dark patches, and offers hope and world peace, and a prospect of ending the misery and exploitation of millions. It may be that India will resolve this crisis of the spirit by turning more and more to this new order, but, when she does so, it will be in her own way, making the structure fit in with the genius of her people.

10 On 17 September 1934 Mahatma Gandhi announced his intention to retire from the Congress on the grounds that spinning and khadi were not regarded by all as an integral part of the programme and that many subscribed to nonviolence as a policy and not as a creed

34. To the Editor, Manchester Guardian[1]

Sir,

I have just seen the statement issued by the Bengal Government in regard to the reference to me in their Administration Report to which I

1. 9 January 1936 *Manchester Guardian*, 13 January 1936

had taken exception.[2] I am glad that they have thought it fit to express their regret and to withdraw the passage in question. I must express my appreciation of this and my gratitude to them for it.

In the course of the Bengal Government's statement, reference is made to a speech I delivered in Calcutta two years ago[3] and to the possible inferences that might be drawn from it. May I make clear what I said then? I stated that the national movement had grown so strong in its challenge to the existing order that the British Government sought to make every kind of effective activity illegal. An authoritarian government never *likes any organised activity which is independent* of it or which does not fit in with its own scheme of things. When opposition to it grows in strength, fear seizes it and it suspects every activity which touches the masses and tries to suppress it, even though that activity is wholly non-political. A kind of nervous breakdown follows and the government, being authoritarian and all-powerful, makes illegal all public activities that it does not like. This applies inevitably to the political movement, but also to economic, social and other movements. All these therefore hover continually on the verge of illegality, for new laws are promulgated overnight by decree. As an instance of the lengths to which the government in India was going, I mentioned that every approach to the masses, urban or rural, for the most innocent of purposes, was stopped. People going to the villages were arrested even before they had said or done anything. Even the Harijan movement, which was purely one of social reform and was neither political nor anti-government, had in some places come into conflict with the authorities. To my knowledge Harijan workers had been stopped from going to the villages to carry on their work and in some instances had actually been arrested. On another occasion I mentioned that in view of this authoritarian and neurotic state of the government's mind, I felt sure that *any popular non-official movement, aiming at the greater use of soap* by the masses, would be suspect in official eyes and would come into conflict with the government.

Yours etc,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. On 7 January 1936, the Bengal Government in a statement apologised for publishing what was a mere "inference" in a report which was intended only to give an accurate picture of current events and agreed to delete the passage from all copies under its control. For Jawaharlal's objection to the passage see also items 29, 30 and 42 in this section
3. See *Selected Works*, Vol 6, pp. 91 94

35. The Congress and Socialism[1]

I have been told that the Congress Socialist Party is holding a conference this month at Meerut[2] and I have been asked to send it greetings. I do so gladly.

The members of the party will not expect me to discuss from a far country the immediate issues that agitate the mind of our people. I am not yet in a position to do so. I can only qualify myself for approval or criticism after closer touch with my colleagues of the Congress and full discussion with them. I cannot of course retain a blank mind on vital issues affecting our country, but to give a concrete opinion requires more intimate knowledge of the exact situations and human material than I claim to possess at present. I may not therefore consider in this message the detailed programme of the Congress Socialist Party, so far as I have come to know it.

Nevertheless I desire to send the conference and its members my good wishes and greetings. The Congress Socialist Party, as its very name implies, stands for the Congress and for socialists. For twenty years or more I have been closely associated with the Congress and have worked for it to the best of my ability, till I have come to consider myself almost as having merged into it. I have given the best part of my life to it because I believed that it was working for the ideals that I had in my heart. Inevitably, therefore, the Congress occupies a great part of my being and the ties that bind me to it are hard as steel. I have also progressively accepted the ideology of a scientific socialism and I may claim to be now a socialist in the full sense of the term. Any organisation that claims to represent these two ideas and ways must therefore have my goodwill, quite apart even from the detailed programme it might advance. I find further that many of my old colleagues whose opinions I have valued are now in the ranks of the Congress Socialist Party.

I have mentioned the two ways that have moved me, and I take it that they move also, in varying degrees, many of my countrymen. These are: nationalism and political freedom as represented by the Congress and social freedom as represented by socialism. Socialism, it is obvious, includes political freedom, for without that there can be no social and

1. Message to the All India Congress Socialist Conference at Meerut, 13 January 1936. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16 January 1936.
2. The meeting was on 19 and 20 January 1936

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economic freedom. But India being unhappily still politically a subject country, nationalism is the dominant urge of most of her politically-minded classes. That is a factor of primary importance and any socialist who ignores it does so at his peril. But no socialist need be reminded that nationalism by itself offers no solution of the vast problems that confront our country and the world; it ignores indeed the world and fails to realize that in doing so it makes an understanding of even the national position impossible. For the Indian problem is but a part of the world problem of imperialism, the two are indissolubly linked together, and that world problem is essentially an economic problem, though it has many changing faces.

To continue these two outlooks and make them an organic whole is the problem of the Indian socialist. Scientific socialism itself teaches us not to follow slavishly any dogma or any other country's example, which may have resulted from entirely different circumstances. Armed with a philosophy which reveals the inner workings of history and human relations, and with the scientific outlook to guide him, the socialist tries to solve the problems of each country in relation to its varied background and stage of economic development, and also in relation to the world. It is a hard task. But then there is no easy way.

Ideas are the essential basis for action. But behind ideas there must be the men to carry them out and the character and discipline to translate them into results. No socialist can be true to his creed or mission if he seeks satisfaction merely in brave ideas and in criticism of others who do not argue with him. That is the way of facile intellectual opportunism. He has to remember that he is no armchair politician but one working for an object—for achievement. And achievement requires character and discipline and united action and the readiness to sacrifice the individual self for the larger cause. That discipline and character have been sadly lacking in India in recent months, and the brave memory of united and effective action is almost a dream that has faded. It is for us to make that dream real again, and real in an even more fundamental sense than it was in the past, for in the future it must be built upon a clear and well understood ideology.

36. To Lord Lothian[1]

Badenweiler
January 17, 1936

Dear Lord Lothian,

I have read your long letter more than once, as well as your article in the *Twentieth Century*[2] I must thank you again for the trouble you took in writing to me so fully on subjects which interest and affect us all so deeply. I find some difficulty in answering you for you have covered so vast a field that an adequate answer must deal with most of the major problems of the world. That is beyond me. But I shall endeavour to touch upon certain aspects, without becoming too argumentative, and this will perhaps give you some idea of how my mind is working.

I entirely agree with you that we are in the midst of one of the most creative and changing epochs in human history. It does seem that we have reached the end of an era and are on the threshold of another. I also agree that the two ideals which are moving most intelligent and sensitive persons are. the ending of the present anarchy of sovereign states, with their hatreds, fears and conflicts, and the creation of a world order; and the socialistic ideal, aiming at "a system whereby the earth and its fruits will be exploited for the benefit of all members of the community in proportion to the services they render to it and not according to the accident of property ownership." The League of Nations, you say, represents the former ideal. I think this is true in so far as it represents a widespread sentiment. In actual practice, however, it hardly functions that way, and it represents the policies of certain great powers who have no intention of giving up their privileged positions or their absolute sovereignty and who endeavour to utilise the League to make the world safe for themselves.

Another question arises. Even if the people behind the League honestly desired the ending of the anarchy of sovereign states, or were pushed

1 J.N. Correspondence NMML Parts of this letter were published in *India and the World*, (London, 1936), pp 177 199, and the full text in *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1958), pp 137 151.

2. In his article and his letter to Jawaharlal of 31 December 1935, Lothian argued that the world was moving towards the twin ideals of internationalism and socialism But as Britain was shedding her imperialism, India should initiate social and economic reforms without losing her unity which she could achieve in no way "except through constitutional means" in the 1935 Act.

by popular opinion in that direction, could they succeed in that objective without changing fundamentally the social order—without, in other words, accepting socialism? Of course they would have to shed their imperialism. The League today does not look beyond the present capitalistic system; indeed it does not contemplate even an ending of imperialism. It is essentially based on the *status quo* and its chief function is to preserve it. In practice, therefore, it is actually a hindrance to the realisation of the very ideal which many people think it represents. If it is true, as I believe it is, that imperialism and the anarchy of sovereign states are inevitable developments of the present phase of capitalism, then it follows that you cannot get rid of the former without also getting rid of the latter. Thus in practice the League has little to do with its supposed ideals and even puts difficulties in the way of their realisation; but even its ideals, by themselves, are such that they lead to a blind alley. It is not surprising that it finds itself frequently involved in hopeless contradictions. It simply cannot go ahead on the basis of the *status quo* because the root of the trouble is that *status quo* both in its imperialist and social aspects. It is right and proper that the League should condemn Italian aggression in Abyssinia and try to curb it,[3] but the very system which it protects and seeks to perpetuate inevitably leads to that aggression. There is no valid answer for an imperialist to Mussolini's taunt that he is doing what other imperialist powers have done before, and are doing now, though not in his particularly blatant way. It does seem rather illogical to condemn Italian bombing in East Africa and maintain a dignified silence about British bombing on the north west frontier of India.

You yourself are of opinion that the achievement of the end is not likely to be by the methods of the Covenant of the League. The League, therefore, offers little hope except in so far as it represents a vague and widespread sentiment in favour of world order and peace. It helps sometimes in mobilising that sentiment and in postponing conflict.

The two ideals you have mentioned run into each other and I do not think they can be separated. The second ideal, of socialism, indeed includes the first, and it may be said that real world order and peace will only come when socialism is realised on a world scale. It is perfectly true, as you say, that real socialism involves a profound transformation of the deeper habits of opinion and of character and this inevitably takes time. Under favourable circumstances and with the

3 On 3 October 1935 the League of Nations imposed an embargo on arms to Italy and on imports from Italy and a ban on loans and credits, but the sanctions failed and were withdrawn in July 1936.

goodwill of a large number of people concerned, these changes may be brought about within a generation. But as things are, instead of that goodwill, we have the fiercest opposition and ill will, and it is therefore likely that the period will be a much longer one. The main question for us to consider is how to create an environment and circumstances under which these deeper changes can take place. Only that will be a real step in the right direction. Under present conditions the environment is against us and instead of lessening our mutual hatreds and selfishness and acquisitiveness, which lead to conflict, actually encourages all these evil traits. It is true that in spite of this grave disadvantage some progress is made and some of us, at least, begin to challenge our old habits and opinions. But the process is very slow and it is almost counterbalanced by the growth of contrary tendencies.

Capitalism stimulated acquisitiveness and these deeper instincts which we want to get rid of now. It did much good also in its earlier stages and by raising production greatly increased the standard of living. In other ways too, it served a useful purpose and it was certainly an improvement on the stage that preceded it. But it seems to have outlived its utility and today it not only bars all progress in a socialistic direction but *encourages many undesirable habits and instincts in us.* I do not see how we can move along socialistic lines in a society which is based on acquisitiveness and in which the profit motive is the dominant urge. It thus becomes necessary to change the basis of this acquisitive society and to remove the profit motive, as far as we can, in order to develop new and more desirable habits and ways of thinking. That involves a complete change-over from the capitalist system.

It is true, as you state it, that the capitalist system has not created international anarchy; it merely succeeded to it. It has in the past removed or lessened actual civil war within the state, but it has intensified the conflict of classes, which has grown to such an extent *as to threaten civil war in the future. In the international sphere it* has perpetuated anarchy on a bigger scale and, instead of petty local wars, it has brought about vast and terrible national conflicts. And so, though it does not create this anarchy, it inevitably increases it and cannot put an end to it unless it puts an end to itself. It has produced the modern imperialisms which not only crush and exploit large parts of the earth's surface and vast numbers of people, but also come into continual conflict with each other.

It may be that Marx overstates the case for the materialist or economic interpretation of history. Perhaps he did so for the simple reason that it had been largely ignored, or at any rate very much understated till then. But Marx never denied the influence of other factors on the

KAMALA NEHRU IN VIENNA, 1935

AT VICTORIA STATION WITH INDIRA

shaping of events. He laid the greatest stress on one—the economic factor. Whether that stress was a little overdone does not make much difference. The fact remains, I think, that his interpretation of history is the only one which does explain history to some extent and gives it meaning. It helps us to understand the present and it is quite remarkable how many of his predictions have come true.

How will socialism come? You say that it is not likely to be achieved by the universal nationalisation of the instruments of production and distribution. Must it not involve the ending of the profit and acquisitive motive and the replacement of it by a communal and cooperative motive? And does it not involve the building up of a new civilisation on a different basis from that of the present? It may be that a great deal of private initiative is left; in some matters, cultural etc., it must be left. But in all that counts, in a material sense, nationalisation of the instruments of production and distribution seems to be inevitable. There may be half way houses to it, but one can hardly have two contradictory and conflicting processes going on side by side. The choice must be made and for one who aims at socialism there can be only one choice.

I think it is possible, in theory, to establish socialism by democratic means, provided of course the full democratic process is available. In practice, however, there are likely to be very great difficulties, because the opponents of socialism will reject the democratic method when they see their power threatened. The rejection of democracy does not or should not come from the socialist side but from the other. That of course is fascism. How is this to be avoided? The democratic method has many triumphs to its credit, but I do not know that it has yet succeeded in resolving a conflict about the very basic structure of the state or of society. When this question arises, the group or class which controls the state-power does not voluntarily give it up because the majority demands it. We have seen enough examples of this in post war Europe and in the decline of democracy itself. Obviously no socialist transformation can be brought about without the goodwill, or at least the passive acquiescence, of the great majority.

Coming to Britain and India, I find a large number of assumptions in your letter which I think have little justification. As I do not agree with many of your premises, I also find myself in disagreement with some of your *conclusions. You say that "Britain is shedding the old* imperialism and is actively concerned with trying to find the way to prevent the anarchy involved in universal national self-determination from ending in fresh wars or in a new deluge of imperialism." I am afraid I fail to see entirely that Britain is acting in this role. I do not

see any shedding of the old imperialism, but only repeated and strenuous attempts to hold on to it, and to strengthen it, though a new facade is presented to the public view in some instances. Britain certainly does not want fresh wars. She is a satisfied and surfeited power. Why should she risk what she has got? She wants to maintain the *status quo* which is eminently to her advantage. She dislikes new imperialisms because they conflict with her old imperialism and not because of any dislike of imperialism itself.

You refer also to the "constitutional road" in India. What exactly is this constitutional road? I can understand constitutional activities where there is a democratic constitution, but where there is no such thing, constitutional methods have no meaning. The word constitutional then simply means legal, and legal simply means in accordance with the wishes of an autocratic executive which can make laws and issue decrees and ordinances regardless of public opinion. What is the constitutional method in Germany or Italy today? What was this method in the India of the nineteenth century or of the early twentieth century or even now? There was no possibility of bringing about a change in India then (or now) through any constitutional apparatus which the people of India could sufficiently influence. They could only beg or revolt. The mere fact that it is impossible for the great majority of the people of India to make their will effective shows that they have no constitutional way open to them. They can either submit to something they dislike intensely or adopt other than so-called constitutional methods. Such methods may be wise or unwise, under the particular circumstances, but the question of their being constitutional or not does not arise.

Most of us, I suppose, are unable to get rid of our particular national bias and often ignore the beam in our own eyes. I realise that I must be subject to this, especially when I consider the relation of Britain and India. You will allow for that. Nevertheless I must say that nothing astonishes me so much as the way the British people manage to combine their material interests with their moral fervour; how they proceed on the irrebuttable presumption that they are always doing good to the world and acting from the highest motives, and trouble and conflict and difficulty are caused by the obstinacy and evil mindedness of others. That presumption, as you know, is not universally accepted, and in Europe and America and Asia it is the subject of humorous comment. In India especially we may be forgiven if we reject it utterly after our experience of British rule in the past and present. To talk of democracy and constitutionalism in India, in the face of what has happened and is happening there, seems to me to distort utterly the

significance of these terms. Ruling powers and ruling classes have not been known in history to abdicate willingly. And if the teaching of history was not enough, we in India have had enough experience of hard fact.

It is true, I think, that the British ruling classes possess a certain instinct for adaptability, but when the very basis of their power is challenged there is little room for superficial adaptation. For anyone to imagine that the British Government or Parliament are kindly trustees for Indian freedom and are beneficently presiding over its development seems to me one of the most extraordinary of delusions. I believe there are many Britishers who feel kindly towards India and her people and would like to see India free, but they count for little in the shaping of policy, and even they, or most of them, think in terms of Indian freedom fitting in with British desires and interests. More freedom, greater responsibility, will come to us, we are told, as we show our fitness for it, and the test of this is how far we fit in with the British scheme of things. One almost feels like suggesting to our mentors and well-wishers in England to renew their acquaintance with Aesop's fables and especially to read afresh the story of the wolf and the lamb.

It is perfectly true that in politics, as in most other things, we cannot start with a clean slate. It is also true that life is often too complex for human logic. We have to take things as they are, whether we like them or not, and to reconcile our idealism with them. But we must move in the right direction. This means, according to you, first of all the preservation of the unity of India, and then the elimination of communalism, the control and gradual devesting of vested interests and the raising of the standard of living of the people, the development of a true Indian army, and the training of the youth of India in constructive practical work required in a democratic state. Beyond all this lies the socialistic ideal, and the general background must be such as to develop those deeper instincts and habits which are necessary for the real working of this ideal.

I suppose many of us would agree with that statement, so far as it goes, though we may word it differently and add to it, and stress some points more than others. I agree with you also that the political phase comes first; indeed without that phase there is no other phase. It may be accompanied by social changes or followed soon after by them. Personally I am perfectly prepared to accept political democracy only in the hope that this will lead to social democracy. Political democracy is only the way to the goal and is not the final objective. The real demand for it comes from a desire, sometimes unconscious, for economic changes. If these changes do not follow soon enough the

political structure is likely to be unstable. I am inclined to think that in India, circumstanced as she is today, the need for economic change is urgent and a vital political change will be inevitably accompanied or followed by substantial economic changes In any event the political change should be such as to facilitate these social changes. If it becomes a barrier to them then it is not a desirable change or one worth having.

I am not aware of any responsible Indian who thinks in terms other than those of the unity of India. That is an essential article of our political faith and everything that we do has that for its goal. That unity, I agree, is likely to be a federal unity, but that does not mean of course anything like the federation of the new Act. That unity also is not the unity of subjection under a common yoke. It is possible that a period of chaos might result in disunity and the formation of separate states in India, but that danger seems to me very unreal. The tendency to unity is too strong all over the country.

The disruptive factors are, according to you, religion, race and language. I do not see the importance of race. Race in India became intertwined with religion and partly took the shape of caste. Hindus and Moslems do not form different races, they are essentially the same amalgam of races. Thus though there are various races, they run into one another and on the whole form a definite unit, racially and culturally. The so-called hundreds of languages of India are a favourite subject for our critics, who usually have little acquaintance with a single one of them. As a matter of fact India is linguistically singularly well knit and it is only due to the absence of popular education that numerous dialects have grown. There are ten major languages of India which cover the entire country, except for some small tracts. These belong to the two groups—Indo-Aryan and Dravidian—and between the two there is the common background of Sanskrit. Of the Indo-Aryan languages, I suppose you know that Hindustani with its various dialects accounts for over 120 millions of people, and it is spreading The other Indo-Aryan languages—Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi—are very closely allied to it. I am sure that whatever other difficulties we may have to face in the way of Indian unity, the language question will not be a major difficulty.

You compare the state of religion in India with that of Europe at the time of the Renaissance and the Reformation. It is true that the people of India have a definite religious outlook on life which is comparable to the outlook in Europe during the Middle Ages Still your comparison does not go below the surface India has never known in the whole course of her long history the religious strife that has soaked Europe in blood The whole background of Indian religion, culture

and philosophy was one of tolerance, and even encouragement of other beliefs. Some conflict arose when Islam came, but even that was far more political than religious, although stress is always laid on the religious side. It was the conflict between the conquerors and the conquered. In spite of recent developments, I cannot easily envisage religious conflict in India on any substantial scale. The communalism of today is essentially political, economic and middle class. I imagine (but I say so without personal knowledge) that the religious bitterness in Ulster today is far more deep-seated than anywhere in India. It is a fact that one must never forget that communalism in India is a latter-day phenomenon which has grown up before our eyes. That does not lessen its significance and we may not ignore it, for it is at present a tremendous obstacle in our way and is likely to interfere with our future progress. And yet I think it is overrated and over-emphasised, it does not fundamentally affect the masses although sometimes their passions are roused. With the coming of social issues to the forefront it is bound to recede into the background. Examine the communal demands of the extreme communalists and you will find that not a single one of them has the slightest reference to the masses. The communal leaders of all groups are terribly afraid of social and economic questions and it is interesting to find them joining hands in their opposition to social progress.

British rule in India has inevitably helped in creating political unity in the country. The mere fact of common subjection was bound to result in a common desire to be rid of it. It must be remembered—a fact that is not sufficiently realised—that throughout history there has been a quite extraordinary sense of cultural and geographical unity in India, and the desire for political unity was bound to grow under modern conditions of transport and communication. Throughout the British period, however, there has been an attempt on the part of the ruling power, partly conscious and deliberate, partly unconscious, to retard this unity. That of course was only to be expected for that has been the invariable policy of all empires and ruling groups. It is interesting to read the frank expressions of opinion of high officers in India during the nineteenth century. The problem was then not very urgent but with the growth of the nationalist movement, and especially during the last thirty years, it became acute. The reaction of the British Government was to devise new methods for creating and, if possible, perpetuating these divisions. Obviously, no one can say that there was not an inherent tendency towards division in India, and with the prospect of the approach of political power, this was likely to grow. It was possible to adopt a policy to tone down this tendency; it was also possible to accentuate it. The government adopted the latter

policy and encouraged in every way every fissiparous tendency in the country. It is not possible for them or for anyone to stop the historical growth of the people, but they can and they have put checks and obstructions in the way. And the latest and most important of these are in the new Act. You commend this Act because it symbolises the unity of India. As a matter of fact it is the very reverse; it is the prelude (if it is not combated) of greater disunity. It divides up India into religious and numerous other compartments, preserves large parts of it as feudal enclaves which cannot be touched but which can influence other parts, and checks the growth of healthy political parties on social and economic issues, which you consider "the most important urgent need in India today."

The policy of the British Government on social issues is equally marked. Far from looking towards any form of socialism or control or devesting of vested interests, it has deliberately protected numerous vested interests, created fresh ones and invariably sided with the political, social and religious reactionaries in India. The new Act is again a culmination of this policy and at no time before have these vested interests and obscurantists and reactionaries had so much power as they will have under the new federal India. The Act legally bars the door to that social progress which, according to you, should be our goal, by protecting and entrenching these vested interests, foreign and Indian. Even small measures of social reform are hardly within reach as a very great part of the financial resources of the state is mortgaged and earmarked for the maintenance of the vested interests.[4]

Every country today has to put up a stiff fight against the forces of reaction and evil. India is no exception to the rule. The tragedy of the situation is that the British people, without being conscious of it, stand today through their Parliament and officials entirely on the side of the forces of evil in India. What they would not tolerate for an instant in their own country, they encourage in India. You mention the great name of Abraham Lincoln and remind me of the vital importance he attached to the union. Presumably you think that the British Government, in trying to suppress the Congress movement, was actuated by the same noble motive of maintaining the unity of India in the face of disruptive forces. I do not quite see how the unity of India

4. By the Government of India Act of 1935, expenditure on defence, ecclesiastical affairs, excluded areas, pensions to members of the higher services and other items, constituting in all a considerable portion of the federal expenditure, was made non votable by the legislature. The Railway Board was also established "to perform its duties upon business principles and without being subject to political interference."

was threatened by that movement—indeed I think that that movement or some similar movement alone can bring about an organic unity in the country, and the British Government's activities push us in a contrary direction. But, apart from this, do you not think that the comparison of Lincoln with the attempt of an imperialist power to crush the freedom movement in a country subject to it, is very far-fetched?

You want to eradicate undesirable and selfish habits and instincts in the people. Do you think that the British in India are helping in this direction? Quite apart from their support of the reactionary elements, the background of British rule is worth considering. It is of course based on an extreme form of widespread violence and the only sanction is fear. It suppresses the usual liberties which are supposed to be essential to the growth of a people; it crushes the adventurous, the brave, the sensitive types, and encourages the timid, the opportunist and time-serving, the sneak and the bully. It surrounds itself with a vast army of spies and informers and *agents provocateurs*. Is this the atmosphere in which the more desirable virtues grow or democratic institutions flourish?

You ask me whether the Congress could at any time have established a liberal constitution for all India by consent, except by making in fundamentals the same kind of concessions to communalism, to the princes and to property. That presumes that the present Act establishes a liberal constitution by consent. If this constitution is a liberal one it is difficult for me to imagine what an illiberal constitution can be like, and as for consent, I doubt if anything that the British Government have ever done in India has been quite so much resented and disapproved of as the new Act. Incidentally, the measures to obtain the necessary consent involved the fiercest repression all over the country, and even now, as a prelude to the enforcement of the Act, all-India and provincial laws suppressing all kinds of civil liberty have been passed. To talk of consent under these circumstances does seem most extraordinary. There is an amazing amount of misconception about this in England. If the problem has to be faced the dominant facts cannot be ignored.

It is true that the government has succeeded in making some arrangement with the princes and with various minority groups, but even these groups are highly dissatisfied except, to some extent, with the minor arrangements affecting their representation. Take the principal minority, the Moslems. No one can say that the aristocratic, semi feudal and other hand picked Moslem members of the Round Table Conference represented the Moslem masses. You may be

surprised to know that the Congress has still considerable Moslem backing.

Could the Congress have done better? I have no doubt that the nationalist movement, of which the Congress is the symbol and the principal standard bearer, could have done infinitely better. The Congress is of course a *bourgeois* organisation (I wish it was more socialistic) and therefore the property question would not have arisen in any acute form at that stage. The communal question would have had to be faced and, I think, solved for the time being at least by a large measure of consent. Probably some degree of communalism would have remained to begin with, but far less than what we are presented with under the new Act. What is more important—circumstances would have been created for the elimination of communalism in the near future and for growth *along social lines; the land problem* would have been tackled. The real difficulties would have been two: the vested interests of the British Government and the City of London, and the princes. The former represent the crux of the question, all else is really secondary. The princes would, under the circumstances, have adapted themselves to a considerable extent to the new situation, and the Congress, constituted as it is today, would have given them a long enough rope. The pressure of public opinion, including that of their own subjects, would have been too great for them to resist. Probably some temporary arrangement might have been made with the Indian states to begin with to enable this public opinion to come into play and shape developments. Presuming of course that the British Government is not there to back up the undiluted autocracy of the princes, there is little doubt that the states would gradually fall into line. No question of civil conflict need have arisen.

All this would have been very far from what I desire but it would at least have been a definite political and democratic step in the right direction. In the framing of a constitution or a political structure it is manifestly impossible to get every one concerned to agree. One tries to have the maximum agreement and the others, who do not agree, either fall into line according to democratic procedure, or have to be pressed or coerced into doing so. The British Government, representing the autocratic and authoritarian tradition, and chiefly bent on preserving their own interests, tried to win the consent of the princes and some other reactionary elements, and coerced the vast majority of the people The Congress would inevitably have functioned differently

All this is of course airy talk without substance for it ignores the principal factor—the British Government and British financial interests.

There is another consideration which deserves notice. The Congress, under Mr. Gandhi's leadership, had laid great stress on non-violence and the conversion of the adversary rather than his coercion. Quite apart from the metaphysical aspects of this doctrine and its feasibility or otherwise in the final sense, there can be no doubt that this has created a powerful feeling against civil conflict and in favour of attempting to win over various groups in India. That is a factor of great value to us in preserving the unity of India and in toning down opposition.

People discuss the noncooperation and civil disobedience movements in terms of constitutional action or otherwise. I have referred to this aspect earlier. May I put to you how they have always impressed themselves on me? Of course these movements exercised tremendous pressure on the British Government and shook the government machinery. But the real importance, to my mind, lay in the effect they had on our own people, and especially the village masses. Poverty and a long period of autocratic rule, with its inevitable atmosphere of fear and coercion, had thoroughly demoralised and degraded them. They had hardly any of the virtues that are necessary for citizenship, they were cuffed and bullied by every petty official, tax-collector, policeman, landlord's agent; they were utterly lacking in courage or the capacity for united action or resistance to oppression; they sneaked and told tales against each other; and when life became too hard they sought an escape from it in death. It was all very depressing and deplorable and yet one could hardly blame them for it; they were the victims of all-powerful circumstances. Noncooperation dragged them out of this mire and gave them self respect and self-reliance; they developed the habit of cooperative action, they acted courageously and did not submit so easily to unjust oppression; their outlook widened and they began to think a little in terms of India as a whole; they discussed political and economic questions (crudely no doubt) in their bazaars and meeting places The lower middle classes were affected in the same way but the change in the masses was the most significant. It was a remarkable transformation and the Congress, under Gandhi's leadership, must have the credit for it. It was something far more important than constitutions and the structure of government. It was the foundation on which only a stable structure or constitution could be built up.

All this of course involved a cataclysmic upheaval of Indian life. Usually in other countries this has involved a vast amount of hatred and violence. And yet in India, thanks to Mahatma Gandhi, there was, relatively speaking, exceedingly little of this. We developed many of the virtues of war without its terrible evils. And the real organic unity

of India was brought far nearer than it had ever been. Even the religious and communal differences toned down. You know that the most vital question which affects rural India, which means eighty five per cent of India, is the land question. Any such upheaval in another country, together with the terrible economic depression, would have resulted there in *jacqueries*. It is extraordinary that India escaped them. That was not because of government repression but because of Gandhi's teaching and the message of the Congress.

The Congress thus released all the live forces in the country and suppressed the evil and disruptive tendencies. It did so in a peaceful, disciplined and as civilised a way as was possible under the circumstances, though inevitably there were risks in such a mass release. How did the government react? You know that well enough. By trying to crush those live and virile forces and encouraging all the evil and disruptive tendencies, and doing so in the most uncivilised way. The British Government has functioned in a purely fascist way in India during the past six years, and the only difference has been that it did not take open pride in this fact as the fascist countries do.

This letter has become terribly long and I do not want now to consider the new constitution Act in detail. That is hardly necessary for the Act has been analysed and criticised by a host of persons in India holding all sorts of opinions, but agreeing in one thing—their utter disapproval of the Act. Very recently one of the most eminent leaders of the Indian liberals described the new constitution privately as "the quintessence of the most venomous opposition to all our national *aspirations*." *Is it not remarkable that even our moderate politicians* should think so and yet you, with all your broad sympathy for Indian aspirations, should approve of it and say that it "involves the transfer of the citadel of power in India to Indian hands"? Is the gulf between our ways of thinking so vast? Why is it so? It almost becomes more of a problem in psychology than in politics or economics.

The psychological aspect is after all very important. Is it realised in England what the past few years have meant to India? How the attempt to crush human dignity and decency, the injuries to the soul more even than to the body, have left a lasting impress on the Indian people? Never have I realised so well how a tyrannical use of power degrades those who use it as well as those who suffer from it. How can we forget it without forgetting everything that is decent and honourable? How can we forget it when it continues from day to day? Is this the prelude to freedom and the transfer of the citadel of power?

People react in different ways to oppression. Some are broken, others harden. We have both kinds in India as elsewhere. Many of us cannot desert our colleagues, who suffer in prison or otherwise, whatever the consequences might be to our individual selves. Many of us cannot tolerate an insult to Gandhi, whether we differ from him or not, for Gandhi represents to us the honour of India. No one in his senses likes conflict and suffering and the way of catastrophe. The Indian national movement has done all in its power to avoid this way, without at the same time giving up the very basis of its existence. But it is the British Government that has proceeded along that path and made a peaceful solution more and more difficult. If it imagines that by merely persisting in this direction it will succeed, it seems to have strangely mistead both the lesson of history and the present temper of the Indian people. If catastrophe is to be avoided, it will have to be for the British Government to retrace its steps.

Please forgive me for the length of this letter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

37. Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Mr. Saumyendranath Tagore[2] is one of our young comrades in India for whom I have the greatest respect. Ardent, clear-headed, and devoted to the cause of the freedom of the masses, anything that he says or writes must deserve attention. But I have seen with great regret the criticism of Gandhi which he has written in a recent book.[3] All legitimate criticism is to be welcomed, for it helps us to get at the truth, and no personality, however great, should be above this criticism. But it seems to me that Mr. Tagore has done an injustice to himself and has failed to grasp many of the underlying factors of the Indian situation in his eagerness to paint Gandhi as a reactionary force in

1. Badenweiler, 20 January 1936. First published in *L'Europe*, 1936. Reprinted in *India and the World*, (London, 1936), pp. 172 176.
2. (1901-1974); Indian delegate to the Sixth Communist International, 1928, founder, Revolutionary Communist Party of India; author of *Communism and Fetishism* and *Tactics and Strategy of Revolution*.
3. *Gandhi*, published in 1934.

every way. It is not possible for me in these lines to consider many of Mr. Tagore's statements which I think are wrong. But, as one who has differed from Gandhi in many important matters and yet cooperated with him in a large measure, I should like to express my disagreement with Mr. Tagore's basic analysis of Gandhi.

It should be remembered that the nationalist movement in India, like all nationalist movements, was essentially a *bourgeois* movement. It represented the natural historical stage of development, and to consider it or to criticize it as a working-class movement is wrong. Gandhi represented that movement and the Indian masses in relation to that movement to a supreme degree, and he became the voice of the Indian people to that extent. He functioned inevitably within the orbit of nationalist ideology, but the dominating passion that consumed him was a desire to raise the masses. In this respect he was always ahead of the nationalist movement, and he gradually made it, within the limits of its own ideology, turn in this direction. Economic events in India and the world powerfully pushed Indian nationalism towards vital social changes, and today it hovers, somewhat undecided, on the brink of a new social ideology.

But the main contribution of Gandhi to India and the Indian masses has been through the powerful movements which he launched through the National Congress. Through nation wide action he sought to mould the millions, and largely succeeded in doing so, and changing them from a demoralized, timid, and hopeless mass, bullied and crushed by every dominant interest, and incapable of resistance, into a people with self respect and self-reliance, resisting tyranny, and capable of united action and sacrifice for a larger cause. He made them think of political and economic issues, and every village and every bazaar hummed with argument and debate on the new ideas and hopes that filled the people That was an amazing psychological change. The time was ripe for it, of course, and circumstances and world conditions worked for this change. But a great leader is necessary to take advantage of circumstances and conditions. Gandhi was that leader, and he released many of the bonds that imprisoned and disabled our minds, and none of us who experienced it can ever forget that great feeling of release and exhilaration that came over the Indian people. Gandhi has played a revolutionary role in India of the greatest importance because he knew how to make the most of the objective conditions and could reach the heart of the masses; while groups with a more advanced ideology functioned largely in the air because they did not fit in with those conditions and could therefore not evoke any substantial response from the masses.

To call Gandhi an ally of British imperialism is the veriest nonsense which can only evoke a smile. The answer to that charge can best be given by the British Government and by British imperialists, who have all along considered him their most dangerous opponent. They have tried to suppress him and oppose him in every way, and the measure of their reaction to him and to the National Congress is the wide-flung and intensive repression that is going on in India.

It is perfectly true that Gandhi, functioning on the nationalist plane, does not think in terms of the conflict of classes, and tries to compose their differences. But the action he has indulged in and taught the people has inevitably raised mass consciousness tremendously and made social issues vital. And his insistence on the raising of the masses at the cost, wherever necessary, of vested interests has given a strong orientation to the national movement in favour of the masses.

Essentially, the Congress under Gandhi's leadership has been a joint anti imperialist front. Mr. Tagore in his book does not believe in the desirability of such a united front. But I should be surprised if he has not changed his opinion since he wrote his book, for, as everyone knows, the policy of the Comintern and the communist parties in different countries has undergone a great change in recent months in favour of a united front[4] In France there is the *Front Populaire*, in England the Communist Party wants to cooperate with the Labour Party, and in the colonial countries there is the definite attempt at cooperation with nationalist movements. In India itself, so far as I know, they are in favour of a joint anti-imperialist front.

Gandhi and the Congress must be judged by the policies they pursue and the action they indulge in. But behind this, personality counts and colours those policies and activities. In the case of a very exceptional person like Gandhi the question of personality becomes especially important in order to understand and appraise him. An English journalist, Mr. George Slocombe, who has had a wide experience of men prominent and otherwise in public affairs all over the world, has referred to Gandhi in a recent book of his, and the passage is interesting and worth quoting. He says, "I have never met any man more utterly honest, more transparently sincere, less given to egotism, self-conscious pride, opportunism and ambition which are found in greater or less degree in all the other great political figures of the world." An English journalist's

4 At the seventh Comintern Congress held in August 1935, the strategy of collaboration with the national movements in the colonies was advocated. In accordance with this the British Communist Party called upon the Communist Party of India to ally itself with the Congress Socialist Party and infiltrate into the Indian National Congress

opinion need not carry much weight with us, nor does the sincerity of a person excuse a wrong policy or mistaken ideas. But as it happens, that opinion is shared by millions in India, and it is very superficial criticism to dispose of such a unique and outstanding personality by cheap and well-worn phrases which are applied indiscriminately to the average politician. We in India have often differed from Gandhi, we differ from him still in many ways, and sometimes we may follow different paths, but it has been the greatest privilege of our lives to work with him and under him for a great cause. To us he has represented the spirit and honour of India, the yearning of her sorrowing millions to be rid of their innumerable burdens, and an insult to him by the British Government or others has been an insult to India and her people.

38. Interview on His Second Visit to London[1]

Question: How is Mrs. Nehru now?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Well, my wife is, I think, slightly better. But I believe before I leave London she will be removed to Lausanne, where I will go from this place on the 6th February.

Q: What is your immediate programme?

JN: I am ignorant of it in as much as it is Miss Ellen Wilkinson, Mr. Krishna Menon and a few other personal friends who are responsible for arranging it.

Q: Would you advise your countrymen to accept ministerial posts under the new Government of India Act?

JN: I cannot say anything on the subject until I reach India and hold consultations with my colleagues.

Q. May we congratulate you?

1. 26 January 1936. From *The Tribune*, 8 February 1936.

N: I do not know why you are congratulating me. If you think my ife is better you are mistaken, if the congratulations are for the recent tatement of the Bengal Government then.....

A correspondent: No Panditji, I congratulate you on your being elected President of the Congress. We have this news in today's newspapers.

JN: Oh, I see, but that is news to me. News concerning me seems to travel quicker to you than to me. I have no official intimation from the Congress Committee on my reported election. From what I know of it, the election could not have taken place by now and I think I am right that the congratulations are a bit premature.

39. On the 1935 Act[1]

Question: When you meet the leaders of different parties in this country, what do you propose to tell them?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It depends upon their questions and what they say to me. I have nothing special to say to them. I shall be very glad to meet them, not with any desire to get anything out of them. But it is always good to have personal contacts with intelligent people.

Q: Do you agree with British public opinion that the passing of the new Government of India Act solves the Indian question? If you do not share that view, would you tell us the magnitude of the Indian problem?

JN: The question is so vast that I have a feeling that even the so-called experts in Parliament on India are stupid in their knowledge of India. The real difficulty arises from one point. People in Britain start with entirely different premises from what we do in India. Inevitably we argue and we go on and on, on parallel lines. The problem as we see it is entirely different from the problem as they in Britain

1. Interview to the press in London, 27 January 1936 From *The Tribune*, 8 February 1936.

see it. Your people talk in terms of communities, castes, languages as the background of the Indian problem. Well, it is very extraordinary how people like even the Secretary of State for India are utterly ignorant of conditions in India Inevitably they go in wrong channels. It is so difficult to change their background.

Q. What do you think of the new Government of India Act?

JN. To me the Government of India Act is trivial because it does not touch a single problem of India. One of the biggest problems of India is unemployment. It is a tremendous problem—the rural class unemployment is appallingly high. You have no conception of it. I cannot estimate figures because millions are completely unemployed and scores of millions are partly employed. The old problem of unemployment is increasing. It began in its present form with almost the coming of the British, with the suppression of old forms of industry and introduction of new forms of modern industry. You cannot imagine the burden on the land. It is too great. The people cannot simply bear it This problem of unemployment cannot be tackled through the new constitution In the present conditions of India, it is desirable from economic and psychological points of view to solve this problem immediately

The Congress or any other party in India is out to realise a certain ideal, not necessarily a political objective. They want to raise the standard of living and solve such other allied problems. How far they can do so effectively under the new constitution is the test of the usefulness of the Act. The two important problems which face India are the land problem and the industrial problem. They cannot tackle these problems under the new constitution We cannot move even our little finger to solve these problems. Under the present Act, and I mean the new one, every single vested interest is protected, it cannot be touched by any democratic council or assembly. The city of London, the British Government, the interests of Indian landlords, the Indian princes and even the interest of the Scottish Presbyterian Church in India are safeguarded under the constitution.

When there is no democratic outlet the question of working a constitution does not arise. A constitution presupposes a democratic constitution. In India the word "constitution" is used freely and simply to mean what is legal for the time being, it means what the Viceroy thinks overnight and issues in the form of an ordinance the following morning. Take it from me that the term "constitutional activity" is incorrectly applied in India. This distinction might be remembered.

The only question is whether you break the law or not. The talk of reaching self-government step by step, by precedents etc., is all nonsense. When you talk of a democratic constitution this question never comes in. You don't call that a constitution which talks in such terms. There is no section of really political opinion in India—I include in this even the most moderate politically inclined people—which has not criticised the new constitution and condemned it in no uncertain language. Nobody has accepted the constitution and even the Right Hon. Srinivasa Sastri has criticised it in very strong language. Of course, he may say that the Indians may adopt certain tactics to meet the situation. But one thing is certain and definite. Nobody in India today is thinking in terms of this constitution because everyone is agreed that it gives nothing. This constitution cannot be worked and you cannot get anything out of it. The question is how to oppose it. I cannot say how we will oppose it. It is highly likely that the Congressmen will put up candidates but it is taken for granted that they will put up candidates and contest elections in order to oppose the constitution. Those who talk of taking office and accepting ministerial posts will do so to oppose the constitution.

The Government of India Act is essentially an Act which converts and mortgages India completely to a number of vested interests—the main interests being the city of London and the British Government. The new federal constitution converts India into a magnified Indian state.

Q: What do you mean by "direct action"?

JN: When they—the Congressmen—talk of direct action, it does not involve any violent action as in Europe. The mentality of direct action is there, perhaps more than it has been in the past. But I do not think it is an immediate issue. This mentality is due to the fact that the background of the government is the continuance and consistent repression of civil liberty of the people in India even in normal times. Under the present normal conditions existing in India several thousands have been detained in jail, sentenced for sedition from day to day, and certain parts of the country are known for the suppression of every kind of civil liberty. Today in normal times, labour and trade union organisations have been banned in several parts of the country. The recently enacted Criminal Law Amendment Act, in the teeth of opposition of the elected Assembly even, almost interferes with the private life of individuals. This Act is hardly a promising good beginning for the so-called generous measure of the new reforms.

If the Criminal Law Amendment Act is passed because of communalism, communism and terrorism, do you not think that it is the final condemnation of the British Government in India not to be able to govern without such an apparatus? They have in that case utterly failed to govern. In my opinion terrorism is a kind of infantile political vanity. Excited youths want to do something because they cannot put up with existing conditions. Real terrorists are not frightened by laws. It is almost impossible to stop a real terrorist from his mad acts. He knows he is playing with his life. He is not to be frightened by oppressive and punitive methods as he is prepared to put his life at stake.

Q: Could you explain the communal problem of India?

JN: The communal problem is not a religious problem, it has almost nothing to do with religion. It is partly an economic problem, and partly a middle class problem in a largely political sense. It practically came into existence in the last 25 or 30 years. It grew specially in the last 15 years or so. But remember there is far more religious bitterness in northern Ireland than there is in India. Not one of the communal groups touches the problem of the masses. They are all interested in the problem of jobs. They want to get more jobs. The idea of power coming in the hands of the people under constitutional acts has led middle class people to think in terms of getting spoils, getting patronage. I do not think it is a very difficult problem to solve. If social and economic issues come to the front the communal problem falls into the background. My outlook is economic whereas yours—I mean of the British political leaders—is political. There cannot be a simple solution of the complicated problem of India. The balance of social forces from time to time has got to be recognised. Since the Congress came on the scene, the Indian peasantry is influencing the Congress which is no doubt controlled by the middle class. As an organisation it has no consistent economic philosophy but it is tending to divide on economic and nationalist lines—the left and right wings of the Congress. A few years ago the Congress passed a resolution on social reforms.[2] You may call it a weak and watery approach to socialism but that was the first approach. My personal attitude is, to put it briefly, a socialist attitude. How to apply it to India depends on many factors and on time. It depends on the peasantry and other forces. The stronger the force the more radical it is likely to be. Take, for instance, the land problem

2. At the Karachi session in 1931.

of India. It can only be solved by collectivism. Any land reform involves expropriation with or without compensation. In order to have a peaceful settlement of the problem one ought to be careful in the matter of compensation but the compensation cannot be in full because the resources of the country will not permit full compensation.

Q: What is the attitude of the Bengal Nationalists to the Communal Award?

JN: The Award of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald hits Bengal very hard. Therefore a number of Congressmen in Bengal feel that they cannot possibly accept the Award or even the resolution of the Congress on it. The Award wipes out in Bengal the whole political Hindu class, the whole of the intelligentsia is wiped out under it. Although the Congress attitude to it is most statesmanlike and correct, I cannot complain of the attitude adopted by the Bengal Hindus.

To conclude, I would say the first item on the Congress programme is to put an end to the new Government of India Act.

40. On a Common Script for India[1]

I welcome the formation of the Association and urge its members to carry on their work, independent of the Congress, and justify its existence by solid work. I agree with its objects and congratulate the members for contemplating the holding of a convention during the same week as the Congress session in Lucknow. You need not be deterred by the so-called multitude of languages of India. Actually India is a most unified area, considered from the linguistic viewpoint.

I am much interested in having a common script for the Indo-Dravidian languages and welcome the suggestion of adopting the Latin script which would bring India closer to the outside world.

1. Address to the Indian Progressive Writers Association, London, 28 January 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 29 January 1936.

41. No Compromise with Imperialism[1]

In India there is a feeling of disillusion about the so-called left-wing groups in Britain. In my view there is nothing to choose between the three political parties, all of which represent imperialism in varying degrees.

If imperialism goes from England there will undoubtedly be the closest cooperation between Britain and India. We will explore the various methods and a programme to squash the new Government of India Act. I am, however, not prepared to accept any compromise with any imperialistic government.

1. Speech at a meeting in the Committee Room of the House of Commons, London, 29 January 1936 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 31 January 1936.

42. Interview to the Press[1]

Question: Are you satisfied with the apology, as it has been termed, of the Bengal Government?

Jawaharlal Nehru: So far as I am personally concerned I want to consider the matter as closed. However, in India there is consensus of opinion which feels that not only further agitation should be carried on for an unequivocal expression of regret on the part of the Bengal Government, but steps should also be taken immediately to demand the withdrawal of the Government of India's Annual Report issued during the week.

Q: What about the comments on the Report which has been described as the India Government's attempt at propaganda pamphleteering?

JN. I cannot say anything on the subject as I have not seen the Government of India's Report nor can I change my mind so far as the Bengal Government is concerned

1 London, 29 January 1936 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 12 February 1936.

Q: What change do you envisage in land reforms?

JN: There must be a radical change in the whole land system of India. But, in my opinion, that is not possible so long as the imperialist structure of the Government of India remains.

Q: What is the role of khaddar in the national movement?

JN: I am of the opinion that khaddar has played a very important part in the national movement of the country. But taking a long distance view I do not think khaddar can survive. I really cannot envisage how we can separate even India from the rest of the world, which have adopted modern industrial methods. None the less, I am satisfied that khaddar will help the country as a side industry, though it can never compete successfully.

Q: What would be your policy for India, if India comes strongly under Japanese economic influence?

JN: Under present conditions in India some measure of protection will be necessary for the Indian industries.

Q: *What about the external danger to India in the absence of* British rule?

JN: Why talk of this? Why not analyse the situation? It depends, first of all, on conditions under which India attains her freedom, whether by compulsion and force or whether by an agreement with Britain. If it is a friendly parting with Britain then the situation is different. But suppose we part company by forcing Britain then it presupposes that we are strong enough to look after ourselves. It is not very easy for Japan to think of planning a conquest of India. Japan can only think *in terms of conquest of India* when she has finished consuming China. I cannot conceive of any Japanese military danger to India for a very long time. If Japan could undertake the conquest of India then most of the European countries might have been squashed by now. But they have not been because of the balance of power that governs the situation. Fundamentally, in my opinion, Japan is a weakening power. She has no background in her way of living and cannot go on for long. She is utterly isolated.

Q: What about Russia—don't you think Russia might plan a conquest of India?

JN: Oh, Lord, I think Russia is a great friend and not a menace to India. As a matter of fact, India has suffered in the past from the rivalries of the imperialist power of Great Britain with other powers. We have merely become a shield for British imperialism. Before the Russian revolution and establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the rivalry between England and Russia was not so much a menace to India as it was for Britain; but we suffered in the bargain. And today Russia is, it is admitted all round, a country least desiring any wars or aggressions as she is concentrating more and more on her own development. She may, of course, want social changes in other countries but it is absolutely inconceivable to think of her becoming a menace to India. Let us remember that Russia and India are both producers of raw material. So there is no economic need for Russia to go to India as it is for Great Britain. My complaint today, if I may so suggest, is that Russia at the present moment has become very conservative. She wants the *status quo*, which I do not like. Her whole outlook is so radically changed. And she knows that any attempt on her part to invade India would involve her in a big war. She does not overlook that Japan is there still in the East.

Q: Do you feel the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was in the right direction?

JN: In theory, I think it was very bad. I do not like the clauses of that Pact. They have led to so many misinterpretations, misreadings and miscalculations. We assumed so many things but the authorities read the clauses in a different way. However, the actual idea of having the Pact was, I think, a desirable thing.

43. On Conditions in India[1]

I would like to impress on the British public the fact that various civil liberties in India are suppressed.

1. At a conference of delegates from Indian and British organisations interested in Indian affairs at Caxton Hall, London, 1 February 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 3 February 1936.

It is suggested that a central organization should be formed in India to supply authentic reports to organizations in England to enable them to fulfil their objects.

However, I would like to point out that organizations abroad cannot be affiliated to the Congress and urge that the name of the Congress should not be used as it might compromise the Congress.

I do not attach great importance to Dr. Ambedkar's change of faith[2] because his faith was not of the faithful kind. A leader like Dr. Ambedkar represents the upper strata of the depressed class, who are economically better off. They are entering into competition and seeking jobs in their desire to share the spoils. The real underdog and the depressed are represented by Mahatma Gandhi rather than the non-Congress sections who want to make the depressed class depressed for ever by agreeing to a separate electorate for them.

2. At Poona in January 1936, Ambedkar declared that he was determined on conversion from Hinduism.

44. On His Election as President of the Congress[1]

I am most grateful to my countrymen for electing me for the second time to the Congress presidentship. At any time that would have been a great honour. At present, when India and the world have to face vital problems and any decisions we may take will have far reaching consequences, that is a signal mark of confidence. But greater even than honour and confidence is the responsibility that is cast on me, and I confess it somewhat overwhelms me. For several years I have been cut off from taking an active part in our national movement and I have watched the passing events as a distant and passive spectator.

I have not met most of my colleagues nor have I had the opportunity to confer with them. That increases the responsibility and difficulties I have to face. I shall shoulder the burden and trust those who have honoured me with their confidence will share it with me, so that the Congress may carry on worthily, as it has done in the past, the struggle for Indian independence and freedom of our masses. In the world today

1. Statement to the press, London, 1 February 1936. *The Tribune*, 2 February 1936.

everywhere the forces of freedom and progress have to face powerful combinations of forces of reaction and vested interests. In India also we have the same conflicts, and imperialism, with its satellites, prevents our progress. To that the Congress will continue, I am sure, to present a joint anti imperialist front and will range itself with the progressive forces of the world, and thus help in realising our national and social freedom and a better world order. I hope to return to India in time to consult my colleagues before the Congress session meets at Lucknow.

45. Speech at a Labour Party Reception[1]

Madame Chairman[2] and Comrades,

The honour and the appreciation that you have shown tonight is, I am aware, not so much for an individual as for the cause which he represents. And those words of different speakers did mirror the affection and goodwill that I carry from here and I am deeply grateful to all of you. I assure Professor Laski that there are thousands of men and women in India, whose names you may not have heard or are not likely to hear, who deserve to be compared with men like Tom Mooney,[3] Dimitroff[4] and Ernst Thaelmann.[5] I should like you to remember that because of certain circumstances you might have heard of my name, my name which might have achieved notoriety, but there are hundreds and thousands in India who can be mentioned with those great men and not me. I do wish you to think not in terms of individuals like me but in a measure of a few thousands who are suffering from day to day.

1. Caxton Hall, London, 3 February 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 17 February 1936.
2. Miss Ellen Wilkinson presided over the reception.
3. (1883-1942), American labour leader who was sentenced to death for alleged participation in the bomb killings at San Francisco parade in 1916, the sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment; pardoned and released in 1939
4. (1882-1949); Bulgarian communist leader; arrested in 1933 for alleged complicity in the Reichstag arson case but later acquitted, acquired Soviet citizenship and served as the secretary general of the Comintern, 1934-43; Prime Minister of Bulgaria, 1946-49
5. (b. 1886); chairman of the German communist party from 1925; arrested by the Nazis in 1933 and detained without trial, shot in a concentration camp in 1944

Many people imagine that the Indian problem is settled or that they have had enough of it, and would like to get rid of it. Perhaps it is a natural reaction with them. But obviously you, who are present here and have probably taken some interest in Indian affairs, must know that *the Indian problem is not only not solved but truly it is a far graver and* difficult problem than it had been in the past few years. The problem has become far more bitter and difficult after the Parliamentary farce of the new India Act. It is impossible to have an agreed solution of the problem between England and India as England stands today. It is impossible for imperialist England and nationalist India to agree on *anything. The only solution is the elimination of imperialism* in India and in Britain the elimination will be inevitable. The relation of Britain and India is in the nature of British aristocracy on the one hand and Indian proletariat on the other, for even the working class of Britain forms part of the aristocracy so far as India is concerned. What I mean is this. Taking England as a whole, it is a kind of upper class and we of India as a whole are a kind of proletariat. The Congress is fundamentally a *joint front against British imperialism* and so long as British imperialism lasts the Congress can only talk in terms of Indian independence. However, even those who are socialists in India do not admire the idea of cultivating any intense form of nationalism. I do not think there can be any healthy basis of cooperation between imperialist Britain and subject India. But, in spite of all the years of horrors that we have undergone, I may tell you that there is an amazing amount of goodwill; the bitterness is not deep-rooted amongst the people. Our bitterness is against the system that governs us and not against the people of Britain. That is indeed a desirable factor in India for us all.

I must emphasise one fact and that is this. Whenever India attains her freedom it will be obviously through Indian efforts and not by outside effort. Fundamentally the problem of India, whether economic or social, depends upon the Indian people. Time must come, it cannot be delayed, when this problem will have to be settled. But the new *India Act is not going to settle it. The India Act is a constant reminder* for irritation, it can never be a signal for peace. On the contrary, it must inevitably lead to conflicts in India, but still with this background of goodwill on both sides a time will come when we can still make friends and be friends. The psychological background in India is intense bitterness, which extends even to the most moderate sections of the Indian people, because we are always conscious that we in India are in a vast prison that is India itself. I must take this opportunity to refer to that great countryman of mine, the one who is today one of the bravest soldiers

of Indian freedom, I mean Abdul Ghaffar Khan. He is not only one of the finest, bravest and most gifted men of India, but he is an embodiment of Indian unity. Do you know that Abdul Ghaffar Khan's mere word is more than half of British military strength in the North West Frontier Province in solving the problem of that place? The frontier question can be settled quickly by Gandhi and Abdul Ghaffar Khan. But the repression of British imperialism in India finds this man, as it finds so many others, in prison. For that reason the real thought of India, my real thought, is not the constitutional Act but something different. I think in terms of the land problem, social services, health, uplifting of the toiling masses, and for that goal I shall toil by treating the new Act as a trivial thing.

46. On the Indian Problem[1]

Mr. Chairman and Friends,

First of all may I point out that, although I happen to be elected the President of the next session of the Indian National Congress, I do not speak in any such capacity but entirely on my own behalf. In any event I should not have been able to speak as President of the Congress, but that is especially so because I have been really cut off from my colleagues and the leaders of the Congress movement in India for a number of years, and it is difficult for me to get into touch with living currents of thought in India without being in that country for some time.

These questions that have been framed are fairly comprehensive.[2] One could say a great deal about them or deal with them briefly. I suppose it would be best if I tried to deal with them fairly briefly, because there is not very much time at our disposal this afternoon, and I shall try (although I am not likely to succeed) to say only that which is pertinent to the subjects dealt with in the questions

1. Discussion with the India Conciliation Group, at its meeting on 4 February 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16, 21, 26, 27 May and 1 June 1936. Reprinted in *India and The World*, (London, 1936), pp 226-262
2. The questions were put by Carl Heath, the chairman

Question: Will you outline what is meant by the term "complete independence for India"?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Presumably the reference is to this phrase occurring in the first Article of the Congress constitution.[3] Therein it refers, I take it, to the political side only and not to the economic side. Of course, the Congress as a whole is beginning to think on economic lines also and otherwise develop its economic policy, and some of us, including myself, think much more on the lines of economic freedom than on the lines of political freedom. Obviously economic freedom includes political freedom. But, defining this phrase simply in its political sense, as it occurs in the Congress constitution, it means national freedom, not only domestic but foreign, financial, military, i.e., control of the military and control of foreign affairs, in other words, whatever national freedom usually signifies. That does not mean necessarily that we lay stress on an isolation of India or a breaking away of India from such associations as might exist with England or with other countries, but it does mean—the word "independence" is used specially to lay stress on the fact—that we want to break the imperialist connection with Britain. If imperialism survives in England, we must part from England, because so long as imperialism survives in England, the only connection between England and India is likely to be the connection of an imperialist domination in India in some form or other. It may become vaguer and vaguer; it may become less obvious than it is; it may even not be obvious on the political side and yet be very powerful on the economic side. Therefore in terms of imperialist Britain the independence of India means the separation of India from England. Personally I can conceive and welcome the idea of a close association between India and England on terms other than those of imperialism.

Q: Do you recognize the need for an intermediate period of transition, and, if so, does the India Act in any way meet this? If not, what are the next steps to be taken?

JN: Whenever any change comes about, inevitably there are all manner of intermediate and transitional phases, but often it so happens that the structure of government becomes rather petrified and does not change rapidly enough, while economic and other changes are inevitably going on, because economic changes do not wait for laws and enactments;

3. Article I of the Indian National Congress, as interpreted by the Lahore Congress in 1929, declared that Swaraj shall mean complete independence as against the original meaning of Dominion Status.

they go on while the structure does not change. The result is that in extreme cases there are big upheavals which forcibly change the structure, and those are called revolutions, but even in that case there are transition periods. I take it that this question refers more to the structure of government than to any intermediate period and it is therefore difficult to answer, because that depends on so many factors. It depends partly on us but largely on the British Government and largely on various forces, national and international. Obviously if there was a mutual arrangement between Britain and the people of India there would inevitably be transitional stages in the process of reaching that goal. It might take a long time, but there would have to be some steps in the process; one cannot suddenly and all at once bring about a big change. On the other hand, if there is no possibility of a change being brought about by mutual agreement, then there are likely to be upheavals, and it is difficult to say what the result of an upheaval will be. It depends on the size of the upheaval, it depends on the great economic forces that cause the upheaval, and anything might happen, because, as I conceive it, the fundamental problem of India really is economic in its various aspects. The chief problem is the land problem, with its enormous amount of unemployment and over-pressure on land, and connected with that is the industrial problem, because probably if one tries to solve the land problem one will have to consider the question of industry. There are also many other problems, such as unemployment in the middle classes, and they will really have to be tackled all together, so that they may fit into each other, and not individually and separately.

All these problems have to be tackled for many reasons, but the fundamental reason is that the economic situation is growing worse and the condition of the vast masses is going further and further down. They cannot be tackled by merely changing the political structure at the top. The political structure might be such as to help us in tackling the problems, and the real test of the political structure is this: does it help us and will it make it easier for us to tackle these problems and solve them?

With regard to an intermediate period, therefore, all one can say is that there is bound to be some intermediate period. We are passing through an intermediate period now, but whether the development is going to be by arrangement or agreement or by sudden jumps or big jumps the future alone can show.

In India the Congress and some groups outside the Congress have suggested that the proper and democratic way to deal with the political aspect of the problem is by means of a constituent assembly, that is to

EUROPE

say, fundamentally the people of India should decide the con
of India, they do not admit that the people of India should
merely passive agents of a foreign authority in regard to the draw
up of such a constitution. The only way in which the desires of th
people of India can take shape is through some such constituent assembly. Today that is not a feasible proposition, simply because it cannot be put into effect unless the British Government itself decides to put an end to its domination in India and leave the Indian people to develop their own constitution, or, whether the British Government so decides or not, the pressure of events brings it about, because a real constituent assembly involves ultimately or, in fact, in the near future after it is formed, the end of British domination in India. A constituent assembly does not mean merely a group of so-called leaders coming together and drawing up a constitution. The whole idea behind the constituent assembly is this: that it should be elected by means of an adult franchise, men and women together, so that there should be really mass representation, in order to give effect to the economic urges of the masses. The present difficulty is that a number of upper middle class people sit down and, instead of talking in terms of economics, they discuss the question of offices in the new constitution and who will be appointed to them; there is a desire to share in the spoils of office, in patronage, and so forth, which the new constitution might bring, and that partly gives rise to the communal problem. If the mass elements take part in the election of the constituent assembly, obviously they will not be interested in getting jobs in the new constitution; they are interested in their own economic troubles and attention will immediately be given to social and economic issues, whilst some of the other problems, which appear to loom large but are fundamentally not important, will recede into the background, like the communal problem.

The second part of the question is: does the India Act in any way meet the need for an intermediate period of transition? I have just said that the test of a constitution is this: whether it helps us to solve the economic problems which face us and which are the real problems. The India Act, as you perhaps know, has been criticized from almost every possible angle by almost every possible group in India, moderate or advanced. I doubt if it has any friends at all in India. If there are a few persons who are prepared to tolerate it, either they belong to the big vested interests in India or they are people who by sheer habit tolerate everything that the British Government does. Apart from those people, almost every political group in India has taken the strongest exception to the India Act. They all object to it and have criticized it in very great detail, and the general feeling is that, far from helping

us, it really takes us back and it binds our hands and feet so tightly that we cannot get a move on. All the vested interests in Britain and in India have found such a permanent place in this Act that any substantial social or economic change or political change becomes almost impossible, short of revolution.[4] On the one hand, under the India Act we cannot even endeavour to make substantial economic changes; on the other hand, we cannot change the India Act itself. You must not think that in the India Act we are getting some democratic instrument which can be developed into something better. That is not so. You must not apply the analogy of the various steps taken in the Dominions —in Canada and in Australia—in the early stages of the development of self-government in those countries. The problems there were very simple; there were simple communities to be dealt with, and, whatever the steps taken were, there was room for inevitable development, and that development did take place. That does not apply to India at all. Today India has not to face a simple problem; it has to face a very complicated economic problem and the decision to be taken on that problem cannot be postponed. Secondly, the India Act is such that it cannot be developed. Of course, there can be development from time to time if the British Government itself changes the India Act, but, as it is, even if 99 or 100 per cent of the people of India want to change it they cannot do so. It has no seeds of change in it; it is a permanent fixing of the chains of vested interest on the Indian people. The only choice that is offered to the Indian people is to submit to it or, if they want to change it, to revolt against it in some form or other. Therefore the India Act does not in any way meet the need for an intermediate period of transition. Under the India Act a wider electorate is created, and that is a desirable thing, but it is the only desirable thing in the Act.

Q: What is the relation of the Indian problem in regard to the world problems? Does the League of Nations help in this connection?

JN: I think that nearly all the major problems that we have to face in the world today—in Europe or India or China or America—are intimately connected together, and it is really difficult to understand any

4. The "special responsibilities" of the Governor General authorised him to safeguard the rights and interests of members and ex members of the public services, prevent commercial and financial discrimination against British individuals and companies and against British imports and protect the rights of the states and princes.

one of them or ultimately to solve any one of them without thinking of the other problems. The different parts of the world today are becoming extraordinarily interrelated with each other, and events which happen in one part of the world immediately react and interact upon the other parts of the world. If there is a big thing such as an international war, obviously the whole world is upset. If there is an economic crisis—we have had a very big one in the past few years—that affects the whole world. These big waves and movements affect the whole world, and obviously the Indian problem is intimately connected with other problems. Anything big that happens in India obviously affects the whole British group of nations—British imperialism. Anything that affects British imperialism makes a great difference in the world, because British imperialism today is a very important factor in world politics. So far as India is concerned, it is a well known fact that India has had the greatest influence on British foreign policy in the last hundred years or so. During the Napoleonic period India loomed large; although perhaps when you read about the Napoleonic campaigns you find that India is seldom mentioned, it was in the background all the time. Whether it was the Crimean War or the occupation of Egypt,[5] always there was the question of India in the background and the routes to India. The routes to India have often been before British statesmen. Perhaps some of you may remember that even after the Great War there was an idea, fostered by Mr. Winston Churchill and some of the leading figures in British public life, of having an enormous Middle Eastern empire from the borders of India to Constantinople, but it did not take shape. It sounds rather curious now, but at that time, after the war, all that area was in British occupation; Persia was in British occupation, and so were Mesopotamia, Palestine, parts of Arabia, and Constantinople. Therefore the idea was not such a fanciful one as it seems to be now, but various things happened to prevent it taking shape; there was the Soviet Government and there were events in Turkey and Persia, and so forth, and the whole thing was upset by various developments. Even so, the object of the British Government was to control the land route to India, because the land route was becoming important, owing to the development of aeroplanes and motor traffic. The question of Mosul nearly brought about conflict between Turkey and England, chiefly because Mosul dominates the land route to India.

5. In 1882 by Britain.

Therefore from many points of view the question of India affects world problems very greatly. Anything that happens to India inevitably affects other countries.

With regard to the League of Nations in this connection, the League of Nations might perhaps help India if the Indian viewpoint was put before it properly and pressed before it, but so far the position has been that India has really nothing to do with the League of Nations except that it is represented on the League. The so-called Indian representatives on the League of Nations are nominated by the Government of India in consultation with the British Government, so that they really *represent on the League the viewpoint of the British Government; they* do not represent in the slightest Indian public opinion. Therefore you might say that India is not represented at all on the League of Nations, but that the British Government gets an extra representative. If India could be properly represented, I suppose the League of Nations would do some good, although fundamentally the League of Nations, of course, is an organization for the maintenance of the *status quo* in the world, and obviously the Indian people desire to change their *status quo*. Therefore, if they laid any fundamental proposition before the League of Nations, it would probably be barred under some section of the Covenant or of the rules under which the League functions, on the ground that it would interfere with the domestic policy of the British Empire

Q: How far is the communal problem due to economic causes?

JN: This question perhaps is not properly framed (I am partly responsible for that), in the sense that the communal question is not fundamentally due to economic causes. It has an economic background which often influences it, but it is due much more to political causes. It is not due to religious causes; I should like you to remember that. Religious hostility or antagonism has very little to do with the communal question. It has something to do with the communal question in that there is a slight background of religious hostility which has in the past sometimes given rise to conflict and sometimes to broken heads, in the case of processions and so forth, but the present communal question is not a religious one, although sometimes it exploits religious sentiment and there is trouble It is a political question of the upper middle classes which has arisen partly because *of the attempts* of the British Government to weaken the national movement or to create rifts in it, and partly because of the prospect of political power coming into India and the upper classes desiring to share in the spoils

of office. It is to this extent economic, that the Mohammedans are on the whole the poorer community as compared with the Hindus. Sometimes you find that the creditors are the Hindus and the debtors the Mohammedans; sometimes the landlords are Hindus and the tenants are Mohammedans. Of course, the Hindus are tenants also, and they form the majority of the population. It sometimes happens that a conflict is really between a money-lender and his debtors or between a landlord and his tenants, but it is reported in the press and it assumes importance as a communal conflict between Hindus and Mohammedans. Fundamentally this communal problem is a problem of the conflict between the members of the upper middle-class Hindus and Moslems for jobs and power under the new constitution. It does not affect the masses at all. Not a single communal demand has the least reference to any economic issues in India or has the least reference to the masses. If you examine the communal demands you will see that they refer only to seats in the legislature or to various kinds of jobs which might be going in the future.

Q: What alternative method would you use for dealing with the situation in the north west frontier? And similarly for the situation in Bengal?

JN: Briefly put, the alternative method I would suggest is the method of conciliation plus some kind of effort to deal with the problem on economic lines, because fundamentally the difficulty of the frontier men is scarcity. They live in a hard country, on the mountain sides, and they come down in search of food and loot. Personally I do not think the frontier problem is very difficult of solution. If a proper and friendly approach is made, I think it ought to be solved fairly easily. As a matter of fact, my own impression is that a similar—not exactly the same, but a similar—problem was faced in the nineteenth century by the Russian Government, that is to say, the old Tsarist Government, because their frontier was fairly near and they had to deal with more or less the same type of people. So far as I know, they never had any great difficulty in dealing with them; certainly they did not have the amount of difficulty that the British Government has had for a hundred years or so. If one thing is obvious it is this, that the British Government's frontier policy has been a dismal and total failure. If they are unable to settle the frontier question after having dealt *with it for generations, having had* every year, or every other year, a military expedition with slaughter and bombing and all the rest of it,

obviously there is something wanting in their policy. The Tsarist Government never had to face all the difficulties which the British Government has to face, the reason being, I think, that the Tsarist Government made it possible for the frontier men to lead a more normal life; they tried to colonise them, to settle them on the land. I am only putting this forward as a suggestion; I do not know enough about the matter to state definitely why the Tsarist Government did not have the same difficulty that the British Government has in dealing with the frontier men. Anyhow, the population involved is not large, and it should not be difficult to deal with them on economic lines, so that this economic urge might disappear. For the rest, obviously the approach must be friendly and not like the recent approach of the Italians in Abyssinia. That kind of approach has failed completely. The frontier men are very brave people, they do not very much care whether they live or die, but they do not like to be dominated. They are freedom loving people, as mountain people often are, and the British Government has not been able to subdue them permanently. It can conquer them from time to time but it cannot subdue them.

With regard to a friendly approach, for years past Mr. Gandhi has been invited by the frontier people to go to them. I believe he went to the Frontier Province some years ago, but he has never crossed the frontier or gone right up to it. His name, however, is very well known on both sides of the frontier. He is very popular with the frontier men and repeated invitations have been extended to him to visit them, but the government has not allowed him to do so. He did not want to go in defiance of the wishes of the government; he did not want to invite conflict on that issue, so whenever he wanted to go he always referred the matter to the Viceroy or the Government of India, saying: "I have been asked to go there and I should like to go", and he always got the same answer, to this effect: "We strongly advise you not to go." That was almost tantamount to an order, and so he has not gone. Apart from Mr. Gandhi, the great leader of the Frontier Province, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, has quite an extraordinary influence and popularity all over that region. It is astounding how he has become such a tremendous figure in that area. That in itself, of course, was quite sufficient to make the British Government dislike him intensely. A man who has such a commanding influence over these turbulent Pathans is a man who will not be liked by any government agency He therefore spends his time in prison; he is in prison at the present moment After two or three years of detention without trial he came out last year, but he was out for only three months, and then he was sent back to prison for a two years' sentence, which he is

serving now.[6] As you perhaps know, he is a member of the highest Congress executive. He is one of the most popular men not only on the frontier but in the whole of India. You will realize from his name that he is a Mohammedan and not a Hindu. He is one of the greatest Moslem leaders of the masses in India. He occupies one of the highest positions in the Congress movement. You must remember that the Congress movement, although it is inevitably composed chiefly of Hindus, has a very stiff backing of Moslems. Therefore if Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Mr. Gandhi did go to the frontier I think they would have the most magnificent reception there, and they could discuss the frontier problem there with others. I do not think it would be very difficult to solve that problem. I do not mean to say that such a visit would put an end to all troubles; that is absurd. Certain troubles will arise again and again, but the foundations of stability could be laid, and if some economic remedies were also applied I think an end could be definitely put to this recurring trouble.

With regard to Bengal, terrorism in Bengal has gained far greater prominence and advertisement than it really deserves. That it has existed there, and that it exists there now to some extent is undeniable, but, after all, when you come to think of it, if in a country like India or a great province like Bengal one or two terrorist acts are committed in the course of two or three years (in the last two years, I think, none have taken place and in the year before there were one or two), although it is deplorable it is not such a terrible thing. We must not lose our sense of proportion in this matter. That is the first fact I want to put before you. Secondly, so far as my knowledge goes (obviously I have no direct immediate knowledge, because I have been in prison for two or three years), there is really no organized terrorist movement now. There was, but I do not think there is now in Bengal or elsewhere in India. I do not mean by that that people in Bengal or elsewhere do not believe in methods of violence; there are many who believe in methods of violence and revolution, but I think that even those who used to believe in acts of terrorism do not do so now; that is to say, the old terrorists, or many of them, still think that in all probability some kind of armed violence might be necessary to fight the dominating power, but they think in terms of insurrection, violence,

6. Arrested on 24 December 1931, he was released on 27 August 1934 with a ban prohibiting his entry into N.W.F.P. and Punjab. He was re-arrested on 7 December 1934 on a charge of sedition and sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment

or some kind of organized revolt; they do not think in terms of throwing bombs or shooting down people. Many of them, I think, were drawn completely away from the terrorist movement by Mr. Gandhi's peaceful movement, but even those who remained turned away from the purely terrorist attitude, which, as you know, is a very infantile attitude in political movements. When a national movement begins there is always a certain background of sentiment and helplessness and hopelessness which drives an excited youth to an act of terrorism, but, as the movement develops and grows stronger, the energy of the people is directed towards organized activity, towards mass action, and so forth. That has happened in India, and inevitably the terrorist movement has practically ended, but the extraordinary amount of terrible repression that has gone on in Bengal inevitably gives rise to some reprisals on the part of the old terrorist group. For instance, an individual may become exceedingly bitter because of certain things that have happened to his own friends in his own city. Terrible things are happening there, and as a reaction the individual or two or three individuals may decide on an act of reprisal directed towards the person who did those things. That has nothing to do with terrorism as an organization; it is purely an individual act of reprisal. Such an act of terrorism sometimes occurs, but, as I have said, even that has not happened for the last two years. Again, the old terrorists are more or less well known to the police. Many of them are interned or imprisoned and many of them have been executed, but a number of them, I suppose, are still about. I met one of them two or three years ago. He was a big man in the terrorist movement in the old days, and he came to see me and said: "I am definitely of opinion that these acts of terrorism are no good. I do not want to do them. I am inducing my people not to do them But what am I to do? I am hunted like a dog. I go about from place to place. I know that whenever I am caught, I shall have to suffer the death penalty. I do not propose to do that. When I am caught I shall shoot in self-defence." One often finds that it is when an old terrorist has been rounded up or is on the point of being caught that he shoots. The net closes round him, and he prefers shooting and being shot and dying in that way to being sent to the gallows.

What I mean is this: the movement is not functioning at all in an aggressive way. Sometimes an individual may commit an act of terrorism in a moment of excitement or in self-defence when he is being caught; otherwise terrorism is over Obviously when such a thing happens it has some psychological or other roots from which it arises, and it is quite absurd to deal with it by a permanent system of

martial law. The average military mind can think of a solution to a problem only in terms of martial law, and, unfortunately for us, in India the average civilian mind has been functioning largely in a military way. Obviously a terrorist plays with his own life. He may be going to lose his life at the very moment when he commits an act of terrorism. For instance, when a person goes into a crowded hall and shoots another person, obviously his or her life is forfeit. I cannot see how a person who is prepared to give up his life can be terrified by any military measures which may be taken. He knows when he carries out his terroristic enterprise that he is bound to die; usually he carries a little poison in his pocket and swallows it after the act. What happens is that a large number of innocent people suffer.

Q: In what ways can people in this country help? What part do you think a Conciliation Group can play?

JN: That is not a very easy question for me to answer—though I have endeavoured to answer it in various places—because it depends on changing conditions here, but certainly a great deal can be done if people really do take an interest in the Indian problem and think that it requires, both from the point of view of India and from the point of view of the world, a suitable solution. I do not suppose that in the present circumstances individual groups can make very much difference; that is to say, they cannot change government policy, though they might affect it in minor matters. But I think such groups can always keep conditions in India in the forefront here. For instance, even now there is no realization amongst the British people of the quite extraordinary amount of repression and denial of civil liberties that is going on in India. I am told that about a month ago there was some reference in Parliament to political prisoners. Some Labour members raised the question, and some Conservative members said: "What! Are there still any political prisoners in India?" That question shows the amazing ignorance that prevails on the subject. There is a very large number of people in India who have been detained without trial for five years, six years, and various other periods, a large number of ordinary political prisoners are being convicted from day to day and the whole apparatus of repression is functioning from day to day. I think the average Englishman or Englishwoman does not require much detailed knowledge of Indian problems to understand the problem of civil liberty; the average English person does feel that civil liberty is a desirable thing, and, when the facts of the

Q: Should not the Indian national movement maintain some kind of effective agency in London for the purpose of spreading accurate information?

JN: I think that would be a highly desirable thing, and I doubt whether anybody would object in principle to it. You must remember that during the last six years India has gone through a very abnormal period. During four years of that time the Congress has been an illegal movement. We always hover on the edge of illegality; we do not know when we might be termed illegal, our funds confiscated, our property confiscated, and our offices confiscated. That makes it a little difficult to develop a foreign agency in the ordinary way, but certainly this is desirable, and I should very much like to have some kind of information bureau here and, it may be, in some other parts of Europe, to function, apart from questions of propaganda, by giving accurate information and providing books and papers, so that people who want that information might be able to obtain it.

Q: We sometimes meet with the objection or the criticism that if the British withdrew from India it would only open the way for Japan. It used to be Russia, but now it is Japan that is mentioned in that connection. Might we hear your opinion on that?

JN: It seems to me that the people who say that do not know very much about the present position or the probable future position of Japan with regard to India. The question can be considered in many ways, but I would put it to you briefly thus: how do you expect Japan to come to India, by sea or by land? Do you expect Japan to come to India after having subjugated the whole of China or before it has done so?

You must realize that it takes a little longer to go from India to Japan than it takes to go from India to England by sea. By the land route, by air, it takes a very little time to go from England to India, but it takes a very long time to go to Japan. One cannot go easily over the Himalaya mountains and the various deserts and other tracts of China. Therefore you must realize that India is not very easily accessible to Japan if Japan goes through China, so Japan has to come by a fairly intricate route through the Singapore Straits, and any hostile fleet could make it difficult for the Japanese to approach India. Even so, of course, Japan might come, but the real point is this, that Japan can never think in terms of the conquest of India so long as it has not

situation in India are put before him, he is somewhat shocked; he dislikes the utter denial of civil liberty in India. I think a great deal can be done by keeping all these facts before the people of this country, and much can be done in that way by cooperation between various groups. I believe there is a National Council for Civil Liberties[7] here, and that could usefully cooperate with other groups in the direction I have indicated.

With regard to specific Indian problems, especially the economic conditions, the way in which the political problem depends on the economic problem is of importance, because when that subject is considered the political problem is viewed in its proper perspective. Otherwise you function in the air, as we have been functioning at these Round Table Conferences and other conferences. A number of lawyers sit down and produce a paper constitution which has no relation to the existing facts or position in India but has relation to only one fact, that is, that the vested interests in India want to perpetuate their existence.

Therefore any group in this country can certainly help the cause of India, and not only the cause of India but, as I think one might say, having regard to the question of civil liberties and other matters which are involved, the cause of humanity. A group could go much further if it decided to adopt the political and economic standpoint of the advanced groups, but, however far it goes, it can, I think, function effectively.

As for the Conciliation Group, I have been told that it is not an organization but a group with no specially defined limits. Such a group, I think, has done good work in the past, and I believe it can certainly do good work in the future I have suggested that it would be desirable for the various groups interested in India as a whole or in particular questions, such as the question of civil liberties, to keep in touch with each other. They need not merge into each other, because they have different outlooks. There is no reason why one group should adopt the outlook of another group. One may not be prepared to commit itself to some points to which another group is committed, but still they may have a great deal in common. There is no reason why they should not occasionally meet together or representatives of them confer together, so that their activities might not overlap but might supplement each other.

7. Founded in February 1934 by British intellectuals, politicians and journalists.

completely subjugated China and made it part of its empire. The conquest of China is a very difficult matter. At the moment Japan has overrun north China and it may perhaps extend further south, but I do not think that anyone acquainted with the history of China or the present position of China or the international position, imagines that Japan is likely to succeed in consolidating her empire in the whole of China. China is a tremendous problem for Japan, and, even if it is conquered, it will continue to be a problem and something which will really absorb the energies of Japan, and probably bring about its downfall. Look at Japan as it stands today as a world power. It seems very strong. Nobody interferes with Japan's territorial instincts and activities. It does what it likes in north China and Manchuria. Yet fundamentally the position of Japan in the world is a very unhappy position. It is isolated from the rest of the world; it has no friends in the world. On the one side there is a tremendous power, America, and there is not much love lost between Japan and the United States of America. On the other side there is China, which, although weak in one sense, is very strong in many ways. It is strong fundamentally, because its passive strength is great; its inertia is tremendous. But, even apart from that, the weakness of China today in the face of aggression is very largely due, I think, to the fact that some of the Chinese leaders are false to China, they are betraying China. It is not so much the weakness of China as the weakness of her leaders, Chiang Kai shek and others, and this may lead to the overthrow of Chiang Kai shek and some kind of a combined and powerful resistance later on. Therefore, in any event, Japan would have a hostile China to deal with, whether it was subjugated or not. With America on one side and China on the other, and the Soviet Republic in the north, which is always likely to be hostile, that Japan should embark on an adventure in India, three weeks' journey away, is to me inconceivable. Then, of course, India presumably would not sit idle It may not be a strong country, but obviously it would do its utmost to defend itself against any aggression.

Q We do not want to talk about only this aspect of the question. What will be the position on the north west frontier if that imperialism is really discarded? What will be the position as regards the security of India if that imperialism, which means constant jealousy and fear and suspicion between the two great powers, Soviet Russia and Great Britain, is finally abolished? What will be the position with regard to the defence policy of India, and what will then be the result in the organization and the cost of the Indian army?

JN: The result of the allaying of that suspicion would be peace and contentment on the frontier. With regard to the defence of India against Soviet aggression.....

Q: And Afghanistan, that is also an element.

JN: Yes, an element. Afghanistan is an unadvanced, industrially backward country, and as an effective military force it is strong only within its own territories. It is a difficult country to invade, because it is a mountainous country and the people are good fighters, but as an invading country it has no strength at all, so we can leave Afghanistan out of consideration.

With regard to Soviet Russia, the first proposition is that there is no power in the world today which is more peaceful and less inclined to aggression than Soviet Russia. I think that is admitted by everybody; it is publicly admitted by the British Foreign Office; in fact, the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Eden,* said so the other day.

Q: The Government of India does not say that; it says the exact opposite.

JN: For various reasons. You can examine that. Soviet Russia from an economic point of view does not require India in the least, as Japan might, because India is a source of raw materials for England. Raw materials exist in sufficient quantities in Soviet territories. In minor matters India might help. Fundamentally Soviet Russia does not require India; it has not that economic urge. At the present moment it is absolutely full of its own economic problems of development, and it wants to take no risk at all of war or adventure. Obviously an invasion of India is a very big risk, not so much because of the strength of India but because any such thing involves today international complications, whether the invader is Japan or Russia. If Japan comes to India it is not a question merely of defeating the people of India, but there is the risk of having to fight on various fronts. Other powers step in, and international complications are introduced. So that Russian policy today (nobody can say what will happen thirty years hence) is bound to be an extraordinarily peaceful policy; there is no doubt about that. If it were not, Russia would immediately be afraid of trouble

8 Anthony Eden, later Lord Avon (b 1897), Foreign Secretary, 1935 38, member of War Cabinet, 1939-45, Foreign Secretary, 1951 55, Prime Minister from 1955 to 1957, when he resigned after the Suez invasion.

from Japan in the east and from Germany in the west. We know that many European countries fear Russia today. The biggest factor at work is a great fear complex of being attacked, and so the countries go on increasing their military machines. So that there is no question of expecting, in the ordinary course, an invasion from Russia. So far as I am personally concerned, I very largely approve of the Russian system of government, and I hope some such thing will extend to India. I think we ought to be the most friendly of neighbours instead of being in conflict with each other. But, apart from that, obviously India, whatever her system of government is, whether socialist or not, will have to take steps to guard her frontiers.

Q: Against whom?

JN: It does not matter. The steps taken may not be very extensive, but India will have to take some steps. If the world continues to be divided up into various capitalist states, armies will have to be kept. It is relatively easy, I think, to protect India on the north west frontier. You have probably read histories of various invasions of India from the north west, but those histories exaggerate a little. There have been invasions, but if you spread them out over a period of two or three thousand years they have not been so frequent as some people seem to think. Those invasions took place not because of the strength of the attacking force but because at the time there was internal trouble in India, and the attacking force simply walked in. An attacking force can always be stopped on the north west frontier by an efficient army without any great numbers being employed. An efficient defence force must be built up to defend India from invasion; one has to face the risk of these things. One of the countries suffering most from a terrible fear of invasion is also at the same time one of the most powerful countries in the military sense, that is, France. France is terribly afraid of a Nazi invasion, and yet it has one of the biggest military machines in the world.

Q: The question has not actually arisen in the course of your addresses, but it might be of interest to know what your view is with regard to the contributions that may be expected from Indian women in the regeneration of India.

JN: Those contributions have been considerable. Indian women in the last fifteen or sixteen years have played a tremendous part in our national movement You may remember that in 1930 Mr. Gandhi started the

civil disobedience movement in connection with the salt tax, and I think the most important and significant feature of that movement was the *tremendous part that the women of India took in it. It was astonishing.* Most of us were astounded by what we saw. It was not as if we had to push them out; they simply came out and took charge of the situation when most of their menfolk were in prison, and they functioned in an extraordinarily efficient way. The surprising thing was that, although many of them had had no experience of public activity, yet they became good organizers and they ran the whole movement *practically without any men for a long time. They ran it not only very* well but in a much more uncompromising way than the men might have done; *they did* become much more uncompromising about *it in every way.* That was such an eye-opener that I do not think after that any person *in India* dares to say that the women of India are going to play a subordinate part in the public life of India in the future. Of course, as you know, they have suffered in the past and they still suffer from a large number of social and semi religious disabilities. They are trying to remove them, and to some extent they have to fight the inevitable reactions of men in that process. Certain orthodox elements in the community are trying to prevent them from removing these disabilities, but I think *they are sufficiently alive to their task, and I do not think* anyone can really stop them from carrying it out. So far as the national *movement is* concerned, the mere fact that such *large* numbers of women have taken such a large part in it makes it absolutely impossible for any nationalist to conceive of keeping them down in any political or social sense. The fundamental rights resolution[9] which the Congress passed some years ago laid down as a fundamental right in the constitution the removal of all disabilities and the absolute equality of women with men in the eyes of the constitution.

> Q: In your answer to the fourth question, regarding the communal problem, you suggested, I think, that the religious element was a small part of it and that it was not primarily economic, but that it resolved itself into political jealousy, political ambitions. How do you see it resolving in the light of the national movement? Do *you feel that the central national aim would be so big that it would bring all the parties together?*

JN: No. First of all I said that the communal movement was not religious, but that *does not mean, of course, that there is not a religious*

9. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp 511-513.

background in India, and sometimes that is exploited. It is political mainly. It is also economic in the sense that the political problem largely arises because of the problem of unemployment in the middle classes, and it is the unemployment among the middle classes that helps the communal movement to gain importance. It is there that the jobs come in. To some extent the growth of nationalism and the nationalist spirit suppresses the communal idea, but fundamentally it will go when economic issues and social issues come to the forefront and divert the attention of the masses, and even of the lower middle classes, because these issues really affect them, and inevitably then the communal leaders would have to sink into the background. That happened in 1921, at the time of the first noncooperation movement, when no communal leaders in India dared to come out into the open. There was no meeting held and there was no reference to them in the papers. They disappeared absolutely because there was such a big movement on other issues. As soon as a big political movement starts the communal leaders come to the forefront. They are always being pushed to the front by the British Government in India. Therefore the right way to deal with the communal question is to allow economic questions affecting the masses to be discussed. One of the chief objections to the India Act is that, because it divides India into seven or eight—I am not sure how many—separate religious compartments,[10] it makes it difficult for economic and social questions to be brought up. Of course they will come up, because there is the economic urge behind them, but still it makes it difficult.

Q: Do you not think caste comes into the communal question at all—Brahmin against non Brahmin? That is a matter we know so well in Madras.

JN: I do not think the communal question is affected much by caste. In south India, of course, the question of caste comes in, and it has given rise to great bitterness. I was thinking more of Hindu *versus* Moslem I am not personally acquainted with conditions in the south in recent years, but it used to be more a question of non-Brahmin *versus* the vested interest. Taking the depressed classes, they really are the proletariat in the economic sense, the others are the better-off people. All these matters can be converted into economic terms, and then

10 The Act of 1935 divided the total number of seats allotted to the Federal Assembly into several categories like general seats, general seats reserved for scheduled classes and separate electorates for Sikhs, Mohammedans, Anglo-Indians, Europeans and Indian Christians

would have to be devised which removed this burden and at the same time lessened the distress and upsetting which a change-over would bring to the landlord group. Probably the compensation would be proportionately less higher up in the scale—the middle landlords getting proportionately more than the bigger ones.

It should be remembered that the word "landlord" is rather a misleading one. In the United Provinces (a zamindari province) there are a million and a half so-called landlords. Probably about 85 per cent of them are no better than the tenant class, and many are worse off than the better-off tenants. There can be no question of depriving them of anything; they stand in need of further help and of a reduction of their burdens—debt, revenue, etc. Of the remaining 15 per cent, only a tiny fraction of 1 per cent are really biggish landlords—about 5,000 in all—and about 1,000 of these might be considered the big landlords whose incomes from land vary from about Rs. 12,000 to Rs. 5,000,000 per annum. Those whose incomes run into millions are a mere handful, of course.

During the recent depression and fall in agricultural prices the position of the landlord has steadily deteriorated, and many of the middle landlords are on the verge of bankruptcy. The moneylender holds them, as well as the tenants, in his grip. Some recent legislation has slightly eased the position vis-a vis the moneylender, but it does not go nearly far enough.

Apart from the landlord and the tenant there are large numbers of the landless proletariat who are largely unemployed, or only partially employed, during harvesting and other seasons.

The problem in those parts of India where the zamindari system does not prevail (Punjab, Gujarat, south India) and there is peasant proprietorship, is somewhat different. These peasant proprietors are much better off than the tenants of the zamindari areas, but latterly they have also deteriorated greatly. Behind them again are the landless classes, many of these being the so-called depressed classes.

Questions of compensation and the like arise only when an attempt is made, as it should be made, to have a peaceful change-over from one system to another. In the event of upheavals, brought on by delay in making the necessary changes in time, it is impossible to say how matters will shape themselves.

to conflict with big industries, because then they would collapse, but I think there will be plenty of room for the growth of cottage industries for a long time to come, simultaneously with the growth of big industries. If big industries are not developed on a capitalist basis, they will deal with the essentials which are required and there will be no needless waste of energy. If all these things are taken together, I imagine we might go a little way towards the solution of the various problems that confront us. I cannot see any movement in that direction under present conditions.

Q: You mean something similar to the Soviet system of the organization of industry and agriculture?

JN: I personally should like to have something similiar to that, but I was really envisaging something much less for the moment. I do not want India to be drilled and forced into a certain position, because the costs of such drilling are too great; it is not worthwhile; it is not desirable from many points of view. I want to go in the direction I have indicated; I may not be able to go far, but that is the direction in which I want to go. I have expressed my personal view, and I do not speak for India.

A NOTE ON THE LAND PROBLEM[11]

Any radical change in the land system, involving large-scale cooperative and collectivist farming, must be preceded or accompanied by the ending of the present zamindari or landlord system wherever it prevails. The question arises as to whether compensation should be given to the landlords so dispossessed If the change can be brought about by peaceful and democratic methods, it would be desirable to give some compensation and so avoid a conflict which is likely to be wasteful and more costly than the compensation itself. But it must be borne in mind that anything in the nature of full compensation is utterly out of the question, especially in so far as the big landlords are concerned. To give such compensation in the shape of bonds would be to mortgage the future of the land and to continue almost the same burden on the peasantry, though in another form Therefore a form of compensation

11. These paragraphs were added by Jawaharlal when he revised the verbatim report for publication

WITH LEONARD WOOLF IN LONDON

47. On the New Constitution[1]

The main problems of India have not been considered. You hear much about the language and communal problems, but the main problems are economic.

The obvious way to deal with the communal problem is to allow the fundamental economic issues to come forward, so that attention can be diverted from the communal issue. The latter will have to be faced and will inevitably be solved as the economic issues are allowed to come up.

The present land tenure system should be replaced by large-scale agriculture on a collective and cooperative basis.

The Congress stands for complete independence, because India wants to be outside the range of British imperialism.

I would like the meeting to consider the problems of India, not so much from the viewpoint of the Act that you have just passed, but as to how it affects the big problems of India. My view is that the only way to solve them is to leave them to Indians.

In my opinion a decision as regards a conflict between India and Britain lies with the British Government, which has taken certain steps which are making the position progressively worse. There will be no peace if the present policy is persisted in.

Question: If Indians show they can work the new constitution, would not that be the quickest way to complete freedom?

Jawaharlal Nehru: That involves the question of what we can do under the constitution I feel we cannot consider any of the main problems.

Q: Are there conditions such as will enable the constitution to develop if the British army is withdrawn?

JN: If it is withdrawn by a friendly agreement between the two countries the Indian army is good enough to look after India. There is no danger in the near future of any external invasion. We will welcome British officers for the Indian army. If the safeguards are examined, you will find that everything worthwhile is restricted. The final

1 Address at a meeting of members of all parties in the House of Commons, 5 February 1936 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 7 February 1936

responsibility as regards law and order, finance and the minorities remains with the Governor and finally with the Viceroy.

48. In the Vast Prison of India[1]

Teach Indians to think in terms of bread and butter and not in terms of temples and mosques and you will find that the communal question has receded to the background.

People here imagine that they have got rid of the Indian problem, but the India Act means no peace in India and the Congress has rejected it completely. There may be conflict in the Congress camp, yet there is a background of goodwill and we are all friends.

Whether one goes to a little prison or a big one does not matter. One is always in a vast prison, my dear friend, that is India. Soon I shall be going back, entangled again, in spite of myself, in Indian politics. That is not a profession but an urge. You get caught in the coils.

1. *Interview to the press, London, 6 February 1936. From The Times of India,* 20 February 1936.

49. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Lausanne
10.2.36

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Thank you for your cable and your letter informing me of the dates of the Congress. I am taking advantage of the new dates to stay on a few extra days here. But in any event I hope to reach India a good month before the Congress. The exact date has not been settled as yet but I shall fix it up soon. Approximately I should be in Allahabad by the 7th March or earlier.

I think that it will be better for me to meet you, Bapu and others informally before a meeting of the Working Committee is held. It is

1. A.I.C.C. *File No. G-43(KW)(i)/1935, p. 3. NMML.*

WITH HIS DAUGHTER IN EUROPE

princes, big semi feudal landlords and all others who are interested in preserving the present order. It makes even minor changes difficult and any major change almost impossible without an upheaval which will wreck the Act and all that it stands for.

During all the discussions on the India Act the question was treated from a lawyer's point of view and the human and economic side was forgotten. Eminent lawyers quibbled about details which did not matter and conveniently ignored the vital issues. The feudal and autocratic rights of the princes were too sacred to be touched but not so the right to live of the three hundred and fifty odd millions of India. The communal issue became the biggest bogey of all and was trotted out at every convenient opportunity.

What are the real problems of India? Inevitably there is the nationalist urge to political freedom and this is bound to remain a dominant factor till all imperialist control is removed. But behind it, and giving it substance, are the economic problems—of grinding poverty, of immense unemployment of the middle classes, of the industrial workers, and chiefly of the rural population.

The last hundred and fifty years of British rule have progressively accentuated the problem of rural unemployment by increasing the burden on the land.[2] Gradually the pre-industrial economy has been killed without giving place to other occupations. In England the change-over at the beginning of industrial capitalism brought much misery and exploitation of the landless proletariat and the unemployed artisans. But gradually and after much travail they found a place in the new factories. In India this change-over was hastened by the ruthless policy of the government and yet no new avenue of employment was opened out to the enormous numbers of artisans and others employed in the cottage industries and small manufacturers who were thrown out. Vast numbers died in repeated famines, the others went back to the land and increased the pressure on it. The capacity for production of the country rapidly decreased while manufactured goods poured in in increasing quantities and, as the railways spread, spread to the remotest villages. The British Government actively discouraged the growth of factories by imposing a tax on imported machinery.[3] India thus became passively industrialized, suffering all the evils of this without any of its benefits. This process lasted throughout the nineteenth century. In spite of discouragement, however, industrialism grew though very slowly. Wartime

2. According to the census, the population dependent on agriculture increased from 61 per cent in 1891 to 73 per cent in 1921.

3. An import duty of 10 per cent on machinery was imposed in September 1931.

these informal talks that count. When these talks should take place I leave it to you to decide. I do not know if Bapu will be well enough then to be bothered with discussions. If he has no objections we might meet at Ahmedabad or wherever he might be. In any event I shall have to go to Bapu.

I have decided to travel by air and to go direct to Allahabad. I should like to spend at least three days before I go elsewhere. If you so wish it, you can fix the meeting of the Working Committee without waiting for my arrival. I suppose there will be enough time to do so even afterwards.

My visit to London was very successful but of course that does not mean much. I shall tell you about it when we meet. Kamala has been a little better lately.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

50. India's Problems[1]

After long deliberation the British Parliament passed last year a new Act conferring, as it was said, a new constitution and a generous measure of self government to the people of India. This Act, it is well known, has been strenuously opposed and is bitterly disliked by almost every politically-minded Indian, moderate or advanced. It is an imposed constitution with the bayonet behind it, and the motive underlying it can best be appreciated by examining conditions in India today and the intensive repression that has become a permanent and normal feature there. A new constitution which requires the machinery of the Criminal Law Amendment Act to suppress every kind of civil liberty, the press and censorship laws to prevent the free functioning of the press and the introduction of "dangerous" books, the continued imprisonment of thousands of persons without charge or trial, and fresh arrests frequently for sedition, is obviously a gift which does not evoke enthusiasm. It is something which cannot endure for it makes the situation worse and does not solve a single one of India's problems.

The Indian view is that the new Act is deliberately designed to strengthen and consolidate all the vested and reactionary elements in India—the British Government, British financial interests, the Indian

1 An article written in Lausanne, 21 February 1936 JN Papers, NMML. This does not seem to have been published

existing political and economic structure is changed and the *paralysing* shadow of imperialism is removed. Feeble and pathetic attempts are made towards their solution which only make it clear that this solution cannot be found within the existing framework. A Royal Agricultural Commission was appointed some years ago under the chairmanship of Lord Linlithgow. Under its very terms of reference it could not enquire into the land tenure system; it could only hover over the surface and suggest superficial changes and the establishment of expensive boards and committees. Other commissions and committees come and go making no difference to anybody, except for the appointment of a few more heavily paid officials. The new Act closes the door to all vital change by protecting every vested interest. It is thus a definite barrier to all progress and has to be broken or removed if we are to get a move on.

For a socialist the solution can only lie along socialist lines: a widely-planned scheme affecting agriculture, industry, communications, education and the social services, which hardly exist in the rural areas. It is not possible to do much by taking each part of this separately and ignoring the rest. Agriculture will have to be based on large-scale co-operative and collectivist farming, big industry and cottage industries must be pushed on at a rapid pace, and education, sanitation, roads, irrigation, housing, etc. must be tackled at something approaching the Russian pace.

How is this to be done? Not while imperialism dominates India, not so long as the city of London is the arbiter of India's destiny, not when every vested and reactionary interest is protected and feudalism flourishes, and civil liberty is crushed. It will certainly not be done through the new Act which represents and consolidates all these imperialistic, financial, vested and feudal interests.

And this is why we in India want an end of the India Act and the complete elimination of imperialism, in short, the independence of our country, and those of us who are socialists aim at a socialist India.

51. A Visit to England[1]

I was twelve days in London—twelve full days spent in meeting many people and groups, and much talk and argument and the answering of

1. Lausanne, 22 February 1936. First published in *The Socialist*, 1936 Reprinted in *India and the World*, (London, 1936), pp. 210 217.

conditions from 1914 onwards hastened this process[4] and to some extent the British Government was compelled by circumstances to encourage it. A capitalist class was consolidated and, as nationalism became more clamant and aggressive, an attempt was made to tone down the opposition of this class and to prevent it from throwing its weight on the side of revolutionary nationalism. To some extent this class became the junior partners and hangers-on of the British capitalist class in the exploitation of India. Essentially, however, British policy still remained the same—to prevent the development of India as an industrial country and to keep it as an agricultural background to industrial England. We were told that the true prosperity of India lay in her agriculture and not in modern industry. In so far as industry spread in India it was largely with British capital and under British directions.

This spread of industry was not fast enough to relieve the overpressure on the land which continued growing and resulted in the progressive fragmentation of the land, till most of the holdings were so small as to be wholly uneconomic. This led to vast rural unemployment and the pauperisation of the masses. That is the main problem of India and the root cause of her poverty. The depression of recent years accompanied by the fall in agricultural prices has accentuated the problem and brought even the small and middle landlords to such a pass that they are on the verge of bankruptcy. The existing land system has been shaken to its foundations and it seems unlikely that it can survive for long, though it may be propped up by various devices and the power of the state for some more years. Any radical change inevitably involves a change in the land system itself.

The recent depression hit industry also very hard and increased industrial unemployment. Many mills and factories closed down and the drift of the village to the town was reversed, thus increasing the pressure on the land.

Unemployment also spread very rapidly in the middle classes who had few openings left to them apart from state or semi state service and the overcrowded learned professions. All these economic urges found an outlet in the nationalist and revolutionary movements in the hope that political freedom would lead to avenues of escape from the morass of poverty and unemployment. Gradually also the economic issues began to colour the nationalist outlet and a socialist movement sprang up.

These are the real problems of India. Nothing substantial has been done to meet them and nothing substantial can be done till the whole

4. The production of iron increased from 235,000 tons in 1914 to 368,000 tons in 1921 and of steel from 67,000 tons to 125,000 tons

people, to the supposed fact that India was not a nation at all with all its races, castes and languages, that it was largely illiterate, and of course to the communal problem. Much could be said about these various matters which would go to show that they were, after all, not so important as they were thought to be. But quite apart from their truth or importance, other facts stand out: the terrible poverty of India, the vast unemployment among all classes, the problems of land and industry, the continuing repression and denial of civil liberty by which the British Government seeks to convince us that we are being given a large dose of self government. These problems cannot be tackled by protecting the very interests that create them and flourish on them.

The Conservative reaction was simple enough, and its very simplicity gave it an air of romance. They had few doubts or difficulties, no complexes over India. For an Indian it was a little difficult to discuss this question with them, in spite of their amiability, for we started from entirely different premises and looked different ways. We could find no common ground to stand on, no agreement to form the basis of argument. The British Empire was good, very good and beneficial to all concerned, and bound to endure. Unhappily it was surrounded by evil elements, full of spite and jealousy, who created difficulties in the smooth working of this ideal institution. If these objectionable elements could be made to see straight or be suppressed, all would be well. Some of the left-wing Conservatives were a little troubled at the close association of their party with all the reactionary and feudal elements in India; they even thought that some economic changes were necessary. But, on the whole, these ideas did not affect the essential serenity of their outlook.

Those who might be called Liberals did not differ greatly, but they were troubled more at what was happening in India, and vague fears of the future prevented them from enjoying the calm of peaceful contemplation which might otherwise have been theirs. Bred up in the traditions of civil liberty and democracy, they felt a little uneasy at the ruthless suppression in India of much they had in England. But only a little. For India was different and far away, and it was possible to still the qualms of conscience and principle by the consoling thought that, but for the repression, India might go to pieces and be converted into a sea of blood. As for democracy, were there not substantial beginnings of it in the India Act with its wider franchise, and safeguards and special powers have a way of falling into desuetude under democratic institutions? So all was well, and it was possible, with a certain measure of equanimity, to accept the present position in India, and at the same

questions. I went with no particular object or intention, I sought nothing in particular except to meet some people I wanted to see and to renew my acquaintance with various currents of English thought. It was almost an educational visit for me, and though circumstances made me talk a great deal, I went to receive impressions more than to give them. Gradually I found myself drawn into all manner of environments and meeting people whom I had least expected to meet. I was a little surprised and pleased, for there was welcome and cordiality everywhere, even from those who disagreed with me utterly. My visit fitted in with my election to the presidentship of the Indian National Congress, and perhaps it was this that gave me an importance I would not have otherwise deserved. Perhaps to many people I became a symbol for a while of the suffering that my countrymen and countrywomen had undergone in recent years, and there was a vague desire to offer something in the nature of reparation. I was a poor enough symbol, for large numbers of others have gone through far greater ordeals; but I was present in the flesh and others were far away, and I sensed among many I met in England a kind of vague pricking of conscience at the doings of British authority in India.

It was very pleasant to meet with all this friendliness and interest in India and her problems, and yet it seemed to me that the interest was largely confined to special groups and individuals, and behind them lay the vast mass of intelligent as well as unintelligent British opinion which was tired and bored over the Indian question. They had had enough of it, other and much more interesting and important events were happening in the world and they wanted to forget about India, just as, psychologists tell us, our subconscious self makes us forget many an unpleasant occurrence which we would rather not remember. Some took comfort in the thought that the India Act being passed, India was out of the picture for many years to come. Others, not so sanguine, yet did not know what they could do; it was a damnably intricate and confusing problem, and it was best to ignore it.

These reactions were perhaps natural; they were not difficult to understand. It was not the intricacy of the problem that baffled, for it was simple enough in its essence, but the fact that any effective solution inevitably came up against the whole structure of British political and economic life, and the complex of ideas and long-cherished prejudices which the British people have held in regard to India. To solve the problem meant the knocking out of the bottom of that structure and the smothering of those ancient ideas and prejudices. It meant the ending of the imperialist tradition and the winding up of the empire. So attention was diverted to the failings, real or imaginary, of the Indian

Only international catastrophes and major events in India or elsewhere *will shake it out of its lethargy.*

Very interesting were many non party men whom I met, sensitive men who though not wedded to any well-defined political policy were keenly aware of the world's disorder and of approaching catastrophe, and anxious to do their best to avert it. India was a secondary question in their minds and they were absorbed by dangers of war and the crisis of modern civilization. Mostly their approach was psychological and humanitarian, and I felt drawn towards it. And yet I felt there was something lacking in it; it was vague and idealistic without much reference to hard and cruel reality, and it did not promise any definite results. Nevertheless a widespread realization of the folly and evil in the present-day world and an ardent desire to end them was in itself a significant and hopeful sign.

The *problem of India is an essential part of the world crisis, for India* is the classic and most important symbol of modern imperialism. With*in the fabric of imperialism there can be no solution of that crisis; it* will have to go, root and branch, and the sooner this is realized and worked *for,* the nearer we *shall all be to a solution of the world's* difficulties. That seems to me the only way, and it is the way of socialism. With that realization will come mutual confidence and cooperation between the progressive elements of India and England. Such problems as remain—and there will be many, for the period of transition is always full of difficulty—can then be faced and solved with mutual consideration and with a view to healing the world's ills. Otherwise there can only be continuous conflict and friction, with occasional eruptions bringing suffering and misery to large numbers.

Perhaps conflict is inevitable and we cannot escape it. Under present conditions it cannot be avoided, for the policy the British Government has pursued in India is a continuous invitation to conflict. But even if conflict continues, cannot it be made a little more civilized than what we have had in the past? Is it not possible to end or tone down at least the fascist methods of brutal suppression of a sensitive people struggling for their freedom, which the British Government has been pursuing interminably for years past?

Whatever the future may hold, I shall carry back with me to India the knowledge that there is a fund of goodwill in England for the Indian struggle, and we have many true comrades here who stand for the same socialist ideal as many of us do and we can work together for a common cause.

time to condemn whole-heartedly the dictatorships and suppression of freedom in Germany, Russia, Italy, the Balkans, and elsewhere.

More interesting because they were more complicated were the reactions of the Labour groups. They varied of course greatly from the communist, looking forward to social revolution, to the trade union leader, vaguely wishing well to India and everybody but moving in a narrow sphere of wages and hours of work and the building up of an organization which might gain a majority in Parliament and lead to a Labour Government. It was not clear what would happen when this desirable result was achieved.

There were many individuals in the labour movement, as well as groups, who had pinned their faith on socialism and who were prepared to apply these principles to India. They realized that imperialism was a barrier to all real progress in both India and England, and in the ultimate interests of both this must go. It was easy for me to discuss our mutual problems with them with this basis of agreement. But for the Labour Party as a whole there was no such realization, and even when an uncomfortable feeling came that some such fundamental change was inevitable, it was sternly suppressed, and as practical men and women they faced the problem of the next Labour Government. With all their dislike for it they moved in the orbit of imperialism, and felt powerless to step out of it. Events might of course force their hands, but the initiative was not likely to come from them. They were unhappy about the past record of their party in regard to India and they wanted to make amends, but within that circle of empire that encompassed them there was not much room for movement. And there was always the fear that any stepping out of that circle might endanger their electoral prospects and lessen their reputation for practical and respectable statesmanship.

The Labour Party has moved to the right in recent years; the drift is likely to continue. Even in earlier days its record in India was indistinguishable from that of other parties and governments, and it gathered to itself the deep distrust of the Indian people. It will not be easy to remove this and, even with all the goodwill that many of its members undoubtedly possess for India, it can hardly do much to regain the confidence of the Indian people, unless it moves out of the circle that closes round it and makes it afraid of its own professions. A Labour Government may come back sometime in the future, and much is likely to happen in India before then. Even when it comes, it will be nervous and lacking confidence in itself; it will be afraid of all manner of vested interests, and the House of Lords will be there to see that it behaves.

Many pacifists and others who desire ardently to prevent war imagine that the way to bring this about is by satisfying the greed of certain European nations and generally preaching goodwill to all, but otherwise maintaining the *status quo*. It does not seem to be realized by them that it is this very *status quo* that produces ill will and conflict and is bound to lead to war. Africa may still be a helpless victim of aggression, but it is not likely to remain so for ever. India and China and several other colonial and semi-colonial countries are even now not so weak and helpless, in spite of their present condition. They can never tolerate willingly their subjection and exploitation, and they will struggle against them with all their strength. So also, as we see all around us, the classes that are exploited for the benefit of the upper strata. The *status quo* has to go throughout the world before war goes and the causes of war.

Ultimately of course this involves something more than a political or even social change; it involves a change in our habits and beliefs and instincts, and that is a terribly difficult process. But even this change in our beliefs and instincts is not likely to come till a suitable environment for it has been created.

How are these vital changes to be brought about? Gerald Heard[3] tells us that the approach must be psychological, we must convince people that it is to their interest to have the change, we must hold a world conference in order to lay the foundations of the new era of peace and plenty. Few people will deny the importance of the psychological approach and the attempt to convert others. Facts are with us, science, reason, decency, the "spirit of the Age", enlightened self-interest, all help us. And in no event can we get a move on unless we have converted a sufficient number of people.

Granting all that, an insuperable barrier remains. It is perfectly true that the world would be a much better place to live in for all of us if we could change it to fit in with the latest developments of science and provide full scope for growth to all countries and individuals. But it is equally true that certain groups and classes which dominate today will lose that privileged position and, especially, the period of transition will be hard for them. They will not be convinced of the beauty of the new order or willing to accept the change. It is possible to convert individuals and even induce them to put up with loss and suffering for a larger cause, but such a conversion is not known to take place in groups and classes as a whole. They move in their own rigid ideologies and

3 (1889 1971), British writer; his works include *The Ascent of Humanity*, *The Social Substance of Religion* and *Science in the Making*.

52. The Way to Peace[1]

In a recent speech in the House of Commons, Mr. Lloyd George pleaded for the "have nots" amongst the great imperialist powers—"have nots" in the sense that they do not possess colonies to supply them with raw materials and provide sheltered markets for their manufactured goods.[2] From a strictly imperialist point of view, perhaps there was some force in his argument; bribery on a big enough scale might lessen the war hunger of these "have-not" powers for a while and relieve the immediate tension in Europe. It might also of course whet the appetite and increase the demand and convince the peoples and the governments concerned that threat of and preparation for war pay. Whatever the immediate result might be, the ultimate result could hardly be doubted—the increase in rivalry between these powers and inevitable conflicts. That has been the history of the growth of modern imperialism, and as fresh colonial areas have come under its domination, these conflicts have increased. The fact that science can provide food and leisure and an ever increasing standard for all does not, under the peculiar system we live in, lessen these conflicts but only creates more unemployment and international friction.

As I listened to Mr. Lloyd George, it struck me as very odd that he should feel so keenly for the unhappy state of the "have-not" powers and yet ignore completely the colonial countries and their peoples. Have they no rights in the matter or no say in it? But even apart from the rights and the moralities, is it imagined that peace will be ensured and entrenched by a sharing of the booty by the imperialist powers?

So long as there are "haves" and "have nots" friction and conflict will continue, and it is desirable to put an end to this state of affairs. But it seems a mockery to call powerful nations "have nots" and ignore the real "have not" countries and classes which are being dominated over and exploited. If Mr. Lloyd George's argument is to be carried to its logical conclusion, the first thing to be done is to equalize from below upwards, put an end to the exploitation of one country or people or class by another, and thus remove the causes of conflict. But that of course would mean an ending of capitalist imperialism.

1. Lausanne, 24 February 1936. First published in *Time and Tide*, 1936. Reprinted in *India and the World*, (London, 1936), pp 218-225.
2. On 5 February 1936 Lloyd George argued that while Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal and Holland had "great tropical territories", Italy and Germany had none and world peace was impossible unless their "claims were reconsidered".

to war. An ardent apostle of peace, a champion of sanctions against Italy, who has received the Nobel Peace Prize,[4] tells us in India that we are narrow-minded and perverted because we do not see the beauty of the British Empire and seek to walk out of it.

I write under a certain disadvantage because I have not seen all the articles which Gerald Heard has written on this subject, and do not know what his immediate practical steps are. So far, I have failed to discover any such practical or effective steps in the proposals of the pacifists. I can hardly imagine that the proposal to hold a world peace conference will, under present conditions, lead to anything.

The only practical solution of the problem came from Gandhi. Whether that was a final solution or not remains to be seen, but it did combine the Sermon on the Mount with effective action. In considering his methods one should not be diverted by a discussion of his views on science, or modern industry, or asceticism, or birth control. The technique and the method of approach stand quite apart from those particular views though they might sometimes be coloured by them. That approach is the psychological approach, the refusal to subordinate means to an end, the constant endeavour to lessen ill will and fear, the continuous willingness to make friends of his opponents, and yet at the same time adoption of effective and dynamic action. For it must be remembered that in spite of the abundance of "nons" in his movement (nonviolence, noncooperation, etc.), it was not a negative, passive affair. It was an active, dynamic, energizing drive which lifted a whole nation out of a morass of demoralization and helplessness, the inevitable result of a long period of subjection, and removed partially at least the inferiority complex from which it suffered, and did all this with the least amount of ill will against the opposite party. Of course there were lapses and bitterness and hatred, but the surprising thing is that they were so few and that within a short term of years he could have worked this astounding change.

The effect on the Indian people was very marked, and that in itself was success enough. Equally interesting, though very different, was the effect on the British people. Individuals apart, this reaction was one of increasing hostility. Partly this was due to the suppression and distortion of Indian news in England. Fleet Street declared a ban on India, except when the antics of a maharaja were prominently figured. While millions in India were living through a nightmare of horror, most people in England no doubt imagined that all was well in this bright jewel of the British crown. But news did occasionally trickle

4 Arthur Henderson was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1934

refuse to open their minds to anything which injures their group interests. *Being in the seats of power they use that advantageous position* to influence mass opinion in their own favour in a variety of ways and the psychological approach is thwarted by them and often neutralized.

It is hard enough to get over this difficulty in approaching even others than the groups whose self interest is affected. But what of these groups themselves? Are we to wait indefinitely till each group and each individual concerned is converted to our ideals and objectives? And are we likely to succeed in this endeavour even after a long lapse of time? Meanwhile danger grows, and the crisis might overwhelm us while we wait and pray.

To take an instance. Must we in India convert the class or order of Indian princes to democracy and socialism before we can set our house in order? Granting (though it is a difficult supposition) that some individuals among them might be so converted, it is an inconceivable notion that the group will agree to give up its feudal, autocratic position. Today most of them treat their states as their private domains where they can do what they will and can draw upon the entire state revenue for their private needs and pleasures. They will inevitably have to give all this up in any new order and they will never accept the change willingly.

Similar considerations apply to imperialist powers and their subject countries. There is much significance in the fact that the British Government is today the stoutest upholder of undiluted autocracy in the Indian states, and has allied itself to all the most reactionary and obscurantist elements in India.

The psychological approach, though admirable and worth stressing, does not thus seem to be quite enough. Something more is necessary to induce the recalcitrant groups to accept or submit to the change. That something is pressure or some kind of coercion, and the bringing about of circumstances which make it more worthwhile for the vested interests to accept change than to suffer greater loss in an attempt to avoid it.

The application of coercion immediately conflicts with the psychological approach. We are back again where we were. Is there no way out? Cannot that coercion be applied in such a way as to minimize the fear and hatred and greed which accompany conflict and neutralize even the results of victory? Is it possible to have that psychological approach and yet have the coercion?

That, I take it, is the real problem. Pacifists, as a rule, seem to avoid it and move in an ineffective sphere. Inevitably they become upholders of an unjust system and support the very causes that lead

Congress, as well as other organisations, will combat it in various ways. The federal part is still very much in the air and even its sponsors and partisans tell us that it will take another two or three years before it takes shape. Two or three years are a short period in the life of a nation but they are long and full of possible happenings and vast changes in the present state of the world and of India. So it is quite possible that this federal structure may remain still born, and, if so, the rest of the India Act may soon follow it into oblivion. Very few will regret this and the vast majority of the people of India will rejoice that this terrible burden has gone.

What then is the way out? If the world as a whole or India sees and experiences great upheavals, political and economic, no one can say what the result will be. When vast and unknown forces are let loose the best laid plans go awry, and sometimes the fresh writing has to be done on a more or less clean slate. So we may not lay down what will happen when such an upheaval has occurred.

But if there is no such upheaval, what then? The Congress has stated that the only solution is by means of a constituent assembly, elected on an adult suffrage, which will draw up the constitution for a free India. That is the only way to give effect to the wishes of the people of India; that is the democratic way. That way also helps greatly in the solution of the communal problem.

No solution that is drawn up by the British Parliament or any other outside authority and imposed on India can ever be agreed to or bring peace. If the Indian people are to decide democratically they can only do so through some form of a constituent assembly. But such an assembly must be a real one, fully representing the masses and with power to decide and give effect to its decisions. A so-called all parties conference or an assembly elected on a limited franchise will be useless. This will reflect the communal and other divisions of the upper classes and prevent issues affecting the masses from coming up.

If the masses are fully represented, inevitably economic issues affecting them will come to the forefront and superficial problems, like the communal one, will lose importance. New and vital forces will be released, drawing their strength from below, and these will seek to solve India's problems in terms of economic reality.

The Congress demand for a constituent assembly is thus a vital one and we must work for its realisation.

through and, in any event, informed people always had a fair notion of what was happening. Even so, these informed and intelligent people, generous and liberal in their ideas, freedom-loving when remote people and other interests were concerned, became more and more hostile to India and her people and tolerated conditions there, of their own government's making, which shocked them nearer home. It was a very striking example of one's own interests perverting one's sense of values and suppressing the moral sense.

In India the same reaction took place among British officials. But they were in the thick of events and could not ignore them or pass academical judgments. So they went from one brutality to another, progressively deteriorated, and what had been an abnormality, hesitatingly indulged in, became a normal daily occurrence.

Thus we see that the psychological approach did not have a very marked effect on the opposite party. It was smothered by those in power and places of authority and not allowed to reach wider groups, and even when it did so reach, the real or imaginary interests of the group prevented it from producing its expected result. Indeed the idea that the group was being placed morally in the wrong produced the strongest irritation and anger and led to the conviction that there must be something deep and diabolical about this seemingly moral approach.

Perhaps it is too soon to judge. But meanwhile all over the world the clouds gather and pacifists talk vaguely of goodwill and refuse to face realities. They will have to do something more if they wish to be effective.

53. A Constituent Assembly for India[1]

The India Act has been imposed on India in spite of the vehement opposition of all politically minded Indians.[2] The provincial part of it will probably come into effect early next year and presumably the

1 Lausanne, 25 February 1936 *The Hindu*, 4 April 1936 First published in *The India Bulletin*

2. The policy of the Congress towards the reforms contained in the 1935 Act was enunciated as far back as June 1934 when the Working Committee passed a resolution condemning the White Paper and stated that the only satisfactory alternative was a constitution drawn up by a constituent assembly.

I have so far read only a few chapters of Comrade Masani's little book, as they came out in periodicals. I liked his fresh, intimate approach and was interested in his reaction to this new world. I think such books have a definite value, especially in India, where knowledge of the U.S.S.R is terribly limited. They do not tell us very much about it or put a full picture before us. They are not meant to. But they do give us glimpses of the masses of a vast country putting their shoulders to the wheel and pushing ahead, and budding and creating, and obliterating many of the black spots which have disfigured our world too long. Those glimpses are helpful; they provide some background to our thinking.

For the more serious student there is no lack of books and those who are fortunate will go to that wonderful picture of the new Soviet civilization which Sydney and Beatrice Webb[2] have drawn up with all their amazing learning, industry and scientific insight. But for most of us I am afraid such books are beyond reach. They should at least read the lighter books, like Masani's, and provoke their minds to serious thought about Russia, the world, and India.

2 *Soviet Communism—A New Civilisation*, published in 1935.

55. The Example of Ireland[1]

Ireland has often been in our thoughts in India and we have drawn inspiration from her unquenchable desire for liberty surviving long centuries of conflict and fierce repression by a powerful imperialism. India and Ireland differ in many ways but we have had to face the same imperialism and inevitably we have drawn closer to each other. So long as imperialism endures there can be no peace or freedom for vast masses of people Only when imperialism and the social system, of which it is the modern representative and upholder, are removed can we build a new order. We shall follow as we have done in the past with the deepest sympathy the efforts of our Irish comrades to nd themselves of all imperialist interference.

1 Message to the London branch of the Irish Republican Congress, 25 February 1936 *The Bombay Chronicle*, 5 March 1936.

54. The Soviet Union[1]

Probably on no other subject have so many books been published in modern times as on Soviet Russia. One wonders at the abundance of them, they come out unceasingly from the European and American publishing houses (Nazi land and fascist Italy excepted) and disappear in millions of libraries and homes. And still the demand exceeds the supply.

Why is this so? Why do Russia and the other territories of the U.S.S.R. attract and fascinate or sometimes repel? Whatever our reactions may be, and whether we are intellectually inclined or emotionally influenced, we cannot cast out the spell. Partly this pull is due to disillusion with the old world and its ways, a desire to escape from a system which has no real hope to offer; even more so we are drawn by the building up before our very eyes of a new civilization, so different from the old, with different values and standards, new motives, hopes and desires. We talk of the Russian experiment, but already it is something much more than that; it has vast achievement to its credit and the history of the world has been changed thereby.

We stand at the threshold of a new era—that is a commonplace oft repeated by almost everybody today. Yet few realise it fully or understand its implications and while they talk glibly of change and transition, keep in the same old mental ruts and refuse to look around. That new era is not a dream of the future; it is the actuality of the present in the U.S.S.R. With all its defects and mistakes and ruthlessness, it is taking visible, vital shape there, stumbling occasionally but ever marching forward.

Of this vast enterprise, so full of lessons for all of us, it is very difficult for most of us to form an adequate conception. A few fortunates may see with their own eyes, the rest must depend on books and on the intelligence and goodwill of the authorities who ban books in India. Unhappily that intelligence and goodwill are singularly lacking in our ruling classes, and the wide net of the censorship keeps out of our ken not only most books on Russia but much of the new literature which is stimulating the best minds of Europe and America today. The man of the sword and the ordinance does not think in terms of the book or of the clash of ideas It is doubtful if he thinks at all; he acts.

1 Lausanne, 25 February 1936 Foreword to *Soviet Sidelights* by M R. Masani, published in 1936

2

REACTIONS TO THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Jawaharlal Nehru's *Autobiography* was published *in London in the spring of 1936. This section* contains some of the correspondence which followed the publication.

58. To Romain Rolland[1]

Montreux
March 4th, 1936

My dear Monsieur Rolland,

I am very grateful to you for your message of sympathy.

I appreciated deeply the letter you sent me a week ago.[2] I intended writing to you more fully on the subject but under the circumstances you will, I am sure, forgive me if I do not do so. I shall however carry your letter with me to India and convey your message to my countrymen. If I may say so, I am entirely at one with you in your general outlook as to what should be done. I hope sincerely that we may be able to move in that direction in India. But, as you are aware, we have to face great difficulties and I do not know how matters will shape themselves. But the thought of your good wishes and blessings will keep our courage up and cheer us in our dark days.

I realise the importance of the great World Congress for Peace—the *Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix*—which will be held next September in Geneva.[3] I very much hope that the Indian Congress will be able to take part in it.[4]

I shall convey your message of affection to Gandhi and other friends.

I am leaving for India day after tomorrow afternoon.

Again thanking you and with my homage and affectionate regards to you and Madame and Mademoiselle Rolland,

I am,
Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 25 February 1936, Romain Rolland, as president of the "World Committee for the Struggle Against War and Fascism", had requested Jawaharlal for his support, and that of the Congress, to a World Congress for Peace which was to be convened at Geneva in September
3. It was in fact held at Brussels from 3 to 6 September 1936
4. It was attended by Krishna Menon on behalf of the Congress.

1. To the Editor, The Leader[1]

Unao
June 8, 1936

Sir,

In the Bombay letter which appears in your issue dated June 7th, your correspondent has done me the honour to refer to certain remarks of mine in my *Autobiography* in the following terms:

> His remarks about the Liberals are not only offensive; they are false. They are downright lies. They are stupid lies!

I shall be grateful if you, Sir, or your correspondent will point out to me what these stupid and downright lies are so that I might be given a chance to mend my ways.

A little earlier in the same letter your correspondent refers to my being asked "many inconvenient questions at some meetings, particularly in Poona, about the extremely offensive remarks he had made in his *Autobiography* regarding several persons and parties."

I should like to be enlightened about these meetings and questions also. So far as I can remember the talented editor of *The Servant of India* pointed out to me, in the course of discussion about civil liberties, that his paper had always taken a strong line in regard to civil liberties, and therefore my sweeping criticism of the Liberals in regard to this matter was not justified. I informed Mr. Vaze[2] that I had not been able to see his paper for a long time past and I was sorry if I had done him an injustice. I had judged from the well known pronouncements of the leaders of the Liberal Party. That my judgment was not a wrong one has recently been demonstrated by the attitude taken and the answers sent by some of these leading Liberals in regard to the formation of a civil liberties union in India.

Yours etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Leader*, 12 June 1936.
2. S G Vaze (1885 1964); for a long time member of the Servants of India Society and its vice president, 1951 64, edited several journals including *The Servant of India*, a weekly published from Poona; connected with the political movement in the Indian states.

the fact that a better constitution is almost impossible of achievement by constitutional means... The British Government has, as it were, served a notice on the Indian people, and particularly on the Liberal Party who pin their faith to constitutional means, that constitutionalism is at an end... Whenever possible the Liberal Party will try to give a good spanking to a reactionary administration composed of all the vested interests, as nine to ten it will be. The Party will on occasions even engineer daring, decisive coups." (Jan. 9, 1936).

In an earlier issue (Aug. 22, 1935) you stress that "we do not want self-government merely for emotional satisfaction, in order that we may enjoy the feeling that Indians now rule in the place of the Britishers. In fact even such a feeling would be illegitimate, for behind the facade of Indian self-rule that we may succeed in putting up there will always be British control. But a mere change of masters, even if it were real, would satisfy nobody. We want self government only as a means of introducing fundamental changes in society, as a means of abolishing privilege, as a means of transferring power from the ruling class, whether white or brown, to the broad masses of people, as a means of establishing a democratic and equalitarian regime. If our self-government is such as to foreclose all these momentous issues, as on Mr. Jayakar's hypothesis[2] it does, we have no use for it... We want them (our legislators) to sponsor drastic measures for the creation of a new social order and challenge all the vested interests and the Governor and the Governor-General together to do their worst. To make the constitution successful is not our objective. Our objective is and must be to revamp our social and economic structure, and if even in taking one forward step in this long and weary process we come into collision with the holders of power and privilege, as we are afraid will be the case, for such collision we must be prepared, whatever the reaction of it may be on the constitution."

My own views on these issues have received sufficient publicity. They go much further. But I recognise with pleasure a certain similarity in mental outlook and a desire to face the real problem of vested interests, whether foreign or Indian. That problem, in the shape of the Indian states, has received continuous attention in *The Servant of India* and the attitude taken by it has certainly been in advance of some sections of Congress opinion in the past

2. Jayakar pleaded for working the constitution "in a modest fashion" He believed that by working it "in a spirit of compromise and conventions the genuine interests of the country would not suffer"

2. To Rabindranath Tagore[1]

Allahabad
June 10, 1936

Dear Gurudeva,
My sister has sent me your letter.[2] Need I say how proud and grateful I feel to have your commendation in such generous language? Many friends have used words of praise for my book, some have criticised it. *But what you have written goes to my heart and cheers and strengthens* me. With your blessings and goodwill I feel I can face a world of opposition. The burdens become lighter and the road straighter.

With homage and affection,

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *Visva Bharati Quarterly*, Vol 29, 1963-64, p. 102.
2. Rabindranath wrote about Jawaharlal's *Autobiography*: "Through all its details there runs a deep current of humanity which overpasses the tangles of facts and leads us to the person who is greater than his deeds and truer than his surroundings."

3. To the Editor, The Servant of India[1]

Mussoorie
13.6.36

Sir,
I am grateful to you for your courtesy in sending me many of the old issues of *The Servant of India*. I have read the articles and editorial notes in them with pleasure and profit. And in reading some of these articles I have felt that the hiatus between your way of thinking and mine was not so great as I had imagined.

You tell us that "while the members of the (Liberal) Party will utilise the constitution for what it is worth, they will ever bear in mind the overmastering fact that the constitution deserves to be put on the scrap-heap and will work with that end in view. Nor are they unmindful of

1. J.N Papers, N.M.M.L.

when some members of the Legislative Assembly resigned because of the repression.[3]

Association in the Round Table Conference was a gesture in favour of the government which was crushing India. Even at the R.T.C. no effective or continuous protest was raised on this ground.

Ever since the early years of this century the declared policy of the government has been "to rally the moderates" to its side and, in conflicts between the government and large sections of the people, leading Liberals have held high executive offices and been to all outward showing part and parcel of the government. They have undertaken responsibility for repression, and for the promulgation of the Seditious Meetings Act and similar measures. Individual Liberal leaders in the Assembly and elsewhere have supported government in not releasing political prisoners, convicts or detenus.

It is not a question, so far as I am concerned, of the Liberal Party or any other party, but of a certain political and social outlook, which I consider reactionary and harmful. I am sure, and I have stated so in my *Autobiography*, that there are many in the Congress who have this reactionary outlook. I am equally sure that there are individuals in the Liberal Party who dislike this and who feel embarrassed by their reactionary colleagues. But there can be no doubt that the Congress today does represent, as a whole, the most advanced outlook, apart from labour and other groups more or less allied to it, and is the only effective organisation in India.

I have yet another difficulty. How far does the attitude of *The Servant of India* represent that of many leading Liberals—of Sir Sivaswamy Aiyar, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad,[4] Sir Cowasji Jehangir,[5] Mr. C.Y. Chintamani and others, or of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru who, though not a member of the party, still represents, I take it, the liberal tradition in India? Do they accept that constitutionalism is almost at an end and the new Act must be scrapped? Do they agree that "fundamental changes in society" are necessary "as a means of abolishing privilege, as a means of transferring power from the ruling class, whether white or brown, to the broad masses of the people, as a means of establishing a democratic and equalitarian regime?" Are they out "to

3 Madan Mohan Malaviya and Vithalbhai Patel were among the members who had resigned.

4 (1865-1947), leading lawyer of Bombay, member of the Hunter committee of inquiry, 1919, leading member of the Liberal Party.

5 (1879-1962), leading industrialist of Bombay, president, National Liberal Federation of India, 1936.

In reading these articles, with their clear though restrained analysis, I find it difficult to understand how the writers stop suddenly and refrain from drawing the inevitable conclusions which follow. They approach them, they hint at them, and yet they stop short of them, both in regard to the political issue of national freedom and the social issue of removing vested interest and privilege. We are told that because of the Government of India Act constitutionalism is almost at an end. Why 'almost' and why just because of the Government of India Act, though that Act might make the issue clearer? Is not a narrow constitutionalism and legalism, which has been the policy of the Liberal Party, inherently and always out of place when we have to meet the challenge of foreign domination or of entrenched vested interest? It was the recognition of this fact in the political sphere by the Congress that made the Congress, despite many failings, develop rapidly into a powerful and effective organisation. It was the refusal to admit it, even in a small degree, by the Liberal Party that made that party, despite many virtues, ineffective and weak and completely out of touch with mass sentiment. The further recognition of this fact in the social sphere of vested interests will inevitably bring the broad masses even more into the national movement and make that movement irresistible.

The amazing passivity of the Liberal Party (quite apart from direct action) during all these years of storm and stress in India has been the consequence, I feel, of that deadening creed of legalism. Action, and often brave and heroic action, has saved the Congress and put it on a pedestal in India, even though in thought it was often backward.

The attitude of *The Servant of India* in regard to civil liberty, I gladly admit, has been one of consistent opposition to its suppression. But I am not so sure that it represents in this matter, or in many others, the Liberal Party as a whole. Something more, surely, than occasional verbal protest was demanded by the occurrences of the past six years. And that protest was often a qualified one. Was it not possible for non-Congress groups, who felt on this question of civil liberty, to take steps to institute enquiries into the grave executive excesses in the Frontier Province, in Bengal and elsewhere? There was much that could be done, even under the abnormal conditions then prevailing, to draw the country's and the world's attention to the horror that prevailed in India

Without indulging in any form of direct action people could have dissociated themselves from too close an association with the government or high officials. There was no such attempt at a gesture which would have had a moral value except, as far as I remember, in 1930

4. To Ellen Wilkinson[1]

As at Allahabad
June 15, 1936

Dear Ellen,
About a month and a half ago, or perhaps more, I sent you an airmail letter. I have a feeling that perhaps this did not reach you. If so, you must have wondered at my not replying to the letter[2] that you had sent me in which you had described your all night reading of my book.

I am writing therefore to make sure, for I am distressed at the thought that you might be under the impression that I have not answered your last letter.

I have been having a fairly strenuous time, simultaneously carrying on war at various fronts. It is a fatiguing business and for the moment I am here at Mussoorie for 10 days to recover a little from physical exhaustion.

The position here is intriguing enough. The news you may have of it in the English press is likely to mislead, but of course India must inevitably keep very much in the background with all the big things that are happening round about you.

You might be interested in an example of the activities of the Government of India's publicity department.[3] The enclosed sheet will give you some idea of it.

With all good wishes,

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. She wrote congratulating Jawaharlal on his *Autobiography*, which was not only indispensable for understanding the Indian situation, but would also give a great impetus to the socialist movement in England.
3. See *post*, section 4, item 40.

5. An Author Replies[1]

For an author to enter into argument with his critics is an unbecoming procedure. He has had his say in his book, and it is right that they

1. Statement issued at Mussoorie, 16 June 1936. *The Leader*, 22 June 1936 Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp 16-23.

revamp our social and economic structure" and "challenge all the vested interests"?

I would gladly believe this but facts seem to be against it. They associate themselves closely with those very vested interests, white and brown, and oppose even a consideration of such vital social changes. In the manifesto[6] of the 21 businessmen of Bombay there were several noted Liberal leaders standing shoulder to shoulder with several persons whom you, Sir, have frequently criticised for their reactionary and pro-government attitude. Do you agree with the sentiments contained in this manifesto, political or social? And do you think that the answers I have received from Sir Sivaswamy Aiyar[7] and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru,[8] which have been approved by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad and other well-known Liberals of Bombay, represent the correct attitude in regard to civil liberties?

This letter has outgrown all reasonable bounds and I crave your indulgence for this. I would beg of you to believe that I write in no carping spirit of criticism. I am not much concerned with parties and individuals but more so with ideas and principles and the action that should follow from them. I think it is time that all of us should try to think straight if we are to act straight. In my *Autobiography* I have endeavoured to give frank expression to my feelings in the hope that this will help in a real consideration of the issues before us. It was not my intention to offend anyone, and if unhappily I have succeeded in doing so, that is my misfortune. But that risk had to be taken. We dare not ignore realities for the sake of superficial gestures and phrases conveying an unmeaning politeness. True courtesy requires a probing of the real issues and an attempt to understand each other.

I am etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6 This manifesto criticised Jawaharlal for preaching socialism.

7 In reply to Jawaharlal's circular (see *post*, section 6, item 6) Sivaswamy Aiyar had argued that the subversive and terrorist policy of a few was the cause of the restriction of civil liberties

8 For Sapru's answer see *post*, section 6, item 8.

My second request would be that the entire wood be considered as a *whole and that we should not lose ourselves in the trees.* Inevitably, in a great country like India and during a powerful nationalist movement, various sets of ideas emerge and fight for mastery. These ideas are bigger and apart from the individuals or leaders who express them, and as far as possible we should consider them as ideas and not merely as appendages to persons whom we may like or dislike. Thus in our political movement during the past few years there was a certain Congress ideology, a Liberal ideology, a Responsivist ideology, as well as others. Today the economic and social issue having forced itself into the forefront, other sets of ideas are producing a ferment and a conflict in men's minds. In considering these various sets and complexes of ideas we can say, regardless of the individuals who hold them, that a particular one is progressive or harmful, it leads to independence or is *reactionary. I hold that the Liberal and Responsivist ideologies are* definitely reactionary and harmful, and they inevitably involve a co-*operation with British imperialism. Thus instead of helping us to* march along the road to freedom, they strengthen the hold of British imperialism. This has nothing to do with the individuals who may hold these views; I may respect them in their personal capacities and have affection for them and admire their character and courage. But still I may hold that they err politically and give the wrong lead. The Congress, I think, has given a straighter and a definitely anti imperialist lead, and though in some matters it has been reactionary at times, it has, I believe, pushed us towards freedom. Believing thus, I have given it my allegiance and worked for it to the best of my ability.

If these are my definite opinions must I not express them for fear of offending some people by my criticism of their views? That would be a futile and a puerile policy, unbecoming in a public man. We who dabble in public affairs and seek to change the destinies of millions dare not remain quiet on vital issues. I claim the right of free criticism of public policies. I gladly acknowledge this right in others who may be opposed to my views. Only thus can we have glimpses of the truth and hammer out a right policy. But of course such criticism should be without malice or ill will.

It was with this viewpoint that I wrote my book. I may have failed to live up to the ideal aimed at, but the book does represent my own carefully considered views on the various ideologies and policies before the country. There may be minor errors here and there but they do not affect the main argument. I might add that some extraordinary references have appeared in the press to the effect that I have been going about apologising for my book and for its so-called inaccuracies.

should have their say. For me to venture to criticize the critics of my *Autobiography* would be almost unpardonable, for reviewers both in England and India have treated this book with a generosity and goodwill which have been overwhelming.

But I am challenged by Mr. N.C. Kelkar and other friends and answers are demanded of me to a number of questions that they have framed.[2] I have absolutely no desire to enter the lists on this issue with Mr. Kelkar, whom I have long respected, or others. But as I am asked questions, I cannot remain wholly silent.

What is my *Autobiography*? It is not meant to be record of all the important events of the past few years. It is a record of my own thoughts and moods and how they were affected by external happenings. I endeavoured to make this a truthful record of my own mental development. How far I succeeded in doing so, it is not for me to say. But the important thing is not what happened, but how it struck me and what impression it produced on me. That is the test of the truth or otherwise of the book.

Of course if my own impression of what happened was at considerable variance with actuality, this would knock the bottom out of any argument that I might advance, and my own mind and doubts would be based on falschood. I would isolate myself from reality and probably shrivel up. Thus the truth or otherwise of events as recorded in the book is of importance.

But still I would venture to say that the primary test of the book is psychological It has given me no little pleasure to find that many of my reviewers have proceeded on this basis and some English friends even, who are opposed wholly to my politics, have gained a certain psychological insight into the mind and soul of our national movement For though I wrote as an individual about an individual, to some extent I may claim to have represented the mental conflicts of large numbers of others who worked in our freedom movement. True understanding between friends as well as opponents comes only from this psychological insight, as between opposing groups it is frightfully hard, if not impossible, to gain this insight.

I would beg therefore that my book be considered primarily from this aspect; all others are secondary.

2. Kelkar in his statement of 5 June 1936, published in *The Tribune* of 6 June 1936, took exception to Jawaharlal's criticism of the Responsivist Party He challenged Jawaharlal to give "specific instances about Responsivists cooperating with government by supporting repression"

responsible for any repression or suppression of civil liberties that *might* ensue.

Repression and the denial of civil liberties have frequently been condemned by the Liberals and the Responsivists. And yet, it has seemed to me that the condemnation has often been of the quantity of it and not the quality. This was natural enough as the official viewpoint as to the necessity of repression was largely accepted. I remember Mr. N.C. Kelkar pressing the government to release members of the Congress Working Committee from prison. The argument advanced was that the situation had improved sufficiently to permit this to be done, and, *in any event, if they misbehaved again, they could be sent back* to prison. That argument did violence to my way of thinking as it seemed to me a substantial justification of the government's general policy and its previous activities.

Take again the replies I have received from Sir Sivaswamy Aiyar and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru to my circular on civil liberties. I make no grievance of their refusal to join the proposed organisation. Others also had done so without giving the particular reasons they gave. These reasons are important and significant and they go to show, to my thinking, that they accept the British Government's viewpoint in regard to the suppression of civil liberties, although they no doubt think that the government went further than it should have done.

All this seems to me to be the acceptance of the ideology of imperialism and *powerful moral support of the policy of repression.* Innumerable other activities—political, semi political, social—at a time when fierce repression was going on all over the country, added to this moral support. For persons who felt keenly the distress of the country and the humiliation of the ordinances and the repression, it was hardly fitting to be hobnobbing continually with those who were responsible for this repression, of feasting with them, of giving parties to them. *This was not a matter of sympathizing with civil disobedience, but of* not sympathizing with the government that was trying to crush the spirit of India. It was a question almost of common decency.

This is the general background of my thought and I should like Mr. Kelkar to understand it, though he might disagree with it utterly. And, if there is any substance in that thought, my conclusions follow from it. It does not help in the clarification of issues, if we call each other perverse or impute evil motives to one another.

I could give many quotations from speeches and writings which support my contention that there is no anti imperialist outlook among leading members of the Responsivist Party as well as the Liberals. But

I have done no such thing and I am yet unaware of any major error in it.

Members of the Responsivist Party, I am told, sign the Congress creed of independence. Personally, though I welcome this, I am not prepared to accept that this is a final proof in their case, or in the case of Congressmen generally, of the acceptance of the ideology of independence, as I understand it. It is well known that there are some Congressmen who are not terribly keen on independence and who seek continually to tone it down. The real test comes in action and in our day to day activities.

How far my own ideology of independence governs the Congress I cannot say. But I know it is widely prevalent in Congress ranks. I believe that it is essentially different from the ideas of political freedom that Liberals and Responsivists, as a body, give expression to. This Liberal and Responsivist conception of Indian freedom, though opposed to British control in India, seems to me to move within the orbit of British imperialism. Hence, though disliking it and seeking to rid themselves of it, they in effect help it and strengthen it. They cooperate with it frequently and give it a moral backing which is injurious to our freedom movement. Many of them insist on the continuation of the British military occupation of India, an idea that is wholly repugnant to me. The whole conception of Dominion Status seems to me to be an acceptance of the basic fabric of British imperialism. That conception is therefore unacceptable to me. It is evident that our ideas in regard to imperialism, what it is and what it thrives on, differ fundamentally. It is not surprising therefore that with differing premises we should draw different conclusions.

The Liberals and the Responsivists have in the past repeatedly accepted high office under the British Government—executive councillorships, ministries and the like. Whatever the motive behind it, I have no doubt in my mind that this inevitably results in intimate cooperation with and support of the imperialist system. It means cooperation in the repression of the freedom movement. We have seen that repeatedly in the past Mr. N.C. Kelkar, if I remember rightly, once congratulated publicly one of his party members on his appointment as an executive councillor.[3] If the Congress decides to accept office under the new Act, I am quite sure that to that extent it will cooperate with and strengthen British imperialism. It will also then become partly

3. S.B Tambe of the Swarajist Party was congratulated by Kelkar on his appointment as an executive councillor in the Central Provinces in 1925.

of *World History*. You could have learnt much about me in it and found much material for thought as well as perhaps answers to some questions which trouble you. But I find that in India there is no habit or desire to read or think. We live superficially, on the surface, or rather in the ruts. It is an astounding country.

I have come here for ten days for a brief spell of quiet. It is not rest as I have plenty of writing and other work to do which keeps me busy. I go down on the 23rd and after that there will be a fierce rush and very interesting work for months.

Ranjit's health has been giving us some anxiety. He has now been told that this altitude does not suit him. So he will also go down soon.

I enclose a letter for Sarwar.

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

7. To the Editor, The Leader[1]

Mussoorie
22 June 1936

Sir,

I am grateful to your Bombay correspondent for his courtesy in supplying me with a list of my "stupid lies".[2] Friends and others have often pointed out my many failings but, so far as I can remember, lying had not been included among them. In my vanity I had also thought that I was not particularly stupid, but that, of course, must be a matter of opinion and, being partial on the subject, I am no proper judge of myself. I was thus particularly interested in tracing out, with the help of your correspondent, these additional and regrettable lapses on my part. I regret that your correspondent has failed to convince me or induce me to mend my ways.

You will forgive me, I trust, for writing to you afresh about myself. It is not a subject after my taste. But, being involved in an argument, I cannot very well help dealing with the various statements made by

1. *The Leader*, 27 June 1936.
2. See *ante*, item 1. The correspondent had replied in *The Leader* of 21 June 1936.

this article is long enough already. I shall, however, mention one or two instances.

Mr. M.R. Jayakar (I think it was in an interview in *The Times of India* early in September 1935) appealed to his countrymen to work the new Act in a spirit of compromise, to enter into a pact with the Governor, not to oppose him in any way, and thus prevent the use of the special powers. If this is not an acceptance of the so-called reforms and of the whole imperialist system which stands behind them, I do not know what it is. I could not better the criticism of *The Servant of India* (Sept. 5, 1935) of this declaration of Mr. Jayakar.[4]

Dr. Moonje has in the past frequently appealed for cooperation with the British Government and he was fortunate enough to be congratulated for it by the Calcutta *Statesman*. His military school[5] received the blessings of the Commander-in Chief and Lord Willingdon is reported to have expressed the hope that the school would loyally serve the British Empire. Personally I have no desire to serve the British Empire nor have I any sympathy for those who have this passion. But however that might be, no one could call those who wish to serve and strengthen the British Empire as anti-imperialists.

4. The paper rejected Jayakar's advice as to a pact with the Governor and characterized it as "a simple looking but all sufficing formula—'Don't let us get in each other's way.'"
5. Moonje established the Bhonsle military school at Poona for "providing preliminary physical and military training to those of our boys who would intend to try to replace these British officers, though its general and comprehensive aim is the military rejuvenation of the Hindus."

6. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Mussoorie
17.6.36

My dear Mahmud,

I presume you received my *Autobiography* from my publishers in London. I wonder if you have had time or have cared to read it. You often ask me questions and love to talk at length. But if you want to know a person you can do so more easily through his books. I was sorry when you told me that you had not read, as a whole, my *Glimpses*

1 Syed Mahmud Papers, N M M L.

policy, I would not dream of calling Liberals liars. But evidently your correspondent's standards and methods of argument are different.

(2) What *The Times of India* reported about me on this occasion I have read for the first time.[5] It is possible that other newspapers misreported what occurred, I believe, at a private meeting. Even so your correspondent's inferences are remarkable. In Bombay on this occasion, as well as others, I referred to the manifesto of the 21. I mentioned that many of these captains of industry (I did not refer to Liberals in this connection) had violently opposed the national movement (not the civil disobedience movement as such). I gave instances, among them the Mody-Lees pact as well certain well known happenings in Bombay and the Legislative Assembly.[6] I added that under cover of attacking socialism, they were really attacking the national movement. The Liberals as such hardly came into the picture, except in so far as some Liberals were among the 21. Far from singling out the Liberals in this matter I hardly referred to them as such.

It is perfectly true that I have often stated that the minimum condition for cooperation on the political plane must be acceptance of independence and an anti imperialist outlook.[7] I believe that many Liberal leaders have stated that their minimum condition for cooperation with the Congress is its rejection of independence and civil disobedience. Which of us are liars? Obviously we differ fundamentally. For me the national movement has no meaning except in terms of independence and anti-imperialism. I cannot give up, nor can the Congress, the very foundations on which we stand. But I have stated often enough that we are perfectly prepared to cooperate with other groups on specific issues, and they are many, like civil liberties. Did we not cooperate, even while differing on the larger issue, on the boycott of the Simon Commission?

(3) In not a single speech, public or private, did I describe the manifesto of the 21 as a Liberal manifesto.[8] (But in justice to your

5 The correspondent had taken exception to Jawaharlal's remark published in *The Times of India* of 23 May 1936 that "some of the Liberals while pretending to oppose socialism attacked the Congress and its policy and principles", and said. "Mr. Nehru is well aware that criticism of socialism has come amply from Congress ranks. Why single out the Liberals alone and talk about their pretending?"

6. See *post*, section 4, item 24.

7. *The Times of India* of 20 May 1936 had reported Jawaharlal as having called for a united front of all the parties who stood for independence and were anti imperialist but as insisting on their agreement with Congress policy

8 The correspondent had pointed out that all the signatories to the Bombay manifesto of the 21 were not Liberals

your correspondent. I have yet another difficulty. The conviction grows within me that mentally and spiritually, even more so than politically, your correspondent and I move in different worlds, think different thoughts, speak different languages. Inevitably, we fail to understand each other. He has failed to convince or convert me; I shall no doubt meet with an equal measure of failure. Fundamentally it is a question of psychology, and I have endeavoured to deal with this aspect, as well as with others, in certain articles I have recently written, especially the one entitled *An Author Replies*, and in a letter which I have sent to *The Servant of India*. I shall not repeat what I have said there, but I shall only deal with certain incidents and 'facts' to which your correspondent refers,

(1) Repeated reference has been made to certain "awkward" questions that were put to me by Mr. D.V. Gokhale[3] and Mr. S.G. Vaze in Poona.[4] Personally I did not realise then or later that they were awkward. I was told that *The Servant of India* had taken up a strong attitude on the question of civil liberties in the past. I pointed out that being in prison I could not keep in touch with this weekly. It was quite likely that if I had known what *The Servant of India* had been writing, I would have mentioned that a certain section of Liberal opinion held a certain view. But that would not have changed in the slightest my general criticism of the Liberal Party's policy and basic outlook. The strongest of verbal protests do not change a deadening passivity into activity. But even apart from that, I have yet to learn that *The Servant of India* represents the Liberal Party as a whole.

Whether it is right or not for the Liberals to join the Civil Liberties Union it is for them to decide. The politics I have learnt have taught me that in public activities importance should be attached to principles and policies and not to individuals. Perhaps the Liberal variety of politics is of a more personal kind.

It is my conviction that Liberal policy in the past has been fundamentally one of cooperation with British imperialism, even though they may often criticise it and verbally oppose it, and that they have given it moral support in times of crisis. Therefore I think it reactionary and harmful to the country's interests. I believe that Liberals hold that the Congress policy has been injurious to the country's interests. The two viewpoints differ utterly. In spite of strong criticism of the Liberal

3. A Congressman of Poona who later joined the Responsivist Party; editor of *Kesari*, 1931-46

4. Vaze had argued that it was unwise for Jawaharlal to have invited the Liberals and Responsivists to join the Civil Liberties Union, when in his *Autobiography* he had suspected them to be sympathisers of the government.

I never meant that those people were dishonest. They honestly believe they are doing the right thing. Both parties can be honest and yet criticise each other.

In my reply I pointed out to Mr. Kelkar that we seem to move in different ideological grooves and therefore find it difficult to understand each other. His rejoinder makes this very clear, for he attributes to me statements and accusations, which I have not made in regard to him or his party. In my reply I have occasionally discussed the Liberals and sometimes the Responsivists; very rarely, except at the end, Mr. Kelkar himself.

I am quite sure that Mr. Kelkar and most of his group bitterly dislike and resent British imperialism in India and seek to get rid of it. And yet I would venture to say that the policy they advocate is something that does not vitally weaken the imperialist fabric. This is a matter of opinion and not surely the question of *bona fides* of either party. He has got a little mixed up about what I said about Liberals and Responsivists.

Thus it was about the Liberals that I mentioned that some of them desired the continuance of the British military occupation in India. It is also about the Liberals that I mentioned about the conception of Dominion Status.

Non-participation in the Civil Liberties Union was not made a grievance by me. But the reasons which two or three Liberals gave to this certainly reveals the mentality which seemed to me to be opposed to the very conception of civil liberties. Again, about participation in social functions in life, I was referring to the civil disobedience period and to a number of individuals in various groups and not specially to Mr. Kelkar or his party.

It is my belief that acceptance of office under the present order is a definite cooperation with imperialism. Mr. Kelkar and I differ. There is nothing more that I can say except to suggest that the difference possibly comes in our conception of what imperialism is. Imperialism for me is not the domination of one country by another, but a subtle, complicated, economic, financial and political order, which has gradually evolved in the course of the last few years or so. To define it with exactitude would take half a page. But, briefly, it is usually used to define financial imperialism.

I am afraid I am unable to understand how private congratulations to a person appointed to high office under the British Government can be anything but a boosting up of that office. Therefore this helps the government of the day and I fail to understand entirely what my father's membership of the Skeen Committee has to do with the matter.

correspondent I must say that I noticed later a big headline in a Bombay paper to this effect. *It seemed silly and I thought it was not* worthwhile to contradict it.) It would have been absurd for me to say so, but if I had said so it would not have been uncomplimentary to the Liberal Party for it would have meant that this party had great influence over big business in Bombay.

I have dealt with my *Autobiography* elsewhere and I do not wish to add to this letter, except to say that when I consider the Liberal outlook I refer to something much bigger than the Liberal Party. I include some Congressmen as well as others in it. But *primarily* that outlook is represented in our politics by the Liberal Party.

Your correspondent writes in anger and uses words which are not usual even in political controversy. To be called a liar is not pleasant. But if it pleases your correspondent to relieve his overcharged feelings in this way, he is welcome to do so. But what is far more important is for us to rise to a higher plane and consider and criticise principles and policies and not individuals. I shall welcome such criticism of what I have written in my *Autobiography* or elsewhere, and it may be that the public also will profit by it.

Jawaharlal Nehru

8. On His Criticisms of the Liberals[1]

Question: What are your views on Mr. N.C. Kelkar's rejoinder?[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru: Though we speak the same language, we mean different things. By those very things, they support imperialism, though it may be considered by them that they are opposing imperialism.

1. Interview to *The Bombay Chronicle*, 3 July 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 4 July 1936
2. In his rejoinder of 28 June 1936 to Jawaharlal's statement *An Author Replies*, Kelkar repudiated the charges made against the Liberals and criticised Jawaharlal for casting aspersions on him and other Liberals.

changes, condolence resolutions and about Palestine, etc. were released to the press?

JN: The minutes would be pretty long. The Working Committee discussed all manner of things. For example, a very long time was taken up as to whether elections to the A.I.C.C. should take place under the new membership rolls or the old ones.

9. To N. C. Kelkar[1]

Allahabad
July 7, 1936

Dear Mr. Kelkar,

As I was passing through Bombay I was asked by some press correspondents if I had seen your rejoinder[2] to my statement. I had only seen extracts from it at the time and some questions put to me were briefly answered by me then. On my arrival here I read your full article. I have an exceeding distaste for carrying on a controversy which involves personalities. It was with some hesitation that I wrote my last article entitled *An Author Replies*. I have absolutely no desire to add to this controversy which seems to be becoming more and more personal and I have therefore decided not to issue any public statement. I feel convinced that we think along entirely different lines and inevitably draw different conclusions, sometimes from the same facts. Every attempt to convince the other leads to further misapprehension and irritation.

But I must write to you personally for I am greatly distressed to find that I have pained you and made you feel that I have been discourteous to you I do not suppose my personal assurance to the contrary will carry much weight with you, but nevertheless I owe this to you. I really do not understand why a criticism or a condemnation of a policy or a course of action should be construed as a personal attack on the persons following it The best of men, morally and intellectually, may follow, in the opinion of others, an utterly wrong and

1 *The Mahratta*, 12 July 1936.

2 In his rejoinder of 28 June, Kelkar objected strongly to Jawaharlal's criticism of his "political ideology as that of a supporter and strengthener of British imperialism in India"

Q: How does the present Parliamentary Board differ from the old Swaraj Party?

JN: The difference between the old Swaraj Party and the present Parliamentary Board is that the old Swaraj Party was independent of the Congress though later it became a Congress party.

The present Congress Parliamentary Board works under the supervision of the Working Committee in matters of policy and a certain amount of independence is allowed as far as details are concerned.

Q: Is the draft of the election manifesto ready?

JN: Not only is the draft of the manifesto not ready, but it is not yet drafted. As a matter of fact, the drafting has not yet begun.

Q: What are your impressions about your northern Indian tour?

JN: I reached Lahore on a very peculiar day. It was the first Friday after the Shahidganj case decision[3] and there was general expectation of some trouble. I addressed during my stay in the Punjab largely attended meetings and I feel that my speeches and the ideas that I expounded were largely appreciated.

In spite of the enormous interest and excitement, my characterising of the Shahidganj and Communal Award as silly and trivial matters was greatly appreciated. I said that if more stress was laid on economic questions and people were made to think on economic lines, the communal question would gradually weaken.

Q: What transpired between you and Mahatma Gandhi during your recent visit to Wardha?[4]

JN: During my visits to Maganwadi at Wardha, I discussed with Gandhiji various questions—political and non political—and questions like the Kamala Nehru Memorial Fund and the like.

Q: How is it that, though the Working Committee sat for two long days, only two or three resolutions about constitutional

3. The decision was given on Monday, 25 May, dismissing the claim of the Muslims to the ownership of the Shahidganj mosque.
4. Jawaharlal was at Wardha from 29 June to 1 July 1936.

10. To Charles Trevelyan[1]

July 15, 1936

Dear Sir Charles,[2]
It was a real pleasure to me to receive your brief letter and to find that besides the bond of Harrow we have a closer link.[3] Thank you also for your little book that you have sent. I shall read it with pleasure. If I go to England I shall be happy to meet you. But in this world today, and more so in India, one may not plan ahead too far. I have no idea when I may be able to go there. For the moment I am engrossed in my work here. So long as I am free I want to do as much as I can.

With all good wishes,

Yours fraternally,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1870-1958); member of the Labour cabinets, 1924 and 1929-31.
3. In his letter of 12 June 1936, Trevelyan said that oppression and poverty in India and war and slums taught both Jawaharlal and himself to be the champions of the underdog.

11. To Ernst Toller[1]

August 10, 1936

My dear Toller,
It was good to have your letter and to have news of you and your wife. It pleases me to know that you liked my *Autobiography*. It is true, I think, that those who have been in prison and have not finally broken down under the ordeal, develop some kind of a common outlook and a bond which unites them invisibly.[2] When I read your beautiful *Letters from Prison* again and again they brought pictures of my own moods and thoughts in prison to me and your book occasionally became a mirror of myself.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. After reading the *Autobiography*, Toller wrote that he often thought that the people who had been in prison formed an invisible brotherhood based on suffering and on the great imagination of heart which prison develops.

injurious policy. Why are different political groups formed except to combat the ideas and policies of other groups? Nobody has doubted the high character, the absolute integrity, keen intelligence, and superb courage of Mahatma Gandhi. Yet members of your group, as well as others, have not refrained from criticising his policies in the strongest language.[3]

Most of us who have given thought to political and economic questions and tried to probe behind them have formed certain conclusions, which are of course liable to change. I have likewise come to my conclusions and some account of my mental journey is given in my book. I have formed, in common with many others, a certain conception of modern imperialism and its working, and I am convinced that certain groups and individuals often by their methods and policies strengthen the imperialist structure, howsoever they might wish to get rid of it. It is not a personal matter but one of larger policy, and the merits or demerits of individuals are not involved in it. Nor is it pertinent, for our present argument, to consider who is right or who is wrong.

Your own rejoinder makes it clear to me how greatly we differ in our political outlook and in our conception of what imperialism is. Dr. Moonje's statement,[4] which you have also given, is something that is utterly beyond my capacity to understand.

My object in writing this letter however is to convey to you my deep personal regret that I should have caused you pain and distress. If I possess a perverted mentality, that is my misfortune. But even that perverse mentality does not think in terms of being discourteous to you.

This letter is a purely personal one, not intended for publication. But if you think that its publication is desirable, certainly you can give it such publicity as you wish.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. In *The Servant of India* of 4 June 1936 Mahatma Gandhi's policy towards the states was characterized as one of urging "just a brown government—whether it be autocratic or plutocratic."
4. Giving his conception of independence and imperialism, Moonje said in his statement published in *The Bombay Chronicle* of 24 June 1936 that he did not want India to break away from the British Empire for which Indians had spent their "blood and money like water."

I think, however, that you have done me and yourself less than justice by calling a small parenthetical statement a "sneer".[4] Certainly no sneer was intended though the point of exclamation gives it a slight sarcastic touch. The statement itself is perfectly correct. Even with that point of exclamation all that it hints at is that the Nazis have extended the meaning of "Aryan" beyond reasonable limits. That may be an arguable proposition but it is not a sneer or a slur.

I have valued the cultural connections in the past between Germany and India and I trust they will continue.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. In his *Autobiography* (1936), p. 30, explaining the origin of 'ji' which is added to Indian names as a mark of respect, Jawaharlal wrote "It is derived from the Sanskrit *Arya* meaning a gentleman or noble born (not the Nazi meaning of Aryan!)."

13. To A.C. Fernandes[1]

3/9

Dear Sir,[2]
Your letter of the 25th August reached me only yesterday.

The passage you refer to deals with Gandhiji's tremendous prestige and influence in India and how any slight to him, intentional or unintentional, was felt by us. The reference to his visit to Rome and the refusal by the Pope to grant an interview to him is by way of illustration —to show what reaction this produced in our minds. I have clearly stated that in all probability no affront was meant but whether it was meant or not, it was felt as such by us. I have been told recently that this interview was not given because it was a Sunday, and as a rule interviews are not given on Sundays. I did not know that when I wrote my book, but I do not think that would have made very much difference to my reaction to the news. I should have thought that formalities need not always be observed. There are always special occasions when they can be and are relaxed. It may be perhaps that this Sunday interview rule is supposed to be inflexible.

1 A.I.C.C. File No. G-5(KW)(u) (Part II)/1936, pp. 503-504, N.M.M.L.
2 Professor of economics and politics, St. Xavier's College, Bombay.

I am so glad to know that your wife has had a great success acting in your plays. This is excellent news and I only wish I was there to see her.

I am glad you are going to America. The new environment will cheer you up and put fresh energy into you.

I was pleased to find that you agreed with what I had said about the problem in Palestine.[3] What I had said of course was very superficial. But it is extraordinary how every problem that we have ultimately gets connected with the larger problem. It cannot be separated. When will this great solution come I wonder and what terrible things will happen before it comes. From day to day I watch with almost painful anguish the development of the trouble in Spain.

I shall write to Indira to find you out. I am sure she would love to meet Mrs. Toller. She is likely to spend the next few months in England.

With all good wishes to you and your wife,

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3 See *post*, section 10, item 5.

12. To O. Urchs[1]

3/9

Dear Dr. Urchs,[2]

I am in receipt of your letter of the 27th August.

It is true that I disagree with the Nazi outlook on life and politics. Unfortunately I do not know much German but I have read a considerable number of books on the subject. I have also read many parts of *My Struggle*[3] in English. I realize of course that many Germans of ability have accepted the Nazi outlook and large numbers of them are enthusiastic and keen about it. I appreciate also that this is the outcome of the sufferings of Germany since the War and the unfair treatment accorded to her. But it would serve little purpose for me to discuss in a letter the larger political implications of the Nazi philosophy.

1. AICC. File No. G-5 (KW)(ii)(Part II)/1936, pp. 499-500, NMML.
2. A German national temporarily resident in Bombay
3. Translation of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*

15. To Buona Barnes[1]

September 22, 1936

Dear Mrs. Barnes,[2]

You will forgive me for the delay in acknowledging your letter of the 7th September.[3] I have been out of Allahabad and since my return I have had to face a large quantity of work.

I appreciate very much the spirit in which you have written to me and frankness with which you have put your own faith before me. And yet I *find it difficult to answer your letter because such things are hardly* capable of discussion in letters. We either feel about them or we do not. We believe them or we ignore them. So far as I am concerned I have said enough about myself directly and indirectly in my *Autobiography*. I do not suppose I can usefully add to it. It may be quite possible that I am spiritually empty, though I have never had that sensation. You write of course as an ardent Roman Catholic. I am not *wholly ignorant of European history or culture. Quite probably I have* read more about it than most educated Europeans. And yet it is quite possible, as you say, that I have not grasped the inner significance of it. If that is so it is my misfortune. I cannot accept the Catholic view of religion or life and, I think, I could point out to you much in history which would lessen the importance of that viewpoint. India has numerous failings and yet essentially it has had the religious outlook on life. So it is not so difficult for an Indian to appreciate the religious outlook in others. You will remember that I have stated somewhere in my *Autobiography* that Catholicism was the only true religion in the West in the narrow sense of the word.

I am myself out of tune with that religious outlook whether it is represented in India or in Rome, and I think that it does not fit in with the modern world. But these are subjects on which argument is not very fruitful and most people proceed on the basis of faith. I can tell you at least that I have made an earnest effort to understand Catholicism

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. *Wife of J.S. Barnes, a Roman Catholic exponent of fascism* and Reuter's correspondent in India
3. Mrs. Barnes described Jawaharlal's life as "spiritually empty, pointless existence, *which does not know the why or wherefore of anything*" and claimed that the Catholic church was "the only true church of the only true religion on earth."

My subsequent statement about the Catholic church not approving of saints and Mahatmas etc., represents my own impression of the general attitude of that church derived from some considerable reading on the subject. That had no direct connection with Gandhiji's visit to Rome. It may of course be a wrong impression and I shall be glad to be corrected. But whether it is right or wrong, I do not see why it should cause resentment. It was not meant to hurt anyone. Personally, although I disagree with that attitude, I rather admire it.

As desired by you I am sending your letter to Gandhiji. But I do not see what further light he can throw on the matter. I presume that all he can say is that he desired an interview but was told that this was not possible that day.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To Gobind Behari Lal[1]

Allahabad
September 3, 1936

Dear Mr. Gobind Behari Lal,[2]

Thank you for your letter of July 20th. It is pleasing to be told that one's book has been welcomed and has influenced in some degree other people.

You are right in what you say about the exile's life.[3] There are certain advantages in it. But there are many exiles who do not profit by these advantages owing to adverse circumstances. And then it is almost inevitable that long exile should result in a severance of ties with the homeland.

Dhan Gopal Mukerji's death has been a great shock to me. For the last ten years I knew him intimately.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Science editor of the International News Service; winner of the Pulitzer Prize for 1937.
3. He referred to Jawaharlal's mention of the life of an exile in the *Autobiography* and felt that there were advantages in living in an "advanced, relatively free and self integrated civilization"

17. To Martand Upadhyaya[1]

Allahabad
October 29, 1936

My dear Martandji,[2]
Thank you for the copy of *Meri Kahani*[3] which I have received. I am glad to learn that your first edition has been exhausted. The general get-up of the book is good, though the reproduction of some of the pictures is not very good. I am sorry I am quite unable to find the time to read through it. I have however looked through it here and there and sometimes found a mistake. I shall point out one such mistake. At page 548 are given figures for languages. You have translated million by lakh thus giving an entirely wrong figure. This must be corrected by changing the figure itself. You might also give the title as is given in the English.

"Basic English" is a technical word which cannot be translated by "मूल अंग्रेजी". Therefore the word "basic" should be used in Hindi also. It has a double meaning—one the obvious meaning and the other—British, American, Scientific, Industrial, Commercial; observe the capitals of all these and you get the word basic....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Sasta Sahitya Mandal Papers (microfilm), N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. (b. 1908); connected with the Sasta Sahitya Mandal, New Delhi, since 1928 and now its secretary; author of several Hindi books for children
3. Hindi translation of the *Autobiography*.

and there were several friends who tried to help me in this process. But the understanding that I have got did not produce appreciation.

My letter is rather scrappy. You will forgive me for this.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

16. To A. W. Breolin[1]

October 29, 1936

Dear Commander Breolin,[2]

I must thank you for your letter of the 22nd September. I need hardly say that I was happy to read of the reactions to my book of a person who is not of my way of thinking, and I appreciate very much your good wishes. May the best side win certainly. But I do not personally think of the side as English or Indian. Why should not the good on both sides win and put an end to the horror of interminable conflict which the modern world exhibits?

I do not know the age of your children. If you have a child of about 10 or 12 years of age I should like to send you a little book I wrote for my daughter when she was about 10. There are other books also, also written for my daughter when she was older. But they are big and heavy.

I am not sure if I have spelt your name correctly. But for that you are partly responsible.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 JN Correspondence, NMML.
2 A retired naval officer and Tory businessman.

3

THE LUCKNOW CONGRESS

18. To A. G. Sayers[1]

November 20, 1936

Dear Mr. Sayers,[2]

Thank you for your letter of the 26th October.[3] It is good to have such good wishes and to feel that there are sane people spread out all over this mad world. I try to think of Indian problems as well as world problems apart from the racial issue which unhappily often colours our vision. I wish the time would come when Englishmen and Indians could meet each other normally and consider the problems that affect them without the ingrained prejudices which nearly all of them have. I suppose individuals are rising above these prejudices everywhere but the process is terribly slow and meanwhile we rush towards an abyss.

I am sending this to your club address as I could not quite make out your home address.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. An English supporter of Indian freedom.
3. In his letter of 26 October 1936, Sayers expressed his admiration for Jawaharlal's two books, *Autobiography* and *India and the World*, and said that despite the unfavourable attitude of the capitalist press he was doing his best to spread correct news about India.

1. Interview to the Associated Press[1]

The European situation is so complex that it is useless as well as impossible to express an opinion regarding it within the limits of a short interview. The "haves"—the powers possessing colonies and raw materials—try to retain what they hold, while the powers of the "have-not" group want a share in the spoils. The question cannot be solved merely by a division of raw materials between the colonial powers and the "have not" powers.

I consider it premature to express an opinion on the Indian political situation.

1. Allahabad, 14 March 1936. From *The Tribune*, 15 March 1936.

2. The Task of Youth[1]

I am asked for a message. The hunger for messages and the like in India fills me with wonder. Whence does it come? Why does it continue in spite of a surfeit of pious sentiments repeatedly expressed?

It is natural perhaps to seek commendation for one's work or an exhortation for the future. Some such momentary feeling gives us a measure of present satisfaction and an escape from the oppression of inaction and ineffective living. We begin to delude ourselves into imagining that at any rate we too are doing our bit in the larger scheme of things.

But this is the way of age when the blood runs cold and petrifaction of mind and body sets in. What of students and young men and women? Are they satisfied with this ineffective substitute for activity? Look at the world around us, pulsating with the fever of change. Study it, understand it, fit into it, and play your part in it—or else collect messages and wax fat on them.

1. Message to the annual issue of the Lucknow university union journal, 15 March 1936. *The Hindustan Times*, 21 March 1936.

last ten or twelve years the volunteer corps has improved its organisation to a great extent. Yet when compared to other countries the organisation in our country is almost negligible. In no other country is there a necessity to tell the crowds to keep the queue or walk in a line. In our country, even those who call themselves volunteers and participate in processions, keep giving instructions to each other. Our country lacks discipline. During a period of slavery it is bound to happen because the people remain suppressed.

Today our country has acquired new strength. It can be assessed by the fact that much force has been used and is being used against us. As the strength of a nation increases, suppression also continues to increase. You all must be aware of the atrocities committed in the last movement, and even today when there is no movement, the government continues its repression. Organizations like the Hindustani Seva Dal and the Khudai Khidmatgars have been declared unlawful. Severe restrictions have been imposed on the press. From this we can infer the strength of our organisation and the extent of the fear of the government.

Instead of fighting with the enemy we fight among ourselves and the consequences of this will have to be borne by us alone. For a long time I was out of the country. While abroad I could not fully assess the situation. Today I am talking to the members of the Hindustani Seva Dal. Our work cannot stop. As far as our training is concerned, we are facing and will have to face several difficulties. But we will have to continue to do our work. We will have to open at least small, if not big, camps. You should obey your officers. But you should not become blind soldiers and act without thinking because I do not want men of wood. You should give thought to all problems and express your views on the issues before the country.

To think that Mahatma Gandhi is an avatar and he alone will accomplish everything is to do him an injustice. I am happy to see you and at the same time sad to recall the past years. But whether we are happy or sad, work is to be done. Dr. Hardikar wanted to inaugurate the second camp today. But I dropped in suddenly and interfered. Dr. Hardikar is a soldier. He feels shy about inaugurating a camp. But this is his achievement and he alone should inaugurate the camp.

3. On the Death of Kamala Nehru[1]

My deepest gratitude goes out to those innumerable friends and comrades who have shared my sorrow and sent me messages of sympathy and affection. Such messages have come to me in their thousands from many parts of the world, from foreign friends and Indians living far away from the motherland. They have come to me from every corner of this vast land of ours, from public bodies and organizations. Congress committees, trade and professional associations, workers and peasants and a great host of individuals. A brave and true comrade of ours has left us and I feel lonely and desolate. But the warmth and abundance of the affection of my countrymen have enveloped me and given me strength and courage. Before that love and overflowing goodwill I feel humbled and I bow my head. How can I thank them?

1 Statement to the press, Allahabad, 17 March 1936. *The Tribune*, 18 March 1936

4. On the Need for Discipline[1]

Brother Volunteers,

I am very glad to meet you today. I have taken a great interest in the volunteer movement and have worked for ten to twelve years in the Hindustani Seva Dal along with Dr. Hardikar. Quite a few from amongst you must have received your training in it. I believe that training of volunteers is very necessary. Today you have come to work at the Congress session. Without training adequate arrangements cannot be made.

I want the work of the Hindustani Seva Dal to be continuous so that trained persons might go back to their cities and villages and give training to others and thus create an organisation in the country. In the

1 Speech at the inauguration of the volunteer training camp, Lucknow, 18 March 1936. From *Aaj*, 21 March 1936 Original in Hindi.

proportional representation must be safeguarded. There is, however, no truth in the allegation that the proposed alteration by the Congress executive is aimed at the exclusion of socialists. But if the group concerned took it in that light, then it is up to us to give them no cause for such a feeling. You should remember that the principle of proportional representation has been in the constitution for 15 years. I am a greater socialist than perhaps others, and do not think that anything which the government or the Congress can do will repress the socialists. I suggest that the system of proportional representation be *maintained for the reason that the minority feels that such protection* is necessary.[2]

2. Despite Jawaharlal's intervention, the resolution favouring the deletion of proportional representation for the A.I.C.C. election was passed by a narrow majority, 34 voting for and 32 against.

7. *On Acceptance of Office*[1]

It is very unfair of me to take the time of the House in this way, but because a reference has been made to me, I must break my silence. Tomorrow you will have before you my presidential address in the open session, but you will have to decide the question in the subjects committee, and it would be right for me, in spite of this difficulty, to tell *the House the point of view I hold in the matter. I occupy a peculiar* position. Ordinarily it is not right and proper for members of the Working Committee to say anything against a Working Committee resolution, but that Committee itself is, as you know, a Committee which has practically ended itself, and a new Committee will take its place. Whether the new Committee will be the same as the old is not in question.

The mere fact *that I am going to preside* tomorrow makes it incumbent on me to say something. The question is not whether there will be an immediate decision or postponement. I find there is a definite difference of outlook. We must exclude personalities in our discussions. It would be below our dignity to accuse each other of unworthy

1 Speech at the subjects committee meeting, Lucknow, 11 April 1936 From *The Hindustan Times*, 12 April 1936.

5. To Rabindranath Tagore[1]

1-4-1936

My dear Gurudeva,

Today I read in the *Visva Bharati News* the English rendering of what you said about Kamala.[2] I was deeply moved by your extremely generous words and I wish to tell you, if I may, how much strengthened I feel by your blessings and by the thought that you are there to keep us, erring ones, on the straight path.

It was a joy for me to see you at Delhi station. But a railway train is hardly a suitable place for a meeting and I was not satisfied. I hope I shall have a better opportunity before long.

I am so glad you received a substantial sum at Delhi for Visvabharati. I hope you will rest after your present tour.

Not knowing what your exact programme is, I am sending this to Santiniketan.

With love and respects,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J N. Correspondence, N M M L.
2. Rabindranath Tagore said on 8 March 1936: "In the case of Kamala... that greatness of hers has spontaneously introduced itself into the hearts of the people... The reticent dignity that she had maintained all through the vicissitudes of her noble life finds today its voice that overwhelms us by its truth."

6. On Proportional Representation[1]

Before putting the motion to vote I would like to say a few words with a view to protect the minorities. Though the issue before the House is small, a great principle is involved. Unless a minority is to be forced to revolt, the representation of that minority by means of

1. At the discussion in the subjects committee meeting on the amendment of the Congress constitution, Lucknow, 10 April 1936 From *The Hindustan Times*, 11 April 1936.

We ought to try and approach this question with a certain mentality —that mentality is that we cannot afford to split up, and break up the Congress. We may even differ now, to agree later and work together. Occasionally we may even act in different ways, but I will certainly do my utmost to try to function so as to help the growth of that mentality and common action in the Congress.

8. The Meaning of Independence[1]

Such an interpretation of the Lahore resolution is wrong, inconsistent and futile I understand the resolution to mean severance of the British connection and I have made it clear in my speeches that this is the only meaning. I will continue to hold such a view and all other interpretations will not be correct. But it will be undignified if it is sought to pass the resolution to give an interpretation of the previous Congress resolution.

1. Lucknow, 12 April 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13 April 1936 This was in reply to the decision of the socialists that they wished to introduce a resolution regarding "complete independence" as it had been interpreted by some leaders as meaning only "substance of independence".

9. Hoisting of the National Flag[1]

This flag is the symbol of our independence, our ideals, our aspirations and our suffering. After seeing it unfurled and standing under it, we have sung the flag song, pledged to serve it and save its honour and glory at all costs

Let it fly aloft. Let its honour shoot higher. Do not let it fall and don't be traitors to your country and its symbol.

1. Lucknow, 12 April 1936 *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13 April 1936

motives and lack of courage. We must recognize that there are two sides, if not diametrically opposed, at least two definitely opposite sides of opinion that are honestly held. The best thing we can do is to try and convince each other as to the correctness of our viewpoints. Difference on this issue is a vital matter, and we must grasp the vital significance of the two opinions.

There may be some members who may perhaps change their opinion later on. But I am sure those people who are present here in the subjects committee have made up their mind, and even discussion for a week will make no radical change in their viewpoint. This question has been before the country for a long time, and members have come with definite ideas to vote one way or the other. Both the viewpoints will make no difference in regard to the voting, but still I feel uncomfortable if any references are made to me and I am silent, and people think that I think differently than I do.

Coming to the question itself, I feel that the difference is between the two viewpoints, one of the reformist and the other of the revolutionary. If we wish the country to advance towards independence, if we wish the country not to be disillusioned, then we must think many times before we take any steps which increase this reformist mentality. Any idea of acceptance of office tends to reformism. It is absurd to compare with Mr. de Valera.[2] Those conditions don't exist here. I do feel that those in favour of acceptance of office are honestly supporting their attitude, but it will lead inevitably to reformism.

I also think that a postponement of the issue is preferable to any decision in favour of reformism. Still it has its dangers. It keeps the reformist mentality functioning, the reformist hopes functioning, and those hopes must be dashed to the ground. Are we going to think in terms of a revolution, or are we going to support reformism, and cut up Congress flags and make boys and girls in schools sing our songs? Is this going to bring independence to this country? A postponement of the question means hesitancy and indecision, and we will have to decide this question as we think best.

But afterwards we shall have to face another question, and that is how the Congress will pull on together. If we have to face enormously powerful enemies, we cannot allow ourselves to split up and waste our energies in conflicts. So far as I am concerned I will try to pull together, even if the decision of the Congress is such as it may be.

2. Advocating acceptance of office, Satyamurti had cited the example of de Valera who fought the Irish constitution by taking office and then removed the oath of allegiance to the King.

and we have taken pride in the fact that our means are worthy of those ideals. We have been witnesses of many a miracle in this old and battered land of ours, and yet our very success has been followed by failure and disillusion. Temporary failure has little significance when the aim is high and the struggle bound to be a long one; it is but the incentive to further effort. Often it teaches us more than a victory easily won and becomes a prelude to a greater success. But we profit by it only if we learn its lesson and search our minds for an explanation of that failure. Only by constant self-questioning, individual and national, can we keep on the right path. An easy and unthinking confidence is almost as bad as a weak submission to helpless dejection. Real failure comes only when we forget our ideals and objectives and principles and begin to wander away from the road which leads to their realization.

In this crisis of our history, therefore, let us look into ourselves and examine, without pity or prejudice, what we have done and what others have done to us, and seek to find out where we stand today. We dare not delude ourselves or evade real issues for fear of offending others, even though some of these others are comrades whom we respect. That is the way of self-deception which none who seek great and vital changes can follow except at their peril.

Sixteen years ago, under the inspiration of our leader, we took a new and long step converting this Congress from an ineffective body, feebly functioning amongst the upper classes, into a powerful democratic organization with its roots in the Indian soil and the vast masses who live on it. A handful of our old friends, representing an age and a class which had had its day, left us, fearful of this democratic upsurge and preferring the shelter and protection of British imperialism to joining hands with the new vital forces which convulsed the country and struggled for freedom. Historically they lapsed into the past. But we heard the rumbling of those forces and, for the moment, lined up with them and played a not unworthy part in current history. We sensed the new spirit of mass release, of psychological escape from the cramping effects of long subjection, we gloried in the breaking of the mental bonds that encompassed us. And because our minds became free we felt that political freedom could not be far, for it is often harder to break the bonds of the spirit than physical bonds and chains of iron and steel. We represented the spirit of the age and were marching step by step with countless others in our country and outside. The exhilaration of being in tune with the masses and with world forces came upon us, and the feeling that we were the agents of historic destiny.

10. The Presidential Address[1]

Comrades,

After many years I face you again from this tribune—many weary years of strife and turmoil and common suffering. It is good for us to meet again; it is good for me to see this great host of old comrades and friends, linked together by strong bonds that cannot break, to sense the old brave spirit yet again, to feel your overwhelming kindness and goodwill to one whose greatest privilege it is to have been a comrade and a soldier with all of you in a mighty struggle for freedom. I am heartened and strengthened by you, though even in this great gathering I feel a little lonely. Many a dear comrade and friend has left us, worn out, long before the normal length of our earthly days, by the stress and strain of conflict. One by one they go, leaving a void in our hearts and a dull misery in our minds. They find peace from this turmoil perhaps, and it is well, for they deserved it. They rest after their labours

But what of us who remain behind with a heavier burden to carry? There is no rest for us or for those who languish in prison or in detention camp. We cannot rest, for rest is betrayal of those who have gone and in going handed the torch of freedom to us to keep alight; it is betrayal of the cause we have espoused and the pledge we have taken; it is betrayal of the millions who never rest.

I am aweary and I have come back like a tired child yearning for solace in the bosom of our common mother, India. That solace has come to me in overflowing measure; thousands of hands have been stretched out to me in love and sympathy; millions of silent voices have carried their message of affection to my heart. How can I thank you, men and women of India? How can I express in words feelings that are too deep for utterance?

For many years now I have been a distant looker-on on this Indian scene where once I was an actor, and many a thing has happened that has filled me with distress and anguish. I do not wish to survey this recent past of ours, which must be fresh in your memory, and which has left a sorry trail behind and many knots which are difficult to unravel. But we may not ignore it for out of that past as well as the present, we have to build our future. We have followed high ideals

1 Lucknow, 12 April 1936 *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13 April 1936. Reprinted in *India and the World*, (London, 1936), pp. 64 107.

progress was made in every direction. Two rival economic and political systems faced each other in the world and, though they tolerated each other for a while, there was an inherent antagonism between them, and they played for mastery on the stage of the world. One of them was the capitalist order which had inevitably developed into vast imperialisms, which, having swallowed the colonial world, were intent on eating each other up. Powerful still and fearful of war, which might endanger their possessions, yet they came into inevitable conflict with each other and prepared feverishly for war. They were quite unable to solve the problems that threatened them and helplessly they submitted to slow decay. The other was the socialist order of the U.S.S.R. which went from progress to progress, though often at terrible cost, and where the problems of the capitalist world had ceased to exist.

Capitalism, in its difficulties, took to fascism with all its brutal suppression of what Western civilization had apparently stood for; it became, even in some of its homelands, what its imperialist counterpart had long been in the subject colonial countries. Fascism and imperialism thus stood out as the two faces of the now decaying capitalism, and though they varied in different countries according to national characteristics and economic and political conditions, they represented the same forces of reaction and supported each other, and at the same time came into conflict with each other, for such conflict was inherent in their very nature. Socialism in the West and the rising nationalism of the Eastern and other dependent countries opposed this combination of fascism and imperialism. Nationalism in the East, it must be remembered, was essentially different from the new and terribly narrow nationalism of fascist countries; the former was the historical urge to freedom, the latter the last refuge of reaction.

Thus we see the world divided up into two vast groups today—the imperialist and fascist on one side, the socialist and nationalist on the other. There is some overlapping of the two and the line between them is difficult to draw, for there is mutual conflict between the fascist and imperialist powers, and the nationalism of subject countries has sometimes a tendency to fascism. But the main division holds, and if we keep it in mind, it will be easier for us to understand world conditions and our own place in them.

Where do we stand, then, we who labour for a free India? Inevitably we take our stand with the progressive forces of the world which are ranged against fascism and imperialism. We have to deal with one imperialism in particular, the oldest and the most far-reaching of the modern world, but powerful as it is, it is but one aspect of world imperialism And that is the final argument for Indian independence

We were engrossed in our national struggle, and the turn it took bore the powerful impress of our great leader and of our national genius. We were hardly conscious then of what was happening outside. And yet our struggle was but part of a far wider struggle for freedom, and the forces that moved us were moving millions of people all over the world and driving them into action. All Asia was astir from the Mediterranean to the Far East, from the Islamic West to the Buddhist East. Africa responded to the new spirit; Europe, broken up by the war, was struggling to find a new equilibrium. And right across a vast area in Europe and Asia, in the Soviet territories, a new conception of human freedom and social equality fought desperately against a host of enemies. There were great differences in the many aspects of this freedom struggle all over the world and we were misled by them and did not see the common background. Yet if we are to understand these varied phenomena, and derive a lesson from them for our own national struggle, we must try to see and understand the whole picture. And if we do so we cannot fail to observe an organic connection between them which endures through changing situations. If once we grasp this organic bond, the world situation becomes easier to understand and our own national problems take their proper places in the wider picture. We realise then that we cannot isolate India or the Indian problem from that of the rest of the world. To do so is to ignore the real forces that are shaping events and to cut ourselves adrift from the vital energy that flows from them. To do so, again, is to fail to understand the significance of our own problems, and if we do not understand this how can we solve them? We are apt to lose ourselves, as we have indeed done, in petty conflicts and minor questions, like the communal problem, and forget the major issues; we are apt to waste our energy (like our moderate friends do) in interminable discussions over legal quibbles and constitutional questions.

During the troubled aftermath of the Great War came revolutionary changes in Europe and Asia, and the intensification of the struggle for social freedom in Europe and a new aggressive nationalism in the countries of Asia. There were ups and downs, and sometimes it appeared as if the revolutionary urge had exhausted itself and things were settling down. But economic and political conditions were such that there could be no settling down, the existing structure could no longer cope with these new conditions, and all its efforts to do so were vain and fruitless. Everywhere conflicts grew, and a great depression overwhelmed the world and there was a progressive deterioration everywhere except in the wide-flung Soviet territories of the U.S.S.R., where, in marked contrast with the rest of the world, astonishing

game. So wanting in mental equilibrium are they, so obsessed by fear of the Congress and the national movement it represents, that their wishes become thoughts, their thoughts inferences and their inferences facts, solemnly stated in official publications, and on which the majesty of the British Government rests in India, and people are kept in prison and detention camps without charge or trial. Being interested in psychology, I have watched this process of moral and intellectual decay and realised, even more than I did previously, how autocratic power corrupts and degrades and vulgarizes. I have read sometimes the reports of the recent Assembly meetings and noted the great differences in tone and content between them and the Assembly of ten years ago. I have observed the forced attempts made to discredit the Congress by a reference to the Tilak Swaraj Fund with which I was connected for many years as Secretary of the Congress. But prepared as I was for much, even I was surprised at the insinuations made against our much-loved chief, Rajendra Babu, and the charges brought against the Bihar Relief Fund.[2] A mild criticism by me of official incompetence soon after the Bihar earthquake[3] was deeply resented probably because the truth of it was realised. Newspapers that criticised the official arrangements at a subsequent earthquake were heavily penalized or suppressed. All criticism hurts the sensitive skin of the government, and its reactions are quick and far-reaching. The more incompetent it grows the less it likes being told so. But this does not prevent it from indulging in reckless allegations about others.

This psychological aspect interests me even more than the more aggressive manifestations of British authority in India, for it throws light on much that has happened. It shows us how a clear and definite fascist mentality has developed among our rulers and how closely allied is imperialism to fascism. How this fascist mentality has functioned in the recent past and is functioning today, I shall not go into now. You know well the horror of these years and of the nightmare that we have all experienced. We shall not easily forget it and if there are some who have been cowed down by it, there are others who have steeled themselves to a greater resolve to end this infamy in India.

But of one thing I must say a few words, for to me it is one of the most vital things that I value. That is the tremendous deprivation of civil liberties in India. A government that has to rely on the Criminal

2. In the Legislative Assembly on 9 March 1936, it was alleged that the Congress did not present accounts fully and administer its finances properly. References were made to the Tilak Swaraj Fund and the Bihar Relief Fund.

3 See *Selected Works*, Vol. 6, pp 196 198.

and for the severance of our connection with the British Empire. Between Indian nationalism, Indian freedom, and British imperialism there can be no common ground, and if we remain within the imperialist fold, whatever our name or status, whatever outward semblance of political power we might have, we remain cribbed and confined and allied to and dominated by the reactionary forces and the great financial vested interests of the capitalist world. The exploitation of our masses will still continue and all the vital social problems that face us will remain unsolved. Even real political freedom will be out of our reach, much more so radical social changes.

With the development of this great struggle all over the world we have seen the progressive deterioration of many of the capitalist-imperialist countries and an attempt at consolidation of the reactionary forces under fascism or nazism or so-called "national" governments. In India the same process has been evident to us during these past years, and the stronger the nationalist movement has grown, the more have efforts been made by our imperialist rulers to break our ranks and to gather together under their banner the reactionary elements in the country. The Round Table Conferences were such attempts and, though they helped our rulers in some measure, they served a useful purpose by showing us clearly the division between the imperialist and the anti-imperialist forces in the country. Unhappily we did not fully profit by this lesson and we still imagine that we can win over some of these imperialist groups to the side of Indian freedom and anti-imperialism, and in a vain attempt to do so we suppress our ideals, blush for our objectives and tone down our activities.

Meanwhile the decay of British imperialism in India becomes ever more apparent. It cannot, by its very nature, solve our economic problems and rid us of our terrible poverty, which it has largely itself created. It subsists on a normal fare of the fiercest repression and a denial of civil and even personal liberty. It surrounds us with a wide network of spies and, among the pillars of its administration, is the tribe of informers and *agents provocateurs* and the like. Its services try to seek comfort for their obvious deterioration and incompetence by perpetually singing songs of mutual adulation. Argument gives place to the policeman's baton and the soldier's bayonet and prison and detention camp, and even our extraordinary finances are justified by the methods of the bully. It is astonishing to find to what depths of vulgarity our rulers have descended in their ardent desire to hold on to what they have got, and it is depressing, though perhaps inevitable, that some of our countrymen, more interested in British imperialism than the British themselves, should excel at this deplorable

ARRIVAL AT KARACHI AIRPORT, MARCH 1936

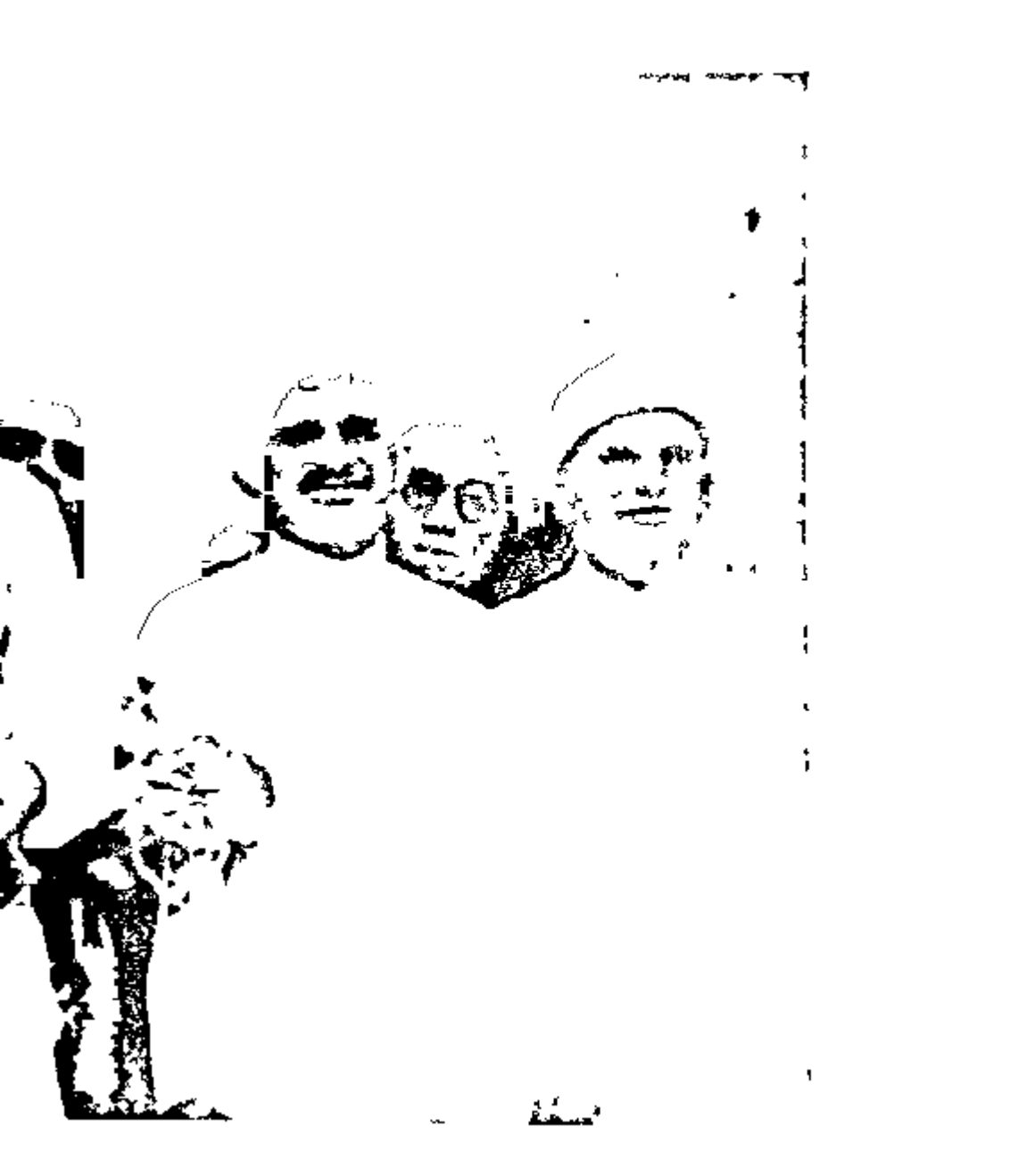

Law Amendment Act and similar laws, that suppresses the press and literature, that bans hundreds of organizations, that keeps people in prison without trial, and that does so many other things that are happening in India today, is a government that has ceased to have even a shadow of a justification for its existence. I can never adjust myself to these conditions; I find them intolerable. And yet I find many of my own countrymen complacent about them, some even supporting them, some, who have made the practice of sitting on a fence into a fine art, being neutral when such questions are discussed. And I have wondered what there was in common between them and me and those who think as I do. We in the Congress welcome all cooperation in the struggle for Indian freedom; our doors are ever open to all who stand for that freedom and are against imperialism. But they are not open to the allies of imperialism and the supporters of repression and those who stand by the British Government in its suppression of civil liberty. We belong to opposite camps.

Recently, as you know, we have had a typical example of the way government functions in India in the warning issued to a dear and valued comrade of ours, Subhas Chandra Bose. We who know him also know how frivolous are the charges brought against him. But even if there was substance in them we could not tolerate willingly the treatment to which he has long been subjected. He did me the honour to ask me for advice and I was puzzled and perplexed, for it is no easy thing to advise another in such a matter, when such advice might mean prison. Subhas Bose has suffered enough at the cost of his health. Was I justified in adding to this mental and physical agony? I hesitated and at first suggested to him to postpone his departure. But this advice made me unhappy, and I consulted other friends and then advised him differently.[4] I suggested that he should return to his homeland as soon as he could. But, it appears, that even before my advice reached him, he had started on his journey back to India.

This instance leads us to think of the larger problem, of the way the bogey of terrorism has been exploited by the government to crush political activity and to cripple physically and mentally the fair province of Bengal. You know that terrorism as such is practically non-existent now in Bengal or any part of India. Terrorism is always a sign of political immaturity in a people, just as so-called constitutionalism, where there is no democratic constitution, is a sign of political senility.

4. The government had arrested Bose on 8 April as being "a menace to the peace and tranquility of the country." For Jawaharlal's correspondence with Bose see *post*, section 6, items 1 and 3

Our national *movement has long outgrown that immature stage*, and even the odd individuals who have in the past indulged in terrorist acts have apparently given up that tragic and futile philosophy. The Congress, by its stress on peaceful and effective action, has drawn the youth of the country into its fold and all traces of terroristic activity would long have vanished but for the policy of the government which feeds the roots out of which a helpless violence grows. But terrorism or no terrorism, a government which adopts the methods which have long prevailed in Midnapur and elsewhere in Bengal stands self-condemned. Similar methods have also long prevailed in the Frontier Province, although there is no hint of terroristic activity there, and that fine man and true beloved *of millions, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, still lies in prison.* Excuses differ, but the real reason is the ever growing fascist mentality of our rulers.

That is one side of the picture. What of us? I have found a spirit of disunion spreading over the land, a strange malaise, and petty conflicts amongst old comrades growing ever bigger and interfering with all activity. We have forgotten for the moment the larger ideals we stood for and we quarrel over petty issues. We have largely lost touch with the masses and, deprived of the life giving energy that flows from them, we dry up and weaken and our organization shrinks and loses the power it had. First things must always come first, and because we have forgotten this and argue and dispute over secondary matters, we are in danger of losing our bearings.

Every great struggle has its ups and downs and temporary failures. When such a setback occurs there is a reaction when the fund of national energy is exhausted and has to be re-charged. That happens again and again, and yet that is not an adequate explanation of all that has taken place. Our *direct action struggles* in the past were based on the masses, and especially the peasantry, but the backbone and leadership were always supplied by the middle classes, and this, under the circumstances, was inevitable. The middle classes are a vague group or groups; at the top, a handful of them are closely allied to British imperialism; at the bottom are the dispossessed and other groups who have been progressively crushed by *economic circumstances* and out of whose ranks come the advanced political workers and revolutionaries; in between are the centre groups, which tend often to side with the advanced elements, but which also have alliances with the upper groups and live in the hope of joining their superior ranks. A middle class leadership is thus often a distracted leadership, looking in two directions at the same time. In times *of crisis and struggle, when unity of aim and activity is essential,* this two-faced leadership is bound to injure the cause and *to hold back*

Anand Bhawan
Allahabad
April 1. 1926

My dear Gurudev,

Today I read in the 'Visva-Bharati News' the English rendering of what you said about Kamala. I was deeply moved by your extremely generous words and I wish to tell you, if I may, how much strengthened I feel by your blessings and by the thought that you are there to keep us, erring ones, on the straight path.

It was a joy for me to see you at Delhi station. But a railway train is hardly a suitable place for a meeting and I was not satisfied. I hope I shall have a better opportunity before long.

I am so glad you received a substantial sum at Delhi for Visva-Bharati. I hope you will rest after your present tour.

Not knowing what your exact programme is, I am sending this to Santiniketan.

With love and respects,

Yours affectionately
Jawaharlal

it drew in large numbers and became an effective instrument of national activity. Though the control and background were essentially middle class and city, it reached the remotest village and brought with it political and economic consciousness to the masses, and there was widespread discussion of national issues in city and village alike. One could feel the new life pulsating through this vast land of ours and, as we were in harmony with it, we drew strength from it. The intense repression by the government during later years broke many of our physical and outward bonds with our countryside. But something more than that happened. The vague appeal of earlier days no longer sufficed and on the new economic issues that were forcing themselves on us, we hesitated to give a definite opinion. Worse even than the physical divorce, there was a mental divorce between the middle class elements and the mass elements. Our constitution no longer fitted in with changing conditions; it lost its roots in the soil and became a matter of small committees functioning in the air. It still had the mighty prestige of the Congress name behind it and this carried it a long way, but it had lost the living democratic touch. It became a prey to authoritarianism and a battleground for rival cliques fighting for control, and, in doing so, stooping to the lowest and most objectionable of tactics. Idealism disappeared, and in its place there came opportunism and corruption. The constitutional structure of the Congress was unequal to facing the new situation; it could be shaken up anywhere almost by a handful of unscrupulous individuals. Only a broad democratic basis could have saved it, and this was lacking.

Last year an attempt was made to revise the constitution in order to get rid of some of these evils.[5] How far that attempt has succeeded or not I am not competent to judge. Perhaps it has made the organization more efficient, but efficiency means little if it has no strength behind it, and strength, for us, can only come from the masses. The present constitution stresses still further the authoritarian side of the organization, and in spite of stressing rural representation does not provide effective links with the masses.

The real problem for us is, how in our struggle for independence we can join together all the anti-imperialist forces in the country, how we can make a broad front of our mass elements with the great majority of the middle classes which stands for independence. There has been some talk of a joint front but, so far as I can gather, this refers to some alliance among the upper classes, probably at the expense of the masses.

5 Members of communal organizations were prohibited from joining the Congress and a greater proportion was reserved for rural representation

when a forward move is called for. Being too much tied up with property and the goods of this world, it is fearful of losing them, and it is easier to bring pressure on it and to exhaust its stamina. And yet, paradoxically, it is only from the middle class intellectuals that revolutionary leadership comes, and we in India know that our bravest leaders and our stoutest commades have come from the ranks of the middle classes. But by the very nature of our struggle, these front rank leaders are taken away and the others who take their place tire and are influenced more by the static element of their class. That has been very evident during our recent struggle when our propertied classes were hit hard by the government's drastic policy of seizure and confiscation of monies and properties, and were thus induced to bring pressure for the suspension of the struggle.

How is this problem to be solved then? Inevitably, we must have middle class leadership but this must look more and more towards the masses and draw strength and inspiration from them. The Congress must be not only *for* the masses, as it claims to be, but *of* the masses, only then will it really be for the masses. I have a feeling that our relative weakness today is due to a certain decay of our middle class elements and our divorce from the people at large. Our policies and ideas are governed far more by this middle class outlook than by a consideration of the needs of the great majority of the population. Even the problems that trouble us are essentially middle class problems, like the communal problem, which have no significance for the masses.

This is partly due, I think, to a certain historical growth during the last fifteen years to which we have failed to adapt ourselves, to a growing urgency of economic problems affecting the masses, and to a rising mass consciousness which does not find sufficient outlet through the Congress This was not so in 1920 and later, when there was an organic link between the Congress and the masses, and their needs and desires, vague as they were, found expression in the Congress. But as those needs and desires have taken more definite shape, they have not been so welcome to other elements in the Congress and that organic connection has gone. That, though regrettable, is really a sign of growth and, instead of lamenting it, we must find a new link and a new connection on a fresh basis which allows for growth of mass consciousness within the Congress. The middle class claim to represent the masses had some justification in 1920, it has much less today, though the lower middle classes have still a great deal in common with the masses.

Partly also our divorce from the people at large is due to a certain narrowness of our Congress constitution. The radical changes made in it fifteen years ago brought it in line with existing conditions then, and

to me. I see no way of ending the poverty, the vast unemployment, the degradation and the subjection of the Indian people except through socialism. That involves vast and revolutionary changes in our political and social structure, the ending of vested interests in land and industry, as well as the feudal and autocratic Indian states system. That means the ending of private property, except in a restricted sense, and the replacement of the present profit system by a higher ideal of cooperative service. It means ultimately a change in our instincts and habits and desires. In short, it means a new civilization, radically different from the present capitalist order. Some glimpse we can have of this new civilization in the territories of the U.S.S.R. Much has happened there which has pained me greatly and with which I disagree, but I look upon that great and fascinating unfolding of a new order and a new civilization as the most promising feature of our dismal age. If the future is full of hope it is largely because of Soviet Russia and what it has done, and I am convinced that, if some world catastrophe does not intervene, this new civilization will spread to other lands and put an end to the wars and conflicts which capitalism feeds.

I do not know how or when this new order will come to India. I imagine that every country will fashion it after its own way and fit it in with its national genius. But the essential basis of that order must remain and be a link in the world order that will emerge out of the present chaos.

Socialism is thus for me not merely an economic doctrine which I favour; it is a vital creed which I hold with all my head and heart. I work for Indian independence because the nationalist in me cannot tolerate alien domination, I work for it even more because for me it is the inevitable step to social and economic change. I should like the Congress to become a socialist organisation and to join hands with the other forces in the world which are working for the new civilization. But I realise that the majority in the Congress, as it is constituted today, may not be prepared to go thus far. We are a nationalist organization and we think and work on the nationalist plane. It is evident enough now that this is too narrow even for the limited objective of political independence, and so we talk of the masses and their economic needs. But still most of us hesitate, because of our nationalist background, to take a step which might frighten away some vested interests. Most of those interests are already ranged against us and we can expect little from them except opposition even in the political struggle.

Much as I wish for the advancement of socialism in this country, I have no desire to force the issue in the Congress and thereby create difficulties in the way of our struggle for independence. I shall cooperate

That surely can never be the idea of the Congress, and if it favours it, it betrays the interests it has claimed to represent, and loses the very reason for its existence. The essence of a joint popular front must be uncompromising opposition to imperialism, and the strength of it must inevitably come from the active participation of the peasantry and workers.

Perhaps you have wondered at the way I have dealt at some length with the background of international and national affairs and not touched so far the immediate problems that fill your minds. You may have grown impatient. But I am convinced that the only right way of looking at our own problems is to see them in their proper place in a world-setting. I am convinced that there is intimate connection between world events, and our national problem is but a part of the world problem of capitalist imperialism. To look at each event apart from the others and without understanding the connection between them must lead to the formation of erratic and erroneous views. Look at the vast panorama of world change today, where mighty forces are at grips with each other and dreadful war darkens the horizon: subject peoples struggling for freedom and imperialism crushing them down; exploited classes facing their exploiters and seeking freedom and equality; Italian imperialism bombing and killing the brave Ethiopians; Japanese imperialism continuing its aggression in north China and Mongolia; British imperialism piously objecting to other countries misbehaving, yet carrying on in much the same way in India and the Frontier; and behind it all a decaying economic order which intensifies all these conflicts. Can we not see an organic connection in all these various phenomena? Let us try to develop the historic sense so that we can view current events in proper perspective and understand their real significance. Only then can we appreciate the march of history and keep step with it.

I realise that in this address I am going a little beyond the usual beat of the Congress President. But I do not want you to have me under any false pretences and we must have perfect frankness with each other. Most of you must know my views on social and economic matters for I have often given expression to them. Yet you chose me as President. I do not take that choice to mean an endorsement by you all, or by a majority, of those views, but I take it that this does mean that those views are spreading in India and that most of you will be so indulgent as at least to consider them.

I am convinced that the only key to the solution of the world's problem and of India's problems lies in socialism, and when I use this word I do so not in a vague humanitarian way but in the scientific, economic sense. Socialism is, however, something even more than an economic doctrine; it is a philosophy of life and as such also it appeals

to have nothing to do with it. The new Act, as is well known, is an even more retrograde measure, and has been condemned by even the most moderate and cautious of our politicians. If we rejected the White Paper, what then are we to do with this new charter of slavery to strengthen the bonds of imperialist domination and to intensify the exploitation of our masses? And even if we forget its content for a while, can we forget the insult and injury that have accompanied it, the contemptuous defiance of our wishes, the suppression of civil liberties, and the widespread repression that has been our normal lot? If they had offered to us the crown of heaven with this accompaniment and with dishonour, would we not have spurned it as inconsistent with our national honour and self respect? What, then, of this?

A charter of slavery is no law for the slave, and though we may perforce submit for a while to it and to the humiliation of ordinances and the like, inherent in that enforced submission is the right and desire to rebel against it and to end it.

Our lawyers have examined this new constitution and have condemned it. But constitutions are something much more than legal documents. "The real constitution", said Ferdinand Lassalle,[7] consists of "the actual relationships of power", and the working of this power we see even today, after the Act has been passed. That is the constitution we have to face, not the fine phrases which are sometimes presented to us, and we can only deal with it with the strength and power generated by the people of the country.

To this Act our attitude can only be one of uncompromising hostility and a constant endeavour to end it. How can we do this?

Since my return from Europe I have had the advantage of full and frank discussion with my colleagues of the Working Committee. All of us have agreed that the Act has to be rejected and combated, but all of us have not been able to agree to the manner of doing so. We have pulled together in the past and I earnestly hope that we shall do so in the future, but in order to do so effectively we must recognise that there are marked differences in our outlooks. I do not yet know, as I write, what the final recommendation of the Working Committee will be on this issue. I can only, therefore, venture to put before you my own personal views on the subject, not knowing how far they represent the views of Congressmen. I should like to make it clear, however, in fairness to my old colleagues of the Working Committee, that the majority of them do not agree with all the views I am going to express. But

7 (1825-1864), founder of the German Social Democratic Party and leader of the labour movement

gladly and with all the strength in me with all those who work for independence even though they do not agree with the socialist solution. But I shall do so stating my position frankly and hoping in course of time to convert the Congress and the country to it, for only thus can I see it achieving independence. It should surely be possible for all of us who believe in independence to join our ranks together even though we might differ on the social issue. The Congress has been in the past a broad front representing various opinions joined together by that common bond. It must continue as such even though the difference of those opinions becomes more marked.

How does socialism fit in with the present ideology of the Congress? I do not think it does. I believe in the rapid industrialization of the country and only thus, I think, will the standards of the people rise substantially and poverty be combated. Yet I have cooperated wholeheartedly in the past with the khadi programme and I hope to do so in the future because I believe that khadi and village industries have a definite place in our present economy. They have a social, a political, and an economic value which is difficult to measure but which is apparent enough to those who have studied their effects. But I look upon them more as temporary expedients of a transition stage rather than as solutions of our vital problems. That transition stage might be a long one, and in a country like India, village industries might well play an important, though subsidiary, role even after the development of industrialism. But though I cooperate in the village industries programme my ideological approach to it differs considerably from that of many others in the Congress who are opposed to industrialization and socialism.

The problem of untouchability and the Harijans again can be approached in different ways. For a socialist it presents no difficulty, for under socialism there can be no such differentiation or victimization. Economically speaking, the Harijans have constituted the landless proletariat, and an economic solution removes the social barriers that custom and tradition have raised.

I come now to a question which is probably occupying your minds—the new Act passed by the British Parliament and our policy in regard to it. This Act has come into being since the last Congress met, but even at that time we had had a foretaste of it in the shape of the White Paper, and I know of no abler analysis of those provisions than that contained in the presidential address of my predecessor in this high office.[6] The Congress rejected that proposed constitution, and resolved

6 Rajendra Prasad had, at Bombay on 26 October 1934, analysed the White Paper proposals in detail

at the bottom of the social ladder and suffer most from exploitation. We have seen in the past widespread official interference in the elections; we shall have to face that, as well as the serried and monied ranks of the reactionaries. But the real danger will come from our toning down our programme and policy in order to win over the hesitating and compromising groups and individuals. If we compromise on principles, we shall fall between two stools and deserve our fall. The only right way and the only safe way is to stand four-square on our own programme and to compromise with no one who has opposed the national struggle for freedom in the past, or who is in any way giving support to British imperialism.

When we have survived the election, what then are we to do? Office or no office? A secondary matter, perhaps, and yet behind that issue lie deep questions of principle and vital differences of outlook, and a decision on that, either way, has far reaching consequences. Behind it lies, somewhat hidden, the question of independence itself and whether we seek revolutionary changes in India or are working for petty reforms under the aegis of British imperialism. We go back again in thought to the clash of ideas which preceded the changes in the Congress in 1920. We made a choice then deliberately and with determination, and discarded the old sterile creed of reformism. Are we to go back again to that blind and suffocating lane, after all these years of brave endeavour, and to wipe out the memory of what we have done and achieved and suffered? That is the issue and let none of us forget it when we have to give our decision. In this India, crying aloud for radical and fundamental change, in this world pregnant with revolutionary and dynamic possibility, are we to forget our mission and our historic destiny, and slide back to static futility? And if some of us feel tired and hunger for rest and quiet, do we imagine that India's masses will follow our lead, when elemental forces and economic necessity are driving them to their inevitable goal? If we enter the backwaters, others will take our place on the bosom of the flowing stream and will dare to take the rapids and ride the torrent.

How has this question arisen? If we express our hostility to the Act and reject the entire scheme, does it not follow logically that we should have nothing to do with the working of it and should prevent its functioning, in so far as we can? To accept office and ministry, under the conditions of the Act, is to negative our rejection of it and to stand self-condemned. National honour and self-respect cannot accept this position, for it would inevitably mean our cooperation in some measure with the repressive apparatus of imperialism, and we would become partners in this repression and in the exploitation of our people. Of

whether we agree or disagree, or whether we agree to differ, there is a strong desire on our part to continue to cooperate together, laying stress on our many points of agreement rather than on the differences. That is the right course for us and, as a democratic organization, that is the only course open to us.

I think that, under the circumstances, we have no choice but to *contest the elections to the new provincial legislatures in the event of* their taking place. We should seek election on the basis of a detailed political and economic programme, with our demand for a constituent assembly in the forefront. I am convinced that the only solution of our political and communal problems will come through such an assembly, provided it is elected on an adult franchise and a mass basis. That assembly will not come into existence till at least a semi revolutionary situation has been created in this country and the actual relationships of power, apart from paper constitutions, are such that the people of India can make their will felt. When that will happen I cannot say, but the world is too much in the grip of dynamic forces today to admit of static conditions in India or elsewhere for long. We may thus have to face this issue sooner than we might expect. But obviously a constituent assembly will not come through the new Act or the new legislatures. Yet we must press this demand and keep it before our country and the world, so that when the time comes we may be ripe for it.

A constituent assembly is the only proper and democratic method for the framing of our constitution, and for its delegates then to negotiate a treaty with the representatives of the British Government. But we cannot go to it with blank minds in the hope that something good will emerge out of it. Such an assembly, in order to be fruitful, must have previous thought behind it and a definite scheme put forward by an organised group. The actual details, as to how the assembly is to be convened, must depend on the circumstances then existing and need not trouble us now. But it will be *our function as the Congress*, to know exactly what we are after, to place this clearly and definitely before the assembly, and to press for its acceptance.

One of the principal reasons for our seeking election will be to carry the message of the Congress to the millions of voters and to the scores of millions of the disfranchised, to acquaint them with our future programme and policy, to make the masses realise that we not only stand for them but that we are of them and seek to cooperate with them in removing their social and economic burdens. Our appeal and message *will not be limited to the voters*, for we must remember that *hundreds* of millions are disfranchised and they need our help most, for they are

or that we would gain strength thereby? Again it is said that more voters would vote for us if they knew that we were going to form *ministries. That might happen if we deluded them with false promises* of what we might do for them within the Act; but a quick nemesis would follow our failure to give effect to those promises, and failure would be inevitable if the promises were worthwhile.

There is only one straight course open to us, to go to the people with our programme and make it clear to them that we cannot give effect to the major items in it under present conditions, and therefore, while we use the platform of the legislatures to press that programme, we seek to end these imperialist bodies by creating deadlocks in them whenever we are in a position to do so. Those deadlocks should preferably take place on those programmes so that the masses might learn *how* ineffective for their purposes are these legislatures.

One fact is sometimes forgotten—the provision for second chambers in many of the provinces. These chambers will be reactionary and will be exploited by the Governor to check any forward tendencies in the lower house They will make the position of a minister, who seeks advance, even more difficult and unenviable.

Some people have suggested, though their voices are hushed now, *that provincial autonomy might be given on this office issue and each* provincial Congress committee should be empowered to decide it for its own province. An astonishing and fatal suggestion playing into the hands of our imperialist rulers. We who have laboured for Indian unity can never be parties to any proposal which tends to lessen that unity. That way lies disaster and a disruption of the forces working for freedom. If we agree to this, why then should we also not agree to the communal issue being decided provincially, or many other issues, where individual provinces might think differently? First issues will sink into the background, independence itself will fade away, and the narrowest provincialism raise its ugly head Our policy must be uniform for the whole of India, and it must place first things first, and independence is the first thing of all.

So I am convinced that for the Congress to favour the acceptance of office, or even to hesitate and waver about it, would be a vital *error.* It will be a pit from which it would be difficult for us to come out. Practical statesmanship is against it, as well as the traditions of the Congress and the mentality we have sought to develop in the people. Psychologically, any such lead might have disastrous consequences. If we stand for revolutionary changes, as we do, we have to cultivate a revolutionary mentality among our people, and anything that goes against it is harmful to our cause

course, we would try to champion the rights of the people and would protest against repression, but as ministers under the Act, we could do very little to give relief and we would have to share responsibility for the administration with the apparatus of imperialism, for the deficit budgets, for the suppression of labour and the peasantry. It is always dangerous to assume responsibility without power, even in democratic countries; it will be far worse with this undemocratic constitution, hedged in with safeguards and reserved powers and mortgaged funds, where we have to follow the rules and regulations of our opponents' making. Imperialism sometimes talks of cooperation but the kind of cooperation it wants is usually known as surrender, and the ministers who accept office will have to do so at the price of surrender of much that they might have stood for in public. That is a humiliating position which self-respect itself should prevent one from accepting. For our great national organisation to be party to it is to give up the very basis and background of our existence.

Self respect apart, common sense tells us that we can lose much and gain little by acceptance of office in terms of the Act. We cannot get much out of it, or else our criticism of the Act itself is wrong, and we know it is not so. The big things for which we stand will fade into the background and petty issues will absorb our attention, and we shall lose ourselves in compromises and communal tangles, and disillusion with us will spread over the land. If we have a majority, and only then can the question of acceptance of office arise, we shall be in a position to dominate the situation and so prevent reactionaries and imperialists from profiting by it. Office will not add to our real strength, it will only weaken us by making us responsible for many things that we utterly dislike.

Again, if we are in a minority, the question of office does not arise. It may be, however, that we are on the verge of a majority and with the cooperation of other individuals and groups we can obtain office. There is nothing inherently wrong in our acting together with others on specific issues of civil liberty or economic or other demands, provided we do not compromise on any principle. But I can imagine few things more dangerous and more likely to injure us than the acceptance of office on the sufferance of others. That would be an intolerable position.

It is said that our chances at the elections would increase if we announce that we were prepared to accept office and ministries. Perhaps that might be so, for all manner of other people, eager for the spoils and patronage that office gives, would then hurry to join us. Does any Congressman imagine that this would be a desirable development

tolerate the subjection of many of its children and their deprivation of human rights, nor can it ever agree to a dissection of its body and a cutting up of its limbs. If we stand for any human, political, social or economic rights for ourselves, we stand for those identical rights for the people of the states.

I have referred to the terrible suppression of civil liberties by the British Government in India. But in the states matters are even worse, and though we know that the real power behind those states is that of British imperialism, this tragic suppression of our brothers by their own countrymen is of painful significance. Indian rulers and their ministers have spoken and acted increasingly in the approved fascist manner, and their record during the past few years especially has been one of aggressive opposition to our national demands. States which are considered advanced ban the Congress organisation and offer insult to our national flag, and decree new laws to suppress the press.[8] What shall we say of the more backward and primitive states?

There is one more matter concerning the constitution Act which has given rise to much controversy. This is the communal decision. Many people have condemned it strongly and, I think, rightly; few have a good word for it. My own viewpoint is, however, somewhat different from that of others. I am not concerned so much with what it gives to this group or that but more so with the basic idea behind it. It seeks to divide India into numerous separate compartments, chiefly on a religious basis, and thus makes the development of democracy and economic policy very difficult. Indeed the communal decision and democracy can never go together. We have to admit that, under present circumstances, and so long as our policies are dominated by middle class elements, we cannot do away with communalism altogether. But to make a necessary exception in favour of our Muslim or Sikh friends is one thing, to spread this evil principle to numerous other groups and thus to divide up the electoral machinery and the legislature into many compartments is a far more dangerous proposition. If we wish to function democratically the proposed communal arrangement will have to go, and I have no doubt that it will go. But it will not go by the methods adopted by the aggressive opponents of the decision. These methods result inevitably in perpetuating the decision, for they help in continuing a situation which prevents any reconsideration.

I have not been enamoured of the past Congress policy in regard to the communal question and its attempts to make pacts and compromises. Yet essentially I think it was based on a sound instinct. First

8 The hoisting of the national flag had been banned in the state of Mysore

This psychological aspect is important. For we must never forget, and never delude our masses into imagining, that we can get any real power or real freedom through working these legislatures. We may use them certainly to advance our cause to some extent, but the burden of the struggle for freedom must fall on the masses, and primarily, therefore, our effective work must lie outside these legislatures. Strength will come from the masses and from our work among them and our organisation of them.

Of secondary importance though the work in the legislatures is, we may not treat it casually and allow it to become a hindrance to our other work. Therefore it is necessary for the Congress, through its executive, to have direct control over the elections and the programme placed before the country, as well as the activity in the legislatures. Such control will inevitably be exercised through committees and boards appointed for the purpose, but the continued existence of semi-autonomous parliamentary boards seems to be undesirable. Provision should also be made for a periodical review of all such activities, so that Congressmen in general and the country should keep in touch with them and should influence them.

We have considered the provincial elections which, it is said, may take place early next year. The time is far off yet, and it is by no means impossible that these elections may not take place for a much longer time or may not take place at all, and the new Act may take its rightful place in oblivion. Much may happen in the course of the next year, and war is ever on the horizon, to upset the schemes and time-tables of our rulers. But we cannot speculate on this, and we have to make provision for contingencies That decision might even have been delayed, but dangerous and compromising tendencies seek to influence Congress policy, and the Congress cannot remain silent when the issue is raised and its whole future is in the balance.

The provincial legislatures may come, but few persons, I imagine, are confident about the coming of the federal part of this unholy structure So far as we are concerned, we shall fight against it to our utmost strength, and the primary object of our creating deadlocks in the provinces and making the new Act difficult of functioning, is to kill the federation. With the federation dead, the provincial end of the Act will also go and leave the slate clean for the people of India to write on. That writing, whatever it be, can never admit the right of the Indian states to continue as feudal and autocratic monarchies. They have long survived their day, propped up by an alien power, and have become the strangest anomalies in a changing world. The future has no place for autocracy or feudalism; a free India cannot

tolerate the subjection of many of its children and their deprivation of human rights, nor can it ever agree to a dissection of its body and a cutting up of its limbs. If we stand for any human, political, social or economic rights for ourselves, we stand for those identical rights for the people of the states.

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of all the Congress always put independence first and other questions, including the communal one, second, and refused to allow any of those other questions to take pride of place. Secondly, it argued that the communal problem had arisen from a certain set of circumstances which enabled the third party to exploit the other two. In order to solve it, one had either to get rid of the third party (and that means independence), or get rid of that set of circumstances, which meant a friendly approach by the parties concerned and an attempt to soften the prejudice and fear that filled them. Thirdly, that the majority community must show generosity in the matter to allay the fear and suspicion that minorities, even though unreasonably, might have.

That analysis is, I think, perfectly sound. I would add that, in my opinion, a real solution of the problem will only come when economic issues, affecting all religious groups and cutting across communal boundaries, arise. Apart from the upper middle classes, who live in hopes of office and patronage, the masses and the lower middle classes have to face identical political and economic problems. It is odd and significant that all the communal demands of any group, of which so much is heard, have nothing whatever to do with these problems of the masses and the lower middle classes.

It is also significant that the principal communal leaders, Hindu or Muslim or others, are political reactionaries, quite apart from the communal question. It is sad to think how they have sided with British imperialism in vital matters, how they have given their approval to the suppression of civil liberty, how during these years of agony they have sought to gain narrow profit for their group at the expense of the larger cause of freedom. With them there can be no cooperation, for that would mean cooperation with reaction. But I am sure that with the larger masses and the middle classes, who may have temporarily been led away by the specious claims of their communal leaders, there must be the fullest cooperation, and out of that cooperation will come a fairer solution of this problem.

I am afraid I cannot get excited over this communal issue, important as it is temporarily. It is after all a side issue, and it can have no real importance in the larger scheme of things. Those who think of it as the major issue think in terms of British imperialism continuing permanently in this country. Without that basis of thought, they would *not attach so much importance to one of its inevitable offshoots.* I have no such fear and so my vision of a future India contains neither imperialism nor communalism.

Yet the present difficulty remains and has to be faced. Especially our sympathy must go to the people of Bengal who have suffered most

An additional method for us to increase our contacts with the masses is to organize them as producers and then affiliate such organizations to the Congress or have full cooperation between the two. Such organizations of producers as exist today, such as trade unions and peasant unions, as well as other anti imperialist organisations, could also be brought within this sphere of mutual cooperation for the good of the masses and for the struggle for national freedom. Thus the Congress could have an individual as well as a corporate membership, and retaining its individual character, could influence, and be influenced by, other mass elements.

These are big changes that I have hinted at, and I am by no means sure how they can be brought about, or whether it is possible to go far in this direction in the near future. Still we must move to some extent, at least, if we are to have our roots in the soil of India and draw life *and strength from its millions. The subject is fascinating but complicated* and can only be tackled by an expert committee which I trust will be appointed on behalf of the Congress. The report of that committee must be freely discussed so as to get the widest backing for it.

All this will take us to the next Congress. Meanwhile perhaps some urgent changes are needed in our constitution to remove anomalies and avoid difficulties. Owing to my absence I have had little experience of the working of the new constitution, and cannot make any concrete suggestions. The reduction in the numbers of delegates[9] and All India Congress Committee members would be, to some extent, desirable if there was a background of widespread activity in the primary and secondary committees. Without it, it makes us even less responsive to mass opinion, and, therefore, an increase seems desirable. But the real solution is to increase the interest and day to day activity of the lower committees.

I have been told that the manual labour franchise[10] has not been a success, and has led to a great deal of evasion. If that is so a change is desirable, for a constitution must be such as can be worked easily and without subterfuge

The Congress is an all inclusive body and represents many interests, but essentially it is a political organization with various subsidiary and allied organizations like the Spinners Association and the Village

9 At the Bombay session the number of delegates had been reduced from 6,000 to 2,000

10 One of the conditions laid down by the Congress constitution was that for eligibility to election to an office a person should have performed some manual labour on behalf of the Congress in the form of spinning or other allied activities

Industries Association.[11] These allied organizations work in the economic field, but they do not seek directly to remove the burdens of the peasantry under the present system of land tenure. Nor can the Congress, situated as it is, wholly function as a peasant organization, although in many provinces it has espoused the cause of the peasantry and brought them much relief. It seems to me necessary that the Congress should encourage the formation of peasant unions as well as workers' unions, and cooperate with such as already exist, so that the day to day struggle of the masses might be carried on on the basis of their economic demands and other grievances. This identification of the Congress with the economic struggle of the masses will bring us nearer to them and nearer to freedom than anything else. I would welcome also the organization of other special interests, like those of the women, in the general framework of our national struggle for freedom. The Congress would be in a position to coordinate all these vital activities and thus to base itself on the widest possible mass foundation.

There has been some talk of a militant programme and militant action. I do not know what exactly is meant, but if direct action on a national scale or civil disobedience are meant, then I would say that I see no near prospect of them. Let us not indulge in tall talk before we are ready for big action. Our business today is to put our house in order, to sweep away the defeatist mentality of some people, and to build up our organization with its mass affiliations, as well as to work amongst the masses. The time may come, and that sooner perhaps than we expect, when we might be put to the test. Let us get ready for that test. Civil disobedience and the like cannot be switched on and off when we feel like doing so. It depends on many things, some of which are beyond our control, but in these days of revolutionary change and constantly recurring crises in the world, events often move faster than we do. We shall not lack for opportunities.

The major problem of India today is that of the land—of rural poverty and unemployment and a thoroughly out of date land system. A curious combination of circumstances has held back India during the past few generations, and the political and economic garments it wears no longer fit it and are torn and tattered. In some ways our agrarian conditions are not unlike those of France a hundred and fifty years ago, prior to the great revolution. They cannot continue so for long. At the same time we have become parts of international capitalism and we

11 The All India Village Industries Association was formed at the Bombay session on 27 October 1934 to work for the revival and encouragement of village industries and the moral and physical advancement of the villagers

Industries Association.[11] These allied organizations work in the economic field, but they do not seek directly to remove the burdens of the peasantry under the present system of land tenure. Nor can the Congress, situated as it is, wholly function as a peasant organization, although in many provinces it has espoused the cause of the peasantry and brought them much relief. It seems to me necessary that the Congress should encourage the formation of peasant unions as well as workers' unions, and cooperate with such as already exist, so that the day to day struggle of the masses might be carried on on the basis of their economic demands and other grievances. This identification of the Congress with the economic struggle of the masses will bring us nearer to them and nearer to freedom than anything else. I would welcome also the organization of other special interests, like those of the women, in the general framework of our national struggle for freedom. The Congress would be in a position to coordinate all these vital activities and thus to base itself on the widest possible mass foundation.

There has been some talk of a militant programme and militant action. I do not know what exactly is meant, but if direct action on a national scale or civil disobedience are meant, then I would say that I see no near prospect of them. Let us not indulge in tall talk before we are ready for big action. Our business today is to put our house in order, to sweep away the defeatist mentality of some people, and to build up our organization with its mass affiliations, as well as to work amongst the masses. The time may come, and that sooner perhaps than we expect, when we might be put to the test. Let us get ready for that test. Civil disobedience and the like cannot be switched on and off when we feel like doing so. It depends on many things, some of which are beyond our control, but in these days of revolutionary change and constantly recurring crises in the world, events often move faster than we do. We shall not lack for opportunities.

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suffer the pains and crises which afflict this decaying system. As a result of these elemental urges and conflicts of world forces what will emerge in India none can say. But we can say with confidence that the present order has reached the evening of its day, and it is up to us to try to mould the future as we would like it to be.

The world is filled with rumours and alarms of war. In Abyssinia bloody and cruel war has already gone on for many months,[12] and we have watched anew how hungry and predatory imperialism behaves in its mad search for colonial domains. We have watched also with admiration the brave fight of the Ethiopians for their freedom against heavy odds. You will permit me, I feel sure, to greet them on your behalf and express our deep sympathy for them. Their struggle is something more than a local struggle. It is one of the first effective checks by an African people on an advancing imperialism and already it has had far-reaching consequences.

In the Far East also, war hovers on the horizon and we see an Eastern imperialism advancing methodically and pitilessly over ancient China and dreaming of world empire. Imperialism shows its claws wherever it may be, in the West or in the East.

In Europe an aggressive fascism or nazism steps continuously on the brink of war and vast armed camps arise in preparation for what seems to be the inevitable end of all this. Nations join hands to fight other nations, and progressive forces in each country ally themselves to fight the fascist menace.

Where do we come in in this awful game? What part shall we play in this approaching tragedy? It is difficult to say. But we must not permit ourselves to be passive tools exploited for imperialist ends. It must be our right to say whether we join a war or not, and without that consent there should be no cooperation from us. When the time comes we may have little say in the matter, and so it becomes necessary for the Congress to declare clearly now its opposition to India's participation in any imperialist war, and every war that will be waged by imperialist powers will be an imperialist war, whatever the excuses put forward might be. Therefore we must keep out of it and not allow Indian lives and Indian money to be sacrificed.

To the progressive forces of the world, to those who stand for human freedom and the breaking of political and social bonds, we offer our full cooperation in their struggle against imperialism and fascist reaction, for we realise that our struggle is a common one. Our grievance is not against any people or any country as such, and we know that

12 Ethiopia was invaded by Italy on 3 October 1935.

even in imperialist England, which throttles us, there are many who do not love imperialism and who stand for freedom.

During this period of difficulty and storm and stress, inevitably our minds and hearts turn to our great leader who has guided us and inspired us by his dynamic personality these many years. Physical ill health prevents him now from taking his full share in public activities.[13] Our good wishes go out to him for his rapid and complete recovery, and with those wishes is the selfish desire to have him back again amongst us. We have differed from him in the past and we shall differ from him in the future about many things, and it is right that each one of us *should act up to his convictions. But the bonds that hold us* together are stronger and more vital than our differences, and the pledges we took together still ring in our ears. How many of us have that passionate desire for Indian independence and the raising of our poverty-stricken masses which consumes him? Many things he taught us—long years ago it seems now—fearlessness and discipline, and the will to sacrifice ourselves for the larger cause. That lesson may have grown dim but we have not forgotten it, nor can we ever forget him who has made us what we are and raised India again from the depths. The pledge of independence that we took together still remains to be redeemed, and we wait again for him to guide us with his wise counsel.

But no leader, however great he be, can shoulder the burden single-handed; we must all share it to the best of our ability and not seek helplessly to rely on others to perform miracles. Leaders come and go; many of our best loved captains and comrades have left us all too soon, but India goes on and so does India's struggle for freedom. It may be that many of us must suffer still and die so that India may live and be free. The promised land may yet be far from us and we may have to march wearily through the deserts, but who will take away from us that deathless hope which has survived the scaffold and immeasurable suffering and sorrow; who will dare to crush the spirit of India which has found rebirth again and again after so many crucifixions?

13 Mahatma Gandhi was present at the Congress session but did not participate in the deliberations

11. Concluding Remarks at the A.I.C.C.[1]

I congratulate you on your successfully helping the Chair in conducting the deliberations of both the subjects committee and the A.I.C.C.

I am happy to take an active part in Congress work with my comrades after some years.

No one knows my weakness better than myself. I know you have put up with my interruptions and heard me patiently. The other day Mr. Satyamurti stopped me during one of my outbursts, I immediately recognised my fault and expressed my regret; I know that all of you have overlooked several other minor errors on my part. I must thank you all for bearing with me. You possibly do not know that I feel things very much and feel them very intensely.

1. Lucknow, 14 April 1936 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 15 April 1936.

12. On Industrialization[1]

I had been so overworked that I had not had time to see much of the exhibition, which shows the lines on which small industries can be developed in the villages to improve the economic conditions and remove the unemployment which is breaking the back of the people. I believe in large scale industrialization but I admit that mass production and village industries on a small scale can go hand in hand. The real problem of India is that of improving the condition of the teeming millions. This cannot be done so long as the present laws are not abolished and exploitation is not ended. Both the social and capitalistic structures must be changed. You can see in Lucknow, taluqdars' palaces, while in the same city stand houses which can be brought down by a kick. Under the present system of exploitation the poor are becoming poorer, and the rich and lazy, richer. The people cannot bear heavy taxation; for instance, the salt tax and other taxes press heavily on the people for whom the smallest burden is unbearable.

1 Speech at the Congress exhibition, Lucknow, 14 April 1936 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 15 April 1936.

13. Concluding Remarks at the Congress Session[1]

It is customary on such occasions when all business is over for someone to indulge in a funeral oration. So Mrs. Sarojini Naidu has come here uninvited to deliver that oration about the Congress and about the President of that Congress who has sat on the high pedestal for these three days and is now going back into oblivion.

1. Lucknow, 15 April 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16 April 1936.

14. On the Selection of the New Working Committee[1]

According to the new constitution, the responsibility of selection is now thrown on the President. Personally, I do not agree with the new provision.[2] The Congress Working Committee, as the executive, will have *to implement the resolutions passed by the Congress. I am of opinion* that it should be a compact body ensuring full team spirit. I feel that there is a necessity to reconsider the clause in this connection at the earliest opportunity.

I had not till now given much thought as to who should constitute the new Working Committee, because I was anxious to know the final decisions the Congress was going to take regarding the several subjects on which there was difference of opinion and clash of ideas. It is my feeling that even if there are differences, we should make it possible to pull together with mutual understanding. The Working Committee is the biggest executive of the Congress and is responsible for all actions of the Indian National Congress during the year. I am not in favour of allowing small committees to decide big issues, such as are sure to come

1. Speech at the A I C C session which met after the conclusion of the plenary session, Lucknow, 15 April 1936. From *The Hindu*, 16 April 1936.
2. Article XII of the Congress constitution as amended at the Bombay session on 28 October 1934 stipulated that "the President of the annual session shall for his term of office select fourteen members of the A I C.C to constitute his Working Committee including not more than three general secretaries and two treasurers of the Congress."

before the Working Committee. But then the All India Congress Committee generally meets only four or five times a year, and therefore the All India Congress Committee should meet more often and should keep itself in constant touch with provincial committees and primary four-anna members, who should be able to apprise the A.I.C.C. of the trend of feeling among the primary members.

It is also up to us to see that the clash of ideas, which is bound to occur, should not impair our strength. We welcome new ideas, and ours is a living organisation and there is nothing to despair if there is a clash of ideas and difference of opinion. As a matter of fact, it is an essential part of progress. Each province in India is a nation by itself, and has its own problems and questions to deal with and, therefore, there is nothing unnatural if there is a clash of ideas and opinion. In order to get over such difficulties, it is necessary to have frequent exchange of views and draw the benefit out of such exchanges.

There are several duties which we have to fulfil, and it is our duty to know clearly what the demands of the people are and how to fulfil them. You witnessed, during this Congress, a clash of ideas. I have been out of this country for a long time. When I first knew about the clash of ideas, I was not at all surprised, as I thought it was an essential part of progress. These clashes of ideas are bound to increase. I gave my opinion on several matters which came before the Congress There was no implicit agreement between me and the Congress and, therefore, I have no grievance about it. Disunion will weaken us. As the English proverb says, "let us hang together, or we hang separately."

As regards the formation of the Working Committee, I consider it a great responsibility. The constitution says that members should be in close agreement with the President. The Working Committee is the executive of the Congress and it has to do what the Congress directs it to do. It must have team work. It might be that I might be able to select a Committee, which might agree with me. They might also disagree with me.

No President would like to have an executive which cannot see eye to eye with him Therefore I thought why should I not take the All India Congress Committee into my confidence and make it also responsible for selecting the new Working Committee; but this will surprise the A I C.C and it will not be proper as some of the members have already left. We will be meeting sooner or later. I should have placed the names of the new Working Committee members before you, but as I had no time to do this, I shall announce the Committee at the earliest opportunity.

I assure the Committee of full cooperation, and ask you to bring your grievances before me. I would request the members of the A.I.C.C. to take steps to implement the resolutions passed at the open session as soon as you return to your respective places. You should give effect to the provisions of the amended constitution immediately. I make a personal appeal to the members to think of the agrarian programme and immediately get in touch with the provincial, district and taluka Congress committees without waiting for a circular from the A.I.C.C. office, and thus get the material ready.

15. Statement on the New Working Committee[1]

The constitution of the Congress directs the President to select the members of the Working Committee for his term of office. This duty and this burden thus devolve upon me and I have given this matter the most careful and earnest consideration. Inevitably, I have consulted many colleagues and sought their guidance in the matter. This became specially incumbent on me as I was placed in a somewhat peculiar position. As President, I was the chief executive of the Congress and was supposed to represent that great organisation. But in some major matters of policy I do not represent the majority viewpoint to which expression has been given in the resolutions of the Lucknow Congress. Thus the Working Committee could not, at the same time, represent, on these matters, my views as well as those of the majority. I have felt that it would be improper for me, under these circumstances, to select a Committee entirely in consonance with my views and that the views of the majority of Congressmen, as expressed in the open sessions of the Congress, must prevail. I was tempted to shift the burden of selection on the All India Congress Committee, so that this Committee might choose such persons to represent it as it thought fit and proper. But after much thought I have come to the conclusion that this would not be a proper course to adopt and I may not shirk the responsibility that has been cast on me. I have tried therefore to form a Committee which represents mainly the majority viewpoint, but which also contains some

1 Lucknow, 16 April 1936 *Congress Bulletin*, 20 April 1936 Extracts. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp 6 7.

representatives of the minority.[2] Such a selection has its disadvantages. I have endeavoured, however, to make it a Committee which, I hope, will pull together in the struggle against imperialism and serve the Congress and the country worthily in this great struggle. I trust that my colleagues of the All India Congress Committee and Congressmen in general will give this Committee their loyal cooperation and support and strengthen its hands in the great work before us, so that we can build up a joint and impregnable anti imperialist front.

The Committee is limited, under the constitution, to fifteen members, including the President. It is impossible to include all those whom I would like to have in it. I regret especially that some old and valued members, who have served on the Working Committee in past years, have been left out of it. I hope, however, that we shall continue to have their full cooperation and that we shall frequently avail ourselves of their advice....

2. Out of 13 members, only three, Narendra Deva, Jayaprakash Narayan and Achyut Patwardhan, were socialists.

16. On Mass Action[1]

Question: What are the potentialities of the Congress majorities in provincial legislatures?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Success in elections to the legislatures by itself cannot be a decisive step towards the attainment of complete independence. The real step must be based on activity outside the legislatures, but the elections, as well as the subsequent activity in the legislatures, might be made to fit in with outside activity, and thus strengthen each other.

Q: Will complete independence precede reconstruction of Indian society on a socialist basis, or will the two happen simultaneously?

JN Ordinarily, national independence will precede social reconstruction, but it is possible that one may follow the other within a short

1. Interview to the press, Allahabad, 19 April 1936 From *The Hindu*, 21 April 1936

space of time, or might even be almost simultaneous. This depends on many factors, national and international, and specially on economic conditions prevailing in the country. There is at present in India a vital need for economic change, that is, a basis for both political and social movements, and no political change which does not help in solving the economic problems of the country, can be on a stable basis.

It is true that political change involves elimination of the third party, that is to say, foreign imperialism, which will inevitably result in weakening greatly the reactionary elements in India itself. Many of these are almost part and parcel of that imperialism and will stand or fall with it. Some have a separate existence as well, and will survive even political freedom for a while.

Q. For the attainment of complete independence will India have ultimately to resort to civil disobedience and non payment of taxes, if and when possible, or do you suggest some other methods?

JN: *All attempts at fundamental changes, political or social, must be based on mass movements. Civil disobedience has been a type of this mass movement which has largely fitted in with the existing conditions of India as well as the Indian temperament. Its background is likely to continue. Mass movements of this type can have nothing conspiratorial about them. Only small groups function in that way, and they function ineffectively.*

Q: How will a world war help India in furtherance of her political and economic objectives?

JN: A world war may help the Indian struggle or hinder it. It is impossible to say what the result of such a war would be and how it would affect India. We may not look forward to such an upheaval in the hope that it would necessarily benefit India, and so far as war or a very big economic crisis is symptomatic of the break-up of the existing economic structure of the world, it is a helpful sign, but it does not necessarily follow that the result of such a war would lead to the establishment of a higher social order. Ordinarily, that ought to be the result, but this result may be delayed on account of widespread destruction and ruin caused by war. It is therefore necessary for us to strengthen our forces that today stand against imperialism and war, and, at the same time, prepare ourselves for suitable action in case a crisis breaks out.

The Lucknow Congress resolution on the war danger gives a clear lead on this issue.[2] It is not an academic lead but a practical one, and we must try our utmost to make the nation understand it and act up to it when the time comes.

Q: Do you apprehend any crisis at an early date in your "cabinet" over the immediate programme of the Congress?

JN: A crisis does not come with previous warning. In my opinion there is no reason why a crisis should arise when all members are anxious to work with team spirit in the interest of the country.

Q: What is your opinion about the business transacted at the Lucknow session?

JN: I do not like to express my opinion in one short interview. I might think over and issue a statement surveying the Congress' attainments etc., during the last session.

Q: Is it not necessary to call a meeting of the A.I.C.C. soon to decide the question of office acceptance, especially so as the government scheme for conducting the next elections is nearing completion and the A.I.C.C. will have to participate in the preparation of electoral rolls etc. if the Congress is to contest the elections?

JN: Events will certainly be taken into consideration in calling a meetng of the A.I.C.C. but no date can be anticipated yet.

Q: What is your reaction to Lord Linlithgow's statement that he would try to keep in touch with various leaders of different political parties?[3]

JN: I am not prepared to answer this question as it is somewhat premature.

2. The Congress declared its "opposition" to India's participation in any "imperialist war".
3. The Viceroy in his broadcast on 18 April 1936 had said that the successful working of representative government required that he should be in touch with the leaders of all political parties.

17. Circular to P. C. Cs[1]

Allahabad
April 22, 1936

Dear Comrade,

Now that the Congress is over, I venture to address you and to draw your attention to some of its principal resolutions. These resolutions cast a responsibility on all of us and we have to take steps to give effect to them in so far as we can. I trust that you will immediately circularise your district and local committees on this subject and request them to hold committee meetings, as well as public meetings, in order to give full publicity to the Congress resolutions and plan out their future work in accordance with them.

Our office has already addressed you on the subject of the changes in the Congress constitution, and copies of the amended constitution and the Congress resolutions are being sent to you separately. Please study this constitution carefully and arrange to take early steps to give effect to the amendments and the transitory provisions. This will probably result in enlarging your committees and in adding to your A.I.C.C. members. This desirable change at the top should be accompanied by a livening up of the primary committees so that even our primary members might take more interest and greater part in our day to day activities. With a view to bring this about, as well as to broaden the mass basis of the Congress, a committee has been appointed.[2] This committee proposes to issue a questionnaire to you in order to have the benefit of your experience and advice.

The long and comprehensive resolution on the suppression of civil liberties is one to which the fullest publicity should be given and it should be *repeated* at public meetings.[3] Special point is given to this resolution by the arrest and detention of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose as he was on his way to attend the Congress. A suggestion has been made that all India demonstrations should take place on a particular day to mark our indignation at this further outrage of public opinion and to send our greetings to our comrade Subhas Bose. I commend this suggestion to you and hope that such meetings will be held as

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India
2. The committee consisted of Rajendra Prasad, Jaramdas Doulatram and Jayaprakash Narayan.
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widely as possible on Sunday, May 10th. At these meetings, besides the special resolution on Subhas Babu's detention, there should also be a repetition of the Congress resolution on the suppression of civil liberties.

Another Congress resolution which requires publicity is the one on war danger. The importance and urgency of this should be stressed and the implications explained to our people. The fact that it is not merely an academic resolution but one which affects us, nationally and individually, and which is likely to have far-reaching consequences, should be made clear.

Every Congressman will realise the great importance of the resolution on the agrarian programme.[4] This resolution is still incomplete and in order to fill in the gaps and make it a complete whole, the cooperation of provincial Congress committees, their local committees and kisan sabhas is desired. May I suggest, therefore, that you should ask your local committees immediately to consider this problem *and to confer with their primary committees, so that the widest possible* discussion of this vital question takes place? Each P.C.C. should then make its own recommendations to the Working Committee.

As you are aware, the resolution which was debated most in the Congress was the one on the new Government of India Act. Whatever the differences in regard to this might have been, one fact stands clear: that the Act has to be combated and rejected. On that there is unanimity and it is desirable to stress this as well as to make this the plank of our anti imperialist programme. The Congress stands firmly for independence and anti imperialism and it is only with this background that we can consider any question. The constructive side of our rejection is the constituent assembly and full publicity should be given to this in public meetings. The slogan of the constituent assembly must be popularised and explained to the masses.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. The Congress resolved that the appalling poverty of the peasantry was "due to a repressive land tenure intensified in recent years by the great slump" and called upon the provincial Congress committees to make suitable recommendations

18. Interview to Railwaymen[1]

Question: What benefit do you expect to derive from cooperation with die hards?[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru: I seek to derive benefit by utilizing all forces available in the country and making use of the strong nationalistic feeling in the country.

Q: What about the squabbles within the provincial Congress committees?

JN: The Congress might not work properly in all provinces, but it is a matter for investigation after facts are reported.

Q: Is it possible to have a socialistic organization without capturing the state?

JN: Both may come simultaneously though it is difficult without obtaining political power. But no power can come without the spread and popularization of correct socialistic ideology.

1. Nagpur, 25 April 1936. From *The Hindustan Times*, 27 April 1936
2. Old members of the Working Committee

19. Subhas Bose and Foreign Propaganda[1]

In the course of the discussions at the subjects committee meetings at Lucknow on April 14, my attention was drawn by a member to a public statement made by Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose, prior to his arrest, in which he had stated that the Working Committee had declined to vest him with a representative capacity on behalf of the

1 Statement to the press, Wardha, 28 April 1936 *The Indian Annual Register*, January June 1936, Vol I, pp 256 257. Jawaharlal issued earlier a shorter statement on the same subject at Lucknow on 14 April 1936 That statement has not been reprinted.

Congress for carrying on foreign work.[2] I was asked if any communication asking for such authority had been received by the then President of the A.I.C.C. or by the Working Committee and whether the Committee had considered it.

As I had no personal knowledge, I asked Rajendra Babu and he told me that during his whole period of office, that is nearly a year and a half prior to the Lucknow Congress, he had received no communication from Sjt. Subhas Bose on the subject and thus the question of its being considered by the Working Committee had not arisen.

It has now been pointed out to me that Sjt. Subhas Bose issued a statement to the press on this subject in July 1935 and various press agencies and newspapers, presuming that the Working Committee would consider the subject, made forecasts and commented on it in August 1935.

May I point out that these forecasts and unauthorised reports of proceedings of Working Committee meetings are wholly unreliable. I have been astonished at reading in the press during the last month about matters which had never been even touched upon during our Committee meetings. It is quite clear that all the references in the press in August 1935 to an alleged letter from Sjt. Subhas Bose being considered by the Working Committee were without foundation. No such letter was received by Rajendra Babu or the A.I.C.C. office, no such letter is to be found in our office files, and there is no mention of any such discussion in the detailed minutes of the Working Committee meeting. Neither the then President nor the Secretary has any recollection of even an informal letter on the subject. It is difficult for them to remember now if they saw the press statement at the time, but in any event the Working Committee does not usually proceed on the basis of press statements as these might be incorrect.

I find no clear reference to a letter in any of Sjt. Bose's statements. It is possible that the misapprehension in the minds of the public has arisen owing to some part of Sjt. Subhas Bose's statement being construed to refer to a letter. It is also possible that a letter he sent was intercepted by government.

2. Subhas Bose in a letter to the United Press had stated that he felt he could not "render any substantial service to our cause while remaining in Europe", as "the Working Committee of the Congress have declined to vest me with any representative capacity. I have felt that my achievement has been far less than what it should have been. In these circumstances my place is among my countrymen at home"

On the larger question of foreign propaganda I do not wish to say anything in this statement. I have long been in favour of our developing foreign contacts and a world outlook. But when we come to the manner of doing so, the subject is full of difficulty. Under present conditions in Europe and in India I doubt if it is desirable or possible to have official representatives of the Congress in foreign countries. This may come later. I imagine that well known Congressmen can do good work in foreign countries even without a special authorisation. Personally I would prefer to be such an independent Congressman when I go abroad, than one whose words have to be weighed carefully lest they commit the Congress. Whenever I spoke in Europe during my last stay there I prefaced my remarks by saying that I did not speak officially in the name of the Congress and could not commit it. I did so even after my election to the Lucknow Congress presidentship.[3]

It is our misfortune that Subhas Babu is cut off from us at present. If he were available I am sure the misapprehension in the minds of some people would be removed.

3 See *ante*, section 1, item 46.

AT THE LUCKNOW CONGRESS, APRIL 1936

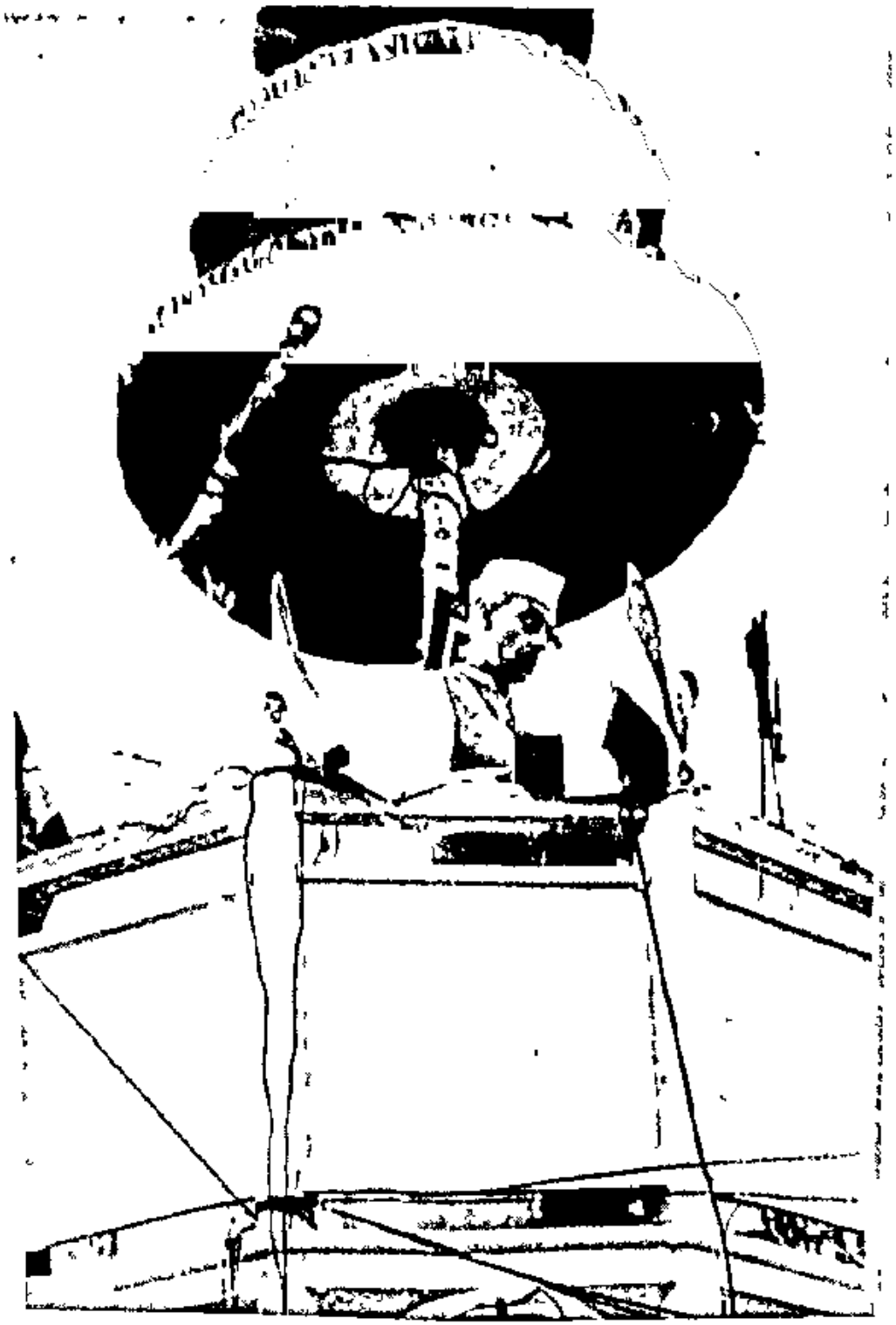

AT THE LUCKNOW CONGRESS, APRIL 1936

4

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN I

1. Vote for Congress and Independence[1]

Since my last visit to Nagpur in 1929, vast changes have taken place in the political history of the country. All these years we have put up a brave fight against a most powerful government. We might not have achieved our objective but we have been successful in rousing the spirit of the nation. It is only by such trials of strength that success can be achieved. There are ups and downs in life and if we lose heart in the fight the obstacles will increase. The question of independence should be uppermost in our minds and all other problems should be subordinate to it.

The Communal Award issue was brought about by the government in conformity with their policy of distracting the public mind from the main problem. Independence and communal representation cannot go together and no Congressman can support the Communal Award.

I cannot say when the elections under the new constitution will be held but whenever elections approach, new parties, some of them unheard of, spring up like mushrooms and canvass for support. Whatever the colour of these parties may be, they generally support the government. I will not ask you to cast a single vote in favour of the Congress if you do not wish to vote for independence. But you should not be carried away by false promises made by Congress opponents. It appears that Hindus and Muslims are engaged in a race for demonstrating their loyalty. Muslims have made it almost their profession to flatter the government and the Hindus are now imitating them in the hope of currying favours.

In the event of a sudden outbreak of war I cannot definitely say whether India will profit thereby, but the nation should discuss the question and be prepared to take a decision regarding participation in the war The choice of participating in the war lies not with the Viceroy or the Secretary of State for India but rests with the nation.

As regards the carrying out of the agrarian programme of the Congress, the peasantry have to be organised on the basis of their day to day struggle, and with the formation of their committees in every village, have to be linked with the Congress which would then be a really powerful mass organisation. These primary committees should communicate

1. Speech at Nagpur, 25 April 1936 From *The Hindu*, 27 April 1936

their proposals and demands to the provincial Congress committees and then to the A.I.C.C. Power should thus go upwards from below.

The country must organise protests against certain restrictions placed on civil liberties of citizens by the government so that further fetters may not be put on them. In my opinion the government attitude in respect of Subhas Chandra Bose is vindictive. It is the irony of fate that a man who returned to his motherland after several years should be incarcerated.

2. On the Dissensions in the Congress[1]

I would like to mention at the outset that reports are appearing in the newspapers of the country about dissensions in the Congress. Some of them are true, but in spite of all that, we have pulled together, and I think we will do so in the future also. Our differences are those of principles and not of personalities and there is a strong desire on our part to continue to cooperate together.

The Lucknow Congress is another landmark in the history of the Congress and it will always be remembered in so far as its discussions related to principles. That is a sign of progress.

As regards the forthcoming elections to the provincial legislatures early next year, I would ask the people what they are going to do. Preparations in this connection have already started and vested interests like the zamindars and talukdars are organizing themselves for the occasion. I would ask those who are present to see that a candidate who seeks their votes either on individual merits or on some party ticket is loyal and honest to his or his party's principles, that the country's interests are safe in his hands and that he is not likely to betray the confidence placed in him. They should also see how he is going to solve the burning problems of the day, namely abject poverty, unemployment and like subjects, and what attitude he had adopted in the country's fight for independence.

The Congress has expressed in unequivocal terms what it thinks of the new constitution and how it is going to work inside the legislatures.

1. Speech at Lucknow, 4 May 1936. From *The Hindustan Times*, 5 May 1936.

The first step that the Congress will take will, no doubt, be to end this constitution. If the Congress fights the elections, its candidates will seek your votes on the Congress mandate and they will abide by the same.

I hope you are aware of the Congress decision to observe the Subhas Day on May 10 next. The country is endangered in respect of civil liberties and the government is ruthlessly suppressing the press, literature and hundreds of organizations in the country. In provinces like Bengal and the North West Frontier, a state of martial law prevails. I appeal to everyone to whatever school of thought he belongs to unite and raise his voice against such suppression of civil liberties. You know that an agitation was organized in the country against the Rowlatt Act. The present laws are much stronger and repressive. The Rowlatt Act, when compared with the present laws, seems to me as a charter of independence. I condemn the mentality which makes the people bear in silence all repression. I hope you will all attend, in large numbers, the Subhas Day meeting to voice your feelings against the suppression of civil liberties.

I would like you to educate the people as to the significance of the Congress resolution on future wars, namely that they must in no case permit themselves to be passive tools for exploitation and they must keep out of it and must not allow Indian lives and money to be sacrificed in enslaving the peoples of other nations.

I have faith in socialism and I believe that it is the only key to the solution of India's problems. Poverty, unemployment, degradation and subjection of the Indian people can only end through socialism. I admit that within the Congress there is a majority at present who are opposed to my views, but I hope that before long they will understand socialism in its true perspective and be converted to it. The government is busy in repressing the country not only politically but also economically. Economic exploitation of the country is very dangerous and the new Government of India Act strengthens the hands of the government to enslave economically the people with more firmness. I therefore request you to study these problems more deeply.

3. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Allahabad
5.5.36

My dear Mahmud,

I read the letter you gave me carefully after your departure and I have read it again.[2] I wanted to write to you soon but stress of work and travelling prevented me.

I find it a little difficult to put my viewpoint before you. You imagine that perhaps after another talk I could help you to solve some problems which trouble you. Do you not remember that during the last dozen years or more we have had a fair number of talks and we have worked together? It is true that during the last four or five years we have not had much chance owing to my having been in prison or abroad. But even when I was out in between and you came to see me I noticed no special desire on your part to discuss any important matter with me. And now on my return I saw with some sorrow how very far you were from me in thought. In the Working Committee meetings I was completely isolated and there was not a single member to support me. You were struck by my address at Lucknow, but I have said and written a great deal on the same subject. Have you taken the trouble to read it? Have you indeed felt that you must try to study these subjects and try to understand my viewpoint? The last dozen years or more have been years of hard and continuous work for me, of self-education and study and thought. For many others they have also been years of study and mental growth. But others again have not taken the trouble to think or study and have remained vaguely where they were. But the world changes.

When you were here I had an hour's talk with you. I gave you the background of my thought. I had nothing more to say. After that it was for you to enquire and ask questions. But you remain quiet and expect me to probe into your mind. That I cannot do, especially as other persons and matters are continually demanding attention.

We are today faced by a critical situation—not because of government but because of ourselves. There is tremendous mental conflict in India. Vast elemental forces are moving and coming into conflict. Personalities do not count for much when this happens, though no doubt they

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Mahmud wrote that he wanted to talk to Jawaharlal to clarify some doubts. He asked Jawaharlal to refrain from criticising the government in order to remain free and carry on his work for the Congress.

have their role to play. I am afraid for you politics is a game of personalities. Going to jail or not is neither here nor there. Nobody wants to go to jail but there are issues which are more vital and it is time we thought of them.

Come here whenever you feel like it. You are always welcome. But do not expect me to talk to you in the air. If you wish to discuss a subject with me I shall gladly do so. The invitation must come from you.

I am going to Bombay on the 14th for a week.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

4. On the Strike of Sweepers in Broach[1]

May 6, 1936

Dear Comrade,

I have received a number of letters about the strike of scavengers in Broach which seems to have been going on for some weeks now.[2] I do not know all the facts of the case and hence I am taking the liberty to enquire from you what the position is. Both from the larger political point of view as well as the equally important one of our raising the depressed classes, our sympathies must inevitably go out to these people at the bottom of the social ladder. I trust, therefore, that your local Congress committees, in the area concerned, will interest themselves in the matter and will try to help in gaining redress of such legitimate grievances as the sweepers on strike may suffer from.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. To the secretary, Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee. A.I.C.C. File No. L-8/1935, p. 41, N.M.M.L.
2. The municipal sweepers of Broach had demanded better conditions of work and higher wages and, dissatisfied with the arbitration award, had gone on strike.

5. To the Secretary, Bombay P.C.C.[1]

May 6, 1936

Dear Comrade,

I have noticed in some newspapers, with alarm, that some proposal has been made for a special reception to me being given at Victoria Terminus, *involving the uncoupling of the railway carriage in which I might* be travelling. While I appreciate the kindly thought underlying this proposal, I would beg of you not to waste your time, money and energy over this uncoupling business. What it exactly means I do not know. But *inevitably it sounds melodramatic and I dislike melodrama.*

I have already informed you that I shall reach Bombay by the Mail on the 15th morning.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-38/1936, p. 343, N.M.M.L.

6. Homage to M. A. Ansari[1]

India sorrows again for a dear and great son of hers[2] That is our unhappy fate; but though we become used to sorrow and tragedy the pang is no less keen, the bitter pain of it remains. Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari has passed away and the nation of which he was a shining ornament and our national movement of which he was so long a strong pillar and a guide feel desolate and shaken. We remember afresh his brilliant gifts and his service to the nation and his sacrifices for the cause of freedom And large numbers of us think with anguish of a loving and warm hearted friend who never failed us and who is no more. It was 31 years ago, almost to a day, that I met him first[3] and during these long years of travail and common suffering I may not say what his friendship has meant to me.

1 Statement to the press, Allahabad, 10 May 1936. *The Leader*, 12 May 1936
2 *Ansari died on 10 May 1936.*
3. Jawaharlal first met Ansari in London in May 1905. Ansari was then a house-surgeon in a hospital.

News reaches me already of meetings and hartals spontaneously organized for today as the sad news spreads. But it is fitting that we honour the memory of our loved leader and great-hearted comrade on a special day all over this vast land of ours. I fix Sunday next, May 17, for this observance and I trust that meetings will be held on that day all over India to express our grief and sorrow at his passing and to convey our respectful sympathy to the lady who has been his partner in life and who now has to face this greatest of sorrows.

7. On the Strike of Steamer Workers[1]

Comrade Sibnath Banerji[2] has come to me and pressed me to go to Calcutta to meet the workers on the steamer services who have been on strike for so long. He has told me of the modest demands of these strikers and of how they have been rejected and every effort to come to an arrangement has been repulsed by the employers. I greatly regret that it is not possible for me to visit the strikers now without upsetting many important engagements. I know that I could not help them much by going to them/but still I should have liked to be with them for a while to show my sympathy with them in their distress and my solidarity with them in their moderate demands. I trust that they will forgive me for not coming.

This strike is almost a typical one which shows the nature of the system under which workers have to labour. Their conditions of work are hard and the recompense they get is the least possible. And when they ask for more and press for more they are asked to sign slave bonds and are dismissed and starved out by the wealthy and powerful company which has drawn its wealth from their labours. Many years ago at the Karachi session the National Congress laid down that transport service on land and river should be nationalized. That demand gathers force when we see powerful private interests owning these vital services, exploiting their employees for their own private advantage. The solution of this problem is the solution that the Congress proposed at

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 12 May 1936. *The Leader*, 16 May 1936.
2. One of the Meerut Conspiracy Case prisoners, founder member of the Congress Socialist Party; later a prominent member of the Hind Mazdoor Sabha, at present a Sarvodaya worker.

Karachi. But today we cannot enforce that solution, and the workers have to carry on their fight for betterment under the most adverse conditions and against powerful vested interests. They will suffer greatly and often lose but I have no doubt that ultimately their cause will win.

It is 90 days today since the strike started. For three months the strikers have suffered great distress and the mere fact that they have held out so long is a measure of their resentment at the conditions under which they have had to work. I send them my sympathy though I know that it does not mean much and hope that they will not be disheartened by temporary failures. The cause they struggle for is bound up with the larger cause of all the workers in India and elsewhere. If they remember this they will take heart.

8. Appeal for an Anti-Imperialist United Front[1]

I have come to this city after five years. Whenever I pay a visit to Bombay I feel happy, because Bombay has played a very important role in the country's struggle for independence. It has stood out as a separate entity from the whole country and carved out a special place for itself. I consider that Bombay, in a way, represents India. It has its capitalists, its rich people, and side by side it has its workers, its unemployed—the exploited thousands. Paying a visit to Bombay one can have a fair idea about India and its conditions.

I thank you for the reception accorded to me in the morning and at this meeting and I am overjoyed at the enthusiasm evinced by the people. But even in the joy and happiness there is the undercurrent of sorrow at the sudden death of one of India's greatest patriots and leaders, Dr. M. A. Ansari.

During the last one and a half months, since the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress, I have been addressing meetings at several places, big and small, and giving expression to my views on the situation in the country. The Lucknow session of the Congress was full of conflicts, each side trying to pull its own way. It was at Lucknow that I placed my views. I think that it is necessary and essential that work should be carried on after having a clear conception of things, especially when it is a question of carrying on a big movement. It is

1 Bombay, 15 May 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16 May 1936.

the duty of the Congress workers to see that one does not deceive the other. That is the reason why I, though elected President of the Indian National Congress, told the people of my way of thinking. I told them towards what I am inclined so that all Congressmen may know my views on several questions that are facing the country. It is no use being petty when the issues before us are very big. If one is to be petty or small minded and wants to keep back something from one's colleagues, good progress cannot be expected.

The small and petty fights that are being carried on, forgetting the major and bigger issues that are facing the country, and such other things dishearten me several times. Having definite views on different issues and discussing them is a sign of healthiness. Such discussions are necessary. It would help the Congress workers and other members to know the situation and the different views on the subject. It would be really a good thing if the workers take up their work after having a clear conception of what they are going to do. The Congress wants lakhs and lakhs of Indians to be prepared thoroughly to carry on the struggle for independence when such an occasion arises. It is really unfortunate that many people are feeling disheartened at the new situation that has arisen in the country. But I think it provides an opportunity to the workers to think and consider the whole question from both sides and come to a decision. Once a decision is arrived at, it is easy to carry on the work. The Congress fight for independence is such that, at the very outset, the leaders of the movement are clapped into jails and it falls to the lot of the workers and followers to carry on the struggle outside; and that can be done only if they know exactly what it is.

At the Lucknow session of the Congress, I placed my views on the situation in the country. One of the main questions that was discussed at the Congress was the attitude of the Congress towards the Government of India Act. There was also the question regarding entering the legislatures. These are questions on which workers are entitled to have their views. A few months ago, while in England, some people asked me as to what Indians would do with the Government of India Act. I replied that the Congress would do exactly what was proper and necessary. I told them: "You ask us to cooperate with you. How can you ask for cooperation while you are carrying on repression?" The first and foremost duty of every Indian is to break himself away from the shackles that are binding him. The primary question is the achievement of independence for the country. Amidst minor things that are surrounding the people, many of them forget the major issue.

Every incident that happens in one or the other corner of the world has its effect on every other part. If one wants to understand a certain

portion of the picture, it will be better understood if he sees and studies the whole picture. Hence it is essential that one should know the international situation as India is part of the world. It is also necessary to discuss and find out as to what are the causes for the particular conditions that are existing in India. The hundred and fifty years of British rule in India form only a fraction of the thousands of years' history. One should consider the relations now existing between India and England and why they are so. Abyssinia has been annexed by Italy.[2] Is there any difference between Abyssinia and India? They may look separate but both of them are parts of the same picture. Imperialism was started in India by England and other countries followed it up and imitated England. Hence it is essential for the people to closely follow and study the international situation.

A few years ago the Congress decided on achieving complete independence because that is the only and the right course to follow. As to when we will reach our goal depends on the strength and forces that are at the command of the Congress. One is bound to wonder, after looking at things, "Where are we drifting?" I have heard that some merchants in this city are dissatisfied and are agitated over my presidential address, possibly because they think that what I preach will harm them. I do not know what exactly is the complaint and what are the speeches that were delivered, but I will be in Bombay for some days more and I would like to understand things better and then I may have something to say about it. They are possibly afraid of what I preached because they have looked at it from a different angle of vision. The main issue is to remove the existing poverty in the country. How can that be done? A solution cannot be arrived at by covering one knot with another. The solution lies in untying the knot. But one should not be afraid of untying the knot. In the process as far as possible no harm should be done to anyone. The untying of the knot would mean benefit not only to the people of India but to the whole world. The question is of untying the knot and not whether somebody will be harmed in the process. That is altogether a separate question. It would be proper if the vested interests themselves consider the whole question with a view to arrive at a solution. But if they want to perpetuate the present poverty in the country and want the present system of exploitation to continue, then the socialist solution is bound to come.

This is my solution of the problem. But I am prepared to consider any alternative, if anyone suggests, by which the problem can be solved. In the event of my being convinced that that method is practical I will

2. Ethiopia was annexed by Italy on 5 May 1936.

certainly join in the consummation of that solution. Upheavals are bound to come. As it is not possible to stop earthquakes, so it is not possible to stop upheavals. Old clothes will not fit when a child grows up. If he has to be clothed, then it should be by stitching new clothes. The old clothes cannot be forced on the child as he will either tear them off or they will not fit him. In the same way the present structure of society is such that the old order of things cannot and will not fit in, and it is essential that something ought to be done soon. If the government in India had tried to mend matters, possibly things would have been better, but that was not done. It is for the people to solve the problem.

There is some truth in that I do not like landlords and princes. But the question is not whether one likes them or not, or whether they are good people or bad, but that the landlords and princes do not fit in anywhere in the present order of things. It is not a question of individual likes or dislikes. The question is how to solve the present problem. Even if some persons try to apply a brake to the inevitable progress towards major change, progress will never be stopped. The forces will be such that they will break the brakes and proceed further.

In the event of a war, the only thing that Inida can do is to declare that she will have nothing to do with such a war.

After a few days Congressmen will come before you asking you to cast your votes for them. Besides Congressmen, many others also will be coming. The Congress programme will be placed before the country very soon, but I do not know what it may contain. But I am sure of one thing that Congressmen will be entering the legislatures to make the constitution unworkable. The communal parties or other parties will ask for the votes of the people in their individual capacity and not as representatives of the poorer classes or the unemployed, the workers or the peasants. If one were to see the demands that will be put up either by the Hindus or the Muslims one will find that there is nothing really beneficial demanded either for the Muslim or the Hindu poor. It will be a demand for a few more government jobs, etc. Or they will be getting into the legislatures for the benefit of those few at the top and not for the poorer classes. They do not contest the elections on any principle or ideology. But Congressmen will be asking for your votes on the Congress programme. They will never come before you as individuals. Their demands are not for their benefit, but for the common benefit. If you agree with the demands then you should vote for Congressmen.

Those who state that the Congress is getting weaker because of the differences of opinion are mistaken. This is not correct. One should

not be afraid of controversy and discussions. I think that it is necessary that all anti-imperialist forces in the country, though they might have differences, should join together and should put up a united front in the fight for Indian independence. Today the Congress is the biggest anti imperialist organisation, but it is essential to bring together all the anti-imperialist forces. That is why the Lucknow session of the Congress passed a resolution with a view to get into closer contact with the masses.[3]

It is essential to look at and study the Indian situation as compared to the international situation. There is today repression in India and suppression of civil liberties, the like of which has not been known since 1857.

As for the offer of cooperation and extension of the hand for shaking hands by high government officials, the Congress has no time for either shaking hands or holding talks. It is busily engaged in removing the burden that is on India. The only way to get a response to the outstretched hands is to remove the disabilities which are preventing Congressmen from shaking hands.

On the question of office acceptance there are two views within the Congress. The Congress has decided to postpone the decision. But whether one is for acceptance or for non acceptance of office, all Congressmen are united on the point of making the working of the constitution impossible. Of course, there are two views on the question as to how it should be given effect to.

Since the advent of Mahatma Gandhi into the Congress arena, there have been not many conflicts inside the Congress on questions of principle. Of course, there were differences of opinion, but the principles did not differ and the ideology was not different. But at the Lucknow session of the Congress one could see clear differences on questions of principle and ideology. When I saw that delegates and workers were closely following the discussions and were discussing among themselves the differences, I was glad because such understanding of differences would be for the good of the country and the thinking power of the workers would increase.

Some people say that the country is tired and is not prepared for any action. I suspect that these people are reflecting their own mind and not of the people. Satyagraha or civil disobedience movement cannot

3. The Lucknow Congress stressed the need of developing closer association between the masses and the Congress organisation "so that they may take a greater share in the shaping of Congress policy and in its activities, and the organization might become even more responsive to their needs and desires".

be started by just pressing a button somewhere and thinking that the whole thing would start off. The situation in the country and several other things have to be carefully considered before the country decides upon any action. It should not be forgotten that it concerns not a few people but crores. It will be the strength and force that is created by the crores that will lead the country to independence.

The issue before the Congress is not socialism though I referred to it in my presidential address. The issue before the Lucknow session was a political issue. The issue before the Congress is whether a radical mentality should be created in the country.

There was a conflict between the council goers and others in 1924 and they returned back to the country after finding the futility of entering the legislatures. You should be careful in considering this question and giving your views.

Babu Subhas Chandra Bose was arrested immediately after his return from Europe. The anger over it is not against the government, but against ourselves as we are not able to do anything to prevent such things happening. Let all of us who took a vow to fight for complete independence six years ago, carry on the struggle for independence.

9. Interview to the Press[1]

Question: What is the future of the zamindari and capitalist systems in India?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The zamindari and capitalist systems are bound to collapse. As to when that would happen, is a question of time.

Q: Will full compensation be paid for expropriation of private property?

JN: There can be mutual agreement between a socialist state and the capitalists and landed classes. They can be compensated to some extent though not in full. But there may be upheavals which cannot be checked by human power and the present social order is tending in that direction. Everything will have to be rearranged all over when the new order comes into being. Socialism is the embodiment of complete

1. Bombay, 15 May 1936 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16 May 1936

democracy and in a socialist state no one will have any grievance against another.

Q: Do you agree that socialism will result in inertia and laziness because the masses would be assured of security?

JN: No, I do not agree with this. Look at Soviet Russia. The object of socialism and communism is to bring about a change in human habits, instincts, desires and urges. The whole atmosphere should be changed in that direction.

Q: What are your views on expropriation of private property?

JN: People with property are practising exploitation. If this system means the exploitation of one individual by another, then it should be changed lock, stock and barrel. If a man of private property does not want to exploit another man, I will have no complaint against such a person.

There is no lack of wealth in this world and if there is no exploitation of one class by the other there will not be much need for socialism.

Q: What is the difference between socialism, communism and Marxism?

JN So far as the final objective is concerned, there is not much difference between socialism and communism. In communism, each person takes what he needs, while in socialism one gets according to what one does.

Scientific socialism can be defined as Marxism. The British Socialist Party, the German Social Democrats and other Continental socialists were Marxists in the sense that they expected things to happen by the process of determinism, while they remained passive spectators of social collapse. The communists thought, on the other hand, that the movement towards such a collapse should be given a push. It is difficult to say who is a socialist. There is a belief that full democracy might never be attained. The communists believe that failure of democracy is not due to democrats themselves, but is due to the opposition of vested interests by undemocratic methods. The German Social Democrats completely collapsed owing to their exceeding weakness. Social democracy has no place in present-day Europe.

Q: Mahatma Gandhi says that he is a socialist, Sir Cowasji Jehangir also favours socialism, and you also favour socialism. What is the difference between these?

JN: Sir Cowasji's socialism is very far from mine. As for Gandhiji's socialism, it is somewhat vague. I have written about it in my *Autobiography*. Gandhiji's socialism can be called more humanitarianism than scientific socialism. Gandhiji has a very strong desire to benefit the underdog. In fact, it is his compassionate desire to serve the interests of the masses; but his socialism seems to be vague.

Q: How do you propose to make the Congress agree to a socialist programme?

JN: I wish to win over the Congress and the country to the socialist programme. I have no desire to do anything by way of forcing the issue. *It will create many difficulties in the way of the Congress working* as a joint front. But the economic problem in India cannot be solved by any other way than by socialism. The greatest problem in India is the land problem. But no problem can be solved unless the country has political power.

Q: Those who are not cooperating with you, do you think they are afraid of being exploited by you?

JN: In the fight for political power, I want the cooperation of all elements in the country who want political power for India. All the anti-imperialist forces should cooperate, though they may be opposed to my views on socialism. There is no question of my exploiting others who join me in this fight, nor of their exploiting me. There is nothing behind the scenes on this question and that is why I openly gave expression to my views in my presidential address at Lucknow. Except for my speech, there is not the faintest suspicion of socialism in any of the Congress resolutions at Lucknow. There is a conflict on the political plane, but it is not on the socialist plane. I wanted to tell them frankly of my personal views. Having told them so I want to *concentrate largely on the political* issue before the country, on the development of the radical mentality and to expose the stress being laid in some quarters on false issues. On the political issue, there is a desire to strengthen the Congress by bringing in mass elements by taking up the economic demands of the masses.

Q: What do you think of the class war?

JN: When a socialist talks of it, he talks of something he does not desire to exist but which already exists in the present order of society in some form or other.

Q: Do you advocate industrialisation?

JN: I advocate industrialisation in its broad theory, but that does not mean that I agree with all that an individual industrialist does. Though industrialism has brought with it many evils, it would help the socialists to reach their goal.

Q: Is there the possibility of a split in the Congress on the issue of acceptance of office?

JN: The difference in view is based not so much on acceptance of office or non acceptance. It is a difference in the fundamental outlook.

Q. Are we thinking of working the constitution or wrecking it?

JN: I am quite clear that the Congress should not work it, as it cannot work it.

Q. What would be your position if the Congress decides finally to accept office?

JN: It is a hypothetical question. I will act according to the circumstances

Q. How will socialism be carried to the villages by the Congress?

JN: The Congress workers must base it on the present economic position of the villagers in terms of the economic situation in the country. It would be absurd to talk of socialism to a villager who is not in a position to understand what it means. He should be told in terms of the agrarian situation and that will ultimately lead to his understanding of socialism.

Q: What is meant by national genius?

JN: In the approach to a problem, the language used by the communists and the socialists is not understood by the people. They use certain historical phraseology lifted from European countries and hurl it down on the people here. One must go to the Indian labourer, know his needs and desires and put them in a way intelligible to him, conveying socialist ideals. In each country the movement develops separately, as in the case of Germany and Spain.

Q. Will the Congress revert to direct action in a particular province if a final decision is taken against office acceptance?

JN: The provinces are not going to act separately. All provinces will act jointly. The fact that Congressmen do not accept office does not mean that direct action, such as a no-tax campaign, will be launched. So far it has been stressed that parliamentary activity is one phase of the Congress programme. Now greater stress will be laid on the economic and agrarian questions.

Q: What is your reaction to the statement of a so-called Liberal from the Punjab opposing the suggestion of formation of a civil liberties union?[2]

JN. In Amritsar there are two organisations which have got good publicity through the columns of certain newspapers though their membership is little. But the Punjab Liberal organisation has nothing to do with the Liberal Party.

I do not see why people of entirely different persuasions should not come together to form the union. In England the Conservatives, the Liberals, the Labountes, the socialists and the communists were members of a similar union which came into existence two or three years ago when the British Sedition Bill was introduced in Parliament. Obviously it is not a union which may or can indulge in unconstitutional activities in the narrowest sense of the term. It will collect material and give it to the press. The mere fact that I invited Liberals for its formation shows that there is nothing in it which is opposed to their views. It will be merely a publicity body.

2. The statement was issued by the secretary of the Punjab Liberal League

Q: A systematic campaign of vilification of the Congress in its handling of the Tilak Swaraj Fund is being carried on in certain newspapers. What do you say about it?

JN: This is not a new matter. It is as old as 15 years. Nearly a crore of rupees was collected in 1921. Two years later most detaded accounts were published and copies were sent to the press. No press could, however, publish those heavy volumes and three years later extracts from the accounts were sent to the press.

Out of the funds collected, nearly 30 to 40 per cent were paper collections. The funds were earmarked for various institutions and the money, though shown on paper, did not actually reach the Congress organisation. It was given to schools, the All India Spinners Association, anti untouchability organisations and similar institutions in the country. A large sum went into the hands of the trustees in Bombay, part of which was confiscated by the government.

Twenty five per cent of the amount (nearly 13½ lakhs) came to the All India Congress Committee. The rest was distributed to provinces, districts and villages. If one could realise that the sum was distributed among thousands of organisations all over the country, one could understand how little was left in the charge of these organisations. In those days, the All India Congress Committee used to give grants to various institutions in the country.

It cannot be guaranteed that part of the funds was not wasted. Having experience of management of public funds, I am rather astonished how these organisations are able to carry on their activities with these amounts for years and years.

In England, during a short election period, millions of pounds are spent. Even a poor party like the British Labour Party spends nearly a million sterling on elections. On the other hand, during the civil disobedience movement in 1932-33 the United Provinces did not spend more than Rs. 63,000 during a period of 20 months.

You are familiar with the remarks made by Sir N.N. Sircar[3] in the Legislative Assembly. I consider it a "low-down" on the part of a high official, to bandy about the fund, without taking care to ascertain facts. Sir N.N. Sircar collected large funds in 1921 to fight the Congress in Bengal but the accounts of those funds did not see the light of day.

3. Nripendra Nath Sircar; advocate general of Bengal, 1929 34; Law Member, Government of India, 1934 39; delegate to the third Round Table Conference and member of the Joint Select Committee; died in 1945.

It is equally unfortunate that Sir N.N. Sircar should talk of "nationalisation of women", when the country is faced with major political problems.

Q: Do you think your Autobiography will be banned in India?

JN: The British press opinion is in such laudatory terms—even Conservative papers are praising it—that it will now be too late for the Government of India to ban the book.

10. Address to the Indian Progressive Group[1]

I do not know on what subject I am to speak, especially when the Group has not definitely made up its mind on any subject. It is certainly a good desire to study and understand things, and I hope that it would lead to good results, though it might be very late in life.

Today big things are happening in the world and people have got accustomed to them and do not pay any particular attention to them, while thirty years ago very serious notice would have been taken if anything big had happened as is happening today. The period since 1914 has witnessed more revolutionary changes than any period before. Several world conferences were held to solve the problems facing the world, like the World Economic Conference, which was held a few years ago when experts from all countries met and tried to find a solution to the economic problems facing the world. Although all of them passionately desired to get at some conclusion, they could not succeed. Everyone talked of economic catastrophes and yet none could show a way to escape from them.

India is one of the major problems of the world. Looking at it from a long perspective, the historian of 100 years hence will write that the two great problems were India and China. These two problems are far more important than the present European problems. There are isolated problems all over the world, like the racial problem or the religious problem, the economic problem or the problem of any country in particular. But nothing can be made out or understood about any problem unless the whole set of problems and the background behind

1. Bombay, 15 May 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16 May 1936.

them are studied. The rise of Hitler or Mussolini or Lenin were results of circumstances and I want you to try to understand the background and the resultant forces. But mere study without action is futile.

Question: What is the aim and object and the policy of the Congress?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The aim and object of the Congress is to win independence for India. It is economic and political freedom for Indians that the Congress wants. And it is the nationalist policy that the Congress is following.

While nationalism was a dominant force in Europe in the 19th century, it came to Asia at a much later stage. It has developed in a pronounced and aggressive way only during the twentieth century, rather since the Great War. Nobody liked to be sat upon by another. Nationalism was something more to the West. Due to economic urges countries in the past built up empires. The British Empire was built up that way. The English people came to India and India began to be exploited for Britain's benefit. Conditions became progressively worse and the urge for protest at first entered the upper middle classes, then the middle classes, and later the lower middle classes and slowly percolated to the masses, and that became the national movement.

Once economic and political freedom for India is won, there would be nothing to prevent the country from having closer connection with foreign countries. The Congress wants to achieve independence through peaceful and legitimate means but behind that lies the idea of power and sanction, not *like the fascist power but through mass action in the* most civilised way.

Q: Will you be satisfied if the problem of India is solved?

JN: Who, I? I will work for a socialist commonwealth of the world.

Q: What is the future of capitalism in India?

JN: The major problem in India today is the agrarian problem. It is purely the capitalist viewpoint that I am giving when I say that capitalism is bound to die. Even Mr. Montagu Norman[2] has declared that the problems created by capitalism baffled him. Capitalism, when it came, did a lot of good. But what was good some time back need not

2. (1871-1950); governor of the Bank of England, 1920-44.

necessarily be good now when circumstances have changed. Conditions in Europe today show that capitalism is not functioning. You should consider why it is not functioning and try to find ways and means to stop the rot.

Q: What is the solution?

JN: Socialism is the solution. But the choice is open to others to offer some other solution. Either we go back to the pre-capitalist era or break the shackles of capitalism and apply socialism as a remedy. Historically, I am convinced that socialism is bound to come.

Q. Will you please throw light on the civil liberties union which you propose to form?

JN It is meant for the preservation of the civil liberties of the citizens. Such a question arises only when there is a conflict between the individual and the state. In England, France and America much importance is attached to the principle of civil liberties. Members of all the political parties should join the civil liberties union. Even though they may belong to opposite camps and may not personally like, even hate, the ideas preached by others, they should fight for the free expression of what others want to say.

You must be aware of the repressive measures like the Press Act, the detention of about 3,000 detenus in Bengal, the vigilance over the friends and relatives of the detenus, the Criminal Law Amendment Act and other provincial acts. You should study these conditions and measures prevalent in our country.

11. Socialism will Dissolve Communalism[1]

Dr. Ansari's greatest contribution was in regard to the Hindu-Muslim question. We should sink our petty differences in the cause of the nation. We are fighting among ourselves for trivial causes and are overlooking bigger and more vital issues. We should study contemporary history

1. Address to Young Muslim Brotherhood, Bombay, 17 May 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 18 May 1936.

to understand what is happening in Palestine, Egypt, Sumatra, Java, Indo-China or Syria. The exploitation of the people in these countries differs only in degree, though in some countries the people are not as enslaved as we in India. But everywhere they are forming united fronts to win their freedom. The questions of seats in the legislatures and offices do not affect the masses of Hindus and Muslims whose interests are one and the same.

The big questions staring India as well as the world in the face are poverty and unemployment and these are common to both Hindus and Muslims.

The only remedy for these problems is a socialist order. The solution cannot be different whether it be in the case of Muslims or Hindus. India should find her own solution in the light of the world experience—of socialism. Substituting Indian capitalists in the place of British capitalists will not alter the lot of India.

A properly constituted and democratically elected constituent assembly alone can formulate the constitution of India. The Congress will not stop its fight till success is achieved and we shall not rest content till our goal is reached.

12. The Need for Congress Unity[1]

Various problems are faced by us in the political arena. Attempts are being made and were made at Lucknow to create a split in the ranks of the Congress.

Party differences should be welcomed from a certain aspect. Differences arise out of free thought. Whether such thought is right or wrong, it denotes a sign of life. Stagnation of thought amounts to death.

Fascist countries like Germany and Italy have adopted ruthless measures to suppress thinking. It is well known that even such dictatorial power comes into existence out of a line of thought.

Under the circumstances, it is incumbent that we find a way out of the existing problems—economic depression, poverty, unemployment and

1. Speech at Bandra, Bombay, 18 May 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 19 May 1936.

starvation. Achievement of freedom alone can vouchsafe a solution which can only be through socialism, which is bound to come sooner or later.

The growing power of the hungry stomach cannot be checked by any existing government or power on earth, as is usually contended. The economic crisis is almost universal in nature. It is a world disease which can be treated scientifically only. It can never be treated by palliatives or by a mentality of reforms. The disease and its attendant evils should be rooted out.

The new constitution, which aims at a division of power, cannot succeed. No advance is possible with it. The machinery that exists is to rule the country but not for serving it as one would desire it to do. Right from the highest officer to the poorest *patel* the emblem of service is rule.

The Congress is not going to tolerate any sort of relation with British imperialism as that can never be a solution.

There are a few in the Congress who do not welcome socialism as a solution. But I am firm in my resolve towards attaining it. It is a law of nature that whenever a change occurs, it is inherent that a few or a small section is always dissatisfied and consequently suffers.

The question before us is to solve the problems of the masses but not of classes and socialism should be reviewed from that point of view.

In our fight, we may suffer, struggle or fall, but we should not be disheartened. I do not quail at seeing comrades fall in battle. But it certainly pains me to see that comrades turn out to be onlookers at the faintest vestige of repression. Differences we may have but in the struggle all should unite with the differences buried fathom deep.

We can as well quarrel for seats after the achievement of freedom. Now we should all unite for the struggle for freedom.

The war clouds hover on the horizon. The prospect of war is shaking imperialism and we should utilise this opportunity. Let us be united in the struggle of the Congress, despite the attempts of interested parties to rend us asunder.

13. On the Duty of Businessmen[1]

Certain English newspapers have stated that I have greatly displeased the merchants by my socialist views. It is for them to say whether I have pleased them or displeased them. From the address you have presented to me this afternoon, I feel that you have given the right reply to those papers.[2] I hope that they will realise the feelings that the merchants have so clearly manifested this afternoon.

I am said to be a fighter who will create fights. I confess that the charge is largely true. Those who are slaves shall never rest content but go on resisting the environment so long as they remain slaves. If they do not do so, they will be as good as dead.

I want to make it clear that I am a socialist. Those who help in securing freedom for the country are its friends while those who do not take any part or join the opposite forces are its enemies, be they foreigners or our own countrymen. I am sure you will support the national movement.

Business can flourish only if there is purchasing power. Because of the lack of this, several factories closed down in America and as much as eighty per cent of her trade collapsed.[3]

No country would like to export its gold. America with its immense riches has hoarded gold and France, which is in a better position than America in the possession of gold, has prohibited the export of gold.

But India's case is different. In spite of opposition by the Assembly and leading businessmen in the country, gold is being exported[4] and we are told that it is being done in the interest of India. The main reason of this policy of the government is that the British Government is badly in need of gold. Englishmen raised a hue and cry when it was said at the Round Table Conference that India would

1 Reply to the address of welcome presented by the bullion merchants and brokers of Bombay, 18 May 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 19 May 1936.

2 In their address of welcome, the merchants assured Jawaharlal of their full cooperation in whatever he did to improve the condition of the peasants and workers of India.

3. *Owing to the depression of 1929 32*, total industrial production fell by 48 per cent and as a result about 15 million workers lost jobs in the United States.

4. There was an unprecedented export of gold from India from October 1931, and from 1931 to 1937, 354 million ounces of gold valued at Rs. 298 crores were exported. This was 1/5 to 1/4 of the entire stock of gold accumulated since 1493.

not pay the loans borrowed in her name unless the position was thoroughly and minutely examined by an independent tribunal. England, however, in her own case, has refused to pay back the money she borrowed from America,[5] and is not even paying interest on these at present. I hope that the bullion exchange will continue to be patriotic.

5. Great Britain and France, among other European nations, stopped payment in 1934 of debts incurred during the First World War to the United States.

14. Address to Women[1]

I have received several complaints from women about a woman not being selected as member of the Congress Working Committee.

I am not pained to receive these complaints. On the contrary I am surprised that the complaints are so few. Women of India have not yet learnt enough to demand their rights boldly.

The personnel of the Congress Working Committee is selected by the President of the year. The responsibility of such a selection is on the shoulders of the President. But everyone should know by now what the situation was and what happened during the Lucknow session of the Congress. I made a radical speech and placed my views on different subjects in a forceful manner. But I cannot carry out many things that I preached. Several of the things that I advocated were not accepted.

Possibly a more self-respecting man in my position would have tendered his resignation from the office of the Congress President. But I thought that I should continue as President. I paid the price for my views and possibly will have to continue doing so. Hence the question of choosing the Working Committee personnel was not an easy job.[2]

If women have any complaint to make they should do so. They should not suppress it. Women should fight for their rights. Whether it is a complaint of women against men, or workers' complaint against capitalists, nothing will happen if they sit quiet. They should put up a fight for their rights.

1. Bombay, 18 May 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 19 May 1936.
2. This part of the report of his speech was contradicted by Jawaharlal in his letter to Mahatma Gandhi. See *post*, item 28.

Twenty years ago, the women of England carried on an intensive struggle and partly succeeded in getting their rights.[3] It would be wrong to imagine that your rights will be given to you or that they will drop down from somewhere, if you simply sit at home. Whether inside or outside the Indian National Congress, Indian women should learn to fight for their rights. Merely putting up your demands will not do. You should organize yourselves. But let not the organisation be merely for holding tea parties, but for putting up a struggle for women's rights.

During the suffragist movement in England, many women entered jails in the cause of their movement. A girl entered the race course at Derby and tried to stop one of the race horses while it was running towards the winning post and in doing so she died.[4] She knew she would die. Though it appeared to be a futile act, all England began to talk about it. People began seriously to consider the question of women's rights and their demands.

It was decided at Karachi that men and women should have equal rights. But mere writing or passing of resolutions is not having them. Men at the Karachi Congress silently consented to the resolution being passed because of the part played by women during the 1930 civil disobedience movement. During that period thousands of Indian women joined the struggle and played a glorious part. They created a wonderful impression. Many of them who silently voted for the Karachi resolution might not have meant what the resolution laid down. They might have had mental reservations. The question was bound to arise again.

Indian women should come forward and take part in the struggle. I want you to organise yourselves and increase your strength. There are still many in this country who are opposed to freedom being given to women. A pandit from Andhra once spoke about the Congress being responsible for bringing out Indian women from their homes. The Andhra pandit's complaint was that women ought not to be given the freedom which the Congress is trying to infuse in them. I warn you that in your struggle for your rights you will have to face many difficulties.

I would like women to complain whenever there is anything to complain about, whether it is against the Congress President or anybody else. But I warn you to be careful about those who show lip-sympathy while actually working against your cause.

3. The women's suffrage movement was started in 1903 in England. After the First World War women over 30 were granted the vote and in 1928 they got full suffrage.

4. Emily Davison killed herself by falling in front of the King's horse in 1913.

15. Address to the All India Trade Union Congress[1]

There are several parts of the resolution, in one of which the Indian National Congress has been criticised.[2] It would not be proper for me, as the President of the Indian National Congress, to say anything about this part or that part in particular. Generally speaking, I am in full agreement with the resolution. The Government of India Act tightens the chain of bondage. Mr. Jhabvala's statement, that the Congress has not decided as to what should be its attitude towards the Act, is wrong. The Congress has decided its attitude and has condemned the Act in unequivocal terms. It is true that the Congress has not yet decided as to how it should be wrecked.

Some people are in favour of office acceptance although they want to make the working of the Act impossible. This attitude I view as dangerous. I think that even a little cooperation with the government at the outset may lead to a fuller cooperation. Hence it is essential that whatever is decided upon should be done after careful consideration of all dangers.

There are two parts in the Act, namely the all India federation and provincial autonomy. I have not heard of even a moderate of moderates saying a good word about the federation that is contemplated by the Act.

You are aware of the repression in the country; and if these are the conditions prevailing during times of peace, what will it be like otherwise? I think that nothing can be achieved by the acceptance of office by those who enter the legislatures with a view to carry out the struggle for independence. I once again emphasize that the form of government for the country should be decided only through a constituent assembly.

The communal question will never be solved by those who claim to be the leaders of different communities. The communal question can be decided only by the constituent assembly. The communal problem is there because of a handful of people in the different communities who want to agitate for their own benefit. The masses have no communal problem.

1. Bombay, 18 May 1936 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 19 May 1936.
2. Jawaharlal was speaking on a resolution condemning the Government of India Act and criticising the Congress for postponing a decision on the question of office acceptance.

The Communal Award is absurd and useless. But it cannot be rejected till the fundamental problem of the country's political freedom is solved. I consider the Communal Award to be a dangerous thing which will check the progress of the fight for independence. But everyone should seriously engage himself in the major problem of achieving freedom for the country and then the communal question will automatically be solved.

You should carry on the propaganda and agitation against the Government of India Act and in favour of convening a constituent assembly, which alone can decide the form of government for the country.

16. Challenge to Critics of Socialism[1]

Khaddar has benefited the people of the country to a considerable extent. We have derived as much benefit out of it as possible and should continue to do so. It is the duty of Congressmen to see that khadi is encouraged. But I want to say that in the ultimate solution of the nation's economic problem, the khadi movement has only a limited place.

This meeting is largely attended by businessmen who must have read my presidential address at Lucknow. I expressed my personal views and opinions in that address. India's greatest problem is that of securing political independence. For this purpose the Indian National Congress has been fighting for a number of years and with greater intensity during the last few years. In my presidential address, I pointed out that apart from this political problem, there were equally important problems facing the country, such as poverty and unemployment, and I also spoke on socialism. But no resolution was brought before the Lucknow Congress regarding socialism and no decision was taken on that issue.

My idea is to educate Indians and spread in them the ideas of socialism and what it stands for. Some time later, the question may be discussed in the Congress, and the attitude of the people of India on this question may be ascertained. This issue cannot be forced on the Congress, as is obvious to everyone, by using the lathi or some such method.

1. Bombay, 18 May 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 19 May 1936.

For this reason, I will educate all sections and classes of people without distinction and tell them through propaganda that socialism will be the ultimate solution of all problems.

The vice president of the Indian Merchants' Chamber in this city commented on the presidential address and a scare was raised and it was even stated that the merchants in the country would have hereafter nothing to do with the Congress.[2] I could have replied to him immediately, but I waited till I came to Bombay. I ascertained the view of all sections of the people in the city, whether they agreed with Mr. Shroff in what he said and whether they were really dissatisfied with the Indian National Congress or with me. I found that Mr. Shroff's views were shared by only a handful of persons. I am glad that the people expressed their approval of what I said and what little I could do for the cause of national freedom and socialism.

But the views expressed by Mr. Shroff and the people of his way of thinking have special significance which require to be investigated.

What is the attitude of Mr. Shroff towards the national problems of India? Does he approve of the present imperialist system and the *present policy of the government?*

There are people in this country who joined hands with the government while the nation was engaged in the fight for freedom. At that time the rest of the world was watching them. What was the help given to the people in the crises by these people? If they did not help the Congress, they could have at least remained neutral, without trying to deal a blow at the Congress. They did not take their due share in the national struggle and how can they expect to be listened to as to what their views are?

Today anyone can see for himself the repression all over the country though there is no civil disobedience movement. Only a few days ago Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose was interned. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan is in prison. A regime resembling martial law is the lot of Bengal and the repression continues in the North West Frontier Province.

The press is suppressed, and innumerable number of organisations are still under the ban. Why do these people not say a word against repression which has become a normal feature of the present administration in the country? The Rowlatt Act appears to be more liberal in the face of the repressive laws now operating. You may remember the agitation carried on against the Act in 1919 when Gandhiji, from

2. On 28 April 1936, A D. Shroff had blamed Jawaharlal for creating class hatred and said that such preaching of the abolition of private property and rapid industrialisation was self-contradictory.

in whose interest is the currency being managed. The Ottawa Pact[3] is another instance of the interests of India being sacrificed to those of Britain.

In these conditions, what have these people done, who raise a scare when one contemplates a new order of society?

There is a possibility of another war and people should decide for themselves as to what they should do, especially businessmen interested in gigantic loans floated on such occasions.

3. India entered into a trade pact with Britain at Ottawa on 20 August 1932 granting imperial preference into India for British imports, whose margin of preference over other country's products varied from 7½% to 10%. The concessions offered to Indian goods and raw materials were negligible and inconsequential.

17. Reply to Shroff's Rejoinder[1]

The people of Bombay have heard me or heard about me through the newspapers so much during the last four days that they must be feeling tired of seeing or hearing me. In the evening newspapers Mr. Shroff has replied to my last evening's speech. I did not have enough time to go through fully what he stated, but from what I read, I feel it is necessary to refer to it.

A few days ago Mr. Shroff made a speech criticising my presidential address at the Lucknow Congress. I replied to Mr. Shroff at a mammoth meeting on Monday. Mr. Shroff again came out with a statement.[2] I feel happy at the controversy as it places before the people both viewpoints. There are big issues facing the country, but the biggest problem that has to be tackled immediately is the question of Indian independence. How can the country be free? It is this question that has to be solved first. The struggle for Indian independence has been going on for years and will continue further. Bombay has played a very prominent part in this struggle. Many thousands take

1. Speech at Chowpatty, Bombay, 19 May 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 May 1936.
2. Shroff had reiterated his view that socialism was not applicable to India and said that Jawaharlal's claim that only the Congress was fighting for the freedom of the country revealed "intolerance" towards other parties.

part in the movement and the merchants of the city help the movement a great deal.

The problem of attaining independence is there, but there is another problem that is staring us in the face and that is the problem of poverty which is becoming acute day by day. There is the Kisan problem in my own province. There is the problem of the workers in Bombay who have to face the attacks on their standard of living. There is the problem of the petty merchants and the unemployed. It is for the people seriously to consider how these problems can be solved, how can the hungry people be fed.

It is evident that so long as India is under foreign domination none of these problems can be solved. Still it is essential to consider how the question of Indian poverty can be tackled; and I think that it can be done only through socialism. It is necessary to think about and discuss socialism. It is with this end in view that I referred to socialism in my speech at Lucknow. I believe in socialism as the only way that can solve India's problems and hope that some day the Congress will become socialist.

But it is essential for everyone to remember that socialism is not the immediate issue and that there is no socialism in any one of the resolutions that were passed at Lucknow. They were all political. Reference to socialism is found largely in my presidential address. Socialism cannot be forced upon a nation. Socialism will come only when the majority of the people want it. And when socialism comes, none can stop its advent. But it is necessary that the people of the country discuss and know what socialism is, whether it is good or bad. That is the reason why I discussed it in my presidential speech.

As to the criticism of Mr. Shroff, everyone has a right to oppose or criticise a view held by another. By such opposition people understand both sides of the question. But I should be allowed to have my own view. I will accept and follow the verdict of the people and of nobody else. It is for the people to say whether they want this or that. Only a constituent assembly can decide upon the form of government *for the country and nobody else.*

If Mr. Shroff accepts this, if he believes in democratic principles, then both he and I have a right to stress our respective points of view before the people. There is a possibility of my getting into jail for advocating socialism, but there is no such fear as far as Mr. Shroff is concerned.

From the statement Mr. Shroff has issued, I feel that either Mr. Shroff has misunderstood what I said on Monday evening or I was misreported in the papers. What I asked Mr. Shroff was, as to what

was his position in relation to the struggle for Indian independence. It is not enough if he merely says that he is also for independence for India. I feel that those who are opposing socialism are doing so because they want to cover up their opposition towards the movement for Indian independence It is a known fact that the Congress and other leaders have not accepted socialism. It is not proper to cover up one's real attitude by criticising or opposing socialism.

Mr. Shroff referred to the help which merchants of Bombay gave to the Congress. I know it. I am sure of their help. They have helped the Congress and will continue doing so. I myself have received addresses and purses for Congress work from abroad and from the Merchants' Association in the city during the last few days and why should I go and ask them whether they will help?

When lakhs and lakhs of men and women were engaged in the struggle for Indian independence, courted jail and sacrificed a great deal, what were the critics doing? They were siding with the government. I am not perturbed over the criticism of Mr. Shroff. He can continue criticising till he is tired. But when the people were sent to jail and made to suffer great hardships during the civil disobedience movement, these critics had no hesitation in siding with the government. And yet, they say that they are for the independence of India. This way everyone can say that he stands for India's independence.

During the fight for independence each man has to choose one side. He is either with those who are fighting for the country's freedom or not. There is no middle course. A handful of big millowners and others are trying to drag India towards fascism with the help of the government in the country. There is no difference between British imperialism and Indian fascism. During the civil disobedience movement the representatives of these men in the Legislative Assembly not only supported the government in its repression but advised stronger measures. Not that those who courted and entered jails expected these people to use their influence and to secure their release or lessen their hardships, but the fact remains that they are on the side of the government which practises repression.

It is a known fact that during those days the Congress had declared a boycott of British goods, and specially British cloth, and many thousands of Congressmen courted jail on that issue. Knowing fully well that there was the boycott movement in the country and being fully aware that that meant thousands were voluntarily suffering for that cause, a few millowners from this very city entered into an agreement with Lancashire They never gave even a few seconds to think as to what would be the outcome of their action.

I am not opposed to freedom of speech. But I wish that similar freedom is allowed to me by others. I am for open discussion of the differences. I am against discussions being carried on behind the scenes. Socialism is bound to come, but it will come only when the people of the country are prepared for it. No power can stop it. Mr. Shroff has stated that I started the controversy. This is not correct. I expressed my views. Nowhere was any resolution of a socialist nature introduced in the Congress because it was thought necessary that the people should understand it before anything definite in that line was done.

Since I came back from Europe I have been working for Congress cooperation with all the other parties who are anti-imperialist in outlook. The parties must agree on carrying on the fight for complete independence for India. In this connection there seems to be a very great possibility of the Trade Union Congress and the Congress cooperating and putting up a united front. There is also the possibility of cooperation with the kisan sabhas. I am sure that the majority of merchants will cooperate with the Indian National Congress as they did in the past. The Congress is prepared to cooperate with anyone who is anti-imperialist. But how can it extend its hand of cooperation to those who are not prepared to move and those who want to stay where they are? The Congress will have to go ahead leaving the others behind.

The doors of the Congress are open for anyone to enter; but if one wants to speak through the window, then also the Congress will respond. Those who complain that the doors of the Congress are shut against them, want those who are at present inside, that is, the majority composed of the poor, to be turned out. I am against *purdah* for women but what can one do with men who want to be behind *purdah*?

At Lucknow there was nothing socialistic in any one of the resolutions passed. The cooperative mentality is growing, but I ask if we should retrace our steps after 17 years of intensive struggle or go ahead. It is for the people of the country to consider the question carefully and come to a decision. I am afraid that some friends are inclined towards cooperation. I think that such a mentality is dangerous as far as the independence movement is concerned. The noncooperation movement of 1921 was the outcome of the Rowlatt Act. But compared to the repression that is at present going on, the Rowlatt Act was a charter of freedom.

I appeal to the voters in the city to help and support the Congress candidates during the coming elections.

The Congress is the people. It is for the people to be alert and understand what is happening in the country and outside. The Congress is an organisation which consists of people who struggle for the country's freedom and carry on the fight after understanding the implications.

18. The Case for Socialism[1]

I place my views on socialism before the country for consideration. In fact I have been doing so for the last ten years and I am glad that it has now engaged the attention of the merchants in Bombay.

The forces released in the post-war world are mighty and none can check their onrush. If I ask the onrush to stop, it will not; it is not in anyone's power to check the mighty forces, once they are released in the world.

We must realise that the solution to vital problems lies through socialism, whether one likes or dislikes it. If these problems are not solved, the world will be threatened with chaos. If obstacles are placed in the way of the solution, the progress may be slackened, but ultimately none can stop the problems getting solved.

This change, which is inevitable, should be brought about as peacefully as possible. Our leaders have stressed the importance of peaceful and nonviolent methods. Perhaps in history no other fight was carried on so peacefully and nonviolently as is being done in India. But when huge masses of people rise in an upheaval, who can say what will happen?

I am glad that the merchants are willing to discuss with me the issue of socialism. Some futile attempts have been made in post-war Europe to solve these vital problems. Even business is suffering and is gradually deteriorating because the purchasing power of the masses has dwindled.

All these questions should not be viewed from the angle of the profit motive. Large problems require bigger remedies.

But leaving this aside, you all know that the Indian National Congress has not adopted my views, but I hope that at a later date it will accept them when a majority of the people are in favour of socialism.

1. Reply to the address of welcome presented by six commercial organisations at Bombay, 19 May 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 May 1936.

Those who raise a false alarm, I would like to know how far they are prepared to join the national struggle. They want to find a pretext to strengthen the hands of the opponents of the Congress.

I have received a letter from a businessman of this city, expressing inability to join the civil liberties union. *This is only a way of opposing* the Congress at every step in its onward march.

19. Nationalism and the Class Struggle[1]

I have so far addressed nearly fifty meetings and must have spoken to half a million people in the city. I am told that the audience tonight is mainly of the lower middle class and I have been asked as to what exactly should be its affiliations. For, after all, the scientific way of considering the conditions in the country is by studying the economic conditions of the people. In this condition of alien domination, all classes unite for national freedom, but behind it it is inevitable that there are also economic conflicts. In the national movement there is the psychological factor, but keeping it aside, the question should be viewed on scientific lines. Considering the relations between India and England, the whole of England can be said to be an upper class and the whole of India can be termed as a lower class. That is to say, England represents the capitalist class while the people of India are the proletariat. The problem of national freedom thus viewed in larger perspective becomes the problem of the exploited people. The rich people in India are also exploited to a certain extent, but the bulk of exploitation falls on the poorer classes. This is the scientific and fundamental analysis of nationalism in India.

Taking into consideration the psychological aspect, one finds that the *struggle for freedom is common in countries under an alien domination.* Behind this national struggle are classes and groups in conflict with one another. Today, though the urge for nationalism is strong, the upper classes are won over by the government. Fundamentally all classes are nationalist. But a small group, the upper fringe of the upper class, has *become the supporter of imperialism* and is more anxious to have British rule in India than the Britisher himself. These Indian groups

1. Speech at Matunga, Bombay, 19 May 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 May 1936.

express themselves in favour of nationalism, but their nationalism is something different.

Europe and the world tried to find stability in the post-war world but were unable to do so. Everywhere there were struggles and conflicts which ultimately led to upheavals. All these upheavals, in whatever part of the world they happened, were intimately inter-connected. And out of these a vital economic question arose.

On a scientific analysis of this situation, one finds that as big economic issues arise, certain class fissures which are already present in the society are accentuated These divisions are more clearly demarcated in the Western countries. In India they remain covered by nationalism; but here too they are coming up. There is a conflict in the Congress on these issues, and people who never devoted their attention to these problems are now perplexed and worried. In India the situation is developing so rapidly that people are forced to find a solution to these problems. One must be clear in one's mind and language. As soon as one is clear and becomes logical, differences curiously hidden under the surface come up and they are accentuated.

One can find the topmost part of the upper classes developing fascist tendencies. The British Government is fascist enough. But certain elements do become fascist and in collaboration with the British want to retain their privileges

One does not agitate on this issue, for agitators cannot effect changes if conditions are not ripe.

Today in India the peasantry and the working class are in a worse condition and are driven to thoughts of extreme action. But they cannot think clearly, and if a mass of people would think they would act. On one side would be the forces of fascism and on the other would be ranged the forces of social freedom, socialism.

Unless India finds a solution to these vital problems there cannot be social stability.

Up to now the upper classes support the national movement, but they possess certain privileges and are uncertain whether they will continue to enjoy them, and some of these classes are pulled over by the government to its side. The upper middle classes support the national movement with the hope that it will benefit them and that they will continue to enjoy what privileges they have.

The lower middle classes have no such difficulties. They are the backbone of the national movement today. Nearly 20 or 30 years ago, the Congress discarded the upper middle class leadership. During the last few years, the Congress message has been carried to the peasants and the villages by people from the lower middle classes. Of course, the

peasants too carry the message. They too back the national movement, but their backing is based on a vague thinking. The peasants are too poor and they look to the Congress for help. Thus the lower middle classes play an important role in the national movement and will continue to do so when the cleavages become more prominent.

The peasantry and workers, when the cleavage occurs, will be on the side of big changes, otherwise they will have to perish and go out of existence. Probably the upper middle classes will move more and more towards the British Government. Princes, big industrialists and landlords and communal leaders thus go over to the other side.

When the cleavage occurs, the line of division will throw the lower middle class on the side of the peasantry and the workers. They cannot possibly ally themselves with the handful of men on the other side. They will have to ally themselves with the masses. Individuals may fail or fall away But the bulk of the lower middle class will march on as it has no hope under the present social system. Most of the leadership will come from the lower middle class, as it came during the last movement.

I have tried to put before you a scientific analysis of the whole situation and these problems cannot be solved in a vague way.

I would suggest to you to weigh these questions and issues arising out of socialism. I want an intelligent understanding of the issues and that people should think scientifically. When a big movement comes, many of you may fall. And in a big movement, there is the need for a strong rank and file, a strong second and third line leadership.

There cannot be ups and downs and social inequalities in this country. These must be got rid of. We have to build up a new social order in which everyone will have the fullest opportunity for development, no exploitation, and in which there will be not merely political democracy, but economic democracy, which means economic equality without which political democracy will be a hoax. What does it matter to one whether he has a vote or not, when he is hungry and starving?

Apart from the peasants and the workers, what is the condition of the lower middle classes at present in the country? There are a large number of educated young men, without employment, sinking physically and mentally, going to pieces. There is the instance of thousands of persons applying for two or three posts as policemen in Calcutta and among these thousands of men, there are many graduates. That is the tragedy of the middle class today. There is no use tinkering with the problem by appointing committees which do not take one anywhere. When the patient is mortally ill, what is the good of patting on his

back? These committees cannot do anything as they function within the framework of this social and economic order.

This order must be changed. When one thinks of the economic problem, one must also think of the unemployment problem, of the agrarian problem, and all these should be seen in a world perspective. Then one can understand the position.

It is most important that political freedom must be won. But it is equally important as to who should win this freedom. If political freedom means the control of the country by the same group which is now cooperating with the British Government, it would not mean any good to the masses. It must be the freedom of the masses, and the lower middle classes go with the masses. I hope that you will support the Indian National Congress and that you will think of the solution of these vital problems in a way which will benefit the vast masses in the country.

20. Socialism the Only Way[1]

Brothers and Sisters,

There are great problems facing us. There is the question of independence. A great struggle has been going on in the country for years past, and in the course of it, thousands of our brothers and sisters have gone to jail and undergone hardships. That struggle for independence is still going on, and it will continue so long as success is not achieved, for it is the first step to our progress. Besides that, there are also other great problems—problems of our poverty, misery and unemployment. Unemployment has spread all over the country. It has spread in every section, among the peasants, workers, merchants, artisans and our youth. Unemployment and poverty have spread everywhere and they are on the increase. In order to get rid of these there is, in my opinion, only one remedy, and that is socialism. We should establish socialism in this country. Excepting this, I see no other way. This problem does not concern India alone. It concerns the whole world. There also many people

1. Speech delivered in Bombay on 19 May 1936 in Hindi for M.R. Masani's film "Pandit Jawaharlal's Message", which was not allowed by the government to be exhibited. The Hindi text is not available. The English translation printed here is in the Home Department (1936) Miscellaneous Series Files at the Tamil Nadu Archives.

are taking a stand in like manner and trying to introduce socialism. At present there are two groups of people in the world. On one side there are people who want to advance the world further and free the people from the chains of imperialism and capitalism. On the other side, there are a handful of people who are deriving benefit from the present state of affairs and are happy and well off and want to perpetuate the present state of things. There is a conflict going on between these two groups. The question is on which side our country, our people are going to stand. Out of these two groups I have no doubt that our country will side with that group which stands for independence and socialism. If there is any country in the world which stands most in need of this, that is, independence and socialism, it is our own poverty-stricken country where unemployment prevails. For this reason I entertain the hope that our countrymen will make the fullest effort to make our country independent and start a movement for the reorganisation of the society so that the country may be guided by the principles of socialism and side by side it may contribute to the efforts that are being made for the freedom of humanity. Our independence should be consistent with the independence of the world so that we may share in the struggle and success of humanity. Only then our country will become really independent and every human being will be able to become independent and make progress to the utmost of his capacity.

21. The Role of Big Business[1]

I have survived easily the strenuous programme that I had to go through during my visit to the city. But the programme which exhausted me most was the one from which I have just come. I am referring to the tea party at the Taj with the members of "Big Business". As I sat watching those people discuss big matters and policies, I wondered if it was possible to bridge the gulf. There was an enormous difference in outlook between myself and "Big Business".

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[illegible] 20 May 1936. From *The Bombay*

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At the top are the feudal lords, the princes and the big landlords. They are interesting as a group to look at. But unfortunately they do not fit in with anything modern, whether politically, economically, or

1. Speech at a students' meeting in Bombay, 20 May 1936. From The Bombay Chronicle, 21 May 1936.

culturally. They never think in terms of the masses, but only in terms of their own interests After them comes the big *bourgeoisie*. After the petty *bourgeoisie* entered the national struggle, which had been in the early days of the Congress carried on for the first time by the big *bourgeoisie*, the latter grew nervous and many of them dropped away though even now some of them are present in the Congress. But they are feeling out of place in the Congress.

Big movements like the civil disobedience movement show up the different groups in the country and as to where they stand. Whenever there is a crisis in the history of a nation the place of various groups and classes is shown up. "Big Business" during the civil disobedience was against the movement and sided with the government and asked for suppressive measures. They may not have done it as a group, but individuals did it. The middle class *bourgeoisie* largely supported the movement. Still the backbone of the movement is the lower middle class.

Since the last disobedience movement was stopped, it was found that there was a sudden going back. Immediately after the noncooperation movement started the Swaraj Party, and in the same way one found parliamentary mentality growing immediately after the civil disobedience movement. It was found that the reaction to the movement was such that there was a swing to the right. A left wing then developed to protest against the possible swing to the right I am not saying anything in terms of something bigger and vaguer than the Congress.

There was another development in the economic phase. Ideas began to spread faster. Those ideas were vague and it was not known as to what those ideas would evolve into. The result was that there was a wide gap between the two groups. There was conflict in their ideologies and activities.

The national movement has come to the final stage after the second civil disobedience movement. Not that it could not be carried on for some years to come, but the struggle had to develop into something beyond the national stage. Due to the suffering of the peasantry, the educated unemployed, etc, new ideas came and a new plan was thought about. The starting of new ideas might partly have been due to success of the experiment in the Soviet Union and how they solved their problems. Conditions in the world are developing.

While the world depression was getting more and more acute, the Soviet Union, without any outside help, built up a tremendous structure which is unparalleled in the history of the world. Many of the methods adopted were undesirable, but that is not the main feature. The main feature is that they have achieved something great. They

solved the economic problem and banished unemployment, while the western European countries are struggling to bring order on their economic plane. Hence there is a swing in favour of the economic doctrine of Russia. *Not that they have become socialists or communists. But seeing that while the rest of the world was groping in the dark Russia succeeded in solving the problem, many businessmen from America and* western Europe visited the Soviet Union and studied their methods.

President Roosevelt, when he assumed office, said that creeping paralysis had come over the economic organisation and it was collapsing by inches.

In India circumstances have forced a new thought to be evolved. The only solution thought of for the economic conditions in the country is a large scale organisation to tackle the peasant, the economic, the educational and other problems, if one wants to achieve anything *at all. This cannot be possible unless there is political power. Hence* the issue today is not the introduction of socialism. I cannot say when socialism will come to India. But that it will come, I am certain. It will come, not because I or half a dozen others want it to come. Nor will it stop because "Big Business" do not want it. Hence it is obvious that the people should concentrate for the present on attaining political freedom.

With that end in view it is essential that there should be an anti-imperialist front. At the very mention of these ideas the *bourgeoisie* becomes *nervous. The "Big Business" people are very sensitive.* They do not like to be reminded that they have not supported the fight for freedom. The big *bourgeoisie* cannot think in terms of the masses and look for support of the British Government. They will join hands with the government when the struggle starts again. The dominating national urge is so strong that the petty *bourgeoisie* has to join hands with those who advocate socialism.

Class struggle is therefore inherent in the present social order. It is there between the peasants and landlords and it is there in the factories. There is no use shutting one's eyes to what is actually happening in the country. One of the representatives of "Big Business" said in the Legislative Assembly that there should be no labour legislation for 20 years to come. They feel happy over it. They never think in terms of the workers and peasants. They always think in terms of *their dividends. When there is a class struggle between the zamindar* and the peasant, I feel that it is my duty to go and help the exploited. The primary problem is to attain political freedom, but one has to understand the economic background before he sets about his work. Unless one understands the background, one is apt to go wrong.

Whenever I refer to socialism you applaud. So I think that all of you believe that the ultimate solution of India's problems lies only in socialism. But I suggest you study it carefully.

Socialism is coming and will come whether "Big Business" want it or not. But I want my friends from "Big Business" to understand and carefully consider what is happening around us. They should not be blind to the fact that the economic structures in western Europe and America are coming down. The agrarian situation in the country today is just like, though not exactly, the agrarian situation just before the French revolution. No purpose will be served by saying that they will go slowly and solve the problem, while the problem is getting more and more acute. There is no use saying they will go slow when the economic situation is deteriorating.

22. Socialism—The Need of the Hour[1]

During the six days that I have been in Bombay, I have addressed innumerable meetings and this is the last speech of this visit, though I may have occasion to come to Bombay many times in future.

You have shown your love and regard for the Indian National Congress of which I am the President, by offering me welcome and by attending the large meetings I addressed. I have placed before you my views on socialism and also discussed the question at the meetings. You listened to what I said. Now, what is the result of this? People attended the meetings in such large numbers because they realised that they had a sort of dissatisfaction within themselves, and perhaps their enthusiasm might have warmed up a little now. There will be an occasion for them again to show that they are prepared to strive for the independence of the country, though when that occasion will come none can tell at present.

Some people in Bombay might have felt dissatisfied with my utterances and might not have approved of them. I talked to the people of your city of Poorna Swaraj and socialism and many people are in favour of these two things.

1. Speech at public meeting at Bombay, 20 May 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 21 May 1936.

The first and the most important issue before the country is complete independence. But along with it, equally vital issues arise out of poverty and sufferings of the people and how to eradicate them.

Some people ask me why I should raise the issue of socialism. They say it will accentuate differences and weaken the Congress.

I would ask them whether they have sufficiently considered whether my references to socialism will create any differences, whether they will strengthen or weaken the Congress.

If the Congress has grown stronger, it is because I raised the issue of socialism. Today the masses in the country have come nearer to the Congress and to that extent the position of the Congress has strengthened. I myself have derived strength for what little I do because I have seen the sufferings and poverty of the peasants and the workers.

For what purpose is Swaraj to be won? I want Swaraj to end the poverty and misery of the masses, for bettering their lot. Nothing else can be the meaning of Swaraj. Their misery has strengthened me in my fight for Swaraj.

The strength of the Congress is the strength of the masses behind it. Now they cannot be forgotten. Everyone has seen the picture of *Bharat Mata*. She is depicted as a beautiful woman. But *Bharat Mata* really represents the starving and hungry peasant. There are many millionaires in Bombay and there are palatial mansions in the city. But the grandeur of these buildings ought not to make one forget the tottering mud hovels of the rural areas. If they could imagine this picture then they could not have told me that I was trying to accentuate differences.

These people tell me that I want to expropriate private property. But they do not consider the plight of the country. There is great wealth on one side, extreme poverty on the other. The situation does not augur well for the country. It must be realised that a handful of persons will not be able to rule the country without the backing of the masses. They have grown rich because the masses had the purchasing power. If the purchasing power is taken away from the people, a handful of rich men cannot stand in the air. If the masses deteriorate, so will the position of the middle classes.

The rich and the upper classes may be able to hold on for a time. But in the midst of this deterioration, they too will be forced to consider these problems and find a solution for themselves.

It is clear that everyone wants Swaraj for without it no progress can be achieved. In the fight for independence cooperation of all the people is necessary. But side by side, the vital problems must also be

considered, for one must have a clear conception of the kind of Swaraj one wants. Is it for perpetuating the poverty of the people?

Many people have favoured socialism. Many again show their sympathy for socialism, but they do not seem to bestow the attention the question deserves. You should think over these questions. My own view is that socialism is the only solution. I do not want you to follow blindly whatever I have said. You must consider both sides of the question, after which you will be in a position to reach a conclusion.

This is the way of educating the people politically. For the ultimate decision will have to be taken by the people themselves. The question cannot be settled off hand and there is ample time for you to consider it. The country must progress and people cannot stagnate. These questions, after they are considered by the country, will have to come up before the Congress for decision.

In the world everything is changing. Society is changing and the country is also changing The people cannot afford to remain behind the times. Their problems cannot be isolated. In the flow of the sea, if a small quantity of water is isolated, it will stagnate and dry up. There is a change everywhere and India cannot hold aloof from the rest of the world.

Even the history of the Congress has changed during the last fifty years. Those who did not want to move with the Congress during these 50 years remained behind and made the curious claim that they alone were genuine Congressmen, having been connected with it from the beginning, while those in the Congress were not Congressmen. But they do not seem to realise that in a country where everything is changing they alone do not change.

'The Indian National Congress is not a lifeless and decaying organisation. All vital questions are considered by the Congress because it is representative of the people's will. There are great leaders in the Congress. Prominent Congressmen constitute the Working Committee of the Congress. But this is not all the Congress. It is the organisation of the people in the country. It is not merely the institution of those who pay the membership fee of four annas. For in this country there are thousands of people who are not able to pay even this amount though they want to join the Congress. The Congress also derives its strength from these unfortunate people. And therefore the Congress must take decisions.

23. On the Bombay Visit[1]

Bombay has been overwhelming in its kindness and in the enthusiasm it has shown for the cause of India's freedom as represented by the Congress. I addressed meetings not only of workers, but also of all shades and grades of Bombay's citizens. I have lost count of the scores of meetings I have addressed during these six days, each of which was attended by vast numbers of people. I imagine that out of Bombay's million and a half population about a third or fourth must have attended these meetings and gatherings.

Meetings may mean little or much, but these vast gatherings signify a deep stirring among the people of all classes, a questioning of vital issues and a desire to get a move on towards their solution. There was a wonderful unanimity on the question of Indian independence and there was also everywhere a sympathetic desire to learn more about socialism.

Some leaders of business have protested against my stress on socialism; but, in spite of this, nothing was more striking than the response of the mercantile community to the call of the Congress and national freedom. Over a score of merchants' associations did me the honour of presenting addresses and of assuring me that they stood shoulder to shoulder with us in our freedom struggle.

I go away with deep gratitude to the people of Bombay for their overwhelming kindness and with joy at the thought that this great city is destined to play as great a part as it did in the past in our freedom struggle.

1. Bombay, 20 May 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 21 May 1936.

24. On the Debate on Socialism[1]

Discussions are going on in the city for the last four or five days on socialism as propounded by me. I would, however, gladly participate in such a discussion.

1. Speech at a merchants' meeting at Bombay, 20 May 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 21 May 1936.

Whatever the view of my critics may be, I personally believe that socialism is the only ultimate remedy for the country's poverty. However, both I and my critics have put before the bar of public opinion our views about the theories we hold. Now it is for the public to judge the merits of the case.

The merchants of the city who issued the manifesto are possibly disturbed by the expression of views I have given. These merchants have in my opinion evaded the major problem that faces the country today. The problem is how to drive away the stark poverty that stares the country. And the action of these few merchants, in these circumstances, amounts to a threat.

Would it not be proper to point out that there are only a handful of merchants worth millions whereas there are millions of people in this country who are almost starving? Is it not equally true that the peasants and workers and petty merchants are faced with the problem of how to maintain themselves? Would it not be pertinent to suggest, under these circumstances, that dissatisfaction will spread in these ranks?

In my opinion the mainstay of the country are these people. And I am one of those who think that if these people persist and if these people live, the country will live.

That is, in my opinion, the major problem and nothing else can cover up the present situation.

It would be perfectly logical to say that those who have assembled here or I myself cannot do anything to alter the present situation under the present circumstances. The attainment of Swaraj can find a solution.

Those who express any doubts on the working of socialism in this country should come out in the open and find a solution to the present situation.

The Indian Merchants' Chamber has several times helped the Congress and the national movement. I am quite aware of the fact that this body has helped the Congress in the struggle for freedom. But there are cases where some ex-presidents or eminent members of this body exploited nationalism in the name of *swadeshi*.

In violation of the resolution passed by the Indian Merchants' Chamber, one of the ex-presidents attended the third Round Table Conference and thereby acted against the wishes of the country.[2] Another equally distinguished member of the Chamber spoke in favour of ordinances in the Assembly, when the struggle for freedom was in full

2. Purshotamdas Thakurdas.

swing and when repression was at its height. A third, ostensibly preaching *swadeshi*, contracted a treaty with foreign textile centres with a view to safeguarding the interests of only a few merchants of this country.[3]

How would it be consistent for such people to preach ideas of *swadeshi* on the one hand and exploit nationalist instincts on the other? I appeal to you to continue supporting the Congress throughout its march for the freedom of the country.

3. H.P. Mody; see *Selected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 65.

25. Socialism and Religion[1]

The twenty one gentlemen who signed the manifesto did not raise their voice against the ordinance raj when a resolution was moved at one of the meetings of the Indian Merchants' Chamber nor did they join hands with the Congress. And it is these people who now raise a hue and cry and criticise me for propagating my views on socialism. They are, however, welcome to criticise. It is for the people to judge which will best suit the country. I have no quarrel with any class or community. I have placed before the country a solution for its problems. If the Liberals or the "twenty one" can show the way, they can put it before the country. But instead, they are advancing ridiculous arguments against socialism. They have broadcast that religion is in danger. Religion has absolutely nothing to do with socialism, which is purely an economic doctrine.

I hope that the merchants will stand by the nation and its premier organisation, the Indian National Congress.

1. Speech at Bombay, 22 May 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 23 May 1936.

26. Interview to The Bombay Chronicle[1]

Question: What is your reaction to the various press statements regarding your advocacy of socialism?

1. Bombay, 22 May 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 23 May 1936.

Jawaharlal Nehru. I am afraid that owing to very busy time in Bombay I have been unable to read fully the various statements that have appeared in the press regarding my advocacy of socialism. I should like to examine them in some detail, but I cannot do so at present during the few minutes at my disposal before I leave Bombay. I should like to make it clear, however, that I stand by every word of what I said in my presidential address at Lucknow. Criticisms of it are based largely on an astounding ignorance of socialism and communism. They are also based, so far as "Big Business" is concerned, in the city as elsewhere, on the intrinsic desire of the big vested interests to prevent any change, however beneficial it might be for the country, if it affects them. The Irish poet Yeats once said: "There is nothing so passionate as vested interests disguised as an intellectual conviction."

We have seen some of this passion and prejudice among the big captains of industry in Bombay, though an understanding of the problems is singularly lacking. Some signatories of the "twenty one" explained socialism to me in language which would have astonished any person who possessed a glimmering of economic knowledge. This manifesto itself shows where passion leads one to.

Q: What is your reaction to the bogey of "religion in danger" in the manifesto?

JN: They talk of religion being in danger. I did not know that the "twenty one" were the high priests or the arch exponents of religion in the city. To talk in this way is to display to the world that they have no valid argument to advance. There is no question of religion when we discuss economic doctrines. Religion should have the fullest freedom provided it does not take the form of vested interests and does not exploit others under this guise. The bringing in of religion in this manifesto shows once again how the vested interests have exploited it to their advantage.

Q: What is your comment on their argument that by advocating socialism you are endangering their personal safety?

JN: This argument is an equally surprising one. We are told that the personal safety of the "twenty one" is in danger. All the world knows that those whose personal safety is in danger in this country are the advocates of independence and socialism—not those who champion blantly the cause of vested interest or British imperialism.

Q: What is the difference between your socialism and communism?

JN: Socialism and communism, so far as ideals and objectives are concerned, are identical or almost so. The difference comes in in regard to the various methods of approach to the problem. Both accept the general philosophy of Marxism in regard to the interpretation of history and current events.

Q: Do you accept this philosophy?

JN: I accept the general philosophy, though I do not accept every communist dogma in relation to it. I want to apply the philosophy in India and to understand what is happening here and to fit it in with the peculiar conditions and the historical outlook of the Indian people. I want to fit the methods to that outlook. I want to avoid violence. I should like to convert a great majority of Indian people by peaceful persuasion to this doctrine of socialism.

Q: Why do you say that the manifesto expresses the intolerance of the "twenty one"?

JN: The manifesto objects not only to the doctrines, as it has every right to do, but also to the propagation of ideas in regard to them. That is a very serious matter, for it infringes the most elementary rights of civil liberty. The coming of socialism will inevitably be a lengthy process and it will involve many factors including the education of people to that end. It cannot obviously come to India so long as the British Empire has possession of India. Therefore, our first problem is one of political freedom. After that the people of India will have to decide what form of economic and social organisation they desire in this country.

Q: What have you to say about the charge of intolerance against the Congress in the manifesto as well as Sir Chimanlal's statement?[2]

JN: I shall be happy to know in what this intolerance consists apart from our criticism of their political activities which we consider to have

2 Chimanlal Setalvad said on 21 May 1936 that Jawaharlal in his annoyance had abandoned all tolerance of difference of views and challenged the *bona fides* of his opponents.

been eminently injurious to the national cause. They have every right to criticise us as aggressively as they like. We stand for freedom on both sides to spread our ideas and to criticise.

But when some people actually go to the length of giving their support to the ordinances and otherwise side with British imperialism, when vast numbers of their countrymen are fighting a life and death struggle, it is a matter of far graver import. If it is a question of intolerance, I would like to ask if the manifesto shows tolerance when it talks of the suppression of certain views which it does not like and goes to the length of inviting the government to suppress them. It comes to this that, in the final analysis, these gentlemen stand with British imperialism and are opposed to even democratic freedom or civil liberty. Nothing could be clearer and more explicit than Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyar's statement on this issue. He has told us that in his opinion there has not been any progressive suppression of civil liberties in India and, so far as he is concerned, he stands shoulder to shoulder, as apparently the "twenty one" do, with British imperialism. The question thus is a much wider one than one of socialism which is not an immediate issue. It is one of our national political freedom itself.

Q: Don't you think that they criticise you because they differ with your methods?

JN: People may differ about methods, but if such differences mean the continuous support of British imperialism in and out of season, the inevitable inference from this would have to be drawn.

How far I am justified as Congress President in airing my views on socialism is a matter for my comrades of the Congress to consider; it is an impertinence for those, who are outside the Congress and oppose it, to talk about it.

I take my orders from the Congress and from no other authority.

27. The Fascist Mentality[1]

I have no doubt at all about the support of the merchants and particularly of the Indian Merchants' Chamber. I know that those who

1. Talk with the representatives of the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay, 22 May 1936 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 23 May 1936

issued the statement are mostly Liberals and are trying to attack the Congress in the guise of "Big Business".

The twenty one signatories to the manifesto are people who represent the fascist mentality in the country. When the socialist ideal becomes too strong, certain vested interests are bound to take to fascist methods. It is nothing new. It has been there in the West and it will be there in India too.

However, one can think of a socialistic order of society only after political freedom has been won. I am advocating socialism and want to make the people understand the doctrine now, so that when political power does come, it may not be captured by the fascists. Hence merchants can advocate socialism consistently with carrying on their business, as the socialist order contemplated is not an immediate one.

I assure you that individuals can continue having private property and consistently advocate socialism as they will not be giving away their possessions till the whole country is changed.

I am surprised at the protest of "Big Business". One can understand opposing, and vehemently opposing, one's views but it is really strange that they are trying to encroach upon my liberty of speech and liberty of thought. Not only do they want me to advocate their doctrines but they are mildly suggesting that I should be stopped from advocating my doctrines.

28. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
25th May, 1936

My dear Bapu,

...About women and the Working Committee I began by saying that I had received some protests for their non-inclusion.[2] I would have welcomed even stronger protests for I wanted our women to be more aggressive and to insist on their rights, both political and social. I

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, File No. II/36, National Archives of India. Extracts. The full text of the letter is not available.
2. Mahatma Gandhi, in his letter of 21 May 1936, had drawn Jawaharlal's attention to a report in *The Hindu* of his speech delivered at a women's meeting in Bombay on 18 May 1936. This report suggested that Jawaharlal had had to accept a Working Committee which was not to his liking. Also see *ante*, item 14.

invited them to organise themselves to press for their rights which they were not likely to get if they waited for the goodwill of their menfolk. About the Working Committee I said that it was formed under peculiar circumstances when I had to play an unusual part. A हयादार[3] President would probably have resigned but I being बेहया[4] stuck on even though the majority of the Congress had decided against me on some vital issues.[5] This peculiar position was reflected in the formation of the Working Committee which certainly could not be under the circumstances of my choice although technically I was responsible for it. When various important viewpoints have to be represented, the lesser ones go to the wall. You are perfectly right in saying that I was responsible for the exclusion of women. But yet this is not the whole matter. I would have liked to have a woman in the Working Committee but as the matter developed and numbers of other names appeared and stayed, there was little choice left. Ultimately I felt that it mattered little to me who was in the Working Committee and who was not. The Committee as it took shape was not my child. I could hardly recognise it and to some inclusions, as you know, I reacted strongly.[6] Yet ultimately I submitted but inevitably with the thought that I was surrendering to others and almost against my own better judgement. At the very first meeting, almost without provocations, the inherent conflicts appeared. The whole purpose of a President nominating a homogeneous Committee was thus frustrated.[7]

3. *Hayadar*—self-respecting.
4. *Behaya*—shameless.
5. Jawaharlal's proposal to permit the collective affiliation of trade unions and peasant leagues with the Congress was rejected, his attempt to associate the Congress more directly with the struggle for political reform in the princely states was also rejected and Mahatma Gandhi's policy of passive support was reiterated. The resolution on agrarian reform was toned down and, while condemning the 1935 Act, the party agreed to contest the elections and shelved the question of office acceptance.
6. There were very few in the Working Committee who were of Jawaharlal's way of thinking.
7. In his reply dated 29 May 1936, Mahatma Gandhi said: "Your explanation about the omission of a woman on the Working Committee does not give me satisfaction.... As to the other members too I have been under the impression that you chose the members because it was the right thing to do for the cause...."

29. To P. V. Gadgil[1]

May 26, 1936

Dear Comrade,[2]
Your letter of the 23rd May. The National Congress as such can hardly become a completely socialist organisation. It is conceivable, of course, that it may give place to a socialist organisation or, becoming socialist itself, cease to be nationalist. What is much more likely is that it will continue to be influenced by both the urges—nationalist and socialist—the latter increasing in strength. I do not think anything in my address creates the difficulty which you have experienced.[3] I think, as I stated, that it is perfectly possible for political independence to come to India without socialism but in the attainment of that political independence socialist ideology will play an ever growing part. The political independence that comes in this way may soon be followed or might almost be accompanied by social freedom. But it is always a possibility that it may come by itself if internal and external events force the political pace. Such political freedom cannot be really suitable and lasting unless it solves the principal economic problem of the country; hence the inevitability of socialism.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Editor of the *Lokamanya*, a Marathi daily.
3. Gadgil had understood Jawaharlal to be planning to convert the Congress to socialism because he did not think India could attain independence without socialism.

30. The World-wide Struggle Against Imperialism[1]

The country has suffered a great loss at the sad and sudden death of Dr. M.A. Ansari who was not only my dear and old friend but a great comrade in the fight for India's freedom. India's great sons are being snatched away, and Mother India is being deprived of their

1. Speech at Delhi, 28 May 1936. From *The Hindustan Times* 29 May 1936.

services at this critical juncture Dr. Ansari suffered a great deal for the country. We must naturally feel dejected over his loss, but we are helpless before God and we should continue our struggle till the goal is achieved, as that will be the fittest memorial to the departed leader.

I recently visited Bombay where lakhs of people came to hear me in dozens of meetings and people belonging to all communities, castes and trades expressed their sympathy with the struggle for freedom. These huge meetings and great enthusiasm are due not to my personality but to the fact that there is a great upheaval going on in the hearts of the millions of India, who are equally groaning under the pain of unemployment, poverty and starvation. This is true of the educated, the tradesmen as well as the labourers and the peasants.

We have been fighting for the last many years with many ups and downs, and though we have not won so far, the time is sure to come when we will rise again and win at last. When our exploiters are once defeated, that would be their last defeat.

India is not the only country where the struggle for freedom is on, but Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Java, Indo-China and several other countries are putting up heroic fights for attaining independence. In other countries people do not talk of Dominion Status and things of that sort; it is only in India that some of our aged leaders continuously talk of Dominion Status and this is most painful to me. People of all other subject nations are fighting for freedom without any difference of caste, religion or political party spirit.

Imperialism is playing the same role in all subject countries, and the fight in India has no peculiarity in it. The problems of India are interrelated with world problems, though I am proud to say that no other country has put up such a hard and brave fight under such unfavourable circumstances.

The exploitation of India by the British has been followed by the exploitation of other nations by other European nations. The British finger-nails have pierced deep down into the hearts of the people of India and the fight of the Indian people is a much tougher fight than that of other countries.

Just as India's occupation gives a great name and status to the British, similarly India's freedom will be a great blow to British imperialism. I am sure that we have made a great progress in the struggle and there is no cause for grief. I am, however, sorry to know that for the last few years, after putting up a great fight, some of our people have deviated from the path and are immersed in trivial affairs, while the greater issue has been forgotten. I am sure that the 350 million people will, in the near future, succeed in their mission, but

what pains me most is not the oppression of the exploiters but the tactics of our own people, who are weakening the country's forces. None else but the Indian people themselves can weaken India's cause and that is the greatest disgrace. I appeal to the waverers and the weak not to weaken the independence front.

I have faith in socialism as the solution for the starvation, unemployment and poverty of India. I do not intend to force socialism on the people, but my idea is to give political education to the people and let them decide as to what is the best course for the country.

I am a socialist, as you all know, and I am keen on converting the Congress to socialism, but whether I succeed or fail in my object, I will always loyally work under the tri-coloured flag of the Indian National Congress since the Congress is the one most powerful organization that has been fighting, and can fight, for the freedom of the 350 million starving people of India.

Some people believe that socialism is even more important than Swaraj. But I think that independence must precede socialism, because unless we are politically free, we cannot carry out a socialist programme in India. I am perfectly willing to cooperate with any member of any organization that stands for complete independence.

You are aware of the Sapru Committee's report.[2] But the great problem of unemployment cannot be tackled by appointing committees. Unless the present political and economic system in the country is completely changed, there is no prospect of ending starvation.

Only a constituent assembly has the sole right to frame a popular constitution for India. The new Government of India Act is absurd and most reactionary. The new constitution means more chains for us.

The so-called Hindu-Muslim problem is not a genuine problem concerning the masses, but it is the creation of self seekers, job-hunters and timid people, who believe in British rule in India till eternity. I wonder as to where is the Hindu-Muslim problem in reality. Whether Hindus or Muslims, poverty, unemployment and other hardships affect them alike; and therefore it is nothing but playing a fraud with the country continuously to harp on the so-called Hindu-Muslim problem.

The days of our exploiters, as such, are numbered and the British are a very wise people, and they know this fact. Therefore the British are anxious to make friends with some of the Congress leaders in whose

2. The U.P. Unemployment Committee, appointed by the government in October 1934, with Tej Bahadur Sapru as chairman, published its report in January 1936. The report recommended the reorganisation of education and the development of vocational education on modern lines.

hands they know the future destinies of India lie. The British are wiser than our timid brethren who grow nervous at seeing Britain's might and waver in the struggle for freedom.

Stand up, comrades, gird up your loins, tage courage and look at the great problems before you. The Congress is the only organization that can lead you to success, march on under the tri-coloured flag till the goal is achieved.

31. On the Ideological Conflict[1]

I am afraid you will feel disappointed if you want to hear from me something about your local matters. I do not want to lose myself in the problems which are not of vital importance to our country, for if we keep on considering these matters, the real important matters will be left out.

I want you to develop a clear perspective and to feel and know the real problems which face you. It is absurd to say that the Communal Award issue is the only main issue before the country.

The day India achieves independence, communal differences and jealousies will go of themselves and these problems will be solved.

You should differentiate between the two schools of thought in India. Some people think in terms of independence for India whereas others think in terms of keeping the present state of affairs intact. The communal problem exists because we are not able to settle the issue by ourselves.

At the Lucknow Congress, we witnessed a new conflict in ideology—an ideology which is present the world over. The question before us is whether we now want to go in for cooperation or continue non-cooperation to develop the revolutionary mentality with a view to bring about revolutionary changes. I judge the Communal Award and the Shahidganj questions from that point of view.

If you lie down on your belly and see an anthill in front of you, you will find it an unsurmountable hill, till you get up. These anthills are a nuisance and these should be removed.

The fundamental problems which face us today are poverty, extreme distress and tremendous unemployment. We should try to solve these

1. Speech at Lahore, 29 May 1936. From *The Tribune*, 30 May 1936.

problems. Committees cannot solve the problems, however good their reports may be, for they do not scratch the real issue.

We want the present rule to go from India not for the sake of prestige; we want it to go because it has failed to solve our real problems. When a government fails to solve these problems it weakens and fails and that is what is happening in India. I cannot say in how many years India will be able to have her own rule. But I think India will have Swaraj within 20 years.

I would like the political and economic structure to be changed. The attempts made at as many as 130 international conferences failed because everybody wanted to stick to the old order of things.

I do not like the paper constitution evolved by lawyers and I am opposed to it. The driving force of independence is great indeed, and to me it appears that everybody in India, whether belonging to the middle class or the poor class, is yearning for it. The only class which is opposed to it is the imperialist class.

You must have heard about the Bombay merchants' manifesto. These beknighted gentlemen only talk good of the Congress on two matters. The first is its advocacy of *swadeshi* because it fills their pockets with gold and the second is when they ask for stopping differential treatment between Indian and European merchants. These people have always opposed the independence movement and they will continue to do so. But a good comes out of their attempt to throw dust in the eyes of the people. The whole merchant community, who were almost in dormant condition, have been roused and they promise to support the Congress even though most of them are not socialists.

A stage has come in the political life of our country when it should be made clear to everybody as to where one stands.

The Liberals are a lot of estimable gentlemen, but sensitive friends. Those among them who belong to the top class are now attempting to line up with the knighted businessmen. They want the continuation of a system to which the country is opposed.

Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyar has criticised my proposal for the civil liberties union. I feel surprised how even a man of that intellectual understanding can say that there is no suppression of civil liberties.

I have been accused of going about preaching socialism among the common people thus endangering the peace of the state and the safety of the knights.

I want to know whether the people are to be kept in ignorance of the new thoughts and big issues of a country, and the fate of the masses is to be decided in the drawing rooms of lawyers.

I have been accused of lowering the prestige of religion. I have openly declared and I want to repeat it again that religion in India as practised today is a scourge and a curse. I ask those "brave knights" since when they have fallen in love with religion and how much of it they practise.

They charge me with endangering their personal safety. Is it not I who have a real cause of grievance with regard to my own personal safety being put in danger always? But I assure "Big Business" that they need not fear me.

I want to say many things but I cannot. However, one thing that helps me to form a higher perspective is socialism. It has helped me to understand history, current and the future. I therefore commend it to you.

32. Unimportance of the Communal Award[1]

I pay my tributes to the brave people of Amritsar where is situated the Jallianwala Bagh of undying memory. Outside the Punjab there is a feeling that the Punjab is much too engrossed in petty communal fights. I am a politician and all of you who have gathered here have come to hear from me about the political, social and economic position of the country. I want you to develop a clear perspective and to feel and know the real problems which face you, and not be side-tracked by issues which are but passing and unimportant.

The issue of the Communal Award, important as it is, is not the main issue before the country. The day on which India achieves her freedom, communal differences and jealousies will get solved of themselves.

There is an ideological conflict between the two sections of people in the country. While one thinks in terms of the continuation of the British domination, the other thinks in terms of independence. I would like you to think in terms of independence, which is the main issue before the country.

The problems of unemployment, poverty and starvation can be solved only through socialism. At the moment I do not want to create any rift or schism. The Communal Award affects only the higher classes. The poor masses are not benefited by its proposals. Their problems

1. Speech at Amritsar, 31 May 1936. *The Tribune*, 2 June 1936.

remain unsolved. If we solve the question of the masses, the question of each community will be solved by itself. I do not like the Communal Award, but I do not want to raise a hue and cry over it.

You have perhaps forgotten the sacrifices of this city, but in foreign countries they remember its sacrifices and its name has found its way into their dictionaries. I want you to tell the government that India will not be a party in any way to any war that may involve the British Empire at any moment.

I believe that the Congress is the only representative body which is fighting for India's freedom, and so I love it. I appeal to you to join the Congress in large numbers and feel your power.

33. The Inevitability of Socialism[1]

Socialism is an economic doctrine for social organization of the state building which can alone bring salvation to the country. As far as rural debts are concerned the rural population is already crushed under the present economic system which has outgrown its utility.

Whether you wish it or not socialism is bound to come. It is apparent in the world's changing conditions. Conditions are changing every day. What of me alone, not a thousand like me can check the new growing thought. I believe socialism is the most effective weapon.

I want that traders and merchants should study and think about socialism and not be afraid without reason.

You are aware of the Bombay merchants' manifesto. These are men who are opposed to the Congress always, but as a reaction to their attitude 95 merchants openly declared support to the Congress. I would not take responsibility in case some people misrepresent socialism. .

As for the communal problem, it is fundamentally wrong to consider matters on religious lines. It is but a question of jobbery for the upper class only.

1. Reply to traders' deputation, Lyallpur, 1 June 1936. From *The Tribune*, 2 June 1936. The deputationists said the propaganda of socialism among the villagers was dangerous for petty merchants and shopkeepers.

34. Businessmen and Socialism[1]

Question: I would request you to remove the anxiety the business classes have begun to feel after your recent speeches.

Jawaharlal Nehru: The present world conditions are sure to have their effect on the Indian situation. Production there is and enough of it, and yet the people are dying of hunger. This apparently is the result of a certain economic policy and every thinking person has to consider these contradictions which we see everywhere in the world.

Socialism is the only solution of our present economic disparity and all our ills and I challenge anyone to point out to me any well thought-out plan to solve the world problem excepting socialism. However, so far as India is concerned, it is a matter of theory only and it will remain so till we achieve independence. Britain herself may be obliged to adapt herself to the new change, but as long as foreign domination continues in India we cannot do anything. I want you to cultivate the habit of thinking over the problems which face you not only as far as your business is concerned, but the problems which confront your country too.

Q: What is the use of spreading ideas that may prove harmful when there is no immediate possibility of Swaraj?

JN: Ideas are always more powerful than individuals. When conditions come to the help of ideas, nothing in the world can check them. In India itself the changing conditions are forcing the spread of new ideas and even if I try to stop the flow of this tide I shall fail. The more opposition you offer, the greater will be the disgust, discontent and anger against your present social and economic structure. So it is time now that both the vested interests and the masses learn the reality about it. True it is that certain vested interests will not go further, but then the new ideas are surely going to spread.

Q: Situated as we are, will it not be better to ask the government to help us in ameliorating the condition of the masses?

1. Interview to businessmen of Lahore, 1 June 1936. From *The Tribune*, 4 June 1936.

JN: I want you to let me know how you and the foreign government can do anything in this direction as long as the present economic structure lasts.

Under the present economic system the masses are not recognised even. They have no place even though it is they who buy. We have to increase their purchasing power and this the government will not be able to do even if it wishes to do.

If the government here attempts to ameliorate the condition of the masses it may have to remove itself from here, because the government has some other vested interests to please. The Ottawa Pact and the 18-d exchange ratio were the results of that one policy.

Q: So you think there is no other course excepting change of the present structure?

JN: Yes. There is the agrarian problem which is to be solved. I want you to absorb the unemployed in industries, in social services centres to teach the people to be clean and make them aware of the hygienic rules. But you must remember you cannot go on with anything unless you pronounce yourselves against vested interests. You must remove these before you can think of making any progress and the biggest vested interest in India today is British imperialism.

You cannot make an economic position stable, which is unstable from the very beginning, even with the help of the army and the police. So you have to change this present economic structure. The present government is failing, as it essentially must fail, being based on this structure. No matter who lives to see the complete disintegration of the present system, whatever may happen that structure is surely going to fail.

Q: How can you say there is no exploitation in a socialist state?

JN: In a socialist state trade becomes a state affair and the state is anxious to supply to the buyer what he wants without any profits. A socialist state becomes self-producing and self-sufficient, for which production is divided and allotted to different suitable areas; the produce is then exchanged for consumption. But as there never arises a question of profits so there is no exploitation.

Q: Is Russia not producing her goods to dump in the world market?

JN: No, Russia is not now producing to dump in the world market. It has sent its products to other countries as it is in need of buying machinery from other countries It has not much gold to pay for the machinery and so it gives its goods in return.

Q: What do you expect the capitalist class to do?

JN: I expect the capitalist class to understand socialism, or at least the economic theory, and after having understood that I expect them to help in the change being brought about. Nobody expects of anyone to part with his property but if the capitalists help in the change it certainly will be peaceful. I would not mind even if the change takes a little more time in coming.

The capitalists should further take an interest in the country's affairs and forces which are now playing a powerful part in the struggle for independence. They should encourage industry and help in decreasing the increasing unemployment.

Q: The country's representative national organization—the Congress—has not accepted socialism. Will it not be, therefore, better to postpone the idea of setting up a socialist machinery, so as not to wean away the sympathies of the people who may otherwise like to remain with you?

JN: I repeat what I have often said and it is that we cannot have socialism in India until we have political power. A machinery has always to be set up beforehand and it cannot be postponed in this case too.

Supposing we do not set up any machinery and India achieves independence through the efforts of her sons and daughters, who is going to take up the power? What group will assume power to give the right lead to the country then? Will you suffer the danger of the Nizam taking up all power or the Narendra Mandal (Chamber of Princes) becoming the master of the country? The danger of small vested interests coming to the front is great and we must take all precautions against them.

Q: I would request you not to frighten away and tax the nerves of a class.

JN: I cannot help it. How can you check the spread of ideas? In the darkness that prevails around us in the world there is no way

excepting socialism and I can assure you that it will injure nobody but benefit all, excepting, of course, the vested interests who must now learn to help in a peaceful change.

Q: Why not tell the monied class to remain mere trustees of the wealth which they have? This is what Indian culture teaches us.

JN: No, this trusteeship theory does not hold good now. This is what the Pope at Rome even preached. We are not guided by movements but kicked about by them. I want to be the subject of history and utilize it for the benefit of my own country.

Q: After all, Indians spend money on charitable works also.

JN: I am sorry that in India people do not know how to spend their money even usefully. Generally—not in all cases—dharmasalas and other such places are built not with an idea of social service but for ensuring a fully paid up policy for entering heaven after death.

I want nobody to suffer. I always avoid hardships and the middle class need have no fear if they agree to move with the forces in the country and side with the new idea to ameliorate the condition of the masses.

35. The Congress and the Masses[1]

Question: How do you visualise the happenings of the next ten years?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The whole economic structure will crash and there will be upheavals which no human power can avert, the capitalist system will go and along with it the British Empire, this is how I visualise the happenings of the next ten years.

Q: What is your estimate of the political situation in the Punjab?

1. Interview to the press, Lahore, 2 June 1936. From *The Tribune*, 3 June 1936.

JN: The Punjab has some political immaturity indeed but then the Punjab has a special feature and that is its youthfulness which is both good and bad Another cause which, in my opinion, has its direct effect on the Punjab's political situation, is that the peasants here are living in a slightly better position so that there cannot be much impetus for a national agrarian movement like the one we have in the U.P.; and then that discontent which is so common among the peasantry elsewhere is not to be found in that terrible form in the Punjab even though it is now increasing.

Individuals do not matter much in big movements even though some may think that but for Lenin the Russian revolution might have failed. The Congress has unfortunately developed a mentality among the people of depending entirely on some leaders instead of depending on the power derived from the masses. It is rather bad that the Congress is now functioning through supreme committees and not through the masses. This has weakened the Congress. Leadership is required at the time of action only.

Q: What will you do if the Congress refuses to accept your ideas on socialism?

JN· Such questions will arise only when the Congress decides to refuse membership to socialists. Till such a position arises like everybody else I will remain in the Congress even though in a minority. Of course, the question of holding executive authority and responsibility will remain to be decided.

Q: Are you aware that the bitterness which is being caused by your new ideology and the differences which are becoming so apparent in the Congress will weaken the national organization?

JN: I am not afraid of a conflict. When there was a conflict last time the Congress stood to gain. The Liberals had been in charge of the whole affair. These men were absolutely isolated from the masses. They knew nothing about them. Their only worry was the upper middle class. The result was that when these Liberals left us, Gandhiji took up the reins and everybody knows that the 2 per cent loss which the Congress suffered by their going away was met by 78 per cent gain in the form of closer and intimate contact with the masses. I want the people to develop clear thinking and not in terms of individuals The real power comes from the common people.

Q: Is it advisable to lose the sympathies of the people who have been connected with the national movement although the 78 per cent gain, which you have mentioned, is out of the 2 per cent who originated the organization? Are we not creating strife in our own camp?

JN: I am surprised to hear of the 2 per cent people with whom the national movement originated. These people always stood against the Congress movement itself. Liberals, as a group, cannot be expected to support the Congress cause, though some individuals among them may support the idea of independence

The 2 per cent class has failed us always. Our country is an agricultural country and time may come and quite soon, of course, when the Congress will become essentially a peasant organization Now are we going to continue making appeals to the barons of Bombay and do nothing which irritates them or shall we appeal to the masses who matter?

Q: How do you propose to bring in the 7 million Muslims to fall in line with you in the Congress?

JN: I will bring in Mussalmans by treating them as non-Muslims, i.e., approach them with the economic issue. My own honest feeling is that even though the Mussalman is rigid and finds it difficult to break through old barriers and the Hindu is flexible by temperament, when a Muslim is convinced of the new thought he will accept it. My appeal will be not to the top leaders but to the masses with whom the economic reality is bound to prevail.

I do not and cannot think of the people of India in terms of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh. I do not want and will not bribe any community to get its support; nor do I want anyone to join the Congress as Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. They have all to consider themselves as Indians.

Q: What is your opinion about the Hindu Mahasabha?

JN: I dislike the mentality of the Mahasabha of seeking favours from the government.

36. Parting Message to the Punjab[1]

I regret very greatly that I have been unable to carry out the full programme laid down for me by the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee.[2] I endeavoured to do so, but the flesh was weak, and the end of the fourth day of intensive travelling, addressing monster gatherings, overwhelming and terrific processions and the swallowing of large quantities of dust, found me in a state which made it very difficult for me to continue this hectic life without inviting complete collapse. As my voice was almost gone for the time being the idea of addressing public gatherings was out of the question. And so after much hesitation and regret I had to take the inevitable decision to rest. I have a fairly strong constitution, which can stand heat and cold and hard work, but before dust and processions it weakens.

I should also like to mention that my own idea of an effective tour is not one which involves incessant travelling with brief halts. I would much rather go to fewer places and have more time to meet people. Personal contacts and discussions are more important than public displays and *darshans*.

I should like to express my deep gratitude to the people of the Punjab who have literally overwhelmed me with their kindness and affection whenever I have come to this province. I shall treasure this memory and it will hearten me. It will remind me of the fine spirit of great numbers of people here, of their enthusiasm for national independence, of their ever-widening horizon in regard to social and economic freedom. I am convinced that in struggles to come the people of the Punjab will play a brave part.

To my comrades of the Congress organization in the Punjab, on whom the burden of arranging my programme during this inclement season has fallen, I am deeply beholden. They have had to face a far harder task than mine and I have marvelled at their energy and enthusiasm which tried to overleap the bounds of human frailty. I trust that with this energy at its disposal the Congress organization in the Punjab will develop and spread out even further and will establish intimate contacts with the broad masses of the population and with all forces which work for Indian independence.

1 Statement to the press, Lahore, 2 June 1936. *The Tribune*, 3 June 1936.
2. He was to tour the Punjab for six days, from 29 May to 3 June 1936, but cancelled all engagements after 1 June 1936.

37. On the Punjab Tour[1]

Question: Are the masses of the Punjab behind the Congress?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I am convinced, after my whirlwind tour of the Punjab, that the masses of the province are solidly behind the Congress and, given proper leadership, the Punjab can give a good account of itself.

Q: Has your Punjab tour changed the communal atmosphere of the Punjab?

JN: I cannot positively say that it has changed, but I certainly feel that there is a marked improvement. The Punjab is known for expression of outward enthusiasm and I am much impressed by the enthusiasm displayed by the people, in both the cities and the rural areas.

I am specially pleased to note that Mohammedans and Sikhs came to see me and hear my message in no less numbers than Hindus. My private talks with Mohammedan and Sikh groups in the Punjab have *also given me the impression that all the sections of the province are* eager to fight for freedom.

Q: Do the people of the Punjab like the doctrine being preached by you?

JN: The presence of 50,000 persons at the rural conference at Sarhali and large audiences at Lahore, Amritsar, Gujranwala, Lyallpur and other centres prove that the people of the Punjab are anxious to know the message of the Congress and how it can help them. These vast crowds came to see me not because of my personal attraction, but because *they liked the doctrine* that I am preaching and because of their love for the Indian National Congress which, they all know, is the only organization fighting for their salvation.

Q: Is it a fact that you have promised to solve the Shahidganj issue after a month?

1. Interview to *The Hindustan Times*, Delhi, 4 June 1936. From *The Hindustan Times*, 5 June 1936.

JN: No, I have made no such promise, but my solution of the Shahidganj and similar communal problems is to get rid of fanaticism. I am not going to settle this issue by sitting in a conference with Maulanas and Sikh leaders but my appeal will be directed to the masses, and I am sure the masses alone will solve such problems, the moment they get a true perspective of the currents and under-currents going on in the country.

I expressed my sincere congratulations to Dr. Satyapal and other Congressmen of the Punjab, who worked so strenuously to make my tour a success. I am exceedingly sorry not to have been able to complete my tour but it is the dust of the Punjab and the great zeal exhibited in processions that deprived me of the pleasure of visiting other parts of the province. Not only is my throat choked, but I am feeling acute pain in the chest. I will never forget the zeal and the dust of the Punjab.

The enthusiasm of the public showed that the people were under the influence of a cyclone. If the Punjab can keep up the enthusiasm that it showed during the last week and the leaders can put their heads together, I am sure the Punjab will regain its lost position in the political sphere of India.

38. Reply to Critics of Socialism[1]

To newspapers and journalists my gratitude is infinite for their courtesy in giving publicity to what I say and write. Especially I am beholden to my critics who labour so hard to improve me by pointing out my innumerable failings and blemishes. I value that criticism more even than the praise of others. My regret is that a life full of many activities, of rushing about from place to place, of addressing vast gatherings and being tossed about by friendly and enthusiastic crowds, of debate and argument, of heavy office work and the facing of mountains of letters, of an hour stolen now and then to cut myself away for a while from the strife and turmoil of a mad world and to lose myself in a pleasing volume, leaves me little chance or time to keep pace with the abundant advice which friends as well as opponents generously shower upon me. But sometimes I dip into this well of

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 5 June 1936 *The Hindustan Times*, 9 June 1936.

advice and criticism and in spite of my innate modesty, a feeling of elation seizes me at the thought that even the casual words that fall from my lips move people so much, even though sometimes that movement may be one of wrath.

In this abundance of speaking and reporting perhaps I should not complain if errors are frequent and words are torn out of their context or imaginary utterances are fastened on to me, or my attempts at humour are not understood or are taken too seriously. Life is hard enough as it is, it would be a difficult burden to carry but for its lighter touches. It is bad enough that I should speak so often; it would be an utter weariness of the flesh if I had to correct every bit of misreporting or misinterpretation. And the questions that are put to me! Innumerable and of an infinite variety they are, from God and religion to marriage, morality, sex and those shadows of God on earth, vested interests and property. These questions seldom relate to my utterances or to the problems before the country. Indeed it is strange how my critics prefer to skip over what I say and to labour over other matters.

Yet the questions interest me and I would gladly deal with them if life was not so short and our days numbered. Unhappily we are so circumstanced that we spend our youth and our later years in the dreary atmosphere of politics, in getting excited over the Communal Award and the Shahidganj mosque and have no time to see life as it is or to face its real problem. For after all the real problem of life is one of human and social relationships, of the relation of man to man, of man to woman, of man to society. We cannot even see this problem whole much less can we tackle it, for our eyes are blinded and our limbs shackled by the political and economic structure that envelops us.

So for the present I may not lose myself in answering these many questions and I shall content myself by referring the questioner to my *Autobiography* wherein he will find my general reactions to men and things. And yet I cannot remain wholly silent when vague insinuations are made about my colleagues and I am quoted as an authority for these. I find references to continuous frictions between my colleagues and myself, of imminent disruption within the Congress and of other dire happenings. I find also some words of mine, which I used at a women's meeting in Bombay,[2] distorted to mean something that I never intended.

2. Jawaharlal was reported in *The Hindu* as having said on 18 May 1936 that although he was the Congress President he had no voice in the selection of the members of the Working Committee. Also see *ante*, item 14.

I believe I have been frank enough at Lucknow and later about the anomalous position which I occupy in the Congress executive. That curious and somewhat embarrassing position has, however, nothing to do with my socialistic faith. It was entirely a political difference which saw the light of day at Lucknow. None of us made secret of it for we felt that about vital matters we had all to be perfectly open and aboveboard and frank with the suffrages we seek and who will be ultimate arbiter of India's destiny. So we agreed to differ and differ openly, but having done so we also agreed to cooperate and pull together, not only because of the larger cause of India's independence, which we all had at heart, but also because our points of agreement were far more numerous than our points of disagreement.

There was, inevitably, a difference in outlook, a difference in stress on various things. All this was political, not socialistic, except in so far as socialism produced that difference in outlook and stress.

Nothing that could be called socialistic appeared in any of the resolutions at Lucknow. Even the socialists realized that the primary issue was political, that of independence, and on that they concentrated.

Having agreed to pull together, I must say that my colleagues have treated me and my vagaries with every consideration and I am deeply grateful to them. I realize fully, and I stated as much to my colleagues once, that I am a bit of a handful, always apt to jump and hop and often rushing in where wiser and more sedate people would bide their time. Still they bore with me and suffered my vagaries. To talk of splits and the like is an absurdity. There can be no division in our ranks when the call of independence comes to all of us and tingles the blood in our veins. We may agree or disagree, we may even part company sometimes but still we will march together to the tune of that call, and to all who hear it and respond to it we offer a warm welcome to our ranks, whatever their views might be.

About khadi again I have been reported as having passed disparaging remarks.[3] I have stated often enough that I do not consider khadi as a final solution of our economic ills and, therefore, I seek elsewhere for that final solution. But still I believe that situated as we are today, khadi has a definite value, political, social and economic, and must, therefore, be encouraged.

But most of the questions relate to socialism and unhappily betray not only ignorance, but passion, which darkens the mind. Socialism is

3. Jawaharlal was reported by *The Hindu* to have expressed doubts on 18 May 1936 in Bombay as to whether hand spinning and weaving were economic propositions.

an economic doctrine. It is a way of organizing the production and distribution and other activities of society. It is, according to its votaries, a solution of the ills from which society suffers today. And yet in considering this economic policy, we are continually having God and religion hurled at us, and Russia, like King Charles's head, is always cropping up. I am perfectly prepared to discuss the Almighty or the strange and mysterious ways in which He is worshipped and I am equally willing to talk of Russia, for Russia is a fascinating country today. But I do object to being side-tracked from the main issue. That can only be caused by confusion or a deliberate avoidance of the real question.

About religion I am quite convinced that there must be the most perfect freedom of faith and observance. People can worship God in any of the thousand ways they like. But I also claim that freedom not to worship God, if I so choose, and also I claim freedom to draw people away from what I consider superstition and unsocial practice. But when religion comes in the garb of vested interest and exploits people, it is not religion and it must be countered.

I believe in the basic economic theory which underlies the social structure of Russia. I think also that Russia has made the most remarkable progress, culturally, educationally and even spiritually, if I may use the word in its real sense.

But nevertheless I do not accept or approve of everything that has taken place in Russia and do not, therefore, propose to follow blindfolded the example of Russia. Therefore, I prefer to use the word socialism to communism because the latter has come to signify Soviet Russia.

Some captains of industry in Bombay take great exception to my use of the word socialism instead of communism, apparently thinking that thereby I seek to delude our people. They need not excite themselves over this matter. I am not afraid of the word communism. Constituted as I am, all my sympathies go to the underdog and to him who is persecuted most. That in itself would be sufficient to incline me towards communism when all the power of the state and of vested interest tries to crush it. Others move in a different way and naturally and gracefully incline to an alliance with power and the topdog. That power in India is British imperialism. But words and labels confuse.

What I seek is an elimination of the profit motive in society and its replacement by a spirit of social service, cooperation taking the place of competition, production for consumption instead of for profit. Because I hate violence and consider it an abomination, I cannot tolerate willingly our present system which is based on violence. I seek, therefore, a more enduring and peaceful system from which the roots of

violence have been removed, and where hatred shrivels up and yields place to nobler feelings. All this I call socialism.

How this will come to India I cannot say, what intermediate steps there will be, what crises to overcome. But I know this, that without some such effort we shall not solve our problems of poverty and unemployment If there are other ways why do not my critics place them before the country instead of getting angry at something which they do not like or perhaps do not understand?

But before socialism comes, or can even be attempted, there must be the power to shape our destiny. There must be political independence. That remains the big and all absorbing issue before us, and whether we believe in socialism or not, if we are serious about independence, we must join forces to wrest it from unwilling hands.

I believe in full democracy, political and economic. For the moment I work for political democracy but I hope that this will enlarge itself into social democracy also. The Congress has laid down the only possible democratic procedure for settling our problems—that of the constituent assembly. I cannot understand how any person who calls himself a democrat can object to this or see another way. But people who talk of unthinking millions of India, as the signatories of the Bombay manifesto of the 21 did, and object to vital problems being placed before them, probably would not like to be called democrats.

Do we stand for a democratic solution of our problems? That is a question I should like to ask my critics. If so then why all this shouting and trembling and wrathful utterances when I place those problems before our people and try to make them think of them? I have hardly mentioned socialism to them except incidentally, but I have laid stress on the amazing poverty of our people, the vast unemployment of our peasants and workers and middle classes, on the progressive deterioration of all classes except the handful at the top. That has been my sin in the eyes of that handful. But that is the only picture that comes before my eyes when I think of India. I cannot rid myself of it, try as I may. It is not a pleasant picture. I do not like it and, as I see it, sometimes my blood freezes within me, and sometimes it boils with indignation that such things should be.

39. On the Need for Trade Unions[1]

I have come to enquire into the cotton mill strike.[2] I am unaware of all the facts that led to the strike but I will talk to the representatives of the strikers and hope that the other party will also put something before me. I think that the labour of our country is weak and the only way to strengthen it is by the formation of trade unions which can face the millowners to some extent.

In foreign countries labourers gain strength to get what they want while in India they get no opportunity to strengthen trade unions. The millowners create unions for workers but they are useless to them. The only way for labour is to go on strike for they cannot oppose the capitalists who are backed by the police and the army of the government. I felt sorry on hearing the court cases against the strikers but was not surprised. The labourers have a right not to sell their labour which is their only strength. The other way is to organize unions. When these two things will be had labour can fight. By strikes not only the labourer suffers but the millowners' work also suffers. Whatever I could gather of your condition is very bad. The condition of Bombay is worse than Ahmedabad but Lucknow and Cawnpore are worse than Bombay. In excitement you put forward several useless grievances which should not be done.

I assure you that I would give all support and do whatever I can. I also feel that if Lucknow and Cawnpore unite you may achieve success.

1. Speech at the meeting of the strikers of R.G. Cotton Mills, Lucknow, 11 June 1936. From *The Leader*, 15 June 1936.
2. The workers of R. G. Cotton Mills, Lucknow, demanded recognition of their union and better living and working conditions. Jawaharlal's efforts at mediation ultimately failed.

40. The New Offensive[1]

The New Offensive But of course it is not new. We have long been aware of it. And yet it seems to be taking a new aspect and a more aggressive one. Forced to recognize that terrorism, of which so much has been made in recent years, does not exist any longer, the Sherlock Holmes and Watsons of the Bengal Government have searched diligently for fresh dangers hidden from the public eye. How else is the vast secret service system of the government to be kept employed? They have loyal service to their credit, they have received fulsome praise from Viceroys and Governors, they have families to support, are they to be asked to join the swelling ranks of the unemployed?

We are told by people who are in the know of the secrets of government that "there had been recently a marked tendency to abandon the terroristic policy of individual murder." It is comforting to know that the sleuth hounds of government have discovered this tremendous secret. Ordinary men and women had come to this conclusion many years ago, but then they had no secret information. They could only judge from the obvious, and the obvious, as every detective knows, is often very misleading. But now the mystery men have given their verdict and we can sleep more securely in our beds. Terrorism is over, it has become the "former enemy". Its ghost is laid to rest.

But alas! we may not have peace or rest for if terrorism is dead another enemy has risen in its place. "The enemy today is communism." Red gold flows from Russia and labour unions, peasant associations, various *samitis*, *ashrams*, youth movements, etc., have all become the agents to spread this nefarious doctrine.

It is true that the individuals who spread this poison keep within the law. Their utterances are discreet, they talk of the distress among the peasantry, they discourage terrorism. But what of that? They are clever and at the back of their minds there are surely deep-laid plans to commit dastardly crimes.

1 Statement to the press, 15 June 1936. *The Tribune*, 17 June 1936. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp 24-27 The publicity department of the Government of India had, in a pamphlet, asserted that communism was spreading in Bengal and that the authorities might have to take "special measures" to check it.

Therefore the time has come to meet this new menace. The many ordinances and other laws not being enough, special and additional measures should be enacted. We are told that "just as in the prolonged fight against terrorism it became necessary to introduce special legislation, so for the preservation of law and order and for the very existence of government, established authority may have to take special measures to stem the rising tide of communism in Bengal."

The fresh offensive has been prepared by a preliminary bombardment by the government publicity department. They have broadcast for public benefit what presumably are their views on communism. No one need be ignorant any longer of this intricate economic doctrine and philosophy of life. For we are told exactly what communism is: "Communism spells destruction, despair, death. Communism means the rooting out of all religion. Communism entails the complete elimination of culture. Communism robs the people of their land, their jewellery, their money and all their earthly possessions. Communism turns boys into thieves and murderers, it makes prostitutes of the nation's girlhood. The Great Moghul caused to be inscribed on a marble tablet in his Diwan-i-Khas: 'If there is a paradise on earth, it is here, it is here.' Of very truth it may be written of communism that 'if there be a hell on earth, it is here, it is here.'"

This bright specimen of thought and writing has been fathered by the publicity department of the Government of India and it gives us an insight into the minds of those who govern us and produce "special measures" and ordinances. Irresponsible and autocratic rulers have their own standards of behaviour which are not for others, and we are well used to their mental aberrations and their progressive deterioration in the face of a popular challenge to their authority. But what shall we say to this nauseating product of a diseased mentality? Have the Government of India discarded all standards of intellectual integrity? Is their mental apparatus going to pieces?

The question is of interest to the student of politics, sociology or pathology. But it is something more vital for us, for we have to live under this dispensation and anyone of us may be spirited away to the "paradise" of the Andamans, or otherwise subjected to pains and penalties.

We have been discussing the problem of civil liberties in India, and some, giving civil liberty a theoretical allegiance, have told us that we are partly responsible for its suppression. For if we behave why should the need of punishment arise? I should like to ask them, as well as the signatories of the Bombay manifesto of the 21, what their reactions are to this fresh move on the part of government.

Special attention should be paid to relieving the burden on the poorest classes who are being crushed by it. If some such steps were taken the problem could be considered in its entirety and injustice and distress to any group would be largely avoided.

The whole problem is complicated by the fact that in the past and the present money lenders have played an important part in the credit system of the country. It is not desirable to upset the system completely without some further provision for cheap rural credit.

These remarks of mine are general. They should be applied to each province having special regard to the conditions prevailing there so as to enable us to make the new adjustment and to relieve the burden in the most desirable way possible.

You may make use of this statement in any way you like. I am sending a copy of this letter to the secretary of the Punjab P.C.C.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

43. Fundamental Problems[1]

I invite your attention to the fundamental problems before the country like unemployment and poverty. It is time that you should rather think of these instead of indulging in petty problems such as the communal question which affects a handful of people and has nothing to do with the masses. Political freedom and brave tackling of the economic issues can settle these problems and inevitably political freedom takes the first place. But political freedom itself must be considered in terms of these problems and not as if it stands by itself in the air. Hence it becomes necessary to consider the economic ills of the country, the agrarian problems, the industrial problems, and others which have in conjunction with and with the help of foreign domination produced this terrible poverty and unemployment. Socialism has been much discussed in the country and some people have objected to it. I believe that the socialist way provides a remedy for

1. Speech at Dehra Dun, 23 June 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 25 June 1936.

these ills. But what I am most concerned with is a thorough discussion of these problems from every possible standpoint, both nationally and internationally.

We cannot ignore the international aspect as it is well known that international factors produce great depression and fall in prices and other crises. Let those who do not believe in socialism produce well thought-out schemes of solving these problems and we shall consider them and decide democratically what is the best for us all. This discussion is good and helps in educating the masses and making them feel that their troubles are essential parts of the national movement. It helps also in clarifying our own minds and gives us a truer perspective of what is happening and what we are aiming at.

I am glad that the Congress has undertaken to draw up an agrarian programme after full discussion with the people really affected by the present problems but we must always remember that the primary and essential job before us is to obtain political freedom and we must all join hands and forces to gain this.

It is certain that the Congress will take part in the elections. It will do so, I am sure, with success. It will not go to voters as a suppliant for votes for individuals on their supposed merits, but as the standard-bearer of India's flag of freedom asking all those who believe in independence to stand in its ranks and support it.

There are many odd groups rising all over the country, hoping to get into the new councils and perhaps to share in the spoils of office and patronage. Let us ask each and every one of them where they stand in regard to independence and anti-imperialism. Is there any doubt in anyone's mind that it is the Congress, and the Congress alone, which has effectively and gallantly fought for India's freedom and will continue to do so? Let us, therefore, not fritter away our energies and be confused by minor issues.

The big issue demands our allegiance. India's self-respect demands that we should stand by the Congress in this and other matters. It is the Congress that counts here as well as in foreign countries when India is considered but it must be remembered that the Congress is going to the new legislatures not to cooperate, not to get petty and superficial benefits out of them, but to fight the new Act and try to break it. We know that independence will not be won in the council chambers but in the broad fields and factories and market places of our great country. The real struggle lies outside but we can help it a little by our presence in the new legislatures, and therefore we have decided to go there.

44. To Satyapal[1]

June 26, 1936

My dear Dr. Satyapal,
On return here I found two of your letters.

As for the statement from me about debts I have already sent you a copy of the letter sent to Lyallpur. This contains a statement on the subject.

You need not be afraid of socialists and others ridiculing or abusing the Congress when I am present.[2] My presence converts a conference into a Congress conference whatever its promoters might want to make it. It should be our endeavour to win all the advanced elements to our side instead of keeping them at arm's length. There is very good material in these people, especially in the Punjab.

I shall let you know the dates of my visit to the Punjab as soon as they are settled.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-38/1936, p 191, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letters of 8 and 22 June, Satyapal had advised Jawaharlal to secure an assurance from the organisers of the socialist conference to be held at Ludhiana on 25 and 26 June that it would not run counter to the Congress.

45. The Need for Panchayati Rule[1]

Mr. President and Brothers,
You have heard a few verses and poems. Now I wish to tell you something plain and direct without any verse or poem in it. It is after a very long interval that I have come to Sultanpur city and district. Many years have passed since I came here last. It may be that

1. Speech at Sultanpur 27 June 1936. Home (Political) File No. 4/15/36, National Archives of India. Translation from Hindi by police reporters

very few of you present remember the time when I used to come here very often. Fifteen years have passed since then. Fifteen or sixteen years ago I had ample opportunities to come to Sultanpur. Not only to the city, but I also roamed in the rural areas of this district and met calamity-stricken poor peasants of this district. People tell me even now that this district is backward. The national leaders and national work seem to have halted and are not moving vigorously forward. Compared to other districts less work has been done here. When people tell me this, I am reminded of the time fifteen or sixteen years back when I used to come here and when such enthusiastic work was done in these so-called backward districts of Oudh—Sultanpur, Pratapgarh and Fyzabad—as perhaps nowhere else in the whole of India. Remember, there have been great struggles in our country during the last fifteen or sixteen years on the part of the people—between the people and the government here, between the Congress and the government. You know there has been a great struggle in the country for Swaraj and other things. This too you know that this struggle by the Congress and the people largely shook the powerful British Government. The time when I used to come here, the crisis of which I am talking, were much earlier than when the struggle of satyagraha or noncooperation was started in the whole country. It was not a great thing to take part in the struggle at that time for it was common to all districts. When I first came to Sultanpur there was some talk about noncooperation in the air, but very few persons had heard of it. The peasants had started a great movement here at that time. A mighty movement had been started in these three districts of Oudh, by which not only these districts, but the whole of our province was shaken, and in the end the government of the province made all sorts of promises in connection with the changing of laws regarding the peasants. Slight changes were actually effected in those laws. But when the time for making alterations came the government had already been making vigorous efforts for a year or two to crush this peasant movement. Thousands of peasants were sent to jail, harassed in their houses and suppressed. So when the time came for changing those laws, government saw that they had suppressed the peasants, and very few of the promises they had made were fulfilled. You know that when the local tenancy law was changed the peasants were very little benefited. I wish to remind you that several years have passed since the poor, weak and weaponless peasants of Sultanpur and other adjoining districts started a vigorous movement, a formidable struggle. And when I remember this I refuse to believe that these districts are the feeblest in Oudh and in our province and that the peasants of these

districts cannot achieve anything. Probably you yourselves can answer this by examining yourselves and your companions. Are the inhabitants of your city worthless? If you say so, then I too will be prepared to believe it. But I am not prepared to believe that the peasants of these districts are worthless, because I have seen them, attended their large meetings and witnessed their enthusiasm and vigour in huge processions. It is evident that it is not surprising if the peasants, being *suppressed and oppressed from every side, are not able to continue a* great struggle for a long time. But the power which roused these peasants to action in 1920 and 1921 is still there and that power is not solely confined to your district but is in the whole of our country and it is due to that power that there have been great movements in our country during the last fifteen or sixteen years, no matter whether they are called noncooperation, or satyagraha or peasant movements. Because of that power no one in this country will ever be able to rest until the peasant questions are solved, for you know that our country is after all a peasant country. It is not a country of individual *vakils* and *mukhtars* who, when they get some ordinary posts, try to imitate higher officers. Their country is not our country. Had it been so it would have been ruined by now. This is a peasant country and unless their questions are solved, unless their hardships are removed, there can be no peace in this country. Till that time it will be the duty of everyone always to make preparations in this country for a revolution because the peasant question is the question of Swaraj of our country. You hear "Swaraj, Swaraj". But what is Swaraj? You raise slogans of "Victory to Mother India"; what is this? Some persons hang pictures of Mother India in their houses, a beautiful woman standing very perplexed and weeping, and in great trouble. But what is India? Have you ever thought of this? A beautiful woman is not India. Naked peasants are India. They are neither handsome, nor good looking, for poverty is not a good thing, it is a bad thing. Therefore, when you cry "Victory to Mother India", remember what India is and that people in India are in the worst extremities, whether they are peasants, or workers or retail shopkeepers, and some of our youth too. Their condition is becoming worse every day. They get no work, nor any profession nor service. They suffer hardships. You will see that the condition of all communities of our country, except a handful of persons who belong to upper society, is gradually deteriorating. That question is necessarily one of peasants, but it is also of all communities, whether they are artisans or follow any other profession. This question is always before you. At times you hear of the Hindu Muslim question and read in papers or see that people fight with lathis. But bear in mind

that the real question of our country has nothing to do with any religion or creed. If the peasants, or workers, or artisans, or shopkeepers fast and starve, they starve whether they are Hindus or Mussalmans. No such law is framed as may give food to a Mussalman peasant and not to a Hindu one or as may be advantageous to a Hindu merchant and injurious to a Mussalman merchant. Such a law cannot be, and is not, framed. The real question of our country has nothing to do with religious institutions. It is connected with the hunger, poverty and starvation of the people, and unless we remove these, each of these questions will face us. Therefore, you have to understand that this is your own concern, you have to think over how this question can be solved. Evidently, we cannot solve this question, if you and I sit idly doing nothing. You and I have to face a mighty government, have to face the British Government. You and I have also to face those people who are unfortunately our brothers, who are at all times bound to the tail of this government, who are always opposed and inimical to their country and betray it, siding with the government which suppresses us. But it is not difficult to win over such people, for they side with those who have power. If there were Swaraj today, they would be the first to come forward with flags in their hands. They would be the first to leave the present officers and side with the new ones. Neither you nor I care much for them. But our fight is with a brave government. Do not think that they are a weak people or that they will be frightened away by your uproar. When a powerful opposition has to be faced, you and I have to increase our strength. Strength has to be opposed with strength, courage met with courage. We have, therefore, to increase our strength. You know that we are all weaponless, we have no arms or anything of the kind. But remember that we have enough strength despite our being weaponless, and that strength is our capacity to achieve something by being organised. Our India, our country, is a big country. If the people of this country are of one opinion and organised and make up their minds to face this autocratic British Government, to bring about in the country all that they wish, the British Government, in spite of its military and police and of those who are tied behind it, cannot do anything. Obviously we will have to remove it. Efforts have been made for the last fifteen or sixteen years to produce this strength, to do our work, whatever that may be, in an organised way. We did smaller as well as greater work. We launched the noncooperation movement, we launched the satyagraha movement. We talked of a no-rent campaign. All these efforts of ours had had a very great effect upon our people, upon the British Government. We had an effect upon our people, in the

sense that we created courage in them, increased their strength, and those who were bowed down and could not keep their heads up began to walk fearlessly. Their dead hopes began to revive a little, that they could remove their hardships. The effect we had upon the British Government is known to everyone and we had an effect upon the world also.

The world came to know that Indians would not tolerate slavery, or at least that they would not tolerate it with their heads bowed even though there may still be slavery in India. In this way the prestige of the inhabitants of India increased. All these were the effects of the national movement.

It is true that we are not yet free. It is true that enough suppression and oppression are being practised upon us in our country. But this does not mean that we have not increased our strength sufficiently. It does not mean that we should bear this or should continue to suffer our bondage. Therefore the question before you and me is to increase our strength further and face it. Why face? That very question of Swaraj again comes up. But what is Swaraj? What does it denote? Do you think that Swaraj means the replacement of the present English officers by Indian officers? Do you think it would be Swaraj if all the high posts, including those of the Viceroy and the Governors, which are at present occupied by Englishmen, were given to Indians while your condition remained the same as it is today? You know that the peasants would be in no way benefited if their troubles regarding rent and ejectment continued. Is there not Indian rule in your district? As far as my information goes, all the present officials are Indians. The deputy commissioner, the superintendent of police, the tahsildar, the deputy collector and the peons are all Indians. But Swaraj has not been established in your district by their holding these posts. And if the same thing happens in other districts also and all the big posts—even that of the Governor—are given to Indians there would be no Swaraj. If the existing system of government continues it is immaterial whether an Englishman or an Indian assumes power. It would not be Swaraj and you and I should fight against it. It is of no consequence whether we have to fight against Englishmen or against Indians, for what we want is that the sufferings of the peasants and the masses should be removed. And in the achievement of this it becomes our duty to sweep aside with a broom whoever stands in our way—be he Indian or Englishman. Thus Swaraj means that the masses should assume authority, that power should not remain in the hands of officers but pass into those of the people, who may do what they like. How can power come into the hands of the masses and

what does this transfer of power mean? You know that under the present system of administration it is the big officials who pass orders. *They fix your rent, and every order regarding rent or any other matter* or law trickles down to you from them. The higher officials pass on the order to their immediate subordinates who in turn pass it on to their subordinates and in the end the *patwari* or constable comes to tell you that you have to obey the order or, if you defy it, to go to jail. If you do not like the law and want to agitate against it you should launch an agitation against it. Thus under the system of government which obtains today it is the big officials who exercise authority and the people have no hand in it. They have either to obey or rebel. But Swaraj is quite a different thing. The present system of government is the worst form of rule that could exist in any country. Swaraj on the other hand means a kind of *panchayati* rule under which the common people will elect their representatives and manage their own affairs, be they of your city of Sultanpur, or of Sultanpur district or of the province or even of the whole country. The big *panchayats* should have representatives elected by the people. Hindus and Muslims, men and women should jointly elect them. You can now realise what is the meaning of *panchayati* rule. You will be empowered to elect your representatives. As the peasants form the bulk of the country's population, the representatives of the peasants would be in the majority. The shopkeepers would elect their own representative and they would naturally select a person who had an intimate knowledge of their problems and also knew how their troubles could be removed. And if after the election he began to be too proud of his position, you would have the right to turn him out and send up another man. Thus he would have fear in his heart and do his work properly. If he did not work properly he would be replaced by another man. If such a *panchayati* rule were established in our country in any district you would realise the difference between things as they are now and would be then. All the laws regarding rent, debt, ejectment, etc., would be made by your elected representatives who would not exercise authority arbitrarily but would rather frame laws according to the wishes of the people. You can yourself realise how easily your troubles and grievances could then be removed. Bear in mind that if at present you launch any agitation, whether it be a kisan movement or any other, your sufferings cannot be mitigated so long as you do not take the reins of government into your own hands. If the crops have failed, if you have to suffer loss owing to the fall in prices, if you have grievances in connection with ejectments or illegal exactions like *nazrana*, you can carry on an agitation against these and form kisan sabhas. All this is very

good. But as long as you do not assume power, as long as the masses do not become the rulers of their country, you cannot get rid of your troubles. If the crops fail and you raise a dust you may perhaps get some remissions. But after six months if the crops fail again the same question will crop up, about remissions. Is your condition any better even when the crops are abundant? So this problem can be solved only when you establish a *panchayati* rule in your country under which the mass of the people including even the poorest classes wield power and a handful of officers cannot sit on high chairs and exercise authority as is the case today. Such a *panchayati* rule is called Swaraj. Swaraj does not mean anything else. Bear in mind that Swaraj does not mean that Indians should become high officials. We have become sick of Indian officers and especially of the subordinate officers. So the main question is that the masses should assume power. You know that nowadays every officer, be he a *patwari* or an ordinary police constable, considers himself to be no less than a Governor. As for the others, you know quite well what they think of themselves. Now suppose there were *panchayati* rule here. What would be the position of these officers then? They would then be appointed by your elected representatives irrespective of the fact that they may be even Governors today. There will be no place for Governors and the Viceroy in this country; they will remain at home. But some arrangement would have to be made to carry on the affairs of the country. So you will have to appoint some men as officers. Suppose your representatives elect such an officer, say, a police officer. What would be the difference between that officer and the police officers of today? Nowadays even the lowest officer considers himself to be a big official and you are afraid that he may arrest you and prosecute you under some law. The police officer of those days would always be afraid of being dismissed if he did anything which displeased the public. You can well realise how such an officer would work. He would always be out to please the public and would avoid displeasing them. Thus the policy of the officers would be changed and their duty would be to serve the public. If they failed in their duty they would be removed and others installed in their place. So the most important question before the country is that of Swaraj or a *panchayati* rule in which all the people of the country—whether they are Hindus, Muslims, or people of any other faith—will have equal rights and they will rule their country, with the help of those rights. I do not mean that all our troubles would immediately vanish with the establishment of *panchayati* rule, but what I want to say is that we shall be on the right path. We shall have power in our hands to remove our troubles and manage our affairs.

And the foremost question then would be to remove poverty and unemployment, *which are rampant in the country. It would be our duty* to remove the growing poverty and unemployment of the peasants and the youth.

These big problems are before you and it is for them that the Congress agitation and other movements are going on in our country. You find that these agitations sometimes halt or subside but they cannot be stopped permanently. These agitations and the struggle for freedom cannot cease, and that is because the power behind them is the country's hunger and suffering—it is the power of the starving multitude. It is possible that your influential leaders, whether they belong to the Congress or to any other institution, may retire owing to embarrassment or fear and they may join hands with the government. This is not an uncommon occurrence. You find everywhere that some people get tired after a time and retire behind the scenes or accept some post. But the retirement of these men, or of a handful of leaders, does not matter much. Nowhere do you find that the retirement or weakening of such men has had any effect on our struggle. It is possible that some effect might have been perceptible in a particular city or district for a short time but this does not matter much. The forces behind this struggle are not those of the influential leaders. Bear in mind that the biggest leader cannot carry on a struggle alone. Battles are fought with the help of big armies and the powers behind those armies. Fortunately there were and still are many big leaders in our country. Mahatma Gandhi is our greatest leader: you know how greatly the country has benefited under his guidance. But bear in mind also that although Mahatma Gandhi is a great leader and there are some others also, leaders cannot fight battles unless the country has strength, which is the outcome of the sufferings of the people, the hunger and starvation of the multitude. And it is these forces which give birth to big agitations and revolutions. The leaders can only foresee the policy. They recognise the forces and lead them along the right path. If the leaders do not give proper guidance the people go astray and lose strength. But whether they follow the right path or not, it is the people who have power, and therefore as long as their troubles are unheeded the country has to face this question and cannot ignore it. Someone—may be a well-to-do officer, a lawyer, a banker, a landlord or he may be occupying some other post—may tell us that Swaraj is a good thing. Even the English have now begun to say that Swaraj is a good thing. But they may say that it would be established by degrees and that this clamour and noise are futile. Swaraj, they say, will be achieved by degrees and this shouting is meaningless. The fact

is that if Swaraj was established by degrees they would not stand to lose because even at present they are well off. They have houses to live in and clothes to put on. All their needs are fulfilled. They can, therefore, wait some time for Swaraj. But if a hungry man asks for food and you tell him that food is a very good thing and that he will get it in good time if he waits a couple of years, he will not be satisfied with your words and his hunger will either kill him or incite him to make a riot. Similarly, when a big country is hungry, when most of her people begin to starve, is it proper to tell her to wait patiently for some time and that she will get food in due course? Is it possible that she can be intimidated with the help of guns and cannons? But after all cannons cannot appease hunger. Only the mind can be terrorised for a time but hunger again asserts itself and the country again agitates. Therefore no big agitations in a country can be suppressed for ever. Cannons and guns can by no manner or means suppress them nor have they been permanently suppressed in any country. They can only be temporarily suppressed but they again come to the surface with greater force and then if their aim is not achieved big revolutions take place in the country.

These are the questions that confront our country. Our problems regarding the peasants, the common people and even the educated classes are growing more acute every day and if no solution is soon found it will be necessary for the country to set her own wits to work and try to put an end to our present government, our existing social system, our present tenancy act and our existing zamindari system, if *she cannot devise any other means to solve these problems.*

These are the main problems before our country. The city of Sultanpur is a little cut off from the current of Indian politics, for such cities can neither be classed among the important cities nor the villages. The mental life and intellectual current which are the chief characteristics of urban areas do not affect such cities, and at the same time the residents of such cities consider themselves superior to the villagers. The result is that they make no progress either intellectually or in any other sphere. The condition of the smaller cities is like that of a backwater which, cut off from the main current, becomes stagnant and smells offensive after a time. Such is the intellectual atmosphere of these smaller cities. Sometimes such things take place in them that one is simply astonished to hear of them. You know that I go about day and night touring various places and placing the big problems of the country before the public, and in this connection I tour in my province also. Perhaps I would not ordinarily have come to Sultanpur so soon, but the reason why I have come here today is that

I have heard of a strange thing happening here.[2] Some days back I heard of it and was very much surprised. I thought to myself that it was a trifling affair and would be settled or suppressed in due course. But when I heard that it was still continuing and that our young boys were being sent to jail in that connection I tried to spare a few hours to come to you in order that I might see and enquire why this city of Sultanpur is such a peculiar city. You know that repression is being practised in our country on behalf of the government in no small measure. Thousands of our young boys and girls are still suffering imprisonment in our country. Thousands have been interned without trial. Our press acts are such that our presses, newspapers and books are gagged. In Bengal and the Frontier Province a sort of martial law is always enforced; and bear in mind that such things are being done by the government in these days when noncooperation and satyagraha movements have been called off. A long resolution was passed recently at Lucknow in this connection. It declared that the government is depriving the people of India of their civil liberties, and you would be surprised to know how soon we get used to everything. When oppression is first practised it appears to be a new thing, but we get used to it after a time. But the repressive laws which are enforced today had not been enforced in India since the days of the mutiny in 1857. If you try to understand its real meaning you will see that we should not be upset over it, for it only demonstrates the growing strength of our country, for the greater our strength the severer will be the laws of the government. So if you want to form an idea of the stage we have reached in our country's struggle for emancipation you can measure it by the amount of repression practised by the government and the number of repressive laws enforced by it. These repressive laws tell you how afraid the British Government is of us and how much it wants to suppress our strength. Some people tell us that we have been fighting the battle for a long time and ask if we have made any progress. This is a foolish question. When you approach a fort to attack it, the nearer you reach the fort the worse does your condition become. Two armies cannot occupy one fort, only one army can remain in it. As the second army approaches and reaches the foot of the walls of the fort the battle grows most fierce and it is just possible that shortly after the battle you may be occupying the fort having turned out the first army. It is not possible for two armies to occupy portions of the same fort. This is not possible as some of our brethren

2. Arrests were being made under the orders of the chairman of the Sultanpur municipality for holding meetings on the municipal grounds.

think. You can of course get a seat in their servants' quarters but two armies cannot occupy one fort. Therefore it is wrong to think that you can get Swaraj piecemeal. You cannot get it in instalments of one-eighth or one-fourth. You will get complete Swaraj whenever you may get it and you will have to exert yourselves to your utmost to do so.

The repression which is being practised in our country at present and the strict laws which are enforced nowadays have not been heard of since the great mutiny of 1857. These laws relate to our suppression, our arrest without trial and the gagging of our papers. It is believed in all countries that every individual has the freedom of expressing his opinion. Everybody is allowed to say freely what he thinks to be true and to publish it in newspapers; he has the right to hold meetings and to deliver speeches. No obstacles are thrown in the path of organisation of meetings. These and similar other liberties which are fundamental rights are enjoyed by the people in other countries. If people are deprived of these they have no other course open to them but to rise in rebellion.

So we are being deprived of these liberties and the government has practised and is still practising and will continue to practise sufficient oppression in the country. But it is strange that in your city of Sultanpur the chairman of your municipal board has committed the same acts for which we blame the government. It is a fundamental principle and is included among the civil liberties that people may have the right to hold meetings in public places. If they are banned, whether by government or by anybody else, it is an outrage upon the fundamental rights of civil liberties. Suppose a Congress meeting has been banned today, they can ban any meeting tomorrow and if we meekly submit they will begin to enjoy the right of banning our meetings. If you go to the villages all the land there belongs to one landlord or the other. So no meetings can be held in the villages nor can they be held in the cities if the municipalities say that all the land is theirs. All the roads and parks belong to the municipalities. But what is a municipality? It is held that what belongs to the municipality is public property. The members of the municipality are those residents of the city who have been elected by the public to manage the affairs of the city. If such obstacles are placed by the municipality in the path of your convening meetings and if you silently submit to its decision the result will be that all meetings will be stopped unless of course they are convened in a private house or garden. But even in that case many obstacles can be thrown in your way. So it is a matter of principle. Perhaps nine boys of your city have been convicted on account of this. It is a matter which deserves your close attention. Those who

are your representatives, at least nominally, those who represent you in the municipality, should not commit such an act that nine young boys of your city should go to jail for attempting to hold a meeting. You have to consider how far you can tolerate it. If you can tolerate this you can tolerate anything. I for one am not prepared to put up with this and I was very much incensed at it. I would have liked to come here to raise a violent opposition against it and some people were of the opinion that I should take up this work, but I do not want to wage a battle against the municipality on this issue. At present we are engaged in more important work and do not want to devote our time to these trifling matters. I therefore checked my anger but even then I deemed it my duty to come to this city and ascertain from its residents, who were so mutely submitting to all these things, the true facts. It is not good that the Sultanpur municipality and its chairman are doing such things here. If the chairman of any municipality did the same thing in England he could not hold his position even for five minutes. A riot would break out in that city. If he passed orders asking people to hold a meeting at such and such a place and disallowing them from assembling at any particular place, whether his chairmanship or post was a government one or not, the public would not tolerate it, either in England or in France. The doings of the government in various places in connection with our struggle for independence are the burning topic of the day. That is a question of a great battle; but it is a pity that our countrymen, specially those who are your representatives in name only and are members or the chairman of the municipality, should do such things. I have been told that it was no doubt the chairman who passed the order but as no member raised his voice against it the whole municipality is responsible for it.

This question does not relate to the chairman alone. You and I know that when any person, whether he is a member of the municipality or its chairman, does such an act, he does not give expression to his inner feelings but is propelled by other forces from behind. Generally government officials, when they get weak members or chairman of a municipality, make them their tools. But whoever may guide them from behind it is a burning disgrace to you that an independent person elected by you should act like this. Therefore bear in mind that the responsibility lies not only on the chairman but also on all the members of the municipality for they did not raise their voice against it. And I would go to the length of saying that it is not only the responsibility of the municipality but that of every resident of Sultanpur. It is disgraceful for you to have elected such members to the municipality. The members do such acts and you tolerate them. Whatever be the

forces working behind them, the world sees only the members of the municipality and they have been elected by you. They may even send your men to jail, but whatever they do, they do in your name and so you also share their disgrace and shamelessness. Therefore you should raise your voice and openly declare that you cannot tolerate this. You should make it clear now and also in the future. And you should also make it clear that if in the future you get an opportunity to hold elections, you would elect anybody rather than an individual who holds up your city to shame. You should make it clear that you do not regard him with respect. Rest assured, I do not know a single member of your municipality nor am I acquainted with the chairman although I have heard his name. I do not know even the names of the members and learnt the chairman's name only recently. I have also come to know that a couple of words have recently been added to his name.[3] I have no personal relations with them. I do not know whether they are good or bad men or whether they are wise or unwise in my estimate. I do not know anything about their nature nor do I want to say anything in this connection; and I do wish that you who know them more intimately should not take note of it as a personal affair, but regard it as a matter of principle. So, whether they are your friends or foes, it is not a question of friendship or enmity. The point is that they are acting against a great principle. They are bringing disgrace on the city of Sultanpur and its residents. Leave aside the question of disgrace, they are depriving the citizens and the peasants of their right to hold meetings and these obstacles which they throw in your path will go on multiplying. They have prevented you from organising a meeting at that place today; they will, tomorrow, stop you from holding a meeting here and the day after tomorrow they will disallow your assembling at a third place So if you have any respect for your liberty, it is your duty not only to wipe off the brand of disgrace from your forehead but also to prevent your hands and feet being tied in future. You should put up a bold opposition and demonstrate to them that you cannot tolerate such things. You should seize every opportunity to give expression to your feelings whether it be the time of election or some other occasion. When I thought of coming here today, I sent a letter to your chairman for it is my practice to talk with or at least enquire from the opposite party, before taking such a course of action, as to what he has to say. So I wrote to him and told him that I had heard such and such things about him and that I was surprised to learn that the chairman of any municipality could commit

3. The title of Rai Bahadur was conferred on him on 23 June 1936.

NAGPUR, APRIL 1936

BOMBAY, MAY 1936

such acts. He gave me a reply to my letter. By chance I was not at Allahabad. Only a day or two ago I went back to Allahabad, but received his letter only yesterday, though it had reached there a few days before. He may have recieved today the reply I sent to his letter. I was much astonished to read his reply. Leave out the local facts. It may be that there is some difference between the facts that he wrote to me and the facts that I heard from others. It is a matter of inquiry which facts are true and which are not. But what he admitted and what he wrote greatly astonished me. I was astonished that one who knew even a little of the present day world and who was considered to be educated even a little should write to me in this way. When I came here and inquired as to what was his profession, for I did not know, I learnt that he was a *vakil*. This astonished me all the more, that a person practising as a *vakil* should be so ignorant of the basic principles of law. By basic principles of law I do not mean a law under which he may give orders and send people to jails. You know that in India laws can be and are framed overnight, the Viceroy puts his signature to it and the law is passed. At present to ride on a cycle is an offence in Bengal. You have to put on a particular kind of clothes and if you put on any others, you commit an offence. Every boy and girl has in his or her pocket, like an offender, an identity ticket, containing his or her photo. Perhaps, I do not remember, every boy and girl between twelve and twenty five years of age has to keep an identity ticket, so that any policeman may call him or her and examine the identity ticket before allowing him or her to go. The identity ticket is white, yellow or red. The white ticket shows that the holder is innocent, red that he is dangerous and some other colour, perhaps yellow, indicates that he is a suspicious character. I am not sure about this. The boys carry them. Besides these there are many other laws. One has to return to one's house before six in the evening. I do not know what is an offence and what is not. They are our rulers and the pen is in their hands. They can frame whatever law they like. I am astonished when a *vakil* writes something against the basic principles of law which he may or may not have read, on the basis of which there have been many struggles in England and other countries and in which a sufficient number of lawyers and law-knowing persons participated. The question of civil liberty, as to where meetings should or should not be held, has been the cause of many struggles in England. It seems that it has not reached his ears and mind, judging from his reply. His contention is simply that he is an officer and no one can dare to question his orders. As I have told you in the beginning, the dangerous thing is that our higher officers govern by sitting in the chair.

Advance a step forward and your municipal commissioners also in this way become your officers and begin to rule over you. "He who does not obey our orders may go to hell." This is a strange thing. I have ample experience of municipal affairs. I too have been a chairman of a large municipality. I never dared to give such orders as are given by your municipal officer of Sultanpur. Think how these ideas and ways are spreading in your country and in your city and if you do not stand against them your condition will gradually become worse. As soon as I arrived here I received a letter from your chairman asking me to see him, if I liked, at the municipal office or anywhere else. I would have gladly met him, but I would have liked to send certain books on law to him, so that he might refresh his knowledge of law. But I am rather helpless in the matter, for I have only just arrived and I have to go back immediately. Unfortunately I had difficulties on the way owing to some trouble with the car. It did not work properly and I know not what troubles I will have to face on my return journey. Tomorrow morning I am to leave for Wardha to attend the meeting of the Working Committee of the Congress, so I cannot stay, otherwise I would have certainly seen him, because it is always better to have a talk, no matter whether the other party understands it or not. But the difficulty is, as I have told you, that he considers that he is an officer and if anyone disobeys him, he should be sent to jail. This idea is quite wrong. Had I been a resident of Sultanpur, my first duty would have been to disobey his orders, as to obey such an order is to insult myself and my city. I would have opposed this order and agitated against it. I would have compelled him in every possible way not to issue such orders. Now it is for you to think. This is a trifling matter, but you should remember that even these trifling matters involve big issues. What will you do in important matters, when you cannot do anything in ordinary matters? You are being restrained; you cannot hold meetings, you cannot do this or that. Where will you say, then, what you have to say? It is necessary that you should think over this matter and show your strength. How to show strength? I do not wish that you should start satyagraha on this question, because we are preparing ourselves for a great task. I do not wish that you should get yourselves arrested and be sent to jail, but I do wish that you should carry on sufficient agitation against this and prove that the chairman and every member of your municipal board has brought your city into disgrace and is suppressing your liberties. You do not approve of their ways which are like those of higher officers. Their duty is to serve you. Had the deputy commissioner of your district prohibited you from holding meetings, it should have been the duty of

your municipal members and the chairman to support your cause against the deputy commissioner. The duty of the municipality is to fight for the freedom of the citizens, instead of depriving them of their liberty. You should bring all these things to light by carrying on an agitation. So far I have not referred to the removing of the Congress flag by him,[4] as I wanted to tell you a matter of principle. That he removed the Congress flag from there has made me very angry. I have no particular hatred for the flag of any nation. Every country has a flag. But I do not like to see the flag of any other country, the British flag, in my country, for that is an emblem of our slavery. It is good if they keep it in their country. But I am hardly able to bear the lowering of our flag by anyone, whether he is an Indian or Englishman. The flag is a small piece of cloth, sometimes it is rolled up, and sometimes it is dirty, but thousands of persons have laid down their lives for it, because thousands of ideas are behind it. It carries the honour of the country, its freedom and its history. In one way it becomes the life and soul of the country and if anyone insults it, the flag is forgotten and the honour of the country occupies its place. If the officers of your municipality insulted the flag—as I have heard—by taking it out and removing it at night, it is shameful. If they are not permitted to fix the flag on the municipal grounds, they may not do so. You have also to think over this, that this is not their shame, for it is after all the shame of your city. It is shameful for him who tolerates this and for the whole of the municipality. I ask you not to offer satyagraha, but do carry on agitation and show your strength and express your opinions through the means you have. You should have a larger number of Congress members. The strength of the Congress as well as of the peasants should be increased here. You should therefore make efforts in this minor question, but first realise that the bigger issue is that there should be a *panchayati* raj and the hardships of our peasants and poor people should be removed. This you can do only when the Congress and other bodies are strongly organised as one unit. Do all this and then you will be able to get rid of this insult and participate in the great issues of the country and in the coming struggles.

4. In March 1936 a condolence meeting held on the death of Kamala Nehru was disrupted and the national flag was removed.

46. To S.M. Abdullah and Prem Nath Bazaz[1]

It is not necessary for you to invite me to my homeland, for the desire to go there is always present within me. It is 19 years now since I went there and often long to be back, but circumstances have been too much for me and have prevented me from doing so. In my *Autobiography* which has come out recently, I have mentioned my love for Kashmir and my desire to go there, but the bigger problems of India keep me tied to this part of India. Those problems, as you know, ultimately affect Kashmir also, for the fate of Kashmir is bound up with that of the rest of India. If India is freed Kashmir will participate in that freedom. I cannot for a variety of reasons visit Kashmir in the near future much as I should like to do so.

I am very glad that you and other friends are trying to bring about unity amongst the Hindus and Mussalmans of Kashmir and spreading nationalistic ideas amongst them as well as the message of political, economic and social freedom. It is obvious to anyone who thinks that the real interests of the people are economic, and religious differences do not come in the way at all of a common political and economic front. It is terribly painful to compare the great beauty of Kashmir and its potential wealth with the terrible poverty of its people. Kashmir ought to be, and I hope will be, a land where the people can enjoy the real wealth of its soil and of its minerals and water power, and thus raise their standard of living very greatly and improve educationally, culturally and industrially. I wish you success in the work you are doing and through you I wish to convey my hearty greetings to the people of my homeland.

1. Printed in *The Hindustan Times*, 30 June 1936.
Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah (b 1905); president of the Kashmir National Conference from 1939 to 1953 except in 1942 and 1944, president, All India States People's Conference, 1946; prime minister of Kashmir, 1948-53.

Prem Nath Bazaz (b 1905); assisted Sheikh Abdullah in founding the National Conference; editor of *Hamdard*, a weekly, in 1935, author of a number of books on Kashmir.

47. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
July 5, 1936

My dear Bapu,

I arrived here last night. Ever since I left Wardha[2] I have been feeling weak in body and troubled in mind. Partly this is no doubt due to physical causes—a chill which has aggravated my throat trouble. But partly also it is due to other causes which touch the mind and the spirit directly. Since my return from Europe, I have found that meetings of the Working Committee exhaust me greatly; they have a devitalizing effect on me and I have almost the feeling of being older in years after every fresh experience. I should not be surprised if this feeling was also experienced by my colleagues of the Committee. It is an unhealthy experience and it comes in the way of effective work.

I was told, when I returned from Europe, that the country was demoralised and hence we had to go slow. My own little experience during the past four months has not confirmed this impression. Indeed I have found a bubbling vitality wherever I have gone and I have been surprised at the public response. What this is due to I cannot say definitely. I can only make various guesses. This public response has naturally heartened me and filled me with fresh energy. But this energy seems to ooze out of me at every meeting of the Working Committee and I return feeling very much like a discharged battery. The reaction has been greatest on this occasion because of my being physically in a low condition.

But it was not about my physical or mental condition that I wished to write to you. There are more important matters which worry me and so far I have seen no clear way out. I do not wish to act in a hurry or without giving the fullest thought to the matter. But even before my own mind is decided I want to tell you which way I am looking.

1. J.N Correspondence. N.M.M.L. Reprinted in *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 194-198.
2. Jawaharlal had gone to Wardha to attend the Working Committee meeting held from 29 June to 1 July 1936.

I am grateful to you for all the trouble you took in smoothing over matters and in helping to avoid a crisis.[3] I was convinced then and I am convinced now that a break of the kind suggested would have had serious consequences for all our work, including the elections. And yet, where are we now and what does the future hold for us? I read again Rajendra Babu's letter to me (the second one) and his formidable indictment of me.[4] That indictment, though formidable, is not specific, except for my speech at the women's meeting, which, as a matter of fact, has nothing to do with any wider issue. The main thing is that my activities are harmful to the Congress cause. They are doing damage to the Congress and are lessening its chances of success at the elections. If I continue in this way there is likely to be further deterioration and my colleagues do not wish to take any chances in this vital matter.

Now, obviously, if there is any truth in this charge it must be faced. The matter is too serious to be glossed over. There are no black and white shades, no delicate balancing of the resultant good or evil; it is all black and that really makes it easier to decide. For however tenderly the fact may be stated, it amounts to this: that I am an intolerable nuisance and the very qualities I possess—a measure of ability, energy, earnestness, some personality which has a vague appeal—become dangerous for they are harnessed to a wrong chariot. The conclusion from all this is obvious.

My own impression before Lucknow, and to some extent even at Lucknow, was that it should not be difficult for all of us to pull together this year. It is evident now that I was mistaken, though there has been no lack of trying on either side. Perhaps the fault may lie with me; I am not aware of it; but one can seldom see the beam in one's own eye. The fact remains, and today there is no loyalty of the spirit which binds our group together. It is a mechanical group and on either side there is a dull resentment and a sense of suppression, and that, as every student of psychology knows, results in all manner of undesirable complexes, both individual and social.

3. Seven members of the Working Committee including Rajendra Prasad, Rajagopalachari, Vallabhbhai Patel and Kripalani, resigned because they disagreed with Jawaharlal's socialist views, but were persuaded by Mahatma Gandhi to withdraw their resignations.

4. In his letter dated 1 July 1936, Rajendra Prasad blamed Jawaharlal for preaching socialism, a doctrine not accepted by the majority in the Working Committee, for launching a regular and continuous campaign against them, and for suggesting that the Working Committee had been forced upon him.

When I reached Bombay this time many people stared hard at me finding it difficult to believe how I had survived. It seemed to be common knowledge there (as reported in *The Times of India* previously) that a peaceful end awaited me—politically, of course. All had been fixed up except the cremation. Hence the surprise. It struck me as curious that I should be wholly ignorant of all these confident rumours when many people in the street were full of them. But though I had been ignorant of them, the rumours had the strongest justification. That in itself is a measure of my present isolation.

I have written at length, both in my book and subsequently, about my present ideas. There is no lack of material for me to be judged. Those views are not casual. They are part of me and, though I might change them or vary them in future, so long as I hold them I must give expression to them. Because I attached importance to a larger unity I tried to express them in the mildest way possible and more as an invitation to thought than as fixed conclusions. I saw no conflict in this approach and in anything that the Congress was doing. So far as the elections were concerned I felt definitely that my approach was a definite asset to us as it enthused the masses. But my approach, mild and vague as it was, is considered dangerous and harmful by my colleagues. I was even told that my laying stress always on the poverty and unemployment in India was unwise, or at any rate the way I did it was wrong.

You will remember that both in Delhi and in Lucknow I made it clear that I must have freedom to express my views on social matters.[5] I understood you and the members of the Committee to agree to this. The question now becomes one more of this freedom of expression than of the views themselves. Even more so it is a question of values in life, and if we value anything greatly we may not sacrifice it.

There is this undeniable conflict. Who is right and who is wrong it is futile to argue. But after last week's incidents I am beginning to doubt if we are really following the correct course. I am inclined to think that the right thing for us to do will be to put the matter briefly before the A.I.C.C. at its next meeting and take its direction in the matter. How best to do this I am not clear yet but it should

5. At a meeting of the Working Committee in Delhi on 15 March and at the Lucknow session in April Jawaharlal made it clear that his election to the presidentship did not necessarily mean endorsement of his views on social and economic matters by the majority or indicate that those views were spreading in India, but that he should be free to express them.

be done as simply as possible and without much argument. So far as I am concerned there will be little argument.

Presumably the result of this will be that I shall retire and a more homogeneous Committee will be formed.[6]

You told me that you intended issuing some kind of a statement. I shall welcome this for I believe in every viewpoint being placed clearly before the country.

I am not mentioning this matter to anyone yet. Of course prying and impertinent eyes will see this *en route* even before it reaches you. They have to be suffered.

In Bombay I had a talk with Mridula. She came from Ahmedabad for a few hours especially at my request. She gave me to understand that, so far as facts were concerned, she had noticed (or mentioned) no difference between what you had told her and what I had written or said. She had indeed made this clear in her letter to you but perhaps you missed a sentence or two. She proposed to send you a copy of her previous letter so that you might see this for yourself.

I was told in Wardha that it was being said by Gujarat women that you or Vallabhbhai or both were responsible for the exclusion of women from the Working Committee. I enquired from Mridula. She told me that to her knowledge nobody had said so or thought so.

I also had a talk with Sarojini on this subject.

I met Jivraj Mehta and Khurshed. Jivraj did not quite agree with Bidhan about the cost etc. But he brought down his previous figure somewhat. He now says that two lakhs ought to be enough for the construction, equipment etc. of the hospital.[7] He would like to see another two lakhs as a reserve fund. He is also of opinion that the construction should be made not on the Swaraj Bhawan grounds, as originally planned, but on the fields to the east of Anand Bhawan. I shall make enquiries from the municipality about this.

I propose to convene a meeting of the Kamala Memorial trustees in Bombay about the time the A.I.C.C. meets. Also a meeting of the Swaraj Bhawan trustees.

6 In his reply of 8 July 1936, Mahatma Gandhi advised Jawaharlal to allow his "humour to play upon the meetings of the Working Committee" and said that "the country should not be made to suffer for your mutual intolerance."

7. It had been decided in April 1936 to set up a hospital in Allahabad as a memorial to Kamala Nehru.

In Bombay Nargis insisted on sending me to a German throat specialist and this man has told me to remain almost absolutely silent for a week in order to rest my throat. It is a hard job.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

48. On the Women's Movement[1]

I have received representations from a large number of Congress women from Gujarat, complaining against the indifference of the Congress Working Committee towards the questions affecting women. In particular, objection has been taken to the absence of any woman member in the present Working Committee.

I welcome the representation, although it is partly directed against me as President of the Congress, as it is a healthy sign of the growing political life among our womenfolk.

Regarding the non-inclusion of women in the Working Committee I must take the full responsibility. I need hardly say that there was or could be no idea on my part or that of others to exclude women as such. But circumstances were such that inevitably my choice was limited by them. Even so, it was certainly possible for me to nominate a woman member, but I decided to break the tradition in the hope that this would ultimately be good for women themselves. The representation I have received is itself a sign that some good has resulted from my decision.

The complaint about the indifference of the Working Committee towards the questions of women seems to be hardly justified except in so far as men can seldom grow enthusiastic about such questions. It must be remembered that the Congress has declared clearly, in the Karachi resolutions and elsewhere, that there should be no disqualification on the ground of sex in exercise of any public function.

Women in India have won, so far as the Congress is concerned, the fight for recognition of their equal status and civic rights which women

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 6 July 1936 *The Bombay Chronicle*, 7 July 1936

of England had to carry on with great bitterness for generations before they succeeded. The door is thus open to them and it is for them to enter; but it seems that the long habit still makes them rely on others' goodwill rather than on their own efforts. That goodwill is there already in a large measure and certainly they should seek to increase it. But ultimately they will advance politically and socially by their own organised strength and not by seeking favour from others.

Politically they have already extorted admiration of the men of India by the gallant part they have taken in our freedom struggle. But their task in the social field is far harder; for, as soon as they try to rid themselves of these heavy social burdens, they come up against old customs and man's prejudices and interests. For this task they will have to rely on themselves alone though many of us, who have been their comrades politically, will gladly continue to share with them the burden of social struggle also.

I have been asked to induce the Working Committee to appoint a special women's sub-committee to look after the women's interests and help to organise the Congress women. I would gladly approach the Working Committee with this request and I have no doubt that they would like to help. But it seems to me that such a committee would be a little premature at present and might lull the women themselves into thinking that other people were working on their behalf. The initiative and driving force of a women's movement must come from women themselves. If Congresswomen organise themselves their efforts will be welcomed by the Working Committee and every help will, I am sure, be forthcoming.

49. To Secretary, Punjab Traders Association, Lyallpur[1]

7.7.36

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 26th June.[2]

My attention was drawn to certain statements made by you or on your behalf regarding the interview your deputation had with me in

1. AICC File No. P 17/1936, pp 131-136, N.M.M.L.
2. The correspondent in his letter of 26 June 1936 had requested Jawaharlal to clear the doubt in the minds of the traders that he advocated repudiation of rural debts.

Lyallpur. These statements were obviously wrong and so, at the request of the secretary of the Lyallpur Congress Committee, I sent a brief note representing my views on the debt question.[3] This was sent from Mussoorie on June 21st before I was aware of the proceedings of the meeting you held at Lahore. I understand that this note has been published in the press and you must have seen it. I have little to add to that note at present.

It seems to me that you are labouring under a misapprehension as to what I said at Lyallpur. I tried to say then what I have subsequently stated in writing and I pointed out to you that under present conditions the tremendous burden of rural debt was insupportable and could not remain as it was manifestly impossible for the debtors to meet their liabilities. Every person who has studied the problem impartially is driven to this conclusion. Indeed the question is not only an all-India one but a world-wide one and most foreign countries have adopted policies to reduce this burden considerably. Usually this is done by an inflation of the currency. Germany, France, England, Italy, the United States of America as well as almost all other countries have adopted this method. Some countries have also had recourse to legislation. In Germany almost the entire public and private debt was wiped off by inflation. Foreign debts which had to be paid in gold have long been withheld. In France inflation wiped off about 80% of the debt. In England the revaluation of the pound sterling reduced all debts by about 33%.

In addition to these devices great and rich countries like England and France have refused to pay their debts to the United States of America.

In India the policy of the government has been the very opposite of this. Owing to a high exchange ratio there has been deflation and debts have consequently risen and the burden on the rural masses has increased considerably. Even before the great world depression and fall in agricultural prices, it was held by competent authorities that the burden of agricultural debt was insupportable and was crushing the rural classes. This burden has vastly increased during the last seven years because of the fall in prices and the government's exchange policy.

Thus the position created is an intolerable one and everyone, whether he is a creditor or a debtor, must recognise this fundamental fact and seek to meet this position. How this is to be done is a matter for

3. See *ante*, item 42.

careful consideration for, obviously, the necessary changes should be made in such a way as to cause the least injury to various groups and as not to upset the whole credit system of the country without some *provision for cheap credit.*

To talk of complete cancellation or repudiation, so long as the present system endures, is to talk in the air. It has no meaning. But to talk of preserving existing debts is even more absurd for payment cannot be enforced when the debtor cannot pay. Trade and industry depend very greatly on the proper settlement of this question.

The whole question of internal debt is again mixed up with numerous other questions—foreign debt, the incidence of land revenue etc. All these have really to be considered together if a suitable solution is to be found. But I cannot enter into these questions in this letter.

My own view is that some kind of a moratorium is necessary to relieve the tension immediately. This will also give time for a proper consideration of the whole question and for a new adjustment. For this adjustment debt redemption boards should be established with power to scale down debts and interest keeping in view: (1) the fall in prices; (2) the paying capacity of the debtor.

In particular attention should be paid to relieving the burden on the poorest classes who are being crushed by it most.

I think that steps should also be taken to consider the whole question of foreign debt which is such a burden on the whole country.

These remarks of mine apply generally to the whole of India. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the special condition in the Punjab to suggest more detailed remedies for it. But I take it that the Punjab problem is not radically different from that of the rest of India. Every province will have to apply the same general principles in its own way to its own particular problems, an effort being always made to relieve the burden with the least injury to any group.

Whether all this is possible under the British Government I do not know. I doubt it. The position for almost all classes in India is pretty desperate and basic remedies are necessary. It is highly unlikely that the British Government in India, constituted as it is, and relying so much on the exploitation of the Indian masses, can undertake any big change which might touch adversely its own vested interests in the country. But it is highly desirable that everyone, whether he is a debtor or a creditor, should realise that existing conditions cannot continue and must be changed for the advantage of both.

You mention Maulana Zafar Ali Khan's name and the propaganda he is carrying on.[4] Unless I know exactly what he has said regarding me I cannot confirm it or contradict it. But if what he says is in conflict with what I have written above then it does not represent my view.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. According to the correspondent, Zafar Ali Khan had undertaken propaganda that Jawaharlal was in favour of repudiation of rural debts.

50. Congress and Socialism[1]

Socialism may be good or bad, it may be a dream of the distant future, or a problem of the present; whatever it is or might be, it seems to occupy a large corner of the mind of India today. The word is bandied about from right to left, and behind it lurks, we are solemnly told, the grim shadow of communism. True, the notion of many of its critics as to what is socialism is of the haziest. And even professional economists, after the manner of government propagandists, try to confuse the issue by dragging in God and religion and marriage and the degradation of women. We must not complain, although it is a tiring business to explain the alphabet to people who tell us that they can read. The curious part of it is that most of this talk and shouting about socialism comes from those who seem to dislike it and who do not want mention made of the word or the idea.

Socialism, as every schoolboy ought to know, is an economic theory which endeavours to understand and solve the problems that afflict the world today. It is also a way of looking at history and of trying to find from its wayward course the laws, if any, that govern human society. Vast numbers of people all over the world believe in it and seek to realise it. A great area from the Pacific to the Baltic is already under its sway; other great countries like France and Spain hover on the brink of it; and there is hardly a country in the world where it

1. 15 July 1936 *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 and 31 July 1936. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp 28-43.

has not got a numerous and faithful following. Neither the intelligence behind it, nor the numbers that support it, necessarily establish its truth. But they do demand a respectful and careful consideration of it by us in India. They put us on enquiry for our own problems, political and economic, loudly demand solution. After considering it we may reject it utterly, or we may learn something from it at least even though we do not accept it wholly. To ignore this vital impulse, which moves millions and captures both the minds and hearts of worthwhile people, can never be the path of wisdom.

But for us, it is rightly said, the political issue dominates the scene, and without independence all talk of socialism, or any other radical change in our economic system, is moonshine. Even a discussion about socialism introduces an element of confusion and divides our ranks. We must concentrate on political independence and that alone. This argument is deserving of consideration for we may not do anything which weakens us by breaking our joint front against imperialism. To some extent the premises are accepted by the most ardent socialist for he admits that political freedom is the first and the essential objective for us today. Everything else must necessarily follow it, and without it there can be no other radical change.

Thus much is common ground. Nationalism is admitted to be our primary urge and concern. And yet the way of looking even at this common objective is not the same.

Nobody wants to create division in our ranks and all of us talk continually of joint fronts against our powerful adversary. Yet we can hardly ignore conflicts of interests, and even as we advance politically (quite apart from socialism or the economic issue) these conflicts become more apparent. When the Congress came into the hands of the "extremists", the "moderates" dropped out. This was not because of any economic issue but simply because politically we were becoming more advanced and the moderate elements consciously and subconsciously felt that too great a political advance might endanger their interests. They dropped out. Yet curiously this split did not weaken the Congress, much as one might have regretted the parting from some old colleagues. The Congress drew into its fold large numbers of others and became a more powerful and representative organisation. Later came noncooperation and again some Congressmen could not keep with the great majority. They dropped out (again on the political issue, though behind it there were other issues) and again the Congress was not weakened. Vast numbers of additional people joined it and for the first time in its long history it became a power in our rural areas. It came to represent India as it had never done before

and to move millions by its mandates and advice. Thus the inherent conflicts between small groups at the top and the vast majority of our countrymen became ever more apparent as we advanced politically. We did not create them. We went ahead regardless of them and thereby increased in power and effectiveness.

Gradually other issues began to colour our political horizon. Gandhiji spoke about the peasantry; he led strong movements in Champaran[2] and Kaira.[3] This was not a political issue though inevitably it had political repercussions. Why did he introduce this complication in the pure nationalism of our political movement? Why did he go about speaking of the terrible poverty of our people? This was new talk, a new orientation, likely to change the centre of gravity of our movement. He knew this well and deliberately he worked for this economic orientation of our political problem. Was it not largely because of this, as well as because of his great personality, that the millions rolled in under the banner of the Congress? All of us began to talk of the underdog, and the sorely tried and crushed underdog turned to us with relief and hope.

Gandhiji persisted in his stress on the poverty of India's millions. We knew this of course theoretically—who could forget it?—for we had the evidence of our own eyes, and the teaching of the giants of old—Dadabhai Naoroji, Digby, Ranade, Romesh Dutt. And yet it was a matter of books and statistics for us of the middle class. Gandhiji made it a live issue and we saw for the first time with horror-struck eyes what India was—a mass of hungry, starving, miserable people. To alleviate this hunger and unemployment he urged the revival of spinning and weaving. Many people who considered themselves very wise laughed at this, but the charkha, though it may not have gone far in solving the problem of poverty, brought relief to many. Even more so it gave a new spirit of self-reliance and cooperation to those who lacked this most. It played a brave part in our political movement. Here again we see an extraneous non-political issue influencing for good our national movement.

In later years Gandhiji also stressed the problem of the depressed classes. In doing so inevitably he angered some groups of *sanatanists*.

2. In Champaran in Bihar, the poor agriculturists were compelled by the European landlords to grow indigo on their lands. In 1917, Mahatma Gandhi launched a satyagraha movement, as a result of which the ryots received statutory relief.
3. In the Kaira (Kheda) district in Gujarat there was a crop failure in 1918. Mahatma Gandhi undertook satyagraha and secured suspension of the revenue collection in the case of "poorer ryots".

There was conflict between these representatives of old custom and vested interest and the progressive forces. For fear of this conflict Gandhiji did not hesitate to launch his great campaign against untouchability. It was not directly a political issue. Yet it was raised, and rightly raised.

So in the Congress and outside it we see these conflicts of interests ever coming to the front. Whether it is a measure of social reform, like the Sarda Act or Dr. Bhagavan Das's new bill,[4] or a political measure affecting various interests, or a labour or peasant matter, this conflict of interests always comes up. Let us avoid conflict by all means, but how can one ignore it when it is there? And what are we to do about it? After sixteen years of stressing that we stand for the masses there can be only one answer to this question when this conflict affects them. That answer Gandhiji gave in one of his speeches at the Round Table Conference in London in 1931. "Above all," he said, "the Congress represents, in its essence, the dumb semi starved millions scattered over the length and breadth of the land in its 700,000 villages, no matter whether they come from British India or what is called Indian India. Every interest which, in the opinion of the Congress, is worthy of protection has to subserve the interests of these dumb millions; and so you find now and again apparently a clash between several interests, and if there is a genuine real clash, I have no hesitation in saying, on behalf of the Congress, that the Congress will sacrifice every interest for the sake of the interests of these dumb millions."

Our ever-increasing contacts with the peasantry made us think more and more in terms of their grievances and their welfare. There were agrarian movements in Bardoli, in the United Provinces and elsewhere. Local Congress committees had often, almost against their will, to face the problem of the conflict of interests and to advise their peasant members as to their course of action. Provincial committees in some provinces did likewise.

In the summer of 1929 the All India Congress Committee itself, at a meeting held in Bombay, boldly faced the issue and gave an ideological lead to the country. With all its nationalist background and stress on political freedom, it declared emphatically that the economic structure of society was one of the root causes of our poverty. Its resolution ran thus:

4. Bhagavan Das's inter-caste marriage bill in the Legislative Assembly was ultimately defeated.

> In the opinion of this Committee, the great poverty and misery of the Indian people are due not only to the foreign exploitation of India but also to the economic structure of society, which the alien rulers support so that their exploitation may continue. In order therefore to remove this poverty and misery and to ameliorate the condition of the Indian masses, it is essential to make revolutionary changes in the present economic and social structure of society and to remove the gross inequalities.

Revolutionary changes! I ventured to use these words not so long ago in Lucknow city and some people thought that they were new on a Congress platform. Few socialists could improve on this general declaration of policy and outlook. Yet it would be absurd to say that the Congress had gone socialist. It was becoming more and more concerned with the poverty and misery of the Indian people and the realisation was growing that mere political changes were not enough, something more was necessary. That something more was a change in the present economic and social structure, a revolutionary change. What this change was going to be, it did not state; it was naturally, under the circumstances, vague and undecided about it.

Civil disobedience came, a political movement for a political objective. Again we saw a conflict of interests coming to the forefront and the big vested interests, fearing a far reaching political change, opposed the movement and supported the British Government. In some areas, like the United Provinces, the conflict of interests was more marked because of the agrarian upheaval.

At Karachi the drive towards an economic orientation became more marked. The Congress hesitated to go far but it could not hold back. Again it declared that "in order to end the exploitation of the masses political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions." It talked in terms of a living wage and it declared that "the state shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport." A socialistic proposal, yet it was still far from socialism.

Thus has Congress been driven by force of events and the pressure of reality to face the economic issue. With all its passion for political freedom it could not isolate it from economic freedom. The two were inseparably bound up together. We have tried to keep them apart and to concentrate on political freedom, but economic problems would insist on barging in. We would shut our eyes to the conflicts of interests and yet, even on the political plane, these conflicts became ever more apparent. The Round Table Conference provided a revealing

display of vested interests lining up behind British imperialism and opposing the forces that were working for Indian freedom.

Memories are short and many people forget this recent history of the Congress and of India. Socialism or a change of the economic structure of society are not new ideas unheard of previously in the Congress; nor is the conflict of interests a novel conception. And yet it is perfectly true that the Congress is not socialistic today. But whether it is socialistic or not, it ceased many years ago to be an organisation thinking in political terms only and ignoring economic issues. As I write, one of its principal activities is to enquire into peasant grievances and draw up an agrarian programme. It must face this and other urgent economic problems. And in doing so, wherever conflicts of interests appear, as they are always appearing, all interests that clash with those of the masses will have to be sacrificed.

It is clear that we must concentrate on the political issue—the independence of India That is of fundamental and primary importance for us and any activity or ideology which blurs that issue is undesirable and not to be encouraged. On that I take it there is agreement amongst Congressmen of all ranks. Why then this talk of socialism?

As I understand it, it is not because any socialist imagines that socialism can have any place in India before political freedom has been established. It can only follow independence if India is ripe for it and the great majority of the people desire it. But the socialistic outlook helps in the political struggle. It clears the issues before us and makes us realise what the real political content (apart from the social content) of freedom must be. Independence itself has been variously interpreted, but for a socialist it has only one meaning and that meaning excludes all association with imperialism. Therefore stress is laid on the anti imperialist character of our political strength and this gives us a yard measure to judge our various activities.

Further the socialist outlook stresses (what the Congress has been emphasizing in varying degrees during these past fifteen years) that we must stand for the masses and that our struggle should be of the masses. Freedom should mean the ending of the exploitation of the masses.

This brings us to a consideration of the kind of Swaraj we are aiming at. Dr. Bhagavan Das, with a most commendable persistence, has been demanding for many years that Swaraj should be defined. I do

not agree with him in some of his views[5] but I do agree with him that we cannot go on talking vaguely about Swaraj without indicating, however roughly, what kind of Swaraj we are aiming at. Are the present owners of vested interests to be the successors of the British in the governance of the country? Obviously that cannot be the Congress policy for we have often declared that we are against the exploitation of the people. So inevitably we must aim at strengthening the masses so that they may effectively hold power when imperialism fades away from India.

That strengthening of the masses, and of the Congress organisations through them, is not only necessary because of our objective, but because of the strength itself. Only the masses can give real strength to that struggle, only they can carry on the political fight to the end.

Thus the socialist outlook helps us in our present struggle. It is not a question of carrying on now a useless academical argument about a distant and problematic future, but of shaping our policy now so as to make our political struggle more powerful and effective. This is not socialism. It is anti-imperialism. It is the political aspect as seen from the socialistic viewpoint.

Socialism of course looks further ahead. It aims at social reconstruction based on an elimination of the profit motive. That is not possible today and so the consideration of it may appear to some as academic and premature. But that view would be short-sighted indeed. For the consideration and clarification of the objective, even though we may not decide about it, affects our approach to it. In whose hands will power come when political freedom is achieved? For social change will depend on this, and if we want social change we must see that those who desire such change have the power to bring it about. If this is not what we are aiming at, then it means that all our struggle is meant to make India safe for vested interests who desire no change.

The socialist approach is the approach of Marxism. It is a way of looking at past and present history. The greatness of Marx none will deny today and yet few realise that his realistic interpretation of events, which has illumined the long and tortuous course of history, was not a sudden and brilliant innovation. It had deep roots in the past; it was known to the old Greeks and Romans as well as to European thinkers

5. Bhagavan Das propounded the view that *varnashram dharma*, if suitably modified, could be a complete system of socialism. Jawaharlal in his letter of 8 August 1936 expressed his disagreement and said that it did not "meet modern economic problems of an international character."

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of the Renaissance and onwards. They conceived of history as a movement and a conflict of ideas and interests. Marx applied science to this old philosophy, developed it and made it the brilliant exposition that has so impressed the world. There may be lacunae in this exposition, over-emphasis here and there. We must not look upon it as a set of dogmas, but as a scientific way of looking at history and social changes. Much is made of the fact that Marx emphasized the economic side of life only. He did emphasize it because it is important and because there had been a tendency to ignore it. But he never ignored the other forces which have moved human beings and shaped events.

Marx is a name that terrifies some people who know little about him. It may interest them to know what one, who, far from being an agitator, is a very respectable and honoured British Liberal, said not long ago. Lord Lothian, in the course of the annual oration at the London School of Economics in June 1931, said:

> Is there not more truth in the Marxian diagnosis of the ills of modern society than we have been accustomed to think? I confess that the prophecies of Marx and Lenin are being realized with the most uncomfortable accuracy. When we look round at the Western world as it is, and the persistence of its troubles, is it not obvious that we must probe into the fundamental causes far more deeply than we have been in the habit of doing? And in so doing, I think that we may find that a good deal of the Marxian diagnosis is true.

This confession from one who might easily have been Viceroy of India is significant. In spite of all the prejudices of his class and the powerful pressure of his environment, his keen intelligence could not help being attracted by the Marxian diagnosis. Lord Lothian may have changed his opinion during the past five years. I cannot say how far what he said in 1931 represents his thoughts today.

But Marxism is not an issue before the Congress today. The issue is whether we must fight the evil effects that we see around us or seek the causes that underlie these. Those who concern themselves with the effects only seldom go far. "They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of these effects, they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction, that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady."

That is the real problem—effects or causes And if we seek for causes, as we must, the socialist analysis throws light on them. And thus though the socialist state may be a dream of the distant future,

and many of us may not live to see it, socialism is a beacon light of the present, lightening up the path which we have to tread.

So socialists feel. But they must know that many others, their comrades in the present struggle, do not think so. They cannot assume, as some do, an attitude of superior knowledge and make of themselves a sect apart. They have to justify themselves in other ways and thus seek to win over to their way of thinking those other comrades and the country at large. For whether we agree or differ about socialism, we march together to the goal of independence.

51. In a Train[1]

Friends often ask me. When do you read? My life seems pretty full of various activities, some useful perhaps, others of a doubtful utility. It is not easy to make friends with books and live in their charmed world when the horrid business of politics consumes our youth and eats up our days and nights which, under a better dispensation, would be given to happier pursuits Yet even in this dreary round I try to find a little time at night to read some book that is far removed from politics. I do not succeed always. But most of my reading takes place in railway trains as I journey to and fro across this vast land.

A third class or an intermediate class compartment is not an ideal place to read in or do any work. But the invariable friendliness of my fellow-travellers and the courtesy of railway officials make a difference and I am afraid I cannot pretend to experiencing all the discomforts of such travelling. Others insist on my having more than my fair share of space, and many acts of courtesy give a pleasant human touch to the journey. Not that I love discomfort or seek it. Nor do I indulge in travelling third class because there is any virtue in it or principle involved. The main consideration is one of rupees, annas and pies. The difference in third class and second class fares is so great that only dire necessity induces me to indulge in the luxury of second class travel.

1 Written on his way to Karachi from Allahabad, 17 July 1936 First printed in the *Modern Review*, August 1936, pp. 187-188 Later reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp 1 5.

In the old days, a dozen years ago, I used to write a great deal while travelling, chiefly letters dealing with Congress work. Repeated experience of various railway lines made me judge them from the point of view of facility of writing on them. I think I gave first place to the East Indian Railway, the North Western was fair; but the G.I.P. Railway was definitely bad and shook one thoroughly. Why this was so I do not know, nor do I know why fares should differ so greatly between the different railway companies, all under state control. Here again the G.I.P. Railway stands out as one of the most expensive and it will not even issue ordinary return tickets.

I have given up the habit of writing much in a train. Perhaps my body is less flexible now and cannot adjust itself so well as it used to to the shaking and jolting of a moving train. But I carry a box full of books with me on my journeys, taking always far more than I can possibly read. It is a comforting feeling to have books around one even though one may not read.

This journey was going to be a long one, to far Karachi, almost it seemed to me after my air journeys, half-way to Europe. So my box was well filled with a variety of books. I started off, as was my wont, in an intermediate class compartment. But at Lahore, the next day, fearful and terrifying accounts of the heat and the dust on the way weakened my resolve and I promoted myself to the luxuries of second class travel. Thus travelling in style and moderate comfort I went across the Sind desert. It was as well that I did so for even in our closely shuttered compartment clouds of fine dust streamed in through all manner of crevices and covered us layer upon layer, and made the air heavy to breathe. I thought of the third class and shuddered. I can stand heat and much else but dust I find much more difficult to tolerate.

Among the books I read on the long journey was one about a remarkable and unusual man, Edward Wilson,[2] lover of birds and animals and comrade unto death of Scott in the Antarctic regions. The book had a double appeal to me for it had come to me from yet another remarkable man. It was a gift from A.G. Fraser, for long principal of the Achimota College in West Africa, that noble and unique monument of African education which he had built up with labour and sympathy and affection.

The sandy, inhospitable desert of Sind passed by as the train sped along, and I read of the Antarctic regions and of man's gallant fight

2. Wilson was one of the five members of Scott's expedition who reached the South Pole and died on the return journey.

against the elements, of human courage that conquered mighty nature *itself, of endurance almost beyond belief.* And of high endeavour and loyalty to comrades and forgetfulness of self and good humour in the face of every conceivable misfortune. And why? Not for any advantage to the persons concerned, not even obviously for the public good or the marked benefit of science. Why then? Simply because of the daring that is in man, the spirit that will not submit but always seeks to mount higher and higher, the call that comes from the stars. Most of us are deaf to that call but it is well that a few hear it and ennoble our present generation. To them life is a continual challenge, a long adventure, a testing of their worth:

"I count life just a stuff
To try the soul's strength on. . ."

Such a one was Edward Wilson and it is well that after having reached the Southern Pole, he had his companions lay down for their final rest in those vast Antarctic regions where the long day follows the long night and silence reigns. There they lie surrounded by immeasurable expanses of snow and ice, and over them the hand of man has put up a fitting inscription:

"To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield."

The Poles have been conquered, the deserts surveyed, the high mountains have yielded to man, though Everest still remains proud and unvanquished. But man is persistent and Everest will have to bow to him, for his puny body has a mind that recognizes no bounds and a spirit that knows no defeat. And then, what remains? The earth becomes smaller and smaller and romance and knightly adventure seem to go out of it. We are even told that a flight to the Pole may be a common occurrence before long. And the mountains have funiculars running up their sides and luxury hotels at the top where jazz bands break the stillness of the night and mock the eternal silence of the snows, and dull middle-aged people play bridge and talk scandal, and bored and blase young people and old seek pleasure feverishly, and seek it in vain.

And yet, adventure is always there for the adventurous, and the wide world still beckons to those who have courage and spirit, and the stars hurl their challenge across the skies. Need one go to the Poles or the deserts or the mountains for adventure when the adventure of life is there for all who care? What a mess we have made of this life of

ours and of human society, and with plenty and joy and a free development of the human spirit open to us, we yet starve in misery and have our spirits crushed in a slavery worse than that of old. Let us do our bit to change this so that human beings may become worthy of their great inheritance and make their lives full of beauty and joy and the things of the spirit. The adventure of life beckons and it is the greatest adventure of all.

The desert is covered with darkness but the train rushes on to its appointed goal. So also perhaps humanity is stumbling along though the night is dark and the goal hidden from us. Soon the day will come and instead of the desert there will be the blue-green sea to greet us.

52. Message to Students[1]

I have been told that the students of Sind and also of the Punjab are a bad lot. They are not interesting themselves in things which ought to interest them.

Sind is a peculiar province and Karachi is a unique city inasmuch as side by side with plenty there is appalling poverty. Those who shouted loudest at the time of the partition of Sind are cooling fastest today. The students have no standards of life except an academical one of examinations I have no objection to students having a good time but all depends on what meaning they attach to this expression. Students should take keener interest in national and international affairs.

Recently a case of acute unemployment has been reported from Calcutta when thousands applied for a constable's job including B.A.'s and M.A.'s. Young men and women should face and solve this problem.

I advise you not to drift but to pursue definite ideals. Be big yourselves, think in a big way, act in a big way.

1 Karachi, 18 July 1936 From *The Hindu*, 19 July 1936

53. Address to the Congress Socialist Conference[1]

Any country which does not love freedom is doomed. The Congress faces the problem of unemployment and poverty which it is trying to solve and I recognise the righteousness of socialists' claims in this connection. There is plenty in the country, but we are dying inch by inch.

The new constitution seeks to make the country safe for imperialism. When Tilak came into the Congress, several left it. The same occurred with the entry of Mahatma Gandhi. But the Congress is none the less strong for these defections.

Congress and socialism are interrelated. While the objective of the Congress is the achievement of the country's freedom, socialism throws scientific light on the problems which the Congress is seeking to solve. The country's freedom comes before any other nationalistic activity. The socialistic remedy to the country's ills cannot be obtained in a day or two. Therefore the socialists should win over antagonists inside the Congress by love.

1. Karachi, 20 July 1936 From *The Hindu*, 20 July 1936.

54. The Election Campaign in U.P.[1]

The U.P. Provincial Congress Committee has fixed the 1st of August for starting its campaign to spread the message of the Congress afresh in this province and to remind our people of the new phase of our struggle for freedom. For our object remains ever the same—the independence of India—and till we attain it we shall continue our struggle for it. To attain that object we want an efficient and powerful instrument and organization. The recent history of India has shown without a doubt that only the Congress can be such an organization and can carry us forward to our goal. Therefore all who hold the freedom of India dear and wish to end the exploitation and misery of her people must rally to the Congress and stand under the national flag which has become for us the flag of Indian freedom.

1 Message to the electorate. *The Hindustan Times*, 1 August 1936.

Reactionaries and others are trying to close their ranks in order to oppose the Congress. By doing so, whether they will it or not, they support the government and obstruct our march to freedom. To all such we shall offer the firmest of opposition and I am convinced that as in the past we shall win through.

The coming elections already cast their long shadow over the country. The Congress has decided to contest them, not in order to work the new Act, but to continue our freedom struggle. We shall go forward to these elections, with all our united strength and with the will to win despite all odds. That we shall win I have no doubt. But we have an array of vested interests against us, from the vast interests of British imperialism downwards. Therefore we must organize ourselves and pull together.

The 1st of August is a red letter day in our history. On that day sixteen years ago Lokamanya Tilak, the great herald of the dawn in India, passed away. On that day began the noncooperation movement which was to change the face of India. Therefore it is a fitting day for the beginning of our campaign. May success attend it.

55. On the Punjab Tour[1]

The Punjab is an astonishing province. Sometimes it seems as if it were a stumbling block in the way of Indian progress and freedom, forgetful of the great issues before the country and lost in petty squabbles; at other times its eyes light up, afire with enthusiasm, and its strong arms stretch out in yearning for the freedom from which we have been so long parted. Almost it seems then that it is destined to blaze a trail for others to follow. So the pendulum swings with the waywardness of youth, for the faults and the virtues of the Punjab are those of youth. And youth, in spite of its faults, is a priceless heritage. From youth much is expected, to youth much may be forgiven.

It was my privilege to see during these last few days, as well as during my previous tour, this happier aspect of youth in the Punjab, a youth which was not confined to the young in years but which affected equally those older in facing and carrying the burdens of life. Hundreds of thousands of brave faces met me, eager eyes full of hope, ears

1. Statement to the press, 3 August 1936 *The Hindustan Times*, 4 August 1936.

listening to the call of political and social freedom, and strong arms that were quivering for action. The sight of them made me forget the weariness of a heavy programme and in response to that call of youth my own blood tingled in my veins. I can never forget this tour of mine in the Punjab and the unbounded love and affection that were showered on me from all groups and classes of people. That debt is beyond my capacity to pay. All I can hope for is to have strength given to me to stand shoulder to shoulder with so many brave comrades in the great struggle to come. And I shall venture to hope that this fine and intoxicating enthusiasm will not end in froth but will be harnessed and directed to right ends; that the Punjab will remember that the real problems which face it, as well as the rest of the country, are those of poverty and unemployment and national freedom; that all others are minor issues, however big they may seem for the moment. Especially I hope that the Punjab will extricate itself from the morass of communalism and pay no heed to the false and misleading counsels of narrow-minded communalists whoever they might be. We aim at big things; we aim at bringing freedom again to this old country of ours and the removal of the terrible burden of poverty and social injustice from our people. Let us stretch ourselves then and make ourselves big to face these tasks.

I hope the Punjab will stand solidly with the Congress, for only the Congress has the will and the capacity to face these tasks. The Congress should be not merely a collection of committees and a few leaders at the top but a broad based popular organization deriving its strength and its general direction from the countless members in its wide fold. And Congressmen must remember that the only real enemy of the cause is the spirit of faction and narrow-minded intolerance of others within the fold.

I must send greetings also on this occasion to our brave comrades of the Frontier Province. I went to the very threshold of that province but did not enter it. I was glad however to meet many friends who came from Rawalpindi and to learn from them of the innumerable obstructions that are placed in their way by the government. That in itself is a tribute to their strength and their desire for freedom. They will overcome them as they have overcome so many other obstacles in the past. News comes today, welcome news, of the discharge of their great and noble leader, beloved comrade of ours, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. We rejoice to have him back and yet his freedom is a conditioned and confined freedom for he may not, according to government orders, enter the Punjab or his own province. We shall control our resentment at this treatment of our leaders and make it strengthen our

resolve to uproot this system which crushes us and insults those we hold so dear.

56. To Agatha Harrison[1]

August 6, 1936

My dear Agatha,
I have received at least 3 letters from you which await reply. But as you know I have been on the move during the last three weeks travelling huge distances and being made to speak innumerable times daily. My usual programme began with the dawn and carried me on till midnight. I have completely lost count of the number of places I visited and the meetings I addressed. If I travelled by train almost every station meant a disturbance, if by car every few miles our car was held up by a crowd. It is not the kind of existence I would recommend to a friend. I think I deserve some kind of a prize or medal for endurance. I hung on to the end and yet another day might have made a difference....

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 JN Correspondence, NMML. Extracts.

57. To George Joseph[1]

August 7, 1936

My dear George,
Thank you for your letter. It came during my tour in Sind and I have just returned to Allahabad.

1. JN Correspondence, NMML.

I do not remember reading your article on *Ramarajyam*. Your question to me surprises me.[2] Have you gone so far astray as to think in terms of fascism? I have no intention of killing myself with overwork and I have the strongest objection to being hanged. I agree that Lenin is much beyond reach but why this fall to Mussolini or Hitler? Politics apart, I dislike the vulgarity of Mussolini as well as the fascism in Germany. Why does fascism breed such crude types, or is it the crude types that beget fascism?

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 In his letter of 18 July 1936 Joseph wrote, "There is one question I should like to ask you: why do you stop with it (socialism), why don't you go on to the next step, fascism, and be done with it. Of course, fascism is a reaction against socialism, just as socialism is a reaction against capitalism. I shall put it in Hegelian terms: capitalism is the thesis, socialism is the antithesis and fascism is the synthesis."

58. Reality[1]

The elections are yet far off; half a year has to pass before this mimic war will be upon us. But their long shadow darkens the horizon and hoarse and strident voices assail our ears. Our newspapers are full of them and our middle class intelligentsia talk of little else. Yet as I wandered in Sind and the Punjab, this tumult and shouting seemed to be a little unreal, the talk of candidates and pacts and manoeuvres and intrigues ruffled the surface only. Underneath this surface I sensed strange currents, I heard a deep rumbling. Why did these vast crowds, especially in the rural areas, gather together or wait long hours by the roadside? Not surely to see or hear a person who had gained notoriety, or just to pay their homage to the Congress. There was a deeper urge, a hunger that gnawed and required satisfaction. And perhaps if we could understand this urge and this hunger, we would also understand *somewhat the problem* of India.

1. Statement issued at Allahabad, 9 August 1936. *The Hindu*, 12 August 1936. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 41-43.

But we are too absorbed in our election tactics or in the communal decision or in a mosque dispute, and the millions pass by ignored and not understood. They have not the gift of explaining their urges and their hunger, and our eyes look another way.

It was an extraordinary experience to see these scores of thousands of Punjab peasants. They were not exuberant or loud voiced like city-folk, the outward signs of enthusiasm were often lacking. There they sat quietly and stolidly but behind that quietness there was commotion and underneath that peasant stolidity there were reserves of power and a deep unrest. As I watched them and tried to look within them I thought of a volcano which has long seemed extinct but which shakes again with inner fire, and of the sea which begins to darken before a storm.

Our meetings were sometimes interfered with by the police and the authorities, the organisers were arrested or interned, especially those who were suspected of socialist leanings.[2] It was made clear that high authority did not approve of these gatherings.

"By the King's Majesty it is proclaimed
Now doff your caps, you ill-conditioned pack!
That high authority is made aware
Of leagues in secret join'd by lawless men
Against the peace and order of this realm"

And yet the ill-conditioned pack came in its thousands and ever the cry was the burden of land revenue and debt. No one talked of the communal decision, or of Shahidganj, or of Muslim demands or Hindu rights. Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs thought and talked only in terms of the common burdens they suffered under. And as I sat with them, the trivial conflicts of the cities receded into the distance and seemed utterly unimportant before these mighty manifestations of peasant India. For those who solve this problem of the peasant in India, it will be well But those who fail to do so will vanish like the snows of yester-year.

2 There were reports of arrests and gagging orders which had been served on the Congress Socialists while the latter were engaged in election propaganda.

59. To Prem Nath Bazaz[1]

August 9, 1936

My dear Prem Nathji,
Your letter of the 15th July came here during my absence in Sind. I returned a few days ago after a long tour.

I appreciate your difficulties.[2] To a greater or lesser extent we have to face similar difficulties everywhere. But we must stick to principles and try to look at the real problem. Any other course would be short-sighted and wanting in intellectual integrity. It would also be doomed to ultimate failure.

I am glad to learn that a youth league has been started.[3] I hope this will keep the long view before it and work for the full freedom of all people in the state—men as well as women. It is folly to imagine that a handful of middle class people will prosper for long if the whole foundation of the state rests on poverty-stricken masses.

You are at liberty to publish our correspondence if you so desire it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C C. File No. 21/1936, p. 99, N M M L.
2. He had complained of the opposition of communal elements to his work.
3. The youth league was intended to develop secular nationalism in Kashmir.

60. Speech at the All India Students Conference[1]

I have come here on your bidding, but I must confess that I am not as eminent as our president, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, who is a distinguished leader and who will guide you in your deliberations. First of all, may I thank you, Mr. President, for your kind words about me? May I remember an occasion, about a quarter of a century ago, when I first met you? It was in Europe—I am not sure whether it was in Paris or somewhere else, but it was in Europe, and at that time I was a

1. Lucknow, 12 August 1936 U.P. Government, Secret Police Abstract of Intelligence No. 33, 22 August 1936.

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student at Cambridge while you had already achieved distinction in the political service of the country.

So far as most of us are concerned we always try our best to tackle the problems with which we are concerned in the best way we can. I propose to say something rather about the background of your problems than about the immediate problems themselves. Partly of course it is due to the fact that I am not competent to deal with the immediate problems.

As many of you know, it is one of my failings, of which I am constantly reminded, that I am always fighting shy of the immediate problems which face us, whether they are in the domain of politics, in which I chiefly perform, or in other spheres of national activity. I confess to that failing. With your leave I will talk for a while about various big questions which do not perhaps immediately affect you, but which I think have a vital consequence for each one of us. Now tell me, what do you think has the question of Palestine to do with the students in India? Most of you do not know anything about it except as something entirely separate and different from your daily life and activities. For the matter of that the question, the great tragedy that is taking place today, what has that to do with the students in India? Has that any consequence? I may tell you that the question of Palestine has far greater interest for me than all the odd news that the Indian newspapers tell me and the odd talks and shouts and tumults about the coming elections and the like. Why, I will tell you. Not because I attach less importance to matters which concern India immediately, but because they are matters which affect you and India and the whole of the world. Take the Spanish civil war that is going on now. That has enormous possibilities for good or for ill and which will make the future of Europe. It will ultimately decide, not for ever—because nothing can be decided for ever—but it will decide which way the balance of forces lies. It is not merely a civil war in a fairly backward country in Europe but it is a conflict between two great forces which you see represented in various shapes in various parts of the world, the forces which might be called roughly the forces of progress on one side and the forces of reaction on the other. Sometimes it is difficult for you to draw a line between the two because there are many middle forces. Those who are not clear in their minds do not exactly know the groups of people who are sometimes moved by emotions and urges. You will find that all over the world today it is a conflict between the progressive section of the world and the reactionary side of the world, whether it is in eastern Asia or western Europe or anywhere, and the result is that this conflict will make a most vital and

tremendous impact on the world including India as much as on Spain or France, because in India the whole of the conflict, political or economic, that is going on here, is ultimately a reflex of that wider conflict. You have many middle forces and many middle groups but you can see on the one side progressive forces working for the moment for the freedom of India and on the other side forces backing British imperialism and working for the continuation of the dominion of India. That is the political side and that is the most important side for the moment, but behind that you have the economic side and other sides. So you see all over the world this tremendous conflict going on and it is most important that you should understand it. It is important not only because you are students and as students it is your function, and it should be your duty, to understand what is happening in the world. What is your education? After all education is meant to fit you for life, that is to say, not only in your narrow spheres but you will have later on to understand the big problems of life. Today really there is no narrow sphere for anyone. Big volcanoes are getting into action and today you are seeing in the world enormous political upheavals and human earthquakes, either really taking place or threatening us in the near future. You cannot escape them. Therefore as Indian citizens it should be your business to understand all this. As students you should understand it not from the propagandist's point of view but from the scholarly and academic point of view, considering both sides of the question and then deciding in your own mind on which side your sympathies go, because you cannot remain inactive if you want to function properly and if I may say so your professors, if they do not try to make you understand these problems, are failing in their duty.

When you go out of the university you will find that you are not fit for anything in the world. After all, the fundamental problem before you and humanity as a whole is the freedom of India, political, social and economic and the relation of man to man, of man to woman, of man to society. These are the basic fundamental problems of humanity wherever you may live and we want a proper solution of these problems, but it is on account of vested interests that exist in India that these problems cannot be solved properly. We are therefore trying to get rid of these vested interests so that we may have freedom to move, and therefore it becomes necessary for us to consider our problems in relation to the wider problems. In India as you know one of the things that has been before us for some time past has been the communal question. It is a nuisance. It crops up at all moments. Why is it a nuisance? It is a nuisance for many reasons, but it is a

nuisance chiefly, I think, because it diverts your attention from the real problems of the country. It is bad in itself because it makes us petty-minded, but ultimately it is utterly bad because it hides from our view the really big problems that affect our country and the people of the world at large, and I want you as students especially to try to understand these petty daily problems, almost local problems, and try to solve them, because you will have one day to face them. But you cannot understand them unless you have the proper background in India. After all, you cannot go anywhere unless you know the direction in which you are going and the objective you are aiming at. I feel sure we shall achieve our object not only because of the growing strength of India, not only because they are big problems, real problems as we call them, but because the problems are becoming more and more insoluble and insoluble problems have a knack and a way of rising up and solving themselves in spite of people, in spite of governments and in spite of vested interests and the like. Those who are students of history perhaps have read about revolutions and changes. But have you ever sought to find the real reason behind the revolution and the change? People who have won military victories did not win them on account of their personality but on account of the big forces that shaped their personality, and they were only figureheads in those victories. You must have heard of Chengiz Khan. He was an outstanding military genius but even behind Chengiz Khan there were extraordinary forces driving him south and west. Individual personalities have enormous forces working behind them. You can see it was obvious in the past and today it is becoming more and more evident. You can see those forces in action today and there is absolutely no reason why any person should not try to understand these great forces. Now if you look at India as well as the world you will find that there are enormous forces crying aloud for a solution; problems affecting the peasantry, the working classes, the artisan class, shopkeepers, middle class, etc. They affect us all. Now what do the students know about what is happening? What is going to happen to you? You must know that every person who goes out as B.A. or M.A. from the university swells the number of the unemployed. He has no job, he has no profession, he has no business, simply because he has not been trained properly. He wastes time over securing petty jobs, which is a most unhealthy thing. That is one aspect of this enormous unemployment problem, but the unemployment problem has another aspect, that is the economic aspect. So if this problem is not solved satisfactorily what is going to happen? We are apt too much to think in terms of law and legal circumstances—circumstances and safeguards and

compromises—as if half a dozen prominent individuals and leaders can by meeting together solve the vast problems. Has it ever struck you that since the Great War, I believe, over 120 international conferences have been held in the world, like the World Economic Conference, the world this conference and the world that conference, besides the League of Nations which is functioning regularly. The vast majority of the statesmen and eminent statesmen who have attended these conferences have really tried to solve the big problems of the world, although they wanted to solve them for their selfish reasons. One of the biggest international conferences, the World Economic Conference, was held in London and in spite of efforts and arguments the problems remained unsolved and left the situation deteriorating. Why is that so? Not because of any desire to leave them unsolved but because they were functioning in a wrong way. I am not prepared to say that if these problems are not solved the world will inevitably go to the dogs, but you find that the situation in Europe is from day to day, hour to hour, worsening because these problems are not yet solved. If you ask me why they have not been solved, my answer is clear. I have no doubt—because these problems cannot be solved within the fabric of the structure of the present-day government.

Now, you cheer me, but I suspect your cheering. I suspect it, I tell you, because it is a kind of emotional display of sympathy. Well and good. Emotions are good, but it is not a matter of slogans and cheering. These problems cannot, I think, be solved by British capitalism. Socialism and capitalism are rival systems or theories in conflict with each other. Socialism is a development, if I may say so, an inevitable development of capitalism. It is not so much a question of conflict but a development from one phase to another. Capitalism plays a very important role in society. During the last century or more it has helped in adding to the wealth of the world. It has fulfilled its function and now it is becoming a terror to further progress. Therefore the next step is the question of distribution which socialism seeks to solve. Well, I am not going into this question. I may tell you that the matter came up in considering the big problems. You can solve the big problems if you understand them and if the obstructions caused by capitalism are removed. Then only you can solve them, not to the disadvantage of this or that group, but to the advantage as it should be of every group. In India you must have big problems, and the point that I wish to impress upon you is that unless those problems are solved by government they will become more and more difficult of solution, and a time will come when the problems will solve themselves either in an orderly way or in a chaotic way, and that is what

is ordinarily called a revolutionary situation. If these problems are not solved in an orderly way by those in authority in the country, then these problems will upset that authority and upset the government of the country. I have no doubt in my mind that if the problems are not solved by the British Government, then the problems will solve the British Government. I cannot conceive of the British Government solving the problems because of the present structure of the British Government. It cannot solve them without upsetting itself. There may be some kind of association between England and India but it cannot possibly be the exploitation by the former of the latter. There ought to be healthy association between England and India. These are the problems that the students should solve. They have a tremendous effect on the future of India and of England and of the British Empire directly or indirectly. Therefore it is up to you as students to understand these problems, the wider problems which affect human society, the problems which affect the political and economic framework of India as well as of the world. What is the good of your learning science and politics of the past age which has no application today? The question is of students participating in politics. It seems to me a very pertinent question because the student who does not first of all fully participate in theory is not a student. I do not call him a student. He may be reading text books and the like but he lacks the essential quality of a student. That is what is happening in the world. It is essential for him to understand political problems and for his university to provide him with the fullest facilities, not in a propagandist way, but to understand both sides of the question and leave it to him to decide how he will act. You cannot be an economist in this country unless you have some practical knowledge of conditions in India. If you go to a village and do a little research work there, as no doubt senior students do sometimes, you will get a more intimate knowledge of Indian economics than from all the text books you may read. If you go to a *mohalla* of Lucknow and try to find out the income, debts and expenses of the inhabitants of that *mohalla* you will get more intimate knowledge of the economics of life than the text books will ever give you.

So therefore it becomes necessary for you to undertake research work. You are now getting a large number of voters under the new constitution and it seems to me an extraordinary thing that every voter who is a student does not indulge in politics. He must know how to vote and for whom to vote. He must understand politics. He must indulge in politics. Therefore it is absurd to talk of students not taking part in politics. Of course it is obvious that a student so long as he is

carrying on his studies cannot disturb the course of his studies by indulging in aggressive politics. You cannot have it both ways. You cannot conceive of abnormal conditions that are going on. You have just to think whether you should carry on with your studies or whether you will enter into the sphere of political action. No rules and regulations can be made for abnormal conditions. Abnormal conditions have come throughout the world. Abnormal conditions have come to India. You cannot think of the action to be taken by all. Each individual has to decide for himself. So it is an essential part of his studies to study politics and take part in them to some extent. Now I should like to tell you that in European countries, except in the fascist countries, a large amount of time is given to the study of international problems. Serious international problems have cropped up and boys and girls are encouraged to take part in political activities. I would like you to have a big picture of the world before you so that you may see the picture of India in that larger picture. If you look at the small picture you cannot have any idea, but if you know the whole picture then you can understand it much better.

I want to take you in another direction and I want you to consider our present-day problems. Only about two weeks ago I happened to be in the north-west of India, in the Indus Valley, standing in Mohenjo Daro. I saw a big city coming out under the ground. I found a big city with double and three-storeyed houses, roofs, streets, shops etc. and I also found jewellery. That showed that there was civilization in existence then. I think this extraordinary civilization which existed in this country existed between 5,000 and 6,000 years ago, the minimum period being 5,000 years. That civilization must have taken several thousands of years to reach that stage of civilization, which was before 5,000 or 6,000 years. Now after at least 150 years or so of British rule in this country we are oppressed by that rule. We try to get rid of it—naturally so. If we look at that long stretch these 150 years become really a small thing. It becomes just a page in a big book. If you look at the world and this page you lose that sense of being enamoured of British rule. The revolutionary situation which has arisen in the world is making the strength of the British people gradually disappear. I do not say that the British people are weak. They are quite a strong people. But the strength of the British people is disappearing. The British occupy the position which Austria had in the 19th century.[2] Now if you take the history of the world you will find that this communal question is not a real thing. There are identical problems

2. The Hapsburg Empire was of large extent but weakened by internal dissension.

in Palestine. In Palestine there are eight separate electorates. If you look at these things you will be surprised that these questions are not Indian questions. This communal question of domination is not an Indian question. Fundamentally it becomes the question of every country dominated by imperialism, wherever there is a subject nation dominated by imperialism you find inevitably these problems coming up, because the very basis of these problems is the desire of the imperialists to dominate the country, and to split up the national unity of the country. Now I want you to understand these problems. It is the third party who is really at the back. You should take one view and you should try to get some idea of what is really important and what is not important. The Hindus believe in avatars but the real avatars are ideas in my opinion. New ideas go to bring about big changes. Today we find that these new ideas are convulsing humanity. Empires come and empires go. But my opinion is that ideas do affect empires. These new ideas come in the minds of intellectual Indian people. What is it which draws enormous numbers of these half-starved peasantry to come to listen to some speech at some conference? I think that they have some suspicion that some changes are coming which gives them hope because they are in trouble. It is because of these new ideas which bring hope to them. Many of my political friends have begun to criticise and how foolish it is that they will not listen. But we must work with the material we have got. We should work in the political field. We go about condemning our people for their ignorance. They are ignorant. They have their failings. Anyhow that is the material with which you and I have to function. What is the good of our sitting at home and criticising these people that they cannot function as they ought to. Let us fight with that material. They may be ignorant but they are, if I may say so, intellectually honest. I want you to consider from the point of view of your own education and understanding what the problems before you are. Now I just refer to one of our major failings. Take this communal question which is often argued from the point of view of percentages. You cannot consider the strength of a group or community by counting of heads. If you will go into the history of the world you will find that small numbers almost invariably have succeeded provided they are efficient. So it is absurd to consider this question from the point of view of numbers. The real thing is that if there was the question of numbers we thirty five crores of people would not have become a slave country. Thirty five crores of people are being dominated by a small number of people in Britain because they are more advanced and a more disciplined people than we are. They are abler people. Therefore the fault lies with us and not with them.

It is because British people are united and we are not. So do not bother about percentages. It does not matter how many people there are in this group or in that group. Now even many of us including myself have criticised the constitution of India, and said that people do not take their proper share in national activities. We have been set examples in Egypt and elsewhere.[3]

Recently I was misrepresented as having said that the students of the Punjab and Sind were a bad lot. I did not say that. But the fact remains that after all the students of India are the real future generation of India. It is what India will be tomorrow. It will be largely a matter for you to see and therefore it becomes very important to pay attention to you. We have got a few years more before us. Many have already departed one by one and ultimately the burden is bound to fall upon you. I think we have not done so badly in the last fifteen years or more. We may have failed in many ways. But I should like to say that India has done pretty well and those people who have had the privilege of doing something in shaping the destiny of India have done pretty well. There is nothing to be sorry for their activities whether they acted rightly or not. But they passed away one by one and the burden is now coming upon you. The question will be for you. Mind you, the burden is going to fall upon you sooner or later and the question will arise whether you are worthy of shouldering that burden. It is a heavy burden, and whether it is a heavy burden or light burden you cannot get rid of it. You cannot shoulder it unless you take it seriously.

3 In Egypt there was a widespread student movement at this time for the restoration of democracy and evacuation of the British troops from Cairo.

61. Industrialisation and Socialism[1]

I very much like the multiplication of factories in the country. India should manufacture for all her needs in India itself, but looking to the situation in the country I do not hope that any progress will be made towards industrialisation, because several difficulties are in the way. But

1. Speech at the opening ceremony of the Hindustan Tyres Limited, Bombay, 18 August 1936. From *The Tribune*, 20 August 1936

I warn you not to mistake industrialisation for political freedom. Several countries in the world, though prominent on the map, are economically slaves. This obviously means that there is something radically wrong in the economic system. In the U.S.A. there are hundreds of factories which have been closed down and one and a half crores of people are unemployed. There are thousands of poor and hungry, while tons of foodstuffs are being burnt and destroyed. There is food enough for those who are hungry, but they have no buying capacity. Industrialisation means money and the control of the banking system in the country. If the people in general should be benefited, industrialisation ought to be undertaken on a scientific basis. The economic system ought to be changed if that is to be achieved. The profit motive should not be there. It would be the duty of those who govern to see that the people have money in their pockets to buy what is produced. Unless that is achieved the present condition in the world will not improve. That solution is called socialism. Whether one likes it or not, there is no escape from it. That is bound to come.

62. The Example of Abdul Ghaffar Khan[1]

Several ideas pass through one's mind when one has to speak on an occasion like the present one. There were several leaders in the past. In the fights for freedom that were carried on in other countries and in India also, the leaders immersed themselves in the movement so much that they became part of the movement; they lost their individuality. In India also great leaders have come and gone. In a country like India, it is not an easy matter to find men coming up and leading freedom movements Yet India had men whose life and saying have been a source of great inspiration to the people of this generation. But they were a handful who sacrificed for the sake of their country in the past.

To awaken a people it is essential to carry on some sort of an agitation. I am sure that in spite of the opposition India will be successful in her fight to achieve her freedom. India will win her freedom not because she had a glorious past, but because the present will carry on the fight for freedom. It is essential for the people not to rest content

1. Speech on the occasion of the release of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Bombay, 23 August 1936 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 24 August 1936.

just because they had a very glorious past, but to study the present situation in the country and the world and find out what is necessary to get the country free.

I am really sorry to note that people are wasting time by quarrelling over unnecessary and useless things like the Communal Award or the number of seats in the legislatures. The fear seems to be that one community would get a larger number of seats in the legislatures than another. I am of the view that if numbers can achieve anything the very fact that the population of India is 35 crores would have brought freedom to her.

I want my countrymen to learn the lessons of the world situation and act in the context of the international happenings. There is no doubt that political awakening of a country cannot be achieved in a day. It is left to a handful of brave people to come forward and carry on the work which would, in time, help a great deal towards the awakening of the people as a whole.

I want the people to look at the communal question from an economic point of view. The masses of both the communities are not concerned about the seats in the legislatures. What they are concerned with is, firstly, their economic freedom. They want to know how they can solve the problem of getting enough food and clothes for themselves. During my tours several poor people approached me. They were both Hindus and Muslims. They asked me a way out of several problems. Their problems are not about the communal feeling, but economic difficulties. How can they pay the money-lender? How can they feed and clothe their people? That is their problem and not the seats in the legislatures.

I am in favour of neither temples nor mosques, nor do I like those who are for destroying these. I want independence for my country and I want the people to fight for their freedom irrespective of their caste, creed or community. The common problem that is facing the country is not the communal problem which is a minor affair compared to the very great problem of achieving independence for the country to which all the communities belong. The communal leaders when asked how getting a few more seats in the legislatures would solve the problem of the masses, the problem of unemployment, the problem of poverty, they could not give me an answer.

They could not because there is no answer to give as nothing can be done through a few more seats in the legislatures to solve these problems. The communal leaders are a few. There are hundreds and hundreds of others who should seriously think about the problems that are facing the country. Can they be solved by the people fighting over

the Communal Award? Can they be solved by getting a few more seats in the legislatures for this or that community? No. Then what are the difficulties in the way of solving these problems? All these problems can be solved only when the country has freedom.

Every child in the nook and corner of the country knows Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's name. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan does not believe in speech making. He carries on work silently. In Bombay people may have faced lathis, they may have gone to jail, but it is nothing compared to what has been done in the Frontier Province during the civil disobedience movement. The province has been organised so well and work carried on in such a splendid manner that the parliamentary work has to face a series of difficulties. The Khan Saheb is not allowed to enter not only his own province, but he cannot go even about a thousand miles nearer that—the Punjab. No province in the whole of India has done so well and worked so hard as the Frontier Province during the last six or seven years of the national struggle. This province, which was backward compared to all the other provinces only a few years ago, has gone far ahead of the others within the last six or seven years, because the people there understand what is the problem that is facing the country, and they also understand and realise how the problems can be solved. Having understood it, they have begun to take great strides.

Sixteen years ago, when the country was in a political muddle there came a great man who showed the right path to Indians to proceed towards their objective. Since then the country has taken great strides. Even in the Frontier Province, the call of this great man has been heard.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan is a great man. I would like you to realise what is behind his greatness.

63. To Agatha Harrison[1]

September 3, 1936

Dear Agatha,

I have your two letters of the 15th and the 25th.

I have not heard from Indira for some little time, since her return to England. I suppose she is settled down now in London and is busy with her preparations for her examinations.

1 J N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Yes, I rather like, or at any rate used to like, watching good cricket matches. There was a time when I took great interest in scores and averages. But that seems long ago and it is ages since I have watched a cricket match.

I am off again soon on my "hurricane" tours. It is an exhausting business and yet I find a strange relief in it from the politics of committees and individuals. I seem to feel a little nearer to reality and I suppose the enthusiasm and the crowds cheer me up.

I have just learnt by telephone that Gandhiji is seriously ill with malaria. I have no particulars yet. Malaria by itself is not uncommon or dangerous. But in his state of health it is a disconcerting business. He has been removed from his village hut to the hospital at Wardha. I am afraid I do not appreciate his living in village huts.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

64. On Minoo Masani's Arrest[1]

I have learnt with deep regret of the arrest of Minoo Masani, a dear and valued comrade.[2] As is well known, the Congress policy at present is not to invite arrest or to come into conflict with the government in this way. That policy continues, but that does not mean that every person should always submit to every order that might emanate from an official of the government, however ridiculous it might be and however much it might interfere with our work.

The policy of the government seems to be to tie down our principal workers and prevent effective Congress work being done in various parts of the country. It is absurd to talk of free elections and normal political work being carried on under these circumstances. Therefore, we cannot automatically accept every order that might be passed against us. Although ordinarily there should be no disobedience of such

1. Statement to the press, Aligarh, 6 September 1936. *The Hindustan Times*, 8 September 1936
2. M.R. Masani was arrested in Lahore on 5 September 1936 for defying the order served on him by the Punjab Government on 4 September, asking him to leave the Punjab within 24 hours.

orders, many considerations are involved, considerations of public work, of the dignity of our organization and the freedom of the individual.

When such orders are suddenly served on a Congressman, he must remember the general policy of the Congress, but at the same time he will inevitably take into consideration other matters also. The responsibility for his decision under special circumstances must rest with him. The attempt of the Punjab Government to stifle political work by arrest or interning provincial workers and preventing people from their provinces from entering the Punjab is one which must lead, unless checked, to a paralysis of political activity in the province. We cannot be parties to this and, therefore, I am glad that Masani resisted it.

65. A Roadside Interlude[1]

We had had a heavy day full of meetings and processions. From Ambala we had gone to Karnal and Panipat and Sonepat and, last of all, Rohtak. The Punjab tour with all its enthusiasm and crowds was at last over. A sense of relief came over me after the long strain, and a weariness which demanded sleep from which there would be no quick awakening.

Night had fallen, and we rushed along the Rohtak-Delhi road, for we had to catch a train at Delhi that night. I could hardly keep awake. Suddenly we had to pull up, for right across the road sat a crowd of men and women, some with torches in their hands. They came to us and when they had satisfied themselves as to who we were, they told us that they had been waiting there since the afternoon. They were a hefty lot of Jats, petty zamindars most of them, and it was impossible to go on without a few words to them. We got out and sat there in the semi-darkness surrounded by a thousand or more Jat men and women.

Quami nara, said someone and a thousand throats answered lustily, three times, *Bande Mataram*. And then we had *Bharat Mata ki jai*, and other slogans.

"What was all this about," I asked them, "this *Bande Mataram* and *Bharat Mata ki jai*?"

1. 16 September 1936 First published in *Trivem*, Madras. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 44-47.

No answer. They looked at me and then at one another and seemed to feel a little uncomfortable at my questioning. I repeated my question: "What did they mean by shouting out those slogans?" Still no answer. The Congress worker in charge of that area was feeling unhappy. He volunteered to tell me all about it but I did not encourage him.

"Who was this *Mata*, whom they saluted and whose *jai* they shouted?" I persisted in questioning. Still they remained silent and puzzled. They had never been asked these strange questions. They had taken things for granted and shouted when they had been told to shout, not taking the trouble to understand. If the Congress people told them to shout, why they would do so, loudly and with vigour. It must be a good slogan. It cheered them and probably it brought dismay to their opponents.

Still I persisted in my questioning and then one person, greatly daring, said that *Mata* referred to *dharti*, the earth. The peasant mind went back to the soil, his true mother and benefactor.

"Which *dharti*," I asked further, "the *dharti* of their village area, or of the Punjab, or of the whole world?" They were troubled and perplexed by this intricate questioning, and then several voices arose together asking me to tell them all about it. They did not know and wanted to understand.

I told them what *Bharat* was and Hindustan, how this vast land stretched from Kashmir and the Himalayas in the north to Lanka in the south, how it included great provinces like the Punjab and Bengal and Bombay and Madras. How all over this great land they would find millions of peasants like themselves, with the same problems to face, much the same difficulties and burdens, and crushing poverty and misery. This vast country was Hindustan, *Bharat Mata*, for all of us who lived in it and were her children. *Bharat Mata* was not a lady, lovely and forlorn, with long tresses reaching to the ground, as sometimes shown in fanciful pictures.

Bharat Mata ki jai. Whose *jai* then did we shout? Not of that fanciful lady who did not exist. Was it then of the mountains and rivers and deserts and trees and stones of Hindustan? 'No' they answered, but they could give me no positive reply.

"Surely our *jai* is for the people who live in India, the many millions who live in her villages and cities," I told them, and the answer was pleasing to them and they felt that it was right.

"Who are these people? Surely you and the like of you. And so when you shout *Bharat Mata ki jai*, you shout your own *jai* as well as the *jai* of our brothers and sisters all over Hindustan. Remember that

Bharat Mata is you and it is your own *jai*." They listened intently and a great light seemed to dawn on their heavy peasant minds. It was a wonderful thought—that this slogan they had shouted for so long referred to them, yes to themselves, the poor Jat peasants of a village in Rohtak district. It was their *jai*. Why then let us shout it again all together and with right goodwill: *Bharat Mata ki jai*.

And so on into the darkness to Delhi city and the train, and then a long sleep.

66. This Touring Business[1]

This touring business is becoming more and more difficult for me. As a tour progresses it seems to gather momentum, the crowds become vaster and vaster, and the most carefully made plans go to pieces because of the pressure of innumerable human beings. All this enthusiasm is exhilarating, one feels intoxicated by it, and for some time at least one's physical capacity increases. But there is a limit to this increase; a twelve-hour a day programme is increased to eighteen hours a day and even then it is not completed. Disappointed audiences, after waiting in vain for many hours, get irritated and their anger descends on the local organisers who are least to blame in the matter. And so, in the midst of widespread enthusiasm, sometimes a trail of unpleasantness is left behind. This can be avoided to a large extent and an attempt should be made to do so.

These difficulties are partly due to the tour programmes that are drawn up, and partly to extraneous causes. Tour programmes have been so heavy that, even apart from the physical strain involved, they are often incapable of fulfilment. A day cannot be extended beyond twenty four hours. Inevitably there are delays at every stage when one has to deal with vast crowds. Fifty thousand men and women moving in procession cannot be made to adhere strictly to a time-table. It takes time even to reach the dais of a meeting or to come away from it. To get a vast audience seated in an orderly manner is a laborious

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 16 September 1936. *The Hindu*, 20 September 1936. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp 48-50.

process, unless a great deal of previous staff work has preceded the meeting. And so delay accumulates on delay.

This is the fate of the regular programme. Then there are impromptu meetings and processions which have not been provided for. Every few miles along the roadside crowds gather together and wait for hours. *It is ungracious to ignore them and pass them by without stopping.* So one has to stop and thank them for their affectionate welcome and say a few words to them. Often enough the villages on the route are decorated and elaborate arches are put up. At the entrance to the village or town half the population turns out and waits patiently for hours. What is one to do with all this love and affection? It is overpowering and one has to bow to it.

For various reasons I attract enormous crowds and I evoke an astonishing amount of enthusiasm. Partly this may be due to a certain personal popularity, but largely, I think, it is due to the great prestige and influence of the Congress. Whatever the reasons may be, *the fact of these vast gatherings of human beings, full of enthusiasm* and excitement, must be taken into account and they must be dealt with fairly and squarely.

I trust, therefore, that in future tour programmes will be drawn up after full consideration has been given to all these factors. They must be *reasonable and capable of fulfilment; they must allow a sufficient* margin for roadside halts and impromptu gatherings. Processions should be avoided unless they are considered absolutely necessary. A large number of small meetings should be avoided (although even these small meetings tend to become big). It is better to concentrate on a few really big gatherings and microphones and amplifiers should be provided for these. It is not humanly possible to address these vast audiences without mechanical aids.

I make these criticisms but I am full of gratitude to the Congress workers and organisers on whom the burden of fixing up my tours has fallen. They worked hard and exhausted themselves in the process, but the magnificent response of our people overwhelmed them and me. The memory of that wonderful response will remain with me and will inspire me. I am proud and happy to be connected with an organisation which, by virtue of its long service and sacrifice, has secured in such ample measure the love and confidence of millions of our countrymen.

67. To the Editor, The Leader[1]

Sir,

You have done me the honour of reminding me of Napoleon in your editorial note in *The Leader* of Sept. 20.[2] Napoleon, in spite of his genius, does not happen to be a hero of mine, and a modest person, as you rightly characterize me, can hardly have Napoleonic ambitions. But the report of some remarks of mine, to which you give publicity, is a garbled one and, therefore, I venture to correct it. I delivered no speech but attended a private committee meeting where I took part in a discussion.[3] It is not usual to publish proceedings of such meetings. But there was nothing secret in what I said. This was to the effect that from the experience of my tours and the reports received by me it was patent that the influence and prestige of the Congress among our people were enormous, and the Congress could sweep the polls. For the Congress the personal appeal of a candidate counted for far less than the national appeal of the organization and the principles for which it was fighting. That being so the individual factor should be stressed less and the principles should be given far greater importance. Even an unknown volunteer, who stood for these principles, could easily win if those principles were generally accepted by the electorate. Therefore it was up to us to lay stress on the general Congress programme and policy and not on individuals. That, indeed, was the right policy for all groups, as only thus can an electorate choose between two rival policies. To stress individual merits and not the broad policy for which the individual stands is a sign of political immaturity in a nation.

I am, etc,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Allahabad, 20 September 1936 *The Leader*, 21 September 1936.
2. The editorial commenting on Jawaharlal's optimistic talk on the Congress winning all the seats it was contesting said. " one of the lessons taught at school is, 'Don't be too sure.' Does this very modest protagonist of the Congress remember Napoleon Bonaparte's medals 'struck in London'?"
3. Jawaharlal had attended the Allahabad City Congress Committee meeting.

68. To Prema Kantak[1]

25/9

Dear Prema Kantak,[2]

What an awful charge you bring against me of forgetting you each time I have met you. I am not so forgetful but when one meets people in crowds, the impressions are apt to be confused.

I am surprised to learn of the controversies that have been going on in Maharashtra over the question of women volunteering.[3] What has Russia or socialism got to do with this? I am a socialist and I want to spread socialistic ideas but I do not want to mix this up with volunteering. It is right that our volunteers should be interested in this subject and we may tell them something about it if they so desire it. But to carry on aggressive propaganda would be wrong.

Then again what have questions relating to marriage and sex relations got to do with volunteering or even with socialism? In a wide sense of the word socialism is a philosophy of life and therefore it covers and includes all aspects of life. But ordinarily socialism means a certain economic theory. When I talk of it I mean that economic theory and all this talk of religion or marriage and morals in connection with it is absurd. We can certainly discuss religion or morals if we feel inclined that way but we must not confuse that discussion with socialism.

People seem to have the most extraordinary notions about religion and marriage in Russia. I wish they would find out the facts before they jump to conclusions. But apart from that, I certainly am no blind admirer of Russia and Russian ways. I approve of their basic economic policy and I think something like it will have to be adopted elsewhere. But I do not believe in our adopting all their ways or methods. We must find our own path to freedom.

1. AICC. File No. G-49/1936, pp. 4 5, NMML.
2. An associate of Mahatma Gandhi and organiser of the Women's National Volunteer Corps of the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee
3. In her letter of 22 September 1936, Prema Kantak said she was facing difficulties in enrolling women as volunteers because left wing politicians were addressing Congress rallies and it was feared that family ties would be loosened under socialism

All these are big questions which require long discussion. I cannot deal with them in a letter. But so far as your volunteers are concerned they do not arise. You should concentrate on volunteering.

If you so desire it, you can give publicity to this letter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

69. To Chimanlal C. Shah[1]

Allahabad
September 25, 1936

Dear Mr. Shah,

Thank you for your note on socialism which you have sent me. I have read it with great interest and found in it a very clear analysis of the situation in India. On some minor matters I may not wholly agree with you but on the whole I do agree with your interpretation. I will here only refer to one or two points. You say that I do not know exactly how socialism will be brought about in India and for the present I have pinned my faith on the constituent assembly. This is only partly true. I talk about the constituent assembly quite apart from socialism, but as an inevitable stage to it. It is the obvious culmination of our struggle for independence and for a democratic constitution. Therefore it should be the objective of all of us who believe in that independence, whether we are socialist or not. I lay stress on adult franchise so that the mass elements in India may make their weight felt and thus divert attention to mass problems—poverty, unemployment, the land question, industry etc.—from the present upper middle class problems that largely fill our minds. When we have to face these mass problems fairly and squarely I feel that inevitably we shall have to think more and more on socialist lines. As you have stated in the course of your note, the point is that the forces and groups that will work for socialism should come more and more to the front Socialism itself will come later when political power has already come

As for the ways and means of achieving socialism itself I do not think it is possible for us to lay down anything definitely because there

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5(a)/1936. pp. 555-57.
2. Chimanlal Chakubhai Shah (b. 1902); solicitor to Government of Bombay during the Congress ministry, 1937-39.

are so many undetermined factors in the world situation. All over the world there is an increasing crisis and inevitably the development of this crisis will affect us. We can vaguely see the direction in which this crisis is going and try to prepare ourselves ideologically and otherwise for coming events. But we must remain flexible in our thought and action, for rigidity may prevent growth. That growth must be based not only on our own objective conditions but also on the mentality and outlook of the Indian people. Therefore we have to think of principles and policies in relation to this general outlook.

The second point that I should like to make clear is about the inevitability of socialism. Now I do not believe in any such absolute determinism and I have never said it. What I have said is that as far as I can see only socialism can solve the world's problems and, therefore, I think it is highly likely to come. But there is always the possibility of a throwback and of present-day civilization killing itself. Besides, what is usually meant by saying that socialism is bound to come is that we expect people to act in a particular way under certain conditions and this will ultimately lead to socialism. For me socialism is very far from a passive waiting for things to happen.

Another thing I have often stated is that if big forces are working for socialism then the objection of some individuals will not stop it, and if these forces are not working for socialism, then all our preaching in favour of it will bear no result.

There are several other minor matters on which I should have liked to say something but I cannot write at greater length at present. On the whole your analysis seems to me, as I have stated above, an excellent one.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

70. To V.K.Krishna Menon[1]

November 19, 1936

My dear Krishna,
I received your cable. Since then I have been expecting your letter. I have just heard that Katju has brought some message from you, but

1. JN. Correspondence, NMML.

foolishly he has not sent it to me yet and this mail will go before I see it. So I cannot write to you about it.

I have just returned from another strenuous tour. One of the good things I succeeded in was to put an end, for a while at least, to a long standing dispute in Bengal.[2] I am off again tomorrow. This election business here is getting on my nerves. It is curious, or perhaps it is the normal state of affairs, that elections seem to bring out all the wrong things in a man.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. See *post*, section 9, item 26.

5

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN II

1. To Madan Mohan Malaviya[1]

Allahabad
April 20, 1936

My dear Malaviyaji,

I enclose a cutting from *The Leader* of today. I was surprised to read this as I was under the impression that we were going to have further talks as the situation developed in regard to cooperation between the Congress and the Nationalist Party. It appears that the Nationalist Party is shutting the door to any such cooperation and, as is stated, is organising itself for a straight fight as against the Congress.[2] This, you will no doubt agree, is an unfortunate development. I hesitate to believe that matters are being precipitated in this way by the Nationalist Party and I should like to have your views on the subject. The propaganda that is going on in the press apparently on behalf of the Nationalist Party will obviously make future accommodation more difficult. If such accommodation is desired the approach from both sides will have to be different. So far as the Congress is concerned, as some of us told you and other friends, we are prepared to go a long way to bring about this accommodation provided of course that this is based on an anti imperialist policy and on Indian independence. The communal decision by itself cannot obviously be made the sole basis for any action as it is a by product of the political situation. Those people who aim and work for Indian independence can have little difficulty in agreeing about the general policy to be adopted in regard to the communal decision, as inevitably such decision is opposed to both democracy and Indian freedom. Concentration on the communal decision with no clear outlook in regard to the wider political issues can have no meaning and can only result in perpetuating that very communal decision which we object to.

I should be grateful, therefore, to you if you would kindly let me know what the Nationalist Party proposes to do in regard to these wider political issues as well as the narrower issue of the communal decision. Further, whether it is true that it is making an alliance with various groups who are opposed to the very idea of Indian independence. One other matter which appears to me to have the greatest

1. J N. Correspondence, N M M L.
2. At a meeting held in New Delhi on 16 April 1936, it was decided that the Nationalist Party would act as a viable opposition to the Congress with a view to contest provincial elections and to combat the Communal Award.

importance is our attitude to the suppression of civil liberties. In the past, prominent members of the Nationalist Party as well as of allied groups like the Hindu Mahasabha have not declared themselves clearly on this issue and some of them have given their active and passive support to the government policy of repression. If that is the general attitude of the Nationalist Party a common political background between it and the Congress is lacking. During the last elections the Nationalist Party supported some candidates who had actually given their adhesion to the Government of India Act as a whole and asked for cooperation with it.[3] Further, among the representatives of the party and candidates there are people who, in the past, had actively supported the government policy of repression. I find from press reports that some of these gentlemen are again taking a prominent part as members or allies of the Nationalist Party. All this is very confusing and requires to be cleared up. May I beg of you, therefore, to help in clearing up the situation so that we might all know exactly where we stand. We should of course try to agree as far as possible, but even if we cannot agree let us at least know where we differ.

I shall be grateful to you if you could let me have an early answer.

With regards,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. In the elections to the Legislative Assembly in 1934, the Nationalist Party had lent its support to candidates belonging to the Hindu Mahasabha, the Democratic Swaraj Party and the National Liberal Federation.

2. Address to the Punjab Political Conference[1]

I regret that, on account of my presence, the conference has been turned into a *mela*. In the bustle and excitement that prevails it is not possible for us to consider the problems which are deliberated upon in such a conference. The question of questions is the fight for liberty. The problem of the country cannot be solved merely by speeches. We must get to real work immediately. The great need of the country and

1. Gujranwala, 30 May 1936. From The Bombay Chronicle, 4 June 1936.

more specially of the Punjab, because the conditions are peculiar here, is to consider the real problems. I want to give a shake to the brains and minds of the Punjabis. I am greatly affected by the fiery speeches made here. An important problem for the Punjab is the Communal Award which has been the subject of discussion before the country. Some people and especially the Muslims like it. It has also affected the Assembly elections. The Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress Nationalist Party have criticized the Congress attitude on the subject. I would like that all Congress matters should be discussed by the masses of the country. The decision should not be taken as authoritative when given only by the leaders. The success of the Congress has not been due to the leaders only but to the interest taken in the affairs by the teeming millions of the country, who have raised the position of the Congress in the eyes of the world. The Congress should, in my opinion, always hold counsel with the masses.

The Award has caused heart-burning among the Sikhs and the Hindus especially in the Punjab and Bengal. But we should remember that this is not a question peculiar to the Punjab or India alone; it is a common phenomenon all the world over. The Award has divided India into a number of communal compartments. It is clear that anyone who wants democracy or independence for the country cannot like the Award. It is a stumbling block in the way of independence. The question is how to get rid of it. Mere bewailings will not help us. We say it is a bad thing. But if we concentrate all our energies on merely decrying it, we cannot carry on our fight for independence.

That our fight for India's liberty shall be fought in the fields and factories of India and not by speeches in the councils is my view. However, the Congress work in the councils would help the struggle for freedom. The Congress election fight will not be for personalities but for principles. I will not beg you to vote but will ask you to do your duty. By merely adopting a resolution on the subject, we will not be able to improve the situation. Let a mutual agreement between different communities be arrived at. That will be the only course to attain liberty. I appeal to Sikhs and Hindus accordingly. I may not like the wording of the Congress resolution, but I agree with the basic principles on which it is based. I am sure that by mutual discussions and consideration we will be able to get over the heart-burning caused by the Award.

I am confident that the only body which has the strength and stamina to fight the British Government is the Congress. It derives its strength from the masses and not from the upper class. All forces in the country should combine to fight the government. Some higher

class people will go further from the Congress. I am not afraid of that. I want clearing of the position, so that we may know where we stand. The bright morning shall dawn and surely dawn though many of us may not live to see, as many of our dearer ones, old and young, have not been able to see and have gone to eternal rest.

3. On the Communal Award[1]

During my speeches in the Punjab I have referred on several occasions to the Communal Award. Short reports, in English, of long speeches in Hindustani inevitably give a somewhat misleading idea of what I said and criticism of it is thus sometimes based on wrong data. It is always desirable that there should be clarity of ideas on controversial issues so that while we may differ, we should at least realize clearly what the issues are. I am, therefore, briefly stating here what my views are on the communal decision. I have already given expression to these views in my Lucknow Congress address, where I stated that the communal decision and democracy could never go together. Its very basis is the denial of democracy and it must inevitably be a tremendous barrier in the way of independence and the consideration of social and economic issues, which are the real problems facing us in India. I cannot conceive of anyone, thinking clearly in terms of independence or of social change, accepting or approving of the communal decision. It has been a matter of great surprise and regret to me that many of our Muslim friends and comrades, who have stood for Indian independence, should so approve of this pernicious decision.

There is no question of my being neutral or non-committal about the Award, nor, so far as I am aware, is that the Congress position. I am not in the habit of being neutral about important matters. To the communal decision I am entirely opposed and I cannot willingly accept it at any time, because to do so would be for me to forget independence and social freedom and the democratic tradition.

The question, therefore, for me is not to approve or disapprove of the Award or to remain neutral. I am not neutral and I disapprove

1. Statement to the press, Lahore, 2 June 1936. *The Tribune*, 3 June 1936.

of it strongly. It resolves itself into this: how to get rid of this most undesirable thing? I can see only two ways of doing this: the way of independence when inevitably such arrangements will have to go and give place to more democratic methods, and the way of mutual adjustment and compromise between the principal groups interested in the Award. I would add that I do not think that any real compromise is possible between those who stand for independence and those who expect to live for ever under the shadow of the British Empire. They look different ways, they work for different objects.

To expect that the British will come to our aid in this matter is to expect the impossible. It is to their manifest advantage not to do so. To expect the communal leaders to do so is equally unlikely. The only way thus is to divert the attention of the broad masses to national and economic problems which affect them much more and thus enable them to see the communal question in its true perspective. To go on laying great stress on the Communal Award defeats the very purpose we aim at for it prevents people from thinking of other issues.

The position of the Congress on the communal question has long been clear. It has declared that it stands for a national democratic solution but should there be a compromise between the parties concerned, it would probably accept it. Apart from this it lays stress on the constituent assembly for the framing of a constitution for a free India and for the decision of communal issues.

4. To Mohammad Iqbal[1]

Mussoorie
June 18, 1936

Dear Sir Muhammad Iqbal,

As I was leaving Switzerland a copy of your pamphlet entitled *Islam and Ahmadism*, which you wrote in connection with some articles of mine, reached me.[2] I read that pamphlet with interest and it was my

1. J N Correspondence, NMML.
2. Inferring from Jawaharlal's articles that he was in sympathy with the Ahmadiya movement Iqbal said that the "eternal solidarity" of Islam could not "tolerate any rebellious group within its fold." For Jawaharlal's articles see *Selected Works*, Vol. 6, pp 468 474

intention, at one time, to write something about it in the public press. Not of course regarding the theological points that you have touched upon, for I am neither competent enough nor interested enough to deal with them; nor regarding the controversy with Ahmadism. My interest was largely confined to the political aspects of the various questions you have touched. But heavy pressure of work prevented me from giving thought to this matter again and I doubt if it will serve any useful purpose for me to enter into this domain of controversy.

There are one or two facts, however, which I wish to clear up in a personal letter to you. I have been surprised at a certain inference you have drawn in your pamphlet to the effect that I was in any way partial to the Ahmadia movement. My articles, which were published in *The Modern Review*, drew their inspiration from the statement that you had made. And because that statement of yours dealt with the Ahmadia community inevitably I referred to it. But my whole contention was a political one as well as the political aspect of a certain theological argument that you had advanced. It had nothing to do with the Ahmadia movement as such. Indeed I knew very little about that movement except what I had read in your article and except for a vague idea that one of its fundamental creeds was loyalty to the British Government. You will appreciate that this latter fact could not possibly prejudice me in favour of the Ahmadia movement. Indeed it prejudiced me against them, so that any impression of yours to the contrary was entirely erroneous. I can never be partial to any movement which in the name of religion supports British imperialism in India.

There are many things in your pamphlet which are thought provoking and with which I do not agree. But I do not wish to trouble you with my own ideas on these subjects. My principal object in writing this letter is to clear up the misunderstanding about the Ahmadia movement which seems to have arisen. So far as the religious or theological aspects of the question are concerned it is not for me to interfere or to discuss.

I have come to Mussoorie for a few days and I am going back to Allahabad soon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. *Negotiations with the Nationalist Party*[1]

Occasional references have been made in the public press to what have been called negotiations that were supposed to be going on between the Congress and the Nationalist Party.[2] Sometimes it is stated that a compromise has been reached; at other times failure is hinted at. All these press references have had little to do with the truth. As a matter of fact there have been no such formal negotiations nor has the subject been considered as between two groups out to bargain. During the past two months I have corresponded with Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya on a variety of subjects, and twice during my stay at Mussoorie I had the privilege of meeting him and discussing with him the many problems that face us. The communal decision was of course discussed but we spent far more time over other and, what I considered, more vital matters affecting our freedom struggle. These matters form the background of our whole struggle and it seems to me that clarity in regard to them is essential. The communal decision and its consequences are important but they are after all offshoots of the main problem, not the main problem itself.

Both of us started with the fixed premise that in our freedom struggle all of us should make every effort to bring together all the forces that are anti-imperialist and are working for Indian freedom. These forces are many and varied, and although temperamentally and otherwise there may be many different viewpoints among them, they have a strong common bond that unites them. It is the bond of a common political objective and common interest in achieving it.

So far as the communal decision is concerned it has undoubtedly been an element of discord amongst us. It was no doubt meant to be so. It is for us to end or at least minimise this discord for this is not based on any vital principle but on other and more superficial matters. I am sure that we can succeed in this for the whole question can now be considered more calmly and with a proper perspective. My own view on the communal decision has been given sufficient publicity. I am convinced that it is a barrier to democratic growth and national

1. Statement issued at Allahabad, 22 June 1936. *The Tribune*, 28 June 1936
2. *The Leader* of 15 June 1936 had suggested that "rumours regarding rapprochement or at least a working agreement between the Congress and the other Nationalist Parties subscribing to the creed of independence seem to have solid foundation."

progress and ultimately it injures most those groups whom it is meant to favour. I would like all communities to recognize the undemocratic character of this decision and to object to it on this ground, whatever their other reactions to it might be. I feel that the question can ultimately be settled satisfactorily only by mutual goodwill between the communities and a spirit of accommodation, as well as a consideration of the true interests of the masses, whether Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian or others. These interests do not differ and as soon as we consider the problem from this point of view many of our present difficulties vanish.

This, I believe, is fundamentally the Congress policy. This, I think, also represents, in its essence, the outlook of the Nationalist Party. The gap between the two is more imaginary than real, and is based more on certain past incidents than on present circumstances. It would be surprising and unfortunate if it could not be bridged. There should be no great difficulty about that. But in considering this we have to consider also the wider problem. We are not out for just an electoral arrangement but for a more fundamental tackling of the problem and for this we seek a wider basis of goodwill. Friends, therefore, must not grow impatient or think in terms of failure because some magic formula is not suddenly produced. The Congress Working Committee will no doubt give its most earnest consideration to this matter. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's earnest desire that we should all pull together is reciprocated by all concerned, and when this widespread desire is present, it is reasonable to expect that it will bear fruit.

6. To Satyapal[1]

10.7.36

My dear Dr. Satyapal,

... I have noticed in the press an announcement about an anti-Communal Award conference in Lahore.[2] I was surprised to find that Congressmen, and even persons calling themselves socialists, are fathering this conference. The socialism that prevails amongst some

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-38/1936, pp 159-161, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. The proposal to organize an anti-Communal Award conference in September 1936 was initiated by the Anti-Communal League of Amritsar.

quarters in the Punjab is of a peculiar variety. That is certainly not my variety of it....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To the Editor, The Times of India[1]

July 15, 1936

Sir,

In your issue dated July 10, 1936, there appeared a letter under the heading "Pandit Nehru and Muslim Party" signed by J.D.J.[2] I wrote to you regarding this letter on July 11, 1936.[3]

In J.D.J.'s letter it was stated that he had referred the matter to Mahatma Gandhi but had received no reply from him. I am informed by Mahatma Gandhi that he has not received any letter of the kind referred to or any other communication on the subject.[4]

I am advised to take legal action in the matter. Will you kindly send me particulars of the article attributed to me to which reference is made in J.D.J.'s letter in *The Times of India*? I should like to know the name of the Punjab journal in which this appeared as well as the date of the issue of that journal.

I must also request your correspondent, J.D.J., to disclose his identity. In a matter of this kind it is only fair that the writer of the original letter should disclose his name.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J N. Papers, NMML.
2. In his letter to *The Times of India*, J.D. Jenkins criticised Jawaharlal for having contributed an "offensive" article to a journal of the Punjab but made no mention of the fact that it was originally printed in 1935. Later Jenkins apologised for it. See *post*, item 11. For Jawaharlal's article see *Selected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 470-474.
3. In his letter of 11 July, which has not been printed, Jawaharlal had asked for the details of the article attributed to him.
4. Mahatma Gandhi had wired: "Received letter. Know nothing of letter in *Times*. Strongly suggest taking legal action."

8. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

15th July, 1936

My dear Bapu,
Your telegram about *The Times of India* letter came last night. I dislike getting entangled in the meshes of the law but, as you so wish it, I am sending another letter to *The Times*, a copy of which is enclosed. Further action will depend on their reply.

I am going to Karachi tomorrow. It is going to be a lengthy business. I enclose a tentative programme.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

1. Maharashtra Government Records, Police Commissioner's File No. 3590/H/II.

9. To Sarat Chandra Bose[1]

Camp Nawab Shah (Sind)
July 26, 1936

My dear Sarat,
I have been thinking of writing to you for a long time. Indeed I wanted to meet you but circumstances have prevented my doing so. Even now I am writing this letter under certain difficulties in a village in Sind.[2] I shall write rather briefly because any attempt to deal with the various matters I want to refer to you would make this letter far too long when I have little time for that now.

I wanted to know from you what exactly is the position in Bengal today in regard to Congress matters as well as the relation between the Congress and the Nationalist Party. I must confess that I am greatly confused and therefore I seek your advice.

Some days ago I read the correspondence which you had last year with Satyamurti.[3] In one of your letters to Satyamurti you stated: "Is

1. AICC File No P-6/1936, pp. 341 345, NMML.
2. Jawaharlal toured Sind from 18 to 27 July 1936.
3. This correspondence was published in *Advance* (Calcutta), 26 June 1936.

it not a fact that during the last five years or more there has been a regular conspiracy in higher Congress circles to put down Bengal? I may tell you frankly that I do not at all regret that Bengal does not count in all-India politics today. All India politics during the last five years or more has been too dirty for words and in a sense I am glad that Bengal does not count there."[4]

I read this statement with considerable pain. As you know during these past five or more years to which you refer there have been civil disobedience movements and most of us were in prison or interned for the greater part of the period. This period with its record of struggle and suffering is a fine record for the whole of India and Bengal's part in that struggle and suffering has been outstanding. Is it fair, therefore, to describe this entire period in the terms you have done? If by all-India politics you refer to the Working Committee, this Committee could not even meet for a great part of this period. When it did meet it had to face enormous difficulties and pressure from government repression, but did it, during that period, do anything unfair to Bengal? The successive Presidents may have erred from time to time, may have weakened, but I do not know how the question of Bengal was treated in an unfair way. It was treated, if you like, in a helpless way. Perhaps you refer to the last two years since the withdrawal of the civil disobedience movement. Much has happened during that period with which I disagree. But is it not strong language to call it too dirty for words? I really do not know what conspiracy there has been in higher Congress circles to put Bengal down. There may have been individual prejudices and partialities but so far as I know there was a very powerful desire to keep Bengal in the forefront because Bengal had suffered so much. But circumstances including the terrible repression of Bengal as well as party feelings in Bengal made it difficult to take any effective action.

But I want your advice specially regarding the present position. You know my views regarding office acceptance and the like. I disagree entirely on that issue with many of my colleagues who represent perhaps the majority in the Congress today. My views on the Communal Award have also been given sufficient publicity. I think that the Communal Award is a hateful thing which can never be accepted. But with all this I do not understand the position of the Nationalist Party in Bengal. This party taken as a whole in India includes in its members many people who are not even Congressmen and who are politically exceedingly moderate. This does not apply to a great extent

4. Letter dated 1 September 1935.

to the Bengal Nationalist Party but it does apply to the Punjab. In the Punjab the Nationalists have made almost common cause with extreme reactionaries and communalists. I do not understand how many Congressmen in Bengal who have always been in the forward ranks of the Congress could ally themselves in any way with these reactionary elements in other parts of the country, which openly oppose the Congress on a variety of fronts. In the Punjab Nationalists talk of a common front with Hindu ministers and the like. Is this not a fatal step for any Congressman to take?

I can fully understand and appreciate the resentment of Congressmen in Bengal against the Communal Award. In my own way I have been stressing this point and you will notice that the Working Committee has gone a long way to make its opposition to the Award clear.[5] I hope that in the manifesto that the A.I.C.C. will issue there will be a further elucidation of this issue, so that the position of the Congress in regard to the Communal Award will be made as clear as possible and will not be essentially different in so far as principles are concerned from the opposition of other people to the Award.

What exactly does the proposal to come to terms with the Nationalist Party mean? It seems to me that it resolves itself ultimately to a division of seats for the election. I do not see how the Congress as an organisation can enter into any pact with the Nationalist Party on that score. In Bengal, I suppose, if there was no Nationalist Party as such there would be no difficulty in a proper allocation of seats to people including the present members of the Nationalist Party because in Bengal the Nationalist Party consists of Congressmen. But in the Punjab and in the C.P. this means watering down the Congress policy by allowing reactionary and moderate elements to have the support of the Congress.

Suppose that the Congress had taken up a clearer and stiffer attitude in regard to the Communal Award two years back, what would have been the result? Probably the occasion would not have arisen for the formation of the Nationalist Party in Bengal. Now however a kind of vested interest seems to have been created in northern India in regard to the Nationalist Party and quite apart from the Award and our attitude towards it that vested interest demands its share in the spoils or else proposes to combat the Congress. That seems to me a very unfortunate state of affairs which inevitably will do injury to all concerned.

5 Jawaharlal made two statements on 2 and 22 June (see *ante*, items 3 and 5) which were endorsed by the Working Committee on 29 June 1936.

Take the resolution which the Nationalist Party in Bengal passed a fortnight or so ago regretting that the Working Committee had postponed a definite decision regarding an arrangement with the Nationalist Party. This resolution seems to have misunderstood the whole situation. There was no question of postponing. Indeed the Working Committee declaration practically met the demands made upon it regarding the Communal Award. The only other step was a question of sharing seats. Further the Nationalist Party went on to state that they must organise themselves to combat the Congress Parliamentary Party as well as other forces.

For the present I am considering the question from the narrow point of view as it affects the Nationalist Party of Bengal. There are, of course, many important considerations to be taken into account also as the proposed action of the Nationalist Party puts the advanced wing of the Congress and the rest of India in an exceedingly difficult and invidious position. It strengthens the moderate element in the Congress and the country and thus ultimately adds to the government strength. The position in the Punjab is also worthy of consideration. But I shall not write to you much about this now. There the advanced elements are still further weakened by such tactics. There is in the Punjab today a definite tendency towards the left amongst the Mussalmans. There are even forces among them who do not look upon the Communal Award with great favour and are beginning to take a politically democratic and reasonable view. How are we to encourage them and thus not only weaken the supporters of the Award but increase the strength of the advanced wing in the Congress?

As regards the Communal Award I have already expressed myself clearly. I should like the Congress to give expression equally strongly to this viewpoint but I should also like it to emphasise the fact that we want to settle this question in cooperation with other groups. Any other attitude is obviously not desirable and only leads to increasing the supporters of the Award in other groups and consequent perpetuation of that Award.

I have given you above some indications of how my mind is working. I wish you would write to me and let me know how you view the situation. I should like to come to Bengal myself and discuss this with you and other friends. Indeed I would have come like a shot if I had felt at any time that my coming was worthwhile. I said as much to the Bengal delegates at the Lucknow Congress but they told me that I should not come yet but should wait for a better opportunity. Please write to me to Allahabad where I hope to reach on the 4th August.

Just before I left Allahabad I sent two books to Subhas. I do not know if he received them.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. To Suresh Chandra Majumdar[1]

August 6, 1936

Dear Comrade,[2]
I thank you for your letter of the 18th July which I received on my return from my Punjab tour.

It seems to me that there is a considerable misapprehension on the subject and most of us are arguing about words rather than principles or policies.[3] Perhaps this is largely due to certain past occurrences which have confused the issue. I am personally at a certain disadvantage in this matter as I was absent, either in prison or abroad, during this period of controversy and dispute. But there is also a certain advantage in this position as I can view the situation unaffected by past controversy.

I think it will serve little purpose for me to go back and discuss this past history, regrettable in some respects as it is. The point is where do we stand today. On this issue it is perfectly clear what the Congress position is today. There is not the slightest ambiguity. I ventured to define this in a statement issued in Lahore in June last and later in a further statement issued from Allahabad.[4] This was not a mere expression of my personal views. (I had expressed my personal views on the communal decision a year earlier in writing my *Autobiography*.) In my statements I had endeavoured to give expression to the official Congress viewpoint. Leading Nationalist opponents of

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-6/1936, pp. 347-349, N.M.M.L.
2. (1888-1954); secretary, Bengal P.C.C. at this time; general secretary and treasurer, Rabindra Bharati Society; founder of *Hindusthan Standard*, *Ananda Bazar Patrika* and *Desh*; member, Constituent Assembly, 1947-50 and of Rajya Sabha, 1952-54.
3. The Bengal Congress Committee had resolved on 12 July 1936 that the attitude of the Congress ought to be "one of clear and unequivocal rejection of the communal decision of the British Government."
4. See *ante*, items 3 and 5.

the communal decision told me at the time these statements were issued that they were perfectly satisfied with the viewpoint laid down therein and with the unqualified condemnation of the communal decision. *But, they added, it was not enough that I should say so; the* Working Committee should confirm what I had said. In saying what I had said I knew I was expressing the views of the Working Committee. But to avoid any doubt on the matter I placed my statements before the Committee and they declared that these statements of mine clearly enunciated the Congress policy in regard to the communal decision.

I really fail to see after this the point of the criticisms of the Working Committee which you make or which some Bengal papers make. *Your argument seems to me to be beside the point. You are perfectly* correct in stating that when the Lucknow Congress rejects the new constitution, *ipso facto,* it rejects the communal decision. Of course it does. I would even go further and say that even apart from this *general rejection of the new Act and the constitution, the Congress* would reject the communal decision as being opposed to all principles of democratic progress and as being aimed at breaking up the unity of India.

Therefore the question of rejecting the communal decision does not *arise at present. All of us, or nearly all of us, in the Congress want* to reject and, what is more, put an end to this communal decision. *The sole question to be considered is how to bring this about.* The Congress is of opinion that the right policy is, on the one hand, to push on our fight for independence and, on the other, to seek some common measure of agreement for the removal or substantial alteration of the Award. Any other policy only confirms this Award for it is obvious that it is to the manifest advantage of British imperialism to hang on to it.

I shall repeat, to prevent any possibility of doubt, the Congress policy in regard to the Award. It dislikes it, does not accept it and rejects it and can never reconcile itself to it, because it is a barrier to our progress to unity, freedom and independence, and is a part and parcel of *British imperialism which it combats.* But from the very nature of the circumstances which have given rise to this Award, it is clear that *it cannot be got rid of except, as I have stated above, on the basis* of independence or near-independence, or a compromise solution between substantial parts of the major groups affected. The policy to be pursued must therefore be such as to lead to these results.

Obviously any weakening of the Congress front is fatal from this or any other point of view. And I think it is obvious that the formation

of a separate group, sometimes in conflict with the Congress, must lead to this weakening. The adoption of tactics such as memorialising the government for a modification of the communal decision is not only at variance with long established Congress policy but inevitably weakens us in our fight for independence.[5] It means the joining together with various individuals and groups which have no desire for independence or even oppose it.

We all know how hard Bengal has been hit by the communal decision. But the question has to be tackled on an all-India basis. Looking at it from this basis we find the Nationalist Party, outside Bengal, to consist of many persons who have nothing to do with the Congress. Some of them have been and are active opponents of the Congress in the fight for independence. Does this not lower the whole plane of our struggle? I can hardly believe that Bengal Congressmen with their splendid record can allow themselves to be exploited in this way by other forces in India.

I can assure you that the Working Committee, far from turning a deaf ear to Bengal's difficulty, is keenly alive to it and is eager and anxious to do everything in its power to solve it. I can further assure you that the members of the Working Committee have as great a dislike of the communal decision as anyone in Bengal. But the wider aspects to the problem demand attention even for the solution of this issue.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. A memorial on behalf of the Hindus of Bengal was submitted to the Secretary of State on 26 June 1936.

11. To J. D. Jenkins[1]

Allahabad
8.8.36

Dear Sir,
I have received your two letters dated July 18th and 24th. Owing to my absence on tour I could not deal with them earlier. I note that

1. J.N. Papers, NMML.

you express your regret for the expressions you used in your letter to *The Times of India*, the reason for this apparently being that I wrote the article a year ago in prison. It is a fact that I wrote the article in prison a year ago. It was published first in *The Modern Review* and many periodicals reproduced it soon after. From the copy of the article which you have sent me it appears that *The People* of Lahore reprinted it on the 24th November 1935, that is, eight and a half months ago. This fact was before you when you wrote to *The Times of India* and yet there is no reference whatever to it. The whole trend and purport of your letter to *The Times* is that you were criticising some recent article of mine.

My article was written, as is apparent, with reference to a statement issued by Sir Mohammad Iqbal. It was partly addressed to him and he was good enough to issue a lengthy and very courteous reply which has subsequently appeared in pamphlet form. In that reply no objection was raised by him to the matter or manner of my article. Nor to my knowledge has anyone, besides you, raised such an objection.

This is the article which you have seen fit to characterise, knowing that it was written last year, as "most dangerous", "wholly improper", "most offensive", "disgraceful", "amazing", "full of falsehoods", and "an absurd effusion". You have charged me with deliberately going out of my way to wound Muslim feelings and thereby create extreme bitterness between one community and another. And you have invited government to take action against me.

I do not know if it is a habit of yours to fling about these epithets and charges, but to me it seems to be a very serious matter, which ignorance of an odd fact or two in no way justifies. Apart from the personal aspect of it, it must inevitably result in creating that very bitterness between communities which you seem to deprecate. And it is not creditable journalism. Your private and personal expression of regret, without in any way withdrawing publicly the expressions you have used, is highly unsatisfactory. I suggest that it is up to you to give public expression to your apology and to withdraw the remarks you have made.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. To Sarat Chandra Bose[1]

August 14, 1936

My dear Sarat,

Thank you for your letter which I received today on my return to Allahabad.[2] I should like to reply to it at some length but I cannot do so at present owing to rush of work.

I think you are unjust to the Congress Working Committee and that you have drawn wrong inferences from what they have done or not done. I can assure you that there is not the faintest idea in their minds of setting one group against the other. The one thing they have aimed at, rather helplessly it is true, is to bring various groups together if possible.

I do not know exactly what you mean by Krishna Das's[3] spying mission. He was sent on no mission at all much less a spying one and certainly the Working Committee knew nothing about it. He wrote a very stupid letter off his own bat....

About Hijli also I do not know what you object to.[4] As far as I remember we made strong references to it and the Working Committee passed a resolution which was approved of by some representatives of Bengal who were present. It was with the approval of the Working Committee and at their desire that I went to Bengal soon after, knowing full well that my going there might result, as it did, in my imprisonment.[5]

You are quite right in saying that the Nationalist Party in Bengal consists of Congressmen only. But this party is a part of a larger Nationalist Party which does not consist of Congressmen only and which is carrying on, in some places, a violent campaign against the Congress.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-6/1936, p. 409, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. In his letter of 11 August, Sarat Bose alleged that the Working Committee had set up "one group against the other in the Bengal Congress" with a view to secure support "to the formation of ministries under the new constitution and to the Working Committee's formula of 'non acceptance and non rejection'" of the Communal Award.
3. Secretary to Mahatma Gandhi, 1921-22, author of *Seven Months with Mahatma Gandhi*. He was charged at this time with reporting on Congress politics in Bengal.
4. On 16 September 1931 two detenus died and twenty were wounded as a result of firing by the jail staff at Hijli detenu camp in Bengal. The Working Committee passed a resolution on 29 October 1931 recording its sense of "deep sorrow at the tragedy." See *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 256.
5. Jawaharlal was arrested on 26 December 1931, soon after his return from Bengal.

I want to come to Bengal soon. It would suit me better if I could come in the third week of September. At present I am engaged up to the 31st August and then, after 4 days interval, up to the 14th September. These tours and intensive work I have to do here in the office are a bit of a strain and I am at present a little below par. But it is impossible to get any rest, physical or mental. We have to face a difficult and complicated situation all over India and unless we can pull together all of us are likely to suffer for it.

I had a note from Subhas the other day telling me that he had received the books I had sent him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

13. Congress Attitude to the Communal Award[1]

The Congress attitude to the Communal Award has been dealt with in the manifesto at more length than it really deserves.[2] The Working Committee gave lengthy arguments in support of its attitude that it will be wrong to continue one-sided agitation against the Award as it will defeat the very object, wherefor the agitation is proposed. I think, and you will agree with me, that the attitude of the Working Committee on this subject has been made perfectly and absolutely clear. The Working Committee has been convinced that the only two alternatives to the Award are either gaining independence by national strength or mutual agreement.

By mutual agreement I do not mean an agreement of all groups and classes as it is exceedingly difficult to get all groups and classes to agree to a common solution, particularly so because of vested interests. What the Working Committee means by an agreed solution is mutual agreement of major communities. The Committee opposes one community

1. Statement at the A I C C. meeting, Bombay, 22 August 1936. From *The Tribune*, 23 August 1936.
2. The Congress election manifesto of 22 August 1936 declared that "the attitude of Congress is, therefore, not one of indifference or neutrality. It disapproves strongly of the communal decision and would like to end it." See *post*, section 8, item 2.

agitating against another as that would put the government in a happy position. In the opinion of the Working Committee such one-sided agitation would divert the attention of the country from political and economic demands. Individuals have always freedom to express their opinion on the Award, but not in such a way as to encourage or carry on an agitation against one group.

By mutual agreement I do not mean that all communal leaders should agree, but I mean that the persons whom the Committee has in mind are those who stand for the political and social progress of the country and not those who are moved by communal considerations. My recent tour of the Punjab has shown me that the masses are not much worried about these communal wranglings. What they really care for is political, economic and social freedom. If the people begin to feel on these lines I think we shall succeed in arriving at a mutual settlement.

14. To Sarat Chandra Bose[1]

September 3, 1936

My dear Sarat,

I wrote to you a few lines from Cawnpore. I hope that this letter will catch you in Calcutta before you leave for Simla.

As you have not so far informed me of the date when I shall go to Bengal, I have fixed up my Madras tour for the first half of October.

Thank you for your letter about your joining the Working Committee. I shall make an announcement about it in another day or two.

I do feel that you have passed judgment on the Congress Working Committee without having all the facts before you. I can speak with direct personal knowledge of the last six months and am quite sure that there was not the least desire on the part of the Committee to elbow out any person because of his views on office acceptance or the communal decision.[2] This matter was entrusted entirely to Rajendra Babu and surely there is no person in India who is more honest and fair in his dealings than Rajendra Babu. I wonder if you have any idea of the vast numbers of the letters and telegrams which have

1. A.I.C.C. File No P-6/1936, pp. 281 283, N.M.M.L.
2. This allegation was made by Sarat Bose in his letter of 27 August 1936.

poured in on us from all manner of people in Bengal during the last few months. No other subject has taken up so much time and consideration.

As regards Krishna Das and his letter, the Working Committee, when it came to know of it, was excessively put out. So was Gandhiji. They did not quite know what to do about it. The letter, as you know, was never received by Gandhiji or anyone else. And Krishna Das, when asked about it, said that he had no copy. He was not sent to Bengal to report on any matter but as a busy-body and a very emotional person he wrote something without really knowing the facts. Personally I think that his mind was not all there. As you know he was discharged from his position in the A.I.C.C. office.

Of course it is absurd to compare Bardoli with Bengal.[3] Who has ventured to do so? The only suitable comparison would be the North West Frontier Province. But will you tell me exactly what you think the Working Committee could have done in the matter? Three years ago I was in Calcutta and I put this very question to people there and I had no answer. Except for passing resolutions, which the Committee did, it could not take any other steps.

I regret to notice in this morning's papers that the Nationalist Party proposes to set up candidates in opposition to the Congress and to concentrate on an agitation about the communal decision.[4] I think this is very unfortunate and the party has ignored the larger issues before the country. The Congress position, as declared in the manifesto, is clear enough. Ideologically there is no difference between the Congress and the Nationalist Party. The difference comes in in regard to the stress to be laid on the various aspects of our national problem and the activities to be undertaken. The Congress holds that final stress must always be laid on the question of independence and not on any other issue which, though important, must inevitably distract attention from the real objective. Any big scale organised agitation against the communal decision at this stage will inevitably divert attention from the vast political and economic questions that face India and the world today. It is obvious that the British Government will only yield to considerable pressure. Our job is to organise that pressure. That pressure can only come effectively on the political plane.

3. Sarat Bose had blamed the Working Committee for its "inaction" in regard to the happenings at Midnapore, Chittagong and other places in Bengal before which, he said, "the happenings at Bardoli pale into insignificance."
4. The Nationalist Party passed a resolution on 30 August 1936 calling upon its branches to set up candidates for the coming elections.

So far as the communal decision is concerned the Congress has used the strongest language in condemning it. Whenever occasion arises it will repeat this condemnation, as a group and individually. Ordinarily if this matter comes up in the legislature or otherwise it will be the duty of the Congress to express that condemnation by vote but obviously one cannot bind down any political party to vote in a particular way unless one knows how the matter comes up. But if an organisation has a clear opinion on a subject voting follows that opinion. It may be necessary to move amendments or to face the situation in some other way. But the general background of the Congress attitude is quite clear.

I must confess to you that my mind is full of the vast upheavals that are taking place in the world today, of the tragic conflict in Spain and of the inevitable effect of all this on India. We dare not forget these major facts of the world situation. We must look at our own problems in true perspective and the only true perspective is the anti imperialist one.

I do not quite understand how the B.P.C.C. can further the cause we all have at heart by trying to represent at the same time the Congress and the Nationalist Party. That can only create confusion in Bengal and all over the country and lead to the weakening of the Congress organisation.

I am leaving Allahabad for a tour in the U.P. day after tomorrow.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. To the Secretary, Bengal P. C. C.[1]

Sept. 5, 1936

Dear Comrade,

I have noticed in the newspapers the report of the proceedings of your executive council held on September 2nd. In this report it appears that your council passed a number of resolutions, or one resolution with several clauses, in regard to the communal decision and the

1. A I C.C. File No G-24(1)/1936, pp. 189-191, N M M L.

Congress manifesto's reference to it.[2] This resolution interprets the Congress manifesto in a way which hardly seems to be justified. But apart from this interpretation it seems to declare unequivocally that the Bengal P.C.C. is going to carry on an organised agitation inside and outside the legislatures against the communal decision. Further it calls upon all subordinate committees to do likewise.

It seems to me that parts of this resolution are directly opposed to the spirit and letter of the Congress manifesto as unanimously adopted by the All India Congress Committee. You will agree with me that this would lead the Bengal P.C.C. to a course of activity which the A.I.C.C. has stated in the clearest language as undesirable and harmful both in the larger interest as well as from the point of view of combating the communal decision. This matter thus raises grave and important issues. Quite apart from the merits of the problem there is another aspect which we must necessarily bear in mind. That aspect is the unity of Congress policy in the country and the willing carrying out by provincial organisations of the decisions of the All India Congress Committee. Obviously if this fundamental axiom is not accepted, all organisational unity disappears and the Congress becomes a loose federation of mutually conflicting groups. That certainly is not the idea underlying the Congress constitution and indeed no organisation can long survive or function effectively if this kind of thing happens.

The matter is too important for me as Congress President or as a member of the Congress executive to take any action on my own initiative, but the Working Committee and, it may be, the All India Congress Committee will have to consider it in all its aspects. It affects intensely all our Congress work in the coming elections to provincial legislatures. Presumably your provincial parliamentary board will desire to run candidates on the basis of these resolutions of your executive. That basis is not the basis which the All India Congress Committee has laid down and hence a conflict arises as to who should stand for election and what policy he should represent. It will be for the Congress Working Committee or the A.I.C.C. to resolve this conflict.

It appears that the Nationalist Party has passed certain resolutions to contest elections and even to oppose Congress candidates. From

2. On 2 September 1936 the Bengal P.C.C. welcomed the rejection of the Communal Award in the Congress election manifesto but added that this did not mean a ban on Congress organisations agitating against the Award. It called upon all Congressmen to fight against the Award in and outside the legislatures

your executive council's resolution it would appear that your council's views are more in conformity with those of the Nationalist Party than of the A.I.C.C. This Nationalist Party is an all-India organisation which includes in its fold, in many provinces, people who are either not Congressmen or those who have opposed the Congress on many occasions. Thus your resolution may lead to a position where you may have to side with a non Congress organisation and oppose the Congress policy and activities as a whole.

One thing more I should like to point out to you. Your executive council has passed this vital and important resolution and given it publicity without any previous reference to us on the subject. A decision of this kind involving the possibility of conflict and confusion within the Congress organisation is of a far-reaching character and before that decision is taken do you not think that it was due to us and to the Congress organisation as a whole to confer with us and try to find some way out of the difficulty that confronts you?

This matter will be placed before the next meeting of the Working Committee and if necessary of the A.I.C.C. I shall be glad therefore if you will kindly send me a full statement on the subject which I can circulate to the members of the Working Committee as well as the president and the secretary of the Central Parliamentary Board. With a view to keep the members of the Working Committee informed, I am sending a copy of this letter to them.

In view of the importance of this question I intend visiting Bengal before the matter comes up before the Working Committee. Towards the end of this month I am going to Madras. Would it suit you if I visit Bengal in the third or fourth week of October? To begin with I should like to go there on a short visit to consult with friends and colleagues, but later I may undertake a more extensive tour of your province.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

16. To Master Tara Singh[1]

September 16, 1936

My dear Master Tara Singh,

I hasten to reply to your letter of the 10th which I have just received on my return from tour.

Your questions about the Congress attitude in regard to the communal decision are not quite clear and they seem to overlap.[2] I shall endeavour, however, to give below what I consider to be the Congress policy in this regard.

The Congress manifesto has made it as clear as possible that the Congress is entirely opposed to the communal decision and wants to end it as soon as it possibly can. There can be no dispute or discussion about this policy or about the desire of the Congress to be rid of the communal decision. How to do so is a matter for us to consider and our methods may vary as the situation develops. It may be necessary under different circumstances to stress one aspect of our struggle. Under different circumstances a different stress may be needed. For instance the governing factor of the situation in the world today is the rapid drive to international war which will inevitably affect India tremendously. It may produce world chaos. How are we to face this tremendous situation, if it arises, is a problem which all of us have to consider even today, for tomorrow may be too late. When such vital problems arise, smaller problems, however important, cannot be stressed. On the national plane the vital question for us is the fight for independence and the first stress must inevitably be laid upon it. To emphasize other matters is to play into the hands of the imperialist government and to make people think that our object is not independence but a change in the proportion of the representation in the legislatures or the manner of elections.

There can be no doubt that the communal decision is a barrier to our progress to independence and democratic freedom as well as to the

1. A I C C. File No. G-5(KW)(ii)/1936, pp. 375-376, N M M L.
2. In his letter of 10 September 1936, Tara Singh asked: "1. Will the Congress nominees in the legislatures vote against the so-called Communal Award, if such an occasion arises? 2. If not, will the Congress nominees be free to vote against the so-called Communal Award if they think necessary? 3. Shall each individual Congress nominee be free to vote against the so called Communal Award?"

unity of India. That is the principal reason why we oppose it. And yet *if we seek to change it, it means that we accept the framework* of the British system and only want a change within that framework. It is for this reason that the general Congress policy has been to stress the wider and more vital issue which includes all other minor issues. To express an opinion about the communal decision and to denounce it as utterly bad is perfectly correct from the Congress viewpoint. But to make the public think that the communal issue is a primary issue today leads to a diversion of interests along wrong lines, to a misapprehension on the part of the public on the vital national and international issues that face us. It is because of this that the Congress has deprecated one sided agitation against it which is bound to lead to a rival agitation in its favour. This is the background of the Congress policy.

A situation may well arise when the Congress may consider the time and circumstances appropriate for a vigorous attack on the communal decision as such. But such an attack must not obscure the issue of independence, and must not lead to rival agitations for and against it which will necessarily result in the British Government being in the favoured position of continuing the communal decision.

The Congress has laid down its general policy in regard to the communal decision; its subsequent action will necessarily be governed by that policy. That is to say, that whenever the question of the communal decision arises in the legislatures or outside, the Congress members ordinarily must express their disapproval of the communal decision by vote or otherwise. This follows from the general policy laid down. But it is difficult to say how the question will come up in the legislatures and what the general position will be then. It may be necessary, for instance, to move amendments to express the Congress attitude. In any event the Congress member can do nothing in the legislatures which can give rise to the impression that he is neutral on this question. For that would be wrong.

Thus I cannot say how and when the matter will come up definitely and how the Congress members will vote. That will depend on the circumstances. But ordinarily their voting will be, as a consequence of the Congress policy, against the communal decision. In a special case the matter will have to be decided at the time. In any event the Congress party will hold together and vote together on important matters.

I hope I have made the Congress position clear.

I appreciate fully and sympathise with the Sikh attitude towards the communal decision.[3] I would beg of you however to consider the national and international problems which surround us and threaten to engulf us. We have to take the larger view and keep this in mind and shape our policy accordingly. We have grown out of the stage when we agitated for changes within the imperialist structure. It is that structure itself that has to go now and when it goes it will take all other evils which it has produced with it. The real question for us to consider is: Do we think in terms of Indian independence or in terms of fitting ourselves into the British imperialist structure?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3 At the National Sikh Conference held at Amritsar in March 1935, the Sikhs expressed their protest against the Communal Award as being wholly unjust to them and resolved to make all possible sacrifices to get the communal decision scrapped.

17. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Allahabad
September 24, 1936

My dear Mahmud,
I am glad you have drawn my attention to the controversy and agitation that has been going on for some time past over the Hindi-Urdu question.[2] I had heard of this controversy but owing to numerous other preoccupations I could not pay much attention to it. Even now, I am afraid, I am unable to get excited about it and it seems to me to be an unreal affair in a world which is in torment and which has to face vast problems affecting the whole future of our country, of the millions who inhabit it, and of civilisation itself. I must conclude that those who are excited over this Hindi-Urdu affair have little conception of these larger and more vital problems. They seem to have lost sight of the wood and concentrate their attention on a few odd trees.

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, File No. XI/36, National Archives of India.
2. The controversy on an all-India language had intensified from 1935. The advocates of Hindi wanted Hindi written in Devanagari script to be the common language while the supporters of Urdu wanted Urdu to be recognised as the official language in either script. The controversy took a communal colour.

My own way of looking at our problems is very different. The vital factor in the world is the fierce tussle that is going on between progress and reaction. Everywhere we see this in different forms and guises — in Spain, in Palestine, in India. What is happening in Spain today is probably of more consequence to the world, and even to India, than anything else. I am oppressed by the attempts on the part of British imperialism to crush the Palestine Arabs. All these, as well as our freedom struggle in India, are parts of the same picture for me. And when I see this mighty picture, ever shifting and changing, many of the little things that worry us seem to lose significance.

Coming to India, the vital factor is the problem of poverty and unemployment. All else is subsidiary to it and can only be considered in relation to it. This is my way of looking at things and I think it is the right way. But I find this perspective strangely lacking in most other people, especially in those who talk and write so much about Hindi and Urdu. Languages and literatures and cultures flourish when people flourish and have freedom to develop their genius. To the starving and the wretched and the slaves, what value has a superficial culture which does not reach them?

It is from this viewpoint that I would like our friends to view this question.

I have another difficulty. I find that many people are considering this question not dispassionately or in a scholarly spirit but with minds full of suspicion and prejudice. They are out to find fault, to impute motives, to cast aspersions, to smell conspiracies. I understand that my good faith has been suspected in this matter. Indeed this was a reason why I hesitated to say anything; for if my good faith is questioned what I say can count for little. But what people think of me in this connection is after all of relatively little moment. It sinks into insignificance when I consider that Gandhiji's *bona fides* have been attacked fiercely and he has been accused of deep conspiracy to crush Urdu.[3] This is an astounding fact to me for, if there is anything I hold by, it is the absolute good faith and straightness of Gandhiji in all matters. You know that I differ from him in many things and I have often given expression to my difference in outlook, but that has nothing to do with my belief in the tremendous sincerity of the man and his enormous services to our cause. Curiously enough, he has done more,

3. Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal and others had been criticised in the Urdu press for attending the session of the Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad at Nagpur in April 1936.

I think, than anyone else to help in evolving the mentality for a common language in India. Both in the Congress and outside, the recognition that Hindustani must be the common linguistic link in India is largely the outcome of his efforts. And yet it is this man who is accused by petty people of the very thing which he has sought with all his might to avert.

However I shall not discuss personalities any further. The question we have to consider has nothing to do with individuals except in so far as we have to understand the background of what is happening. First of all let us be clear as to what the Congress, that is to say nationalist India, stands for. In our constitution it is clearly stated that the language of the country and of the Congress is Hindustani. It is further stated that both the scripts, Nagari and Urdu, are to be officially recognised. Further in the fundamental rights resolution of the Karachi Congress it is stated that "the culture, language and scripts of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected."

Now this is as clear as it could well be. The position thus is this: We think that the principal languages of India, each of which is an ancient language and has a considerable literature, should be encouraged in their various linguistic areas. They should be the principal languages for those areas. These languages are, apart from Hindustani and its variations, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya, Assamese, Sindhi etc. There in no question of any of these languages being suppressed by Hindustani. For over a large area however in the north, Hindustani, with its variations, holds sway. We have to try to standardise this Hindustani as far as we can for this northern area, and at the same time to make it a necessary second language for the rest of India, so as to make it the linguistic link which binds India together. There is no other possible language which can be this link and I think it is quite inevitable that Hindustani should develop in this direction. I am not against English or other foreign languages. I think a knowledge of foreign languages is essential for us to keep in touch with the world and with modern thought. But that knowledge can never extend to large numbers of people in the country.

And thus Hindustani is going to be the national language of India. At the present moment there are many variations of it. We talk usually in terms of Urdu and Hindi, thinking chiefly of the script and partly of the background of Persian or Sanskrit. But an even more vital difference is that between the city language and that of the rural areas. We seldom think of the rural areas in this connection because all our public life derives inspiration from city folks. To some extent this is

bound to continue and it is right that the higher cultural standard of the city should play an important part. But as education spreads in the rural areas this predominance of the city will not be so marked and our language will undergo a considerable change. It may not remain so polished and so courtly but it will gain in vitality and power of expression.

The real standardisation of language will only come when there is mass education on behalf of the state. Our efforts today in this direction cannot carry us far except in so far as they create a certain atmosphere. There is another factor to be borne in mind. People often object to a certain growing tendency for the Hindi and Urdu versions to drift apart. There is, I think, some tendency of this kind and some individuals help it. But the real reason for this, I think, has nothing to do with individual motives. It has a more fundamental basis.

When we talk of the common simple language of the people, which we would wish to encourage at the cost of the Persianised or Sanskritised language, what exactly do we mean? Every tyro knows that there is a world of difference between the language of Delhi and the language of Nagpur or of Bihar. There is a tremendous difference between the language of Lucknow city and the rural areas of Lucknow. What then is this simple common language of the people? Each one of us is apt to consider his own language or the language of his group the standard language and to be irritated when another variation of the language is used. Instead of being a little ashamed of his ignorance or of his limited knowledge, he seems to glory in the fact that he does not understand something.

But I want to point out something deeper. The simple common language of the people is always a limited language. Probably it consists of about two thousand words. It is good enough for the day to day activities of ordinary life. But as soon as we begin to discuss any problem of life, political, cultural, economic, social, this simple language does not help us We have to go outside its range to discover the requisite words and phrases to express uncommon ideas. Inevitably the writer or the speaker has recourse to Persianised or Sanskritised words. Thus apparently the two variations of the language drift apart. This is really a sign of the vitality of the language and we need not alarm ourselves about it. I am sure that after this first flush of separate growth they will come nearer to each other because they cannot help it. Circumstances are too strong for them and a mass audience will demand both simplicity and uniformity. It is up to us to help in this process wherever we can and I think we can do something in that direction now. But we must not waste our efforts in objecting to this growth

of the language even though that growth may exhibit separatist tendencies. We want a rich and varied language drawing for its sustenance and its vitality from the classical languages as well as the modern languages of the world. In the modern sense of the word our languages are somewhat immature and they have to develop before they can express modern ideas and fine shades of modern thought. So the richer they get the better. We must not try to stop the growth of the languages because of our own limited knowledge. The real thing to be objected to is the tendency both in Hindi and Urdu for a certain courtly and elaborate method of expression which, though grandiloquent, has little vitality and can never reach the masses. If we think and speak and write in terms of the masses, inevitably our speech and writing will tend to simplicity and force. This is the way to check the extravagant conceits as well as the separatist tendencies of Urdu and Hindi.

I do not say much about the script because that is a matter that is settled so far as we are concerned. For Hindustani both the Nagari and the Urdu scripts must be encouraged and recognised everywhere. This is not merely a political compromise, as perhaps some people think, but a vital principle to encourage national growth. I would personally encourage every language and every script that exists because I am convinced that real education can only be given to the growing child in the home language and script. I find it quite absurd when I learn that people want to suppress a language or script anywhere. That shows utter ignorance of national growth and the part that language plays in it. I would remind you of how the Russians have solved this problem in their own vast and varied territories. They have encouraged every single local language and they have even gone so far as to manufacture a new script for certain nomadic languages which had no script so far. The result of this has been a wonderful growth of education all over the Soviet territories. I would go so far as to permit the adopting, by the state schools, of the Tamil or any other language in any city in northern India where a sufficient number of Tamil boys and girls require this. So also with all other languages and scripts. Our policy must be not to suppress any language or script but to encourage it so far as we can. Applying this to Hindustani it inevitably follows that we must encourage both the Nagari and the Urdu scripts all over the Hindustani speaking areas. To try to suppress any of them in any way is wrong and harmful. Further, in the non Hindustani speaking areas, the state, I think, should undertake the teaching of either the Hindi script or the Urdu wherever a sufficient number of people demand it.

With this background to my thought it astonishes and grieves me to find that in the North West Frontier Province the Hindi script should be discouraged by the state. In your province, Bihar, I understand that some people object to facilities being given to the Urdu script by the state. That seems to me an utterly wrong attitude. We must throw the way open to both these scripts everywhere and permit the use of either or both as the people choose.

It is curious how many things in our country take a communal tinge. Even the language question has become communal. And, for some mysterious reasons, Urdu is supposed to be the hallmark of the Muslims. With all due deference, I am not prepared to admit this. I consider Urdu as my language which I have spoken from my childhood up. Unfortunately for myself my education was such that I know neither Urdu nor Hindi properly. But that does not mean that Urdu ceases to be my language. I consider this question, therefore, and I want others to consider it, entirely from a linguistic point of view and not from a communal viewpoint. To talk about culture and Muslim culture in this connection is to talk beside the point.

When we consider the question of a common language for India we must bear one important fact in mind, that a common language cannot be a hotchpotch of all the languages of India. We cannot create an artificial language like this and impose it on the whole of India. That will fail as Esperanto and Volapuk failed.[4] The question as to what Hindustani is cannot be determined by a reference to the non Hindustani speaking areas of India, such as south India. We can only fix upon Hindustani by considering northern India and by trying to evolve a common tongue out of the variations of Hindi and Urdu. Any attempt to influence this evolution by mixing up the consideration of other languages in India is doomed to failure.

Keeping this well in mind we can at the same time try to find the common words and links between this standardised Hindustani of the north and the other principal languages of India. This will be helpful in the study of Hindustani in other parts of India. I tried to point out the essential difference between these two methods of approach at Nagpur during the sessions of the Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad, but I am afraid I did not succeed in making myself clear.[5] Many people there were far too full of other problems which seemed to me superficial.

4. These were two attempts at developing international languages
5 The full text of the speech is not available.

Apart from these remarks of mine at the Parishad at Nagpur I did not say much else so far as I remember, as I felt somewhat out of place in the gathering and out of touch with its various constituent elements. It was the first time that I had attended such a gathering. My chief interest in it was that it should develop links between the different literatures of India so that common ideas might course through them and they should begin to look more and more to the masses of our people. I wanted our writers in the various languages to consider the many problems the European writers have to face today, and I hoped that the Parishad would develop into some such association. But I found to my regret that discussions ranged round trivial matters such as Hindi and Hindustani and odd words here and there. My own sympathy was for the use of the word Hindustani and I mentioned this, but I felt ill at ease when I found that this question so dominated everything else. That conference had a large number of people from south India representing the southern languages. They were suspicious of the attempts made on behalf of Hindustani to overshadow them. In spite of that suspicion they came. Inevitably their approach to Hindustani was to a large extent through Sanskrit which was a common link. They could vaguely think in terms of Hindi but the word Hindustani seemed much more foreign to them. This was, I believe, felt by Gandhiji and he made it clear that he would like the southern writers to accept the word Hindustani but they would require some further contacts with us before they would gladly do so. Therefore, he said, for the present the uncouth phrase "Hindi *yani* Hindustani"[6] be used. His intention was to win over, as far as he could, these reluctant and suspicious writers from the south and the west to the ideal of Hindustani as a common language for India, and he took the most feasible course that was open to him. But in doing so he made it perfectly clear that he did not give in on any point of principle, for to him Hindi itself meant the use of both the scripts and both variations of the language. He made this clear subsequently, I am told, at the meeting of the Sahitya Sammelan.[7]

Thus in considering this Nagpur Parishad one must bear in mind that it was not a meeting of Hindi and Urdu writers from the Hindustani speaking areas but a gathering in which people from the south and the west predominated and their views had to be considered and respected.

6. Hindi, that is, Hindustani.
7. Held at Nagpur in April 1936.

This letter has grown most terribly long and I am afraid it is rather scrappy. I have dictated it in some haste and I may not have expressed myself as clearly as I might have done. But it will, at any rate, give you some idea of how I feel in this matter. If you so desire it, I shall further elucidate any further aspect of this question. But one thing more. This talk of Muslim culture and Hindu culture in this connection astonishes me. It betrays an amazing ignorance of modern conditions and modern forces. Perhaps you have read what I have written in my *Autobiography* on the subject. Previous to that I addressed a few questions to Sir Mohammad Iqbal on this subject of culture.[8] I have yet had no answer to my questions and I shall be glad if you or someone else will supply me with that answer. I feel that there is a tremendous amount of loose thinking on these subjects. This must not be encouraged.

There are various national cultures and many of these have been influenced by religions. But essentially they have remained national cultures. In the course of time each national culture has influenced its neighbouring cultures and thus we find today mixed cultures in most countries. India has a very powerful national culture but it has been influenced by equally powerful influences of other cultures. I refuse to consider these separate trends as Hindu or Muslim. They are essentially parts of our common heritage and today they are being influenced by cultural or other tendencies which flow from the scientific civilization of the West. All the king's horses and all the king's men cannot stop the development of the forces which tend to unity in India, politically, economically and culturally. Indeed this tendency is a world-wide one. We are developing, in spite of wars and conflicts, a world culture which will not crush or standardise national cultures, but which will connect them together with common links, and yet retain their infinite variety. In India our object must inevitably be the making of a united nation, politically and otherwise, with strong cultural bonds and at the same time with the fullest tolerance for the development of cultural variations. Indeed these variations must be encouraged and helped. We do not want a drab uniformity in India but a wide and varied life bubbling over with rich vitality. Beyond this we must work for the common world culture and world order, which is the only way out for the present disorder and chaos all over the world.

There is one matter which is worth noting, why is it that whenever such so-called cultural and similar questions are pushed to the front, political reactionaries take the lead in them? Is that not a significant

8 See *Selected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 468-474.

thing which ought to make us think hard? Out of political reaction there can never be cultural progress. If there is any person really keen on cultural growth in India he must also be keen on the political freedom of India and work for it to the best of his ability.

With apologies for the length of this letter,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. To Mahadeva Desai[1]

September 24, 1936

My dear Mahadeva,

You will remember that I told you and Bapu that the Urdu press was full of Hindi-Urdu controversy and there had been many attacks on Bapu. I have no time to keep in touch with the Urdu press. But I have found lately that there is a great deal of ferment on this question and many people are excited over it. I found a reference to this in some of the addresses presented to me by Muslim organisations. At Mahmud's suggestion I have written a letter to him on this subject. It has been hastily dictated. But still it may help a little in clearing the atmosphere. I enclose a copy for you. You can show it to Bapu when he has the time.

Very probably I shall spend a few hours at Wardha on the 3rd or 4th on my way to Madras.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J N. Correspondence, N.M M L.

19. To Sarat Chandra Bose[1]

September 26, 1936

Dear Comrade,

. . For the present I do not propose to reply to your letter[2] in any detail. Much of it is concerned with matters on which we all agree. We are all of one mind, I hope, about the communal decision and we want to get rid of it. Where a certain difference comes in is in the present tactics to be adopted to gain this end. What these tactics (in the best sense of the word) should be is a matter for careful consideration But it is clear that whatever action we take might be, it will fail of its purpose if it is a disunited action. That surely is the essence of working through an organisation.

I do not for the moment consider the merits of the question. These were considered at length at the Bombay Working Committee and A.I.C.C. meetings at which, unfortunately, you were not present. After full consideration, the statement was adopted practically unanimously by both the Committees. This statement seemed to be clear enough on all the points involved. Even if there was some doubt as to its interpretation, it was for all of us to consider it afresh and, if necessary, reinterpret it. You will agree with me, I hope, that those who drafted it and who ultimately passed it have a certain right to be heard in regard to its interpretation. I was therefore surprised to find that the Bengal P.C.C. council put a certain interpretation to it which, to my thinking and that of many of our colleagues, was wholly unjustified. I put it to you that a little consideration was due to us in the matter and we might have been told of your views and interpretation before any such decision was arrived at by your P.C.C. Curiously enough your P.C.C. has not yet sent our office a copy of the resolution passed on the 2nd September regarding the communal decision. We have received this, for the first time, together with your letter under reply. I had to proceed on the basis of newspaper reports which are not always reliable. I would beg of you to impress upon your office to be in closer touch with us and send their resolutions as soon as they are passed.

The real question before us, as I view it, is the stress we have to lay on this matter. We are drifting in India, as in the rest of the world, to a period of grave crisis and upheaval. We have to face this in a united and disciplined manner on the basis of independence. There is a grave danger in this foundation being weakened if we lay special

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-24(i)/1936, pp 143-145, N.M.M.L. Extracts
2. Dated 19 September 1936.

stress on any other issue including such an important issue as the communal decision. After all what does the demand for a change in this decision amount to? It means our bringing pressure on the British Government to alter it within the framework of the present constitution, certainly within the framework of British imperialism. That is a dangerous line to adopt, for inevitably it changes the emphasis from independence to something far short of it. Independence inevitably includes the ending of the communal decision with all its unhappy offshoots. An agitation for the removal of the communal decision does not and cannot include the wider political issue. Our national movement has passed beyond the stage of emphasizing, to any great extent, any issue other than independence. We may of course emphasize this issue as a part of our fight for independence. But we have to see that this emphasis does not tone down that real demand and does not weaken our anti-imperialist front It is this wider issue that I would like you and your committee to consider, and, in particular, I would like you to bear in mind continuously the great crisis that threatens us in the near future ...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. To Jagat Narain Lal[1]

Allahabad
30-9-36

Dear Babu Jagat Narain Lal,[2]
I have your letter of Sept. 24.[3] I am replying in some haste as I am pressed for time. The Congress has declared as clearly as possible that *it is wholly opposed to the communal decision and seeks to end it.*

1. *The Leader*, 31 October 1936.
2. (1896-1966), member of the Bihar Nationalist Party at this time; a freedom fighter; went to jail several times, general secretary, *All India Hindu Maha* sabha, 1925 35; parliamentary secretary, Bihar Government, 1937-39, deputy speaker, Bihar Assembly, 1952-57, Minister for Law, Cooperation and Animal Husbandry in Bihar, 1957 61.
3. Jagat Narain Lal had requested Jawaharlal for a "clear statement' on the attitude of the Congress to the Communal Award.

Indeed, it must end it if it thinks or acts in terms of independence. That being the policy of the Congress, whenever this subject comes up for consideration inside the legislature or outside it, the expression of opinion or other action to be taken must necessarily be in conformity with that policy. Thus ordinarily when a vote is to be given it must be against the communal decision. The Congress cannot take up a neutral or non-committal attitude on this matter.

At the same time it must be borne in mind that an organization cannot bind itself down to vote in a particular way without knowing the exact form of the proposition and the circumstances that exist at the time. The principle of trying to get rid of the communal decision will, of course, remain and will govern Congress policy. Thus Congress members might prefer to move an adjournment to a proposition in order to explain their attitude more clearly. If there is a big national or international crisis at the time this might also have to be taken into consideration.

As regards the question of leading an agitation against the Award, the Congress holds, firstly, that the primary consideration for us should always be the issue of independence. Everything should be judged from that point of view. Independence, of course, includes the removal of the Award and many other objectionable things. The Congress wishes to avoid any activity which diverts attention from the main issue to other matters. Such other matters which fit in with the larger issue can of course always be pressed. The Communal Award issue can, of course, fit in, in an agitational sense, with this main issue. When it so fits in, then there is no question that it should be pressed with all vigour. When owing to various factors it does not so fit in, a special agitation based on it will injure the larger cause by making it appear that we are really thinking in terms of changes within the framework of the new Act, that is, of British imperialism.

Secondly, the agitation would depend on the internal situation. It may be that an agitation, say, carried on in the main by Hindus leads to a rival agitation in favour of the Award carried on in the main by Muslims. This results in creating a situation in favour of the retention of the Award for such a conflict is inevitably exploited by the British Government against us. Therefore, the idea of a one-sided agitation is not favoured by the Congress. It wants to create an atmosphere on the basis of independence which will help in the solution of this problem. This need not mean that all the communal leaders of various groups must agree and embrace each other before anything can be done. That is a highly unlikely contingency. But it does mean that those who think in terms of political freedom and economic issues,

to whatever groups they may belong, will be able to see this communal decision in the true perspective and will join hands in fighting it.

At the present moment the Congress feels that for both the reasons mentioned above, it is undesirable to raise special attention in regard to the Award though, of course, our disapproval of and opposition to it must be proclaimed, as the Congress manifesto has done and as many of us have done as individuals. But it is quite possible that this may arise when the Congress feels that it should press this issue. In coming to a decision the two points mentioned above will have to be taken into consideration.

Thus the real question for consideration is not one of principle but one of the methods to be employed to give effect to that principle. The Congress feels that its line of approach to this question is likely to yield the best results. Another matter which perhaps separates the Congress from some others is the vital importance it attaches to independence.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

21. *To Syed Mahmud*[1]

5-10-36

My dear Mahmud,

I expected to see you before I left Allahabad but there was no sign of you. Among other things I wanted to talk to you about that letter I wrote to you on the Hindi-Urdu controversy.[2] I gave a copy of this to Ashraf[3] and he gave it to the Associated Press which apparently issued a summary to the press. I think the full letter should appear in some papers—*The Bombay Chronicle* etc. as well as Urdu papers. I think you ought also to write on the subject. The attitude that Abdul Haq[4] has taken up and his propaganda are highly misleading and offensive and I am surprised that you and others should quietly submit to

1 Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, item 17.
3. K.M. Ashraf (1903-1962); historian of medieval India, secretary, political and economic department of the A.I.C.C., 1936-38, expelled from the A.I.C.C. for communist sympathies in 1945.
4 (1870-1961), Urdu scholar and editor of *The Standard English Urdu Dictionary*.

this kind of thing. Is it our fate that always the reactionary Muslims should take the lead in everything and the nationalists should follow in their wake like dumb-driven cattle? That has been the case often enough in the past. Is it going to continue? I hope not. It is about time that on this issue as on others a little aggressive spirit should be displayed by those who call themselves nationalist and advanced. This talk of separate Muslim parties also must not be encouraged.

I write in haste in the moving train. At every station there are vast crowds.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

22. *Address to the Hindi Prachar Sabha, Madras*[1]

I have followed with great interest the work of the Hindi Prachar Sabha in Madras. I have also felt great joy in seeing the rapid progress made in the spread of Hindi in south India in such a short time. Such a great development is due to the people's passion for Hindi and also the efficiency of the *pracharaks*. People ask me why I do not devote attention to Hindi propaganda. The reason is not that I do not take an interest in it, but because I have concentrated all my efforts on politics. Several things have to be done in this country, and it is but right that some should specially devote their energies to the furtherance of the Hindi movement.

There is no conflict between Hindi and other Indian languages. Learning of the mother tongue and acquiring proficiency in it need not be subordinated to Hindi. Hindi is the common language in India, and is essential for inter provincial and national purposes. It is the language that would keep India together and unify the nation. Hindi is already spoken by two-thirds of the population in this country; and it is the duty of the rest to learn it. It is not difficult to learn three or four languages and all these languages can certainly co-exist. In Europe everyone has to learn at least three languages. Even in a small country like Switzerland three languages are spoken. The spread of Hindi would solve the language problem in the country.

1. 7 October 1936 From *The Hindu*, 7 October 1936

There is not much distinction between Hindi and Urdu. The script no doubt is different; but in essentials the language is the same. I consider the recent controversy in regard to this as needless and sedulously carried on by communalist leaders. After all, both Urdu and Hindi or Hindustani are Indian languages, and no community, Muslim or Hindu, can deem it as their own property. It is the common heritage of the country. Let us not quarrel over this matter. Personally I would prefer the term Hindustani to Hindi.

23. To S A. Brelvi[1]

Camp Madura
October 12, 1936

My dear Brelvi,
Your letter of the 5th has only just reached me.[2] I do not agree with you about the responsibility for the Hindi-Urdu controversy. You accuse the Parishad as well as some prominent Congressmen. I do not think either are fundamentally to blame, though the Parishad made a number of errors without any special evil intent. Will you tell me the names of Congressmen who have offended in this connection and the occasion when they have done so? It seems to me that the one person really responsible for this controversy is Abdul Haq. I have been astonished to learn the length to which he has gone. I have been still more astonished to find that nobody has effectively protested against this and not only falsehoods are allowed to pass but his offensive impertinences are allowed to pass unchallenged. I can only conclude that most people, in connection with this matter or similar matters, are in a pathological condition and unable to think and act clearly. I have no use for the political reactionaries posing as champions of this culture or that.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J N Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 5 October Brelvi wrote that the Hindi Urdu controversy would not have arisen if apart from the decisions of the Parishad some "prominent Congressmen" had not propagated Hindi instead of Hindustani.

24. On the Bombay Riots[1]

This renewal of communal rioting in Bombay[2] must force every sensitive and thinking individual in the land to consider this problem in its deeper aspects. It is sad to have deaths and broken heads but what is infinitely worse is the brutality and vulgarity of the whole thing. If this brutality is to be associated with the name of religion in India, then no decent person would like to associate himself with that religion. It is about time that all people, to whatever community or religious group they belong, made up their minds that they would, on no account, tolerate such brutality, inhumanity and violence by whatever group committed. We must have courage to condemn utterly even our own co-religionists. There has been far too much toleration in the past. Some pious sentiments have been expressed condemning individual acts but on the whole there has been a background almost of approval. It is because of this background that the evil elements in society exploit the name of religion. I suppose that the Bombay riots will ultimately end because such things cannot go on. But the memory of these will not end soon and if our men of religion do not attempt to eradicate this background of toleration for a brutal, indecent and vulgar hooliganism then indeed it is clear that our men of religion have had their day, and other decent elements in society will come to the front.

1. Interview to the press, Vijayawada, 19 October 1936. *The Hindu*, 20 October 1936.
2. There was communal rioting for five days in Bombay from 15 October on the question of construction of an assembly hall within the precincts of a temple near a mosque.

25. Address to the Arya Samajists[1]

It is up to the Arya Samajists to cooperate with the premier national institution, but the Congress cannot bind itself to any conditions.

While bigger issues are shelved in the background petty problems are being magnified to the detriment of the country's progress.

1. Bareilly, 24 November 1936. From *The Hindustan Times*, 25 November, 1936

ON THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

I wonder how people in India can worry about sectarian problems of civilization and culture when hunger and poverty are staring the nation in the face.[2]

It is an imperative necessity to relieve all this which vitally affect the country before people can apply themselves to any minor issues.

You should be straight and realistic and not waste time and energy over extraneous matters.

2. In their welcome address the Arya Samajists had asked Jawaharlal as to what safeguards the Congress would provide for protection of "Aryan civilization and culture".

26. To Habib-ur-Rahman[1]

25th November, 1936

Dear Maulana Saheb,[2]

I have just seen a statement of yours in *The National Call* in which you express your displeasure at my attitude to the Communal Award. You state that I have fallen a victim to the Hindu Mahasabha leaders. I shall be grateful if you will explain your statement a little more as I value your opinion and would like to know what your grievance is.

I am writing this in a train as I am touring at present and therefore I cannot say much. But I wish to point out to you some facts which may clear up the position somewhat. I expressed my opinion on the Communal Award first nearly two years ago, long before I had met or discussed this with anyone. I was in prison then and I wrote it in my *Autobiography*. This can be found in the published book. This was on the lines of my various subsequent statements on the subject, and the A.I.C.C. election manifesto issued two months ago from Bombay is in conformity with it. The recent resolution of the Bengal P.C.C. repeats the A.I.C.C. manifesto and contains nothing new.

The gist of this opinion is that the Communal Award is bad from the point of view of the unity of India and our struggle for freedom.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P 17/1936, p. 17, N.M.M.L.
2. (1892-1956); founder of the Ahrar Party, 1929, one of the strongest nationalist Muslim organisations in India, president, Majlis-e-Ahrar, Punjab, at this time.

This has little to do with the weightage of any special community or group. I am not much concerned with this. But I do view with apprehension the splitting up of India into separate communal groups and thus preventing the consideration of economic problems which affect all of us. I do not think that the Communal Award is compatible with independence. I think that it injures the Muslim masses as much as others. The only persons it really touches are a few upper class people. I think therefore that inevitably it will have to go if we are to consider the wider economic issues affecting the masses.

But I am equally sure that it should only go by an agreed settlement between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. Therefore any one-sided agitation against it is wrong and injurious. When an opportunity offers itself, an attempt should be made for this agreed settlement. I think that as economic issues are becoming more important, this agreed settlement will not be difficult.

This is, as I understand it, the Congress position. I shall be glad if you will kindly let me know where you differ from it.

Kindly send your reply to Allahabad which I hope to reach on December 2nd.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

27. To Habib-ur-Rahman[1]

13/12/1936

Dear Maulana Saheb,

I have received your letter of the 8th on my return from Bombay.[2]

I should like this question of the Communal Award to be cleared up for I find that the misunderstanding continues. I am not concerned for the moment with what the Hindu Mahasabha or the Nationalist Party say in regard to it. What I am concerned with is the Congress position.

The Congress position is that the Award is undemocratic and that it comes in the way of our independence. It splits up India into numerous

1. AICC. File No. P 17/1936, pp 13, NMML.
2. Habib-ur Rahman in his reply accused the Congress of supporting the Hindu Mahasabha, and blamed Jawaharlal for the change in the Congress attitude

parts. It prevents the proper consideration of the real problems of poverty and unemployment. It is not so much a question of Muslims getting this or not getting that. Quite apart from Hindus and Muslims, the communal decision gives a separate compartment to numerous other groups, such as Europeans, and this splitting up prevents national and economic growth. It is quite conceivable that Muslims should retain their special protection and yet the whole basis of the Award might be changed. For both Hindus and Muslims suffer under the Award.

This is the theoretical position of the Congress in regard to the Award. But believing this it also believes that a change should only be made by agreement between the main groups concerned. Any attempt to force a change against the wishes of a group will not solve the problem.

Thus in theory the Congress is completely opposed to the Award and whenever its opinion is asked it must give it. It is not and cannot be neutral in opinion. But it does not wish to take any step without agreement. If the matter is brought up in the Assembly and their opinion is asked, Congress members must inevitably give it against the Award but they will add that it must be changed by agreement. Any other position seems to me inconsistent for Hindus or Muslims or any who believe in independence.

The Ahrars stand for the independence of India. Believing this, can they approve of the Communal Award? They cannot but they must say that they object to change being forced without their agreement or consent. The Ahrars further, I trust, stand for the masses. If so, do they consider that the Award does anything at all for the Muslim masses?

I am interested in two things: political independence and the removal of the burdens from our masses. I am not interested in Hindus or Muslims as such. I am quite convinced that the Communal Award is a bar to both these things that I am interested in. If so, I cannot but condemn it and I should like to know how anyone who wants independence or the economic freedom of the masses can accept the Award. It applies only to a handful of the upper classes. Where do the masses and their problems come in?

I am sorry if some Muslims cannot think in terms of independence and the economic freedom of the masses. Would you have me give up independence or the masses because of that?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6

CIVIL LIBERTIES

1. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

26.3.36

My dear Subhas,

I returned from Delhi today and found your letter[2] of the 13th from Badgastein awaiting me here.

In Delhi we had of course learnt of the British consul's letter to you through a Reuter message. It had come as a shock to us all and I was so angry and upset that I spent a bad night. I suppose you know that there was an adjournment motion[3] in the Assembly which was passed by a majority of three votes—Jinnah and some of his colleagues remaining bravely neutral.

Your letter has put me in a difficulty. All my personal reaction to such orders and warnings is to go against them. And yet I was not quite prepared to advise you to return immediately. I should have liked to consult other people but there were none about and I knew you would be expecting a reply from me. So I cabled to you today to postpone your departure pending further developments. It is sad that you will not be present at the Lucknow Congress. I was so looking forward to it.

Obviously this kind of thing cannot be endured for long—perhaps we have endured it too long already. You cannot submit to indefinite exile. In such matters, however, your personal inclination must count for most. For the present we shall see how matters shape themselves at Lucknow and immediately after.

I enclose a few draft resolutions[4] which the Working Committee has recommended to the subjects committee. The Working Committee meets again on the 7th at Lucknow to consider further resolutions.

Love,

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

1. U.P. Government, Intelligence Department, Special Branch Records.
2. In his letter of 13 March 1936, Subhas Bose sought Jawaharlal's advice whether he should return to India against the warning of the government.
3. The motion to censure the government for its decision to arrest Subhas Bose was passed on 23 March 1936
4. Not printed.

2. Message to The Bombay Chronicle[1]

A charter of slavery is no law for the slave. The slave who would be free can only tear it up and fashion for himself a new charter of freedom. Between the two there is nothing in common, the gulf that separates them cannot be bridged.

1. Allahabad, 27 March 1936. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 12 April 1936.

3. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

Allahabad
30.3.36

My dear Subhas,
Four days ago I sent you a cable advising postponement of departure. But I was greatly worried about it and felt that I had done wrong. I consulted Gandhiji and other friends in Lucknow and therefore sent another cable[2] to you (one copy to Vienna, the other to Badgastein) suggesting your immediate return. I hope you received these cables I am anxiously waiting to have news of you. Probably you might be starting back soon and this letter might not reach you. But still I am taking my chance. There is just the odd possibility of your not having received my cables. I am quite clear in my own mind that you must come back now.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

1. U.P. Government, Intelligence Department, Special Branch Records
2. On 27 March Jawaharlal had cabled "Consulted colleagues We think your immediate return desirable."

4. On the Arrest of Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

The arrest of such persons makes us feel intensely about our present political state. Such a state of affairs cannot continue for long if repression of this kind is to continue. I had met Subhas Babu only two or three days before he started for India, and both of us, who had not been in touch with the Congress politics and situation here for a long time, discussed the political situation and possible methods of continuing the struggle.

After the letter of the Secretary of State informing him not to enter India if he valued his liberty was conveyed to him, Subhas Babu cabled to me asking my advice as to what he should do. At first I cabled to him asking him not to precipitate things by immediately starting for India, but later, after consultation with friends, I felt that it was essential that this indignation should not be pocketed. I again cabled him asking him to come back to India in spite of the order. Those cables possibly did not influence his decision to return as Subhas Babu had started before the cables could have reached him.

1. Lucknow, 9 April 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 10 April 1936. This speech was made at the subjects committee after a resolution on Bose's arrest had been passed.

5. All-India Protest Day[1]

It has been suggested that a special day should be fixed for the all-India expression of our indignation and resentment against the arrest and detention of Mr. Subhas Bose. I gladly commend this suggestion to all Congressmen and others, and fix Sunday, May 10, for this purpose, when public meetings should be held all over the country, and resolutions passed on Mr. Subhas Bose's arrest conveying the greetings of the people to our comrade.

Subhas Babu's arrest is one of the latest and most significant instances of the widespread and intensive suppression of civil liberties in India. It is desirable, therefore, that this wider aspect is also stressed, and the

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 22 April 1936. *The Hindu*, 23 April 1936.

resolution passed by the Lucknow Congress on the suppression of civil liberties should be placed before the public and endorsed by them at all public meetings.

It will be remembered that the question of protecting civil liberty is one that affects all Indians, whatever political or other party or group that they might belong to or whether they belong to none. It is not a matter that affects Congressmen only. Therefore, on this question, we should invite the cooperation of all who believe in civil liberty and endeavour to build up a joint front on this issue.

6. Circular on Civil Liberties[1]

I am taking the liberty of addressing you on the subject of the suppression of civil liberties in India. This suppression has been progressively getting more widespread and intensive and has now become the normal feature of the administration. As has been pointed out, at no time since the revolt of 1857 have civil liberties in India been suppressed to the extent they are today. It is manifest that real political life, and even social and personal life, are very seriously interfered with by this suppression. Various political and other organisations have protested against this from time to time and it would be desirable for them to cooperate on this issue, even though they might differ on others, so that a joint fight might be put up on this vital question.

The existence of civil liberties is generally considered to be essential for the development of every kind of national activity—political, cultural, social and economic. With their suppression all these activities suffer. In countries with a democratic background the greatest value is therefore attached to civil liberty and people of the most diverse and mutually hostile opinions join together in a common attempt to protect this foundation of all liberty and activity. They consider it their duty to resist even the suppression of any opinion or activity to which they are personally opposed, for once the principle of such suppression is admitted it can be, and frequently has been, extended to all manner of other activities. In America, England and France powerful civil liberties unions, of a purely non party character, have been established to resist all such encroachments and their activities have borne substantial

1. Allahabad, 22 April 1936. *The Hindu*, 28 April 1936 This was addressed to prominent individuals of all parties and some editors of newspapers

fruit. In India the necessity for such a joint effort embracing all groups and individuals, who believe in civil liberties, is obviously even more necessary than elsewhere.

It is proposed, therefore, to start an Indian civil liberties union, the sole function of which will be the protection of civil liberties in all departments of national activity. It should be open to all individuals who believe in this fundamental proposition and it should avoid any entanglement of any other political or economic issues. Such a union could have a national council with a wholetime secretary, as well as local committees wherever possible. The first object of this union would be to collect data and give publicity to it. Other activities such as the organisation of public opinion to resist all encroachments on civil liberties would follow.

I am addressing this letter to some friends who are not connected with the Congress organisation and I trust that it will be possible to *build up, with their help and cooperation, a non party and non-sectarian* union of the kind I have outlined above. The exact form that such a union might take and its future activities would naturally depend on the views of those interested in this subject who join it.

I hope that I may count on your cooperation in this important national work. Politicians and those who dabble in public work are naturally interested in this; equally so are educationists, lawyers and professional men, authors and journalists, printers and publishers, social reformers and those who work for the betterment of the peasantry and the industrial workers.

Could you kindly favour me with your views on this subject?

Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To Ronald Kidd[1]

Allahabad
April 22, 1936

Dear Mr. Kidd,[2]
I shall be obliged to you if you could kindly send me by air mail the constitution and rules of your National Council for Civil Liberties.

1. *AICC File No FD 9/1936-37, p 81, NMML.*
2. Secretary, National Council for Civil Liberties, London.

We are trying to form a similar council for India and it will help us to have your rules for reference.

When I was in London you will remember that we discussed the possibility of having some kind of a conference in London under your auspices and in collaboration with other organisations on Indian civil liberties. I wonder if this idea has at all taken shape. The position here in India in regard to civil liberties continues to be the same, that is to say, all the repressive apparatus is in full play. We would welcome any activity on your behalf to bring this home to the British public.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. To Tej Bahadur Sapru[1]

Allahabad
May 9, 1936

My dear Tej Bahadurji,

Thank you for your letter of the 1st May which I have read carefully.

Your objections to joining the proposed civil liberties union are two: 1. It would be easier to get the restrictions on civil liberties removed if the Congress, as well as possibly some others, changed their methods, and 2. That though a non party union is theoretically possible there is bound to be conflict in the approach to certain questions.

As regards I, it is obvious that questions of civil liberties only arise when there is a conflict between the public, or certain sections of it, and the executive government. If there was an acquiescence in, or a submission after verbal protest to, the policy and activities of a government, there would be little question of suppressing civil liberties. Only when the opposition to the government becomes felt by that government does the tendency to suppress it take shape. Every government tends to resent forcible criticism and opposition, and a democracy can only function properly if public opinion constantly checks government and prevents it from becoming too autocratic. In India where there

1. J N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. The letter was later published on 26 May

is no democracy, the government is essentially autocratic and the need for preventing it from indulging in the worst excesses is thus all the greater. Obviously this does not and must not mean approval of the methods of any political party. Nor does it mean that the Congress or any group should be allowed by government to carry on revolutionary activities or civil disobedience without check or hindrance. But there are certain fundamental principles governing civil liberties which apply whatever the activities of political parties might be, and it has been possible in other countries for the most diverse and mutually hostile groups to combine together for the defence of these principles.

Those who believe that direct action is a necessary and desirable method of political activity are likely to adhere to it. Are we then to conclude that the government is justified not merely in meeting and trying to suppress in the ordinary way this direct action when it takes place, but also to carry on in the way it has been doing during the past few years? If that is the view taken, then that is certainly opposed to the usual conceptions of civil liberty.

Your second point certainly has force though I think it should be possible for us, differ as we might, to cooperate together in this field. The activities of the civil liberties union would necessarily be entirely legal and constitutional in the narrow sense of the term. It might incur the displeasure of government but it would not come into conflict with it.

The real difficulty seems to be a fear that some of us in the Congress might put others in a false position by something that we might do. May I suggest a way out? Why not have a civil liberties union of non-Congressmen? Or there might be two unions cooperating with each other but not committing each other in any way. I can assure you that I have no desire to take advantage of anyone else or to do anything that would put him in a false position. I am only anxious that something should be done to check the unbridled autocracy of the government.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. Subhas Day[1]

I was in Europe when the new Indian constitution was enacted and many European friends pressed me to express my opinion. I told them always that so long as India was strangled and even ordinary civil liberties of her sons were ruthlessly suppressed, it was sheer nonsense and absurd to talk on the new constitution when there was no liberty to speak out one's mind even. At present the government is carrying on an unfair fight, as it continues those laws which were promulgated when the satyagraha fight was on. No doubt our country has enough brave hearts who will continue the fight for gaining independence. But the government has failed in its duty as a government. At present the government fears that if the people are allowed to enjoy civil liberties they will become too strong and perhaps shake off the foreign domination. Civil liberties of the people are their fundamental right. In European countries people consider it their unquestioned right for protecting which they fought in the past and sacrificed thousands of lives at its altar. People should be allowed to express their opinion by speech or writing. If civil liberties are suppressed a nation loses all vitality and becomes impotent for anything substantial.

The government some time back prohibited even a condolence meeting under the initiative of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, which was an all parties meeting, and in Bengal in many parts even petty details of everyday life are controlled in the name of law and order. Young children of fourteen and fifteen are rotting in jails without even a sham trial. Living in jail is not pleasant to anybody. The energy and activities of these young people could have been utilised better if there was proper discharge of responsibility by the government What is at present done in Bengal is sure of being extended to other parts of the country if the people do not stand up for protecting their rights.

The Englishman is very honest in things which are likely to bring him profit. While in England, some of them tried to impress upon me the necessity for the Congress to cooperate with the British. I presented the viewpoint specially of the suppression of our bare civil liberties. I frankly told them there and I repeat the same now, that in the present circumstances there cannot be any talk of cooperation. We are a tolerant people and are prepared to cooperate with anybody. But such talks

1 Allahabad, 10 May 1936 From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 12 May 1936

are nonsense so long as there is strangling of our civil liberties. We cannot cooperate with British imperialism which is quite different from Englishmen for whom I have great regard and love. British imperialism is falling and in course of time will entirely disappear.

Subhas Bose's arrest is not only a question of denying one of our beloved leaders his liberties but involves the question of principle and every patriotic Indian, no matter to what political party he belongs, should combine together for fighting this growing menace and check the government's high handedness and protect our civil liberties.

10. On the Proposed Civil Liberties Union[1]

I had not intended issuing any further statement just yet on the proposed civil liberties union as I was waiting for replies from all those persons to whom I had sent my circular letter. A large number of replies have already reached me, but some still remain. I am also in correspondence with the American Civil Liberties Union[2] and the British National Union of Civil Liberties. On receipt of this information I hope to communicate again with those to whom I had previously addressed my letters as well as to issue a statement in the press. That fuller statement will be issued later. But as I find some erroneous references in the press I am compelled to correct them. One such statement refers to the "futile replies" which I am supposed to have received from Maulvi Shafi Daudi[3] and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. This is entirely wrong. Maulvi Shafi Daudi has already sent his letter to the press and so I have

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 12 May 1936 *The Leader*, 14 May 1936
2. The American Civil Liberties Union was founded in 1920 "to champion the right of all people, regardless of race, colour, place of birth, position, income, political opinions or religious beliefs, to the opportunity of free expression, inquiry and assembly and of fair trial before the law."
3. Maulana Shafi Daudi, the working secretary of the All India Muslim Conference, wrote to Jawaharlal, "The malady in us is the lust of suppressing the liberty of our own kith and kin (that of minorities by the majorities). If by your powerful advocacy your countrymen are not assured of their complete liberty the energy of the nation cannot be harnessed for fighting against government."

nothing further to say about it, especially as it largely concerns itself with matters which bear no relation to the question of civil liberties. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's letter is one of cordial appreciation of the project. He writes: "I heartily agree with you on the necessity and importance of forming such a union, and I will cooperate with you in this matter to the fullest extent I can." I have received many such letters. Some others, however, while agreeing entirely with the object of the civil liberties union, have pointed out certain difficulties in the way of approach to the subject by people of different political persuasions. That consideration cannot certainly be ignored. But I feel that it should be possible here, as it has been possible in other countries, for people differing widely on objects and methods in the political sphere to combine together on this narrower but none the less basic issue on which they agree. That will mean no commitment on other issues and, though there may be different ways of looking at them, if there is a desire to pull together a measure of success should certainly follow.

Such a union would have a national council which would lay down the broad policy to be pursued. It should also have a central office in charge of a competent person who would collect data about the suppression of civil liberties and give publicity to it as objectively as possible. Much of the work, however, of the union should fall on local committees in the larger towns. The membership of the union is not meant to be a mass membership, but it should be open to any person who subscribes to its object of the protection of all civil liberties and pays a certain annual subscription which might be fixed at Re. 1. Local work will be done under the direction of the local committees and subject to the general policy of the union. I would suggest that friends interested in this project might ask others who are also interested to give their names for such local committees in the larger towns. Ultimately a central council itself might be elected by these local committees. But to begin with it may be necessary to have a temporary central council functioning from above. I would suggest, therefore, specially to friends in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Delhi, Lahore, Patna, Lucknow, Allahabad, Karachi, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Poona and some of the other larger towns to form such provisional local committees.

11. To T. C. Goswami[1]

Allahabad
May 25, 1936

My dear Tulsi,
Forgive me for the delay in answering your letter. As you know I have been away.

Thank you for what you have said about my *Autobiography*. It was as frank and as truthful of my inner feeling as I could make it. I doubt if I could have written it outside prison. I am glad to find that it is making people think a little.

You must have seen the reaction of our Liberal friends to the proposal for a civil liberties union. It is quite extraordinary how narrow-minded they have become. But I do think that we should do something in this matter in spite of these wise people who move so cautiously. I hope you will take some steps in this matter in Calcutta.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

12. To the Editor, The Leader[1]

Mussoorie
16 June 1936

Sir,
In your issue dated June 15, 1936 you refer to the "perverse meaning" which I have attached to certain statements of Liberal leaders in regard to civil liberties.[2] May I venture to suggest that even perversity has a claim sometimes to be understood? Some Liberal leaders (not all)

1. *The Leader*, 24 June 1936.
2. The editorial argued that the Liberals were against the proposed civil liberties union because it would be a tool in the hands of the Congress and Jawaharlal was attaching a perverse meaning to this by claiming that the Liberals favoured repression.

13. Creation of the Civil Liberties Union[1]

Allahabad
July 8, 1936

Dear Friend,

Some weeks ago I addressed a letter to a number of leading men and women in the country on the subject of the formation of an Indian civil liberties union. Most of the answers I received welcomed the proposal; some wanted further information on the subject before they could give their final answer; a few expressed their inability to join the proposed union. Since then the subject has been frequently discussed in the press and in some centres provisional committees have already been formed. It is apparent that the need for a civil liberties union is widely felt and the time has come to give shape and expression to this desire.

In consultation with a number of friends a provisional constitution has been drafted. I enclose a copy of this together with an explanatory note.[2] This constitution has also been published in the newspapers for public information. The present draft is not the final one. Suggestions for any changes can be sent to me and they will be carefully considered and, where possible, incorporated. But I trust that you will be able to express your general agreement with this provisional constitution as it is hardly possible, at this stage, to refer every suggestion for change to all the people interested in the scheme. When the union has definitely come into existence and is functioning the whole constitution can be revised, if this is considered necessary. You will notice that it is proposed to have a national council of about a hundred members. There is no virtue in this number and, if so desired, the number can be increased. The object is to make the council representative of various parts of India and of various shades of thought. We hope to fix upon a number of foundation members of the council to begin with. Inevitably many desirable and worthwhile people may be left out. These can be added after further consultation.

May I have your permission to include your name in the list of the foundation members of the national council?

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, File No. VI/36, Item No. 17, National Archives of India.
2. Not printed.

I should also like to know if you agree generally with the provisional constitution attached, and also to the proposal that Mrs. Sarojini Naidu should be the president of the union.

An early answer will be gratefully appreciated.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To Rabindranath Tagore[1]

Camp Larkana
21 July 1936

Dear Gurudeva,

Some time back I sent you this provisional constitution of the civil liberties union. I trust that the constitution framed meets with your general approval. I have been away from Allahabad and do not know if any answer has come from you.

I have been long hesitating in addressing you in this connection separately. I would be very happy if you would agree to be the honorary president of this union.[2] I had not suggested this before as I did not wish to add, in any way, to your burdens. But an honorary work of this kind would in no way put any burden on you and it would add to the prestige of our union very greatly. There is obviously no other person in India who could better fill that place. As you know some of us have suggested Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's name for the presidentship or chairmanship of the national council. The idea is that she could be the active head of the council, looking after its general direction, and that you would be the honorary head of the whole organisation. We do not want it to be in any way a Congress organisation or to be political in any narrow sense of the word. Fortunately many prominent non-Congressmen and some people who are not politically inclined are agreeing to join the union. This will give it a broad basis. But with you at the head this would be still more assured. There is a general consensus of opinion on this subject. I do hope that you will be good enough to agree.

1. Visvabharati Papers, Santiniketan.
2. Rabindranath Tagore agreed to be the honorary president.

Please do not trouble to write back yourself. Anil Chanda could drop me a line. My address till the 27th will be Hyderabad (Sind); up to the 1st August: Bradlaugh Hall, Lahore; and after that Allahabad.
With regards,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

15. To Jal Naoroji[1]

Camp Shikarpur
July 23, 1936

My dear Jal,
Your letter missed me in Allahabad and has only just reached me here. This touring about is a very tiring process, even more so mentally than physically. I have been at it this time now for a week and I have still another 12 days to go. It seems a terribly long time.

I am glad that you have realised that the financial condition of Congress people is bad. Division of labour has not progressed very far in this country and those who take to politics very seriously have not only to work on a variety of fronts but have also to provide as far as they can the hard cash for the purpose. That is a difficult operation, but it is far pleasanter than to ask others for money.

It is a standing wonder to me how a person will gladly spend a hundred rupees or more in entertaining me, or many thousands of rupees in some wretched marriage function or other, and yet be averse to giving a small donation for public work. Unto those that have more shall be given. And so three cheers for Sir Cowasji and his kind.[2]

As for the Civil Liberties Union I am trying to get Rabindranath Tagore to agree to becoming honorary president of the whole organization. Sarojini would continue as president or chairman of the National Council. Of course real work cannot be expected from either

1. JN. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his presidential address to the Bombay Provincial Liberal Conference at Sholapur on 18 July 1936, Sir Cowasji Jehangir reiterated that to Jawaharlal all capitalists were reactionaries. His one ambition was to rouse the peasantry and the masses against the capitalists but how could he deprive great landlords of their lands and the capitalists of their wealth and the people as a whole of their religion under a free and democratic system of government?

of them. The man in charge of the work must be a wholetime paid secretary of some position and competence. I have no such person in view yet though I have thought vaguely about one or two.

Probably I shall reach Bombay on the 18th. I hope I shall be fresher then than I feel now. I am quite fit and even my throat has improved. I have a strong inclination to go to bed for a few days. It is entirely a psychological reaction to daily meetings, processions etc.

We had an interesting exhibition of the functioning of our press in Karachi. There is a paper there called the *Sind Observer*, owned by a Parsi businessman.[3] This paper is not favourable to the Congress generally though it has been giving Congress news. Shortly before my arrival there the proprietor issued directions to the editor, a Madrasi,[4] to give no news at all of the functions with which I was connected or of the Indian States' People's Conference or of the Socialist Conference. He was good enough to add that if the Congress people wanted any news to be published they should pay at advertisement rates for them. But as for the States Conference and the Socialist Conference news were not to be printed even as advertisement. The editor who is by no means an extreme type jibbed at this and gave news. He was forthwith fired and his editorial subordinates continued merrily to carry on under the new dispensation. The editor is being charged personally at advertisement rates for the Congress and other news that he gave.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Cowasjee Fakirjee was the proprietor of the *Sind Observer*.
4. K. Punnaiah, an Andhra journalist, was editor of the *Sind Observer*.

15. To K. Punnaiah[1]

Camp Shikarpur
July 23, 1936

Dear Mr. Punnaiah,
I have seen copies of the correspondence which you sent to Mr. Jamandas.[2] There seems to be some omission in it but on the whole

1. AICC File No G-2/1936, p. 31, NMML.
2. Mount has omitted from the *Sind Observer*.

it is fairly complete. But one thing I do not know, and I should like to know that before I take any further step in the matter. The only step that I can take is to issue a statement and I propose to do that as soon as I hear from you.[3]

I want to know what you are going to do in the matter. That is to say, whether you are giving publicity to this correspondence, whether you are addressing the All India Journalists' Association on the subject and, if so, on what lines? I think that you should certainly give publicity to the correspondence yourself. If you are issuing any statement kindly send me a copy to Hyderabad where I hope to reach on the 27th.

I should also like to know if the rest of the editorial staff of the *Sind Observer* have decided to carry on the paper and with the proprietors under these new conditions. It seems to me an extraordinary thing for any journalist to do, but then many of our journalists are of a peculiar kind. I am sure that most Indian papers would take up the matter and give full publicity to it. You might also write personal letters to the editors of some of the leading papers like *The Bombay Chronicle*, *The Hindu*, the Calcutta papers, the Delhi papers, the Lahore papers etc.

If I hear from you at Hyderabad, as I hope to do, I shall issue a statement to the press then.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. See the following item.

17. On the Lot of Indian Journalists[1]

The lot of a journalist is a hard one in India. He has to face a battery of formidable press laws, which demand securities and threaten their confiscations as well as the confiscation of the entire press. He has to live in constant dread of the law of sedition and other laws, which might land him in prison.

1. Statement to the press, Hyderabad, 27 July 1936. *The Hindustan Times*, 28 July 1936.

He has, particularly in Bengal, to face the day to day pressure backed by veiled or unveiled threats of coercive action of the press censor. *It is even loudly whispered that this gentle pressure of the press censor* has led important nationalist newspapers to give in their editorial columns articles, which had been written in the press censor's office. Some other newspapers, which pose as being independent, look for inspiration to this office.

The lot of the Indian journalist is indeed a hard one and worse even than the penalties imposed upon him. He is in constant dread of what might happen. For these dangers and difficulties, the government is responsible but a very glaring example of another danger has recently come before the public. To some extent, this has existed but the fate of the editor of the *Sind Observer* has thrown a searchlight on these happenings behind the scenes.

The *Sind Observer* has never been a pro-Congress organ. It is essentially moderate and has supported a communal party. Its old editor, Mr. Punniab, has frequently criticised me. He has gone on deputation to the Governor offering his whole hearted cooperation. Thus there is little in common between my politics and his but this is not a matter of politics but of the most elementary rights of journalists. *Outside interference with the expression of news is bad enough* but far more dangerous is the attitude and attempts to suppress the news.

No journalist, who has even an inkling of respect for his profession or of the service he owes to the public, can ever tolerate this deliberate misleading of the public by suppression of news on the eve of my arrival in Karachi Mr. Punniah was directed in writing by the proprietor of the *Sind Observer*, who is an Indian, to refrain from giving certain news and reports in the paper.

Some of these directions are interesting—the extracts from the civic address to the President of the Congress and a few extracts from the President's reply shall be published and not the full text.

That no verbatim report of the proceedings of any meetings or interviews or speeches connected with the visit of the President of the Congress shall be published, that no photographs of anyone or gathering connected with the Congress shall appear, no report whatsoever shall be published of the proceedings of any of the meetings, interviews or of speeches nor any photographs shall appear in connection with the Indian States' People's Conference and even if these bodies or any persons desire to pay for the same, no report shall be given of the activities of the Parsi Rajkutiya Sabha of Karachi or any announcement of their meetings or of any meetings under their auspices shall be published even on payment.

Mr. Punniah refused to carry out the directions and gave the news of these events, at the same time expressing his disagreement with my views. He was forthwith dismissed from his post by the proprietor of the paper and was called upon to pay for these insertions at advertisement rates.

This seems to me a monstrous interference with an editor's discretion and an insult to the public.

I am glad that the public has reacted strongly to this insult.[2] I must repeat that this is not a matter of views but of the news and it cuts at the very root of everything that a newspaper stands for; I disagree entirely with Mr. Punniah in his views and policy but I must stand up for the fundamental privileges of the journalists and the public.

I trust that the Journalists' Association will take this matter in hand. Such an encroachment of their rights cannot be allowed to go unchallenged and any journalist, who submits to it, is not worthy of his responsible profession.

2. The Karachi Municipal Corporation adjourned on 21 July 1936 for five minutes as a protest against the dismissal of Punniah; the Sind Journalists Association passed a resolution congratulating Punniah for upholding the honour of the profession, and at a public meeting of the citizens of Karachi on 21 July 1936 the conduct of the board of directors was condemned and a boycott of the *Sind Observer* advocated.

18. Inauguration of the Civil Liberties Union at Bombay[1]

This meeting has been called with a definite purpose. It is not an occasion when I can say all I feel about the political and economic situation in the country.

About three months ago the idea of starting an Indian civil liberties union was mooted. Since then there have been discussions both among the political and other leaders in the country as also in the newspapers. India is a vast country having people holding various views on questions and it was certainly not an easy problem to start a civil liberties union. There was no doubt that there was a great necessity for the starting of such an organisation. But it was felt that rather

1. 24 August 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 25 August 1936.

than doing things in a hurry it should take its own time so that the organisation could be started on a broad basis and it could be a sound and solid structure.

The constitution of the Indian Civil Liberties Union, which has been drafted on the lines of the Civil Liberties Union of America and the National Civil Liberties Union of Great Britain, has been drafted in a manner which would help a great deal in the future development of the organisation. As soon as the constitution is adopted—as a matter of fact it has been adopted—the official organisation will come into existence. Before long, I am sure, similar organisations will be started all over the country. I consider the fight against the suppression of civil liberties as part of the fight for independence. It is essential that people holding different political views should come on a common platform wherever possible and work for a common cause. The Congress is the largest organisation in the country. The Congress has been fighting for the civil liberties of Indians. But there are several others who, though not subscribing to the Congress policy and programme, hold as strong views on the question of suppression of civil liberties. These two can come together and work together on this common question. By such sort of cooperation on common questions, one can slowly expect to have a joint front on several questions.

Some people do not want to join the Civil Liberties Union as they are non political men. I do not know as to how any person in a slave country can call himself a non politically minded person. One may not be interested in politics, one may be an artist or an author or a painter, but yet as long as his country is under foreign domination, he is bound to be politically-minded. I value the friendship of some of those who are not in the political field because it gives me a lot of relief for being able to be away for some time from the political variety. Supposing civil disobedience is started, those who take part in the movement get into the jails, then it would be the duty of those who remain outside to fight against the suppression of civil liberties.

The executive of the National Council of the Indian Civil Liberties Union will lay down the general policy on which the Union will work. The details of work will, of course, fall on the local committees. The Union is not meant to be a mass organisation, though there is no restriction on anyone becoming a member. It will keep in touch with the suppression of civil liberties in the provinces, collect facts and publish them, keep in touch with the foreign unions and get their help and sympathy. It will get into touch with those organisations and through them with world opinion. The British Government cares a great deal about world opinion. I hope that the Bombay Union will be a

model union, an example to be followed by the other unions to be started in the country. The honorary president of the Indian Union is Dr. Rabindranath Tagore and it is not possible to get a better man than he for this post. He is respected very greatly all the world over and is an international personality. The actual chairman is Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and it is an extraordinarily desirable choice.

Out of the 150 letters inviting people to become members of the General Council, I have received very few refusals. Hardly 10 or so have declined to be members. Of them there is Gandhiji whose refusal is hardly a refusal because he has blessed the organisation, but has said that since he is out of politics he would not like to be in the Council. Similarly some of the members of the Congress Working Committee have stated that it is necessary to bring non-Congressmen in. There is no use in the same people who have been fighting for civil liberties being there. Whenever their help is wanted it will be gladly given.

Some people do not want to join the Union for one reason or other. When one suspects the motives of the people who propose to start a civil liberties union, I feel that there is nothing that can be said about it. People may disagree on several matters in politics or otherwise, but they can easily agree on fighting for their civil liberties. Someone has said that the starting of the Civil Liberties Union is the second string to the Congress bow.[2] I told him that the Congress bow was a hefty bow and had many strings to it and many more would be added to it. To suspect our motives is unfair. Education is worth nothing without civil liberty. There are people who mix up the Civil Liberties Union with several things and confuse the matter. A big leader refused to join the Civil Liberties Union because I attacked him or his group in my *Autobiography*. I for one welcome criticism; I am in favour of the clearest and strongest criticism of views, if the critics disagree with them. It should, however, be without malice and it should not be personal. But strong criticism of one's views should not be taken as a personal attack. One can strongly criticise the views of a certain person and yet be one of his best friends. For a healthy and democratic growth of public life it is very essential that there should be strong and open criticism.

There is a high standard of public life in India, for which Mahatma Gandhi is responsible to a very great extent. The public life in India is unlike the public life in the West. When the country is engaged in very big things, it would not do to get offended because one's views are

2. N.C. Kelkar.

criticised. I want to clear a misunderstanding about the book I have written. I wrote what I felt. I did not have in view personalities at all. I was concerned with ideals and principles. The question of civil liberty arises not when the people of a country obediently carry on the orders of the government. It arises only when there is a conflict between the people and the executive authority. The idea of civil liberty is to have the right to oppose the government.

19. On the Role of the Press[1]

Journalism and journalists play a very important part in the public life in the modern world. In India there is the possibility of suppression of facts either by the government or by private proprietors or at the dictates of advertisers. While I do not mind the newspapers giving prominence to certain type of news in accordance with their policy, I am against suppression of news as it would deprive the public of the only means of forming a correct judgment on world events.

What is important is that the people should get correct and adequate information and they must be left to form their judgment, though the press, of course, helps in the formation of public opinion. In Germany and Italy the press is not free and publishes what the nazi and fascist rulers want to publish. In fact the Germans in Germany do not, through their newspapers, know much of what is happening in their own country and derive information on these matters from the foreign papers that are allowed entry. I express my admiration for the British press. Even in England, papers deliberately suppress certain type of news, although the British Government does not overtly interfere with the discretion of the newspapers in publishing news. But the British Foreign Office has its own dignified ways of influencing newspapers which generally accept its suggestions. So far as India is concerned the British press is hardly reliable. It does not publish the truth about India, except in rare cases. In India I hope this tendency of suppressing news that vested interests do not like will not grow.

1. Reply to an address of welcome from the journalists of Bombay, 24 August 1936
From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 25 August 1936

Keep that power in your hands. If that goes then your importance also goes.

Mr. Brelvi in his address has criticised the treatment meted out to journalists by the politicians. Nobody underestimates the importance of the press. We all recognise its need and importance in the modern world and also realise that it can make or mar reputations and, therefore, it is not surprising that human nature being what it is, the politicians "make love to the press". But there are occasions and places where newspapermen are not welcome.

20. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

September 3, 1936

My dear Krishna,

...About civil liberties you seem to be under some misapprehension. There is or can be no question of our affiliating the Indian Civil Liberties Union to the English one. As a matter of fact this is not organisationally possible as the British Union is a national union which cannot even affiliate a similar union in the Irish Free State. But the Indian Union proposes to develop close contacts with all civil liberties unions abroad. I cannot say what exactly the Indian Union will do as the Council which will control it is a mixed and varied one. We have definitely tried to include in it all manner of people. On this question our idea was and is to build up in India the widest possible front.

It is not possible for me to judge of the right line of action in regard to this matter in England. You are in a better position to judge. But it seems to me that there can be no harm in close cooperation between you and the British Union. We do not expect much from the latter but my own tendency is to err on the side of inclusion rather than on exclusion. There may be risks in this. I would take them....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

21. To Mulk Raj Anand[1]

September 3, 1936

Dear Anand,[2]
Thank you for your letter. Your cable also reached me but it took a long time in doing so as I was travelling. There was no point in my answering it then as you must have received by that time the note[3] I sent you on civil liberties through Lohia.[4]

I am glad you are pushing the civil liberties question through various organisations. I think special stress should be laid on the press laws, the censorship, the banning of books and the stopping of even unbanned books by the Sea Customs Act.

I do not know if you have issued a manifesto as mentioned in your letter.[5] Ordinarily I could have no objection to giving you authority to add my name, but I occupy a peculiar position at present and every word I say is keenly examined and sometimes variously interpreted. Something that may be wholly suitable in England may not quite fit in in India. I would therefore prefer to see anything to which my name is to be attached.

I have seen the first number of the *New India Literature*. It is an interesting and attractive collection.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J.N. Correspondence, NMML.
2 (b. 1905); author of *Coolie*, *Untouchable* and other novels and short stories in English, editor of *Marg* magazine.
3 In his letter of 18 July 1936, Anand requested Jawaharlal for a note on the Civil Liberties Union which could be published in the *Left Review*. The note is not available.
4 Ram Manohar Lohia (1910-1967), joined the Congress Socialist Party in 1934, secretary of the foreign department of the A.I.C.C., 1936-38; left the Congress in 1948, general secretary, Praja Socialist Party, 1953-54, one of the founders of the Socialist Party; member, Lok Sabha, 1963-67, author of several books including *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism*.
5. A manifesto was to be issued in the *Left Review* against the censorship laws in India.

22. Congressmen and Free Speech[1]

Elections do not bring out human nature at its best, and election meetings even in that home of the "mother of parliaments", England, have gained an unpleasant notoriety. But why should we copy the West in this matter? The recent incident in Poona, when Sir Cowasji Jehangir was prevented from speaking,[2] reminded me forcibly of election meetings in England when an unpopular speaker attacks a popular cause. I regret greatly that he was so prevented for this can only result in a diversion of public interest from the principles and policies for which the Congress or the Liberal Party stands to the incident itself. It will set a bad precedent, and personalities will be involved when principles must occupy the forefront. Congressmen stand for certain principles and they have given proof of their earnest adherence to them at the cost of tremendous suffering. We hold that the liberal policy has no fundamental principles and that it is based on trivial matters of the moment and has no real comprehension of the problems of India and the world. The great majority of the people of the country have willingly accepted our viewpoint, for ours is an unassailable position from the points of view of both national honour and public policy. Therefore we must concentrate on these principles and prevent the argument from degenerating to one of personalities. We must give the fullest opportunity to those who disagree with us to give expression to their views, for only thus can we expose the hollowness of their policy. Else they will take refuge in argument over trivial details and sidetrack the main issue. We must adhere to the democratic tradition.

These remarks of mine have a wide application. In regard to the particular incident at Poona, I must say that I see nothing to object to in Sir Cowasji calling me "a spoilt child of the Congress". There is truth in that remark for my comrades of the Congress and the country generally have indeed done everything to spoil me by the excessive affection and goodwill that they have showered on me. I am human enough to react to this and if I behave occasionally like a spoilt child,

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 4 September 1936. *The Leader*, 6 September 1936
2. He was prevented from addressing an election meeting arranged by the Liberals at Poona on 29 August 1936

when they advanced such arguments, had their tongues in their cheeks. It is really necessary for us, I feel, if we are preparing for a democratic form of government, or for that matter any form of government, and for political, cultural, economic, social or moral development, to realise that civil liberty is essential. You cannot have individual or national growth without a measure of civil liberty for individuals to express their thoughts and ideas, and to meet together and to write in newspapers.

Remember this also, that apart from the positive acts of suppression of civil liberty, far more dangerous is the atmosphere of fear that is created, which prevents people from saying or writing in accordance with their wishes. Take the press in India, especially the press in Bengal, which had to function during the last few years with all manner of threats that have been issued alongside of the enormous amount of press laws. You forget this continuous background, this deadly background of the shadow of the press laws, the deadly shadow of the censorship coming before the poor manager or editor. I do not know how an editor can function at all in this atmosphere. The really terrible thing is not the actual action taken from time to time to suppress newspapers or books, but this atmosphere of fear that is created. Where there is fear, there can be no development of the human spirit.

Do not imagine that by mere formation of a civil liberties union, we are going to get back our civil liberty. What we have to do is to face further deprivation of civil liberties. As long as the shadow of imperialism is not removed the danger is of more civil liberties being removed. That is the great danger now. What seemed twenty years ago the worst deprivation of civil rights, we have now got used to it. The organisation you have formed today should not only be vigilant about protecting civil liberties but should also see that there is no further deprivation of civil liberties. At any rate, you have to check the continuance of further deprivation.

I think something has been said regarding the kind of union you should have. It is clear that such a union should have representatives of every shade of thought which believes in civil liberty. It must not have any political affiliation with any party. Its individuals may have political views, but the organisation as a whole should not have any political views or aims. Otherwise it will become a mere appendage to a political organisation. It must retain its non-party character. That is the idea in my mind when I consulted others and issued various circulars on the subject. Unfortunately, some friends took a different view, and did not respond well and I have already referred to the reply of Sir P S. Sivaswamy Aiyar. His view is a practical negation

of civil liberty. Others agreed with the principle I proposed, yet did not wish to join the Union. I am sorry they took a view which had nothing to do with any principle. I think they are afraid of Congressmen and they feared my humble self. It is unfortunate that we should consider this question from the point of view of personalities and not on grounds of principle. I am glad, therefore, that in Madras there is some encouragement.

The Union should be as broadbased as possible. I gave expression sometimes to harsh language while referring to the acts of the opponents of the Congress, but I think that those interested in public affairs should always be prepared for common action in respect of matters of common agreement. I do not think that they, on matters of agreement, should consider themselves untouchables. That seems to me to be an unjustifiable attitude, and I hope that this Union will attract more members from the Liberal Party who, I know, are strongly in favour of the principle. A reference has been made to the work of Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastriar.[3] I am glad about it. I would be very happy if such work is taken up by others and continued. Lawyers are obviously the persons who can join the Union. I do not want that this Union should be dominated by Congressmen or that Congressmen should hold the leading strings.

Unfortunately or fortunately, Congressmen are to be found in large numbers in various places. You cannot easily ignore them. Congressmen are often found to be the most active element in the community. I would be happy if persons other than Congressmen join the Union in large numbers. An executive of All India Central Council has been formed, and in towns and cities local unions should be formed. I am glad that a union has been started in Madras, because Madras in many ways is specially suited for this work.

Obviously a civil liberties union is not intended to be a mass organisation of hundreds and thousands. It is a union obviously more or less confined to the intellectuals who understand the principles of civil liberty. In other countries, civil liberties unions are generally composed of lawyers, professors, literary men, authors, publishers, etc. There are not in such unions many active and aggressive politicians. Here, we have not got quite such a wide field to choose from as in America or other countries where there are more independent professions. The principles involved in the subject are semi-legal, and there should be a lawyers' committee to advise and defend cases.

3. (1874 1953); Liberal leader, member, Governor's executive council, Madras, for a few days, advocate general, Madras, 1924 1928.

I have nothing more to say. But I have received a slip containing a few questions. The questions are nasty and their object is to put me in a hole. Perhaps, for the purpose of enjoying my discomfiture. I shall read them, however, so that you can see my discomfiture.

The questions are:

(1) Can you tell us from your personal experience of Soviet Russia, whether there are civil liberty unions in Russia? If so, whether these unions tried to help Trotsky, Zinoviev[4] and Kamenev[5] who were exiled or shot after the farce of a trial?

(2) Is there any room for difference of views in a dictatorship like that of Stalin which you admire so much?

(3) Do you admit that there is more civil liberty in India at present than in Russia?

(4) *If you make a speech in Moscow attacking communism in* the manner in which you have been attacking British imperialism in Madras, do you hope to remain a free man as you are at present?

Now, friends, my discomfiture is complete. These questions assume that I am a fervent admirer of everything that happens in Russia, which, of course, I am not. In Russia, recently there was that trial. I do not know the circumstances, and I do not feel competent to pass any definite opinion. The news we get is usually coloured. I do not think I will be justified in expressing a definite opinion on a matter which I do not know thoroughly. This trial had a reaction on me. That I can say. I do not know if it was a farce of a trial. A well-known English barrister, Mr. Pritt, I think, was in Russia by chance at the time of the trial, and he has said that seldom did he see a fairer trial than that so far as legal formalities were concerned. As I said, the trial produced a bad impression on me. I am not a fervent admirer of the Stalin dictatorship. I admire the economic transformation of the land there, the development of its social life, its educational and cultural activities. To a large extent, I am an individualist. I feel that there is more room for the development of individualism in a socialistic state. Today, only a handful, those at the top, are individualistic and in socialism there is the hope of getting more security for the people and for more people becoming individualistic. In socialism, there is more freedom of work and you get in it a greater chance to assert your individuality than

4 and 5. Zinoviev and Kamenev were leading Bolsheviks who were expelled from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union along with Trotsky in 1927, and executed after the treason trials of 1936.

in a capitalistic society. I do not presume to be a blind follower of any system. I am trying to propagate the ideas underlying the system of socialism. I cannot, however, shut my eyes to the defects found in the application of that system. But as I understand the socialistic system, I think it aims at the fullest democracy and the fullest civil liberty.

Today the so-called democratic countries in the West are democratic only in a political sense. It is not enough to give a vote to a hungry man. That vote can be bought or influenced. In order to have the fullest democracy, you must have an economic democracy. The failure of democracy in Europe is the failure of the one-sided and partial democracy. Fascism and socialism are poles asunder.

Within the framework of socialism and communism we have a greater chance for the development of the individual than in the so-called individualistic and capitalistic society. That is how I try to reconcile the two ideas of socialism and individualism. There are today the so-called democratic countries like England, France and America which are only democratic in the political sense. That is not enough. In order to have a full democracy, you must have also economic democracy in addition to political democracy. Now we talk in terms of fascist and socialist dictatorships. We put the two on the same footing without understanding either. The fascist dictatorship is based on the utter negation of democracy and the utter negation of the liberty of the individual. It is not only so in actual fact, but also according to fascist theory and ideology. The socialist dictatorship believes and aims at the fullest democracy and civil liberty and ultimately it aims at a stage when there will be no necessity for the coercive authority of the state. No new system can come into being without a difficult transitional period in which a dictatorship is necessary. But this does not mean the dictatorship of an individual. It means the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, of the 95 or 98 per cent of the people in contrast to the 2 or 5 per cent in the other system. As regards the last question, I think, perhaps Russia would not have allowed me to carry on propaganda there and I would have suffered. But this question is beyond the scope of the subject. So far, about these questions.

Question: Does your type of socialism obtain in any part of the world?

Jawaharlal Nehru: My type of socialism! What obtains in the world you know. You want to cross-examine me. I hope socialism will be established the world over.

24. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

October 29, 1936

My dear Krishna,

...And now I come to an important matter which requires your careful consideration because it affects you. I suggest to you that you might come over to India soon, say, for six months or so, and take charge of the civil liberties organisation here as a secretary. Don't be put off at the abruptness of the proposal. There are many reasons why I am making it. I think that if you gave a push to the Civil Liberties Union in India and organise it on a proper basis it would go a long way. Apart from this I think it would be good thing for you to come to India and have a look round and meet people. You cannot do effective work, even in England, unless you renew contacts in India. I think also, that your coming to India would be good for you, because it will give you a much needed change. Then again I should like you to come here so that I might discuss many things with you. The more I think of it the more does the idea of your coming here and spending some time in India appeal to me. The India League work will of course suffer. It may even stop, but that cannot be helped and perhaps you can be of some assistance to it even from India. Remember that I am not suggesting for the moment that you should return for good. For the present I think that you should think of coming here for 6 months or so. You can decide later as to when you should go back. If you find that you are doing really worthwhile work here then you can stay on. You need not confine yourself to civil liberties work later, but, to begin with, that ought to be your principal job. It will provide for you a definite place in our public life here in which you can fit in with the greatest ease. There are of course so many other things which you can also do.

About the finances. The Civil Liberties Union, at the present moment, lives on air and has no resources. That is of course because we have not tried to collect funds for it. It will not be difficult for us to get some money and we have always intended paying a wholetime secretary of the organisation who will be the principal executive as the honorary president (Tagore) and the head of the Council (Sarojini Naidu) cannot give much time or energy to it. We do not and cannot pay heavy allowances. But you will not require that. However this is a matter between you and me and there will be no difficulty. I shall

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

also try to arrange for your steamer fare to India. So the financial part need not come in your way.

I am writing this practically off my own bat, though I have consulted a few friends. I am informing Sarojini that I am writing to you and I shall mention the fact to Tagore whom I am likely to see soon. I am quite sure, however, that all of us will welcome your taking charge of the civil liberties business. We want a few intelligent men about. There is no superfluity of them. You won't have a soft job, the difficulty coming in your dealings with the stupid ones who abound.

Think over all this and send me a brief cable soon to indicate what your reaction is to my proposal. If your answer is "yes" I would suggest that you should try to come as early as possible and certainly in time for the Congress session. I suppose you will have no difficulty in raising funds for your passage. We can settle accounts later. Perhaps Lane[2] could make an advance from my accounts. A sufficient cable address for me is "Nehru Allahabad"....

As I have mentioned above, I am suggesting this on my own initiative. But you can place some reliance in me. I cannot let you down.[3]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. John Lane the Bodley Head, publishers of the *Autobiography*.
3. In fact, Krishna Menon did not return to India, and Dr. K.B. Menon became secretary of the Civil Liberties Union.

25. On the Freedom of the Press[1]

A person who aspires to be a public man must inevitably come in contact with the press. However much he may be irritated at times he must ultimately be inclined to love the press.

I ought to have been a journalist instead of what I am. It is difficult to reply to this. But certainly I think that if I had no other job in life I should have turned to journalism. I might have earned my living from the profession of journalism. I write articles in the daily

1. Reply to address of welcome presented by the Indian Journalists Association, Calcutta, 5 November 1936. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 6 November 1936.

press but they are not paid for by the proprietors of the papers. I do not know if this is the way they can establish the profession of journalism in the country.

I know the difficulties which the owners of newspapers and periodicals in India have to face. But I feel that among the owners there is a tendency to exploit their subordinates and it is a thing which seems to me to be an extraordinarily short sighted policy. Therefore in the interest of good work one must give a good living wage to the worker whether he is a journalist or connected with the press in any other capacity.

The impression I gather from the meeting is that the profession of journalism is confined to the members of the male sex. That is surprising because I have noticed that in other countries women have come much to the fore in the profession and they possess some of the best qualities to shine in that profession which the male members lack.

You are well acquainted with the fairly notorious press laws. But I feel that you do not realise them although you talk so much of the difficulties which come in your way. Although you know that the press laws are there, you have no vivid realisation of the danger. Almost daily you read in newspapers about confiscation and forfeiture of press security but somehow you are accustomed to them. For this state of affairs I feel that you yourselves are at fault, in not presenting your case properly, pointedly and logically. You are all well acquainted with the government actions against the press. But it was only when I read speeches delivered at the last press conference wherein there was given a connected account of the whole thing that I was astounded. The whole case was put there and it impressed me very much. And this happened to me who knows much of the press laws. Imagine what effect it would produce on a man who does not know much about them.

I am not surprised that the appeal of the Indian Journalists' Association to the foreign press did not evoke much response except in a section of the American press. They know the state of affairs in countries like Germany and Italy but in a country like France the people are interested to know the case of India in spite of the fact that they are wrapt in serious problems of the state. But what they actually want are not vague statements but detailed facts and figures which cannot be supplied to them. In England, however, there is a remarkable situation. There is the tradition of freedom of the press, certainly as strong as anywhere, but so far as India is concerned, out of imperial consideration, the English people have developed a peculiar attitude. I refer to the period of 1932 and onwards when a great civil disobedience movement was going on in India. There was hardly a mention about

that in the British press and that was because a word had gone round that India was not to be mentioned in the British press. Fleet Street was told not to publish anything about India except occasional anecdotes about rajas and maharajas and things like that. I was amazed to notice that manner of extraordinary discipline of the British press. *Just a hint from the India Office was sufficient enough for them to fall* in line. In Germany there was compulsion to achieve this but in England the sheer sense of imperial consideration was enough. It was difficult for me to understand this but I must say that I admire that marvellous and single-minded devotion of the English people to the imperialist cause.

It is bad enough to carry false news or propaganda news but I think that readers after some time can accustom themselves to accepting that type of news after proper discount. But the real danger lies in the suppression of news when readers are denied totally in forming their opinion about it. For instance the news about Germany they can read more from outside than in Germany itself where all unwelcome news is suppressed.

In India the journalists know more than I do how the news is suppressed. Even when there is no direct prohibition of news there is the indirect prohibition. That is a dangerous thing which the journalists have to face even more than the distortion of news. This kind of danger is increasing more and more both in India and outside. It is important not only from the point of view of journalists but of all right-thinking individuals who prize the freedom of the press. There is another danger and that is radio which is sure to be a strong rival to the press. It is not yet strong enough in India but it is sure to be a terrible engine for governmental propaganda and may affect the newspaper press.

The question of freedom of the press is a vital question and inevitably the brunt of the fight must fall upon the journalists; but the general public must also take their fair share in it. I hope that in an organised way and not only through your newspaper but through your Association as well you will try to keep the public wide awake about their duty towards it. Your criticism ought to be pointed and lawyer-like. And for this you will get all cooperation and help from the foreign department of the All India Congress Committee and the Civil Liberties Union.

26. Address to the Civil Liberties Union in Calcutta[1]

If it is necessary to have a union like this in other countries, it is all the more necessary in India and still more necessary in Bengal. In fact the necessity for a civil liberty union arises when there is a growing suppression of civil liberties. The more the suppressions the more the necessity. In England there is a civil liberty union which, as far as I remember, first saw the light of day when a Sedition Act was proposed there a few years back. Of course, that Sedition Act was nothing in comparison with various acts, ordinances and regulations which we have here. But anyway that gave rise to tremendous agitation in England, agitation not merely by what may be called the politically advanced people but a large number of conservatives and other people also joined it and the reason was that in England there was still some respect for civil liberties. And the result was that the bill was considerably toned down and it was passed in a truncated form. And so the civil liberty union came into being in England because of that Act and it has been functioning quite effectively since then. There whenever there is any occasion the union immediately takes action. It is not a large body. There they think more in terms of having in the committee representatives of various schools of thought than in terms of number. If there is any likelihood of interference on the part of the police, they do not wait for the things to happen, they take measures beforehand. And the result has been that what might have happened actually did not happen. The very knowledge that there are a number of competent men to deal with such matters, makes the police behave in a proper way. In America also the civil liberty union has been functioning effectively for a long time. It has many branches and is carrying on its work on a very large scale. In India such a union is needed far more because there cannot be any comparison in matters of suppression of civil liberties between India and other countries.

The position in this country is that we get used to such things. We sometimes protest, we sometimes express indignation. But the fact remains that some time after we get used to it and we do not feel very strongly about. What do they do in England? If anything happens in England, they start a fierce agitation. They go on agitating and taking steps till the wrong is redressed.

1. 7 November 1936. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 8 November 1936

Compared to the various laws, regulations and ordinances which we have now, the Rowlatt Bill may be almost called a charter of liberty. Now there is censorship, ban on publication, ban on associations and so on. These are astounding things. But we get used to such things, we become dull and the result is that we often cannot realise what is happening. We talk about our sufferings and so on but we do not collect facts and place them before our countrymen in a systematic way. I have been intimately connected with Indian politics and as such I always try to find out what happens with regard to suppression of civil liberties and other things. But there is this handicap that I do not get all facts in a connected and concentrated form. The facts contained in the address of Mr. Minal Kanti Basu as chairman of the *reception committee of the All India Journalists' Conference* are astounding. What is needed therefore is collection of facts and placing them in a systematic manner before the countrymen. As we grow in strength, the suppression of civil liberties becomes intenser. That shows the intensity of our struggle. A civil liberties union is a check to some extent on executive action. But so far as many other important matters are concerned, a more effective check is possible only through a powerful organisation like the Indian National Congress.

An All India National Council has been established consisting of about 130 members. They are spread all over India. But in such an organisation it is difficult for them to meet. They have got to face that difficulty. For most of its executive work small committees may be appointed. The most necessary thing is collection of facts and publicity to those facts. There is a need of appointing a competent, well-informed wholetime man to act as secretary who will have to do most of the things necessary. I hope that the public in Bengal would come forward to help the Bengal branch of the Union with funds without which it is impossible for the Union to work. The question of detenus in Bengal is an important question and I would like a special department of the Civil Liberties Union to take up the question of the detenus. The National Committee is a very representative committee and I also want a competent man to act as secretary. When we get a man like this we expect to function more vigorously than we are doing at the present moment.

When the Congress is confronted with a particular crisis against which we must fight, we would see that nobody comes and puts obstacles in our way. We cannot allow our country to play into the hands of the people who would act wrongly at the time of the crisis. This is a point which we must consider. But so far as any activity of the Congress is concerned, we must give others the fullest freedom for

expression of opinion. We want free expression of opinion, we want criticisms because it would help the Congress.

27. On Suicides by the Bengal Detenus[1]

One after another, they go, finding life too great a burden to carry, shackled and crushed in internment with no limit to their suffering, no hope of a day when this will end.

Two of these detenus, we have been told, have committed suicide within the last few weeks[2] and Poet Rabindranath Tagore's moving words, demanding a public enquiry, are still ringing in our ears.[3]

And now comes the news of a third suicide of a detenu, Krishna Pankaj Goswami.[4] Will this never end? Will dawn never come to put to flight the unending night of their suffering? This problem of the detenus is a public scandal of the first magnitude.

Before the reality of this problem and all that it implies to India, constitutions and elections seem vague and unreal. The only reality is the power that stunts and crushes us.

I trust that Congress committees, civil liberties unions and all other organizations representing public opinion will support and reiterate Dr. Tagore's demand for a public enquiry into these cases of alleged suicide and into the conditions under which the detenus have to live.

That is not enough, for the whole rotten system must go. It is an imposition on us and till it goes and all that it represents, everything else that comes to us will be darkened by its shadow.

1. Statement to the press, Gollagokarannath, 27 November 1936 *The Hindustan Times*, 28 November 1936.
2. On 23 September 1936, Nabapran Ghosh, a member of the Revolutionary Party, externed from Midnapur in 1933 and arrested at Calcutta in 1934, committed suicide at Gopalganj police station, and on 17 October 1936, Santosh Chandra Ganguly committed suicide in Deoli detention camp.
3. In a press statement, issued on 21 November 1936, Tagore said, "The fate of a large number of our young men and women is bound up with this system of detention which crushes the body and kills the spirit."
4. A detenu under house arrest in Malda district in north Bengal, committed suicide on 21 November 1936.

28. To Frank P. Manley[1]

December 5, 1936

Dear Mr. Manley,[2]

Thank you for your letter and the reprint of your editorial.[3] I remember the incident to which you refer.[4] I am afraid I may not discuss the many points to which you have referred in your note as this would mean a lengthy controversy for which I have no time. I might mention however that "the calm confidence of the British mind for democratic institutions and freedom of speech and of the press" has not been apparent to me in this country. I suggest that you might make some study of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, both central and provincial, the various press laws, the work of the press censor, the ordinances and detention without trial and so on and so forth. It would also be interesting to see a list of a few hundred organisations in India which are banned. The denial of civil liberty in India has reached such proportions that it is a public scandal of the first magnitude. I was all along under the impression that it is an admitted fact that the British mind does not function democratically in India.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5 (a)(part II)/1936, p. 339, N.M.M.L.
2. Associated with the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Nellore.
3. In an editorial in the *Baptist Missionary Review*, Manley commended the constitutional way in which Jawaharlal opposed the 1935 Act, that is, by going to the councils and combating it, and Manley thought this was possible in India but not in Russia or Italy.
4. Manley referred to an incident at a railway station, when Jawaharlal escorted an American lady out of a heavy crowd which had collected to see him.

7

THE CONGRESS AND THE STATES

1. To M. C. Mallappa[1]

9/7/36

Dear Mr. Mallappa,[2]
I have your two letters.[3] I shall be leaving for Sind on the 16th and I am not likely to be back in Allahabad till early in August. If it suits you, you can come to see me there.

I read your criticism of the Congress in your last number[4] and I must say that I was surprised to do so. I think the matter is wrong, but the manner of it seems to me still more wrong. I can quite understand that the policy of the Congress in regard to the states does not go far enough to please many people; further that the utterances of some leading Congressmen are displeasing to some states people.[5] Every journal as well as every individual is justified in criticising this policy and asking for a change.

But, apart from references in odd speeches which do not bind the Congress, what exactly is this policy to which such strong exception is taken? I fail to understand what all the shouting is about. The Congress has declared itself in favour of the identical political, social and economic freedom for the whole of India, including specifically the states. As far as objective goes, it is not easy to improve upon this, though it could be clarified still further. As for the activities to be undertaken, it has laid stress on the obvious fact that the burden of the struggle in the states must inevitably lie on the states people. The stress on this fact may be too great, but the fact remains that the Congress cannot do much today in the states and it would be deluding the states people to make them think otherwise. There seems to me far too great a tendency to make the Congress pass bombastic resolutions which it cannot give effect to. For my part I should like the

1. A I C.C File No. G 27/1936, pp. 25-27, N M M L.
2. Editor, *The New Indian States Journal*, Bombay.
3. Mallappa had asked Jawaharlal to clarify Congress policy as regards the Indian states.
4. He had described Congress policy towards the states as "unfortunate" and showing "unconcernedness".
5. At the Lucknow Congress Rajendra Prasad and Vallabhbhai Patel, among others, had said that while the Congress fully sympathised with the demands of the states' subjects and wished them to secure the same rights and liberties as the people in British India, the main struggle had to be carried on by them alone.

stress to be varied a little but that is not a vital matter. We seem to be arguing about secondary matters and forgetting the main issue.

As for your saying that 80 million states people will go out of the Congress, this seems to me a very unmeaning and unwise threat. If the 80 million are so vastly excited over it, why do they not set their own houses in order and set about doing something themselves? Do they want to be spoon fed by others? Of course it is not their fault that they are so weak and helpless today. It is the fault of various circumstances. But it does not help to talk tall and issue ultimatums to the Congress.

The policy of the Congress is criticised. What does the policy of the States' People's Conference amount to? It seems to me very feeble and sometimes even reactionary.

The Congress policy is not of unconcernedness towards the states. It may have been weak occasionally and therefore it is up to us to strengthen it. But the attitude of Congressmen as a whole has been one of positive sympathy with the states people and the desire to co-operate with them whenever opportunity offers itself is always present.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Congress and the Indian States[1]

We have in the past talked and argued a great deal as to our attitude towards the Indian states and the people who live there. Occasionally, this argument has led to heat and excitement. And yet what we have discussed have been relatively trivial issues. The fundamental fact remains that Indian states and the rest of India are one and indivisible and that an Indian, wherever he may live in this vast land of ours, must have the same rights and opportunities—political, economic, social and cultural—as any other Indian. If that is once admitted by all thinking persons, there is little room for argument except on minor

1. Message to the Indian States' People's Conference, Karachi, 18 July 1936. *The Hindustan Times*, 19 July 1936.

issues. The problem of the Indian states is not a separate problem standing by itself. It is a part of the larger problem of India. And that is the problem of the freedom of the Indian people.

3. To Kanhaiyalal D. Vaidya[1]

August 12, 1936

Dear Friend,[2]

I have just received your letter of the 7th August.[3] I am afraid I must have produced a wrong impression in the minds of the Conference delegates at Karachi. I was not criticizing them but meeting the criticism of the Congress. So far as I am concerned I am quite clear that states peoples should expose in every way the misgovernment and misbehaviour of their princes. Further that they are entitled to the fullest sympathy and support from others outside the states. I congratulate you on the work that your Jhabua State People's Conference has done and the way it has stood up to repression. We shall certainly keep in mind what is happening in Jhabua and give publicity to such news as comes to us. If we have the chance of helping you more we shall gladly take advantage of it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *A.I.C.C. File No. G-70/1936, p. 17, N.M.M.L.*
2. Secretary, Central India States' People's Conference and general secretary, Jhabua State People's Conference.
3. *Vaidya had written to Jawaharlal on 7 August 1936 that his message to the* Karachi conference had given the impression that he thought that Congressmen were doing nothing in the states but crying at the top of their voice from the vantage ground of British India. He also complained that Patel had asked them not to expose the autocracy of the princes

4. To N. S. Hardikar[1]

September 3, 1936

My dear Hardikar,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 28th August.[2]

The attitude of the Congress towards the Indian states is contained in various resolutions of the Congress with which you are no doubt acquainted. It is true that some confusion had arisen in the past in regard to this attitude. But this confusion has largely been cleared up and in any event the only authoritative direction is contained in Congress resolutions and not in individual utterances. The position today is that the Congress work should be carried on in the states as in the rest of India. It is entirely wrong to say that the Congress or its leaders are not interested in the Indian states or desire that the people of the states should not participate in Congress activities. We are greatly interested in the future of Indian states' subjects and, as the Lucknow Congress resolution on civil liberties declared, we want them to be on a par in regard to political, social and economic conditions with all other people in India.[3] In this respect there is no differentiation between them and the others. Therefore it is desirable and necessary that Congress work should be carried on in the Indian states and Congress committees organised there.

In view of the fact, however, that we are not at present inviting conflict with the government or with the Indian states no action should be taken which is in direct conflict with the state government. Should a situation arise where such conflict is feared reference should be made to us for directions. Apart from this question of conflict, every activity

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-27/1936, p. 13, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 28 August 1936, Hardikar complained that the work of Congress organisation in Mysore state had met with opposition from many people who argued that "the leaders who visited the state of Mysore during the last three years" had not cared to sympathise with the people of the state in their Congress activities.
3. The Lucknow Congress resolution on civil liberties read: "...the Congress deeply regrets that in the Indian states there is a similar suppression of civil and personal liberties, and, in many of them, conditions in this respect are even worse than in the rest of India and almost every kind of liberty is non-existent.... The Congress declares that it can recognise no differentiation in personal, civil and democratic liberties as between the states and the rest of India."

of the Congress should be carried on in the states, especially the enrolment of members and formation of Congress committees.

You are at liberty to give publicity to this letter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8

THE ELECTION MANIFESTO

1. The Task of the Congress[1]

When I returned from England, I did not know much about the conditions in the country and I was told that a feeling of despair had paralysed the people. My tours have convinced me that this is not the correct position. While I found a feeling of oppression among the people owing to the government's repressive policy, growing unemployment and the economic crisis, I could discern beneath apparent despair a feeling of optimism and enthusiasm. The people say that the Congress has been suppressed but my tours have convinced me that this is not correct. What has happened is that despair caused by economic crisis and unemployment and aggravated by repression had made the people temporarily inactive, but I am not prepared to call this the suppression of the Congress, because beneath this apparent despair is the will to be free and a spirit of resistance. The masses are still enthusiastic and will be ready for action whenever called upon to do so. I feel confident that the Congress is growing stronger and stronger.

I know our country is passing through difficult times because of floods and droughts, but, despite all this, the people are quite enthusiastic, which after all is the test by which you can judge the preparedness of the people to be free. The Congress has done many things in the past and will continue to do so.

Some important items like the agrarian programme and the mass contact committee report cannot be placed before you just now. But the election manifesto is before you and this is the most important thing at present engaging attention, although three or four months ahead of elections. There are a lot of difficulties in the way of parliamentary activities.

You are aware of the ban placed on the Frontier Gandhi and the detention of Mr. Subhas Bose. The only way, whereby these can be removed, is by strengthening ourselves.

You all know about the Trichinopoly municipal election incident.[2] We are really surprised that such things should happen among Congressmen. It is a matter for all of us to carefully consider and think out ways, whereby a repetition of such things can be avoided.

1. Speech at the A I C C, Bombay, 22 August 1936. From *The Tribune*, 23 August 1936.
2. T.S.S. Rajan, a prominent Congressman of Tamil Nadu, had supported a non Congress candidate for the chairmanship of the Tiruchchirappalli municipal council, and as a result Rajagopalachari resigned from the Congress.

I earnestly hope that though we intensely feel Mr. Rajagopalachari's separation, Mr. Rajagopalachari will greatly help us in putting a stop to indiscipline. We may have differences of opinion inside the Congress; but once a Congress authority decides, we must accept the decision. We must all beware of the reaction to any act of indiscipline in the country. We must all think in terms of the country as a whole and bigger issues.

I felt Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan's resignation acutely. Mr. Jayaprakash did not like the idea of being a member of the Working Committee without his being a member of the A.I.C.C. Hence the resignation.

The elections are ahead; we will put all our strength towards the achieving of the desired results. There are two forces in the country, one wanting to take the people towards independence and the other for maintaining the present order. The parties, other than the Congress, talk too much, promise to do a great many things, but experience has shown that they always cooperate with British imperialism. We should see that no harm is done to the freedom movement.

You all know there is a lot of difference between the view you hold and mine; but I try to bring our forces together, because our aim is to tackle British imperialism. Some of my comrades have some objection to my preaching socialism; what can I do but to explain whatever I feel. I have explained, with the view of mine and others before me and with anxiety not to weaken the Congress strength, which I have worked for. If you have any complaint tell me. Whatever is your command I will never go against it.

Two of our colleagues have resigned from the Working Committee. I do not like the system of choosing the members of the Working Committee. I feel intensely about it. I hope the new Congress will amend the constitution so that the President is authorised to choose his own Working Committee. I am helpless in that the Lucknow Congress decided against my views. Of course we have continued for four months and I do not find it difficult to continue for four more months. But the views of the Working Committee members should be similar. It should be a perfect team. I, therefore, leave it to the A.I.C.C. to make a selection of two members. I would not mind if the choice falls on two women, but I would urge that at least one woman be selected.[3]

3. On 4 September 1936 G.B. Pant and Sarojini Naidu were made members of the Working Committee.

2. The Congress Election Manifesto[1]

For more than fifty years the Indian National Congress has laboured for the freedom of India, and ever, as its strength grew and it came to represent more and more the nationalist urge of the Indian people and their desire to put an end to exploitation by British imperialism, it came into conflict with the ruling power. During recent years the Congress has led great movements for national freedom and has sought to develop sanctions whereby such freedom can be achieved by peaceful mass action and the disciplined sacrifice and suffering of the Indian people. To the lead of the Congress the Indian people have responded in an abundant measure and thus confirmed their inherent right to freedom. That struggle for freedom still continues and must continue till India is free and independent.

These years have seen the development of an economic crisis in India and the world which has led to a progressive deterioration in the condition of all classes of our people. The poverty-stricken masses are today in the grip of an even more abject poverty and destitution, and this growing disease urgently and insistently demands a radical remedy. Poverty and unemployment have long been the lot of our peasantry and industrial workers; today they cover and crush other classes also—the artisan, the trader, the small merchant, the middle class intelligentsia. For the vast millions of our countrymen the problem of achieving national independence has become an urgent one, for only independence can give us the power to solve our economic and social problems and end the exploitation of our masses.

The growth of the national movement and the economic crisis have resulted in the intense repression of the Indian people and the suppression of civil liberties, and the British Government has sought to strengthen the imperialist bonds that envelop India and to perpetuate the domination and exploitation of the Indian people by enacting the Government of India Act of 1935.

In the international sphere crisis follows crisis in an ever-deepening degree and world war hangs over the horizon. The Lucknow Congress called the attention of the nation to this grave situation in India and the world, and declared its opposition to the participation of India in

1. 22 August 1936. A.I.C.C. File No. 42/1936, pp. 629-641. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp 401-405. The manifesto was drafted by Jawaharlal.

an imperialist war and its firm resolve to continue the struggle for the independence of India.

The Congress rejected in its entirety the constitution imposed upon India by the new Act and declared that no constitution imposed by outside authority and no constitution which curtails the sovereignty of the people of India, and does not recognise their right to shape and control fully their political and economic future, can be accepted. Such a constitution, in its opinion, must be based on the independence of India as a nation and it can only be framed by a constituent assembly.

The Congress has always laid stress on the development of the strength of the people and the forging of sanctions to enforce the people's will. To this end it has carried on activities outside the legislatures. The Congress holds that real strength comes from thus organising and serving the masses.

Adhering to this policy and objective, but in view of the present situation and in order to prevent the operation of forces calculated to strengthen alien domination and exploitation, the Congress decides to contest seats in the coming elections for the provincial legislatures. But the purpose of sending Congressmen to the legislatures under the new Act is not to cooperate in any way with the Act but to combat it and seek to end it. It is to carry out, in so far as is possible, the Congress policy of rejection of the Act, and to resist British imperialism in its attempts to strengthen its hold on India and its exploitation of the Indian people. In the opinion of the Congress, activity in the legislatures should be such as to help in the work outside, in the strengthening of the people, and in the development of the sanctions which are essential to freedom.

The new legislatures, hedged and circumscribed by safeguards and special powers for the protection of British and other vested interests, cannot yield substantial benefits, and they are totally incapable of solving the vital problems of poverty and unemployment. But they may well be used by British imperialism for its own purposes to the disadvantage and injury of the Indian people. The Congress representatives will seek to resist this, and to take all possible steps to end the various regulations, ordinances and acts which oppress the Indian people and smother their will to freedom. They will work for the establishment of civil liberty, for the release of political prisoners and detenus, and to repair the wrongs done to the peasantry and to public institutions in the course of the national struggle.

The Congress realises that independence cannot be achieved through these legislatures, nor can the problem of poverty and unemployment be effectively tackled by them. Nevertheless the Congress places its

general programme before the people of India so that they may know what it stands for and what it will try to achieve, whenever it has the power to do so.

At the Karachi session of the Congress in 1931 the general Congress objective was defined in the fundamental rights resolution. That general definition still holds. The last five years of developing crisis have, however, necessitated a further consideration of the problems of poverty and unemployment and other economic problems. With a view to this the Lucknow Congress laid particular stress on the fact that "the most important and urgent problem of the country is the appalling poverty, unemployment and indebtedness of the peasantry, fundamentally due to antiquated and repressive land tenure and revenue systems, and intensified in recent years by the great slump in prices of agricultural produce", and called upon the provincial Congress committees to frame full agrarian programmes. The agrarian programme which will be drawn up by the A.I.C.C. on the basis of these provincial programmes will be issued later.

Pending the formulation of a fuller programme, the Congress reiterates its declaration made at Karachi—that it stands for a reform of the system of land tenure and revenue and rent and an equitable adjustment of the burden on agricultural land, giving immediate relief to the smaller peasantry by a substantial reduction of agricultural rent and revenue now paid by them and exempting uneconomic holdings from payment of rent and revenue.

The question of indebtedness requires urgent consideration and the formulation of a scheme including the declaration of a moratorium, an enquiry into and scaling down of debts and the provision for cheap credit facilities by the state. This relief should extend to the agricultural tenants, peasant proprietors, small landholders and petty traders.

In regard to industrial workers the policy of the Congress is to secure to them a decent standard of living, hours of work and conditions of labour in conformity, as far as the economic conditions in the country permit, with international standards, suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes between employers and workmen, protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment and the right of workers to form unions and to strike for the protection of their interests.

The Congress has already declared that it stands for the removal of all sex disabilities, whether legal or social, in any sphere of public activity. It has expressed itself in favour of maternity benefits and the protection of women workers. The women of India have already taken a leading part in the freedom struggle, and the Congress looks forward to

their sharing, in an equal measure with the men of India, the privileges and obligations of citizens of a free India.

The stress that the Congress has laid on the removal of untouchability and for the social and economic uplift of the Harijans and the backward classes is well known. It holds that they should be equal citizens with others, with equal rights in all civic matters.

The encouragement of khadi and village industries has also long been a principal plank of the Congress programme. In regard to the larger industries, protection should be given but the rights of the workers and the producers of raw materials should be safeguarded, and due regard should be paid to the interests of village industries.

The treatment of political prisoners has long been a scandal in India. Every effort should be made to improve this and make it humane. It is equally necessary to change the whole basis of the prison administration so that every prisoner might be treated in a humanitarian and rational manner.

The communal decision, which forms part of the new Act, has led to much controversy and the Congress attitude towards it has been misunderstood by some people. The rejection in its entirety of the new Act by the Congress inevitably involves the rejection of the communal decision. Even apart from the Act as a whole, the communal decision is wholly unacceptable as being inconsistent with independence and the principle of democracy; it encourages fissiparous and disruptive tendencies, hinders the normal growth and consideration of economic and social questions, is a barrier to national progress, and strikes at the root of Indian unity. No community or group in India profits by it in any real sense, for the larger injury caused by it to all outweighs the petty benefits that some have received. Ultimately it probably injures most those groups whom it is meant to favour. The only party that profits by it is the third party which rules and exploits us.

The attitude of the Congress is, therefore, not one of indifference or neutrality. It disapproves strongly of the communal decision and would like to end it. But the Congress has repeatedly laid stress on the fact that a satisfactory solution of the communal question can come only through the goodwill and cooperation of the principal communities concerned. An attempt by one group to get some communal favour from the British Government at the expense of another group results in an increase of communal tension and exploitation of both groups by the government. Such a policy is hardly in keeping with the dignity of Indian nationalism; it does not fit in with the struggle for independence. It does not pay either party in the long run; it side tracks the main issue.

The Congress, therefore, holds that the right way to deal with the situation created by the communal decision is to intensify our struggle for independence and, at the same time, to seek a common basis for an agreed solution which helps to strengthen the unity of India. The effort of one community only to change the decision in the face of the opposition of another community might well result in confirming and consolidating that decision, for conflict between the two produces the very situation which gives government a chance of enforcing such a decision. The Congress thus is of opinion that such one sided agitation can bear no useful result.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the whole communal problem, *in spite of its importance, has nothing to do with the major problems* of India—poverty and widespread unemployment. It is not a religious problem and it affects only a handful of people at the top. The peasantry, the workers, the traders and merchants and the lower middle class of all communities are in no way touched by it and their burdens remain.

The question of accepting ministries or not in the new legislatures was postponed for a decision by the Lucknow Congress. The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that it will be desirable for this decision to be taken after the elections. Whatever the decision on this question might be, it must be remembered that, in any event, the Congress stands for the rejection of the new Act, and for no cooperation in its working. The object remains the same—the ending of the Act. With a view to this end every endeavour will be made to prevent the introduction and functioning of the federal part of the scheme, which is intended to perpetuate the domination of imperialist interests and the feudal interests of the states over the whole country and prevent all progress towards freedom. It must be borne in mind that the new provincial assemblies will form the electorate for the proposed federal central legislature and the composition of those provincial legislatures will materially affect the fate of the federal constitution.

We appeal to the country to give every support to the Congress in the elections that are coming. National welfare demands it. The fight for independence calls for it. The effectiveness of the work that the Congress members of the legislatures will do will depend on their *numbers and their discipline and the backing and support that the* country gives them. With a clear majority they will be in a position to fight the Act and to help effectively in the struggle for independence. Every party and group that stands aloof from the Congress organisation tends, knowingly or unknowingly, to become a source of weakness to the nation and a source of strength to the forces ranged against

it. For the fight for independence a joint front is necessary. The Congress offers that joint national front which comprises all classes and communities, bound together by their desire to free India, end the exploitation of her people, and build up a strong and prosperous and united nation, resting on the well-being of the masses.

With this great and inspiring goal before us, for which so many men and women of India have suffered and sacrificed their all under the banner of the Congress, and for which today thousands of our countrymen are suffering silently and with brave endurance, we call upon our people with full hope and confidence to rally to the cause of the Congress, of India, of freedom.

3. Concluding Address to the A. I. C. C.[1]

I request the members of the All India Congress Committee to forward any details regarding the curbing of civil liberties to the office of the All India Congress Committee. Already some information has been received but further details are needed. I pay my tributes to Mr. Ram Manohar Lohia in charge of the foreign relations department and Dr. Ashraf, secretary, and Dr. Khwaja Hamied,[2] under-secretary of the political and economic information department.

Bhai Parmanand in a speech has made allegations against Indian women who participate in the Congress movement.[3] It is a disgraceful speech. There are several things which cannot be tolerated, and what Bhai Parmanand has done is one such. He ought to have expressed an apology and withdrawn such an offensive statement.

1. Bombay, 23 August 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 24 August 1936.
2. K.A. Hamied (1898-1972), member, Bombay Legislative Council, 1937-62, sheriff of Bombay, 1952-53, Fellow of the Royal Institute of Chemistry, London.
3. In a statement published in his Urdu daily *Hindu* of 6 August 1936 Bhai Parmanand had said that all the Congresswomen who courted arrest during the civil disobedience movements had not been sincere and honest and refused to withdraw his remarks at a public meeting held at Delhi on 8 August and at Kanpur on 11 August as a result of which the two meetings were disrupted.

I am told that asking questions at public meetings and creating uproar means curtailment of civil liberties. I do not agree with this view. And this shows that there are people who do not understand what is meant by civil liberty. Certainly the audience should observe decorum at public meetings. But if the speakers at such meetings go on making outrageous statements, and if the speakers refuse to answer questions the audience has a right to protest. It does not mean curtailment of civil liberties.

4. Full Steam Ahead[1]

Question. What has been the outcome of the A.I.C.C. meeting?

Jawaharlal Nehru. The All India Congress Committee has demonstrated afresh the fundamental unity of the national movement in India. It has also shown again that this movement is essentially based on anti-imperialism and has little use for the petty reforms which are sometimes proffered to us to weaken our urge for independence and to dull our resentment against foreign domination.

Whatever differences might exist among those who seek the freedom of the Indian people, they stand shoulder to shoulder in this great struggle and there will come to their ranks all those who stand for Indian independence and for the removal of the exploitation of her people.

The All India Congress Committee has given a lead to Congress workers in general and has laid stress on the urgent need for discipline in our ranks and a high standard of public life. I trust that all Congressmen will pay heed to this direction and advice and will close up their ranks for a common fight.

To the people of Tamil Nadu in particular, I venture to make this appeal, especially as their affairs came before us in Bombay. After the retirement of Sjt. C. Rajagopalachariar—which I hope is temporary—they have a special responsibility.

1. Interview in Bombay, 25 August 1936. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 26 August 1936.

To all Congressmen I would appeal to remember always the high standards of public life, which have been associated with the name of the Congress. We may not lower those standards even for the sake of a temporary success at an election.

Success does not lie in winning an election by lowering our standards but by displaying that we adhere to our ideals, whatever the consequences.

The All India Congress Committee has said "Full Steam Ahead". Let all Congressmen take heed of this and be worthy of the country's trust and honour.

5. To Ammu Swaminadhan[1]

September 2, 1936

Dear Mrs. Swaminadhan,[2]

I am in receipt of your letter of the 22nd August enclosing a manifesto issued by your Conference to candidates for the coming elections.[3]

The Congress proposes to set up women candidates for the seats reserved for them in the provincial legislatures in the coming elections. It is possible that some women candidates may also be set up from the general constituencies. This matter is in the hands of the All India Parliamentary Board and the various provincial parliamentary boards. So far as I know no final decisions have yet been arrived at. The provincial boards are supposed to recommend names to the All India Parliamentary Board which thereupon sends its recommendations to the Congress Working Committee. I would suggest your getting into touch with the All India Parliamentary Board as well as, where possible, with the provincial boards to find out the names of the women candidates.

I have read your manifesto and I am glad to inform you that we accept every proposal that it contains. The manifesto refers to many

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-48/1936, pp. 1-2, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1894); member of the Congress since 1930, founder member, All India Women's Conference; secretary, All India Women's Conference, 1936, member, Central Legislative Assembly, 1945; member, Constituent Assembly; member, Lok Sabha, 1952-57.
3. She had requested Jawaharlal to give the list of names of women candidates nominated.

matters with which, I suppose, almost everyone in India agrees, whatever his political persuasions, such as educational reforms, rural reconstruction, communal unity, etc. The really important item is the removal of sex disabilities, whether legal or social or in any sphere of public activities. This has long been a plank in the Congress programme and you will find it in the Karachi resolution of the Congress on fundamental rights. You will further find it in the recent manifesto issued by the All India Congress Committee. So also maternity benefits and social insurance.

The removal of untouchability is also a vital plank in the Congress programme. The protection of civil liberties has long been agitated for by us.

Everyone will of course agree with the removal of immoral traffic in women and children, the protection of children and young people from the evils of drugs, drink, tobacco, exploitation and cruelty, and adequate measures to cope with social diseases, leprosy and cancer. The formation of a national tuberculosis association seems to be desirable but it is more a method of tackling this grave menace.

As regards unemployment, the way in which it is mentioned in your manifesto indicates only a wish that something should be done. With that of course everyone will agree. But how it is to be done is another matter. Many of us think that the only way of tackling it effectively is by introducing vital changes in our economic system.

I do not think the Congress has ever passed a resolution on the question of *purdah* or polygamy or early marriage. But as a matter of fact Congressmen and Congresswomen have in the past done a great deal against *purdah* and early marriage and I have no doubt that they will continue these efforts. Polygamy has so far not become a live issue, partly because, I suppose, it does not exist to any large extent. But we should certainly try to put an end to it.

You will thus notice that we are at one with you in your programme. But I feel that many items in your programme are, if I may say so, superficial in the sense that they do not enquire into the root causes of the evils which we want to get rid of. Partly no doubt these evils are due to our own customs, but largely they are the consequences of political subjection and a thoroughly bad economic system. Thus we are forced to consider the political problem as well as the economic problem in its many ramifications. The first step inevitably becomes political independence. And to that end the Congress is devoting its thought and energy. However much we may wish for many reforms we feel our efforts will be wasted if we cannot gain real power to bring about these reforms.

I trust that your Conference will also realise the necessity for political freedom in order to give full effect to the social and economic freedom of women, and will make this clear in your manifesto. This of course does not mean that you should lay less stress on your specific demands for women.

I trust your Conference will cooperate with the Congress in the various common activities in which we are interested and specially in the larger struggle for national freedom.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. Line up with the Congress[1]

In the Congress election manifesto it was stated that "every party and group that stands aloof from the Congress organisation tends, knowingly or unknowingly, to become a source of weakness to the nation and a source of strength to the forces ranged against it." Every day brings justification for this statement and proof of the fact that the real contest is between two forces—the Congress as representing the will to freedom of the nation, and the British Government in India and its supporters who oppose this urge and try to suppress it. Intermediate groups, whatever virtue they may possess, fade out or line up with one of the principal forces. In this way we find the world struggle represented in India, the struggle between progress and reaction, between fascism and anti-fascism, between imperialism and national freedom.

For those who have any appreciation of this mighty struggle in the world and in our own country, the choice is clear. To hesitate and to adopt an intermediate position is to injure the cause they have at heart. They must support the Congress. There are no doubt estimable people in other groups, but, whether these are political or communal, inevitably they weaken the national front. It is because of this that the Congress claims the allegiance of the Indian people and calls

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 18 September 1936 *The Hindustan Times*, 21 September 1936

upon them to support it and not to fritter away their strength by allying themselves with parties and groups which may even approach it in many ways, but which really weaken it by providing a separate platform or by laying stress on communal or other issues. The issue for India is that of independence. He who is for it must be with the Congress and if he talks in terms of communalism he is not keen on independence. He who is not for it, inevitably drifts to the side of the government.

Let this position be clearly understood by our people as it has been understood and acted upon by the government. For the government there is only one principal opponent—the Congress. All else are to be preferred to the Congress. We have seen this policy in action all over the country and the matter has been repeatedly raised in the Legislative Assembly. As further proof of this policy of governmental interference, I have been shown an interesting official document issued by the United Provinces Court of Wards to all district officers in the U.P. I give this circular below for public information.[2]

This is the official attitude and all of us who have moved about among the people know how subordinate officials are acting up to it. What answer can the people of India give to it? There is only one possible answer, only one dignified answer, and that is for all of us to sink our petty differences and line up with the Congress.

2. Not printed. The U.P. Court of Wards, "representing important agricultural interests", had sent a circular to its officials to use their influence "to prevent the election of candidates who belonged to the Congress Party."

7. Circular to P. C. Cs[1]

September 23, 1936

Dear Comrade,

I write to ask you what steps you have taken to broadcast the Congress election manifesto in your province. This document is the rock on which we have to build our election campaign and should therefore be given the widest publicity in the language of your province. It should be remembered that essential and integral parts of the manifesto are

1. AICC File No P 1/1936, p 85, NMML.

the Karachi resolution on fundamental rights and the Lucknow resolution on the agrarian programme. Both these should always be printed together with the body of the manifesto.

As publicity to this manifesto must largely be given in the language of the province, we are not sending you any considerable number of copies of it. But we shall send you soon some copies in English. In case you want more you will please let us know. Please send us translations of the manifesto which you may have issued.

You have been receiving from us our various newsletters and bulletins, some meant for foreign countries, others for India. You must have appreciated the value of these. We shall be continuing these and probably we shall extend the scope of such periodical surveys. We want our district and town committees to profit by such surveys and we would gladly send them direct to the districts if they would write to us for them. We propose to make a small charge covering postage etc. Will you kindly address your district and town committees on this subject and inform them of our offer?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

September 28, 1936

My dear Krishna,

Your letter of the 19th September. I shall await your report on Brussels.

In your last few letters you have given expression to a certain irritation with "hobnobbing with ministerialism", a proper subject for irritation. Further you go on to say that it is bad politics and worse strategy. And then "who am I to offer advice to the President of the Congress." The President of the Congress is not above receiving advice from anybody. In particular I expect both advice and criticism from you all the time. But I think you might give the President of the Congress a little credit for some glimmering of sense. You seem to imagine that I am responsible for this hobnobbing with this ministerialism, or, at any rate,

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

that I am neutral about it. As a matter of fact the whole position in India has changed very greatly during the last six months on this subject. At the time of the Lucknow Congress, acceptance of ministries was a dead certainty as far as the Congress was concerned. Today it is a very doubtful proposition. The whole background is changed as you can see from the Congress election manifesto. It is true that that manifesto does not decide this issue, and its postponement is not a good thing for us. Do you think I was in favour of postponement till after the elections?

Try to imagine what the human material is in India—how they think, how they act, what moves them, what does not affect them. It is easy enough to take up a theoretically correct attitude which has little effect on anybody. We have to do something much more important and difficult and that is to move large numbers of people to make them act and to do all this without breaking up the Congress. I must say that the results of the last six months have been quite extraordinary.

You may have heard of the police search of the Congress office. It is evident that they do not like our newsletters. I have written on this subject as well as some others to Stafford Cripps[2] and James Middleton.[3] I enclose copy of the letter I have sent them.[4] Also I enclose a copy of the letter I have addressed to the District Magistrate, Allahabad.[5] These two letters will give you all the information on the subject. You can make such use of it as you like. Please find out from Cripps and Middleton if they have received my letters. One never knows....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Richard Stafford Cripps (1889-1952); eminent lawyer who was on the left-wing of the Labour Party; was a personal friend of Jawaharlal; visited India in 1939 as the guest of Jawaharlal, British ambassador in Moscow, 1940-42; negotiated War Cabinet declaration on India, March-April 1942; member, Cabinet Mission to India, 1946; President of the Board of Trade, 1945-47, Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1947-50.
3. Secretary, Labour Party, 1934-44.
4. This letter is not available.
5. See *post*, section 12, item 29.

9. On the Selection of Congress Candidates[1]

We have noticed with some apprehension the tendency of some Congress committees to recommend as candidates for the ensuing provincial elections persons whose past record and even present activities have been opposed to the Congress. We have laid stress previously, and we wish to do so again, that the quality of the candidates, from the point of view of Congress policy, is more important than the winning of seats and the capture of a fictitious majority in the legislatures. This Congress policy has been laid down clearly in the election manifesto of the A.I.C.C. It is "not to cooperate in any way with the Act but to combat it and seek to end it. It is to carry out, in so far as is possible, the Congress policy of rejection of the Act, and to resist British imperialism in its attempts to strengthen its hold on India and its exploitation of the Indian people." Only such persons can be chosen as Congress candidates for election as believe in this policy fully and are prepared to carry it out. In the words of the Lucknow Congress resolution, "such candidates must be chosen from those who fully support the Congress objective of Indian independence and pledge themselves to carry out its policy in regard to the legislatures." Such pledges may not be lightly or unknowingly undertaken. We trust, therefore, that all candidates who have already been nominated will bear this in mind, and if any of them consider it necessary to reconsider their decision in view of this fact, they should do so. All candidates must be chosen on this basis.

We have also noticed with regret that certain conflicts have arisen in some places among Congressmen themselves as to who should be the Congress candidate. We should like to remind Congressmen that the real struggle for freedom will not be carried on inside the legislatures but outside. In the words of the election manifesto, "real strength comes from thus organising and serving the masses." This all important work demands the continuous attention and the active service of all Congressmen. There is no limit to the number of persons who are required to do so.

1. This statement was issued by Jawaharlal, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Jamnalal Bajaj at Wardha on 17 November 1936 *The Hindu*, 18 November 1936

9

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN III

1. Students and Politics[1]

India at present is a peculiar country and the questions that are raised surprise one. Some even argue that the independence of India is bad for India; that something less than independence is in reality more than it. Not being metaphysically inclined I find some difficulty in understanding these abstruse problems. Yet another peculiar question relates to students and politics. Students must not take part in politics, some say. What is politics? According to the usual interpretation in India (*official India*), *to assist or support the government in* any way is not politics; but it is politics to criticise or work against the existing order in India.

Who are the students? They may be children in the elementary schools or young men and women in colleges. Obviously the same considerations cannot apply to both.

Quite a large number of senior students today possess a vote for the coming provincial elections. To vote is to take part in politics; to vote intelligently necessitates the understanding of political issues; to understand political issues results usually in accepting a certain political policy; and if one accepts that policy it is the duty of the citizen to push that policy, to try to convert others to it. Thus inevitably a voter must be a politician, and he should be an ardent politician if he is a keen citizen. Only those who lack the political or social sense can remain passive and neutral or indifferent.

Even apart from his duty as a voter, every student must, if he is properly trained, prepare himself for life and its problems. Otherwise his education has been wasted effort. Politics and economics deal with these problems and no person is properly educated unless he understands them. Perhaps it is difficult for most people to see a clear path through life's jungle. But whether we know the solution of the problem or not, we must at least know the nature of it. What are the questions that life puts to us? The answers may be difficult, but the curious thing is that people seek to answer without knowing the real questions. No serious or thinking student can take up this futile *attitude*.

The various isms that play such an important part in the world today —nationalism, liberalism, socialism, communism, imperialism, fascism,

1. Allahabad, 1 October 1936. First published in the *Students' Tribune*, Lahore. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 51 55

etc.—are efforts on the part of various groups to answer these questions. Which answer is correct? Or are they all steeped in error? In any event we have to choose and in order to choose we must know and have the capacity to choose correctly. This cannot be done if there are repressions and suppressions of thought and action. It cannot be done properly if High Authority sits on us and prevents the free play of the mind.

Thus it becomes necessary for all thinking individuals, and more so for the student than for others, to take the fullest theoretical part in politics. Naturally this will apply to the senior students at life's threshold rather than the junior ones who are still far from these problems. But a theoretical consideration is not enough for a proper understanding; even theory requires practice. From the point of view of study alone the student must leave his lecture halls and investigate reality in village and town, in field and factory, to take part to some extent in the various activities of the people, including political activities.

One has ordinarily to draw the line somewhere. A *student's first* business is to train his mind and body and make them efficient instruments for thought, understanding and action. Before he is trained he cannot think or act effectively. Yet the training itself comes not from listening to pious advice, but by indulging in action to some extent. That action, under normal conditions, must be subordinated to the theoretical training. But it cannot be eliminated or else the training itself is deficient.

It is our misfortune that in India our educational system is thoroughly lop-sided. But an even greater misfortune is the highly authoritarian atmosphere that surrounds it. Not in education alone, but everywhere in India, red liveried, pompous and often empty headed Authority seeks to mould people after its own pattern and prevent the growth of the mind and the spread of ideas. Recently we have seen how this *Authority has made a mess of things even in the realm of sport and* our cricket team in England, full of brilliant players, was effectively hamstrung by the ignorant nobodies who controlled it.[2] Genius was sacrificed so that Authority might triumph. In our universities this spirit of authority reigns supreme and, in the name of discipline, comes down heavily on any who do not meekly obey. They do not like the qualities that are encouraged in free countries, the spirit of daring, the adventures of the soul in uncharted regions. Is it surprising then that we do not produce many men and women who seek to conquer the

2 In June 1936 the famous cricketer Amarnath was expelled from the Indian team touring England by its manager Brittain Jones as a "disciplinary measure"

Poles or Everest, to control the elements and bring them to man's use, to hurl defiance at man's ignorance and timidity and inertia and littleness and try to raise him up to the stars?

Must students take part in politics? Must they take part in life, a full wholesome part in life's varied activities, or be of the clerkly breed, carrying out orders from above? As students they cannot keep out of politics, as Indian students even more so they must keep touch with them. Yet it is true that normally the training of their minds and bodies must be their principal consideration during this period of their growth. They must observe a certain discipline but that discipline should not be such as crushes the mind and kills the spirit.

So, normally. But abnormal conditions come when all normal rules are swept away. During the Great War where were the students of England, France, Germany? Not in their colleges but in the trenches, facing and meeting death. Where are the students of Spain today?

A subject country is always to some extent in an abnormal condition. So India is today. And in considering these problems we must also consider our environment and the growing abnormality in the world. And as we seek to understand it, we are driven to take part, however little it might be, in the shaping of events.

2. To Sarat Chandra Bose[1]

Camp Wardha
October 4, 1936

My dear Sarat,

As I was leaving Allahabad I received your letter of the 30th. A copy of it has met me here.

I have discussed the matter with Vallabhbhai and Rajendra Babu and we are clearly of opinion that the interpretation put upon the Congress election manifesto by the Bengal P.C.C. was not justified.[2] You refer to your letter of the 31st August.[3] I have not that letter by me here but I would like to inform you that previous to that I wrote

1. A I C C. File No G-24(1)/1936, pp 89-90, N M M L.
2. Sarat Bose in his letter of 30 September 1936 had justified the interpretation.
3. In his letter of 31 August 1936, he had warned that if the Working Committee banned the agitation by the Congress in Bengal against the communal decision, Congress unity in Bengal would be destroyed.

on several occasions to the Bengal P.C.C. on this very subject and made it clear what our attitude was. Further I asked them what their position was vis-a-vis the then Nationalist Party of Bengal. It seemed to me then that they were gradually converting themselves into the Nationalist Party. That fear seems to me even more justified now after the last decision of the B.P.C.C.

We are all very glad to learn that there has been a friendly arrangement between the rival groups in Bengal. This is indeed good news. But to some extent I have a feeling that this arrangement amounts to this: that the Nationalist Party has swallowed the Congress in Bengal.

I shall not here discuss further the justification of your interpretation. I hope to do so when we meet. But I still trust that your committee will see its way to vary its interpretation and bring itself into line with the A.I.C.C. and the Congress organisation as a whole.

I have been very anxious, as you know, to visit Bengal to have full talks with you as well as other friends and colleagues there. I wanted to do so to discuss this communal affair as well as to know from you and others what your grievances against the Working Committee have been during the past few years. I think there must be a lot of misapprehension in this matter and it would be a good thing if we could discuss this matter frankly so as to remove these misapprehensions. Unfortunately I have not been able to visit Bengal in spite of my desire to do so. But after my return from the south I want to take the earliest opportunity of going to Calcutta. I propose reaching there on the 1st November and staying there for about 5 days. I think I had better remain in Calcutta all this time and not go to any other part of Bengal.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Message to Karnataka[1]

I understand that the Karnataka is inaugurating the election campaign soon. I send our workers my good wishes on this occasion and I trust

1. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 5 October 1936. Out of a number of such messages issued by Jawaharlal to various parts of India a representative selection has been included

that they will carry the message of the Congress—the message of Indian independence and the ending of the exploitation of the Indian people—to every corner of their province. The Congress has undertaken to run candidates for elections to the provincial legislatures and we propose to fight these elections with all our strength and I am sure that all over India we shall succeed. But greater than any temporary success in elections is our adherence to our ideals and objectives. We may not lower them whatever happens. It is because of them that the Congress has become the symbol of Indian unity, of independence and Indian freedom and it is because of them that we hope to gain our objectives.

Seldom has a greater crisis overshadowed the world than that which confronts us today. And the future may well test the capacity and nerves of the stoutest amongst us. We must bear that in mind and remember that the only way to meet these great dangers and difficulties is to have a powerful and well managed organisation which has clear ideas and objectives and the courage and discipline to stand by them, even when danger threatens. That organisation is the Congress. And therefore it is up to all of us to stand under the banner of the Congress, to strengthen it and to make it the living and vital embodiment of India's will to unity and freedom. I hope that the people of the Karnataka will stand by the Congress today and tomorrow as they have done in the past and that they will not only ensure the return of the Congress candidates at the elections, but will prepare themselves for the greater task to come.

4. Women and the Freedom Movement[1]

Madame President,[2] and Sisters,

Yesterday a girl asked me what I was going to say at this meeting and at the spur of the moment I said I might advise them not to be too womanly. Then of course I corrected myself by saying that they should not be too womanish. I think that instead of entering into the deep waters of women's representation in the legislatures and the local bodies

1. Madras, 6 October 1936. *The Hindu*, (evening edition) 6 October 1936.
2. Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi.

in the country I would much prefer to talk to you about other and more fundamental matters affecting women. I do not know how many of you have heard the famous saying of a French writer to the effect, that if you want to judge the culture and civilisation of a people, you can find that out by the status and condition of the women of the country. You need not look round to see what the men are about, if you find that the women of that country are cultured and civilised and highly advanced in the various walks of life. If the women are backward, that nation is backward. That is, in my opinion, a very important way of judging a nation's advancement.

Many of us in India, as well as elsewhere—because the women's question is not purely an Indian question, although it may concern us here for the time being—are apt to think much more in terms of men who function at the top, who may be advanced and who may be great and forget the part that the women are playing. I should like you, and not only you, because you may take it easily enough, I should like the men of India to apply those scales now and always to the state of affairs in India. What is the condition of the women, what are the women doing, what opening and opportunities have they got, and what disabilities are they labouring under? If you view the matter from that point of view, inevitably not only will women go up, but the whole nation will go up including the men.

It is pretty obvious that if in a country the population is more or less backward, not advanced, that country cannot go very far. That backward population will drag it down. We are thinking in terms of women without whom it is quite impossible to go ahead. That applies to many backward classes in the population. If you have large sections—you may call them backward classes, depressed classes, Harijans or economically poor classes—if we have a large proportion of people who have not got opportunities to advance, to go ahead and live normal and natural lives, then that country cannot go very far. You may occasionally produce great men even out of a muddy soil. But the fact remains that you will have to remove the mud before you can have a sane and sober living for the great majority of the people. Therefore whether you look at it from the point of view of women, who have for a long time been the depressed classes in India and in the world, or in terms of other classes of men and women, who are economically and otherwise depressed, we have to remove those bars and give equal opportunity, equal privileges to all of them before we can have an advanced nation.

We are too much in the habit of looking back and praising the past. We are entitled to do that, because there are many things in our past

history and culture which are praiseworthy and for which we can take legitimate pride. But that is a bad habit, all the same, to be looking back all the time. In the same way, sometimes I think there is a bit too much talk of Sita and Savitri and the like, estimable ladies no doubt, who played a very brave part and who have become traditional heroines for us. It is right that we should have such heroes and heroines in our national calendar and in our traditions, but we cannot live on tradition alone. Nor can we live on the reputation acquired by ancient heroes and heroines, quite apart from the fact that we cannot entirely apply those examples to modern conditions. Conditions change. While we may take inspiration from the good qualities that the ancient heroes and heroines possessed, we cannot exactly copy everything that might have been done in those times because times have utterly changed.

I said a while ago something about the depressed classes. As a matter of fact, we all, men and women of this country, belong to the depressed classes, because in every country, which is a subject country, the people dominated over inevitably are the depressed and the exploited. Therefore when we talk in terms of getting rid of this exploitation and removing people from their depressed stage to a higher stage, we come across the political problem, and the political problem becomes a common factor for all of us who inhabit this country. Therefore it becomes necessary for all of us to do our utmost and take our part in the struggle for freedom and independence of this country, because so long as that barrier is not removed, I do not think it is possible for us to remove other barriers that keep down women or other depressed groups in the country. I do not mean that we should wait and do nothing at all in regard to the other matters which affect women till India has got political freedom. We have to march together, more or less, on all fronts. But inevitably we cannot go far in any direction till we remove that major barrier of political subjection. Therefore it becomes necessary for the women of India to take their full part in the struggle for political freedom. And apart from that, if they take full part in that —as in a large measure they have done in the past few years—they will reach a stage inevitably in the country, which would make it terribly difficult for their menfolk to be obstructive as before. They would gain a position in the public life of the country from which it would not be possible to remove them.

I do not know very much about the state of affairs during the civil disobedience movement in this province here. But in northern India, where the *purdah* system has prevailed and many other evil customs

of seclusion, the 1930 civil disobedience movement played an extraordinary and astounding part in putting an end to that system of seclusion of women. They came out from their houses when their menfolk were in prison; they took the lead in the great movement; they played their part; they showed quite extraordinary powers of organisation, discipline and enterprise. That kind of thing sent up our womenfolk in the estimation of not only our country at large, but of other people in other parts of the world who had been in the habit of saying that Indian women were slaves and incapable of doing anything. They were surprised and astounded at the change that they saw.

So therefore women should take the fullest part in the political struggle for freedom, political and economic. But remember that politics and economics are after all a means to an end. Even political independence, important as it is, is only a means to a certain end. What are the fundamental questions that people have to face all over the world? These could be resolved into the relation of man to man, man to woman and man to society. Probably all things will come under these heads, and when we consider these wider and larger questions, the political side is not quite so important as it might otherwise appear to be. We in India inevitably are somewhat overwhelmed by the political aspect of the matter, because that happens to be a tremendous barrier in our way. And so long as that barrier is not removed, we can think of little else; yet, so far as women are concerned you cannot think entirely on this political plane. You have to think also on your own plane and think of your own disabilities, because you are not likely to be helped by your menfolk. Therefore whilst you will have to share with men in the struggle for political freedom, you will have to bear the whole burden of the struggle for women's emancipation yourself. And the sooner you realise that the better will it be for you. Individuals may sympathise with you; individuals may also help you. But still you will have to fight, not so much perhaps actual opposition, although of that there will be enough, but tremendous inertia which is far more dangerous to combat. You will have, if you want to combat it, to go on with all your strength all the time, because the moment you sit down, the inertia overwhelms you and puts an end to your work. I am glad I see evidence of this activity to some extent, though not enough. Women's movements are rising up, trying for the removal of various disabilities and seeking representation of women in all political bodies. It is essential that women should have a voice because they will not only be helpful but also reasonable, sensible and peaceful. There is one danger against which I would like to warn you and that is this: that in your desire to fight against the disabilities, you might forget

the political struggle. Today the principal urge in India is the nationalist urge for political freedom and for economic freedom. Both these are common for men and women and if you try to function outside these two urges and cut yourself adrift from the living current of national life, your movement will be functioning in the air, and you will be functioning in little coteries and drawing room parties.

Your president has referred to the part that women should take in the various bodies and committees, political and other, in the country. I entirely agree with her. As I have already said, apart from the necessity of women having to consider the major issues, it is quite absurd that that alone should be the work. So far as the Congress is concerned I should very much like, I would welcome, more and more women occupying prominent positions in committees and boards and its executives. So far as the Congress constitution is concerned, it not only welcomes but encourages women to come in. There are not very many women at the present moment occupying seats of authority in the Congress Party; that may be due, unfortunately, to the fact that men do not like pushing women ahead and you have to face that also. If the women ask and are really keen about it and push ahead, you are bound to get it because there is a strong body of public opinion behind you. Men also would welcome this. I hope that your push will have such strength that it will become very difficult for men to refuse your demands. I thank you once again for your welcome.

5. On Industrial Training[1]

I am glad of the opportunity to visit this institution. I was interested in the young men working here and I wanted to find from their faces and from their eyes if they looked worthwhile. So far as I am personally concerned, I find it extraordinarily difficult to think of people as Harijans or non-Harijans, or anything else. I want to see something in the eyes and the face, some signs of intelligence, spirit, character and courage. When I saw the children here I liked their faces; I found that they had some energy in them. They were the kind of

1. Speech at Kodambakkam Industrial School, Madras, 6 October 1936 From *The Hindu*, 6 October 1936.

people who would probably, one cannot say for certain, make their way in future. Then I wondered if this was in any way due to the kind of life and training they got here. Presumably, it is partly due to the kind of training they get here; they get a measure of self-reliance, they feel that they are learning something valuable to rely upon so that they can make their way through life and the world with their own strength and that gives them self-confidence and self-reliance. Therefore, I liked the spirited faces of the young boys that I saw and that is the chief impression that I shall carry away with me. Because of these young boys that I saw here, I think this institution has justified itself. You will see that the way I approach the question is somewhat different from perhaps the usual approach. I look at it, as I try to look at various other problems, political or otherwise, from bottom upwards and I shall therefore wish this institution of yours every success.

Such institutions, desirable as they are, seem to be drops in the vast ocean. We can take credit for the fact that this institution is catering for and training 27 boys. But it is more to the point that we should take discredit for the fact that there are so many hundred thousands we are not catering for. What about them? We seem to be tremendously smug because we take a bucketful of water from the ocean and think we have drained the ocean. Therefore whilst it is right and proper that we should foster these institutions and work for them, we cannot forget that the real problem of raising these vast numbers, untrained, uneducated young boys and girls, Harijans or others, is a problem which is not going to be tackled in a small and petty way. It will require bigger measures. Do not think that I am minimising the importance of such institutions because I think they are very important, not only from the smaller point of view of training some small number of young men but even I say, from the larger point of view of laying some kind of a foundation for our tackling in future the whole problem on a big scale. Such institutions produce the human material which will help us to solve the problem. The real big problem ultimately is the problem which I do not think anybody can take up or solve except the state. We must have the resources of the state as also popular cooperation before we can solve this big problem.

I dislike talking about particular groups or communities because I find it a little difficult in thinking of them as such and it is our duty of course to raise the so-called Harijans because they are very backward, so low down in the social scale. But I hope you will raise them so that they might cease to be a separate group and that will only happen when I think we have tackled the whole question of society as a whole. The problem of the tremendous number of unemployed

in the country, the tremendous number of illiterates not having the wherewithal to live in the country—that is the real problem of which the Harijans form a considerable part. Therefore, if you tackle the big problem, the Harijan problem solves itself. That does not mean we should forget the Harijans. You cannot simply go about and take an odd person here and there and try to pull him above the mire. You have to remove the mud all round. I wish to thank you for the address and for the kind words in which it is couched.

6. On the Harijan Problem[1]

I am visiting various Harijan institutions and quarters in the city so that I may get some idea of the condition of Harijans round about Madras. I think of this problem not as a Harijan problem, but as the problem of the poor, downtrodden, unemployed, landless labourers in India. *We ought to know that at present the biggest problems in* India are the problem of Indian poverty—poverty of the Indian masses —and the problem of Indian unemployment, unemployment not only of the masses, but also of the middle classes. The Harijan problem is really a part of these problems. Therefore, if we try to solve these problems, we can solve the Harijan question also.

I do not understand nor do I appreciate the idea of groups of people being kept apart. We must remove all these barriers so that there may be no group in India which by its work, economic position or name, is supposed to belong to an inferior group. Therefore, the problem before us is not a limited problem of uplifting this man or that man, but of establishing in India equality so that every single person in India, man or woman, may have the fullest opportunity for growth.

Now that, as I take it, is the general outlook of the Indian National Congress and it is in order to give effect to that, that it seeks, in the first instance, political freedom and political power in this country; for only when the people of this country have political power can they adopt economic and social policies which can raise the masses up to a

1. Madras, 6 October 1936. From *The Hindu*, 6 October 1936.

human level. It is absurd to talk of uplifting our masses, or educating them in any big sense, so long as we do not change the whole structure of the state as it exists today. The existing structure is not meant for raising the masses. In fact it has resulted in the deterioration of the millions in India. Therefore it becomes necessary to change the structure.

You may say that a school may be opened to educate you or that industrial homes should be started for you to get some kind of technical training. But only a few here and a few there will benefit out of the hundreds and thousands of people who require such education. This is not the way to uplift the millions that form the nation. In this way, we may take a thousand years before we complete our job. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the very foundations, so that we can build a structure for the entire nation. We cannot put up a big building without a secure foundation. Therefore in aspiring for political freedom and in seeking a just economic order, we ought to lay a firm foundation on which we can build up the well being of Indian humanity. This kind of thing cannot be done easily by individual effort. This can be done by great organisations which have power and vast numbers of people behind them. That is why we are seeing the Congress, which is the only really great national organisation in the country, doing big things in this country; we are seeing it influencing tremendously the present state structure in India. Why? Because it derives its strength from the millions. And if we have got to do big things we can only do them in an organised way through powerful organisations, and the only organisation that exists in India for this purpose is the Indian National Congress. Therefore, whether Harijans or Hindus, Muslims or Christians, if we think in terms of raising the Indian masses, if we think in terms of political or economic or social freedom, it is necessary for us to support the National Congress and strengthen it. We must support it and put all our strength into it and if we like, we may try to influence it in the way we think best. But we cannot support the cause by sulking in a corner; we should join the main army of progress in the country and help it with all the strength we may have.

It is about time people stopped touching another's feet. This seems to me to be a sign of slavery. If we want to be free men, we ought to act like free men and not touch another's feet or be bending all the time. We must have a straight back. In a meeting we must behave in an organised and disciplined manner, and we should not shout or push.

7. Speech at Gokulam Ashramam[1]

In your address you have stated that I am a "friend of the poor". I wholly disagree with you. I am an enemy of the poor. I dislike poverty intensely. I hate it. I want you to root it out and put an end to it. I am friendly with people who happen to be poor. That is a different matter. I want them not to be poor. I think it is possible for us to put an end to poverty. Therefore I do not want you to think in terms of poverty continuing in this country or anywhere else. You have stated that you are doing a little bit to ease the suffering of the poor. Until the problem is finally solved, one will only be able to do a little bit. You know very well that by giving odd charities to a few beggars we cannot solve the problem. Charity in money or in service does not necessarily solve the problem as a whole, although it does create an atmosphere for its solution.

I do not know much about the Gokulam Ashramam. But from what little I have heard about it, I feel that it is a little different from the usual run of institutions intended for doing good to those who are called the lower classes. It may be that these can do a little good occasionally, but if I belonged to those classes, lower down in the social scale, I would probably have resented very strongly the patronising attitude of those who came to do good. It is not the right line of approach to the solution of the problem. It seems to me that they are meant far more to display a patronising spirit than a spirit of camaraderie of goodwill and cooperation. I am glad to note that in the conduct of the Gokulam Ashramam there is no such spirit of condescension or patronage but a spirit of mutual cooperation, and that the idea of service governs here. This is the right and effective way of approaching the problem and I am glad to find that such work is being done in the colony. The idea will certainly spread and I hope that the young men and women who are going into the villages from this Ashramam will be able to get into touch with the people and spread the ideals of service.

I wish the Ashramam and the inmates every success.

1. Madras, 6 October 1936. From *The Hindu*, 6 October 1936. In the Ashramam 18 Harijan boys and girls were receiving training to serve the destitute in the villages.

8. Two Messages[1]

After many years I have come back to this great city of the south, and ever since my arrival I have been imbibing impressions of your province. The vast multitude that greeted me at the station and along the route, and this enormous gathering that faces me as I speak make me feel very humble, though humility is not much in my line. I know that these enormous gatherings and welcomes represent something which is not exactly meant for me as an individual but something else, though it may be that in such matters personality also counts for a little.

I come to you as the bearer of the message of the Congress. I come to you with the dignity and authority of the Indian National Congress. I say so not from a sense of vanity but because I do feel full of authority because I am the President of the Indian National Congress. I feel full of authority when I speak to you in the name of the Congress because I know that in speaking so, I speak what is in your minds and hearts and I really echo your own voices.

It is right that you should welcome that message because it is not a message from outside yourselves or a commandment from another, but it is the voice of your hearts and minds. It is right that you should welcome the President of the Indian National Congress and show your allegiance to that great national organisation in ways of enthusiasm and sometimes of frenzy. What does that mean? It does mean, I take it, ultimately that the Congress, in spite of what people or groups here and there say and shout occasionally, is something which does mirror the mind and heart of India, which in spite of many failings, in spite, may be, of its containing many persons who may not be wholly desirable—it is a great organisation and it contains good, bad and indifferent persons as all great organisations do—I say in spite of its failings and weaknesses, the Indian National Congress is a great and mighty organisation representing the people of India, representing their desires, and their sufferings, and therefore, claiming the allegiance, love and affection of India. Why is it so? Because it represents ultimately something deeper than those superficial things over which we occasionally quarrel, dispute and get excited. In the measure you have understood that deeper thing, that deeper call which the Congress represents, in that measure you will have understood the Indian question.

1. Speech at public meeting in Madras, 6 October 1936. From *The Hindu* 7 October 1936.

Most of us forget this deeper message. Most of us, I am afraid, are little-minded and short-sighted enough to get excited over the little things of life and forget the bigger and deeper things—the bigger issues—and then speak, in our short-sightedness, sometimes with ill will in our minds. We attack the Congress and attack its decisions. But we forget that, after all, if there is anything in India which carries the promise of hope to us, it is the Indian National Congress. Think of it, I beg of you. Let those who may be detractors of the Congress think of it. What would Indians have been in the last generation or so without the Indian National Congress? Think of what India would be today if we had not this powerful all-India organisation containing all kinds of people, right from the north, from the country wherefrom I hail originally, from Kashmir and the Himalayan snows, to Kanyakumari in the south, binding them together in a common cause, a common struggle and a common love. Think where we would be without the Indian National Congress, with our petty quarrels, provincial jealousies and our mutual conflicts and struggles. We would have been all crushed under the iron heel of British imperialism.

Therefore when you think of the Congress, it is up to you to think of it as yourselves; because it is your body, your strength, your organisation. How was it that this nation which has been under foreign domination for ages and generations, and which had lost even the hope of freedom, suddenly stood up, and faced the powerful country, the powerful empire, which dominates the world and dictated terms to other empires? How was it that we stood up, faced it bravely, and to some extent, shook its foundations? How was it that we had the strength to do all these? Where did we get the strength from? Not from outside, you know. We did not get it from great leaders, although leadership was very essential and great leadership came to us at the right moment to show us the path we had to tread. That strength came ultimately from the millions of the Indian people. It came from you and the likes of you all over the country, peasants, workers, middle classes and others. It came from all these joining hands, working together, cooperating together, fighting and suffering together. We developed thus a great strength which terrified even a great empire. We are going to develop that strength still more till we humble that great empire.

So let us have a proper perspective of the Indian National Congress when we talk about it or discuss it and when groups of people and parties talk about it and venture to criticise it and tell others and write about it in terms of detraction. It seems a curious thing not only in your province but in other provinces too that we find individuals and

groups who have spent their time and energies in cooperating with the British Empire, which dominates and exploits our country, and in fighting those who have been struggling for freedom, and accepting office under this government and cooperating with it in crushing Indian nationalism and the freedom struggle. It is extraordinary and astounding that these individuals and groups should dare to come out in the open and dare to talk in terms of detraction of the Congress and what it stands for and ask what has the Congress done for India. What have they done for India, I should like to know. It is about time that we told them frankly what we mean. Let us not use hard words. But it is time that they were made to feel by you and others and all of us that we will put up with much, but we will not put up with this kind of siding with British imperialism at every crisis in this country, and with those who try to crush the forces of nationalism, but go out into the country posing as great nationalists, patriots and workers for Indian freedom.

Therefore I come to you with the message of the Indian National Congress. I do not beg of you to accept it. Why should I beg of you to accept it? Why should I come in humility to you to accept this message? I can and do remind you of it. We forget sometimes the voice of our own hearts and the claims of reason because little things happen which make us forget them. We stray away into by-paths from the main road and we find it difficult to emerge out of them. We need to be reminded of the message again and again so that we may not lose heart. I have not come to tell you any new thing. I have come to tell you of the old thing, repeat it again and again so that you may remember it and act whenever the time comes. But in addition to the message of the Congress, I bring to you and to the people of this province another message, a message which has not been adopted by the Indian National Congress, but towards which the Congress has looked with a certain amount of acceptance. I would like to make it clear on this platform and elsewhere that the message is not that of the Congress. I do not wish to dilate upon the subject, but only wish to draw your attention to certain facts connected with it.

During the last three or four months I have travelled a good bit, chiefly in the north of India, somewhat in the west of India and at the present moment in the south of India. During these months I addressed vast gatherings. I took part in innumerable processions containing vast multitudes of people. I have looked into the eyes of millions of my countrymen and women. I have looked deep into their eyes to find out what lay behind them. I have tried to interpret the message that lay in the minds and hearts of the millions. I have found, wherever I have gone, whenever I said anything about the new message,

the message of social freedom, this message of abolition of poverty through a new organisation of society, through socialism, whenever I said that, I have seen a shining light in the eyes of the millions, I have felt the enthusiasm of the millions, I have felt a fire at work in these millions. I want you to understand why that is so.

Wherever I went I addressed vast audiences. At this moment also I am facing a vast audience. But I would like to tell you that this is not the biggest audience I have addressed during the last three or four months. Sometimes it looked as if a whole city was on the move. In parts of my own province and in the Punjab—and the Punjab is supposed to be a backward province politically, a communal-ridden province—I saw and felt as if almost the whole population of a huge district was on the move. It was astounding to see such crowds at unauthorised meetings. Where the authorised meetings took place, the gatherings were still bigger It was undoubtedly so because of the great prestige and power of the Indian National Congress. They came to hear the message of the Congress. It was also, if I may suggest it, because they had heard whispers and murmurings of the new message of socialism. It had awakened them and made them walk scores of miles to know what it was about. Peasants in the zamindaris and talukdars came in their thousands to hear the new message. It was impossible even with the help of loudspeakers to get at the audience. Therefore I want you fully to understand, if not to accept, this message, and try to realise how the new thought-currents are moving millions of people.

I would like to ask you why the message of national and political freedom of the Indian National Congress moves the Indian people so much. It is good to have a pride which desires freedom. But it is something more than that which moves the millions. It is something more which urges them forward. Some of you, prosperous people, may have pride. But what pride is there in the hungry, exploited people, exploited by all the means of vested interests combined with British imperialism?

There is a stronger force, the force of hunger which guides them forward. They consider that by this new message their hunger will be satisfied, their sufferings will be removed. Great movements like noncooperation, civil disobedience and satyagraha have prospered in our country and prospered to an astounding degree. This is because we have behind us the tremendous urge of economics, the urge of hunger, suffering and misery. So long as these urges remain, and not only remain but also grow, we will drive forward the masses into action. All that we see happening in India and in the world at the moment is the result of the enormous forces of high motion.

You in the city and in the provinces of Andhra and Tamil Nadu are thinking for the moment a tremendous deal in terms of elections, all-India elections, provincial elections, municipal elections and the like. I see a frightful excitement about the municipal elections in the city. So far as the election question is concerned, I may say a few words about it if I remember about it in time. It is not that I do not attach importance to it. I attach importance to everything that the Congress takes up and whatever we take up we propose to do well. We are not dabblers in odd things. We are not Sunday politicians. We are not vaguely interested in these matters. After all, these matters, for many of us, mean a great deal. In the past these have been matters of life and death. It may be so in the future. We cannot take them lightly. Therefore whatever we take up, we take up in earnest and put our whole strength behind it. If you like, forget it the next day. So far as this election matter is concerned, the Congress is going to do it well. So far as I am concerned, in regard to this election matter, I propose to put forth all the strength in me to see that the Indian National Congress does it well. Having said so, I will tell you it is likely that I may forget it the next day. Why do I say so? Because my mind is full of the vast problems that face the world today, that face India today. My mind is full of the future, and always I am trying to peep into that future, to have some glimpse of that future, so that I may be able to mould my policy in accordance with that future, so that I may help the Indian National Congress and the country in preparing for that future. About that future you and I may not be able to say much. We are not prophets. History tells us it is difficult to prophesy. One thing I can say with confidence and that is this. The future is not going to be a static future. It is going to be a dynamic future for India and the world. It is going to be a revolutionary future, a continually changing future. It is going to be a future which might see many horrible things. I don't know what the result of these big revolutionary changes might be. I am not usually afraid of dynamic changes. But sometimes my mind wobbles a little when I see the revolutionary future of the world. This future may contain in it seeds of destruction of a great deal of what we call civilisation in this world today. Howsoever it might be, it is a future you cannot ignore. It is a future which will bring in its train numerous human earthquakes and you cannot escape terrestrial or human earthquakes simply by disliking them. If an earthquake comes in the city of Madras, even those who dislike it may find it not comfortable; and if a human earthquake comes to this province you may not be able to escape it, however much you may dislike it. All over you can see these human earthquakes taking

place. You can almost feel the rumblings in the air and the tremblings under your feet. By understanding it you are prepared for it.

We might have to face in India and in the world all kinds of chaotic things. If I believe in revolution, I believe in disciplined revolution. If we are thinking human beings, we have to think of the enormous possibilities that the future hides, but which may not be hidden too long. And we have to be prepared for them. Therefore my mind is thinking of the future. Sometimes it is thinking of the past also and trying to draw lessons from the past. So a curious thing happens. I will make a confession to you, though it is not a thing which will enhance my reputation as a politician in your eyes. Sometimes I think of the past and often I think of the near future or the distant future, so that the present seems to be unreal to me. That is a horrible feeling in a politician. Now I do not ask you to lose grasp of the present or to lose yourself in dreaming about the future. But I do ask you to think about these big problems.

We read in the papers about the happenings in Spain, Germany and other places, about fascism and anti-fascism and imperialism and anti-imperialism. Are they isolated things or parts of a connected whole? For my part, I consider that if we look deeply into them, we would find them to be a kaleidoscopic picture. Parts of it may show us what is happening in China as between Japanese imperialism and China split up into various parts. In Spain, there is a civil war and a democratic regime is being crushed by a cruel fascist military autocracy. The greatest tragedy in the world is happening in Spain today. I desire that you should understand me, as I desire to understand you. We must understand each other. I have not come to listen to long speeches of praise from you and you should also not expect much praise from me. Not that praise is not due to each other. But after all it is not a useful pastime to sit together and recount each other's praises. Therefore I want to tell you that the thing that occupies my mind at the moment more than anything else is the Spanish civil war. The war is having a tremendous effect on the future of Europe. The fight is between the progressive and the reactionary forces in Europe. If the rebels win, it means fascist domination of Europe and the world, though not always, at least for the moment. Fascism may sometimes come into conflict with imperialism; but both are birds of the same feather. They hang together ultimately. Therefore, if fascism goes up in the world, imperialism, including British imperialism, goes up and *vice versa*. Therefore we can see these forces acting and reacting in all parts of the world. In Spain the government is a democratic government, not a communist government, although socialists and communists support it.

This is being attacked by a military reactionary clique. It is attacked in the first instance by foreign soldiers. The cry of religion being in danger is raised, but curiously the men who fought for Roman Catholicism in Spain in the first instance were paid Moors from Africa. We thus see the name of religion being exploited to crush the democratic republic of Spain. We find in India also the cry of religion being in danger, the family system in danger, etc., raised whenever an economic *plan of regeneration of society is discussed.*

Therefore you see all over the world today this tremendous fight between the powers of progress and reaction, as well as a growing socialism. .Go to the little country of Palestine. What is happening there? You may think it to be a conflict between the Arabs and the Jews. No, it is a fight between British imperialism and Arab nationalism. Go to any country under foreign domination. You will see the same conflict between imperialism and nationalism. You will find everywhere a grow*ing socialism. Under foreign domination the problem of unemployment* becomes so important that inevitably people begin to think in terms of socialism and communism.

What will be the result of fascist victory in Spain? We can see it from the manner in which Hitler speaks and the shameless way in which the German Government supports the rebels. The result will be the inevitable product of fascism, war—war on a *big international scale.* It means war all over the world. It means a dreadful war which may destroy half the world. We should think over the consequences and be prepared for them. Many things may happen. A war may upset the economic order of society. We will have to face an economic crisis everywhere.

How to face the chaotic conditions which may come to India during such a revolutionary period? It can be faced ultimately only by a strongly-knit disciplined organisation. What organisation is there except the Indian National Congress? There is no way out except to strengthen the Indian National Congress. If it is necessary today it is even more so when the time of trial comes. We must have an organised and disciplined nation behind us, so that when chaotic conditions arise we can immediately take the matter in hand and control those conditions.

There are elections now and further elections may come. I am not sure if the federal structure will ever come. So far as the Congress is concerned it will do *everything to wreck and destroy it. We have now* decided to stand for elections to the provincial assemblies. What we will do afterwards, we will tell afterwards. The forcing of this Act on *India in spite of the united disapproval* of India means one thing only.

It is an invitation to India to revolt. And if we do not revolt today, it is because we are not strong enough to do so.

We must know our weaknesses. It is no use shouting slogans, though shouting a slogan does sometimes strengthen a multitude. We must know where our strength lies and where our weakness lies. We must never forget our weaknesses, and never forget the strength of our opponents. Therefore if we adopt a certain policy today, don't forget that the fundamental principle is to wreck the whole structure of this Act, absolutely, completely, not only this Act, but everything before, behind and right and left of it. If there is any doubt in the mind of any person as to what the Indian National Congress stands for in regard to this Act, surely after reading the manifesto issued some time back from Bombay all doubts should be removed.

I urge you to read the Congress election manifesto more than once and to understand its inner significance. That document, people with little minds, people who are ignorant of world politics and its import, will not understand correctly. They may not know its significance. I do not say it is a perfect document. I welcome criticism of that manifesto and I have no grievance about it. The Congress welcomes criticisms, because it will know the feeling in the country. It is only then we will know our strength. We want to develop our strength. It is worthwhile for the Congress to receive criticisms. But these must be informed criticisms. As I said, it is not a perfect document. But those who read and understand it will know the national mind and the national struggle the Congress tries to carry on. The Congress is interested in the elections only because these will help us to carry on the national struggle.

You all know the controversy on the important issue of office acceptance. On this question there are differences of opinion not only in Madras, but in other places as well. The majority may perhaps hold a contrary view to the one I hold. This question, as you know, came up before the Lucknow Congress and I ventured to place before it my view with all the strength and force that I could command. The Congress, I take it, would have decided the issue one way or the other, perhaps in favour of it, but it decided finally in favour of postponing the question. Let me also confess that it might have decided against my view. But this question, let us remember, remains undecided. I have not changed my view. I consider it will be fatal for the Congress and Congressmen to accept office and I hold it will lead to cooperation with British imperialism, giving a moral support to imperialism, taking responsibility for the misdeeds of imperialism. It will also tone down our struggle against imperialism. Therefore, whenever an occasion comes,

I shall say once again what I feel about it. What we are concerned with is how to fight and end this new Act. Remember the new federal structure has got to be fought tooth and nail. It is difficult to find suitable language to characterise this. It is disgusting, poisonous and offensive. It is a thing which has to be stoutly opposed. It is an attempt to impose feudalism and feudal autocracy. That is a most undesirable thing. Such a position is not to be tolerated even at the cost of revolution, if it is necessary.

I shall now proceed to say a few words on a much narrower issue, viz, elections to the corporation and to the local bodies in this presidency. I find from newspapers and from the numerous letters and telegrams that I receive and from all kinds of people who come to see me to discuss this question, that there is an undesirable type of interest evinced in these municipal elections. Since the Congress has decided to contest these elections I say it is right and proper that we should contest them in right earnest. If the Congress takes up this work, it must be done well. I however find extraordinary mud-slinging against one another, mutual criticism of an undesirable type and personal matters introduced and coming to the front. You know that this has been our misfortune to some extent in Tamil Nadu and Andhra. You know we have condemned certain of our friends whom we respect and with whom we have cooperated for a long time and with whom we hope we will cooperate in future. But judging the question from various standpoints and from the point of view of the larger question of the fight for freedom, the Working Committee of the Congress had to condemn the action of those friends. In these local squabbles, we are apt to forget the main issue. Therefore the Working Committee, in order to check the certain amount of growing indiscipline in the Congress ranks, took action in the matter. It was not right for Congressmen to forget the pledge they took when standing for elections. If Congressmen forget this pledge and act independently, what pledge are they going to keep in the bigger fight for freedom? This growing sense of indiscipline is a serious matter. Why are the people looking to the Congress to lead in the fight? In a big organisation, self seekers there may be. It is natural. It shows the measure of the strength of the Congress. There is no need to worry about it too much. Such men will soon be found out. But let us not do anything which will weaken the strength of the Congress. The people believe that the Congress will not bow its knee to British imperialism. That hope in the Congress must be encouraged and we must live up to that hope. We shall rather see these elections lost than allow the Congress to buy success at the cost of its ideals. The Congress will not buy success. The Congress ideals should

not be allowed to be lowered. Let Congress committees and Congressmen remember this. People come and tell me about the corporation elections and the individual candidates. I am not interested in individual candidates and I forget the next moment who they are. But I am interested in seeing that the strength of this national organisation is developed.

So long as the Congress is a big national organisation, whose strength we want to develop, we must bear in mind not the claims of individual Congressmen, but bear in mind that the Congress is bigger than its secretary and president. Let us remember this distinction. If you dislike *Congress committees, its presidents or secretaries, try to reform the* committees. I can say, as President of the Congress I receive complaints which are often justifiable. There are people in the committees who create vested interests in Congress offices. But let us remember that the Congress is something bigger than its leaders, bigger than Mahatma Gandhi. The point to be remembered is that it is our duty to enforce discipline in the Congress ranks, because we are a democratic institution and indiscipline in it will spell ruin. Even if a *one-eyed man or* one-legged man is put up by the Congress, we must support him. We must try to set right things not by opposing the Congress and by bringing charges against the secretaries and presidents of the committees and by *telling* that this man or that man should not be put up for the corporation elections. If this is done, I will not tolerate it. You can get rid of your grievances through the organisation by joining it and working through it. These are elementary things in working a democratic organisation. Take an interest, a living interest in Congress activities and try to remedy things from within. I do not want a fascist regime *in the Congress ranks. Those who think that the Congress is not carry*ing out its policy properly, should try to convert the Congress to their view and then try to control its policy. I do not want futile accusa*tions made against Congressmen by Congressmen. Let them remem*ber the ideals for which the Congress is standing and working. It is nationalism *versus* imperialism. Even in matters of common interest, for example, the question of civil liberties, some who do not like Congressmen, are refusing their cooperation. When such are the conditions, let us not weaken the strength of the Congress organisation by mutual squabbles.

I have heard only distantly about the Justice Party. I do not know whether that party exists today. Perhaps its existence is now threatened and therefore this group is shouting much. It is an astonishing fact that this group in the past had stood as the staunchest pillar of British imperialist administration and flourished under the shadow of British

imperialism. If that group exists, we must remove it and annihilate it. I say this because the Congress stands to win freedom and those groups which support imperialism must be removed. These reactionary forces ought to be checked. The main problems of India are hunger, poverty and unemployment. If you think in terms of these problems and find out ways and means to remove these evils, you will see that there is no other body except the Congress worthy of support. All these problems affect alike the Hindu, the Muslim, the Brahmin and the non-Brahmin. These communal groups are singularly unable to find out a solution for these questions. Another thing I wish to state is that the communal leaders are always political reactionaries. How can the Congress have any truck with these reactionaries? The Congress alone can solve the three main problems. The way to tackle these problems is to think about them in the light of what I have said. The question of socialism can be decided after we have obtained freedom, for I feel that socialism will come after we have obtained freedom. But if you study these questions, it will help you in your national struggle and that is why I have referred to them at some length. I thank you very much for the patience with which you have heard me.

9. Labour and Socialism[1]

I am sorry I cannot speak to you in a language which all of you can understand, for it is difficult to convey one's thoughts when one's speech has to be translated sentence by sentence. But I wish you to remember that although we may talk different languages, the problems we have to face are identical, whether we live in the south or whether we live in the north. I wish to consider with you the nature of some of these big problems that face us all over the country; how they affect the industrial workers, railway workers; how they affect the peasantry; how they affect the middle classes in their cities. For essentially these problems are fundamentally allied to one another and if we seek a solution of them, we will have to go right down and understand why these problems arise.

1. Address to railway workers, Perambur, Madras, 6 October 1936. From *The Hindu*, 7 October 1936.

The biggest problems in India today are the problems of poverty and unemployment. Those who are railway workers have had to face for some time past the question of retrenchment. Why should there be factories closing down? Why should there be enormous numbers of unemployed? These are complex questions and we cannot solve them unless we understand why they have arisen. In your address to me, you have stated that you stand for socialism. Labour the world over, wherever it is, stands for socialism; and even apart from labour, there are many other forces which stand for socialism in the world today.

I believe and many of us believe that the present troubles and distempers of the world cannot be cured except by socialism. Therefore I hope that socialism will come to this country as well as to the rest of the world. But I find often enough that when we talk about socialism we talk about a thing which we seldom understand. Our socialism means simply, perhaps, a dislike of people who are better off. That is not socialism. Socialism is an economic doctrine whereby there would be a proper distribution of the things that you produce, thereby raising the standards of the people all round. I am not going into what socialism is, because it is a complicated subject. But what I wish to tell you is this. We have got big and complicated problems to deal with. We cannot get rid of them by simply learning a slogan. It is right, I think, that you should take the trouble to understand what socialism is so that when the time comes we may be able to work along the right lines to achieve it.

We talk a great deal of socialism and we should talk a great deal about it; but it is obvious that in order to have socialism in this country, we must have political power in our hands. We cannot have socialism under the British Government. This is an absurdity. Therefore it is essential for us to have freedom and independence in this country before we can give effect to any socialistic principle. Therefore we must not, in talking vaguely of socialism, forget the struggle for independence in this country. I say so because I find many people taking refuge in talking about socialism and doing nothing in regard to the political struggle for freedom. For a socialist in India, today the first and primary duty is to fight for the independence of the country. If he does not do so, he cannot be a socialist however much he may talk about socialism. But it is also true that a socialist fighting for political independence does it in a way so as to keep the socialist issue in the foreground, so that when freedom comes it may be easier for socialism to come.

We have come to the conclusion that for the workers and for all of us in this country it is essential to fight for independence. For the

workers especially it is necessary to keep the socialist ideal in their mind and to work for it. We have thus two definite things to work for and to fight for, and the first in order of precedence is independence.

The Indian National Congress is our great national organisation fighting for independence. It has fought in the past and it is going to fight, and it is bound to fight, in the future for independence. There are many odd groups and odd individuals all over the country, who make a noise from time to time. But it is patent to anybody who has eyes to see that the only effective organisation which has the strength to fight and the courage to fight for freedom is the Indian National Congress. If any of you want to do anything effective in this fight it is up to you to strengthen the National Congress in this fight. Therefore if you, as the organised workers of the country, want to take your part in this fight for Indian independence, it is necessary for you to join in this political struggle of the Indian National Congress. I am glad to find that more and more organised workers of the country have begun to realise this fact and to give their weight and support to this national struggle carried on by the Congress. The more they make it a mass struggle the more it will be for the good of the masses. Now it is good that you should influence the Congress in this direction and cooperate with the Congress in the fight for freedom. At the same time it is right and necessary that you should keep your workers' organisations functioning and growing so that you may be able to fight for the special workers' demands with which you are most concerned and not only fight for them now, but much more so to press for them in a larger way when there is any measure of political freedom in this country. The strength of the workers obviously lies in their organisations. They have no individual strength. The strength of the organised workers lies in their trade unions and in cooperation among the various trade unions themselves.

During the past few years the Indian workers' movement has suffered a tremendous setback by breaking up into various parts. You know also that efforts have been made to bring about unity in the labour ranks. But unfortunately these efforts have not succeeded to any large extent. I am surprised that in spite of the obvious lesson that we ought to have learnt from the past experiences, there are still people in the ranks of the labour movement who do not encourage unity in the labour ranks, who actually encourage disunity, and who make all sorts of futile excuses and bring about obstruction in the way of such unity.

I want to put it to you, the rank and file of the labour movement, and of the railway workers' movement, that it is up to you to consider these problems and to press for this unity for without it, take it from

me, you and your comrades will not be able to get much out of your pleadings and beggings, but might even lose what little you possess.

I am sure that if the labour rank and file insist on unity in the labour movement, if they make it clear to their leaders that they must have this unity, those leaders who come in the way of that unity will have to bow to that decision. But so long as they do not insist on this, it may be that some of their leaders here and there will come in the way, will not work for unity and the workers will remain weak and disunited.

The workers have got to work then for this unity in the labour movement. They have got to build up a strong workers' movement in this country, both to help in the struggle for freedom and to help in the economic struggle of the workers and ultimately in the struggle for socialism. They cannot do it by fighting amongst themselves and being disunited.

The first lesson a worker learns is the importance of united effort. The whole trade union movement means workers working together. In the same way, on the political side, they have to pull together. But in order to weaken them, all manner of forces come into play, largely at the instance of those who do not want independence—the government or other forces—and the result is that splits are created, sometimes on a religious basis. Whether they are Muslims or Hindus, are not their demands as workers the same? There is no difference whether they are Hindus, Muslims, railway workers or factory workers. If the cause of the workers goes up, both profit; if it goes down, both will sink under it.

Unfortunately we are not free. Many of us are foolish enough not to see this and we think more in terms of our community, though it will not make the slightest difference to anybody if a few more Hindus or Muslims get government jobs or seats in the councils. Therefore I want you to consider all these questions, to build up your movement, to join hands with the Indian National Congress which is fighting for political liberty, and at the same time stand for the workers' rights and advance your cause, and having built a free India, later go and build a socialist India.

10. The Congress in Perspective[1]

Young men and women,

I do not feel exactly like a man of destiny. I do feel now and always, when I have to stand and speak before an audience of young men and women, somewhat more youthful. I feel a little more optimistic, and generally *I feel better than I usually do.* But, *in spite* of that, I am afraid, I stand before you not to give any dynamic, eloquent or rhetorical message, because a person who is made to speak several times in the course of the day to various audiences, varying in character, is apt to lose the inspiration he might otherwise possess. Therefore, standing before you, I frankly confess to you that I have not a very full or prepared mind, and I propose to go on in a scrappy manner, as odd ideas come to my mind. You will therefore forgive me if I am not very cogent or very inspiring.

Yesterday I spoke to a vast multitude of human beings—and other addresses too I have delivered in Madras—about the current political and economic problems. Those problems are with us, whether we are students or grown-ups. You have to face them. But at the same time I should like you to consider them in a slightly different way from the way of the grown-ups. I should like to address you in a slightly different way from the way in which I address a politically or physically grown-up audience. Often enough, those who are physically grown up are not all mentally grown-up. But that is not the case in India only. You find it elsewhere too. So I should like you to consider these problems in a somewhat detached way. Whether we criticise the youth of India or praise them, ultimately the burden of carrying on India is bound to fall on your shoulders and the like of you in the country. It *is going to be a heavy burden, a heavy responsibility,* and if you do not *realise what it is going to be, if you do not prepare for it from now,* it will not be well with the country. Therefore it is right that you young men and women, all over the country, should think about these matters, not necessarily come to a decision immediately, but clear your minds of the enormous amount of cobwebs they do possess. I do like addressing students and drawing their attention to these various matters and perhaps make them think a little. I do not want you to accept anything I say. I do not possess, I hope, a fascist mentality. I am *not a Fuhrer or any other kind of a man of destiny.*

1. Address to Madras students, 7 October 1936. From *The Hindu*, 8 October 1936

May I say in passing something which is wholly personal, which has nothing to do with you, but which perhaps might interest you. It is this. I do not like this talk in our country of the Congress president being elected for three years and the like. I think it exhibits an utterly wrong mentality. It exhibits fundamentally a fascist mentality. I, for one, am not going to be any party to the development of that mentality in India. I do not want you to take anything that I might say as the truth or the right thing. I only want to tickle your minds and make you discuss with each other, make you come to a decision, provisionally or otherwise, and to change your decisions if *other facts come before you. I want you to move mentally as I want* you to move physically occasionally. That is why I want you to take what I say as something more or less provisional.

Yesterday I said that I had a very serious failing for a politician. I often took leave of the present. A politician has no business to do that, because his chief functions are in the present. Often I lose myself in the past. That, as you know, is a failing of the age. Oftener perhaps I lose myself in dreaming of the future. That, I hope, is something in favour of youth. And so between that past and the future that one tries to get a glimpse into, I have a feeling of unreality in the present; and that is a vital failing for a politician. But when I meet vigorous young people, I live in the present and also dream of the future. Thus I have a feeling of the present also. I try to build the future on the present and to connect the two together. So, somehow, the picture before me is strangely mixed up between the past and the present and the future that is to come.

A month or two ago I happened to be far away from Madras, in the north-west corner of India, in the Indus valley. I stood before the ruins of Mohenjo Daro. They fascinate me. I have been there previously. Although this time I went there on a political mission, I could not resist the temptation to steal a few hours to look at the ruins again, not only to look at them, but to dream of the enormous past that lies behind our country. You will remember that Mohenjo Daro dates between five and six thousand years back. When I thought of those six thousand years of India's history, very glorious years some of them, bad and shameful years others of them, ups and downs, somehow I felt the present was an insignificant part of that long history, *this unhappy present. Some of us imagine that this past, the unhappy* period of 150 years or so—for Madras it is a longer period—is something which is almost lost in the mist of time, is something which we cannot get rid of, which pursues us, clings to us and sticks to us. Now that is a feeling that one can understand, because the present is always

a mountain to us. It looms large. Our troubles as students or family men may be very little; but for the moment they overpower you, excite you. Soon after, you may forget that trouble. It will become the past. You will say it does not matter. So also, in the history of nations, the present may seem very big, very unhappy and very important. But, yet it will be very little, if you consider it with that long perspective, that long range history can give you. There is no country on the face of the earth that has a longer perspective of history than India has. Therefore, standing there in the ruins of Mohenjo Daro and thinking of that long perspective, these 150 years of British domination in India seem to lose all significance for me, seem to be just a tiny bit in the *long period, just a page in the long chapter. And then, I tried to look* with a longer perspective and although it was a dim perspective, it was a perspective of the future, I tried to think what was going to happen in the world and in India, how we are going to be prepared for it, how we are going to fashion our country and our individual lives for it.

Why I have mentioned this to you is to develop not that vague dreamy roaming mind which unhappily sometimes I possess, but a certain perspective which will take you out, but not detach you, from today. We dare not take ourselves out of it. That is a weak man's way of escaping the present-day problems. We dare not escape from today. We have to think of today and conquer today. If we think of yesterday and still more so if we think of tomorrow, today does not oppress us quite so much. Then we get a right view, a right perspective.

You see in the country today, even in the National Congress, conflicts of opinion, arguments and heated debates, and some of you imagine, and some people are interested in stressing and emphasising that the Congress is splitting up, breaking up and all manner of tendency is arising within the Congress which will weaken our national front.

I want you *to consider what this nationalist movement has been. It* has grown up in the past slowly and gradually, and almost imperceptibly. And today, you find it functioning in a powerful, magnificent manner in the country. I dare say, speaking of subject countries and nationalistic movements in subject countries, there is no parallel in history, to such a powerful movement being built up as the Indian National Congress It is not a matter for cheering. Many factors have gone towards it. But still, the fact remains that we have built a magnificent movement, of which the living embodiment is the Indian National Congress. Go into its history. You will find in the early days, fifty years ago, a number of very respectable individuals meeting

together, a small group of upper class people meeting together, and talking in terms of the crudest loyalty. Now it is astonishing, when we read the speeches of those days today, how they managed to say those things which even the feeblest and the weakest of our people will not dream of saying today. Yet what they said were not the sayings of weak men. They were brave men, strong men. The situation had not developed sufficiently and they thought in a particular manner. So the Congress began more or less representing the upper layer of the middle class in India. Gradually the other classes rolled into it. Then, you find in the intervening stages, a gradual conflict coming into the Congress, a conflict of ideals, of different groups which were represented in the early years of this twentieth century, the conflict between the so-called extremists and the moderates, between the followers of Tilak and those of Gokhale. Now, we are too apt to think today, and we were even more then, to think in terms of personalities. They were great persons, Tilak and Gokhale. We must not be dazzled by their greatness, but rather seek the cause underlying those conflicts of ideals. We find that Tilak represented the coming of the lower middle class into the nationalistic movement. *It was this lower middle class emerging gradually and coming into the Congress, that frightened the upper middle class. Roughly speaking, the conflict between the extremists and the moderates in the Congress was the conflict between the rising lower middle class and the established upper middle class.* That conflict went on for a number of years. To begin with, the impact swept the lower middle class outside the Congress although it was larger in number. Ultimately it could not be kept out. A certain handful of the upper middle class, not the whole, did not like this new turn of affairs and they left the Congress and formed the Liberal Party. Many of the upper middle class still remained in the Congress. Gradually there was a change in the whole tone and outlook. The Congress became much more influenced by the desire and the needs of the lower middle class, and inevitably it became more extreme in its outlook and more given to action rather than activities purely of an academic kind. Later came Gandhiji into the fold, a very great and powerful personality. *He brought all the remaining fragments of the lower middle classes into the Congress. He also brought other powerful factors. Although he did not actually bring in the peasants and the masses into the Congress,* he brought their influence, their thoughts, their desires and their wants, very much into the Congress, because he himself represented them to an astounding degree. The Congress became predominantly a lower middle class organisation. That was the origin of the Gandhi Congress today. Because the masses

came in, we had those powerful movements—noncooperation, civil disobedience and the like.

We were unfortunate to lose a group of Liberals. But however unfortunate it might have been it was perhaps a thing which nobody could control. In a sense, that might be considered a split within the Congress, for some estimable people left the Congress. The reason for it was not a resolution here or a decision there, but the fact that a large number of others came into the Congress, whose general views, not only views but looks and dresses, they disliked. That is to say, in the balance, although we lost a group which we should have liked to have kept with us, we gained a large number of others and the Congress, even after the departure of the Liberal group from us, was a far more powerful body than it had been before. So in spite of that split with the Liberals, the Congress gained in strength because more people from the masses, a large number of them, joined the Congress.

The same process took place when Mahatma Gandhi came into the movement. Again, the Congress lost some people who had worked along with it for many years. They left because they did not like the look of the Gandhian Congress. They did not like the new talk of noncooperation. The whole Congress changed. It began to talk a new language, not much of English but the language of the country, dressed in the dress of the country and began to think in terms of the country. Behind this noncooperation were all manner of unknown factors. Some old Congressmen left, but again we find that although they left, the Congress became a far more powerful thing than it had been before, because a vast number of people came into it. Always you have this choice before you. However much we may regret individuals going out of the Congress—we want to keep them, we want as broad a national front as possible—we have to choose occasionally between the few and the many, between old and expired notions and ideas and new, dynamic, vitalising ideas which lead you to action, which bring into your fold vast numbers of people. Why do they bring vast numbers? Because they interpret the urges, desires and wants of those large numbers of people. The Congress, with all its failings—they are many, let us admit it—with all its mistakes, tried to keep in touch with those wants and desires and that is why it has become the powerful organisation it has been for the last few years. You must think, if you really want to increase the strength of the country, not in terms of individuals, not in terms of gaining the goodwill of this person or that person even though he might be a desirable individual, but in terms of large numbers, of the masses of the people, peasantry or workers or the vast numbers of middle class people of this country.

We talk about the problems of peasants and workers and rightly too. After all, this country is a peasant country. Our main problem is the peasant problem, the land problem. All the other problems sink into insignificance before it. And yet, you know that today even with educated people, people who go through universities, life is not a bed of roses. They have to face the problem of unemployment. Middle class unemployment today is a tremendous factor in India. It is a growing factor. There is no way out. Whether you function as ministers under the new Act or not, there is no way out of it under the present structure of the steel frame of the British administration in India. In order to solve that problem of unemployment, whether of the middle class or of the peasantry or of the industrial workers, you have to go outside that frame and picture, and think in different terms and lay down different boundaries. Therefore today you are in the grip of this problem of unemployment as much as the peasants.

We talk of the proletariat, of socialism and communism and the rest of it, but I must consider that in a country like India under the domination of a foreign imperialistic power, the whole population is the proletariat of the other country. That is the scientific analysis according to communism and socialism. In a sense, if you consider the question of India and England, India becomes a kind of rural area attached to the urban area of England, and as the urban areas have the habit of exploiting rural areas, we become the proletariat of the entire people of England, though it might be that the profits go only into a limited number of pockets. That is why there is the nationalistic urge in us for political freedom and that is why in any crisis all of us, even those who imagine that they are themselves out of it, come into the grip of poverty and unemployment.

How are you going to face these problems and how are you going to face the bigger problems that the world is going to thrust before you? I should like you to consider these in relation to the big world issues. You cannot possibly separate these problems. They are inextricably mixed up together. In whatever profession you are, you must face them. Supposing you are a trader, you will inevitably be mixed up with international trade. Some of you may become bankrupt without any mismanagement on your part, but because the price of a certain commodity has fallen very low. In the last few years, there has been a terrible depression in the world, a trade depression, a slump in trade, which is affecting not only the business classes but all classes, and especially the peasants, tremendously. Even when the harvest is good, the peasants are not better off. We have come to a stage when, however good the harvest might be, it does no good to the peasant. In

America, the state is giving bounties to the farmers to burn their crops. Can you imagine anything more foolish than that? Even in rich America, there are today thirteen millions of unemployed and many of them are hard up, starving, with no place to take shelter in. That is the stage of civilisation which we have reached under the sway of capitalism in the world. In India, we do not quite see the tremendous happenings because of the fact that ours is not a fully capitalist country. We are still a semi feudal country. We have acute unemployment with prospects of its growth, and in order to understand it and in order to find a solution for it, you have to think in terms of the wider problems of the world. You should prepare yourselves for the big things that are going to happen. Whatever is going to happen, we are not going to have a quiet life and a static life.

A famous Frenchman has said that right from the beginning of the twentieth century, there has been no period which has been so fundamentally revolutionary than this period and the age in which we live. Ever since the Great War began in 1914, there has been revolution in all parts of the world. The Russian revolution, the upheavals in Germany and the present terrible war in Spain are simply a prelude to a devastating change in the future. If there are people in this country who do not like revolution, who do not like a big change, then I think they have chosen a very wrong moment to be born in, because they cannot escape it. We cannot escape the elemental and natural forces working through the myriads of human beings. No doubt, human beings are bound to be sensible, thinking and thoughtful, but they cannot escape these elemental forces. You will see, before very long in the world, tremendous human cyclones; and if these happen, it is obvious that India will be affected by them. Are we prepared to meet the situation?

Our political and economic problems are very important. Without solving them we cannot do anything. But, after all, political freedom is not an end in itself. It is a means whereby we can live a good life, and a means of solving the problem of human relationship. But we will not be able to move on unless the political and economic obstacles are removed. We have to reach conclusions about them so that we might build the India of the future. These are the problems which you, as students, should think about.

You have stated in your address that I am a socialist. It is quite true and I am rather conceited about it. But allow me to say that socialist as I am, to some extent, I am a weak man. I am not a believer in dogmas. If you accept a dogma there is a sort of compulsion which I hate whether in religion or in politics. People accuse

me that I am not definite. I am definite so far as today and tomorrow are concerned. But I am not definite about the day after. I am *not* definite because I want to adapt myself to the changing conditions. All the time I want to be thinking about this. I do not want preconceived ideas and formulas to influence me. I want you also to adopt that attitude of open mind. It is not entirely a logical way of thinking, but I feel that way. I hope you will all consider these problems, discuss them and have heated debates about them and whenever the occasion comes act up to your convictions.

When I heard that the students of Madras have no organisations, I was surprised. Wherever you go in Oxford or Cambridge you will find numerous students' organisations bubbling with life. They discuss all sorts of problems. I am surprised to see the lack of interest in the Indian student in world problems. It is not enough that you gather on occasions to present addresses. That is certainly a pleasant function. But I should like you to interest yourself in all matters and organise yourself. I hope that Madras will build up a strong students' organisation.

You have presented me with a heavy purse. I thank you for it, but let me tell you, you have put me in a great difficulty. Money must be always accepted if it is presented. There are plenty of good causes which require money. But when I go out on a Congress tour, I do not encourage the presentation of purses except for Congress purposes. There are many other funds, charitable funds, for which I have myself issued appeals, but I do not encourage presentation of purses during a tour on behalf of the Congress for purposes other than Congress work. You have specified that the money should be spent on the spread of socialist ideology. It is dear to me and I should like it to spread, but it is not obviously the Congress ideology at present, and I cannot therefore utilise the money in any department of the Congress. You have put me in a difficulty and I shall have to think about it and may have to consult you about it before I decide what to do with it. I thank you again for the address of welcome.

11. On the Importance of the Land Problem

I thank you for the address, and I am especially grateful for such messages when they come from the peasantry with whom I have been connected in my province for the last seventeen years. I do not know in any detail the problems of the peasantry in these parts. Generally of course I am acquainted with the broad questions which affect you as they affect other peasants elsewhere. But even without knowing the details of these questions, I think any person who is acquainted with the situation in India, political and economic, is bound to come to the conclusion that the great fundamental problem of India today is the land problem. There is no doubt about it in my mind. If we talk about Swaraj or independence, essentially it is in order to face and solve this problem as well as others. It is because we cannot move in the direction of solving this problem or any other major problem that we should remove the obstacles which foreign domination puts in our way. Therefore whether you stand for the peasants or the workers or any class or group in India, it is your and their common interest to remove that obstacle. And that is commonly known as the nationalist urge, which ought to be common to every person in India except those groups, those very small groups, which flourish because of that foreign domination. Leaving those small groups aside, which are usually the products of that foreign domination, all other groups, to whatever class they may belong, have a common interest in removing those obstacles caused by foreign domination. While you work for the solution of that political problem in common with others, you are always thinking that that political solution should be such as to enable you and the country to solve the other problems with a view to ending the exploitation of the peasantry.

Now today, as I said, the real major problem of the country is the land problem. We do not talk about it so much. That is to say, our newspapers or prominent people are often discussing many other problems which are no doubt important in themselves but which, on the whole, sink almost into insignificance when you think of India in terms of this great peasant problem. They are insignificant from the point of view of numbers alone, because the peasant problem affects the vast population of India; and they are also insignificant from other

1. Speech at the meeting of the South Indian Federation of Peasants and Workers, Madras, 7 October 1936. From *The Hindu*, 8 October 1936.

points of view, and relatively they pale into insignificance. And yet, there is far more talk about those relatively minor matters and far less of this tremendous thing that overshadows India. That is likely to make a great difference in the India of the future.

Why is it that, in almost every part of India today, there is a tremendous ferment in the rural areas—whether it is in the zamindari areas, big talukdari areas, as in my province, or in Bengal or Bihar, which are the three main talukdari and zamindari provinces, or in the ryotwari provinces like the Punjab or the Central Provinces or the major part of the Madras Presidency? Conditions differ to some extent, the problems of the peasants differ, and yet, there is a common ferment going on all over. They do not themselves understand exactly what they want. But they understand what they want immediately. It is a smaller payment of revenue, remission of revenue or debt or water rates or *various other things that they suffer from. These are legal things* quite apart from the innumerable illegal exactions they have to put up with.

In a district in Oudh, I was told about fifty two different types of illegal exactions which the talukdars are exacting. Even allowing for exaggeration, it is a prodigious list. In the Punjab it is a problem relating to the small peasant proprietors who are usually considered to be the bulwarks of the social system. However much the British Government wants to help them, it cannot give them much remission in the way of revenue, because if that is done, the whole structure will go bankrupt. There seems to be no obvious way out of it. It is becoming increasingly difficult for the petty zamindars of the Punjab to pay their revenue; and there is the question of agricultural debts also. Taking all these together a problem is arising which, under the present circumstances, is an insoluble one. There is the solution of death by famine, flood, etc. Leaving all these out, under the present economic and political structure of the British Government in India, the land problem is an insoluble one. Therefore it becomes necessary and essential for us to find what changes we will have to make in the political and economic structure so as to enable us to solve the land problem as well as other problems.

Mind you, under the new Act, of which we thoroughly disapprove, under this new constitution which is coming down upon us, whatever power you may have in the provinces, *fundamentally we move within* that steel frame structure of the British Government. Therefore that Act is a futile thing so far as any solution to our problems is concerned. These are some general considerations which I have to put before you. I do not think it is enough to live on slogans, to shout

slogans and generally make it appear that it is really a question of smashing individually rich people who might be exploiting the masses. It is a far more intricate and difficult problem. We have to think not in terms of just removing a few ordinary individuals. We have to change the system and it is no good our blaming them. We may blame particular individuals for particular exactions, but it is no good our blaming a capitalist because he is a capitalist, a zamindar because he is a zamindar. He is a product of the system in which all of us have been brought up and bred. The very best of the zamindars, talukdars and capitalists cannot do very much, however well-intentioned they might be, so long as that system flourishes. So our wrath should be directed not against individuals but against the system which is injurious.

I have been asked: "Why do you criticise zamindars and want to do away with them? Have you not met good, honest nationalist zamindars?" It is an absurd question to put. Of course I know good honest nationalist zamindars as well as good honest nationalist capitalists. But it is not a question of their honesty or dishonesty. There are good and bad zamindars just as there are good and bad tenants and peasants. But the point is that a certain system which flourishes today is not good for the country or for the masses of the people. It crushes them; it exploits them. It does not make much difference who is working the machine. It is no good to know that a God fearing man is working the machine. There is so much talk about Indianisation of the services.[2] It may have some force or some reason. But again it comes to this, that you want to change the person who is working the machine. Instead of the Englishman, you want an Indian to be in charge of that machine. It is no satisfaction to me to know that an Indian sits upon me. I want to get rid of the burden. Therefore we must view this question in a more fundamental and basic way. We must consider the question dispassionately and impersonally.

While it is necessary for big economic groups like the peasants and the workers to form their own organisations for the redress of their grievances, they cannot fundamentally remove those grievances till we get Swaraj. That is true. Yet it is possible for them, if they are strong enough, to remove certain grievances even before Swaraj. In any event, a mere attempt to remove those grievances in an organised way strengthens them and will enable them in future to play a more

2. There was a persistent demand during this period in the Central Legislature and outside for recruiting large numbers of Indians into the defence and the covenanted services.

and more important part in the political struggle for the country and in the subsequent social changes that might be brought about. Therefore such organisations of the peasants and workers are to be welcomed, and it is desirable that they should function in the closest cooperation with the National Congress. They need not, they cannot, expect the National Congress to adopt their programme in toto. It is a nationalist organisation consisting of many groups and classes. But they should attempt to influence it more and more, to pull it in their direction. That indeed is what has been happening during the last fifteen or sixteen years. The more the Congress has looked to the masses, inevitably it has had to think in terms of the good of the masses, and it has gradually adopted the cause of the masses.

You have mentioned in the address that the economic needs and demands of the peasants and workers should be made the main plank of the economic programme of the Indian National Congress. At the last session of the Congress at Lucknow, a resolution was passed calling upon the All India Congress Committee, in consultation with provincial Congress committees, including peasants' organisations, to draw up an agrarian programme for the country. At the present moment various provincial Congress committees are in the process of drawing up a programme. The Congress, being what it is, cannot be expected to become completely a peasants' organisation. It will come nearer and nearer to the peasants the more the peasants come into it both individually, as they should, and in an organised way as they might in future. But you must not grow indignant with the Congress. That is absurd. *I am glad you are going to issue some kind of a journal*[3] for the benefit of your movement amongst the kisans, and I wish your Federation and your newspaper all success.

3. *Vahini*, a Telugu biweekly.

12. For Unity in the Labour Movement[1]

I am glad to attend this great meeting of the workers of Madras. I would like to tell you much, but the meeting is so big and tremendous that I am afraid it will not be possible for everybody to hear me

1. Madras, 7 October 1936. From *The Hindu*, 8 October 1936.

or for the meeting to continue for a sufficiently long time. Therefore, I propose to tell you just a few things which I think you ought to know.

The first thing is that you are workers in factories and your immediate troubles are the troubles which you have to face in your factories. It is in order to protect your interests as workers that you have organised yourselves in trade unions. That is right, because that must be the immediate object of the worker, to protect himself, to organise himself and to resist the assaults of his employer on his wages, and on his standard of life.

What is the worker? What strength has the poor worker got? He can be knocked down; he can be kicked and cuffed and dealt with in any way that an employer might choose. One worker, or one peasant has no strength. But if they organise themselves, they will have great strength. A ten thousand, a hundred thousand and a million workers, organised, will have great strength. Therefore, strength lies, for you, in organisation. It does not lie in begging and pleading for justice and mercy. It lies in organisation and in your helping each other whenever you are in trouble. This is the whole history of the workers' movement in the world and this has taught us that the only way for workers to protect their interests and to save themselves is to organise into trade unions and to stand shoulder to shoulder whenever there is attack on any single person. I hope that you have learnt that lesson.

You must also learn another lesson. Employers of course always try to break trade unions. They try to weaken them because they are afraid of a strong aggressive trade union movement. Therefore they put difficulties in the way. They try to start rival trade unions which are really no trade unions at all, which they try to induce the workers to join so that real trade unions might suffer. You should beware of the unions started by employers. Their purpose is not to strengthen the workers' movement, but to weaken and destroy it. Their purpose is, when workers go on a strike, to break that strike. Their purpose is to supply black-legs when there is a crisis in the labour movement. Therefore, workers must always remember this and support and strengthen the real trade unions. You should remember also that the strength of the labour movement in India does not consist merely in your particular trade union in Madras. It consists in all the trade unions in India working together in one great labour movement. The labour movement in India has split into separate federations and organisations and congresses. And since it is so split up, it has become weak and unable to protect the workers from the attacks that are made on them. This has been the fate of the Indian workers' movement during the last six or seven years. It is high time that you and all Indian workers learn

a lesson from it. What lesson have you learnt during the last six or seven years? What lesson has the labour movement learnt after these splits and divisions of the last few years? It seems to me, unhappily, that the movement is still carrying on in the same old way and in the same foolish way without profiting from past experience.

The lesson *that you should have learnt, that you must learn and* which you can forget only at your peril, is this, that you should have a unified and strong labour movement in India. Those who work for unity in the labour movement in India, work for the betterment of the workers. Those who work against that unity, whatever their intentions may be, are doing a great disservice to the cause of the Indian workers' movement. Therefore it is up to the rank and file of the workers in India to press for this unity in the labour movement, to shout for it, to make it clear to their leaders that they insist on having it. There will always be people who are interested, for various reasons, in not advancing the cause of unity amongst the workers. I hope that *labour in Madras will insist on this unity of labour in the* country.

You have also to face larger problems. We talk of Swaraj in the country and of the Indian National Congress fighting for Swaraj and independence. How do these things affect you? Perhaps many of you may think that these have nothing to do with you, that so far as you are concerned, it is none of your business to try to get Swaraj. But if any of you think so, though there are not many who would be so foolish as to think so, you are in the wrong, because if Swaraj is necessary for India, if Swaraj is urgently needed, it is not for those at the top and for the well-to-do people, but for the poor people, the workers and the peasants who cannot any longer do without it.

Swaraj means ultimately the power to redress the grievances of the people. The Swaraj we are working for is a Swaraj of the Indian masses, a Swaraj in which workers all over the country will have an effective voice. We want Swaraj in order to remedy the ills and redress the grievances of the people, and we can only do that when the Indian people themselves have power in their hands. Therefore it becomes necessary for the workers to work and fight for Swaraj. The Indian National Congress is our great organisation and is fighting for Swaraj. Therefore it is necessary for us, whether we are peasants, workers, shopkeepers or others, to support that great national organisation in its fight for Swaraj. The workers have also to carry on their fight at the *same time as they carry on the fight for Swaraj. They have also to* carry it on in such a way that when Swaraj comes they may be able to have in it an effective share.

The strength of the worker lies in his organisation, in his trade union. Therefore, he must do everything he can to support and strengthen this trade union. Once a trade union weakens, there is little hope for the worker. I want you to understand that a trade union means a trade union started, supported, organised and generally supervised and controlled by the workers and their friends. It does not mean one started by the owners of the factories or the mills. It is the duty of every worker to shun and keep away from these employers' unions and the so-called welfare associations. In this connection I have been told that there is some kind of employers' organisation here which always tries to undermine and dig underneath the other trade union, so much so that it has been putting up candidates in opposition to the candidates of the trade union for the municipal elections. I know nothing about these matters and hesitate to give you advice concerning matters I do not know about. But I think the principle is quite clear, that you should consider that, even as an employers' union is a body to be avoided at all costs, so are its candidates.

Lastly, your union as well as other unions in the country must join together. Unless you have a united labour movement, one group of unions will be played off against another and the result will be that you cannot get what you want. Therefore, it is essential for workers in the country to have a unified labour movement, to press for it and to insist on having it. I see absolutely no reason why there should be no such movement. So far as I know, the minds of the workers and even of their organisers have been trying for a united labour movement. It is their misfortune that in spite of their attempts it has not come off yet. Anyhow, if you and other workers put up a united effort for it, you will succeed. Another point which is more or less subsidiary to the previous one is that you must not bring the Hindu-Muslim question into the workers' movement. It has done enough mischief elsewhere. I hope that in the workers' movement it will have absolutely no place. When people talk of Hindu unions and Muslim unions—that way lies madness. Therefore I hope that whether you are Hindus or Muslims you will function together, fight for the cause of labour and for the cause of the country, which ultimately is the cause of the masses.

13. Socialism and Nationalism[1]

I have glanced through some of the addresses presented to me and they, or most of them, seem to have come from young people socialistically inclined. That is good; for youth is good and socialism is good and both, when they go together, are doubly good. But still, I do feel that in these addresses and other demonstrations, where socialism is boomed up—I like that atmosphere and I like the thought behind the slogans but I do not like sometimes the greater absence of thought behind the slogans—many of those persons who talk so loudly about socialism have not really considered the question. They applaud it and think of socialism in terms of anti-this, anti that or anti a *particular thing. Socialism, as most other isms, has inevitably* to oppose those who are opposed to it. Inevitably, if there are obstructions put in its way, socialism has to take a good big broom and sweep away those obstructions. But it is not anti-anything; it is not anti-zamindar or, anti-capitalist. If a certain system like the peasant proprietor land system comes in the way of a socialistic reorganisation of society, it is right that that particular land system should be put an end to and another evolved. If a certain system called the capitalist system requires change, development and extension, it is right that we should give that extension and effect the change or development. But that does not mean that socialism is a matter of merely combating capitalism. It is a question of developing capitalism. It does not mean that we are out just to chase out and pursue and otherwise put an end to the tribe of landlords, capitalists and the rest. It is absurd. It does not mean anything of that sort. It means that we are out to change a particular system of which even its representatives are helpless victims. Therefore, I want you to think a little more in terms of fundamental matters and theories and not of repetition of slogans and the rest. I want you, young men and those who are attracted to socialism, to study it and study it not merely to learn a few phrases and technical words, but to understand the real thought behind it, to understand how it has grown under special circumstances in Europe.

It is a product of the growing industrialism of Europe. It has come into existence as a kind of product—I have called it, sometimes, the

1. Speech at Madras, 8 October 1936. From *The Hindu*, 8 October 1936.

daughter—of capitalism Call them sisters, if you like; they have come together. They are intimately allied. As modern industrialism has grown in the West, as capitalism has grown so socialism has grown, in a humanitarian way at first and then gradually coming to grips with the subject, itself becoming more and more scientific, though not, of course, absolutely mathematically precise—because we have to deal with human beings and societies and we cannot be so precise—but still precise enough to help us to think and to give us some indication of the road we have to travel. All that is the product of certain conditions which prevailed during the last hundred years. This idea is almost a hundred years old, not in its modern form but in the form which preceded it. The actual modern form is just about forty or fifty years old. You must see that in relation to past history and environment and then you will understand it.

What happens very often is this: you transplant phrases and words and apply them bodily to Indian conditions today. I am quite convinced that the socialist analysis helps us to understand conditions everywhere, whether it be Europe, China or India. I am quite convinced that the fundamental thought behind socialism, the theory of socialism, can be and will be made to apply to all countries of the world within a fairly short space of time, as time is counted in terms not of human life but of the life of nations. But that does not mean that I believe that we must blindly and foolishly apply it in the particular manner that it might have been applied in any other country. It does not mean that you and I should sit down and blindly copy what has been done in Russia or what might have been in any other country. That is not socialism. That is simply bigotry and blindness. The very first thing that socialism or, in a scientific sense, Marxism teaches us is this: that we must not be dogmatic about it. It indicates lines of vision and activity. It says it is only an indication to help us to think along those lines, that we must study the objective conditions of the country and adapt our activity and thought to those conditions, of course, within the framework of socialistic theory. The greatest of the Marxists of modern times, Lenin, was never tired of repeating that it is folly for persons to go about saying, say, in England or Germany, that they will do what Russia has done. The English or German people, when they want socialism, will, of course, adopt its fundamental principles—such as suppression of profit in industrial production and consumption—but they will do it in accordance with their own conditions and needs. Suppose England went socialist or communist today—England I think is in a far better condition to become communist today than Russia is even after its eighteen years' effort,

because Russia started from a very low level and a much more backward condition and it wants time, still. It has grown at a tremendous pace, at a marvellous pace; it is astounding what Russia has done. It has, of course, committed many things which many do not like, which I utterly dislike. But in thinking of the economic changes in Russia, I think it is amazing to see what has been done. But great as her record is, Russia has not caught up the countries which have been growing for the last century and a half industrially. Probably in the last ten years, Russia has made greater progress than most other countries would have in fifty years. That is certainly a tremendous pace. It may be that in another ten or fifteen years, it may go ahead of the most industrialised countries of the world. That is possible. But if England turns communist or socialist, it starts from a very high standard of life, of industrial development and the like. England is in a position immediately to become far more socialist than a country which has been backward. Therefore you cannot copy one country in another. You can profit by the example of another country and study its translation of theory into practice. It is tremendously helpful. But, remember, Russia had to do without an example. It had no 'practice' before it. It had all theory. It had mugged up the theory well enough, but it had to apply it in its own way. It applied it in a good way, not afraid of changing its method whenever it went wrong. People who had no vision said that Russia did this and that, sat down and criticised, not realising that Russia was, for the moment, exhibiting a quality which is a very valuable one in human beings and in nations —the quality of profiting by experience, changing by experience and not remaining 'stick-in-the-mud.' Russia, in the course of its affairs, has repeatedly changed its policy, but of course not in fundamentals.

But I am not here to talk about Russia. I am only telling you that socialism when it is applied to India, will have, I think, to fall within the wide framework of socialistic theory. The manner of its application, the speed of its application and the measures for its application, will, however, have to depend on Indian conditions. They will have to depend on Indian industrial conditions, Indian cultural conditions and, to some extent, on what may be called the genius of the Indian people. All these will have to be taken together. Therefore it is impossible for anyone now to state which particular shape, form or colour the future socialist organisation of India will take. You can generally say what its probable shape or form or colour might be. But as to the exact form or as to how long it will take to get into that form, nobody can say anything definitely now. It will be foolish to be dogmatic about it because you cannot know.

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None the less, if we really want to understand and prepare ourselves for that socialist India, we have to think hard and deep. We have to see it in connection with our present struggle for freedom and independence. If you isolate it from that, you function in the air. Today, the hunger and poverty of the Indian people are inevitably driving them to socialistic thought. Why do you talk of socialism to me, young men and women all over the country? Not because a few odd persons have been delivering speeches about it but because of the growing middle class unemployment in the country. Because of that, you are forced to examine the problem and to think. Because you think of it and examine it, you are driven in the direction of accepting socialism. So, there is a growing urge to socialism and that will go on increasing. But remember this, that the dominant urge in India today, the dominant urge in any country that is a subject country, inevitably must be the nationalist urge. Whilst I tell you socialism is not an 'anti' thing, nationalism, I think, is an 'anti' thing fundamentally. I do not want to be 'anti' anything, unless it be solid, constructive and health-giving. The fact remains that essentially the background of nationalism is anti-foreign. It derives its strength not so much from love but from dislike. It is to some extent a racial matter, although we may not think on racial lines. I want to tell you I dislike nationalism. But I do like nationalism so far as India is concerned, situated as it is today, because nationalism for us means that it takes us in the direction of our freedom and of our own growth physically, mentally, morally and spiritually. For us, nationalism is a releasing force, and therefore, it is good. But nationalism in a country like Germany today or Italy is not a force which takes one to freedom. It confines and restricts. It is a narrowing thing.

It is not an enlarging thing. Therefore nationalism in Europe today has become a bane and a curse. Therefore, progressive people of Europe today feel insulted if you call them nationalists and they ask you, "Do you think we are narrow-minded, bigoted people, fascists or nazis?" Nationalism is a confined and excessively narrow creed there. But it is a definitely different thing here in India. But still, the fact remains that the background of nationalism is not so much, I think, an active positive feeling as a negative feeling.

You know that in the past eighteen or twenty years, we in India have had a unique experience, the experience of a great and inspiring leader dinning into our ears the doctrine of nonviolence, peace and goodwill and love for our opponent. That continuous dinning and teaching has inevitably produced a certain atmosphere in the country. It has not wholly got rid of the background of nationalism, viz.,

the 'anti' element in it, but has reduced it to a minimum. Ordinarily a nationalist movement like ours, if we had not that continuous pressure from our leader in the direction of peace and goodwill, would have resulted in something terribly racial, anti foreign, devouring and consuming us and perhaps occasionally giving us a certain energy to go ahead, but ultimately making us much smaller men. And the solution of the problem would have, quite apart from the moral issue, become much more difficult; because it is difficult to solve problems by accumulating violence and hatred.

Although we have functioned as a nationalist movement and our nationalism has been of a *fairly intense variety, yet it has led to relatively little of the bitterness that is the natural line of nationalism elsewhere.* But I cannot say that we have escaped those hatreds and bitternesses altogether. We have them still in our hearts and sometimes they *come out, if not against our opponents, at least against our own* colleagues.

The problem before us is, nationalism being the dominant urge of the country and socialism being, according to you and me, the right path *to tread to solve the problems which face us, how to combine the* two? We cannot have one of the two alone, because nationalism alone does not solve the problem and to follow socialism alone will be to ignore the vital issue before the country and the vital urge which *moves millions in the country. We have to combine the two.* Socialism has inevitably to push nationalism forward in its political garb. That is the common aspect between socialism and nationalism. Both like political independence. But nationalism, more or less, stops there, *while* socialism wants to go ahead. *Socialism, if it is wise,* presses forward with its ideas and turns nationalism in its direction. At the same time it does not combat with nationalism because the first tremendous step is common to both. Socialism wants to cooperate with *nationalism, cooperate not only with the socialist elements and others* who are friendly to socialism but even with anti-socialist elements in that nationalism. Without that proviso, there can be no cooperation, because there is no common ground left.

I *hope you who talk in terms of socialism will remember that you* may not, dare not, use the term "socialism" and socialistic slogans as an excuse for inaction in the political and nationalist field. If you do, you will bring disrepute to the name of socialism.

14. Socialism and the Indian Struggle[1]

I do not quite know what to say about "Socialism and the Indian Struggle", because at this very moment there is a real struggle going on outside the hall. It is astonishing to find that in Madras microphones have not come into general use. You have a small hall for the purpose of this meeting; perhaps this is the biggest hall available. It is difficult to concentrate on a subject with these disturbances and noise outside the meeting hall.

I am coming from another meeting and the contrast between that meeting and the present one is terribly marked. I have been asked to talk about socialism. I am not much impressed with this audience nor is there the spirit of socialism in it. At the other meeting, I saw before me nearly fifty to sixty thousand human beings who were in the midst of a daily struggle for a living and thinking only in terms of that struggle. It is to those people that socialism can bring some relief from their sufferings.

We talk and discuss about socialism and it is right that we question intellectually and in a scientific way and come to some conclusions. But all this will mean less than nothing if you do not have the real background. I was invited to tea by the socialists of Madras and I went there. I found various slogans up against the walls. They are good slogans. I like them. But they will be wholly meaningless to the average peasant or worker in India. I have seen in big gatherings people coming with posters carrying such slogans. But what does it convey to the poor peasants who are thinking in terms of revenue, rent, taxes and debts? It will mean nothing to them.

I want you to feel that you cannot build up socialism or spread the socialistic ideology in this way. You have to get at the back of the worker's mind, think in his terms, use his language and sometimes undergo his sufferings. Then only will you develop socialism in India. We are too apt to think of it in terms of slogans with a century of European history behind them. They have value in the West. But they have no such history in India and our position in India is different. If we have to spread the gospel of socialism in India, we have to translate it not only into the Indian languages, but interpret it more and more in terms of

1. Speech at the Gokhale Hall, Madras, 8 October 1936 From *The Hindu*, 9 October 1936.

the Indian genius. I do not mean that it will take a century to develo this idea. The fundamentals will remain the same, but it will take som time to spread. So far as I am concerned, I have always an open mind and I want to change my ideas to suit them to changing conditions.

I do believe that socialism, or to give it a more scientific name Marxism, does give a clue to the past and the present, helps us in tackl ing all manner of problems in history, politics, sociology and economics. That is my general attitude towards it. It is not obviously the attitude of the orthodox. I accept that general outlook, because it helps me to understand and act. I am groping and trying to find out how to interpret the gospel of socialism in terms of the Indian struggle.

What I am troubled about is not so much the fine points in the theory of socialistic ideology. I want to understand the right approaches to it. If you ask me what is the meaning of the surplus value theory of Marx I do not consider myself competent to answer it. I should like to be an expert and I should like to learn more and more about it. My mind is at present engaged not with these subtle theories and metaphysical questions which sometimes give rise to heated debates and splits among the socialists and the communists, but rather with the interpretation of the fundamental ideas of socialism in India, in order to make those ideas fit in with our conditions and to make them somehow enter into the minds of the Indian peasants and workers, and the Indian middle class men.

When you ask me to deliver addresses, what I say, probably, will not be what you expected. This long preamble to the subject was not expected by you. May be, you expected some exhortations from me to gallant action. Of course, one wants gallant action in life. But gallant action does not necessarily come from exhortations. The real problem before you and before us is this: How are we to apply these ideas to conditions in India? It is not enough that we shout slogans that have no value in India and might not apply to India.

I will now take you with me along another line of thought. The thing about socialism that appeals to me tremendously is the way it somehow gives us a certain dignity, a truer understanding of the sufferings and the tremendous tragedies of humanity. We have seen and we have got used to these and most of us have suffered like dumb-driven cattle, because we had to. That suffering continues today and at present it is growing intenser. But it makes all the difference whether you endure the suffering like mere animals or like human beings trying to get rid of it, combating obstacles and trying to overcome them.

Socialism has come into the field of human thought. Some say that it has brought conflicts, increased class hatred, and made people hate

and dislike others who exploit them. Partly that was the inevitable product of socialism and partly it had nothing to do with it because it does not teach hatred of individuals. It teaches hatred of systems which are bad. Socialism removes the veil from our eyes and tells us how all life, everything in the world today governing society, is almost entirely based on exploitation. That struggle goes on, and if you want to find a solution, you must first understand the struggle.

The existence of class struggle is patent in many departments of life, in factories, in rural areas and in the towns. You will find the tussle going on between the ruling classes sitting on the others and the others trying to get rid of their burdens. That is the class struggle. But in India we have not only the class struggle, but also the national struggle which, in a way, is a racial struggle, because nationalism is allied to racialism in subject countries. So it does not create class struggle. It draws your attention to the existing facts, and after drawing your attention, it tells you how to get rid of them. It aims at a classless society.

Because socialism throws aside the veil, it brings about conscious conflicts. To give a political comparison, we often enough talk of the shooting at the Jallianwala Bagh. The description we often hear about it is not at all correct, because nobody who went there on that fateful day had any idea that he was going to be shot. They went there in their gala attire and then Dyer shot them. They could not escape. It was no deliberate act of courage on their part. It is a different thing when you and I deliberately go to break laws, to receive lathi charges and firing.

Some persons, like the Liberals and others, have stated that we have brought increased suffering to the Indian people, and that we have not brought Swaraj nearer. These are perfectly true statements, but the conclusions that have been drawn from them are futile.

When you are meeting an entrenched power and vested interests, you have to meet that power with power. You cannot meet it with slogans. When therefore you organise yourselves, either peacefully or otherwise, to meet that power, that power entrenches itself still further. It does not allow you any liberties and the stronger you grow, the laws become harsher, repression increases and civil liberties are cut off. In the struggle one must win and the other sustain complete defeat. There can be no partial occupation of a citadel by the two armies seeking to capture it. As the fight becomes closer, the sufferings will be heavy. It is futile to think in terms of capturing power in bits and scraps. Therefore, when the struggle to capture power, political or economic, comes, we have to face all things. There is only one alternative. It is the continuation of the present exploitation. When you are in the field,

there is bound to be conflict, and that conflict must be settled, in order to establish a society based on nonviolence and cooperation. That is the ideal and in the process we have to go through various conflicts. In the process and in the efforts to realise our goal, we should not care for petty things. If we are true socialists we get a sense of elation and a sense of exaltation in our efforts.

In India and in Madras we lose ourselves in the little things of life, we pine for office whether in the Congress or in the corporation or in the council. I hope that a person who understands socialism will never have that feeling. Of course, it is difficult to find a true and real socialist, but in theory at least we can get hold of the true article. The real socialists should never indulge in these petty bickerings and disputes. For myself, I do not wish to curb ambitious people. I wish to meet them. But ambition should be made of sterner stuff. I should like to meet people with ambitions like Napoleon. But I am rather an admirer of Chengiz Khan than of Napoleon, not because of his terrific massacre, but because of the fact that he was of a higher calibre than his contemporaries. I admire him for his tremendous foresight as a military genius. If you want to be ambitious, well, be ambitious for something worthwhile. There are brilliant people in the history of India and in other countries who can be models for you. If we are ambitious about petty things, it not only lowers us in the estimation of other peoples, but in our own estimation.

So far as India is concerned, I do want you to have that perspective before you approach any problem. On the one side we have to face this nationalistic fundamental urge and on the other the economic urge. Economic conditions in the country have forced us to think entirely in terms of socialism. I think that when you seriously think about this, the only solution offered is socialism. The real objective is to find a solution for the unemployment and poverty and the misery existing in the country. We say that socialism offers the best solution. There are brilliant people all over the world, but in spite of their best endeavours they have failed to produce a scheme by which these miseries could be solved. I remember reading some time ago a speech of Mr. Montagu Norman, the Governor of the Bank of England, in whose hands lies the shaping of the currency policy of the country. In an address to businessmen he has admitted his failure to find a solution for the present economic depression, while the socialist has got a plausible explanation of the depression and a method of approach to the solution of the problem. The question is not one of accepting socialism blindly, but one of seeking a way out of the present unsatisfactory conditions. It does not matter how we approach the question, but the

fundamental objective should remain common. The conditions in India are gradually becoming grave, and that is why there is so much talk of socialism now. At the same time, the nationalist urge remains a dominant issue. The problem before us is how best to combine both. I do not want anybody in the country to imagine that we are trying to hide anything. The Congress is a living organisation and it would not represent the nation if it did not represent all the viewpoints. Recognising the conflicts, we have to find common ways of action. We must not do anything to prevent that common action. Although we cannot cooperate on the larger issues, we can cooperate on the issue of anti-imperialism. I believe that in India the obvious common platform is anti-imperialism.

This is the last public engagement during my stay in the city and I would like to express my gratitude to the residents. I have addressed several meetings and think that at least half of the population must have heard me. What is more, I have felt something of the strong enthusiasm of the people and felt strengthened in my work.

15. Trade Unions and the Congress[1]

I am glad of the opportunity, before I leave the province, of saying something about the problem of workers, as it is of great and growing importance. In reality the problems of the peasant and the worker, as well as many other problems in India, form part of one and the same problem, viz., poverty and unemployment. These two problems are peculiar problems which cover all—peasant, worker, artisan, merchant, tradesman and almost everybody. How are we to get rid of them? As workers, you know that you cannot get rid of them except by developing your strength and organisation. That is the only way. So your business is one of developing organised strength. A trade union is the organised strength of the workers, the peasant organisation is the organised strength of the peasants and the national movement is the organis-

1. Speech at meeting of railway workers, Tiruchchirappalli, 16 October 1936 From *The Hindu*, 17 October 1936.

ed strength of a subject nation to wrest political power. So, in a sense, the national movement covers the various classes in a country in order to wrest political power so that we can then tackle the question of poverty and unemployment.

It is perfectly true that a workers' organisation has a definite outlook and the nationalist movement's outlook is not quite the same as that of a trade union, or of a peasant organisation, because in the nationalist movement there are other classes also besides the working classes. At the same time a nationalist movement has to establish freedom. That also must necessarily be the objective of the workers; therefore, in regard to the big objective of independence, both the movements should face the same struggle.

The obtaining of Swaraj for India is a common aim for workers as well as the nationalist movement and it is necessary and desirable for the two to cooperate because thereby the workers will really advance their own cause. You may ask me what the Congress is going to do for the workers. It is a great democratic organisation containing all manner of people, with all manner of ideas, but with the one binding link, viz., the desire to obtain the independence of India. I cannot say what the Congress may decide. There are 80 per cent of the population as peasants in the country and quite a large percentage of industrial workers also. The real way to influence the Congress is to come into it. There is also another way of coming into the Congress and it was discussed recently and perhaps something may be done in this matter. It is for the Congress committees to have a closer cooperation with trade unions. The same cooperation there is even today, local, provincial and all-India, but perhaps it may be possible for organised workers to send their representatives to some Congress committees. That is all that has been considered. I do not want to discuss this question, but I want you to remember that it is essential today in India for the workers' movement to throw its full weight with the national movement and in the struggle for independence. If the workers hesitate and do not do so, then it will stifle itself and will not profit by the strong urge for political freedom that is strengthening the country.

In spite of joining and supporting the nationalist movement, trade unions must function as trade unions separately from the Congress. They may cooperate with the Congress on the political side, but they have the workers' demands and must function as unions and fight those battles. Even on those issues they will have a great deal of support from the Congress. It is the function of industrial workers to carry on a trade union, to have new ones and to build up a powerful trade union organisation. Every worker should know that his whole

strength and future depend on the strength of the union. The more strongly a trade union is organised the greater is the protection to the workers. Trade unions are being developed to become a great national federation or organisation. The next step is to become international.

A split in the trade union movement has unfortunately weakened the position of the workers in the country at this time. There is also the question of retrenchment of railway workers. The remedy for it lies in your hands. The great lesson the workers have to learn is that only in their organised strength lies any protection for them. First of all, your own union should be strong. You must get every railway worker to join and there must be unity in your rank and file. So long as there is no unity, you will be weak and your employers will take advantage of this weakness. Hence you should build up a joint and strong united labour movement in India.

You must resist and end the unions sponsored by the employers with a view to weaken the trade union movement. I also condemn communal unions. I cannot imagine a more monstrous aberration. The very basis of the labour movement is unity in regard to work and labour. I wonder what this has to do with religion, caste or creed. If you are railway workers, whatever may be your religion, your job is in the union. These things should be avoided by you and you must try and build up a strong organised labour movement for the whole of India in which should be included all those people who labour not only by their hands but by their brains also. Even now in theory they are included. This great labour movement should fully cooperate with the Indian National Congress on the political platform, completely, so that along with the peasant movement, we may be able to build a joint and impregnable front against British imperialism and carry on the fight for freedom in India and before long achieve independence.

Organised labour stands all over the world for socialism. I take it that you also stand for socialism. You cannot bring in socialism today, because socialism does not come in a subject country. Those who believe in socialism have to spread its ideology and convert others to accept socialism and thus build up and prepare the ground for the future introduction of socialism, for only in socialism will the worker get his own and build up a state and eliminate all exploitation.

16. A Pudukottah Reception[1]

One is apt to get a little tired mentally after continuous repetition of the same kind of incidents. Fortunately Pudukottah offered a variety which took us out of the dull rut. As we approached Pudukottah town I saw part of the Pudukottah army lining the road in battle array. I was interested. Further up a larger force of the army occupied the road. I grew more interested. So I got off the car and inquired from someone who might be the head of the police or the field marshal what all this was about and whether there were manoeuvres of the army, or the international situation affected the Pudukottah state, and whether preparations were being made for the coming crisis, or was a riot feared. I was told that the army had turned out merely to clear the way for me so that the crowds might not embarrass me. A very delicate compliment indeed, on the part of the Pudukottah state to the President of the Indian National Congress, to which I was unaccustomed. I have had so far tremendous receptions from all manner of people and crowds. But to be escorted by an army through the streets lined with troops was a Viceregal experience which I had not had. So I thought I had better make the most of it while I had the chance and I decided to march through that part of the territory of this great state. And so we marched along, the Pudukottah army following, while a silent crowd and people stood by. It must have been a pleasant sight to which I was not accustomed. We marched a mile or so when unfortunately, owing to pressure of time, I had to go back to the car. And so I bade good-bye to the Pudukottah army and rushed off away to Trichinopoly.

This incident is full of meaning and shows us how states function and especially those under more or less British administration. For I understand that the ruler of Pudukottah is a minor and the administration is under British control. I was passing through the state at a great pace as I had no time to waste. I would not have stopped at all anywhere but for the state authorities who were full of fear of all manner of happenings, and did the very thing which I could not have done, owing to lack of time, and created a commotion all over the state and drew more attention to my passage than would have otherwise happened.

1. Statement to the press, 16 October 1936 *The Hindu*, 16 October 1936 Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 58 60 Jawaharlal passed through Pudukottah, then an Indian state, on 15 October 1936.

So far as I am concerned I welcome this and I am grateful to the state authorities for this military arrangement made to welcome my passage through their territory. I understand that garlanding was specially forbidden by the state as a revolutionary activity which might upset the whole fabric of the administration. Probably the fabric is so flimsy that any breath of wind will blow it away. Hence its excessive nervousness.

17. Farewell Message to Tamil Nadu[1]

Men and Women of Tamil Nad,

For two weeks, I have wandered up and down your province and visited many of your famous cities and large numbers of villages I have addressed hundreds of meetings and vast multitudes of men and women. For these two weeks we have been together and have seen each other, and perhaps we have grown to understand one another a little better.

And now I am going back to the north and as I go, innumerable memories crowd into my mind—memories of surging crowds, and an enthusiasm bordering on frenzy, and shining eyes with unspoken pledges looking through them.

I brought the message of the Congress to you. That message was no new one to you, and yet you demonstrated anew, in your magnificent way, your allegiance to the Congress and to the country's freedom. Individuals come and go, but the cause remains and binds us together in a common unity. Right through this tour of mine, this sense of unity in a great enterprise has been with me, the unity of India trying to break through the divisions and shackles that are our lot today. I forgot that I was in the far south away from my home in the north; only one thing mattered—the independence of India—and we were all comrades struggling shoulder to shoulder to realise this desire of our hearts. The love of India filled us and we looked forward, eagerly and anxiously, to the promise of freedom.

And everywhere with this love of independence was a passion for social freedom, a desire to end the exploitation of our people and establish a juster order which would put an end to the cause of poverty and the vast and growing unemployment which strangles us. The great

1. Given at Madras, 18 October 1936 *The Hindu*, 20 October 1936 Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp 58 60.

crowds that gathered to hear me were largely naked, poverty-stricken people, hungering for relief from their terrible burdens. And in their minds and ours political freedom and social freedom were mixed together and were two facets of the future we worked for.

But all this wonderful enthusiasm and overpowering affection have to be disciplined and organised lest they waste themselves on trivial objects. The Congress has endeavoured with much success to do this, but we must go further still, and harness this energy and vitality to the cause of the Congress and of India's freedom. For this, the Congress must spread its organisation, just as it has already sent its appeal, to every village and function throughout on a democratic basis. Leadership is essential, but authoritarianism is bad, and already we suffer from it sufficiently under British domination.

In some places there were local disputes chiefly about municipal and district board elections.[2] Some of them undoubtedly were due to a certain looseness in the choice of Congress candidates. Men were chosen who had little of the Congress spirit in them and subsequently could not play the great game and even occasionally broke their pledges. That way lies danger. Our strength will lessen and our ideals fade if we lower down our quality in search for quantity. Therefore we may not lower our ideals whatever happens.

Women came to our meetings in surprising numbers and it was clear that they were also to some extent politically awake. I was glad to see this awakening amongst them for women must play their full part in this national and social struggle.

Big problems face us. We must grow big enough to solve them and we may not allow the trivial or secondary to take the first place in our minds.

I must express very deep gratitude to you for the affection showered upon me. Yet that was for the Congress, for I came as the Congress President, the bearer of the Congress message. Remember that message and remember also that true enthusiasm leads to activity, joint disciplined activity under the Congress flag, and in furtherance of the Congress aim.

I go back now, but I shall long remember this visit and I shall take the message of our comrades in the Tamil Nad to other parts and other people.

2. Jawaharlal had refused to accept an address of welcome from the Tiruchchirappalli municipality as some of its Congress members including the chairman had opposed the official Congress candidates in the municipal elections and the chairman had refused to resign in spite of the Congress directive

18. Impressions of Andhra Tour[1]

Three days in the Andhra districts are hardly sufficient to enable one to say much. But even these three days have shown to me that here, as in Tamil Nad, there is tremendous enthusiasm amongst the people for the Congress.

In Tamil Nad, I had noticed considerable sympathy with socialistic ideas, often expressed in addresses presented to me. Here in Andhra Desa this is still more noticeable. The peasantry as well as the young people have expressed themselves very definitely in favour of these socialist ideas. I am not sure whether these ideas are rightly understood by many of them. Still all this shows a tremendous ferment in the people. I was also glad to notice peasants' organisations in Andhra Desa, which appear to be doing good work for the peasants. Such peasant organisations are helpful, not only to agitate for the removal of peasant grievances but to help in the larger cause of Swaraj. I hope there will be the fullest cooperation between these ryots' associations and the Congress committees.

In Guntur the over-enthusiasm of some young socialist produced a small incident which was in itself insignificant, but it might have created some misapprehension in the minds of those present.[2] That incident was clearly due to his over enthusiasm and I am sure that it did not mean anything more than that socialists must bear in mind that they have to convert others to their viewpoint. It is no service to socialism to irritate people by a stress at the wrong moment. However, that little incident has passed off and I hope there will be the fullest cooperation between all.

I understand that a regular campaign has been launched by the provincial government against socialist workers and that proceedings are being taken against some of them apparently with a desire to suppress the spread of socialist ideas. Such ideas cannot of course be suppressed in this way, but it is important that all Congressmen should realise that this kind of suppression of one group or one set of ideas is inevitably followed by an attempt to suppress other groups and

1. Interview to the press, Vijayawada, 20 October 1936 *The Hindu*, 21 October 1936.
2. On 19 October at Guntur a young man claiming to be a socialist had interrupted Jawaharlal's speech at a public meeting

other ideas also. Therefore, we must hold together and object to all such suppression of individuals and ideas from the point of view of civil liberty and the cause of national freedom.

I am sorry that I have been able to spend only three days in Andhra Desa. The region attracts me as I feel there is very fine material and very fine enthusiasm. I wish I could stay here longer but that cannot be done now. My good wishes to all our comrades and workers in the Andhra areas. I trust that they will sink their petty differences and hold on to the high ideals of the Congress. If they do so, all opposition to them will be of little avail.

19. Observance of Anti-War Day[1]

The Lucknow Congress passed a resolution drawing the country's attention to the war danger and laying down the general lines of the policy to be followed in regard to it. Ever since then that danger has come nearer, the clouds darken the horizon, and bloody and terrible war hangs in the balance. Already one can hear the tramp of armed men in Europe and vast fleets of aeroplanes and bombers take to the sky. Feverishly every government prepares for the war that seems inevitable. We may not forget this dominant and overwhelming fact of the world, of far greater importance to our future than the constitution Act and elections that absorb so much of our attention. Our future and the future of the world are wrapped up in it; we forget this at our peril.

It has been the custom in many countries to observe anti-war days. In our own country anti-war days have been observed in the past at the instance of some provincial Congress committees as well as the Congress Socialist Party. But the urgency and vital importance of the matter demand a greater interest and a wider observance, so that we may not forget. I suggest therefore that November 11th, the Armistice Day, be observed as an anti-war day throughout the country and meetings be held in the evening. At these meetings the resolution of the Lucknow Congress on war danger should be read out and adopted.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 29 October 1936 *The Tribune*, 31 October 1936.

20. To N. G. Ranga[1]

31.10.1936

Dear Ranga,[2]

Thank you for your letter of the 23rd October. My three days in Andhra gave me a definite feeling that the Andhra peasants were awake and class conscious. I suppose partly at least this must be credited to the work you and your colleagues have been doing among the peasantry.

As to what you say about the Congress Working Committee and the Parliamentary Committee, I cannot write much because that would involve a lengthy argument.[3] But I should like you to realise, as I do, that socialism cannot be built up in this country by manoeuvres at the top and capturing committees. It must have a more solid foundation. I am much more concerned with this solid foundation than having socialists in this or that committee. Secondly, that socialists have still to convert large numbers of the middle but advanced elements in the Congress. They are good material if properly approached but I find that often enough there is no proper approach to them. They are only irritated.

It is difficult for me to issue appeals on behalf of particular journals as you suggest.[4] So far I have not done so.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5(KW)(1)/1936, p 183, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1900); founder president of the Bharat Kisan Sammelan, 1935, member, Lok Sabha, 1957-70, resigned from the Congress in 1959 and joined the Swatantra Party; later became its president, rejoined the Congress in 1972, author of several books including *Peasants and Communism* and *Towards World Peace*.
3. In his letter of 23 October 1936, Ranga had regretted that Jawaharlal had not nominated more socialists to the Working Committee and the All India Parliamentary Committee.
4. Ranga had requested Jawaharlal to make an appeal for financial help for the Telugu journal, *Vahini*, so that security could be paid to the government.

21. The Congress and the World Crisis[1]

I do not know in what capacity you welcomed me this morning when I arrived in this great city of Calcutta. That magnificent and overwhelming welcome and that demonstration of overwhelming affection—I wonder in what capacity I received them. I know of course that you have a habit of showering love on your people whom you happen to like and that when you give your love, you give it in an abundant measure. But still I wonder in what capacity you gave me this welcome. I happen to be the President of the Indian National Congress today. The Indian National Congress is something of which you, I and all of us are proud and which we honour. And it is right you should show honour to one who happens to be its President however personally lacking he might be in the noble qualities befitting that position. I represent for the moment the Indian National Congress. This Congress of ours has become a unique party in this country.

It is a great and powerful organisation and if I come and speak to you as its President, I speak with the authority and dignity of the Congress. I do not speak in a humble way because I represent a great and powerful organisation which has become the mirror of India's desires, sufferings and urges and has become the symbol of India's will to freedom. I am proud to belong to this organisation. I am proud of my colleagues in this organisation, innumerable men and women who have fought shoulder to shoulder for the past many years. If I come to you and speak to you as the President of the Congress, I also come to you in my personal capacity as one of your old comrades, as one who has shared with you your joys and your sufferings; and I should like, human as I am, that you took me more as one of your comrades than as the President of the Indian National Congress.

I feel that in considering our problems in this country we are often apt to forget the fundamental background of these problems. We are apt to forget the tremendous world problems that are overshadowing the world horizon. Now if we think that we happen to live in a world which is not changing rapidly, in a world which is more or less static, in a world where we can think of the minor affairs or secondary problems, then it is a different matter. But when there is a catastrophe waiting for

1. Speech at public meeting, Calcutta, 5 November 1936. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 6 November 1936.

us, then it becomes a little foolish on our part to think in terms of minor or secondary matters. A great man said two or three years ago that in the history of the world there never had been such a revolutionary period as it exists today, as it has existed since the end of the last Great War. We cannot escape the force of world events. We have got to be ready to face them so that we can either avert them or profit by them.

This is the fundamental factor of the Indian situation as it is of the international situation. It may be a surprise to you to know that today my mind thinks more of the Spanish problem, of the horrors that are going on in Spain, than of many ordinary problems in relation to India. I am obsessed with this Spanish affair. Why? Not because I am greatly concerned with the fate of an individual Spaniard, not because of the fate of Spain hanging in the balance, but only because wrapped up with the fate of Spain is the fate of Europe, and wrapped up with the fate of Europe is the fate of the world. I think of the possible consequences of all this. I see the tremendous growth of fascism, the triumphant growth of fascism. But because it is triumphant today we are not going to submit to it. It is a thing which we shall fight to the utmost, whatever may happen.

I look with grave apprehension at the triumphant growth of fascism in certain countries in Europe. When I see certain other European countries more or less democratic falling a prey to this fascism or a country like England flirting with it, apparently combating it, or like France following a weak, vacillating policy, I fear for the future of Europe. I fear because I cannot conceive that fascism will ultimately triumph in Europe because fascism is built on foundations of sand.

The real issue in the world today is the possibility of this great catastrophe that seems to approach us so rapidly. And it is approaching very rapidly. It may come in two years, three years; it is not possible to extend the period beyond that. That ought to be a long enough period, psychologically and practically, to get prepared for it. I hold certain views rather strongly in regard to politics, in regard to economics, in regard to social matters. And I gave expression to those views at the Lucknow Congress. But I feel that, in view of the world crisis that threatens to overtake us, I would not be justified in weakening the Indian National Congress through which alone we can hope to face the crisis effectively. We cannot face the approaching world crisis individually. We cannot face it through our little, petty groups here and there.

The Indian problem is fundamentally a problem of India's poverty

and unemployment. Everything else stems from it. I am prepared to base my whole case on India's poverty and the growing unemployment in the country. We are today having a progressive deterioration of human material in India. It is a terrible thing. Bengal has protested and protested rightly against the detention for an indefinite period of thousands of persons. And the real injury caused to Bengal thereby is the intellectual deterioration of her people. The problems before us are problems of poverty and unemployment. And it is because we seek to remedy them that we think of Swaraj. After all, we can postpone political Swaraj for some time, but when economic conditions become critical, when hunger affects millions and millions, we cannot postpone the issue, we have got to procure food for the hungry and employment for the unemployed.

The Congress has decided to contest the coming elections and I think that, in view of the present situation in the country, we have no alternative but to contest the elections. But I would like the audience to remember this, that so far as the new Act is concerned, the whole attitude of the Congress is one of intensive dislike and desire to put an end to it as soon as possible. It is the desire of the Congress not to cooperate in the slightest way with this Act. Still we have decided to contest these elections. There is no inconsistency in this except so far as that in contesting these elections, possibly we may gradually slide down the scale and go in for a measure of cooperation. There is that danger. Let us face it. And what is the position in the country today? There are two groups of forces. One may be called the left-wing and the other the right wing, inasmuch as one is for some measure of cooperation while the other is totally against any cooperation with government. It is a conflict of ideas. This conflict of ideas we see in the Congress itself. After all, the Congress represents the nation and therefore the Congress represents this conflict of ideas of the nation also. In politics, however extreme one may be, it is quite absurd to talk of doing the same thing always, to take an attitude of uncompromising hostility always. We have got to decide policies in regard to certain circumstances.

Now the Congress has accepted this position of running candidates for the elections. But I would remind you that the Congress has made it perfectly clear in the election manifesto that it wants to go to the councils to break the constitution. Although the whole question of the elections may not be a great issue when we think in terms of bigger problems, we must put all our strength in it, now that we have decided to contest the elections. When I ask you to go to the legislatures, I ask you to send those people who will fight there. This is a matter

which I want you to remember. This is a matter of the most vital importance. It is essential that Congress candidates must be men who are real Congressmen, not in the sense of four-anna members, but men whose past records show that they can stand up to fight for freedom, whatever may happen. I want you to remember that Congress candidates, who will go to the legislatures, will go there not in their individual capacity but only as standard bearers of certain policies which the Congress has adopted. If you support those policies adopted by the Congress, it becomes your duty to support the Congress candidates; you cannot support anybody else. The ultimate contest is between the Congress and the various forces ranged round the government. When I speak of Congress candidates, I do not recognise any communal group. I mean Congressmen—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and everybody. The other day I saw in the papers that Mr. Jinnah said that the Muslim League candidates "may" cooperate with the Congress in the legislatures. I thank Mr. Jinnah for the offer. But I do not want "mays" and "buts". I want fighters. So far as we are concerned, we rely on Congressmen alone—Congress Hindus, Congress Muslims or Congress Sikhs. So far as our fight for freedom is concerned, it is going to be carried on by the Indian National Congress and the Indian National Congress alone. We are not going to rely on any communal group, however liberal they may seem.

The issue of the Communal Award has been boomed up a lot in the press.* I do not deny that it is an important issue. I do not deny that it is an issue which affects a large number of people and that we must give our earnest consideration to it. But I would like to submit to you that even in considering the issue you must not lose sight of the bigger issues of the country in relation to the international and domestic situations. There are few people in this country who like that Award. Anyone who stands by independence and democracy cannot like that Award. So far as the Congress is concerned, it has expressed its opinion about it in the strongest possible terms. And when occasion comes the Congress will not fail to show what it feels about it. But let us not put this issue in the forefront of all our problems, thus diverting the attention of the masses from the real problems of the country. I have found during my wanderings in different parts of India that many Muslim groups who work amongst the middle class and the peasantry are coming to the conclusion that this Communal Award is not going to do any good to them but would, on the contrary, prove ultimately injurious to their interests. And they would be glad to welcome an opportunity to get out of this tangle. I would make an appeal to them to consider the Communal Award in relation to bigger problems. I do not want them to put this

in the forefront because if they want to put it in the forefront, they forget the international issue and the issues of poverty and unemployment. The only possible way of arriving at a solution of this communal problem is through the cooperation of various groups. I do not like you to understand by this that the Congress expects all the big communal leaders of the Muslim League and of the Hindu Mahasabha to cooperate in this matter and embrace one another. This is not likely to happen. If we can gain a substantial support from various groups, then there is the possibility of our solving the problem. If we keep this in mind then we will be able to put an end to the Communal Award. But if we make it a primary issue, then we do a very great wrong to the political movement and divert the attention of the masses from the bigger issues.

22. Poverty and 'Culture'[1]

After all, we belong to a passing generation. We have had our day. Sooner or later we shall pass on. We have laboured hard for the dawn, we have worked and struggled through a continuous night. Many of us with whom we have worked shoulder to shoulder during the past many years have left. Many of us, left behind, may not live to see that dawn. But the dawn will come.

And those left behind have got to keep up that torch to brighten at least the path along which we have got to go. That torch has got to be kept up. And I want to know how many hands there are amongst you, strong arms that will keep that torch up?

During the last twenty years we have passed through many crises, made sacrifices, gone through many sufferings. You may say that we have not been able to deliver the goods. But, on the whole, we have done fairly well. There are other ways of measuring success. There are psychological values which are much more important than those other things. These twenty years have not been years of which India could be ashamed. We have enough to be proud of. We have shown enough courage, discipline and sacrifice for a great cause in this country. If we have not

1. Address to students, Calcutta, 6 November 1936. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 7 November 1936.

succeeded in attaining freedom, what of that? That does not mean that all these years have been useless. However, these are things of the past. At any rate we can and we will hold up the torch as we have done in the past. But what of the future? When that time comes when the torch of freedom has got to be handed to you, young men and young women, what will you do? I want an answer to these questions from you. I have had enough of fine words. I have not come here to get praises from you. What is that talk of sacrifice and services? Enough I have had of it. Are you prepared yourselves for that trial?

You talk of cultural cooperation. Cultural cooperation? I do not understand it. We have had enough of brave words. You talk of cultural cooperation when there is such terrible misery all around you. Where is the culture in this country? There is terrible poverty in this country and you talk of culture. It is mockery, I tell you. I believe in culture. And I want culture to spread to millions, not the culture of the few on the top. Are you going to build up that culture on the miserableness of Indian humanity? That is not culture. We have had a fine and great and ancient record of culture but the root soon dried up. Why? Because it became confined more and more to the superficial strata, because it did not draw inspiration from the masses in the country.

You have couched your address in fine and flowery language. We have had enough of it. There is a controversy in certain parts of India now as to Hindi or Urdu becoming the national language. Hindi is a language in relation to the vast numbers of people that speak it. But it cannot become a world language until it becomes a language of the masses, until it goes to the masses, talks the language of the masses, thinks their thoughts and their problems. How is it that a change has come about in your Bengali language? It is because you had a number of artists who have brought about this change. They are in touch with the masses and know the language of the masses. Beauty comes from simplicity of language, not from cumbrous and high-sounding words showing learning. That is not the beauty of language. Beauty of language comes from grace and simplicity. If you think in terms of culture, if you think in terms of language, go to the masses that are behind you. Unless you can raise them, unless you identify yourselves with them, there is no use talking of your culture and your language.

The problem is how you can raise these poverty-stricken masses in India. How can you put an end to this terrible unemployment that has already laid us low, caused enormous sufferings and degradation to our

peasants and our working masses and is just now attacking our middle-class young men and women. It is like a creeping paralysis. If you go to a person who is suffering from paralysis and talk to him about culture, what will it avail? You will have to talk to him about his disease and its remedy. When a man is hungry, what is the use of talking to him about culture? *Think in terms of reality. Do not lose yourselves in words and phrases.* I beg of you, in your organisations, in your associations, to grapple, theoretically at any rate, practically when you get the chance for it, with the problems in all seriousness; do not treat them as light things. Do not play with them as a mimic game of politics.

I do not talk in terms of self sacrifice. Enough of self-sacrifice. I want you to become ambitious men, not men with petty, ignoble ambition but men with ambition of doing brave deeds, of raising our country to a higher level, of joining the great game of life, of making life something which will ennoble you and ennoble our people. If you live life as life should be lived, you will find that there is something greater than the ordinary comforts and petty amenities of life. That is life, life rich in experience, rich in the higher sensations of life.

Do not talk of my service and sacrifices. I have done it because there is joy in it. Do you think that I could turn back from this kind of life and go back to my old profession of law? How foolish, how silly it is to talk of my sacrifices. I lead this life because I find joy in this.

23. Capitalism, Imperialism and Socialism[1]

Although I talk a great deal of socialism and bring it into most of my addresses some way or other, I do not usually deal with the fine points of the doctrine. I would however warn you that you should not expect from me a very learned and scientific discourse on socialism. I *have tried to understand the doctrine of socialism by reading a fair* amount of theory. It appealed to me and I have gradually grown into it. I have grown into it to a large extent and I am still growing.

1. Address to Congress Socialists, Calcutta, 7 November 1936. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 8 November 1936.

And I do not know that even now I can call myself in any sense a dogmatic socialist because what appeals to me in socialism is that there can be no dogma about it.

You know that the whole conception of modern socialism is something fairly new. Old socialism was mere humanitarianism, a mere utopian idea of justice and equality, of doing away with poverty and the rest of it. That idea of course is as old as the world. It came more into prominence in the early days of industrial revolution. But what is called modern or scientific socialism is Marxism. When we talk of socialism, it is essentially Marxism we speak of. Essentially it is based on certain scientific methods of trying to understand history, trying to understand from past events the laws that govern the development of human society and, having understood those laws, trying to understand the present with the help of those laws, and also the future how dimly it may be. But the fact that Marx was a great genius in his line does not necessarily mean that the laws he derived are fundamental laws which we cannot challenge. As a socialist I must challenge anything unless I understand it. We should approach a subject with a desire to understand it.

Many people get very worried about the issue of class struggle and seem to think that this is preaching class hatred and enmity. The whole conception of class struggle is that the world today, as in the past, is based on the conflict of classes, dominance of a certain class over the others. If this is a fact we must recognise it. It is astounding that anybody denies it. To recognise this fact and then to try to get rid of it is not promoting enmity and hatred. Socialism aims at the abolition of class struggle by the abolition of classes and having one class.

Today the whole of the social fabric is based on violence, conflict, cut-throat competition and it develops all the evil qualities which go with these things. And when people come to us and talk to us not to disturb the present structure for fear that such activities on their part may be resented by this or that man, it means that these people are in favour of perpetuating this violence, hatred and enmity which the present system breeds. Socialism means that there should not be such enmity, such hatred and such violence. The only alternative is our submission to, and acceptance of, the present order. The whole of Marx's analysis shows how society changes as it goes on developing. What Marx showed was that the economic factor was the most important factor. The control of the means of production gave them control over the life of the community. Thus in the days when the principal means of production was the land, the landlords were the dominant class. That was the feudal period. Naturally with the coming of the industrial revolution, the landlord class sank into the background in Western

countries. Land is still an important means of production but there are also other means of it.

Capitalism today is in a tremendous process of decay. It is not a question of our going about cursing this individual capitalist or that for having money. This idea of cursing capitalists or landlords individually has nothing to do with our idea of understanding what capitalism is. When we attack capitalism, what do we attack?

Capitalism came a hundred years ago in its modern form and did a tremendous lot of work by its methods of production, increased the standard of living and wealth. Unfortunately in India we profited very little by it. But taking the world as a whole, capitalism increased the wealth of the world tremendously. It increased the food of the world, it increased the standard of the world a great deal. We must not simply think that capitalism has always been bad. But it has served its purpose, it does not any more fulfil a purpose. The good points of capitalism should be retained but fitted to a new structure so that it may give society the benefit of the new methods. The problem of production of wealth was solved by capitalism but not the problem of distribution of wealth. Socialism is the only analysis which helps us understand what is happening, as to why there is this accumulation of wealth on one side and extreme poverty on the other, why we have international conflict and what is this new type of imperialism. This is connected with the modern growth of imperialism, with the demands of raw materials and a demand for markets. When we talk of anti-imperialism, most of us think it is against England. We must understand that imperialism is something vaster and entirely different from England, France or any other country. There is English imperialism, French imperialism, Japanese imperialism. Essentially they are the same type of thing. But though of the same type they often come into conflict with each other. At first they tried to divide the world. They tried to find markets for raw materials and then they came into conflict with each other. Capitalism is fundamentally based on not only continuous domestic conflict, but international conflict on such a big scale that the next war may end in the destruction of the very great civilisation that Europe has built up in the past several years. What is happening in Spain may happen all over the world. All this is the inevitable fruit of the present system of capitalism in the world.

So far as we in India are concerned, we are in a peculiar position and this peculiar position is due largely to the coming of the British here some 150 or more years ago. Their coming also brought various influences from the West. Capitalism in India is still not fully grown. It may be said to be in its infancy in India. But capitalism itself is a world

phenomenon. We cannot separate capitalism of one country from another. Therefore if capitalism decays in America and Europe, it cannot obviously carry on in India. On the other hand, there is the tremendous problem of poverty and unemployment which cannot be solved without a widespread system of planning, development of industries big and small, development of social services, development of agriculture, entire change of the system of land laws and so on and so forth. We require this enormous system of planning and only socialism can provide it. How can socialism come to this country? Obviously neither socialism nor anything can come to this country so long as British imperialism remains in this country. So this question of Swaraj arises, which is removal of British imperialism from this country and the placing of power in the hands of the Indian masses. Power placed in the hands of the people at the top will not bring socialism, nor will it solve the problems of India. Therefore this fight for Swaraj becomes essential for everybody, for socialists certainly and for everybody else who wants freedom except those who may be interested in the continuation of British imperialism.

It is perfectly true that the actual working of the socialist state cannot be introduced in India till after we are independent, and even then it will probably take some time. We cannot make a country socialist by passing laws. Laws are necessary to make the path clear. But we have to build up the state. The mere passing of laws will not bring socialism. We will have to build up society. If we want socialism, we will have to build up human beings. It is ultimately a question of education of the whole generation. The ultimate goal is far. We cannot get it suddenly. But still we cannot separate it from the idea of independence.

I do not think that we can win Swaraj in India without the effective help of the masses of the country. In a fight for Swaraj the socialist approach to the masses is important. One of the things that attracts me towards socialism is its freedom from dogma. I find to my horror that some people go about and talk of socialism in terms of phrases and slogans. I think this is the best way of running down socialism. They forget that when they use those phrases they do not convey any idea to the masses. We are required to speak in the language of the Indian peasants, Indian labourers, Indian working classes and not in the language which is totally foreign to them, not in slogans which are not understandable by them.

RECEPTION AT MADRAS, OCTOBER 1936

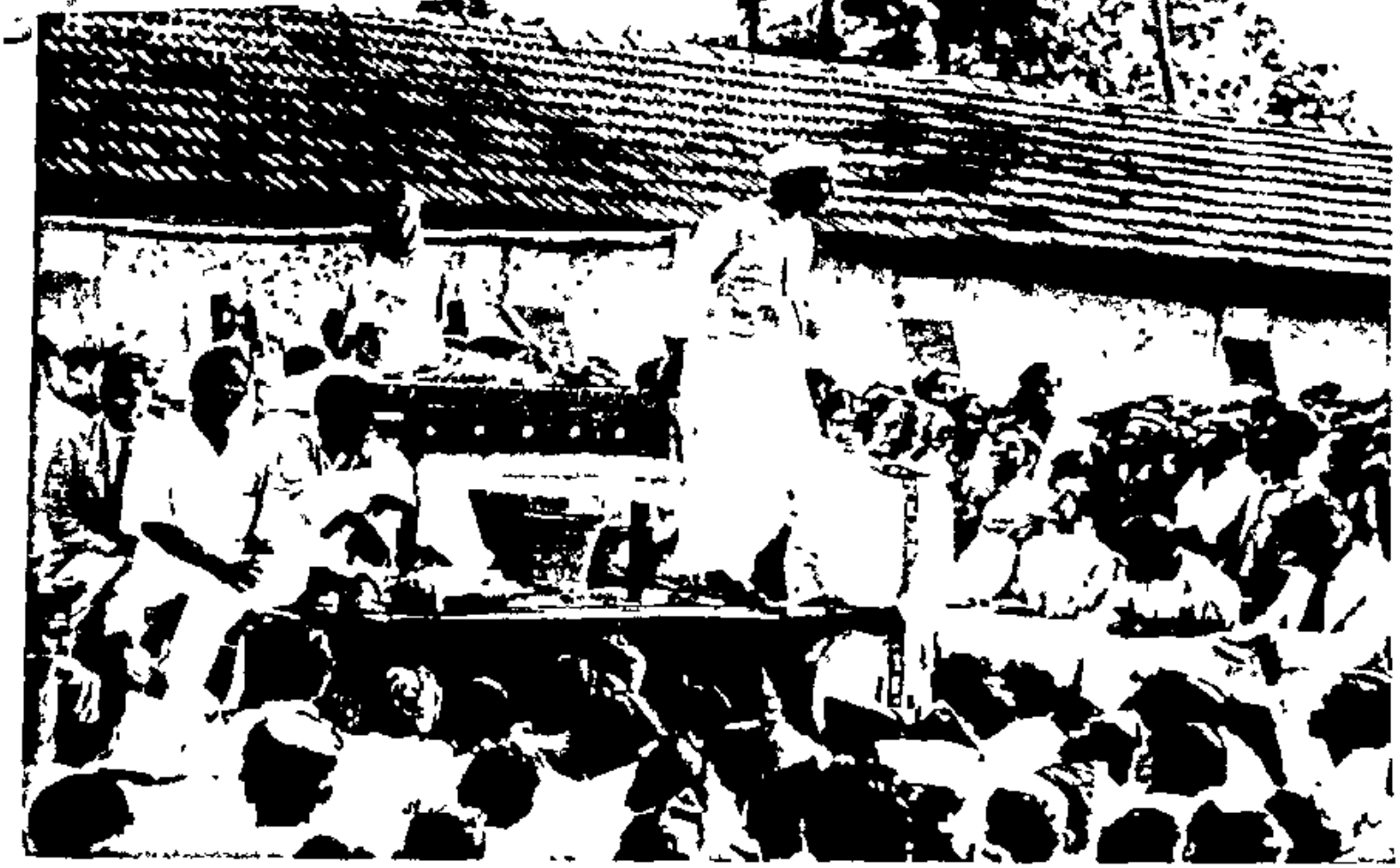

AT GOKULAM ASHRAMAM, MADRAS, OCTOBER 1936

24. Municipalisation and Socialism[1]

I express my gratefulness to the Calcutta Corporation for the welcome accorded to me. I can hardly forget the magnificent reception that thousands and thousands of Calcutta citizens gave me five days ago. Although the expressions of love in your address are couched in personal language, it is meant more for the office that I hold and the great organisation I represent. I appreciate it not only on my own behalf but also on behalf of that great organisation.

I go about in the country like a pilgrim who seldom rests anywhere. I wander about in quest of something which is not entirely clear in my mind. I am not referring for the moment to the objective we have in view, the freedom of India. That is clear enough. I wander about and address huge crowds trying to carry the message of the Congress to them. Sometimes doubts assail me whether I reach the mind of the people, but still I carry on, not because I have a passion for discomfort or a passion for self-sacrifice but because of the unease which is in my mind. It is my mind that troubles me. The sights that I see around me during my wanderings, the sights of misery and unhappiness, trouble me. So it becomes difficult for me to rest even though I may seek that rest. You know we have to carry on till we reach our goal. And often I feel a certain measure of dissatisfaction at the inactive character of much of the work that we do, of the destructive character of our work. And I envy you who are in charge of the great city and who are doing a great deal of constructive work for the city. It is an enviable work.

Under the present circumstances it is not a very happy task even to try to do constructive work, the work of raising the standard of living of a very large number of people. You face a great deal of difficulty from the government, from vested interests and the like. You have large ideas; you have large visions. But you see that vested interests do come in our way whether we function as municipal commissioners or otherwise. Therefore, if I think about it, I do not envy you very much. But after all, you are working for a great city. And I must confess that I have a love for large cities. I love the village in a way but I hate to live in villages. But I do not like the present large cities either.

1. Reply to the Calcutta Corporation address, 9 November 1936 From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 10 November 1936.

After all, it is the city which is a fine sphere of culture and civilisation. I want to take the cultural advantages of the city. I like to take many of the cultural advantages that the city life provides and I like some of the things which the village stands for. I like the city to approach the village and the village to approach the city. So I like this idea of trying to look after great cities, trying to raise their level, of making them beautiful cities, not only with beautiful buildings, but with healthy, efficient human beings, or loving people, cooperating with each other and not trying to knock each other down and exploit each other and make each other miserable. That is the ideal of the great city that I should like to have and I like to work for. I love to extend this beauty to the village. I love to have the city beautiful, the country beautiful, the world beautiful, so that our people in future might have a glimpse of a world where they will have cooperation, a sense of service for the common good, goodwill and love for each other and not violence, hatred, exploitation and misery. So I love this work—this constructive work which you do. But I do not think that all that we do is sheer work of destruction. Our work may not bring the results that it ought to bring. Sometimes the results are terribly disheartening.

It inevitably comes to this that it is better to remove these obstructions that come in our way. And therefore many of us have for the moment, almost against our will, almost against the urges that are within us, devoted ourselves to this work of destruction, of agitation, of breaking down, so that we may have a clean slate to write on and a clean field to build on.

Just consider how much we have got to do in India whether in cities or in villages, where thousands and thousands of our people live—people who are living emblems of poverty and misery in India. It frightens me and yet it encourages me. Many of us feel that we must carry on in this way because it is the only way possible at the present moment under the present circumstances. I take it you, who are engaged not in this work of destruction but in some constructive phases of life, you also feel that there is something in this effort of destruction, because you yourselves will then find a greater advantage in building up anew. But I do feel and feel very strongly that in India today there are many, many things to be done. And there is one thing which is far and above others. There is one outstanding fact which we cannot ignore. It is the bounden duty of us to see that the difficulties in our way are removed—the obstructions which prevent our intellectual growth, our spiritual growth, our moral growth and our economic growth. And the first step to that is knocking down of imperialism. We have to put an end to the poverty of this country. I am aware I do not know much.

But still I should like to put before you that when I go to a great city and find great palatial buildings there, I always form my opinion of the city not from the palaces, but I form my opinion of the city from things that are happening behind these palaces—the mud huts in which are living thousands of people, living in misery and unhappiness, missing education, sanitation, hygiene, cultural development, parks, libraries and so many other things for which the municipality is set up and so many other things. This is undoubtedly the look-out of the municipality. An efficient municipality is also ultimately responsible for the housing of the population. A municipality is also responsible for their maintenance and if there is no work for the people to do, it is its duty to provide them with employment.

A poor man, a starving man, is a disgrace to a municipality. It is not good for the municipality to say that we have no money to do this or to do that. I think it is the essential function of a municipality to see that there is no unemployment. If you cannot fulfil this function, it must be understood that something is wrong either in the municipality or in the social structure under which it functions. But it is absurd for me to blame the Calcutta Corporation for this. Today it is a vast problem and the problem is not within its control. But the modern ideal of a municipality is that there should be no unemployment, that there should be no unhealthy human beings in the city. A municipality should build up educated and useful citizens who can do a great measure of real work. If that is the idea of a municipality how very far we are from it. Whatever you may try to do, you are up against British imperialism, you are up against vested interests. You are up against a certain social structure which prevents our proper growth, our municipal growth. The idea of municipalisation is the idea of seeing private properties being utilised for the work of the public. That is not socialism. That is sheer development of the municipality. My comparing this idea of municipalisation to socialism you may consider absurd. But the idea is there. And this idea takes us inevitably to other ideas.

I do not know if you think in terms as to what Calcutta should be like twenty or thirty years hence. Do you think of what would be your problems a generation hence? Do not limit your vision. You must think of things ahead and think of the future. You, as a municipality, must set an example to the vested interests that employees should be treated as human beings, that they should not be exploited. I trust this corporation representing this great city will always think in terms of its large number of employees who, after all, are citizens of Calcutta and will not treat them merely as persons to be exploited.

It is pleasant for me to go out of the way of politics, and talk of other matters. I am too much engaged in politics and yet I like to deal with other matters. After all, I do not think I am a politician. It is sheer chance that made me a politician. But still, I do like to come out of the maze of politics and think of other matters. And therefore it is pleasant to me to talk of some other matters and I am thankful to you for giving me this opportunity to speak on such matters. I have come to Calcutta after three years. Today I am going away. I may come back very soon or I may not come for a long time. But whether I come back soon or late I shall remember and remember well the extreme marks of affection which the people of Calcutta have showered upon me.

25. The Need for a Larger Perspective[1]

Everywhere when I go to meetings of students, I find a large measure of enthusiasm, but not very much of concentrated thought and clear ideas behind that enthusiasm. And I always have that feeling that enthusiasm takes the place of thought and action. That would be a misuse of that enthusiasm, that would be a negation of that enthusiasm, because right enthusiasm must lead to right action just as right thought must lead to right action.

Whenever I address students I draw their attention usually to certain wider aspects and wider problems to enable them to think, hoping that by thinking they would be able to learn to think in larger perspective and that would lead them to action You talk of Indian freedom being the whole of your politics and half your religion. I do not quite know that the other half of your religion leads you to slavery. I want you to consider and think of these problems of Indian freedom from many viewpoints.

Today we Indians are oppressed by the might of British imperialism. We have long been oppressed and we have a feeling of suffocation and many people seem to think that the organised might of British imperialism is such that it would be difficult to get out of its clutches.

1. Address to students, Calcutta, 9 November 1936. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 10 November 1936.

Many people—I am not talking of students at the present moment—intelligent and educated people, think almost in terms of the British Empire being good for us and certainly not death for us. There are Indians who argue that independence is not good for this country, that something which is not independence is better for the country. That is a remarkable state of mind which not only puzzles me but astonishes me. You may go to a country like Afghanistan which is very backward, but you will not come across a man who will not immediately understand the conception of national freedom. He has repeatedly fought for it and because of that, it has been impossible for the British Empire, in spite of its armies, fighting machines, to bring Afghanistan within its fold.

The people of Afghanistan understand the conception of freedom and they value it and fight for it. But here in this country, we find even some of our highly educated friends getting very irritated if you talk of independence. I am not talking naturally of people within the Congress, because the Congress stands for independence, but there are other people whom I mean. That is a curious mentality which a person develops, who cannot understand even the simplest of ideas. And that shows that sometimes education may be a wrong education and intelligence a perverted intelligence, because the conception of freedom is the simplest possible conception. It is a conception which any man can easily understand. Why is it then that some people who are educated and intelligent fail to understand it and feel so irritated and even suggest to us, people of the Congress, that they are willing to cooperate with us if we give up the idea of independence? Astounding indeed. For the very thing for which India has suffered, for the very thing for which scores of people have gone through the trial of sufferings, we have to give up that very thing because a dozen people want it. It is an astounding proposition. I try to think how this idea has developed and I can see long continued subjection, long continued domination of another country, has a peculiarly corroding effect on people's minds. It has a corroding effect on our political and social life, but it has the worst effect on the mind and spirit of a man. We suffer from it to a great extent.

The most remarkable instance of this effect on certain of our friends is that they live in this vague atmosphere, which is far removed from any conception of freedom. Why is that so? It is simply because long continued subjection has that effect. But still why cannot they take a longer view of things?

The British Empire has been here for the last hundred and fifty years or more, but a hundred and fifty years in a nation's history is not a terribly long period. Hundred and fifty years in India's history is what may

be called a flea-bite. We seem to think, how can we, weak persons, how can we, unorganised persons, stand up against the enormously powerful imperialist machine? But look at the long stretch of Indian history. A few months back I was near the north western frontier of India in the Indus Valley, Sind. I visited Mohenjo-daro, the ruins of that great city, which existed in India five or six thousand years ago.[2] I had previously been there. During this visit I was on a political tour. But I could not resist the temptation of visiting Mohenjo-daro, because I liked to see the remains of so many years ago. It gave me a truer perspective of the events and things of Indian history and India itself. As I saw the ruins of glory of that magnificent city, the thought came to me of the high standard of culture which existed six thousand years ago and I thought there must have been many thousand years of gradual development which preceded that. And then I thought of the subsequent history of India during these six thousand years, of many ups and downs, of many glories and of many things of which we are ashamed. Then I came to the British rule of 150 years.

But looking at that with the long perspective, I considered other factors too, historical, economic and other factors, which brought about this change in the world and in India. I saw those factors as working towards the end of the British Empire, towards weakening the strong pillars built up by England during the last century. All these things taken together gave me a truer perspective of what is happening in the world and what did happen and is happening in India. I was not oppressed so much because of the British Empire, in spite of its present pressure of oppression and suppression, because I felt that it was a passing phenomenon which would not last for long. I ask you to review the history of India in that way. Some momentary irritations, some domestic troubles, sometimes oppress us terribly, although they are not important. For the moment they become terribly important for us, but they pass away a week or two after. For a moment this trouble has come to us in the shape of British imperialism. It now seems to be permanent, but if we have eyes to see, we can see that it is gradually fading out of the world. But for the time it will function aggressively.

British imperialism is a thing not so much of today, but almost of yesterday. We have dealt with the past, now let us have a peep into the future. I see a terrible future, at any rate an immediate future. I hope that the ultimate future will be better, but I do see terrible

2 The archaeological excavations conducted at Mohenjo-daro in Sind, Harappa in the Punjab and in some other sites during 1922 had brought to light the flourishing of a great civilisation in the third millennium B C.

conflicts and violence in the immediate future. I see this conflict of enormous forces which might bring about the destruction of a great deal of what you and I hold dear in this country, and in terms of the world.

As young men, as students, I want you to think in terms of India, in terms of India's troubles and India's freedom. We are born in India, we have to function in India. And therefore our first job must be to work for the freedom of India. But I do not want you to limit your thoughts to India, although your activities may be largely limited to India. You must try to think in terms of the world. Nationalism is not wholly good enough. It is a restricted creed, a narrow creed. For India today it is an uplifting creed; but nationalism has dangerous aspects in it. Ultimately what it is, it is anti-ism, anti foreign, anti English and so on. In a country like India it is an uplifting creed today, because we work for the freedom of India; then nationalism is right. But this nationalism in Germany is a crushing thing, not an ennobling thing, it is a narrow thing, it is an aggressive thing which threatens the freedom of others.

I want you to think more in terms of something wider than nationalism. Otherwise when freedom comes to India, we shall remain narrow and limited and we shall not take part in the great freedom movement of the world. Having gained freedom, we may forget that there is such a thing as human freedom, economic freedom. Take yourself a little outside this narrow ambit of nationalism and think of the world. View the world forces that are at work today. India today is not and never can be a separate unit from the world. It grows and grows more as a part of the international scheme of things. If you come to the world which is in touch with each other, you see they are tremendously interrelated, so far as trade, commerce, science and culture are concerned.

There is a thing like national culture. A nation has a culture. But even that national culture is getting tremendously influenced by international factors. Today books and ideas and conditions of living are becoming more or less like each other. Europe is terribly international in commerce and trade; yet there is such intense, aggressive nationalism in Europe and America with the result that trade suffers, commerce suffers and conflict comes and war comes. Keep in view the larger perspective of history, the real forces that are shaping the present, the economic forces, the international forces. If you keep all this in view, you will see your problems in India in the true perspective. As a rule what do you do? As a rule you are talking so much of the problems of our country. We get nervous. We get excited over communal problems, the Hindu-Muslim problem. Anyhow, when these problems arise, we try to understand them and solve them.

After all, if we look at these problems from the larger perspective of history, we see they come to nothing. They are like bubbles which exist for a moment and then burst. Try to understand them in the larger perspective.

We talk so much of the depressed classes. Economically, they are landless labour in India, people who were deprived of lands in the remote past and who have been kept deprived of them for this long period. Ultimately it becomes an economic problem of raising their standard. Give them proper facilities and the problem will not remain.

The position of women in India is terribly bad, in spite of the very beautiful talks about Sita and Savitri. They are oppressed and suppressed. They are not allowed to grow. No country can progress if its womenfolk is suppressed or oppressed. If they are cultured and advanced, then you are cultured and advanced. If you imagine that you are going to do brave deeds and your women will sit behind you, occasionally cheering you for the brave deeds and patting you on the back, that will not be good enough. You cannot make them burdens on the society, you cannot make them burdens on the nation. No country can progress with this burden. Ultimately the thing that will count is the economic freedom of women. Women ultimately rise when they are not economically dependent on others and that will solve the problem completely.

Talking about the freedom of India, if you do not apply these ideas of freedom to people who surround you, your mothers, your sisters and your daughters, it shows that you have no unified conception of freedom even. That is not freedom, but some anti-British feeling, anti-foreign feeling, and that is not good. The conception of freedom is something better. It is freedom from social thraldom, it is economic freedom of the masses. If you include all these freedoms in your conception of national freedom then you have a right conception of freedom.

Whenever you consider these various problems, consider them in this wider aspect. If you want to do effective work, you have to do two things. You should understand this problem from this wider perspective and try to understand the international problems so as to understand what is happening there. On the other hand, take part in the day to day activity and struggle of the peasants and workers and masses. But you do not go higher up nor do you come down to the soil. You remain in the thin rarefied air in the middle. Instead of living in this thin middle air I want you to go down. Go to the poor people's quarter in Calcutta or a few miles outside it. Try to understand them, try to understand what they do and how they work. When you go to villages,

you also do a lot of good to yourselves. It makes a great deal of difference to the person who goes there. It gives you the knowledge of things, it gives you character, it gives you discipline. Therefore, if you want to do work, go to the working people's quarters outside Calcutta and some villages and just do a useful job. Sweep the road if possible. Know how they live, what is their standard of living. And then you will get a greater insight into the economics of India. If you do that, it will give you insight into the masses of India, it will make you effective workers.

This communal question is a bogus question in India, although people might be excited over it. The real questions which affect India are questions of poverty, unemployment and freedom. People sometimes argue about percentages here and there. When individuals and groups think that their power depends on percentages, it seems to me that they have lost all conception of what power is. It is not numbers that count, today you find relatively small nations are very powerful nations. England is a small nation but it is a powerful nation. Strength will come to us when we develop fine qualities, when we have fine human materials. A community which has good human materials is a strong community. I want you to think in terms of these fundamental problems. We are of the earth, but we must look higher up.

"Lord, though I lived on earth, a child of earth,
Yet I was fathered by the starry skies."

26. Calcutta[1]

I go back from Calcutta after five crowded and strenuous days, a little tired but full of hope and elation. The weariness of the body counts for little and it passes when there is freshness of the spirit; and these days in Calcutta have refreshed me and put new energy into me.

Here, in this great city, I met many old comrades of the Congress, many people representing the districts of Bengal, representatives of the workers, young men and women, and all manner of other folk. I had

1. Statement to the press, Calcutta, 9 November 1936. *The Hindu*, 10 November 1936. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 61-63.

the privilege of attending the meetings of the Bengal provincial Congress committee. We were faced by a somewhat intricate problem, but both in the consideration of this problem and in the discussions over wider issues I found an overwhelming desire on the part of all to cooperate with each other, to pull together amongst themselves and with the rest of India in the great cause of Indian freedom which is the predominant issue in our country today.

That the B.P.C.C. passed a unanimous resolution is a matter for great satisfaction and I congratulate it on this achievement.[2] More than that, however, what impressed me was the spirit which underlay this decision and the other problems that it faced. There seemed to be a vivid realisation that our salvation demanded the sinking of petty differences and the building up of a strong and impregnable front against the imperialism that envelops us and crushes us. The measure of our realising this and understanding the wider issues that face us is the measure of our strength and hope for the future. I rejoice that Bengal stands together, a united house, prepared to face the opponents of Indian freedom and to cooperate fully in the cause of Indian freedom and the emancipation of the masses from exploitation.

This spirit was visible not only in the ranks of the workers but in the general public. The magnificent welcome that was given to me on my arrival and the vast multitudes that I have addressed at numerous meetings are evidence of the faith of Bengal in the Congress and her vitality. The personal affection and consideration that I have received here from everybody has been overwhelming and it is difficult for me to express my deep gratitude for it. I shall remember it for long years.

Not all the repression and suppression that Bengal has had to put up with has damped the spirit of her people or made them waver in their passion for freedom. This unquenchable spirit of hers shines brightly through all their torment and suffering. That spirit will conquer, I have no doubt. But, lest we fritter our energy over the less important things, we must always remember that first things must always come first and the first thing in India is Indian freedom, and the appalling poverty of India's millions. Everything else is secondary.

I go back now but Bengal will be often in my thoughts and we in the rest of India will expect brave things from the people of Bengal. I shall not say good-bye, for we shall meet again often and often in comradeship in the great cause.

2. The B.P.C.C. resolution passed on 8 November 1936 expressed satisfaction at the rejection of the Communal Award in the Congress election manifesto

27. Message to Utkal[1]

For the first time I have visited the Utkal province though my visit has been all too brief and has just exceeded two days. During these two days, however, I have visited Cuttack, Puri, Bhubaneswar, Berhampur and a score of villages besides many wayside gatherings of peasants. This hurried tour has brought home to me more than ever the appalling poverty of the people of Utkal. The brave and fighting Kalingas, who have made such a mark in our old history, today are the especial victims of flood and famine as well as the imperialist exploitation of our country. In this poverty-stricken country of ours, Utkal seems to be the greatest sufferer and I have seen this suffering in the sunken faces of innumerable people. For Utkal as for the rest of India the problems of poverty and unemployment are urgent and overwhelming and Swaraj must come soon to put an end to them. The rest of India has a special charge in regard to Utkal and the Congress, I trust, will give all the help it can to our comrades in Utkal. The sorrow and suffering of Utkal draw me and I hope that I may come again to this province and be of greater service to her people than I have been on this occasion. Utkal is at present entangled to some extent in the problems created by the new province. But they are trivial and secondary compared to the vital national issues which face us all. I am sure that Utkal will stand by the Congress and face with us these issues. To my comrades of the Congress in Utkal I am beholden for the trouble they took for my tour, and to the people of Utkal I am deeply grateful for the warm affection of their welcome. The bonds that unite us will hold and will grow stronger for ours is a common struggle and a common destiny.

Question: Do the special circumstances in the province require the Congress to accept office?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Whatever it be, an all-India decision should be followed everywhere. All-India problems are more important than local problems.

1. Statement to the press, Tekkali, 12 November 1936. *The Hindu*, 14 November 1936, *The Tribune*, 15 November 1936.

28. The Importance of the Election Manifesto[1]

Dear Comrade,

I have been surprised to find sometimes that candidates selected by the Congress for the coming provincial elections are not fully acquainted with the Congress election manifesto. This is very much to be regretted for the whole election campaign of the Congress must be based on this manifesto. We are fighting this election not on personal grounds but for certain principles and certain larger objectives. We miss the whole significance of this position of the Congress if we fail to lay stress on these vital issues. Individuals must not count for us in this election, it is the cause that counts.

I suggest to you to address each one of your selected, as well as prospective, candidates for election on this subject and make this point quite clear to them. Each one of them should be sent a copy of the Congress election manifesto which should be carefully read by him or her. The candidate must base his entire campaign on this manifesto and should refer to it in any election statements that he might make. He should distribute copies of the manifesto widely to his electorate and the general public in his constituency. In short, he should make it clear to all concerned what the Congress stands for and what he or she, as a representative of the Congress, stands for.

I invite your immediate attention to this matter and trust you will take very early action.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 Circular to the provincial Congress committees and parliamentary boards, 1 December 1936. A.I.C.C. File No. G-37/1936, p. 125, N.M.M.L.

29. The Need for More Women Candidates[1]

Dear Comrade,

The selection of candidates for the provincial elections has largely been made on behalf of the provincial Congress committees. Still some seats remain to be provided for and I venture to bring to your notice an important matter on which I feel that sufficient stress has not been laid so far. This relates to women candidates.

The great and significant part that our womenfolk have played in the national struggle for freedom is the most outstanding event of recent years. It is right that we should open out fresh avenues of service for them and recognise in practice, as we have already done in theory, their right to an equal share in public and national activity. They have fully earned this right, if I may venture to say so, but even apart from this, the right was theirs. From the larger viewpoint of national progress, it is essential that women should share in the responsibilities as well as the triumphs of the struggle.

We must also not forget that our womenfolk have consistently *refused special and reserved representation in the legislatures.* They have even protested against the partial representation that has been given to them. That attitude must be appreciated by the nation as a whole and we should see to it that they do not suffer for it.

It is therefore necessary that we should provide for women candidates to stand for as many general constituencies as possible, apart from the special seats allotted to them. I earnestly trust that every effort will be made to do this.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Circular to the provincial Congress committees and parliamentary boards, 1 December 1936. A I C.C. File No G-37/1936, pp. 125-127.

30. To Beohar Rajendra Sinha[1]

Camp Lucknow
December 1, 1936

Dear Rajendra Sinhaji,[2]

I am sorry I have not been able to write to you but I am constantly moving about and it is very difficult to find time to write. Even now I can only write very briefly.

The Congress attitude to landholders is contained in various resolutions. Broadly speaking it is this, that the present land system requires radical changes. The Congress is considering what changes should be made and is yet undecided about them. Meanwhile it has suggested a very substantial reduction in the rent and revenue. It had further suggested some years back that there should be no intermediaries between the state and the cultivator. In spite of this it is true to say that the Congress has not decided anything in favour of ending the present system of landlordism. While therefore it thinks that a big change is necessary it does not know what this is going to be.

So far as my attitude is concerned I have written about it at some length in books and essays. I would specially refer you to some answers I gave in London in January last.[3] These are contained in my book called *India and the World*.

I think that the present land system in India is wholly out of date and is breaking down. It cannot last long though it may carry on for some years. The problem of our poverty and the land cannot be solved within the ambit of this system. It must therefore be admitted that this system must go, and with it landlordism as such. How this will go will depend entirely on the circumstances then existing. I should like it to go as peacefully as possible and with the least injury to any group. I am perfectly prepared for reasonable compensation to be given, the nature and extent of this to be determined carefully having regard to the circumstances and to the fact that it must not involve a burden on the peasantry. This of course envisages a solution by compromise of this problem. I would like to have such a solution because anything else is bound to be a much more costly and much more painful affair. No one can say what the solution would be

1. AICC File No. E-22/1937, pp. 41, N.M.M.L. The last paragraph is from *The Leader*, 21 December 1936.
2. (b. 1900); he was the Congress candidate for the C.P. Assembly from the northern districts landholders' seat.
3. See *ante*, pp. 110-111.

if it resulted from a big conflict. I would at any time think in terms of a democratic solution, that is, the majority of the people deciding.

I have laid my views before the people as I think I have every right to do, in order to make them think over this urgent and important problem. We cannot solve it now because we have not the power to do so. But it is right that we should think about it as it cannot be ignored. If the A.I.C.C. think that I am not entitled to give my own views on this, in my capacity as Congress President, it is for them to say so and it will be for me then to decide what I should do.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

31. To B. C. Roy[1]

Allahabad
Dec. 3, 1936

My dear Bidhan,

Thank you for the copy of your letter to Govind Ballabh Pant which you have sent to me. I do not know what you expect from me in the way of inspiration and guidance,[2] but if I may venture to offer a suggestion—why not arrange for some of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas to be shown in Calcutta for the free entertainment and instruction of our over-worked and over-worried colleagues? Of course there is that other sovereign remedy, of standing on one's head, which the Bengal parliamentary board and the B.P.C.C. might indulge in with advantage. I can commend this method from personal experience though of course you with your limited medical trade union outlook are not likely to appreciate it.

Probably it will take some time for you to fix up the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. Meanwhile we have to carry on with this election business and I suppose something in the nature of a decision has to be arrived at, even though it might be upset the next morning. The Working Committee will be meeting in Bombay on the 9th and perhaps the Parliamentary Board might also meet then. Kindly send any

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-6/1936, p. 37, N.M.M.L.
2. Bidhan Roy had asked for advice on settling election disputes in Bengal

further report that you like us to consider to Bombay care of the Congress House there.

In the various possible courses that you have suggested you have forgotten one. Let us all stand for election and may the devil take the hindmost.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

32. To Vidyagauri Nilkanth[1]

December 7, 1936

Dear Lady Nilkanth,[2]

I thank you for your letter.[3] Indeed you have my good wishes for the Women's Conference. I have always felt strongly that whatever major question we may have to consider in India, this must be considered in relation to the problem of women's progress. I have watched the growth of the women's movement in India with great interest. I have felt however that this has been largely confined to the upper classes. I think it will gather strength only when it spreads out to other classes also, just as the National Congress became great and powerful when it reached the lower middle class and the masses. Inevitably the leadership of your movement will remain among upper class women. But if the movement is going to be a live one it must deal with the problems of the vast majority of women in India.

The women's movement also must continue to take a great part in the freedom struggle in India. They are directly concerned with this as much as the men and even for their own particular problems they

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5(a)/1936, p. 275, N.M.M.L.
2. (1876-1958); a social reformer who was connected with several women's organisations; president, All India Women's Conference, 1932-33, and president of its Gujarat branch at this time.
3. In her letter of 2 December 1936 she had requested Jawaharlal to send his message of good wishes for the eleventh session of the All India Women's Conference to be held at Ahmedabad.

will come nearer to success through their participation in the larger struggle for freedom.

I wish you again all success.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

33. Message to Congress Candidates[1]

December 7th 1936

Dear Comrade,

You have been chosen as a candidate to contest the election to the provincial legislature on behalf of the Congress. I greet you as such and send you my good wishes. It is an honour to be so chosen; it is even more a responsibility, and I would have you remember this responsibility more than the honour. As a Congress candidate you do not stand in your individual capacity, but as one pledged, in common with innumerable others, to a great enterprise. You stand for Congress principles and Congress objectives, for India's freedom and the ending of the many burdens that crush her people. You become a standard-bearer of the Congress, reflecting to some extent the greatness of that organisation which has come to represent the urges and desires, the hopes and fears, the failings and the strength of the Indian people.

Surely it is a great responsibility that you carry, for you have the honour of the Congress and the nation in your charge. Be jealous of that precious charge and allow no one to tarnish it. We fight for success and we shall have that success, but even success must not be purchased by stooping or by forgetting the ideals of conduct which have cast a lustre on the Congress name and raised us out of our petty selves.

You know what the Congress stands for, you have read the Congress election manifesto. I trust that you will base your election campaign on this manifesto and make it clear to our people what we struggle for and why we carry on this great struggle. We do not fight for petty and ineffective reforms but for India's independence and freedom for the Indian masses. We enter the legislatures to combat the new

1. A.I.C.C. File No. E 1/1936-37, pp 49-51, N.M.M.L.

Act and to try to end it. Our election campaign must revolve round that central pivot. There is no room in it for personalities or personal and petty issues.

May success attend your efforts.

Yours in the cause of India's freedom,
Jawaharlal Nehru

34. A Message to Socialists[1]

Comrade Masani has asked me for a message to your Conference.[2] I send my greeting gladly and I hope that your deliberations will result in good to the great cause we have at heart. That cause today is best served by building up a powerful anti imperialist joint front in the country. It is obvious that the National Congress is the only organisation which can function as such a joint front.

As you know I am vastly interested in the socialist approach to all questions. It is right that we should understand the theory underlying this approach. This helps to clarify our minds and give purpose to our activities. But two aspects of this question fill my own mind. One is how to apply this approach to Indian conditions. The other is how to speak of socialism in the language of India. I think it is often forgotten that if we are to be understood we must speak the language of the country. I am not merely referring to the various languages of India. I am referring much more to the language of the mind and the heart, to the language which grows from a complex of associations of past history and culture and present environment. So long as we do not speak in some language which has that Indian mentality for background we lose a great measure of our effectiveness. Merely to use words and phrases, which may have meaning for us but which are not current coin among the masses of India, is often wasted effort. It is this problem of the approach to socialism that occupies my mind—

1. Faizpur, 20 December 1936. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 24 December 1936 Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 95-96.
2. *The All India Congress Socialist* conference was held on 23 December 1936.

how to interpret it in terms of India, how to reach the hearts of the people with its hope giving and inspiring message.

That is a question which I should like a socialist to consider well.

35. To Mohanlal Saxena[1]

December 21, 1936

My dear Mohanlal,

Your letter has just come. You need not apologise quite so much. There is no need for apologies or explanations. I do not mind very much whether you are a delegate or not.[2] That does not make much difference. I see that we have a hard time ahead of us in the province and in the country. The opposition of government never worries me. But I am worried at certain tendencies towards the development of undesirable cliques in the Congress and the enormous capacity for intrigue that some people have. We shall have to fight that. I am not myself a retiring person and I like to be in the thick of a fight. It seems to me that the first job that we have to face is this job of cleaning our own house.

About your proposal for a resolution about political prisoners and detenus I shall consult others.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C C. File No. G-5/1937, p. 341, N.M.M.L.
2. Saxena had not been selected to attend the Congress session at Faizpur.

10

THE WORLD OUTSIDE

1. Observance of Abyssinia Day[1]

Addis Ababa lies at the foot of the conqueror. Ethiopia, in spite of her gallant defence of her independence, lies helpless and prostrate before the brutal might of fascist imperialism. Poison gas and liquid fire and all the modern engines of destruction have triumphed and in their triumph have not only exposed afresh the true nature of imperialism, but have also shown us the hypocrisy and duplicity of the Great Powers and the utter futility of that body which is known as the League of Nations. For the moment imperialism triumphs again in the long world struggle for freedom, but that struggle will go on in Ethiopia as elsewhere till freedom comes and puts an end to imperialism everywhere. We in India can do nothing to help our brethren in distress in Ethiopia for we also are the victims of imperialism. But we can at least send them our deep sympathy in this hour of their trial. We stand with them today in their sorrow as we hope to stand together when better days come. I appeal to the Indian people therefore to give a countrywide expression to our sympathy and solidarity with the Ethiopian people and our resolve not to submit to the fascist imperialist menace. I trust that demonstrations for this purpose will be held throughout the country on Saturday next, May 9. The Sunday following, May 10th, as I have previously appealed, will be observed as Subhas Day to register our indignation at the suppression of civil liberties in India.[2]

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 5 May 1936. *The Leader*, 7 May 1936.
2. See *ante*, section 6, item 5.

2. Reply to Italian Consul-General[1]

The Italian consul general in Calcutta has criticised and expressed his resentment at my issuing an appeal for the observance of an Abyssinia Day to express our deep sympathy for the people of Ethiopia in their hour of trial and humiliation. He has protested against what he

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 8 May 1936. *The Leader*, 10 May 1936.

terms "empty talks" against Italy, a country which has always been friendly to India. Against Italy and the Italian people we have no grievance and for the friendliness they have shown to us in the past we are grateful. To me personally Italy has been dear from my childhood days. Her wonderful natural beauty and magnificent art have drawn me to her; her history has fascinated me. The story of her freedom struggle has been an inspiration of my youth. I have felt the majesty of Rome with its long and varied heritage, the mysterious charm of Florence, the beauty of Venice and Naples. But our love and admiration for Italy have nothing to do with our hostility to imperialism and fascism. The passionate love that we, who are the children of India, bear to our motherland does not mean approval of the imperialist machine that governs and crushes us. That very love calls upon us to combat this imperialism and to free our country. And wherever imperialism appears, in whatever guise it might be, it is the opponent of the forces struggling for freedom and we have to oppose it.

What are the Ethiopian people, I am asked. They are the people who have been subjugated by the Italian forces by fire and sword. They are a backward people, I know, and they have many failings. They may lack unity, and imperialism, as in India, may spread disunity amongst them. But I repudiate utterly the suggestion that imperialism has gone to Abyssinia, or come to India, for humanitarian motives or the spread of civilization.[2] Imperialism goes to exploit and remains to exploit and the people under its heel sink materially and spiritually. Its true messengers in Abyssinia have been poison gas and liquid fire and they reveal its nature more than any argument. That is the foretaste of the civilization that it brings, and we in India, who suffer humiliation enough in our land, cannot permit the additional spiritual degradation of remaining silent when imperialism spreads out its cruel wings and crushes other peoples.

I appeal therefore again to the Indian people to observe Saturday, May 9, as Abyssinia Day and to send their heartfelt message of sympathy to the people of that unhappy country.

2. Criticising Jawaharlal, the consul general had said, "Today Rome, the teacher of civilization to the world, cuts the chains and throws open to Abyssinian people the garden gates of an era of disciplined development and of material and spiritual welfare."

3. The Lessons of Abyssinia[1]

We have met here frequently in the past to consider and express our resentment at the policy and acts of British imperialism in relation to India and our freedom struggle. Tomorrow we shall gather together again for a like purpose, to send our loving greeting to a dear comrade of ours who has been the latest victim of that imperialism, and to express our indignation at the tremendous suppression of civil liberties from which we suffer in this country. But today we look to another part of the world, far from India, and to another imperialism, and we meet sorrowfully to consider a tragedy that has befallen our brethren in Abyssinia. They are not our brothers by race or country, but a common bond holds us together; for we both are victims of imperialist greed and exploitation. Ours is an old story of imperialist domination, we are the classic land where modern imperialism first established itself and became a fore-runner of and an example to others; theirs is a new tale and the rape is still fresh and flagrant for the world to see. We can do nothing for them, we cannot help them in any way, but it is right that we meet together to send our deepest sympathy to our brethren in distress and in the bitter hour of their defeat and humiliation to express our solidarity with them, and our determination to combat imperialism in whatever shape or form it works.

And from this tragedy of a brave people we can learn many lessons. The first lesson is that imperialism and fascism, though they function through many countries and governments, are fundamentally of the same nature, the same urges push them forward, they pursue the same methods, and they are bent on the same exploitation of subject peoples. The body is the same though the heads are many, and though often the heads argue and quarrel with each other. It is this fascist imperialism which dominates a great part of the world today and which opposes the forces working for freedom. The problem of freedom therefore for each country has two aspects—the first is the obvious one of gaining national freedom against the imperialism that prevents this, the second is equally important, though not so obvious, it is the international struggle of the forces of freedom against the forces of imperialism. And

1. Speech on Abyssinia Day, Allahabad, 9 May 1936 *The Hindustan Times*, 11 May 1936.

thus the fate of Abyssinia is not something distant and unrelated to us, it becomes part of our own larger struggle for freedom.

The second lesson we have to learn is from the significant and revealing attitude of the Great Powers towards this Abyssinian problem, especially that of England. We have heard all their brave talk of sanctions and the like, of supporting Abyssinia and giving her assistance, and we have seen how they have failed her at every step. Few things in past years have shown up more the duplicity and hypocrisy of these Great Powers than this betrayal of Abyssinia after the brave promises made to her. They applied some petty and ineffective sanctions but the oil sanction, which might have made a difference, was deliberately avoided. They were jealous of Italy and so tried to hinder her a little, but they could not afford to see an imperialist power suffer defeat at the hands of a colonial country.

The third lesson which recent events shout out at us is the utter futility of the League of Nations. Anything more extraordinary than the weakness and helplessness of the League in the face of aggression by one of its members over another it would be hard to find, unless one goes to China. The League looked on calmly while horrible methods of warfare were employed against the Abyssinians and poison gas and liquid fire tortured and killed women and children. The League may continue, as the dying continue for long, but no one can consider it as a means for enforcing collective security. The last effort of our present-day capitalist world to build up some kind of a world order and check war has failed. Every dictator now knows that he can totally ignore the League, and war thus comes nearer than ever before a frightened world. And this war, we have seen, comes now secretly, unheralded and unannounced, and spreads utter destruction wherever it goes.

And so today while we think with sorrow and sympathy of the Abyssinian people we think also of this wider problem which affects us as it affects the entire world; we think of the numerous peoples of the great continent of Africa who have been stirred by the Abyssinian conflict and who will not long remain the silent exploited people who have borne the cross for ages; we think of our own freedom struggle and see it in relation to the wider struggle against fascist imperialism the world over. And if we think rightly and see world events together in proper perspective, we are more likely to act rightly and work our way to our own freedom.

4. To Robert O. Jordan[1]

May 12, 1936

Dear Comrade,[2]

I have *received with pleasure your letter of April 13 conveying to us* your good wishes for our freedom struggle and your expression of solidarity with us in our common fight against imperialism the world over.[3] We heartily reciprocate your sentiments and assure you that, engrossed as we are in our own national struggle, we realise fully that this is a part of the world struggle for the freedom of the oppressed and the exploited. We have the warmest feelings for the African peoples in Africa and elsewhere and we follow their efforts to emancipate themselves with every sympathy.

The tragic fate that has overtaken Ethiopia has come as a shock to the whole of India. On the 9th May an Abyssinia Day was observed throughout the length and breadth of our country and innumerable meetings were held to express the deep sympathy of the Indian people with the people of Ethiopia in their hour of trial and sorrow. We are convinced, however, that the Ethiopian nation will not end its struggle in spite of the great difficulties facing it.

In India we stand for full independence and not for any association with British imperialism. But we also work for a close association of free peoples and nations in order to build up a world order where there is no exploitation of one country by another and one class by another.

Situated as we are, it is our misfortune that we cannot be of any effective assistance to our Ethiopian brethren. Although India is supposed to be a member of the League of Nations, it is really the British Government that profits by this, for the so-called Indian representative is nominated by that government. We have no say in the matter.

1. AICC File No. FL, 8/1936, pp. 19-20, NMML.
2. President of the Ethiopian Pacific Movement in the U.S.A.
3. In his letter Robert Jordan had congratulated Jawaharlal on his Lucknow address, said that both Ethiopians and Indians were fighting for the cause of liberty, and stressed the need of unity to fight for the oppressed in Asia and Africa.

We shall be glad to maintain contact with your movement and to receive from you such literature and bulletins as you might issue. Our foreign department will also gladly send you our publications.

With all good wishes,

I am,
Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. The Arabs and Jews in Palestine[1]

My expression of sympathy with the Arab national movement and their struggle for freedom has brought me some protests from Jews in India.[2] I venture therefore to state a little more fully what my attitude is to this problem of Palestine.

Few people, I imagine, can withhold their deep sympathy from the Jews for the long centuries of the most terrible oppression to which they have been subjected all over Europe. Fewer still can repress their indignation at the barbarities and racial suppression of the Jews which the Nazis have indulged in during the last few years, and which continue today. Even outside Germany, Jew-baiting has become a favourite pastime of various fascist groups. This revival in an intense form of racial intolerance and race war is utterly repugnant to me and I have been deeply distressed at the sufferings of vast numbers of people of the Jewish race. Many of these unfortunate exiles, with no country or home to call their own, are known to me, and some I consider it an honour to call my friends.

I approach this question therefore with every sympathy for the Jews. So far as I am concerned the racial or the religious issue does not affect my opinion.

But my reading of wartime and post-war history shows that there was a gross betrayal of the Arabs by British imperialism. The many

1. Statement to the press, 13 June 1936 *The Tribune*, 16 June 1936 Reprint ed in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp 127 131.
2 In April 1936, there was an Arab revolt against the British in Palestine.

promises that were made to them by Colonel Lawrence[3] and others, on behalf of the British Government, and which resulted in the Arabs helping the British and Allied Powers during the war, were consistently ignored after the war was over. All the Arabs, in Syria, Iraq, Trans-Jordan and Palestine, smarted under this betrayal, but the position of the Arabs in Palestine was undoubtedly the worst of all. Having been promised freedom and independence repeatedly from 1915 onwards, suddenly they found themselves converted into a mandatory territory[4] with a new burden added on—the promise of the creation of a national home for the Jews[5]—a burden which almost made it impossible for them to realise independence.

The Jews have a right to look to Jerusalem and their Holy Land and to have free access to them. But the position after the Balfour declaration was very different. A new state within a state was sought to be created in Palestine, an ever-growing state with the backing of British imperialism behind it, and the hope was held out that this new Jewish state would, in the near future, become so powerful in numbers and in economic position that it would dominate the whole of Palestine. Zionist policy aimed at this domination and worked for it, though, I believe, some sections of Jewish opinion were opposed to this aggressive attitude. Inevitably, the Zionists opposed the Arabs and looked for protection and support to the British Government.

Such case as the Zionists had might be called a moral one, their ancient associations with their Holy Land and their present reverence for it. One may sympathise with it. But what of the Arabs? For them also it was a holy land—both for the Muslim and the Christian Arabs. For thirteen hundred years or more they had lived there and all their national and racial interests had taken strong roots there. Palestine was not an empty land fit for colonisation by outsiders. It was a well populated and full land with little room for large numbers of colonists from abroad. Is it any wonder that the Arabs objected to this intrusion? And their objection grew as they realised that the

3. Thomas Edward Lawrence (1888-1935), a picturesque character popularly known as "Lawrence of Arabia"; attached to the expeditionary force assisting the Arab revolt in 1917; took part in Sherif Abdulla's Arab revolt against the Turks and entered Damascus with Arab forces in 1918, member of the British delegation at the peace conference in 1919, author of Seven Pillars of Wisdom.
4. The League of Nations passed a resolution on 24 July 1922 making Palestine a mandatory territory under the British
5. Arthur Balfour, the foreign secretary, made a declaration on behalf of the British Government on 2 November 1917 supporting the claim of the Jews for a "national home" in Palestine.

aim of British imperialism was to make the Arab-Jew problem a permanent obstacle to their independence. We in India have sufficient experience of similar obstacles being placed in the way of our freedom by British imperialism.

It is quite possible that a number of Jews might have found a welcome in Palestine and settled down there. But when the Zionists came with the avowed object of pushing out the Arabs from all places of importance and of dominating the country, they could hardly be welcomed. And the fact that they have brought much money from outside and started industries and schools and universities cannot diminish the opposition of the Arabs, who see with dismay the prospect of their becoming permanently a subject race, dominated, politically and economically, by the Zionists and the British Government.

The problem of Palestine is thus essentially a nationalist one—a people struggling for independence against imperialist control and exploitation. It is not a racial or religious one. Perhaps some of our Muslim fellow-countrymen extend their sympathy to the Arabs because of the religious bond. But the Arabs are wiser and they lay stress only on nationalism and independence, and it is well to remember that all Arabs, Christian as well as Muslim, stand together in this struggle against British imperialism. Indeed some of the most prominent leaders of the Arabs in this national struggle have been Christians.

If the Jews had been wise they would have thrown in their lot with the Arab struggle for independence. Instead they have chosen to side with British imperialism and to seek its protection against the people of the country. Ultimately, therefore, the struggle resolves itself into one of nationalism *versus* imperialism, and all other minor aspects of it, such as the Arab-Jew problem, though important today, have little historical significance. In the same way the communal problem, spoilt child of British imperialism, looms large in India today, but in the wide range of history it loses all importance.

India and Palestine both have their national problems and both struggle for independence; they have something in common in this struggle and the opponent is the same. In both cases, as elsewhere, nationalism comes into contact with new social forces and is affected thereby, and gradually takes shape as an aspect of the world problem, which affects us all alike whether we realise it or not. We must therefore understand each other and sympathise with each other.

As we take this long view the Arab-Jew question fades into insignificance. The Arabs of Palestine will no doubt gain their independence, but this is likely to be a part of the larger unity of Arab peoples for which the countries of western Asia have so long hankered after, and

this again will be part of the new order which will emerge out of present-day chaos. The Jews, if they are wise, will accept the teaching of history, and make friends with the Arabs and throw their weight on the side of the independence of Palestine, and not seek a position of advantage and dominance with the help of the imperialist power.

I trust, therefore, that the people of India will send their warmest greetings and good wishes to the Arabs of Palestine in their brave struggle for freedom against a powerful adversary.

6. The Arab National Struggle[1]

I am sorry I have to go away from Allahabad and not be present here on the day of the Palestine conference. If I had been here I would have gladly attended it to express my sympathy and solidarity with the Arabs who are struggling so bravely for the freedom of their country. This struggle as I conceive it has little to do with religion. It is not against the Jews as such. It is a national struggle in which Arabs of different faiths are joining hands for the common object of securing independence for their country. It is a struggle against imperialism. And there is much in common between their struggle for freedom and ours and, even on narrow grounds of self-interest, we in India should support and sympathise with the Arabs. The National Congress has already expressed its sympathy for the Arabs and sent them the good wishes of the Indian people. I trust that this Arab struggle in Palestine will help us to see our own struggle in proper perspective and make us forget our internal divisions in the face of the common adversary.

1. Message to the provincial Palestine conference held on 18 July 1936 at Allahabad. *The Hindu*, 19 July 1936.

7. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

August 6, 1936

My dear Krishna,

...I gather that Lohia has been in correspondence with you both about civil liberties and other matters. I do not propose to write to you today about political matters partly for lack of time and partly because the subject is really too complicated to tackle off-hand. I seem to be sitting continually surrounded by all manner of knots which I am trying to unravel. For the present however interest goes out to the happenings in Spain and to the great influence they are likely to have on the future shaping of events in Europe and the world.

Indira wrote to me that she lunched with you and that she found you looking better and more cheerful, which is good news.

You will remember that the Congress passed a cordial resolution of sympathy with the World Peace Congress that is going to be held in Geneva[2] early next month. This is the Congress with which all manner and kinds of people from Romain Rolland to Robert Cecil are connected. I have been getting long cablegrams from these people urging us to send someone to attend the Congress. But it is quite impossible for us to do so. That is a pity for it could have been worthwhile for us to be officially represented there.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. It was, in fact, held at Brussels

8. Message to the World Peace Congress[1]

While we desire peace and try to check the forces making for war, we feel that real peace can come only when the causes of war are removed.

1. Allahabad, 2 September 1936. *The Leader*, 6 September 1936.

The Peace Congress, therefore, must try to discover these causes of war and seek to remedy them. *Otherwise all its efforts will be largely* wasted. We need not touch upon those causes which make for war in the world and which are at present agitating Europe, for you are well acquainted with them. But I should like to emphasize that peace in colonial countries can only be established with the removal of imperialist domination for imperialism is itself the negation of peace. Therefore, for us in India, as well as for other countries situated like us, the first step must be political freedom, to be followed, I hope, by social freedom. Thus we shall be able to build up in our country, in common with the rest of the world, an enduring foundation for peace and freedom and human progress.

In India today we suffer from all the ills of imperialist domination and exploitation, and our energies, therefore, are directed towards the removal of these evils. The new Act which the British Parliament has passed with reference to the Indian constitution strengthens this imperialist domination instead of weakening it. Therefore, we have to combat it and we should like our comrades of other countries to realise this present situation in India and the difficulties we have to face. In the economic sphere the distress of the peasantry as well as of the workers and of a large number of middle class unemployed is acute. Thus the economic situation has reached a stage when a mere political solution without the solution of the economic problem will bring little relief to the people. Still the political solution must inevitably precede all other steps. And that political solution can only be the independence of India. The Indian National Congress stands for this independence, *because it believes that only thus can it solve the social problem* that confronts the country.

But while our National Congress works for Indian independence it does not believe in an isolated and aggressive nationalism. It looks forward to a world order based on equity and cooperation between nations. We trust that the World Peace Congress will work to this end so that the root causes of war might be removed and an era of peace and progress dawn on this distracted world.

9. The Importance of the World Peace Congress[1]

On the 6th of September the World Peace Congress meets at Brussels. Among the many efforts that have been made to consolidate the forces of peace, this Congress is the most remarkable, and it represents more than any other a consolidation of all the forces in the world today, that stand for peace and progress. The most diverse elements and groups, ranging from some members of the Conservative Party in England, Liberals, Labourites, supporters of the Popular Front in France, enthusiasts for the League of Nations idea, pacifists, socialists, communists, heads of progressive governments in Europe and innumerable organizations all over the world have joined their forces to combat the growing menace of fascism and world war.

Our own National Congress is taking its full part in this World Congress and will be represented by Mr. V.K. Krishna Menon.

It is strange that this Congress should meet just when the world seems to be on the verge of a precipice and a terrible war on an unimaginable scale threatens the entire world, when in Spain a bloody and horrible civil war is devastating the country, and when every country is preparing feverishly for a clash that seems inevitable. Yet that is the very reason why this World Peace Congress has become inevitable, and has drawn to its ranks such diverse groups which are prepared to sink their many differences in the face of a common danger.

In Spain today we have some indication of the horror that might overtake the world on a much larger scale. There a peacefully elected democratic government, representing the progressive elements, was suddenly attacked by rebel groups with the aid of a mercenary army from abroad. And these rebels have received considerable material aid from fascist countries, and there has been no lack of sympathy for them even in Britain. Those who talk so loudly of law and order in India do not hesitate to support rebels against the government in Spain. That government was not even socialistic. It was a liberal democratic regime. But because it was progressive it was disliked by reactionaries everywhere, and in Spain today we see a determined attack of fascist forces against a rising democracy.

1. Statement issued at Allahabad, 2 September 1936. *The Hindustan Times*, 4 September 1936.

That is a lesson for us all, and that in miniature shows us the state of the world today. All minor problems sink into insignificance before this vital question of progress *versus* reaction all over the world. It is well that we should throw our weight on the side of progress and peace, and line up with the forces that stand for this. But that peace can *come only when the root causes of war are removed. As the* Lucknow Congress declared its conviction, "such a peace can only be established on an enduring basis when the causes of war are removed and the domination and exploitation of nation by nation is ended." Peace cannot come out of imperialism or out of fascism, for both are founded on war. I trust that the Indian people will give heed to this problem of world peace with which we are so intimately connected, and send their greetings to the brave effort that is being made in Brussels to combat the menace of war.

10. To Sheila Grant Duff[1]

Allahabad
Sept. 3, 1936

...I work in India for Indian freedom because I feel that this is my proper field of activity and I can work most effectively here. But always I try to think in terms of the larger world problems and try to fit India into them. If you have that in view, it does not matter much where you pitch your tent—in Prague or London or India.

I agree with you that we must try to stop war. I would even go so far as to say with you that it is important to allay the immediate causes. But how is one to do this? War will not come from us but from those who oppose us and we cannot control them....

I do not want world war even for the sake of Indian freedom, or perhaps it would be more correct to say that I do not look forward to any real freedom for India as a result of a devastating conflict all over the world. I do not know what the result of such a conflict will be, except that it will destroy a great deal of what we value. But then

1. Extracts published in *India Weekly* (London), 1966. Sheila Grant Duff (now Mrs Sokolov Grant) met Jawaharlal in England in 1936, author of *Europe and the Czechs* and *The German Protectorate*.

we come back to the question: How are we to stop war? Mere pacifism is not enough and often the revolutionary plays into the hands of the reactionary.

It is all very complicated and we are really forced to look deeper down and then examine the roots of the evil and try to remove them, avoiding, as far as one can, the destruction of the good that we have.

I am afraid I have written a very disjointed letter. It is very late and I am tired and sleepy after a heavy day....

11. Observance of Palestine Day[1]

Most of us are absorbed in our own national problems and we are apt to forget what is happening elsewhere. And yet we all feel that the world hangs on the brink of a precipice. In Spain today a fierce and cruel struggle is being carried on, the result of which will influence the future of Europe and of the whole world. Indians, I feel sure, send their good wishes to the forces of the Spanish Government and the Spanish people who are fighting so bravely against a rebellious and largely foreign soldiery. Nearer to us, and on a smaller scale, we see the tragedy of Palestine where the might of the British Empire is being used to crush a gallant people struggling for freedom. The latest news is that additional British armies are being sent to Palestine to break the Arab movement. Palestine is going to be conquered by Britain, *and the tragedy of it is that the Jews, themselves the victims of fascism* and imperialism, are on the side of imperialism in Palestine. But out of imperialism cannot come freedom or peace.

Our Arab brethren in Palestine have to face a terrible ordeal. Small in numbers they have to face the armed might of an empire. At this time of trial and suffering, let us at least send them again our greetings and good wishes, for we are comrades in the same larger cause, the cause of freedom and anti imperialism.

I suggest to Congressmen and Congress committees to hold such meetings on Palestine on Sunday next, 27th September. That day will be not only a day of sympathy for the Arabs in Palestine but one of determination to combat imperialism.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 21 September 1936. *The Tribune*, 23 September 1936.

12. To I. Olsvanger[1]

September 25, 1936

Dear Dr. Olsvanger,[2]

I have received your letter.[3] The statement[4] you refer to was issued some days ago, probably the day before I saw you. I am afraid we are not likely to convert each other completely. We approach the question from different viewpoints. But, at any rate, we need not suspect the good faith of the other. It seems to me that you have not done me the courtesy in believing in my *bona fides*. So far as I am concerned politics and morals have seldom drifted far apart and I have tried to act publicly in the Congress with my conception of morality. I believe in every word of what I have said in regard to Palestine. I may change that belief with further knowledge but with all deference to you my knowledge of the world situation is not insignificant. I hold that it is impossible to understand any problem, whether that of India or Palestine, without reference to that larger situation and I hold that the Arab movement is essentially a nationalist movement, though there are certain complicating factors like relics of feudalism, etc. The fact that ignorant or mischievous Arabs have been misbehaving cannot take away from the essential character of that movement. It astonishes me for you to tell me that I am siding with the enemies of freedom in Palestine. In my recent statement I mentioned the large additions to British troops that are being sent to Palestine. I suppose, according to you, these British troops are the friends of freedom in Palestine. I hold differently.

As I dictate this letter my office is being searched by a crowd of policemen under the orders of the local magistrate. This is a gentle reminder to me of how imperialism functions in this country. I cannot tolerate this imperialism in India or Palestine and the question I ask everyone is whether he stands for this imperialism or against it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No G-5(KW)(n) Part 1)/1936, p. 189, N.M.M.L.
2. *A Zionist living in Jerusalem.*
3. Dr. Olsvanger in his letter of 23 September 1936 argued that it was a conflict between the moral idea of Zionism and certain interests opposed to it. The Arabs were not "gallant people struggling for freedom", as Jawaharlal had described them, but were seeking sympathy from the imperialists
4. See the preceding item

13. Spain and Palestine[1]

Political India is full today of talk of the coming provincial elections and candidates for these elections are cropping up everywhere. As the days go by we shall probably hear more and more of these elections and the air will be full of sound and fury which always accompany them. Other questions also occupy our minds such as the communal question or even the petty controversy about Hindi and Urdu. And yet how petty all these are before the mighty problems of poverty and unemployment—the poverty that crushes our millions, the unemployment that has us by the throat. Inevitably we must think of these problems for our sphere of thought and action is India.

But to confine ourselves to Indian problems is not good enough, it is not even sufficient for our own national purposes or our struggle for freedom. Every tyro in public life knows that the politics and economics of different countries are related to each other, that the world hangs together today as it has never done before, and the great problems we have to face are essentially world problems. To ignore this world aspect of any major issue is to lose perspective and invite error.

Therefore let us look round the world today with all its conflict and tension and cruelty and unhappiness and, behind all, its vast questioning. We meet today especially to think of the little country of Palestine and of its troubles. In a world view this problem of Palestine has relatively little importance for bigger things are happening elsewhere. And yet it has an intrinsic importance of its own and it throws a light on the working of imperialism from which we ourselves suffer. Therefore it is right that we should consider it and send our greetings to those who are struggling for freedom there.

But before we turn our thoughts to Palestine I should like to take you to Spain for a while for that will give us a broader view of the world stage. It is in Spain today that the most vital happenings are taking place, frightful and terrible events, of enormous consequences to the future of Europe and the world. Our fate in India is bound up with them more than we realise.

What has happened in Spain? Some months ago there were normal democratic elections there and as a result a popular radical party—

1. Speech on Palestine Day at Allahabad, 27 September 1936. From *The Leader*, 28 September 1936. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 132 142.

a joint popular front—came into power.[2] They formed a government of a liberal democratic variety. It was not a communist or even socialist government. There was not a single communist or socialist in it. They started with a programme of liberal reform to take Spain out of the feudal and reactionary ruts in which it had lived for so long. They made good progress, and then suddenly there was a military rebellion, headed by the army chiefs and other reactionaries.[3] And this rebellion first started, not in Spain, but in Morocco with the aid of non-Spanish troops. It was a rebellion against law and order—words so dear to the British Government—against the constituted government of the country, against a moderate liberal regime.

How did these military bosses dare to raise the flag of rebellion? It is clear enough now. They did it with the material aid of the fascist countries of Germany and Italy and, it is interesting to note, financial aid from the big financiers of the City of London.

The Spanish Government and people were taken aback. It was terribly difficult for unorganised and improperly armed masses to face an organised and well-equipped army in rebellion. And this was why the rebels expected an easy victory. But the Spanish people rose at the bidding of their popular government and without discipline or proper arms they faced bravely the rebel armies, most of which consisted of Moroccan troops. There was a mass levy of the people, even boys and girls rushed to the rescue of their hard-won liberty. We saw a strange sight—these masses fighting against regular armies and holding them often in check.

The reactions in other countries were noteworthy. Nazi Germany and fascist Italy were entirely on the side of the rebels and gave them every help. France sympathised with the Spanish Government but dared not help. In England the great newspapers, like the *Times*, frankly sympathised with the rebels, thus indicating clearly the attitude of the British Government and the British ruling classes. British financiers rejoiced at the victories of the rebels. European governments evolved a policy of non intervention which meant in effect that the Spanish Government could not be helped, but the rebels could draw aid from outside.[4]

And so this terrible tussle goes on in Spain with everything weighed in favour of the rebels. And yet the ordinary people, men and women,

2. The popular front consisting of republicans, socialists, communists, Trotskyites, syndicalists, anarchists and other left wing groups was elected to power in February 1936
3. It began on 17 July 1936.
4. At the initiative of France 27 nations agreed on non intervention.

boys and girls, are keeping their end up and giving their lives in thousands to prevent their country from falling under a bloody and most reactionary tyranny.

In Spain today we see clearly the terrible conflict of the forces of progress and the forces of reaction, the conflict which is latent all over the world. On the issue of this conflict depends whether Europe and the world will be dominated by fascism or not. On that issue depends vast and bloody war all over the world. The triumph of the rebels means the strangling of France by three fascist countries surrounding her. It means that fascism will make a triumphant attempt at world dominion in cooperation with the fascism of Japan.

In this vital issue we find the ruling classes and government of Britain definitely favouring fascism. We find imperialist Britain with her much vaunted democracy sympathising with those who are trying to crush democracy in Spain. For it must be remembered that the struggle in Spain is not between communism or socialism and fascism, but between democracy and a cruel military-fascism.

This is not really surprising, for essentially imperialism and fascism are of one family and if a crisis comes they stand together. All over the world today they oppose the forces of progress—in Europe of social progress, in India and other subject countries of even political progress. Between imperialist and fascist powers there is also inherent conflict for many of them want a greater share in the spoils of exploitation. But despite this mutual conflict they sympathise with and aid each other as against the social urge to freedom and the nationalist struggle for political freedom. And thus we find the Indian struggle for independence a part of this world struggle against imperialism and fascism. So also the struggle that is going on against British imperialism in Palestine.

We must have this larger and clearer view or else we shall lose ourselves in a maze and fail to understand events. But if we have this to guide us and to provide us with a yard measure we shall be able to judge of happenings correctly and we shall know which group or individual is on this side of the struggle or that. In India we find sometimes persons, posing as experts on foreign affairs, expressing sympathy for the rebel cause in Spain or for fascism generally, and some of our newspapers unthinkingly accept this outlook. Essentially this is propaganda for the fascist and reactionary cause. It is not surprising that reactionaries in India should sympathise with reactionaries elsewhere.

In Palestine the problem seems to be one of Arabs and Jews, and some of our Muslim friends here look upon it as a religious problem

demanding sympathy for their co-religionists. That is a wrong and misleading outlook. It is a problem of a growing nationalism desiring freedom and being suppressed by imperialism. In this process, British imperialism, as in India, has tried to play off one community against another and set the Jews against the Arabs. Like our own communal problem, they have sought to produce a communal problem in Palestine. So also the French Government have done in Syria. We must learn from this what the true genesis of this communal problem is in subject countries and try to remove the root cause.

It is true that at present there is ill will and conflict between the Arabs and Jews in Palestine. It is also true that a true solution will come by an understanding between them based on the freedom of the country. The Jews have been and are the victims of a cruel fascism and we must feel for their sufferings. It is a misfortune that they should allow themselves to be exploited in Palestine by British imperialism. Their future in Palestine lies in cooperation with the Arabs and in recognition of the fact that Palestine is and must continue to be essentially an Arab country. If that is admitted cooperation is easy and Jews will be welcomed in Palestine, as well as in Trans Jordan, to help, as they are in a position to do, in the development of the country. Arabs and Jews have cooperated in the past and lived together as friends. There is no reason why they should not do so again.

For the moment the immediate issue is the fresh determination of British imperialism to crush the Arab movement. Large additional British armies are being sent to Palestine almost to conquer the country afresh. Martial law will flourish there. Our sympathies and good wishes must go out to the people of Palestine in this hour of their distress. The crushing of their movement is a blow to our nationalist strength as well as to theirs. We hang together in this world struggle for freedom.

I am aware that outrages and regrettable happenings have taken place in Palestine. We must disapprove of them for they tarnish and weaken a good cause. I also know that various feudal elements are trying to exploit the nationalist sentiment to their own advantage. But, in spite of all this, let us remember that essentially the struggle is one of Arab nationalism seeking freedom against British imperialism, and all the power of that imperialism is trying to crush it. It cannot ultimately be crushed for nationalism and the will to freedom survive.

But though we send our sympathy and good wishes to the people of Palestine, the real way to help is to play our own part worthily in our own struggle for freedom in India. That is but another, and perhaps the most important, aspect of the great struggle against world

imperialism. It is absurd for people to talk of sympathy for the Arabs, and then cooperate with British imperialism in India.

For us, therefore, the problem becomes one of carrying on our own struggle for independence. All those who stress other and smaller aspects, like the communal aspect, divert attention from the real issue. In this struggle we shall waste our energy and injure the cause if we think in terms of minor improvements with the help of that very imperialism which we seek to combat. In the Congress election manifesto this vital background of our struggle has been emphasized. This manifesto has been welcomed by the country as a whole, though there are some people who have grown angry over it. We see here the essential difference between our great organisation standing for anti-imperialism and certain principles, and others who have no clear vision and who always think in terms of individuals and petty reforms or communal favours. If the country wants freedom it has only one course open to it—to line up with the Congress. Our doors are open to all on this basis; we are not exclusive. But those who think in terms of cooperation with British imperialism have no common ground with us. They may be estimable people, as many of them are, but the question is not of individuals but of principles. And in the great world crisis that overshadows the horizon, it is essential that we should offer a strong and united front to the forces of imperialism and reaction. Only the Congress offers that front.

The Congress attitude is clear. Only in one matter—the question of accepting or not accepting office under the new constitution—is it still undecided. My own view about this has been repeatedly stated and I hold by it with the same conviction as ever. It is that we must not accept offices or ministries or else we help in working the new Act. This flows naturally from the Congress manifesto and I trust that when the time comes, this decision will be taken.

14. To the Editor, The Leader[1]

Sir,

In your issue dated October 2nd you refer to the excesses committed by the left-wingers in Spain. Your authority for this statement is Senor

1. Allahabad, 2 October 1936. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. The date 1 October 1936 given in the source is evidently incorrect. Jawaharlal is likely to have written it on 2 October before leaving for Madras. This letter was not published.

Gil Robles,[2] the noted fascist leader of Spain. May I venture to suggest that Herr Goebbels or General Goering are not very reliable authorities for the happenings in Germany? Nor is Senor Gil Robles to be accepted as such for Spain.

I am etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Gil Robles was a leading Catholic and royalist politician in Spain.

15. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

December 14, 1936

My dear Krishna,
This morning I sent you a cable informing you that the Congress was willing to affiliate itself with the World Peace Congress organisation on the conditions indicated by you in your report. Your report was considered fully at the meeting of the Working Committee in Bombay last week and we decided to recommend affiliation to the Faizpur Congress. The final decision will come at Faizpur but there is no doubt that the Working Committee's recommendation will be accepted. So I am taking action on it immediately and today I am sending a letter to Dolivet, a copy of which I enclose.[2] This letter is full enough and I have little to add to it. You might write to him yourself and find out if he has received my letter, and if there are any lacunae you can fill them in.

There is one difficulty in our way. We are so wrapped up with the coming Congress session and the elections that it is next to impossible to do anything else. This election business will go on till the third week of February and I am going to be fully exploited for it. I shall not have a day's peace and, very probably, I shall be a physical wreck by the time it ends or earlier. So please do not expect anything wonderful to happen for some time.

On hearing from you and Dolivet I shall take steps to convene a committee to set up the peace organisations. A peace day is easy

1. J N Correspondence, N M.M.L.
2. Not available Dolivet was the secretary of the World Peace Congress.

enough to organise but a plebiscite is beyond our capacity for some time at least. Send us your own suggestions as to what we can do. Meanwhile you will consider yourself as representing the Congress on the R.U.P. organisation and you can address them officially on our behalf.

You have not sent us any account of your expenses incurred in attending the Brussels Congress. You are entitled to these.

In the Working Committee resolution appreciation of your work at Brussels is recorded.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. To Raja Rao[1]

December 14, 1936

My dear Raja Rao,

I got your letter some little time back. I am glad to know that you are living now in the beautiful surroundings of the Cote D'Azur. I hope your wife will get well there.

The Spanish affair is really terrible. We are far from it and naturally we do not feel the tension as you must do. But more and more people are beginning to realise how the future of the world may be affected by what is happening in Spain.

I have not so far received the issues of *La Revolution Espagnole*. I do not know what has happened to them. I should love to get this regularly.

Your account of French politics is interesting and this inside view helps one to understand what is happening. It is a strange world in which most of our preconceived notions get upset and we have to seek a new equilibrium.

The approaching Congress has brought a great deal of work to me and so I may not write at length.

With all good wishes for the new year,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J N Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

11

THE FAIZPUR CONGRESS

1. On the Choice of the Congress President[1]

Ever since my name was mentioned for re-election to the Congress presidentship, I have thought repeatedly and anxiously over the matter. The idea did not attract me, for I do not believe in the same person functioning again and again in one office. My utility, such as it is, would not disappear if I was not President. It might possibly be greater, for I would be relieved of the routine performance of many duties which take up a great deal of time and energy.

The burden that a Congress President has to carry is no light one and his lot is not enviable. There were other colleagues and comrades fitted for the task and it seemed improper that I should in a way monopolise this seat of honour and this burden of authority. I discussed the matter with my comrades and I pressed for other names, notably that of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. But Khan Saheb was wholly unwilling and the others were also reluctant. I felt that I could not myself adopt a wholly negative attitude as there were some reasons, in the past year as in the present, which favoured me. In a way I represented a link between various sets of ideas and so I helped somewhat in toning down the differences and emphasising the essential unity of our struggle against imperialism. So, undecided, I could say neither yes nor no definitely and I remained silent on this issue, leaving chance to decide it. Nominations for the presidentship have now been made and as the time for election draws near, I feel that I cannot remain silent any longer and I must tell my countrymen what my feelings are.

I shall gladly welcome the election of any of my colleagues and cooperate with him in another capacity in the great enterprise we have undertaken. Should however the choice of my countrymen fall on me, I dare not say no to it; I shall submit to their pleasure. But before they so decide, they must realise fully what I stand for, what thoughts move me, what the springs of action are for me in speech and writing. I have given enough indication of this and from this I want to be judged.

I am not an unknown quantity and I do not want to be accepted under any false pretences. When I returned from Europe last March I came as one long cut off from political activity, without the living

1. Statement to the press, Bareilly, 20 November 1936. *The Hindu*, 21 November 1936. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 64-68.

touch with events which is so necessary for those who dabble in public affairs. Yet I had the advantage of a period of quiet thought, detached from the day to day worries of a political life. I ventured to place these thoughts of mine before my countrymen at the last session of the Congress. Since then, during a crowded eight months, I have picked up the old threads, resumed contact with the many-sided life of India, met innumerable comrades of mine, wandered about a great deal over this great land of ours, and looked into the eyes of millions of my countrymen and countrywomen. And so I have been able to form some idea of India as she is today; I have filled in that picture which had grown a little vague.

This further knowledge has not made me change in any way those views of mine which I expressed at Lucknow. It has but confirmed them. I see the world in the grip of a titanic conflict, of which our own struggle is but a part.

I see the old order breaking up; capitalism having fulfilled its purpose, decaying; and imperialism, its latest offshoot and development, *entrenching itself before the onslaught of socialism and nationalism.* For imperialism is but an aspect of this new capitalism and it is not possible to understand it without reference to this central fact.

In India, the outstanding fact is the appalling poverty and misery of the people and the vast and growing dimensions of unemployment. There can be no substantial relief from this under imperialism and so perforce we must have independence.

The primary issue becomes one of political freedom, though this is intimately allied to social issues, and only if this alliance is understood can effective advance be made and the right stress laid. I believe that through socialism alone can we solve our economic problems, but socialism can only function when India is politically free. Yet in that struggle for Swaraj itself the socialistic analysis helps by showing us the true nature of the struggle, its relation to the wider world struggle, and the kind of Swaraj we should aim at.

So the problem today in India is one of combating imperialism in all its aspects, and the necessity for us is to build up an anti imperialist front for this purpose. That front must include all elements and people who desire independence, whatever their social or economic objectives might be. It must include socialists and those who are not socialists alike on this basis. The Congress itself has offered the widest basis for this joint front. We must maintain that. We may not break that front for we have to face powerful imperialist and reactionary forces. If any weaken this front, they do so at their peril and to the injury of the nation.

Our task is therefore to pool our resources, to tone down our differences as far as we can, to bear with each other even though we may differ on some matters, for ours is the larger agreement on the issue of Indian freedom and independence. We have done so in the past and built up the magnificent structure of the Congress. We shall do so in the present and in the future and so build up on an ever wider foundation this strong and united front against imperialism.

The immediate task is to combat the new Act and all its works. The Congress election manifesto has declared that there can or will be no cooperation with this Act. Let there be no weakening in this resolve and let us carry it to its logical consequence. We shall fight the elections with all our strength but we shall fight them for this and no other purpose, remembering always that the real struggle and the real strength lie outside the legislatures.

These are my present thoughts and I place them before my countrymen so that they may know how my mind is working. But over and above all this lies the shadow of international crisis and ever-impending war. We may not forget it for our fate and our future are involved in it.

2. Further Thoughts on the Presidentship[1]

As I was travelling from Allahabad to Bareilly I drafted a statement[2] in the train about the coming Congress presidential election. I was in somewhat of a quandary and not knowing what to do decided to take the public into my confidence. That statement seems to have given rise to some controversy in the press.[3] As I have been incessantly touring in the interior, I have not been able to see most of the press comments and do not know what they are. Such as I have seen have surprised me for they seemed to raise issues which I had not intended to raise.

1. Statement to the press, Hargaon (Sitapur district), 28 November 1936 *The Hindu*, 29 November 1936.
2. See the preceding item.
3. It was argued by some that Jawaharlal's statement of 20 November 1936 on the subject of his re-election meant that a vote for him at the election would be a vote for socialism.

I did not wish to enter into this controversy, for I am placed in a peculiar position. I had no desire to be re-elected President and I had stated I would welcome the election of another and would gladly *cooperate with him. Eminent and respected colleagues* have been suggested for the presidentship and election of anyone of them would be in the fitness of things. Yet under the circumstances, as I pointed out previously, I could not say "no". I have, however, just received a telegram to the following effect from two close colleagues of mine:

> Newspapers interpret your statement treating your election as a vote for socialism and anti-office acceptance. We think it reiterates your own views on socialism and at the same time treating political independence as of paramount importance and pleading for joint action and your election as no vote for socialism or anti-office acceptance. Misunderstanding needs clearing.

In view of this request of my colleagues I cannot remain silent. I would add I have just heard that Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel has issued a statement on this subject.[4] But I have not seen or heard it so far and I do not know what the exact nature of it is. The view expressed about my statement in the above telegram is perfectly correct. It would be absurd for me to treat this presidential election as a vote for socialism or anti-office acceptance. I have expressed my views on socialism and pointed out how this colours all my outlook and my activity. I have further expressed myself often enough against office acceptance and whenever opportunity occurs I shall press this viewpoint before the Congress, but it is for the Congress to decide this issue directly and on full consideration of it and not as it were by casual and indirect vote. I do believe that political independence is the paramount issue before the country and the necessity for joint, united action on this is incumbent on all of us. I say this to remove any misunderstanding and not suggest *even indirectly that I should be elected. If in spite of this* I am elected, it can only mean that my general line of activity during the last eight months is approved by the majority of Congressmen and not my particular views on any issue. Considerations that have led me to act in that way hold and in so far as I can, I shall continue to act in the same way whether I am President or not.

4. While admitting that on some "vital matters" his views were in conflict with those of Jawaharlal, Patel asked the delegates "to plump for Pandit Jawaharlal as being the best person to represent the nation and guide and regulate in the right channels the different forces that are at work in the country."

3. The Congress and the Elections[1]

Some of you are old members of the A.I.C.C. and old associates while others are new, but old or new, we are all comrades in arms. This Congress, in connection with which we are all met here, has several special features. The first is that we meet in a village—a beautiful and fine village constructed by our friends. Hardships you may suffer during your stay in this improvised Congress Nagar, but you must not forget to take into consideration what hardships the reception committee had to suffer. A recent flood had spoiled the show first, but still this is a great achievement on the part of the reception committee.

Secondly, we have the ensuing elections to the different provincial legislatures. The Congress has set up over a thousand candidates. Several of our co-workers have been detained on account of the election campaign and have sent apologies for being absent. I wish they had been able to come, for, after all, we have to gain strength by discussions at a central place where views can be exchanged and a programme formulated.

After all, among the 1,500 candidates set up by the Congress there will be all sorts of people, good, bad and indifferent. The Central Board generally accepts the local nominations after considering the local objections. No organisation can grow unless its final decision is respected by the rank and file. I want you to carry the message back from here that threats of resignations are no good. Who dare run away from the Congress? People have resigned from the Congress organisation or held out threats to resign in protest against Parliamentary Board nominations. I was out of the Board and, after seeing what has happened during the last few months, I am glad I did not share this responsibility. I have every sympathy with Sardar Patel and Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant in their difficulties. Anybody who threatens to resign from the Congress must remember that he cannot do so and yet carry the Congress name with him. If people want to run away from the Congress, they are quite at liberty to do so, but only on this condition, that they cannot be allowed to have the benefit of the Congress label behind their name.

1. Speech at the A.I.C.C. meeting, Faizpur, 25 December 1936. *The Hindu*, 26 December 1936.

The Congress, however, is not perturbed by these. Whoever adopts an attitude of threat does not know what organisations are and has never carried on their work. Such threats reveal a poor knowledge of political affairs. The election is only one of the things that the Congress has to do. Even if the heavens fall the Congress will go on. The Congress cannot accept every suggestion made. It cannot take a decision once for all and stick to it.

The election is a heavy responsibility. Wooing the voters and serving them is our duty but the burden is great. Firstly, we have to fight those who are in alliance with the government which is bent on breaking the rules prepared by themselves in order to defeat us. You know what has happened at the various places and what will happen in the near future. Secondly, there is our own inherent weakness which we must remove.

In connection with the elections, new problems have sprung up. Some people think that success in the elections is nothing but the sharing of spoils. But I would want you to understand that the nomination of candidates is not the distribution of sweets. In nominating candidates we must make it clear that we want the real work of the candidates to continue. Although our real work is not inside the councils we may use them for whatever they be worth. Elections will come and go but the Congress will remain for ever and that is why our real and great work is outside the legislatures.

I am surprised at the suggestion which emanated from certain quarters to the effect that owing to the ensuing elections the plenary session of the Congress should be postponed. It was a preposterous suggestion for, even if the heavens were to fall, the Congress sessions cannot be postponed. I would request the delegates who have come here to attend the Congress session to explain all these to the members of district and village Congress committees.

Telegrams of protest are pouring in and augmenting the government revenues. What can I do? I am bound by the Congress constitution and every member of the Congress should try to proceed constitutionally. In view of the ensuing elections there is a growing indiscipline among the Congress ranks which must be put down. At Bombay, the Working Committee drafted disciplinary rules so that Congressmen may not fight among themselves. Otherwise our organisation will grow weaker and this is certainly not desirable.

I wanted to place these facts before you. There are other big issues besides these. The one thing I want you to bear in mind is that whatever our objective we cannot afford to weaken our organisation.

4. Message to the Nation[1]

The world is in torment today and everywhere in the West as in the East there is conflict and the fate of devastating world war overshadows us. It is not a conflict of individuals but one of ideas and of vast elemental forces, which are moving millions and which clash against each other. Everything is out of joint and we seek feverishly for a new equilibrium which will fit in with existing conditions and yield peace and progress to a distracted and unhappy world. Behind the seeming complexity of international problems the underlying fact comes out. On one side are ranged the forces of progress, on the other the forces of reaction and vested interest. We in India are engrossed in our own difficulties and problems. And inevitably our own activities must lie in this sphere. But the right way to understand our own problem is to see it in proper perspective as a part of the world problem for the world today, in spite of its diversities and mutual conflicts, is a unity and must be considered as a whole. No part of it can live in isolation, cut off from the rest. With this background in view, when we consider the problem of India, we find that essentially it is the problem of removing poverty and unemployment, and the building up of the political and social order which removes all obstacles and hindrances from the path of freedom and progress. This removal involves political freedom. For without the power to shape our destiny, we are helpless victims of external forces which keep us down and exploit us. Political freedom thus becomes the primary objective without which we cannot advance materially in any direction. But behind that lies the real urge, the urgent necessity and desire to solve our problems of poverty and unemployment, to raise the standards of our millions, to remove illiteracy, to build up our industries, to get out of the iron grip of vested interests and to rid India of the numerous ills which inevitably follow foreign domination. That is a big problem, but big as it is, it is a part of the bigger world problem.

It is to the solution of this problem that the National Congress has exerted itself. And it is for this, that it has demanded the allegiance

1. Bombay, 18 May 1936. D.I.G. (C.I.D.) Maharashtra State File No A/Misc/38/134, pp. 11-12.
This speech was recorded by the National Gramophone Manufacturing Co. Ltd., Bombay, on 18 May 1936 and released on 27 December 1936 at the time of the Faizpur Congress.

and support of the people of India. It has attached little importance to minor measures of reforms for all these are but wasted efforts when the road to real progress is barred. It has refused to be swept away by communal passions or the cries of particular groups seeking advantage at the cost of the larger good. It believes that the communal question has nothing to do with the great problem of poverty and unemployment which affects our millions. And because it has no real connection with them it is a shadow problem which will vanish at the touch of reality. The Congress stands thus for Indian freedom, it stands for the interests of the masses. It stands for great and radical changes in our economic and social system. It stands in the outside world with the forces of progress which are battling against the forces of reaction. It is the joint front in India against imperialism and its allies and satellites. All our people, to whatever group or religion or caste they might belong, have found welcome and comradeship in its widespread ranks. All Indians, whoever they might be, if they believe in these ideals and objectives and desire the freedom and progress of our well beloved country and her unhappy millions, must throw their weight on the side of the Congress and join in the gallant struggle for freedom. The present is full of misfortune and misery, and many are depressed and puzzled. But the present also offers many an opportunity for high endeavour and brave adventure for a cause that must fire the imagination of all, young and old, who have the spark of life in them and who are not afraid of risk and danger in quest of great ideals. But the present will pass—it is the future that counts. And this future beckons to us, a future bright with promise and achievement and human well being. Who will not answer that call?

5. Presidential Address[1]

Comrades,

Eight and a half months ago I addressed you from this tribune, and now, at your bidding, I am here again. I am grateful to you for this repeated expression of your confidence, deeply sensible of the love and affection that have accompanied it, somewhat overburdened by this

1. Faizpur, 27 December 1936. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 28 December 1936. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 69-94

position of high honour and authority that you would have me occupy again, and yet I am fearful of this responsibility. Men and women, who have to carry the burden of responsible positions in the world today, have a heavy and unenviable task and many are unable to cope with it. In India that task is as heavy as anywhere else and if the present is full of difficulty, the veil of the future hides perhaps vaster and more intricate problems. Is it surprising then that I accept your gracious gift with hesitation?

Before we consider the problems that face us, we must give thought to our comrades—those who have left us during these past few months and those who languish year after year, often with no end in prospect, in prison and detention camp. Two well beloved colleagues have gone —Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari and Abbas Tyabji, the bearers of names honoured in Congress history, dear to all of us as friends and comrades, brave and wise counsellors in times of difficulty.

To our comrades in prison or in detention we send greeting. Their travail continues and it grows, and only recently we have heard with horror of the suicide of three detenus[2] who found life intolerable for them in the fair province of Bengal, whose young men and women in such large numbers live in internment without end. We have an analogy elsewhere, in Nazi Germany where concentration camps flourish and suicides are not uncommon.

Soon after the last Congress I had to nominate the Working Committee and I included in this our comrade, Subhas Chandra Bose. But you know how he was snatched away from us on arrival at Bombay and ever since then he has been kept in internment despite failing health. Our Committee has been deprived of his counsel, and I have missed throughout the year this brave comrade on whom we all counted so much. Helplessly we watch this crushing of our men and women, but this helplessness in the present steels our resolve to end this intolerable condition of our people.

One who was not with us at Lucknow has come back to us after long internment and prison. We offer cordial welcome to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan for his own brave self as well as for the sake of the people of the Frontier Province whom he has so effectively and gallantly led in India's struggle for freedom. But though he is with us, he may not, so the orders of the British Government in India run, go back home or enter his province or even the Punjab. And in that province of his the Congress organisation is still illegal and most political activities prevented.

2. See *ante*, p. 444.

I must also offer on your behalf warm welcome to one, who though young, is an old and well tried soldier in India's fight for freedom. Comrade M.N. Roy has just come to us after a long and most distressing period in prison,[3] but, though shaken up in body, he comes with fresh mind and heart, eager to take his part in that old struggle that knows no end till it ends in success.

The elements have been unusually cruel to us during these past few months and famine and floods and droughts have afflicted many provinces and brought great suffering to millions of our people.[4] Recently a great cyclone descended on Guntur district in the south causing tremendous damage and rendering large numbers homeless, with all their belongings destroyed. We may not complain of this because the elements are still largely beyond human control. But the wit of man finds a remedy for recurring floods due to known causes, and makes provision for the consequences of droughts and the like, and organises adequate relief for the victims of natural catastrophes. But that wit is lacking among those who control our destinies, and our people, always living on the verge of utter destitution, can face no additional shock without going under.

We are all engrossed in India at present in the provincial elections that will take place soon. The Congress has put up over a thousand candidates and this business of election ties us in many ways, and yet I would ask you, as I did at Lucknow, to take heed of the terrible and fascinating drama of the world. Our destinies are linked up with it, and our fate, like the fate of every country, will depend on the outcome of the conflicts of rival forces and ideas that are taking place everywhere. Again I would remind you that our problem of national freedom as well as social freedom is but a part of this great world problem, and to understand ourselves we must understand others also.

Even during these last eight months vast changes have come over the international situation, the crisis deepens, the rival forces of progress and reaction come to closer grips with each other, and we go at a terrific pace towards the abyss of war. In Europe fascism has been pursuing its triumphant course, speaking ever in a more strident voice, introducing an open gangsterism in international affairs. Based as it is on hatred and violence and dreams of war, it leads inevitably, unless

3. Roy was released from Dehra Dun jail on 20 November 1936 after serving a term of six years' imprisonment in connection with the Communist Conspiracy Case at Kanpur.
4. There was famine in parts of Bengal, Bombay and Gujarat and floods in Bihar, U.P. and Assam.

it is checked in time, to world war. We have seen Abyssinia succumb to it; we see today the horror and tragedy of Spain.

How has this fascism grown so rapidly, so that now it threatens to dominate Europe and the world? To understand this one must seek a clue in British foreign policy. This policy, in spite of its outward variations and frequent hesitations, has been one of consistent support of Nazi Germany. The Anglo-German Naval Treaty threw France into the arms of Italy and led to the rape of Abyssinia.[5] Behind all the talk of sanctions against Italy later on, there was the refusal by the British Government to impose any effective sanction. Even when the United States of America offered to cooperate in imposing the oil sanction, Britain refused, and was content to see the bombing of Ethiopians and the breaking up of the League of Nations system of collective security. True, the British Government always talked in terms of the League and in defence of collective security, but its actions belied its words and were meant to leave the field open to fascist aggression. Nazi Germany took step after step to humiliate the League and upset the European order,[6] and ever the British 'National' Government followed meekly in its trail and gave it its whispered blessing.

Spain came then as an obvious and final test, a democratic government assailed by a fascist military rebellion aided by mercenary foreign troops. *Here again while fascist powers helped the rebels, the League* powers proclaimed a futile policy of non intervention, apparently designed to prevent the Spanish democratic government from combating effectively the rebel menace.

So we find British imperialism inclining more and more towards the fascist powers,[7] though the language it uses, as is its old habit, is democratic in texture and pious in tone. And because of this contradiction between words and deeds, British prestige has sunk in Europe and the world, and is lower today than it has ever been for many generations.

So in the world today these two great forces strive for mastery—those who labour for democratic and social freedom and those who wish to crush this freedom under imperialism and fascism. In this struggle

5. The treaty of 18 June 1935 permitted Germany to have a navy which was 35% of the naval strength of Britain. This bilateral agreement estranged France and led to a Franco-Italian agreement, which encouraged Italy to invade Abyssinia.
6. On 16 March 1935 Germany formally denounced the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles imposing disarmament on her; and on 7 March 1936 she occupied the demilitarized zone of the Rhineland.
7. After 1935, fascism came to be identified with aggression.

Britain, though certainly not the mass of the British people, inevitably joins the ranks of reaction. And the struggle today is fiercest and clearest in Spain, and on the outcome of that depends war or peace in the world in the near future, fascist domination or the scorching of fascism and imperialism. That struggle has many lessons for us, and perhaps the most important of these is the failure of the democratic process in resolving basic conflicts and introducing vital changes to bring social and economic conditions in line with world conditions. That failure is not caused by those who desire or work for these changes. They accept the democratic method, but when this method threatens to affect great vested interests and privileged classes, these classes refuse to accept the democratic process and rebel against it. For them democracy means their own domination and the protection of their special interests. When it fails to do this, they have no further use for it and try to break it up. And in their attempt to break it, they do not scruple to use any and every method, to ally themselves with foreign and anti-national forces. Calling themselves nationalists and patriots, they employ mercenary armies of foreigners to kill their own kith and kin and enslave their own people.

In Spain today our battles are being fought and we watch this struggle not merely with the sympathy of friendly outsiders, but with the painful anxiety of those who are themselves involved in it. We have seen our hopes wither and a blank despair has sometimes seized us at this tragic destruction of Spain's manhood and womanhood. But in the darkest moments the flame that symbolizes the hope of Spanish freedom has burnt brightly and proclaimed to the world its eventual triumph. So many have died, men and women, boys and girls, that the Spanish Republic may live and freedom might endure. We see in Spain, as so often elsewhere, the tragic destruction of the walls of the citadel of freedom. How often they have been lost and then retaken, how often destroyed and re-built.

I wish, and many of you will wish with me, that we could give some effective assistance to our comrades in Spain, something more than sympathy, however deeply felt. The call for help has come to us from those sorely stricken people and we cannot remain silent to that appeal. And yet I do not know what we can do in our helplessness when we are struggling ourselves against an imperialism that binds and crushes.

So I would like to stress before you, as I did before, this organic connection between world events, this action and interaction between one and the other. Thus we shall understand a little this complicated picture of the world today, a unity in spite of its amazing diversity and

conflicts. In Europe, as in the Far East, there is continuous trouble, and everywhere there is ferment. The Arab struggle against British imperialism in Palestine is as much part of this great world conflict as India's struggle for freedom. Democracy and fascism, nationalism and imperialism, socialism and a decaying capitalism, combat each other in the world of ideas, and this conflict develops on the material plane and bayonets and bombs take the place of votes in the struggle for power. Changing conditions in the world demand a new political and economic orientation and if this does not come soon, there is friction and conflict. Gradually this leads to a revolution in the minds of men and this seeks to materialise, and every delay in this change-over leads to further conflict. *The existing equilibrium having gone, giving place* to no other, there is deterioration, reaction, and disaster. It is this disaster that faces us in the world today and war on a terrible scale is an ever-present possibility. Except for the fascist powers every country and people dread this war and yet they all prepare for it feverishly, *and in doing so they line up on this side or that. The middle groups* fade out or, ghost-like, they flit about, unreal, disillusioned, self-tortured, ever-doubting. That has been the fate of the old liberalism everywhere, though in India perhaps those who call themselves liberals, and others who think in their way, have yet to come out of the fog of complacency that envelops them. But we

"Move with new desires.
For where we used to build and love
Is no man's land, and only ghosts can live
Between two fires."

What are these new desires? The wish to put an end to this mad world system which breeds war and conflict and which crushes millions; to abolish poverty and unemployment and release the energies of vast numbers of people and utilise them for the progress and betterment of humanity; to build where today we destroy.

During the past eight months I have wandered a great deal in this vast land of ours and I have seen again the throbbing agony of India's masses, the call of their eyes for relief from the terrible burdens they carry. That is our problem; all others are secondary and merely lead up to it. To solve that problem we shall have to end the imperialistic control and exploitation of India. But what is this imperialism of today? It is not merely the physical possession of one country by another; its roots lie deeper. Modern imperialism is an outgrowth of capitalism and cannot be separated from it.

It is because of this that we cannot understand our problems without understanding the implications of imperialism and socialism. The disease is deep-seated and requires a radical and revolutionary remedy and that remedy is the socialist structure of society. We do not fight for socialism in India today for we have to go far before we can act in terms of socialism, but socialism comes in here and now to help us to understand our problem and point out the path to its solution, and to tell us the real content of the Swaraj to come. With no proper understanding of the problem, our actions are likely to be erratic, purposeless and ineffective.

The Congress stands today for full democracy in India and fights for a democratic state, not for socialism. It is anti-imperialist and strives for great changes in our political and economic structure. I hope that the logic of events will lead it to socialism for that seems to me the only remedy for India's ills. But the urgent and vital problem for us today is political independence and the establishment of a democratic state. And because of this, the Congress must line up with all the progressive forces of the world and must stand for world peace. Recently there has taken place in Europe a significant development in the peace movement. The World Peace Congress, held at Brussels in September last, brought together numerous mass organisations on a common platform and gave an effective lead for peace. Whether this lead will succeed in averting war, no one can say, but all lovers of peace will welcome it and wish it success. Our Congress was ably represented at Brussels by Shri V.K. Krishna Menon and the report that he has sent us is being placed before you. I trust that the Congress will associate itself fully with the permanent peace organisation that is being built up and assist with all its strength in this great task. In doing so we must make our own position perfectly clear. For us, and we think for the world, the problem of peace cannot be separated from imperialism, and in order to remove the root causes of war, imperialism must go. We believe in the sanctity of treaties but we cannot consider ourselves bound by treaties in the making of which the people of India had no part, unless we accept them in due course. The problem of maintaining peace cannot be isolated by us, in our present condition, from war resistance. The Congress has already declared that we can be no parties to an imperialist war, and we will not allow the exploitation of India's manpower and resources for such a war. Any such attempt will be resisted by us.

The League of Nations has fallen very low and there are few who take it seriously as an instrument for the preservation of peace. India has no enthusiasm for it whatever and the Indian membership of the

League is a farce, for the selection of delegates is made by the British Government. We must work for a real League of Nations, democratically constructed, which would in effect be a League of Peoples. If even the present League, ineffective and powerless as it is, can be used in favour of peace, we shall welcome it.

With this international background in view, let us consider our national problems. The Government of India Act of 1935, the new constitution, stares at us offensively, this new charter of bondage which has been imposed upon us despite our utter rejection of it, and we are preparing to fight elections under it. Why we have entered into this election contest and how we propose to follow it up has been fully stated in the election manifesto of the All India Congress Committee, and I commend this manifesto for your adoption. We go to the legislatures not to cooperate with the apparatus of British imperialism, but to combat the Act and seek to end it, and to resist in every way British imperialism in its attempt to strengthen its hold on India and its exploitation of the Indian people. That is the basic policy of the Congress and no Congressman, no candidate for election, must forget this. Whatever we do must be within the four corners of this policy. We are not going to the legislatures to pursue the path of constitutionalism or a barren reformism.

There is a certain tendency to compromise over these elections, to seek a majority at any cost. This is a dangerous drift and must be stopped. The elections must be used to rally the masses to the Congress standard, to carry the message of the Congress to the millions of voters and non-voters alike, to press forward the mass struggle. The biggest majority in a legislature will be of little use to us if we have not got this mass movement behind us, and a majority built on compromises with reactionary groups or individuals will defeat the very purpose of the Congress.

With the effort to fight the Act and as a corollary to it, we have to stress our positive demand for a constituent assembly elected under adult suffrage. That is the very cornerstone of the Congress policy today and our election campaign must be based on it. This assembly *must not be conceived as something emanating from the British Government* or as a compromise with British imperialism. If it is to have any reality, it must have the will of the people behind it and the organised strength of the masses to support it, and the power to draw up the constitution of a free India. We have to create that mass support for it through these elections and later through our other activities.

The Working Committee has recommended to this Congress that a convention of all Congress members of all the legislatures, and such

other persons as the Committee might wish to add to them, should meet soon after the elections to put forward the demand for the constituent assembly, and determine how to oppose, by all feasible methods, the introduction of the federal structure of the Act. Such a convention, which must include the members of the All India Congress Committee, should help us greatly in focusing our struggle and giving it proper direction in the legislatures and outside. It will prevent the Congress members of the legislatures from developing provincialism and getting entangled in minor provincial matters. It will give them the right perspective and a sense of all-India discipline, and it should help greatly in developing mass activities on a large scale. The idea is full of big possibility and I trust that the Congress will approve of it.

Next to this demand for the constituent assembly, our most important task will be to oppose the federal structure of the Act. Utterly bad as the Act is, there is nothing so bad in it as this federation and so we must exert ourselves to the utmost to break this, and thus end the Act as a whole. To live not only under British imperialist exploitation but also under Indian feudal control, is something that we are not going to tolerate whatever the consequences. It is an interesting and instructive result of the long period of British rule in India that when, as we are told, it is trying to fade off, it should gather to itself all the reactionary and obscurantist groups in India, and endeavour to hand partial control to the feudal elements.

The development of this federal scheme is worthy of consideration. We are not against the conception of a federation It is likely that a free India may be a federal India, though in any event there must be a great deal of unitary control. But the present federation that is being thrust upon us is a federation in bondage and under the control, politically and socially, of the most backward elements in the country.

The present Indian states took shape early in the nineteenth century in the unsettled conditions of early British rule. The treaties with their autocratic rulers, which are held up to us so often now as sacred documents which may not be touched, date from that period.

It is worthwhile comparing the state of Europe then with that of India. In Europe then there were numerous tiny kingdoms and princedoms, kings were autocratic, holy alliances and royal prerogatives flourished. Slavery was legal. During these hundred years and more Europe has changed out of recognition. As a result of numerous revolutions and changes the princedoms have gone and very few kings remain. Slavery has gone. Modern industry has spread and democratic institutions have grown up with an ever-widening franchise. These in their turn have given place in some countries to fascist dictatorships.

Backward Russia, with one mighty jump, has established a Soviet socialist state and an economic order which has resulted in tremendous progress in all directions. The world has gone on changing and hovers on the brink of yet another vast change. But not so the Indian states; they remain static in this ever-changing panorama, staring at us with the eyes of the early nineteenth century. The old treaties are sacrosanct, treaties made not with the people or their representatives but with their autocratic rulers.

This is a state of affairs which no nation, no people, can tolerate. We cannot recognise these old settlements of more than a hundred years ago as permanent and unchanging. The Indian states will have to fit into the scheme of a free India and their peoples must have, as the Congress has declared, the same personal, civil and democratic liberties as those of the rest of India.

Till recent years little was heard of the treaties of the states or of paramountcy. The rulers knew their proper places in the imperial scheme of things and the heavy hand of the British Government was always in evidence. But the growth of the national movement in India gave them a fictitious importance, for the British Government began to rely upon them more and more to help it in combating this nationalism. The rulers and their ministers were quick to notice the change in the angle of vision and to profit by it. They tried to play, not without success, the British Government and the Indian people against each other and to gain advantages from both. They have succeeded to a remarkable degree and have gained extraordinary power under the federal scheme. Having preserved themselves as autocratic units, which are wholly outside the control of the rest of India, they have gained power over other parts of India. Today we find them talking as if they were independent and laying down conditions for their adherence to the federation. There is talk even of the abolition of the viceregal paramountcy, so that these states may remain, alone in the whole world, naked and unchecked autocracies which cannot be tampered with by any constitutional means. A sinister development is the building up of the armies of some of the bigger states on an efficient basis.

Thus our opposition to the federal part of the Constitution Act is not merely a theoretical one, but a vital matter which affects our freedom struggle and our future destiny. We have got to make it a central pivot of our struggle against the Act. We have got to break this federation.

Our policy is to put an end to the Act and have a clean slate to write afresh. We are told by people who can think only in terms of action taken in the legislatures, that it is not possible to wreck it, and

there are ample provisions and safeguards to enable the government to carry on despite a hostile majority. We are well aware of these safeguards; they are one of the principal reasons why we reject the Act. We know also that there are second chambers to obstruct us. We can create constitutional crises inside the legislatures, we can have deadlocks, we can obstruct the imperialist machine, but always there is a way out. The constitution cannot be wrecked by action inside the legislatures only. For that, mass action outside is necessary, and that is why we must always remember that the essence of our freedom struggle lies in mass organisation and mass action

The policy of the Congress in regard to the legislatures is perfectly clear; only in one matter it still remains undecided—the question of acceptance or not of office. Probably the decision of this question will be postponed till after the elections. At Lucknow I ventured to tell you that, in my opinion, acceptance of office was a negation of our policy of rejection of the Act; it was further a reversal of the policy we had adopted in 1920 and followed since then. Since Lucknow the Congress has further clarified its position in the election manifesto and declared that we are not going to the legislatures to cooperate in any way with the Act but to combat it. That limits the field of our decision in regard to offices, and those who incline to acceptance of them must demonstrate that this is the way to noncooperate with the Act, and to end it.

It seems to me that the only logical consequence of the Congress policy, as defined in our resolutions and in the election manifesto, is to have nothing to do with office and ministry. Any deviation from this would mean a reversal of that policy. It would inevitably mean a kind of partnership with British imperialism in the exploitation of the Indian people, an acquiescence, even though under protest and subject to reservations, in the basic ideas underlying the Act, an association to some extent with British imperialism in the hateful task of the repression of our advanced elements. Office acceptance on any other basis is hardly possible, and if it is possible, it will lead almost immediately to deadlock and conflict. That deadlock and impasse does not frighten us, we welcome it. But then we must think in terms of deadlocks and not in terms of carrying on with the office.

There seems to be a fear that if we do not accept office, others will do so, and they will put obstacles in the way of our freedom movement. But if we are in a majority we can prevent others from misbehaving; we can even prevent the formation of any ministry. If our majority is a doubtful one then office for us depends on compromises with non-Congress elements, a policy full of danger for our cause, and

one which would inevitably lead to our acting in direct opposition to the Congress mandate of rejection of the Act. Whether we are in a majority or in a minority, the real thing will always be the organised mass backing behind us. A majority without that backing can do little in the legislatures, even a militant minority with conscious and organised mass support can make the functioning of the Act very difficult.

We have put the constituent assembly in the forefront of our programme, as well as the fight against the federal structure. With what force can we press these two vital points and build up a mass agitation around them if we wobble over the question of office and get entangled in its web?

We have great tasks ahead, great problems to solve both in India and in the international sphere. Who can face and solve these problems in India but this great organisation of ours, which has, through fifty years' effort and sacrifice, established its unchallengeable right to speak for the millions of India? Has it not become the mirror of their hopes and desires, their urge to freedom, and the strong arm that will wrest this freedom from unwilling and resisting hands? It started in a small way with a gallant band of pioneers, but even then it represented a historic force and it drew to itself the goodwill of the Indian people. From year to year it grew, faced inner conflicts whenever it wanted to advance and was held back by some of its members. But the urge to go ahead was too great, the push from below increased, and though a few left us, unable to adjust themselves to changing conditions, vast numbers of others joined the Congress. It became a great propaganda machine dominating the public platform of India. But it was an amorphous mass and its organisational side was weak, and effective action on a large scale was beyond its powers. The coming of Gandhiji brought the peasant masses to the Congress, and the new constitution that was adopted at his instance in Nagpur in 1920 tightened up the organisation, limited the number of delegates according to population, and gave it strength and capacity for joint and effective action. That action followed soon after on a countrywide scale and was repeated in later years. But the very success and prestige of the Congress often drew undesirable elements to its fold and accentuated the defects of the constitution. The organisation was becoming unwieldy and slow of movement and capable of being exploited in local areas by particular groups. Two years ago radical changes were made in the constitution again at Gandhiji's instance. One of these was the fixation of the number of delegates according to membership, a change which has given a greater reality to our elections and strengthened us organisationally. But still our organisational side lags far

behind the great prestige of the Congress, and there is a tendency for our committees to function in the air, cut off from the rank and file.

It was partly to remedy this that the mass contacts resolution was passed by the Lucknow Congress, but unhappily the committee that was in charge of this matter has not reported yet. The problem is a wider one than was comprised in that resolution for it includes an overhauling of the Congress constitution with the object of making it a closer knit body, capable of disciplined and effective action. That action to be effective must be mass action, and the essence of the strength of the Congress has been this mass basis and mass response to its calls. But though that mass basis is there, it is not reflected in the organisational side, and hence an inherent weakness in our activities.

We have seen the gradual transformation of the Congress from a small upper class body to one representing the great body of the lower middle classes and later the masses of this country. As this drift to the masses continued the political role of the organisation changed and is changing, for this political role is largely determined by the economic roots of the organisation.

We are already and inevitably committed to this mass basis for without it there is no power or strength in us. We have now to bring that into line with the organisation, so as to give our primary members greater powers of initiative and control, and opportunities for day to day activities. We have, in other words, to democratise the Congress still further.

Another aspect of this problem that has been debated during the past year has been the desirability of affiliating other organisations, of peasants, workers and others, which also aim at the freedom of the Indian people, and thus to make the Congress the widest possible joint front of all the anti-imperialist forces in the country. As it is, the Congress has an extensive direct membership among these groups; probably 75 per cent of its members come from the peasantry. But it is argued that functional representation will give far greater reality to the peasants and workers in the Congress. This proposal has been resisted because of a fear that the Congress might be swamped by new elements, sometimes even politically backward elements. As a matter of fact, although this question is an important one for us, any decision of it will make little difference at present; its chief significance will be as a gesture of goodwill. For there are few well-organised workers' or peasants' unions in the country which are likely to profit by Congress affiliation. There is not the least possibility of any swamping, and, in any event, this can easily be avoided. I think that now or later some

kind of functional representation in the Congress is inevitable and desirable. It is easy for the Congress to lay down conditions for such affiliation, so as to prevent bogus and mushroom growths or undesirable organisations from profiting by it. A limit might also be placed on the number of representatives that such affiliated organisations can send. Some such recommendation, I believe, has been made by the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee.

The real object before us is to build up a powerful joint front of all the anti imperialist forces in the country. The Congress has indeed been in the past, and is today, such a united popular front, and inevitably the Congress must be the *basis and pivot of united action. The active* participation of the organised workers and peasants in such a front would add to its strength and must be welcomed. Cooperation between them and the Congress organisation has been growing and has been a marked feature of the past year. This tendency must be encouraged. The most urgent and vital need of India today is this united national front of all forces and elements that are ranged against imperialism. Within the Congress itself most of these forces are represented, and in spite of their diversity and difference in outlook, they have cooperated and worked together for the common good. That is a healthy sign both of the vitality of our great movement and the unity *that binds it together. The basis of it is anti-imperialism and independence.* Its immediate demand is for a constituent assembly leading to a democratic state where political power has been transferred to the mass of the people. An inevitable consequence of this is the withdrawal of the alien army of occupation.

These are the objectives before us, but we cannot ignore the present-day realities and the day to day problems of our people. These ever-present realities are the poverty and unemployment of our millions, appalling poverty and an unemployment which has even the middle classes in its grip and grows like a creeping paralysis. The world is full of painful contrasts today, but surely nowhere else are these contrasts *so astounding as in India. Imperial* Delhi stands as the visible symbol of British power, with all its pomp and circumstance and vulgar ostentation and wasteful extravagance; and within a few miles of it are the mud huts of India's starving peasantry, out of whose meagre earnings these great palaces have been built, huge salaries and allowances paid. The ruler of a state flaunts his palaces and his luxury before his wretched and miserable subjects, and talks of his treaties and his inherent right to autocracy. And the new Act and constitution have come to us to preserve and perpetuate these contrasts, to make India safe for autocracy and imperialist exploitation.

As I write, a great railway strike is in progress.[8] For long the world of railway workers has been in ferment because of retrenchment and reduction in wages and against them is the whole power of the state. Some time ago there was a heroic strike in the Ambernath Match Factory near Bombay, owned by a great foreign trust.[9] But behind that trust and supporting it we saw the apparatus of government functioning in the most extraordinary way. The workers in our country have yet to gain elementary rights; they have yet to have an eight-hour day and unemployment insurance and a guaranteed living wage.

But a vaster and more pressing problem is that of the peasantry, for India is essentially a land of the peasants. In recognition of this fact, and to bring the Congress nearer to the peasant masses, we are meeting here today at the village of Faizpur and not, as of old, in some great city. The Lucknow Congress laid stress on this land problem and called on the provincial committees to frame agrarian programmes. This work is still incomplete for the vastness and intricacy of it has demanded full investigation. But the urgency of the problem calls for immediate solution. Demands for radical reforms in the rent and revenue and the abolition of feudal levies have been made from most of the provinces. The crushing burden of debt on the agricultural classes has led to a widespread cry for a moratorium and a substantial liquidation of debt. In the Punjab *karza* (debt) committees have grown up to protect the peasantry. All these and many other demands are insistently made and vast gatherings of peasants testify to their inability to carry their present burdens. Yet it is highly doubtful if this problem can be solved piecemeal and without changing completely the land system. That land system cannot endure; an obvious step is to remove the intermediaries between the cultivator and the state. Cooperative or collective farming must follow.

The reform of the land system is tied up with the development of industry, both large scale and cottage, in order to give work to our scores of millions of the unemployed and raise the pitiful standards of our people. That again is connected with so many other things—education, housing, roads and transport, sanitation, medical relief, social services, etc. Industry cannot expand properly because of the economic and

8. The dismissal of 827 men for refusal to be transferred on lower rates of pay led to a strike for 60 days on the Bengal Nagpur Railway.
9. The strike was for the restoration of a reduction in wages and recognition of the workers' union. The factory was owned by the Swedish Match Company.

financial policy of the government which, in the name of Imperial Preference, encourages British manufacturers in India, and works for the profit of Big Finance in the City of London. The currency ratio continues in spite of persistent Indian protest; gold has been pouring out of India continuously now for five years at a prodigious rate, though all India vehemently opposes this overflow. And the new Act tells us that we may do nothing which the Viceroy or the Governor might consider as an unfair discrimination against British trade or commercial interests. The old order may yield place to the new but British interests are safe and secure.

And so one problem runs into another and all together form that vast complex that is India today. Are we going to solve this by petty tinkering and patchwork with all manner of vested interests obstructing us and preventing advance? Only a great planned system for the whole land and dealing with all these various national activities, coordinating them, making each serve the larger whole and the interests of the mass of our people, only such a planned system with a vision and courage to back it, can find a solution. But planned systems do not flourish under the shadow of monopolies and vested interests and imperialist exploitation. They require the air and soil of political and social freedom.

These are distant goals for us today though the rapid march of events may bring us face to face with them sooner than we imagine. The immediate goal—independence—is nearer and more definite, and that is why perhaps we escape, to a large extent, that tragic disillusion and hopelessness which affect so many in Europe.

We are apparently weak, not really so. We grow in strength, the empire of Britain fades away. Because we are politically and economically crushed, our civil liberties taken away, hundreds of our organisations made illegal, thousands of our young men and women always kept in prison or in detention camp, our movements continually watched by hordes of secret servicemen and informers, our spoken word taken down lest it offend the law of sedition, because of all this and more we are not weaker but stronger, for all this intense repression is the measure of our growing national strength. War and revolution dominate the world and nations arm desperately. If war comes or other great crisis, India's attitude will make a difference. We hold the keys of success in our hands if we but turn them rightly. And is it the increasing realisation of this that has swept away the defeatist mentality of our people?

Meanwhile the general election claims our attention and absorbs our energy. Here too we find official interference, in spite of denial, and

significant attempts to prevent secrecy of voting in the case of illiterate voters. The United Provinces have been singled out for this purpose and the system of coloured boxes, which will be used everywhere else, has been ruled out for the U.P. But we shall win in these elections in spite of all the odds—state pressure, vested interest, money.

That will be but a little step in a long journey, and we shall march *on, with danger and distress as companions.* We have long had these for our fellow travellers and we have grown used to them and when we have learnt how to dominate them we shall also know how to dominate success.

6. Concluding Address[1]

During the last two days you have seen much. You have heard me much. Still I stand here for the last time. Whatever Babu Rajendra Prasad and Mr. Aney have said about the organizers here, I join in the tributes paid to them. Theirs was a heavy responsibility and they have discharged it in a magnificent manner. Their workers showed a remarkable spirit of cooperation and steadfast devotion to duty. There is nothing impossible for us. We have the key to Swaraj with us. It cannot be snatched away by any foreign power. But when we are disunited they take advantage. You have come here in lakhs to the Congress and the exhibition and everyone of you can bear testimony to the stupendous task that the workers were faced with.

Babu Rajendra Prasad and Mr. Aney love me. You brothers and sisters, all of you love me and tolerate me. A few months ago somebody said that I am the spoilt child of the Congress and will wreck the Congress and the country.[2] I had thought that this conclusion may be wrong, for I have never wrecked anybody, but he is right in thinking that I am the spoilt child of the Congress. By your love and showers of praise you add to my pride. You lift me high because you talk so highly about me. That is not good. We should not shower too much praise on each other. You do not consider how we or my

1. Fairpur, 28 December 1936. *The Hindustan Times*, 30 December 1936.
2. The reference is to Cowasji Jehangir's election speech at Poona on 29 August 1936.

predecessors reached this high pedestal of glory. We are small men. We had our own qualities and defects. But chance had it that we joined the huge task and came under the banner of a great leader. This was a huge responsibility and involved the destinies of thousands and meant life and death for many. The power which we had was derived from all of you—from your love and devotion. This power is yours and this greatness is bestowed by you. If you withdraw your support, if you withdraw your blessings, the man will become weak and fall.

Our greatest leader, Gandhiji, came to our country. That was our good luck. But not even the biggest leader can accomplish this stupendous task. In this struggle we all went forward. Our strength was the strength which our army gave us and which increased daily. You must not forget the army of workers which has contributed to our greatness. You have seen in this Congress, whether it was a tamasha or not. People came from all corners of the country. Why did they come from the far off Frontier and Cape Comorin? They did not come for comforts, for there is no comfort here. Why do all sorts of people gather, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others? Why do we meet and disperse? Is this due to love for each other? What brings you here—drags you here? That is what gives us power and contributes to our success. We are all delegates and visitors, friends and comrades. I was amazed at the way that you sat here, calm and mannerly. A few people can disturb a big assembly but here, in spite of the vast crowd, the work went on smoothly. This power of quiet and patient work can solve our problems. We have enough power. We want united effort. Now you return to your homes in different directions, but we will not be separated because our goal will bind us together. We are soldiers on the same battlefield. In all places and phases of the Indian struggle, in bazaars and factories, we all meet. Our relationship cannot break. I take leave of you, but what is this leave taking when we have to join together and march forward?

7. Selection of the Working Committee[1]

In regard to the appointment of the Working Committee I have long felt that the existing rule was not the proper rule wholly, because it

1. Speech at the A I C.C., Faizpur, 29 December 1936. *The Hindu*, 30 December 1936.

gave too much power to the President. With all becoming humility and modesty, I say, you may not always have such a president as I am. What I mean to say is that he may not be so greatly amenable to your wishes as I am.

Suppose by an odd chance you elect a President who may be capable in many ways, who may be obstinate and pigheaded and may not appoint a Working Committee immediately or does not bring it for long to a meeting of the All India Congress Committee. Under the new constitution there is little to prevent him doing so. Of course there may be a requisition meeting. But there are innumerable ways of his obstructing and delaying and carrying on for months almost autocratically. Although some of us may be temperamentally autocratic, it is bad in the constitution to encourage this. On the other hand there is this difficulty. If we leave it to election it becomes very difficult to get anything like a compact, homogeneous and harmonious Committee. Therefore, there also I felt a difficulty and this idea ought to be left out. Now, my own idea is that the President should continue to nominate the Working Committee but, immediately after his nomination, it should be placed before the All India Congress Committee for information—not for confirmation. Of course, if necessary, they can kick out the whole body. When the new cabinet is appointed, if it appears that as a whole they cannot approve of it, they can kick it out. I think some change of this kind can be done in regard to the Congress constitution. I thought it my duty to leave the matter to the constitution committee. But, as I remained vested with authority with regard to the appointment of the Working Committee, whatever I did, I thought I must not postpone it till after the meeting of the All India Congress Committee.

I want to say I have considered all various difficulties and it is also a fact that some persons whom I would like are not here. Many provinces are not properly represented and some provinces are over-represented. All this is true and one gets so little time to consider all these things at the time of the Congress. However, I considered these matters and I consulted my colleagues and ultimately came to the decision that the existing Committee should continue to function as it is, with this variation that I should extend the old practice of inviting people who are not members but interested and we will consult them and they will take part in our deliberation, though not as members. Of course, on particular occasions particular individuals may be invited.

I have become a convert to this idea of a village Congress. I was not enamoured of the village Congress sessions though our touch with the village has been living. I do not mean to say that all Congress sessions

should always be held in villages. But, having seen what I have seen here—not so much the arrangement part, although, having regard to difficulties it was remarkable, and I think Shankerrao Deo[2] and his colleagues deserve our warmest congratulations—I have become a convert to the village Congress.

I may relate a story. A short while before the Congress when a storm came here and there was knee-deep mud and there was no trace left of the preparations for the Congress, Mr. K. F. Nariman came here and he was struck that anyone could think of holding the Congress here and he said to Mr. Shankerrao Deo, "You better get away from here". But Mr. Shankerrao said, "Even so the Congress is going to be held here—mud or no mud."

Then Mr. Nariman asked, "But how will you get water in this place?" Mr Shankerrao said that even if there was no water he would get a million bottles of soda water but the Congress would be held here. That is a spirit which is admirable—'admirable' is rather a weak word for it.

Apart from the arrangements the thing that struck me was the vast influence that the village Congress must have not only on the neighbouring areas but on the neighbouring provinces. People coming from vast areas have fresh minds and a fresh heart and they carry back sparks of living fire. It is a tremendous thing.

2. (1894-1974); a leading Congressman of Maharashtra, member, Congress Working Committee, 1938-50; member, Constituent Assembly, 1946-50; Later joined the Sarvodaya movement.

8. On the Success of the Congress Session[1]

This Congress has been a splendid success. It has demonstrated the unity of the Indian people in the great fight for independence.

It has shown that, though we may differ in our outlook or viewpoint, we are all at one in our desire to pull together.

It has been a magnificent demonstration of the joint front about which we hear so much. The Congress is this joint front in India and

1. Statement to the press, Faizpur, 29 December 1936. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 30 December 1936.

all who desire Indian independence have no alternative but to work for it within the ranks of the Congress.

We got through a great deal of work, but all this was done expeditiously and in a business-like manner. It was remarkable to see the goodwill and comradeship that prevailed during all our discussions and the desire to stress always the main points of agreement rather than differences.

To many of us who doubted the feasibility of holding the Congress in a village, this has been an eye-opener.

From the point of view of Indian humanity this has been probably the biggest Congress ever held.

It was not only big. It consisted of an earnest and disciplined people gathered together to hear the message of the Congress and to carry it to the distant parts of India.

The flame that we lighted at Faizpur will shed its radiance not only in the rural and urban areas of Maharashtra but all over India, and scores of thousands of men and women who gathered here will carry sparks of it to light the fire of independence in the innumerable villages and towns of India.

12

MISCELLANEOUS

AT THE FAIZPUR CONGRESS, DECEMBER 1936

AT THE FAIZPUR CONGRESS, DECEMBER 1936

1. To T.R. Deogirikar[1]

Allahabad
March 26, 1936

Dear Mr. Deogirikar,[2]

I have received your letter of the 12th March only today on my return from Delhi. A few days ago someone else drew my attention to the criticisms in the Maharashtra press on my remarks about Shivaji meeting Afzal Khan.[3] Previous to that I did not know anything about it. I am very glad that you have written to me on this subject and given me extracts from books which go to show that my statement was wrong. This is a matter of special pleasure to me as I have always been distressed at the thought that Shivaji should have been accused of improper behaviour. As that doubt has been removed from my mind now, I feel happier.

As for my book, you must realise that it was written in prison, without reference books or authorities. Very largely I had to rely on my memory or my notes of odd events. It was inevitable that serious mistakes should creep into such a book. I could not possibly be very scholarly or accurate. I have been looking forward to friends to point out these mistakes to me so that I can correct them in a future edition.

The book, as you know, covers a vast field and I do not presume to have studied in any detail the whole course of human history. I have tried to understand the main forces and have laid stress on them; for minor incidents I had to rely on my memory of what I had read long ago from books mostly written by foreigners. I can quite understand friends in Maharashtra resenting what I had written about Shivaji, incorrect as it was, but I wish they had given me a chance to correct

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1896); editor of Marathi journal, *Chitramaya Jagat*, for many years; leading Congressman of Maharashtra; member, Rajya Sabha, 1950-62.
3. Jawaharlal had written in *Glimpses of World History*: "With his (Shivaji's) enemies he was prepared to adopt any means, good or bad, provided that he gained his end. He killed a general sent against him by Bijapur by treachery ...Some of Shivaji's deeds, like the treacherous killing of the Bijapur general, lower him greatly in our estimation." These sentences started a controversy in the Bombay press. Deogirikar in his letter had referred Jawaharlal to Jadunath Sarkar's contention that Afzal Khan had wanted to murder Shivaji but had been outwitted by him.

myself. Now that this has been done I gladly acknowledge the error and shall correct it when the occasion arises for issuing a new edition.

You can give publicity to this letter or extracts from this letter if you so wish.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To Sri Prakasa[1]

Lucknow
3.5.36

My dear Prakasa,

Thank you for your letter which Narendra Deva gave me. I am glad you wrote and thus gave me an opportunity to say something about an incident[2] which I had completely forgotten. I wish you had come yourself, for a talk is often more satisfactory.

Like you, many things and persons and groups in India at present oppress me. But my reaction to them is somewhat different from yours. It is an aggressive reaction and often an impertinent and undignified one. The mere fact that conditions became adverse and individuals lukewarm makes me feel more combative. I have not undertaken this job to please others or because of others but because I have felt a strong urge to do so. All my intellect pushes me in that direction, so also my emotions and pride. I have tried to cultivate the 'long view' in which our present disorders lose their importance and take a very secondary place. This helps me in retaining a measure of calm and to see things in proper perspective. But the personal difficulty remains and the conflict with others who do not take this long view. This is heightened by the fact that I have had to go through during the last many months a severe mental strain which becomes obvious enough to others on occasions.

1. Sri Prakasa Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Sri Prakasa complained about an incident at the Lucknow session of the Congress, when Jawaharlal jumped from the rostrum to deal with some Sanatanists who were creating a disturbance; when Sri Prakasa sought to accompany him, Jawaharlal pushed him aside, saying "Go to hell, you Benares people."

That is the background which I should like you to bear in mind when considering my unfortunate self. Then there is today, I feel, a severe tug-of-war in India between rival ideologies. This is partly apparent and partly hidden but is important. I find myself very much on the side of one ideology and I am distressed at some of my colleagues going the other way.

I have no clear recollection of what I said during the Congress on the occasion you mention. Your memory of it must be right. But perhaps you attach more importance to damns and hells than they deserve. They have become excessively common in modern English, and especially American speech, and have little significance. I am afraid that I have fallen a victim to these new fangled uses. But the fact remains that my temper has become of the shortest and I frequently misbehave. An apology for it is no doubt desirable but I want to find even more an explanation for it. I wonder if you can glimpse any explanation in what I have written above. You know anyhow that I could not mean that silly remark for you, or indeed for anyone. But the irritation within me and the over-wrought nerves sought a way out and that was a result.

I write hurriedly and perhaps do not make myself clear. But I think you will understand and, understanding, forgive.

I do not understand you when you say that you want to have a rest from politics. How can any of us escape from these tools?

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

3. On the Training of Volunteers[1]

Allahabad
6.5.1936

Dear Comrade,

I am addressing you on the subject of volunteer organisation. The question comes up annually at the time of the Congress session, as well as in the course of our many activities which demand the presence of

1. Circular to the provincial Congress committees. A.I.C.C. File No. P 1/1936, p. 163, N.M.M.L.

trained volunteers. Enquiries have reached me as to what should be done in regard to this training and whether it should be taken up on a large or small scale. In many respects the training given in the past was not wholly satisfactory and our volunteers did not learn the art of controlling and guiding crowds efficiently. We shall thus have to consider afresh this question of training in the event of our forming any groups of volunteers. It will be also necessary for us to consider whether it is not better for us to train a small group well rather than a larger group indifferently. Probably conditions in different provinces differ.

For the present I would beg of you to let me know how matters stand in your province in regard to the training of volunteers. Are there any volunteer corps or other trained groups of volunteers? Would your provincial committee or any district committee care to take up further training or organisation of volunteers? This is a question for you to decide in consultation with your district committees. In the event of your desiring any help or advice from us, or expert guidance, we shall be glad to be of such assistance to you as we can.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Dharam Prakash[1]

May 8, 1936

Dear Dr. Dharam Prakash,[2]

I have received your note on the organisation of a volunteer corps by your League.[3] As I told you, you have my full sympathy in any attempt to start a volunteer corps. I am in favour of volunteer training on principle and would specially welcome this training to be given to the suppressed classes. I think this in itself will give them self-respect and self-reliance.

But when I come to your scheme I find that it is so ambitious as to be wholly impracticable. I really do not know how you propose to build up a volunteer corps on this scale. The Congress, with all its great

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-15/1936, pp. 9-10, N.M.M.L.
2. President, U.P. Depressed Classes League.
3. The League planned to build up a corps of 50,000 uniformed volunteers to secure the rights of the depressed classes through constitutional means.

resources, has never attempted anything one-tenth as ambitious. I feel also that your estimates are needlessly big.

I never think that anything can be done if one thinks on this big scale. The proper way to have volunteers is to lay stress on quality and not on quantity. Further, a volunteer to be worth anything must have *some mental training as well as ideological training*. Mere drill is not enough. Our own tendency in the Congress today is to limit our training to selected individuals who are *likely to profit by it*.

I would very much like you to meet with success in the formation of a volunteer corps and if any expert help is desired by you we might be able to supply it. But I greatly fear that success will not come along the lines you have laid down.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. On Congress Finances[1]

Allahabad
May 8, 1936

Sir,

My attention has been drawn to a letter appearing in your issue of the 7th May under the caption "Congress Finances".[2] It is not customary to pay attention to charges brought forward by anonymous correspondents who take shelter in anonymity to make reckless and malicious statements; nor is it usual for reputable journals to give publicity to such statements. It becomes even more difficult to consider seriously a communication which does not contain a single fact, but which is overfull of rumours and whispers and inferences and imputations and a hatred of the Congress and all its works. A psychologist or a psychoanalyst might be interested in this curious phenomenon and in the repressions, failures and complexes that underlie it. But those who are in charge of the Congress organisation have other and more worthwhile work to do.

1. Letter published in *The Time of India* on 15 May 1936.
2. The correspondent had charged the Congress with financial irregularities and mismanagement of the Tilak Swaraj Fund.

The value of the communication can be gauged by such gentle charges lovingly made: that the Congress buys its votes at the elections, and that it blackmails people and classes and then ruins them. Such malicious falsehoods are so patently absurd that they do little harm, but for newspapers and others to encourage them inevitably involves some deterioration in public life. There are certain standards of public work which we forsake at our peril, and it might be desirable even for your anonymous correspondent to remember them.

I do not know if your correspondent J has opened a central office or an enquiry bureau where "reports" ceaselessly "arrive from all parts of India about the deplorable state of Congress finances". Certainly I did not know that "the Congress budget at this moment shows a deficit of nearly two lakhs of rupees", and far from the Lucknow Congress having "proved a fiasco or financial tragedy", my information is that it did rather well and there is no deficit at all. But even if there were deficits why should J worry about them? We would err in the most distinguished company with great countries and powers. We have, I believe, always met all our liabilities, unlike rich and powerful countries like England which refuses to pay its international debts.[3]

I do not know who the people are who are said to be "clamouring" for an enquiry into the Tilak Swaraj Fund. I have not heard of them. I know something about that fund owing to my long association with the office of the A.I.C.C, and knowing something also about public and party funds in England and other foreign countries, I can say with confidence that the Tilak Swaraj Fund has been more carefully accounted for and audited at every stage than such funds are elsewhere. The fullest publicity has been given to it in the newspapers and in our monthly and annual audited accounts. It is remarkable that in spite of years of conflict with the government, when our books and papers were largely in government possession, we have succeeded in keeping proper accounts and treating the funds entrusted to us by our friends with the care that public funds deserve. The Congress has thousands of committees; it is a vast organisation. It has had to face terrible repression and the opposition of a powerful government. It may be that in some local committees there have been errors and some waste during abnormal times. But as a whole, and in so far as the central headquarters are concerned, there has been astonishingly little waste.

If J or any of his friends are so interested in our accounts and expenditure, I would suggest to them to subscribe to the *Congress Bulletin* issued by the A.I.C.C. office (annual subscription: Rs. 2/-). This will

3. See *ante*, section 4, item 49.

have the additional advantage of keeping them informed of Congress politics and prevent them, I hope, from making the very foolish and inept statements that J's letter abounds in.

Jawaharlal Nehru

6. To Indranarayan Sen Gupta[1]

May 9, 1936

Dear Mr. Sen Gupta,[2]
Thank you for your letter.[3] I am grieved to learn of the famine condition in the Burdwan and Presidency divisions as well as in other parts of Bengal. It seems to me that we can do really little to relieve this permanent distress of our people without changing the whole structure of government as well as the agrarian system. Hence the necessity for a radical agrarian programme. I hope the programme that you draw up will really deal with the causes that underlie these famines and perpetual scarcity. A strong and definite programme on the basis of which propaganda is carried on will in itself bring great pressure on the government. Tinkering with the present conditions will not help.

It would be an excellent thing if you could send a competent committee of inquiry to the famine areas to report objectively what the economic conditions are. The inquiry should be detailed and should give facts and figures. Meanwhile I hope that the Bengal press will give sufficient publicity to these conditions of famine.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A I C C. File No. G-25/1936, p. 115, N.M.M.L.
2. President of the Bengal Congress Nationalist Party in 1935; active participant in the civil disobedience movements.
3. Acute famine conditions had been reported from Presidency divisions and some districts of north and east Bengal and Sen Gupta urged Jawaharlal to advise him on how to tackle the problem.

7. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

May 13, 1936

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have just received your long letter of the 10th about the Bengal dispute.[2] I have already written to you and requested you—as indeed the A.I.C.C. has done—to take full charge of this matter and decide it as you think proper.[3] If I may suggest one thing, the consideration of the problem need not necessarily be one of the full legal type with all the tricks and hoodwinkings that our past experience unfortunately reminds us of. This kind of thing should be definitely discouraged though perhaps it may not be possible to avoid it altogether.

As for the intervening period, before fresh elections are held, obviously there must be some authority. There cannot and should not be a gap. In spite of the difficulty of having a partially constituted B.P.C.C. functioning for this period I can see no other way out. This is not a nominated committee, but a partially elected committee. If it represents even half the province, it should, I think, function. The real way out of the difficulty is to have the elections held as soon as possible and to prevent the tactics of delay. I do not see why it should take months to scrutinise the list of members or to decide about future elections.[4]

This whole Bengal affair is, you will agree with me, almost a nightmare and very selfishly I am casting the burden on you. The way out of it will have to be not by interminable legal arguments nor by nominations and pacts but by some kind of elections however imperfect they might be. The sooner these are held the better.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, File No. III/36, National Archives of India
2. He had sought Jawaharlal's "advice and guidance" whether the "provisional nominated" B.P.C.C. should be allowed to function pending the settlement of election disputes.
3. The A.I.C.C. at its meeting on 15 April 1936 had authorised Rajendra Prasad to continue to deal with Bengal disputes
4. Some Congressmen in Bengal had demanded fresh elections of thirty delegates, and Rajendra Prasad had written that this would mean "elections in nearly half the province" and that it would take "months and months" to scrutinise the lists of the primary members in the disputed districts.

8. Democratic Functioning of the Congress[1]

Allahabad
May 14, 1936

Dear Comrade,

I venture to write to you and to seek your cooperation, as well as the cooperation of your committee, in a matter which seems to me of some importance. I receive from time to time complaints from individual members of P.C.Cs, or from a group of members, against another group or an office bearer. Often we are asked to give our decisions on highly technical interpretations of our own constitution or of the P.C.C. constitutions. We welcome as a rule communications from Congressmen generally and we are always happy to be of service to them in any matter. And if legal interpretations are demanded of me, I shall certainly give them, however much I might dislike this job and however rusty my knowledge of law might be But I do not fancy this work and I should like to discourage, if I may, the preoccupation of Congressmen with legal quibbles and the like. Life is short and we have big work ahead and the less we waste our time on petty disputes the better. I can understand conflicts of opinion on matters of principle and it is right that in a living and vital organisation like the Congress there should be such conflicts. But the way to resolve them democratically is to place our viewpoints before our larger committees and to abide by their decisions. For this purpose it is desirable for the full P.C.C. to meet frequently. There has been a tendency to avoid or postpone P.C.C. meetings because of the cost of travelling or other reasons. Usually the executive council decides many major issues or sometimes the office bearers do so.

This is an undesirable tendency and it leads to authoritarianism and a weakening of the democratic element. Personally I feel, and the Lucknow Congress has emphasized this, that if we desire to draw life and strength from the masses, we must develop the political life of our primary committees and go to them frequently for consultation and direction. This direction must come much more from below than from above. Otherwise we lose touch with the living elements and function increasingly in small committees in the air.

An office bearer, as I conceive his duties, has no special powers except to carry out the directions of his committee. If the committee does not

1. Circular letter to the secretaries of the provincial Congress committees. A.I.C.C File No. P 1/1936, pp. 153-155, N.M.M.L.

meet frequently the office bearer inevitably begins to function as a committee and authoritarianism grows. And this leads to an unhealthy desire to hold office and exercise the power that it is supposed to give. *Why* should office give any special power? The office of a president of the A.I.C.C. or of a P.C.C. is a high one, but apart from the honour and glory, there is no reason why it should confer any power on the individual concerned.

I think therefore that office bearers, apart from the duties of their office, should act more as members of their committee than as specially favoured mortals above the common lot of Congress members. Thus only will we encourage democracy and discourage authoritarianism. Where any dispute arises it is for the committee to decide and the decision of the P.C.C. should end the dispute. There should be no reference, *except in very exceptional matters, to the A.I.C.C. or to its President.* The President, however, will welcome communications on matters of policy and principle and the work we have to do.

Perhaps you will be good enough to place this letter before the members of your P.C.C. as well as to send copies of it to your local committees.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
May 25, 1936

My dear Krishna,

...We have formally started this department[2] and put it under the charge of Dr. R. Lohia, a bright and earnest young man with a Berlin Ph.D. Inevitably we have to go slow to begin with as there is so much to be done. But I think we shall be able to do some good work. We propose to develop contacts with all and sundry to begin with. The nature of these contacts will vary with the individuals or groups concerned.

We have also started in the Congress office a separate political and economic department in charge of Dr. Mohammed Ashraf whom perhaps you know. This department has an ambitious programme of not

1 J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2 The foreign department of the Congress.

only collecting data but preparing monographs, issuing pamphlets, etc. Ultimately it might even undertake field surveys.

Do you remember our talk about the publication of a series of small books dealing with Indian problems, chiefly economic? Is there any possibility of some such thing being done at your end? Some people have been discussing it here as the need for such books is keenly felt. Let me know whether you propose to do anything. Suppose we can get some such books written here, could we get them published in England?

You can have a faint idea of what I had to go through in Bombay by referring to *The Bombay Chronicle* of those days. It was almost as bad as the London paper after the King's death. I am now here for three days only at the end of which I go to the Punjab for a week. It is the hottest time of the year there. So I have something to look forward to.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. Before India Is Reborn[1]

Indians and Englishmen are, I am afraid, likely to disagree about the record of British rule in India. That is perhaps natural, but it does come as a shock when high British officials, including Secretaries of State for India, draw fanciful pictures of India's past and present and make statements which have no basis in fact. It is quite extraordinary how ignorant English people, outside some experts and others, are about India. If facts elude them, how much more is the spirit of India beyond their reach? They seized her body and possessed her, but it was the possession of violence. They did not know her or try to know her. They never looked into her eyes; for theirs were averted and hers downcast through shame and humiliation. After centuries of contact they face each other, strangers still, full of dislike for each other.

And yet India with all her poverty and degradation had enough of nobility and greatness about her, and though she was overburdened with ancient tradition and present misery, and her eyelids were a little weary,

1. Article published in *Asia* (New York), June 1936.

she had "a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions". Behind and within her battered body one could still glimpse a majesty of soul. Through long ages she had travelled and gathered much wisdom on the way, and trafficked with strangers and added them to her own big family, and witnessed days of glory and of decay, and suffered humiliation and terrible sorrow, and seen many a strange sight; but throughout her long journey she had clung to her immemorial culture, drawn strength and vitality from it, and shared it with other lands. Like a pendulum she had swung up and down; she had ventured with the daring of her thought to reach up to the heavens and unravel their mystery, and she had also had bitter experience of the pit of hell. Despite the woeful accumulations of superstition and degrading custom that had clung to her and borne her down, she had never wholly forgotten the inspiration that some of the wisest of her children, at the dawn of history, had given her in the *upanishads*. The keen minds, ever restless and ever striving and exploring, had not sought refuge in blind dogma or grown complacent in the routine observance of dead forms or ritual and creed. They had demanded not a personal relief from suffering in the present or a place in a paradise to come, but light and understanding: "Lead me from the unreal to the real, lead me from darkness to light, lead me from death to immortality," as the *Brihadaranyak Upanishad*[2] expresses it. In the most famous of the prayers recited daily even today by millions, the *gayatri mantra*,[3] the call is for knowledge, for enlightenment.

Though often broken up politically India's spirit always guarded a common heritage, and in her diversity there was ever an amazing unity. Like all ancient lands she was a curious mixture of the good and bad, but the good was hidden and had to be sought after, while the odour of decay was evident and her hot, pitiless sun gave full publicity to the bad.

There is some similarity between Italy and India. Both are ancient countries with long traditions of culture behind them, though Italy is a newcomer compared to India, and India is a much vaster country. Both were split up politically, and yet the conception of *Italia*, like that of India, never died, and in all their diversity the unity was predominant. In Italy the unity was largely a Roman unity; for that great city had

2. One of the 18 prominent *upanishads*.
3. An English rendering of this Vedic hymn transcribed by Jawaharlal in his notebooks, is "O *m*! Hail to the regions of the earth, air, and the heavens! We meditate on the glorious effulgence of the divine sun. May he stimulate and direct our intelligence!"

dominated the country and been the fount and symbol of unity. In India there was no such single centre or dominant city, although Benares might well be called the eternal city of the East, not only for India but also for eastern Asia. But, unlike Rome, Benares never dabbled in empire or thought of temporal power. Indian culture was so widespread all over India that no part of the country could be called the heart of that culture. From Cape Comorin to Amarnath and Badrinath in the Himalaya, from Dwarka to Puri, the same ideas coursed, and, if there was a clash of ideas in one place, the noise of it soon reached distant parts of the country.

Just as Italy gave the gift of culture and religion to western Europe, India did so to eastern Asia, though China was as old and venerable as India. And, even when Italy was lying prostrate politically, her life coursed through the veins of Europe.

It was Metternich[4] who called Italy a "geographical expression", and many a would be Metternich has used that phrase for India; and, strangely enough, there is a similarity even in their geographical positions in the two continents. More interesting is the comparison of England with Metternich's Austria; for has not England of the twentieth century been compared to Austria of the nineteenth, proud and haughty and imposing still, but with the roots that gave strength shrivelling up and decay eating its way into the mighty fabric?

It is curious how one cannot resist the tendency to give an anthropomorphic form to a country. Such is the force of habit and early associations. India becomes *Bharat Mata*, Mother India, a beautiful lady, very old but ever youthful in appearance, sad-eyed and forlorn, cruelly treated by aliens and outsiders, and calling upon her children to protect her. Some such picture rouses the emotions of hundreds of thousands and drives them to action and sacrifice. And yet India is in the main the peasant and the worker, not beautiful to look at, for poverty is not beautiful. Does the beautiful lady of our imaginations represent the bare-bodied and bent workers in the fields and factories? Or the small group of those who have from ages past crushed the masses and exploited them, imposed cruel customs on them and made many of them even untouchable? We seek to cover truth by the creatures of our imaginations and endeavour to escape from reality to a world of dreams.

And yet despite these different classes and their mutual conflicts there was a common bond which united them in India, and one is amazed

4 Count Metternich (1973-1859), Austrian diplomat and Foreign Minister, 1809 1848 and the arch leader of European reaction

at its persistence and tenacity and enduring vitality. What was this strength due to? Not merely the passive strength and weight of inertia and tradition, great as these always are. There was an active sustaining principle; for it resisted successfully powerful outside influences and absorbed internal forces that rose to combat it. And yet with all its strength it could not preserve political freedom or endeavour to bring about political unity. It did not seem to think them worth taking much trouble about. Very foolishly it ignored their importance and suffered for this neglect. Right through history the old Indian ideal did not *glorify political and military triumph, and it looked down upon money* and the class that made money-making its profession. Honour and wealth did not go together, and honour was meant to go, at least in theory, to the men who served the community with little in the shape of financial reward.

The old culture managed to live through many a fierce storm and tempest, but, though it kept its outer form, it lost its real content. Today it is fighting silently and desperately against a new and all-powerful opponent—the *bania* or money-lender civilization of the capitalist West. It will succumb to this newcomer; for the West brings science, and science brings food for the hungry millions. But the West also brings an antidote to the evils of this cut throat civilization—the principles of socialism, of cooperation, and service to the community for the common good. This is not so unlike the old brahman ideal of service, but it means the brahmanization (not in the religious sense of course) of all classes and groups and the abolition of class distinctions. It may be that when India puts on her new garment—as she must; for the old is torn and tattered—she will have it cut in this fashion, so as to make it conform both to present conditions and to her old thought. The ideas she adopts must become racy to her soil.

What has been the record of British rule in India? I doubt if it is possible for any Indian or Englishman to take an objective and dispassionate view of this long record. And, even if this were possible, it would be still more difficult to weigh and measure the psychological and other immaterial factors. We are told that British rule "has given to India that which throughout the centuries she never possessed, a government whose authority is unquestioned in any part of the sub-continent"; it has established the rule of law and a just and efficient administration; it has brought to India Western conceptions of parliamentary government and personal liberties, and "by transforming British India into a single unitary state it has engendered amongst Indians a sense of political unity" and thus fostered the first beginnings of nationalism. That is the British case, and there is much truth in it,

though the rule of law and personal liberties have not been evident for many years.

The Indian survey of this period lays stress on many other factors, and points out the injury, material and spiritual, that foreign rule has brought us. The point of view is so different that sometimes the very thing that is commended by the British is condemned by Indians. As Doctor Ananda Coomaraswamy[5] writes: "One of the most remarkable features of British rule in India is that the greatest injuries inflicted upon the Indian people have the outward appearance of blessings."

As a matter of fact the changes that have taken place in India during the past century or more have been world changes common to most countries in the East and West. The growth of industrialism in western Europe, and later on in the rest of the world, brought nationalism and the strong unitary state in its train everywhere. The British can take credit for having first opened India's window to the West and brought her one aspect of Western industrialism and science. But, having done so, they throttled the further industrial growth of the country till circumstances forced their hands. India was already the meeting place of two cultures, the Western Asiatic culture of Islam and the eastern, her own product, which spread to the Far East. And now a third and more powerful impulse came from further west, and India became a focal point and a battleground for various old and new ideas. There can be no doubt that this third impulse would have triumphed and thus solved many of India's old problems, but the British, who had themselves helped in bringing it, tried to stop its further progress. They prevented our industrial growth, and thus delayed our political growth and preserved all the out of date feudal and other relics they could find in the country. They even froze up our changing and to some extent progressing laws and customs at the stage they found them, and made it difficult for us to get out of their shackles. It was not with their goodwill or assistance that the *bourgeoisie* grew in India. But after introducing the railway and other products of industrialism they could not stop the wheel of change; they could only check it and slow it down, and this they did to their own manifest advantage.

"On this solid foundation the majestic structure of the Government of India rests, and it can be claimed with certainty that in the period which has elapsed since 1858 when the Crown assumed supremacy over all the territories of the East India Company, the educational and material progress of India has been greater than it was ever within her power

5. (1877-1947); born in Sri Lanka and settled in the USA, an eminent historian of Indian art, author of *The Dance of Siva* and many other works.

to achieve during any other period of her long and chequered history." This statement from the *Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, 1934*, is not so self-evident as it appears to be, and it has often been stated that literacy actually went down with the coming of British rule. But, even if the statement were wholly true, it amounts to a comparison of the modern industrial age with past ages. In almost every country in the world the educational and material progress has been tremendous during the past century because of science and industrialism, and it may be said with assurance of any such country that progress of this kind "has been greater than was ever within her power to achieve during any other period of her long and chequered history"—though perhaps that country's history may not be a long one in comparison with Indian history. Are we needlessly cantankerous and perverse if we suggest that some such technical progress would have come to us anyhow in this industrial age, and even without British rule? And, indeed, if we compare our lot with many other countries, may we not hazard the guess that such progress might have been greater—for we have had to contend against a stifling of that progress by the British themselves? Railways, telegraphs, telephones, wireless and the like are hardly tests of the goodness or beneficence of British rule. They were welcome and necessary, and because the British happened to be the agents who brought them first we should be grateful to them. But even these heralds of industrialism came to us primarily for the strengthening of British rule. They were the veins and arteries through which the nation's blood should have coursed, increasing its trade, carrying its produce and bringing new life and wealth to its millions. It is true that in the long run some such result was likely, but they were designed and worked for another purpose—to strengthen the imperial hold and to capture markets for British goods—which they succeeded in achieving. I am all in favour of industrialism and the latest methods of swift transport, but sometimes, as I rushed across the Indian plains, the railway, that life-giver, has almost seemed to me like iron hands confining and imprisoning India.

The British conception of ruling India was the police conception of the state. Government's job was to protect the state and leave the rest to others. Public finance dealt with military expenditure, police, civil administration, interest on debt. The economic needs of the citizens were not looked after, and were sacrificed to British interests. The cultural and other needs of the people, except for a tiny handful, were entirely neglected. The changing conceptions of public finance which brought free and universal education, improvement of public health, care of the poor and feeble minded, insurance of workers against illness, old age and unemployment and the like in other countries, were almost entirely

beyond the ken of the government. It could not indulge in these spending activities; for its tax system was most regressive, taking a much larger proportion of small incomes than of the larger ones, and its expenditure on its protective and administrative functions was terribly heavy and swallowed up most of the revenue.

The outstanding feature of rule by the British was their concentration on everything that went to strengthen their political and economic hold on the country. Everything else was incidental. If they built up a powerful central government and an efficient police force, that was an achievement for which they can take credit, but the Indian people can hardly congratulate themselves on it. Unity is a good thing, but unity in subjection is hardly a thing to be proud of. The very strength of a despotic government may become a greater burden for a people; and a police force, no doubt useful in many ways, can be, and has been often enough, turned against the very people it is supposed to protect. Bertrand Russell, comparing modern civilization with the old Greek, has recently written: "The only serious superiority of Greek civilization as compared to ours was the inefficiency of the police, which enabled a larger proportion of decent people to escape."

Britain's supremacy in India brought us peace, and India was certainly in need of peace after the troubles and misfortunes that followed the break-up of the Moghul Empire. Peace is a precious commodity, necessary for any progress, and it was welcome to us when it came. But even peace can be purchased as too great a price, and we can have the perfect peace of the grave, and the absolute safety of a cage or of prison. Or peace may be the sodden despair of men unable to better themselves. The peace which is imposed by an alien conqueror has hardly the restful and soothing qualities of the real article. War is a terrible thing and to be avoided, but it does encourage some virtues, which, according to William James,[6] the psychologist, are: fidelity, cohesiveness, tenacity, heroism, conscience, education, inventiveness, economy and physical health and vigour. Because of this, James sought for a moral equivalent of war which, without the horrors of war, would encourage these virtues in a community. Perhaps if he had learned of noncooperation and civil disobedience he would have found something after his own heart, a moral and peaceful equivalent of war.

It is a futile task to consider the "ifs" and possibilities of history. I feel sure that it was a good thing for India to come in contact with

6 (1842-1910); an American psychologist and philosopher; founder of the pragmatist movement; his works include *The Will to Believe*, *Principles of Psychology* and *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

the scientific and industrial West. Science was the great gift of the West, and India lacked this, and without it she was doomed to decay. The manner of our contacts was unfortunate and yet, perhaps, only a succession of violent shocks could shake us out of our torpor. From this point of view the Protestant, individualistic, Anglo-Saxon English were suitable; for they were more different from us than most other Westerners and could give us greater shocks.

They gave us political unity and that was a desirable thing, but, whether we had it or not, Indian nationalism would have grown and demanded that unity. The Arab world is today split up into a large number of separate states—independent, protected, mandatory and the like—but throughout all of them runs the desire for Arab unity. There can be no doubt that Arab nationalism would largely achieve this unity if Western imperialist powers did not stand in the way. But, as in India, it is the purpose of these powers to encourage disruptive tendencies and create minority problems which weaken and partly counteract the nationalist urge and give an excuse to the imperialist power to stay on and pose as the impartial arbitrator. The political unity of India was achieved incidentally as a side-product of the empire's advance. In later years, when that unity allied itself to nationalism and challenged alien rule, we witnessed the deliberate promotion of disunity and sectarianism, formidable obstacles to progress.

What a long time it is since the British came here, a century and three quarters since they became dominant! They had a free hand, as despotic governments have, and a magnificent opportunity to mould India according to their desire. During these years the world has changed out of all recognition—England, Europe, America, Japan. The insignificant American colonies bordering the Atlantic in the eighteenth century constitute today the wealthiest, the most powerful and technically the most advanced nation; Japan, within a brief span, has undergone amazing changes; the vast territories of the U.S.S.R., where till only yesterday the dead hand of the Czar's government suppressed and stifled all growth, now pulsate with a new life and build a new world before our eyes. There have been big changes in India also, and the country is very different from what it was in the eighteenth century—railways, irrigation works, factories, schools and colleges, huge government offices and so forth.

And yet, in spite of these changes, what is India like today? A servile state, with its splendid strength caged up, hardly daring to breathe freely, governed by strangers from afar; her people poor beyond compare, short-lived and incapable of resisting disease and epidemic; illiteracy rampant, vast areas devoid of all sanitary or medical provision; unemployment on

a prodigious scale both among the middle classes and the masses. Freedom, democracy, socialism, communism are, we are told, the slogans of unpractical idealists, doctrinaires or knaves; the test must be one of the well being of the people as a whole. That is indeed a vital test, and by that test India makes a terribly poor showing today. We read of great schemes of unemployment relief and the alleviation of distress in other countries; what of our scores of millions of unemployed and the distress that is widespread and permanent? We read also of housing schemes elsewhere; where are the houses of hundreds of millions of our people, who live in mud huts or have no shelter at all? May we not envy the lot of other countries where education, sanitation, medical relief, cultural facilities and production proceed rapidly ahead, while we remain where we were or plod wearily along at the pace of a snail? Russia in a brief dozen years of wonderful effort has almost ended illiteracy in her vast territories, and has evolved a fine and up to date system of education, in touch with the life of the masses. Backward Turkey, under the Ataturk Mustapha Kemal's leadership, has also made giant strides toward widespread literacy. Fascist Italy, on the very threshold of its career, attacked illiteracy with vigour. Gentile,[7] the Education Minister, called for "a frontal attack on illiteracy. That gangrenous plague, which is rotting our body politic, must be extirpated with a hot iron." Hard words, unseemly for a drawing-room, but they show the conviction and energy behind the thought. We are politer here and use more rounded phrases. We move warily and exhaust our energies in commissions and committees: Indians have been accused of talking too much and doing little. It is a just charge. But may we not express our wonder at the inexhaustible capacity of the British for committees and commissions, each of which, after long labour, produces a learned report—"a great state document"—which is duly praised and pigeonholed? And so we get the sensation of moving ahead, of progress, and yet have the advantage of remaining where we were. Honour is satisfied, and vested interests remain untouched and secure. Other countries discuss how to get on; we discuss checks and brakes and safeguards lest we go too fast.

"The imperial splendour became the measure of the people's poverty", so we are told by the Joint Parliamentary Committee, 1934, with reference to the Moghul times. It is a just observation, but may we not apply the same measure today? What of New Delhi today with its Viceregal pomp and pageantry, and the provincial Governors with all

7. Giovanni Gentile (1875-1944); Italian philosopher and theorist of fascism

their ostentation? And all this with a background of abject and astonishing poverty. The contrast hurts, and it is little difficult to imagine how sensitive men can put up with it. India today is a poor and dismal sight behind all the splendours of the imperial frontage. There is a great deal of patchwork and superficiality, and behind it the unhappy petty *bourgeoisie*, crushed more and more by modern conditions. Further back come the workers, living miserably in grinding poverty, and then the peasant, that symbol of India, whose lot is like that of Edwin Markham's[8] *Man with the Hoe*, to be "born to Endless Night."

It would be absurd to cast the blame for all India's ills on the British. That responsibility must be shouldered by us, and we may not shirk it; it is unseemly to blame others for the inevitable consequences of our own weaknesses. An authoritarian system of government, and especially one that is foreign, must encourage a psychology of subservience and try to limit the mental outlook and horizon of the people. It must crush much that is finest in youth—enterprise, spirit of adventure, originality, "pep"—and encourage sneakishness, rigid conformity and a desire to cringe and please the bosses. Such a system does not bring out the mentality of real service, the devotion to public service or to ideals; it picks out the least public-spirited persons whose sole objective is to get on in life. We see what a class the British attract to themselves in India! Some of them are intellectually keen and capable of good work. They drift to government service or semi-government service because of lack of opportunity elsewhere, and gradually they tone down and become just parts of the big machine, their minds imprisoned by the dull routine of work. They develop the qualities of a bureaucracy—"a competent knowledge of clerkship and the diplomatic art of keeping office." At the highest they have a passive devotion to the public service. There is, or can be, no flaming enthusiasm. That is not possible under a foreign government.

But, apart from these, the majority of petty officials are not an admirable lot; for they have only learned to cringe to their superiors and bully their inferiors. The fault is not theirs. That is the training the system gives them. And if sycophancy and nepotism flourish, as they often do, is it to be wondered at? They have no ideals in service; the haunting fear of unemployment and consequent starvation pursues them, and their chief concern is to hold on to their jobs and get other jobs for their relatives and friends. Where the spy and that most odious of

8 (1852-1940). American poet, whose poem *The Man with the Hoe*, written in 1898, was a protest against the debasing drudgery and exploitation of labour.

creatures, the informer, always hover in the background, it is not easy to develop the more desirable virtues in a people.

Recent developments have made it even more difficult for sensitive, public-spirited men to join government service. The government does not want them, and they do not wish to associate with it too closely, unless compelled by economic circumstance.

But, as all the world knows, it is the White Man who bears the burden of empire, not the Brown. We have various imperial services to carry on the imperial tradition, and a sufficiency of safeguards to protect their special privileges, all, we are told, in the interests of India. It is remarkable how the good of India seems to be tied up with the personal interests and advancement of these services. If any privilege or prize post of the Indian Civil Service is taken away, we are told that inefficiency and corruption will result. If the reserved jobs for the Indian Medical Service are reduced, this becomes a "menace to India's health". And, of course, if the British element in the army is touched, all manner of terrible perils confront us.

I think there is some truth in this: that if the superior officials suddenly went away and left their departments in charge of their subordinates there would be a fall in efficiency. But that is because the whole system has been built this way, and the subordinates are not by any means the best men, nor have they ever been made to shoulder responsibility. I feel convinced that there is abundant good material in India, and it could be available within a fairly short period if proper steps were taken. But that means a complete change in our governmental and social outlook. It means a new state.

But of one thing I am quite sure, that no new order can be built up in India so long as the spirit of the Indian Civil Service pervades our administration and our public service. That spirit of authoritarianism is the ally of imperialism, and it cannot co-exist with freedom. It will either succeed in crushing freedom or will be swept away itself. Only with one type of state is it likely to fit in, and that is the fascist type. Therefore it seems to me quite essential that the Indian Civil Service and similar services must disappear completely, as such, before we can start real work on a new order. Individual members of these services, if they are willing and competent for the new job, will be welcome, but only on new conditions. It is quite inconceivable that they will get the absurdly high salaries and allowances that are paid to them today. The new India must be served by earnest, efficient workers who have an ardent faith in the cause they serve and are bent on achievement, and who work for the joy and glory of it, and not for the attraction of high salaries. The money motive must be reduced to a minimum. This is a vital matter

our country. It will be for us to retain what is of real value in our culture and to fit it in with the new civilisation that we build up.

Have you read Sidney and Beatrice Webb's *Soviet Communism?* If not, do so.

After all, though we talk of ancient culture and modern science and economics, the big thing that stares us is the astounding poverty of India. It is for that that we have to find a solution. I can think in no other terms but that.

You know the kind of life I lead, of continuous strain and tension and an attempt to keep pace with numerous activities. I am seldom in Allahabad. Still in spite of these activities and tension I have not entirely lost a certain philosophical temper and with its help I try to retain a measure of sanity. I do not quite know how you could help me. That is for you to judge yourself. There is no point in your coming to Allahabad for, as I have said, I am seldom there and you will not even find a good library there. Why do you wish to leave Calcutta which should provide you with books and libraries in abundance?

I have come here for 10 days for some kind of rest. I go down to Allahabad on the 23rd and immediately I shall be on the move again.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. To Secretary, Bengal P.C.C.[1]

Mussoorie
June 20, 1936

Dear Sir,

I have received today your letter dated the 14th June together with what purports to be a representation of the Bengal P.C.C. to the Working Committee regarding Babu Rajendra Prasad's decision on Bengal election disputes. In your letter you seem to challenge, to some extent at least, Babu Rajendra Prasad's competence to consider and decide this matter finally. As a matter of fact the last meeting of the A.I.C.C. gave him full authority, at my request, to deal with this matter. And so far as I am concerned I consider myself bound by his decision. Of course if your committee sends a representation to the Working Committee it

1. A.I.C.C File No. P-6/1936, pp. 535 536, N.M.M.L.

will naturally be placed before the Working Committee. What the Working Committee may do in the matter I cannot say. But I think you will agree with me that the Working Committee is not likely to upset Rajendra Babu's decision unless the strongest arguments are advanced in favour of it. In such matters the Committee will not function as a court of appeal but only as a revising authority which takes action in extreme cases of injustice. It may even hold the view that in view of the A.I.C.C. decision Rajendra Babu was competent to decide the matter finally.

I write the above *without having read your representation.* I am thus approaching the question quite apart from the merits of Rajendra Babu's decision or the strength of your objections.

I am not prepared in any way to interfere with the normal working of Rajendra Babu's directions in the matter by postponing elections or otherwise simply on the ground that the Working Committee is going to consider the matter. I propose therefore to let matters take their course. I do not exactly know what Rajendra Babu's directions are, because I have not got his decision with me here. But whatever that may be it ought to remain and should be acted upon regardless of any representation which may be considered by the Working Committee. As a matter of fact the Working Committee is meeting on the 29th. It will consider your representation before the end of the month.

Quite apart from the legal arguments that might be advanced against Rajendra Babu's decision or in favour of fresh postponement of the elections, I should like you and your committee to consider the grave implications of these repeated attempts to postpone any final decision and to prolong this unfortunate controversy. There must be at some stage or other a finality in such matters. Otherwise it is quite impossible to carry on any work. You know well that Congress work in Bengal has suffered quite enough in the past because of this and even now it is inevitably in a state of suspended animation awaiting a final decision. It seems to me that the duty of every Congressman must be primarily to have this final decision whether it is good, bad or indifferent. The worst possible decision will probably be better than this interminable controversy and legal quibbling.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Babu Rajendra Prasad. It is for him to issue any further directions that he might think fit in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

13. The Agrarian Problem in India[1]

Compared to other countries, India is poor in her political literature as well as in books dealing with current problems. In the nineteenth century Dadabhai Naoroji, Digby, Ranade and Romesh Dutt built up a strong and enduring foundation for such a literature. On that foundation our national movement grew, and most of us derived our political and economic ideas from those giants of old. Then there was a gap. During the past few years again books and pamphlets have appeared in some numbers, and though some are worthwhile, the lack of the real article still continues. We have either sketchy political surveys or heavy tomes on economics written by professors for would be professors. The intelligent layman is left out in the cold and little help is provided for him to find a way in the chaos of the modern world as it affects India. Compare this with the abundance of good books in the countries of the West dealing with every problem that faces them. Many of them are frankly propagandist and one-sided, but there are also large numbers of objective studies collating and giving facts and figures and real pictures of the condition of the world today.

Whatever our views and ideas might be on present-day problems, we must agree that they should have a background of objective study of existing conditions. Thus only can we bring these ideas to the test of reality and evolve effective lines of activity. It is time, therefore, that our experts and students devote themselves to the proper study of facts as they are and to their presentation in an agreeable form. Of course this has been and is being done to some extent. But more is required, and a wider vision which embraces the whole though it may concentrate on a part.

Of all our problems none surely is more important and urgent than the agrarian problem. The dark shadow of the peasant covers the Indian landscape and intrudes itself into each one of our problems, political and economic. Realising this the National Congress has undertaken a close study of this problem and the drawing up of an agrarian programme. It is fitting, therefore, that the first of our political and economic studies should be a brief survey of this problem.

1. Allahabad, 8 July 1936. Foreword to Z. A. Ahmed's *The Agrarian Problem in India*, (Allahabad, 1936).

The object of this series of studies is to present facts objectively but it is not claimed that the writer has a blank mind with no views of his own. We have little use for blank minds. So, inevitably, the writer's outlook colours his presentation of his subject, and the objective he has in mind affects his conclusions. This outlook or these conclusions need not necessarily be those of the Congress.

This series does not pretend to deal exhaustively with the subjects included in it. Nor does it claim to supply the need for political and economic literature to which I have referred. It has a simpler and more modest purpose and that is to give the average reader a short and popular, and yet a scholarly, account of present-day conditions in India.

Dr. Z. A. Ahmad's[2] pamphlet is the briefest of surveys of a difficult and vast problem. Objection may well be taken that it does not discuss in any detail the various land tenure systems in India. And yet a detailed discussion in such a general survey would probably have detracted from the value of the pamphlet. We would have forgotten the wood for the trees, and many a lay reader might have felt bored at these details. Yet a study of these details is very necessary and it is hoped that such a detailed survey will be forthcoming at a later stage. But the broad survey must be grasped before we study details.

There is nothing new in this pamphlet which cannot be found elsewhere. But old truths have to be restated, old facts and arguments repeated, lest we forget. And the statement of them has to be made in a modern framework and a present-day setting. Dr. Ahmad has done that with ability and success and I have gone through his pages with ease and with profit. It surprised me to find how much he has put in this short compass. I commend this brochure not only to Congressmen but to all who are interested in understanding and solving India's major problem.

2. (b. 1908); secretary, economic information department, A.I.C.C., 1936-37, and U.P.P.C.C., 1937-42, member, national executive, Congress Socialist Party, 1937-40, later joined the Communist Party of India and was for some time its all India secretary; member, Rajya Sabha, 1958-62 and from 1966.

14. On Criticisms of Congress Accounts[1]

The approach of elections has apparently galvanised some of the opponents of the Congress in western and southern India into feverish activity of a peculiar kind. The desire to find something against the Congress has led them away from the straight and honourable paths of political controversy into shady and crooked ways Our finances are attacked, our accounts challenged, the Tilak Swaraj Fund becomes suspect, and long-nosed detectives seem to prowl about trying to find out what happened fifteen years ago or thereabouts. There is something ludicrous about this sudden interest in old accounts, long passed and audited and put away in our archives; and this new interest becomes still more curious when we find that it is exhibited by gentlemen some of whom confess to not having contributed at all to any Congress fund. The donors are content, but the eager public spirit of those who did not give anything cannot be suppressed. I do not know if we are expected to produce, for the benefit of these eager spirits, all our accumulated account-books for the last fifteen years, or to get them printed afresh.

As I have previously stated,[2] all our central accounts have been carefully audited from year to year and circulated to the press for public information. These accounts contained also audited statements or provincial accounts, which were inspected periodically by our auditors and inspectors. Annually up to 1925 a big volume containing these full accounts was issued to the public and the press. By the end of 1925 the original collections for the Tilak Swaraj Fund were practically exhausted, except for the large sums earmarked for specific purposes and some trust funds. Our accounts therefore from 1926 onwards became much simpler and more modest and thus it was not necessary to issue annually the big books of accounts which had been prepared till then. From then onwards briefer statements of accounts were prepared, audited, submitted to the All India Congress Committee for approval and issued to the press. May I, as one long connected with the A.I.C.C. office, express my gratitude to and admiration for our treasurer, Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, and his office for the efficient way in which they have kept the A.I.C.C. accounts and looked after Congress funds during these many years, many of which were difficult years of storm and stress?

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 9 July 1936. *The Hindustan Times*, 10 July 1936.
2. See *ante*, item 5.

Seth Jamnalal Bajaj informs me that he and his office will be happy to give any information about Congress accounts to any donor who addresses himself to them. They will also welcome personal visits of donors to their office at 395 Kalbadevi Road, Bombay, where all the old and new accounts of the Congress office can be inspected and enquiries made. Donors interested in knowing how the earmarked items of the Tilak Swaraj Fund—about fifty lakhs were so earmarked—were distributed, and what part of them is still represented by investments, stocks, and immovable property, can easily find this out from the treasurer's office or by a personal reference to the accounts and papers. But every such visit of inspection should take place after reasonable notice and during office hours.

The treasurer's office as well as our office will always be happy to reply to all *bona fide* enquiries and to place the information at their disposal before all Congressmen and donors. But it is clear that there is no such *bona fide* intent behind the attacks and insinuations made by some people who are neither Congressmen nor donors to the Congress funds. It is not the practice of the Congress to rush to a court of law even though there may be sufficient justification for this. But if malicious and defamatory statements continue to be made they will have to be challenged in a law court.

15. To N. R. Malkani[1]

Allahabad
9/7/36

My dear Malkaniji,[2]
Thank your for your letters and for the press cuttings you sent me which I have read with interest.[3] I suppose one of the principal quests of life is the search for worthwhile individuals. Yet few of us undertake that

1. N.R. Malkani Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (1890-1974); journalist and social worker; member, A.I.C.C., 1921-1967; additional Deputy High Commissioner for India in Karachi, 1948; director of rehabilitation, *Government of Rajasthan*, 1949-52; member, *Rajya Sabha*, 1952-62.
3. Reviewing Jawaharlal's *Autobiography* in *The Hindustan Times* of 25 June 1936, Malkani had written that the book "is written by a man who is yet playing the second act of his life-drama and who may yet be the great leader of future causes."

search and most are content with the mediocre variety. Indeed they are afraid of the exceptional type. He expects everything and generally makes himself a nuisance. But without him life would be a wilderness with no oases.

As I conceive real progress or civilization it means the raising of the general standard as well as the production of the high type of individual. Some people, Keyserling[4] for instance, imagine that the two processes cannot go together and one has to choose—a deadening flat level at a fair altitude, or the beautiful lotus surrounded by mud. I do not see why this dilemma should be offered to us. Why should one not have a high general standard and at the same time mountain peaks rising above it? I believe in the development of individuality and yet I also believe in a socialistic order which is supposed to suppress individuality. I think that under real socialism the various economic and social inhibitions and obstructions being removed, individuality will have far greater play than at present.

To understand people, to go behind their outer coverings and probe underneath the surface, to seek for the reality in a man, attracts me. It is not always a pleasant business but the risk must be taken, unless one is content to go through life blind folded. What worries me is the obvious desire of most people to keep their eyes shut and their irritations at those who invited them to look round.

Do not worry about me. I have a tough body and mind and can survive much.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Count Hermann Keyserling (1880-1946), German philosopher; among his writings, *The Travel Diary of a Philosopher* is best known.

16. The Need for Good Books on India[1]

India, in common with the world as a whole, is faced with vital problems. Many of these are world problems which affect us, some are peculiar to

1. Note, 11 July 1936. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. It was proposed to form a National Publications Society which would publish books on Indian political and economic subjects. Jawaharlal, Narendra Deva and K. T. Shah were to be the editors, and Raghunandan Saran the secretary.

India though even these bear an intimate relation to wider problems. To solve these problems we must seek to understand them and to grasp their inner significance. A vague, though intensely felt, discontent with existing conditions does not, by itself, help in their solution. A knowledge of these conditions as well as of the underlying causes which have produced them is essential not only for the politician and the student but for all who dabble in public affairs and try to understand them. Unfortunately there is a lack of suitable literature so far as India is concerned.

To supply this lack will be the work of large numbers of experts and specially qualified persons. This series represents one such effort in this direction. The intention behind it is to study objectively and scientifically various political, economic, cultural and administrative aspects of our life as well as institutions and organisations, both official and non-official, which affect the public life of the country. The series will not only deal with the economic handicaps and political disabilities of our people, but also with the possibilities of progress and social reconstruction.

The series will consist of a number of monographs. It is proposed that each subject should be dealt with by a writer who is an expert in it or who is otherwise fully competent to deal with it. It is also proposed to have the monographs translated into the principal Indian languages.

Each monograph will be a separate study, but an attempt will be made to connect it with the whole, so that the entire picture can be seen and the particular subject should take its proper place in it. Thus each study will become an integral part of the whole. In order to achieve proper coordination between the various monographs and to maintain the plan and purpose of the series, it is proposed that the board of editors should append two chapters to each monograph. One of these at the beginning, showing the place of the institution or particular problem in the present system of Indian economic life; the other at the end, summarising conclusions and indicating how that institution should be remodelled or the problem dealt with in a scheme of political and social reconstruction.

It is proposed to have a board of five editors with a secretary who can look after the business side of the undertaking. The monographs can be published directly by the board or through some well-known publishers. In the event of publishers undertaking publication, the cost to the board will not be much. But probably it will be desirable to publish some at least of the monographs directly. A publisher would like to have his pick. As the monographs are likely to find a ready sale

an ultimate loss is not probable. Even if there is some loss on a particular publication, this will be covered by the profits on another. Authors should be paid on a royalty basis. If properly organised in a business-like way there is no reason why there should be any substantial loss, and there might well be an appreciable profit, which can be thrown into the business. Large sums therefore should not be needed.

Apart from the initial cost of publication it will be necessary to have an office with the requisite staff of typists, clerks, etc. Also reference books and some kind of a library. The library will contain reports and books which are not easily available in the public libraries. It is desirable to have the office in a city where well-equipped university libraries are available for reference. It may also be necessary to engage competent translators who can work regularly in the office. This will probably be better than engaging odd translators for each separate work, though, to some extent, this will be inevitable. The same set of translators under competent guidance will evolve a uniform method of doing their work and a uniform vocabulary of scientific and special terms will also grow up.

It is estimated that a sum of Rs. 15,000 should be available for this business. Besides a lump sum, it may be possible to build up a body of subscribers who pay a sum annually and get the publications free or at a reduced price.

The board of editors will work in cooperation with other organisations wherever this is possible, for instance, with the political and economic department of the National Congress, or a university department. But the responsibility for their work will rest on them alone and they will not commit any other organisation. Where possible and necessary they may organise research work by advanced students.

The whole scheme is an ambitious one and it may not be possible to go far to begin with. But though we may begin in a small way we must have the entire scheme before us and try to work up to it.

17. To Roger Baldwin[1]

August 6, 1936

My dear Roger,

It is long since I have written to you although I believe that some of my colleagues in the Congress office here have been in correspondence

1. J N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

with you. Did I thank you for the papers of the Civil Liberties Union that you sent so promptly?

The other day I had a shock as I read quite accidentally a small paragraph in a newspaper about Dhan Gopal Mukerji's suicide. A little while before I had written to him and I must say that this kind of sudden disappearance is very upsetting. His recent letters had been peculiar and there had been much too much God about them.[2] He was obviously unhappy. But I do not quite understand the mentality which leads to suicide.

I am walking about in the maze of Indian politics frequently greatly worried. It is not much of a maze if one looks to essentials but then there are so many things which cover up these essentials and, anyway, just at present my mind continually runs to the happenings in Spain and to all the possibilities for good and evil that they hide.

Very probably you are somewhere in Europe now according to your usual habit. But this letter is going to New York.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Dhan Gopal Mukerji wrote to Jawaharlal on 4 May 1936: "I have reached the conclusion that without the grace of God nothing can become victorious. And remember grace descends on a saint or a sinner with equality in haphazard fashion. In the mind of God the descent of grace is according to law or laws. But to our small minds it seems to be lawless."

18. To Jehangir Vakil[1]

August 9, 1936

My dear Jehangir,

I have been away hence the delay in writing to you. I received your previous letter also.

I find it a little difficult to write to you on the subject of spiritualism because my own way of looking at it is very different from yours. You mention your experience.[2] If some such experience comes to me I suppose I shall change my outlook also. Till then I must carry on in my

1. JN. Correspondence, NMML.
2. Jehangir Vakil wrote that through a process of "spiritual revolution" he had become a convert to Mahatma Gandhi's policy of *ahimsa*

own way. The only safe way for any person is the way he feels impelled by his own inner being to go. I am not vain enough to deny the truth that may be in someone else but I must see it for myself before I can act upon it.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

19. Appeal for Flood Relief in U.P.[1]

Famine and flood have become constant visitors to our unhappy land. They are bad enough wherever they might come, but in India where millions live normally on the verge of starvation an additional calamity brings utter ruin.

In many parts of Bengal, there have been famine conditions for months and untold suffering has been the lot of the vast numbers of our countrymen there. During the last few weeks there have been floods in many provinces with their inevitable accompaniments of homeless wanderers without food or clothing or the barest necessities of life. The United Provinces have probably suffered most from these recent floods. I have just visited some of these flooded areas in this province and caught a glimpse of the misery that prevails. During a brief visit I could not of course form any adequate idea of the extent of the damage done or the many problems that await solution. But even a glimpse gave me an insight which newspaper accounts could not have done.

Many districts are affected in this province, Lucknow and Unnao and the neighbouring areas, as well as the eastern districts. They are all deserving of urgent help and relief but undoubtedly the worst sufferer is the enormous Gorakhpur district, with its dense population of 35 lakhs, and the surrounding areas. A great part of Gorakhpur district is today a vast ocean which covers the remains of what were twelve or thirteen hundred villages. Little islands stand out here and there with ruined huts, and treetops peep out above the surface of the waters.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 14 August 1936 *The Hindu*, 15 August 1936

The immediate problem is one of relief, of providing shelter and food and clothing for the refugees. Government agencies have removed many of the stranded villagers and provided refugee camps for them. But the task of feeding these many thousands has almost entirely fallen on non-official organisations. The Gita Press in Gorakhpur has done splendid work not only in rescuing the stranded but in feeding them. They have been feeding daily about 10,000 refugees in camps, including those in government camps, and in addition have been sending food into the interior for another 20,000. The local Congress committee has also opened some camps and fed the refugees. There has been full cooperation between the various agencies working for relief.

Funds and clothing are urgently needed. The U.P. Congress Committee have appointed a Provincial Flood Relief Committee under whose auspices relief work is being done. Syt. Mohanlal Saxena, M.L.A., is the secretary of this committee and donations should be sent to him to Aminabad Park, Lucknow. Donations will also be accepted at the A.I.C.C. office, Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad. Clothing, old and new, will be welcomed and I hope that Congress committees, khadi bhandars, students and others will make collections. Gifts from mill-owners of sarees, dhotis and cloth pieces will also be welcomed. Needless to say fancy articles are not required nor should torn and worn-out clothes be sent. All such clothes should be sent either to Shri Mohanlal Saxena, Lucknow, or direct to Baba Raghav Das, president, District Congress Committee, Gorakhpur.

As soon as the immediate problem of relief is dealt with other and more difficult problems have to be faced. Why should these devastating floods occur with such alarming frequency? Surely the science of engineering is capable of devising means to avoid these floods or to lessen the losses caused by them. It appears that recent floods in Gorakhpur district have been both bigger and more frequent than previous ones. Are these caused, as some people say, by the building of embankments and railway lines or other obstructions to the free outflow of storm waters? These questions must be tackled by public enquiry conducted by competent engineers.

Another unfortunate feature of the Gorakhpur flood was the suddenness with which it came. There was no warning whatever in large areas and suddenly at night the waters rushed in on the collapse of an embankment and overwhelmed hundreds of villages.

An important matter which needs immediate attention is the question of rent and revenue. It is manifest that a vast area of cultivated land has been covered by flood waters and the crops completely ruined.

It is quite impossible for the people concerned, and they number several hundreds of thousands, to pay any rent or revenue. All current rent and revenue, as well as arrears, for the affected land must be remitted. Legal proceedings for the realisations of these sums must be stopped forthwith. A moratorium on the debts of the tenants as well as the zamindars affected is also an immediate necessity. These points have to be stressed as I was told of instances where coercion was being used by the zamindars' agents to realise rent and a surviving cow or bullock was being attached and taken away. Under existing conditions of distress these methods are little short of inhuman. The peasantry who have suffered will have to be provided with seeds free of cost as well as materials for the reconstruction of their huts. These problems have to be faced; but for the moment the demand for relief in the shape of money and clothes is urgent and I hope this demand will be met generously by people all over the country.

20. To Ellen Gottschalk[1]

August 29, 1936

Dear Miss Gottschalk,[2]

On return from Bombay yesterday I received your letter of the 3rd August.

I have myself been receiving unsatisfactory reports about Roy's health in prison and I have been distressed about it. A friend of mine in Dehra Dun had an interview with him in the gaol on the 19th July and he wrote to say that Roy complained of severe internal pains. He issued a statement to the press to this effect but subsequently it was stated, probably on behalf of government, that Roy was keeping good health. I should very much like to be of service to Roy in this matter but we are so helpless in it. Quite apart from any internal trouble that he may have, I can well understand the terribly depressing effect of long solitary confinement. Five years of it for a sensitive individual! From what I could find out, the place where he is kept in the Dehra Dun gaol is highly unsatisfactory and depressing.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1908-1960); an American domiciled in France; married M.N. Roy in 1937; edited *Radical Humanist* published from Calcutta and M.N. Roy's *Philosophical Consequences of Modern Science*.

I am told that Roy's release is due on November 20th. Personally I doubt if the government will give him any further remission. They are peculiarly callous in such matters. But I am writing to friends in the Legislative Assembly and asking them to do what they can in the matter. Apart from the prejudice which induces government to act in such a way towards those who are their political opponents, the government is a terribly slow moving machine. At every step there is red tape and references from one department to another. Probably these references will take many weeks and we shall be on the eve of November before the final answer is forthcoming. In any event we shall try to press that a competent outside doctor should examine him.

I am asking our foreign department to send you the foreign newsletter that they issue from time to time.

With kind regards and good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

21. To Govind Ballabh Pant[1]

August 29, 1936

My dear Pantji,

I enclose two letters which will speak for themselves. One is from Khurshed Lal[2] and the other from M. N. Roy's wife who is in Paris now. Both refer to Roy's state of health. I wonder if it is possible for you or anyone else to do anything in the matter in the Assembly or outside it. I am myself sure that Roy is seriously unwell. Whether he has any serious internal trouble or not I cannot of course say, but there can be little doubt that five years solitary confinement has injured him greatly, as it would injure any person. And Roy is a very sensitive person who reacts to his surroundings more than the average person might.

I do not suppose you can do much in the matter. Still an effort should be made. Even if his release cannot be hastened, he ought at

1. J N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1903-1950); Congressman from Dehra Dun; member, Constituent Assembly, 1946; Deputy Minister, Government of India, 1948-50.

least to be examined thoroughly by competent outside doctors.[3] He is being kept, and he has been there a long time now, in the female ward of the Dehra gaol. You know well what an awful hole this is. I could not survive this place for many weeks. The government have not even had the decency to keep him in the new barrack outside the main gaol where they kept me, although that was depressing enough.

In case Khurshed Lal has another interview with Roy, I am asking him to write to you direct.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. In his letter Khurshed Lal had suggested Roy's medical examination by "an independent medical board".

22. To K.T. Shah[1]

September 2, 1936

My dear Shah,

I have just returned to Allahabad from Cawnpore. I have had no breathing time since I was in Bombay and have been unable to give much thought to the rules and regulations.[2] I am here in Allahabad now just for three days and a vast amount of work as well as committee meetings await me here. Still I shall make an effort to find some time. But one thing is beginning to frighten me. I have taken so much work on my shoulders and the burden seems to be growing, so that it is becoming almost impossible for me to keep pace with my work. I do not know how much time I shall be able to give in future to editorial work of the kind you would require. You were quite right in stressing that we must have workers and not ornaments. But what am I to do? I am a worker certainly. But I work in so many fields.

It would certainly be a good thing if we could meet. But I see no way of finding a day for the purpose. I am definitely booked up for the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5 (KW)(n)(Part II)/1936, p. 569.
2. Shah had sent to Jawaharlal the draft rules and regulations of the National Publications Society.

13th September as well as before and after. I shall only spend a few days in Allahabad towards the end of the month and then go to Madras. I shall try to send you my suggestions about your draft to Simla.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

23. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

September 2, 1936

My dear Vallabhbhai,
I have received your letter of the 29th August today on my return from Cawnpore. The Cawnpore visit was a great success and during the two and a half days there I addressed about 25 to 30 meetings. I met all manner of people and on the whole the Congress position there, both in regard to elections and general work, has been greatly strengthened....

As regards the question of Bhulabhai's response to an invitation[2] I quite agree that any formal invitation must be rejected or rather an answer should be sent that the matter will be referred to the Working Committee. Informal invitations are more difficult and ticklish matters. They vary from something approaching almost a formal invitation to an accidental meeting. It is not easy to lay down any hard and fast rules but personally I am inclined to think that they should be avoided with all courtesy, reference being made to a consultation with the Working Committee. Further if an informal or other approach is made the basis of such an approach should be enquired into. Thus while we may discuss constitutional and other matters even without a definite basis being formulated (though here too it is far more desirable to have some such basis) there is the question of political prisoners, detenus, the banning of Congress organisations, etc., which demands a clear indication before we can talk about any matter profitably. I imagine that if some such reply is sent to any approach it would be the right course to adopt.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5 (KW) (u) (Part II)/1936, p. 577, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. Bhulabhai Desai had asked for guidance in case he was invited while at Simla for talks with the Viceroy. Mahatma Gandhi had thought he should decline a formal invitation, but agree to informal talks. The final decision, however, was left to Jawaharlal.

I am very glad to learn that the Mahakoshal matters have been very satisfactorily settled.[3] I met Govind Das[4] and Dwarka Prasad Misra[5] for a few minutes on my way to Cawnpore and they told me so.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Bhulabhai Desai.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. At a meeting of the Joint Congress Parliamentary Board of the Central Provinces and Berar, a compromise settlement was effected between the rival groups led by Seth Govind Das and Ravi Shankar Shukla.
4. (1896-1974), joined noncooperation movement, 1920, imprisoned several times during the freedom movement; president, Mahakoshal P.C.C., 1928-34 and 1946-57; member, Lok Sabha from 1952 till his death.
5. (b. 1901), suffered imprisonment several times during the freedom movement; minister, Central Provinces, 1937-39 and later in 1946; Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh, 1963-67; author of several books, edited *Lokmat*.

24. Homage to Jatindranath Das[1]

Seven years ago, on September 13th, died Jatin Das in a Lahore prison on the sixty-first day of his hunger-strike. This brave and gentle and lovable boy gave his life voluntarily in protest against the treatment given to political prisoners. India was moved and stirred by this self-immolation and the memory of it moves us strangely still, and questions arise in our minds, disturbing, accusing questions. What have we done for the cause for which Jatin Das gave his life? Have we done all we could for the betterment of the lot of the political prisoners, those soldiers of freedom whose life is one of continuous suffering and sacrifice?

In recent months Jogesh Chatterji[2] underwent a long ordeal by hunger-strike for this purpose. He was induced at last to give this up on the assurance that every effort will be made to organize public opinion on this subject. Babu Rajendra Prasad, the president of the All India

1. Statement issued at Allahabad, 3 September 1936. *The Leader*, 6 September 1936.
2. (1895-1969), member of Anusilan Party, arrested in 1925 in connection with Kakori Conspiracy Case, undertook a fast for 111 days in 1935-36 in support of demand for better treatment of political prisoners, member of Revolutionary Socialist Party, 1940-53, joined Congress in 1955, member, Rajya Sabha from 1956 till his death.

Political Prisoners' Committee, issued a comprehensive statement restating the demands of political prisoners for humane treatment.[3] We have many preoccupations and urgent problems face us, but we may not forget the lot of our comrades in prison in India, in detention camps, in the Andamans, and we must ceaselessly press for their better treatment, in particular for more human contacts by more frequent interviews and letters, and mental food through books, newspapers and writing materials. We must insist on the ending of solitary confinement, which is such a torture to the sensitive and cultured, and on the removal of political prisoners from the Andamans.

This and much else we must bear in mind and work for, and it is fitting that on the anniversary of Jatin Das's death we should think of him and of all those who are suffering silently behind prison bars. I commend to all Congress committees and Congressmen to observe Sunday, September 13th, as Political Prisoners' Day and to hold public meetings where resolutions based on Rajendra Babu's statement should be passed.

3. In his statement of July 1936, Rajendra Prasad criticised the segregation of political prisoners in different prisons and demanded their separation from ordinary prisoners, and said that they should be provided with books and newspapers.

25. To Patrick Lacey[1]

September 5, 1936

Dear Mr. Lacey,

I have your letter of the 13th August. I am sorry for the delay in answering it. But, as you know, I have been on the move most of the time.

I did not see the leading article in *The Statesman* to which you refer or the correspondence on the subject.[2] Perhaps I was not in India then. There is no doubt that the present system of arranged marriages is a dismal failure. Probably it was not such a failure, though inevitably it

1. A I C C. File No. G-5 (KW)(a)(Part II)/1936, p 465, N M.M L.
2. In three articles in *The Statesman*, Lacey had described the system of arranged marriages as almost diabolical and suggested that if public opinion could not remedy the evil, there should be legislation permitting institutions to nullify proceedings.

must have been bad, a generation or two back. But conditions are so changing today, even in India, that the present generation is getting more and more out of touch with the parents of the older type. Hence the growth of a hiatus and the consequent increase of misery. The dowry system is of course utterly bad.

Probably if the age of marriage was raised sufficiently not only by law, which cannot go very far in this direction, but also by social custom, some of the evils of the arranged marriages would disappear. Grown up boys and girls do not submit so easily to parental coercion.

It seems to me that what is required first of all is a civil marriage act which includes all people in India and which does not require any denunciation of religion. Secondly, divorce should be made easy and should depend on mutual desire. It would be desirable also to have legislation permitting a Hindu couple to institute nullity proceedings under certain circumstances. What these circumstances should be requires some careful consideration. But I should not like them to be such as to make the proceedings difficult for the parties concerned. Personally a mutual desire to separate seems to me a sufficient cause. But I doubt if that will be acceptable to most Hindus today. To institute nullity proceedings on the ground that marriage was arranged without the couple's consent might lead to all manner of difficulties. Consent itself or want of it will be difficult to prove or disprove. If there was such a law, parents may adopt all manner of dodges to accumulate evidence of consent. And even if this consent was willingly given by an immature girl or boy, what value has it got?

These are some odd thoughts that strike me. They are rather vague but they will give you some idea of how I approach the subject.

You can use this opinion as and when you like.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

26. Gandhi Jayanti[1]

Early in October India celebrates an anniversary which is dear to all of us. It is the anniversary of the birth of Gandhiji, our beloved leader.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 21 September 1936. *The Tribune*, 24 September 1936.

It is right that we should thus *show our love and affection to him and* our deep appreciation of what he has meant for us and for India. We, who have grown up politically under his great influence, hardly realise the vast changes that he has brought about in our country. We take them almost for granted. But we know well enough how empty India would have been without him, and how greatly different. It has been the good fortune of India to produce, even in the days of her degradation, this master-spirit who has cast his impress on the world and forced the world's attention on India.

Every year we celebrate this anniversary. But this year it has a special significance, for he has only just recovered from a serious illness.[2] He lies weak still and our hearts go out to him to wish him well, and our minds look forward to him to lead us afresh in the struggle for freedom.

The celebration has ordinarily been extended to a week—the Gandhi Jayanti Week. During this week I hope that meetings will be held all over the country to convey the nation's love and good wishes to her dear and chosen leader. But the best message that we can send him is the message of our readiness to continue the struggle for freedom, and our preparedness for peaceful action and disciplined sacrifice in this great cause. The clouds gather round the world and overshadow the horizon; but if we hold to our anchor, we shall be able to face the storms and tempests that may envelop us.

All the world knows how dear khadi is to Gandhiji. It is right that we should devote this week, therefore, in popularising khadi. Khadi has long been a symbol of the Congress and of freedom in this country. It is the label of those who stand for independence. It is the link between many of us and the peasant masses of the country. Let us, therefore, carry the message of khadi, during this week, to millions of people in our country, in town and village alike.

I trust that all Congressmen will patronise certified khadi only. There is too much of uncertified stuff in the market and this, like a bad coin, injures the real article. It is a little cheaper as the wages paid to spinners and weavers are lower. But the Spinners' Association and its recognised centres pay higher and standard wages to their workers and we must encourage this by patronising certified khadi only.

2. Mahatma Gandhi had contracted malaria and been admitted into hospital.

27. Message to Burmese Students[1]

September 22, 1936

Dear Friend,
I send you all good wishes on the occasion of your anniversary. The younger generation of Burma, you say, looks up for light. That is right. But the younger generation will find the light not by looking up for it merely. It will have to seek out the path both through intellectual adventure and action.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Sent on the sixth anniversary of the Rangoon University Students Union. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5(KW)(n)(Part I)/1936, p 287, N.M.M.L.

28. To the Chairman, Allahabad Municipal Board[1]

September 24, 1936

Dear Sir,
I am writing to you about the various advertisements that appear on the walls and hoardings facing public streets in Allahabad. For some of us it has become a painful ordeal to go through these streets and to face these very ugly and sometimes highly improper advertisements. House owners with a stretch of wall have to put up with these notices and posters on their walls. I do not know if there are any bye-laws governing these advertisements on public highways. May I suggest to the Board to consider this matter both from the aesthetic and financial point of view? I suggest that all such advertisements should require some sanction and should be taxed. They will thus be controlled, improper ones will be excluded, and a substantial revenue will be derived by the Board. I might add that some such practice prevails in many European municipalities.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

29. To the District Magistrate, Allahabad[1]

September 26, 1936

Dear Sir,

I write to you in connection with the search of our office that took place yesterday under the warrant issued by you for this purpose. I was a little surprised at this search as I understand that there had been some correspondence between you and our office in regard to the issue by our office of newsletters, and we had informed you that we would take legal advice in the matter and comply with the provisions of the law. Any request from you for further information regarding our bulletins or newsletters would have been willingly complied with, and specimen copies of such newsletters would have been sent to you in the ordinary course, but it appears that you preferred the unusual and abnormal course of issuing a warrant for the forcible seizure of various newsletters and documents.

I have no desire to discuss the propriety of such action by you. But I should like to point out to you that, in the letter sent to your office dated September 2nd by my colleague, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, you were requested to indicate which particular bulletin or circular or newsletter you referred to in your letter dated August 21st, which was delivered in our office on the 1st of September. You were good enough to point out in your reply dated September 5th that no particular pamphlet was referred to. Under the circumstances, it was difficult for us to take any action without legal advice.

As was pointed out to you in Dr. Lohia's letter of 2nd September, we issued from time to time a variety of bulletins, circulars and newsletters. They are issued sometimes by me as President or by the General Secretary or assistant secretary of the A.I.C.C. or by the officers in charge of our foreign, political and economic departments. One of these is the *Congress Bulletin* which is printed and sent to the members of the All India Congress Committee, our subordinate committees and sometimes to foreign organisations with whom we are in touch. This *Bulletin* is usually issued by the General Secretary and contains Congress proceedings as well as notes on current happenings and instructions to Congressmen.

Our foreign department has been issuing a newsletter which is sent to a considerable number of addresses in foreign countries, and to a small number of addresses in India, notably provincial Congress committees. We have also issued a survey of foreign affairs to the Indian press, a special

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, F No III/36, National Archives of India.

bulletin on Palestine, and certain economic and other data to the Indian press.

Besides the above, our office has to issue from time to time all manner of circular letters to our own members and committees in India as well as to organisations abroad. If we have to issue a special note on a particular matter, such as Palestine, this is sent to our committees as well as to newspapers.

In view of these multifarious activities, it was not easy for us to decide which, if any, of our circulars or bulletins or newsletters require your permission or other action. We sought your help in the matter but you were unable to point out any particular one of these newsletters or bulletins. Thereupon, we took steps to obtain counsel's opinion on it and Dr. Kailas Nath Katju was approached by us for this purpose. Dr. Katju was unable to send us his opinion soon as he was heavily engaged otherwise. He has now sent us that opinion.

In brief, that opinion amounts to this, that the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1932 or the Cr. L.A.A. of 1935 has no further bearing on this matter and need not be considered; also that the amendment of the Indian Press Act XXIII of 1931 by the Indian Press Act XXIII of 1932 has also no bearing upon the present topic. Therefore, the only provisions which we have to consider are the provisions of the Indian Press Act XXIII of 1931. These provisions are extraordinarily wide and vague. They can be extended to include many of the activities of any office or business which issues circulars, bulletins, newsletters, etc. The intention of the legislature was probably not to interfere with the normal working of offices and business. Probably it wished to control newssheets which are sold to the public at large or are easily obtainable by anybody. So far as our newsletters or bulletins are concerned, they are not issued to the public, they have no subscription and they have a very limited circulation except in so far as parts of them may be reproduced in the public press. Only in the case of our printed bulletin, we have asked some Congress committees and libraries to cover postage. Thus, *prima facie*, these bulletins, newsletters, etc. are not newspapers or public sheets in any way and do not come within the provisions of the Indian Press Act of 1931. It is possible, however, that owing to the broad and inclusive provisions of the Act, the argument may be advanced that any statement of fact is news, however stale it might be, and any interpretation of it is a comment which comes *under the provisions of the Act.*

For our part, it has not been our wish in this matter to violate or evade the provisions of the existing law, however much we may think that that law is unreasonable. But we wanted to be clear about the implications of this law, before we could take any definite action in this

matter. To avoid a lengthy controversy on this subject, we are prepared to seek your permission for such newsletters, bulletins, circulars, etc. You have already got numerous copies of these in your possession to enable you to judge of their contents.

I understand that so far as our printed bulletin is concerned, this is not a subject of controversy. We have issued this irregularly from time to time for the last many years. No copies of it were seized by the police yesterday. I take it that our circular letters to our Congress committees, to members of the A.I.C.C. and to foreign organisations and individuals with whom we are in contact are also not a subject of controversy. There remain four types of bulletins or newsletters: (1) our foreign newsletter which is usually issued twice a month mostly to foreign addresses (2) a survey of foreign affairs which we propose to issue as a rule twice a month to the Indian press and certain selected addresses of Congressmen and Congress committees (3) statistical and other data relating to India which we may issue from time to time to the press in India and to our committees and (4) special bulletins which might be issued in regard to particular questions, such as the bulletin which we issued in regard to the Palestine issue.

These newsletters or bulletins will be issued by Dr. Rammanohar Lohia of our foreign department and Dr. K. M. Ashraf of our political and economic department. Occasionally, they might be issued by our General Secretary, Mr. J. B. Kripalani, or, in his absence, by the assistant secretary Mr. D. Narsinh.

I shall be glad if you will kindly authorise the publication of such newsletters and publications.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

30. To Purnima Banerji[1]

Allahabad
September 1936

My dear Norah,
Your letter. I have survived the cycle accident[2] as I propose to survive other accidents. But I have been feeling very tired these days and I am not likely to go out of Allahabad till the end of this month.

I think our *halka* committees should certainly do something constructive. We shall discuss that later after the committees are properly formed.

I have read a good part of Aldous Huxley's book.[3] I have been carrying it about with me during my tour but have had no time to finish it yet.

As for the answers to the problems of life, do you know what Marx said about it? The only way history answers questions is by putting further questions.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Jawaharlal fell from a bicycle on his way to Nagla Dakao in the remote interior of the Etawah district on 14 September 1936.
3. *Eyeless in Gaza*, a novel published in 1936

31. To K.T. Shah[1]

Camp Wardha
October 3, 1936

My dear Shah,
I am dictating this letter in the train on my way to Wardha and Madras I have gone through the synopsis of the first monograph.[2] Narendra Deva happened to be in Allahabad and I had a brief talk with him on the subject. We were both very busy and could not discuss the matter at length. He will write to you separately. But on the whole there was not much difference between us.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Later published under the title *Provincial Government in the Constitution*.

The synopsis you have sent seems to be good and exhaustive, and I have not much to say about it.

In regard to chapter 1 (Introduction), it seemed to Narendra Deva and me that this chapter, though perfectly right so far as it goes, was hardly the kind of introduction which the three editors are supposed to give jointly. We would suggest that this chapter be left as it is but a kind of general introduction to the series, on behalf of the editors, be made to precede it. This is desirable because this monograph will be the first in the series, and some explanation of the purpose of the series is desirable. Towards the end of this general introduction we might deal with the particular place of the subject of the monograph, that is provincial administration, in the larger picture. I think some such introduction from the editors would be desirable both from the point of view of the series and the particular monograph. After this your chapter 1 would follow, almost as it is, except that it need not be called an introduction then.

The concluding chapter will be important as it will be an indication of what we want done. I am myself not quite clear from your synopsis exactly how you propose to deal with it. Is it your intention to suggest some kind of provincial or other units which will work within a socialist framework? Or do you wish merely to clear the field for a future application of socialism? This applies, to some extent, to other matters dealt with in the preceding chapters, such as finance, judiciary, etc.

Then again all manner of questions arise as to the nature of these provincial units and, I imagine, we should deal with this matter somewhat tentatively. I agree that the real unit should be an economic unit. On the other hand cultural and linguistic considerations will have to be borne in mind. There is a strong feeling in India about this and we may not ignore it. I should like to give cultural and linguistic autonomy as far as possible, as in Russia, within the framework of a larger economic unit. Thus we may have the provincial unit and autonomous areas. I do not like huge provinces. They are apt to develop separatist tendencies. Yet I do not see how we can easily split them up without offending present-day sentiment. In the south, linguistic provinces are likely to be relatively small. But in the north, where there is an enormous more or less single language area, the problem is somewhat different. Perhaps it may be possible to have a large unit divided up into sub-divisions for economic and administrative purposes. On the one hand we have to lay stress on the unity of India, that is centralisation. On the other hand, we must allow

freedom for cultural and other growth which might suffer from too much centralisation.

I mention these odd thoughts that are coming to my mind for you to consider. And because I am not certain in my own mind as to the final shape of these units I suggest that our proposals should not be too definite.

In chapter 4, you will have to deal with current problems which are agitating the public mind, for instance, the question of accepting office or not, as well as the chances of Congress majorities from various provinces. You will of course deal with this objectively, and yet inevitably you will have to consider the present position and deal with controversial topics.

In chapter 1, I suggest that you might refer to linguistic considerations also, as also in the final chapter.

Another small matter. I do not like the word "governordom" in chapter 3. I wish you would use some other word for it. In chapter 4, middle of the page, I would like some other word to be used instead of "denaturalises".

I hope you will go ahead with the monograph. As for the next one, Narendra Deva and I are of opinion that the "Federal Government of India" should follow. This seems to come naturally after the provincial administration.

I am returning your draft.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

32. To Khurshed Lal[1]

28.10.1936

My dear Khurshed Lal,

Your letter. I am sorry to learn of Roy's illness. I think that on his release he might come to Allahabad to stay with me for a few days and we can discuss his future programme then. I want you therefore to convey my invitation to him as soon as you can. He can come to Allahabad even if I am not here. My sister will be glad to have

1. AICC. File No. G-5(KW)(i)(Part I)/1936, p. 259, NMML.

him. But please send intimation of his arrival to my sister. I am leaving Allahabad on Nov. 3rd and am likely to return here on the 18th night. Then probably I shall leave on the 20th again for Bareilly. After the Bareilly conference I am touring in some districts round about there. Early in December I shall be back again in Allahabad.

In the event of Roy catching me in Allahabad on the 18th or 19th he should come here straight from Dehra Dun. If, however, he is discharged on the 20th then I think he might come to Bareilly and meet me there and later go to Allahabad.[2] Anyway, I want him to take some rest to recoup his health and he is welcome to stay at Anand Bhawan. Probably it will be desirable for him later on to go either to Calcutta or Bombay to consult doctors. We can see to that later.

As regards money required by him, while he will not require much to begin with, except for clothes and travelling expenses, there will be no difficulty about this sum and you can hold me responsible for it. So, will you please advance the necessary amount for clothes and travelling to him if it is necessary, and let me know what it is so that I can send you a cheque?

As for a demonstration, his health will hardly fit in with one. I think it will be right that you should give him an informal welcome to which Congress workers and some other people might be invited. But public meetings, processions and the like should be avoided.

I am returning Miss Gottschalk's letter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Roy was released on 20 November 1936 and met Jawaharlal at Bareilly.

33. To Jack C. Winslow[1]

October 29, 1936

Dear Winslow,[2]

I must apologise to you for the great delay in acknowledging your letter of August 4th. I read it with great interest and I kept it by me

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. An English missionary who founded the Christa Seva Sangha at Poona.

well as those who live in the West. But do you not attach too much importance to certain happenings? For instance, your reference to the British or American idolaters. It is natural that many of our people suffering from a certain inferiority complex should welcome these persons with open arms. There are other obvious reasons also, but the whole thing has no importance.

There is little that you write about Aurobindo Ghose with which I do not agree. It may interest you to learn that he issued an order to his *ashramites* not even to attend the public meeting I addressed in Pondicherry. But again you seem to judge all India from Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry. I suppose it is a bit of India. But a very small bit. What surprises me far more than Aurobindo Ghose is a man like the Aga Khan carrying it off both in India and in England.

I have seen your article in the *News Chronicle*. Of course I disagree completely with your analysis of the Indian situation. It may be that I am wrong. But I should like to assure you that the conclusions that I have arrived at have little to do with excited crowds of youths. One thing that you say I must protest against. You say that I never miss a chance of cursing Sastri. Now, apart from what I have written in my *Autobiography*, I do not think I have ever written or said anything in public even in strong criticism of Sastri. I cannot even remember having said anything in private about him, except what I have written in my *Autobiography*.

But I do not wish to discuss your article. I wanted just to send you my good wishes on the eve of your departure from India. Do not go away with all this bitterness for this unhappy country.

I shall write to my daughter and I am sure she will be happy to meet you and your wife. But she is not likely to go to Oxford till next October.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

38. To J. N. Gupta[1]

Allahabad
Dec. 7, 1936

Dear Mr. Gupta,

Thanks for your open letter to me which I have read with interest. You will forgive me if I do not answer it at length for this would mean my discussing almost all the current problems of our country and the world. I write and speak about these problems often enough. A letter is hardly the place to consider them and I am hard pressed for time.

One thing I should like to point out, however, the sincerity or good faith or ability of a person does not necessarily mean that his policy is good. Only a short sighted fool would say that people who disagree with him do not act in a *bona fide* and honest manner but when two policies come into conflict, one has to oppose those who hold the opposite opinion, howsoever good they might be individually. Thus in the case of Indian Liberals there is no question of their being estimable persons. The point is whether their policy is good or bad for the country. If it is bad, as I think it is, then it must be opposed. In any democratic country this is taken for granted. The biggest people in any party in England are opposed by members of other parties and nobody objects to this because this becomes the contest of principles and not of personalities. Even so in India we must forget personalities and think in terms of principles.

You seem to separate the three objectives—India's independence, the creation of a socialist state and the solution of the problem of India's poverty and unemployment, and you suggest that the last named should be tackled first. I am afraid this whole conception of our struggle is wrong. If all of us in India devoted ourselves to fighting poverty under the present system—political and economic—we shall not get rid of it. If we could get rid of it then the problem is a simple one and even the need for Swaraj is not very apparent.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 A.I.C.C. File No. G-5(a)/1936. pp. 169 171, N.M.M.L.

GLOSSARY

Chhota hazri	breakfast
Halka	a locality
Jayanti	birthday celebration
Patel	a headman of the ryotwari village in central, western and parts of south India
Pracharak	publicist
Quami nara	any nationalist slogan
Samiti	committee
Sarvodaya	a non-political movement for social welfare
Sriyut (Syt.)	Sanskrit term used as prefix to name of a man

INDEX

(Biographical footnotes are italicized)

Abdullah, Sheikh Muhammad, 308 & *fn*
———, Sherif (Arabia), 573 fn
Abyssinia—see Ethiopia
Abyssinia Day, 567, 568, 571
Accra, 51 fn
Achimota College, 326
Addis Ababa, 567
Advance, 368 fn
Afghanistan, 53, 105, 549
Aga Khan, 674
Ahmed, Z. A., 647 & *fn*
Ahmedabad, 114, 240, 285, 312, 416, 560 fn
Ahrar Party, 401 fn, 403
Aiyar, P. S. Sivaswamy, 137, 138 & fn, 143, 262, 269, 433, 434
Alexander, Horace, 2, 23
Allahabad, 3, 4, 26, 113, 114, 139, 151, 156, 157, 159, 203, 214, 263, 305, 309, 312 fn, 332, 354, 359, 364, 371, 372, 374, 376, 380, 395, 402, 416, 420, 421, 439, 449, 575, 593, 644, 655, 658, 659, 664, 668, 670, 671
Allahabad municipality, 15, 664
All India Congress Committee, 38 fn, 39, 41, 43, 79, 151, 167 fn, 192, 196, 197 fn 200, 202, 203, 206, 212, 228, 311, 312, 320, 370, 379, 381, 382, 394, 397 fn, 401, 441, 458, 461, 463, 465-467, 472, 478, 513, 559, 595, 605, *606, 616, 626, 628 & fn*, 630, 644, 645, 647 fn 649 fn, 665, 667
All India Congress Socialist Conference, *60 fn*, 422, 562 & *fn*
All India Journalists Association, 423, 440, 443
All India Muslim Conference, 415 fn
All India Political Prisoners Committee, 661
All India Spinners Association, 192, 228, 663
All India States People's Conference, 422, 424
All India Trade Union Congress, 237, 245
All India Village Industries Association, 193 & fn
All India Women's Conference, 466 & fn, 468, 560 & fn
All That's Past (W. de la Mare), 8 fn
Almora jail, 3
Amarnath, L., 476 fn
Amarnath (Kashmir), 633
Ambala, 348
Ambedkar, B R., 87 & fn
Ambernath Match Factory, 612
American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, 445 fn
American Civil Liberties Union, 415 & fn, 426, 653
Amritsar, 227, 270, 279, 366 fn, 385 fn
Anand Bazar Patrika, 372 fn
Anand, M R., 430 & *fn*
An Author Replies (J. Nehru), 146, 148 fn, 151
Andaman islands, 287, 661
Anderson, Sir John, 47 & *fn*
Andrews, C. F., 3, 25
Aney, M. S, 614
Anglo German Naval Treaty, 601 & fn
Anna (nurse), 20
Annette (nurse), 20
Ansari, M A., 1 & fn, 216 & fn, 218, 231, 265, 266, 599
———, Zohra, *1 & fn*

Anti Communal Award Conference, 366 fn
Anti Communal League, 366 fn
Anusilan Party, 660 fn
Arabia, 95
Ascent of Humanity (G. Heard), 123 fn
Ashraf, K. M., 397 & *fn*, 464, 630, 667
Atal, M., 11, 14, 19
Ataturk, Kemal Pasha, 53 & fn, 639
Aurobindo Ashram, 674
Australia, 55
Austria, 28, 341, 633
Autobiography (J. Nehru), 14, 15, 17 fn, 133, 134 fn, 137, 138, 139 fn, 140, 144, 146 fn, 148, 153 & fn, 155 fn, 156 fn, 157, 159 & fn, 160 fn, 225, 229, 281, 372, 392, 401, 417, 418, 427, 439 fn, 643, 649 fn, 674

Badenweiler, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8-10, 12, 14 16, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 45, 62
Badgastein, 408
Badrinath (U.P.), 633
Bajaj, Jamnalal, 472 fn, 648, 649
Baldwin, Roger, 652
Balfour, Arthur, 573 & fn
Balfour declaration, 573 & fn
Balkans, 120
Banerji, Purnima, 668
———, Sibnath, 217 & *fn*
Bank of England, 230 fn
Baptist Missionary Review, 445 fn
Bardoli, 320, 379 fn
Bareilly, 593, 671 & fn
Barnes, Buona, 157 & fn
———, J. S., 157 fn
Basu, Mrinal Kanti, 443
Bazaz, Prem Nath, 308 & *fn*, 335
Belgium, 122 *fn*
Bengal Government, administration report of, 58
Bengal Nagpur Railway, 612 fn
Berhampur, 555
Berlin, 20, 630
Bex, 15, 18
Bhagavan Das, 320 & fn, 322, 323 fn
Bhai Parmanand, 464 & fn
Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad, 386 fn, 390, 391, 399 & fn
Bharat Kisan Sammelan, 534 fn
Bhonsle Military School (Poona), 144 fn
Bhowali, 4
Bhubaneswar, 555
Bihar Relief Fund, 175 & fn
Bijapur, Sultan of, 621 fn
Birmingham, 2
Black Forest, 45
Blickling Hall, 49 fn, 50
Bombay, 133, 137 fn, 138, 145, 147, 148, 151, 154 fn, 155 fn, 182 fn, 192 fn, 193 fn, 197 fn, 215, 216-218, 239, 241-244, 246, 254, 255, 257, 260, 266, 281, 282 fn, 283, 285, 311-313, 320, 346, 349, 400 & fn, 401, 416, 422, 425, 426, 449 fn, 465, 560, 587, 596, 597 fn, 600 fn, 612, 621 fn, 631, 649, 656, 658, 671
———, Congress session at, 197 fn
Bombay Chronicle, 25, 152 fn, 408, 423, 631
Bombay manifesto, 147 & fn, 269, 271, 284, 287
Bombay Provincial Liberal Conference, 421 fn
Bombay Special (Emergency) Powers Act, 57 fn
Bonaparte, Napoleon, 352 & fn, 525
Bose, Sarat Chandra, 368, 376 & fn, 378 & fn, 379 fn, 394, 477 & fn
———, Subhas Chandra, 17, 43, 176 & fn, 203-205, 206 fn, 207, 212, 223, 239, 372, 377, 407 & fn 409 fn, 415, 457, 599
Brelvi, S. A., 399 & fn, 429
Breolin, A. W., 158 & fn
British National Council of Civil Liberties, 411 & fn, 415, 426, 429
Brittain Jones, 476 fn
Broach, 215 & fn
Brussels, 130 fn, 470, 576 fn, 578, 588, 604
Buchman, Frank, 672 fn
Buddha, Gautama, 31

Bulgaria, 88 fn
Cairo, 3, 343 fn
Calcutta, 29, 48, 59, 144, 217, 249, 378, 379, 416, 417, 423, 442, 478, 535, 545, 547, 548, 552, 553, 559, 567, 644, 656 fn, 671
Calcutta Corporation, 545, 547
Cambridge, 7, 21, 336, 509
Canada, 55
Cape Comorin—see Kanyakumari
Captain, Goshiben, 16
———, Nargis, 313
Cawnpore—see Kanpur
Cecil, Robert, 576
Central India States' People's Conference, 451 fn
Chakravarty, Amiya, 12, 13 fn, 24
Chamber of Princes, 33, 274
Champaran, 319 & fn
Chanda, Anil Kumar, 421
Charles I (King of England), 283
Chatterji, Jogesh, 660 & fn
Chengiz Khan, 338, 525
Chiang Kai shek, 104
China, 53, 85, 94, 103, 104, 180, 194, 229, 493, 518, 570, 633
Chintamani, C. Y., 137
Chitramaya Jagat, 621 fn
Chittagong, 379 fn
Christa Seva Sangha, 671 fn
Churchill, Winston, 95
Church Mission Society, 51 fn
Civil Liberties Union, 146 & fn, 149, 247, 410-417, 419-421, 425-427, 429, 430 fn, 432, 434, 435, 438, 439 fn, 441-443
Communal Award, 37, 83, 150, 211, 238, 268, 270, 281, 345, 359 & fn, 361-365, 366 & fn, 369-371, 373, 378, 381 & fn, 383 & fn, 385 fn, 395 fn, 396, 401-403, 538, 554 fn
Communism & Fetishism (S. Tagore), 75 fn
Communist Party (Britain), 77 & fn
———, (India), 57 fn, 77 fn, 647 fn
———, (Soviet Union), 436 fn
Congress, Indian National, 9, 15, 16, 22, 23, 27 fn, 29, 33-37, 39-41 & fn, 43-46, 52, 56, 58 fn, 60, 70-74, 76-80, 82, 83, 87-92, 99, 103, 109, 112, 113, 118, 126 fn, 127, 130 fn, 135-137, 141, 142, 147 & fn, 150, 164, 168, 169, 171, 175 & fn, 178, 179 fn, 180, 181, 184, 185, 187-190, 192-194, 195 fn, 196-200, 202-207, 211-213, 214 fn, 215, 217, 219, 222 & fn, 225, 226, 228, 230, 233, 236-241, 242 fn, 243-250, 252, 254-259, 262, 263, 264 fn, 265, 267, 268, 271, 274, 276-279, 281 fn, 282, 284, 291-293, 299, 302, 307, 310, 311, 313, 314, 318, 320-324, 326, 329-331, 333, 347-349, 351-353, 359 & fn, 361-363, 365 & fn, 366, 368-370, 372, 374, 376, 377 & fn, 379, 380, 383 & fn, 384, 387, 395 & fn, 396, 397, 400, 401, 402 & fn, 403, 409, 411-414, 417 fn, 420-422, 424, 426, 431-433, 435, 443, 444, 449 & fn, 450, 451, 452 & fn, 453, 457-472, 478, 479, 483, 485, 486, 488-492, 494-498, 500, 501, 503-506, 509, 513, 515, 525-531 & fn, 533, 534 & fn, 535-537, 545, 549, 553-556, 558 fn, 560-563, 575-578, 581, 586-588, 591-600, 604-618, 623-627, 629, 630 & fn, 645-649, 652, 655, 659, 660 fn, 663, 665-667, 671
———, election manifesto of, 377 & fn, 379, 381 & fn, 383, 401, 586, 593, 608
———, *golden jubilee of*, 22 & fn, 23, 44-46, 52
———, session at Bombay, 197 fn
———, session at Faizpur, 587, 595-618
———, session at Karachi, 82 fn, 217, 313, 321, 387, 461, 467, 470
———, session at Lahore, 91 fn, 169
———, session at Lucknow, 43 fn, 83, 88, 164-197, 199, 202, 203, 206, 207, 212, 214, 218, 219, 222 & fn, 223, 225, 232, 235, 238, 242, 245, 260, 268, 310, 311 & fn, 321, 362, 371, 373, 407, 410, 449 fn, 452 & fn, 458, 459, 461, 471, 513, 533, 536, 571 fn, 579, 592, 599, 600, 610, 612, 622 fn, 626
Congress Working Committee, 22, 38 &

fn, 41, 113, 114, 126 fn, 143, 150, 151, 167, 183, 197 & fn, 198, 199, 200, 204 206, 214, 235, 256, 263 & fn, 264 & fn, 281 fn, 306, 309 & fn, 310 & fn, 311 fn, 313 & fn, 314, 327, 366, 369-371, 373, 374, 376-379, 381, 382, 394, 407, 427, 458 & fn, 466, 496, 534 & fn, 559, 587, 588, 596, 599, 605, 606, 615-617 fn, 644, 645, 659
Congress Bulletin, 626, 665
Congress Nationalist Party, 627 fn, 647 fn
Congress Parliamentary Board, 466
Congress Socialist Party, 35, 56, 60, 77 fn, 217 fn, 329, 430 fn, 533
Constantinople, 53, 95
Cooke (M R Anand), 430 fn
Coomaraswamy, Ananda, 635 & fn
Cote D'Azur, 588
Crimean War, 53 & fn, 95
Criminal Law Amendment Act, 28 & fn, 29, 36, 81, 82, 114, 176, 445
Cripps, Sir Stafford, 471 & *fn*
Cuttack, 555
Czechoslovakia, 39

Damascus, 573 fn
Dance of Siva (A Coomaraswamy), 635 fn
Das, Seth Govind, 660 & *fn*
———, Jatindranath, 660, 661
———, Krishna, 376 & *fn*, 379
———, Baba Raghav, 655
Daudi, Maulana Shafi, 415 & fn
Davison, Emily, 236 fn
De Gaulle, Charles, 19 fn
Dehra Dun, 600 fn, 656, 657 fn, 658, 671
De la Mare, Walter, 8 & *fn*
Delhi, 1, 55, 166, 311 & fn, 348, 350, 388, 407, 416, 423, 464 fn, 611, 621
Democratic Swaraj Party, 360 fn
Deogirikar, T. R., 621 & *fn*
Deoli, 444 fn
Deo, Shankerrao, 617 & *fn*
Derby (England), 236
Desai, Bhulabhai, 659 & fn, 660
Desai, Mahadeva, 46 fn, 393
Desh, 372 fn
De Valera, Eamon, 55 fn, 168 & fn
Dharam Prakash, 624 & fn
Digby, William, 319, 646
Dimitroff, 88 & *fn*
Discovery of India (J. Nehru), 24 fn
Diwan i Khas, 287
Dolivet, M, 587 & fn
Doulatram, Jaramdas, 203 fn, 422
Dumesnil, Dr, 15
———, Madame, 15
Dutt, Romesh Chandra, 319, 646
Dwarka, 633
Dyer, General, 524

East Africa, 52, 63
East India Company, 635
East Indian Railway, 326
Eden, Anthony (Lord Avon), 105 & *fn*
Egypt, 95 & fn, 232, 343 & fn
Ehrhardt, Frau, 14
Employers Federation of India, 418 fn
Engadine, 10
England, 2, 4, 15 fn, 16, 18, 19, 25, 26, 30, 31, 41 fn, 42 fn, 47, 49 fn 55, 62 fn, 65, 71, 74, 77, 84, 86, 87, 89, 91, 95, 103 105, 115 118, 120, 121, 122 fn, 125, 139 fn, 153, 154, 219, 220, 227, 231, 235 & fn, 236 & fn, 242 & fn, 247, 303, 305, 315, 340, 346, 410, 414, 428, 429, 437, 440-442, 457, 476 & fn, 507, 518, 519, 536, 543, 570, 584, 602, 633, 638, 675
Esperanto, 390
Etawah, 668 fn
Ethiopia, 24 fn, 54, 63, 98, 194 & fn, 220 & fn, 567-571, 601 & fn
Ethiopian Pacific Movement, 571 fn
Europe and the Czechs (S. Grant Duff), 579 fn
Eyeless in Gaza (Aldous Huxley), 668 fn

Faizpur, 618
———, Congress session at, 587, 595 618
Fakirjee, Cowasji, 422 fn

Fernandes, A C., 155 & fn
Florence, 568
France, 18, 36 & fn, 45, 53 fn, 122 fn, 231, 234, 235 fn, 241, 303, 315, 410, 437, 440, 477, 536, 583 & fn, 584, 601 & fn, 656 fn
Franco Italian agreement, 601 fn
Fraser, Alex., 51 & fn, 326
Friends of India Society, 42 & fn
Fyzabad, 293

Gadgil, P. V., 265 & fn
Gandhi, Mahatma, 22, 29, 33, 34, 38, 42 fn, 46, 56, 57, 58 fn, 73-78, 87, 90, 98 100, 106, 113, 114, 125, 130, 150, 152 & fn, 155, 156, 165, 171, 191, 195 fn, 222, 225, 235 fn, 239, 263 & fn, 264 fn, 299, 310 fn, 312 fn, 319 & fn, 320, 329, 347, 353 fn, 367 & fn, 368, 376 fn, 386 & fn, 391, 393, 408, 427, 497, 505, 506, 609, 615, 653 fn, 659 fn, 662, 663 & fn
Gandhi (S. Tagore), 75 & fn
Gandhi and Socialism (R.M. Lohia), 430 fn
Gandhi Irwin Pact, 86
Ganguly, Santosh Chandra, 444 fn
Gossler, Lou, 11
Geneva, 36, 130 & fn, 576
Gentile, Giovanni, 639 & fn
German Protectorate, The (S. Grant Duff), 579 fn
German Social Democratic Party, 183 fn, 224
Germany, 3, 18, 28, 66, 106, 120, 122 fn, 154, 155, 232, 315, 333, 428, 440, 441, 477, 508, 518, 520, 551, 572, 583, 601 & fn
Ghana, 51 fn
Ghose, Aurobindo, 674
Ghosh, Nabajivan, 444 fn
Gide, Andre, 19 & fn
G.I.P. Railway, 326
Glimpses of World History (J. Nehru), 144, 145, 621 fn
Goebbels, J., 587
Goering, H., 587
Gokhale, B. G., 505
———, D. V., 146 & fn
Gokulam Ashramam, 487
Gopalganj, 444 fn
Gorakhpur, 654, 655
Goswami, Pankaj, 444 & fn
———, T. C., 417
Gottschalk, Ellen, 656 & fn, 671
Government of India, Act of 1935, 27 & fn, 36, 68, 70 & fn, 71, 74, 78-81, 83, 84, 89 91, 93, 94, 108 & fn, 109, 112-115, 117, 118, 126 & fn, 142, 144, 182, 183, 186, 187, 204, 213, 219, 237 & fn, 238, 240, 264 fn, 267, 291, 350, 360, 459, 511, 537, 562, 577, 593, 605-609, 611
———, annual report of, 84
Grant, Mrs. Sokolov (Sheila Grant Duff), 579 & fn
Gujranwala, 279
Guntur, 532 & fn, 600
Gupta, J. N., 675

Habib-ur Rahman, 401 & fn, 402 & fn
Hamdard, 308 fn
Hamied, K. A., 464 & fn
Hapsburg Empire, 341 fn
Haq, Abdul, 397 & fn, 399
Harappa, 550 fn
Hardikar, N. S., 164, 165, 452 & fn
Hari (Harilal), 15
Harijan Seva Sangh, 47, 49
Harrison, Agatha, 25, 42 & fn, 51, 332, 346
Harrow, 153
Heard, Gerald, 123 & fn, 125
Heath, Carl, 42 & fn, 90 fn
Hemmerlin, Mlle., 11, 15
Henderson, Arthur, 125 fn
Hijli, 376 & fn
Hindi Prachar Sabha (Madras), 398
Hind Mazdoor Sabha, 217 fn
Hindu, 263 fn, 281 fn, 423
Hindu Mahasabha, 277, 360 & fn, 361, 395 fn, 401, 402, 539
Hindustani Seva Dal, 164
Hindustan Times, 25, 649 fn

Hindusthan Standard, 372 fn
Hitler, Adolf, 19, 54 fn, 154 fn, 230, 333, 494
Hoare, Sir Samuel, 27 & fn, 36 & fn
Holland, 122 fn
Hunter Committee, 137 fn
Huxley, Aldous, 668
Hyderabad (Sind), 423

In and Out of Prison—see *Autobiography*
Incitement to Disaffection Bill, 28 fn
India and the World (J. Nehru), 160 fn
India Conciliation Group, 42, 90 fn, 101, 102
India League, 15 fn, 42, 438
Indian Franchise Committee, 49 fn
Indian Merchants Chamber, 239, 258, 259, 262
Indian National Congress in Great Britain, 40, 41
Indian Progressive Group, 229
Indian Village Education Commission, 51 fn
Indo China, 232, 266
Indo-Czechoslovak Society, 8 fn, 9
Indus Valley, 550
International, Third, 36 fn, 75 fn, 77 fn, 88 fn
International News Service, 156 fn
Iqbal, Mohammad, 363 & fn, 375, 392
Iran, 53 & *fn*
Iraq, 54 fn
Ireland, 55 fn, 82, 129
Irwin, Lord, 42, 49 fn, 50
Italy, 18, 63 fn, 66, 120, 125, 220 & *fn*, 232, 315, 428, 440, 445 fn, 520, 568, 583, 632, 633, 639

Jallianwala Bagh, 270, 524
James, William, 637 & *fn*
Japan, 54 fn, 85, 86, 103-105, 584, 638
Java, 232, 266
Jayakar, M. R., 135 & *fn*, 144 & fn
Jehangir, Cowasji, 137 & *fn*, 225, 614 fn
Jenkins, J D, 367 & fn, 368, 374, 375
Jerusalem, 573, 581 fn
Jhabua, 451
Jhabua States People's Conference, 451 & fn
Jhabvala, S H, 237
Jinnah, M A, 335, 407, 538
Jodhpur, 1
John Lane the Bodley Head, 439 & *fn*
Joint Parliamentary Committee, 636, 639
Jordan, Robert O, 571 & fn
Joseph, George, 332, 333 fn
Justice Party, 497

Kaira, 319 & fn
Kakori Conspiracy Case, 660 fn
Kamala Nehru Memorial Fund, 150
Kamenev, 436 & fn
Kanpur, 1, 285, 378, 464 fn, 658, 659
Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case, 600 fn
Kantak, Prema, 353 & *fn*
Kanthapura (R. Rao), 12 fn
Kanyakumari, 615, 633
Karachi, 1, 3, 24 *fn*, 218, 236, 321, 326, 328, 368, 416, 422, 424, 425 fn, 451 & fn, 649 fn
———, Congress session at, 82 fn, 217, 313, 321, 387, 461, 467, 470
Karnal, 348
Kashmir, 308 & fn, 335 fn, 349, 489
Kashmir National Conference, 308 fn
Katju, Kailas Nath, 355, 666
Kelkar, N C, 140 & fn, 142 & fn, 143, 148 & fn, 149, 151 fn, 427 fn
Kesari, 146 fn
Keyserling, Hermann, 650 & *fn*
Khan, Afzal, 621 & fn
———, Khan Abdul Ghaffar, 90, 98, 99, 177, 239, 331, 344, 457, 472 fn, 591, 599
———, Maulana Zafar Ali, 317 & fn
Khudai Khidmatgars, 165
Kidd, Ronald, 411 & fn
Kripalani, J B., 44, 310 fn, 667

Labour Party (British), 13, 77, 88, 228, 471 fn
Lacey, Patrick, 661 & fn
La Condition Humaine (A. Malraux), 19 fn
Lahore, 150, 279, 315, 347 fn, 366, 372, 375, 416, 423
———, Congress session at, 91 fn, 169
Lal, Gobind Behari, 156 & fn
———, Jagat Narain, 395 & *fn*
———, Khurshed, 656 fn, 657 & *fn*, 658 & fn, 670
Lancashire, 244
La Pelouse, 11
La Revolution Espagnole, 588
Laski, Harold, 88
Lassalle, Ferdinand, 183 & *fn*
La Symphonie Pastorale (A. Gide), 19 fn
Lausanne, 10, 23, 24, 78, 113
Lawrence, Colonel (of Arabia), 573 & *fn*
Leader, 133, 145 & fn, 352, 417
League of Nations, 36 fn, 53 fn, 54 & fn, 62, 63 & fn, 94, 96, 339, 567, 570, 571, 578, 601, 604, 605
Left Review, 430 fn
Lenin, 230, 324, 333, 518
Lesny, Vincenc, 8 & *fn*
Letters from Prison (E. Toller), 153 & fn
Liberal Party (India), 133, 135, 136, 137 & fn, 146, 148, 227, 431, 505
Lincoln, Abraham, 70, 71
Linlithgow, second Marquis, 42 & *fn*, 117, 202
Lloyd George, David, 122 & fn
Lyallpur, 279, 289, 292, 314, 315
Lohia, R.M., 430 & *fn*, 464, 576, 630, 665, 667
Lokmanya, 265 fn
Lokmat, 660 fn
London, 5, 6 & fn, 7, 15 fn, 19, 21, 22, 23, 30, 31, 38-41, 55, 56, 72, 78, 80, 81, 114, 117, 216 fn, 339, 346, 352 fn, 411 fn, 412, 464 fn, 579, 583, 613, 631
London School of Economics, 324
Lothian, Marquis, 49 & *fn*, 62 & fn, 324
Louis XVI (France), 29
Lucknow, 22, 196, 205, 238, 243, 245, 260, 285 & fn, 340, 388, 407, 408, 416, 654, 655
———, Congress session at, 43 fn, 83, 88, 164 197, 199, 202, 206, 207, 212, 214, 218, 219, 222 & fn, 223, 225, 232, 235, 238, 242, 245, 260, 268, 310, 311 & fn, 321, 362, 371, 373, 407, 410, 449 fn, 452 & fn, 458, 459, 461, 471, 513, 533, 536, 571 fn, 579, 592, 599, 600, 610, 612, 622 fn, 626
Ludhiana, 292 fn

MacDonald, Ramsay, 83
Madras, 38 fn, 43, 108, 349, 378, 382, 393, 398, 416, 432, 435 & fn, 485, 492, 502, 509, 511, 513, 514, 522, 525, 659, 668
Maganwadi (Wardha), 150
Mahmud, Syed, 144, 214 & fn, 385, 393, 397
Majlis-e-Ahrar, 401 fn
Majumdar, Suresh Chandra, 372 & *fn*
Malaviya, Madan Mohan, 137 fn, 359, 365, 366, 415, 416
Malda, 444 fn
Malkani, N. R., 649 & *fn*
Mallappa, M.C., 449 & *fn*
Mallik, Basanta Kumar, 642 & fn, 643 fn
Malraux, Andre, 19 & *fn*
Manchester Guardian, 15, 28, 47, 58
Manchuria, 54 & fn, 104
Manley, Frank F., 445 & fn
Man with the Hoe (E. Markham), 640 & fn
Marg, 430 fn
Marie Antoinette, 29
Marius the Epicurean (W. Pater), 7 fn
Markham, Edwin, 640 & *fn*
Marseilles, 24 & fn
Marx, Karl, 64, 324, 523, 542, 668
Marx, Gandhi and Socialism (R.M. Lohia), 430 fn
Masani, M.R., 129, 347 & fn, 348, 562

Meerut, 60 & fn
Meerut Conspiracy Case, 217 fn
Mehta, Jivraj, 312
Mein Kampf (A Hitler), 54 fn, 154 & fn
Memoirs of a Midget (W. de la Mare), 8 fn
Menon, K.B., 439 fn
———, V.K. Krishna, 15 & *fn*, 21, 42 & fn, 78, 130 fn, 429, 438, *439 fn*, *470*, *576*, *578*, *587*, *604*, *630*
Mesopotamia, 95
Metternich, Prince, 633 & *fn*
Middleton, James, 471 & fn
Midnapur, 177, 379 fn, 444
Misra, Dwarka Prasad, 660 & *fn*
Modern Review, 364, 375
Mody, H P., 259 fn, 418 & *fn*
Mody Lees Pact, 147
Mohenjo Daro, 341, 503, 504, 550 & fn
Mongolia, 180
Montreux, 24, 130
Mooney, Tom, 88 & *fn*
Moonje, B S, 144 & fn, 152 & fn
Moral Rearmament Movement, 672 fn
Morocco, 583
Moscow, 436
Mosul, 54 & fn, 95
Mukerji, Dhan Gopal, 156, 653 & fn
Mulhausen—see Mulhouse
Mulhouse, 12, 15
Muslim League, 538, 539
Mussolini, Benito, 24 & fn, 63, 230, 333
Mussoorie, 134, 139, 144, 145, 288, 289, 315, 363, 364
Mysore, 189 fn, 452 fn, 673 & fn

Nagla Dakao (Etawah), 668 fn
Nagpur, 211, 386 fn, 388, 390, 391 & fn, 416
Naidu, Sarojini, 197, 312, 420, 421, 427, 438, 439, 458 fn
Naoroji, Dadabhai, 319, 646
———, Jal, 16, 18
———, Khurshed, 312
Naples, 568
Napoleon, see Bonaparte,
Narayan, Jayaprakash, 200 fn, 203 fn, 458
Narendra Deva, Acharya, 200 fn, 622, 650 fn, 668-670
Narendra Mandal—see Chamber of Princes
Nariman, K.F., 617
Narsinh, D., 667
National Call, 401
National Council of Civil Liberties in India, 102 & fn
National Gramophone Company, 597 fn
Nationalist Party, 359 & fn 361, 365, 368, 370, 371, 374, 376, 379-382, 395 fn, 478
National Liberal Federation of India, 137 fn, 360 fn
National Publications Society, 650 fn, 658 fn
National Sikh Conference, 385 fn
Nawab Shah (Sind), 368
Nehru, Indira, 2, 3, 4 fn, 10, 14, 154, 346, 576
———, Jawaharlal, 2 fn, 6 fn, 8 fn, 13 fn, 17 fn, 22 fn, 24 fn, 33 35, 38 fn-41 fn, 46 fn, 48, 49 fn, 59 fn, 62 fn, 78, 84, 85, 91, 110 fn, 130 fn, 134 fn, 138 fn 140 fn, 146 fn 148 fn, 150 fn, 151 fn, 153 fn, 155 fn 157 fn, 160 fn, 167 fn, 176 fn, 214 fn, 216 fn, 224 230, 234 fn, 235 fn, 239 fn, 242 fn, 261 fn, 263 fn, 264 fn, 265 fn, 273 277, 279 282 fn, *285 fn*, *289 fn*, *292 fn*, *309 fn*, 310 fn, 312 fn, 314 fn, 317 fn, 323 fn, 352 fn, 363 fn, 367 fn, 368 fn, 370 fn, 376 fn, 386 fn, 395 fn, 401 fn, 407 fn, 415 fn, 417 fn, 418 fn, 421 fn, 430 fn, 439, 445 fn, 449 fn, 466 fn, 471 fn, 472, 529 fn, 531 fn, 532 fn, 534 fn, 555, 560 fn, 568 fn, 571 fn, 579 fn, 581 fn, 593 fn, 594 fn, 621 fn, 622 fn, 627 fn, 628 fn, 643 fn, 649 fn, 650 fn, 653 fn, 658 fn, 659 fn, 668 fn, 671 fn, 673 fn
———, demands apology from Jenkins, 375, disagrees with Lothian, 50,

51; drafts election manifesto, 459, prefers not to be Congress President, 16; presides over Faizpur Congress, 595-618, presides over Lucknow Congress, 166-196, proceeds to Europe, 1
———, on advertisements, 664; on Ahmadiya movement, 363, 364, on arranged marriages, 661, 662; on *Autobiography*, 133, 137, 138, 140, 148, 157, 159, 225, 229, 417, 418; on being Congress President, 67; on Bengal Government's allegations, 46-49, on Bengal politics, 368 374, 376-382, 394, 395, 559, 628, 644, 645, on Bombay manifesto, 220, 221, 234, 235, 238-246, 257-263, 269 275; on British rule in India, 28, 51, 57, 59, 81, 95, 126, 127, 149, 174, 273, 287, 301, 302, 315, 347, 445, 613, 631-642; on capitalism, 64, 223, 230, 336, 340, 507, 508, 543; on China, 53, 104, 123, 229, on civil disobedience movement, 43, 56, 57, 73, 107, 201, 223, on civil liberties, 57, 212, 222, 410-414, 426, 430-436, 442, 465, on common language for India, 68, 83, 385-393, 397-399; on common script, 83; on Communal Award, 37, 211, 238, 268, 270, 271, 345, 346, 361-366, 369, 373, 377-381, 383, 385, 394-397, 401-403, 462, 463, 538, on communalism, 37, 69, 82, 97, 107, 108, 189, 190, 211, 237, 267, 268, 270, 283, 334, 338, 343, 345, 498; on communal parties, 221; on communism, 283, on condition of peasants, 33, 211, 212, 293, 294, 296, 297, 319, 320, 334, 459, 507; on Congress, 33 36, 43, 45, 52, 57, 60, 72, 73, 141, 177, 179, 192, 230, 240, 241, 256, 268, 276, 277, 318, 319, 321, 323, 468, 479, 486, 488, 489-491, 496, 500, 504 506, 598, 609, 610, 629; on Congress and Indian states, 449-453, 606, on Congress branches abroad, 40-43, on Congress finances, 228, 625, 626, 648, 649, on Congress and land owners, 558; on Congress and Nationalist Party, 359, 360, 365, 368, 370-374; on constituent assembly, 93, 127, 184, 232, 267, 284, 354, 605, 606; on constructive programme, 191, on culture, 11, 540, 541; on cycle accident, 668; on death of Ansari, 216, 218, 265, 266; on decision to contest elections, 460; on defence of India, 85, 86, 103 106; on development of languages, 386, 388, 389, on differences in the Congress, 34, 212, 222, 226, 282, 309-311, 318, 629, 630, on discipline, 457, 458, 465, 496, 497, 531, 595, 596, 615; on education, 337-339, 476, on elections, 291, 492, 596, 605; on election manifesto, 469, 495, 556, on export of gold, 234, 241; on fascism, 35, 36, 54, 74, 569, 584, on floods, 654-656; on foreign department of the Congress, 39, 630, on formation of provinces, 669, on freedom of press, 423-429, 434, 439-441, 443; on full independence, 91 fn, 291, 294, 296, 298, on Government of India Act of 1935, 27, 37, 66, 68-70, 80, 81, 92-94, 112, 114, 182, 183, 186, 213, 243, 246, 250, 251, 253 255, 261, 287, 460, 494-496, 511, 605, 606, and reaction of Conservatives, 119, Liberals, 119, Labour, 120 and independents, 121; on grievances of Bengal Congress, 369, 381; on Harijans, 191, 485; on Hindi-Urdu controversy, 385-392; on his wife's illness, 2-4, 10 12, 14, 16-23, 29, 30, 44, and her death, 164; on imperialism, 65, 66, 220, 342, 493, 494, 543, 568, 577, 584, 601, 603, 611, on India's importance to England, 53, 55; on Indian Journalists, 424; on Indian problems, 90 112, 115 117, 121, 484, 486, on Indian situation, 32, 35, 52-58, 72, 76, 109, 115, 116, 457, on Indian states, 188, 189, 607, on Indian students abroad, 32, on India's past, 632, 634, on industrialization, 196, 335, 336; on industrial training institutions, 484, on international contacts, 39, 337 339, 345; on international situation,

172, 173, on joint front, 610, 611; on Justice Party, 497, 498, on khaddar, 85, 238, 282, 319, 663; on Krishna Menon, 42, on land problem, 110, 111, 223, 461, 510, 511, 558, 612, 646, 647, on League of Nations, 62, 63, 96, 570, on Liberals and Responsivists, 136, 137, 141 143, 146, 269, 276, 277, and their criticism of civil liberties union, 418, 427, on Mahatma Gandhi, 29, 34, 58, 76-78, 171, 195, 663, on mass contact, 191, 193, 553, on M N. Roy, 656, 657; on Muslims and the Congress, 277, on national flag, 307; on nationalism, 247 249, 252, 520, 521, 551; on need for larger perspective, 550, 551; on North West Frontier, 98, 99, 239, 331, 346, on office acceptance, 167, 168, 185 187, 200, 222, 223, 226, 227, 237, 463, 471, 495, 586, 594, 608, on Oxford, 5, 24, on Palestine problem, 572 575, 580, 581, 585; on panchayati rule, 297, 298, 307, on political and economic department of the Congress, 630, 631, on political opposition, 673, on political prisoners, 444, 462, 660, 661; on press laws and censorship, 434, on prison life, 2, 26, 30, 31, 214, on propagation of Hindi, 400, 401, on proportional representation, 166, 167; on prospects of war, 211, 213, 233, 242, 494, 535, 600, on Punjab, 330, 331, 334; on Punjab tour, 276, 278, 280, 298, 299, 330, 331; on re-election as Congress President, 591-595, on religion, 157, 260, 270, 283, on revolution, 339, on riots, 400, on role of Arya Samajists, 400, 401, on role of conciliation groups, 101; on role of millowners, 34, on role of press, 428, on rural indebtedness, 289, 290, 292, 315, 316, 461, 612; on Shivaji, 621; on situation in Europe, 163, 600, on slogans of *Bande Mataram* and *Bharat Mata ki jai*, 348-350; on socialism, 36, 37, 60, 61, 65, 180 182, 213, 220, 221, 223, 224 226, 231, 233, 234, 239, 240, 246, 250 256, 265-267, 271-277, 283, 290, 317, 319-323, 329, 333, 336, 340, 353, 355, 436, 437, 491, 498, 499, 508, 517 525, 534, 542, 544, 562, 592, 594, 604, 650, on Soviet Russia, 56, 86, 105, 106, 128, 129, 181, 191, 195, 274, 283; on Spanish Civil War, 493, 494, 578, 583, 602, on Sultanpur and national movement, 293, on students, 328, 341, 475 477, 509, and task of youth, 163, 337, 388; on Subhas Bose's arrest, 407 409, on suppression of civil liberties, 176, 203 & fn, 213, 231, 302, 303, 305, 536; on suppression of news, 428, on Swaraj, 91 fn, 291, 294, 296, 297, 299, 300, 302; on task of municipalities, 302-304, 306, 545 547; on terrorism, 34, 82, 99, 100, 176, on tours, 350, 351; on trade unions, 285, 461, 500, 501, 514-516, 527, 528, on training, 165, 476, on travel by train, 325-328; on unemployment, 249, 407, 507, on unity, 168, 169, 219, 225, 232, 233, 240, 245, 291, on unity of India 67, 632, 633, 638, on untouchability, 462, on village industries, 462; on violence, 418, on visit to England, 2, 5 7, 16, 19, 21-23, 25, 26, 30, 31, 38, 42, 51, 78, 114, 117 127, 172, on volunteer organisation, 164, 165, 623, 624, on war and India, 194, 202 & fn, 204, 211, 213, 533, 604, on women, 107, 235, 236, 313, 314, 461, 466, 467, 480-482, 483, 552, 557, 560, on workers' problems, 461, 514, 612; on Working Committee 38, 197, 199, 264, 282, 309 313, 458, 616

———, Kamala, 3-5, 10, 16-18, 19, 21, 22, 23 & fn, 24, 25, 44, 114, 164, 166 & fn, 307 fn, 312 fn

———, Kishanlal, 22 fn

———, Vidya, 22

Nehru Award for International Understanding, 19 fn

Nellore, 445 fn

New Delhi, 1, 159 fn, 639

New India Literature, 430

New Indian States Journal, 449 fn
News Chronicle, 674
New York, 39, 653
Nilkanth, Lady Vidyagauri, 560 & fn
Nizam, of Hyderabad, 274
Nobel Prize (literature), 19 fn
———, (peace), 125 & fn
Norman, Montagu, 230 & fn, 525
North Western Railway, 326

Olivanger, I, 581 & fn
On the Edge (W. de la Mare), 8 fn
Ottawa Pact, 242 & fn, 273
Oudh, 293, 511
Oxford, 3, 5, 7, 18, 24, 509, 642 fn, 672, 674

Palestine, 95, 151, 154, 232, 266, 342, 356, 494, 572-575, 580-582, 584, 603
Pandit, R. S., 145
———, Vijayalakshmi, 22
Panipat, 348
Pant, G. B., 458 fn, 559, 595, 657
Paris, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18, 19, 657
Parsi Rajkutiya Sabha, 424
Patel, Vallabhbhai, 310 fn, 312, 449 fn, 472 fn, 477, 594 & fn, 595
———, Vithalbhai, 137 fn
Pater, Walter, 7 & fn
Patna, 416
Patwardhan, Achyut, 200 fn
Peasants and Communism (N. G. Ranga), 534 fn
P.E.N., 17
People, 375
Perrin, I
Persia—see Iran
Philosophical Consequences of Modern Science (M. N. Roy), 656 fn
Plato and Platonism (Walter Pater), 7 fn
Poland, 19
Pondicherry, 674
Poona, 87 fn, 133 fn, 144 fn, 146, 416, 431 & fn, 671 fn
Portugal, 122 fn
Prague, 10, 39, 579
Praja Socialist Party, 430 fn
Prasad, Rajendra, 22, 38, 113, 175, 182 fn, 203 fn, 206, 310 & fn, 378, 449 fn, 472 fn, 477, 614, 628 & fn, 644, 645, 660, 661 & fn
Pratapgarh, 293
Press Act, 231
Prince of Wales College, 51 fn
Principles of Psychology (W. James), 637 fn
Pritt, D. N., 436
Pudukottah, 529 & fn
Pulitzer Prize, 156 fn
Punjab Liberal League, 227 & fn
Punjab Political Conference, 360
Punjab Traders Association, 314
Punnah K, 422 & fn, 424, 425 & fn
Puri, 555, 633

Rabindra Bharati Society, 372 fn
Radical Humanist, 656 fn
Rajagopalachari, C., 310 fn, 457 fn, 458, 465
Rajan, T.S.S., 457 fn
Ranade, Mahadeo Govind, 319, 646
Ranga, N. G., 534 & fn
Rangoon University Students Union, 664 fn
Rao, Raja, 12 & fn, 588
Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix, 130
Reddi, Muthulakshmi, 479 fn
Reichstag, burning of, 88 fn
Responsivist Party, 140 fn 143, 146 fn
Revolutionary Communist Party, 75 fn
Revolutionary Socialist Party, 444 fn, 660 fn
Reynolds, Reginald, 42 & fn
R. G. Cotton Mills, 285 fn
Rhineland, 601 fn
Robles, Gil, 587 & fn
Rolland, Madame, 130
———, Mademoiselle, 130
———, Romain, 130 & fn, 576

Rome, 24, 155, 156, 275, 568 & fn, 633
Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, 253
Round Table, 49 fn
Round Table Conference, 33, 56, 71, 102, 137, 174, 228 fn, 234, 320, 321
———, Joint Select Committee of, 228 fn
Rowlatt Act, 239, 245, 443
Roy, B. C, 312, 559 & fn
———, M N., 600 & fn, 656-658 fn, 670, 671 & fn
Royal Agricultural Commission, 117
Royal Institute of Chemistry, 464 fn
Russell, Bertrand, 637
Russia, 39, 53 fn, 54, 56, 86, 103, 105, 106, 128, 129, 181, 191, 252, 253, 273, 274, 283, 286, 353, 436 & fn, 437, 445 fn, 518, 519, 607, 638, 643

Sahitya Sammelan, 391 & fn
San Francisco, 88 fn
Santiniketan, 4, 8 fn, 166
Sappho, 7 & *fn*
Sapru, T.B, 137, 138 & fn, 143, 267 fn, 412, 414
Sapru Committee—see U P. Unemployment Committee
Sarabhai, Bharati, 5, 6, 9
———, Mridula, 312
———, Suhrid, 5
Saran, Raghunandan, 650 fn
Sarda Act, 320
Sarhali (Punjab), 279
Sarkar, Jadunath, 621 fn
Sarwar, 145
Sasta Sahitya Mandal, 159 fn
Sastri, V. S. Srinivasa, 81, 674
———, T R. Venkatarama, 435 & *fn*
Satyamurti, S, 168 fn, 196, 368
Satyapal, Dr., 280, 366
Sexena, Mohanlal, 38 & fn, 44, 563 *fn*, 655
Sayers, A. G, 160 & fn
Schuster, Sir George, 21
Science in the Making (G Heard), 123 fn
Scott, Captain, 326 & fn
Scottish Presbyterian Church, 80
Sea Customs Act, 430
Sedition Bill (British), 227, 442
Seditious Meetings Act, 137
Sen Gupta, Indranarayan, 627 & fn
Serpent and the Rope (R. Rao), 12 fn
Servant of India, 133 & fn 136, 144, 146, 152 fn
Servants of India Society, 133 fn
Setalvad, Chimanlal, 137 & *fn*, 138, 261 & fn
Seven Months with Mahatma Gandhi (Krishna Das), 376 fn
Shah, Chimanlal Chakubhai, 354 & *fn*
———, K. T., 650 fn, 658 & fn, 668
———, Reza (Iran), 53 & *fn*
Shahidganj, 268, 279 281, 334
Shahidganj Case, 150 & fn
Shivaji, 621 & fn
Shroff, A. D, 239 & *fn*, 240, 241, 242 & fn, 243-245
Shukla, Ravi Shankar, 660 fn
Siberia, 52
Simla, 378, 659 fn
Simon Commission, boycott of, 147
Sind Journalists Association, 425 & fn
Sind Observer, 422 & fn, 423, 424, 425 fn
Singapore Straits, 103
Singh, Master Tara, 383 & fn
Sinha, Beohar Rajendra, 558 & *fn*
Sircar, N. N., 228 & *fn*, 229
Skeen Committee, 149
Skrefsrud, Lars, 2 fn
Slocombe, George, 77
Socialist Party (India), 430 fn
———, (British), 224
Social Substance of Religion (G. Heard), 123 fn
Somerville College (Oxford), 24
Sonepat, 348
South Africa, 55 & fn
Soviet Communism—A New Civilization (S. & B Webb), 129 *fn*, 644
Spain, 154, 386, 387, 477
Spanish Civil War, 154, 493, 494, 508, 535, 543, 576, 578, 580, 582 584, 586-588, 601, 602
Sri Lanka, 349, 635 fn

Sri Prakasa, 622 & fn
Stalin, J., 436
Standard English Urdu Dictionary (A. Haq), 397 fn
Statesman, 15, 144, 661 & fn
St. Pancras (London), 15 fn
Straight is the Gate (A. Gide), 19 fn
St. Xavier's College (Bombay), 155 fn
Subhas Day, 203, 204, 213, 409, 410, 414, 415
Sultanpur, 292, 293, 297, 300, 301 fn, 303, 304, 306
Sumatra, 232
Swaminadhan, Ammu, 466 & *fn*
Swarajist Party, 142 fn, 150
Swatantra Party, 534 fn
Swedish Match *Company*, 612 fn
Switzerland, 3, 10, 18, 20, 21, 23, 25
Syria, 53 & fn, 232, 266, 585

Tactics and Strategy of Revolution (S. Tagore), 75 fn
Tagore, Rabindranath, 3, 4 fn, 134 & fn, 166 & fn, 420 & fn, 421, 427, 438, 444 & fn
———, Saumyendranath, 75 & *fn* 77
Tambe, S B, 142 fn
Thaelmann, Ernst, 88 & *fn*
Thakurdas, Purshotamdas, 258 fn
The Listeners (W. de la Mare), 8 fn
Thompson, Edward, 673 & fn
Tilak, Lokmanya, 329, 330, 505
Tilak Swaraj Fund, 175 & *fn*, 228, 625 fn, 626, 648, 649
Times, 15, 583
Times of India, 144, 147 & fn, 311, 367 & fn, 368, 375
Tiruchchirappalli, 457 & fn, 529, 531 fn
Toller, Ernst, 7, 153 & *fn*
Towards World Peace (N G. Ranga), 534 fn
Travel Diary of a Philosopher (H. Keyserling), 650 fn
Treaty of Versailles, 601 fn
Trevelyan, *Sir Charles*, 153 & *fn*
Tribune, 140 fn
Trichinopoly—see Tiruchchirappalli
Trotsky, Leon, 436 & fn
Turkey, 53 fn, 54 & fn, 95, 639
Twentieth Century, 62
Tyabji, Abbas, 599
Tyrol, 10

United Nations, 15 fn
United States of America, 51, 66, 94, 104, 154, 410, 435, 437, 442, 508, 544, 551, 571 fn, 601, 635 fn, 638
University of Prague, 8 fn
Unnao, 654
Untouchable (M R. Anand), 430 fn
Unvericht, Dr, 20
Unwin, Sir Stanley, 17 *fn*
U.P. Depressed Classes League, 624 fn
U P. Unemployment Committee, 267 fn
Upadhyaya, Mattand, 159 & *fn*
Urchs, O, 154 & fn
Utkal, 553

Valuni, 513 fn, 534 fn
Vaidya, Kanhaiyalal, 451 & fn
Vakil, Jehangir, 653 & fn
Varadarajan, H R, 673 & fn
Varanasi, 622 fn, 633
Varieties of Religious Experience (W. James), 637 fn
Vaze, S G, 133 & *fn*, 146 & fn
Venice, 568
Victoria Terminus (Bombay), 216
Vienna, 408
Visvabharati, 166
Visva Bharati News, 166
Voices of Silence (A. Malraux), 19 fn
Volapuk, 390

Wardha, 150 & fn, 306, 309 & fn, 312, 393, 472 *fn*, 668
Washington, 49 fn

Webb, Beatrice, 129, 191
———, Sydney, 129, 191
West Africa, 51, 326
Wilkinson, Ellen, 139
Willingdon, first Marquis, 42, 144
Will to Believe (W James), 637 fn
Wilson, Edward, 326 & fn, 327
Winslow, Jack C, 671 & fn
Women's National Volunteer Corps, 353 fn
World Congress for Peace, 130 & fn, 576-578, 587 & fn, 588, 604
World Committee for Struggle against War and Fascism, 130 fn
World Economic Conference, 229, 339

Yeats, W B, 260
Young Workers League, 57 fn

Zinoviev, 436 & fn

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FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps, outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling — these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of the East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles,

both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the 'third world' as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.

New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

EDITORIAL NOTE

This volume covers the period from January 1937 till Jawaharlal's departure for Europe on 2 June 1938. After the Faizpur Congress Jawaharlal resumed his strenuous election campaign and was more responsible than any other individual for the spectacular success of the Congress in almost all the provinces. Having waged this campaign primarily on the basis of rejection of the Act of 1935, he was disappointed by the Working Committee's decision to accept office. But he loyally abided by it and did all he could to assist the Congress ministries.

However, his mind and heart were elsewhere. He visited Burma and Malaya and the distant provinces of the North West Frontier and Assam. He launched a programme of 'mass contacts', especially among the Muslims and sought to deal, by argument and persuasion, with the efforts of Jinnah and the Muslim League to weaken support of the Congress among the Muslims. He took up the cause of the people in the Indian states and sustained resistance to the federal clauses of the Act of 1935. He roused the awareness of his countrymen to the danger of the spread of fascism in the world. Fascism and imperialism were blood brothers, and India should give all moral support to the peoples of Abyssinia, Spain and China. He arranged for the despatch of food and a medical unit to Spain and of medical supplies to China, and organised a boycott of Japanese goods.

Yet, amidst all this varied activity, Jawaharlal had time for reading and writing. It was in October 1937 that he wrote his article "The Rashtrapati". Published as an unsigned article, very few knew the authorship of this sharp attack on what Jawaharlal regarded as his inclination to dictatorship.

A few letters of 1935 and 1936 have also been included.

Much of the material in this volume has been selected from the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru. The cooperation extended by the Director and the staff of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library is acknowledged.

The Maharashtra Government and the National Archives of India have authorised us to utilize material in their possession. *The Bombay Chronicle, The Hindustan Times, The Tribune, The Leader* and *The Hindu* have allowed us to reprint the texts of speeches and statements first published by them. The Asia Publishing House has permitted us to reprint two letters from *A Bunch of Old Letters*. The frontispiece is from the Jamnalal Bajaj collection of photographs at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

CONTENTS

1. The Election Campaign

1	Discipline among Congressmen	2 January	1937	1
2	Message to Congress Candidates	4 January	1937	2
3	To V.K. Krishna Menon	4 January	1937	3
4	Greetings to Bihar	5 January	1937	4
5	Farewell Message to Bihar	13 January	1937	4
6	On Foot to the Polls	15 January	1937	5
7	Message to the Punjab	16 January	1937	6
8	Communalism, Sectarianism and Elections	16 January	1937	7
9	Farewell Message to the Punjab	18 January	1937	9
10	Make the Congress Stronger	19 January	1937	10
11	On Mustering of Voters	22 January	1937	12
12	To M. M. Malaviya	26 January	1937	13
13	Renewal of the Independence Pledge	26 January	1937	14
14	Make the Congress Victory Spectacular	30 January	1937	16
15	The Meaning of Complete Independence	2 February	1937	18
16	On the U.P. Government's Circular	5 February	1937	19
17	Message to the Voters of U.P.	6 February	1937	21
18	The Significance of the Election Campaign	9 February	1937	21
19	Message to the Nation	10 February	1937	25
20	Appeal to Kerala	10 February	1937	25
21	On the Electoral Success in U.P.	13 February	1937	26
22	Message to South and West India	16 February	1937	27
23	To Agatha Harrison	22 February	1937	28
24	To V.K. Krishna Menon	22 February	1937	29

25	To Sir Stafford Cripps	22 February	1937	31
26	To Govind D. Madgavkar	24 February	1937	34
27	On the Victimisation of Students	24 February	1937	35
28	To N. G. Ranga	5 March	1937	36
29	To Mohan Chandra Mohanta	9 March	1937	38
30	The Congress and the Muslims	11 March	1937	39
31	On the Prohibitory Orders in Calcutta	27 March	1937	40
32	To Ramananda Teertha	9 April	1937	41
33	The Election Tour	14 April	1938	41
34	A Note on the Tour			42

2. Office Acceptance

1	Circular to P.C.Cs	9 February	1937	47
2	The Need for Sanctions	19 February	1937	48
3	The Importance of Mass Contacts	19 February	1937	48
4	Congressmen and Ministries	19 February	1937	50
5	Circular to P.C.Cs	3 March	1937	51
6	The Need for a Long-term View	3 March	1937	53
7	The Snare of the Constitution	6 March	1937	54
8	To Vallabhbhai Patel	8 March	1937	55
9	Speculations about Office Acceptance	8 March	1937	57
10	On Non-acceptance of Office	14 March	1937	58
11	On Formation of Congress Ministries	19 March	1937	59
12	Presidential Address to the All India Convention of Congress Legislators	19 March	1937	60
13	Observance of the Anti-Constitution Day	22 March	1937	71
14	On the Futility of Office Acceptance	23 March	1937	72
15	To Lord Lothian	25 March	1937	74

16	On the Fascist Nature of the Constitution	28 March	1937	75
17	To V. K. Krishna Menon	28 March	1937	76
18	On the Breakdown of the Negotiations	29 March	1937	76
19	To Abdul Walli	30 March	1937	77
20	To Govind Ballabh Pant	30 March	1937	78
21	On the Success of Anti-Constitution Day	7 April	1937	78
22	On Federation and Deadlocks	8 April	1937	80
23	On Lord Zetland's Statement	9 April	1937	81
24	On Lord Lothian's Statement	14 April	1937	82
25	The Magnitude of the Crisis	16 April	1937	83
26	To Agatha Harrison	18 April	1937	84
27	To V. K. Krishna Menon	21 April	1937	85
28	To Horace Alexander	21 April	1937	86
29	To H. N. Brailsford	22 April	1937	87
30	To William B. Benton	22 April	1937	88
31	To W. P. Crozier	22 April	1937	88
32	To Sir Stafford Cripps	22 April	1937	90
33	To V.K. Krishna Menon	2 May	1937	90
34	The Princes and the Federation	3 May	1937	91
35	The Strike of Jute Workers in Bengal	3 May	1937	92
36	The Constitutional Deadlock and the Constructive Programme	3 May	1937	95
37	To E. B. Shawe	5 May	1937	96
38	The Unchanged Policy of the Congress	15 June	1937	99
39	On Rumours of Forming Ministries	16 June	1937	100
40	To W. P. Crozier	24 June	1937	101
41	To Agatha Harrison	24 June	1937	102
42	To M. N. Roy	25 June	1937	103
43	The Working Committee and Office Acceptance	7 July	1937	105
44	The Decision to Accept Office	10/20 July	1937	106
45	On Coalitions	10 July	1937	110
46	On the Working of the Minority Ministries	13 July	1937	111
47	To V. K. Krishna Menon	19 July	1937	111

48	To H. Khan	19 July	1937	112
49	Note on the Constitutional Impasse	July	1937	113

3. The Congress and the Muslims

1	The Congress and the Muslims	10 January	1937	119
2	The Need for Greater Contacts with Muslims	31 March	1937	122
3	Rejoinder to M. A. Jinnah	25 April	1937	124
4	The Congress and the Muslims	25 April	1937	125
5	The Congress and the Muslims	2 May	1937	129
6	On the Press Attacks on Jinnah	23 May	1937	132
7	To Mohanlal Saxena	22 June	1937	133
8	To Rafi Ahmad Kidwai	23 June	1937	134
9	To Mohanlal Saxena	23 June	1937	134
10	To Khaliquzzaman	27 June	1937	135
11	The Communal Approach of Jinnah	30 June	1937	136
12	To N. A. K. Sherwani	30 June	1937	138
13	To R. V. Dhulekar	30 June	1937	139
14	To A. G. Kher	30 June	1937	140
15	To Manilal Pande	30 June	1937	141
16	To Khaliquzzaman	1 July	1937	141
17	To A. G. Kher	1 July	1937	144
18	To Har Prasad Singh	1 July	1937	145
19	To Rafi Ahmad Kidwai	1 July	1937	146
20	To N. A. K. Sherwani	1 July	1937	147
21	To N. A. K. Sherwani	3 July	1937	148
22	Jinnah's 'Grievances'	3 July	1937	149
23	To Rafi Ahmad Kidwai	5 July	1937	152
24	To N. A. K. Sherwani	5 July	1937	154
25	The Need for an Urdu Newspaper	7 July	1937	156
26	The Importance of Urdu Newspapers	10 July	1937	156
27	To Kailas Nath Katju	10 July	1937	157
28	On the Suppression of Congress Workers	10 July	1937	158

29	To Mahatma Gandhi	13 July	1937	159
30	On a Stone-throwing Incident	14 July	1937	161
31	To Postmaster, Orai	18 July	1937	162
32	To Rafi Ahmad Kidwai	18 July	1937	162
33	To Rafiuddin Ahmed	18 July	1937	163
34	The Congress and the Muslim League	20 July	1937	164
35	To Rajendra Prasad	21 July	1937	165
36	On the Result of the Bundelkhand Bye-election	25 July	1937	171
37	To Rafiuddin Ahmed	4 August	1937	173
38	On Communalism	11 August	1937	173
39	To A. M. Balu	25 August	1937	175
40	To M. A. Jinnah	7 September	1937	176
41	No Compromise with the Muslim League	17 September	1937	178
42	To Siddiq Ahmad Siddiqui	28 September	1937	178
43	To Dewan Chaman Lal	30 September	1937	180
44	To Mahatma Gandhi	30 September	1937	182
45	To the President, The Grand Muslim Union, Bombay	5 October	1937	182
46	The Importance of Urdu Journalism	7 October	1937	183
47	To Dewan Chaman Lal	7 October	1937	184
48	The Tactics of the Muslim League	17 October	1937	185
49	To Subhas Chandra Bose	20 October	1937	186
50	On the Shia Conference	21 October	1937	190
51	To Acharya Narendra Deva	9 November	1937	190
52	To Mohammad Ismail Khan	10 November	1937	192
53	To V. K. Krishna Menon	11 November	1937	197
54	To District Magistrate, Saharanpur	11 December	1937	198
55	To Masood Husain	22 December	1937	199
56	To Mohammad Ismail Khan	26 December	1937	200
57	Misreporting in the Press	30 December	1937	205
58	To Mela Ram	31 December	1937	206
59	The Need for a Dispassionate Approach	1 January	1938	207
60	To Mohammad Ismail Khan	2 January	1938	210
61	To Mohammad Ismail Khan	18 January	1938	211
62	To M. A. Jinnah	18 January	1938	212

63	To M. A. Jinnah	4 February	1938	213
64	To Mohammad Ismail Khan	4 February	1938	217
65	To Mohammad Ismail Khan	5 February	1938	218
66	To Sayidur Rahman	10 February	1938	221
67	To M. A. Jinnah	25 February	1938	222
68	To M. A. Jinnah	8 March	1938	224
69	To C. Khaliquzzaman	22 March	1938	227
70	On the Communal Riots in Allahabad	31 March	1938	228
71	To P. D. Tandon	4 April	1938	231
72	To M. A. Jinnah	6 April	1938	232
73	On the Exaggerated Accounts of the Riots	13 April	1938	241
74	To M. A. Jinnah	16 April	1938	243
75	The Real Causes of the Riots	1 May	1938	245

4. The Working of Provincial Autonomy

MINORITY MINISTRIES

1.	On the Ban on the Kottapatam Summer School	17 June	1937	249
2	On the Viceroy's Speech	24 June	1937	250
3	To the Chief Commissioner, Delhi	1 October	1937	253

NON-CONGRESS MINISTRIES

4	The Repression in Chittagong	13 June	1937	255
5	On Strikes in Bengal and Assam	1 July	1937	256
6	On the Non-release of Political Prisoners in the Punjab	20 July	1937	257
7	To Mohammad Yamin Dar	30 August	1937	258
8	To the Secretary, Bengal P.C.C.	2 September	1937	259
9	To Lala Hansraj	28 September	1937	260
10	Message to the Indian Civil Liberties Conference	4 October	1937	261

11	To Gopichand Bhargava	5 October	1937	264
12	On the Unionist Ministry in the Punjab	11 October	1937	265
13	To the Editor, The Tribune	17 October	1937	268
14	To Saroj Kumar Ghose	20 October	1937	269
15	To Mohamed Yakub	20 October	1937	270
16	The Agitation for the Release of the Detenus	28 October	1937	271
17	The Hunger Strike of the Prisoners in the Punjab	20 January	1938	274
18	The Need for Peaceful Agitation	28 January	1938	276

CONGRESS MINISTRIES

19	Election of the Leader of the Bombay Congress Assembly Party	28 March	1937	278
20	To Leaders of Congress Parties in Provincial Assemblies	16 July	1937	280
21	To Agatha Harrison	19 July	1937	282
22	To Secretary, Maharashtra P.C.C.	20 July	1937	282
23	To Gopinath Bardoloi	21 July	1937	283
24	Salaries of Public Servants	24 July	1937	284
25	Address to the U.P. Congress Legislators	27 July	1937	286
26	To Leaders of the Congress Majority Provinces	30 July	1937	287
27	The Responsibilities of the Ministers	1 August	1937	288
28	To Gopinath Bardoloi	4 August	1937	290
29	On the Congress Policy in the Provinces	7 August	1937	291
30	To V.K. Krishna Menon	7 August	1937	293
31	The Problems before the Congress Ministries	9 August	1937	296
32	The Congress and the Federation	11 August	1937	299
33	The Congress and Mass Contact	11 August	1937	300

34	Political Consciousness among the People	12 August	1937	301
35	On the Policy of the Congress Ministries	12 August	1937	303
36	To Sajjad Zaheer	25 August	1937	307
37	To A. B. Tribhuwan	26 August	1937	308
38	To B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya	27 August	1937	309
39	The Right Perspective	30 August	1937	310
40	To S. M. Joshi	31 August	1937	319
41	To M. G. Natesa Chettiar	31 August	1937	320
42	To Prime Minister, U.P. Government	6 September	1937	321
43	The Congress and the Labour Problem	11 September	1937	321
44	The Need for Public Cooperation	12 September	1937	325
45	Interview to Congress Workers at Ahmedabad	19 September	1937	327
46	To the Mill Workers of Kanpur	23 September	1937	328
47	To Vallabhbhai Patel	23 September	1937	334
48	The Peasant Problem	27 September	1937	335
49	To Srikrishna Sinha	28 September	1937	336
50	To C. Rajagopalachari	1 October	1937	336
51	On the Working of the Congress Ministries	29 October	1937	338
52	On the Congress Attitude to Sedition	30 October	1937	343
53	The A.I.C.C. and the Congress Ministries	4 November	1937	344
54	To the Prime Ministers of the Congress Majority Provinces	4 November	1937	348
55	On the Advantages of Office Acceptance	5 November	1937	350
56	On the Kanpur Strike	9 November	1937	351
57	To Edward Thompson	11 November	1937	354
58	To C. Rajagopalachari	13 November	1937	355
59	To N. B. Khare	14 November	1937	356
60	The Reasons for Office Acceptance	15 November	1937	357
61	On the Communal Disturbances	18 November	1937	357
62	To P. Subbarayan	21 November	1937	359

63	To the Members of the Working Committee	24 November	1937	361
64	To K. Bhashyam	25 November	1937	364
65	To G. B. Pant	25 November	1937	365
66	On the Role of Congress Workers	26 November	1937	366
67	To C. Rajagopalachari	11 December	1937	368
68	To Srikrishna Sinha	11 December	1937	369
69	The Problems of the Provincial Ministries	17 December	1937	370
70	To N. B. Khare	22 December	1937	371
71	To Mahadeva Desai	26 December	1937	372
72	The Continuing Struggle	31 December	1937	372
73	To Edward Thompson	30 January	1938	375
74	On the Speaker's Position in the Legislature	1 February	1938	376
75	On Differences between Governors and Ministers	7 February	1938	377
76	To V. K. Krishna Menon	5 March	1938	378
77	To Agatha Harrison	5 March	1938	379
78	To Arabinda Sen	11 March	1938	380
79	To P. Subbarayan	11 March	1938	381
80	To Sampurnanand	26 March	1938	381
81	To General Secretary, U.P.P.C.C.	14 April	1938	383
82	On the Proposed Kisan Demonstration	14 April	1938	384
83	On the Proposed Agrarian Reforms in U.P.	17 April	1938	385
84	On the Need for Kisan Demonstrations	20 April	1938	386
85	To Mahatma Gandhi	28 April	1938	387
86	On the Difficulties of the Congress Ministries	13 May	1938	389
87	On the Congress Attitude towards Kisan Sabhas	23 May	1938	391
88	On the Working of the Congress Ministries	29 May	1938	392
89	On the Challenge of the Vested Interests	1 June	1938	393

5. Problems of Congress Organisation

1	Publicity to Congress Resolutions	2 January	1937	397
2	Importance of Mass Contacts	2 January	1937	399
3	Celebration of Independence Day	2/11 January	1937	400
4	The Ban on Independence Pledge	24 January	1937	401
5	On Understanding Congress Policy	3 March	1937	401
6	To Gopichand Bhargava	5 March	1937	402
7	To Mahatma Gandhi	8 March	1937	404
8	To Shahid Suhrawardy	10 March	1937	406
9	To Subhas Chandra Bose	16 April	1937	407
10	To B. Raja Bhushanarao	5 May	1937	410
11	To Secretary, Madras Provincial Varnashrama Swarajya Sangha	19 June	1937	412
12	To Ohabali Khan	19 June	1937	414
13	To Suresh Majumdar	20 June	1937	415
14	The Congress and Labour and Peasant Organisations	28 June	1937	417
15	To Raj Kumar Chakravarty	1 July	1937	425
16	Importance of Non-legislative Work	10 July	1937	427
17	The Congress and Peasant Organisations	10 July	1937	428
18	To President, Bengal P.C.C.	21 July	1937	430
19	To Rani Lakshmibai Rajwade	23 July	1937	431
20	To Congress Leaders of the Minority Provinces	30 July	1937	431
21	The Policy of the Congress	11 August	1937	432
22	To Ali Sardar Jafri	1 September	1937	435
23	To Sangat Singh	6 September	1937	436
24	On the Role of the Congress Socialist Party	16 September	1937	437
25	Gandhi Jayanti	23 September	1937	438
26	To S. V. Ramaswamy	2 October	1937	439
27	To S. C. Mitra	6 October	1937	442
28	On His Tour of Gujarat	7 October	1937	443

29	To Satyapal	19 October	1937	444
30	To Satyapal	9 November	1937	445
31	Allowances for Congress Members of Assemblies in Non-Congress Provinces	30 November	1937	446
32	To Bhaskar Mitter	23 December	1937	448
33	On the Training of Volunteers	24 December	1937	449
34	New Year Greetings	31 December	1937	450
35	To the General Secretary, A.I.C.C.	5 January	1938	451
36	To Sri Prakasa	31 January	1938	452
37	To Rajendra Prasad	16 April	1938	453

6. Visits to North West Frontier Province

1	Bombing and Kidnapping on the Frontier	22 June	1937	457
2	To E. B. Shawe	20 July	1937	462
3	The Task Before the Country	14 October	1937	463
4	On Communal Differences	16 October	1937	464
5	On the Frontier Problem	16 October	1937	465
6	Parting Message to the Frontier	18 October	1937	467
7	Impressions of His Visit to the Frontier	6 November	1937	468
8	On His Second Visit to the Frontier	26 January	1938	472
9	Farewell to the Frontier	28 January	1938	473
10	To Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan	29 April	1938	476

7. Visit to Assam

1	To Secretary, Assam P.C.C.	20 October	1937	481
2	Strengthen the Congress	27 November	1937	482
3	To Bishnu Ram Medhi	1 December	1937	483

4	The Necessity of Swaraj	1 December	1937	489
5	On the Threshold of Swaraj	6 December	1937	490
6	In the Valley of the Brahmaputra	9 December	1937	492
7	In the Surma Valley	9 December	1937	499

8. The National Flag

1	The National and the Red Flags	26 April	1937	505
2	The Honour of the National Flag	25 June	1937	506
3	To G. Satyanarayana	31 August	1937	507
4	To Chandra Badan Shukla	27 September	1937	508
5	To Hari Prasad Desai	1 October	1937	510
6	To Press Kamgar Union, Bombay	1 October	1937	511
7	To B. N. Prasad	10 November	1937	512
8	The National Flag	30 December	1937	513
9	To V. K. Krishna Menon	9 January	1938	515

9. "The Rashtrapati"

1	To Padmaja Naidu	5 October	1937	519
2	The Rashtrapati	5 October	1937	520
3	To Padmaja Naidu	20 October	1937	523
4	To Krishna Kripalani	2 June	1938	525

10. The Indian States

GENERAL

1	To E. M. Sankaran Nambudiripad	29 March	1937	529

2	Message to the Deccan States People's Conference	25 July	1937	530
3	Message to 'Rajasthan'	29 September	1937	531

AJMER-MERWARA

4	Princes and the Federation	18 September	1937	532
5	The Indian States and the Congress	19 September	1937	533
6	On the Proposed Transfer of Territory	3 November	1937	536

ALWAR

7	To the Prime Minister, Alwar State	21 October	1937	537
8	To Shankar Lal	9 November	1937	538

BHOPAL

9	To A. S. Bazmi	23 May	1938	539
10	Feudalism in Indian States	26 May	1938	540
11	On Civil Liberties in Bhopal State	2 June	1938	541

BIKANER

12	Repression in Bikaner State	26 June	1937	542

JODHPUR

13	Feudalism in Jodhpur State	7 August	1937	545
14	Message to Jodhpur Praja Mandal	1 October	1937	546

KATHIAWAR

15	Message to Kathiawar Youth Conference	7 October	1937	547

MYSORE

16	Election Activities in Mysore State	20 February	1937	548
17	To the Mass Awakeners' Union, Bangalore	28 June	1937	549
18	To T. Siddalingiah	27 August	1937	549
19	To Secretary, Karnataka P.C.C.	27 August	1937	550
20	To N. Ramamurti	1 September	1937	551
21	To Secretary, Karnataka P.C.C.	2 September	1937	551
22	To President, Mysore Congress Board	6 September	1937	553
23	To Mirza M. Ismail	30 September	1937	554
24	To Mirza M. Ismail	19 October	1937	555
25	To Secretary, Karnataka P.C.C.	20 October	1937	558
26	To Mirza M. Ismail	4 November	1937	561
27	To M. L. Srikantaiah	9 November	1937	565
28	To Secretary, Karnataka P.C.C.	11 November	1937	566
29	To Mahatma Gandhi	14 November	1937	567
30	To R. S. Hukerikar	19 November	1937	569
31	To K. C. Reddy	19 November	1937	570
32	On the A.I.C.C. Resolution on Mysore State	26 November	1937	571
33	To Rajendra Prasad	29 November	1937	572
34	To Mirza M. Ismail	25 December	1937	573
35	To K. C. Reddy	4 January	1938	575
36	To P. Rangaswamy	4 March	1938	576
37	To H. K. Veeranna Gowdh	31 March	1938	577
38	To H. C. Dasappa	11 April	1938	578
39	To V. S. Narayana Rao	22 April	1938	579
40	To H. C. Dasappa	26 May	1938	579

ORCHHA

41	To R. S. Shukla	28 September	1937	580

11. Imperialism and Federation

1	Interview to The News Chronicle	2 January	1937	585
2	The Main Problem of India	25 February	1937	587
3	To Horace G. Alexander	17 June	1937	588
4	To Asaf Ali	5 August	1937	589
5	Hunger Strike in the Andamans	6 August	1937	590
6	On Government's Attitude towards the Andaman Prisoners	19 August	1937	593
7	On Federation	19 August	1937	594
8	On Federal Government	21/23 August	1937	595
9	Despatch of Indian Troops to China	25 August	1937	611
10	To Asaf Ali	26 August	1937	612
11	On the Hunger Strike of the Andaman Prisoners	29 August	1937	613
12	To V. K. Krishna Menon	30 August	1937	614
13	To Mrs. Duncan Harris	2 September	1937	616
14	To Sri Prakasa	2 September	1937	617
15	To Bhulabhai Desai	12 September	1937	618
16	To Carl Heath	7 October	1937	619
17	The Unity of India	8 October	1937	620
18	To Mahatma Gandhi	3 November	1937	632
19	To V. K. Krishna Menon	20 December	1937	633
20	To Agatha Harrison	23 December	1937	634
21	The Need for Indian Independence	29 January	1938	634
22	To Bhagavan Das	31 January	1938	635
23	To Bhagavan Das	8 February	1938	637
24	Rejoinder to Lord Zetland	30 May	1938	638
25	India and the World Perspective	31 May	1938	638

12. India and Her Neighbours

SRI LANKA

1	Sri Lanka	8 March	1937	645
2	Burma and Sri Lanka	11 March	1937	646
3	To K. Parameswaran Pillai	30 March	1937	648
4	To K. Natesa Aiyar	27 August	1937	649

VISIT TO BURMA

5	India and Burma	7 May	1937	650
6	Why Burma was Separated	11 May	1937	652
7	The Policy of the Indian National Congress	15 May	1937	654
8	On the Separation of Burma	17 May	1937	656
9	Farewell to Burma	20 May	1937	657
10	To V. K. Krishna Menon	22 May	1937	659
11	To Ba Maw	21 July	1937	660
12	To Niranjan C. Galliara	9 February	1938	662

VISIT TO MALAYA

13	The Situation in India	23 May	1937	663
14	Address to the Indians in Malaya	24 May	1937	666
15	On His Visit to Malaya	25 May	1937	668
16	Address to Indians in Singapore	26 May	1937	670
17	Women Should Not Be Weak	27 May	1937	676
18	To Rajendra Prasad	29 May	1937	677
19	Indian Labour in Malaya	31 May	1937	678
20	A Question of Manners	1 June	1937	684
21	Indians and Sinhalese in Malaya	2 June	1937	687

22	To Fellow Countrymen in Malaya	4 June	1937	689
23	Imperialism in Malaya and India	4 June	1937	693
24	Farewell to Malaya	4 June	1937	694
25	Back Home	19 June	1937	695
26	To the Editor, The Times of Malaya	25 July	1937	697

13. The World Situation

1	Message to the Left Book Club	8 February	1937	701
2	Food for Spain	20 February	1937	701
3	A Letter about Spain	24 February	1937	703
4	To Victor Gollancz	10 March	1937	705
5	Fascism and Empire	27 March	1937	705
6	Appeal for Aid to Spain	30 March	1937	708
7	India and China	13 April	1937	709
8	The Need for Active Support to Spain	20 April	1937	710
9	To J. Mascaro	22 April	1937	711
10	Further Appeal for Help to Spain	24 April	1937	711
11	To Govind Madgavkar	26 August	1937	712
12	To A. E. Shohet	26 August	1937	713
13	Zanzibar and the Boycott of Cloves	28 August	1937	714
14	To V. K. Krishna Menon	30 August	1937	718
15	To Hooseinbhoy A. Laljee	31 August	1937	720
16	The Congress and World Problems	4 September	1937	720
17	To Mufti Amin Husseini	4 September	1937	723
18	Formation of Clove Boycott Committees	12 September	1937	723
19	Observance of China Day, 1937	14 September	1937	724
20	Boycott of Japanese Goods	30 September	1937	725
21	To V. K. Krishna Menon	30 September	1937	725

22	To V. K. Krishna Menon	7 October	1937	727
23	On the World Situation	10 October	1937	728
24	The Need for a Broader Outlook	11 November	1937	730
25	Indian Sympathy for China	28 November	1937	731
26	Appeal to Help China	18 December	1937	732
27	Observance of China Day, 1938	24 December	1937	733
28	The Congress and China Day	25 December	1937	733
29	To Rabindranath Tagore	9 January	1938	734
30	The Need for Help to China	9 January	1938	734
31	To James S. Cushman	2 February	1938	736
32	To J. Olsvangar	2 February	1938	737
33	To Nnamdi Azikiwe	11 February	1938	737
34	To Tan Yun-Shan	10 April	1938	738
35	To Madam G. Duchene	29 April	1938	739
36	The Failure of the League of Nations	30 April	1938	740
37	India and World Politics	18 May	1938	742
38	On Framing India's Foreign Policy	26 May	1938	744
39	Despatch of Medical Unit to China	1 June	1938	747

14. The Haripura Congress and After

1	Report to the A.I.C.C. at Haripura	10 February	1938	751
2	The Congress and Federation	18 February	1938	759
3	The Congress and the Indian States	19 February	1938	761
4	The Congress and Burma	19 February	1938	764
5	On the Rights of Minorities	20 February	1938	765
6	On the Hunger Strike by Political Prisoners	20 February	1938	769
7	To N.S. Hardikar	14 March	1938	771

15. General

PERSONAL

1	To Mohanlal Nehru	18 January	1935	777
2	To Indira Nehru	26 May	1935	781
3	To Indira Nehru	15 January	1936	785
4	To Indira Nehru	30 January	1936	787
5	To Indira Nehru	8 March	1936	788
6	To Indira Nehru	1 April	1936	789
7	To Indira Nehru	27 April	1936	791
8	To Indira Nehru	30 April	1936	792
9	To Indira Nehru	4 May	1936	793
10	To Indira Nehru	7 May	1936	794
11	To Indira Nehru	2 June	1936	794
12	To Indira Nehru	29 June	1936	795
13	To Indira Nehru	5 October	1936	797
14	To Indira Nehru	15 October	1936	798
15	To Indira Nehru	1 November	1936	800
16	To Indira Nehru	5 November	1936	801
17	To Indira Nehru	25 November	1936	802
18	To Indira Nehru	8 December	1936	803
19	To Indira Nehru	14 December	1936	804

ON SCIENCE

20	Science and Planning	26 December	1937	806
21	The Progress of Science	5 March	1938	808

TO THE STUDENTS

22	On the Kanpur Students' Strike	21 February	1937	813
23	To P.S. Singh	18 April	1937	814
24	The Republic of Youth	2 August	1937	815
25	Students and National Service	30 August	1937	816
26	Law and Society	1 September	1937	817
27	Students and Discipline	28 September	1937	819
28	Commitment and Creativity	17 November	1937	821

29	On the Allahabad Students' Strike	20 November	1937	823
30	The Duty of Indian Students in Britain	23 March	1938	825
31	Message to the Canadian Youth Congress	30 April	1938	826

THE QUESTION OF LANGUAGE

32	On the Hindi-Urdu Controversy	6 July	1937	826
33	The Question of Language	25 July	1937	829

MISCELLANEOUS

34	To Lionel Fielden	3 January	1937	845
35	The Role of a Cartoonist	24 February	1937	846
36	To V.K. Krishna Menon	25 March	1937	847
37	To V.K. Krishna Menon	5 April	1937	848
38	To J. Barnes	22 April	1937	849
39	Nationalism and Socialism	7 May	1937	850
40	To Sajjad Zaheer	1 July	1937	851
41	To Ernst Toller	19 July	1937	852
42	To J.A.D. Naoroji	30 August	1937	853
43	To Sushila Prasad	31 August	1937	854
44	To Shyam Sunder Lal	6 September	1937	856
45	To Bharati Sarabhai	30 September	1937	857
46	To Carlos da Cruz	1 October	1937	857
47	To Bhulabhai Desai	1 October	1937	858
48	To Ernest F. Paton	11 November	1937	858
49	On the Role of a Progressive Writer	14 November	1937	859
50	The Problems of the Kisans	19 November	1937	860
51	Lenin	2 January	1938	861
52	To V.K. Krishna Menon	3 February	1938	862
53	To John Maynard	3 February	1938	863
54	To N. R. Malkani	10 February	1938	864
55	To Bharati Sarabhai	10 March	1938	864
56	To P.V. Gadgil	11 March	1938	866
57	To Bhagavan Das	12 March	1938	866
58	To John Gunther	16 March	1938	867

59	To Durgabai Jog	22 March	1938	872
60	To Riaz Mohamad	22 March	1938	872
61	Escape	7 April	1938	873
62	Prison Days	April	1938	876
63	To Krishna Hutheesing	5 May	1938	877
64	A Visit to Garhwal	10 May	1938	879

ILLUSTRATIONS

frontispiece

In Dehra Dun, 19 January 1937
In Delhi, March 1937 — *between pp.* 96—97

All India Congress Legislators Convention, Delhi, March 1937
At Victoria Terminus, Bombay, 14 May 1937 — 240—241

In the North West Frontier Province, October 1937
With Subhas Bose, Calcutta, 4 November 1937 — 464—465

Page of The Rashtrapati, 5 October 1937
On the North West Frontier, Torkhan, October 1937 — 544—545

In Malaya, May 1937
In Pyuntaza, Burma, May 1937 — 688—689

In Penang, Malaya, 23 May 1937
Addressing a public meeting at Seremban, Malaya, 29 May 1937 — 752—753

With Subhas Bose, 1938
With members of the Congress Working Committee on board the S.S. "El Medina", 2 January 1938 — 816—817

1

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

1. Discipline among Congressmen[1]

Allahabad
January 2, 1937

Dear Comrade,

Reports reach our office from time to time to the effect that some Congressmen are opposing official Congress candidates in the provincial elections. Whatever the merits of various candidates might be, once the final decision has been made by the Central Parliamentary Board, there is no room for further discussion. All Congressmen must stand by that decision and any, who deliberately go contrary to it, invite disciplinary action on behalf of the Congress. The mere fact that an individual is personally so anxious to go to the legislature, that he or she is prepared to flout the Congress decision, is the final argument against his candidature. Too great a desire to enter the legislatures, or to have any office, is almost a disqualification for it. And those whom this desire leads to pushing themselves forwards in opposition to the decision of their own organisation, are certainly not desirable candidates.

It was to meet such cases of flagrant indiscipline that the disciplinary rules of the Congress have been recently revised by the Working Committee.[2] Those rules are meant to be acted upon. I want you therefore to report to our office immediately as follows:

1. Names of Congressmen, if any, who are opposing official Congress candidates, with further information as regards their constituencies and the names of our official candidates.

2. What steps has your committee so far taken against these rebel Congressmen or Congresswomen? Has any notice been issued to them to submit their explanation or to show cause why disciplinary action should not be taken against them?

3. What further steps does your committee propose to take against them?

I suggest that, if you have not already taken steps, this should be done immediately. In addition to this, please inform all such rebel

1. Circular to the provincial Congress committees and parliamentary boards. A.I.C.C. File No. E-1/1936, p. 33, N.M.M.L.
2. The rules were revised by the Working Committee at its meeting held in Bombay from 9 to 11 December 1936.

Congressmen that they should submit their explanations direct to our office for my consideration. In the event of the local or provincial executive not taking adequate action in the matter, action will be taken by us. A person who opposes and injures the Congress work cannot continue to have the privilege of calling himself a Congressman.

Please treat this matter as urgent.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Message to Congress Candidates[1]

I am leaving Allahabad for a lengthy tour in Bihar, U.P. and the Punjab and I shall not be back at headquarters for a long time. Large numbers of letters and telegrams come to me asking me to go to this place or that. I would gladly accede to all these demands but the number of days at our disposal is limited and a day has twenty four hours only. So I must limit my wandering. I trust that friends and comrades will appreciate my difficulty and not press me to do what is beyond my capacity. To all Congress candidates for election I send greetings and good wishes in this New Year. Let them remember that they represent a cause, a principle and an idea. They do not stand on personal grounds but as soldiers of the Congress and of Indian freedom, and it is on that ground alone that they seek the suffrage of our people. Those who believe in that cause must help them and vote for them. Those who are opposed to our principles or do not care for any principles have every right to oppose us. Between them and us there is no common ground; we stand in different ranks, under different flags, owing different allegiances. We shall combat them on these broad grounds of principle and Indian freedom. But there are others who seek to take advantage of the great prestige of the Congress, sail under false colours, and yet oppose the Congress candidates. Those who oppose the Congress in this election are no Congressmen and voters and the public generally must realise this fact.

1. Allahabad, 4 January 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 5 January 1937.

I trust that sympathisers with the Congress will offer their services for the Congress election campaign. Such voluntary services will be welcomed. More particularly on polling days educated workers are needed at each polling booth, for on such occasions there are often mischief-makers present whose chief business is to create trouble. Particular attention should be paid to this matter at an early stage and competent and educated helpers allotted to every polling booth in each constituency. An election campaign is not all meetings and enthusiasm. It requires careful staff work and organisation and all parliamentary boards and candidates should pay special attention to this.

3. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
January 4, 1937

My dear Krishna,
As soon as the Faizpur Congress was over I had to start with this election touring business. I am going to carry on with it without interruption for the next seven weeks. During this period I shall hardly be in Allahabad for a day or two. I shall thus be somewhat out of touch with letters though of course I shall see that important ones reach me. But there might be delay in dealing with them....

I am dictating this in a moving train. I wonder what I shall be like after these seven weeks are over. I am pretty tough but by the end of February I might have to retire to a nursing home for a while.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

4. Greetings to Bihar[1]

Comrades of Bihar,

I come to you after several years. I came to you last, three years ago, at the time of the great earthquake.[2] Since then much has happened and many an earthquake of another kind has come to our people and to me personally. But the old call still rings in our ears and drives us on—the call of Indian freedom and of our suffering masses. The future may hold greater earthquakes for us than in the past, but whatever may befall us, we should carry on till we reach the goal of freedom. Bihar has a proud record and much is expected of Bihar in the future. Let the people of Bihar remember this in the days to come. Let them stand by the Congress and the cause of freedom. In that hope and belief I send them warm greetings and good wishes in the New Year.

1. Statement to the press, Patna, 5 January 1937. *Indian Nation*, 6 January 1937.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 186-198.

5. Farewell Message to Bihar[1]

For seven days I sped like an arrow from the bow from place to place in Bihar carrying the message of the Congress wherever I went. During these seven days I travelled from end to end of the province right up to the frontier of Nepal. I met vast audiences of poverty-stricken peasantry in the rural areas; I passed through ancient cities, famous in history and tradition, and modern towns with their industries and commerce and unemployment and railway strikers. Through the steel city of Jamshedpur I went, and across the black coal area of Jharia. Rapidly I passed

1. Given at Ghazipur, 13 January 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 14 January 1937. The first paragraph was reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), p. 99.

through Chota Nagpur with its beautiful forests and its so-called aborigines. Everywhere I found enthusiastic response to the message of the Congress, everywhere love and goodwill beyond measure. I leave the province with regret but I carry back with me the fragrant memory of the generous affection of its people and I shall feel strengthened and invigorated by it in the perils and tasks to come. Men and women of Bihar, dear comrades in a great and glorious enterprise, I wish you good fortune and courage and perseverance.

The Bihar tour was fast and furious but I managed to complete my programme on most days. But on the last day, in Muzaffarpur district, I failed in this and to my very great regret I could not attend the great meeting in Muzaffarpur city where many thousands had long waited for me. The programme was unreasonably heavy, the roads were bad, the vast crowds of kisans bigger than anywhere else; there were innumerable unexpected road halts where people, especially women, had gathered, and the loud-speakers failed to come. I am afraid all this rather bowled me over and I am not quite as fit now as I was ten days ago. In Ballia also the programme was a fantastic one. I must cry halt to these programmes and in future every district programme must be passed by me before it is announced. I have another seven weeks to carry on with this tour and I do not want to end it suddenly because of physical unfitness. I must therefore insist on light and reasonable programmes. From the point of view of our work also it is utterly wrong to have too many functions. One or two big functions are far more important than many small ones.

6. On Foot to the Polls[1]

Wherever I go, I find great enthusiasm for the cause of the Congress. In the elections, enthusiasm and public meetings and demonstrations are good, but more important for any big undertaking is staff work and the careful working out of details. I find that little attention is paid

1. Statement to the press, Fyzabad, 15 January 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 16 January 1937.

8. Communalism, Sectarianism and Elections[1]

All those people who talk in terms of Hindu rights and Muslim interests are job hunters, pure and simple, and fight for the loaves and fishes of office. How long are you going to tolerate this nonsense, this absurdity?

The Ghaznavi-Burdwan Pact in Bengal[2] has exposed the pretensions of these supposed opponents of the communal decision. It has conclusively proved that all this opposition to the communal decision was merely a fight for spoils.

It appears the only aim of the opponents of the Award is to get ministerships and government jobs and they are prepared to sell their community for their own petty interests.

India's problem is linked up with the problem of the world and the election business is important inasmuch as it helps us to grasp this problem. But I warn you to beware of minor issues.

There are only two forces in the country, the Congress and the government. Those who are standing midway shall have to choose between the two.

I do not want your vote for me or for any of my friends. To vote against the Congress candidate is to vote for the continuance of British domination.

Elections come and go, but there is no escape from the major problem of India's poverty. Congressmen are going to the legislatures to continue the fight for freedom and oust those who have been weakening our efforts.

I want to make it clear that Congressmen are not entering the legislatures in any spirit of cooperation with the government or for working this constitution. These elections are very important as they help

1. Speech at Ambala, 16 January 1937. From *The Hindustan Times,* 18 January 1937.
2. Abdul Halim Ghaznavi (1876-1953); a liberal politician of Bengal; member, Indian Legislative Assembly, 1926-45. On 7 January 1937, he and the Maharaja of Burdwan signed an agreement that in Bengal the Communal Award should be accepted subject to revision at the end of ten years; there should also be an equal number of Hindu and Muslim ministers and an equal proportion should also be maintained in the services subject to the reservation of an agreed percentage for members of the European, Anglo-Indian and Christian communities.

in establishing mass contact with the millions of voters and non-voters. It is the Congress alone which is capable of fighting the government.

The opponents of the Congress are bound with each other by a community of interests. Their demands have nothing to do with the masses.

The Congress attitude with regard to the communal decision is quite correct and the attempt of the Hindu Mahasabha to malign the Congress is regrettable.[3]

What is this Burdwan-Ghaznavi Pact? Hindu Mahasabha leaders have blessed it. The Communal Award which has been condemned as most undemocratic and anti-national will remain, and so will remain the separate electorates and the percentage of seats allotted to the respective communities. But there will be equal number of Hindu and Muslim ministers. Could there be anything more palpably selfish than this?

The very nature of this pact confirms the wisdom of the Congress stand on the Award. You are already familiar with its decision in regard to this Award. I appeal to you to strengthen the Congress. I am sanguine that the Congress will come out with flying colours in this election fight. The Congress victory at the polls will necessarily lower the government prestige. It would mean the victory of the Congress principles and ideals.

There has been criticism in the selection of candidates. Congress candidates are its soldiers. They have been allotted a certain task. I am a humble servant of the Congress. They have not selected me as their candidate. Shall I feel myself belittled by it although I am not ashamed of saying that I think I am fit to rule India, nay, the world?

This is no division of spoils. The selection as a Congress candidate is not a matter of great honour. You honour me today because you think I have the courage to stand against foreign exploitation. Above all other qualities that I possess, I am a soldier. It is not worthwhile to fight over these minor matters. There is a gigantic task ahead of us which will try our mettle. We are standing on the top of a volcano. I invite you all to prepare yourselves for that danger.

I am sorry that my name was misused by Lala Deshbandhu Gupta's[4]

3. The president of the Hindu Mahasabha had said on 21 October 1936: "Congress has very few Muslim members and it cannot afford to antagonise them. No doubt this has led the Congress into committing the serious blunder of keeping neutral over the communal decision which was not a communal but a national question."

4. (1900-1951); a leading Congressman of Delhi; imprisoned several times during the freedom struggle; editor of *Tej* from 1923; member, Constituent Assembly, 1946-50.

opponent, Shrimati Lekhawati.[5] She had written to me and I gave her a lengthy reply.[6] I concede that the country's progress depends on women's progress but I have heard it for the first time that a woman wants our support simply because she is a woman. We want brave men and women for our fight. There is no distinction of caste in our ranks. The only criterion is the fitness of the candidate. I am sorry that Shrimati Lekhawati Jain who professed to be a Congresswoman opposed the Congress so bitterly from the very outset. She raised the slogan of Hindu interests and Jain interests. The Congress may lose a thousand seats but it cannot tolerate that any community should come and raise sectarian issues in the elections. Election fever is high today, but I am not without hope that after the elections, Shrimati Lekhawati Jain will feel sorry in her calmer moments for all that she has done.

I again appeal to you to vote for the Congress candidates as a Congress victory will be your own victory.

5. (b. 1908); contested the 1937 election as an independent candidate and was defeated; Deputy Chairman, Punjab Vidhan Sabha, 1964-66; Deputy Speaker, Haryana Vidhan Sabha, 1968.
6. She had taken objection to the decision of the Congress Parliamentary Board over the selection of the candidate for her constituency and requested Jawaharlal to arbitrate. Jawaharlal in his reply stated that as a disciplined Congressman, he had on several occasions "submitted to Congress decisions when I did not agree with some of them" and therefore regretted that he could not interfere in the matter.

9. Farewell Message to the Punjab[1]

Three days I have spent in the Punjab and during this brief period I have visited many cities and many rural areas. Three crowded wonderful days were full of movement and full of most extraordinary enthusiasm. I came with the message of the Congress and vast overpowering

1. Lahore, 18 January 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 20 January 1937.

crowds gathered to listen to it and their very numbers, enthusiasm and spirit were the measures of their response thereto. What a magnificent response it has been and how heartening the feeling that the spirit of communalism wilts and withers and reaction cannot raise its head! Follow this up, friends and comrades of the Punjab, to make the Congress victorious in these elections and in the greater work ahead. We part today but we shall meet again.

10. Make the Congress Stronger[1]

With the passing of each day India is becoming more and more impatient to secure independence for its millions and full control over its own destiny in order to advance towards progress and prosperity in all directions of national activity. It is this unique, powerful and irrepressible urge for freedom which drives, as it were, lakhs of our men and women to such huge gatherings, determined to have their aspirations fulfilled.

Since my last visit to Dehra Dun I have been to several places—to Cape Comorin, to eastern and western India, and to all the provinces. I am now coming from the Punjab where I travelled for three days using even an aeroplane. Everywhere I met lakhs of people assembled in huge gatherings. Why is it so? To some people it may be a *tamasha*, but to the poor villagers and peasants it is certainly no *tamasha*. Behind these huge gatherings there is a powerful force which pushes us forward. Economic hardship, poverty and unemployment are rampant in the land, and the masses are now anxious to find means and ways whereby they can see better and brighter days. There is an impatient and irrepressible desire everywhere to attain freedom.

The conditions in the country have worsened during the last fifteen years or so. We have been fighting to attain freedom for our motherland. We have seen noncooperation and satyagraha movements, but

1. Speech at Dehra Dun, 19 January 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 22 January 1937.

the present desire to achieve Swaraj, now surging everywhere in the country, is much more deep-rooted and powerful. After so much experience of political struggle, we still follow the same old path as there is no other course open to us. That the nation has taken a turn for the better and has lifted its head high, is in itself a hopeful and significant sign of the approach of better days.

Freedom is never achieved by the leaders pressing a button. Great achievements are possible only when the leaders are backed by popular force. When millions of men move towards one objective in complete unity a situation is created which by itself makes freedom possible. Political, economic and social matters are of far-reaching importance and certainly something new by way of an economic organization would come out of it removing our poverty and solving our problems.

The goal of the Congress is panchayat raj wherein all would participate and the people would have the reins of power and administration in their own hands. We have to acquire power; and we can do so only by constant exercise of strength in political struggles. People or nations can develop strength only when they make efforts to become self-reliant. Strength can never be acquired by keeping aloof.

The people should organize Congress committees in *mohallas* and villages and strengthen the Congress organization through those committees. Their hardships can then be expressed and ascertained and a basis found for a uniform policy. Lakhs and crores of people would then know what those problems are which afflict them all. We should not expect life to be easy and soft for those who go to the legislatures. We want these legislatures to be of assistance to us in our fight for Swaraj rather than a hindrance. We should not send to the legislatures such persons who will always support our enemies.

Of a population of 35 crores in the country, only three crores are going to be the voters according to the new constitution. The Congress claims to represent these thirty five crores of people. But it does not want that the three crores of people who have the right to vote should be allowed to be misled by others. There are only two forces in the country, the Congress and the government. Although the British Government declare that they are standing aloof from the election, I have heard about the police threats in this district and their secret activities under the cloak of the electioneering of the other side. But despite all this we are going to the legislatures, not as irresponsible beings or self-appointed attorneys of the people, but as soldiers. While the Congress is bound by its disciplinary rules and you the voters will hold in your hands the leading strings, there are others who are going to the legislatures to seek personal profit. There are some who want to be

ministers. This is not an occasion to put forth claims of relationship or kinship before the electorate. It is a straight fight in which certain principles are at stake. The Congress is the only institution which represents the people and has been fighting for the rights of the people. Those who stand in the middle of the fight between the Congress and the government will be serving no useful purpose.

I am delighted that a lady[2] is contesting the election here. It is through the efforts of men and women that India's salvation can be brought about and it is very essential that both play their part together in the struggle.

I also appeal to you to observe Independence Day on 26 January, and a hartal on 1 April, the day the new constitution is to come into force.

2. Shrimati Sharmada Tyagi (1908-1937); a Congress worker from Dehra Dun; member, U.P. Assembly, 1937.

11. On Mustering of Voters[1]

I understand that in some districts of the United Provinces special arrangements have been made by the Congress candidates to induce voters to go to the polls on the polling day. It has been arranged especially in rural areas. Early in the morning of the polling day at a fixed hour voters should be summoned together by the beating of drums. They would then march together with national flags, singing national songs, to the polling booth and having recorded their votes should march back in order.

I commend this arrangement to the other districts of the United Provinces and to other provinces where voting is yet to take place. They must remember "On Foot to the Polls".

I appeal to the educated young men, students and others, to offer themselves as workers for the polling days.

1. Speech at Meerut, 22 January 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 24 January 1937.

12. To M.M. Malaviya[1]

Allahabad
January 26, 1937

My dear Malaviyaji,

I have been much distressed at the development in connection with your support of Shannodevi[2] and Keshoram[3] and your opposition to the Congress candidates who were opposing these two. On the merits I do feel that you have supported the wrong candidates. On further enquiry I am convinced that Keshoram has a most reactionary record and has been opposing the national cause these many years. The allegation against him of having been present with Dyer in Jallianwalla Bagh is probably incorrect, but the other charges are substantially true. I have considerable evidence to this effect but I will not trouble you with it now.

As regards Shannodevi I found that practically all Congressmen in the Punjab, belonging to both groups, were opposed to her. Even the leading Nationalists in the Punjab were opposed to her. Her tactics in the course of the election have been most unfortunate and reprehensible. She has been opposing Dr. Gopichand's candidature also. Under the circumstances it was quite impossible for the Congress to adopt her, even if there was a constitutional way open for this. And this as I told you was not open to me at this stage. I sent you a long telegram to Banaras but I am afraid you must have missed it.

But merits apart what I am faced with is the clear position that Shannodevi and Keshoram are opposing Congress nominees and you are openly supporting them. What am I to do with this? I am getting large numbers of letters of protest and of enquiry as to what steps we should take in the matter. I do not know what to say in reply. Your general and particular support of many Congress candidates has been of great value to us. Even apart from this the feeling that we have you on our side has been a great consolation to me. But how am I to distinguish between you, with all my regard for you, and others who

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, File No. 1/37, National Archives of India.
2. (b. 1902); editor of Hindi daily *Shakti*, 1936-40; as a Nationalist Party candidate was defeated in 1937; member, Punjab Assembly, 1940 and its Deputy Speaker, 1950 and 1962 and Speaker, 1966-67.
3. A Nationalist Party candidate from Amritsar who was defeated in 1937.

have acted similarly? I have no answer to that question and it seems to me that some answer must be given. Hence my distress. As this matter raises a question of considerable personal and general importance I am referring it to the members of the Working Committee for their advice.[4] But I am writing to you to seek your own advice in the matter. I am sure you can view it objectively and, apart from the personal equation, advise me as to what I should do under the circumstances.[5]

With regards,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. While Maulana Azad wanted disciplinary action to be taken against Malaviya. Bhulabhai Desai suggested that an ultimatum be sent to him. Sardar Patel, Achyut Patwardhan and Shankarrao Deo preferred that the matter be dropped in view of Malaviya's old age and general standing.
5. In his reply of 23 February 1937, Malaviya wrote: "You and your colleagues of the Working Committee will no doubt decide the matter as you will think proper."

13. Renewal of the Independence Pledge[1]

Today, by repeating the independence pledge, we have reiterated our faith in our ability and our resolve to win independence. We must carry on our fight till we have achieved our aim.

We do not want to break any orders at present. But we must note that the government ban[2] is only a shadow of the coming events. It also shows that the strength of the Congress is increasing.

1. Speech at Allahabad, 26 January 1937. From *The Leader*, 28 January 1937.
2. The Independence Day pledge had been banned on 22 January 1937 in several provinces.

Today, when I went to the villages, I saw heavy police arrangements everywhere. I do not know whether the government has decided to celebrate Independence Day in this manner. But I am struck by the manner in which the new police stations have been constructed in rural areas. Police stations in the villages of Allahabad district present the appearance of forts. Ditches have been dug around and arrangements for drawbridges have been made. Holes have also been made in the walls of the buildings.

You know it well that the Congress election manifesto[3] has clearly laid down a policy for us and whatever we must do must be in keeping with that policy. We shall go to the legislatures not with a view to cooperate with those who have imposed the Act upon us. We shall go there so that we are able to combat the Act and offer resistance to British imperialism which is trying to strengthen its hold on India and its exploitation of the Indian people. Above all, we want to use these elections to rally the masses under the Congress standard, to carry the Congress message to the millions of voters and non-voters so that the mass struggle gets further stimulus. I would therefore urge you to vote for the Congress candidates.

I want to refer to the Gorakhpur and Pilibhit outrages.[4] I have a suspicion that these are connected with the election campaign. It has also surprised me very much that the coloured ballot box system has not been introduced in the case of rural constituencies. Such a system is needed in the rural areas as it would greatly facilitate the illiterate voters. What surprises one most is that this system is introduced in the case of Allahabad city constituency but not in the village constituencies. I do not know whether the U.P. Government considers the villagers to be more educated than the people living in cities. This is the only province in the country where the coloured box system has not been introduced for the village voters. In my opinion, this has been done to prevent fair voting.

Some newspapers, including the London *Times*, have expressed an opinion that a large convention, to be attended by the Congress candidates who would be elected to the legislatures and prominent members

3. For the text of the manifesto see *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 459-464.
4. It had been reported that Congress workers had been murdered in these places.

of the All India Congress Committee, would be held after the election and they would constitute the proposed constituent assembly. I however want to repudiate this suggestion.

I also want to refer to Mr. Shyamlal's statements.[5] I want to tell you that the Congress has given no undertaking in connection with the Poona Pact. In fact, no such undertaking could ever be given and the right of the Congress to work for the Harijans cannot be challenged.

In the end, I also want to say that I had nothing to do with the selection of the candidates. The selection was made by the Congress committees and parliamentary boards and it is just a coincidence that my servant Harilal has also been selected. I can, however, say from my personal knowledge that he is a very suitable candidate.

5. A scheduled caste candidate from Allahabad to the provincial assembly; he had contended that though the Poona Pact had stipulated that the Harijans would be allowed to contest elections without interference from any party, the Congress had set up a candidate for the reserved seat.

14. Make the Congress Victory Spectacular[1]

I come before you, one and all, men and women, to deliver the message of the great organization, the Congress. I have been touring the country on election propaganda and asking the people to vote for the Congress candidates. No doubt you will vote for the Congress candidates but the victory must be so spectacular, effective and splendid that the opponents will feel ashamed of their standing against the nation's chosen

1. Speech at Jhansi, 30 January 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 31 January 1937.

representatives. We are not enamoured of the councils, but the past history of the councils reveals that during our absence, such people enter there who betray the nation's cause in the midst of our fight for independence, and side with the government in crushing this fight. If we are able to push out such men from there, it will be by itself a great achievement, let alone our doing any good in the assemblies, which we cannot do under this constitution.

We have been ruined politically and economically. Everyone of us, peasant or petty trader, labourer or small merchant, is going down economically. Our trade has already gone down much. Means of production have been snatched away by a few. Poverty reigns, starvation rules, and I have come to tell you the way to get out of this vicious circle. Freedom is the only remedy for all these ills.

Independence can be attained through a sound organisation and constant struggle with the forces that deny it. It is possible that we may lose once, twice, and ten times, and repression may succeed for a short time; but history shows us that the governments which proved unsuccessful in solving the problems of poverty and starvation had to depart. So, essentially our fight is a fight against poverty and starvation. And we are bound to succeed in stamping out these things if an organised effort is made. Though there are other parties and organisations also in the country, some communal and some non-communal, have they ever dared to stand against the government and made sacrifices for their beliefs? It is the Congress which has fought and sacrificed for its principles. The Congress lives for the masses, thinks for the masses and acts for the masses. In fact it is the living embodiment of the nation's visions, dreams and aspirations. Make it stronger so that it may stand up to the government with renewed strength and win independence.

We are respected in the world today, not because we have become independent, but because we are struggling to become independent; we have cultivated a will, a desire to become free. And for this we should be grateful to the Congress which has produced in us this fibre to stand up to the mighty power. In fact if the Congress goes down then the nation goes down and if the Congress rises higher then rises with it the national honour, the country's prestige and our individual honour as well. In fact there are only two forces in the country, the Congress and the government. We do not want any party which, while hostile forces are pitched against each other, takes a stick in hand and strolls, trying to exchange glances and smiles with both, and finding its position untenable sometimes takes shelter behind communal issues. In fact such parties do not stand for any principles or ideals. The people belonging to them are job-hunters and office-seekers.

15. The Meaning of Complete Independence[1]

Allahabad
2.2.37

Sir,

I have just read your leading article on 'Complete Independence' in your issue of February 2nd.[2] May I venture to say that this article does not contain that clarity of thought and expression which one has a right to expect from *The Bombay Chronicle*? It confuses the issue and tones down the Congress demand for independence and thus is likely to mislead the public. What the Congress demand and objective are can be easily ascertained by reference to the Congress resolutions as well as to the famous Congress independence pledge which was first taken by millions of Indian people on January 26th, 1930. In this pledge it is stated at the end of the first paragraph: "We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or complete independence." Could anything be clearer or more unequivocal than this?

I cannot enter into this question at length at present as I am continuously moving about. I have already written on this subject in my books and I would especially draw your attention to my answer to a question put to me in London. This is given at p. 228 of my book, *India and the World*.[3]

Briefly put, the position is that we can have no willing connection with imperialist Britain. We cannot be even partners in an imperialist concern. And so, if Britain continues to be imperialist, we part company, for the very basis of our Congress and freedom movement is anti-imperialism. That does not mean isolation for us. We do not believe in cutting ourselves off from the rest of the world and we shall gladly work for the establishment of world peace and a world order based on political and social freedom. But imperialism is the very negation of both these and so we cannot be parties to it in any form. Hence our

demand for complete independence, and neither the shadow nor the substance of this will satisfy us, but only the full article.

Yours etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

16. On the U.P. Government's Circular[1]

I have just seen the circular, issued by the chief secretary to the United Provinces Government, directing district officers to take action under section 108 Cr. P.C. against the Congress workers engaged in Congress work, on the ground that they are preaching sedition.[2] The U.P. Government has been conspicuous in India for its open activities against the Congress in connection with elections. Almost alone in India, among provincial governments, it has persisted in refusing to have coloured ballot boxes, a system which ensures secrecy of voting for illiterate voters.

The ministers must be held responsible for this unjust decision which can only be based on the conviction that with secret voting, the Congress is bound to sweep the polls. I have found, during my tour of the United Provinces districts, complaints of official interference and official canvassing for anti-Congress candidates based on reliable data. The officials in many places have practically become agents of the National Agricultural Party.[3]

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 5 February 1937. *The Hindustan Times*. 6 February 1937.
2. On 5 February 1937, the U.P. Government issued fresh instructions under section 108 of the Criminal Procedure Code against dissemination of seditious ideas during the election campaign.
3. The National Agricultural Party of Oudh and Agra, formed in 1934, contested the 1937 elections. This party of landlords and zamindars was supported by the U.P. Government.

The open sympathizers and workers of the party are, it is stated, being appointed as polling officers. This is bad enough, at any time, but in view of the absence of secrecy this is an outrageous device. The new circular of the U.P. Government is the culmination point of this set and deliberate policy. It is an astonishing document and the most revealing part is its issue and publication at this juncture on the very eve of election when the election campaign is practically over and voting is going to take place soon.

The object of it at this stage can have little to do with the election campaign. It must be to affect the voting itself. A tremendous and unparalleled response from the public to the Congress message and patent failure of all the devices of its opponents have apparently unnerved the government completely. After visiting every district in U.P. and going deep into rural areas everywhere, I can say definitely and with no doubts or reservations that given fair voting conditions, hundred per cent success in U.P. is certain. Knowledge of this has upset the government and its hangers-on, and hence this circular at this stage. It is evident that the circular aims at widespread action. It says so and, on the very eve of election, can only mean that a determined attempt is being made to interfere with the normal course of elections. Already one sees what is being done.

Five of our principal workers in Dhampur, district Bijnor, have been arrested and other arrests are being threatened. In Cawnpore, there were lathi charges on our election meetings. This state of affairs indicates the extent to which the government has deteriorated. Again, the ministers must share the responsibility for this. The very measure of this deterioration and lapse from all decent standards of public life is the measure of the Congress strength and hold on the masses, which the government supporters fear so much. Whatever happens during the next few days, I trust that Congressmen and the public generally will keep cool and proceed with our programme peacefully and determinedly and on the election day overwhelm our opponents by our organized voting strength, representing the Indian masses and their will to freedom.

People in Bihar have done splendidly.[4] Let us of the U.P. take up this friendly challenge of our sister province and do better, and so, comrades in U.P., on with our work to the triumph of the Congress.

4. In Bihar, the Congress had won 98 out of 152 seats in the assembly.

17. Message to the Voters of U.P.[1]

I have completed my tour of the districts of the United Provinces, and now I proceed to Maharashtra and Karnataka. I have visited nearly all the 48 districts of my province during the past weeks and months and I return full of joy and confidence at the wonderful enthusiasm of our people.

The name of the Congress is a magic both in the town and village. It has become the shelter and hope for our millions. All the embattled legions of our rulers and of vested interests cannot keep those millions down any longer. They are weary of the long night. They smell the breath of the dawn and so under the sheltering and inspiring banner of the Congress, we march forward to triumph.

For the present, we have to face the elections. Tomorrow and the day after the voters will march to the polling booths. Let every voter, man or woman, do his or her duty to the country and vote for the Congress. Thus we shall write in millions of hands our flaming resolve to be free.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 6 February 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 7 February 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), p. 100.

18. The Significance of the Election Campaign[1]

Everywhere the Congress election issue looms large before the eyes of the people and it is, therefore, necessary to understand the significance of this campaign. Why has the Congress taken up this activity with so much enthusiasm and energy? Not because India is going to win Swaraj through these assemblies and councils. That could never happen.

1. Speech at Bombay, 9 February 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 10 February 1937.

It is for the purpose of strengthening the national movement and for the sake of the only vital question that awaits a solution at the hands of the people. The poverty of the people and their ever-increasing misery are the questions which await a definite solution that cannot be put off.

There can be only two forces in the country, one representing the Indian National Congress, and the other, the government.

So long as you do not realise the important principles involved in the Congress programme of capturing the legislatures, you will not be able to understand the real meaning and significance of these elections. These elections are not intended to send inside the legislatures people who would adorn ministerial *gaddis*. I therefore want you all to take a broom and sweep the government's yes-men off the councils.

The issue before us is very clear. If once the importance of elections is realised everyone would automatically consider it his duty to support the Congress without hesitation. It is encouraging to hear of the successes of the Congress in Bihar and other provinces. The effect of such good news is heartening and other provinces should take the lead.

The Congress has once again proved that it enjoys the loyalty of the peasants as it has always supported the cause of the peasants. All the kisan sanghs in the country are welcome to join the Congress for they must not forget that India is predominantly a land of the peasants.

In the fight for national independence all must join, for one section of the people alone cannot carry it on. The Congress therefore must win the elections. Do not pay any heed to the so-called independents. Those who are not Congress candidates must not be supported. The growth of the Congress is the main thing. It must gain strength. Round it hinges our future. It is an army which needs men of courage. It must have discipline. This is no time to criticise the Congress. It is the real protector of all Indian interests. Whoever works against it in the name of labour is doing a disservice to the working class. On account of some petty quarrels, the trade union leaders are opposing the Congress.[2] They have thought it fit to put up a candidate in the labour constituency of the city in opposition to the Congress candidate. Though the Congress attempted to accommodate the Trade Union Congress, nothing has come of it. The major issue facing us should not be forgotten.

2. K.N. Joglekar, S.A. Dange and other trade union leaders had opposed the Congress candidate.

The present attitude of the Trade Union Congress will harm not only the cause of the workers but the national movement itself. Is it the desire of the Trade Union Congress to keep away the workers from playing their legitimate part in the fight for freedom? It is deplorable that the Trade Union Congress should go to the length of joining hands with the rivals of the Congress candidate. Let them remember that today there is no issue before the country except the question of independence. And if they remember this, they should alter their attitude towards the Congress. It is wrong to suppose that the Congress is against the working class movement. The very purpose for which we have joined this struggle is to get bread to the starving, clothes to the ill-clad, shelter to the homeless, work for the unemployed and a better standard of living for all. I, as an ex-president of the Trade Union Congress,[3] have the welfare of the workers at heart. I hope the Trade Union Congress will not do anything to cause disruption among the nationalist forces in the country but will help to consolidate them and strengthen the fight for freedom.

It is a pity that much time and energy are being wasted on petty squabbles. The Congress alone has taken upon its shoulders the heavy responsibility of expressing the will of the nation. No other party in the country has the courage to do it or would ever dare do it.

At this critical juncture, it is the duty of every Indian to stand by the Congress brushing aside all other considerations.

The communalists among the Hindus and the Muslims are quarrelling over the loaves and fishes of office. But the people at large are gradually able to see what lies behind the cloak of communalism and are rallying round the banner of the Congress.

In certain sections of the press a report of a secret pact between the Congress and Mr. Jinnah regarding the acceptance of office by the Congress has appeared. It is a false and malicious report. It would be a grievous mistake if the Congress accepts office, after the nation has spoken its mind in the manner it is doing in province after province. We should remember the issue on which we have approached the electors and they are giving their verdict. Then, how on earth can I sign a pact with Mr. Jinnah whom I have seen only once during the last five years and that too only for five minutes at a students meeting in Allahabad?

3. Jawaharlal was president of the All India Trade Union Congress in 1929-30.

I regret that Mr. Jinnah should call the Congress Muslims "adventurers".[4] I most emphatically protest against such a description. The Congress Muslims in the North West Frontier Province and other provinces cannot be called so and their suffering and sacrifice have evoked admiration from the entire country. After all, what does Mr. Jinnah know of the national movement when he has not cared to take part in it even once?

There are Muslims in the Congress who can provide inspiration to a thousand Jinnahs. Let not Mr. Jinnah pour ridicule on the Muslims in the Congress. What does he know of their steadfastness, their patriotism, their struggle, their heroism and their sacrifices? Mr. Jinnah does not understand our demand for independence that has shaken this mighty government. I challenge Mr. Jinnah to show whether there is any other party or organisation in India than the Congress which has given such a consistent fight to the government with a view to alleviating the lot of the poor, hungry and unemployed. Not only Britain but the entire world cannot resist India's demand if but a quarter of India resolves to assert the claim for independence.

Mr. Jinnah speaks in sarcastic terms about independence.[5] He does not realise that the course of events in the world and the very spirit of the times are going to work for India's freedom. I am sorry to see the way Mr. Jinnah's mind works. He does not understand the significance and the real spirit of national independence. Mr. Jinnah may prefer "responsible government",[6] but, I, for one, would not agree to join such a party in preference to the Congress which stands for national independence. As for the achievements of Mr. Jinnah's party, I shall not say a word.

I am sorry that the Congress did not set up more Muslim candidates. In the United Provinces, I found a large number of Muslim voters asking me in whose favour they should exercise their franchise in the absence of Congress candidates. The voters of the U.P., whether they were Hindus or Muslims, were all anxious to vote for the Congress.

4. Jinnah in his reply of 19 January 1937 to Jawaharlal's statement of 10 January 1937 had said: "The League does not believe in assuming a non-communal label, with a few adventurers or credulous persons belonging to other communities thrown in and who have no backing of their people."
5. In his statement of 19 January Jinnah had said: "Does it lie in his (Jawaharlal's) mouth to parade so much that he stands for complete independence of India, which when it suits him becomes the substance of independence?"
6. Jinnah in the same statement had also said: "I stand for a free democratic responsible government for the people of India."

In the end, I would appeal to you all to vote for the Congress candidates.

19. Message to the Nation[1]

My message to the country is: "Vote for the Congress and pack up your knapsack for the march to Swaraj".

1. Bombay, 10 February 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 11 February 1937.

20. Appeal to Kerala[1]

I am sorry that I cannot give any time to your beautiful province now. I hope that some time later on, I may be able to come again. You know that at the present moment, I am touring about more or less in connection with the elections that are going on, asking the people to vote for those candidates that the Congress has set up. I trust that you will also vote for the Congress candidates and thus ensure Congress success in this election. This is not a matter of individuals getting in or individuals getting out; it is a matter of an organised army going in under the banner of the Congress. Therefore, it is improper for individuals who stand on their own to call themselves Congressmen or others; because, if they do so and oppose the official Congress candidates, they do an injury to the Congress cause and the Congress name. I hope, therefore, that here in this province of Kerala, the Congress will triumph as it has triumphed elsewhere. I hope that the Congress candidates will win here in the same overwhelming way in which they are winning today in the United Provinces.

1. Speech at Cannanore, 10 February 1937. *The Hindu*, 11 February 1937.

21. On the Electoral Success in U.P.[1]

Comrades of the United Provinces! I send you my greetings from far Karnataka. I join in your triumph.[2] We have won overwhelmingly in the elections as we knew we would.[3] But who has won? Not our candidates in their individual capacities; not even we workers and soldiers of the Congress who have toiled and laboured for this success; it is the great organisation which has nurtured us and lighted the spark of hope in the hearts of our suffering millions; even more it is those masses themselves who have triumphed despite all the pressure and threats and violence and inducements that were offered to them.

From all accounts it was a fine and inspiring sight to see orderly processions of our village folk marching long distances with our national flag to the polling booths and voting *en bloc* for the Congress candidates. They listened to our call, heard the message of the Congress and responded to it in a magnificent measure. The United Provinces, as other parts of India, stands thus for the complete rejection of the new constitution and for a fight to put an end to it and build a fresh one on the basis of a constituent assembly. But above all the masses have voted for the Congress because they felt that the Congress stood for their interests, worked for them and was their representative.

Let us remember this fact always and keep true to our mass moorings. Only that will bring us ultimate success and redeem our pledge to our people. Anything else will be a betrayal of our cause and of the hopes that have been roused in our millions.

The lesson of the election for us in the U.P., in Bihar and elsewhere is that wherever we have gone straight to the masses and spoken the clear and simple language that they understand they have gladly and

1. Message given at Hubli, 13 February 1937. *The Hindu*, 14 February 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 100-102.
2. In U.P., the Congress had won 134 out of 228 seats in the legislative assembly.
3. Over 54% of the total electorate went to the polls and out of 1,585 seats in the provincial assemblies, the Congress won 711. In five provinces, Madras, the Central Provinces, the United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa, it obtained absolute majorities. The Congress was the single biggest party in four provinces: Bombay, Bengal, Assam and N.W.F.P. In the assemblies of Sind and the Punjab the Congress was in a comparatively smaller minority.

whole-heartedly thrown their weight in our favour. Where we have weakened and compromised, our success has been more partial. Our best and strongest candidates have been the Congress workers with no personal influence or resources and so let us be humble before this victory and realise that the credit goes to the masses.

The people of the U.P. and Bihar and other parts of India have given notice to British imperialism in India to quit. I am confident that Bombay and Gujarat and Maharashtra and Karnataka will follow suit and deliver the same emphatic notice.[4]

The days of imperialism are numbered. The people have spoken and pronounced its doom. It is for us to follow this up and link ourselves still further with the masses. The elections will be over soon; but the great work we are pledged to still remains. To that we have now to address ourselves. With full confidence we march to this final triumph.

4. In Bombay the Congress won 86 out of 175 seats in the lower house.

22. Message to South and West India[1]

I go back to the north at the end of my long journeying. I go back to prepare the Congress pilgrimage to Swaraj of which this has been but a step.

I brought the message of the Congress to the south and the west. But you have heard now that message, not only through my feeble voice, but from the numberless millions of the north who have rallied to the Congress call and their thundering cry for freedom reverberates through the broad plains and valleys of Hindustan.

What echo does that find in your hearts? Does not your blood quicken in your veins at the heartening cry of the masses?

1. Belapur, 16 February 1937. *The Hindu*, 16 February 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 102-103.

India awaits your own brave response and knows full well what it will be.

Away with reaction and the enemies of freedom. Line up! Line up! And let us all march together to Swaraj.

Who dares to ignore this call?

23. To Agatha Harrison[1]

Allahabad
February 22, 1937

Dear Agatha,

You will forgive me, I hope, for not having written to you before your departure. I sent you a telegram on the 16th January to Bombay. But, as you did not sail on that day, I suppose it never reached you. Later I met Carl Heath during a hurried visit to Allahabad and he told me that you had not gone. Your letter came subsequently.

It has almost been physically impossible for me to do any writing as I have been continuously on the move. I suppose I have created some records in the way of political tours during these last few months. The surprising thing is that I have survived them in a fairly good condition.

The elections are over resulting, as you know, in great Congress victories. And this in spite of the pressure and devices of the government, ministers, big landholders and the like. But for these we would have had an even bigger victory. And now to the next job. Soon I am going to Wardha for a Working Committee meeting and next we have the A.I.C.C. meeting and convention[2] in Delhi.

Indira will be coming here, I hope, early in April, and perhaps I may be able to steal a short holiday with her. I have suggested to her to come by air. She objects to travelling by Mussolini's ocean liners, nor

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. As decided at the Faizpur Congress, a convention of A.I.C.C. members and the Congress legislators elected to the central and provincial legislatures was held in Delhi on 19-20 March 1937. This followed the A.I.C.C. meeting held on 17-18 March 1937. For Jawaharlal's address at the convention, see *post*, section 2, item 12.

is she enamoured of the P. & O. She suggested going by the French boat to Colombo but this was too lengthy and complicated a journey.

My mother's health has been bad. She had a mild attack of paralysis a month ago and since then she has been bed-ridden. I want, therefore, Indira to come here as early as possible and so I have suggested her travelling by air in spite of the considerable expense.

I should very much like to go to Europe next autumn but it seems difficult.

With all good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

24. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
February 22, 1937

My dear Krishna,

I have now returned from my tours which covered a great part of this enormous country. During these past few months I have travelled tens of thousands of miles and addressed thousands of meetings. All this has been a wonderful experience for me. The surprising thing is that I have got through it in fairly good condition. The election results have been good. I was quite convinced that they could not be otherwise. The only doubtful factor was what might be the effect of pressure, threats and trickery on the part of the government, ministers, big landholders and the like. On the whole we survived all these because of the tremendous mass enthusiasm that was created.

I am writing today to Stafford Cripps and I enclose a copy of my letter to him as this might interest you.[2]

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See the succeeding item.

We have now to face this ministry business which the A.I.C.C. will have to decide within a month and later the convention. I gather from your letter that you have written to me about the convention. I have not received this yet. I should like to have your ideas as to what should be done at the convention.[3]

You have written to me about the difficulties that arise occasionally regarding the Congress representation at functions in England. I do not think it is desirable for any formal action to be taken just yet. I do not like your idea of the Congress President appointing a foreign deputy. I think the present informal arrangement might continue. We shall see about it later.

Very vaguely I am thinking of going to Europe next autumn with Indira but I doubt if I shall be able to do so as both the time and the money will be lacking. Yet I do think that a visit from me will serve a useful purpose. Such a visit is only possible by air to save time and that is an expensive business.

Indira is likely to come here early in April. My mother's health is causing me anxiety and I want Indira to be here as soon as she can. For this reason I have suggested to her to come by air, K.L.M., as soon as her examination is over.

Neither our office nor I have heard at all from the *R.U.P.*[4] You will remember that I wrote to them a long letter in December before the Congress, a copy of which I sent you.[5] They have not even acknowledged this so far as I know. This is surprising. Will you find out from them if they have received the letter and what they propose to do about it?

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. In his letter of 23 January 1937 Krishna Menon said that the convention's main task should be to provide for the consolidation and discipline in the party and press for a constituent assembly for framing the constitution of India.
4. *Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix* (World Peace Congress).
5. This letter is not available.

25. To Sir Stafford Cripps[1]

Allahabad
22 February, 1937

My dear Cripps,

I have long wished to write to you to congratulate you on the joint front of left-wing elements in Britain that you have succeeded in bringing about.[2] This was pleasing news and I felt that it was laying the foundation of bigger things to come. I could not write however because I was continuously moving about, often in remote parts of the country, addressing enormous audiences everywhere, chiefly in connection with our elections.

To give you some idea of the amount of travelling I have done during the last eight or nine months, and specially during the last three months, I might mention that I have probably covered over fifty thousand miles by railway train, motor car and aeroplane. I have addressed literally thousands of meetings and I imagine that in this way I have come into direct contact with ten million people. Apart from these huge audiences I have met vast numbers of others on the roadsides as I motored through rural areas. The enthusiasm everywhere was astounding.

You must have heard of the Congress victory at elections here. That victory is big enough but to grasp the real significance of it you must remember what we were contending against. We had the government apparatus and all the other vested interests against us and all means, fair and otherwise, were employed to defeat us. But the enthusiasm for the Congress was so tremendous that it swept everything before it. Our majorities have been enormous.

Remarkable as this election victory has been, the really significant feature of the election campaign has been the shaking up of the masses. We carried our message not only to the thirty million and odd voters but to the hundreds of thousands of non-voters also. The whole campaign and the election itself have been a revelation of the widespread anti-imperialist spirit prevailing throughout the country. It has also made clearer the class cleavages among the people. The big landlord class and

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. A united front of the Socialist League headed by Cripps, the Independent Labour Party and the communists was formed in Britain to oppose the Conservative government.

other vested interests were ranged against us. They were swept away in the Congress flood[3], their most determined opponents being their own tenants.

This class cleavage is very apparent in the comparison between the elections for the provincial assemblies (lower houses) and the provincial councils (upper houses). In the former the franchise was low and the electorates were large, the average constituency having as many as forty to sixty thousand voters. In the latter the franchise was a high property one and the electorate was very small, usually some hundreds. In the assembly elections we carried all before us and our majorities were prodigious, varying, as a rule, between twenty thousand and fifty thousand. In the council elections we fared badly though even here we won a few seats.[4] The election made it perfectly clear that the wider the mass appeal, the greater was our success. With the present electorate of about ten per cent of the population (for the lower house) we have gained ninety per cent of the seats in the general constituencies. We could have won 100% of these seats but for the tremendous pressure of vested interests, and sometimes the questionable tactics employed against us. If this is any indication of the Congress strength, as it undoubtedly is, then our position is even stronger so far as 90% of non-voters are concerned. Only a microscopic handful at the top, fearful of social changes, might be said to be against us and to cling to the present dispensation, though even they are critical of it.

This applies to the general constituencies. It does not apply so far to the Muslim special electorate and we have not succeeded in regard to Muslim candidates.[5] Partly this is due to our own timidity as we ran few Muslim candidates. The burden of running over a thousand candidates was great and we did not wish to add to it. If we had run more Muslim candidates, I think we would have had a fair measure of success, especially in the rural areas.

But it is true that the Muslim masses are more apathetic. They have been too long doped with communal cries. They have no leaders of

3. Of the 564 candidates for the 228 seats in the United Provinces, 152 were from the National Agricultural Party as against 168 Congressmen and 36 Muslim Leaguers. The National Agricultural Party won 21 seats, the Congress 134 and the Muslim League 27.
4. Of the 229 seats in the six provinces, the Congress had won 64 out of the 92 seats contested by it.
5. The total number of Muslim seats in the assemblies of the 11 provinces was 482. The Congress contested 58 seats and won 26. In N.W.F.P. the Congress had won 15 out of 29 seats.

their own and they are a little hesitant in casting their lot completely with the others. Still it is obvious that even these Muslim masses are getting out of the rut of communalism and are thinking along economic lines. Equally significant is the change that is coming over the younger generation of Muslims. These young people are definitely cutting themselves away from the old communal ways of thought. On the whole, I think that the communal position is definitely brighter. The Hindu communalists have been largely swept away by the Congress and they count for little.[6] The Muslim communal leaders still function but their position weakens for they have no reply to the questions about poverty and hunger and unemployment and independence that their own people put to them. They can think only in terms of jobs for the upper classes.

As a whole, India is wide-awake and expectant. It talks and thinks in terms of the poverty of the masses and how to relieve it, and inevitably it is being driven to a radical solution of our social problems. Politically the masses are wholly anti-imperialist, so also the middle classes, except the top fringe. My extensive touring has been a revelation to me of the suppressed energy of the people and of their passionate desire to be rid of their burdens. The Congress is supreme today so far as the masses and the lower middle classes are concerned. Even the Muslim masses look up to it for relief. It has hardly ever been in such a strong position.

The future is a little uncertain. Within a month the All India Congress Committee will meet to consider the situation and lay down our future plan of action. This will be followed immediately by a convention of all Congress members who have been elected to the legislatures. This convention is of course not the constituent assembly which we have demanded. It is meant to discipline our members and to keep before them the three principal items of our programme: fight the Government of India Act, hinder the federation from coming or functioning, and work for the constituent assembly. This convention will consist of over a thousand members.

When I say that the future is uncertain I refer to our immediate plan of action. So far as our general policy is concerned there is no uncertainty or indecision about it.

6. The Hindu Mahasabha had won only two seats in the Bengal Assembly and one in the Bengal Council. It had won one seat in the Central Provinces Assembly and four seats in the Sind Assembly. One seat was won by the Congress Nationalist Party in the Punjab Assembly and one seat in the Bombay Assembly.

So much about India but do not imagine that I am engrossed with our own problems to the exclusion of those of the outside world. For me this Indian problem can only be looked at in relation to the world situation and I try to follow events and developments in Europe and elsewhere. But I have written a long enough letter and I shall not inflict any more of my thoughts on you.

I am sorry I could not send Mellor[7] an article for the *Tribune*. But it was not possible for me to write anything during my tours. Even now I have to face a good deal of arrears of work. If you think it worthwhile you can give extracts from this letter in the *Tribune*.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. William Mellor (1888-1942); editor of the *Tribune*, 1937-38, the newspaper founded by Stafford Cripps and Aneurin Bevan.

26. To Govind D. Madgavkar[1]

Allahabad
24.2.37

Dear Sir Govind Madgavkar,[2]

Your questions are interesting.[3] It is a little difficult to deal with them briefly as my approach to such matters is different. I do not think in terms of a Hindu group or a Muslim group in politics or economics. Therefore I do not quite understand what Hindu unity means or Muslim unity except perhaps in a cultural sense. A vital problem in our provinces is the land problem. The question of Hindu or Muslim unity here does not arise. The big taluqdars, be they Hindus or Muslims, are on one side, their tenants on the other. The terms socialism, democracy, fascism etc., represent certain ideologies and certain forms of political and social structure. Without our trying to understand political

1. Maharashtra Government (D.I.G., C.I.D.) records, File No. 3590/H/II.
2. A retired judge of the Bombay High Court.
3. He had asked among other questions whether Swaraj was possible without Hindu-Muslim unity.

and social problems we fight in the dark not even knowing our objectives. Strength comes from understanding and clarity of thought. Without that, action is blind.

As regards your question No. 6 I am entirely with you in your answer.[4]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. He had doubted whether any progress was possible, "as long as our life and our actions are dictated, not by the practical and the scientific spirit of the probable results of our actions in the present and the future, but rather by pronouncements made in the past however sacrosanct."

27. On the Victimisation of Students[1]

On account of my touring about continuously for many months I have been unable to keep pace with happenings and have often missed important news. It is only now that these reach me and sometimes surprise me. I find that the student world in this province is deeply stirred at some of these events which have affected them intimately. There have been friction and trouble and strikes in many places, notably Shahjahanpur, Fyzabad and Cawnpore. Orders under sec. 144 and other sections of the Criminal Procedure Code were issued in some places prohibiting students from going near the polling booths on the election day. In Fyzabad I understand that 18 students were arrested and susbsequently released on bail. Students were also fined in Fyzabad for attending a meeting addressed by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. But the most shocking instance comes from Shahjahanpur where, I am informed, a student of the mission school was publicly caned apparently for attending a meeting addressed by me. This student subsequently, it is stated, committed suicide. A student's suicide is alleged to have occurred in Lucknow also recently.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 24 February 1937. *The Leader*, 26 February 1937.

I am shocked at the barbarity of a public caning of a boy by a person whose business is to teach and train him. And for what crime! Canings and suicides—are our schools reduced to this? This is a serious matter and however much we might be engaged in big issues we cannot permit these barbarities to pass unnoticed. It is not only the individual concerned, or the particular school, but the whole educational machinery and policy of the province that is on its trial and the very least that must be done is an impartial public enquiry.

This victimisation and punishment of students raises an important question of principle. Are our students to be prevented from taking part in the ordinary normal public activities because an authoritarian system of education so decrees? Everywhere senior students are encouraged to do so in order to fit them for the problems of life. Many such students are themselves voters and as such bound as a matter of civic duty to take part in elections. Are our students made of different stuff than others? Does our educational system aim at producing robots and helpless human beings who can only obey orders? We have had enough of this. It is time to change.

For the moment the caning of a tender Indian boy fills my mind. The shame and humiliation of it led that sensitive boy to suicide. The horror and tragedy of it! We must have an enquiry. We owe it to him who has died; we owe it still more to others like him who face similar problems and similar humiliation.

28. To N.G. Ranga[1]

Allahabad
5-3-1937

My dear Ranga,

I have your long letter of February 26th.[2] So far I know nothing about this matter except scraps that I saw in the press during my election

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-3(i)/1937, pp. 371-372, N.M.M.L.
2. Ranga had said that the Andhra Provincial Ryots Association, fearing that the peasants' interests might not be safeguarded by the candidates approved by the Congress, had issued a separate pledge in January 1937 to be taken by Congress candidates.

tour. I think that there must have been a great deal of misunderstanding on the subject and I am very sorry to see that a controversy has started about peasants' rights. As a member of a peasant association you have every right to press forward demands on behalf of the peasantry just as a trade unionist can press forward demands on behalf of the workers which go a little beyond the Congress demands. Of course, such demands should not be in conflict with the Congress demands. I think however that it was not a very wise move on your part to issue a kind of a pledge and ask candidates to take it. You know that this could also have been done by trade union leaders. But they refrained from doing so and rightly. The question of taking pledges other than the Congress pledge by a Congress candidate produces confusion and you yourself would have been put in a difficulty if some had taken this pledge and some had not. The right way was to appeal to candidates and others to keep in view peasants' rights and to work for them in so far as they could, subject of course to the Congress policy and Congress discipline. This would have served your purpose and would have been perfectly correct procedure. Your issuing another pledge must have given rise to a misunderstanding in the minds of many people and especially of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.[3] I have not myself discussed this matter with Sardar Patel or seen all the papers, but I am quite sure that much of this controversy would not have arisen except for gross misunderstanding on the part of several people. I do not think that any question of disciplinary action arises. I am glad that you do not insist on your pledge. Unfortunately, this question of peasants' rights and workers' rights raises suspicion in some people's minds and small things appear big to them. We have to keep this matter in view while proceeding with our work among the peasantry and try to win over to our side those who would undoubtedly be with us but for suspicion.

We are playing with great forces and we have to remember this fact; they are greater than our individual selves and even our organisations. Observe the great mass upheaval in Bihar and the U.P. during these elections. There were peasant organisations in some parts of the provinces but essentially the upheaval was a much vaster thing than any small organisation could have brought about. The problem before us is to understand these great forces and harness them.

3. Ranga regretted that Vallabhbhai Patel had called for disciplinary action to be taken against him without prior request for withdrawal of the pledge.

I do not think it will serve any useful purpose for us to carry on this controversy about your having issued a pledge in Andhra.[4] The matter has ended. We have other work to do now. Personally you know that I was much impressed by the ryots' organisations in Andhra. I think they have a great future before them but it would be unfortunate and injurious to all concerned if the impression got abroad that the peasants' organisation was in conflict with the Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. He had the pledge withdrawn in the "general interests of Congress".

29. To Mohan Chandra Mohanta[1]

Allahabad
March 9, 1937

Dear Comrade,[2]
Your letter. I agree with you that communal cries should not be encouraged. But *Bande Mataram* has too long been associated with our national movement for it to have any communal significance. Slogans cannot be imposed from above. They have to grow.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5 (KW)(i)/1937, p. 508, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary, Jorhat District Congress Committee; had written that *Bande Mataram* was no longer a national slogan as its adoption by the Hindu Mahasabha had turned it into a communal slogan.

30. The Congress and the Muslims[1]

You want me to devise means to draw in more Muslims into the struggle. I can do so only after having talks with the Muslims. Meanwhile you may ask me any question on the points on which you want satisfaction. You know how the leaders of every community, for their own benefit and for other reasons, have been creating misunderstandings in connection with the last elections to the legislatures. Poverty, hunger, disease and destitution afflict Hindus and Muslims alike. I wonder why the Congress, which is fighting for the cause of the country irrespective of any caste or creed, should be held responsible for the present state of affairs. The best course for Hindu-Muslim *rapprochement*, in my opinion, is to work among the Muslim masses whose vital problems are identical with those of others.

It is not true that the Muslims have deserted the Congress. The best among them are in the Congress. In the Frontier, the Pathans form the strength of the Congress. The present strained relations between the Hindus and the Muslims are not due to religious or other reasons but due to the activities of certain interested parties. When Mr. Jinnah dubbed the Congress Muslims as self-seekers, I replied that the Congress Muslims have done better work than Mr. Jinnah. I have never said that the Congress belongs to one community. The Congress is a fighting force in the country representing Hindus and Muslims and all other communities alike.

1. Talk to Muslims at Sarai Aghamir, Lucknow, in reply to a welcome address, 11 March 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 12 March 1937.

31. On the Prohibitory Orders in Calcutta[1]

I have just seen that the police commissioner of Calcutta has issued prohibitory orders against meetings, processions and organising hartals in the Calcutta area.[2] He says that he has done this because the secretary of the Congress Socialist Party has issued a militant appeal for the hartal.

What this particular appeal is I do not know but the police commissioner should know that the hartal for 1 April has been organised under the directions of the Indian National Congress and is a perfectly peaceful and even legal way of protesting against the new constitution. His interference is significant in showing that this constitution in no way affects the police raj under which we live, especially in Bengal. The order continues by whatever name we call it and it is this old order that we combat and seek to end. The reaction of the people to the new constitution becomes still more obvious, when the heavy hand of the police comes down to prevent us from giving peaceful and constitutional expression to it.

I hope that the people of Calcutta will express their resentment of this flagrant denial of civil liberties and the first of April will witness their peaceful but determined resolve to end this constitution and march in line with the Congress to our goal of freedom.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 27 March 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 29 March 1937.
2. They had been prohibited from 29 March to 4 April 1937.

32. To Ramananda Teertha[1]

Allahabad
9-4-1937

Dear Teertha,[2]
You are mistaken if you think that I do not refer to the suppression of the Harijans by caste Hindus. I have written about it on many occasions and I am quite convinced that every kind of social suppression and barrier must go in a free India. Perhaps you know that in north India this question is not very acute. During my tours in the south I have laid considerable stress on it.

So far as I am concerned, all these problems appear to me as one big whole—the ending of all social, political and economic exploitation of man by man, or class by class, or nation by nation. That leads me to socialism. No socialist can tolerate untouchability and the like.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. Maharashtra Government (D.I.G., C.I.D.) records, File No. 3590/H/II.
2. (1903-1972); a leading Congressman of Hyderabad; had organised the Hyderabad State Congress in 1938; suffered imprisonment several times for leading the struggle against the Nizam's government.

33. The Election Tour[1]

I have read Mahmud-uz-Zafar's[2] narrative of part of my election tour last year with interest. This was natural for I was the principal actor in this performance and the story brought back to me many an incident, and a succession of pictures passed through my mind. I was also

1. Foreword written at Allahabad, 14 April 1938. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. S. Mahmud-uz-Zafar Khan worked as a secretary to Jawaharlal during the period of the election campaign in 1937; he later joined the Communist Party.

interested in the reactions produced in the mind of a person for whom all this was new—these great crowds in towns and villages, this surging enthusiasm, those millions of eyes out of which India looked at us, sad eyes but with a glimmer of hope in them. For Mahmud-uz-Zafar was almost new to Indian politics, having spent many years abroad, and looked at this changing scene with a fresh mind. I had grown used for many years to Indian crowds, my mind was jaded, and almost I took everything for granted. This narrative itself deals with only a small part of the tours I have undertaken.

Reading this story, I felt sometimes that the author had misunderstood the significance of something or given wrong emphasis to something else. I did not agree with some of his impressions and criticisms. He was new to the Congress and not fully cognizant of its background and past record. But it does not matter much whether we agree or disagree. The impact of a fresh and intelligent mind on the problems that we have to face is always interesting and helpful. I wish, however, that I had not figured so largely in this narrative. I was just a pilgrim going from place to place, and the real people who counted and will count in the future were the masses of India.

34. A Note on the Tour[1]

were covered—about 26,000 miles by railway, 22,500 by road (chiefly by car) and 1,600 by air. The means of transport varied greatly. They included aeroplanes, railway (usually third class travelling, sometimes second class, and on two occasions special trains for short distances); motor cars (from a Rolls Royce to a fifteen year old Ford); motor lorry; horse carriage, tonga, *ekka*, bullock cart, bicycle, elephant, camel, horse, steamer, paddle-boat, canoe, and on foot.

The Congress provinces visited were: Bombay, Punjab, Sind, Delhi, United Provinces, Andhra, Tamil Nad, Nagpur, Mahakoshal and Maharashtra. Calcutta was also visited, but not other parts of Bengal. Kerala (Malabar) was just touched at Cannanore. This leaves only Gujarat, N.W.F. Province, Assam and parts of central India and Rajputana which were not visited.

Most of the touring was done in rural areas and apart from the meetings which had been arranged, there were innumerable impromptu gatherings by the roadside. During a day as many as a dozen meetings might be held, some of them having audiences of thirty thousand or more. Some mammoth gatherings approached a hundred thousand. A meeting of five thousand was considered a small affair. The daily total of persons attending was frequently 100,000, sometimes it was much greater. On a rough and conservative estimate, it can be said that ten million persons actually attended the meetings I addressed, and probably several million more were brought into some kind of touch with me during my journeying by road. These vast audiences usually had a large proportion of women.

These figures do not include the attendance at the Faizpur Congress, nor do they include the tours (such as those to Burma and Malaya) subsequent to February 1937.

These intensive tours called for a great deal of staff-work and efficient organisation. Generally speaking the organisation was excellent but too much was attempted to be done in a brief day of twenty four hours. Day after day the programme began at dawn and went on till very late at night—eighteen hours or more. Once on February 13th-14th it meant continuous movement and addressing of meetings for the whole day and night—twenty four hours—the next day's programme beginning soon after.

2

OFFICE ACCEPTANCE

1. Circular to P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
February 9, 1937

Dear Comrade,

As you are aware the A.I.C.C. will meet in the third week of March to consider the question of office acceptance. Before the A.I.C.C. meets the P.C.Cs have to send their recommendations in accordance with the Congress resolution and the P.C.Cs are supposed to consult their district and local committees. The object is to have a large body of opinion of the rank and file of the Congress to enable the A.I.C.C. to decide the question. As the time at our disposal is short early steps should be taken to consult provincial and local committees. I would therefore request you to take steps in this matter as soon as you are free from the elections and to communicate to our office the recommendations of your P.C.C. and local committees.

These recommendations should obviously bear in mind and should fit in with the general Congress policy governing the new Act, as embodied in the Congress resolutions and the Congress election manifesto. Brief replies, positive or negative, will not be very helpful. Therefore a reasoned recommendation should be sent outlining the line of action to be taken up by the Congress members of the legislatures to further our policy of rejection of the Act as a whole and to impede the further development of the federal scheme. This policy has to be an all-India one. It should deal with the specific instances of the Congress having an absolute majority in a provincial assembly, a doubtful majority on a roughly fifty-fifty basis, and a minority. If all these considerations are borne in mind and discussed, the recommendations will help both the A.I.C.C. and the public generally in coming to right conclusions. It should always be remembered that the question is one of larger policy and not merely one of local significance.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-28/1937, p. 524, N.M.M.L.

2. The Need for Sanctions[1]

There are three views on the question of office acceptance. These are: first, we should go to the legislatures to wreck the constitution and therefore we should not accept office; second, we should accept office and run the constitution; third, we should accept office with a view to wrecking the constitution. I would however like to hear the views of the members who are attending the meeting.

To me this constitution appears to be worthless. It does not give us any real powers or rights. Our hands and feet will remain tied. We shall not be able to do anything in particular while in office.

The main question before us is how to wreck the constitution. Our main programme lies outside the legislatures. That programme is to create sanctions. Without creating sanctions we cannot do anything. The country's increasing sanction should be reflected inside the legislatures. The legislatures should not be divorced from the reality outside.

1. Speech at the meeting of the Allahabad District Congress Committee, 19 February 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 February 1937.

3. The Importance of Mass Contacts[1]

Allahabad
February 19, 1937

Dear Comrade,

Now that the elections are over we are in a position to review the situation and plan our future work. The larger policy governing our work in the legislatures and outside has already been laid down by the Congress

1. Circular to the provincial Congress committees. A.I.C.C. File No. P-1/1936, p. 9, N.M.M.L.

—the policy of fighting the new Act and the federation, and working for the constituent assembly. How best to do this, in so far as the legislatures are concerned, will be determined by the A.I.C.C. next month. But the large body of Congress workers should not merely wait for developments. They have immediate and important work ahead of them and this has to be undertaken whatever the ultimate decision of the A.I.C.C. might be.

The elections have taught us afresh the old lesson—that our strength comes from the masses and from mass organisation and the facing of problems affecting the masses. Everywhere, where we went to the masses direct, we had splendid response from them. Our very few reverses were largely due to our workers not looking to the masses in that area but relying on the support of small groups and individuals. But the days of small groups controlling elections are past.

Secondly, wherever Congress work had been done in the past regularly and efficiently and the Congress organisation had been kept functioning, our success was overwhelming. It was not the election campaign so much as the previous work and contacts with the masses that helped us.

Thirdly, our election campaign itself was something much more than getting some Congressmen elected to the legislatures. It was a wide-flung appeal to India's millions to line up with the Congress for Indian independence and the facing and ending of the appalling poverty and misery of the Indian people. It was to this cry and appeal that these millions responded in such magnificent measure.

Our future work must therefore keep all this in view. We must remember always that despite all our success in the elections our most important work lies with the masses. Work in the legislatures, in order to have any effectiveness, must be kept in line with mass work and mass contacts. The newly elected Congress members of the legislatures have, inevitably, to carry through their tasks in these legislatures, but they have a larger field of action and that is their constituency. They represent not only their voters, who form ten per cent of the population, but also the ninety per cent others in that area. They must therefore keep intimate touch with these masses of our countrymen and coordinate their activity in the legislatures with their work outside. Both have the same objective—Indian independence and the lessening of the burdens of our people.

Mass work cannot be done with success individually. It requires organisation. Obviously the organisation that can undertake this with success is the Congress. Therefore our immediate objective must be the formation of Congress committees in every village. This would be

in accordance with the direction of the Faizpur Congress.[2] Wherever I have travelled during these last few months of intensive touring, I have laid stress on village committees and I have invariably found that the peasantry and others welcomed the idea warmly. We must therefore start this working of forming village committees immediately. The village and the peasant await us—let them not wait in vain.

Anti-Constitution Day: Another important work faces us. This is the hartal on April 1st in accordance with the resolution of the Faizpur Congress calling for a hartal or general strike on that day. I have found during my tours that this idea has met with a ready response. It must be popularised from now onwards, so that this day might be a magnificent demonstration of the nation's detestation of the constitution and its resolve to be free. Every cooperation to make this day a success must be invited and welcomed. All those who want to get rid of the constitution and stand for a free India should be invited to join, such as trade unions, merchants' associations, peasants' unions, students' associations and like bodies.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Congress constitution and mass contacts resolution passed by the Faizpur Congress directed the provincial Congress committees to establish primary committees in villages.

4. Congressmen and Ministries[1]

Allahabad
February 19, 1937

Dear Comrade,

Consequent on the Congress victory at the polls the press is full of anticipation and rumours about ministries and coalitions.[2] I need hardly inform you that all these are products of fertile imagination and have

1. Circular to the provincial Congress committees. A.I.C.C. File No. P-1/1937-38, p. 177, N.M.M.L. Jawaharlal also issued the substance of this letter as a statement to the press on 22 February 1937.
2. There was speculation in the press that the Congress intended to form a ministry in the U.P. and that an understanding had been reached between the Congress and independent Muslim members in the Frontier Province Assembly.

little relation to facts. So far as Congress members and parties of the legislatures are concerned they cannot take any such step till the A.I.C.C. has finally decided on our course of action. Therefore, all such Congress members must studiously refrain from committing themselves in any way whatsoever either to other groups or to members of the governments. In the event of a leader of the Congress Party in a provincial assembly being invited by the head of the government in that province his answer should be that he and his colleagues are not in a position to enter into any conversations till the A.I.C.C. has issued its direction on the subject.

The newly elected Congress members of provincial assemblies have already met in some provinces to elect their office-bearers. They are likely to meet for this purpose in the remaining provinces soon. It is desirable that these parliamentary groups should remain in close touch with their provincial Congress committees and should confer with them and report to them from time to time. In this way a close connection will be established between work inside the legislature and our outside activities and the two will be coordinated together.

Please inform the newly elected Congress members of your provincial legislature of this circular. I enclose an extra copy of it to be sent immediately to the leader of the Congress assembly party in your province.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Circular to P.C.Cs[1]

Allahabad
March 3, 1937

Dear Comrade,
I enclose a copy of a circular I am issuing to the secretaries of P.C.Cs for your information so that you might pass it on to the leader of the Congress parliamentary party in your province. It is quite possible that you or the leader of the Congress parliamentary party may

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-14/1937, p. 65, N.M.M.L.

be approached by representatives of the government to discuss formation of ministries or other matters relating to the legislature. You may also be approached by other groups in the legislature. It is highly desirable that the response to all such requests should be clear and definite and uniform all over India. With other groups we can form no alliances.

If a request comes from a Governor for an interview to discuss such matters, an answer should be sent pointing out that such discussions can serve little useful purpose at this stage till the A.I.C.C. has finally decided the lines of our future policy. If, however, the Governor still desires to meet you or the leader of the parliamentary party, you or he should see him and give him an answer on the same lines. Further, you can draw his attention to the resolutions of the Working Committee recently passed which lay down the general lines of the policy which will govern us in the legislatures and outside.[2] Beyond this you cannot go at this stage.

The question of ministries is still undecided and all speculations in regard to it are premature and undesirable. There is however another question: who is going to be the president of the legislature? It is likely that our policy will be to put up a Congress member for this post and to ask the party to support him. This post is an important one involving constant contact with representatives of the government and requiring the possession of many qualities. We cannot distribute this or any other post or office as rewards to individuals, however deserving of reward they might be. We have to keep this larger viewpoint of our cause and our freedom struggle always before us. Therefore all such matters must be considered from this larger viewpoint. It is desirable therefore that you or your party should arrive at no final decisions in such matters without reference to the Working Committee. Whenever such questions arise, I shall expect to hear from you.

2. At its meeting held in Wardha on 27-28 February and 1 March 1937, the Working Committee declared: "The Congress has entered the legislatures not to cooperate with the new constitution or the government but to combat the Act and the policy underlying it, as this Act and policy are intended to tighten the hold of British imperialism on India and to continue the exploitation of the Indian people. The immediate objective is to resist the introduction and working of the federal part of the Act, and to lay stress on the nation's demand for a constituent assembly." Another resolution asked the Congress members of the assemblies to coordinate the work inside the legislatures with the Congress work done outside.

I shall be glad if you will communicate the contents of this letter to the leader of the Congress parliamentary party in your province.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. The Need for a Long-term View[1]

We have reached a stage when we should have a clear-cut policy. The ultimate goal of the Congress is to capture power. The seizure, nay, the revolutionary seizure, of power is the aim of the Congress. It is not only for removing the defects of the administration, but also to wrench the power of government with the force and strength acquired through the mandate given to us by the people. We should not therefore forget that goal whatever may be the decision arrived at on office acceptance. But we should carefully judge all our actions and measure each step that we take so that we are able to know that in our struggle we are going in the right direction. Unless we have some fixed norms and standards by which we judge our actions, we shall be lost in the confusion about the issue of office acceptance by the Congress. The test of any step taken, such as acceptance of ministry or otherwise, depends on how we can propagate our work and what effect it will have on the rank and file of the Congress. We have to see from a long-term point of view whether we are taking a false step for some short-term and immediate gain.

Although the Congress has kept the issue open, it has given sufficient expression of its policy in the election manifesto and the various resolutions passed from time to time by the Working Committee. The basic idea is not to extend our cooperation to the present constitution. The main policy of the Congress has once again been placed before the people by the Congress Working Committee when it met recently at Wardha. It was with a view to give clear directions to the people that the Working Committee at Wardha passed resolutions emphasising the Congress objective, though decision on the office acceptance issue was postponed until opinions of the provincial committees were received.

1. Speech at Allahabad, 3 March 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 4 March 1937.

We are fighing for things afar and we must look ahead. We must have a clear-cut policy. If we have such a policy then we can expect the masses to support us. I am quite sure that any show of sophistry or cleverness at this juncture would not work. I have tried to understand the kisans and I am of opinion that they would understand and appreciate a clear and straightforward policy better. In my view, the kisans and labourers are anti-imperialists. But we should not be led away by any wrong notion that by doing a little good to the kisans we would be able to strengthen our hold on them. Such a move would amount to *chal bazi*.

I am surprised to hear Dr. Katju arguing that we should enter the legislatures to prove our capacity to maintain law and order and reduce forgery and perjury. Well, this is not at all the issue before Congressmen. What we have to keep in view is the object and the means that we adopt for achieving it. We have to see very carefully what effect will be produced by any particular action of ours on the people whose support and sympathies we enjoy.

7. The Snare of the Constitution[1]

By casting votes in the legislatures we cannot wreck the constitution. The utmost we can do is to create deadlocks. We can wreck it when our efforts are backed by organised mass effort. Issues bigger than mere elections await us. Through elections we wanted to raise a storm and create a revolutionary outlook. The Congress victory has created an atmosphere in the country which could not have been accomplished by individual canvassing as pursued in the previous elections.

We must however investigate the causes of the few defeats which we have suffered. Though the Muslim nominees of the Congress have been defeated in the U.P.,[2] I refuse to believe that the Congress has no

1. Speech at the Congress legislators' meeting, Lucknow, 6 March 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 8 March 1937.
2. In the U.P. elections, out of 66 Muslim seats, the Congress contested only 9 and lost all.

hold on the Muslim masses. I am sure that when the next opportunity comes we shall not lose a single Muslim seat in the rural areas though I am not quite certain about the urban seats. I don't think the Muslim masses are indifferent to the Congress. In my opinion, our defeat was mainly due to our failure to reach them. Our efforts at reaching them in the countryside were inadequate, mainly due to the paucity of Muslim workers. We now need Muslim workers in larger numbers.

We must also fully understand the implications of Congressmen's entry into the legislatures. Nobody likes fighting for the sake of fighting, but we must not forget our objective, namely, acquisition of power for the bigger struggle that awaits us. I just cannot believe that any major problem confronting the country can be solved within the present political structure. I therefore think that mere formation of a ministry would not enable us to do any good to the peasantry. I regard the present constitution as a trap to catch us and mislead us. One thing however is certain, i.e., whether we are in office or not, we are in closer grip with the major problems. If we view the present situation in the proper perspective, we shall see that even if the Congress decides to accept office that would be for ending British imperialism and not for strengthening it.

I also want to refute the allegation that the Congress Working Committee has prejudged the issue of office acceptance. I want to make it clear that the Working Committee has arrived at no decision in this regard. It is keeping its mind open on the issue. We must however remember that for success inside the legislatures we must not lose our contact with the masses outside.

8. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Allahabad
March 8th, 1937

My dear Vallabhbhai,
I returned from Lucknow this morning and received your letter of the 4th.

1. Maharashtra Government (D.I.G., C.I.D.) records File No. 3590/H/II.

On return from Wardha I issued a circular to P.C.Cs.[2] I suppose you must have seen it in the press. I sent a personal letter to the presidents of P.C.Cs on the question of conversations with government etc.[3] It is irritating to find all this loose talk about ministries being carried on by Congressmen and newspapers. I felt annoyed at some evidence of it in U.P. circles. I had not intended taking any aggressive part in the debate on the office issue in the U.P.P.C.C. but this atmosphere and various intrigues induced me to do so and I plunged in.

Quite apart from the office issue, the whole manner of treating this subject is foolish and lacking in self-respect and political sense. The real significance of our victory in the elections is lost in arguments about the spoils of office. I have just had a letter from Agatha Harrison from London in which she points out this danger.[4] It was because of this that she stated at a meeting there (I think of M.Ps.) that the election was fought on the issue of independence and the victory was on that issue, and not on petty matters of detail.

I hope to reach Delhi on the 15th morning. I shall stay at Ansari's house.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

2. See *ante*, item 3.
3. See *ante*, item 4.
4. Agatha Harrison wrote to Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal on 3 March 1937: "What is not realised is the basis on which people have been returned to power nor the strength of feeling behind that basis. This we are doing all in our power to make clear so that in the days ahead public opinion is aware of the issues that are at stake.... I am saying over and again that the issue now is between Congress and the Government of India, that it has been returned to power on a very simple issue by a method this country understands, an election, that the result of this is very clear."

9. Speculations about Office Acceptance[1]

In spite of resolutions of the Working Committee and warnings issued by responsible Congressmen, I find that some newspapers and individuals continue to indulge in speculations about Congress ministries. I cannot stop them from these flights of fancy but may I remind them again that our cause is not advanced thereby. The election was fought and won on big issues—independence, ending of the present Act, constituent assembly—and behind this objective of ours ever hovered the spectre of the terrible poverty and misery of our people. The millions of India have set their seal on this objective and if we are true to them and to our pledges, we must only think in terms of these big issues. All India knows that the office acceptance issue will be decided within ten days by the All India Congress Committee in Delhi. Let us await that decision and abide by that decision in a disciplined way. But whatever that decision may be it must keep our objective and policy in view. And all those who think in any other and lesser terms do disservice to our cause. To discuss the personnel of ministries when the whole question of acceptance of office itself is undecided seems to me lacking in the dignity, restraint and self-respect which our great organisation demands of its members. The recent decision of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee[2] should be a warning to those who think too light-heartedly in terms of personnel of ministries. We are not out for the spoils of office but for bigger, vaster things affecting our millions, and we have to find the best way to gain them.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 8 March 1937. *The Leader*, 10 March 1937.
2. The U.P.P.C.C., meeting in Lucknow on 7 March 1937, resolved in favour of non-acceptance of office by a majority of thirty votes.

10. On Non-acceptance of Office[1]

It is surprising that the press which is supposed to know everything and be all-pervasive is completely out of touch with the feelings of the people, particularly in rural India. It is also ignorant of many happenings in the country. Newspapers play a great role and exert great influence on the people. We are aware of the conditions in Germany and Italy where the news is absolutely one-sided.

Question: Why does the Congress have a legislative programme if it does not intend taking up office?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Congress has to go to the people and tell them what it stands for apart from telling them whether it can carry out its programme or not. The question really is not bound up with the taking up of office. Many things that the Congress wants seem to be outside the purview of the present Act and even if the Congress accepts office it may not be able to give effect to them.

Q: Is acceptance of office a part of the process relating to the wrecking of the new constitution as envisaged in the election manifesto?

JN: The phrase used in the election manifesto is meant to convey an idea of combating the constitution and ending it as soon as possible and, I believe, that would remain the background of the Congress policy.

Q: After having placed a well-defined programme before the country, would not the Congress, by refusing to take office, be disheartening the electorate?

JN: If the Congress, after accepting office, failed to carry out its programme, would it not irritate the people more?

Q: Is it not necessary to take advantage of whatever power is given under the Act and give effect to the extra-legislative activities of the Congress?

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 14 March 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 15 March 1937.

JN: What happens in our villages is of greater significance than what happens inside the legislatures, and taking the whole position into account, our strength would be increased more by work outside than inside the legislatures.

11. On Formation of Congress Ministries[1]

This convention cannot be a permanent body, but that does not mean that it would cease to exist. Its constituents will be there and they can be called together if need arises. There are several questions, in the absence of direction, with regard to the work of the Congress legislators in the provinces wherein they are not in a majority and it is asked whether alliances with other groups are permitted.

No alliance can be entered into without the sanction of the Working Committee but cooperation in particular matters with other groups has not been ruled out.

The ultimate control of the work of Congress legislators would vest in a small committee of three to five members. The intention is not that this committee should necessarily be representative of different provinces or provincial Congress legislators. Personally I do not feel that there is any objection to a non-legislative arm controlling the legislative arm of the Congress.

There is no need to discuss how important or representative the convention is. The delegates attending the convention are representatives, not because they are victors in elections but because they represent the Congress viewpoint. The convention can do nothing apart from the Congress. Immediately it does so it would become a rival organisation.

The resolution amounts to disobeying of the directions given by the Working Committee to the convention. How can Congressmen invite

1. From *The Hindustan Times*, 20 March 1937.
This speech was delivered at the subjects committee meeting of the All India Convention of Congress members held in Delhi on 19 March 1937 on the resolution moved by Yakub Hassan, a Congressman from Madras, proposing that the convention should invite non-Congress legislators also to discuss the plan for the preparation of a constitution.

the cooperation of semi-imperialist groups and permit them to have a say in the matter of framing the future constitution? It is a dangerous thing to revert to an "all party attitude". There has been enough weakening in this matter. The constitution should be drafted by the strong hand of the masses, not by the quill pens placed above their ears. If the object is to consider the communal issue and find out why Muslim candidates did not succeed in elections in the same measure as others, I am agreeable to it. If you want to combat the psychology of fear that pervades the country with regard to the communal problem, I welcome it, but for that the ground will have to be prepared first by a small committee and then a larger body could take it up. We have failed to make any advance in solving the communal problem because this method has not been adopted.

There is no reason why we should not discuss with non-Congress legislators or others, but the proposal made in the resolution really goes beyond the terms of reference of the convention. That is not the only objection. I repeat that the subject is not one that should straightway be referred to a large gathering. Otherwise, more harm than good might be done to the object which Mr. Yakub Hassan[2] has in mind.

2. (1875-1940); a leading Congressman of Tamil Nadu and one of the founders of the Muslim League; member, Madras Legislative Council, 1930 and Minister for Public Works in the Congress ministry formed in Madras Presidency, 1937-39.

12. Presidential Address to the All India Convention of Congress Legislators[1]

We are used to our Congress gatherings, vast and impressive and representing the will of the Indian people for freedom. Behind them lie half a century of our country's history and a tradition of growth and change and adaptation to fresh needs and new situations. But today we meet in this convention under novel conditions, for this convention

1. Delhi, 19 March 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 20 March 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. [illegible]

has no background except such as we determine. Well-established institutions and organisations develop, in the course of time, a certain will and momentum which carry them forward almost apart from the desires of their constituent elements. They have an individuality which expresses itself in its own particular way, a certain stability and steadiness of purpose as well as a certain conservatism. They do not easily move out of their moorings; like an elephant, they are heavy of movement, but when they move, they have all the greater momentum, and they change the shape of things. Such is our Congress.

But this convention is new and few people seem to know what it is or what it is going to be. Some doubt is justified; and yet all of us know well our moorings and our purpose, and though, as a convention, we may be new, we have our roots in those past struggles which are written in the history of the Congress and our freedom movement. This convention is a child of the Congress, looking to it for strength and guidance.

In writing this address[2] I suffer from a disability. During the few days that will elapse between now and the meeting of the convention, the major issues before us will be decided by the All India Congress Committee. I do not know what these final decisions will be, and so, when this written message changes to the spoken word, much may have happened which might need variation or emphasis. And yet, whatever this variation might be, the Congress policy and programme are clear and fixed for us by repeated resolutions of the Congress itself and by our election manifesto. We must move within that orbit and any attempt to go out of it would be a betrayal of that policy and of the larger interests for which the Congress has stood. Those of you who have been elected to the new legislatures have asked the suffrage of the people on the basis of the Congress election manifesto, and you must inevitably take your stand on this. The very greatness of your success at the polls is a striking testimony of the response of the masses to this policy and programme. Millions have testified to their faith and confidence in this; they have given it the final seal of approval of the Indian people.

The electorate was confined to a bare ten per cent of our people, but everybody knows that the lower down the scale we go, the greater is the Congress strength. The remaining ninety per cent are even more solidly for the Congress than the ten per cent who have supported us. Though our success has been overwhelming and has confounded our

2. Jawaharlal wrote this address on 11-12 March 1937.

opponents, and swept away the representatives of the big vested interests who opposed us, it should be remembered that the whole machinery of election was so designed as to weaken us. The pressure of an autocratic and entrenched government was exercised against us, and behind it were ranged all the reactionaries and obscurantists who always flourish under the shadow of imperialism. Yet we won in resounding manner.

Only in regard to the Muslim seats did we lack success. But our very failure on this occasion has demonstrated that success is easily in our grasp and the Muslim masses are increasingly turning to the Congress. We failed because we had long neglected working among the Muslim masses and we could not reach them in time. But where we reached, especially in the rural areas, we found almost the same response, the same anti-imperialist spirit, as in others. The communal problem, of which we hear so much, seemed to be utterly non-existent, when we talked to the peasant, whether Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. We failed also among the Muslims because of their much smaller electorate which could be easily manipulated and coerced by authority and vested interests. But I am convinced that, even so, we would have had a much larger measure of success if we had paid more attention to the Muslim masses. They have been too long neglected and misled and they deserve special consideration. I have no manner of doubt that they are turning to the Congress to seek relief from their innumerable burdens and their future cooperation is assured, provided we approach them rightly and on the basis of economic questions.

We have too long thought in terms of pacts and compromises between communal leaders and neglected the people behind them. That is a discredited policy and I trust that we shall not revert to it. And yet some people still talk of the Muslims as a group dealing with Hindus or others as a group, a medieval conception which has no place in the modern world. We deal with economic groups today and the problems of poverty and unemployment and national freedom are common for the Hindu, the Muslim, the Sikh and the Christian. As soon as we leave the top fringe, which is continually talking of percentages of seats in the legislatures and state jobs, and reach the masses, we come up against these problems. This way lies the ending of what has long been known as the communal problem.

One of the most remarkable signs of the times is the ferment among the Muslims in India, both the intelligentsia and the masses. Without any effective leadership, they have drifted aimlessly, and they resent this helpless position and feel that the communal leadership they have had

has weakened them politically, in spite of the trivial and superficial gains which they are supposed to have got from an imperialism which seeks to wean them away from the national movement. Muslims, young men and old, and the Muslim press, are full of this self-analysis, and the desire to get out of the communal rut and line up with the forces of freedom and progress is strong within them. They see how the Congress has swept away Hindu communal organisations, how it has captured the imagination of the masses, and they feel a little desolate and left out. They want to share in the triumphs of today and tomorrow, and are prepared to take their share of the burdens also. And so this election and our campaign, though they resulted in the loss of Muslim seats as a rule, have been a triumph for us even in regard to the Muslims. They have gone some way to lay the ghost of communalism. It is for us now to go ahead and welcome the Muslim masses and intelligentsia in our great organisation and rid this country of communalism in every shape and form.

The elections have many lessons to teach us but the outstanding fact is this: where we went to the masses direct we won overwhelmingly. Our partial lack of success in some provinces was clearly due to the Congress organisation there being confined to the cities and having little contact with the peasantry. We must remedy these failings and speak more and more the language of the masses and fashion our policy to meet their needs. We must carry the Congress organisation to every village, the Congress message to every mud hut.

I have referred to some of our failings and some of our failures. It is well to remember these and not to allow ourselves to be swept away by success into forgetting them. We build for the future and our foundations must be well and truly laid. To win an election is a small matter for us; we are out to win the freedom of our people.

Having disposed of these failures let me refer to the success that has come to us, for it is this tremendous success, not surprising for us who know our people, but astounding and upsetting to others, that is the outstanding feature of these elections. How carefully and lovingly the government had nursed the great vested interests of India, encouraged the big landlords and communalists, helped them to organise themselves to oppose us, and looked confidently for success in its evil venture! Where are they now, these pillars of imperialism in India and exploiters of the Indian people? Sunk almost without trace, overwhelmed by the sea of Indian humanity, swept away by the big broom of the masses from the political scene. Like a house of cards, they have fallen at the touch of reality; even so will others go

who oppose India's freedom, and a day will come when British imperialism throttles and crushes our people no more and is a dream of the past for us.

We went to our people and spoke to them of freedom and the ending of their exploitation; we went to that forgotten creature, the Indian peasant, and remembered that his poverty was the basic problem of India; we identified ourselves with him in his suffering and talked to him of how to get rid of it through political and social freedom. We told him of imperialism and of this new Act and constitution which bind us still further and which we were out to end and replace by panchayati raj, fashioned by a constituent assembly, a grand panchayat of the nation, elected by all our people. We read out to him our election manifesto and explained its significance. He and his kind gathered in vast numbers to hear us and, listening to the Congress message, his sunken eyes glistened and his shrunken starved body rose up in enthusiasm and the wine of hope filled his veins. Who, that saw that vision, can forget it, or that subsequent sight of thousands marching to the polling booths in disciplined array, ignoring pressure and threat, disdaining the free conveyances and free food offered to them by our opponents? It was a pilgrimage for them to give their allegiance to the Congress, to vote for the ending of the new constitution, for the establishment of panchayati raj when they would themselves have power to liquidate the poverty that consumed them.

That is the significance of this election. If there is any meaning in democracy, if this complicated and expensive apparatus of elections and voting has any sense behind it and is not an impertinent farce, then the Indian people have spoken so that even the deaf might hear, and proclaimed that they will not have this constitution. They have given notice to British imperialism to quit. This constitution must therefore go, lock, stock and barrel, and leave the field clear for our constituent assembly.

We talk of and discuss our policy in the legislatures, but all this is vain and profitless parleying before the fundamental and dominant fact of the situation that this constitution must go. So the people of India have decided and we shall be false and unfaithful representatives of our people if we allow ourselves to forget this fact contrary to that emphatic direction.

I know that there are elements among us who are too fond of slurring over these fundamentals, who look longingly to office, and who have even compromised the dignity of our great cause and of the Congress by discussing the personnel of ministries long before the question

of acceptance or non-acceptance of ministerial office has been decided by the All India Congress Committee. Whatever their views may be on this issue, whatever the decision of the A.I.C.C. might be, I would have them remember, now and for the future, that no Congressman worthy of his name, no Congress member of a legislature, can act except with the dignity and discipline that our cause and organisation demand. I would have them remember the election manifesto and the Congress resolutions on the basis of which they sought the suffrage of the people. Let no one forget that we have entered the legislatures not to cooperate in any way with British imperialism but to fight and end this Act which enslaves and binds us. Let no one forget that we fight for independence.

What is this independence? A clear, definite, ringing word, which all the world understands, with no possibility of ambiguity. And yet, to our misfortune, even that word has become an object of interpretation and misinterpretation. Let us be clear about it. Independence means national freedom in the fullest sense of the word; it means, as our pledge has stated, a severance of the British connection. It means anti-imperialism and no compromise with empire. Words are hurled at us: Dominion Status, Statute of Westminster,[3] British Commonwealth of Nations, and we quibble about their meaning. I see no real commonwealth anywhere, only an empire exploiting the Indian people and numerous other peoples in different parts of the world. I want my country to have nothing to do with this enormous engine of exploitation in Asia and Africa. If this engine goes, we have nothing but goodwill for England, and in any event we wish to be friends with the mass of the British people.

Dominion Status is a term which arose under peculiar circumstances and it changed its significance as time passed. In the British group of nations, it signified a certain European dominating group exploiting numerous subject peoples. That distinction continues whatever change the Statute of Westminster might have brought about in the relations *inter se* of the members of that European dominating group. That group represents British imperialism and it stands in the world today for the very order and forces of reaction against which we struggle. How then can we associate ourselves willingly with this order

3. The Statute of Westminster of 1931 declared that the "dominions are autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate to one another in their domestic or external affairs though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations."

and these forces? Or is it conceived that we might, in the course of time and if we behave ourselves, be promoted from the subject group to the dominating group, and yet the imperialist structure and basis of the whole will remain more or less as it is? This is a vain conception having no relation to reality, and even if it were within the realms of possibility, we should have none of it, for we would then become partners in imperialism and in the exploitation of others. And among these others would probably be large numbers of our own people.

It is said, and I believe Gandhiji holds this view, that if we achieved national freedom, this would mean the end of British imperialism in India, and a necessary result of this would be the winding up of British imperialism itself. Under such conditions there is no reason why we should not continue our connection with Britain. There is force in the argument for our quarrel is not with Britain or the British people, but with British imperialism. But when we think in these terms, a larger and a different world comes into our ken, and Dominion Status and the Statute of Westminster pass away from the present to the historical past. That larger world does not think of a British group of nations, but of a world group based on political and social freedom.

To talk, therefore, of Dominion Status, in its widest significance, even including the right to separate, is to confine ourselves to one group, which of necessity will oppose and be opposed by other groups, and which will essentially be based on the present decaying social order. Therefore we cannot entertain this idea of Dominion Status in any shape or form; it is independence we want, not any particular status. Under cover of that phrase, the tentacles of imperialism will creep up and hold us in their grip, though the outer structure might be good to look at.

And so our pledge must hold and we must labour for the severance of the British connection. But let us repeat again that we favour no policy of isolation or aggressive nationalism, as the word is understood in the central European countries today. We shall have the closest of contacts, we hope, with all progressive countries, including England, if she has shed her imperialism.

But all this discussion about Dominion Status is academic talk. It is many years now since India put that idea by and there can be no reversion to it. Today, with the whole world in the cauldron of change and disaster threatening it, this lawyers' jargon seems strangely out of place. What counts today for us is to break and end this constitution. What counts for the world is Spain and British

rearmament[4] and the French armament loan,[5] and the frantic and terrific race to be ready for war before this catastrophe comes to overwhelm civilisation. When will this come, suddenly and unannounced, and make a wreck of the modern world? That is the question for you and all of us, for on our answer and on our ability to cope with this crisis will depend the future of the Indian people. We have bigger decisions to take, graver choices before us, than those of lawyers' making.

Those decisions and that action require strength and perseverance and a disciplined nation. They require the masses in intelligent and organised movement for mass ideals and mass welfare. They demand that joint front of anti-imperialist forces, of which we have heard so much, and of which our National Congress is the living embodiment. It is not by mere votes in the legislatures, or petty reforms, or even artificial deadlocks, that freedom will come, but by the mobilisation of mass strength, and the coordination of our struggle in the legislatures with our struggle outside. For, essentially, we aim at the conquest of power for the Indian people to shape their destiny, and that power will only come through our own strength and will to achieve.

This is why the Working Committee has laid stress again on the extra-parliamentary activities of the Congress members of the legislatures and on mass contacts. Our overwhelming success in the elections will be wasted if we do not keep up our intimate contacts with the masses and seek to serve them and mobilise them for the great tasks ahead.

With this background of principles and Congress policy we have to consider the narrower issue of what we are to do inside the legislatures. This narrow issue, and especially the question of acceptance or non-acceptance of ministerial office, has given rise to much controversy, and has often been considered divorced from the more fundamental factors of the situation. If we remember these factors, and the Congress and the Working Committee have stressed them again and again, the issue becomes narrowed down still further. Indeed it hardly arises, except indirectly, for, as I have already stated, the outstanding fact of the elections is that the people of this country have given their verdict clearly, unequivocally and emphatically against this slave constitution.

4. In a White Paper issued on 16 February 1937, Britain announced a five year plan of rearmament of its army, navy and air force at an estimated average expenditure of £ 300,000,000 a year.
5. France undertook to guarantee a Polish loan, chiefly for rearmament, of approximately 2,600 million francs.

If the British Government has any respect for democracy and still sees virtue in democratic procedure, as it so loudly proclaims, then it has no alternative but to withdraw this constitution and Act. That is our position and our demand, and so long as it is not acceded to we shall labour and struggle to that end.

Congress members of the legislatures have their work cut out for them by Congress resolutions. That work is primarily to fight the Act and press and work for a constituent assembly. Some people, in their ignorance, have imagined that this convention is itself the constituent assembly and that it is going to draft a new constitution for India. This convention is going to do no such thing. That is not its function and the time for drawing up India's constitution is not yet. Nor is the constituent assembly a magnified all parties conference. The constituent assembly that we demand will come into being only as the expression of the will and the strength of the Indian people; it will function when it has sanctions behind it to give effect to its decisions without reference to outside authority. It will represent the sovereignty of the Indian people and will meet as the arbiter of our destiny.

How can this assembly meet today when British imperialism holds forcible sway here with its armies of occupation, spies, informers and secret service, and the denial of civil liberty? When so many of our loved ones and comrades languish in prison or detention camp? When this monstrous constitution has been imposed upon us, despite our indignant repudiation of it?

Therefore let us be clear about it. There is no room for a constituent assembly in India till we have in effect removed these burdens and obstructions, and the will of the Indian people can have sovereign play. And, till then, there is no room in India for any other constitution imposed upon us; there is room only, unhappily, for conflict and struggle between an imperialism that dominates and a nationalism that seeks deliverance. That nationalism is no weakling today and, though it may have to wait awhile for its deliverance, it will not tolerate domination and dictation.

So we are told by the Congress to go to the legislatures not to cooperate, for this so-called cooperation would only be another name for submission to dictation, but to fight the Act. Whatever decision we might take on other issues, that basic policy remains and must remain. Inevitably it follows that we cannot have any alliances with individuals and groups who do not subscribe to this policy.

It is within this narrow framework that we have to consider the question of office acceptance. That question will have been decided by the

All India Congress Committee[6] by the time we meet in convention and I stand before you, and by that decision this convention will be bound. So I cannot say much about it here. I have often given expression to my views on this subject and our electoral victory has not changed them in any way. But we have to remember that whatever the decision of the All India Congress Committee might be, the whole logic of Congress resolutions and declarations and policy leads us to maintain a spirit of noncooperation towards this constitution and Act. Ordinarily in a democratic constitution, to have a majority means an acceptance of ministerial responsibility. To refuse responsibility and power when a democratic process offers it to us is illogical and improper. But we have neither democracy nor power in this constitution; the illogicality and contradiction lie in the constitution itself. Are we to twist and distort ourselves to fit in with this perversion? Therefore whatever else we might do that spirit of noncooperation and struggle against British imperialism must pervade our efforts.

Many of you are eager and desirous of doing something to relieve the burdens of our masses, to help the peasant and the worker and the vast numbers of middle class unemployed. Who does not want to do that? No one likes conflict and obstruction, and we have hungered so long for real opportunities for serving our people through constructive effort. They cry aloud for succour, these unhappy millions of our countrymen, and even when their voices are silent, their dumb eyes are eloquent with appeal. It is difficult to live in this country surrounded by this human desolation and misery, unspoken often and the harder to bear because of that. We talk of Swaraj and independence, but in human terms it means relief to the masses from their unutterable sorrow and misery. Ultimately all that we work for resolves itself into that. And if we have a chance to give such relief even in a small measure, we cannot reject it.

But that relief must be for the millions, not for a few odd individuals. And if we think in terms of those millions what relief does this new constitution offer? I have read its relevant clauses again and again, ever with a growing astonishment at the audacity of those who have framed it and thrust it on us, protecting all those who need no

6. At its meeting held in Delhi on 17-18 March 1937 the A.I.C.C. authorised and permitted the acceptance of office in provinces where the Congress commanded a majority in the legislatures, provided the leader of the Congress Party in the legislature was satisfied and was able to state publicly that the Governor would not use his special powers of interference or set aside the advice of ministers in regard to constitutional activities.

protection, confirming their privileged position as exploiters, binding us hand and foot not to touch them in any way, and leaving the masses of India to sink deeper in the quicksands of poverty. We cannot give adequate relief to the masses within the scope of this constitution; that is a demonstrable impossibility. We cannot build any new social structure so long as special privileges and vested interests surround us and suffocate us. We cannot carry out any policy, political, economic, social, educational or any other, when the whole executive agency and civil service is not subject to our control, and we may not touch the major part of the revenues. The "special powers and responsibilities" of the Governors and the Governor General apart, the Act by itself is more than sufficient to disable any minister.

But we can do some other things. We can take upon ourselves the odium and responsibility of keeping the imperialist structure functioning, we can become indirectly responsible for the repression of our own comrades, we can take away the initiative from the masses and tone down their fine temper which we ourselves have helped in building up. All this may happen if we follow the path of least resistance and gradually adapt ourselves to existing conditions. I do not think that this will happen for the temper of the Congress and the people will not allow it. We have gone too far for that.

Thus we do not seek the working of the new constitution but the most suitable way of meeting and creating deadlocks, which are inevitable in this scheme of things, and of carrying on our struggle for freedom.

I can see no flaw in my reasoning, if the premises of the Congress resolutions are accepted, as accept them we must. Whatever the A.I.C.C. may decide on this question of office acceptance, we shall have to carry on the spirit and letter of those resolutions in the legislatures as well as outside.

Our decisions must be all India decisions, for it would be fatal to have variations in policy to suit the minor needs of provinces. The unity of India has to be maintained; so also the unity of our struggle against imperialism. Danger lurks in provinces acting separately and being induced to parley separately. Therefore, as I conceive it, the chief virtue of this convention, now or later, is to keep this all India character of our work in the legislatures ever in the forefront and to prevent fissiparous tendencies and the development of provincialism. A necessary counterpart of this is the maintenance of a uniform discipline among Congress members of all legislatures. Every effort is likely to be made on the part of our opponents to effect breaches in that discipline and all India policy, but we must realise that without

that self-imposed discipline and uniformity, our strength goes and we become isolated groups and individuals, ignored and crushed in turn by our opponents.

The wider policy that will govern us must inevitably come from the Congress and that policy must be loyally carried out by this convention and its members. What other functions the convention will perform will be laid down by the All India Congress Committee and I do not wish to prejudge the issue in this written message of mine. But I can conceive the convention or its representatives not only doing what I have mentioned above, but in times of national or international crisis playing an important role in our struggle for power and freedom.

You will soon go back to your provinces and constituencies and explain to our comrades there the decisions taken here in Delhi city, and prepare for the new forms of struggle that await you. We have some experience of this struggle for freedom and many of us have given the best part of our lives to it, and a variation in its shape or form will not deter us. But we must hold to our old anchor and not be swept away by passing currents. And we must remember that we live in a dynamic world where almost everybody expects sudden and violent change and catastrophe. That crisis, national or international, may seize us by the throat unawares sooner than we imagine. So we must be ever ready for it, and we may not think or act in terms of static or slow-moving periods.

Our next task is the hartal of April 1st, and on that day, I hope, you will be in your constituencies to take part in that mighty demonstration against this slave constitution and to declare again, with millions of our countrymen, that this constitution must be scrapped and must give place to another, framed by a constituent assembly and based on the sovereignty of the people of India.

13. Observance of the Anti-Constitution Day[1]

The 1st of April will soon be upon us and I trust that all Congressmen and Congress organisations are taking suitable steps to observe that day

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 22 March 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 23 March 1937.

as a day of complete hartal. On the evening of that day public meetings should be held in towns and villages and an identical resolution should be passed at these meetings. This resolution is given below. It has been framed on the basis of the national demand formulated by the All India Convention.

> This meeting reiterates the opinion of the people of India that the Government of India Act of 1935 has been designed to perpetuate the domination and exploitation of the Indian people. This meeting declares that the Indian people do not recognize the right of any external power or authority to dictate the political and economic structure of India. The Indian people can only accept a constitutional structure, which has been framed by them, which is based on the independence of India as a nation and which allows them full scope for development according to their needs and desires. They stand for a genuine democratic state in India where political power has been transferred to the people as a whole and the government is under their effective control. Such a state can only be created by the Indian people themselves and through the medium of a constituent assembly elected by adult suffrage and having the power to determine finally the constitution of the country.
>
> This meeting, therefore, condemns and utterly rejects the new constitution and demands its withdrawal in accordance with the declared will of the Indian people.

14. On the Futility of Office Acceptance[1]

The momentous discussions during the past week have not altered my conviction about the fundamental needs of the country at the present juncture.

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 23 March 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 24 March 1937.

Acceptance of office under conditions which would tie the hands of the ministers and give them more responsibility than power is futile. I am not sure whether any Congress government would at all be formed. No Congress ministry, for instance, could avoid immediate action to be taken to tackle the agrarian problem or the question of rural indebtedness. The condition of the peasantry in Bengal and the United Provinces is terrible.

In the United Provinces particularly, where the peasantry is politically more conscious and better organised, the new excise duty on sugar is likely to produce a crisis.[2] Sugar factories have threatened to close, and if the threat is carried out, the economic troubles, which had been staved off by more and more land being brought under sugarcane, are bound to come to a head. The Congress ministry in the United Provinces, if there is one, would have to deal with this problem immediately.[3]

> Question: Keeping in view the stress that has been laid by all the leaders on the necessity of the work outside the legislatures being more important than inside, what would be the nature of work that Congressmen would have to do outside in the country, as there is a possibility that they may lose sight of that work in view of the recent discussions on the office acceptance question, as also due to the interest that is being evinced by practically everyone in the work within the legislatures?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Working Committee at Wardha has clearly laid down the work that has to be done outside the legislatures.[4] All Congressmen, and particularly those not engaged in any legislative work, have to carry out that decision.

2. In the budget for 1937-38, excise duty on sugar was increased from Rs. 1.31 to Rs. 2.00. The Finance Member had contended that if the new additional excise resulted in the closure of weak and inefficient sugar factories it would be an advantage to the industry as a whole.
3. The United Provinces Sugar Factories Control Act enacted by the Congress ministry ensured supply of sugarcane to the factories along with a minimum price for sugar, and created an official agency to deal with any crisis.
4. The Working Committee called upon every Congress member to keep in touch with the primary and other local Congress committees in the constituency, share the responsibility of keeping the Congress organisation in that area in efficient working condition and remain in touch with the masses.

The legislative programme of the Congress, important as it is because of its possible results, must not lead us to forget the organisational and other activities of the Congress. It is on the strength of our organisation and our direct contact with the masses that our ultimate strength depends. Without this mass sanction behind us we can do little in the assemblies and still less outside.

We should, therefore, let the Congress workers continue to concentrate on the formation of village committees and enrol Congress members. The decisions of the A.I.C.C. and all other programmes of the Congress must be explained at the village meetings so that the masses can keep in touch with the political developments. We should try to enquire into their sufferings and, whenever possible, must try to give them relief. The Congress must mean the masses of the country and masses constitute the nation.

15. To Lord Lothian[1]

Allahabad
March 25, 1937

Dear Lord Lothian,

Thank you for your letter[2] of the 4th March which reached me in Delhi just after we had come to our decision.[3] May I say that I appreciate your writing to me even though I may not always agree with you? I am quite sure that a full consideration of all points of view is necessary in order to approximate to the truth or to the right course to be taken.

The Congress Committee, as you no doubt know, went very far towards permitting the acceptance of responsibility under the new constitution. They went further than many of us wanted. We have certainly asked for an assurance that they will not interfere with the minister's discretion or ignore his advice so long as he acts within the constitution. If that assurance cannot be given then it is clearer than

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He expressed the hope that as the Congress was the largest single party in six provinces it would be willing to take office.
3. On 17-18 March 1937, the A.I.C.C. had reiterated Mahatma Gandhi's insistence on a written assurance from the Governors that they would not make use of their special powers as a condition precedent to the Congress taking office.

ever that these special powers are not unrealities. It seems to me that the offer is a very fair one on our part. I do not yet know whether such assurances will be given.

I wrote to you once before, I think, that I am in entire agreement with you on the importance of retaining and strengthening the organic unity of India.[4] All our policy is shaped to that end. We want to and must avoid the calamities and frustrations which the division of India must bring in its train. But surely the federal part of the new constitution does not help this unity. It sows the very seeds which produce discord and disunity and conflict.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 62-75.

16. On the Fascist Nature of the Constitution[1]

Recent developments have made it clear that Congress ministries are unlikely. Even the modest assurance that was asked for on behalf of the Congress has been denied and we shall soon see minority ministries backed by the special powers of the Governors. That is as it should be for it reveals the nature of the new constitution so that even the blind can see. It is a constitution with a democratic veil in the provinces but essentially of a fascist type concentrating power in the Governors and the Governor General. It is the culmination of the growth of the fascist spirit in the British Government in India and with the introduction of the federal scheme the structure will be complete. The veil is torn and the reality stands forth in all its ugliness. We are content as we would have been in any event. The Congress policy has been laid down in the clearest terms and to that all of us must adhere. We fight the Act and the constitution and we shall put an end to them. Let us all pull together to that end. The first answer must come on the 1st April. So remember the 1st April.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 28 March 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 29 March 1937.

17. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
March 28, 1937

My dear Krishna,
I returned from Delhi yesterday. I feel tired and rather empty after these months of hard work. What I want badly is rest to refresh a jaded mind.

Your cable reached me in Delhi. I could not answer, partly because we were in the middle of the discussion, partly because only a very long cable in reply would have sufficed. I suppose you know how matters shaped themselves in Delhi. I do not wish to write much now. The future is uncertain still. It is by no means clear that ministries will be accepted by the Congress for this depends on the assurance being given by the government. The chances seem to be that a clear assurance will not be given. You will probably know by the time you get this letter...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

18. On the Breakdown of the Negotiations[1]

I am perfectly satisfied at the turn the events are taking.[2] The Congress position is perfectly clear as we propose to go straight on, and we hope to put an end to this constitution before long.

1. Message to the press given on the telephone from Allahabad, 29 March 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 29 March 1937.
2. On the refusal of the Governors to give necessary assurances, the leaders of the Congress Party in the six provinces had expressed their inability to form ministries.

19. To Abdul Walli[1]

Allahabad
30.3.1937

My dear Walli,[2]
I have just received your letter.[3] I am very glad you wrote to me, because I value your opinion and especially at the present moment when we are all thinking hard how to deal with the Muslim position in the Congress.

About Khaliq I need hardly tell you that I have myself been much put out at the way he has been drifting away from the Congress. For so many years past I have had a warm corner in my heart for him and I believe that my affection for him is reciprocated. It has grieved me therefore to find that political developments seem to be driving each one of us away from the other. For nearly a year I have neither seen him nor corresponded with him. I would be happy indeed if he broke loose from the reactionaries who surround him.

I am surprised to learn from your letter about a scheme being hatched to bring about a coalition between the Congress and the League Party in the assembly. I had not heard anything about it. I am entirely opposed to this as I am opposed to all pacts and coalitions with small groups at the top. So far as I know my colleagues of the Working Committee are also opposed to it. Abul Kalam Azad who is here at present also definitely opposes it.

But what worries me is the larger question of getting Muslims in a body to join the Congress and to get rid of their vague suspicion of that body. For undoubtedly there is that suspicion and hitch. I wonder if you have any suggestions to offer. If so do write to me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5(KW)(i)/1937, p. 139, N.M.M.L.
2. (1885-1941); a Congressman of Lucknow; suffered imprisonment several times during the freedom struggle; worked as secretary to Motilal Nehru, 1923-26; published *Maloomat*, an Urdu monthly magazine.
3. In his letter of 28 March 1937 he informed Jawaharlal that Khaliquzzaman had been drifting away from the Congress and should not be brought back through any alliances or coalition with the Muslim League in the assembly; "once the Congress enters into a pact with the Muslim League it loses the right to ask the Muslims to join it."

20. To Govind Ballabh Pant[1]

Allahabad
30.3.1937

My dear Pantji,
I have just received a letter from an old Muslim friend whose opinion I value.[2] In the course of this letter he says that "a scheme is being hatched with the help of Pantji and Mohanlal to bring about coalition between the Congress and League parties in the assembly." I am surprised to read this and I can hardly believe that there is anything behind it. Still I am referring the matter to you, because it has been brought to my notice under the best of auspices. I am personally convinced that any kind of pact or coalition between us and the Muslim League will be highly injurious. It will mean that we almost lose our right to ask the Muslims to join us directly. It will mean many other things also which are equally undesirable. But I need not go into this matter in any detail. Abul Kalam Azad, as you know, is strongly opposed to it.

As I told you on the telephone last night I have telegraphed to Vallabhbhai suggesting to him that a meeting of the parliamentary sub-committee be held here about the 7th April. Abul Kalam is keen on this and I think, on the whole, that it will be a good thing to have the meeting. But we must have a Working Committee meeting also before long.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. E-1/1936-37, p. 11, N.M.M.L.
2. See the preceding item.

21. On the Success of Anti-Constitution Day[1]

I have recently had what is for me an unusual experience. For some days I have been confined to bed with fever. Fever and I have long

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 7 April 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 10 April 1937.

been strangers to each other and this new companionship has proved irksome and annoying. I am glad to say that I have ended it, and my first act on leaving my sick-bed is to offer my respectful and warmest congratulations to the Indian people on the wonderful demonstration of solidarity, discipline, peaceful organisation, and unity of all classes which the hartal of April 1st demonstrated. That hartal was meant to give yet again vivid and emphatic expression to the will of the Indian people to fight and end the new constitution. It did that in a manner which none will forget. But it was something more even than that. For behind that stoppage of work, the closed shops and businesses, the fields lying untended for a day, the empty colleges and schools, the vast processions and meetings, one saw the masses in movement, one sensed the ferment in their millions of minds, and the hunger that drove them like an elemental force to political and social freedom. Hindu and Muslim had that common aim and, forgetting their petty rivalries of a day, worked together and made the first of April a day that we shall not forget. That first day of April set a seal on that unity which had long eluded us, and it cast its glamour on the future that we are going to fashion with our united efforts.

Efforts were made to suppress this great demonstration, especially in Bengal. They failed as they were bound to do. Some of our dear comrades have been arrested and await trial. I do not know fully the circumstances of their arrest but I do know that it was our desire to avoid conflict with authority for that is our policy at present. But I should like to say that this general policy does not and cannot mean that we are to submit always to every foolish or offensive order that is passed by police or executive authority to impede our normal work.

The first of April saw the masses of India in motion; it also witnessed a frantic search for individuals to put on the liveries of ministers, for ministries were going abegging and there were few so poor in spirit as to be tempted by them. The strange and vivid contrast between these two brought out the difference between the real India and the marionettes that are made to function on the official stage. And the two together brought out the pitiful absurdity of the new constitution which the people of India have already turned into a corpse that awaits burial.

Lawyers, as is their wont, discuss the mechanics of this constitution, and some even forget their law in their eagerness to champion the British cause. And faded and discarded individuals, whose groups and policies the public had brushed aside into nothingness, appear again as interlopers and usurpers, posing as ministers, though they have no sanction or strength behind them, except the force of British arms to

support them.[2] Legal quibbles will find rest now for the most eminent of the constitutionalists, Professor Berriedale Keith, has had his say and condemned the Act and supported the Congress attitude.[3]

But behind the mechanics of the constitution lie the realities of the situation, and these realities are that the masses have entrusted the Congress with their mandate and their power to fight this constitution. They are not going to abdicate that power because minority ministries function and the provincial assemblies are not allowed to meet for months. We shall know how to deal with this and every situation for the initiative lies with us so long as the masses are with us and we are true to our mandate. But our eyes must always be turned to these masses, and not to legal quibbles, and the test of every action must be that it increases the strength of the masses.

2. The Congress having refused office a deadlock ensued in the six provinces where it had a majority, and the Governors appointed *ad interim* ministers who had no support in the legislature.
3. (1879-1944); Sanskrit scholar and constitutional lawyer; professor of Sanskrit and comparative philosophy, Edinburgh University, 1914-1944. About the Act he wrote: "To say, as Lord Erskine and Lord Brabourne have said, that they would give the ministers all help, sympathy and cooperation is meaningless, for the Act itself gives powers and imposes duties on Governors, which reduce the ministerial responsibility to a farce."

22. On Federation and Deadlocks[1]

open to any of us to go outside the decision of the A.I.C.C. in this matter. So far as we are concerned we are completely satisfied with the developments. We believed that deadlocks were inherent in the scheme and these have appeared at the very outset even though we attempted to avoid them. Our policy takes into consideration these deadlocks and therefore is not upset by them.

There is nothing further that we need do; so far as the government is concerned our cards are on the table but so far as the people are concerned we have much to do, for it is from them that we derive our support and strength and it is in their increasing strength that lies the promise of victory of our cause.

There is no question of our approaching the government in any way in this matter. The conditions that the A.I.C.C. has imposed on us remain; it is for the government to agree or not to agree.

23. On Lord Zetland's Statement[1]

We should be grateful to the Secretary of State for India[2] for his statement clarifying the attitude of the government.[3] It is the old patronizing and hectoring attitude to which we have been long accustomed. We are told to take the Act or leave it. This time the British Government have realized that we do not take this Act and we reject it with all the strength that is in us. That has been our consistent policy and that is the mandate which we have received from millions of people in India. If there is any force in democracy, we must be true to our mandate from the electorate.

1. Interview to the press, Allahabad, 9 April 1937. *The Hindustan* Times, 11 April 1937.
2. 2nd Marquis of Zetland (1876-1961); Governor of Bengal, 1917-1922; member, Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on India, 1933; Secretary of State for India, 1935-1940.
3. In a statement in the House of Lords on 8 April 1937 Zetland reiterated the government's stand that the Governors could not give any assurance of non-interference within the framework of the constitution and therefore no useful purpose would be served by inviting Mahatma Gandhi to a conference for resolving the constitutional deadlock in the six provinces.

It is good and noble of the Lords to tell us what democracy means but it is not customary for democracy to be interpreted by the House of Lords or Hitler or Mussolini.

It is as clear as the noonday sun that our paths lie in different directions. There is nothing of common interest. We shall go along our paths resolutely and with a will to put an end to this bogus Act which has been forced down upon us.

24. On Lord Lothian's Statement[1]

I am glad that Lord Lothian recognises that the final authority to resolve any conflict must be the electorate.[2] If that is so, why all this argument and this talk of special powers and safeguards? It is because the Congress claims by right of the recent election to represent that electorate that it voices the demand of that electorate. We are perfectly prepared to go to that electorate and take its decision. It must be remembered that the real question is not one of legal quibbles but of where power rests—with the British Government's executive or with the Indian electorate. It was to make this clear that the Congress demanded assurances and Lord Zetland has emphatically replied that the British Government has all this power and intends sticking on to it in spite of the elections and the electorates. The real contradiction lies in the Act itself. It is an absurdity which has hardly anything to do with democracy or responsibility.

1. Interview to the press, Allahabad, 14 April 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 15 April 1937.
2. Commenting on Mahatma Gandhi's proposal for arbitration to resolve the constitutional deadlock, Lothian, in a letter to the *Times* of 12 April 1937, had observed: "I am inclined to think that the real key to the solution lies in the recognition that under a system of responsible government the ultimate decision against abuse of power comes to rest with the electorate."

25. The Magnitude of the Crisis[1]

The crisis that has arisen cannot be fully understood in the narrow legalist way nor can any real comparison be made with the constitutional development of the dominions. No dominion had ever been insulted in an Act like the India Act, passed in the teeth of the fiercest opposition, forcibly imposed, and containing the concentration of power in the hands of Governors and the Viceroy with a federal structure of stereotyped autocracy entrenching feudalism and making social progress constitutionally impossible. The recent elections fought on the issue of independence and utter rejection of the new constitution resulted in an overwhelming victory for this policy. Indian democracy has thus emphatically demanded the withdrawal of the constitution. Democracy and special powers in the hands of the executive are incompatible, one suppresses the other. The dominion Governors' powers of veto are limited and the British conventions largely applied. In India the special executive powers are far-reaching and all-embracing and they have the background of an autocratic government.

Apart from the safeguards the Act protects vested interests, prevents ministers from touching the major part of the revenues or dealing with the services, thus making it impossible for them to tackle any major problem. Because of this the whole Act must go to ensure progress.

Despite this the Congress decided to accept ministries if it was assured, even in the limited sphere of partial provincial autonomy, that the special powers of the Governors would not be exercised and the ministers' advice would prevail. Without such an assurance responsibility is farcical and is divorced from all power. Such an assurance could have been given if the British Government's professions were sincere. It meant a liberal interpretation of the constitution. Constitutions are liberalised by interpretation of legislation. We offered the former and simple method although it would be temporary for no amount of interpretation could finally reconcile us to what was inherently bad. Still it might have been afforded some limited scope. The British Government's reaction is characteristic. They told us in their usual way that they will do just what they like regardless of millions of Indian

1. Message to *News Chronicle*, Allahabad, 16 April 1937. *The Leader*, 20 April 1937.

voters. They have appointed puppet ministers representing nobody and knowing they cannot face the legislatures they refuse to summon them. This is the way autocrats, afraid of the peoples' representatives, have always acted and this is the way, history tells us, that leads to revolution. Lord Zetland's recent speech is an invitation to the Indian people to get rid of the incubus, that is, British imperialism which, whatever its professions, acts in the old autocratic and domineering way. Some people live in the hope of divisions in the Congress ranks and the weakening of Indian opposition to British imperialism.[2] They hope in vain. The Congress will face the future struggles as it has faced those of the past with confidence and unity always remembering that its mission is to achieve the independence of the Indian people.

2. Jawaharlal had reasons for this assumption. Lord Zetland wrote privately to the Viceroy on 5 April 1937: "We will see that no opportunity of reopening conversations with the leaders of the Congress in the provinces is allowed to slip by unheeded by the Governors... In this connection do you think that there is any definite step which might be taken, not necessarily by all six Governors simultaneously, with a view to detaching the more reasonable Congressmen gradually from their allegiance to the caucus?"

26. To Agatha Harrison[1]

Allahabad
April 18, 1937

Dear Agatha,

I have not written to you for several weeks, although much has happened during this interval. Perhaps you know that I have not been keeping well. Nothing much is the matter with me but I have been partly incapacitated during the last three weeks from taking my normal part in political happenings. I am better now though still rather weak.

Indira has written to you after her arrival. It is good to have her. Early next month we hope to go to Burma.

I received Carl Heath's cablegram urging the Congress leaders to meet the Viceroy. As I have said above, I have been largely out of the picture during the past two or three weeks. But it seems to me that

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

there is not the faintest chance of the Congress leaders asking for interviews with the Viceroy. You must remember that the Congress is a big democratic organisation and it cannot be twisted in any direction at the will of one or more of its leaders. Apart from this what are we to talk about with the Viceroy if we meet him? There is no common ground that I can see. Viceroys and Secretaries of State will have to learn how to behave themselves before decent Indians can go anywhere near them. There are no signs of this behaviour.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

27. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
April 21, 1937

My dear Krishna,
I have not been writing to you for some time. This is no doubt due to my ill health, but do not imagine that I have been very ill. At first there was some suspicion of typhoid but that seems to have been wrong. I do not think there was anything seriously the matter with me, but somehow I felt thoroughly exhausted and could hardly do anything. I am slowly getting back to form. But it will take a little time before I am fit again. Early next month I hope to go to Burma for a fortnight and it is just possible that I might go further to Malaya for a week. I shall treat this more or less as a holiday, though there will be work to do and many engagements. Indira will go with me.

I am not writing to you about the political developments. There is nothing very new to write. So far as we are concerned there has been no change in our position or attitude and there is likely to be no fundamental change. As you know the government is not having meetings of the new assemblies where the Congress has a majority.[2] But

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In spite of repeated demands by the elected members, the *ad interim* ministries in these provinces declined to convene the legislatures.

none the less these members are going to meet and carry on with part of their programme. This kind of parallelism must inevitably lead to some conflict, though this may be delayed.

There is a meeting of the Working Committee here next week. It was to have been held in Wardha but because of my ill health they have changed the venue.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

28. To Horace Alexander[1]

Allahabad
April 21, 1937

Dear Alexander,

Forgive me for the delay in acknowledging your letter and the account which Allen and Unwin sent. Ever since my return from Delhi I have been more or less unwell and laid up. I do not know what the matter was with me unless it was just accumulated fatigue.

The political situation in India seems to have attracted some notice in England which is surprising enough. But as usual the press in England has expressed surprise at the way we refused to play the game. I am afraid that those who apply the tactics of the ostrich are likely to receive many more surprises in the future.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Horace Alexander Papers, N.M.M.L.

29. To H.N. Brailsford[1]

Allahabad
April 22, 1937

My dear Brailsford,

This is a very belated acknowledgement of the greetings that you and Clare Leighton[2] sent to me some months ago. You will, I hope, forgive me for this delay. During the early part of the year I was continually moving about electioneering and for some weeks now I have been, more or less, confined to bed. Nothing much has been the matter with me. I imagine it is just accumulated fatigue. I have been grossly misusing my poor body during the past year and taking pride in the fact. The body has rebelled but we are coming to terms again.

Because of my illness I have been largely out of the recent controversy about the constitutional crisis in India. I could not wholly keep out of it, for my mind would insist on thinking about it. Out of the crowds of legal and other statements that have been made the obvious fact stands out that the conflict inherent in the Act has taken immediate shape. There is going to be no peace in India with this Act. We surprise people in England often enough and are told by them that we do not play the game. But the surprise comes to them because they do not follow what is happening in India or rather they deliberately ignore it till their attention is forced to it. And when the games are fundamentally different they cease to be games.

One of the most promising signs in India today is the ferment among the Muslim masses and intelligentsia. There is a general feeling among them that they have been led astray by their communal leaders. Strenuous efforts are being made to keep them away from the Congress and you must not be surprised if you read occasionally of Hindu-Muslim riots.

There are of course obvious differences between different groups in the Congress but the common bonds are stronger and we all realise that we must pull together. Whenever a conflict threatens, our old friends, the Liberals, immediately line up with the opposite party. But I must not write any more now. I really wanted to thank you and Clare Leighton for the beautiful card of greetings that you have sent me.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1899); a well-known American engraver and painter.

30. To William B. Benton[1]

Allahabad
April 22, 1937

Dear Mr. Benton,[2]
I was glad to receive your letter from a steamer on the Irrawaddy in Burma. It was a pleasure to meet you here. I do not know that I succeeded much in placing the Indian viewpoint before you. India is a big country and her problems are complicated like the problems of all countries today. And yet essentially they resolve themselves into certain simple and fundamental issues. Already, as you may have seen, a kind of constitutional crisis has arisen over the new constitution. We are in a curious position. We have big elected majorities but they may not function and puppet ministries representing minorities or tiny groups function and the government does not even convene the new legislatures because to do so would be to invite defeat....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. (1900-1973); American publisher and advertiser; later a Democrat politician.

31. To W.P. Crozier[1]

Allahabad
April 22, 1937

Dear Mr. Crozier,[2]
I must thank you for your letter of the 11th March and the two copies of the *Manchester Guardian* which you were good enough to send me. I am sorry for the great delay in acknowledging them. But for more

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1879-1944); editor, *Manchester Guardian* from 1932 till his death.

than three weeks now I have been unwell and mostly confined to bed. I am still supposed to keep away from work, though it is difficult to do so entirely.

I have read your articles about the Indian situation with interest. Since then, of course, much has happened and many fresh developments have taken place. Many people in India and England have expressed their views on the situation. I am sorry that I am not well enough to write to you at any length at present. But one thing I should like to say. Our friends in England dislike the Indian problem and try not to think of it as far as they can help it. They avoid consideration of it because the only way out of the difficulty is not to their liking. Having put the subject out of their minds they are taken by surprise when something forces them to think about India. They have not taken the trouble to see the natural course of developments in India or the various forces at play. They take an exceedingly superficial view derived from a few persons at the top and when this view does not fit in with subsequent events they are angry with us. Nothing has happened in India in recent months which any competent observer could not have prophesied. And yet extreme surprise is expressed at developments in India. These developments may be on right or wrong lines, but they were not surprising or unexpected.

What is surprising is that champions of democracy should support the new constitution in India and advise us to accept it as it is, and that they should further support the action of the Governors in appointing minority ministries and refusing to call the legislatures. Democracy when applied to the East seems to undergo a strange sea change in the minds of our friends in England.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

32. To Sir Stafford Cripps[1]

Allahabad
April 22, 1937

My dear Cripps,
Forgive me for the great delay in acknowledging your letter[2] and the splendid telegram you sent me to Delhi. Soon after my return from Delhi I fell ill and ever since then I have been more or less confined to bed. I am however much better now, though I still feel weak.

You will have followed no doubt the political developments in India. Behind the legal and constitutional arguments there lies the real conflict and it seems that this conflict is likely to continue in some shape or other. You will realise no doubt that this conflict has come not because of the more advanced left elements in the Congress but because even the central elements could not adjust themselves to the new position. So that while we differed often enough within the Congress, in this matter we have pulled together and we are going to pull together.

I do not know what has happened to the *Tribune*. It has not come to me for many weeks. I wonder if the censor is responsible for this.

With good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 3 March 1937 Cripps had hoped that "the elected representatives will work for the establishment of freedom by refusing to partake of the empty fruits of office which can do nothing but poison the pure and free spirit of the Congress."

33. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
May 2, 1937

My dear Krishna,
I have received three of your letters dated the 23rd April and one dated the 24th. I write these few lines in haste as I am just off to Burma....

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

As for the general political situation I shall not write much. You must have seen the Working Committee resolutions. They mean more or less what they say. I think you have misunderstood some of Gandhiji's statements.[2] That is not surprising for he is not very clear. But the fact is that his attitude is stiff, stiffer than that of many other people. In the country a sense of coming struggle is gradually spreading.

I feel very tired after this meeting and I am glad to be off to Burma. I shall not have rest there but it will be a change. It is just possible that I may stay on or even go to Malaya. All this will probably take me a month and I shall be more or less cut off from correspondence during this period—a good thing. Indira is going with me.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. In a statement issued on 22 April 1937 Mahatma Gandhi observed: "What I want before Congressmen accept office is an assurance which I still hold to be within the power of the Governors that they will not interfere with the day to day administration of the provinces. For under the Act, it is not they who are responsible for the administration of the provinces within the sphere prescribed by the Act. All talk, therefore, of the constitutional inability of the Governors to give an assurance baffles me and makes me suspect the motive of the British politicians who have the working of the Act within their power."

34. The Princes and the Federation[1]

The constitutional deadlock that has arisen in India, immediately on the introduction of the new constitution, has brought home to many the real significance of that constitution more than any amount of explanation and analysis. The Act may remain on the statute book yet awhile and the shadow ministries function, backed by British power. But all this is unreality, the land of ghosts and spooks. The reality of today is British imperialism on one side and the Indian nationalism as

1. Statement to the press, Calcutta, 3 May 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 4 May 1937.

represented by the Congress on the other. The Act has no place in the picture and so it is collapsing at the first touch. But we have to hasten this process at either end and so we must remember that the federal part of it still raises its ugly head in the mists of the future. The Congress has directed us to fight this federal structure and to prevent its introduction, for nothing is so bad in the Act as its federal part.

What of the princes? We hear vague rumours of some agreeing and some doubting. These princes, or nearly all of them, have acted during the past years of national struggle as the close allies of British imperialism. Consistently they have been unfriendly to the national movement. Are they going to register another unfriendly act by joining the federation despite the unanimous opposition of political India to this structure? This will be a grave decision for them and they will thus align themselves, even more than before, in opposition to the people of India. There is a great deal of talk of independence of the states and of their special treaties and the like. But the thing that is going to count in future is the treaty that the people of India make with others. The Act will go inevitably with all its hundreds of sections and its special powers and its federation. And so I would ask the princes to consider this matter from this point of view and not to rush in where wiser people fear to tread.

35. The Strike of Jute Workers in Bengal[1]

The tragic incident which occurred in the morning at the Howrah station resulting in serious injuries to two unfortunate youths[2] should provide a lesson for the people who must realise that enthusiasm, although in itself a very good thing, must be kept within limits. The railway authorities should be blamed for having kept the mail bags scattered all over the platform for such a long period which really proved to be the cause of the unfortunate tragedy.

1. Speech at Calcutta, 3 May 1937. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 4 May 1937.
2. While garlanding Jawaharlal at the station a student accidentally fell on the railway track and fractured his legs. A Muslim member of the Barabazar Congress Committee also sustained injuries due to the heavy rush.

The very fact that over two lakhs of people are involved in the jute workers strike is a thing which can be ignored by no one.[3] For the moment the strike may be confined to jute mill areas round about Calcutta but they must realise that it is merely symptomatic of the labour conditions in India. They must also realise how it is influencing the whole labour movement in India, and as a consequence, the other fundamental problem of India, i.e., the agrarian problem. Everybody knows it well that both the agrarian and labour problems are interconnected.

I have carefully gone through their demands. I find it very difficult to understand how any person could characterise these demands as unjust and unreasonable. To my mind the demands are eminently reasonable. It has been stated that even Mr. Fazlul Huq.[4] the Prime Minister, at one stage of the negotiations with the strikers, admitted that the demands of the strikers are reasonable. The Whitley Commission which came to India eight or nine years ago had also recommended, as we all know, most of the things which the strikers are now demanding.[5] I am reminded of the opposition which labour had to face in the early nineteenth century from the millowners in England. The millowners have adopted the same attitude towards the jute mill strikers now. What does all this indicate? It points out that they are afraid of the labour movement in India. But I think if public opinion in India strongly supports these demands of the strikers, and if the public come forward to help them with money, it would be quite impossible for any government to resist their demands.

It is childish to say that the present strike has been engineered by a handful of agitators. A political colour is sought to be given to a question which is predominantly economic. Six months ago, I visited Calcutta when Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, at present the Premier of Bengal, saw me and declared himself as a *khadem* of the Congress and even

3. The strike which had started in February 1937 ended in a failure due to the unsympathetic attitude of the interim ministry.
4. A.K. Fazlul Huq (1873-1962); member, Bengal Council, 1913-34, and Central Assembly, 1934-36; delegate to the Round Table Conference, 1930 and 1931; Prime Minister, Bengal, 1937-41; resigned after heading a coalition ministry, December 1941 to March 1943; headed the United Front ministry in East Pakistan in 1954; was a central minister in Pakistan, August 1955 to March 1956 and Governor of East Pakistan, 1956-58.
5. The Commission had recommended standardisation of wage rates in the jute industry in Bengal, recognition of unions, provision for education of the workers and their children, elimination of jobbers for appointment, no dismissal of workers and construction of houses.

wanted money from the Congress to help him in his election expenses. Ministers in this province who secured their elections to the provincial legislative assembly profusely swearing by their solicitude for redressing the grievances of the masses are now behaving in a manner which shows that voices of down-trodden millions do not reach their high pedestal. Or else, how could one account for the astounding *volte face* of the Bengal Premier, Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, who after having declared the demands of the strikers as legitimate only some weeks back, should now turn round and condemn the strike leaders as mere political agitators inspired by influences from Moscow?

I should like to put some questions to the Premier. The first is this: Has he the power to deal with these matters? If he claims that he has not got that power to deal with these matters, these being vital matters concerning thousands of people, what earthly good will he be doing by continuing to occupy these ministerial gaddis? Today it is the problem of jute. Tomorrow it may be the agrarian problem of Bengal. You must remember that Mr. Fazlul Huq has succeeded in his election to the Bengal Legislative Assembly on the basis of having a certain agrarian programme.[6] Mr. Huq has such an extraordinary record of effectively changing position one after another that I do not know how far he will stick to that agrarian programme which he and his Praja Party placed before the people of Bengal and because of which he succeeded in gaining his seat in the legislature. I do not know what he is going to do about that programme because it is quite possible that as he has changed in the past his views in other matters, he may also change his outlook with regard to the Praja Party programme. But suppose he sticks to that programme in theory, he may tell us tomorrow, as he is telling us about this jute strike, that although he still believes in that programme he is powerless. So, then, we arrive at this conclusion that he is helpless in giving effect to any major programme. Then what good does it do to anybody except the ministers to stick to their offices? That is a question that you can legitimately put to him.

It is because of this that the Congress demanded an assurance from the Governors that there would be no interference with the work of the ministers, before the Congress accepted office. And they all know that because that assurance has not yet been given the Congress has not accepted office. If the Congress had accepted office they would

6. The Krishak-Praja Party of Fazlul Huq had announced a radical programme of economic reconstruction of Bengal, which included the abolition of the zamindari system.

have functioned as ministers and would not be mere helpless people with whom one could only sympathise. If Mr. Fazlul Huq, on the other hand, says that he has the power to deal with these vital problems then why is it that he does not interfere? That is the question I would like to put to the Premier of Bengal.

This jute strike is important in itself. It is important because it is symptomatic of the labour struggle. It is important because it becomes a part of our freedom movement. And I want you all to help it with money and otherwise.

36. The Constitutional Deadlock and the Constructive Programme[1]

You have no doubt read carefully in the public press the resolution passed recently by the Working Committee on the present situation and the constitutional deadlock that has been created by the refusal of the Governors to give the assurances asked for in terms of the A.I.C.C. resolution.[2]

This resolution clarifies the present position, which has been already sufficiently discussed in the statements issued by Gandhiji and others. It is desirable that full import of the resolution and the future possibilities should be explained to all Congresmen and the public generally so that we may have intelligent cooperation of all in future. What the future may bring we cannot say but we have to be prepared for all contingencies. It is by our organised and disciplined strength alone

1. Circular to provincial Congress committees, Allahabad, 3 May 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 4 May 1937.
2. In a resolution adopted on 28 April 1937, the Working Committee observed: "the pronouncements of the policy of the British Government made by Lord Zetland and Mr. Butler are utterly inadequate to meet the requirements of the Congress.... The past record of the British Government as well as its present attitude show that without specific assurances as required by the Congress, popular ministries will be unable to function properly.... The assurances do not contemplate the abrogation of the right of the Governor to dismiss a ministry or dissolve a provincial assembly when serious differences of opinion arise between the Governor and his ministers."

that we can shape that future. Hence the stress on the constructive programme of the Congress.

Previous resolutions of the Congress and the Working Committee have laid stress on the agrarian problem and on the questions affecting industrial workers. All these together form the Congress programme and all these have to be worked for. Above all I would beg of you to remember the future that looms ahead and to prepare for this. The Congress members of the provincial legislatures must keep in constant touch with their constituencies.

There is one matter which I should like to clarify. The Working Committee, while strongly condemning those, who have accepted ministerships in defiance of the majorities in the legislatures and popular will, has advised that hostile black flag demonstrations should be avoided. This does not mean that such demonstrations are always illegitimate nor is it in any way a condemnation of those of our comrades who have so far taken part in them. Several have gone to prison because of these and our sympathy goes to them. But the Committee felt that under the existing circumstances such demonstrations were unnecessary and that they gave fictitious importance to certain individuals who are styled ministers today. Therefore, they have advised against them and this advice should be followed everywhere in a disciplined manner. At the same time the holding of meetings denouncing the action of the so-called ministers has been encouraged.

37. To E.B. Shawe[1]

S. S. Ekina
May 5, 1937

Dear Mr. Shawe,[2]

Your letter[3] of April 30th reached me as I was leaving for the station and I read it in the train. You have raised so many interesting points

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. A journalist working in New Delhi for the *Statesman*.
3. Shawe had sought clarification on certain statements in Jawaharlal's *Autobiography*.

IN DEHRA DUN, 19 JANUARY 1937

IN DELHI, MARCH 1937

in it that I would like to reply to it at some length. I am afraid I cannot deal with it as satisfactorily as I might have done if I had more leisure.

The story of Motilal Ghose on his death bed was meant to illustrate his intense nationalism (which inevitably took the shape of anti-British Empire) as well as his sense of humour.[4] There was no question of this being his idea of paradise, much less is this my idea of paradise. A nationalist thinks too much in terms of his nationalism and forgets other matters. I am against the British Empire, not because it is British, but because it is empire. Therefore anti-imperialism leads me to dislike the British Empire which represents imperialism in India. But all this has nothing to do, so far as I am concerned, with any animus against Britons or England.

I have often written on the question of independence and Dominion Status. For various reasons I cannot conceive of India having complete freedom within the fabric of the present British group of nations. If the empire goes then this is conceivable but that will be a different type of connection for all the constituent elements. Therefore I stress independence as I must think in terms of the world as it is. A socialist Britain would change the whole nature of the problems and I would like to be in close contact with it.

I think the danger to India from external invasion is greatly exaggerated, either from across the frontier or from across the seas. A close consideration of the problem, in relation to each individual country from which danger is supposed to threaten, will show that there is not the faintest likelihood of it. But, of course, there is the risk and we must prepare for it as best as we can and I think we could put up a good show. Every country has to face these risks today, even the most powerful of them. I do not want a protector of India, for a protector invariably begins to dominate. A country's strength or weakness is a relative factor; it depends on the balance of forces in the rest of the world. Of course we should try to take advantage of this.

As for the frontier, I think that the British policy has been hopelessly wrong and indeed it has an amazing record of failure behind it. Our approach would be completely different—a friendly approach and

4. Jawaharlal had stated in his *Autobiography* that when he accompanied Mahatma Gandhi to meet Motilal Ghose, the ailing editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, the latter while blessing Mahatma Gandhi and his movement, added that, "as for himself, he was going away to other regions, and wherever these might be, he had one great satisfaction—he would be somewhere where the British Empire did not exist. At last he would be beyond the reach of this empire."

economic approach. Abdul Ghaffar Khan counts more on the frontier and round about than an army corps. A word from him will go further. Apart from this the only danger from the frontier is a danger of raids. That is bad but not of vital importance. Most of the trouble occurs when the British troops enter tribal territory.

Responsibility and power certainly tone down people in opposition. But the real question is: how are some vital and urgent problems going to be solved? If they are not solved soon the basic trouble continues and the toning down of some people or groups does not make much difference. Others seek to represent those grievances and problems. On the solution of those problems equilibrium is established, and not till then.

You are entirely wrong in thinking that the Congress, or rather the majority in it, merely wanted to find a way out for not accepting responsibility and asked for Governors' assurances for this reason. Most of us expected that these assurances would certainly be given and we were surprised at the turn events took.

No one can say that an individual act of terrorism will never take place. It may be a reprisal, an act of personal vengeance, or due to religious fanaticism. But politically speaking, I think, there is no chance of terrorism playing any part in future.

I do not think that the landlords or capitalists will change heart. But it is quite possible that the pressure of the masses may force them to agree to a change of system. What I pointed out was that the Congress was essentially a nationalist body but it was being influenced more and more by mass elements. Thus economic questions were shaping its policy now far more than some years ago.

There are obvious fascist elements in India today. They may grow. But I doubt if they can keep pace with the growth of socialistic elements. British imperialism, on the whole, encourages the growth of Indian fascism, although there is some conflict between them.

Anglo-Indians are welcome in the Congress. I am sure they will find a proper place in the new order provided they do not range themselves against it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

38. The Unchanged Policy of the Congress

In the course of his recent speech at the Conservative Association of Oxford University, Lord Zetland expressed a grievance that the Congress had not extended the hand of cooperation to the same extent that the government had done, and that he could not see how the Congress could expect the government to go further in order to meet the Congress point of view, so long as the Faizpur Congress decision to wreck the new constitution was not scrapped.

Lord Zetland, as usually happens with most of the high officials in this country, seems to live in a world cut off from the realities of India.

On your behalf, and as President of the Indian National Congress, let me say that the declaration made by the Congress at Faizpur regarding the new Government of India Act is not going to be withdrawn, whatever happens; the declaration of the Congress that it is not going to work the new reforms will remain.

The Indian National Congress has always stood for complete independence. We want our constitution to be framed by a constituent assembly elected by the representatives of all adult Indians. But, in spite of that, and against the expressed will of the Indian people, this constitution has been thrust on us. We rejected it. Constituencies set up under new reforms framed by the British Government itself had also rejected it by very large majorities. It can indeed be said that the whole country, with very insignificant minorities, have kicked back the constitution which the British Government had framed. That fundamental policy of wrecking the reforms remains.

The conditions which were responsible for that decision at Faizpur remain unchanged and nobody could now alter or deviate from it without the consent of the All India Congress Committee.

There is talk of nearly one thousand detenus being released in the near future. This seems to be an eyewash designed to divert the country's attention from the main problem of detention without trial. So long as there is any single detenu anywhere in Bengal, anywhere in India, or even anywhere outside India, the detenu problem remains and the anger of India about that policy of the government also remains.

1. Speech at Calcutta, 15 June 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 16 June 1937. Extracts.

I am just amazed how such shameful incidents, like the banning of the Summer School of Politics and Economy at Kottapattam[2] and the alleged communist trial[3] at Calcutta, can take place under the very nose of the so-called popular ministers. I just cannot stand the vulgarity of these incidents. They show the new reforms in their true colours in spite of pious professions of interim ministers....

2. The school started on 1 May 1937 by the Andhra Congress Socialist Party and the Andhra Youth League was banned by the government on 19 May 1937 on the ground that it sought to spread communist and revolutionary ideas.
3. Basanta Kumar Joshi and eleven others were tried on charges of conspiracy to propagate the doctrines of communism.

39. On Rumours of Forming Ministries[1]

My attention has been drawn to the publicity that has been given in some Bombay newspapers to certain telegrams sent by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on the 9th March to Syt. Shankarrao Deo and Syt. Gangadharrao Deshpande. I am astonished to find that some people have drawn extraordinary inferences from these telegrams. On the very day that Sardar Vallabhbhai sent these telegrams he wrote to me drawing my attention to a newspaper report about some Maharashtra M.L.As having suggested names for the ministries.[2] He pointed out how undesirable it was for any Congressman to talk in terms of ministries before the question was decided by the A.I.C.C. Previously we had discussed this matter in the Working Committee and deprecated any activity which might lead others to think that any Congressman was eager for office. Some of us, as is well known, were entirely against office acceptance. But all of us were clear that no names should be considered in this connection till the A.I.C.C. had given its decision and we decided that such vague talks must not be encouraged. They were improper and undignified. I issued a statement to the press on this subject

1. Statement to the press, 16 June 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 17 June 1937.
2. *The Times of India* had reported on 9 March 1937 that at an informal meeting, the Maharashtra Assembly legislators had decided that the Congress should accept office and recommended the name of K.F. Nariman for the chief ministership.

at the time.[3] When we saw the press report about the Maharashtra M.L.As' recommendation I was shocked and so were my colleagues, for this showed an eagerness for office which was not to our liking. Sardar Vallabhbhai promptly tried to stop this undesirable tendency by getting into touch with the leaders of Maharashtra and Karnataka. This was in furtherance of our own decision at Wardha. It had nothing to do with any individual. I must express my deep regret at the fact that some individuals and newspapers make serious charges without an atom of justification.

3. See *ante*, item 9.

40. To W.P. Crozier[1]

Allahabad
June 24, 1937

Dear Mr. Crozier,

Thank you for your letter of April 30th.[2] I have been away touring in Burma and Malaya, hence the delay in acknowledging your letter.

You are right in saying that one must not be too severe on people in England or in India who were surprised at recent developments. You are also right in pointing out that some intelligent and important people among my countrymen were equally surprised. What I pointed out to you in my last letter was that many responsible people in England and in India form their opinions about the current situation without any reference to realities.[3] Such a thing cannot happen in England in regard to British politics because of your democratic background, numerous newspapers and other publications and a much higher standard of political education. In India we have not got that background. We have an enormous gap between the very intelligent and important people you mention and the vast number of the lower middle classes, the peasantry and the workers. They live in two worlds apart and fail

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He had written that it was not only the British sympathisers but also a number of Indians who were surprised over the constitutional deadlock. He thought that many Indians including Congressmen also would be willing to work the constitution of 1935, though they intended ultimately to secure the overthrow of the India Act.
3. See *ante*, item 31.

to understand each other completely. Many people in England inevitably come in contact with a handful of the upper class folk who, though full of intelligence and goodwill, are cut off from the mass of their countrymen, hence their failure to judge the situation.

The Congress has escaped this isolation by its direct contact with the masses. It has at the same time many contacts with the intelligent people at the top. And so to a large extent it can grasp the realities of a situation. Those realities, as you will know, do not depend on pure theory as to what should be, but on many other indeterminate psychological factors.

It is true that there are many Indians in the Congress camp who would be perfectly prepared to accept office under the new constitution if we got the assurances from the Governors which the Congress has asked for.

Indeed that is the Congress position. The Congress is a large organisation with many kinds of people in it who, though often differing themselves, are determined to pull together because they feel that any other course would injure the cause they have at heart. It has a fair number of intellectuals but it feels more and more the vague but nevertheless powerful pressure of mass opinion. It may vary its tactics from time to time but its basic policy has shown, at least during the past seventeen years, an extraordinary uniformity.

I need not assure you that so far as I am personally concerned, in spite of views which you would consider extreme, I can easily conceive of cooperation for the good of India and the world between Indians and Englishmen.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

41. To Agatha Harrison[1]

Allahabad
June 24, 1937

Dear Agatha,

I have got your letter of June 12th with its enclosures.[2] It is a little difficult to write much about the present situation. In a sense it is

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. She wanted a fresh effort by Jawaharlal to resolve the constitutional deadlock.

quite clear and its very clarity has brought out the inherent antagonism that exists in India. What we shall do in the near future I should not like to anticipate. But I do not think it will be influenced much either way by what the Viceroy has said or not said. We are meeting at Wardha on July 5th.

I agree with you completely in theory that it would be a good thing for us to have an accredited representative in London. But who is to be this representative? You see that even a member of the Working Committee who was present in London hesitated to say much. The situation here is often so complex that it is not easy for a person at a distance to understand it or to follow it. So far as I am concerned I need hardly tell you that I would love to pay a visit to the West. This kind of thing invigorates me both physically and mentally. But it seems to me highly improbable that I will be able to do so. It is not impossible, just as nothing is impossible. Ultimately it is a choice as to where one can make oneself more useful.

Indira's health worries me. She has lost weight since she came here. That of course is not surprising as she has suddenly had to face a hot weather after more than two years of a better climate. Part of her trouble, the doctors tell us, is due to her tonsils. So it has been decided to cut them off. I hope this will lead to a permanent improvement in her health. Meanwhile she has been suddenly reminded by the Somerville people that her Latin test has still to take place. Also she must read up a large number of fairly heavy books in English, French and Latin to prepare for the coming term at Oxford.

We are just at present having the hottest of hot weathers. We are on the verge of the monsoon.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

42. To M.N. Roy[1]

Allahabad
June 25, 1937

My dear Roy,
Your letter of the 16th June reached me last evening, that is, on the 24th. The fault was not yours as the Bombay postmark bore the date

1. Maharashtra Government (D.I.G., C.I.D.) records, File No. 3590/H/II.

17th June. Evidently, *en route* some persons were trying to derive some profit and instruction from your letter. But I am afraid they are a dull crowd and nothing seems to enter their thick heads.

I have seen your draft resolution in the newspapers.[2]

My trip was certainly a success from the political point of view because it shook up the Indians as well as the non-Indian population of Burma and Malaya. From my health point of view it was not such a brilliant success, though I feel certainly better.

Your resolution had not reached the provincial Congress committee office at the time of the meeting of the council and so it was not considered formally. But we had an informal talk about it and the general opinion was definitely against it. This was not so much as regards the particular recommendation that you might make but the line of argument and the language of the resolution. I confess I did not like your resolution at all.

What I said in Calcutta had little to do with the immediate issues before us.[3] I was referring entirely to our fundamental opposition to the new constitution in answer to Zetland's speech. My own opinion regarding acceptance or otherwise of office has not changed remarkably. But it does not depend so much on assurances and the like. In such matters, of course, so many other considerations, apart from pure theory, have to be borne in mind before a final decision is arrived at. I cannot write much about these aspects in this letter. But what you have written has of course to be kept in mind.

My own programme is entirely uncertain. I am going to Wardha on the 1st and likely to remain there for a week. Then I come back to Allahabad *via* Jhansi. I may visit a few places in the U.P. after that. But I am likely to be in Allahabad most of the time. The work at headquarters is heavy and has to be attended to. I do not know when and where it will be convenient for you to meet me. Perhaps a little later we might fix this up. I do not think it will be worthwhile for you to go to Dalhousie to see Subhas. Wait for him to come down.

2. The resolution was as follows: "The United Provinces Congress Committee is of the opinion that leaders of Congress parties in the provinces where the Congress is in a majority should be directed to accept office, if invited by the Governors to do so after throwing out the interim ministries, as no useful purpose will be served by insisting on a formal assurance."
3. See *ante*, item 38.

With all good wishes to you and Ellen,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

43. The Working Committee and Office Acceptance[1]

Question: What do you think of the Working Committee's resolution?[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru: Every decision of the Working Committee is a right one. Just as the king can do no wrong, the Working Committee also can do no wrong.

Q: Is the Working Committee competent to take a decision which is not quite in keeping with the All India Congress Committee's decision?

JN: It is always desirable to call the A.I.C.C. and pass a resolution but the time before us was so short, and the issues involved so important, that we had no alternative but to pass the resolution. The resolution itself made it clear that the Working Committee would have liked to submit its decision to the A.I.C.C. but there was no time.

The Committee would certainly place the matter before the A.I.C.C. when it meets next which would be done in due course.

1. Interview to the press, Wardha, 7 July 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 9 July 1937.
2. Reviewing the position in the light of further declarations made by Zetland, Stanley and Linlithgow, the Congress Working Committee in a resolution on 7 July 1937 declared that it would not now be easy for the Governors to use their special powers and hence it permitted the Congressmen to accept office. The resolution said: "Office is to be accepted and utilised for the purpose of working, in accordance with the lines laid down in the Congress election manifesto and to further, in every possible way, the Congress policy of combating the new Act on the one hand and of prosecuting the constructive programme on the other..."

Q: Is the Committee likely to draft any rules regarding the conduct of ministers?

JN: During the last three months, the Working Committee has already passed several rules. But if it finds it necessary it would again adopt additional rules.

44. The Decision to Accept Office[1]

Soon after the conclusion of the Working Committee meeting, I was asked by over-eager pressmen for my opinion on the Working Committee resolution on office acceptance. I told them that I could not say anything about it as members of the Working Committee do not discuss its resolutions. And then I added lightly that for a member of the Working Committee a resolution of the Committee must be right. For him, so long as he continued to be such a member, the Working Committee, like the king, could do no wrong.

I feel, however, that I cannot dispose of this question in this light vein and that I should try to explain the significance of the resolution to my comrades of the Congress. For two or three years now the subject of office acceptance has roused fierce controversy in the country and individuals and groups have debated it and clung stoutly to their respective views. Those views remain much the same, but what lay behind these views? Few, I suppose, objected to office acceptance on principle, and even those who thought in terms of revolutionary changes did not consider that acceptance of office was inevitably and invariably a wrong step. They, and many with them, feared that acceptance involved a grave risk of our getting involved in petty reformist activities and forgetting for a while the main issue. They feared that the initiative would pass from the masses and our activities would be largely confined to the stuffy and limited sphere of the council chamber. It was this risk that induced the Congress, the A.I.C.C. and the Working Committee to emphasise repeatedly that more important work

1. Statements to the press, Allahabad, 10 and 20 July 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 11 and 21 July 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 234-240.

lay outside the legislatures, in contact with the masses. If we remember that and our objective of independence always and work to that end, the risk lessens and we may even utilise the council chamber to this very end.

I have no doubt that the Working Committee resolution passed at Wardha reflects the opinion of the majority of the Congress today. This opinion is in favour of acceptance of office but it is even more strongly and unanimously in favour of the basic Congress policy of fighting the new constitution and ending it. Acceptance of office may be a phase in our freedom struggle, but to end the constitution and have a constituent assembly is our main objective today as it was yesterday. Acceptance of office does not mean by an iota acceptance of the slave constitution. It means a fight against the coming of the federation by all means in our power, inside and outside the legislatures.

All this the Working Committee resolution has emphasised and it has made clear again that we are not going to be partners and cooperators in the imperialist firm. The gulf between the British Empire and India cannot be bridged, our viewpoints and objectives are different. Thus it is not to work the constitution in the normal way that we go to the assemblies or accept office. It is to try to prevent the federation from materialising, and thereby to stultify the constitution and prepare the ground for the constituent assembly and independence. It is further to strengthen the masses and wherever possible, in the narrow sphere of the constitution, to give some relief to them. Let this be borne in mind by every Congressman.

The last three months and more have shown that the Congress was not eager for office and the spoils thereof. Office was ours even without the asking for it, if only we could reconcile ourselves to the prospect. We looked upon this question always from the point of view of strengthening the people for the struggle for independence. We hesitated and tried to clear the way for our work and weighed the advantages and disadvantages. There can be no doubt that these three months have made the Congress position clearer and stronger, and if we accept office we do so for the longer purpose in view and we leave it when that purpose can be better served otherwise.

The Working Committee resolution was inevitable under the circumstances, and I trust that it will be loyally followed by all Congressmen. But to be loyal to the spirit underlying it, we must carry on our work outside the legislatures with even greater energy. We must not lose our sense of perspective. Real strength even for our work in the legislatures, and much more so for the struggle ahead, comes from outside. This is the significance of this resolution as of previous ones.

We have taken a new step involving new responsibilities and some risks. But if we are true to our objectives and are ever vigilant, we shall overcome those risks and gain strength and power from this step also. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.

II

The resolution of the Working Committee giving permission to accept office and the consequent formation of Congress ministries in six provinces has created a new situation.[2] Many Congressmen view this with a measure of apprehension, many others expect great things out of this change. Both these reactions are natural. We have swerved off to some extent from the path we have followed for so long and a feeling of hesitation in treading over strange ground is inevitable. Some fear unknown pitfalls, others look forward to an easy march. But all of us, who have deemed it a privilege to serve our country and our people through the Congress, have loyally accepted the Working Committee decision, and in accordance with the traditions of our great organisation, kept faith with each other.

If tried Congressmen feel hesitant on new ground, what of the masses? What do they think of this new orientation of our policy, what do they expect from the Congress now? Do any of them imagine that our struggle for freedom has ended because Congressmen occupy high offices? Do they think foolishly that Swaraj is at hand? They must be puzzled to see some of their old comrades who were in prison with them yesterday, sitting in the seats of the mighty in those imposing structures which have been the citadels of British imperialism. Red-liveried *chaprasis* hover about them and the enervating perfume of power surrounds them. What has happened to these comrades of ours, they must wonder, what strange sea change has transformed the convict of yesterday into the minister of today? Is it that they have forgotten and deserted us, poor starving folk, we who looked to them so hopefully for relief from misery? Or, are they going to lead us to a land overflowing with milk and honey, the happy land of our dreams, so different from our present lot?

2. The Congress formed ministries, in the first instance, in Madras, U.P., Bihar, Bombay, C.P. and Orissa.

Both these pictures would be wrong. We have not left them and we are their comrades as of old. Though some of us may sit on chairs of state, the same khadi covers our bodies, the same thoughts fill our minds, the same goal calls to us insistently and drives us to action. But we are yet far from that goal and the power to mould our country's destiny is not ours yet. There is no Swaraj or Congress raj, though Congressmen may be ministers. And yet we have a new opportunity for serving and strengthening the masses and perhaps easing their many burdens a little. But even that service will depend on the attitude of the masses, on their organised strength and on other intelligent appreciation of what is happening.

It is incumbent on us therefore to go to the masses and explain to them what has happened. The Working Committee resolution must be read out to them and all its implications fully explained. They must understand that while there is this great apparent change on the surface, the old conflict between imperialism and nationalism continues, and in this conflict strength comes to us from them and not from high office. And those of our comrades who are in office today, and who deserve every help and sympathy from us in the arduous and responsible work they have undertaken, will only work effectively if the masses are vigilant and press forward the Congress demands.

I suggest therefore that meetings for this purpose be held all over India, in town and village, on a particular day, Sunday August 1st, when the Working Committee resolution should be read out and explained and, while offering comradely greetings to the Congress ministers, we should pledge ourselves anew to independence and the removal of the poverty of our people. On that day also the flag salutation ceremony should be solemnly performed everywhere. August 1st is a special and significant day for us, a day long dedicated to India's freedom. On that day seventeen years ago the great Lokamanya passed away, and on that very day India launched the noncooperation movement and began wielding that weapon which has strengthened and vitalised our people so greatly. It is fitting therefore that this day be suitably celebrated and we should remember the past and we should look to the future with the same determination which has held us for so long.

A change has come over our provincial government and though this change does not vitally affect the relation of Britain to India, it is right that it should affect all our own countrymen whether they are in government service or not. It is time that every Indian came out on India's side and cooperated with the Congress in the high tasks that it has undertaken. I trust that as an earnest of this sympathy and goodwill every Indian, who stands for India's freedom, will wear khadi,

46. On the Working of the Minority Ministries[1]

We have rejected the new constitution utterly and our policy is directed to end it.

This is the basic fact of the situation and superficial changes in our tactics must not delude anyone by imagining that we are giving up by one iota our policy of ending the constitution. It will have to go and imperialism will have to go from India.

The minority ministries are governing not as democrats, as suggested by Mr. Neville Chamberlain,[2] but as fascists.

Provincial autonomy is a strange and ugly beast which functions just as British imperialism has functioned in India. In Europe this is called the fascist way of doing things, but in India the British Government calls it democracy.

1. Message to a London daily. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13 July 1937.
2. (1869-1940); Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1931-37, and Prime Minister of England, 1937-40; author of appeasement.

47. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
July 19, 1937

My dear Krishna,

I suppose you were sufficiently put out by the Working Committee decision. Your letter of the 23rd June[2] reached me some little time after I returned from the Working Committee meeting. Not that this would have made much difference. Much that you have said in your letter I had before me. The decision of the Working Committee, though unfortunate in many ways, had become inevitable and it was not possible to resist it. The choice always lies in not changing the decision but in breaking away. And this latter course has far-reaching

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. He wrote that the British Government was anxious to make the Congress accept office and expressed his fear that if the Congress fell into the trap it would ultimately lead to acceptance of federation also.

consequences. However the thing has been done now and it is no good being tragic about it. We have to make the best of the situation. There are of course plenty of risks and dangers. We have to face them....

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

48. To H. Khan[1]

Allahabad
July 19, 1937

Dear Friend,[2]
Your two letters dated 25th May and 2nd June both reached me. I am sorry for the delay in answering them but I have had to face heavy work here.

As you have perhaps heard, the Congress has decided to accept ministries where it has a majority, so that today in six provinces in India, Congress ministries have begun to function. This is outwardly a big change from the time when these ministers were always liable to be taken to prison. But of course we must not allow ourselves to be deluded into thinking that the Congress or the people of India have got real power. How long these ministries will last and what they will be able to do I do not know. But the future is full of problems.

I received the cablegram about Sardar Teja Singh Swatantra.[3] In this matter we are doing what we can but unfortunately the Punjab is one of our most backward provinces politically speaking.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. He was in Switzerland and wanted to propagate the cause of Indian independence in Europe by working as a representative of the Congress. He also pleaded that a movement should be started to secure the release of Teja Singh Swatantra.
3. (1901-1973); a revolutionary and a communist; after working abroad for a long time reached India in 1934 and remained underground till his arrest in January 1936; during his detention in Campbellpore jail between 1936 and 1942 was elected unopposed to the Punjab Assembly in May 1937; was closely associated with the All India Kisan Sabha and the Communist Party; member, Lok Sabha, 1971 till his death in 1973.
The Indians at Geneva had recommended that Teja Singh Swatantra be nominated as a Congress candidate in the elections for the Punjab Assembly.

I am sorry to learn of your ill health and your other difficulties. I wish I could help you in the manner suggested by you. But Indian newspapers seldom pay their correspondents and it is difficult to get any thing out of them. I have tried this before and failed. I am not connected with any newspapers myself. I shall however keep your suggestion in mind and if an opportunity offers itself I shall write to you. But I see no prospect of success at present...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

49. Note on the Constitutional Impasse[1]

On April 1st, 1937 Part III of the Act of 1935 was put into operation, and provincial autonomy as envisaged in the new constitution was inaugurated. The parties or groups controlling a majority in the provincial assemblies were then entitled to shoulder the responsibilities of government, in terms of the Act, in all the provinces. In six provinces the Congress assembly parties were in a clear majority over all other parties;[2] in some provinces they were the largest single party. The six provinces where they were in a clear majority (Madras, U.P., Bihar, Bombay, C.P. and Orissa) comprised two-thirds of British India's population. The Congress was thus in a position to undertake, if it so chose, the formation of ministries in these six provinces. In most of the remaining provinces it could have done so by forming an alliance or coalition with another group.

The question of office acceptance and formation of ministries had agitated the Congress for the past two years and a final decision had been repeatedly postponed. After the general elections had brought

1. July 1937. *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 228-233. This was a joint note of Narendra Deva, K.T. Shah and Jawaharlal for the series issued by the National Publications Society.
2. The following number of seats were won by the Congress in the legislative assemblies of the six provinces: Madras—159 out of 215 seats, U.P.—134 out of 228 seats, Bihar—98 out of 152 seats, Bombay—86 out of 175 seats, C.P.—70 out of 112 seats and Orissa—36 out of 60 seats.

striking success to the Congress and the inauguration of the new constitution was imminent, the decision could no longer be delayed. The All India Congress Committee therefore met for this purpose in Delhi in the third week of March 1937 and finally decided to permit acceptance of office in the provinces where the Congress commanded a majority in the legislature, but they made this subject to a condition. Ministries were only to be formed by Congressmen if the leader of the Congress Party in the provincial legislature was satisfied, and was in a position to declare publicly, that the Governor would not use his special powers of interference, or set aside the advice of ministers in regard to their constitutional activities. The all India convention, consisting of Congress members of the various provincial assemblies and members of the All India Congress Committee, accepted this decision of the All India Congress Committee.

In accordance with this direction the leaders of Congress parties who were invited by Governors to form ministries asked for the necessary assurances, and these not having been given, the leaders expressed their inability to undertake the formation of ministries.

The majority party having refused office, a deadlock ensued in these six provinces, and the Governors appointed *ad interim* ministers who had no backing in the legislatures. The legislatures themselves were not summoned as this would have inevitably led to the dismissal of the *ad interim* ministries and a sharpening of the impasse.

During the three months that followed many statements were issued on behalf of the Congress as well as of the British Government defending and justifying the position taken up by each. The controversy was often carried on in legal and constitutional terms but, in essence, the conflict went deeper and represented the antagonism between British imperialism and the desire of the Indian people to be free. By asking for assurances from Governors not to use their special powers of interference, the Congress wanted to develop a convention that the ministers' advice would prevail even as regards these special powers. It wanted a free hand in the provincial government within the limits of the Act.

The Governors' executive powers and functions, according to the Act, are of three kinds:

(i) those to be exercised in the Governor's sole discretion;
(ii) those in which he is to exercise his individual judgment; and
(iii) those in which he must act upon the advice of his ministers.

The assurances demanded by the Congress referred to the first two classes. In the first of these the Governor need not even refer to his ministers, if he so chooses, and can take decisions entirely on his own

responsibility. In the second class fall certain obligations imposed upon the Governor in which he must exercise his individual judgment, but before he does so, he is to consult his ministers. Should the advice of the ministers not be acceptable to him, he can disregard it. The list of matters in which the Governor is entitled to exercise his own judgment is formidable and imposing, and it was an appreciation of this fact that led the Congress to ask for assurances to avoid obstruction and continual deadlocks in the government of the province.

It was stated on behalf of the British Government that such assurances could not be given without doing violence to the Act. The Congress leaders stated that, while they were entirely opposed to the Act as a whole, they did not contemplate amendments to the Act by demanding assurances. Such assurances could be given even within the terms of the Act. Where discretion was given to the Governor he could certainly exercise it in favour of the advice of the ministers, and he could give an assurance to this effect. The Governor was nowhere prohibited by the Act from exercising his discretion in accordance with his ministers' advice.

As the controversy took a legal turn, as to whether the assurances demanded could or could not be given under the Act, Mahatma Gandhi, on behalf of the Congress, proposed that the matter be referred to an impartial tribunal for decision. This offer was not accepted by the British Government. Nor was recourse had to section 310 of the Act, which was framed especially to meet possible difficulties during the transitional period.

As the controversy proceeded there was a slight toning down by interpretations of the original demand for assurances on behalf of the Congress. The British Government also changed their ground by slow degrees and finally took up the position that, though a definite assurance in terms of the Congress resolution could not be given, the essence of provincial autonomy, as envisaged in the new constitution, was the cooperation of the Governor with his ministers.

The position of the *ad interim* ministries was becoming more and more difficult. They were highly unpopular and they had no sanction behind them except the will of the Governor. As they could not face the legislature, the legislature was not summoned in spite of repeated demands from the elected members. Provincial autonomy seemed to be reduced to a farce. It was obvious that these conditions could not last much longer as the legislatures had to be summoned within six months and the budget had to be passed. It was this deepening crisis which led to the largest advance on the part of the British Government, but this advance was accompanied by a broad hint from the Viceroy that if

the Congress majorities persisted in their refusal to accept office, the constitution would have to be suspended under section 93 of the Act in those provinces where the Congress commanded a majority.

It was to consider this situation that the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress met and on July 7th, 1937 it decided to permit acceptance of cabinet responsibilities. It declared that while the declarations on behalf of the British Government exhibit a desire to make an approach to the Congress demand, they fall short of the assurances asked for in terms of the A.I.C.C. resolution. It stated further that it was unable to subscribe to the doctrine of partnership propounded in the aforesaid declarations, and that the proper description of the existing relationship between the British Government and the people of India is that of exploiter and exploited, and hence they have a different outlook upon almost everything of vital importance. Nevertheless the Committee felt that the situation created as a result of the circumstances and events that had occurred since the Congress demand was put forward, warranted the belief that it will not be easy for the Governors to use their special powers. The Committee therefore resolved that Congressmen be permitted to accept office where they may be invited thereto. But it added that it wished to make it clear that office was to be accepted and utilised for the purpose of working in accordance with the lines laid down in the Congress election manifesto and to further in every way the Congress policy of combating the new Act on the one hand, and of prosecuting the constructive programme on the other.

Within a few days of this resolution of the Working Committee, the leaders of Congress parties in the six provinces were invited to form cabinets, and they accepted the invitation. The constitutional deadlock thus ended. Congress cabinets have now been formed in Madras, United Provinces, Bombay, Bihar, Central Provinces and Orissa.

3

THE CONGRESS AND THE MUSLIMS

and in Bengal, like the Ahrars and the kisan parties,[3] being outside the fold of the Muslim League, are not really Muslim. We have a new test of orthodoxy.

What exactly Mr. Jinnah would like us, of the Congress, to do with the large numbers of Muslims in the Congress, I do not know. Would he like us to ask them to resign and go on bended knee to him? And what shall I say to the great crowds of Muslim peasants and workers who come to listen to me?

All this seems to me extraordinary and harmful doctrine and most unjust to the Muslims. His reference to a 'third party' is also far from happy or complimentary to the Muslims. Between British imperialism and Indian nationalism he would have them remain as a political group apart, apparently playing off one against the other, and seeking communal advantage even at the cost of the larger public good.

I am totally unable to think along these or any other communal lines, and with all deference to Mr. Jinnah, may I suggest that such ideas are medieval and out of date? They bear no relation whatever to modern conditions and modern problems, which are essentially economic and political. Religion is both a personal matter and a bond of faith, but to stress religion in matters political and economic is obscurantism and leads to the avoidance of real issues. In what way are the interests of the Muslim peasant different from those of the Hindu peasant? Or those of a Muslim labourer or artisan or merchant or landlord or manufacturer different from those of his Hindu prototype? The ties that bind people are common economic interests, and, in the case of a subject country especially, a common national interest. Religious questions may arise and religious conflicts may take place, and they should be faced and settled. But the right way to deal with them is to limit their sphere of action and influence, and to prevent them from encroaching on politics and economics. To encourage a communal consideration of political and economic problems is to encourage reaction and go back to the Middle Ages. It is an impossible attempt, for it ignores realities.

The realities of today are poverty and hunger and unemployment and the conflict between British imperialism and Indian nationalism. How are these to be considered communally?

There are of course many groups and parties and odd individuals in the country today. But, historically speaking, the present contest lies

3. The Krishak Praja Party founded in 1929 by Fazlul Huq.

between imperialism and nationalism. All 'third parties', middle and undecided groups, etc., have no real importance to this historic sense. They have consequently no great strength and they function only in elections and the like and fade away at other times. The Congress represents Indian nationalism and is thus charged with a historic destiny. Because of this, it is the only organisation which has developed a vast prestige in India and the strength and will to stand up against British imperialism. Thus, in the final analysis, there are only two forces in India today—British imperialism and the Congress representing Indian nationalism. There are other vital forces in the country, representing a new social outlook, but they are allied to the Congress. The communal groupings have no such real importance in spite of occasional importance being thrust upon them.

Mr. Jinnah leads a party in the Legislative Assembly.[4] The members of that party have shown the most remarkable independence of each other and of the party. Why is that so? Because no common principle or policy binds them and at the touch of any real problem they break apart. That must also be the inevitable fate of communal parties.

There is no question of dictators and camp followers. The Congress is a democratic organisation with its roots deep down in the Indian soil. Its doors are open to every Indian who believes in independence. For it the dominant issue is that of independence to enable us to get rid of poverty and the exploitation of the people. It may make mistakes but it tries always to think in terms of the nation and in terms of national freedom, and deliberately to avoid a narrower or a communal outlook.

What does the Muslim League stand for? Does it stand for the independence of India, for anti-imperialism? I believe not. It represents a group of Muslims, no doubt highly estimable persons, but functioning in the higher regions of the upper middle classes and having no contacts with the Muslim masses and few even with the Muslim lower middle class. May I suggest to Mr. Jinnah that I come into greater touch with the Muslim masses than most of the members of the Muslim League? I know more about their hunger and poverty and misery than those who talk in terms of percentages and seats in the councils and places in the state services. I have had vast Muslim audiences in the Punjab and elsewhere. They did not ask me about the communal problem or percentages or separate electorates. They were intensely interested in the burden of land revenue or rent, of debt, of water rates, of unemployment, and the many other burdens they carry.

4. He was the leader of the Independents in the Central Legislative Assembly and the official members tried to keep this group away from the Congress.

As President of the Congress I have the honour and privilege to represent the innumerable Muslims throughout the country who have taken a valiant part in the struggle for freedom, who have suffered for the great cause of independence and who have stood shoulder to shoulder with others in our historic fight under the banner of the Congress. I represent the many brave Muslim comrades who still stand in the front ranks of our forces and who have been true to the Congress through the strain and stress of past years. I represent the hunger and poverty of the masses, Muslim as well as Hindu; the demand for bread and land and work and relief from innumerable burdens which crush them; the urge to freedom from an intolerable oppression. I represent all this because the Congress represents it, and I have been charged by the Congress to hold aloft its principles and the torch that it has lighted to bring hope and strength and brightness to the dark corners of our land and to the suffering hearts of our people.

The Congress welcomes all cooperation; it has repeatedly stressed the need for a joint front against imperialism. It will cooperate with pleasure with the Muslim League as with other organisations, but the basis of this cooperation must be anti-imperialism and the good of the masses. In its opinion no pacts and compromises between handfuls of upper class people, and ignoring the interests of the masses, have any real or permanent value. It is with the masses that it deals for it is concerned above all with their interests. But it knows that the masses, Hindu and Muslim, care little for communal questions. They demand urgently and insistently economic relief and, in order to obtain this, political freedom. On this broad basis there can be the fullest cooperation between all elements in the country who seek the good of the people as a whole and their freedom from imperialism.

2. The Need for Greater Contacts with Muslims[1]

Allahabad

Wherever we went we found a willing response from them, an eagerness to hear the Congress message and a desire to line up with our freedom movement. But the lack of previous work among them and the paucity of trained Muslim workers prevented us from taking full advantage of this new interest and awakening. Since then the subject has engaged the earnest attention of leading Congressmen and it has been felt that we must make a special effort to enrol Muslim Congress members, so that our struggle for freedom may become even more broadbased than it is, and the Muslim masses should take the prominent part in it which is their due. Indeed when we look at the vital problems facing the country, the problem of independence and of the removal of poverty and unemployment, there is no difference between the Muslim masses and the Hindu or Sikh or Christian masses in the country. Differences only come to the surface when we think in terms of the handful of upper class people. Even these differences are no doubt capable of adjustment if approached in a friendly manner and with the larger viewpoint always before us.

The first thing to be done is to concentrate on enrolling Muslim members of the Congress. With a large membership, they will inevitably play an important part in the Congress work and will help in shaping the Congress policy. I suggest to your committee therefore to pay special attention to this matter and take immediate steps to organise enrolment of Muslim members. I know that large numbers are waiting to be approached by our workers and will gladly join.

I suggest also that each provincial Congress committee should appoint a special committee to consider and take in hand this work of increasing Congress contacts with the Muslim masses, rural and urban. This committee will not lay down any policy for that is the work of the provincial Congress committee. It will concentrate on the enrolment of members and otherwise interesting the Muslims in the day to day activities of the Congress. These activities will not of course be carried on separately by the Muslims but by Congressmen generally in each particular area.

The office of the All India Congress Committee is starting a separate department for this purpose and we shall gladly help with advice, leaflets, pamphlets, etc. The provincial Muslim mass contacts committees will naturally work under the direction of their P.C.Cs. But it would be desirable if they kept in direct touch with the A.I.C.C. office.

There is one other matter to which I should like to draw your attention. Complaints reach our office sometimes that notices of meetings, etc. are not always issued in Urdu and so many people remain ignorant of our activities and cannot join our meetings. These complaints are

often justified. I should like you, therefore, to impress upon your district and local committees to issue notices in Urdu in all areas where there is an Urdu-reading population. This will apply more specially to the Punjab, Delhi and U.P. and to the larger towns elsewhere.

I shall be grateful to you if you will send our office periodical reports of the work done in this connection.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Rejoinder to M. A. Jinnah[1]

I am sorry that anything that I have said or done should lead Mr. Jinnah to think that I want to function as a dictator.[2] Far from dictating to others, I cannot even dictate to myself. I am a servant and worker of the Congress carrying out its directions. Personally I find it difficult to think of any question on communal lines. I think on political and economic lines. But I should like to assure Mr. Jinnah and others that the Congress attaches the greatest importance to the building up of a united India and for removing the differences and suspicions which unfortunately separate sometimes various religious groups. To that end the Congress will cooperate with all others but inevitably that unity must have an enduring political basis. It cannot be a unity of subjection.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 25 April 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 26 April 1937.
2. In response to a suggestion by *Jayabharat*, a daily of Bombay, that Jinnah's offer of cooperation should be accepted, Jawaharlal had wired: "Congress is bound by the fundamental policy of independence, rejection of the new constitution and working on mass basis for mass betterment. I am willing to cooperate and discuss with representative individuals or groups on this basis." Jinnah replied: "It appears to me that he has taken the position of a dictator. It comes to this 'accept what I have already decided and then I shall talk to you.' This is not the way to arrive at a settlement."

4. The Congress and the Muslims[1]

For various reasons the problem of increasing the Muslim element in the Congress has recently received considerable attention. This has been so both on the side of prominent Congressmen, Hindu and Muslim alike, and on the part of others who, though sympathetic, have hesitated to join the Congress. There is no doubt about it that Muslim India is in a state of ferment today. The Muslim masses inevitably think more and more in terms of common economic problems and common burdens together with others. As a reaction to these new currents certain prominent Muslims, connected with communal organizations, have tried to dissuade Muslims from joining the Congress and have even hinted at dire consequences and catastrophes if this should happen.[2]

I have no desire to enter into these controversies which tend to become personal and in which irrelevant issues are often raised. It is not, therefore, with a view to controversy that I issue this statement, but I do feel that clarity of ideas is desirable and the Congress position should be clearly understood. I find that even Congressmen sometimes fail to appreciate this and talk in terms of pacts and compromises with Muslims or other religious groups.

The Congress is a political organization dealing also inevitably with economic problems for these problems affect the masses of India more than anything else. The objective of the Congress is political independence, that is, the capture of power by the people of India, irrespective of their religion. Every Indian of the hundreds of millions who inhabit this country must be a sharer in this power and must benefit by the new order that we strive for. For ultimately it is this order, which removes our crushing poverty and unemployment, which we work for. Subjection and poverty are the common lot of Indians whatever their religion might be; freedom and economic and cultural betterment must

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 25 April 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 28 April 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 149-155.
2. Opposing the Muslim mass contact programme of the Congress, Shaukat Ali in a statement to the press issued on 21 April 1937 had warned: "All that is being talked and written in the press about Muslim mass contact and the Muslim League would have been very amusing if it was not so tragic and full of danger. Howsoever Pandit Jawaharlal may be encouraged by what paid or unpaid Muslims may say to him, he will fail unless he meets real Muslims. Efforts like this will only widen the gulf and lead to a fearful catastrophe."

also be the common lot of all of us. In the struggle to obtain this the Congress offers a common platform to all and because it thinks in terms of the masses and their betterment, it goes to them, organizes them, advises them, seeks strength and guidance from them.

The Congress, being a political organization, does not concern itself with religion or connected matters. But religion and culture being important matters in the life of many individuals, it is right that they should want to know how these are viewed by the Congress. Therefore, the Congress declared at Karachi and subsequently, in the clearest language, that the fundamental and basic rights of all Indians must contain provisions for the free exercise of religion, for freedom of conscience, for the protection of the culture, language and script of minorities, and further that all citizens, whatever their religion or caste or sex, were equal before the law and in regard to public employment, office, trade or calling. The franchise must be on the basis of universal suffrage.

This assurance has been repeated in the Congress election manifesto and is the basis of all Congress policy. It applies to all majorities and minorities alike and it is unthinkable that the Congress will ever vary it.

Having given this solemn assurance, the Congress has nothing further to do with religious or cultural matters and it pursues its political struggle. In this political struggle it has gained great power because millions of people have sided with it, approved of its programme, and looked to it for deliverance from their thraldom and misery. That programme was a common programme for all Indians, whatever their religious persuasions may be. The development of the nationalist movement has crystallized power in two opposing ranks, and we have in India today two dominating forces: Congress India, representing Indian nationalism, and British imperialism.

I have often been made to say in the public press, owing to a mistranslation, that there were only two parties in India. That is manifestly wrong for there may be, and are, any number of parties, big or small, important or confined to a handful. But what I have said, and what I think is true, is that there are two principal forces in India today, that of the Congress and that of imperialism. Others incline during a crisis towards the one or the other, or are mere lookers-on and do not count. We have had big crises and conflicts in the past, and as is the way with nations and communities, we have gained strength and self-reliance thereby. Out of a fiery furnace of a nation's suffering and conflict, the Congress has steeled itself and risen higher and higher, strong in the love and strength of our millions. Those who kept out of it and relied on the feeble prop of an alien and vanishing government, remain themselves feeble, without self-reliance or strength, unable

to charge themselves with the energy of a nation on the move.

Strength does not come to a nation or a community from mere numbers, or special seats in the legislatures, or protection given by outsiders. It comes from within and from the cooperation and goodwill of comrades in a common cause. The minorities in India will not flourish by being spoon-fed from above but by their own merits and strength. Can anyone imagine that any majority in India can crush the brave Sikhs, small as they are in numbers? Only a lunatic can think that the Muslims can be dominated and coerced by any religious majority in India.

The time has gone by when religious groups as such can take part in political or economic struggles. That may have been the case in medieval times. It is inconceivable today; the lines of cleavage are different, they are economic. Therefore, to think in terms of communal groups functioning politically is to think in terms of medievalism. And this is the reason why communal groups in India fail so dismally in the political field; they have and can have no common political or economic policy; they split up and are usually dominated by reactionaries. Having no inner strength they look inevitably to favours from the imperialist masters. And what are these favours? A few state jobs, a few seats in legislatures. How does this affect the hunger of the millions or the unemployment of vast numbers?

Realization of this is coming slowly to those who hoped for relief from their communal leaders and so they are turning more and more to the Congress and thinking in terms of political and economic power.

We talk of approaching the Muslim masses. That is no new programme for us although the stress may be new. That is part of our principal programme of developing increasing contacts with the masses, whether they are Hindu or Muslim, Sikh or Christian or any others. The religion of all these is their personal matter which the Congress guarantees. But we think of them not as religious units but as suffering units of the hungry Indian masses who cry loudly for succour.

It must be remembered that the Congress has always had large numbers of Muslims in its fold, and larger numbers have sympathized with its activities. Some of the most eminent of our national leaders have been and are Muslims. But it is true that the Muslim masses have been largely neglected by us in recent years. We want to repair that omission and carry the message of the Congress to them. Why do others object to this? If they disagree with the political or economic policy of the Congress, they are at perfect liberty to place their policy before the masses. But it is to the masses that the appeal must be made.

This is important, the appeal to the masses. Our problems cannot be solved, we hold, by a few people at the top. And that is why we have lost faith in the old style all parties conferences, in a few persons, representing communal organizations with no common political background, meeting together and discussing and quarrelling. We have had enough experience of these in the past, and that experience does not call for repetition. We are, of course, always willing to discuss our problems with all who earnestly desire their solution, whether they agree with us or not. But the way to a solution is not through a so-called all parties conference.

Those who talk of the Congress entering into a pact or alliance with Muslims or others, fail to understand the Congress or the new forces that are moving our people. We have already made a great pact among our people, a great pact among ourselves, among all who desire national and economic freedom, to work together to this common end. The Muslims are in this pact just as the Hindus and Sikhs and so many Christians. They are there as Indians, and if they have problems *inter se*, as they must have occasionally, they will discuss them and decide them democratically within the great organization which has come to represent to such a remarkable degree the will of the Indian people. Is it not better and more dignified to do this than to seek favours from and take deputations to our alien rulers who dominate over us, and seek to play off one against the other?

When we have gained our freedom, that is the only possible and democratic way for us. And even now, in the course of our struggle for freedom, that is the only way.

Some people suggest that semi-communal nationalist parties should be formed, like a Muslim Congress party. That seems to me a wrong course and one which will encourage communalism and injure the larger cause. Our experience of the Nationalist Muslim Party[3] in the past was not a happy one. Such half-way groupings confuse the issue and the masses are perplexed. Those who disagree with the Congress will, of course, form their groups and parties. But those who agree should not stand on the doorstep; they should enter the nation's chamber and take full share in shaping the nation's policy. There are many today who talk vaguely of being Congressmen and of being in favour of independence. But they work through other and communal organizations and waste their strength thereby.

3. The All India Nationalist Muslim Party was founded in July 1929 to promote a spirit of nationalism among the Muslims and foster healthy relations among different communities.

The crisis deepens and the people of India will soon have to take many fateful decisions. Already these petty and unreal problems, communal and the like, shade off into the background and the real issues, pregnant with destiny, overshadow India and the world. What will our answer be whether we are Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs or Christians? Shall we stick to our little ways, lost in a wilderness of pettiness? Or will we, united and firm of purpose, take the shaping of events in our strong hands and make the history of our choice?

5. The Congress and the Muslims[1]

I have read Mr. Jinnah's latest statement[2] with care. I agree with him that the Muslim League is a political organisation and often acts on the political plane. But because it is confined to a religious group it is, like others of its kind, essentially a religious or communal organisation. I can fully understand and appreciate a religious or cultural organisation acting on a religious or cultural plane only. I can also understand a political organisation acting politically, whatever its view might be. But to mix the two is to create confusion and prevent the proper decision of any issue. Mr. Jinnah tells us that the Muslim League is a political organisation and its policy and programme differ in vital respects from that of the Congress. The mere fact that a person is born to or professes the faith of Islam does not surely mean that he must also conform to the political policy and programme of the Muslim League. If he disagrees with that policy, as large numbers of Muslims do, he must inevitably seek some other political organisation whose policy and programme appeal to him. If he agrees with the Congress policy he will join it and function through it politically. That does not mean that he wants the disruption of Muslims. He is merely acting as politically-thinking people act. Obviously there are great differences of political opinion, *inter se*, among Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Parsees, etc.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 2 May 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 5 May 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 155-160.
2. In his statement of 29 April 1937, Jinnah while referring to Jawaharlal's statement of 25 April said: "It is quite clear that he is talking as if he were a sovereign authority."

Among each of these religious groups one may find Congressmen, socialists, anti-socialists, communists, liberals, direct-actionists, revolutionaries, moderates, extremists, believers in different kinds of economic theory, supporters of the Douglas credit system or any other system. These cleavages of political and economic opinion are rightly represented by political and economic parties in the public life of the country. But to form a religious or communal party, which also dabbles in political and economic matters, cuts across these real cleavages of opinion on live issues and thus is an unreal party in the political sense. Or else it partly represents, as the Muslim League or Hindu Sabha or Sikh League may claim to represent, a certain section of a religious group which holds by certain political and economic theories. But even this it does not do with clarity and precision as it is always talking in terms of a religious group which, by its very nature, is a politically mixed one.

I do not agree with the policy of the Liberal Party but I can understand it. It is a political party which bases its appeal on a certain political theory and its doors are open to all, Hindus or Muslims or others, who agree with that theory. Not so the Muslim League or the Hindu Sabha.

Mr. Jinnah has failed to understand me if he thinks that I am out to destroy other parties. But, because I believe in the Congress policy and programme, I try my hardest to push that forward and to convert all others, Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, etc., to that viewpoint. Mr. Jinnah, or the Liberals, or any other individual or group, are perfectly entitled to push their policy forward in the same way. Why then does Mr. Jinnah object to my working among the Muslims for the spread of Congress ideals? The objection is not political, it is communal, and hence the confusion of thought and action. When Mr. Jinnah talks of the Mussalmans, or warns them to do this or that, he is not speaking politically but communally. He is presuming that all Mussalmans must inevitably think on the same political lines and these should be in accordance with the policy laid down by him and the Muslim League. Surely that is a large presumption.

Mr. Jinnah thinks that the Congress policy is wrong and harmful. I think likewise of his policy. We differ. Let us agree to differ and work democratically for the spread of our respective viewpoints. I would gladly welcome Mr. Jinnah as the leader of a purely political party open to all denominations and with a defined policy. Political and economic issues will then be placed clearly before the country and the people of the country, who will ultimately decide these issues, will be enabled to think about them on right lines. To appeal to Mussalmans

or Hindus as religious groups on political matters is obviously the wrong thing. It is the medieval attitude, when politics and economics were in the background, and it cannot possibly fit in with the modern world. It is because of this that I say that I find it difficult to think on communal lines.

It is very unfair of Mr. Jinnah to say that the Congress considers it utter nonsense to safeguard the rights and interests of the minorities. The very reverse of this is true. In so far as religious and cultural and linguistic rights are concerned (and these are generally considered to be the basic minority rights) these have been amply safeguarded by the Congress as far as solemn declarations can safeguard them. There may be other questions which require consideration, and certainly occasions have arisen in the past and will arise in the future, in this imperfect world, when political adjustments are desirable in regard to minorities. The Congress is fully alive to this and is always ready, when such occasions offer themselves, to help in bringing about such an adjustment. But political adjustments must be in consonance with a basic political policy. To have a relatively minor adjustment at the expense of fundamentals is not an adjustment; it is the uprooting of the whole structure, a complete loss of equilibrium.

The Congress does not and cannot accept the Communal Award because it is a negation of our fundamental principles of democracy and of a united India. It is incompatible with freedom. But Mr. Jinnah knows that the Congress policy is to get it altered in cooperation with, and with the goodwill of, the communities concerned.

When Mr. Jinnah says, quite rightly, that the Muslim League differs in vital respects from the Congress in political matters, does he expect the Congress, including the Muslims who agree with the Congress, to give up its policy, in deference to the Muslim League, a policy which has been a beacon-light to us and to millions in this country these many years, and for which so many of us have gone repeatedly through the valley of the shadow? Mr. Jinnah knows that in the hour of our trial when we faced the might of a proud empire, many prominent leaders of the Muslim League sought alliance with the die-hard leaders of the Conservative Party in England, than whom there are no greater enemies of Indian freedom. Are we to submit to them now, we who have refused to submit to the embattled power of that empire, and who prepare afresh for fresh trials and tribulations in the struggle for independence which has become the life-blood of all our activities?

Mr. Jinnah refers apparently to my faith in socialism. It is true that I desire to put an end to imperialism all over the world and I look forward to the establishment of a socialist state not only in India but

elsewhere also. I believe in a world order based on the principles of socialism, and I am convinced that only thus will the distempers and miseries that afflict us find final burial. But the Congress is not committed to this creed or policy. Nevertheless the Congress thinks and acts in terms of the masses, Hindu or Muslim or other, seeks strength from them, and determines its policy with reference to them. Therefore it considers that even political adjustments with minorities will have a surer and more real basis if the masses are enabled to have their say in the matter.

Do I talk like a dictator or a sovereign authority? It is for others to judge. But may I venture to say that Mr. Jinnah, when he objects to our carrying on our ordinary political work among Muslims or issues mandates and warnings to Mussalmans as a whole, regardless of their political opinions or affiliations, adopts an attitude which may, without impropriety, be called dictatorial?

6. On the Press Attacks on Jinnah[1]

I have been greatly pained to learn that some Gujarati papers have been making unseemly attacks against Mr. Jinnah and other Muslim League leaders. Personally I am not reading these papers and do not know Gujarati. I, therefore, had no knowledge of this.

But if this is true, it is entirely unseemly and will injure our cause.

The discussion between myself and Mr. Jinnah is one of principle, having nothing to do with personalities.

I know Mr. Jinnah since many years and have respect for him. But in certain matters he holds one view, I hold another. It is but meet that each one of us places his viewpoint before the public coolly so that it also may think over these important things. If the press or some others plunge into personalities and fling abuses at one another, no deliberation on these important matters will be possible.

And even so, this is not gentlemanliness; it creates wrong sentiments. Those who do so, injure the Congress. I can say with confidence that

1. This statement to the Rangoon correspondent of the *Muslim Gujarat*, a weekly published from Surat, was published in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 23 May 1937.

no Congress leader approves of this. I apologise to Mr. Jinnah, on my own as well as my colleagues' behalf.

7. To Mohanlal Saxena[1]

Allahabad
22-6-1937

My dear Mohanlal,
Yesterday we were talking about Sherwani's[2] election. I think that he can be helped greatly by Ashraf visiting his constituency for a short while. Ashraf knows that area well and is popular among the workers there. I might also be able to induce Muhammad Miyan[3] (son of the late Vilayat Hussain of Allahabad) to visit Jhansi. I think you might mention this to Sherwani and suggest to him that he might invite both Ashraf and Muhammad Miyan to help him in his work. I do not think I shall be able to spare Ashraf for more than three days. How long Muhammad Miyan will be able to remain there I cannot say.

I make the above suggestion remembering what you said yesterday about Ashraf perhaps alienating some Muslims by some views of his. I do not think that makes any difference in this present case. Apart from that the complaint against him seems to me to be largely based on a persistent propaganda carried on by some Urdu papers and people like Shaukat Ali and others who do not like him at all. He has been particularly careful not to hurt the religious susceptibilities of anyone. He has just returned here after his very successful tour in the Punjab.

Ashraf and Muhammad Miyan might go together to Jhansi for three days or so. The two will just balance each other.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-61/1937, p. 249, N.M.M.L.
2. N.A.K. Sherwani (1887-1956); joined the Congress in 1921; defeated in the election to the provincial assembly, 1937; elected member, U.P. Assembly, 1946; Minister of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry in U.P., 1946-51.
3. Maulana Muhammad Miyan Farruqui (b. 1904); a Congressman from Allahabad; president, Allahabad City Congress Committee, 1947; member, Rajya Sabha, 1952-64.

8. To Rafi Ahmad Kidwai[1]

Allahabad
June 23, 1937

My dear Rafi,
I presume you are in charge of Sherwani's election campaign and are taking all necessary steps in the matter. Nisar is not a very pushing person and therefore much will have to be done for him by others. There is no lack of people who are prepared to help him. For instance, from Allahabad you can draw upon Ashraf, Muhammad Miyan, Muzaffar Hussain and one or two others. As I told Mohanlal I shall visit Jhansi on my way back from Wardha on the 8th and 9th.

I am sorry to learn that you are again unwell.

Yours,
Jawahar

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-61/1937, p. 245, N.M.M.L.

9. To Mohanlal Saxena[1]

Allahabad
June 23, 1937

My dear Mohanlal,
I understand that Sherwani is lying unwell in Cawnpore. He has written a dismal letter to a person complaining that people are not helping him. As a matter of fact there are a number of people who are prepared to help if they are asked to do so. Three or four Mohammedans are prepared to go from here and they are good workers. Sherwani, I am afraid, thinks too much of the *maulvi* type of individuals. He is likely to lose his election if he thinks too much of *maulvies*. I wish you would shake him up a little. Probably on my return from Wardha Narendra Deva might also accompany me.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-61/1937, p. 247, N.M.M.L.

on communal grounds and exploited the name of religion for our purposes. I hope that every Congress candidate and every Congress worker will stick to his principles and not stoop in an endeavour to win a cheap election triumph. We look far, we have to march a long distance. Not by stooping will we do so, but we will do so with our heads high and with a straight back and by adhering to the cause of the masses for whose betterment we labour.

12. To N.A.K. Sherwani[1]

Allahabad
30-6-1937

My dear Nisar,
For some days past I have been trying to find out what has been happening in your election. Today at last on Ashraf's return I have had some news. I want to tell you that we regard your election campaign as a most important one and I hope you and all Congressmen in Bundelkhand will realise this fact and do their utmost in it. I am tired of electioneering and touring. But I shall give you two full days, July 11th and 12th. I shall start from Allahabad on the night of the 10th and go to Jhansi or any other place that you want me to go. Will you please draw up my programme in consultation with Atmaram Kher[2] and others and let me know what it is?

I am going to Wardha tomorrow and I shall try to induce Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Abdul Ghaffar Khan to visit your constituency. But I am doubtful if they will come. Anyhow I hope to send you their messages. Syed Mahmud might visit you.

Muzaffar Hussain, Abdul Moid[3] and Sadiq Ali are going with this letter. Sadiq Ali is going direct to Hamirpur. He has spent two years there and he should prove a very valuable worker. He knows the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-61/1937, p. 231, N.M.M.L.
2. Atmaram Govind Kher (b. 1894); a leading Congressman of Jhansi; suffered imprisonment several times during the freedom struggle; minister, U.P. Government, 1946-52; Speaker, U.P. Assembly, 1952-62 and 1969-74.
3. Syed Abdul Moid, imprisoned several times during the freedom movement; general secretary, Allahabad D.C.C., and captain, Congress volunteers corps, 1932-37; died 1973.

I am going to Wardha tomorrow and shall return to Allahabad on the 8th. I shall leave Allahabad on the 10th night for Jhansi or such place as I am wanted in.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To A. G. Kher[1]

Allahabad
30-6-1937

My dear Kher,
We are sending some Muslim workers to Bundelkhand to work for Sherwani. They are good workers. More will follow in a day or two. Muzaffar Hussain and Abdul Moid are going to Orai where they will see Sherwani. Sadiq Ali whom you perhaps remember is going direct to Hamirpur. In another day or so Shahid and, may be, others will follow.

I sent you a telegram yesterday about my own visit. I have now decided to give two full days, 11th and 12th, to Sherwani's constituency. I shall come from Allahabad starting on the 10th night. Please have my programme fixed up in consultation, of course, with Sherwani and let me have a copy of it at Wardha.

I am sure you realise the great importance of Sherwani's election. It has become a test election for us and its consequences are going to be far-reaching, both from the political point of view and the communal. Therefore every Congressman must make it a point of honour to do his utmost in this connection. For a victory for us in this would indeed be a triumph for the Congress and our cause. This is not at all a personal individual affair. I hope you and all our colleagues in Bundelkhand will set to work in earnest and make the whole place hum.

I am going to Wardha tomorrow and I shall be there till the 7th. I shall try to induce Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam to come also. But I am not sure that they will agree. Dr. Syed Mahmud will probably visit.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-61/1937, p. 235, N.M.M.L.

15. To Manilal Pande[1]

Allahabad
June 30, 1937

My dear Manilal,[2]
I am glad to learn that you are helping Sherwani in his election. I am writing to you however to impress upon every Congressman that this election is a vital one for us and we must exert all our strength and our organisation to win it. We are sending a number of workers from here. More will follow. So far as we are concerned we shall do our utmost to help Sherwani. I shall visit Bundelkhand on the 11th and 12th for the purpose. This is a test for Bundelkhand and I am sure that you shall come out well through it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-61/1937, p. 237, N.M.M.L.
2. (1892-1939); a Congressman of Jalaun.

16. To Khaliquzzaman[1]

Allahabad
July 1, 1937

My dear Khaliq,
I have your letter of the 29th. I have read it carefully and it seems to me that there is a great difference between what you say in this letter and what you told me when we met. It is difficult to discuss this matter properly in a letter and therefore I do not propose to do so. It is obvious that the problem of a minority, religious or otherwise, is always a difficult one and we must apply ourselves to its solution. But behind this minority problem there is yet another—the conflict between the

1. U.P. Government (D.I.G., C.I.D.) Special Branch records—Intercepted letters.

progressive elements and the reactionary elements. The line of action that has appealed to you in the past and seems to appeal to you now is to associate yourself with the communal and reactionary elements in order to make them more progressive and less communal. This may be in theory occasionally a possible policy but all our past experience in India has shown that it ends in one thing—the absorption of the progressive in the reactionary group. It astonishes me to survey this process going on during the last dozen years or so. Today it has arrived at its culminating point and the attitude of the Muslim League is more intensely communal than I could have conceived possible for any organisation. I have no doubt that you were not responsible for the working of the various notices and leaflets that have issued in Bundelkhand. But the fact remains that some of them are issued above your name. That is the pity of it. Today in the eyes of the public you must inevitably stand for the extreme limit of communalism and political reaction. I know you do not feel that way but circumstances have forced you to act in that way.

You are perfectly right in saying that there is more life and bustle in the reactionary camp than there has been in the past. Is that not inevitable when a doomed policy tries to protect itself by all means, fair or foul? And in this attempt to protect itself it has to stoop to highly undesirable methods because it cannot meet the other party in the field of argument. These are always the signs of the fading away of a group which has ceased to have any meaning in real politics.

The identical process has taken place in the political field with the growth of the national movement in India. The reactionaries have joined hands and tried to form a joint front between themselves and British imperialism. Are we then to give up our national movement or to tone it down because reactionaries get frightened and organised?

The Bundelkhand election has a certain temporary value but, after all, it is a small affair and will pass. The Muslim League has a perfect right to put up a candidate to represent its policy. It is not that I object to it but the astounding notices that are coming show the depths to which the League has fallen. Even Jinnah has no other argument left in a political contest but to appeal in the name of Allah and the Holy Koran. A community, majority or minority, which adopts such tactics is in a poor way. Fortunately there are many Muslims who do not adopt these tactics and they will serve their community as well as the larger cause far better. I am rather glad that this Bundelkhand election has thrown this flashlight on the real conflict. That conflict has nothing to do with the minority questions but is a political conflict.

On the one side there is progressive thought in action and every desire to solve the minority problem fairly and in cooperation with those concerned. On the other there is sheer communalism, religious bigotry and political reaction. When such clear conflicts occur, people have to choose definitely on which side of the barricade they will be. They cannot remain in the manger. So far as the world is concerned you seem to have chosen the side of reaction and communalism. If I am grieved at this am I to blame?

From day to day our fight continues and while people talk of offices and the ministries, our young men—Hindu and Muslim—go to prison. The world hovers at the brink of catastrophe and the Muslim League, under its brave leadership, talks in terms of four hundred years ago.

Is the League a democratic organisation or is it not just a close preserve of certain individuals? Why should I accept it as the representative of the Muslims of India when I know it represents the handful of Muslims at the top who deliberately seek refuge in the name of religion to avoid discussing mass problems? I have a certain measure of intelligence and I have studied political, economic and allied problems. Am I to insult my intelligence by talking baby-talk of an age gone by? You know what has happened in the Muslim countries of the West, in Turkey and Iran and Egypt and Palestine and Syria. You know also what Muslims there think of communalism and all its work. Do you not see that this communal policy which the Muslim League here has fathered is a policy more injurious to the Muslims of India than anything that a majority could do would be? It is a doomed policy both from the point of view of the community and the larger world, but unhappily people get wrapped up in little things, in the affairs of the moment, and do not see whither the world is going. It is quite possible that the Muslim League may win a few elections, may rouse up some of the Muslim masses in the name of Islam and the Koran. But is that the way to build up the strength of the Muslim minority in the country or to make it play an effective part in the shaping of India's destiny?

I have given more thought to this problem in India than to any other. I know that it is a difficult problem just as every real problem in life is difficult. I shall do my utmost to help in its solution with the goodwill of all parties concerned. You know me well enough. I hope you realise that personal prestige and the like do not come in my way much. But I cannot have dealings with political reaction, because that means a surrender of all my principles and a divorce from the realities of the situation.

Is it not a strange thing that in this conflict men like Wazir Hasan[2] and Maulana Hussain Ahmad should be ranged on the progressive side and that you should be on the side of the reactionaries? It is not a question of associating yourself with my views or all my activities. Wazir Hasan has not done so. Far from it. But there should be a certain integrity about our politics in public life and if we ally ourselves with those who have not got this integrity, inevitably we suffer from this alliance.

I am quite sure that I have your affection and good wishes as you have mine. I also feel that at the back of your mind you must largely agree with me. And yet fate has so worked that you are working with and helping people against your own wishes and conviction and thus aiding the cause of reaction and bigotry in India.

Indu will be going back to Europe in September. I am going to Wardha today. I shall come back to Allahabad, from Wardha, about the 8th or the 9th.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. (1874-1947); secretary, All India Muslim League, 1912-19; member, U.P. Council, 1915-21; sponsor of the Lucknow Pact of 1916; chief judge, Oudh Chief Court, 1930-34; president, Muslim League session, Bombay, 1936; joined the Congress, 1937.

17. To A. G. Kher[1]

Allahabad
July 1, 1937

My dear Kher,

I have your card. I enclose a copy of a letter[2] I am sending to Sherwani. Please note what I have said there about Keshav Deva and polling day arrangements and the like. I am relying on you greatly in this election and I am sure that you will do your utmost. I have written to various people in Bundelkhand including Diwan Shatrughna Singh. I wish his

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-61/1937, p. 205, N.M.M.L.
2. See *post*, item 20.

wife, the Rani,[3] would come out and work among the Muslim women. She is an excellent worker and if we could go to the Muslim women and induce them to come to the polling booths we would have many votes. Will you also write to him? Tandonji is writing to him also.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Rajendra Kumari (b. 1901); a Congress worker of Hamirpur; imprisoned several times during the freedom movement.

18. To Har Prasad Singh[1]

Allahabad
July 1, 1937

My dear Kunwar Saheb,[2]
I am writing to you about Sherwani's election. Banda is not in his constituency. But still I want you to give every help to him in this election. The result of the election will have far-reaching consequences and we must therefore exert ourselves to the utmost. I hope that you will exercise your great influence on behalf of Sherwani actively and give him such other workers as you can. Kher, Dhulekar and others are working hard for Sherwani and we are sending a good number of workers from outside. Keshav Deva Malaviya will also probably go there soon to help in organising. Please do your utmost. I shall visit the constituency on the 11th and 12th.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-61/1937, p. 203, N.M.M.L.
2. A leading Congressman of Banda; imprisoned several times during the freedom struggle; member, U.P. Assembly, 1937-39.

19. To Rafi Ahmad Kidwai[1]

Allahabad
July 1, 1937

My dear Rafi,

I feel that I am to some extent encroaching on your preserves. I am taking great interest in Sherwani's election and in order to save time I am taking the initiative in making some arrangements. I hope you will not mind. It is obvious that this election is a very important one and will have far-reaching consequences. The way the Muslim League leaders are carrying on is astounding. We must take up their challenge and meet it with all our strength.

For the last week I have been impatiently waiting for news as to what was happening and where Sherwani was and what you had done in the matter. But no definite news came. Meanwhile time flew. So ultimately I sent Ashraf to make personal enquiries on the spot and report to me. He spent three days in the constituency, saw Sherwani, Kher and others and came back yesterday. As soon as I saw him we arranged to send Muzaffar and Moid who went yesterday. Sadiq Ali is going to Hamirpur today. Muhammad Miyan and Shahid will go in a day or so. Others are also going. There must be no dearth of workers. But the dearth seems to be of organisation.

I have written letters to Kher, Dhulekar, Manilal Pande, Diwan Shatrughna Singh and Kunwar Har Prasad Singh asking them to throw their full weight in this election.

I feel that a good organiser is urgently needed there, both for preliminary work and polling day arrangements. It struck me that Keshav Deva might be able to go. He would do this work well. I have just spoken to him and he has promised to go at least for the last week and perhaps more. I am writing accordingly to Sherwani.

I am going to Wardha today, probably returning to Allahabad on the 8th and leaving Allahabad on the 10th for Jhansi etc. I shall spend two full days in Sherwani's constituency. Syed Mahmud will accompany me. I have fixed up with Bhargava for the loudspeakers for those two days. I am writing this to you to keep you informed of what is being done and to apologise for intruding in your and the provincial committee's domain.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-61/1937, pp. 213-214, N.M.M.L.

Our office has advanced Rs. 100/- to Muzaffar and others who have gone or are going to Jhansi. We have done this on behalf of the P.C.C. In addition Rs. 10/- have been given to Shahid.

I am sending copies of this letter to Narendra Deva and Damodar Swarup.

One thing more. I understand that there are nearly 80 polling booths. We shall therefore require a large number of competent helpers on that day. Keshav suggested that we might ask some of the district committees to send a man each at their own cost for this purpose. To save time I asked him to write direct to such committees as he thought will be able to do so. Such persons will have to come two or three days ahead of time.

Your letter has just come. There was no cheque in it as stated.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. To N.A.K. Sherwani[1]

Allahabad
1-7-1937

My dear Nisar,

I wrote to you yesterday and I am writing again. You will see how much I am thinking about your election and how much I wish to help you in this. It seems to me that you will not suffer from a lack of workers. You have plenty of support of this kind. But the one thing that I want to impress upon you is the proper organisation of the election campaign as well as polling day arrangements. Organisation goes a long way. In order to help you purely in the organisational part I am arranging to send Keshav Deva Malaviya soon. He is a good organiser and is acquainted with most of the workers there. I think he will be of great help to you on the organisational side and especially for polling day arrangements which must be clearly thought out. I am not sure when he will reach there but I hope that at the latest he will be there on the 6th or 7th, possibly earlier.

I am told that there are nearly 80 polling booths. This will require a great deal of organising and many competent workers. You will no

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-61/1937, p. 107, N.M.M.L.

doubt get a good number of workers locally. Still we are trying to get some competent men from other districts especially for the polling day. Keshav Deva is arranging for this.

I am going to Wardha today and shall remain there till the 7th night at least. If there is anything you want to refer to me you can write or telegraph to me at Wardha till then. Remember that I shall do everything that I can do to help you in this election. I shall await in Wardha the tentative programme for my visit to your constituency on the 11th and 12th.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

21. To N.A.K. Sherwani[1]

Camp Wardha
July 3, 1937

My dear Nisar,
I have just received your letter.

I have asked both Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Abdul Ghaffar Khan to visit your constituency but I am sorry to say that both are unable to do so. I cannot, under the circumstances, press them. They have, however, given me a message for you which I enclose. You might have it printed.

You must have seen in the papers my statement[2] about Jinnah's leaflet and his reply. Jinnah says that he has issued no statement of any kind whatever and yet the *Khilafat* prints such a statement and probably leaflets are being distributed containing this. I am issuing a further statement in reply.[3] Presumably Jinnah will explain this obvious discrepancy. It might be worthwhile for you to issue a short notice saying that Jinnah denies having issued any statement in the election and therefore the statement issued above his name is not his. I enclose a cutting from *The Bombay Chronicle* which will give you his statement.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-61/1937, pp. 105-106, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, item 11.
3. See *post*, item 22.

The programme you have sent for me is not very attractive, and it takes up more time than I can easily spare. Why do you make me start from Cawnpore and return me to Cawnpore? Practically you are taking full three days and two days was as much as I could allow. Please get me back to Allahabad on the morning of the 13th. However I leave this matter to you. Please also remember that too many small meetings are not desirable.

You want various *maulvies* to go to your help. I understand that several are already going. Maulana Husain Ahmad is perhaps the best person you could have to help you in the election. Abul Kalam Azad is writing to Ahmad Said[4] and one or two others. It is right to have these people but if I may venture to say so the correct approach should be on economic lines. It is no good your competing with the Muslim League on its own ground. Choose stronger grounds. I speak with some experience of Hindu and Muslim voters and masses.

Go ahead confidently and do not worry yourself. Pay enough attention to the organisation. This makes a great difference and that is why I asked Keshav Deva to go to you.

In Hamirpur district, as you know, Diwan Shatrughna Singh is a man of influence and can do a great deal. But even a better worker than he is his wife, the Rani. I have suggested that this lady should go round to the Muslim women voters who do not come easily to the polls at all. I think you might write to the Diwan requesting the Rani saheba to take particular interest in the women voters.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Secretary, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind for many years; suffered imprisonment several times during the freedom struggle; died 1959.

22. Jinnah's 'Grievances'[1]

Mr. Jinnah has denied having issued any statement to the Jhansi-Jalaun-Hamirpur Muslim voters such as I referred to. I am glad to have his

1. Statement to the press, Wardha, 3 July 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 5 July 1937.

denial. But the *Khilafat* newspaper gives prominence to such a statement and various other newspapers have published English translations of it. I understand that this statement with Mr. Jinnah's name attached to it is being distributed in Bundelkhand. I would suggest that Mr. Jinnah might find out who is responsible for this misuse of his name and should dissociate himself from the statement in question.

Mr. Jinnah complains of misrepresentation of the Muslim League and of himself by many Congressmen and by the Congress press. May I point out to him that there is no such thing as the Congress press in the sense that the Congress owns or controls a newspaper? But if there is any misrepresentation on the part of anyone I am sorry for it and I shall gladly help in removing it if he will point out what and where it is.

To call the Muslim League politically reactionary is a matter of opinion and Mr. Jinnah cannot grudge us the liberty of holding to that opinion. It may be that our standards are different, but surely Mr. Jinnah will not deny that many prominent members of the League have quite a remarkable record of reactionary political activity and of alliance with British imperialism against the Indian freedom movement.

Mr. Jinnah has again told us that the Congress policy of mass contact with Mussalmans is fraught with very serious consequences.[2] Why the endeavour of a political organisation to enrol members should have such dire consequences I do not know. Surely that is the first function of every organisation, and as I have said previously, I think, I would welcome the Muslim League enrolling members for its own programme and policy. Apparently it does not believe in enrolling members or in any kind of mass contacts. The objection, therefore, is to mass contacts as such and not so much to the Congress having them. May I point out to Mr. Jinnah again that this is no new policy for the Congress? During the last seventeen years there has been no period when the Muslim membership of the Congress has not been counted by thousands and tens of thousands. We do not keep separate communal records of members; for us a Muslim or a Hindu member stands on the same footing. But if Mr. Jinnah desires to compare the Congress Muslim membership with the membership of the Muslim League I can have the necessary statistics gathered together. I imagine he will find that

2. In a statement on 1 July 1937, Jinnah had said: "...In my opinion this policy of mass contacts with Mussalmans by Congress is fraught with very serious consequences. There is plenty of scope for Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to improve his own people, the Hindus, as there is a lot of undesirable element among them. Similarly the Muslim League should do the same thing, as there is plenty of undesirable element among the Mussalmans."

the number of Muslim members of the Congress is enormously greater than the total membership of the Muslim League.

I am advised by Mr. Jinnah to improve my own people, the Hindus. Not being religiously or communally inclined, I venture to think of my people as the Indian people as a whole and I act on the political and economic plane. I seldom think, unless I am forced to, of the religious persuasions of people. In my Congress work I have to deal from day to day with colleagues and comrades who are Hindus and Muslims, Sikhs and Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, Buddhists and Jews, and others who attach no religious label to themselves. May I also add that I am not out at present to 'improve' anybody, although no doubt improvement is often desirable. That improvement will follow on an extensive scale when freedom comes, and therefore I am primarily interested in Indian freedom and the removal of the poverty and exploitation of India's millions.

Mr. Jinnah refers to an interview given by Mr. Kripalani.[3] My colleague is not here and I have not this interview with me but I shall answer the question put to me. The Congress has not agreed to or guaranteed Mr. Jinnah's fourteen points. But the Congress has said that it seeks a change in the Communal Award in cooperation with and with the goodwill of the parties concerned, including Muslims. That is obviously what Mr. Kripalani meant.

Another statement of Mr. Kripalani is objected to. This relates to what happened during the conversation between Babu Rajendra Prasad

3. Kripalani in his interview of 19 May 1937 had said, "Mr. Jinnah's fourteen points (one would have thought they were exhausted) having been granted by the foreign government and guaranteed by the Congress, unless Mussalmans relinquished them voluntarily, may we ask what more is needed?" Jinnah, describing the interview as crooked, disingenuous and totally untrue, wanted to know from Jawaharlal whether the Congress had guaranteed the fourteen points of the Muslims.

and Mr. Jinnah two years ago.[4] I was not in India then and have no personal knowledge, but Mr. Kripalani was in constant touch with developments. The quotation which he gives is not from a press report but from the official Congress publications issued at the time. To verify this matter still further, reference was made to Babu Rajendra Prasad himself. Rajendra Babu stated that not only did he himself agree to the formula drawn up during those conversations, but, as President of the Congress, he assured Mr. Jinnah of his ability to get it accepted and passed by the Congress. Mr. Jinnah however insisted on having the adherence and signatures of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and some leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha. This additional agreement could not be obtained. There can be no doubt whatever that, if Mr. Jinnah had so desired at the time, Rajendra Babu would have secured the assent of the Congress to the formula.

4. In his statement of 24 June 1937, Kripalani said: "Mr. Jinnah has apparently forgotten what took place in 1935. The conferences resulted in substantial agreement on the points discussed. Mr. Jinnah however was of the opinion that Hindu Mahasabha leaders must also agree, and the agreement was not obtained. Mr. Jinnah considered that it was not worthwhile to proceed further with the matter or to give publicity to the substantial agreement with Congress unless the Hindu Mahasabha also agreed."

   Referring to Kripalani's statement, Jinnah said on 1 July: "Kripalani referred to my Bombay speech on May 21, in which I said that in 1935 I spent four or five weeks holding conferences with Babu Rajendra Prasad trying to get the Muslim point of view accepted at least by Congress leaders, if not by Hindu Sabhaites. But I didn't succeed....Hindu Mahasabha didn't agree to it since it adopted a different course of action that in India there should be complete supremacy and ascendancy of Hindus."

   The talks for arriving at an agreement to replace the Communal Award were held from January to March 1935.

23. To Rafi Ahmad Kidwai[1]

Camp Wardha
July 5, 1937

My dear Rafi,

Your letter was given to me by Pantji. I was astonished to read it and although I am terribly busy here I am hastening to reply to it.

1. AICC. File No. G-61/1937, pp. 21-22, N.M.M.L.

It surprised me how with all your experience of public life you are so liable to such moods and tie yourself up in this curious way. I feel that sometimes you are much to blame because you imagine things and seek no explanation for them. Or some little thing happens which you magnify enormously. Others are of course often to blame also. I am often to blame, we all are. The only possible way to get on in a corporate life is to be continuously in touch with each other, to consult each other, and, if necessary, to quarrel with each other. Danger lies in holding oneself aloof, in functioning separately without constant consultation. This consultation is often not necessary, sometimes it is a hindrance, but in the long run it pays because it prevents misunderstandings from growing. I feel that in the U.P. a great deal of our misunderstandings are due to people functioning separately and suspecting each other's motives or ideas. You know that I am continually working with people with whom I do not agree, who suspect me and whom sometimes I suspect of entirely wrong political views. But I carry on because I talk to them frequently of these very differences and suspicions.

I cannot write to you much now but you must pull yourself together. I showed your letter to Narendra Deva and Pantji but I have had no time to talk to them about it. I just got a vague suggestion that there was some misunderstanding.

Now about Sherwani's election. I hope you have gone to Orai. I do not propose to discuss what has already happened and the errors that we might have made. I have had an extraordinary letter from Fida.[2] It is so foolish that I can only conclude that illness has interfered with his present sanity. He himself says that he is feeling rather mad.

You know that it was made clear to Sherwani that the U.P.P.C.C. was unable to help him financially for the simple reason that we did not have the funds. And this was accepted by Sherwani. However the fact remains that this election has become an important one and therefore we cannot shirk responsibility even though we have no commitments. So far as workers are concerned a fair number has gone from outside. Abul Kalam Azad has sent telegrams to Husain Ahmad and

2. Fida, a brother of N.A.K. Sherwani, in his letter of 30 June 1937 wrote: "... the last election has left us broke and the main reason why my brother was defeated even in the last election is that he was ruthlessly...and hopelessly neglected by the Congress. In fact, Congressmen were instrumental in getting my brother defeated...."

Bashir Ahmad[3] of the *Aljamiat* of Delhi. He was also telegraphing to Ahmad Said. These people must be paid their travelling expenses.

We shall anyhow try to give some financial help. I believe that already about Rs. 700 have been given to various persons for this election. I understand that Pantji gave you Rs. 250. I gave Rs. 100 to Muzaffar, Mohammed Miyan etc. and Rs. 100 to Keshav. I have further written to Diwan Shatrughna Singh for Rs. 250 which I shall send a little later. We shall try to send more money. How much I cannot say. But you know what importance we attach to this matter and we shall try our utmost. Meanwhile you must make the fullest arrangements for work during this last week and for polling day.

I am likely to return from here on the 7th evening reaching Allahabad on the 8th evening. I may be delayed by a day. I shall visit Bundelkhand according to the programme drawn up for me on the 11th and 12th.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. (1885-1955); a leading member of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind; suffered imprisonment several times during the freedom struggle; member, U.P. Council, 1948-55.

24. To N.A. K. Sherwani[1]

Camp Wardha
July 5, 1937

My dear Nisar,

I have had a very extraordinary letter from Fida. He seems to have lost his balance owing to illness and other causes. But I do not wish to write about this matter now. I am at the present moment interested in how to help you in the election. I have already telegraphed to you that Abul Kalam Azad has wired to Maulana Husain Ahmad and Maulvi Bashir Ahmad of *Aljamiat*, Delhi, to visit your constituency immediately. He is also wiring to Ahmad Said of Delhi. He has asked them to communicate with you. You must make arrangements for their travelling expenses etc.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-61/1937, pp. 101-103, N.M.M.L.

You have written both to me and to Abul Kalam about lack of funds. You know that the provincial committee has no funds at all and is very heavily in debt. This was made plain to you some time back. So it is impossible for us to look up to the provincial committee. Most of us were under the impression till two or three days ago that you desired no financial help. Narendra Deva and the others whom I have spoken to have told me that they know nothing about your financial difficulties. I believe some letter was sent by Fida to the P.C.C. office. Unfortunately Narendra Deva was not there and Rafi had been ill. The office must have answered formally because it could only answer that they have no money.

However, although no commitments or promises were made, still we cannot shirk the responsibility, specially in view of the importance that is now attached to your election. Therefore we want to do our utmost to help you in this matter even financially. I cannot say what we can do because we have no funds to draw upon and we cannot ask the provincial committee for the simple reason that it has nothing. So that the arrangements that we make will be personal arrangements for which we are ourselves responsible. It is a difficult job but we do not want your work to suffer for want of funds. Some money has already been given to the people who have gone from Allahabad. Rafi has taken some small sum too. I have written to Diwan Shatrughna Singh that I am responsible for Rs. 250/- which I shall send him later. In a day or so we shall try to make arrangements to send more money to you or to others there. What exactly this will be I cannot say just yet.

I expect to return to Allahabad by the 9th. Please drop me a line there to confirm your programme for me. I shall adhere to that programme unless I hear to the contrary from you.

I am writing this letter at a late hour at night after a very tiring and exhausting day. I have still much work to do for tomorrow. But I felt that I must write to you. I have no doubt that you can win this election if you try. Remember again that it is quiet organisation and silent workers going to the villages that count, not just a few flashy personalities coming for a day like myself.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

25. The Need for an Urdu Newspaper[1]

The proposal to have an Urdu periodical, to begin with a weekly and later a daily, to give to the Urdu-knowing public the ideological message of the Congress and to fight all sectarian tendencies, is one which must command support. I welcome it and commend it to others. Although I have plenty of other work to do, I shall gladly associate myself with this venture, because in common with my other colleagues, I realize the importance of it. I trust that Congressmen and all friends of the Congress will support this venture. In doing so they will be supporting the cause they have at heart.

1. 7 July 1937. *The Leader*, 10 July 1937. This message was given to the Hindustan Newspapers Co. Ltd., Lucknow, which planned to publish *Hindustan*, an Urdu weekly.

26. The Importance of Urdu Newspapers[1]

Allahabad
July 10, 1937

Dear Comrade,

Reports from the provinces tell us that our efforts to increase our contacts with the Muslim masses continue to meet an encouraging response. These efforts must be continued in towns and villages.

I have already pointed out to you that in order to reach our Muslim comrades it is desirable and necessary for us to issue our pamphlets, leaflets and notices in the Urdu script in addition to the Devanagri or other scripts. In northern and central India this should always be done as a matter of routine, both in towns and villages. In the south and elsewhere where the Urdu-knowing public is very limited, especially in

1. Circular to provincial Congress committees. A.I.C.C. File No. P-1/1937-38, p. 91, N.M.M.L.

rural areas, this duplication need not always take place. But even there it is desirable in the larger towns where there is always an Urdu-reading section of the population.

In this connection I would suggest to you to ask your district and local committees, as well as your Muslim mass contact committees, to subscribe to some Urdu newspapers which present the Congress viewpoint or support the Congress generally. Such newspapers should be encouraged and they are of value in spreading the Congress ideology among the people. If you have such newspapers in your province you will no doubt subscribe to them. In addition to these I would draw your attention to two Urdu weeklies of an all-India significance.

Within two weeks or so an Urdu weekly—*Hindustan*—will come out from Lucknow under the Congress auspices. I would strongly recommend this to you and I suggest that your district committees should communicate with the manager, *Hindustan*, 6 Neill Road, Lucknow.

The other paper to which I would draw your attention is the Urdu weekly, the *Aljamiat* of Delhi. This is not a Congress newspaper. It is issued on behalf of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema. It has however espoused the Congress cause to a large extent and its appeal is of special value to the Urdu-reading public. I commend to you therefore this weekly and trust that your local committees will subscribe to it. The address is: The Manager, *Aljamiat*, Delhi. The subscriptions of both these weeklies are trivial and every committee could easily afford them.

It would be desirable to build up small reading-rooms attached to town, ward and village Congress offices where these and other newspapers could be made available to the public. This would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

27. To Kailas Nath Katju[1]

Allahabad
10-7-1937

My dear Kailas Nath,

If it is possible for you I should like you to help in the defence of a Muslim colleague of ours who has got into trouble because of a speech

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-57/1937, p. 51, N.M.M.L.

he delivered in Allahabad at the time the informal Muslim conference was held here in May last. His name is Maulvi Abul Qasim[2] of Shahjahanpur. There is a set attempt being made on the part of the government to control and suppress Muslim workers on behalf of the Congress and it is up to us to give such persons as much help as we can. The case is likely to take place in Allahabad. Muhammad Mian (Muhammad al Farruqui) of Allahabad will probably see you about this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. A prominent leader of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind.

28. *On the Suppression of Congress Workers*[1]

The U.P. Provincial Congress Committee has already drawn attention to the organized campaign to suppress Congress workers, which has been initiated by the government in the U.P.

Large numbers of our workers, especially those who work among the peasantry, have either been convicted or are being proceeded against.

One special feature of this planned repression is the way the Muslim workers for the Congress are being penalised.

Mr. Sajjad Zaheer,[2] secretary of the Allahabad Congress Committee, is being proceeded against for a speech to a kisan gathering.

Maulana Abul Qasim of Shahjahanpur is also being proceeded against for a speech delivered in Allahabad on the occasion of his visit here in May last to attend the informal Muslim conference. Noted Muslims, who are connected with the Congress mass contact programme, are being singled out.

Maulana Husain Ahmad, a prominent divine of Deoband, was externed from Delhi when he was carrying on propaganda in favour of Muslims joining the Congress.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 10 July 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 11 July 1937.
2. (1905-1973); member of the Communist Party; sentenced to four years' imprisonment by the Pakistan Government for his alleged role in a conspiracy case; returned to India on release.

Maulana Nuruddin Behari[3] of the Jamiat has also been externed from Delhi, apparently for the same reason. These actions of the government indicate the measure of their fear of our mass contact programme and their desire to obstruct it. I trust this will lead to greater activity in furtherance of this programme.

3. Member, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind from Delhi; suffered imprisonment several times during the freedom struggle.

29. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
13.7.1937

My dear Bapu,
On my return from Wardha I had to go almost immediately to Bundelkhand for Sherwani's election. I have just returned and found your note awaiting me. I am glad that a public announcement was made about the Maulana being consulted regarding Muslim ministers. I am expecting him and Govind Ballabh this evening for consultation.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan accompanied me to Jhansi etc. and has returned with me. Probably he will go to Bihar in a day or two. I do not quite know his programme yet.

About the Hindi-Urdu matter I shall write something within a few days.[2] It will not be very deep. But it may help in clearing the issues and facilitating a calmer consideration of them. I shall send you a copy, also to Maulana. Just at present there is a rush of work here in the office owing to my long absence and Kripalani is not here.

Sherwani's election is an uncertain affair. One thing can be said, that the majority either way is likely to be small. The electorate is 7500. Probably 5000 will vote and I imagine that the majority will be less than 500, probably much less.[3] The major fact against us is a question of caste brotherhood. The Muslim League candidate is a Malkhan Rajput and 25 per cent of the total electorate consists of these Malkhan

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-61/1937, pp. 107-108, N.M.M.L.
2. See *post*, section 15, item 33.
3. 4,557 votes were cast and Rafiuddin defeated Sherwani by 727 votes.

Rajputs. These people in a caste panchayat have decided to support the Muslim League candidate and they have even gone so far as to threaten with various pains and penalties those members of the brotherhood who vote against their candidate. These people are so frightened of this caste order that they dare not even come out of their houses to our meetings. They simply keep away. This is a solid block of votes and we have so far been unable to touch them.

Then, of course, there is the cry of "Islam in danger" and this is being exploited to the uttermost by Shaukat Ali and some others. As a matter of fact we have had all the better of the argument and we have produced quite a galaxy of Muslim leaders including men like Maulana Husain Ahmad and other Ulemas to support Sherwani. The general feeling among the better class Muslims is entirely in favour of Sherwani. The peasantry as a rule is also in his favour except for the Malkhan Rajputs. The whole electorate is very backward, politically speaking. Whatever the result of the election it has been a great success from our point of view in awakening the Muslim masses there, and large numbers of Muslims of the middle classes have volunteered for help to Sherwani. Students of Aligarh have come of their own accord to help him. Altogether the atmosphere created by this election not only in the constituency but in the U.P. generally is good. There is considerable resentment at the exploitation of religion and at the backwardness of the Muslim masses who can be misled in this way.

There are of course elements of trouble in the constituency in the sense that Shaukat Ali and others are always talking in terms of trouble. Shaukat Ali continually refers to a possible civil war.[4] He has said that he will make a Spain of India and so on and so forth. His language sometimes is astonishingly vulgar. All this may delude some people. But it has produced a strong reaction among the thinking Muslims against him. Many people who were half-hearted in their support of the Congress are now much stronger and more determined.

Yesterday at Orai I had a slightly unpleasant experience. As I was coming back in a car from Jalaun accompanied by Mahmud and two others, suddenly a group of little boys, hardly more than six or seven

4. For example, in a statement published on 9 July 1937 Shaukat Ali had said: "I am very sorry to see Pandit Nehru and his entourage on the warpath, issuing challenges to everybody. I do not know what others will do, but I am certain that the Indian Muslims will never accept the position, which he wants to assign them. Nor would they become anybody's camp-followers. If he persists in this policy, I am afraid he will create great mischief, hurt the cause of freedom and the progress of India and worsen our position, which will eventually end in civil war."

years of age, headed by two grown-ups with the Muslim League flag, tried to stop our car and then threw stones at it. A window pane was broken, but no one was hurt. Such incidents, small in themselves, create excitement. However, I treated it lightly and I believe the excitement passed. Some of our Muslim colleagues there were very angry and wanted to demand police action. But I stopped this.

Reports from the Punjab and Sind regarding work among the Muslim masses are very encouraging.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

30. On a Stone-throwing Incident[1]

Newspapers this morning state that I was injured at Orai by stone-throwing. This is entirely untrue. A few stones were thrown at our moving car as we were returning from Jalaun to Orai. I was not even touched by them and no one was injured.

The windscreen of the car was not broken, but one of the side glass panes was broken. The incident had little importance and I did not think it even necessary to refer to it.

When, however, I found that exaggerated remarks were spreading, I made a brief reference to the matter at an Orai meeting. The report of the remarks in this connection that has appeared in the press is absolutely wrong.

I am not used to melodramatic utterances. What I said was that this trivial incident has little significance and people should not worry about it. Really the unfortunate part of it was that little boys, mostly under six or seven years of age, should be induced by their grown-ups to indulge in such unseemly behaviour. I emphasised that no importance should be attached to the incident.

Elections are apt to lead to excitement and sometimes to words and deeds which we regret afterwards. Let us, therefore, keep quite cool under these circumstances and avoid this excitement.

1. *Statement to the press*, Allahabad, 14 July 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 15 July 1937.

I understand that Pantji has taken some action in this matter. So I am sending him a copy of my original letter to you also.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

33. To Rafiuddin Ahmed[1]

Allahabad
July 18, 1937

Dear Mr. Rafiuddin,

On July 5th I addressed a letter from Wardha to Rafi Ahmad Kidwai. It was addressed as follows: Syt. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, c/o The Congress Committee, Orai, District Jalaun (U.P.). The letter was sent by express delivery. This letter did not reach the addressee.

It has come to my knowledge that this letter managed to reach you and came into your possession. Further that you or someone on your behalf opened this letter, although it was manifestly addressed to someone else. I shall be glad to know if this is a fact and whether this letter is in your possession. It is not usual for letters to be opened by people to whom they are not addressed and it has surprised me to learn that this was done in regard to the letter mentioned above sent by me to Rafi Ahmad Kidwai. Why this particular letter, which was so clearly addressed, should have reached you I do not know. I shall be glad if you will enlighten me on the subject as the matter is deserving of an inquiry.

My letter to Rafi Ahmad Kidwai was a personal one but there was nothing in it which I desired to keep secret. But I am concerned about the fact that a personal letter should be opened by another person and an attempt should be made to exploit it. It is because of this public aspect that I am writing to you on this subject.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

34. The Congress and the Muslim League[1]

Mr. M. A. Jinnah's methods of controversy get curiouser and curiouser. In his latest statement he has referred triumphantly to a statement issued by some members of the Nationalist Party in Bengal.[2] What is the issue between us? Mr. Jinnah stated that even the Congress refused to agree to the formula evolved by him and Rajendra Babu during their Delhi conversations two years ago. It is admitted that Babu Rajendra Prasad agreed to this formula. It is further clear that Rajendra Babu, the then President of the Congress, assured Mr. Jinnah that he could get the Congress as an organisation to accept it, and he did so after consulting several members of the Working Committee who were in Delhi at the time. Rajendra Babu deliberately took that responsibility on himself and if Mr. Jinnah knew anything of the Congress, he must have realised that Rajendra Babu could deliver the goods so far as the Congress was concerned. It is true that Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and some members of the Bengal Nationalist Party did not accept that formula. But it is equally true that their opposition would not have prevented the Congress from accepting it. Mr. Jinnah will remember that the Bengal Nationalist Party was opposing the Congress in many matters and indeed had run candidates in opposition to Congress candidates during the elections to the Central Assembly. Therefore for Mr. Jinnah to say that even the Congress rejected that formula is entirely incorrect and I am surprised that he does not appreciate this patent fact. The Congress would have certainly accepted it on the recommendation of its President and the Working Committee. But Mr. Jinnah wanted the Nationalist Party also to agree. This they would not do and Rajendra Babu had no authority to speak for them. Because of this Mr. Jinnah did not consider it worthwhile to proceed with the matter, although Rajendra Babu was perfectly prepared to place it before the Congress and get its formal assent. This is the sequence of events and if Mr. Jinnah will consider it carefully, he will no doubt realise that his

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 20 July 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 21 July 1937.
2. They had issued a statement criticising the *Poona Pact*.

statements on this issue have been far from correct and that he has been doing an injustice not only to those whom he has sought to criticise, but also to himself.

This is past history, but the present holds us, and I am still waiting to know what Mr. Jinnah's reactions are to the methods adopted on behalf of the Muslim League in the recent Bundelkhand election. He has denied the notice issued in his name. Does he also disagree with its contents? If not, may we presume that this is his and the Muslim League's political platform? My visit to Bundelkhand has enlightened me greatly as to how communal organisations run elections and the notices and other material that we have collected will no doubt be of value to the future historian.

35. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Allahabad
21-7-1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Thank you for your letter about Orissa affairs.[2] I have been wanting to write to you for the last four days about a curious situation that has arisen here but as the urgency seemed to pass, I delayed writing. I shall now put you briefly in possession of the facts.

During the general elections in the U.P. there was not much conflict between the Congress and the Muslim League. It was the desire of both parties to avoid a conflict as much as possible and to accommodate each other. In the early stages of the election campaign a number of Muslims who were more or less Congressmen were doubtful if they would stand on behalf of the Congress or the League. If they had been pressed to do so they would have probably stood on the Congress ticket. But as there was no such pressure they drifted gradually to the League side under the vague impression that it was much the same thing. The League election board in the U.P. was a curious affair. There were some fairly good and old Congressmen in it, there were hopeless reactionaries, and there were middling people who drifted hither and thither.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Rajendra Prasad had been in charge of the formation of the ministry in Orissa.

As we looked upon the election campaign it was a tussle with the Agriculturist Party which was a wholly government party of big zamindars. The League also was opposing them and so inevitably our opposition to the League weakened. We did not want to split the forces opposed to pure reaction.

I did not know much about all this and had practically nothing to do with it. As the election campaign developed and our strength became apparent, some Muslims came to us wanting to stand on our ticket. But they were not obviously desirable from the Congress point of view and we allowed matters to drift, although we began to regret not having run more Congress Muslim candidates.

There was no kind of arrangement between the U.P. Congress and the League, but a kind of convention developed. In one or two instances we opposed League candidates and came near to success.

During the election campaign the outstanding and most powerful worker on behalf of the League was Maulana Husain Ahmad who has always been very near to the Congress. During my tours where there was no Congress Muslim candidate, I usually supported the League candidate if he was not an obvious reactionary, as sometimes he was.

After the elections there was a tussle inside the League and the reactionary elements seemed to gain the upper hand. Relations between the U.P. Congress and the U.P. League became more strained. During the convention at Delhi this matter was discussed by us with the Jamiat leaders who had so far supported the League fully but who were now worried at the reactionary turn it was taking.

After the convention the U.P. League board became even more reactionary and its president, the Raja of Salempur,[3] joined the interim ministry. This created a crisis in the League which resulted in the resignation of many members from its parliamentary board. Among those who resigned was Maulana Husain Ahmad. Most of those who resigned were not M.L.As but one M.L.A., Hafiz Ibrahim,[4] also resigned and formally joined the Congress Party. There were at least four or five other M.L.As in the League group who were keen on joining the Congress Party but who for various reasons refrained at the time.

3. Raja Shaban Ali Khan; resigned from the National Agriculturist Party in U.P. in 1936 to participate actively in the election campaign of the Muslim League.
4. Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim (1889-1964); joined Swaraj Party and was member, U.P. Council, 1926, and U.P. Assembly, 1937-39; minister, U.P. Government, 1937-39, and again from 1946 to 1958; Minister for Irrigation and Power, Government of India, 1958-63; Governor of Punjab, 1964.

During the months that followed there was much controversy between the two groups of Muslims—those of the League and those who had resigned and their sympathisers, who were supporting the Congress. Bitterness grew, and the success of the Congress appeal to the Muslim masses irritated the Muslim Leaguers. So matters stood and the distance between the League and the Congress went on widening. This came to a head in the recent Bundelkhand election. This election, although we lost it, was an eye-opener to everybody. All manner of Muslims from *maulvies* and members of the Jamiat to young students trooped up, often uninvited, to help the Congress candidate. The reactionary methods of the League irritated them and they grew quite enthusiastic in their opposition to it. We lost the election for two reasons: (1) the cry of 'Islam in danger' and (2) bribery on an extensive scale. Many voters came to us and told us that they would vote for the Congress candidate if we paid them a little more than the other side was paying. There was a third reason also—the strength of caste feeling. Quite 25% of the voters were Malkhan Rajputs and the Muslim League candidate belonged to the same brotherhood. Their *biradari* decided to support him and threatened to punish any member who did not do so. People were made to take the oath on the Qoran. This solid block of votes went wholly against us almost without a single exception. But for it we had a comfortable majority. There was also shameless personation in regard to women voters, the same persons voting again and again.

In spite of all this the election was a most hopeful sign of a growing political consciousness among the Muslims. All our workers are sure that if the election was held again in the same area we would win. Last time we only put in about ten days' intensive effort. We got the real rural vote of the peasant but the residents of the *qasbas* were far more difficult. It was interesting to find that the Muslim peasant was not carried away by the cry of 'Islam in danger'. When asked why he was voting for the Congress he confessed frankly that he did so because he expected the Congress to reduce his rent.

Generally speaking therefore our position has been considerably strengthened by the election. We have discovered to our pleasant surprise that there is a strong band of Muslim workers all over the province who are determined to fight reaction and to support the Congress. Quite a number of the leading lights of the Jamiat have helped us enthusiastically. They were disgusted by the tactics of the League's supporters in Bundelkhand. We have collected a large number of leaflets and posters issued by the League and they are instructive reading.

It is true that we have still to face a solid mass of reaction and the cry of religion carried off many people. It is also true that bribery is

rampant during Muslim elections. The voters are very poor and are smaller in number. We cannot and will not compete in these corrupt practices. Still the outlook is hopeful.

I have, without intending to do so, discussed at some length the Bundelkhand election. Still it will help you to form a background.

Towards the end of June, a little before the Working Committee meeting, the U.P. Muslim League leaders, Khaliquzzaman and Nawab Ismail Khan,[5] made an approach towards the Congress. This had obviously some connection with the possibility of ministries. They pointed out that last March their parliamentary board had offered cooperation to the U.P. Congress Party on the basis of the 'Wardha programme' as laid down by the Working Committee, and were prepared to work under the discipline of the Congress Party. You will remember the Working Committee resolution on the Congress policy in the legislatures passed at the Wardha meeting prior to the convention. It was not clear whether the Muslim League board accepted the whole resolution or only the particular items of the legislative programme. If the former, then they accepted the Congress policy 100% including independence, fighting the Act, constituent assembly, etc., etc.

I knew nothing about all this, nor did Maulana till it was vaguely hinted at Wardha early this month by Pantji. But it was all very vague and I did not like the look of this angling for ministries.

When Maulana Abul Kalam went to Lucknow from Wardha he saw Khaliq who told him that he was practically prepared to give him a blank cheque *provided* two of their number were included in the ministry—himself and Nawab Ismail Khan, the president of the U.P. board. Maulana looked at all this with some suspicion but he felt attracted by the possibility of the whole Muslim League ceasing to exist as a separate group and being practically absorbed by the Congress.

He and Pant came to Allahabad and we discussed the matter at great length. I disliked (we all did) this bargaining for seats in the ministry. We disliked taking in two persons who, from the Congress point of view, were weak. We feared reaction among the Congressmen in general, and Congress Muslims in particular, who would have been irritated at their being excluded in preference for those who had been fighting the Congress. What of those who had severed their connection with the League

5. Nawab Muhammad Ismail Khan (1884-1958); took active part in the khilafat movement in U.P.; a prominent leader of the Muslim League, 1930-46; member, Working Committee of the All India Muslim League for a long time and president, U.P. Muslim League; member, League Action Committee, 1945-46; vice-chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University, 1947-48.

and joined us? What of those Muslims of ours who had stood by the Congress during all these years? What of the Jamiat which was supporting us and opposing the League? You must remember that we have always had a strong and staunch group of Muslims with us in the U.P. They have not been many but they are growing in influence and younger Muslims are now strongly attracted to us. Were we going to ignore those who were with us and favour our opponents who joined us just to get the spoils of office? And then there was the risk of conflicts arising within the ministry or the party—conflict of a communal or political nature—resulting in resignations and the creation of an awkward situation.

All this and more we considered and we hesitated. And yet the alternative was worth having if it could be secured. This was the winding up of the Muslim League group in the U.P. and its absorption in the Congress. This would have a great effect not only in the U.P. but all over India and even outside. This would mean a free field for our work without communal troubles. This would knock over the British Government which relied so much on these troubles.

After much discussion in which two other members of the U.P. (Kripalani and Narendra Deva) joined, we came to the conclusion that we should offer stringent conditions to the U.P. Muslim League group and if they accepted them in toto then we would agree to two ministers from their group. Besides them one minister would be Rafi Ahmad.

We drew up these conditions. The March resolution of the Working Committee on Congress policy in the legislatures was to be accepted from A to Z after full consideration, so that there might be no misapprehension. The Muslim League group will be wound up, including the U.P. parliamentary board. All the Muslim League M.L.As to become full members of the Congress Party (but there was this that they were not specially asked to take the Congress pledge). All of them to abide by the discipline of the party. In bye-elections, no separate candidates; all to support the Congress candidates, and generally to endeavour to increase the prestige of the Congress. If the Congress decided on resignation from the ministry or from the legislature, they would follow suit. And some others. You will agree that these were pretty stringent conditions and in effect amounted to something more than the Congress pledge. But we did not ask them to sever all connection with the parent Muslim League. The position would have been a peculiar one involving a dual loyalty to some extent. It could not last and we expected the U.P. Leaguers to break away from the parent League.

We decided to offer these conditions and also that if any condition was not agreed to, then not to come to terms with them.

Maulana and Pant went to Lucknow. They sent for Nawab Ismail Khan but he was ill in Meerut and could not come. There were talks with Khaliq who agreed to all the conditions except two: the winding up of the parliamentary board and not to set up separate candidates at bye-elections. These were vital conditions. Khaliq said that he personally would agree but he had no authority to do so. In effect, he pointed out, this might happen anyhow. Therefore Maulana said he could not give a final answer and came to Allahabad.

Meanwhile rumours had spread that we were talking with the Muslim League. Of course the details were not known. There was consternation among all our people, especially the Muslim Congressmen, the Jamiat people and young Muslims. Not only consternation but anger for the Bundelkhand election was fresh in everybody's mind. Maulana Husain Ahmad sent a special messenger and so on and so forth.

I was feeling very uncomfortable and was instinctively repelled by all this talk on an opportunistic basis. I felt trouble would follow and the settlement would be temporary only. Maulana was also distracted. Ultimately we sent word that we regretted we could not alter our previous conditions at all; if they were accepted in toto we would agree, not otherwise. We had no authority to go beyond this without consulting the Working Committee. So the matter dropped and Maulana Azad went off to Bombay. Khaliq said he was unable to agree.

Today Khaliq made another approach. He suggested that he would call an emergent meeting of his executive to consider the question of the bye-elections if we could postpone decision for some days. I spoke to him on the phone. I referred him to Pantji but did not encourage him at all.

That is how matters stand now. Maulana Azad is keen on Hafiz Ibrahim being taken into the cabinet. He is a good and competent man and used to belong to the Swaraj Party. He might be described as a moderate Congressman. Pantji knows him well. There is just one difficulty about him and that is this. It might be said that he left the League and joined us in order to get into the ministry. This would not be true as he left the League in March or early April when the question of ministry was not in the air. He left with a group including Maulana Husain Ahmad. He is intimately connected with the Jamiat. Still it is possible that the torrent may be hurled against him.

I am tired of writing this long letter. By the time you reach the end of it you will appreciate the humour of my saying at the beginning that I would give you a brief account. But the matter was complicated and

I wanted you to be in full possession of the facts in case of possible developments. Vallabhbhai has already had a chance of discussing this with Maulana Azad.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Bapu.

Maulana Azad has not returned yet from Bombay, nor is there any news of him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

36. On the Result of the Bundelkhand Bye-election[1]

The Muslim League is entitled to rejoice at the result of the election in Bundelkhand. And yet people in Bundelkhand itself and others who know the facts realise that this election has considerably enhanced the prestige and strength of the Congress. It is interesting, therefore, to examine the facts.

This was the first occasion during the past many years of elections of various kinds that the Congress had contested an election for a Muslim seat in this area. Politically it was a virgin field; practically no political or economic issues had been touched. It was a separate communal electorate liable to be influenced by communal cries. For the first time, the Congress came into the field and talked the language of politics and economics. On the other side, stress was laid throughout on communalism and the cry of 'religion in danger' was a powerful slogan for a non-political electorate.

Out of a total vote cast amounting to about 4,700 the Congress candidate got nearly 2,000, a substantial number. The constituency included three districts: Orai, Jhansi and Hamirpur. In two of these districts, Orai and Jhansi, Mr. Sherwani, the Congress candidate, got a clear majority; in the third district, Hamirpur, the Muslim League candidate had an overwhelming majority. Mr. Rafiuddin, the League candidate, was a resident of Hamirpur district and had all the advantages

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 25 July 1937. *The Hindu*, 29 July 1937.

which pained me greatly. Such occurrences make me feel that the great problem we have to tackle is our own ignorance and folly which cause grave disorders.

Imperialism has sown the seeds of communalism everywhere for it thrives on disunity among the subject people. The imperialists are not interested in any religion. Their motive is economic exploitation. Thus the real rulers of India are the British capitalists and financiers who run the empire for their own benefit.

I want you to understand these economic realities. The problem of poverty cannot be solved except by socialism. And in this connection it is amusing to find imperialists posing as sympathizers of Islam and Hinduism and telling the people that socialism is opposed to their religion. The real fact is that they do not want us to think in political and economic terms for once we grasped these realities we shall no longer submit to imperialist domination.

The Congress wants to make the people, the workers and peasants, politically conscious for they are the ultimate rulers of the country. The government under Swaraj would be based on small democratic units, so that every citizen would have a right and opportunity to influence decisions on every vital issue.

On the same basis we want to organize the Congress which is by far the strongest and most disciplined political body in the country. It is the only body which has been fighting for the independence of the country and at whose bidding thousands of men and women are prepared to undergo any hardships and to make every kind of sacrifice. Even if some people are opposed to the Congress viewpoint in certain matters they should join it in large numbers to try, in a democratic way, to convert it to their own way of thinking.

The Congress is not a religious organisation. Its main work lies exclusively in political and economic fields. As regards religion it has only one principle: that everyone should have complete freedom in the choice and practice of his religion. It also allows freedom to every community to develop its own culture. But a new question has been raised by the interested people who dispute the right of the Congress to approach the Muslims. I can understand if they opposed the Congress programme but to say that the Congress should not seek Muslim support is wrong on principle as well as opposed to historical facts. As a political organisation it would continue to propagate its ideals among members of all communities. I approach you, not as a Muslim or a Hindu. My relation with you is that of a fellow Indian and as such I approach you, to explain to you my ideas and try to convince you. I cannot understand how anyone could dispute that right.

A large number of Muslims have always been with the Congress and the Muslim province of the N.W. Frontier has made greater contribution to the cause of freedom than any other province and I hope many more would now join.

I do not wish to appeal to your sentiments by high-sounding phrases and slogans. I want you not to follow anyone blindly—the government or the Congress—but to learn to think for yourselves.

39. To A.M. Balu[1]

Allahabad
August 25, 1937

Dear Sir,[2]

I have your letter of the 19th August drawing my attention to a press cutting from *Viduthalai*, a Tamil daily. I cannot read this in original but I have read your translation.

It is true that I wrote a letter to Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai regarding the Jhansi election and that this letter was apparently intercepted by someone on behalf of the Muslim League. I have no objection at all to the letter being published although it was a private letter dealing with personal matters apart from election matters. The inferences drawn from the letter in the Tamil paper are absurd and false. The election was run, as is usual for Congress elections, by the parliamentary board of the province of which Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai was the president. As such the U.P. Congress Committee undertook to help financially in the conduct of the election to the best of its ability. We have done this in the case of a large number of Congress candidates during the general elections. In the Jhansi election some payments were made to our workers for travelling expenses, conveyance charges, etc. The constituency was a rural one spread out in three districts and as such our workers had to travel a lot. In my letter to Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai I mentioned the payments that had been made for entry into our accounts and later on entered into the election accounts to be submitted to the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-61/1937, pp. 23-25, N.M.M.L.
2. Editor, *Salem Times;* in his letter of 19 August 1937, he had referred to the report published in the Tamil local newspaper alleging that the Congress President had bribed the *maulvies* to bring them into the Congress during the Jhansi election campaign.

authorities. So far as I remember the total sum that was mentioned in my letter was Rs. 700/-. Of this, Rs. 250/- were paid to Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai himself for the parliamentary board; Rs. 250/- were paid to Diwan Shatrughna Singh, a prominent Congress worker of Hamirpur district. He was in charge of organising the workers in his district. Rs. 100/- were paid to Pandit Keshav Deva Malaviya who was sent on behalf of the provincial Congress committee to help in organisational work. And Rs. 100/- were paid to some Muslim workers sent from Allahabad. All these sums were not personal payments to individuals but advances made in connection with the election for which they had to account. All these sums will be mentioned in the election accounts to be submitted to the authorities. There was nothing secret about these and, as a matter of fact, having regard to the magnitude of the election, very small sums were spent by the U.P.P.C.C. It is totally false for anyone to say that any part of these sums was meant to bribe anyone. They were meant for the usual legitimate election expenditure, printing leaflets and paying for conveyance charges of the workers.

Further I stated in my letter to Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai that some leading *maulvies* had been invited to come and help the Congress candidate and that they should be paid their travelling expenses.

You are at liberty to publish this letter if you so wish. This whole incident illustrates the low tactics employed by some opponents of the Congress.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

40. To M.A. Jinnah[1]

Allahabad
7-9-1937

My dear Jinnah,
I met Iftikharuddin[2] yesterday and he told me that you had mentioned to him some letter of mine which, according to you, contained compromising statements. I was surprised to hear this from Iftikharuddin and

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-61/1937, pp. 19-20, N.M.M.L.
2. Mian Iftikharuddin (1907-1962); joined the Congress in 1935; detained during the Quit India movement; joined the Muslim League, 1946; became Minister for Rehabilitation in Pakistan, 1947; expelled from the party in 1950; founded Azad Pakistan Party, 1951, and founder-member, National Awami Party.

learn what you said in this connection. I understand that you have not actually seen the letter to which reference has apparently been made. I am therefore sending you a copy of it.[3]

This letter was of course a private one and deals in the first part with entirely private matters which are hardly political. In the second part of it it deals with Sherwani's election and mentions certain payments made on behalf of the provincial Congress committee to some workers of the Congress who were sent to Bundelkhand to help Sherwani. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai was the president of our parliamentary board and Keshav Deva Malaviya was the secretary. I gave an account of some of these payments so that the parliamentary board should enter them in their books and they should further be entered in the election accounts later. These payments were made to our principal organisers for travelling and other expenses for the workers employed.

I presume you know that we try to help our candidates in so far as we can and we have done so in the general elections as well as in the bye-elections. I am astonished that this letter of mine should first of all be stolen and then a completely false and malicious use should be made of it by certain individuals. I do not mind the letter being published in full, although as I have stated it was a private letter. What is done however is for people to carry on a whispering propaganda and to make all manner of vague allegations and insinuations. There is absolutely nothing in this letter or in our conduct of the Bundelkhand election which was improper and which I seek to hide. I think that we maintained throughout that election a very high standard of public conduct.

But as this matter has apparently come to your notice I think it desirable to send you a full copy of the letter in question. I should like you to find out, if you can, who is responsible for stealing this letter. I wrote on the subject to Mr. Rafiuddin of Jhansi, but his replies have been curious and he is not prepared to take any action in the matter.

I am leaving Allahabad today on my way to Bombay and expect to be away for two weeks.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. See *ante*, item 23.

41. No Compromise with the Muslim League[1]

The Congress is a force which no one can resist.

The Congress is a political body whose doors are open to all. It has routed the Hindu Sabha. The Muslim League's existence is seen only in a few provinces and is confined to only a few Muslims belonging to the upper classes. Its policy and programme differ from those of the Congress. How can there be unity between the two bodies unless the Congress gives up its ideals? The Hindu-Muslim question is a question of the upper classes and not of the masses. Both Hindu and Muslim masses are steeped in poverty which can be removed from both simultaneously and not separately.

The Congress has nothing to do with religion. It is a political body fighting for the country's freedom in which the Muslims should take their due share. The Indian National Congress works for the betterment of the masses. There is nothing like the Hindu-Muslim question but it is the question of doing away with the country's bondage.

I therefore appeal to the Muslims to join the Congress in large numbers.

1. Speech at a Muslims' meeting, Ahmedabad, 17 September 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 19 September 1937.

42. To Siddiq Ahmad Siddiqui[1]

Allahabad
28.9.1937

My dear Siddiqui,[2]

I fully agree with your suggestion. I think we must form a united front against the present Aligarh regime in alliance with everybody who

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 13/1937, p. 39, N.M.M.L. The date 8 September 1937 given in the office copy of the letter is obviously incorrect as Jawaharlal refers to the Palestine conference which was held on 25 September 1937.
2. A nationalist Muslim student of Aligarh Muslim University and founder-member, All India Students Federation, 1936.

agrees with us—Muslim League, Independents, Liberals, etc. I think there are at least a dozen old boys in the U.P. legislature. You must approach all of them and if possible get a joint statement apart from short notice questions. As for our attitude to the annual session of the All India Muslim League, it is clear that we welcome every attempt at its *democratisation and that of providing a mass basis. The real contradiction* of the Muslim League lies in the fact that a few feudal landlords and reactionaries want to exploit the backward Muslim masses for the retention of their privileges and a fundamentally reactionary political outlook. Now an effort to widen the basis of the Muslim League will immediately bring them into conflict with the Muslim mass demands. They will try to hoodwink the masses by emphasising superficial issues (*vide* the tentative agenda of the League). We should help the Muslims to organise big mass meetings and to formulate their mass demands. For instance we must demand that the talukdari system must be abolished in the interests of the Muslim kisans, that indebtedness should be immediately liquidated, that immediate provision should be made for the relief of the unemployed, that all *waqf* property should be returned to democratically elected bodies, and finally we must insist that the membership of the Muslim League should be confined only to exploited Muslim masses. This means that every Muslim who lives a parasitic life should be excluded from the organisation of the Muslim League. The purpose of this League should be to start an active and organised struggle against British imperialism. On the Palestine question we must insist that the Muslim League adopt the resolution of treble boycott passed by the Palestine conference and that the proposal of sending a deputation should be exposed.[3] You can take it on my authority that this proposal was first placed before the Muslims at the suggestion of the Viceroy after Maulana Shaukat Ali had met him. I have seen Maulana Shaukat Ali's own letter to Mohammad Mian of Allahabad narrating all that. In short, I suggest that instead of forming an independent Muslim league or accepting the League membership and working from within, we must organise in every *mohalla* mass meetings of Muslims and formulate their mass demands. Then we should lead a big demonstration and present these demands

3. On 25 September 1937 the Palestine conference held in Calcutta passed a resolution calling upon the League of Nations to protect the rights of small nations, to terminate the mandate of Palestine, and to allow its people to work out their future. It also resolved to send a deputation to Muslim countries and Europe to represent the Indian viewpoint as regards Palestine and to try to secure the annulment of the partition of Palestine.

before Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim Leaguers. I will come to Lucknow on the 12th and stay with Dr. Zaheer.[4]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Syed Ali Zaheer (b. 1899); member, U.P. Council, 1930-37; resigned from the Muslim League and joined the Congress in 1937; member, Interim Government, 1946; ambassador to Iran, 1947; ambassador to Iraq, 1948-51; minister, U.P. Government, 1951-67; member, U.P. Legislature, 1969-74.

43. To Dewan Chaman Lal[1]

Allahabad
30/9/37

My dear Chaman Lal,
I have just received your letter[2] of the 28th enclosing a copy of the letter which you and Raizada Hansraj[3] have sent to Mahatmaji. I have read the letter with some surprise. It seems to ignore completely the events and tendencies of the last year or two. We are always prepared to discuss with anyone the communal or any other important question and to try to find a solution. But these questions cannot be isolated from the basic political and economic issues. There is little use in discussing them with someone who does not agree with the Congress on these basic issues. Then again the old method of one or two individuals coming to terms has been shown to be pretty useless. We are dealing today with democratic forces and cannot side-track. The Congress may or may not represent any considerable body of Muslims but the Muslim League certainly does not represent any but the reactionary elements in the Muslims. Jinnah's attitude during the past year has been to encourage extreme communalism and reaction among the Muslims and

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-17/1937, pp. 319-321, N.M.M.L.
2. He had written that Jinnah "is in a mood not only to discuss but to come to an agreement regarding the communal issue as well as other issues of graver import."
3. (1869-1958); a leading Congressman of the Punjab; imprisoned several times during the freedom struggle; member, central legislature, for many years from 1928; member, Lok Sabha, 1952-56.

there is great resentment against this among progressive Muslims. Large numbers of them have come to the Congress as a consequence of this and we have to consult these comrades of ours in any matter which affects them and the Muslims generally. Still we are perfectly prepared to meet Jinnah if the position is cleared up. Rajendra Babu's offer is already there.

What are the communal issues before us today and what are we going to talk about and with whom? On political and economic matters to treat the Muslims or the Hindus as homogeneous groups is absurd, and yet this is what Jinnah thinks should be done. I am afraid I am wholly unable to think on these lines.

As you know Rajendra Babu has publicly stated that he is prepared to stand by the agreement with Jinnah which was arrived at two years ago. Jinnah's answer to this frank approach has been extraordinarily futile. All of us in the Congress will stand by Rajendra Babu's assurance. No argument or further discussions are necessary on that point. It is for Jinnah and his group to be equally frank.

I am afraid I do not appreciate the steps you have taken in this matter. They are not likely to help.

As for the Punjab unity conference,[4] if it fails, as it is likely to, the responsibility is not ours. Personally I am more concerned with the repressive policy of the Punjab Government[5] and it may be that because of this alone, apart from other factors, it may be desirable for Congressmen to dissociate themselves from the unity conference. The Punjab Government is today by far the most reactionary and offensive of all provincial governments and it is time that it was shown up.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. The conference was convened by Sikandar Hayat Khan to devise ways and means to end communalism.
5. A Unionist ministry headed by Sikandar Hayat Khan was in office in the Punjab.

44. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
September 30, 1937

My dear Bapu,
Chaman Lal has sent me a copy of a letter dated 25th September which he and Hansraj have sent to you. This letter has only just reached me and I am sending him a reply immediately. I enclose a copy of this reply. I think that Hansraj and Chaman Lal have acted very unwisely in this matter. I do not know what answer you have sent to them but I am sure that a meeting between you and Jinnah at this stage would not only serve little purpose but might be actually harmful. I am writing to Maulana also about this.

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-17/1937, p. 317, N.M.M.L.

45. To the President, The Grand Muslim Union, Bombay[1]

Allahabad
5-10-1937

Dear Sir,
Your letter.[2] Your surprise surprised me. There is nothing in my letter to Mr. Rafi Ahmad which is contrary to what I wrote to you. We do not support any organisations—Muslim, Hindu, or other. But when we contest elections we put up candidates and we support our official candidates. In this way we have supported during the general elections about 150 candidates in the U.P. alone. Mr. Sherwani was our official candidate and the U.P. Provincial Election Board of the Congress helped him to the best of its ability. This was done entirely by the provincial Congress committee and the moneys given were to the officers and

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-61/1937, p. 9, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 4 October 1937, he wrote: "In one of your last letters you stated that you didn't support financially any Muslim organization which may hold Congress views. I am amazed to find the contrary in the cutting. Can you contradict it?..."

special workers of the provincial board for their expenses during the election. Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai was the president of the provincial board, Mr. Keshav Deva was the secretary and the others are our special provincial workers of the Congress. I am writing these facts to you to enlighten you. But I might mention that this is no part of the work of the A.I.C.C. which does not concern itself with elections directly. The provinces are supposed to look after them.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

46. The Importance of Urdu Journalism[1]

Allahabad
7-10-1937

Dear Comrade,
I enclose a statement to which I should like you to give publicity in Gujarat.

I was interested during my visit to Gujarat, especially in Surat district, to come across large population of Muslims. I think it is desirable for your local committees to subscribe to some Urdu papers which give the Congress viewpoint or something approaching it. Such newspapers are far more important than occasional meetings and speeches. I suggest to you therefore that you might impress upon all your local committees to subscribe to one or two or three Urdu papers which they can place in their office or public libraries. This will be appreciated by our Muslim friends. I would particularly suggest that the weekly Urdu newspaper *Hindustan* (Neill Road, Lucknow) should be subscribed. Another paper which is not a Congress paper but which generally supports the Congress is the *Aljamiat* of Delhi which is also worthy of being subscribed.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Letter to the secretary, Gujarat P.C.C. A.I.C.C. File No. P-10/1937, p. 31, N.M.M.L.

47. To Dewan Chaman Lal[1]

Allahabad
7.10.1937

My dear Chaman Lal,
Thank you for your letter of the 3rd October. As I wrote to you we are always prepared to meet and discuss any matter with Jinnah or anyone else. As a matter of fact there is nothing very much to discuss. However, even so we are prepared to meet. But Jinnah has a curious way of proceeding about these matters in which the personal aspect predominates. I have watched with amazement his methods and public utterances during the last year or so. It almost seems that he has lost all idea of perspective and balance. To him Indian politics are just a background for individuals, notably himself. I do not think he has any conception of principles or the big issues at stake. It was because of all this that I hesitated when I got your letter, because any false step on our part would be exploited against us.

You refer to the regime of terror, reaction and corruption which is flourishing in the Punjab today. I agree with you. Why then do you give a certificate to Sikandar Hayat?[2] In your statement[3] congratulating Sikandar Hayat on his apology there was nothing at all wrong and yet did it not miss out the essential background of this situation, namely, the repression for which Sikandar Hayat is responsible? To read your statement meant to feel that Sikandar Hayat was acting in a magnanimous way and Satyapal was churlishly keeping away. Not to mention the repression etc. was almost to condone it under the circumstances. However, I hope to talk over Punjab matters at the conference in a few days.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-17/1937, pp. 241-242, N.M.M.L.
2. Sikandar Hayat Khan (1892-1942); leader of the Unionist Party in the Punjab; Chief Minister, Punjab, 1937-42.
3. In a statement issued on 30 September 1937, Dewan Chaman Lal said: "... as far as Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan is concerned...no attempt has been spared by him in the unity committee to bring about a generally workable and agreed solution."

48. The Tactics of the Muslim League[1]

I have nothing much to say regarding the recent happenings in the Muslim League;[2] but, of course, I have found them interesting reading. As it happened, I was busy these days addressing scores of meetings in the Frontier Province, and the contrast between the quiet dignity and strength of these brave comrades of ours in the Frontier, and the hysteria of the Muslim League is marked.

The League seems to have overlooked the Frontier Province, which census tells us is almost entirely Muslim and which present-day facts as well as past events tell us is solidly behind the Congress. I think recent developments in the League and allied circles are interesting and significant. They signify the obvious fear of the growing strength of the masses under Congress leadership. Vested communal interests, representing small sections of both Hindus and Muslims, want to align themselves to resist that mass pressure.

It is interesting to note that Bhai Parmanand has fully appreciated the Muslim League policy.[3] The next step should obviously be for the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha, in the sacred name of religion, to join together to protect their respective vested interests against the incursion of the common people of India. This is a fascist development in India.

Behind the veil of religion and culture, there is this attempt to consolidate vested interests and groups of privileged people. Indian politics are thus becoming clearly defined and real issues are coming before the public. Unfortunately even now, to some extent, the cloak of religion misleads many people.

When the privileged groups begin to fear the growth of nationalism and mass interests, they begin to act hysterically and in an unbecoming

1. Interview to the press, Lahore, 17 October 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 19 October 1937.
2. At the Lucknow session on 17 October 1937 the Muslim League passed a resolution condemning the Congress for "foisting *Bande Mataram* as the national anthem upon the country in callous disregard of the feelings of Muslims." The League also protested against the formation of the ministries in certain provinces by the Congress and condemned the Governors for their failure to enforce their special powers for safeguarding the interests of the Muslims and other minorities.
3. In an interview to the press, he expressed approval of Jinnah's idea of organising the Muslims and desired that Hindus should also organise themselves for the protection of their rights.

manner. Perhaps, this is inevitable and we see that the limit has been passed. Wild talk of this kind does not influence events of course. But there are certain decencies which even a hysterical state cannot excuse. The League and its supporters stand clearly and definitely today for the division of India, even on a political and economic plane, into religious groups.[4] Whatever this may be, it is against the thesis of the nationalist idea of unity of India. It is a reduction of modern life and its problems to absurdity. It is mediaevalism. It is a thing which cannot happen because it is opposed to the logic of history. It is sad that there should be some people in India still who are so backward in their ideas as to think in this way. But, perhaps, it may be all to the good, for the issues are clearly defined by being put forward in this manner.

This is the last ditch of political reaction. It may cause us some inconvenience, but millions in this country will jump over it, as they have jumped over many other obstructions, and march steadily to their cherished goal of an independent and united India.

4. In his presidential address at the Lucknow session of the *Muslim League* on 15 October 1937, Jinnah said that the Congress ministries, "by their words, deeds and programme had shown that the Mussalmans cannot expect any justice or fairplay at their hands...they have their destiny in their hands, and a well-knit, solid, organised united force can face any danger and withstand any opposition. No Hindu leader speaking with any authority shows any concern or genuine desire for it. Honourable settlements can only be achieved between equals, and unless the two parties learn to respect and fear each other, there is no solid ground for any settlement. Offers of peace by the weaker party always mean confession of weakness, and an invitation to aggressiveness....It does not require political wisdom to realise that all safeguards and settlements would be a scrap of paper, unless they are backed up by power. Politics means power and not relying on cries of justice or fairplay or goodwill."

49. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

Allahabad
20.10.1937

My dear Subhas,

Your letter of the 17th. Certainly as suggested by you I shall discuss the *Bande Mataram* song with Dr. Tagore. I do not know that any formal statement is necessary by the Working Committee but we should

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-5/1937, p. 215, N.M.M.L.

be clear in our own minds. I have managed to get an English translation of *Ananda Math* and I am reading it at present to get the background of the song. It does seem that this background is likely to irritate the Muslims.[2] Further there is the difficulty of the language which is not understood by most people. I do not understand it without the help of a dictionary.

There is no doubt that the present outcry against *Bande Mataram* is to a large extent a manufactured one by the communalists. At the same time there does seem some substance in it and people who are communalistically inclined have been affected by it. Whatever we do cannot be to pander to communalists' feelings but to meet real grievances where they exist.

I have decided now to reach Calcutta on the 25th morning. This will give me time to see Dr. Tagore as well as other friends.

As for disciplinary action, it is difficult for me to talk vaguely about strictness or leniency. Ultimately this has to be considered in relation to the general situation and to the particular facts of the case. Generally speaking our policy was a strict one during the elections and immediately after. But later a certain leniency came in and a number of previous orders were revised on the party concerned apologising. In particular we felt that the denial of the four-anna membership to any person was not to be indulged in except in very special cases. Generally the punishment was in regard to the holding of offices or membership of an elected committee. If the past record of a person was good and he had erred merely at election time because of local factions and passions we tried to take a lenient view and on his apologising no further action was taken. But as I have said above each individual case has to be considered on its merits and even more important consideration is the result of such action on Congress work in future. If such action is good to help Congress work it must be taken. If it is likely to hinder then it is to be avoided. Many of our people are insufficiently developed in the political sense not to be affected by personal rivalries. And so they err occasionally without really wishing to go against the Congress. If it is possible to win them over and yet keep the prestige and discipline of the Congress, then it is worthwhile doing so. If a disciplinary action creates fairly widespread resentment among certain groups of Congressmen, then it has failed in its purpose.

These are various considerations that are to be borne in mind. But ultimately the matter should be decided by the provincial committee or

2. See *post*, section 5, item 22.

its sub-committee. I dislike very much the idea of the Working Committee or the A.I.C.C. interfering in provincial decisions except in a friendly way by private advice or consultation. In rare cases interference may be called for. After all it is the P.C.C. which has to shoulder the burden of the work in the province and it is not fair to it to do anything which lessens its prestige. That is why our office has not taken any action in such matters directly and we have consistently tried to uphold the position of the P.C.C. At the same time we have tried to soothe the feelings of the parties concerned. Generally we have sent copies of our letters to the P.C.C. I was astonished to learn from Sarat that the secretary of the P.C.C. does not keep him in touch with our correspondence. This in itself shows a certain lack of cooperation in your office.

Apart from the general difficulty of dealing with party factions and the like, an additional difficulty is met with in Bengal and that is the communal one which is likely to get tied up with party rivalries. Bengal, politically considered, has been almost entirely a Hindu province in the past, that is to say, Hindu Bengal has taken an active part in politics. This is not likely to remain so for long as more and more Muslims are becoming politically awake. The question therefore is how far the Congress can influence these Muslims and bring them within its fold. If we are unable to do so they will strengthen the communal elements. And then we shall have a dominating communal element in the politics of Bengal. Thus the situation is a different one and in everything that is done, in our general Congress work, in assembly work, in the disciplinary action that we take, all these wider considerations have to be borne in mind. I have no doubt that you and Sarat have these considerations in mind. The recent meeting of the Muslim League and the fulminations of Fazlul Huq there have shown the recrudescence of an intensive and low type of communalism.[3] You may have to suffer for this in Bengal more than people in other provinces. But I do hope that you will be able to counter it by a wide appeal to the Muslim masses. There is no other way to meet it. I do not think that there is any real strength behind the Muslim League or its newfangled supporters. But it is our weakness that will make a difference. In facing this

3. In a speech on 17 October 1937 at Lucknow, Fazlul Huq said: "If the Hindu Congress ministries continue to follow a policy of oppression of the Muslim minorities in their provinces, I declare it from this platform that I shall retaliate in Bengal even if it costs my life...hypocrisy, untruth and deceit are the basis of Congress policies and the Congress is trying to establish a Hindu raj in India."

difficult situation it is wise to avoid as far as possible internal factions within the Congress and to try to end them.

About Tipperah district I can say nothing because obviously I do not know all the facts.[4] But I have a vague feeling that if the situation is not handled carefully, it might strengthen the communal elements there and weaken the influence of the Congress on the Muslim masses. It is because of this that I wrote on this subject previously. But having written I do not propose to do anything else. It is for you and your colleagues to take such action as you think fit and proper.

As for Karimganj, the facts that have been placed before me, and I have had sufficient matter from both sides, do leave a great doubt in my mind and in such matters I would like to give the benefit of the doubt to the parties proceeded against. Apart from the merits of the case the larger consideration of keeping effective workers together also influences me. A curious situation has arisen. We have no intimation whatever from the B.P.C.C. that any action has been taken. So in the ordinary course we have issued notices of the A.I.C.C. meeting to all our members. We are now asked by someone in Karimganj, to whom such a notice went, whether he can attend the meeting or not as the B.P.C.C. has taken action against him. As we have no official intimation we cannot take cognizance of this action, nor indeed do we know exactly what it is. We have referred him to the B.P.C.C.

You ask me whether we want you to revise the penalty already imposed. I do not even know what this penalty is and on whom it has been imposed, except rather vaguely. If you and Sarat feel, however, having regard to all the circumstances that it might be better to revise the penalty then certainly you might do so. That is for you to decide, keeping all the wider considerations before you.

I hope you will share this letter with Sarat.

I am thinking of going from Calcutta after the A.I.C.C. meeting to Assam and Sylhet for tour for a week or so. I have never been that way before. I shall not of course go into the local politics in these places. Still I should like to have your advice as to how to proceed in such matters when I go there. I have already informed the B.P.C.C. about this tour of mine. I shall finally fix it up in Calcutta.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Some Congressmen in this district, against whom disciplinary action had been taken for having worked against the Congress candidates in the elections, had formed a rival Congress committee in order to capture the Congress organisation.

50. On the Shia Conference[1]

May I offer my congratulations to the All India Shia Political Conference[2] on its clear and unequivocal decision to support the Indian National Congress in the struggle for India's freedom? Their resolution on the constituent assembly has also been on identical lines put forward by the Congress. I rejoice at this, not because they have accepted the Congress resolution, but because they have considered these political questions apart from communal and other considerations.

It is refreshing to see this clarity of outlook. We may have any number of differences among ourselves on any number of questions. But when we consider the issue of national freedom, political or economic, there can be no "ifs" and "buts" and provisos. Those who add provisos care more for them than for the main objective and so the objective itself becomes secondary and even fades into insignificance. The question before each one of us always is what we should give the first place and what the second place. By that we are judged. The Shia conference has placed the first thing in the first place and has not sought to lessen its real significance by provisos. I congratulate the members of the conference and welcome them warmly to the ranks of those who fight for India's freedom.

1. Allahabad, 21 October 1937. *The Hindu*, 21 October 1937.
2. The All India Shia Political Conference was held on 11-12 October 1937 at Lucknow. They questioned the claim of the Muslim League to represent the entire Muslim community and resolved to join the Congress.

51. To Acharya Narendra Deva[1]

Allahabad
9-11-1937

My dear Narendra Deva,
I have just heard that the council meeting[2] has been postponed. I do not know what date will be fixed for it now and it is possible that I

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-20/1937, pp. 73-74, N.M.M.L.
2. Of the U.P.P.C.C.

may not be able to go there as I have many engagements. I am, however, going to Lucknow on the 15th and from there to Bara Banki the same day, returning that night to Allahabad.

Vague rumours have reached me about very active canvassing about the presidentship of the provincial conference. I do not mind such a canvassing but I do hope that this is not a prelude to bitter conflicts within the P.C.C. It is absolutely immaterial who is elected president and who is not. But it is very important that we must avoid the kind of unhealthy conflict within our ranks that we have had in the past. A very serious situation is arising in the U.P. in regard to communal matters. Some members of the Muslim League, enraged at their defeat at Bijnor,[3] are carrying on the most filthy and violent propaganda, even urging personal violence and not stopping at suggesting murder. This propaganda is directed chiefly against Congress Muslims and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema. We shall have to consider this situation very carefully for it requires tactful handling. There are other grave matters before us affecting all our future work. When I think of all this I am shocked at the pettiness people show in regard to elections and the like.

I have received a complaint by telegram from Lucknow about the declaration of Dr. Murarilal as president of the provincial conference. I do not propose to take any action as it is for the P.C.C. to decide finally. But this kind of reference to the A.I.C.C. is itself an undesirable indication of the growth of party factions.

The provincial conference dates were fixed for the 28th and 29th. But I understand that Aligarh people want the dates changed. It is possible that owing to the riot there and other factors a later date might be desirable.[4] Anyway a final decision should be made very soon. I am going to Assam at the end of November for a fortnight.

If it is possible for you to hold the council meeting on the 15th at Lucknow it would suit me, or even the 16th. An early meeting is desirable to decide about any dispute regarding the presidentship as well as the dates of the provincial conference.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. In the Bijnor-Najibabad Muslim rural constituency bye-election, Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim, the Congress candidate, defeated Abdus Sami, the Muslim League candidate, by a margin of over five thousand votes.
4. A Hindu-Muslim riot took place in Aligarh on 3 November 1937.

52. To Mohammad Ismail Khan[1]

Allahabad
November 10, 1937

My dear Nawab Sahib,
I am taking the liberty of writing to you as I am greatly distressed at the turn events have taken. The kind of things that are being said and written are likely to accentuate communal feelings very greatly and lead inevitably to great bitterness and possibly trouble. I am sure you want to avoid this as much as I do. During election contests exaggerated statements are often made which normally one would hesitate to say. Even so it has been my desire to prevent any such exaggeration from disfiguring our work and whenever my attention has been drawn to it, I have taken some action in the matter.

During the Bundelkhand election and even more so during the Bijnor election much was said on behalf of the Muslim League which astonished me. Still I thought that the fever of election held people and that this would pass. But I find that this continues and the violence of the speeches and writings is not only not conducive to clear thought, but can only lead to violence in action.

I do not quite know what our differences are in politics. I had imagined that they were not very great. But, whatever they might be, I am sure you will agree with me that it is highly desirable for all of us to keep to a certain standard in our public work and to avoid appeals to passion and bigotry. Only thus can public life grow and a question be considered dispassionately.

I presume that you think that the Congress has acted wrongly or is pursuing wrong ideals. You are perfectly entitled to think so and to say so. We are a political party and criticism is always good and helps in keeping an individual and a party up to the mark. I wish, however, that the criticism was specific and political. This would help us and the public in understanding it and perhaps in meeting it to some extent. I would be grateful to you if you could let me have this helpful criticism. What are the specific policies and programmes or principles of the Congress with which you do not agree? You will remember that you and Khaliquzzaman told us that you agreed with the Wardha programme of the Congress. That is a pretty comprehensive programme which includes almost everything that we stand for. Then there is the fundamental rights resolution of the Congress and our declarations on

1. *Nehru-Jinnah Correspondence*, (Allahabad, 1938).

the Communal Award. In Calcutta recently some of these previous resolutions relating to minority rights were assembled together in one comprehensive resolution[2] which you no doubt have seen. These resolutions cover religious matters, culture, language, script, etc.

On the language and script question I wrote a pamphlet giving the Congress viewpoint.[3] This had a very favourable reception all round and there was general agreement with its conclusion. I do not know if you have seen it. In any event I am sending a copy to you.

I think it would be definitely helpful to all concerned if we could define our points of agreement and points of difference. That would be fair to the public also, and we could then discuss or debate the points of difference. When you asked me to go to Lucknow to discuss with you the constituent assembly resolution, I gladly went although it involved upsetting my programme. We failed to agree about the wording of that resolution but our discussion clarified matters and showed that there was no great fundamental difference.

The principal object of my writing to you, however, is to draw your attention to the fantastic statements that have been and are being made by many people on behalf of the Muslim League. I cannot imagine that you agree with them and yet these statements go uncontradicted. And not only statements but acts which are not condemned. For instance, after the Bijnor election a volunteer on behalf of the Muslim League stabbed one of our respected workers in the train.[4] The volunteer might have got excited and I have no particular grievance against him, but the fact that this incident did not draw any condemnation from the leaders of the Muslim League surprised and distressed me.

Other kinds of violence have also been indulged in and, to my knowledge, incitements to violence have been and are frequent. The encouragement of this type of speech and activity can only lead to deplorable results.

2. The A.I.C.C. in its meeting in Calcutta held from 26 October to 1 November 1937, while drawing attention to its policy in regard to the rights of the minorities in India and to the fundamental rights resolution passed by it earlier, reiterated that "it considers it its duty to protect these rights and ensure the widest possible scope for the development of these minorities and their participation in the fullest measure in the political, economic and cultural life of the nation. The objective of the Congress is an independent and united India where no class or group or majority or minority may exploit another to its own advantage, and where all the elements in the nation may cooperate together for the common good and the advancement of the people of India."
3. See *post*, section 15, item 33.
4. Maulana Nasir-ud-din, a leading Congressman of Fyzabad, was stabbed on 28 October 1937.

The greatest stress has been laid during the Bijnor election campaign and subsequently on the fact that Islam is in danger and that the Congress is out to destroy Islam. Has this, or can it have, an atom of truth in it? Is it a fair statement even at election time? I would beg of you to consider this, for it hurts me to see such remarks made by responsible persons and responsible organisations. We are a political organisation working for political ends, which, of necessity, must be alike for Hindu and Muslim as well as other religious communities. We have declared in the most unequivocal terms that full religious and cultural freedom is guaranteed to every one and every group. Even if we had not so declared, is it conceivable by the wildest stretch of imagination that Islam can be suppressed by the Hindus in India or vice versa?

I enclose for your consideration extracts from notices and posters issued on behalf of the Muslim League during the Bijnor election and would beg you to consider if they are fair and legitimate statements.

It has been stated repeatedly that my statement that the Congress has nothing to do with religion implies active opposition to Islamic beliefs. It has further been declared that Congress Muslims are active atheists. Are either of these statements true?

In a manifesto issued by the joint secretary of the U.P. Muslim League Parliamentary Board during the Bijnor election, it was stated that the Congress had decided to suppress, to dominate over and finally to cripple the Muslims so that they might never rise again. It was further added that the Congress was determined to bring about such a transformation in the religious outlook of the Muslims that instead of prostrating themselves before Allah they should do so before Gandhi and Jawaharlal like the Hindus. The fantastic nature of these statements would lead one to attach little importance to them, but when they are made on behalf of a responsible organisation, one cannot dismiss them lightly.

In the course of speeches on behalf of the Muslim League candidate of Bijnor emphasis was laid on the following:

(1) The Congress wanted to suppress and eliminate Urdu.
(2) The Congress would stop *tazias*.
(3) The Congress would stop cow-killing.
(4) The Congress would force people to wear dhotis instead of pyjamas.
(5) The Congress bribed the Ulemas.

These, you will agree with me, are extraordinary and fantastic charges. The charge of bribing our respected colleagues of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema is so patently absurd that it is almost ludicrous. It was said to be supported by a letter which I wrote to Rafi Ahmad Kidwai at the time of the

Bundelkhand election. I sent this letter to the press some time back. I also sent a copy direct to Mr. Jinnah. Probably you have seen it. Do you think there is anything the least bit improper in it?

I have been accused, in a number of newspapers supporting the Muslim League, of having snatched away and torn off every flag bearing *Allah-o-Akbar* in Najibabad. This is a complete lie without the shadow of a foundation. I have no recollection of even seeing such a flag in Najibabad. As you know I move about in large crowds and anything that I do can be seen by thousands of persons.

It has been stated by Maulana Shaukat Ali that the peasant voters in Bijnor were threatened by tehsildars, patwaris, mahajans and landlords and thus induced to vote for the Congress candidates. Further, they were harassed at the polling stations if they came to support the Muslim League. I am not aware of any such incidents but if you can draw my attention to any I shall certainly inquire.

Dr. K.M. Ashraf has been made a special target and all manner of false statements have been attributed to him. It has been stated that he declared at the Ahrar conference that like the Russians, Mussolini and Hitler, we shall destroy every relic of religion and kill every religious person. It passes one's belief how such astounding lies can be given currency.

Information reaches us from our local committees that groups of workers for the Muslim League go about from village to village shouting offensive slogans, such as *Congress Murdabad, Gandhi Murdabad, Hindu Kafir hain, unko marne se ham bahisht jawenge.*[5] Written complaints to this effect have reached the Congress offices. I need not add that the villagers greatly resent this kind of thing and there might have been trouble if our people had not restrained them.

The widespread repetition of such falsehoods, the deliberate spread of religious fanaticism, and the open incitements to violence must excite and anger many persons and degrade our public life. I have referred above only to the statements made by responsible members of the Muslim League and to writings in well-known newspapers supporting the League. My list would be interminable if I referred to the filthy abuses by many irresponsible persons. The growth of this spirit of violence is evident. Maulvi Naseer attacked in the train after the Bijnor election, Mr. Abdul Hakim[6] shouted down at a meeting at Basti, Maulana

5. "Death to the Congress, death to Gandhi, Hindus are infidels, we shall reach heaven by killing them."
6. A leading Congressman of Basti; Deputy Speaker, U.P. Assembly, 1937-39.

Ahmad Said driven away from a public meeting in Madras, Sir Wazir Hasan in Delhi. I was in Cawnpore recently and many instances were reported to me.

Saddest of all perhaps has been the recent episode in Aligarh University. One can put up with much in the market place, but we have a right to expect a higher cultural level and some restraint in a university. And yet we had passion and violence there also. You are intimately connected with Aligarh and have no doubt looked up to it with pride. Does it not pain you to learn that many of the students of Aligarh, influenced by a speech delivered by Maulana Zafar Ali Khan and apparently incited by their vice-chancellor, should behave in this manner?[7]

I do not want to exaggerate what is happening and I am sure it will tone down and be controlled. But what I worry about is the encouragement of and acquiescence in these deplorable events by responsible public men. Can we have any public life, or any life, if this is the background in which we function? With what self-respect can we look into each other's eyes, or into the eyes of the foreigner, if we forget the elemental courtesies and decencies of life? You and I and many of us have been entangled in public affairs for a long stretch of years and we have seen many ups and downs. We have, I hope, a measure of respect for each other. We came to politics not to find a profession, for we could have done well otherwise also. We came because we wanted to work for an objective we had at heart. We tried to live up to certain ideals and even when sorrow and difficulty encompassed us the thought of that objective and those ideals kept us going. It has not been the politician's game of electioneering that has kept us up to the mark. Elections come and go; we win or lose. But there are other things in life which have attracted us and given us strength even when disaster seemed to threaten us. But if those things go, life itself would lose its flavour, and public affairs would become a curse and an abomination.

I have written to you at great length and told you what I had in my heart. You will forgive me. I am distressed at the shaping of events and I want, with your help, to stop this rot.

One thing more. If you have any grievance or complaint against the Congress or its methods during the election or at any other time, I hope yon will not hesitate to let me know, even as I have written to you

7. At a meeting of the Aligarh Muslim University Union on 4 November 1937 when K.M. Ashraf tried to calm down the feelings roused by the highly provocative and abusive speech made by Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, he was manhandled by some of the Maulana's supporters.

frankly. We are a large organisation and things may be done on our behalf which are undesirable. We try to stop them whenever we can get hold of them.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

53. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
November 11, 1937

My dear Krishna,

...A very unfortunate development in India and specially in the U.P. in recent weeks has been a fierce communal campaign by the Muslim League. Fear of the growth of Congress influence among the Muslims and specially the Congress victory in the Bijnor bye-election, has led the Muslim League to most unscrupulous methods. There is no political or economic argument. It is just sheer religious fanaticism and a campaign of undiluted violence. When one sees what is being said and done, the virtue of full liberty of speech and writing seems to grow a little less. This campaign has had full play as the provincial government does not take any action. Everything up to murder on religious grounds is preached and the worst type of fanaticism is being roused.

Probably you were somewhat worried by what I wrote about Russia in a previous letter.[2] You hinted as much. Perhaps you imagine that some kind of Trotskyism is spreading in India. There is no such thing here. But the various trials in Russia this year of highly placed individuals gave a great shock to many people, mostly friends of Russia. Those trials might have been perfectly justified, but the mere fact that they occurred showed an unhealthy background. Why should there be this background more than twenty years after the revolution? Why should there be such complete suppression of civil liberty even so long after the militant period of the revolution and civil war? These questions

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. See *post*, section 12, item 12.

trouble one and I must confess I can find no satisfactory answers. They are more or less academic questions which do not affect our actions.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

54. To District Magistrate, Saharanpur[1]

Allahabad
11/12/37

Dear Kunwar Jasbir Singh,
I have just returned from the rural area around Saharanpur where I went to address some meetings. An incident occurred at a meeting at Mirzapur to which I should like to draw your attention. I arrived there at five, somewhat later than the appointed hour. I met an excited crowd of over a thousand persons on the road awaiting me. I was informed that some time earlier a group of persons headed by one Mr. Ali Ahmad of Raipur had come to the meeting which was waiting for me and created some disturbance. A group of Muslim League volunteers had also come about the same time in a motor bus. After a while they tried to snatch the national flag and in doing so they belaboured several persons. This action was resented and there was fear of retaliation when the Congressmen present appealed to the crowd not to retaliate in any way. The flag was snatched away, broken and torn. Just then news came that I was arriving. Therefore the crowd, or most of it, went to the roadside to see me and meanwhile the *durries* and other articles were removed from the meeting place, apparently by the persons who had come with Mr. Ali Ahmad, and taken away. His party retired hurriedly and so did the Muslim League volunteers on the bus. By the time I arrived they had all gone.

I was further told that Mr. Shah Nazar of Behat, who I understand is a special magistrate, was present for part of the time before my arrival. He left before the flag was snatched and torn.

This kind of thing indicates an extraordinary state of affairs and it is likely to lead to trouble on the election day. In particular any attempt to dishonour the national flag is greatly resented and I for my part am not prepared to tolerate it even if this leads to trouble.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I might mention that a report of the affair has been lodged at the Behat police station.

I am leaving Saharanpur early tomorrow morning.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

55. To Masood Husain[1]

Camp Lucknow
December 22, 1937

Dear Mr. Masood Husain,[2]

I have your letter.[3] I entirely agree with you in what you say about Urdu notices being distributed and also that the language should be Hindustani. I understand that Urdu notices have been distributed. As for the language of the notice itself, I find, apart from about half a dozen words, the language is simple and ordinary Hindustani. So that the notice taken as a whole consisting of several hundred words is in proper language. It is impossible to object to a few individual words as this depends so much on the writer of the notice. You must also remember that the notice is written chiefly for the villagers and words are used which they are likely to understand.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-20(i)/1937, p. 237, N.M.M.L.
2. A vakil of Basti.
3. He had complained that the notices for the provincial conference at Aligarh had been issued in Hindi only and had many Sanskrit words in them.

56. To Mohammad Ismail Khan[1]

Allahabad
December 26, 1937

My dear Nawab Sahib,
I must apologise to you for the delay in answering your letter of December 1st.[2] It reached me about the middle of the month on my return from Assam and I have been overwhelmed with work since then.

You suggest that I have been hasty in arriving at certain conclusions on the basis of information supplied by interested parties. It may be so and perhaps on a fuller consideration of all the evidence I might vary my opinion. Indeed I wrote to you m order to balance the facts and accusations in my possession with such as you might draw my attention to. Any person, however judicial-minded he might be, is invariably influenced to some extent by what he sees and hears. I have seen something and I have heard a great deal about the activities of some of the workers on behalf of the League and I have been influenced thereby. But essentially my distress was due to the whole background of the Muslim League propaganda, as evidenced by their official leaflets and notices and other statements. All this was intensely communal and anti-Congress. Political questions were hardly referred to and the stress was on religious and communal questions, which did not arise at all. This seems to me a grave disservice to any community and to the nation, for progress comes through the development of the political mentality in a group. Nationalism is obviously a higher ideal than communalism in so far as politics is concerned.

I am writing this reply in some haste and therefore I cannot deal very fully now with all the points you have referred to. Nor do I think it desirable for us to waste our energy in discussing all manner of personal complaints and allegations. I shall only say this that a very large number of complaints have reached me of needless aggression on the part of persons calling themselves Muslim Leaguers. The national flag has been torn and pulled down, Congress meetings in villages interfered with, and speeches of a violent and provocative kind delivered. Some of these instances I have investigated myself.

1. *Nehru-Jinnah Correspondence*, (Allahabad, 1938).
2. He had written: "I am sure that you must be aware that the nationalist press has been vilifying and calumniating our most respected leaders without any protest from any Congress public man of eminence. The patience of the Mussalmans is well-nigh exhausted and if they, therefore, hit back, it may be occasionally below the belt, you should not feel greatly horrified..."

and I expressed my strong disapproval of them. Certainly I am prepared to condemn all such remarks by whomsoever made. Unfortunately I seldom have time to see the Urdu or Hindi press and cannot follow its outbursts. As for the so-called nationalist press in English, there has certainly been anti-Muslim League propaganda but this has been political, I suppose. I do not remember seeing anything personal. In any event please remember that the Congress does not control any single such newspaper. They are vaguely nationalist because they cater for a public which prefers that outlook and they criticise individuals and groups in the Congress, including me, pretty vigorously. I disapprove entirely of many of their policies but I am unable to control them.

I have not seen the dramatic piece[3] which appeared in the *Hindustan*, nor have I read Sardar Sardul Singh's speech[4] to which you refer.

I might remind you that last May or June, when I was in Burma, my attention was drawn to certain references to Mr. Jinnah in the Gujarati press. These papers were not Congress papers; indeed they were partly anti-Congress. I did not myself see what they had written but on being told that they had indulged in personal criticism, I deprecated this and publicly apologised to Mr. Jinnah, although I was in no way concerned with the papers.[5]

You refer to the Congress mass contact movement as if this was started as a challenge to the Muslim League.[6] Allow me to assure you that it is nothing of the kind. You may or may not agree with the ideology behind it, but you will appreciate, I hope, that it has nothing to do with Hindu or Muslim as such. It is the natural development of an organisation towards the masses. I laid stress on it in April 1936 in my Lucknow Congress address[7] and since then we have been pushing it.

3. This was a parody written by Athar Rasheed on the Muslim League session held at Lucknow.
4. In his presidential address at the Punjab Political Conference, he had said: "... the cause of political independence of this country cannot be allowed to be retarded by schismatic tendencies of self-seekers who use religious and cultural catch-phrases to mislead the unsophisticated masses...Communal leaders who wouldn't sacrifice the crease of their trousers for community or country, often speak of facing realities, not knowing that the world of realities is much wider than the tip of their nose, beyond which these communal leaders are unable to see anything."
5. See *ante*, item 6.
6. He had stated: "It is possible that the situation may improve after the elections are over, though I am not sure whether the mass contact movement which is being carried on aggressively by the Congress among the Muslims will not continue to cause friction and maintain the present tension."
7. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 170-195.

A few months later I pointed out that it had lagged behind so far as the Muslims were concerned and urged Congressmen to push it among them. Whatever the shortcomings and errors of the Congress might be, it is in conception and even in practice a national movement. It has no other *raison d'etre*. It cannot admit the argument that it must not function in a particular religious group. For if it does so, it ceases to be national. If it does so, it must also retire from other such groups, and ultimately it must fade away. There is no middle course.

We are a political organisation with our doors open to all and trying to function on the national plane. In the interests of Indian unity and freedom it is essential that there should be such an organisation. There is no other. It may be that occasionally this organisation errs in a communal or group matter. If so every effort must be made to put it right. To attack it as an organisation and try to weaken it is to attack the conception of Indian unity itself and of nationalism and freedom. What will take its place? And what of all of us if there is no such organisation?

We go to elections of course in the hope of winning a seat. But I hope you will remember that we aim higher. Winning seats does not carry us far. We are out to develop the people politically and to organise them for the fight for freedom. Elections give us an opportunity for this and so we welcome them. An election run on personal issues or other side issues is of no use to us whatsoever; indeed it injures our cause.

You refer to the belief that the Congress is trying to destroy Muslim solidarity. That is often said but I do not understand it at all. There can be and should be religious or cultural solidarity. But when we enter the political plane, the solidarity is national, not communal; when we enter the economic plane the solidarity is economic. The Congress is out to build up national solidarity and at the same time to preserve in every way possible the cultural solidarity of different groups.

It is very unfair of anyone to charge Muslim supporters of the Congress with being financed by the Congress.[8] Naturally in our elections we help our candidates, Hindu or Muslim. Apart from this what is meant? If it is hinted at that Muslims in the Congress are there for love of money it is a calumny and a falsehood. Our finances are perfectly above board and can be inspected. In our various offices there are a number of Hindu as well as Muslim wholetime workers who are paid a maintenance allowance, which is usually far less than what they

8. He had said: "...the Muslim supporters of the Congress are being financed and helped by the Congress which, as at present constituted, is an overwhelmingly Hindu body, to fight their co-religionists and subdue them..."

can earn otherwise or what they were actually getting before they joined us.

You refer to the appointment to ministerial offices of persons who have abjured their parties and only recently joined the Congress. Presumably you refer to Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim. I think you are very unfair to him. Perhaps you do not know that Hafiz Ibrahim has been a Congressman for years past and has held office in Congress committees. He left the League Parliamentary Board long before the ministries were formed on the ground that the board was allying itself to reactionary elements which had opposed the League and the Congress in the general elections. That attitude was a perfectly comprehensible and justifiable one, whether one agreed with it or not. Subsequently as you know he resigned and sought election again. What more can man do?

I hope however that now that the elections are over all these matters and disputes will tone down and gradually vanish away, allowing us to consider our national problems dispassionately. You write that you agree with the Congress programme as outlined in the Wardha resolution of the Working Committee. You agree that politically speaking there seem to be no vital differences between the Congress and the League, and then you ask me to point out where we differ from you.[9] Perhaps this letter will help you to appreciate our viewpoint. It is not for us to seek out differences, it is our business to remove them. We are a political organisation trying with such ability and energy as we possess to work for a certain end. In the nature of things, being a national organisation we work among all classes and groups in India. This means no ill will to other groups or individuals. Our effort must necessarily be to gain their goodwill. So far as the minorities are concerned it is our declared aim and purpose to go out of our way even to gain their goodwill. So if we agree in such a large measure why should we not carry on in a friendly way?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. He wrote: "...as far as the interest of the whole country is concerned, there is not much difference between the policies and programmes of the two organisations...I may be permitted the liberty of stating that if this mass contact movement had not been thrust upon us and if the Muslim League parties had not in the various legislatures been so contemptuously treated by the Congress, wherever they happened to be in majority, the Mussalmans would have been nearer the Congress ideals today than they are likely to be for some considerable time to come..."

57. Misreporting in the Press[1]

Unfortunately I have no time to read the Hindi and Urdu press, especially of the Punjab and Delhi. Rarely when I see it I am astonished and grieved at the kind of propaganda that is carried on in many of these papers and at the number of wrong statements made. My attention has just been drawn to some of these statements and I am astounded that any one should have made such false statements about me. One of these is that I have refused to see Mr. Jinnah. This is wholly false. Another remarkable statement is that I am encouraging the Shahidganj agitation and it is stated that I have promised to give a large sum of money to the Ahrars for this purpose. This is absolutely and maliciously false. I entirely disapprove of this agitation and everybody knows that the Congress does not permit any kind of civil disobedience at the present moment. As for my promising money for this or anything else, the charge is a scandalous one which no person with a spark of decency could have made. Our Congress accounts are audited and placed before the public.

Another false statement was that I had pulled down the Muslim League flag at Najibabad some time back. There is not a shadow of a foundation for this. No Congressman has any business to interfere in any way with any such flag. I regret that communal flags should be given prominence as this must inevitably mean a multiplicity of flags and emphasise separatist tendencies. Our national flag was deliberately chosen to represent all communities and groups in India. It was and is the common flag of India, representing the unity of India, as Maulana Mohamed Ali so often emphasized. But I do not wish to force it on anyone nor do I wish to interfere with any other flag.

I would appeal with all earnestness to all journalists and newspapermen not to give publicity to rumours and unauthorised reports or to anything which increases bitterness. They have a heavy responsibility and they must prove worthy of it. To the public I would appeal not to believe in anything which is not authorised and proved to be authentic. I am always prepared to confirm or deny any piece of news. Without such confirmation or denial anything relating to me should not be believed.

1. Statement to the press, Harduaganj, 30 December 1937. *The Tribune*, 31 December 1937.

58. To Mela Ram[1]

Camp Harduaganj
December 31, 1937

My dear Mela Ram,

Owing to Muslim League propaganda a very serious situation is arising in many parts of the province. We have to handle this very tactfully. Apart from the big issues involved, we have to see that small grievances are met and there are no petty points of conflicts.

In Saharanpur there are some matters of this kind which deserve immediate attention. Probably it was largely because of them that we lost the election. It is possible that unless they are settled quickly a worse situation might arise.

I am therefore writing to you to request you to do your utmost to get these matters settled. It is better to err on the side of generosity in such cases for we have to look at them from a larger political objective. Mohanlal Saxena has been specially asked by the council of the P.C.C. to visit Saharanpur to look into these matters.

These matters are:

(1) The Idgah dispute[2] which you know well. This must be settled and the person owning the land be induced to part with it for the Idgah.

(2) The question of the chairmanship of the municipal board or the district board and of the education committee. We understand that if one of these chairmanships does not go to a Muslim member there will be great irritation among the Muslims. I trust, therefore, that it will be possible for a Muslim member to be elected to one of them.

(3) The question of retrenchment of the Muslim clerks in the municipal board. In this matter a little generosity would well repay our efforts.

We consider these Saharanpur matters as having more than local importance. It is therefore that I am writing to you and Mohanlal Saxena is going there in a day or two. I do hope that you will be

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-20(i)/1937, p. 229, N.M.M.L.
2. This dispute was over cow sacrifice in Gangoh in Saharanpur district.

able to put right these unfortunate matters. We have spoken to Ajit Prasad[3] of course.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Ajit Prasad Jain (b. 1902); member, U.P. Assembly, 1937-39 and 1946-47; member, Constituent Assembly, 1947-50; member, Lok Sabha, 1952-65; Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation, Government of India, 1950-54 and Minister for Food and Agriculture, 1954-59; president, U.P.P.C.C., 1961-64; Governor of Kerala, 1965-66; chairman, Irrigation Commission of India since 1969; member, Rajya Sabha, 1968-72.

59. The Need for a Dispassionate Approach[1]

From press reports it appears that Mr. M.A. Jinnah has issued some kind of a challenge to me, though I have not been able to make out what this is about and why he should think it necessary to issue challenges.[2] Nor have I any recollection of any previous challenge to which he refers. Mr. Jinnah is further reported to have said that he is fighting the Congress leadership which is misleading the Hindus. In the same week Mr. Fazlul Huq has called upon Muslims to prepare for direct action against Hindus and has threatened to use a big rod against those he disapproves of.[3] He looks forward to communal conflicts and prophesies dire happenings in which he will play a prominent role. All this frank incitement to communalism and hatred and conflict is strange

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 1 January 1938. *The Hindustan Times*, 3 January 1938.
2. Speaking at Calcutta on 26 December 1937 Jinnah said: "I am not fighting Hindus. I am fighting a leadership which is misleading Hindus...I had thrown out a challenge many months ago to Jawaharlal Nehru and I throw out the challenge now. Let him come and sit with us and let us formulate a constructive and practical and ameliorative programme which will remove poverty and hunger and give immediate relief to the poor."
3. At a meeting of the All India Muslim Students Federation at Calcutta on 28 December 1937, Fazlul Huq said: "...I have got a stern rod for those who preach communalism and disturb the peace of the country. We must hold fast and avoid all separatist tendencies. We are surrounded by enemies on all sides and we must therefore be ready for the fight."

language which one has not associated so far with political leaders and those in positions of responsibility. I have no taste or aptitude for controversy of this kind and I can only regret that matters which should be discussed dispassionately and with the ordinary courtesies of public life should be dealt with in such a manner. Whoever wishes to fight the Congress on the communal issue will have to fight in the air, for the Congress will have nothing to do with such internecine conflicts. We have fought, not without success, the mighty power of British imperialism and that fight we shall continue till imperialism flourishes no more in India. In that fight we shall gladly cooperate with every individual and group in India, whatever our minor differences might be. We think in terms of no other fight, and we shall strain every nerve and do our utmost to gain the confidence and goodwill of all our countrymen. Mr. Fazlul Huq's approach is one of threats and angry defiance. Mr. Jinnah's approach is anything but friendly. But I should like to assure Mr. Jinnah, on behalf of my colleagues and myself, that even without the issue of challenges, any statement or proposal by Mr. Jinnah will always have the most careful consideration. We are always prepared to sit down and consider any of the problems which afflict India. So far as the minorities question is concerned, it is the declared and well-established policy of the Congress not only to do full justice to them, but to go even beyond that in order to inspire confidence and goodwill in them. The Congress can conceive of no freedom for India which is not an equal freedom for all the various religious communities which inhabit India and in which all do not share equally and have full opportunities of growth and development. So far as religious and cultural matters are concerned it has given the fullest possible assurances and declared that these should be incorporated in our fundamental rights in the constitution. A further assurance has been given in regard to personal law. In regard to certain political rights, the Communal Award stands for the present and we have stated repeatedly that we seek no change except with the concurrence of those concerned. We have further declared that we shall stand by the provisional agreement which was arrived at between Babu Rajendra Prasad, acting as Congress President, and Mr. Jinnah. What remains? If there is anything of importance left over, let us have it out by all means and consider it. My difficulty is that I do not know what the argument is about.

Essentially the Congress is a political body acting on the national and political plane, and inevitably dealing with economic questions. All these overlap communal and religious boundaries. Because of the strength that has come to the Congress from the organised masses of this country, and because of the growing importance of India, the Congress

functions also to some extent on the international plane. This is bound to grow. This also has nothing to do with religious or communal questions.

I welcome the recent re-orientation of the Muslim League and some of its resolutions which have brought it much nearer, in theory at least, to the Congress. I welcome its new objective of independence.[4] I hope this theory will be translated into practice and strengthen the anti-imperialist struggle.

I would beg Mr. Jinnah to remember what the Congress is today. It is very different from what it was in the days when he was associated with it. During this period it has grown remarkably and is today an organisation with thirty one lakhs of members actually on its rolls, of whom about a hundred thousand are Muslims. It influences scores of millions of others. But apart from the vast numbers it influences, it has succeeded by its continuous work among the masses and its campaigns of direct action, in developing political consciousness among the people and in creating strength and self-reliance in them. These millions, though more disciplined than ever before and capable of united action, are not dumb sheep who can be driven at the will of a few leaders, howsoever honoured and respected the latter might be. Even our village committees are vital bodies having a will of their own and striving to express it. The Congress is thus a vast democratic organisation, influenced greatly by its leadership no doubt, but essentially reacting to the pressure and urges coming up from its tens of thousands of local committees.

What are our major problems today? Politically, the fight against the proposed federation and for independence; socially and in the sphere of economics, the fight against poverty and unemployment, and the necessity to lighten the burdens of our masses and raise their standards to human levels. There are ever so many other matters of importance and demanding attention—education, medical relief and sanitation, the development of planned industry—but before we can grapple with them the basic problems must be solved. In facing these basic problems of federation and independence and poverty and unemployment we come up against great vested interests, imperialistic and semi-feudal. The recent decisions of the Muslim League lead me to hope that that organisation is beginning to think of their problems in the same light as

4. At its Lucknow session held from 15 to 18 October 1937 the Muslim League passed a resolution "to establish in India full independence in the form of a federation of free and democratic states in which rights and interests of Mussalmans and other minorities are adequately safeguarded in the constitution."

we have done for so many years. If so, let us cooperate by all means with each other and with all other anti-imperialist elements in the country in this fight for freedom, whether the method of fighting is by direct action or otherwise.

May I express the hope that any further approach to the communal or minorities question will be a dispassionate one, and will not seek to rouse bitterness and hatred which can never help in the consideration of any problem? In this dynamic and revolutionary age, pregnant with big possibilities, those of us who have a measure of influence with our countrymen dare not lose sight of the big things or encourage passions which weaken us and lower us in the world's esteem.

60. To Mohammad Ismail Khan[1]

Bombay
2/1/38

My dear Nawab Sahib,
I wrote to you from Allahabad just before my departure and sent this letter to Lucknow thinking that you might be there. I hope you received it. Later I read the press reports of the Muslim students' conference held in Calcutta at which Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Fazlul Huq spoke. I do not know if you agree with the aggressive and defiant approach which their speeches displayed but I was grieved and distressed at it. I had no desire whatever to carry on a controversy but in view of Mr. Jinnah's "challenge" to me, I had to say something in reply. I have today issued a statement[2] to the press, a copy of which I enclose.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. *See the preceding item.*

61. To Mohammad Ismail Khan[1]

Lucknow
Jan. 18, 1938

My dear Nawab Sahib,
Thank you for your letter which I received some days ago.[2] I have been in Lucknow for the last three days, but unfortunately I have been so busy with our provincial Congress meetings that I had no opportunity of meeting you.

You must have seen Mr. Jinnah's recent statement.[3] I can only express my regret that he has issued this aggressive statement which does not help much. But the questions we have to consider are more important than the method of approach and I shall therefore not enter into needless controversy. But my difficulty remains. What are these points of dispute? I wish you could enlighten me so that we might consider them and come to grips with them. May I therefore request you to let me know what these points of dispute are?

I am just leaving for Lahore and the Frontier Province. I hope to be back in Allahabad in ten days' time.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Welcoming Jawaharlal's statement of 1 January 1938, Mohammad Ismail Khan wrote to him: "...I congratulate you on your statesmanship in making the position of the Congress clear at an opportune moment. I have no doubt that it will elicit a suitable response from Mr. Jinnah. I agree with you that Mr. Fazlul Haq's speech as reported in the press shows not only bad taste, but is most offensive."
3. In a statement issued on 10 January 1938, Jinnah had said: "...I want Jawaharlal Nehru to realise that neither he nor the Congress is yet in a position of a sovereign power to make declarations and give assurance....I hope that the events of the last two months must have convinced the Congress High Command that the Muslim League must be recognised on a footing of complete equality."

62. To M. A. Jinnah[1]

Lucknow
January 18, 1938

Dear Mr. Jinnah,
I have read the statement you issued recently to the press with care. I am afraid we approach the question from differing viewpoints and I feel that your approach is not very helpful. But I entirely agree with you that an argument carried on through the medium of the press is not desirable. Indeed I had decided not to issue press statements on the subject, but after your Calcutta speech, in which you mentioned my name and issued some kind of a 'challenge' to me, I felt that a public statement was unavoidable. Hence my statement, in which I tried to avoid unnecessary controversy.

You know perhaps that for some months past I have been in correspondence with Nawab Ismail Khan on this subject and I have been anxious to find out what the points of difference and agreement were. I am afraid I do not know this yet and your last statement does not help. I would feel grateful to you if you could kindly throw some light on this and let me know what exactly are the points in dispute which require consideration. I think this will help us all and lead to an avoidance of needless controversy. We can then come to grips with the subject. As I have said in my last statement, we are eager to do everything in our power to put an end to every misapprehension and to endeavour to solve every problem that comes in the way of our developing our public life along right lines and promoting the unity and progress of the Indian people.

I am leaving for Lahore today. From there I go to the Frontier Province and return to Allahabad in about ten days' time. Kindly address your reply[2] to Allahabad.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *Nehru-Jinnah Correspondence*, (Allahabad, 1938).
2. Replying to Jawaharlal on 25 January, Jinnah wrote: "...I fail to see what you are driving at. It does not suggest any useful proposal of concrete character... you further refer to my Calcutta speech...But you do not even now give me the purport of my speech and what was the challenge which compelled you to say, what you did, in your statement which you consider unavoidable..."

for I am not aware of any attempt on the part of the Congress to injure Urdu. Some time back I wrote an essay on "The Question of Language"[3] which represents, I believe, the Congress viewpoint. It was approved by Mr. Gandhi and by many people unconnected with the Congress and interested in the advancement of Urdu, including Maulvi Abdul Huq, *secretary, Anjuman-e-Taraqqi-e-Urdu of Hyderabad.* I do not know if you have come across this essay. In any event I am asking my office in Allahabad to send you a copy. If you disagree with the argument or conclusions of this essay I shall be grateful to have your criticisms.

I might mention that the Congress ministry in Madras is endeavouring to introduce the study of Hindustani in the state schools in the province. They are having primers and textbooks prepared especially for the purpose by the Jamia Millia. These primers etc. are to be in two scripts—Devanagri and Urdu—but in identical language, the students having the option of script.

I mention these instances to show how misapprehensions arise. But the real questions at issue are more important and it is in regard to these that clarification is necessary. I presume you are acquainted with the Congress resolutions and statements on minority and fundamental rights and regarding communal questions. If you so wish it, I can have these sent to you. Many of these were collected together in a comprehensive resolution passed by the Working Committee in Calcutta towards the end of October 1937. About the Communal Award the Congress position has been repeatedly made clear.

The Congress policy as laid down in these resolutions may be incomplete or wrong. If so, we shall gladly consider suggestions to complete it or rectify it. Personally I do not see what more can be done by the Congress regarding religious or cultural matters. As for political (communal) questions, the Communal Award, unsatisfactory as it is, holds the field for the present and till such time as it may be altered by mutual agreement of the parties concerned.

In considering wider political questions, the Congress has adhered to certain principles and policies for a number of years, though minor varitions have taken place from time to time. Our present policy in the legislatures and outside was defined by a comprehensive resolution passed by the Working Committee at Wardha last year. I was very glad to find from Nawab Ismail Khan and Chowdhry Khaliquzzaman that the U.P. Muslim League, or the U.P. Muslim League Parliamentary Board, accepted this programme. This included our objective of

3. See *post*, section 15, item 33.

independence, our demand for a constituent assembly, our general attitude to the constitution, the Act and the federation, and our methods of work inside and outside the legislatures. It referred also to our agrarian and labour programmes. Thus there appeared to be a very large measure of agreement between us, not only in regard to fundamentals, but even regarding many details.

In view of this agreement it distressed and surprised me to find that there was so much conflict. I have tried therefore to find out what this conflict is about. I do not see how I can make any proposal, concrete or vague, when I do not know what the points in issue are. It is true that in reading your speeches I have come across various statements to the effect that the Congress is trying to establish Hindu raj. I am unaware of how this is being done or who is doing it. If any Congress ministries or the Congress organisations have made mistakes, these should be pointed out to us.

A report of your Calcutta speech appeared in the newspapers at the time and is no doubt available to you and for me to give you a purport of it seemed hardly necessary. In this you state that you are fighting the Congress, that you are fighting the Congress leadership which is misleading the Hindus. Further you have said that you want to bring the Congress High Command to its senses.[4] May I suggest that those who are privileged to advise or lead the Congress have no desire to fight anybody except British imperialism? In any event, if we mislead or misbehave we have a right to enquire from our critics where and how we have done so.

Further in your Calcutta speech you said: "I had long long ago, months ago now, thrown out a challenge to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and I throw out a challenge now—let him come and sit with us and let us formulate a constructive programme which will give immediate relief to the poor". It was to this 'challenge' that I referred in my last letter. I do not remember on which previous occasion you had issued a similar challenge to me.

It is always helpful to discuss matters and problems face to face, and, as I have said previously, we are always glad to do so. A short while

4. In his concluding address to the All India Muslim Students Federation in Calcutta on 28 December 1937, Jinnah said: "...Ours is a just position and if we are united, we have nothing to fear. If we are united, I feel confident that a large body of Hindus will agree with us that the Congress High Command must be brought to their senses...While we want to raise ourselves to the highest stature, our hands of cooperation for the good of the country are always fully stretched out but on equal terms. We are not going to be subdued or be camp-followers or a subject race of the Hindu raj."

ago you met Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, one of our most respected leaders, than whom there is no one better fitted to explain the Congress viewpoint in regard to the minorities problem or any other matter. Whenever necessity arises every one of us will willingly welcome a talk. But even such a talk is likely to be vague and infructuous if some clarification of ideas does not take place previously. Correspondence helps in this process and sometimes is even preferable as it is more precise than talk. I trust therefore that you will help in clarifying the position by telling us where we differ and how you would like this difference to end. You have also criticised the Congress in vigorous language, as you were no doubt entitled to do. But are we not entitled to ask you to substantiate those criticisms in private at least, if not in public?

I have inquired from Mr. Gandhi about your letter[5] to him dated the 5th November, 1937. He received it in Calcutta when he was lying ill there and he felt that it needed no answer. Your letter had been in answer to his and the matter seemed to end there for the time being. He was good enough to show me his letter and yours and it seemed to me that no particular reply was called for. I understand that he wrote to you yesterday.[6]

I hope to be in Allahabad by the 9th February.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Jinnah, in reply to Mahatma Gandhi's letter of 19 October 1937, had written: "I am sorry you think my speech at Lucknow is a declaration of war. It is purely in self-defence. Kindly read it again and try and understand it. Evidently you have not been following the course of events in the last twelve months. As to reserving you as a 'bridge' and 'peace-maker', don't you think your complete silence for all these months identified you with the Congress leadership, although I know you are not even a four-anna member of that body..."
6. Mahatma Gandhi in reply wrote: "You complain of my silence. The reason for my silence is literally and truly in my note. Believe me, the moment I can do something that can bring the two communities together nothing in the world can prevent me so doing. You seem to deny that your speech was a declaration of war, but your later pronouncements too confirm my first impression. How can I prove what is a matter of feeling? In your speeches I miss the old nationalist. When in 1915 I returned from my self-imposed exile in South Africa everybody spoke of you as one of the staunchest of nationalists and the hope of both the Hindus and Mussalmans. Are you still the same Jinnah? If you say you are, in spite of your speeches, I shall accept your word.

   Lastly, you want me to come forward with some proposal. What proposal can I make except to ask you on bended knees to be what I thought you were? But the proposals to form a basis of unity between the two communities have surely got to come from you."

64. To Mohammad Ismail Khan[1]

Wardha
4/2/38

My dear Nawab Sahib,
Your two letters dated 16th January and 29th January apparently came together and missed me in Allahabad. They have been forwarded to me here and have just reached me. I shall reply to them more fully later. But I hasten to correct a misunderstanding which appears in the last paragraph of your letter of the 16th January.[2]

I am glad you have written about this to me and drawn my attention to it. The report made to you was entirely incorrect. At a meeting somewhere—I forget the name of the place—I was interrupted several times. I asked the interrupters what they wanted and what their grievances were. They were unable to give me a satisfactory reply. I said that I did not know what the vital differences between the Congress and the Muslim League were and I wanted to know what these were. I said further that Nawab Ismail Khan and Choudhry Kaliquzzaman had assured us on their own behalf and on behalf of their colleagues that they accepted the Congress objective and programme and we had nearly come to an agreement. But unfortunately this fell through on the question of the formation of the ministry. Thus there were no fundamental differences.

May I request you to give a message to Khaliquzzaman? I would have written to him separately but I am rushed for work at present. Someone told me that he complained of having sent three letters to Gandhiji to which he had no reply. I enquired from Gandhiji and he tells me that he has received no letter at all from him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Ismail Khan had drawn Jawaharlal's attention to a report of his speech in Saharanpur district that "the League was creating all this trouble because 'Ismail Khan wanted two Ministerships to which the Congress ministers did not agree'."

65. To Mohammad Ismail Khan[1]

Wardha
5/2/38

My dear Nawab Sahib,
To continue my letter of yesterday's date.

The Congress mass contact movement has never been thought of in terms of Muslims only or confined to them.[2] It was thought of in terms of extending the organisation and influence of the Congress among all classes of people. In a sense it has been in existence for many years but it took more pointed shape at the Lucknow Congress of 1936. No mention was made of Muslims at the time. Later on, and quite apart from elections, I laid stress on carrying it on more particularly amongst the Muslims. The elections came and afterwards again we emphasized it. This was in furtherance of our general programme as a political body. It was not directed against the Muslim League.

Naturally we welcomed noted Muslim ulemas when they joined the Congress. We welcomed other Muslims also who were politicians and economists. So far as we were concerned we had no desire to emphasise the religious aspect of any question through these ulemas. Some of these ulemas were old colleagues of ours in the Congress or the khilafat movement, and though their viewpoint was not purely political, it was definitely political in most matters that concerned us. You are right in saying that during the elections many of these ulemas were requested in help. The candidates or their organisers made special efforts to obtain their assistance. There was nothing unnatural about this. I have learnt for the first time from your letter that someone working for our candidate threatened to excommunicate Muslim voters. I do not know who did this but in any event it was highly improper for him to do so.

Many odd people unconnected with the Congress probably supported the Congress candidates. Surely this had nothing to do with a Hindu

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 16 January, Ismail Khan wrote: "Can the Congress have the temerity to deny that its own propaganda among the Muslim masses has been free from these blemishes? Has it (the Congress) not in the recent by-elections and in its mass contact movement utilised to the fullest extent the religious and spiritual influence of eminent theologians, and through them done its best to exploit the religious sentiments of the ignorant masses in every conceivable manner...If after this exhibition of communalism by a majority community, a minority devises effective measures for its security can you blame it, and wonder at its communalism?"

government as it had probably little to do with a great love for the Congress. But the opposite candidate was running on a definite communal ticket and it is not surprising that zamindars and others preferred a Congress candidate who stood on a wider platform. Suppose a Hindu Mahasabha candidate opposed a Congress candidate. Is it not extremely likely that Muslim zamindars and vakils, who are in no way associated with the Congress, would prefer the Congress candidate to the purely communal candidate? This is not communalism but a reaction from communalism.

You have drawn my attention previously to certain offensive epithets said to have been used against members of the Muslim League. I have no information, except what you say, about these epithets. It is possible that exaggerated or perverted reports reached your ears. In any event your complaint has been, so far as I can remember, not against Congressmen but against Ahraris and others.[3] I am glad that even in the super-heated atmosphere of the elections Congressmen were not guilty of improper behaviour. It is possible that some Ahraris erred. If so, I am sorry. They are not closely associated with the Congress and are unused to our discipline and methods.

As for the national flag, it took birth 17 years ago during the early days of the noncooperation movement.[4] Its colours and shape etc. were determined after careful consultation with leaders of all communities in the Congress. In those days Muslims were present in large numbers in the Congress and the flag was frequently used by the khilafat committee. Its colours were certainly determined to represent various communities, green being for Muslims and white for other minorities. We did try later not to lay stress on the communal reason for the colours as we wanted it to be considered the common national flag of all. Maulana Mohamed Ali delivered any number of eloquent orations on the national flag as representing the unity of India and all communities.

3. In his letter of 1 December 1937, Ismail Khan had complained: "...I wonder whether the speeches delivered by the Ahrar leaders who are today espousing the Congress cause have ever been reported to you. I also do not quite know whether you ever read vernacular papers in which they are often reproduced. If you have not done so, I cannot possibly describe here the filthy abuses of the Muslim League and its leaders in which these heroic gentlemen indulge...I am afraid that your workers purposely refrain from furnishing you with information which would not be to their credit..."
4. Ismail Khan had written: "...I am not aware that any Muslim organisation has recognised it to be the national flag. I have also understood it to be the Congress flag...I do not know whether the Hindu Mahasabha or the Christian community treat the tricolour flag as the national flag."

It is obvious that India must have a national flag, a flag which all can call their own. A communal flag cannot possibly take its place and it is hardly proper to put up any communal flag on public buildings used by people of all communities. During the past 17 years the national flag has become very popular all over India and it has been endeared to us by any number of sacrifices and even deaths to protect its honour.

You are perfectly right in saying that many Hindus, and so also many Muslims, are swayed by communal feelings. But the point is: what lead we must give, what objective we have, and what methods we pursue? If we do anything that increases communalism and separatism then we do injury both to our community and to the nation.

You are mistaken if you think that the Congress has neglected other groups or minorities in India and is concentrating on the Muslims only. You know that we have fought the Hindu Mahasabha and disabled it politically. We have done effective and successful work among the Christian masses in the south. We have approached the Sikhs, Parsis and Jews. Our policy is the same throughout. Naturally, you will agree, the Muslims have a special importance and we desire to gain their goodwill. But allow me to tell you that there has been no liberal financing of anybody. Our income is almost entirely derived from four-anna subscriptions.

There is no question of the Congress trying to break the solidarity of the Muslims or any other community. It is on the political field that we make appeal and thus want to make a common platform for all.

As for Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim, you are right in saying that he did not join the civil disobedience movement. But he has long been a member and office-bearer of a local Congress committee and a member of the Swaraj Party in the legislature. I do not know why he stood as a Muslim League candidate. One of the reasons probably was because at the time there was no apparent conflict between the Congress and the League.

I enclose copies of the correspondence I have had with Mr. Jinnah.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

66. To Sayidur Rahman[1]

Allahabad
February 10, 1938

Dear Mr. Rahman,[2]

It is two months ago when I received your letter[3] but have been so frightfully busy since then that I was unable to thank you for it. Even now I am afraid I cannot deal with all the questions that you have raised in it. Your questions really involve a consideration of the technique of revolutionary action in India. To some extent you can find an answer to them by considering both the revolutionary technique that we have developed in India through the Congress and the methods employed in other countries. You will find that in Western countries revolutionaries today seldom talk in terms of violence, although violence is not excluded from their thought. But essential revolutionary changes are sought to be brought about by mass action. This action may be of many kinds ultimately ending in civil disobedience, non-payment of taxes and other forms of noncooperation.

The Muslims, as any other group, are undoubtedly justified in acting as a group in all matters which affect them as a group. These matters are religious and cultural in the main. In political matters the lines of demarcation are not communal and therefore a communal consideration of such matters is reactionary.

I am glad that the League has adopted independence for its object. But I do not yet know how far it represents the ideology of the leaders of the League. Many of these leaders, you will recollect, have cooperated with the government in its attempts to suppress India's struggle for freedom. In any event I have sought to find out what the Muslim League desires and wherein it differs from the Congress and no one has so far given me an answer in public or in private. You will remember that controversy arose because objection was taken to the Congress working among Muslims. This was an extraordinary objection because if it is once admitted we shall also have to admit the right of the Hindu Mahasabha to prevent us from working among the Hindus. We

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-4/1937-38, pp. 13-14, N.M.M.L.
2. An advocate of Dibrugarh.
3. He had asked whether it was through mass consciousness that Jawaharlal wanted the people to be relieved of their poverty and whether the Congress and the Muslim League, having the same ideal of achievement of independence, could not reach their goal pursuing their different paths.

do not challenge the right of the Muslim League or any other organisation to work. We do claim that we have an equal right to spread our political ideology and methods of work and to appeal to people to support this ideology.

As for the *Bande Mataram* song, you will see that there is not a word in that part of it which has been accepted by the Congress, which has any reference to any religion or religious idea. The song has become exceedingly popular all over India during the last thirty years or more as a political song and the British Government has tried to suppress it as such. It has been associated with innumerable instances of sacrifice and suffering and as such it has become part of our national movement. It may in future become less important, but it would be wrong for the Congress to suppress a thing which has this background and which does not offend against any principle.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

public might not be misled? A clear and authoritative statement from you will help us also in understanding what you stand for and what you object to.

I note that you do not wish me to introduce in our correspondence any matters which we may have discussed with Nawab Ismail Khan or Chowdhry Khaliquzzaman. I did not know that they represented any different viewpoint from yours. I thought it necessary to draw your attention to the repeated attempts I have been making to find out what the political and communal policy of the Muslim League is and wherein it differs from that of the Congress. You will remember saying last year that the Muslim League had an entirely different policy even on political matters from that of the Congress. Since then the League has changed its objective and its economic outlook and has thus approached nearer to the Congress. I am anxious to find out what the real meaning of these changes is. Without this clarification it is difficult for us to understand the present position.

You say that you do not believe in the doctrine that I lay down, namely: "Are we not entitled to ask you to substantiate all these criticisms in private at least, if not in public?" Further you say that for your part you make no such distinction and are prepared to substantiate anything that you have said publicly, provided it is correctly reported. If you will read my sentence again you will no doubt observe that I have nowhere laid down any such doctrine as you imagine. I would indeed welcome a public treatment by you of the criticisms made by you. But if you yourself were unwilling to write to the press on the subject, as you indicated in your letter, I put it to you that we were at least entitled to request you to substantiate the criticism in private.

If you have made no criticisms of the Congress, and the press reports are entirely wrong, then of course no question of substantiation arises. All that need be done is to contradict the press reports. But if criticisms have been made, as presumably they have been, then I would request you to justify them publicly or privately as you might choose. Personally I would prefer the former method.

I am afraid I must confess that I do not yet know what the fundamental points of dispute are. It is for this reason that I have been requesting you to clarify them. So far I have not received any help in this direction. Of course we shall willingly meet you whenever opportunity arises. Our President, Subhas Chandra Bose, or Maulana Abul Kalam Azad or I or any other member of the Working Committee can meet you at a suitable opportunity.

But when we meet what are we to discuss? Responsible people with organisations behind them can hardly discuss anything in the air. Some

clarification of the issues, some clear statement of what is wanted and what is objected to, is always desirable, otherwise we may not come to grips with the subject. You will remember the argument about what transpired at Delhi in 1935 between you and Babu Rajendra Prasad. There has even been a difference of opinion about the facts. It would be unfortunate if we repeated this performance and then argued about it later.

It is thus highly desirable for us to define the issues first. This is also necessary as we have always to consult many colleagues in regard to any matter affecting the Congress policy. There is surely nothing undesirable or inappropriate about this defining of issues by correspondence.[3] It is the usual method adopted between individuals and organisations. May I therefore beg of you to enlighten me?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. In the same letter Jinnah also wrote: "...you want me to note down 'the points of difference' and discuss them through and by means of correspondence—a method which I made it clear in my last letter is highly undesirable and most inappropriate. I welcome your suggestion when you say 'whenever necessity arose everyone of us would willingly welcome a talk'. If you think that necessity has arisen and anyone of you is willing, I shall be glad to see you and equally welcome a talk. The thing is that you prefer talking at each other whereas I prefer talking to each other. Surely you know and you ought to know what are the fundamental points in dispute."

68. To M. A. Jinnah[1]

Allahabad
March 8, 1938

Dear Mr. Jinnah,
Thank you for your letter of March 3rd.[2] I am afraid our letters to each other repeat themselves. I go on requesting you to tell us what

1. *Nehru-Jinnah Correspondence*, (Allahabad, 1938).
2. Jinnah stated: "...You wind up your letter by insisting upon the course that I should formulate the points in dispute and submit to you for your consideration and then carry on correspondence with you. This method I have already stated in my considered opinion is undesirable and inappropriate. The method you insist upon may be appropriate between two litigants and that is followed by solicitors on behalf of their clients but national issues cannot be settled like that."

exactly are the points in dispute which have to be discussed and you go on insisting that this should not be done by correspondence. At the same time you have pointed out that the main points in dispute have been constantly, and very recently, discussed in the press and public platform. I have carefully followed press statements and your public speeches. In my effort to discover these points of dispute I enumerated some of the criticisms which you were reported to have made in public speeches. In your reply you stated that you were misreported, but you did not say what the correct report should have been. Further you said that these were minor and trifling matters, but again you did not point out what the major matters were. You will perceive my difficulty. I hope I am not making any insinuations or innuendoes, as you suggest in your last letter. Certainly it is not my intention to do so, nor to raise trifling matters which are not germane to the present subject. But what are these matters which are germane? It may be that I am dense or not sufficiently acquainted with the intricacies of the problem. If so, I deserve to be enlightened. If you will refer me to any recent statement made in the press or platform which will help me in understanding, I shall be grateful.[3]

It is not my desire, may I repeat, to carry on a controversy by correspondence, but only to find out what the main points of discussion and dispute are. It is surely usual for national issues to be formulated and clarified in this way to facilitate discussion. Both in national and international matters we are frequently adopting this course.

You are perfectly right in saying that this matter has been tackled since 1925 repeatedly.[4] Do you not think that this very history warns us not to approach it in a vague manner without clear ideas as to what we object to and what we want? Apart from this, much has happened during these past few years which has altered the position. For instance, the Communal Award. Do you want this discussed with a view to some settlement being arrived at on another basis?

3. Jinnah in reply wrote on 17 March 1938: "Perhaps you have heard of the Fourteen Points."
4. Jinnah had stated: "When you say that 'I am afraid I must confess that I do not know what the fundamental points in dispute are' I am only amazed at your ignorance. This matter has been tackled since 1925 right up to 1935 by the most prominent leaders in the country and so far no solution has been found. I would beg of you to study it and not to take up a self-complacent attitude and if you are earnest I don't think you will find much difficulty in realizing what the main points in dispute are because they have been constantly mentioned both in the press and public platform even very recently."

It is obvious that the Congress is exceedingly anxious to remove all causes of misunderstanding and friction. Apart from wider national issues, it would like to do so because such misunderstanding comes in the way of its work. It has frequently considered the problem and passed such resolutions and put forward such proposals as it considered right. I do not wish to discuss as to whether these were right or not. That may be a matter for argument. But according to our lights we tried to do our best. If we did not succeed to the extent we hoped to do that is our misfortune and we shall gladly consider suggestions which might lead to better results.[5]

What are the various aspects of this matter? May I enumerate them?

(1) The Communal Award, which includes separate electorates and reservation of seats.
(2) Religious guarantees.
(3) Cultural protection and guarantees.

Presumably these are the three main heads. There may be some minor matters but I do not refer to them as you wish to concentrate on the main issues.

As regards the Communal Award, the position of the Congress has been clarified. If it is your desire to discuss this matter, I should like to know it.

As regards religious and cultural guarantees, the Congress has given as full assurances and guarantees as is possible. If, however, any other guarantees are considered necessary, they should be mentioned. About one of the questions which you have referred to in your speeches, the language question, I have written to you previously and sent you my brochure. I trust that you agreed with its main conclusions.

Are we going to discuss these matters or some others which I have not mentioned above? Then again the background of all such discussions must necessarily be a certain political and economic one—our struggle for independence, our anti-imperialism, our methods of direct action

5. Jinnah in the same letter, inviting Jawaharlal's attention to the articles on Muslim views and demands published in *The Statesman* of 12 February 1938 and *New Times* of 1 March 1938, wrote: "...But if you desire that I should collect all these suggestions and submit to you as a petitioner for you and your colleagues to consider, I am afraid I can't do it nor can I do it for the purpose of carrying on further correspondence with regard to those various points with you. But if you still insist upon that as you seem to do so...in that case I would request you to ask the Congress officially to communicate with me to that effect and I shall place the matter before the Council of the All India Muslim League..."

whenever necessary, our anti-war policy, our attempt to remove the exploitation of the masses, agrarian and labour problems, and the like. I take it that with the re-orientation of the Muslim League's policy there will not be any great difference regarding this anti-imperialist background.

You will forgive me for repeating myself in these letters and for saying the same things over and over again. I do so because I am keenly desirous of your appreciating my viewpoint, which I believe is also the viewpoint of my colleagues in the Congress. I have no desire to take up your time and to spend my time in writing long letters. But my mind demands clarity before it can function effectively or think in terms of any action. Vagueness or an avoidance of real issues cannot lead to satisfactory results. It does seem strange to me that in spite of my repeated requests I am not told what issues have to be discussed.

I understand that Gandhiji has already written to you expressing his readiness to have a talk with you. I am not now the Congress President and thus have not the same representative capacity, but if I can be of any help in this matter my services are at the disposal of the Congress and I shall gladly meet you and discuss these matters with you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

69. To C. Khaliquzzaman[1]

Khali
March 22, 1938

My dear Khaliq,
I have received your letter of the 15th March together with a copy of your letter to Gandhiji.[2] I do not quite agree with the account of past history that you have given, and Pantji, I understand, has also carried away different impressions. However, it is no good discussing the past.

1. C. Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan*, (Lahore, 1961), pp. 182-183. A copy of this letter is not available among Jawaharlal's papers kept in the N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 15 March 1938 to Mahatma Gandhi, referring to the formation of a coalition ministry in U.P., he wrote: "I would have been humiliated in my own eyes and would have been unworthy of any trust in future by any group of men, if I had yielded to the demands that were made to me..."

In your letter to Gandhiji you mention the threat and danger from "undisciplined forces within our own ranks which aim at the destruction of our social structure and spiritual background." I do not know exactly to what group you refer. Personally I should have said that the greatest danger in India is from the undisciplined forces which communal organizations let loose and which they feed and which are likely to put an end to any spiritual background that we may have in this country. During the last few months I have watched with astonishment the progressive deterioration of the communal situation and I have wondered that sensible and intelligent persons should be parties to this.

I shall of course meet Mr. Jinnah whenever he cares to meet me but it passes my comprehension what language we can talk with each other which is understood by both of us.[3]

I am not worried very much either by the end of Austria[4] or by a few communal riots. I think in bigger terms and play for higher stakes. It is quite possible that I may prove an utter failure in my attempts. If so, I shall make my exit gracefully without shouting or complaining, I hope. But I see no reason why I should give up the ideals which have moved me and driven me to action.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

3. Khaliquzzaman wrote: "I have carefully perused the correspondence between you and Mr. Jinnah and I am glad to find that in spite of some stiffness running through it the door for a talk between you and him has not been banged. ...I hope you will see it through in spite of irritation and the annoyance which you may have to suffer at times during the course of the negotiations..."
4. Germany annexed Austria in March 1938.

70. On the Communal Riots in Allahabad[1]

I do not understand how the people get so much affected, become panicky by rumours and are completely upset merely by the acts of a few *goondas* or misguided people. This is disgraceful.

1. Speech at a public meeting in Allahabad, 31 March 1938. *The Leader*, 2 April 1938.

If all the rumours that are spread at Allahabad during the period of the communal disturbances are compiled, it would give an impression that Allahabad is undergoing the same turmoil as China or Spain. But if one examines those rumours they would prove to be cent per cent false. Those responsible for the mischief might be ten, twenty or twenty five people, and I fail to understand why the whole city is shaken by a handful of people; why mere pattering of lathis by a few people leads to the suspension of the entire business in the city. There might be some instigators behind those handful of people; yet I fail to understand why the entire population should lose their balance by the acts of a few people. We talk of big problems like achievement of freedom, removal of the poverty of the people and similar things. Only those mentally strong can achieve these objectives, and if there are fifteen or twenty men of strong will in a *mohalla*, they can control the situation.

In Spain, for instance, war is going on for over a year. Bombs are thrown from the air from time to time killing not one or two people but wiping out the population of an entire street at a time. Yet people are busy in their avocations as in normal times. There is never any suspension of business on account of fear. They don't lose their heart, while here mere pattering of lathis causes suspension of the entire business. I have heard that there is so much panic here during the period of rioting that everybody wants a guard. Even people in Civil Lines, where nothing has happened, make frequent telephone calls, asking for police guards. It is very painful to see such a state of affairs. Stray assaults on innocent people are really deplorable. I have visited the Colvin hospital and there I saw an old woman among the injured. I do not understand the motive behind such cowardly acts. Surely, the assailant has not done a great religious deed by injuring that old woman.

No doubt, some happenings in Allahabad recently are responsible for stirring up communal feelings but it is not proper for the people to say that they are not responsible for the outbreak of rioting as the communal feelings have been roused. I am prepared, even on behalf of the Congress, to say that they are certainly responsible for such deplorable happenings because it is their duty to ensure that such things do not occur. Every citizen is responsible for what has happened.

I feel that the Congressmen in the city like Mr. Muzaffar Husain, president, Mrs. Purnima Banerji, and Messrs. Radhey Shyam Pathak[2] and

2. A Congressman of Allahabad; imprisoned in 1932 and 1942; secretary, Allahabad D.C.C., 1937-41; joined Congress Socialist Party and later the Praja Socialist Party; died 1973.

Sajjad Zaheer, secretaries of the city Congress committee, rose to the occasion and I congratulate them. If there were 200 or 400 people who could work like them, the riots would have been brought under control in two hours.

Hundreds of complaints relating to arson and assault have been received at the Congress office and requests were made to get them recorded at the *kotwali*. This is not our method though there may be some sitting in a secure place like *kotwali* who would like to get these reports recorded there. Other people might be doing so but the Congress should not follow that method. I do not mean to say that Congressmen should never make reports to the police but on occasions like these they cannot turn their office into a police station forgetting their own work in moments of excitement. Therefore, although sometimes even correct information is brought to us, we do not get any report recorded at a police station. That causes displeasure to some people, but I am sure that even they would appreciate the attitude of the Congress when they think over the matter coolly.

I have visited some *mohallas* today. I still noticed signs of panic in some quarters. Some people told me that a section of the people was storing grain, which shows that there is a preparation for a disturbance again. I want to put an end to such rumours and I hope that the public would not be affected by such actions. A limit of absurdity was reached when I found that a lawyer who was reported to have been killed during the riots was found arguing in a court. Do not therefore be led away by rumours. It is also not proper for anyone to leave his house in panic. It would generally be seen that during such disturbances the *mohallas* are never attacked by neighbours. Therefore, there is no point in leaving the *mohallas*. Such conduct only added to the confusion.

I do not wish to speak of bigger problems on this occasion. Behind the communal disturbances there is a political background. What could be the cause of communal riots? *Muharram* and *Holi* festivities were celebrated in the past also without untoward occurrences. The special thing this year is that there is the Congress ministry which wants to do something for the people in general. They want to tackle intricate problems intended to ameliorate the condition of the kisans and the masses. This is not liked by some people whose interest is to create tensions in order to distract the government's attention from the major problems.

At present, I would only request the people to realise that it is their responsibility to keep peace and order without the help of the police or the military and in spite of the *goondas*. They should try to contradict baseless rumours, allay panic, call back the people who have

left their homes and find ways and means to restore peace in their own *mohallas*.

The period of the national week from April 6 to 13 should be devoted to making efforts to allay panic and fear and to establish permanent organisations of Hindus and Muslims for maintaining peace in each *mohalla*.

71. To P. D. Tandon[1]

Camp Calcutta
April 4, 1938

Dear Tandon,[2]
Your letter. The way students and young men can help, if a serious communal situation arises, is this: a group of them should volunteer and their names should be taken down. They should be ready to come out at a moment's notice. In case there is any excitement or trouble they should gather and go to the Congress office and from there to the area affected. In these areas as well as in the central part of the city, like Chowk, small groups of five should stand at important places and crossings and patrol in the neighbourhood. Their very presence will inspire confidence in the shopkeepers and residents. Individuals should not do this work but small groups of five or six. It must be remembered that under no circumstances must these volunteers indulge in any violence.

The first thing to do is to enrol names for this purpose and to give a list to the city Congress committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1915); a journalist and Congressman of Allahabad; Minister of State, U.P. Government, 1971-72; wrote several books on Jawaharlal Nehru.

72. To M. A. Jinnah[1]

Calcutta
April 6, 1938

Dear Mr. Jinnah,
Your letter[2] of the 17th March reached me in the Kumaun hills where I had gone for a brief holiday. From there I have come to Calcutta. I propose to return to Allahabad today and I shall probably be there for the greater part of April. If it is convenient for you to come there we could meet. Or if it suits you better to go to Lucknow I shall try to go there.

I am glad that you have indicated in your last letter a number of points which you have in mind. The enclosures you have sent mention these and I take it that they represent your viewpoint.[3] I was somewhat surprised to see this list as I had no idea that you wanted to discuss many of these matters with us. Some of these are wholly covered by previous decisions of the Congress, some others are hardly capable of discussion.

As far as I can make out from your letter and the enclosures you have sent, you wish to discuss the following matters:

(1) The Fourteen Points formulated by the Muslim League in 1929.
(2) The Congress should withdraw all opposition to the Communal Award and should not describe it as a negation of nationalism.
(3) The share of the Muslims in the state services should be definitely fixed in the constitution by statutory enactment.
(4) Muslim personal law and culture should be guaranteed by statute.
(5) The Congress should take in hand the agitation in connection with the Shahidganj mosque and should use its moral pressure to enable the Muslims to gain possession of the mosque.
(6) The Muslims' right to call *Azan* and perform their religious ceremonies should not be fettered in any way.
(7) Muslims should have freedom to perform cow-slaughter.
(8) Muslim majorities in the provinces, where such majorities exist

1. *Nehru-Jinnah Correspondence*, (Allahabad, 1938).
2. Referring to Jawaharlal's letter of 8 March, Jinnah wrote: "I am surprised when you say in your letter under reply, 'but what are these matters which are germane?...' Perhaps you have heard of the Fourteen Points."
3. The articles in *The Statesman* of 12 February and *New Times* of 1 March 1938.

at present, must not be affected by any territorial redistribution or adjustments.

(9) The *Bande Mataram* song should be given up.

(10) Muslims want Urdu to be the national language of India and they desire to have statutory guarantees that the use of Urdu shall not be curtailed or damaged.

(11) Muslim representation in local bodies should be governed by the principles underlying the Communal Award, that is, separate electorates and population strength.

(12) The tricolour flag should be changed or, alternatively, the flag of the Muslim League should be given equal importance.

(13) Recognition of the Muslim League as the one authoritative and representative organisation of Indian Muslims.

(14) Coalition ministries.

It is further stated that the formula evolved by you and Babu Rajendra Prasad in 1935 does not satisfy the Muslims now and nothing on those lines will satisfy them.

It is added that the list given above is not a complete list and that it can be augmented by the addition of further 'demands'. Not knowing these possible and unlimited additions I can say nothing about them. But I should like to deal with the various matters specifically mentioned and to indicate what the Congress attitude has been in regard to them.

But before considering them, the political and economic background of the free India we are working for has to be kept in mind, for ultimately that is the controlling factor. Some of these matters do not arise in considering an independent India or take a particular shape or have little importance. We can discuss them in terms of Indian independence or in terms of the British dominance of India continuing. The Congress naturally thinks in terms of independence, though it adjusts itself occassionally to the present transitional and temporary phases. It is thus not interested in amendments to the present constitution, but aims at its complete removal and its substitution by a constitution framed by the Indian people through a constituent assembly.

Another matter has assumed an urgent and vital significance and this is the exceedingly critical international situation and the possibility of war. This must concern India greatly and affect her struggle for freedom. This must therefore be considered the governing factor of the situation and almost everything else becomes of secondary importance, for all our efforts and petty arguments will be of little avail if the very foundation is upset. The Congress has clearly and repeatedly laid down its policy in the event of such a crisis and stated that it will be no party

to imperialist war. Peace, therefore, and Indian independence is its basic policy. The Congress will very gladly and willingly cooperate with the Muslim League and all other organisations and individuals in the furtherance of this policy.

I have carefully looked through the various matters to which you have drawn attention in your letter and its enclosures and I find that there is nothing in them which refers to or touches the economic demands of the masses or affects the all-important questions of poverty and unemployment. For all of us in India these are the vital issues and unless some solution is found for them, we function in vain. The question of state services, howsoever important and worthy of consideration it might be, affects a very small number of people. The peasantry, industrial workers, artisans and petty shopkeepers form the vast majority of the population and they are not improved in any way by any of the demands listed above. Their interests should be paramount.

Many of the 'demands' involve changes of the constitution which we are not in a position to bring about. Even if some such changes are desirable in themselves, it is not our policy to press for minor constitutional changes. We want to do away completely with the present constitution and replace it by another for a free India.

In the same way the desire for statutory guarantees involves constitutional changes which we cannot give effect to. All we can do is to state that in a future constitution for a free India we want certain guarantees to be incorporated. We have done this in regard to religious, cultural, linguistic and other rights of minorities in the Karachi resolution on fundamental rights. We would like these fundamental rights to be made a part of the constitution.

I now deal with the various matters listed above.

(1) The Fourteen Points, I had thought, were somewhat out of date. Many of their provisions have been given effect to by the Communal Award and in other ways; some others are entirely acceptable to the Congress; yet others require constitutional changes which, as I have mentioned above, are beyond our present competence. Apart from the matters covered by the Communal Award and those involving a change in the constitution, one or two matters remain which gave rise to differences of opinion and which are still likely to lead to considerable argument.

(2) The Congress has clearly stated its attitude towards the Communal Award, and it comes to this that it seeks alterations only on the basis of mutual consent of the parties concerned. I do not understand how anyone can take objection to this attitude and policy. If we are asked to describe the Award as not being anti-national, that

would be patently false. Even apart from what it gives to various groups, its whole basis and structure are anti-national and come in the way of the development of national unity. As you know it gives an overwhelming and wholly undeserving weightage to the European elements in certain parts of India. If we think in terms of an independent India we cannot possibly fit in this Award with it. *It is true* that under stress of circumstances we have sometimes to accept as a temporary measure something that is on the face of it anti-national. It is also true that in the matters governed by the Communal Award, we can only find a satisfactory and abiding solution by the consent and goodwill of the parties concerned. That is the Congress policy.

(3) The fixing of the Muslims' share in the state services by statutory enactment necessarily involves the fixing of the shares of other groups and communities similarly. This would mean a rigid and compartmental state structure which will impede progress and development. At the same time it is generally admitted that state appointments should be fairly and adequately distributed and no community should have cause to complain. It is far better to do this by convention and agreement. The Congress is fully alive to this issue and desires to meet the wishes of various groups in the fullest measure, so as to give to all minority communities, as stated in No. 11 of the Fourteen Points, "an adequate share in all the services of the state and in local self-governing bodies having due regard to the requirements of efficiency." The state today is becoming more and more technical and demands expert knowledge in its various departments. *It is right that, if a community is* backward in this technical and expert knowledge, special efforts should be made to give it this education to bring it up to a higher level.

I understand that at the Unity Conference held at Allahabad in 1933 or thereabouts, a mutually satisfactory solution of this question of state services was arrived at.[4]

(4) As regards protection of culture, the Congress has declared its willingness to embody this in the fundamental laws of the constitution. It has also declared that it does not wish to interfere in any way with the personal law of any community.

(5) I am considerably surprised at the suggestion that the Congress should take in hand the agitation in connection with the Shahidganj

4. At the conference held towards the end of 1932 it was agreed that all appointments should be made by non-party public service commissions comprising all important communities, consistent with the principle of ensuring fair representation to the various communities; and no person should be disabled by reason of community, caste, creed, race or sex.

mosque. That is a matter to be decided either legally or by mutual agreement. The Congress prefers in all such matters the way of mutual agreement and its services can always be utilised for this purpose where there is an opening for them and a desire to this effect on the part of the parties concerned. I am glad that the Premier of the Punjab has suggested that this is the only satisfactory way to a solution of the problem.

(6) The right to perform religious ceremonies should certainly be guaranteed to all communities. The Congress resolution about this is quite clear. I know nothing about the particular incident relating to a Punjab village which has been referred to. No doubt, many instances can be gathered together from various parts of India where petty interferences take place with Hindu, Muslim or Sikh ceremonies. These have to be tactfully dealt with wherever they arise. But the principle is quite clear and should be agreed to.

(7) As regards cow-slaughter, there has been a great deal of entirely false and unfounded propaganda against the Congress suggesting that the Congress was going to stop it forcibly by legislation. The Congress does not wish to undertake any legislative action in this matter to restrict the established rights of the Muslims.

(8) The question of territorial redistribution has not arisen in any way. If and when it arises it must be dealt with on the basis of mutual agreement of the parties concerned.

(9) Regarding the *Bande Mataram* song, the Working Committee issued a long statement in October last to which I would invite your attention.[5] First of all it has to be remembered that no formal national anthem has been adopted by the Congress at any time. It is true, however, that the *Bande Mataram* song has been intimately associated with Indian nationalism for more than thirty years and numerous associations of sentiment and sacrifice have gathered round it. Popular songs are not made to order, nor can they be successfully imposed. They grow out of public sentiment. During all these thirty or more years the *Bande Mataram* song was never considered as having any religious significance and was treated as a national song in praise of India. Nor, to my knowledge, was any objection taken to it except on

5. The Working Committee meeting in Calcutta from 26 October to 1 November 1937, while recognising the validity of the objection raised by Muslims to certain parts of the *Bande Mataram* song, pointed out that the evolution of the use of the song as part of national life was of infinitely greater importance than its setting in a historical novel written before the national movement had taken shape. It therefore recommended that at the national gatherings the first two stanzas only of the song should be sung.

political grounds by the government. When, however, some objections were raised, the Working Committee carefully considered the matter and ultimately decided to recommend that certain stanzas, which contained certain allegorical references, might not be used on national platforms or occasions. The two stanzas that have been recommended by the Working Committee for use as a national song have not a word or a phrase which can offend anybody from any point of view and I am surprised that anyone can object to them. They may appeal to some more than to others. Some may prefer another national song; they have full freedom to do so. But to compel large numbers of people to give up what they have long valued and grown attached to is to cause needless hurt to them and injure the national movement itself. It would be improper for a national organisation to do this.

(10) About Urdu and Hindi I have previously written to you and have also sent you my pamphlet on "The Question of Language". The Congress has declared in favour of guarantees for languages and culture. It wants to encourage all the great provincial languages of India and at the same time to make Hindustani, as written both in the Nagri and Urdu scripts, the national language. Both scripts should be officially recognised and the choice should be left to the people concerned. In fact, this policy is being pursued by the Congress ministries.

(11) The Congress has long been of opinion that joint electorates are preferable to separate electorates from the point of view of national unity and harmonious cooperation between the different communities. But joint electorates, in order to have real value, must not be imposed on unwilling groups. Hence the Congress is quite clear that their introduction should depend on their acceptance by the people concerned. This is the policy that is being pursued by the Congress ministries in regard to local bodies. Recently in a bill dealing with local bodies introduced in the Bombay Assembly separate electorates were maintained but an option was given to the people concerned to adopt a joint electorate, if they so chose. The principle seems to be in exact accordance with No. 5 of the Fourteen Points, which lays down that "representation of communal groups shall continue to be by means of separate electorates as at present, provided that it shall be open to any community, at any time to abandon its separate electorate in favour of joint electorate." It surprises me that the Muslim League group in the Bombay Assembly should have opposed the bill with its optional clause although this carried out the very policy of the Muslim League.

May I also point out that in the resolution passed by the Muslim League in 1929, at the time it adopted the Fourteen Points, it was stated that "the Mussalmans will not consent to join electorates unless

Sind is actually constituted into a separate province and reforms in fact are introduced in the N.W.F. Province and Baluchistan on the same footing as in other provinces"? Since then Sind has been separated and the N.W.F. Province has been placed on a level with other provinces. So far as Baluchistan is concerned the Congress is committed to a levelling up of this area in the same way.

(12) The national tricolour flag was adopted originally in 1920 by the Congress after full and careful consultation with eminent Muslim, Sikh and other leaders. Obviously a country and a national movement must have a national flag representing the nation and all communities in it. No communal flag can represent the nation. If we did not possess a national flag now we would have to evolve one. The present national flag had its colours originally selected in order to represent the various communities, but we did not like to lay stress on this communal aspect of the colours. Artistically I think the combination of orange, white and green has resulted in a flag which is probably the most beautiful of the national flags. For these many years our flag has been used and it has spread to the remotest village and brought hope and courage and a sense of all India unity to our masses. It has been associated with great sacrifices on the part of our people, including Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, and many have suffered lathi blows and imprisonment and even death in defending it from insult or injury. Thus a powerful sentiment has grown up in its favour. On innumerable occasions Maulana Mohamed Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali and many leaders of the Muslim League today have associated themselves with this flag and emphasised its virtues and significance as a symbol of Indian unity. It has spread outside the Congress ranks and been generally recognised as the flag of the nation. It is difficult to understand how anyone can reasonably object to it now.

Communal flags cannot obviously take its place for that can only mean a host of flags of various communities being used together and thus emphasising our disunity and separateness. Communal flags might be used for religious functions but they have no place at any national function or over any public building meant for various communities.

May I add that during the past few months, on several occasions, the national flag has been insulted by some members or volunteers of the Muslim League? This has pained us greatly but we have deliberately avoided anything in the nature of conflict in order not to add to communal bitterness. We have also issued strict orders, and they have been obeyed, that no interference should take place with the Muslim League flag, even though it might be inappropriately displayed.

(13) I do not understand what is meant by our recognition of the Muslim League as the one and only organisation of Indian Muslims. Obviously the Muslim League is an important communal organisation and we deal with it as such. But we have to deal with all organisations and individuals that come within our ken. We do not determine the measure of importance or distinction they possess. There are a large number, about a hundred thousand, of Muslims on the Congress rolls, many of whom have been our close companions, in prisons and outside, for many years and we value their comradeship highly. There are many organisations which contain Muslims and non-Muslims alike, such as trade unions, peasant unions, kisan sabhas, debt committees, zamindar associations, chambers of commerce, employers associations, etc., and we have contacts with them. There are special Muslim organisations such as the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the Praja Party, the Ahrars and others, which claim attention. Inevitably, the more important the organisation the more the attention paid to it, but this importance does not come from outside recognition but from inherent strength. And the other organisations, even though they might be younger and smaller, cannot be ignored.

(14) I should like to know what is meant by coalition ministries. A ministry must have a definite political and economic programme and policy. Any other kind of ministry would be a disjointed and ineffective body, with no clear mind or direction. Given a common political and economic programme and policy, cooperation is easy. You know probably that some such cooperation was sought for and obtained by the Congress in the Frontier Province. In Bombay also repeated attempts were made on behalf of the Congress to obtain this cooperation on the basis of a common programme. The Congress has gone to the assemblies with a definite programme and in furtherance of a clear policy. It will always gladly cooperate with other groups, whether it is in a majority or a minority in an assembly, in furtherance of that programme and policy. On that basis I conceive of even coalition ministries being formed. Without that basis the Congress has no interest in a ministry or in an assembly.

I have dealt, I am afraid at exceeding length, with the various points raised in your letter and its enclosures. I am glad that I have had a glimpse into your mind through this correspondence as this enables me to understand a little better the problems that are before you and perhaps others. I agree entirely that it is the duty of every Indian to bring about harmonious joint effort of all of us for the achievement of India's freedom and the ending of the poverty of her people. For me, and I take it for most of us, the Congress has been a means to that

end and not an end in itself. It has been a high privilege for us to work through the Congress because it has drawn to itself the love of millions of our countrymen and, through their sacrifice and united effort, taken us a long way to our goal. But much remains to be done and we have all to pull together to that end.

Personally, the idea of pacts and the like does not appeal to me, though perhaps they might be necessary occasionally. What seems to me far more important is a more basic understanding of each other, bringing with it the desire and ability to cooperate together. That larger cooperation, if it is to include our millions, must necessarily be in the interests of these millions. My mind therefore is continually occupied with the problems of these unhappy masses of this country and I view all other problems in this light. I should like to view the communal problem also in this perspective for otherwise it has no great significance for me.

You seem to imagine that I wanted you to put forward suggestions as a petitioner, and then you propose that the Congress should officially communicate with you. Surely you have misunderstood me and done yourself and me an injustice. There is no question of petitioning either by you or by me, but a desire to understand each other and the problem that we have been discussing. I do not understand the significance of your wanting an official intimation from the Congress. I did not ask you for an official reply on behalf of the Muslim League. Organisations do not function in this way. It is not a question of prestige for the Congress or for any of us, for we are keener on reaching the goal we have set before us than on small matters of prestige. The Congress is a great enough organisation to ignore such petty matters, and if some of us have gained a measure of influence and popularity, we have done so in the shadow of the Congress.

You will remember that I took the intiative in writing to you and requesting you to enlighten me as to what your objections were to the Congress policy and what, according to you, were the points in dispute. I had read many of your speeches, as reported in the press, and I found to my regret that they were full of strong attacks on the Congress which, according to my way of thinking, were not justified. I wanted to remove any misunderstandings, where such existed, and to clear the air.

I have found, chiefly in the Urdu press, the most astounding falsehoods about the Congress. I refer to facts, not to opinions, and to facts within my knowledge. Two days ago, here in Calcutta, I saw a circular letter or notice issued by a secretary of the Muslim League. This contained a list of the so-called misdeeds of the U.P. Government. I read this with amazement for there was not an atom of truth in most of the charges. I suppose they were gamered from the Urdu press.

ALL INDIA CONGRESS LEGISLATORS CONVENTION, DELHI, MARCH 1937

AT VICTORIA TERMINUS, BOMBAY, 14 MAY 1937

Through the press and the platform such charges have been repeated on numerous occasions and communal passions have thus been roused and bitterness created. This has grieved me and I have sought by writing to you and to Nawab Ismail Khan to find a way of checking this deplorable deterioration of our public life, as well as a surer basis for co-operation. That problem still faces us and I hope we shall solve it.

I have mentioned earlier in this letter the critical international situation and the terrible sense of impending catastrophe that hangs over the world. My mind is obsessed with this and I want India to realise it and be ready for all consequences, good or ill, that may flow from it. In this period of world crisis, all of us, to whatever party or group we might belong and whatever our differences might be, have the primary duty of holding together to protect our people from the perils that might encompass them.

Our differences and arguments seem trivial when the future of the world and of India hangs in the balance. It is in the hope that all of us will succeed in building up this larger unity in our country that I have written to you and others repeatedly and at length.

There is one small matter I should like to mention. The report of my speech at Haripura, as given in your letter and the newspaper article, is not correct.

We have been corresponding for some time and many vague rumours float about as to what we have been saying to each other. Anxious inquiries come to me and I have no doubt that similar inquiries are addressed to you also. I think that we might take the public into our confidence now for this is a public matter in which many are interested. I suggest therefore that our correspondence might be released to the press. I presume you will have no objection.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

73. On the Exaggerated Accounts of the Riots[1]

I have refrained from saying anything about the communal situation in Allahabad, partly because I did not think it necessary to do so and partly because I was fully occupied.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 13 April 1938. *The Hindustan Times*, 14 April 1938.

I find from newspapers, however, that exaggerated and coloured accounts have been published with scare headlines and these are apt to mislead the public. There are newspapers and newspapers. Some specialise in communal propaganda and make it their business to spread hatred and prejudice, and do not hesitate to give publicity to falsehoods. Unfortunately, we have some such in Allahabad and Delhi and other places. Other newspapers are more restrained and give more or less truthful and objective accounts, but even these are sometimes led away by excited correspondents and by their desire to give striking and colourful accounts of the incidents.

The incidents that occurred on April 11 have thus been exaggerated out of all proportion. Headlines declare that there was a pitched battle in Allahabad, that the army was called out, that panic reigns, and so on and so forth. I have some knowledge of what has taken place here during the last few days, and I have walked repeatedly up and down almost every lane in Allahabad city and visited every *mohalla,* Hindu or Muslim. The so-called pitched battle consisted of exchange of brickbats in a narrow lane for about three minutes and about a dozen persons were injured.

As for the army being summoned, I was not aware of this, and I have not seen a single soldier in any part of Allahabad on Monday when there was undoubtedly some tension. Most of the shops in the centre of Allahabad city remained closed, but then some big shops opened in the Chowk itself for a while, and in other parts many shops were open and vehicular traffic continued. On Tuesday most of the shops opened.

Today normal business is being carried on in the shops and markets. Almost all the incidents that occurred took place on the morning of Monday, April 11. Since then nothing of note has happened.

As for panic, no doubt some people were panicky and perhaps some correspondents of newspapers and news agencies were of their number, but even on Monday morning conditions were far better and more cheerful than one might imagine from newspaper reports.

I personally must confess that I did not lose my appetite or sleep because of anything that had occurred.

Regrettable as these incidents are, we must not lose our balance, or our sense of perspective because of them, or exaggerate them or their consequences. Throughout these days we have been holding small *mohalla* meetings and even the authorities did not consider it necessary to prevent gatherings.

May I beg the newspapers—their editors and correspondents—not to permit any exaggeration in their columns? Something has happened;

that was unfortunate and deplorable, but that something was not so big as to upset us or worry us much.

Indeed, it is obvious that trouble-makers are few and they can be controlled and checked without much difficulty if men and women of goodwill of all communities work to this end.

74. To M.A. Jinnah[1]

Allahabad
April 16, 1938

Dear Mr. Jinnah,
Your letter of April 12th has just reached me.

I am exceedingly sorry that anything that I have written to you should have caused you pain. It seems to be true that we approach public problems from different standpoints and inevitably I try to place my viewpoint before you and seek to gain your appreciation of it. To say anything that might pain you would defeat my own purpose, even apart from its impropriety. At the same time I owe it to you and to myself to endeavour to place frankly before you how my mind works and what my views are on the subject-matter under discussion. Our viewpoints might differ, but I do believe that the margin of difference can be lessened by a frank approach on either side. I have sought to make this approach in all sincerity and with every desire on my part not to say anything that might come in the way.

In my last letter I dealt with the various points mentioned in the extracts you had sent me as I presumed that, as you had drawn my attention to them, they might to a large extent represent what you had in mind.[2] As you know, I have been trying to get at these points of

1. *Nehru-Jinnah Correspondence*, (Allahabad, 1938).
2. Jinnah wrote: "...you have formulated certain points in your letter which you father upon me to begin with as my proposals.... Those are some of the matters which are undoubtedly agitating Muslim India, but the question how to meet them ... whether constitutional changes are necessary, whether we should do it by agreement or conventions, and so forth, are matters, I thought, for discussion, but I am extremely sorry to find that you have in your letter already pronounced your judgement and given your decisions on a good many of them with a preamble which negatives any suggestion of discussion which may lead to a settlement..."

difference and when I saw something concrete I wanted to give my reaction to it. I tried to state what the Congress opinion has been in regard to them. There is no finality in day to day politics, although certain principles are supposed to govern policies. It is for the Congress, if it so chooses, to vary any policy. All I can do is to state what the past and present policy is.

I regret that you think that I write in an arrogant and militant spirit and as if I considered the Congress as the sovereign power. I am painfully conscious of the fact that the Congress is not a sovereign power and that it is limited and circumscribed in a hundred ways and further that it may have to go through the wilderness many a time again before it achieves its objective. You have referred to my obsession with the international situation and the sense of impending catastrophe that possesses me.[3] If I feel that way, as I do, I can hardly grow complacent or imagine that the Congress is sovereign. But when I discuss Congress policies, as a Congressman, I can only repeat what these are and not bring in my own particular views on the subject, if these happen to be at variance with Congress resolutions.

You point out to me that the Congress press has contained numerous falsehoods in regard to the Muslim League and some of its leaders, as well as the provincial governments of Bengal, Punjab, Sind and Assam. I entirely agree with you that falsehoods, misrepresentations and insinuations are to be deprecated and countered wherever they might occur, in the Urdu, Hindi or English press, or whatever the political complexion of the newspaper. There is no such thing as the Congress press over which the Congress has control, but it is true that many newspapers generally support the Congress. But whether we can influence them or not, we certainly want to stop all such false and misleading statements and to express our disapproval of them. In this matter I can only beg of you to point out specific instances so that we might take necessary action.

I note what you say about the publication of our correspondence. I have not got with me copies of your correspondence with Mahatma

3. Jinnah referring to this opinion of Jawaharlal had written: "It seems to me that you cannot even accurately interpret my letter... you are thinking in terms entirely divorced from realities which face us in India. I can only express my great regret at your turning and twisting what I wrote to you and putting entirely a wrong complexion upon the position I have placed before you at your request..."

Gandhi.[4] I am therefore writing to him to seek his permission as suggested by you.

I am afraid it will hardly be possible for me to visit Bombay in April or May. Early in June I intend sailing for Europe. In case I go to Bombay earlier I shall inform you so that we might have the opportunity of meeting. I understand that you will be meeting Mahatma Gandhi in the near future.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. He had replied that he would have no objection provided the correspondence between him and Mahatma Gandhi was also published simultaneously. Ultimately the entire correspondence between Jinnah and Jawaharlal from 18 January to 16 April 1938, as well as that with Mahatma Gandhi from 19 October 1937 to 20 April 1938, was released to the press by Jinnah on 15 June 1938.

75. The Real Causes of the Riots[1]

An indissoluble bond of unity exists between the workers and the peasants of the world. The struggle of the Indian workers is the struggle of the workers of the world. I have given much anxious thought to the recent communal riots and have come to the conclusion that the root cause of these riots is political and not religious. There are people who want to stop the onward march of India to its destined goal. They know that they cannot do that. But it is possible for them temporarily to deflect and divert the course of national endeavour. It is these persons who are interested in communal disorders. It is curious that these gentlemen studiously refrain from the discussion of economic problems facing the masses at their meetings. At a recent meeting of the Muslim Leaguers at Allahabad, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan of Lahore indulged in personal attacks on me. Such attacks are, of course, not going to affect me. The question is not whether I am competent or incompetent. That is a personal issue. But the Muslim speakers at that very meeting had nothing to say about the problem of hunger of the Muslim masses. That shows their real motive. These gentlemen only want to put

1. Speech on May Day, Allahabad, 1938. *The Tribune*, 3 May 1938.

4

THE WORKING OF PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY

MINORITY MINISTRIES

1. On the Ban on the Kottapatam Summer School[1]

While I was in Malaya I read a brief report in the papers of the Madras Government's ban on the summer school at Kottapatam and the subsequent lathi charge on the students. Such a step would have been surprising and reprehensible even during the course of the civil disobedience movement. At the present moment it came as a shock to me. Since my return I have looked further into the matter and the sense of astonishment and shock has not lessened. This incident has illuminated, as by a flash of lightning, the real nature of the new constitution and the way the Madras ministry is functioning, for it is this ministry that is obviously responsible for the steps taken. We see that this ministry is as much a police ministry suppressing elementary rights of free speech and association as the previous government was. We see what the new Act means to the people. The same intolerable state of affairs continues and all the soft words thrown out at us cannot stop the aggressive suppression of civil liberty or the use of the lathi on the bodies of our youth. The lathi remains still under the new ministers, as it was before, the true symbol of the government.

Some other important considerations arise. The police reporters tried to force entry into the summer school. Very rightly this was objected to. We have been giving facilities to police reporters at our public meetings but this does not mean that we admit their right to attend our committee meetings and summer schools and the like. This cannot be agreed to. Summer schools for the study of political and economic problems have been held in many places in India. This is a healthy development which I trust will continue, for only by study and discussions can we understand our problems and find the way to their solution.

Another question that arises is the right of an individual or group to refuse to obey an order which it considers objectionable. It is patent that, civil disobedience having been suspended, disobedience of orders is not desirable. Where such objectionable orders are made reference

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 17 June 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 18 June 1937

should immediately be made to superior committees for advice. But sometimes cases arise when immediate decisions have to be made and the burden of such decisions must lie on the individual or group concerned and cannot commit the organisation. I can conceive of instances of orders which are so derogatory to the dignity of the individual or of the Congress that the individual prefers to disobey them on his own responsibility. This has nothing to do with civil disobedience. It is the inherent right of an individual. This right, however, must be exercised with every care so as not to injure the larger purposes we have in view, and the individual must take the risk of being judged by the organisation.

2. On the Viceroy's Speech[1]

The recent speech[2] of Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy, is pitched in a somewhat lower key than most of the previous utterances on behalf of the British Government. It is softer in tone and *prima facie* is conciliatory in approach. During the last three months there has been a marked change in these utterances. The Secretary of State for India, Lord Zetland, adopted a minatory and pompous attitude[3] some time back and his subordinates in India faithfully reflected that attitude. Very soon they realised that the attempt to bully the people of India would not pay; it had the reverse effect. So the tone changed and soft words took the place of harsh language. But the substance remained much the same and it is the substance that counts.

The objective and policy of the National Congress have been clearly laid down. We aim at the independence of India and a constitution that has been framed by a constituent assembly elected by adult franchise. We aim, in other words, at the capture of power by the Indian people as a whole. Only then shall we be in a position to tackle and

1. Allahabad, 24 June 1937. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. This statement does not seem to have been printed.
2. In his speech on 21 June 1937, the Viceroy appealed for cooperation and said that in regard to special responsibilities, a Governor would, at all times, be concerned to carry his ministers with him.
3. Lord Zetland, in his statement in the House of Lords on 8 April 1937, had declared that the king's government must be carried on and if the representatives of the majority party refused to accept office, it was open to the Governor to invite other persons to form a council of ministers.

solve the vast social and economic problems that face India—the appalling poverty and unemployment, the terribly low standard of living of our people. For this purpose, great changes in the social structure will be necessary and a vast planned system affecting our agriculture and industry and social services. These social and economic changes cannot take place under British imperialism. Political independence is an essential preliminary step before social problems can be successfully tackled and the burdens that crush our millions removed. Therefore we concentrate on this political issue, but we have in mind always that the real problem is how to end poverty and unemployment.

Meanwhile a reactionary constitution has been imposed upon us by British imperialism, meant to protect and perpetuate all the tremendous vested interests—British and Indian, imperialist and feudal—that exploit and impoverish our people. We have rejected that constitution utterly and we want to put an end to it and all our policy is directed to that end. We cannot and will not cooperate in accepting and working that constitution. It was on this basis that we went to the electorate and were supported by them in an overwhelming measure. This fact must be remembered for it is the basic fact of the situation, and superficial changes in our tactics must not delude anyone into imagining that we are giving up by an iota our policy of fighting and ending the new constitution. That constitution will have to go and imperialism will have to go from India.

The Viceroy has spoken softly but the meaning of his utterance is hard as British imperialism is hard. More revealing still are the activities of the government. We are told by the Prime Minister that we have already got provincial autonomy. This provincial autonomy is a strange and ugly beast which functions just as British imperialism has functioned in India. Indeed, it is the same thing in a slightly different garb. Puppet ministers have been appointed who do not have the support of even fifteen or twenty per cent of the legislature; in some cases ministers are not even members of the legislature, having been defeated in the elections. And for fear of being kicked out by an overwhelming majority of that legislature, the legislature is not summoned. In Europe this is called the fascist way of doing things; in India the British Government calls it democracy.

These puppet ministers, with the Governor at their back and the high officials of the civil service to put courage into them, are carrying on the old tradition of repression and suppressing civil liberties. Within the last few weeks some remarkable instances of "democracy" and "provincial autonomy" have occurred in India under the new dispensation. In Madras province a summer school of socialistically-inclined young

men and women, carrying on its work peacefully and quietly inside a house, was declared illegal by the government of the puppet ministers and, soon after, the police came and indulged in lathi play, breaking many heads and injuring many people and then arresting the lot. A bunch of them has now been awarded six months' imprisonment.

Newspapers are being penalised and their securities forfeited for criticising the ministers. Leading Congressmen are externed or interned from particular places. Arrests for speeches are frequent, sometimes for speeches delivered two years ago or during the last election. In the United Provinces, a planned campaign to prevent Congress work has recently come to light. It appears that early in May a secret meeting was held at which the puppet ministers and high officials of the civil service were present. At this meeting it was decided to proceed on an extensive scale against leading Congressmen chiefly under the security sections of the Criminal Procedure Code—sections 107, 108, 109. Some of these are meant for bad characters and habitual criminals. Already more than a score of such cases are pending all over the province and fresh arrests are being made. The U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, at a recent meeting, drew attention to this planned campaign of repression as a flagrant example of the working of what is called provincial autonomy. It has directed all Congressmen, against whom such proceedings are taken, to refuse to give security for so-called good behaviour, which means an abstention from political activity, and to prefer going to prison. A large number of organisations continue to be banned under the existing law.

Strikes are frequent. There was an extensive jute strike near Calcutta two months ago in which two hundred and twenty thousand workers were involved.[4] The police and the military were used against them and firing took place. The strike was ultimately called off on certain assurances from the ministers. Those assurances have so far not been fulfilled.

A great strike of railway workers on the Bengal Nagpur Railway took place some time back.[5] It was well organised and entirely peaceful and all the efforts of the officials of the railway and the government to break it failed. Thereupon promises were made on behalf of the government conceding certain demands and the strike was called off. The

4. The Calcutta jute mill workers went on strike in February 1937 for securing their elementary right to form a union and for the redress of their legitimate grievances.
5. There was a strike in the Bengal Nagpur Railway from 13 December 1936 to 10 February 1937 due to the demotion of a number of workers.

subsequent steps taken by the government have been such as to make the railwaymen feel that they have been betrayed and there is at present strong resentment among them.

In Dhubri in Assam, in a match factory owned by the Swedish Match Trust, a strike has been in progress for the last six months and in spite of extreme hardship and starvation the workers are still carrying on.[6]

In the rural areas the condition of the peasantry is appalling. In recent years over a hundred large factories for manufacturing sugar grew up in the United Provinces and Bihar and vast tracts were given over to sugarcane cultivation. The peasant, despairing of wheat cultivation owing to the fall in agricultural prices, turned to sugarcane. For a short period he did just slightly better by this change-over, while the factory owners made large profits. There was over-production and the price of sugarcane fell. Lately the government has imposed an excise duty on sugar by certification and this has been passed on almost completely to the sugarcane grower. The condition of the peasantry in these areas is piteous in the extreme and there is great ferment among them.

This is the background of the Viceregal utterance. This is the reality in India and those who claim to think and act in terms of reality must face this. An Act and a constitution which protect and safeguard imperialism and all other vested interests must petrify this misery of India's millions. Therefore we will have none of them and that remains our fundamental policy.

Soft words and gestures do not solve hard problems or fill empty stomachs.

6. See *post*, item 5.

3. To the Chief Commissioner, Delhi[1]

Allahabad
October 1, 1937

Dear Sir,

I am informed that some time ago a notification was issued by the Delhi Government declaring forfeit any copy of the independence pledge

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-9/1937, p. 175, N.M.M.L.

NON-CONGRESS MINISTRIES

4. The Repression in Chittagong[1]

I had heard the call of Chittagong and felt drawn towards it in many ways. Of course, the voice of Chittagong was silenced in a way, but it had been heard loudly.[2] The whole of India had shuddered at what had happened at Chittagong and in Bengal.

The indignities hurled at men and women of Chittagong were the indignities hurled at men and women of India. Though Chittagong was silenced, her silence sent a louder message all over India and also outside the great land of ours.

I have been very much impressed by the display of patience by the people of Chittagong who have been living with a ticket-like identity card which is an intolerable degradation for youth. I however want the people to put up a brave fight for the freedom of the country and put an end to such intolerable conditions.

Whenever any government takes recourse to such extraordinary measures, it betrays its own incompetence.

The fundamental problems of the country today are the hunger, poverty and unemployment of the masses. The more serious they grow, the harder would be the political struggle for freedom. When big problems arise, they make the existence of a government impossible if it fails to solve them.

The national crisis is like an earthquake and it shakes both the timid and the brave. A few more seats in the legislatures or a few more jobs under the government do not count as strength. I therefore urge upon you not to indulge in communal bickerings.

The appalling poverty and unemployment are the only problems of India as every Hindu and Mussalman suffers from them. Keeping in view these big problems, how absurd and ridiculous the communal bickerings really appear! How do such absurdities help millions of

1. Speech at Chittagong, 13 June 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16 June 1937.
2. Since the armoury raid of 1930 the Bengal Government had been pursuing a policy of repression in Chittagong.

peasantry in Bengal and the United Provinces? So, I would urge upon all to shape our policy from the point of view of the masses.

The Congress makes no distinction between the followers of different religions. It works on democratic lines. I would like all those who want the Congress to work for the masses, to join it and work for their amelioration.

Terrorism impedes national progress. It is not a peaceful mass organisation, for the masses cannot be organised by secret means.

If we look at the world around us, we shall see that imperialism, like fascism, operates as an engine of exploitation. The Congress is fighting both the form and the system by which it operates because it is really crushing us under its weight. The Congress is however dealing with imperialism not as a racial question.

The present constitutional deadlock in the country is nothing but a reflex of the real nature of British imperialism. It can be solved only by the ultimate triumph of Indian nationalism.

The great ovation that I received in Burma and Malaya[3] was a homage paid by the Indians of Burma and Malaya to the great national organisation fighting for the freedom of this country.

In the end, I wish to thank all organisations which presented me the addresses, though I regret my inability to reply to each one of them separately.

3. Jawaharlal visited Burma and Malaya in May-June 1937. See *post*, section 12.

5. On Strikes in Bengal and Assam[1]

It may be recalled that two months ago the jute industry in Bengal was convulsed by a gigantic strike of jute workers. This strike developed till it involved more than 2,00,000 men and the Government of Bengal tried in various ways to suppress the strikers. There was firing and orders were issued under the Criminal Procedure Code to prevent entry of labour leaders in the strike areas. Still the strike grew and for many weeks the workers carried on in spite of much suffering. There was great public sympathy for the strikers for their demands were reasonable and it was notorious that their working and living conditions were

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 1 July 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 2 July 1937.

thoroughly bad, while enormous dividends had been paid by the industry in the past. Ultimately in May last the strike was called off on the assurance of the Bengal ministry that relief would be given. I understand that nothing has been done so far to give relief and sufferings of the workers continue. There is continuous ferment among them and it is right that the public should support them now as before and insist on the promises made to them being kept. Hundreds of thousands of poor workers are involved. We may not ignore their appeal for help.

There is another strike to which I would like to call public attention. This is in the Dhubri Match Factory in Assam. Many will remember the strike last year at the Ambernath Match Factory near Bombay and the heroic struggle of workers there.[2] Both these factories belong to the great Swedish Match Trust and it is scandalous that our workers should be crushed by these foreign trusts which are supported in this action by the government. The Dhubri strike arose out of a lock-out and it began as early as December 1936.

A remarkable feature of this strike is the action taken by the government officials. They have issued orders under section 17, Act V of 1861, and appointed many strikers as special constables who have to work as such without pay and against their will. Legality of this action is doubtful, but whether it is legal or not it is a monstrous procedure to attempt to crush the strike in this way. The strike concerns only 350 workers, but in its way it is a typical one in which the respective roles of the workers, a foreign trust and the government are clearly brought out.

The prolonged nature of the strike has brought much suffering to the workers and I trust that they will receive every sympathy and support from the public and from the Congressmen in particular.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 612.

6. On the Non-release of Political Prisoners in the Punjab[1]

I welcome the proposal to have a widespread agitation for the release of political prisoners in the Punjab. While such prisoners are being released in many other provinces, the Punjab, under its reactionary

1. Message to the Punjab Political Prisoners Release Committee, Allahabad, 20 July 1937. *The Tribune*, 25 July 1937.

ministry,[2] lags behind. I hope that full public pressure will be brought to bear on the Punjab Government to do something which should be the first step of any government which claims to represent the people. If it does not do so it is clear that it is the old government continuing with a slightly different garb.

In particular, it seems to me most objectionable that Sardar Teja Singh Swatantra, duly elected member of the Punjab legislature, should be detained in prison. This is an insult to his constituency and to the people of the Punjab. If one elected member can be so detained there is no reason why every elected member with whom the government does not agree should not also be detained in prison. This is the essence of fascism and the Punjab Government in this matter is acting in a true fascist spirit.

I trust therefore that there will be a sustained and vigorous agitation in the Punjab for the release of Sardar Teja Singh as well as other political prisoners.

2. In the elections of 1937 to the Punjab Assembly, the Unionist Party under Sikandar Hayat Khan won 96 out of 175 seats and formed, in February 1937, a ministry.

7. To Mohammad Yamin Dar[1]

Allahabad
30.8.1937

Dear Friend,[2]

I regret the delay in answering your letter. Ordinarily it is not desirable for Congressmen to interview the ministers in the provinces like the Punjab where anti-Congress ministries are functioning. If, however, a minister sends for a Congressman in connection with some Congress activity or speech there is no harm in his going to the minister for this purpose. Congressmen are not expected to give undertakings of any kind for future behaviour. At the same time Congressmen must remember that in their acts and speeches they should avoid anything that

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-76/1937, p. 425, N.M.M.L.
2. A Congressman of Ludhiana.

savours of falseness, violence or vulgarity. They can and should criticise the British Government as a system and the present Punjab ministry as a kind of off-shoot of that government, but criticism of individuals should be avoided. We must deal with principles and not with personalities.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. To the Secretary, Bengal P.C.C.[1]

Allahabad
2.9.37

Dear Comrade,
It is proposed to hold a conference on civil liberties in India in London on October 17th. This will be an important function and it is desirable that we should take full advantage of it by supplying full facts and figures. Bengal, at the present moment, is suffering most from deprivation of civil liberties. Therefore it is desirable that the fullest particulars about Bengal should be sent for the conference. May I request you to send a complete note on this subject in regard to detenus, Andaman prisoners and all other forms of suppression of civil liberties in Bengal? This should be sent to the secretary, Indian Civil Liberties Union, Bombay Mutual Building, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Road, Bombay, who will forward them to London. Kindly send this information at an early date.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Maharashtra Government records, Police Commissioner's Office File No. 3590/H/II.

9. To Lala Hansraj[1]

Allahabad
28.9.1937

My dear Lalaji,

I have just received a copy of your letter sent to Gandhiji about the unity conference.[2] I had already seen some of the statements issued in regard to it. The position is a difficult one and it is doubtful if our association with the conference is good for us or not. This association having started, it becomes a little difficult for us to break it without obvious and sufficient cause. On the one hand we do not want to cooperate in any way with the present Punjab Government and the less our people have to do with the ministers the better; on the other hand we cannot keep away from any real effort at a solution of the communal problem. I suppose that Sikandar Hayat's principal reason for pushing this on is to gain credit for his ministry. We can hardly cooperate with him in this desire. The Punjab Government has been acting in such a manner in political field as to make Congressmen disgusted with it and I think we might well adopt a general attitude of noncooperation. I think our attitude in regard to the unity conference should be influenced by the repression of the government. There has been far too little protest against this continuing repression. If anything fresh occurs we may well have to revise our attitude to the unity conference. I am going to attend the political conference in Hoshiarpur district on the 11th October and I hope to confer with you and others there.

In your letter to Gandhiji you refer to Dr. Satyapal having written to me about the unity conference. I do not think your information is quite correct. He did write to me on the subject and generally asked for my views. I do not think that it can be said that he ignored any particular direction of mine except that there seems to be a habit in the Punjab to rush to the press. I have requested Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Gopichand and others not to make any statements in the press criticising each other. If they have any grievance they should discuss it among themselves and later, if necessary, refer it to us.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-17/1937, pp. 357-358, N.M.M.L.
2. The unity conference was sponsored by Sikandar Hayat Khan.

10. Message to the Indian Civil Liberties Conference[1]

I send my greetings to this conference which is being held in far London to consider the plight of the people of India. Everyone knows that for many years past civil and personal liberties have been crushed in India, but many people imagine that with the coming of the new constitution a new era has dawned in India and civil liberties flourish here now. It is necessary therefore to realise what the present state of affairs in India is.

The new constitution came to us not only unwanted and unasked for, but fiercely objected to by the people of India. We saw in it no marked advance to freedom, but an attempt to hold us in check and bind us down to British imperialism and its satellites in India. What was called provincial autonomy was bad enough, but far worse was the proposed federation. The Congress won overwhelmingly in the elections and, after prolonged debate, we decided to accept office and form ministries in a number of provinces. We did so in order to strengthen ourselves to fight the new constitution and, in particular, to resist the federal part of it. Before we accepted office we made it clear that we could not put up with the interference of Governors in regard to the so-called safeguards. Although no clear and definite assurances were given to us in this behalf, the controversy on this issue and the reluctance of the Congress to accept office under these limitations, have made it difficult for the Governors to exercise all the powers that the Act gives them. They realise that to do so would be to invite conflict which will result in the suspension of the constitution. Thus the Congress ministries have had a freer hand than they might otherwise have had. But it must be remembered that the safeguards and special powers are there and they hinder the work of the Congress ministries in numerous ways. This hindrance is very real though it has not so far taken the shape of open conflict.

The acceptance of ministerial office by Congressmen in six provinces, and later in one more province, brought about a rapid and marked change in all these provinces.[2] The change was especially noticeable

1. Allahabad, 4 October 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 17 October 1937.
2. In July 1937, Congress ministries were formed in the six provinces. Later, in September 1937, the Congress formed a ministry in the North West Frontier Province.

in regard to civil liberties. The bans imposed by the government on hundreds of organisations were removed, a large number of political prisoners were released, securities taken from newspapers were returned, the continuous shadowing of and spying on the people engaged in public work became less obvious. Public meetings and demonstrations were not interfered with. It seemed as if a heavy burden had been taken away, and people in towns and villages alike breathed more freely. They felt to some extent as if they had woken up from a nightmare. The change was marked and could be observed and felt everywhere in these seven provinces. And yet it was far from complete and numerous hindrances on the ordinary rights of citizenship remained. The new provincial governments could not go as far as they wanted to because of the difficulties raised by the Governors and the Governor General, as well as by the permanent services, which had been bred up in the old tradition. Red tape and numerous references to various authorities delayed progress. On either side there was a desire to avoid conflicts if they could be avoided.

In the past, encroachments on civil liberties had been of various kinds. Those due to the provincial governments could be largely removed by the new Congress governments in the provinces. But the provincial ministries were powerless in the face of the central government's encroachments. These continue in full measure, as well as many others which, though provincial, were intimately connected with the central government's policy. This applies to the banning of the Communist Party and all other organisations and trade unions which were supposed to have a red colour. It applies to books which are banned or refused entry under the Sea Customs Act. This banning and stoppage of books has been the public scandal in India. The scandal continues. The censoring of correspondence seems to continue still in the same old way even in the provinces where Congress ministries are functioning. There have even been instances of the correspondence of a provincial Prime Minister being watched and censored. A question was recently asked in the Central Assembly at Simla about the censoring of ministers' correspondence.[3] No answer was given.

It will thus be seen that even in the provinces where Congress ministries are functioning much remains to be done. But it is true that a great step forward has been taken in these seven provinces in so far as civil liberties are concerned. The difference between these provinces and the rest of India is already tremendous. In Bengal and in the Punjab,

3. To a question in the Central Assembly on 27 September 1937, the government stated that it was not in the public interest to give a reply.

the two principal non-Congress provinces at present, all the old suppressions and restrictions continue. While political prisoners are being released in the U.P., Bihar, Bombay, Madras, Central Provinces, Orissa, and the Frontier, in the Punjab and Bengal fresh arrests and convictions are taking place. Organisations are banned and the press is terrorised and suppressed by the demand of heavy securities and, in Bengal, by a strict censorship. Punjab is in many ways politically the most backward major province of India and its present government does not differ in the least from its predecessor. British imperialism finds more pliant tools there than elsewhere.

But Bengal, as in the past, so today, keeps the lead in repression and suppression of civil liberties. Even now hundreds of organisations are banned there, especially in the districts of Midnapore and Chittagong. It takes one's breath away to learn that in Chittagong district alone about 23,000 persons (official figure) are interned or restricted in their activities by government orders. Large numbers of detenus are still there in Bengal, untried and unconvicted, but kept in concentration camps for years. The full weight of the British raj continues to be felt by the unhappy people of this province.

Outside what is called British India, there lie the Indian states where even to talk of civil liberty is a joke. Two of the most advanced states are supposed to be Travancore and Mysore. In the former the Congress is still illegal and not even Congress members can be enrolled. And yet adjoining it is the province of Madras which is supposed to be governed by a Congress ministry and legislature. In Mysore innumerable restraint orders have been passed in recent months to prevent the mildest type of Congress activity.[4] The state of Hyderabad, the largest in India, still rejoices in a feudal regime, and the very idea of holding a public meeting, even for religious or social purposes, is foreign to its traditions and practices. If the great states function in this way, what of the innumerable small ones?

India, it is not always remembered, still comprises small patches of territory ruled by France and Portugal. Chandernagore and Pondicherry have not yet profited much by the *front populaire* government of France, and are backward areas where civil liberties are suppressed. In Goa, Portuguese fascism flourishes unchecked.

Far from India live numerous Indian exiles, many of whom have not seen their homeland for a quarter of a century or more. Yet they are not permitted to return home because of what they are said to have done long years ago.

4. In July 1937 many Congressmen were prohibited from making speeches.

This is the state of India and the Indian people now under the new constitution, and across our north west frontier squadrons of aeroplanes fly past to bomb and kill our neighbours and cousins.[5] It is well therefore that lovers of freedom and civil liberty in England should think of us and, in spite of the terrible problems that confront the world today, endeavour to help us in removing these innumerable restrictions on our liberties. That is an essential pre-requisite of all progress, and our problem is after all a part of the great world problem which faces us all over the world.

5. See *post*, section 6.

11. To Gopichand Bhargava[1]

Allahabad
5.10.1937

My dear Dr. Gopichand,
I am greatly distressed at the continuous and intensive repression that is going on in the Punjab. I do not see how we can offer any cooperation whatever to a government which is carrying on in this way. I do not want to come to any decision before examining all the facts and consulting our colleagues in the Punjab. I am reaching *Garhdiwala* for the conference[2] on the 11th morning. I hope I shall meet you there. On the 13th I shall be in Lahore.

I was surprised to see a statement issued by Chaman Lal the other day in fulsome congratulation of Sikandar Hayat.[3] There was not a mention in this of the repression going on. The Congress cannot act in this way.

12. On the Unionist Ministry in the Punjab[1]

I wish the volunteers will learn how to manage the crowds instead of creating noise themselves. Nobody among the audience should try to speak for maintaining order.

I have read the statement[2] of the Punjab Premier asking me to persuade the Punjab Congressmen to desist from making violent speeches. The advice given by him seems to be extraordinary, judging by his present attitude and actions in arresting the Congress workers and proscribing books and papers. The present government in the Punjab which has adopted a policy of repression is as reactionary as was the government which functioned here before April this year. It is impossible for me to conceive that any government which pays its ministers such fat salaries, the money for which comes from the pockets of the poor, can ever claim to be a friend of the poor peasantry.

It is all tall talk that the Unionist Government in the Punjab wants to serve the masses. How can such a government, whose only occupation is to glorify the British rule, help the poor in solving their problems of poverty, hunger and unemployment? Holding of a Viceregal durbar is just but a part of their occupation. Nobody can expect them to give up their occupation.

I am sorry to say that the Punjab Premier had been led to believe the reports of the C.I.D. when he gave orders for the prosecution of the Congressmen in this province. I refuse to believe that any Congressman would preach violence. It is by observing nonviolence in word and deed that the Congress has taken rapid strides and developed into a living force. Our strength lies in our organisation which has spread throughout the country from the Frontier down to Ceylon. I am always prepared to take good advice from anybody, be he my friend or an enemy, and I am always willing to make the best use of that advice. But in view of the methods that Sir Sikandar Hayat has adopted, it becomes impossible for anyone to give any weight to his opinion or desires. How can anyone respect his opinion in such circumstances?

1. Speech at the Punjab Political Conference, Garhdiwala, 11 October 1937. From *The Tribune*, 12 October 1937.
2. Issued on 2 October 1937.

Whenever I see such big crowds, I feel encouraged because I can at once visualise what great potentialities they possess for doing good to the country. At the same time, I also feel distressed on becoming conscious of their helplessness. I feel tormented by the thought that such fine human material cannot be used for the right purposes. I know that when people turn up in such large numbers at these gatherings, they do so not merely to see my face. They feel urged to do so because they are hopeful that some solution of their problems will be found by the Congress whose representative I am. However, that solution can be found not by simply passing a few resolutions, but by creating a right type of force. What we need to do most urgently is to bring about a change in the mentality of the people. I must say that the people here, during the recent elections, have shown how unmindful they have been of their true interests. By being lethargic and divided among themselves, they have not paid enough attention towards the strengthening of the Congress organisation in the province. I appeal to the Congressmen in the Punjab to remove your differences and always submit to a majority decision, establish a network of Congress committees, fight every election and take a broom and clear your adversaries in your province.

Things have changed in the seven provinces where Congress ministries are functioning and the people living there are feeling some sort of relief. There is an upsurge of new energy in them. It is a matter of surprise that things have remained very much the same in the Punjab. The people living in this province should not believe that Swaraj has been won in the provinces where the Congress has secured a majority. Nothing of that sort has happened because the real power, that is the power of possessing and spending money, has remained where it was before. Still, it must be said that a new wave of enthusiasm and energy has swept the Congress provinces, and the people living there have shaken their fears off.

In the U.P. we have decided to create a new force by reorganising ourselves because we believe that sooner or later we shall succeed in wresting the full powers from the hands of the present government.

If one looks at the situation in the Punjab, one finds that repression is in full swing here. In the other provinces, the atmosphere has very much changed for the better. While other provinces are releasing the prisoners and lifting all other curbs on the sale and circulation of books and newspapers, in this province more and more restrictions are being imposed and proscription orders passed and securities demanded.

It will serve no useful purpose if you merely passed a resolution condemning the harsh nature of the regime imposed on the people of this

province by the Unionist ministry. What is desired is that the people of the Punjab must resolve to remove the ministry whose members have launched a tirade against the Congress. The ministry under whose regime the chairman of the reception committee of this conference has been arrested must be made to go.[3] I must however put the blame on the people of this province for the present state of affairs as it is they who have voted in favour of the Unionist candidates. Of course, the Congress organisation of this province cannot also escape being blamed. They did not put up sufficient number of candidates to fight the elections. I am surprised that the Congress in the Punjab did not contest the bye-elections to the provincial assembly. The need of the hour is that we acquire more strength. This fact is however not being grasped by the Congressmen in the Punjab.

In such vast gatherings a slogan like "uncrowned king Jawaharlal Zindabad" is commonly heard. I hate being associated with the word 'king', be he crowned or uncrowned, because the very system of kingship is intrinsically wrong and it repels me. The country can make real progress only when there is a widespread awakening among the masses. A few leaders, however good and capable they may be, cannot do much.

The chosen few—these rajas and nawabs—have now bossed over us for long and they should now be removed or kept in some safe cupboards. I am happy to see that in the Punjab the number of primary members enrolled by the Congress organisation is larger than the quota fixed for this province. I, however, wish that you should have a network of Congress committees, and the number of primary members in this province should also be more.

I want to make an appeal to the Congressmen in the Punjab to sink their differences and work in closest harmony. I also have differences with my colleagues in the Working Committee on several crucial matters; still, I always abide by the decision of the majority after giving my most thoughtful consideration to all such matters. I hope the people of this province will develop a militant spirit and learn to work with discipline and in a spirit of cooperation with each other.

3. Balwant Singh 'Dukhia' was arrested on 12 September 1937 for a speech delivered on the Andaman Day.

13. To the Editor, The Tribune[1]

In train
17/10/37

Sir,

As I was wandering about the Frontier Province, I read hurriedly a report of a speech of mine in *The Tribune* and your criticism[2] of it in the issue of October 14th. In this and other reports many errors have crept in. Perhaps that is inevitable when long speeches in Hindustani are rendered briefly in English. It is a weariness of the flesh to have to correct all these but one or two points which have misled you deserve notice.

I am reported to have said that this Unionist Government in the Punjab was in one respect worse than the previous government as the latter did not at least carry on an open campaign of propaganda against the Congress as the Unionist Government did. While I hold that the Unionist Government is in one respect worse even than the previous government, I never made the other remark attributed to me. It would be manifestly untrue and absurd to say that the previous government did not carry on open propaganda against the Congress. Everyone knows that both in word and deed not only the previous Punjab Government but all provincial governments as well as the central government did carry on a fierce propaganda against the Congress. Indeed, they did much more than propaganda.

What I said in my speech was that the present Punjab Government was functioning in the same reactionary imperialist way as its predecessor, with this difference that the latter was frankly and openly an organ of British imperialism while the former had a different cloak which hid its real nature. This made the position somewhat worse as some people might be misled by this cloak and might ignore the real thing behind it, which is British imperialism.

I think that definitely the present Punjab Government is the most reactionary of all the provincial governments in India. It is pursuing this reactionary policy both in the political and the economic spheres, and its aggressive policy of repression and suppression of civil liberty has

1. *The Tribune*, 19 October 1937.
2. *The Tribune* was critical of certain remarks in Jawaharlal's address to the Punjab Political Conference on 11 October 1937 and felt that as long as the Congress was unable to secure the allegiance of the Muslim community, Congressmen could not hope to dislodge the Unionists who were mainly dependent on the Muslim communal vote.

given it an unenviable prominence in India. For anyone to ask for the cooperation of the progressive elements in this policy or with this government displays an extraordinary ignorance of principles and of democratic public life.

I might add that I am not at all against criticism of the Congress by the opponents of the Congress or even by its friends. I believe in the fullest criticism and discussion of public issues. But the leaders of the Unionist Party have indulged often in abuse of the Congress and its leaders, a practice which is not usually looked upon with favour by responsible public men.

Another point that you have discussed has been my regret at the fact that more Congress candidates were not put up at the time of the general election. I fully realise the difficulties of the Congress organisation in the Punjab but I am quite sure that the real strength of the Congress in the Punjab is not reflected in the present provincial assembly. My tours in the Punjab have given me an opportunity to judge of the views and temper of the people, and I am convinced that the mass of the people here, as elsewhere, stand by the Congress. If another general election was held and Congress candidates were put up for every seat, is there any doubt that the Congress would meet with signal success?

Yours &c.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To Saroj Kumar Ghose[1]

Allahabad
20.10.1937

Dear Sir,[2]
I am in receipt of the representation which you and a number of others have sent.[3] I regret the delay in acknowledging it owing to my absence from Allahabad. I am grieved to learn of the incidents to which you

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-5/1937, p. 179, N.M.M.L.
2. A resident of Nator in Rajshahi district, now in Bangladesh.
3. The representation referred to the disabilities suffered by the Hindu minority in north and east Bengal. It also stressed that the Congress should be strengthened in Bengal to protect the Hindu minority as they would not like to enter into any dishonourable pact with the Muslims out of a sense of fear.

Frankly speaking, I do not know anything about it. That does not mean, of course, that we should remain silent spectators of this tragedy. This is a thing which none of us who is sensitive can ever forget. It is however a reminder of our own weakness, and to be reminded of our weaknesses is not a pleasant thing.

In any event, there is a very great responsibility in this matter and both the people and I have a common responsibility. The people have to bear it in greater proportion because it is largely due to their efforts that their comrades in the Andamans stopped their hunger strike in the hope that their release would not be delayed long. They have got to remember that Mahatma Gandhi himself pleaded for their release and the Congress Working Committee also pleaded for the same. So far as I can gather, there are various hints and suggestions thrown out by the authorities that the release of the prisoners is a matter that might be effected very soon. So those prisoners took a step, namely, putting an end to their hunger strike, relying on that hope. By this thought of approaching release, the even tenor of the prisoners' lives has been disturbed. The feeling that a great change in their lives is going to be wrought at an early date upset their mental equilibrium, preventing them from doing anything physical and mental that makes life worth living. By the agitation that has been started for their release, their countrymen have raised hopes in the minds of these prisoners and until they succeed in getting the release of their comrades from behind the prison bars, they shoulder a great responsibility.

I feel that responsibility and the Working Committee feels it; all of us feel it. No doubt, we shall do as much as we can in this matter. Yet I cannot promise to you that immediate release would be obtained because, as I confessed in the beginning, I feel powerless. I do not talk tall and I do not want you to talk tall. Still, I hope that the growing strength of the nation will certainly succeed in having its way. Therefore you and I have to concentrate our efforts not only in Bengal but in the whole of India.

In the provinces, where the Congress has accepted office, there has been, to a large extent, a different atmosphere. There is the Congress outlook in the government, but at the same time they have to carry on the same old burden in the same old atmosphere suffocating as before. It must not be forgotten that Congress ministry or no ministry, it is the British Government that rules India. It is the British army that occupies India and it is the British will that prevails in India. Still, it is perfectly true that in those Congress provinces one would find an enormous difference, may be by a few declarations and by a few executive actions. But even then one would find in the villages and in the

remotest corner of those provinces that the humblest of the peasants realises that he is in a different atmosphere and he knows that in case he is oppressed by the police or a petty official he would be able to approach even the man at the top. But in spite of this, no Indian must forget that it is the British people, the British imperialism that is dominating India. That is one side of the shield. The other side of the shield is that in spite of the old atmosphere there is entirely a new atmosphere in those provinces where Congress ministries are functioning. There is among the people a sense of exhilaration on account of this and therefore a new sense of confidence as a consequence. I do not want to discourage that spirit of exhilaration but there should be a certain discipline in that spirit.

Bengal has been carrying on the same old burden for so many years past. Her people are still living under the shadow of that tragedy but I want to tell you that the whole of India realises that fully. The whole of India, I would not use the word simply because it is patronizing, but the fact is that the whole of India feels with great anxiety about the conditions prevailing in Bengal. Because quite apart from the feeling of comradely affection it is sheer self-interest that makes us feel like this.

Whether it is a Congress province or a non-Congress province, ours is a common interest. We want the freedom of India. Our interests are so linked together that we cannot go ahead when one part of ours lags behind. I should like to tell you that I feel that you are going to have a very big change—may not be in the coming months—but in the near future.

The city of Calcutta is a great city. It has a high record of public life not only in Bengal but in the whole of India. But politics today has shifted its centre of gravity, and the strength of the nation has certainly been transferred from the cities to the rural areas, to the villages, to the mud huts and factories. Therefore Bengal would be moving and it is already moving towards the villages. While people in cities like Calcutta may protest and hold demonstrations, the rest of Bengal will no longer remain unmoved.

The Congress has begun talking about Muslim mass contact, although there is nothing special in that programme. It has been the objective of the Congress for a long time past to cultivate mass contacts with the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and in fact with all the communities. The Congress, as a political organisation, thinks in terms of India and not in terms of communities. It, therefore, pursues a policy of mass contact which is going on in the villages, in the huts, in the shops and among the humblest of men.

Among the Muslims in all parts of India the Congress ideals have rapidly spread. I hope that the Congress candidate would achieve an overwhelming victory over his rival sponsored by the Muslim League in the Bijnor election. It is the question of bread which appeals most to the masses whether they are Hindus or Mohammedans. The economic issue is the most important factor. I have not the slightest shadow of doubt that in Bengal, too, if the Muslim masses are approached with a clear-cut economic programme, they would transfer their loyalty to the Congress.

17. The Hunger Strike of the Prisoners in the Punjab[1]

I am greatly worried about the hunger strike of the political prisoners in the Punjab jails but I am helpless.[2] I have a mind to go and see the hunger strikers but I feel that it is no use my seeing them, since I have nothing else but to advise them to give up the hunger strike. I am of the opinion that the weapon of hunger strike should be used only in extraordinary circumstances. Some injustice has been done to the prisoners. They are bound to feel disappointed and those who have been prisoners themselves can very well appreciate their feelings.

The political prisoners have made some mistake in their judgment on the state of affairs in the country after the introduction of the new constitution. If we had the power, we would release all the political prisoners at once. And therefore a strong and consistent agitation may have to be carried on for their release as it is time now that they are released.

When the question of release comes, all political prisoners should be released and there should be no differentiation between the political prisoners. Civil disobedience in no form should be resorted to at present in connection with the agitation for the release of political prisoners. If that is done, the real issue would be blurred.

1. Speech at Lahore, 20 January 1938. *The Tribune*, 22 January 1938.
2. As the political prisoners in the Punjab jails, including those repatriated from the Andamans, were not released by the authorities on the ground that they gave no undertaking not to take part in subversive activities, they went on a hunger strike and appealed to Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress to take up their cause.

I am laying down the reins of office after two years. I am feeling tired now after having carried that heavy burden so long. I am not, however, physically tired. None in the Congress can sit at ease. All of us have to carry on the work.

The whole of Europe is in a state of insecurity. The League of Nations has not fulfilled its object and the balance of power has now changed. With the birth of a new Italy and a new Germany the whole face of Europe has been changed. The League of Nations does not represent the real Europe. The only work of the League of Nations, like the Liberals, is to pass pious and nicely-worded resolutions. With what has happened in Europe, the position of England has become weak. England's supremacy lay in her naval power and that country is even today building many ships. But the aeroplanes, as a weapon of war, have taken away that supremacy. Englishmen will do their utmost to save and strengthen their country. They are a brave people. But the victory is bound to be his who possesses new weapons.

Today countries are fighting undeclared wars which the legal heads refuse to recognise in spite of the havoc created by those wars in Spain, in Abyssinia and in China. The new method of war is to take a lead in the attack; for whosoever attacks first is bound to succeed.

I visualise a world war within one or two years. Japan, in spite of her brave people, is bound to have a crashing fall soon because of its ever-increasing imperialist lust.

What happens to England affects us in India also. We in India were never so strong as we are today and I am sure that no outside power can prevent us from achieving our independence.

I confess that I feel the weight of the promises and assurances given to the teeming millions when I and others went from village to village because we have not been able to do much to redeem our promises. There are two ways of making progress. One is that of agitation and the other way is that of doing constructive work. There is bound to arise a conflict between the two and I do not know when that conflict may arise.

As a practical politician, my present worry is not how to get freedom —because I believe that we are going to be free—but how to keep that freedom intact.

Though the Punjab is a brave province and there are very large numbers of good workers here, the Congress does not hold the position that it ought to, because of the differences among Congressmen which are rather personal. With the increase in power of the Congress, undesirable persons who were never with us are entering the Congress. They may prove a source of weakness to it. I am anxious to strengthen

the organisation of the Congress, lest we fall from the high position which we have attained. I am glad to say that the Punjab has during the last year increased its membership and I hope that a still greater progress will be made. I appeal to Congressmen to sink their differences, of which I am, however, not afraid because that shows that there is life in them. I suggest that, like the U.P. Congress, they may make a rule that no Congressman will go to the press with his quarrels. By that I do not mean that a fair and just criticism should not be made or truth be suppressed but what I would suggest is that their quarrels should be referred to the Congress committee first for settlement.

Some of the Punjab non-English papers, which claimed to be friends of the Congress, wrote awful things about me and the Congress. I condemn that tendency.

No circulars should be issued or posters or articles published for maligning Congressmen. Every Congressman who has served the Congress should be given an unrestricted opportunity to continue to do the work, if he so desires.

18. The Need for Peaceful Agitation[1]

When I was passing through Lahore a few days back, I spoke about the political prisoners on hunger strike. Since then certain events have happened here and my name has been used in this connection and I find I have been misinterpreted.

I should like to make it clear that while I deplore a resort to hunger strike, all my sympathies are with the political prisoners. Every sensitive Indian and lover of liberty must feel for them and desire that all of them should be released. I wish I had the power to help them, for if I had it, I would use it unhesitatingly and gladly in their favour. I am distressed exceedingly by their continued imprisonment and their act of self-immolation.[2]

1. Statement to the press, Lahore, 28 January 1938. *The Hindu*, 29 January 1938.
2. Amulya Charan Chowdhury, a detenu under order of release, committed suicide in Chittagong.

Though we have not the power to do that, we are not entirely powerless if public opinion moves in the matter. It is our duty, therefore, to carry on a ceaseless propaganda and agitation for this purpose. I stated last time that there should be no civil disobedience or breaking of laws as this was against the present policy of the Congress, but apart from this, peaceful agitation is certainly desirable.

I am sorry to learn that on the occasion of the procession in Lahore on January 24 some damage was done and offensive epithets were used.[3] I am assured that the processionists were not responsible for this, but certain irresponsible persons, who had followed the procession, misbehaved. Such acts are not only undesirable but hinder our work and injure the very cause we have at heart.

To the political prisoners, I send my deepest sympathy in their trial.

3. The Prisoners' Release Committee organized a procession in Lahore on 24 January 1938 to press for the release of the political prisoners who were on hunger strike in the Punjab.

friends must remember that the assembly party consists of elected representatives from all over the Presidency. Bombay city is important but in point of numbers it is overshadowed by Gujarat, Karnataka, and Maharashtra. Maharashtra sends the largest contingent and so, inevitably, the views of Maharashtra count for most. The Presidency being a composite province from the Congress point of view, the position was a difficult one and members could honestly hold divergent views as to the way out of the difficulty. Sardar Vallabhbhai, to some extent, lessened this difficulty by keeping Gujarat out of the contest for leadership.

The responsibility for election lay on the elected members and they, after mutual consultation and reference to other colleagues, came to a certain conclusion with remarkable unanimity. In these consulations Sardar Vallabhbhai had very little share, though it would only have been in the fitness of things if he had taken a greater share. The whole procedure adopted was proper and democratic and undoubtedly the result was in accordance with the wishes of the great majority of the elected members.

Why then this outcry and vituperation and highly improper personal attacks? Surely some people in Bombay, however earnest or numerous they might be, wished to impose their will on the elected members from Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka. That is not democracy. There have been frequent references to autocracy and fascist methods but the methods adopted by the leaders of the agitation savour more of fascism than of democracy and I am sure they will realise this when the excitement of the moment passes. If there had been the least doubt in our minds that the will of the majority of the elected representatives had not prevailed in the election of the leader, we would willingly and gladly have asked for a fresh election. But the majority of these members have made it clear that they stand by that election.

Elections to offices in the Congress are not the distribution of prizes or spoils. Congressmen are not out for such prizes or spoils. We try to adopt the democratic method and choose those best fitted for a particular office, having regard to a variety of circumstances. Sometimes this method may not give the best results but we accept it none the less.

This agitation has been grossly unfair to Sardar Vallabhbhai. It has been unfair to Mr. Nariman. It has cast a heavy burden on Mr. Kher[3] who has already to face a difficult enough situation and who deserves all our sympathy and cooperation. Everybody knows that Mr. Kher

3. B. G. Kher (1888-1957); a solicitor of Bombay; Chief Minister, Bombay, 1937-39 and 1946-52; high commissioner of India in Britain, 1952-54; chairman, Official Language Commission, 1955 and Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, 1956.

never asked for any office and he was reluctant to have the leadership thrust on him. I earnestly hope that friends in Bombay will consider the situation coolly and put an end to an agitation which started on a false basis and which must injure our cause.

20. To Leaders of Congress Parties in Provincial Assemblies[1]

Allahabad
July 16, 1937

Dear Comrade,

In view of the acceptance of office by Congressmen in some provinces and the formation of Congress cabinets, may I draw your special attention to the resolution passed by the Working Committee at Wardha on February 28, 1937 laying down the policy to be pursued by Congressmen in the legislatures?[2] This resolution was subsequently endorsed by the A.I.C.C., and the recent permission given by the Working Committee to accept office must be interpreted in terms of that resolution. The burden of acting up to the specific Congress directions contained in this resolution now devolves on all Congress parties in the provincial assemblies, and more specially on the Congress cabinets where such exist.

The full resolution, referred to above, must be carefully read and kept in mind, so that the basic policy of the Congress in regard to the new constitution might colour and direct all our activities in the legislatures. You will also, I trust, keep in mind the election manifesto that was issued on our behalf.

This basic policy of combating the Act and the new constitution will soon have to come into operation if an attempt is made to inaugurate the federation. The proposed federation is far the worst part of the Act and it is utterly bad. It has to be resisted in every way and with every weapon at our disposal. May I suggest to you to consider this question carefully, so that when the time comes your cabinet and party may be fully prepared to offer effective resistance?

I must also remind you of the Congress direction to Congress members of the legislatures to take the earliest steps to press the demand for a constituent assembly to frame the constitution of a free India.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-1/1936, p. 3, N.M.M.L.
2. See p. 52.

Apart from this basic policy, Congress cabinets and parties have to carry out the programmes outlined in the election manifesto and in Congress resolutions. Release of political prisoners, internees and detenus must inevitably be an early step. So also the return of securities taken from newspapers and presses. A repeal of all repressive laws must follow.

On the constructive side, the land question and rural debt have to be tackled. These questions are complicated and if an attempt is made to deal with them thoroughly, some delay is inevitable. Such an attempt should, of course, be made on the lines indicated by Congress resolutions, especially the agrarian resolution of the Faizpur Congress.[3] But it is very necessary that some relief should be given to the peasantry almost immediately. This will be an earnest of the better land system that we aim at, and the masses will realise by this, as by nothing else, that a new spirit moves the new cabinets and provincial governments.

What these immediate steps are to be will depend on the land system in the province concerned and on its own peculiar problems. But relief from suits for arrears of rent and debt could be given without delay by a moratorium. A reduction in rent and revenue could follow and this should be accompanied by the imposition of income-tax, on a progressive scale, on agricultural incomes.

For industrial workers an eight hours' day is a reform that has been long overdue.

These are some of the points for your early consideration. I trust that by your prompt and decisive action you will enhance the prestige and strength of the Congress and give relief to the masses who look to the Congress for a lightening of their many burdens.

In provinces where the Congress Party is not in a majority, you will of course not be in a position to do much. But even there the same line of action should be followed, in so far as it is possible.

We shall be happy to send you Congress resolutions or other Congress literature, if you so desire.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Pending the framing of an all-India agrarian programme, the resolution suggested: (1) readjustment of rent and revenue demands, (2) exemption from rent of uneconomic holdings, (3) levying of agricultural income-tax on a progressive scale, (4) reduction of canal and other irrigation rates, (5) abolition of forced labour and feudal dues and levies, (5) fixity of tenure with heritable rights, (7) introduction of cooperative farming, (8) cancellation of rural debt and arrears of rent, (9) statutory provision for a living wage and suitable working conditions for agriculture, and (10) recognition of peasant unions.

21. To Agatha Harrison[1]

Allahabad
July 19, 1937

Dear Agatha,
Thank you for your letters of the 24th June and 10th July.[2] During the last few days many things have happened, which seems rather strange. How far this means a change one cannot say. Anyhow the next few months will show whether it is possible to do much under present conditions....

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. She had written about the negotiations leading to the decision of the Congress to accept office and added: "some of us who are following things closely at this end glimpse—perhaps dimly—what you have gone through."

22. To Secretary, Maharashtra P.C.C.[1]

Allahabad
20.7.1937

Dear Comrade,
Your letter. I appreciate the idea behind your proposal to celebrate the fact that the Congress has taken office in various provinces but I think the proposal is premature. It is deluding people to say that Congress raj has been established. When freedom comes to us in real measure it will be time enough for us to celebrate it. There is great danger of the public being led to believe that the struggle for freedom is over if we celebrate in this fashion.

I am issuing a statement[2] to the press today more or less on this subject.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-14(i)/1937-38, p. 111, N.M.M.L.
2. See pp. 106-110.

23. To Gopinath Bardoloi[1]

Allahabad
21.7.1937

Dear Comrade,[2]
I thank you for your letter of the 4th July explaining to me what the line system is.[3] I appreciate your difficulties but I am not in a position to give a definite opinion as to what should be done. In this matter you should consult your provincial Congress committee.

As I have told you, I should welcome the opportunity of visiting Assam. But I am afraid I cannot say when this wish will be realised.

About the Speaker's salary, you must know that it should not exceed Rs. 500. Apart from this he may have house allowance and conveyance allowance. A Speaker is to some extent cut off from day to day politics. But we are not prepared to accept the dictum that in a country like India at present a Speaker must cut himself adrift from the Congress and have no relation to it. A Speaker has to be impartial in his rulings and his conduct. But he must always bear in mind the Congress goal and the Congress policy and he must, to the best of his ability, help this. I do not think it will be desirable for a Speaker to belong to the executive of the Congress, that is, to the executive committee of the P.C.C. But perhaps it may be possible for him to continue as an ordinary member of the P.C.C. if he happens to be such. This matter is not clear yet.

A Speaker cannot formally belong to the parliamentary party. But he can certainly confer with the leader of that party whenever occasion arises.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P.L. 12/1937-39, p. 151, N.M.M.L.
2. (1890-1950); joined noncooperation movement, 1921; leader of the Congress Party in the Assam Assembly, 1937; formed the coalition ministry in Assam in 1938; Chief Minister, 1946-1950.
3. The system whereby, within an area determined by a line in the neighbourhood of or inside a non-immigrant village, immigrants were not allowed to acquire any land.

24. Salaries of Public Servants[1]

The advent of Congress ministries has made the question of reducing salaries of public servants a live issue. We see, on the one hand, Congress ministers taking only a fraction of the salaries of their predecessors and, on the other hand, most other public servants in high offices drawing enormous salaries. Even professors and vice-chancellors and other academic folk measure their love of learning and service to the community by the exorbitant salaries they get. In the Punjab we have seen the remarkable spectacle of the new legislators increasing their daily allowance to a record figure.[2] The two pictures are striking enough and yet perhaps few persons appreciate the real difference. This difference is big enough in degree but it is bigger still in kind.

The Karachi resolution on fundamental rights laid down that: "Expenditure and salaries of civil departments shall be largely reduced. No servant of the state, other than specially employed experts and the like, shall be paid above a certain figure, which should not ordinarily exceed Rs. 500 a month."

It will be noted that Rs. 500 is more or less the maximum salary. This does not necessarily mean that ministers or other high officers should invariably get the maximum. The principles underlying the Congress resolution are two: (1) salaries should be in keeping with the poverty of the country and they should therefore be as low as is compatible with efficiency; (2) salaries should not be a measure of the dignity or importance of the office an individual holds but should be based on his needs.

The first of these principles is generally recognised but the second, I am afraid, is not yet sufficiently appreciated. Sensitive people feel that there is a certain indecency in drawing large salaries out of a poverty-stricken people, as in drawing large dividends out of the labour of ill-paid workers. The real fault and indecency lies in a system which permits and encourages this kind of thing. We have got so used to thinking in terms of measuring our importance and our progress in life in

1. Allahabad, 24 July 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 27 July 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 241-244.
2. The Congress resolved that the allowance of a member should not exceed Rs. 10 a day or Rs. 75 a month if a salary was to be paid plus Rs. 2/8/- as daily allowance for the days of attendance. The Unionist ministry in the Punjab, however, fixed Rs. 20 per day as allowance and Rs. 2/8/- per day for conveyance.

terms of income that it is difficult to think of other terms. And yet this is a false and pernicious standard and where money values prevail too much, men decay. But even in our money age we all know that the social and cultural value of a poor scientist or writer is often far greater than that of a rich businessman or a high official drawing a big salary. A taluqdar or big zamindar has a large income but it is a little difficult to find where his social value comes in; some people doubt if he has the slightest social value.

We must, therefore, get rid of this idea of measuring people by their incomes and salaries. Probably this standard of measurement, if inverted, would be a safer guide for us. The question involves big issues and a refashioning of our social order. As a socialist I would confidently point to the socialist solution of this as of other difficulties. But for the moment we are concerned with the salaries of public servants only.

The Congress wants, in so far as it can, to apply this principle to public salaries. That is to say, it wants to reduce them to reasonable limits, more in keeping with Indian conditions, so as to lessen the tremendous gap between the official and the man in the field, and to give back, as much as possible, of the revenue of the country to the masses in the form of social and other services. It wants to end the practice of paying progressively more to the higher officials. The office they hold should not determine the salary but the needs of the individual who holds it. An ideal system would require more or less the same payment for all services and all offices. But under present conditions this is not possible and variations must creep in. Still there is no obvious reason why a minister should be paid more than his secretary, simply because of his office. To some extent this may be occasionally necessary as the minister might have to shoulder additional responsibilities. But the principle we wish to adhere to is that a minister has no business to be paid more than his secretary simply because of his office. This would apply to other offices also. This does not mean that other salaries should also approximate to the maximum fixed, but rather that all salaries should be on lower scale, the maximum being touched only when obviously necessary.

But there are patent difficulties in the way in suddenly upsetting the present system from top to bottom. Apart from the evil inheritance from the British Government, the social system, the habits of people and many other things come in the way. And we have to face suddenly so many complex problems which demand immediate consideration. We can therefore only set certain examples before the public to begin with, but this question has a basic importance and must be dealt with fully before long. For the present we have provisionally fixed ministerial and

other salaries roughly in accordance with the Karachi resolution. That is the maximum allowed, but this maximum need not be drawn as a matter of course.

The question of allowance is intimately connected with salaries. Certain offices necessitate some appurtenances for the sake of efficiency and rapidity of work. But allowances must not become additions to the salaries, else the whole purpose of having low salaries will be defeated.

While on the one side we want to reduce salaries of the higher officers, we want also to provide for a living wage for all and to raise the standard of living of the masses. How far that is possible under the present system is another matter. The ideal we aim at is not to perpetuate poverty but to abolish it, and to raise the general standard as high as possible so that everyone may participate in the culture of the age. For this, great political and social changes will be necessary. Meanwhile we shall at least try to reduce the gap between the favoured few and the unfavoured millions.

As soon as opportunity offers itself we shall consider the question of salaries and allowances, in consultation with the Congress ministers, so that we might give effect to the real spirit of the Karachi resolution and put an end to the notion that the worth of a man or his work is measured by the salary he gets.

25. Address to the U.P. Congress Legislators[1]

We are ready to help you, but we will certainly strongly criticise you if an occasion arises. You have not been selected to run the government for the Governor but for the people. The power behind you is that of the Congress from which you have received your strength and inspiration. I would remind you of the resolutions passed by the Congress Working Committee for your guidance. You have been sent to the legislature to remedy defects and you should not betray your cause. I want you to take immediate action for the fire of starvation is aflame and you cannot pass time in consultations. Millions of eyes are watching you and if nothing is done they would be turned against you.

1. Lucknow, 27 July 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 28 July 1937.

26. To Leaders of the Congress Majority Provinces[1]

Allahabad
30.7.1937

Dear Comrade,

I should like to draw your attention to the resolution of the Faizpur Congress calling upon Congress members of the legislatures to take the earliest opportunity to put forward in the new assemblies the demand for a constituent assembly, elected by adult suffrage. After the general elections the Working Committee at its Wardha meeting dated February 27th and 28th again referred to this as follows:

> The immediate objective of the Congress in the legislatures is to fight the new constitution, to resist the introduction and working of the federal part of the Act and to lay stress on the nation's demand for a constituent assembly. Congress members of the legislatures have been directed by the Faizpur Congress to take the earliest opportunity to put forward in the new assemblies this demand for a constituent assembly, and to support it by mass agitation outside.

This resolution of the Working Committee was endorsed by the All India Congress Committee on the 18th March.

On the 20th March the All India Convention passed a long resolution, the last part of which ran as follows:

> This Convention therefore calls upon all Congress parliamentary parties to take the earliest opportunity to put forward, in the name of the nation, a demand in their respective legislatures that the Government of India Act of 1935 be withdrawn, so that the people of India may frame their own constitution.

You will thus see that great stress has been laid throughout on behalf of the Congress on this demand for the withdrawal of the present constitution and the framing of another constitution by a constituent assembly, being made at the earliest possible stage in the new assemblies. As Congress ministries have come into existence in six provinces this duty devolves upon them now.

Sessions of the provincial assemblies have taken place in all these provinces. But so far as I am aware no step has been taken by the Congress Party or the Congress ministry to bring such a resolution before

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-72/1937, pp. 35-36, N.M.M.L.

the House.[2] May I know why this has not been done so far? It is obvious that the value of unequivocal denunciation of the present Act is far less if it is made at a later stage after we have more or less accepted the position as it is. In any event, the explicit directions of the Congress cannot be ignored. Will you kindly let me know what you propose to do in this matter, so that I might place it before the Working Committee which is likely to meet in the course of two or three weeks?

In this connection may I also beg of you to keep in mind this fundamental policy of the Congress in all your activities inside or outside the legislature?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Congress ministries in the six provinces subsequently secured the passage of the resolution.

27. The Responsibilities of the Ministers[1]

The acceptance of office by Congressmen has led some people to think that they have got Swaraj, while others apprehend that that might put them away from their goal of independence. The resolution of the Congress Working Committee on the subject will make the whole position clear. It clearly shows that our goal remains as it was; and though the Congress accepted office, we are continuing our pilgrimage, namely, the achievement of independence. Today is the Lokmanya Tilak Day and we should derive courage by remembering him. A great event had also taken place on August 1, seventeen years ago. The noncooperation movement was started for the first time on that date. The Congress has now decided to accept office but its ultimate objective remains unchanged. It is possible that the Congress ministers might be able to do a little for the good of the peasants but if anybody thinks that we have attained Congress raj he would be deceiving himself. We should remember that we do not desire Congress raj but want the raj of the people. I warn you against false ideas of Congress raj or Swaraj having been established in India; it is a snare and a delusion. Some may think

1. Speech at Allahabad, 1 August 1937. From *The Leader*, 3 August 1937.

that those Congressmen who have been appointed ministers have become great and the appointments might also have excited jealousy, but the ministers are laden with the burden of great responsibilities. The discipline taught by the Congress is that they should work according to the wishes of the people and I hope that whatever decisions are taken they would be based on the opinion of the people. The Congress has not changed its goal and the methods pursued for the last seventeen years; the charge that it has done so is not correct. The Congress still adheres to the goal of independence and its principles of struggle remain the same. Owing to certain circumstances it has decided to accept ministerships but it has not changed the basic principles of struggle. It is still committed to the achievement of independence and the removal of people's poverty. The ministers have limited powers and the people should not have high hopes of them. I sympathise with the difficult position of the Congress ministers for the heavy responsibility that has been placed on them, and on their decisions depends the fate of millions. If they stumble, lakhs of people would stumble with them.

I want the people to think for themselves and express their opinions regarding the Congress ministers' actions. Lack of thought and criticism make the people weak, but I also want them to work in unity and maintain their discipline. This is the lesson that the Congress has taught us.

People must not forget that the ministers are no longer the creation of Governors but of the people. They can be asked to vacate office and be replaced by others. The power of the ministers depends on the people's power. The ministries are small things before bigger events which we have to face and for which we must be forewarned and remain prepared.

Though some political prisoners have been released in some provinces, many of them are still in jail and, therefore, it is necessary that we should demand their release as early as possible. Many prisoners are in the Andamans where politicals are said to be on hunger strike.[2] Confinement of prisoners outside India is not proper as it deprives them of the opportunities of meeting their relations. Sardar Teja Singh had been elected to the Punjab Legislative Assembly by the people, and yet he is detained without trial and that shows our helplessness.

I do not want Congress raj but people's raj. If the Congress ministers cannot satisfy the people's demands even to a limited extent, their

2. 187 political prisoners demanded the release of all political prisoners and detenus and repeal of all repressive laws and went on hunger strike on 24 July 1937.

acceptance of office would be a thoroughly worthless affair and sheer waste of time.

28. To Gopinath Bardoloi[1]

Allahabad
4.8.1937

Dear Comrade,

You wrote to me some time ago about the line system and I sent you a brief reply. I have since received a letter from Mr. Abdul Hamid Khan[2] on this subject and I have given some further thought to the matter. As you have pointed out, Mr. Abdul Hamid Khan has little to do with the Congress. But I have tried to consider this question apart from individuals. It is obvious that in theory any such ban put on the population of a province is undesirable. We are at the present moment pressing for the removal of the Criminal Tribes Act.[3] The ban is not only undesirable in point of theory, but in practice it often results in an aggravation of the evils to prevent which the ban was imposed. For it results in separatism and a continuous feeling of conflict between the groups. The problem is not solved in this way but is checked to some extent and aggravated in some other respects. I cannot, with the material at my disposal and being ignorant of the local conditions, presume to give a definite opinion. That is for you and your party to decide or, if necessary, the matter might be referred to the Working Committee in so far as the principle is concerned. But I would like you and your party to consider this matter in its larger aspects and not to infringe the principles of civil liberty for which we stand. Perhaps the best way to deal with it would be to consider it as a part of the larger agrarian problem. I do not know if you intend tackling this problem at all in Assam. But it should be tackled. It may be possible to lay down certain rules of general application limiting transfers of land to some extent in order to prevent formation of large holdings in single hands. There may be other ways of dealing with this. But to isolate a group that is

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P.L. 12/1937-39, pp. 149-150, N.M.M.L.
2. A member of the Assam Assembly; requested that the Assam Congress Party should support his move in the assembly for the annulment of the line system.
3. The Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, which was intended to prevent the anti-social activities of the criminal tribes, was amended several times, and finally repealed on 28 February 1952.

backward and perhaps criminally inclined is to confirm it in its backwardness and criminality. That is a fundamental rule of sociology and it should not be ignored.

You should also consider the political effect of any decision of yours on the province and on India. Your local conditions may not be known everywhere but you will be open to criticism nevertheless for having infringed an elementary principle. I write all this to you to invite your serious consideration to every aspect of the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

29. On the Congress Policy in the Provinces[1]

Question: What are your views on the recent Gandhi-Viceroy meeting?[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru : I do not know if there is any precise significance to be attached to this meeting.

Q: The Congress Party likes flying its flag on public buildings. What is your view?

JN : Our flag is more than a party flag. Some of our opponents even used our flag during the general elections. As far as I know there is no legal enactment for the use of the Union Jack in India. The Congress does not wish to employ the Congress flag in a hostile spirit towards the Union Jack because we fully recognise that the Union Jack is Britain's flag. But inevitably the Union Jack has become a symbol, although the flag itself is not resented. It is the national flag that should be in evidence everywhere in India.

1. Interview to the press, Allahabad, 7 August 1937. From *Hitavada*, 8 August 1937.
2. In response to an invitation from the Viceroy, Mahatma Gandhi met him on 4 August 1937. They discussed the problems of rural uplift and peasants' conditions. Mahatma Gandhi also conveyed to the Viceroy his views on his proposed visit to the N.W.F.P. and the ban on the entry of Abdul Ghaffar Khan into that province.

Q: What is your opinion about the Congress ministers being members of the Working Committee also?

JN: The Working Committee would like a convention to grow whereby the Congress ministers would not be members of the Working Committee. The ministers, however, are liable to be called in for consultation.

Q: What is the Congress policy in the provinces where the party has formed ministries?

JN: The policy will vary slightly in certain provinces but fundamentally it will be uniform. Different problems will be tackled keeping in view their urgency in particular provinces. In the United Provinces, as in most other provinces, the agrarian problem is the principal one.

The U.P.P.C.C. has studied the agrarian question very closely for the last seven years. Its ultimate objective is the abolition of the zamindari system. Opinions differ as to how this system can be abolished. Tiny holdings must be done away with and large cooperative holdings should take their place. That entails a complete change in the present situation. Many zamindars having a modern outlook believe that the present system will have to go, but they will want full compensation. The question of full compensation, in equity, does not arise,

India. An increased tax on Japanese goods, which will benefit British goods, does not help Indians. If however there is a big industrial development, then even though the imports would not decrease, their nature would change. Ultimately the imports would decrease as India would possess heavy machines which would enable her to manufacture her own machinery.

In so far as finance is concerned, the Congress intends to introduce a progressive tax on agricultural incomes above a certain minimum.

30. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
August 7, 1937

My dear Krishna,

I have not written to you much lately and I owe you several letters. But I doubt if I can repay my debt today...

I am sorry to learn that you are having personal difficulties. Nothing interferes with one's activities so much, public or private, as the difficulties which make one live under a continuous strain. However, one cannot permit oneself to be pushed down by circumstances and it is seldom worthwhile worrying much about them.

I have read Stafford Cripps' opinion. This has confirmed me in my opinion that I should not risk a legal contest.[2] Therefore I leave it at that. Whatever other steps you consider desirable, apart from going to a court of law, you might take. I do not understand one thing. There must be numerous authors, more or less in the same legal position as I am in regard to John Lane. Have they all resigned themselves to a loss of their old royalties and is no one of them raising the question himself? However that may be, I think definitely that invoking the law would mean great trouble for me and you, and might mean throwing good money after bad. Then again there are political consequences which are not desirable...

In one of your letters you give a list of various movements[3] like peace movement, cultural cooperation, civil liberties, youth and students,

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. Jawaharlal's publishers, John Lane, went into liquidation and there was a temporary cessation of royalty payments.
3. In his letter of 21 July 1937, Krishna Menon referred to these various movements in England functioning as separate entities and hoped to draw them together.

socialists, labour and peasant—a formidable list. We have all these in varying degrees but a handful of people have to carry on with them, usually the same people. The socialist movement is suffering at the present moment with all manner of growing pains and slightly disruptive tendencies.

For the moment the work for us here has become exceedingly heavy and all manner of main problems arise. It is a curious position and it is a little difficult to prophesy what will happen in the future. One thing is certain: that the Congress ministers will have a very hard and unenviable time. You mention contradictory statements from Congressmen. That is not surprising because those contradictory tendencies are present in the country. And yet the unifying tendencies are also present. On the one side there is a desire to sit down and peg away at administrative and legislative work, on the other, there is the ever-present idea of conflict in the future and preparation for it. Most people, I think, including those whom I might call centrists in the Congress, realise that conflict is inevitable. It is inherent in the scheme of things and not all the goodwill in the world can avoid it. The approach to this probable conflict is different of course. Probably few persons are haunted quite so much by this sense of conflict to come as Gandhiji, and one can see this peeping out of some of his recent articles.[4] But mostly people get put off by his approach and his language. In the last issue of the *Congress Socialist* there are two articles condemning and criticising a recent utterance of his.[5] Both these articles are quite singularly stupid and have failed to understand the real significance of what he has been writing. It is obvious that he is not writing as a socialist nor does he use socialist phraseology, but thinking and writing on the nationalist plane he has taken up a strong enough attitude.

You mentioned some time ago that you feared that the federation scheme might not be objected to strongly enough. I think your fears are unjustified, though you have valid grounds for them. There are people in the Congress who might, with a gesture of resignation, accommodate themselves to the federation. But I think that the general sense of the Congress is bitterly hostile to it, and the only question is

4. Writing in the *Harijan* of 17 July 1937 on the Congress ministries, Mahatma Gandhi stated: "Office acceptance was not intended to work the Act anyhow... In the prosecution by the Congress of its goal of complete independence, it is a serious attempt on the one hand to avoid a bloody revolution and on the other to avoid mass civil disobedience on a scale hitherto not attempted."
5. Two articles entitled "Non-Violent Approach" and "The Mahatma Misleads", which appeared in the *Congress Socialist* of 24 July 1937, criticised Mahatma Gandhi's views on the Act of 1935 and office acceptance by the Congress.

how best to fight it. There is a possibility, however, of the contest coming before the federation appears on the scene.

We have got extraordinarily complicated and difficult problems to face from day to day and Gandhiji's somewhat unusual notions of what to do and how to do it sometimes increase the difficulties of the ministers. Then there are some people in our own ranks who create difficulties enough on the other side.

But why should I give you a catalogue of these complications and difficulties? We all have to face them everywhere and when I think of Spain and what is happening between China and Japan, and what might happen all over the world, all this sobers me, and, curiously enough, the burden seems to be a little lighter.

You mentioned in one of your letters that I might attend a peace gathering on the 16th and 17th of October. I should like to do so but I fear I cannot leave India at this stage. I think my presence here does make a difference. The rumour that I am going to Europe in the autumn or winter is almost entirely without foundation. But certainly we shall give full cooperation to this gathering and to the committee formed for the purpose. I should like you to keep in touch with them and represent us whenever the necessity arises.

You want my authority to represent India on some kind of an executive dealing with this Spanish affair. I do not quite understand what this central committee is, but certainly you can join it on our behalf and represent us there. Exactly whom you will represent, I do not quite know. But that is immaterial and we need not go into it. If necessary, I could get a formal Congress authorisation for you but I think for the moment you can act on my authority as Congress President.

There is a kind of a Spain-India committee in India but it is a paper committee doing nothing. Indeed it has not got going. If you think that you would like a formal resolution of the Congress, you can send me more particulars of the committee and I shall put the matter before the Working Committee....

You seem to imagine that the coming of Congress ministries might release me to some extent. As a matter of fact the very opposite is happening....

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

31. The Problems before the Congress Ministries[1]

It is after eight months that I am visiting Bombay. During this period many things have happened in India and in the world. After the Faizpur session of the Congress, the Delhi Convention and the A.I.C.C. meetings were held where the question of office was decided. Before that the Congress had come out triumphantly in the elections, and after the elections the decision on the question of office could not be postponed, and conditional acceptance was decided upon. It resulted in a constitutional controversy on the question of assurances. The position was cleared to a great extent, and the Congress decided upon acceptance of office. Following that decision, Congressmen formed ministries in six provinces. This was a new line of action so far as the Congress is concerned.

After the acceptance of office many began to doubt whether the Congress fight for achieving Indian freedom was over or was to continue. When some of the Congressmen themselves began to feel like that, it is not at all surprising if the others also felt so. Yet, the fundamental policy of the Congress remains the same. Independence cannot be achieved through the councils. We can win it only by a greater struggle than what we had waged and we must prepare for it.

World events are moving fast. Though it is called a civil war, the war that is in progress in Spain is a conflict between two forces, namely, democracy and fascism. Indians sympathise with those who are fighting for democracy and have helped them to the extent a poor country like India can. Japan has been slicing China off bit by bit for her own benefit. Her latest act is resented by the Chinese people, possibly because they have gained in strength, or it might be because they became desperate and could not tolerate Japanese aggression any further. The Indian problem is part of the world problem and it would be difficult to get a clear conception of the Indian problem unless one understands the world problem properly.

The Indian provinces are as big as the countries in Europe, each province having a problem of its own. The British Government is the same in all the Indian provinces, following a uniform policy. The Congress should also follow the same policy in all the provinces; if not, it might weaken its strength, as each province would begin to look at things from its provincial point of view. That forebodes danger.

1. Speech at Bombay, 9 August 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 10 August 1937.

instead of playing into the hands of the imperialists by attacking the Congress ministers. If the people do not like a minister or his actions, they have every right to remove him. But it would not be proper to attack him and still want him to retain his position as a minister. Weakening the ministers would mean weakening themselves and the Congress. Individuals within the Congress ministries do not count. They are there because they are Congressmen. Anything that they may or may not do is the responsibility of the Congress. They are elected representatives of the people and any attack on them would be an attack on the Congress and the people themselves. The British are a clever people. The Act that they have introduced is to divide Indians and make them look at things from a provincial point of view. That is bound to happen as that is the objective of the first part of the Act. Hence it is essential to have a uniform policy for all the provinces so that the people might not fall into the trap placed for them. The people might attack the Congress ministers for not doing this or that and that is what is wanted by the British. For not doing a certain thing the people would get dissatisfied with the Congress ministers and the British would take advantage of that position to crush the Congress.

Till now the work that the Congress carried on was quite different from the work that has now been undertaken by some Congressmen. The Congress has laid stress on organisation and discipline. It fought with the British Government and succeeded in its fight to a great extent because of its discipline. But now the Congress has undertaken to follow some other method of work side by side with its usual activities. We are fighting to establish democracy and the Congress is a democratic organisation. Every Congressman has a right to express his view. I do not, for a minute, suggest that the people should give up making their just demands but I want to warn them against the pitfalls of bringing undue pressure and making uncalled-for attacks on the Congress ministers. The responsibility of the Congress ministers is the responsibility of every Congressman. If the ministers spend sleepless hours trying to solve difficult problems, I myself have spent sleepless hours to solve the self-same problems. Congressmen should place the demands of the workers and peasants before the people and popularise them. The ministers are after all the servants of the people and will have to come out of their offices if the people so desire. The attitude of the people towards the Congress ministers should be one of sympathetic watchfulness and their actions should help the Congress ministries and not force them to take a certain course of action.

I want everyone to understand the real meaning of democracy. The decision of the majority should be binding on everyone. That decision

should be accepted and carried out in a disciplined manner. There is pleasure in doing so. Democracy does not mean forcing the opinion of a particular city on the representatives of a whole province.

I am honoured by the people for they have elected me as the Congress President twice continuously. There are but six months and a little more left for me to complete my tenure of office. I am anxiously looking forward to that day when I could transfer my burden. It is a heavy burden. The work of a Congress President is not an easy one. I have to attend to several things, enquire into many matters, issue suitable instructions, etc. There is a possibility of mistakes being committed. It is likely that I might break down before the tenure of office is over. Not that I would not have any responsibility after I transfer the burden of presidentship to some other shoulders, but it would certainly be a lesser burden.

The Congress has demonstrated to the world what it can do with organisation and discipline. It has been proved beyond doubt that the only organisation in the whole of India which can put up a fight is the Indian National Congress.

The demarcation between the Congress and the non-Congress provinces in the country is evident and the difference would be more evident if the people help and cooperate with the Congress ministries. The Bengal ministry's attitude regarding the Andaman prisoners is curious. The present ministry has stated, like its predecessor, that they will not consider the question of the Andaman prisoners until they give up hunger strike. It only shows the weakness of that ministry. The question of the Andaman prisoners is a question which has been agitating the whole country for a long time. When the hunger strike was started, it is stated, the officers there passed insulting remarks against the prisoners. The question of the Andaman prisoners is not a question affecting the province of Bengal only but the whole country. It has therefore been decided to observe the Andaman Day on August 14 and I hope that everyone would join in celebrating that day.

32. The Congress and the Federation[1]

I can say on behalf of the Congress that there cannot be any negotiation with the Viceroy or the British Government for the inauguration of

1. Address to Congressmen at Bombay, 11 August 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 12 August 1937.

the federation. Mahatma Gandhi did not discuss the question with the Viceroy and will never discuss it. Anybody, even if he be a Congress minister, will be a traitor to the country if he, in any way, facilitates the inauguration of the federation.

The Congress ministers and Congressmen in general want to break the front of the federation, the back of the federation and the left and right of the federation, and throw it at the face of those who framed it; because the federation means handing over of the destiny of India to British capitalists and vested interests.

The question of the election of the leader of the Congress Party in the Bombay Assembly had been decided at the Congress Working Committee meeting at Delhi. When called upon, Mr. K.F. Nariman did not place before the Working Committee any proof that Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel interfered in the election. So the Working Committee's decision should be taken as final. As a matter of fact, I had written to Mr. Nariman inquiring whether he wanted some members of the Working Committee to inquire into the affair, but Mr. Nariman did not reply.

A strong volunteer organisation for the mass contact programme is very necessary. Though Congressmen have entered the legislatures, the real field of struggle is outside.

33. The Congress and Mass Contact[1]

Our aim has always been the attainment of complete independence for India. The formation of Congress ministries does not alter our aim. It does not in any way change our policy of wrecking the constitution.

The establishment of Congress ministries has not brought Congress raj. But it is wrong to say that they are utterly useless. If the ministers could achieve nothing then what was the need for having such a long controversy that had preceded the acceptance of office by the Congress?

If the Congress ministers can achieve anything at all, they can do so only with the full support of the people. To weaken the ministries is to weaken the Congress.

1. Speech at Bombay, 11 August 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 12 August 1937.

Mass organisation is the only weapon with which we can face the British Government and it is to mass organisation that we must give our increased attention.

Several things have happened since I last addressed a meeting at this very place. But the chief event has been the assumption of office by the Congress. Since 1919 the Congress has been following a policy of noncooperation with the government. Even when we were not engaged in active civil disobedience, our attitude had been one of noncooperation.

We have to support fully the Congress ministries because they are appointed by the people themselves. The only strength behind the ministries is the strength of the Congress, the strength of the people; and to weaken the ministries is to weaken the Congress.

The British Government have not suddenly fallen in love with India and conferred a great privilege on her. Their only wish is to weaken the Congress. They thought that we would be involved in the little problems of the ministries. They hope to break our unity by the lure of power. Our aim is to consolidate and enhance our strength. The ministries are posed with problems every day. There are snares waiting for them at every step, and without the wholehearted support of the Congress and the people, they cannot carry on.

I therefore appeal to you to strengthen the Congress by enrolling yourselves as Congress members in large numbers. The Muslim mass contact drive does not mean any separate programme for the Muslims. There can be no such separate programme. A political organization fighting for independence cannot think in terms of communities or communal interests. The doors of the Congress are open to all, and those who want full freedom for their motherland and bread for her starving millions should join the Congress.

34. Political Consciousness among the People[1]

Our national work no longer consists in merely making speeches. New difficulties and problems have arisen which demand our attention and

1. Speech at Bombay, 12 August 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13 August 1937.

energy. But public meetings and speeches are not yet entirely superfluous.

Why do I come here to address you? I come to place before you the various problems that face the country so that you could consider and think over them, hold discussions and then give your opinion through your ward, district and provincial Congress committees. It is thus alone, after a process of sifting and crystallization, that we can obtain the verdict of the whole country on important issues of national policy. That is the basis of democracy and we want to make that the basis of the Congress organization. I, therefore, appeal to you to use your powers of judgment and not follow anyone blindly, for that may kill your initiative.

The only basis of Swaraj is the will of the masses. There should be Congress committees in every village and in every street where people should frequently meet to discuss various local and national problems. They would thus not only strengthen the national movement but also develop political consciousness among the people without which attainment of Swaraj would not be possible.

The greatest problem is that of national freedom. Its solution requires the conscious effort on the part of the vast mass of the people. A new problem has been created by the acceptance of office. Do not be under the illusion that we have got any real power. The exigencies of the international situation have induced the British to make a show of transfer of some power to Indians but the British have reserved the real power for themselves. We have accepted office to strengthen the movement and to give what little relief we can to the people. But we should never forget that it involves no compromise with the fundamental demands and that we should always be ready for the final struggle.

Even now we must prepare to resist the poisonous scheme of federation which would soon be inflicted on India. In the same way we should be ready to resist any attempt to involve us in any imperialist war. That can be done only by strengthening the Congress organization.

We want our country to be a living country, where every man and woman should, by his or her conscious will, contribute to the general well-being and happiness of our people.

35. On the Policy of the Congress Ministries[1]

Question: Why is the ban on labour leaders not lifted by the Congress ministries?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Congress ministries have their own difficulties to face; the all-India contacts of the labour leaders of the Presidency are responsible for the delay in the removal of the restrictions against them.

Q: What is your opinion about the Madras Government's recent *communique*?[2]

JN: The *communique* is vague and might have been misconstrued. Not merely the Congress ministry, but any ministry should give the fullest freedom and liberty, as the common law in England, for expression of opinion and ideas. But no government can tolerate open preaching of violence. I would be extremely sorry if any government placed restrictions against freedom of speech and spread of ideas so long as violence was not preached.

Q: What shall be the Congress attitude towards the Coronation durbar?

JN: The Congress ministers will have to carry out the Congress decision regarding the Coronation durbar, and if the British Government wants to avoid a conflict between the Congress ministers and the Governors, they should keep the King in England.

Q: What is the best solution of the Palestine question?

JN: The best solution of the Palestine question is to arrive at an amicable settlement through discussion between the Arabs and the Jews themselves by keeping the British out of Palestine. I have the support of the leaders of both sides when I express this view.

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 12 August 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13 August 1937.
2. The *communique* stated that the government's decision to release political prisoners should not be interpreted as a licence for any form of subversive activities and warned the people against the spread of class hatred.

Q: What steps will be taken by the Congress to prevent the inauguration of the federation?

JN: That will depend on what tactics would have to be adopted at the particular time and I do not want to reveal at this stage what I think should be done.

Q: What will be the policy of the Congress ministries?

JN: The Working Committee meeting at Wardha will consider several questions arising out of the acceptance of office by Congressmen in six provinces. The whole question will be dealt with from an all-India point of view and a uniform policy will have to be evolved, though special provincial problems will be left for the consideration of the provincial parties concerned.

The Working Committee might also consider the question of salaries of the ministers as also of the parliamentary secretaries and leave the details to be settled by the provincial parties. The problem of salaries is fundamentally a difficult one. While during the old regime the authorities decided upon 10 or 15 per cent cut in the salaries, the Congress was looking at the reduction in salaries from an absolutely different standpoint. We have to take into consideration the general poverty of the country. It is not a question of abler the man higher the salary. The salary has to be fixed at a level beyond which it cannot be reduced further while keeping efficiency in view.

Q: Do you think constructive criticism of the Congress ministries is desirable?

JN: It is difficult to draw a line regarding criticism, constructive or destructive. Hostile criticism which leads to the weakening of the ministries should be avoided. I do not mean that the Congress ministries should not be criticised. It is a matter of psychological approach to the problems.

It is one thing to draw attention to certain things and pull up the ministers towards their duty and make criticisms which would strengthen the hands of the ministers, and quite another if it were hostile criticism. To imagine that the Congress ministers can do everything is a false impression, and it would be wrong to proceed further on such a false impression and criticise the ministers. If a hostile mentality is prevailing, then it would only make the Congress ministers despair and do nothing.

Q: Will the question of Kakori prisoners and others result in a deadlock in the United Provinces?

JN: The Indian Penal Code is a comprehensive thing under which anything and everything can be brought. The Code may require to be overhauled, but since it is an all-India measure it cannot be overhauled now. In regard to the special legislation which was meant to be used against the politicals, the position of the Congress is quite different and clear. There are several prisoners in the United Provinces who have been convicted for totally non-political offences. As a matter of fact, I was sentenced to two years' imprisonment on charges of criminal intimidation and extortion.[3] That did not come under political offences. As, however, people knew me it was all right. Similarly there are several unknown persons who have been imprisoned on those charges. Then there are several who have been sentenced on charges of bad antecedents. I consider the provisions relating to this as bad but I do not know how many share my views. Surely the ministry could not say that all those who have been sentenced on charges of bad antecedents or criminal intimidation and extortion should be released. It would have to go through individual cases and decide whether they were political or non-political cases.

Q: Do you like the suggestion that there should be a Muslim Congress President in the coming year?

JN: I welcome the suggestion but I am against the choice being made on purely communal grounds. It would be inadvisable and foolish for the Congress Working Committee to make suggestions as to who should be the President of the Congress next year.

The job of the Congress President has become rather a heavy one and one cannot have communal considerations in mind in selecting the Congress President. Ordinarily speaking that would be an excellent thing and we would welcome it. But I am not prepared to consider the question solely from the point of view that it should be a gesture of goodwill towards a particular community. If the delegates to the Congress think that it would be a wise course, they are at liberty to do so.

Q: What shall be the function of the army, the police and the jails under the Congress regime?

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 252-257.

JN: The Congress after due consideration had decided to accept non-violence as its technique and policy. But even a pacifist government, required to resist foreign invasion, cannot say that it will not use force to resist foreign aggression. Suppose there is a counter-revolution and there are attempts made to upset the government of the day, then even a pacifist government which fails to convince the other party with arguments, will have to put down the counter-revolution through force of arms. Government is the coercive part of the state. Even a pacifist government has to maintain an army. There may be occasions when people, whether strikers or not, indulge in violence. No government can tolerate it because such an outbreak of violence has dangerous potentialities and will have to be put down and brought under control. For example, in the city of Bombay, such an outbreak of violence would become a minor civil war and would upset the civic life of the city. The trouble might have been started with the best of motives, but later hooligans, who care a hoot for the rights of this or that side, join in the trouble just to loot. It would be the duty of the state to put the trouble down. The Congress ministers will have to instruct and see that the police do not take any peremptory action. They will have to judge each case on its merits before opening fire.

Violence is vulgar and the use of it coarsens a nation. Violence always leads to further violence and never solves a problem. Even if it did solve one problem, it creates half a dozen more problems. It is a barbarous way of settling questions. But force cannot be entirely eliminated in the present conditions. For example, if I were to be in Spain today, my duty would be to take up a gun, fight for the Spanish Government and not sit quiet and see women and children slaughtered. The other alternative left for me would be to do nothing at all and run away from the country. When I see violence being committed it shocks me because I am a civilised human being, and not because I am afraid.

Q: In view of your recent speeches, would it be correct to say that you have changed your views regarding the Government of India Act?

JN: To think so would be to show lack of intelligence.

Q: Do you think that reduction of salaries will partly solve India's poverty?

JN: The real way to remove poverty from our land lies through changing the entire social structure. The lowered salaries that are being

received by the Congress ministers will in no way solve the problem of Indian poverty. This only serves as an example for others in the government to follow. So long as there is no check on the enormous profits made by the industrialists and others, the problem cannot be effectively solved. The salaries that the officials receive are monstrous. In Japan, which is one of the richest countries in the world, the salaries of half a dozen high officials may not exceed the salary received by a single high-salaried man in India. The chief of police there receives something between rupees four hundred to five hundred and the ordinary constable between rupees forty to fifty, while in India the police chief receives about twenty five hundred and the ordinary constable about rupees twenty seven only. One can very well see the enormous differences that exist in the salaries of the high and the low.

I am personally against giving up of wants deliberately. If there are a large number of people receiving small salaries, and a few receive very high salaries, it is vulgar and improper for the high officials to receive high salaries. The general level of living in India should be raised. I do not mind however high it may go.

36. To Sajjad Zaheer[1]

Allahabad
August 25, 1937

My dear Banne,
I understand that some kind of a demonstration took place a few days back in front of the *kutchery* in which a considerable number of kisans were involved. These kisans apparently came with some grievances against their zamindars.[2] In the course of this demonstration slogans and cries were raised against the Congress and the Congress ministry. I have not been able to find out yet in detail as to what actually happened. I happened to see Lal Bahadur yesterday and I asked him about it. He

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On 17 August 1937, a number of tenants, who had been forcibly ejected from their lands in Allahabad district, marched in procession shouting slogans against the zamindars.

told me something but that was not enough and I asked him to get further particulars from you.

Some important questions of principle are involved in this matter, such as the desirability of Congressmen demonstrating against and condemning the Congress ministries and the Congress. Further, the use of the red flags in such functions. It is desirable that we should consider these fully. It may be necessary to have a meeting of the town Congress committee for the purpose. But before we call that I should like to know all the facts.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

37. To A. B. Tribhuwan[1]

Allahabad
August 26, 1937

Dear Mr. Tribhuwan,[2]
I am in receipt of your letter of August 12th together with the appeal.[3] You must know that it has been repeatedly stated on behalf of the Congress that the Indian Christian community has an honoured place in our political and social life. But I do not think it is right for you or for anyone else to think of ministries in connection with communal and religious groups. That seems to me to lead to dangerous consequences. The Congress is pledged to protect and encourage minorities. But it would become an absurdity if cabinets are formed on a communal basis. The first consideration in the Congress is the political consideration. You yourself say that up to now Indian Christians have maintained an attitude of strict neutrality so far as the Congress and the British Government are concerned. Do you not feel that this very neutral position makes it a little difficult for them to be considered as Congressmen? I know, of course, that there are good Congressmen among the Christians. But for the moment, I am referring to the community as a whole. I imagine

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-76/1937, p. 463, N.M.M.L.
2. A pleader in Ahmednagar.
3. He had appealed for representation of the Indian Christian community in the provincial ministries formed by the Congress.

that the Indian Christians, if they took a lead in the nationalist movement, would take a much larger share in it than their numbers warrant, because generally speaking their educational standards are higher.

As you know, the cabinets in the various provinces have already been formed and the question of changing them does not arise at present.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

38. To B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya[1]

Allahabad
August 27, 1937

Dear Comrade,

I understand that your P.C.C. executive passed a resolution on the 17th August regarding the attitude of Congressmen towards the Congress ministry. This resolution rightly lays down that Congressmen should not condemn the conduct of the ministry in the press or on the platform. Further it goes on to say that no Congress committee, other than the Andhra P.C.C., should discuss the conduct of the ministry at its meeting and that doubts, if any, should be intimated to the Andhra P.C.C.

I do not quite understand what is meant by the latter part of this resolution. But it may mean that practically all discussion on public issues is not to take place in Congress committees or in the public, except by opponents of the Congress. This seems to me an unsafe policy. The position we have to face today is undoubtedly peculiar and full of difficulty. We are on the one hand an agitational organisation; on the other hand, we are indirectly responsible for some provincial governments. If we disapprove of those provincial governments, it is in our power, as the Congress, to remove them. If so, it is a little absurd for us to criticise our own creations. And yet if we suppress the public consideration of the problems before the ministries, we suppress all initiative in our local committees and primary members and this would lead to the winding up of a great deal of our mass activity. We have to build up our strength on the initiative of primary members and local committees. It is a little difficult to draw the line but I would like the fullest discussion on such

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-3(i)/1937-38, p. 213, N.M.M.L.

matters. But the discussion is to take place in a friendly and constructive way and to be in the nature of recommendations. If that background is kept, no harm can be done. I should like you and your committee to consider this aspect of the question. I fear that any tendency to suppress frank discussion will lead to undesirable consequences and bitterness. It might even lead to the very thing that we desire to avoid, that is a condemnation of ministries. We have to proceed on democratic lines and to develop both the freedom and the discipline of a democracy.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

39. The Right Perspective[1]

The formation of Congress ministries in six provinces has brought a breath of fresh air in the turgid and authoritarian atmosphere of India. New hopes have arisen, new visions full of promise float before the eyes of the masses. We breathe more freely for the moment at least. And yet our task is infinitely harder, more complex, and dangers and difficulties beset us at every step. We are apt to be misled by the illusion that we possess power, when the reality of power is not within our grasp. But the responsibility is ours in the eyes of the people and if we cannot discharge this to their satisfaction, if hopes are unfulfilled and visions unrealised, the burden of disillusion will also be ours. The difficulty lies in the inherent contradiction of the situation, in the vastness of India's problems demanding a far-reaching and radical remedy, which it is not in our power to give under present conditions. We have to keep the right perspective always before us, the objectives for which the Congress stands, the independence of India and the ending of the poverty of the people. We have at the same time to labour for smaller ends which bring some immediate relief to the masses. We have to act simultaneously on this double front.

If we are to achieve any success in this great enterprise, we must keep faith with our people, be frank with them, take them into our confidence, and tell them our difficulties and what we can hope to achieve and what

1. Allahabad, 30 August 1937. *The Leader*, 4-6 September 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 285-300.

we cannot, till greater power comes to us. We must examine the principles on which we stand, the anchor which holds us, for to forget them is to cast ourselves on a sea of pettiness and trivial detail, with no lighthouse to guide us on our path. We dare not grow complacent.

All our activities must therefore be guided by the objective of Indian independence. No Congressman, whether he is a minister or a village worker, can afford to forget this for then he will lose the right perspective which is essential for all of us. To achieve this independence we have to get rid of the new constitution, and so the minister, who functions under this very constitution, will always think in terms of replacing this by another, framed by the Indian people, through a constituent assembly. That thought, though it might not materialise in action for some time, should govern his outlook. The next major step in that direction will come when the attempt is made to thrust federation on us against our declared will. That attempt has to be combated, in the assemblies as well as outside, and we shall use all our strength to prevent this federation from functioning.

Those of us, who have to shoulder the burden of directing national policy and giving a lead to our people, have to think in even wider terms and to look often beyond the frontiers of India. Our own problems have to be seen in relation to international problems, the possibilities of great crises or wars. The Congress has laid down our policy in the event of such crisis developing, and if we are to abide by that policy, as we must, we must ever keep it in mind. The recent despatch of Indian troops to Shanghai is a reminder of how our resources are utilised for protecting imperialist interests. This exploitation of India will continue and grow unless we are vigilant. It might land us, almost unawares, in a war, not of our seeking, but in the interests of the very imperialism which we seek to remove from India. Congressmen must therefore not allow themselves to forget the international implications of what happens in India. Our ministries are not directly concerned with those larger events, but indirectly they may also come in contact with them and might be able to influence them.

The Congress has laid repeated stress on civil liberty and on the right of free expression of opinion, free association and combination, a free press, and freedom of conscience and religion. We have condemned the use of emergency powers and ordinance and special legislation to oppress the Indian people, and have declared in our programme that we shall take all possible steps to end these powers and legislation. The acceptance of office in the provinces does not vary this policy, and indeed much has already been done to give effect to it. Political prisoners have been released, the ban on numerous organisations removed, and

press securities have been returned. It is true that something still remains to be done in this respect, but this is not because of any lack of desire to take further steps on the part of Congress ministries, but because of extraneous difficulties. I trust that it will soon be possible to complete this task and to redeem our pledge in full by the repeal of all repressive and abnormal provincial legislation. Meanwhile the public should remember the peculiar difficulties under which the Congress ministers have to function, and not be overeager to cast the blame on them for something for which they are not responsible.

Civil liberty is not for us merely an airy doctrine or a pious wish but something which we consider essential for the orderly development and progress of a nation. It is the civilized approach to a problem about which people differ, the nonviolent way of dealing with it. To crush a contrary opinion forcibly and allow it no expression, because we dislike it, is essentially of the same genus as cracking the skull of an opponent because we disapprove of him. It does not even possess the virtue of success. The man with the cracked skull might collapse and die, but the suppressed opinion or idea has no such sudden end and it survives and prospers the more it is sought to be crushed with force. History is full of such examples. Long experience has taught us that it is dangerous in the interest of truth to suppress opinions and ideas; it has further taught us that it is foolish to imagine that we can do so. It is far easier to meet an evil in the open and defeat it in fair combat in people's minds, than to drive it underground and have no hold on it or proper approach to it. Evil flourishes far more in the shadows than in the light of day.

But what is good and what is evil may itself be a doubtful matter, and who is then to decide? Governments all over the world are not known to be particularly competent in giving such decisions, and official censors are not an attractive crowd. Yet governments have to shoulder a heavy responsibility and they cannot discuss the philosophy of a question when action is demanded. In our imperfect world we have often to prefer a lesser evil to a greater one.

For us it is not merely a matter of giving effect to a programme to which we have given adherence. Our entire approach to the question must be psychologically different. It cannot be the policeman's approach which has been so characteristic of the British Government in India, the method of force and violence and coercion. Congress ministries should avoid, as far as possible, all coercive processes and should try to win over their critics by their actions and, where possible, by personal contacts. Even if they fail in converting the critic or the opponent, they will make him innocuous, and the public sympathy, which almost invariably goes

to a victim of official action, will no longer be his. They will win the public to their side and thus create an atmosphere which is not favourable to wrong action.

But in spite of this approach and this desire to avoid coercive action, occasions may arise when Congress ministries cannot avoid taking some such action. No government can tolerate the preaching of violence and communal strife, and if this unfortunately takes place, it has to be curbed by having recourse to the coercive processes of the ordinary law. We believe that there should be no police censorship or banning of books and newspapers and the largest freedom should be given to the expression of opinions and ideas. The way we have been cut off from progressive literature from abroad by the policy of the British Government is a public scandal. We must get rid of these bans and censorships and nurture the free soil from which the life of the intellect can grow and the creative faculties can take shape. But still, it must be remembered that there may be exceptional cases of books and newspapers which are so manifestly of an obscene character or promote violence or communal hatred and conflict that some action to check them has to be taken.

A number of political prisoners, convicted for violent activities, have recently been released by the Congress ministries after long terms in prison. They have been welcomed by the public and by Congressmen, and we have been asked if this welcome did not signify an approval of violence. That question reveals an ignorance of public psychology and of the minds of Congressmen. The public and Congressmen alike welcomed them because of the mantle of long suffering that they bore. How many of them had spent their entire youth in prison, how many had faced death without flinching?

They had erred and pursued a wrong path, they had followed a policy injurious to the very cause they sought to serve, but they had paid for it in pain and torment and by long years in solitary cells. They had come to realise that the old policy of theirs was utterly wrong. And so the public welcomed them and friendly faces greeted them wherever they went. Has this not got a lesson for governments who imagine that by suppressing a number of individuals they solve a problem? They succeed thereby in intensifying that very problem, and public sympathy, which might well have been against the individual's deeds, turns to him because of his suffering.

The problem of the political prisoners in the Andamans is with us today and we see the amazing folly of the government in pursuing a policy which is creating a frenzy of excitement among the public. Thus they intensify the very atmosphere which they seek to remove.

The Congress ministries have rightly followed a contrary policy because they try to move with public approval, and seek to win over these brave young men, and create an atmosphere favourable to the working of the Congress programme. In that favourable atmosphere even wrong tendencies will wilt and wither away. Everybody of any consequence in Indian politics knows that terrorism is a thing of the past in India. It would have vanished even earlier but for the policy of the British Government in Bengal. Violence is not killed by violence, but by a different approach and by removing the causes which lead to it.

On these comrades of ours, who have been released after one or two decades of prison life, rests a special responsibility to be loyal to the Congress policy and to work for the fulfilment of the Congress programme. The foundation of that policy is nonviolence and the noble structure of the Congress has been built on that firm foundation. It is necessary that this should be remembered by all Congressmen, for it is even more important today than it has so far been. Loose talk encouraging violence and communal conflict is especially harmful at the present juncture and it might do grave injury to the Congress cause, as well as embarrass the Congress ministries. We are no longer children in politics; we have grown to man's estate and we have big work ahead, big conflicts to face, difficulties to overcome. Let us face them like men with courage and dignity and discipline. Only through a great organisation deriving its sanctions from the masses can we face our problems, and great mass organisations are built up through peaceful methods.

The basic problems of India relate to the peasantry and the industrial workers, and of the two, the agrarian problem is far the most important. The Congress ministries have already begun to tackle this, and executive orders have been passed to bring some temporary relief to the masses. Even this little thing has brought joy and hope to our peasants and they are looking forward eagerly to the greater change to come. There is some danger in this eager expectation of the paradise to come, for there is no immediate paradise in prospect. The Congress ministries, with the best will in the world, are incapable of changing the social order and the present economic system. They are bound down and restricted in a hundred ways and have to move in a narrow orbit. That indeed was, and is, a principal reason for our opposition to this new constitution. We must therefore be perfectly frank with our people and tell them what we can do and what we cannot do under present conditions. That very inability of ours becomes a powerful argument in favour of the vital change which will give us real power.

But meanwhile we have to go as far as we possibly can to give relief to them. We must face this task courageously and not be afraid of vested interests and those who would obstruct us. The real measure of the success of Congress ministries will be the change in the agrarian laws that they bring about and the relief they give to the peasantry. This change in the laws will come from the legislature, but the value of that change will be enhanced if the Congress members of the legislatures keep in close touch with their constituencies and inform the peasantry of their policies.

Congress parties in the legislatures should also keep in touch with Congress committees and with public opinion generally. By this frank approach they will get the friendly cooperation of the public and will be in touch with the realities of the situation. The masses will thus also be trained and disciplined in the democratic method.

A change in the land laws will bring some relief to our peasantry, but our objective is a much bigger one and for that the pre-requisite is the development of the organised strength of the peasantry. Only by their own strength can they ultimately progress or resist the inroads that vested interests might make on them. A boon given from above to a weak peasantry may be taken away later, and even a good law may have little value because it cannot be enforced. The proper organisation of the peasants in Congress committees in villages thus becomes essential.

In regard to the industrial workers, the Congress has not so far developed a detailed programme because the agrarian situation dominates the Indian scene. Some important principles have, however, been laid down in the Karachi resolution and in the election manifesto. Labour's right to form unions and to strike has been recognised and the principle of the living wage approved of. The policy recently outlined by the Bombay Government in respect of industrial workers has the general approval of the Working Committee. This policy is by no means a final policy or an ideal one. But it represents what can be attempted and done under present conditions and within a relatively short period of time. I have no doubt that if this programme is given effect to, it will bring relief to labour and, what is even more important, give it organisational strength. The very basis of this programme and policy is the strengthening of workers' organisations. The Bombay Government declare, in their statement of labour policy, that "they are convinced that no legislative programme can be a substitute for the organised strength of the working class, and till organizations of workers, run on genuine trade union lines, grow up in the various fields of employment, no lasting good can

accrue. Government are therefore anxious to assist in removing real hindrances in the way of the growth of the organisation and to promote collective bargaining between the employers and the employees. Means will be devised to discourage victimisation of workers for connection with a labour organisation and participation in legitimate trade union activity."

With regard to trade disputes, the Bombay Government propose legislation to ensure that no reduction in wages or other change in the conditions of employment to the disadvantage of the workers should take place till they have had sufficient time and opportunity for having the facts and merits of the proposed change examined and all avenues of peaceful settlement of the dispute explored, either through the channel of voluntary negotiation, conciliation or arbitration, or by the machinery of the law. A corresponding obligation would rest on the workers in respect of demands on their behalf. This means that before a trade dispute develops into open conflict there must be an intermediate stage of negotiation or arbitration. It does not mean that there is compulsory arbitration ending in an award which is finally binding on all parties whether they accept it or not.

Compulsory arbitration of this latter kind has always been opposed by labour for it strikes at the root of one of their most cherished rights—the right to strike. They also fear with considerable justification that in such a compulsory proceeding in a capitalist country, the weight of the state is likely to be cast on the side of the employers. And so they would be tied hand and foot, unable to use the only weapon which they possess and which a century of hard struggle has given them. That is not the present proposal for that would be contrary to the Congress policy of recognising the workers' right to strike. That right to strike is fully maintained, but an intermediate stage is provided for to explore avenues of settlement of the dispute. This policy, I am convinced, will be highly to the advantage of all concerned, and especially of labour. Our labour is weak and disorganized and unable to stand up for its rights. The long record of sporadic strikes is a record of almost continuous failure. It is true that even unsuccessful strikes sometimes strengthen the labour movement, but the reverse is still more true, and the present feeble state of our labour movement bears witness to this. For years past labour has been fighting a constant rearguard action against wage-cuts, almost helpless to prevent them. If some such legislation, as is proposed in Bombay, had been in existence, it would have been far more difficult to reduce wages and labour would have been in a much better position to bargain on equal terms with the employers, with probably a friendly public opinion to back it.

The strike is a powerful weapon, the only real weapon of labour. It has to be cherished and preserved and used in an organised and disciplined way with effect when necessity arises. To use it casually and sporadically is to blunt it and thus weaken labour itself. Behind the strike there must be a strong organization and public opinion. This organization seldom develops if there are frequent partial and sporadic strikes which fail.

Organization therefore is the primary need of labour, and all who wish well for labour must help in the building up of strong trade unions. They must remember that any form of violence, whether during a strike or at other times, is injurious to labour's interests. It drives the state into the opposing ranks and provokes far greater violence on the part of the states. It disorganises labour and irritates public opinion. In India it sometimes leads to communal violence which diverts attention immediately from labour's demands. Labour, above everything, cannot afford to be communal or to encourage communalism.

The recent strike[2] in Cawnpore had many lessons to teach us. Much was made in the newspapers of the firing that took place there and I was even misreported as having said that I approved of this firing. As a matter of fact I knew nothing of this firing at the time and I said so. Subsequently I found that this firing was a trivial and individual affair of little significance. An individual had fired in a moment of excitement but had fortunately caused no great injury to anyone. But what is worth noting is that occasional stone-throwing from the crowd was indulged in largely by communal elements who were out for trouble. They did not want a settlement. Even when a settlement was arrived at, these communal elements tried their utmost to upset it and prevent the workers from returning to the mills. Fortunately their influence was not great and the workers' leaders succeeded, after a hard night's work, in explaining the situation to the workers and getting them to resume work. This difficulty would not have arisen if the workers had been properly organised in a trade union.

The lesson, therefore, is: strengthen the organisation and beware of communalism and violence.

The workers and their leaders know well that the Congress ministries are friendly to them and wish to help them in every possible way. Circumstances beyond their control may prevent them today from going as far as they would like to. But, for the first time in its history, the

2. The strike, which had commenced in July 1937, was called off on 9 August following the appointment of a labour enquiry committee under the chairmanship of Rajendra Prasad.

workers' movement has friendly provincial governments in six provinces, and the chance of remedying some of its ills and developing its strength and organisation. They will injure their own cause by embarrassing these governments and withholding their cooperation from them.

Questions have arisen as to the attitude of Congress committees and Congressmen generally towards Congress ministries and the provincial governments where they function. Are they to criticise publicly or only privately or say nothing at all? What should our public activities be now in these six provinces?

It is manifest that the Congress is more important than any ministry. Ministries may come or go, but the Congress goes on till it fulfils its historic mission of achieving national independence for India. That achievement will come, not through ministries, but through the organised strength of the Indian people acting through the Congress. When that achievement comes in full measure the Congress might well cease to exist. Its task will be done. But till then it is the emblem of our strength and unity and national purposes, and we must strengthen it in every way. That strength comes from day to day service of the masses and by developing their initiative and habits of democratic discussion.

It is patent that for a Congress committee to condemn a Congress ministry is both improper and absurd. It is as if one Congress committee condemned another. The ministries, being the creation of the Congress, can be ended at any time by the Congress. If they are not good enough, let us end them or mend them. If we are not prepared to do so, then let us put up with them. Therefore condemnation is out of the question. If we think at any time that they ought to go, then we should take the proper steps under our constitution to bring this about.

On the other hand, for Congress committees and Congressmen to become silent and tongue-tied spectators of the doings of a Congress government would be equally absurd. Vital subjects, like the agrarian problem, will be considered by the legislatures, and all of us are, or should be, interested in these. Congress committees have every right to discuss them and send their suggestions and recommendations and popular demands to the provincial Congress committee concerned. That course should prove helpful both to the legislature and the P.C.C. Friendly criticism or suggestions should always be welcome; it is the friendliness and mode of approach that matter. Any attempt to embarrass the Congress ministries and put difficulties in their way will end in embarrassing ourselves. We are all soldiers in the same cause, comrades in the same great enterprise, and whether we are ministers or village workers, we should deal with each other in a spirit of cooperation

with a desire to help and not to hinder. But we have to be vigilant also and ever alert, and not permit complacency to creep in, deadening our public activities and gradually crushing the spirit of our movement. It is that spirit that counts and the public activity that results from it, for only that can supply the driving force to carry us forward to our goal, and only on that can we base a structure of democratic freedom. The small gains that may come to us will be of little consequence if they come at the cost of that spirit.

We aim at national independence and a democratic state. Democracy is freedom but it is also discipline, and we must therefore develop both the freedom and the discipline of democracy among our people.

40. To S. M. Joshi[1]

Allahabad
August 31, 1937

Dear Comrade,[2]

Your letter of the 27th. I do not know the details of the scheme of village panchayat that the Bombay Government has put forward.[3] So I cannot give an opinion. It is true, as you say, that an official panchayat may come in the way of the development of wider Congress panchayats. There is that risk and yet that risk has to be taken, I think. If we do not take it, somebody else does and he starts village panchayats on an utterly wrong basis. I should like these panchayats to be elected on as wide a basis as possible, possibly adult suffrage, and to be given some criminal and civil powers. Probably they will abuse this and there will be rival parties and the like. That cannot be helped. We have to pass through a stage like that. If these panchayats are formed on a more limited basis, then the Congress panchayat plays an important

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-37/1937, p. 401, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1904); joined the freedom struggle, 1930; founder-member of Congress Socialist Party, 1934; in detention, 1943-46; chief organiser, Rashtra Seva Dal, which was banned 1941-42 and 1947; general secretary, Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti, 1956-61; member, Bombay Assembly, 1952-62; chairman, Praja Socialist Party, 1963-64 and of Samyukta Socialist Party, 1964; member, Lok Sabha, 1967-71.
3. The scheme proposed that every village with a population of 2,000 or more should have a village panchayat of elected representatives.

role as representing the popular masses. It will probably capture the official panchayat. I agree with you that we must do nothing to weaken the Congress in the villages or elsewhere. And whether there are official panchayats or not we must have strong village Congress committees, because it is these that will have to function as our organs of struggle. It should be possible for us to keep these going on a mass basis even with the official panchayats. The whole thing depends so much on how it is worked out and what the outlook of the organiser is.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

41. To M. G. Natesa Chettiar[1]

Allahabad
August 31, 1937

Dear Sir,[2]
I am in receipt of your letter of the 27th August sending me a copy of a bill for the abolition of the Partible Permanently Settled Estates in Madras. I am unable to send you any detailed opinion on this subject without a closer study of the problem in Madras. I have no doubt that these big estates in Madras or elsewhere have to be abolished. But the exact manner of doing so deserves careful consideration. Not being conversant with the details of the land system in Madras, I cannot make any specific suggestion at present. Much will depend on the amount to be paid as compensation. It is desirable in any event that these matters should be considered fully.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-76/1937, p. 411, N.M.M.L.
2. Member, Madras Assembly. His bill sought the abolition of partible zamindaris in the Madras Presidency, as they were small holdings.

42. To Prime Minister, U. P. Government[1]

Allahabad
September 6, 1937

Dear Sir,

I am addressing you on the subject of the postal censorship of letters. If it is considered desirable or inevitable to continue this, I have no particular objection. I do not know how far this is a provincial matter or an all-India matter. It is quite possible that this postal censorship is controlled by all-India authorities. For the moment I am not writing to you about the principle of the thing.

My purpose in addressing you is a much more limited and smaller one. If letters have to be opened and regummed, I suggest that at least this should be done efficiently and with the least trouble to the addressee. At the present moment this opening and regumming is carried out in a stupid and clumsy way which almost invariably ends in attaching the letter to the envelope. It is difficult to get it out. Most of my letters, both private and official, come in this way and my colleagues have the same complaint. The postal censors have specialised in a particular kind of dark gum which spoils the envelope and the letter and by itself is not a thing of beauty. If it is possible to introduce a little efficiency and neatness about this unsavoury business, many of us would feel grateful.

I might add that it is a fairly common complaint that letters are not delivered at all and disappear in the post.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Home Department (Political) File No. 32/8/37, National Archives of India.

43. The Congress and the Labour Problem[1]

I have been anxious to meet and address the workers of Bombay because in this city the problem of workers is the most important one and

1. Speech at Bombay, 11 September 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 12 September 1937.

their conditions are fairly bad. The labour question of the city invariably assumes an all-India character.

I have dealings all over the country and the problem of the workers is not as important as the problem of the kisans, if one were to look at it from an all-India point of view. The kisans form the majority of the thirty five crores in India. So long as the problem of the kisans is not solved, it would be difficult to solve the other problems. If there are thousands of unemployed among the workers, there are lakhs among the kisans. In the interest of the workers themselves it is necessary that the kisan problem should be immediately tackled. If that is not solved, it would be like a heavy stone hanging round the neck of the workers.

I come from an agricultural province, where, except in Cawnpore, the acute problem is that of the kisans. There are several difficulties and impediments in political work, but since the acceptance of office by the Congress the difficulties of some Congress leaders have only increased. The Congress stands for Swaraj. It wants a democratic form of government. The power so far in India is in the hands of a few. That was so even before the British came to India. But since the last few years things have begun to change. There are very few countries in the world where the power is in the hands of a few. In Europe the monarchs have been removed but in India, with the advent of the British, the old rajas and maharajas flourish.

For the last several years an agitation has been going on for complete freedom for the country both through the Congress and otherwise. The common people always suffer if the political power is in the hands of a few, whether they are British or Indian. But if there is a real democratic system of government, no one suffers as the power is in the hands of the people in general. That is real Swaraj. Hence India can be said to have attained Swaraj only when the British control is removed from India. For that it is necessary to struggle, and for carrying on that struggle strength is a necessity which cannot be had by sitting quiet. For example, strike is a weapon of the workers against the oppression of the employers. If the strike is an organised and united one, the workers would succeed; if not, it might end in failure. The question now is that the people should have both strength and organisation. That is not an easy thing to achieve. If it is difficult to organise and unite all the workers of Bombay, then one can imagine the difficulty in organising and uniting thirty five crores of Indians. The Indian National Congress, which was at first in the hands of a few in the upper strata of society, has slowly spread its organisation and has today reached the masses of the country. After the advent of Mahatma Gandhi, the kisans began to take interest in the Congress and the

example, in the United Provinces the Congress ministry, which proposed to bring in some legislation to relieve the burden of taxation and indebtedness of the kisans, has issued orders that no prosecutions should be launched against the kisans till the legislation is passed. This does not mean that all their difficulties have been removed, but they certainly have been lessened. Who knows what will happen to the ministers? They were in jail some time ago and they might again be there some time later. They have accepted office under the orders of the Congress so that the people may gain strength for a bigger conflict with British imperialism.

I think that either the ministers would have to tolerate the interference for some time or break off immediately. If on a really big issue there is a conflict between the ministers and the Governor, then they will have to resign and go back to their old field of work. But, if in the meantime something can be done for the people, it should not be missed. Ministers cannot be expected to come and explain to the public what happens in the secretariat or between them and the Governor. It is a peculiar situation. Some people think that the Congress ministers are not making the necessary efforts to get this or that done. The ministers and a few others might be aware that attempts are being made, but they cannot come out and say what is happening till it is decided one way or the other.

I am the President of the Congress. I receive several complaints about the working of the Congress committees. Immediately I come to know about such things, I do not mention anything to the public, but I write to them first, then meet and discuss with them. The Congress ministers are there because the Congress has asked them to accept office. They will come out when they are asked to do so. For example, none of them accepted office till the Congress decided to accept office, though they were invited to form the ministries. I understand the difficulties in the way of the ministers. After all, they have to work with the same old machinery. The system is the same though the ministers are different. If the whole outlook has to be changed, it is essential to change the whole system and that can be done only when there is Swaraj. The Congress is the only organisation in the country which can fight the British Government. It contains men and groups who differ in ideas. The conditions of the workers cannot be changed to a desirable extent till the whole system of society undergoes a change. It is therefore necessary that the workers themselves should make efforts and strengthen their own organisational power.

The *communique* issued by the Bombay Government on the policy that they intend to follow regarding labour disputes shows that it is a

good one and there should be no objection to it. It after all retains the right of the workers to strike. The government only wants that a settlement, if possible, should be arrived at before any drastic action is taken by either side and the medium proposed is arbitration. As a matter of fact, the labour policy of the Government of Bombay will make the employers think many times before they decide upon a wage cut.

The Congress has declared that it will release all political prisoners, remove all restrictions and bans. It looks bad that it should not have done so even after two months of the assumption of office. It looks as if it has not kept up the promises it has given. The matter is small but the principle involved is really big. The Congress has not forgotten the promises it has made. Let it be clearly understood that the promises have not been fulfilled so far not for want of anxiety on the part of the Congress ministers but because there are difficulties in the way. There are three ways out of the difficulty. Either they try and get the things done or resign or come before the Working Committee or the All India Congress Committee and place all the facts and ask for advice. I am confident that one of the three things will be done very soon. But one cannot expect things to be made public during the negotiation stage as it would make matters worse. The constitution and the rules of the government are such that it takes a considerably long time before anything can be done.

There should be some legislation to restrict the hours of work of the workers and clerks in mercantile organisations. I have also explained the position of the Congress ministry in regard to non-removal of bans and restrictions. The B.P.C.C. had unanimously decided upon a resolution asking for the removal of all bans and restrictions on labour organisations and their leaders. There should be no restriction on expression of views, though no government can tolerate preaching of violence. In my view, preaching of Marxist views also should not be restricted. There should be freedom of thought and speech.

44. The Need for Public Cooperation[1]

Today we have Congress ministries in most of the provinces, and if the ministries are there, it is not due to any individual effort on anyone's part,

1. Speech at Bombay, 12 September 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13 September 1937.

but it is the result of the strength and organisation of the Indian people. It is for them, therefore, to see that the work of the Congress ministries is directed towards the furtherance of their main objective. Ministry or no ministry, the goal of the Congress is the achievement of self-government and all Congress work should be directed towards the furtherance of that goal.

If the Congress ministries acquit themselves creditably, it would be on account of the people's strength behind them. If they fail to achieve anything it would not be their fault but that of the people, for the ministries have the backing and strength of the organisation of the Congress behind them and they speak and act with that strength and support. The success or failure of their work depends on how far they have helped in building up and strengthening the vast Congress organisation and how far they have led it towards the goal of independence.

I have moved during the last election among millions of people and addressed hundreds of meetings, and I have done it with the sole objective of delivering the message of the Congress to thousands of homes. The election campaign was only a part of the Congress programme. The strength of the Congress lies in its work among the masses, and in so far as it can reflect the mind of the masses, it is the representative body it has become today. If the Congress Working Committee speaks with authority and asks them to do certain things, it is doing so with the awareness that it is reflecting the mind of the people.

How has the Congress developed that strength and prestige? The claim of the Congress to be the only representative body in India is based on solid work. During the two decades of constant and frequent trials of strength against the mightiest power of the world, the Congress has removed the inertia of the people, roused their conscience and made them imbibe the spirit of service and sacrifice which alone can take them nearer to the goal of independence. A hundred and fifty years of foreign domination has eaten up their vitals and it is no small measure of achievement to awaken the political consciousness among them. Today the whole of India is politically alert and has stood the trials of the struggle against the government. That is why the Congress can today claim to talk in the name of the people of India. We cannot afford to lose this. We must keep the organisation and training intact whatever line of action we may adopt.

If the Congress has formed ministries in the provinces, it is with the definite object of ending that objectionable feature of the new constitution, the federation, which gives the princes a very prominent place in shaping the destinies of the nation. These feudal overlords, with their strong position in the new federation, can in no way be of any help to

India's ultimate objective. With a proper perspective and clear ideology we are sure to succeed in our efforts at putting an end to the scheme of federation.

The Congress ministers have a very difficult task ahead of them. There are so many schemes which have to be implemented and which require finance. Yet, the major part of the provincial and central finances is being taken away by the military and the services. However, we have to ensure that this new move of office acceptance leads us towards our goal and also helps us in strengthening our organisation. In the circumstances, we should realise that it serves no useful purpose to criticise the ministers. We should remember that the Congress ministries have undertaken a heavy responsibility and with the cooperation of the public will acquit themselves creditably and justify the trust reposed in them. The demands and grievances of the public should be placed before them in a friendly way and the Congress committees would be willing to do their part in the matter.

Outside India we find a different trend altogether. Bombs and cannons are today busy suppressing the revolutionary urge in different parts of the world. In the Far East, Japan is out to crush China. We cannot keep our eyes shut to these incidents as these have a lesson for us also. Besides, we should see that our country is not made a party in any way in this struggle. Against our own desire, India's men and materials should not be used abroad in the name of the people of India as has been done recently under the pretext of safeguarding Indian interests in China. All these problems demand constant vigilance backed by the strength of organised public opinion. This the Congress alone can do and that is why our efforts should be directed towards the strengthening of this great body which can legitimately speak in the name of the people.

45. Interview to Congress Workers at Ahmedabad[1]

Question: Why did you send your daughter to a foreign country for education?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is advantageous to study the world from outside at present. Other countries like Britain, France, Germany, Russia are

1. 19 September 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 21 September 1937.

sending their students to foreign countries. If India becomes free I will send students to foreign countries at national cost.

Q: Do you not think there is a need for changing the Bombay ministry as it has been unable to release political prisoners?

JN: It is impossible to expect the Congress ministers to carry out the Congress programme immediately. We should cooperate with the Congress ministries and strengthen their hands; we shall recall the ministers if they cannot do anything, but they are our men, and we should not weaken them by publicly criticising them.

There are difficulties about the release of political prisoners as men forget their political object while committing a crime and subsequently declare themselves political prisoners.

When the ministers are negotiating with the Governor in this matter we should also have patience. The ministers will make a public declaration if they fail in these negotiations.

Q: Is it in order to form the Socialist Party within the Congress?

JN: I am a believer in socialism and an admirer of the new world which Russia has created, but our present aim is political freedom without which we cannot do anything. As to the forming of the Congress Socialist Party, I think any party can be established within the Congress and it can propagate its principles; but we should not fight among ourselves.

I earnestly appeal to the people of Gujarat to make the next Congress session a success and establish Congress committees in every village.

46. To the Mill Workers of Kanpur[1]

Dear Comrades,

For some time past there has been considerable excitement in Cawnpore. Sometimes there is a strike, sometimes the millowners close the

1. This was a letter written in Hindi and was first published in *Pratap*, a Hindi newspaper of Kanpur. Its English rendering was published in *The Leader* of 27 September 1937 under the dateline, Kanpur, 23 September. The Hindi text is not available.

mills and at other times some workers are dismissed which leads to trouble. This question, however, is not one which affects Cawnpore alone; its impact is being felt all over the province. And this is right because the problem of the workers and the question of their welfare is one which should affect everybody. I regret I could not come myself and take part in it. I have been touring about all over India as part of the heavy responsibility that lies on the country falls on me; and questions relating to the workers and peasants are cropping up everywhere. But wherever I went, Cawnpore was always in my mind and I was always anxious to get news about the labour trouble. I hope to be present among you soon and whatever help I can give you I shall give.

The problem of Cawnpore workers is a difficult one. But we should not forget that Cawnpore labourers number only 50,000 out of a total population of 50 millions in this province; and then millions of people form the peasantry. Therefore unless the problem of the peasantry is solved, we cannot drive out poverty and distress from the country. It is true that there is a close affinity between the problems of the peasants and the workers. If the former are in a sad plight, it would be difficult for the latter to improve their lot. After all, it is from the peasantry that most of the workers come, and a very large number among the peasants remain idle. That is why whenever there is a strike there are any number of peasants available to take the place of the strikers and the strike falls through. However strong may be the workers' organization, poverty and unemployment among the peasants are bound to act as a deadweight. Therefore it is essential to improve the lot of both as otherwise neither would be able to benefit much. This is the basic truth about the whole country and specially about our province which is predominantly agricultural. Only Cawnpore, which is an industrial centre, has a large labour population.

All these factors will have to be kept in mind by the provincial government. The workers should also remember them or they would fail to grasp the real significance of the situation and would never realize their weakness or their strength. It is only recently that the Congress ministries have come into power. They are trying to serve the people as much as they can by working along the lines of the Congress principles. You should not, however, forget that the real power is not in the hands of the ministries, and in many matters they are greatly fettered. The British Government is still functioning in our country and Swaraj is as yet a long way off. You must have noticed that the Congress ministry has full sympathy for you and has also tried to help you. But you should not forget its limitations. It cannot do things beyond its power, and if you try that it should do so, it might result in harm.

There is a sort of a tussle always going on between the workers and the millowners. Both see to their own advantage and it may be that their interests clash. Whichever is the stronger party will pull the weaker. Ultimately, we think that this tussle will end only when the workers get full compensation for their labour and when all the large concerns in the country are owned by the people. But this is a thing which cannot take place in a single city. It must take place in the whole country. Before this could happen it is essential that the government of the country must pass into the hands of the people. This is what is known as Swaraj. It is for this that the Congress has been fighting for so many years and has now been able to achieve some success. When we achieve Swaraj the way will be open to us and we shall manage our mills and factories and our land just as we want. But not till then.

I have referred to the constant tussle between the workers and the millowners. I am convinced that the greater the strength of the workers the better would they be able to improve their lot. But in what does this strength lie? It lies in organization. The first thing, therefore, that the workers should do is to organize a mazdur sabha or a trade union. Without this they will always remain weak. You all know that for long the Cawnpore mazdur sabha remained a weak body. As a result the workers also lacked strength. Today, the mazdur sabha is strong and it does not insist on swelling the membership. But many other things are necessary for it and if it lacks strength, as it often happens, it may lose in a fight and suffer loss. Perhaps you have all heard that ten years ago there was a large organization of workers in Bombay.[2] Due to frequent strikes that organization grew weak and has not been able to recover completely. If it had not supported those frequent strikes, it would have consolidated itself and would have been today a most powerful organization. What is true of Bombay is also true elsewhere. The difficulty is that the workers are so impatient that if they acquire a little strength they think they can achieve everything. They forget that powerful forces are operating against them which they cannot successfully fight. The result is that they lose, and then they get discouraged, grow weak, and all their enthusiasm ebbs away. We should always measure our strength and go only as far as we can. There we should stop and gather more strength and then again march forward.

I am stressing these basic things so that you should all ponder over them seriously and then decide. I find that you have gained in strength

2. The large membership which the Mumbai Girni Kamgar Union had in 1929 had fallen considerably by 1930.

and are full of enthusiasm. But I am afraid you may do certain things which may weaken you and all enthusiasm may then cool down. There is a danger of being involved in trivialities and forgetting the essential matters.

After all, how is it that you have gained strength? There is a new feeling in the air due to the Congress success and the coming into power of the Congress ministry. Since then a change has taken place in the relations between the people and the government. This has also been realized by the millowners and their attitude towards you has changed. Many of your demands were conceded by them and to consider your basic demands a committee of inquiry was set up. All these things naturally helped in increasing your strength and you got an opportunity to improve your condition. You have now to seize this moment and get the maximum out of it. A single false step on your part might mean that you may lose the opportunity and then who knows when it may come again? Do not forget that if you adopt wrong tactics then even the provincial government will not be able to help you.

The first thing that you have to do now is to strengthen the mazdur sabha and organize yourselves. Secondly, you must make all necessary preparations for the inquiry committee. If you get yourself entangled in small matters and are not fully equipped, the committee will not be able to give a proper decision. The millowners will be ready with all the material and will argue their case very well but you will not be able to do so. And if you continue to be involved in side-issues and the inquiry committee, as a consequence, is not able to function, then there is the risk of your spoiling the case.

It is said that the millowners did not observe the terms of the settlement. I am, of course, not aware of the situation at Cawnpore but this is likely. Even then the question arises: what are you going to do? Should you, in a moment of excitement, stray away from the right path and forget it? If you do so, it would not be wisdom and you will suffer. Of course this will please your enemies.

After a hundred years' constant struggle, at last the workers have achieved two of their objectives. One is the right to form a trade union and the other is the right to strike. The workers cannot forego these two rights, as without them they would be powerless and weak. But the weapon of strike is such that it should be used only on special occasions. It loses its edge if it is resorted to too frequently. Workers should have recourse to strike only when all other avenues have been exhausted, and the mazdur sabha, after much deliberation, decides to do so. If the strike is to take place at the instance of one single individual or a group, how can you have any organization? And if

this were to happen every day what effect would it produce? Either it would result in the millowners declaring a lock-out making the workers to starve after some time, or the millowners, finding that no settlement was possible, might put up a stubborn resistance. How long would the workers in that case be able to continue the strike? In such a case it is also likely that the workers may forfeit public sympathy without which they cannot expect to succeed. You all know to what extent the Congress and the Cawnpore public have helped you, and without that help you could not have done much.

It is often complained that the millowners try to rid themselves of such workers who take particular interest in the mazdur sabhas. This complaint is probably true and the millowners resort to such practices in every country. The workers have also been opposing it everywhere because if this practice is not checked the workers cannot organize themselves. But at the same time the right to dismiss a worker who does not do his work well should be conceded to the mill manager. No one should question this right. No institution or mill can function properly without discipline. Wherever the trade unions are well organized, whether it is in Russia or in England, this holds good. It is not desirable for everyone to interfere in a matter relating to the retention in service of any particular worker. But where the mazdur sabha feels that injustice has been done to a particular worker, it should have the right to bring the case to the notice of the public, and, if necessary, hold an inquiry. In such matters, if some principle is involved, recourse may even be had to a strike. This should, however, be done after giving due notice and where there is no other way open for redress. Any show of impatience can only make matters worse and the workers may be involved in unnecessary strikes and difficulties. Therefore when such incidents happen there should be a protest, followed by an inquiry, and whatever is possible under the circumstances should be done, and then, if need be, the mazdur sabha should meet and deliberate what to do next. Generally, this is how the workers should act. But at Cawnpore, in the present circumstances nothing should be done to precipitate matters as it might prove harmful. Perhaps the inquiry committee itself will decide about the steps to be taken if a worker has been illegally dismissed. Some solution, legal or otherwise, of this question must be found out. It is necessary for the workers to collect all relevant material on this point to be laid before the inquiry committee.

The workers should not forget that, after all, their wages are paid out of the profits made by the mills and factories. If the work in a mill is bad, production is less, then the margin of profit is also proportionately reduced. In such circumstances either the mill will have to close

down or much of its burden will fall on the workers. Whatever, therefore, is injurious to the working of a mill ultimately proves detrimental to the interests of the workers. In England the workers get much higher wages than in India because they work more and their output is also much better. Therefore, it becomes easier to pay them higher wages and to provide them with many other amenities. You should not do anything which might interfere with the smooth working of the mill or cause any obstruction. When you are compelled to go on a strike then all should join it, but before that all efforts should be made to solve the issue and other interests should not be allowed to interfere.

I would like to draw the attention of the workers particularly to one thing because I feel that without it they cannot make much progress. In our work and in our organization we can achieve better results if we are nonviolent and peaceful. There are people who believe that they can terrorise and browbeat others and force them to concede their demands by threats or by violence. Such people are living in a fool's paradise and are completely deluded. If violence is resorted to, it cannot be expected that the government will not interfere and the army or the police will not be called. The workers should remember that the government is very powerful and will put down violence by violence and that the workers will be subdued in no time. This will have a very bad effect on the workers' organization as a whole. It will become weak and the attention of the public will be diverted from the reasonable demands of the workers to their quarrels.

You all know the nature of the fight the Congress had to wage against the government during the last seventeen years, and how a strong organization has been built up in the country. From the Himalayas to the Cape Comorin, in every village and town, the power and influence of the Congress have been felt. All this has been achieved by nonviolent methods and not through brickbats, lathis or guns. Without overlooking the principles, you should see what can be done in the present circumstances to strengthen your power. All sensible people in India know that we can fight our battle of freedom only in this nonviolent and peaceful manner and it is in this way that we can organize and make ourselves strong. All other methods are childish and betray ignorance of our present circumstances and world conditions. You cannot organize the masses except through peaceful means and a strike which is accompanied by violence can never succeed. You must grasp all these things well because your success or failure will depend on them. The Congress has always helped you and will continue to help you, but the Congress cannot cooperate with you if violence is resorted to. This will lead to a parting of ways.

I have addressed to you a very long letter. Most of the night was passed in writing and now the day is about to dawn. I wanted to give expression to my feelings. My feelings about Cawnpore are mixed ones. I rejoice to think that you have gained in strength, but at the same time I grow anxious lest you should take a false step, and all this enthusiasm might die down and whatever little you have gained might also disappear. If you follow the right path and stick to it, then you will gain in strength and the condition of Cawnpore workers will also improve. Everything, therefore, depends on you. All that we can do is to give you advice or help, but it is for you to do the work, and the success or failure depends on you. I have deliberately avoided mentioning the millowners and their shortcomings at length. I am addressing this letter only to you, and it is to you, therefore, that I appeal. It is not the mistakes or faults of others that harm us but we suffer due to our own faults and mistakes. I have told you to organize yourself for therein lies your strength. You should not forget that only recently the millowners, after seeing your organized strength, have formed an employers' association. You have yet to encounter great difficulties and you have a long way to go. Do not allow yourself to be deluded into the belief that you have already reached the goal.

here is also serious.[3] Our province is in a state of ferment for various reasons and all manner of difficulties are arising which have to be handled quickly. Then so much accumulation of work here. I feel awfully tired and repeated long journeys by train are exhausting. However I shall consult Kripalani and wire to you from Allahabad tomorrow.

I have your letter of the 19th. I note the rough figures you mention about collections. As for the general collections for Congress purposes, certainly you should keep the major portion in Gujarat. But it is customary for a proportion of my tour collections to go to the A.I.C.C. funds. I hope you will agree to this. What this proportion should be I should like to have your advice about. 25% seems to me fair.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. On 1 September 1937, observed as kisan day, a resolution was passed in hundreds of villages in U.P. demanding the abolition of the zamindari system. This led to the harassment of Congress workers by the zamindars.

48. The Peasant Problem[1]

The outstanding problem of India is the peasant problem. All else are secondary. Unless we can give substantial relief to the peasantry and remove their burdens all our other activities are of little avail. The coming of the Congress ministries has given new hope and new life to our peasantry. On the other hand, the big zamindars and taluqdars, specially in Bihar and the United Provinces, are organising to resist this long deferred justice to the peasantry. We see here the class struggle in action not on the side of the peasantry so much but on the part of the big zamindars. But we must not be diverted from our path. We must remain true to our pledges and give satisfaction and fulfilment to the hopes of the peasantry.

1. Message sent on 27 September 1937 to *Arjun*, a Hindi newspaper published from Delhi. A.I.C.C. File No. P-9/1937, p. 201, N.M.M.L.

Party.[2] This circular raises important issues of principle and practice and I have therefore written on the subject to the secretary of that party as well as to the provincial Congress committee. I enclose a copy of the letter[3] sent to the party secretary.

Apart from the intrinsic importance of this matter we have to consider it in another aspect. Is the Congress organisation going to become a camp follower of the government carrying out directions issued by the local government, or is it to retain its independence? Obviously there must be the fullest cooperation between a Congress ministry and the government and a provincial Congress committee. But it seems to me that not only the P.C.C. must continue to function independently but should also take the initiative in Congress matters. It is open to the P.C.C. to make recommendations to the government and to carry on such agitational or other activities as it thinks desirable. The government as such should not interfere with the activities of the P.C.C., though of course individual members of it have every right, as members of the P.C.C., to give advice and help in shaping policy. Congressmen should feel that the provincial Congress committee is a more vital organ of theirs than the provincial government. The provincial government may have to resign but the P.C.C. goes on.[4]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. A circular letter of the Congress Party in the Madras Assembly directed the Congress committees in the Madras Presidency not to enrol employees of local bodies as Congress members as that would constitute a violation of official rules.
3. Not printed.
4. C. Rajagopalachari in his reply wrote: "The fight here is between the Justice Party and the Congress. It would lead to utter demoralisation if the services under local bodies took sides. It was impossible conscientiously to permit the employees of the local boards, therefore, to become members of the Congress Party simply because we were in office. It would be a scandal...."

51. On the Working of the Congress Ministries[1]

The last meeting of the A.I.C.C. was held in Delhi six or seven months ago. At that meeting, among other important subjects, the most important was the one which related to office acceptance. The country had been agitated over that issue for long. There were different points of view. Eventually it was decided by the Working Committee to accept office provided we were assured that the Governors would not interfere with the constitutional activities of the ministers. Then we did not get all we wanted. After some exchange of views through press statements between the Congress leaders and the authorities concerned, both in England and India, the Working Committee decided to authorise the Congress representatives to accept the responsibilities of office in the six provinces in which the Congress Party was in majority. Since then the Congress has also formed the ministry in the North West Frontier Province. This decision of the Working Committee was not in full consonance with the Delhi formula put forward by the A.I.C.C.,[2] and as such it will be placed before you for ratification.

My personal view was against office acceptance and so with your permission I want to give my views on the new experiment after it has been worked for the last few months. In my opinion, office acceptance has benefited us. The country is pulsating with a new life and new vision. As Congress President I go about in different parts of the country, and as such have ample opportunities of seeing and feeling how the kisans, peasants, labourers and traders are feeling as a result of the new experiment. Wherever Congress governments have been established, people are heaving a sigh of relief. But we have to see how far we have advanced towards our real objective or whether some weaknesses have entered into our scheme of things. As regards the work of the Congress ministers, my own idea is that they have done a lot of good. In doing a lot of little good things they might forget the bigger objective. Good work is good in itself and interests us. But sometimes it also diverts our attention from the really big issues. I do not say that this

1. Speech at the A.I.C.C. session in Calcutta, 29 October 1937. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 30 October 1937, and *The Hindustan Times*, 30 October 1937.
2. See pp. 69 and 105.

has been the case. But there is always the danger. It is up to this House to be vigilant and save us from that danger.

The Congress ministers are in very great difficulty. So far our life has been a life of struggle against the British raj and as such it has been an agitational life. That struggle is still with us, and will continue till complete independence is achieved. But with new changes, new responsibilities have devolved upon us. Ministers are our own men and are members of the A.I.C.C.

I want to tell you what I feel in my heart of hearts. May be you also feel like me, with the only difference that I have opportunities of knowing more things than you have. We are all anxious and restless to get out of slavery and to be free. Unfortunately, in our country so many problems have got to be solved, due to the folly and indifference of our rulers who have allowed most essential problems to be accumulated. At times, I feel upset that our pace in the matter of improving the lot of the masses has been slow so far. I do not criticise our ministers. I feel sympathy for them in the uphill task that confronts them. But this does not mean that people who still find their lot not improved appreciably should not voice their grievances. Our masses have been oppressed, suppressed and downtrodden for ages past. They could not speak about or discuss the matters which affected their interests adversely. It is the Congress which created and fostered the democratic spirit in them with the result that they have now started to feel and agitate about their grievances. This is a necessary concomitant of the spirit of democracy which has been inculcated by the Congress. That spirit has to be encouraged, strengthened and used on the right lines. That being so, it would be wrong to suggest that the Congress ministers should not be criticised and that the people should keep tongue-tied. If that were so, why did we assemble here? But having said all this, I feel that there should be a proper appreciation of the handicaps that our Congress ministers have got to labour under in the initial stages and that every criticism should be based on weighty reasons and must be of a constructive nature. Criticise the Congress ministers you must whenever there is sufficient justification for it. They are your creatures. Today, if you so desire, they will come out. They are there not at the sweet will and pleasure of the Governor. They owe allegiance to you and the Congress organisation. If this view is taken, then your criticism should prove helpful and friendly because it would be done with the desire to strengthen their hands and not to weaken them.

Our workers have been talking a lot about the Muslim mass contact move on the part of the Congress. There is a lot of misconception

about it. We do not, in our calculations and scheme of things, discriminate between Hindus and Muslims as such. Our mass contact move has succeeded beyond the most optimistic calculations, so much so that today the Congress claims a far larger number of Muslims in its fold than the Muslim League can do. Only recently a vigorous attack was launched on the Congress by Mr. Jinnah's Muslim League at Lucknow. But we need not worry about such baseless insinuations. A few days ago at Bijnor, there had been a straight contest between the Congress and the League, and you will hear shortly that the Congress nominee has succeeded with a thumping majority.

Fortunately, we meet here in this province of Bengal which has got a tremendous record in our political life, a record of great sacrifice, a province which has been in the forefront of our national struggle for all these generations. Yet it is our misfortune that you are not sharers in the freer atmosphere and feeling of exhilaration that the Congress ministries have brought in other provinces. You have yet to put up with the old ways of repression. You have the same old heavy atmosphere. You have yet to think of problems, which in other provinces are past problems, where they can now face newer problems. But you have to spend yet so much of your energy on the problems of repression, of detenus and political prisoners, banning of Congress organisations in Midnapore and Chittagong, and so many things. You are oppressed and naturally your major problem is still how to get out of these.

I wish to assure you that in those provinces where the Congress ministries are functioning there is no forgetting of what is happening in Bengal. There is anxious realisation of this state of affairs and a deep-seated desire to do something which might be of help to you because obviously we hang together.

It may be that the British Government, while introducing provincial autonomy, sought to increase provincialism, to introduce differences between various provinces, so that they may not engage themselves so much in the problems of all India. Be that as it may, we have certainly based our national movement on the fullest and completest freedom of India, and it is inconceivable that we would think of half a dozen provinces and forget the rest. It is impossible. If Bengal is pulled down, the whole of India is pulled down, the rest of India is pulled down for the time being. One affects the other. We cannot consider these problems in isolation and, therefore, the problems that are worrying Bengal are not the problems of Bengal but the problems of India, in which the whole of India has not merely an academic interest but a live interest. I hope that desire will bear fruit.

I hope you have seen in today's paper a statement issued by the Working Committee in regard to the *Bande Mataram* song.[3] You must have seen, in some of the newspapers, big headlines expressing resentment at the Working Committee's statement. I want to tell you, first of all, that this statement was drawn up by the Working Committee after most anxious and prolonged thought and after consultation with a large number of people that we could get into touch with.

I want to tell you that we did not consider this matter in Calcutta only but for weeks past we had been considering this matter by correspondence and otherwise, by consultation specially with leading friends in Bengal and elsewhere.

Why did we consider it? Not because objection was taken to it by some—the Congress is strong enough to fight that objection—but because having carefully examined it we felt that in regard to one or two matters, legitimate objections might be taken. We have to consider it from an all-India point of view, because we are the All India Congress. We cannot think in terms of provincial groups or religious sections. We have to look at it from an all-India point of view. There are certain words in it which certainly can be taken objection to by some. If so, we have no sufficient answer to give to those who object. We do not very much mind the objections of some people who do it just for the sake of it. But we wanted to consider this problem purely rationally.

Therefore the first thing I wish you to realise is that this was done after most careful consideration—and in a small way after months of consideration—and certainly after some days of intensive thought and consideration. Nothing was done rapidly or in a hurry. Of course long consideration does not justify a false or wrong act.

But I want you to read carefully the statement that the Working Committee has issued and I beg of the editors and leader-writers of newspapers to read it very carefully, because I feel that the statement reached many of the newspapers in the small hours of this morning. When they got it probably they did not have much time to read it carefully, and I do say—not in a spirit of challenge—that there is not a single word in the statement to which anybody can take any objection.

You will see that the major part of the statement is meant to be placed before the public—and we are thinking in terms of all India, not merely the public of Calcutta or of Bengal, but thirty five crores of India. We have to deal with a large number of people who do not know the background of the *Bande Mataram* song. They have heard it and they

3. See p. 236.

have liked it and a sentiment has grown round it. Few know how it arose and when it arose. Because of this ignorance of the background many honest misconceptions have arisen about it.

You will see that three-fourths or more than half of the statement shows the tremendous significance of the *Bande Mataram* song in the national movement and national life of India. We have tried to show how it has become a part of our national life which it is impossible for any resolution of anybody to take out. For the first time in the Congress history we have dealt with this song more or less officially. It had never been done before—in spite of the tremendous sentiment and reverence that have grown up—so far as I know, by the A.I.C.C. and much less by the Congress; so that for the first time we have recognised officially the place of the *Bande Mataram* song, which has been used so often. The *Bande Mataram* song, really speaking, has now become a far greater part of our national movement than it was at any time before. At the same time we have tried to point out that a part of the song, the first two stanzas, are such that it is impossible for anyone to take objection to, unless he is maliciously inclined. We have recognised that in the rest of the song there is ideology, imagery, allegory, etc., which people of various groups cannot put up with. Remember, we are thinking in terms of a national song for all India. Therefore if there is an ideology which various groups in India cannot honestly and sincerely accept, then it is an improper ideology for a national song.

I, for myself, cannot really enthuse over an ideology, Hindu or Muslim. As soon as the ideology comes, I forget *Bande Mataram*. People's mind is diverted to other thoughts and it introduces a sense of confusion in their minds, since their attention is diverted to allegories, phraseologies and ideologies which do not suit other people. The latter part of the song is seldom used in the rest of India. We have in our statement recognised the existing practice and at the same time removed certain misapprehensions which were justified. I think the Working Committee's statement is a good statement and a right statement. To all our friends, who have seen some danger in it, I say that there is no danger in it and it is not disparagement of the song that has grown up in our national movement.

52. On the Congress Attitude to Sedition[1]

Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code has been referred to, and it has been said that the repeal of the sedition section has been the objective of the Congress. Many of us have taken some pride in stating before the courts of law that we are seditious, that we intend to be seditious, and that we shall be seditious. So it would be perfectly absurd for anyone connected with the Congress to take any action for sedition as such. But I do not think that this House, however much it may desire, can say or lay down that under no possible circumstances can a Congress ministry or any other ministry refuse to take action against any individual. We can easily imagine circumstances in which the state, constituted as at present, is forced to take action in the case of violence against the state or in the case of communal violence which sometimes occurs in this country. So we should be clear about this when we say that no Congress ministry has any business to launch prosecution for sedition. We cannot say straightway that even when the question of violence is involved, even when the whole policy of the Congress should be to avoid prosecution, even though a person has offended against the law, the right approach to this problem for the Congress ministry should be a nonviolent approach.

We are wedded to nonviolence and we have to carry that approach into our state actions. Therefore our approach, even when a wrong appears to be done, should be a nonviolent one. Yet there may be circumstances when it may be inevitable that, for fear of a greater wrong, the state might have to take action. We cannot, I submit, lay down that no action can ever be taken. We cannot conceive of a free India, when it is invaded by foreign aggression, not meeting it with all the strength it commands. Similarly, internal commotions may take place. When the day comes when force is eliminated, I hope the state will also eliminate it because the people will then be so advanced that they will be able to cooperate with each other and do without the help of the state. We have been actuated by high ideals. We can take pride in that we, as an organization, have built them up. We want to show to others that our idea of functioning as a government is different from the idea of other people.

1. Speech at the A.I.C.C. session, Calcutta, 30 October 1937, during the discussion on the policy which the Congress ministries should adopt in meeting sedition and violence. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 31 October 1937.

53. The A.I.C.C. and the Congress Ministries[1]

The recent meeting of the A.I.C.C. in Calcutta was the first meeting held since the formation of Congress ministries in various provinces. Inevitably, the work of these ministries came up for discussion and review. Such a review is, in the nature of things, beset with difficulties. These difficulties increase because we have no rules or conventions for the purpose. We are on new ground, and though we might adjust ourselves to it in course of time, we may not pitch our tents on it, for our resting place is yet afar and we must ever keep moving towards our objective. It is clear that Congress ministers have to follow Congress principles and to govern themselves by the general directions issued by the Congress or the All India Congress Committee or the Working Committee. It is also clear that it is not possible or desirable to interfere in the day to day work of the ministries, or to call for explanations from them for administrative acts, unless some important principle is involved. Even when such explanations are necessary, it is not always easy to discuss them in a public forum like that of the All India Congress Committee. We have thus to strike a mean to keep the control of the policy in the hands of the A.I.C.C. and not to interfere too much in administrative matters. Where such intervention is considered desirable, the Working Committee should make inquiries and, if necessary, report to the A.I.C.C.

Our past history has been agitational history and we have developed as a semi-revolutionary organisation. By our day to day activities and especially through the great mass movements that the Congress has undertaken, we have released an enormous amount of energy among our people. That energy represents the strength of the nation, provided it is not frittered away but is directed in a disciplined way to consciously held objectives. To some extent it was directed in the past to constructive activity but the background was largely agitational. That background has still to remain as our struggle for freedom is likely to bring in the future severe conflicts with British imperialism. Nevertheless, the acceptance of office and responsibility and the formation of Congress ministries have changed considerably the aspect of our work. Our general attitude to these ministries cannot be agitational in the old sense of the word; we cannot agitate against ourselves. We may and should,

1. Allahabad, 4 November 1937. *The Leader*, 8 November 1937. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 78-85.

when necessity arises, criticise them or press them to further the Congress programme, but that criticism must be friendly and coöperative criticism. Any unfriendly or hostile attitude to them must inevitably react on the Congress organization and weaken it. Hostile criticism must logically lead to the changing or the ending of the ministry. Circumstances might arise when this is necessary, and when this happens we shall take the step deliberately and after full consideration, realizing the consequences which will flow from our action. To indulge in any action on the spur of sentiment and without thought of the consequences is likely to lead us to trouble, out of which it may be difficult to extricate ourselves.

It is not an easy matter for the Congress organisation, with its vast membership and past traditions, to adapt itself to new conditions. Contradictions and conflicts are inherent in the situation, yet perhaps we may tone them down to some extent with some more experience and adjust ourselves to the new scheme of things. But that scheme has no permanence in it for our very acceptance of office is limited and circumscribed by our pledge to combat and end the new constitution, and to produce the conditions and the strength in the nation for a constituent assembly to meet and frame the constitution for an independent India.

Our primary objective is thus, and must remain, to increase the strength of the Congress and through it of the nation. In this task, unless there is the fullest cooperation between the Congress organisation and the Congress ministries, difficulties will continually crop up and a measure of failure might also attend our efforts.

The ministries are in an unenviable position. They are tied up in many ways by the constitution and their resources are limited and largely mortgaged in favour of British imperialist and other interests. They have to function through permanent services which cannot be expected to get out of their old ruts and traditions and get in tune with the new order, however much they might loyally carry out the directions issued to them. With all these and other handicaps, the ministers have to face tremendous tasks, the legacy of a long period of inaction or wrong action on the part of previous provincial governments. Urgent and vital problems shout for solution and the very spirit we have evoked in the masses demands such a solution. Delay on our part in effectively dealing with these problems irritates many of our own people who have no clear conception of the difficulties and obstructions in our path, but who are naturally eager to get things done. Demands also come from a host of individuals for petty personal attention or to remove individual grievances and they cannot always be ignored. Administrative

work absorbs a great deal of time. And so the big things are thrust into the background, and this again gives rise to complaints.

It is an embarrassing position for our ministers. On the one hand, they have to face the inherent contradictions and obstructions which flow from the present constitution; on the other, they are responsible to and have to satisfy all manner of people and committees. They are responsible to their electorates, to their party in the legislature, to the provincial Congress committee and its executive, to the Working Committee, and to the All India Congress Committee. Even local Congress committees think it their function to have their say in the work of the provincial government. All this sounds very complicated and confusing, yet in reality it is not so. What is the responsibility to the electorate? That electorate plumped for the Congress candidates not because of their individual merits, but because they represented the Congress and its programme. Nothing could be clearer than this. The vote was for the Congress. Every single Congress member of the legislature today, if he was unwise enough to backslide and seek election again in opposition to the Congress, would be defeated by a Congress candidate, whoever he might be. It is to the Congress as a whole that the electorate gave allegiance, and it is the Congress that is responsible to the electorate. The ministers and the Congress parties in the legislatures are in their turn responsible to the Congress and only through it to the electorate. The Congress, though it functions through a host of committees, is essentially one and has one basic policy. There are thus no conflicting allegiances for Congress ministers or Congress parties in the legislatures. That basic policy is laid down by the annual session, and it is interpreted and implemented by the A.I.C.C. The Working Committee, as the executive of the Congress, is charged with the carrying out of this policy.

The A.I.C.C. should therefore consider the broad lines of policy and discuss questions of principle. The Working Committee can, whenever necessity arises, go into greater detail and review the work of the ministries. For the A.I.C.C. to discuss the details of administrative action is obviously not possible, for the A.I.C.C. is a public forum and such acts cannot be discussed with advantage in public by large committees. It would be unfair to the ministers to ask them to make public statements about all the details of their administrative work.

To some extent this procedure would apply to the provincial Congress committees also. It is necessary and desirable that the ministers should keep in the closest touch with the provincial committees, for these committees are the channels through which they reach the electorate. If they lose touch with the P.C.Cs, they lose touch with the Congress

organisation and with the electorate. But the P.C.C. is too big a committee for any detailed discussion, or for any criticism of the ministers to be effectively met by it. The executive of the P.C.C. however is a small, compact body and the ministers should take this more into their confidence. We have been directed to coordinate our activities outside the legislatures with those inside. This can only be done effectively if the P.C.C. executive is in close touch with the ministries. The P.C.C. should also give publicity to the achievements of the ministries and to their future programme.

Local Congress committees have every right to make suggestions to and even friendly criticisms of ministers, but anything savouring of hostile criticism by them should be avoided. Such local committees are seldom in possession of all the facts, and it would make the position of the ministers intolerable if we were to require them to appear before local committees and furnish explanations to them. If a local committee has complaints or doubts, it should refer to the provincial executive, which, in its turn, in important matters, might make a reference to the Working Committee. But ministers should of course get into touch with local committees wherever they go and through them with the views of Congressmen in general and the public.

The ministries have especially to face two sets of problems: those relating to civil liberty, and those appertaining to agrarian and labour conditions. The latter have obviously the larger mass significance, and yet the former have importance as civil liberty is the basis of all progress. For us the long deprivation of many forms of civil and personal liberty has given it a special importance, and to remove the obstructions to it is our first objective. There is strong feeling in the country on this point and the Calcutta meeting of the A.I.C.C. gave expression to it. The strangling of Bengal, with her detenus and internments and externments, and bans on organizations, and ticket-of-leave persons and hosts of political prisoners, oppresses the whole of India. Perhaps one of the most potent methods of helping our comrades in Bengal is to have a clean sheet in regard to civil liberty in the provinces controlled by Congress ministries. Already the contrast between the two is great. The wider the gap, the more we demonstrate the futility and incompetence of the policy of repression.

We have stood for civil liberty and made it one of our fundamental rights. As a people claiming to be progressive we must necessarily do so as this is the only correct policy. But we have another important reason for doing so—our policy of nonviolence. That policy was deliberately adopted by us in our struggle for freedom and we have stuck to it through all these years. Equally so must we adhere to it and apply

it to those who may be opposed to us or critical of us when we control the provincial government. Even the wrong-doers must be approached nonviolently, for a violent suppression of wrong-doing does not end it. Thus a Congress ministry must avoid, as far as it possibly can, the use of the coercive apparatus of the state. It should approach the wrong-doer and try to win him over and point out the evil consequences of his act. Even if this approach is not successful, coercive action should be avoided, unless dangerous consequences are feared.

It is clear that, in spite of every desire to avoid it, coercive action may become necessary in particular cases. This will not be for sedition as such, for sedition is no crime for a Congressman, and all of us may be considered guilty of it in varying degrees. Violence or dangerous incitement to violence and communal strife cannot, however, be tolerated by any state. Even in such cases the personal approach should be a prerequisite, and our constant endeavour should be to create an atmosphere which does not encourage the violent approach to problems. Violent suppression of individuals or groups or ideas militates against this atmosphere and so, though it might be momentarily successful, it adds to the difficulties. Thus not only our policy and pledges but also expediency tell us that the widest extension of civil liberty is desirable. Congress ministries will have to go to the furthest limit possible in removing present restrictions and the laws which impose them.

54. To the Prime Ministers of the Congress Majority Provinces[1]

Allahabad
November 4, 1937

Dear Prime Minister,

You have no doubt followed the proceedings of the recent meeting of the A.I.C.C. held in Calcutta. The Committee was appreciative of the work already done by the Congress ministries but it felt, at the same time, that much remained to be done to establish a full measure of civil liberty. Great importance was attached to this and wherever any coercive action had been taken, considerable resentment was displayed. Many of the criticisms were based on ignorance of the real state of affairs. Nevertheless it is true that the A.I.C.C. is very sensitive in

1. N.B. Khare Papers, National Archives of India.

regard to any suppression of civil liberty. It feels that the Congress provinces should show a clean slate.

Objection was especially taken to the non-release of political prisoners, to books continuing to be banned, to the use of the C.I.D. for the purposes of shadowing political workers, to the demand of securities from newspapers, and to the non-repeal thus far of special repressive legislation.

I am sending you herewith copies of such resolutions as are of special interest for you. The federation resolution is of particular importance and you will notice that the provincial governments are requested to intimate to the British Government that they do not desire to be included in the proposed federation. I trust that some such resolution will be placed by your government before the assembly at an early date.

It will be desirable if the assembly also passes a resolution of sympathy with the Indian struggle in Zanzibar.[2] This resolution should request the central government to impose an embargo on cloves from abroad.

The resolution on Indian exiles is sent for your information so that your government might take such steps in regard to them as you consider feasible.[3]

The fourth resolution relates to the ban on books.[4] As you know, a very large number of books have been banned by previous governments. It is desirable that these bans on political literature be lifted as soon as possible.

The fifth resolution was referred to the Working Committee for necessary action. It raises the question of civil liberty and draws the attention of Congress ministries to the necessity of implementing the Congress manifesto in this respect.[5]

The sixth resolution relates to titles and decorations. Congress ministries cannot associate themselves with these titles, etc., but, if any titles are given while they are in power, the responsibility for these will partly rest on them. It is desirable therefore that no titles be given in the provinces where Congress ministries are functioning. The procedure adopted in Canada some years back might well be followed by the Congress ministries and a resolution passed by assemblies asking that no further titles be given.

2. See *post*, section 13, items 17 and 19.
3. The resolution urged upon the Government of India "to remove all restraints and restrictions on the entry into India of all political exiles."
4. The Congress ministries were asked to lift the ban on several proscribed books.
5. The resolution called upon the Congress ministries to release political prisoners and "to repeal repressive laws, even those which authorise detention without trial."

The seventh resolution relates to linguistic provinces.[6] This is in accordance with well-established Congress policy.

Apart from these resolutions, I should like to draw your attention to the strong feeling among Congressmen on the question of the separation of judicial and executive functions. Practical considerations might delay this separation for a while but the old Congress policy continues.

I am enclosing for your consideration a copy of an article[7] I am sending to the press today. I would beg your special attention to the question of civil liberty which is agitating the minds of so many Congressmen today.

I would add that the repeal of repressive legislation, in accordance with Congress policy as repeatedly laid down, is considered a matter which should be taken in hand at the earliest possible date. Delay in taking action injures our prestige and gives an opportunity to non-Congress provinces to justify their repressive policy.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. It reaffirmed the Congress policy of redistribution of the provinces on a linguistic basis.
7. See the preceding item.

55. On the Advantages of Office Acceptance[1]

I have heard with the greatest attention the distinguished speakers who spoke earlier. I have carefully thought about their reasons for suggesting that office acceptance was an error.

For a correct estimate of the position we must have a balance and weigh the advantages and disadvantages of accepting office. We have to look ahead for the major fight. Minor operations between two sides do not matter much. It is the major fight that will decide the big issues. Till such a major fight is brought about, the forces on both sides have to be manoeuvred to take up suitable positions.

We have no ready-made army. Our methods of warfare are different. The greatest effect of office acceptance is the remarkable change it has

1. Speech at Allahabad, 5 November 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 6 November 1937.

brought about in the psychology of the people and the atmosphere in the country. There are certain things which cannot be weighed accurately in any scale. They are courage, sorrow and such feelings. One great advantage has been that the burden of the common people has been lightened to some extent. Some relief has been extended to the peasants and labourers. It was a great consideration that weighed in favour of office acceptance.

A great deal still remains to be done for the masses. A great disadvantage, however, is the risk of being lulled into a false belief that we have done our duty and can afford to carry on in this manner for long. We must not forget our goal of independence. We have not retraced our steps yet and gone back upon our vow to wreck the Act. If the Governors at any time try to pick a quarrel, they might force the Congress to embark upon other methods of struggle including satyagraha. That would mean inviting a fight with the people of India. If, therefore, we did our work properly to strengthen the masses, we could rightly claim that we are preparing for the final wreckage of the Act. If our ministers go wrong, we can always call them back.

Purushottamdas Tandon has been a member of the Congress for a long time. He was elected to the provincial legislature as a Congress candidate. He continues to be a member of the Congress as long as he wishes to be so and does not go against the Congress discipline. By consenting to be the Speaker, he does not cease to be a Congressman. I think his decision not to resign from the party on his election as the Speaker is therefore quite proper.

56. On the Kanpur Strike[1]

I abandoned my visit to Assam when I heard of a recrudescence of strikes at Cawnpore. I cannot lighten the burden of the workers. You have to remove it yourselves. And you should not think that you alone are faced with difficulties. We are all confronted with great problems. I visited the mill areas and I was surprised to see how people lived in those places.

There is a good deal of talk about vested interests. I am convinced they will have to give place to socialism. It is a pity that you cannot

1. Speech at Kanpur, 9 November 1937. From *The Leader*, 12 November 1937.

apply yourselves wholeheartedly to your work. Slight obstacles or difficulties make you go off the track or discourage you. Only those who have patience and perseverance know how to work. You should not forget that for many years the Congress has been fighting for the freedom of the country. Congressmen had to go to jails and suffer in many other ways. But the fight has not ceased. There were moments when the fight slackened, and then again the thread was picked up with firm hand. The forces of imperialism could not suppress it; and even now that fight is going on. It is for this purpose that the Congress has accepted office. The ministers have always the question of their country's freedom before them, and they, therefore, want to solve the problems of the workers and the peasants and to increase their power. So long as they do not get power, it is impossible to get rid of capitalism and vested interests. There is however no doubt that forces of capitalism, widely scattered all over the world, are gradually weakening. Everywhere there is trouble. If there are strikes in one place, there are other troubles in another. I do not question the benefits that capitalism and proprietorship might have brought. But they are old and outworn things now. In order to shake off capitalism you should increase your strength, and for that you need the support of millions of men. No one leader is enough to make socialism prevail in the world. For that, the reins of the government must be gathered in the hands of the common people.

The millowners are not intrinsically bad people. The difficulty is that there is a clash of interests between the workers and the employers. The same is true about the landlords and the kisans. You must all understand this basic problem. During the last four or five months' struggle that you have been waging, there is no doubt you have gained in strength, but at the same time you have increased your anxieties also. The millowners, seeing that the workers are gaining in power, began to attack them. The workers ought not to forget that in every fight they must first assess the strength of their antagonists and their own strength. I believe that you are deceived in two ways. You over-estimate the strength of your employers and underrate your own. That is perhaps true, but you must remember that if you work together, your strength is not less than that of your employers. The second danger which besets you is that in a fit of temporary enthusiasm you think that you have triumphed and thus lose sight of the enemy's power. I am afraid the workers do not consider these basic matters in all their bearings.

The workers have always been in the forefront in the fight for freedom. For example, in Russia when the revolution took place the workers took a leading part. Coming nearer home, the workers at first were

very weak, they had no organisation and submitted meekly to all the hardships to which they were subjected by the millowners. It is true that you now have the weapon of strike, and by wielding it you can cause loss to the employers. But you should not forget that being men of resources the employers can bear such losses, while it often reduces you to starvation. The question, therefore, resolves itself into one of patience and perseverance. In such a struggle the workers are naturally faced with anxiety.

In the present strike, the workers at first were weak, but after the general strike you acquired strength. You became over-enthusiastic and overrated your strength. That inevitably led to trouble as the employers, seeing this increase in the workers' strength, wanted to check it. At this time when each party was engaged in a trial of strength, the enquiry committee appointed by the government was to commence its labours for which the millowners had made ample preparations. You, on the other hand, had not been able to get ready on account of your other preoccupations. In Bombay, the millowners have to supply certain information to the government, but in our province there is no such practice. I believe that the millowners did not like the idea of the enquiry committee. They were not eager to explain everything to it. They wanted that the tussle between the workers and themselves should go on, because in doing so the workers often committed mistakes. Last time when I addressed you, I advised you to do two things—to organise yourselves and to prepare your case for the enquiry committee. I did not ask you to submit to the hardships to which you were subjected by the employers. I wanted that you should leave that question to the mazdur sabha which would look into the matter and concentrate its attention on the preparation of your case alone for the enquiry committee.

I came to Cawnpore on account of the two strikes which are still going on. While I admit that it is an inherent right of the workers to go on strike when necessity demands it, I would advise you not to precipitate it where it is harmful. The millowners allege that they received no notice of the strikes. They say they cannot recognise the mazdur sabha which has no proper control over the workers. Therefore the workers should consult the sabha and discuss among themselves before they decide to strike. I am of the opinion that the workers have been impatient in resorting to strike in the cases of the Elgin and the Cawnpore Cotton Mills. You should terminate the strike as quickly as possible. Communalism among the workers is not at all desirable. If you allow it to invade you, then your movement would grow weak.

57. To Edward Thompson[1]

Allahabad
November 11, 1937

Dear Thompson,[2]

I have delayed in answering your letter[3] of July 25th which came long ago. This acceptance of office business has not lightened the burden of most of us. It is all very well to prevent one's enemies getting dug in, but the alternative of getting buried oneself is equally unpleasant.

I am sorry to say that nothing has been done so far about giving status to our wild animals. I agree with you that we should move in the matter and I shall remind the great ones who are Prime Ministers in the provinces today. But the human problems we have to face are sufficiently overwhelming, and it is difficult to think of much else. Besides, there is no public opinion on the subject and in this democratic age public opinion counts. And so we have to think much more of music before mosques and the like than of the slaughter of wild animals.

I am rather vague as to what should be done about these animals. There might be large reserves created but this is an expensive matter which our present governments will be afraid of touching. Can you suggest any inexpensive steps which might be taken soon?

I was greatly interested to read of the recent activities of the India Office in London which displeased you. But I think you are unjust to them. They have been brought up in a particular way and you cannot expect them to get out of the habits of a lifetime. I am afraid they will stick to them to the bitter end.

Indira wrote to me a little while back that she was going to meet you and your wife. So now I can legitimately claim a copy of your *Metcalfe*.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1886-1946); friend of Jawaharlal and supporter of the cause of Indian freedom; novelist, historian and writer on public affairs; his writings include *The Reconstruction of India, Enlist India for Freedom!* and *Life of Charles, Lord Metcalfe.*
3. He had referred to the need for protecting wild life in India and for reforming the India Office in London.

58. To C. Rajagopalachari[1]

Allahabad
November 13, 1937

My dear Rajagopalachari,
I have your letter of the 9th.[2] I am sorry you are still unwell and weak.

I am very sorry that you feel that I have not treated you fairly. I do not know if this refers to my conduct in Calcutta[3] or to what I have written to you recently.[4] Howsoever we might differ in any matter, we have no business to be unfair to each other, and it pains me to think that you think me guilty of this offence. It is possible, of course, that one cannot be wholly fair in matters on which one has a definite opinion, but I tried hard in Calcutta and afterwards not to allow my personal opinion to colour my conduct. Even in the expression of my views I tried to be as non-committal as I could, though in my own mind there was not much doubt. I have been distressed by many things that have taken place recently but I have kept the distress to myself or, at any rate, have not expressed it in public. Consistently I have tried to create an atmosphere of friendliness towards the Congress ministries. For this I have been sufficiently criticised by the Congress and others. In Bengal and the Punjab I am referred to as a person with two faces and two voices—one for the Bengal and the Punjab ministries and the other for the Congress ministries.

As for what happened in Calcutta, I do not know how far you think me responsible for it. I do not see myself how I could have forcibly suppressed the views of many of the members of the A.I.C.C.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P.L.-3/1937 (Pt. III), p. 389, N.M.M.L.
2. Rajagopalachari had felt that the criticism at the A.I.C.C. and Working Committee meetings at Calcutta in October 1937 of his attitude to certain matters of provincial administration "was most unthinking and unfair."
3. Jawaharlal had said that certain policies adopted by the Madras Government were contrary to the ideals of the Congress.
4. See pp. 336-337.

59. To N.B. Khare[1]

Allahabad
November 14, 1937

My dear Dr. Khare,[2]
Thank you for your brief personal letter.

I have received the copy of Pandit Dwarka Prasad's letter of the 8th November which you have sent me. I shall put up this letter for the consideration of the Working Committee. May I point out, however, that the Working Committee has all along been of opinion that there should be a coordination between the activities of the various Congress ministries? Also that the Committee has been stressing all the time that the Governor should not preside over cabinet meetings. In fact, we have stated that the Prime Minister should protest and have his protest recorded on every occasion that the Governor presides. There is no question of meekly allowing the Governor to preside. We did not want to break on this issue right at the beginning but, if this practice continues, in spite of repeated protests, we shall have to consider what action is to be taken.

The business rules referred to should certainly be revised. In this matter we cannot do anything as we do not know what these rules are. It is for a Congress ministry to take the initiative and we shall gladly inform the other ministries of the action taken.

Probably you have received the memorandum[3] on I.M.S. officers sent by some doctors to Dr. Gilder,[4] the Minister for Health, in Bombay. On this question also it is for a ministry to take the initiative in consultation with other ministries. We shall gladly help in this process of consultation.

The questions of a cut in the salaries and the abolition of commissionerships are also important. But here also I do not know what you

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.
2. (1882-1969); joined the Congress in 1919; member of the C.P. and Berar Assembly, 1923-29; member, Central Assembly, 1935-37; Chief Minister of C.P. and Berar, 1937-38; expelled from the Congress, 1938; member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1943-46; Prime Minister, Alwar state, 1947-48; president, Hindu Mahasabha, 1949; member, Lok Sabha, 1952-57.
3. The memorandum stated that provincial ministers would have no voice in the appointments under the Government of India scheme for the reorganisation of the Indian Medical Service.
4. M.D.D. Gilder (b. 1882); an eminent physician of Bombay; Minister for Public Health, Government of Bombay, 1937-39 and 1946-52.

would like the Working Committee to do. Obviously we want a cut in the salaries. How to bring it about should be suggested by you.

I am interested to learn of your proposal to make the 26th of January a national holiday. I think this would be excellent.

I can assure you that our office is prepared to help you in every way that we can. We hope soon to start a special department in charge of a competent economist to deal with problems which the Congress ministries have to face. We can also consult experts on any specific problem referred to us by you.

I hope you will inform Pandit Dwarka Prasad of this reply of mine.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

60. The Reasons for Office Acceptance[1]

The new constitution is a mere trap. Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai was a prisoner till yesterday. No doubt, he is a minister today, but has not much power. We have accepted office to give the masses the little relief that we could give and also an opportunity to develop the necessary strength for wresting real power. Personally, I would like to shatter the existing economic order of India to bits; but I alone am not the Congress.

1. Speech at the political conference held in Bara Banki on 15 November 1937. From *The Leader*, 22 November 1937.

61. On the Communal Disturbances[1]

Since I returned from Lucknow this morning people have been running to me and asking me to tell the police to arrest the *badmashes*. I do

1. Speech at Allahabad, 18 November 1937. From *The Leader*, 21 November 1937.

not consider myself an adviser to the police; while riff-raffs should certainly be arrested, I do not consider it proper that I should say that arrests should be made indiscriminately, because in the past, such complaints have led to the arrests of even innocent people. There are complaints against the police almost everywhere, but such complaints are very common in India where the government is foreign and therefore relies not on the goodwill of the people but on the help of the police. The administration cannot displease the police in this country by taking action on complaints against them, and therefore the police administration has deteriorated.

Who constitute the police? Our own kisans and our own countrymen are in it. Therefore it is a wrong policy to say that every one in the police is bad. Both good and bad people are in the police; and it is not proper to entertain the belief that the police is inimical to the people. Police officers are appointed by our own ministry, and therefore they should be under the control of the public. An attempt should be made to improve the police and secure its cooperation in maintaining peace. It is the duty of the police to preserve peace and the public also should cooperate with it in this and prevent the occurrence of incidents like those which took place in Allahabad. If the people find any defect in the police administration, attempts should be made to remove it but they should not always curse the police as a whole.

How can we preserve communal peace in the town? Firstly, the people should refuse to be disturbed or worried by reports of quarrels; secondly, they should not believe rumours, 90% of which are exaggerated; thirdly, if *goondas* provoke quarrels, efforts should be made to check them, irrespective of communal considerations. It is undoubtedly the primary duty of the police to preserve peace, but the people are also not free from responsibility in the matter.

People of all communities should form common organizations in every *mohalla*, the function of which should be to provide protection to the citizens, and with that end in view it is intended to form a corps of volunteers on behalf of the Congress, who would be trained during their spare hours in the work of public service. I wish that the administration of the town should be improved and such organisations of volunteers should work in cooperation with the police, and not as rival organizations, to preserve peace and order in the town. It is not necessary that only Congressmen should be enrolled as volunteers but anyone who wants to serve the town can be enrolled.

I hope that the people will not be upset by petty individual quarrels, and that the Hindus and Muslims will join to work together for the protection of the *mohallas*. Those who want to be enrolled as

volunteers can give their names either at the city Congress committee office or at the *mohalla* Congress committee office.

62. To P. Subbarayan[1]

Camp Amroha
November 21, 1937

My dear Subbarayan,[2]
Your letter of the 17th November came yesterday. I am sending you this answer from Moradabad district where I have just come for a Muslim bye-election.

There is one sentence in your letter which has surprised me greatly. You say: "It is so difficult for the government if those who were not in favour of acceptance of office are to take advantage of the situation and press home their view." This seems to me a strange doctrine. The acceptance or otherwise of office was not and is not an end in itself. It was a means to an end. Opinions differed as to the means. Ultimately a certain opinion prevailed. Is it your view that those who did not agree with this opinion should retire gracefully from the Congress or should play the part of lookers-on? I am unable to appreciate this viewpoint. Apart from this, the acceptance of office was made for a particular purpose and subject to certain Congress principles and programmes. If these principles are flouted and the programmes ignored, do you expect Congressmen who attach value to those principles and programmes to remain silent? I think I have probably done more to help the Congress ministries than any other person in India. I have done so because I thought it the right thing and I wanted them to function in as good an atmosphere as possible. Also because I have a sense of discipline. But I want to tell you frankly that many things that the Madras Government have done have seemed to me a negation and a reversal of fundamental Congress principles and policy. It is not a question of my

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P.L.-3/1937 (Pt. III), pp. 403-404, N.M.M.L.
2. (1889-1962); Chief Minister, Government of Madras, 1926-30; joined the Congress in 1937; Minister for Law, 1937-39 and Minister for Home and Legal Affairs, Madras Government, 1947-49; Minister for Transport and Communications, Government of India, 1959-62; Governor of Maharashtra, 1962.

being happy or not happy. These moods come and go. But we have not devoted our lives to certain causes without feeling some deep urge within us and without believing in certain principles. It may be that opinions differ as to the principle. If so, we accommodate each other or we go different ways. It depends on the extent of differences and on various other factors.

I am in fairly close touch with the Congress organisation in India and with the opinion of the rank and file Congressmen. Few things have happened during the last few months which have shocked the Congress conscience quite so much as the Batliwala prosecution.[3] This is becoming a bye-word for us wherever we go and in the Punjab and in Bengal a standing justification for every repressive activity of the government there. Only a tremendous sense of discipline has kept the average Congressman quiet under this heavy strain.

I am writing to you frankly as you would no doubt like me to. Unfortunately Rajagopalachari is unwell still and I still await his answer to the letter I sent him after the Calcutta A.I.C.C. meeting. It is not enough for the Madras Congress legislative party to approve of the action taken by your government. The A.I.C.C. and the Congress have to be satisfied.

I shall be leaving for Assam from Allahabad on the 25th. I expect to return about the 10th of December when I shall go immediately to Saharanpur and Bulandshahr for two Muslim bye-elections. After that I shall be in Allahabad for a few days.

Indira is quite happy at Oxford.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. S.S. Batliwala (b. 1905); a socialist leader of Bombay; arrested at Tellicherry on 2 October 1937 for an alleged seditious speech and sentenced to six months' simple imprisonment. On 21 March 1938 the Madras Government remitted the unexpired portion of the sentence and released him.

63. To the Members of the Working Committee[1]

Allahabad
November 24, 1937

Dear Comrade,

It is now clear that the A.I.C.C. meeting will not be held in December or January. The great majority of the members are against such a meeting. But a meeting of the Working Committee is very necessary to consider the fast developing situation in the country. I am afraid it is difficult to fix a meeting in December. I am going to Assam tomorrow and shall not be back till the middle of December. Muslim bye-elections in the U.P., provincial conferences and other important engagements will keep some of us busy in the latter half of December. Other members of the Working Committee are also likely to be busy then. Thus the nearest available date seems to be in the first week of January.

Then about the venue. Ordinarily we would have chosen Wardha to suit the convenience of Gandhiji. But in view of his weak health and the doctors' imperative orders, it seems inadvisable to put this burden on him. I would therefore suggest some other place. If you agree, I would propose Allahabad for the venue. This would have certain obvious advantages.

You are no doubt following with interest, and perhaps with a measure of anxiety, the rapid growth of a situation in the country which seems to be leading to a crisis. There is the possibility of a political crisis on the federation issue. There is the communal situation which, owing to the efforts of some members of the Muslim League, is taking an ugly turn. There is the increasing agitation in the Indian states from Kashmir to the south, comprising all manner of states, both big and small. There is the unusual ferment among students. But most important of all is the state of the industrial labour and peasantry. The labour situation is serious and is causing some anxiety in many places. And yet the vital problem continues to be that of the peasantry. If one is to judge from the newspapers, not much is happening in the rural areas. But, as a matter of fact, there is a tremendous awakening and ferment among them, and I am inclined to think that this will take the shape of some form of aggressive action unless satisfaction comes to them.

All these happenings, unconnected as they seem, can hardly be unrelated. What is the underlying cause? Not surely a few agitators,

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. This letter was also sent to C. Rajagopalachari and G.B. Pant.

although agitators may give point to an urge or a struggle. There is obviously a deeper cause. All these indications point to a pre-revolutionary stage of a struggle. The immediate cause may be the formation of Congress ministries, which has released the long-suppressed emotions of the masses, and given rise to the hope of an early deliverance. The real cause is the delay in solving the problems of the masses, and the repression that kept them down having been lifted, the problems and the urgent demand for their solution jump to the forefront.

We have rightly tried to curb all this indiscipline and to direct this fresh energy into right channels. We have not wholly succeeded, but it must be said that on the whole the discipline of the Congress has been a powerful factor in the country. Will this discipline hold?

The Congress organisation today has grown vaster than ever and our apparatus to control it and work it—our offices and the like—are not big enough for the task. But this is only the mechanical part of it, important though it is.

The real question before us is a more vital one. What should be our basic policy in view of this countrywide development, a development which we must welcome, except for the indiscipline involved in it? Ignoring it does not help. There are only two ways of dealing with it: the way of repression, and the way of solving some at least of the problems which affect the masses and thus controlling and disciplining the new forces that are growing everywhere.

Obviously the way of repression is not open to us, though we may indulge in it to some extent for specific purposes. We are not experts in this business and we have no taste for it. In any event, we are bound to fail as we are not likely to carry the sympathy of the people with us, and without that we are powerless.

The only other way is to press hard, and rapidly, for substantial relief for the masses, notably for the peasantry and secondly industrial workers. Failure to do so will overwhelm us.

I am endeavouring to give my personal reactions in this letter. I cannot discuss the whole complex situation in any detail but I think it my duty to place before my colleagues of the Working Committee the general trend of my thought. I am anxious to do so because I see a crisis of considerable magnitude approaching and we must analyse it and prepare ourselves for it. I also feel that some of our provincial governments are too engrossed in their day to day problems to give adequate consideration to the basic issues. A recent development in which the Congress governments have taken to the use of the Special Powers Act and of the sedition section of the Penal Code, and the demanding of securities from newspapers, even prior to publication, fill me with

apprehension. Nobody can doubt that repressive activity must be indulged in by a state on occasion. But that activity fails in its purpose if it results in encouraging the very tendencies it seeks to check. Repression by a Congress government can never succeed except on rare occasions when it is obviously directed to open violence. In other cases it will only fan the flames of discontent.

The use of special powers by a Congress government on any occasion gives the final justification for their imposition by the British Government during the civil disobedience movement. It is an invitation to them to use them again when the time for conflict comes, and when they are so used, as they are bound to be, our mouths will be shut and all criticism hushed.

The Batliwala case may or may not have been justified on the merits. But the fact remains that it has shocked large numbers of Congressmen and has given the fullest justification to non-Congress governments to indulge in repression. So also the demand for pre-publication security. What is there to distinguish our governments from the non-Congress governments? Not much, so far as civil liberties are concerned.

If we follow this path—and we cannot remain stationary—we must either march ahead along it or choose another path, or we shall have to copy the methods of the British Government. We shall slowly become their replica, doing their work and preserving them from the odium of doing it. There is no middle path. So this is a vital question for us. Are we gradually to line ourselves with the forces behind the British Government?

More important still is our agrarian and labour policy, and specially the former. There is a tendency to tone this down for fear of estranging the big landlord elements. We do not want to estrange anybody but when vital issues are at stake and there is conflict between the masses and small groups, we must choose the interests of the former. And this not only because we are committed to this policy, but because there is no other way. Any attempt to choose half-way houses will please nobody and will discredit us with the masses.

I have come to think more and more that a brave approach to the agrarian problem is the only way to solve the communal problem. During my tours in connection with the Muslim bye-elections in the U.P., I have realised that the only thing that counts with the Muslim rural voters is the U.P. Government's orders staying arrears of rent suits and processes for debt. They are eagerly expecting big things to follow. If these big things fail to materialise, there will be a reaction, and a communal reaction. Apart from the other big things, if it is eventually decided to ask them to pay the old arrears of rent, there will be a roar

of protest, and I am sure that in effect the arrears will not be realised. Thus it seems to me that all these arrears must be wiped out completely. So also old debts. This in itself will not be enough.

This letter is already very long and I cannot go on. But I hope I have sufficiently indicated what I have in my mind, and I would like my colleagues to give consideration to it. We are overwhelmed with problems. That is all the more reason why we should see them in proper perspective and spot the real issues.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

64. To K. Bhashyam[1]

Allahabad
November 25, 1937

My dear Bhashyam,[2]
Your letter of the 18th Nov. I am surprised to read it. There can be no question whatever of the Congress councillors giving an address of welcome to the Viceroy. This would be entirely against the Congress policy. In fact, Congressmen should not join in any function of welcome to him. The release of some of the detenus in Bengal or any other development has nothing to do with our fundamental policy which is one of consistent opposition to British imperialism of which the Viceroy is the representative in India.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-19(ii)/1937, p. 27, N.M.M.L.
2. (1882-1959); a leading Congressman of Madras; joined the freedom movement and was imprisoned in 1931 and 1942; president, Madras District Congress Committee, 1936; member, Madras Assembly, 1937-39; Minister for Law in Madras Congress ministry, 1946-47; went to Malaya for I.N.A. trials, 1946.

65. To G.B. Pant[1]

Allahabad
November 25, 1937

My dear Pantji,
I am leaving for Assam today and am not likely to be back before the middle of December. Before I go, I want to write to you and tell you that I am greatly distressed at the turn events are taking all over India, in so far as the Congress ministries are concerned. In my letter[2] sent to the members of the Working Committee, a copy of which was sent to you, I gave expression to my feelings. That opinion was restrained in expression, but behind that restraint there was an intensity of conviction. If I may put it in technical language, the Congress ministries are tending to become counter-revolutionary. This is of course not a conscious development, but when a choice has to be made the inclination is in this direction. Apart from this the general attitude is static. We dare not be static for that means that we are merely carrying on the tradition (with minor variations) of the previous governments. Indeed, we cannot remain static for long for the world is not static. Inevitably the choice has to be made and I fear the choice too often is of the wrong kind.

I am quite sure that the advent of Congress ministries has resulted in a great accession of strength to us. Partly this has no doubt been due to certain initial measures taken by them, but very largely the change was a psychological one which was inevitable. But we cannot live on psychology, or on the reputation of a few good deeds. We have been carrying on for many months now and we have to show greater results, and now that the time for going forward comes we show a marked tendency to go back. Of course we cannot go back because the movement is too strong to permit us to go back. But in trying to do so we weaken that movement greatly and do exactly what the British Government has been trying to make us do these many years—create a split and get the Congress or part of the Congress to adopt what is essentially a pro-imperialist policy. If this is a likely contingency, then the sooner we are out of office the better. I am quite clear that we are better out than in, unless we can go ahead much faster than we have been doing. Indeed for the present, especially in Madras and Bombay, the question is of not going back.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See pp. 361-364.

It may be that I have got the wrong perspective, but I can only think and act according to my own lights. And the issues are too serious to be slurred over.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

66. On the Role of Congress Workers[1]

The Congress ministries are certainly working under the constitution, but a time may come when their hands may be tied down by the rigours of the constitution, and a conflict with the British Government may become inevitable, and the Congress may be forced to embark again on a campaign of civil disobedience. But I think our strength is now sufficiently great and we cannot be suppressed even in civil disobedience.

If we are fully organised and the whole nation follows the Congress decisions, then the British Government would hesitate in provoking a conflict. The whole question before us is how to further strengthen our *sangathan*. I am sure that there is no organisation except the Congress which can take the country to its goal. There are some organisations which can render assistance in that direction, but none except the Congress can carry on that work.

I cannot approve of the spirit of rivalry between the Congress bodies and the organisations like kisan sabhas. I have received reports from some districts that the people of kisan sabhas create disputes with Congress *mandals*, which are also composed of kisans. On account of rivalries, disputes have arisen at meetings about red and national flags. Such quarrels only tend to weaken the strength of the Congress. The red flag is a symbol of labour and to some extent also of kisans, and therefore it should be respected; but it should not cause conflict with the national flag. The kisans cannot understand the minute differences between the two and consequently a spirit of rivalry in regard to the two flags might upset them. The national flag is recognised by the villagers all over the country, and therefore an attempt to remove it and replace it by a red or any other flag would be disgraceful. The national flag at

1. Inaugural address at the Congress workers educational camp held at Allahabad on 26 November 1937. From *The Leader*, 29 November 1937.

present stands against the British flag, and therefore any attempt to weaken the national flag would amount to increasing the strength of the other flag. Consequently they should respect the red flag also, because it stands for noble objects, but they should all combine to increase the strength of the national flag.

Ten days are not enough to understand the problems that face the country, but the object of the camp is to draw the attention of the workers to those problems, while they should always consider themselves to be students and continue the study of those problems.

Congress *mandals* are very useful. They are in direct touch with the people. The need for preparing *swayam sewaks* of the right type in every *gram* or *mandal* is very great, and I suggest that batches of villagers should learn the work of *swayam sewaks* in their own villages and then teach others, as the holding of educational camps at distant places is an expensive job, and also because it would take many years to train the people of the whole district by that method. We want to prepare the right type of *swayam sewaks*, and to create a spirit of service and military discipline in them.

People should understand that Swaraj is not attained merely by the acceptance of office by the Congress. There are thousands of obstacles in the way of the attainment of Swaraj, and we do not accept the new constitution because it does not give us Swaraj. At the same time the Congress ministries can strengthen the hands of the people in their struggle for Swaraj. Moreover, during the period of the last four or five months when the Congress ministries have been functioning, the strength of the masses has considerably increased and a new spirit instilled in them. That new life should be put to the best use and should not be allowed to fritter away.

Officials of the *mandals* should realise their responsibilities. I have recently seen a notice issued on behalf of a certain *mandal* calling upon a person to appear before it in order to answer a charge made against him. It was worded like a court summons. That is certainly a sign of enthusiasm but if Congress *mandals* involve themselves in such matters as the award of punishments, there is the danger of their breaking up on account of party factions as happened in the case of panchayats in the past. An effort should certainly be made to check quarrels but they should not act like criminal courts. A time would come when they would be able to settle disputes among themselves, but it has not yet come.

In this connection, the necessity of cooperation between the public and the police comes to the forefront. The attitude of the public should not invariably be one of hostility towards the police.

There is a proposal to amend tenancy laws. I hope that the new legislation will provide sufficient relief to the tenantry, though it may not be to the extent we desire because of many obstacles. The Congress *mandals* and committees should send, from time to time, the kisans' grievances to the ministers, but not by way of agitation. The zamindars are organising an agitation, and therefore it is necessary that the kisans' grievances also should reach the government formally from time to time.

I hope that the workers will follow the lectures that will be delivered at the camp and understand the problems that will be put before them. How to strengthen their *sangathan* is the one important problem before them. Indians have a sufficiently bad reputation for quarrelling among themselves, but within the Congress organization there should be no dissensions. We should give expression to our respective views with the greatest freedom but should learn to abide by the decisions arrived at in a panchayati manner.

67. To C. Rajagopalachari[1]

Camp Saharanpur
December 11, 1937

My dear Rajagopalachari,
Your letter[2] of the 30th November has managed to reach me during my tour. I realise that it is difficult to deal with such matters by correspondence. And yet delay is also harmful. There is a strong feeling in Congress circles and there have been marked repercussions in many odd places. Something in the nature of a crisis is arising in other provinces and the example of Madras is cited.

The A.I.C.C. is not meeting till Haripura but the Working Committee is likely to meet at the beginning of January.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Rajagopalachari stated that in so far as the charges against him were concerned, rather than try to deal with them by correspondence he should prefer to speak in person to the Working Committee.

68. To Srikrishna Sinha[1]

Camp Saharanpur
December 11, 1937

Dear Srikrishna Babu,

I have read in the newspapers with great astonishment the circular[2] issued by the Bihar chief secretary to the commissioners and district officers. Anything more impertinent and insulting I can hardly conceive of. I take it that this circular could not have been issued without the consent of the Governor. In any event, this shows a spirit in the secretariat which is absolutely undesirable. I think that a speedy and effective action should be taken. The nature of this action will have to be decided upon by you. But it should be a public condemnation by you of the chief secretary's action. The Governor should also be informed that you take the strongest exception to what the chief secretary has done, and this raises vital questions which may precipitate a crisis. The circular must be withdrawn and the chief secretary should apologise to the ministers for it. Indeed, I think that you should inform the Governor that a chief secretary who behaves in this manner is not fit for his post. He must be given some other job. I am quite convinced that in this matter the strongest line must be taken by your ministry.

Apart from the contents of the circular, I think that no important circular should be issued at all by the chief secretary without the knowledge and permission of the minister concerned. That, I am told, is the practice in the U.P.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.
2. The chief secretary to the Bihar Government issued a confidential circular to commissioners of divisions stating that an order not signed by either a secretary, an under secretary or an assistant secretary to government should not be acted upon.

69. The Problems of the Provincial Ministries[1]

Conditions in the world are undergoing a rapid change; they are not what they were ten years ago. The forces of power are practically drifting towards war, and the aeroplanes and other scientific methods of warfare will make a present-day war very dangerous. I think that the British power is weakening. Though Nanking has fallen, China would not be easily suppressed by Japan. The greatest country in the world is the United States of America and I doubt if it would be able to keep itself aloof from a world war, in spite of its intentions to the contrary. A talk about the international situation might sound extraordinary in the Purushottam Das Park, yet I want to draw the attention of the people to those problems, as a time might come when they might eclipse the questions that we are faced with at present.

There is hardly anyone who deserves more sympathy than the ministers. People think that they have attained a great honour by their appointment as ministers but the fact is that a very great burden of responsibility has been put on them. In the first place, they are bound by the rigours of the constitution. In the second place, the public, the kisans particularly, expect that as Congressmen are in the ministry, their miseries would be completely wiped out. Their miseries cannot be removed until Indians attain full power and complete freedom and the entire system is changed. There are great obstacles in the way of the ministers doing any substantial good and, therefore, they deserve the greatest sympathy. I, therefore, desire that the public should express opinions on their work after giving a careful consideration to the subject. I, no doubt, want intelligent people to examine the problems and offer criticism, but at the same time, one principle of democracy is that there should be discipline; otherwise chaos would be the result.

The great achievement of the last sixteen or seventeen years' struggle is the awakening in the masses of the desire to act and the wish to work unitedly. There is a great need for ending domestic disputes as the world is threatened with a serious crisis which can be faced only through united organization. The only power which can face the coming crisis is the Congress and therefore it becomes necessary that we should enhance the strength of the Congress and maintain discipline in it. Every Congressman should understand that if, at the time of the

1. Speech at Allahabad, 17 December 1937. From *The Leader*, 19 December 1937.

crisis, he committed any act to weaken the Congress, he would be doing something unworthy of him.

It has been declared that the Congress will not accept federation. But the question arises as to what we would do if it is forced upon the country. The All India Congress Committee passed a resolution stating that it would not accept federation. The resolution was criticised and described as a weak one. Fromerly, we used strong language while making any request to the government. Now the power of the Congress has increased and as its position has become stronger, it would be undignified for the Congress to use strong language. There is always a form of language which is adopted in correspondence between two governments, and though the form may be mild the force behind it can be felt.

What are we going to do with the federation? We have got to create a mass psychology that would not accept the federation and would fight against it. We have now sufficient strength, much more than what we had during the noncooperation and civil disobedience days, and we should take full advantage of it.

70. To N.B. Khare[1]

Allahabad
December 22, 1937

My dear Dr. Khare,
I have your letter of the 19th December. I am glad to learn that you are taking action about January 26th being declared a public holiday. I entirely agree with you that such action should be uniform in all the Congress provinces. I am writing to the other Prime Ministers accordingly.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. N.B. Khare Papers, National Archives of India.

such things. So many cabinets may come and go but we have to keep the other bigger problems before us. These addresses make us believe that we have reached our goal and that we should stop there. But we cannot stop anywhere on the way even though we may be occupying ministerial chairs. And therefore we should not forget our pledges.

What is our condition today? The British Government has established an organisation which keeps us as slaves. It is not so much the military force as its organisation that is keeping us down. From the Viceroy down to the *patwari* in the village, its organisation is full and complete and with that it rules over us.

If we have to fight it, then we must also make our organisation strong all over India. We are trying to reach the people. We have succeeded in creating a great organisation to oppose this force of the British Government.

But where do these ministers of ours stand today in this structure? The Viceroy continues, the Governors are also there and everybody else is there as ever before. Even the red-turbaned policeman has not changed but only six of our men are today in their midst trying to run the government. Is this Swaraj?

All we have gained is a little strength to do something and these ministries are only temporary arrangements. Because we have before us bigger issues, any praise for small achievements is likely to mislead us.

In 1918, twenty years back, a new life was infused by the noncooperation movement. People heard the names of Swaraj and of the Congress and they began to feel that the end of their miseries was near. People realized that our slavery was not a thing of fate but one that could be ended. They tried to rise and by and by they rose. The path was a long one. It was a long pilgrimage. Millions of India's men and women began to dream of the day when their shackles would be removed. So many of our leaders passed away but our struggle did not stop, because it was not confined to any particular individual.

But remember that by merely carrying aloft the national flag we are not working for Swaraj. Don't think that our work has become easier. We are all soldiers in a great army, an army of liberation. This has created new relationships among us. These attachments are closer than those among brothers. We have created a new urge in our young and old, men and women of all castes and creeds, which makes us forget our differences.

We have been fighting and it has not been a small fight against a mighty empire. We have been very successful despite all kinds of repression. We could not be suppressed. However, our dreams remain unfulfilled and yet we know we are proceeding on the right lines.

had to be paid for them. In no case is a minister getting more than Rs. 750 for salary plus allowances.

As for travelling, he is supposed to travel as far as possible third class, though he is permitted to travel in higher class whenever necessity arises. The use of saloons by the ministers has been completely given up. Nor do they ever travel first class. But occasionally they take a second class berth, not the whole compartment.

As for the members of the assemblies, we have also laid down that they should be paid at the rate of double third class fare.

I am writing in haste as I am in Allahabad only for a short while. I am leaving again.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

74. On the Speaker's Position in the Legislature[1]

Some controversy has taken place as to the position of the Speaker in the legislature. Some people are inclined to the view that the practice of the British House of Commons should be followed here. Others are inclined to the different practice which prevails in the United States of America and elsewhere. The question is whether the Speaker should abstain from participation in politics outside the legislature. Personally, I agree with the position taken up by Shri Purushottamdas Tandon, Speaker of the U.P. Assembly.[2] It is obvious that the Speaker must be absolutely impartial in his dealings as Speaker. He must protect the rights of the minorities. If that is conceded, as it must be, then I see no reason why he should not participate in activities outside the legislature. This becomes all the more important in a country situated as India is at present, that is, a country under alien domination struggling to be free. Every Indian feels, or ought to feel, strongly in this matter and should try to throw his weight on

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 1 February 1938. *The Tribune*, 2 February 1938.
2. He stated that he would participate in politics, thereby following the French and American conventions and not the British convention.

the right side, the only side so far as he is concerned. Every Congressman is bound to do so by his convictions and temperament. For him to say that by virtue of election to the speakership he has suddenly become a neutral element in politics is to delude himself as well as others. We cannot become neutrals. A speakership or any office or position is a minor matter—the real thing is the struggle for freedom to which we are dedicated. It is from the latter point of view that everything has to be judged.

There is another aspect of this matter. We are apt to follow almost blindly British practice and procedure whether they fit in with our requirements or not. There is no reason why we should do so, and we must shake off these shackles. It is open to us, of course, to accept this practice where we choose to do so, but it must not be thrust down on us either by law or convention or, what is worst of all, by a slavish habit of mind which is unable to think in other terms.

75. On Differences between Governors and Ministers[1]

In the event of differences between a Governor and the ministers, the latter should not resign but take the constitutional crisis on to a higher plane, making it an issue between the Governor and the assembly as in England where the issue is treated as a conflict between the Crown and the Parliament. In case the Governor dissolves the assembly, and dismisses the cabinet, they should refuse to resign and continue to function, thus developing a first-class crisis. This is, of course, my personal view.

Subsequent developments will depend on the strength of the masses. The federation will not come if the nation demonstrates its strength. But if it is ushered in, it should be combated constitutionally.

The Working Committee has not discussed the possibility of coalition governments in Bengal and Assam. The news appearing in the press about this is a piece of conjecture, having no foundation whatsoever.

1. Address to the Congress workers, Jhansi, 7 February 1938. From *The Hindu*, 8 February 1938.

76. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
March 5, 1938

My dear Krishna,

I have come back to Allahabad after a long absence. A number of letters have come from you, some reached me at Haripura, the others met me here. These letters are dated the 9th February (four), the 16th and the 19th February.

I do not want to deal with the matters, you have touched upon[2] now at any length, partly because I am tired out and have not been keeping very well, though there is nothing physically wrong with me, and partly because I am not quite sure how things will shape themselves in the A.I.C.C. office. My own connection with it will not be so intimate as it has been.[3] I was pressed hard to become the General Secretary this year. But I could not tolerate the idea of having to deal with a tremendous amount of routine work which would have left me no leisure. It was as much as I could do to consent to remain a member of the Working Committee. But for Subhas and the ministerial crisis[4], I had almost decided to keep out of the Working Committee.

R.U.P.—About this I doubt that much can be done at this end but I shall think about it later.

Federation—I think you have attached too much importance to the visits of Lothian and Samuel.[5] They have made no real difference to the Congress. Whatever people may think in England, it may be said with confidence that the federation, as proposed, will meet with the

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letters Krishna Menon referred to the proposed meeting of *Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix*, the visit of Lord Lothian to India and the need to fight the federation, and developments in world politics and their effect on India.
3. At the Haripura session of the Congress in February 1938, Subhas Bose succeeded Jawaharlal as Congress President.
4. The Congress ministries in the U.P. and Bihar which resigned on 15 February 1938 on the issue of release of political prisoners resumed office after reaching an understanding with the respective Governors.
5. Herbert Louis Samuel (1870-1963); British statesman and philosopher; chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster, 1909-10 and 1915-16; Home Secretary, 1916 and 1931-32; high commissioner, Palestine, 1920-25; chairman, Liberal Party organization, 1927-29; leader of the Liberal Parliamentary Party, 1931-35; attended Haripura Congress in February 1938; author of several books including *Philosophy and the Ordinary Man* (1933) and *In Search of Reality* (1957).

most determined opposition on the part of the Congress. Indeed I am not all sure that it will ever materialise. The resolution of the Haripura Congress on the federation[6] laid particular stress on the Indian states being changed out of recognition before we could combine with them. I think this stress was desirable as it brought up the problem of the states and their internal conditions to the forefront.

Ministerial Crisis—This crisis has been resolved almost entirely in favour of the Congress and all the prisoners concerned have either been released or will be released in the course of a week or so. The language used by the Congress was moderate and restrained. But the intention was definitely to make this a major issue, if necessary. We did not want to have a major conflict on this particular issue if we could avoid it with dignity. We wanted to get through our tenancy legislation,[7] if possible. Also to concentrate on the federation issue. But having taken this step we were prepared for all the consequences, which meant inevitably a crisis in the other provinces also and all-India action by the Congress. In U.P. the agrarian problem would have assumed big dimensions immediately.

In this crisis Gandhiji played an important part. He was quite clear that we could not submit to Viceregal interference. In fact, he felt that we had delayed this matter.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. The Haripura Congress resolution on federation said that a real federation should consist of free units, and the Indian states participating in the federation should have representative institutions and civil liberties and responsible governments, as in the provinces.
7. The United Provinces Tenancy Bill introduced in April 1938 was passed in December 1939 after heated debates. It ensured permanent tenure for the kisans, abolished *sir* land above 50 acres and provided for an assured return to the kisan by lowering the rent.

77. To Agatha Harrison[1]

Allahabad
March 5, 1938

Dear Agatha,
Your letter of February 16th. The ministerial crisis has ended, as you know, in a more or less satisfactory manner. There will probably be

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

some quiet sailing for a while. But the whole position is one full of difficulty and such crises might arise at any time.

I have not been keeping very fit during the last fortnight and I am going off to my sister's house in the hills—a remote place above Almora where letters and telegrams come twice a week. I shall stay there for about two weeks.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

78. To Arabinda Sen[1]

Almora
March 11, 1938

Dear Friend,[2]

I have your letter.[3] I am afraid I cannot discuss at any length the question that you have raised. But I want to tell you that the Congress has not changed its policy in the least regarding the new constitution. It cannot act in an adventurist manner and it must choose its ground for a big conflict. In the ministerial crisis that arose we were perfectly prepared for a conflict, but the British Government climbed down completely. It would have been absurd for us to have the conflict under the circumstances.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5 (Pt. III)/1938, p. 429, N.M.M.L.
2. A resident of Calcutta.
3. He wanted to know why the Congress did not take advantage of the ministerial crises in Bihar and U.P. in order to wreck the constitution.

79. To P. Subbarayan[1]

Almora
March 11, 1938

My dear Subbarayan,
Thank you for your letter.[2] It is difficult to discuss big matters of policy in the course of a letter. But I agree with you that it is highly desirable for Prime Ministers to meet the members of the Working Committee to discuss important matters and for the coordination of their general policy. We have always invited the Prime Ministers to the Working Committee meetings, but unfortunately they have not always been able to come.

I am afraid I cannot go to Ootacamund. But thank you for the invitation all the same. I do not like hill stations. When I go to the mountains I prefer solitude. I have come here to Khali near Almora in search of it. There are no houses near us for miles around, and I am getting the rest and refreshment that I want.

There is some chance of my going to Europe this year round about June.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P.L.-3(Pt. II)/1937-38, p. 87, N.M.M.L.
2. He suggested that the Working Committee should keep in touch with the Congress ministries and lay down broad principles of policy.

80. To Sampurnanand[1]

Almora
March 26, 1938

My dear Sampurnanand,[2]
I wonder if you have seen my little book called *Letters From a Father to His Daughter* in English. This came out about nine years ago, and

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. At this time he was Minister for Education in U.P.

was subsequently translated into Hindi and Urdu. The Hindi translation was by Prem Chand.

Some months back I mentioned both to Pantji and Pyarelal Sharma[3] that this book would be a suitable one for primary and secondary schools here. I suggested that if the government were prepared to use the book, I would give them all the author's rights in it as well as the publishers', so that they could issue it cheaply and directly themselves. Obviously there was no question of any profit by the author or a publisher. Still I could not very well push one of my own books, although it is supposed to be very good for the children. Apparently nothing was done.

Unknown to me, my publishers carried on negotiations with the Calcutta University and in Assam through the medium of the Oxford University Press and the book has now been prescribed both in Bengal and in Assam. I do not personally like this profiteering business on text books, but my publishers, Kitabistan, have entered into all manner of contracts with the Oxford University Press as well as the authorities in Bengal and Assam. It is not possible for me to interfere with them now. All this relates to the English edition only.

I am writing to you about the Hindi and Urdu editions and suggesting to you that you might utilise them if you think this worthwhile. There are no contracts relating to them and I shall be very glad to give my rights in the book to the provincial government if it is prepared to issue it for its schools. That is to say, that the provincial government will not have to pay anything to me and probably nothing to the publishers. They could easily issue the book, on a large scale, at four annas a copy. But this should be confined to boys and girls in the schools and should not be for public sale. My publishers can bring out an edition for public sale separately.

I am putting this to you as well as to the Bihar education department for your and their consideration. You will let me know what you think about it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. (1873-1941); a leading Congressman of Meerut; Minister for Education in the Congress ministry in U.P. from July 1937 to 2 March 1938 when he resigned.

81. To General Secretary, U.P.P.C.C.[1]

Allahabad
April 14, 1938

Dear Comrade,

I see from the newspapers that someone is organising a kisans' march and demonstration[2] before the council chamber on the 20th April. I do not know who is doing it. So far as I know the P.C.C. is not concerned. It seems to me highly undesirable for repeated demonstrations to be held before the council chamber. Everybody tries to do so nowadays and the whole object of such demonstrations is thus frustrated by making them cheap and ludicrous. Besides, I think it very wrong for kisans to be asked to march repeatedly to Lucknow. Demonstrations of the kisans may be desirable but it is far better to have them locally. Even if a demonstration is held in Lucknow it should be held away from the council chamber.

Whoever organises such demonstrations does it with some of the prestige of the Congress, and the Congress name is thus inevitably dragged in. The P.C.C. should therefore consider this matter and give definite directions for Congressmen to abide by. It is improper for the P.C.C. to be dragged in without consultation or against its will by individual Congressmen or other organisations. Other organisations of course are free to do what they like. But Congressmen, even though they are connected with other organisations, should only do such things as are consistent with the P.C.C.'s policy. Will you therefore kindly put this matter up before the next meeting of the council?

I should also like you to find out who is responsible for this announcement and to communicate to those concerned my views on the subject.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-20(Pt. II)/1938-39, p. 239, N.M.M.L.
2. The proposed demonstration of kisans before the council chamber on 20 April 1938 was abandoned after Jawaharlal's protests. See also *post*, items 82 and 84.

82. On the Proposed Kisan Demonstration[1]

I find from newspapers that a kisan demonstration is being organised in front of the council chamber in Lucknow on April 20. I do not know definitely who has done so. On enquiry I find that the provincial Congress office or any local Congress committee have nothing to do with this. It seems to me highly undesirable that repeated demonstrations should be held before the council chamber. The very object of such demonstrations is frustrated by such repetition and they are made cheap and ludicrous. We have recently had several demonstrations of this kind organised by odd groups with grievances.

To demonstrate peacefully is the right which we must protect, but to demonstrate so as to interfere frequently with the work of the assembly seems to me highly improper. Those who encourage this set a bad example, which all kinds of people will follow to public detriment. To ask kisans to march long distances and gather before the council chamber at frequent intervals is no service to kisans. It is grossly unfair to them. It is far better for them to demonstrate in their local areas and to give expression to their wishes there.

The provincial Congress committee has called for observance of kisan day on April 17 and all of us should make this a success. That is the right way.

Congress committees should make it perfectly clear that the demonstration organised for April 20 has nothing to do with the Congress. This is a matter which will have to be considered by the council of the provincial Congress committee, for the Congress organisation cannot remain a passive spectator when its name and prestige are used for purposes that are considered undesirable. It is also necessary that no Congressman should do anything that may be inconsistent with the provincial Congress committee's policy.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 14 April 1938. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 15 April 1938.

83. On the Proposed Agrarian Reforms in U.P.[1]

We should all remember why we are celebrating today a special kisan day all over the province. It is because for many years the Congress in this province has stood for the betterment of the kisans' lot. We have worked among the kisans, carried out enquiries and published them. There had been no-tax campaigns in the past when the kisans were suffering greatly owing to the slump in agricultural prices. On many occasions conferences and Congress committees had passed resolutions about the kisans' grievances and demanded relief. At the time of the elections last year, Congressmen went to the peasantry with their election manifesto which laid great stress on the agrarian problem. Most important of all questions is, of course, the question of Swaraj, that is, panchayati raj in which the people should have power to do what they choose. That is our objective still, as of old, and without that there can be no final relief.

But meanwhile we cannot delay agrarian reform and we must therefore give relief to the peasantry as far as possible. In order to give effect to the promises made in the election manifesto, the Congress ministry took immediate steps. The first thing it did was to issue stay orders for the arrears of rent suits and debt suits. Soon after, they appointed a large representative committee of the assembly to consider the question of agrarian reform. After that committee had submitted its report, the government framed its own proposals, and very soon those proposals will be incorporated in a bill.

It is to consider these proposals that we have met here. I am sure the kisans will approve of them for they are based on their own demands. But I must add that mere approval is not enough. We will have to face a stiff opposition from the taluqdars and big zamindars. We must, therefore, be wide awake and organised and see to it that no obstruction stops these reforms. It is possible that the upper chamber may also be obstructive, but if the kisans are well organised and are insistent in their demands we will have our way.

I therefore appeal to you to strengthen the Congress organization in every village and to follow carefully the proceedings of the agrarian bill

1. Speech on the occasion of the kisan day celebrations, Allahabad, 17 April 1938. From *The Leader*, 20 April 1938.

and give your opinions whenever necessary. For the present, we must concentrate on the agrarian measure already before us and get it passed. That will bring considerable relief to a large number of people who have suffered for long, but it will not solve the problem of land for there are many persons without land and money and are unemployed. All the other problems will also have to be tackled, and it may be that in future we may have to consider the whole question of abolishing the zamindari system. The problem of debt is also going to be tackled soon.[2]

2. The United Provinces Agriculturists Debt Redemption Bill of 1939 proposed to reduce considerably the debts of small agriculturists. The bill laid down that the creditor should not be entitled to receive a sum higher than twice the amount of the principal of the loan minus all payments that he may have received.

84. On the Need for Kisan Demonstrations[1]

Some days ago I issued a statement about the proposed kisan demonstration before the council chamber in Lucknow. I learn that in response to my request this demonstration has been abandoned by the organisers. I am very grateful to them for this and at the same time I must apologise to them for certain statements of mine which were based on ignorance. I have subsequently discovered that this demonstration was decided upon early in April at a kisan workers conference held in Lucknow under the distinguished presidentship of Acharya Narendra Deva. At that time no announcement had been made on behalf of the provincial Congress for the celebration of a kisan day on April 17th. It was rightly felt that the kisans should give organised expression to their general approval of the agrarian proposals of the U.P. Government. In view of the attempts being made by some groups hostile to the kisans to organise opposition to these proposals, it is obviously desirable and important that the kisans should have their voice heard effectively and repeatedly. After all, it is the good of these millions of peasants that must be the final criterion.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 20 April 1938. *The Tribune*, 22 April 1938.

Kisan meetings and demonstrations, to enable them to follow developments and to bring the weight of their opinion to bear on them, are thus to be encouraged, and I trust that the Congress organisation will keep alert in this matter. But I still think that demonstrations before the council chamber should only take place on rare and very special occasions and should not otherwise be encouraged. The principal question in the U.P. during the next few months is agrarian reform, and I hope that all of us, whatever our other differences might be, will cooperate fully in this long overdue endeavour to ease the burden on the peasantry.

85. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
April 28, 1938

My dear Bapu,
I returned to Allahabad this morning from Lucknow and received your letter[2] together with a copy of Mahadeva's note on his visit to the Frontier. I have read this note and I shall write to Khan Sahib and Abdul Ghaffar Khan. I am not surprised at anything that Mahadeva has written. It is a natural development of what I myself saw. I had hoped, however, that some check might be imposed on the tendencies that were visible then. The only person who can do this effectively, apart from you, is Maulana Abul Kalam. I think it is highly necessary that he should go to the Frontier. Meanwhile I do hope that both the Khan brothers will come for the ministers' meeting and the Working Committee.

As you know, I have been greatly distressed at the turn events have taken in Congress politics during the last six months. Among the matters that have disturbed me is the new orientation of the Gandhi

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Also printed in *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 283-284.
2. In his letter of 25 April 1938, Mahatma Gandhi stated: "It hurts me that, at this very critical juncture in our history we don't seem to see eye to eye in important matters. I can't tell you how positively lonely I feel to know that nowadays I can't carry you with me. I know that you would do much for affection. But in matters of state, there can be no surrender to affection when the intellect rebels. My regard for you is deeper for your revolt. But that only intensifies the grief of loneliness."

Seva Sangh.[3] We are developing very rapidly on Tammany Hall lines and it is distressing to find that even the Gandhi Seva Sangh, which might have set a standard to others and refused to become just a party organisation intent on winning elections by hook or crook, has descended to the common level.[4] I feel strongly that the Congress ministries are working inefficiently and not doing much that they could do. They are adapting themselves far too much to the old order and trying to justify it. But all this, bad as it is, might be tolerated. What is far worse is that we are losing the high position that we have built up, with so much labour, in the hearts of the people. We are sinking to the level of ordinary politicians who have no principles to stand by and whose work is governed by a day to day opportunism.

Partly of course this is due to a general deterioration all over the world, partly to the transition period through which we are passing. Nevertheless, it does show up our failings and the sight is painful. I think there are enough men of goodwill in the Congress to cope with the situation if they set about it the right way. But their minds are full of party conflicts and the desire to crush this individual or that group. Obviously bad men are preferred to good men because the former promise to tow the party line. When this happens there is bound to be deterioration.

For months past I have felt that I could not function effectively in India as things were going. I have carried on of course as one can always carry on. But I have felt out of place and a misfit. This was one reason (though there were others also) why I decided to go to Europe. I felt I could be more useful there and in any event I would freshen up my tired and puzzled mind. I have found it difficult to discuss any matter at length with you because I do not wish to tire and worry you in your present state of health. And then

3. It was formed in 1923 but its policy and programme continued to evolve till 1934 when they became more defined. Broadly, its aims were the removal of untouchability and promotion of village reconstruction work and village industries. At the meeting of the Sangh in April 1937, when asked whether those who entered the legislatures might be members of the Sangh, Mahatma Gandhi said that the members of the Sangh should also enter the legislatures as "no political programme can stand without the constructive programme.... But there should be no scramble for power. That will be our undoing. Only those will go as are asked by the Gandhi Seva Sangh to go...."
4. Later, in his letter of 7 May 1938 to Jawaharlal, Mahatma Gandhi wrote: "What is it in the new orientation of the Gandhi Seva Sangh that has disturbed you? I must own that I am responsible for it. I should like you to tell me unhesitatingly what has disturbed you. If I have erred, you know I shall retrace my steps as soon as I discover the error."

I have also felt that such discussions do not yield any worthwhile results.

I have decided to sail from Bombay on the 2nd June. How long I shall be away I do not know. But probably I shall return in September towards the end.

On the 1st of May I am going for a week to Garhwal. Sarup will go with me and we shall have a short aeroplane flight over Badrinath and the snows. On return from Garhwal I shall go to Bombay for the ministers' meeting and the Working Committee.

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

86. On the Difficulties of the Congress Ministries[1]

The calling of the Prime Ministers' conference[2] has been a beneficial move and good results have followed therefrom. They have reviewed the work they had done during the last nine or ten months. They had also to find out how much of what they intended to do had remained incomplete. They also wanted to find out what were the defects in their work and how they could remove those defects so that the strength of the Congress was increased.

The work before the ministers is particularly difficult in this country, as there are many obstacles in their way. I am reminded of a cartoon in which India was represented as an elephant, one of its legs having been secured by means of a rope to a tree. Congressmen sat on the elephant and the Viceroy stood by its side egging it on to move forward and saying that the rope was elastic. Thus, we have been trying to move forward and although we are making progress, the fact remains that India is still in bondage.

I want to draw your attention to a severe handicap which the ministers are experiencing in carrying out their tasks. There is a veritable hierarchy of officials starting from the civil servants downwards. For a number of years in the past, these officials had been accustomed to a

1. Speech at Bombay, 13 May 1938. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 14 May 1938.
2. A conference of the Congress Prime Ministers of the seven provinces was held in Bombay from 12 to 14 May 1938.

particular type of administration. Congress ministries have, however, completely changed the old system.

It is, of course, difficult for these officials to learn the new way of doing things as intended by the Congress ministries. They can as well be asked to go to a school and learn all these things over again. And it is equally difficult to have them replaced by men who know how to do things in the changed circumstances. Thus, on the one hand, the Congress ministers have to carry on their work amidst severe handicaps imposed by the new constitution, and on the other, the officials are of a different frame of mind.

Unless these officials develop a missionary spirit they cannot succeed in their efforts. It is quite obvious that unless the thousands of officers under government employ show the same spirit with which the ministers are actuated, it would be impossible for them to fulfil their task. The Congress ministers are working very hard. For them, an eight-hour day has no significance. Each Prime Minister is working for sixteen to eighteen hours a day, and has consequently suffered in health.

The ministers have also discussed as to why they are not moving so fast as they intended. This might have been due to some defects and to the inherent weakness of the people themselves, and now they are devising means to get rid of this kind of weakness. At the same time, they have also to be careful to see that they are not caught too much in this snare of offices, lest they should forget the main objective for which the Congress has been striving.

depends largely upon the people themselves. They know that the Congress is the biggest national organisation in this country and they must strengthen it. Hitherto, people were afraid of joining the Congress due to the attitude and policy it had adopted. But now the situation has altered and Congress membership has increased by leaps and bounds. But at the same time, the organisation has become weak on account of the presence of some self-seekers. We know how the villagers and peasants have benefited by the strengthening of the Congress. The villager has been able to feel the relief as he has found a reliable friend in the Congress. The Congress knows the strength of its real enemies who have the army at their command. I want the people to remain on guard against the danger posed by such forces.

87. On the Congress Attitude towards Kisan Sabhas[1]

While as a rule no conflict should occur between the Congress and the kisan sabhas, conflicts have occasionally taken place due to local causes or personal animosities rather than due to any conflict of principles. Some individuals unable to find a place in the district Congress executives have sought to organise kisan sabhas locally which might give them greater prominence.

The Congress had to take disciplinary action in the past in a few cases and where any Congressman through a kisan sabha or otherwise indulged in open activities to condemn or run down the Congress and bring it into disrepute, disciplinary action had to be taken against him. The general attitude of the Congress towards the kisan sabhas should be governed by the Haripura resolution.[2] It has been the

proud privilege of the Congress in these provinces to identify itself with the kisans and the masses. They have taken the Congress to their heart and made it their very own, and their mud huts, the emblem of misery and poverty, proudly bear the national tricolour with its promise of deliverance. Though our organisation is national and should as such represent all groups and interests, it must remain predominantly kisan and should place their interests foremost. This is particularly necessary at present when an important agrarian bill is before the legislature.[3] The whole Congress organisation in the provinces must be mobilised to lend its support to the bill.

If Congressmen keep out of the kisan organisations, they will merely allow non-Congressmen or even opponents of the Congress to take charge of them and run them in opposition to the Congress. Their influence may not be much but they will succeed in sowing the seeds of evil and create difficulties for them. The council cannot approve of Congressmen joining any and every kisan organisation and in the event of their being run in opposition to the Congress it cannot be encouraged. It is desirable to have kisan organisations but there should be no duplication of them. The Congress is kisan in its outlook and it must retain its national character and speak the language which is in keeping with it. If a kisan sabha is to serve the cause of the kisans, it must serve in coordination with the Congress. The desire of individuals to figure prominently before the public through kisan sabhas should not be encouraged. It is only the cause of the kisans that should be pushed. It is obviously undesirable for any kisan organisation to put up its own candidates in municipal, local board, or assembly elections in opposition to the Congress candidates.

Any attempt to replace the national flag by another or to lessen its significance is not only a disservice to the national movement but also to the cause of the kisans.

3. See p. 379.

88. On the Working of the Congress Ministries[1]

If we attempt a critical analysis of the working of the Congress ministries, we shall see that on the credit side are the growth of Congress

1. Speech at Poona, 29 May 1938. From *The Hindu*, 30 May 1938.

power, the increase in Congress prestige, the widening of Congress influence and the enactment of beneficent legislation for the masses, thus vindicating the Congress claims.

On the debit side, there have appeared signs which clearly suggest that the ministries have not functioned in terms of the ultimate goal of Purna Swaraj. Their energies are now slightly deflected from the main struggle for Swaraj and in place of singleness of purpose in achieving that goal, they have now become immersed in immediate issues. The Congress has now attracted into its fold thousands who are not eager for achieving Swaraj or to join the fight, but are merely seeking personal gains. Above all, there is the fact that the Congress has lost the chastening and bracing opportunity of action, of fighting imperialism directly and thus of deriving more strength.

With the acceptance of office we have not been able to wipe out the evils of economic exploitation by imperialism and the poverty and misery of the masses. Success can however be achieved by relying on one's own strength.

89. On the Challenge of the Vested Interests[1]

I have read with interest the speeches delivered at the zamindars' conference[2] at Lucknow. There seems to be so much hysteria behind them that it is difficult to take them seriously. Still, one cannot ignore this new move of the zamindars and taluqdars and other vested interests in the United Provinces. If they want to challenge the Congress, that challenge will be gladly accepted; if they want to challenge their tenants in the U.P., the peasantry of my province will also gladly accept the challenge.

The Congress in the U.P., as elsewhere in India, has tried to proceed on a national basis, keeping in mind the interests of all groups and classes; but, inevitably, it has thought and worked in terms of masses. That has been the very basis of its existence and it must continue to function as such.

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 1 June 1938. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 2 June 1938.
2. The Oudh zamindars' conference held in Lucknow on 29 May 1938 advocated closer cooperation between the zamindars and other capitalists "against the socialist and communist menace in the country." The U.P. Tenancy Bill was described as "unjust and mischievous".

5

PROBLEMS OF CONGRESS ORGANISATION

1. Publicity to Congress Resolutions[1]

Allahabad
January 2nd, 1937

Dear Comrade,

The Faizpur Congress is over and now we have to get down to work to carry out the directions of the Congress. For the next six weeks or so most of us will be busy with the provincial elections, but that does not mean that we should postpone activity in regard to the other resolutions of the Congress. Indeed many of these resolutions lay down the Congress policy on important and vital matters and should therefore be placed before the electorate and the public. At the numerous public meetings that are being held in connection with the elections attention should be drawn to these resolutions of the Congress. The election manifesto should, of course, always be kept in the foreground. Particular attention should be invited to the following resolutions:

(1) Elections and constituent assembly—This resolution,[2] as embodying the Congress policy in regard to the elections, should be clearly explained and the implications of the constituent assembly to frame a constitution for a free India pointed out. It should be stated that this constituent assembly is very different from an all parties conference. It will be a grand panchayat of the nation, elected on an adult franchise, meeting when the reality of power has already shifted to the people so that they can give effect to their decisions without any interference from outside authority. It will be the only proper method of establishing a free democratic state for which the Congress stands.

(2) Convention—The idea of this convention[3] should be explained. It is not a substitute for the constituent assembly but a preparation for it, as well as for a disciplined and effective fight against the federal structure and the rest of the new Act.

(3) Suppression of civil liberties and detenus—This suppression and the detenu question must always be emphasized before the public so that a strong public opinion against them may be built up.

1. Circular to P.C.Cs. A.I.C.C. File No. P-1/1937-38, pp. 219-222, N.M.M.L.
2. The resolution reiterated the "entire rejection of the Government of India Act of 1935", described any cooperation with the constitution as a "betrayal of India's struggle for freedom", and called upon all the Congress candidates to carry on the election campaign strictly in accordance with the election manifesto issued by the A.I.C.C.
3. See pp. 60-71.

(4) Agrarian programme—Although this is a provisional programme, it has great importance and the vast body of our rural electors and others will appreciate it. It should therefore find prominent place in our election campaign, especially in rural areas.

(5) War danger and frontier policy—The importance of preparing the public mind on the possibility of imperialist war and our resistance to it must always be kept in view. This requires widespread and ceaseless propaganda. As for the frontier policy of the government, there is little realization of the injury this has done, and is doing, to India as well as her trans-border neighbours. It is desirable, therefore, that the public should realise this danger and injury.

(6) Non-participation in the Coronation and other imperialist functions[4]—This resolution is important and it is essential that all Congressmen should always keep it in mind. No Congressman can take part in any official or semi-official functions which go to strengthen British imperialism. In doubtful cases it is better to err on the side of non-participation than on the other side. In such cases reference can be made to our office.

Special attention must be drawn to the possibility of Coronation functions being held here. Every such function, whatever it may be, must be avoided. Probably there will be no Coronation celebrations in India for many months, but it is nevertheless desirable to educate public opinion on this subject from now onwards.

(7) Hartal on April 1st—The hartal, which the Congress has fixed for April 1st, is intimately connected with our agitation against the new Act. It should, therefore, be made a part of our election campaign and the country should be fully prepared for it. Detailed directions for it will probably be issued later, but the general idea of this hartal should be popularised from now onwards.

Printed copies of Congress resolutions are being sent to you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. The Coronation of George VI was to take place on 12 May 1937. The Congress decided not to participate in the celebrations; this was "in no way intended to express any ill will or discourtesy to the King's person."

2. Importance of Mass Contacts[1]

Allahabad
January 2nd, 1937

Dear Comrade,

I should like to draw your special attention to the Congress constitution and mass contacts resolution[2] passed by the Faizpur Congress. By this resolution a committee[3] has been appointed to revise the constitution with a view to democratise the Congress still further. This committee would like your cooperation in this matter and any suggestions received will be carefully considered. It might be desirable for your P.C.C. to appoint a small sub-committee for the purpose. Reports and suggestions should reach us by the 31st March 1937.

Pending such constitutional changes, the Congress has suggested that a wider basis should be given to the Congress by making the primary unit a village or a *mohalla*. This can be done even under the existing all-India constitution, though it may be necessary to alter some provincial constitutions for the purpose. If so, I trust you will take early steps to make the necessary changes in your provincial constitution. We hope that these village and *mohalla* committees will be functioning by the end of June 1937.

Under the terms of this resolution each P.C.C. has to appoint an organising secretary. Such a secretary should preferably be a wholetime worker. Kindly let us know soon what you propose to do in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Circular to P.C.Cs. A.I.C.C. File No. P-1/1937-38, pp. 217-218, N.M.M.L.
2. This resolution emphasised the need for "increasing the association of the masses with the Congress organization" and "giving opportunities to the primary members to initiate and consider Congress policies and programme."
3. Rajendra Prasad, Jairamdas Doulatram and Jayaprakash Narayan were the members of this committee.

3. Celebration of Independence Day[1]

Allahabad
January 2/11, 1937

Dear Comrade,

I write to remind you of the approach of January 26th—Independence Day. The fact of elections must not come in the way of this important celebration. Indeed the celebration should help us in our election work. In the event of polling actually taking place in some places on that day, suitable variations in the manner of celebrations should be made, but in any event the day must be celebrated. To permit of local variations no detailed directions are being sent, and local committees can frame their own programmes. The essential part of it is the holding of a meeting in the afternoon or evening and the repetition, by those attending, of the independence pledge of 1930 with certain inevitable variations. The last paragraph of this pledge relating to civil disobedience has been left out, and a few lines added at the end.[2]

In the morning, there should be a formal hoisting of the national flag, with appropriate ceremony. Householders and shopkeepers should also be encouraged to put up or hang national flags. An attempt should be made to have these celebrations on an extensive scale, so as to reach even remote villages.

A copy of the pledge[3] is enclosed.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Circular to P.C.Cs. A.I.C.C. File No. P-I/1937-38, pp. 209-210, N.M.M.L.
2. The pledge issued on the eve of the salt satyagraha in 1930 had contained references to that movement and to the moral and material injury done to the country under British imperialism. These references were deleted from the pledge and the following lines were added to it: "We recognise that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. India has gained strength and self-reliance and marched a long way to Swaraj following peaceful and legitimate methods, and it is by adhering to these methods that our country will attain independence. We pledge ourselves anew to the Independence of India and solemnly resolve to carry on non-violently the struggle for freedom till Purna Swaraj is attained."
3. Not printed.

4. The Ban on Independence Pledge[1]

I find that some provincial governments have banned the publication of the independence pledge. So far as I know, this is the first time that this pledge has been banned, although it has been used and repeated often during the past seven years. It is evident that the tremendous mass enthusiasm for the Congress, which is evident everywhere, has upset the nerves of these governments. For the present, it is not our policy or desire to commit breaches of such orders, and so where there is a ban, it is desirable not to use this particular pledge or form of words, but the Independence Day meetings must be held widely and a brief pledge reiterating the old pledge should be taken.

1. Statement to the press, Kanpur, 24 January 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 25 January 1937.

5. On Understanding Congress Policy[1]

Allahabad
March 3, 1937

Dear Comrade,
I should like to draw your particular attention to the series of resolutions passed by the Working Committee at Wardha recently. You must have seen these resolutions in the press and they will be sent to you soon from our office. These resolutions give a definite and clear lead to the Congress organisation and to the country generally in regard to our future work and policy both inside the legislatures and outside. Final decisions about this policy will no doubt be taken by the A.I.C.C. in Delhi but, whatever the decision on the question of ministries might be, this general background of our policy is clear and is bound to remain. Therefore every newly elected Congress member of the legislatures as well as all other Congress workers should be fully acquainted with it and should act up to it. You will therefore kindly take immediate steps to inform all such persons as well as all Congress committees in your jurisdiction of these resolutions. At the next meeting of your provincial Congress committee these resolutions should be read out.

1. Circular to P.C.Cs. A.I.C.C. File No. P-I/1936, p. 7, N.M.M.L.

In particular, I should like to draw your attention, and through you that of all Congressmen in your province, to the immediate necessity of our organisational work being carried on in rural and other areas at almost the same tempo as during election time. The elected members have a special responsibility for this in their own constituencies. They should also see to it that the people in their areas are not harassed or ill-treated because of their support of the Congress in the elections and every such case should be investigated.

Recently hail and frost have done great damage to crops in north India and the peasantry in these areas are alarmed and distressed. In all such cases, Congress workers and Congress members of legislatures should make personal enquiries and help the peasantry in putting forward demands for remission and other forms of help to relieve their distress.

Leaders and members of Congress parliamentary parties should remember that we can enter into no alliances with other groups, nor can we negotiate with the government or their representatives in regard to our future work in the legislatures. So long as the A.I.C.C. has not definitely laid down its directions, no such conversations can serve any useful purpose. In the event of any particular developments taking place, the matter should be referred to us to ensure that an identical and uniform policy is followed everywhere.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. To Gopichand Bhargava[1]

Allahabad
March 5, 1937

My dear Dr. Gopichand,

Kripalaniji has shown me your letter[2] to him. I have taken the trouble to go into this matter and I must confess that the more I look into it the more it disgusts me. Punjab politics seem to have got into such a hopeless state of mess that nothing but a major operation is likely to put them on right lines. The Congress in the Punjab simply means a

1. A.I.C.C. File No. E-17(i)/1936, p. 119, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 27 February 1937, he wrote that Ruplal Puri, president of the Amritsar Congress Committee, and his followers had worked against the Congress candidate in the assembly elections and had been carrying on a "false and disgraceful propaganda" against him.

handful of persons in a few cities, and that handful quarrelling continuously. The last elections showed us where the Congress was strong and where it was weak. Nowhere in India have we got such a thing as a typical pro-government party like the Unionist Party gaining so much support in the province.[3] I must confess that I have not quite got over the fact that the key seats in the Punjab were left uncontested by us. It is my belief that we could have captured almost every rural seat in the Punjab, Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh, if we had approached the peasantry on right lines.

The Congress does not even go near the peasantry in the Punjab and in the cities it is busy with personal squabbles.

In your letter you point out that those who are conspicuous by their absence at the time of action come out when the question of holding office in the Congress is concerned. This is perfectly true. But in the Punjab, do you not think that it applies in equal measure to both rival groups? I have been reading posters issued in Amritsar. I find it difficult to decide which side has succeeded in issuing the more objectionable posters.

I am writing to the Punjab P.C.C. in regard to these Amritsar matters and I shall pursue this question further. Regarding Ruplal Puri it is quite possible that the present Punjab P.C.C. is partial to him. But I must say that my own efforts to get at solid facts about him have not succeeded. It is no good saying vaguely that he has been opposing the Congress candidate. It does not even carry me very far if I am told that he informed Malaviyaji that Keshoram had better chances. All this may be undesirable, but it does not give me solid ground for disciplinary action. I am perfectly prepared to take such action if I am given the facts. But in spite of every attempt, such facts are not supplied to me. Thus it is not just the question of the Punjab P.C.C. not acting.

I have today had a long talk with representatives of Dr. Santram's party.[4] They have given me their version. Even according to this version they have made any number of mistakes. No doubt the other party must have made an equal number or perhaps more mistakes. I am asking for an explanation of all these matters.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. It had won 96 out of 175 seats in the Punjab Assembly. The Congress had won only 18 of the 29 seats contested by it.
4. Santram Seth, Sohan Singh Josh and Master Purnanand had formed a rival Congress committee in Amritsar opposing the committee headed by Ruplal Puri.

7. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
March 8, 1937

My dear Bapu,
I have your letter of the 5th March enquiring about khadi at exhibitions.[2] This matter has been repeatedly discussed by us in the course of the past year ever since my return from Europe. The U.P. Provincial Congress Committee organised one or two exhibitions two or three years back. Since then they have not repeated this. But occasionally some of our district committees organise exhibitions. Even this has grown rarer now. Exhibitions organised by swadeshi sabhas however continue. Last November the Allahabad Swadeshi League had their annual exhibition. As usual they exhibited mill cloth. They wanted me to open the exhibition. For several months I refused to agree because of this khadi matter. Ultimately however I agreed to do so for various reasons chiefly local. I felt that my refusal would be misinterpreted and would do us some injury. In my opening speech there I dealt largely with this question of khadi.

The question you have put is not easy to answer. The average khadi worker seems to be of the opinion that khadi should not be exhibited if mill cloth is allowed there. Other Congress workers are usually of a contrary opinion on the ground that at such exhibitions there is usually a good sale of khadi. Obviously the opinion of the khadi worker who is presumed to be an expert at his job and who is anxious to push khadi should be almost final. I would, therefore, hesitate to give my decision against him unless I succeed in convincing him. I imagine that from a certain long-distance view it is better even to incur some loss now so as to avoid producing any confusion in the public mind as to what khadi is and what it is not. This can only be done by adherence to the present policy of banning uncertified khadi sales in such exhibitions.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-27/1937, pp. 521-523, N.M.M.L.
2. Mahatma Gandhi had written: "As you may remember, the policy of the A.I.S.A. has invariably been not to exhibit khadi at exhibitions held under the aegis of the Congress and accepting Indian mill cloth as exhibits there....A reference has already been made to khadi workers in other provinces and they tell me that lifting the bar will certainly damage khadi because they argue that the public will never be able to understand the distinction between khadi and mill cloth if both are exhibited at Congress exhibition stalls. I hold this argument to be conclusive...."

At the same time I find that uncertified khadi is sold at such exhibitions and plenty of people patronise it. There are quite large numbers of people, as you know, who are not particularly keen on buying certified khadi, but who are prepared to do so if it comes their way. The point is: are we to cater for these people in any special measure or are we to concentrate on holding fast to those who desire to use pure khadi only? This question has not only its business side but its psychological side also. Khadi has, on the one hand, built up a firm foundation for itself and there is a body of men in the country who must have pure khadi, whatever the cost or the trouble. At the same time, khadi does not spread as rapidly as it might among other classes who only occasionally patronise it. For khadi workers the object should be to develop the khadi habit in the latter. That habit comes largely from appeals to the mind or heart and partly from sheer habit. Ordinarily speaking, it would be a good thing to have as many casual purchasers as possible so that they may get used to buying and wearing khadi and thus develop the real habit. The present policy, to some extent, keeps away this casual purchaser and thus reduces the field from which regular khadi buyers might be drawn.

In regard to these exhibitions there is another difficulty. Often enough there is no real supervision over the stuffs that come in and textiles made of foreign yarn are taken, or even some stuffs which are largely foreign and have just a bit of Indian material and work on them. This may perhaps be got over with a more stringent control. But the usual Swadeshi league committee is not frightfully keen over this matter.

Swadeshi exhibitions often raise other issues also which cannot be ignored. For instance, last year I decided to open it because I felt that any other decision on my part would have given rise to some trouble and bitterness and thus would have come in the way of our work.

Therefore if you want my final opinion I cannot give it very definitely, and because of my not being so definite I must respect the opinions of others who are working for khadi. I am however inclined to think that it might be preferable to allow khadi to be exhibited and sold in these exhibitions under certain conditions which would prevent as far as possible (1) something else being mistaken for khadi and the distinction between khadi and mill cloth being clearly preserved, (2) the exclusion of partly foreign stuffs from the exhibitions.

I have just this morning returned from Lucknow. I hope to be here for the next six days. On the 14th I go to Delhi where I hope to meet you on the 15th. In Delhi I shall be staying at Ansari's house.

My mother is improving, I think, though the process is so slow it is hardly perceptible.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Shankerlal direct.

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

8. To Shahid Suhrawardy[1]

Allahabad
March 10, 1937

My dear Shahid,[2]
It was good to hear from you after these many years.[3] It must be nearly ten years since we met. When I was in prison I heard vaguely that you had come to India. Since then I have occasionally heard of you and when I went to Calcutta I wondered if I would be able to meet you. But I was so terribly occupied and I suppose your heavy academic duties kept you away.

I was very glad to learn that you were being put up as a candidate on behalf of the Congress and I am sorry that you did not succeed. It is obvious that this was due to the indiscipline of the Congress people. Bengal politics have long been in a terribly muddled state. One might almost despair of them. But still one dare not despair at any time about anything.

I like your phrase about me: "One whose unparalleled personal sincerity envelops his political doctrines".[4] This sounds so nice. But what exactly does it mean is more than I can say. However I shall feel warm and comfortable, wrapped up in this unparalleled ferment.

With good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5(KW)(i)/1937, p. 389, N.M.M.L.
2. (1890-1965); professor of Islamic studies, Visvabharati, 1926-32; professor of comparative fine arts at Calcutta University, 1932-43; visiting professor at Columbia University, U.S.A., 1953; later served as Pakistan's ambassador to Spain and other countries.
3. He had written that he had been defeated in the election to the Bengal Council "due to the bungling of the leaders and the indiscipline of the Congress elected members."
4. He wrote: "Like the rest of the world I have been following your extraordinary output of talent and energy but Bibi...and I often talk of you as one whose unparalleled personal sincerity envelops his political doctrines....Please do not look upon this as individualistic heresy; it is the foundation of my affection and admiration for you."

9. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

Allahabad
April 16, 1937

My dear Subhas,
I got your letter[2] of 11th April. I am answering it briefly as I am still more or less bed-ridden.

I am quite sure that the Working Committee will gladly give you full support in your attempts to put an end to the long-standing disputes and divisions in Bengal Congress politics. Generally speaking it is the policy of the Working Committee not to interfere in local disputes but leave them entirely to the province. In Bengal specially the Working Committee has not had the least desire to interfere. But when big groups come into conflict and the P.C.C. itself just holds the balance between the two and matters are continually being referred to us by both groups, it becomes impossible to remain silent. Even so, I think you will find that the attention of the P.C.C. has been drawn to the complaints and they have themselves been asked to deal with them. During the last few months we have received a large number of complaints, notably from Tipperah, and all these have been forwarded to the B.P.C.C.

There was one matter about the election of the A.I.C.C. from Bengal which *prima facie* seemed to be wrong in so far as the counting of votes is concerned. We asked for an explanation from the B.P.C.C. None came for a long time. The matter was, therefore, put up before the Working Committee and, with Sarat's concurrence, a recount was suggested. Later, an explanation came and so we have kept the matter pending for further inquiry.

Last year I issued a circular to all provinces discouraging local complaints being made to the A.I.C.C. and emphasizing that all such matters must be dealt with by the P.C.Cs except in rare instances. You will remember another difficulty. The Bengal P.C.C. has in the past

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-5/1937, pp. 591-595, N.M.M.L.
2. Bose had written: "You know all about the quarrels in Bengal in recent years. Their roots have gone deep. The differences centre round personalities and it is difficult to discover any principles underlying them. After my release all the groups have offered to work with me....I can think of handling provincial affairs only if I feel that I shall have the full support of the Working Committee and the different groups will cooperate among themselves—and not merely with me—in carrying out future programme...."

hardly been a properly constituted body because there were no proper elections for many years. That difficulty should not arise now.

It seems to me that the best approach to the Muslim masses should be directly through local Congress committees. Kisan sabhas may be organised where necessary. But where this is done by semi-Congress people it leads to conflict. Where the same persons function in both organisations it makes little difference. But the real point is that you should have an effective agrarian programme. If this is good enough it will draw the Muslim masses. If the Congress can adopt it, it is desirable that it should do so.

In regard to disciplinary action, I think that flagrant cases of indiscipline should be dealt with. But too much of disciplinary action sometimes creates the impression of an inquisition.

It seems to me undesirable for prominent Congressmen to form a regular party with non-Congressmen in the assembly.[3] The question is not free from difficulty but I think you should at least point out to these persons that their action is not proper and it does not fit in with their position in the Congress. I understand that Bankim Mukherjee[4] is the vice-president of the Bengal P.C.C. It is open to them to confer with other labour and peasant members but to have a regular party is definitely undesirable. It may be necessary to ask them later on to resign from office in any executive committees of the Congress. For the present do not take any extreme step.

It is difficult to give a general opinion on this question.[5] Each case must be dealt with on its merits. Obviously it will be desirable for you to interest yourself personally in these matters. At the same time it may be difficult to postpone consideration of all the disputes for many months. You and your committee must decide what is best. If complaints are made to us, we shall refer them back to you but it may be that an urgent complaint may require quick decision. Perhaps it will facilitate your own work later to have an inquiry committee to go into the matter and report to you.

3. Bankim Mukherjee and Niharendu Dutt Majumdar, elected to the provincial assembly as United Front candidates with Congress help, had formed a Parliamentary Peasant and Labour Party with some non-Congress legislators. Bose wrote to Jawaharlal that "they do not accept the Congress whip any longer."
4. (1897-1961); one of the founder-members of All India Kisan Sabha in 1936; a Communist Party member of the Bengal Council, 1936 and Bengal Assembly, 1952-57; deputy leader of the opposition in Bengal Assembly, 1957-61.
5. Bose wanted Jawaharlal to advise him in regard to the large number of disputes about the constitution of district Congress committees, pending before the provincial Congress committee.

This again is difficult for me to advise as so much depends on local circumstances.[6] Ordinarily it is bad for elections to be postponed and yet special cases require special remedies. As a matter of fact, new elections will have to take place everywhere in the course of the next six months or so. As I have stated above, in this and other matters we want to leave the decisions in the hands of the P.C.C. But sometimes when reference is made to us we have to abide by the letter of the constitution. If you yourself take all these matters into consideration and then decide or, when necessary, make your own recommendations to the Working Committee, there should be little difficulty.

I might inform you that most of us feel that the present Congress constitution requires many alterations in regard to elections, etc. A committee has been appointed for the purpose. We want these elections to start from the primary village committees.

I have long felt that a desirable change in Bengal would be to make the city of Calcutta a separate province like Bombay. At present Calcutta politics and sometimes corporation politics overshadow Bengal's problems. A separation of the two would help you to develop that healthy agrarian problem of the Bengal districts. This separation can only take place with the consent of Bengal Congressmen. I spoke to Sarat about this and he seemed to be agreeable. I have found most people from the Bengal districts to agree to this proposal. Perhaps you could circularise your districts about it.

There is one important matter to which I should like to draw your special attention. This is the question of disciplinary action against Nalini Ranjan Sarkar.[7] I am sorry there has been so much delay in this matter. This is having a bad effect in other provinces. The case is an obvious and flagrant one requiring immediate and strong action. I hope that you will see that this is done soon.

I understand that you might be going to Dalhousie soon. If you go there while I am in Allahabad, I hope you will break journey here. My programme is to remain here till the 24th April when I go to Wardha for the Working Committee, returning on the 29th. On the 4th May I sail from Calcutta for Rangoon.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. Bose feared that if elections took place in his absence for the remaining district Congress committees, the factional disputes would grow. He therefore sought Jawaharlal's advice whether elections should be postponed.
7. For joining the Bengal ministry formed by the Krishak Party and the Muslim League.

10. To B. Raja Bhushanarao[1]

Allahabad
May 5, 1937

Dear Comrade,[2]

I received some time ago your letter[3] without date in which you have drawn my attention to the widening gulf in Andhra between socialists and other Congressmen. I am sorry that owing to my illness, and later the Working Committee meeting, I could not answer it earlier.

The general question you have raised is important and deserving of our careful attention. While it is inevitable that in a great and widespread movement like ours, differences of opinion arise and sometimes there is a pull in different directions, it is obviously undesirable and injurious to our cause if these differences affect our action and promote indiscipline in our ranks. To prevent or, at any rate, to mitigate this evil we can issue general directions and see that they are obeyed. We must also examine specific causes and instances of conflict in action and try to lay down a correct course of action in regard to them.

One of these specific matters has been the use, on occasion, of the red flag. On this question I have recently issued a circular letter[4] to all provincial Congress committees and this has found publicity in the press. So I shall not say anything further about this matter.

In Andhra, so far as I know, there are, quite apart from members of the Congress Socialist Party, individual unattached persons calling themselves socialists who frequently act in an indisciplined manner. I believe that some months back there was some conflict between these individuals and the Socialist Party and the latter took action against them.

It is difficult to deal with the matter properly except in the case of specific instances which can be investigated and, if necessary, action taken. If such instances are brought to our notice, we shall certainly enquire into these and take other steps. In your letter you mention certain such matters. The reference to the recent assembly elections is vague and I am afraid nothing can be done about them now.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-3(i)/1937-38, pp. 269-271, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary, West Godavari District Congress Committee.
3. He had written that during the elections the socialists had carried on propaganda for Congress candidates as a different group. On 1 April the socialists and non-socialists had taken out two different processions and shouted slogans against each other. He added: "Some Congress Socialists seem to develop a class mentality from which they want to look upon others as untouchables."
4. See *post*, section 8, item 1.

As regards April 1st, I am surprised to learn that the Andhra P.C.C. circulated for adoption a resolution other than that issued by me for the whole country.[5] This seems to me very improper for the P.C.C. The resolution I had issued as President was issued to ensure uniformity all over India. It was issued after consultation with the Working Committee. It was in almost the identical language used by the All India Convention in Delhi, and it was the duty of every P.C.C. to adopt it in its entirety without any change whatever. In this matter I am enquiring from the Andhra P.C.C., but from what you have written it appears that those who objected to the P.C.C. resolution were clearly right.

As for the red flag being used in the procession on that day, the use of it was improper in a Congress procession. If other groups or organisations, such as labour or peasant groups, as such, wanted to carry the red flag somewhere in the procession where they were marching, they could do so. But this implied that some non-Congress or semi-Congress groups were joining and cooperating with a Congress procession. Even so, the red flag could not be displayed prominently. The dominant and obvious flag in every Congress procession must be the national flag. There must be no rivalry between the two and no confusion on this issue in the public mind. Those who join a Congress procession must agree to treat it as such and not to do anything to it which makes it some other kind of procession.

I do not know why the Andhra P.C.C. prohibited speeches on April 1st. They were not prohibited elsewhere and I see no reason why there should have been such prohibition. But if a P.C.C. definitely issues such a direction, it should certainly be obeyed. Not to obey it is to promote indiscipline.

The slogan which you say was used by some socialists on that day was objectionable. The fact that two meetings were held and two processions taken out was also very objectionable. If this kind of thing continues and develops, it is bound to put an end to all possibility of united action.

It is difficult to lay down any general rule about slogans. Some are good, some bad, some on the border line. Some latitude may be allowed to a crowd, indeed it has to be allowed, but this must not mean the encouragement of slogans which are in effect an attack on the Congress.

5. The resolution issued by Jawaharlal read: "In order to demonstrate effectively the will of the Indian people to resist the imposition of the unwanted Constitution and as an earnest of their determination to launch a powerful mass movement for its destruction, the Congress issues a call for a nation-wide hartal or general strike on April 1, the day on which the new Constitution is to be inaugurated."

As the subject you have raised is important, I am sending a copy of this letter to the secretary of the Andhra P.C.C.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To Secretary, Madras Provincial Varnashrama Swarajya Sangha[1]

Allahabad
June 19, 1937

Dear Sir,
On my return from Burma and Malaya I received your letter[2] of the 9th June together with its enclosures. The statement[3] that I issued some time back regarding the Congress policy towards religion is a correct statement of the Congress position in so far as the Karachi Congress laid it down. The Congress stands for the free exercise of religion and for freedom of conscience subject to public order and morality.

You have however sought to extend this definition so as to prevent the Congress from considering questions of untouchability, temple entry and the like. You should know that this is a totally unjustified interpretation of the Congress position, and the removal of untouchability in all its forms has been one of the fundamental planks of the Congress for many years past. It is obvious that your conception of religion includes in it the forcible suppression by law and otherwise of other people to conform to your own opinion in the matter. That is the very reverse of what the Congress thinks and lays down in regard to religious freedom. The very idea of untouchability is one which offends against the Karachi resolution on fundamental rights. It offends against freedom of religion. It is open for an individual, if he objects to mixing with any other group, to retire to some place where he may live apart from the world. He may go to the Himalayas or to some island in the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-19(ii)/1937, pp. 199-201, N.M.M.L.
2. He complained that Rajagopalachari, leader of the Congress organisation and of the ministry in Madras, was acting against the policy of the Congress by supporting the temple entry proclamation and other purely religious issues.
3. See pp. 125-129.

sea. It is not open to him, in order to please himself, to impose his will on large numbers of others and prevent them from taking their share in social life. If any member of your organisation objects to meeting untouchables, the Congress does not force him to meet them. He can pray in solitude in his own house or wherever else he pleases. But if your organisation, on the other hand, seeks to compel others to conform to your way of thinking in the matter of religion, then it goes beyond its function and, according to my way of thinking, beyond public order and morality.

It is obvious that there may be a difference of opinion on this issue as there is between you and me. I have not a shadow of doubt that you are hopelessly in error and it surprises me that anybody should think in terms which are repugnant to me because they are based on the suppression of human beings by others of their kind. How should these questions then be decided? Obviously the democratic way of settling these questions is for the majority to decide. I am perfectly prepared to accept the verdict of the Hindu majority on this issue when the time comes. When we have the power to do so, we shall no doubt consult the people concerned and abide by their decision in the matter. Meanwhile, it is open to all of us to carry on propaganda on behalf of the policy we approve of. That policy in so far as I am concerned is one of complete and absolute removal of untouchability in all shapes and forms.

In this matter it is evident that we differ, and as I have stated above the only way to settle it is democratically. To enable such a settlement to take place we must work for a free India, whatever our opinions on these questions might be.

I have therefore to inform you that in this matter I am entirely in agreement with Mr. C. Rajagopalachari.[4]

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. In his letter of 3 May 1937 to the secretary of Swarajya Sangha, Rajagopalachari maintained that "the Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation is a good and noble act....Pt. Jawaharlal's opinion that the Congress is a purely political organisation is quite right and does not affect the situation as regards what Hindus should do as Hindus and lovers of Hinduism. Some of us are not only Congressmen. We have also other interests in life besides politics. Moreover, the contribution that Hindus should make to politics is inextricably mixed with their attitude towards a better ordering of Hindu society."

12. To Ohabali Khan[1]

Allahabad
June 19, 1937

Dear Comrade,[2]
I have just received your letter. I am surprised to learn that the district Congress committee discarded the suggestion to hoist the national flag on the day of Deshbandhu's death anniversary. Without enquiring from them as to why this was so I cannot express any final opinion. But it was eminently fit that on such a day the flag should be hoisted.

As regards the *kirtan* and sweets distribution, I think you have misunderstood their purpose. A *kirtan* is a singing of music of an entirely inoffensive character and people of other faiths often attend it. It is true that it is a Bengali Hindu custom which is often given effect to at death anniversaries. Personally I am not interested in it. But I think there is no harm in it if people wish to have it. I do not think you can say that it is an intrusion of religion. I think that it would be better on such occasions for individuals, if they so wish it, to arrange for such music, and not for Congress committees to arrange the function. But this is my personal opinion and I do not think it will be right to impose it on others. You are right in raising an objection to the inclusion of religious ceremonies in any Congress activity. We have to be careful about this. In regard to religion of course we allow perfect freedom. But it is desirable that the Congress as such should not organise religious functions. Sometimes, however, especially when prominent Congressmen die or there are death anniversaries, one cannot ignore the sentiment of the people and some such thing as *kirtan* takes place and Congressmen join it.

As you know, it has long been the custom for both Hindus and Muslims to join each other's festivals like the *Diwali*, *Dasehra*, the *Id* and others. They do not join the religious part of it, but for the social part of it. It is desirable that there should be this common intercourse to promote comradely feelings.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-5/1937, pp. 523-524, N.M.M.L.
2. A Congressman of Barisal, now in Bangladesh.

13. To Suresh Majumdar[1]

Allahabad
June 20, 1937

Dear Comrade,

Your letter[2] of May 15th met me here on my return from my tour. You have raised an interesting question about the ethics and the policy which should govern nationalist journals. I can only briefly give you my personal opinion on the subject. Every newspaper has an obvious duty to its readers to give all kinds of news to enable them to come to right conclusions about it. Any deliberate suppression of news for fear of government displeasure or for any other reason offends against the principles which should govern the life of a journalist. He should be prepared to give publicity to anything that is really news even though he may not approve of it.

That is the theory of it and the more it is translated into practice the better. But inevitably in practice many other considerations come into play and a journalist will judge the value of news from his own standpoint and will give such importance to the news in his display as he thinks it deserves. It is well known that even by headlines and general display the value of a news-item can be increased or decreased. Obviously a journalist who holds by a certain policy, for instance Indian nationalism and freedom, will like to give publicity to matters which help the nationalist cause. He should not suppress other matters but his stress will be different.

In regard to the Coronation, everything depends on the stress that a newspaper gave to it. To attach too much importance to such an event, with all its attendant ceremonies and pomp and circumstance, seems to me, quite apart from the Congress attitude in the matter, undesirable as this turns the public mind from important questions and policies to shows and demonstrations. Personally I have no interest whatever in it and I confess that I have not read either in the newspapers here or in the newspapers I got from England any full account of the Coronation. The subject did not interest me in the slightest. What did interest me was the political implication of the Coronation and how it was sought by

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-5/1937, pp. 509-513, N.M.M.L.
2. He had drawn Jawaharlal's attention to an editorial in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of 15 May 1937, criticising the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* for not publishing any news about the Coronation of George VI.

this to raise up the somewhat fading prestige of royalty. There is no reason why we should be parties to this organised effort to boom up royalty. There seems to me an element of vulgarity about it all.

What I have written above has hardly anything to do with the Congress resolution on non-participation in the Coronation activities. So that even apart from the Congress attitude, I would have preferred intelligent newspapers to deal with the Coronation briefly and without indulging in too much sentiment or sob-stuff. The Congress attitude, however, drew pointed attention to the political aspect of all these celebrations and how capital was made out of them by British imperialism in India. That is an important matter and it is the business of the journalists in India not to be made tools by British imperialism in this respect. While therefore giving important news in their columns they should take every care not to boom up this imperialism by the kind of news that often comes through. If I had been in charge of newspapers, I would have dealt with Coronation news on this basis. That is, important news would have been given but long and futile accounts of the pomp and pageantry and of the dresses worn would have been omitted. I would have sought to point out to my readers the inner significance of all this pomp and show and how every effort was being made by modern means of publicity to whip up enthusiasm for monarchy. The recent abdication of ex-King Edward was a blow to the monarchy in England.[3] Because of this it became necessary to shout even more loudly at the time of the Coronation. There is no reason whatever why we in India should be swept off our feet or lose our sense of proportion because of this widespread publicity in England. And newspapers should help the public in retaining a correct perspective.

I gather that the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* has not given much importance in its columns to the Coronation celebrations. It deserves to be commended for this sound attitude.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. King Edward VIII had abdicated on 11 December 1936 on the issue of his marriage to Mrs. Simpson.

14. The Congress and Labour and Peasant Organisations[1]

Since my return from Burma and Malaya I have received many letters from Congress committees and Congressmen enquiring about the duty of Congressmen towards labour and peasant organisations. Should these organisations be encouraged or not? And, if so, what form should they take, what relation, if any, should they bear to the Congress? These problems have arisen in many provinces and they require our serious consideration. Sometimes these problems are largely personal, sometimes they are mainly provincial, but behind them always there is the larger issue. In dealing with the local aspects of the problem, we must inevitably consider these peculiarities and even personalities. But we must be clear about the principles and the real issues before we lose ourselves in the forest of local detail.

How has this problem arisen? Not surely just because of a few persons acting in a particular way, but because of the dynamics of the very struggle in which we are engaged. It is a sign of our growth and the rising consciousness of the masses. For that growth the National Congress is mainly responsible and to it therefore must go the credit in a large measure for this new mass consciousness. The Congress has worked for it and if success comes to it, Congressmen must not fight shy of this. Therefore this new development is to be welcomed even though it might bring some occasional complications with it.

These complications are to some extent inherent in the situation. The Congress is predominantly a political organisation representing the urge of all classes of Indians towards national freedom. A labour or peasant organisation is essentially a group or class organisation primarily interested in the welfare and advancement of that group or class. The Congress thinks and acts mainly on the political plane, the workers' organisation on the functional and economic plane. Yet the differences are not so great as one would imagine and the development of our struggle and of political consciousness brings the two close to each other and they overlap to a considerable extent. The Congress, because of its close touch with the masses, because indeed it is by far the biggest mass organisation in the country, inevitably begins to think and act in terms of the

1. Article written on 28 June 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 2 July 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 213-227.

economic grievances and disabilities of the masses, that is the workers, peasants and others. The labour and peasant organisations are forced to the conclusion that economic disabilities cannot be removed to any large extent unless political freedom is achieved and power comes to the people as a whole. Thus the two overlap and the joint anti-imperialist front grows up.

In any country under alien domination the political aspect always overshadows other aspects. This in itself would make the Congress the dominant organisation in the country, but this predominance has been further intensified by the part that the Congress has played in recent years in our struggle for freedom. The Congress is thus today far and away the most powerful and the most widespread organisation in India; it has tremendous mass appeal and mass support; even the workers and peasants look up to it and are influenced by it far more than by their own class organisations. Other organisations are not even bad seconds. The Congress has obviously not achieved this mass influence and support by its political programme only. It has done so by its magnificent record of service and sacrifice, and by its direct approach to the masses and its increasing economic orientation, which is understood by those masses more than the purely political objective. It is interesting to compare the organisational and basic strength of the Congress in various parts of India. This strength varies directly with this economic orientation and mass contacts.

Thus from the point of view of our freedom struggle, both in its political and economic aspects, it is essential that the Congress should be strengthened. Everything that weakens it, weakens that struggle, and weakens even the workers' and peasants' movements, for neither of these is strong enough to make much headway without Congress support. It is the realisation of this fact that has brought about the demand all over the country, and from all kinds of quarters, for a joint anti-imperialist front under Congress auspices. Indeed the Congress itself is increasingly considered this joint front.

But in spite of all this the Congress remains, and has to remain, a national organisation and it cannot always represent the functional or class interests of the workers and peasants. It cannot function as a trade union or kisan sabha. In actual practice, where its contacts with the peasantry are considerable, it almost functions as a kisan sabha. The general tendency is for the Congress to develop into a predominantly peasant organisation and this process is likely to continue, but the leadership is bound to remain with the middle classes, chiefly the lower middle classes, so long as the Congress remains the National Congress and does not undergo a sea-change into something entirely different.

But these are speculations about the future and it is the present that concerns us. The outstanding facts of the present are: (1) the Congress must be strengthened because it is the only organisation which can lead us effectively to our goal; and (2) the rising consciousness of and ferment among the masses. If these two facts are correlated then we have a powerful movement which grows in strength and leads us to success. This is the basic reason for and the *raison d'etre* of the emphasis that is being laid on mass contacts. And be it remembered that this applies to all—Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian masses. The cleavages of religious faith do not affect this programme at all. We talk loosely sometimes of Muslim mass contacts, but this is not a communal movement dealing with Muslims only. Our programme is identical in this respect for Muslims and Hindus or others; only in order to draw the attention of our workers to work amongst the Muslim masses have we talked of Muslim mass contacts.

Contacts with the masses can be of two kinds: direct contacts by means of Congress members and village committees among the workers and peasants, and contacts with the workers' and peasants' organisations. The first of course is essential and needs no argument. Without it the second does not come into the picture at all, for the second can only be a corollary to the first. If the Congress has not got direct and widespread and deep contacts with the masses, it is bound to be influenced far more by the middle classes and will thus move away to some extent from the mass outlook which it has been its consistent aim to develop. It must, therefore, be the aim of every Congressman, and more specially those who have the interests of labour and the peasantry at heart, to develop these direct contacts by enrolling Congress members from the working classes and establishing village committees.

The second kind of contacts, that is some kind of organisational relation of the Congress with working class organisations, involving functional representation, has been discussed for some time past and is still being discussed. It involves a basic change in the Congress constitution and I do not know when, if ever, it will be given effect to. Personally I am in favour of the principle being admitted and given effect to gradually as the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee has recommended. This will not make much difference to begin with, as the workers' and peasants' unions, which are properly organised and capable of taking advantage of the Congress affiliation, are very limited in number; and then the conditions for affiliation would be laid down by the Congress. But this question does not arise now as the Congress constitution does not permit such affiliation or any kind of functional representation. It is a debatable question and we need not consider it further here. But

this I should like to emphasise again, that those who are in favour of this change cannot bring it about from outside pressure; they can only do so by having a large enough Congress membership of workers and peasants who want such a change. If the outside pressure is at any time great enough to compel the Congress to bow to it against its own will, that will mean that the outside organisations are more powerful than the Congress, and if so why affiliate? But this is a highly unlikely contingency.

While it is true that this question is beyond our purview at present, we see something vaguely similar to it developing all over the country. This is the increasing cooperation in actual work between local Congress committees and working class organisations. Sometimes even joint informal committees have been formed. Often enough the leading spirits of those local organisations are prominent Congressmen and so there is no difficulty in having this cooperation. But there is something more in it than this common link; there is the demand for this cooperation and a realisation that it is highly necessary.

Having laid so much stress on the importance of bringing in workers and peasants directly into the Congress, let us now consider the desirability of having separate working class organisations. There can be no doubt whatever that both industrial workers and peasants have, or ought to have, the inherent right to organise themselves. That is in the nature of a fundamental right which the Congress has repeatedly recognised. There is no room for argument about it. The Congress has gone a step further and encouraged, in theory at least, the formation of such unions.

The case of industrial workers is clearer than that of the peasantry. It seems to me that anyone interested in such labour must come to the conclusion that it is the bounden duty of the workers to organise themselves in trade unions, and for others to help them to do so. The trade union movement is the inevitable counterpart of modern industry; it must grow as industry grows. The Congress with all its mass contacts cannot function as a trade union, and the numerous workers' problems and conflicts that arise can only be dealt with by a trade union. From the point of view of our larger freedom movement also the organisation of workers in trade unions is essential for such organised workers develop strength and momentum and a high degree of political consciousness. Therefore Congressmen should help in the organisation of trade unions, and help also, in so far as they can, in the day to day struggles of the workers. There should be cooperation between the local Congress committee and the trade union. The trade union is of course in no way within the Congress organisation, nor is it subject to official Congress control. But it must recognise that in political matters the lead of the Congress has

to be followed and any other course will prove injurious to the freedom struggle and even to the workers' movement. In economic matters and those relating to workers' grievances, the union can have whatever programme it chooses, even though this may be in advance of the Congress programme. Congressmen, in their individual capacities, can and should be members or friends of the union and as such will of course give it their advice. But a Congress committee as such should not try to control a trade union. Recently a case came to my notice when the Congress committee tried to interfere with the elections to the executive committee of a labour union. This seems to me highly undesirable. It is unbecoming for a Congress committee to do so and unfair to the union. It is bound to lead to conflict or to the conversion of the union into something which is not essentially a labour union. Congressmen, of course, who have served the cause of labour, have every right to take part in the affairs of the union.

Transport workers stand on exactly the same footing as other industrial workers and their organisation in special unions is highly necessary. It is also desirable to organise separately and functionally those workers in cities who carry on particular professions and whose economic interests are allied, such as *tongawalas, thelawalas, ekkawalas, mallahs* (fishermen and boatmen), stone-breakers, petty clerks, press workers, sweepers, and the like. All these should of course be brought directly into the Congress fold as primary members, but they have special problems of their own, and a functional organisation gives them strength and self-reliance. It is easier for them later on to take part in Congress work. This of course presumes that Congressmen are in intimate touch with their special organisations and give them every help in time of need.

Mixed labour unions and mazdur sabhas in a city, consisting of workers from various trades and businesses, are usually not successful. There is no functional unity amongst them, no common urge to cooperation or action; and if a political unity is desired, the Congress is there to give it.

The important problem of the peasantry remains, and this, after all, is the most important of our problems. In the term peasantry, I include the peasant proprietors as well as the tenants, the petty zamindars of the Punjab and elsewhere, the kisans of the U.P. and Bihar, and the *krishaks* of Bengal and Orissa. The same method of treatment will not apply to all these; there will be variations. But, for the moment, I am dealing with the Congress approach to their special organisations.

The Congress has fully recognised the right of the peasantry to organise themselves, and in theory the considerations I have advanced in favour of trade unions apply to them also. But there is a difference. It is relatively easy to organise factory workers and the like; they are a

closely-knit group, working shoulder to shoulder and obviously suffering from common disabilities. It is far more difficult to organise the peasantry, loosely scattered and thinking almost always in terms of the individual and not of the group. We have experienced all these difficulties in the course of our Congress work and thus we find that while Congress influence over the peasantry is very great, our organisational strength among them is much less. Tens of millions look up to the Congress and owe allegiance to it, but the actual membership is counted in hundreds of thousands only.

Where Congress committees are working effectively in village areas, an effective kisan organisation in the same area would largely overlap. There would be duplication of effort and waste of energy. The Congress itself is usually considered by the peasantry as their own organisation, and that is as it should be. Thus we find that in such areas separate kisan organisations have not grown up, although the kisan movement, as a part of the Congress and more or less within its fold, is strong. Where, however, Congress committees are not functioning effectively in the villages, the gap is bound to be filled sooner or later by peasant organisations. The important fact to be borne in mind is that there is deep ferment in the peasantry all over India and a powerful, though partly unconscious, desire on their part to do something to get rid of their many burdens, which have become quite unbearable. Fundamentally this is due to economic conditions, but also there is the fact that the political movement, under the leadership of the Congress, has raised mass consciousness and made them resent many things which they used to bear silently like dumb beasts. They have also had a glimmering of the effectiveness of organisation and united mass action. So they are expectant and if the Congress call does not reach their ears, some other will, and they will respond to it. But the call that will find echo in their hearts must deal with their own sufferings and the way to get rid of them.

Because of this we find today all manner of strange people, who have never had anything to do with the peasantry before, talking in terms of economic programmes and trying in their uncouth way to woo the peasantry. Even political reactionaries of the deepest dye discuss unctuously agrarian programmes. Nothing will or can come out of this, for far-reaching agrarian reform will never come out of political reaction. But this attitude of theirs shows us the way the wind blows.

This wind is blowing to the villages and to the mud huts where dwell our poverty-stricken peasantry, and it is likely to become a hurricane if relief does not come to them soon. All our political problems and

discussions are but the background for *the* outstanding and overwhelming problem of India—the land problem.

The Congress has realised this in a large measure, and in spite of its political preoccupations it has laid down an agrarian programme. This programme, though it does not go to the root of the problem, is substantial and far-reaching and undoubtedly would bring relief to the peasantry. So far as I know, agrarian programmes drawn up by the peasant organisations do not differ greatly from this. But the drawing up of a theoretical programme is not enough. It must be given the fullest publicity among the peasant masses and the organisation must reach the village. Further we must draw up definite schemes and proposals on the basis of this programme. These proposals will vary in different parts of India as conditions differ. It is the business of provincial Congress committees and Congress assembly parties to draw up these proposals. It is true that we may not be in a position to give effect to this full programme under the present conditions. But we must be ready with it, to the smallest detail, so that when the time comes we can go ahead confidently and with speed.

I have pointed out that present conditions in India and the very dynamics of the situation are leading to the organisation of the peasantry. The example of other countries points to the same conclusion. Therefore it seems to me inevitable that peasant organisations will grow up. Where the Congress is itself largely a peasant organisation separate kisan sabhas and the like will not function effectively as organisations, though they may offer occasional platforms for the ventilation of kisan grievances. Where Congress contacts with village folk are weak, the kisan organisation will develop more. In any event, the growth of peasant organisations, weak or strong, will take place. What should be our attitude to them?

We cannot say that there should be no peasant organisations. That would be contrary to the declared Congress policy; it would be wrong in principle, and it would come into conflict with that living movement and ferment that we see all around us. Nor can we say that a kisan sabha should be just a wing of the Congress, each member of the sabha being also a primary member of the Congress. That would be an absurdity, for under those conditions it is hardly necessary to have a kisan sabha. It seems to me also out of the question to place peasant organisations in the same category as the All India Spinners Association or the Village Industries Association. Such restrictions will not stop the growth of separate peasant organisations; they will only result in putting them outside the pale of the Congress and make them look upon it as a partly hostile body.

It is important that there should be no thought of rivalry between the two for this will be injurious to both, more specially to the peasant organisation which is bound to be much weaker. If large numbers of peasants are direct members of the Congress and leading Congressmen are interested in the peasants' grievances, there will be no rivalry and in effect, though not organisationally, the peasant organisation will be a kind of a wing of the Congress.

There are of course difficulties in such vague contacts and possibilities of friction. These difficulties are inherent in the situation and we have to face them. The more real our politics are, the more they deal with the problems of life and the many facets of a vast and complex and dynamic movement, the more we have to face fresh problems and adjust ourselves to changing situations. For life itself is complex and ever-changing. Any advice I may give today on this or any other subject may not hold good some time later for conditions may change.

And then principles may be good but it is not always easy to apply them in practice. Thus we find today that sometimes the kisan sabha platform is used in opposition to the Congress. Sometimes political or communal reactionaries try to do so; more often, some Congressmen who do not approve of the local Congress committee or its office-bearers find the kisan sabha platform a convenient place from which to attack them. A rival Congress group thus may exploit another organisation to gain power in the Congress itself. Thus the kisan sabha sometimes becomes a temporary home for the recalcitrants of the Congress, or even those against whom disciplinary action has been taken by Congress committees. I have had reports of kisan conferences being organised within a couple of miles of a district political conference, on the same day and at the same time. This was intentionally done to injure the Congress conference and attract some people away from it. I have further had reports of processions organised to interfere with Congress conferences, of slogans offensive to the Congress being shouted there, of flag conflicts being deliberately engineered.

This kind of thing is highly objectionable and all Congressmen must oppose this folly and this exploitation of the kisan movement in the interests of particular groups and individuals. It does not injure the Congress ultimately, except in so far as it produces confusion in the minds of the unsophisticated and simple-minded peasantry. It injures far more those who indulge in such practices. I have previously written about the flag and I want to repeat that any attempt to dishonour the national flag, by whosoever committed, cannot be tolerated.[2] We have no grie-

2. See *post*, section 8, item 1.

vance against the red flag. For my part, I like it and honour it as the symbol of the workers' struggle and sacrifices. But it is grossly unfair to that flag to treat it as a kind of rival of the national flag.

Nor can we tolerate direct attacks on the Congress and offensive slogans. Persons who indulge in them do grave injury to the cause they claim to have at heart. This of course does not mean that criticism of Congress policy is not to take place. Full freedom of criticism is as the breath of life to living and growing organisations.

All such incidents have a local significance and are usually connected with local affairs. They should be dealt with locally or, if necessary, reference can be made to the A.I.C.C. office. When any Congressman indulges in persistent attacks on the Congress or in activity which is definitely harmful to Congress work and prestige, his case should be considered separately and referred to the P.C.C. or the A.I.C.C.

But we are concerned much more with the larger problem and we must not be led away from it by local peculiarities. To face and solve that problem we must develop direct contacts with the peasantry. I think also that we should develop and maintain friendly and cooperative relations with peasant organisations and Congressmen should belong to them in large numbers. But we must avoid the development of any sense of rivalry between the two. The principles we follow are clear enough but the human factor is equally important, and if the latter functions properly there should be a minimum of trouble and friction.

15. To Raj Kumar Chakravarty[1]

Allahabad
July 1, 1937

Dear Comrade,[2]

Your letter of the 29th June.[3]

It is always a little difficult to define precisely the scope of political or social intercourse. The real thing to appreciate is the intention of

1. A.I.C.C. File No. E-5/1936, pp. 97-99, N.M.M.L.
2. (1892-1975); a Congressman and professor in a college at Calcutta, member, Indian Constituent Assembly, 1946-47 and Pakistan Constituent Assembly, 1947-52; returned to India, 1953.
3. He had written that the resolution passed by the Working Committee in April 1937 urging Congressmen to avoid cooperation or contacts with the officials needed clarification. He specially asked whether the Congress legislators should not approach the ministers in charge of detenus for extending to them some temporary relief and added that it was not possible to completely avoid the officials at lower levels.

the resolution and this is clear enough. This resolution refers particularly to the provinces where minority ministries are in existence but the policy it lays down is not new. It is the old policy of the Congress to avoid cooperation or contacts as far as possible with officials of the government. This refers primarily to official and semi-official functions and such functions, even though they might be of a social character, which tend to enhance the prestige of the government and its officials. It does not bar all social dealings for many such are the result of domestic or other relations. This policy must be generally pursued by all Congressmen, whether they are M.L.As or not. Obviously we cannot be strict with the primary members of the Congress but in regard to prominent Congressmen we should be stricter.

In the provinces where there are minority ministries, special efforts were being made by ministers to develop contacts with Congress M.L.As. This had to be stopped as it might have led to complications and a lessening of our discipline. The same rule, generally speaking, applies to the provinces where the ministers have a majority. You will notice that such contacts with ministers are not absolutely banned—they are made subject to the express consent of the leader of the party. This policy applies to other Congressmen also but inevitably they stand on a somewhat different footing from the M.L.As who are brought in more or less official contact with ministers and officials.

Occasionally Congressmen, M.L.As and others have to deal with some government officials. This cannot and need not be stopped. Thus in local areas there may be a question of giving relief. But such contacts should not be encouraged and should usually take place after reference to higher authorities. In regard to the detenus question, if any contacts are necessary, the leader of the party should make them either with the ministers or others, or someone else with the permission of the leader.

Some contacts are also inevitable in municipalities and the like.

I think it will not be at all desirable for Congressmen to join any deputation to the ministers.

We do not want our rules and directions to be interpreted in a vindictive way and for disciplinary action to be taken at every fancied breach. We have laid down general principles only and we trust to the good sense of Congressmen to follow these principles. Where there is a clear and deliberate breach of the basic policy of the Congress or a specific direction, there disciplinary action might be taken.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

16. Importance of Non-legislative Work[1]

Allahabad
July 10, 1937

Dear Comrade,

I need not draw your attention to the resolution of the Working Committee on office acceptance for that has already received sufficient attention from you. But I would draw your attention again to the directions of the Working Committee, given in its earlier resolutions and endorsed by the A.I.C.C. to the vital importance of continuing with full vigour our organisational and other work outside the legislatures. That must continue to be our major occupation and without it legislative activity would have little value. The two forms of activity must be coordinated together and the masses must be kept in touch with what we do and consulted about it. The initiative should come from those masses.

The work of enrolling Congress members must continue vigorously as well as the formation of village committees. These committees should be encouraged to meet frequently to consider and discuss their own problems as well as the larger issues before the country. Our work in the legislatures will only bear fruit if it is followed closely and influenced by the Congress rank and file and the people generally. It must be the reflex of our larger freedom movement.

I should like to know what steps you are taking, in terms of the Working Committee's directions, to coordinate the activities of your provincial Congress committee with those of the Congress Party in the provincial assembly. In provinces where the area under the jurisdiction of both is more or less the same, few difficulties will arise. But there are composite provinces where the legislative province includes several Congress provinces. In such composite provinces care should be taken to work harmoniously and without encroaching on each other's preserves. The provincial Congress committee is the final authority for Congress purposes within that province. At the same time the Congress members of the legislature from that province belong to the Congress Party of the assembly and owe discipline to that party. To avoid misunderstandings a practice should be built up of mutual consultations. For this purpose the parliamentary sub-committee of the Working Committee should be consulted.

During the ensuing months we want to keep in close touch with your provincial activities and we expect you to keep in direct and constant touch with your district and local activities. For this purpose a system

1. Circular to P.C.Cs. A.I.C.C. File No. 41/1936-37, p. 41, N.M.M.L.

of fortnightly reports must be kept up. We shall therefore expect to hear from you every fortnight giving a brief and concise account of the Congress work that is being done, the number of Congress workers enrolled, the number of village and ward committees functioning, and other activities of the Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17. The Congress and Peasant Organisations[1]

Allahabad
July 10, 1937

Dear Comrade,

Some days ago I sent an article to the press in which I discussed our relation to labour and peasant organisations.[2] This was reproduced in many newspapers and I presume that your attention was drawn to it. In this article I discussed the principles that should govern our work and I pointed out various difficulties that had to be faced. I did not go into the details of how to surmount these difficulties as conditions differ in various parts of the country and I could only deal with the general problem in that article.

Friends have written to me pointing out again some of their difficulties. I shall be glad to consider these fully and offer such advice as I can. A vital and growing movement like ours which touches the masses intimately must inevitably come up against such difficult problems. In considering them, however, the basic principles must be kept in view and this is why I drew attention to them.

I find that these problems and difficulties are more marked in areas where the Congress contacts with the rural masses are less than they should be. With the growth of Congress committees in villages and a large and fairly active rural membership, the desire of these rural masses for opportunities of self-expression is largely filled.

Obviously the first duty of every Congressman is to develop these direct contacts with the villages. That is the whole purpose of our mass contacts drive. We must make more and more members of the Congress in our rural areas and build up a network of village committees. The Congress agrarian programme must be placed before them for this is of greater interest to them than other issues. Their own immediate problems must be tackled and discussed with them and every possible

1. Circular to P.C.Cs. A.I.C.C. File No. 41/1936-37, pp. 43-44, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, item 14.

help given in removing their grievances and teaching them to act in an organised and effective way.

Where genuine peasant organisations exist we should cooperate with them. We cannot oppose the formation of such organisations for it is the undoubted right of the peasants to organise for the removal of such grievances.

Where such organisations are politically reactionary they are not true peasant organisations and we cannot cooperate. Also where the peasant platform is utilised as a platform by opponents of the Congress, we cannot have anything to do with it.

But while we cooperate with peasant organisations, our primary duty is to make the Congress in the rural areas as nearly a kisan organisation as is possible. Unless we do this in an ever-growing measure we shall lose living touch with the peasantry. Every Congressman must therefore bear this in mind and work accordingly.

I have previously discussed the question of the flag. For the Congress and for every Congress function, the only possible flag is the national flag. Indeed this flag has already become the flag of the nation. Great as the Congress is, the flag is something more than the Congress flag.

The red flag has long been associated with the workers, especially industrial workers. It is not the flag of any particular country. Its origin is curious. In the early stages of the workers' movement, about a hundred years ago, the red flag was used by the state authorities when martial law was proclaimed and the workers were shot down and crushed under it. Thus it became associated in the mind of the workers with suffering and sacrifice for the cause; it came to embody for them their hopes and aspirations. They adopted this flag of their opponents and made it the symbol of their own solidarity. It became all over the world the international flag of the working class. As such it is right that we honour it. And if our workers adopt it as their trade union flag, it is right that they should do so in token of their solidarity with the workers of the world.

But to bring the red flag in token of hostility or rivalry to the national flag is highly objectionable and leads inevitably to friction. Therefore all such displays of it must be avoided. More specially this is to be borne in mind in rural areas. The peasant has no such background in regard to the red flag as the industrial worker has. We have slowly accustomed him to the national flag and he has grown to cherish it and consider it as his own. This flag represents, as no other does, the national struggle for independence. To lessen its value in the peasant mind, to confuse him in regard to flags, is to do disservice to our freedom movement. Therefore the peasantry should be encouraged to use the national

flag only and I would suggest to peasant organisations also to use this flag. Let us make it the universal symbol of Indian independence, of political and social freedom for our Indian masses.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. To President, Bengal P.C.C.[1]

Allahabad
July 21, 1937

Dear Comrade,
I have been sent a copy of the proceedings of the meeting of the Congress council party held on the 14th July. From this it appears that six persons, of whom five are Rai Bahadurs, wrote letters offering their cooperation to the Congress council party and this was accepted with thanks. It was resolved further that they may be invited to attend the meetings of the party in future. It appears further that some of these gentlemen have been made members of the sub-committees formed by the Congress Party.

It will appear that these gentlemen, for all practical purposes, are being treated as members of the party without their having given any pledge. This seems to me contrary to the Congress direction in the matter and I should like to have fuller information from you. The fact that there are only a few members of the Congress Party does not mean that other people should be added on who have nothing to do with the Congress. May I also suggest that gentlemen who rejoice in the titles of Rai Bahadur and the like should ordinarily be kept at a safe distance from the Congress Party? I shall thank you if you will send me an early reply.[2]

Regarding the question of attendance in the council when the Governor gives his address in the joint sitting, it is obvious that the council party must follow without exception the policy to be laid down by the assembly party. It would be absurd for one group to keep away from this function and for the other to attend it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. E-5/1936, p. 57, N.M.M.L.
2. The Bengal P.C.C. replied that, in a resolution passed on 21 July, they had directed the council party not to enter into any coalition with non-Congressmen who had not signed the Congress pledge or given up their titles, and were not aware of the decisions taken by it.

19. To Rani Lakshmibai Rajwade[1]

Allahabad
July 23, 1937

My dear Tai,
Your circular letter about the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship has reached me. It is not very safe for you to incite me to express my opinions on such subjects. I find that when I do express them they shock and irritate people. Of course, it does one good to be shocked occasionally and therefore it is perhaps worthwhile for me to indulge in this pastime.

I am afraid however that I cannot find time to deal with the subject satisfactorily, much as I would like to do so. So far as the women suffrage movement is concerned in its narrow aspect there is not much doing in India. Women have got the suffrage though in a limited way and they are bound to get it extended. But the growing feminist movement in India which deals with other problems also is, of course, an important later-day development. Politically speaking, you are no doubt aware that the Congress stands whole-heartedly for equal citizenship of women with men and for the same franchise for both. So far as I am concerned I think that women should be treated on the same level as men educationally and economically and industrially, except in so far as a few occupations are concerned.

All good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-71/1937, p. 1, N.M.M.L.

20. To Congress Leaders of the Minority Provinces[1]

Allahabad
July 30, 1937

Dear Comrade,
I have to remind you that in accordance with the direction of the Faizpur Congress it is the duty of the Congress parties in the provincial

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-72/1937, p. 33, N.M.M.L.

legislatures to bring forward at the earliest opportunity the demand for the summoning of a constituent assembly elected by adult suffrage. The Working Committee subsequently emphasized this and later the All India Convention which met at Delhi on March 19th and 20th called upon all Congress parties to take the earliest opportunity to put forward, in the name of the nation, a demand in their respective legislatures that the Government of India Act of 1935 be withdrawn so that the people of India may frame their own constitution.

I should be glad to know what you have done so far to give effect to this Congress direction and what you propose to do in the future. This matter relates to the basic policy of the Congress itself, and the essence of the direction is that steps be taken at the earliest opportunity. The direction applies as much to the provinces where Congress parties are in minority, as in those where they are in majority.

The matter will be considered soon by the Working Committee and I shall therefore like to have your reply at an early date.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

21. The Policy of the Congress[1]

Question: Would you kindly tell us why the ban on labour leaders is not removed?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The ministers have several difficulties in their way and it may take some time before any action is taken. I have no knowledge about the matter, but I feel that it may be necessary for the Congress ministry to go through a long process before they acted.

Q: Could you kindly tell us about the different phases of the Congress work?

JN: At the outset I want to impress upon you the necessity for keeping such discussions open, so that the public might know what we are

1. At a meeting of Congress workers in Bombay on 11 August 1937, Jawaharlal had answered the questions put to him by some Congressmen. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 12 August 1937.

all about. I, for one, am against any secret confabulations behind closed doors, and that is why I asked the press to be present on this occasion. There may be occasions when it may not be advisable to hold open discussions.

In today's issue of *The Bombay Sentinel* there is a headline which says that the Mahatma and I are to meet the Viceroy. Something was published yesterday also as to what had transpired between Mahatma Gandhi and the Viceroy during their last interview.[2] It was stated that the discussions centred round federation. I am amazed at the way in which things have been published. I want to assure you that there is not an iota of truth in what has been stated. I do not know from where the paper got such information. I think there should be some responsibility in publishing things. When federation was not even thought of, it is simply amazing to say that federation was discussed. When such reports are published, it becomes difficult to carry on. There are instances when things that are published by the papers have just an iota of truth. Such publications create enormous difficulties in the work that has to be carried on in the country's fight for freedom. Already difficulties have been created by the acceptance of office, and with the spread of such baseless stories, the difficulties increase. I have no objection whatever to the criticism of the ministries. In a democracy it is the inherent right of everyone to criticise. But I would ask the people not to forget our main objective.

Q: What is your view about the agitation going on in Bombay regarding the election of the leader of the legislative party?

JN: *The Bombay Sentinel* and other papers have been publishing letters, several of them open letters to me and the Mahatma. I have been trying to understand what all this agitation is about. What is the question that has to be solved? The way the agitation has been started and carried on is reprehensible. One cannot understand the purpose of the agitation of the kind. There is a gentlemanly way of doing things. Have the newspapermen in the city forgotten the way in which they have to conduct newspapers? This is the first time in my life that I have come across such an irresponsible way of doing things.

The Indian National Congress is a very big political organisation. There is a method of doing and discussing things. If it is done in the wrong way, much harm would be done to the Congress. I want to assure you that I personally place the honour and prestige of the Congress foremost. I love the institution and would resist with my life

2. See p. 291.

any harm done to that institution. I might commit mistakes. But I believe in doing things in a democratic manner. Whatever has happened so far, has happened with the consent of the people who are the strength of the Congress. For example, the idea of mass contact has been started with a view to see that primary members of the Congress take initiative in the Congress work.

Q: How long do you expect the Congress ministries to be in office?

JN: It would depend on the circumstances. One cannot say now how long the Congress ministries will continue in office. The present turn is a political game, each party trying to gain its point. The British Government wants to divide Indians, while the Congress has accepted office to strengthen the masses and the Congress organization. Each side will choose its own time and place to give fight to the other, and not play into the other's hands. If Congressmen and the people try to force the hands of the ministers, who are tied hand and foot and have their own difficulties to face, the position of the ministers would be weakened, and hence attacks on them would be improper. I have however no objection to constructive criticism.

The next fight is going to be a very big one, and the people should prepare themselves for it. One should not deceive oneself by imagining that the acceptance of office by Congressmen has led to Swaraj or Congress raj. The invitation of the British statesmen to the Congress to accept office was with the definite view of dividing the Congress. Once that division is there, inauguration of federation would not be difficult.

Q: What do you think of the Government of India Act?

JN: Every Indian should resist, tear, and burn the federal part of the Government of India Act. I cannot understand how people could ever imagine that Gandhiji could have discussed with the Viceroy on the basis of the present scheme of federation. I consider any Indian going to the Viceroy to discuss the federal scheme of the Government of India Act and its introduction in India as a traitor to the country. *The Times of India* has said that, according to the law, Congressmen cannot prevent the inauguration of federation.[3] That is for the Congress to find

3. In its issue of 11 August 1937, the paper stated "a closer study of the provisions of the Act revealed that it was not within the competence of the British Indian provinces to say whether or not they would join the federation ...however much the governments—six of them at least—may desire to be obstructive."

out and no doubt that will be done. But apart from that I cannot imagine how the constitution can remain intact when, against the desire of the Congress governments, the Governors seek to send representatives to the federal assembly. That would certainly involve a conflict with the Congress.

22. To Ali Sardar Jafri[1]

Allahabad
September 1, 1937

Dear Sir,[2]

I have your letter without date. I have not followed very closely the controversy in *The Statesman* about *Bande Mataram*.[3]

The Congress has not officially adopted any song as a kind of national anthem. In practice however the *Bande Mataram* is often used in national gatherings together with other songs. The reason for this is that 30 years ago this song and this cry became a criminal offence and it developed into a challenge to British imperialism.[4] Thousands of people suffered because of this and it came to be associated in the minds of the public with a fight against British imperialism. To this extent it became a symbol of nationalism in India. I do not think anybody considers the words to have anything to do with a goddess. That interpretation is absurd. Nor are we concerned with the idea that the author of the book, which contains this song, had in his mind when he wrote it, because the public does not think on these lines.

I think that the whole song and all the words in it are thoroughly harmless and nobody can take exception to their meaning. But I also think that the song is not suitable as a national anthem. It contains too many difficult words which people do not understand and the ideas it contains are also out of keeping with modern notions of nationalism

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5(KW)(2)/1937, pp. 215-216, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1913); Urdu poet and writer; edited *Diwan-e-Ghalib* and *Diwan-e-Mir* in Hindi and Urdu.
3. In *The Statesman* of 14 August 1937, it was contended that the Muslims objected to the singing of *Bande Mataram* because in *Ananda Math*, this song was sung by the main character of the play whose "sole aim was to turn out the Moslems from Bengal", and that the song was also idolatrous in spirit.
4. At the Bengal provincial conference held in Barisal in 1906, the delegates were severely beaten for singing this song in defiance of the ban.

and progress. We should certainly try to have more suitable national songs in simple language. But great songs and anthems cannot be made to order. It requires a genius for the purpose. I suppose in time we shall get something good. Meanwhile there is no reason why we should not give full permission for the use of the *Bande Mataram* as well as other favoured songs which many people have come to associate with our struggle for freedom.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

23. To Sangat Singh[1]

Allahabad
September 6, 1937

Dear Comrade,[2]
The Congress attitude in regard to any issue is contained in the Congress resolutions. These resolutions, and these include the resolutions of the P.C.C., have laid down the agrarian programme. Every Congressman can advocate this programme as the official Congress programme. In regard to matters like the abolition of the zamindari system there is no official decision of the Congress. But our own P.C.C. is favourably inclined towards this. It is therefore possible for Congressmen to hold either viewpoint and to express it in public. They can support the abolition of the zamindari system or its continuance. In doing so they do not commit the Congress to it.

Even in advocating the abolition of the zamindari system it should be borne in mind that we deal with a principle and are not in opposition to individuals who may be big zamindars. It is desirable to lay stress on the official Congress programme in a joint meeting so as to avoid needless controversy over other matters before the public. However, a Congressman is perfectly entitled to advocate the cause of the kisans from the Congress platform. It is undesirable for him at any time to attack individuals, even though there might be big landlords or *sahukars*. He can of course criticise the whole *sahukari* system.

A Congressman can certainly be a member of a kisan sangh provided this kisan sangh does not act against the interests of the Congress.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-76/1937, p. 359, N.M.M.L.
2. A Congressman of Saharanpur.

A Congressman has every right to popularise his viewpoint.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

24. On the Role of the Congress Socialist Party[1]

I am not inclined to enter into controversy with regard to crystallization of groups or parties within the Indian National Congress with a view to its radicalisation. However, it is clear to me that individuals or groups have perfect right and liberty to propagate their ideas within the Congress.

The desirability or otherwise of such groups depends on their working and their approach to problems as they arise from time to time. The Congress is a national organisation and has in its fold people of varying or conflicting opinions. As a living body it evolved an economic and social policy of its own and there might be conflicting or divergent views with regard to such policies in the Indian National Congress. The Congress Socialist Party has focused attention on these policies and propagated an ideology, which, according to me, is no doubt a good thing. The Congress Socialist Party also, it must be admitted, has helped in the process of radicalisation of the Congress. However, I have found occasions when, owing to a wrong approach, the otherwise sympathetic elements, instead of being drawn to socialism, were repulsed from it. As far as I can see, there is no hostility to the Congress Socialist Party. As such, the unnecessary and obtrusive militancy creates harmful reactions.

There is a fear of the labour policy, contained in the radical programme, creating class conflict. Obviously, in certain Congress circles such fears are entertained with the inevitable result of weakening the tempo of implementing the radical programme, but it is the duty of the people holding views in favour of such an ideology to dispel such fears as they are more imaginary than real, and arise partly due to the lack of appreciation of the historical implications of the ever-growing class conflict in the present capitalist structure of society. There is neither a

1. Talk to the members of the Gujarat Congress Socialist Party, Ahmedabad, 16 September 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 23 October 1937.

personal nor a private motive involved in the struggle, but it is an element woven in the very fabric of society as constituted at present. We cannot stop people holding or propagating the opposite views. The problem can be dealt with properly and tactfully by ceaseless impersonal propaganda and by explaining the intricacies of the historical process.

The workers in the labour field must concentrate on the organisation of labour on genuine trade union lines. The so-called militancy, which is not required at all, always works towards quite a different end than that contemplated by the militant forces which organise strikes, etc.

In those provinces where the Congress has come to power, the people and Congress workers can mobilise mass opinion by demonstrations which are likely to assist the respective ministries. The creation of mass strength is the strongest safeguard against the inauguration of federation.

25. Gandhi Jayanti[1]

Soon we shall be celebrating Gandhi Jayanti week and paying our homage to Mahatmaji. It is right and fitting that we honour our great leader—Mahatma Gandhi—in this and other ways for no man in India has done more for the freedom of our people. India of today is largely of his making and though independence may still be far from us, we have marched a long way on that journey.

Much remains yet to be done and we shall have to face many struggles and crises before we reach the promised land. Let us bear this in mind and not be carried away by momentary excitement, by pride, by partial achievement, or by arrogance of holding some limited power. We have reason to be proud of our great organization and of the peaceful discipline that it has evolved in millions of our people.

We think with joy and gratitude of the sacrifice of so many of our comrades who have lighted the path of Swaraj. By the labour and sacrifice of innumerable comrades of ours, we have built an India strong of purpose and strong in action. We have laid a firm foundation of the noble structure to be.

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 23 September 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 24 September 1937.

Our strength comes from organization and discipline and the right purpose and right means. That is the strength which is neither swollen by momentary triumph nor depressed by temporary failure. Only the weak and the infirm of purpose allow themselves to be inflated and deflated in this way. A great purpose requires iron determination and iron discipline which is superior to excitement of passing phases. The right purpose requires the right means to attain it for we are judged by means we adopt and not merely by the end that we loudly proclaim.

That end in itself is governed by the path we follow. It is well to remember this, or else we shall go astray and weaken and fail to take advantage of the great opportunities that fate and circumstances will place in our way. We are out for great things; to make history of our choice, to mould India of our dream. And so in paying homage to our great leader and in sending him our greetings we must think anew of tasks ahead and prepare for them. We have to remember lessons he taught us of peaceful disciplined action and not allow ourselves to be deflected from it. We have to remember also that khadi has become the symbol of our struggle for freedom and the very livery of it. Let us all wear this livery of national service and thus proclaim our adherence to the great cause we have at heart.

26. To S.V. Ramaswamy[1]

Camp Lucknow
October 2, 1937

Dear Sir,[2]
Owing to my absence on tour I have only now seen your letter of the 4th September together with its enclosures. I have carefully seen all the papers that you have sent. You have preferred an appeal from the decision of the executive of the Tamil Nad Congress Committee. I might remind you that ordinarily disciplinary action is taken by the provincial committees and such matters do not come up in appeal to the Working Committee. A certain revisional jurisdiction, however, always vests in the Working Committee and it is for it to consider any such case under that jurisdiction.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-19(ii)/1937, pp. 59-63, N.M.M.L.
2. (1906-1966); a Congressman of Salem; member, Lok Sabha, 1952-58; Deputy Minister of Railways, Government of India, 1958-64 and Deputy Minister of Commerce, 1964-66.

You have complained in your letter that no charges were framed against you and no time was given to you to meet them. As a matter of fact, I find from the papers you have sent me that you were given an opportunity to send an explanation by both the president of the Salem District Congress Committee and the president of the Tamil Nad P.C.C. You have been further informed that the charge against you was that you had committed an offence against Congress principles and solidarity and had maliciously attacked the leader of the Congress Party in your article in the *Viduthalai* of 19th July 1937. In fact you sent a lengthy explanation in justification of the article in question to both the Salem District Congress Commitee and the Tamil Nad Congress Committee. I fail to understand how you can maintain, in view of this, that no charge was framed and no opportunity was given to you for an explanation. The facts are not disputed, as the offence alleged against you was an article which you admitted. In your explanation you tried to justify this article at length. Under the circumstances, there was no point in your arguing the matter orally with the Tamil Nad P.C.C. or its executive. It seems to me clear, therefore, that full opportunity has been given to you, under the rules, to submit your explanation. And in fact you did so.

On the merits of this question I should like to say that the article you wrote is one of the most extraordinary that I have ever read in connection with the Congress. I have often stated that we welcome criticism from Congressmen and I have no desire to suppress this. But the spirit and the language of your article have little to do with criticism. It is sheer vituperation of the most personal kind. An intense communalism and an anti-Brahmin feeling run through this article and I think any person will agree with me that your article will produce in the mind of a reader a strong feeling against the Congress organisation in Madras. Your article therefore lowers the dignity of the Congress and injures it in the minds of many persons.

I do not wish to discuss in this letter your article in detail. But I like to point out that your criticism[3] of the nomination of Dr. Rajan[4]

3. He had observed: "The nomination of Dr. T.S.S. Rajan, a gentleman belonging to the same sub-sect as the leader, for the special purpose of making him the leader of the upper house and a minister is a bad precedent....Dr. Rajan is a person against whom disciplinary action has been taken. If this disobedience and disloyalty are so lightly to be treated with what grace could the leader enforce discipline against other members?"
4. T.S.S. Rajan (1880-1953); a physician of Tiruchchirappalli; imprisoned during noncooperation movement; Minister for Public Health and Religious Endowments, Madras Government, 1937-39 and 1946-51.

is entirely misconceived. That nomination may have been good or bad but it was perfectly correct and there was no breach of any rule in the disciplinary action that the Congress committee took against Dr. Rajan. No bar was placed against him and he submitted to the action that was taken against him.

You have stated in your article that Brahminism is a menace far more undesirable than foreign rule. This sentiment is the height of communalism and anti-nationalism. You refer repeatedly to the larger interests of the non-Brahmins. You may be right in criticising the domination of the Brahmin element in the south but the whole trend of your article is so intensely communal that I was astonished that a Congressman should write this. If there was a general response to your call, it can only mean the disintegration of the Congress in the south and the increase of communal friction. I repeat that this article of yours which calls upon the people to drive out every Brahmin from any post in the Congress organisation, even that of a clerk, and which demands a purging of the Brahmin plague, is so offensive that I cannot conceive that any person of sobriety has written it. I can only imagine that you did so in a moment of extreme excitement when you were not wholly responsible for your action. But I find that in your subsequent correspondence and explanation you have sought to justify this article completely. There is not a shadow of regret anywhere or a withdrawal of the vulgar abuse that it contains. Even apart from the Congress rules and principles, I should have thought that decency would object to such an article.

Under the circumstances, I really do not see how the Congress committee could have refrained from taking disciplinary action against you. Whether this action was in excess of the requirement or not is another matter. But it is difficult to consider that even so long as you persist in your attitude of justification of something which is on the face of it unjustifiable.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

27. To S.C. Mitra[1]

Allahabad
October 6, 1937

Dear Sir,

Newspaper reports state that you have decided to sever your connection from the B.P.C.C. as you wish to be a no-party man. It is not quite clear what you mean by this phrase or how you propose to act in the future. But you will no doubt remember that you have been elected[2] on the Congress ticket and pledge and you cannot ignore this pledge even as President of the council. This matter therefore raises important issues which will have to be considered not only by the B.P.C.C. but by the All India Working Committee at its next meeting. I should like, therefore, to have all the facts from you. No one of course suggests that as President of the council you should show partiality to the Congress. You have to be impartial in your duties. But we do not accept the position that a Congressman ceases to be a Congressman if he happens to be a Speaker or President. The Congress is not a party. It is something much bigger than that, although it might function as a party in an assembly. If you disagree with the viewpoint of the Congress in this or other matters, then the right course for you is to resign and leave the Congress to run another candidate.

I should like to know what salary you have been receiving since your appointment.[3] The Congress has fixed the salary of Rs. 500/- as the maximum for Speakers and Presidents plus a maximum allowance of Rs. 250/-. No Congressman can accept anything more than this and the balance is to be handed over to the Congress funds. Please let me know what salary you have been receiving so far and what part of it you have handed over to the Congress funds.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-5/1937, p. 53, N.M.M.L.
2. Denying this he wrote to Jawaharlal on 22 October 1937 that the Congress Party in the council being in a small minority had not set up any candidate for the presidentship and that 70 p.c. of his votes came from non-Congress members. He had therefore resigned from the council of the B.P.C.C. He had also felt that as President of the Bengal Council he should not take active part in politics.
3. He wrote that out of his salary of Rs. 1,500/-, he had decided to draw Rs. 500/- only in addition to car and house allowances.

Till these matters are settled it will not be possible for the B.P.C.C. to accept your resignation.[4]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. His resignation which was accepted in April 1937 by the Congress council party had already been ratified by the Bengal P.C.C. in September 1937.

28. On His Tour of Gujarat[1]

I am sorry I am unable to visit Haripura on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of Congressnagar.[2] I should have liked to have gone there in any event, but my desire to go has increased after the five days that I spent recently in Gujarat.[3] These five days were crowded days and the rich panorama of Gujarat and its attractive sons and daughters passed before my eyes. Everywhere I went it was inspiring to see the great enthusiasm of the people for the Congress and for Indian freedom. Even in the remotest village of Gujarat the cry of *Inquilab Zindabad* came from lusty throats. Gujarat has a proud reputation for national service and for the part it has taken in our freedom struggle. The mighty demonstrations that I saw everywhere that I went in Gujarat and the great enthusiasm that filled all kinds and classes of people were evidence, if evidence was needed, that Gujarat, as ever, is ready for sacrifice and struggle in the cause of Indian freedom. I have brought back pleasant memories from my brief tour, memories which will endure; and because of these memories I wanted to go back to renew them soon. But other and urgent calls have come for me and my next visit to Gujarat must wait. May I express my deep gratitude to all our friends and comrades in Gujarat for their exceeding kindness to me during this visit of mine and for the great trouble they took over it?

1. Message sent to the Gujarat P.C.C., Allahabad, 7 October 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 8 October 1937.
2. The foundation stone was to be laid on 14 October 1937 preparatory to the holding of the annual session of the Congress from 18 to 20 February 1938.
3. Jawaharlal visited Gujarat from 16 to 20 September 1937.

29. To Satyapal[1]

Allahabad
October 19, 1937

My dear Dr. Satyapal,
Your letter[2] was given to me. I am sorry I missed seeing you on my way back. I had many things to speak to you about and I had no time for doing so during my brief stay.

I do not know what Dr. Gopichand and his party are saying. It is difficult to deal with vague allegations. Whatever I said in the Punjab I said publicly, or semi-publicly at the workers' meeting. It is absurd to say that I admonished anybody, least of all you. But I am free to confess that I am disheartened at the way the Congress work is carried on in the Punjab. The personal element counts far more there than other matters. It has been my endeavour to reduce this personal element in Congress affairs everywhere. I have therefore attempted to lessen the significance of the office of president or secretary of Congress committeess from the A.I.C.C. downwards. It is the committees that should count and not individuals. When this is done more democracy comes in and the interest in the office-bearers lessens. Conflicts of opinions and personalities are inevitable in public work. But one tries to avoid such conflicts from influencing our work. Otherwise all of us suffer. In the Punjab, more than anywhere else, great difficulties have to be countered. These difficulties will increase to some extent because of the decisions of the Muslim League conference.[3] We cannot afford to weaken our forces at this juncture by raising minor issues which divert attention.

I wanted to talk to you about certain circulars issued by your office which seemed to me unhappy. I also wanted to tell you that during my journey to Peshawar and back various people met me. They complained about the extravagance of the P.C.C. workers who had been sent to tour. Also about their accounts. It appears that groups of workers are sent out and sometimes their expenses are heavy. This kind of complaint is often exaggerated but it cannot be ignored and should be inquired into.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-17/1937, pp. 117-119, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 16 October 1937, he had stated that Gopichand Bhargava and his followers had been spreading the false news that Jawaharlal had severely reprimanded him for not being able to conduct Congress work properly in the Punjab.
3. See pp. 185-186.

I was sorry to read in the papers your latest statement[4] regarding the unity conference. After all that had happened during the provincial conference there seemed to be no necessity for such a statement at this stage. I am quite clear in my own mind that we must withdraw from this conference. But I want to proceed about it in the right way. The recent proceedings of the Muslim League have confirmed me in my opinion.

You are aware that when purses are presented in a province a percentage of these collections goes to the A.I.C.C. As the Punjab is not flourishing financially, we shall charge only a quota of 10% which we did on the last occasion also. Will you therefore kindly send us 10% of the general collections made during my last tour?

Please send us a brief account of the collections.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. In a statement issued on 16 October 1937, Satyapal said that "the unity conference could produce no results except to multiply communal differences and should be opposed tooth and nail".

30. To Satyapal[1]

Allahabad
November 9, 1937

My dear Dr. Satyapal,

I have read your statement[2] issued to the press in regard to the Working Committee's resolution on the unity conference. I do not think this

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-17/1937, pp. 53-54, N.M.M.L.
2. Commenting on the Congress Working Committee's directive to its representatives to proceed with the deliberations in the unity conference, Satyapal stated on 3 November 1937 that since Jawaharlal and Vallabhbhai Patel had declared the futility of cooperating with the unity conference, the decision of the Working Committee had come to him as a painful surprise.

statement was at all a happy one. It was open to you to take any individual action you liked in the matter but as the president of the Punjab P.C.C. a statement of this kind issued by you can only lead to further complications. You refer to your painful surprise because I had clearly declared the futility of our cooperating with the conference. But you forgot that as President of the Congress I act impersonally and represent the decisions of the Working Committee in their corporate capacity. I wish our friends in the Punjab could also act impersonally and think in terms of the organisation more than on individual or personal terms.

The Working Committee has to take into consideration all-India factors. It has to take a distant view as well as a near view. Many of these factors are perhaps not considered by you and hence there is a difference in the conclusion arrived at. A serious situation is arising all over India today owing to the deliberate activities of certain communalists who are trying their utmost to increase communal friction. The very fact that they are losing ground all along the line makes them speak and act most irresponsibly. We have to take all these matters into consideration and always keep our larger policy before us. In any event, each one of us who belongs to the organisation has to subordinate his personal inclinations to the common will. Whatever we may think, it is unbecoming for us to argue with each other in public prints.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

31. Allowances for Congress Members of Assemblies in Non-Congress Provinces[1]

The Working Committee clearly laid down some time back the rules governing members' allowances both in the Congress provinces and in the non-Congress provinces.[2] In the Congress provinces effect could be

1. Circular to the leaders of the Congress Party in the non-Congress provinces sent on 30 November 1937. A.I.C.C. File No. G-28/1937, p. 163, N.M.M.L.
2. See p. 284.

given to this by law. In the non-Congress provinces this was not so and a much higher rate, and sometimes a shamefully exorbitant rate, of payment was adopted in spite of objections raised by the Congress members. It is clear that the Congress members in these non-Congress provinces cannot accept anything more than what the Congress members in the Congress provinces are getting. This is not only against the expressed provisions of the Working Committee resolution but is derogatory to their dignity and prestige. If they accept anything more, they will lose a great deal of their credit with the public and will become the butts of our opponents' ridicule. Because of this the Working Committee made it clear that all excess payment should be handed over to the A.I.C.C. to be earmarked for the province concerned. This money was to be used for provincial purposes on the advice of the provincial Congress committee and the Congress legislature party in the assembly in that province. This fund primarily was not to be used for the day to day activities of the Congress but was to be used partly as an election fund and partly for special Congress activities like the building up of a national service, but in special cases it might be used for other Congress activities also. It must be remembered, however, that it is slightly improper for Congress committees to function and to rely on such funds for their routine activities. In a very special case the fund might be used for the repayment of debts incurred for election purposes by the provincial organisation or even by some individuals. But this must be treated as a special case to be decided upon by the P.C.C. and the Congress Party. Individual members should not decide this nor should they pay any part of the money to their district committees directly. It is important that funds should be paid directly to the A.I.C.C. through the leader of the party. There has been a great delay in conforming to this rule, although considerable sums have been realised by individual members. This is a breach of that rule and is very unfair to the Congress members in the Congress provinces. It should be remembered that in these Congress provinces, members are not only getting much less as a daily allowance but also lower railway fares. In addition to this, they give a percentage of this allowance to the P.C.C. and another percentage to the Congress Party. In the U.P., out of the lesser allowance that they get, members pay 15% to the P.C.C. for a national service fund. They pay another percentage, which I do not remember, to the Congress Party in the assembly. Apart from this, each member was called upon to pay Rs. 50/- in order to enable the P.C.C. to pay off its election debts. This Rs. 50/- is likely to be increased to Rs. 100/- in the case of many members and some have indeed paid much more for the provincial debts. Thus it will be seen

that it will be grossly unfair for Congress members in non-Congress provinces to profit personally by these allowances. We cannot treat these allowances as profit-making concerns. Leaders of the Congress Party in these provinces are therefore requested to take immediate steps in this matter and to report to the A.I.C.C. office the names of the members who have paid, and the names of those who have not paid, in accordance with the resolution of the Working Committee. It should be remembered that this resolution applies also to Congress members who have become presidents of the assembly or the council in non-Congress provinces.

32. To Bhaskar Mitter[1]

Allahabad
December 23, 1937

Dear Bhaskar Mitter,[2]
I have your letter of the 27th November. I agree with you that political activities in Bengal have suffered a great deal owing to various causes. It is a pity as there is such a good material there. I hope there will be an improvement now that Subhas Babu will be there.

As for a new newspaper in Calcutta, it is perfectly true that there is no real Congress organ, although there are several nationalist newspapers. As a matter of fact there is no such newspaper in India. Calcutta at least has some papers which give the nationalist side. In the U.P. there is not a single newspaper which does even that. There is a probability that we may start a daily in English soon at Lucknow, to be followed by Urdu and Hindi papers. I do not know when this will fructify. At the present moment we cannot do without English newspapers, though the importance of Indian language papers is growing and they are likely to dominate the future. In Bengal you would have considerable competition whether you started in English or Bengali. As a matter of fact if you have a proper press, it is not difficult to have

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1919); at present chairman, Andrew Yule & Co. Ltd., Calcutta; as a student at Cambridge, he wanted Jawaharlal to advise him whether he could start a newspaper in Bengali on his return home so that the real economic character of the people's problems could be explained to them.

two papers in different languages. In this matter as in others you might consult Subhas Bose who might be going to England soon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

33. On the Training of Volunteers[1]

I have long thought it necessary that we should encourage volunteering among our people. This volunteering can have nothing to do with a training in armed warfare. But nevertheless volunteering is necessary to inculcate discipline and the capacity for united action, also to improve the physique and bearing of our young men and women. I do not like to see Indian boys and girls going about with bent backs and generally slouching along. I want them straight of limb and strong of body. The physical bearing of an individual is not only intimately connected with his efficiency as a worker but has also psychological reactions on his mental approach to any problem.

But most of all we require volunteering because any great organisation like ours cannot do without it. Even in the small matter of controlling meetings, processions and other activities of the Congress, disciplined volunteers are essential. We are apt to think that a large number of volunteers, even though inefficiently trained, are better than a smaller number better trained. It is obvious that this is not so, and it is frequently seen that crowds of volunteers come in the way of efficient management. I think much has still to be learnt by our volunteers as to how to deal with crowds. The first thing they must remember is that they have to deal with the crowds in a friendly and persuasive manner and not in the hostile manner of the police. A great crowd does not permit itself to be bullied. But a friendly crowd is always prepared to listen to reason if approached in the right manner. Therefore, at every function an attempt should be made to give the fullest directions to the crowd and to appeal for their cooperation.

1. Message sent on 24 December 1937 for a booklet on the volunteer organisation written by Harivadan Thakore on the occasion of the Haripura Congress. A.I.C.C. File No. G-89/1937-38, pp. 229-231, N.M.M.L.

Volunteers must remember that two things are forbidden as far as they are concerned. They must not start issuing orders or shout. A volunteer must do his work quietly otherwise he increases disorder. Shouts of 'silence' and 'sit down' or 'make way' should not be uttered by volunteers. Secondly, pushing should be avoided except where absolutely necessary. You cannot push a huge crowd. You only irritate it. But an appeal to the crowd to go back or to make room usually meets with a satisfactory response.

The idea that rings should be formed around persons to protect them from the crowd is wrong. A ringed person finds greater difficulty in going through a crowd. In a procession people should be asked to keep standing and volunteers should also remain standing at their posts. No attempt should be made by volunteers or the crowd to follow leaders.

These are just a few odd hints that I am suggesting. There are many other things which I should like to tell the volunteers if I had the time. I hope they will learn them from their instructors. Above all, they must remember that each volunteer by his general bearing and efficiency creates a good or bad impression. He is a symbol and to some extent our powers of organisation and efficiency are judged by him. He must not let the good name of our organisation down. A small matter which is often forgotten is that volunteers and for the matter of that others, whenever they walk together, should march in step.

I hope that the Haripura Congress will result in the building up of an efficient volunteer corps of men and women in Gujarat. I send the volunteers there my greetings and good wishes.

34. New Year Greetings[1]

Those who were privileged to be present at the Harduaganj conference[2] saw a sight they will not forget. They saw a hundred thousand persons full of life, full of enthusiasm and full of hopes, who had tramped to this little village from afar. They camped in the open and sat under trees and neither the wintry weather nor cold nor rain damped their

1. *Message to his countrymen, New Delhi, 31 December 1937. The Hindu*, 1 January 1938.
2. See pp. 372-375.

ardour. It was the peasant India that was awake and expectant. Speeches and resolutions seemed unimportant, for the spoken and written words were dominated by the shining eyes and glowing hearts of the great multitude. The long night of their sorrow and misery seemed to be passing and they were impatient for the dawn of deliverance.

As the old year passes with all its burden of joy and sorrow, success and failure, despair and hope, I think of those hundred thousand ardent faces I saw at the conference, strong in hope, and the future seems to be mirrored in them. The old year passes leaving a legacy of conflicts and problems to the new year, leaving also this hope of dawn to those who laboured night-long. We have heavy burdens to carry, tremendous difficulties to face in India and the world, but we have also the strength and faith which will overcome all these obstacles. And so in faith and confidence, I send my new year greetings to the people of India, to the men and women, to our innumerable comrades and those especially who still suffer behind prison walls and in detention camps. May the new year bring us a measure of achievement to lighten the burdens on our suffering millions! May it take us, a united nation, a long way to the full freedom we crave!

35. To the General Secretary, A.I.C.C.[1]

Camp Bombay
January 5, 1938

Dear Comrade,

I understand that some Congress delegates have proposed my name for the presidentship of the next Congress. I have no desire to stand for this election and would request you to withdraw my name from this contest. I shall also thank you if you will kindly announce this fact in the press so that people might not vote for me by mistake.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-81/1937-38, p. 11, N.M.M.L.

36. To Sri Prakasa[1]

Allahabad
January 31, 1938

My dear Prakasa,
I have your two letters dated the 26th and the 28th. Also your little book[2] and the stamp book and the slip book. Thank you very much for them. I am all for these contraptions which make our life easier and more efficient.

I am writing briefly to you now as I am leaving for Wardha. Perhaps I shall write more fully later on, better still, have a talk with you. I realise fully the difficulties that are cropping up in our public life.[3] But I think they are largely inevitable in our present state of growth. We may not shirk our jobs when the burden becomes heavy. For my own part I do not know yet what I shall do after the Haripura Congress. I feel very tired mentally and the desire to run away, for a while at least, is strong. But where can one run to and how can one run away from one's own mind?

I am quite clear in my own mind that in some capacity or other you and I and others like us will have to continue to shoulder the burden. I am, therefore, also clear that you should become a delegate and a member of the A.I.C.C. Whether you become a member of the Working Committee or not can be decided later. I think you should. As a matter of fact I had included your name in the first list that I prepared at Lucknow two years ago. But the list, as it emerged ultimately, had little to do with my choice. However, much depends on how things fashion out at Haripura. In any event you should be a member of the A.I.C.C. . . .

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. He had written a book containing simple rules of conduct and citizenship.
3. Sri Prakasa was appointed supervisor for the election of delegates from U.P. to the Haripura Congress and also of the assembly elections. He resigned in face of opposition from many Congressmen in the U.P.P.C.C.

37. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Allahabad
16-4-38

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Your letter about Shaukat and Zaheer.[2] I do not understand their haste and their reluctance to inform Sir Sikandar Hayat before the final step is taken. This does not show strength of mind. If they cannot resist Sir Sikandar's wishes now, how will they be able to do so later?

Of course both of them will be welcome to the Congress and they should be told so. But the manner of their coming should be such as to cause the least resentment and should facilitate their future work, whatever this might be. If they suddenly resign today and are taken up by you tomorrow, this will lead to the impression that you have perhaps induced them to resign to put Sikandar Hayat in a false position. Then again what are they to do in the Congress after they resign? A young military officer is seldom fitted to do anything else and is peculiarly unfitted for public work. They have no such background or training. Again, it is all very well for them to say that they will reduce their expenditure and live simply. Probably they have little idea of what this means. So far each of them must have been spending Rs. 600 or so a month (adding the allowance from Sir Sikandar). It will be very difficult for them to reduce this standard to Congress limits. In any event, it will be undesirable for the Congress to give them any allowance straight off after their resignation from the army. This will be adversely criticised and will make a bad impression.

A mere negative dislike of any service may be good enough for resignation, but it will not take far in any positive work for the Congress. If they are really keen on doing Congress work then they must face the initial difficulties bravely—inform their father, etc.—and take the final step after full deliberation and consultation. I do not for the moment see what they can do in Bihar or for that matter in the U.P. Perhaps they might be more useful in the Punjab but they will not like the idea of working there near their father (one of Sikandar Hayat's cousins has recently joined the Congress in the Punjab).

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.
2. Shaukat, the son of Sikandar Hayat Khan, and his friend Zaheer, lieutenants in the army, wanted to resign and join the Congress as they objected to the discriminatory treatment of Indians in the army. Jawaharlal mistook Zaheer also for Sikandar Hayat Khan's son.

I think they must realise, if they have any sense, that a false and hurried step now will not be good for them or the Congress. Their obvious course is to inform Sir Sikandar, give him a little time, and then take the step. Even so, this step should not be followed immediately after by a formal engagement by the Congress. They should take their time, consult others. For instance, I shall be glad to meet them and discuss their future with them. They might see Mahmud also.

If they have finally decided to resign without reference to Sir Sikandar then that is their look-out. This step should be taken without reference to the Congress and without any help from the Congress. They should be told of course that they will be welcomed in the Congress whenever they choose to come but this coming, to begin with, can only be as ordinary members. Nothing else should follow till a decent interval has passed. During this interval they can consult people and try to find out exactly what they can do.

I wanted to find out from Ashraf if he knew these young men but Ashraf has gone to the city and is not available at present.

I do think that you should not engage them in any Congress activity immediately after resignation—should they resign now. Besides, I do not suppose resignations from the army take effect immediately. This will take time and Sir Sikandar will get to know and bring pressure to bear upon them. If they are unable to withstand this pressure, then the resignation might be withdrawn. If you have made any commitment, you might then be placed in a false position.

As for the work they might be asked to do, I can make no suggestion whatever. I should like to meet them. Is it possible for them to come to Allahabad? I shall be here till the 23rd night and shall then go to Lucknow for two or three days.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

6

VISITS TO NORTH WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE

1. Bombing and Kidnapping on the Frontier[1]

Less than two months ago the British Government addressed a communication to the Spanish Government and the insurgents in Spain asking both of them to refrain from bombing the civil population from the air. This remonstrance was sent to both the warring groups in Spain, but as a matter of fact the immediate occasion for it was the bombing of some of the towns in the Basque country, largely by German and Italian aeroplanes in the service of General Franco.[2] For nearly a year, ever since the outbreak of the insurrection in Spain and its invasion by foreign forces, the world has been sickened by accounts of the barbarities perpetrated by the fascist military clique in that unhappy country. Even so the bombing of Guernica, an unfortified city, with incendiary bombs, the killing thereby of 800 civilians, and the destruction of a large part of the city came as a terrible shock to the peoples of the world.

The British Government sent a pious note of protest and remonstrance; that is its chief function now in foreign affairs. And yet, just then, that same British Government was indulging in bombing from the air across the north west frontier of India. It was a strange and significant coincidence demonstrating in a flash the true nature and hypocrisy of modern imperialism.

How does the thing that is monstrous and horrible in Spain become justifiable in India or across her frontier? Whatever the so-called justification might be, frightfulness remains frightfulness, and there are certain standards of conduct which can only be ignored and set aside at peril to the civilisation and culture which the world has so painfully built up through long years of travail. All over the world people realise this and raise their voices against this new barbarism of bombing of civilians from the air. But fascism and imperialism, twin brothers, are impervious to this widespread opinion, are wholly insensitive to the suffering of innocent human beings and to the crash of civilisation and the collapse of much that humanity cherishes. They carry on with their bombs from the air and destroy or maim impartially man and woman, boy and girl, and the child at the breast.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 22 June 1937. *The Leader*, 26 June 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 203-212.
2. (b. 1892); Spanish soldier, organizer and leader of the rebel forces in the Spanish civil war, 1936-39; head of the Spanish state since 1940.

But humanity apart, let us examine this bombing business across the frontier. The Congress has condemned it,[3] as every sensitive person needs must, and it has further condemned the real motive force behind it, the so-called forward policy at the frontier. We are told, however, that the British Government indulged in this bombing in order to rescue and protect girls who had been kidnapped. It is strange that even kidnapping of girls should fit in with the frontier policy of the government, just as communalism fits in with its larger Indian policy. Memories of how the kidnapping of missionaries in various parts of the world helped in spreading the empires of various imperialist powers come back to us. Do we see a like process in operation at the frontier?

Now it is clear and beyond possibility of argument that the kidnapping of girls is a barbarous and inhuman thing and we cannot tolerate it. A government that cannot prevent it demonstrates its own incompetence. But it is also clear to every tyro in politics that air-bombing and military expeditions do not materialise unless there are important reasons of policy behind them. What that policy in India has been and is, we all know. For generations past it has messed about the frontier, ostensibly trying to solve the problem, in effect worsening it. One may argue whether this failure is due to sheer incompetence, or to a desire not to solve the problem, so that it may continue as a constant irritant and an excuse for periodical frontier operations and their inevitable reactions on Indian politics, or to both. But almost everybody is agreed that British policy on the frontier has been a complete failure.

That is true on the face of it and yet that is too simple a statement to make, for the British people are no fools, and in framing their imperial policies they do not stop at the frontier; they look far beyond it. In the old days they looked at the Tsar and his advancing empire; now the Tsar has gone past recall, but the same fascination forces them to look at the wide-flung Soviet territories which almost touch the frontiers of India. In this area of Central Asia they see threats to their Indian empire, to the routes to India, to their world position. In the great crises

3. The Faizpur Congress had condemned the punitive measures and the policy that necessitated inhuman and barbarous methods, like bombing from the air, which led to frequent military raids across the frontier and stated its belief that "friendly relations and peace can be established without much difficulty if the trans-border tribes are treated as friends and good neighbours and are not interfered with on the pretext of spreading civilization, or by making military roads under the guise of rendering economic assistance or otherwise...." It further added: "The charge laid against the Frontier Pathan tribes as being untamed, fierce, truculent and aggressive is without foundation and appears to be made with the object of justifying unwarranted interference and a heavy permanent military expenditure...."

that loom ahead, the Indian frontier and the adjoining countries may well have decisive importance. It is true that the Soviet Union desires peace more ardently than any other country in the world. It is also true that the Soviet Union has tried hard to make friends with England. Yet the inherent antagonisms of the two systems remain and may become even more evident when crisis comes. We have seen how official England, even at the cost of minor interests and prestige, has indirectly aided the insurgents in Spain and supported the Nazi policy in Europe. The true kinship of imperialism with fascism affected British foreign policy more than many other considerations.

Thus the frontier of India and the lands beyond it are regarded by the government as a probable theatre of war, and all their policy is directed to strengthening themselves there for war purposes. It is not a policy of pacification of and cooperation with the frontier tribes. It is ultimately one of advancing and occupying more territory so as to remove the theatre of war a little further away from their present base. The military mind, ignoring political and psychological factors, thinks only in terms of extending the bounds of an empire and thus making it safer from attack. As a matter of fact this process often ends in weakening a country or an empire. In India we have the military mind at work even in the civilian departments, for the civilian considers himself, and rightly, as much a member of a foreign army of occupation as the soldier.

All this has led to the so-called 'forward policy' at the frontier and because of this every excuse is good enough to be utilized for a forward move. It is with this background that we must consider recent events on and across the frontier.

This forward policy becomes an intense preparation for war, for the great war that is prophesied for the not distant future. Apart from our opposition and strong objection to this forward policy in itself, we have to oppose it as such a preparation for war. The Congress has declared itself against India's participation in an imperialist war and by that declaration and policy we must stand, not for quixotic reasons, but in the solid and permanent interests of the people of India and their freedom.

The forward policy has another aspect, a communal one. Just as the canker of communalism, fostered by imperialism, weakens and injures our public life and our struggle for freedom, so also the forward policy introduces that canker at the frontier and creates trouble between India and her neighbours. The policy of Britain at the frontier has been alternately to bribe and terrorise the frontier tribes. That is a foolish policy, foredoomed to failure. That certainly can never be the policy of a free India towards them. The Congress has repeatedly declared that it has

no quarrel whatsoever with our neighbours and that it desires to cultivate friendly and cooperative relations with them. Thus the forward policy of the British Government comes into direct conflict with our intentions and creates new problems which will be difficult of solution in the future. We must try to prevent that happening as far as we can, and this makes it necessary for us to hold hard to these fundamental principles of ours and not allow ourselves to be swept away by anything else.

I am quite convinced that the trouble at the frontier can be ended by a friendly approach on our part, if we were free to make that approach. One man alone, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, loved on either side of the frontier, could settle it, but under the British dispensation, he may not even enter his province. But even apart from Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, I can say with confidence that any approach by the Congress would meet with success. The chiefs of the frontier tribes would realise soon enough that our interests and theirs were not in conflict and they would cooperate with us in putting an end to the scandal of kidnappings and raiding expeditions. They would realise also that any other course than this would imperil the freedom that they have got, for British imperialism is determined to march further and further in pursuance of its forward policy. They play into the hands of this imperialism by giving it pretexts for action, and they create an unfriendly feeling in India by being parties to kidnappings and raids.

Let us examine briefly the recent occurrences on the frontier. A village girl of about 15 or 16, Ram Kuar, apparently eloped with someone. This incident, which was a purely local and personal affair and had no larger significance, suddenly assumed importance and excited communal passions in the neighbourhood. Candidates for municipal and assembly elections exploited it, such is the virtue of communal electorates. The matter was clearly one to be settled privately or through a court in accordance with the wishes of the girl herself. Neither Hinduism nor Islam profited or suffered by such an incident. A court intervened and it is interesting to note that the offence, for which the man who had accompanied Ram Kuar was ultimately sentenced, was based on the minority of the girl, she being just under 16. It was not a case of forcible abduction. The girl made various contradictory statements, as almost any girl might have done under such extraordinary circumstances.

Perhaps the incident might have ended there. But the assembly elections gave it further life for the candidates made full use of it. This incident had nothing to do with Waziristan or the frontier tribes. In Waziristan about that time some trouble had already started; this had

no connection whatever with Ram Kuar's case. The Waziris were acting against the British Government for some reasons of their own. But the growth of communal passions, chiefly due to the propaganda about Ram Kuar's case during the election campaign, affected the Waziris also and this produced unfortunate results soon after the election was over. Four Hindu girls were forcibly kidnapped by some Waziris aided by local bad characters, presumably to avenge Ram Kuar. This was followed later by many cases of dacoities.

All this, as far as I can make out, is confined to Bannu district. It is worth noting that it was in this very district that Congress candidates fared badly during the assembly elections. Where Congress is stronger no such thing has happened. Communalism and trouble go hand in hand.

These kidnappings and dacoities had two obvious consequences. The small minority of Hindus living in the rural areas were naturally terrified and confounded. What frightened them most was the fact that, as a rule, their Muslim neighbours, who had formed the large majority of the population, did not help them or protect them. Worse even than the actual occurrences were the rumours that were spread.

The second consequence was the advance of the forward policy. It had ample excuse now. Were they not going forward to punish those who kidnapped and committed dacoities on innocent and defenceless people? And so, claiming to be protectors of the weak, they marched ahead to fulfil the plans of British imperialism, and they bombed right and left with goodwill, and left a track of ruin and misery behind them.

It is easy to understand the reaction of the small minority of terrified Hindus. It is also easy to understand the anger of the hill tribes who saw this ruin and death surrounding them and to some extent connected it with the communal controversy. Nevertheless it was and is folly for both to think or act in terms of communalism; for both are victims of that larger policy of imperialism which marches on regardless of human suffering. For the Hindus in the Frontier Province to support imperialism and its policy is not only the height of folly and cowardice but also to invite ruin for themselves. They cannot live and prosper in that province except in cooperation with, and with the goodwill of, their neighbours. For their Muslim neighbours in these villages to look on while kidnapping and dacoity take place almost before their eyes is to degrade themselves before the world. That is not the way of neighbours. For the frontier tribes to associate themselves in any way with kidnapping and raiding is to discredit themselves and to imperil their freedom.

Our policy is clear. We cannot approve of the forward policy of the government, because that is a discredited policy, because it strikes at the very root of our struggle for freedom, because it makes enemies of our friends, because it is a preparation for war, and because it is an imperialist policy. We can never tolerate the barbarity and inhumanity of bombing from the air. Our approach to the frontier problem would be entirely different; it would be based on friendship and cooperation and respect for the freedom of others; and an attempt to find an economic solution for their difficulties.

But it is equally clear that we cannot tolerate kidnappings and dacoities and raids. Our sympathies must go out to those who suffer from these and it is our bounden duty to protect them. The surest protection, we feel, will come from a friendly approach and the removal of communal passions. Those who seek to feed these passions, either on the Hindu or the Muslim side, are friends of neither the Hindus nor the Muslims. The Congress has already done good work in the Frontier Province in this respect and it is to be noted that the recent trouble has been largely confined to Bannu district where unfortunately the Congress organisation is weak. Dr. Khan Sahib, the Congress leader in the Frontier Province, has already given a straight and a brave lead and I trust that Hindus and Muslims alike will follow it. This is not a question of Hindu or Muslim, but of our dignity and good repute, our intelligence and good sense, to whatever religious faith we may belong, and of Indian freedom itself.

2. To E.B. Shawe[1]

Allahabad
July 20, 1937

Dear Mr. Shawe,

I owe you an apology for the delay in answering your letter of June 11th.

I do not think there was any weakness in my argument regarding the frontier. It is always possible for the wrong man to become popular and to exercise his influence in a wrong direction. That danger has to be faced everywhere. What we want is the right man and the right policy. If we have both then success is bound to come sooner or later.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

A wrong man pursuing a wrong policy may injure the cause but the policy is doomed to failure. Some time back I issued a long statement[2] in regard to the frontier. You must have seen it.

As for my putting you in touch with a Congress thinker in Delhi, it is a little difficult for me to pick and choose people. I do not know who is of my persuasion and who is not, or indeed if there is anyone entirely of my persuasion. But I might suggest to you two persons who represent different persuasions within the Congress. One is Professor Indra[3] and the other Farid-ul-Haq Ansari.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. See the preceding item.
3. Indra Vidyavachaspati (1891-1960); a leading Congressman of Delhi; a Sanskrit scholar, and professor at Gurukul Kangri in Hardwar before joining the non-cooperation movement; edited *Vijaya* and *Arjun*, Hindi newspapers published from Delhi.

3. The Task Before the Country[1]

For long years I had cherished a desire to come to you but many obstacles came in the way of our meeting. That desire has now been fulfilled at long last. You can imagine my feelings at the wonderful reception you gave me. The honour you do is not to me personally but to the great Congress organisation which is a splendid asset for India; whatever we do for it is not much.

Just as the Frontier tops other provinces on the Indian map, so does it even in sacrifices in the struggle for freedom. Little wonder then that I and all India feel immensely proud of it.

I am sorry that I cannot go to every district of the province during my brief stay but my desire to come to the province was so powerful that I did not want to let this opportunity go.

We have a great task before us. I have travelled throughout this vast country and met different persons for understanding the common bond

1. Speech at Peshawar, 14 October 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 16 October 1937 and *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16 October 1937.

uniting thirty seven crores of Indians. I have found that slavery is not the only bond that binds us. The whole country is also knit together with the urge for becoming free. When a nation is subjugated, slavery enters its very soul and it becomes difficult to resurrect a dead nation. We think that we shall never be free. This is our weakness. Even with education we have only become greater slaves. India is not poor. She has a rich soil and plenty of labour and yet the people in the country are starving and are unemployed. But despite the oppression the poor peasants have faced their problems courageously and by their grit and determination bewildered everyone. This gives us the hope that the country's strength is growing and India is bound to be free. However, in the task before us we have to act wisely and with confidence.

4. On Communal Differences[1]

As an expression of your love and admiration for Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, you have bestowed the title of *Fakhr-e-Afghan*[2] upon him. It would be more appropriate if you call him *Fakhr-e-Hindustan.*[3] The frontier is not only a historic but a living part of India. Our differences are mainly manufactured and intelligent people should not be taken in by these. The British Government are interested in these differences which are created under the garb of religion. The Congress has declared freedom for all religions and cultures. Communal questions take the form of a demand for greater representation in the legislatures or the services. The real question before the country is of making a new constitution through a constituent assembly. The Congress is moving in that direction.

The people of the frontier are brave but they should know that mere percentage will not increase a nation's strength. Mere counting of heads does not make a nation strong. Had it been so India would not have been a slave nation at all. A different yardstick is used for measuring national strength.

1. Speech at Peshawar, 16 October 1937. From *The Hindu*, 17 October 1937.
2. Pride of the Afghans.
3. Pride of India.

IN THE NORTH WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE, OCTOBER 1937

WITH SUBHAS BOSE, CALCUTTA, 4 NOVEMBER 1937

There is an urgent need for a united effort for gaining and retaining freedom. A mere replacement of high English officials by Indian officials will not free India. We are not against officials but against the system of government. It is true that foreigners, of right, cannot become officials in our land, but that is a different question. Our fight is proceeding on different principles. As long as the British army is present in India we cannot be free. That army is sitting over the heads of all of us. We have only been given some power so that we may not drift more towards revolution. But even that is a sign of our increasing strength. When the power is transferred from a handful of Englishmen to the Indian nation then Swaraj will be attained. We do not want the power to remain with a handful of men, whether English or Indian. We want freedom so that our country is able to banish poverty and compete with other countries in all respects.

5. On the Frontier Problem[1]

The Frontier Province has recently got a Congress ministry.[2] I do not know much about its achievements, but the atmosphere has become freer. The province heaves a sigh of relief and a feeling of satisfaction is felt all around. But the hands of even the Congress ministry are tied down. The major portion of money is earmarked for British interests and only a small portion is left for the people.

We do not want to see the hand of the British Government in shaping the country's constitution, nor do we want a constitution solely made by elders. We want adult franchise for a constituent assembly. That is the only method for solving India's problems. There would not be any communal question in this method as everybody would get an equal share. The talk of one community suppressing another is absurd.

The Congress ministries cannot do much. They will themselves have to contribute largely to the fight for freedom which is bound to come. Apart from the British Government being an obstacle, there are other obstacles as well in the way of our freedom. Some people create these obstacles either out of their love for the British Government or because they think themselves to be the progeny of the British Government, and stand in the way of India's freedom. Around the costly palaces of

1. Speech at Peshawar, 16 October 1937. From *The Hindu*, 18 October 1937.
2. See p. 261.

the princes, there are mud houses where live millions of naked and starving people. These palaces have been built with the sweated labour of these starving millions. Wherever I go, crowds come to listen to me, partly out of their love for the Congress, but mainly because of their urge for solving the problems of poverty and unemployment.

These questions have not been created by a few revolutionary leaders. Rather, the revolutionary atmosphere has created the revolutionary leaders. Hunger, poverty and unemployment have become universal. That is so even outside India. In China, bombs are being rained. In Palestine, Arabs are being suppressed. No news comes from Palestine except that the Arab Higher Committee[2] has been declared unlawful. We know what all that means. That means that repression is rampant there and is being faced bravely.

A great war is imminent and India will certainly be affected thereby. If the British Government is involved in a world war, it will look to us for help. In the last World War we had committed a folly. We are not going to be taken in again. The Congress has been declaring for two years that we will not join such a war. Nor can we join a war by which the power of Britain might increase. We do not want to entrust the fate of India to imperialistic wars. The decision on this question rests with us. The British Government will suddenly declare war and we are proclaiming our resolve not to fight.

The Waziris are our brothers and we understand each other. Then, why are they being suppressed with India's money and in India's name? Why have we the frontier expeditions every year? A government which has not solved the frontier problem for the last 50 years is, indeed, a very worthless government. If we had the power, we would have settled it long ago. We would have taken the difficulties of the independent tribes as our own and found some solution. Two years ago a gentleman, unfriendly to India, asked me in England what would befall India if the British army were suddenly withdrawn from the Indian frontier. I replied that in that contingency there would be general rejoicings and illuminations on both sides of the border. If this problem is left to the Frontier Gandhi, he can solve it in no time. As a matter of fact, any person can solve it as it is not a complicated problem. It is the British policy which is involving India for nothing and getting her a bad name.

India can face these problems easily. The Congress has proved that it can fight the strongest government. The Congress is a representative body. Its leaders are worthy men. I appeal to you to strengthen the

2. It was formed in April 1936 and it called for the suspension of Jewish immigration.

Congress organisation and to form a network of Congress committees. We are determined to be free. We have the strength in our arms and can use the sword and the musket, but we have evolved the better and more effective method of achieving our goal through nonviolence. Our united and nonviolent efforts have left the government in a quandary. And we have succeeded a lot. If the leaders are arrested, we should not get puzzled. Great revolutionary changes are going to take place in the world. For removing poverty from the land we have first to capture political power. We should do that with fire in our hearts and coolness in our heads.

6. Parting Message to the Frontier[1]

Three days in the Frontier Province—three brief days spent there—and I saw with my own eyes this historic gateway of India, rich with the memories of our long past, rich also with the memories of the recent brave deeds and sufferings for the sake of the freedom of India. I saw the gallant people of this northern tip of India; their virile enthusiasm and discipline and frank and simple nature captured my heart. The freedom of India has no other stouter soldiers, no braver defenders, and to have comrades such as these is a joyous privilege and a rare delight. As guardians of the gateway of India, they are also the foremost among the fighters and guardians of our national freedom. They can learn much from the sophisticated people of other provinces but others can learn much of courage and brave endurance and splendid discipline and freedom from narrow sectarianism from these dear comrades of ours in the north, and march together and struggle side by side and win together in that great enterprise of India's freedom which draws our millions ever forward. To the north I brought admiration and comradely greetings of the people of other provinces. Affection and hospitality overwhelmed me and now I go back with living and throbbing pictures in my mind and tens of thousands of voices are ringing in my ears. These voices pull me back, and even as I go away, the call of the frontier comes to me. Soon I hope to renew my acquaintance with these comrades of the north.

1. Statement to the press, Peshawar, 18 October 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 19 October 1937.

7. Impressions of His Visit to the Frontier[1]

Question: On your return from the frontier, you have contrasted the 'quiet dignity' of the frontier Muslims with the 'hysteria' of the communalist Muslim League. Is the contrast quite so legitimate and are not the frontier people a distinct cultural unit, separate from the rest of India? There is of course such a thing as the essential unity of India and of her cultural past which hurdles over the many diversities of race and religion, but are the frontier people a part of this essential unity?

Jawaharlal Nehru: During my brief tour in the frontier, I was personally intensely conscious of the unity of India. It may be that this was due to a certain subjective state, but I think that this had an objective foundation also. I was also conscious of the fact that the people of the Frontier Province thought in terms of Indian unity and Indian freedom. Probably their thoughts were vague and undefined and could not bear cross examination; nevertheless, they were there as a solid obvious fact. They were continually referring both in their public addresses and in their private talks to the freedom of India and not to any local freedom of their own. Probably this sense of Indian unity and freedom has consciously grown in them in recent years since the noncooperation movement and after, but I imagine that the background of it was present long before. It is true that they have a strong feeling of kinship with the people across the border, with the border tribes in the semi-independent area beyond India and in Afghanistan. Even with the Afghans proper they have the feeling of kinship because of language and cultural relations, but politically speaking they look very definitely to India. It is obvious that the tightening of the political bonds between the Frontier Province and the rest of India has been due to common sacrifices for a common cause.

One thing is very apparent in the frontier and that is the absence of what is known as the communal spirit in the rest of India. Even in matters of religion, though they are undoubtedly religious in a broad sense, they are far removed from bigotry. They are a very child-like people with the virtues and failings of children. It is not easy for them to intrigue and so their actions have a certain simplicity and sincerity which commands attention. Their customs also afford

1. This interview taken by Ram Manohar Lohia was printed in the *Congress Socialist*, 6 November 1937.

a pleasant contrast to some of the customs prevailing in other parts of India. For instance, *purdah* is not very prevalent except in cities and the further away one goes the less of it there is. There is a regular corps of Pathan women volunteers among the Red Shirts. In the tribal areas, I am told, there is no *purdah* at all.

Q: For almost a year now, the border tribes of the frontier are continuing the tradition which, with the last Burmese war, came to a definite close in the rest of India. Against the pounding technique of imperialism, they have mainly their stout hearts to defend them. What moves these hearts?

JN: I do not know enough about these tribes to say much. But one thing is obvious, that their love for independence is something fierce and unquenchable. Only a process approaching extermination is likely to end it. The only possible approach to them will have to be a friendly approach giving them perfect freedom. To any hostile approach they will put up, as they have put up in the past, an unbending resistance. But they are very susceptible to friendship and they will do almost anything for those whom they consider their friends. A friendly approach therefore is certain to be rewarded with the best of results. It must be remembered that this tribal area is a narrow strip of territory from 50 to 80 miles across containing sparse population. The numbers affected are thus relatively small. They are terribly poor and their problems are basically economic. It should not be difficult to solve them from the economic point of view but that solution itself will fail if it involves forcible political suppression. Whatever they do, they will have to do it willingly.

Q: The Indian National Congress has time and again expressed its solidarity with the tribes' fierce desire for freedom. The Congress has approached the tribes in an eminently friendly manner. Could the tribesmen be unaware of this approach? Could they also be unaware of the fact that the Congress is fighting for the freedom of India as a whole? Difficulties might sometimes arise which cause confusion but what is the basic relation between the frontier tribes and the rest of India?

JN: Some time back there was a report in the newspapers that the Waziri leader had delivered a speech in which he condemned the kidnappings that had taken place and said that some mischief-makers were responsible for them. So far as he was concerned, he was strongly

opposed to such crimes as they brought discredit to him and his followers. He would do everything in his power to punish the miscreants. Indeed, he invited the leaders of the national movement to come and enquire on the spot. It was not possible under the circumstances for any such enquiry to be held but I think that in this matter of kidnappings his statement was a perfectly *bona fide* one. It was obviously not to his interest that such things should occur. He is up against a big thing, that is, the forward policy of the British Government, and the kidnapping of a few individuals does not help. It only prejudices people against him. We must remember that these tribal people are no fools, although they are simple, more or less uneducated folk. Men who have the power of organisation and resistance that their leaders have shown must have some understanding of events. I feel sure that such men, when approached in a right way and in a free manner, will be willing to meet that approach more than half way. It is not a pleasant or an easy thing for them to continue to suffer the terrible hardships which modern war with its aeroplanes and bombings brings. They would like an honourable way out, but they would not look at anything which involves their subjection. There should be no difficulty in a free India in dealing with them on friendly terms.

Q: The forward policy of the government, in spite of the heavy expenditure involved, has been a patent failure. Is not the heavy list of casualties, notwithstanding its gross official under-estimate, an eloquent testimony of the failure?

JN: The forward policy of the British Government involving periodical little wars has been a patent failure even from the point of view of the British Government. It has not succeeded in subduing the tribes; only the heavy cost of it has fallen on India. It is stated that recent operations in Waziristan have cost a lakh of rupees a day. The air-bombing expeditions, though they involve a great deal of damage and destruction, have not shaken the morale of the tribal people. Whatever other policy might be adopted, the present British policy must be given up.

Q: Could you not, after your tour throughout the country, say that the morale of the Indian people as a whole has mounted considerably and the day of freedom is within sight?

JN: I must say that I was deeply impressed by the people of the Frontier Province. I am used to big crowds and popular enthusiasm but the discipline and quiet dignity of these people were striking. The

words they uttered did not seem to be airy flourishes meaning little. They seemed to mirror the desire of their hearts and behind them they carried the impression of reserves of strength. The whole of India has reason to be proud of these frontier people and inevitably when India is a free country, as it should be before many years are out, they will have an honoured place in it.

The frontier people will of course have an honoured place in free India. Even today, while falling in line with the national development, they have showed what an effective vanguard they can be. Imbued with a morality of life and death, entirely dissimilar to that of the rest of India, they have yet accepted the civilization of peace and given the Congress technique a deeper import.

It may be that these frontier people may teach us many a lesson. They are not men of words and any resolution for them is something which has to be translated into deeds. The most significant example of this has been their adherence to the policy of nonviolence during our struggle. This policy has affected the whole of India deeply and it has been largely imbibed by the people as a whole, who have gradually come to recognise its efficacy. Still, for many, it is a synonym for inactivity and for some it is a cloak for cowardice. But nobody can accuse the Pathans of physical cowardice in a struggle. If they have accepted nonviolence and acted up to it, it is through their strength, not weakness. Their example is thus full of meaning for all of us and it will help us to develop this technique even further combining peaceful action with efficient action leading to results.

Q: The world is full of hatred and wars and yet there are large masses of men of peace. To them, all struggles against evil, preeminently the Indian struggle, have a deep import. All over the world now there is an anxiety for peaceful developments and all popular movements give full expression to them. They have their own methods of reducing the political and economic power of the bankers, armament manufacturers, big capitalists and the like. No doubt, those methods are revolutionary in nature, as they hit at the reactionary policies and reduce their potentialities for launching a general offensive. Is there a possibility of this trend continuing?

JN: The development of popular mass movements in other countries slows an ever-growing reliance on a peaceful technique of struggle. This is in contrast with the aggressive and blatant violence of fascist countries. Where these peaceful methods have been pursued, strength has been built up for the popular cause, as in France the *front populaire*. In Spain,

this happened also to a large extent but militarist and fascist violence brought about a crisis. What will happen in other countries, it is difficult to say. But it seems, in any event, the right and the expedient course for a people's front movement to be built up on peaceful lines. In India probably the chances and the advantages of such a peaceful development of strength are greater than elsewhere. Danger here as elsewhere comes from possible violence from the other side. It should be remembered also that the background of the Indian struggle, though essentially peaceful, is equally dynamic and ultimately coercive. Therefore, the old-styled pacifist doctrine of passivity has no application to our nonviolent dynamic struggle, which is far from being passive.

8. On His Second Visit to the Frontier[1]

The Faqir of Ipi[2] and leading Waziri chiefs vehemently resented the gross accusations levelled against them by interested persons who had their own axes to grind. The letter was addressed to me as Congress President, and the invitation was extended to me and other Congress leaders to visit the territory and verify the truth of their assertions. The letter conveyed their firm resolve to shed the last drop of their blood to regain their integrity and freedom. The Faqir unequivocally condemned the action of the raiders, adding that they proved a slur on the fair name of Islam and the tribes. I do not question the veracity of the statement. Friendly relations with neighbours are not only essential for the safety of the Indians but are necessary for the political advancement of India. Left to themselves, the Congress and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan are competent to tackle the problem to prevent all inroads of the Waziris.

Do you think the British Government invaded Waziristan because one or two or some Hindu women were kidnapped? That is not the way of the British Government. There are other easier ways to get back the women. But the fact remains that their interests are different. The trans-border territory is invaded in furtherance of imperialist designs to

1. Bannu, 26 January 1938. *The Hindustan Times*, 27 January 1938.
2. Haji Mirza Ali Khan, better known as Fakir of Ipi, (1890-1960); Imam of a mosque at Ipi; leader of the Waziris who led armed protests against the British Government.

push forward the frontiers and strengthen themselves. They make such occasions as tribal raids only a pretext. There can be no justification whatever for the waste of millions and billions of our money.

The Congress policy is to establish brotherly contacts with the neighbouring peoples, living in the trans-border territories and countries. They must trust us and we must trust them. With the help of our close relations, believing in each other's freedom, we must prevent the happening of anything undesirable or untoward.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan can successfully solve the frontier problem. This province has produced this great man in whom all India takes pride. He has lifted the frontier men out of the morass, changing the whole atmosphere. He created the great army of Red Shirts, the Khudai Khidmatgars, and mobilized such an arms-loving race for a heroic non-violent struggle for freedom. It is a miracle that he has performed. The weapon of nonviolence is a mighty weapon. Only the bold and the daring can wield it. Cowards and weaklings cannot do anything with it. We challenged the British power boldly with this weapon. Through it the withering and drooping spirit of India gained vitality. Power alone can meet power. In an age where only air-bombers can face the air-bombers, not bows and arrows or even guns—weapons which have now become antiquated and useless, India forged this new weapon of non-violence to face a powerful enemy and shook the British Empire to its foundations.

The Hindus and the Sikhs fear insecurity due to the smallness of their number living in this part. Their plea is not proper and tenable. They have to share the joys and sorrows in common with the people inhabiting this province and create mutual confidence. Their strongest armour should be their friendship with them. No better safety can they get than through their ties of intimacy with the rest of the people.

I would appeal to all Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs to enlist themselves among Red Shirts to strengthen the Congress.

9. Farewell to the Frontier[1]

All the provinces of India, all the religious groups of India, have essentially the same task politically and economically and we must therefore

1. Speech at Dera Ismail Khan, 28 January 1938. From *The T*: nuary

all cooperate together in this great endeavour. The Congress is the only organisation which includes all within its wide fold and can successfully tackle our great problems as it has successfully faced the might of the British Empire. Therefore we must all strengthen the Congress.

I am bidding goodbye to the frontier for a while after my seven days' tour. During these seven days I have seen many unforgettable pictures of the present but often my mind has wandered to the past, for the frontier area is rich in memories of India's long history. For thousands of years caravan after caravan had trekked through the narrow passes of the north-west. Many strange and new peoples had come to this land of ours and were absorbed by India. The Aryans came long ago and influenced India tremendously. The Scythians and Turks and Huns also came and many of them settled down and even today there is much of Scythian blood in our Rajput races.

The other day I crossed the Indus almost at the spot where Alexander crossed it, and in my mind's picture I saw the Macedonian army entering the fertile plains of India. Later, Asoka the Great left imperishable memorials all over the frontier tracts. Peshawar became the capital of a great empire ruled by Kanishka spreading from the Vindhyas to Central Asia. It was a Buddhist empire. And then came to Peshawar, pilgrims and students in search of learning from the West and the Far East. It was the meeting place of three great cultures, the Indian, the Chinese and the Greco-Roman. Later again, the Arabs suddenly rose into prominence, and in one tremendous sweep of conquest spread from China to Spain. They knocked at the doors of India but did not enter.

It is well to remember that Islam was India's friendly neighbour for hundreds of years without any conquest or conflict. As such it was welcomed as India has always welcomed new thoughts and ideas from abroad and attempted to absorb them into its own synthesis. In the days of the greatness of Baghdad, when Haroun Al Rashid[2] was *khalifa*, scholars went to and fro between India and the Arab world, and many Sanskrit books were translated into Arabic. It was only when Central Asian conquerors came to India as invaders that there was conflict. This conflict was political, not religious, although it was exploited in the name of religion. Mahmud[3] came as a ruthless conqueror and looted India but how many people know that one of his best armies in Central Asia consisted of Indian and Hindu troops under a general named Tilak?

2. (766-809); the fifth caliph of the Abbasid dynasty of Iraq who had replaced the Umayyad as rulers of the Islamic world.
3. Mahmud, Sultan of Ghazni (d. 1030); succeeded to the throne of Ghazni in A.D. 986-87 and ruled till his death; made frequent plundering raids into India.

It was across these frontier tracts that India sent her message of religion and art to the Far East and so many pilgrims made long journeys to India in search of learning.

All these and many other pictures came to my mind as I wandered across the Frontier Province. And then I was rudely called back to the present with its poverty and misery and illiteracy and backwardness. But I thought also of the future that we hope to fashion when India would be free and end her poverty and flourish anew.

In spite of the poverty and backwardness of the frontier I have found many things there which fill me with hope, for the people are a magnificent people physically as also in their courage and love of freedom. With that firm foundation it is not difficult to build well and nobly. The tribal people I have met have also impressed me and I felt drawn to them. The friendship and welcome that they extended to me are precious memories. I am convinced that between them and the people of India there will be friendship and comradeship in the days to come when India is free and the nightmare of frontier troubles will be past.

Recently there was a conflict with the Waziris.[4] We must not blame a whole people for the misdeeds of a few. It is painful to learn of abductions and lootings and it is clear that every government must resist them and seek to end them. But what is the best way to do this? Surely, not the way of the British which failed dismally. The way of India would be one of friendship and an attempt to raise the simple and backward but brave people to higher levels. They live in their bare mountains and have few occupations except fighting and shooting. With education and suitable occupations and industries they will raise themselves and become our true guardians of the frontier.

I have always visualised India in terms of the unity of India, the identity of its major problems—freedom and poverty—and the objective of a united and free Indian nation with power in the hands of the masses.

I am happy to find how strong the hold of the Congress is in the frontier. I am also happy to see tens of thousands of smart Khudai Khidmatgars who are the volunteers of the Congress in the Frontier Province. Everybody, Hindu, Sikh or Muslim, can join them, for theirs is not a communal organization.

4. A case of abduction led to the armed protest by the Waziris against alleged government interference in the religious matters of the tribes. As military action proved inadequate, punitive air action was taken in parts of Waziristan.

The Hindu minority in the province is afraid of the great Muslim majority of 95 per cent and of the tribal people. But to be fear-ridden is no help. They must discard fear and even their womenfolk should do so. But at the same time they should live in friendship and cooperation with their neighbours.

During the past few years a remarkable change has come over the Frontier Province and a new spirit is evident. In spite of occasional troubles, this spirit of communal amity is growing. The growth of the Congress and the Khudai Khidmatgars has led to this but behind this vital and hopeful development there is that great and noble man, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who has already performed such miracles in the Frontier Province. He has made the war-like Pathan become an even braver soldier in our nonviolent struggle for freedom.

Nothing has impressed me so much as to see Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan surrounded by his people, each looking in the other's eyes with overwhelming affection and confidence. Well may we be proud of this great son of India.

Fakhr-e-Afghan, he is lovingly called but he is truly *Fakhr-e-Hind*. He is the dominating personality of the frontier and his influence extends across the border. He is a pillar of strength to the Congress and to communal unity and the cause of the masses. With a man like him both the minority and the majority are secure. For above everything he is a man of character and ideals and nothing can make him party to something he considers radically wrong.

There are difficulties of course and it is foolish to expect a complete change to come suddenly over the poor illiterate people of the frontier. But already the change is remarkable and in this change and in Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan lies the hope of amity and progress.

Let the minorities in the Frontier Province, therefore, discard their fear and suspicion and under the banner of the Congress and the leadership of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan march ahead in confidence to the great goal we have in view.

10. To Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan[1]

Allahabad
29th April, 1938

My dear Khan Sahib,

Mahatmaji has sent me a copy of the note which Mahadeva Desai prepared on his frontier visit. I understand that this note has been sent

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-16/1938-39, pp. 71-72, N.M.M.L.

to you also. I need hardly tell you that I am greatly distressed at many things that are happening in the Frontier Province.[2] It is difficult to write about them. We are having great difficulties in all the provinces. But in the Frontier Province there is the additional obstacle of complete want of contacts. I pointed this out during my last visit and made certain suggestions, but nothing has come out of them.

All over India we find that our work suffers because of lack of organisation and lack of efficient office work. We are used to propaganda in the villages and we can do this well. But something is much more important now and this is organisation and the putting up of trained workers in offices. This is necessary in our Congress offices. Much more is necessary for the Congress ministries, otherwise the ministers have to rely completely on the permanent service which is usually, as you know, hostile to our methods of work. In the Frontier Province there is an utter lack of this office work and organisation and letters and telegrams remain unanswered and no reports come to us.

We are moving towards a big crisis in the world and we can only meet it if there is proper organisation and a common purpose animating us. If this is not there we will go to pieces and all our good work goes by the board. It is absolutely necessary therefore for all of us to meet frequently to discuss our difficulties and evolve common plans of action. Unless we meet we do not know each other's minds. Unfortunately your ill health has prevented you from attending the Congress and the Working Committee meetings. The doctor[3] has not attended any meeting for a long time. I do hope that both of you will make a point of attending the ministers' conference in Bombay on the 12th of May as well as the Working Committee later on.

You know that the Frontier Province looks up to you more than to any other person and the burden must be shouldered by you, in cooperation with the doctor. The two of you can do what you like there. It is therefore necessary that the two of you should be fully acquainted with the national and international developments.

I am not discussing specific cases. But I might mention that Abdulla Shah's case has upset me greatly.[4] I have read the judgment on the

2. It was reported that due to certain differences the Red Shirt organisation had threatened to separate itself from the Frontier Province Provincial Congress Committee.
3. Khan Sahib.
4. A government school teacher, sentenced to imprisonment for wrongful confinement of a Hindu girl, was set free and reemployed by the Frontier Government and compensated for the period spent in jail.

case and many other papers and I am convinced that a man like Abdulla Shah cannot be entrusted with the education of children. I am also certain that a payment to him of any part of his salary during the period he was in prison is highly improper and against public morality.

I am sailing for England on June 2nd and I shall be away for three or four months. I am going abroad not for the sake of health but to do work. At this stage of crisis it is important that we should remain in touch with international developments. As I am going away for some time I would particularly like to meet you and Khan Sahib before I go. This is why I repeat my request that both of you should come to Bombay for the ministers' meeting.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the doctor.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7

VISIT TO ASSAM

1. To Secretary, Assam P.C.C.[1]

Allahabad
October 20, 1937

Dear Comrade,

Regarding my visit to Assam early in November please meet me in Calcutta on the 25th of this month when I can settle my provisional programme. The Sylhet and Surma valley people want me to give them three days. I am not sure if I shall be able to do so. If I can get away from Calcutta on the 1st of November, as I hope to, I can remain with you up to the 10th at the latest. If it is possible for you to give three days to the Surma valley, I shall be glad. The remaining days can be allotted to Assam.

I shall come there accompanied only by my secretary. No special arrangements are necessary about my diet except that I cannot take chillies and spices in my food. For the rest, I eat every kind of food, usually vegetarian, sometimes non-vegetarian. I take both tea and coffee and can do without either without any difficulty. I do not rest in the middle of the day. But I should like the day's programme to end early in the evening and not to start too early in the morning. Usually the programmes should be from 8 o'clock in the morning to 8 in the evening. The food supplied should not be rich and should be light and simple.

At big meetings it is difficult for me to speak without a loudspeaker. Therefore loudspeaker arrangements are desirable. It is better to have big meetings rather than a large number of small ones. In most centres I should like some time to meet the workers. If it is necessary to translate my Hindustani, please arrange for a suitable translator.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the secretary of the Sylhet Congress Committee. I shall be staying in Calcutta with Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose, 1, Woodburn Park.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-4/1937-38, pp. 275-276, N.M.M.L.

2. Strengthen the Congress[1]

I have come to Assam, not enamoured of her natural beauties, but to preach the message of the Congress and the ideals of Swaraj.

What is the meaning of Swaraj? It means a democratic state where power will rest with the poor and will not be utilised for the benefit of a rich few. The Congress aims at the removal of poverty and unemployment of the people of the land. There cannot be two opinions about this inasmuch as the welfare of the cultivators and labourers is, at heart, of all, irrespective of the community or religion to which they belong. The Congress programme, based as it is on the live economic issues of the country, cannot be suspected of interfering with one's religion which is entirely an individual and private matter. The Congress has a well-knit organisation spread throughout the country and it is this organisational force which enables it to carry on the country's fight for Swaraj. And this again is made possible on account of the fact that the strength of the British Government is based on bullets and bayonets. The crux of the whole thing lies in the fact that the Congress has the people at its back. The charge that Congressmen are required to obey ready-made orders from above is absolutely untrue. It is the people themselves who shape and mould the policies of the Congress. In short, the Congress is nothing but a panchayat of the masses.

It is this strength which the Congress derived from the masses that made it possible, in the N.W.F. Province, Bombay, Madras and other provinces, for the persons who once rotted in jails, to become ministers, and they are now the masters of those very people who had put them in jails.

I would not be satisfied if I am to be ruled even by an Indian Viceroy, and it matters little to me who rules the country as long as the real power does not belong to the people of the country. And for acquiring this power, I make an earnest appeal to all of you to join the Congress and strengthen its organisation.

I have heard it said that some Assam politicians accuse all-India leaders that the latter have neglected this province so long. I say the leaders by themselves cannot endow an organisation with real strength unless it is fortified with the activities of the people whom the Congress

1. Speech at Dhubri, 27 November 1937. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 28 November 1937.

represents. Here, I would like to draw your attention to the conditions that prevailed in N.W.F. Province some years ago, and how by their own endeavours, unaided by outside leaders, they built up an organisation of labourers and kisans which soon became strong enough to attract the notice of other provinces and leaders. I hope Assam will not lag behind politically and will rise up to the occasion to strengthen the Congress organisation.

About the Dhubri match factory strike,[2] I feel that the mere fact that the workers have continued the strike for so long a period is sufficient to convince one of the justness of their cause.

India must get Swaraj today or tomorrow. Assam is not outside India and she will also get it. I ask the employers to read the signs of the times. Let them not act against the wishes of the people.

2. See *ante*, section 4, pp. 256-257.

3. To Bishnu Ram Medhi[1]

Camp Jorhat
December 1, 1937

Dear Comrade,[2]

You pointed out to me in the course of conversation the various difficulties in your way in enrolling members during the time fixed for this. Under our present rules the enrolment period ends by about the 30th September. Ordinarily most members are enrolled in the previous two or three months. In Assam, however, that is a period when little work of the kind can be done because of the heavy rains and floods.

Even earlier in the year, though it is possible to move about, the condition of the peasantry is not such as to enable you to enrol them in large numbers. They are poor of course and the only suitable time when you can enrol them is soon after the harvest. This harvest season is on now in December and there is only one harvest during the year.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-4/1937-38, pp. 39-49, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1890); joined noncooperation movement, 1920; president, Assam P.C.C., 1930-39; member, Assam Assembly, 1938; Minister for Finance and Revenue, Assam, 1946-50; Chief Minister, Assam, 1950-52 and 1956-58; Governor of Tamil Nadu, 1958-64.

The position thus is that unless you are allowed to enrol members during December and January you will be greatly handicapped in this work. Under a recent decision of the Working Committee, it has been laid down that members should not be enrolled from the date of the closing of the members' list to the general election, that is to say, in the present instance, from 30th September to sometime in January. This rule would obviously hit you hard.

I propose to put this matter before the Working Committee and to request them to relax the rule in your favour so as to permit you to enrol members during this period. Meanwhile, I do not wish you to suspend your work till such decision of the Working Committee. The Congress organisation in Assam is not as strong and as widespread as it should be and every effort should be made to push it on. I have seen myself that there is considerable popular enthusiasm for the Congress. The masses have to be reached. Their response will certainly be good. My present tour in Assam will also help you to carry on your organisational work. I want you, therefore, to push ahead even now with your membership campaign and to organise Congress committees in villages and bigger areas.

But please remember that all the members that you might make since the 30th September last should be entered in a new register. They should not be mixed up with the members on the register prepared up to 30th September. The new members will not be entitled to vote at the general election in January. They may however vote at a bye-election which may take place in the course of the next year, provided they have been on the rolls for three months previously.

I am giving this permission to you on my personal initiative and authority so that Congress work might not be hindered in Assam. I am anxious that the Congress organisation should develop here and should come in line with our other provinces. I have seen that the organisational side here is weak, although the material is good. In one district, the district Congress committee was itself a primary body and consisted of 60 members only. This was absurd. In these days when we talk of mass contact, for a district to have 60 primary members is extraordinary. Besides this, a district committee is not a primary committee and cannot be such. Primary committees should be village committees and town committees or a small number of villages grouped together to form a primary committee. The members on the rolls of these primary committees should then elect the district committees, which are thus elective bodies and in the nature of executive committees. The primary members are not district committee members. The primary members have also to elect the Congress delegates.

I have not got your provincial constitution with me but I suggest to you to consider and revise it carefully in the light of the All-India constitution and some other provincial constitutions. You might, for instance, get the constitution of the U.P.P.C.C. for reference. Our office will also give you such help as we can in this matter.

It seems to me that there is not sufficient encouragement and control from the top in the province. The material, as I have said, is good. The first thing to be done, therefore, is to reorganise your provincial office and make it an efficient, business-like concern, having fixed hours of work and keeping in constant touch with your district and local committees. You should have a special organising secretary as well as an inspector who goes round continuously inspecting the local offices and advising them how to keep their books and do their work. Accounts must be inspected regularly in all district and local committees, and instructions issued as to the proper ways of keeping registers and accounts.

You should also, together with your membership campaign, encourage the enlistment of volunteers in each village and local area. Village and other committees should enrol their own volunteers without waiting for instructors from outside. Such volunteers will not be very efficient but efficiency can come later. You should send someone to give instructions about volunteering if you can do so. But meanwhile the process of enrolling volunteers should be carried on.

All this is meant to encourage mass contact and to give a mass basis to the Congress organisation in Assam. You should therefore approach particularly all those people who may be slightly cut off from the Congress influence, such as Muslims, the hill tribes and the depressed classes. The basis of your organisation will inevitably be the peasantry and therefore you should keep the agrarian reforms ever before you and discuss this with the peasantry. Village Congress committees should be encouraged to discuss their own problems and refer them to you. You have also the problem of the tea garden workers. I am told that it is difficult for you to approach them and find out their grievances. Members of the assembly should ventilate these grievances and try to remove the obstructions in the way of their approach and organisation. In all these matters there should be a coordination of the activities of the Congress organisation with the Congress Party in the legislature. Members of the legislature should not only press forward the demands of the masses by way of resolutions and bills, but should also move in their constituencies and organise Congress committees there. They should always keep in touch with their constituents.

I do not know what rule you have about Congress members' allowances and the like in the assembly. This should be in keeping with the Working Committee's direction in the matter. It is also desirable that Congress members of the assembly should give a percentage, say 15% of their allowances, to the provincial Congress committee.

Finally, I should like you and your committee to remember that we are on the eve of big movements, possible conflicts and big changes. We have got a brief period of respite to prepare for this. If we do not take advantage of this period to build up our organisation and to make it strong and efficient and widespread, we shall lose the great opportunity that is coming to us.

Three matters have been continually referred to me since my arrival in Assam. These are the opium question, Sylhet, and the immigration question involving the line system.

So far as the opium question is concerned, your policy should be clear and definite. You must stand for the complete suppression of opium, subject, at the most, to the sale of opium on medical licence. You should criticise the government also in this behalf vigorously. This has long been a world question and you have the sympathy in this matter not only of the rest of India but of the world at large. For Assam, opium is a far greater evil than even liquor and therefore it is desirable to concentrate on it. Of course, care should be taken not to replace opium with liquor as the government may well try to do for the sake of revenue. This opium question should be raised continually both in the assembly and in outside agitations.

In regard to Sylhet, the general policy of the Congress is quite clear and, indeed, Sylhet already belongs to the Bengal Congress province because it is linguistically Bengali. Apart from this linguistic principle, the Congress policy is one of self-determination and so the ultimate decision should largely rest with the people concerned. I take it that the Sylhet people would welcome amalgamation with Bengal. This is desirable from the economic point of view also, as Sylhet being a permanently settled area fits in with the economy of Bengal far more than that of Assam which has peasant proprietorship. It might be desirable for the Sylhet representatives in the assembly to take the initiative in the matter. I do not think, however, that any change is likely to take place in the near future. I want your committee and the Assam people to realise that we have far bigger problems ahead and big changes are coming in the course of the next few years, and not to bother much about other matters which will inevitably be taken in hand as soon as we have greater power.

The immigration question is a complicated one and it has become a communal question which will make it more difficult of solution. Every effort should be made to avoid giving prominence to the communal aspect of it. Essentially it is an economic question and it should be tackled in an economic way. The desire of the Assamese not to be overwhelmed by the non-Assamese people and to preserve their language and culture is perfectly legitimate. But it must be recognised that a sparsely populated area with vacant lands, like Assam is at present, cannot continue as it is, with overcrowded provinces surrounding it. Therefore, immigration is bound to take place because of the economic urge for it. No amount of sentiment and not even laws will ultimately stop it. Indeed, even from the point of view of developing Assam and making it a wealthier province, immigration is desirable. The real problem is how to control and organise this immigration. To talk in terms of stopping it is to ignore realities. To talk in terms of allowing it a free play is also to ignore certain realities and at the same time to lay the basis for future problems which will be difficult of solution. The land problem in India is our major problem and we have to change our land system very greatly in the near future. In Assam, fortunately, there are vacant lands which give us scope for the development of a planned economy in that area at least. To allow this to be developed in a haphazard way by odd immigrants would be folly as this would simply create new problems and burdens for the future.

Personally, I think that the state should try the experiment of organised and planned agriculture there in the shape of large state farms or collective farms or collective farms under state supervision. I do not know if the present state has the wisdom or the capacity to think or act on these lines. In any event, some planning and organisation are necessary, and an expert committee ought to enquire into the possibilities of it.

Even if holdings are given to individuals, this should be subject to various restrictions. First of all, the holding should not be too small or too big. Too small a holding would be uneconomic. Too big would encourage wrong tendencies. A proper-size holding should be calculated to be sufficient for a family. These lands should also not be subject to alienation by way of mortgage or sale, because if alienation is allowed, the land may go to the money-lenders and the like and big estates will grow up.

In allotting lands the first preference should inevitably be for the people born in Assam. The landless people of Assam as well as the agricultural people who have not enough land to support themselves, or who have unemployed sons in the family, should be allotted fresh land in

these new areas. Only after such allotments have taken place should immigrants from outside be admitted to these areas.

I have made the above suggestions without any deep study of the problem. I have no doubt that many other useful suggestions could be made. All these should be considered dispassionately from the economic point of view by experts and others. I do feel that the present line system is essentially bad because it creates, or is likely to create, two sharply divided areas hostile to each other. This will mean that Assam will have a terrible problem to face in future. If, as is said, the new immigrants have been sometimes criminally inclined, this will mean the preservation and encouragement of those criminal tendencies. It is well known to sociologists and criminologists that it is dangerous to have colonies of people who might have such tendencies because they grow under such conditions, and there is no assimilation with the other elements in the population. Immigrants should always be assimilated, otherwise they become foreign bodies always giving trouble. Therefore, the present line system is certainly undesirable. At the same time to abolish it and to leave the door open to the unrestricted immigrants without any safeguards would also be undesirable.

One other matter. I am told that the companies owning tea gardens pay a ridiculously low rental to the state, far less than the agriculturists.[3] Further, that by showing most of their processes as the agricultural process, they escape much of their income-tax which they might otherwise pay. I do not know much about this but it seems to me a very unfair arrangement and I see no reason why the state should suffer. This matter ought to be investigated and agitated both in the assembly and outside.

I do not know what kind of royalty or other charge is paid by the Assam Oil Company to the state. This also requires investigation and, if necessary, some kind of action. These oil companies are often lightly taxed although they make huge profits.[4]

3. For a long time the income from tea gardens was exempt from income-tax as it was deemed to be agricultural income. Under the Act of 1935 also the Government of India decided to treat sixty per cent of the profits from the growth, manufacture and sale of tea as agricultural income. In 1939, the Assam Government decided despite great opposition to levy a tax on agricultural income.

4. The Assam Oil Company was started in 1899 and became a subsidiary of Burma Oil Company in 1921. All oil products were sold in India at very high prices since the entire fuel trade was in the hands of the oil trusts.

I have written to you a long letter giving my impressions about various matters. I should like you to place this letter before your provincial Congress committee at their next meeting. I am sending a copy of this letter to Shri Gopinath Bardoloi, leader of the Congress Party in the Assam Assembly, and I hope he will place it before his party for their consideration.

In conclusion, may I express my gratitude to you and to all your colleagues for the welcome that you have accorded to me here in Assam and for the great trouble you have taken over my visit? This visit is not over yet but already I have been charmed by your province and I am quite sure that it has great potentialities for future progress. I hope the Congress organisation will rapidly become strong and efficient so that it can give a good push in the direction of such progress.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. The Necessity of Swaraj[1]

I am grateful to you for the addresses you have presented to me and the generous terms in which you have referred to my qualities. I feel overwhelmed because though the affection bestowed on me is to my liking, the tremendous expectation behind it makes me feel rather small; and while I say this I utter a friendly warning not to expect many things from an individual, however great he may be.

A leader, of course, is required in so far as he points the path, but a leader isolated from the masses is only too weak. At most, the activities of the people find coordination and expression in a leader, and therefore I say that when you praise a leader or blame him you should rather praise or blame those millions of people who made him as such.

Do not give yourselves away to petty issues for this will divert you and you will lose the proper perspective. Be it culture, literature or anything else, none of these can be nurtured with the help of a few leaders at the top. But if your efforts are fortified at the bottom, you can hope to build a reservoir of strength which would be a source of real power to you. Then alone you will grow big and act big.

1. Speech at Tezpur, 1 December 1937. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 3 December 1937.

An entire change in the present system of administration is required to effect improvement in the conditions of the masses. The new Government of India Act has, of course, conferred some power but the administrative machinery remains the same with the result that though there are now Indians placed in high positions in the administration, the miseries of the people and their problems of poverty and unemployment have not ceased to exist.

The entire policy of the British Government is guided and controlled by a group of capitalists in England in spite of the presence of the king in their constitution; and the same policy is being worked out in the British administration in India for the benefit of a handful of European business magnates in this country. The provisions of the new Government of India Act amply testify this. The Act definitely provides for various safeguards for British trade in India. It requires only common intelligence to realise that if we are to improve the condition of the masses we will have to bring under the control of the natives of India—Hindus and Muslims, men and women—the trade and commerce of the land; and this would necessarily mean some curtailment of the British interests which have already been well safeguarded against any onslaught from the Indians.

It is obvious therefore that so long as the capitalist control of the administrative machinery is not removed, a mere change of personnel at the top would not give the colouring of Swaraj for which the Congress is fighting or remove the various ills of the masses for whose welfare the Congress has committed itself.

Therefore I would urge upon you all to join the Congress and strengthen the organisation for your own benefit and the benefit of the country as a whole.

5. On the Threshold of Swaraj[1]

You see wars going on and also the preparations for greater wars. Be that as it may, it would require a great nerve and energy to have our way and that is possible only through the organisation of the Congress. Therefore, I ask you to build up this organisation still further so that it may become absolutely representative of the millions in the villages.

1. Speech at Silchar, 6 December 1937. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 7 December 1937.

It is discipline and organisation that help when the hour comes. Enthusiasm is good but it is not good if there be no clear thinking behind it. I am much more interested in appealing to your mind for I don't want blind followers.

The address you have presented to me is a bit embarrassing as it seems you expect magic things from me. I am afraid there is nothing as magic in this world, otherwise Swaraj would have been attained long ago. But the fact is that we have to try hard and work for the fulfilment of our ideal in view. Therefore I say that I feel depressed when you speak in your addresses in extravagant language, for it seems that you expect too much from an individual. It may be right to show affection for an individual but in India it is dangerous to exalt an individual too much. We have had too long a list of people sitting not only in exalted positions but on the shoulders of humanity. We want now the forgotten and downtrodden men to come up in their turn.

I happen to be the representative of a big organisation and I have to carry its message which has become so dear that the people flock to me to hear it. The whole of India is so hungry and thirsty for a change that people come to me in the hope that I may have some message to lift them out of the depth of poverty and misery into which they have fallen. But our difficulty is that we have not as yet even launched on the proper path, for our hands are tied. Real work will begin only when we have attained Swaraj.

The huge crowd that assembles to greet me everywhere has another lesson for us and it is the tremendous sense of unity of India. This is a historical fact and anyone who does not know this knows little of India's past or present. In spite of political deviations and differences there has been a cultural unity of India. Later on, of course, the noose of common slavery tightened round us and this ultimately manifested itself in a common struggle for freedom. And all of us realise it now that we are engaged in this common endeavour.

This whole Congress movement has been one of strengthening the Indian people. We have weakened considerably the power of British imperialism, a power feared and respected by great nations. And it must also be recognised that our peasantry have stood up against this mighty power. But the real thing the Congress has done is to build up a nation which had become denationalised through long years of foreign domination; and the Congress has succeeded to a great extent in this regard too. We are now on the threshold of Swaraj, not that we have got it, owing to Congress ministries being formed in several provinces. I tell you, and I speak with the most intimate knowledge of things, that our villagers have now quite changed. If we have a

movement now, it would be a great one and it would be difficult for any power to check it.

What really is important today is not the local problems but the problems of India. I, therefore, urge you to think in terms of India and to some extent in terms of the world.

6. In the Valley of the Brahmaputra[1]

Eight days are an all too brief period for the Assam valley, and yet this was all I gave to it, and then I sped away to another beautiful valley. During these eight days I visited many towns and villages and had a glimpse of the rich variety of this province and of the hospitable people who inhabit it. I loved the uncommon combination of semi-tropical scenery and snow-topped mountains with a noble river running between them. Everywhere I had the warmest of welcomes, and I am deeply grateful to all classes and peoples for their exceeding courtesy. That courtesy was extended to me by Europeans and Indians alike, and even the railway authorities gave every facility for my travelling. But above all I rejoiced to experience the love and goodwill of the masses who came in such large numbers to meet me and hear me. Throughout my tour I was enveloped and stimulated by the abundance of this affection, and I shall remember it with joy and gratitude. I shall carry away with me also, imprinted on my mind, the silent beauty of the dawn as we sailed over the bosom of the Brahmaputra and the snow-covered peaks in the distance caught the first rays of the rising sun.

Many places I visited and saw, but there was one notable exception. I am sorry I could not go to Shillong. I am sorry also that I could not visit the tribal areas. I met, however, many of the members of these tribes—Khasis, Kacharis, Ravas, Garos, Lalungs, Mikirs, Miris, and Nagas—and was attracted by them and by the bright faces of their children. They deserve every help and sympathy from Congressmen, and I hope they will receive it.

Rush tours like mine involve a great deal of organizing and give much trouble to those in charge of them. This burden fell naturally on my comrades of the Congress, and I must express my deep gratitude to them

1. Written in a running train on 9 December 1937. *The Tribune*, 14 December 1937. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 189-199.

for all they did. The Congress is a living vital force in Assam, as I saw and felt everywhere I went during these eight days, but the organizational side has been somewhat neglected, and so the province has not pulled its full weight in the past. I hope and believe that this deficiency will be made good now and the great enthusiasm of the people will be organized and disciplined to right ends.

I came up against particular problems affecting Assam and exercising the minds of the people of the province, and yet all these were secondary before the major problem of India—the poverty of the people—and this was terribly in evidence in the province. It is this problem of poverty and that of Swaraj and national freedom that overshadow all local problems and we must always remember this if we are to retain a proper perspective and work effectively. In a sense Assam is fortunate; for the very fact that it has been somewhat neglected and its development has been slow opens out promising vistas of rapid development on a planned basis, greater production of wealth and a rising standard of living for her people. Elsewhere in India I have seldom had this sense of latent power and resources which the jungles and unoccupied spaces of Assam have given me. The place cries aloud for the mind and the hand of man to develop it, but this can only be for the public good if it is organized and planned and deliberately aims at the betterment of the masses.

Among the various local problems that the people of Assam think about there are: opium, the future of Sylhet, immigration and the line system, the tea gardens, and more especially the labour employed there, and the excluded and partially excluded areas with the various tribal folk inhabiting them. Then there is that precious commodity, oil, more valuable in the modern world than gold.

The opium question of Assam has for long years excited the attention of all India and even of other parts of the world. The government, while expressing appreciation of public sentiment, has resisted it also in its desire to cling on to the opium revenue. Yet it is true that the opium consumption has gone down considerably and with it the revenue. Probably it could have been stamped out almost completely if the government had pursued a more rigorous policy during the past dozen years or more. There is a tendency now, I was told, to issue licences for opium in increasing numbers to almost everyone who applies for them and the age limit of fifty is seldom enforced. The time has certainly come when a more vigorous and effective policy should be pursued and the issue of licences should be a rarity and only for definite medical reasons. It should be possible to reduce opium consumption almost to vanishing point within two or three years. There is a danger of opium smuggling increasing, but I think this is magnified and can be checked. There is

probably more smuggling going on now *via* the Indian states in Rajputana and central India than across the border. But this smuggling is still small compared to the authorized sale of opium.

There seems also to be a tendency on the part of the government to increase its liquor revenue to replace its diminishing income from opium. This must be checked or else one evil will give place to another.

The future of the Surma valley is a living question in Assam and the Assamese are keenly desirous that Sylhet should be transferred to the administrative province of Bengal, so as to leave them an area which is linguistically more homogeneous. The people of Sylhet, I found, were equally in favour of this change and, on the face of it, the desire is reasonable. Sylhet is not only linguistically Bengali, but its economy is more allied to that of Bengal than of Assam proper. There is the permanent settlement there, as in Bengal, while in Assam peasant proprietors, with a varying assessment, are usually to be found.

The Congress has all along laid stress on a linguistic division of provinces. This corresponds with cultural areas, and it is far easier for the people of such an area to develop educationally and otherwise on the basis of their mother tongue. Indeed, the Surma valley has long formed part of the Congress province of Bengal. Thus it is clear that, so far as the Congress is concerned, there is no doubt as to what the future of Sylhet should be—it should go to Bengal. I feel, however, that we have to face today far more important and vital problems, and the next few years are pregnant with the possibilities of vast changes. Therefore, we should not spend our energy too much on trying to bring about the small changes, which, however desirable, do not affect the main issue. We should certainly press for these relatively minor changes, but always looking at them in the proper perspective and not losing ourselves in them. When the big changes come, as come they must, the other will follow rapidly.

Immigration and the line system is a far more vital problem of Assam. I hesitate to give a detailed opinion on this issue as it requires expert knowledge which I do not claim to possess. Pre-eminently it is a question to be considered by experts, economists and others. And yet there are some considerations which seem to me to govern this question. It is right that the basic consideration should be the development of Assam and the betterment of the people of Assam. But Assam cannot be isolated from the rest of India, nor can any artificial barriers be put between them. Even laws cannot for long override economic factors. Assam is partly an undeveloped province with a relatively sparse population, while on two sides of it are thickly populated areas with land-hungry masses. It is true that large parts of Assam are mountainous country and some

other parts are liable to periodic floods. Still there is plenty of room for development and at present there is a want of equilibrium between Assam and the surrounding provinces, and this will always result in economic forces seeking to restore an equilibrium. These realities or these forces cannot be ignored, but if they are properly understood and directed to right ends, we can ultimately produce an equilibrium which is for the benefit and advancement of the people of Assam.

It seems to me that throwing the unoccupied land open to unrestricted immigration without any planning or recognized end in view will be peculiarly unfortunate. We have a sufficiency and more of difficult land problems in India, indeed they are the major problems of the country, and it would be folly to add to them in Assam. Assam is fortunate in being in a position to carry out large schemes of land reform without coming up against vested interests which are difficult to dislodge. For a government to create fresh vested interests is to add to its own difficulties and tie its own hands and feet as well as to encumber the next generation.

It is generally believed now that land reform should move in the direction of large collective farms or state farms. The Assam Government has a fine opportunity to work to this end. Instead of just allowing odd people to get parcels of land and to cultivate them as they will in an individualistic way, it should start large state farms and try to develop collectives. Assam-born people should be given preference in these, but immigrants should certainly be accepted. The capital for these undertakings should be raised, if necessary, by loan. It will be a profitable investment. Such state farms and collectives should work out a planned scheme of land reform in the whole province and begin by giving effect to it in their own areas. With success in these areas, the scheme can easily be extended to other parts of the province.

I do not know if the present Government of Assam has vision enough and can think or act in these terms. Probably not. In any event, nothing should be done which might come in the way of such development in the future. If land is to be allotted to individuals it should be given on specific conditions, such as no right of sale or mortgage and the state to have the right to organize collectives when it so desires. To give the right of sale or mortgage will result in the building up of large estates. This, as well as speculation in land, has to be avoided. The parcel of land allotted should not be too small to be uneconomic for a family and not too large to convert the holder into a landlord subsisting on the labour of others. The size can be fixed after local enquiry. In allotting land, preference should be given to Assam-born people and promising immigrants should then be welcomed.

The present line system seems to me obviously a transitional affair which cannot continue as such for long. To remove it suddenly and leave the field open to unrestricted immigration would result in producing all manner of entanglements and future problems. To keep it as it is seems to me undesirable. The principle is bad and we cannot encourage it in India. It is also bad to confine immigrants in a particular area and so prevent them from being assimilated by the people of the province. This results in increasing separatism and hostility between adjoining areas, and a terribly difficult problem is created for future generations. The very basis of immigration must be the assimilation of the immigrant. If he remains an alien and an outsider, he is a disrupting force in the body politic. From a sociological point of view it is admitted now that it is dangerous even to keep colonies of criminals apart, as they deteriorate when they are removed from the healthy influences of normal social life. They concentrate on their criminality.

The Assamese, however, fear that, instead of assimilating the immigrants, they might be assimilated by them, as they come in such vast numbers. Some comments in the last Census Report, where the immigrants from eastern Bengal are compared to a "mass movement of a large body of ants", have produced a powerful impression on the mind of the Assamese, and they fear a suppression and almost an extinction of their culture, language, and individuality. Though there is some reason for this apprehension, I think it is exaggerated. Culture and individuality in a people do not depend entirely on numbers, but on something more vital. Even small minorities, enveloped by alien and hostile peoples, have retained their culture, language, and individuality, and even intensified them. If the Assamese have this vital element in them, as I believe they have, they will not be affected much by large bodies of immigrants coming in. They will influence the latter far more than they will be influenced by them, especially as the immigrants are likely to be of a lower cultural level.

But still, as I have said, it would be undesirable to have unchecked immigration without a plan or system. Under a planned development the possible dangers will be avoided and the wealth of Assam will grow and the Assamese people will prosper, while at the same time affording scope for immigrants to come in and so gradually to establish an equilibrium between Assam and the adjoining provinces.

The tea gardens cover a good part of Assam, and the province might indeed be called the land of tea. I passed by innumerable such gardens, especially in upper Assam, and they had a prosperous look about them. A tea garden can be judged to some extent from its external appearance, and I must say that most of these gardens in the upper valley looked

clean and efficient, more so than the gardens I had seen some years ago in Ceylon. The bushes were neat and close together, and their surfaces formed an unbroken and uniform expanse.

But the shine of the shoe is not the test of its fit or the comfort it gives to the wearer. I suppose the garden labourers are not looked upon as the wearers of the shoe in question. But I was more interested in them than in the quality of the tea produced or the dividends of the companies. And the look of these labourers, men and women, was not good and their complaints were many. Some progress has been made, in law at least, from the days when these workers were indentured coolies and practically in bondage. But, in effect, I doubt if the change has made material difference to their lives. They had a hunted look about them, and fear peeped out of their eyes. They were poor, of course.

They have no organization and are not allowed to have any. I am told that outsiders are not encouraged to go to them or to their lines, and they live more or less secluded lives. They have been given special representation in the provincial assembly, but the measure of their helplessness is this, that their so-called representatives represent the interests of their employers and always side with them. They dare not elect the people of their choice. This is a deplorable state of affairs, and to remedy this utter helplessness is far more important than some paternal legislation to remove minor grievances. The employers themselves should realize that these primitive labour methods cannot continue, and even their own interests require that labour should be made more self-reliant.

I think the immediate need is for a proper enquiry to be carried out into labour conditions, and the provincial assembly might well appoint a committee for this purpose, which should go thoroughly into the matter. I hope the employers will cooperate with such a committee and give it every facility. Facilities for labour organizations should also be given and, as such organizations grow up, they should be recognized and encouraged.

I might add that, so far as I was concerned, I had some facilities given to me by the tea garden authorities to meet the labourers. The tea planters were courteous to me in this and other matters, and I am grateful to them. Large crowds of workers met me at meetings and by the wayside, but during my rush tour I had no time to go deeply into their problems.

I was surprised to learn that the tea companies paid exceedingly little in the way of revenues to the state for the land occupied by them. They pay far less than the ordinary agriculturist. Why this particular favour should be shown to them I do not know. It seems unfair to the state and to the agriculturists.

Vast tracts in Assam are included in the excluded and partially excluded areas.[2] The people living here are cut off from the rest of India, and we know little about them. Curiously enough, the Government of India Act of 1935 has widened the gap and made them still more unapproachable. And yet no people in India require more helpful sympathy and cooperation from their countrymen than these tribal folk and others who live, cut off from us, in these areas. I like these people and feel drawn to them, and I hope the Congress organization and our provincial assemblies will do everything in their power to remove their disabilities and to encourage education and industry among them. Here also investigation is needed. Some of the tribal people I met were obviously intelligent and, given the right education and encouragement, would go ahead.

Apart from the tea plantations and oil, modern industry is hardly in evidence in Assam. At Dhubri there is a match factory belonging to the Swedish Match Trust, and this has gained an unenviable notoriety during the past year because of a lock-out and strike. This strike and lock-out lasted for nearly a year, and this long-drawn-out struggle is itself evidence of the deep feeling of grievance among the workers, who had continued their struggle despite hunger and destitution. Their demands were reasonable. It is bad enough that the workers should be starved into submission anywhere, but it is worse that powerful foreign trusts, trying to cloak themselves under the garb of swadeshi, should thus exploit their workers in India. I think it should be made perfectly clear that the Congress strongly disapproves of this and will try to put an end to it when it has the chance to do so.

There is obviously room for the development of industry in Assam, both cottage and large-scale. Weaving is widespread, and every middle-class girl has a loom. An essential part of her training consists in the practical knowledge of weaving. Efforts to teach cottage industries to Harijans and tribal people have met with success, and these could easily be widely extended with excellent results. I saw an efficient little school and ashram run for this purpose by the All India Harijan Sevak Sangh. The work was limited in scope for lack of funds.

What large-scale industries can be developed in Assam, I am not competent to say. Paper making is evidently one of them, for the forests

2. Where there was an enclave or a definite tract of country inhabited by a compact tribal population it was classified as an excluded area; and where the tribal population was less homogeneous, but was still undeveloped and substantial in number, it was classified as a partially excluded area. On 1 April 1937, the Naga hills district, the north-east frontier tract, the Lushai hills, and the North Cachar hills were declared as excluded areas within the province of Assam.

run wild with bamboos and other plants which are said to be good for the purpose. I was surprised to learn that the tea-planters import their wooden cases for tea from abroad, mostly from Japan, and a vast number of such cases are used. There is a plentiful supply of good wood at their very doorstep, and, with suitable machinery, all the wooden cases required can be produced locally with advantage to the province and to the tea industry.

At Digboi one sees the familiar iron derricks against the skyline, and they announce to the visitor that he is entering an outpost of the great empire of oil. The Assam Oil Company is associated with the Burma Oil Company, and the two together are parts of the Shell combine. This accumulated wealth of past ages is being pumped out at Digboi, but Assam, the owner of this wealth, hardly profits, for the royalties go to the central revenues of India. This is unfair to the people of Assam, and there is an agitation against it which seems to me to be justified. The price of petrol is higher in Assam than in Calcutta or elsewhere. This remarkable example of capitalist economy was in evidence in Burma also. Burmese or Assamese petrol is cheaper in London than in the country which produces it, where the oil is pumped and refined.

And so goodbye to the valley of the Brahmaputra, and across the forests and over the hills to Silchar and Sylhet in the Surma valley.

7. In the Surma Valley[1]

As I journeyed from one valley to another, the railway crept along (for it went very slowly) between thick forests on either side; almost impenetrable, so they seemed. They came right up to the railway line, leaving only a narrow passage grudgingly for us to pass through. Their million eyes seemed to look down with disdain on this human effort, and were full of the hostility of the forest against man, who had dared so much against it, and cleared it to enlarge his domain. Their thousand mouths were agape with the desire to swallow him and his works.

The call of the jungle and the mountain has always been strong within me, a dweller of cities and of plains though I am, and I gazed at these forests and jungles, fascinated, and wondered what myriad forms of life and what tragedy they hid in their darknesses. Bountiful nature, or nature red in tooth and claw—was it much worse in these forest recesses than

1. 9 December 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 21 December 1937. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 184-188.

in the cities and the dwelling-places of men and women? A wild animal kills for food to satisfy his hunger. He does not kill for sport or for the pleasure of killing. The fierce fights of the jungle are individual fights, not the mass murder that man calls war; there is no wholesale destruction by bomb and poison gas. The comparison seemed to be all in favour of the forest and the wild animals.

So I thought as I watched the passing jungles. Gatherings of people at small stations, and many tribal folk with gracious gifts of fruit and flowers and cloth, woven by themselves, and fresh milk came to welcome me. Bright-eyed Naga children gave me garlands to wear. Some of these tribal people pressed some money on me also, copper and nickel coins for Congress work, they said. And I felt ashamed and humbled before their clear gaze, full of faith and affection. What of the cities with their selfishness and intrigues and money-grabbing?

And so to our destination and big crowds and rousing welcomes and *Bande Mataram* shouted vigorously to the skies. A motor journey through the villages with crowds and welcome everywhere, and on to Silchar. The audience at the meeting there seemed to be bigger than what I had been told the population of the city was. Probably many people came from the villages.

For three days I rushed about the valley, chiefly in the Sylhet district. As in the Assam valley, the roads were generally bad and a prodigious number of ferries had to be crossed. But the charm and beauty of the passing scenery held me and made me forget the roads, and the warmth of the welcome from all manner of people sent a glow to my heart.

Sylhet was definitely Bengal. The language proclaimed it, so also the zamindari tenants who came, and of whom a large number were Muslims. And yet it had much in common with the valley of the Brahmaputra; tea gardens with their unhappy and helpless-looking labourers, excluded areas with tribal people. It was Bengal, but it seemed to possess a definite individuality of its own, hard to define, but something that was in the air.

I was gratified by the enthusiasm for the Congress which the masses showed, an enthusiasm shared by the Muslims as well as the Hindus, and even by the tribal people. Obviously good work had been done there in the past and the harvest was promising. It was pleasing also to find earnest workers in all parts of the district. Sylhet has a good number of them and the human material they deal with is also good. Much, therefore, can be expected of Sylhet. Unfortunately, some local disputes have marred the good work, but these cannot be allowed to continue. The cause is greater than the individual, and the worker who

does not realize this has failed to learn the first lesson of a Congressman. But I have confidence in Sylhet, in its people, and in its Congress workers, earnest and keen as they are and with a record of sacrifice for the cause behind them. And so, as I was leaving Sylhet and was asked for a message, I said, "Go ahead, Sylhet!"

In the Bhanubil area of Sylhet I came across a large number of Manipuris. Hundreds of charkhas, with Manipuri women and girls plying the wheel, sat there in ordered array to welcome me, and their menfolk and charming children stood by. I was surprised and pleased to see these Manipuris and delighted to learn of the brave part they had taken in the civil disobedience movement. They had also had an economic no-tax movement of their own some years ago, when an attempt was made to enhance their rents.

Here were entirely new people, new to me, and so different from all others I had seen in India. How little we know of our own country and her children! Their features were Mongoloid, they resembled somewhat the Burmese. Indeed, the resemblances to the Burmese were many, and included the dress of their womenfolk. They were extraordinarily neat and clean-looking, and the young girls, with the laughter lurking in their eyes, had quite a smart modern look. The children were charming, with their hair over their foreheads cut short and arranged neatly in front. These fascinating people were peasant folk with little or no education, good spinners and weavers, taking pride in themselves. They were all Vaishnavas by religion, but even here some Burmese customs had crept in and, as I was told, their marriages could be dissolved.

In the hills between the two valleys there lies the state of Manipur, which is the centre of these people, and from there this Bhanubil branch had migrated some generations back. When did the original stock come from Burma or elsewhere, I wondered. They were called backward, I suppose, and yet with education and opportunity, what could not be done with this attractive and intelligent-looking people?

In Sylhet I came across many Muslim fishermen, who complained to me that they were treated as social outcastes and as a kind of depressed class by their own co-religionists.

In Sylhet also many Nagas from the surrounding hills came to visit me with greetings and gifts. And from them and others I heard a story which India ought to know and to cherish. It was the story of a young woman of their tribe belonging to the Kabui clan in the Naga hills. She was of the priestly class and she had the unique opportunity among her people to receive some education in a mission school,

where she reached the ninth or tenth class. Gaidilieu[2] was her name and she was about nineteen, six years ago, when civil disobedience blazed over the length and breadth of India. News of Gandhi and the Congress reached her in her hill abode and found an echo in her heart. She dreamed of freedom for her people and an ending of the galling restrictions they suffered from, and she raised the banner of independence and called her people to rally round it. Perhaps she thought, rather prematurely, that the British Empire was fading out. But that empire still functioned effectively and aggressively and it took vengeance on her and her people. Many villages were burnt and destroyed and this heroic girl was captured and sentenced to transportation for life. And now she lies in some prison in Assam, wasting her bright young womanhood in dark cells and solitude. Six years she has been there. What torment and suppression of spirit they have brought to her, who in the pride of her youth dared to challenge an empire! She can roam no more in the hill country through the forest glades, or sing in the fresh crisp air of the mountains. This wild young thing sits cabined in darkness, with a few yards, may be, of space in the daytime, eating her fiery heart out in desolation and confinement. And India does not even know of this brave child of her hills, with the free spirit of the mountains in her. But her own people remember their Gaidilieu Rani and think of her with love and pride. And a day will come when India also will remember her and cherish her, and bring her out of her prison cell.

But our so-called provincial autonomy will not help in bringing about this release. More is needed. For the excluded areas are outside the ken of our provincial ministries, and, strange to say, they are even more cut off from us now than they were before the advent of provincial autonomy. Even questions about Gaidilieu were not allowed to be put in the Assam Assembly. So we progress to Swaraj through the Government of India Act, 1935.

Darkness had set in and my tour was approaching its appointed end. We reached Habibganj late in the evening and, after the meeting there, hurried on to Shaistaganj to catch our train. The crescent moon hung over the horizon, with the silvery brightness gone and looking gloomy and yellow. I thought of the past twelve days with all their quick movement and crowds and enthusiasm, and it all seemed like a dream that was over. And I thought of Gaidilieu, the Rani, sitting in her prison cell. What thoughts were hers, what regrets, what dreams?

2. (b. 1919); joined the Kabui agitation in 1930 for the establishment of an independent Naga rule; arrested in 1932 and sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment; released after independence on Jawaharlal's initiative.

8

THE NATIONAL FLAG

1. The National and the Red Flags[1]

Dear Comrade,

Reference is sometimes made to us about the use of the red flag at Congress meetings. Occasionally unseemly incidents have also taken place in this connection. I have previously expressed myself in public whenever such an incident has taken place but I should like to make the position clear for the guidance of Congressmen.

The red flag has, for a hundred years or more, been the flag of the workers all over the world and nearly all workers' organizations have adopted it in various countries. It represents the struggles and sacrifices of the workers as well as the conception of the unity of the workers all over the world. As such it is entitled to our respect, and a workers' organization, if it so chooses, has every right to display it at its functions.

But so far as the Congress is concerned our flag is the national tricolour. During its short life of half a generation it has already become a symbol to us all, including workers and peasants, of freedom and national unity and solidarity. It represents, as nothing else does, the spirit of the Indian people striving for freedom and the honour of the nation. And because of that so many of our comrades have braved suffering and prison for the sake of that flag. In remote villages we find that flag displayed and the sight of it gives courage and hope to the poor downtrodden villager. That flag has become wrapped up in our minds with so much that we value, so much that we hope for, that any discourtesy to that flag hurts us vitally and we resent the insult to the nation's honour. We cannot tolerate any such discourtesy or insult from whomsoever it might come.

For the Congress this is the only flag and on all Congress functions it is this flag which must be displayed. Between it and the red flag or any other flag there can be or should be no rivalry. If workers' organisations join a Congress procession or a Congress meeting, it is open to them to have their own flags or banners. But any such flag must not dominate the scene or seek equality at such functions with the national flag. At

1. Circular letter to provincial Congress committees, 26 April 1937. Home (Political) File No. 4/15/37, National Archives of India.

all Congress functions it is the national flag that must dominate the scene. I trust that these directions will be borne in mind by all and no one will countenance any act which may be construed as lessening the honour and dignity and importance of a flag that has become so dear to us during these many years of struggle and conflict.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Honour of the National Flag[1]

Two recent incidents have occurred, in Simla and near Poona, when the national flag was pulled down by some persons. These incidents have, perhaps, no larger significance and were caused by the folly of individuals. But, nevertheless, they were viewed with pain and resentment. For our flag is dear to us and has become a symbol of our freedom and the nation's honour.

It should be clearly understood that we can and will tolerate nothing that tends to dishonour the national flag.

The way to react to these incidents is to use this flag all the more and I am glad that the people of Simla did so.

In particular, I would suggest that all Congress organizations should revert to our old practice to have the national flag unfurling ceremony regularly on the morning of the last Sunday every month.

Reports of these ceremonies should be sent to the office of the All India Congress Committee.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 25 June 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 26 June 1937.

3. To G. Satyanarayana[1]

Allahabad
August 31, 1937

Dear Comrade,[2]

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter[3] of the 5th August. For most of this time I was away from Allahabad. I have read this letter and the correspondence you have sent me with some astonishment. For a conflict to arise on such an issue is highly undesirable. It is obviously not possible in such matters to lay down hard and fast rules. Much has to depend on the good sense of our workers and of the people concerned.

In regard to the red flag, I have stated the Congress position as clearly as I could. The Congress, as such, has nothing to do with the red flag. We can only recognise one flag, that is the national flag, which is the emblem of Indian freedom and independence. Any person who tries to lessen the significance of the national flag in the eyes of the public, does injury to our cause. You know that this flag question is an important question between us and the British Government. It is necessary, therefore, to lay the greatest stress on the national flag.

The red flag has a certain definite significance connected with labour and international socialism. Many of us appreciate that and respect the flag. But any attempt to push the red flag in India inevitably, to some extent, conflicts with the national flag, especially in purely Congress functions. This is the background of our policy. Also, it must be remembered that in rural areas we cannot have a confusion of flags. The peasants get puzzled. They have already got used to our national flag and we should spread this among them as much as we can.

At the same time, if special organisations bring their flags in a public procession, ordinarily they should be given freedom to do so. But they must take a subordinate place in a procession. The difficulty comes in when some people insist on taking out the red flag in a particular way in a Congress procession; they do something which they have no right to.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-73/1937, pp. 3-5, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1911); a Congressman of West Godavari district; organised Congress Socialist Party in the district, 1937-39; later joined Communist Party; member, Tamil Nadu Assembly, 1952-57.
3. He had written that, as the Ellore Town Congress Committee had not allowed some associations to observe the Tilak Day and the Congress ministry formation day on 1 August 1937 with red flags, two separate meetings had been held by Congressmen on that day.

At the same time to veto the use of any other flags always, in Congress gatherings and processions, is also an excessive use of authority and leads to friction. The real question that faces us is what flag has got to be pushed by us with all our strength in India today. The answer is that it is the national flag.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Chandra Badan Shukla[1]

Allahabad
September 27, 1937

Dear Comrade,
I have received your letter of the 20th. I have been out of Allahabad, hence the delay in answering. I am glad that you have written to me and placed many further facts before me regarding the incidents in Ahmedabad on the day of my arrival.[2] I did not think then that any personal affront to me was intended by anybody, but I did think that a deliberate attempt was made to push aside the national flag by those who were bearing the red flag. I also thought that in the attempt to do so, the carefully made arrangements for the procession were upset by surging crowds. I gave expression, therefore, to my views on this subject because I felt that such behaviour would lead to resentment against the red flag and its supporters. I have seen this resentment growing up in many parts of India and I have noticed it with great regret though I think that the red flag, as the flag of the workers and of international socialism, should find a growing place in Indian public life. Inevitably, the national flag is and must remain the dominant flag in India because it represents the struggle for independence which is the primary issue before us. It is the national flag that opposes the Union Jack in India and all that the Union Jack represents in the way of imperialism. Therefore anything that lessens the value of the national flag is injurious to

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-10(i)/1937, pp. 55-57, N.M.M.L.
2. At the Ahmedabad station on 16 September 1937, Jawaharlal was reported to have been surrounded by a group of people who waved red flags in front of him and upset the arrangements for welcoming him. C.B. Shukla, one of the organizers of the procession of workers carrying red flags, explained to Jawaharlal that they had gathered to welcome him and not to create trouble as suggested by the press.

the larger cause. Indirectly it helps the Union Jack. It is obvious that the red flag cannot take the place of the Union Jack in India but the national flag can and will do so. At the same time the red flag has an important place from the workers' point of view and from the point of view of our international contacts with workers and socialism. I do not think there is any reason why it should come into conflict with the national flag. Unfortunately many incidents have happened in recent months when attempts have been made by over-zealous supporters of the red flag to push it into prominence so as to overshadow or even oust the national flag at a number of places. This has given rise to resentment because the national flag has come to mean a great deal to a large number of people in this country. My fear is that if such unfortunate incidents continue, the red flag will become very unpopular in India and there will be a reaction against it, and it may be that it will bring about conflicts which are wholly unnecessary and undesirable. I do not want this to happen and I want people to realise the consequences of their acts in the larger sphere. People think too much of their local problems and conflicts. I have inevitably to think more from an all-India point of view. That is why I have taken the trouble to write repeatedly in the press on the subject.

I feel however that in our rural areas the red flag has no background and is likely to create confusion only. For the last seventeen or eighteen years we have been trying to educate the peasantry into understanding the national flag and they have got to know it at last. It has become a source of strength to them and one finds it in most villages. To produce confusion in their minds about this flag is to undo the work of these eighteen years. To illustrate this confusion I gave the instance of a kisan's reaction to it on one occasion. This was not meant, obviously, to ridicule the red flag but to point out how others may ridicule it or misunderstand it.

Regarding the incident at Ahmedabad, I am sorry that any words of mine should have been torn out of their context and used in a sense not intended by me. I am sorry also that any workers or others who had come to greet me should feel that I had treated them harshly. That surely could not be my intention.

I have explained above, as I have done previously, my attitude to the red flag and to the national flag. Whenever occasion arises I shall explain still further because I want to remove all conflicts between the

3. Referring to the incident near the railway station on his arrival there on 16 September, Jawaharlal had said that he was pained at the sight of the people trying to thrust the red flag in his face. He had warned them that such rudeness would be ruinous to their cause.

two, so that the red flag may find a proper place in India to represent the great causes which are associated with it.

I do not think it is necessary for me to issue press statements about what happened in Ahmedabad. To do so I would have to find out from the various newspapers what has been said and this is a troublesome undertaking. But if you consider it necessary, you can give publicity to this letter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. To Hari Prasad Desai[1]

Allahabad
October 1, 1937

Dear Comrade,[2]

I have just received your letter. I am sorry to learn that the red flag incident at Ahmedabad and what I said about it have been misinterpreted. I thought I had made the position quite clear. There was no question of my insulting the red flag as I respect it and I do not want anyone to insult it. It is an international symbol of great significance and has behind it the love and respect of vast numbers of people in the world. It represents the solidarity of the working class and the hope of international socialism. As a socialist I must respect the red flag. It is indeed owing to my desire to avoid conflicts between the red flag and the national flag that I have repeatedly made statements on this question. In India today the dominant flag in our struggle for independence must necessarily be the national flag which represents it. Anyone who lessens the significance of this does a disservice to the cause of independence. The sentiment for the national flag is rightly deep and widespread and any opposition to it leads to resentment which is likely to lessen the respect for the red flag and bring about hostility between them which will ultimately injure the red flag. This fact must be borne in mind. It is because of this that I have deprecated all aggressive uses of the red flag. At the same time I think it is undesirable for any person to run down the red flag, or to show any disrespect to it.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-9/1937-38, p. 21, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary, Mill Kamdar Union, Ahmedabad; he had written that some Congressmen and workers in Gujarat were using Jawaharlal's remarks about the red flag to deride left forces and condemn their flag.

I have already written on this subject to others who enquired from me. I do not think that there is any point of my issuing a press statement as I have not come across many press comments. But it is open to you to give publicity to my letter if you so desire it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. To Press Kamgar Union, Bombay[1]

Allahabad
October 1, 1937

Dear Comrade,
I have your letter of the 23rd September conveying to me a resolution[2] of your managing committee. That resolution must have been based on incomplete reports of what I said or did. Numerous incidents have come to my notice of conflicts between the red flag and the national flag. I have tried my best to avoid these conflicts because I have felt that if they continue, the red flag will be disliked and objected to by large numbers of our countrymen who honour the national flag. I have therefore laid stress that a display of the red flag in a spirit of hostility to the national flag must be avoided. I have always stated that the red flag is entitled to respect as the symbol of the workers and of international socialism. It would be unfortunate if this symbol was brought into disrepute in India by needless aggressiveness and hostility on the part of its supporters.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-9/1937-38, p. 17, N.M.M.L.
2. They had deplored Jawaharlal's reaction to the red flag at Ahmedabad station as "an insult to the flag of the workers of the world."

7. To B.N. Prasad[1]

Allahabad
November 10, 1937

Dear Dr. Prasad,[2]
I have just received your letter which, as you say, you have written at the instance of the higher authorities of the university. I am glad you have made the position clear.

I was asked some weeks back by the students of the Sir P.C. Banerji hostel to hoist the national flag on their hostel building. Previously I had taken part in this ceremony in the Holland Hall and the Kayastha Pathshala hostel at the invitation of both, the authorities and the students there. I was not aware at the time, or till today, of the fine distinction between recognised hostels and hostels which are university buildings. I made that clear to the students who approached me and they assured me on the point. Even so I wanted them to excuse me as I had no time to spare and I did not see the point of my going to every hostel for the flag-hoisting ceremony. Since then they have come to me repeatedly and at last I agreed to go, fixing Nov. 12th at 5 p.m. for the purpose. Before I did so I enquired again if the authorities had been approached and I was assured that they had been informed and were agreeable.

In view of what you have written now it is obvious that I cannot go to the hostel for this or any other like purpose. It would be improper for me to go there or anywhere by the backdoor, as it were, and with the disapproval of those in authority. Will you kindly inform the students of your hostel of this so that they might put an end to the arrangements that were being made?

I should like to add that the resolution of the executive council of the university,[3] to which you have drawn my attention, seems to me a very unhappy one. The executive council seems to be oblivious of what is happening in India, what changes have taken place, what millions of our countrymen feel and passionately desire to achieve, what even the students under their charge are or seek to be. The council appears to think and live in a narrow space bounded by the government and the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-9/1937-38, pp. 39-40, N.M.M.L.
2. An eminent mathematician; at that time superintendent, P.C. Banerji hostel, University of Allahabad.
3. The resolution passed on 22 October 1937 read: "...as the form of the national flag has not yet been discussed and decided upon by the government and the legislatures, it is not meet and proper for an academic body like the University to associate itself with a flag-hoisting ceremony."

legislatures, and even so it does not realise that the government itself has changed.

So far as I am concerned, I have made it clear that we want to avoid any kind of a conflict over the flag. We want it to be accepted and honoured willingly by all. We do not want to create a situation which might be embarrassing to the university authorities. But we do expect every Indian to show courtesy to the flag and I must say that the attitude of the university executive council comes perilously near to showing it discourtesy.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. The National Flag[1]

I see this flag in your hands. It is spreading in all villages and homes. It has been in our country for some years. But there are many things behind it.

What does the flag indicate?

It consists of three colours. It represents our vast country from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, as also all castes and communities in India who call themselves Indians and sons of this soil. This tri coloured national flag of ours is the symbol of our unity, independence and sacrifices. So we must take it to every home in India.

It was made in consultation with all the communities. I don't want to differentiate between the various communities represented by the colours. It is the symbol of unity among all communities. It is the flag of our independence. It reminds us of our fight for freedom as also our unity. India is a vast country with so many communities living therein. Until the advent of this flag, twenty years back, we were weak and shattered. When we learnt that strength lay in unity, this flag came to the forefront. Though it is only twenty years old as yet, I want it to reach every home in India. It has given us strength and when we hold it aloft, we feel as one with the millions in the fight for independence. It has given us courage and hope. It has also given us a sense of unity.

1. Speech at the flag-hoisting ceremony at the U.P. Political Conference held at Harduaganj in Aligarh district on 30 December 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 31 December 1937.

The combination of the three colours, saffron, white and green, is a grand one and it makes it probably the most beautiful of all the flags in the world. But we don't revere it for its colours. We cannot tolerate any insult to it. We don't want to show disrespect to other peoples' flags and cannot tolerate disrespect to ours.

All countries of the world have their flags. England also has its own. Let it rise as high as possible in England or anywhere else where they want to take it, but let Britain not hoist it on our country. I have often heard you raising voices "down with the Union Jack" and such things. We should not say so. It is beneath our dignity and honour to do so.

There is one more flag which we see being taken out. It is the red flag. This is the flag of no country, but of the poor, downtrodden and oppressed, all over the world. A lot of blood has been spilled over it, too. So I revere it and we should all respect it, but we cannot carry two flags at the same place and time. That will confuse us. It might even lead to differences among us, so we must keep only our tricoloured national flag. Those who are trying to take this red flag to villages are not doing a proper thing. That diminishes the strength behind the national movement for freedom. No flag other than this national flag can fight against British imperialism. I, therefore, request everybody that this flag alone should be taken to the people. It is a very valuable asset. When I stand under it, my honour increases and I get more strength, but I don't want it to be in the hands or over the heads of those who don't deserve it and won't show it the respect due to it.

There is one more flag which is seen in cities, but has not yet reached the villages. It is the green flag of the Muslim League. As I have said already, we are not to show dishonour or disrespect to anybody's flag. The same applies to this flag. What we should do is to try to increase the popularity of our flag by putting in more service and sacrifice.

This flag of the Muslim League has come to the fore only during the last three or four months. What is its necessity? Why should there be separate flags for Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Sikhs? Why all this collection of flags, like those in Prayag, that won't help in our work? If every community has its own separate flag, that will show our disunity and differences, not unity, while the purpose of a flag is to unite.

Our tricolour is the flag of all the communities combined and not of any one community. It is recognized as the flag of the whole nation by all Hindus, Muslims and others. But there are a few Muslims who raise communal cries and want our differences to continue and it is they who have raised a separate flag.

We should also remember that when we take up the national flag, it presupposes that we are not to indulge in any underhand or mean

action. When you take up this flag no such action can be tolerated. Remember, this flag has been the emblem of our nonviolent struggle for independence. We should not think that our fight has ended with the formation of Congress ministries in seven provinces. Our fight is for removing hunger and unemployment of our masses. Some people want us to forget these problems, but we cannot, if we stand united under this flag.

9. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
January 9, 1938

My dear Krishna,
I have read what you say about the independence demonstration. I am afraid it is hardly possible for me to send you a speech for the occasion but I shall send you a message.[2] Probably you have already got the independence pledge which we used first in 1930. This pledge is a very long one and the last paragraph does not apply now as it refers to civil disobedience. We have, therefore, shortened the pledge for this year. The whole of the first paragraph of the original pledge is incorporated and a short second paragraph is added.[3] I shall send this on to you.

About flags, I think you should concentrate on the Congress tricolour flag, as this is the symbol of our independence struggle. It does not matter of course if separate organisations participating in the demonstration bring red flags but so far as we are concerned, at this particular meeting or demonstration, the national flag is most significant. There has been some controversy in India over this question. The general attitude taken up by me has been to avoid any conflict and to stress the national flag. Trade unions often use the red flag and that is right. But in the rural areas the red flag has no significance here, no historical background, and it produces confusion in the peasant's mind. He cannot understand two flags and he has got used to the national flag everywhere. In India today symbolically the conflict is between the national flag and the Union Jack, and anything that confuses this issue lessens the significance of the national flag. I have therefore emphasised that in rural areas the national flag only should be used. It is, in fact, in universal use.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *post*, section 11, item 21.
3. See p. 400.

Another difficulty has arisen by the attempt made by the Muslim League to push their communal flag. In all these considerations I think we should lay the greatest stress on the national flag. But, as I have said, labour and such like organisations can of course display their own particular flags and standards.

Since I wrote to you last the situation has developed here in the wrong direction and I am greatly distressed at various events that are happening. I am afraid I cannot write to you at length but it is clear that many vital matters will have to be decided at the Haripura Congress. I do not know at all what I shall do after the Congress. My own inclination is not to take up any burden of office or even executive responsibility so far as the top executive of the Congress is concerned. Subhas Bose has to face an extraordinarily difficult situation than any I had to face. I should like to help him of course in every way; but how to do this effectively is the problem.

Unfortunately I shall have no rest before the Congress session. I am going off to the frontier again soon.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

9

"THE RASHTRAPATI"

1. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
5.10.37

Bebee dear,
This morning I returned from Lucknow. As an after-dinner exercise I have written the enclosed essay.[2] Do what you like with it. I have not got it typed here as I did not want to show it to anybody here, including Upadhyaya. I have not sufficient energy or time to type it myself. I would rather you did not tell others that I wrote it for this would take the bloom off. It might be worthwhile to send it for publication somewhere. Why not try *The Modern Review*? But as I have said, do what you like.

I shall soon go off on my perpetual tours. On the 9th I leave Allahabad.

10th	Delhi
11th, 12th, 13th	Punjab, ending up with Lahore
14th, 15th, 16th	Peshawar etc.
18th, 19th	Bijnor etc.
20th	Allahabad
24th	Leave Allahabad
25th	Santiniketan
26-1st Nov.	Calcutta

Then probably Assam and Surma valley for ten days.
Love,

Jawahar

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See the succeeding item.

2. The Rashtrapati[1]
by Chanakya

Rashtrapati Jawaharlal ki Jai.[2] The Rashtrapati looked up as he passed swiftly through the waiting crowds, his hands went up and were joined together in salute, and his pale hard face was lit up by a smile. It was a warm personal smile and the people who saw it responded to it immediately and smiled and cheered in return.

The smile passed away and again the face became stern and sad, impassive in the midst of the emotion that it had roused in the multitude. Almost it seemed that the smile and the gesture accompanying it had little reality behind them; they were just tricks of the trade to gain the goodwill of the crowds whose darling he had become. Was it so?

Watch him again. There is a great procession and tens of thousands of persons surround his car and cheer him in an ecstasy of abandonment. He stands on the seat of the car, balancing himself rather well, straight and seemingly tall, like a god, serene and unmoved by the seething multitude. Suddenly there is that smile again, or even a merry laugh, and the tension seems to break and the crowd laughs with him, not knowing what it is laughing at. He is godlike no longer but a human being claiming kinship and comradeship with the thousands who surround him, and the crowd feels happy and friendly and takes him to its heart. But the smile is gone and the pale stern face is there again.

Is all this natural or the carefully thought-out trickery of the public man? Perhaps it is both and long habit has become second nature now. The most effective pose is one in which there seems to be least of posing, and Jawaharlal has learnt well to act without the paint and powder of the actor. With his seeming carelessness and insouciance, he performs on the public stage with consummate artistry. Whither is this going to lead him and the country? What is he aiming at with all his apparent want of aim? What lies behind that mask of his, what desires, what will to power, what insatiate longings?

1. 5 October 1937. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. Jawaharlal later appended the following note to this article: "This article was written by Jawaharlal Nehru, but it was published anonymously in *The Modern Review* of Calcutta, November 1937. 'Rashtrapati' is a Sanskrit word meaning Head of the State. The title is popularly used for President of the Indian National Congress. Chanakya was a famous Minister of Chandragupta, who built an empire in north India in the fourth century B.C., soon after Alexander's raid on India. Chanakya is the prototype of Machiavelli."
2. Victory to President Jawaharlal.

These questions would be interesting in any event, for Jawaharlal is a personality which compels interest and attention. But they have a vital significance for us, for he is bound up with the present in India, and probably the future, and he has the power in him to do great good to India or great injury. We must therefore seek answers to these questions.

For nearly two years now he has been President of the Congress and some people imagine that he is just a camp-follower in the Working Committee of the Congress, suppressed or kept in check by others. And yet steadily and persistently he goes on increasing his personal prestige and influence both with the masses and with all manner of groups and people. He goes to the peasant and the worker, to the zamindar and the capitalist, to the merchant and the peddler, to the Brahmin and the untouchable, to the Muslim, the Sikh, the Christian and the Jew, to all who make up the great variety of Indian life. To all these he speaks in a slightly different language, ever seeking to win them over to his side. With an energy that is astonishing at his age, he has rushed about across this vast land of India, and everywhere he has received the most extraordinary of popular welcomes. From the far north to Cape Comorin he has gone like some triumphant Caesar passing by, leaving a trail of glory and a legend behind him. Is all this for him just a passing fancy which amuses him, or some deep design, or the play of some force which he himself does not know? Is it his will to power, of which he speaks in his *Autobiography*, that is driving him from crowd to crowd and making him whisper to himself:

> "I drew these tides of men into my hands
> and wrote my will across the sky in stars."

What if the fancy turn? Men like Jawaharlal, with all their capacity for great and good work, are unsafe in democracy. He calls himself a democrat and a socialist, and no doubt he does so in all earnestness, but every psychologist knows that the mind is ultimately a slave to the heart and logic can always be made to fit in with the desires and irrepressible urges of a person. A little twist and Jawaharlal might turn a dictator sweeping aside the paraphernalia of a slow-moving democracy. He might still use the language and slogans of democracy and socialism, but we all know how fascism has fattened on this language and then cast it away as useless lumber.

Jawaharlal is certainly not a fascist, not only by conviction but by temperament. He is far too much of an aristocrat for the crudity and vulgarity of fascism. His very face and voice tell us that:

> "Private faces in public places
> are better and nicer than
> public faces in private places."

The fascist face is a public face and it is not a pleasant face in public or private. Jawaharlal's face as well as his voice are definitely private. There is no mistaking that even in a crowd, and his voice at public meetings is an intimate voice which seems to speak to individuals separately in a matter-of-fact homely way. One wonders as one hears it or sees that sensitive face what lies behind them, what thoughts and desires, what strange complexes and repressions, what passions suppressed and turned to energy, what longings which he dare not acknowledge even to himself. The train of thought holds him in public speech, but at other times his looks betray him, for his mind wanders away to strange fields and fancies, and he forgets for a moment his companion and holds inaudible converse with the creatures of his brain. Does he think of the human contacts he has missed in his life's journey, hard and tempestuous as it has been; does he long for them? Or does he dream of the future of his fashioning and of the conflicts and triumphs that he would fain have? He must know well that there is no resting by the way in the path he has chosen, and even triumph itself means greater burdens. As Lawrence said to the Arabs: "There could be no rest-houses for revolt, no dividend of joy paid out." Joy may not be for him, but something greater than joy may be his, if fate and fortune are kind—the fulfilment of a life purpose.

Jawaharlal cannot become a fascist. And yet he has all the makings of a dictator in him—vast popularity, a strong will directed to a well-defined purpose, energy, pride, organisational capacity, ability, hardness, and, with all his love of the crowd, an intolerance of others and a certain contempt for the weak and the inefficient. His flashes of temper are well known and even when they are controlled, the curling of the lips betrays him. His over-mastering desire to get things done, to sweep away what he dislikes and build anew, will hardly brook for long the slow processes of democracy. He may keep the husk but he will see to it that it bends to his will. In normal times he would be just an efficient and successful executive, but in this revolutionary epoch, Caesarism is always at the door, and is it not possible that Jawaharlal might fancy himself as a Caesar?

Therein lies danger for Jawaharlal and for India. For it is not through Caesarism that India will attain freedom, and though she may prosper a little under a benevolent and efficient despotism, she will remain stunted and the day of the emancipation of her people will be delayed.

For two consecutive years Jawaharlal has been President of the Congress and in some ways he has made himself so indispensable that there are many who suggest that he should be elected for a third term. But a greater disservice to India and even to Jawaharlal can hardly be done. By electing him a third time we shall exalt one man at the cost of the Congress and make the people think in terms of Caesarism. We shall encourage in Jawaharlal the wrong tendencies and increase his conceit and pride. He will become convinced that only he can bear this burden or tackle India's problems. Let us remember that, in spite of his apparent indifference to office, he has managed to hold important offices in the Congress for the last seventeen years. He must imagine that he is indispensable, and no man must be allowed to think so. India cannot afford to have him as President of the Congress for a third year in succession.

There is a personal reason also for this. In spite of his brave talk, Jawaharlal is obviously tired and stale and he will progressively deteriorate if he continues as President. He cannot rest, for he who rides a tiger cannot dismount. But we can at least prevent him from going astray and from mental deterioration under too heavy burdens and responsibilities. We have a right to expect good work from him in the future. Let us not spoil that and spoil him by too much adulation and praise. His conceit is already formidable. It must be checked. We want no Caesars.

3. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
20. 10. 37

My dear, what am I to write to you? How am I to answer your questions? Surely you did not expect me to psycho-analyse myself in an article, written ostensibly by another for publication? And written at the fag end of a tiring day. But your complaint is a deeper one and no doubt justified. But it is justified only because you will imagine me as something other than I am, something nobler perhaps, more mysterious, more complicated. Have I not warned you against that fatal error? We expect too much from people and then are disappointed. Many things are wrong with me, not only my theoretieal knowledge of

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

psychology. That theoretical knowledge is itself a vain delusion. I do not possess it and yet I have somehow managed to impress you with it. The first thing that you must remember about me is that I have a knack of imposing on people (you included, in spite of your insight and perception) and I produce in their minds exaggerated notions about myself. That knack has stood me in good stead in life. Even in examinations I usually did far better than others who were my superiors in knowledge. In life I have done the same because consciously or unconsciously, or both, I always try to create an impression. I succeed often enough. And so I have succeeded in impressing you with my theoretical knowledge of psychology when as a matter of fact I hardly know anything about it. But you are perfectly right in saying that I have little sense of intuitive perception. Conceited and self-centred people seldom have it.

Again you are wholly right in saying that I have been a failure in my individual relationships—curiously enough there have been singularly few such relationships in my life. Perhaps I felt my weakness, or was afraid of interfering with my public activities. To find a reason is rather silly. Such things just happen because one is made that way. My most successful relationships are of a casual variety. I suppose the reason for this failure is my incapacity to give. You mention Bapu, but I am quite sure that I have not given him anything that was valuable or worthwhile. I took much from him; what little I gave was not to him as an individual but to him as an abstraction. This is rather vague and yet it has a positive meaning. I have been and am one of those who take from individuals without giving much in return; if I give at all, it is to the group.

I have begun to discuss myself—I like it, I suppose, and yet it is distasteful. Your questions put me on enquiry and the result of the enquiry was not a pleasing one. When the sanctuaries are empty, what is there to reveal? Out of that barrenness and poverty, what is there to give?

Perhaps I exaggerate but essentially this is true. I do not think I am a secretive individual; I am probably franker about myself than the average man. And there are very few happenings in my life that I would take the trouble to hide. And if I hide them, it is because they are trivial and commonplace and my conceit wants a nobler background. Legend has almost invested me with that background and having got it I do not very much care what it is. I have a measure of restraint but that too is the product of a long loneliness. If thoughts pass through my mind, as they do in abundance, I let them go through and fade away. Some stick or come back again and again. Is it worthwhile giving

them the clothing and shelter of words? And how can words imprison the vague fancies of an uncharted mind. Perhaps some sort of intuition might capture them.

I was fascinated by the frontier and I have promised myself another and a longer visit. Early in December probably when it will be very cold.

Love,

Jawahar

4. To Krishna Kripalani[1]

Bombay
2.6.38

My dear Krishna,

So you have presumed to sit on judgment on me and have passed extravagant remarks which will go to increase my conceit. You know that modesty is not my strong point as was pointed out with some force in an article in *The Modern Review* of November last. (Do you know that I wrote that article—the one called 'The Rashtrapati'. It was a low-down trick on my part to write anonymously thus in order to watch people's reactions. Even Ramananda Babu did not know that I had written it).

But I am writing to tell you that my address in England will be:

C/o India League, 165 Strand, London W.C. 2

All good wishes,

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

10

THE INDIAN STATES

GENERAL

1. To E.M. Sankaran Nambudiripad[1]

Allahabad
29.3.1937

Dear Comrade,[2]
Your letter[3] of the 10th March. It is true that the Working Committee have not so far appointed any all-India organising secretary.

Your work as organising secretary should primarily be to spread and strengthen the Congress organisation and make it as democratic as possible. In particular, you should interest yourself in the development of the organisation from below, that is, village committees. You should not lay down or initiate any policies as organising secretary. That is for the provincial Congress committee and higher bodies to do.

In regard to the states, the first thing for you to remember is that there is no fundamental difference in our policy in the states and in the rest of India. There is no question of non-interference and the like. Differences creep in because of the difficulties in working in the states and our desire to avoid conflict there. Therefore subject to your avoidance of active conflict you should act in the states in almost the same way as elsewhere, that is to say, you should form Congress committees from below upwards and build up the Congress organisation.

In Travancore, I understand, the Congress is still under a ban. I think your committee should carry on a continuous and persistent agitation against this ban. We should not accept this limitation of our activity lying down. As I have said above I do not want you to come into conflict with the Travancore Government and therefore there should be no satyagraha of any kind.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-12(i)/1937-38, pp. 267-268, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1909); joined the Congress during civil disobedience movement, 1930; founder-member, Congress Socialist Party, 1934; secretary, Kerala Provincial Congress Committee, 1934 and 1938-40; joined Communist Party of India, 1941 and was its general secretary, 1953-56, 1962-63 and 1967-69; Chief Minister, Kerala, 1957-59; leader of the opposition, Kerala Assembly, 1960-64 and from 1969.
3. He had prepared a plan for intensifying Congress activities in Cochin and Travancore states and had sought Jawaharlal's guidance in carrying out this work.

In Cochin probably there is no ban and therefore you should build up the Congress organisation. I think you should take exception to the fact that the Cochin State Congress Party uses the name Congress. You should ask them to avoid using words which may give a wrong impression. You should also make it clear to the Cochin public that this organisation is not connected with the Congress.

You may, at a suitable moment, call an informal conference of Congressmen in the state to consider the lines of activity. I would suggest further that you must have some kind of organisational basis before you start with demands and the like. You may of course confer with small groups even before.

You cannot expect all-India leaders to visit you. They have not the time for the purpose. Apart from this, they do not go about initiating such campaigns. You must yourself do all the spade work.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Message to the Deccan States People's Conference[1]

I am glad to learn that the Deccan States People's Conference has fixed Sunday, August 1, for the celebration of an elementary rights day in the states as well as outside. The Congress has often declared itself strongly in favour of recognition of civil rights and freedom in the states. At its Lucknow session it declared clearly that it could recognise no differentiation in personal, civil and democratic liberties as between the states and the rest of India.[2] Every Congressman therefore must inevitably sympathise with this attempt to gain the elementary rights of citizenship for the people of the states. It is well to remember that, while we struggle for freedom in India, people of the states are denied the most elementary rights of citizenship. Civil liberties do not exist at all even in small measure and unless there is freedom of speech, freedom of press, protection of life and property, freedom of association and the like, there can be no progress of any kind. A government or a state which suppresses civil liberties passes judgment against itself, and must be considered not only reactionary but incompetent.

1. Allahabad, 25 July 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 27 July 1937.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 188-189.

The Indian states today, judged by this standard, are more reactionary and incompetent than almost any other place or country. Many of us may have far-reaching objectives for the states as well as for the rest of India but the first step for all is to ensure a measure of civil liberty. I commend therefore this celebration of August 1 as elementary rights day for the people of the states and I trust that Congressmen will give it every support. It is fitting that this particular date should have been chosen—a date which reminds us of a great son of India who fought for Indian freedom and whose name is enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen. That date also reminds us of the commencement of the non-cooperation movement which was the beginning of the new phase in the Indian struggle for freedom.

3. Message to 'Rajasthan'[1]

Every day the problems relating to the states are becoming more acute and engaging more of our attention. I believe that their solution lies with the other vital issues of the rest of the country. All national problems are interwoven and interdependent; so we must try to grasp the basic principles and essentials. India cannot be divided into parts; its solidarity is unbreakable and must remain intact. All must have complete freedom and it is inconceivable that half of the country would be enjoying Swaraj, while the other half would remain bound by the shackles of slavery. This very idea leads us to oppose federation. This is the Congress policy and the states' subjects must cooperate to this end.

The world is sure to face the severest war resulting in great upheavals in every country and India will also play her part then; but we must decide regarding the form of administration. I believe that the major provinces are proving a stumbling block in the way of India achieving solidarity. If the big provinces like the U.P. and the Punjab are partitioned, the chances of solidarity might be brightened.

The federation stands condemned since it seeks to prescribe different systems of administration for British India and the Indian states. The administration should be alike for the well-being of the people.

1. Published in a Hindi weekly, *Rajasthan*, issued from Jhansi, and reprinted in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 29 September 1937.

The world has changed considerably since the paramountcy of the states was arrived at a hundred years ago by virtue of the treaties. Hence *such treaties bear no relation to the present times.*

The elected representatives of the states should be sent to the constituent assembly. But if the states choose to keep aloof, then we will have to do something; in no case will we lose the opportunity. But it is probable that many Indian states might send their elected representatives to the said assembly.

AJMER—MERWARA

4. Princes and the Federation[1]

I thank the different public and mercantile associations for the addresses and purses presented to me but I would not be satisfied with mere eulogies. I want the Congress organization to be strengthened everywhere and the mission of the Congress spread all over the country.

I am an enemy of the present constitution and would like the country to fight it tooth and nail.

I deplore the reactionary character of the Indian princes. They are joining the federation simply to increase their difficulties. The proposed scheme of the return of certain portions of Merwara to the adjoining states is improper and the people must oppose it as it is quite improper for the government to throw them under the rule of the princes.[2]

A commissioner who could levy punitive tax on 1,420 workers[3] for the fault of the police which could not keep order is quite an unfit official.

1. Speech at Beawar, 18 September 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 23 September 1937.
2. In April 1938, the British Government restored to the states of Udaipur and Jodhpur certain areas seized in the early 19th century on the ground that it was no longer necessary for the British Government to retain them in order to enforce law and order.
3. In a scuffle which took place between two groups of textile mill workers in Beawar in 1936 over the question of the reduction in the payment of dearness allowance by the millowners, a loyalist worker was killed. This led the commissioner to impose a punitive tax on those workers who opposed the settlement.

I am astonished to see that the workers, mill owners and the general public did not raise their voice against this injustice. The workers must be united and those who create dissensions are enemies of the workers.

5. The Indian States and the Congress[1]

The position of the Congress *apropos* Indian states is that the Congress is fighting for the independence of the whole of India and would not tolerate one kind of administration in one part and another kind in the other. I am not prepared to accept treaties blindly; they are anachronisms. If conditions mature before the states are in a position to participate, I would not wait to convene the constituent assembly much as I would like the states' representatives in any future constituent assembly.

I have heard complaints made that Ajmer-Merwara is being neglected by Congress leaders. India is a vast country and it is not possible for me to go to every place. Moreover, in the midst of a fight, the attention of the Congress is naturally diverted towards those parts where the fight is the thickest. If the people of Ajmer want to have recognition, it is in their own hands. Only those parts which are ready to play their part in the history of the country that is being enacted can claim recognition.

Political changes have taken place in India during the last eighteen years. Although Congress ministries have been formed, it does not mean that India is free. That day is still far off. Legally, we are still slaves. The British Government is still there to repress and suppress us. A country cannot gain power or independence by mere change of the constitution. It is internal solidarity and strength alone that can make a nation free.

Besides material harm, the greatest harm done by British rule in India is spiritual. The slavery of iron fetters is nothing in comparison to mental slavery. A hundred and fifty years of British rule has engendered this mental slavery among the Indian people. But the Congress has, during the last eighteen years, done much to change this mentality. Today, the poor tenant for whom nobody formerly cared is walking with his head raised.

1. Speech at Ajmer, 19 September 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 22 September 1937.

Mr. Jinnah stands for the independence of India as much as I do, but there is a fundamental difference regarding our methods.

It is said that the Congress movement is the work of a few agitators. Those who say so are completely ignorant of world history. Behind all the revolutions in the world there is the power of the suffering masses. If the government of a country is able to give relief to the hungry and suffering masses, it continues to survive; if not, then there is a revolution and it is doomed. The same questions are behind the revolution that is taking place in India. If the British Government is capable of solving the problems of hunger and unemployment in India, it would remain, in spite of all opposition. The British Government is, no doubt, aware of this fact and wants to solve this question mainly for two reasons; firstly, because hunger and poverty increase discontent among the masses and, secondly, if India is poor, it cannot fill the coffers of England.

British policy has always been to exploit India and the only way of making India affluent is to strike at the root of this policy, so that the river of gold flowing from India to England might be stopped. India will never rest content till she has thrown off this yoke.

Everywhere in the present-day world a constant fight is going on between two opposing forces. In Europe, it is between fascism and anti-fascism; in India and other dependent countries it is between nationalism and imperialism. The fight between the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine is a creation of British imperialism. I have every sympathy for the Jews, but they have adopted a wrong policy in looking towards the British Government and in not coming to amicable terms with the Arabs and making Palestine free. Even if no Muslim in India had raised his voice against the British policy in Palestine, I would have taken up the cause of the Arabs because I look at these problems from a purely political point of view.

The formation of ministries by the Congress does not mean that Swaraj has dawned. The main purpose behind this is to secure as much benefit for the masses as possible and thereby to increase the power of the Congress. I cannot say how long these ministries would last. The prisoners of yesterday are the ministers of today and who knows, they might again be prisoners tomorrow.

I am told that some portions of the British province of Ajmer-Merwara are being handed over to Udaipur and Jodhpur states, probably as a bribe to lure these states into joining the all-India federation. If so, it is a most objectionable move. The people of this province must resist it with all their might. They will have the sympathy and support of the entire country in this agitation. It is wrong in principle to transfer any

part of the British territory to Indian states, most of which are very much worse off than British India.

A very curious idea has gained currency that the Congress is indifferent towards the problems of the Indian states. I declare emphatically that the Congress stands for the independence of the whole of India and cannot tolerate that one portion of this country should remain under subjection while another portion is free. The Congress is really a great organisation whose importance has come to be realised even by foreign countries. The Congress is, however, not prepared to initiate a struggle at this juncture in any part of India, but it gives full sympathy and support to the cause of the states' subjects. If they have strength enough to carry on an agitation, the Congress is prepared to help them. It is becoming impossible for the Indian states to exist as they are. The peasants of Bijolia in Udaipúr state have been deprived of their lands and property but their solidarity and organization have remained unshattered, in spite of suppression and repression by the state authorities.[2] The Congress has full sympathy for their cause as for the cause of the Jat peasants of Sikar.[3]

The municipal franchise in Ajmer is ridiculous.[4] The citizens of Ajmer should carry on a raging and tearing campaign for its revision. The people of Ajmer should send the best men to the municipality.

I am pained to see that in spite of Ajmer being a big labour centre, there is no labour union here. The first duty of labour is to organize and form a union. I hope that the labourers in Ajmer will form a union so that their demands may have a solid backing.

The Hindu-Muslim problem should be viewed in relation to world politics. The main question before us is of poverty and it affects Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others alike. There is nothing in the Congress programme which benefits any one community more than the other communities. The Hindu-Muslim question is mainly for a few seats and services and it has no bearing on the masses. A few seats and

2. The failure of the government in the Udaipur state to introduce reforms led the kisans of Bijolia to start agitating from 1918. The agitation became so intense that the state authorities called out the army to put down the riotous tenants.
3. In 1935, the Jat peasants of Sikar in Jaipur state agitated for the reduction of taxes on land and remission of land revenue. This movement gradually spread into the neighbouring state of Bikaner and the discontent soon developed into an agitation against landlordism.
4. The franchise was granted to graduates or those owning property and paying income tax. The commissioner could also terminate the membership of any elected member if he was considered undesirable or his activities caused danger to the public peace.

services cannot remove poverty. I am amazed that the strength of a community has come to be reckoned by the counting of heads. Communities have risen not on account of their numerical strength but by their bravery and courage. India, a land of thirty five crores, is under foreign domination and if she attains freedom it will be due to these thirty five crores, and not due to a handful of people however brave and courageous they may be. It does not behove a brave community like the Muslims to put a prize on freedom. Even if the Congress executed a bond conceding all their demands, it would mean nothing because in any future revolution nobody can say where the Congress President and the document would be. It is the height of ignorance to believe that in this age any community can crush another community.

6. On the Proposed Transfer of Territory[1]

Some weeks ago I was in Ajmer and I was informed that there was a strong rumour to the effect that the Government of India was bargaining with the Udaipur and Jodhpur durbars about the proposed federation. It was said that discussions were being carried on for the transfer to these states of parts of Merwara. This was supposed to be the consideration for their joining the federation. There was great resentment at this proposal all over Ajmer-Merwara and especially among the Mers, who would be cut into three parts if this proposal was accepted. The Mers are a brave, compact people who intensely dislike the idea of being split up. They disliked also the idea of being placed under the state governments with their medieval and feudal laws and customs, and hence an agitation has been forming against this proposal. How far the proposal has ripened or not I do not know, but the reaction to this agitation has been numerous house searches in Beawar, including the office of the town Congress committee, and the removal of all correspondence on this issue from that office. In Jodhpur the Prajamandal and the local branch of the Civil Liberties Union have been declared unlawful, and the president of the Praja Mandal, Shri Achleshwar Prasad Sharma,[2] has been arrested. Numerous house searches have taken place there also.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 3 November 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 5 November 1937.
2. (1907-1974); a leading Congressman of Rajasthan; imprisoned several times during the states people's movement; edited Hindi newspaper, *Sainik*, 1931-37, anl *Praja Sewak*, 1940-47.

These are significant facts and they tell us eloquently how the ground is being prepared for the proposed federation. Government and state officials discuss the fate of an old community without any reference to them. They might be transferred like chattels from one government to another. It is of no consequence what they think about it. And if any presume to think and to protest, they are clapped in prison and the organisation declared illegal.

This matter, even apart from the suppression of civil liberty, is an all-India matter, for it involves the transfer of a territory, which is now part of what is known as British India, to Indian states. Such a transfer cannot be accepted or agreed to unless the people concerned themselves desire it. It is clear that they do not.

ALWAR

7. To the Prime Minister, Alwar State[1]

Allahabad
October 21, 1937

Dear Sir,

I understand that an act called the Prevention of Seditious Meetings and Publications Act was passed in Alwar some years back and that this Act is still in force. This Act prevents not only public meetings but even private meetings held in a private place with tickets. Five persons meeting together is presumed to be a public meeting within the meaning of this Act. This is an extraordinary and very unusual limitation of the ordinary right of assembly. I would beg of you to consider how far it is in consonance with present conditions in India. I feel sure that the state of Alwar does not desire to be ranked with those states which are considered very reactionary. I trust therefore that your government will be good enough to repeal this Act and to give full freedom of expression and assembly to the people of Alwar. I am sure this will be appreciated by them.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-9/1937, p. 109, N.M.M.L.

8. To Shankar Lal[1]

Allahabad
November 9, 1937

My dear Shankar Lal,
Your letter[2] of the 28th and your telegram about Alwar. As you know Indian states affairs came up for a considerable discussion in the A.I.C.C. meeting and a strong resolution was passed regarding Mysore.[3] I do not think any particular good comes by our passing resolutions about individual states. We will have then to pass a crowd of resolutions because much the same thing is happening in a host of states. As a matter of fact we are receiving complaints from all over India about state interference in Congress activities. The matter is a difficult and intricate one and we have to act in such places in accordance with the circumstances and our strength.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-9/1937, p. 91, N.M.M.L.
2. He wanted the Congress Working Committee to consider the case of some political prisoners in Alwar state who were denied facilities to defend themselves.
3. The resolution passed by the A.I.C.C. on 31 October 1937 at its meeting held in Calcutta read: "This meeting of the A.I.C.C. expresses its emphatic protest against the ruthless policy of repression as indicated by inauguration of various restrictive and prohibitive orders and political prosecutions launched in the Mysore state and also against the suppression of civil rights and liberties by denying the elementary rights of speech, assemblage and association.

   This meeting sends its fraternal greetings to the people of Mysore and wishes them all success in their legitimate non-violent struggle and appeals to the people of Indian states and British India to give all support and encouragement to the people of Mysore in their struggle against the state for right of self-determination."

BHOPAL

9. To A. S. Bazmi[1]

Camp Lucknow
May 23, 1938

Dear Mr. Bazmi,[2]
Your letter has just reached me. I am distressed to learn of the state of affairs in Bhopal. I do not know what we can do in the matter except give publicity. This publicity can be given by newspapers, by the Congress office and by the Civil Liberties Union, Bombay. Ultimately of course it is the people of Bhopal who will have to make a move. It is foolish to expect much to happen unless people in Bhopal itself are prepared to do something effective. The situation in Mysore has changed rapidly because the Mysore people took action. I think that the Mysore settlement[3] will have a powerful effect in all the states and will give strength to the people's movement.

I am keeping Mashriqui's letter for the present. I shall pass it on to the Congress office in Allahabad. As perhaps you know, I am leaving very soon for Europe and cannot do much myself.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-35(Pt. VIII)/1938-39, p. 37, N.M.M.L.
2. Editor, *Madina*, an Urdu bi-weekly published from Bijnor. He had forwarded a letter from Tarzi Mashriqui, secretary, Bhopal State People's Association, which gave an account of the people's sufferings in the state.
3. The Congress had sent Vallabhbhai Patel and J.B. Kripalani to Mysore to enquire into the circumstances resulting in a firing on unarmed people at a temple celebration at Viduraswatham in April 1938, as well as other matters relating to Congress work in Mysore state. They reached a settlement with the Mysore Government by which the government recognized the Mysore State Congress, co-opted three Congress members to the constitutional committee, gave assurances on release of political prisoners and withdrawal of prohibitory orders, and reached a compromise on the flag issue.

10. Feudalism in Indian States[1]

The recent tragedy enacted in Mysore state, painful as it was, has led to a settlement between the state government and the people which on the whole must be considered satisfactory and honourable for the people as well as the government. That settlement, if loyally carried out by both the parties, will lead to the strengthening of the people and the speedy realization of full responsible government in the state. It will affect, and has indeed affected, not only the Mysore state but all other Indian states. Throughout India the people of the states are astir and longing to be rid of feudalism and the heavy burdens that crush them. It is right and proper that those who live and work in the provinces should sympathise with and welcome these new stirrings and help the people of the states to the best of their ability. But the burden of the struggle must inevitably fall on the people of the states. The Congress has declared unequivocally that the struggle for freedom is essentially one, wherever it is waged in India, and the freedom that we seek includes the states and the rest of India in equal measure.

We must remember that most of the states are terribly backward and reactionary. The states in Rajputana and the Punjab are especially so. But perhaps the most typical and feudal and politically backward state is Hyderabad, which has the honour of being called the premier state in India. Another state which has to be placed in this unenviable category is Bhopal. The Bhopal State People's Conference inform that no kind of political activities are permitted there and civil liberties do not exist at all. Numerous local newspapers have been suppressed and many printing presses have ceased to function because of the heavy securities demanded of them. Newspapers from outside, if they are suspected of exposing the repression in the state, are forthwith banned. Thus, a dozen newspapers, including *Madina* of Bijnor, have been banned. Public meetings are not permitted even within mosques and temples without a written licence obtained from the city magistrate. This licence is not issued at all for political meetings. Even private gatherings inside the houses have been subjected to this restriction. A very strict censorship prevails in regard to books and literature from outside. Such is the state of Bhopal and indeed of many other states. We cannot be the willing and passive spectators of this suppression of the people of the states. We must tell them again and again what we stand for and help them in their struggle.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 26 May 1938. *The Leader*, 29 May 1938.

11. On Civil Liberties in Bhopal State[1]

I have just seen a statement which the Bhopal Government has issued.

I am sorry I have no time now, as I go to my steamer, to say much about it, but I should like to express my gratitude to the Bhopal Government for this answer of theirs to the charges made about the suppression of civil liberty.

Although the statement is a long one, it is a vague one, and it is difficult to say from the reading of it how far there is freedom of association, expression of opinion and the press in Bhopal at present. That a communal conference was permitted does not mean much, nor does the fact that a semi-moribund Congress committee exists there convey anything. The question is whether organizations working for political reforms are freely permitted, whether public meetings can be held without special permission on each occasion and without restrictions, and how far newspapers can function or are admitted from outside.

It is stated in the statement that action has been taken against a number of newspapers. I am not prepared to say that no action should ever be taken against a newspaper and this may certainly be justified where it increases communal bitterness or personal malice. But where this is used to suppress political work and legitimate aspirations, it is obviously wrong.

The test of civil liberty is how far criticism of the state is freely permitted. I should like to know how matters stand in this respect. The state of political progress can be gauged by the existence and strength of organizations carrying on political work freely, the absence of restrictions on public gatherings for this work and the free admission of newspapers except for very special reasons. In Bhopal, it is stated, there was no press till recently. This in itself is a sign of backwardness and of political inertia which the state should endeavour to remove.

I shall be very glad if I am convinced that in Bhopal civil liberty is not repressed and I shall gladly withdraw any statement that I might have made which may be contrary to facts. But I should like to be convinced of this first. An informal inquiry into this can be made, if the Bhopal Government is agreeable, by the Civil Liberties Union.

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 2 June 1938. *The Hindustan Times*, 3 June 1938.

BIKANER

12. Repression in Bikaner State[1]

In March 1937 attention was drawn to the Bikaner state by the sudden extermment from the state of Shri Laxmidas and Shri Magharam, secretary and president of the Praja Mandal, and of two advocates, Satyanarain Shroff and Shri Muktaram. So far as we could find out these extermments were meant to put a stop to the ordinary constitutional activities of the Praja Mandal. They were a pointed instance of the lack of civil liberty in the state. Reports of many other grievances reached our office from time to time and, from enquiries made by us, they seemed to have substance. We hesitated to give any publicity to them without previous reference to the state authorities. On April 24th, 1937 I wrote[2] to the Prime Minister of Bikaner state and sent him a note giving some of these complaints. I requested him to be good enough to let me know how far they were correct. I have had no answer to my letter, nor even an acknowledgment. I feel therefore that I must draw public attention to some of these facts and complaints and I give below copy of the note I sent to the Prime Minister of Bikaner.

Apart from the utter absence of civil liberty, I should like to draw special attention to the feudal basis of the states and the inequality before the law, the opium consumption, and the existence of slavery. The taxes fall most heavily on the poor. These are long-standing complaints. Just at present it appears that attempts to collect money for the golden jubilee celebration of the maharaja are resulting in much suffering.

Copy of the note sent to the Prime Minister of Bikaner state on April 24th, 1937

1. Inequality before the law—No criminal prosecution can be launched against the 150 *pattedars*, sardars, nobles in the state, who own one-third of the villages of the state, without the special sanction of the state executive council. This council consists wholly of the *pattedars* with the occasional exception of a Prime Minister from outside.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 26 June 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 27 June 1937 and the All India States' People's Conference File No. 4/1937, pp. 225-227, N.M.M.L.
2. This letter is not available.

2. Opium consumption—According to the figures arrived at on the basis of the 1931 budget, there is an income of Rs. 3 lakhs from customs duty on opium. The flat rate per maund of opium is Rs. 500/-. This gives a total consumption of 600 maunds for Bikaner, though it may be that some of this is smuggled out. The population of Bikaner is about a million and thus the consumption of opium for 10,000 of the population comes to 6 maunds. This figure is forty times the figure prescribed in the League of Nations covenant which is a maximum of 6 seers for every 10,000 population.
3. Slavery—In the census report of 1921, the number of born slaves in the Bikaner state is given as 10,904. They are the property of the maharaja or his feudatories, are married or divorced at their masters' will and are given away as presents.
4. Civil liberty—Civil liberty hardly exists in the state and there is no freedom of thought or speech or press or association. Freedom of person is also interfered with as is shown by deportations and the like. The following instances have been mentioned:
   (i) In 1926 or thereabouts, the village of Ramnagar of Mahant Bhairongir was confiscated in lieu of an annuity of Rs. 30,000/-. This contract, it is stated, was testified by the Agent to the Governor General and the Political Agent. This annuity, it is alleged, has never been paid.
   (ii) The temple of Baramandir with adjoining lands was confiscated and sold as the Mahant had hoisted a national flag on the 26th of January 1930.
   (iii) Nathimal Pandit of Sujangarh was sentenced to 3 months' R.I. because he wanted to organise a protest meeting against the action of the state authorities in starting the Bikaner conspiracy case.[3]
   (iv) In the summer of 1936 the services of a teacher in the Bikaner state school were dispensed with as he had suggested the observance of two minutes' silence in memory of Kamala Nehru.
   (v) The only secular magazine *Pushkarendu* had to cease publication as the editor was asked to give an undertaking that he would not deal with the political subjects.
   (vi) Mahatma Gandhi's book, *Hind Swaraj*, is prohibited entry into the state.
   (vii) In March 1937, Shri Laxmidas and Shri Magharam, secretary and president respectively of the Praja Mandal, and Shri

3. On charges of causing disaffection among the people of Bikaner state through seditious writings and speeches, several persons were tried and sentenced in 1932.

Satyanarain Shroff and Shri Muktaram, advocates, were externed from the state.

5. Jail treatment—In October 1936 the prisoners of Bikaner jail went on hunger strike consequent, it is alleged, upon the death by beating of prisoner Prema Jat. Cases of torture are mentioned in Chandanmal[4] case in 1932.

   In barracks of Bikaner jails which are 30′ × 17′, 18 to 29 prisoners are kept huddled together. The ceiling is low and the only ventilation comes through 2 grated doors on one side.

   Habitual and casual offenders are kept together. There is no library and no jail school for juvenile prisoners or others.

6. Expenditure—(i) The Privy Purse. The palace expenditure comes to 12.7% of the revenues of the state, that is Rs. 14 lakhs out of Rs. 114 lakhs. In addition, there are other considerable sums spent by the palace.

   (ii) The budgeted expenses on education amount to 1.2% of the entire budget. Of this a considerable part is granted towards sardars' education.

   (iii) The expenses on hospitals, medicines, sanitation, etc. are 1.5 per cent.

7. Taxes—The basis of taxation is such as falls most heavily on the poorest in the state. Except for a few cereals, no article is exempt from customs duties. Food products such as sugar, rice, etc. are heavily taxed. Cattle grazing fees are charged from peasants and flat rates of taxation have been fixed for every camel, buffalo, horse, cow, sheep and goat.

   Railway freight and fares are the highest allowed under the Indian Railway Act, being 4 pies per mile for 3rd class passengers. The state owns 800 miles of railway but its waiting rooms and other arrangements are exceedingly primitive and backward.

   Annual taxes of varying amounts are levied on the different professions, for example, confectioner, Rs. 10, shoe-maker, Rs. 5/-, carpenter, Rs. 4/-, tailor, Rs. 3/-, porter, Rs. 2/-.

8. Golden jubilee—It is stated that the Bikaner state intends to spend one crore of rupees on the golden jubilee of the maharaja which is expected to be celebrated sometime in September 1937. Allegations have been made that forced contributions for this purpose have been introduced and all, rich or poor, are expected to make them, even the poorest family being expected to contribute a lump sum of Rs. 4/-.

4. One of the accused in the Bikaner conspiracy case.

The Rashtrapati

by Chanakya

"Rashtrapati Jawaharlal ki Jai". The Rashtrapati looked up as he swiftly passed through the waiting crowds, his hands went up and were joined together in salute, and his pale hard face was lit up by a rare smile. It was a warm personal smile and the people who saw it responded to it immediately and smiled and cheered in return.

The smile passed away and again the face became stern and sad, impassive in the midst of the emotion that it had roused in the multitude. Almost, it seemed that the smile and the gesture accompanying it had little reality behind them; they were just tricks of the trade to gain the goodwill of the crowds whose darling he had become. Was it so?

Watch him again. There is a great person and tens of thousands of persons surround his car and cheer him in an ecstasy of abandonment. He stands on the seat of the car, balancing himself rather well; straight and seemingly tall, like a god, serene and unmoved by the seething multitude. Suddenly there is that smile again, or even a merry laugh, and the tension seems to break and the crowd laughs with him, not knowing what it is laughing at. He is a god no doubt godlike no doubt but a human being claiming kinship and comradeship with the thousands who surround him, and the

PAGE OF THE RASHTRAPATI, 5 OCTOBER 1937

ON THE NORTH WEST FRONTIER, TORKHAN, OCTOBER 1937

JODHPUR

13. Feudalism in Jodhpur State[1]

The paths pursued by the Indian states are curious but what shall we say of those states which have British officers to look after them? In the latter case we have the full advantage of state feudalism and British imperialism joined together in happy wedlock. Jodhpur is one such state.

In certain districts of Jodhpur state famine and scarcity conditions have prevailed for some time past. Owing to lack of fodder and water, large numbers of cows have died, and in some places water has to be brought by bullock carts and sold in the bazaars at three annas a pitcher. The Jodhpur Praja Mandal tried to relieve this distress and appointed a relief committee for this purpose. This committee made enquiries into the economic conditions prevailing at present among the peasantry.

The Jodhpur Government did not approve of the enquiry or the relief work and the Praja Mandal president, Syt. Achleshwar Prasad, was informed accordingly. Even this information was conveyed in a curious way. A copy of a letter from the Chief Minister to the Inspector General of Police was sent to the Praja Mandal. This letter ran as follows:

> Will you kindly send for Achleshwar Prasad and warn him that neither he nor any member of the Praja Mandal or other allied institutions such as the civil liberties union should proceed into the districts with a view to spread discontent among the masses? Achleshwar Prasad may also be informed that the pernicious activities of himself and his associates are being closely watched by the government and if they continue to give further trouble drastic action will be taken against them.

As we are not in the habit of giving publicity to statements without verifying them, we referred this matter to the Chief Minister and enquired what the pernicious activities had been to which he took exception, and why he objected to relief work being organized by the Praja Mandal. To that enquiry of ours the Chief Minister has not had the courtesy to reply; perhaps the inference is justified that he has nothing to say in reply.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 7 August 1937. *The Leader*, 9 August 1937.

Information has reached us now of another instance of the Jodhpur Government's vigorous activity under their feudal-imperialist regime. Syt. Jainarain Vyas,[2] who has long been a Congressman and was a member of the All India Congress Committee at one time, was a short while ago travelling by train. He was asked to wake up in the middle of the night at Marwar junction by a crowd of policemen and asked to leave Jodhpur territory immediately. No reason was given, no order was shown. Mr. Vyas insisted on some written order. Early in the morning he sent an express telegram to the Chief Minister. There was no reply and later in the day he was forcibly removed in a lorry to Beawar beyond the Jodhpur state territory.

2. (1899-1963); a leading figure in the all India states' people's movement and founder-member, Rajputana States' People's Organisation; Chief Minister, Rajasthan, 1948 and 1951-54; president, Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee, 1956-57; member, Rajya Sabha, 1957-63.

14. Message to Jodhpur Praja Mandal[1]

Indian people—whether they may be of British India or Indian India—must have rights for full freedom.

I offer my congratulations to the released young men and expect that they will again work among the people with fresh vigour and strength, and will try to get their grievances redressed.[2] While the whole of India is striving for freedom, Indian states cannot remain neutral.

The sympathy of the people residing in different provinces of India goes wholly to the people of the different Indian states, and we consider ourselves united with the latter. Our efforts for achieving Swaraj will certainly benefit the Indian states' people.

1. Lucknow, 1 October 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 2 October 1937.
2. For organising famine relief work in Jodhpur state, some members of the Jodhpur Praja Mandal were detained for about a year.

KATHIAWAR

15. Message to Kathiawar Youth Conference[1]

The Kathiawar youth conference should be held at a place where the executive decides to hold it after consultation with the local workers. The conference should have freedom to discuss the usual matters which such conferences discuss. There should be no limitations or restrictions on the conference, but obviously it must deal with all such matters having regard to the situation. It must not create unnecessary trouble for itself. It should concentrate on civil liberties, fundamental rights and opposition to the federation.

Our general policy is to avoid conflict with the states and this should be adhered to. But this does not mean that we should suppress our activities. If in the course of activities the state intervenes and even arrests a person that cannot be helped. But deliberate civil disobedience or breaches of orders are not encouraged today either in British India or in the states. An attempt should be made to build up public opinion. Where the fundamental right of association is denied, small private meetings should be held and propaganda done through leaflets, etc.

The Congress does not differentiate between the states and the rest of the country. But the difference arises on the part of the states. The Congress cannot undertake any special activity in the states. Such activity has for its basis the people of the states themselves. The Congress will sympathise and give such support as it can.

The youth conference should try to cooperate with the political conference and should not consider itself a rival to it.

Regarding the Gujarat P.C.C.'s arrangements of constituencies, I can say nothing without full inquiry. Such matters are usually left entirely in the hands of the P.C.C. If they have any grievance they should place it before the P.C.C. Personally I think that the principle of election is always desirable. As the Congress constitution is being amended some of these questions will probably not arise in future.

1. This message was sent to the president, Rajkot Youth League. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 7 October 1937.

MYSORE

16. Election Activities in Mysore State[1]

The Mysore state earned a reputation in the past for a progressive policy. Under a succession of able Dewans it advanced educationally and industrially. The present administration seems to be bent on destroying that reputation by following a reactionary policy in political matters. Six years ago it declared war against the national flag and ever since then it has sought to hinder normal Congress activities in the state. Recent developments there show the extent to which the state government is bent on preventing constitutional activities. Early in March next, elections are to take place for the representative assembly of Mysore. This assembly has little power and contains a large body of nominated members. Still the local Congress committee decided to contest these elections and set up a board for the purpose. Shrimati Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya happened to be passing through Bangalore and Mysore in January last. She was asked to deliver speeches in connection with the election campaign. She was immediately served with orders under the Police Act and under sec. 144 Cr. P.C. prohibiting her from delivering any speeches in public or private. This ban was extended even to the proprietor of the hotel where a tea party had been arranged. Similar orders were served on many residents of the state. It thus appears that the state government is not prepared even to tolerate normal election activities and these elections are reduced to a farce. It is necessary that attention should be drawn to this fact and to the conditions prevailing in a so-called progressive state in India. We have to remember that we cannot isolate the states from the rest of India. Ultimately the problems of the two are the same, and one acts and reacts on the other. I trust that the Mysore state government will yet see its way to refrain from interfering in normal election activities, if it does not wish us to believe that these elections have no meaning whatever.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 20 February 1937. *The Hindu*, 22 February 1937.

17. To the Mass Awakeners' Union, Bangalore[1]

Allahabad
June 28, 1937

Dear Comrade,
I have your letter of the 21st June with its enclosures. I note the order that has been issued in Bangalore. This order is certainly a restriction on civil liberty and as such to be protested against. But it is not possible for me to issue public statements because of every order issued by the police or the magistrate. I wonder if you realise that scores of such orders are being issued and, what is much worse, large numbers of our prominent workers are being arrested from day to day. Therefore I cannot take any special steps in the matter. But you should communicate with the Civil Liberties Union and yourself protest against the order in the press and otherwise.

I do not know anything about your organisation, the "Mass Awakeners' Union." It has a curious and novel title.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-57/1937, p. 31, N.M.M.L.

18. To T. Siddalingiah[1]

Allahabad
August 27, 1937

Dear Comrade,[2]
I have received your letter of the 13th August.[3] I have also heard from the Karnataka P.C.C. on this subject. Before I had fully considered your letter I dictated a reply to the Karnataka P.C.C. I enclose a copy

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88/1937, p. 643, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1898); joined Mysore state people's movement, 1935; founder-member, Mysore State Congress, 1937; president, Bangalore Congress Committee, 1938; Minister for Industry, Mysore Government, 1953.
3. He wrote that the Mysore Congress Board had decided to resort to some form of direct action to counter the repressive measures adopted by the state authorities.

of this reply. You should communicate on this subject with the Karnataka P.C.C. I can only consider it when I have their views on this subject. It may be necessary for me to refer the matter to the Working Committee.

It is not our wish to come in the way of any legitimate steps that you might desire to take. But I should like you to consider such steps in all their bearings. And further I should like to make it clear that in any action that you might take the responsibility must rest on your board. Obviously, we cannot undertake any responsibility. At any time this would have been difficult. But at the present moment the situation in India is such that we cannot lightly indulge in any form of direct action. But if after fully considering all such matters you are still desirous of undertaking some form of direct action I am prepared to consider the question and refer it to the Working Committee, if necessary. But as I have stated above you should communicate with us after you have consulted the P.C.C.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

19. To Secretary, Karnataka P.C.C.[1]

Allahabad
August 27, 1937

Dear Comrade,

... It is obviously undesirable except for very strong reasons to launch a civil disobedience movement in any part of India at the present moment. At the same time conditions in the Indian states are peculiarly irritating and prevent all Congress work being done. We cannot accept this position and there should be a continuous protest against it. I can conceive of a position arising when this protest takes the form of some kind of direct action. But apart from the principle involved, it must be clearly bome in mind that before any such action is indulged in there should be strength behind that action and general popular approval.

I should therefore like your committee to send me its own opinion on the representation of the Mysore Congress Board. If you have not already received this representation you should send for it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88/1937, pp. 653-654, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

20. To N. Ramamurti[1]

Allahabad
September 1, 1937

Dear Sir,[2]
I am in receipt of your letter of the 26th August forwarding to me a copy of the letter sent by your union to the Dewan of Mysore. I have read this letter carefully and I think it makes out a very strong case against the present government in Mysore. This government has long had a reputation of being progressive but it is quite clear that this reputation is thoroughly unjustified, specially in regard to civil liberties. It is right that public attention should be drawn to this denial of civil liberties in a state which considers itself advanced.

So far as the Congress is concerned it takes every interest in the conditions prevailing in the state. There is no question of pursuing a policy of non-interference. I do not know where you have got this idea from. But because the states are politically more backward it is more difficult to do regular work there. In regard to Mysore our office will gladly give the fullest publicity to what is happening there.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88/1937, p. 637, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary, Civil Liberties Union, Bangalore. He wrote: "... If this severe repression is possible in 'Ram Rajya', to use Mahatma Gandhi's words, what would be the condition of the people in other states? There is not a shred of truth in this description. Mysore is as bad as any other state..."

21. To Secretary, Karnataka P.C.C.[1]

Allahabad
September 2, 1937

Dear Comrade,
Your letter of the 28th August. I have already written to you on this subject. It is clear from various papers that I have received that the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88/1937, pp. 635-636, N.M.M.L.

Mysore Government is indulging in severe repression of civil liberties in the state. I think your P.C.C. should carry on an agitation all over the province against this. You should support Congressmen in Mysore who have to suffer under this regime. I am sure that an agitation conducted by you will have some effect on the Mysore Government which is sensitive to public opinion in India.

I note what you say about the Mysore Congress Board. This Board seems to have been formed quite properly and it should be encouraged in its work. It seems to me that before even the question of any form of civil disobedience arises there is much work that should be done in agitating public opinion and informing it of the repressive activities of the government. Some of the members of your committee ought to go to Mysore for this purpose and interview the officials there. You should also have leaflets printed stating what is happening in Mysore state and distribute them both in Mysore and outside. If in the carrying on of this work any arrest is made, well and good. But a deliberate breach of orders should be avoided. There is great room for public activity in the nature of a protest or agitation even apart from formal disobedience. This is the advice you should give to the Mysore Congress Board and committees. But in giving this advice you should promise them such support as you can give. I think your advice will only then be valuable and have effect.

I suggest therefore that your committee should take this line of action for the present and await developments. The Mysore Congress Board should also act accordingly. Thus the question of active civil disobedience does not arise at present and in any event this matter will have to come to me through your committee.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the president, Mysore Congress Board.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

22. To President, Mysore Congress Board[1]

Allahabad
September 6, 1937

Dear Comrade,
Your letter of the 31st August.[2] I realise what is happening in Mysore and we are prepared to give full publicity to this. I suggest that you might send to our office a properly documented note on this subject which we can release to the press. I do not think it desirable to call for a celebration of the Mysore repression day as suggested by you. There are at present many things happening in India which are even more repressive than anything you are experiencing in Mysore. After all, in Mysore you have so far had a number of orders which are no doubt objectionable. But in Bengal and Punjab and many states arrests and sentences are frequent.

As for your request to extend the period of enrolment of members, this is beyond our power. Members can of course always be enrolled. There is nothing to stop them. But they cannot participate in the voting of the delegates' election unless they are enrolled by a certain date.

I have also received your letter of September 2nd.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88/1937, p. 627, N.M.M.L.
2. He wrote about the repressive measures that had been used to curb the legitimate and constitutional activities of the Congress in the state and said that due to intensive official propaganda, Mysore had come to be known as the model state although the real conditions were not known to the people living outside Mysore. He wanted the Congress to pass a resolution condemning the state's repressive policy and for acquainting the people in British India with the real conditions.

23. To Mirza M. Ismail[1]

Allahabad
September 30, 1937

Dear Sir,

I am venturing to address you on the subject of Congress activities in the Mysore state. For some years past many restrictions have been placed on the normal work of the Congress organisation in Mysore state. During the past year a large number of references have been made to me about the additional restrictions placed on prominent Congressmen and others who either visited Mysore from abroad or are residents of Mysore. I have before me a long list of various orders suppressing civil liberties which have been issued by officers of the Mysore Government during the year 1937. I have copies of some of these orders and of ordinances and police notifications issued in the state. I do not, at this stage, wish to put these in detail before you. You are no doubt aware of their contents and of the action taken by the officers of the state. But the text of these orders makes it clear that they are directed against those who do any kind of Congress work, however normal and constitutional it might be. The fact that a person is in sympathy with the Congress is held against him. The desire of a Congressman to "popularise the establishment of a local Congress committee" is held to be something approaching an offence. Meetings have been prohibited over wide areas and a regular campaign against the national flag instituted. All this shows that the Mysore Government is inspired by a spirit of hostility against the National Congress and the national movement. As President of the Congress, I cannot ignore such happenings wherever they might occur. I am therefore taking the opportunity of writing to you to find out directly from you what the policy of the Mysore Government is in regard to the Congress and what it is going to be in the future. We have to fashion our own policy accordingly.

Mysore has often been said to be a progressive state but the facts that have been placed before me go to show that in regard to the suppression of civil liberties it is one of the most backward states in India. Even in parts of Rajputana, which are otherwise far more backward, there is a greater measure of civil liberty than what prevails at present in Mysore. The attitude of the Congress towards the Indian states is well known. We seek to carry out normal constructive and organisational work in a constitutional manner there. We have no desire to

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88/1937, pp. 581-583, N.M.M.L.

invite conflicts. But it seems to me that the Mysore state is desirous of preventing us from carrying on this normal work even at the risk of conflict. I should like to be clear on this issue before I advise my colleagues in Mysore and Karnataka as to what they should do.

The Congress is not only a great national organisation but it happens to be connected intimately today with the provincial governments of Bombay and Madras as well as some other provinces. I do not know if the Mysore state desires to cooperate with these provincial governments which adjoin its territories, or has no such desire. These governments must inevitably be affected by the attitude of the state towards the Congress.

I shall thank you, therefore, if you will kindly let me know whether Congress work can be carried on in its entirety in Mysore state, whether Congress leaders and workers from outside can visit the state in furtherance of this work, whether Congress committees can be organised in the state and Congress members enrolled and whether the national flag can be exhibited in the state at Congress functions and on such private buildings and cars on which the owners desire to put it up.

I might add that the national flag is not used or exhibited in token of any hostility to the Mysore state flag. It is the flag which represents the idea of Indian freedom and Indian unity.

I shall thank you for an early reply.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

24. To Mirza M. Ismail[1]

Allahabad
October 19, 1937

Dear Sir Mirza,

Thank you for your letter of October 8th, also the personal letter of October 9th.[2] I appreciate your courtesy in writing to me fully. I received your letters only last night on my return to Allahabad.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88/1937, pp. 539-541, N.M.M.L.
2. The Dewan had stated: "... the government of Mysore is not inspired by a spirit of hostility against the National Congress, nor does it wish to put any obstacles in the way of normal constructive work of an all-India character that is carried on in a constitutional manner."

It is possible, and even probable, that we differ on many matters of public policy, and it is hardly worthwhile to argue about fundamental or temperamental differences. Many of us in the Congress differ from each other on important issues. But we also agree on many vital issues and, the agreement being far greater than the disagreement, we pull together. Similarly it should be possible for Congressmen and state authorities, though differing from each other, to find some basis for mutual adjustment. It is obvious that we live in a changing and dynamic world and even in India considerable changes are taking place before our eyes. To ignore them can hardly be wise on the part of anyone who deals with public affairs. The Congress is playing an ever-growing part in the shaping of India's future, and it may be that when that future becomes the present, the Congress will dominate the scene.

The policy of the Congress towards the Indian states has been twofold. On the one hand it has, for various reasons of expediency, refrained from interfering too much in the states. On the other hand it is obviously interested, and intensely interested, in the present and the future of the states. It is interested because the very basis of our policy is an all-India unity, and in the modern world it is hardly possible to think of small units functioning separately. The tendency indeed is to think in terms of a world unity. It is also interested because the interests of the states and what is called British India are inextricably bound together; neither can ignore the other. The proposed federation, to which we are entirely opposed, forces us to think of the states, both in their external relations and their internal structure and economy. Thus we cannot, either of us, escape the problem however much we might like to do so.

In considering the problem, it is not good enough to be tied down by present-day legality, for that legality is part of the problem itself. Nor is it at all feasible that the Congress or any other organisation should remain neutral.[3] It may, for reasons of expediency, avoid various kinds of activity, but in the realm of thought and in the expression of thought, it must have absolute freedom. There is no other possible way in a changing world. To repress the expression of thought is to drive that thought underground, to make it fiercer, and to produce a neurotic condition. If it is a right thought, then to suppress it is obviously wrong. If it is a wrong thought, then to suppress it is to make it more perverted and dangerous. That of course is the argument for civil liberty.

Personally I am convinced that the Indian states system is entirely out of date and it will have to adapt itself rapidly and considerably to new

3. The Dewan wanted the Congress to adopt the position of a friendly neutral in the internal politics of Mysore state.

conditions. Whether it can do so without trouble and upheaval depends on the statesmen who control the destinies of the states. Mysore is in many ways the most progressive of the Indian states and I had hoped that if any state could march with the times and adapt itself to the new order, it would be Mysore. When I find, therefore, that Mysore, in spite of its advantages, is acting in a reactionary manner on the political plane, I am grieved.

You may be quite right in thinking that some of the persons against whom action has been taken by your government are undesirable. I do not know them personally. But I do not think that that justifies the action or lessens in any way their influence. Probably repressive action has the reverse effect. I find that about the very date you wrote to me, or a little earlier, the Congress office, or the office of the Mysore Congress Board, was searched and almost all the files carried away. Further, that security was demanded from the council of action and the president of the board. That seemed to me a strange commentary on your letter.

I realise fully that a government has to take action against certain forms of subversive activity.[4] But usually this refers to violence or appeals to violence. Activity undertaken to spread ideas or to bring about a peaceful and constitutional change in the constitution, is usually given free scope, even though it might not be liked.

I can assure you that I have every desire to avoid anything in the nature of a conflict between the Congress and the Mysore state authorities. Mysore is the last state where we would like to face this. I am also prepared to counsel restraint to our people. But, as you say, restraint has to be on both sides.

I understand from your letter that you have no objection to the use of the national flag at Congress functions, on private buildings and on cars. There is no question of putting this flag up in token of hostility to the state flag or on official buildings. I do not see why any conflict should arise in this matter.

In spite of differences of opinion, I do not see why it should be difficult for us to avoid conflict between the Congress and the state authorities. It is possible for mistakes to occur on either side but if there is a spirit of accommodation, these mistakes will not go far. But I do think that a full measure of civil liberty is necessary for such a spirit of accommodation to exist, and I would beg of you to enhance the prestige of Mysore by ensuring this civil liberty in the state. If civil liberties are suppressed, we cannot remain silent spectators.

4. The Dewan had stated: "... we cannot tolerate subversive agitation, under which head I include attacks on the constitution in general, and on the position of our ruler in particular ..."

For the moment I am not discussing responsible government and the like. This letter is long enough already. Personally I feel that a long step towards responsible government would be one of true statesmanship and would strengthen the state tremendously. But in any event civil liberty is a prerequisite for any progress.

I am returning to you Mr. C. Vijayaraghavachariar's letter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

25. To Secretary, Karnataka P.C.C.[1]

Allahabad
October 20, 1937

Dear Comrade,

On my return to Allahabad I received your letters of the 7th and 9th October. Thank you for them. I have also had letters from the secretary of the Mysore Congress Board. The Dewan of Mysore has further sent me a reply to the letter I sent him.

It is not our practice to deal with local committees directly. We always deal with them through provincial Congress committees.

Regarding Mysore, we have taken no direct steps. It is true that we have corresponded directly with the Mysore Congress Board but this is our practice in regard to all committees that write to us for advice. In the present case as in that of the others we have always told them to confer with you and to abide by your advice, and usually copies of our letters to them have been sent to you. You must further remember that the problems that have arisen in Mysore are important and are of all-India application. We must therefore take interest in them and guide the general policy in regard to them. Mysore itself occupies a curious position in the Congress organisation. It is not fully developed from the Congress point of view. If it was so developed it would be a province in itself. As it is, I do not quite know what it is—a district or less than a district—in our organisation.

Two questions arise in Mysore. The first is relating to civil liberty, that is freedom of speech and organisation of the Congress. It is undoubted that obstructions have been placed in the way of Congress work in Mysore. Congressmen from outside have been prevented entry and

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88/1937, pp. 515-517, N.M.M.L.

local Congressmen have been prevented from speaking and organising. We cannot agree to these restrictions on principle. We must therefore protest against them and draw the attention of the state authorities to them. It is true that the state, or any other government, must have authority to deal with certain types of subversive agitation. No state can permit the preaching of violence or of violent activity. But apart from this, agitational propaganda is considered constitutional activity and permitted by all states claiming to be progressive. Ultimately this is in the interest of the state itself, for an open expression of an opinion even though of an undesirable nature has less dangerous consequences for the state than suppression of opinion. Suppression does not end that opinion but perverts it and it cannot be met in the open. That is the principle of civil liberty and it is very foolish and wrong for any state to go against that principle. The British Government has not succeeded in its attempt to suppress opinion and the Mysore state is also not likely to succeed. Therefore I am clearly of opinion that where suppression of opinion takes place we must raise our voice against it and claim freedom of speech and organisation. At the same time people who work on behalf of the Congress must remember that our language must be restrained. It must deal with principles and not with personalities. Anything else is unbecoming to the dignity of the Congress. Unbecoming language and personal attacks are not signs of strength but of weakness. The Congress is a strong enough and powerful enough organisation to deal with its opponents in a dignified way. All Congress workers must therefore work with dignity and restraint. In particular, Congress principles must be kept in view and nothing savouring of violence must be indulged in.

The second point is about the national flag. I understand that the position of the Mysore Government now is that the national flag can be used at Congress functions, on private buildings and on cars. They object to the use of the flag in a spirit of hostility to the state flag, or on any occasion where it may be considered as a challenge to the state flag. I think that on the whole this position is a reasonable one provided it is acted up to in a *bona fide* manner. We do not want the Congress flag to be used in token of hostility to the state or any other flag. Nor do we want to put it up on public buildings and the like. Our desire is that no one who wants to exhibit it on his house or car or in any place belonging to him, should be prevented from doing so. I trust therefore that there will be no difficulty about the flag in future. In case any subordinate official of the state infringes the rule laid down by the state authorities, this matter must immediately be brought to the notice of his superior authorities.

The question of suppression of civil liberties is a more difficult one. The authorities of the state on the one hand assure us that they want to give freedom of expression etc.; on the other hand they carry on acts of repression. Evidently their idea of freedom and civil liberty differs very much from ours. You inform me in your letter that after your interview a number of pending cases were withdrawn and yet immediately after, the office of the Congress board was searched and their files were taken away and notices were served on members of the council of action of the Mysore Congress Board. This aggressive action of the state does not fit in at all with their professions and we must take the strongest objection to it.

I have considered this matter thoroughly and I feel that while on the one hand we cannot submit to the repressive activities of the state, on the other hand the time is not ripe for any action in the nature of direct action on an organised scale on behalf of the Congress. Such direct action should therefore be avoided. Your interview with the Dewan and my correspondence with him have put the Congress position clearly before him and I have no doubt that he will be sufficiently influenced by them. Therefore it would be unwise to precipitate matters at this stage. At the same time we must enter our strongest protest whenever any suppression of civil liberties takes place and we should carry on in a disciplined way our ordinary organisational activities in Mysore, remembering always that this has to be done in a dignified way without indulging in loose language. This will undoubtedly strengthen the Congress in Mysore state. Meanwhile we can watch developments.

You suggest that the Working Committee might send one or two representatives to visit the state. I do not think this is necessary at this stage. We have more important work in hand. But it is desirable that your P.C.C. should take direct and intimate interest in happenings in Mysore state. If you like, you can place this letter before your provincial executive, but it must be remembered that this letter or any other letter from us is not meant for the press. Care should be taken to prevent publication.

Our general policy should be to avoid a conflict with the state authorities but at the same time not to submit quietly to their aggressive activities. If we are wide awake and continue our protest against repression, I am sure that we can produce a marked improvement in the policy of the state. It should also be remembered that as I am corresponding directly with the Dewan of Mysore any aggressive action on our part at the present moment will be premature and improper. If, as I have stated previously, in the ordinary course of our activities arrests take place,

then it cannot be helped and we must not mind them. But an open flouting of an order is not to be indulged in.

I have dealt in this letter with the general position in Mysore and Karnataka. I am sending a copy of it to the Mysore Congress Board.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

26. To Mirza M. Ismail[1]

Allahabad
November 4, 1937

Dear Sir Mirza,

I have received today your two letters dated the 29th October together with their enclosures.[2] I am grateful to you for them.

Since I wrote to you last many events have taken place which have unfortunately worsened the situation, so far as an outsider can judge. I would not presume to express a final opinion about any situation without a close study. I am therefore not in a position to say much as to any particular event that might have happened in Mysore. But a considerable experience of public affairs and movements enables me to form some opinion even from a distance. I try to look at the whole wood although I may not be able to examine the trees closely.

You have no doubt seen the resolution of the All India Congress Committee passed recently in Calcutta regarding Mysore.[3] That resolution was a non-official one pressed by a large number of members. Many of us had no desire to take any steps which might perhaps make it more difficult to end the friction which is developing in Mysore. I

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88/1937, pp. 395-403, N.M.M.L.
2. He wrote: "... as these agitators have advanced no reasons for abolishing the present form of government, it would be, I think you will agree, totally impossible to substitute for it immediately anything in the nature of real responsible government. Manhood suffrage is for the present out of the question. Our present electorate represents only a minority of the people.... In these circumstances we cannot but regard the demand for immediate responsible government as a subversive activity..."
3. See p. 538.

might add that even a gentleman from Mysore, who had come to tell us of what was happening there, was not particularly desirous that the All India Congress Committee should pass a resolution. But the feeling of the members was so strong that it found vent in the resolution that was passed.

I have read your letters carefully. I realize that there is a great difference between your approach to the problem of Mysore as well as of India and mine. I am prepared to agree with you that in some respects the people of Mysore are better off than the people of other parts of India. Certainly I think that, among the Indian states, Mysore has been more progressive than the great majority of other states. I appreciate also that the Mysore Government is actuated by a desire to better the condition of the people economically and industrially and thus to raise the standard of living. May I say that, while we work for political change in India, our real objective is the raising of the standard of our people?[4] It is because we feel that no major effort in this direction is possible under the present political conditions, that we seek the political change. Even so, in the provinces where Congress ministries are functioning you will find that a great deal of stress is laid on bettering and improving the condition of the masses economically.

Great movements, like that led by the Indian National Congress, can seldom be understood in terms of the wishes of the few leaders, however big they might be. To imagine, as high English officials have sometimes imagined in the past, that a few agitators can work up the people, is to show a remarkable lack of perception. The processes of history are deeper and there can be no doubt that the National Congress has represented and does represent a historic development of great significance. Individuals may give it some shape and direction here and there, but the urge behind it has come from the sub-conscious self of India herself and represents forces which move nations and millions of men. Because it has represented this reality, it has grown to the stature which it possesses today. While politically and economically India has lagged terribly behind, the National Congress has tried to fill the gap to some extent in the mind of India. But so long as only a mental bridge is made the problem is not solved. The solution can only come when we fit in, politically and economically, with existing conditions in the world and in our country.

4. The Dewan had written: "On the general issue of the advancement of the people of India our difference appears to be one of the positions which we hold. You, as the head of a great political organisation, rely upon political change as the means towards political advancement. I, as the head of a paternal government, rely upon raising the standard of living, and believe that political change will follow in due course."

Generally speaking, the hiatus is far greater in the Indian states than in the rest of India. In most of them even the mental bridge is lacking, and the way political and economic changes are looked upon by those in authority astonishes people who are accustomed to study the modern world and its manifold problems. It seems to me inevitable that this hiatus should disappear in the whole of India if an equilibrium is to be established. Usually what happens is that the equilibrium is sought for first in the minds of men and new ideas spread. For the moment this appears to increase the gap between ideas and existing conditions; it may even bring about conflict between the two. But in reality it is an attempt to lessen and eventually to end the conflict. When those ideas materialize in political and social changes, the conflict ends. Conflict comes when political and social conditions lag behind reality. If in Mysore new ideas spread and seek change, this is surely a sign of the progress of Mysore and should be welcomed as such. All history, and especially recent history in India, demonstrates that the attempt to suppress ideas does not solve any problem; it only aggravates it. Indeed, the attempt fails even to suppress the idea which is objected to.

I have ventured to place this background of my thought before you, rather than discuss particular happenings, as the background and the way one looks at things are important. If our background and objectives differ, then inevitably our appreciation of a particular situation will also differ. Even if there is this difference in background and objective, the only correct way seems to me to be the way of civil liberty. Hence my belief and insistence on civil liberty. I am convinced that wrong ideas flourish less if freedom is given to them and people can discuss them and judge them dispassionately. Suppression leads to emotional reactions usually in favour of the person and the thing suppressed.

I would beg of you to consider this aspect of the problem for I earnestly wish that Mysore should go ahead and should set an example to others. I am sure that vision, generosity and tact on the part of the state authorities will go a long way towards ending the petty conflicts that are taking place now.

You ask me what I think about the demand for responsible government in the state. I can hardly have two opinions on this subject. If I stand for independence and a democratic responsible government in India, I must also desire responsible governments in the states. It would be derogatory to the state and people of Mysore for me to consider them so backward as to be incapable of advancing with the rest of India. I think that the desire to have responsible government is a perfectly legitimate desire and the state governments would be wise in acknowledging it as such and even associating themselves with it. By such action they

would advance their own prestige and strength enormously. Whatever the future may bring for us, it is clear that no part of India can remain isolated or cut off from the rest. Each part will react on the other and the powerful movements which convulse India will send their waves and ripples to the remotest corners of the country. How responsible government is to be established in a state is a matter for careful consideration but the principle has to be admitted and steps taken to give effect to it. A prerequisite for the consideration of the problem is full liberty to discuss it.

It often happens that the wrong kind of people get mixed up in big movements. There may be some, and indeed there often are, people who exploit the movement to their own advantage. But we cannot judge the movement from them, and in taking special action against them we give them greater importance than they deserve. Left to themselves they are likely to find their own level. If so, it is easier to meet them in the open and counteract their activities.

You suggest that the Congress should declare that it does not approve of subversive activities in the state. It is perfectly true, and we have declared it times out of number, that the Congress is entirely opposed to violence in any form or the preaching of violence. Apart from that it is difficult to define the word subversive. Opinions will differ widely and many people may think that even routine activities of the Congress in British India are of a subversive nature. Criticism of a government or the desire for reform in the state apparatus is usually considered perfectly legitimate unless it is accompanied by the preaching of violence. Indeed, freedom of criticism is supposed to act as a safety valve against violence and real subversive activities.

We have to face very difficult problems in India and those of us who look ahead have no desire to add to them in the states. We earnestly desire to avoid conflicts in the states, just as we desire communal harmony. I think I can say with confidence that the Congress has consistently worked for communal harmony and is working for it. The response to our policy among Muslims has been most gratifying and heartening. But you are right in saying that the situation is full of antagonisms and possible conflicts. These are inherent in the world today and if we cannot escape them, we have to face them as bravely and as intelligently as we can.

I have just issued an article[5] to the press. It has nothing to do with the states but as it discusses our general policy I am sending a copy of it to you.

5. See pp. 344-348.

I have written to you at great length. You will forgive me, but I want to be perfectly frank with you. We can only understand each other and lay the basis for future cooperation by mutual frankness.

I am returning the papers you were good enough to send me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

27. To M. L. Srikantaiah[1]

Allahabad
November 9, 1937

Dear Sir,[2]

I am in receipt of your letter of the 28th October. I have been following with close interest the developments in Mysore state and I am greatly distressed at the repressive policy of the government. As you know this matter came up before the A.I.C.C. and a resolution was passed on the subject. I am in correspondence with the Karnataka P.C.C. and our Mysore friends on the subject. I am sorry that I cannot be of any direct help. The burden of the repression and the struggle must inevitably fall on the people of Mysore. We can only sympathise from abroad and send you our good wishes. If the struggle is carried on, on completely peaceful lines, I am sure that it will end in success ultimately.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88/1937, p. 375, N.M.M.L.
2. Editor, *Janavani* published from Bangalore. He had informed Jawaharlal of the ban placed on the publication of his paper by the state government.

28. To Secretary, Karnataka P.C.C.[1]

Allahabad
November 11, 1937

Dear Comrade,

Your committee must have seen the resolution of the A.I.C.C. on the situation in Mysore. This resolution protests vigorously against the campaign and repression carried on by the Mysore state authorities and gives general support to the peaceful struggle against it.

The question arises as to what we can do in furtherance of the A.I.C.C. resolution. The matter is not free from difficulty and a situation that is changing may require changing policies. But our fundamental policy will continue as in the past. This policy is of every sympathy and help but no deliberate law-breaking on our part. A situation may arise when the people in Mysore may want to take action on their own responsibility. It should be clearly understood that such action is on their own responsibility. I have had a long talk with Mr. Reddy,[2] the acting president of the Mysore Congress Board, and tried to explain to him our general policy. I have read a long interview which he gave in Madras and this seems to me a reasoned and restrained statement.

I might inform you that I am continuing my correspondence with the Dewan.

I hope your committee will give every help in its power to our comrades in Mysore and will give them such advice from time to time as you consider desirable.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88/1937, p. 373, N.M.M.L.
2. K.C. Reddy (b. 1902); founder-member, Mysore State Congress; president, Mysore State Congress, 1946; Chief Minister, Mysore state, 1947-52; minister in the Central Government, 1952-62; Governor, Madhya Pradesh, 1962-67.

29. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
14/11/37

My dear Bapu,
I have just read your article on the A.I.C.C. meeting.[2] Regarding the Mysore resolution you have said that it was *ultra vires* of the A.I.C.C.[3] If this was so, then I had no business to permit discussion on it and should have banned it. I am not aware of any constitutional provision which leads to this result and only something in the nature of such a provision can bar a resolution moved in the ordinary way and supported by a majority of the A.I.C.C. Apart from the constitution itself, I am not aware of any previous decision of the Congress or the A.I.C.C. which lays down that such matters should not be considered. Even if there was some such resolution, I do not see how it could prevent the A.I.C.C. from considering a matter if it so chose, unless the resolution was embodied in a rule of practice. The A.I.C.C. is at complete liberty to consider a resolution which may go contrary to a previous resolution passed by itself. If however there is a rule of practice or procedure, this has to be acted upon till the A.I.C.C. does not alter it. There is no question of such a rule, but I do not even know of a resolution which lays down a policy which the Mysore resolution infringes. In statements issued by us in the past mention has been made that the Congress desires to follow a policy of non-intervention in the states. Those statements cannot bar the A.I.C.C. itself from intervening if it so chooses. I cannot understand how the legal phrase, *ultra vires*, can be made to apply.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Also printed in *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 256-257.
2. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Harijan* of 13 November 1937: "... the resolution moved in the A.I.C.C. criticising the Congress ministries, and still more the speeches, were wide of the mark. The critics had not cared to study the facts... Let them study and take to heart what Jawaharlal Nehru has said in his elaborate statement on the matter. I am convinced that in their action the critics departed from truth and non-violence..."
3. He had written: "Much more offensive, in my opinion, was the Mysore resolution; and the pity of it is that it was carried with practically nobody to speak out for truth. I hold no brief for Mysore.... In my opinion the Mysore resolution was *ultra vires* of the resolution of non-interference.... The resolution did not set forth the correct state of affairs, and the speeches were full of passion and without regard to the facts of the case. The A.I.C.C. should have appointed, if it was so minded, a committee even of one person to ascertain the facts before proceeding to pronounce judgment..."

Another question arises, what is intervention? Is a mention of a state in a resolution intervention? Is a demand for civil liberties, or a condemnation of repression, intervention? If so, the Congress itself has been guilty of it in specific and unequivocal terms during the last two years.

The Mysore resolution of the A.I.C.C. is very badly worded and, in any event, I did not want it to be passed by the A.I.C.C. just then. But my feelings have little to do with the matter. I have to act as the president of a democratic assembly. The resolution was one of condemnation of repression in Mysore. Are we to refrain from condemning repression in a state in future whatever the nature of this repression? If this repression consists in attacking the Congress itself, insulting our flag, or banning our organisation, are we to remain silent? These matters must be cleared up so that our office and our organisation might know definitely what line we are to take up.

You have said that the A.I.C.C. should not have passed the resolution without at least hearing the other side. Do you think that it is feasible for us to appoint inquiry committees to go to the states? Will the states agree? On several occasions I have suggested this to the states—not a committee but just an individual to go there and inquire from both sides. They have invariably turned this down.

This Mysore matter has been going on for a long time. The Karnataka P.C.C. has taken some steps in the matter. Their secretary has had a long interview with the Dewan of Mysore. I have repeatedly written to the Dewan and put a large number of specific cases before him. He has replied at length without, in my opinion, justifying the state policy. For months past I have been restraining Congressmen in Mysore from indulging in any disobedience of orders and, in fact, no orders have been disobeyed, except by Nariman recently.[4] The Karnataka P.C.C. ultimately considered the situation and condemned the policy of repression in Mysore and asked us for further directions as to what they should do. It is hardly correct, therefore, to say that the A.I.C.C. condemned anybody unheard or *ex parte*. We pursued all the ordinary avenues open to us.

I am writing all this to you as I want to be clear in my own mind what our policy is. You have censured the A.I.C.C. and me for the

4. K.F. Nariman was arrested in Bangalore on 24 October 1937 while addressing a students' gathering.

course we pursued. I have not yet understood how and where I was wrong and so long as I do not understand it, I can hardly act otherwise.[5]

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

5. Mahadeva Desai replying on 19 November 1937 on behalf of Mahatma Gandhi wrote that Mahatma Gandhi "was clear that there was an infringement of the policy of nonintervention... Bapu wants me to assure you that he never intended to censure you...."

30. To R. S. Hukerikar[1]

Allahabad
November 19, 1937

My dear Hukerikar,[2]

Your letter of the 14th November. I might inform you that I was distressed to read Mahatmaji's criticism of the Mysore resolution. I think he has done the Mysore people, the K.P.C.C. as well as the A.I.C.C. an injustice in passing an opinion without fully finding out the facts. I am quite clear in my own mind that neither Mr. Reddy nor you were in any way to blame for what happened. Nor do I think that the A.I.C.C. acted in any unconstitutional way. It may have been better for the resolution not to have been put forward in the way it was. That is a matter of opinion. But I do think that Mahatmaji has been unjust in his criticism. I might inform you that I wrote to him immediately on reading his criticism and asked him to explain it to me. It is not my habit and it will be improper for me to enter into a public controversy with him on this subject. Therefore I am writing to you personally and I do not want you to give publicity to this letter. But my mind is quite clear on this subject and I want to assure you that I have no grievance against you or the Karnataka P.C.C.

You need not come to Allahabad to explain this as no explanations are necessary. It will be difficult for you to catch me here as I shall be moving about and going to Assam on the 25th.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88/1937, p. 367, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary, Karnataka P.C.C. He wrote that Mahatma Gandhi's criticism would split the Congress ranks and cause a suspension of all activities, while those in jail would continue to rot.

I am sending a copy of your letter to Mahatmaji. I hope you do not mind.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

31. To K. C. Reddy[1]

Allahabad
November 19, 1937

Dear Mr. Reddy,
I have your telegram. I am sorry to learn that you have resolved against interviewing the Dewan. It seems to me always a wrong policy to refuse to interview people, whoever they might be, except under very special circumstances. An interview does not mean a surrender. I do not know if an interview was suggested by the Dewan or not.

As for your deciding to resist prohibitory orders by disobeying them, I have already explained to you that we cannot encourage this in any way or take the responsibility for it.

I want to tell you that I was distressed to read Mahatma Gandhi's criticism of the Mysore resolution of the A.I.C.C. Evidently, Mahatmaji was not in full possession of the facts. I have written to him on the subject drawing his attention to some of the facts. But I do not want to enter into a controversy with him in public. Nor do I want you to give publicity to our differences of opinion.

I think that you and Mr. Hukerikar proceeded in a very proper and constitutional way and were desirous of avoiding anything that might embarrass. I am sure that if Mahatmaji had known all the facts he would not have criticised in the way he has done.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88/1937, p. 359, N.M.M.L.

32. On the A.I.C.C. Resolution on Mysore State[1]

Mahatma Gandhi's views and advice always command weight and it has been our good fortune to be guided by them for these many years. I have therefore paid full attention to his criticism of the last A.I.C.C. meeting held in Calcutta and have sought to discover wherein I erred as chairman of that meeting. On the merits of a resolution, opinions can often differ, and as chairman, I have no business with them, though as executive head of the Congress organisation for the year, I cannot keep aloof. But I do not wish to discuss the merits of any of the A.I.C.C. resolutions. Like other Congressmen I am bound by these resolutions till they are varied or rescinded. But the criticism lays stress on this that truth and nonviolence were violated and the resolution on Mysore was *ultra vires* of the A.I.C.C. It would be helpful to me and to others if these serious charges were substantiated, for only then can one profit by that criticism. I want to realise wherein my error lay so that I might not repeat it. If that realisation does not come to me, I am likely to err again. That realisation has not come to me in spite of every effort to understand the criticism.

It is possible that undue emphasis was laid on certain aspects in some of the speeches. That usually happens in a debate. But I cannot recollect anything that can be described as a violation of truth or nonviolence. So far as the wording of the resolution was concerned, I see nothing in it which can in any way be described as a departure from truth or nonviolence. It is possible of course that the wording might not be happy or to the liking of some people.

The statement that the Mysore resolution was *ultra vires* is a definite charge which ought to be capable of full substantiation. I have been unable to discover any basis for it. The Congress constitution in no way prohibits or bars such a resolution. No Congress or A.I.C.C. resolution, so far as I know, comes in the way. The procedure adopted by me was, I think, perfectly correct. But even if it was not so, the resolution cannot become *ultra vires*. These difficulties come in my way in accepting Gandhiji's criticism. So long as they are not removed, I can only act in accordance with the dictates of my own mind. Unfortunately, I have to function for another two and a half months as Congress President and occasions may arise during this period when I have to give my ruling or opinion. I should therefore like to be convinced of the error of my ways to prevent another lapse.

1. 26 November 1937. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88/1937-38, p. 277. N.M.M.L. Jawaharlal drafted this statement, but then decided not to publish it.

33. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Camp Gauhati
November 29, 1937

Dear Comrade,

You must have seen the comment of Gandhiji on the A.I.C.C. resolutions, notably Masani's resolution[2] and the Mysore one. He has stated that these resolutions violated truth and nonviolence and the Mysore resolution was *ultra vires* of the A.I.C.C. Opinions will no doubt differ on the merits of these resolutions. But apart from the merits, the criticism is about truth and nonviolence and about the legality of one of them. As chairman of the Committee I am naturally concerned and if the criticism is justified, I acted erroneously. I want to understand this and to find out where my error lay. I wrote to Gandhiji immediately on the publication of his article but unfortunately he has not been well and the message he sent me in reply did not clear my doubts. I am receiving numerous letters on the subject asking for my opinion and I do not know what to say in reply. Unless I am convinced to the contrary, I must hold by my previous opinion and act according to it whenever opportunity arises.

I am greatly exercised over this matter and at one time I thought of issuing a press statement. I drafted this on my way to Assam but later decided not to issue it.[3] I am however sending you a copy of it with this letter.

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.
2. The A.I.C.C. had adopted a resolution moved by M.R. Masani: (1) condemning the continuance of repression even under the much-advertised new constitution; (2) regretting that even in Congress provinces all political prisoners had not been released and repressive laws were still in force; (3) demanding the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners and detenus and the repeal of all repressive laws; and (4) urging the A.I.C.C. to instruct the Congress cabinets to carry out the election pledges in this connection and set an example to the other provinces.
3. See the preceding item.

I shall be grateful if you could let me have your views on the two points raised.[4] I need not add that I do not want views on the merits of the resolutions.

Please mark your reply 'personal' and send it to Anand Bhawan, Allahabad. I expect to be back on December 13th.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. In his letter of 24 December 1937, Rajendra Prasad wrote that "the traditional Congress policy in regard to Indian states was one of extending its sympathy and moral support to the legitimate and peaceful struggle and the responsibility and the burden of carrying on that struggle within the states must necessarily fall on the states people themselves... the resolution of the A.I.C.C. at Calcutta goes much beyond exercising moral and friendly influence...amounts to a direct interference with the internal administration of a state and to participating in a struggle that may be going on..." About Masani's resolution, he wrote: "the reference of Mahatma Gandhi must be more to the speeches made in reference to Mr. Masani's resolution than to the wording of the resolution itself."

34. To Mirza M. Ismail[1]

Allahabad
December 25, 1937

Dear Sir Mirza,

I must apologise to you for not answering your letter of the 22nd November till now.[2] I was away in Assam when it came here and I received it a fortnight later. Even after that I have been so much overburdened with work that I could not deal with it. I wanted to write to you at some length and hence I kept putting the reply off. Yesterday I received your letter of the 21st December and this made me feel how guilty I was. I am now writing to you in some haste and cannot deal fully with your two letters. Perhaps I may write at greater length later. Meanwhile I shall briefly refer to one or two points.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88/1937, pp. 241-243, N.M.M.L.
2. He wrote to Jawaharlal: "I do not look forward to (and should feel bound to oppose) any form of all-India unity that destroyed the autonomy of the states..."

I am afraid the report of my speech[3] at Allahabad to which you refer does me the reverse of justice. I cannot conceive of having said what I am reported to have said. The question of civil liberty is one in which I have taken deep interest and which moves me greatly. It is obvious that a state has to take action sometimes to suppress civil liberty. But the measure of the progress of that state is that this action should be limited in scope and should occur at the rarest intervals and only when immediate danger is apprehended. Almost as an invariable practice liberty of speech should be given, even though the speech is not to our liking. Obviously there is no point in saying that we permit things that we like. It is only when we permit things that we do not like that we adhere to civil liberty. I hope in the course of the next few days to write fully in the press on this question of civil liberty. But may I say here that I have been greatly distressed at the suppression of speech and action by the Mysore Government which is not justified in any way according to my way of thinking?

Almost daily I see in the papers some fresh instance of such suppression and of a crusade against the national flag.

You are right in thinking that I look forward to an all-India unity. This unity will in all probability be a federal unity leaving a great deal of local initiative to the federating units. But you are not correct in saying that the Congress as such desires, now or later, to dictate policy to governments and states alike. When India is free I do not know whether the Congress will continue to exist or what form it will take. At the present moment it happens to be the only organisation which can be said to represent Indian opinion as a whole. I do believe that ultimately it is the opinion of the people of India that should prevail both in the states and in the rest of India. In the states it will primarily be the opinion of the people of the states. The Congress, as you are doubtless aware, does not hesitate to express its opinion on international matters. How then can it remain silent in matters intimately affecting it in the states? The

3. Mirza Ismail wrote: "... Your speech at Allahabad calling upon the citizens to cooperate with the police who are 'not the enemy of the people', as you rightly said, must strengthen the hands of Congress ministries in the provinces and of administrators elsewhere. But what gave me especial pleasure to read was a report of your speech at the meeting of the citizens of Allahabad the other day in which you have said that 'there should be freedom of speech with this limitation that improper and dangerous speeches, which are likely to create mischief, should not be allowed and the mischief-makers should be arrested.' Need I say how entirely I agree with the sentiments you have expressed?"

proposed federation has to be faced by the Congress, and the states are meant to be integral parts of this federation.

I have no doubt that you have come in contact with public men in various parts of the world. You must have realised that no one outside a narrow sphere in the British Government can think of the present Indian states except with astonishment. They seem to be so entirely unique in the world of today. A hundred or two hundred years ago they were not unique. But the world has changed, and we have not.

Thank you for the books on Mysore that you have sent me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

35. To K. C. Reddy[1]

Camp Bombay
January 4, 1938

Dear Mr. Reddy,

As you are aware the Congress policy regarding Indian states is not clearly defined and is sometimes interpreted variously. The changing situation all over India will probably lead to a greater clarification in the near future. Meanwhile I can let you have my own opinion as to the general line to be adopted in Mysore. I have already informed you previously to avoid open conflict, in the nature of disobedience of orders, with the Mysore Government. I think you should try to strengthen your general position with the people and carry on propaganda for civil liberties and responsibility in the government. This should be done in a way so as to make a rapprochement possible whenever an occasion offers itself. If you can come to an understanding with the state government which results in improving present conditions, I think it will be highly desirable for you to do so.

You must remember that the larger problems of India are intimately tied up with each other and major changes are likely to come all over the country once they begin moving in that direction. A state by itself cannot resist them. Therefore while I want that you should continue vigorously to cultivate public opinion for the two objectives that I have

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88/1937, p. 109, N.M.M.L.

mentioned above you should not shut the door to an understanding with the administration of Mysore.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

36. To P. Rangaswamy[1]

Allahabad
March 4, 1938

Dear Mr. Rangaswamy,[2]
Thank you for your letter. I have read Sir Mirza's speech.[3] It is a foolish utterance without much significance and I do not think it is worthwhile my saying anything about it.

You can rest assured that I shall take the liveliest interest in the affairs of Mysore state in particular and the Indian states in general. Meanwhile I think it is all for the good that you should function without the name of the Congress for a while. As soon as I have a little leisure I shall probably write about Indian states.[4]

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88(Pt. I)/1938, p. 13, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1904); a lawyer and politician of Bangalore; took active part in Mysore state people's movement.
3. Speaking at the meeting of the Karnataka Sahitya Parishad at Bangalore on 27 February 1938, Mirza Ismail had said: "Frantic efforts have been made to create disaffection in the state. We can, therefore, afford to disregard Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru when he talks of 'repression' in Mysore..."
4. See p. 540.

proposed federation has to be faced by the Congress, and the states are meant to be integral parts of this federation.

I have no doubt that you have come in contact with public men in various parts of the world. You must have realised that no one outside a narrow sphere in the British Government can think of the present Indian states except with astonishment. They seem to be so entirely unique in the world of today. A hundred or two hundred years ago they were not unique. But the world has changed, and we have not.

Thank you for the books on Mysore that you have sent me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

35. To K. C. Reddy[1]

Camp Bombay
January 4, 1938

Dear Mr. Reddy,

As you are aware the Congress policy regarding Indian states is not clearly defined and is sometimes interpreted variously. The changing situation all over India will probably lead to a greater clarification in the near future. Meanwhile I can let you have my own opinion as to the general line to be adopted in Mysore. I have already informed you previously to avoid open conflict, in the nature of disobedience of orders, with the Mysore Government. I think you should try to strengthen your general position with the people and carry on propaganda for civil liberties and responsibility in the government. This should be done in a way so as to make a rapprochement possible whenever an occasion offers itself. If you can come to an understanding with the state government which results in improving present conditions, I think it will be highly desirable for you to do so.

You must remember that the larger problems of India are intimately tied up with each other and major changes are likely to come all over the country once they begin moving in that direction. A state by itself cannot resist them. Therefore while I want that you should continue vigorously to cultivate public opinion for the two objectives that I have

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88/1937, p. 109, N.M.M.L.

mentioned above you should not shut the door to an understanding with the administration of Mysore.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

36. To P. Rangaswamy[1]

Allahabad
March 4, 1938

Dear Mr. Rangaswamy,[2]
Thank you for your letter. I have read Sir Mirza's speech.[3] It is a foolish utterance without much significance and I do not think it is worthwhile my saying anything about it.

You can rest assured that I shall take the liveliest interest in the affairs of Mysore state in particular and the Indian states in general. Meanwhile I think it is all for the good that you should function without the name of the Congress for a while. As soon as I have a little leisure I shall probably write about Indian states.[4]

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88(Pt. I)/1938, p. 13, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1904); a lawyer and politician of Bangalore; took active part in Mysore state people's movement.
3. Speaking at the meeting of the Karnataka Sahitya Parishad at Bangalore on 27 February 1938, Mirza Ismail had said: "Frantic efforts have been made to create disaffection in the state. We can, therefore, afford to disregard Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru when he talks of 'repression' in Mysore..."
4. See p. 540.

37. To H. K. Veeranna Gowdh[1]

Allahabad
March 31, 1938

Dear Friend,[2]

I am glad to learn from your letter that you are having a session of the Mysore Congress next month. I should have liked to attend it as you suggest. But I am afraid that it is not at all possible for me to do so owing to heavy and important work here.

I wish to send you, however, my good wishes for the session. As you know I am greatly interested in the problem of the Indian states and I have taken particular interest in the movement for additional freedom in Mysore state. I am quite convinced that these states should aim at full responsible government and I therefore sympathise with your aim.

I was glad to find that in the recent elections for the Mysore Assembly which were brought about by resignations of your members on this very issue you had complete success. This demonstrated the popular strength behind your movement. I hope however that you will realise that any real progress will only come to you through your own organised strength. I hope therefore that you will organise yourselves effectively and will work peacefully and with sobriety to attain your objective. You must not be discouraged by apparent reverses or the displeasure of high officials. The only thing that harms is for us to leave the right path in a moment of excitement. If you stick to perfectly legitimate and peaceful methods, you are bound to succeed. Mysore is one of the leading states of India and I am glad to see that the people of Mysore are also taking the lead in getting rid of autocratic and feudal restrictions. I wish you success in this enterprise. You will remember always, I hope, that Mysore state, as every other state in India, is an integral part of India. Your freedom therefore is a part of our freedom. We hang together and we shall finally succeed together.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88(Pt. I)/1938, p. 79, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1899); imprisoned several times for participating in the Mysore state people's movement; president, Mysore Pradesh Congress Committee, 1952; minister, Mysore state, 1956-67.

38. To H. C. Dasappa[1]

Allahabad
April 11, 1938

Dear Mr. Dasappa,[2]

I have your two letters of the 12th and 24th March.[3] I have already written to you how delighted I was at the success of your candidates for the legislative assembly elections. I think these elections have, in a large measure, justified what your party has been doing in the past.

You inform me that your president went to Delang to consult Mahatmaji.[4] I did not go to Delang myself and so I could not meet him. I do not know what advice Mahatmaji gave and what you have decided subsequently. Anything that I may say, therefore, may be out of place. I do not wish to conflict with any other advice that you may have received and besides I do not know what the developments have been.

It is clear that the Dewan's attitude is not one of friendliness towards you and that he wants to weaken the strength of the Mysore Congress. It is also clear that he will oppose in every way the demand for responsible government. I have no doubt in my mind that you should stand for responsible government. I am also clear that Congress members who are appointed members of the committee of reforms or the federal committee should be responsible to the Mysore Congress and should take directions from them. They must not be just individual members doing as they like.

Personally I would not break on the issue that the Dewan has not expressly mentioned responsible government in his terms of appointment for the committees. But I would not agree to this being excluded from

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88(Pt. I)/1938, p. 63, N.M.M.L.
2. (1894-1964); founder-member, Mysore State Congress; minister, Mysore state, 1947-52; member, Rajya Sabha, 1954-57; member, Lok Sabha, 1957-62; Minister for Railways, Government of India, 1963-64.
3. In his letter of 12 March, Dasappa had written that the Congress in Mysore had won all the seats in the bye-elections. He added: "We are greatly encouraged by the volume of authoritative pronouncements all round about the feasibility and desirability of reforms in the states.... How I wish the Working Committee at this critical stage had not banned parliamentary and political activities in the name of the Congress in Mysore."
4. The Mysore State Congress Board sought Mahatma Gandhi's advice regarding their cooperation with the official committee appointed for the introduction of reforms in view of the state government's silence on their demand for responsible government.

purview. It should be open to the Congress members to be recommended if they so choose.[5]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. The Mysore Government proposed to appoint four Congressmen on the committees to consider the question of reforms and federal affairs.

39. To V. S. Narayana Rao[1]

Allahabad
April 22, 1938

Dear Comrade,[2]
I have received your letter of the 17th April sending me copies of the order issued by the district magistrate and the statement issued on behalf of the Mysore Congress. So far as I can see your flag satyagraha has met with some success.[3] I am glad that you have maintained the honour and dignity of the national flag.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88(Pt. I)/1938, p. 97, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary, Mysore State Congress.
3. The agitation against the government order banning the hoisting of the national flag at the Congress convention held in Sivapur was started on 10 April and a large number of people courted arrest.

40. To H. C. Dasappa[1]

Allahabad
May 26, 1938

Dear Mr. Dasappa,
I have your letter.[2] I think that on the whole the Mysore settlement[3] is a good one and you should profit by it and gain strength.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-88(Pt. II)/1938, p. 221, N.M.M.L.
2. He gave an account of the developments which led to the settlement with the Mysore Government.
3. See p. 539.

There is no possibility of my going to Mysore. I am just leaving for Europe.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

ORCHHA

41. To R. S. Shukla[1]

Allahabad
September 28, 1937

Dear Sir,[2]
I am in receipt of your letter of the 14th September. I regret the delay in answering it. This was due to my absence from Allahabad.

Capt. Lal Awadhesh Pratap Singh[3] is the president of the Mahakoshal Provincial Congress Committee, that is to say, the provincial Congress committee for the Hindi-speaking parts of the Central Provinces. Adjoining Indian states are usually attached for purposes of Congress work to the provincial Congress committee. Congress work is organized by provincial Congress committees in accordance with the general instructions issued in that behalf from the All India Congress Committee. Our office does not engage directly in local work. Capt. Awadhesh Pratap Singh as president of his provincial Congress committee is thus supposed to organise Congress work in the area under his charge. I do not know what detailed steps he has taken in this matter especially in any Indian state. Our general policy is that we should establish the Congress organization both in British India and the Indian states and should carry on the constructive work of the Congress more especially

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-87/1937, pp. 83-84, N.M.M.L.
2. Political secretary, Orchha state.
3. (1888-1967); served in Indian army for many years before joining the Congress in 1921; founder-member, Baghelkhand District Congress Committee, 1931 and its president, 1932-35; president, Mahakoshal P.C.C., 1937; member, Constituent Assembly of India, 1946-50; Prime Minister, Rewa state, 1948; Chief Minister, Vindhya Pradesh, 1948-49; member, Rajya Sabha, 1954-60.

in the states. It is not our desire to come into conflict in this work with the state authorities. But otherwise we make no distinction between work in British India and in the states. These are the general instructions issued by us regarding work in the Indian states. Presumably it is in accordance with these instructions that Capt. Awadhesh Pratap Singh has appointed some organisers in various parts of his Congress province.

I am not personally acquainted with Pandit Rameshwar Prasad Sharma,[4] or if I have met him I do not at present remember him. Should you desire to enquire about him I would suggest to you to communicate with Capt. Awadhesh Pratap Singh, president, Mahakoshal P.C.C., Gopalbag, Jubbulpore. I trust that we will have the full co-operation of the state authorities in the work that our organisation does in Orchha.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. A Congressman of Jhansi district.

11

IMPERIALISM AND FEDERATION

1. Interview to The News Chronicle[1]

Edward Thompson: You are reported as saying that India will not 'touch' the new constitution. What do you mean by it?

Jawaharlal Nehru: There is no question of not touching the new constitution, because the fact of our seeking elections shows that we are coming into touch with it. What is meant is that we do not approach this constitution in a spirit of cooperation. It has been forced upon us against our will. We dislike it thoroughly and we propose to make its functioning as difficult as possible. The federal part of it is a monstrosity.

ET: India's position being so bad, would it not be better to use the constitution as a means of giving Indians some chance of relieving the misery?

JN: The constitution is bound to fail because it cannot solve any major problem of India. These problems of the land, poverty and unemployment demand solution. We do not think there can be a proper solution under British imperialism. We have indicated the way out through a constituent assembly.

ET: My criticism of the Congress is that it has not the courage to remember that such people as the princes' subjects exist or to speak up for their rights. What do you think?

JN: The Congress does not ignore the princes' subjects though its activities have largely been concentrated in British India. It stands for the same political, economic, civil and other liberties for the Indian states' subjects as for the others. It has not been able to do much for the Indian states, because it has its hands full elsewhere and many of its leaders do not want to add to their burdens. But the principle is admitted and proclaimed.

ET: Would not a genuine Dominion Status be as good as independence?

1. Printed in *The News Chronicle*, (London), 2 January 1937. Jawaharlal was interviewed by Edward Thompson during his visit to India in December 1936.

JN: I cannot conceive of a genuine independence within the empire for India even to the extent of that of the British dominions. There is no parallel between the two. I can conceive of a free India coming to a friendly arrangement with Britain.

ET: Would you like India to come under a dictatorship such as we see in fascist countries?

JN: I am entirely against the idea, more especially the idea of a personal dictatorship. I can imagine, however, that in times of grave crisis, a measure of group dictatorship might be necessary. But this should not be extended to ordinary times.

ET: Is not the unity of India largely artificial and recent? Would it not be better if India split into separate nations on the lines of race and language?

JN: I think it would be unfortunate if India is split in that way. The unity of India is not only desirable but highly necessary, and I doubt if there are any intelligent people in India who think differently. This unity, however, should not be an oppressive one, but should give full freedom for cultural and other diversities.

ET: India's poverty appals every visitor; how do you propose to tackle it?

JN: It seems to me that the only way to solve outstanding Indian problems is to have an all-embracing planned system of Indian economy, dealing with the land, industry—big-scale and village—social services, etc. Such a system can only take effect when obstructions in the shape of big vested interests have been removed. Therefore it becomes necessary to remove most of these obstructions.

ET: The British are not your only difficulty. Do you not think that between India and freedom are her communal quarrels and also the princes?

JN: I do not think the communal problem will present the slightest difficulty when economic questions are being considered. As for the Indian princes, it is absurd to expect that they should carry on in their feudal, autocratic way because of some treaty they made with representatives of the British power a hundred years ago. Ultimately it will be for

the people of the states themselves to decide what the position of the princes will be.

> ET: Some provinces send no men for the army, others send a few hundred; the overwhelming majority come from two provinces. Do you think you can ever have a democratic government, while a section of India holds the weapons and takes the risks for the rest?

JN: The army question offers no insuperable difficulty. The army as well as a kind of militia will have to be recruited from all over India. There is no reason to suppose that the present Indian army will not be loyal to the new order. The British army, of course, will have to go.

2. The Main Problem of India[1]

Some accident, or the play of circumstances which often seems to us as the working of an unknown fate, brought Reginald Reynolds to India at a peculiar point in our recent history. He came on the eve of a great eruption, of human earthquakes, which shook the hundreds of millions of India as well as that empire which still holds sway here. He even played a little part in the tense drama which followed the Lahore Congress of December 1929 and preceded Gandhiji's famous march to the salt sea and civil disobedience. What happened to him immediately after that I did not know, for suddenly we were caught up in the whirlwind of a mass upheaval and of a powerful and entrenched government trying to suppress it.

But Reynolds saw something of this drama and of this great conflict between elemental forces, far greater than the individuals concerned in it. And that gave him an insight into the soul of India which was so passionately struggling for freedom, into the appalling poverty and misery of the Indian people which lay behind this elemental urge, and into the social conflicts which were becoming more and more evident and were colouring the nationalist and social aspects of our struggle. He saw this struggle, as it should be seen, in the wider picture of the world struggle.

I am glad therefore that he has written this book. From one such as he a book on India claims attention. It is immaterial whether one agrees

1. Allahabad, 25 February 1937. Foreword to Reginald Reynolds' *The White Sahibs in India,* (London, 1937).

with him or not in everything he says. But what he says has knowledge behind it and insight and an appreciation of the wider issues. And so all of us, in India or England, can profit by his analysis of our problems and think with greater clarity about them.

There are two kinds of books on India written by Englishmen. The great majority of them are of the imperial and patronising variety which point out to us the high destiny of the British Empire and our folly in not appreciating this patent fact. They are generous with their advice to us as to how we can fit in with this grandiose scheme of things. The other variety of books, very few in number, are written by Englishmen who are attracted towards our freedom struggle but are apt to consider it on sentimental grounds. Because their approach is more friendly, sometimes they show a greater insight, but their treatment is not very helpful in understanding the problems that confront us.

If we are going to solve these problems, we must understand them. We have to unravel the knots that have tied us up, and in order to do so, our approach must be scientific and must take into consideration the needs of the masses in India. That is the problem of India, not the princes or the landlords or other vested interests, English or Indian. Imperialism has accentuated, and often produced, these knots, so the imperialist approach is out of question. The sentimental approach, common enough among my own countrymen, though inevitable under the circumstances, does not carry us far.

Every book that helps us to understand scientifically the background of the Indian struggle is to be welcomed. And so I welcome this book and commend it to Englishmen and Indians who want to help in the solution of one of the major problems of our age.

3. To Horace G. Alexander[1]

Allahabad
June 17, 1937

Dear Alexander,

Your letter of the 12th May reached me yesterday on my return from Burma and Malaya. I note that American publishers are not agreeable to undertake the issue of *India and the World*. In Burma I was asked for my permission for a Chinese edition of the book. The Chinese

1. Horace Alexander Papers, N.M.M.L.

translator wants to get it published in Shanghai. I told him that so far as I was concerned I would be very glad if a Chinese edition came out. The publisher will probably be writing to me. I do not propose to press for any special terms as I am keen that the book should be published in China. I suppose that no formal permission from Allen and Unwin is necessary for this purpose.

I have seen your letter to Gandhiji. I have read it with interest. I shall not say anything about it here. But I do not think that the question of the services is really so important as to come in the way, at any rate, in the sense that there may be fear of victimisation. There need be no such fear. But the fact remains that the whole outlook of the services is such that it cannot fit in with a changed order. Nobody wants to victimise them and thus carry on a kind of feud. But the fact remains that they are a powerful vested interest and they are coming in our way often enough.

The questions before us, however, are more fundamental than the future of the services and it is as well that this should be realised. I have been somewhat out of touch with the happenings in India owing to my absence for six weeks.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Asaf Ali[1]

Allahabad
5.8.1937

My dear Asaf Ali,

I have read with interest the letter you have addressed to the Chief Ministers of the provincial governments.[2] Have you addressed this to Congress ministers only or to others also?

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P.L. 16/1937, p. 15, N.M.M.L.
2. He had sought the Chief Ministers' views on the resolution to be moved by him on behalf of the Congress Party in the central assembly recommending that immediate steps be taken to reduce central expenditure, more particularly defence expenditure, so that more money could be provided to the provinces to undertake nation-building activities. He had mentioned that if Indian troops replaced British troops, there would be an approximate saving of about Rs. 20 crores.

Andamans and are painfully starving to death. My feelings were strong and I dared not give them utterance immediately. And what could I add to the moving and poignant appeal of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore who came out of his retirement and, in spite of age and ill health, said eloquently what all of us feel in our hearts?[2]

If there is any humanity, any sensitiveness of human suffering in us, we must respond in full measure to that appeal and to the silent but powerful cry from the Andamans. I dislike hunger strikes; I do not encourage them. But I know something also of the horror that surrounds these people who, in desperation, are driven to these painful courses. Some of us may imagine that their action was precipitate. What do they know of the innumerable attempts by other means to get rid of sufferings and humiliations?

The question of political prisoners being sent to the Andamans has agitated the country for many years now and the hunger strike and death by starvation has already taken place in the past. But our governments grow more and more callous and think that their prestige is more important than the lives of hundreds and the wishes of millions. I am told that even on the present occasion every effort was made by other means and, when these failed, a few political prisoners resorted to hunger strike. Taunts and insults on the part of the authorities followed and this resulted in the spreading of the hunger strike to hundreds.

It should be remembered that the hunger strike in the Andamans is far worse and more dangerous than in India, for the climate of the Andamans is bad and complications soon follow. News does not reach us and we live in suspense today, full of anxiety for the fate of our young men. But let it be understood that, if anything happens to these young men, India will be aflame with anger and will not forget it or forget

2. In his statement issued on 2 August 1937, Tagore said: "On the continent of Europe they have their Devils Island, their Lipari, their concentration camps and other specially built hells for primitive exhibition of humanity, but in England they have no such unhallowed places for intensification of the suffering by wrenching away prisoners from their own soil. When, to our dismay, we find that infringement of their own rule has been made possible exclusively for the subject races, the insult of their distinction humiliates all of us and I offer my protest in the name of my country...once again the heartless inflexibility of governmental machinery has triumphed over its sense of humanity and justice. It is only in the province of Bengal that hundreds of boys are still detained without trial and the press is now and then gagged to remind us of the fact that the unanswerable will of the people of this country and the civil liberty that the people of Bengal enjoyed have become as unreal as a mirage in the desert."

those on whom the responsibility for this will lie. Constitutions are as dust in the scale if they cannot give us the power to protect our own people. We have seen what is called the provincial autonomy functioning in Bengal and in the Punjab. It is the same ugly thing that we have known so long and which crushes our people.

How long are we going to tolerate the continued incarceration of detenus? It is time that halt was called to this infamy. The recent order of the Bengal Government forbidding, at the instance of the press censor, even the publication of news of the 'Detenus Day' shows the depths to which this government has fallen. Each one of us, who is silent, compromises with these evils and tolerates them. This is not a matter concerning Bengal only but one which affects the whole of India and which touches the honour and dignity of every Indian. I trust that every Congressman will do his utmost at this juncture to make the voice of the people heard and their wishes acted upon in regard to the Andaman prisoners and detenus. That is our primary duty today.

I understand that in Bengal, August 9 has been fixed as 'Andaman Prisoners Day'. This day is too near perhaps for an all-India demonstration. But on this day or the day as soon after as possible, I trust that demonstrations will be held all over India.

I should also like to mention the strange and revealing case of Pandit Parmanand who was sentenced to life term in the first Lahore Conspiracy Case in 1915.[3] For twenty two years he has been continuously in prison, although the life term seldom exceeds fifteen years and is usually less. Yet he continues to be in prison.

3. Parmanand (b. 1890) and several others who were convicted in the first Lahore Conspiracy Case of 1915, were members of the Ghadar Party who had returned from America. They had planned an uprising of the Indian troops at Lahore, Ferozepur and some other places in the Punjab on 21 February 1915 as a prelude to a general uprising. Of the 291 persons tried for the conspiracy, 42 were sentenced to death, 114 were transported for life, 93 imprisoned for varying terms and 42 acquitted.

6. On Government's Attitude towards the Andaman Prisoners[1]

I have carefully read the Viceroy's reply[2] to Mr. Mohanlal Saxena. I appreciate his method of approach to this problem which is agitating India so deeply. He has tried to reason and put the government point of view in a manner which is somewhat novel for a Viceroy and the Government of India.

I am convinced that he has wholly failed to justify the government's attitude. It is perfectly true that no government can surrender simply because there is a hunger strike.

Personally I am opposed to hunger strikes except for very exceptional reasons, but it would be equally wrong for the government to ignore and defy popular opinion and sentiments.

In the present case he must know that all India is vastly agitated and is unanimous in its demand regarding the Andaman hunger-strikers. Because of this widely spread all-India feeling, provincial governments, where Congress ministries are functioning, have asked for the repatriation of the Andaman prisoners to their respective provinces.

The government, which for reasons of prestige, ignores this national feeling and demand, creates and worsens the very situation from which it seeks escape.

There is argument enough in favour of putting an end to the penal settlement of the Andamans and specially to bring back all political prisoners. But even apart from this, is it not enough that for the people of India this has become a vital question which moves them to their innermost depths? Is it conceivable that any really popular government would defy public opinion in this matter?

It must be remembered that this question of the Andamans has not suddenly arisen because of the hunger strike. It has come up again and again and roused public feeling, so the government had plenty of time to take action apart from the threat of hunger strike.

A hunger strike is really very bad, but one must also remember that the prisoners have no means of access to the outer world and that they grow desperate and resort to this method.

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 19 August 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 August 1937.
2. The Viceroy wrote to Saxena that the government had found no change in the attitude of the prisoners in regard to terrorism. He also thought that their repatriation to their home provinces would encourage them to use the method of hunger strike. He denied that the prisoners in the Andamans were made to live in unhealthy conditions.

The whole question of terrorism has been treated in India in an utterly wrong way. One cannot suppress terrorism by terrorism even though the latter might be on behalf of the government. One has to find out the root causes and remove them.

In India today, it is well known that terrorism has ceased to have any real significance. Probably it would have long ceased to exist if the policy of the government had been different. It has now disappeared because those who were attracted to it have come to realise that it is a foolish and infantile policy injuring the cause of the country.

I am convinced that the growth of the Congress movement and the spread of new social ideas have broken the back of terrorism.

A recent statement[3] made by some of the discharged prisoners from the Andamans condemning terrorism on their own behalf and on behalf of other prisoners in the Andamans, has a very real significance which I am sorry to say the Viceroy has not appreciated.

It is confirmed by numerous other reports that have reached us from other sources. Not to meet this frank approach, and to ignore it, is to intensify that very psychology of which the government disapproves.

It will embitter not only the unhappy prisoners in the Andamans who hover between life and death, but also the people of India as a whole. Today a humane and tragic sight is uppermost in the people's minds and the shadow of death hovers over them. While we argue people might well be dying. I trust still that this human side will be considered by the Viceroy. No government has ever lost even its prestige by doing the right thing, but even if prestige was in the balance, there are other factors in life which count more.

3. They had stated, on their behalf as well as on that of other political prisoners in the Andamans, their dissociation from and disapproval of the policy of terrorism. They added that they had come to realise that such a policy was wrong and injurious to the national cause.

7. On Federation[1]

A constituent assembly is not the development of a step taken in legislative assemblies. Legislatures can only condemn the present Act and demand the summoning of a constituent assembly. They cannot produce conditions under which such an assembly can meet.

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 19 August 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 August 1937.

A constituent assembly must be an absolutely sovereign body deriving its authority from the Indian people alone. It can only come into existence, therefore, when such sovereignty in reality rests with the people of India or when the Indian people are on the verge of real power. The time for such an assembly would come when the people of India are in a position to enforce their will.

The report of what I said in regard to federation, when I was addressing the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee workers in Hindustani, is not quite correct.[2] What I said was that having regard to the clear policy of the Congress in regard to the proposed federation, any person, if he agreed to this federation or anything like it behind the back of the Congress, would be betraying the interests of the Congress and, as such, of the nation.

Obviously opposition to the proposed federation does not mean opposition to the idea of federation. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact accepted the idea of federation and most of the thinking people in India believe that some kind of federation must ultimately be established in India, but the proposed federation is a monstrosity and cannot be accepted in any shape or form.

Therefore, a resolution passed in the assembly is in the nature of a repetition of the people's wishes in this matter, just as a resolution of the Congress is a declaration of the national will. It does not and cannot by itself lead to a constituent assembly. For that the whole balance of power in India has to shift from the side of British imperialism to the Indian people.

How to bring about a constituent assembly does mean the same thing as how to achieve the freedom of India. A constituent assembly divorced from Indian freedom is an absurdity.

2. See pp. 432-435.

8. On Federal Government[1]

In the previous chapters of this book the Government of India Act 1935, embodying the new constitution for India, has been examined in some detail and criticisms have been offered from the point of view of

1. This was a summary of conclusions and recommendations written by Jawaharlal in the train from Bombay to Lucknow on 21-23 August 1937, for the book entitled *Federal Structure*, (Bombay, 1937), edited by K.T. Shah. J.N. Papers. N.M.M.L.

the Indian people's ideal of political evolution and progress. That ideal, it must be remembered, is based on the sovereignty of the people and it refuses to recognise any limitations or reservations to this sovereignty.

But while we lay stress on the independence of India and the establishment of a free national state, we recognise fully that the world of today urgently demands an international order and the fullest cooperation between nations to solve the problems and end the conflicts that afflict mankind. Science and modern industry and trade and finance and transport and communications, in fact the whole basic texture of the world today, is international, and hence the problems we have to face are essentially international and require international solutions. To think or act in terms of a purely national state, largely cut off from the rest of the world and developing itself independently of it, is to ignore realities and to refuse to take advantage of the many avenues of progress and advancement which modern conditions offer. A narrow autarchy does not fit in with these conditions and must inevitably lead to reaction and a throw-back.

Thus, though we stand for an independent national state, we are entirely opposed to a nationalism and a state ideal which are based on a hatred of other states and a desire to dominate over other peoples. We have seen and see today how this limited and aggressive national outlook leads to a continuing state of international anarchy, developing from time to time into dreadful and devastating wars. International peace and the well-being of the world have become one and indivisible. That peace depends on a solution of the political and social problems of the world and the evolution of a world order, and we believe that such a solution and order must inevitably be based on the principles of socialism. But that is a larger question which we are not called upon to discuss here. We wish to emphasize here that our conception of an independent national state is in no way opposed to the development of this world order, and that we would be perfectly prepared to make sacrifices, and even to accept certain limitations and assume burdens, in common with others, in the interest of international cooperation.

But this cooperation must be real, effective and between free units. The League of Nations, as constituted today, has demonstrated the futility of international cooperation on a wrong basis and with the purpose of maintaining a *status quo*, unjust in itself and in the interest of a few dominating powers. It has become an impotent instrument for maintaining peace and collective security and is ignored and insulted at every turn. It cannot undertake the solution of any fundamental problem because it has neither the power to do so nor the will to tackle the roots of that problem.

The so-called British Commonwealth of Nations is still less a nucleus of international cooperation as it represents a dominating imperialist group, holding a large number of subject peoples in its power, and combating other imperialist groups and powers. It will have to change beyond all recognition before it can serve as a basis for cooperation between free nations. India's association with the group is an enforced one and it has worked and is working to the detriment of India. The people of India have therefore declared and emphasized their will to be dissociated from this group, and this has become a primary objective of the national movement. Any continuation of this association means a continuation, in some form or the other, if not political then economic, of the domination of Britain over India, and the imposition of restrictions which prevent the people of India from developing on their own lines and according to their own needs and desires. The independence of India and the recognition of the sovereignty of the Indian people are thus the essential prerequisites for the consideration of the problem of India's future constitution.

When we examine the new constitution critically in the light of our political objective and ideals, we find that the foundations laid there cannot serve even as a basis for raising the structure of a free India. The provincial part of the constitution is full of imperfections and restrictions, but the federal part has nothing whatever to do even with the conception of a free India; it can only be considered as a barrier which has to be removed in its entirety before we can go ahead in any direction. We shall thus have to build anew on entirely new foundations. The National Congress has demanded that the constitution of a free India must be drawn up by a constituent assembly, elected on the basis of adult suffrage, and this seems to us the only feasible and democratic method of procedure.

What will be the nature of this new constitution? It is difficult in the changing and dynamic world of today to prophesy about the future. Old established notions, which were taken for granted but yesterday, have no sanctity today. Ideas are at war, not only on the ideological plane, but often enough on the field of battle itself, where argument and debate are drowned in the clash of arms. New hopes and desires of social equality fill the peoples of the world, while at the same time fascism has raised its ugly head and suppresses and pours contempt on the democratic process. Political democracy, which seemed so obvious and inevitable a generation ago, is weak and ailing, simultaneously attacked on two fronts and deserted by many of its former adherents. On the one hand, political democracy is considered insufficient to solve the problems that confront us and resolve the conflicts of interests of

classes or of nations, and an economic democracy is advocated. On the other hand, the very principle of democracy is attacked and dictatorship and authoritarian methods of government find favour with many. Even the friends of democracy feel that some variations are necessary in the old nineteenth century methods and approach, for today our problems grow more and more complicated and technical and difficult of detailed consideration by parliaments. Experts and special committees are taking an ever-growing part in public affairs, and parliaments, even in the democratic countries, confine themselves to laying down general principles and policies. The state is being forced by stress of circumstances, even where capitalism prevails, to socialise public utilities and advance in the direction of socialisation.

In Spain we have had a disturbing example of a democratic state being attacked by vested interests, aided by foreign powers, when these interests realised that the democratic process might endanger them.[2] The issue there still hangs in the balance, but the lesson is clear that privileged classes and interests do not always submit to the democratic process when this threatens to weaken their special position. When votes are lacking, recourse is had to arms, even the arms of the foreigner against one's own people.

In Russia there has been a swing towards political democracy, so far as the constitution is concerned, but this has not apparently made much difference to the methods of government which are still largely authoritarian, though they are based on the consultations and participation of millions of people.

These, and like questions, trouble the minds of thinking people all over the world. They may trouble India's mind too later, far more than they are doing today. For the present, politically-minded India is of one mind in this matter and it works for the establishment of a fully democratic national state. Democratic constitutions are fundamentally similar and it would serve little purpose for us to discuss the details of such a constitution. We shall content ourselves therefore by referring to certain aspects only of a constitution for India.

Such a constitution must be based on the recognition, in law and in fact, of the sovereignty of the people of India. No foreign power or authority can thus frame this constitution for us, and it must be the self-expression of the Indian people. Nor can any alien authority be permitted to interfere in any way in the working of this constitution. We recognise, however, that an independent India will gladly cooperate with other nations in the international sphere and, for this purpose, it

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 582-586.

will be prepared voluntarily to limit its sovereignty, to the extent that other nations limit theirs, in the establishment of an international order. No other limitations or restrictions can be accepted.

The unity of India must be maintained by the constitution. The unity, both geographical and cultural, is a patent fact of Indian history, and political and economic unity has also become essential for us. Having regard to the vastness and diversity of the country, as well as other factors, a federal system of government seems indicated. But this federation will have to be entirely different from the federation proposed under the Government of India Act 1935, under which there is no uniformity and an unnatural alliance is sought to be made between feudal states and autocratic states and more or less democratic provinces. A large measure of uniformity is essential, and we should try to aim at removing all distinctions between what is called British India today and Indian India or the states. It is possible that, owing to the backwardness of the states, they might not be able to come up to the standard of the provinces for some time. A transitional period, not too long, may be necessary to allow them to approximate to this standard. But, at the very beginning, the objective of having uniformity should be recognised and acted upon to the furthest extent possible. A large measure of democracy must come to the people of the states before the provinces can federate with them. The same terms of federation should apply to provinces and states alike. This will mean the giving up by the rulers of their autocratic powers, and also, inevitably, a considerable modification of their treaties. We cannot accept these hundred-year-old treaties as valid today or unchangeable.

Thus the states will have to fall in line with the provinces in regard to political institutions and principles and methods of government. The establishment of a federation will also necessitate a new regrouping of the states, either among themselves or with the adjoining provinces. Even under the present Act some combinations have been formed for the purposes of representation in the proposed federation. The states vary in size too much and most of them are too small to be treated as federating units. Transport and irrigation have also necessitated co-ordination in the past. This coordination will necessarily increase in all departments with the economic development of the country.

The present division of provinces was made for administrative reasons only to suit the convenience of British administration, or because of historic reasons connected with the growth of the British power. It has little to do with linguistic, cultural or economic considerations and there is no reason why we should keep it unchanged. While most of the states are too small to be treated as federating units, many of the

provinces are on the other side and are too large to make suitable economic or administrative units. The composite Presidencies of Bombay and Madras sprawl over western and southern and eastern India and contain within their areas diverse elements which might well form separate provincial units. Bengal and the United Provinces are unified areas, linguistically and culturally, but both of them are enormous and have a vast population. We should therefore endeavour to reconstitute our provinces on a rational and scientific basis.

This does not mean that we should ignore local sentiment in this matter; that sentiment cannot be set aside even for other important considerations. Indeed, we feel that the wishes of the people concerned must be the dominant factor in coming to a decision, and the reconstitution should be such as to give a fuller chance of self-expression to the people concerned. We do not wish to encourage in any way the formation of communal provinces, but we feel that it might be possible, in a scheme of redistribution, to give important groups and minorities territories within which they can feel that they have full opportunities of self-development, without which a creative life is hardly possible. We do not think this will increase communalism or separatist tendencies. The sentiment of nationality is growing and, with the removal of minor causes of friction, communal feelings will decrease.

The Indian National Congress has accepted and acted upon the principle of linguistic divisions of provinces.[3] That division usually coincides with cultural groupings and local sentiment, and should be made the basis of a future reconstitution. The Presidencies of Bombay and Madras would easily split up, according to this, into Gujarati, Marathi, Canarese, Telugu, Tamil and Malayali areas. In the north there is the huge Hindustani-speaking bloc, which is much too big for a single province. Even the United Provinces might well be divided up into two or more suitable administrative and economic units. Bengal also is too large to be treated as a single unit, and should be made into two or more provinces. The Punjab seems to suggest a division into three parts.

But we need not consider a detailed scheme of reconstitution of provinces. If the principles are accepted, the actual lines of division will not offer any great difficulty. These principles are: the province should not be too small or too big. If it is too small, the burden of

3. Under the Congress constitution adopted in 1920 at the Nagpur session, the provincial Congress committees were directed to reorganise themselves according to the linguistic distribution of provinces.

administration is too heavy and the possibilities of economic development are limited. If it is too large, then it is unwieldy and efficient administration becomes difficult. Large provinces are also to be avoided as they might tend to increase provincialism and separatism. A large number of relatively small provinces will encourage the growth of a feeling of nationality and the unity of India. One or two large provinces, joining in a federation with many small ones, will tend to dominate the others. We feel therefore that provinces should be more or less of a uniform size, though we do not expect this principle to be applied with any strictness. Other, and more important, considerations will have to be borne in mind and these will interfere with its application. These other considerations are: linguistic and cultural, economic and local sentiment.

It may also be possible to give, even within the framework of a province, a measure of autonomy to a cultural group or minority. This has been done, with satisfactory results, in the U.S.S.R., where the federating units have autonomous areas for national minorities. How far this will be possible in India, it is difficult to say, but the idea might be explored further.

It is of the essence of democracy that the community should have the right to change or vary its constitution, but it is usual to have some safeguards in regard to certain fundamental provisions of the constitution. These hindrances to rapid change give a greater permanence to these provisions; they check the executive authority and prevent it to some extent from abusing the great powers it possesses; they protect minority rights and thus give a feeling of security to the minority groups. What these fundamental rights should be would largely depend on the nature of the state. In an individualist capitalist state they would differ from corresponding rights in a people organised on a socialist basis, for in these two forms of state organisation both the basic institutions and the governing outlook differ from each other. But whatever may be the future social organisation of India, there are certain fundamental rights guaranteeing the freedom of the individual which we would like to ensure and to be incorporated in the constitution. These rights are: freedom of conscience and religion; free expression of opinion; free association and combination; protection of the culture and languages of minorities; equality of all citizens before the law, as well as for public service or trade or calling, irrespective of religion, caste or sex; and others of a like nature.

The National Congress, at its Karachi session in 1931, adopted a resolution on fundamental rights, and considerable value is attached to the assurances contained in this resolution by the minorities and various

groups in India.[4] The national movement is thus committed to the incorporation of these rights in the constitution. We are convinced that the Indian constitution should contain a guarantee in regard to these fundamental rights for the assurance of all minority groups in the country. For this purpose, the Karachi resolution of the Congress, and the provisions of Western constitutions relating to civil liberties, might be taken as models.

It should be remembered that civil and individual liberty, often restricted and circumscribed in what is known as British India, is totally absent in nearly all the Indian states. A guarantee of the nature is thus especially required for the peoples of the states.

With the establishment of a federation, the executive authority of the federal government will extend to the whole country and will comprise all the departments of the state in India, except in so far as a number of subjects come within the scope of provincial autonomy. The chief executive authority may be vested in the head or chief of the state who may be given an appropriate designation in keeping with our traditions. *Rashtrapati* has already become a well-known and popular word in India, and the chief of the state might well be called *Rashtrapati*. But the name is immaterial, what we have to consider is the position of such a person in our constitutional structure and the power and authority he is to possess. Should he be just a figurehead like the President of the French Republic or should he have the large powers which the President of the U.S.A. possesses? We feel that he should exercise his functions exclusively on the advice of his ministers. At the same time we would not like him to be just a figurehead. Under the exceptional and dynamic conditions prevailing in the world today, some measure of initiative should be given to our chief. His position might be midway between the Presidents of the French Republic and the U.S.A. He must act as the constitutional chief of a responsible government.

The federal executive would consist of a council of ministers, recruited from that party in the federal legislature which commands a majority of votes in the legislature. These ministers will be collectively responsible to the federal legislature and their salaries will be voted every year.

The federal legislature should be bicameral. We are against the two-chamber system in the provinces but we think that in the federation two chambers are desirable. One of these chambers, which for the sake of simplicity might be referred to as the lower house, should be elected directly by the people of India on simple uniform franchise such as

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 511-513.

adult suffrage. The other chamber, or the upper house, should be elected by the federating units as well as by special interests. The upper house should be the guardian of the rights and interests of the federating units as well as of minority and cultural groups, and of the fundamental rights laid down in the constitution. Its legislative powers need not be coeval with those of the lower house, and its authority in regard to the voting of the finance bill or the federal budget should certainly be considerably less than that of the lower chamber. Its special function will be to revise the legislative proposals of the lower house and to scrutinise them from all points of view.

The device of the joint sessions of the two houses is not a very happy one and often causes estrangement. It should not be used as a matter of course in every case of conflict, but should be rarely adopted and only for certain well-defined purposes, such as the amendment of the constitution, reconstitution of a province, regrouping of the federated states, or in the event of a sudden emergency arising. Such joint sessions should only be held on the advice of the ministry in office.

Each chamber must have the right to regulate its own procedure, appoint its own officers, enforce its own decisions, and to conduct investigations by committees.

It will be advisable to set up, in the federal machinery of government, a national economic council. This body will be set up by the legislature and will be subordinate to it. Nevertheless it should have a measure of independence in its own special domain. A modern government has to face difficult economic problems and to undertake complicated tasks which require careful thought and expert guidance. The legislature is almost always overburdened with work and cannot give sufficient time or thought to these problems, and an assembly of politicians is usually not a suitable forum of a detailed consideration of such subjects. The broad lines of policy should of course be laid down by the legislature, but the working out of this policy must be the concern of experts and those especially interested in it.

The national economic council will thus lighten the burden on the legislature and will speed up the economic development of the country. It will supervise the trading enterprises of the state, such as railways, post offices, the Reserve Bank and the like; India's foreign trade and the negotiation and conclusion of trade treaties; economic relations with foreign countries; the working of the currency and credit mechanism within the country; the care of the labour and peasant population; relations between employers and employees; the agrarian relief of indebtedness, etc. The statutory railway board set up under the Act would get absorbed in such an economic council. The constit[illegible] the Reserve

Bank may have to be radically revised, especially in regard to the bank's functions, in order to make it conform to the national economic council.

The national economic council could also be entrusted with the task of planning the economic life of the community under the general direction and supervision of the federal government. This task is a stupendous one and it may be necessary to create a special planning commission for the purpose.

This economic council will have to include representatives of the federating units, and also representatives of special interests, such as chambers of commerce or industry, agriculture, trade unions of industrial workers, peasant organisations, professional and technical associations, and scientific experts.

In the provinces there should be only one chamber representing the people of the province directly on a basis of adult franchise. It would be desirable to encourage functional representation and to prefer this, whenever possible, to territorial representation. As there will be no second or revising chamber, provision should be made for a direct referendum to the provincial electorates on certain specified matters of fundamental policy affecting the organisation of the province as a unit or other subjects which are vital to the life of the province. If the method of referendum is adopted, the constitution will have to provide for the minimum majority necessary to carry out a fundamental change of policy.

It will perhaps be unnecessary and uneconomical to begin with to have an economic council in the province corresponding with the federal economic council. It is desirable to avoid needless additions to the wheels of government machinery. But with the speedy development of our economic life and large-scale planning, a provincial counterpart to the national economic council may become necessary. This provincial economic council, when it comes into being, should cooperate and coordinate its activities with the federal council.

The provincial cabinet will be, we need hardly add, fully responsible to the legislature.

However carefully the functions of government are divided by the constitution between the central federal government and the various constituent units of the federation, there must remain a good deal of common ground in regard to which the authority of the federal and provincial governments may develop. There may also be an undistributed field of residual powers and functions which cannot be foreseen at the moment the constitution is framed. Life is ever-changing and dynamic, more so in the present age than ever before, and new problems are

constantly arising owing to advances in science and technology and because of other reasons. Even human habits and modes of life are undergoing rapid changes. Specific provisions must therefore be made in the constitution to meet such contingencies.

We have already suggested that the federal upper house should be constituted the guardian of the rights of federating units. This house should also have authority to deal with conflicts over the undistributed field of residual powers and functions. In the event of a dispute arising as to what constitutes undistributed and residual powers, the supreme court should be given the power to decide. It should be open to both the federal and the provincial governments to move the supreme court in a dispute of this kind.

Some of the provisions in the Act of 1935, regulating the relations of the centre to the provinces, might well be retained. Section 102 of the Act authorising the federal legislature to legislate for a province in an emergency; section 103, empowering the federal legislature to legislate for two or more provinces by mutual consent; and section 104, disposing of the residual powers of legislature, are such provisions which it is desirable to retain.

The provisions of sections 122 to 135 of the Act of 1935 offer a good model for the regulation of administrative relations between the federation and the federating units. But the final authority in such cases should vest in the supreme court or the federal upper house.

In matters of finance, an effort should be made to have as complete a division of the resources and obligations as is possible under the circumstances. But, even so, an absolutely water-tight division cannot be achieved. Provisions like those contained in sections 137, 138, 140, 142 and 144 of the Act of 1935 may be re-enacted in the new constitution. Under present conditions, the provisions about borrowing in the Act of 1935 seem unobjectionable. But borrowing for directly productive purposes, or for taking over an already productive enterprise, on the security of such enterprise, should be freely permitted.

Provincial governments will have to explore the possibilities of new and additional sources of revenue. It is difficult to make concrete suggestions in this respect till further experience has been gained. The National Congress has already advocated the imposition of a graded tax on incomes from land, as well as death duties. An income tax on land should bring in a considerable revenue, especially in the permanently settled areas.

There should be a supreme court for India having the final appellate authority in all matters. The power to interpret the constitution must also vest in this court. Apart from this, the only original jurisdiction

of the supreme court should be to try high-placed offenders charged with offences involving a violation of the constitution. In such cases the court should be debarred from accepting the plea of "act of state" by way of justification.

The combination of judicial and executive functions should be forthwith abolished.

The scale of salaries of judges, as of other high officers, will have to be considerably reduced from the present very high scale. But the independence of the judiciary may be guaranteed by their salaries, allowances, pensions, etc., being regarded as in the nature of consolidated fund charges, which are not subjected annually to the vote of the legislature at the time of the budget.

Judges should be appointed during good behaviour and may be removable from office on proof of any default in their duties or for bodily or mental disability or infirmity. When such action becomes necessary, the authority to move in the matter should be the legislature of the province or of the federation, as the case may be. This legislature should present an address to the executive head requesting him to remove the judge from his office.

Judicial authority should be empowered and directed to maintain the fundamental rights and civil liberties guaranteed by the constitution.

The final test of the independence of a nation is the capacity to defend itself from external invasion or interference. If, therefore, India is to be independent, she must be in a position to repel foreign aggression and to quell internal commotion through her own resources and without any outside help. She must therefore provide herself with armed forces sufficient for this purpose, as well as with well-developed industries to supply the munitions and accessories of warfare. Warfare is becoming more and more mechanised, and it is a well-known fact that no nation, which has not got a sufficiently developed industrial background, can hope to carry on a war effectively for any length of time. A non-industrial nation can thus hardly be called independent, as it is not in a position to defend itself for long against aggression.

The defence of India has, at the instance of the British Government and its officers in India, usually been considered from an entirely wrong angle. Most Indian politicians are too much occupied with the political and economic aspects of the Indian struggle for freedom, to consider the technicalities of defence. A certain mystery surrounds this and Indians are told that they do not and cannot understand it. Fantastic threats are held out of possible invasions by foreign forces, if the British retire, and we are told that our lives and property are only safe because of British protection. Our lack of trained officers, the inevitable result

India being entangled, as a kind of camp-follower of the British, in British wars for the furtherance of British imperialist interests.

We cannot therefore consider the organisation of our defence forces in terms of present policy. That policy will have to be fundamentally altered and based on dissociation from any imperialism and on friendship with our neighbours. It will have to consider Indian interests only. A free India cannot tolerate foreign armies within its territories in any shape or form or for any purpose. Foreign officers can only remain for a transitional period as experts to train our men.

The department of defence must be entirely a federal concern, administered directly by the federal government. The constitution should expressly provide that no other authority, whether a provincial government or state, should have any defence forces of its own. To maintain the principle of the supremacy of the civil over the military authority of the state, a member of the federal council of ministers should be in charge of the department of defence and the federal ministry as a whole will be responsible for it. This ministry, in its turn, will be responsible to the federal legislature.

The modern apparatus for defence and warfare is highly mechanised and real strength in defence will depend far more on highly trained units and in proper air, naval and land equipment than in large numbers of men under arms. Vast conscript armies are apt to become a burden in modern warfare and to reduce the mobility and effectiveness of our forces; mechanisation, and indeed every kind of warfare today, requires, as we have stated above, a highly developed basic industry.

The organisation for defence should therefore be based on a relatively small, but highly trained and mechanised army with an effective naval arm and a strong and well organised air force. We do not view conscription with favour and we do not think that any necessity for it will arise, as there is a vast reservoir of manpower in India and voluntary recruitment will serve our purpose. But unforeseen emergencies and crises might arise, and we think therefore that the constitution should empower the federal government to provide for conscription for national defence if a grave national emergency demands it.

In addition to the regular army, there should be a militia which would be our second line of defence and which would form a large reservoir for the regular army, navy and air force.

We might mention here another matter which is not directly connected with defence. Although we do not wish to encourage military conscription, we would welcome labour conscription of the entire citizenship of the country for building public works and performing social service for a fixed period. We think that this would have great value

to any international or supra-national organisations that might be formed. The general policy governing India's foreign policy will be to promote friendship with our neighbours and other countries, and world peace based on an equitable and progressive world order. Just as India will not permit any aggression on her own territories or interests, she will deliberately avoid all aggression on others.

We have endeavoured in the above paragraphs to indicate what in our opinion the general character of a federal constitution for India should be. We have not discussed this constitution in any detail, but the broad outlines of the completed picture are visible. This constitution for India is vastly different from the present one, especially in its federal aspects; there is another background and the objective aimed at is entirely different. And yet the suggestions we have made are all capable of being acted upon, even under present conditions, if the obstructions of vested interests in the way are once removed. We realise that this is a big if, but big things are happening in the world today, and India cannot remain static in a changing world. The social and economic problems that India has to solve are stupendous; she can only approach them with any hope of success with her hands and feet freed from the ropes of imperialist interests and feudal traditions. Complete political and economic freedom is essential for the solution of these problems.

The constitution that has been suggested is essentially a democratic one. This is in keeping with the national demand for a free democratic state. We have indicated above, however, that we consider a reconstruction of the existing social system as essential for the well-being of our people and for the ending of the conflicts that oppress society today. The constitution should therefore be so framed as to make such a change-over possible democratically and to encourage the socialisation of society. There should be no restrictions in the constitution on this change. Whether such a complete change-over is possible through the democratic process alone, it is difficult to say, in view of what is happening in the world today. But the attempt must be made.

9. Despatch of Indian Troops to China[1]

The despatch of Indian troops to Shanghai by the British Government is a matter of the gravest import and concern to India.[2] This has been done in continuation of the old policy of using Indian troops abroad without any reference to the wishes of the Indian people. That policy has been condemned by the Congress which has declared emphatically that India cannot permit her armies and peoples to be exploited to her own disadvantage and for the benefit of British imperialism.

It is stated that Indian troops have been sent to Shanghai to protect Indian interests there. What these Indian interests are few people seem to know and it is manifest that the interests to be protected are British imperial interests. And even if Indian interests have to be protected, it is for the Indian people to decide what steps should be taken. The sending of Indian troops, therefore, without the consent of the Indian people is thus an affront to India. Though by itself it might be a small matter, it is a thin end of the wedge and might lead us to all manner of unforeseen entanglements. It might indeed lead us unwittingly to war.

The Congress has repeatedly warned us of the danger of war and declared its opposition to the participation of India in any imperialist war. This was no empty warning but a declaration made after full consideration of the grave issues involved. By that declaration and warning the Congress stands. The world is drifting helplessly to a state of continuous conflict. The Spanish struggle has continued for over a year and there is no sign of its ending. The Sino-Japanese war, begun in the modern way without any declaration, but with bombs bringing destruction and death to thousands, may last, it is said, for years. Wars begin but do not end easily. They spread and consume other countries. This is the world prospect before us and the possibility of an international conflagration threatens to overwhelm humanity. How shall we face this crisis of history? Not surely as camp followers of imperialist Britain, being ordered about to fight her battles and preserve her interests.

In our preoccupations with our provincial governments and our domestic problems, grave as they are, we may not forget this mighty thing

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 25 August 1937. *The Hindu*, 26 August 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 273-275.
2. The government *communique* said that Indian troops had been sent to Singapore and Hong Kong for the protection of British and Indian nationals.

that overshadows the world and might upset, in one great sweep, all our schemes and planning. That is the major issue before India, as before all other countries, and in a decision as to how to face it, the people of India will have their say and it is their wishes that must count. Congressmen must be vigilant to this end; not to be so is to invite disaster.

Therefore India must protest against this despatch of troops to China. In the Far Eastern conflict our sympathies are inevitably with China, and we wish her people success in maintaining their freedom against imperialist aggression. But in this international game we cannot allow our manpower and resources to be used as pawns by others. Today we can protest only, but that protest will have the full strength of the Congress behind it if this policy continues.

10. To Asaf Ali[1]

Allahabad
26.8.1937

Dear Asaf Ali,

Your letter of the 4th August reached me in Wardha. Other members of the Working Committee also received copies of your letter. I had not mentioned this matter to anyone, nor was it my intention to bring it up before them. But it was as well that you wrote to them.

My object in writing my last letter[2] to you was that certain phrases in your circular to the Premiers were capable of being interpreted in a way which might have been injurious to the Congress position. I see now that those phrases had a certain history behind them. I have no doubt that you did not mean to say anything which might tone down the Congress objective in this matter. But as the sentences appeared ambiguous, I wrote to you.

This matter of the army, I feel, is one on which no such ambiguity should be allowed to flourish. As you know the international position is full of difficulty and all manner of complications might arise. Take for instance the recent despatch of Indian troops to China. I feel that the Congress position should be maintained in its clarity. This position, as I understand it, is this: all British troops must be withdrawn from India without any qualification whatever. The Indian army should not

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P.L. 16/1937, p. 21, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, pp. 589-590.

be used for any warlike purposes or any purposes abroad without the previous consent of the Indian people. Further that India is not prepared to join any imperialist war waged by Britain. Any language that might appear to tone down our position will be taken advantage of by our opponents. It was for this reason that I wrote to you previously.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. On the Hunger Strike of the Andaman Prisoners[1]

I do not remember anything in recent years that has exercised the mind and moved the heart of India so much as the fate of the political prisoners in the Andamans consequent on their hunger strike. The whole of the country has been deeply stirred and all manner of people, even outside the ranks of the politicians, have raised their voices in sympathy for human suffering and in protest against a grievous wrong. Everybody knows that this sympathy is not for violent activity, and most of us do not approve of the weapon of a hunger strike to right a wrong. And yet there is this enormous, deep and widespread feeling for our countrymen in the Andamans. Almost one can hear the heart of India beating and feel the pulse quickening at the thought of this grim tragedy that is being enacted. It is not so much the individuals that matter. It is as if a limb of the nation was in pain and the whole body suffered for it.

And yet the Government of India has decreed that they are not prepared to give any consideration to the prisoners' demands. Surely it would be a difficult task to find another instance where the government of a country was so alien in thought and feeling and action to the people of that country. Even despots bow to popular will, but not so the Government of India under the new constitution. The gap that separates the people of India from the British Government is unmeasurable and unbridgeable. Perhaps even this tragedy that is being enacted before our eyes has served a good purpose if it makes us realise the true

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 29 August 1937. *The Leader*, 31 August 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 283-284.

nature of this gap and of the illusion of power that the new constitution is supposed to give us.

The provincial governments, whose prisoners are in the Andamans, are powerless in the matter. Many of them, it is well known, have asked for the repatriation of these prisoners. But they ask in vain. This raises important constitutional issues, but more important than this is the human issue, overriding political barriers. The humanity of India has been outraged and the British Government have dared to treat it as of no consequence. But India will remember this challenge and will give her answer.

12. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
August 30, 1937

My dear Krishna,

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letters dated 4th, 7th and 27th August. I have already acknowledged receipt of other letters. You can find out from your file if any, that you have sent, have so far not been acknowledged by me. If so, they are probably missing.

You say something about the Indian trade delegation[2] in one of your letters. This delegation, I take it, represents big business here and as such behaves as big business always does. To some extent it may exploit nationalism for its purpose. I know nothing of what has been done there and so I cannot say. It is not obvious that any agreement that may be arrived at will necessarily be accepted here. But Congress opposition in the Central Assembly is weak and acts still more weakly. Still if there are any obvious defects in the agreement and it means the tightening of the imperial bond, we shall try to criticise and oppose it to that extent.

About the meeting of the council of the International Peace Congress at Geneva on the 13th September, you should certainly attend if you can manage it. You should attend all such important meetings of the International Peace Congress on behalf of the Congress.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. A delegation had been sent to England to conclude a new agreement to replace that concluded in 1932, after the Ottawa agreement.

Some time back I learnt that you were having a conference on civil liberties in India on the 17th October. Is this fixed up and do you wish me to do anything in regard to it?

I now come to your proposal for a mass demonstration on India on the 24th October in Trafalgar Square. It is a good idea if you can bring it about. As regards Congress flags, it may be possible to send you some from here. You have not given me any idea of how many you require and of the size they should be. Probably I shall send you a few samples with Indira. Unfortunately our flags are not made properly on a mass scale. Something of this kind is being thought of now but it will take a little time.

About portrait banners with likenesses of Indian leaders, I do not quite know how you are going to prepare these banners. We have hardly any of the kind here. I see no objection in principle to your displaying pictures of some leading Congressmen who are ministers. However, this need not be overdone. I do not know which of the leaders you intend to honour in this way.

You can certainly write a letter to the press on this subject and send it to our office here. We shall give it publicity. So far Lohia has not heard from you on this subject.

So far as I know there are not many special banners of the various progressive movements in India. Many trade unions have just a red flag, sometimes with the hammer and sickle on it.

Would it be possible for you to get the flags made there if we send you suitable khadi for the purpose? Of course the flags must be of khadi, whether silk or cotton. Silk is expensive. If you could get them printed there on the stuff we send, it would be probably cheaper and more effective. If you approve of this idea, you must let me or Lohia know how much of this stuff you would require.

The making of gramophone records rather frightens me. I have been repeatedly asked by gramophone companies, both foreign and Indian, for such records. One foreign company, I think it is the Columbia, made a record in London of a speech from Gandhiji. These people have given a lot of trouble and have not fulfilled the financial part of their arrangements. Partly this was due to the fact that civil disobedience having taken place they could not sell their records in India as the government intervened. That particular record, as a matter of fact, dealt with some religious topic.

Last year I agreed to make a record in English and one in Hindustani for a new Indian company.[3] They were not great successes but I

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 597-598.

believe they are on the market. I do not suppose they will be very suitable for foreign consumption, nor are they technically good, but I shall try to send the English one to you with Indira.

This recording business was one of the most exhausting processes that I have had to undergo. It sounds simple, just twelve minutes. As a matter of fact, I must have spent about three hours in a wretched studio, on a hot stuffy day, in Bombay when even the fans were not allowed to work, as they interfered with the recording.

Although I do not look forward to a repetition of this experience, I might make the attempt if you are keen. Probably the best place to do it would be Bombay or some other big city.

During the last year I have on three occasions made little talkies. These have been in Hindustani. The first one was banned by the government although it was very innocuous.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

13. To Mrs. Duncan Harris[1]

Allahabad
September 2, 1937

Dear Mrs. Harris,[2]

I am grateful to you for your letter of July 16th. We welcome and appreciate greatly the good wishes of the Women's International League. As you are no doubt aware our national movement stands for the removal of all disqualifications that women suffer from and all the hindrances that have been put in their way by law or custom. It has long been our proposal to incorporate this as a kind of fundamental right in the Indian constitution.

You are perfectly right in thinking that the real struggle for Indian freedom is still to come. This struggle, we are convinced, is not an isolated phenomenon, but is a part of the world struggle. In these days when uncertainty prevails all over the world about the future, and the

chances of international war increase, it is well that those who stand for peace and freedom should cooperate with each other.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To Sri Prakasa[1]

Allahabad
2.9.1937

My dear Prakasa,

Your letter of August 31st. As the money is not sufficient for three wells, you would better have two only.

Bhulabhai and Satyamurti's attitude regarding the sending of Indian troops to China distressed me greatly.[2] The other day a German journalist came to see me and he said how astonished he had been to read the statement of Bhulabhai and Satyamurti.

About the Federal Court Bill,[3] I am afraid I know nothing about it. But I suspect that it has elements of danger in that it means accepting a bit of the federation. I wonder if you could send me a note on this which would inform me of the position.

I am afraid you will have to stick on to the Central Assembly till something happens. We all have to stick on. My position is surely difficult enough.

I am going to Bombay on the 7th to see Indira off. From there I shall go to Gujarat and expect to return by the 19th.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-20/1937, p. 213, N.M.M.L.
2. In a statement issued on 21 August 1937 they said that they had no objection if Indian troops were used for protection of Indian nationals abroad but in case of their employment in the Sino-Japanese war their "sympathy will be with those against whom aggressive imperial encroachment is being carried out under one excuse or other."
3. The bill proposed to confer upon the federal court the power to exercise jurisdiction more effectively over the courts in the provinces. Opposing the bill in the Central Assembly, Sri Prakasa said: "with the help of this bill...government is merely trying to get our consent indirectly to its scheme of federation and I am sorry to find that various persons who really ought to know better, are being caught in the net."

15. To Bhulabhai Desai[1]

Bombay
September 12, 1937

My dear Bhulabhai,

I have been wanting to write to you for some time past about the despatch of Indian troops to China. When I saw the statement that you and Satyamurti issued, I was somewhat distressed. This was more because of the implications of the statement than of what it actually contained. I had no knowledge, of course, at the time and I have yet no knowledge as to the background of the statement and what had happened behind the scenes in the matter. After a few days there were so many inquiries about it addressed to me and complaints, and I felt also that this despatch of troops was full of risk and danger for us, that I decided to issue a statement which you must have seen.[2] Since then I have had letters from England and press cuttings which go to show that it has been generally taken for granted that the Congress has agreed to the despatch of these troops. It seems to me that this will lead to complications and great confusion in the public mind both in India and in England. The matter is likely to come up before the International Peace Conference at Geneva and I have written to them protesting against this despatch of troops.[3]

The situation between China and Japan is becoming progressively worse and there is considerable danger of developments in Europe also. It seems to me that we have to be very much on our guard and to lose no opportunity to declare that we shall have nothing to do with wars and the like which Britain may wage. Our attitude will not merely be a negative one but perhaps an active one in terms of the Congress resolution on war danger.[4] In a day or two I propose to issue a statement[5] suggesting the holding of protest demonstrations on the China issue on a fixed day.

There is the Abyssinia matter also. We can do little about it. But still I think we should clearly express our views, whenever possible, in

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P.L. 16/1937, p. 89, N.M.M.L.
2. See pp. 611-612.
3. Jawaharlal, in fact, had written to Krishna Menon. See *post*, section 13, item 13.
4. The resolution passed at the Lucknow Congress in 1936 said that India cannot be made a party to an imperialist war without the consent of her people and any attempt to involve her would be resisted. It also disapproved of war preparations being made in the country to create an atmosphere of war.
5. See *post*, section 13, item 19.

regard to the British Government's attitude to kick Abyssinia out from the League. They tried to do this at the last League meeting but a number of small nations managed to shout loud enough to prevent them. Jordon of the New Zealand delegation played an important part in opposing the British deal. The matter is likely to come up again before the League in a few days' time. I suppose the so-called representatives of India will support Britain under instructions from their bosses. I have therefore communicated with Jordon telling him that the National Congress is entirely opposed to any recognition of Italy's aggressive action in Abyssinia or to the removal of Abyssinia from the League.[6]

I am going to Gujarat tonight with Vallabhbhai for a five days' tour. After that I go to Ajmer for a day and then to Allahabad.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. Jawaharlal cabled, "National Congress strongly supports continuation Ethiopian delegation League. Interests peace demand no recognition aggression Ethiopia China."

16. To Carl Heath[1]

Allahabad
October 7, 1937

Dear Mr. Heath,
Thank you for your letter of September 15th.[2] I appreciate the frankness with which you have written to me. May I say that I agree with you in much that you have written and I realise the dangers that beset us?

I can assure you that I shall put no obstruction in the way of a meeting with Lord Linlithgow.[3] Some time back I felt a little differently when the Andaman hunger strike was on. During the continuation of

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He wrote: "Once your Indian princes and their federal legislative nominees are entrenched it will be a far bigger job and in this fight you may conceivably be driven to some kind of revolutionary action. I hope not. But if so you will have a very difficult India to deal with—all the India of privilege and power, which values the *status quo* above all considerations. . . ."
3. Heath had suggested that Jawaharlal should meet the Viceroy.

that strike I did not feel like meeting the Viceroy who was certainly partly responsible for the policy towards the Andaman prisoners.

There is no chance of my going to Europe this year. But I am thinking and hoping that next summer I might be able to go for a while.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17. The Unity of India[1]

Most Americans, bred up in the democratic tradition, sympathise with the struggle for freedom in India. They dislike empire and imperialism and domination and exploitation of one nation by another. And yet they hesitate and are perplexed at the problem of India, and they wonder if it is possible to build up a united and progressive nation out of the seemingly infinite diversity that makes up the fabric of Indian life. They have heard so much of the separatist elements, of the conflicts of religion and culture, of the variety of languages, of the medieval conditions in the semi-feudal regions of the Indian states, of social cleavages, of the general backwardness of Indian life, that doubts assail them whether it is possible to harmonise all these in a free and independent India. Can democracy be built up on these insecure foundations? Can India stand together and free if British rule was withdrawn?

These hesitations and perplexities are natural and the doubts and questions that give rise to them must be considered by us dispassionately and an attempt made to find answers. Freedom for a nation and a people may be, and is, I believe, always good in the long run; but in the final analysis, freedom itself is a means to an end, that end being the raising of those people to higher levels and the general advancement of humanity. In India the vital and most important problem that faces us is the appalling poverty of the people. Will political independence help us to get rid of this as well as of the numerous ills that flow from it?

1. Allahabad, 8 October 1937. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. First printed in *Foreign Affairs*, January 1938, and reprinted with a few changes in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 11-26.

It is well to remember that the British have been in effective control of India for more than a hundred and fifty years and during this period they have had almost complete freedom to act in any manner they chose. There was no democratic or any other kind of control, the British Parliament being too far away and too ignorant to intervene. India was, and is, a rich country, rich in her agricultural resources, her mineral wealth, her human material; only her people are poor. It was indeed the wealth of India that attracted hordes of foreign adventurers to her shores. With these resources and material and a century and a half of unchecked despotism, one is entitled to ask for substantial results. During this period Europe has changed out of recognition, Japan has transformed herself up with an amazing speed, America has become the most advanced and the wealthiest country in the world. But in India we have this grinding poverty, and widespread illiteracy, and general absence of sanitation and medical relief, and a lack of all the good things of life. There are undoubtedly some good works which have followed British rule, notably in irrigation, but how little they are compared to what might have been! It is idle to blame the people for this when those people were allowed no say in the matter. The very backwardness of a people is a condemnation of the government. With this patent result of British rule in India, little argument is needed to demonstrate its failure. But even admitting its failure, it is true that our present problems are no nearer solution. Yet it is well to bear this in mind, for the very structure of British imperialist rule has been, and is, such as to aggravate all our problems and not to solve any of them. And because these problems insistently demand solution, we have to look for it outside the orbit of the British Empire.

India is smaller than the United States of America, yet it is a vast country in size, and in population it is far larger than the U.S.A. Our problems therefore are continental, unlike those of the small countries of Europe. Till the advent of modern communications and modern methods of transport, it was very difficult for such a vast area to hold together politically for long. The U.S.A. have grown and developed into a powerful unit, despite their vast area, because of this development in transport and communication. If the U.S.A. had a past history, going back hundreds and thousands of years before modern science and industry revolutionised life, it is exceedingly probable that they would have been split up into many small national units, as in Europe. If India has been split up politically in the course of her long history, it was inevitable under the then existing conditions. Yet always the idea of the political unity of India persisted and kings and emperors sought to realise it. Asoka indeed achieved it two thousand years ago and built

up an empire far greater than that of Britain in India today. This empire stretched right into Central Asia and included Afghanistan. Only a tiny tip in south India remained outside it, and this because of the horror of war and bloodshed that came over Asoka in the full flood of victory and conquest. Many another ruler in the past tried to achieve the political unification of India and succeeded in some measure. But this desire for a unified political control of the whole country could not be realised as the means and machinery were lacking. The coming of the British to India synchronised with the development in transport, communications and modern industry, and so the British rule succeeded at last in establishing the political unity of India.

This desire for political unity, in India as in other countries before the advent of nationalism, was usually the desire of the ruler or the conqueror, and not of the people as a whole. In India, where for long ages there was a large measure of local self-government, the people were far more interested in their local freedom and rights than in the machinery of government at the top. Kings changed at the top but the newcomer respected these local rights and did not interfere with them. Because of this, conflicts between kings and people did not take place as in Europe, and later under cover of this kings gradually built up their autocratic power.

An all-India political unity was thus not possible in the past, but what is far more important for us is to see what other more basic unifying or separatist features there were in Indian life. This will help us to understand the present and shape the future. Superficial observers of India, accustomed to the standardisation which modern industry has brought about in the West, are apt to be impressed too much by the variety and diversity of India. They miss the unity of India, and yet the tremendous and fundamental fact of India is her essential unity throughout the ages. Indian history runs into thousands of years, and, of all modern nations, only China has this continuous and ancient background of culture. Five to six thousand years ago the Indus Valley civilisation flourished all over northern India and probably extended to the south also, and even then it was highly developed with millenia of growth behind it. From that early dawn of history innumerable peoples, conquerors and settlers, pilgrims and students, have trekked into the Indian plains from the highlands of Asia, and they have influenced Indian life and culture and art, but always they have been absorbed and assimilated by India. India changed by these contacts and yet she remained essentially her own old self; like the ocean she received the tribute of a thousand rivers, and though she was disturbed often enough and storms raged over the surface of her waters, the sea continued to be the sea.

gradually faded out of the land of its birth. The man who is supposed to be largely responsible for this was Shankaracharya, who lived in the eighth century after Christ. This amazingly brilliant young man travelled all over India, arguing, debating, convincing large audiences, and in a few years (he died at the age of 32) changed the mental atmosphere of the country. The appeal was to reason and logic, not to force.

This practice of debate and conference over religious and other matters was common all over India and there are records of many great gatherings from Kashmir in the north to the far south. Whatever the political divisions of the country, ideas spread rapidly all over the land and were hotly debated. India hung together culturally and the mental background of the people everywhere was much the same. Even the masses in different parts of the country were not dissimilar in thought and outlook. The chief places of pilgrimage fixed by Shankaracharya were situated at the four corners of India: Badrinath in the Himalayas in the north, Rameswaram near Cape Comorin in the south, Dwarka in the west overlooking the Arabian Sea, and Puri in the east, washed by the waters of the Bay of Bengal. Thus there was continuous intercourse between the peoples of the different parts of India. India as a whole was their holy land.

It is interesting to compare the intolerance of Europe in matters religious to the wide tolerance prevailing almost throughout history in India. Christianity came to India in the first century after Christ, long before Europe knew much about it, and found a welcome and a home. There was no opposition whatever. Even now there are many early Christian sects flourishing in India, which were crushed out of existence in Europe. There are the Nestorians, and various Syrian Christian sects. The Jews came to India also about eighteen hundred years ago or more and were welcomed. They still live their community life and parts of an ancient city where they live are supposed to resemble old Jerusalem. The Zoroastrians also came to India, driven out from Persia, and made their home here, and have flourished ever since. The Muslims came first very soon after the advent of Islam and they found ready admittance and welcome and full opportunities of propagating their faith. For centuries there was no conflict except on the frontiers; it was only when Muslims came as conquerors and raiders that there was conflict.

The coming of Muslim rule shook India. For a while there was a conflict between the old background and the new, but soon the old spirit of India began to assert itself and attempts began to be made to find a synthesis of the old and the new. Even in religion, most difficult

subject of all, this attempt was repeatedly made, by Nanak,[4] Kabir,[5] and others. The Muslim rulers generally accepted the background of Indian life and culture, varied by Persian cultural ideas. There was no difficulty whatever in the adaptation of old Indian arts to new ideas. New styles grew up in architecture and painting which were truly a synthesis of the two and yet were essentially Indian. So also in music. Even in dress a certain uniformity crept in, and a common language developed.

Thus the whole history of India for thousands of years past shows her essential unity and the vitality and adaptability of her culture. This vitality took her message in art and thought and religion to the Far East, it took the shape of great colonizing expeditions to Malaysia, to Java and Sumatra and the Philippines and Borneo, and the remains of great monuments there, a thousand years old, bear testimony to it.

Behind this cultural unity, and giving strength to it, was the ceaseless attempt to find a harmony between the inner man and his outer environment. To some extent this was the medieval outlook of the Middle Ages in Europe, and yet it was probably something more. The profit motive was not so obvious and riches were not valued in the same way as elsewhere. Unlike Europe, honour was reserved for the man of intellect and the man who served the state or society, and the great soldier or the rich man took second and third place. Perhaps it was this want of stress on the outer environment that made India politically weak and backward, when external progress was so rapid in the West.

This past record of Indian cultural solidarity does not necessarily help us today, for it is present conditions that we have to deal with, and memories of what has been may be of little avail. But though that is perfectly true, yet an ancient people have deep roots in the past and we cannot ignore them. Both the good and the bad that we possess have sprung from those roots; they give us strength and inspiration, they also burden us and tie us down to many a harmful tradition and evil practice. India undoubtedly deteriorated and the vital urge in her began to lessen. Her power to assimilate and absorb became feebler, and the flexibility of her thought and structure gave place to rigidity. What was dynamic became more and more static. The rationalism and the scientific basis of her thought continued for a favoured few, but for others irrationalism and superstition held sway. Caste, which was a division of society by occupation, and which was far from rigid, developed a fearful rigidity and became the citadel of social reaction and

4. (1460-1504); the first of the Sikh Gurus.
5. (1440-1518); a Muslim weaver whose songs and teachings emphasised the unity of all religions.

the exploitation of the masses. For a long time India vegetated, the strength had gone out of her, and it was inevitable that she should fall an easy prey to the better-equipped and more vital and technically advanced nations of the West.

The immediate result of this was the growth of conservatism, a further shrinking inside her shell in self-defence. British rule helped this process by crystallising many a changing custom and giving it the force of law. More important in keeping India back was the economic structure which British rule built up. The feudal Indian state system, the gilded maharajas and nawabs, and the big landlord system were essentially British creations in India. We have them, to our misfortune, still with us. But this desire of the British rulers to keep a semi-feudal structure in India could not keep back the impact of new ideas and new conditions.

The British themselves came to the East on the wave of the great impulse which the coming of industrialism gave to the world and India was inevitably affected by this impulse. For their own purposes and in order to entrench themselves, they built railways and the other accompaniments of a modern administration. They tried hard to stop the industrial growth of India, desiring to keep her as a producer of raw material only and a consumer of British manufactured goods. But the industrial revolution had to spread to India, though it came slowly because of the obstruction on the part of the government.

The British gave political unity to India. This was possible now owing to the development of communications and transport. It was a unity of a common subjection, but it gave rise to the unity of a common nationalism, and the idea of a united and free India gripped the people. It was not a superficial idea imposed from above, but the natural outcome of that fundamental unity which had been the background of Indian life for thousands of years. The difference that had crept in was the new emphasis on the political aspect. To combat this, the British Government tried to lay stress on the religious differences and adopted a policy to encourage them and bring them into conflict with each other. It has had a measure of success, but nationalism, in India as in the other countries of the East, is the dominant urge of the time and must triumph. This nationalism is being tempered today by the economic urge, but this is still further removed from the medieval outlook which thinks in terms of religious groupings in political affairs.

The growth of the powerful nationalist movement in India, represented by the National Congress, has demonstrated the political unity of India. During the last seventeen years vast upheavals, in the nature of a peaceful rebellion, have taken place throughout the length and breadth

of the country, and shaken the foundations of British rule. This voluntary organisation, commanding the willing allegiance of millions, has played a great role in fixing the idea of Indian unity in the minds of our masses. The capacity for united action and disciplined sacrifice for a national ideal which our masses have shown has demonstrated not only the probability of Indian unity but its actual existence. In India today no one, whatever his political views or religious persuasions might be, thinks in terms other than those of national unity.

There are differences of course and certain separatist tendencies, but even these do not oppose national freedom or unity. They seek to gain a special favour for their group and because of this they hinder sometimes the growth of the nationalist movement. Religious differences affect politics less and less, though still sometimes they distract attention. There is no religious or cultural problem in India. What is called the religious or communal problem is really a dispute among upper class people for a division of the spoils of office or of representation in a legislature. This will surely be settled amicably wherever it arises.

Language is supposed to divide up India into innumerable compartments and we are told by the census that there are 222 languages or dialects in India. I suppose the census of the U.S.A. mentions a very large number of languages; I think the German census mentions over sixty. But most of these languages are spoken by small groups of people or are dialects. In India owing to absence of mass education dialects have grown. As a matter of fact India is a singularly unified area, so far as languages are concerned. Altogether there are a dozen languages and these are closely allied to each other. They fall into two groups—the Indo-Aryan languages of the north and centre and west, and the Dravidian languages of the south and the east. The Indo-Aryan languages derive from Sanskrit and if one knows one of them, it is easy to learn another. The Dravidian languages are different, but each one of them contains fifty per cent or more words from the Sanskrit. The dominant language in India is Hindustani (Hindi or Urdu) which is already spoken by a huge block of a hundred and twenty million people and is partly understood by scores of millions of others. This language is bound to become the all-India medium of communication, not displacing the great provincial languages, but as a compulsory second language. With mass education on behalf of the state this will not be difficult. Already with talkies and the radio, the range of Hindustani is spreading fast. The writer of this article has had occasion to address great mass audiences all over India and almost always, except in the south, he has used Hindustani and been understood. Whatever difficult problems India has to solve, and they are many, it is clear that the

language problem is not one of them. This is already well on the way to solution.

It will thus be seen that the forces working for Indian unity are formidable and overwhelming and it is difficult to conceive of any separatist tendency which can break up this unity. Some of the major Indian princes might represent such a tendency, but they flourish not from their own inherent strength, but because of the support of the British power. When that support goes, they will have to surrender to the wishes of their own people, among whom the sentiment of national unity is widespread.

This does not mean that our problems are easy of solution. They are very difficult, as every major problem in the world today is difficult, and probably their solution will depend on international as well as on national factors. But the real problems of India, as of the rest of the world, are economic, and they are so interrelated that it is hardly possible to tackle them separately. The land problem is the outstanding question of India and without revolutionary changes in our agriculture and land system it is difficult to see any final solution of it. Feudal relics and the big landlord system are hindrances to development and will have to go. The tiny holdings, averaging a fraction of an acre per person, are uneconomic and wasteful and too small for the application of scientific methods of agriculture. Large-scale state and collective or cooperative farms must be established instead, and this cannot be done so long as the vested interests in land are not removed. Even when this is done the vast urban and rural unemployment will not be reduced. For that, as well as for other obvious reasons, we must push the industrialisation of the country. This again requires the development of social services—education, sanitation, etc. And so the problem becomes a vast many-sided one affecting land, industry and all departments of life, and it can only be tackled on a nationally planned basis with no vested interests to obstruct our planning. Therefore many of us think that a socialist structure is necessary for in no other way can such planning be organised and pushed through.

But then the vested interests come in—there lies the real difficulty and conflict. Far the greatest of these is the City of London, representing British finance and industry, and the Government of India is but a shadow of it when vital interests are concerned. There are the imperial services and Indian vested interests also, the princes and others. The new constitution in India, though giving a certain leverage in the provinces owing to the extension of the electorate, is essentially designed to protect these special interests and keep British imperialism in India intact. Even in the provinces real power rests with the Governors and

the revenues are largely mortgaged to these interests. Such strength as there is behind the provincial governments comes far more from the organised national movement than from the constitution Act. Fear of conflict with this movement, resulting possibly in the suspension of the constitution, prevents too much interference with the provincial governments. But the position is essentially unstable and conflicts are inherent in it. Besides, under the financial provisions and reservations it is not possible to undertake any really big schemes of social reform.

But the proposed federal structure is far the worst part of the constitution as it gives permanence to the feudal Indian states and, in addition, gives them some power to interfere in the affairs of the rest of India. The whole conception of a union of imperialism, feudalism and democracy is incapable of realisation and can only mean the entrenchment of all the reactionary elements in India. It must be remembered that the Indian state system is over a hundred years old and it has continued more or less unchanged during this past century. During this period Europe and the world have changed past recognition and it is a monstrous imposition that we should be permanently saddled with these feudal relics which prevent all growth. Hence the fierce opposition to the federal structure and the constitution Act as a whole.

The National Congress stands for independence and a democratic state. It has proposed that the constitution of a free India must be framed, without outside interference, by a constituent assembly elected on an adult franchise. That is the democratic way and there is no other way, short of revolution, which may bring anything in its train. An assembly elected by adult franchise will represent the people as a whole and will be far more interested in the economic and social problems of the masses than in the petty communal issues which affect small groups. Thus it will solve without much difficulty the communal and other like problems. It will not solve so easily the economic problems, but the clash of interests there is similar to that found all over the world. In the world-wide conflict of ideas and politics, India stands for democracy and against fascism and the totalitarian state. She stands for peace and cooperation between nations and ultimately the building up of a world order.

Will an independent India be strong enough to protect herself from outside aggression and invasion? If India is strong enough to gain her freedom from British imperialism, which has so long been entrenched in her soil, it seems to follow that she will also be strong enough to resist fresh aggression. The strength of a nation is a relative affair, depending on a host of internal and external factors. Most independent countries today are not strong enough to stop by themselves the

aggression of a great power. Even a great power might succumb to a combination of other powers. Probably the U.S.A. is the only country which is so fortunately situated and is so strong in every way as to resist successfully almost any hostile combination. The others depend for their independence partly on their own strength, but more so on a combination of circumstances. It is a precarious position, full of risk and danger, when world war darkens the horizon.

India will of course take all necessary steps to strengthen her defences and she has the industrial and other resources to do so. Her policy will be one of friendship to her neighbours and others and she will avoid conflict. The National Congress has already declared that in the event of Britain being involved in an imperialist war, India will not be a party to it. There is no doubt that India can build up an efficient defence apparatus. Her army today, though lacking in Indian officers, is considered an efficient force.

Who might be the aggressor against India? It is hardly likely that any European nation will embark on this rash adventure, for each country in Europe fears its neighbour. Soviet Russia, for purposes of aggression, is definitely out of the picture; she is wedded to a policy of international peace, and India fulfils no want of hers. Afghanistan and the border tribes are also out of the question. Our policy towards them will be one of close friendship and cooperation, utterly unlike the "forward policy" of the British which relies on bombing combatants and non-combatants alike. But even if they were hostile and aggressive, they are too backward industrially to meet a modern army outside their own mountains.

Japan is mentioned as a possible aggressor, and it is said that militarists in Japan dream of Asiatic and even world dominion. Perhaps so, but before they can approach India they will have to crush and absorb the whole of China, an undertaking which most people think is utterly beyond their capacity, and one which will involve at some stage conflict with other great powers. How can Japan come to India? Not overland. Deserts and the Himalayas offer an effective barrier and not even air fleets can come that way. By sea the route is long and intricate and full of danger as narrow straits have to be passed. Japan's invasion of India can only be a practical proposition if China has been completely crushed, and the U.S.A., the Soviet Union and England have been effectively humbled. That is a large undertaking.

Thus we see that normally speaking there is no great or obvious danger of external invasion. Still we live in an abnormal world, full of wars and aggression, when international law has ceased to be and treaties and undertakings have no value, and an unabashed gangsterism prevails

among nations. We realise that anything may happen in this epoch of revolution and wars, and the only thing to be done to protect oneself is to rely on one's own strength as well as to have a policy of peace. Risks have to be taken whatever the path we follow. We are prepared to take them. There is indeed no other way.

We do not underestimate the difficulties before us. We have a hard task, hard because of external opposition, harder still because of our own weaknesses. It is always more difficult to fight one's own failings than the strength of the adversary. We have to do both. We have social evils with the authority of long tradition and habit behind them. We have the elements which have gone to build up fascism in other countries. We have inertia and a tame submission to fate and its decrees. But we have also a new awakening of the vital spirit of India. The static vegetative period is over and a hunger for change and the ending of their misery and poverty has seized the masses. The world is shaken by war and alarms of war and no one knows what horror and inhuman cruelty and destruction of human progress the future holds for us. But whatever that may be, India will no longer be merely a passive instrument of destiny or of another's will.

In the sub-conscious mind of India there is much questioning, a struggle and a crisis. As of old, it seeks a synthesis of the past and the present, of the old and the new. It sees the new industrial civilisation marching irresistibly on; it distrusts it and dislikes it to some extent for it is an attack against and an upheaval of so much that is old; yet it has accepted it as an inevitable development. But still it seeks to synthesise it with its own fundamental conceptions, to find a harmony between the inner man and this ever-changing outer environment. That harmony is strangely lacking in the world today and all of us seek blindly for it, and till we find it we shall have to march wearily through the deserts of conflict and hatred and mutual destruction.

18. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
November 3, 1937

My dear Bapu,
I have just spoken to Pantji on the telephone and he informs me that the situation in Cawnpore is not so bad as he had feared.[2] I am therefore staying on in Allahabad for two days and am going to Cawnpore on the 6th.

One of the Andamans' prisoners, Biswanath Mathur,[3] recently released from Hazaribagh jail, has seen me here. He was released about 10 days ago. He went to Delhi to interview B. K. Dutt, another Andamans' prisoner. Dutt, as you will remember, is well known as the companion of Bhagat Singh in the Assembly Bomb Case. In this case he was sentenced to 10 years. But subsequently he was sentenced to a life term in the conspiracy case with Bhagat Singh in Lahore. Mathur informs me that Dutt is in a very bad way. He is not only physically ill with various troubles but mentally he is in a state of extreme neurosis and desperation. He is practically in solitary confinement in Delhi, there being no other political prisoners there. Quite apart from the question of release, a suggestion was made to me that it would be a good thing if he was transferred to a Bihar jail. He would probably get better treatment there as well as companions. Also such relatives as he possesses live in Jamshedpur and he could easily have interviews with them. I understand that he has had no interview with relatives for a long time. I do not know what can be done in this matter as he is under the Delhi Government. Perhaps the Bihar Government might suggest his transfer in view of the fact that his relatives live in Bihar. I am sending a copy of this letter to Rajendra Babu.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.
2. 5,000 mill workers went on strike as a protest against alleged victimisation and the breach of the agreement reached between the millowners and the Mazdoor Sabha on 9 August 1937.
3. (b. 1914); a Congressman of Gaya; imprisoned for four years from 1933 in the Andamans for his part in the Gaya conspiracy case; later joined Communist Party.

19. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
December 20, 1937

My dear Krishna,
I returned from Assam about a week ago and I have been so frightfully busy with all manner of odd things during this period that I have been unable even to open my correspondence. This is a bad state of affairs and cannot be allowed to continue. But meanwhile I am rather at sea. I am writing briefly to you without any reference to your last letter, just to tell you that I am alive.

Lothian is here. I had a long talk with him today and we are likely to meet again. Of course he is intent on pushing federation. But men like him do not make very much difference here in spite of their able and tactful approach. Dangers come from other quarters. As a matter of fact, federation is still a far off affair and our immediate problems are overwhelming. There are many things that are happening here which distress me greatly. It is difficult even to write about them unless I write an essay. When in Assam I had a cable from Cripps and Mellor asking for an article for *The Tribune* on the present situation which seemed to them puzzling. Of course it is puzzling, though in essence it is clear. Yet it is difficult for me, holding the position I do, to write frankly on the subject at present. I have to observe a certain discipline. Probably I shall write frankly enough later. Meanwhile the Congress is nearing an internal crisis. Probably this will come to a head at the Haripura session. There are all manner of confusing problems, not the least of which is a sudden outburst of intense communalism, fanned by the Muslim League....

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

20. To Agatha Harrison[1]

Allahabad
December 23, 1937

Dear Agatha,
Forgive me for not acknowledging some of your letters. My tour in Assam cut me off completely from my correspondence and since my return I have been hard put to it to deal with the piles of letters that awaited me....

Lord Lothian is here at present and I have had two long talks with him, each extending to three hours or so. I am likely to meet him again tomorrow before he goes. The talks were of course very friendly but there was the difference in approach and in objectives....

All manner of irritating problems are cropping up here and it is difficult to say how things shape themselves during the next few months. The next Congress at Haripura is likely to be a trying affair. Apart from other considerations and purely from the personal point of view, I am looking forward greatly to being relieved of this presidentship business. It has been an exhausting thing. I do not suppose it will make very much difference so far as work and worry are concerned but it will be something to be relieved of a number of routine activities. Subhas Bose is likely to be the next President and I do not envy him the job. I hope his health will stand up to it.

With all good wishes for the New Year,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

21. The Need for Indian Independence[1]

I welcome the demonstration organized for Indian independence in London. The independence of India has become a vital problem not only for India, but for England and the world.

1. Allahabad, 29 January 1938. Message for the demonstration for India's independence held in London on 30 January 1938. *The Hindustan Times*, 30 January 1938.

Only on the basis of this independence can the Indian problem be solved and only on this basis India can contribute her proper share for world peace. Only then can normal and friendly relations develop between India and England. To delay this inevitable solution is to add to the insecurity of the world.

India can never agree to anything short of independence, but this independence includes fullest cooperation in world order and real collective security.

It does not mean hostility to the British people, but the basis of a real cooperation for peace and human progress.

22. To Bhagavan Das[1]

Allahabad
January 31, 1938

My dear Babu Bhagavan Das,

Your letter of the 28th has just come. I hasten to reply to it though I am afraid must write hurriedly and can hardly do justice to the subject.

First of all I must point out to you that there has been no vital alteration in the old independence pledge.[2] The phrase you have drawn attention to—"India must sever the British connection"—formed part of the original 1930 pledge and has remained there ever since. In fact the whole first paragraph of the new pledge is bodily taken, without the slightest alteration, from the old pledge. The remaining paragraphs of the old pledge dealt in detail with the political, economic, cultural and spiritual injury caused to India by British rule, and finally there was an appeal for civil disobedience, which started soon afterwards with the salt laws in 1930. These remaining paragraphs have been left out now simply because we wanted to make the pledge short and concise and details were considered unnecessary at this stage. They were not left out because we disagreed with them in any way. The reference to an immediate campaign of civil disobedience was also out of place at present.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-100/1937, pp. 53-55, N.M.M.L.
2. Expressing his fear over a seeming change in the pledge decided upon by the Congress Working Committee in Bombay in January 1938, Bhagavan Das wrote to Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal: "Any sudden severance of all connection between the two countries is likely to mean tremendous turmoil and bloodshed in India."

You will thus observe that no real change has been made in the pledge. It remains as it was and as it has been repeated on countless occasions and by millions of people. I am surprised to find that you or Gandhiji should think otherwise. Gandhiji's idea that Purna Swaraj was not specified in this way is also not based on fact.[3]

The whole idea underlying 'independence' and the severance of the British connection is that we cannot have full freedom within the scope of the British group of nations, even though it might gradually change its character. There can be and there should be no complete independence in the sense of isolation from the rest of the world. But independence for us means opportunities for fuller cooperation with the other countries, including the British group. Any form of Dominion Status means our hanging on to a group which stands as a group opposed to other groups. It thus prevents real world cooperation for which we stand. The British group is by no means a progressive group and even during the last few years it has played a definitely reactionary role in world affairs. In Indian affairs it is frankly imperialistic. Why should we ally ourselves with a group which is reactionary today in the hope that it may shed its reactionary character in the future? When it gets rid of this imperialistic outlook we shall welcome it and offer it our cooperation, as we shall offer it to any other country working along right lines for world peace and order. We shall work with all our strength for the evolution of a world order.

In spite of the relative independence of the British dominions, it is Downing Street and Whitehall that determine British foreign policy, and they have determined it in a way which has encouraged reaction in Europe and elsewhere. I disapprove strongly of this policy and in no event am I going to agree to India being made a pawn in the British imperialistic game, in war or otherwise.

In the economic sphere also, India is bound hand and foot to British interests, and any form of Dominion Status that I can conceive of will protect these interests and we shall remain hangers-on of the City of London.

It is conceivable of course that all this will ultimately go. It is possible that force of circumstances will make England adopt socialism. When that happens we shall welcome it and cooperate in full measure

3. Replying to Bhagavan Das on 22 January 1938 on behalf of Mahatma Gandhi, Mahadeva Desai wrote that Mahatma Gandhi "does not think that the Working Committee has any authority to alter the pledge, for the simple reason that the pledge is based on the Congress objective of Poorna Swaraj, which has not yet been defined...."

with the new England. But why think in terms of a British group or an Indo-British group only? Why not in terms of a group of advanced nations cooperating together for the common good?

I am convinced that we cannot have any normal or peaceful relations with Britain till the imperial link is severed and India is really independent. Only then can we think in terms of forging new links with England and other countries based on a different outlook and for a different purpose. The logic of our recent history, present circumstances, as well as the possibilities of the future, point only this way. The psychological background of our struggle leads to this inevitable conclusion. I accept therefore, with all its implications, the phrase in our pledge—'sever the British connection'. Indeed I think it is the very essence of that pledge, and without it the words 'complete independence' or 'Purna Swaraj' would have little meaning.

But what is equally important is for us to remember that we are aiming at world cooperation and world order. Our independence will be a step for us in that direction.

If you so wish it, you can certainly send your letter and Gandhiji's to the press. But if you do so, I suggest that this letter of mine should be sent along with them.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

23. To Bhagavan Das[1]

Allahabad
February 8, 1938

My dear Babu Bhagavan Das,
Your letter[2] of the 3rd February.

I hardly think that it is necessary for the Congress to reconsider this question. As a matter of fact I have discussed this matter in several statements and essays of mine, in England and in India, and made it quite clear that we shall gladly cooperate with Britain if the conditions

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-100/1937, p. 61, N.M.M.L.
2. While thanking Jawaharlal for clarifying the issue, Bhagavan Das wanted it clearly stated in the pledge that "while India must sever connection with imperialist and exploiting Britain, this does not mean complete and irreconcilable separation from Britain."

of true cooperation exist. I have also made it clear that severance of the present British connection is an essential preliminary for such co-operation. We seek a larger cooperation which might include many countries.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

24. Rejoinder to Lord Zetland[1]

Let his Lordship note that the nineteenth century method of relying on high sounding declarations is gone by and today in the twentieth century India has gained so much in strength that it will not be allured by such offers.[2]

A federation imposed on India against her will would prove dangerous also to Britain.

1. Poona, 30 May 1938. *The Tribune*, 31 May 1938.
2. Referring to the criticisms of the federal scheme, Zetland declared in his speech of 27 May 1938 that, though it may be possible to accommodate the reasonable requirements of both the provinces and the states, no such change could be considered till the federation had come into operation.

25. India and the World Perspective[1]

Some six or seven days ago I was invited to a Muslim conference at Mhow. About thirty thousand people were present and I told them that it was the last time I would be speaking before leaving for England. But within these few days many engagements came up and I had to speak so often. I am afraid that before I sail I may have to speak several times more.[2]

Let me thank you, the citizens of Bombay, for the expession of your affection. You have presented me with many sweet-smelling flowers.

1. Speech at Bombay, 31 May 1938. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 1 June 1938.
2. Jawaharlal left for a tour of Europe on 2 June 1938.

The fragrance of the flowers will fade soon, but the sweetness of your affection will endure long with me.

I have no definite programme because the condition of the world today is strange and ever-changing. The problems of India will be ever in my mind and I will study them in the context of world affairs. Unless one looks at the domestic problems in that light, one cannot understand them in their true perspective. If one looks ahead and farther away, problems nearer home would appear small and not so important as they seem.

Take for instance the Hindu-Muslim problem. Many people get excited about it. But if they look at the world they will find that it is nothing very new. In Egypt, Palestine and Iran there are similar problems though they are not known by the same name. It has nothing to do with religion. Such problems arise in all lands, where there is foreign rule.

I do not suggest that we should throw the blame on the foreign rule in this manner and forget our own weaknesses. But what I feel is that, if we look at the problem from the world point of view, the veil would be torn from it and we would see it truly as it is, as a purely political problem, which has no connection whatsoever with religion. On the other hand, from a nearer view it looks like a problem of jobs and seats.

We cannot devise a cure unless we know the nature of the disease. We are suffering from two kinds of illness, one is common to all the world, the other peculiar to ourselves, and both these are inextricably mixed up.

The British Government has been with us for 150 years. At present we are engaged in a life and death struggle with British imperialism. Therefore, we must understand what this empire is, how it arose and how it spread, and why it is in decadence now.

Many empires have come and gone, but the nature of the present-day empires is very different. The British Empire is an empire of commerce and finance. The crowned heads are mere outward symbols. The reality behind these symbols is the reality of big business.

We look at the Governors and Viceroys and think they form the government. Behind them there is the Secretary of State. But even the Secretary of State is a mere dummy. Real power lies in the hands of the merchants and the capitalists.

This explains the provision in the new constitution prohibiting the passing of any discriminatory legislation against British interests. All sorts of obstacles are being laid in the path of expansion of the shipping trade of India. We are supposed to have a new government, but we are shackled and bound from all sides.

I welcome the plain utterance of Lord Zetland. It makes at least one thing clear, namely, that there is an ocean of difference between the British and Indian viewpoints. The Haripura resolution is very clear on the point.[3] We are not opposed to the principle of federation; but the question is one of the kind of federation. Is it to be a federation of free India or slave India?

In the federation, as envisaged in the Government of India Act, all the real power is reserved to Britain. Moreover, it attempts to club together the partly democratic British Indian provinces with states that are at least a century and a half behind the times. One cannot yoke together a horse and a tortoise. If Lord Zetland does not understand this fact, it is his misfortune, but the Congress position is quite plain and it will do everything in its power to secure its objective.

We stand for full freedom. We stand for a constitution framed by a constituent assembly of the elected representatives of the people. In the framing of this constitution neither Lord Zetland nor the British Parliament will have any voice. That is our demand and as long as our demand is not met, the Indian problem will not be solved.

We should derive inspiration from the stirring call given to his countrymen by Kemal Pasha by getting the following words inscribed on the monument of freedom at Ankara: "Turk, be proud, work, have confidence".

The Congress has fought many battles and won some victories. The recent crisis in Orissa,[4] U.P., Bihar, as well as the clove boycott,[5] have shown the mass support behind the Congress. There was a day when Indians had to walk in shame in foreign lands. But today we can go to those places with some pride. Though we have not achieved freedom, we have shown that we have the courage to fight British imperialism and our achieving full freedom is only a question of time.

3. See p. 379.
4. The Congress ministry in Orissa had decided to resign from 5 May 1938 in protest against the appointment as acting Governor of J.R. Dain, the revenue commissioner, during the period the Governor of the province was to remain on leave. The crisis was averted when the Governor decided not to proceed on leave. Earlier, in April 1938, the Congress Working Committee had passed a resolution stating: "It is difficult for the Ministers to act as Ministers to those who have been their subordinates and who might have fallen into disfavour with them."
5. The revised proposals of the Zanzibar authorities for controlling the export trade in cloves had not satisfied the Indian community and in sympathy with them the boycott of clove trade was resorted to by the business community in India.

The Working Committee has passed a resolution about sending an ambulance to China.[6] Today thousands of people are being killed in China and whole cities are being annihilated. The Chinese are fighting bravely. Though I am aware of the military power of Japan, I have known all along that the Chinese cannot be beaten easily.

In this war, China has suffered greatly and Japan too will have much to suffer. I am very sorry for that. I have no ill will or hatred against the Japanese people, but the Japanese Government has so far imitated imperialist powers to the extent of dragging its country into war.

China and India are bound together by cultural ties. India has given to China her religion. It is but proper that Indians should express their solidarity with the Chinese people by sending an ambulance unit.

6. The Working Committee at its meeting held in Bombay from 15 to 19 May 1938 appointed a committee under the presidentship of Dr. Jivraj Mehta to take necessary steps to send a motor ambulance unit with necessary doctors and nurses to the Chinese National Government under the charge of Dr. Madan Atal.

12

INDIA AND HER NEIGHBOURS

SRI LANKA

1. Sri Lanka[1]

Ceylon is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh and yet, of recent, the cries of "Ceylon for the Ceylonese" there and of retaliation here have been raised. These are narrow and separating cries and, whatever their ultimate effect, they leave behind a bitter taste in the mouth. Every thinking man, both in Ceylon and in India, must pause and consider that no word or act of his may spread bitterness between the two countries that have lived and are continuing to live in most intimate relations of culture and trade. In the past, India and Ceylon have had enriching cultural exchanges of language and literature and thought lasting up to modern times. Today, the Indian element forms over 15% of Ceylon's population and the country's trade with India easily comes first on the list. Then, why these cries and who raises them? Over 7 lakh Tamil coolies on the plantations and estates and the Malayalee domestic servants are in no way harmful to Ceylon's economic interests and do not enter into competition with Sinhalese labour. The lot of Tamil labour exploited by British estate owners is too sordid to excite the envy of the Sinhalese. Labour's interests do not clash and the reasons for the anti-Indian propaganda in Ceylon are to be found in more important and influential quarters. The Indian traders and bankers have hit their British colleagues rather hard and there is some competition between the Indian and the Sinhalese petty curios-dealing businessmen. And so in the sectional interests of a handful of traders and bankers and shopkeepers, the relations of two countries, who are so singularly united in their destiny by their past and their present state, are sought to be poisoned.

India will have nothing to do with this vicious propaganda. She recognises Ceylon as of her own self and respects her political individuality. She is desirous to encourage trade with Ceylon and there can be no talk of erection of hostile trade barriers. I only hope that the Sinhalese people will likewise recognise that Indian and Sinhalese interests do not clash and that the oppressor of both of our peoples is British imperialism. Only the continued amity of the two peoples will

1. Allahabad, 8 March 1937. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

ensure that Trincomalee, which the British have fortified as an air and naval base, shall not be used in defence of British capital and trade but shall act as the strong arm to protect the reconstruction of the Sinhalese and the Indian nations.

2. Burma and Sri Lanka[1]

Burma has recently been politically separated from us[2] and Ceylon has long functioned as a separate unit of the British Empire. But whatever the exigencies of British imperial policy might demand, India and Burma and Ceylon can never forget the cultural and commercial bonds that have tied them for thousands of years. The political shape of the countries has changed repeatedly during this long span of years but our deep attachment has continued and will continue. It will continue, among other reasons, because today we have to face essentially the same problem and the same opponent. That opponent is British imperialism and that problem is how to free our people. All over the world events are marching apace covering in a few short years the track of centuries, and imperialism, allying itself to fascism, struggles to maintain itself. But it struggles in vain, for the freedom of the peoples of India, Burma and Ceylon, as of the rest of the world, cannot long be delayed.

In this struggle between the mighty forces of imperialism and nationalism and social freedom, British policy is ever trying to weaken us by introducing fissiparous tendencies and by diverting our attention to minor conflicts which it encourages. We must beware of this and we must not permit ourselves to become tools of British imperialism. The separation of Burma has an inner and wider significance which must not be missed. It is in furtherance of British imperial preparations in the East for the world crisis which already overshadows the horizon. Burma has special importance because of its oil. A little beyond it, Singapore, with its strategic position and powerful naval base, commands the routes between the East and the West. Trincomalee in Ceylon has developed into a naval and air base of the first importance.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 11 March 1937. *The Leader*, 14 March 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 161-164.
2. Acting on the Simon Commission's recommendation, the Act of 1935 provided for separation of Burma from the rest of the country, and this came into effect on 1 April 1937.

to consider it. I shall hand over to him your letter. I understand that in his reply to Mr. Aluwihare he pointed out that any discrimination as regards franchise or otherwise against the settled Indian population would be highly unfair. Naturally he could only deal with the principles involved and not with the details of the legislation. He will write to you in answer to your letter.

It is always desirable in such conflicts not only to adhere to principles and to protect the rights of our countrymen abroad but also to adopt a friendly attitude towards the people of the country and to seek to arrive at a satisfactory compromise.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

VISIT TO BURMA

5. India and Burma[1]

I have come to Burma in two capacities, in my individual capacity as a person who has long wished to visit Burma, and as the head of a great organisation. I have brought to the people of Burma the goodwill and affection of the people of India. Whatever may befall us, the people of Burma can rest assured of the goodwill and affection of India.

India and Burma have been united by ancient bonds for over 2,000 years and, despite separation, nothing can break that living link and the numerous other links of art and culture. People talk about the political separation of Burma and are worried over it. I want you to look upon the relations between India and Burma in the right perspective—the perspective of 2,000 years' contact.

Burma and India must carry on together though they are now politically separated by England. Cooperation and the preservation of a friendly spirit between Indians and Burmans must always be sought by all those who believe in the welfare of the people belonging to these

1. Jawaharlal visited Burma from 6 May to 20 May 1937. This was a reply to an address presented to him at a public meeting in Rangoon on 7 May 1937. From *The Hindu*, 12 May 1937.

countries. We must also condemn most strongly the policy of the imperialists who want to exploit the masses and the nationals of the subjugated countries for their own benefit.

I am very thankful to you for the honour you have shown to me by welcoming me to your great country. I want to tell you how very fascinated I used to feel by your country when as a young boy I had an opportunity to read books about Burma. It is only today that my desire has been fulfilled. In your address you have referred to my sacrifices for India's freedom. I, however, want to tell you that it is not only I who has made sacrifices for India's struggle. Many Indians have done so and it is that sacrifice which has put new life and new spirit among us. So far as the political separation of Burma is concerned, it is impossible to say, during these days of speedy transport facilities, that any country could be separated from another. However, I want to submit that all problems relating to India and Burma should be tackled in a friendly spirit and with proper cooperation.

The fight for freedom which is now being waged will produce results of far-reaching importance. It is not only the future of India and Burma that will be decided as a result of this fight. This struggle will also decide once and for all the future of that horrid thing, imperialism.

I must confess that I do not know much about the recent political affairs in Burma. I however wish to direct your attention to what has happened in India recently. In many provinces the Congress has won the elections overwhelmingly in spite of the tremendous obstacles put by the government and vested interests. Congress parties in six provinces are supreme. Ministries were offered to them but they refused. They are not after the ministries but are after the conquest of power so that they may put an end to the poverty and misery of the Indian people. Because the Government of India Act does not give them that power they are opposed to it and wish to put an end to it. They think they might hasten and expedite it by accepting the ministries and, therefore, they asked for assurances. They asked that they should be given a free hand even in the limited sphere of legislative activity. The authorities refused to give them the assurances and the result was that phantom minority ministries, with no strength behind them, are functioning in those provinces.

Indians have gone to all parts of the world and I wish them well. I am, however, of the opinion that Indians will be honoured in other countries only when they have achieved freedom in their own country. The troubles of Indians in South Africa and Zanzibar would disappear. Indians do not go to foreign countries like Europeans to exploit others. I want Indians to spread all over the world, but I do not want them to

go there to exploit the people of those countries. I do not want them to imitate the people of Europe. To the Indians living in Burma, my advice is to live in cooperation with the Burmese, for their future is tied up with that of the latter. If Indians think they can live apart, or at the cost of the Burmese, they are mistaken. They are here on sufferance. This advice of mine is practical commonsense and not mere idealism.

I think the separation will isolate Burma and weaken her politically. But that is a question to be decided solely by the Burmese and the final word rests with them. I would ascribe two reasons which led the British to separate Burma from India. They are the growing strength of India and the desire to keep Burma down and under for a long time to come.

I would appeal to the Indians living in Burma to help their Burmese brethren in their fight for freedom. I would also appeal to the Burmese to help India in her struggle for independence. It is through mutual help and cooperation that the bonds of unity between India and Burma in their fight for freedom will be strengthened.

6. Why Burma was Separated[1]

Five days ago I arrived in Burma and during this period whatever I have seen has impressed me much. I feel that I am in no strange country but am in a part of India.

Burma has been separated from India by the British Government because its policy is one of divide and rule. Some people say that by separation a new chapter has been opened for Burma, but the fact remains that Burma is still a subject country.

The growth of national feeling in India during the last twenty years is indicative of the fact that India is increasing her strength to oppose the British administration.

Unemployment among the educated classes is widespread. There are thousands of young educated persons without jobs. The condition of artisans and the peasantry is the same.

1. Speech at a public meeting in Rangoon, 11 May 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 15 May 1937.

To the Round Table Conference in London, with a few exceptions, the government invited people who were landlords, zamindars, rajas and nawabs. They were not selected by the people. They were the government nominees. The result was that these people could not come to an agreement. They raised various questions but they could not solve them.

But anyhow the British Government drew up a constitution, and some thought that the constitution was meant to give more powers to Indians. On the other hand, I would say that it was an attempt on the part of the British Government to secure more powers for themselves. We do not want this constitution which has not been prepared by the people of the country. What India wants is a constitution framed by a constituent assembly. I do not want outsiders to draw up the constitution for us by sitting in London.

In the recent general elections in India the Congress has secured a majority in six provinces. The Congress refused to accept office because the Governors refused to give assurances. The Governors selected their own ministers who had no support of the majority of the elected representatives. The Governors would not summon the legislatures in those provinces saying that that was not the proper time. But the fact is that the government knows that if the legislatures are summoned, the ministers whom the Governors have chosen will be turned out of office.

The fight for freedom will however continue although we are not offering satyagraha or any other similar movement for the present.

There are still hundreds of young men and young girls detained in Bengal without trial.

The press regulations and the special powers of the police are still there. I therefore ask: what is the good of the new constitution? The new constitution contains several safeguards, and one of them is that nothing should be done which may affect British commerce. I want to know if Indian trade could prosper under these circumstances. There is hunger and unemployment in the country, and these can be solved only after the attainment of Swaraj.

Burma's problems are the same and here too unemployment and poverty are increasing although not on the same scale as in India. The country is full of wealth such as minerals, oil, petrol and timber, but the foreigner benefits by them. That is the reason why Burma has been separated.

The importance of oil specially in modern war cannot be overemphasised. Any country without sufficient oil cannot stand a war. Factories in Europe are busy day and night manufacturing armaments. That is the reason why oil is so useful. The availability of oil in Burma is one

of the causes of separation.

The war that is going on in Spain at present has two forces involved in it. These are fascism and nationalism. The fate of all Europe as also that of India is dependent on the result of that. If fascism triumphs it would equally be a victory for imperialism. Therefore, India sympathises with the present Spanish Government and has helped them in their fight. I am glad to say that a hundred or more Indians are fighting in Spain. The Indians have also sent monetary help to Spain for the relief of the wounded.

In the end, I want to appeal to the Indians in Burma to cooperate with the Burmans and help them in their fight for freedom as they should help the Congress in India.

7. The Policy of the Indian National Congress[1]

Question: Is it a fact that a mandate was given by the Indian National Congress to Mahatma Gandhi to claim at the Round Table Conference Purna Swaraj meaning complete independence to give the nation control over the army, external affairs, finance, and fiscal and economic policies?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Yes.

Q: Has this claim been granted by the Government of India Act?

JN: No. Very far from it.

Q: Would it be possible to attain Purna Swaraj by working the Government of India Act?

JN: Certainly not. Therefore the Congress rejects the Act utterly.

Q: If it is not possible, what is the object of the Congress Party in entering the legislative councils?

JN: To wreck the Government of India Act and work for a constituent assembly.

1. Interview to the press, Moulmein, 15 May 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 23 May 1937.

Q: Will a Governor allow a party to form a ministry if its sole object is to wreck the reforms?

JN: In several provinces the Governors have actually invited the Congress leaders to form ministries in spite of the declared policy of the Congress to wreck the reforms. But the Congress leaders refused to form ministries, because the Governors did not give assurances not to interfere.

Q: Is it not a fact that the ministry in a democratic country accepts office to work the constitution?

JN: It is an undoubted fact in a democratic country. That, however, does not apply to India, which under the British rule is not a democratic country. The Act is not democratic.

Q: Is it not your candid opinion that the rejection of the reforms and acceptance of office are inconsistent?

JN: They are inconsistent. But the fundamental inconsistency lies in the Act itself. The Act talks of responsibility but does not give it. Therefore, the Congress enters the councils to destroy it, not to work it. A person may, in theory, accept office not to cooperate but to work for a revolutionary change as far as possible.

Q: Would it be possible under the Government of India Act for the Governor to give a pledge that he will not exercise his powers of veto and certification?

JN: Yes, many eminent jurists, including Mr. Berriedale Keith, have declared that the Governors may give assurance demanded by the Congress.

Q: Have you heard that the House of Representatives in Burma refused the demand in Part I of the budget by which the allowances of 18,000 pensioners were affected? If such a thing happens what would you suggest to remedy or rectify the error?

JN: I do not know anything about the particular matter. But given the responsibility what the legislature does must be presumed to be right.

Q: Do you think that communal representation in the legislative bodies is the greatest hindrance towards Home Rule?

JN: It is bad and a hindrance, but it may not be the greatest hindrance.

Q: Do you know that in Burma, the Burmese people have no differences of castes or creeds?

JN: Yes.

Q: Do you not think that Indians in Burma should all join in the common electorate instead of claiming separate communal representation?

JN: Yes.

Q: There are 13 Indians out of 132 members in the House of Representatives. Do you think they are able to protect their interests?

JN: Certainly not, if it means in opposition to the great majority. But they may do so in cooperation with Burmans.

8. On the Separation of Burma[1]

The present constitutional deadlock in India is really a deadlock between Indian nationalism and British imperialism. The safeguards in the new constitution are designed to prevent the growth and the progress of Indian industries and business.

When the question of separation first arose, it was felt in India that it was being deliberately decided upon by the British Government, and consulting the Burmese for their opinion was merely an eyewash. It is in pursuance of a larger imperial policy in connection with the naval base at Singapore. The problem is interconnected and is for the purpose of strengthening the British power in the East. Another factor which influenced British policy is the presence of oil in Burma which is so important for power and transport in times of peace and war. It is foolish to suppose that by political separation both countries could be completely severed. Ideas and ideals have no barriers and cannot be prevented from spreading.

1. Speech at Rangoon, 17 May 1937. From *The Orient Gong* (a journal published in Rangoon), 2 June 1937.

The increase in the postal rates between India and Burma is a deliberate attempt to create barriers between the two countries. It is an astounding fact that articles would now cost more to be sent to Calcutta than to be sent to London, and I cannot conceive any intelligent man doing such a thing. I can understand the British Government deciding on the question but I cannot understand Burmese friends agreeing to it. To me it appears to be a psychologically hostile decision. I, therefore, appeal to you to do your utmost to remove any feelings of conflict between India and Burma.

9. Farewell to Burma[1]

What a magnificent welcome you have given me, men and women of Burma, Burmese and Indians alike! I came as a messenger of goodwill to you from the Indian National Congress and our people. I expected friendliness and goodwill in return. But the affection that you have showered on me in such abundant measure has overwhelmed me, and now that the time has come for me to bid you goodbye, I am sad at heart at leaving you and the many precious friends I have made here during these crowded thirteen days. This fair land is pleasant and beautiful, but pleasanter and more delightful are the people of this country, their bright young faces, their women with the laughter in their eyes. We in India who have responsibility cast on us for the future of our unhappy millions have a heavy burden to carry and it is not always easy to put on a brave smile when so much suffering and misery and difficulty surround us. I came to you tired and weary in spirit, but your joyous enthusiasm removed that weariness and lightened the weight of the burdens that I have to carry. Your eyes told me, even more eloquently than your verbal assurances, of the comradeship that is ours. Who will dare to break that union? Who will venture to tell us that we are apart from one another?

The separation of Burma has come. What of it? What difference can this little thing, imposed upon us by foreign will, make to us or to

1. Statement to the press, Rangoon, 20 May 1937. *The Hitavada*, 30 May 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 167-169.

the bonds that unite us, bonds of the immemorial past that have sunk deep into our consciousness, bonds of the present, of mutual self-interest and a common struggle for freedom, shining bonds of the future with all its hope and promise for our peoples? India, the ancient among nations, still lives and her youthful vitality in the present age has surprised the world. Even in her subjection and degradation, she has produced great sons and daughters, and dear to her children is this old mother of theirs in spite of her failings and weaknesses. To Burma, her sister, she gave the most precious of her gifts two thousands years ago or more. Long ages afterwards, the chain of circumstance brought the same fate to us, the same subjection, and bound us closer together in sorrow and suffering. We shall come out of this valley of the shadow also together.

Indians have come and settled down in Burma in large numbers and some are prosperous but many are poor exploited workers and peasants whose lot is similar to that of the Burmese worker or peasant. Many an Indian has made this country his homeland, for others it is an adopted land. For both, the prosperity of Burma spells happiness; the distress of Burma, misery and sorrow. More and more their interests are tied up with those of the children of the soil. How can differences of any moment arise between the two?

We in India claim that in all matters concerning us the interests of the people of India must be paramount and it is for them to decide ultimately what these interests are. So also in Burma. The interests of the Burmese masses must be paramount and it is for them to make final decisions regarding their interests.

The world is in ferment today and vast problems face all of us. There is a continuing crisis everywhere and catastrophe looms over the horizon. How shall we confront these problems, for we ignore them at our peril? Little men and little countries lose themselves in the petty things of life and are overwhelmed and swept away when the big things come. But the wise and the brave look further and deeper and prepare their country for a high destiny. That destiny calls to us; the future beckons to both India and Burma. Shall we not answer that call, marching in step together through the trials that may lie in store for us, strengthening and heartening each other, and winning freedom for our masses together?

And so fare you well, dear comrades of the past and of today. May good fortune be yours and may all of us have the courage and wisdom and perseverance which our countries demand of us.

10. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

S. S. Karoa
May 22, 1937

My dear Krishna,

After two strenuous weeks in Burma, Indira and I are going to Penang in Malaya. During this time in Burma I have been very largely cut off from Indian politics. Burmese newspapers are thoroughly bad and since the recent enhancement of postal and telegraphic rates between India and Burma, press services have been reduced. Apart from this I was kept on the move all the time, chiefly by air, and hardly had time to devote to newspapers.

I have received two of your letters dated the 26th of April and the 1st of May. About the Trotsky business, there is no question of my associating myself with it.[2] It is true that I was asked to give my name to an appeal for an enquiry into the Moscow trial. I have no intention of doing so. It is true that when I was in Europe I expressed a measure of sympathy for Trotsky because of what I considered unnecessarily harsh persecution. But recent events have not advanced him in my opinion. I must confess, however, that all these recent trials in Russia still remain partly a mystery to me....

My Burma visit proved to be very tiring. I covered a great part of the country, mostly by seaplane, and I think I succeeded in doing some good work. Quite a lot of mischief has been done during the last few years and there has been much tension between the Burmese and Indians. One of the evidences of this is the astonishing enhancement of postal rates which the new Burmese legislature has passed. Do you know that it is more expensive to send letters and parcels from Burma to India than it is to send them to England? This seems to me monstrous. All this ultimately is to the disadvantage of Burma, for it isolates her. British policy is to cut off Burma from India as much as possible, and the Burmese people have largely acquiesced in it. Politically and industrially they are behind India, and to be cut off from India means further domination of British interests. As a result of my visit some realisation of this state of affairs has taken place.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. Krishna Menon in his letter of 26 April 1937 suggested to Jawaharlal not to associate himself with the appeal against the trial of Trotsky and added that "even those who at the first trial were rather shocked now begin to understand the nature of this widespread and overt conspiracy against the U.S.S.R."

Another fact that might interest you is this: oil and petrol which are produced in Burma in large quantities are sold at a higher price in Burma than in England or in India. Right in the oilfields the price of petrol is higher than the English price. A more flagrant example of capitalist monopoly it is difficult to conceive. The Burma Oil Company is of course all powerful with its enormous resources and close affiliation with Anglo-Persian Shell and other oil combines.

We expect to be in Malaya 13 days. We shall go from Penang to Kuala Lumpur and Singapore returning to Penang from where we sail on June 5th. We reach Calcutta on the 12th and Allahabad, probably, on the 14th June. There is hardly time for you to communicate with me in Malaya. But in case you wish to do so and there is time to catch me there, my address is: 9 Holland Road, Kuala Lumpur. For cables: Care Publicity Kuala Lumpur.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

11. To Ba Maw[1]

Allahabad
July 21, 1937

Dear Dr. Ba Maw,[2]

I was astonished to receive yesterday a cutting from *The Rangoon Daily News* giving an interview from you.[3] Fortunately I received a telegram about the same time from Rangoon informing me that some of my colleagues had met you and pointed out to you that there had been a great misunderstanding. I understand that the misunderstanding will be cleared up in the press.

I write to you, however, even without waiting for further information from Burma, to assure you that the reports that seem to have been made about my criticising you are entirely without foundation. What

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-8/1937-38, pp. 201-202, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1893); a teacher and lawyer who entered politics in 1933; leader of the Burma Anti-Separation League and member, Burma Legislative Council, 1933-34; Education Minister, 1934-37, and Prime Minister of Burma, 1937-39; arrested in 1940 for opposing British policy; head of the state of Burma under Japanese occupation, 1943; interned in Japan, 1946; later resumed legal practice in Rangoon.
3. Ba Maw was reported to have said that he had been pained by certain remarks alleged to have been made by Jawaharlal during his visit to Burma.

astonishes me more than anything else is that a vulgar epithet should have been put in my mouth, a word which to my knowledge I have never used in regard to any person, much less about you.

I do not know when I am supposed to have referred to you in this or any other manner. In India I have made no reference at all in public or in private. In Burma I think I did refer to you in a public speech once or perhaps twice. The reference was brief and it related to what you were reported to have said during the Coronation ceremonies. I said, so far as I can remember, that the speech of yours did not fit in with the policy you claim to stand for in Burma. That I think is the sole criticism that I made. Generally, my attitude was one of keeping aloof from internal Burman politics, partly because I did not wholly understand them and partly because it would have been absurd for me to interfere during a brief visit. I was attracted to some extent by certain youth organisations who were struggling to develop a clearer ideology. My own impression of Burmese politics was, and I give it to you frankly for what it is worth, that there was not enough of ideology or clear principle about them. They were governed far more by personalities and the personal equation. So I welcomed the growth of new ideas of a socialist character among young men and attended some meetings organised by these young parties. Apart from this I took no part in Burmese politics. Of course wherever I went I spoke on political questions, both Indian and Burmese, because these questions interest me. Personally, I am convinced that the struggle for freedom in Burma or India is intimately connected and cannot be separated without injury to both. Our national movement is more advanced than the Burmese movement in spite of the fact that Burma has some very great advantages. Perhaps our very disadvantages in India have spurred us to greater endeavour.

Anyhow, I am not discussing large political issues in this letter. I began writing to you to express my regret that my name should have been associated with a vulgar and absurd word in criticism of you. I had the most hospitable and cordial welcome from the people of Burma and I came back, as I stated repeatedly, with great feelings of attachment and gratitude for those charming people. Even though Burma may be politically separated from India, I hold that we have much in common with each other and, in particular, that our fight for freedom is a common struggle. In this struggle if India can help Burma in any way I shall be most happy.

With regards to Mrs. Ba Maw,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. To Niranjan C. Galliara[1]

Allahabad
Feb. 9th, 1938

Dear Niranjanji,[2]
Your letter of the 31st January.[3] I am fully aware of the difficulties that you have pointed out. For the present, what we propose to do is to lay down two principles regarding Congress work in Burma. We do not want to consider Burma as completely cut off from India, and to treat it as we would treat, for instance, Malaya. On the other hand, we realise that we cannot treat Burma as a part of India like Bengal or any other province. We must therefore find a middle way. In our constitution, we shall just state that a Burma Congress committee can be formed with subordinate local committees and that the object of this committee will be in addition to the objective of the Indian National Congress, that is, the independence of India, to work for the freedom of Burma. This committee will not be confined to Indians but must include Burmans also. It is likely, of course, that few Burmans will join it. But the door must be open. This committee must consider the question from the point of view of the masses in Burma including the Burmese and Indians alike. It must not therefore function as a purely Indian organisation claiming rights for Indians as against the Burmans. For this purpose some Indian association can function.

How exactly the Burma Congress committee should be formed is a matter for further consideration on which we should like fuller suggestions from our friends in Burma.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-8/1937-38, p. 17, N.M.M.L.
2. An Indian political worker in Mandalay.
3. He referred to the strained relations between the Indians and the Burmese and made certain suggestions for making the Congress organisation in Burma a more effective body.

VISIT TO MALAYA

13. The Situation in India[1]

Question: What is the aim of the Congress?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The aim of the Congress is not self-government or Dominion Status. It aims at achieving complete independence for India.

Q: What have you to say about the emigration of Indians to Malaya? Is it desirable or not?

JN: I am not in a position to say whether it is desirable or not. I do not know enough of the subject. I am, however, inclined to think that Indians are bound to drift here owing to unemployment in their homeland. In the matter of jobs, however, I think the interests of the people of the country should come first. They should be given preference.

Q: What about the Indian children born and educated here, whose parents are permanently domiciled here?

JN: I think they should be treated as people of the country. Still, it is not a subject on which I would like to say much as I do not know enough about it.

Q: Would you please say a few words on the present situation in India?

JN: It is not merely a question of the provincial Governors giving the assurances demanded by the Congress. It is a conflict for power between British imperialism and Indian nationalism. The former has the power and the latter wants to get it from them. The struggle would go on till we get it. As it is, in the present situation, the new Government of India Act is not functioning as it is meant to function. In granting the electoral privilege, it was intended that the people should rule themselves through their elected representatives. The appointment of minority ministries by the Governors is a negation of all this.

1. Jawaharlal visited Malaya from 23 May to 4 June 1937. He gave this interview to the press at Penang on 23 May 1937. From *The Hindu*, 31 May 1937.

Q: What would happen if the provincial Governors refused to give the assurances asked for by the Congress?

JN: In three months or so, the provincial legislatures will have to meet to pass the budget, etc. Then, in the provinces, where the Congress holds the majority, the ministries will be defeated. It would then be open to the provincial Governors to do one of two things. They will either have to rule autocratically by certification or dissolve the legislatures and order a new election. In the latter case, the same situation will recur as the Congress will not assume office. The aim of the Congress Party is to put an end to the Act by creating a situation which would make it impossible for the Act to function.

Q: Do the "reserved powers" of the Governors constitute the chief objection to the Act?

JN: Yes, that is one objection. But the main objection is that the Congressmen have been denied the right by the British Parliament to decide what should be the constitution for India. India must decide that for herself, and the Congress has asked that a constituent assembly for the whole of India, elected by adult suffrage, should draw up the new constitution.

Q: But what is the ultimate aim of the Congress? It is Dominion Status or complete independence?

JN: It is definitely complete independence. There can be no Dominion Status for India. She is not on the same footing as Canada or South Africa or Australia. English jurists have not denied that the Statute of Westminster gives the dominions the right to secede. It only means that if any dominion secedes, Britain would not go to war against that dominion. In the case of India, it is different. If Britain loses India, she would cease to be an empire.

Q: If India gets severed from Britain, would she not fall a prey to some other great power—say, for instance, Japan?

JN: In the first place, while Japan is a great and an aggressive power, her economic situation is critical, and it is doubtful if she would finance a prolonged campaign against India. Japan is hemmed in on both sides by two hostile powers, Russia and America, neither of whom is likely to keep quiet and let her capture India. Then, there is China, next door to Japan, which, even though not very powerful, is hostile to Japan. It would be a better proposition for Japan to try to gain full control of China, but even this she has so far failed to do. For the past hundred

years or more, the question of India has dominated British foreign policy and her possession has given England great prestige, besides wealth and economic advantages. All the other powers envy England for her possession of India. If England went out, the other powers would not let anyone among them get control over India. This balance of power equation which keeps even small nations like the Balkan states intact would be a safeguard for India. Moreover, if India gains complete freedom, it would be due to a strong moral force within her which would make it impossible for the British to rule over her any more. If that force is strong enough to reject the British who have been entrenched in India for over a hundred years, I am sure it would be too strong to allow any new foreign power to gain control over India. When India gains complete freedom, she would proceed to build up her defences. Of course, that would take time.

Q: Is India fit enough to assume complete independence?

JN: This question really does not arise. The process of getting fit begins with complete independence. Fitness comes only with the exercise of power. It does not come when others are exercising power. It has been suggested to us that a gradual evolution may be more satisfactory than a sudden transition. Gradual evolution is not possible in the world of today. All around us there are sudden changes and revolutions are taking place.

Independence does not mean that India would be hostile to Britain. On the contrary, it is quite conceivable and likely too that India would enter into political as well as economic treaties with Britain. This would become so even during the transitory period. British experts would be invited to assist until Indians are trained to fill all the posts. Such experts would, of course, be under the control of the Indian government which would be elected by the constituent assembly representing the people of this country. I do not think there would be any difficulty about the transitory period.

Look at our North West Frontier Province. There has been trouble there for over a period of a hundred years, yet no solution has been found.[2] I think the British Government's approach is hostile, and is therefore doomed to failure. The problem is largely an economic one. The tribes indulge in raids because they have no food and other supplies. Russia has solved a similar problem on her frontier with the same people by colonisation. Such an arrangement is more satisfactory than punitive expeditions.

2. See pp. 468-472.

14. Address to the Indians in Malaya[1]

This country of Malaya had contacts with India a thousand years ago and here a large number of Indians came and settled down and colonised the country and for hundreds of years brought contacts of one kind or other. But our new relationship with Malaya should be one of friendship. You must make friends with the people and try to help them as far as possible.

I have come to Malaya not with the object of going from place to place doing propaganda on behalf of India. I have come here for rest and relaxation. Being here for the first time it is inevitable that I want to see my countrymen and understand their problems as we might not have the chance of meeting again. I want, above all, to look at you and I want you to look at me as we have got to understand each other and do big things in India.

There is the big struggle for freedom going on in India which concerns you and me, whether you live in India or outside. If India is a subject country, her children will be treated as subjects and slave people wherever they might go and I want you to realise that we can do very little for them unless we change the whole structure of the government.

This struggle for freedom is of very great importance and you must remember that we have arrived at a stage in the national struggle where there is no room for compromise, where there is no room for representations and petitions, and therefore when you want us to put forward all manner of representations and petitions we cannot do it. I want you to realise that in India today our nationalist struggle has arrived at a stage when the next step is a change-over of power, and when this change-over takes place there can be no compromise about it, because you cannot have two groups of authorities holding power.

There is a great deal of confusion about this matter. Some people imagine that all we want is the Indianisation of the services and getting more and more jobs for Indians as Governors and other high officials. Now you will be surprised to learn that, according to me, if every state job in India was held by Indians from the office of Viceroy down and no other change was made in the government, it would do no good to the few persons who got the jobs. Therefore the freedom of India does

1. Ipoh, 24 May 1937. From *The Hindu*, 2 June 1937.

not mean Indians holding big jobs. We are after something bigger than that. We are after the removal and the ending of the poverty of the Indian people.

The main problem in India is the problem of poverty and unemployment. We cannot get rid of that by giving some jobs. What is the remedy? Before we start trying any remedy for the removal of the disease of poverty, we must have complete freedom of action. We cannot tackle that problem while both our limbs remain tied up and, therefore, we must have freedom to go along the path of progress. So, we have got to remove the barriers. The biggest obstacle is the government which is carried on in the interests of the big financiers of the City of London. Today, the position is that British commerce has got us by the throat.

We shall have to do something which will affect the millions in India and we cannot do that under the system followed by the British Government. Unless we change the government we cannot change the structure. So, if we want to tackle the problem of poverty, we have to remove the stranglehold of imperialistic interests.

If we want to tackle these problems, we must have power first. That power must vest with the masses of India and everyone of the 350 millions of Indians, to whatever religion or caste he may belong, should have a share in that power and in that freedom. It is then only that we will be in a position to fight the problems of poverty and unemployment in India. Before we think of that we must think of removing the obstruction of foreign domination. Essentially the fundamental problem is the political freedom of India. I need hardly tell you how this great organisation of ours, the Congress, has united the people of India from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, and disciplined them to put up this fight. Today we are capable of united action. I have no doubt that the time is not far distant when India will be free.

There is a big conflict taking place in the world today. India is in ferment and the big countries of Europe are arming today and we are on the edge of a volcano. Big things are going to happen and the fate of the world may hang in the balance in a year or two. I hope that those who live here will follow the Indian struggle closely and give much help to it because your welfare is linked up with it.

I want the Indians in Malaya to know that although they are far away from their mother country they are not forgotten. If the people of India cannot do much for their countrymen abroad, it is because they are faced with difficult problems.

The aim of the people of India is the achievement of freedom and the future of Indians abroad depends on the future of India.

15. On His Visit to Malaya[1]

A Malayan daily has suggested that apparently there is some secret motive behind my visit to this country. I want to state that I do not act secretly or furtively and I have given expression to whatever I have had in my mind.

My visit to Malaya has been sudden. I had been attracted to the country because I knew that it is beautiful and because my mind had been full of the historical connections between Malaya and India from remote ages past. As soon as I came to this country, it brought to my mind what had happened 1,500 or 2,000 years ago, how large numbers of Indians had come here, lived here, colonised the place and built up magnificent citadels. I found evidence in the language and customs of the people which reminded me of my own country, and what I saw made me feel more and more at home. My mind also goes back to the past more and more.

I may tell you how I became interested in politics. The world is in a queer state today and my country is also in a queer state. I could not tolerate the conditions I saw, and therefore I fought with all the strength in my body to change the conditions I did not like and perforce, whether I liked it or not, I have become a politician. How could any Indian help it? What we find in India will inevitably be found in any country under foreign domination.

This nationalist fervour is born out of the conditions that prevail in the country. In its broad sweep come many other activities of the nation. While nationalism is a good thing, it is also a bad thing since, although it is inevitable, you are not free in your own country because it makes you think of one matter only. The cultural and other aspects of life are then relegated to the background.

In your address you made a reference to the even tenor of life enjoyed in this country. I would, however, say that no one can escape getting rude shocks common to all of us. Today, we see the world in a tremendous ferment. It is not, perhaps, wise to think that you are cut off from these upheavals. I wish to urge upon you the need for considering these problems from a longer perspective.

1. Speech at Selangor, 25 May 1937. *From The Hindu*, 2 June 1937.

I want you to think of the history of India. How many of you know that in the Indus valley there have been dug up the remains of an ancient civilisation? That they dug up a magnificent city which is supposed to be over 6,000 years or more old and during these 6,000 years that have passed, a lot of things have taken place. Many things have happened to the advantage of India and many things have happened to her disadvantage; there have been many periods of progress and decay but India has carried on. When you take this long perspective of 6,000 years of history, it seems like the end of a chapter or a story.

I also want you to think of the Indian National Congress in a certain way. We want freedom. Of course, we want to get rid of the foreign and alien control over our country. That was the basis of the movement twenty years ago. Ever since then, the movement has been directed to the strengthening of our people because the great problem before India is that our people, after long years of subjection, have not only lost hope but also lost all backbone and spirit. They go about with bent bodies and bent heads, sunken eyes and sunken stomachs with very little food to eat and no hope at all, and that is a terrible thing because physical domination is bad for a people. It is far worse than mental domination which comes after long physical domination. But the change that has come over the country in the last 16 or 17 years is a remarkable one. That change has been brought about under the most difficult circumstances. We had to do this in face of opposition from the state machinery. We had to do it under the most inhibiting conditions created by widespread poverty and starvation. Although we are very far from what we want for our people, we have advanced a sufficiently long way because we put the high ideals of the country before us. We do not believe in petty politics or in playing tricks with our rulers to give us freedom. We have got some measure of freedom because we have concentrated on the strength of the people, on the unity of the people of India; because we have built a firm foundation on the reverses and the oppression suffered by us.

Our movement is not a movement of the upper or middle classes or the aristocrats. Our movement has, from the beginning, been launched with the active support of the peasantry and workers of India. We have put our faith in them and have helped them. They now form the backbone of our struggle. This struggle has been carried on by the peasantry, not by a handful of people, but by unknown thousands.

Remember this that if you want to help in the struggle for the freedom of India, you must do your utmost to foster unity and raise the spirit of the people. You must function together. You must meet together, discuss your problems together, and if any troubles come to

one, you must suffer together. Only then will you be entitled to fight together.

I bring with me the greetings and good wishes of the Congress to Indians abroad, but I also wish to talk to you about your troubles. Many people have complained to us that the Congress does not do much for Indians overseas. The Congress cannot do much for them or anyone else at the present moment. The time may come when the Congress—rather the Indian people—would be free in India, when they may be able to do something for you. But I want you to remember this: whether we can do much for you or not, we have not forgotten the Indians who have gone abroad. I want Indians to go abroad and to be on friendly terms with other people and not to think of their advantage at the cost of the people of the country where they are settled.

In the end, I thank you for your address of welcome. I also thank those who have presented me with addresses and purses at the Indian Association. I apologise to them for not being able to speak at the association. I will remember this beautiful country when I return to the valley of sorrow—India.

16. Address to Indians in Singapore[1]

In this cosmopolitan audience gathered together in this cosmopolitan city, it is perhaps difficult to pick out the language which will suit all of us; also, my own linguistic attainments are limited, but I suppose and I have been told that it would be best if I spoke mostly in the English language. I have been only three or four days in Malaya, but I have almost lost count of time, because in these three or four days there have been several events, and so many things have happened. I have gathered so many new impressions that my mind is full of them and I almost seem to think that I have been here for many weeks. And I have hardly had time during this interval to separate or ponder over these new impressions of mine, but generally speaking, may I say that those impressions are happy impressions, pleasant impressions? Indeed, I knew that when I came to Malaya, I would find a beautiful land and many friends, and I expected a warm welcome here from my own countrymen and the people. I expected that welcome, but I must confess that I have been a little surprised at the extreme cordiality and warmth of the welcome I have received wherever I have gone. Indeed,

1. 26 May 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 13 June 1937.

to some extent they have been boisterous. To some extent they have come in the way of, what the newspapers say, my "quest for health and rest", but it does not matter. I am strong enough, I may tell you.

May I say I have been slightly hurt and somewhat amused to read in the newspapers occasionally discussions of various antics of mine when I am facing crowds? I have been described as possessing flashes of temper. It has been said that a certain place I was annoyed because the chairman of the reception committee was not present. I do hope that I am not all that. I may occasionally lose my temper, but I hope that I am not so discourteous as to behave in such a manner.

The fact is, I consider myself rather an expert in dealing with crowds. I have dealt with so many crowds, such enormous crowds as running to a lakh and over at a time, without any police help or any other help, and may I add that I found it easier to deal with the crowds without the help of any volunteers, unless the volunteers were specially trained for the purpose? So I consider myself an expert with crowds if I may say so, and when I see a crowd of persons pushing and jostling one another especially when there are children, the desire to curb them and produce order comes to me, and therefore I often jump down and go into the crowd, backwards and forwards, and in this way occasionally divert their attention from one direction to another. And when I do this, the crowd of journalists seems to mistake it for rage on my part.

The welcome I have received has been extraordinarily warm and I want you to think of that and try to find the reason for it, because it is not enough for me to say that I am a popular person, that people like to see me, or that there is something particularly attractive about me. That may be. Perhaps, I believe, I have a measure of popularity. I may have developed certain tricks to attract the crowd.

But there is something beyond this. It seems something more than that. Why does this happen? And I want you to remember also that if I attract such big crowds in Malaya, what happens in India?

In India, I have almost become an intolerable nuisance to my friends and to those who are not my friends, because it is hardly possible for me to move without enormous crowds surrounding me. I don't know where to go or to move, although from long practice I feel at home in the midst of crowds. The bigger the crowd, the more at home I feel.

In India, wherever I go crowds come to me. If I go to any place, they are there, and I do not know where to go so as to be away from them, unless I retire into the remoteness of a Himalayan fastness.

I went to Burma, partly—as I came to Malaya—to se[illegible]ma, and to meet the Burmese people, and partly also in quest of [illegible] change. But this is what I found everywhere.

I have found people talking in a curious way—if I may say so without offence—and there were references made in some of the newspapers here about agitators and this and that, and my talking politics and not praising sufficiently the British Government and the British Empire. Well, I am afraid such phrases stick in my throat, and I am unaccustomed to talk all the time about the weather. I want a little more serious topic for conversation, and I am not going to insult you with frivolities. You gather here in your tens of thousands, and I want to tell you what I have in my mind, and what the millions of people in India think, and I want people to realise, whether they agree or disagree with me, that I think it would be discourteous of me to talk to them except about matters that are important to me, important to India, and I hope important to them.

What is this talk about agitators and my being anti-British and anti-this or pro-that? I thought that public men, dealing with public affairs, did not use such trite sayings nowadays. They talk of agitators as if millions of people are moved by a few of them, and they talk of them as if the world is in an uproar because of a few misguided persons. That simply shows that they have lost all sense of proportion. They do not understand what is happening.

Think of what is happening in India today, and perhaps from these vast crowds gathered here you will get an inkling into the Indian heart and mind, a glimpse of what India is today, and what is happening or likely to happen to India, for India is moved by something which is shaking her to her foundations, and the many millions of her inhabitants—many of them unconsciously—are being swayed by a current which sometimes brings about vast changes in the national history. These things happen sometimes in the life of nations. Those who understand it, it is all right for them, but those who do not, they go under, and get crushed by the current of humanity. You may like it or dislike it, but these things come when they choose to come.

You have a recent example in Spain. When certain geological changes take place under the earth, certain cracks appear, and there is a rumbling and a shaking of cities and populations. The people living in those cities are not consulted by those geological agents which bring about the earthquakes. In the same way you have human earthquakes in the world, when enormous currents move human beings in their millions, and if you know history at all, you will find that human earthquakes have come and shaken empires.

An intelligent person seeks to understand events, and so you had better understand the world of today. It is not a question of liking it or disliking it. If I walk in the street and stumble over a stone,

it is useless and foolish of me to curse that stone. Rather I have to blame myself for not having noticed it and avoided it. And so you had better understand the world of today, if you want to be prepared for the world of tomorrow. It is going to make a lot of difference not only to Indians, be they in India or outside, but also to the entire world.

India is a very big country. By its very size it makes a difference to the world just like China. Therefore what happens in China or India is of the greatest moment to the world because both countries have become a big problem for it.

You may think that China is a weak nation today, and not strong enough to combat or face aggression from outside. But do not think that a great nation like China, which has been carrying on for several thousands of years with many ups and downs, is going to collapse because some foreign power has attacked her territories. China will rise again and play an important role in world affairs. And similar will be the position of India.

India, in the course of thousands of years of history, has had many ups and downs, but she has come up again and again, and if you know anything about this history of India, you will know something of the vitality of the people.

You who live here in Malaya may be largely acquainted with the Indian "coolie" as he is called with some contempt. It is true perhaps because India herself has sunk to the coolie ranks among nations, and perhaps that contempt is justified, but remember that if India has gone down, she has also the vitality to rise again and is going to play a big role in the history of Asia and in the history of the world. The whole of Europe today is in a ferment and nations are ceaselessly making armaments. If you go to Europe today you will find a tremendous state of tension. You cannot be sure when and on what day you will find yourself in the midst of war. There is tension not only in Europe but all over the world. No doubt it is a very big problem in Europe at present. But, as a student of history, I can also tell you that the two major problems of the twentieth century will certainly be China and India. The problems posed by China and India may for the present remain confined to their respective countries, but the internal changes taking place in these countries can better be appreciated if we look at them in the background of the world situation.

You invited me and you were good enough to accord me this great welcome. This is a welcome which is obviously not meant for me but for that great movement which I represent. In your welcome address you have expressed your heart-felt sympathy for the struggle for freedom in India. It is right that you should send your greetings and goodwill to the

Indian National Congress, which has disciplined the people of India and which is holding aloft the torch of freedom in India. That great movement is something which every Indian should be proud of—not only be proud, but should strive to strengthen it in every possible way.

A certain newspaper wants to remind me that I have come here as a guest and I should not therefore forget the duties of a guest. I hope I have not forgotten my duties as a guest, but I am not aware that it is the duty of a guest to go about indulging in platitudes and suppress much that he has in mind and heart. I do not like saying anything about matters which I do not fully understand. About matters which I do understand, I like to have my say whenever anybody asks me or whenever I have the opportunity. Therefore if you ask me—and many people have asked me—about Malayan politics, labour conditions of Malaya and the rest, I hesitate to say anything because I do not know much about them. Probably I know more than many of you, but I do not have expert knowledge on these subjects which would entitle me to speak on them with authority. But I do consider myself an expert relating to matters pertaining to Indian politics and economics.

I have been shown every courtesy by all I have come into contact with, the government officials included, but that does not mean that when I meet my own countrymen, I must not speak on subjects which are of common interest to us.

This country, Malaya, is a pleasant country, and a very beautiful country, and the people are a delightful people, and may I say that the newspapers of Malaya have given me an agreeable surprise after my two weeks in Burma? In Burma the newspapers had little news, and I felt myself cut off from the outside world and India. Since coming here, I have found newspapers giving more news of the world, and the experience has been pleasant, because as a politician, I read a large number of newspapers. Secondly, newspapers interest me as I always think that if I have no other job, I might perhaps undertake the job of a journalist.

Generally speaking, this country, owing to a certain fortunate set of circumstances, has become politically stagnant. It is so, I feel it, I see it. Why? Because, unique perhaps among all the countries in the world, Malaya is overflowing with wealth. The government of the country is flushed with money, and despite depression, etc., it is a rich country.

Wherever you may go in Europe or Asia, you will find those countries plagued with the problems of poverty, unemployment and various other ills. And you will find the governments struggling hard to balance their

budgets; but the Malayan Government, I believe, has no such difficulties to face.

Where does the money come from? It comes mainly from tin and rubber. You are rich on account of your mineral and other natural resources. You have got this tremendous bounty from nature. You are entitled to it and it is a fact that Malaya has an abundance of and can produce these goods which are so necessary both in peace and in wartime. Therefore you are likely to do well financially, and as such a political and economic crisis is not likely to overtake this country. That is why I say that when the rest of the world is concerned with tackling the problems relating to budgets and unemployment, you are in the happy position of having adequate financial resources. But this economic stability may result in complacency which may make you forget the problems of the world and the tension about which I spoke to you. This tension makes life hard for the average European. You should not forget that the great changes taking place in the world are bound to affect you also. How can you escape those changes notwithstanding your economic wealth? And, therefore, you have to think and understand these problems.

This pleasant and magnificent city of Singapore is situated on one of the great highways of the world, linking the Middle East to the Far East. You occupy one of the most vital parts of the world. Yours is an international city as all kinds of people live here, and transact business, and in a sense you ought to develop the international mind, and consider international problems in their true perspective.

Although I am a nationalist, fighting for national freedom, I try not to succumb to this nationalistic feeling because I know that Indian affairs affect not only India but other parts of the world also. I therefore try to have an international outlook and try to understand what is happening all over the world. And thereby I try to get a true perspective of the world problems.

Just before I came to the platform, somebody sent me a typed list of questions for answering them. To me the questions appear to be silly. They have come from what is called the self-respect movement of Madras, a party now known as the Justice Party,[2] which has been loyal to the British Government. The questions put to me show that they are not worthy of any consideration. I regard the present self-respect movement in Madras singularly futile and very anti-nationalistic.

2. In 1917, T.M. Nair and P.T. Chettiar organised a party named the South Indian Liberal Federation, popularly known as the Justice Party, whose principal aim was to promote the interests of the non-Brahmins.

One of the questions put to me is whether I could say why the Congress Party cannot support the insurgents and rebels in Spain as they are nationalistic in character. It shows complete ignorance. In Spain today, you see, the rebels are trying to crush the democratic government.

Well, so far as I am concerned as also anyone else who cares for democracy and freedom, all our sympathy is with the people of Spain and against fascism and militarism. Therefore I am glad to say that although our resources are limited, we have extended to Spain some medical help and thus we have, to a little extent, helped them to fight against Franco and his fascist allies.[3]

I thank you all once again for your cordial welcome and reception.

3. Dr. Madan Atal went to Spain on 13 April 1937 to serve the wounded and the sick of the International Brigade. Some money was also collected in India and England for this purpose.

17. Women Should Not Be Weak[1]

I do not want to address you as 'ladies'. I consider the word to be rather vulgar. I would prefer to call you 'women'.

I am sorry I have come here for only a few minutes, rushing in and rushing out, because I always like to meet young girls and women of my country, to talk to them, and tell them what I think about India, and hear what they think on the subject, because I hold rather definite and also strong views on subjects relating to the women of India. But I do not—I must confess to you—like the woman who is like the flower in the field, and the lily in the valley, which just blooms and does nothing else. I do not like weaklings. I like physically fit men and women who can face mobs if necessary, and during the last 17 or 18 years India has produced large numbers of such women, who cannot only face a mob, but control a mob, if necessary, single-handed.

There was a time, you remember, when the idea of allowing a woman to go anywhere by herself was considered most unusual. She was to be accompanied by men to help her in case of an attack, and she was of course considered quite helpless and not capable of doing anything to defend herself. Well, I suppose there are such women in India still, but they

1. Reply to an address of welcome presented by the Indian Ladies Union, Singapore, 27 May 1937. From *The Indian* (Singapore), 12 June 1937.

are becoming fewer and fewer, and there are now large numbers of women who are not only prepared to look after themselves, but after the whole country, if necessary. We must have a spirit of self-reliance in our womenfolk, and let me tell you that the biggest event that has happened in India in the last few years relates to our women.

We had civil disobedience movements. All manner of things have happened but the biggest and most heartening event in India has been this change in women. In 1930, they came into the field. Many of them had never left the shelter of their homes. When their sons, husbands and brothers were sent to prison, they came out of the shelter of their homes and took over the duties of those who had been imprisoned, and they discharged those duties excellently and much better than men and because of that India has risen in the estimation of the outside world. Remember, a country is finally judged by the standard of its womenfolk and not of the menfolk. If the womenfolk are backward, uncivilised, illiterate and uncultured, then their country is no good, no matter what their menfolk be. Therefore, you must think in those terms today and derive benefit from the experience of the Indian women and learn to be self-reliant.

I just cannot appreciate the idea of women covering themselves with horrid jewels, like prisoners' chains. They are the things I cannot stand. I tell you, persons covered with brilliant chains and glittering diamonds really repulse me. I may however say that women should not neglect themselves. They should take some care of themselves and their looks. We appreciate it. We look for self-reliance, character and beauty in women, but do not want them to be like dolls.

18. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Port Dickson (Malaya)
May 29, 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,
I have just received your letter of the 22nd May. I have been having a very strenuous time in Malaya where the public receptions have been overwhelming. In many ways the Indian community here is very backward, specially so in politics. A comparison with the Chinese in almost every department of life and business is very much to the disadvantage

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.

of the Indians. My visit has shaken them up a great deal and created some stir all over the Malay Peninsula.

We are sailing on the 5th June from Penang. We reach Rangoon on the 8th and the same day we take a Scindia boat for Calcutta. This is a slow method of travelling and I will not reach Calcutta before the 13th June evening. But I want to have some experience of travelling by an Indian-owned liner. This also gives me an opportunity to visit Akyab and Chittagong. Probably I shall remain in Calcutta for a day or two as I want to consult some doctors about Indira. She has been keeping rather poorly and managed to get a little hurt in a motor accident in Singapore. Fortunately the injury was slight.

It has been difficult for me to follow developments in India. But my general impression is, and this is confirmed by your letter, that not very much is happening. Newspapers here and in Burma give little in the way of Indian news. And then I rush about so much that I hardly have time to read them. I am now, however, having some kind of rest for four days at a quiet sea-side place. We arrived here last night and even a day has made some difference and refreshed me.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

that I wished to see. They were good enough to send me some government publications and Mr. Srinivasa Sastri's report[2] on Indian labour conditions in Malaya. I am sorry that, owing to my heavy programme, I could not take advantage of those courteous and friendly offers, except to visit some labour lines in Singapore and Penang. Many of my countrymen here were also desirous that I should acquaint myself personally with labour conditions.

The responsibility for not paying these personal visits of inspection is thus largely mine. The fault certainly is not of the labour department or of friends here, and I may not therefore speak with any authority about the actual conditions in which Indian labourers live. Nor indeed would I have been able to do so even if I had paid a few visits of inspection. The problem is a much deeper one requiring careful study and it is this basic aspect that interests me especially.

I had occasion to discuss labour questions with officers of the labour department and with others, and during my brief stay in Port Dickson I have read some literature on the subject, including Mr. Sastri's report and the Central Indian Association's memorandum on it. I have also met a number of Indian labourers and seen crowds of them at various meetings.

All this would not entitle me to form final opinions about the living conditions and certain other specific problems discussed in the numerous reports. But behind these specific problems lie more important considerations about which even a newcomer and a layman may have something to say.

The first line of enquiry that suggests itself to me when I consider labour conditions in any country is about labour organisations. Are there any trade unions or other workers' organisations? Are they more or less independent or are they of the kind that are called company unions? Are they strong enough to protect the interests of the workers? What is the law on the subject?

Through generations of conflict and suffering in the industrial countries of the West, labour has learnt this primary lesson: that only by organising itself and developing its own strength through unions, can it hope to safeguard its interests and advance them. It has to contend against the organised power of the modern capitalist machine; it has to bargain with this power. What chance has poor labour got in this

2. Srinivasa Sastri had been deputed by the Government of India in November 1936 to study the conditions of Indian labour in Malaya. His report made several recommendations for improving the economic status and the living conditions of the Indian emigrants.

tussle unless it has unity and organisation at its back also? When we speak of trade unions we think invariably of workers' unions. But chambers of commerce and planters' associations and other employers' organisations are as much trade unions as any labourers' union. They have great financial resources at their back, intelligence and education, usually the support of the state, and the power to impose their own terms by threat of dismissal, involving starvation and misery. This has nothing to do with the merits or demerits of individual employers. It is a group or a class we have to consider which inevitably thinks in terms of that group's advantage. The strongest of workers' unions cannot face the employers' unions on equal terms. Unorganized workers are helpless before them.

The state (speaking in terms of a capitalist state) may help the workers' cause to some extent and protect their interests occasionally. But the state can seldom do much if the workers themselves are weak and disorganised. The best of the state's officers, who sincerely desire the betterment of labour, will be unable to meet or check the organised might of the employers who often have a dominating influence over the state. Sometimes it may be said that these employers and financiers are, for all practical purposes, the state. But even apart from this direct control or influence, there are other indirect but equally important influences at work. The high officials of the state belong to the same class or group, educationally, socially, culturally and economically, as the controllers of capital and labour, and inevitably it is easier for them to think in terms of that class.

Long ago Disraeli wrote about the two worlds,[3] the world of the rich and the world of the poor, and how they were entirely apart from one another, with next to nothing in common. He wrote about the English people in nineteenth century England. How much more is that applicable today in other countries. And when one adds to this the differences of race and language and an entirely different cultural background, the distance separating the two becomes vast. There may be sympathy and goodwill but it is difficult to understand even intellectually the other's viewpoint. Far more difficult is it to have an emotional awareness of the other's feelings, and it is only this that brings true understanding.

Even if the efforts of the state are helpful, and they undoubtedly are so sometimes, they are of the benevolent parental type, which do not

3. Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881); Conservative Prime Minister of England, 1868, and 1874-80; in his novel, *Sybil*, published in 1845, he spoke of two nations, that of the rich and of the poor.

encourage self-reliance and inner strength. To advance a community, self-reliance must be encouraged, and therefore an essential condition for the betterment of the workers is the promotion of trade unions and workers' organisations. The state itself will be able to do more for labour then than otherwise.

At present, so far as I know, there is little in the nature of labour organization in Malaya. I was told, however, and I was glad to hear it, that the labour department would welcome the formation of trade unions. I was told so in the course of a discussion about last year's strike of municipal workers in Singapore. In this strike, I understand that the labour department supported the strikers' demand for a higher wage. The strike was partially successful and wages were increased though not to the level asked for. The labour department is still urging, I believe, that the full demand of the municipal workers be agreed to. I hope, therefore, that every effort will be made to develop workers' unions in Malaya.

But what exactly are we driving at when we talk of labour and its future? Is it just to maintain a large force of labour, with a certain minimum degree of security and comfort, ever supplying larger dividends to industry, but with no other vital change in their condition? Or do we think in terms of raising them educationally, culturally and economically ever to higher levels, and making them true citizens of the country they live in and of the larger world? Surely, only the second alternative is worth working for, and it is the only possible way if one takes a long view. The rapid and progressive growth of the machine technique in industry, a growth which means ultimately greater production of wealth and higher standards for all, has strangely resulted in paralysing industry to some extent in the most highly developed industrial countries of the world by increasing unemployment and lessening purchasing power. The growth of man must keep pace with the growth of the machine or else both will go under.

So used were we in the past to a lack of the good things of life that we built up an economics of scarcity. When plenty came we thought and acted in the same way, and even went to the extent of destroying large quantities of commodities and restricting production to fit in with our out-of-date economics. It was an astonishing spectacle only possible in our topsy-turvy world, and it was a foolish attempt, for we must live up to science and the machine and their inevitable consequences. Crisis came and slump and depression and we imagine now that we are out of the wood. But the conflict between an age of plenty and an economics of scarcity continues.

A socialist has a clear and scientific way out of this muddle. He would introduce an economics of plenty to fit in with this age of plenty. He would encourage production to its furthest limit and he would produce for consumption and not for profit, and all the profits of industry would go to the community, ever raising its standards as the wealth of the country increases. There is no limit to this process as there is no limit to the progress and advancement of man. Private monopoly would be avoided and wages and salaries would be so adjusted as to give enough purchasing power to the community to consume all the goods produced. There can then be no unemployment and there can be no trade slump.

But socialism is a far cry in Malaya today. Let us think in terms of an intelligent capitalism. How did President Roosevelt try to meet the crisis that was strangling the United States? In order to revive a languishing trade and industry, he insisted on raising wages and shortening hours of work, and strengthened the trade unions and encouraged them to deal directly with the employers. The increased wages brought fresh purchasing power to the masses and business revived and the wheels of industry went round. For, under modern conditions of mass production, it is essential to have mass consumption. Without the latter the former cannot continue, and for mass consumption the masses must have the necessary purchasing power provided for them. And ultimately this leads to far greater profit to industry.

In Malaya probably the labour population is never thought of as consumers. To some extent this is true owing to the nature of Malaya's principal industries and the lack of other industries. But a closer analysis would demonstrate that the wealth and prosperity of Malaya would increase greatly if the purchasing power of the masses was continually raised.

Fortunately for Malaya, nature has blessed the country to an unusual degree and it has not suffered so far from the ills that afflict the world. Why should it not utilize this natural wealth to raise all the people who live here to ever higher standards, educationally, culturally and in other ways? Every investment of this kind pays itself back a hundred-fold in the human material that it produces. If England and France had the standards of life that prevail here and had these material resources, would they not use them to the fullest extent to raise the living standards of their masses, as well as their educational and cultural standards? A country is judged not by the few people at the top but by the masses at the bottom; a city is judged not by its few palaces but by its many slums.

Therefore I think that wages should be kept at as high a level as possible. A maintenance level is not enough. Labour is at least as

important, if not more so, as capital in the development of industry, and labour should share in the prosperity of the industry, as it is made to suffer when industry languishes. In many countries industry is in a bad way and may find some difficulty in raising labour's standards. Not so in fortunate Malaya. Why then should not all the people who live in this country, and especially the labourers and workers, out of whose efforts wealth is created, benefit fully by this abundance? It is bad business to divert the abundance to unspent surpluses and abnormal dividends.

I do not know why the wage figure for 1928 has been made into something like an ideal standard for Indian labour. What mystic virtue attaches to that year or to that figure? Even the present conditions of industry patently permit a substantial increase. And I fail to see entirely why Indian labour should be paid less than Chinese or other labour. Apart from other and vital considerations which affect the Indian labourer and his present relatively low standard of living, there are national aspects of this question, and India must claim equality of status and wage with others.

It is perfectly true that in India the wages are often lower (though not always so) than the wages paid here. There are obvious reasons for that but we need not go into them here. Why in any event should that be a measuring rod for wages here? Why should we not take the standard of wages in England or America as a measure? And then it must be remembered that a person who leaves his home and goes to another country expects and needs more.

These are general considerations which seem to me to apply to Indian labour here, apart from any particular aspects of the problem. But it would be highly desirable to have a close study and an economic survey made of the condition of Indian labourers. Such an enquiry would include family budgets and the whole question of indebtedness.

Labour has always attached great importance to the number of hours of work. The whole history of the labour movement all over the world is one long struggle to reduce hours of work. It is now well recognized that eight hours a day is the maximum desirable limit, and in some countries the working day is smaller. I think it is eminently desirable to reduce the working day to eight hours in Malaya.

If it is our purpose to raise the human material in the labour areas to higher levels, then education becomes a vital necessity. I feel that there is tremendous room for improvement in this respect and the fullest opportunities not only for primary but secondary education should be provided for.

Some criticism has been addressed to me and sometimes what I have said or done has not been approved. I refer to this in no spirit of irritation, for I like criticism as it helps me to look at myself through others' eyes, to consider a question from various viewpoints, to try to think straight in the tangled web of modern life. And if a newspaper will not criticise, who will? That surely is one of the principal functions of the public press, and the press of today has a tremendously important part to play in public affairs.

I have been accused of a breach of etiquette, of a lack of good manners, of discourtesy to a host, of not behaving as I should have behaved. I am inevitably a partisan in such matters, and howsoever I might try to consider them impersonally and objectively, my sub-conscious self would incline me to partiality. Still I examine my own behaviour and try to discipline my actions and spoken words. It would not be surprising if an unending succession of crowds and functions resulted in a tension of the nerves and this led me astray occasionally. I live a strange, abnormal life.

How far have I been guilty of these various misdeeds? I have wondered to what extent these accusations were due to the strange novelty to Malaya of what I did or said. Into the pleasant, though superficial, drawing-room atmosphere I came with the dust of the field and factory and market place sticking to me, and my appearance or manners were not in keeping with the notions of the drawing room. Elsewhere the drawing room and country house have ceased to dominate the scene and the world of reality outside is continually knocking at their doors and sometimes pushing itself in. I came to Malaya with no particular intention of meeting crowds and addressing them, but rather for a pleasant and peaceful holiday in soothing tropical scenery. But the crowds came to me and enveloped me, and their shining eyes and abundant affection found an echo in my heart, and I told them of what they yearned to hear, of our struggle in India, of our hopes and fears, of the new strength and self-reliance that was ours, of our determination to put an end to poverty and unemployment, of the long night that must pass away before the coming dawn.

The crowds that came had not been trained in the manners of the drawing room, and if the arrangements were not ample enough there was much pushing and disorder. And when I adopted other methods to end the confusion, some people thought that I was merely losing my temper. Much of the confusion was due to the fact that many could not see me. I mounted a table to enable these persons to see me. Or on other occasions I pushed my way through the crowd to ease the strain at a particular place where the pressure was great.

abundant natural resources I have felt, strangely enough even more than elsewhere, the tragedy of the world. For Malaya came to represent to me for the moment the natural wealth of the world. With this great store that nature has provided us with, and with the enormous power to exploit these resources through science and industry, could we not make of this world of ours a paradise for all? And yet, in spite of all this present plenty and future promise of far more, we quarrel over trifles, and man exploits man and nation exploits nation, and the fearful prospect of international catastrophe darkens our lives. But the day will come when we shall find the way out of this complicated maze and cooperate with each other to the common advantage and advancement of man.

21. Indians and Sinhalese in Malaya[1]

A question has often been put to me as to the contacts that should exist between the Indians and Ceylonese in Malaya. An interview with me that has recently appeared in the press contains one or two statements in regard to this matter which are liable to create some misapprehension and so I should like to express myself clearly on this subject.

Nationalist as I am in regard to Indian freedom, I do not look upon contacts with other peoples from a narrow nationalist viewpoint. My very nationalism is based on an internationalism, and I am very conscious of the fact that the modern world, with its science and world trade and swift methods of transport, is based on internationalism. No country or people can isolate themselves from the rest of the world, and if they attempt it, they do so at their peril and the attempt is bound to fail in the end. I do not believe in a narrow autarchy. But the internationalism that I look forward to is not one of common subjection, imposed from above, but a union and a cooperation of free nations for the common good. It is this kind of world order that will bring peace and progress to mankind.

Force of circumstances makes us in India act and think on the nationalist plane. That is inevitable for all Indians wherever they might live, for our primary objective must be national freedom. But I want them

1. Statement to the press, Singapore, 2 June 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 13 June 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 175-177.

to develop at the same time the international habit of mind and to develop contacts with other countries and peoples. We have a big part to play in the future. Let us prepare ourselves for it.

These contacts will inevitably be greater with those countries and peoples with whom we have common interests and whose world policy might ultimately coincide with ours. Thus I think that India and China have a great deal in common and their future cooperation will not only be advantageous to both, but of benefit to the world at large.

I have therefore urged upon Indians in Malaya to develop the closest cooperation with the Malayans and the Chinese as well as others living in this country. The Ceylonese are nearer to us in many ways than any other people outside India and it is only natural that our association with them should be close. I make no distinction in this matter between the Jaffna Tamils and the Sinhalese or other Ceylonese. India has been a kind of elder sister to Ceylon for long ages past.

This should be the general outlook of the Indians here. But it is obvious that cooperation to develop on sound lines must be based on some common policy. A so-called cooperation mainly thinking in terms of jobs or privileged positions for a few persons is not true cooperation; it is nearly allied to jobbery and I am not interested in it. Strength comes to a community from self-reliance and not from a few state jobs that might be given to it. Even the state jobs come ultimately more to those who have this strength and self-reliance.

Cooperation must also be in both ill fortune and good fortune. To share in the good fortune and to exploit the other's ill fortune is not cooperation and does not enhance the good name of a community.

There seems to have been some argument as to whether Ceylon Tamils should be classed as Indians. Some such interpretation has apparently been given in Malaya. This seems to be wrong in fact and likely to create a split among the Ceylonese which is not desirable. It is obviously not true in the political sense of the word. But a more important consideration is that such an interpretation will encourage a cleavage among the people of Ceylon and we should be no parties to this. We want the people of Ceylon to weld themselves into a strong unit, which will live in close cooperation and friendship with India. If the Ceylonese and Indians are to be classed together for any purpose we have no objection. We would welcome this as we would welcome an even larger association. But let this be done in a straight way by calling them Indians and Ceylonese and not by way of subterfuge or forced interpretation.

In regard to the children of the soil, it is right that their interests should have precedence over others. But if Indians or others are born

IN MALAYA, MAY 1937

IN PYUNTAZA, BURMA, MAY 1937

here and have made Malaya their permanent home, why should they not be considered also as children of the soil?

22. To Fellow Countrymen in Malaya[1]

During my brief stay in this green and pleasant land I have addressed many audiences and had my say about many matters. I have discussed the present condition of India and what we are doing there and I have ventured to suggest what Indians in Malaya might do. Inevitably they have been vague suggestions and generalisations, for specific problems can be dealt with in detail only by a person more acquainted with them than I could claim to be. On the eve of my departure from Malaya, as the train is carrying us to Penang, I am attempting to put some of these suggestions into more definite shape. I have already written separately about Indian labour here and the desirability of close contacts between Indians and others.[2]

Indians here have three duties to face, three kinds of responsibilities to shoulder—their duty to India, their duty to Malaya, their duty to themselves. The three are not mutually exclusive; they overlap and each helps the other.

Their duty to India is to keep in intimate touch with current events there, to take living interest in our freedom struggle, and to help it in such ways as are possible to them. Obviously they cannot do much from here, but for their own sakes they should try to swim in the current of national progress and derive strength and vitality from it. If they look forward, as they must, to share in the triumph when it comes, they must be prepared to carry some of the burdens also. Their future is after all intimately and irrevocably bound up with the future of India. On India's freedom depends their status, the protection of their interests, and the place they occupy in the world. How can they help? Financially, of course. Also by observing our national days, using khaddar, by the display of our national flag at Indian functions. Khaddar is not an economic proposition in Malaya. It must cost more than other imported cloth or silk. But it has become the symbol of our freedom

1. This article was written on the eve of his departure from Malaya on 4 June 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 15 June 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 188-194.
2. See pp. 678-684.

struggle and of our association with the masses, and those who use it consciously show their allegiance to both these ideals of ours, which are in effect one. And if they pay a little more, let them remember that the money largely goes to poor Indian spinners and weavers.

All Indians could and should do this, whether they are local born or not. For the local born are as much children of India as others and India's freedom must be as dear to them.

Their duty to Malaya is to live in friendship and fullest cooperation with the children of the soil, with the Chinese, and with all others who live here. They must consider the interests of Malaya as their own, for Malaya has become their land by birth or adoption, and must work for the progress of this country in every way. The people of the soil must feel that we come to cooperate with them and not to injure their interests in any way. If India is their first love demanding allegiance and sacrifice for her cause, Malaya is dear to them also; and indeed the very love of India should lead them to friendship with these lands and their peoples with whom India has had such close contacts from the dawn of history, and whose interests are so nearly allied to hers.

Lastly, their duty to themselves. My first reaction here was not a very favourable one. I found too many small Indian groups functioning separately. There was no conflict between these groups but nevertheless, they weakened the community. Strength requires a larger unity comprising all these groups, all those who look to India as their common motherland. Therefore the primary need for Indians is to build up this larger unity organisationally and to develop contacts—social, political, business—between Indians from all parts of our homeland. To the extent that they succeed in doing this will they be respected by others and have their voice heard in matters of importance.

A larger number of Indians here belong to the labouring class and our future in Malaya is thus closely bound up with the future of Indian labour here. It is necessary therefore that middle class Indians should seek to serve the labouring masses in every way and remain in close touch with them, so that they may know their needs and wants and might help them in their struggle. I have suggested elsewhere the desirability of forming workers' unions. In cities probably these would be more feasible to begin with than elsewhere. Far-sighted employers should welcome them for they can then deal with responsible organisations and bodies of labour rather than with a disorganised mass. Such trade unions need not be confined to Indian workers only for the cause of labour is not racial. Racial or purely national unions are apt to be exploited against each other. Therefore, as far as possible, unions should comprise all the labour in an industry.

It is the business of the state to provide free education and medical facilities for all. In a rich country like Malaya this is easily possible but none the less conditions being what they are we must help ourselves where the state fails to perform its functions. For education is a vital matter for a community and all its future depends on the human material it produces and trains. In this matter the Chinese in Malaya have set a fine example by putting up innumerable up-to-date schools. Why should not the Indians follow? This is necessary from another point of view also. In the existing state schools the Indian languages are not taught, nor indeed has India any place in them. (For the moment I exclude the Tamil schools for Indian workers.) This means that our boys and girls grow up cut off from India and denationalised to some extent. In our own schools there would be an important place for Hindustani, our national language, as well as for the mother tongue of the students. Such schools, I would suggest, should cater for all Indians and should not be confined to one provincial or religious group. We do not want sectarianism in our education. Indeed if our schools are good enough and attract non-Indians, I would welcome them.

For the present when even good schools are lacking, to think in terms of colleges is premature. But obviously we cannot end the education of our children at the school stage. It surprises me how limited are the facilities for higher education in this country in spite of its wealth. There is not a single university and only one training college and one medical college. Some young men and women may go abroad for higher studies—to India or foreign countries. But it is absurd to expect any considerable number to be in a position to go to other countries. Thus in effect the people of the country, Indians as well as non-Indians, have no opportunities to pursue their studies further.

Apart from general cultural education, technical and scientific training is essential for a country with such large mineral and forest resources. Otherwise it can only remain, as it is largely at present, a producer of raw material, and not one that makes the manufactured article. For expert work it will always have to seek people from abroad. This is a humiliating future for any country.

This question of higher and technical education is of course one for all the people of Malaya. It is not confined to Indians. But Indians should think of it and should cooperate with other communities to remove this strange and surprising lack of the most essential condition of modem progress.

Something that I feel should be done almost immediately is for Indians to open public libraries and reading rooms, providing Indian newspapers, journals and books. To begin with, reading rooms should be opened,

as these are not costly, and gradually libraries should be built up around them. I am told that some of the Indian associations get newspapers from India. That is not enough. The reading rooms should be open to the public, including non-Indians, who should be invited to interest themselves in Indian affairs. Such reading rooms and libraries would go some way to keep the Indian population of Malaya in touch with current events in India.

There are, I believe, some Indian-owned newspapers in Malaya which give Indian news. Such newspapers are desirable both in the Indian languages and in English. Newspapers are the ears and voice of a community. Without them a community is deaf and dumb and consequently helpless and powerless. Therefore, I hope that our countrymen will build up high-class and stable newspapers and journals.

I have recommended strongly that Indians here should take to khaddar wearing. For this purpose khaddar depots should be opened where good and reliable khadi can be obtained without intermediate profiteering. The All India Spinners Association or its branches should be consulted about this. These khaddar depots might also stock other Indian goods.

These are some suggestions which I make for the consideration of my countrymen and countrywomen here. I would add that in all these matters we expect Indian women to take a prominent part. Ours is not just a men's movement in India. Women have played and are playing a brave and outstanding part in it.

In ending this article I should like to remind all my countrymen that if they wish to share in the honour and privilege of being India's children, they must be prepared to shoulder the responsibilities that always accompany privileges. Wherever in this wide world there goes an Indian, there also goes a bit of India with him, and he may not forget this or ignore it. By his actions India will be judged. He has it in his power to some extent to bring credit or discredit to his country, honour or dishonour. Let him keep this in mind always and let him bear himself with dignity in good fortune and ill fortune alike. India wants freedom and friendship with the world, and for that we labour; we are no humble suppliants for anybody's favour. We are no citizens of a mean country, but of a noble land with a great past and, let us hope, with a greater future. That future beckons to all of us. Who will not answer that call?

23. Imperialism in Malaya and India[1]

Question: Has economic and social success of what might be described as British imperialism in this country led you to modify your views on the situation in India?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is a doubtful proposition to advance. Social success is measurable by how wealth is applied and where that wealth goes. British imperialism, as in other countries, has succeeded in so far as the present system could succeed in exploiting natural resources and thereby producing wealth.

Wealth in Malaya lies on top, and one has merely to scoop it up. It is astonishing that education is so poor in Malaya. It should be bristling with industrial and technical schools and other forms of higher education. The crux of the problem however is that one cannot condemn anything as being bad. I am a socialist but it would be absurd for me to condemn capitalism. In my opinion, capitalism has ceased to fit in with the existing conditions. Hence all the world's troubles today.

The Government of India Act has been passed in spite of Indian opposition which also included the moderate elements. India is being forced into a steel cage from which she cannot escape constitutionally. The Congress is particularly opposed to the sections dealing with federal matters.

Meanwhile, we are prepared to utilise the new provincial structure to increase the strength of the Indian people.

It appears that Mr. Gandhi has made the position still clearer by stating that if the government demanded the resignation of the ministers that in itself would be tantamount to dismissal. The Congress is not prepared to accept office under this condition.

As regards the Sastri Report, I would prefer Indians to stay at home and starve rather than go abroad and meet with indignities.

1. Interview to the press, Penang, 4 June 1937. From *The Sunday Times* (a newspaper of Malaya), 6 June 1937.

24. Farewell to Malaya[1]

For thirteen days I have wandered up and down the land of Malaya, enchanted by its beauty and charm. The spell of the country held me in its grip, and though great crowds came to welcome me and I talked to them of many things, my mind could not get rid of that spell and my eyes were always seeking to take their fill of this green and pleasant land where it is always afternoon and the troubles and conflicts of the world seem far away. And now it is time for me to go back to my homeland to face the heavy tasks and shoulder the responsibility that fate and circumstance have cast upon me. I go with regret, but I carry back many treasures with me—the memory of this beautiful country so richly endowed by nature, and far more precious memory of the love and affection that have been showered upon me in such abundant measure. To my own countrymen here of all classes, from the labourer in the field to the merchant or professional person, I find it difficult to express my gratitude. Between us there need be no formal and superficial expressions of thanks, but rather a deeper understanding of each other, and, I hope, a deeper appreciation of each other, bound together as we are by the strong chain of common ideals and objectives. It was this great cause, which I represented to them, that brought them in their tens of thousands to welcome me and which evoked that tremendous enthusiasm which we have seen and felt. It is this cause for which we live and which we shall see triumph. But the welcome that I received came from others also, from the people of the country, the Malayans, and the people of China who live here in such large numbers, and from the Ceylonese who are so near akin to us. To them all I am most grateful. From others I had every courtesy, from the press, from such government officials as I came in contact with, and from the police during my meetings and processions. I wish to express my gratitude to them.

I came here tired and I have had a strenuous time here, except for a brief spell of peace at Port Dickson. But this country and its generous and hospitable inhabitants have refreshed me and I go back rich in mind and fitter in body. This memory will endure for long and cheer me in the days to come.

And so goodbye Malaya, or as I would prefer to have it, *au revoir.*

1. Statement to the press, Butterworth, 4 June 1937. *The Leader,* 18 June 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India,* (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 195-196.

25. Back Home[1]

It is good to come back home after six weeks of continuous wandering, good to see familiar sights, familiar faces, to rest for more than a day or two in the same place. Some have the wanderlust, and I have it myself in some measure, and I love to get out of the old rut and cross mountains and seas and make acquaintance with new countries, new people. And when one may not do this, as alas too often I may not, I give rein to my imagination and we take long and improbable journeys and seek adventure in distant countries. But the old rut calls us back and we return to the day's routine.

So I was back from Burma and Malaya. There were numerous formidable files awaiting me, and a crowd of letters to answer, and questions and problems which a great organisation has continually to face. Pressmen surrounded me—what had I to say to this or that? Had I seen some statement or other? Was the Congress going to form ministries? And so on interminably. Fortunately I knew little about these various statements and pronouncements and I felt some difficulty in readjusting myself to the old world which I had left but six weeks before. Before my eyes floated still the Shwe Dagon pagoda glistening in the morning sunlight, and the palm trees swaying in the pleasant land of Malaya.

Back to the files and the letters. A summer school has been raided[2] and the lathi has felled down many people. The jute strike is over but the grievances of the jute workers continue.[3] The workers in a match factory of the Swedish trust have been long on strike and are being ill-treated.[4] The problem of the detenus. A Congress committee has been suspended and protests and counter-protests have poured in. Appeals from district committees against certain orders of their provincial committees. There is an interruption and fifty kisans appear on the scene full of their troubles. They cannot be ignored.

Back again to the files. Should kisan organisations be started or should we concentrate on making kisans members of Congress committees? What should be the relation between the Congress committee

1. Allahabad, 19 June 1937. *The Modern Review*, July 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 197-202.
2. See pp. 100 and 249.
3. See p. 252.
4. See p. 257.

and the kisan sabha? Am I in favour of functional representation? Telegrams pour in protesting against the choice of a candidate to contest a bye-election. A long distance trunk call on the telephone comes from south India. Visitors, visitors with nothing worthwhile to say, wasting time. An occasional visitor, who is interesting, taking up more time. And all the while the Shwe Dagon pagoda floating in the air and the gem palace of Mandalay and laughing men and women in gay attire wandering by.

Back to work. Financial matters, confusing and troublesome. Cases of disciplinary action. Some hard ones but discipline has to be maintained in an organisation. Mass contacts, what progress is being made in the villages? What with Muslims in towns and villages? Letters in approval of our new activities, letters in criticism. Are the Congress members of the legislatures working in their constituencies carrying the message of the Congress?

How hot it is, and the paper one writes on sticks to the hand. And how pleasant it was by the sea-side in Malaya with the tide lapping the beach and the palm trees and the graceful areca-nuts fringing the shore.

A conference with colleagues in the office. Cablegrams from abroad. Discussion on foreign affairs. Zanzibar—Indians overseas. Visitors, visitors—hell! Why will so many people come when there is so much to be done? But some are old colleagues and though what they say may be unimportant, they are valued comrades and may not be ignored. Strangers come and who knows whether their business is important or not? Peasants come and who can turn these helpless ones away without a word of cheer?

The situation on the frontier—air-bombing and kidnappings, a curious mixture, and the larger question being somewhat hidden by communal feelings on either side. When will people behave like grown-ups? How childish all this is and religion, as of old, warps the mind and confuses the issue.

A note on Congress work in the Punjab, a complaint from Bombay which takes up time. Visitors asking me to visit their districts or attend conferences.

Will the Congress accept ministries? When will the Working Committee meet to consider this question? Wise people, knowing far more than I do, announce that the Committee is meeting within a few days. Evidently they imagine that our main preoccupation is to think about and discuss this question of ministries. They would be surprised to find how little this has to do with our work and how many other activities claim our attention. And those who question may be still further surprised if they had a glimpse into my mind.

For my mind goes back over the heads of the visitors and questioners and across the files to those six weeks that are gone past recall, days full of wandering in strange places, old world and new, crowded days. And pictures of the past come up before me when the beautiful palace at Mandalay hummed with play and laughter, and behind this hid many an intrigue and cruelty, and the rapid decay of an order that had lived its time. That gem palace is empty today, shorn of its gems, and only ghosts and memories fill its deserted halls. The teak roofs and pillars stand as of old, but they are dead wood and no more. The past they represent is gone for ever.

But the Shwe Dagon pagoda still towers in all its strength and beauty over the city of Rangoon and gives its ageless message to all who come under its spell. It shines in the morning sunlight and glimmers as the evening shadows fall, and we creep away from Burma reverently with this image of the soul of a people impressed on our minds and hearts.

26. To the Editor, The Times of Malaya[1]

Sir,

A friend in Malaya has drawn my attention to an article in your issue of July 13th under the caption: 'Nehru did not answer'. I was not aware that a question had previously been put to me which I had failed to answer. But now that it has been brought to my notice I gladly answer it.

Having dabbled somewhat in history I have found that dominant and imperialist nations and dominant classes do not leave their privileged positions by considerations of justice, or by sweet argument and smiles, and least of all in response to a beggar's bowl. They hold on to what they have got and exploit their subject nations or classes for their own advantage. These subject nations or classes, not unnaturally, object to this process and want a place in the sun for themselves. There is conflict, and in the past this conflict has almost always been a bloody one.

I seem to remember that certain classes in England, once upon a time, rebelled against their king, who had presumed too much, and cut off his head. Subsequently these classes, wanting power, chased another

1. Allahabad, 25 July 1937. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. *The Times of Malaya* was a newspaper published in Ipoh.

king of theirs out of England. In France also the head of a king fell in the conflict between the rising middle classes and the old landed aristocracy. Of national upheavals against foreign rule the instances are legion. Perhaps I might mention Mazzini and Garibaldi in Italy, and the Greek struggle for freedom against the Turks. I mention these two instances because they roused tremendous enthusiasm in England. The rebels were claimed as heroes and patriots and feted as such.

History thus seems to teach us that if a country or class wants to attain freedom, it must resist the dominant power and seek to dispossess it. In order to do this effectively and successfully it must develop the strength and the organisation for it. In the past this resistance has been of the violent and armed variety and it has been generally recognised as justified.

In India we are under alien imperialist rule and we seek to get rid of it. We want our country to be independent. We must therefore develop the strength and organisation so that the will of the Indian people shall prevail as against foreign authority. But we have deliberately set our faces against armed revolt, for a number of reasons which I need not discuss in detail here, and tried to develop a peaceful technique of struggle. The whole basis of our struggle is thus a peaceful one, but nevertheless it is a dynamic struggle which relies on the organised strength of the masses. Perhaps *The Times of Malaya* has heard of non-cooperation and civil disobedience. They are the peaceful equivalent of armed rebellion. For any country desiring to be free from foreign rule the choice lies between these two methods. We have chosen the peaceful and more civilised course while all the highly cultured nations of Europe arm to the teeth and prepare to murder each other.

"Strong enough for what?" you ask me. Strong enough to have our way despite all opposition, strong enough for the will of the Indian people to prevail in India instead of that of British imperialism, strong enough to make India free and independent.

Yours etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

13

THE WORLD SITUATION

1. Message to the Left Book Club[1]

I offer greetings to the Left Book Club[2] on the occasion of the rally for world peace and against fascism.[3]

The people of India stand whole-heartedly for world peace and against the menace of fascism. They have suffered long enough under crushing imperialism. For them there can be no world peace so long as imperialism and fascism hold sway.

1. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 8 February 1937.
2. The Left Book Club was organized by Victor Gollancz, the socialist publisher of London.
3. It was held at the Albert Hall in London on 7 February 1937.

2. Food for Spain[1]

Our elections have absorbed our attention and most of us have thought of little else during the past few weeks. But now that the elections are over we must look around again and take cognizance of the world drama which pursues its tragic course and threatens world-wide catastrophe. We must do so primarily because the peril faces us as it faces others, because the same basic forces are in conflict elsewhere as in India, and the outcome of that conflict will affect us and mould our future. This conflict of world forces is most evident in Spain where bloody and inhuman war has waged for over seven months, and where a brutal fascism and militarism has sought to crush and annihilate Spanish people. They have failed in their endeavour; for the Spanish people, hungry, ill-armed, lacking trained leadership, have yet put up such a magnificent fight that they have confounded their enemies, and shown afresh what the masses can do when they fight for their own freedom. The defence of Madrid for over three months has already taken its place in history, an inspiration to those who hunger and struggle for freedom. All the forces of reaction, the fascist powers, foreign legionaries, mercenaries, the farce of non-intervention, have struck hard at Madrid and

1. Allahabad, 20 February 1937. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. First printed in the Indian press on 22 February 1937 and reprinted with a few changes in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 265-267.

Spain, but the spirit of that great city still stands high—indomitable, *invincible, a bright flame—though ruins and death and starvation* encompass it.[2]

Whatsoever might be the ultimate fate of this epic struggle, the people of Spain have written history with their hearts' blood and heroic courage. Out of this precious material they have built up, in the midst of suffering and disaster, the great people's front and the people's militia which has held the gates of Madrid, for those gates have become the symbols of human liberty.

But the Spanish war is no longer a Spanish affair. The rival forces of the world fight for mastery there. Fascism fights anti-fascism; militarism seeks to crush democracy. In this struggle British imperialism, with its so-called policy of non-intervention, has hindered and obstructed the Spanish people in their fight for freedom. But everywhere the lovers of freedom, the exploited of the world, have raised their voices in defence of the Spanish people, and have sent such help as they could—ambulance corps, medical supplies, food supplies and even volunteers. The International Brigade of Volunteers,[3] drawn from all countries, has demonstrated magnificently the solidarity of the people of the world with the Spanish masses, and many of them have found a last resting-place, with their Spanish comrades, on Spanish soil which they defended with their lives.

What of us in India? We are not indifferent; we cannot be indifferent to courage and heroism in the cause of human freedom. We cannot forget that our own larger interests are involved, our own freedom for which we labour is at stake. For fascism and imperialism march hand in hand; they are blood brothers. The victory of either is the victory of both all over the world.

We have already expressed our deep sympathy and solidarity with the Spanish people in many ways. The National Congress has given eloquent expression to the Indian people's voice and feelings.[4] But that is not enough. We must translate our sympathy into active and material help. We are poor and hungry folk, crushed under many burdens, dominated by an arrogant imperialism, and we struggle ourselves for freedom. But even in our poverty and misery we feel for our Spanish

2. The rebel forces of Spain had beseiged Madrid, the capital and Republican stronghold.
3. It was formed to help the Spanish Republican Army in its struggle against the rebels. The volunteers were drawn from over fifty nations including India.
4. The Faizpur Congress passed a resolution assuring the solidarity of the people of India with the Spanish people in their struggle for liberty.

comrades and we must give them what aid we can, howsoever little this might be. We can help in sending them medical supplies and food. I trust it will be possible for us to arrange to send grain and other food supplies, and I appeal to those who deal in such food-stuffs for their cooperation in this matter.

In London our countrymen have formed a Spain-India Committee[5] with Syt. V.K. Krishna Menon as chairman and Mrs. Saklatvala[6] as treasurer. I suggest that for the present we might send money to them for the purchase and dispatch of medical supplies. I am glad to say that I have already been able to send £115, contributed chiefly by friends in Bombay. I trust that contributions for this purpose will be forthcoming from all parts of the country. They will be received and acknowledged by Dr. R.M. Lohia, Foreign Department, All India Congress Committee, Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad. It will be for us to consider later what other form or shape we can give to our help to the Spanish people. But, apart from money, food is urgently needed and the call for it has come to me repeatedly.

5. The committee was formed in January 1937; in September 1937, the committee presented a Red Cross ambulance for use in Spain.
6. Sehri Saklatvala, widow of Shapurji Saklatvala.

3. A Letter about Spain[1]

War, bloody and brutal civil war, rages in Spain and anxiously we await the day's news. We have seen to what heights the masses can rise when they fight for freedom and their own emancipation; we have watched with amazement the heroic and disciplined sacrifices of the Spanish people in their struggle against fascist, military and reactionary cliques and adventurers. But perhaps nothing brings out more clearly the fundamental difference in the outlook of the rival forces than other activities almost unconnected with the war which take place behind the fronts and which are seldom reported. The rebels have made a point of bombing the buildings containing the famous art treasures of Spain, while the Spanish Government, though fighting for life, has yet devoted time and energy to the protection of these invaluable treasures. More significant still is the way the government is tackling big problems. Only

1. Allahabad, 24 February 1937. Published in the Indian press on 2 March 1937.

recently I gave publicity to a passage in a letter written to me by Mr. Horace Alexander, the well-known member of the Society of Friends. In this he said that he had been to Barcelona recently. "I was much impressed," he writes, "with the efficiency, orderliness and vigour of the 'red' authorities there. In spite of the war they seem to be tackling such problems as the vast influx of refugees, the problem of the beggars and destitution, etc., most effectively, and I saw no sign of violence or terror, though I met a number of people who were definitely *not* 'red', such as the protestant pastors, but who were whole-heartedly pro-government". One wishes that our benign government in India possessed a fraction of this efficiency and vigour in tackling our problems of destitution, poverty and unemployment!

I have just received a letter from my daughter, Indira, from England, which I find so interesting that I want to share it with others. In this letter she gives an account of a talk which a lady visitor from Spain gave to her school. This lady—Dr. Komas—is a lecturer in biology at the University of Barcelona. Her home was in Majorca which was taken by the rebels at an early stage. For six months Dr. Komas had no news whatever of her relatives and later the briefest of information. She has suffered considerably during the war, but Indira writes that she spoke quietly and without any sign of emotion. I quote below from Indira's letter:

> Dr. Komas said little about the war itself, apart from briefly sketching its background. She spoke of what interested her most: children and education. She told us of the groups of people who were trying to shield the children of Spain from the horrors of war, to give them as calm an education and as healthy a life as possible in the circumstances. Big colonies have been founded in Barcelona and Valencia for children and here the littlest ones are sent by train from Madrid and the surrounding villages in the hands of the government. In these colonies there are schools; the children are clothed and fed. Many of them wear new clothes for the first time in their lives. The Barcelona booksellers told Dr. Komas that they had never before sold so many children's books. Food is scarce but the grown-ups manage with biscuits and anything else that they can get while all the milk and bread available are sent to the colonies for the children. The main difficulty so far is the transport of the children, for the trains are very slow and the journey is made much longer by the necessity of having to avoid the fighting fronts. One would hardly expect Madrid to rejoice during Christmas or the New Year, but the government said that the children should not

be disappointed. A 'Children's Week' was organised. Everybody gave voluntary help and during that week the children had their cinema shows and games. Every child received a toy—many for the first time. 'We tried to make them happy', said Dr. Komas, 'and their smiling faces gave us renewed courage and strength; they made us happy and we were glad that all that was possible was being done for their safety and welfare.' But this was only in the day-time. At night they woke up at the sound of bombs—the little ones cried and the older ones remembered the terrible scenes of war. Dr. Komas showed us the Children's Week posters and other pictures. Dr. Komas, I found, was very charming . . .

4. To Victor Gollancz[1]

Allahabad
March 10, 1937

My dear Gollancz,[2]
Thank you for your letter of February 8th. I am very glad to learn of the success of the Albert Hall rally. It is astonishing how the Left Book Club has got on. Unfortunately we are outside the pale and Left Book Club books are not supposed to be good food for us. And so, while I congratulate you on your success, I envy those who share it with you.
With all good wishes,

Yours fraternally,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1893-1967); British publisher and organiser of the Left Book Club in 1936; well known for his support of various humanitarian causes.

5. Fascism and Empire[1]

I gladly associate myself with the demonstration organised by the Spain-India Committee at the Kingsway Hall. Spain and the tragedy that is

1. Allahabad, 27 March 1937. Message to the Spain-India Committee on the occasion of a demonstration at the Kingsway Hall, London, on 9 April 1937. *The Hindu*, 10 April 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 122-126.

being enacted there dominate our thoughts today whether we live nearby in the other countries of Europe or in far India. For this tragedy and conflict are not of Spain only but of the wide world, and on what ultimately happens in Spain depends the future of so much that we value. Most people realise now that the Spanish war is no longer a Spanish affair, or a civil war between different groups of Spaniards. It is a European war on Spanish soil or, more correctly, an invasion of Spain by fascist forces and mercenaries from abroad.[2] And so in Spain these rival forces fight for mastery, fascism and anti-fascism, and democracy, crushed in so many countries of Europe, fights desperately for life.

The issue as between Italian fascism and German nazism, on the one hand, and Spanish democracy on the other, seems to be clear enough and I suppose that most people in England, who stand for democracy and freedom, sympathise with the Spanish people. But many of these very people are perhaps not so clear when they consider the policy of the British Government in regard to Spain. And when they go a few steps further and think of the relation of British imperialism to India, all clarity disappears.

And yet the real lesson of Spain is that fascism and imperialism are blood brothers, marching hand in hand, though they may have their faces averted from each other, or may even come into occasional conflict with each other. Englishmen see, more or less, the democratic side of their government functioning in the domestic sphere, and they conclude that elsewhere also their government has this democratic background. But the whole foreign policy of Britain during the last four years has shown that the forces that move it have nothing to do with democracy; they are friendly to the development of the fascist powers, though they have half-heartedly and unsuccessfully tried to check this development occasionally when it seemed to threaten British imperial interests. That is the story of British policy in the Far East, in the shameful betrayal of Abyssinia, in the intrigues of central Europe, and in the farce of non-intervention in Spain, culminating in the open avowal of fascist Italy that it will continue to send its armies to crush the people of Spain.

Many people are bewildered by the seeming inconsistencies and contradictions of British foreign policy, and yet there is no real inconsistency. The inconsistency is in the minds of those who imagine that the democratic background of British domestic policy governs foreign policy

2. In the Spanish civil war, the fascist countries supplied men and material in large quantities to the rebel forces to enable them to break the resistance of the Republican army.

also; or sometimes there is inconsistency in the utterances of foreign ministers and other politicians who juggle with words to delude the public into reconciling these contrary tendencies and policies. In the field of action British foreign policy has pursued consistently and unhesitatingly the path of rapprochement with fascism. All the horror of Spain has not diverted it from its set purpose, the recent blood-curdling massacres in Addis Ababa have not affected it in the slightest degree.[3] Even fear of endangering Britain's international position by the growth of fascist powers in northern and central Europe and in the Mediterranean has not resulted in a marked variation of that policy.

Why is this so? Because essentially imperialism and fascism are close of kin and one merges into the other. Sometimes imperialism has two faces—a domestic one talking the language of democracy, and a colonial one verging into fascism. Of the two, the dominant one is the latter and it ultimately governs larger policies. So we see that whatever government functions in Britain, whether it is a Conservative government or a Labour government or a 'National' government, in India this government wears a fascist uniform. The drift towards fascism continues in India and the new constitution, with all its democratic facade in the provinces, is essentially fascist in conception and probably in action, especially in the federal structure. The only really democratic part of it is the larger electorate in the provinces and this electorate has declared overwhelmingly in favour of scrapping the new Act. But the Act and the constitution continue, and the tremendous majorities elected under this very constitution are powerless and cannot have their way.

Empire and democracy are two incompatibles; one must swallow the other. And in the political and social conditions of the modern world, empire must either liquidate itself or drift to fascism, and, in so drifting, carry its domestic structure with it.

So the question of British imperialism in India is intimately related to British domestic policy and governs the latter. It seems inconceivable that there will be any major social change in Britain so long as the empire flourishes, nor is there likely to be any marked change in foreign policy. It seems more probable that great changes will take place in India, ending in the liquidation of the empire, and these will result in major changes in Britain. Or the two may come more or less simultaneously.

3. Hundreds of Ethiopians, including women and children, were massacred by the Italians following the attempt at assassination of an Italian military commander.

The background of the Spanish struggle therefore is one of world conflict between democracy and the forces of freedom everywhere and fascism and imperialism. That is the lesson Spain teaches in her agony and through her blood and suffering. We who stand for Spain must learn that lesson in all its implications and stand equally for the ending of fascism and empire and all that they signify. We must pull out the root of the trouble.

But while we argue and debate, blood flows in Spain and heroic men and women and even children fight our battles and give their lives for human liberty. Governments deny them the aid that was their due, but the peoples of the world have heard their cry for succour and have responded to it, for was not that cry the cry of the exploited everywhere?

We are ourselves helpless in India and hunger and stark poverty meet us everywhere; we fight for our freedom and to rid ourselves of the empire that exploits and crushes us. Famine and flood and natural calamity have pursued us and added to the burdens of empire. But out of our hunger and poverty we will send what help we can to our comrades in Spain, and though this may not be much, it will carry with it the earnest and anxious good wishes of the people of India. For those who suffer themselves feel most for their brothers in misfortune elsewhere.

6. Appeal for Aid to Spain[1]

We appeal to the people of India, who themselves struggle against imperialism and reaction, to help now and immediately, before it is too late, our Spanish comrades in their struggle for freedom, life and culture.

We can be no parties to this policy and we must understand the true nature of the conflict, its significance and implications. We must give our whole-hearted support to the Spanish people, not only the support of our words and good wishes, but more tangible support which the people of Spain, perishing under fire and gas and by hunger, so urgently need. Unhappily situated as we are, we cannot do much, for we ourselves suffer under the yoke of imperialism and struggle for freedom. But food and medical supplies and money for them we can send.

1. Allahabad, 30 March 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 5 April 1937. Jawaharlal was one of the signatories to this appeal.

With the object of organising our support, and co-ordinating news and propaganda about Spain, on a nation-wide basis, we propose the establishment of a committee for aiding the Spanish people and we appeal to the people of India to help now and immediately.

7. India and China[1]

I am ashamed that physical illness should incapacitate me from keeping my promise and being present at Santiniketan tomorrow for the inauguration ceremony of the Chinese Hall. It has not been so usually with me, and so I gave my word gladly and with full confidence that I would join in this great ceremony, great in the memories of the long past that it invokes, great also in the promise of future comradeship and the forging of new links to bring China and India nearer to each other. What a long past that has been of friendly contacts and mutual influences, untroubled by political conflict and aggression! We have traded in ideas, in art, in culture, and grown richer in our own inheritance by the other's offering. Political subjection came to both of us in varying forms, and stagnation and decay, and at the same time new forces and ideas from the West to wake us out of our torpor. We have been struggling to find a new equilibrium, to rid ourselves of the forces that throttle us, to give expression to the new life that already pulsates through our veins. The whole world seeks that new equilibrium, but the forces of darkness are strong and in the name of fascism and imperialism and their allies seek to crush the spirit of man and all the art and culture that flow from it. But that spirit of man is not easily crushed; it has survived many a barbarous onslaught; it will triumph afresh.

China and India, sister nations from the dawn of history, with their long tradition of culture and peaceful development of ideas, have to play a leading part in this world drama, in which they themselves are so deeply involved. And it is right that they should draw nearer to each other, seek to understand each other afresh and draw strength from their past and present. All understanding to be real must be based on the cultural and ideological background of a country. I welcome,

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 13 April 1937. *The Hindu*, 15 April 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 165-166.

therefore, the inauguration of the Chinese Hall, situated most appropriately at Santiniketan, and I trust that it will be a real meeting ground of the best in China and India. I must offer my grateful thanks to the Chinese scholars and friends who have made the building of this hall with its library possible. I earnestly hope that this hall will lead to ever-widening contacts between the two countries, and that Chinese scholars will come to India and Indian scholars will visit China, and thus set up an ever-flowing stream of mutual understanding which will help us both in the solution of the problems that face us.

8. The Need for Active Support to Spain[1]

For more than seven months, civil war has raged in Spain with almost unparalleled brutality. We, in India, have viewed this struggle with concern, our sympathies have gone out to the Spanish people in the hour of their trial, we have sent messages of goodwill to them. But, on the whole, our interest has lacked warmth and direction. The conflict calls for our closer attention, and some action on our part; for it vitally concerns the interests of the Indian people. The forces in bloody conflict in Spain are essentially the same as are in conflict in India, and they threaten a catastrophe to the world and to India. The people of Spain are today defending their newly-won democratic freedom against a host of reactionaries and militarists, who are openly supported by the fascist governments of Germany, Italy and Portugal. British imperialism has indirectly aided the reactionary rebels in Spain by its policy of non-intervention.

The Spanish people, poor, almost unarmed and untrained, have with indomitable will and courage faced these militarist rebels, marching with mercenaries and foreign legionaries and supplied with the latest and most horrible engines of warfare. In the course of their heroic struggle, they have built up their great bulwark, the people's front, and have organised the people's militia. Madrid, after three months of siege and continuous attack, broken up and ruined by bombardment and aerial attack, still stands unconquered, the city victorious, whose gates are defended by the unshaken and fierce determination of the people.

Millions of people throughout the world, lovers of freedom and the exploited of all races, have responded to the call of the Spanish people.

1. Calcutta, 20 April 1937. *The Hindu*, 22 April 1937. Jawaharlal was one of the signatories to this appeal.

The diplomacy of British imperialism, subtle and Machiavellian, has, through its so-called policy of non-intervention, lent support to the fascist countries in their adventures in Spain. So it has sought to protect its large financial interests in Spain and its wider imperialist interests elsewhere. This policy threatens to draw the Indian people on to the side of imperialism and reaction.

9. To J. Mascaro[1]

Allahabad
April 22, 1937

Dear Mr. Mascaro,[2]
Thank you for your letter. Indeed I remember meeting you in Ceylon very well. As for Spain there is no question of your thanking me or my thanking you. The fight in Spain is a fight in which all who are interested in democracy and freedom must give their support and sympathy.

Should you come to India I shall be happy to meet you. Do send me your translations of the *upanishads* when they are published.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. A student at Cambridge of Indian religions. He later translated some of the Indian classical literature into English. In his letter of 31 March 1937, Mascaro recalled his meeting with Jawaharlal in Ceylon in 1931.

10. Further Appeal for Help to Spain[1]

Crisis is a much hackneyed word in this world of today for everywhere there is crisis, continuing, persistent, threatening crisis and feverish preparation for the catastrophe that all fear and yet cannot avert. In India we are in the middle of a crisis and the wheels of the gods move slowly but inevitably to future conflicts between our urge to freedom and

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 24 April 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 26 April 1937.

the imperialism which binds us. We cannot shirk them and we will meet them in the days to come with courage and with the strength that our people have shown so often before. Yet, engrossed as we are in our own struggle, we may not forget the tragedy of Spain where freedom and democracy fight for breath and life. All the world watches anxiously the issue of this struggle for on it depends so much that we care for. This issue will have its far-reaching consequences everywhere, and not least on our own struggle for freedom in India. By helping the people of Spain we help ourselves and our freedom movement. We have just learnt with pride that a hundred countrymen of ours are fighting in the ranks of the International Brigade for the people and Government of Spain. I have recently had news that an old colleague of ours, Dr. M. Atal, has gone to Spain to give his medical services to the wounded and to the starving. In Bilbao women and children starve and the might of the British Empire bows down before the insurgents.[2] Or is it that the British Government sympathises with and indirectly supports these insurgents?

I venture to appeal again to the people of India to give all the help they can to support this struggle for freedom in Spain. Our A.I.C.C. office in Allahabad will gladly receive contributions and pass them on immediately to the proper quarters.

2. Delay in despatch of food supplies to the besieged city of Bilbao by the British caused considerable difficulties to the people, and the city ultimately fell to the rebels in June 1937.

11. To Govind Madgavkar[1]

Allahabad
August 26, 1937

My dear Sir Govind,

Gandhiji showed me your letter to him in Wardha.[2] The question of sending an envoy on behalf of the Congress to foreign countries has not been considered by us. The matter is full of difficulties as in foreign countries, especially in Europe, the division between rival groups is very marked. Not only are countries aligning against each other but inside

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5(KW)(2)/1937, p. 353, N.M.M.L.
2. Govind Madgavkar, in his letter of 12 August 1937 to Mahatma Gandhi, offered to serve the country abroad.

the country there is the same alignment. A visitor from India cannot remain wholly neutral and if he remains so he carries little weight with both groups. Thus it becomes necessary to develop a definite foreign policy. To some extent such a development has gradually taken place. But it is still vague. Invitations sometimes come to us from organisations and international conferences. But the very nature of such invitations to some extent commits us to a certain policy. Last year we were represented at an International Peace Congress held in Paris.[3] This was an anti-fascist organisation and we had no hesitation in joining it because we agreed with the general background.

Personally I do not think that it is desirable for us to adopt a neutral attitude in regard to world problems. For instance, in regard to China and Japan, I think we should definitely express our fullest sympathy for China, although of course we cannot do much for her. In the same way in Europe I feel that we should align ourselves with the anti-fascist forces.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 576-577.

12. To A. E. Shohet[1]

Allahabad
August 26, 1937

Dear Mr. Shohet,[2]
Thank you for your letter and the copy of the *Jewish Advocate* which you sent me. I should like to write on the Palestine problem, but I am too full of other work at present. Perhaps a little later I might write to the press on this subject.

It has always seemed to me that this problem should be settled by mutual consultation between Arab and Jewish leaders. Unfortunately in the past the Jewish leaders have relied too much on British support as against the Arabs and have thus, in the eyes of the Arabs, become supporters of British imperialism in Palestine. It seems to me clear that

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5(KW)(2)/1937, p. 363, N.M.M.L.
2. Editor, *Jewish Advocate*, published from Bombay.

the proposed partition is utterly bad and is bound to create more trouble in the future.[3] It is certainly not a solution of the problem. A real solution must be based on the following factors: (1) independence of Palestine, (2) recognition of the fact that Palestine is an Arab country and therefore Arabs must have a predominant voice in it, and (3) recognition of the fact that the Jews in Palestine are an integral factor and their rights should be protected.

I feel sure that there is no inherent conflict between the Arabs and the Jews and that if the matter is approached in a spirit of cooperation, a mutually satisfactory solution can be found. That solution cannot be based on the interests of British imperialism. These third party interests will always tend to widen the gap between the Arabs and the Jews and, in the name of protecting one against the other, in reality to protect British imperialism at the cost of the other two.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. The Peel Commission in its report published in July 1937 recommended the partition of Palestine into three areas: a Jewish state, an Arab state and a mandated territory consisting of Jerusalem and a corridor to the sea at Jaffa.

13. Zanzibar and the Boycott of Cloves[1]

For some years past the problem of Indians settled in Zanzibar has been before the country. The British Government of the colony, supported by the Colonial Office in London, has been devising laws and regulations which crush Indian trade and will ruin the Indian community in Zanzibar. Our countrymen there refused to submit tamely to this process of squeezing out, and they protested with all their might. They looked to India for sympathy and help in their trials, and they did not look in vain. The people of India responded to that call and at innumerable meetings expressed their solidarity with their countrymen in Zanzibar. The Congress gave emphatic expression to this feeling and passed numerous resolutions in support of the cause of Indians in Zanzibar. Even the Government of India appeared to sympathise and considered the

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 28 August 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 1 September 1937. Reprinted in *Eighteen Months in India*, (Allahabad, 1938), pp. 276-282.

proposed legislation as a menace to Indian interests and a breach of previous agreements. But the wheels of the Imperial Government and the Colonial Office moved on, regardless of Indian interests, and the legislation was passed with minor variations.[2]

Ruin faces the 15,000 Indians in Zanzibar and they have resolved not to submit to this usurpation of their rights. A month ago they started their campaign of passive resistance against these measures and they are carrying on their peaceful and gallant struggle. They have voluntarily gone out of the port trade in cloves in which they have been traditionally engaged. The Working Committee of the Congress, at its last meeting, called upon the people of India to help their countrymen in every way and demanded an embargo on the entry of cloves into India. Further they asked the people to boycott cloves so long as this problem was not settled to the satisfaction of Indian interests. This was the least that our people could do to help our countrymen abroad in their hour of trial.

The Government of India meanwhile has veered round from its old position and has become an apologist of the new legislation in Zanzibar which creates a clove monopoly. Probably it had to do so because of pressure from the imperial government, of which it is a subordinate branch. But it is surprising to find that certain elected members of the Central Assembly should have also forsaken the Zanzibar Indians and helped the government in opposing the demand for an embargo. The arguments advanced by them showed an astonishing and pro-imperialist bent of mind.[3] Those who oppose India's struggle for freedom, thereby supporting British imperialism in India, usually support this imperialism abroad also, even at the cost of Indian interests.

It is utterly wrong to say that our struggle in Zanzibar is to protect Indian vested interests as against the interests of the people of the country. The Congress holds by the principle that in every country the interests of the people of that country must be dominant and must have

2. As the clove growers association's monopoly of the trade was being resented by Indian traders, the Government of India protested to the British Government against the proposed legislation guaranteeing the association's monopoly. As a result, some concessions were obtained, but these being inadequate, the Zanzibar Indians appealed to the Congress for help. The Congress, supporting their demands, called upon Indian traders to boycott clove imports from Zanzibar.
3. For instance, Jinnah, expressing his doubt whether the government deserved to be censured, said in the Central Assembly on 23 August 1937 that so far as he had followed it, the scheme "is at any rate intended to safeguard the interests of the Indians fairly without in any way prejudicing the objective, namely, that the relief must be given to the growers as far as possible...."

first consideration. We apply that principle to India and therefore we cannot tolerate any foreign interests imposing their will on us. We apply that principle to other countries also and we would willingly put an end to Indian interests there if they conflict with those of the people of the country. But we are not prepared to submit to, and we shall fight, any attempt to injure Indian interests for the advancement of British imperialism. In Zanzibar it is this imperialism that is functioning and it is in its interests that the changes have been made. An anti-Indian clove monopoly has been established to enrich the British monopolist at the expense of the Indian small trader. The Zanzibar distillery, which is an imperialist British concern, is in a position to buy from the monopolist association clove stems at half the rate that would otherwise have been obtainable in a free foreign market.

Secondly, it is notorious that Britain's colonial administration, as that of India, is exceedingly expensive, extravagant and top-heavy. To keep this running and to find money for it, the people are heavily taxed. The burden falls especially on the poor. In many African colonies the iniquitous 'hut-tax' or a 'poll-tax' is imposed on the poorest to enable the administration to pay heavy salaries and allowances to its officials who are usually Britishers. Sir George Maxwell,[5] a distinguished public servant of Malaya, has recently pointed out the scandal of these expensive and over-staffed administrations run at the cost of improverishing the already poor and of stinting the barest expenditure on public works, public health, education and other essential public services. He gives many startling figures from Malaya and Africa. One colony with a total population of 3,001 (men, women and children) maintains a heavily paid Governor and Commander-in-Chief and numerous officials. But we need not cross the seas for such instances; we have remarkable examples in our own country.

Zanzibar has put up with such an expensive over-staffed British administration. Like Topsy, it "growed", fattening on the prosperity of the clove trade, which had been built up by Indian industry. Every boom period was taken advantage of to add to the number or emoluments of the army administrators. Then came the slump and it was not so easy for the unhappy country to shoulder this heavy burden. Instead of reducing the number of big officials and the amounts paid to them in

4. In many African colonies, the poll and hut taxes were imposed on the Africans both to force them to go out to work for their 'white' employers and to raise revenue.
5. (1871-1959); a British civil servant who served in Malaya for several years and retired as chief secretary in 1926; was later vice-chairman of the slavery committee of the League of Nations.

salaries and allowances and thus making the administration fit in to some extent with the necessities and realities, fresh sources of revenue—not for public works or education—but to keep the administration running in the old way were anxiously sought after. Further taxation was out of the question. And so this device of collaring the profits of the clove trade and running the administration with their help. These profits, which would have been spread out over a large number of traders, were diverted, by the creation of a monopoly, to the administrative machine as well as to British imperialist concerns. Recently, a new burden has been undertaken by the Zanzibar Government for the honour and glory of British imperialism. The recurring cost of a naval coastal defence unit, or part of the cost, will fall on Zanzibar.

Thirdly, the political rule of the British over the colonies is perpetuated by this strategy of creating conflict on other issues and of diverting the attention of the Arab and African inhabitants from the fundamental anti-imperialist issue. Anti-Indian feelings are sought to be raised and the real imperialist exploiter hides behind this screen and carries on merrily with his work of exploitation.

This clove monopoly, it is obvious, has little to do with the interests of the African and Arab growers of clove. The monopoly is bound to hurt them in the long run. A monopoly by an independent national state might have some virtue in it; monopoly by a socialist state would inevitably benefit the growers as they would be the owners and beneficiaries of the monopoly. But a monopoly by an imperialist government in a subject colonial country can only benefit that government and the imperialism it represents.

The issue is thus quite clear for all who wish to understand it. The Zanzibar Indians are the victims of British imperialist policy, and their cause is the cause of all of us in India. For us it is a national question of grave import and no communal considerations affect it. Yet it is interesting to remember that the Indian merchants in Zanzibar, who are suffering from this new legislation and are fighting against it, are Muslims. Some of the Muslim members of the Central Assembly, who have constituted themselves as the guardians of Muslim interests and who voted recently with the government and against the interests of Zanzibar Indian Muslims, might well ponder over this fact.

The problem has a larger significance for it affects all Indians overseas as well as the national status of India. India cannot tolerate the humiliation and injury of her children abroad, and when they call us for succour, can we remain silent? Wherever they live or carry on business they are subjected to ignominy and discrimination, and constant conflicts arise. Today we cannot give them adequate and direct aid, but the

time will come when the long arm of India will reach them and will be strong enough to protect them. But even today we are not so weak as to watch helplessly the ruin of our countrymen.

The result of this brave resistance of Zanzibar Indians will have far-reaching consequences. If they win, they will increase the status of Indians abroad and all our countrymen overseas will be stronger to face the difficulties that encompass them. If they lose, it is not they only that lose, but India loses, and all her children abroad, wherever they might be, will sink in their helplessness. Zanzibar Indians occupy a strategic position among overseas Indians in the British colonies. They are a strong community which has played and is playing a decisive role in the economic life of the country. It is not easy to ignore them or suppress them, and if we help them they can win.

What can we do to help them? We had asked for an official embargo on cloves but the British Government, unhappily supported by some of our own countrymen, has refused to have this. Let us then have an unofficial embargo and boycott cloves and stop their import into India. This is a big enough weapon to paralyse the clove business of Zanzibar, for India is the biggest purchaser and consumer of cloves. Already, this has had a marked effect in Zanzibar where the price of cloves has fallen greatly and the government there is gravely embarrassed. We must organise efficiently this unofficial embargo and show to our alien government that the people of India can act effectively despite its opposition.

The Working Committee of the Congress has given the lead and I appeal to my countrymen to follow it. I appeal to the merchants not to import or deal in cloves. I appeal to all consumers to give up the use of cloves till this struggle ends satisfactorily for us. It is a small sacrifice but the cause for which we work is a big one. And let us remember that meanwhile our countrymen in Zanzibar are bravely carrying on their campaign of passive resistance.

14. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
August 30, 1937

My dear Krishna,

I had just written two long letters to you this evening when your cablegram arrived asking for airmail instructions for the Geneva meeting of

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

the thirteenth September in regard to China, Abyssinia, and the Indian national peace organisation.

About Abyssinia I do not know what the present position is. In any event we should adhere to our old policy of refusing to recognise the Italian conquest. No peace policy can be based on the acceptance of aggression simply because it has succeeded.

The Indian national peace organisation refuses to materialise. I see no prospect of it in the near future. The various organisations to which you once referred in a letter do not function at all and it is futile to expect anything from them. The Congress functions but it is overburdened with work. For the Congress to start a peace platform with others simply means that the whole burden falls on the Congress, and yet others interfere and make work difficult. It is fairly easy to cooperate in a demonstration, but it is far more difficult to do so organisationally. The Congress is so vastly more important than the others.

I am glad you have reminded me about China. Our attitude is one of complete opposition to Japanese aggression and of sympathy for China. Recently Indian troops were sent, or are being sent, to Shanghai. It was stated that this was to protect Indian interests there—an absurd and patently false pretext—unless by Indian is meant British. Unfortunately Bhulabhai Desai and Satyamurti issued a very foolish statement in regard to this. Soon after I issued a statement[2] about it, a copy of which I enclose. I think you should record your strong protest on behalf of the Congress at this exploitation of Indian manpower and resources in the interests of British imperialism. The real danger is that this might be repeated on a larger scale later, and might even result in India being dragged into some war. We must lay the greatest stress on this aspect of the question and make it perfectly clear that we shall resist it. In the interests of world peace, this kind of thing must not be allowed to occur.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

2. See pp. 611-612.

15. To Hooseinbhoy A. Laljee[1]

Allahabad
August 31, 1937

Dear Mr. Hooseinbhoy,[2]
Thank you for sending me the resolutions passed at a meeting in Bombay on the subject of Palestine.[3] I entirely agree that the British Government's proposals to divide up Palestine are objectionable and cannot solve the problem. I look upon this question from the political point of view and not from the religious. For me the Palestine movement is essentially an Arab movement of national freedom and I sympathise with it completely. You know also that the National Congress has repeatedly expressed its solidarity with the Arabs in this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5(KW)(2)/1937, p. 255, N.M.M.L.
2. (1890-1971); a prominent nationalist Muslim and founder-member, Swaraj Party; member, Bombay Legislative Council, 1924-34, and Central Assembly, 1934-45; president, All India Shia Conference, 1937 and 1964-65.
3. The Muslims of Bombay, at a meeting on 10 August 1937, passed resolutions condemning the British proposal for the partition of Palestine and expressing solidarity with the Muslim Arabs of Palestine.

16. The Congress and World Problems[1]

Allahabad
September 4, 1937

Dear Comrade,
We have to face many intricate and difficult domestic problems, but because of these we may not ignore world problems which affect us directly and indirectly. The status and position that our national organisation has obtained in this country as well as abroad necessitate that we should take this larger view and fashion our own policy accordingly. The wishes and opinions of the Indian people already count for something in world affairs and the day is soon coming, we hope, when they

1. Circular to P.C.Cs. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.

will count for a great deal more. It is also a well recognised fact that international affairs are closely knit together and even a national problem, in order to be fully understood, has to be considered in its relation to world problems. The danger of international war and crisis is ever before us, and therefore it is necessary that we should educate public opinion in regard to affairs abroad and direct it to right channels.

I am therefore drawing your attention to some of these urgent problems, so that you might take necessary steps by asking Congress committees to organise meetings and demonstrations in regard to them.

Zanzibar and boycott of cloves—We have already addressed you on this subject. The future of all Indians living or trading abroad depends on the success of the passive resistance movement that is being carried on by Indian merchants in Zanzibar. The Working Committee has called for a boycott of cloves and this boycott must be pushed by all Congressmen.

Palestine—The struggle for freedom in Palestine has been going on for many years and it has taken many shapes. British imperialism is now attempting to cut up this little country into three parts so as to perpetuate its dominance there and safeguard its air route to India. The Congress has given its full support to this struggle for independence and we must condemn this fresh attempt at weakening the national movement in Palestine by splitting it up. It is our belief that the right way to solve the problem is on the basis of an undivided and independent Palestine. The approach to this is for the Arab leaders and the Jewish leaders to confer together without any interference from British imperialist authorities.

Abyssinia—The tragedy of Abyssinia is too recent to be forgotten. For that tragedy the partial responsibility must rest with the British Government which adopted throughout a weak and vacillating policy and indirectly encouraged Italian aggression. Lately the British Government has been endeavouring to get Abyssinia out of the League of Nations. We are not enamoured of the League and we do not expect anything from a body which has shown itself to be weak and powerless and incapable of doing anything effective. But the driving out of Abyssinia from the League will be a betrayal of a brave people in the hour of their defeat and humiliation; it will be a recognition of the right of an aggressor nation to dictate its will to the League which it had flouted and insulted. So far as India is concerned, we must oppose this and stand by the unhappy people of Ethiopia.

On the last occasion when Britain sought to get Abyssinia out of the League, this was opposed by Mr. Jordan, the representative of New Zealand. All progressive forces were mobilised to support New Zealand

and they succeeded, for the time being, in preventing this from happening. But Britain is likely to make the attempt again and it is quite possible that the so-called Indian representative,[2] nominated by the Government of India, may be ordered to support Britain. We must make it clear that the people of India are entirely opposed to this suppression of the Abyssinian people or to any recognition of the aggressor nation.

Indian troops sent to China—The sending of Indian troops to Shanghai without any previous consultation or consent of the Indian people, or their representatives, is not only an affront to India but is a matter of the most vital concern to us. The first question is: is Indian manhood and are Indian resources to be exploited for the protection of British imperialist interests? But the implications of this are vaster and more dangerous, and the second and more vital question arises: is India to be pushed into a war for the sake of British imperial interests? That is a question on which the Congress has spoken with emphasis and clarity on many occasions. Our position is clear as the day. We will not permit this exploitation of our people and we will be no parties to an imperialist war. Therefore it is clear that we must protest against this despatch of Indian troops to Shanghai.

China and Japan—In the war that is going on in the Far East our sympathies must inevitably be with the people of China and against the aggression of Japan. We must give full expression to this sympathy. At the same time we must make it perfectly clear that if the situation develops towards world war, we will be no parties to it.

It is desirable that we should draw the attention of the public again to the Congress resolutions on war danger. Public opinion must keep wide-awake and vigilant on this issue so that it may be prepared in some measure to face the dangers and crises that might suddenly descend upon us. Wars come today undeclared and unheralded and if we forget this fact we do so at our peril.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Aga Khan was elected president of the League of Nations in 1937.

17. To Mufti Amin Husseini[1]

Thanks for your cable.[2] The Indian National Congress sends you greetings and assurance of full solidarity in the struggle for Palestine independence. We trust that undivided Palestine will secure complete freedom from British imperialist control, enabling all communities there to cooperate together for their common good and for the progress of the country. To this end, we hope that the Arab leaders and Jewish leaders will confer to solve their problems without interference from British imperialism.

1. Cable sent from Allahabad, 4 September 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 5 September 1937.
   Mufti Amin Husseini (1893-1974); Mufti of Jerusalem for forty years, organised Palestinian Arab opposition to the British mandate in Palestine and against Zionism.
2. It read: "The Palestine Arabs read with admiration your pronouncement regarding Palestine...and request your continued support."

18. Formation of Clove Boycott Committees[1]

It is time to take effective steps to bring about the boycott of cloves in India to help our countrymen in Zanzibar. For this purpose, I have appointed today a committee in consultation with the leading merchants of Bombay and other colleagues. This committee is a strong committee, strong from the Congress point of view and strong in its inclusion of leading merchants dealing in the trade of cloves. The strength of this committee is a measure of the earnestness with which we are going to deal with this problem. This committee is meant for all India, but to make it effective and workable it consists of Bombay men only so far. I hope it will co-opt leading merchants of Calcutta, Madras and elsewhere. I hope also the clove boycott committees consisting of businessmen and others will be formed in Calcutta and Madras by provincial Congress committees in cooperation with the local merchants and in consultation with the central committee. We must carry on this boycott throughout and there are going to be no half-hearted measures in this respect.

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 12 September 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 13 September 1937.

I congratulate the merchants on their patriotic attitude and decision.

I send greetings to our countrymen in Zanzibar and assure them again of our fullest support. Indians in Zanzibar have called for help, we have heard that call and they will hear our answer which will be an answer of action.

19. Observance of China Day, 1937[1]

The war in China goes on undeclared in the approved modern way, but nevertheless is ruthless and accompanied by the slaughter of thousands of human beings. Japanese aggression continues and the League of Nations, originally founded to protect the rights of the peoples and to prevent aggression, has become so helpless and impotent that it dare not even discuss the urgent problems of the day, much less take a decision on them.

Meanwhile, fascism grows and tears up every international treaty and obligation. Britain, one of the principal League powers, does not even protest and gives its indirect support to fascism. India, though not in a position to take any effective action, cannot remain a silent spectator of this tragedy, which might affect it considerably. We must organise our protest and keep a vigilant eye on what is happening.

I suggest that Sunday, September 26, should be observed as a special day for this purpose, when we should condemn the Japanese aggression on China and send our full sympathy to the Chinese people.

We must also record our organised protest on the sending of Indian troops to China without the assent of the Indian people and, in doing so, we should keep the larger danger of the international war before us. The 'war danger' resolution of the Faizpur Congress should therefore be repeated and explained.

I trust that Congress committees will organise meetings all over the country for this day and pass these resolutions.

1. Statement to the press, Broach, 14 September 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 15 September 1937.

20. Boycott of Japanese Goods[1]

Horror upon horror piles up in China and Japanese imperialism tries to crush the spirit of the Chinese people by the massacre of non-combatant men and women and even children.

Flourishing cities are destroyed from the air and terror reigns in that great land. We see something of what modern war is and we realise again the ruthlessness and inhumanity of imperialism.

All over India mass demonstrations and great meetings have condemned this, and we have sent our deep sympathy to our brothers and sisters in China. They are fighting most gallantly for their freedom and whatever suffering they may have to endure they will win through in the end. How can we help them? Boycott of Japanese goods has been suggested, not only in India but also in other parts of the world.

This suggestion is natural and justifiable and we give it full consideration. Organisation of such a boycott in India is not easy as Japanese goods are already controlled by a quota system and although a large variety of them come in, quantities are limited.

But it is clear that we must create the psychological atmosphere for such a boycott and each one of us, who feels hurt at the suffering and the sorrow of China under Japanese aggression, must avoid purchasing Japanese goods. But this must not be done in favour of other foreign goods. Mere sympathy is not enough. Let us do this much more at least to help the people of China in the hour of their trial and distress.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 30 September 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 1 October 1937.

21. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
September 30, 1937

My dear Krishna,
I seem to have a sheaf of letters from you which I have so far not acknowledged. One is dated the 8th September, another the 17th and two are dated the 18th September. Also the picture of the ambulance. I note what you say about your interview with Jordan.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I have read your private report about the meeting of the Council of the International Peace Campaign at Geneva.

About China, there can be no difference of opinion in India. But, as I have pointed out elsewhere, a boycott of Japanese goods here is a complicated affair. As you will notice I have suggested something of the kind. Probably we shall pass a resolution to that effect in the coming A.I.C.C. meeting.[2] But I do not quite see what we can do except general propaganda. I have not yet seen the resolutions passed by the International Peace Campaign. India's attitude, more particularly the Congress attitude, is being appreciated by the Chinese abroad and I have received cables to that effect.

I am interested to learn about the proposed agrarian conference in February next.[3] I should like you to take part in this conference on our behalf.

We are prepared to send our affiliation fee to Dolivet at any time.

I have not written to you about the Palestine issue. As you know this matter is agitating India quite a lot and all Indian sympathy is with the Arabs. So far as the Muslims are concerned there is an attempt to make it a religious issue. I wonder if you can lay stress on this in the I.P.C. or elsewhere. Our position is that Palestine must be essentially an Arab country and independent. Further that the Arabs and Jews should meet together and compose their differences on the basis of Palestine independence. The legitimate rights of Jews should be safeguarded by mutual agreement and not by the imperialist power. I think that both the Jews and the Arabs are beginning to realise that there is no solution to the problem except one of mutual agreement between them. But there is still too much of a reliance placed by the Jews on British power enforcing its will against the Arabs. I read the full text of Weizmann's[4] address at Zurich. It was a very feeling one but there was little of approach to the Arabs. To some extent we have been in touch with both the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine. In England apparently the Arabs' cause is hardly represented and all sympathy is with

2. At a meeting in Calcutta in October 1937, the A.I.C.C. passed a resolution calling upon the Indian people to boycott Japanese goods as a mark of sympathy with the people of China.
3. The International Peace Campaign had decided to call an agrarian conference in Geneva in February 1938 to discuss problems affecting peasants and agricultural workers. This was to counter the effect of the conference to be convened in February 1938 by the International Labour Organisation to be attended mainly by representatives of landowners and governments.
4. Chaim Weizmann, president of the Zionist organisation and later President of Israel, stated the Jewish case at the twentieth Zionist Congress at Zurich in August 1937.

the Jews. While I sympathise with the Jews I do not see why this should blind us to the fact that we are dealing with an essentially Arab country and Arab interests should dominate.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

22. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
October 7, 1937

My dear Krishna,
I have your three letters, two dated the 25th September and one 29th. I have nothing to add to what I have written to you about the boycott of Japanese goods. The vague indication that I made to this effect has had a good response and I have even had messages of thanks from China. But I am not yet clear how to organise this and at the same time not to push forward the sale of British goods in India.

I have already sent you a message for the civil liberties conference.[2] I enclose another copy of this.

I had not read Masani's pamphlet but your exceeding annoyance at it made me look into it. Parts of it seem rather exaggerated but the feeling behind that speech of Masani is pretty common in India.[3]

I am leaving Allahabad for a considerable time, going to the Punjab and the Frontier.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See pp. 261-264.
3. In a speech delivered on 2 September 1937 in Bombay and later printed as a pamphlet entitled *A Foreign Policy for India*, Masani argued that until India became independent she could not materially influence developments in the international sphere. He pleaded for India's resistance to war, national self-reliance and withdrawal from the League of Nations. He also said that capitalism and not fascism was the cause of war, and that the struggle was not between fascism and democracy but between capitalism and socialism.

23. On the World Situation[1]

The peace of the world is menaced and preparations for war are going on in Europe and other countries at a feverish pace.

Factories manufacturing war materials have been working day and night for the last two years and men engaged in the production of war materials enjoyed not even Christmas.

Although such is the pace at which production of war materials is going on, no country in the world wants war. Nations tremble at the devastating nature of the next war. But war is inevitable. It will come. In fact, it is already on us.

Japan is waging an undeclared war on the Chinese, and the civilian population, including women and children, is being bombed. War has been going on for a considerable time now in Spain, and trouble has started in Palestine also, where martial law has been imposed and so many institutions have been declared unlawful. Newspapers have been banned. British imperialism is trying to crush the brave Arabs.

Disaster will follow the next war and there would be utter ruin on all sides. We are already reading about horrible happenings in places where war is being waged.

The events happening in other parts of the world will have their effect on India and the British Empire. I cannot say how the British Empire would fare in the next war, whether it would survive it or not. Nobody can foresee that but I can say this much, that within the next ten or fifteen years the British Empire will be profoundly affected and it is possible that it might break up.

I would not be sorry if that happens for the British Empire has been the cause of much unhappiness to the subject nations.

There would be only two forces working in the next war, namely, the one which struggled for the freedom of their respective countries and the other trying to keep the nations in slavery.

The events taking place in Spain profoundly move us. We cannot send our men to fight for the Spanish Government but we could send an ambulance corps.

We should follow world events keenly and must be ready for war when it comes. We must be in a position to defend ourselves and for this the primary need is organisation. The Congress is the only organisation in the country which can fight British imperialism.

1. Speech at Delhi, 10 October 1937. From *The Hindustan Times*, 11 October 1937.

We cannot afford to fight over petty matters and communal questions when weightier issues are before us seeking solution. There are many dangers before us and we should therefore forget our small quarrels and concentrate on the achievement of freedom for the country. For who lives if India dies?

India's condition seems perplexing to me at times. I am a professional politician. As President of the Congress, I have tremendous responsibilities on my shoulders. I cannot run away from them. I must therefore shoulder them. At times they are very tiring. I have shouldered these responsibilities for a long time now and I have never shirked them. The fate of many millions of people is entrusted to the Congress. Faced with certain difficult situations, it is not easy for anyone to say which course one should follow and which one should not.

I have to feel the pulse of the country and see whether the country is going backward or forward. I have to see that the forward step is maintained. I can see that we are on the threshold of freedom for our motherland. But we cannot shut our eyes to the many difficulties besetting our path.

The mere shouting of *Inquilab Zindabad* will not bring us freedom. India cannot achieve freedom through these slogans. We should consider seriously the questions facing the country and the world. I cannot say how far Indians have understood these problems and their implications. The achievement of freedom is not an end in itself. There are questions like unemployment, poverty, etc., which we shall have to face courageously and find solutions for them. However, these questions are not easy of solution. We have to create mass consciousness among the people for their rights and duties and a feeling of self-confidence. If there is no awakening among the masses, the attainment of freedom would not mean anything. We have therefore to realize our own strength. If we do that there is no nation on earth which can keep us down.

The civil disobedience movement symbolised our strength. But we must remember that a handful of leaders cannot do much till they have the strength of the masses behind them. If we forget this, we shall find ourselves in a sorry state.

The fact that Congress governments have been established in seven provinces does not mean that we have achieved Swaraj. The Congress has accepted office after nearly two years of discussion. We have accepted office not on any petty consideration but with a view to make ourselves strong. If we have the power we would help the peasants and labourers and improve their conditions. But it is a fact that we do not have much power to help them.

We cannot help the peasants because the country is, so to say, mortgaged to the I.C.S. We are, therefore, not in a position to bring about the necessary reforms in the country. It is for that reason that we hesitated at first to accept office. Conditions, however, have remained practically the same. The poor peasants feel that there has been no change. They can only breathe a little more freely under the Congress ministries. That is all. They can now go to the ministers and complain if police and other officials misbehave. From this they should not however conclude that we have got all power. Our fight is not yet over. We have therefore to make ourselves strong.

The U.P. ministry has decided to release all political prisoners. While on the one hand, the Congress ministries are releasing prisoners, on the other hand, more arrests are being made on political grounds in the Punjab and in Bengal.

There can be no compromise on the question of federation. If federation is introduced it would block our path towards freedom. We would be tied down along with the states and it would hamper our progress towards our goal. I am also averse to the very system of monarchy which has caused only misery to the people.

24. The Need for a Broader Outlook[1]

I am speaking to impress upon you the need for taking a rational view of men and events. I think the British Government is not contriving to precipitate war. On the other hand, it wants to avoid it. It is the fear of war and the armament activities of other nations that prompt it to intensify its own war preparations. In fact, Britain, France and America have too much of possessions and riches of the world to risk war.

War in fact never ceased during the last eighteen years. Even after the Great War, both economic and actual wars have been going on the world over. Even after the war ceased, foodstuffs to Germany were not allowed and children were starved to death for some time.

I was in London in 1935 on Armistice Day, when eighty lakhs of people suspended all business for two seconds which was very impressive. All over Europe, people were deeply touched by the solemn occasion.

1. Speech at Allahabad, 11 November 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 12 November 1937.

They all hate war. It is wrong to suppose that either the British or the Germans are cruel people. It is not proper for us to generalise in that manner. Our fight is not against individuals. We stand for definite principles.

I want to utter a note of warning that we should not take a narrow view of things. If we want to achieve great things, we must have great minds and big hearts.

In the event of war it becomes incumbent on us to think rationally and also make our organization strong. We do not want that the blood of Indians should be shed in an imperialistic war while they remain as slaves. After having made sacrifices in the past, we should see that we utilise the international situation to our own advantage and enlarge the bounds of our freedom. We are not going to be mere tools to be used in the imperialistic game.

I would plead that base actions and mean thoughts are not allowed to tarnish our ideals. Some people complain that the British are trying to divide the Hindus and Muslims, but the fault, in a large measure, is of the Indian people who are foolish enough to allow themselves to be exploited in this way. The only method by which we can strengthen ourselves is to maintain high ideals by rising above the petty considerations of communal gains and selfish interests.

25. Indian Sympathy for China[1]

You must have read of the decision of the All India Congress Committee regarding a boycott of Japanese goods. It is difficult to organize this as the Japanese goods dribble in under a quota system and are very cheap. Nevertheless we are trying to create a psychology of boycotting these goods. As you know, there is a strong anti-Japanese and pro-China feeling in the country. The recent events in China have shocked the people of India and all our sympathies are with the people of China.

1. Jawaharlal sent this message to Professor Tan Yun-Shan, founder-director, Cheena Bhavan, Visvabharati. *The Hindustan Times*, 28 November 1937.

26. Appeal to Help China[1]

I have received the following cable from Dr. John Dewey,[2] Prof. Albert Einstein, Mr. Bertrand Russell and Romain Rolland from New York:

> In view of the wanton destruction of oriental civilization, and for humanity, peace and democracy we propose that the people of all countries should organize a voluntary boycott against Japanese goods, refuse to sell and load war materials to Japan and cease cooperation with Japan in ways that help her aggressive policy while giving China every possible help for relief and self-defence until Japan has evacuated all her forces from China and abandoned her policy of conquest. Wish the Congress to endorse this statement and give publicity and call all India to join action.

The following reply has been sent by me to Dr. John Dewey:

> Your cable. Congress already expressed condemnation of Japanese aggression and full sympathy for China. Called for boycott of Japanese goods and agrees to general policy and objective of your statement and is giving publicity. Congress is most willing to cooperate for humanity, peace and democracy everywhere and for elimination of fascism and imperialism.

In issuing this message to the press I should like to draw the attention of the public again to the urgent necessity of abstaining from purchasing Japanese goods. Horror piles upon horror in China and armed might and air bombs and poison gas kill hundreds of thousands of her children and crush her very soul. We are sickened at the brutality and inhumanity of the Chinese scene. But mere sympathy is not enough. We must give such help as we can. This help can be of two kinds—refusal to purchase Japanese goods and financial assistance for medical relief. I trust that Congress committees and other organisations will carry on propaganda for this boycott. Donations for sending medical relief will be received in the All India Congress office and will be forwarded to proper quarters. An urgent demand for medical supplies has been received by us and I earnestly trust that the people of India will give what they can for relief of suffering and tortured humanity in China.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 18 December 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20 December 1937.
2. (1859-1952); American philosopher, educationist and critic; also founder of the *American Civil Liberties Union*, 1920.

27. Observance of China Day, 1938[1]

I have recently drawn the attention of the Indian people to the horrors attendant on the Japanese invasion of China and appealed to them to help our Chinese comrades by subscribing for medical supplies. I have today received an appeal for help from Chu Teh,[2] commander-in-chief, eighth route army, China. Chu Teh, it will be remembered, was the chief of the famous army which performed the prodigious feat some years ago of marching 8,000 miles in spite of almost insuperable difficulties. The feat is unique in military annals.

I suggest that Sunday, January 9, be observed as China Day throughout India and that meetings be held and collections made for the purpose of helping the Chinese with medical supplies. All such contributions and collections should be sent to the Foreign Department, All India Congress Committee, Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 24 December 1937. *The Hindu*, 25 December 1937.
2. (b. 1886); leading commander of the Chinese communist armies before 1949; vice-chairman, central people's government, 1949-54, vice-chairman of the republic of China, 1954-59; chairman of the National People's Congress Committee, 1959-69.

28. The Congress and China Day[1]

Allahabad
December 25th, 1937

Dear Comrade,

I should like to draw your particular attention to a statement I have issued to the press suggesting that Sunday, January 9th, 1938, be observed as China Day throughout India. On this day public meetings should be held in towns and the large villages to express sympathy for the people of China in their hour of trial and to explain the significance of the struggle that is going on in the Far East. The public should be requested not to buy Japanese goods but this does not mean that they should

1. Circular to P.C.Cs. A.I.C.C. File No. P-1/1937-38, p. 9, N.M.M.L.

buy other foreign goods. In particular, Japanese silk should not be purchased. *On that day collections should be made for the purpose* of sending medical supplies to China.

Please inform all your local committees of this and request them to take steps immediately to organise this work.

All money collected for the Chinese people should be sent to the Foreign Department of the A.I.C.C., Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

29. To Rabindranath Tagore[1]

Allahabad
January 9, 1938

My dear Gurudeva,

Your telegram announcing your generous donation for the China Relief Fund came last night. It gave me great pleasure. Apart from the sum itself, the lead you have been, and are giving, in regard to China has been of inestimable value to us. Perhaps you know that even our feeble gestures of goodwill and help have produced a deep impression on the Chinese people. Unfortunately our politicians, or most of them, are so engrossed in their domestic problems that they pay little attention to world events, even though these may have an important bearing on India.

Affectionate regards,

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. Visvabharati Papers, Santiniketan.

30. The Need for Help to China[1]

A sort of world conflict is going on in which democracy is pitched against imperialism and fascism. What is happening in China? Japan

1. Speech on China Day, Allahabad, 9 January 1938. *The Leader*, 13 January 1938.

is trying to secure domination and political influence over China which would mean the strangling of the Chinese aspirations for freedom. If we understand that imperialism stands against the political emancipation of nations and if we also understand that the victory of imperialism at one place is bound to have its influence over other places, we would surely extend our sympathies to the people of China. The Chinese are fighting an imperialist power which is almost fascist in character. Japan first attacked China a few years back. Loud protests were made but they had no effect. Now seeing China becoming more powerful and organized every day, Japan fears that her imperialist ambitions may receive a setback. It has therefore suddenly attacked China. Formerly there used to be a regular declaration of war, but now hostilities commence even without such a declaration. In these hostilities bombers are used and thousands of people are killed and immense loss to property is caused. Our fellow human beings are being oppressed in China and, in the name of humanity, it is our duty to help these innocent people. But what help can we give? Even if we send a few men from here, that is not enough. We can show our sympathies by sending medical supplies and such other help at this hour of their national struggle. What, however, would have a telling effect on Japan is the boycott of Japanese goods. I do not mean any harm to Indian merchants who have commercial dealings with Japan, but they should not place any further orders with Japan. In any case, I would like the public to boycott Japanese goods. I also suggest that the names of the shopkeepers, who have signed the pledge that they will not sell Japanese goods, should be brought to the notice of the people so that they may patronize their shops.

I have received numerous letters from the Chinese leaders and generals expressing gratitude for India's sympathy and seeking assistance in the hour of their crisis.

The vital issues confronting the world cannot be settled in one day and soon enough we will have to decide on which side we would range ourselves. We have to be prepared for the future struggle which is inevitable for winning the country's freedom. The international situation is at present very complicated and any day there may start a general conflagration. Most of the European countries have been making vast preparations for some time past and Britain too is not lagging behind. It is for this reason that the Congress for the last two years has been saying that India will not join Britain in any future war which would be in furtherance of its imperialist designs and I want to make it perfectly clear that Indians do not want to be a party to any war. If a war is forced upon us against our will then Britain would have to

fight with India first before it fights with anyone else. Therefore we have been trying to organise the masses and strengthen our national forces.

Whether we could send some doctors to help the Chinese is a matter under consideration. In the meanwhile, we should try to help the Chinese in other ways.

31. To James S. Cushman[1]

Allahabad
February 2, 1938

Dear Mr. Cushman,[2]
Miss Agatha Harrison has forwarded to me the cutting about the Trotsky trial[3] which you sent her. Thank you for thinking of me in this connection. I have read Walter Lippmann's[4] article with interest. I do not often agree with Walter Lippmann and I do not agree with him in the present instance. But I certainly think that the events in Russia during the past year and more, and specially the trials of many persons who had been prominent in the revolution, have been very distressing features. They made one feel that there must be something wrong about a system which has to indulge in such cruelty and suppression. It seems that violence must necessarily breed violence. And yet I do think the socialist ideal and collectivism are right and ultimately inevitable. The way to them might be somewhat different.

The New Year is well on but still may I send you and Mrs. Cushman my good wishes for it?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

32. To J. Olsvangar[1]

Allahabad
February 2, 1938

Dear Dr. Olsvangar,

I am grateful to you for your message of sympathy[2] of the 12th January 1938.

I do not remember if I thanked you for sending me a copy of *The Round Table* containing an article on Palestine.[3] I read this article with interest and I have been trying to follow developments in Palestine with some care. I must confess that I am distressed at what is happening there and I see no way out of this tangle by the method that the British Government is pursuing. I wish the Jews did not rely so much on the British Government and would seek a settlement directly with the Arabs. That would be both honourable and lasting. Any other attempt at a settlement will fail and will bring greater bitterness in its train.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On the death of Jawaharlal's mother on 10 January 1938.
3. An article entitled *Palestine And The Arab World* discussed the economic and military issues arising out of the plan for the partition of Palestine.

33. To Nnamdi Azikiwe[1]

Allahabad
February 11, 1938

Dear Mr. Nnamdi Azikiwe,[2]

I have received your book *Renascent Africa* which you have been good enough to send me. I am grateful to you for this gift and I am looking forward to reading this book with pleasure. I am greatly interested

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1904); vice-president, Nigerian National Democratic Party; member, Nigerian Legislative Council, 1947-51; minister, Government of Eastern Nigeria, 1955-57; Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Nigeria, 1960-63 and president, 1963-66.

in the future of Africa and I welcome signs of awakening among the Africans. May I assure them that they have the good wishes of the Indian people? We hope that in the near future the terrible burdens they have suffered from will be removed and they will be given an opportunity to grow in every way.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

34. To Tan Yun-Shan[1]

Allahabad
April 10, 1938

My dear Professor,[2]
I have received your letter of April 7th. As you are going back to China I hope that you will carry to the Chinese people the deep sympathy of India in their present trials. You will tell them how the people of India have followed with pain and anxiety the invasion of China by the Japanese army and how they have been shocked by the brutalities committed by the invaders. All over the world we see the most shameless gangsterism in international affairs. What the outcome of all this will be it is difficult to say. But I agree with you that ultimately the forces of good will triumph over the forces of evil. I have no doubt that China will meet with success in repelling this invasion. But in doing so I earnestly trust that she will not adopt the militarism of the West but will retain the noble qualities which made her so great in the past. China and India have stood for certain ideals in human life for ages past. These ideals must be adapted to the changing circumstances of the world today. But they must remain to guide us in the future as they have done in the past. I trust that it may be given to our two countries to cooperate together in the cause of world peace and freedom and that neither of us, in good fortune or ill fortune, will lose our souls in the pursuits of some temporary advantage.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1901); a Chinese scholar of oriental and western philosophies; taught Chinese language and culture at Visvabharati, 1928-31 and 1934; founder-director, Cheena Bhavan at Santiniketan, 1934-67.

Recent news from China has heartened us. But what has encouraged us most is the fine unity that the Chinese people are showing in the face of trial and disaster. It is that spirit that counts and that must win. We in India have much to learn from this example of unity and sacrifice for the cause of national freedom.

I hope that when you come back to Santiniketan I shall have the pleasure of meeting you again. I intend visiting Europe this summer.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

35. To Madam G. Duchene[1]

Allahabad
April 29, 1938

Dear Madam Duchene,[2]

Thank you for your letter of the 21st April informing me of the Women's International Conference that is being held at Marseilles on the 13th of May. I am afraid it is not possible, at this short notice, for any woman of India to participate in this conference but I am quite sure that Indian women will give you their fullest cooperation in the task that you have set for yourself. Recent events in Europe, more particularly in Spain[3] and Austria,[4] have shown us what a brutal and unscrupulous fascism can do. It is time that all men and women of goodwill, all over the world, who believe in peace and democratic progress should ally themselves to combat this grave menace.

Recently we have also seen that the British Government has agreed to recognise the conquest of Ethiopia by Italy.[5] This is the very negation of all morality in international relations. If governments weaken and err, it is up to the people to stand up for the right.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D.-7/1936-38, p. 425, N.M.M.L.
2. An active member of the Women's International Conference held in Marseilles in May 1938.
3. The rebel troops under General Franco had succeeded, by 15 April 1938, in isolating Barcelona and Catalonia from the rest of the country.
4. Austria was annexed by Germany on 13 March 1938.
5. The Anglo-Italian Agreement of 16 April 1938 led to the recognition by Britain of the Italian conquest of Ethiopia.

I send my greetings to the International Women's Conference and wish it all success in the great task which it has undertaken.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

36. The Failure of the League of Nations[1]

The Working Committee at their last meeting appointed a committee on foreign affairs. A great country like India and an organisation like the Indian National Congress must necessarily at any time pay attention to international affairs and lay down their policy in regard to them. In the present state of ever-deepening world crisis, continuous vigilance is necessary on our part lest events should march ahead and catch us unawares and injure the cause we have at heart. In full recognition of this fact the Congress at Haripura passed its resolution on foreign policy[2] and the Working Committee appointed their foreign affairs committee.

Nearly twenty years ago the World War ended and in the minds and hearts of many people there was some hope that the tide of war had been stemmed and the foundations of a system of collective security laid. They looked to the new League of Nations to check the aggressor and protect the law-abiding among nations. Yet the history of these twenty years is one long record of failure and the League of Nations stands today weak and helpless, discredited and ignored. All the brave words about disarmament and the outlawry of war have ended in nothing, idle dreams that have vanished at the coming of cruel day. The world hovers today at the brink of war and catastrophe and spends three times

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 30 April 1938. *The Tribune*, 1 May 1938.
2. The resolution passed at the Haripura session stated: "The people of India desire to live in peace and friendship with their neighbours and with all other countries, and for this purpose wish to remove all causes of conflict between them. Striving for their own freedom and independence as a nation, they desire to respect the freedom of others, and to build up their strength on the basis of international cooperation and goodwill. Such cooperation must be founded on a world order and a free India will gladly associate itself with such an order, and stand for disarmament and collective security. But world cooperation is impossible of achievement so long as the roots of international conflict remain and one nation dominates over another and imperialism holds sway. In order therefore to establish world peace on an enduring basis, imperialism and the exploitation of one people by another must end...."

as much on armaments as it did in 1914. International morality, feeble as it always was, has ceased to exist. Manchuria, Ethiopia, Spain, Austria are the bloody witnesses of the new order of unabashed and brutal gangsterism which fascism is seeking to impose upon the world. The League is paralysed and can only think in terms of localising a conflict which spreads continually. The League powers, and notably Britain, ignore the League and its decisions and make pacts with the aggressors. Peace and security are thus non-existent and the strong are free to bully and violate the weak.

India, engrossed as she is in her own problems and struggle for freedom, can be no passive spectator of this tragedy which will powerfully affect her own future destiny. India must therefore make her voice heard among the nations and make it clear that when opportunity offers itself she will take action to support the cause she has at heart. She cannot be a party to the foreign policy of the British Government, which is increasingly becoming pro-fascist and is leading to war. India wants freedom and security and peace and believes in a system of collective security. But collective security cannot be based on imperialism. The two are incompatible as democracy and imperialism are incompatible. The failure of the League of Nations is largely due to the attempt to make it function as a guardian of the imperialist powers backing it. If imperialism goes then alone can the dream of peace and security take shape.

In any world solution of the problem of collective security the freedom of India thus becomes an essential factor. Without it there is no solution and the seeds of conflict remain. This fact must be realised by all who work for peace and security.

Britain has recently concluded a pact with Italy and has agreed to recognise the Italian conquest of Ethiopia. She will now try to induce the League of Nations to do likewise. The British Government may forget its solemn pledges and betray the League and the cause of peace, but India must make it abundantly clear that she will be no party to this shameful policy. She will not recognise the Italian Empire over Ethiopia and the League of Nations must be made aware of India's stand in this matter. India stands for freedom and peace and collective security and will take her place by those powers who support these principles and oppose the recognition of the Italian conquest of Ethiopia. We have instructed our representative on the executive of the International Peace Campaign accordingly and in response to his requisition an emergency meeting of the executive of the International Peace Campaign is being held at Geneva on May 7th prior to the League council meeting.

37. India and World Politics[1]

It is always a fascinating game to try to lift the veil over the future. The future, and that too not a distant one but the near future, is going to change the map of the world considerably. Unfortunately, many people, caught in their humdrum life, do not care to think of the future at all. It would not be a peaceful future, but it is going to be a bloody one. I think that people of India do not wish to be passive spectators, but want to be actors also, trying to shape their destinies according to their will.

I do not know how you look at world events. Do you think that these events have taken place as if by magic or do you think that there are some underlying forces that shape events? Do you want to think of history in terms of the history of the 19th century or the 13th century or of some remote age?

Perhaps you would be inclined to draw a parallel from the past. There was power politics in the past. Politics was dominated by power. If you still view history from the point of view of power politics, you would be hopelessly mistaken. For the very concept of power has changed. It would be dangerous to measure the present with the yardstick of the past. The present age is a dynamic age, a revolutionary age, a changing age. Not in politics alone but socially, economically, and industrially, the world is changing rapidly. And we have to be on guard, lest we may think of tomorrow in terms of today. There has been right through history a lag of ideas. Ideas do not keep pace with events. For instance, I would mention the French Revolution. The underlying cause was presumably economic and the distress of the peasant. The conditions which preceded the French Revolution are to be found in some parts of this country. The conditions existing under the present zamindari system can be compared to those existing in France of the pre-revolutionary days. Liberty, equality and fraternity enthused the people in the French Revolution. Great men like Voltaire and Rousseau had given these ideas to the world, and for a hundred years these ideas spread all over Europe. In France itself, the old land system was put an end to after the revolution and was brought up to date.

Meanwhile, something strange was happening, and that was the industrial revolution which changed the structure of society. Even at the

1. Jawaharlal and Subhas Chandra Bose spoke on this subject at a meeting organised by the Indian Civil Liberties Union, Bombay, 18 May 1938. *From The Bombay Chronicle*, 19 May 1938.

time of the Napoleonic wars, new problems had already arisen out of the industrial revolution. The ideas of the French Revolution did not solve the problems of the people.

On account of this lag of ideas, occasionally these outbursts or revolutions have occurred in the world. These upheavals are merely attempts on the part of the people to catch up with events. They are efforts to cover the gap and that would mean the breaking up of old vested interests. So, Europe marches step by step towards catastrophe and all that fine European civilisation is again threatened with extinction.

If you want to understand current events and their future course, you must get over the gap between ideas and events. I am not addressing these remarks to the Liberals who belong to the past generation. Nor do I refer to the communalists who belong to the medieval times. I address them to Congressmen. Many in the Congress are so engrossed in the national struggle that they do not think in terms of ideas or of the future. Nationalism makes people lop-sided. They concentrate too much on the immediate issues before them. They cannot think of social and economic problems which a progressive country would think of. That has been the fate of the Indians and that has been the fate of the Irish people. And yet nationalism is the inevitable step which they have to take before they pass on to the next phase. Even in the Congress, when people think in terms other than that of politics, at once the lag in ideas becomes apparent. It is said that one chief function of the Congress is that of achieving political freedom and that other steps would follow after that freedom has been won. That is true. But these steps do not and would not follow in such a methodical fashion one after another. There is bound to be overlapping. For example, there is medieval feudalism, and side by side there is the most modern type of industrial capitalism. The process of development cannot be confined to the sphere of politics alone. History has shown that political freedom has to precede all other forms of freedom, but at the same time, all these forms of freedom are inter-connected. Capitalism in this country is in its early stages and it is yet developing. But the fact remains that capitalism is a world phenomenon, that if it cracks in the United States or in England, it is going to thrive in this country.

So the Congress which is essentially a political body cannot help thinking in terms of social and economic questions. That is why the Congress governments are so intensely interested in solving the land problems facing the peasants.

What is happening around us is that the people of the world have chosen different sides of forces to stand by. India should also make up her mind which side she has to take.

If we understand the conflict of these forces such as fascism and nazism, we would at once understand the politics of the British Government. We shall see the enormous mediocrity of the British 'National' Government. The British cabinet seems to have lost the capacity for thinking clearly and correctly. Since the loss of America, no government in Great Britain has ever been more incompetent and more inefficient than the present 'National' Government.

In Great Britain, the class hatred has developed to such an extent that the ruling families are prepared to see the extinction of the empire rather than see the down-and-out come into their own. That is how the attitude of the British Government towards Franco can be explained. They do everything to help the rebels indirectly, knowing full well that success of the rebels would mean disaster to the empire.

We must therefore try to look at the underlying causes of world tension. Hence I want the people to think of the present in terms of the future that is yet to come.

38. On Framing India's Foreign Policy[1]

In a world full of war and preparations for war India stands significantly as a country which has deliberately based its policy on peace and nonviolence. How far it is possible to apply these methods in the international sphere today, it is difficult to say.

But it must be remembered that the nonviolence of the Indian struggle is not a weak, passive and ineffective pacifism. It is a dynamic thing with sanctions behind it and if the world is to progress in culture and civilisation, it will have to adopt peaceful methods of solving its problems. That day may yet be distant. But India will cooperate with all her heart to bring it nearer.

For a subject country like India, foreign affairs and foreign policy are considered by many to be outside the scope of practical politics. They are a game at which only free nations can play. There is some truth in this for a subject country is controlled and bound down by the dominating power even in regard to its internal policy, and much more so

1. Allahabad, 26 May 1938. Foreword to *Foreign Policies of the Indian National Congress and the British Labour Party*, a pamphlet written by Ram Manohar Lohia. Reprinted in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13 June 1938.

regarding its foreign policy. India may be an original member of the League of Nations but all the world knows that this means an additional voice and a vote for the British Foreign Office. The people of India have no say in the matter and their so-called representatives are nominated by the British Government. And so, inevitably, the subject country concentrated on achieving national independence before it could think of playing an effective part in international affairs.

And yet this is a half-truth and we see its limitations even today. In spite of her political subjection to Britain, India is increasingly interesting herself and to some extent influencing foreign policy. Even today the voice of India counts for something in international affairs. Why is this so? Because it is recognised that India is on the threshold of freedom and a free India is going to make her weight felt in world affairs. Because also the background of international affairs has changed and is continually changing. Cabinets and governments still play a dominant role in shaping foreign policy, but the mass of the people and their wishes count for more and more and though they may not yet be able to give shape and content to this policy, they influence it and sometimes exercise an effective check over it. That influence of the people will grow till palace politics and the intrigues of cabinets give place to a real and open collaboration between the peoples of various countries, till a league of governments gives place to a league of peoples.

The people of India will cooperate fully in this task, and it is right therefore that even today they should range themselves with the forces that work to this end. But as a matter of fact it has never been easily possible to separate domestic policy from foreign policy; each acts and reacts on the other. Today that separation is a manifest impossibility. And the Congress, in spite of its preoccupation with the internal struggle for freedom, has been compelled by force of circumstances to think of outside affairs and express itself in regard to them. As early as 1921, it passed a resolution on the foreign policy of India assuring our neighbouring countries of our friendship for them. As the war danger developed, the Congress expressed itself clearly and declared that India would be no party to an imperialist war. We were interested in the fate of Ethiopia, we protested against Japanese aggression in China, we sided wholeheartedly with the Spanish Government in its heroic fight against foreign invasion and domestic rebellion.

We took deep interest in all this and more not only because of our sympathy for a people who were fighting for freedom but because the Indian people were understanding the true significance of events abroad and were developing a definite foreign policy in regard to them. They saw that India's future was to some extent bound up with what was

happening in Europe or the Far East. As our vision and understanding have grown, so has our interest in foreign affairs.

The Haripura Congress went a step further in defining our foreign policy but still we are on the threshold of this domain and it is right that Congressmen should give thought to this matter and help in developing a clear-cut and comprehensive policy. Events march rapidly nowadays and we must not lag behind them or be caught napping when the time for action comes.

I welcome this essay of my colleague, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, as a contribution to the further study of this subject. He does not necessarily commit the Congress to what he says, but his background is that of the Congress and many will agree with him. He has discussed at some length the changing policy of the British Labour Party. This policy has often been in the past hostile to India or at best indifferent. It has been weak and ineffective in the domestic field. It has given passive support sometimes to the reactionary 'National' Government of the day. And yet at their last conference there were gleams of hope and we must welcome them.[2] We welcome them because if that policy is really pursued it might offer a basis of cooperation. We have stood up against the British Government and resisted it but we want to make it clear that our resistance is to their policy and to their domination over India. We would welcome cooperation with the British people and with other peoples on the basis of Indian independence and world peace. That is the corner-stone of our policy and we cannot give it up.

There is a talk of collective and pooled security to ensure peace and freedom, while on the other hand the world rushes headlong to war and catastrophe. Those who talk of collective security will have to be clear in their minds about it. Is it going to be based on pacts of certain Western governments and on the continuation of the imperialist system? To imagine so is to ignore realities. There can be no collective security or peace on the basis of imperialism, just as there can be no peace if fascism holds sway. There can be no pooled security unless the problem of India and like problems are solved. India will throw her whole weight in any real scheme of collective security and peace. But if her own freedom is ignored she will consider the scheme a sham and a farce. The problem of India is thus an essential part of the world problem. Whatever happens she makes a difference and it is well that this should be realised.

Meanwhile it seems clear that collective security must be backed by

2. The Labour Party at its annual conference in October 1937 had urged a firm and honourable international policy.

some kind of effective sanctions against the aggressor. What must these sanctions be? Military sanctions may perhaps be necessary and inevitable on particular occasions but they involve war, and the remedy might be as bad as the disease. Economic sanctions may also involve that risk, but not necessarily so. They are powerful and on the whole peaceful; though their effect might not be immediate, it is far-reaching. It is quite possible to control the aggressor by economic sanctions alone. To have no sanctions is to allow free play to the aggressor and ultimately to bow to his will. That cannot be agreed to, for that means no collective security. It means the law of the jungle.

39. Despatch of Medical Unit to China[1]

Allahabad
June 1st, 1938

Dear Comrade,

On the eve of my departure for Europe, may I draw your attention to the medical unit that is being sent to China on behalf of the Congress? The President has already issued an appeal for funds for this. I am sure that this appeal will meet with an abundant response if Congress committees interest themselves in the work of collection. We must send a gift worthy of India and of the Congress. Already our decision to send a medical unit has been warmly welcomed in China and elsewhere. We must take speedy steps to give effect to our decision. I hope therefore that you will circularise your district and local committees to make collections in this behalf and to send them to the A.I.C.C. office.

It may be that under the President's direction we may have to celebrate special days in connection with our China mission. If so, it is desirable that on these occasions Congress committees should fly our national flag and the Chinese flag jointly. Congress committees should therefore procure Chinese flags. If there is any difficulty in obtaining them, the secretary of our China committee, Shri G.P. Hutheesing, Gulshan Villa, Oomar Park, Warden Road, Bombay, should be asked.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Circular to P.C.Cs. A.I.C.C. File No P-1/1938, pp. 67-68. N.M.M.L.

14

THE HARIPURA CONGRESS AND AFTER

1. Report to the A.I.C.C. at Haripura[1]

My colleague, the general secretary, is submitting to the A.I.C.C. the report of the Congress work during the year. It has not been the practice for the retiring President to add to this or to have a separate say, but nevertheless I am venturing on this course as I should like to place certain considerations before the Committee. Although I have called this note a report, the designation is not quite correct. I am not traversing the ground covered by the general secretary, nor do I propose to make a survey of the past year's activities. But I do wish to draw attention to certain important aspects of the problems we have to face.

These problems grow more complex and the burden of responsibility on the Congress ever increases. This is the inevitable consequence of the growth of the Congress itself and the ever-widening influence that this great organisation exercises on the hundreds of millions of our countrymen. History has cast on us, of the Congress, the task of moulding India's destiny, and the history of tomorrow will record how we have faced this great task. We have rendered a good account of ourselves in the past, and, with all our faults and weaknesses, served India with fortitude and with abundant love for her suffering children. But the future is harder to face. What will it say of us and of the Congress? We who meet here at Haripura, in a corner of peasant India, have to carry this heavy and crushing burden of the future, and what we say and do here will fashion to some extent the future that is to come.

What are we? Individuals linked together in a mighty organisation. Individuals play their role on the public stage and sometimes influence events; organizations give content to the lives of large numbers of people and mould their activities. But the individual and the organisation move in their narrow spheres, ineffectively, so long as they do not represent in some way the inner urge of the masses and the great forces that go into the making of history. It is because the Congress became the instrument of these great forces in India, because it came to represent the hunger for freedom of our people and their passionate desire to be rid of their poverty, that it played the great role of India's standard-bearer in the face of imperialist might.

We cannot shirk the responsibility that has been cast on us. That responsibility includes not only our domestic problems, vitally important

1. This was written by Jawaharlal on 10 February 1938 and submitted to the A.I.C.C. session at Haripura on 16 February 1938. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 17 February 1938.

as they are, but also our international problems. Engrossed as we are in our struggle for freedom, we have already begun to take part in international affairs, and that part is certain to grow. In any event we could not have ignored the growing shadow of war and the strange evolutions of power politics in the world. They affect us intimately, both directly and because of their effect on British imperialism. But as the day of our independence draws near, we have to be clear in our own minds about our foreign policy and the part we shall play in international affairs.

We have already made it abundantly clear that we shall be no parties to imperialist war, and if British imperialism seeks to drag us into it, we shall resist the attempt. Further we have repeatedly stated that imperialism itself, and the economic roots that underlie it, which result in the subjection of one nation by another and in international rivalry, is the dominating cause of war. Imperialism and peace are as the poles apart, and to have peace in this world we must rid it of imperialism.

We see today fascist aggression all over the world and frightfulness beyond description accompanying it, and an open glorification of war. We see also countries genuinely anti-imperialistic and desiring peace, as well as imperialist countries, sated with conquest and the spoils of conquest, fearful of war lest they lose what they have. There is talk of the fascist powers and the democratic countries, and we are asked if, in the conflict that seems to be inevitable, we are going to refrain from helping the democratic countries. We must clear this confusion in our own and in other people's minds.

We are entirely against fascism, and the Congress has given the strongest expression to its condemnation of fascist aggression in Africa, Europe and the Far East. But what are the democratic powers and what will they be fighting for when world war overwhelms us? England? England is certainly democratic to some extent, but only in the domestic sphere. It is anti-democratic and imperialistic in regard to its empire. So far as we in India are concerned, we have this imperialism as our constant companion. If England fights and wins, it is British imperialism that wins and the British hold on India is strengthened thereby. On no account therefore can we be parties to India helping in such a war—even against the fascist powers. If democracy is going to fight fascism, then democracy must live up to its name and be democratic at home and abroad.

Labour leaders and pacifists in England are indignant against fascism and are even prepared to shed their pacifism in defence of England. But they view with equanimity the continuance of British imperialism in India, and console themselves with the thought that if they left

IN PENANG, MALAYA, 23 MAY 1937

ADDRESSING A PUBLIC MEETING AT SEREMBAN, MALAYA, 29 MAY 1937

India we would fall a prey to Japan or Germany or Italy. It is a curious and comforting delusion and shows how a dormant imperialism colours the outlook of even those who call themselves democrats, pacifists and socialists. The obvious contradiction in a policy based on democracy at home and imperialism abroad is not seen. But the contradiction persists none the less and inevitable consequences will flow from it. These consequences are that we will on no account assist British imperialism and that our primary objective is to get rid of that imperialism. Every socialist, as well as everyone else desiring world peace, must, if he understands the implications of his creed, support us in this attitude and strive to end imperialism in India and elsewhere.

To talk of a Japanese or German or Italian invasion of India is to forget realities completely and to live in a world of fantasy. Japan is further away from India, for all practical purposes, than England is. The land route is entirely closed and impossible of passage, even for aircraft. The sea-route is very long and terribly dangerous and cannot be negotiated till British sea power and air power have ceased to exist in the East, and probably America has been wholly disabled. Japan cannot think of coming to India till she has absorbed the whole of China, a task almost certainly beyond her competence and resources. Even after that, the next countries on the list are Australia, the Philippine Islands and the Netherlands India.

It is equally fantastic to think in terms of a German or Italian invasion of India. Both these countries will have their work cut out for them in Europe and their objectives lie in Europe or North Africa. But if, by any chance, the fascist powers gain an overwhelming victory in a world war and the world lies prostrate before them, then of course anything might happen. Even so India will not go as a gift to anybody. She will resist the invader to the utmost and, in spite of lack of military and such like resources, she has developed enough strength and technique of her own method of struggle to make an invasion a terribly burdensome operation. We have to struggle today with an entrenched system which has dug itself deep into our very soil. It will be far easier to deal with a newcomer who comes with hostile intentions.

Recently we have had the farce of air-raid precautions in some of our cities and gas-masks have been flourished before us. The idea of giving gas-masks instead of food or work to starving people may have some humour in it, or probably it is just the product of the average military mind, but in India today it is a manifest absurdity. There is no obvious risk of air raids in India except possibly some stray attempt. Are German or Italian or Japanese planes coming across thousands of miles over continents and oceans to bomb Indian cities? That would be difficult

enough under any circumstances, and it would be totally useless from the point of view of the larger objective that the enemy forces would have. It is clear that the air-raid precautions in India have only one end in view—to familiarise the Indian people with the idea of approaching war, to create an atmosphere favourable to our joining it. Many of our countrymen have not realised this and seem to welcome these fanciful activities of the military in India. It is time they understood their significance and opposed them for what they are—preparations of British imperialism to rush us into an imperialist war.

For the same reason we have opposed the despatch of Indian troops to China. India has sent her whole-hearted sympathy to the people of China in their travail and we would gladly help them to the best of our ability. But we will not tolerate the use of Indian troops for the purposes of British imperialism.

If we are opposed to any participation in an imperialist war, we must be equally opposed to any increase in armaments in India. The army in India is not a national army. It is an imperialist army and partly a foreign army of occupation. To increase its strength or effectiveness is to strengthen imperialism and we can be no parties to this. Indeed we cannot approve of any expenditure on it. Recently the mechanisation of the British army in India was debated in the Central Assembly. We are totally opposed to this not only on the ground that it is the British part of the army that is mechanised, or that we object to additional military expenditure, but on the more fundamental ground of resisting the strengthening of the apparatus of imperialism in India. We are told that this is required for the defence of India, but the defence of India, in the vocabulary of our rulers, means the defence of British imperialism and British vested interests in India.

The world seems to be in a perpetual state of crisis and no one knows when this might lead to catastrophe. We must therefore be perfectly clear in our own minds where we stand and what we propose to do, and we must let other people know our minds. In the conflict between fascism and democracy, we are all for democracy, but England does not come to us in a democratic garb and we will not cooperate with her imperialism. Even apart from India, British foreign policy, during the past eight years, has been singularly pro-fascist. Britain has actively supported or passively accepted fascist aggression in the Far East and in the West. In spite of brave words to the contrary, she has consistently helped the fascist powers to grow in stature and power and has weakened the League of Nations. The key to the understanding of international affairs in recent years is this attitude of the British 'National' Government. Disarmament came to grief because of it. Germany

repudiated the Treaty of Versailles and entered into a naval treaty with Britain over the head of the League of Nations. The British Government is very largely responsible for the shameful farce of non-intervention in Spain, and recently this government has even sent an official representative to the rebels in Spain. France might have followed a different policy but fear of being isolated has made her a hanger-on of the British foreign policy. Thus the British Government must largely shoulder the responsibility for the failure of disarmament, the fading away of the League of Nations, and the deplorable deterioration in international relations. Imperialism must necessarily result in ever-increasing armaments.

The policy of the Congress is governed by two basic considerations—complete independence, our constitution being framed by a constituent assembly elected by the Indian people, and resistance to India's participation in Britain's wars. Both these are aspects of one and the same thing—anti-imperialism. On the constructive side of peace we are prepared to go to the fullest extent to outlaw war and establish world peace and collective security. Indeed we go further, as the very basis of our national struggle has shown, for we want to eliminate all violence from national or international affairs. As such we must stand for disarmament on the widest possible scale. Believing as we do in a world order, we shall cooperate with every attempt to evolve cooperation between nations.

The League of Nations was undoubtedly such an attempt, but the League was in effect a League of governments, and our government being a foreign government, we have so far had no place in the League. In the name of India the British Government has had an additional vote. We cannot agree to this misrepresentation and hence we have condemned the League and often demanded India's withdrawal from it. A free India would gladly cooperate with the League and would seek to make it a real League of peoples and not governments. Only when India is independent will she be properly represented in it.

Our ardent desire to work for world peace and to cooperate with other nations in this vital task is evidenced by the Congress joining the World Peace Congress. An essential part of the programme of the World Peace Congress is the strengthening of the League of Nations. We accept this, but subject to our present opposition to the League when we can find no place there. We must also make it clear that by accepting the League when we are free, we do not accept the *status quo* in international affairs or many of the grossly unfair treaties imposed by imperialistic countries on weaker nations. The League can only function effectively on a basis of equity and democracy and anti-imperialism.

Collective security would involve the use of some kind of sanctions against the aggressor nation. India would unhesitatingly join in sanctions, but it must be remembered that the whole Congress approach to this problem, as to others, will be governed by the policy of nonviolence. If we have adhered to nonviolence in our own struggle for freedom, equally so will we think in terms of it in considering international affairs and the coercion of an offending and aggressor nation. It may perhaps be open to doubt how far this policy will be applicable in defending a country against foreign aggression. Most of us, if we were in Spain or China today, would probably be compelled, by force of circumstances, to adopt the violent method of defence, rather than be ineffective spectators of tragedy and disaster. But in considering international sanctions the Congress is bound to oppose military sanctions for these would lead to war on a more extensive scale. Our policy would be economic sanctions which, if properly applied, are likely to be even more effective in the long run.

In world affairs today England is often referred to as a democratic nation, and yet the democracy underlying Britain's government can be judged by the new constitution in India with all its safeguards and special powers vested in the Governors and the Viceroy. Even more so by the proposed federation which seeks to bolster up the feudal states and through them British imperialism. India will resist this federation and the imperialism that lies behind it, and we shall continue our struggle for freedom whether war comes or crisis.

The Indian states still function in their old bad way and try to hold on to a century that is past. They endeavour to crush all attempts at political activity and yet all over India there is a stir and an awakening among the people of the states. The Congress objective in regard to the states is clear. The independence of India includes the states, and the people of the states must have the same freedom as those who live in other parts of India. Our movement for freedom includes in its scope all the states. While the objective is clear, there has been some doubt as to the way of approach to it by the Congress. Some have advocated a policy of non-interference by the Congress in the states, leaving it to the people of the states to shoulder the burden of their struggle. Inevitably that burden must fall on them, but it is neither possible nor desirable for the Congress to keep aloof. We can and should prevent the name of the Congress being exploited, but the Congress is vastly interested in every struggle for freedom in the states and, wherever possible, it has to give its support. The states are dark and unwholesome corners in India where strange things happen and people disappear leaving no trace behind. During the past year, one of the most advanced states in

India, Mysore, has gained an unenviable notoriety because of its attempt to crush an agitation aiming at responsible government in the state. The A.I.C.C. passed a resolution condemning the repression there. This resolution was criticised as *ultra vires* by Gandhiji, but I think it was entirely within the competence of the A.I.C.C.[2] If a state like Mysore behaves in this fashion, what shall we say of the other states?

We have now had six months' experience of the working of the Congress ministries and life has not been easier for us because of the new problems that have faced us. The ministries have functioned bravely in spite of enormous difficulties and have a substantial record to their credit. And yet we wish it was more. There are so many things that cry aloud to be done, so many abuses to go, so much leeway to be made good. A vast amount of the ministers' time and energy is spent in getting little things done which the representatives of the old order do not like. The conflict inherent in the constitution is always there in spite of all attempts to cover it up, and even though it may not see the light of day, it eats up their time and energy, and important work suffers. The old services, even with goodwill which is not always present, cannot be the agents of the great changes that the Congress wants to introduce. They have been brought up in a different tradition and their competence is largely confined to work in the ancient ruts of an irresponsible imperialist administration. An attempt to leave the ruts fills them with apprehension, and where we demand and require a flaming enthusiasm for the new order, we get a reluctant passivity. It is difficult to carry on effective work in this way and our over-worked ministers live a care-worn and exhausting life. They deserve our fullest sympathy in their thankless task.

We see in India today a rapid development of social forces and sometimes of social conflict. The Congress, representing as it does different forces, itself becomes to some extent the forum for these conflicts. We have thus certain disrupting tendencies and, at the same time, the strong unifying tendency which has held us together for so long. I have no doubt that the unifying tendency must be made to triumph for any other outcome would do great injury to our cause. Much has happened recently before and during our Congress elections, which has made many of us think hard, and pained us greatly. I do not wish to discuss these matters here except to say that the spirit of faction is far too evident. Inevitably there is a right wing of the Congress and a left wing and various middle groups, though this simple classification sometimes misleads. An attempt to drive out the left, if successful, would be fatal for it represents a vital

2. See p. 538 and p. 567.

part of the movement without which it would lose much of its flair and become increasingly wedded to petty reformist activities. It would spread confusion in the mass mind, more especially among the peasantry, and thus weaken the Congress. I feel that some such attempt has been made during recent months and it has created considerable bitterness.

Certain leftist elements in the Congress and outside have also erred and thus themselves partly created a situation which has done them harm. There has been too much of a tendency to take advantage of a temporary mass excitement, too much of an identification of their own wish-fancies with the supposed urges of the masses, sometimes a support of methods which are not in consonance with the Congress policy, sometimes a support of wrong action for fear of losing influence with the people. Such a policy is likely to become adventurist and bring at least temporary failure in its train.

We have to hold to our anchor and not allow ourselves to be swept away in these grave times by momentary excitement, or by party strife, or by desire of temporary gain at the cost possibly of the larger good. We have to remember that during these many years we have tried, not without success, to function politically on an unusually high ethical plane, and we have to live up to these standards of integrity in public affairs which we have so often proclaimed. We may not forget that nonviolence is not a mere phrase for us, but a deliberate policy which we have adopted and pursued with remarkable results. It is true that many who talk loudly of truth and nonviolence have little to do with either, and they use these terms for narrow purposes of their own. Nevertheless truth and nonviolence have to be adhered to by us to the best of our ability. What will this game of politics be worth for us if we lose our ideals and tarnish our integrity?

We have seen recently a strange and disturbing outburst of communalism. We have welcomed the new orientation of the Muslim League with its objective of independence. We have welcomed the rapidly rising political consciousness of the Muslims, which has sent large numbers of them to the Congress, and moved large numbers of others to function outside the ranks of the Congress. But the communalism that these latter have exhibited has been distressing, for separatism is always a sign of backwardness. But far more distressing has been the singular lack of decency and the ordinary standards of public life that has been in evidence. Violence has often been encouraged and has already led to some deplorable occurrences.

But this will pass and what will remain is the new awakening among the Muslim masses. It will pass if the Congress holds hard to its policy of treating all minorities with not only full justice but generosity so as

to gain their confidence and goodwill. It will pass because other and more vital problems confront us. It is the peasant who is beginning to dominate India, and it is to him and his kind that we shall have to go again and again, and if we find favour in his eyes and give him relief from his age-long bondage, it is well with us. But it will not be well with us if we fail him and do not keep the promises we made to him.

I believe as firmly as ever that only socialism will solve our problems as also those of the rest of the world. But the fundamental tasks before us at present are two: to put an end to imperialism, and to end the relics of feudalism in the states and in our land system.

2. The Congress and Federation[1]

The Congress will not under any circumstances whittle down its opposition to federation. I am surprised to see all kinds of irrelevant subjects being brought into the discussion. We must remember that we are now faced with big issues. I want to know what is going to be our stand on the constitutional crises in Bihar and the United Provinces?[2]

I disapprove of so many amendments having been moved to the resolution.[3] I would like that the Congress during every session discussed only one or two important resolutions in which could be brought every outstanding problem of the day. To some extent, I can understand the anxiety of the members that the Congress might whittle down its opposition to federation. But we should remember that today the Congress is a gigantic organisation and that members of the Working Committee are only too well aware of their responsibility and therefore their words, as embodied in the resolution, have the fullest import of what they convey.

1. Speech on Bhulabhai Desai's resolution opposing federation at the subjects committee meeting at the Haripura Congress, 18 February 1938. From *The Hindu* (evening edition), 18 February 1938.
2. The Congress ministries in Bihar and U.P. had resigned on 15 February 1938 as the Governors of these provinces did not agree to the release of all political prisoners. The Governors later backed down.
3. M.R. Masani's amendment had wanted the Congress to make it clear that unless complete independence was given to the people of India, the Congress would not accept federation. Z.A. Ahmad's amendment wanted the Congress committees to cooperate with the other anti-imperialist organisations for fighting against the inauguration of federation.

There is no need to say that we are going to fight federation.[4] There is no point in saying that at this juncture. Regarding the suggestion of direct action, what other weapon have we in our armoury? It must be either threat of direct action or direct action itself. So what is the point in laying it down as a part of our decision to oppose federation?

Then there is the demand for uniting with kisan and other organisations. I am in sympathy with some of these, and some others I do not like, but, all the same, I would undoubtedly cooperate with every one of you to fight a common foe, whatever differences we might have. What particular advantage would we have by saying that we will cooperate with other anti-imperialist organisations, or that we will resort to direct action to fight federation? The status of the subjects of the Indian states has been brought into the discussion.[5] I may assure you that I feel very strongly on this subject, but a resolution on federation is not the occasion to deal with that issue. And what is the use of rubbing in the question of Indian states at every conceivable opportunity? We are only doing harm to the Indian states by this attitude. We are face to face with big issues. What reply are we going to give to the country on the crisis with which we are now faced? The British are not going to leave our shores on hearing threatening speeches. I assure the House that the fact that some British leaders have toured the country[6] should not lead us to the conclusion that the Congress would whittle down its opposition to federation. I wish you to study carefully the proper resolution[7] and see if it does not embody our viewpoint completely. Remember clearly the implications of the federal scheme, which is nothing short of an attempt to bind us down for ever.

The Working Committee has huge and heavy responsibilities. Their decisions affect the history of India and the destinies of millions of her population. The Working Committee, therefore, cannot be expected to indulge in any irresponsible talk. It cannot make itself responsible for reckless and undignified talk as you and I sometimes indulge in, in our individual capacities. One of the previous speakers had urged the freedom of the vote. I endorse that suggestion, but I am afraid I cannot

4. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya's amendment proposed that if the federation were foisted on India it would be combated in every way "leading to direct action for the overthrow of the constitution and preparation for convening of a constituent assembly."
5. N.G. Ranga moving another amendment had said: "the proposed federation if imposed without reforming the states would not only encourage separatist tendencies but further tighten British imperialist hold upon India."
6. See pp. 378-379.
7. See p. 379.

agree with some of the suggestions of the previous speakers to lay our cards on the table as to what methods exactly we have in mind for fighting the federal menace.

When we talk of resorting to direct action or taking kisans or trade unions with us, we do not talk of fighting the federal scheme. Such talk serves only to deflect attention from the supreme task of fighting the federation. The Congress today is very different from other organisations. You may say there is no harm in allowing a rat to walk in the company of an elephant, but does that make a rat an elephant?

To weigh the Congress and the States People's Conference in the same balance is a mockery. These comparisons detract from the dignity and prestige of the Indian National Congress. If you say, 'Do fight for freedom, but at first bargain with the States People's Conference', will it not look ridiculous?

The constitutional crises in Bihar and the U.P. are big issues about which we are expected at the present moment to give directions as to how our ministers should conduct themselves. I hate to talk big on any and every issue and give knocks with hard words. But that does not mean that I want to give in to the British Government on the federation issue. We must go forward to implement our decision, but before we do so, we must collect our thoughts.

3. The Congress and the Indian States[1]

I wish to invite your attention to the resolution passed ten years ago by the Calcutta Congress which had clarified the Congress position.[2] To say that the Congress does not concern itself with the welfare of states is utterly wrong and a misinterpretation of the Congress attitude. It is beyond comprehension how the Indian National Congress claiming to fight to secure independence for all India could, even for a moment, leave out of consideration such a great part of the country as out of its scope. It is utterly unthinkable. How can we picture a free India without freedom for the states that run throughout the length and breadth

1. Speech at the subjects committee meeting at the Haripura Congress, 18 February 1938. From *The Hindu*, 19 February 1938.
2. It said: "This Congress assures the people of the Indian States of its sympathy with and support in their legitimate and peaceful struggle for the attainment of full responsible governments in the States."

of the land, spread everywhere in profusion, intermingled with the other territories surrounding them or separating them? It is our right and duty to fight as much for the people of those states as for others. For our goal is a unified and undivided India. But the states are in a slightly different category as regards their nature and structure. In these numerous states, there thrive many such ideas and people not of today but those discarded some time back. It is, therefore, meet and proper that we apply different methods of approach and plan a different line of action, suited to the conditions of these states, and strive to bring them in line with us and make them play their rightful part in the national struggle. I wish to assure you that there never has been even the thought of not including in our great movement the states that are part and parcel of our country.

My views on Indian states are very well known. I hold very strong views and my position is that I cannot tolerate even for a short while the continuance of states in their present form. Their very existence oppresses me. In them, I see exemplified two things—the feudal order and British imperialism—both of which I dislike intensely. It is not correct to argue that by this resolution the Congress is trying to wash its hands off the states and pursue a policy of non-interference.[3] It is physically impossible to separate the problem of Indian states from that of the rest of India. I have no doubt this matter is now cleared up and there is not even a shadow of doubt.

The first half of the resolution stresses the objective of independence.[4] That is common both for British Indian subjects and Indian states' subjects. While this is recognised, it is absurd to talk of non-interference. It is with this background that I approach this subject. All of us have deeply pondered over the subject. We may differ in our approach to this question but our objective is the same. We are absolutely of one mind that it is the duty of every one of us to work for the realisation of the Congress ideals in the Indian states.

3. The resolution stated: "Congress, therefore, directs that for the present Congress committees in states shall function only under the direction and control of the Working Committee and shall not engage in any parliamentary activities nor engage in direct action in the name and under the auspices of the Congress nor undertake internal struggle of people of the states in the name of the Congress."

4. "The Congress stands for the same political, social and economic freedom in the states as in the rest of India and considers the states an integral part of India which cannot be separated. The Purna Swaraj or complete independence, which is the objective of the Congress, is for the whole of India, inclusive of the states, for the integrity and unity of India must be maintained in freedom as it has been maintained in subjection..."

You must remember that there have been in the past, both in the Congress and in the A.I.C.C., occasions when conflicts arose over the subject of Indian states. There have been very unwholesome debates creating an atmosphere which is injurious to the interests of the people of the Indian states.

At Calcutta a resolution was adopted condemning repression in Mysore and subsequently certain events happened which resulted in creating an atmosphere which instead of proving helpful to the agitation had an adverse effect.[5] This thing had troubled me greatly and I tried to think about it and analyse the situation in my mind. I thought how we could help this struggle in the states. May I now say something, perhaps in criticism of that resolution, because I did not personally like the resolution which came before the All India Congress Committee at Calcutta in regard to the language and certain phrases of it? But the essential part of that resolution, regarding the condemnation of repression in Mysore, I wholeheartedly endorse, because in the course of my presidentship I had had a lot to do by way of correspondence in regard to the affairs in Mysore with all sorts of people. I speak with some knowledge on the subject and with that knowledge I can say definitely what happened in Mysore deserved the severest condemnation from the All India Congress Committee.

It may be that some people in the states erred, but on the whole the states' people carried on the agitation with resolution. And certain consequences followed. It is not good enough for us to act in that manner, more specially now when we have to face big problems and big crises. It would be better, perhaps, if we tone down our resolution and tone up our activity slightly, so far as the use of the Congress name is concerned, and push forward and prepare good ground for action not only in British India but also in the states. Today a remarkable awakening is taking place all over India, including the Indian states. We, on our part, must try to nurse it, cherish it; and above all we must organise ourselves.

We are all agreed on this. The most controversial point in the Working Committee's resolution related to the clause which banned the organisation of Congress committees in the Indian states. Personally, I would welcome the formation of as many Congress committees as possible all over India. But during all these years how many committees have been formed? Except for a few that existed "in the imagination of the faithful", the use of the Congress name by these organisations, which were placed under different circumstances, was more a hindrance than a help.

5. See pp. 561-580.

During my presidentship, I had on many occasions advised the Mysore Congress Committee not to launch civil disobedience against the Durbar's order although I had all the while felt that the Mysoreans had the perfect right to do so. But the Congress, which for the moment was following a different policy, could not get embroiled in civil disobedience in the Mysore state with its implications and repercussions in other parts of the country. So what help did the Mysore Congress Committee get from us? For carrying out the constructive policy of the Congress, there were all-India organisations working independently of the Congress. Therefore Congress committees in the states were not required to do this. Thus the use of the Congress name by the states' committees was definitely a hindrance to them and thoroughly useless. It is best to face facts. It might be that in a year or two conditions in the states might change. In fact, I feel that this would happen earlier than the people believed and then the Congress could certainly reconsider the position. But as it is, it would be better for the states' people to depend on themselves and not to look outside for help from the Congress. I want to assure the states' people that this resolution in no way goes back in the slightest degree on the Congress attitude towards the states' people. But the question that has become vital is that we must face realities and march independently towards our common goal.

4. The Congress and Burma[1]

It is difficult to explain the Congress attitude on the question of Burma. Burma is neither a province of India nor a part of it. It would be absurd to say that the Burma Congress Committee stands for the freedom of India and not of Burma.[2] We do not want Burma to remain a colonial province of India. I do not want to attach much importance to the fact of the separation of Burma. I have always treated it from a realistic point of view. The conditions in Burma are different and most of the resolutions passed by the Congress have no bearing on them. It would be wrong also to treat Burma as a foreign colony like Malaya where there are a large number of Indians. Burma's associa-

1. Speech at the subjects committee meeting at the Haripura Congress, 19 February 1938. From *The Hindu*, 19 February 1938.
2. Consequent upon the separation of Burma from India, the subjects committee at the Haripura Congress approved its removal from the list of Congress provinces in the Congress constitution, and creation in its place of a new Burma committee to work for the freedom of the people of Burma.

tion with India and the Congress is very old. Unfortunately, the majority of the Burma Congress Committee's members are Indians and only a small number of Burmans have participated in it. I hope that more Burmans will join the Congress committee. The present change is only an attempt to face reality and get over certain difficulties.

5. On the Rights of Minorities[1]

Mr. President, Brothers and Sisters,

I am reading this resolution in English.[2] In Indian politics the question of majority and minority often crops up. Our countrymen look at this question in a strange manner and even after thinking over it they are unable to understand what this question is and why they fear each other. You must have seen that during the last few years several things have happened in India, one of which is that the majority has advanced towards the Congress. During the last 20 years large numbers of our Muslim brothers fought for independence. Since 1921 several such occasions came when our Muslim brothers were with us in lakhs. In the movement of 1930-31, ten to fifteen thousand Muslims went to jail. Last year the Muslims joined the Congress in a very large number. Not only the Muslims but the Christians, the Jews and the people of several other communities which are in a minority in our country also joined the Congress. In this resolution we have expressed our pleasure on their joining the Congress. Our effort is still continuing. We want that people of every community in India should join this struggle. You must be remembering that such a resolution was passed at the Lucknow session of the Congress and a programme of mass contact presented before us.[3] Since

1. Jawaharlal moved a resolution on minority rights at the Haripura Congress session on 20 February 1938. This is a translation of his speech in Hindi on the occasion and printed in the *Report of the Fifty First Indian National Congress*, February 1938.
2. The resolution, passed by the A.I.C.C. on 20 February 1938, declared that Congress "regards it as its primary duty and fundamental policy to protect the religious, linguistic, cultural and other rights of the minorities in India and will give widest scope for their development and their participation in the fullest measure in the political, economic and cultural life of the nation".
3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 222.

Gandhiji gave a new colour to the Congress we have been thinking over this problem. We discussed this problem at the Lucknow Congress. We said that our objective was mass contact. At Faizpur we emphasized this very thing that the message of the Congress be carried to every home, to the homes of the Hindus and Muslims both. In the last election our attempt was to spread the Congress message from door to door and bring it home to every community—Hindu, Muslim and Christian.

We conveyed the message to every home. On behalf of the Congress sufficient work is being done among the Muslims and its result has been good. Even then some people had taken exception to it. They ask what right has the Congress to work among the Muslims. Likewise, others can ask what right the Congress has to work among the Sikhs. Hindus can ask what right the Congress has to work among the Hindus. But they do not understand that the Congress is not a communal organisation. The Congress is a political organisation whose aim is complete independence. At the same time our country is very poor. We have to remove its poverty. We have to remove the poverty and slavery from this country. As for the political and economic questions, the Congress is ready to help everyone. Its doors are open to everyone. We cannot solve these problems on a communal basis. Had the Congress not been there today it would have been incumbent on me, you and all of us to create such an institution whose doors were open to everyone. If we raise separate voices on a communal basis it would be of no avail. The door of the Congress is open to every Indian. It is closed only for those who do not want full independence. And whoever wants full independence, for him it is open. Despite this it is repeatedly said that if India becomes independent it would be for a particular community. But this is not true. Only a fool or a brainless person can think in terms of Hindu and Muslim rule. There can never be such a rule. If there is any rule it would be only Indian rule. Today we have to see what is there in the Congress which can jeopardize the interests of the Muslim or Christian brethren. Swaraj is for all—rich and poor. You should understand this fully well that in regard to religious matters everyone should have complete freedom. Everyone should have religious freedom.

The kisans in our province are very unhappy. Hindus and Muslims both are laden with debts. You know that in the Punjab the Hindu-Muslim problem is very complicated. Despite this there is no communalism among the kisans and the small zamindars. They want the burden of their debts to be lightened. Everyone of them has the same problem.

It is also important that people should have regard for the culture, manners and language of every community. There have been long debates on the question of national language. What is its outcome? We should have one national language. It does not mean that if you are a Gujarati all your work will not be done in Gujarati. Instead, in Gujarat the people will be completely free to do their work in Gujarati; in Madras they will be free to do their work in Tamil and Telugu; in the Frontier they will be free to do their work in Pushtu. Everybody will be free to do his work in his own language in his province. This also we should understand that in regard to culture and education people will have full freedom. In regard to these matters there should be no conflict whatsoever. There can be differences in political views. Between the zamindars and the farmers, the labourers and the millowners, there cannot be any communal question. There may be conflicts between a zamindar and a farmer, between a millowner and a labourer, but they cannot be called Hindu-Muslim conflicts. Even so people call them Hindu-Muslim conflicts and break each other's heads. This is not a matter of principle. According to the principle, all of us should be free to do whatever we like. Unfortunately in our country there are a large number of foolish people and among them there are mostly educated people who discuss political problems and often the conflicts emanate from them. In the Punjab Assembly the Muslims are in a large number. Even then why are there conflicts? If you study it carefully you will find that wherever there is the Hindu-Muslim question it is started only by a few upper-class people. The middle class is not benefited by it. Instead, it suffers loss. The big people quarrel over trifles like government service, membership of the councils, etc. These days a new question has cropped up. It is about ministries. But it is a question of a handful of people. These upper-class people dupe the Hindus, Muslims and Christians and make them fight for their own benefit. I am very happy that the Muslim League has declared full independence as its goal. But by its other utterances it seems that its sole policy is to abuse and malign the Congress. But this is not proper. For the last eighteen to twenty years Congress has been functioning as a dignified organisation and lakhs of people are its members. In the Muslim League there are people who are well educated. But only recently I was taken aback after hearing their speeches. Several times I tried to understand what the matter was after all and whether there was any fundamental issue in it. What do they want to say? Generally their complaints are about the Congress ministries and about the language. They raise the question of the Urdu language. Now they have raised a new question. It is about the *Bande*

Mataram song which they say stands for the Hindu state. But this has been proved to be totally false. The purpose of raising this question is merely to create a rift. About the Hindi-Urdu controversy Mahatmaji had approved of an agreement at Karachi.[4] As a matter of policy the Congress wants the Hindustani language.

Now take the question of *Bande Mataram*. The *Bande Mataram* has been in vogue for thirty years and no one ever objected to it. Despite this, about the last portion of the *Bande Mataram*, to which some exception can be taken, four months back the Congress Working Committee decided in Calcutta that generally it might not be sung.[5] As regards the first portion there is not even a single word in it to which anyone can object. There are some difficult Bengali and Sanskrit words in it which one cannot follow easily. But a song which has been connected with our political life for thirty to forty years cannot be discarded by any kind of threat. We have to advance in our struggle for freedom. Many of our brothers and sisters who have come here as delegates know how for the last eighteen to twenty years we have been involved in so many minor and futile issues. It is my earnest request that if someone could speak on this and plead in a proper manner, then the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. would be ready to settle all the issues connected with it. But please do remember that the Congress has some principles. It cannot give up those principles. As far as the minorities are concerned we are always ready to make a settlement with them. In this resolution nothing new has been said. If you study it and read the Working Committee resolution carefully you will find how clearly the rights of the minorities have been mentioned therein. Congress has declared what path we will adopt. If there is any point at dispute, Congress is ready to settle it. The Congress has expressed its views very clearly and quite fearlessly. Ours is a democratic organisation and our main aim is to fight the British Empire. The question of majority and minority has been deliberately raised in slave countries. Imperialism always tries to see that the question of majority and minority is kept alive and nationalism receives a setback. These days the problem of Palestine has also become complicated like this. You must be aware that Englishmen arrived there only 20

4. Speaking on the resolution on fundamental rights at the Karachi Congress in March 1931, Mahatma Gandhi had said: "though I am sure that Islamic and Aryan cultures are not mutually exclusive and fundamentally different, I must recognise that Musalmans look upon Islamic culture as distinctive from Aryan. Let us therefore cultivate tolerance. Let us try to learn the Urdu language and Urdu script and understand the Musalman's insistence on it."
5. See p. 236.

years back. Prior to that, for 1,500 years, the Jews, the Muslims and the Arabs had been living there. But the Arab-Jew question never arose between them. No sooner than imperialism stepped in, the Arab-Jew relations became strained and assumed serious proportions.

We do not know where this problem will lead us. But in my opinion its growth is to be attributed to imperialism. If we became successful in our fight against imperialism and British rule came to an end, it would assume a different form altogether. As long as the British ruled, this communal voice against the Congress would continue to be raised. Today, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Parsis are joining the Congress in lakhs. Vested interests are therefore afraid of its growing power. They fear that their control over the masses will be removed. Therefore they want to spread communal feelings among them. In order to establish their own leadership they adopt wrong means and spread communalism in the name of freedom. When we were fighting against imperialism and were in jails, the people of the Independence Party[6] who today pose to be the supporters of freedom were against us.

It is the duty of the Congress to go halfway to meet the minorities and allay their fears. In this resolution there is nothing to feel perturbed about. The Congress wants to adopt such a policy which would be found satisfactory by all the people. I hope you, the delegates to the All India Congress Committee, will consider this resolution fully well before its adoption, keeping in view your position and responsibility.

6. See p. 121.

6. On the Hunger Strike by Political Prisoners[1]

There is only one amendment moved so far urging the deletion of the portion which refers to hunger strike by political prisoners.[2] On this issue I propose to explain the position of the Working Committee clearly. We are not condemning the hunger strike resorted to by the Andamans prisoners, nor censuring them. We only want to state our point

1. Speech at the subjects committee meeting at the Haripura Congress, 20 February 1938. *The Hindu*, 21 February 1938.
2. Sardar Patel had moved the resolution disapproving the hunger strike by the political prisoners in the Punjab. Sohan Singh Josh opposing it said: "Sir Sikandar's government calls our patriots murderers and dacoits. Our efforts in the assembly have failed. I request you not to join in the condemnation of hunger strike."

of view, since Congress has never before announced its views about hunger strike. But in doing so the Working Committee did not disapprove of the action already resorted to by the political prisoners in the Andamans or elsewhere.

Hunger strikes by prisoners have complicated the problem of their release rather than helped it. In several cases hunger strikes have actually impeded efforts to secure the release of prisoners and we should resist the temptation to go on a hunger strike. I don't think it proper that one should go on a hunger strike to secure release.

Hunger strike is a very serious and dangerous weapon. I do not say that political prisoners should, under no circumstances, resort to hunger strikes in order to ventilate their grievances. Occasions may certainly arise when political prisoners may have no other alternative. But still we must discourage the application of this dangerous weapon with a view to securing release.

Mr. Munshi Ahmed Din[3] has told us here this morning that the Punjab political prisoners have not resorted to hunger strike in order to secure release but for the mitigation of many humiliating and dehumanising jail regulations. I will still appeal to you to be clear about this. It is an extreme step and should not be encouraged.

The resolution moved by Sardar Patel is the most important resolution of the present session of the Congress. All the time we had been considering other resolutions, our minds were occupied with this crisis. In fact, we had our eyes on the clouds that had gathered on the horizon. I agree with Mr. Masani who said that we should mobilise for the fight. And as I take a peep into the future, I say this problem does not concern only Bihar and U.P. but all the provinces.

Englishmen expressed surprise that we were so calm and quiet while the crisis was impending. Such people are ignorant of the past history of the Congress. We have always worked with a cool head and with smiling faces. We give an opportunity to the other side to retrace its steps. Our resolution may appear outwardly cold and even mild but we have calculated all that is to follow in the wake of the present crisis.

The Governor has made statements relating to certain activities of the Kakori prisoners.[4] Nobody would say that the Kakori prisoners were

3. (1899-1967); a leading Congressman of the Punjab.
4. Following the resignation offered by the U.P. Congress ministry on the issue of the release of political prisoners, the secretary to the Governor of U.P. said: "Those for whose release they pressed, in particular, were prisoners who had been convicted in the Kakori case which dealt with an elaborate conspiracy extending over a considerable period in course of which a number of dacoities and murders were committed."

murderers and dangerous people. They were brave men who had no axe to grind and who risked their lives not for personal benefit. It is possible that after fifteen years of incarceration, completely shut off from the outside world, the released prisoners may have committed some mistakes or uttered what they should not have. But after having personal talks with some of them, I am confident that they no longer believed in their old methods.

I am glad that Mr. Dubash has spoken on this resolution.[5] It is good that the comrades of the Kakori Conspiracy Case stand before us and have expressed their views honestly and sincerely. It is clear that these prisoners have sincerely changed their views. This new orientation in their political outlook should not be interpreted as mere opportunism. I have talked with many of them and I can assure you that they have sincerely abjured their previous creed. We have not coerced them to accept our creed. We have given a pledge to the millions of voters that we shall secure the release of our political prisoners. I am glad we have unflinchingly striven to honour our pledges.

5. Durgashankar Dubash, a Kakori case prisoner, had said: "the Andaman prisoners had realised that days of terrorism had gone and it was not out of selfish motive to seek liberty that they said this; but they had come to subscribe to the Congress creed and had honestly and sincerely decided to work the Congress programme."

7. To N.S. Hardikar[1]

Khali
March 14, 1938

My dear Hardikar,

... I think some kind of all-India direction and control is necessary for our volunteer organisation, but, apart from this, I think the provincial Congress committees should be given a fair amount of freedom to organise volunteers on the general lines laid down by the Working Committee or some volunteer board nominated by it.

I feel that the work the Seva Dal has done during the last 15 years or so, though useful, has not borne as much fruit as it ought to have

1. N.S. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

done. We have worked too much from above and made the structure top heavy. We have given some training to a few hundred persons, but most of these have got lost in their cities or villages, and the gain to us has not been much, while the cost has been considerable. I was greatly impressed by the Khudai Khidmatgars. These have grown up from below, chiefly from the villages, and have spread with remarkable rapidity. They have hardly cost anything. It is true that they vary greatly in efficiency and otherwise and there may be undesirables among them. But, generally speaking, they represent a higher level and they help greatly in keeping the people up to the mark. They represent an ideology of disciplined service and (to the extent they understand it) of nonviolence. It is these Khudai Khidmatgars who have been the backbone of the movement in the N.W.F.P. and it is they who have helped to keep it peaceful.

I think we should profit by their example in several ways:

(i) by building from below;
(ii) by not spending too much money on the superstructure;
(iii) by allowing the undoubted sentiment in favour of volunteering which exists almost everywhere to take shape without undue restrictions from above, but always guided from above; and
(iv) thus trying to build up a kind of mass movement in favour of volunteering.

I look upon volunteer organisation from two points of view:

(i) to build up a rather loose organisation on a mass basis as indicated above; and
(ii) to have a chosen body of well-trained persons, relatively small in numbers but of a higher mettle. These to come out of (i).

For the mass organisation which we encourage to grow up in villages, etc., some simple rules should be laid down and for the rest each village should be asked to raise its own volunteers for local work. Where possible we should of course try to reach them and train them, but our incapacity to reach or train all of them should not be a bar to their formation. In one way, however, we should try to reach all of them, and that is through printed leaflets giving directions for training, work, etc. For the rest we should largely leave them, to begin with, to their own resources.

The general directions to these village or town units should consist of

(i) how to form and train themselves—some simple rules;
(ii) stress on nonviolence and acting always in a truthful way;
(iii) idea of service and cooperation. I think each village unit should undertake some practical work from time to time, say, once a week or fortnight. They could clean up the whole village; or build huts; or roads and pathways; help in village reconstruction work; or make playgrounds for the children; or run literacy classes if they can manage them; or help in the fields; or do so many other things. While helpful suggestions might be made, the initiative might be left to them;
(iv) they should all meet together once a week for a march. They might go to a neighbouring village and meet another unit. This should be in the nature of a holiday to promote *esprit de corps* and develop the cooperative spirit. National songs should be sung in community fashion;
(v) some simple scouting rules should be taught;
(vi) they should be told definitely that as volunteer units they must be absolutely clean from party politics within the Congress which is becoming a damnable curse;
(vii) they should keep in touch with headquarters and send reports of their activities. Headquarters, on their part, sending people, whenever possible, to train, help and inspect. But as I view this development, much of the instruction will inevitably be through leaflets which will teach such subjects as how to organise a meeting, how to control crowds without pushing or shouting, etc., apart from the subjects mentioned above.

I would not ask these volunteers (the mass organisation) to take any complicated pledges. They should promise faithfully to abide by the basic rules of the organisation (nonviolence, truth, service, discipline, cooperation among themselves). No other pledges are necessary for them.

The other class of volunteers, the chosen ones, will require a stiffer training, higher standards, and a greater ideological preparation. For these a textbook might be prepared.

I think we should begin by concentrating on the first class of volunteers—the loose organisation, chiefly in the villages but also in the towns. For this purpose a central board should frame simple directions, and the P.C.Cs should draw up further rules if necessary to suit their special conditions.

The central board should then draw up more detailed rules for the second class of volunteers (the selected ones). They should undergo training for a fixed period, say, three months, and later on should give some time every year to practical service. Out of these trained selected volunteers we can get our instructors and inspectors for the first class of volunteers.

This is a very hastily written and imperfect note but I am sending this to you as it may give you some idea of how my mind is working. It would work more efficiently and concisely if I knew that something definite was going to be done. It is difficult to work in the air. For some time past there has been talk of reorganising our volunteers but nothing has come of it, though there are signs of awakening in some provinces. It is now possible either to organise on some definite all-India basis under the directions of the Working Committee or to leave it to the P.C.Cs to do as they think best. Or, as we have done in the past, to let matters drift.

There is one other matter which I think I should mention and Gandhiji has hinted at it also. Gandhiji and several members of the Working Committee have not got much faith in your manner of doing work. I have not been able to find out exactly why this is so although I tried to do so. There was, I believe, some article that you wrote three years ago to which exception was taken. At my request you sent me an article written by you, but I was given to understand that this was not the article in question. I have seen no other article and so I am unable to judge. In any event if there is this want of faith in you, it will be difficult for you to work effectively. If such is the case then perhaps you had better work in a more restricted sphere. Your work will also depend on your state of health. For some time to come you ought not to exert yourself too much. In any event clear indications should be given as to what should be done and where you can fit in, if you can fit in at all, in the work to be done.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Gandhiji to save time. I am also sending a copy to Subhas Babu who is deeply interested in volunteering and has no doubt definite ideas of his own....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15

GENERAL

PERSONAL

1. To Mohanlal Nehru[1]

Dehra Dun Jail
18.1.35

Dear Sir,
I am in receipt of your circular letter dated 8th January 1935 addressed to the trustees of the Swaraj Bhawan Trust.

The proposal that has been made to utilise the entire Swaraj Bhawan buildings and land for the purpose of a general hospital to be called 'Motilal Nehru Hospital' raises a number of issues which have to be carefully considered, and it is difficult for me to give a definite reply without consultation with my co-trustees. As I am not in a position to have this consultation, I am indicating to you briefly some ideas that I have had on the subject of Swaraj Bhawan and I shall be obliged if you will communicate them to the other trustees.

Your proposal involves four separate questions: (1) The utilisation of Swaraj Bhawan, (2) the inauguration of a memorial for Pandit Motilal Nehru, (3) the future of the Congress Hospital in Allahabad, and (4) the establishment of a general hospital in Allahabad to supply a badly felt need.

To take these in inverse order. As a citizen of Allahabad I would welcome the establishment of an up-to-date general hospital. In the event of such a modern hospital being started, the necessity for carrying on the present Congress Hospital would naturally cease and it could become merged in the new hospital and all its equipment and material would be presented to it. The Congress Hospital was started by my father as a temporary measure to meet a particular situation. It has been carried on because it was obvious that it was supplying a real need and giving medical relief to thousands in the neighbourhood. Partly also there was a sentimental disinclination to wind up something that had been started by my father. If a new hospital is started, that need will

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

be attended to by it and the sentimental consideration will not matter much.

In case the scheme for a new hospital does not materialise in the near future, it would be desirable to carry on the Congress Hospital for the present, if that is not financially impossible. Probably it will not be difficult to do so on the present modest scale. Since a nominal fee has been charged, a monthly income has come in. This may develop. If an additional Rs. 200/- or Rs. 250/- a month could be guaranteed, the immediate difficulties would recede into the background. I shall be glad to contribute Rs. 50/- a month. Indeed I contributed this sum indirectly from the beginning of 1932 to last year, during the period Swaraj Bhawan was in government possession, and the hospital was lodged without rent in my cottage. The hospital having gone back to Swaraj Bhawan, the cottage has been rented out and I suggest that the sum realised in rent be treated as my monthly donation to the hospital. If necessary, I am prepared to add to it.

This question of the upkeep of the present hospital or dispensary will of course not arise if the larger scheme of a new hospital is given effect to. But as the consideration of this may take time, it is as well to make arrangements to carry on.

It is mentioned by you that it is proposed to have a hundred beds in the new hospital. This is rather vague and does not convey much information. As you know there were at one time, in 1930 and 1931, twenty or thirty beds in Swaraj Bhawan. But beds do not by themselves make a good hospital, and it is by no means clear whether the intention of the Allahabad committee is to have a really up-to-date modern hospital or some small second-rate affair. The latter would only mean an extension of the present Congress Hospital. On the other hand, an up-to-date hospital with the latest modern apparatus and devices is a very expensive affair and its cost will run into many lakhs of rupees. It is doubtful if the rambling, spread-out Swaraj Bhawan building would be suited for this. A modern hospital requires a modern building especially built for it. The recurring expenditure will also be heavy.

Which of these two ideas has the Allahabad committee in mind? If the former, then it is hardly worthwhile making a great fuss about it and calling it by a grandiloquent name. If the latter, then the question of a building is almost a minor affair and all depends on the funds available. The trustees are asked to hand over Swaraj Bhawan on the vague assurance of a committee that they propose to have a hospital there. They can hardly be expected to discharge their trust by divesting themselves of it in such a manner and without knowing definitely that sufficient funds are already in sight for a proper use of the trust property.

If the Allahabad committee desire to have a general hospital and at the same time to have a local memorial to Pandit Motilal Nehru, they ought to go ahead with their scheme quite apart from Swaraj Bhawan. Of one thing they can be assured, that the Swaraj Bhawan authorities will help them in every way, and it is quite possible that eventually they may even offer them land or building. But it seems to me premature and improper for any promise to be made at this stage. This would not only depend on the hospital scheme and the money already collected but also on other considerations.

These other considerations are: the question of having an all-India memorial to Pt. Motilal Nehru and of associating it with Swaraj Bhawan. The proposed hospital can hardly take the place of such a memorial. It will be a local affair with largely a local appeal, though if it is on a big enough scale it may assume more importance. An all-India memorial to Pt. Motilal Nehru should ordinarily be inaugurated by his old colleagues of the Working Committee, Gandhiji and others, together with prominent men and women in other walks of life, and such a memorial should naturally be associated with Swaraj Bhawan. It should further the cause which he had at heart and for which he gave Swaraj Bhawan. (His letter containing the offer is clear enough on this subject).[2] A hospital is by no means excluded under the terms of the gift but there can be no doubt that other uses would be more appropriate.

The trustees and the Board of Management of Swaraj Bhawan have therefore to consider this larger question before they can dispose of Swaraj Bhawan in any way or bind themselves down to do so. I believe that various suggestions have been made vaguely but so far no serious consideration has been given to this subject owing to disturbed political conditions.

My own idea has been for some time (and I think some other trustees think likewise) that a museum of national growth and regeneration — political, economic, artistic and cultural — be established there, and together with it a library and study and a research institute. This national museum should be a picture of our recent (say, during the last fifty

2. Motilal Nehru, in a letter written to Jawaharlal on 27 March 1930, had stated: "We agreed ... that having regard to the past history of the house and the stage we have now reached in the national struggle for freedom the most appropriate use to which it can be put is to make it the permanent headquarters of the Indian National Congress. This means that the offices of the All India Congress Committee will be permanently located in the house and parts of it not occupied by these offices will be utilized for other national purposes to be determined later in consultation with the members of the Working Committee."

years) growth, our struggles, failures and successes in various departments of the national and cultural activity. I would gladly give my library to this and I believe it will not be difficult to get widespread support in money and material for this idea. It would be novel and worthwhile and it would serve a definite purpose and attract both the serious student and everyone interested in India's immediate past and present.

The idea can be developed in many ways. I only wish to hint at it here. The whole scheme may well become an ambitious one and yet it will not require very large funds and it can develop from relatively small beginnings. If it had been possible for me I would have discussed this with my co-trustees, but as I cannot do so, I trust they will consider it among themselves.

Because I have this notion of utilising Swaraj Bhawan, and at the same time having an all-India memorial for my father, it is difficult for me to commit myself to this handing over of Swaraj Bhawan for a hospital or any other purpose. But I need hardly say that this does not mean any opposition on my part to the hospital scheme. I hope the scheme will be worked out and continued independently of Swaraj Bhawan. The Congress Hospital and its material will always be at the disposal of the promotors of the scheme; and later on it may be possible for the trustees of Swaraj Bhawan to help them in other ways.

The point is that the proposed hospital in Allahabad should not be treated as an all-India memorial to my father but more or less as a local effort, with outside support, and Swaraj Bhawan should not be tied up with it at present. A hasty step now may prevent us from developing worthwhile schemes later on.

I shall be glad if you will send a copy of this note to members of the Board of Management of the Swaraj Bhawan Trust. I agree that the President and the working secretary of the A.I.C.C. be co-opted to the Board required by the trust deed. This is a formal matter and need not require a meeting. But I would suggest to the trustees and the Board to have an early meeting to consider various proposals and make some arrangement for the future. Of course, I shall not be there but that is no reason why they should not meet.

This note may be shown to friends interested in the matter, but I would prefer that it was not given publicity in the press or otherwise. Some of the ideas I have expressed in it should be considered by the trustees before they are placed before the public.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To Indira Nehru[1]

Almora Jail
May 26, 1935

Darling Indu,
Your letter and mummie's, sent prior to sailing from Bombay,[2] reached me today. I am replying to it immediately as my letter is already overdue. I shall send this by air mail, so also my future letters, which will of course go fortnightly. I have no idea when the air mail leaves but as there are frequent services now this does not matter much. I want you and mummie also to write by air mail direct to the Almora jail. I don't suppose I shall be transferred from this jail for some time. In case of my transfer I shall try to inform you.

I shall send my letters c/o Thomas Cook, Geneva. Also, any cable or wireless message that I might send. So please keep in constant touch with Cooks at Geneva. In the event of your settling down anywhere for some time, that address should immediately be communicated to me so that I can write direct. I have told Madan Bhai to send cables to Anand Bhawan and have arranged that they be sent on to me here. But tell him that in the event of an urgent message requiring a quick answer he might cable direct to me here. I don't suppose any special necessity for this will arise. After all, what can I advise or suggest from this distance? All decisions will have to be taken by you three, and it is as well that this should be so. We should all be self-reliant and depend upon ourselves. You know my general views and I have gone even further than I might have done in giving all manner of unnecessary details. That is a bad habit I have got into which even jail does not rid me of.

Our Bombay friends, and they are so many, were wonderfully good to you and did everything conceivable for your comfort in Bombay and during the voyage. That is very pleasing, of course, and yet I sometimes think there is danger in such abundant goodwill and help being showered on us! We get spoilt and begin to expect it everywhere as of right and when it is not forthcoming we feel grieved and cantankerous! We get into the habit of depending on others—a bad habit. Of course, in Europe you cannot expect all this personal attendance and help. That indeed is one of the advantages of going there and getting out of one's shell.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Kamala Nehru sailed for Europe on 23 May 1935 for medical treatment.

I want you to write to Pilloo[3] and give her a message on my behalf. Curious that I should send a message to Bombay *via* Europe but such is life at present for us. I cannot write to her direct. Indeed I cannot write to anyone but you and mummie. Tell Pilloo that I think she is a perfect brick and that I am ever so grateful to her. And give her my love.

You must be in the Arabian Sea, as I write this, far from all land. On board also you will have abundance of kindness. There are many friends and the Lloyd Triestino people are decent. Besides, with the Italian Consul's letter and Scarpa at the other end you will have the shadow of Mussolini to help you and that is a mighty shade on an Italian boat. I have an idea that this is about the time when Mussolini's march on Rome[4] took place and if so this will be celebrated on board. Do you remember the celebration on board the 'Cracovia' in May 1931 with its songs and Blackshirts and *evvivas*? One of the very few things I like about Italian fascism is their song of youth—*Giovinezza*—with its haunting refrain.

You have a number of big guns on board. They are pretty dull people as a rule and do not look quite so big from close quarters. I am glad you met Mrs. S.K. Datta. I gather she is taking a crowd of Indian girls for a European tour. She does so every year. So you must have plenty of agreeable company. I have never met Mrs. Datta but I know Dr. S.K. Datta well and I think he is a very fine man. He was a friend and admirer of Dadu's. He felt Dadu's death so much that he gave up smoking, quietly, without any fuss. This was a very touching and graceful tribute to a friend, and it was a sacrifice for a smoker to give up a life-long habit.

I hope you are having a calm voyage and will escape the monsoon. And yet I almost wish that you—not mummie—might have experience of the monsoon on the high seas. There is a magnificence about the sea—with its great waves tossing about the little ship and huge showers of spray enveloping the decks. The cloud-bursts come with a peculiar fury and in the distance you might see what look like huge columns connecting the sea with the clouds above. Apparently the water is sucked up through these columns. Twice in my student days I passed through the Arabian Sea monsoon. Almost everybody on board, that is the passengers, was laid low and groaned all the way from Aden to Bombay! But I survived with about half a dozen other passengers and regularly

appeared for my feeds in the dining saloon. It was a job to walk about clinging to various objects, and food sometimes would hop about.

So you are going to Trieste and Vienna or shall I say Wien as the Austrians call it? My mind goes back a quarter of a century or more—I think it was in 1909—when I visited the place with Dadu and Shridhar Chacha. It was pre-war Vienna, charming and graceful, full of beauty and historic associations. It was the home of music of the gentler variety, of waltzes and comic operas and songs. Do you know the famous old Blue Danube waltz? Perhaps the younger generation have forgotten such dainty trifles in these days of the strident jazz. The Viennese were a peculiar and very happy mixture of the Germans and the Italians. Somehow they had managed to get many of the good qualities of both, and life seemed to flow, at the top at least, with a charming grace. But this was long, long ago, not so much in point of time as of a succession of tragic events. Vienna, proud Vienna, thousand-year-old Vienna, was very badly hit by the Great War and ever since then it has gone down and gasped for breath. Today it leads a precarious life in the shadow of an ever-impending tragedy.[5] No one can tell what its future will be. Only last year there was a dreadful civil war there.

But of course you will have nothing to do with all this and during your brief stay there you will see the surface of the great city only and may not even realise what lies behind it. But the glory has departed from Vienna, and I am sure that if I went there I would feel sad. It is or was one of the great cities which have a soul or a personality—like Rome and Paris and London—not Berlin. I remember being taken up a huge dome of a cathedral in Vienna from which we had a fine view of the city. And there on the dome were pointed out to us bullet marks, caused hundreds of years before, by the invading Turks who besieged the city.[6]

One thing modern Vienna produced after the war which was considered unique. This was a series of very fine workers' flats, beautiful palaces they were, where ordinary workers could live very cheaply. Many of these workers' buildings were knocked down in last year's civil war. Still they are very well worth a visit to see what a go-ahead municipality can do for the poorest of its citizens. Compare them to our mud hovels, if you have a chance to go to see them. If Nanu is there he can easily take you.

5. Englebert Dollfuss, the Austrian Chancellor, suspended parliamentary government in March 1933, and the next year suppressed the socialists, but in July 1935 he was himself murdered by the Nazis.
6. Vienna was besieged by the Turks in 1529 and 1683.

I hope Nanu is there with you and that you sent him a telegram on arrival at Trieste. He will not only be of immense help to you but his presence will save you a deal of money for he knows the place and the people.

It is good to visit Vienna and other places but I do hope that you will all soon settle down in good old bourgeois Suisse. I do not at all fancy mummie being carted about from place to place and I particularly hope that she will not have to go to Berlin. The sooner she gets settled down in Switzerland the sooner will you be able to settle down also with your work. Afterwards, when mummie is better of course, I would like you both to tour about a little. But there is no fun in travelling when ill. Your present movements will naturally depend on mummie's treatment and the possibility of an operation. Probably this matter will be decided within two or three weeks of your arrival. Will you please ask Madan Bhai to send me a fairly detailed cable about the advice of the Vienna physician on the desirability of an operation and future treatment?

Mummie and you will of course manage everything marvellously, as you say. You have no business to do otherwise for you have the family reputation to keep up! For the present the management will have to be done largely by you for mummie will have enough to do to look after herself. But I do want you to take personal interest in the arrangements, whether it is engaging hotel rooms, reserving accommodation on the railway or the many other things that will be cropping up. Do not put too much of a burden on Madan Bhai. You must get used to shifting for yourself or else later on you will have difficulties. Interest yourself in the money side too, so that you may know what is happening and can take charge whenever Madan Bhai happens to be away. I suppose Madan Bhai will have an account at Cooks at Geneva. This might be in your joint names—yours and his.

Meanwhile, keep in touch with Mlle. Hemmerlin.

My dear, I do not worry. I am not the pining sort. If I had been inclined that way I would have pined away already. But instead I prosper and fatten in the face of difficulties and adversities and I find life worth living because of them. When any action or work faces me I concentrate on it and try to do my best. When action is denied me I shut that drawer of my mind and open some other. And so now that I do little else I take a vast interest in my little jail garden and my flowers and seedlings and exercise such managing capacity on them as I possess and give them the benefit of my care and tenderness. The rain god has been playing us false and there has been practically no rain for two months. But I am fighting this perverse creature—for my pugnacity

must find an outlet—and carefully utilising every little bit of water that I can lay hold of. Some of my little flower plants have dried up but on the whole I have kept my end up so far.

I live in my little tent for my barrack is under repairs. It is very hot in the middle of the day but I prefer this tent to the barrack for I have the starlit-night above me and the tent gives me an illusion of travel. And though you may plough through the great ocean, my imaginary journeys are vaster and take me to greater distances.

This morning I had an interview with Raja and *chhoti puphi*. They came to Almora yesterday and returned to Bhowali today. The call of the baby was insistent. In my next interview, a fortnight hence, I hope to see Chand and Tara and Ritu. Dolamma is not well. I hope you will send her a few lines regularly. These will cheer her up tremendously. Also write to the *puphis* and keep them informed of your plans.

I have received a copy of Vol. 2 of the *Glimpses* and I gather that you have taken a number of copies with you. The book is formidable to look at and handle. You must be terrified at the prospect of reading it! I wish it had been split up into two volumes. Unfortunately it is full of misprints and minor errors. As I could not correct the proofs this was inevitable but none the less it is irritating. Probably you will not miss the meaning anywhere.

I had your telegram from Bombay. I am not writing separately to Madan Bhai. Tell him all that interests him and pertains to him in this letter.

And so *au revoir* and all my love,

Your loving
Papu

3. To Indira Nehru[1]

Badenweiler
15.1.36

Indu dear,

Yesterday morning I wrote to you that mummie was looking better. The aspiration with oil had been a success. In the afternoon she had a bad time with a cough, trying to bring out a lot of slimy stuff which

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

was troubling her. This seems to have been due to weakness of the heart which was not functioning properly. It was an attack of the kind she had on Dec. 22nd, only milder. It may have been partly due to the reaction from the oil, but chiefly, I suppose, from the exhaustion of high temperature for a long time. The attack did not seem to involve immediate danger but it was very exhausting indeed as it lasted for three or four hours. The night was a restless one with little sleep. It was not considered desirable to give her a strong sleeping draught as this has a numbing effect on the heart. The temperature also went up high during the night. Early in the morning—about 4—she fell sound asleep and she still sleeps as I write at 10.30.

I wrote to you about your German that you should do what you think proper after consultation with Mlle. Hemmerlin. It is difficult for me to advise without knowing much more of the kind of teaching that is given there. Generally speaking, it is desirable to keep up the thread of learning a language, as once broken, one has to begin afresh. It is preferable to give less time to it, to giving it up altogether. But these vague considerations must be applied to concrete facts. These facts can be considered best by you and Mlle. Hemmerlin.

I have received a provisional programme from London about my forthcoming visit. It is already pretty full and is likely to be a heavier one than last time. But it is more scientifically arranged and so easier to manage. I shall probably meet a number of authors and writers. You see I am myself supposed to be one of that fraternity since I wrote the *Glimpses*. It would have been a good thing if you had also met some of these people, for they are interesting. But you will have plenty of chances in future of meeting them. One must make oneself interesting—intellectually and otherwise—before one can meet other attractive folk on an equal footing. There is no reason why the interest should be on one side only.

We have been having misty and rainy days. I suppose that is so in the greater part of Europe. But the weather seems to be changing. Last night there was a slight frost here. I imagine that the snow will be back within a few days.

Love from mummie and

Your loving
Papu

4. To Indira Nehru[1]

London
30.1.36

Bien aimee,

For several days I have been thinking of writing to you. But all day I am out, rushing from one place to another, and I return very late at night dead tired. I write a few lines to mummie and that is all I can manage before weariness and sleep overpower me. I have an even heavier programme to face than we had on the last occasion. It is much more businesslike and scientific and carefully arranged. People come to fetch me from one place to another and everything fits in beautifully but my exhaustion grows as the day draws to a close. It is a different type of a programme. I am not going to Indian organisations or seeing many Indians—mostly I meet English people in groups or separately. I usually go out to feed in English houses.

I arrived at a peculiar time when the country seemed to be behaving in an extraordinarily sentimental and soppy way owing to the late king's death.[2] The newspapers were for many days full of the silliest stuff in black borders and hardly any news appeared. I am afraid I did not read them. I even missed the pomp and pageantry of the funeral. I was in my flat carrying on with my interviews while kings and princes and the like marched solemnly surrounded by vast crowds. From all accounts the crowds were prodigious. I should have liked to have seen them for I am interested in the psychology of crowds.

The flat I am staying in is not nearly as bright and cheerful as the Mount Royal one. It is an old style one patronised by retired colonels and their kind. I have two small rooms and a bath-room. It is a convenience to have a separate bedroom and a sitting room. There is also more of 'service'—maids, and valeting, etc.

The day I arrived here I had to go out to dinner with Lady Rhonda,[3] who is the daughter of a millionaire coal-miner. She showed great organising capacity during the big war and now owns and edits a weekly paper—*Time and Tide*—with socialistic sympathies.

*** *** ***

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Incomplete.
2. George V died on 20 January 1936.
3. Author of *Leisured Women, This was My World* and *Notes on the Way*; died 1958.

5. To Indira Nehru[1]

Cairo
March 8, 1936

Darling,
Here am I again stopping at a very fashionable hotel, reeking of luxury and jazz and dancing, and enormous public rooms, and wide corridors, and crowds of waiters and dragomans and page-boys dashing about. I take advantage of the lovely bath-rooms by having two baths during my short stay.

When I left Marseilles I could see in the distance the snow-covered Alps, probably Mont Blanc was one of the peaks. Today, on rising from Rome, we had a fine view of the city and of St. Peter's. Later, in south Italy we crossed the Apennines with their peaks covered with snow and ice. We were flying high—about 4,500 metres which is, I think, over 14,000 ft. This means that we were not very much below the height of Mont Blanc. Our window-panes got covered with frost and it was difficult to see out. Again in Greece there were snow-covered mountains below us. The Athens landing ground was far from the city but we passed over the city and had a good and rather unusual view of the Acropolis.

The Mediterranean was of a wonderful colour—deep blue sometimes turning to emerald green near the coastline. A spot moved rapidly across the face of the waters—it was our shadow. Little islands were continually appearing and disappearing, cunningly shaped they were, fantastic little things dotted about over the blue sea, which crept inside them and sent its arms to embrace them. Over above them floated tiny wisps of clouds.

The great height at which we were flying made it just a little difficult to breathe with ease. The pressure of the atmosphere was less. At any rate, I experienced some slight discomfort. It was not much. Our plane is a beauty. It is a great big aluminium bug with two eyes sticking out over its nose and graceful wings stretching out on either side. It bears the name: *Perkoetet,* which in Dutch means, I think, wood pigeon or some such thing.

The height played strange tricks. A fellow passenger took out his fountain-pen. As he unscrewed the cap a fountain of ink splashed out. The lessening of atmospheric pressure had induced the ink to jump out in this way. The poor man's clothes were spoilt.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

We had five passengers in all, including myself. Two dropped out at Athens. So now we are three. One, a woman, is bound for Batavia. She is Dutch. The other, an Englishman, is going to Calcutta.

On arrival at the Cairo airport I found Fouad Bey waiting for me. He was the same as ever and embraced and kissed me. One of his first questions was about you. He told me that he might be going to Suisse next summer and if so he would visit you. I gave him your address. Also he impressed upon me that whenever you passed this way to India you must visit him or at least let him know so that he can come to see you. You might keep this in mind and note down his address. Here is the address:

Mr. Fouad Selim Bey Al-Higazi, 33 Sharia Dawawine, Cairo.

His wife is away and so I did not see her. But Bobby, his son, came round later and we had a long talk. He has grown of course and is a nice-looking boy. Fouad Bey told me that he was too full of politics to attend to his studies. He belongs to the *Bazis* (after the Nazis)—from *Baz*, a hawk. I was surprised to find how extremely naive he and others were about political matters. They seemed to know precious little and chiefly lived on enthusiasm. Even a little conversation with me was a revelation to him and he said that many of his old notions were upset and he was beginning to think on new lines.

It would be a graceful thing if you would send a few lines to Fouad Bey and tell him that you would be happy to see him when he comes to Suisse. This would cheer him up no end.

From tomorrow the deserts and then day after India.

Love,

Yours,
Papu

6. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
1.4.36

Darling mine,

Your letter of the 22nd March came today. What awful things examinations are to worry and harass us! I remember reading once a comparison made by a professor of the Sorbonne, many hundreds of years

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

ago, of examinations with the torments of purgatory, and he came to the decision that the former were worse. They are evil things, these examinations. Yet somehow they pursue us and we cannot quite get rid of them. But do not worry overmuch. I am sure you will do well. And if you think in June that you are not strong enough in Latin, and your teacher agrees with you, why, drop it for the time and appear in it later. But you have two months more and that is a fair period.

I hope you are already in Italy and feeling the charm and magic of that beautiful country. How I wish I was with you. My own visits to Italy have been too brief and I have always hungered for a closer acquaintance. To Sicily I have never been, and all I know of it is from the distant glimpses from on board the ship as we passed the Straits of Messina.

You have the spring. Here the brief spring is passing, though it is pleasant enough still, and the trees have dropped their leaves. Fans sometimes are necessary and the sun is hot.

Do you worry about my having time or not to write to you? I always have time for that. I like writing to you and it is a relief to me from care and work. It is true that I am well occupied and likely to be more so. Today I feel quite light and free. I had reserved five or six days for writing my presidential address for the Congress.[2] For three days I laboured hard at it all day, and late last night I finished it. Suddenly, as I finished it, I felt as if a burden was off my shoulders. It is not finally done with for I am likely to change it, but the first draft is off my hands. I do not usually change my original drafts but others might induce me to make changes. It is being typed now and I hope to send you a copy separately tomorrow by air.

I wrote to you about Gurudeva's tribute to mummie.[3] I saw it a little while ago and it moved me greatly. I am enclosing it. It is really a wonderful thing how mummie's personality has impressed millions of people. Nothing like it has happened to my knowledge in India. The tributes that have come from the most unexpected quarters have not been formal ones; they have been full of affection and sorrow and admiration. Character and dignity and quiet restraint, together with inner fire, have a way of stealing into the hearts of millions.

Many poems in English, Hindi and Urdu and other languages have been written. They are not good as poetry, often they are silly, but they

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 170-195.
3. For Rabindranath Tagore's tribute to Kamala Nehru see *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 166.

give some expression to this universal love which vast numbers felt for mummie. I enclose two such poems for you to see.

I am enclosing also a copy of some resolutions passed by the Working Committee at Delhi.

My Longines wrist watch, of which I have been so proud and which has given me uninterrupted service for nine years, suddenly stopped the other day to my astonishment. I had no other and I could not do without one, so I rushed to a local watch dealer and purchased a cheap West End one—an incassable. Three days later the Longines changed its mind and started functioning again, but I am a little doubtful of it now. It was curious that after returning from the home of watches I should have to buy one in Allahabad.

Your letter reached Dolamma today. She was greatly affected when she had it read out to her.

I have a fairly light day tomorrow—mostly letters. But from tomorrow night a stream of guests are coming. First Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya for a day or so. Then Bapu with his entourage and soon after the Working Committee crowd. We shall have a busy time and Anand Bhawan will be very full.

Would you like me to send you unusual foreign stamps? I get them pretty often. I have been giving many, which I received on condolence letters, to Chand.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

7. To Indira Nehru[1]

Nagpur
27.4.36

Darling Indu,

I have had a very strenuous three days in Nagpur—huge meetings and speeches one after the other, and the Hindustani literary conferences.[2] I have even ventured to hold forth on the development of Hindi literature, not knowing much about it! I am afraid I must live up, or try to

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. The twenty fifth All India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan was held at Nagpur from 24 to 26 April 1936.

do so, to the literary reputation I am acquiring. That will be a hard job. I feel I must improve my Urdu also. That will be even harder. But something of this kind must be done if we are to live in touch with developments of thought in our country.

We are just off to Wardha by car. There I intend remaining for two days and then I go back to Allahabad.

It has been very hot here, hotter than at Allahabad.

All my love,

Your loving
Papu

8. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
30.4.36

Darling mine,

I have just returned from Wardha by the Bombay Mail. It is late at night but the air mail goes early tomorrow morning and so I sit down to write to you.

I found two letters from you waiting for me here—one from Palermo and the other from Taormina. I am happy that you have been enjoying yourself in Sicily. I have been having a heavy time in Wardha. The physical strain was not so bad. I am used to that, but the continuous tug of war in the Working Committee is a most exhausting process and it distresses. I am afraid we are in for this continuous internal conflict, for different ideas fight for mastery. It is always difficult for people to give up old ideas in favour of new ones.

I have been travelling 3rd class. In this weather this is a bit of a trial but it is comforting to know that a good deal of money is being saved. The difference in cost between 3rd and the higher classes is very great.

I read in the train today a book I liked. It is an autobiography by Vincent Sheean,[2] a journalist, called *In Search of History*. It deals with the mental conflicts and development of a young man, and such books,

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. (1899-1975); American journalist; author of several books including *Personal History, Between the Thunder and the Sun* and *Nehru—The Years of Power*.

if they are sincere and well-written, are always worthwhile. This book is both. I think you will like it. Shall I send it to you? More or less it is a book. I think, on the lines of Anna Louise Strong's[3] book which Nanu sent you. I have not myself read the latter, but I would like to do so. When you have finished with it, could you send it to me?...

Love,

Papu

3. (1885-1970); American journalist known for her left-wing leanings; organised *Moscow Daily News*, 1930; deported from the Soviet Union in 1949 on charges of espionage which were withdrawn in 1955; her publications included *Songs of the City*, *Chinese Millions* and *I Change the World*.

9. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
4.5.1936

Darling mine,

Today I received your letter of the 21st April from Taormina. Your praise of this little place is enthusiastic and I have caught something of your enthusiasm and sought to see it through your eyes. It is better that way for yours are younger eyes and mine are tired and weary. I am glad you saw the Greek play acted in the old way—or what is now imagined to have been the old way—in an open-air theatre. I don't remember ever having seen this done though such performances take place sometimes in England. But I have felt the enchantment of these Greek plays even when I have read them. It is extraordinary how these stories of an ancient people, so far removed from us and so different, still grip us and move us strangely. Is this the power of great art alone which transcends time and space, or is it that essentially humanity is the same though its external trappings change?

So you have finished your holiday and are back again in more prosaic Bex. You will remember your visit to Italy and Sicily. Such interludes are pleasant and their memory survives and refreshes.

I returned to Allahabad this morning after a two-day stay at Lucknow. I shall remain here now for ten days and then go to Bombay for a strenuous week....

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

I have given you quite a budget of news about people's comings and goings. The supply is exhausted for I am a bad news-vendor.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

10. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
7.5.36

Darling Indu,

I have your letter from Bex after your return from your Sicilian tour. You are full of praise for Florence and Taormina. Taormina I do not know but Florence comes up before my eyes with all its sleepy beauty and old-world charm. Even when writing to you my historical letters I succumbed to this charm and my style became less prosaic. Do you remember that passage?[2]...

All my love,

Your loving
Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. See *Glimpses of World History*, (Bombay, 1967), pp. 268-269.

11. To Indira Nehru[1]

Lahore
June 2, 1936

Darling Indu,

I have not been able to survive the six days of my Punjab tour. Four days of it have laid me low and today, the fifth day, I am spending largely in bed. Punjabi popular welcomes are formidable affairs. In my case they have been truly terrific. Both in towns and villages, vast

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

crowds have collected and have overwhelmed me. The programme has been a terribly heavy one, involving long motor journeys. The heat was bad but it was finally the dust that proved too much for me. My throat is all swollen and I can hardly speak without difficulty.

All this great popular affection, though trying enough, is also moving —among a wilderness of excited compliments the most charming and pleasing was one from a young man who objected to much that was said, but added:

तुसी प्यारा है चंगा है।[2]

Tomorrow night I go back to Allahabad.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

2. You are fine and lovable.

12. To Indira Nehru[1]

In train to Wardha
29.6.36

Darling,

My thoughts go to you today especially and I think of the burden of your examination. It will begin today and you will have your seven hours of it, and again tomorrow and the day after. I remember reading somewhere what a famous professor of the Sorbonne said once during the middle ages. He compared examinations to the sufferings in purgatory and came to the conclusion that the former were far worse. Not knowing much about purgatory I cannot say but I am sure that examinations are a nuisance. All that can be said for them is that they do push us on a little and bring some tension in our minds and thus help in making them sharp and clear. But there is too much of this tension and sometimes this results in blurring and confusing our minds instead of clearing them. Especially so in India, where far too much importance is attached to the passing of examinations and failure is considered a terrible disgrace. As a matter of fact, examinations as they are conducted today are no real test of anything worthwhile. Often those who do

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

well in examinations are failures subsequently in life, and *vice versa*. So it is absurd to take them too seriously or to grow enthusiastic or depressed over them. We try to succeed of course in whatever we put our hands and minds to but we must not lose our sense of proportion.

Anyway your examination troubles will be over, for some time at least, when this letter reaches you and I hope you feel pleasantly relaxed....

I am on my way to Wardha for the Working Committee meeting. I shall be there for two or three days and then I intend going to Bombay for a day for some business—also to see Padmaja after her operation.

Love,

Papu

Wardha 30/6

This letter was too late for the air mail yesterday and so I kept it back. As usual I have had a very tiring and distressing time with all-day debate and argument. My colleagues in the Working Committee are greatly irritated with me as they think that my talking about socialism puts them in a false position. It frightens the rich folk. And so they have almost come to the conclusion that we should part company.[2] This may result in my resigning from the Congress presidentship. I am not sure yet. Anyway I doubt if I can carry on in this way for long. It is a depressing business.

I wrote to you once about Vera Brittain's[3] *Testament of Youth*. I have been reading bits of it here to try to get my mind off politics. I think it is a book you will like, especially as it contains a lot about Somerville. Shall I send it to you?

P.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 309-311.
3. (1893-1970); British author, whose best-known work is her autobiography, *Testament of Youth*.

13. To Indira Nehru[1]

In train to Madras
5/10/36

Darling Indu,

Where are you now, I wonder? What are you doing? Are you having some rest after your examinations? These thoughts come to me as I rush along to the south. I reach Madras soon and later on, after three days, I go further south to Madura and beyond, almost to Cape Comorin, which we visited, mummie and you and I, more than five years ago.[2] This journey makes me feel that I am going further away from you. And so I am, but it is not so much the actual distance that counts but the fact that news of you does not reach me regularly and it is delayed. In Allahabad, I have a sense of nearness to you—letters come more or less regularly—and there are so many things belonging to you which give me a feeling that you are not far. But when I travel away I seem to lose touch with you and I feel a little bit lonelier than I usually do. Lonely in the midst of crowds, vast and friendly crowds, overwhelming one with their affection.

Yesterday I was in Wardha and saw Bapu and then I took the train and at most stations since then, night and day time, there have been crowds. A tiring business. I am a little frightened of the Madras tour for I fear it might almost prove too much for me. Because I have hardly been this way at all, the crowds are all the more eager to see me.

I am being promoted. I came to Wardha from Allahabad in a 3rd class compartment. From Wardha I was asked to travel 2nd and so now I am sitting and writing in lordly fashion. But as we near Madras, I am told that we shall be transferred to a small special train which will take us to Madras. Pomp and circumstance! And then a procession—and then meetings, addresses, parties, and everywhere speeches.

During my tour I shall be taken to Pondicherry also—French India. I am rather looking forward to it. I have never been to any of the French spots in India. It was a little unusual for me to receive telegrams in French from Pondicherry.

I wish Nan had come with me. This would have been a new experience for her.

Keep fit, my dear. The mind functions well only when the body is well.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 532-559.

I have no idea when the air mail goes from Madras. Probably I have just missed it. And then air mails are so irregular now. Imperial Airways have had a bunch of disasters.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

8/10

This letter was too late for the air mail. So I kept it. I am just adding some pictures from the papers here.

Love,

P.

14. To Indira Nehru[1]

Somewhere in Tamil Nad
(my geography is not strong enough
to remember these odd names)
15.10.36

Darling Indu,

For some days I have been attempting to write to you—in vain. I am carried along in a rush from early morning to midnight and it is not easy to write after a twenty-hour stretch of speaking and motoring alternately. The way the people have come to meet us everywhere has been astounding. Yesterday I was within hail of Kanya Kumari and I did so much want to go there. I like the place and especially the feeling that I am on the uttermost tip of India. But it was 60 miles away and that meant 120 miles there and back on an indifferent road. This could not possibly be fitted into my terribly heavy programme.

Today I was at Madura and I made a point of going to the famous temple there. It was a private visit. Hardly anyone was told of it.

1. Written by Jawaharlal *en route* from Madurai to Tiruchchirappalli. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

But, lo and behold, a great crowd surrounded the temple and followed me into its vast corridors. A strange way to see a place with a mass of seething humanity! My ideas of the temple are consequently vague. But the vast size was impressive and sometimes oppressive. The corridors were enormous, and huge statuary, some of which very good. I was taken to the inner sanctum, the holy of holies, the shrine of Meenakshi, an incarnation of Parvati. A great honour. I was struck by the curious way of the Hindu faith which refuses to part with any born within its fold. Here I am accused of irreligion and yet treated as one who is a devout follower. A present of a silk scarf was also given to me—a special gift of the goddess. I realised in this vast temple with its innumerable corridors and inner chambers, faintly lighted up, the great psychological influence of these religious edifices. How they must impress and rather frighten the multitudes and increase the power of the priesthood. That temple put me in mind of the days when the priests were triumphant and ruled over the minds of men, of the great temples of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and, to some extent, of the great cathedrals. There are not many people who can resist this numbing effect.

I have never seen so many roses in my life as here. Everywhere there are enormous garlands of roses, fat heavy things, each containing a thousand to two thousand roses. In the course of the day I might get 200 of such garlands! They are not specially good roses but even so their very number is overwhelming. It seems such a pity to waste them, and what am I to do with these quantities? The car gets filled up and then I distribute them to girls and women and children by the roadside.

Sometimes very artistic decorations are made for our meetings. Festoons of flowers, roses and chrysanthemum, the meeting area shaded with a bamboo network covered with green leaves.

But I must not go on. I am due to be back in Allahabad on the 22nd.

I have had no news of you for ages. No doubt you must have written and your letter is following me about.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

15. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
1-11-36

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of October 21st. I am sorry that you feel lonely. Of course that feeling comes to all of us and for a time is rather overwhelming. I feel terribly lonely often enough and seek an escape in intensive activity and work. That is a poor way of escape and yet it serves its purpose. For me to feel that way is to be expected for though physically active and fit, I am very old, old not so much in body as in mind and feeling. I have always had that feeling of loneliness but latterly it has grown upon me. But it is all wrong for you to feel this way. For you and the people of your generation there is going to be excitement enough in the days to come. The aeroplanes that hover over you are the reminders of what is coming. The prospect is not a pleasant one but it is not a dull one. What a horror is this Spanish affair. It makes me feel almost sick.

I can quite appreciate your wishing to spend some time in London during the Christmas holidays. You have friends there and cheerful engagements. And yet Miss Baker[2] is probably right in thinking that London will tire you. I think that too long a stay there will necessitate your having to recuperate later, as you had to do last time. And, strangely enough, some days full of excitement in London lead later on to that very feeling of loneliness of which you complain.

Cornwall is not a bad place. I rather like the idea of a stay there but then it is not I who am going but you! Still the point is that you should go where you want to go and do it cheerfully. Switzerland I imagine will be good and you can indulge in winter sports which ought to buck you up. I suppose if you go to Suisse, you would go to Bex for most of the time or on some excursions, etc. Partly you might be with Lu.[3] But wherever you might be try to avoid too much excitement and irregular hours.

I have written to Miss Baker. I have suggested Switzerland to her as an alternative to Cornwall. I have said that personally I like the idea of going to Cornwall but Switzerland with winter sports might

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Principal of Badminton School, London.
3. Mrs. Louise Geissler; helped Indian students and others in Germany during the pre-Hitlerian period.

appeal to you more. Finally I have suggested to her to find out how you feel in the matter. If she asks you tell her frankly how you feel about it.

Today is Betty's birthday. She and Raja have been in Delhi and are returning here today. Soon they will go back to Bombay.

Writing of birthdays, yours will be here soon. I sent you through Kailash Nath Katju a garland and some odd bags. I want you to get something for this birthday—something you particularly like. I am not referring to the many utilitarian things we carry on with but to those we can well do without. So, for the moment, forget utilitarianism. I enclose a cheque for £ 5 for this. I am afraid you will not have much of a chance of buying anything in Bristol.

I am off to Calcutta tomorrow and from there I go to Orissa and Andhra and C.P.—returning to Allahabad on November 18th.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

16. To Indira Nehru[1]

In train to Calcutta
5.11.36

Darling,

Yesterday I was in Santiniketan and it was peaceful and quiet there. It was vacation time, the Puja holidays were not over, but still there was a considerable colony resident in Santiniketan and Sriniketan. I stayed at Sriniketan as Gurudeva was living there and I had a long, long talk with him about many things. My affection for him grows. I found him a little better than he was when I saw him last in Delhi in March soon after my return from Europe. He was more wide-awake though age steals over him. And yet he still thinks of travelling abroad and visiting China next summer! But I doubt if he will be able to go. Fortunately some big donations have relieved him of financial anxiety for Santiniketan.

We talked of you and he told me what a good influence you had been for others in Santiniketan. And I fell to wondering what influences had shaped you—how good they were or otherwise—and how you were reacting to your present environment. It is eight months since

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

I saw you, my dear, and I wonder how you are growing and changing. Perhaps in another six months' time we might meet again.

There was Krishna Kripalani there and his wife Nandita and Anil Chanda and one or two others whom I recognised and many whom I did not know.

And now I am off to Calcutta.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

17. To Indira Nehru[1]

Dugadda—Garhwal
Nov. 25, 1936

My darling one,

I am sitting in the mountains again, or rather the outer fringe of them. This morning I reached Kotdwar, which, as its name implies, is the gate, the gate of Garhwal. This mountain district of our province is singularly cut off from the outside world. Except to Lansdowne, which is a military centre, there are hardly any roads, and so the outsider seldom comes. I never entered it properly before, although I have skirted the fringe. It is a huge district, 200 miles long, sprawling over the Himalayan foot-hills and mountains.

Dugadda means the two rivers. How uncouth is गड्डा, for river. Compare it to the melodious, flowing नदी, झरना, दरिया! Poor, poverty-stricken areas, with fine human material, as we often find in the mountains. But Garhwal has become famous for the Garhwali regiment which refused to fire in Peshawar during the civil disobedience movement of 1930. Even now two of the Indian officers—Chandra Singh[2] and Narayan Singh[3]—are in prison for that offence.

It is chilly here even at midday. At night it must be very cold. I am here for a few hours only and this evening I return. I would like to go in the interior but I may not. There has been one great disappointment. Did I write to you that I intended going to Badrinath,

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1891); joined Indian army, 1914; remained imprisoned till 1941 after dismissal from service in 1930.
3. Joined Indian army, 1914; was released in 1937.

So you have changed! Of course you have and you should at your age. I find myself growing and changing even at my age. Strangers may not notice such changes for they see the surface only but when there is an emotional bond between two persons even slight moods become apparent. A gesture, a word, a way of looking or speaking betrays the change. So you are not likely to pass unnoticed by me, or rather the change in you. Only the dull and self-centred ones remain more or less static. And we are not dull and too narrow, are we?

Edward Thompson, whose article you sent me, has paid us a rather nice compliment. "You Nehrus", he writes to me, "have been very lucky in many ways, and lucky most of all in your charming and splendid women." He was thinking of mummie perhaps, about whom he had read in my book, and he had recently met Nan. He goes on to say: "Your letters to Indira are an altogether charming record. If she will regard my wife and myself as friends we shall feel honoured; and she will find we are friends".

They live at Oxford. So when you go there you might meet them. They will help you to form your ideas about the English as a race. He writes a very stupid article (the one you sent me) and yet in his own way he is perfectly straight and honest and keen on doing the right thing.

I was amused to read about your reactions to the English. They are a curious people. I must say I like many of their qualities—most of all their restraint. It impresses one. It is an aristocratic quality. But when the aristocrat becomes afraid of losing his special privileges he comes down the scale immediately. And so the English people, fearful now of losing their special position, are losing the good qualities they possessed. Yet some remain. Unhappily, we have always come into touch with the wrong side of them. That was inevitable as our relationship was all wrong.

I suppose the change of kings and all that lay behind it has excited people a lot in England. Yet I must say that everybody behaved rather decently. The human element in the drama was powerful and when kings behave as simple humans, people are gripped by the story. On the whole Edward came out rather well. Not as a very great person, but at any rate as one who refused to behave as an automaton and who could decide for himself in spite of all the pressure that was brought to bear on him. I listened to his farewell speech on the wireless.

All my love,

Your loving
Papu

ON SCIENCE

20. Science and Planning[1]

Most of us unhappily are too much engrossed in the business of politics to pay much attention to the finer and more important aspects of life. That is natural perhaps in a nation which struggles for national freedom and to rid itself of the bonds that prevent normal growth. Like a person in the grip of a disease it can think only of how to gain health again, and this obsession is a barrier to the growth of culture and science. We are entangled in our innumerable problems; we are oppressed by the appalling poverty of our people. But if we had a true standard of values we would realise that the silver jubilee of the Indian Science Congress this year is an event of outstanding importance. For that Congress represents science, and science is the spirit of the age and the dominating factor of the modern world. Even more than the present, the future belongs to science and to those who make friends with science and seek its help for the advancement of humanity.

On this occasion of the silver jubilee, I should like to send my greetings to the Indian Science Congress and to the many distinguished scientists, our own countrymen and our visitors from abroad, who are assembling in Calcutta. He who was chosen to preside over the Congress session had to end his life's journey before he could come here, but that life itself of distinguished service in the cause of science and great achievement has a message for all of us. Though Lord Rutherford[2] is not here, his written word has come to us and, through the courtesy of the editor, I have been able to glance through his presidential address.

Though I have long been a slave driven in the chariot of Indian politics, with little leisure for other thoughts, my mind has often wandered to the days when, as a student, I haunted the laboratories of that home of science, Cambridge. And though circumstances made me part company with science, my thoughts turned to it with longing. In later years,

1. Allahabad, 26 December 1937. *The Hindustan Times*, 8 January 1938. Jawaharlal sent this message on the occasion of the silver jubilee of the Indian Science Congress held at Calcutta on 3-9 January 1938. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 175-177.
2. (1871-1937); professor of physics at Cambridge, 1919-36; was awarded the Nobel Prize for physics in 1908; demonstrated the first artificial splitting of atoms, 1919.

through devious processes, I arrived again at science, when I realised that science was not only a pleasant diversion and abstraction, but was of the very texture of life, without which our modern world would vanish away. Politics led me to economics and this led me inevitably to science and the scientific approach to all our problems and to life itself. It was science alone that could solve these problems of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition and deadening custom and tradition, of vast resources running to waste, of a rich country inhabited by starving people.

I have read therefore with interest and appreciation Lord Rutherford's remarks on the role of science in national life and the need of training and maintaining research workers.[3] And then I wondered how far all this was possible under our present scheme of things. Something could be done no doubt even now, but how little that is to what might and should be done. Lord Rutherford tells us of the need for national planning. I believe that without such planning little that is worthwhile can be done. But can this be done under present conditions, both political and social? At every step vested interests prevent planning and ordered development and all our energy and enthusiasm is wasted because of this obstruction. Can we plan on a limited scale for limited objectives? We may do so in some measure, but immediately we come up against new problems and our plans go awry. Life is one organic whole and it cannot be separated into watertight compartments. The Mississipi Valley Committee, writing in their Letter of Transmittal to the federal administration of public works, U.S.A., refer to this planning business: "Planning for the use and control of water is planning for most of the basic functions of the life of a nation. We cannot plan for water unless we also reconsider the relevant problems of the land. We cannot plan for water and land unless we plan for the whole people. It is of little use to control rivers unless we also master the conditions which make for the security and freedom of human life".

And so we are driven to think of these basic conditions of human life, of the social system, the economic structure. If science is the dominating factor in modern life, then the social system and economic structure must fit in with science or it is doomed. Only then can we plan effectively and extensively. Lord Rutherford tells us of the need for

3. In his address Lord Rutherford observed: "This is in a sense a scientific age, where there is an ever-increasing recognition throughout the world of the importance of science to national development.... With the growth of responsible government in India, it is to be anticipated that the staff required for the scientific services in India and for industrial research will more and more be drawn from students trained in the Indian universities."

cooperation between the scientist and the industrialist. That need is obvious. So also is the need for cooperation between the scientist and the politician.

I am entirely in favour of a state organisation of research. I would also like the state to send out promising Indian students in large numbers to foreign countries for scientific and technical training. For we have to build India on a scientific foundation, to develop her industries, to change the feudal character of her land system and bring her agriculture in line with modern methods, to develop the social services which she lacks so utterly today, and to do so many other things that shout out to be done. For all this we require trained personnel.

I should like our central and provincial governments to have expert boards to investigate our problems and suggest solutions. A politician dislikes and sometimes suspects the scientist and expert. But without that expert's aid the politician can achieve little.

And so I hope, with Lord Rutherford, "that in the days to come India will again become the home of science, not only as a form of intellectual activity but also as a means of furthering the progress of her people".

21. The Progress of Science[1]

Friends,

You are men of learning and many of you have distinguished records in the realm of science. Yet you have honoured me, an outsider, with an invitation to participate in this annual gathering of yours and I have willingly accepted that invitation. Science and academic halls have not known me for many a long year, and fate and circumstance have led me to the dust and din of the market place and the field and the factory, where men live and toil and suffer. I have become involved in the great human upheavals that have shaken in recent years this land of ours. Yet in spite of the tumult and movement that have surrounded me, I do not come to you wholly as a stranger. For I too have worshipped at the shrine of science and counted myself as one of its votaries.

Who indeed can afford to ignore science today? At every turn we have to seek its aid and the whole fabric of the world today is of its

1. Address at the seventh annual meeting of the National Academy of Sciences held in Allahabad on 5 March 1938. *The Hindu*, 9 March 1938. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 178-183.

making. During the ten thousand years of human civilization, science came in with one vast sweep a century and half ago, and during these 150 years it proved more revolutionary and explosive than anything that had gone before. We who live in this age of science live in an environment and under conditions which are totally different from those of the pre-scientific age. But few realise this in its completeness, and they seek to understand the problems of today by a reference to a yesterday that is dead and gone.

Science had brought all these mighty changes and not all of them have been for the good of humanity. But the most vital and hopeful of the changes that it has brought about has been the development of the scientific outlook in man. It is true that even today vast numbers of people still live mentally in the pre-scientific age, and that most of us, even when we talk glibly of science, betray it in our thought and actions. Even scientists, learned in their particular subjects, often forget to apply the scientific method outside that charmed sphere. And yet it is the scientific method alone that offers hope to mankind and an ending of the agony of the world. This world is racked by fierce conflicts and they are analysed and called by many names. But essentially the major conflict is between the method of science and the methods opposed to science.

In the early days of science there was much talk of a conflict between religion and science, and science was called materialistic and religion spiritual. That conflict hardly seems real today when science has spread out its wings and ventured to make the whole universe its field of action and converted solid matter itself into airy nothing. Yet the conflict was real for it was a conflict between the intellectual tyranny imposed by what was deemed to be religion and the free spirit of man nurtured by the scientific method. Between the two there can be no compromise. For science cannot accept the closing of the windows of the mind, by whatever pleasant name this might be called; it cannot encourage blind faith in someone else's faith. Science therefore must be prepared not only to look up to the heavens and seek to bring them under its control, but also to look down, unafraid, into the pit to hell. To seek to avoid either is not the way of science. The true scientist is the sage unattached to life and the fruits of action, ever seeking truth wheresoever this quest might lead him. To tie himself to a fixed anchorage, from which there is no moving, is to give up that search and to become static in a dynamic world.

Perhaps there is no real conflict between true religion and science but, if so, religion must put on the garb of science and approach all its problems in the spirit of science. A purely secular philosophy of life may

be considered enough by most of us. Why should we trouble ourselves about matters beyond our ken when the problems of the world insistently demand solution? And yet that secular philosophy itself must have some background, some objective, other than merely material well-being. It must essentially have spiritual values and certain standards of behaviour, and, when we consider these, immediately we enter into the realm of what has been called religion.

But science has invaded this realm from many fronts. It has removed the line that was supposed to separate the world of things from the world of thought, matter from mind; it has peeped into the mind and even the unconscious self of man and sought the inner motives that move him, it has even dared to discuss the nature of ultimate reality. The reality of even a particle of matter, we are told, is not its actuality but its potentiality. Matter becomes just a "group agitation" and nature a theatre for such agitations or "for the inter-relations of activities". Everywhere there is motion, change, and the only unit of things real is the "event", which is, and instantaneously is no more. Nothing is, except a happening. If this is the fate of solid matter, what then are the things of the spirit?

How futile the old arguments seem in view of these astonishing developments in scientific thought. It is time we brought up our minds in line with the progress of science and gave up the meaningless controversies of an age gone by. It is true that science changes and there is nothing dogmatic or final about it. But the method of science does not change and it is to that we must adhere in our thought and activities, in research, in social life, in political and economic life, in religion. We may be specks of dust on a soap-bubble universe, but that speck of dust contained something that was the mind and spirit of man. Through the ages this has grown and made itself master of this earth and drawn power from its innermost bowels as well as from the thunderbolt in the skies. It has tried to fathom the secrets of the universe and brought the vagaries of nature itself to its use. More wonderful than the earth and the heavens is this mind and spirit of man which ever grows mightier and seeks fresh world to conquer.

That is the task of the scientist, but we know that all scientists are not fashioned in the heroic mould, nor are they the philosopher-kings of whom Plato told us in the days of old. Kingliness might not be theirs but even philosophising is often lacking, and the day's task follows a narrow sphere and a dull routine. As they specialise, and specialise they must, they lose sight of the larger picture and become pedants out of touch with reality. In India the political conditions under which we have had the misfortune to live have further stunted their growth and

prevented them from playing their rightful part in social progress. Fear has often gripped them as it has gripped so many others in the past, lest by any activity or even thought of theirs they might anger the government of the day and thus endanger their security and position. It is not under these conditions that science flourishes or scientists prosper. Science requires a free environment to grow. When applied to social purposes, it requires a social objective in keeping with its method and the spirit of the age.

That fear complex which oppressed India has happily disappeared to a large extent owing to the activities and movements initiated by our great organization, the National Congress, and even the poor, hungry and miserable peasant has a franker look today and a straighter back. It is time that the shadow of that fear and apprehension vanished from our academic halls also.

We have vast problems to face and to solve. They will not be solved by the politicians alone, for they may not have the vision or the expert knowledge; they will not be solved by the scientists alone, for they will not have the power to do so or the larger outlook which takes everything into its ken. They can and will be solved by the cooperation of the two for a well-defined and definite social objective.

That objective is necessary for without it our efforts are vain and trivial and lack coordination. We have seen in Soviet Russia how a consciously held objective, backed by coordinated effort, can change a backward country into an advanced industrial state with an ever-rising standard of living. Some such method we shall have to pursue if we are to make rapid progress.

The greatest of our problems is that of the land, but intimately connected with it is that of industry. And side by side with these go the social services. All of these will have to be tackled together and coordinated together. That is a vast undertaking but it will have to be shouldered.

Soon after the formation of the Congress ministries in August last, the Working Committee of the Congress passed a resolution which should interest scientists and experts. I should like therefore to draw your attention to it. It ran thus:

> The Working Committee recommends to the Congress ministries the appointment of a committee of experts to consider urgent and vital problems, the solution of which is necessary to any scheme of national reconstruction and social planning. Such solution will require extensive surveys and the collection of data, as well as a clearly defined social objective. Many of these problems cannot be dealt

with effectively on a provincial basis and the interests of adjoining provinces are inter-linked. Comprehensive river surveys are necessary for the formulation of a policy to prevent disastrous floods, to utilize the water for purposes of irrigation, to consider the problem of soil erosion, to eradicate malaria, and for the development of hydro-electric and other schemes. For this purpose the whole river valleys will have to be surveyed and investigated and large-scale state planning resorted to. The development and control of industries require also joint and coordinated action on the part of several provinces. The Working Committee advises, therefore, that, to begin with, an inter-provincial committee of experts be appointed to consider the general nature of the problems to be faced, and to suggest how, and in what order, these should be tackled. The expert committee may suggest the formation of special committees or boards to consider each such problem separately and to advise the provincial governments concerned as to the joint action to be undertaken.

Something has been done in this respect, a power alcohol and other committees have been appointed, but I wish more had been done. I should like an aggressive and widespread tackling of our problems by experts. I should like museums and permanent exhibitions for the education of our masses, especially the peasantry, to grow up in every district. I remember the wonderful peasant museums I saw in the U.S.S.R. and compare them with the pitiful agricultural exhibitions that are organised here from time to time. I remember also vividly that splendid and astonishing museum, the Deutsches Museum at Munich, and wonder rather wistfully when some such thing will grow up in India.

It is for this Academy of Sciences to take a lead in all such matters and to advise the government thereon. The government should cooperate with them and help them and take full advantage of their expert knowledge. But the academy must not just wait for the government to give it a push every time. We have got too much into the habit of waiting for government to take the initiative in everything. It is the business of the government to take the initiative, but it is also the business of the scientists to take the initiative themselves. We cannot wait for each other. We must get a move on.

And so, having taken up so much of your time, I commend you to your labours, and hope that you will have the privilege of serving India and of helping in the progress and advancement of her people.

TO THE STUDENTS

22. On the Kanpur Students' Strike[1]

I have been distressed to learn of the recent developments in the D.A.V. College in Cawnpore resulting in a strike of the students of the college. It appears that a large number of students took part in the polling day arrangements for the assembly election in rural areas and this was disapproved by the college authorities. This was done not only in Cawnpore but in various parts of India, and I am partly responsible for this as I, in common with some of my colleagues, appealed to the students and others to help us. It seemed to me that it was a well-recognised right and privilege of students to participate in elections in this manner. In other countries they do so; even in India, with its authoritarian atmosphere, they have done so. Senior students are often themselves voters and it is right that they should take interest in this working of the constitutional apparatus of the government. From the point of view of their education even and their preparation for life, it is desirable that they should be encouraged to do so. It is true that abnormal conditions prevail in India and, situated as we are, there is bound to be continuous conflict between our nationalism and will to freedom and the government which is based on authoritarianism. This inevitably introduces complications. But this conflict and these complications do not and should not limit this elementary right of the student world. The students stand on the threshold of life and they must walk across that threshold occasionally to see and understand life as it is. Only then will they be able to live it worthily and play an effective part in it. Thus in India, where all of us await eagerly the change from the dismal present to a brighter and freer future, it is all the more necessary for students to prepare themselves for this future by understanding the present and taking some part in its manifold activities. Else they will be out of joint, unhappy misfits in a changing world. I am convinced therefore that we were right in asking the students to join in some of the election activities and they were right in responding to that call. Ordinarily the matter would have ended there as it has so ended everywhere else in India, including the other colleges in Cawnpore.

1. Allahabad, 21 February 1937. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

But unhappily in the D.A.V. College there was friction and the students were told, or thought, that they would be victimised for their behaviour. This excited some of them and it is stated that some cries derogatory to the principal were raised and some petty damage to window panes, etc., was done. The students as a body deny these cries but *it is quite possible that a few among them were responsible for them.*

It is regrettable that any student should have used unseemly language or indulged in unruly and rough behaviour. Such behaviour injures the cause of the students as it diverts attention from the principle involved to other matters.

It seems to me that a small matter has assumed needless importance and the sooner this conflict between the college authorities and the students is ended the better for all concerned. Discipline must exist in any establishment or organisation, much more so among the students. All life is largely a matter of discipline. But this discipline, in order to be of value, must be largely self-discipline. Imposed discipline often defeats its purpose.

I feel that the right of students to take part in orderly and constitutional politics must be recognised and to penalise such activity would be a grave wrong. In the present case, in view of the unruly behaviour of some students, it is right and proper that the students should express their regret to the principal for this.

I am sure that the principal has no desire to penalise his students and thus lay the foundations of discord. He must want harmony and the spirit of cooperation. I trust he will assure them that there will be no victimisation and the students will end their strike.

23. To P. S. Singh[1]

Allahabad
April 18, 1937

Dear Comrade,[2]

I have your letter of April 9th. I am glad to learn that the Indian students in Great Britain and Ireland have started a federation. I have read with interest the message that Mr. George Bernard Shaw has sent you. I think he is perfectly right in laying stress on the desirability of

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Editor, *The Indian Student*, a journal published from London.

Indian students developing contacts with non-Indians and of trying to understand the spirit of European culture. That indeed should be the objective of every Indian who goes abroad to Europe, for only thus can he widen his own horizon and understand to some extent the modern world, and thus make himself fit for the future service of the Indian people and of humanity.

But this emphasis, right as it is, does not in any way lessen the desirability of Indians who go abroad meeting each other, cooperating with each other, and acting together whenever such joint action is called for. Indeed Mr. Bernard Shaw himself approves of your aims which necessitate joint action. This joint action can only come if you have an organisation which brings Indian students together to discuss among themselves their common problems. These problems are the problems of Indian students abroad; even more so they are the problems of India and the world. If Indian students do not give thought to these larger problems during their studies abroad, they do not learn much, and they return to their mother country with vacant minds, or minds which are full of useless lumber, for which there is no demand in this country.

I welcome therefore the attempt to organise Indian students abroad. I do not know anything about this organisation and how it is likely to shape itself. The time for congratulations will come later when you have justified yourselves by your good work.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

24. The Republic of Youth[1]

I send my greetings to the World Students' Association which is having its international conference soon in Paris.[2] The present generation has had to face great problems and conflicts, and all over the world rival forces fight for mastery. Many have laboured for a happier and more worthwhile order which will solve these problems and put an end to these conflicts. When that order comes we cannot say, but meanwhile we carry the heavy burden of today and think of the catastrophes that

1. Allahabad, 2 August 1937. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. This conference, held in October 1937, was devoted to the freedom of colonial peoples and the preservation of peace in the world.

threaten to overwhelm us. The students, representing the coming generation, are yet, to some extent, free from this burden, but even now they cannot wholly avoid it and all too soon their time will also come. I hope they will shoulder it worthily and bring the enthusiasm and broad-mindedness of youth to the solution of our problems. They must avoid the narrow creeds that separate and keep us in the old ruts, and seek the broad path of mutual cooperation for human betterment. The student world is astir with these ideas, in the East and West, and therein lies the hope of the future. I welcome, therefore, this international conference which brings students from all over the world and develops contacts between the youth of different countries. For students are essentially members of the republic of youth which ignores narrow boundaries and racial and other barriers, and thinks of the world as its theatre of action for the common good. I wish the conference all success.

25. Students and National Service[1]

We have already lived a major part of our life. After some time we shall go away leaving the burden to be shouldered by you. It is a troublesome world but you have to live here. How will you face it?

I desire to peep behind the curtain of the future and see what sort of men would carry on the struggle, for men are instruments of history. It all depends on the human material and the qualities of head and heart that the people possess. That is what I am looking for among the new generation. It has been said in the past about Indians that they can make a great deal of noise but lack perseverance and constancy. The charge is not wholly unfounded. But within the last few years great changes have taken place in India. These changes have been for the good.

Difficult times are ahead and we must understand that no country can make progress without making some sacrifice. A country's history is made when it comes out successful through its trials. A great deal of emphasis has been laid in India on administration, so much so that what is administered has itself been lost sight of. We have got accustomed to this unsatisfactory state of affairs as a matter of habit. Things are very bad in India compared to foreign countries. India appears like a dilapidated country.

1. Reply to a welcome address presented by the students of Kayastha Pathashala, Allahabad, 30 August 1937. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 31 August 1937.

WITH SUBHAS BOSE, 1938

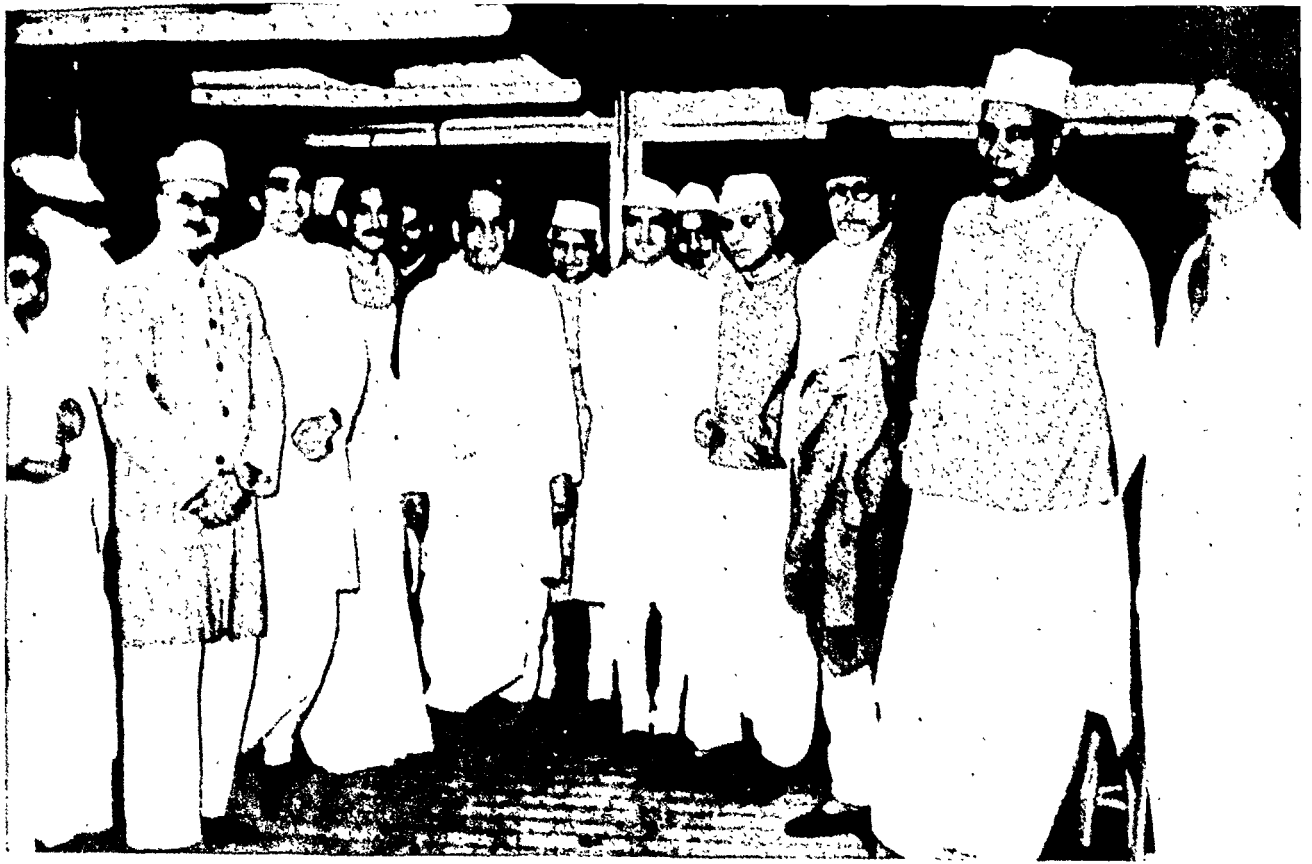

WITH MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE ON BOARD
THE S.S. "EL MADINA", 2 JANUARY 1938

In England only stupid boys think of entering the services and taking up jobs. I would advise the students to choose the path of national service and sacrifice and not hanker after the I.C.S. or the P.C.S. You should put your enthusiasm to proper use. You should aim high and work indefatigably for your ideals. Although reading of history shows that man is the most stupid being and that thought has often depressed me, still the history of the evolution of man with that tiny grey matter and his conquest of nature are wonderful achievements and inspire me with hope for the future. Man has never admitted defeat.

26. Law and Society[1]

Students generally study law in order to join the legal profession to earn their living, but I want them to think of the other phases of life also. When two countries are involved in a conflict then the principle that operates in the making of laws is: 'might is right', and not what the subject people would like to have. A law enacted without the people's willingness and support behind it can enjoy little respect.

If we look at the struggle between Japan and China, we shall see that it is the beginning of a big fight. Formerly, as in 1914, the breaking out of a war was preceded by a formal declaration to enable the belligerent nations to withdraw their ambassadors from the enemy's territory. But now a war begins suddenly with bomb-throwing, and legally one cannot call it a war, as a declaration is not made according to international law, although thousands lose their lives.

What I wish to emphasize is that law is certainly a desirable thing, for without it society cannot go on. But laws should also be changed to suit the changing conditions. At present, everything in the world is undergoing a change. It therefore makes no sense if we say that old laws would continue. Precedent is the basis of English law. Precedents are followed in arriving at decisions while the fact that conditions have changed and the precedents would not apply to the conditions prevailing now is not taken into consideration.

So far as social laws are concerned, religious beliefs and customs which have the force of law give them the necessary sanction. People entertain a sort of fear in introducing a change or reform in the old customs.

1. Address to the Allahabad University Law Society, 1 September 1937. From *The Leader*, 4 September 1937.

As regards administrative laws, they are made by the party in power and the party in power makes such laws as would make its interests secure. Propaganda is done everywhere for creating an atmosphere in favour of those administrative laws. Education is a great means for doing such a propaganda. In the present age, radio and cinema are also being utilised for the purpose.

Hindu law is based on customs. Customs change and with that the laws also change. However, with the advent of the British raj those customs were codified[2] with the result that the dynamic character of the Hindu customs was suppressed. If there had been no statute law customs could have changed with the change in times. The Hindu customs, which were codified, do not represent progressive views, but they represent the views of the reactionaries with whose advice they were codified. The result is that radical changes are needed in the Hindu law because there are many things of which Hindu society is tired but it is bound by the statute.

The society's bond with the old customs and laws is like a growing child whose coat has to be changed as he grows. Otherwise, the same coat would cause him considerable inconvenience and ultimately it would be torn for it would not fit him. Similarly if laws that governed a society are not changed when the society developed and progressed, a time would come when it would be impossible for it to continue in its old dress, and an attempt consequently would be made to tear it, a process which is called revolution. Therefore, if you want to have good laws then the laws should be such as would suit the prevailing conditions and should be changed when the conditions do not remain the same. The time has now come when it is impossible for the society to continue to wear the old coat and that is the reason why you notice revolutionary tendencies in the society.

Behind every law there is some power. It is the power of public opinion and if public opinion goes against any law, it becomes impossible for it to have any force. Looking at the conditions as they prevail now in the world and in our country, it seems that the present laws have outlived their utility. Ours is a country on the march and if there be no obstacles, India cannot only equal other advanced countries of the world but can go ahead of them.

I very much wish the students of law to think over the questions raised by me today, for unless the students of law appreciate that the laws

2. A code of Hindu law was prepared in 1775 during the time of Warren Hastings; it codified customs relating to inheritance, marriage, caste and other religious usages and institutions of the Hindus.

should change with the changes overtaking the society, they would not be able to help in the framing of the right type of laws. If, on the other hand, they believed that the old laws should continue then they would not prove themselves to be useful citizens and the country would also not be benefited by them.

27. Students and Discipline[1]

My way of addressing a large gathering is to talk to them. I want you to understand the nature of even the most difficult problems before you and form your opinion about them. I do not like the blind carrying out of the orders of great leaders, however eminent they may be. Though the leaders' ability does matter, still I would say that an opinion formed by the mass of the general public carries more weight and influence than the opinion of a leader. Strength comes to you not from a public leader but from yourselves. It is, of course, our good fortune that we had a succession of distinguished leaders in our country. During the last 20 years or so, that we have been fighting against the government, many of our comrades have passed away. We feel their loss. So would the leaders of today also pass away, one by one, but the battle of freedom that we are waging would continue till the goal is achieved.

I am a political worker and I am greatly interested in that work. I am very pleased to see the new spirit that came over the Indian masses during the last two months. It looked as though the nation had taken a different turn. New hopes are visible on the faces of even the poorest farmers in the country. There is no doubt that all this is due to the Congress ministries coming into power. But that does not mean that we have obtained Swaraj. The same old British Government still rules over us. The Congress ministers have somehow been allowed to find a place for themselves in the governmental apparatus. They are very much handicapped in their work because not only have they to work with the same old civilians who are placed under them but have also to reckon with the extraordinary powers vested in the Governors. It is true that even under the existing conditions they have opportunities to increase their strength. I also do not wish to ignore the potentialities for doing good which the Congress ministries have acquired

1. Speech at Kanpur, 28 September 1937. From *The Leader*, 1 October 1937.

after coming into power. Danger however lies in the fact that this small strength which they have acquired might make them so complacent that they may stop working for their real object. But it is also good that under the Congress ministries we have now got an opportunity to conserve our strength and increase it further. But we should not become over-jubilant on seeing the Congress in power because who knows on what issue the ministers may have to resign. For years we had only one type of work to do and that was to fight. But we have now turned our attention to this work of a different type.

I also want to refer to the regrettable change that has come over the students. The recent student outrages in several parts of the province must be condemned by all. Students get unusually excited on trifling issues. Of course, the students have the right to oppose injustice but they have no business to indulge in acts of indecency and outrage. The methods followed by them are of the fascist variety. These methods have found approval in Germany and Italy. If the students followed these methods they would soon acquire a bad name. They should, therefore, realize that they are following a wrong path and should give it up.

We have gathered here today to express our sympathies for the Chinese who are at present involved in a serious struggle. It may seem curious that those who are slaves should sympathize with the Chinese who are free and are fighting to preserve their freedom. We do so because we are interested in the Chinese struggle and wish to see all down-trodden people, wherever they may be, become free. The Sino-Japanese fight is in many respects extraordinary. It was started without a regular declaration of war. It has been very fierce in its nature and there is every likelihood of the war assuming the proportions of a world conflagration. There is every possibility of both China and Japan being destroyed. It is true that the Chinese are less powerful than the Japanese but the Chinese are not so weak now and the Japanese cannot easily overpower them. The Japanese, finding a closer *rapprochement* growing between the Chinese and the Russians and believing that the Russians are getting involved in their domestic troubles, attacked the Chinese without any provocation. The only fault of the Chinese is that they are trying to grow strong. I condemn the policy of sending Indian troops to fight abroad for imperialistic purposes. In future, we should not agree to the employment of Indian troops for such purposes. Safeguarding of the Indian interests has been given as the ostensible reason for the despatch of Indian troops to China. It has, however, failed to convince anyone.

28. Commitment and Creativity[1]

I am glad to see that you have a students' union in your university. I however want to ask you whether you have formed any study circles devoted to the consideration of important problems. We are living in times of dynamic changes, and soon enough you will have to shoulder grave responsibilities. Are you prepared to shoulder those responsibilities? At Oxford and Cambridge there are numerous clubs for the discussion of important questions. You should also start such clubs. You cannot remain in academic seclusion.

During the last twenty years, India has raised herself considerably from her depressed and weak condition. We do not know what lies in store for us during the next ten years. May be, there will be no British Empire on the map of the world—not because India is waging a fight against it but because the world today is at the end of an epoch of capitalism, and many new forces are emerging to fight imperialism.

I want the students and teachers to think about big issues for thus alone can big problems be solved. I want such organisation of the students to be developed as would pose a challenge to the empires of the world. I do not want you to behave like a frenzied crowd.

You people live comparatively in an atmosphere of freedom and have fewer cares and anxieties. You are, therefore, in a better position to take a dispassionate view of things. You have the time and opportunity to train your minds. At the same time you have also to shoulder the bigger responsibility of training others who are not so fortunate as to receive university education.

India is, at present, pulsating with a new life. If you develop the right outlook, then you will be prepared to undertake the responsibility of shaping India's future. You must develop an individuality if you want to perform great deeds. India can become a great country if its people develop a spirit that befits great men. It is not by shouting or raising big cries but by the accomplishment of great deeds by its people that our country shall be reckoned as one of the great nations. I have often wondered if behind all this shouting there is any real energy and force. I want to know how many of you are thinking of big issues and have great ambitions? Search for jobs and security of life cannot be called an ambition.

1. Address to the students of Lucknow University, 17 November 1937. From *The Leader*, 20 November 1937.

We lack a spirit of cooperation among us. The greatest service that the Congress has done has been to inculcate a spirit of cooperation among the people. Cooperation has been the hallmark of Western civilization.

The situation in the world is becoming so complex that no one can say what would happen in the next ten or fifteen years. A great catastrophe faces the world and I think a new world is likely to emerge out of the present crisis. Though our country has become strong as a result of the great awakening brought about among the people by the nationalist movement, still we continue to suffer greatly because we have not rid ourselves of the slavish mentality, and the gap between our profession and practice remains as big as before. It is difficult to fight these evils. But before we try to fight them, we must think clearly what we want to change. No action taken without proper thought ever produces right results.

I am happy to note that the people are slowly giving up the fatalist mentality. The larger the number of people who challenge the planets rather than feel over-awed by them, the better it would be for the country. I would prefer to command nature and conquer it than be its slave. I hate being a weakling.

The relationship between the teacher and the taught is different from that which exists between the employer and the employee. Strikes, therefore, really do not fit in with the life of the students. I would not therefore approve the idea of students going on strikes on flimsy grounds during normal times. We cannot, however, lay down any rules for the revolutionary period. I would like the students to behave in a dignified and disciplined manner. I cannot appreciate the idea of students shouting slogans and parading in the streets like excited mobs.

It is a sad thing to see the spirit of communalism grow, of all places, in the temples of learning. I do not get excited when the communal question crops up because it is mainly raised by a few upper-class city-dwellers, although I know they can sometimes make a nuisance of themselves. Nobody however raises this question in rural areas as it is not after all a question affecting the whole mass of the people in the country. Obsession with this question shows the mental backwardness of the people who raise it. It prevents clear and unbiased thinking. The recent incident[2] which took place in Aligarh University shows the same obsession from which some students seem to be suffering. I hope it is only a momentary aberration. I expect cultured men not to

2. See p. 196.

be swept off their feet by the propaganda carried on by the communal elements in our society.

29. On the Allahabad Students' Strike[1]

I am primarily interested in fundamental matters and am anxious to find out how our young men can be prepared for the service of the country. We can expect bright people only to come out from our colleges and universities. During the noncooperation days it was said that schools and colleges were *ghulam khane*[2] and it was for that reason that a boycott of the educational institutions was started. The Indian colleges and universities have already earned a bad name. The system of education in the country is also bad and ought to be changed. A complete change in the system throughout the country is not an easy task though the Congress ministries may take some steps in that direction. Those who are students today will soon be called upon to carry the burden of the administration of the country. They should, therefore, acquire such a high standard of efficiency as would earn them the respect and admiration of all. The students should try to develop their mental faculties and should aim high. They should not hanker after jobs.

Therefore I am not much impressed by the students resorting to strikes on petty issues. There is something at the present moment which has caused a sort of stir among the labourers, the kisans and others. I noticed at Cawnpore that the labourers were leading a new life. But we should remember that when one gets strength and new life there is a danger of that new energy and power being misused. The Cawnpore labourers have shown improvement in their organisational abilities. I am simply surprised to notice the military precision with which they organized picketing in connection with the strikes. But there is the danger of this new power being frittered away and misused.

So far as the students are concerned they should show greater restraint in their conduct because they are educated and are therefore expected

1. Speech at a meeting organised by the Allahabad Students Association on 20 November 1937. From *The Leader*, 22 November 1937. Restrictions placed by the authorities in regard to flag-hoisting and participation of students in the election campaign led to widespread strikes in colleges and schools in the U.P. Despite Jawaharlal's advice, the students of Allahabad continued the strike.
2. Homes for the slaves.

to be cultured and well behaved. But I see less restraint among them. The question of fees, in my view, is not so serious as to necessitate strikes. The fees charged differ from one institution to another. In some institutions they might be somewhat high but I cannot appreciate the students resorting to strikes on that account. I cannot understand at all the reason for a strike on the question of fees. The party which should protest and represent against fees should be the parents but it is strange that while the parents could bear the payment of the fees, the students are becoming *khudai faujdars*[3] and questioning the propriety of the fees. I appreciate that students should be full of enthusiasm but on the issue of fees it was not proper for them to have gone on strike. In my view, if the students carried on, by constitutional methods, a concerted agitation against the fees, which they consider to be unjust, their demands would be conceded.

The relationship between the employer and the labourer, and the zamindar and the tenant, is of the exploiter and the exploited. Hence the struggle between them is bound to continue; but the relationship between the teacher and the taught is not that of the exploiter and the exploited. Both are engaged in the same task, though due to the prevalence of a system of foreign administration the students think that they are being suppressed.

I am emphatically of the opinion that they should not waste their growing strength by resorting to strikes indiscriminately though I do not say that there should be no strikes. As regards the Ewing Christian College question, I feel that they had put Dr. Ahmad in a very embarrassing position because he could not even express his opinion freely on the subject due to his own involvement in the matter raised by the students.[4] I realize that certain actions of the college authorities have aroused resentment but I would advise the students to consider the situation coolly and try to find an honourable solution for ending the strike as soon as possible. I hope the notion of false prestige would not be allowed to mar the prospects of success for arriving at an honourable settlement.

I am surprised at the way in which my speeches at Lucknow and Cawnpore have been reported. They seem to have given an impression that I called the students *bhatiaras*. I have not been properly reported. What I had said was that the students' meetings should not be like the *majlis of bhatiaras*.[5] Incidents such as had taken place at Plaza at

3. Self-appointed guardians.
4. Z.A. Ahmad had been invited by the students for the flag-hoisting ceremony but the college authorities did not permit it.
5. A meeting of the uncivilised.

Lucknow and at Christ Church College at Cawnpore bring the students into disrepute only.

30. The Duty of Indian Students in Britain[1]

I send my greetings to the federation of the Indian Students Societies in Great Britain on the occasion of their second annual conference. Many Indian students go to foreign countries for their studies. Of these the largest number go to Great Britain and therefore it is important that the Indian students in Great Britain should organise themselves and hold together, and prepare themselves not only individually but also collectively for the work ahead of them in India. That work is going to be of the most exacting kind requiring clear thought and vision, training, efficiency and perseverance. It is not good enough for us to push along in the old ruts.

Indeed, these old ruts are visibly disappearing before our eyes, not only in India but elsewhere also. Vast and intricate problems face us everywhere and the burden of solving them will inevitably lie on the shoulders of the younger generation. How far are the Indian students abroad preparing themselves for shouldering this burden and for answering the questions that the modern world puts to them? It is not good enough to repeat catchwords and time-worn phrases in answer to these questions. We have to go deeper if we are to understand the complexities of the situation today in India and the world.

We have to develop something of steel in us which will not bend even under the stress of adverse circumstances. We have to prepare ourselves to face unflinchingly any situation and any crisis that might come our way. In this world full of crises and impending catastrophe, it is the men and women of clear vision, trained minds and strong wills, devoted to the cause of freedom and betterment of humanity, who will mould history. India needs such men and women. How many of her people abroad will rise to the occasion, the future will show. I hope that the conference of the Indian students in Great Britain will help in placing these ideals before our countrymen abroad and in organising them for work in this behalf.

1. Khali, 23 March 1938. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 19 April 1938. This message was sent to Feroze Gandhi, the organizing secretary.

31. Message to the Canadian Youth Congress[1]

I send my greetings to the delegates of the Canadian Youth Congress. They will discuss their common problems but they will realise that their problems are a part of the wider problems of the world. A true solution of national problems must be founded on a solution of international problems. It is right that youth, which is not hidebound and tied down to the ancient ruts, should consider the problems that encompass us and try to find ways of solving them. We have to face today an aggressive and brutal fascism and those who have grown up in a democratic tradition are repelled by it. But democracy is not merely anti-fascist. It must necessarily be anti-imperialist. It must base itself on the freedom of all peoples and countries. Only then can we have security and progress in this world and cooperation for the common good. I have no doubt that the young men and women of Canada will stand by this ideal of peace and freedom all over the world. I wish them all success in their deliberations.

1. Allahabad, 30 April 1938. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D.10/1936, pp. 209-210, N.M.M.L. The third Canadian Youth Congress was held in Toronto in May 1938.

THE QUESTION OF LANGUAGE

32. On the Hindi-Urdu Controversy[1]

Lately the Hindi-Urdu controversy has risen again and the people suspect that the protagonists of each are suppressing those in favour of the other. Without thinking over the problem, spirited articles are written as it is considered that the more one attacks another the more one benefits one's own language. But a little reflection would show the utter

1. Message to the Madras Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. *Aaj*, 6 July 1937. Original in Hindi.

futility of this. The literature in any language does not progress in this manner.

It is also found that we often attach very different meanings to literature. We get greatly involved in minor matters with regard to a language and forget the basic issues. For whom is a literature meant? Is it for a few educated people or for the common man? Until we answer this question we shall be unable to discuss clearly the future trend of a literature. If we realise this, then probably our other disputes also, including the Hindi-Urdu controversy, might be resolved.

The first thing to bear in mind is that our literature at present is very backward. Compared to any European language ours is quite inferior. The new books that are being published in our country are not of a high standard; so to understand the present-day world it becomes necessary to read books in foreign languages. New ideas are reflected very little in our literature. There are very few good books on history, politics, economics, science and other subjects in our languages. We have to pay full attention to this problem, otherwise our languages cannot develop and those who are keen to learn these subjects will be compelled to go elsewhere.

A number of questions arise. I cannot deal with all of them here. But I want to draw your attention to certain points.

I fully believe that rivalry between Hindi and Urdu is harmful to both. They can progress only by cooperation, and if one progresses the other will also gain. Therefore their mutual relationship should be not of rivalry even if they have to go different ways occasionally. One should be pleased to see the other progress for it would then result in one's own progress. When in Europe the new literatures (English, French, German, Italian) progressed, all of them did so together and not by competition or by suppressing each other.

This does not mean that the lovers of a particular language should not make a separate effort for the advancement of their own language. They must do so; but such effort should not be directed against any other language and should always bear in mind the basic principles.

Not only with regard to Hindi and Urdu but with regard to all our major languages—Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam—we should make it clear that we want the progress of all of them and not any rivalry among them. In each province the language of that province is supreme. Hindi or Hindustani is certainly the national language and it ought to be. But it can come only after the provincial language. If this is decided upon much misunderstanding can be removed and the relationship among the different languages can also improve.

Although Hindi and Urdu are very close to each other, they are somewhat drifting apart, thereby causing harm to both. There are two heads on one body; yet both keep quarrelling. We have to understand two things which are apparently contradictory. Firstly, we should write and speak such language in Hindi or Urdu as is a middle language, not containing many difficult words from Sanskrit or Persian or Arabic. This language is generally called Hindustani. It is said, and rightly, that if such language is written the drawbacks of both sides creep in and a hybrid language is created which has neither beauty nor force. Although this is correct, it is not so important. I think that by a combination of Hindi and Urdu we can in course of time evolve a very beautiful and potent language which will have the vigour of youth and rank high among the languages of the world.

Despite this we have to remember that languages are not evolved or do not progress by compulsion. A literature blooms like a flower; if force be applied, it withers. Therefore if Hindi and Urdu drift apart temporarily we should not worry. We should try to learn both languages, because the larger our vocabulary the better it would be.

As for the script, it should be made quite clear that both the Hindi and Urdu scripts should co-exist and that everyone should be free to write in either. It is often said that the Hindi script is suppressed in one province, say, the Frontier Province, and that in another province the Urdu script is not given enough scope. We should not express the viewpoint of one side alone; rather we should propound the principle that both scripts be allowed full freedom everywhere. The lovers of Hindi and Urdu should come to an agreement and work for it.

This question, in fact, goes even beyond Hindi and Urdu. In my opinion, every language and every script should have full freedom provided a sufficient number of people speak that language or write in that script. For example, if in Calcutta there are a considerable number of Tamil-speaking people, they should have the right to have Tamil as the medium of instruction in their schools. It is obvious that political or other such work in a province cannot be done in a number of languages. It can be done only in the language of that province. In northern and central India, where Hindustani is the language of the common man, one language and two scripts should be used freely. It does not mean that everyone will have to learn both the scripts. It will be too great a burden on children. Therefore they, or their parents, should decide which script they should learn. But an effort should be made to make some people learn both the scripts.

There has been much controversy in regard to the words Hindi and Hindustani, and this has created misunderstanding. It is an unnecessary

controversy. Both the words can be used for our national language. Both are beautiful and related to our country and people. But it would be better if in order to end this controversy we call the spoken language as Hindustani and the script as Hindi or Urdu. Then one will clearly understand what we say.

What should be the form of this Hindustani language? The people of Delhi or Lucknow say that their dialect is intelligible to all and so it should be treated as Hindustani. But if you go to Banaras, Patna, central India or Rajputana, you will find a lot of difference. And if you go from a city to a village you will find still greater difference. What language then should be ours?

Our language should be a cultured language and understood by the maximum number of people. We cannot evolve such a language by sitting together and comparing certain shortcomings, nor can a few scholars of Hindi and Urdu do it jointly. A strong foundation for our language will be laid only when the writers write and the speakers speak for the common man. Then all this academic discussion as regards the proportion of Urdu and Hindi words will come to an end. The common man will make the decision. Whatever is intelligible to him will remain and the rest will gradually disappear.

Therefore the basic issue before us is that we should build up our literature for the common man. When we write, we should have him in our mind. Every writer has to ask himself, "For whom do I write?"

One thing more. It is essential that the famous books of Europe be translated into Hindi. Only thus will we be able to bring here the ideas prevalent in the world and derive advantage from foreign literatures.

33. The Question of Language[1]

We have had during recent months a revival of the old controversy between Hindi and Urdu, and high excitement has accompanied it and charges and counter-charges have been flung about. A subject eminently suited for calm and scholarly consideration and academic debate has been dragged down to the level of the market-place, and communal passions have centred round it. Inevitably, many of the champions who have

1. Allahabad, 25 July 1937. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 11-13 August 1937. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 241-261. It was also published by the A.I.C.C. as a pamphlet.

entered the field of battle have little to do with scholarship or the love of a language for its own sake; they have been chiefly concerned with the government orders and court procedure. Those who love language as the embodiment of culture, of airy thought caught in the network of words and phrases, of ideas crystallized, of fine shades of meaning, of the music and rhythm that accompany it, of the fascinating history and associations of its words, of the picture of life in all its phases, those to whom a language is dear because of all this and more, wondered at this vulgar argument and kept away from it.

And yet we cannot keep away from it or ignore it, for the question of language is an important one for us. It is not important because of that cry of the ignorant that India is a babel of tongues with hundreds and hundreds of languages. India, as everyone who looks round him can see, has singularly few languages considering its vast size, and these are intimately allied to each other. India has also one dominant and widespread language which, with its variations, covers a vast area and numbers its votaries by the hundred million. Yet the problem remains and has to be faced.

It has to be faced for the moment because of its communal and political implications. But that is a temporary matter and will pass. The real problem will remain: as to what policy we shall adopt in a scheme of general mass education and the cultural development of the people; how shall we promote the unity of India and yet preserve the rich diversity of our inheritance?

The question of language is ever one of great consequence for a people. Almost exactly three hundred years ago Milton, writing from Florence to a friend, emphasized this and said: "Nor is it to be considered of small consequence what language, pure or corrupt, a people has, or what is their customary degree of propriety in speaking it...for let the words of a country be in part unhandsome and offensive in themselves, in part debased by wear and wrongly uttered, and what do they declare, but by no light indication, that the inhabitants of that country are an indolent, idly yawning race, with minds already long prepared for any amount of servility? On the other hand, we have never heard that any empire, any state, did not at least flourish in a middling degree as long as its own liking and care for its language lasted."

A living language is a throbbing, vital thing, ever changing, ever growing and mirroring the people who speak and write it. It has its roots in the masses, though its superstructure may represent the culture of a few. How, then, can we change it or shape it to our liking by resolutions or orders from above? And yet I find this widely prevalent notion that we can force a language to behave in a particular manner if we

only will it so. It is true that under modern conditions, with mass education and mass propaganda through the press, printed books, cinema, and the radio, a language can be varied much more rapidly than in past times. And yet that variation is but the mirror of the rapid changes taking place among the people who use it. If a language loses touch with the people, it loses its vitality and becomes an artificial, lifeless thing instead of the thing of life and strength and joy that it should be. Attempts to force the growth of a language in a particular direction are likely to end in distorting it and crushing its spirit.

What should be the policy of the state in regard to language? The Congress has briefly but clearly and definitely stated this in the resolution on fundamental rights: "The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected." By this declaration the Congress is bound, and no minority or linguistic group can require a wider assurance. Further, the Congress has stated in its constitution, as well as in many resolutions, that, while the common language of the country should be Hindustani, the provincial languages should be dominant in their respective areas. A language cannot be imposed by resolution, and the Congress desires to develop a common language and carry on most of our work in the provincial languages would be pious wishes, ignored by the multitude, if they did not fit in with existing conditions and the needs of the situation. We have thus to see how far they so fit in.

Our great provincial languages are no dialects or vernaculars, as the ignorant sometimes call them. They are ancient languages with a rich inheritance, each spoken by many millions of persons, each tied up inextricably with the life and culture and ideas of the masses as well as of the upper classes. It is axiomatic that the masses can only grow educationally and culturally through the medium of their own language. Therefore it is inevitable that we lay stress on the provincial languages and carry on most of our work through them. The use of any other language will result in isolating the educated few from the masses and in retarding the growth of the people. Ever since the Congress took to the use of these provincial languages in carrying on its work we developed contacts with the masses rapidly and the strength and prestige of the Congress increased all over the country. The Congress message reached the most distant hamlet and the political consciousness of the masses grew. Our system of education and public work must therefore be based on the provincial languages.

What are these languages? Hindustani, of course, with its principal aspects of Hindi and Urdu, and its various dialects. Then there are Bengali, Marathi, and Gujarati, sister languages of Hindi and nearly

allied to it. In the south there are Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam. Besides these there are Oriya, Assamese, and Sindhi, and Punjabi and Pushtu in the north-west. These dozen languages cover the whole of India, and of these Hindustani has the widest range and also claims a certain all-India character.

Without infringing in the least on the domain of the provincial languages, we must have a common all-India medium of communication. Some people imagine that English might serve as such, and to some extent English has served as such for our upper classes and for all-India political purposes. But this is manifestly impossible if we think in terms of the masses. We cannot educate millions of people in a totally foreign tongue. English will inevitably remain an important language for us because of our past associations and because of its present importance in the world. It will be the principal medium for us to communicate with the outside world, though I hope it will not be the only medium for this purpose. I think we should cultivate other foreign languages also, such as French, German, Russian, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, and Japanese. But English cannot develop into an all-India language, known by millions.

The only possible all-India language is Hindustani. Already it is spoken by a hundred and twenty millions and partly understood by scores of millions of others. Even those who do not know it at all at present can learn it far more easily than a foreign language. There are many common words in all the languages of India, but what is far more important is the common cultural background of these languages, the similarity of ideas, and the many linguistic affinities. This makes it relatively easy for an Indian to learn another Indian language.

What is Hindustani? Vaguely we say that this word includes both Hindi and Urdu, as spoken and as written in the two scripts, and we endeavour to strike a golden mean between the two, and call this idea of ours Hindustani. Is this just an idea with no reality for its basis, or is it something more?

There are many variations in Hindustani as spoken and written in various parts of northern and central India. Numerous dialects have arisen. But these are the inevitable consequences of want of education, and with mass education these dialects will tend to disappear and a certain standardization will set in.

There is the question of script. Devanagari and the Urdu scripts are utterly different from each other, and there is no possibility of either of them assimilating the other. Therefore wisely we have agreed that both should have full play. This will be an additional burden on those who have to learn both and it will encourage separatism to some extent. But

we have to put up with these disadvantages, for any other course is not open to us. Both the scripts are part of the genius of our language, and around them have gathered not only literatures peculiar to the scripts, but also a wall of sentiment which is solid and irremovable. What the distant future will bring to us I do not know, but for the present both must remain.

The Latin script has been advocated as a solution of some of our linguistic difficulties. It is certainly more efficient than either Hindi or Urdu from the point of view of rapid work. In these days of the typewriter and duplicator and other mechanical devices the Latin script has great advantages over the Indian scripts, which cannot fully utilize these new devices. But in spite of these advantages I do not think there is the slightest chance of the Latin script replacing Devanagari or Urdu. There is the wall of sentiment, of course, strengthened even more by the fact that the Latin script is associated with our alien rulers. But there are more solid grounds also for its rejection. The scripts are essential parts of our literatures; without them we would be largely cut off from our old inheritance.

It may be possible, however, to reform our scripts to some extent. We have at present, besides Hindi and Urdu, the Bengali, Marathi, and Gujarati scripts, each of these three being very nearly allied to Devanagari. It should be easily possible to have a common script for these four languages. This need not necessarily be Devanagari exactly as it is written today, but a slight variation of it. The development of a common script for Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, and Marathi would be a definite gain and would bring the four languages much nearer to each other.

I do not know how far it is possible for the Dravidian languages of the south to fit in with a northern script, or to evolve a common script for themselves. Those who have studied this might enlighten us on this point.

The Urdu script has to remain as it is, though some slight simplification of it might be attempted. It might easily absorb the Sindhi scrip which is very similar to it.

Thus we ought to have later on two scripts: the composite Deva nagari-Bengali-Marathi-Gujarati and the Urdu, and also, if necessary, southern script. No attempt must be made to suppress any one of these unless there is a possibility by general agreement of those concerned tc fit in the southern languages with a northern script, which is likely tc be Hindi or a slight variation of it.

Let us consider Hindustani both as the mother tongue of the north and central India and as an all-India language. The two aspects are different and must be dealt with separately.

Hindi and Urdu are the two main aspects of this language. Obviously they have the same basis, the same grammar, the same fund of ordinary words to draw upon. They are, in fact, the same basic language. And yet the present differences are considerable, and one is said to draw its inspiration from Sanskrit and the other to some extent from Persian. To consider Hindi as the language of the Hindus and Urdu as that of the Muslims is absurd. Urdu, except for its script, is of the very soil of India and has no place outside India. It is even today the home language of large numbers of Hindus in the north.

The coming of Muslim rulers to India brought Persian as a court language, and to the end of the Moghal period Persian continued to be so used. The language of the people in north and central India continued to be Hindi throughout. Being a living language, it absorbed a number of Persian words; Gujarati and Marathi did likewise. But essentially Hindi remained Hindi. A highly Persianized form of Hindi developed round the imperial courts, and this was called *Rekhta*. The word Urdu seems to have come into use during the Moghal period in the camps of the Moghals, but it appears to have been used almost synonymously with Hindi. It did not signify even a variation of Hindi. Right up to the Revolt of 1857, Urdu meant Hindi, except in regard to script. As is well known, some of the finest Hindi poets have been Muslims. Till this revolt, and even for some time after, the usual term applied to the language was Hindi. This did not refer to the script, but to the language, the language of Hind. Muslims who wrote in the Urdu script usually called the language Hindi.

It was in the second half of the nineteenth century that the words Hindi and Urdu began to signify something different from each other. This separatism grew. Probably it was a reflex of the rising national consciousness which first affected the Hindus, who began to lay stress on purer Hindi and the Devanagari script. Nationalism was for them inevitably at the beginning a form of Hindu nationalism. A little later the Muslims slowly developed their form of nationalism, which was Muslim nationalism, and they began to consider Urdu as their own particular preserve. Controversy centred round the scripts and their use in law courts and public offices. Thus the growing separatism in language and the conflict of scripts was the outcome of the growth of political and national consciousness, which to begin with took a communal turn. As this nationalism became truly national, thinking in terms of India and not in those of a particular community, the desire to stop this separatist tendency in language grew with it, and intelligent people began to lay stress on the innumerable common features of Hindi and Urdu. There was talk of Hindustani not only as the language of northern and

central India, but as the national language of the whole country. But still, unfortunately, communalism is strong enough in India, and so the separatist tendency persists along with the unifying tendency. This separatism in language is bound to disappear with the fuller development of nationalism. It is well to bear this in mind, for only then shall we understand what the root cause of the evil is. Scratch a separatist in language and you will invariably find that he is a communalist, and very often a political reactionary.

Although the terms Hindi and Urdu were interchangeably used for a a long time during the Moghal period, Urdu was applied more to the language of the mixed camps of the Moghals. Round about the court and camp many Persian words were current, and these crept into the language. As one moves southwards, away from the centres of Moghal court life, Urdu merges into purer Hindi. Inevitably this influence of the courts affected the towns far more than the rural areas, and the towns of the north far more than the towns of central India.

And this leads us to the real difference between Urdu and Hindi today—Urdu is the language of the towns and Hindi the language of the villages. Hindi is, of course, spoken also in the towns, but Urdu is almost entirely an urban language. The problem of bringing Urdu and Hindi nearer to each other thus becomes the much vaster problem of bringing the town and the village nearer to each other. Every other way will be a superficial way without lasting effect. Languages change organically when the people who speak them change.

While Hindi and Urdu or ordinary household speech do not differ much from each other, the gulf between the literary languages has grown in recent years. In written literary productions it is formidable, and this has led some people to believe that some evil-minded persons are the cause of it. That is a foolish fancy, though undoubtedly there are individuals who take delight in increasing separatist tendencies. But living languages do not function in this way, nor can they be twisted much by a few individuals. We have to look deeper for the causes of this apparent divergence.

This divergence, though unfortunate in itself, is really a sign of healthy growth. Both Hindi and Urdu, after a long period of stagnation, have woken up and are pushing ahead. They are struggling to give expression to new ideas and leaving the old ruts for new forms of literary expression. The vocabulary of each is poor as far as these new ideas are concerned, but each can draw on a rich source. This source is Sanskrit in the one case and Persian in the other; and hence, as soon as we leave the ordinary language of the home or the market-place and enter more abstract regions, the divergences grow. Literary societies,

jealous of the purity of the language they use, carry this tendency to extreme limits, and then accuse each other of encouraging separatist tendencies. The beam in one's own eye is not seen, the mote in the other's eye is obvious enough.

The immediate result of all this has been to increase the gulf between Hindi and Urdu, and sometimes it almost appears that the two are destined to develop into separate languages. And yet this fear is unjustified and there is no reason for alarm. We must welcome the new life that is coursing through both Hindi and Urdu, even though it might lead to a temporary widening of the gulf. Hindi and Urdu are both at present inadequate for the proper expression of modern ideas, scientific, political, economic, commercial, and sometimes cultural, and they are both trying hard, and with success, to enrich themselves so as to meet the needs of a modern community. Why should either be jealous of the other? We want our language to be as rich as possible, and this will not happen if we try to suppress either Hindi words or Urdu words because we feel that they do not fit in with our own particular backgrounds. We want both and we must accept both. We must realise that the growth of Hindi means the growth of Urdu and *vice versa*. The two will powerfully influence each other and the vocabulary and ideas of each will grow. But each must keep its doors and windows wide open for these words and ideas. Indeed, I would like Hindi and Urdu to welcome and absorb words and ideas from foreign languages and make them their own. It is absurd to coin new words from Sanskrit or Persian for well-known and commonly used words in English or French or other foreign languages.

I have no doubt in my mind that Hindi and Urdu must come nearer to each other, and, though they may wear different garbs, will be essentially one language. The forces favouring this unification are too strong to be resisted by individuals. We have nationalism and the widespread desire to have a united India, and this must triumph. But stronger than this is the effect of rapid communications and transport and interchange of ideas and revolutionary changes going on in our political and social spheres. We cannot remain in our narrow grooves when the torrent of world change rushes past us. Education, when it spreads to the masses, will also inevitably produce standardisation and unification.

We must not, therefore, even look upon the separate development of Hindi and Urdu with suspicion. The enthusiast for Urdu should welcome the new spirit that is animating Hindi and the lover of Hindi should equally appreciate the labours of those who seek to advance Urdu. They may work today along parallel lines somewhat separate from each other,

but the two will coalesce. Nevertheless, though we tolerate willingly this existing separatism, we must help in the process of this unification. On what must this unity be based? Surely on the masses. The masses must be the common factor between Hindi and Urdu. Most of our present troubles are due to highly artificial literary languages cut off from the masses. When writers write, whom do they write for? Every writer must have, consciously or subconsciously, an audience in his mind, whom he is seeking to influence or convert to his viewpoint. Because of our vast illiteracy, that audience has unhappily been limited, but even so it is big enough and it will grow rapidly. I am no expert in this matter, but my own impression is that the average writer in Hindi or Urdu does not seek to take advantage of even the existing audience. He thinks much more of the literary coteries in which he moves, and writes for them in the language that they have come to appreciate. His voice and his word do not reach the much larger public, and, if they happen to reach this public, they are not understood. Is it surprising that Hindi and Urdu books have restricted sales? Even our newspapers in Hindi and Urdu barely tap the great reading public because they, too, generally use the language of the literary coteries.

Our writers, therefore, must think in terms of a mass audience and clientele and must deliberately seek to write for them. This will result automatically in the simplification of language and the stilted and flowery phrases and constructions, which are always signs of decadence in a language, will give place to words of strength and power. We have not yet fully recovered from the notion that culture and literary attainments are the products and accompaniments of courtly circles. If we think in this way we remain confined in narrow circles and can find no entrance to the hearts and minds of the masses. Culture today must have a wider mass basis, and language, which is one of the embodiments of that culture, must also have that basis.

This approach to the masses is not merely a question of simple words and phrases. It is equally a matter of ideas and of the inner content of those words and phrases. Language which is to make appeal to the masses must deal with the problems of those masses, with their joys and sorrows, their hopes and aspirations. It must represent and mirror the life of the people as a whole and not that of a small group at the top. Then only will it have its roots in the soil and find sustenance from it.

This applies not only to Hindi and Urdu, but to all our Indian languages. I know that in all of them these ideas are finding utterance, and they are looking more and more towards the masses. This process must be accelerated, and our writers should deliberately aim at encouraging it.

It is also desirable, I think, for our languages to cultivate contacts with foreign literatures by means of translations of both the old classics and modern books. This will put us in touch with cultural and literary and social movements in other countries and will strengthen our own languages by the infusion of fresh ideas.

I imagine that probably Bengali, of all the Indian languages, has gone furthest in developing contacts with the masses. Literary Bengali is not something apart from and far removed from the life of the people of Bengal. The genius of one man, Rabindranath Tagore, has bridged that gap between the cultured few and the masses, and today his beautiful songs and poems are heard even in the humblest hut. They have not only added to the wealth of Bengali literature, but enriched the life of the people of Bengal, and made of their language a powerful medium of the finest literary expression in the simplest terms. We cannot produce geniuses for the asking, but we can all learn from this and shape our course accordingly. In this connection I should also like to mention Gujarati. I am told that Gandhiji's simple and powerful language has had a great influence on modern Gujarati writing.

Let us now consider the other aspect of Hindustani as an all-India language, bearing in mind that it is no rival to the great provincial languages and there is no question of its encroaching on them. For the moment let us set aside the question of script, for both scripts must have full play. We cannot, of course, insist on everyone learning both scripts; that would be an intolerable burden for the masses. The state should encourage both scripts and leave the persons concerned, or their parents, to choose between the two. Let us therefore consider the content of the language apart from its script.

Apart from its widespread range and dominance over India, Hindustani has certain other advantages as an all-India language. It is relatively easy to learn and its grammar is simple, except for the confusion of its genders. Can we simplify it still further?

We have a remarkably successful experiment to guide us, that of Basic English. A number of scholars, after many years' labour, have evolved a simplified form of English which is essentially English and indistinguishable from it, and yet which is astonishingly easy to learn. Grammar has almost disappeared except for a few simple rules, and the basic vocabulary has been reduced to about 850 words, excluding scientific, technical, and commercial terms. This whole vocabulary and grammar can be put down on one sheet of paper, and an intelligent person can learn it in two or three weeks. He will require practice, of course, in the use of the new language.

This experiment must not be confused with the many previous attempts to evolve a common world language—Volapuk, Esperanto, etc. All such languages, though simple, were highly artificial, and to learn them was an additional burden.

The breath of life did not vitalize them and they could never become the languages of large numbers of people. Basic English, having all their advantages, does not suffer from this disadvantage, as it is a living language. Those who learn Basic English cannot only have a simple and efficient means of communication with others, but they are already on the threshold of standard English and can proceed further if they so wish.

My enthusiasm for Basic English might lead to the query, why not have this as an all-India language? No, this cannot be, for the whole genius of this language is alien to our people and we would have to transplant them completely before we could impose this as an all-India language. The practical difficulties would also be far greater than in the case of Hindustani, which is already so widely known all over India.

But I think that where we teach English as a foreign tongue—and we shall have to do this on an extensive scale—Basic English should be taught. Only those who wish to make a special study of the language should proceed to standard English.

Can we evolve a Basic Hindustani after the fashion of Basic English? I think this is easily possible if our scholars will turn their minds to this end. The grammar should be as simple as possible, almost non-existent, and yet it must not do violence to the existing grammar of the language. The essential thing to be borne in mind is that while this basic language is complete in itself for the expression of all non-technical ideas, it is yet a stepping-stone to the further study of the language. The vocabulary might consist of a thousand words or so, not chosen at random because they are common words in the Indian languages, but because they form a complete whole and require no extraneous assistance for all ordinary speaking and writing.

Such a Basic Hindustani should be the all-India language, and with a little effort from the state it will spread with extreme rapidity all over the country and will help in bringing about that national unity which all desire. It will bring Hindi and Urdu closer together and will also help in developing an all-India linguistic unity. On that solid and common foundation, even if variations grow or diversions occur, they will not lead to separatism. Those who wish to add to their knowledge of Hindustani can easily do so; those who are content with knowing Basic Hindustani only can yet take part in the larger life of the nation.

I have said previously that we should not object to the development of Hindi or Urdu separately. The new words that come in from either direction will enrich our inheritance, if they are vital, living words forced on us by circumstances or coming up from the masses. But the formation of artificial words with no real sanction behind them has no such significance. To a large extent we have to form artificial words to meet the growing needs of our political, economic, scientific, and commercial life. In the formation of such words we should try to avoid duplication and separatism. We should be bold enough, I think, to lift bodily foreign technical words which have become current coin in many parts of the world, and to adopt them as Hindustani words. Indeed, I should like them to be adopted by all the Indian languages. This will make it easier for our people to read technical and scientific works in various languages, Indian and foreign. Any other course will lead to chaos and confusion in the mind of the student, who has to grapple with large numbers of technical terms, and who often has to read important books in other languages. An attempt to have a separate and distinct scientific vocabulary is to isolate and stultify our scientific growth and to put an intolerable burden on the teacher and the taught alike. The public life and affairs of the world are already closely knit together and form a single whole. We should make it as easy as possible for our people to understand them and take part in them, and for foreigners to understand our public affairs.

Many foreign words can and should thus be taken in, but many technical words will have to be taken from our own language also. It is desirable that linguistic and technical experts should make a list of such words for common use. This will not only bring about uniformity and precision in matters where variety and vagueness are highly undesirable, but will also prevent the use of absurd phrases and expressions. Our journalist friends have a knack of translating literally foreign words and phrases without caring much for the meaning behind them, and then these loose words become current coin and produce confusion of thought. "Trade union" has been translated sometimes as *vyapar sangh*, a perfectly literal translation and yet as far removed from the truth as anything could be. But the choicest of the translations has been that of "imperial preference." This was called by an enterprising journalist *shahi pasand*.

What should, then, be the policy of the state in regard to language? The state has to decide this question in regard to its courts and offices and education.

The official language of each province for affairs of state should be the language of the province. But everywhere Hindustani, as the all-

India language, should be officially recognized, and documents in it accepted in both the Devanagari and Urdu scripts. In the Hindustani-speaking provinces the two scripts must be officially recognized, and it should be open to any person to address a court or an office in either script. The burden of supplying a copy in the other script should not be put upon him. The office or the court may occasionally use either script, but it would be absurd to enforce the rule that everything should be done in both scripts. The script that is mostly used in the area which the court or office serves will become the dominant script of that court or office. But notifications should be issued in both scripts.

State education must be governed by the rule that it should be given in the language of the student. Thus in each linguistic area the language of that area should be the medium of instruction. But I would go a step further. Wherever there are a sufficient number of people belonging to a linguistic group, even though they might be living in a different linguistic area, they can demand from the state that special provision be made for teaching them in their own language. This would depend, of course, on such students being easily accessible from a convenient centre, and it would apply to primary education and, perhaps, if the number were large enough, to secondary education. Thus in Calcutta the medium of instruction would be Bengali. But there are large numbers of people there whose mother tongues are Hindustani, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, etc. Each of these groups can claim from the state that their primary schools should be run in their own language. How far it will be possible to extend this to secondary education I do not quite know. That would depend on the number of pupils concerned and other factors. These pupils would, of course, have to learn Bengali, the language of the linguistic area they live in, but this is likely to be done in the early secondary stage and after.

In the Hindustani-speaking provinces both Devanagari and Urdu scripts will be taught in the schools, the pupils or their parents choosing between them. In the primary stage only one script should be used, but the learning of the other script should be encouraged in the secondary stage.

In the non-Hindustani-speaking provinces Basic Hindustani should be taught in the secondary stage, the script being left to the choice of the person concerned.

University education should be in the language of the linguistic area, Hindustani (either script) and a foreign language being compulsory subjects. This compulsion need not apply to technical schools and higher technical courses. Provision for teaching foreign languages as well as our classical languages should be made in our secondary schools, but the

subject should not be compulsory except for certain courses or for preparation for the university stage.

Among the provincial languages I have mentioned Pushtu and Punjabi. I think primary education should be given in these, but how far higher education can also be given through them is a doubtful matter requiring consideration, as they are not sufficiently advanced. Probably Hindustani will be the best medium for higher education in these areas.

I have, with great presumption, made various suggestions ranging from primary to university education. It will be easy to criticize what I have written and to point out the difficulties in the way, for I am no expert in education or in languages. But my very inexpertness is, perhaps, in my favour and I can consider the problem from a layman's point of view, with a detached outlook. Also I should like to make it clear that I am not discussing in this essay the important and difficult problem of education as a whole. I am only dealing with the language side of it. When we consider the whole subject of education we have to think in terms of the state and the society we are aiming at; we have to train our people to that end; we have to decide what our citizens should be like and what their occupations should be; we have to fit in this education to their life and occupations; we have to produce harmony and equilibrium in their private and social and public life. We shall have to lay far greater stress on technical and scientific training if we are to take our place in the modern world. All this and more we shall have to do, and in doing so we shall have to upset the present incompetent and inefficient and top-heavy system of education and build anew on securer foundations.

But for the moment let us confine ourselves to the question of language and arrive at some general agreement in regard to it. I have written this essay with a view to invite consideration of this problem from a wider angle. If we agree to the general principles I have discussed, the application of them in practice will not be difficult. We are not in a position to apply most of these principles today, in spite of so-called provincial autonomy. We have no financial resources and our hands are tied up in a variety of ways. But to the extent we can put our principles into practice we should do so.

It may be that there is general agreement in regard to some of the suggestions I have made, and some disagreement in regard to others. Let us at least know where we agree; the points for discussion and debate will then be limited in number and we can consider them separately.

I might add that my frequent references to linguistic areas and the language of the province necessitate that provincial units should correspond with such language areas.

To facilitate their consideration I give below some of my main suggestions:

1. Our public work should be carried on and state education should be given in the language of each linguistic area. This language should be the dominant language in that area. These Indian languages to be recognized officially for this purpose are: Hindustani (both Hindi and Urdu), Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya, Assamese, Sindhi, and, to some extent, Pushtu and Punjabi.

2. In the Hindustani-speaking area both Hindi and Urdu, with their scripts, should be officially recognized. Public notifications should be issued in both scripts. Either script might be used by a person in addressing a court or a public office, and he should not be called upon to supply a copy in the other script.

3. The medium of state instruction in the Hindustani area being Hindustani, both scripts will be recognized and used. Each pupil or his parents will make a choice of script. Pupils will not be compelled to learn both scripts but may be encouraged to do so in the secondary stage.

4. Hindustani (both scripts) will be recognized as the all-India language. As such it will be open to any person throughout India to address a court or public office in Hindustani (either script) without any obligation to give a copy in another script or language.

5. An attempt should be made to unify the Devanagari, Bengali, Gujarati and Marathi scripts and to produce a composite script suited to printing, typing and the use of modern mechanical devices.

6. The Sindhi script should be absorbed in the Urdu script, which should be simplified, to the extent that is possible, and suited to printing, typing, etc.

7. The possibility of approximating the southern scripts to Devanagari should be explored. If that is not considered feasible, then an attempt should be made to have a common script for the southern languages—Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

8. It is not possible for us to think in terms of the Latin script for our language, for the present at least, in spite of various advantages which that script possesses. We must thus have two scripts: the composite Devanagari—Bengali—Gujarati—Marathi, and the Urdu—Sindhi; and, if necessary, a script for the southern languages, unless this can be approximated to the first.

9. The tendency for Hindi and Urdu in the Hindustani-speaking area to diverge and develop separately need not be viewed with alarm, nor should any obstruction be placed in the development of either. This is

to some extent natural as new and more abstruse ideas come into the language. The development of either will enrich the language. There is bound to be an adjustment later on as world forces and nationalism press in this direction and mass education will bring a measure of standardization and uniformity.

10. We should lay stress on the language (Hindi, Urdu, as well as the other Indian languages) looking to the masses and speaking in terms of them. Writers should write for the masses in simple language understood by them, and they should deal with problems affecting the masses. Courtly and affected style and flowery phrases should be discouraged and a simple vigorous style developed. Apart from its other advantages, this will also lead to uniformity between Hindi and Urdu.

11. A Basic Hindustani should be evolved out of Hindustani on the lines of Basic English. This should be a simple language with very little grammar and a vocabulary of about a thousand words. It must be a complete language, good enough for all ordinary speech and writing, and yet within the framework of Hindustani, and a stepping stone for the further study of that language.

12. Apart from Basic Hindustani, we should fix upon scientific, technical, political and commercial words to be used in Hindustani (both Hindi and Urdu) as well as, if possible, in other Indian languages. Where necessary, these words should be taken from foreign languages and bodily adopted. Lists of other words from our own languages should be made, so that in all technical and such like matters we might have a precise and uniform vocabulary.

13. The policy governing state education should be that education is to be given in the language of the student. In each linguistic area education from the primary to the university stage will be given in the language of the province. Even within a linguistic area, if there are a sufficient number of students whose mother tongue is some other Indian language, they will be entitled to receive primary education in their mother tongue, provided they are easily accessible from a convenient centre. It may also be possible, if the number is large enough, to give them secondary education in the mother tongue as well. But all such students will have to take, as a compulsory subject, the language of the linguistic area they live in.

14. In the non-Hindustani-speaking area, Basic Hindustani should be taught in the secondary stage, the script being left to the choice of the person concerned.

15. The medium of instruction for university education will be the language of the linguistic area. Hindustani (either script) and a foreign language should be compulsory subjects. This compulsion of learning

additional languages need not apply to higher technical courses, though a knowledge of languages is desirable even there.

16. Provision for teaching foreign languages, as well as our classical languages, should be made in our secondary schools, but the subjects should not be compulsory, except for certain special courses, or for preparation for the university stage.

17. Translations should be made of a considerable number of classical and modern works in foreign literatures into the Indian languages, so that our languages might develop contacts with the cultural, literary and social movements in other countries, and gain strength thereby.

MISCELLANEOUS

34. To Lionel Fielden[1]

Allahabad
Jan. 3, 1937

My dear Fielden,[2]
Your letter reached me and it made painful reading.[3] I am afraid you are a misfit in that job or in India: but then all of us are. What is one to do about it? You blame others (including innocent me!) but does not the fault lie really in the environment, in circumstances which are bigger than individuals, in the unhealthy relation between India and England, in the topsyturvy world itself? Broadcasting is a great thing, I believe in it. But it is after all a part of a much larger whole, and if the body is sick how can you treat a finger or a limb?

I cannot write to you all I want to. I am writing this note in haste. I am off on one of my interminable tours and for seven weeks I shall have no rest. But even if I had more time I doubt if a letter would

1. Lionel Fielden, *The Natural Bent*, (London, 1962), pp. 197-198.
2. (1896-1974); controller of broadcasting in India, 1935-40; director of public relations, Allied Control Commission, Italy, 1944-45; his works include *Beggar my Neighbour*.
3. He wrote to Jawaharlal that he was a misfit in All India Radio, for he could neither present the Indian point of view in his broadcasts nor could he accept the conditions forced upon him by his superiors.

convey to you all I feel. I wish you could come here and spend a few days with us. Both my sister and I would be happy to have you and perhaps you might feel better and calmer for a change.

I have had to put up with a great deal which might have embittered me and filled me with hate and yet I have survived. I feel pretty lonely often enough but not bitter against anybody. Why should you succumb to this bitterness and hate? I suppose Delhi, Imperial Delhi, is partly responsible for it. It is not easy to remain sane there and even I cannot stand it for long.

India is a very friendly place. It has so many hateful aspects but so many more lovable ones. You must get behind the mask and get in tune with it. Unhappily you have started at the wrong place, with the wrong people. Not your fault of course.

I wish I could help you. Perhaps, I can in some odd ways. Write to me sometimes about books and pictures and anything else that you like. Your letters will be welcome. In spite of politics, I have not lost my humanity.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

35. The Role of a Cartoonist[1]

How many of us have waited from day to day for Shankar's[2] cartoon? How many have turned to the page of the newspaper containing his cartoon before we have seen the news of the day? That cartoon has not only given us pleasure but a new insight into current events. For a true cartoonist is not just a maker of fun but one who sees the inner significance of an event and by a few master strokes impresses it on others.

1. Allahabad, 24 February 1937. Foreword written by Jawaharlal for the book containing a collection of one hundred and one cartoons by Shankar.
2. Shankar (K. Shankar Pillai) (b. 1902); worked as cartoonist for *The Hindustan Times*, 1932-46; founder-editor, *Shankar's Weekly*, 1948; founded Children's Book Trust, 1957 and International Dolls Museum, New Delhi; founder, International Children's Competition and B.C. Roy Memorial Children's Library and Reading Room; editor, *Children's World*.

Shankar has that rare gift, rarer in India than elsewhere, and without the least bit of malice or ill will he points out, with an artist's skill, the weaknesses and foibles of those who display themselves on the public stage. That is a service to all of us for which we should be grateful. For we are apt to grow pompous and self-centred, and it is good to have the veil of our conceit torn occasionally. And so I gladly pay my tribute to Shankar and I hope that he will long continue to enlighten us and amuse us and pull us down a peg or two.

36. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
March 25, 1937

My dear Krishna,

... One small matter. I am getting rather fed up with my name. It is always being mis-spelt and mis-pronounced. The other day a B.B.C. announcer got hopelessly muddled over it and went on ha-haing. Unfortunately I cannot change my name but I propose to make a slight change in the way it is written. Jawaharlal consists really of two Hindustani words: Jawahar and Lal. In India one usually combines the two, but this long word has got a terrifying look about it and foreigners cannot get hold of it. So it would be better in future to separate the two. My name should therefore be given as: Jawahar Lal Nehru....

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

37. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
April 5, 1937

My dear Krishna,
I sent you a copy of C.F. Andrews's letter[2] to keep you informed of that particular development. I do not quite understand in what way the contents do not represent facts. Your letter does not make this clear. But Andrews's letter hardly contains any facts, only suggestions which he passed on to me. Therefore I referred him to you. Perhaps you do not know that I have known Andrews rather intimately for more than twenty years. His politics are not mine, indeed I do not consider him political at all, but in his own way he has done extraordinary good work. His desire to do something for me was perfectly natural, though he may not prove helpful at all. He is the last person to barge in where he is not wanted. To avoid any misunderstanding in this as in any other case, a direct contact and explanation always seem to me to be desirable.

I want to tell you that I have no grievance against John Lane because the business collapsed. That was his misfortune as well as mine and others and, so far as I am concerned, I want to forget the affair and go ahead. The business of the best of people fails sometimes and certainly I have not thought in terms of any evil intentions on the part of Lane....

It is long since I left the law but the horror of legal procedure and solicitors and their kind sticks to me. Whether other methods may be right or wrong, this method, to my thinking, should almost always be avoided. You are assuring me that everything will be done with 'caution and rectitude'. Of course, I have no doubt of that. But I have an uncomfortable feeling of moving about solicitors' chambers and police courts, and every word being weighed in the legal balance lest it commits, and interviews being avoided lest they entangle, and the policeman's warning that what one says may be used against one, etc., etc. Life is complicated enough already, why should we make it more so?

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. He wrote to Jawaharlal in early March 1937: "Allen and Unwin are now (with two other firms) the liquidators of John Lane and I have been urging them with all my power to make good the royalties which were due to you from the bankrupt firm. Also I pressed them very strongly to come immediately into touch directly with Krishna Menon and not merely deal with him through the resuscitated firm of John Lane."

...The more I think of it, the clearer I get in my own mind that I must not take the initiative in any litigation. The very thought of it has upset me sufficiently, the actuality will be far worse, and the wrong kind of publicity that this will give me in India and England will be a torture. I would sooner lose money any day than lose my peace of mind.

Owing to my unfortunate illness the power of attorney could not be signed and witnessed last week. I hope to send it this week.

This letter has been written in bed.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

38. To J. Barnes[1]

Allahabad
April 22, 1937

Dear Barnes,

Your letter[2] reached some months back. I did not answer it as you were travelling about and I thought that it would take you some time to reach England.

I was glad to hear from you after a long interval. I have been having a very busy time and perhaps because I rather overdid it, I have spent the last few weeks in bed. I am recovering now.

It is a little difficult to discuss vital and intricate questions in a letter. But I do agree with you that it is desirable for Indians to go to various centres of European culture other than those in England. We have got too much into the habit of looking at the world through British spectacles. But circumstances are against us and we have not got the capacity to make any such arrangement on a wide enough scale. Besides, the world is in a curious way and one does not know how long European culture itself will last.

I think you are right in saying that my outlook is largely coloured by the British background of education. I suppose I cannot help it, though

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 30 December 1936, Major Barnes argued that "Indians should be Indians, learn things independently of England and judge things for themselves."

I try to see things straight. When the world itself is so crooked, it is not easy to have a straight view of anything.

With all good wishes to you and your wife,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

39. Nationalism and Socialism[1]

I send my greetings and good wishes to the conference that is being held in London on socialism in India.[2] In a country under alien domination the first reaction and the primary urge is inevitably to be nationalist. That has been so in India and even now nationalism is the dominant feeling in the country. But force of economic circumstances and the urgency of finding a solution for the problems that affect the masses, lead people to look more and more towards socialism, for nationalism by itself offers no such solution. And so socialist thought has spread in India rapidly during these past few years and has coloured the whole nationalist movement.

As a socialist I believe that socialism alone will solve our problems or the problems of the world. But socialism is not just a collection of slogans. It requires careful thought and working out in relation to our country. I hope that the conference in London will help in clarifying the issues so that all of us may be able to think more clearly about them.

1. Rangoon, 7 May 1937. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D.-7/1936-38, p. 307, N.M.M.L.
2. The conference was to be held on 22-23 May 1937.

40. To Sajjad Zaheer[1]

Allahabad
July 1, 1937

My dear Bunne,

Your letter[2] came last evening. I do not think there will be any difficulty about the lawyer for your defence on the 10th. Both Katju and Kapil Deva are perfectly willing to appear for you unless some important engagement prevents them. You are wrong in thinking that Kapil Deva was not keen on going. For the 29th he found it impossible to go because of a number of other engagements on that day. I saw Katju also a few days ago and he told me that he would gladly appear for you if he could manage it. He has not returned from Chapra yet and so I cannot get his final word for the 16th. But I am leaving a letter for him and by tomorrow or the day after he ought to be back and we shall know. If he can go, this matter is settled; if he cannot go then Kapil Deva certainly will go. I saw him last night and he promised to do so in case Katju was not going. There is no point in both going. Kapil Deva was rather worried at having created the impression in your mind that he did not want to go. He assured me that he was keen on appearing for you.

I am going to Wardha today and at the earliest I shall come back on the 8th night, perhaps it may be the 9th. I hope to see you here then. I shall be in Allahabad only for a day or so as I shall leave on the 10th night for Sherwani's constituency.

I hope you are none the worse after a few days in the lock-up. My own opinion is that it is a very desirable part in a person's education and far from minding it you should almost welcome it! But of course you should fight this case out fully on larger grounds of principle. I am glad to learn the nature of the speech you delivered. That will make it a good test case.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-57/1937, pp. 35-36, N.M.M.L.
2. Sajjad Zaheer was arrested in June 1937 at Mussoorie for a speech delivered at the Unnao kisan conference. In his letter of 29 June 1937, he informed Jawaharlal that he had been released on bail and that the hearing in his case would take place in July 1937.

Will you assure your father and mother on my behalf that we shall gladly do all we can in the matter and, in any event, not to worry? This is a part of the day's work.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

41. To Ernst Toller[1]

Allahabad
July 19, 1937

My dear Toller,

I was delighted to have your letter[2] of March 30th. But it took a very long time to reach me. I am very glad to have good news of you and to find that your work and your lectures are having a fine reception in America. Thank you for the press cuttings that you have sent me.

I know nothing about S. B. Shastri who offers to translate your book in Marathi. I am enquiring about him. But in any event my own advice to you will be not to agree to the publication of any of your books in India unless you are paid some royalty. It is true sales in India are very limited and you are not likely to make much money. Still there is no reason why an author should be exploited. As you seem to like the idea, it may be possible to arrange for the translation and publication of your book in one or two Indian languages. The principal and most widespread language here is Hindi or Hindustani. I am enquiring from a Hindi publisher if he would like to take this up. Marathi is also a well-known language spoken in western and central India., I shall write to you or one of my colleagues will write as soon as we have more information from Hindi and Marathi publishers.

There are undoubtedly strong fascist tendencies in India but they are not organised and they cannot easily organise themselves separately under present conditions. Indian fascism and British fascism must necessarily be in conflict because Indian fascism will be aggressively nationalistic. But in our nationalist movement these fascist tendencies are increasingly

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Toller had observed that the European war had already commenced and it was only a matter of time before the actual hostilities began.

evident. At the same time socialistic tendencies are also becoming more and more evident and they are better organised. The Nazis have carried on for the last two or three years a consistent and deliberate propaganda in India directly as well as indirectly. They have not had very much success.

My daughter is here with me now. She came to spend the summer with us and will be returning to Oxford in September.

Is your wife with you? How long do you expect to remain in the States? Do send me your new plays when they come out.

With all good wishes and affectionate regards,

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

42. To J. A. D. Naoroji[1]

Allahabad
August 30, 1937

My dear Jal,

Thank you for your letter[2] containing your musings on the imperial race as well as your countrymen. Now that you are in London, I hope you have had better company than on board. That latest type of developed humanity, the smart relatively young managing director woman, has no doubt come to your aid. I do not personally fancy eyes of different colours, but no doubt it must be intriguing.

Indu is sailing from Bombay on the P. & O. *Viceroy of India* on the 11th September. Why P. & O.? Well, there was little to choose between John Bull and Mussolini. But the real consideration is an economic one. The P. & O. give 50% reduction on students, a large enough bait for most of us to swallow. Indu will spend a few days in Paris and is likely to reach London by the 1st October. She would like to meet you there. I do not know your exact address. But if you like you can get into touch with her through Agatha Harrison, 2 Cranbourne Court, Albert Bridge Road, London S.W. 11.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 31 July 1937, Naoroji stated that the disintegration of the British Empire was far more obvious and that the British would give way if "we definitely give some show of better moral stamina and some real purpose."

I have had a long complaint from an eminent scientist—it runs to thirteen foolscap typed pages—about the Tatas' scholarships being given to foreigners. I was surprised to learn this. Why should Tatas give these scholarships to foreigners?[3]

Nan, as you have no doubt heard, has developed into an honourable minister.[4] It is a queer world. Anyway you happen to be in London, so have a good time not only with managing directors but others, and do not be in a hurry to come back. This is a dull country.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Naoroji explained that there were two kinds of Tata scholarships and in accordance with the trust's policy one set was to be distributed internationally without regard to the nationality of the recipient and the other was meant for Indians only.
4. Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit served as Minister for Local Self-Government, U.P., 1937-39.

43. To Sushila Prasad[1]

Allahabad
August 31, 1937

Dear Madam,[2]

I have your letter. I deal below with the questions you have put me.

(a) It is a fact that part of my daughter's education is taking place in foreign countries. This is because in many ways there are greater facilities for acquiring the kind of education I should like her to have. In some ways the education is superior and some things like foreign languages are more easily acquired in the countries where these languages flourish.

(b) The cost of education abroad is considerable though it need not be as much as Rs. 500/- per month. About two-thirds of that sum might suffice.

(c) It would be perfectly justifiable on the part of a public servant or the public servant's wife to desire to give the best possible education to his or her children. It is true that it will be difficult for a salary of

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5(KW)(2)/1937, pp. 243-245, N.M.M.L.
2. A resident of Gorakhpur.

Rs. 500/- a month to undertake, under present conditions, the education abroad of one's children.

It should be remembered however that the facilities that a few public servants may have today because of their higher salaries do not extend to vast numbers of our countrymen. Most of these go completely without education, some get a very second-rate education and a microscopic number have the chance to get good education. The problem must therefore be seen not from the point of view of the few fortunate ones but of the vast numbers of the unfortunates. It is my conviction that given proper education we would find a first-rate material in our people, even from among the poorest classes. That opportunity is lacking to many. The state cannot and should not think in terms of favouring a few at the expense of the many. Individuals in our society today may be favourably placed in relation to others. That will continue so long as our social structure is not changed. But the state cannot give through its action far greater facilities of advancement to a small group and none at all to others.

The fixing of salaries at Rs. 500/- seems strange to many people who have been used to much larger salaries. But as a matter of fact this is the usual scale in most countries which are much richer than India. It is true that by just lowering the salaries and keeping the rest of the social structure intact a certain incongruity appears. The way out of the difficulty is to extend this principle to our social and economic life generally and not to reject an obviously good principle.

In regard to foreign education, I should personally like a large number of Indian boys and girls to go to foreign countries for their education. I should like the state to pick out promising students for this purpose and send them at state expense. Today most of the people who go do not make good at all. They are a waste of the nation's resources. If the state took proper charge of education and gave it free, as it should, and even sent out children abroad in large numbers, then there would be no such difficulty as you have pointed out. The difficulty is one of the transitional stage.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

44. To Shyam Sunder Lal[1]

Allahabad
September 6, 1937

Dear Friend,[2]
I have your long letter. I wish you would learn to write briefly. To a person who receives hundreds of letters it is a physical impossibility to read all of them much less to answer them.

I am sorry I cannot write a lengthy essay, in reply, discussing all the political and personal problems that you have touched upon. I appreciate your thinking about these matters. But have you realised that you may not have all the data before you and are thus not in full possession of the facts about any matter?

There are two personal matters which I shall deal with and which it surprises me that a man of intelligence should refer to. One is my publication of my *Autobiography* in England. Books are published to be read and to gain an audience. For the particular point of view I wanted a world audience and the only possible way of getting it was to get it published in Europe. If I want an American audience I get the book published in America. If I want a French audience I get it published in France. The publication of my book in England has done more for the Indian cause than the publication of any book at any time has done previously.

As for my daughter being educated in Europe, I should like as many competent young men and women to go to foreign countries for education as is possible. I should like the state to send thousands of Indians as other states do with their nationals.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5/1937, p. 31, N.M.M.L.
2. (1915-1967); a student leader, Allahabad University, 1936; member, Congress Socialist Party; worked as chief press adviser to G.B. Pant.

45. To Bharati Sarabhai[1]

Allahabad
September 30, 1937

My dear Bharati,
I have read your poem. Do I like it? I do not know. For as I read it, I began thinking of you and the verses became a far-away thing, vague and distant, and your voice seemed to come to me. Your changing voice and your changing expressions. Little girl, little woman, sometimes one, sometimes the other, very wise and sophisticated in the ways of the world, and yet so childlike, so hopeful. And then I wondered what life would bring to you of fulfilment, of disillusion, for each one of us has something of both.

My mind wandered and I thought less of you as a particular individual, as Bharati, and more of an impersonal little woman, a representative of her sex. Knowing little of the sex, and yet presuming to know something of human beings, that freakish accident of nature and art intrigues me, and I wonder often at my own ignorance.

Do not ask me for criticisms of your poems. I am not competent at this business. But I like many of your lines but others seem to me rather heavy.

I am full of work as ever and always it haunts me and calls me. Almost I feel like making a bonfire of my mountains of papers.

Love,

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

46. To Carlos da Cruz[1]

Allahabad
October 1, 1937

Dear Friend,[2]
I have your letter of the 9th September. I do not know much about this question but I should certainly like facilities to be given to our

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P.L.-16/1937, p. 115, N.M.M.L.
2. A Goan resident of Bombay.

fellow countrymen in Goa. My conception of freedom of India includes Goa. I am sending your letter on to the leader of the Congress Party in the assembly.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

47. To Bhulabhai Desai[1]

Allahabad
October 1, 1937

My dear Bhulabhai,
I am forwarding to you a letter received from a Goan. I do not know what is happening in the assembly regarding Goans but I hope that our attitude will be one of friendship to the Goans and not to regard them as foreigners.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P.L.-16/1937, p. 117, N.M.M.L.

48. To Ernest F. Paton[1]

Allahabad
November 11, 1937

Dear Mr. Paton,
I must apologise to you for the delay in answering your letter[2] and in thanking you for the book you sent me. I am interested in the Oxford group and I think it has been doing good work. Yet somehow the approach seems to me incomplete because it is an individual approach which does not seek to change the environment. Individual betterment and the giving of a new basis and a new quality to life are of course highly

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He wrote to Jawaharlal from London commending the work of the moral rearmament movement, known as the Oxford Group.

important. And yet the determining effect of the environment continues and submerges individuals. I feel therefore that the approach must be from both the sides, the individual as well as the social. The latter leads me to socialism. It is a curious thing that while there are innumerable highly cultured individuals today who hate war, yet the world marches to war and destruction.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

49. On the Role of a Progressive Writer[1]

In my opinion a writer should not be a mere utopian; for unless he has something fundamental in his mind, and his writing has connection with reality, with actual life, his work cannot prove enduring. There have been writers in different ages who wrote things utopian which had no connection with life. For instance, there is a feeling that people should be provided with the opportunities and freedom to make themselves happy and good citizens, and therefore this question has also assumed some importance now as to why should the writers also not help in the attainment of that end. I think that one main obstacle in the way of reaching our ideals has been that we do not want to reach them. A progressive writer should present his ideals in such a way that his work would create among the people the aspirations and the desired fervour and enthusiasm to reach those ideals.

Politicians often involve themselves in petty matters and consequently they cannot do much when faced with bigger problems. But the writers, however, do not generally allow themselves to be involved in petty things, and they can therefore put before the people the fundamental problems in their proper perspective. For instance, the question of finding ways and means of bringing Urdu and Hindi together can be decided more satisfactorily through an academic discussion than by allowing it to be debated by the politicians who instead of solving it succeed in generating heat and feelings of distrust only. The writers can help a great deal in the matter because they generally keep themselves free from petty matters.

1. Speech at a conference of the Progressive Writers Association held in Allahabad on 14 November 1937. From *The Leader*, 18 November 1937.

I think a writer has to be an individualist but by being merely an individualist he cannot contribute to the progress of a nation. If, in his individualism, he keeps himself isolated from the society, he may produce a work of art, but that work would have little effect on the people, and it would not have in it the force of a race or a nation. If a race or a nation is affected by his work, then he would become, in a way, a representative of that nation or race. In the past, there have been many writers who could be described as representatives of the world and the age in which they lived. I am not prepared to accept the theory that in a socialist or communist world, individualism would be suppressed, though in the present-day world individualism is really being suppressed. When everyone is given an opportunity and liberty to think, read and write, then how can individualism be prevented from developing? It is, therefore, a mistaken belief that individualism gets suppressed under a socialist or communist set-up. Everybody should have an opportunity to rise and that is possible when the basis of society is socialist or communist. Progressive writers should, therefore, show to the people the way to reach ideals.

In the end, I want to request you to keep in your society the writers only and not allow among yourselves politicians like me. Otherwise, the creative and artistic side of your work would be affected. In Europe and America, there are societies of progressive writers and they have affected Europe and America to an immeasurable extent. For example, works of writers like Voltaire caused a great effect not only on the French Revolution, but on the whole world for about a hundred years. In Europe, artists have played a great role in the changes brought about in the world conditions. In India, there are very few such artists; one of them is Dr. Tagore, but there is a great need of writers like him. I wish to emphasize once again the need for having artists only as members of the society of progressive writers.

50. The Problems of the Kisans[1]

and take work from others and reap the benefit of their labour, or whether the kisans who themselves work on the land should be the owners of the land, or the land should be considered as the property of the entire society, that is, all the people? The solution of this problem will have a tremendous effect on the life of the millions of our brothers and sisters. Before this major problem, all other problems of ours are minor. Our poverty is linked with this. Therefore we have to consider it thoroughly.

Only to sympathise with the poor peasants is not good enough for us. We have to understand what their problem is and find its solution. These days there is fermentation in all the villages of India. The burdens of poverty and unemployment and laziness are oppressing our people. How can we eradicate them?

Often people say that the zamindari system should be abolished; and I too share that opinion. But whatever we do, first we have to understand the problem well. What is the zamindari system? When and how did it begin in India? How many people in our country know that the zamindari system was introduced by the British rule? It was not there before.

This little book by Dr. Ahmad throws light on all these matters and whoever reads it will understand the real problems of India better. Therefore I am happy that this book has been translated into Hindi and I hope that it will find a large number of readers among the Hindi-knowing people.

51. Lenin[1]

Twenty years ago Lenin's name suddenly came before the world. Some people wondered what new thing had happened in Russia and who was this new man who dared do so. Most of the people thought that after some time he would weaken and his work too would disappear. But he was not weakened and his work went on progressing. During these twenty years a lot of changes took place in the world and are still taking place before our eyes. But now who is there who does not know Lenin and bow his head before his name? Even those who were his enemies recognised his superiority. And for the millions of the poor and unhappy people of the world he became a star which showed them the

1. Allahabad, 2 January 1938. D. G. Tendulkar Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi. Jawaharlal wrote this message presumably for some Hindi journal.

path of freedom. He got a place in the hearts of the millions and he revived those withered hearts. Lenin was born in Russia but he belongs to the whole world and we also seek our path in his light. It is meet and proper that we remember this great man and muster our courage by his memory.

52. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Camp Wardha
February 3, 1938

My dear Krishna,
We have been reading accounts of the national independence demonstration organised by you in London. From all accounts this was very successful. I am sorry I could not keep my promise and send you a written speech for the occasion.

I arrived here today for the Working Committee meeting. Subhas has also just arrived but I have not had time to talk to him much. He told me however that you were far from well and generally worried as well as somewhat depressed. I am sorry to learn this. There is much that depresses us in the present state of the world but after all it does not help one to become a victim of circumstances.

I have myself seldom felt quite so slack mentally as I have been doing lately. My tour in the North West Frontier Province was cheering and I am glad I went. But the atmosphere in India is oppressive and I am looking forward eagerly to the end of the Congress session at Haripura. What exactly I shall do after that I do not quite know. I should like to take a fortnight off completely and go to an out-of-the-way place in the hills. If I do so I shall try to revise *Glimpses of World History*.

It is my intention, if the fates are not too unkind, to visit Europe next summer. Apart from other reasons and my desire for a change, which I cannot have in India, I want to see you and Indira.

I wonder if you saw an article in *The Modern Review* of November last called "The Rashtrapati" by Chanakya.[2] If you have not read it try to get hold of it. It might amuse you or irritate you according to your mood. Anyway it should amuse you when I tell you that I wrote

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See pp. 520-523.

it. The writing of it one evening after dinner amused me considerably. I tried to see myself as an intelligent outsider might perhaps see me. Whether I succeeded or not I do not know. I was also interested in finding out people's reaction to it.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

53. To John Maynard[1]

Allahabad
February 3, 1938

Dear Sir John,[2]
Some little time back Raja Narendra Nath sent me your monograph on collective farming in the U.S.S.R. I have read this with great interest and profit. I think that we, in India, ought to be able to profit greatly by the successes and failures of the Soviet experiment. Many of their failures were due to excessive speed in changing over the old land system. Perhaps at a somewhat lesser tempo we might avoid some of these errors. Yet I feel that a fairly rapid change in our land system is due, especially in the big zamindari areas. It is possible that the next stage might be some form of peasant proprietorship. But I am sure that this will not solve any problem. Only large-scale farms, cooperative or collective, will meet the present requirements of the situation. That again will not touch the unemployment problem for which we must have industrial development as well as the development of social services. All this can only be done on a planned and coordinated basis. Under existing circumstances such planning on a large scale is not possible. And this is the reason why the present system, both political and economic, is collapsing.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Herbert John Maynard (1865-1943); joined Indian Civil Service, 1883; member, executive council of the Governor in the Punjab, 1921-26; author of *Russia In Flux* and *The Russian Peasant and other Studies.*

54. To N. R. Malkani[1]

Allahabad
10-2-38

My dear Malkani,
Forgive me for the delay in thanking you for your letter and for the copy of your article. I have read your article with great interest. I liked your criticism.[2] I am not so thin-skinned as to object to it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. N.R. Malkani Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Malkani wrote, "the *Autobiography* is an autobiography only by accident. It reads like a novel and is essentially political history of modern India in which Panditji happens to play an important part ... It is an autobiography with part revealed part concealed vanities of author's life ... whole chapters, almost divisions of his life, seem to be hidden from our view — he is so silent about his personal ambitions, reticent about his attitude to sex, so cautious about the mention of monetary affairs.... The book is not subjective, for I sadly miss the biography of his soul. And Panditji does not even tell me that he had had a friend.... The book is great but not profound... after reading the book I have a feeling that Jawaharlal is like a political Yogi whose thought, word and deed are devoted to the fierce deity of Indian Independence."

55. To Bharati Sarabhai[1]

Khali
March 10, 1938

My dear Bharati,
I was glad to learn from Mridula that you and Leena might also be coming up here. I could not quite make out on the phone when you would be coming. Apparently it was going to be after Mridu. I arrived here today and I like the place. The climate is delightful—not as cold as I thought it would be. It is quiet and an ideal place for me to rest and be about under the pine trees.

I think this place ought to do a deal of good to Mridu and to all of you. There was some talk of your staying in Almora. I think it will

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

be far better for you all to stay at Khali itself. At any rate you should all come up here and spend some time at Khali. Later, if and when you like, you can move to Almora. It is always possible to get furnished houses there. But if you take my advice you will stay at Khali and have a taste of healthy simple life in pleasant surroundings. Ranjit's home will be lying empty most of the time and you can all thus easily stay here. Mridu, I take it, will reach here in five or six days' time. You and Leena should follow soon after and at any rate before I go back, or otherwise Mridu will be left alone when Ranjit and I go down. She won't be alone exactly as there are a number of people in the estate, but the house will be otherwise empty.

Remember that this is not a fashionable or civilized place. So don't bring finery or other unnecessary articles. The thing to do here is to walk, take sun-baths, etc. One can go for good excursions. It will be worthwhile for you all to go for a big excursion to the Pindari glacier which is five or six days' easy march from here.

When you come you might bring a cook with you. You can get a cook here of course but your own man will suit you better. Don't bring many servants. One personal servant is quite enough. There are plenty of people about here and if necessary you can engage local people for odd jobs.

When coming you had better come to us here and we shall fix up a car from Kathgodam. Your luggage can come by lorry. Don't waste time at Kathgodam but start as soon as you can as the journey is a long one. *En route* at Ranikhet you can have your midday meal. We can easily fix that up with some friends. At Almora some people will also meet you but you need not stay there. The car will bring you to within 2-1/2 miles of Khali Hill, ponies will meet you there (at Dina Pani) and you can ride up. The cars available here are not extra good. However they move. Better give good notice for the car to be reserved. I expect I shall be here till the 23rd or 24th.

Love,

Yours,
Jawaharlal

56. To P. V. Gadgil[1]

Khali
March 11, 1938

Dear Gadgil,
Your letter of 21st.[2] I cannot conceive of independence without democracy in India. The two hang together. Therefore we have stated that we want the democratic state in India. The question of expropriation may or may not arise. The proper way to put it is full responsible government in the states and a new land system which ultimately must involve the ending of landlordism. How landlordism will end will depend a great deal on the circumstances existing at the time. Many expediencies have been adopted in the democratic countries in the West. Some of these involve partial compensation, some inflation so as to reduce the burden of debt on the state.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5 (Pt. III)/1938, p. 445, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter, Gadgil had asked whether national democracy should be achieved along with independence or should follow it.

57. To Bhagavan Das[1]

Khali
March 12, 1938

My dear Babu Bhagavan Dasji,
I have come here for a change and I am now endeavouring to reply to some of my accumulated correspondence. Among these is your letter of March 1st.[2] During my absence most of my letters were dealt with by the A.I.C.C. office. I find I have not got the cutting you sent me or the pamphlet. On my return I shall try to find where these are.

When I say, as I have said previously, that all is not right with Russia, this refers to recent developments in the political field. It does not refer

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5 (Pt. III)/1938, p. 373, N.M.M.L.
2. Referring to Jawaharlal's views on Soviet developments, Bhagavan Das suggested that India should achieve material progress without giving up her spiritual heritage.

to the general economic policy of the country. I think that on the economic plane Russia has succeeded remarkably and I believe that a similar economic policy will have to be applied to India as also to the rest of the world. This policy must be based on production for consumption and not for profits and on a tremendous reduction of private ownership. That is to say, I believe in the objective of modern scientific socialism for India. I do not wholly accept the methods adopted in Russia and I think that these methods must fit in not only with present conditions in India but also with what might be called the genius of India. Thus it may be that while we may have different transitional periods, the objectives may be the same.

I agree with you that in considering political and economic problems we have also to consider a certain spiritual background and approach. I use the word 'spiritual' in a non-religious sense.

Briefly put, this is my general outlook.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

58. To John Gunther[1]

Khali
March 16, 1938

Dear Gunther,[2]

It has suddenly struck me that unless I send you answers to your questions from here, when I have some little leisure, I might find it very hard to do so. Even in this remote spot news has trickled in of Hitler's coup[3] in Austria and my mind feels agitated. All the peace and quiet of this place have given place to tension. I do not know what the future will bring, but whatever it is, it will not be peace and quiet. I doubt if you will have much use for the note I am sending you but I want to keep my promise. And so here it goes. It will reach New

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1901-1970); American journalist and writer; author of many well-known books including *Inside Europe* (1936), *Inside Asia* (1939), *Inside Latin America* (1941), *Riddle of MacArthur* (1951), *Inside Africa* (1955), *Inside Russia Today* (1958), and *Inside South America* (1966).
3. The Nazis invaded Austria on 11 March 1938, and the *anschluss* or union of Austria with Germany was proclaimed.

York long before you do and will wait for you there. A copy is being sent to Hong Kong by air but it is sure to miss you there.

All good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

NOTE

Being an attempt, not altogether successful, to answer the questions put to me.

1. What books do I read? During the last two years I have had little time to read books. But I get a fair number of new and old books and dip into them from time to time. One of my grouses with my present mode of existence is that I do not get the chance to read as much as I want to. My interests in books are fairly catholic. Inevitably I want to read political books and those dealing with present-day problems. My early education has given me a taste for science and I try to keep in some kind of vague touch with scientific developments. History interests me and so does travel, especially old books of travel or modern books dealing with out-of-the-way places—deserts, polar regions, jungles. I read very little fiction, except for a few well-known authors. Poetry has always attracted me and I go to it sometimes for relaxation. I do not feel much at home with some of the modern poets.

I am writing this note in Khali in the Kumaun hills. It might interest you to know what books I have brought with me for my brief stay here. They are:

Aldous Huxley: *Ends and Means*
Bertrand Russell: *Which Way to Peace?*
John Dewey: *The Quest for Certainty*
Edward Thompson: *Life of Lord Metcalfe*
H. Levy: *Philosophy for a Modern Man*
J.R. Firth: *The Tongues of Men* (a book on the development and use of language) and a number of pamphlets, etc.

2. Among the English and American periodicals I have subscribed to regularly for many years are:

The New Statesman
The Manchester Guardian Weekly
Time and Tide

The New York Nation
The New Republic
The Living Age

Other periodicals come and go. I used to get *The Times Literary Supplement* and sometimes the *Literary Digest*, etc., but they have dropped off for lack of time to read them. I should like to get the *Labour Monthly* of London as well as some other leftist periodicals but they are not allowed entry in India. I get the *Tribune* of London. Also *Vendredi* of Paris and *L'Europe*.

A number of foreign periodicals come to our office and I see them occasionally.

3. I have had no time for many years for any other distractions apart from reading and sometimes writing. As a boy I collected postage stamps. I love winter sports but have no chance in India. I used to be fond of riding, and enjoy a swim.

4. I suppose my father and Gandhiji have been the chief personal influences in my life. But outside influences do not carry me away. There is a tendency to resist being influenced. Still they work away slowly and unconsciously. My wife influenced me considerably in many ways, though unobtrusively.

The reading of Karl Marx and Lenin had a powerful effect on me. That effect was partly concerned with the content of what I read. But even more so with the manner of treatment of the subject. I was tired of the mystical and metaphysical approach to life's problems, and the clear, scientific, analytical and unadorned method of treatment and approach appealed to me tremendously. It seemed to resolve many of my doubts and made me understand past history and current events better.

Some years previously I was influenced in the same way by reading Bertrand Russell's books. I like them very much even now but I began to have a feeling of ineffectiveness about them. I appreciated greatly also some of Neibuhr's books.

When I read Spengler I disliked him. And yet I found a certain fascination in his enormous survey of human activity.

5. I am afraid I cannot give any names of my intimate friends. I have a fairly large circle of friends, which includes people in England, France and America. But when it comes to real intimacy the circle narrows down tremendously.

6. I do not quite know what I am. I am certainly a socialist in the sense that I believe in the socialist theory and method of approach. I am not a communist chiefly because I resist the communist tendency to treat communism as holy doctrine and I do not like being told what to think and what to do. I suppose I am too much of an individualist. But my general approach is largely Marxist, though not in a technical sense. For instance I am not frightfully excited about the theory about surplus values. I am not a good enough economist to have a definite opinion about the fine points of communist economic doctrine. I feel also that there is too much violence associated with the communist method and this produces untoward results, as in Russia in recent years. The ends cannot be separated from the means. I realise, of course, that there is quite as much, if not more, violence outside communism, and that the whole of our social structure is based on it. I am not prepared to say that violence must be ruled out but I should like to lessen it as far as possible, and any method which increases it encourages a wrong tendency.

7. My health has been and is good. In prison I had a touch of pleurisy twice and this distressed and troubled me for some months.[5] But I got over it. I suppose there is some remains of it hanging about but my general good health keeps it down.

8. I have had seven terms in prison. Total period of sentences: ten and a half years—longest sentence: 2½ years plus fine. Other sentences varying from 6 months to 2 years, sometimes with brief periods outside. Total period actually spent in prison: 5½ years. This added to jail remissions for good conduct amounts to nearly 7 years. Longest period at a time: a little under two years. On several occasions I was discharged before time. One sentence of 2½ years (in Nabha—an Indian state under a British administrator) was suspended right at the beginning. I suppose it is still suspended.

9. What do I like most? Difficult to say. I like mountains and glaciers very much, and running water in the hills. Yes, I like lettuce salad and good conversation and animals and flowers, and swimming and riding. Perhaps one likes most the things one is deprived of. I had an intense feeling of enjoyment once in prison. This was in the hot weather when the temperature was about 116°F, and for a long time past I had not had a cold drink. My wife sent me a thermos flask filled with iced *sherbet* and I did enjoy that.

5. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 401.

I do not think I care at all for a fight as such. And yet intense activity in the midst of conflict does give me a sense of inner satisfaction. I feel rather at home then.

10. What do I dislike most? I am not strong in my hates. They may be intense enough for a moment but they pass. I do not like bats and centipedes. I feel angry when I see cruelty to human beings or animals. I suppose I am rather soft that way. But what I dislike most, I think, is the person who in the name of God, truth, and the public good is always feathering his own nest. I suppose that would be a fair definition of some politicians at least.

About six months ago I wrote an article[6] about myself. This appeared in the November number of *The Modern Review* of Calcutta. The article was called "The Rashtrapati" and was anonymous. "Rashtrapati" means chief of the state. The title is used for the President of the Congress. At that time there was some talk of my being re-elected President for another year. I was entirely opposed to this and had decided not to stand. It struck me one day to play a little trick. The idea amused me and so I wrote an article about myself and sent it by a devious route to the editor of *The Modern Review*, who did not discover who the author was.

In this article I considered judiciously my virtues and gave praise for them in full measure. But then I went on to say that these very virtues, if misdirected, might bring trouble. It was hinted that in spite of my talk of democracy and socialism, I was the kind of person who might fancy himself as a Caesar. I was not a fascist, it was admitted, and yet I had most of the qualities which might drive me to dictatorship in these times of crisis and change. We had to be on our guard against this and so ultimately the argument went on to say that my conceit should not be encouraged—it was already colossal—and I must, on no account, be elected President of the Congress a fourth time.

I wrote this mainly to watch and enjoy the reactions on others. I am afraid there was a trace of malice in it. I did enjoy these reactions, but soon after I could not keep the secret and told some of my friends.

If I can find this article and I remember to do so, I shall send a copy to you on my return to Allahabad.

6. See pp. 520-523.

59. To Durgabai Jog[1]

Khali
March 22, 1938

Dear Durgabai Jog,[2]
Your letter has reached me here.[3] I am sorry you did not make an attempt to meet me at Haripura. Certainly you can see me in Bombay when I go there next.

It is a little difficult for me to suggest a special programme for you. There are really so many activities which can be undertaken. I think women should take the fullest part in political work. That will give them a greater status in India than any other thing else. But apart from this, women should also work for the removal of all disabilities from which their sex suffers.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5 (Pt. II)/1938, p. 213, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1899); joined civil disobedience movement, 1930, and was imprisoned many times.
3. She sought Jawaharlal's advice about the work which women could take up in addition to social service and spinning.

60. To Riaz Mohamad[1]

Khali
March 22, 1938

Dear Mr. Riaz Mohamad,[2]
Your letter of the 14th has reached me here. I should be very glad to help you to find suitable work in the national cause. But the suggestion that you make that I should make you my secretary is difficult for me to adopt. My method of work is such that I have to keep the fewest possible persons near me. Otherwise my work suffers. It is not my intention to have any more assistants with me than I have at present. I have numerous requests of the kind that you have made, both from

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5 (Pt. II)/1938, p. 219, N.M.M.L.
2. A railway employee at Ajmer.

Muslims and Hindus and Parsis and others. But I cannot change my habits and method of work.

Regarding your future work, perhaps you can communicate with Dr. Ashraf of the A.I.C.C. office and see if he has any suggestion to make.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

61. Escape[1]

The Haripura Congress was over. The wonder city of bamboo that had risen on the banks of the Tapti was looking deserted. Only a day or two before, its streets had been full of an animated jostling crowd, grave and gay, talking, discussing, laughing, and feeling that they were taking part in the shaping of India's destiny. But those scores of thousands had suddenly departed for their distant homes and a sense of emptiness hung in the still air. Even the duststorm had abated. Having a little leisure for the first time since I came, I wandered by the Tapti bank and, in the darkness of the approaching night, went up to the edge of the flowing water. I felt a little sad when I thought that this magnificent city and camp, that had risen over the fields and waste lands, would vanish soon, leaving hardly a trace behind. Only the memory would endure.

But the sadness passed, and the desire that I had long nursed, the wish to go away to some far-off place, became strong and possessed me. It was not physical tiredness, but a weariness of the mind which hungered for change and refreshment. Political life was an exhausting business and I had had enough of it for a while. Long habit and routine held me fast but distaste for this daily round grew, and while I answered questions and spoke as amiably as I could to comrades and friends, my mind was elsewhere. It was wandering over the mountains of the north with their deep valleys and snowy peaks, and precipices and gentle slopes covered by pine-trees and deodars. It panted for escape from the troubles and problems that encompassed us, for peace and quiet and the gentle sigh of the wind.

1. Allahabad, 7 April 1938. *The Modern Review*, May 1938. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 200-204.

At last I was going to have my way, to pander to my secret and long-cherished desire. How could I trouble myself with ministries coming or going, or the melting-pot of international affairs, when the door of escape lay open before me?

I hastened north to my city of Allahabad and found to my dismay that some trouble was brewing. I grew irritated and angry with myself. Was I going to be thwarted and prevented from going to the mountains because fools and bigots wanted to create communal trouble? I reasoned with myself and said that nothing much could happen, the situation would improve and there were plenty of sensible people about. So I argued with and deluded myself, possessed by the desire to go away and escape. Like a coward I crept away when my work lay in Allahabad.

But soon I had forgotten Allahabad and its troubles and even the problems of India receded into some corner of my brain. The intoxication of the mountain air filled me as we climbed up the winding road to Almora in the Kumaun hills. From Almora we went further up to Khali, riding on sturdy hill ponies for the last part of our journey.

I was in Khali where I had longed to go for the past two years, and it was pleasant to be there.[2] The sun was setting and there was a glow on the hill-sides and a hush in the valleys. My eyes searched for Nanda Devi and her companion peaks of the snowy range, but they were hidden by light clouds.

Day succeeded day and I drank deep of the mountain air and took my fill of the sight of the snows and the valleys. How beautiful and full of peace they were, and the world's ills seemed far away and unreal. Towards the west and the south-east deep valleys, two or three thousand feet below us, curved away into the distance. Towards the north towered Nanda Devi and her white-clad companions. Fierce precipices, almost straight cut, sometimes led to the depths below, but more often the curves of the hill-sides were soft and rounded, like a woman's breast. Or they would be cut up in terraces where green fields witnessed to the industry of man.

In the early morning I lay bare-bodied in the open and the gentle-eyed sun of the mountains took me into his warm embrace. The cold wind from the snows made me shiver a little, but the sun would come to my rescue and fill me with warmth and well-being.

Sometimes I would lie under the pine-trees and listen to the voice of the wandering wind, whispering many strange things into my ears, and

2. Jawaharlal stayed at Khali (Almora) from 10 March to 26 March 1938.

lulling my senses, and cooling the fever in my brain. Finding me unguarded and open to attack, it would cunningly point out the folly of men's ways in the world below, their unceasing strife, their passions and hatred, their bigotry in the name of religion, the corruption of their politics, the degradation of their ideals. Was it worthwhile going back to them and wasting one's life's effort in dealings with them? Here there was peace and quiet and well-being, and for companions we had the snows and the mountains and the hill-sides covered with a multitude and a variety of trees and flowers, and the singing of birds. So whispered the wind, softly and cunningly, and in the enchantment of the spring day I allowed her to whisper.

It was early spring still in the mountains, though down below summer was already peeping in. On the hill-sides the rhododendron flowers made bright red patches which could be seen from afar. The fruit trees were full of bloom, and millions of tiny leaves were on the point of coming out to cover with their fresh and tender and green beauty the nakedness of many of the trees.

Four miles from Khali, fifteen hundred feet higher up, lay Binsar. We went there and saw a sight which we can never forget. Stretched out in front of us was a six-hundred-mile stretch of the Himalayan snowy range, from the mountains of Tibet to those of Nepal, and in the centre towered Nanda Devi. There was Badrinath and Kedamath and many another famous place in that wide expanse, and just across them lay Kailas and Manasarovar. What a magnificent sight that was, and I gazed at it spell-bound, awe-stricken with the majesty of it. And I grew a little angry with myself when I thought that I had missed this overwhelming beauty, in a corner of my own province, all these long years, though I had wandered all over India and visited many distant countries. How many people in India had seen it or even heard of it? How many of the tens of thousands who visit annually the cheap and tawdry hill stations in search of jazz and bridge?

So the days passed and contentment grew in my mind, but also a fear that my brief holiday would soon end. Sometimes a huge bundle of letters and newspapers would come and I viewed them with distaste. The post office was ten miles away and I was half inclined to let my mail rest there, but old habit was too strong and the possibility of finding a letter from some dear one far away made me open the door to these unwelcome intruders from outside.

Suddenly there came a rude shock. Hitler was marching into Austria and I heard the tramp of barbarian feet over the pleasant gardens of Vienna. Was this the prelude to that world catastrophe which had hung over us for so long? Was this war? I forgot Khali and the snows

and the mountains and my body became taut and my mind tense. What was I doing here, in a remote corner of the mountains, when the world was on the brink and evil triumphed and had to be countered and checked? Yet what could I do?

Another shock came—communal riots in Allahabad, many heads broken and a few persons killed. A few men dead or alive did not matter much, but what was this disgusting madness and folly that degraded our people from time to time?

There was no peace for me then even in Khali, no escape. How could I escape from the thoughts that tormented my mind, how could I run away from my trembling heart? I realised that we had to face the world's passions and endure the world's anguish, dreaming sometimes, it may be, of the world's deliverance. Was this dream just a phantasy of the dreamer's mind or was it something more? Will it ever take shape?

For a few days more I stayed on in Khali, but a vague disquiet filled my mind. Slowly a measure of peace returned to me as I gazed at those white mountains, calm and inscrutable and untouched by human folly. They would remain there whatever man did, and even if the present generation committed suicide or went into oblivion by some slower process, the spring would still come to the hill-sides, and the wind will rustle through the pine-trees, and the birds will sing.

But meanwhile there was no escape, whatever of good or ill the future might hold. There was no escape except to some extent in action. No Khali could smother the mind or drug the heart into forgetfulness. And so to Khali I bade good-bye, sixteen days after I had come there, and wistfully I took my last long look at the white peaks of the north and imprinted their noble outline on the canvas of my mind.

62. Prison Days[1]

For many months I have had the manuscript of these poems with me, a constant reminder to me of my promise to write a few lines as a foreword. And yet I have found it strangely difficult to write this foreword, although I have done a great deal of writing on all manner of subjects during this period. I am no judge or critic of poetry and so I

1. Jawaharlal wrote this foreword in April 1938 to a book *Prison Days and other Poems* by S.H. Vatsyayan, published in September 1946.

hesitated, but I love poetry and some of these little poems have appealed to me greatly. They have stuck in my mind and brought back to me memories of prison days and that strange and haunted world where men, whom society had branded as criminals and cast out of its pale, lived their narrow circumscribed lives. There were men there who had been involved in a killing, men known as dacoits and thieves; but all of us were bound together in that sorrow-laden world of prison, between us there existed a kinship of spirit. In the lonely chambers which were our cells we walked up and down, five measured paces this way, and five measured paces back, and communed with sorrow. We found friendship and companionship and refuge in thought and on the magic carpet of fantasy we fled away from our surroundings. We lived double lives—the life of the prison, ordered and circumscribed, bolted and barred, and the free life of the spirit, with its dreams and visions, hopes and desires.

Something of that dreaming comes out in these poems, something of that yearning when the arms stretched out in search for what was not and clutched at empty space. Something also of the peace and contentment that we managed to extract even in our loneliness in that house of sorrow. There was always a tomorrow to hope for, a tomorrow which might bring deliverance.

And so I commend these poems and perhaps they might move others as they have moved me.

63. To Krishna Hutheesing[1]

Srinagar (Garhwal)
5.5.38

Betty darling,

I sent you a telegram from Lucknow asking you to reserve a berth for me in a cabin where I would have no companion. I do not like the idea of having someone sharing my cabin. I can put up with most discomforts but privacy is something I treasure.

We have had three days of the Garhwal tour and we have enjoyed them.[2] They have been unusual. First the aeroplane trip from Hardwar to Badrinath and Kedarnath and back to Hardwar. Then the same

1. *Nehru's Letters to His Sister*, (London, 1963), pp. 58-59.
2. See the succeeding item.

day by car 58 miles to Devaprayag following the Ganga in its upper reaches. At Devaprayag the Ganga splits up into the Bhagirathi, which comes from Gangotri, and the Alaknanda, which has its sources in the glaciers of Badrinath and Kedarnath. The two join at Devaprayag and there we spent this night. The next morning we took to horses and rode about 20 miles to Srinagar (Garhwal) following the Alaknanda all the way.

The air journey was good though bumpy. Nan did not exactly enjoy it as she was violently sick most of the way. But it was a delightful sight to see the Ganga in its youthful exuberant stage winding and gurgling through the valleys. We approached the snows and hovered over Badrinath and Kedarnath and saw the snowy peaks looming in front. Badrinath was particularly grand.

We have been here since yesterday noon. Srinagar is situated in a broad and pleasant valley with the Alaknanda running through it. It is a small unpretentious little town, though in olden times it was the capital of the Garhwali kingdom. Now it is cut off almost from the rest of the world by the lack of even a carriage road. Such a site in Europe would be jumped upon and a beautiful town would grow up with villas all over the hill-sides and a brightly-lit city.

We have had several functions. This evening there was to be a conference but heavy rain came down just as I started speaking. The awning had previously blown away. We carried on in spite of the rain and I held forth for about 45 minutes. There was a large crowd of women present and they stood the rain bravely getting quite soaked.

Tomorrow noon we go to Pauri, a hill station about 8 miles away. We spend the night there and then go back to Devaprayag and Hardwar. Thus ends our Garhwal trip. After two days in Allahabad, I shall go to Bombay. But on the way I shall spend half a day at Kareli in the C.P. I expect to reach Bombay on the 12th morning by mail. Raja will probably reach there on the 11th evening. He intends leaving Allahabad with me on the 10th evening by express but he will not stop at Kareli.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

64. A Visit to Garhwal[1]

My sister Vijayalakshmi and I have just spent five days in Garhwal. During these many years I have travelled a good deal in India and I have visited every district of the United Provinces, often more than once. But Garhwal remained unvisited except for a few hours given to Dugadda a year and a half ago. I was eager to fill this gap and, as always, the mountains attracted me. But the lack of communications necessitated a longer period and so I hesitated. But the insistence of friends in Garhwal and the consciousness of my own failure in the past induced me at last to repair this omission and to find a few days for these mountain valleys. I was happy to have as companions Vijayalakshmi and Raja Hutheesing as well as comrades from Garhwal.

It was a delightful visit, though a strenuous one, and we have returned somewhat stiff of body but with our minds full of pleasant memories. We visited Gochar, Devaprayag, Srinagar and Pauri and many villages on the way. Our journeying was done by aeroplane, by car, on horseback and on foot, riding being the principal means adopted owing to the lack of cart roads. The aeroplane took us all the way to Badrinath and Kedarnath and we had a near view of the snowy peaks which dominate these ancient places of pilgrimage. We could not land there and had to come back some way to Gochar where we landed. A great welcome awaited us there from the mountain folk and then we returned having completed by air within five hours a journey that takes as many weeks on foot. From the air we saw Garhwal spread out below us with its bare mountains and its numerous valleys with rivers winding through them. We were in the land of birth of the Ganga and this noble river, which we had known and loved so well in its rich and stately maturity, appeared before us now in its eager and joyful youth and its bubbling and gurgling childhood.

Having done with the air journey we took to the road and followed the Ganga from Rishikesh to Devaprayag where the Bhagirathi meets the Alaknanda and joining together drop their own particular names and become the Ganga, the river that has held India's heart captive for so many thousands of years. Perched up on precipices between the two rivers and across them, sits the little town of Devaprayag, looking down on the swiftly-flowing currents as they rush through rock-hewn gorges to meet and intermingle in a warm embrace.

1. Allahabad 10 May 1938. *The Tribune*, 13 May 1938. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 205-212.

We reached Srinagar, situated in a broad and pleasant valley. The Alaknanda flowed swiftly by it, carrying timber from its upper reaches. The town was a small one, fallen greatly from its old estate when it was the capital of the Garhwali kingdom. Here we stayed for two days and took part in the conference that was being held there and met many old comrades.[2] We then proceeded to Pauri on the hill-top which gazes at the magnificent range of the northern snows. Badrinath and Kedarnath, the Chaukhamba and Trishul and even Nanda Devi. All along the route we were met by the people from the villages, men and women and children, and warm-hearted affection came to greet us.

A busy programme in Pauri and a night there, and then a long and weary ride by a little frequented and badly kept route to Devaprayag, with halts and meetings on the way. From Devaprayag to Hardwar and back to railway train.

The abiding impression of Garhwal was one of isolation and poverty. It was extraordinary how near we were to the rest of the world and yet how cut off from it. Twenty miles represented now a hard day's journeying, as it must have been a thousand years ago or more. During these ages that had gone by there had hardly been any improvement in communications and journeys were on foot or rarely on horseback. Only the telegraph wire spoke to us of science and the modern world. The lack of cart roads throughout this wide-flung district is astonishing and for half a century there has been an insistent demand, ever growing louder, for a good road. We had heard of this before but we had not realized the passion behind it. Everywhere all sorts of people demanded and begged and shouted for a road. Everything else was secondary to them and Swaraj itself took the semblance of a road leading from the heart of the mountains to the plains below. They told us that it was a matter of life and death for them. 'Give us a road or we die', they pleaded.

Why has this road-making been delayed so long in Garhwal? It was expensive, of course, but equally expensive roads have been made all over India in mountainous regions. During the period of the World War the people of Garhwal were soothed by promises of a railway and a survey at a cost of many lakhs of rupees was actually made. But neither the railway nor a road materialised. If there had been a regiment stationed in Garhwal or any considerable British official population, a road would have appeared soon enough. But officials do not look with favour on a sojourn in Garhwal and consider it as a kind of exile. Even inspections by high officials seldom take place there. Still the road would have

2. Jawaharlal attended the district political conference at Srinagar on 5-6 May 1938.

come if there had not been some definite objection to it on the part of the British Government. I imagine this objection was based on the desire on the part of the government to keep Garhwal isolated and immune from political influences, as it was one of their chief recruiting areas. Garhwal regiments are well known, but I was surprised to learn that thousands of people from the district served in the armed police in Bengal. They are terribly poor and the land cannot sustain them in its present condition; they have hardly any industries, and so inevitably they seek employment elsewhere.

We met large numbers of school children and I liked to ask them many questions. I found that over ninety per cent of them had never seen a railway train, or a motor car, or even a carriage. But they had seen an aeroplane flying over them; only some days before we had ourselves flown across.

Garhwal must have a road and that soon. It will never progress without it. But a road is not enough and what is urgently needed is to improve the productive capacity of the people. Apart from the question of the road the chief complaints were the lack of water, the heavy assessment, and the lack of medical help and schools. If a person fell seriously ill, it was not even possible to carry him to some hospital nearby. He simply died or, if he was lucky, survived. The demand for education was great, even for girls, but the schools were few and far between.

The lack of water for the fields seemed strange, for there were several rivers with plenty of it and occasional springs. And yet fields in the river valleys were lying dry and elsewhere they were worse off. We saw large numbers of terraced fields which had been cut out of the hill-sides with enormous labour, lying desolate and untended. They had been allowed to run waste as it was not considered worthwhile to cultivate them. Partly this problem of water has been aggravated by the lack of forests and the general barrenness of the hill-sides. Why Garhwal has such few forests while Kumaun abounds in them I do not know. The soil is as good and other conditions appear equally favourable.

Yet with all its poverty and barrenness, Garhwal gave us the idea of great potential strength and resources. There was water power running to waste everywhere when it could be converted into electricity and life-giving power for fields and industries. Probably there were plenty of minerals in that vast area only waiting to be developed.

Let the road come to Garhwal. But equally urgent is an inquiry into its power resources and minerals. These power resources could supply electric power not only to Garhwal but to a large part of the province. Thus two expert inquiries seem called for immediately—one for the

GLOSSARY

Bahisht	paradise
Biradari	community
Chalbazi	trickery
Gaddies	seats of power
Khadem	a servant
Kutchery	law court
Mandal	board
Pattedars	leaseholders
Qasbas	small towns
Sahukars	bankers
Swayam sewak	a volunteer
Tamasha	amusement

INDEX

(Biographical footnotes are italicized)

Abbasid dynasty, 474 fn
Abdus Sami, 191 fn
Abyssinia—see Ethiopia
Acropolis (Athens), 788
Addis Ababa, 707
Aden, 782
Afghanistan, 622, 630
Aga Khan, 722 fn
Agra, 19 fn
Ahmad, Maulana Husain, 147, 149, 153, 154, 158, 160, 166, 170
———, Maulvi Bashir, 154 & *fn*
———, Said, 149 & fn, 154
———, Z.A., 759 fn, 824 & fn, 861
Ahmedabad, 508-511
Ahmed Din, Munshi, 770 & *fn*
Ahmed, Rafiuddin, 136 & fn, 159 fn, 162, 163, 171, 172, 173 & fn, 177
Ahmednagar (Ahmadnagar), 308 fn
Ahrar Party, 120
Aiyar, K. Natesa, 649 fn
Ajmer, 533-536, 619, 872 fn
Akyab, 678
Albert Hall (London), 701 fn, 705
Alexander, 520 fn
Alexander, Horace, 86, 588, 704
Ali, Ahmad, 198
———, Asaf, 589, 590 fn, 612
———, Maulana Mohamed, 119, 201, 205, 238
———, Sadiq, 138, 140, 146
———, Shaukat, 125 fn, 133, 160 & fn, 179, 195, 201, 238
Aligarh, 178 & fn, 191 & fn, 196, 199 fn, 213, 372
Aligarh Muslim University, 168 fn, 178 fn, 196, 213, 822
Aligarh Muslim University Union, 196 fn
Aljamiat, 154, 157, 183
Allahabad, 2, 3, 15, 16 fn, 23, 28, 104, 133 & fn, 138, 139 fn, 140, 144, 146, 149, 154, 155, 158, 170, 176, 177, 179, 191, 211, 212, 214, 216, 217, 229 & fn, 231 fn, 232, 235, 241, 242, 245, 269, 307 fn, 334, 335, 358, 360, 361, 376, 378, 387, 409, 508, 519, 539, 555, 558, 569, 573, 574 & fn, 580, 619, 632, 712, 727, 736 fn, 777-780, 791-793, 795, 797, 799, 803, 823 fn, 851, 871, 874, 876, 878
Allahabad Swadeshi League, 404
Allahabad University, 856 fn
Allied Control Commission (Germany), 845 fn
All India Congress Committee, 16, 28 & fn, 30, 33, 47, 49, 51, 52, 57, 61, 65, 69, 71, 74 & fn, 80, 81, 95, 99, 100, 105, 106, 114, 117, 123, 183, 188, 189, 191, 193 fn, 287, 296, 325, 335, 338, 339, 342, 344, 346-348, 355 & fn, 360, 361, 368, 371, 378, 397 fn, 401, 402, 407, 427, 445, 447, 448, 453, 506, 538 & fn, 546, 561, 562, 565-578 fn, 580, 712, 726 & fn, 731, 744, 751, 757, 763, 763 fn, 768, 769, 779 fn, 780, 866, 873
All India Convention of Congress Legislators, 33, 59 fn, 72, 287, 296, 411
All India Harijan Sewak Sangh, 498
All India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, 791 fn
All India Kisan Sabha, 112 fn, 408 fn

All India Muslim Students Federation, 207 fn, 210, 215 fn
All India Nationalist Muslim Party, 128 & fn
All India Radio, 845 fn
All India Shia Political Conference, 190 & fn, 720 fn
All India Spinners Association, 692
All India States People's Conference 761
All India Students Federation, 178 fn
All India Trade Union Congress, 22 23 & fn
Almora, 380, 381, 781, 785, 864, 865, 874, & fn
Aluwihare, Bernard, 649, 650
Alwar, 537
Ambernath (Bombay), 257
American Civil Liberties Union, 732 fn
Amrita Bazar Patrika, 97 fn, 415 fn
Amritsar, 13 fn, 403 fn
Ananda Bazar Patrika, 415 fn, 416
Anand Math (B.C. Chatterji), 187, 435 fn
Andaman Day, 267 fn, 299
Andaman islands, 272, 274 fn, 289, 299, 313, 590, 591, 593, 594 & fn, 613, 614, 632 fn
Andhra Congress Socialist Party, 100 fn
Andhra Provincial Ryots Association, 36 fn
Andhra Youth League, 100 fn
Andrews, C.F., 803, 848
Andrew Yule & Co. Ltd., 448 fn
Anglo-Italian Agreement, 739 fn
Anjuman-e-Tarraqqi-e-Urdu, 214
Ankara, 640
Ansari, Farid-ul-Haq, 463
————, M.A., 56, 405
Anti-Constitution Day, 12
Anti-Separation League, 660 fn
Arab Higher Committee, 466 & fn
Arjun, 463 fn
Ashraf, K.M., 133, 134, 138, 139, 146, 195, 196 fn, 455, 873
Asia in the Twentieth Century (F. Whyte), 623 fn
Asoka, 474, 621
Assam, 360, 361, 365, 372, 377
Assam Oil Company, 488 & fn, 499
Atal, Madan, 641 fn, 676 fn, 712, 781, 784, 785
Athens, 788, 789
Australia, 664, 753
Austria, 228 & fn, 739 & fn, 867 & fn, 875
Autobiography (J. Nehru), 96 fn, 97 fn, 856, 864 fn
Avadh (Oudh), 19 fn, 393 fn
Azad, Maulana A.K., 14 fn, 77, 78, 138, 140, 148, 149, 153-155, 159, 168, 170, 171, 182, 216, 223, 387
Azad Pakistan Party, 176 fn
Azikiwe, Nnamdi, 737 & *fn*

Badminton School (England), 800 fn
Badrinath, 389, 802, 803, 875, 877, 878, 880
Baghdad, 474
Baghelkhand, 580 fn
Baker, Miss, 800 & fn
Ballia, 5
Balu, A.M., 175 & fn
Baluchistan, 238
Ba Maw, 660 & *fn*, 661
Banaras, 829
Banaras Hindu University, 213
Banda, 136 fn, 145 & fn
Banerji, Purnima, 229
Bangalore, 548, 549, 565 fn, 568 fn, 576 fn
Bangladesh, 269 fn, 270 fn, 414 fn
Banker, Shankerlal, 406
Bannu, 461, 462
Bara Banki, 191
Baramandir, 543
Barcelona, 704, 739 fn
Bardoloi, Gopinath, 283 & *fn*, 489
Bareilly, 803
Barisal, 414 fn, 435 fn
Barnes, J., 849 & fn
Basque, 457
Basti, 195 & fn, 199 fn
Batavia, 789
Batliwala, S.S., 360 & *fn*
Bazmi, A.S., 539 & fn

B.C. Roy Memorial Library and Reading Room, 846 fn
Beggar my Neighbour (L. Fielden), 845 fn
Behari, Maulana Nuruddin, 159 & *fn*
Behat (Saharanpur), 198, 199
Bengal Nagpur Railway, 252 & fn
Bengal Tenancy Bill, 270 & fn
Benton, William B., 88 & *fn*
Berlin, 783, 784
Between the Thunder and the Sun (V. Sheean), 792 fn
Bevan, Aneurin, 34 fn
Bex, 793, 794, 800
Bhagavan Das, 635 & fn, 637 & fn, 866 & fn
Bhargava, Gopichand, 13, 146, 260, 264, 402, 444 & fn
Bhashyam, K., 364 & *fn*
Bhopal, 540, 541
Bhopal State People's Association, 539 fn, 540
Bhowali, 785
Bijnor, 20, 191 fn, 194, 195, 274, 340, 519, 539 fn, 540
Bijolia, 535 fn
Bikaner, 542-544
Bikaner conspiracy case, 544 fn
Bilbao, 712 & fn
Binsar, 875
Bombay, 1 fn, 27 fn, 28, 100, 103, 124 fn, 152 fn, 170, 171, 173, 177, 237, 239, 245, 257, 278 & fn-280, 296, 316, 322, 328, 330, 353, 356 & fn, 360 fn, 365, 372, 389 & fn, 409, 433, 478, 539, 555, 565, 595 fn, 616, 617, 635 fn, 638, 641 fn, 713 fn, 720 fn, 723, 781, 782, 785, 793, 796, 801, 803, 853, 857 fn, 872, 878
Bombay Chronicle, 18, 148
Bombay Sentinel, 433
Borneo, 625
Bose, Sarat Chandra, 188, 189, 407, 481
———, Subhas Chandra, 104, 186, 223, 378 & fn, 407 fn, 408 fn, 449, 458, 516, 634, 774, 862
Brabourne, Lord, 80 fn
Brailsford, H.N., 87
Bristol, 801
British Commonwealth of Nations, 65 & fn, 597
Brittain, Vera, 796 & *fn*
Bulandshahr, 360
Bundelkhand, 135, 138-142, 144, 154, 159, 165, 167, 168, 170-172, 177, 192, 195
Burdwan, maharaja of, 7 & fn
Burma, 43, 85, 88, 90, 91, 101, 104, 256 & fn, 412, 417, 588, 646, 648, 664, 671, 674, 764 & fn, 765
Burma Oil Company, 488 fn, 499, 660
Butler, R.A., 95 fn

Caesar, 521, 522
Calcutta, 40, 93, 100, 104, 119 fn, 179 fn, 187, 189, 193 & fn, 207 fn, 210, 212 & fn, 214, 215 fn, 216, 222 fn, 232, 236 fn, 240, 252 & fn, 273, 341, 344, 347, 348, 355 & fn, 380 fn, 406, 409, 448 & fn, 481, 499, 519, 520 fn, 538 fn, 561, 571, 573 fn, 660, 678, 723, 726 fn, 763, 768, 789, 801, 802, 806, 828, 841, 871
———, Congress session at, 761
Calcutta University, 382, 406 fn
Cambridge, 448 fn, 711 fn, 806 & fn, 821
Campbellpore, 112 fn
Canada, 664, 826
Canadian Youth Congress, 826 & fn
Cape Comorin—see Kanyakumari
Catalonia, 739 fn
Caveeshar, Sardul Singh, 202
Cawnpore—see Kanpur
Cawnpore Cotton Mills, 353
Ceylon—see Sri Lanka
Chakravarty, Raj Kumar, 425 & *fn*
Chaman Lal, Dewan, 180, 182, 184 & fn, 264 & fn
Chamberlain, Neville, 111 & *fn*
Chanakya, 520 & fn, 862
Chanda, Anil, 802
Chandanmal, 544 & fn
Chandernagore, 263
Chandragupta, Maurya, 520 fn

Chapra, 851
Chatterji, Ramananda, 525
Chattopadhyaya, Kamaladevi, 548, 760 fn, 791
Chaukhamba, 880
Chettiar, M.G. Natesa, 320 & fn
———, P.T., 675 fn
Children's Book Trust, 846 fn
Children's World, 846 fn
China, 229, 275, 295, 296, 327, 370, 466, 589, 607, 612, 617-619, 622, 630, 641, 664, 673, 753, 754, 756, 801, 817, 820
China and Foreign Powers (F. Whyte), 623 fn
China Relief Fund, 734
Chinese Millions (A.L. Strong), 793 fn
Chittagong, 255 fn, 263, 276 fn, 678
Chota Nagpur, 5
Chowdhury, Amulya Charan, 276 fn
Christ Church College (Kanpur), 825
Chu Teh, Marshal, 733 & fn
Cochin State Congress, 530
Colombo, 29
Columbia, 615
Columbia University, 406 fn
Comilla, 270 fn
Communal Award, 7 & fn, 8, 131, 151, 193, 208, 214, 225, 226, 233-235
Communist Party (India), 41 fn, 112 fn, 158 fn, 408 fn, 507 fn, 529 fn, 632 fn
Congress Central Parliamentary Board, 1, 9 fn
Congress election manifesto, 15 & fn, 47, 58, 64, 80, 126, 349
Congress Hospital (Allahabad), 777, 778, 780
Congress, Indian National, 1-28 & fn, 30-33, 36 fn-40, 42, 47-57, 67-71, 73-77, 80 & fn, 82-85, 87, 90 & fn, 92 & fn, 94-99, 100 fn, 102, 104 fn, 105 fn-107, 109-116, 119-133, 136-138 fn, 140, 150-152 & fn, 153 fn, 156-158, 160, 164-167, 171-178, 180-183, 185, 186 fn, 187-197, 200-205, 207-209, 211 & fn, 213-224, 226 & fn, 227, 229-240, 244, 246, 250, 252-254, 256, 258, 261-271, 273-304, 307-320, 322-333, 335-337 & fn, 339-352, 355-360, 362, 363, 365-368, 370-371, 373-375, 378-380, 381 fn, 383-394, 397-399, 401-404, 406 & fn, 408 & fn, 410-417, 426-439, 441-450, 452-455, 458, 459, 461-467, 469, 471, 472, 474-477, 482-486, 489-494, 498, 500, 502, 505-508, 510 fn, 515, 516, 520 fn, 521, 523, 529-536, 538-541, 547, 548, 550, 551, 553 fn-560, 562, 564, 567-569, 571, 573 fn-576, 578-581, 585, 587, 589, 590, 593-595, 597, 600 & fn, 601, 605, 607, 611, 612, 614, 615, 618, 619, 626, 629, 633, 636 fn, 637, 640, 651, 653, 654, 657, 662-664, 669, 670, 674, 702, 712, 715, 718, 723, 729, 744, 746, 751, 755-766, 768-771, 773, 779 fn, 790, 796, 804, 811, 822, 831
———, session at Calcutta, 761
———, session at Faizpur, 3, 28 fn, 43, 50 & fn, 99, 271, 281, 287, 289, 296, 397, 399, 431, 458 fn, 702 fn, 724, 766, 804
———, session at Haripura, 378 fn, 379 fn, 391 & fn, 450, 452 & fn, 516, 633, 634, 640, 740 & fn, 746, 759 fn, 764 fn, 765 fn, 826, 873
———, session at Karachi, 126, 234, 412, 601, 602, 768 fn
———, session at Lahore, 587
———, session at Lucknow, 202, 218, 530, 618 fn, 765, 765
———, session at Nagpur, 600 fn
Congress Nationalist Party, 13 & fn, 33 fn, 164, 271
Congress Party, 69 fn, 76 fn, 114, 270, 428, 431-441, 443 fn, 448, 449, 485, 489, 589 fn, 676, 858
Congress Socialist, 294 & fn
Congress Socialist Party, 40, 229 fn, 319 fn, 328, 410, 437, 507 fn, 529 fn, 856 fn
Congress Working Committee, 1 & fn, 14 & fn, 28, 52 & fn, 53, 55, 57, 59, 67, 73 & fn, 74, 77, 78, 85, 91, 95 & fn, 96, 100, 103, 105-111, 116, 164, 168, 170, 186, 188, 204, 214,

223, 236 & fn, 237, 246, 267, 272, 278 & fn, 280, 286-288, 290, 292, 295, 300, 304, 305, 315, 325, 326, 338, 341, 342, 344, 346, 347, 355 fn-357, 361, 362, 365, 368 & fn, 377, 378, 381 & fn, 389, 401, 407 & fn, 409-411, 426 fn-428, 432, 439, 443, 446-449, 453, 477, 484, 486, 521, 529, 538 fn, 550, 560, 578, 612, 635 fn, 636 fn, 640 fn, 641 & fn, 696, 715, 718, 721, 740, 759, 760, 762 fn, 763, 768-771, 774, 779 & fn, 791, 792, 796, 811, 812, 862
Conservative Association (Oxford University), 99
Conservative Party (British), 131
Cornwall, 800
Criminal Tribes Act, 290 & fn
Cripps, Sir Stafford, 29, 31 & fn, 34 fn, 90 & fn, 293, 633, 635
Crozier, W.P., 88 & *fn*
Cushman, James, 736 & fn

Da Cruz, Carlos, 857 & fn
Dain, J.R., 640 fn
Dalhousie, 104, 409
Dange, S.A., 22 fn
Dar, Mohammad Yamin, 258 & fn
Dasappa, H. C., 578 & *fn*, 579
Datta, S.K., 782
———, Mrs. S.K., 782
D.A.V. College (Kanpur), 813, 814
Deccan States People's Conference, 530
Dehra Dun, 10, 12 fn
Delang, 578
Delhi, 8 fn, 28 & fn, 56, 57, 71, 74, 76, 86, 90, 154, 157, 158, 159 fn, 164, 166, 183, 196, 205, 213, 224, 242, 254, 278, 300, 338, 401, 405, 411, 463 & fn, 519, 632, 791, 801, 829, 846
Deoband, 136 fn, 158
Deo, Shankarrao, 14 fn, 100
Desai, Bhulabhai, 14 fn, 617, 618, 719, 759 fn, 858
———, Hari Prasad, 510 & fn
———, Mahadeva, 372, 387, 476, 569 fn, 636 fn
Deshpande, G.B., 100
Deutsches Museum (Munich), 812
Devaprayag, 878, 879
Devils Island, 591 fn
Dewey, John, 732 & *fn*, 868
Dhampur (Bijnor), 20
Dhubri, 253, 257, 483, 498
Dhulekar, R.V., 139, 145, 146
Dibrugarh, 221 fn
Digboi, 499
Dina Pani (Almora), 865
Disraeli, Benjamin, 680 & *fn*
Dolivet, M., 726
Dollfuss, E., 783 fn
Douglas, Major, 130
Doulatram, Jairamdas, 399 fn
Dubash, Durgashankar, 771 & fn
Duchene, G., 739 & fn
Dugadda (Garhwal), 802
Dukhia, Balwant Singh, 267 fn
Dutt, B.K., 632
Dwarka, 624
Dyer, General, 13

Edinburg University, 80 fn
Edward VIII, 416 & fn, 805
Egypt, 143, 639, 799
Einstein, Albert, 732
Elgin Mills (Kanpur), 353
Ellore, 507 fn
Ends and Means (A. Huxley), 868
England, 18, 24, 30, 31 & fn, 65, 86, 87, 89, 97, 101, 264, 275, 327, 332, 338, 377, 415, 459, 466, 478, 514, 525, 534, 586, 587, 614 fn, 622, 634, 635, 637, 640, 650, 659, 665, 697, 704, 706, 741, 743, 752, 754, 756, 793, 805, 814, 817, 825, 845, 849 & fn, 856, 869
Enlist India for Freedom! (E. Thompson), 354 fn
Erskine, Lord, 80 fn
Esperanto, 839
Ethiopia (Abyssinia), 275, 619 fn, 706, 719, 721, 739 & fn, 741
Ewing Christian College (Allahabad), 824

Hardikar, N.S., 771
Harduaganj (Aligarh), 372, 451, 452
Hardwar, 463 fn, 803, 877
Harijan, 294 fn, 372, 567 fn
Harilal, 16
Haripura, 22, 241, 368, 378 & fn, 444, 453, 516, 751, 872
———, Congress session at, 378 fn, 379 fn, 391 & fn, 450, 452 & fn, 516, 633, 634, 640, 740 & fn, 746, 759 fn, 764 fn, 765 fn, 862, 873
Haroun-Al-Rashid, 474 & *fn*
Harris, Duncan, 616 & fn
Harrison, Agatha, 28, 56 & fn, 84, 102, 282, 379, 634, 736, 803, 804, 853
Hasan, Wazir, 144 & *fn*, 196
Hassan, Yakub, 59 fn, 60 & *fn*
Hastings, Warren, 818 fn
Hazaribagh, 632
Heath, Carl, 28, 84, 619 & fn
Hemmerlin, Mlle., 784, 786
Hind Swaraj (Mahatma Gandhi), 543
Hindu Mahasabha, 8 & fn, 33, 38 fn, 130, 152 & fn, 185, 201, 219 & fn, 220, 356 fn
Hindustan, 156 fn, 157, 183, 202
Hindustani Seva Dal, 771
Hindustan Newspapers Co. Ltd., (Lucknow), 156 fn
Hindustan Times, 846 fn
Hitler, Adolf, 82, 195, 867, 875
Holland Hall (Allahabad University), 512
Hong Kong, 611 fn, 868
Hoshiarpur, 260
House of Lords (Britain), 81, 82, 250 fn
Howrah, 92
Hukerikar, R.S., 569 & fn, 570
Huq, Abdul, 214
———, Fazlul, 93 & *fn*-95, 120 fn, 188 & fn, 207 & fn, 208, 210, 211 fn
Husain, Masood, 199 & fn
Hussain, Muzaffar, 134, 138, 140, 146, 147, 154, 229
———, Vilayat, 133
Husseini, Amin, 723 & *fn*
Hutheesing. G.P., 745, 785, 801, 878, 879
———, Krishna, 801, 862, 877
Huxley, Aldous, 868
Hyderabad, 41 fn, 214, 263, 540
———, Nizam of, 41 fn
Hyderabad State Congress, 41 fn

Ibrahim, Hafiz Muhammad, 166 & *fn*, 170, 191 fn, 220
I Change the World (A.L. Strong), 793 fn
Idgah dispute, 206
Iftikharuddin, Mian, 176 & *fn*
Independent Labour Party (British), 31 fn
Independent Party (India), 121 fn
India and the World (J. Nehru), 18, 588
Indian Science Congress, 806
Indian Student, 814 fn
Indian Students Association, 825
India Office, 354 & fn
Indra (Vidyavachaspati), 463 & *fn*
In Search of History (V. Sheean), 792
In Search of Reality (Lord Samuel), 378 fn
Inside Africa (J. Gunther), 867 fn
Inside Asia (J. Gunther), 867 fn
Inside Europe (J. Gunther), 867 fn
Inside Latin America (J. Gunther), 867 fn
Inside Russia Today (J. Gunther), 867 fn
Inside South America (J. Gunther), 867 fn
International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, 431
International Brigade of Volunteers, 676 fn, 702 & fn, 712
International Children's Competition, 846 fn
International Dolls Museum (New Delhi), 846 fn
International Peace Campaign, 726 & fn, 741
International Peace Congress, 614, 618, 713, 726 & fn

Ipi, 472 fn
———, Faqir of, 472 & fn
Iran, 143, 639
Iraq, 474 fn
Ireland, 814
Irrawady, 88
Ismail, Mirza M., 554, 555, 561, 573, 574 fn, 576 & fn
Italy, 58, 275, 634, 734, 753, 788, 790, 793, 820, 845 fn

Jafri, Ali Sardar, 435 & *fn*
Jain, Ajit Prasad, 207 & *fn*
———, Lekhawati, 9 & *fn*
Jaipur, 535 fn
Jalaun, 136, 141 fn, 149, 160-163
Jallianwala Bagh, 13
Jamia Millia Islamia, 213, 214
Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, 136 fn, 137 & fn, 149 fn, 154 fn, 157, 158 fn, 159 fn, 166, 167, 169, 170, 191, 194, 239
Jamshedpur, 4, 632
Janavani, 565 fn
Japan, 275, 295, 296, 307, 327, 370, 499, 618, 621, 630, 641, 664, 753, 817, 820
Java, 625
Jayabharat, 124 fn
Jerusalem, 723 fn
Jewish Advocate, 713 & fn
Jhansi, 104, 133, 134, 136, 138 & fn, 140, 146, 147, 149, 159, 171, 175 & fn, 177, 581 fn
Jharia, 4
Jinnah, M.A., 23, 24 & fn, 39, 119-121, 124 & fn, 129-133, 136, 137, 142 148-152, 164, 167, 176, 180-182, 184, 185 fn, 195, 201, 202, 205, 207-213, 215 fn, 216 fn, 220, 222 & fn, 224 & fn, 225 fn, 226 fn, 228 & fn, 232 & fn, 243 & fn, 244 fn, 245 fn, 340, 534, 715 fn
Jodhpur, 532 fn, 534, 536, 545, 546
Joe, Durgabai, 872 & *fn*
Joglekar, K.N., 22 fn
John Lane Ltd., 293 & fn, 848 & fn
Jordan, Robert O., 619, 721, 725
Josh, Sohan Singh, 403 fn, 769 fn
Joshi, Basant Kumar, 100 fn
———, S.M., 319 & *fn*
Justice Party, 675 & fn

Kabir, 625 & *fn*
Kailas, 875
Kakori, 305, 770 & fn, 771 & fn
Kakori conspiracy case, 771 & fn
Kangani system, 684 & fn
Kanishka, 474
Kanpur, 20, 35, 134, 149, 196, 317, 328-332, 334 & fn, 351, 353, 394 & fn, 632, 813, 823, 824, 825
Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin), 10, 333, 513, 521, 624, 667, 797, 798
Karachi, 284, 286, 315
———, Congress session at, 126, 234, 412, 601, 602, 768 fn
Kareli, 878
Karimganj, 189
Karnataka Sahitya Parishad, 576 fn
Kashi Vidyapith, 213
Kathgodam, 865
Kathiawar Youth Conference, 547
Katju, Kailas Nath, 54, 157, 801, 851
Kayastha Pathashala, 512
Kedarnath, 875, 877, 878, 880
Keith, A.B., 80 & *fn*, 655
Kemal Pasha, Ataturk, 640
Keshoram, 13 & fn, 403
Khali, 381, 865, 874-876
Khaliquzzaman, Choudhry, 77 & fn, 135, 141, 168, 170, 192, 201, 214, 217, 223, 227 & fn, 228 fn
Khan, Abdul Hamid, 290
———, H., 112 & fn
———, Khan Abdul Ghaffar, 95, 138, 140, 148, 159, 291 fn, 357, 460, 464, 466, 472, 473, 476
———, Mahmud-uz-Zafar, 41 & fn, 42
———, Mirza Ali, Haji (Faqir of Ipi), 472 & fn

———, Muhammad Ismail, 165 & *fn*, 192, 204, 210-212, 214, 217, 218, 219 fn, 223, 241
———, Obaidi, 414 & *fn*
———, Shaban Ali, 166 & *fn*
———, Shaukat, 453 & fn
———, Sikandar Hayat, 181 fn, 184 & *fn*, 258 fn, 260 & fn, 264 & fn, 265, 453 & fn, 454 & fn, 769 fn
———, Zafar Ali, 196 & fn, 245
Khan Sahib, 357, 462, 477 & fn, 478
Khare, N.B., 356 & *fn*, 371
Kher, A.G., 138 & *fn*, 139, 140, 144-146
———, B.G., 278 fn, 279 & *fn*
Khilafat, 135, 145
Khudai Khidmatgars, 473, 475, 476, 772
Kidwai, R.A., 134, 146, 152, 155, 162, 163, 169, 173, 175-177, 182, 183, 194, 357
Kingsway Hall (London), 705
Kitab Bhan, 352
Kotnis, Doctor, 704, 705
Kotdwar, 802
Kottapattam, 100 & fn, 249
Kripalani, J.B., 151 & fn, 152 & fn, 159, 169, 334, 335, 402, 539 fn
———, Krishna, 525, 802
———, Nandita, 802, 804
Krishak Praja Party, 94 & fn, 120 fn, 239, 409 fn
Kuala Lumpur, 660
Kuar, Ram, 460, 461
Kumaon hills, 232, 881, 882

Labour Monthly, 869
Labour Party (British), 747 & fn
Lahore, 211, 212, 245, 264, 276, 277, 519, 592 fn, 632
———, Congress session at, 587
Lahore conspiracy case, 592 & fn
Lal, Shyam Sunder, 856 & fn
Laljee, Hooseinbhoy A., 720 & *fn*
Lansdowne, 802
Lawrence, T.E., 522
Laxmidas, 542, 543
League of Nations, 179 fn, 275, 543, 596, 619 & fn, 716 fn, 721, 722 fn, 724, 727 fn, 740, 741, 745, 755
Left Book Club, 701 & fn, 705 & fn
Leighton, Clare, 87 & *fn*
Leisured Women (Lady Rhondda), 767 fn
Lenin, 861, 862, 869
Letters From a Father to His Daughter (J. Nehru), 381
L'Europe, 869
Levy, H., 868
Liberal Party (India), 87, 130
Life of Charles, Lord Metcalfe, (E. Thompson), 354 & fn, 868
Linlithgow, Lord, 105 fn, 250, 619
Lipari, 591 fn
Lippmann, Walter, 736 & fn
Literary Digest, 869
Living Age, 869
Lohia, R.M., 615, 703, 746
London, 18, 56, 103, 259, 261, 354 & fn, 499, 615, 634, 653, 657, 667, 701 fn, 703, 730, 783, 786, 800 & fn, 804, 814 fn, 850, 853, 854, 858 fn, 862, 869
Lothian, Lord, 74, 82 & fn, 378 & fn, 633, 634
Lucknow, 35, 55, 57 fn, 77 fn, 156 fn, 168, 170, 180, 183, 190 fn, 191 & fn, 210, 211, 216 fn, 232, 334, 340, 357, 383, 384, 386, 393 & fn, 405, 448, 519, 595 fn, 765, 766, 793, 803, 824, 825, 829, 877
———, Congress session at, 202, 218, 530, 618 fn, 765, 766
Lucknow Municipal Board, 201
Lucknow Pact, 144 fn
Ludhiana, 258 fn

Machiavelli, 520 fn
Madani, Maulana Ahmad Husain, 137 & *fn*
Madgavkar, Govind, 34 & fn, 712 & fn
Madina, 539 fn, 540

Madras, 59 fn, 196, 214, 249, 251, 263, 320, 336, 364 fn, 365, 368, 412 fn, 441, 555, 675, 723, 767, 797, 798
Madrid, 701, 702 & fn, 704, 710
Madurai, 797, 798
Magharam, 542, 543
Mahant Bhairongir, 543, 544
Mahmud, Syed, 138, 140, 146, 160
Majorca, 704
Majumdar, Niharendu Dutt, 408 fn
———, Suresh, 415
Malaviya, Kapil Deva, 851
———, Keshav Deva, 144-146, 154, 176, 183
———, M.M., 13, 14 fn, 152, 164, 403
Malaya, 43, 85, 90, 101, 104, 249, 256 & fn, 364 fn, 412, 417, 588, 625, 659, 670, 671, 673, 674, 677, 679 & fn, 681, 682, 716
Malkani, N.R., 864 & fn
Maloomat, 77 fn
Manchester Guardian, 88 & fn
Manchester Guardian Weekly, 868
Manchuria, 741
Mandalay, 662 fn
Manipur, 501
Mansarovar, 875
Marseilles, 739 & fn, 788
Marwar, 546
Marx, Karl, 869
Masani, M.R., 572 & fn, 573 fn, 727 & fn, 759 fn, 770
Mascaro, J., 711 & fn
Mashriqui, Tarzi, 539 & fn
Mass Awakeners Union (Bangalore), 549
Mathur, Biswanath, 632 & *fn*
Maxwell, George, 716 & *fn*
Maynard, Herbert John, 863 & *fn*
Mazzini, 698
Medhi, Bishnu Ram, 483 & *fn*
Meerut, 170, 382 fn
Mehta, Jivraj, 641 fn
Mela Ram, 206
Mellor, W., 34 & *fn*, 633
Menon, V.K. Krishna, 3, 29, 30 fn, 76, 85, 90, 111, 197, 293 & fn, 378 & fn, 515, 614, 618 fn, 633, 659 & fn, 703, 718, 725, 727, 847, 848 & fn, 862
Merwara, 532-534, 536
Mesopotamia, 799
Messina, 790
Mhow, 638
Midnapore, 263, 340
Mill Kamdar Union (Ahmedabad), 510 fn
Milton, John, 830
Mirzapur, 198
Misra, Dwarka Prasad, 356, 357
Mississipi Valley Committee, 806
Mitra, S.C., 442 & fn
Mitter, Bhaskar, 448 & *fn*
Modern Review, 519, 520 fn, 525, 862, 871
Mohamad, Riaz, 872 & fn
Mohanta, Mohan Chandra, 38 & fn
Moid, Syed Abdul, 138 & fn, 140
Mont Blanc, 788
Moradabad, 359
Moscow, 94, 394, 736 fn
Moscow Daily News, 793 fn
Mukherjee, Bankim, 408 & *fn*
Muktaram, 542, 544
Mumbai Girni Kamgar Union (Bombay), 330 fn
Munich, 812
Murarilal, Doctor, 191
Muslim Gujarat, 132 fn
Muslim League, 24 fn, 32 fn, 77 & fn, 78, 119-122, 125 fn, 129 fn, 130-132, 135 fn, 136 & fn, 137, 142, 143, 144 fn, 146, 150 & fn, 151, 159-161, 165-169, 171, 172, 173 fn, 175, 176 fn, 178-180, 185 & fn, 186 & fn, 188, 190 fn, 195, 197, 198, 200-202, 204-206, 209 & fn, 211 fn, 217, 218, 219 fn-223, 226 fn, 227, 232-234, 237-240, 244, 274, 340, 361, 409 fn, 445, 446, 468, 514, 516, 758, 767
———, session at Lucknow, 185 fn, 186, 188 fn, 202 fn, 209 fn
Mussolini, Benito, 28, 82, 195, 782 & fn, 853
Mussoorie, 851 fn
Muzaffarpur, 336

Mysore, 263, 538-540, 548, 551-553, 561, 757, 763, 764
Mysore Congress Board, 549 fn, 550, 552, 553, 557, 558, 560, 561, 566, 578

Nagpur, 600 fn, 791 & fn
———, Congress session at, 600 fn
Naidu, Padmaja, 519, 523, 796
———, Sarojini, 35
Nair, T.M., 675 fn
Najibabad, 191 fn, 205
Nambiar, A.C.N., 783, 784, 793
Nambudiripad, E.M.S., 529 & fn
Nanak, 625 & fn
Nanda Devi, 874, 875, 880
Nanking, 370
Naoroji, J.A.D., 853 & fn, 854 & fn
Narayan, Jayaprakash, 399 fn
Narendra Deva, Acharya, 113 fn, 134, 147, 153, 155, 169, 190, 386
Nariman, K.F., 100 fn, 278 & fn, 279, 300, 568 & fn
Nasir-ud-din, Maulana, 193 fn, 195
Nath, Raja Narendra, 863
National Academy of Sciences, 812
National Agricultural Party, 19 & fn, 166 & fn
National Awami Party, 176 fn
National Peoples Congress Committee (China), 733 fn
National Publication Society, 113 fn
Nator (Bangladesh), 269 fn
Natural Bent (L. Fielden), 845
Nazar, Shah, 198
Nehru, Indira, 28, 30, 91, 103, 144, 354, 360, 704, 781, 785, 787, 789, 791-795, 797, 798, 800-805, 853
———, Jawaharlal, 9 fn, 24 fn, 28 fn, 41 fn, 50 fn, 56 fn, 58, 59, 61 fn, 77 fn, 84 fn, 92 fn, 96 fn, 102 fn, 105, 110 & fn, 113 fn, 124 fn, 125 fn, 129 fn, 151 fn, 160 fn, 178 fn, 207 fn, 211 fn, 212 fn, 215, 221 fn, 226 fn, 231 fn, 232 fn, 244 fn, 245 fn, 256 fn, 268 fn, 291, 293 fn, 303, 304, 327, 354 fn, 355 fn, 374, 375, 388 fn, 408 fn, 409 fn, 411 fn, 415 fn, 433 & fn, 443, 444 fn, 446 fn, 449 fn, 454 fn, 468, 502 fn, 508 fn, 509 fn, 510 fn, 511 fn, 520-523, 571 fn, 573 fn, 576 fn, 585-587, 595 fn, 618 fn, 619 fn, 637 fn, 638 fn, 648 fn, 659 fn, 660 fn, 693, 711 fn, 736 fn, 765 fn, 779 fn, 823 fn, 845 fn, 847, 848 fn, 851 fn, 858 fn, 864 fn, 866 fn, 872 fn, 874 fn, 880 fn
———, presides over All India Convention of Congress legislators, 60-71; presides over Punjab Political Conference, 265-267; proceeds to Burma, 650, and to Malaya, 663; sails for Europe, 541, 638
———, on abolition of Zamindari, 292, 437; on agrarian reforms in U.P., 385; on allegation against Madras ministry, 355, 359, 360, 368, 441, 442; on all-India language, 832; on Alwar state, 537; on Anti-Constitution Day, 40, 50, 71, 72, 79, 398; on apathy of Muslims, 32, 33; on Assam Congress, 484; on Assam line system, 283, 290, 487, 488, 494, 496; on Assam Oil Company, 499; on assurances from Governors, 74, 83, 114; on *Autobiography*, 864; on award of titles, 349, 431; on ban on independence pledge, 14, 254, 401; on *Bande Mataram*, 38, 187, 222, 236, 237, 341, 342, 436, 437, 768; on Basic English, 838, 839; on beauty of Khali, 865; on Bengal Congress, 406, 407; on Bengal Government, 269, 270; on Bhopal state, 540, 541; on Bijnor bye-election, 191-197, 201; on Bikaner, 542, 543; on bombing of the frontier, 457-462; on boycott of Japanese goods, 731-733, 735; on breakdown of negotiations with Governors, 76; on British army in India, 590; on British Commonwealth, 597; on British Government, 457-460, 469, 470, 473, 490,

533, 621, 626, 628, 752, and capitalism, 352; on Bundelkhand bye-election, 135-155, 159, 160, 167, 175-177, 182, 183; on Burma Congress Committee, 662, 764; on Burmese politics, 661; on capitalists, 98, and capitalism, 681; on civil liberties in India, 261-264, 312, 347-349, 397, 556, 557, 559, 574; on civil liberties in Indian states, 530, 531; on civil services, 369, 389, 390, 589; on clove boycott, 715; on coalitions, 78, 110, 239; on collective security, 741, 747, 755, 756; on common script, 833; on Communal Award, 131, 234, 235; on communalism, 7, 8, 34, 39, 62, 127, 160, 173, 174, 201, 202, 228, 241, 464, 639, 758, 769, 822; on communalists, 446; on communal pacts, 240; on complete independence, 18, 65, 99; on Congress, 11, 21, 39, 53, 54, 61, 102, 121, 122, 125, 126, 150, 174, 178, 202, 208, 209, 240, 244, 300, 301, 310, 311, 326, 337, 367, 374, 388, 399, 482, 491, 562, 574, 585, 667, 669, 670, 751, 752, 757, 766; on Congress and Goans, 857, 858; on Congress Hospital (Allahabad), 777, 778; on Congress and Indian states, 429, 529, 535, 546, 547, 549-551, 554, 556, 560, 564, 566, 580, 581; on Congress and kisan sabhas, 37, 38, 391, 392, 417-425, 429, 430; on Congress and labour, 363; on Congress and mass contact, 49, 62-64, 67, 73, 74, 87, 121, 123, 127, 128, 130, 156, 157, 172, 174, 178, 202, 218, 220, 273, 339, 340, 402, 419, 428, 429; on Congress ministries, 281, 289, 292, 293, 297, 298, 303, 304, 306, 309, 311, 318, 323, 324, 326, 337-339, 344-346, 362, 366, 370, 389, 393, 435, 465, 729, 730, 757; on Congressmen and official contacts, 426, 427; on Congress and Muslim League, 178, 180, 192, 193, 226, 233, 234; on Congress and Muslim League in U.P., 165-171; on Congress objectives in legislatures, 287; on Congress organization, 11, 45, 373, 477, 484, 489, 490, 493, 529, 559, 577, 729; on Congress Socialist Party, 410, 438; on Congress victory in elections, 26-29, 31, 32, 61-63; on Congress and war, 459, 731, 735; on Congressmen and official receptions, 364, 398; on Congressmen and titles, 431; on constituent assembly, 68, 397, 433; on constitutional crisis, 81, 113-116; on constructive programme, 96; on defence of India, 606-609, 664, 665, 753; on democracy, 598, 826; on detenus, 99, 257, 258, 271, 272, 276, 592, 769-771; on Dhubri strike, 498; on differences between Governors and Congress ministers, 377; on difficulties in public life, 453; on disciplinary action, 187-189, 409; on discipline among Congressmen, I, 70; on dispatch of Indian troops abroad, 327, 607, 611-613, 617, 618, 719, 722, 820; on display of news, 415, 416; on division of provinces, 600, 601; on Dominion Status, 65, 66, 97, 636, 664; on duty of legislators, 49, 286, 485; on Edward VIII, 805; on elections, 6-8, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23; on European situation, 673; on examinations, 789, 790, 795, 796; on external aggression, 98, 630, 631; on false reporting, 434; on fascism, 586, 706, 707; on fascism in Goa, 263; on fascist tendencies in India, 852, 853; on Fazlul Huq, 94, 340; on federal and provincial legislatures, 603, 604; on federation, 294, 378, 379, 397, 435, 531, 655, 730, 756, 759, 760; on flying, 788; on foreign education, 328, 854-856; on foreign policy, 609, 745-747; on French Revolution, 742; on frontier policy, 97, 98, 459-462, 469, 470, 473, 475; on fundamental rights, 601; on future constitution of India, 595-610; on Gaidiliu Rani, 502; on Gandhi Seva Sangh, 388; on Garhwal, 880, 881; on glory of Vienna, 783; on Government of India Act of 1935, 70, 72, 75, 83, 251, 297, 300, 306, 311, 585, 595; on Governors and cabinet meet-

ings, 356; on Harduaganj conference, 452; on Harijans, 41; on help to China, 641, 734-736, 744; on help to Spain, 295, 703, 708, 710-712; on himself, 481, 520-523, 847, 868, 869, 870; on Hindu law, 818; on Hindustani, 832, and its development, 828, 840, 841; on Hindustani Seva Dal, 772, 773; on Hindu-Urdu controversy, 826-830, 834-836; on his election tour, 41-43; on his wife's illness, 786; on hunger strikes, 274, 591, 593, 613, 614, 770; on inauguration of Chinese Hall in Santiniketan, 709; on incident at Ahmedabad station, 508; on Independence Day celebration, 400; on independence pledge, 635; on India and China, 738; on Indian army, 754; on Indian labour in Malaya, 678-684, 689-692; on Indian languages, 627, 827, 828, 830, 831, 833, 837, 838, 843-845; on Indians abroad, 652, 663, 670, 687-692; on Indian states, 263, 575, 577, 586, 599, 629, 756, 762; on Indian students abroad, 814, 815; on India's capacity for adaptability, 622-624; on India's culture, 624, 625; on India's diversity, 620; on India's head of state, 602; on industrial policy, 315, 316; on influences on him, 869; on internationalism, 668, 728; on Japan's aggression, 327, 719, 724, 820; on Jinnah's attitude, 24, 119, 120, 124, 132, 184, 207, 211-216, 222-227, 232-241, 243-245; on Jodhpur state, 545, 546; on journalistic ethics, 415, 416; on jute workers' strike, 93, 94; on Kanpur mill strikes, 329-334, 351-353; on khadi, 109, 404, 405, 439, 440; on kisan demonstrations, 383-386; on labour problems, 329; on labour and strikes, 317, 322; on land problems, 495, 628, 863; on language newspapers, 448; on law and society, 817, 818; on law courts, 848, 849; on League of Nations, 275, 596, 740, 754, 755; on Lenin, 861, 862; on lessons of elections, 62, 63; on literature, 827, 829; on Madurai temple, 799; on Mahatma Gandhi's meeting the Viceroy, 291; on Malaviya and Nationalist Party, 13, 14; on Malaya's wealth, 675, 698; on medium of instruction, 841, 842; on memorial to Motilal Nehru, 777-780; on mill strikes in Assam and Bengal, 256, 257; on ministerial crisis, 379; on minorities, 126, 131, 193, 208, 214, 234-236, 765, 767; on minority ministries, 95, 111, 249-254, 653, 663; on moral rearmament, 858, 859; on Moscow trials, 197, 736; on Muslim League, 129, 142, 143, 150, 166, 168-170, 179, 185, 186, 193-198, 200, 201, 217, 221, 239; on Muslim masses and Bengal Congress, 408; on Muslim support to the Congress, 218, 239; on Mysore state, 538, 548, 554, 567-573; on national flag, 205, 219, 220, 238, 291, 366, 425, 430, 505, 507, 508, 510, 513, 514, 559; on nationalism, 596, 668, 675, 743; on need for good relations with Burma, 658; on nonviolence, 758; on office acceptance, 23, 47, 50-52, 54-57, 58, 64, 65, 67-69, 73, 100, 101, 104, 105, 112, 116, 288, 302, 323, 350, 351; on official languages, 841; on opium evil, 486, 493; on Palestine, 303, 534, 713, 714, 720, 721, 723, 726, 737; on Pathans, 469-471; on planning, 806, 807; on planning of tour programme, 5; on political exiles, 349; on political organisations, 129; on political prisoners, 313, 325, 328, 374, 433; on Poona Pact, 16; on postal censorship, 321; on preservation of wild life, 354; on princes, 532; on princes and federation, 92, 267; on prison life, 877; on problems of Assam, 493-499; on proposal to re-elect him Congress President, 452; on proscription and censorship, 313, 349; on prosecution of Batliwala, 360; on Punjab Congress, 275, 403, 445; on Punjab Government, 184, 257, 258, 265-268; on red flag, 366, 425, 430, 505, 510, 514, 515; on red flag and national flag, 507-511; on religion and politics, 120, 412, 413; on repression in Chittagong, 255;

on riots, 228-231, 242, 245, 357, 358; on role of cartoonists, 846, 847; on role of progressive writers, 859, 860; on salaries of public servants, 284-286, 307, 375, 376, and Congress members of legislatures, 448; on science, 810; on science and religion, 809; on scientific outlook, 809; on sectarianism, 9, 32; on sedition, 343; on selection of Congress candidates, 8, 16; on self-reliance, 781, 784; on sending Congress representatives abroad, 712, 713; on separation of Burma, 646, 650, 652, 653, 655; on separation of judiciary from executive, 350; on Shia Conference, 190; on socialism, 131, 682, 850; on Soviet Russia, 866, 867; on Spanish civil war, 598, 702, 703, 708; on Speaker and politics, 283, 376; on Sri Lanka, 645, 647, 649; on staff work, 3, 6; on stone-throwing incident, 161; on students and national service, 816, and politics, 812, and their duties, 822-825; on suppression of news, 415, 416, and ideas, 563; on supreme court, 606; on Sylhet, 486, 494, 500; on tea gardens, 497; on terrorism, 594; on tour of Gujarat, 443; on trade unions, 316, 353; on training of volunteers, 450, 451, 771-774; on transfer of territories, 532, 534, 536; on Trotsky's trial, 654; on unity conference, 181, 446; on unity of India, 75, 491, 586, 599, 622-624; on Urdu, 834; on Urdu journals, 183; on vested interests, 394; on Viceroy's speech, 250, 251, 253; on victimisation of students, 35, 36; on violence, 314; on visit to Assam, 492; on visit to Burma and Malaya, 104, 657-661, 668-678, 684-695, 697, 698; on visit to frontier, 467-472; on war danger, 275, 398, 728, 746, 752; on woes of peasants, 122, 315, 335, 861; on women, 431, 616, 676, 677, 872; on workers, 352, 353, 375, 385, 679; on world problems, 720-722

———, Kamala, 543, 781 fn, 790 fn

———, Mohanlal, 777

———, Motilal, 77 fn, 777, 779 & fn, 783

———, Shridhar, 783

———, Swarup Rani, 785, 791

Nehru—The Years in Power (V. Sheean), 792 fn

Neibuhr, Reinhold, 869

Nepal, 4

Netherlands India, 753

New Delhi, 96 fn, 846 fn

New Republic, 869

News Chronicle, 585

New Statesman, 868

New Times, 226 fn, 232 fn

New York, 732, 867

New York Nation, 869

New Zealand, 619, 721

Nigerian National Democratic Party, 737 fn

Notes on The Way (Lady Rhondda), 787 fn

Official Language Commission, 279 fn

Olsvangar, J., 737

Ootacamund, 381

Orai, 140, 153, 160-163, 171, 173 fn

Orchha, 580 fn, 581

Ottawa, 614 fn

Oudh—see Avadh

Oxford, 103, 360, 805, 821, 853

Oxford Group, 858 & fn

Oxford History of India (V. Smith), 623

Oxford University Press, 382

Palermo, 792

Palestine, 143, 178 fn, 179 fn, 303, 534, 639, 720 & fn, 737, 768

Palestine And The Arab World, 737 fn

Palestine Conference, 179 & fn

Pande, Manilal, 141 & *fn*, 146

Pandit, Chandralekha, 785, 791

———, Nathimal, 543

———, Nayantara, 785
———, Rita, 785
———, R.S., 865
———, Vijayalakshmi, 389, 797, 805, 854 & fn, 878, 879
Pant, G.B., 78, 152-154, 159, 163, 168, 170, 227, 365, 382, 632, 856 fn
Paris, 713, 783, 815, 853, 869
Parliamentary Joint Select Committee, 81 fn
Parmanand, Bhai, 119, 185
———, Pandit, 592 & fn
Patel, Vallabhbhai, 14 fn, 37 & fn, 55, 78, 100, 171, 300, 334, 446 fn, 539 fn, 619, 769 fn, 770
———, Vithalbhai, 278, 279
Pathak, Radhey Shyam, 229 & *fn*
Patna, 829
Paton, Ernest F., 858
Patwardhan, Achyut, 14 fn
Pauri, 879
P.C. Banerji Hostel (Allahabad University), 512 & fn
Peasant and Labour Party, 408 fn
Peel Commission, 714 fn
Penang, 659, 660, 678, 679
Personal History (V. Sheean), 792 fn
Peshawar, 519, 802
Philippines, 625, 753
Philosophy and The Ordinary Man (Lord Samuel), 378 fn
Philosophy for a Modern Man (H. Levy), 868
Pilibhit, 15
Pillai, K. Parameswaran, 648 & fn
———, K. Shankar, 846 & fn, 847
Plato, 810
Plaza (Lucknow), 824
Pondicherry, 263, 797
Poona, 506
Poona Pact, 16 & fn, 164 fn
Port Dickson (Malaya), 679, 694
Portugal, 263
Praja Sewak, 536 fn
Praja Socialist Party, 229 fn, 319 fn
Prasad, B.N., 512 & fn
———, Rajendra, 151, 152 & fn, 164, 165 & fn, 181, 208, 224, 233, 317 fn, 399 fn, 454, 572, 573 fn, 677
———, Sushila, 854 & fn
Prayag (Allahabad), 514
Prem Chand, 382
Press Kamgar Union (Bombay), 511
Prevention of Seditious Meetings and Publications Act, 537
Punjab Political Conference, 202 fn, 268 fn
Punjab Unity Conference, 181 & fn, 235 & fn
Puri, 624
Puri, Ruplal, 402 fn, 403 & fn
Purnanand, Master, 403 fn
Pushkarendu, 543

Qasim, Maulvi Abul, 158 & fn
Quest for Certainty (J. Dewey), 868

Raipur, 198
Raja Bhushanarao, 410 & fn
Rajagopalachari, C., 336, 337 fn, 355 & fn, 360, 368, 412 fn, 413 & fn
Rajan, T.S.S., 441 & *fn*, 442
Rajasthan, 531
Rajendra Kumari (Rani), 145 & *fn*, 149
Rajputana, 829
Rajputana State People's Organisation, 546 fn
Rajshahi, 269 fn
Rajwade, Rani Laxmibai, 432
Ramamurthi, N., 551 & fn
Ramaswami, S.V., 440 & *fn*
Rameswaram, 624
Ramnagar, 543
Ranga, N.G., 36 & fn, 37 fn, 760 fn
Rangaswamy, P., 576 & fn
Rangoon, 409, 660, 678, 697
Rangoon Daily News, 660
Ranikhet, 865
Rao, V.S. Narayana, 579 & fn
Rasheed, Athar, 202 *fn*
Rashtra Seva Dal, 319 fn

Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix, 30 fn
Reconstruction of India (E. Thompson), 354 fn
Reddy, K.C., 566 & *fn*, 569, 570, 575
Renascent Africa (N. Azikiwe), 737
Revolt of 1857, 834
Reynolds, Reginald, 587 fn
Rhondda, Lady, 787 & fn
Riddle of MacArthur (J. Gunther), 867 fn
Rishikesh, 879
Rolland, Romain, 732
Rome, 782, 783, 788
Roosevelt, Franklin D., 682
Round Table, 737
Round Table Conference, 93 fn, 653, 654
Rousseau, 742
Roy, Ellen, 105
———, M.N., 103, 803
Russell, Bertrand, 732, 868, 869
Russia, 327, 459, 630, 664, 811, 812, 861-863, 866
Russia In Flux (H.J. Maynard), 863 fn
Russian Peasant and other Studies (H.J. Maynard), 863 fn
Rutherford, Lord, 806 & fn-808

Saharanpur, 198, 199, 206 & fn, 437 fn
Said, Maulana Ahmad, 196
Sainik, 536 fn
Saklatvala, S., 703 fn
———, Sehri, 703 & fn
Salem, 441 fn
Salem Times, 175 fn
Sampurnanand, 381
Samuel, H.L., (Lord Samuel), 378 & *fn*
Samyukta Socialist Party, 319 fn
Santiniketan, 519, 709, 710, 738 fn, 801
Sarabhai, Bharati, 857, 864
———, Leena, 864, 865
———, Mridula, 864, 865
Sarkar, N.R., 409
Sastri, V.S. Srinivasa, 679 & fn, 684, 693
Satyamurti, S., 617, 618, 719
Satyanarayana, G., 507 & *fn*
Satyapal, 184, 260, 264 fn, 445, 446 & fn
Saxena, Mohanlal, 78, 133, 134, 206, 375, 593 & fn
Sayidur Rahman, 221 & fn
Scarpa, 782
Sea Customs Act, 262
Sen, Arabinda, 380 & fn
Seth, Damodar Swarup, 147
———, Santram, 403
Shah, Abdulla, 477, 478
———, K.T., 113 fn, 595 fn
Shahidganj, 205, 235
Shahjahanpur, 35, 158
Shaistaganj, 502
Shakti, 13 fn
Shanghai, 311, 589, 611, 722
Shankaracharya, 624
Shankarlal, Lala, 538
Shankar's Weekly, 846 fn
Shannodevi, 13 & *fn*
Sharma, Achleshwar Prasad, 536 & *fn*, 545
———, Pyarelal, 382 & *fn*
———, Rameshwar Prasad, 581 & fn
Shastri, L.B., 307
———, S.B., 852
Shaw, George Bernard, 814, 815
Shawe, E.B., 96 & fn, 462
Sheean, Vincent, 792 & *fn*
Sherwani, Fida, 153-155
———, N.A.K., 133 & *fn*, 134, 136-141, 144-148, 153 & fn, 154, 159 & fn, 160, 171, 177, 182, 851
Shillong, 492
Shohet, A.E., 713 fn
Shroff, Satyanarain, 542, 544
Shukla, C.B., 508 & fn
———, R.S., 580 & fn
Shwe Dagon, 696, 697
Shyamlal, 16 & fn
Sicily, 790, 792, 793
Siddalingiah, T., 549 & *fn*
Siddiqui, Siddiq Ahmad, 178 & fn
Sikar, 535 & fn
Sikh League, 130, 201
Silchar, 499
Simla, 262, 506

Simon Commission, 590, 646 fn
Sind, 238
Singapore, 611 fn, 646, 656, 660, 675, 678, 679
Singh, Bhagat, 632,
———, Chandra, 802 & *fn*
———, Dewan Shatrughna, 139 & *fn*, 144, 146, 149, 154, 155, 176
———, Har Prasad, 145 & fn, 146
———, Kunwar Jasbir, 198
———, Lal Awadhesh Pratap, 580 & *fn*, 581
———, Narayan, 802 & fn
———, P.S., 814 & fn
———, Sangat, 437 & fn
Sinha, Srikrishna, 336, 369
Sitaramayya, Pattabhi, 309
Sivapur, 579 fn
Smith, Vincent A., 623 & *fn*
Socialist League (British), 31 fn
Society of Friends, 704
Somerville College (Oxford), 103, 796
Songs of the City (A.L. Strong), 793 fn
Sorbonne, 789, 795
South Africa, 216 fn, 651, 664
South Indian Liberal Federation, 675 fn
Spain, 66, 229, 275 295, 296, 406 fn, 457, 459, 472, 474, 598, 654, 672, 676 & fn, 701, 711, 739, 741, 755, 756
Spain-India Committee, 703 & fn, 705
Special Powers Act, 362
Spengler, Oswald, 869
Srikantaiah, M.L., 565 & fn
Sri Lanka, 265, 645-649, 711 & fn
Srinagar (Garhwal), 878-880
Sriniketan, 801, 804
Sri Prakasa, 453 & fn, 617 & fn
Srivastava, Jwala Prasad, 394 fn
Stalin, Josef, 736 fn
Stanley, O.F.G., 105 fn
Statesman, 96 fn, 226 fn, 232 fn, 436 & fn
Statute of Westminster, 65 & fn, 66, 664
St. Peter (Italy), 788
Strong, Anna Louise, 793 & *fn*
Subbarayan, P., 359 & *fn*, 381
Suhrawardy, Shahid, 406 & *fn*
Suisse, 784, 789, 800
Sujangarh, 543
Sumatra, 625
Surat, 132 fn, 183
Swaraj Bhawan, 777-780
Swaraj Bhawan Trust, 777
Swaraj Party, 166 fn, 170, 220, 720 fn
Swatantra, Teja Singh, 112 & *fn*, 258, 289
Swedish Match Trust, 253, 257, 498
Switzerland, 112 fn, 784, 800, 804
Sybil, (B. Disraeli), 680 fn
Sylhet, 189, 481, 486, 493, 494, 499-501
Syria, 143

Tagore, Rabindranath, 186, 187, 591, 734, 790 & fn, 801, 838
Tandon, P.D., 231 & *fn*
———, Purushottamdas, 145, 351, 376
Tan Yun-Shan, 731 fn, 738 & *fn*
Taormina, 792-794
Teertha, Ramananda, 41 & *fn*
Tehri, 877
Tellicherry, 360 fn
Testament of Youth (V. Brittain), 796 & fn
Thakore Harivadan, 450 fn
This was My World (Lady Rhondda), 787 fn
Thompson, Edward, 354 & *fn*, 375 & fn, 585-587, 805, 868
Tilak, Lokamanya, 109
Tilak Day, 507 fn
Time and Tide, 787, 868
Times (London), 15, 82 fn
Times Literary Supplement, 869
Times of India, 435
Times of Malaya, 698
Tipperah, 189, 407
Tiruchchirappalli, 441 fn
Toller, Ernst, 852 & fn
Tongues of Men (J.R. Firth), 868
Toronto, 826 fn

Trafalgar Square (London), 615
Travancore Coconut Growers Association, 648 fn
Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation, 413 fn
Treaty of Versailles, 755
Tribhuvan, A.B., 308 & fn
Tribune (Lahore), 268 & fn, 869
Tribune (London), 34 & fn, 90, 633
Trieste, 783, 784
Trincomalee, 646
Trishul, 880
Trotsky, Leon, 659 & fn, 736 & fn
Turkey, 143
Tyagi, Sharmada, 12 & *fn*

Udaipur, 532 fn, 534-536
Umayyad, 474 fn
Unionist Party (Punjab), 184 fn, 258 fn, 269, 403
United Provinces Agriculturists Debt Redemption Bill, 386 fn
United Provinces Political Conference, 803 & fn
United Provinces Sugar Factories Control Act, 73 fn
United Provinces Tenancy Bill, 379 fn, 393 fn
United States of America, 370, 376, 406 fn, 592 fn, 602, 621, 627, 630, 664, 753, 807, 852, 853, 856, 869
Unnao, 851 fn
Upadhyaya, S.D., 519

Valencia, 704
Varnashrama Swarajya Sangha, 412, 413 fn
Vendredi (Paris), 869
Vesugar, Pilloo, 782 & fn
Victor Emmanuel III, 782 fn
Viduraswatham, 539 fn
Viduthalai, 175, 441
Vienna, 783 & fn, 784, 875
Vijaya, 463 fn
Vijayaraghavachariar, C., 558
Visvabharati, 406 fn
Volapuk, 839
Voltaire, 742
Vyas, Jainarain, 546 & fn

Walli, Abdul, 77 & *fn*
Wardha, 28, 52 fn, 53, 56, 73, 86, 101, 103, 107, 110, 134, 138, 140, 144, 146, 148, 159, 163, 168, 192, 204, 214, 280, 287, 304, 336, 361, 401, 409, 453, 612, 712, 792, 796, 797, 804, 851
Waziristan, 460, 475 fn
Wein—see Vienna
Weizmann, Chaim, 726 & fn
West Godavari, 507 fn
Which Way to Peace? (B. Russell), 868
Whitley Commission, 93 & fn
Whyte, Frederick, 623 & fn
Women's International Conference, 739 fn, 740
Women's International for Peace and Freedom, 616 fn
World Peace Congress, 755
World Students Association, 815

Zaheer, 454 & fn
———, Sajjad, 158 & *fn*, 230, 307 851 & fn
———, Syed Ali, 180 & *fn*
Zanzibar, 349, 640 fn, 651, 696, 714-718, 721, 723, 724
Zetland, Lord, 81 & *fn*, 82, 84 & fn, 95 fn, 99, 104, 105, 250 & fn, 638 & fn, 640
Zurich, 726 & fn

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FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling—these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of the East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of

regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles, both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the 'third world' as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.

New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

EDITORIAL NOTE

This volume covers the period of just over twelve months, from June 1938 to July 1939. Not happy with the performance of the Congress ministries in the provinces, Jawaharlal Nehru sailed for Europe to study at first-hand the growing strength of Nazism and fascism and the consequential drift, despite the British policy of appeasement, towards war. He visited Spain, Britain, France and Czechoslovakia, and his letters, memoranda and despatches to the *National Herald*, the newspaper started under his guidance in September 1938, reveal his concern and clear understanding. He tirelessly reiterated the need to challenge aggression and to curb the gangsterism that was striding across Europe. But little could be expected from the British Government which was dominated by imperialist and class interests. So, even if finally Britain was driven to war, she could not expect any support from the Indian National Congress. A whole-hearted commitment to progressive forces against the reactionary elements that were dominant in Europe could not mean that a shackled India would fight on the side of diehard British conservatism. Only a free India could support the cause of world freedom and democracy with full enthusiasm.

On his return to India in November 1938, Jawaharlal did not lose sight of the international situation and organized the despatch of food supplies to Spain and medical aid to China. But developments in India soon forced their attention on him. However disappointed Jawaharlal might have been with the provincial Congress ministries, he recognized the unfairness of Jinnah's charges of discrimination against the Muslims and sought in vain for a clarification of these vague allegations so that they could be properly investigated. Meantime, there developed the clash in the leadership of the Congress between Mahatma Gandhi and Subhas Bose. An effort to keep this clash above the level of personal squabbles and to secure a settlement which would be fair to both sides only resulted in bitter criticism and accusation.

In these dismal months, painful from both the personal and the larger, national points of view, there were two forms of activity which gave Jawaharlal some satisfaction. He was closely involved with the popular awakening in the Indian states and helped to integrate this movement with the main struggle for Indian independence. He also, as chairman of the newly formed National Planning Committee, was able to start the

work of formulating plans for the India of the future, which would comprise a socialist economy within a democratic society.

Much of the material in this volume has been selected from the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru. The cooperation extended by the Director and the staff of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library is acknowledged.

Shri V.V. Giri has permitted us to consult his papers. The National Archives of India has authorised us to utilize material in its possession. *The Bombay Chronicle, The Hindustan Times, The Tribune, The Leader,* the *National Herald* and *The Hindu* have allowed us to reprint the texts of speeches, statements and editorials first published by them. The Asia Publishing House has permitted us to reprint one letter from *A Bunch of Old Letters.* The letter to Abdul Latif on 22 January 1939 has been taken from the facsimile in *Latif ki Kahani* (Bijnor, 1964). The frontispiece and the photograph of Jawaharlal with British Labour leaders have been received from Leonard Barnes, the photograph with the delegates of the Wafd Party from Tarak Nath Das, and that with Subhas Bose at Sodepur from the Netaji Research Bureau, Calcutta.

CONTENTS

1. In Europe

1	To Basil Mathews	30 January	1938	1
2	To Agatha Harrison	2 February	1938	1
3	To V.K. Krishna Menon	28 April	1938	2
4	To Agatha Harrison	9 May	1938	3
5	India Cannot Stand Aloof	24 May	1938	4
6	To Shankarrao Deo	26 May	1938	6
7	The Object of the Visit	27 May	1938	6
8	Farewell Message to India	2 June	1938	7
9	To J.B. Kripalani	12 June	1938	7
10	A Letter from the Mediterranean	11/13 June	1938	8
11	On the Morale of Spain	18 June	1938	17
12	On Spain and Britain	19 June	1938	17
13	France and India	20 June	1938	19
14	The Situation in India	21 June	1938	21
15	Conditions in India	23 June	1938	24
16	Britain, Spain and India	23 June	1938	25
17	The Need for Understanding India	27 June	1938	27
18	India and the International Situation	29 June	1938	29
19	The Boycott of Japanese Goods	29 June	1938	30
20	India and the World	29 June	1938	30
21	The Hidden Crisis in India	30 June	1938	33
22	India and Britain	6 July	1938	34
23	Civil Liberties in India	7 July	1938	55
24	China and India	7 July	1938	56
25	To J.B. Kripalani	14 July	1938	57
26	To Subhas Chandra Bose	14 July	1938	58
27	On Federation	14 July	1938	59
28	Peace and Empire	15 July	1938	61
29	The Congress and Collective Security	16 July	1938	69
30	The Spirit of Indian Nationalism	16 July	1938	72

31	Greetings to Spain and China	17 July	1938	77
32	India and the British Labour Party	18 July	1938	78
33	To W.H. Gladstone Solomon	19 July	1938	81
34	India and the War Danger	20 July	1938	82
35	To Carl Heath	21 July	1938	83
36	India and the World Crisis	21 July	1938	83
37	The Bombing of Open Towns	24 July	1938	85
38	To J.B. Kripalani	27 July	1938	89
39	Spain, China and India	31 July	1938	91
40	To J.B. Kripalani	1 August	1938	92
41	Note to the Working Committee	1 August	1938	93
42	To Bharati Sarabhai	3 August	1938	105
43	Indian Students Abroad	8 August	1938	107
44	To J.B. Kripalani	16 August	1938	108
45	The Czech Crisis	17 August	1938	109
46	The Birth of the National Herald	21 August	1938	110
47	To J.B. Kripalani	24 August	1938	114
48	To J.B. Kripalani	30 August	1938	117
49	The Tension in Europe	31 August	1938	119
50	Nationalism and the Mass Struggle in India	August	1938	120
51	To J.B. Kripalani	1 September	1938	128
52	Germany and War	3 September	1938	129
53	India and the European Crisis	5 September	1938	130
54	Note for the Working Committee	6 September	1938	131
55	India's Objectives	6 September	1938	137
56	The Betrayal of Czechoslovakia	8 September	1938	142
57	Message to the British Communist Party Congress	13 September	1938	145
58	To J.B. Kripalani	15 September	1938	146
59	The Crisis in Europe	18 September	1938	148
60	The Munich Crisis	20 September	1938	150
61	The Great Betrayal	22 September	1938	153
62	On the Brink	22 September	1938	155

63	The Struggle of Czechoslovakia	24 September	1938	158
64	Cable to A.I.C.C.	25 September	1938	159
65	The Betrayal of Czechoslovakia	26 September	1938	159
66	London in Suspense	28 September	1938	161
67	The Choice Before Us	29 September	1938	166
68	It Is Not Peace	30 September	1938	171
69	To G.B. Pant	1 October	1938	172
70	To Abul Kalam Azad	1 October	1938	174
71	To Nahas Pasha	1 October	1938	175
72	Pacifism and Nonviolence	2 October	1938	179
73	Peace and After	2 October	1938	180
74	The Problem of Palestine	3 October	1938	184
75	To A.C.N. Nambiar	3 October	1938	186
76	The World Crisis	4 October	1938	187
77	The Hoax	15 October	1938	188
78	The New Europe	18 October	1938	191
79	The Indian Princes	21 October	1938	193
80	Indian Freedom and World Politics	23 October	1938	195
81	The Real India	29 October	1938	198
82	Cable to India League	10 November	1938	200
83	To V.K. Krishna Menon	17 November	1938	201
84	Report on His Travels	17 November	1938	202

2. The World Crisis

1	Why India Supports China	21 August	1938	209
2	To V.K. Krishna Menon	21 November	1938	211
3	To A. Del Vayo	21 November	1938	212
4	Appeal for Help to Spain	22 November	1938	213
5	Europe and India	22 November	1938	215
6	Spanish Relief	4 December	1938	216
7	Indian Labour in Malaya	6 December	1938	218
8	The Tragedy of Palestine	18 December	1938	219
9	To Charles Francois Baron	23 December	1938	223

10	To Gertrud Baer	24 December	1938	223
11	To Gerta Calmann	24 December	1938	224
12	Help to China and Spain	3 January	1939	225
13	Britain's Foreign Policy	7 January	1939	226
14	Spain and Europe	10 January	1939	229
15	To R. Gowtum	22 January	1939	234
16	Homage to the Spanish Republic	24 January	1939	234
17	India Looks at the World	25 January	1939	235
18	Our Path is Clear	26 January	1939	241
19	On the International Situation	21 March	1939	244
20	India and Egypt	27 March	1939	246
21	To Chen Ming Shu	6 April	1939	248
22	To Kamil El Chadirchi	6 April	1939	249
23	Medical Mission to China	8 April	1939	250
24	To Christine Shaddick	18 April	1939	251
25	To William Rust	18 April	1939	252
26	The Wooing of Russia	30 May	1939	252
27	England's Dilemma	31 May	1939	255
28	The New China	15 June	1939	265
29	Spain—A Year Ago	25 June-23 July	1939	267

3. *The Coming of War*

1	Socialism, Fascism and Imperialism	13 April	1939	283
2	The Coming of Dr. Schacht	16 April	1939	285
3	Destiny	16 April	1939	287
4	Relief for Ten Days	18 April	1939	289
5	The Challenge	18 April	1939	292
6	The Congress and War	22 April	1939	294
7	The Gathering Clouds	25 April	1939	296
8	To Harry Pollitt	26 April	1939	298
9	To V.K. Krishna Menon	26 April	1939	299

10	The Congress and War Danger	1 May	1939	300
11	No Contradiction in Congress Policy	2 May	1939	301
12	To J.B. Kripalani	5 May	1939	303
13	To Eduard Benes	31 May	1939	304
14	To Rajendra Prasad	7 July	1939	305

4. Provincial Autonomy

THE WORKING OF THE MINISTRIES

1	To Gulzari Lal Nanda	22 November	1938	309
2	To G.B. Pant	8 December	1938	311
3	The Kisans and the Congress	30 December	1938	312
4	Askote	25 January	1939	318
5	To G.B. Pant	21 February	1939	320
6	To V.K. Krishna Menon	24 February	1939	321
7	To B.G. Kher	17 March	1939	322
8	To C. Rajagopalachari	17 March	1939	323
9	To Leonard K. Elmhirst	21 March	1939	324
10	Provincial Governments—Wake up	28 March	1939	325
11	Standards of Public Conduct	30 March	1939	329
12	To Mahatma Gandhi	1 April	1939	331
13	To Yusuf Meerza	4 April	1939	333
14	Kisans Should Strengthen the Congress	16 April	1939	334
15	To Abul Kalam Azad	17 April	1939	335
16	To Rajendra Prasad	12 May	1939	336
17	To Rajendra Prasad	14 May	1939	338
18	All India Political Prisoners' Day	15 May	1939	338
19	To Rajendra Prasad	17 May	1939	339
20	To Vallabhbhai Patel	17 May	1939	340
21	To Rajendra Prasad	17 May	1939	340
22	To Vallabhbhai Patel	23 May	1939	341

23	To Rajendra Prasad	27 May	1939	342
24	The Problems before the Congress	3 June	1939	343
25	To Vallabhbhai Patel	16 June	1939	347
26	To Rajendra Prasad	2 July	1939	348
27	A Governmental Lapse	9 July	1939	349
28	To Rajendra Prasad	11 July	1939	352
29	On the Success of Mass Literacy Campaigns	14 July	1939	353

THE CONGRESS MINISTRIES AND THE MUSLIMS

30	On Jinnah's Charges against the Congress	3 January	1939	354
31	To M.A. Jinnah	4 January	1939	355
32	To Sikandar Hayat Khan	4 January	1939	355
33	On Charges of Atrocities on Muslims	8 January	1939	356
34	To G.B. Pant	16 January	1939	358
35	To Abul Kalam Azad	22 January	1939	359
36	To Abdul Latif	22 January	1939	360
37	To Mohamed Azizur Rahman	25 February	1939	361
38	To Nemi Saran Jain	30 May	1939	362

5. National Planning

1	To Anil Kumar Chanda	1 December	1938	367
2	On Industrialisation	17 December	1938	367
3	Congress Policy on Large-Scale Industries	21 December	1938	368
4	To V.V. Giri	16 January	1939	370
5	To V.V. Giri	27 January	1939	371
6	National Planning and Industrialisation	14 February	1939	372
7	To K.T. Shah	13 May	1939	373

8	To H. Trivedi	13 May	1939	375
9	The Need for Planning for Free India	4 June	1939	375
10	Planning—A Continuous Process	15 June	1939	380
11	To G.B. Pant	16 June	1939	383
12	To V.V. Giri	16 June	1939	384
13	Guide-lines for Planning	19 June	1939	385
14	The Programme of the National Planning Committee	20 June	1939	391
15	To Jagdish Prasad	20 June	1939	394
16	To V.V. Giri	20 June	1939	396
17	To Subhas Chandra Bose	21 June	1939	397
18	The Necessity of Industrialisation	29 June	1939	398
19	Planning and the Public	30 June	1939	399
20	To Subhas Chandra Bose	11 July	1939	401
21	To V.V. Giri	14 July	1939	402

6. The Indian States

1	Repression in Travancore	21 October	1938	405
2	The New Awakening in Indian States	18 November	1938	405
3	To Edward Thompson	29 November	1938	407
4	Indian States to Form Part of Free India	30 November	1938	408
5	To Gangaram Wazir	6 January	1939	409
6	The Ranpur Incident	12 January	1939	410
7	Aundh	29 January	1939	412
8	Struggle in the Indian States	3 February	1939	412
9	To G.B. Pant	4 February	1939	413
10	On Your Feet	7 February	1939	414
11	The Anachronisms of the Indian States	9 February	1939	415
12	Freedom Is Indivisible	15 February	1939	418
13	Police Firing in Orchha State	18 February	1939	431

14	Repression in Orchha State	27 February	1939	432
15	Firing in Jaipur	4 March	1939	433
16	Conditions in Kashmir State	4 March	1939	434
17	To Harekrushna Mahtab	5 May	1939	435
18	To the Agent to the Governor General, Orissa States	5 May	1939	436
19	Sarila State	21 May	1939	436
20	To A.V. Thakkar	30 May	1939	438
21	Conditions in Indian States	30 May	1939	439
22	To G.M. Bakshi	2 June	1939	440
23	Greetings to the Kashmir National Conference	8 June	1939	441
24	The Demand of Responsible Government	11 June	1939	441
25	To Jaipal Singh	21 June	1939	442
26	Gangsterism in Limbdi	22 June	1939	443
27	Facts about the Indian States	June	1939	443
28	To V.K. Krishna Menon	1 July	1939	445
29	The Future of the People in the States	13 July	1939	447
30	Feudalism in Hyderabad	15 July	1939	447

7. The Congress Organisation

9	To Rajendra Prasad	7 July	1939	470
10	Indiscipline in the Congress	10 July	1939	474

8. The Tripuri Congress and After

1	The Congress Presidential Election	26 January	1939	477
2	To Vallabhbhai Patel	26 January	1939	480
3	To Subhas Chandra Bose	4 February	1939	480
4	The Re-election of Subhas Bose	22 February	1939	485
5	Where Are We?	28 February and 1-6 March	1939	488
6	To Subhas Chandra Bose	1 March	1939	520
7	The Resolution on the National Demand	11 March	1939	521
8	On Criticism of the Resolution	11 March	1939	522
9	To V.K. Krishna Menon	16 March	1939	524
10	To Mahatma Gandhi	22 March	1939	526
11	To Mahatma Gandhi	24 March	1939	527
12	To Sarat Chandra Bose	24 March	1939	527
13	Rumours in the Press	26 March	1939	532
14	To V.K. Krishna Menon	31 March	1939	533
15	To Subhas Chandra Bose	3 April	1939	534
16	To V.K. Krishna Menon	4 April	1939	550
17	To Mahatma Gandhi	17 April	1939	553
18	To Rajendra Prasad	17 April	1939	556
19	To Subhas Chandra Bose	17 April	1939	557
20	To V.K. Krishna Menon	18 April	1939	558
21	To Subhas Chandra Bose	20 April	1939	559
22	To Mahatma Gandhi	20 April	1939	559
23	To Abul Kalam Azad	20 April	1939	561
24	Appeal to Subhas Bose to Withdraw Resignation	29 April	1939	562
25	Reasons for Not Joining the Congress Working Committee	2 May	1939	564

26	On the Ideological Differences in the Congress	2 May	1939	565
27	To K. Rama Rao	3 May	1939	567
28	To V.K. Krishna Menon	4 May	1939	570
29	To Vishambhar Dayal Tripathi	7 May	1939	571
30	To P. Subbarayan	13 May	1939	573
31	On the Formation of the Forward Bloc	21 May	1939	574
32	The A.I.C.C. and After	24 May	1939	575
33	On Ziauddin Ahmad's Insinuations	27 May	1939	581
34	A Dangerous Proposal	7 July	1939	582
35	On the Defiance of the A.I.C.C. Resolution	13 July	1939	583
36	Demonstrations against the A.I.C.C. Decision	13 July	1939	585
37	Dissensions Will Weaken the Congress	25 July	1939	586
38	The Congress Is the Only Weapon	26 July	1939	594
39	On the Forward Bloc	26 July	1939	595
40	Discipline in the Congress	31 July	1939	596
41	To Sri Prakasa	15 August	1939	599
42	Enough of It	18 August	1939	602

9. General

THE QUESTION OF LANGUAGE

1	A Common Language for India	31 January	1939	607
2	To Manzar Rizvi	4 March	1939	608

STUDENTS AND PUBLIC LIFE

3	Students and the World Problem	6 December	1938	609
4	Discipline in National Life	2 January	1939	610
5	The Cultivation of a Scientific Outlook	3 January	1939	613

ON INDIANS ABROAD

6	On Conditions of Indians Abroad	5 June	1939	618
7	To V.K. Krishna Menon	11 June	1939	619
8	To R. Bhamani	17 June	1939	620

PERSONAL

9	To Indira Nehru	12 April	1939	621
10	To Indira Nehru	13 April	1939	622
11	To Indira Nehru	22 April	1939	623
12	To Indira Nehru	26 April	1939	624
13	To Indira Nehru	12 May	1939	624
14	To Indira Nehru	3 July	1939	626

MISCELLANEOUS

15	To Rabindranath Tagore	1 December	1938	629
16	On Wearing European Dress	2 December	1938	630
17	To F.E. Aristarchi	8 December	1938	630
18	To Lionel Fielden	23 December	1938	631
19	To Madam Sun Yat-sen	27 December	1938	632
20	To A.C.N. Nambiar	December	1938	633
21	Keshab Chandra Sen	2 January	1939	634
22	Problems of Currency and Finance	9 January	1939	637
23	To Gregg M. Sinclair	22 January	1939	638
24	To K. Ahmad Abbas	25 February	1939	639
25	Khadi	6 March	1939	640
26	To Mohammad Hatta	17 March	1939	643

27	To V.K. Krishna Menon	6 April	1939	644
28	To Inayet Ali	7 April	1939	644
29	To K. Rama Rao	18 April	1939	645
30	To Frank C. Laubach	18 April	1939	646
31	To V. Lesny	18 April	1939	647
32	To Gopi Nath Bardoloi	18 April	1939	647
33	The Defence of India	19 April	1939	648
34	To Mohanlal Saxena	20 April	1939	654
35	To Rafi Ahmad Kidwai	20 April	1939	655
36	To F.J. Warburg	21 April	1939	656
37	To V.K. Krishna Menon	21 April	1939	656
38	To Shanti Prasad Agarwal	22 April	1939	657
39	Anti-Indian Films	6 May	1939	658
40	Educational Use of Films	6 May	1939	659
41	To K. Rama Rao	12 May	1939	659
42	To Mohammad Habib	12 May	1939	660
43	To C. Khaliquzzaman	15 May	1939	661
44	To Carl Heath	16 May	1939	661
45	Ernst Toller	24 May	1939	662
46	Society, Crime and Criminals	25 May	1939	664
47	Federation	27 May	1939	665
48	To Lady Astor	27 May	1939	671
49	To Gopi Nath Bardoloi	30 May	1939	672
50	To Anup Singh	31 May	1939	672
51	To Farid Ansari	2 June	1939	673
52	To K. Rama Rao	4 June	1939	674
53	The Monsoon Comes to Bombay	15 June	1939	676
54	To Edward M. Groth	17 June	1939	677
55	On Obscene Notices and Noisy Processions	11 July	1939	678
56	The Significance of Khadi	12 July	1939	679

1

IN EUROPE

1. To Basil Mathews[1]

Allahabad
January 30, 1938

Dear Basil Mathews,[2]
I am grateful to you for your few lines of sympathy which you have sent me.[3]

I am thinking of visiting Europe next summer if I can possibly manage it. I feel tired. More so mentally than physically and it is not possible for me to find any kind of rest or even much of a change in India. If I go to Europe perhaps I might have the good fortune of meeting you there.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-5(Pt. 4)/1938, p. 637, N.M.M.L.
2. Basil Joseph Mathews (1879-1951); connected with British missionary societies; author of many books including *India Reveals Herself* and *The Church Takes Root in India.*
3. On the death of Jawaharlal's mother.

2. To Agatha Harrison[1]

Camp Wardha
February 2, 1938

Dear Agatha,
Thank you for your letters[2] and the cutting[3] which Cushman sent you. I am writing a few lines to Cushman.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. She wrote to Jawaharlal that Subhas Bose's talks with Zetland, Stewart and Halifax had made a deep impression. He had been very frank with them and they were under no delusion as to the situation or to the determined front against federation.
3. The cutting was of an [illegible] Walter Lippmann, in *New York Herald Tribune.*

I arrived here today for the Working Committee meeting. Subhas Bose has also just come, but he has gone out to spend the night at Shegaon and so I have had no chance to talk with him yet.

The more I think of it the more I feel like going to Europe next summer. It is true that the position here is getting extraordinarily complicated and one does not like to shirk responsibility at a time of difficulty. But I feel stale and it seems a little difficult even to carry on till the next Congress. I must freshen up and I do not see myself doing it in India. I should, in any case, like to see Indu. To ask her to come to India in summer would mean that she would have the worst time of the year in India. It would be possible of course for me to take her for a week or two to some out of the way place in the hills, or even to Kashmir, where I have been wanting to go for a long while. But wherever I might go people would come to me and I would have little peace. So I suppose I had best see her in Europe.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
April 28, 1938

set public meetings in London, I view the prospect with distaste. Perhaps one such meeting might be necessary, but why three?

I have fixed no programme in my mind about the Continent. But I should like to spend a good bit of my time there. I had intended going to Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and perhaps even Turkey. I do not know how far recent events will interfere with this. Of course, I should like to spend some time in Paris. Scandinavia is rather out of the way though it is attractive. Spain I would like to visit. I do not know if that will be possible or desirable....

I have been vaguely thinking of returning to India overland *via* the Russian and Central Asian republics. These Central Asian republics attract me very much. But all this is rather vague and perhaps it had better remain vague till I reach London and have a talk with you and other people. Much will depend on the international situation then.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Agatha Harrison[1]

Allahabad
May 9, 1938

Dear Agatha,

On my return today from a visit to the mountains of Garhwal I have received your letter of April 30th.[2] I agree with you that the situation in England and India is different from what it was two or three years ago. I cannot therefore adopt the same attitude as I did on the last occasion I visited England. On the last occasion, I made it more or less of a rule not to see people who were officially connected with the British Government. I do not propose to do that this time. But I must say that I am not keen on making any advances towards them. If any of them desires to meet me and this meeting can be conveniently arranged, I shall not object. I am writing on these lines to Krishna Menon also.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. She wrote that unlike his last visit to London, Jawaharlal should not during his proposed visit refuse to meet persons holding key positions relating to India.

I had written to Indu about Lord Lothian's invitation. Her personal reaction to it was not favourable as she objects strongly to Lothian's pro-fascist politics. I have however written to Lothian that I shall gladly go to Blickling. As for the date, this might be fixed up in consultation with Krishna Menon.

I do not know when I shall go to Paris. I shall not go there on my way to London from Genoa.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. India Cannot Stand Aloof[1]

Events are moving fast in the world. One does not know when the world map might be altered. India cannot stand aloof. We should establish better contacts with foreign countries and more of us should visit them. I am worried at the news of the imminent danger of war and the aggressive postures of certain countries. These countries do not even attempt to conceal these postures. One does not know when a world war might take place. And what would India do then? The Congress is the only effective organisation which would be able to face such difficulties. Therefore, the Congress should further strengthen itself lest it may be found wanting. In ten or twelve days I will leave India for four months, but my programme is not yet settled since the conditions are changing fast.

The labour trouble in Cawnpore is an old one. Since the Congress took up the reins of the government, the labourers had had some hopes and their power also increased. The government appointed an enquiry committee under the chairmanship of Babu Rajendra Prasad whose findings[2] were accepted by the labourers, but were rejected by the employers'

association. The latter had used strong, rude and unseemly language against the committee and exhibited only passion and anger but no reason. Employers do not want to part with any part of their exorbitant income. I admit that the labourers have blundered in not waiting for the government's decision on the report and deciding on a lightning strike. I believe that if the employers had also rejected the government's decision,[3] the labourers' case would have become strong. I admit that the labourers were exasperated by their continued victimisation, the apathy of the employers and this wholesale rejection of the committee's findings. The strike affects Hindus and Muslims alike. It concerns us all as it would affect the labourers all over India, as also the fight for freedom. I appeal to the public to render them all possible help.

I have a feeling that public meetings are treated as a *tamasha*. I, however, attach great importance to them. It is really tantalising that while we spend all our time and energy to serve you, we should get in return only your love and affection. I, therefore, urge upon you to properly understand the suggestions that are made and give practical shape to them.

The recent Shia-Sunni trouble[4] in Lucknow and the communal riots in several places are to be regretted. This is not the way to face bigger problems confronting us. It is disappointing to find that we waste our energy over minor issues. Communal troubles have really no religious background but are rather political in nature. We cannot easily get at the root of communal troubles. But one thing is certain. The impression has gone round that the Congress government would allow all kinds of news to be published. We must put a stop to such a gross misrepresentation of our policy and remove the fear and misunderstanding from the public mind.

Recently the Mysore Government resorted to firing on the people. There is a great agitation going on in the states. People there are worried lest they may be left behind.

3. The U.P. Government had endorsed the recommendations of the Labour Enquiry Committee.
4. In Lucknow, on 22 April 1938, two persons were killed and twenty eight injured in a clash between Shia and Sunni Muslims.

6. To Shankarrao Deo[1]

Allahabad
26.5.38

My dear Shankarraoji,
I have just received your letter of the 24th.[2] Will you kindly convey to the German consul in Bombay my thanks for his kind invitation to me to include Germany in my European tour? I am afraid it is difficult for me to fix up anything about my tour from here as arrangements are entirely in the hands of my friends at the other end, and I do not want to do anything which might overlap or conflict with these arrangements. On my arrival in Europe I shall finally fix up my programme.

I hope to reach Poona on the 28th night and visit Panchgani on the 29th.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 24 May 1938, he passed on an inquiry from the German consul in Bombay whether Jawaharlal could visit Germany on an official invitation.

7. The Object of the Visit[1]

I have no particular object in view in visiting Europe this year. For some time past I have been thinking of going there so as to renew contacts and study changes in the situation there, on the spot. I think it is desirable for some of our public men to visit foreign countries from time to time for mutual advantage of both parties concerned. We cannot isolate ourselves in the world today. We must understand it and try to influence events as far as we can.

Another object of my visit is to meet my daughter. I have so far made no plans and have left my programme to some friends in Europe. On arrival in England I shall fix up my programme definitely. I should like to return to India by the overland route and not by sea.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 27 May 1938. *The Leader*, 29 May 1938.

8. Farewell Message to India[1]

My beloved countrymen, I go to Europe with the authority and on behalf of the Congress. I hope I shall deserve the hope and trust you have reposed in me. I may come back as soon as possible. But the fight for freedom must proceed as relentlessly as ever.

It is up to you to hold the banner of the Congress aloft and under its banner swear that you will not take rest until the battle of freedom is won.

I am going to Europe with a purpose and hope to return within a few months after visiting Spain, England, France and, if possible, some other countries, including Russia and America. Our nation, consisting of 350 millions of people, is pitted against one of the worst types of imperialism, namely British imperialism. It is engrossed in the life and death struggle for independence. Our people are determined to win Swaraj which is their birthright, and that accounts for the growing strength of the Congress.

I am fully confident that the people of India will keep the flag of Indian nationalism flying for ever. Swaraj is much more near to us today than ever, and so let the fight be strengthened.

1. Speech at Bombay, 2 June 1938. *The Hindustan Times*, 3 June 1938.

9. To J. B. Kripalani[1]

S.S. Biancamano
12/6/38

My dear Jivat,

I enclose a typed letter. I shall be grateful if you will have copies of this sent to the President and all the members of the Working Committee. I want to keep them in touch with my activities abroad and I propose therefore to send you periodical letters of this kind. They are not meant for publication but you can exercise your discretion and give publicity to any particular fact or part of the letters. Please show the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-1(K.W. V)/1938, p. 58, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

letters to Lohia also. I am sending a copy direct to Bapu and a copy to Vijayalakshmi.

During the voyage I have been surrounded by an atmosphere of friendliness and, to some extent, even respect. Partly this is due to many passengers having read my book but really it is due to an appreciation of the growing strength of the Indian people. The welcomes I got at out of the way places *en route* impressed people greatly. At Massawa I had a more enthusiastic welcome than the official welcome organised for the Viceroy of Ethiopia,[2] who by the way is a very delightful person. He is, I think, the nephew of the king of Italy.

Will you please tell Lohia that a very new and interesting leftist magazine is coming out in America called *Ken*? It has fine articles about Europe, China, etc., and the pictures are splendid. It comes out once a fortnight and costs 25 cents each copy....

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

2. The Duke of Aosta, cousin of King Victor Emmanuel, had been appointed Viceroy of Ethiopia in succession to Marshal Graziani in November 1937.

10. A Letter from the Mediterranean[1]

S. S. Biancamano
June 11/13, 1938

Our voyage is nine days' old already and in another three days' time we reach Genoa and disembark. It has been a pleasant voyage. The Indian Ocean was a little choppy. This did not affect me at all but it affected a considerable number of passengers who remained in the bowels of the ship for several days and then suddenly appeared as we approached the Red Sea. The Indian Ocean was close and sticky—that is the weather was so—the Red Sea was cooler and pleasanter than is usually the case. We are now in the Mediterranean and it is chilly.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-71/1938, pp. 17 (a-i), N.M.M.L. Enclosure to the preceding item.

We have a varied assortment of passengers on board—people from China and Japan, from India and those picked up from Italian Somaliland. Italians predominate and there are Chinese, Americans, English, Swedes, Danes, etc., and Indians. The English are not much in evidence. There is an Italian mission, under the leadership of an ambassador, which is returning from Japan, Manchuria and North China (the areas under Japanese occupation). This was a mission of goodwill to Japan with a business and industrial side to it. A small group of Chinese are going to Geneva for the labour conferences there.

Our ship stopped at Assab, which is not usually a port of call, to pick up the Duke of Aosta, the Italian Viceroy of Ethiopia, and his mother, the Dowager Duchess. It stopped next at Massawa in Eritrea (Italian Somaliland) and many fresh passengers came on board, almost all Italians. Suez and Port Said were the subsequent stops.

At Massawa, a number of Indian merchants and their wives had gathered together on the quay to welcome me. They were Gujarati Hindus and Muslims from western India—all Gujarati-speaking. Many of them had travelled long distances from the interior (from Asmara) especially for the purpose. Unfortunately, no one was allowed to land from the ship owing to some medical regulations, but a few Indians managed to get special permission from the local governor to board the ship, in order to see me. The rest of the crowd remained standing for hours in the hot sun on the quay. They gave me a rousing welcome which evidently impressed both the passengers and the Italian authorities. They shouted our well-known slogans and sported our national colours.

The small deputation of Indians—Muslim and Hindu—that came to see me on board at Massawa, complained to me of various disabilities they were suffering from and how the Italian Government was trying to squeeze them out. Many of them had been settled there for thirty years or more and had prospered. Trade was practically in their hands as the Somalis were backward, and the Italians were not well acquainted with the language and ways of the inhabitants.

I was told that the relations of the Indian merchants with the Somalis were excellent. Even with the Italian authorities, their relations were outwardly good. (I might mention that the Duke of Aosta subsequently spoke in good terms to me of the Indian merchants in that part of the country and even added that sometimes the Italian authorities borrowed money from them.) The merchants told me that since the Ethiopian campaign[2] and the introduction of economic sanctions against Italy,

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 454.

all imports from foreign countries other than Italy, had been stopped. Trade was thus confined to Italy and Italian goods. They put up with that, of course, as it was not possible for them to affect Italian policy in this respect. What they objected to was the new policy of pushing Indian merchants away whenever opportunity offered itself. Thus when an Indian merchant went to India, he must come back within a fixed period or he could not return at all. Newcomers were not welcomed or even permitted. There were a number of other disabilities which I need not mention here. The merchants asked me to move the Congress to take up this matter with the Italian Government. I explained to them that we could not do much in view of the international situation. Still, we could give publicity in India and I suggested to them to send a full memorandum to the foreign department of the A.I.C.C. They have promised to do so and I hope the foreign department will keep in touch with them and take such steps as it may consider necessary. The memorandum they will send will be in Gujarati. They know some English and can speak Italian and Hindustani but they feel at home in Gujarati only.

We may not be able to do much for these outlying colonies of Indians, but I do feel that we must keep up contacts with them. Their eagerness to meet me and display their solidarity with the national struggle in India was pleasing and encouraging. And in this welcome the Muslims took the lead, as they appeared to be the most important merchants there. Even my passage through their port of Massawa became an event in their lives as it brought them in personal touch with our struggle for freedom. It was evident that they had faith in the Congress and its leaders. I had a short talk with these Indian merchants and I told them of our recent success in Zanzibar and of the position in India and abroad.

As in Massawa, there are innumerable groups of Indians scattered all over the world who look to India. Even an occasional letter from our foreign department would cheer them up greatly, for they will feel then that India also remembers them and cares for them.

Many passengers in ships, passing through the Suez Canal, often manage to pay a brief visit to Cairo. I had decided not to do so. But three hours before reaching Suez, I received a marconigram from Cairo conveying to me the welcome of the Wafd Party[3] and requesting me to get off at Suez and proceed from there by private aeroplane, which

3. An Egyptian political party founded in 1918 by Zaghlul Pasha to press Egyptian demand for independence; dissolved along with other parties in January 1953.

had been chartered, to Alexandria to meet Nahas Pasha. I decided to accept this invitation and cabled accordingly. But the time was short and my cable reached too late. So when I disembarked at Suez there was no one to meet me. Through the good offices of Reuter's agent there, who had come to interview me, I engaged a car and went off to Cairo, reaching there at 9.30 p.m. on the 9th June. At 11.30 p.m. that same evening I was at last traced down by the person representing the Wafd. It was arranged that early next morning I should fly to Alexandria, spend some hours with Nahas Pasha and other Wafdist leaders, and then fly to Port Said to catch my boat the same day. Then long after midnight, I paid a visit to the pyramids and the Sphinx which looked very impressive in the moonlight.

On the 10th morning, we flew to Alexandria. There I met Nahas Pasha and a number of prominent leaders of the Wafd Party, including several ex-cabinet ministers. These included Makram Ebeid Pasha,[4] Secretary-General of the Wafd and ex-Minister of Finance, Mahomoud Bassouring Bey, ex-President of the senate, Naquib Hilaly Bey,[5] ex-Minister of Education, Saby Abu Allam Bey, ex-Minister of Justice, Abdul Fattab Tawil Bey,[6] ex-Minister of Health. We had two hours talk and then had to consume an enormous and magnificent lunch for another hour.

Our talk ranged over many subjects. Nahas Pasha and Makram Pasha told me of developments in Egypt. I told them of the position in India, and then we discussed briefly international affairs. There was nothing very new in what I was told about the Egyptian situation but certain interesting and instructive facts came to light.

I began by conveying the greetings of the Congress and of the Indian people to Nahas Pasha and to the Wafd Party which had carried on for many years the struggle for Egyptian freedom. I told them how deeply we were interested in this and how we had followed it, as far as we could, for we looked upon it as part of the great world struggle for freedom. Between Egypt and us there were many other bonds also and our opponent was the same imperialism. Nahas Pasha reciprocated these sentiments and said that they had looked upon the Indian struggle and its leaders with admiration. He reminded me of the attempts he had made in 1931 to meet and do honour to Gandhiji as the great leader of the fight for Indian independence. He had arranged a great

4. A Copt and the principal lieutenant of Nahas Pasha; left the Wafd Party in 1943.
5. Later left the Wafd Party; served as Prime Minister of Egypt from January to June 1952.
6. Minister for Public Health and Social Affairs in 1942; later held the portfolios of justice and communications.

party in his honour at Heliopolis, near Cairo, and issued invitations for five hundred guests to it, but the then government would not permit it. He had then tried to meet him at Port Said. Again, the government would not allow him to go on board or Gandhiji to set foot on Egyptian soil. In this way all his attempts to meet Gandhiji had been frustrated and he could not convey personally, as he desired, the greetings and admiration of the Egyptian people to the people of India, through their great leader. Those were black days for Egypt, he said, and unhappily they had returned more or less to them again and present conditions were very bad. The Wafd was as popular as ever with the *fallaheen*,[7] but the palace clique, aided by British imperialism, dominated the scene. The recent elections[8] had been accompanied by the most shameless intimidation and falsification of election returns. They were producing soon a black book on these elections. (I might add that from independent testimony, previous to this, both from English and French sources, there was a great deal of truth in this charge.)

I put it to Nahas Pasha that such tactics had always to be faced by a nationalist or a social movement struggling for freedom. Every device and method of oppression was employed by imperialism and reactionary cliques and vested interests. Unless the movement itself had sufficient strength, it could not cope with such tactics. Strength only could come from organised mass support. It therefore seemed to me that the Wafd did not have this organised mass support, for otherwise it would not weaken so rapidly because of palace intrigues. He admitted that there was some truth in this although the Wafd was still very popular with the masses. The Wafd leaders had thought that with their treaty with Britain, the independence struggle had practically ended in their success, and they had thrown themselves enthusiastically into the task of preaching Anglo-Egyptian friendship. As a government, they became absorbed in the work of the government and neglected their organisation and agitational work. This ultimately weakened the Wafd and when the time for a trial of strength came, they were unable to rise to the occasion. They had been over-confident, too full of faith in the *bona fides* of the British Government, not in sufficient touch with the masses.

As a matter of fact it is quite clear that the Wafd Party, while it was in power, did little or nothing for the peasantry. They were afraid of

7. Peasants.
8. In the elections held in April 1938, the Wafdists were heavily defeated and a coalition government of Liberals, Saadists and dissident Wafdists was confirmed in office.

alienating the big landlords as well as the palace. The royal family actually owns over ten per cent of the land in Egypt. It used to own much more. Over fifty per cent of this land is owned by a handful of people. These big landlords put a brake on the Wafd's activities and at the same time organised themselves under the shelter of the palace, to oppose the Wafd. The palace succeeded in creating a split in the Wafd. One group started criticising the main party on the ground that it was not advanced enough and was too friendly to the British. As a matter of fact this was a ruse, for this dissentient group consisted chiefly of the big landlord elements and it has subsequently cooperated fully with the palace group and even, to some extent, with the British.

The Wafd would not have been much affected by this if it had a powerful organisation behind it. But it had neglected this and thought of itself more as a government. The great fall in cotton prices was exploited by the opponents of the Wafd against them as if they were responsible for it. This had some effect on the peasantry. All this and other causes led to the defeat of the Wafd. But the real reason is the inherent weakness of the party. It is definitely an upper middle class party with a certain mass support but with no roots among the masses. Even the middle classes in Egypt have not grown sufficiently (less than in India); and such as exist are largely tied up with foreign interests. There is no real agrarian movement, no labour movement at all (trade unions are not permitted by law), and the whole outlook of the Wafd has been moderate and somewhat primitive. Oppressed by the physical force behind the palace and the British, they have thought in terms of raising trained volunteers to protect themselves. I understand that the Wafd were contemplating trade union legislation when they were thrown out of office.

We discussed the Indian movement and how it had been based on nonviolence. We considered the practical sides of it, apart from its moral aspects. We had a much harder task in India than the Wafdists in Egypt. The British were comparatively new in Egypt and although they had taken control of all the important and key positions, they still had not gone deep down to the roots. In India, they had dug themselves in during the last century and a half. We were disarmed as the Egyptians and had no means at our disposal to oppose violence with violence. Indeed it was manifest that the state's apparatus of coercion could not be successfully opposed anywhere by violent methods. The state had now a terrific superiority in this respect. And yet unless we could counter it and neutralise it by effective sanctions, we would remain helpless. It was only by our strength that we could progress. I pointed out how

we had developed strength by our peaceful methods and how the British Government, with all its coercive apparatus, had been unable to crush it. The Wafdists were greatly interested in my account, both of this method and of the development of our national movement during the past twenty years.

Then I told them of how and why we accepted ministries. The fact that some of our biggest leaders did not go into ministries, and also our rule that ministers should not belong to Congress executives, interested them greatly. They had had to face similar problems and they had decided differently. Of course conditions were different here but some of them were beginning to feel that the Congress policy had been a wise one.

We talked of many matters and I cannot write in detail or else this letter will never end. I tried to explain to them the background of our struggle, of how our main aim had been to put backbone and character into our people, to organise and discipline them, to lay stress on the means and high standards in public life, to forego even a present minor advantage if that conflicted with the principles we adhered to, and always to think and act in terms of the masses. Without the masses we were helpless and even independence meant to us the removal of the poverty and distress of our people and raising them to higher levels. I pointed out, of course, that we had not always lived up to our ideals and principles, we had made mistakes, showed weakness, and yet those ideals had helped us greatly in preventing us from straying too often and too far. And the success that had come to us had really been remarkable. Perhaps I exaggerated, as I am apt to do, when I talk to foreigners about our movement. Also when I am out of India, our day to day difficulties fade away and the major achievements and problems stand out. Anyway I impressed them considerably.

We discussed briefly the Hindu-Muslim problem in India and they expressed their great regret at the fact that some Muslims were not throwing their full weight into the national struggle and were creating difficulties.

We then went on to international affairs and I pointed out how India was thinking more and more of her own struggle in relation to struggles for freedom elsewhere. We realised that our own future was partly tied up with this. We had, therefore, definitely taken sides, in so far as an expression of opinion and sympathy went, in various external struggles such as in Ethiopia, Spain, China and, of course, in countries where a nationalist struggle for independence was going on. We had gone further and opposed fascism and generally but vaguely allied ourselves with the non-fascist forces. I mentioned our association with the

International Peace Campaign[9] and of how this had brought us nearer to the progressive and anti-fascist forces in the world. Although still a subject country, India, because of the inner strength she had gained and her widening outlook, was already playing some part, however small, in international affairs. Our prestige abroad was increasing and it was generally recognised that our independence could not long be delayed and, when freed, India would play an important part in world affairs.

Two hours were not sufficient for our conversation and we had to end it hurriedly. The question was put to me of how closer contacts could be established between Egypt and India, the Wafd and the Congress. I said that we would do all we could to have such contacts. The first thing to do was for the headquarters of the Wafd and the A.I.C.C. office to get into touch with each other and to exchange all publications, reports, etc. The next step might be sending delegations. I extended a cordial invitation on behalf of the Congress to Nahas Pasha and his colleagues of the Wafd to visit India, and they assured me that they would very much like to accept it and send a delegation. They inquired about a suitable time for this. I suggested January or February so that they might attend the Congress session, but I added that they would be welcome at any time. May I suggest that an official invitation be extended to Nahas Pasha and the Wafd by the President of the Congress?

Among the Wafdist leaders I found Makram Pasha to be the most intelligent and with a grasp of wider issues. He is a Copt.

After my interview with the Wafdist leaders we flew from Alexandria to Port Said. At the aerodrome, a number of Egyptians representing the local Wafd welcomed me, also some Indian merchants. We were pressed for time to catch our boat and could not stay but still we were given a rousing welcome in the streets of Port Said.

We have many interesting passengers on board and I have had frequent talks with them. The Duke of Aosta, the new Viceroy of Ethiopia, is a very charming man. He is about forty but is still very school-boyish and entirely unaffected and simple. His chief grievance in life seems to be that he has to put up with ceremonials.

The Italian mission to Japan has several agreeable and interesting members. They are full of praises for Japan of course, and they had tried to point out to me the virtues of the fascist regime. They knew my views. Some passengers possess my books and these have been going round, and the Italians have been reading my views on Mussolini and fascism. They were not to their liking but they took them in

9. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 576-577.

good part. I explained to them at length what we have been doing in India, laying special stress on our nonviolent technique. They seemed to be impressed. It is extraordinary to notice among the Italians, and sometimes among others also, their firm faith in the decline of the British race and in the approaching collapse of the British Empire.

The Chinese passengers are quiet and retiring and keep largely to themselves. I have had talks with them about our China medical unit and other matters.

June 13th

We have just left Naples and are on the last lap of our journey by sea. Early tomorrow morning we shall reach Genoa. At Naples there was an imposing display of the Italian royal family, generals, fascist leaders, militia, bands, etc., to welcome the Duke of Aosta. The Italian mission to Japan also disembarked here. After the reception was over, we got down and spent some hours in Naples.

Soon after our boat reached Naples harbour, a customs official came to me and informed me that he had been instructed by the ministry in Rome to help me in getting my luggage through the customs and in any other way that he could. In case I disembarked at Genoa, instructions had been sent to the customs authorities there also.

Among the letters I received at Naples was one from the Marquis of Zetland. This was a cordial letter from his private address. He wrote to say that he would greatly welcome the opportunity of meeting me if I felt disposed to have a talk. I shall send him a reply after I see my programme.

In Naples I met Sardar Ajit Singh[10] who has been an exile from India for over thirty years. I met him previously in Switzerland. He is very keen on going back to India and probably the government will permit him to do so. He lived for many years during and after the war in Brazil and became a Brazilian subject under another name which he had adopted in Persia. I have suggested to him that he should apply formally to the Government of India and the government of the Punjab stating all the facts.

I do not yet know my programme definitely after Genoa but it seems likely that I shall go straight to Spain—Barcelona—for a few days. With luck I might have a fairly exciting time there as bombing is a daily occurrence. I am due in London on June the 22nd or 23rd.

10. A revolutionary who went into exile in Persia in 1908 and remained abroad in Europe and South America till 1945; died 1947.

Miss B. Batlivala,[11] who is a fellow passenger, has kindly acted as my secretary during the voyage and has helped me greatly. She accompanied me to Cairo and Alexandria.

11. Now Mrs. Mansell.

11. On the Morale of Spain[1]

I was particularly struck by the civilian population's composure in the face of air raids and war conditions. They are carrying on almost normally under the most abnormal conditions by their conviction of ultimate victory. I am particularly impressed by the systematic methods employed here. I have received every courtesy and am very grateful for the facilities given to me.

1. Barcelona, 18 June 1938. *The Hindustan Times*, 19 June 1938.

12. On Spain and Britain[1]

I was astonished at the normality of Barcelona in spite of air raids and all manner of dangers. The trams were running, the shops open, the theatres and cinemas filled. I know that human beings could get used to almost anything, but I marvel how the people manage to carry on without much difference, not insouciant, but fully realising the seriousness of the situation and determined to face whatever happened.

I had a room on the sixth floor of a Barcelona hotel. Every night I heard an air-raid alarm and the sound of anti-aircraft guns, and from my seat on the balcony I watched a bombardment.

1. London, 19 June 1938. From *Manchester Guardian*, 24 June 1938.

I visited a large number of government offices and factories and met many high government officials, and I was much impressed with the general air of efficiency and the very orderly, businesslike way in which things were being done. It was the very reverse of any condition of panic, and this was largely due to the people's confidence in themselves. The government were always stressing the fact that it would be a long struggle, and preparing the people for another two years of conflict. All their work was based on that expectation. I was greatly impressed with the spirit and steadfast air of officers and men whom I met a few kilometres from the front.

I am convinced that even if these people are defeated in a material sense it would be astonishingly difficult to defeat them in a moral sense. I noticed that no one ever talked about civil war. They talked about resisting the invasion of Spain, and they resented the humiliation of that invasion. Any reverse for the republic hardened the people, but I think that psychologically Franco is weak, that if the struggle is prolonged his side might ultimately begin to crack up, and that he would only remain in Spain as long as the foreign troops are there.

Every Spaniard who spoke to me is bitter against the British Government, and especially against Mr. Chamberlain. They always referred to the French Government as being pushed by Great Britain. They said it is impossible to regard the British Government as neutral in this invasion; it is hostile to the Spanish Republic.

India is determined to oppose the federation as planned under the Government of India Act. The Congress demands that the constitution of India should be framed by a constituent assembly of the people of India. Recent events have intensified the determination of the Congress that India should be independent. When we talk about the independence of India it means breaking the political bonds that have existed between us, but not the relations, which may be of the closest, most friendly character. The question of what these relations should be can only be decided on equal terms. We want complete economic independence to develop our economic life and structure as we wish. During the last two or three years we have been thinking much more about international affairs. We cannot be tied down by any foreign policy of the British Government. We are so strongly opposed to that policy that we cannot tolerate being associated with it.

India is not going to be treated as a pawn in foreign affairs. It is not going to be associated with any war except by the express desire of the Indian people. They will not be dragged into any imperialist war, and they would oppose any attempt to make them parties to it.

13. France and India[1]

I am glad of the opportunity to say a few words to our friends in France, for France has long been for us a citadel of liberty, and in our own struggle for freedom in India we have often looked to France and her history for inspiration.

Europe today is full of crises and dangers and the threat of a terrible and devastating war hangs over all of us. People in Europe, busy with their own problems, are apt to forget India and the East; and yet India and the freedom of India are parts of the world problem, and till India is free from imperialist domination and has gained her independence, there will be no enduring peace in the world.

We in India stand for world peace and collective security and that is why we have gladly associated ourselves with the International Peace Campaign. But we are convinced that peace can come only when all people are freed from imperialist control.

Our struggle for independence is essentially in the interests of world peace. Even the methods we have adopted in this struggle have been peaceful ones, though none the less effective, as the growing power of our great national organisation, the Indian National Congress, shows. We have gained a measure of power in the provinces which our ministers control today, but real power still rests with British imperialism and we are determined to rid ourselves of this and gain full freedom.

We stand for a constituent assembly elected by the Indian people on an adult franchise to determine the future constitution of a free India. We claim and expect the goodwill of the French people, who have been for so long the torch-bearers of liberty in the world, in our struggle for freedom. India's freedom will be one of the bases of world peace and security for which we all strive.

1. Talk over the Paris radio, 20 June 1938. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 30 June 1938.

During the last few days I had been in Barcelona, and I witnessed the wonderful spirit of the Spanish people in the face of privation and great difficulties. I witnessed their calmness and even when the city was bombarded from the air and the civilian population was inhumanly massacred, the life of the city remained normal, perfect order prevailed and the people became more determined than ever to resist foreign invasion and win freedom. I am convinced that their spirit and indomitable will can never be crushed and Spain cannot be subjugated by foreign armies, however long their struggle may last.

It is a tragedy that in the name of non-intervention, democratic countries are putting difficulties in the way of the Spanish Republic and aiding its enemies. But the republic will triumph, and those who imagine otherwise and base their politics on this, will be grievously mistaken.

There is a talk of a withdrawal of foreign armies, which is difficult to materialise. But the real question is not of volunteers but of the munitions which are being poured in for the help of the insurgents and the foreign aircraft which is continually bombing open and defenceless cities. This at least must be stopped.

India has looked upon the struggle in Spain with the deepest interest, and all her sympathies are with the Spanish people and the republic. We consider this struggle as of vital importance in the world struggle for freedom. And we wish all success to the International Peace Campaign and its great work to preserve peace and establish it on an enduring basis in the world. In that work the Indian National Congress will give its fullest and whole-hearted cooperation.

The task of ensuring world peace based on freedom is the most vital today. Unless this is done, war of the most terrible and barbarous kind will envelop the world and destroy civilisation itself. We have to face great reactionary forces which dream in terms of war and imperialism and fascism. We cannot do this effectively or successfully unless the forces for peace and progress are also united and pulled together.

Hence the great importance of a world organisation working for peace like the International Peace Campaign which brings all these forces together and helps them to cooperate with each other and oppose the forces that lead to war. As a result of this realisation, the International Peace Campaign has also grown and represents today in all parts of the world the will to peace and freedom.

I am sure that the people of France, who have stood for peace and freedom, will help in every way this great campaign for peace and freedom and security.

14. The Situation in India[1]

Friends, you will forgive me for speaking in English. I am sorry for the incapacity of mine to express myself properly in French. I have come to Europe directly from India on a private visit. I cannot, however, get rid of my public capacity. Wherever I am, I am a bit of India, and my mind is naturally full of problems of India and her fight for independence. By way of importance, the first country I have visited is Spain in Europe. Though Spain has nothing to do with India directly, her fight for freedom is immensely significant. So also is China's fight and we have given help to them. You in Europe today, and for some time past, have been oppressed by the fear of an impending war. Your mind is full of a European complex. You may, not, therefore, give due importance to India and Asiatic problems. I, however, want you to show sympathy towards India in her struggle for independence, for she is not free. If your sympathy is based on the knowledge that her freedom will have an effect on the world problem, then you will treat the Indian question as your own. India is also a factor from the point of view of the independence of the subject peoples all over the world. Now you must realise that our fight for independence continues and it is bound to continue so long as independence is not reached. By independence we do not mean aggressive and imperialist nationalism, but, first of all, we mean to save the Indian masses from dire poverty by bringing about economic changes. So, we cannot accept any political status that will not allow us to make social changes. Secondly, our independence conflicts with British imperialism. We have been and are opposed to British imperialism but our fight is peaceful. We have built up a powerful organisation which represents all sections of the Indian people. It is called the Indian National Congress. Though we have not gained our independence, we have come nearer to it. We are in a strong position and are getting stronger. Our country is now in a position to influence the international situation and we can change British foreign policy. It is, therefore, natural that we think of independence. We, however, do not believe in exclusive nationalism. We believe in collective peace and cooperation. Of course, fascist imperialism should not hold its sway over any part of the world. In our

1. Speech at the Hall of Nations, Paris, 21 June 1938. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 30 June 1938.

opinion, peace can come only when India is free. The Indian and Chinese masses are more peace-loving than any other people in the world. So, more than any other nation, we want peace. Now, in India today, as you have just heard from M. Dolivet, we have various Congress ministries and they will have to go when the Congress so desires. At the same time, the British Government have retained enough powers. Only their control or check is not constitutional and is a matter of conflict between them and ourselves. In the present situation the British Government do not like that conflict, firstly, because of our strength and, secondly, because of the international conflict. Therefore, we can exercise a great deal of pressure on the British Government, and if there is a crisis in Europe, our position will make a difference. We declare that we shall not be a party to an imperialist war. Without our consent any war will be resisted by us.

Now it is possible that a grave crisis may overtake our country if the British Government try to impose federation on us which is utterly bad and prevents us from realising our aims. The British Government have not done it yet. Again, they are afraid of a crisis in India. What do we stand for? We want a constituent assembly to frame our constitution without any interference by the British Government. We want to be friendly with every nation, even with England, and to settle our affairs. Both for Spain and China, Indian national feelings have been very powerfully stirred. Our National Congress has passed resolutions on their behalf. In India, thousands of demonstrations and meetings have taken place in favour of the Chinese and the Spanish people. We have sent medical help to Spain and are organising to do the same for China. We have boycotted Japanese goods. The Japanese export to India, in spite of its cheapness, is falling considerably.

In Malaya, the Chinese workers in the iron mines went on strike and refused to work for the Japanese. So the Japanese proprietors employed Indians who have settled in Malaya in great numbers. The Chinese organisation telegraphed to the Indian National Congress, and the Congress pressed the Indian workers, with success, to do as the Chinese workers did. So not a single Indian worker was found.

Question: What steps did India take against the Anschluss?

Jawaharlal Nehru: There were many demonstrations but Indians could not take any effective steps. Our people do not have any effective means of helping Austria. In India, we have to oppose British imperialism. We do not have foreign affairs in our hands. We can only express our opinions. The British Government's policy in India supports and encourages fascist plots.

Q: Under what material situation of distress and starvation do the Indian people live and what is the exact figure of the yearly levy or drain of Indian wealth by British imperialism?

JN: The standard of life in India has progressively deteriorated, and the ruralisation of India, consequent on the destruction of Indian industries for the benefit of the British capital and industries, has aggravated the country's poverty. Large cities have become extinct, or have been converted into markets for foreign goods, and many people have lost their occupations. Consequently, they had to fall back on land. The burden on land is so acute that poverty has increased. Land cannot support everybody. During the last hundred years the Indian industry has disappeared and now most of the industries are owned by the British. In fact, poverty is increasing and is likely to increase unless changes take place.

It is difficult to give accurate statistics relating to the drain of India's wealth because there are visible and invisible drains. One million pound sterling is the national debt largely consisting of the purchase price given by the British Government to the East India Company, and we have to pay for British war conquests in India, Burma, China, Afghanistan, Persia and Africa. We have to pay for conquest over ourselves. We have not repudiated the British debt, but we want an impartial arbitration and we would abide by its verdict, but the British Government refuses to have arbitration. The British Government does not pay to America while she wants India to pay. Pensions, debt charges, currency manipulations, and the industrial drain are all included in the British levy on India.

The present Act contains a peculiar section. We cannot do anything to improve our economy or influence the financial, trade and industrial policies of the government, as doing so will hurt British interests. Consequently, we cannot have industrial development and national shipping. The British Government will not allow us to have them. In the same way, anything we do is opposed by them.

Q: What measures are the fascist countries adopting to profit by the actual Indian situation in their international policy?

JN: Many vain attempts have been made by the fascist powers to use the national discontent of the subject people. There has been a great deal of Italian propaganda in India by broadcasting from Rome in various Indian languages. Attempts have been made from Berlin to get various writings published in the Indian press. Some individuals are inevitably affected. All these methods, however, have proved a failure. The National Congress is opposed to fascism anywhere and everywhere. Our

national movement has been politically well developed. During the Abyssinian crisis, there was a tendency in Italy to create anti-British sentiment in India. We were defending Abyssinia against Italy. We were sorry that the fight for Abyssinian freedom did not go far enough. Our fight for political freedom is against all oppressors. So all attempts by the fascists to exploit Indian national feelings have failed in India.

Q: Can you tell us something about the British attempts to establish peasant cooperatives in India and about the peasants' relations with the Congress?

JN: Out of 3 million members of the Congress about eighty per cent are peasants. But there are many more peasants who could not become members for they have no means to pay the membership fee and so are not formal members. In some parts, big landed proprietors or zamindars exist, and in other parts, lots of small peasant proprietors are fast becoming paupers. Fragmentation of land into small plots has been a curse. The peasant proprietor's land is so small that he is always in debt to the money-lender. But much worse is the position of peasant tenants in other parts. They can be evicted by the landlords at any time, and rent can be increased, and thus they find themselves unable to pay taxes and revenue. The poverty of the peasant tenants has strengthened the national movement and they have looked towards the Congress. The British Government tried to do something for these poor people. But we must realize that no lasting good to the peasants can be done by the British Government because they rely on big landlords for support. So they cannot take adequate remedial steps as they are afraid of offending the zamindars. The big landlords, however, are doing nothing. They know that the British cannot do away with them. So only small attempts have been made to do some good to the peasants.

15. Conditions in India[1]

India has come to realize that Indian problems are a part of world affairs, and much that happens abroad has reactions in India.

1. Speech at a reception in the House of Commons, 23 June 1938. From *The Hindustan Times*, 24 June 1938.

The feeling in England two and a half years ago was that the Indian question had been settled. That feeling was based on an erroneous conception because the Indian question today is bigger than it had been at any time in the past. There are at the moment enormous potentialities for good or evil.

India is passing through a period in which the forces of conflict are not obvious—there is no civil disobedience—but beneath the surface there is great tension and a feeling that great changes must come. India is not opposed to federation on principle, but only to the type of federation envisaged in the Government of India Act.

16. Britain, Spain and India[1]

After seeing British policy at work in Spain and elsewhere, India is more than ever determined to free herself from British domination. This is especially true with regard to her international policy. This is perhaps the chief message I bring back from my visit to Spain. Possibly, two things impressed me more than any other, the first was the normal life in Barcelona and the other was the indomitability and great reserve power of the Spanish people. Of course, it is always hard for a layman to make an expert judgment, but unless the Spanish Government is literally starved to death in food and munitions, I do not see how the Republican Spain can lose. The army is confident and strong. Everyone else is also confident of the ultimate victory.

There is no doubt that the mass of the Spanish people believe that the British Government is hostile to them. I encountered this sentiment frequently and I believe, particularly responsible for it are the surprising misjudgements which Mr. Chamberlain, the British Premier, made about Spain.

For instance, what happened about the Anglo-Italian agreement?[2] Approximately three months ago, Mr. Chamberlain began to believe that General Franco would win within a couple of weeks and he rushed to Italy so as to be on the victorious side. Then what happened? He was completely fooled and his judgment was found wrong. But did

1. Interview to the press, London, 23 June 1938. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 24 June 1938.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 739.

he revise his opinion so as to fit it in with facts? Apparently not. The British Government still maintains the view that Spain will fall any day, though we all know it is not true.

Here is a good example. One of the most important British correspondents in Barcelona told me that his home office refused to believe and publish his stories, merely because if they did publish the information from their correspondent, the British Government's myth about the imminent collapse of the Spanish Government would be exploded.

Spain is a long way off from India, but there are some interesting points in common. For instance, the bombings which I experienced in Barcelona. In scope, these cannot fairly compare with the so-called police bombings by the British Government on the north west frontier.[3] But in principle it amounts to the same thing and in point of fact the British bombings have the same effect as the Italian bombings in Spain. The only victims are women and children. They arouse nothing but rage and a desire for revenge. They are not definitely a military success. That may have something to do with the new readiness of the British Government to give them up because they insisted at the last Disarmament Conference[4] that they would retain bombers for these police raids. The British people have heavy responsibilities for what is happening in Barcelona today to innocent women and children and to the seamen of their own ships.

One of the greatest lessons Spain can teach the world is the power of unity, and the same lesson is to be studied also in China. The unity of all progressive democratic forces in the country multiplies its strength many times. We know this in India from experience. The Spanish victory over Germans and Italians, who are constantly spreading subtle pro-fascist propaganda in India as well, would be a great encouragement to India. Any triumph over fascism, wherever in the world, helps India as it helps everyone.

Question: Do Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress favour Republican Spain?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Mahatma Gandhi and the entire Congress are definitely in favour of Republican Spain.

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 457-462.
4. At the World Disarmament Conference in 1932, no agreement could be reached as no country was prepared to consider the question from the wider international aspect. In regard to aerial bombing, every country approved of its complete abolition but Britain added a proviso permitting bombing for police purposes in outlying areas.

17. The Need for Understanding India[1]

In India I am accustomed to address the unsophisticated millions who require from no speaker the arts of an orator, and if I speak in that simple manner, it is not because I am unappreciative of an English audience, but because I am apt to forget myself.

I am deeply moved by the welcome. It indicates that the gathering associates itself with India's struggle for freedom, which is related to larger questions in the world. You have a good deal of responsibility to share in regard to what has happened in India in the last few generations. Many things happened which it is not easy to forget, but we will forget them keeping in view the larger interests of the two peoples and in the interests of the bond which unites all the progressive-minded people who are engaged in a common struggle against imperialism and fascism.

In India we are gradually beginning to associate ourselves with the wider world movement for real freedom and are looking forward to it enthusiastically. Nationalism in itself is not a good thing, but fortunately India, in spite of the terrible background of history, has kept its movements and its nationalism remarkably free from racial bitterness and strife.

We appreciate the gestures made to us by the people in England and elsewhere, but gestures do not help people in becoming free. I want the problem of India to be studied in its proper context. I am pained to see how the British labour movement views freedom in a somewhat limited sense, and I am more pained by the approach of the party to certain peculiar issues. It is quite right that there should have been protests against the bombing of Barcelona and in China. I have seen the horrors in Barcelona, but why had there not been protests long ago against bombing on the north west frontier? I admit that there is a difference in degree, but none in principle between bombing Barcelona and bombing the Indian frontier. It is quite impossible for the British Government to condemn the one and permit the other.

1. Reply to the welcome address at Caxton Hall, London, 27 June 1938. From *The Hindu*, 3 July 1938.

Indignation is felt here at the bombing of Barcelona and Canton. I want you to realise that there is no difference in principle between the bombing of Barcelona and Canton and of the north west frontier. If England is responsible for bombing the north west frontier, it is impossible for her to condemn the bombings of any other place.

The Indian problem is primarily, essentially and fundamentally the problem of the peasants of India, and of their incredible poverty, and if you wish to solve this problem you must think in terms of relieving the poverty and raising the mass of peasants and workers to a human level. I want you to consider the problem from this angle and not from a lawyer's point of view. You cannot solve the problem within the fabric of imperialism. History shows that a dominating power, unable to solve the fundamental problem of the people it governs, cannot last long. Therefore, we think that British imperialism must go from India. The Indian National Congress has great leaders, but what gives it strength is the peasantry of India, the hunger of India, and so long as that hunger is not satisfied, this struggle will go on. If you develop a habit of looking away from a problem, the problem does not cease to exist, though it is possible that you may cease to exist.

One thing which distresses me very much is that all over the world there is degradation of spirit, which ultimately is projected in its grossest form by fascism. Fascism is a near kin to imperialism; unless by your words and actions you also condemn imperialism, it is not much use condemning fascism. You have been surprised in the past few years at the extent of the excesses to which human beings can go, but the atmosphere in which such excesses take place is fairly familiar to us. Go down to the roots of fascism and imperialism and you will find they lead to the same place. There have been similar excesses in India. When these took place in other places you were shocked, and rightly so, but you ought to have been shocked earlier when they were taking place in India.

I do not want you to think of India as cut-off from the rest of the world but to treat it as part of a human and international problem. The peasants and their poverty constitute the real problem. It is not a question of federation or of constitutional niceties; nor is it a problem for a lawyer or a politician. It is a great human problem and unless it is solved, it must inevitably provoke revolution. Because British imperialism is incapable of solving it, it must go from India. It is not a legal but a vital matter touching the economic life of millions of people, and the Congress sees it as such. We in India are going to solve our problems. I have however been disappointed to find a spirit of pessimism and degeneration overtaking the people in Europe. Such a

spirit allows many terrible things to flourish under the grossest and crudest form of fascism. But India looks at her future with confidence, and I personally have a vision of triumph before my eyes. Sometimes I think the democratic movement in England might be helped by what we do in India.

The Congress is going to have nothing to do with the foreign policies of the British Government and would not accept the consequences of those policies, nor take any part in an imperialist war. I beg all my friends in England to get down to the roots of India's problem which is a world problem. Once they realise this all would be well.

18. India and the International Situation[1]

The international situation today is critical and it becomes more and more evident that the attitude India takes is of great importance.

India's attitude is as important internationally as nationally. British foreign policy is entirely reactionary and is aiding fascist aggression. As such, it is bringing war nearer, whatever its professions may be. I feel India must reiterate firmly what it has already declared that it will oppose an imperialist war.

As to the Indian situation, it is my firm conviction today that India should have a constituent assembly and no half-way house would be acceptable to her people.

India can and, I hope, will play an important part in international affairs. India's attitude towards the Spanish struggle is deeply appreciated by the Spanish people, and their struggle, heroically conducted against tremendous odds, must be an inspiration to all who love freedom.

1. Interview to the correspondent of *The Hindustan Times*, London, 29 June 1938. *The Hindustan Times*, 1 July 1938.

19. The Boycott of Japanese Goods[1]

If Lord Zetland and Lord Halifax want to know the Congress views about the federation and India's reaction to international developments, I am prepared to express them forcibly.

There is no truth in the reports that Sir Walter Citrine and I are preparing a Japanese goods boycott plan. I have discussed the question of the boycott of Japanese goods at Transport House. Our own efforts in India in this regard have been fairly successful. Sir Walter Citrine and others were very much interested in it. We are always prepared to cooperate with others in a boycott, but there is no question of the preparation of any plan.

I am seeing the Archbishop of Canterbury[2] on Monday.

1. Interview to the press, London, 29 Jnne 1938. From *The Hindustan Times*, 30 June 1938.
2. Cosmo Gordon Lang (1864-1945); Archbishop of Canterbury, 1928-42; member, Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms, 1933; a staunch supporter of Chamberlain's policy of appeasement.

20. India and the World[1]

One remarkable thing about India is that we have developed a very great interest in international affairs not only in relation to India, but because the Indian problem has become and is becoming more and more an essential part of the world problem.

An anti-imperialist people like the Indians cannot help being anti-fascist, support the Spanish Republic in its struggle against the interventionist, fascist and imperialist powers, and favour the Chinese people in their struggle for independence against the military fascist imperialism of Japan.

1. Interview to the *Daily Worker*, London, printed on 29 June 1938. Reproduced in *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 6 July 1938.

As such, the Indian people are opposed to the foreign policy of the British National Government and cannot tolerate to be associated with it.

That feeling was expressed when, in February, the Congress passed a historic resolution[2] in favour of a free India taking its part in the collective organisation of peace.

The fundamental starting-point for an understanding of the problem is, however, the fact that the Indian people are determined to win their economic and political independence from Britain, and they will make use of any crisis in which Britain is involved, to further their liberation struggle.

Thus, supposing Britain were drawn into a war against Germany and Italy following an attack on Czechoslovakia, there can be little doubt that the British would try to use this situation to fasten themselves even tighter on India.

Now, for two reasons, the Indian people would resist such an attempt. In the first place, as our aim is independence the Indian people will not participate in a war that is not of their own choosing. Now, it would be impossible for the people of India to make that free choice while still subject to British rule. Our first task would, therefore, be to free ourselves.

In the second place, and this has been clearly shown by the experiences both in Spain and China, that fascism can be successfully defeated in war only if the popular anti-fascist forces are really in control of the leadership.

Thus, in a way, we in India would be facing a problem very similar to that which the really anti-fascist forces in Britain itself would be facing—the problem of security—if the war was being conducted in a really anti-fascist, democratic and thus an anti-imperialist manner. And our struggle for freedom would assist in solving this problem.

The Indian people are fundamentally anti-imperialist and, in any case, there would certainly be at least a tendency towards noncooperation.

Recently, of course, the whole internal situation in India has changed considerably. It would, for instance, be the easiest thing in the world to stop the peasant paying taxes. And if the Indian National Congress were to give a call for the non-payment of taxes, that would, of course, mean major conflicts.

Furthermore, the present Indian army is recruited mainly from the peasantry. The Indian soldiers, when on leave, go back to their villages, maintain contact with the people of their own class and origin. There-

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 740.

fore, it would be impossible for the British—in the event of a major peasant movement—to prevent the army from being affected.

Today, the army is pretty efficient. But just because of the fact that it is mainly based on the peasantry, it cannot be considered, from the British point of view, as a 'reliable' army.

So there arises the question of whether or not, sooner or later—and sooner than later—the Indian people will have to develop their own army, a popular army, a democratic army, somewhat similar to the National Revolutionary Army in China and the People's Army in Spain.

I am convinced that somehow or other such an army would have to be developed. There are, of course, very great difficulties—the difficulties experienced by every popular army at its formation—the problem of officers, the problem of command.

But there is no doubt that responsible Indian circles are well aware of the problem. Already it has ceased to be an entirely theoretical one. The various Congress ministries are actually discussing ways and means by which some sort of training—not of course at the moment—anything like a real military training can be given to the population.

Any such move would naturally be viewed with the greatest possible disfavour by the British. Thus the whole question of the Congress power, not only in the provinces but also at the centre, is raised.

If, at the time of crisis, the Congress ministries in the provinces were to refuse to cooperate with the central government, they would obviously be dismissed. Then the British would have two alternatives—either to call new elections, which would only result in a greatly strengthened Congress majority, or to rule by decree, which would provoke a major conflict.

What becomes more than ever essential is therefore some real power at the centre. This, in essence, is the other side of the struggle against federation as proposed by the Govomment of India Act.

The English people should give up the idea that they can muddle through the Indian problem and imagine that thereby the Indian problem is disposed of.

Any attempt to impose federation will provoke a major conflict. Any attempt to evade the issues will provoke conflict. There is only one solution to the problem—the ending of the British supremacy in India.

And the anti-fascist British people should realise that it is not possible to conduct the anti-fascist struggle successfully, if the anti-imperialist struggle is ignored. It is no more impossible to do this than it is to condemn the fascist bombing of open towns in Spain and China while tolerating British bombing on the north west frontier of India.

21. The Hidden Crisis in India[1]

I have come to England after about two years and a half. During this period there have been marked changes in India. The formation of the Congress ministries is but a petty and superficial aspect of the change in India. Other matters occupy my mind more than this. But I also observe that our problems have come nearer a crisis. Some of you think that India, of late, is quiet and passive. But this apparent quietness is a mere facade which hides the real problems of political and social freedom. I have become aware of a new strength among the Indian peasantry and the working class. The peasantry in some places has become even aggressive. I welcome this visible sign for it embodies a new spirit. I welcome it for it is a symbol of the coming strength. India is now beginning to face the world with confidence. Power politics is not an agreeable matter, at any rate, in Europe. But India is now a powerful factor, let no one forget that.

There is a talk about the Government of India Act and the federation. The Congress has made it quite clear that federation cannot be imposed on her by a third party. To me office acceptance and federation mean little by themselves. I can think of them only in terms of independence. India has one demand—positive, immediate and, I believe, moderate also—the formation of a constituent assembly which alone can prepare a democratic constitution for India. I can visualise cooperation with England in innumerable fields, with mutual advantage, provided England begins with a clean slate. I think it possible, almost probable, for England to begin with a clean slate, without having any reservations or restrictions.

To my mind, India cannot submit to an imposed constitution. It alone shall decide what it wants. This attitude is crystal clear. After all, frankness is the friendliest gesture. And in all frankness I say that India will have nothing less than complete independence and perfect equality.

1. Talk to Indian residents, London, 30 June 1938. From *The Hindustan Times*, 8 July 1938.

22. India and Britain[1]

Mr. Chairman and Comrades,

For some years past I have heard of the Left Book Club, mostly only heard of it, because perhaps many of you are not aware that, wide as is the scope of the Left Book Club, it does not include India in its dominion. Not that, that affects so much the income of the Left Book Club, because at least so far as I am concerned, I used to get regularly from my book-seller, bills for books supplied which never came to me. They were stopped by the censorship, or by that extraordinary provision of the law in India, the Sea Customs Act, which empowers customs officers to stop any books they do not like. And apparently Mr. Gollancz's name is not liked by the customs officials in India.

It, therefore, gives me a peculiar satisfaction to come here and speak to you under the auspices of the Left Book Club. I have heard with admiration of the growth of this Left Book Club movement, because it is a movement and something much more than mere printing and publishing of books—and how it is spreading all over, not only in England but in other countries also—of certain types of books, serious books, which more and more people read. After all, in considering the problems of today, the more thought we give to them, the more we study them, the more will we be in a position to solve them.

I am somewhat embarrassed by the remarks of our chairman today.[2] Like him I am a modest person. But perhaps you might be led to expect from what he has said that perhaps I might say something in the heroic vein. I am incapable of feeling heroic or of speaking heroically. Also, after the last 10 or 12 days in London, during which period

1. Speech at the Left Book Club rally, Queen's Hall, London, 6 July 1938. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 13 July 1938.
2. Victor Gollancz, founder of the Left Book Club, said in his introductory remarks: "There have been heroes in the world of many kinds—teachers, philosophers and masterminds. But, in the present historical epoch there is but one true class of hero — the hero of humanity. And in that class Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is conspicuous. Only twice in my life have I felt great humility in the presence of another man — once when I saw Dimitroff almost alone facing the rising Nazism, and the second time when I met Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru."

I have addressed a large number of big and small audiences, I do not feel exactly fresh, and it is hardly a suitable preparation for addressing this large audience. Still, as you have done me the honour of coming here, I shall endeavour to place before you the problem of India as I see it.

What exactly is this problem of India about? You have a large number of problems to face: domestic problems, international problems, European problems, the problems of China, Spain, etc. You are full of them. You have gathered here today to hear about India, and I take it that many of you do not usually have the opportunity either to hear about India or to read about it, because the newspapers here are generally silent about India. In fact, India is seldom mentioned. The fact that there is an Indian problem may have escaped many readers of the newspapers here. But because this is so, it does not do away with the problem. The problem becomes rather bigger.

Now India is obviously a problem in itself, but the way you would like to consider it, and the way I would like to consider it, is more in relation to the other problems of the world, to the international situation. Personally, I have always tried to look upon it in that way, and I think that it is not really possible to understand any one of these problems that face us, unless we have before us that larger picture of the world as it is today. Of course, if I function in India, as I must, I function largely on an Indian plane, and I have to face the various difficulties peculiar to India that are always there. But even those difficulties I can better appreciate and thus function much more effectively in India if I keep the larger picture of the world before me and try to fit India into it somewhere. Therefore, it is desirable that we should look upon these problems in that way. And if we really feel that the Indian problem is a part of the world problem then we cannot ignore it, because if we do, we will be doing something which will come in the way of our understanding of the larger problem.

It is surprising how people sometimes discuss things and do things as if they were not related in any way to a larger whole and come to strange conclusions. The world is a very strange place to live in, but stranger still is the fact that even intelligent people can take these little probems separately, and discuss them without relation to the larger whole. I think we in India will not go far in the solution of our problems unless we see them in relation to the larger whole, and I do not think you will go far unless you know something about India and can fit it into the larger picture. Therefore, let us consider this question of India from that point of view.

It is quite extraordinary how in the course of the last twenty years, since the war, repeated attempts have been made—over one hundred

international conferences have been held in various parts of the world, in Europe and America — to consider and solve the various political and economic problems. Leading statesmen, prime ministers and foreign ministers have gathered together, and after weeks of discussion have gone back home without solving any problem. Before every conference, they had threatened us that if the conference did not succeed, the world would be faced with disaster. I suppose that most of the people who went to these conferences desired some kind of a solution, both for personal reasons, because of their reputation as statesmen, and for wider reasons. And despite that, they utterly failed to do it. And as we see it, there has been a continuous deterioration in the situation, and we have now arrived at this mess. What a strange thing it is that these statesmen continue to function in the same old way and do not try to find out what the roots of the problems are! I do not suppose you can say they are not intelligent, but there must be something lacking because they do not desire to look at the roots of the problems. They avoid them. Because they have been functioning on a different plane, they think, to touch the roots will change the whole structure, affect interests which they do not want to be affected, and the result is that they function superficially and ineffectively, and their efforts are a failure.

In India, the immediate problem before us, call it a national problem if you like, is the problem of gaining our national freedom. That is to say, it is an anti-imperialist problem, the problem of ridding India of the dominion of the British Empire. Now, a very large number of people in England today do not like fascism. They attack it and condemn it. And yet many of them who do so get very irritated if you talk about the British Empire functioning in India or other colonial parts of the empire. They try to separate these two things. Of course one can find the points of distinction. But because they try to think that the imperialist system is something different, and because they seek to preserve it in a way while attacking fascism, their attack loses all real effectiveness. There is no logic behind it. You know how in the past the fascist leaders of Italy have repeatedly taunted the British people and said, "We are only doing what you have done in the past." And it is a common taunt in Europe, when the question of bombing comes up in connection with China or Spain, that the British people are continuously doing it on the north west frontier of India.

So in considering these questions you have to be logical in order to understand the roots of them and not try to preserve your interests and to condemn somebody else's, although yours may be of the same kind. Obviously, I am no lover of the British Empire, but the astounding fact is that the British Government today is conducting a foreign policy

which, as it seems to me, would inevitably bring about a fall of this empire. We now seem to be actual witnesses to the fading of the British Empire. It may take a little time, and perhaps the reason for it is this. When a thing has had its day, whether it is an empire, or a group, or a class, it begins to function most foolishly, and virtually ends up by committing what may be called *hara-kiri*. And that is what we are seeing today. And while I have no objection to the British Empire committing *hara-kiri*, it is interesting to see how this kind of a thing occurs. Looking at it even from the point of view of an imperialist group of statesmen, it astounds me why they function the way they are functioning at the present time.

The fact is that as this whole imperialist system has tied itself up in such enormous knots, it is meeting its own nemesis; and it is not likely to get out of it, unless the people who run it themselves realise that they cannot continue it. But, unhappily, such people seldom have that vision or courage, and so conflicts come, and the end is the same, except that it is an end brought about after much conflict, bitterness and suffering. It is unfortunate, but usually that is what has taken place in history.

I do not know whether those progressive-minded people in various parts of the world will be able in future to exert such an influence so as to bring about this change without any major conflict. No doubt, it is a curious state of affairs — we see all these contradictions everywhere, both within nations, and certainly in the international sphere. And it seems to me that we are not going to get rid of any of these problems ultimately unless there is an effective world solution of them. That, of course, does not mean that those of us who function in India should wait patiently for a world solution. We have to carry on and seek solution in our own particular area or country we live in, but at the same time we must envisage that solution as part of the world solution, otherwise we would be functioning less effectively than we might.

Therefore, we again come back to this: that we must see the problems in relation to the whole, and while we push our own struggle, it must not run counter to the larger world struggle. If it does, it cannot get the benefit of the great world process which is so clearly in operation today. We are in a tremendous revolutionary period — a period of transition which will lead us somewhere. Where exactly, we are not able to say, but we can say that an enormous change will take place in the not distant future.

In India there is a nationalist movement. There is also a social movement. The two react on each other, and although the freedom movement in India was, for long years, essentially a nationalist movement —as it was bound to be because the first reaction to foreign domination

is to create nationalism and a desire for political freedom—but as that movement grew and as it got into touch with the masses, and the masses came into it, the masses began to influence it. As the influence of the masses went on increasing, and as the mass influence is always in the direction of social change, this movement in India was inevitably forced by circumstances to think about social change. And even behind that nationalist movement, what was ultimately the urge? Why did this vast number of peasants side with the Indian National Congress? Surely, because they saw in the Congress an organisation which promised relief to them. When we talk about Swaraj, which means independence, they take the word to mean in their own sense, that is something which would rid them of their burdens, because if Swaraj comes and it does not rid them of their burdens, it would be a poor relief and certainly not worthwhile. So they came. Therefore behind this political movement, which, to begin with, did not consciously express the real urge behind it, was ultimately led to give expression to the urge to remove the poverty and misery of India. After all, the fundamental problem is the problem of poverty.

It is an astounding problem, and you who know something of the distress caused by unemployment in England, can have some conception of what Indian poverty is. It is something really shocking. It is true that those of us who live there get used to it. We are not shocked as we might be, as human beings have an infinite capacity to get used to anything. The mere fact that human beings put up with the sorry state of this world is surprising enough. It was astounding to see human beings in Barcelona carrying on in spite of daily air raids. So we see one gets used to it—but still the state of the Indian people is alarming.

We sometimes talk of this long period of British rule over India. It has really been a long period, and sometimes when you talk to an audience, which perhaps is very different from this Left Book Club audience, the people in the audience say, can you find any good having resulted from such a long period of British rule over India? Of course, I could make a list of good things that have been done—railways, post offices, telegraphs, canals and the like. But the real thing is that the extreme poverty and misery of the country do not speak well for the 160 years of British rule, and all the railways and telegraph services do not do away with that major fact. And indeed if you analyse this problem you will see—and I do not mean to say that there was no poverty in India before the British came—that a great change has taken place in the world since the days when the British came to India. It was during the first days of the industrial revolution that the British came to India and since then industrialisation has taken place in the world. In the early days

there were famines in certain places in India caused by the failure of the rains. There was then no means of getting food in one particular area from elsewhere, but during the later British period there were still food famines in India, and they were worse — they were famines of money, because food could be brought by train, but people did not have the wherewithal to buy it. So you must not compare the poverty of the former days caused more by lack of proper methods of production, bad transport, etc., to the poverty caused by famines in the present times when new conditions of life have helped the countries of the West including America to become more prosperous. Though some of the changes which have helped those countries in becoming prosperous have been introduced in our country also, yet our poverty has gone on increasing. It is obviously due to the political and economic systems operating in the country which have drained her wealth out of the country. In Britain, as you became industrialised, great cities grew up, and the villages became deserted. Whether that was good or bad, I am not going to talk about it. However, the fact is that almost all over the more or less civilised parts of the world, you saw a progressive urbanisation which meant the development of industry. In contrast, during the last hundred years or so there has been a progressive ruralisation in our country. Now, do not get confused by the fact that you see cities like Bombay and Calcutta growing up. They are great centres of what? Fundamentally, they are centres or emporia of foreign goods which come to be distributed all over India. And in these cities, built up at the expense of the smaller towns and even villages, we have seen a great exodus from towns to villages. Why? Because they had no occupation or business in the towns, no openings, because their old occupations had gone, and the millions of people who followed these occupations, handicrafts and the like, could not pursue them. Originally, they were stopped by various legal enactments which the East India Company enforced. Latterly, by the direction of economic forces they could not compete with the products of the factories from the West.

But, ordinarily, this would have resulted in the building up of industrialism in India, because, remember, India was a country highly developed so far as manufacturing was concerned when the British came. Indeed, when the British and before them others came they came in search of Indian manufactures to sell to the West. So that it was at a stage when the next step might have been the development of industry. That was stopped deliberately, and, at the same time, the old manufactures and small industries were crushed. Consequently, scores of millions of people had nothing to do, and this process went on for over one hundred years.

To begin with, it was a big process. It came with a sudden bang, and affected millions, causing serious famines. For instance, one-third of the population of Bengal had perished in the early days of British rule.[3] Yet, strangely enough, the British revenue officials proudly declared: "We have collected the full revenues here". This process continued right through the hundred years—as railways developed and as foreign manufactured goods went into the country. Wherever they went the petty industries could not compete with them, and as the people had no occupation left to them, they left the towns and went to the villages, thinking in terms of getting work on the land.

They became a burden on the land because where a tract of land provided work for half a dozen persons, there were now twenty or thirty which the land could not support. So the level of the people went down and down. That is the fundamental problem of Indian poverty and how it has grown in the last hundred years. The British rule has adopted a policy of preventing industrialisation of the country. The machinery coming into India is heavily taxed. It is a far more costly venture to build a factory in India than in England, although labour is so much cheaper in India.

It was only, more or less, during the last war that, of course, in spite of them, industrialisation gradually grew among certain classes in Bombay and other centres on a very small scale. During the war there was a new phase because then British goods and other goods could not come in easily, and for war purposes the British Government had to encourage industries to grow in India. And after the war the situation arose when, first of all, Indian nationalism was growing strong, and secondly Indian industry was also not so weak, and the British Government did not want Indian industry to ally itself with the more revolutionary elements in Indian nationalism and so wanted to give them some kind of bribe.

But more important still, ever since the war, they thought in terms of future wars, and they felt that from the point of view of future wars, it was necessary for them to develop some kind of industry in India. It may be of a peculiar kind—for their own purposes—but still they allowed it to develop to some extent. So some of the old restrictions were removed. But, peculiarly, the Indian industry developed with British capital and under British control, and the profits were largely going outside India. This is a curious situation. We talk of swadeshi, which means home-made goods, but relatively few Indian industries profit because all the bigger concerns have grown up with British capital. Big concerns are going out there adding 'India' after their names as, for

3. In the famine of 1770, one-third of the population of Bengal and Bihar died.

instance, Imperial Chemical Industries India Ltd., and they take enormous areas on lease, and the curious thing is that the government has refused to publish the terms of the lease given to the Imperial Chemical Industries. In this way, great British combines are digging themselves in since the war. And while you have been talking so much of constitutional changes and discussing them at length in Parliament and elsewhere, all the time these combines have been digging themselves in and creating enormous vested interests, creating fresh vested interests and making it extraordinarily difficult for us to get a move on when we have the chance, unless we dig them out completely.

So behind this political problem you see the complexities of this economic problem and how it is intimately related to the poverty of India. You will discuss the Indian question vaguely and ask, "Why do you object to Dominion Status—why talk in terms of independence?" Well, I do so realising that independence might be a mere word as we have seen in the case of Egypt and other places, but about one thing we are clear that we are going to rid India of this tremendous imperialist, economic and financial control. And we do not therefore want to think in terms of a political constitution giving us what might be considered political freedom with no real economic freedom. We feel we can solve the problem of Indian poverty only by making great inroads in the economic system, and we cannot do this unless we are free from the control of the City of London and their financial interests. Therefore, we must think in terms of independence.

Of course, we think in terms of independence for other reasons too. I shall go into that now. For the present moment, I will refer to foreign policy. India will not submit to British foreign policy. I can very well understand and should personally welcome cooperation between India and Britain, but, first of all, any cooperation must inevitably be the cooperation between two free nations. Secondly, it must be cooperation for the common aim of elimination of imperialism.

We have tried in India during these past years to develop and strengthen our movement, and our strength has definitely increased. It is great enough for the British Government to think seriously before inviting a conflict. On two or three occasions, in the past few months, there was the possibility of a conflict because of a difference of opinion between the British Government, or the Governor who represents it, and the Congress ministries. But the British Government had to give in on all those issues.[4] This shows that the strength of our movement

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 640 and 759.

is such that the British Government is not easily prepared to invite conflict.

I do not mean that no conflict will ever take place. Occasions may arise when there is a conflict, when they do not give way and when we may also not give way. But still the movement is developing and becoming very strong, and largely so, because it has become more and more associated with the social problem. Therefore, this is also a fundamental problem for us to see how we can integrate the political struggle with the social struggle. Sometimes, of course, there is a slight conflict between the two in the sense that the political struggle being, in the main, the national struggle, comprises all manner of people of differing views. In regard to political matters, it draws several classes of people who may be in conflict with each other, but function together against the common foe, imperialism. But as soon as we begin to consider social problems, these classes get into conflict with each other, so that there is that inevitable conflict. At the same time, everybody in India realises now that before any solution of the social problem is found, there must be the power in our hands to solve it and that means political independence. Therefore, inevitably, the political question takes precedence, and even those who are keenest about social change insist on the political change coming first.

Still, difficulties arise because even the approach to the political question can be of various kinds. What kind of political freedom are we going to get? We may become free from British imperialism, but then, who is going to have the power in India afterwards? What will be the method of fighting to achieve freedom? The approach to it will be governed by the kind of freedom we have in our minds. At present, I will talk only in terms of political freedom. It should be at least a kind of freedom which itself becomes a bulwark against reaction.

Therefore the question becomes one of joining these two movements for social and political freedom and making them function together. That is to say, the whole urge for social freedom must throw its weight into the struggle for political freedom and influence it in its direction. I cannot say exactly how this will turn out, but on the whole in India the tendency has been very marked towards the political struggle assuming a social aspect and, generally speaking, the Congress today is definitely committed to social change on a fairly radical scale. I do not mean to say that the Congress as a whole has turned socialist. There are socialist wings, and there are right wings which disapprove of socialism and there is a large central bloc which vaguely approves of socialism, which is radical and which, generally speaking, will probably vote for a socialistic proposal, but which is not consciously and definitely

socialist, because this nationalist urge has been so great that it is moved by that more than by any other urge.

In fact, the reality is that so many of the peasants have come into this nationalist movement, that we cannot now function at all without giving consideration to peasant problems. And so, as soon as the Congress ministries came into existence, the first thing they had to do was to take up the agrarian problem. They cannot change fundamentally the land system any more than the present law allowed them to do; and as they had to do something at the present juncture, they have taken up for consideration big measures of land reform. What will happen to them I do not know. They will be passed by the legislative assemblies. But then we have been presented in the Government of India Act with second chambers in the provinces which are elected by strict franchise and where the majority of the members are big landlords. Its result has been that there are likely to be big conflicts between the second chambers representing the interests of the landlord and the other house representing the peasant interests. I do not quite know how this conflict will shape itself though it does not worry me very much because we are not concerned so much with a constitutional difficulty, as, in the ultimate analysis, what matters is the building up of the adequate power of the Indian people to be able to exercise sufficient pressure on the British Government to liquidate British imperialism in India.

Now, take for instance the provisions made in the Government of India Act, regarding the federation and provincial autonomy. I have vainly tried to find an answer as to how far, within its limited scope, has the Act enabled the successful working of these schemes. Though I would like to consider the question in its wider aspects, to me the whole conception of any constitution being drawn up and imposed on the Indian people is an absurd conception from the point of view of solving the Indian problem. It will not solve it. And the only possibility of solving it is to recognise that the people of India must take the matter into their own hands and must frame their own constitution. After that, the question may arise as to what the relations between India and England are going to be, and if this is discussed in the proper spirit, then the psychological background is created. If not, then a big conflict becomes inevitable and it creates yet another kind of psychological background which prevents the people on both sides from approaching each other in a friendly manner.

The Congress is a powerful organisation but it is democratic also. It might as well have drawn up a constitution. But it has adopted the other course by saying that a constituent assembly elected by adult

franchise should draw up this constitution. That is surely the only democratic method to do it. And I cannot conceive of any person who believes in democracy opposing this method. Any other method will be disapproved of. It will irritate. Take the case of provincial autonomy. We do not like it. Under it we cannot do much. Still, we are working it because we thought that we might be able to strengthen ourselves for the next conflict. That was the sole reason why we decided to work it. And I think the events during the last one year have strengthened us enormously. We have been able to do some good work, passing such legislation as has done some good. But the important point is how we can strengthen ourselves for the future. We have succeeded in doing that to a large extent.

We can therefore look upon the future with a considerable measure of confidence. The world today is full of crises. There is a possibility of war and many people feel rather distressed about it. We also feel distressed about it, but because of the new strength which we have developed in ourselves, we are singularly optimistic about the future of India, and we are thinking more and more in terms of taking part not only in freeing India—that, we feel, will come before very long—but also of playing some role in international affairs.

Already, I think, most far-seeing statesmen feel that Indian independence is not far distant, and their attitude towards India is rapidly undergoing a change because they want to make friends with a free India. Moreover, they are also aware of India's enormous potentialities, and about her playing an important part in the world. India is therefore already thinking in those terms and preparing herself for that time.

Now I want to put before you one fact which is an interesting one and which makes us think furiously. If advantage is not taken of a particular situation, we get into tremendous difficulties. You know of the tragedy in Spain. You remember in the early days of this revolt, Moroccan troops were brought over to Spain by Franco. An extraordinary thing, that Franco, representing a peculiar type of fascism and militarism, should take advantage of Moroccan people to suppress the republic of Spain. But why did that happen? Why was it allowed to happen? The republic of Spain, if it functioned properly, should have taken earliest steps to deal with its colonial problem. For various reasons it did not do so and has suffered for it. Its enemies took advantage of this. Nobody can believe that General Franco believes in the freedom of the various nationalities in the colonies, although I understand that he has declared that he is going not only to grant autonomy to Spanish Morocco but will also help them to build up some kind of Moroccan empire. Of course, such promises are cheaply made, but the point is how a false step

on the part of the republican government of Spain affected their own future so tremendously.

I do not know whether it is an absolute fact, but it very well might be that the Spanish Government did intend doing something and made some proposals for reducing the burden on their colonial population and relieving their agricultural distress. But the people in authority in French Morocco thought that if this was done in Spanish Morocco, their own position would become very difficult because their people would demand similar relief. So the French Governors in French Morocco pressed the French Government to intervene and prevent the Spanish Government from doing such a thing. The French Government pointed this out to the Spanish Government, and the Spanish Government, which did not want to do anything to irritate the French Government, did not act. Now, observe how one thing leads to another. The French Government at that time was a popular front government.[5] One of the first functions of a popular front government should have been to deal or begin to deal with its colonial problems. It did not do so at all. I know that even in India, in Pondicherry, the tiny piece of territory belonging to France, I was astonished, on a visit there, to see the conditions. They do not permit trade unions there. Now, this popular front government functioning in Paris would not allow trade unions to be formed in Pondicherry. There are two points I wish you to consider in this respect. One is this. How a government while functioning democratically at home, unless it tackles its colonial problem, ultimately falls in its home territory too. It must have a logical policy for both, and so we had the tragic fact in Spain that the people who ought to have been behind the republican government actually were made to attack it. It is no good blaming them. They were misled, and probably all manner of promises were made to them. This was perhaps done because they were poverty-stricken. But it is well for the British, and for those people who are interested in the British Empire, and more especially those who talk in terms of democracy and in terms of opposition to fascism, to remember that they cannot ultimately be anti-fascist or go far in their fight against fascism, unless they are also anti-imperialist.

So if you want to solve this problem, you must look at it from this broader anti-imperialist aspect and think about this lining up of forces you see in the world today. You see fascism so obviously attempting

5. On 4 June 1936, Leon Blum had formed a *Front Populaire* government in France.

to advance on the one side, and the forces opposed to it trying to counter it. But the forces opposed to fascism will always be ineffective unless they are also opposed to imperialism.

In India today there is much talk about provincial autonomy, the Congress ministries and the like. But I want you to remember first of all that the Government of India functions as irresponsibly as it has ever done. We still have the various press laws functioning,[6] the Communist Party is still illegal,[7] and it is the Government of India which is responsible for that declaration. I told you at the beginning about the Sea Customs Act—we do not get most of the advanced books published in England—and in provinces like Bengal and the Punjab, we still have more or less the old system of repression so far as civil liberties and the rest go. We still have in Bengal a fair number of detenus, people kept in jail without trial, and of course our old friends, the Indian princes, still flourish in India. These Indian princes are perhaps very curious specimen of the old system—which has vanished from the rest of the world—of the purest autocracy subject of course to British suzerainty.

Now the Indian princes talk a great deal about their independence, their treaty rights and the like. Who are these Indian princes? Most of them are the creation of the British power. Most of them, the very great majority, are not princes at all—I mean to say in the technical and legal sense. They were, when the British came, barons or such. Some of them acted as viceroys of the Moghul Empire and some were just tax collectors. But then came in India the period of the fall of the Moghul Empire. It was a period of chaos and disorder, and that is why it was easy for invaders from abroad—and all manner of them did come from abroad, even before the British armies came—to sweep down and try to get what they could. When the British came and found these people functioning as big estate owners, they found it easier to deal with them than to deal with the population at large. So they made treaties with them and put them more firmly in their positions. It was since then that those people began to call themselves as princes. They had

6. The provisions of the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act of 1931, the Sea Customs Act of 1878, the Foreign Relations Act of 1932, the Criminal Procedure Code (section 99-A to 99G) and the Indian Penal Code, 1860, were enforced to curb freedom of the press in the country and stop the import of literature regarded as seditious.

7. The Communist Party was declared illegal when the government saw the great response received by the party to its appeal for a country-wide strike of textile workers on 23 April 1934.

no such titles previously. The people of India were of course not consulted when these treaties were made. They were made at the beginning of the 19th century, say, about 120 years ago or so. During this period, Europe and the world have changed enormously. Quite a number of big revolutions have taken place. The land system has changed. All the petty princes and others in central Europe have gone. But in India the system that existed 120 years ago has not changed. While ordinarily it would have changed, because as new events took place and as the situation developed elsewhere, the changes and revolutions would have come to India also, but the British power was there to perpetuate this feudal system. And the people who might otherwise have removed them, or kept them under control, could do nothing because it was the British power which protected them.

Obviously, India is not and cannot be split up into two parts—one comprising the Indian states and the other the rest of India. India must be an indivisible whole; it may of course ultimately be a federation—that I don't know but I see no harm in federation—but it must be one unit, and if you know anything about the history of India, you would mark the strange fact that India has been a kind of unit for thousands of years until it was divided up politically.

So we see that this states problem is often brought before us to tell us how politically the states are different from the rest of India. I do not think it is really such a difficult problem because so much pressure is now growing inside the Indian states from the side of the people living there that it cannot be resisted and the princes will have to come to terms and ally themselves with us. And suppose we had a constituent assembly, I think many of them would have had to join it sooner or later. Later, of course, all of them would have to join it.

So that today in India the situation is full of difficulty no doubt as in the rest of the world, but it is also full of hope because we feel that we are moving ahead, that we have strength, and we also feel that it is now only a question of power politics in the world. If I may put it bluntly, we shall develop our power and exercise it in the right direction.

So far as our larger ideals are concerned, this is our ideal. It is not a narrow nationalistic ideal of an isolated India cut off from the rest of the world. We believe in a world order but this must obviously be based on freedom and justice as otherwise there can be no world order. We believe in collective security. But remember this, any attempt to have collective security on an unjust *status quo* cannot possibly last. Its basis must be freedom and justice. You cannot expect us in India today to accept the *status quo* and talk in terms of preserving it by collective

security. Otherwise, we do believe in the doctrine of collective security and the development of a world order.

I have tried to deal with this problem of India from the larger perspective than merely from the point of view of the Indian nationalist movement. There is a great socialist movement in the country, which forms part of the larger movement. Personally, I look forward to the realisation of socialism in India. But here I wanted to place this problem before you not only from the point of view of the socialist but also from the points of view, more or less, common to all sections in India, at any rate, in the Congress, of the advanced sections.

Question: What is the Congress viewpoint about freedom of thought and whether under the system envisaged by the Congress, freedom of development in this respect will be allowed?

Jawaharlal Nehru : For long years past, the Congress has declared itself in favour of full freedom to think and freeing of every section of the population from any restrictions. So far as the question of freedom of thought is concerned, it was because freedom of thought was interfered with by the British Government, that inevitably our reaction was to demand it. About seven years ago, the Congress drew up a kind of a charter making provision for certain fundamental laws of the constitution.[8] A number of those laws were related to this question of freedom of thought, freedom of organization and association, and all the various things which go to make up civil liberties.

These things should go deep down as the fundamentals in the constitution and should not be interfered with. Also laid down in these fundamental laws was the question of freedom of religion, culture, language and the so-called minority rights.

Q: What have you to say about the minority question, the communal problem and religious rights?

JN: About the minority question, I find a number of people have asked me about religious rights and the communal problem. First of all, there is no religious problem in India. What you might perhaps consider a religious problem is somewhat different. It is a communal problem. The religious problem arises from a conflict between religions and there is no such problem because there is the completest freedom

8. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 511-513.

WITH KRISHNA MENON AND GENERAL LISTER IN SPAIN, JUNE 1938

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assured to all the groups and sections. The Congress has especially laid it down as its fundamental policy that there should always be complete freedom of religion and its practice, of course, so long as this is compatible with public morality and order.

It may be that in a vast country like India there might be a petty quarrel somewhere — that is not a matter for debate. But this communal problem is not a religious problem. It is partly political and partly economic and partly personal. At the present moment, you will find provinces in India which are entirely Muslim, like the North West Frontier Province, being on the side of the Congress. It is true that owing to certain historical background of hostility, it is not very difficult to raise some communal prejudices and passions. And do not for a moment imagine that I am trying to minimise this problem or its importance for us. But do not think of it in terms of religious strife or riots. In a vast country like India, if sometimes we hear that there has been a riot in some town or the other, we also find that the rest of the country is unaffected by it. We should not therefore lose our sense of perspective.

Then, this communal problem again used to be considered as a problem of representation in the legislatures. So far as that is concerned, it has for the moment been settled or decided by a certain decision of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald when he was Prime Minister. It was criticised very strongly, and it was never agreed to, but, nevertheless, the Congress attitude has been that we do not desire any change in it except with the consent of the parties concerned. If it is by consent, we agree.

So, in a certain way, this communal problem is an economic problem. In some places, like Bengal, the peasantry is largely Mohammadan and the landlords are Hindus. It is not a communal problem at all, but a tenant-landlord problem. But, in order to hide the main conflict, the colour of communalism and religion is given to it. In the United Provinces, it is slightly the other way round: the peasantry is largely Hindu and the landlords, Muslim. But the landlord, not wanting to be considered as a landlord, while coming into conflict with his tenants, will say the Hindu elements are in conflict with the Muslim. And today, apart from certain trivial personal factors, one sees that an attempt has been made by reactionary and semi-feudal elements—both among the Hindus and the Mohammedans—to take shelter behind the name of religion to prevent the people from joining the progressive forces, and consequently also to prevent the real problem—the economic problem—from being tackled.

If I go to the Punjab and address a meeting—and may I tell you that the meetings in India are enormous as in a meeting there may be present fifty to sixty thousand people comprising Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs—then among the questions which are put to me, no one asks me about the communal problem. What they are interested in is when is their water rate going to be reduced or when will they get relief from their tax burden? Now, can these problems be treated as communal problems? There may be a conflict between the landlord and the tenant, but there is the same conflict between the Hindu landlord and the Hindu tenant.

Remember this, there is the question of the unity of India which I referred to. It is an interesting question and I wish I could tell you something about this fascinating aspect of the Indian situation. People have an astounding conception of India's history of the past. They seem to think that before the arrival of the British people in India the only occupation of the Indian people was to cut one another's throat, and since the Englishmen established themselves there, everything has been well. Well, it is true that except for certain periods of history when Indian political unity was established, if you look at this enormous country, you would realise that it was not easy to keep such a country in political unity before modern transport and modern communications and the rest came into existence. In the past, big empires broke up because the industrial revolution had not come. But what is important is this: that India has had cultural unity for thousands of years, and I want to put before you one or two instances of this.

The basic language of India, of the whole of India, was Sanskrit—one elementary language—out of which so many languages of the present-day India have grown. Do not imagine there are hundreds of languages in India. There are ten languages which are all intimately connected with each other. Those in the north are derived from Sanskrit, and others in the south were powerfully influenced by it. One of the languages, which is the Hindustani language, is spoken by 130 million people, and it is understood by a fairly large number of others. I have no doubt that it will become the main language, not replacing the great languages, but becoming the main link between them.

There also take place in India huge conferences where representatives from all parts of the country gather and they discuss questions affecting them all. Now, this idea of holding a conference of representatives of all India is a very old idea. Representatives go from the south all the way to Kashmir to attend a conference. You find from the most ancient times the most famous places situated—one in Cape Comorin in the extreme south, another on the western coast, the

third in Puri, the extreme east, and the fourth in the extreme north in the Himalayas—and there was a constant going to and fro between these places, and a constant inter-change of ideas. And when a new idea took birth, it spread immediately all over India through controversy, talk and discussion.

And the fact of the matter was, perhaps unfortunately for India, that India and her people did not attach much importance to politics. They attached greater importance to their activities, and this was partly due to the fact that they had a very large measure of local self-government. They did not care who were at the top so long as they did not interfere with their local liberties. If two kings fought, provided it did not interfere with local liberties, the people did not mind who won. In fact, there are treaties in evidence where kings entered into agreement with the people of the town that if their wars caused any harm to their crops, they would pay compensation. So the people said—go ahead and fight. It was unfortunate that they did not take enough interest in political issues, and ultimately it did result in the people at the top depriving the rest of their local liberties.

Right through history you find this common culture of India. I should also like you to appreciate the rich civilisation inherited by us in India from our past. How many of you have heard of the great discoveries made in many places, of the magnificent cities, shop fronts, swimming pools, beautiful jewellery, toys for the children, fine statuary, etc., which are five thousand years old and which show that our civilisation is at least five thousand years old and was also contemporaneous with the earliest civilisation in Egypt? And we have had this continued from that period and, strangely enough, this civilisation appears to be essentially a secular civilisation. No temples are found anywhere in these great cities. There are things which show some kind of worship, but the people did not attach much importance to them, they did not put up huge buildings for them. Unfortunately, they got into the habit of erecting buildings later on. So that you see this history of India with its hundreds of years of positive development, with the number of conquests remarkably few for that period; and people also do not seem to realise that a number of invaders were repelled during that period.

Compared to the long vista of India's history, the last one hundred and fifty years or so, which have been so oppressive in many ways, form but a very small period and it seems as though that little chapter is also ending soon, and we are going to turn over a new page.

Q: What is the role played by Mr. Gandhi?

JN: I have talked in terms of various movements—I did not mention Mr. Gandhi's name. But I think you all must know a great deal about Mr. Gandhi. This great development of the national movement during the last twenty years, and especially its development as a mass movement, is largely the work of Mr. Gandhi. India and the Indian people owe an enormous debt to him—for he has really worked wonders. Whether some of us for particular reasons may agree or not is a matter for ourselves to decide, but the point is that in the past twenty years of India's history, he has played an amazingly important rôle. He has had greater influence with the Indian masses, and been more popular than perhaps you can find any other example in history, I might say. Many persons have become great after their death, but at present I am talking of a person who during his lifetime has moved such a huge mass of humanity. There is no doubt about his great services to the people of India. Please also remember that Mr. Gandhi's popularity is the same today as it ever was.

Q: Has the Congress changed its policy with regard to nonviolence?

JN: The Congress has not changed its policy. The Congress, largely at the instance of Mr. Gandhi, adopted passive methods. Mr. Gandhi, of course, laid stress on that as he believes these are the only proper methods to pursue under any circumstances.

It astounds me that somebody from this audience should think it to be a shameful matter to pursue passive methods. I should very much like to know why it is shameful. It is possible to imagine the circumstances where passive methods do not answer the purpose. That is a different matter. But to say that it is shameful to believe in passive methods is an astounding and selfish approach. Unless we are to revert to Hitlerism and barbarism or we find that there is no other way out, I think we must insist that passive methods should always be pursued.

The way Mr. Gandhi puts this before the Congress is certainly the moral way. But, after all, the Congress is a political organisation; it likes to fulfil its obligations morally, but also wants to know what will be the result of those obligations. Mr. Gandhi stressed the practical side of it which was that, in fact, we had no other alternative, and he therefore laid stress on passive methods. Remember, he was also the first person who put forward an effective plan of action. It was not merely a question of saying we should remain passive and do nothing else, but he put forward a plan involving direct action—countrywide satyagraha —which meant exertion by the whole country of a tremendous pressure. It was not merely a negative thing, and, in the last analysis, it

was the only way open to us. And that plan made a tremendous difference to India, because it gave us self-reliance, strength and capacity for united action. These were the qualities which we lacked. So the Congress adopted the use of passive and legitimate methods as one of its cardinal principles.

Now, I am not, for the moment, going into the virtues of violent or nonviolent action. I can conceive of circumstances where nonviolent action has to be abandoned in favour of other methods. That situation has not arrived in India, because we are strong enough to follow our own methods to achieve our goal. I do not know how to give a specific instance, but I do not see how I could have functioned nonviolently in Spain at the present moment. So in India also such occasions might arise.

Q: If the British were removed from India, wouldn't there be a possibility of Japanese aggression on India?

JN: So many people have asked this question about the defence of India. I wonder if any person ever takes the trouble to put himself for a moment in the position of a Japanese general thinking in terms of the conquest of India. Because the whole thing is fantastic. It is fantastic, I say, although in the world today all manner of things can happen. India can get rid of British rule either by agreement or by force. If she gets rid of it by force then it presupposes that India possesses a certain strength to resist others. And, if by agreement, then we immediately have opportunities to develop our defence forces, and in that case, any aggression on India might create bigger complications.

But let us leave out England for the moment. Japan would take longer time to come to India than to England. The passage from Japan to India is one of the most complicated and difficult to navigate with its narrow straits. It is impossible for Japan to come overland or by air because of the great mountains and deserts. It must therefore come by sea, and the sea route is complicated and difficult. And Japan is not likely to undertake such a rash adventure unless it was safe in its home waters. It would never think of it unless it had subjugated and absorbed the whole of China, a task which is highly unlikely it will ever accomplish. Even so, it would expose its flanks to great hostile powers, to the U.S.S.R. and America. Then again, it would probably think in terms of easier prey like the Dutch Indies, or Australia, or the Phillipine Islands, so that the Japanese generals, before ever thinking of India, would have many other things to dispose of. Finally, if they decide to come to India, they will get a fitting reply.

Q: What is the role of women in the Congress?

JN: Of course, there are a large number of women in the Congress, and, as a rule, they function more aggressively than men. But really it is a curious phenomenon how our national movement has affected the women of India. When about thirty to fifty thousand men were imprisoned in India suddenly, their places were taken by thousands of women who had previously done no such work. They came out into the streets and took charge of the situation and became very aggressive. That in itself shows how the widespread national movement is affecting the entire Indian life.

Q: In case there is war between British imperialism and the fascist countries, what would India do?

JN: I do not know whether there will be war or not. But, obviously, British imperialism draws closer and closer to fascism, and so far as its policy is concerned, it has completely changed, and it is obviously pro-fascist today. It is possible to conceive of two imperialisms coming into conflict, or British imperialism coming into conflict with fascism. Remember, the armament programme is meant for that because I do not see any other big conflict facing British imperialism. I do not think it is immediately meant for Russia, though ultimately the conflict may be with her.

Q: Suppose this contingency arises, what then?

JN: Obviously, our sympathies are not with fascism. We are also opposed to imperialism. The Indian National Congress has repeatedly declared that it is not going to be dragged into war by the British Government, and any attempt to do so would be resisted. The only party that can decide this matter is the Indian people.

In case there is war, it is hardly likely to be other than an imperialist war, and we do not want to be exploited for the sake of any imperialism. In other words, if India is a free country, an independent country, then it is quite possible that in a conflict involving two rival forces, of which one may more or less be representing the aggressive side, the reactionary side, and the other, the progressive side, then it would be both in India's interest, and to her ultimate advantage, to see that the progressive side wins. But, if India, as a subject country, is to be exploited, that would not be tolerated.

Q: Is there fascism in India?

JN: There are fascist tendencies in India, particularly in the Indian states.

Q: What about India's relations with Ceylon and Burma?

JN: In regard to Ceylon and Burma, we would very much welcome them if they chose to join a future Indian republic or a federation, but obviously that must be left to the people of Ceylon and Burma. There can be no compulsion in the matter.

Q: What about the anarchical conditions which would prevail if the British withdrew from India?

JN: A slightly similar question was put to me the other day. What would happen on the north west frontier, I was asked in solemn tones, if the British forces withdrew? I replied, "There will be celebrations on both sides of the frontier."

23. Civil Liberties in India[1]

Two or three years ago civil liberties hardly existed in India. The many ordinances and other measures have completely restricted them. But since the Congress took over the government in some provinces, there has been a considerable change. One of the first acts of the Congress ministries was to resume civil liberties as far as they were able to do so. There was a conflict with the Governors over this. Ultimately the Governors and the Viceroy gave way, because they were apprehensive of the consequences. If they had not, the constitution would have lapsed, and the Governors would have been obliged to govern under something akin to martial law.

1. Speech at the National Council of Civil Liberties, London, 7 July 1938. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 9 July 1938.

A fundamental change has been that now the poorest peasant feels a great burden removed, and knows that the police cannot harass him, and, generally, he can say and do what he likes. However, the restrictions cannot entirely be removed because many of these are imposed by the Government of India.

The position in the non-Congress provinces remains much the same as it had been. There are numerous prosecutions for sedition, and in Bengal, detenus are still kept in prison without trial, and their number goes on increasing from time to time.

In the states, the question of civil liberties had been bad throughout, and there has been no improvement at all. In some states, I saw definite signs of deliberate attempts being made to introduce fascism.

24. China and India[1]

I am particularly touched that I should be your guest today. India's sympathy with China would have been at any time inevitable because of the bonds of culture and history between the two countries, but, today, India, in her own self-interest, feels bound to associate herself in China's struggle.

There are no two countries which have had so long and continuous a stream of culture, and today both are facing the problem of blending that heritage with the best of the modern world.

The days of Europe dominating the world are passing, and I have no doubt that the centre of world affairs will increasingly shift to Asia and America. The world today, so advanced in many ways, is yet showing shocking deterioration of morality, and in arresting its spread, the countries like China and India with their great cultures have a mission. I hope we will cooperate in that great work for preserving freedom and international morality.

1. Speech at the China Association, London, 7 July 1938. *The Hindustan Times*, 8 July 1938.

25. To J.B. Kripalani[1]

London
14th July, 1938

My dear Jivat,
Thank you for your letter. I have been wanting to write to you for a long time past. There is so much to write about, but I am afraid this cannot be until I leave London and have some leisure elsewhere.

It seems to me obvious that we cannot possibly accept the basis for negotiations suggested by the Muslim League.[2] I really don't see why it was necessary for the Working Committee to meet to consider this subject.

I enclose a letter from the General News Service. I think it would be worthwhile for you to subscribe to this for your foreign department. If possible, you might also suggest to them the names of organisations and individuals who might subscribe.

I wonder if you know that large tea plantations in Assam are owned by the cooperative movement in England. This movement professes advanced ideas regarding labour, and so it is a little absurd for them to be responsible for the very backward labour conditions in Assam. I have pressed this home to them here, and they are somewhat agitated about it. Could you write to people in Assam to find out facts and particulars regarding these plantations owned by the cooperative? These facts could be sent on to the India League here.

I am sorry to learn that Lohia has not been functioning for some time and that Ahmad is leaving. For months past there has been no issue of the *Foreign News Letter*, and I do not know how to explain this here. I find that there is an enormous field for supplying information here if we could only take advantage of it through our foreign department. There are a number of competent and earnest young Indians here who will be coming back to India before long.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-71/1938, p. 9, N.M.M.L.
2. In May 1938, Bose and Jinnah held talks. In reply to a letter of 15 May from Subhas Bose, Jinnah stated on 5 June 1938 that "it is impossible for the All India Muslim League to treat or negotiate with the Congress the question of Hindu-Muslim settlement except on the basis that the Muslim League is the authoritative and representative organisation of the Musulmans of India..." Bose replied on 25 July 1938 that "It will be improper for the Congress to make the admission that the Muslim League is the only representative organisation of the Muslims of India because many Muslims support the Congress..."

I am feeling the strain of too many engagements, and I am not very fit at present. I hope to take a few days off in France soon.

I have met all manner of people, but about that I shall write to you later.

Dr. Atal will be returning to India in a few days' time. Some money has been raised for the unit here, and out of this I have advanced some to Atal for the purpose of purchasing various articles which cannot be obtained in India. We have also advanced some money for his fare back to India and asked him to produce accounts before the China committee in India. That committee must decide about the fare. I think it will be desirable for it to approve of the payment of second class fare for him.

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

26. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

London
14th July, 1938

My dear Subhas,

I wanted to write to you at some length about what I have done here but this must wait for the moment. Meanwhile I am writing about the China medical unit. Atal is sailing in a few days for India. We have collected about £300 here for the unit and we may collect a little more. We had no time to get the permission of your committee for certain expenditure here—some articles had to be purchased which could not be obtained in India, such as gas masks. I have asked Atal to buy them and advanced the money for the purpose. Atal also wanted to know if his fare to India would be paid. I told him that this is for the committee in India to decide, but we have advanced him money for the purpose and asked him to give full accounts of all expenditure to your committee for their approval and sanction. Altogether we have advanced him £150.

I think it will be desirable for your committee to sanction second class fare to India for him, but it is entirely for you to decide whether this should be sanctioned or not. He will meet you soon after reaching India and discuss the whole situation with you.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I am distressed to learn from Kripalani that our foreign department and other departments are not functioning properly. I am afraid I cannot do anything for them so long as I am here. There is so much work to be done at the other end and it is unfortunate that we are not doing it.

Kripalani sent me the Muslim League resolutions[2] in reply to the memorandum to Jinnah. These resolutions are absurd and preposterous and it is impossible to agree to them. I suppose you have already come to your decision.

I hope to go to Paris next week and then to the south of France for a few days' rest.

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

2. The Congress memorandum of 14 May 1938 stated its terms for any understanding with the Muslim League. Unequivocal support should be given to the Congress in its fight for independence and its opposition to the federal scheme and the right of the Congress to work among the Muslim masses should be fully recognised. Muslim League members, if they joined the Congress ministries, should be amenable to Congress Party discipline. The Council of the Muslim League, meeting on 4-5 June 1938, while conceding the Congress claim of being a national organisation demanded that the Congress should recognise the Muslim League as "the only representative organisation of the Mussalmans of India." If that were done, the League would go ahead with the negotiations.

27. On Federation[1]

Some people seem to be of the opinion that I have been carrying on negotiations with officials and others. As a matter of fact, I did not come here with any such purpose, I did not discuss with any person,

1. Interview to the press, London, 14 July 1938. *The Hindustan Times*, 15 July 1938.

either publicly or privately, any question of amendment of the Government of India Act. Inevitably I met people—officials and others—and discussed various aspects of Indian and other problems. I endeavoured to place the Indian viewpoint before them, but there was no question of my trying to get something out of anybody. We do not think in such terms in India; we are not working even for the slightest change in the Government of India Act, for the simple reason that we do not want the Act. It seems to me that there is a much wider appreciation in England now of the real nature of the Indian question and its wider implications. Most thinking people realise that the nationalist movement is far stronger than it has ever been and that any attempt to impose anything against its will, will lead to serious conflict.

This reality is being appreciated more though it may still be that the Indian question may be overshadowed by international affairs. I have tried to connect the two, so that people look on the Indian question in relation to international affairs and crises of wars. I have found that where it is so considered, it immediately assumes greater importance in the eyes of others. Naturally, Indian developments may play an important part in affecting the British.

At present, British foreign policy is resented in India, and we see no reason whatever why we should be parties thereto. This becomes yet another reason why we should have our own foreign policy and complete independence. I think that people in England are beginning to realise that the only solution of the Indian problem is to allow the Indian people to frame their own constitution through a constituent assembly. This is the only democratic, possible way, open to us, and, inevitably, it will have to be adopted sometime or other.

Some experts maintain that the navy is out of date. Defence is a technical rather than a political issue, but the first and most effective arm must be the air. We, however, cannot rely on armies and navies of others to defend us. It would be highly improper to talk about independence in terms of the British army and navy. We would like close cooperation with England and probably an alliance, but we do not look upon this problem as one where we stand helplessly by and ask for protection.

Until India is in a position to build her own aeroplanes, she would have to buy elsewhere. There is bound to be a gap of period, but India is prepared to take the risk. Individual Congressmen certainly considered the major question of defence in relation to immediate responsibility. The Sino-Japanese war confirms my opinion that it would be difficult for Japan to operate over a long distance.

I realise that it would take time to train officers and others, but recent events have shown that competent armies could be raised fairly rapidly. Of course, India's foreign policy would be one of world peace. India would associate herself with those powers who stand for world peace and collective security. Moreover, India would want a popular army and not a mercenary force.

The nationalist movement, in the last few years, has made rapid strides. This has been made possible due to increasing participation by the Indians in the movement and also due to activities of the Indians abroad.

My recent remarks about the non-existence of civil liberties in Bengal and other places have evoked criticism from Bengal. I however do not want to argue, but I do not retract from what I have said about the Bengal Government. I think that a feeling of hostility would remain in India against England, as in Ireland. Such a feeling should be removed, because it is such a waste of energy. The real way to deal with it is for India to be absolutely free and able to decide what she wants. This would provide a firm basis for friendly cooperation.

28. Peace and Empire[1]

This conference has been held on the invitation of the India League and the London Federation of Peace Councils, to consider problems of peace and empire. Peace and Empire—a curious combination of words and ideas fundamentally opposed to each other, and yet I think it was a happy idea to put them together in this way, and to convene this conference. I do not suppose we can have peace in this world unless we do away with imperialist ideas. Therefore the essence of the problem of peace is the problem of empire.

So long as empires continue to flourish we may have periods when open war between states does not take place, but even then there is no peace, for conflict and preparation for war continue. There is conflict between rival imperialist states, between the dominating power and the subject people, and between classes. The very basis of the imperialist state is coercion of subject peoples and their exploitation; inevitably this

1. Presidential address at the conference on Peace and Empire, London, 15 July 1938. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 22 July 1938. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 268-277.

is resented and attempts are made to overthrow this domination. On this basis no peace can be founded.

Now you and I in these days of fascist aggression often labour to do something to check the fascist menace, but not always to check the imperialist idea too. Many people seek to distinguish between the two. They do not think much of the imperialist idea, but consider that we might carry on with it for a time, although we cannot possibly do with fascism. I wish you would consider that in this conference, and try to find out how far we can distinguish between the two.

Perhaps because I come from a country which is under imperialism, I attach a great deal of importance to this question of empire. But apart from that, I feel that you cannot distinguish between the two conceptions of fascism and empire, and that fascism is indeed an intensified form of the same system which is imperialism. Therefore, if you seek to combat fascism you inevitably combat imperialism.

We have to face an extraordinarily difficult and complex situation when the embattled legions of fascist reaction threaten the world and are often encouraged and supported by other imperialist governments. The reactionary forces of the world gather together and consolidate themselves, and in order to face them and check them we must also forget our petty differences and hold together.

We find fascism spreading and all manner of propaganda going on in imperialist states and in other countries. Perhaps you know that in South America today there is tremendous propaganda on the part of the fascist states. We also find imperialist countries gradually drifting towards fascism, although sometimes they talk the language of democracy at home. They must do so because they cannot, owing to their imperialist foundation and background, ultimately resist fascism unless they give up that background.

There is a kind of consolidation of the forces of reaction. How are we to meet this? By consolidating the forces of progress against reaction. And if those who represent the forces of progress are inclined to split up and argue too much about minor matters, and thereby endanger the major issue, then they will be incapable of effectively resisting the fascist and imperialist menace. At any time it would be a matter for your consideration, that we hold together. But with all manner of difficulties facing us, it becomes an imperative necessity.

Now only a joint front, not a national joint front, but a world joint front, can achieve our purpose. And out of the horrors we have gone through, the most hopeful signs that come to us are those which point towards the consolidation of the forces of progress and peace all over the world.

You will remember how in China there was internal conflict which weakened the nation. But when Japanese aggression came last year we beheld a people who had been bitterly fighting amongst themselves and destroying each other, who had built up enormous bitterness against each other, still being great enough to see the menace, and to organize and unite themselves to fight it. Today, and for the last year, we have seen a united people in China fighting the invasion. In the same way, you will find in every country more or less successful attempts at unity growing up and you find all over the world these various national united groups looking for international solidarity.

In Europe and the West, where progressive groups have a longer history and different background, you have both advantages and disadvantages. But in Asia, where such groups have recently come into existence, the issue is often clouded by the nationalist issue, and one cannot think of it so easily in terms of internationalism, obviously because we have to think first of all in terms of national political feeling.

Even so, these modern developments, and especially what has happened in Abyssinia, in Spain and in China, have now forced people to think in terms of internationalism. We find a remarkable change in some of these countries of Asia, for even though we were engrossed in our struggles, we began to think more and more of the social struggles in other parts of the world, and to feel more and more that they affected us because they affected the entire world.

If we desire to resist the fascist menace effectively, we must equally oppose imperialism, or else we fail. The foreign policy of Britain is an example of this pitiful failure, for thinking in terms of imperialism it cannot resist fascist aggression or ally itself to the progressive forces of the world. And in so failing it is even helping in the disruption of its own empire which it seeks to preserve. We have here a significant example of the basic kinship of imperialism with fascism and of the contradictions which imperialism itself presents.

If we are convinced, as I take it most of us are, that imperialism is akin to fascism, and both are enemies of peace, then we must seek to remove both, and not try to distinguish between the two. Therefore, we have to seek to root out imperialism itself, and seek a complete freedom for all the subject peoples of the world.

Now we are often told that instead of the imperialist conception, we should develop the conception of the commonwealth of nations. This is a phrase which appeals to one, because we all want a commonwealth of nations in this world. But if we think in terms of an empire gradually being transformed into a commonwealth, almost retaining its own structure economically and politically, then it seems to me that we are

likely to delude ourselves very greatly. We cannot have a real commonwealth of nations born of empire. It must have different parents.

In the British Commonwealth you have a number of countries which are almost independent. But let us not forget that in the British Empire there is a vast area and a vast population which is completely subject, and if you think that this subject population is gradually going to become an equal partner in that commonwealth, you will find enormous difficulties. You will find that if that process is somehow achieved in a political way, there will be many economic bonds which are inconsistent with a free commonwealth, which will not permit real freedom for those subject people, but will prevent them from changing their economic order if they wish, and will prevent them from solving their social problems.

Every one of us, I suppose, is in favour of a real commonwealth of nations. But why seek to limit it to a few countries and nations? That means that you are building up one group to oppose another group. In other words, you are building on the conception of empire and one empire comes into conflict with another empire. That may reduce the danger of war within a group, but it increases the danger of war between groups.

Therefore, if we think in terms of a real commonwealth, we must necessarily abandon the ideas of imperialism, and build afresh on a new basis—a basis of complete freedom for all peoples. For the sake of such an order each nation should be prepared to shed, in common with others, some of the attributes of sovereignty. On this basis we can achieve collective security and establish peace.

Today in Asia, Africa and elsewhere, there are enormous populations which are subject, and until we get rid of that subjection, and imperialist ideas cease to exist, we will find this is a thorn in the side of peace.

The mandatory system in Africa and elsewhere is, I think, a very dangerous idea, because it covers a bad thing under a fair name. Essentially it is the imperialist system continuing in another guise. It is always dangerous to make one person the trustee of another, and allow him to profit by it. It may be that in some countries where you intend establishing complete freedom the same form of government may not be established as quickly in one place as in another, but you must proceed on the basis of complete freedom for every subject people, and then proceed in a practical way to help them if necessary. Although, personally, I rather distrust these offers of help, occasionally they may be necessary. But I do not think you will find a way out through this mandatory system, for it is founded on the same basis as imperialism.

I mentioned to you the growing solidarity of the various peoples, their feeling of international fellowship and comradeship because of this crisis.

risk to the safety and preservation of their imperial interests in the future.

We come, therefore, to this, that we have to base any policy that we evolve on true foundations, and to root out the real evil. The problem of central Europe, Czechoslovakia, Spain, China and many other problems, we realize, ought to be brought together and considered as a whole.

May I also remind you of another problem about which perhaps we do not think in this connection so often, but which is very much before us these days, the problem of Palestine? This is a peculiar problem and we are apt to think of it too much in terms of conflict between the Arabs and the Jews. May I remind you to begin with that right through 2,000 years there has never been any real conflict between the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine? It is a problem which has recently arisen, since the war. It is fundamentally a problem created by British imperialism in Palestine, and unless you keep that in mind, you will not solve it. Nor is it likely to be solved by British imperialism.

It is true that this has become at the present moment rather a difficult problem because of the passions it has roused. What then is really the problem in Palestine?

The Jews are there, and every one of us has the greatest sympathy for the Jews, especially today, when they are being persecuted and hounded out of various countries of Europe. Although the Jews have erred in many ways, they have done a considerable service to the country since they came into Palestine. But you must remember that Palestine has been essentially an Arab country and this movement is basically a national struggle for the independence of the Arabs. It is not an Arab-Jew problem. It is essentially a struggle for independence. It is not a religious problem. Perhaps you know that both Arab Muslims and Christians are completely united in this struggle. Perhaps you know that the old Jews, resident in Palestine before the war, have taken very little part in this struggle, because they have been closely associated with their Arab neighbours. It is quite understandable that the Arab people should resist any attempts to deprive them of their country. Any people would. An Irishman, Scotsman or Englishman would do the same. It is a question of not wanting to be pushed out of one's own country and the desire for freedom and independence.

So that the Arab people started this movement for the independence of their country, but British imperialism played its hand so cleverly that the conflict became the conflict between Arabs and Jews, and the British Government cast itself in the role of umpire.

The problem of Palestine can only be solved in one way, and that is by the Arabs and Jews ignoring British imperialism and coming to an

agreement with each other. Personally, I think that there are many Arabs and Jews who desire to find a solution of the problem in this way. Unfortunately, recent events have created difficulties which have been played upon by imperialist elements, and it may be some time before the Arabs and Jews can come together, but it should be our business and duty to stress this viewpoint and to make it clear— (1) that you cannot solve this problem by trying to crush the Arab people; (2) that it will not be settled by British imperialism but by the two main parties coming together and agreeing to terms.

I do not propose to refer to the large numbers of countries which are subject countries, or countries which have other social troubles today, because almost every country has them. It may be that we can consider their problems later on, but I do think we must not forget the countries of Africa, because probably no people in the world have suffered so much, and have been exploited so much in the past as the people of Africa.

It may be that in the process of exploitation to some extent even my own countrymen have taken part. I am sorry for that. So far as we in India are concerned, the policy we wish to follow is this. We do not want anyone from India to go to any country and to function anywhere against the wishes of the people of that country, whether it is Burma, East Africa, or any other part of the world. I think the Indians in Africa have done a great deal of good work. Some of them have also derived a great deal of profit. I think Indians in Africa or elsewhere can be useful members of the community. But only on this basis do we welcome their remaining there, that the interests of the people of Africa are always placed first.

I suppose you realize that if India were free it would make a tremendous difference to the conception of empire throughout the world and all subject people would benefit thereby.

We think of India, China and other countries but we are too often apt to forget Africa and the people of India want you to keep them in mind. After all, though the people of India would welcome the help and sympathy of all progressive people, they are today perhaps strong enough to fight their own battle, whilst that may not be true of some of the peoples of Africa. Therefore, the people of Africa deserve our special consideration.

Most of you will probably agree with the ideas I have put forward. Many people outside this hall may not agree with them. Many people may say these are idealistic notions and have nothing to do with the modern world. I do not think there could be any more foolish notion than that. We shall only solve our problems today by proceeding in this

way, and if you think we can solve them without raising these fundamental issues, you are highly mistaken.

Here is a small example of today in dealing with these problems. The example is of the Moors in Spanish Morocco. There was delay in dealing with their problem and the fascist clique in Spain took advantage of this and deceived these poor unfortunate Moors by making them all manner of false promises and enlisting them on its side to attack the very people who were likely to give freedom to them. That kind of thing will happen again and again if this issue is not faced properly.

We can hardly expect a subject country to show enthusiasm about the freedom of others when its own people remain subject.

Therefore, in India, we have made it perfectly clear and the Congress has declared that it can play no part in any imperialist war. So long as India is subject, it is an absurdity to expect it to give its men and resources in a cause which might be in favour of strengthening an empire.[2] The right way to deal with the situation is to root out imperialism, to give complete freedom to the subject peoples and then to approach them in a friendly manner, to come to terms with them. If the approach is made in that manner, they will be friendly. Otherwise, there will be constant hostility, trouble and conflict, and when the crisis develops and peril comes, all manner of complications will arise and it is not easy to say what will happen. Therefore, I beg all of you to remember and realize that we are not dealing with distant idealistic solutions today, but with current problems, and if we neglect them and evade them, we do so at our peril.

2. The conference in one of its resolutions passed on 16 July 1938 welcomed the increasingly active role played by the Indian National Congress in international affairs and noted with satisfaction the Congress declaration that the people of India are ready to cooperate with other peoples in defence of peace and collective security but that they will not, as a subject nation within the British Empire, allow their strength and resources to be used for imperialist war purposes of their rulers.

29. The Congress and Collective Security[1]

We have after all had an extraordinary gathering and if you go through the long list of organisations represented, it is a singular education for us in international matters.

Now there has been an argument about a particular resolution which was placed before us and I have tried to follow that argument very closely. I am intelligent enough to appreciate what lay behind that argument and yet, because I have myself not been entangled in this argument, I cannot exactly get excited about it nor understand the reason for all this excitement.

I pointed out that when the Congress passed the resolution it did not think for a moment of either side in this argument as it has been presented to you. It was not worried by reason of various opinions held by other organisations. Yet it arrived at that conclusion. What does it signify? Obviously the Indian National Congress is going to act, as all organisations ultimately act, in its own selfish interests whenever the occasion arises for it to act. But it has begun to realise more and more that its self-interest leads to what might appear to be an unselfish action, which is to work for international solidarity and cooperation with other progressive forces. But when it cooperates it is not with the missionary spirit of doing good to others, but out of realisation of the need for acting and cooperating for the common good of all. Therefore the Congress came to its conclusion in regard to world collective security.

Now I suppose the real issue is what is meant by collective security and it might be that the people would not ask this if they analysed their conception. Obviously, for an Indian it has no meaning if the collective security involves the subjection of India. Similarly, any person who is a subject, will not be very much interested in assisting to maintain a *status quo* which involves his subjection. Yet, it is not such a simple issue as that. Conditions may arise when it may be to our advantage to get rid of that subjection and get rid of collective security at the same time.

1. Concluding speech at the conference on Peace and Empire, London, 16 July 1938. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 22 July 1938.

I cannot lay down a hard and fast rule. No practical politician can do that long beforehand, and in speaking to you I am not prepared to do that. I have functioned for many years as what might be called an agitator. At the same time, the time has come in India when though we have still to function as agitators, but as agitators also we have to think when we can. Our organisation has given advice which we know, if it is adopted, will convulse the entire country. We cannot lightly give that advice. In the past, we have carried on our movement and gone forward, I suppose, knowing that we were not strong enough to achieve our aim. Now, suppose I go and put a certain proposal before the Congress today and it adopts it, it would mean that millions of people would act upon it and follow that advice. It is no light burden that the Congress has to carry when it means upsetting the whole system in India.

Therefore I am not prepared to say exactly how under a certain set of circumstances we shall act, but I can tell you that we are prepared to act with only one thought in our minds. Firstly, it is for the achievement of the independence of India that we shall continue to strive, and secondly, because we do believe, and we are convinced, that this isolated national independence is out of date and cannot exist for long in future, that we cannot always consider problems in terms of isolated national independence. We have to consider it in a larger way. If we think only in terms of national independence, I feel we would not go a long way. The Indian National Congress must think in larger terms, must think of the greater perils that are overshadowing the world and try to avert these perils.

I have carefully read the resolution you have passed and having read it I found there was nothing about it with which I disagreed. If there had been anything in it, with which I disagreed, probably I would have drawn your attention to it or expressed myself previously.

The reference to the National Congress resolution is not a complete reference, it is true. It does not give everything that the Congress resolution says. But in so far as the reference goes, it is a correct reference. You have the text of the Indian National Congress resolution and you can yourself read and judge it. But I do think that there is nothing in this resolution that you have passed which misinterprets or puts a false meaning to that resolution. It does not give the full significance of that resolution and I felt that when I read it; but I did not think it necessary that a resolution should go into a detailed analysis of a resolution made by another organisation. Therefore I accepted the resolution from several points of view. Firstly, because I saw nothing in it to which I objected. If I had been given the drafting of it, I might have drafted

it differently—I might have put it more tersely. But the point was this: there was nothing that I objected to, and it is a tremendous thing, looked at from the point of view of a resolution passed by a large number of organisations. I do attach importance to that.

I have functioned in the Indian National Congress, which itself is composed of many groups and many viewpoints, and it has been inevitable that these groups pressed for their respective viewpoints, and many people imagine that the Congress is going to split up and are disappointed when it is not split up, and in spite of these varying viewpoints we have been wise enough to hold together and to have the fullest and most vital differences and yet, when we have arrived at a decision, to hold by that decision. I do not mean to say that we must sacrifice principles for the sake of unity, but after all we are, I take it, not only the people with revolutionary tendencies, but people who want results, and we hope to achieve them in the not distant future. We have to be realists and idealists at the same time. Strength comes from mass organisation, mass effort and a united effort.

If the National Congress is strong today, it is because it happens to have millions of Indian people behind it. Therefore it presumes to go ahead because ultimately what counts is the consciousness of strength. This strong organisation may become terribly powerful and may upset our little applecart.

Suppose I go to the Congress with a proposition—it happens frequently with me—and my proposition is rejected. I find that hard. However, should I walk out of the Congress? I don't do this because I have always felt I would be playing false to the Congress and the cause I represent, and that I should be doing what the British imperialists desire in India to happen. Therefore I put up with it and with all our arguments in the Congress. For I may remind you of that saying that unless we hang together we are likely to hang separately.

May I in conclusion thank all the delegates and organisations represented here, especially the delegates, for their indulgence to me in spite of slight waves of excitement, and the organisers, who have taken a tremendous deal of trouble behind the scene? I think they can well feel satisfied with their resolution, and I think it will have far-reaching and desirable consequences.

30. The Spirit of Indian Nationalism[1]

The people of England have a good deal of responsibility for what has happened in India in the past few generations. I do not say that just in a spirit of criticism, because many things have happened in the past which it is not easy to forget, but still we will try to forget for the sake of our larger comradeship. You know that nationalist struggle generates feelings of bitterness, almost of hatred. After all nationalism is something anti, anti-foreign government may be almost racial—it is a negative thing which has a definite positive side to it also. It is not a good thing taken by itself. Usually too much of it—too great a dose of it—stunts a race, although at the same time, at a certain stage, it is something that makes a race grow.

It has two aspects—an aspect of leading a people to freedom and another aspect which you see so much in Europe today—something which leads to the reverse of freedom. And so nationalism often has been in the past, something which unhappily brings hatred and rivalry between different people in its train.

Now fortunately in India in spite of the whole background of Indian history during the last 150 years—and it has been a terrible background—in the great struggle in which we have been engaged more or less continuously during the last 18 or 20 years, it has been remarkable that we have kept our movement singularly free from racial bitterness and for that, as you know, the credit must go to the great and noble lead which Mr. Gandhi has given. He gave that lead for moral reasons, for ethical reasons, as well as for good solid practical reasons. However that may be, there is another reason which perhaps helps us in considering these problems in a scientific way, in an unemotional way, and that is the reason which a socialist might advance, and is also one of the reasons why I welcome this kind of gathering, this kind of enthusiasm which this gathering represents, partly British, partly Indian, partly international. Such a gathering represents the level to which we are raised in our struggle and the way we look upon it.

1. Speech at Kingsway Hall, London. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16 July 1938.

And, no sooner we think of it in these larger international terms than we immediately forget these racial backgrounds, and we feel, you and I, and all of us feel in this way that we are comrades in a joint adventure, although that adventure extends not to India only but also to Spain and China and very much so to Europe today. And although by the very excess of your cordiality and welcome you have embarrassed me, still, believing and realising the significance of this that it is a gesture on your part, a stretching out of your hand in good fellowship to the people of India, I appreciate it, and I thank you for it. But this I want you to realise and you will forgive me if I stress this point, that gestures, though welcome, do not go very far. I am not, however, pushing this argument further but I do want you to consider this question of India in its true context.

What is that context? Three years ago I was in England and I was told by a large number of people, people not only of the so-called right wing but also of the left wing, that India for the moment is out of the picture here. We have had enough of India. We must devote ourselves to other problems and we are not going to devote more time to it for some years. That kind of thing was not very pleasant to me, although, frankly speaking, I may tell you it did not make much difference to me or to India. But it pained me because I felt that your movement here which is connected with social, political and various other kinds of freedom, is a part of the social, economic and political freedom all over the world. I felt that you were somehow talking in the air, because if your conception of freedom is a limited freedom, there is something very radically wrong with that conception. So when people at that time wished me well in India, I was grateful for their good wishes but I saw that their wishes made little difference to me. We had come to realise in India that after all if we were to achieve anything, it would only be through the strength that we developed in India. But what pained me more was that I felt that here in England or elsewhere in Europe, the whole method and mode of approach to this problem was wrong.

I give you an analogy which is very much to the fore now. There is great indignation at the bombing of Barcelona and Canton and very rightly. It is inhuman and horrible and only a very few days ago I was myself a witness, not once but at least seven or eight times, to the bombing of Barcelona. A horrible thing and it is an experience I am not likely to forget as long as I live. I want you to appreciate that this bombing of Barcelona and Canton are of the same type, may be not in the same degree, but there is no difference in principle between the bombing of Barcelona and the bombing of the north west frontier. I want you to

appreciate that if England or the British Government is responsible for the bombing of the frontier in India, it is quite impossible for it to condemn the bombing of any other place. You know well that all over the rest of the world this attitude of the British Government in sometimes condemning other powers when they bomb, and not themselves stopping their own bombing is a matter for ribald jests, and rightly so, because they have landed themselves in an extraordinary state where everything they say is pure quibbling. They cannot justify any protest which they might make because of the action they are taking.

In the same way you cannot appreciate this whole question of India unless you are quite clear in your own minds as to what imperialism is, that imperialism is a bad thing and must go not only from India but wherever it exists. So long as you are not clear, all the goodwill and sympathy you may feel for India will not take you very far. Therefore, I want you to think about this and to see this question of India in its larger conflict of imperialism and anti-imperialism. I do not want you or even ask you to think of India apart from the rest of the world. If you consider that question in relation to the larger problems of the world, only then will you understand it properly, only then will you be able to help in that cause. Otherwise it may be that although you may feel sympathetic today, if you have not understood the real implications of the problem then something may happen in a time of crisis when the British Government may do something and you may get swept off because you have not grasped that problem.

That problem is the problem of removal of imperialism and not of giving federation or autonomy. People ask me and they expect me to deal with the question of federation and about some of the provincial ministries which are under Congress control. They are interested that I should tell them something about these. I do not propose to do so, not due to lack of time, but because I want to concentrate on major issues. Do not get lost in these subsidiary and petty problems that fill the papers to the exclusion of the real problem. If the provincial ministries have helped us in one way they have hindered us in another, and as a result we have to face difficult problems.

I have been accustomed in India to speak to large gatherings of peasants. For the moment, I should like you to forget me, if you can, and to think of these millions of peasants of India. It is the hunger and poverty of these millions which constitute the real problem of India and not whether federation should be like this or that or how the provincial autonomy should function. The problem of India is essentially, primarily and fundamentally, the problem of the peasants of India as also of the workers and others. Therefore, if you want to understand

the problem and solve it, you will have to think in terms of removing that poverty from India, and raising all those masses of Indian peasants and workers to a level which can be called a human level. Once you consider the problem from that point of view, and not from the point of quibbling about federation, you will get an entirely different basis.

I may tell you that you cannot solve the problem by holding meetings of the British cabinet or of any other imperialist government. I tell you as one who has endeavoured to study history, that when a democratic power is fundamentally unable to solve the real problems of the people that it governs, then that government cannot last long and you will find that government getting overwhelmed by social revolution. The British Government is incapable of solving the great question of poverty in India. Therefore, if history teaches us anything at all, it teaches us that British imperialism must go from India.

That does not mean that you and I and the people of India are going to wait, doing nothing and expecting history to do things for us. I want you to appreciate that this is not a statute in a parliament which is being debated. It is a vital matter which affects hundreds of millions of people. If the Indian National Congress has grown in strength and shaken the might of the British Empire, how has it been so? You will remember that we tried a unique method of combating this empire. Peaceful though it was, it was not a pacific method, it was an aggressive method. It was a method which brought tremendous pressure on it.

What strength lay behind the Indian Congress? We had great leaders undoubtedly, but it is not the leaders that gave it strength, it was the people, the peasantry, and if you go further back still, it was the hunger of India. So long as that hunger is not satisfied, this fight will go on, despite all constitutions, despite what the British Government may or may not do in India. This is a fundamental reality to be appreciated. I want you to feel in those terms if you have this reality of India before you. During the last two years I wandered about India a good deal, and I do not know how many millions of eyes I have looked into during those two years and how many millions of eyes looked up at me, but everywhere I found the same hungry look, the same misery looking out of those eyes though, often enough, one also saw a new gleam of hope that hunger and misery were coming to an end. It is this background of poverty and hunger which makes the Indian problem look so serious and I therefore want you to appreciate that so long as this problem is not solved, you will find it proving a burden to the entire world. I therefore beg of you to think on these lines.

It is childish for any people to say that we shall dispose of this problem. We have had enough of it. It is too difficult and we have many diffi-

cult problems in the world today apart from the problem of India. May I also tell you that you are developing the habit of looking away from difficult problems and not trying to solve them? That is why when I speak to you here or anywhere else in England, I perhaps speak in a different key, in a different tone, because I am apt to tell you that when I speak on behalf of the Indian people, I do so with a measure of confidence that the Indian people are going to solve their problem, however difficult it may be.

Sometimes I find here in England, and elsewhere in Europe, a want of confidence. I notice a feeling of being overwhelmed by the problems. But, how curious it is that I, who comes from a country that is still subject to British imperialism and which is still governed by the British Government, should speak to you, not only with confidence, but with the conviction of triumph in my eyes, and you should have the misfortune to put up with the kind of thing you are putting up, and show yourselves to be helpless and unable to do anything. Sometimes I think that it may be that your movements here which aim at greater social freedom may be helped ultimately by what we do in India.

I must add that I do not wish to minimise our difficulties. They are great. To raise 360 millions of people, who for generations past have been subject to exploitation, is a difficult problem. You can change constitutions, and you can change laws, but it is not so easy to ameliorate the conditions of living of the vast millions, to educate them and to raise the standard of living of the people in a big country like ours. Still, we have the courage to say that we shall face these problems. But, what however distresses me, as it must distress you, is this degradation of spirit which seems to grow all over the world and which ultimately is represented in the most obvious, in the most crude and grossest form by what is called fascism.

You, who cheer when I condemn fascism, remember this, that fascism is a near relative of imperialism. Your condemnation of fascism is of little value unless in your heart and by your words and actions you also condemn imperialism. You have perhaps been shocked by the extent to which civilised people can go in perpetrating excesses, but surprising as they are, may I inform you that in India although some of the excesses that we read about are new to us, the atmosphere in which such excesses take place is thoroughly familiar to us? It did not shock us as it did shock you. The difference is that you have grown accustomed to a thing that has been happening for a long time under the name of imperialism, but when it came in a different garb you were shocked. Rightly so, but you ought to have been shocked earlier also. Therefore I beg of you to go down to the roots of this problem and see if it leads

you to the same conclusion. It is the same roots which manifest themselves in different countries. I would, therefore, urge you to understand the real significance of this problem, so that you may be able to deal with it properly.

31. Greetings to Spain and China[1]

I offer my greetings and the greetings of the Indian National Congress and the people of India to the British workers and other democrats and especially to the Spanish people.

India is far from Spain and is engrossed in her troubles of poverty and subjection but today we are fighting in India with considerable success with the conviction that we will soon win through. The best service that India can do to Spain or China is to struggle all the harder against fascism which is crushing her. But out of our poverty and weakness, we will also give what we can to stop subjection. If war is indivisible, if peace is indivisible, then I would say, freedom also is indivisible. Fascism is new to you but we have been experiencing it for the last 150 years, and so we know what Spain and China are going through. We support them because we admire their qualities of fighting—fighting day in and day out, and not compromising. We draw the lesson from their fight and we shall not compromise with British imperialism which stands for naked domination over India.

A part of the world inevitably reacts everywhere, which explains why, though you have a democracy, your government is becoming increasingly pro-fascist. When you protest against fascism do not forget the background of your government or the training that your leaders get in administering the subject nations of your empire.

1. Speech at Trafalgar Square, London, 17 July 1938. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 19 July 1938.

32. India and the British Labour Party[1]

Two and a half years ago I visited England and met many people here belonging to various parties and groups. They showed a courteous interest in the Indian problem and expressed sympathy for our cause. I appreciated the courtesy and welcomed the sympathy. And yet, inevitably, I attached no great importance to either, for I was fully conscious of the indifference and apathy to India of people generally and even of those whose business it is to consider such problems. I found a general desire not to think about India, to shirk the issue. It was too complicated and in a world full of troubles, why add to them? The Government of India Act had just been passed and, unsatisfactory as it was, it had one merit at least. It postponed the issue for a while and gave an excuse for not thinking about it.

I was not disappointed for I had not expected much more, and for many years we had trained ourselves in India not to rely on others but to develop our own strength. I went back to India. Our problem did not vanish because people in England were not thinking about it. It grew and we grew with it.

Meanwhile, the international situation became ever more critical and we came to realise that the Indian problem was a part of this world problem and that we in India could make a difference if crisis or war came. That realisation has grown with us and with others and has raised the Indian national struggle for independence to the international plane.

During my present visit to England I have again had the privilege of meeting many old friends and new and spoken about India to numerous gatherings. I found still a certain apathy and considerable ignorance, and inevitably the urgent problems of Spain and China and central Europe absorbed attention. And yet I found a vital difference and a new and more realistic way of looking at the Indian problem. Perhaps this was due to a realisation of the great strength of the Indian national movement today, perhaps to the gravity of the international situation and the apprehension that India might add to the danger of it when crisis came.

1. London, 18 July 1938. *The Tribune* (London), 28 October 1938. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 119-125.

Perhaps this very gravity, this sense of impending catastrophe, had forced people out of the old mental ruts and made them think afresh in terms of reality.

For the reality is this: that India wants and is determined to achieve full independence; that the problem of our appalling poverty clamours for solution and that this will not be solved till the people of India have power in their hands to shape their political and economic destiny as they will and without interference from outside; that the organised strength of the Indian people has grown greatly in recent years and it is difficult for outside authority to check for long their march to freedom; that the international situation indirectly helps greatly the Indian national movement. Even the Conservative die-hard has to acknowledge that this in essence is a true analysis of the Indian situation. India is bound to achieve her independence, preferably with the goodwill of others, but even if that goodwill is denied her. And so almost everybody today talks in terms of Indian independence.

Looked at in this perspective, the question of provincial autonomy and federation become minor issues in a larger context. They may, of course, provoke a major conflict, but the real question is, and will remain, independence, and every step we may take, every tactic we might adopt, will be considered and decided with reference to this question alone. Does it strengthen us and bring independence within our grasp?

If obstruction is offered, if attempts are made to impose anything on us, our reaction is bound to be hostile. The result ultimately will be the same for forces beyond human control are working to that end, but that result may be one brought about in friendliness and goodwill and leading to friendship and cooperation, or it may have a background of ill will and conflict darkening the future and creating barriers to healthy cooperation.

I believe it is an appreciation of all this that has brought about a welcome change in the outlook of many people here. They realise that in a dynamic situation mere passivity and indifference do not pay, while an active policy might well be advantageous.

England and India have an unfortunate background of hostility and conflict. It is not easy for an Indian to forget this, and yet in these pregnant days of world conflicts and fascist aggression and an ever-present possibility of terrible war, if we continue to think and function in the narrow terms of the past, we do so at our peril. We must rise above them and take the larger view.

I trust that it may be possible in the future for India and England to cooperate together as equals for the common good. But that cooperation is impossible under the shadow of empire. That empire will have

to be liquidated and India will have to gain her independence before real cooperation is possible.

As an Indian nationalist I have nothing to say to England, for we can only think of her in terms of imperialism. I can only work for building up and increasing our own strength and relying on it to gain our objective.

But as one who ardently desires a world order based on peace and freedom, I have much to say to England and to her people, for I see her present government pursuing a policy disastrous alike for both peace and freedom. That policy widens the gap between England and India, for we are entirely opposed to it and consider it one of the major evils of the present-day world. Can there be cooperation between us on this basis?

As a socialist I have even more to say to my comrades here. British Labour in the past has wobbled dangerously on imperial issues and more particularly on India. Its record is bad. But in these times of peril, none of us dare wobble or equivocate. And so it is time that the British Labour acted up to the principles it has enunciated, and, as it happens, even expediency demands such action.

Labour, which is anti-fascist, must also equally be anti-imperialist. It must stand for the ending of empire. It must clearly declare for the independence of India and for the right of the people there to frame their own constitution through a constituent assembly, and it must be prepared to do everything in its power to bring this about. We are not concerned overmuch with the federation, for we want the whole of the Government of India Act to go and to be replaced by a constitution of our own making.

The time has passed for minor remedies and the world rushes to catastrophe. We may yet avert this if the progressive forces of the world work together. India can play her part in this company, but only a free India can do so. British Labour working to this end will lay the foundations of future friendship and cooperation between the peoples of England and India.

It is gratifying to note that the leaders of British Labour are thinking on these lines. It is still more pleasing to find the rank and file of the labour movement responding enthusiastically to this call of freedom.

The world marches rapidly today and no one knows what tomorrow will bring. India also is changing and going ahead, and all our planning may be out of date soon. But a basis of goodwill between the progressive forces in India and England will lay the foundations for future cooperation for our mutual good and to the advantage of world peace and freedom.

33. To W. H. Gladstone Solomon[1]

London
19th July, 1938

Dear Mr. Solomon,[2]

I am in receipt of your letter of July 14th[3] for which I thank you.

I entirely agree with you that everything should be done to preserve Indian art and to make it better known in foreign countries, more especially the great achievements of the distant past. I think also that replicas of the great monuments should be made as suggested by you.

I would personally welcome an exhibition of Indian art in London, provided, of course, that this is done properly and is a really first class exhibition. This should base itself on the ancient Indian achievements in sculpture and painting as well as her arts and crafts. Of course, all modern developments should be included. Obviously such an exhibition must be properly organised. Otherwise it will do little good.

It seems to me that the initiative for such an exhibition abroad has to come not from India, but from the country where the exhibition is going to be held. I understand that this has been the case in the past in regard to the Persian, Chinese, French, Italian and Dutch exhibitions in London. But I feel sure that if the initiative is taken elsewhere and it is shown that a proper exhibition is likely to result from it, every cooperation will be given in India. I cannot, of course, speak in this matter on behalf of the Congress without referring to it, but I have little doubt that the Congress organisation, as well as the Congress ministries, will welcome such an exhibition and give it such help and cooperation as they can.

Indian art has too long been treated as a thing for experts only and books on it are usually little understood by the public at large. It is highly desirable that a more effective and popular representation of it should be made.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1880); a noted painter; curator, art section, Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay; director, Sir J.J. School of Art, Bombay; author of *The Charm of Indian Art*.
3. In his letter of 14 July 1938, he had stressed the need for the preservation of Indian art and suggested the holding of an Indian art exhibition in London.

34. India and the War Danger[1]

I have spent nearly a month in London and met a large number of friends belonging to all parties and groups. Today, the world situation, and the danger of war, fill everyone's mind and it is in this context that I have discussed the problem of India.

The changed circumstances have led people to consider the problems in the light of the new perspective. This has pushed minor issues into the background. Now, everybody realises that independence for India is bound to come. Everybody talks in these terms and the only question is one of finding ways and means.

It is also fully realised that today the Indian national movement is stronger than ever before and it is not possible to ignore it in any way.

A dominating factor in the situation is the danger of a crisis caused all over the world by an imminent war, and it is also clear that India can make a vital difference if such a crisis occurs.

It is also becoming increasingly clear that India which is not perfectly free will not permit herself to be exploited for purposes of war, while a free India will judge this question all by herself.

Therefore, questions like federation and the rest become minor issues before this major one which must decide the political future of India. More and more people now feel that the only way out is for the Indian people to decide about their constitution through a constituent assembly. Ultimately, of course, everything depends on the strength of the Indian people.

I have had the greatest courtesy and friendliness shown to me by people of varying shades of opinion whom I have met here, and I am grateful to them for this.

1. Talk with the correspondent of *The Hindustan Times*, London, 20 July 1938. From *The Hindustan Times*, 21 July 1938.

35. To Carl Heath[1]

London
21st July, 1938

Dear Mr. Heath,
I have your letter of the 16th.[2] I should like to write to you at greater length later, but I am leaving London for Paris today.

I might mention, however, that what you have written, though correct in so far as it goes, is not the basis of a real understanding, it is only a step to avoid conflict and pave the way to a future understanding.

Even so the statement that India will ultimately have the right to decide for herself does not go far enough. We cannot think in terms of long periods, but only in terms of the near future.

I am quite sure that the right approach is to proceed on the basis of that self-determination now. The machinery may take a little time, but the principle must be explicit and steps taken to give effect to it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Carl Heath referring to their recent meeting in London proposed "a working agreement between India and Britain for achieving freedom for India."

36. India and the World Crisis[1]

I have had the privilege of meeting a large number of persons belonging to all parties and viewpoints in England during the past months. I have discussed Indian problems and international problems with them, and I must say that I have found a new appreciation of the Indian problem among widely divergent groups. There is not the same complacency as there used to be.

1. Statement to the *Manchester Guardian*, London, 21 July 1938. *Manchester Guardian*, 22 July 1938.

This has, no doubt, come from a realisation of the strength of the nationalist movement and the powerful and widespread urge for independence, as well as from the apprehension as to India's part in a great world crisis which always seems to be impending. India obviously can play a part in such a crisis which might make a difference and thus the Indian problem becomes a part of the world problem and cannot be separated from it. In regard to world affairs, Indian opinion is entirely anti-fascist, and there is complete disapproval of the British Government's foreign policy, which is considered pro-fascist and pro-Franco. This has become an additional barrier between India and the British Government and has intensified our desire to have full control of our foreign policy, which can only come through independence.

But anti-fascist as India is, it is also fundamentally and inevitably anti-imperialist; it is because she is anti-imperialist that she is anti-fascist. In any crisis she will first of all consider her policy from the point of view of anti-imperialism which is of her own freedom from imperialist domination. A subject country cannot help its dominating imperialism even in order to combat the fascism it dislikes. That is the crux of the problem, and the Congress has stated it in the clearest language.

India must decide for herself what attitude she will take in a world crisis, and only a free India can so decide. A subject India has no alternative but to oppose and resist any attempt to impose any decision on her.

Problems of federation and the like have to be viewed in this larger perspective, and if so viewed they become relatively minor matters. As a matter of tactics we may act in a particular way, but this action will always be taken in a spirit of hostility and with a desire to strengthen ourselves, unless the imposition of anything on us is entirely removed. Such a removal will change the whole situation and produce a new psychological atmosphere, devoid of the sense of conflict. This can come only if the British Government decides and declares that the constitution of India should be framed by the Indian people themselves and they should have full freedom to do so.

How to give effect to this declaration must immediately be considered and some steps taken to that end. The only democratic way is through a constituent assembly, as the Congress has demanded. With this background the present position can be considered, and I am sure it will be possible for a friendly arrangement about procedure to be arrived at. It is important, however, that there should be no delay in order to create this right background and to prevent crisis from overtaking us.

The Congress obviously cannot make any additional move. It has stated its position quite clearly. It is for the British Government to

move in the matter. If it goes on repeating that the framework of the Government of India Act must stand, then the gap is completely unbridgeable. What has to be said is the very reverse of this—that the Government of India Act is a temporary expedient and will have to be scrapped to give place to a constitution as drafted by the Indian people. There is no other way out. Not to adopt it is to proceed, as we have done for so long in the past, in a hostile way and think always in terms of a crisis that approaches, and prepare for it.

We may adapt ourselves to a particular development if we think we gain strength thereby. But our eyes will be fixed elsewhere, and we will endeavour to take advantage of every opportunity which takes us to our goal. The time has gone by for leisurely steps. One does not proceed in this way over a yawning chasm. The only way is to jump it.

I am most grateful for the courtesy and friendliness which I have met with from all people in England.

37. The Bombing of Open Towns[1]

I have to convey to this great gathering the greetings and the assurances of full support in the cause of peace of the Indian National Congress representing the people of India. I do not speak on behalf of kings and queens or princes, but I do claim to speak for hundreds of millions of my countrymen. We have associated ourselves with this work of peace most willingly because of the vital urgency of this problem. Also because, in any event, our past background, and our civilisation, would have urged us to do so. For the spirit of India for long ages past, like that of our great sister nation China, has been a spirit of peace. Even in our national struggle for independence we have always kept this ideal before us and adopted peaceful methods. So we gladly pledge ourselves to labour for peace.

Lord Cecil remarked yesterday that the only way ultimately to have peace is to abolish war. We entirely agree with this statement. To abolish war we have to remove the causes and roots of war. Because

1. Speech at the International Peace Conference, Paris, 24 July 1938. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 3 August 1938. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 278-283.

we have dealt with the problem superficially in the past, and not touched its roots, we have failed so far to achieve anything worthwhile, and the international situation has progressively deteriorated and brought death and untold suffering to millions. We shall fail again and perhaps perish in that failure if we continue to ignore those roots of war.

We see fascist aggression today driving the world to war and we rightly condemn and seek to combat it. But though fascism is a recent growth in the West, we have long known it under a different name—imperialism. For generations past colonial countries have suffered under imperialism and suffer still. It is this imperial idea, functioning as imperialism or fascism, that is a potent cause of war and until this goes there can be no true or enduring peace. There is no peace for a subject country at any time, for peace only comes with freedom. And so empires must go; they have had their day. We are not interested in emperors or kings, but in the peoples of the world, and the Indian National Congress stands for the people of India and their independence. Even today India is a powerful factor in favour of peace, and she can make a difference if a world crisis arises. She cannot be and does not propose to be ignored in this matter. A free India will be a tower of strength for peace, and soon we hope that India will be free.

Lord Cecil has pointed out the dangers of an intensive nationalism. May I say that I entirely agree with him, and, though I stand for Indian nationalism and Indian independence, I do so on a basis of true internationalism? We in India will gladly cooperate in a world order and even agree to give up a measure of national sovereignty, in common with others, in favour of a system of collective security. But that can come only when nations associate on a basis of peace and freedom.

There can be no world security founded on the subjection of colonial countries or on the continuance of imperialism. Freedom, like peace and war, is today indivisible. If the aggressors of today have to be checked, the aggressors of yesterday have also to be called to account. Because we have sought to cover up past evil, though it still persists, we have been powerless to check the new evil of today.

Evil unchecked grows, evil tolerated poisons the whole system. And because we have tolerated our past and present evils, international affairs are poisoned and law and justice have disappeared from them.

We have met here especially to discuss the aerial bombardment of open towns and civilian population. Horror has piled on horror from day to day and though the present is terrible to contemplate, the future seems to hold something that might be incredibly worse. Recently I visited Barcelona and saw with my own eyes its ruined buildings, its gaping chasms and the bombs hurled through the air, bringing death

and destruction in their train. That picture is imprinted in my heart and each day's news of bombing in Spain or China stabs me and makes me sick with the horror of it. And yet over that picture there is another, that of the magnificent people of Spain who have endured and fought against these horrors for two long years with unexampled heroism, and written with their own blood and suffering a history that will inspire ages to come. To these great men and women of Republican Spain I offer on behalf of the Indian people our respectful homage. And to the people of China, also, knit to us by a thousand bonds since the dawn of history, we stretch out our hands in comradeship. Their perils are ours, their suffering hurts us, and we shall hold together whatever good or ill fortune may befall us.

We are deeply moved by these aerial bombardments in Spain and China. And yet aerial bombing is no new thing for us. The evil is an old one, and because it went unchecked it has grown to those vast and terrible dimensions. Have you forgotten the bombing on the north west frontier of India which has been going on now for many long years and still continues?[2] There are no great cities like Madrid or Barcelona or Canton or Hankow, but the villages of the Indian frontier also shelter human beings, men, women and children, and they also die and are maimed when bombs from the air fall on them. Do you remember that this question of aerial bombing was raised many years ago in the League of Nations, and the British Government refused to stop it on the frontier? This was called police action, and they insisted on its maintenance. The evil went unchecked, and if it has grown now is it surprising? On whom lies the responsibility?

The Prime Minister of Great Britain has recently offered to withdraw his reservation if there is general agreement in regard to the stoppage of aerial bombing. But that offer is an empty one, unless he takes action and stops all bombing on the frontier. Till then his protests against other people's bombing have little meaning and less value.

The Bishop of Chichester[3] demanded yesterday at this conference that no treaty should be made with countries that were carrying on aerial bombing, a sentiment that was rightly applauded. What of England then, which is still responsible for bombing on the frontier of India? Is it because the British Government cannot approach this question with clean hands, that they have developed an incredible foreign policy

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 457-462.
3. George Bell (1883-1963); dean of Canterbury, 1924-29; bishop of Chichester, 1929-58; chairman, central committee of world council of churches, 1948-54.

and now seek friendship and agreement with a power that is most responsible for this bombing in Spain? I wish to dissociate India completely from this policy of encouraging the evil-doer and aggressor and to say that the people of India will be no party to it and will resist it whenever they have a chance to do so.

We have seen the tragic farce of non-intervention in Spain, which, under the cover of fair words and democratic procedure, has aided the insurgents and the invaders of Spain and prevented the people of the country from obtaining even the means of defence. The seas and a hundred doors are open for supplies to reach the insurgents, but the Pyrenees frontier is closed in the name of non-intervention, though women and children die through bombing or are starved from lack of food.

We blame and condemn the invaders and aggressors in Spain, but they have at least openly defied all canons of international law and decency and challenged the world to stop them. What of those governments who, while bravely talking of peace and law, have submitted to this challenge, adapted themselves to each fresh act of aggression, and tried to make friends with the evil-doers? What of those who have criminally stood by and shown indifference when life, and what was more sacred than life itself, was crushed and dishonoured?

Even today the aggressor nations are far weaker in numbers and strength and resources than the other countries. And yet the latter appear helpless and incapable of taking effective action. Is it not so because their hands and feet are tied by their past and present imperialist policies? These governments have failed; it is time that the people took action and compelled them to mend their ways. This action must be immediately to stop aerial bombardments, to open the Pyrenees frontier, to permit the means of defence and food to reach Republican Spain. If bombing is to continue, anti-aircraft guns and other apparatus meant for defence must be allowed to go through.

What vast destruction there has been during these last two years in Spain and China! The starving and the wounded, the women and the children cry aloud piteously for help, and it is the business of all decent and sensitive people all over the world to help. This is a world problem, and we must organise on a world basis. The real burden of the struggle has fallen on the people of the stricken countries; let us at least carry this small burden.

I am glad to tell this conference that the Indian National Congress has organised and is soon sending a medical unit to China. We have also met with considerable success in India in our boycott of Japanese goods as the export figures demonstrate. A recent incident will indicate

the strength of our feeling for the Chinese people. In Malaya the Japanese owned iron and tin mines which employed Chinese workers. These workers refused to help in producing munitions for Japan and left the mines. Thereupon Indian workers were engaged, but at our request they also refused to work there, although this meant privation and suffering for them.

And so the struggle goes on. How many of our friends and colleagues and dear ones have died in this struggle already, and not died in vain? How many of us who are gathered here may go the same way and not meet again? But whether we live or die, the cause of peace and freedom will remain, for that is greater than us—it is the cause of humanity itself. If that perishes then all of us perish. If it lives, we live also, whatever fate may befall us. To that cause then let us pledge ourselves.

38. To J. B. Kripalani[1]

Paris
27.7.38

My dear Jivat,

I wrote[2] to you this morning—I want to add a few lines to give you some idea of the position in regard to India here. In a sense my visit has done good as it has kept India in the forefront. So far as meetings, etc., go I have had unusual success and great crowds have come which is extraordinary for meetings to be addressed by Indians—Bapu apart. At international gatherings I have pegged away at the Indian question and at imperialism. But the really interesting part of my visit has been the numerous private conversations I have had with all manner of individuals. I found a very marked difference in outlook among Englishmen of all parties. Partly this is due to the consciousness of our growing strength but largely owing to the international situation. Even diehard Conservatives talk seriously about the independence of India and discuss how a constituent assembly can be summoned. There is a spirit of resignation to an inevitable happening. Of course this happening can be delayed but the cost of this is recognised to be great and possibly very harmful. All this sounds rather curious when put side by side

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-71/1938, p. 11, N.M.M.L.
2. Not available.

with suggestions made by Satyamurti and others.[3] The Working Committee members, I suppose, are worried over Jinnah's intransigence and over difficulties in C.P.[4] and elsewhere. Quite rightly. So would I be if I was there. And yet from a distance all this does not seem quite so big as it appears at home. It would have been natural and usual for people in England to question me and try to tackle me on all such matters, especially the Hindu-Muslim tension. This has always been the case previously. And yet surprisingly this did not happen to any marked extent. Would you believe it that in the course of two hours' very frank and friendly conversation there was no mention of Hindu-Muslim affairs or even of federation, so far as I remember?[5] Our conversation covered a wide range of subjects and covered many aspects of the Indian problem. We talked of independence and the constituent assembly and economic questions and the present international situation. There was no obvious attempt to shirk any issue or to talk superficially, as was the case with Zetland. This will indicate to you what the basis of my talks has been. I have chosen the ground for them and dealt with our problems fundamentally in view of the grave crisis that approaches. This does not mean that the British Government is going to take away or to surrender to our demands. This kind of thing does not easily happen. Indeed Linlithgow, as we parted, said that a wide gap separated us and we would look at each other across it. Still this does mean that the position has eventually changed and if we do not appreciate it, it is our fault and we shall suffer for it. We are in an enormously strong position. Indeed we would have been in an overwhelming position but for our internal difficulties.

I must stop now. Perhaps you could convey the contents of the letter to Bapu.

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

3. Satyamurti said on 9 July 1938 that if the British Government fulfilled certain conditions, he would recommend to the Congress the acceptance of federation as a transitional solution.
4. N.B. Khare, the Premier of C.P., resigned on 20 July 1938, following differences with some of his colleagues, and reformed the ministry on the advice of the Governor. As this action was criticised by the Congress Working Committee, he resigned again on 23 July 1938 on the ground that he had "committed an error of judgement."
5. Jawaharlal met Linlithgow in London on 19 July 1938.

39. Spain, China and India[1]

The fascist planes select at random the militarily less valuable targets, making it really impossible to explain by military reasons their merciless killings of the defenceless citizens in open cities. During my stay in Spain, I was caught twice in the whirlwind of air raids and so I can say from my personal experience that these barbarian brutalities are not so greatly effective as the interveners would like them to be.

The high spirit of the republican territory is remarkable. The people calmly face these hard ordeals, and the war methods of the interveners only increase the determination and endurance of the civil population and the people's army. The situation on the front is not at all so unfavourable as is reported by the press patronizing Franco. I also visited the international brigades in which my compatriots are fighting too. The biggest problems are the provisions and war materials. In this respect we must render help to the republican government. Otherwise Franco is far, very far from victory.

In Barcelona and Madrid, I conveyed the unanimous greetings of the Indian people to the Spanish people who are on the republican side.

All Asians are aware that the heavenly empire is fighting for their common aim. The Indian sympathies for China are very understandable, as China is nearest to us and our relations with her are thousands of years old. India helps the Chinese struggle with all means available at hand. One of the most effective means of help has been the boycott of Japanese goods. It was the biggest success in India.

India, the most valuable part of the British Empire and its might, the most important source of its strength, is causing more and more worries to London. All of us still remember last year's elections, in which the national movement achieved gigantic victories. The Indian National Congress is mobilising masses in increasingly bigger proportions in support of demands for the revision of the constitution, for changes in the powers of the Viceroy, which would be a decisive step towards independence of India.

Above all, we are endeavouring to achieve independence. In the National Congress are united the national revolutionaries, the socialists

1. Interview to *Rude Pravo* in Paris printed on 31 July 1938. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

and the communists, in a formation similar to national fronts, and it represents all the forces in the country. The political consciousness of our people is growing. The influence of Gandhi is still great even if it is more moral than political in nature. We see political questions in a substantially different way from Gandhi, but our relations are good and moreover it is our foremost duty to maintain and strengthen our cooperation against England. We are well organised and we are not afraid of undertaking strikes and tax boycotts. Besides, the most important internal problem is the solution of the agrarian question.

The Soviet agrarian policy has secured great sympathy for the Soviet Union in India. I need not even add that Great Britain fights with all its means against the establishment of contacts between India and Moscow. The establishment of direct personal contacts is next to impossible. The relevant literature comes to us only in English from the English democratic sources. We highly appreciate the foreign policy of Moscow and the support rendered by it to the oppressed peoples.

In India there are no fascists. Among the hundreds of millions of Indians there is hardly a person who would sympathise with the parties of the totalitarian powers. We are very well aware of what Berlin, Rome and Tokyo want but we shall never allow the forces of our national anti-imperialist movement to be harnessed to their carriage. We shall never join such powers—not even if they would be ready to support us—because their aims are directed against democracy; they want to drown the world in blood. We do not wish to exchange the present oppression with a bigger one, still more reckless one. We want to carry on consistently an anti-fascist policy.

If there is an international conflict our attitude will depend on the attitude which England adopts towards us. We have been demanding changes in the constitution. If London agrees to our demands, we shall help them. If they reject our justified demands and our righteous claims, we shall hardly be able to support them.

40. To J. B. Kripalani[1]

Houlgate (France)
1.8.38

My dear Jivat,

I enclose a long note[2] for the Working Committee members. I am sending copies of this note to Bapu and to Subhas—and to no others.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-71/1938, p. 5, N.M.M.L.
2. See the succeeding item.

It is going to cost me a devil of a lot of money to send all this by air mail. Will yon take such steps as you consider proper to communicate this note to the Working Committee members? Care should be taken to keep it absolutely confidential.

It has been an awful job to type this long note. But I did not want to entrust it to anyone else.

I get little news about India. The C.P. news was expected though not in the way it came about. The Burma riots are bad.[3]

I have no idea how my friend Jinnah is functioning.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

3. There had been riots in Burma following the publication of an article by an Indian mullah and it was reported that the Indian community suffered considerable loss of life and property.

41. Note to the Working Committee[1]

I must apologise to the members of the Working Committee for my not keeping them informed of what I have been doing since my arrival in Europe six weeks ago. I sent a note at the conclusion of my voyage.[2] Since then my time has been so fully taken up by engagements that it was not possible for me to write in detail. Even brief letters have been difficult to write. I felt somewhat worn out in London and under doctors' advice took some injections and ultra-violet ray treatment as a tonic. I have now come to a French seaside place for a week to take some rest and to clear off arrears of correspondence and do other important work which has had to wait all this time.

My first few days in Europe were spent in Barcelona, Spain, and there was much that I saw there which was of exceeding interest. I wanted, and still want, to write about this visit in some detail to the Working Committee, but I must postpone this to some future occasion.

1. Written at Houlgate (France), 1 August 1938. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See pp. 8-17.

Then I spent three days in Paris, where I went again for six days after my London visit. During both these visits I met many important and interesting persons, attended conferences and meetings, and had an intimate glimpse into the whirlpool that is Europe and international politics today. Of this I should like to write later if I can find the time.

The rest of my time—full four weeks—I spent in London or the neighbourhood. There was the Indian question dominant, so far as I was concerned, and international affairs, and the connection of the two. I propose to deal in this note chiefly with the Indian question, leaving other matters for a future occasion.

I might mention that my visit to Europe has attracted considerable attention, and a particular importance has been attached to it, not only in England but also in other countries of Europe. Even in Berlin, I was told that great importance was attached to my visit. I have had repeated invitations from the German authorities, unofficially conveyed but almost official in their character, pressing me to visit Germany and see things for myself. In view of the present state of Europe and international affairs I have not thought it advisable to visit Germany. I was told that some high German officials were so keen on seeing me and discussing various matters with me, that they were prepared to travel to any part of Germany to do so. As a matter of fact I am going to pass through Munich early next month and I propose to spend two days there. I have sent word that if anyone wants to see me, he can do so then at Munich.

In England I had made it clear that I was prepared to see anybody but I was not keen on seeing any officials and would not take the initiative in the matter. If however I was approached by any such person I would gladly meet him. This, I need hardly add, had nothing to do with questions of personal prestige. It has been unusual for us to visit officials in the past and I did not wish to encourage the idea, which has long been prevalent, that Indians are terribly keen on meeting cabinet ministers in order to plead their cause. On the last occasion when I visited England, two and a half years ago, I took up a stronger attitude and would not agree to meet a member of the British Government even though he might want to meet me. But conditions in India have changed and I felt that such an attitude would be absurd and improper. So I relaxed but only slightly. On my receiving personal invitations from the parties concerned I willingly consented to meet them.

I met a host of people of all shades and views. Excepting the Prime Minister, I met almost everybody who counts or might count in regard to India. Another exception is Winston Churchill, whom I did not meet. I had long and friendly talks with all of them. Some I met in

country houses during week-end visits and had repeated opportunities of talking to them. These talks covered a wide variety of subjects—our domestic subjects of course like federation and provincial autonomy, Indian defence forces (which I discussed with a very high military officer with intimate knowledge of Indian and world conditions), and international affairs in relation to India. I met some people from the British dominions also and was interested in their reactions to the Indian demand for independence.

It is impossible for me to reproduce these talks, nor is it perhaps desirable to do so in this note. I propose to give general impressions only. The numerous public and semi-public gatherings I attended, I propose to ignore in this note, as they have been partly reported. I would say this, however, that many of these gatherings were remarkable and quite unusual for an Indian to address.

The dominant impression that one gathers is that the whole question of India is looked upon from the point of view of what India might do at a time of grave international crisis, such as war or the like. The fact that India, or to be more exact the national movement or the Congress, can make a considerable difference during such a crisis is everywhere recognised. Crudely put, India had a tremendous nuisance value. Because of this, India cannot be ignored and everything should be done to settle this question, or prevent a conflict at least, before the great crisis comes. (In France, it is the opinion of leading politicians that England has, in late years, been so deplorably weak in international affairs because of the fear of losing India in the event of crisis.)

It was significant that in my talks with British politicians the Hindu-Muslim question was only briefly referred to. In view of recent happenings it might have been justifiable to lay stress on this, as in the past. But when major questions are discussed, minor ones sink into insignificance and it was obvious that no vital importance was attached here to the communal problem. Of course this does not mean that this will not be played up and exploited for all it is worth. But it has ceased to occupy the centre of the stage in serious politics. I think this background might be kept in view when considering this question in India. Those who had read the Jinnah correspondence invariably reacted against him.

The federation was frequently discussed but this also more in the larger context of the future of India. This attempt to understand and deal with the Indian problem fundamentally was much more obvious than at any previous time. The world situation was no doubt responsible for this, also the feeling that the Indian national movement had grown too big and strong to be suppressed. These two reasons taken

together made it imperative to British statesmen that a true solution should be found which might lead to friendly relations between England and India. And yet when this solution seemed to lead to the elimination of empire from India, there was inevitably a strong reaction against it. The problem seemed insoluble for the moment—a gap that could not be bridged. Yet a full realisation of the problem itself and a desire, no doubt for selfish reasons, to solve it somehow were obvious indications of the great change that had come over British opinion. So far as leftist circles were concerned, they were prepared to go almost to the full extent of meeting India's demands for independence and a constituent assembly. The right elements, those in power today, were not so prepared but felt very uncomfortable about it.

The talk I had with Lord Linlithgow was long, frank and friendly. We discussed many subjects—international affairs, British foreign policy, Spain, communism (that is, the economic policy underlying it), Russia, America, Japan, Spain, the land question in India, cooperative farming, the reclamation of alkaline soils by utilizing molasses, industrial development in India, the effect of adult suffrage on a people, the pushing on of social services, etc. We talked of provincial autonomy as it had worked and the inherent difficulties underlying it. We hardly touched upon the Hindu-Muslim problem or on federation. And then we discussed the future of India and her relations with the British. Linlithgow put me the straight question if we would agree to a status like that of the British dominions. My answer to this question was not a brief one.

I said that in spite of the background of hostility which had inevitably developed between India and England owing to their abnormal relations and the recent events, we had every desire to maintain friendly contacts to our mutual advantage. We recognised further that the dominion conception was a dynamic and changing one and gave a large measure of independence. At the same time it was essential that we should start with a clean slate and have perfect freedom to decide about our future. Psychologically this was very important as otherwise there would be some imposition and the feeling of hostility would continue and poison our relations, as it had done in the case of Ireland. But there were other practical reasons also in favour of independence. For us political independence meant little unless we had the fullest economic independence and the power to shape our economic structure independently of the City of London. Our real problems were economic and we could only solve them by very radical economic reforms and changes. Dominion Status meant in theory economic freedom but not so in practice, and especially in the case of India with her long past

AT VICTORIA STATION, LONDON, 23 JUNE 1938

WITH LEADERS OF THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY, JULY 1938

L. TO R: JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, C.R. ATTLEE, UNKNOWN, R.H.S. CROSSMAN, A. BEVAN, HAROLD LASKI AND STAFFORD CRIPPS

record of economic bondage to Britain, this practice would certainly continue. If Dominion Status was offered to us in reality, our reaction would depend on many circumstances. We would certainly not look upon it as a satisfactory solution or as ending the dispute between England and India. The urge to independence was too widespread and deep-seated. It may be that in the totality of circumstances we might consider it a step which strengthened us and thus enabled us to reach our ultimate objective, and in this light worked it. But always the desire to go further ahead would be present and the psychological feeling of conflict would continue.

Then again why should we think in terms of a narrow grouping of nations? Why not consider this on a world-wide basis? One group of nations facing a hostile group would lead to conflicts on a wider and more tremendous scale between the rival groups. The time had come when we should build on this wider basis and not confine ourselves to the so-called British Commonwealth. The very name of this implied racialism which excluded us. Why should India not have the closest relations with China which was drawing very close to us? Or any other country?

I pointed out that the present foreign policy of Britain was repugnant to us and we were entirely opposed to it. We could not have co-operation in foreign affairs on this basis.

Although we demanded independence, we did not think of this in terms of isolation or a narrow nationalism. We were looking forward to a world order and we were perfectly prepared to have the closest relations with Britain provided these were based on perfect freedom and equality. The way to achieve this result was for England to realise and declare that the people of India were absolutely free to shape their destiny and frame their constitution, and the only democratic way was by means of a constituent assembly, as demanded by the Congress. If this was fully admitted and a willingness shown to take immediate steps to that end, a new atmosphere would be created, a friendly one, between India and England, and cooperation would become easy. We could agree without difficulty about the steps to be taken to reach the objective, and our future contacts and relations would be viewed in this light.

As an Indian nationalist I could only think in terms of increasing the strength of our people. That was the only guarantee of our progress and freedom. But as one vastly interested in world peace and cooperation, and in the establishment of friendly relations between India and England, and further in view of the great world crisis that threatened us, I urged that British statesmen should be wise and far-seeing enough

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to take the only step in regard to India which would bring a real solution in its train.

Lord Linlithgow seemed rather oppressed at the difficulty and complexity of the problem. He said that even if he agreed with me that the Government of India Act had to be scrapped and a constituent assembly summoned, what could he do except to resign and lead a small band of people in England advocating this. He could not get the British Government to agree to it. I pointed out that the realities of the situation demanded far-reaching action and, so far as I could make out, most British men of affairs were trying to face these realities. There was no other way out. Not to take it was to add to the difficulties and make a friendly settlement further off than ever. And then there was the danger of world crisis.

So we talked of many matters. As I was leaving, Lord Linlithgow said that a wide gap separated us and we would look at each other across it.

say what would happen or what we might do two years or so hence. But still if the Labour Party, of its own motion and without any question of an agreement with us, made a move in the right direction, we would certainly welcome it. Such a move, even though it did not bring any definite results now, might prove helpful.

I had long conversations with some of the Labour leaders and they produced a document embodying their suggestions. This was based, of course, on a Labour government coming into power, but it was suggested that the broad principles of it might be adopted at the next annual Labour Party conference. It was considered that some such step should be taken at a fairly early stage, and certainly long before the general election. Sprung at the last moment before an election it would have unfortunate results as there would be no mass backing for it.

The basis of these proposals was that India should be given the fullest opportunity for self-determination by means of a constituent assembly. Also that this should be done as rapidly as possible by executive action without previous sanction of Parliament. To refer to Parliament would delay matters and introduce complications. Constitutional lawyers of high repute considered that this could be done. Further to expedite matters, as far as possible the existing electoral machinery should be taken advantage of, subject to adult suffrage being introduced. Also to avoid communal difficulties, existing arrangements and divisions, *mutatis mutandis*, to continue for the purposes of the constituent assembly.

The matter was to be referred to Parliament only when the constituent assembly had framed its constitution and its representatives had met the representatives of the British Government and framed a treaty. Of course, it would be open to Parliament to interfere by a vote of no-confidence or otherwise at any stage.

The Government of India Act need not be repealed as such. This repeal would be consequential on a treaty of secession. This treaty would be subsequently ratified by the new parliament in India as well as the British Parliament. There is no exact precedent for such a procedure which involves the treaty-making power of the crown. There is the Irish parallel which is somewhat different.[3] A nearer case was that of Heligoland.[4]

3. The Government of Ireland Act of 1920 provided for separate parliaments for Ulster and the south. In 1937, an independent Eire was established under De Valera's leadership.
4. Heligoland island, at the mouth of the river Elbe, was ceded by Britain to Germany in 1890.

My original talks took place with Attlee (the leader of the opposition), Sir Stafford Cripps, Prof. Laski, Leonard Barnes[5] (an authority on colonial questions) and some others among whom was a judge of the Australian Supreme Court. The heads of proposals framed then were as follows:[6]

I said that these proposals could form the basis of discussion and, generally speaking, the Congress would probably agree, though I could not commit it to every item. It will be noticed that an indirect system of election for the constituent assembly is proposed. This seems inevitable in order to restrict its members to reasonable limits.

Further, I made it clear that we wanted no amendment of the Government of India Act. We wanted it scrapped altogether. We would prefer to carry on with the existing structure till the constituent assembly met and decided, and to do without the wrong type of federation. But in any event both the provincial governments and the Government of India must function differently and in the spirit of the changes to come.

The Indian states offered some difficulties. It has been suggested that the door should be left open for them to enter the constituent assembly on the same conditions as the provinces, but no compulsion should be exercised. We should rely on the compulsion of events which is bound to be considerable, and, in any event, a large number of them would join, if the British Government's attitude was clear and they could get no help from it. Still the difficulty remained: what of those which did not join? It has been suggested in the above proposals that the British Government should denounce (legally and constitutionally, of course) their treaties with the princes. I pointed out that such a course at an early stage might give rise to difficulties and should be avoided. The legal position might then be one of independence for the state and this might enable it to intrigue against us and obstruct our work in many ways. So I suggested that no reference to this might be made till the actual time came to consider this matter. Much will have

5. (b. 1896); served in the British colonial office, 1921-25, and in South Africa, 1933; taught in the department of social and administrative studies, Oxford University till 1962; Labour Party expert on colonial affairs.
6. Not given in the text available. The major heads however were: a constituent assembly elected on universal suffrage with acceptance of existing communal constituencies and other similar basis of representation to decide the future constitution; only those princely states which accepted these forms of elections could send elected representatives to the assembly; Britain to announce that all treaties with princes would lapse as soon as the constitution had been passed; and a treaty between India and Britain, announcing the abdication of the British power in India; and India would take over that part of the debt represented by assets within India, after independent valuation.

happened by then and I felt sure that the creation of the constituent assembly would give rise to such a power in India that no one would be able to withstand it.

The question of the princes and the Indian states requires more research work in the constitutional and historical domains. It seems that the position they have taken up recently has no justification in law. There are no two crowns in India. In the League of Nations India is one. It was proposed therefore that this question might be further looked into both in England and India.

In regard to the public debt, the Congress position is accepted that, in case of disagreement, there should be an impartial tribunal. An interesting suggestion is made regarding that part of the debt (not covered by assets) which might ultimately be allotted to us. It is proposed that we pay this not in cash but in purchase of British goods. That is to say that in paying the debt we get our money's worth in machinery or other goods. We are thus not making a one-sided payment at all but getting something in exchange for it. Ordinarily speaking, this is an undesirable undertaking as it must affect adversely the home manufactures. But if the debt has to be paid, surely it is better to get something in exchange. Probably our developing industries will require plenty of heavy goods and machinery and we shall, in any event, have to import them. Importance was attached by the Labour leaders to this arrangement as they thought this would make it easier for them to approach the British public. Of course, it may be that the tribunal decides that there is nothing due from us. In that event no question arises of any such arrangement.

I pointed out that in the event of a peaceful, speedy and friendly transition to independence, India would not be unwilling to assume some burdens in the shape of pensions and other charges. The cost of conflict would be greater than these. But we could only consider these questions after the main question was decided.

Further I pointed out that I could not formally commit the Congress to anything and it was desirable that the Labour Party should go ahead of its own accord. Then again, I repeated, all this was very much in the air and no one knew what the next year or two might bring.

These proposals were subsequently discussed at an informal meeting of the Labour executive, among them present being Attlee, Dalton,[7]

7. Hugh Dalton (1887-1962); a Labour politician and contemporary of Jawaharlal at Cambridge; Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1929-31; Member of Economic Warfare, 1940-42; President, Board of Trade, 1942-47; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1945-47; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1948-50; Minister of Town and Country Planning, 1950-51; Minister of Local Government and Planning, 1951.

Stafford Cripps, Morrison,[8] David Grenfell,[9] Laski, and Morgan.[10] There was some criticism and discussion but in principle all agreed that this was the only line of approach. As persons who always thought in terms of elections, they considered them from the electoral point of view. The general view was that the main principles should be affirmed by the Labour Party but the detailed steps to be taken (which indeed could not be taken now so far as the Labour Party was concerned) should be held over and considered. Meanwhile some research work should be done about the constitutional and other aspects.

I might mention that the attitude of these Labour leaders was very different this time from what it was two and a half years ago. These leaders, it must be remembered, include all the moderate and most cautious of the Labour group.

I do not think that all this will lead to anything very practical on these lines as the situation is a changing one. Nevertheless it might prove helpful in many ways. I should like to know the reactions of the Working Committee to this line of approach.[11] I shall meet the Labour leaders again before I return to India and I want to tell them then, informally of course, what the Congress attitude is.

The question of defence was also discussed with the Labour leaders but this was not incorporated in the heads of proposals referred to above. The principles suggested were:

1. British army to disappear.
2. The present Indian army to be taken over by the new Indian government and democratized.
3. Militia to be built up.

The first step should be a declaration of the type and policy to be pursued. Then a technical committee should be appointed to report as to how this could be done.

The present system in India is neither efficient nor suited for our purpose. Under it we require 27 years at least to Indianise the army and even then the army will not be of the right type. Thus there is no question of Indianisation as such now.

8. Herbert Morrison (1888-1965); a Labour politician; Minister of Transport, 1929-31; Minister of Supply, 1940; Home Secretary, 1940-45; Lord President, 1945-51; Foreign Secretary, 1951.
9. (1888-1968); a Labour politician; M.P., 1922-54.
10. Probably Morgan Jones (1885-1939); Labour M.P., 1921-39; member, Joint Select Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms, 1932-34.
11. In his reply of 9 September 1938, Kripalani wrote that Mahatma Gandhi and others were highly satisfied with the attitude adopted by Jawaharlal in these talks.

There should be a pact of mutual non-aggression between Britain and India. A military alliance was not considered desirable as British policy might be controlled by a reactionary government as today.

A trade agreement would obviously be necessary. This might be part of the treaty or separate from it.

The question of Indian nationals in other countries would have to be considered, e.g., in Mauritius where Indians were domiciled for generations. Such Indians might be given the right to choose as to whether they want to become citizens of India or prefer to continue as British subjects.

It would be necessary to have separate treaties with the British dominions but this can be considered later.

The question of federation was, as I have stated, not discussed by me with Linlithgow. But it was discussed with many others. My general line was that it was quite impossible for us to accept federation as it was, or even with minor variations, and any attempt to impose it will be stoutly resisted. I pressed always that the only proper and effective way of dealing with the Indian problem was to recognise our right of self-determination and agree to the constituent assembly. If that was not done then we would judge everything from one point of view: does this add to our real strength and enable us to go to independence? Does it strengthen us in case of conflict with the British Government? If so we might work it, though this would not be in a spirit of friendship and the background would always be there and the attempt to go forward to independence always present. Ultimately we would gain our objective but Britain would not gain our friendship as she might otherwise do.

In any event, even to work federation, the Congress had laid down that, among other things, it was essential for the princes federating to have a democratic and constitutional method of election for the federation in their states, approximating to that in the provinces. This by itself was not enough as we could not accept the reserved subjects or 'safeguards'. But if the first point was settled to our satisfaction, there was a possibility of other points being considered in a favourable atmosphere. In any event, all these 'safeguards', etc., would have to remain in abeyance.

I was informed by some persons that Bhulabhai Desai had conveyed a different impression to people here and had indicated that if some minor changes were made the federation would be accepted.[12] I could only say that he must have been misunderstood as the Congress resolution and policy were quite clear.[13]

12. Desai denied that he had said anything to this effect.
13. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 379.

So much for India.

I should like to add a few words about the position of the present British Government. This is apparently strong and perhaps is so. And yet there is a strong element of uncertainty about it. Foreign policy is playing a more important role than domestic policy and the present foreign policy is very unpopular among large sections of people, including staunch Conservatives. Chamberlain, the Prime Minister, is definitely unpopular. He continues and might continue because there is no feasible alternative. The Labour Party is very weak in leadership and is extraordinarily mediocre. It has no striking personality. In effect, the strongest and ablest critic of the government's foreign policy is Winston Churchill. The changing and critical foreign situation makes the British generally apprehensive of changing the government. But it is quite possible that a change might take place bringing a kind of coalition. Everything is really dominated by foreign affairs, and my success, such as it was, in putting India into the picture was due to my considering the Indian problem always in relation to the international situation.

I shall be going to Czechoslovakia soon for a week. Afterwards to Vienna and Budapest. There is a chance of my proceeding further to Turkey. I want to be back in Geneva early in September about the time the League assembly meets. After that I go to England for a week or ten days.

I want to go to Russia but I am not sure yet if I will go. Also if possible I want to visit some of the Asiatic Muslim countries—Iran, Iraq—on my way back. I think we should develop contacts with them and my visit will be useful. But all this is vague and uncertain. If I go to all these places my return to India might be delayed to the third week of November or thereabouts. Otherwise, I should return towards the end of October.

I think my visit, though entirely informal, has borne good results in making people in many countries feel the importance of India at the present juncture and still more so in the future. It seems to me highly desirable that our foreign department should develop and be well-organised to keep up our contacts with the outside world and keep us in touch with developments. Whatever our own views about the future in India might be, India is bound to play an important and ever-growing part in international affairs and we should prepare ourselves for it.

Our contacts with China are at present good and close. The decision by us to send a medical mission has had the happiest results. I think it very necessary that these contacts should be increased for China is not only our neighbour and intimately connected with us, but is likely to play an important part in world affairs in the future. There is a proposal

to set up an international hospital in China, to be opened on October 10th, the anniversary of the Chinese Republic. We have been especially invited to send representatives for this function. I made it clear that we were hardly in a position to make any financial contribution towards the hospital. All we could do was to support our medical unit, which might later attach itself to the international hospital. I said further that some members of this unit might be nominated by the Congress to represent it at the function on October 10th, 1938.

I hope that we shall continue with vigour our China campaign in India —both in regard to the medical unit and the boycott of Japanese goods. This boycott has been more successful than many of us imagined as the export figures show. October 10th might be celebrated by us in India as a special China Day.

This note is a terribly long one. My apologies to my colleagues of the Working Committee. But long though it is, I have only put down a fraction of what I have in mind and what I would like to communicate to the Working Committee. May I request that the contents of this note be kept strictly confidential?

42. To Bharati Sarabhai[1]

Houlgate
3.8.38

My dear Bharati,

It is just two months since I left India. I have not written to you or even acknowledged your letter to me. What must you have thought of me? I cannot forgive myself and yet such things happen. I am a regular correspondent and I have to deal with a host of letters. But when personal letters come, they are put away separately. I do not wish to answer them with my business correspondence. I cannot deal with them through a secretary. I want to answer them at leisure when the mood to do so seizes me and so they lie often remembered and yet unanswered.

I thought that the voyage would be quiet and restful and would enable me to do some work which I had long kept by. I did do some work but I found it hard to do much of it. The people on board—mostly Italians and fascists, some Americans, Spaniards, Danes, Englishmen—

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

took an interest in me and absorbed my time. And ever since my arrival in Genoa I got caught in such a whirlpool of activity that it was hardly possible to find time to do the simplest things I wanted to do. Letter-writing was almost completely stopped. I began to deteriorate physically and some doctors insisted on my taking injections and ultra-violet rays and the like. At last I decided to have a few days off and I came to the seaside with Indu. It has not been very restful here either as I had to clear off arrears of work. But at least I have had a little more sleep and sea bathing. We have only been here six days and tomorrow we go *via* Paris to Czechoslovakia.

Vasantsena[2] is excellent writing and a really good piece of work. It is astonishingly personal—perhaps that adds greatly to its value. I doubt if I could have written anything quite so personal. But then I am a practising politician and have to be careful. I am told that strong objection is being taken in India to my wearing European clothes here.

What do you propose to do with *Vasantsena?* Are you publishing it?

I am so entangled with my work and so wrapped up in the ideas that fill my mind that I find it difficult to get into tune with questions of life and art as they affect one personally. Sometimes they interest me for they are of fundamental interest to all of us. But when I function impersonally, as I often do, I seem to be far away from them and they seem superficial before the realities that face me. You on the other hand are intensely personal and terribly interested in your developing personality. I am not sure that this deliberate attempt at personal development is always right. May it not lead to hot-house growths? Personality should develop unconsciously and unawares while we are engaged in worthwhile activities. But I suppose the same rule does not apply to each one of us.

The sound of the sea comes to me and it is pleasant to hear. It is my last night here. Soon I shall be back in the maze of European affairs and wonder at the astounding folly of man. My visit to Spain produced a powerful impression on me. It filled me with horror and yet it inspired me.

I have no news of Mridula. Indeed I have little news of India. Perhaps it is as well that I am cut off.

I shall return to you *Vasantsena* soon.

Love,

Yours,
Jawaharlal

2. These were the opening chapters of an unpublished memoir.

43. Indian Students Abroad[1]

In India students are not discouraged to come to Germany but they are also not encouraged. This is so on account of the political regime that exists in Germany. In the beginning the treatment meted out to Indians was definitely bad. That was due partially to the racial theory, and also to a certain extent to the desire to please the British. Herr Hitler's reference to British rule in India as something necessary is not unknown in India.

However, the main questions that face the students are, firstly, the treatment meted out to them, and, secondly, the question of study itself. As far as the study of sciences is concerned probably progress is still being made in Germany. But taking education as a whole there is no progress. Political ideology imposed from above by people who may not be primarily concerned with education can have only bad results. Of course, that is the case almost everywhere. Glorification of the empire is a tenet that has been imposed on the prevailing system of education in the British Empire. Still the Nazis are far more advanced in this respect than anybody else. Books are burned and professors renowned all over the world are chased out of the country. Thus the intellectual level of the country could not but fall and this would become apparent as years go by.

I recently had a conversation with Professor Gilbert Murray[2] on this subject. According to him an extremely curious thing is happening in Europe. This is a repetition of the renaissance in a reversed sense. Then the Greek scholars chased out of Turkey helped in the intellectual development of Europe where they migrated. Now it is the European scholars who are migrating to Turkey, Palestine and other countries, and there is no doubt that these countries will benefit from it.

There are people in India who do not see the value of going abroad for studies. They are entirely wrong. However, I am not in favour of everybody going to England for studies although for various reasons England affords to many Indians the best opportunity for studies. What India needs is men with specialised knowledge and training. If India has

1. Speech to Indian students, Munich, 8 August 1938. From *The Hindustan Times*, 22 August 1938.
2. (1866-1957); British classical scholar and professor of Greek at Glasgow and Oxford universities; chairman of the International Committee for Intellectual Cooperation of the League of Nations.

the power she would send hundreds of students to different countries to have technical education and acquire knowledge, as India would need the services of all such men.

But whatever be the subject of study, the students should never forget the true aim of their studies which is to work for the betterment of the material conditions of the people of India and help them to become free in the fullest sense of the word.

44. To J. B. Kripalani[1]

Prague
16.8.38

My dear Jivat,

I enclose a translation of Nahas Pasha's letter.[2] I am sending a copy to Subhas also. You will notice that such pressing invitations cannot be lightly ignored and I would urge the Working Committee to accept. The President should write directly to Nahas Pasha. His various addresses are given in his letter. I shall probably meet him in September in Switzerland.

The central European situation is very critical and the worst is feared. Personally I still think that war will not come but it is a doubtful issue. I have no doubt in my mind that war can be prevented if the British Government adopted a strong attitude in favour of Czechoslovakia, but that is exactly what it is not doing. It is astonishing how the British Government goes on encouraging indirectly Hitler and his gang. Hitler is now concentrating troops on the frontiers and it is expected that numerous petty incidents will be created in the German districts of Czechoslovakia to give an excuse to Hitler to intervene. The Czechs are behaving well under the strain and are resolved to resist whatever happens. Meanwhile Runciman[3] is here and he is known to be partial to Hitler to some extent. But what is astounding is how the 100% British pacifists are behaving. One of these apparently well-meaning

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-71/1938, p. 12, N.M.M.L.
2. Nahas Pasha, in his letter of 2 August 1938, invited the Congress to send a delegation to Egypt to attend the National Wafdist Congress on 24-25 November 1938. He wrote that "it has been decided to give to this year's session a wider oriental significance by inviting Indian Congress as well as the representatives of the oppressed peoples of the Near East..."
3. Walter Runciman (1870-1949); British Conservative politician; acted with little success as mediator in August-September 1938 between the Czech Government and the Sudeten Germans.

persons—Lord Allen of Hurtwood[4]—is here and is functioning as the advocate and emissary of Hitler urging the Czech Government to surrender all along the line to Hitler and hand over a big chunk of the country to Hitler. That, of course, means the end of Czechoslovakia and the complete domination of Hitler right up to the Black Sea.

If war comes, it is unlikely to remain confined to two countries. It will spread and thus all manner of terrible things will happen. Personally, I think that it is bound to end in Hitler's defeat.

In England there is talk of having another R.T.C. to consider the federation issue. Also suggestions are made in the papers that the Muslim League should be consulted.

Vijayalakshmi and I shall return to London soon and expect to be there on the 25th August.

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

4. (1889-1939); British pacifist and labour leader; thrice imprisoned for refusal to serve in armed forces; visited Hitler and Goering and this later led to his break with the labour movement.

45. The Czech Crisis[1]

I do not intend to give advice on internal matters, because the problems of Czechoslovakia are so intricate that it is impossible even with the best sources of information being available to arrive at any definite conclusion.

I am chiefly interested in matters of local administration here. The experience I gain might be put to immediate use for the benefit of India.

From the international point of view I am much interested in the Czechoslovak problem. I would not like to see any solution which might weaken the state. I do not however see why the fullest equality and opportunity should not be given to all the nationalities within the framework of a democratic constitution.

I consider the question of plebiscite as a most intricate and involved one. The fact is that Europe has got itself into a mess. The municipal elections in May and June could however be interpreted as a kind

1. Interview to the press, Prague, 17 August 1938. From *The Hindu*, 18 August 1938.

of plebiscite.[2] India has great sympathies with Czechoslovakia but on the question of war she would have to consider her own interests. Besides, it would be extraordinary to ask a subject country to fight for Great Britain on the Continent. In any case such a decision must be left to India herself. Our fight for democratic independence depends on whether the democratic or imperialist-fascist system is victorious. It would be stupid to assume that we would support a fascist power, merely because it finds itself in conflict with England. Neither nationalist-socialist nor Italian propaganda has a place in India.

India would not support Great Britain merely because she is engaged in fighting a fascist or Nazi power. India would decide according to the circumstances of the case and would not blindly follow Great Britain, unless the Indian political problem was solved to India's satisfaction, without further delay.

2. Though the six-party coalition government in Czechoslovakia had agreed to hold municipal elections in the Sudeten German region in order to placate Henlein, the Sudeten leader, the policy of persecution and terrorization launched by Nazi Germany in the region made the government cautious.

46. The Birth of the National Herald[1]

the burden and the responsibility made me feel that I could not shirk it, and that I must give my full cooperation to my colleagues in this heavy task.

At any time the business of running a daily newspaper is a difficult one involving decisions on important matters of policy. For a newspaper like the *National Herald* which seeks to represent not the small group that runs it, but to be the herald of a great national movement, and to give utterance to the urges and thoughts of a people struggling for freedom and seeking ways to develop themselves in a thousand directions, the task is incomparably heavier. We have chosen a time to give birth to this newspaper when the world hovers on the brink of war and goes from one crisis to another. The new phase of world revolution, that began in August 1914 with the Great War, continues to shake the world, and is likely to continue for many long years to come till another equilibrium is established. Fate has tied us to this great and disturbing period of human history and we cannot escape that fate.

I write this article as I sit in a great city in central Europe, and for the past two weeks I have moved about in this part of the world and sensed the tension and fear that possess the people. On the German frontier a million and a half men are massed together and armies move about in pretence of war. Czechoslovakia is ready to spring to her own defence as soon as any aggression takes place. Loudspeakers in the cities give directions for air raids—buy gas-masks, beware of the warning signal and take shelter immediately. Sometimes the noise of the siren envelops the city—a weird, piercing, prolonged cry, full of pain and fear. This is the warning of an air raid and it tells the people that danger is coming from the sky. Hurry, hurry, put on your gas-masks, take shelter, go into the underground caverns before the death-dealing bomb hurtles through the sky and crashes on the noble buildings that are the pride of the city. That signal is only a rehearsal so far in Europe except in Spain. In Barcelona I heard it as a prelude to a rain of bombs and death and destruction.

The little country of Czechoslovakia, an island of democracy in a sea of reaction, carries on its work normally in spite of this tumult of war and preparation for war. Her men and women move calmly but there is determination in their eyes. The beautiful city of Prague, reminding me by its name of my own home town, has a peaceful old-world look as it stretches on either side of the winding river. It grows lovelier still as the evening shadows fall and thousands of lights glimmer on the sloping hillsides. I wonder what the fate of this city will be, as of many another city in Europe, when war comes. Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona, Canton, Hankow, Shanghai.

Yet war need not come, perhaps it will not come; it can be stopped. But sometimes one feels as if we were all in the grip of tragedy, after the Greek fashion, which moves inevitably and inexorably to a predestined catastrophe.

It is in this world that we live and must play our part. During the last eighteen years we have played a worthy part and written many an unforgettable chapter in India's story. Under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership and his inspiring guidance we have produced life and vitality in our people, hope and courage, discipline and organization, and ideals which make life worthwhile. That is a noble heritage to hand down to the coming generation, and yet our very success increases the burden of responsibility and the complexity of our problems. For success often leads to giddiness and forgetfulness, and petty conflicts arise, and the smaller problems fill our minds. But at this crisis of world history, dare we become small-minded and forget the major problems of our country and age?

It was not the prospect of petty success and trivial achievement that moved our millions to action and sacrifice. We aimed high and laboured to make India a great nation, standing for peace and freedom in the world, to rid her millions of their appalling poverty and distress and open out avenues of progress and self-development to them. To dream, to work hard for the realisation of that dream, and to see that dream materialise before our eyes—that is fulfilment in life.

What is the aim and purpose of the *National Herald?* To be a great newspaper giving its readers the world's news faithfully and keeping them in touch with the forces and ideas that are shaping human destiny. Not to suppress or distort news in the mistaken belief that it might injure our cause. We cannot serve our cause by untruth, we cannot serve the public by withholding news and thus preventing it from forming right judgment, we cannot advance democracy by methods dear to the fascists, we cannot be true to the spirit and ideals of journalism itself by suppression or distortion of news.

But the *National Herald* stands for something more than the mere dissemination of correct news. It is a missionary in the cause of Indian freedom, of world peace based on freedom and cooperation between peoples and nations. It will view everything from this point of view and will endeavour in every way to serve this great cause. It is no pale anaemic newspaper with no particular views of its own, seeking to avoid the burden of decision by sitting on the fence. That is not how we conceive a journal to act or to serve the public. The hour is heavy with destiny. Are we to be merely lookers-on while others mould events?

Broadly speaking, this journal will represent the policy and programme of the Indian National Congress. It will do so because it believes in that policy and programme. It will also do so because the Congress is the one vital mass organisation which, by its long record of struggle and sacrifice, has come to represent the aims and aspirations as well as the strength of the Indian people. The *National Herald* is not an official organ of the Congress and what it may say will not commit the Congress. It may criticise any particular decision of the Congress or urge the adoption or variation of some policy. But if it does so, it will necessarily be in all friendliness and with the desire to strengthen the Congress and further the cause the Congress has at heart. Our national movement is a vital one representing the living forces of the nation. We have to be on our guard to prevent it, by self-criticism and a desire to learn and profit by experience, from hardening and losing that vitality and the capacity to adapt itself to changing conditions.

Some of the promoters of this journal are socialists who believe that our problems, in common with the world's problems, will only be solved by the adoption of the economic framework of society which goes under the name of socialism. Other promoters are not socialists. Yet there is comradeship between the two and full cooperation, not only in the political objective of independence but in many an immediate social objective also. For it must be remembered that the Congress is committed to vital social and economic changes and has laboured for them for many years. The Congress stands for the hundreds of millions of India and these millions have clung to the Congress, with hope and affection, because it brought to them the promise of relief from their many burdens. Their interests must remain paramount in any policy or programme that the Congress might frame. It is in their interest that the independence of India and elimination of empire are essential preliminaries to the great social tasks of building a new nation.

Our strength has lain in all of us, even with varying views, standing together in the Congress and cooperating in the common enterprise. We must continue to hold together. There is no other way except the way of short-sighted folly. The *National Herald* therefore does not approve of sectarianism and attempts to disrupt or weaken the national movement and will not encourage them. It must be our endeavour, now as in the past, to lay stress on the common points among us, on the vast measure of agreement, and to tone down our differences.

I trust that this journal will live up to its ideals and that nothing will be written in it with malice or ill will to anyone. I hope also that it will always extend courtesy to those who may disagree with it and deal with them in all fairness. We aim high and we may never forget our

objectives. But we have to take care of our means also, for wrong and ignoble means demoralise and corrupt a people and lead them away from the path leading to the cherished goal. Among the many things Gandhiji has taught us, perhaps the most important has been the emphasis on the means. We forget that lesson at our peril—means and ends, two sides of the same picture, acting and reacting on each other, inseparably linked together. Without the right ends in view, means are a futility leading nowhere; without right means, the end itself fades away and disappears.

This journal is not meant to be a profit-making business undertaking. It is not in the spirit of profit and dividends that it has been launched. No one who seeks monetary gain for himself will find welcome there. Yet an undertaking of this kind must, if it is to succeed, be conducted efficiently in a business-like way. The service of the country or any cause requires efficiency and cannot be made an excuse for incompetence and slackness. We look upon this newspaper as a great cooperative enterprise in which everyone connected with it, from the directors, the editor and the manager to the office-boy and the compositor in the printing room, shares the excitement and the joy of working together for a cause that stirs us and demands the best that is in us. We seek the cooperation of our readers and the public generally, for the *National Herald* is theirs as much as ours, and without their help and cooperation its capacity for public service cannot be great, and we would ourselves lose interest in it.

And so we launch our venture. May the *National Herald* prove a brave, true and efficient soldier in the cause of Indian freedom and world peace.

47. To J. B. Kripalani[1]

Budapest
24.8.38

My dear Jivat,

Perhaps you know that I have been held up here because of Indira's illness. It was a serious affair but fortunately she is progressing well and I hope she will be well enough to travel by air within a few days. We expect to be in London by the end of the month. Vijayalakshmi has also been held up here.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-71/1938, p. 6, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

I have received today, *via* London, your two letters dated the 16th and 17th.

You are right perhaps in accusing me of haste in coming to a conclusion regarding the Working Committee and Krishna Menon.[2] I stand corrected. What struck me as very curious was that the matter should not have been referred to me at all.

The present position is that Krishna Menon is a member of the executive of the I.P.C. on behalf of the Congress. Thus in so far as the work of the I.P.C. is concerned he represents the Congress. He is not otherwise in any way a representative of the Congress. Roughly speaking, the I.P.C. work consists of bringing together all organisations interested in peace and in organising help in the way of food, etc., for those who are suffering from aggression. Thus they have tried to send food to Spain, to organise hospital work in China, to organise protests against bombing, etc. Menon, in addition, has naturally laid stress always on the Indian aspect—the bombing of the north west frontier and on real peace being incompatible with imperialism. These are points on which there can be no two opinions in the Congress at least. The peace movement is growing in strength, and in England, largely on account of Menon's efforts, it is becoming anti-imperialist. Peace and Empire conferences are taking place laying stress on the liquidation of empire so as to oppose fascism effectively and establish peace. There is going to be an important conference of this kind—called the Peace and Empire Congress—in Glasgow on September 24th and 25th. It is supposed to be for the people of the British Empire. It is organised by the Scottish Peace Council and all manner of very mixed people from the Archbishop of Canterbury to extreme left-wingers are the patrons. I have been invited to it and have also been asked for a fraternal delegate on behalf of the Congress. I am afraid I shan't be able to go but I think it is desirable that the Congress should be represented, if this is possible. Also that a message might be sent by the President. I would suggest that Krishna Menon might be asked to go there and lay stress on the Congress emphasis on anti-imperialism. Please let me know what you and our other colleagues think of this.

Mahadeva has sent me a copy of Jinnah's letters to Subhas.[3]

2. In his letter of 11 August 1938, Kripalani wrote to Jawaharlal that the Working Committee had objected to Krishna Menon's representing the Congress at these conferences and meetings and being paid travelling expenses.
3. *Inter alia*, Jinnah wrote to Bose on 2 August 1938, "The Council (of the League) is fully convinced that the Muslim League is the only authoritative and representative political organisation of the Mussalmans of India....The All India Muslim League, therefore, does not require any admission or recognition from the Congress..."

As you know the plight of the Jews in central Europe is terrible. Among them are many brilliant persons, scientists, professors, technicians, experts of various kinds, etc. I feel it would be a good thing for us to utilise the services of a few such experts for our work in India and in order to train our own people. Provincial governments could do so—we lack good human material for the big jobs. The cost would be little, far less than we would have to pay any other experts, foreign or Indian. Some of our big industrialists could also get competent technicians and experts for the development of industry. I know there has been some feeling among professional people, especially doctors, against Jewish doctors settling down in India. I am not thinking in terms of professional people of this kind. I wish you could let me know what the Working Committee's reactions are to these suggestions. If they think something can be done, I can then make further inquiries. Turkey has greatly benefited by such experts; of course we do this from the sole point of view of our own good and not for humanitarian reasons.

When I was in India I suggested that our China medical unit might have someone of a political bent accompanying it. (I mentioned Lohia's name then.) Later I referred to this again in one of my notes to you. I do feel that this is important in view of the developing relations with China and the necessity for contacts and understanding. I do not know if Lohia can go or what he proposes to do after he leaves the A.I.C.C. office. I understand that Raja Hutheesing is keen on accompanying the unit. I should think he would be good and as secretary of the China committee he would be fitting. Could you mention this to the China committee people? A mission of doctors alone will be very one-sided and will not do us as much good as we ought to expect. I believe there are quite enough funds now. More funds and interest will depend on the proper reporting of what is being done there. The doctors will probably not be able to do this. But the main thing is intelligent political contacts with prominent people there. I think Raja will be suited for this....

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

48. To J. B. Kripalani[1]

Budapest
30.8.38

My dear Jivat,
I have stayed on so long here owing to Indira's illness. She is much better now and we are therefore going to London by air on September 1st. Vijayalakshmi is accompanying us.

Europe is a volcano on the point of bursting. I have thought repeatedly of sending you long notes for the Working Committee dealing with the European crisis as well as the minority question in Czechoslovakia.[2] The latter is of course the merest pretext for the crisis which is solely due to Hitler's determination to dominate Europe by crushing Czechoslovakia and thus reaching Rumania with her oil fields and wheat. Nevertheless, the minority question is full of interest and warning for us and we might learn something from it. But I have been unable to write in spite of several attempts. Partly this has been due to lack of time owing to Indira's illness, but largely owing to the mass of material in my head which I cannot easily compress into a note.

But the crisis grows and the volcano might burst at any moment. September is the critical month and mid-September the worst time. If September passes without war, there will in all likelihood be no war at any rate till next spring. The decision rests with Hitler and Hitler alone. Nobody else is going to start a war.

It is obvious that a war once started will shake and paralyse the world and affect India deeply. Our attitude and the actions we might take will have the most vital consequences for India's future. This attitude will depend on many factors and we can hardly lay down hard and fast rules for every contingency. But it does seem to me very important that the Working Committee should meet and give full thought to the situation and prepare themselves for possible happenings. They must not be caught unawares and unprepared. Almost every cabinet in the world is meeting daily and giving anxious thought to the problem. We cannot ignore it or just wait for things to happen before we consider them.

It is therefore my earnest request that the Working Committee should meet urgently to consider the European crisis. This fact should be made public and this in itself will have important consequences. What the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-71/1938, p. 10, N.M.M.L.
2. Sudeten Germans, the Slovaks and Hungarians constituted substantial minority groups in the Czechoslovak Republic.

Working Committee decides I shall not presume to suggest. Obviously its decisions will be partly in the form of resolutions to be made public and partly confidential. Some may be provisional. The public resolutions would necessarily be rather vague and more or less on the lines of the Haripura resolution.[3] The Working Committee might express its sympathy with the democratic forces in Europe and disapprove of Nazi attempts at aggression. But the main thing is to state emphatically that in the event of war, India will not be at war with any country except by an express decision of the people of India. How the people of India will or can decide is another matter. Certainly, I would not accept the decision of the central assembly as constituted today. However this point need not be gone into our resolution. What I am suggesting is the very attitude which the dominions have taken up. Even General Smuts,[4] who is in favour of South Africa joining a war if England is a party to it, has made it clear that an English declaration of war does not commit South Africa. I do think that a strong reiteration of this by us has great value at present. To this should be added a rider to the effect that an imposed war will be resisted. Of course the Working Committee should express the hope that war will be avoided.

The fact that the Working Committee meets urgently, especially to consider the world crisis and danger of war, will be of great significance and will make it clear that we intend to play a part in international affairs when they affect us.

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 740.
4. Jan Christian Smuts (1870-1950); South African soldier and politician; opposed the British in the Boer War, 1899-1902; minister, 1910-19; Prime Minister of the Government of South Africa, 1919-24; antagonist and later friend of Mahatma Gandhi.

49. The Tension in Europe[1]

The European tension is influenced by wider factors than is generally realised. Some of these can be traced to the places which are outside Europe. This also underlines the importance for a country like India to have a closer look at the tension in Europe. The tension is great and it suggests, as alternatives, two courses: first, an advance to a big-scale armed conflict, and, second, an avoidance of this conflict. The latter implies a wide settlement, taking into consideration the popular struggles which are now being waged for the establishment of a democratic system in some of the important foreign-dominated countries. In other words, the latter course, if it has to assert itself, has to be more genuine and take necessary note of the popular strivings. Great Britain has, in this regard, to carry great responsibility because it is the British attitude which will influence one or the other of the alternatives. India has also a role to play as her stand will be a matter of interest and also weight upon Britain.

India at the moment is dissatisfied with British foreign policy. This has been evidenced in connection with the Abyssinian, Spanish and Chinese questions. On all these questions, the Indian stand has been different from the stand taken by the British Government. The policy of the latter has been one of showing favour to the fascist powers. Certain polemics of the latter basically make no difference to this, even as several of the formal declarations of the former. A confusion is caused by some manifestations of clashes between the imperialist groups in connection with certain moves and steps for the extension of their hold or increase of their bargaining power. The present British Government's attitude of favouring the fascist powers, despite threats in various ways suggested by the latter to British imperialistic interests, indicates clearly enough an even greater apprehension of the forces that are feared will gain strength by an adoption of the democratic course. Britain among the powers is also in a very difficult position owing to the nature of her empire as now constituted and maintained.

The struggle in India is essentially and fundamentally an anti-imperialist one. As such, it is also opposed to fascism which vigorously supports the imperialist philosophy. While India is keen on getting out of the imperialist hold and with this aim carries on her struggle, she has

1. Report of a talk with the correspondent of *Amrita Bazar Patrika* in Prague, printed on 31 August 1938.

no desire to support the expansionist drives of the fascist powers merely on account of the manifestations of clashes within the imperialist camp. To do so would not only arrest the progress of the Indian movement but may also produce dangerous consequences for it. The propaganda attempted to be pushed by fascist sources is an evidence of the Indian movement holding an advanced ideological basis.

The future of Anglo-Indian relations will depend upon the strength of the popular movement in India and the tendency in concerned circles in Britain to take to a progressive course. A policy based on readiness to adopt such a course will help to put Anglo-Indian relations on a sound basis. This could then prove a factor in favour of the preservation of peace and for the retention of a good balance in the East. India's movement for freedom has gained great strength and is bound to gain greater strength as the time passes. Britain has more to gain by timely adjustments with the forces that really matter.

The Czechoslovak question has today advanced to a position of international importance and is therefore of interest to India. The Czechoslovak issue in its present form has less to do with the minority issue as generally understood. Now the problem is linked with an expansionist course visualized by Germany. In other words, the opposing forces are Germany's aim to extend her hold in central and south-eastern Europe and Czechoslovakia's alertness to uphold her independence and sovereignty which she feels are being endangered by the former. The calmness shown by Czechoslovakia in the face of such a serious danger is very impressive. The situation has also been allowed greatly to advance to a critical stage by a policy of drift and hesitancy followed by Britain. All lovers of freedom will wish for the successful and healthy emergence of this peaceful and progressive democratic republic.

50. Nationalism and the Mass Struggle in India[1]

It is not a particularly easy task to give a picture of the situation in India which is at the same time concise and yet deals with all the major problems that have come up.

1. *Labour Monthly* (London), August 1938.

In India, as *Labour Monthly* readers know, the National Congress represents the nationalist movement and the nationalist urge of the people. It was started, more than 50 years ago, as a small group who were very much anglicised, principally middle class persons and who spoke in very moderate and loyal language. It grew because it represented the nationalist urge in the people, fundamentally an urge against domination by a foreign government, which developed widely among the middle classes. It took the lower middle classes into its path, and during the last 20 years or so it began to approach the peasantry, which is the biggest group or class in India. When it did this, it became a real live organisation. So far it had been an organisation more or less at the top, and even the divisions in it called 'moderate' and 'extremist' did not differ from each other very much.

Mr. Gandhi's contribution to the Congress, his essential contribution about 20 years ago, was to bring the peasantry into the Congress. The whole centre of gravity of the Congress changed. More and more we began to go to the peasants first of all as persons who thought that they had nothing to learn from the peasants, but to teach them and tell them what to do. But inevitably we found that we had much to learn. We became interested in the peasant problem, which was no part of the nationalist movement. It might almost be said that we wanted to use the peasants in the cause of nationalism. We had started thinking in terms of developing strength to meet British imperialism, but unless the masses supported the cause of nationalism we had no effective strength. Inevitably, therefore, we had to go to the peasants. We organised them on nationalist lines, but the peasant question became more and more an important one to consider. Indeed the peasant, when he heard us talk in terms of Swaraj or freedom or independence, interpreted it in terms of getting rid of his own burdens. Independence had no other special meaning for him. It was on these lines that the peasantry began to get organised and to become politically conscious, and, on the other hand, the Congress began to grow peasant-conscious.

The leadership of the Congress remained as before in middle class hands, but from the upper middle class it moved to the lower middle class. Even now it might be said that the leadership is largely in the hands of the lower middle class with a certain upper middle class sprinkling and a very strong peasant influence in it. Questions of the industrial workers have also influenced the Congress. They were not in it as such or as organised groups, but as individuals. They overlapped to a large extent with the peasantry. The workers' problems therefore came before the Congress, but it was the peasant problem that essentially occupied it.

At the present moment, therefore, the Congress is a powerful, disciplined organisation. The last 18 years of consistent struggle with British imperialism have given the people a great deal of discipline, showed them how to work unitedly and made it a very effective organisation. In fact, there is no other organisation in India which can compare with it in its approach to the masses or in its strength. The trade unions in India had a very chequered career. They mostly began about 20 years ago and grew in strength until about 8 or 9 years ago, when the Trade Union Congress broke up. That period coincided with a big civil disobedience movement which was crushed by the government. Shortly before, the Meerut trial had taken place and the government tried to crush at the same time all trade union activities as well as the nationalist movement. For two or three years the normal work was interrupted and the struggle gradually grew weaker.

Then followed the Round Table Conferences. This was an attempt to introduce some kind of constitution that would please most of the reactionary elements and might please other moderate elements, an attempt to unite them against the more radical sections in India. To some extent the British Government succeeded for the moment. There could be no immediate big reaction and they were able to pass their constitution. The Congress had been an illegal organisation for many years. As soon as we were able to, we started again, regained our contacts with the peasantry and soon rebuilt our organisation.

Elections under the new constitution were held shortly afterwards. There was considerable controversy as to what we should do. If we had been strong enough, we should probably have taken a strong line to begin with, but we were only able to criticise and condemn the constitution. We decided to take part in the elections, generally because it gave us a very fine opportunity of working among the masses, but also because there was no alternative programme for us. The question of whether after the elections we should accept any offices under the constitution or not was left undecided. We carried on a big election campaign, reaching almost every single village, not only in British India. We did not go to the 30 million voters only, but to the two or three hundred million of the people, and the result was a great victory for the Congress. In these elections practically all the radically advanced groups worked together, which was one of the reasons why the Congress emerged so successfully.

Now the Congress, being a nationalist movement, inevitably has all kinds of people in it. Of course all those who are absolutely pro-imperialist are out of it, because it is an essentially anti-imperialist organisation. But it has people who are very moderate in politics and very reactionary in

social matters, and it has at the other extreme a fair number of socialists, some communists and others who have recently been cooperating with it. But the Congress also consists of a very large middle section which is certainly anti-imperialist, which is vaguely favourable to socialism and which is pro-peasant because of our work among the peasantry and generally pro-worker too. It is this section which ultimately decides what policy should be. Ordinarily this great middle section goes to the 'left', and fairly far to the left if there is nothing to pull it back. Naturally the small right wing tries to pull it back and has some power to do this.

It should be remembered that the terms 'left' and 'right' are somewhat loosely used in India and have not the same significance as in the West. Thus a person may be very 'left' or advanced in a political and nationalist sense and yet 'right' in a social sense. He may be a good anti-imperialist and may have a record of effective struggle against the British Government. He is respected for this and commands influence. This seeming contradiction arises from the fact that there are two parallel movements — the political and the social. The problem in India is to coordinate and integrate these two.

Apart from these sections, there is Mr. Gandhi who occupies a peculiar position. He does not belong to the right wing, although they always seek his support, as only if they can get it does the right wing count in the Congress. There is no doubt that Mr. Gandhi has changed the whole Congress, the whole nationalist movement in India. He has given it tremendous mass backing and tremendous mass strength. He has awakened people in India to an extraordinary extent and awakened them more or less in a revolutionary direction. He has adopted revolutionary methods, but he also attaches the greatest importance to passive and nonviolent methods. He obstructs anything which he fears will lead to violence, but apart from that his tendency has always been towards the 'left'. Whatever views may be held about him, there is no doubt that he is a tremendous power in India today. His popularity among the Indian people is no less than it ever was, except among certain 'leftist' elements.

In the last two or three years there has been a crystallisation of socialist opinion in the Congress. This resulted largely from the increase in the members of the Congress and came primarily from contact with the masses. But intellectually it also arose from the fact that many people went to prison and there read a large number of books. When they were released they discussed matters among themselves and gradually a certain socialist group came into existence. Three or four years ago this gave rise to the Congress Socialist Party. This took place during a period of reaction while the right group in the Congress was in the ascendancy. The Congress Socialist group immediately came into conflict with this right

group, but in such a way that it antagonised the large middle group and did not succeed, as it might have done, in carrying this large anti-imperialist group with it. About two years ago this antagonism lessened to some extent. The feeling grew that we must work together on an anti-imperialist basis, that otherwise each group was weak and powerless. We had to put this programme of anti-imperialism and independence in the forefront and for the rest to carry on propaganda. This was the position for a year or two prior to the elections.

After the elections the Congress had to face actual problems. It was not so easy to pass a resolution that would please everybody. The acceptance of office by Congress ministers resulted in two different tendencies. On the one hand, there was a tremendous feeling of awakening among the people, both the peasantry and the workers, a feeling as if a great burden had been removed and that big things were going on. This resulted among the workers in big strikes, and among the peasantry in a ferment which took the form not of any particular action but of large demonstrations and a new aggressiveness which they developed in dealing with their landlords or landlords' agents or with the police. They were not so easily cowed down. Where previously they might have put up with a beating from a policeman, now if he even spoke to them offensively they would take umbrage and report the matter. Now, they thought they had their own ministers; they must come to right decisions. Among the workers, too, there was the growing feeling that they were not going to be suppressed in the way they used to be. In several big strikes, for instance, the strikers knew very well that the police would not take the same action as in the past.

On the other hand, there was obviously a tendency for the Congress leaders to become slightly more compromising. They were dealing with day to day problems, meeting the Governor and others and trying to find a way out which usually took the form of some kind of a middle way. Sometimes when there was a conflict, the Governor gave way. But on two or three occasions the Governor did not give way and the ministers resigned. The issue was not, perhaps, a very vital one, but the importance was psychological. One such issue was the release of political prisoners. The ministers resigned but when they had done so, the Governor reversed his decision and gave way.[2] The simple reason was that the Governor and the Viceroy and the British Government were afraid of a conflict. They saw that the nationalist movement had grown much stronger than it had ever been before and much better organised and were unwilling to fight it. There was also the influence of the international situation.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 378-379.

It was very much against their interests to seek a conflict in India with the international situation in its present state. They therefore adopted the very unusual course for the British Government and actually climbed down.

One result of these resignations was that they had to accept the same ministers. They could not hold fresh elections, because these would have resulted in a bigger majority for the Congress and an election campaign which would again have roused the masses. The only alternative was for them to set aside the constitution and govern directly under martial law. That would have meant increasing the conflict, and they accordingly accepted the situation and drew back.

One of the fundamental things of the Indian situation as far as the British Government is concerned is that along with the growth of the nationalist movement the international situation puts that movement in a very strong position. It is uncertain, of course, how far that situation will be used, but everybody in India realises that to some extent it will be used. We have laid stress on two main things. First of all, if any attempt is made to supplement this constitution by bringing in federation it will lead to conflict. We are all opposed to federation which we look upon as the worst part of the constitution. Secondly, we have laid stress on the fact that if there is any outside crisis and war, we are not going to be ordered about for the British Government. It is for the Indian people to decide whether they take part in war or not. It may further be said that they propose to take no part in imperialist war. That is a matter which is exercising the minds of British officials in India who are wondering what, in a moment of crisis, India may do.

As far as our internal problems are concerned, they are getting very complex and very difficult; more and more social questions are appearing within the nationalist movement. On the one hand, there is this disrupting tendency, which is inevitable to some extent. On the other, there is a powerful urge to keep united. If we do not keep united as an anti-imperialist front, we shall become weak and unable to carry on effective struggle against British imperialism. So far this urge for unity has been much stronger than the other. I think it is likely to continue and I believe that it is right that it should continue as such. Although there is a great deal of criticism of each other, every group recognises that we must hold together.

The peasant movement in India, as has been pointed out, has grown more aggressive and more self-reliant. This took the form of big demands. As a matter of fact some sections of the Congress had been thinking in terms of peasant demands for many years. Here it may be pointed out that the Congress demands many things. It is a national organisation

spread out right from the northern frontier to the south. In almost every village some traces of it can be found, some members of it and a committee, but the situation varies in different provinces. There is a fair measure of provincial autonomy, though in matters of policy the national bodies have the decisive authority. Some provinces are more pro-peasant and pro-worker than others, as, for instance, the United Provinces. There the Congress movement is itself largely a peasant movement, with the result that no separate peasant movement of any consequence has arisen, whereas, in other parts, peasant movements have developed because the peasantry did not find the same field within the Congress. Generally speaking, the Congress programme was very pro-peasant, but when the ministries began to function, difficulties of two kinds appeared. One was due to the mixed character of the Congress, which even includes some landlords with the exception of the very big ones. This acted as a check on legislation. Also there was the fact that there are two houses, an upper house elected by a very restricted franchise and consisting generally of big landlords, and a more popular house. The upper house would certainly reject any big agrarian measure that came before it. Therefore in a province such as, for instance, Bihar, it was decided that the best course was to pass a moderate measure of agrarian reform quickly.[3] A compromise measure was agreed with the upper house and became a law, but the peasantry was not wholly satisfied with it and the peasant movement came into conflict with the Congress movement. In the United Provinces, on the other hand, a more far-reaching measure was put forward which is still being discussed in the assembly.[4] It is bound to result in conflict between the two houses, but what form this will take cannot be foretold. But there the measure has the support of the peasants.

This land problem is fundamental in India and cannot be solved under the present land system. The ministries can go on functioning and can tackle other problems, but while this problem is postponed it becomes more acute. The ministers have tackled it partly because they promised to do so, and also for the reason that they personally want the support of the peasants in any future conflict.

In the same way the question of industrial workers has been tackled. Various committees were appointed, and, on the whole, their reports were favourable to the workers. They recommended a rise in wages and improvements in many other directions. In Bombay, which is the most industrialised province, the employers reluctantly accepted the recommendations of the government and the committee and gave a rise in wages. In the United Provinces, however, the committee appointed by the government recommended more or less the same changes as in Bombay, but the employers thereupon retorted with an aggressive memorandum rejecting everything recommended and criticising the government very strongly as a partial body. Thereupon a big strike took place in Cawnpore,[5] which has apparently now been settled and the rise in wages has been granted.

Generally speaking, then, both the peasantry and the workers have gained something in standards, but, what is more important, they have gained considerably in strength and are more prepared to enter into big disputes. On the other hand, psychologically speaking, the Congress and the Congress ministers have become less revolutionary, sitting as ministers and carrying on the day to day work in cooperation with British officials. The two processes work simultaneously, the masses becoming more aggressive and more revolutionary-minded and the leaders less so. But ultimately what will count is the masses and their problems.

That, then, is the position in India today. There are internal conflicts developing inside the Congress, but, at the same time, there is a strong desire to prevent a split. On the other hand, the conflict with British imperialism is developing on the question of federation, and if there is an international crisis, the attitude of the Congress will also lead to a conflict. It is unlikely that the British Government will do anything much in India, but it is possible that if they went far in the way of changing the present federation scheme and the general government of India, they might win certain groups in the Congress to their side. Even, however, if there is no major conflict, Congress ministries cannot go on functioning very long, unless big changes occur. So many other matters come up that give rise to conflict with prominent British Government officials that the present constitution is likely to break down. The biggest issues will then arise in India.

India is thus, like the rest of the world, far from static, and all manner of dynamic possibilities confront her. Her present constitution, imposed upon her by British imperialism, is essentially unstable and cannot last. Her people are engrossed in their manifold problems, and yet realise more

5. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 329-334 and 351-353.

and more that these problems are connected with international developments. Because of the strength they have developed, they face the future with a measure of confidence and look forward to the day when full power will come to them to enable them to solve their social problems and play an effective part in evolving peace and freedom in the world.

51. To J.B. Kripalani[1]

Budapest
1.9.1938

My dear Jivat,

I enclose copy of a note[2] which I am sending to Govind Ballabh Pant. I think you might consult Rajendra Babu also about it, and any others you think necessary. In view of our annual floods, I think we should try to get some experts to deal with the problem.

Bapu has been sending brief and cryptic letters to Lothian and Agatha Harrison about federation, etc.[3] Lothian interprets them his own way and carries on some kind of private propaganda on those lines. I wish the position could be cleared up by Bapu in a private and full letter, say, addressed to Agatha Harrison. Otherwise confusion is caused. An effort is made to show that Bapu's position regarding federation is essentially different from mine and so they can go ahead with federation.[4] I

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-71/1938, p. 26, N.M.M.L.
2. It contained a list of foreign refugee experts who could be employed in India.
3. Mahatma Gandhi had written to Lord Lothian on 20 January 1938 that if the British Government recognised the Congress "... as the one and only party that can successfully resist the Government and deliver goods.... the only party which, from its inception, has represented all minorities.... they will not hesitate to postpone inauguration of the Federation till they have satisfied the Congress."
4. To clear this confusion, Mahatma Gandhi wrote in *Harijan* on 10 October 1938: "I have made it clear that as far as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and I are concerned, though we may talk in different languages, we are one in most things that matter to India. On the question of federation there never has been any difference of opinion between us. And I have made a rule for myself that so far as the Congress is concerned, if there is an unbridgeable gulf between him and me, his view should prevail. And this for the very good reason that I am not in the Congress and he is in the centre of it and very much in touch with everything relating to the Congress."

have already written at length to you and the Working Committee as to what my attitude here has been.[5] Mahadeva wrote to me that Bapu was 'very happy' to read my note. I do not quite know if that means agreement with it.

In any event I should like to have full instructions from the Working Committee about this matter. I have been expecting something more from you than a mere acknowledgement (with a dash of your own opinion) which has already come.

I do not know how long I shall remain in London this time. Probably I shall go there two or three times in the course of September. I am bound to be asked by various people and it would help me greatly to know the Working Committee's reactions to my note. Subhas has not written to me at all.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

5. See pp. 92-105.

52. Germany and War[1]

The present European crisis, in which the world hovers between war and peace, is of the greatest moment for India.

India, of course, is all in favour of world peace, but at the same time she must be prepared for all developments.

If war comes to Europe and even if Britain is a party to it, it does not mean that India would also be a party to it. This point must be realized by all concerned.

India's attitude must be determined by the Indian people, keeping in view their own interests and the interests of world peace and freedom.

Our sympathies naturally are with the progressive democratic world forces. It is for this reason that we sympathize with Czechoslovakia. I have watched with admiration the calm restraint and determination

1. Interview with the correspondent of *The Hindustan Times*, London, 3 September 1938. *The Hindustan Times*, 4 September 1938.

shown by the people of Czechoslovakia in the face of intolerable bullying and danger. The strangest and the most significant feature has been the recent policy of the British Government. Ever-shifting, it has given encouragement to the bullying of Czechoslovakia by the German Government. In Spain also, despite General Franco's contemptuous rejection of the non-intervention committee proposals, the British Government continues to woo General Franco and encourage reactionary forces in Europe.

It is clear that the Czech people will resist with all their might the German aggression, and this will lead to a European and even world war, the result of which will not only be destruction on a vast scale, but also, as it seems most probable, collapse of the Nazi power in Germany. In such a conflict Britain will be involved on the side of Czechoslovakia.

Today, if Britain arms herself feverishly, it is obviously directed against Germany alone; yet British policy goes on supporting Nazi policy.

It is astonishing how personal inclinations and class sympathies of some leading British statesmen are making war daily more probable, although they do not desire it.

The issue of war or peace depends finally on the word of one man, Herr Hitler, whose decision will be governed by the attitude adopted by England. If the British attitude seems favourable, as it is at present despite occasional warnings, then Herr Hitler will not be inclined to start a war.

So far as we in India are concerned, we must be prepared for all eventualities. We must, therefore, sink all petty differences in order to face this great crisis. India must refuse to be made a camp-follower of British foreign policy and oppose being dragged into a war. It is only the Indian people who can decide this issue from the viewpoint of their own freedom and independence.

53. India and the European Crisis[1]

The fact that a particular country is an enemy of Britain does not necessarily mean that that country is our friend. Now, is it a fact that a

1. Interview to the correspondent of *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, London, 5 September 1938. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 15 September 1938.

country that is friendly to Britain is necessarily an enemy of India or a friend of India? That is why it is absolutely necessary for India to develop her foreign policy all by herself. India wants to be friendly with every nation but she will certainly not cooperate with or encourage reactionary nations. World peace can be established only on the basis of freedom of all the peoples and nations. That is possible only by the elimination of fascism and imperialism from the world. Meanwhile, if crisis arises involving war, it should be clearly understood that the people of India, and they alone, can and will determine what part India shall take in the crisis.

No war can be imposed upon India by British decisions, nor is it to be assumed that India will automatically be at war with a country because the British Government is at war with that country. Any attempt to drag India against her will has to be resisted. India is very sympathetic with the people of Czechoslovakia in the present crisis because they have been a bulwark of democracy in central Europe and it would be a tragedy if fascism triumphs there. We have watched with anxiety and dismay the bullying of the Czech people and their government not only by the Nazi government of Germany but also by the British Government.

54. Note for the Working Committee[1]

I have ventured to send long notes to the Working Committee about the conversations and interviews I have had in London and elsewhere on political matters. I had hoped to receive some direction from the Committee in reply to these notes so that I could guide myself accordingly, but so far I have received none. My visit and activities here produced some impression. Immediately afterwards efforts were made to lessen this impression by private propaganda and insinuations that I did not represent the views of the Working Committee and especially not of Gandhiji, who was the only person who counted. Unfortunately the controversy that took place between the Congress President and Shri Satyamurti, and the unjustifiable use made of Shri Bhulabhai Desai's name, created a certain confusion and helped this insidious propaganda.

1. London, 6 September 1938. A.I.C.C. File No. G-71/1938, pp. 30 (a-e). N.M.M.L.

Shri Bhulabhai Desai's statement should have ended this argument so far as he was concerned, but Gandhiji's name was then freely bandied about, hinting that he was practically prepared to accept federation, subject to some developments.

It is obviously not possible for me to meet these hints and insinuations partly because they are not made publicly and partly because the charge is that I do not represent my colleagues or Gandhiji. My endeavour has been to lay stress throughout that fundamentally on the question of federation there is a unanimity of opinion between Gandhiji, the Congress President, and the other members of the Working Committee.

On my return to London my attention has especially been drawn to the complications that are arising behind the scenes owing to this private propaganda. It appears that some letters that Gandhiji had written to Lord Lothian have been used by him for this purpose. One of these letters was sent quite recently. I have seen copies of these letters. They are brief, and although I can well understand and appreciate what Gandhiji meant, I realise that it is easy to interpret them in some other way, and it is in this other way that they are interpreted.

Mr. Carl Heath (who is a very moderate president of the India Conciliation Group and who is in constant and friendly touch with Lord Lothian as well as the India Office) has especially drawn my attention to these developments both by letters and private talk.

Mr. Heath is very keen on something being done to remove any misapprehensions that might exist in England about the difference of opinions regarding federation between Gandhiji, the Congress President and other members of the Working Committee. How this is to be done he does not say, but he emphasises that before events march ahead much further, the Congress position regarding federation should be reiterated and clarified and the general unanimity of Congress leaders on this issue emphasised. It seems likely that the British Government will take some steps fairly soon. Probably the Viceroy might make a statement on his return to India. The Under Secretary for India[2] is also going to India soon, no doubt to study the position in regard to federation. (It might be added that the Under Secretary is not considered very bright or able. Probably he will spend his time shooting tigers and in bowing as a kind of god-father of ministers, etc.) So Mr. Heath points out that an attitude of drift on our part might have unfortunate consequences and an impasse might be created, the issue of which must be conflict on a vast scale.

2. Findlater Stewart, permanent Under Secretary of State for India, 1932-42.

The gap between the position of the Congress and that of the British Government is so great and the whole background is such that a conflict sometime or other seems likely. If there was any real intention on the part of the British Government to bridge that gap, some change would have been visible in the activities of the central government of India. Even in the provincial governments there is continual friction and delaying methods are employed. The police is still far from being really controlled by the ministers. But the way the central government and the assembly function make it patent that the old spirit continues with hardly any change. I have no doubt that these notes and letters that I send are opened by the agents of the secret service in India, just as letters for me here from India are all delayed and bear traces of being opened. Partly this is due to the fact that the whole structure of government in the provinces, except for the ministers, is much the same as it was previously, partly because the present government in England is astoundingly reactionary and smug, in addition to being not known to possess much intelligence. We must reckon with all these factors which seem to indicate that the British Government is quite foolish enough to take some steps which would lead to conflict. That conflict is in a sense inherent in the situation.

At the same time there are other factors which affect the situation profoundly—the knowledge of the great strength of the national movement and the obvious difficulty of suppressing it by force. And the governing factor—the international situation. Both these tend to prevent a conflict. Lord Linlithgow having himself to face realities in India is to some extent conscious of the problem and is far more of a realist than Lord Zetland who seems to live still in a past age.

Leaving the possibilities of conflict aside, it is clear that our attitude should not be misunderstood or misinterpreted or left in doubt either in the minds of our own people or those of the British Government. It is also highly desirable that this attitude should be a united one and no one should be left to imagine that we are at loggerheads among ourselves. This would be desirable at any time, but at the present crisis in international affairs, and in view of the talks and proposals regarding federation that are going on behind the scenes, failure on our part to clarify these matters might have the most unfortunate consequences.

It is true that the Haripura Congress has laid down the Congress policy on both these questions in sufficiently emphatic language. But much has happened since then and, in view of what is taking place now, it is necessary to reiterate and clarify that position.

In regard to the international crisis it is not easy for the Congress

to lay down finally what it will do under any set of circumstances. The situation changes and grows in complexity. But the essential thing is to emphasise that India cannot and must not be dragged into war by the decision of the British Government. The decision must rest with the Indian people and any attempt to impose a decision will be resisted. The recognition of India's right to decide on peace and war has important bearings on India's right to frame her own constitution.

Regarding the federation, our position fundamentally is that the present scheme is totally unacceptable and if imposed will be resisted. We claim the right to frame our own constitution through a constituent assembly which must be elected by adult franchise by the people. (An attempt is made by Lord Lothian in his letter to water down this idea of a constituent assembly to a farce, namely, a small gathering chiefly consisting of the provincial ministers and some others. This is patently absurd and wholly out of the question. An assembly will only be worthwhile and able to overcome communal differences if it is elected by the mass of the people and brings their real problems to the forefront.)

Gandhiji has often insisted that the Congress does not desire the slightest alteration in the Government of India Act for the simple and all sufficient reason that we want to get rid of the whole Act and cannot accept a modified edition of it.

But he has hinted that under certain circumstances it might be possible to work a federation with a view to add to the national strength and lead up to a real constituent assembly. What are these circumstances? Clearly the essential background is the explicit acknowledgment of India's right to determine her constitution which means that the Government of India Act is a passing and transitional phase which must go soon. That being granted and admitted what else according to him is necessary?

He has laid stress (and so has the Haripura Congress) on the method of representation of the Indian states being a democratic one and approximating to that of the provinces. Approximation must mean a very near approach and not merely a show or dummy democracy. It must also mean civil liberty for without it there is no democracy.

He has further made clear in his letters and otherwise that even this, by itself, is not enough as reserved subjects and special powers cannot be accepted by us. But he has added that he hopes that it will be easier for these questions to be settled if the other major issues are decided in accordance with our wishes.

That, as I understand it, is Gandhiji's position. But it is desirable

for him and the Working Committee to consider it in all its implications and to know exactly where we stand.

As I understand it, it resolves itself into this: We are convinced that there can be no settlement of the Indian problem except on our anti-imperialist basis and with full self-determination through a constituent assembly. Only then, as equal and independent units, can India and England deal with each other and come to an understanding about their mutual relations and contacts. Till this is done our relations will have a continuing background of hostility, and conflict will be ever present, latent if not always aggressively apparent. This background has been clearly brought out in Gandhiji's article in the *Harijan* on the C.P. affair.[3]

In the event of this settlement not coming, our position is to examine everything with a view to determining whether a certain course of action strengthens us or not. If the former, we may adopt it and thus carry on without an aggressive conflict but keeping in view the possibility of this.

In regard to the federation, according to Gandhiji, we might avoid conflict and strengthen ourselves if certain things were done. These by themselves are not satisfactory but the alternative of conflict will not be worthwhile at this stage if these things are done.

These particular developments are as stated above. They involve an entirely different approach to the problem from that so far adopted by the British Government. This different approach means in the first instance the recognition of self-determination and the favouring of a constitution through a real constituent assembly. Thus the Government of India Act becomes a transitory measure which has to be replaced as rapidly as possible by another of our making.

3. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Harijan* of 6 August 1938: "Of course, the Governor's action conformed to the letter of the law, but it killed the spirit of the tacit compact between the British Government and the Congress....The indisputable facts led one to the irresistible conclusion that the Governor, in his eagerness to discredit the Congress, kept a vigil and brought about a situation which he knew was to be uncomfortable for the Congress. The unwritten compact between the British Government and the Congress is a gentleman's agreement in which both are expected to play the game.... In accepting the resignation of Dr. Khare and his two colleagues, in demanding resignations from the other three Ministers, in expecting an immediate answer, in summarily rejecting their explanation and dismissing them.... the Governor betrayed a haste which I can only call indecent."

If this is the background then the other steps for the transitory period are in regard to the federation:

(i) Democratic elections in the states as in the provinces and civil liberty.

(ii) Reserved subjects to remain no longer reserved.

(iii) Special powers not to be exercised.

On this basis the federation can be discussed as a transitory measure. In addition, it is clear that much more specific guarantees about the non-interference of Governors or Viceroy in provincial governments should be demanded. Thus it should be laid down that Governors should function purely as constitutional heads and must not preside over cabinet meetings or interfere with the ministers' discretion.

As all this is for the transition period, steps have also to be taken for the ending of this period within a short time so as to bring into being the new constitution of India's making.

It is on this basis alone that I can envisage even a temporary understanding. A far better course, of course, is for the British Government to scrap the Government of India Act and federation and proceed right away with the self-determination plan. But if that is not to be for the present, we might agree to the other course suggested above, though it has its dangers, as the British Government is notoriously capable of turning and twisting its words and assurances, and not playing fair. Therefore we must be careful not to be satisfied with any vague understandings or assurances which can bear two interpretations. We must have definite and unequivocal language and it has to be in writing.

Another matter has to be borne in mind. It is not for us to put forward any proposals. We can and must only stress full self-determination. If the British Government has any proposals to make, it is for it to advance them. We may accept them in goodwill, or be just prepared to work them in hostility, or reject them utterly and, if necessary, be prepared for a conflict. This attitude of ours will be reflected, of course, in our reactions to the international situation.

It is quite possible that the British Government might decide to hold over federation for another year or two. Indeed there is a probability of this. They might make a brave statement of going ahead with federation but in effect allow matters to drift. I do not think this tactics can be accepted by us as it means a continuation of the present unsatisfactory position. In such an event, we must insist on our full demand for self-determination, and, at the same time, refuse to submit any longer to a continuation of the Governor's interference with provincial administration. He must not preside over cabinet meetings and

abide by the ministers' decisions in everything. To allow the present position to continue to drift is entirely wrong.

I have tried to analyse the situation and its possibilities and suggested what, in my opinion, is the lowest we can go to. Anything less than that would be definitely harmful and wholly out of keeping with the needs of the situation. Personally, I think that the only right solution is full self-determination and any intermediate stage is a waste of time and introduces complications. I distrust the British Government entirely, and its policy towards Spain and Czechoslovakia makes me sick with disgust. This is a good measure of its policy towards us and therefore we cannot ignore it in considering our own position in India. A government which can function in this way has sunk to almost the lowest depths of reaction, and I should not like India to have anything to do with such a government.

By the time this note reaches India the present European crisis may have worsened or eased off. Probably it will ease off. That of course does not mean that the crisis is over. It will only have been postponed. Europe is dominated by gangsterism today, and so long as this continues, crisis after crisis will come, and sometime or other there will be catastrophe.

It is my intention to go to Geneva next week for a few days in order to meet some people there. I should like an early reply on the matters referred to in my notes for my own enlightenment and guidance. Also I want to know what the Working Committee has decided about Nahas Pasha's invitation.

55. India's Objectives[1]

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1. Interview to the *Daily Worker* on 6 September 1938, published on 7 September 1938.

As reported in yesterday's *Daily Worker*, the Indian graduates of British universities have little prospect of suitable employment, and the government feels it can offer no solution to the problem.

An efficient reorganisation of social services poses serious difficulties. The Congress is however doing valuable work in this field, though checked by the British Government, which keeps the administration of the country in its stranglehold.

India has been crying for such schemes which will make the life of people more tolerable, and there are schemes which would give employment to large numbers of Indians.

Sanitation and general public health schemes are a dire necessity, and by putting such schemes into effect the problem can be satisfactorily solved.

The only real method of dealing with the problem is along the lines of complete and widespread reorganisation of Indian life.

Recent British foreign policy has demonstrated by its continuous pro-Nazi and fascist bias in central Europe and Spain that the British Government has moved far from the democratic and peace-loving outlook of the world. And it has also shown how impossible it is for the people of India to cooperate with it. We realise, however, that today there are strong forces in Britain which are exceedingly dissatisfied with British foreign policy. While we stand for democracy in Czechoslovakia, it is obvious that our primary concern is the establishment of democracy in India, which can come only by India's being an independent nation and by the ending of British imperialism.

For us, the people of India, all questions—whether national or international—must be judged by this standard. India, though still subject to British imperialism, has already developed a certain international status. The voice of her people counts in international councils and is listened to with respect.

This is not only because of the strength of our national movement today but also because of our realisation that the future is with us. A free India is bound to play an important part in international affairs. Today, we speak in foreign countries with a measure of authority and do not go about begging querulously for anybody's favours. We extend our hand of friendship to those who stand for our ideals of peace and democracy and are opposed to imperialism and fascism and do not show favour to the forces and powers that are reactionary and anti-democratic.

In the world today no individual or nation can remain a passive spectator to the conflict between the two opposite forces, unless that individual or nation does not wish to count in world affairs.

India and her people have no intention of playing a passive role in the world when vital issues are at stake, which affect not only the world at large but their own freedom. We do not want to be ignored. Those people who object to our taking an active part in international affairs have not understood the world of today due to lack of vision and understanding. Today, it is impossible to separate the fate of any one nation from the fate of other nations. World problems—political, economic and social—cross the boundaries of nations. No country's problems can today be understood and much less solved by treating them in isolation from the problems facing other countries. Even for understanding the Indian problem one has to understand the world problem. To solve it, it becomes essential to throw the weight of India on the side of the right solution of other world problems, too. If we ignore this larger aspect, we ignore it at our peril.

If war comes, it would be totally absurd for anyone to suggest that India should put up with what happens and be a shuttlecock to be pushed about by the British Government. If we are not prepared to tolerate that, as we are not, then we must understand the events that are leading to war or peace today. We must follow not the policies that aim at war and the suppression of people but the policies that aim at freedom and the release of the people's energies.

In these conflicts between the rival forces, it sometimes becomes necessary for us to take definite sides. We cannot remain quiet when evil triumphs or endeavours to triumph. In the case of Spain it seems to me for reasons not only of international policy but our own national policy that it is dangerous for us to have to face a victory achieved by Germany and Italy. It further seems to me that no decent or sensible person can submit passively and quietly to what has been done in Spain by General Franco and his supporters. There are certain things which cannot be tolerated. This applies to China also. From every point of view—national and international—for the sake of our own freedom in India and from the point of view of decency and public morality, it is quite impossible for us to remain neutral in the face of Japanese aggression and wanton frightfulness perpetrated over China.

We do not increase our strength or our dignity among the nations, nor do we advance our own cause by sitting on the fence when vital matters are in dispute. I am glad therefore that the Indian National Congress and the people of India have thrown their full weight on the side of the struggle for freedom, peace and democracy wherever it occurs. I can only conclude that those who are opposed to this are attracted by the Nazi or fascist gospel or by the Nazi or fascist policy and they want

to give scope to it to grow in India. Fortunately, there are few such persons in India.

I am very glad that a number of Indian delegates attended the World Youth Congress in New York.[2] From all accounts that have reached me I am glad that they played an effective part in the deliberations of the Congress, thus serving the cause of world peace as well as the cause of Indian freedom. Our younger generations show signs of shaping well and we must welcome this because it is on their shoulders that the burden of the progress of India will be cast. While intensely conscious of Indian problems—political and economic—and passionately desirous of seeing India becoming independent, and her appalling poverty liquidated, they see these problems in a world perspective. They are not oppressed by the sense of long subjection of the older generation. They can feel and breathe the air of freedom, and so when they speak, their voice carries weight and enhances the prestige of India.

I find that some criticisms have been made about this World Youth Congress. The South African Government apparently refused passports to some delegates on the ground that the Congress was a communist gathering, while some organisations, including the Independent Labour Party of Britain, called it a congress of war and not a peace congress. Both these criticisms seem to me totally absurd. The World Youth Congress, from all accounts that are available, was an extraordinarily representative organisation of the youth from all over the world, comprising all shades of opinion, except the fascist and the Nazi variety. There were political organisations represented, so were economic, social, cultural and religious. The Congress was welcomed by top representatives of the American Government. It is true that there were communist delegates too and they were welcomed just as non-communists were welcomed. Very wisely the Congress wanted to work on the basis of achieving broadest peace in the world.

It is well known that the Communist Party today is one of the strongest forces in favour of world peace and its earnestness and capacity for action of many of its members are undoubted. Only those who secretly or publicly favour or wish to encourage fascism and Nazism can be opposed to cooperation with communists and others of their way of thinking in the cause of peace. To call the World Youth Congress, which was a gathering of such representatives of the youth drawn from all over the world who feel intensely interested in peace, a war congress shows an amazing confusion of thought. Peace cannot be established in the

2. Five hundred delegates from fifty four countries including India took part in this Congress held in August 1938.

world by merely praying for it or by waiting for it. We have to meet organised onslaughts on it by powers of reaction, and the only way to meet these onslaughts is to organise for peace, by bringing together all groups of peoples who are interested in peace and freedom. A complete answer to the argument of the *Manchester Guardian* that the Congress Working Committee was not justified in censuring the Governor of the Central Provinces for the part he played in the recent crisis in that province has been given by Gandhiji in his article in the *Harijan* dealing with the Central Provinces affairs. Nothing need be added to this. The point of difference fundamentally is this. The *Manchester Guardian* seems to imagine that all is settled down in India and a democratic form of government is functioning. The reality is very far from this. Nothing is settled down in India and our conflict against British imperialism continues and will continue till it is eliminated from India. The partial democracy that we have in the provinces is hedged in and restricted on all sides. The Governor is very far from being a constitutional Governor, the Viceroy is still much of an autocrat and all the old paraphernalia of the British Government continues in India untouched and unchanged.

The central government has not been affected in the slightest bit by the changes made in the provinces, and it continues to speak in hectoring and aggressive language in total disregard of the people of India. So the old conflict continues though it may apparently be toned down now and then. We have to function in terms of that conflict and to prepare and strengthen ourselves for it. When India is an independent democratic state, then it will be time enough for the *Manchester Guardian* to think of democratic procedure in India. Till then it is essential that the Indian national movement should exercise the strictest control over the different provincial governments and develop a uniform policy there, specially in relation to the conflict against British imperialism. A reference to the Congress resolution on office acceptance should make this clear to those who do not know it already.[3] It is on those terms and with a view ultimately to get rid of the Government of India Act and hasten independence of India that we fashion our policy.

The recent happenings in Travancore[4] are very significant. I do not know much about the background of recent events there but it is obvious that the freedom movement there has grown considerably and

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 69.
4. Several persons were killed as a result of firing in Travancore state at a meeting organised as part of the civil disobedience campaign launched by the state Congress on 26 August 1938 for defying prohibitory orders.

the state authorities are trying to control it ruthlessly. The Indian states are caught in a ditch and foolishly they imagine that they can stem the tide of nationalism by guns and ordinances.

If British imperialism with all its might has failed to do that in India, it is absurd to imagine that the feudal or semi-feudal Indian states can succeed. The Congress has deliberately tried to avoid hostilities with the states' authorities in the hope that peaceful compromises will be arrived at. The Congress, of course, stands for responsible government in the Indian states and for a united and free India including the states. The Congress must, therefore, sympathise with all the people in the states who desire independence and freedom. In spite of this ardent sympathy, the Congress has tried by all means in its power to work for a peaceful solution. It will no doubt still continue to work for that solution. But the rulers and the ministers of some of the states are apparently taking the bit into their mouth.

Perhaps this will hasten the solution of the problem. It will draw the attention of the whole of India and of other countries to these curious places in India called the Indian states where mediaeval conditions flourish and civil liberty is hardly known. Travancore is a state which has been considered as one of the most advanced in India—educationally and otherwise. If such events can occur there, it can well be imagined what the conditions in other states would be. It is time that this problem of the Indian states was faced and solved and this absurdity ended in India. While one deplores the tragedies that have been enacted in Travancore, one is also thankful to the Travancore Government for thus forcing the pace and inevitably bringing the final liquidation of the present Indian states system much nearer.

56. The Betrayal of Czechoslovakia[1]

Sir,

As an Indian, intensely interested in Indian independence and world peace, I have followed recent developments in Czechoslovakia and Spain with anxious interest. For some years past the Indian National Congress has criticised and dissociated itself from British foreign policy, which has seemed to us consistently reactionary and anti-democratic, and

1. Letter to the editor, *Manchester Guardian*, London, 8 September 1938. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 284-287.

an encouragement to fascist and Nazi aggression.[2] Manchuria, Palestine, Abyssinia, Spain agitated the people of India. In Manchuria the foundations were laid for encouraging triumphant aggression, all covenants and rules of international law were ignored, and the League of Nations sabotaged.[3] With all our sympathy and goodwill for the Jews in their distress in the face of fierce and inhuman persecution in Europe, we considered the struggle in Palestine as essentially a national struggle for freedom which was suppressed by violence by British imperialism in order to control the route to India. In Abyssinia there was a gross betrayal of a brave people. In Spain little was left undone in order to harass the republic and encourage the insurgents. Having decided that the Spanish Government should lose, or was going to lose, the British Government tried in a variety of ways to hasten the desired end—and even insult, injury and gross humiliation by the insurgents were endured.

The fact that everywhere this policy has been a disastrous failure has not and does not discourage the British Government from continuing to pursue it. The consequences of the rape of Manchuria we see all around us in the world today. The problem of Palestine grows worse from day to day and violence counters violence and the government uses ever-increasing military forces and coercion in an attempt to subdue a people. It is not always remembered that the problem is largely the creation of the British Government and it must shoulder the *responsibility* for much that has happened. Abyssinia, as your correspondent points out, still remains unconquered and is likely to remain so. In Spain a heroic people have refused to fall in with the wishes of the British Government and have demonstrated that they will not be and cannot be crushed or subdued.

It is a remarkable record of failure. And yet the government of Great Britain is not capable of learning from it and mending its ways. It pursues even more intensively its policy of encouraging aggression and giving support to General Franco and the fascist and the Nazi powers. No doubt it will carry on in this way if allowed to do so, till it puts an end to itself as well as the British Empire, for overriding every other consideration are its own class sympathies and leanings towards fascism. That would certainly be a service it will render, howsoever unwittingly, to the world, and I would be the last person to object to an ending of imperialism. But I am deeply concerned with the prospect of world

2. Britain had persuaded Franco to join her in an effort to induce Czechoslovakia to transfer to Germany all territories where more than 50 per cent of the population was German-speaking.
3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 15.

war and it distresses me exceedingly to realise how British foreign policy is directly leading to war. It is true that Herr Hitler has the last and determining word in this matter but Herr Hitler's decision itself will largely depend on the British attitude. This attitude has so far done everything to encourage him and to bully and threaten Czechoslovakia. So if war comes, the British Government can have the satisfaction or otherwise of feeling that they were largely responsible for it, and the people of Britain, who have put this government in power, can draw what comfort they can from this fact.

I had thought that nothing that this government did could surprise me (unless it suddenly turned progressive and worked for peace). But I was mistaken. Recent developments in Czechoslovakia and the way the British Government, directly and through its mediators, has baulked and threatened the Czech Government at every turn has produced a feeling of nausea in me, and I have wondered exceedingly how any Englishman with any trace of liberal instincts or decency could tolerate this. I have wondered still more how those who talk so loudly of peace could have supported, actively or passively, this obvious invitation to war.

Recently, I spent some time in Czechoslovakia and came in contact with numerous people, both Czech and German. I returned full of admiration for the admirable temper of the Czech people and the democratic Germans who, in face of grave danger and unexampled bullying, kept calm and cheerful, eager to do everything to preserve peace, and yet fully determined to keep their independence. As events have shown they are prepared to go to extraordinary length to satisfy every minority claim and preserve peace but everybody knows that the question at issue is not a minority one. If it was the love of minority rights that moved people why do we not hear of the German minority in Italy or the minority in Poland? The question is one of power politics and the Nazi desire to break up the Czecho-Soviet alliance,[4] to put an end to the democratic state in central Europe, to reach the Rumanian oil fields and wheat, and thus to dominate Europe. British policy has encouraged this and tried to weaken that democratic state.

In any event, we in India want no fascism or imperialism and we are more convinced than ever that both are closely akin and dangers to world peace and freedom. India resents British foreign policy and will be no party to it, and we shall endeavour with all our strength to sever the

4. By the Soviet-Czech treaty of May 1935, each country was committed to join France in aiding the other state if it were attacked. But during the Czech crisis of 1938 neither France nor the U.S.S.R. came to the assistance of Czechoslovakia.

IN PARIS, JULY 1938

IN PRAGUE, AUGUST 1938

bond that unites us to this pillar of reaction. The British Government has given us the final and unanswerable argument for complete independence.

All our sympathies are with Czechoslovakia. If war comes, the British people, in spite of their pro-fascist government, will inevitably be dragged into war. But, even then, how will this government, with its openly expressed sympathies for fascist and Nazi aggression or a like government, advance the cause of democracy and freedom? So long as this government endures, fascism will always be at the doorstep.

The people of India have no intention of submitting to any foreign decision on war. They alone can decide and certainly they will not accept the dictates of the British Government which they distrust utterly. India would willingly throw her entire weight on the side of democracy and freedom but we heard these words often enough twenty years ago *and more. Only free and democratic countries can help in freedom and* democracy elsewhere. If Britain is on the side of democracy then its first task is to eliminate empire from India. That is the sequence of events in Indian eyes and to that sequence the people of India will adhere.

Yours, etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

57. Message to the British Communist Party Congress[1]

I offer my greetings and good wishes to the Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain.[2] It is not necessary for one to be a communist to do so, for in these grave times when unimagined perils face us and catastrophe threatens to overwhelm the world, party labels must lose their narrow significance and our actions must be governed by larger considerations. These larger considerations are the maintenance of peace and democracy, their extension, and their establishment on a firm basis of freedom. Fascist aggression has already brought war and frightfulness to Spain and China and threatens to extend these to the whole of Europe. The forces of democracy and progress must hold together and cooperate

1. London, 13 September 1938. *The Bombay Chronicle,* 17 September 1938.
2. Held at Birmingham on 16 September 1938.

to meet this menace. The foreign policy of the Soviet Union has been one of the strongest pillars of peace in the world and there is no doubt that if there was cooperation in this policy by other powers, peace would become unassailable. The British Government, however, pursues a different policy and one which has in the past and in the present encouraged fascist aggression and thus brought war nearer. To this policy the people of India are entirely opposed. In India we stand and struggle for our national independence, but because of that we are equally interested in the great world struggle between fascism and anti-fascism, and all our sympaties are with the latter. A free India will throw her entire weight on the side of democracy. A subject India, denied freedom and democracy, will resist decisions imposed upon her by British imperialism. Therefore both the interests of the hundreds of millions of India and of the world struggle demand the ending of imperialism and the establishment of a free democratic state.

58. To J. B. Kripalani[1]

London
Sept. 15, 1938

My dear Jivat,
Your letter of the 9th September has just come.[2] I am sorry I am not with you all to share your burdens. If I had felt that I could really be more useful in India I would not have come to Europe at all. But I had no such feeling then and I decided to come here. It was my intention to return in October but I was always prepared to cut short my visit here if my presence was required at home. Of course, if I had been there, I would have been busy enough and could have done many jobs. But I wanted very much to freshen my mind and to be away for a while from our day to day domestic troubles. The world is moving very fast, for good or ill, and I do feel that we ignore this largely and hence do not see our own problems in proper perspective.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 71/1938, p. 3, N.M.M.L.
2. He wrote to Jawaharlal that the Congress Working Committee would discuss the question of Congress attitude to war in the light of the passing of a bill penalizing propaganda against recruitment, and the Muslim League's support of it.

In your letter you say that Vallabhbhai wants me to return by air for the A.I.C.C. meeting. I am afraid this is almost physically impossible now unless I started today or at the latest tomorrow. And then I would arrive on the eve of the meeting. I doubt if that would be worthwhile in any event. Just at present it is not easy for me to leave Indu although she is progressing. Vijayalakshmi also feels rather lost without me. I was thinking therefore of remaining here for some weeks more. I have given up the idea of going to Russia or anywhere else. That would anyhow be difficult in the present international situation.

I am going to Geneva tomorrow for a few days. Much depends on whether war comes or not. It seems to be on the threshold.

Indu is in a nursing home and is expected to remain there for another two or three weeks. After that she will be required to spend six weeks recuperating in some health resort. She ought to be normal then. My intention is to see her well on the way to normality and then to return to India. This means my reaching India about the end of October. But everything is in a melting pot and it is difficult to fix programmes.

There is one matter which I should like you to mention to Subhas. I wrote to him and Raja about it some time back. A great part of the money collected here for our China fund was in the form of cheques in favour of individuals. Later, we found that the banks would not even collect or deposit these cheques unless someone had authority to deal with this fund here. All that we wanted to do with this money was to collect it and send it on to India, except for a small balance for contingent expenses. I suggested that Krishna Menon, who had done the organising part here, might be authorised to deal with this fund, to realise this money and send it on. But as no authority has so far come, the cheques remain uncashed and I fear they are on the point of lapsing. Perhaps if the authority came soon, they might not lapse. If they lapse, you know how difficult it will be to get fresh cheques.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

59. The Crisis in Europe[1]

In an ever-shifting situation, which changes from hour to hour, it is difficult to write, for what one writes today may be out of date tomorrow. The whole of Europe is tense and terribly anxious; people wait for developments with a fever of excitement. Is it going to be war or peace? Is Nazi and fascist aggression to continue, or will the gigantic bluff be called? Will Czechoslovakia be betrayed by the British and French Governments? The next few days will show, but whether there is war or peace, the people of India must understand the inner meaning of events and the forces that are are shaping them. Those forces will continue to work, often secretly and behind closed doors, whether the present outcome is apparent peace or war.

In India there have been no illusions in the past about British foreign policy and the Congress has repeatedly described this as a pro-fascist policy. In spite of high-sounding phrases about freedom and democracy and collective security, the British Government has consistently sided with the forces that are attempting to crush democracy. Abyssinia was betrayed, Spain is a living witness of Britain's partiality for fascism. If fascism and Nazism have not wholly triumphed, it is not because the British Government have done or left undone anything. It is because the victims of aggression have refused to submit or commit suicide.

Today history seems to be repeating itself in Czechoslovakia and the British and French Governments seem to be on the verge of betraying that country which has been the citadel of democracy in central Europe. Whether that betrayal will take place or not will depend on the power of public opinion in Britain and France to check it.

We have no illusions about the present British and French Governments. And yet few among us could imagine the lengths to which these governments have gone in their support of Nazism and fascism. Why has this been so? We must understand this, realise what is in store for us, and shape our policy accordingly.

In view of the great importance of international affairs at the present juncture, the *National Herald* will make a special feature of them. We hope to give articles by experts dealing with the various aspects of the crisis which envelops Europe and the world and which threatens to

1. London, 18 September 1938. *National Herald*, 26 September 1938.

engulf us. The importance of this to us and to our struggle for freedom is obvious and the time is rapidly approaching when India will have to develop a foreign policy in keeping with our own objectives and needs and with our desire to help in establishing world peace based on freedom. The Haripura Congress has already given a lead in this direction, and a healthy and informed public opinion is essential for this development.

It is the good fortune of the readers of the *National Herald* that we have secured a series of articles on the crisis in Europe from a distinguished authority on international affairs,[2] the first of which appears in this issue. These articles, originally written for a Labour weekly in England, are primarily addressed to the British labour movement.

But the Indian national movement can equally profit by them and I would commend them to the earnest attention and study of all Congressmen. For, essentially, all forces and movements in favour of freedom and democracy have to face similar problems in the world. They have not only to resist open fascist aggression but also the more insidious, and therefore the more dangerous, policies of the present British and French Governments, which in the name of democracy are helping to crush democracy. Ashamed of their own misdeeds, each government tries to cast the blame on the other. In reality, both are afraid of the forces of democracy, and therefore encourage Nazism and fascism, hoping that these will make the world safe for their ruling classes.

It is possible that the people of these countries, who have been deluded so often by their governments, will yet compel them to change their policy. It may be that the courage and determination of the people of Czechoslovakia will check the betrayal of their country by those who have posed as their friends. The next few days will show.

Whatever the future may bring, India has to be prepared for it, and this preparation involves a clear appreciation of events. I hope that this series of special articles by an authority on the subject will help in bringing this appreciation.

2. A.C.N. Nambiar.

60. The Munich Crisis[1]

Lac Leman, the lake of Geneva, how peaceful and beautiful it looks! Steamers puff away towards Lausanne carrying tourists and sightseers. A huge jet of water seems to come out of the lake itself and rises high into the sky. In the background, Mount Saleve dominates the city of Geneva, and further back still rise the snowy peaks of Mont Blanc. Hotels line the quayside with the flags of many nations fluttering in the breeze. Huge autobuses loaded with tourists dash down the streets.

Further up there is the Palais Wilson, the old home of the League of Nations. A little beyond is the solid pile of the International Labour Office, and further still rises in all its aggressive and massive grandeur the brand new Palace of the League.

But the beauty and the peace of the lake and the city attract little notice; for one thought fills the minds of all. What does Czechoslovakia say? What is happening in London? What in Paris, in Prague, in New York? People ask each other for the latest news, and rumour and conjecture have a happy field. Depression reigns supreme. The League assembly is sitting, but who cares for it? Geneva does not count, the League is dead. Prague counts and London, Paris, Moscow and, of course, the mountain retreat of Hitler. The Palace of the League looks like a mausoleum built to honour the dead body of peace and collective security. While Europe quivers with excitement and hovers between peace and war, the League assembly does not even refer to the vital issue.

Is it peace or war? What answer have the Czechs given? The British and French Governments have betrayed Czechoslovakia and thrown her to the Nazi wolves. Will the British and French people submit tamely to this treachery?

The Rumanian delegate says in a loud voice, in the hearing of a group of French delegates, "Czechoslovakia will live, it is France that dies." The Frenchmen get red in the face.

Monsieur Blum[2] is reported to have said that he is torn between conflicting emotions—his overmastering desire to have peace and his shame

1. Geneva, 20 September 1938. *National Herald*, 28 September 1938. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 97-102.
2. Leon Blum (1872-1950); French socialist leader; Prime Minister of a popular front government, 1936-37; arrested by Vichy government and imprisoned in Germany, 1942-45; Prime Minister again in 1946-47.

at what is being done. "Very good of you, Monsieur Blum," says another Frenchman, "but we are not interested in your psychological reactions. We are interested in democracy, in Czechoslovakia."

Message from London. The Czech Government has accepted the Hitler-Chamberlain-Daladier[3] proposals[4] in principle. Depression. But someone says this is all British propaganda.

Another message. The British labour movement has denounced the Chamberlain policy and is meeting the C.G.T. (the French Labour Confederation) tomorrow to devise a common plan of action. Bravo!

News from Prague. The cabinet is still sitting. It has sat all night. No decision has been reached yet.

Message from Berlin. There has been a clash between Germans and Czechs near the frontier. Another message, vast concentrations of German troops on the Czech frontier.

An English delegate to the League tries to justify his government's policy. It is very distressing, very painful, but there was no other way out. Hitler was on the point of marching into Czechoslovakia. His air force was ready to bomb Prague. Something had to be done and Chamberlain bravely did it. It is true that this means sabotaging democracy and the League and betraying the Czechs. But peace at least is preserved. For how long? And is it after all preserved? What if Hitler demanded a British colony under threat of war? Would not Britain fight then? Of course. So that the possession of a colony was far more important to the British Government than democracy and the League Covenant and solemn promises and assurances, and the fate of gallant Czechoslovakia.

Telephone from New York. There has been a great protest meeting condemning the betrayal of the Czechs. Good. But the Americans protest only from a high moral plane. Will they do anything else?

Someone says that the surest way for a country to commit suicide is to seek the friendship and protection of England and France. These governments are sure to play false and betray.

3. Edouard Daladier (1884-1970); French politician; member, Radical Socialist Party for many years; Prime Minister and Minister for National Defence, 1938-40; arrested in September 1940 and deported to Germany; freed by Allies, 1945; member, National Assembly of France, 1946-48.
4. According to these proposals Czechoslovakia was to cede to Germany such territory where more than half the population was Sudeten German. The area was to be determined by an international commission and jointly guaranteed by Britain, France and Germany. Those areas where Germans were in a minority were to receive extensive rights of self-government.

The Russian delegates look grim. The Czechs are too unhappy to say anything. The Spaniards are not lacking in words. "We know all this, we have had experience of this", they say. "We relied on our stout right arms and we shall win through and save democracy."

What is the latest news? What is happening? Newspapermen rush about telephoning to Prague, London, Paris, and rumours fly bringing a measure of depression or elation in turn. The Czechs will never give in—the Czechs have surrendered. But, no. Benes[5] is a clever man and he will not allow himself to be caught. If the Czech Government surrenders, it will fall immediately and give place to another. Hitler demands the resignation of Benes.

Midnight. Cafe Bavaria, the haunt of diplomats and journalists. A foreign minister is there and crowds of delegates to the League, and editors, journalists and many hangers-on of the League. Beer and coffee are consumed and there is continuous talk and argument. Behind it all a tension, even hard-boiled journalists showing nerves.

What has Prague decided? What of London and Paris? Resentment rising in London. In Paris the Chamber of Deputies is meeting tomorrow. The French Government may fall. Already a new Premier is mentioned. In London Parliament is meeting. Labour is getting aggressive. Tempers are going up everywhere, although newspapers keep the soft pedal on.

Telephones ringing continuously. Hello Prague! Hello Paris! What is the latest news? Is it war or peace?

News from Prague. The government has invoked the treaty of Locarno[6] and claim arbitration under its terms. Germany had agreed to this and Hitler subsequently had confirmed it.

Bravo! Clever step. Benes is no fool. He has put the British and the French Governments in a hole. What will they say to this? What will Hitler say? A Swedish delegate says that he was one of the arbitrators appointed in Locarno.

Chamberlain to go to Hitler again day after tomorrow. He is becoming quite good at carrying messages by air. Perhaps his little tea-party will not come off after all.

Hello Prague? Hello Paris? Hello London? Is it peace or war? and so to September 21, 1938. Is it peace or war?

5. Eduard Benes (1884-1948); Czech statesman; Foreign Minister, 1918-35; President, 1935-38; headed the Czech Government in exile in London; elected President of Czechoslovakia in June 1946 but resigned on 7 June 1948.
6. The Locarno Treaty of 1925 between Britain, France, Germany and Italy guaranteed the existing Franco-German frontiers and Germany recognized France's title to Alsace-Lorraine.

61. The Great Betrayal[1]

"We have been abandoned, betrayed", cried a vast multitude of the Czechoslovakian people in their agony. News had come that their cabinet, after nearly forty eight hours of almost continuous sitting, had decided to accept the Anglo-French ultimatum,[2] and a hundred thousand citizens of the city of Prague poured out into its streets, sorrowful beyond words, tasting the dregs of humiliation. Only a few days before, when war appeared inevitable, and danger and death faced them, they were high-spirited, full of courage and determination. Even the thought that their beautiful and much-loved city of Prague might be reduced to dust and ashes did not deter them from their grim resolve to fight and, if necessary, die for their freedom. But now? What can one do with a stab in the back? What can one say when the assassin is one whom one has counted as a friend?

They wept, these hundred thousand proud men and women, and in the bitterness of their hearts they prayed to heaven to punish France for her treachery and England for her betrayal. "Our best friends have deserted us", they cried, "and today we stand alone not only against our enemies but against these friends of ours."

For months they had quietly submitted to the bullying of Lord Runciman's mission,[3] and behind it of the British and French Governments. Step by step they had accepted Lord Runciman's proposals, they had swallowed every bitter pill, hoping that when crisis came these governments would stand by them. They had even finally agreed to the full plan drawn up by Runciman at the instigation, no doubt, of the British Government. Still the dagger-thrust came from these friendly governments and betrayal in time of need, such as history, with all its dark record of treachery, cannot show.

1. Signed article written at Paris, 22 September 1938. *National Herald*, 1 October 1938.
2. Under the pressure exerted by Britain and France, the Czech Government accepted on 21 September 1938 the Anglo-French plan to cede to Germany the areas inhabited by Sudeten Germans.
3. A number of concessions were made to the Sudeten Germans by the Czech Government in August-September 1938 on the advice of Lord Runciman who was sent to Prague as "standing adviser" by the British Government.

The multitudes still fill the streets of Prague; the shops are closed, the factories do not work. A year ago, to a day, they had marched in the funeral procession of Masaryk,[4] their liberator. Within a few days they were going to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the republic. But fate and the treachery of their 'friends' had brought this death blow to them and they reeled at the shock.

And yet behind all their sorrow there is still determination. 'We are alone', they cry, 'let us be strong. Czechoslovakia shall live!'

The last few days have been dramatic enough to suit the most jaded appetite. But the play is not ended. Mr. Chamberlain and the British and French Governments have not brought peace to the world, but have unloosed passions which will have full play in the days to come. War could have been stopped and stopped for long if these governments had really wished it by their building a peace front against the Nazi aggression. But they preferred to side with the Nazis and the fascists and thus made sure of war tomorrow, if not today—a tomorrow when friendless and despised they will look in vain for sympathy and help. For the reputations of these governments is mud today. Many an Englishman proclaims loudly that he is ashamed of being English when such things happen; many a Frenchman hangs his head in shame.

What of us in India? We have long experience of promises broken and betrayals by the British Government. Yet it is well that this new experience has come to us also, lest we forget. None so poor today as would care to have the friendship of England or France, for open enemies are safer and better than dangerous friends who betray. To rely on the friendship or protection of these is to invite disaster. Let India learn this lesson again well and not be swayed away by soft words and promises meant to be broken. Let India cut herself away from this connection with Britain which makes her a sharer in dishonour and betrayal. We must rely on ourselves alone and on our own strength and so achieve independence.

62. On the Brink[1]

History marches on in Europe with terrific strides and every hour brings news of fresh developments. Mr. Chamberlain's visits to Berchtesgaden and Godesberg have not ended the crisis or pushed war into the far distance.[2] War still hovers in the air and may descend on us at any moment. But Mr. Chamberlain's new role as Herr Hitler's messenger-boy has thrown a flood of light on the true significance of British foreign policy and the way this has consistently helped fascist aims.

Whatever the outcome of the agony of today might be, it is clear that the future is going to be one of continuous conflict between the rival forces of progress and reaction. The British Government, under Mr. Chamberlain's guidance, have thrown their weight entirely on the fascist side, but the people of Britain have still to be reckoned with, and the last four days have opened their eyes to the terrible reality. They are realising, as the people of France are realising, that with all the betrayal and treachery of their governments, with all the shame and dishonour that has come to them, the price may not be peace after all.

The Indian people will have to take vital decisions in the days to come and it is necessary that they should understand the true inwardness of this crisis. We have seen during the past year or more how Britain has indirectly sought to help the rebels in Spain. We now see how Britain openly and explicitly helps the Nazi government, even at the cost of weakening herself in Europe and the world. Why is this so?

It is clear that if there is war in Europe, it will come through the aggression of Nazi Germany. From no other quarter can war begin.

It has also been clear that if a powerful peace front was created against Nazi or fascist aggression, this war could be checked and peace ensured. This peace front could have consisted of the Soviet Union, France, England, and Czechoslovakia with the goodwill of the United States of America. To this peace front would have inevitably gravitated Poland, Rumania and some of the lesser powers. It would have been an overwhelming combination against Germany and Italy (if Italy

1. Signed article written at Paris, 22 September 1938. *National Herald*, 5 October 1938.
2. Chamberlain visited Germany, authorised to settle by the Czechoslovak Government and with a French power of attorney. He hoped to conclude with Hitler arrangements arising out of the Czechoslovak acceptance of the Anglo-French plan.

joined Germany, which was by no means certain). If this had happened, it would have been madness on the part of the Nazi government to play the part of the aggressor and peace would have been assured.

This straight and obvious policy, inevitably leading to peace, was not to the liking of the British Government, for it meant cooperation with the Soviet Union. It meant the strengthening of the Soviet Union and releasing of popular forces all over the world. The class sympathies of the British Government made them view the Soviet Union with horror and inclined them towards Nazism and fascism. And so although they talked of democracy and peace, they pursued a policy of appeasement of fascism and thus directly led to war.

Chamberlain is at Berchtesgaden. What further infamy, what greater betrayal is afoot? Incredible, unbelievable things have already happened and one's capacity for astonishment is already past. A British Prime Minister functions as an emissary of Hitler and fascism and works for fascist domination over Europe. A French Foreign Minister, M. Bonnet,[3] goes even a step further and actively works for the destruction of his ally, Czechoslovakia, for the greater glorification of Hitler. Patriotism, nationalism, peace are mouthed by all these gentlemen, but the object in view is the triumph of Hitler. Suddenly, as if by a flash of lightning, the true motives of the statesmen are lighted up.

The ruling classes, the top dogs have no use for freedom or democracy. They fear both and they see in Hitler the champion of reaction, who, though hard and difficult to tolerate, is infinitely better than real democracy. They forget conveniently that Hitler aims at the destruction of France and the complete domination of Europe. They forget that Czechoslovakia is the sole rampart of democracy in Europe. If that goes, France also goes. What does it matter provided the class interests of M. Bonnet and Mr. Chamberlain are safe? We see how class feelings are the final criteria in meeting a crisis.

Frenchmen and Englishmen hang their heads in shame. Stupefied at the rapid turn of events, with not only dishonour but ultimate destruction of their proud countries facing them, Chamberlain and Bonnet send their ultimatum to the Czechs. Accept Hitler's demands, or we also will range ourselves against you. Note this: it was not only an abandonment of an ally and friend, it was also a threat of supporting the enemy. In torment and agony of spirit the Czech cabinet sits continuously for nearly forty eight hours. Chamberlain gets very angry at

the delay in the answer and his minister and the French minister keep on calling on the Czech ministers throughout the night ever adding to their threats. The Czech Government surrenders.

How shall we describe this? The perfect description has been given by someone. It was the rape of Czechoslovakia by Germany with England and France holding her forcibly down!

Parliaments are not consulted. They are not even called. Chamberlain says that it would be inconvenient to call it while delicate negotiations are going on. In France, meetings and demonstrations are forbidden. We have the fascist methods developing in England and France.

Englishmen say that they are ashamed of being English. In France, the news of one deed spreads like a flash and brings some pride to a disillusioned people. A French general, serving on a French military mission in Prague, declares that the betrayal of the Czechs by his country has disgusted him so much that he renounces his French citizenship and swears he will never return to France.[4] Henceforth, he considers himself a Czech citizen. Strange that this act of renouncing French citizenship, because he thought it a dishonour, should fill with pride large numbers of Frenchmen! They were proud that one brave Frenchman had said frankly what he thought and braved the consequences.

Chamberlain is meeting Hitler. Meanwhile the masses stir and strange rumblings are heard in France and Britain. They had been fooled long enough by these ministers and governments of theirs. Yet their predicament is a hard one. They least of all want war. It is they and their sons and brothers and husbands who will die, and their children and wives and mothers and sisters who will be bombed. What are they to do?

All this could have been stopped so easily if England and France and Russia had stood together in the cause of peace. But Chamberlain and Bonnet prefer Hitler.

News from Berchtesgaden. Chamberlain is not meeting Hitler this afternoon as arranged. Is it the break? Is it war? The strain grows and grim serious faces pour over the latest editions of the newspapers in the cafes.

Further news. There has been an exchange of letters between Chamberlain and Hitler. They will meet again. But behind it all the

4. It was reported on 23 September 1938 that General Faucher, chief of the French military mission to Czechoslovakia, had sent his resignation to the French Government and placed his services at the disposal of the Czech armies.

agony of suspense. What further betrayals? What devil's plot is being hatched on the banks of the Rhine?

The masses are stirring. Enough of this betrayal and truckling to fascism. In spite of the government ban at every factory gate, the workers demonstrate, and then march to the Czechoslovakian legation to show their sympathy. Troops and military police in evidence everywhere. Why? Not against the enemy but to overawe the French people. There are minor clashes.

63. The Struggle of Czechoslovakia[1]

I met Reuter's man early in my stay in Prague and told him that I could not express any opinion about the particular problems affecting minorities without much more study, but that it was obvious that in Czechoslovakia the question of minorities was a mere excuse. The real problem was one of German expansion towards the east and practically breaking the independence of Czechoslovakia. It was a problem of power politics and thus an international one. Our sympathies were entirely with the Czechoslovakian Government and we were opposed to the Nazi aims. We felt that it was very important for a democratic country like Czechoslovakia not to be weakened in any way.

I also admired greatly the calm and determined attitude of the Czechoslovak people and democratic Germans in the face of this great crisis. The Nazi attitude was one of pure bullying and it was astonishing how this bullying was being supported by the British Government through the Runciman mission and otherwise.

As for the war, if this occurred, our sympathies would inevitably be with Czechoslovakia, but I added that we were not prepared for England to exploit India for her imperialist purposes. It was a little absurd for England to talk of democracy and to deny that to India.

I gave several interviews to Czechoslovak and German papers in Prague. Naturally, it was not easy for me as a visitor to give advice to any party or make criticism. That would have been improper, but I

1. Letter to T.K. Menon of the Indo-Czechoslovak Society, Bombay; extracts published in *National Herald*, 24 September 1938. The full text is not available.

made it quite clear that the Indian sympathies were entirely with Czechoslovakia and against the aggressors who were trying to bully her.

64. Cable to A.I.C.C.[1]

London
25 Sept. 1938

Urgent necessity official Congress statement.[2] Definite India's attitude international crisis. Also suggest office issuing instructions for guidance Congressmen.

Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-71/1938, p. 20, N.M.M.L.
2. The A.I.C.C., at its session at Delhi on 24-26 September 1938, resolved that "in the event of war breaking out in Europe, the A.I.C.C. delegates its powers to the Working Committee to deal with the situation as it arises from time to time in the light of the Haripura resolution on foreign policy and war danger."

65. The Betrayal of Czechoslovakia[1]

We have passed through incredible days, when every hour brought fresh news of betrayal and humiliation for the British and French people, yet in spite of all this war approaches. We must understand the inner meaning of events and realize how the British and French Governments

1. Statement to the press, London, 26 September 1938. *The Hindustan Times*, 27 September 1938.

have gone to unheard of lengths in order to placate the vaunting ambition of Germany's dictator. Fundamentally this is as in Spain because of the fascist character of the British Government. The one way of assuring peace by forming a peace bloc in cooperation with the U.S.S.R. and France, they have rejected, preferring the friendship of the fascist powers, and have paid a price in the most shameful betrayal in history. And even that price is not sufficient to stop war from coming. We will no doubt hear a great deal about democracy, but we have seen how far the British Government cares for democracy and we should beware of assurances, which are only meant to be broken.

With war coming, all our sympathy will be for Czechoslovakia, whose people have behaved with courage and dignity and raised themselves in the eyes of the world. We would gladly do all we can to help them but it must be clearly understood that we are not going to be pawns in imperialist adventures, nor are we prepared to help the governments which will betray democracy whenever they have a chance to do so. It is we who will decide, not the British Government, and our decision will depend not on promises but on definite action which takes us to our goal.

It is pitiful and absurd for the Indian princes to shout out their loyalty and promise to fight for democracy.[2] It is scandalous that they should crush their own subjects denying democracy, yet talk tall what they will do abroad. The high commissioner for India in London,[3] forgetting his own business, has also made some astonishing remarks in Quebec. Whom he speaks for I don't know. It is most objectionable that he should abuse his position and carry on British propaganda.

2. For example, the Maharaja of Bikaner wired to the Viceroy on 16 September 1938: "I can conceive of no greater mistake being made by anyone in India, Europe or elsewhere than to imagine that the Princes of India will not again rally round their gracious emperor on this occasion."
3. Feroze Khan Noon, high commissioner for India in London, interviewed by Reuter on 19 September 1938 in Quebec, said: "I am certain that never again will Britain engage in an aggressive war, and since seven provinces where there are Congress ministries out of 11 provinces in India are already cooperating with Britain and all the Congress ministries have sworn allegiance to the crown, it is reasonable to conclude that any misunderstanding still left between the Congress and Britain will disappear with proper cooperation and personal contacts in the sphere of administration and Britain will receive the united support of India."

66. London in Suspense[1]

After the mysterious happenings behind the scenes of the past few weeks, the journeying to and fro, the appeals and the ultimatums, the mounting danger of war, Mr. Neville Chamberlain at last was to make a public pronouncement. He spoke through the radio and I listened in to his broadcast.[2] It was brief, hardly lasting eight minutes, and there was nothing that was new in what he said. It was an appeal to sentiment after the Baldwin manner, but lacking the Baldwin touch and personality. It struck me as singularly ineffective. There was no reference to the vital issues at stake, to the naked sword that was being flashed before the world terrorizing humanity, to the way of violence that was becoming the law of nations and which Mr. Chamberlain himself had been encouraging by his activities. There was hardly a mention of the proud and gallant nation that was being offered as a sacrifice to the blood lust of the beasts of prey that surrounded it. The reference to it was a disparaging one—"a far-away country of whose people we know nothing."[3] No hint at the dignity and courage, the love of peace and freedom, the calm determination and tremendous sacrifices of these far-away people, who had been coerced and abandoned so faithlessly by their friends. Nothing was said of the incessant threats and insults and lies that had flown unceasingly from Nazi quarters. Only a brief, apologetic reference to Herr Hitler's "unreasonableness."

1. London, 28 September 1938. Published as "Day by Day" in *National Herald*, 7 October 1938. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 288-293.
2. In a broadcast on 27 September 1938, Chamberlain had said: "After my first visit to Berchtesgaden I did get the assent of the Czech Government to proposals which gave the substance of what Herr Hitler wanted, and I was taken completely by surprise when I got back to Germany and found that he insisted that the territory should be handed over to him immediately, and immediately occupied by German troops without previous arrangements for safeguarding the people within the territory who were not Germans, or did not want to join the German Reich. I must say that I find this attitude unreasonable."
3. Chamberlain had also said: "How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas-masks here because of a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing. It seems still more impossible that a quarrel which has already been settled in principle should be the subject of war."

I felt depressed and my heart was heavy within me. Was virtue always to be treated so, unless it was accompanied by a big battalion? Was evil ever to triumph?

I thought that perhaps Mr. Chamberlain would do greater justice to his theme the next day in Parliament. Perhaps, at last, he would give credit where it was due, and speak the truth without fear of Herr Hitler. Zero hour was approaching; it was time that the truth was out. But at the back of my mind I did not believe this for Mr. Chamberlain's past stood up before me and was witness to his partiality for fascism and its works.

Meanwhile there was a digging of trenches in the parks and open spaces, and anti-aircraft guns were being mounted. A.R.P.—air-raid precautions—stared at us from every hoarding, and in innumerable improvised depots men and women tried on gas masks—true emblems in all their ugliness of this savage age of violence. People went about their businesses, but their faces were strained and full of apprehension. There was sorrow in many homes as their loved ones were summoned to put themselves in readiness for the coming war.

The hours slipped by and brought the dreaded moment nearer, when, at the mad bidding of one man, millions of inoffensive, kindly, and well-meaning men would rush at each other and kill and destroy. The guns would thunder and belch out fire, and the whirr of the bombing aeroplanes would fill the sky. Zero hour. Would it be tomorrow or the day after?

Would this world of the twenty-eighth of September, nineteen thirty eight ever be like this again?

> Once more we hear the word
> That sickened earth of old:
> "No law except the sword
> Unsheathed and uncontrolled."

I am pressed by people to get a gas mask. The idea seems ridiculous to me. Am I to go about with a snout and the appearance of a beast? I am not adverse to risk and danger and a few days in Barcelona gave me some taste of air raids. I do not believe in the efficacy of gas masks and if danger comes, the mask will be poor protection. Perhaps its main purpose is to give confidence to the wearer and keep up public morale. No one knows how he will function face to face with extreme danger, yet I imagine that I shall not easily lose my head.

Still, the curiosity to see a gas mask at close quarters overcomes me, and I decide to go to one of the A.R.P. depots. I am fitted and later fetch a gas mask.

President Roosevelt has sent another message[3] to Herr Hitler—a dignified, moving appeal in which the real point at issue is stressed. What a vast difference between what he says and how he says it and Mr. Neville Chamberlain's pronouncements! Even the printed word of President Roosevelt shows that there is a man behind it. What does reason matter or fear of consequences to Hitler? Is Hitler absolutely mad that he should risk his astonishing diplomatic victory, obtained, no doubt, under threat of violence, by plunging into war? Does he not know that defeat and disaster will certainly be his lot in a world war; that many of his own people will turn against him? Or perhaps he has taken the true measure of Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier and knows exactly how far they can go.

The streets leading to the Houses of Parliament are crowded and there is excitement in the air. Inside the House every space is occupied and the visitors' galleries are overfull. The Lords are present in full force. They look a very bourgeois crowd indistinguishable from humbler mortals. There sits Lord Baldwin next to the Duke of Kent.[4] On the other side of him are Lord Halifax and the Archbishop of Canterbury. The diplomats' gallery is crowded. The Russian *charge d' affaires* is there and the Czechoslovakian minister, Monsieur Masaryk,[5] son of a famous father who built up the Czechoslovakian nation. Is the son going to see the destruction of the noble edifice that the father erected?

The Prime Minister begins. He has not a striking appearance; there is no nobility in his countenance. He looks too much like a businessman. His delivery is fair. For an hour he speaks, a bald narrative with

3. President Roosevelt on 27 September 1938 had said: "...for the sake of humanity everywhere, I most earnestly appeal to you not to break off negotiations, looking to a peaceful, fair, and constructive settlement of the questions at issue. I earnestly repeat that so long as negotiations continue, differences may be reconciled. Once they are broken off, reason is banished and force produces no solution for the good of humanity."

   In his second appeal on 28 September, Roosevelt said: "The question before the world today, Mr. Chancellor, is not a question of errors of judgment or of injustices committed in the past. It is a question of the fate of the world, today and tomorrow...my appeal was solely that negotiations should be continued until a peaceful settlement was found and that thereby a resort to force be avoided..."
4. George, Duke of Kent (1902-1942); the youngest son of King George V.
5. Jan Masaryk (1886-1948); Czech diplomat and politician; represented his country in Washington and London; Foreign Minister of the Czech Government in exile in London, 1940; Deputy Prime Minister, 1941-45; returned to Czechoslovakia in May 1945 and remained in the f[illegible] inistry till February 1948.

occasional personal touches and words that give a glimpse of suppressed excitement. Somehow I feel (or is it my imagination?) that the man was not big enough for the task he undertook, and this complex comes out repeatedly in his words and manner. He is excited and proud about his personal intervention, his talks with Hitler, the part he is playing in world affairs. Though Prime Minister of Britain, he is not used to these high tasks, and the intoxication of the adventure fills him. A Palmerston or a Gladstone or a Disraeli would have risen to the occasion. A Campbell-Bannerman would have put some fire in what he said. A Baldwin might have gripped the House, so would Churchill in a different way. Even Asquith would have spoken with a dignity suited to the occasion. But there was neither warmth nor depth of intellect in what Mr. Chamberlain said. It was very evident that he was not a man of destiny.

My thoughts flew to his meeting with Hitler, and I thought how overwhelmed he must have been by Hitler, overwhelmed not only by the frequent ultimatums of the latter, but by the dynamic and passionate and somewhat neurotic personality. For Hitler, for all his evil bent and distorted intent, has something elemental about him and Mr. Chamberlain is of the earth, earthy. But even Mr. Chamberlain could have met that elemental force with another force, also elemental but far more powerful, the force of organized democracy, the will of millions of people. He did not possess that power, nor did he seek to possess it. He moved in his narrow sphere and thought in limited terms, and never tried to develop or represent the urge that moves millions. It was inevitable, under the circumstances, that in the clash of wills he must go down before Hitler.

But was there even a clash of wills? There was no hint of such real clash in what Mr. Chamberlain said, as there had been none in his deeds. He approached Hitler with sympathy and a large measure of approval and agreement. There was no talk of high principles, of freedom, of democracy, of human right and justice, of international law and morality, of the barbarity of the way of the sword, of the sickening lies and vulgarity of the high priests of Nazism, of the unparalleled coercion of minorities in Germany, of refusal to submit to blackmail and bullying. On principles there was hardly any dispute, only some details were discussed. It is evident that Mr. Chamberlain's outlook, allowing for his English environment, was not so different from Hitler's.

In that long speech of his there was much in praise of Hitler, of his sincerity, of belief in his *bona fides*, of his promise not to seek further territory in Europe. There was no mention of President Roosevelt and

his striking messages. There was no mention of Russia, although Russia is intimately concerned with the fate of Czechoslovakia.

And what of Czechoslovakia herself? There was mention of course, but not a word about the unparalleled sacrifices of her people, of their astonishing restraint and dignity in face of intolerable provocation, of their holding aloft the banner of democracy. It was an astonishing and significant omission, deliberately made.

Mr. Chamberlain's speech held his audience. Not because of the excellence of the argument or the personality of the speaker, but because of the vital importance of the subject. He led up to a dramatic conclusion. He was going to Munich tomorrow and so were Signor Mussolini and M. Daladier.[6] And as a great favour Hitler had made a striking concession—he would defer mobilisation for twenty four hours!

Mr. Chamberlain succeeded in rousing the House by this element of drama and by the hope it brought of the possible avoidance of war. The strain of the last few days lessened and relief appeared in all the faces.

It was good that war had been pushed off, even though this might be only for a day or two longer. It was terrible to contemplate that war, and any relief from it was welcome.

And yet, and yet, what of Czechoslovakia, what of democracy and freedom? Was there going to be another betrayal again, the final murder of that nation? This sinister gathering of four at Munich, was it the prelude to the four-power pact of fascism-cum-imperialism to isolate Russia, to end Spain finally and to crush all progressive elements? Mr. Chamberlain's past record inevitably makes one think so.

So tomorrow Chamberlain meets Hitler and Mussolini. One was too much for him, what will be his fate with these two strong men? Perhaps Mr. Chamberlain and Monsieur Daladier will, under cover of intricate words, agree to everything that Hitler says, and then, as another of his great favours, Hitler will consent to postpone war by a few days or weeks. That will indeed be a great triumph and Hitler ought to be hailed then as the prophet of peace. The Nobel Peace Prize might still be awarded to him, though Mr. Chamberlain will be a hot competitor.

6. Chamberlain's speech was interrupted by the delivery of a letter from Hitler inviting Chamberlain to a four-power conference in Munich. He announced his acceptance of the invitation and Parliament was adjourned to enable him to prepare for his third visit to Germany.

67. The Choice Before Us[1]

In this grave hour when the fates of nations hang in the balance and world war threatens humanity, the people of India cannot remain passive spectators of the march of historic events. They stand to gain or lose from them, as do others, and they have to decide how best to serve the cause of freedom that is dear to them. To wait on others to decide for them, or not to decide at all, is to prove unworthy of our historic destiny. All the peoples of the world desire peace, but individuals and those in power and authority are driving the world to terrible war even though they talk glibly of peace. The people of India are even more committed to the way of peace than other peoples.

The Congress has clearly laid down the principle which must govern our action in times of world crisis and war. By those principles we must stand. But the time is fast approaching for the application of those principles in the light of events and recent developments. A negative attitude of protest or the mere enunciation of a principle is not enough when a positive policy and constructive action become necessary. Our movement long ago passed the stage of protest in our national affairs and we took to constructive action. In foreign affairs also we are passing that purely agitational stage and India's voice counts today and is listened to with attention in international gatherings. It becomes essential, therefore, that we should fashion our policy accordingly and link our national struggle with that policy.

Striving for national freedom, we have inevitably become anti-imperialists and have resisted not only foreign domination in India, but imperialism itself. We saw in fascism a development of and a more dangerous form of imperialism, and we condemned it. We looked upon the two as twin brothers which crushed freedom and prevented peace and progress. We realised that the conflict between fascism and imperialism on the one side and freedom and democracy on the other was world-wide, and gradually we ranged ourselves with the forces of progress and freedom. In Abyssinia, Spain and China we condemned imperialist and fascist aggression.

1. Signed article written at London, 29 September 1938. *National Herald*, 6 October 1938. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 294-300.

Fascism crushed all progressive elements and set up new standards in cruelty and inhumanity. It gloried in brutality and openly aimed at war. Imperialist powers talked in terms of democracy but aided and abetted fascism and helped it to grow. International morality decayed, all idea of collective action for peace was given up, and an unabashed gangsterism among nations grew up and was tolerated. Yet it was clear that only by collective action could the aggressor be stayed and peace maintained. A surrender to violence and aggression was no basis for peace, for the aggression and blackmail grew by every surrender and brought world war ever nearer. It was not difficult for this aggression to be checked and peace ensured if those powers who believed in peace acted together, for their strength was far greater than that of the fascist aggressor. But many of these very powers who talked of peace and democracy were imperialist and they sympathised with fascism and encouraged it.

The British Government has a special responsibility for the growth of fascism and thus for bringing war nearer. They tolerated aggression in Manchuria, took part in the betrayal of Abyssinia, and indirectly aided the fascist rebels in Spain. Their general policy was one of consistently encouraging fascism and Nazism. They did not succeed in Spain because the people of Spain refused to fall in with their wishes and fought with unsurpassed courage and determination for their freedom.

In Czechoslovakia the incredible happenings of the past few weeks have shown to what depths the British and French Governments can sink in their desire to increase the power and prestige of Nazi Germany at the cost of the destruction of democracy in central Europe and the coercion and dismemberment of a gallant and friendly state which had put faith in their word. This act of gross betrayal and dishonour did not even bring peace, but has brought us to the threshold of war. Yet peace was to be had for the asking by building up a joint peace front between England, France and Russia and other powers, which would have been too powerful for Nazi Germany to dare to challenge. The British Government refused to line up with Russia and made Hitler believe that he could deal with Czechoslovakia singly, with England and other powers looking on. They ignored Russia in all their negotiations and worked in alliance with Hitler for the crushing of Czechoslovakia. They preferred the risk of making Hitler dominant in Europe to cooperation with Russia in the cause of peace. Their class feelings and hatred of the new order in Russia were so great that everything else was subordinated to it. They gladly agreed, at the bidding of Hitler, to the termination of the alliance between Russia and Czechoslovakia and thus sought to isolate Russia. The next obvious step was a four-power pact

between England, France, Germany and Italy, an alliance between imperialism and fascism in order to make the world safe for reaction and for the crushing of the progressive elements all over the world. But the overweening ambition of Hitler has come in their way and an outraged public opinion has cried halt. They have talked of peace, but have deliberately avoided the obvious way to peace, and every step they have taken has been an encouragement to Hitler to wage war.

They have arrived at the precipice from which, perhaps, retreat may be impossible, and yet there is not even now a marked change in their pro-fascist policy. If war comes they will talk of democracy, but if they continue as governments they will still act in the imperialist-fascist way and betray that very democracy if they have the chance to do so. No one who has followed their activities in the past can doubt this or rely on them.

And yet, whether there is war or peace, the fate of Czechoslovakia is a vital matter to the world and to all who stand for democracy and freedom. The momentous struggle between fascism and anti-fascism is being and will be fought on this issue and the result of it must have far-reaching consequences. India must be vitally interested in it for it affects her own future. We cannot tolerate the defeat of democracy and the world domination of fascist-imperialism. Britain, perhaps preserving the outward forms of democracy, would then turn more definitely fascist; France may do likewise. If this grave danger threatens then no people or individuals can be neutrals or onlookers, and we have to cast our full weight on the side of democracy, serving thereby the cause of our own freedom. Not to do so might help fascism and reaction.

Governments have power to shape a country's policy and to give it a right or wrong turn. But in moments of crisis, of war, and potential war, popular forces emerge and grow and make a vital difference. They change governments or compel them to act in a certain way. It is these progressive forces that we see growing up around us, and if the crisis develops into war or otherwise, they will grow all the more. We have to reckon with these forces, to welcome them and to cooperate with them. It is fear of these that has prevented the British Government from cooperating with the Soviet Union in ensuring peace and has made them seek alliance with the Nazis even at the cost of weakening their empire.

Yet there are obvious dangers with an imperialist and reactionary government exploiting for its own purposes in war-time the slogan of democracy. Do we not have even now Hitler and Mussolini giving their approval to the principle of self-determination, choosing to forget what they have done and are doing to many of their own people? Have we forgotten the fine phrases and slogans used by the British Government

during the last war? Obviously we cannot be taken in by phrases again and allow ourselves to be exploited for imperialist purposes. We cannot be parties to the horror and disillusion of the last war.

It is true that this very memory of the past will cling to us and be a constant reminder to us of what we should not do. It is true also that there is a greater realisation of the issue today, a vaster mass consciousness, a greater vigilance among the people. The existence of the Soviet Union itself and the astonishing fight for democracy in Spain are significant. And yet who can say that vast numbers of people will not be misled again and their courage and sacrifice and idealism not exploited for base ends, leaving after the holocaust of war the same misery, the same injustices, imperialism and fascism?

How to avoid this terrible danger and yet how not to be a mere spectator when the most vital issues are at stake? It is a question most difficult to answer for every person who cares for freedom and democracy and world peace and order. For us in India the difficulty is no less. We sympathise with all our heart with Czechoslovakia in her struggle for freedom, we realise the world significance of it, the momentous consequences which flow from it. We want to help her in her struggle to the best of our ability, for thereby we help the cause of freedom and democracy throughout the world. We want to combat fascism. But we will not permit ourselves to be exploited by imperialism, we will not have war imposed upon us by outside authority, we will not sacrifice to preserve the old injustices or to maintain an order that is based on them. We will not and cannot forget our own struggle for freedom. Slogans which may sound pleasant to the ear but have little reality behind them, or vague promises which have been broken often before, cannot determine our course of action. Will anyone dare to ask us to fight for democracy and deny us that democracy?

It is a terrible predicament and a difficult question to answer. Yet the answer must be given, and given in clear language. The Congress, in its resolutions, has already clearly indicated what this answer must be. We have to amplify this and apply it, in terms of constructive statesmanship, to the needs of the hour.

Whether there is war or a so-called peace which is continuous conflict and a herald to war, we must be clear what we are aiming at and fight for that. We must not permit vague slogans or what are termed military necessities to take away such liberties as we possess and to divert us from our objective. We must have no imperialist settlement at the end, but the liquidation of imperialism itself. We must have a real league of nations controlling armaments and air services, and collective

security based on freedom and social justice. And those who have the conduct of war or peace must be people who believe in these objectives.

If I were an Englishman I would not trust the present British Government in war or peace, and I would not like to commit myself to their care to be used and exploited as they wish. Their talk of peace and democracy has been pure bluff. They could have ensured peace by cooperating with France, the Soviet Union, and the United States of America, and as for democracy, they have done their utmost to slay it in central Europe. I would demand that this government must go. So long as it remains I would fear betrayal.

But as an Indian I must confine myself to India. It is time that the problem of our independence was faced and settled finally. We have had enough delay, and if every group of people are considered worthy of self-determination, the three hundred and seventy millions of India have waited long enough for it. There is no other way of settling this question except by recognition of our right to independence, and through a constituent assembly. The proposed federation is dead; let there be no further talk of it. We have bigger questions to decide, vaster problems to settle, and the sooner we set about them the better. More and more people, even in England, have come to realise that it is both good politics and good sense to have a friendly and free India by their side rather than a hostile India ever giving trouble and weakening them in times of crisis. As a prelude to the new age of freedom and democracy, for which we work and for which we may have to fight, India must have the full sense of freedom.

But we are in the midst of a crisis, and intricate schemes cannot be evolved in a day. What can be done without delay? India's right to independence must be recognised, as also the fact that her constitution will be drawn up by a constituent assembly elected by adult franchise. A committee consisting of representatives of the people should be set up to work out the details for the election of this assembly. And immediate steps should be taken for the transitional period so that a popular direction is given to affairs. With this background, questions of trade and economic relations between India and England will be considered in a friendly spirit, and I have no doubt that India will seek to do justice to all just interests of the British people in India.

An India with her freedom assured to her, and working for the establishment of a democratic state, will be a pillar of strength to freedom and democracy elsewhere, and will throw in her weight and resources, in war or peace, for the defence of democracy. She will most willingly join forces in the defence of Czechoslovakia, to combat fascism, to work for a settlement to do away with the injustices of the past and the present

and lay the foundation of a true world order. Then India and England, if England also pursues the paths of freedom and justice, will cooperate together for peace and the good of humanity.

68. It is not Peace[1]

Of all the peoples of the world, none is better able to understand and sympathise with the feelings of the Czechoslovakian nation than the masses of India. India has followed this tragic drama of betrayal with intense interest.

From long experience her people have learned not to trust the promises of the British Government, and yet recent developments in British foreign policy have amazed and shocked them.

Apart from the final dramatic statement, Chamberlain's speech in Parliament was more remarkable for what it left unsaid than for what it said. Except for his perfectly right insistence on peace, his talk said nothing about the high principles and policies involved or about the international right and morality or about the maintenance of democracy.

Czechoslovakia is to be sacrificed, the Soviet Union isolated, and a clear field left for Nazi expansion, despite Hitler's promises towards the south-east of Europe.

Mussolini will no doubt ask for his pound of flesh in Spain and elsewhere, and Chamberlain and Daladier might, in the name of peace, agree to this gift.

Peace at any price—at the price of the blood and suffering of others, the humiliation of democracy, and the dismemberment of friendly nations.

Even so it is not peace, but continuous conflict, blackmail—the rule of violence, and ultimately war.

The British Government has been repeatedly talking about self-determination and even Hitler and Mussolini were laying stress on it. So are the people of India. Three hundred and seventy millions of them want this self-determination and independence. The people of the Indian states from Travancore to Kashmir are also struggling for their freedom but are being ruthlessly suppressed.

1. Talk with the correspondent of the *Daily Worker*, London, 30 September 1938, printed on 1 October 1938.

69. To G. B. Pant[1]

London
October 1, 1938

My dear Pantji,

I received your cable some time back. It has not been possible for me to do anything in the matter of experts owing to the critical international situation. I shall make further inquiries before I return to India. I have already sent you particulars of some Austrian refugees and I shall send you more information within a few days.

I feel, however, that the outlook of the United Provinces Government is somewhat different from mine. I do not attach much importance to odd people knowing something about particular industries, big or small. What I am keen on is to have men with some vision, as well as expert economic, technical and engineering knowledge, who can survey the whole problem and then suggest a plan for development. I fear the schemes of the United Provinces Government in regard to industrial or rural development are lacking in any vision or plan. Under present conditions this planless method will lead to no results. However, if a competent man is available for a particular industry, there is no reason why we should not have him.

During my stay in Geneva I had long talks with some of the League of Nations people who have been intimately associated with work in China. The League, as you know, has given great help to China in building up its industrial, financial and other sides. I wanted to know how far it was possible for this to be done in India, either formally through the League channels or informally by getting people directly at their suggestion. Of course, if you deal with the League formally you will have to go through the Government of India. I do not suppose the Government of India will veto any such approach, but it is sure to put difficulties in the way. Everything would depend on the kind of persons sent by the League and it would be necessary for us to fix upon these persons privately before a formal approach is made.

These League advisers could come for a few months to survey the problems and give advice, especially in regard to rural development, as well as industrial and economic matters, or one or two persons could come for a couple of years. It is possible that in the former case the League might bear the expenses. It takes a lot of money from India and there is no reason why it should not do something for India.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

In the event of a League official or someone recommended by them coming for a longer period, he would have to be paid. These rates of payment are less than the usual official rates in India. Probably you would have to pay between 1,000 and 1,500 rupees a month.

I am myself inclined to think that you should try to get the League to send a small commission which could survey the problems and give advice.

Further we might find out informally one or two really competent men, experts in agricultural and rural organisation, and, if possible, employ them privately for a period.

I also saw John G. Winant,[2] the new American director of the International Labour Office. I was favourably impressed by him. He is very keen on doing something for India and is perfectly willing to send a couple of men to survey labour as well as agricultural problems and give advice. Presumably the I.L.O. will bear the cost. I attach more importance to Winant's offer than to the League of Nations people. I suppose even in this case you will have to deal with them through the Government of India, but in any event we should fix up things privately with Winant and only then approach the Government of India.

The League people have also suggested that you might send a medical officer to Geneva for training. He could function as a temporary member of the health section for a year.

I am sending you this information so that you may consider it with your colleagues before I return. When I come back we can discuss these matters more fully and take such steps as you consider desirable.

I am eager to return to India, but am held up somewhat by Indira's ill-health, as well as my sister's. Both of them require looking after and I do not wish to leave them until everything is fixed up. Still I hope to return towards the end of this month.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

2. (1889-1947); director, International Labour Office, Geneva, 1938-41; U.S. ambassador to Britain, 1941-46.

70. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

London
October 1, 1938

My dear Maulana,
I have not written to you since I came here, but I have sent several letters and reports to the Working Committee, which no doubt you must have seen. I have been following, as far as I could, developments in India. You have had a lot of trouble and the burden on you must have been great.

As you know I have been meeting Nahas Pasha and trying to develop contacts with the Wafdist movement. Nahas Pasha is very keen on this and I hope that good will result from our efforts.

I conveyed his invitation to the Congress to send representatives to the Wafdist congress on November 23rd. I think it is highly important that we should send some representatives—at least two, a Hindu and a Muslim. I cannot think of a better representative than you. I might mention that Nahas Pasha specially suggested to me that one of our representatives should be a Muslim. I do hope that the Working Committee will decide soon about it and will communicate its decision directly to Nahas Pasha.

Perhaps you would write to him direct, not only about this congress but about other affairs also. I am sure he would be delighted to receive a letter in Arabic from you.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter[2] I am sending to Nahas Pasha. This will give you some idea of the talks we have had.

You will notice the reference to the Arab congress to be held on November 7th. I do not know what the position is in regard to this in India and whether the Muslim League or the Jamiat are sending delegates. What I have said in my letter to Nahas is based on information received in London. It would be worthwhile your finding out how matters stand in India and writing to Nahas Pasha about it.

Perhaps also you might inform Mufti Kifayatullah[3] and others of the Jamiat as to the true character of this congress, which is probably being run to some extent under British influence, although in regard to Palestine it will no doubt criticise British policy. Anyway it is anti-Wafdist.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-71/1938, p. 16, N.M.M.L.
2. See the next item.
3. (1872-1952); a prominent leader of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind.

I am eager to get back to India, but for some time I am rather tied up because of my sister's and daughter's ill health. I hope to decide in the course of the next week or ten days.

I hope you are keeping well.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

71. To Nahas Pasha[1]

London
October 1, 1938

My dear Nahas Pasha,

It was a great pleasure and privilege to meet you again and have a long talk with you. I found that there was so much in common between us and our respective national movements that it would be to the great advantage of both of us to cooperate with each other as far as we can.

I recapitulate below the various points that we discussed.

1. We should organise a weekly exchange of a news-letter between the Indian National Congress and the Wafd Party. These letters to contain news of the political movement as well as economic, social and cultural news.
2. We should exchange our publications.
3. We should try to send delegates to our respective congresses and at other suitable times. Thus I hope that it will be possible for the Indian National Congress to send fraternal delegates to the Wafd congress in November, and I am happy to know from you that representatives of the Wafd will visit India early next year. Their visit will fit in with our annual session of the Congress in February or March.
4. I suggested to you also that we might develop contacts through certain international organisations, with whose objectives we agree. This would give us an opportunity to study international affairs and to influence them to some extent. This does not mean that we should commit ourselves to particular policies in regard to our own countries or our

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-71-1938, pp. 16(b-f), N.M.M.L.

own national movements, but it would help us to some extent if we associated ourselves with progressive movements in the world. Our national problems are so much a part of the international problem that it is difficult to study them separately. Obviously our principal concern must be the freedom of our countries, but in working for this objective international contacts will be helpful.

I mentioned to you the affiliation of the Indian National Congress with the R.U.P. (*Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix*). We associated ourselves with this organisation because we believe in world peace and freedom, but we made it clear that peace, in our opinion, can only be established on a basis of freedom and anti-imperialism—imperialism, like fascism, being itself a negation of peace or freedom. We have consistently pressed this attitude in the R.U.P. We are represented on the R.U.P. executive by a member nominated by our organisation.

I would suggest that to begin with you might acquaint yourselves with the activities of the R.U.P. and develop informal contacts with it, without any formal commitment on your part. Later, you can judge for yourselves what is the best course for you to adopt. In the event of the R.U.P. having international conferences it might be desirable for a fraternal delegate or an observer to be sent by the Wafd. In this way you would come in contact with many organisations and individuals whose cooperation would be useful. You would also bring the question of Egypt before them, as well as problems affecting the Arab world, more especially Palestine, and all this could be done without any formal commitment on your part.

I understand that M. Jacob represents the R.U.P. in Cairo. You are acquainted with him and he will, no doubt, supply you with all necessary information.

5. I also suggested to you the desirability of youth organisations in Egypt getting into touch with international youth organisations, in particular with the World Youth Congress. This is an important body and its influence is a growing one in a large number of countries. I am sure they will welcome the association of Egyptian youth with them.

I would also like your youth organisations to get into direct touch with Indian youth organisations. Wherever possible delegates might be sent to youth congresses, either national or international.

6. All of us in India are greatly interested in the problem of Palestine. It is difficult for us to have direct contacts with the people of Palestine. We would like, therefore, to keep in touch with the situation there through your party. This would help us greatly. We would therefore welcome news of Palestine in your weekly news-letters.

Our general attitude in regard to Palestine has been this. We have looked upon the struggle in Palestine as a struggle for national freedom and not as a religious or racial struggle. It is an anti-imperialist struggle of the Arab people. At the same time we realise that the Jews have been grossly ill-treated in Europe and we have a great deal of sympathy for them, but this sympathy does not mean that they should allow themselves to be used as tools of British imperialism in Palestine, as they have done and are doing. Certainly they have certain rights there, which should be protected, and they can help as useful citizens in building up Palestine, but the essential thing is that Palestine is an Arab country and should achieve freedom as such, with Jewish rights protected. We feel that the only way out of the present difficulty is by means of an agreement between the Arabs and the Jews on the above basis and without any interference by British imperialism.

I understand that there are many Arabs and some Jews who accept this basis and who would gladly cooperate together. I have no doubt that you can exercise a powerful influence in this direction.

7. In India, unfortunately, some difficulties occasionally arise between certain groups of Mussulmans and others. It is our earnest desire to remove every grievance and to build up a unified nation in which every group and community and individual has full and equal rights. We have the example before us of what you have been able to achieve in Egypt. I am glad to say that we have built up a powerful platform of unity in India and among our most noted leaders and colleagues there are many Muslims. Still some elements in the community, for political or other reasons, have opposed the national movement. I have no doubt that with the example of Egypt before us and your goodwill to help us, we can deal with this problem with success.

In effect, the problem has been accentuated by the efforts of British imperialism to create divisions. Of course, it is up to us to solve it by our own efforts and it would be improper for you or your party to associate yourselves with any particular group in this matter. You must necessarily be above such domestic matters. Nevertheless your influence in favour of unity will be helpful.

8. Apart from our official contacts, I would greatly welcome personal contacts by correspondence between you and me.

Weekly news-letters and publications should be sent to the above address and marked 'Foreign Department'. These news-letters can be either in English or French. Any special publications in Arabic might also be sent.

I have learnt since my return here that an Arab congress is being organised in Cairo by certain anti-Wafdist and pro-fascist elements, who

are known as the 'green shirts', that it will take place on November 7th in Cairo. You did not tell me anything about it when we met. I wonder if this congress has been organised just as a counter-blast to yours. I presume it will be supported by the palace party and will consider the Palestine problems. I shall be grateful if you will let me know more about it and suggest to us what our attitude should be in regard to it.

I understand that it will be a purely Muslim congress with a pan-Islamic bent. As such a national organisation like ours will not have contacts with it. I am told, however, that invitations have been issued to certain Muslim organisations in India and that some Indian Muslims have accepted them, among them being Sir Mohamad Yakub, Mr. M.A. Jinnah, Mr. Abdul Rahman Siddiqui[3] and Moulvi Madhar el Din.[4] Of these, Sir Mohamad Yakub, I regret to say, is very reactionary in politics and pro-British imperialism. The others are leading members of the Muslim League, which is a communal organisation. I am told also that two other representatives might be coming from India, namely Mufti Kifayatullah and Moulvi Abdul Halim Siddiqui.[5] These two might represent the Jamiat-ul-Ulema. This organisation is a semi-political and semi-religious one, which has often been associated with the National Congress in our struggle. Mufti Kifayatullah is a very fine man, but he is not very political.

These people no doubt are very much agitated about the Palestine situation and hence their desire to take part in the congress.

I find that the Palestine Arab Centre here in London knows about this proposed congress of November 7th but that it does not know anything about the Wafdist congress to be held on November 23rd.

I intend returning to India in the last week of October. I shall try to break journey in Egypt so that I may have another chance of meeting you and your colleagues.

You must have followed closely the developments in the international situation. It is remarkable how England and France have deserted Czechoslovakia. For the moment the outlook is depressing and all

3. A prominent Khilafatist and Muslim League leader of Bengal.
4. A Khilafat leader and prominent member of the Muslim League in Delhi; was murdered in 1939.
5. (1889-1969); leader of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind in U.P.

that we can say is that to rely on the friendship or protection of either of these countries is a dangerous thing.

With warm regards and good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

72. Pacifism and Nonviolence[1]

In the course of the last few days, in Europe, we have seen the cult of the lathi being spread. Though Mahatma Gandhi has left the Congress, he is bigger than the Congress and is a great force. His fight for India's freedom is greater than that of any organisation, and he is still there to give his advice to us. Lately we have seen extraordinary triumphs being achieved by violence in Europe. The Mahatma has lived for the exact opposite. He stands for something entirely different. He has been called a non-resister, but he has not merely sat down and bowed his head to evil. Active resistance to evil has been his creed—if one liked it—peaceful and nonviolent resistance—but resistance nevertheless.

I cannot see Mahatma Gandhi submitting to what the great empires of Britain and France, with all their strength, have submitted to under threat of a powerful country. I cannot also see the Indian nationalist movement submitting to it either. His whole training has been such that one could not submit to anything degrading or bad.

I have been surprised by the attitude adopted by so many so-called pacifists. They have given their support to the most terrible things and they have subscribed to the standards which do not evoke respect. Gandhiji's is aggressive and fighting pacifism and his achievements in India have been outstanding.

I do not know how far Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy has reached the other countries but I believe that there is a growing realization that there should at least be some moral standards in the conduct of nations.

1. Speech at Indian students' hostel on the 69th birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, London, 2 October 1938. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 4 October 1938.

73. Peace and After[1]

The Prime Ministers who, after the Munich conference,[2] went to their homes were welcomed as the saviours of peace. Not a glance was given to the treaties or alliances and no recognition was afforded to the alliances of Czechoslovakia and all the obligations arising from her international contracts.

All that Prague and the Czechoslovak nation received was a crown of thorns. The life of the Czechoslovak Republic is not, however, closed by the Munich conference. This was the message broadcast from Prague yesterday through the wireless.

After these tense days of anxious suspense, of shame and humiliation, it is well that we should understand what has happened. It is evident that many people in India have failed to understand the course of events, and even the *National Herald* announced at one stage that Mr. Neville Chamberlain had called Hitler's bluff. *The Hindustan Times*, according to Reuter, has acclaimed the Munich conference as a magnificent stand on the part of Mr. Chamberlain, and hailed him in language of extravagant praise. What are we to make of all this sickening stuff? Is it mere ignorance on the part of those who conduct our newspapers? If so, it is inexcusable. Or is it a conscious lining up with fascism? The time is past when we could be vague about these matters. For the future good of India and the world, for our freedom and the freedom of others, we have to be clear where we stand.

The Congress has long been clear on this issue. We who have struggled for our freedom and attached the greatest importance to peace and high standards of public conduct, could only view with repugnance the emergence of fascism, based on human slavery and brutal violence and the destruction of all international codes of behaviour. Where would India be in a fascist world?

During the past four weeks we have been faced by a difficult problem. We stand for democracy and, as such, if there was a contest between

1. Signed article written at London, 2 October 1938. *National Herald*, 12 October 1938.
2. The Munich conference convened by Hitler on 29 September 1938 resulted in an agreement between Germany, Britain, France and Italy. It accepted German claims to Czechoslovak territory. A commission of four powers which was dominated by German and Italian representatives would settle any points in dispute.

democracy and fascism, inevitably our sympathies would go to the former and our resources should go to strengthen it. And yet, were we going to strengthen, at the same time, British imperialism and allow ourselves to be exploited by it? So put, the question was a difficult one to answer. But in reality the question did not arise.

Imperialist Britain was not going to support democracy, and, if by any chance it did so in reality, it would have to shed its imperialism. The British Government understood this well enough and threw all its weight on the side of fascism. It was not at Munich or Godesberg or Berchtesgaden that the decision was made, but months and years earlier. The world was to be made safe not for democracy but for fascism, and with this end in view the British National Government has functioned these many years. There were forces in England, even in the cabinet, which pulled it back. There was France trying, without avail, to check this movement. There was the mounting displeasure of the United States of America. But the clique that controlled the British Government deliberately and persistently pursued its policy of strengthening fascism in Europe.

Spain became a classic example of this policy and slowly it began to dawn on the British people where their government was leading them. Then came Austria, and Mr. Chamberlain by his public statements (no one knows how much further he went in his private assurances) invited Hitler to annex Austria. Even the British foreign office, following a traditional policy, viewed with dismay this drift to fascism and the attempt to make Germany the dominant power on the Continent.

Mr. Chamberlain did not allow this to come in the way of his pro-Nazi policy. The permanent head of the foreign office was removed from his key position.[3] Mr. Eden, the Foreign Secretary, also resigned. For a while, the National Government was shaken and it almost seemed that its days were numbered. But the Labour opposition was incredibly weak, undecided and afraid of assuming any responsibility. The moment passed.

Austria having been disposed of Czechoslovakia came on the scene. Hitler and the Nazi government gave all manner of assurances that they had no aggressive design on Czechoslovakia. But memories are short. Had not Hitler said exactly the same thing about Austria a month before its annexation? Earlier still, in 1935, he had stated with all solemnity in his Reichstag speech: "Germany will tread no other path than

3. Robert Gilbert Vansittart (1881-1957); permanent Under Secretary in the Foreign Office, 1930-38; was removed by Chamberlain and appointed chief diplomatic adviser.

that laid down by the peace treaties. We have no thought of invading any other country." Had he not given his approval to a treaty with Czechoslovakia itself, a treaty of arbitration of disputes?

Lord Halifax, as Foreign Secretary, referred to these assurances in Parliament on March 14, 1938. He said: "By these assurances, solemnly given and more than once repeated, we naturally expect the German Government to abide, and if indeed they desire to see European peace maintained, as I earnestly hope they do, there is no quarter in Europe in which it is more vital that undertakings should be scrupulously respected."

So speak statesmen from their places of authority, deluding a public which still attaches value to their words. Meanwhile they act differently. Goebbels[4] let us have a peep into the Nazi mind on April 7, 1938: "All this takes place step by step at a time when we run the least possible risk. The risks become smaller, the more powerful we become.... There was a time when the world spoke of the demands it would make on us. Today we speak only of the demands which we make on the world."

The British Government, if it sought peace and the defence of democracy, had a clear path—a path which led with certainty to both. This was a close association with France and Russia and Czechoslovakia on the firm plank of preventing aggression or the application of force to solve any problem. This was an overwhelming grouping with the backing of many of the smaller powers of Europe and the goodwill of the U.S.A. This would have been the basis of collective security. It is certain that peace would have been ensured and Nazi aggression checked.

But the British Government pursued an opposite policy and deliberately encouraged Nazi aggression by saying that they would not help Czechoslovakia. They sent Lord Runciman to Prague to threaten and coerce the Czech Government. They did not say a word when Germany mobilised on a vast scale. They did not venture to criticise the campaign of hate and lies which the propaganda machinery of the Nazis broadcast to the world. They did not remind Germany of her promises and assurances.

At one time it appeared that British public opinion might turn against them. Mr. Chamberlain then started his errands to Hitler and at the same time a desperate war scene was created in England. Mr. Chamberlain certainly deserves credit for the extraordinary cleverness with which he handled public opinion and, playing on the fear of war,

4. Joseph Goebbels (1897-1945); Nazi leader; incharge of party and government propaganda; committed suicide along with Hitler in the last days of the war.

brought about the very thing he had so long worked for—a complete triumph of Hitler at the expense of Czechoslovakia. He also laid the foundations of the four-power pact so that fascism and reaction may be consolidated and Russia might be isolated.

Mr. Chamberlain succeeded but he did so as an accomplice almost of Hitler's. The triumph is Hitler's. Mr. Garvin,[5] in today's *Observer*, sings this paean of praise: "At the head of 80,000,000 of reunited Germans and with an irresistible influence now over many more millions of other races on the further side of Europe, Herr Hitler stands forth as the mightiest sovereign and ruler since Napoleon and perhaps since Charlemagne."

The Observer represents that very clique which has had a dominating influence over Mr. Chamberlain and British foreign policy. At this moment of betrayal of democracy and the cutting up of the living body of Czechoslovakia, it can only think with joy of the triumph of Herr Hitler and Nazism. That is the achievement of Mr. Chamberlain, and, if praise is to be given for it, let us give it by all means.

We are suddenly launched into a new world of ultimatums, swift mobilisations, threats of overpowering forces, individual leaders hurriedly consulting together and deciding on surrender or war. The old methods of democracy fade away. France, immensely weaker now than ever before, will seek arrangements with Germany. A temporary arrangement may come, but France is too proud a country and too much attached to freedom to go down without a struggle. She had betrayed her ally, dishonoured herself and at the same time disabled herself. Who will support her in time of need? And yet we have to remember that Hitler has declared in his book that France has to be annihilated. War will always be in the air between Germany and France.

Russia, strong even by herself, will look eastwards more. Between her and the Western powers antagonism will grow. There will be no peace between her and triumphant fascism.

England is already in the German orbit. She has sacrificed others to placate the growing appetite of Germany. A day is soon coming when she will have to decide on conflict or sacrifices which concern her more intimately. She is not likely to give up what she has without struggle. So there is no peace in that prospect.

So in whichever direction we see there is no real peace but prospect of conflict or war. There will be more feverish preparation of war, and armaments will grow. Meanwhile England lines up with fascism and

5. James Louis Garvin (1868-1947); editor, *The Observer*, 1908-1942; supported policy of appeasement.

we await the result of this in Spain and elsewhere. But already there is a visible reaction and a revolt against the National Government. This will grow.

Much has happened which has distressed us exceedingly and our hearts go out to the people of Czechoslovakia, who have borne themselves throughout these terrible days with an amazing fortitude, dignity and disciplined courage. But we have learnt afresh some lessons that will help us to steer clear of the pitfalls that confront us. The British Government does not stand for democracy but for imperialism and fascism, which are the negation of democracy.

Already we see the methods of fascism being introduced in England. A mighty demonstration to condemn the government's policy was organised in the Albert Hall for September 30. But there was a ban on halls for this purpose and neither the Albert Hall nor any other was available. The press here is becoming almost as regimented as in Germany. England's word or her international undertakings have no value. Her friendship is dangerous for it is likely to be followed by betrayal.

There is a great deal of talk of self-determination. Well, we will have it in India and free our hundreds of millions from the grip of imperialism and fascism. We will be independent and cut ourselves away from the pro-fascist policy of Britain. Fascism may dominate in Europe but the world is not confined to Europe. There is America, there is Asia, there is the Soviet Union.

74. The Problem of Palestine[1]

I am glad that Mr. Edward Thompson has written about Palestine in 'Notes on the Way'. I have watched with amazement the studied silence of the British press about conditions in Palestine. Occasionally a bomb outrage is referred to, or a murder, or the despatch of additional troops, but the horror that is continuously going on in that unfortunate Holy Land finds no mention. I have personal knowledge of how news has

1. London, 3 October 1938. Letter to the editor, *Time and Tide*, printed on 8 October 1938.

been sent to British newspapers and suppressed by them. Many reports have reached me of the frightfulness with which the Arab population is being treated, and a mere reading of them has shocked me beyond words. They may be exaggerated, but I have no doubt that there is a great deal of truth in them, and I can say with certainty that millions of people in Asia and Africa believe them and are infuriated by them. I know of their reactions in India and I have recently had occasion to discuss the Palestine situation with the leaders of the Egyptian national movement.

It is not a question of being pro-Jew or pro-Arab. I am pro-Jew in a sense because I think that the Jews have been shamefully treated in central Europe and I am full of sympathy for them and can appreciate their aspirations. But I am strongly pro-Arab also because I know that the Arabs are struggling for their freedom and are being crushed by British imperialism. I have met leaders of both Jews and Arabs and tried to understand their respective viewpoints.

The conflict is not essentially between the Arabs and the Jews. We must remember that the present problem of Palestine is of recent creation. It has come into existence since the Great War and the responsibility for it must rest with the British Government, which made lavish promises to both the Arabs and the Jews during the war and sought to exploit both to their own advantage. These promises were often mutually contradictory. Since the war it has not been love of the Jews that has moved the British Government but the desire to control an important route to India and the East. An independent Arab state might not be wholly amenable to control from Whitehall, and hence it was considered desirable to place the Jews in a key position. Situated as they were, the Jews had inevitably to rely on British protection and Palestine could thus indefinitely remain under British control. The Jews have fallen into this trap and their love of Palestine has been exploited for the purposes of British imperialism.

It is absolutely clear to me that Palestine is and must remain a fundamentally Arab country. I am convinced that no amount of terrorism or coercion will cow down the Arabs into submission. It is equally clear that the Jews are an essential and vital part of the country and should be given protection of their rights and a full opportunity to cooperate in building up Palestine. I think it is possible for both of these premises to be agreed to and a settlement arrived at on that basis, provided Arabs and Jews deal with each other directly and British imperialism does not exploit one against the other for protection of its own interests.

It must be realised that the present policy of the British Government is doomed to failure. The Arab national movement will never be crushed by bayonets and terrorism. Black and Tan methods did not succeed in Ireland, still less will they succeed in Palestine. Enforced partitions are equally doomed to failure. The British Government must also remember the terrible crop of bitterness and ill will that they are sowing, not only in the entire Muslim world but also in large parts of Asia and Africa.

To the Jews I would earnestly appeal to realise that their lining up with British imperialism and against a national movement will have disastrous results for their race. Their ability and resources are of infinite value to Palestine and nothing can stop them from having an honoured place in the country, provided they seek it in cooperation with the Arabs. They will never get it in opposition to the Arabs. Unhappily, there is a great deal of anti-Jewish sentiment in Europe today. There has never been any such feeling in Asia or Africa but, owing to the struggle in Palestine, this is growing and I am greatly distressed by it. It is time that the leaders of the Jews considered this problem dispassionately in its wider aspects.

75. To A. C. N. Nambiar[1]

When I was in Vienna I received a large number of applications from Jewish experts who wanted employment in India. It is just possible that a few of them may suit us. I am going through their papers. Obviously we cannot go ahead without personal interviews and finding out the exact terms. It may be necessary for you to see these people and report. That means either your going to Vienna or their coming to you. I do not know whether either of these courses is easily possible. However, I shall write more later.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

76. The World Crisis[1]

I become angry when I review events of the past ten days, but anger does not help judgment. I did not expect Mr. Chamberlain and the British cabinet to act as the champions of democracy but I was surprised to see him act as the assassin of democracy. Another surprising thing was that many of the radical elements found themselves in a dilemma and were forced by those who upheld fascism and brutality to appear before the world as the advocates of war and the opponents of peace. That is how they would be represented in the next election while the fascists would appear as peacemakers. What is really shocking is that the passion for peace is exploited for something worse than war and that is treachery and betrayal. The real issues in the negotiations with Hitler are not peace and war but whether men like Mr. Chamberlain who are frightened of progress of Soviet Russia and possibly of communism should stand up to the fascist forces or line up with them.

If the Treaty of Versailles was bad the concord of Munich is a million times worse, and nothing but evil can come out of it. It is shameful that Czechoslovakia, a democratic country with a dignified government, should have been kept out of the consultations with a regime which had shown its utter vulgarity, and that only now could Mr. Chamberlain start the chorus of praise for a country that had sacrificed so much. What had been done at Munich would be remembered

1. Speech at Friends House, London, 4 October 1938. From *The Hindu*, 12 October 1938.

for all time all over the world. It would be remembered in India particularly, to the shame and dishonour of France and Britain.

We have had a long intercourse that has been an unfortunate one and we have long realised that we cannot rely on the word of any British Government. I do not like war but I would have a thousand wars before lowering my head to that evil thing called fascism. In India we are an unarmed people and our methods are peaceful but we have refused to submit to evil no matter how strong it may be. If in the future the alliance between fascism and imperialism shows itself up in India, I think I can say that you will find the Indian people refusing to submit or bow their heads to it. It is essential that India should be independent, and direct her own foreign policy completely free from that ot Britain. Only in that way can she play her part in maintaining moral standards. That is what self-determination—a word prostituted in these last few days—really means for India.

77. The Hoax[1]

The tragic drama of Europe unfolds itself and each day brings further news of the dismemberment of the continent as we have known it. Czechoslovakia, from being a proud free nation, a citadel of democracy, is now a country sunken in sorrow and despair, with hungry wolves snarling and biting off bits of it, and its shrunken remains becoming almost a colony of Nazi Germany. South-east Europe trembles and falls into the Nazi orbit. There is trouble brewing in Danzig[2] and in Alsace-Lorraine.[3] Violence reigns supreme in Europe. No other way seems to be known here except aggressive violence or pitiful surrender.

The Great War cut up Europe anew; we have now a fresh refashioning of the Continent. And how far this will go on no one can tell. The two redeeming features are Spain and Russia. In spite of all the attempts of the British and French Governments to betray Spain, the

1. Signed article written at London, 15 October 1938. *National Herald*, 25 October 1938.
2. After Munich, Germany demanded that Poland should cede Danzig and grant Germany extra-territorial routes across the corridor.
3. After annexing the Sudetenland, Nazi Germany mounted its pressure on the Balkan states. Hitler also stepped up propaganda activities in Alsace-Lorraine.

Spanish people have refused to surrender to fascism and Nazism, and today, in spite of daily bombardments from the air, they hold aloft the torch of freedom and democracy. And Russia stands as a mighty bulwark against advancing Nazism.

While Europe shakes and trembles, the British Parliament is on holiday and the Prime Minister of Britain goes afishing. And *The Times*, that thunderer of old, has sunk to the level of Herr Hitler's own well-managed press and sings his praises from day to day. Even *Punch*, that very respectable organ of the British middle classes, has lost its temper with *The Times*, and in biting satire of a *Times* leader writes:

> Justice alone was yielded
> And everyone was right:
> The sword that Hitler wielded
> Was not a sword of might.
> The French and we were tender
> And took the kindliest course;
> The Czechs did not surrender
> To fear nor yet to force.
> Lord! I could write a column
> Of tripe to this intent,
> As smooth—as suave—as solemn—
> If England gave up Kent.

What has been at the back of British foreign policy during these past months? To imagine that Mr. Chamberlain was suddenly faced with the alternative of war and a humiliating peace is to delude oneself. Even to the last moment he held the important cards in his hands and could have imposed an honourable peace, or, at any rate, a much better agreement. No one can doubt that this was certain a few weeks earlier. But every such policy involved a measure of cooperation with Russia and a certain opposition to Hitler. Mr. Chamberlain's fundamental policy has been opposed to both these developments and he has consistently followed it ever since he came to power. That policy has been one of encouraging the growth of the Nazi power and of functioning almost as an ally of Hitler.

In order to follow this policy more effectively, he got rid of a popular Foreign Secretary, Mr. Eden. He even removed the permanent head of the foreign office, Sir Robert Vansittart, and took to Sir Horace Wilson[4] instead. In Spain, he tried his utmost to smother and kill the

4. (1882-1972); chief industrial adviser to Chamberlain's government; appointed adviser on foreign affairs, 1938; accompanied Chamberlain to Munich.

republic. In Czechoslovakia, he brought all the strength of his government to support the Nazi ultimatums and threatened the Czechs with all manner of penalties if they did not submit. It was not merely that he deserted the Czechs in their time of need. The reality was far worse. By sending Lord Runciman to Prague and his consistent pressure he acted throughout as the faithful friend and ally of Herr Hitler. Mr. Churchill has pointed out that, but for Britain's intervention, the Czechs could have got, at any time previously, much better terms.

At no time had Mr. Chamberlain thought in terms of a conflict with Germany. Hence the total unpreparedness of Britain when the question became a vital one. Even then the A.R.P. preparations were farcical and apparently meant to create panic. Mr. Chamberlain had decided to give a triumph to Herr Hitler and he succeeded in his endeavour, probably more than he intended.

The past is done with; it is the future that concerns us. But in understanding the future we must have a clear understanding of the motives of Mr. Chamberlain and the British Government. Munich has not changed them. These motives are to build up a fascist-imperialist alliance to resist democracy all over the world, and in particular to oppose the Soviet power. Ultimately to restrict democracy in England itself and to hold down the colonial countries with a firmer grip.

As events have turned out, such an alliance would be dominated by Nazi Germany with England as a junior partner. Mr. Chamberlain, no doubt, would have preferred to accept a subordinate position. The alternative of joining hands with Soviet Russia and the democratic forces is repugnant to him, for that would mean the end of Nazism and fascism and ultimately even imperialism.

A crisis is always a testing time for individuals and parties and their policies, and the recent crisis has at least done this much good that it has cleared the air and shown us where everyone stands. Mr. Chamberlain and his government are obvious partisans of fascism though the garb they would put round it would have a semi-democratic appearance. It is interesting to notice how the British Parliament is receding into the background. It does not meet when critical decisions have to be taken. It only gives its subsequent approval. The cabinet as such hardly counts or is even mentioned; it is the Prime Minister who counts. Mr. Chamberlain arrives at vital decisions without reference to his cabinet; he defends them in Parliament as his decisions, and not as the corporate decisions of the cabinet. Parliament gradually approximates to the Reichstag, and Mr. Chamberlain is beginning to fancy himself as a Fuehrer.

Attempts to suppress personal and civil liberty are becoming increasingly common in England, and the freedom of newspapers is interfered

with. It is well known that, in case war had begun, the government had decided to suppress all anti-government newspapers and criticism.

The Labour Party has not distinguished itself during the crisis. It played an utterly ineffective and insignificant role and did not seem to know its own mind when immediate and effective action was called for. One can expect little from it in the future, unless it changes greatly.

The pacifists behaved strangely. The more I see them here the more I realise the difference between them and the dynamic and effective pacifism of Gandhiji. Gandhiji has taught us not to submit to evil whatever the consequences, and he has shown us a way of combating evil. Pacifists in Europe seem to believe that the best way to avoid war is to submit to the threat of war. Thus, in effect, they become the supporters of those who threaten violence. Some pacifists here went to extraordinary lengths in their support of Herr Hitler in Czechoslovakia.

For me the greatest shock came from some of the leaders of the Independent Labour Party. They stood up in Parliament to praise Mr. Chamberlain as the man who brought peace. There was not a word of criticism of his policy. There was some vague talk of capitalism and socialism and of the evils of the present order. But in this grave crisis, their forces, such as they were, were lined with the serried ranks of the reactionaries. It was not surprising that they were cheered by the Conservatives.

I wondered at this strange exhibition of those who considered themselves revolutionaries and socialists. Words seem to have little meaning; it is after all action that counts, and it is by our actions that we shall be judged.

78. The New Europe[1]

A quick nemesis is overtaking those who played with war and peace during these fateful days and betrayed friends and allies. The assurance that war was not imminent, that this terrible danger was past for the time being at least, brought a tremendous feeling of relief to the millions. They rejoiced, as well they might, and Mr. Chamberlain basked in the sunshine of their joy. Was he not the peacemaker, who had

1. *National Herald*, 18 October 1938.

averted war single-handed? And yet in his heart he knew, and his well-drilled battalions knew, that peace was a far-off dream, and a war more terrible than ever, and far more dangerous for them, was lurking round the corner. The price they had paid in dishonour and faithlessness gave neither peace nor respite, and so they cry now: "to arms, to arms, let us work night and day for the war that is to come."

For a looker-on, these days of destiny have been full of meaning. Yet none of us can be a looker-on when the fate of the world hangs in the balance. Emotions crowd upon us; hope and fear and anger and disgust come in quick succession. Vast forces, opposing ideals were in conflict and for some days we stood on the edge of a razor, precariously balancing ourselves on the fleeting moment and peering into the dark and unknown future.

Strange that at this hour of destiny a Chamberlain and a Daladier should occupy the centre of the stage. We had long heard and we knew that Britain's government was the poorest that she had had since the days of Lord North.[2] And now these very men had to face destiny and the world witnessed their crumpling up and their utter poverty of thought or deed. Was it their fault, one wondered, or the fault of the people whom they represented and who cheered them after a deed of shame and sorrow? Or was it the death-gasp of democracy itself, as we had known it?

For years we had been watching the gradual betrayal of democracy and all the fine ideals that had gone to build up a League of Nations. We protested and condemned British policy in Manchuria, in Abyssinia, in Spain, in China again. We could hardly believe that it could go further, that Britain and France would themselves murder the democracy which had been their pride for so long. Yet Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues gave that stab to the plaudits of the multitude.

On Tuesday, fascism trembled and Hitler, for all his brave words, thought of retreat. The people of Germany began to move and hold peace demonstrations. In Italy there was trouble.[3] Then at that critical moment Mr. Chamberlain came to the rescue. On Thursday, the Munich agreement was signed and fascism was triumphant.

2. Guilford Frederick North (1732-1793); British Prime Minister, 1770-82; responsible for the policy which led to the loss of the American colonies.
3. Germany was alarmed by the mobilisation of the British fleet which followed the British communique of 26 September 1938 that a German attack on Czechoslovakia would compel France, Britain and Russia to come to her assistance. Mussolini too cancelled orders of general mobilisation.

The old Europe was dead and a new continent was taking shape. Herr Hitler swept not only into Czechoslovakia with his legions but spread out his wings far and wide. Like a terrifying avalanche fascism spread and countries and governments bowed to its will. Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, the Balkans and Turkey, all looked to Berlin for orders. France became a second class power, England a junior partner in the fascist game. Hitler now dares to issue orders to England as to who should be her ministers and leaders, for no anti-fascists can be tolerated. England may not, except at the cost of provoking war with Germany, presume to have a Labour government.

And Czechoslovakia? "Farewell, France," she says, "Goodbye, England, you have crucified us to save yourselves. But do you imagine that even the price of dishonour and betrayal that you have paid will save you? Your time will come soon."

Most tragic and heart-rending of all is the fate of hundreds of thousands of German democrats handed over to Hitler.[4] Many have committed suicide, many have already been shot, and concentration camps grow up to swallow and engulf thousands.

France passes into the background, her noble history darkened by this last act of base betrayal. England is yet counted among the great powers, and she will not succumb totally without struggle. But her greatness has left her and under the Chamberlains and Halifaxes her decline is inevitable.

4. It was reported that Hitler had demanded the immediate surrender of all non-Nazi Sudetens including about ten thousand members of democratic organizations.

79. The Indian Princes[1]

It is a pleasant surprise to me that the problem of the Indian states does interest a British audience at a time of crisis like the present. We should not only express our disapproval of the states system in India but look at it in the context of the world situation. Those who think of Indian freedom cannot forget the states. We cannot have freedom for one part of India while the other part remains sunk in feudalism.

1. Speech in London, 21 October 1938. From *The Hindu*, 2 November 1938.

There can be no free India without the states. There cannot be a free federation with fascist cells dotted all over the country. It is geographically impossible. The states are an anachronism and fascist cells dotted all over the country within the household of a free India.

Similarly, when we think of world freedom, we cannot think of it unless the freedom of India and China is also considered. No one can be an effective anti-fascist unless he is an anti-imperialist also.

It would be easy to make a list of the enormities perpetrated by the princes, though one's senses are blunted now by what is happening in the fascist countries of Europe. The states are in fact totalitarian in a political if not in an economic sense. Till a few years ago no prince dared do anything that might displease the local British agent or the resident and it is really extraordinary that they should now talk of their independence and treaties. Why is this so? It is so because it is now in the interest of the British Government to encourage such talk. There is not the least doubt that if the British Government were to tell the Indian princes that they must accept federation, they would have no option but to accept. The talk about their rights and liberties is sheer nonsense, because it is now being raised at the instigation of the British Government so that a joint front against Indian nationalism be formed. As the Indian National Congress grows strong, Britain seeks to find other elements to fight it.

The whole Indian states system did not come down to us as a legacy of history, but was quite recently created by the British who had made treaties with odd persons who often did not belong to the states at all but were freebooters and adventurers. I do not think that in pure law they could be said to be independent. At the most, they were equivalent to the medieval barons of Europe. The treaties had been made a hundred and odd years ago. The world has changed greatly since then and so has India. But in the states we find that there is stagnation only.

It is not generally known that a large number of states are controlled by officers nominated by the British Government. It is these officers who actually rule and not the princes themselves. And yet these men came to the Round Table Conferences as representatives of the princes and spoke of the "sacredness of treaties". It is well known that any prince who is not fully pro-British gets into the bad books of the government and is removed.

During the last two years there has been a great awakening among the people of the states. In the more advanced states the leaders belong to the middle class with peasant backing. In backward states there is no middle class and the peasants themselves are leading the

struggle. In Travancore, there is a very high percentage of literacy, and the movement is of the middle class. Yet, there is terror in Travancore today, and the person responsible for it is the Prime Minister[2] who had recently praised Messrs. Hitler and Mussolini and expressed a desire for a similar regime in India. The mitigating feature of the old feudal system was that it was hopelessly inefficient. Taxes were heavy but rarely were they all collected. But the British administration now keeps an autocratic structure which is more efficient in collecting taxes. The situation is now, however, heading towards a crisis.

What have the people of Travancore done? Their only crime has been that they demanded responsible government. This is regarded as an exhibition of disloyalty towards the state. There is now semi-martial law and the military has been called out to aid the police. In Hyderabad, no public meeting can be held, not even a prayer meeting, unless special permission has been obtained and some money deposited as security.

Thus there prevails in the Indian states a complete totalitarian system. But this problem has to be faced in a world context as freedom like peace is indivisible.

2. C.P. Ramaswami Iyer.

80. Indian Freedom and World Politics[1]

The past weeks of crisis and disaster have shaken all of us up. War was happily avoided for the moment, but disaster came nevertheless, and the future is dark with possibilities of war and something that is worse even than war. When the time of trial came in Europe, it was obvious that the forces of real peace and progress were not strong enough or determined enough to face the issue. It was not the enemy abroad that mattered so much, but his reactionary allies at home, who stabbed democracy and freedom from behind, and thus ensured the triumph of brutal reaction and violence in Europe. Perhaps what moved these reactionary governments in so-called democratic countries was not *fear of defeat but fear of victory, for that victory* would have been a

1. London, 23 October 1938. *The Tribune* (London), 28 October 1938.

victory of real democracy and possibly an end of fascism in Europe. Fascism had to be kept going in Europe, whatever the cost. That cost has been a heavy one and the bills will continue to be presented and paid till disaster overwhelms the world.

The people of India have followed the course of events with pain and anguish. Wedded to peace and democratic freedom, they have watched the complete surrender of democracy with shock after shock of surprise. They have one consolation. They were no parties to this betrayal and dishonour.

Today the prestige of England and France has vanished utterly from all over the East. Unfortunately even the progressive forces in these countries have suffered because of this and little reliance is placed on them. When crisis came they failed to make any impression or even to pull together, and even now the lesson has not been sufficiently learnt. India feels more than ever that the only way to gain her objective of independence is by her own organised strength and will to freedom and through such sacrifices as may be demanded of her. She is not weak today; she is self-reliant and is conscious of her growing strength, and she has learnt not to surrender to evil or to superior physical might, whatever the consequences.

Inevitably we shall rely on ourselves but it is foolish to think on narrow national lines in this world today, especially after Munich and the triumphant domination of fascism over Europe. If the progressive forces all over the world cannot even now pull together they are doomed to annihilation and they will deserve that doom. Therefore India must necessarily pursue this policy of cooperation with those who stand for freedom. What will others do?

Recent events have demonstrated with startling clarity that freedom is indivisible. We cannot have a static world in which freedom and democracy exist in some parts and a total denial of freedom in other parts. There will be conflict between the two, for the very presence of democratic freedom is an offence in the eyes of fascism and ultimately undermines it. Therefore there is a continuous attempt by fascism to put an end to free conditions in other countries. This can either be met by a policy of surrender and a progressive suppression of liberties or by facing aggression and refusing to submit to it. The policy of the British Government is apparently the former one, or perhaps this is not surrender for them as they themselves approve of fascism. This simply cannot be the policy of those who care for freedom and democracy. What are these to do?

"To resist is to conquer" is the slogan of the Spanish Republic and they have lived up magnificently to that slogan. Alone in Europe, they

have shown that democracy, if it so wills, can defend itself successfully even against overwhelming odds. Powerful states have collapsed and proud empires have been humbled by methods of gangsterism. But the people of Spain stand unconquered and unsubdued, and out of the very horror they have gone through, they have built up a new Spain which fills all friends of democracy with hope.

If we are to face fascism, it is in that spirit that we have to do it. To hold hard to our principles and to freedom and to refuse to surrender even unto death. But if we compromise with those principles, and carry on our own imperialism while we combat fascism, we lose both friends and supporters as well as all the strength and enthusiasm that come from fighting for a worthy cause. If England really fought for democracy, she would have the world's sympathy and support. But who would sympathise with an imperialist England fighting to keep her colonies?

The weakness of England and France during the recent crisis was their imperialism. Imperialism cannot champion democracy; it cannot fight fascism effectively as at heart it sympathises with it. The empire of England, as that of France, will fade away before long but if the present policy continues they will not only end but end in further dishonour and will give place to fascist empires.

Collective security was meant to check violent aggression on the part of nations. It has failed because it had an imperialist basis, and so long as that foundation endures, it will not function effectively. And yet collective security is essential if a national and peaceful world order is to be evolved.

A new Europe is rising up before our eyes, a new world, and we have to understand it and adjust ourselves accordingly. Events are marching ahead and changing the shape of things as we have known them. There seems to be too much of the frightened and helpless spectator about the champion of freedom and democracy in Europe today. He has lost all initiative and can only bemoan his lot. It is time that this defeatist attitude was ended and the issues faced squarely and action taken.

The spread of fascism must be countered both at home and abroad. It can only be checked by encouraging democracy everywhere and placing our reliance on it. As an Indian I desire passionately the freedom of India and I shall go on working for it. But I feel now more than ever that this is necessary from the wider international viewpoint, in order to combat fascism. Only a free and democratic India can help democracy elsewhere. A subject India dominated by imperialism will be a burden which ever grows heavier and thus weakens the democratic front. British imperialism is now facing a difficult problem of its own

creation in Palestine, and a sorry mess they have made of it. They will not solve it by methods of terrorism. They will not solve any of their imperialist problems by coercion. This policy will only lead to their own weakening and the strengthening of fascist elements in those countries, as we see in the Arab world today. And India is a much vaster undertaking than little Palestine.

The only possible policy, if Britain believes in democracy, is to shed imperialism utterly and rapidly and replace it by free democratic institutions in these countries, which, instead of weakening it, will then be powerful allies. An independent democratic India will be a tower of strength against fascism in Europe or Asia.

There is no other effective way of holding fascism or of building up collective security. The old method has collapsed and to cling on to it with all its inner contradictions is to invite repeated disaster. All the armaments that Britain can build up will not give her sufficient strength to face the perils that will come, if she has feet of clay and bases herself on a rebellious empire. That armament itself might well be used ultimately for the further crushing of democracy in Europe and even in England.

To ask India to accept present conditions and to cooperate with Britain in sustaining a vanishing democracy, is to refuse to understand the mind and temper of India or the march of events in Europe. We must look things straight and get out of the mental ruts which have brought so much evil in their train. India believes in freedom and democracy and wants to give her support to any system that ensures them. She holds out her hand of fellowship to all who believe in them in England or elsewhere. But only a free India can do so, and Indian freedom thus becomes a vital factor in world politics.

81. The Real India[1]

In proposing the toast to India, I must apologise for my inability to follow the conventional method of an after-dinner speaker. The thoughts which are uppermost in my mind are such that it is impossible for me to indulge in witticism. I admit that I look sad. The

1. Speech at dinner on Diwali day organised by the Indians in London, 29 October 1938. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 10 November 1938.

82. Cable to India League[1]

Convey my greetings to the Spain conference.[2] A complete alignment of the British Government with Nazi fascist forces has resulted in the betrayal of Czechoslovakia as seen in her dismemberment following the Munich agreement. The Anglo-Italian agreement has meant abandonment of all pretences to serve the cause of democracy and collective security. It has ensured world domination by fascism, with England serving submissively as a junior partner. However, all progressive forces must resist this and support the cause of democracy in Spain, China and elsewhere.

The Spanish Republic is carrying on a great struggle at present. The question of freedom in every country is vitally linked with the struggle that is now going on in Spain. Therefore all those who believe in democracy and freedom must support the Spanish Republic and oppose the British Government which symbolizes reaction today. The British Government is deluding people in the false name of peace to carry on its war policy which unless checked is inevitably going to result in disaster.

India stands for real peace based on freedom and policy of self-determination for subject peoples in the world. We are as much opposed to fascism as we are opposed to imperialism. The cause of democracy can be served better by extending its domain far and wide and by making colonial countries its bulwark and resisting all fascist encroachments. The only alternative to this is giving encouragement to gangsterism, the rule of violence in international affairs, and suppression of civil liberties and democratic procedure. There is no middle way between fascism and full democracy. Though the British Government has chosen the former way, I hope the British people will follow the path of democracy in Europe, China, India and other colonies.

Spain, in particular, calls for help in the name of all we hold dear and we must answer that call. The republican forces have triumphed in the

1. On board the ship *Strathnaver*, 10 November 1938. From *National Herald*, 16 November 1938.
2. Due to blockade of food shipments by the English and the French, the people of Spain were faced with hunger. The Indian students in London decided to help the Spanish people by giving up food for one day. Foodstuffs were also collected at major Indian ports for shipment to Spain.

field of battle in the face of overwhelming odds and despite deliberate obstructions put in their way by the British and French Governments. The people of Spain have shown what miracles can be performed by the people fighting for freedom.

The Spanish people are faced with starvation and millions of them are suffering from untold privations after having been rendered refugees from the areas which have passed under the control of the rebels. If we really care for the ideals of human freedom and courage and sacrifice for the great cause which we have so long cherished and also if we are moved by intelligent self-interest, we must help these gallant people with abundant supplies of food and necessaries of life. We must ensure that freedom wins in Spain.

83. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Bombay
November 17, 1938

My dear Krishna,
We have just arrived here and I have received your letter of the 5th. I am sorry you are unwell.

I have taken the earliest opportunity to appeal for Spain. We are convening a meeting of all the principal associations connected with the export and sale of foodstuffs in Bombay to try to get something done. I shall write to you about it later but I want you to find out immediately from the Spanish ambassador what steps we should take to send the foodstuffs we collect. I suppose we should send it to some port in France. You will remember my saying that in case we are unable to arrange for the transport, we should like the Spanish Government to take charge of it from us here. Of course we will help as far as we can.

I shall be in Allahabad by the 25th stopping at Wardha on the way.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

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Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

84. Report on His Travels[1]

My discussions with Lord Zetland, Lord Linlithgow, Lord Halifax and other authorities, during my stay in London, were of the nature of an exchange of views on the Indian political situation. There were no parleys of any kind, nor did I carry any terms from the British Government to Gandhiji.

I expressed my views quite frankly to the British authorities, explaining the Congress position. So far as they were concerned, being a government they could not talk as frankly as I did but they explained their views. I was trying to understand their views and they were trying to understand mine. I cannot say whether a common ground could or could not be found between these two sets of views. My interviews with Lord Zetland, Lord Linlithgow, Lord Lothian and Lord Halifax were nothing beyond friendly talks. Federation formed one of the subjects. So far as I was concerned, I expressed my views—the Congress position. So far as they were concerned, they could not be quite so frank as no government could talk in any language except in vague terms. My personal impression of this government is that it has succeeded quite remarkably in tying itself up into a knot, and in a mad frenzy it goes on tying itself into more and more knots. It is so obsessed with certain notions that its policy hinges on those notions. Thus, during the crisis, it would not approach Russia, simply because it is so antagonistic to that country.

Two things are obvious, viz., the realisation of the strength of the Indian people and the Indian national movement which has a sobering influence on reaction, and the ever-remaining possibility of a crisis of war and India's reaction to it. For the present, sub-consciously, a very great change is coming over the outlook of the British. Events have made them suddenly realise that they are fading out of the picture of imperialism. This is bringing about strange mental reactions but there is a feeling of submission to unalterable fate.

It is obvious that the present government in England does not enjoy the confidence of the British public. Still, it is tolerated as there is no alternative. The Labour Party is afraid of doing anything. However, there is a remarkable change in its outlook on the Indian problem.

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 17 November 1938. From *The Hindu*, 18 November 1938.

Thanks to the recent events, Labour now admits that the only solution of the Indian problem is complete self-determination. So far as the Conservatives are concerned, we have disturbed their minds, but not their loyalty to the present Indian policy.

There is a rift in the Conservative Party, Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden commanding more support in the country than in Parliament. Irrespective of his politics, Mr. Churchill is the ablest politician in England today. Still, the fact remains that England today has an unintelligent and reactionary government.

My absence from the country for five months has made it difficult for me to express any opinion on the situation here. Naturally, I have watched the developments in Europe which are bound to affect India along with the rest of the world. I have had occasions to observe these developments at close quarters in England and Czechoslovakia and at Geneva. I am astonished at the foreign policy of His Majesty's Government. Mr. Chamberlain's policy is so astounding that it has upset everyone and compelled revision of our previous notions. It is so deliberately in favour of the Nazi policy in Europe. Right now there could be no doubt that democracy in Europe is on its last legs unless something is done to save it. Public feeling in Europe is tremendously against the Nazi policy. Even the majority of people in Germany and Italy are against any war in Europe and are deeply opposed to the present policy of their governments.

Mr. Chamberlain has been given the credit for avoiding a war but this has in a sense obscured the real issue inasmuch as nobody wished to have a war and everybody wanted to avoid it. The British Government is more afraid of winning a war because that would mean the end of the present regimes in Germany and Italy and also mean British cooperation with Russia, which the present government wants to avoid at all costs. However, in Europe today there is great fear of war and preparations for war are going on. That is a sad commentary on the peace which Mr. Chamberlain brought from Munich. It is generally considered that France has become a second-class power. The whole of England is dissatisfied with the present policy pursued by Mr. Chamberlain and it is stated that even the British foreign office is opposed to it. But there is a general feeling that Mr. Chamberlain who is responsible for this state of affairs must bear the consequences. Events, however, march so rapidly that the consequences will be more disastrous and may come sooner than anticipated.

The British Government has given a free hand to the fascists. Indeed, so far as Mr. Chamberlain is concerned, he had deliberately encouraged Italy's action in Spain some months back. But his plans have

been upset by the resistance of the Spanish people. I must say that my visit to Spain produced a powerful influence on me. I cannot conceive of the Spanish people who are fighting for their republic being defeated. It is difficult to prophesy because Italy and Germany can pour troops, aeroplanes and war materials to help General Franco. But for this foreign aid, the insurgents would be swept off in a few weeks. The new army of the republic, built up in the last two years, is a magnificent army. It is curious and interesting to note that two of its greatest and ablest generals are commoners: one of them was a tailor and the other a mason two and a half years ago.[2]

In the military sense the republic is stronger than ever today but its most vital need is food. It has to shelter a vast number of refugees from the areas under General Franco. This food problem is very critical and therefore I appealed today at the reception at Ballard Pier for food for Spain.[3] I did so not merely due to humanitarian reasons, but for the more vital reason of self-interest, for the Spanish issue affects all of us who care greatly for democracy. I do not appeal for money but for foodgrains, flour and other materials. Jute and cotton are also welcome. I earnestly trust that the great mercantile associations in Bombay who deal in food products will give foodstuffs in abundance to be sent to Spain.

While in Spain, I was asked by the generals, officers and everyone to convey their greetings to the people of India. Those people had a strong sense of fighting not only for their national freedom but for democracy and freedom everywhere.

One fact that is worth noting is that India seems to have acquired a new status in international affairs. In international conferences and elsewhere, by which I do not mean the League of Nations, India functions practically on a level with the independent nations, and Indian nationalist opinion is valued greatly. There is a general feeling that India is on the threshold of independence and so the goodwill and friendship of India are considered worthwhile.

I may also explain what I had said about the Indian states in London. In my opinion the Indian states system is completely out of date and harmful. It prevents progress and therefore must go. How this is to be achieved is difficult for me to say. Obviously the people of the states should be brought on par with those in British India and

2. Modesto and Lister.
3. At the reception on his arrival in Bombay on 17 November 1938, Jawaharlal appealed to the merchants and other public associations of Bombay to send a ship laden with rice, wheat, sugar, oil and other foodstuffs to the people of Spain.

given all the rights and representation as envisaged under a democratic set-up. There are over a hundred small states which are not economically viable and therefore cannot continue as independent units. The major states may however continue to exist with all the democratic freedom for the people while the rulers remain as constitutional heads.

I have always been interested in the Indian states problem, but it would be incorrect to say that I would entirely devote myself to it to the exclusion of all other things.

The present policy of the Indian National Congress and the All India States People's Conference is directed towards the attainment of responsible government in the states. That is why I stressed the historical origin of these states in the meetings I addressed in London. There has been a great deal of misleading talk about the sovereignty and the so-called independence of the princes. The point to remember is that our objective has to be recognised by all, including the rulers of the states, because autocracy and feudal conditions can no longer be tolerated. The Congress has made it clear that in realising this objective, it wants to have the cooperation of the rulers as far as possible. Ultimately, there is no other way out except to introduce responsible government, and thus make the states as equal and free partners with the rest of India.

The whole conception of Indian states is so foreign to modern ideas that when people hear about the states they react against them. There is nothing like it anywhere else in the world. Of course, it applies to the system. There may be good rulers and there may be bad too. In modern political conditions one cannot have independent units unless they are economically viable. I can conceive of the rulers of such states being constitutional heads. These are my personal views. I am aware that the Indian National Congress makes no distinction between smaller and bigger states.

I regret that I was not able to go to Russia. My daughter's illness upset my European programme. I had already stayed abroad too long and did not wish to delay my departure to India. On leaving Europe I spent a few days in Egypt. Nahas Pasha, the Egyptian leader, received me, which was a recognition of the position of the Indian National Congress. One of the reasons for the failure of the Wafd Party in the last Egyptian elections was that the elections were not completely free. Before the elections took place, the party in power decided on the number of seats to be given to the Wafd Party. Further, there was no freedom of voting and the voters were called upon to say for whom they had voted. It was also alleged that there was no proper counting of votes and that the results were declared without any counting in

certain constituencies. The elections there were a manipulated affair. The conditions in Egypt, with all its so-called independence, resembled those prevailing in the Indian states. Egypt is more or less like a big Indian state. On one occasion the ex-Prime Minister, Nahas Pasha, had to face a severe lathi charge and had a narrow escape.

But the Wafd Party in Egypt is as popular as the Indian National Congress. All the same, it has not developed such a mass organisation as the Congress has done in this country. We in India have developed mass contacts. I do not think that under these circumstances it is possible to cook up elections in India as in Egypt. As in India, land is a major problem in Egypt. The government is now in the hands of the landowners, the ruler himself owning 10 per cent of the land in Egypt. Moreover, there is neither a peasant movement nor a workers' movement, and this is a major weakness of the nationalist movement in Egypt.

2

THE WORLD CRISIS

1. Why India Supports China[1]

India's sympathy goes out for China for a variety of reasons. Like China, India is aspiring and fighting for national freedom. The forces of national freedom in both countries extend to each other the hand of sympathy and support. They must band themselves together against the urge of imperialism for exploitation and conquest. They must swear to prevent the use under imperialist control of their nationals and soldiers in each other's territory. They must mutually defend themselves by refusing economic relations with the imperialist invader. They must prepare themselves for the day when they can strike a simultaneous blow at all imperialism. They must send each other, in event of need, money, medical supplies and all manner of other possible help. India has a fourfold task to perform: (1) She must ceaselessly condemn the despatch of Indian troops to China and demand their withdrawal as also that of the Indian people attached to the British consulates in China; (2) she must organise an effective boycott of Japanese goods; (3) she must educate the people never to supply men and material to the British Empire in its wars; and (4) she must pay to China till it pinches. The ancient friendship of the two peoples of China and India must now be reinforced by the new *camaraderie* of the two freedom-loving nations.

While we condemn Japan and support China, we must not err in assessing the true role of Britain. A mighty propaganda machine has been set in motion and we must withstand it. The British commentators rejoice through our own talkies, radio and press at Britain's rearming to curb the "cynic's violation of right". The inference obviously is that Britain is a democracy, just and peaceful, and can be relied on to stand by humanity with her arms against brutality. The addresses of the United States President are also likely to cause confusion. In his insistence on the capacity of the democratic powers to protect the peace of the world, one might see in British armaments a factor of justice and peace.

One thing must be clear. There is, of course, the danger of war in the boast of the Italian spokesman who calculates the fascist bloc to contain 200 million men and to own 2 million tons of battleships. But we would be foolish if we pitted against these, the 3 million tons of the American

1. Printed in *Advance*, a newspaper of Calcutta, 21 August 1938.

and British navies. Britain is as much a part of the imperialist system as Japan or Italy and, far from ranging their armaments against each other, we must regard them as one solid bloc against progress and peace. Against the armaments of fascism, India can only pit the desire of her people for national freedom. She eagerly welcomes the cooperation of all democratic and socialist forces throughout the world but considers that the formal democracy of the British state is only a shabby smoke-screen and British armaments are surely no part of the world's democratic forces.

If Britain rearms, and until British monopoly capital is destroyed, she does so to secure her own interests. And her interests throughout the world are large. Even in the east, where Japan is hurling bombs over China, Britain is still the owner of the largest territories. In India, Australia, Malaya and other colonies, she owns over one-tenth of the world's territory and one-fifth of its population. Under Britain's protecting wings, Holland and France own between themselves another 2 per cent of the world's territory and 5 per cent of its population. On the basis of Asia and Australia alone, Britain is responsible for the daily humbling of nearly one-fourth of their surface and one-half of their population.

The enforced satiation of British imperialism and the fascist conquests of Japanese imperialism differ only in the extent of their unmasked brutality, but are alike in the damage they cause to human peace and progress.

One might also relevantly enquire if British arms have stood by peace and democracy during the eighteen months of the Spanish war and the six months of the fresh Japanese war on China. Day after day cities are being destroyed and human life killed. British monopoly capital is so tied up with Japanese monopoly capital that unless its own existence is imperilled, and a war is forced on it, it must just look on. The answer to the challenge of fascism to seize the whole world does not surely lie in British arms. Britain will not fight, and even if that were to happen, how does it fundamentally matter if the fascist brutality of Japanese imperialism were exchanged for the steady blood-sucking of British imperialism?

Who can fight the fascist menace of reaction and war? There are national freedom movements in India, China and other such countries. There is Soviet Russia which has definitely discarded imperialism as the basis of its state policy. There are democratic and socialist forces throughout the world such as the popular fronts and the world committees for peace and democracy. In the unity of these forces lies the answer to the fascist challenge.

2. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Wardha
November 21, 1938

My dear Krishna,

I wrote to you briefly from Bombay. I have taken full advantage of a certain enthusiasm created by my return to push the Spanish food question. It is difficult to say how far we will succeed in this matter, but on the whole the reception has been good and I expect that we shall certainly send something substantial. For the moment we concentrate on Bombay, as usual, in such matters. The bourgeoisie of Bombay helps us far more than the rest of the country put together. Unfortunately, the trade conditions are bad and therefore it is difficult to raise funds. Still I expect the equivalent of Rs. 50,000/- will be forthcoming from Bombay. I am fortunate enough, in spite of my leftist views and tendencies, to have a measure of popularity with the merchant class in Bombay. The committee we have formed consists entirely of merchants, stockbrokers and businessmen. The only two non-businessmen in it are the chairman, that is me, and one of the three secretaries, Hutheesing. The vice-presidents and two other secretaries and all the members are businessmen. I am enclosing a list of the organisations represented in this committee. You will see that it is a very impressive list and if they get going we shall meet with considerable success. I have cast the whole burden on them.

We shall of course try to do something in the rest of India also, especially in the ports — Karachi, Calcutta and Madras. But as time is an important element, Bombay will count for most.

At a committee meeting yesterday various questions were discussed. First of all it appears that some articles and foodstuffs are far cheaper in Europe than in India, even apart from the question of freight. Thus wheat and sugar will be cheaper there and it might be worthwhile for us to sell the wheat and sugar we get here and buy them in Europe. Of course, there is a certain sentimental value in sending goods direct from here and many things will be sent. Even in regard to purchases made there, we propose to ask the Bombay merchants to arrange through their agents in France to make the purchases. All this is rather vague and inquiries are being made. I hope to return to Bombay about the middle of December by which time much will have been done.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Among the articles that we might be able to collect are: wheat, rice, sugar, tea, coffee, soap, *bajra* and other foodgrains not known in Europe, cotton and jute. There are of course many other articles which might be obtained.

It is obviously undesirable for us to attempt to send things direct to Spain. I suppose it will be convenient to all parties concerned to hand over the articles in question to the Spanish authorities at some port in France, probably Marseilles. Would this be suitable? It may also be desirable to send the goods in separate batches rather than to wait for one big consignment.

I have asked Hutheesing to write to you but I think that he should get immediately into touch with the Spanish authorities so that there might be the least delay. I want you to find out and send us the address of the proper person for us to deal with in London or Paris or Barcelona or Marseilles. I am myself writing directly to Del Vayo[2] on the subject.

I have mentioned in the list above *bajra*. This and some other foodgrains are not known in Europe. They are very good and nourishing and they are cheaper than wheat. *Bajra* makes the most excellent porridge and bread.

There was some talk of sending a special steamer laden with foodstuffs for Spain, but it seems to me to be undesirable to organise this. Such a steamer would have to undergo considerable risks and we might have to wait a long time before we get enough material to fill it up. It is therefore much better to send the foodstuffs through the ordinary agencies as they are collected.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. *Foreign Minister in the Spanish Government.*

3. To A. Del Vayo[1]

Wardha
November 21, 1938

Dear Senor Del Vayo,
I reached India four days ago and I am glad to inform you that I have taken immediate steps to organise the sending of foodstuffs to Spain.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

A strong committee for the purpose called the Spanish Relief Committee has been formed in Bombay. This committee consists almost entirely of representatives of the principal merchants associations of Bombay, especially those associations which deal with the sale and export of foodstuffs. I am the president of this committee but in fact the merchants themselves have undertaken the burden to organise relief. I trust that speedy results will follow.

I shall be grateful to you if you will tell us with whom this committee should deal in regard to the export and delivery of foodstuffs and other articles. Many questions arise which require consultation by us with representatives of your government. The first question is as to the kind of foodstuffs and other articles that should be collected and sent. In regard to some foodgrains, it might be cheaper for us to buy them in Europe rather than to send them from here, as the European price is lower than the Indian price. There are some foodgrains which are peculiar to India and which are not known in Europe. They are very good and nourishing and we hope to send some of these to Spain. Among the articles that we hope to supply there will be wheat and other foodgrains, rice, sugar, tea, coffee, cotton, soap, some essential oils specially used for cooking food and other similar articles. We would be grateful if suggestions were sent to our committee as to other things required in Spain which we can easily obtain in India....

With greetings and all good wishes for success in your struggle,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Appeal for Help to Spain[1]

Invitations to preside over various conferences or to visit various parts of India are pouring in upon me. I have already stated that it is quite impossible to accept such invitations. Much as I would like to visit various places and meet colleagues there, it is quite impossible for me to tour about or attend conferences and the like. I must devote myself

1. Statement to the press, Wardha, 22 November 1938. *National Herald*, 24 November 1938.

for some time to come to the heavy work that faces me. I trust therefore that my comrades and colleagues in various parts of India will appreciate my difficulty and not press me to visit any place or attend any conference.

Immediately on my arrival in Bombay, I ventured to draw the attention of the people to the plight of the people in Republican Spain and numerous refugees there and appeal for foodstuffs to be sent to them. My appeal has met with immediate heartening response, and a strong and representative committee of leading merchants and businessmen in Bombay has been formed.

Bombay, as so often in the past, has taken the lead in this matter and I am confident that her citizens will give generous support to this noble venture. But the call has not been made on Bombay alone, but on the whole of India and I earnestly trust that other provinces and cities will line up with Bombay and stretch out their helping hands to the sorely stricken people of Spain who, for two years and a half, have fought with astonishing courage and determination for democracy and freedom.

It has long been recognised that the struggle in Spain has a vital significance for all those who care for freedom. It is thus intimately related to our own struggle for freedom. By sending food to Spain, we help indirectly our own cause and enhance the prestige and position of India in the world. By the help we sent to China and Spain, we have compelled the attention of the world and made it clear that our sympathies and policy are not those of the British Government. We are thus building up an international position for our country, and our voice counts already in the councils of the world. Thus not only for humanitarian reason, but for considerations of self-interest and growing international status for India, we have to help the Spanish people with food.

It is our intention to send foodstuffs and some useful commodities. Money will not be sent but money contributions are welcome as they can be converted by us into food. I understand that many Indian students in England have decided to forego a meal once a week and to give the cost of it for Spanish relief. I commend this example to our young men and women. This relief is urgently needed during this winter.

Any kind of non-perishable foodstuffs will be welcomed, more especially wheat, rice, *bajra* and other foodgrains, sugar, tea, coffee and essential oils. Intimations of all such contributions as well as enquiries should be addressed to the secretaries, Spanish Relief Committee, Congress House, Bombay-4. Donations of money should be sent to the treasurer, Spanish Relief Committee.

5. Europe and India[1]

I toured Europe to study and to understand Western developments. We must use the knowledge thus gained in India's fight for freedom. Modern inventions have brought the countries of the world together, thereby enabling closer international contacts. We must take advantage of this to clear up the misunderstandings. While trying to solve the Indian problem, we should not ignore the world situation as it is bound to affect us. For instance, a merchant must watch the fluctuations of trade and must know the various rates, measures and weights and he must use them to his advantage. Similarly, we must study Western developments. We must express our sympathy for the oppressed and downtrodden and we must help them whenever we can.

It is necessary for us to observe closely the social, political, industrial and economic changes which are affecting the world. The governments of foreign countries have provided food and work for their unemployed. In England, for instance, about twenty lakhs of the unemployed are paid Rs. 50 each every month. Still they are dissatisfied. In India, however, the same amount is paid to babus and clerks. Yet these men do not concern themselves with India's problems, nor do they agitate for their solution. While millions of our countrymen are starving, the government makes no provision for them.

We have to tackle the problems of labour, agriculture and trade; and we must study the methods which the Western nations have used to deal with them. I visited Europe with the purpose of gaining first-hand knowledge which can be of help to us in solving the problems facing our country.

Italy's object in interfering in the affairs of Spain was to checkmate France and overawe England. The Spanish Republic is short of food. We should send as much of foodgrains as possible, and thus express our sympathy for the republican cause. The Spanish war cannot be described as a civil war; it is one between a republic and imperialist powers who aim at wiping out democracy. This war, therefore, will affect the whole world, including India. By giving help to China and Spain, we will be helping our cause and gaining an international understanding of our problems.

1. Speech at Wardha, 22 November 1938. From *The Hindu*, 23 November 1938.

England, France and Russia have scrapped a sacred agreement which bound them to help the Czechs when the latter's liberty was threatened. England, due to fear of Germany, has betrayed Czechoslovakia. A free India would have helped the Czechs, and would help all nations fighting for liberty.

The lesson we should draw from this struggle is to forget our differences and concentrate on our aim to achieve independence. We should fight shoulder to shoulder until our cherished goal is attained.

6. Spanish Relief[1]

I have ventured to appeal to the people of India for foodstuffs for the starving people of Republican Spain and a generous response is already being made to that appeal. But some people have doubts; some objections have been raised. Surely charity should begin at home, they say. Should we, with our hungry, poverty-stricken millions, think of the distress of others and forget the misery of our own people? There is logic and reason behind these objections, and it would indeed be absurd for us to pose as the helpers and saviours of the world when we cannot save ourselves.

But these objections proceed from a misunderstanding. Reasons based on humanity and charity are powerful enough to induce anyone to help Spain, but it is not for humanitarian reasons that we seek this help.

We seek it in order to throw our weight, such as it is, on the right side in a vital conflict which is of tremendous significance to us and the world. We seek it in order to dissociate ourselves publicly and through action from the policy of the British Government which has lined itself up with the fascist powers. We seek it in order to demonstrate to the world that we stand with the democratic and progressive forces of the world.

If India were an independent country directing her foreign policy and her international relations, she would undoubtedly have played an important part in world affairs and thrown her weight on the side of freedom. We cannot do so in the usual way as unhappily we are still a

1. Signed article printed in *National Herald*, 4 December 1938.

part of the British Empire and our foreign policy is determined at Whitehall and Downing Street. We can and we do sometimes dissociate ourselves from this policy by resolution and public utterance. But our voices do not go far and even if they reach people in other countries, they produce little effect unless some action accompanies them. What action is today open to us?

By our sending a medical mission to China, by our giving foodstuffs to the Spanish people, we compel the world's attention to our viewpoint. Thereby we begin to function on the international plane and the voice of India begins to be heard in the councils of the nations. This is our way of building up a foreign policy and of giving effect to it.

Thus our giving practical shape to our sympathies has a vital significance in giving India a position and a prestige which usually only free countries possess. India is supposed to be a member of the League of Nations and we pay a very large contribution to it every year. But everybody knows that our membership is a sham one and those who call themselves India's representatives there are nominated by and represent the British Government. India's prestige does not go up by their activities or by our association with the League. But the free aid that we give medically or otherwise to China and Spain stamps us as people who have a view and a will of their own, who refuse to bow down to British policy and who are determined to function as free people, whenever an opportunity offers itself.

Much has been said about foreign propaganda on behalf of India. Can anyone doubt that no amount of foreign touring and speeches, useful as they might be, can compare in effectiveness with the action that India takes in foreign countries? This action brings us into the centre of the world picture, and no amount of publicity and propaganda at vast expense would draw world attention to us to the same extent. We take our place then as of right in international conferences and speak as equals to equals, with authority and confidence.

The time has gone by when India went out into the outer world, repeating her long tale of sorrow and woe, a suppliant for favour, begging for sympathy and help. The sorrow and woe may be ours still and we naturally welcome all sympathy and comradeship. But the world is weary of tales of suffering and misery; it has had surfeit of them. It is interested in those who act. And so when India comes before the world with dignity and self-confidence and with some capacity for action and cooperation with others, respect and friendship greet her, and a thousand hands are eager and willing to shake her hand in fellowship.

An independent India would have her ambassadors, her ministers and her consuls in foreign countries and would spend a large sum of money

on them. We would spend that money even if the need at home were great, for our international position, our trade and commerce, our world contacts would depend on these representatives of ours. Today our ambassadors are our medical missions and our food missions to foreign countries, and the little that we spend on them comes back to us a thousandfold in gratitude and friendship and comradely ties between our people and theirs. The bonds that we are forging in mutual adversity will stand us in good stead in the years to come.

We send our little help to China and Spain, to gallant peoples writing in their own blood and agony the epic story of freedom's fight. But our help is not to China or Spain only, but rather it is consecrated to an ideal, to democracy, to freedom, for which we ourselves have suffered so much and will have to suffer still. And all those who care for freedom in this wide world of ours recognise us as their comrades and stand shoulder to shoulder with us. Is this a small gain to us for the paltry price that we pay?

India, let all remember, is no mean country today, submitting to subjection and superior might. She has grown in stature and has a role to play in the world. But with that growth have come responsibilities, and we, who are privileged to be her children, have to shoulder those responsibilities and develop vision and a world outlook. We have to accustom ourselves to functioning as a free people. Only thus shall we be worthy of our destiny.

7. Indian Labour in Malaya[1]

The memory of my visit[2] to the beautiful and pleasant land of Malaya is fresh in my mind, but, above all, I think of the lot of the thousands of the Indian workers there.

I have come to know of the heavy reductions which were made by planters in the wages of Indian labourers without any reference to India. I am glad that the Central Indian Association of Malaya resisted this and that the government in India banned all recruitment of south Indian labour to Malaya. Subsequently it appears that under cover of "voluntary emigration" labour recruitment continued in illicit form. But in

1. Message to a journal published by the Indians in Malaya. *National Herald*, 6 December 1938.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 663-694.

September last the central assembly passed an amending bill regulating this form of labour emigration also.[3]

Efforts are now being made by vested interests in Malaya to open out a fresh source of cheap labour from India which they can exploit at their will. We have to be vigilant to prevent any such opportunity being given to them. India cannot and will not permit the exploitation of her children in this way and we must insist that no Indian worker is allowed to be lured away abroad unless decent wages and conditions of livelihood are assured for him. Therefore all emigration to Malaya must stop till such time as guarantees are forthcoming of proper treatment of our workers.

It is the business of all Indians in Malaya to support the cause of Indian labour there. The Congress has always been keenly interested in the status of Indians abroad and it will follow with every sympathy the struggle of the Indian workers in Malaya. In so far as it can, it will give every help to our fellow countrymen overseas.

India cannot tolerate the ill-treatment and exploitation of her children anywhere.

3. On 17 September 1938, the central assembly passed an amendment to the Indian Emigration Act of 1922 to regulate the emigration of unskilled labourers to other countries, particularly Malaya and Ceylon. The purpose of the amendment was not only to secure certain standards of wages and living for labourers who were assisted to migrate but also to ensure that these standards were not jeopardised by the emigration of people over whom the Government of India had no control.

8. The Tragedy of Palestine[1]

We have been told that a round table conference is going to be held in London to settle the question of Palestine.[2] We know something about

1. Signed article printed in *National Herald*, 18 December 1938.
2. The persecution of the Jews in Germany and other countries during the nineteen-thirties pushed up the Jewish immigration to Palestine to a large extent. The Arabs reacted violently to this influx. In 1937, a British commission recommended partition of Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state. The partition commission found the task impossible as the two peoples were "inextricably tangled up". The British Government made another unsuccessful attempt to solve the problem by convening a round table conference in London.

round table conferences and how they are used to obscure issues and consolidate imperialistic control. Behind the thick veil of pious phrases and vague assurances in Parliament and conferences, sometimes we glimpse the terrible reality in Palestine. A strict censorship and conspiracy of silence of British newspapers prevents the truth reaching us, for howsoever authenticated a statement of fact is, newspapers in England refuse to publish it, if it is in favour of the unhappy Arabs who are fighting and dying for freedom.

Unfortunately, the issue is made to appear as if it was a contest between the Arab and the Jew, and not a national struggle for freedom against imperialist domination. The terrible persecution of the Jews in Germany and elsewhere rightly draws the world's sympathy to them. It is a tragedy that two oppressed and suffering peoples, the Arabs and the Jews, should come into conflict with each other.

In this confusion of issues we must keep our minds clear, and not allow our sympathy for the Jews in their distress to work injustice for the Arabs, or our inevitable sympathy for the Arabs of Palestine translate itself into anti-Jew sentiment. To the Jews, as victims of fascist terror and brutality, we must extend all sympathy and help. But that does not and cannot mean that Arab interests in their country of Palestine can be ignored.

Palestine is an Arab country and Arab interests must prevail there. I have not a shadow of a doubt in my mind that justice demands this. I do not think there need be any conflict between Arab and Jew interests in Palestine and both can cooperate to their mutual advantage and for the advancement of Palestine. The real conflict is with British imperialism, and the struggle, whatever its varying phases, is a national struggle for freedom. It is the misfortune of the Jews that they have aligned themselves with British imperialism. In doing so they have not even shown practical wisdom, for British imperialism has had its day and fades away before our eyes.

For this vanishing support, they have risked the displeasure, not only of the entire Muslim world but of most Asiatic countries. That is a heavy price to pay in this world where already brutal persecution pursues them in many countries of Europe and elsewhere. Let the Arabs and Jews face each other in friendship and in a spirit of cooperation and their problems will find a solution. But that solution can and will only be on the basis of Arab freedom. Not all the king's horses nor all the king's men will be able to find any other solution.

Meanwhile, the king's horses and the king's men are functioning in Palestine and odd bits of information reach us of the terror that overshadows the country. Let us realise what this terror is. It is the old

martial law regime of the Punjab; it is a repetition of the methods of the Black and Tans in Ireland.

I have received some extracts from a letter from Palestine which tell us how the British army of occupation and invasion has functioned there. This letter was written by an English lawyer in Palestine, a man, I am definitely assured, of high character and ability and fully aware of what constitutes evidence. Another Englishman of character and position whose judgment I value tells me that this letter can be accepted as a fact.

The letter is not a new one; it was written in September last. But the argument holds and we must not delude ourselves into the belief that things are better in Palestine. The rulers of the British Empire humble themselves before Hitler and Mussolini, but they pride themselves that they are still strong enough to deal with Palestine.

The following are extracts from a letter dated September 16, 1938 received from an Englishman in Palestine, which is referred to in the above article:

> The savagery of the authorities here, who have apparently embarked upon a policy of terrorism, is a matter upon which few of the British civilian population generally can trust themselves to speak or write.
>
> After Moffat's assassination,[3] they "savaged" the little town of Jenin by blowing it (or a large portion of it) to smithereens. The official statement said, "150 houses had been demolished", an estimate not erring in exaggeration. Certain persons were shot down "while attempting to escape". Some of the means resorted to to obtain information from the population will not bear repetition.
>
> After having blown up the houses and boasted, on the broadcast, of doing so, the authorities suddenly found that some of the property demolished belonged to Ruhi Bey Abdul Hadi, confidential adviser to His Excellency on Arab affairs! Much "back-patting" of Ruhi Bey, accompanied by "very sorry, old chap", and the production of a cheque book for compensation calmed him down. He, owing to his influence, of course will get prompt compensation, but the other wretched owners are equally as innocent as he.
>
> It was done to strike terror into the people, not to punish the guilty. Not only were the houses demolished but, I am sorry to say, many of the population were robbed of money, jewellery, etc.,—including

3. Terrorist outbreaks increased in Palestine throughout August-September 1938. W.S. Moffat, the British assistant district commissioner, was assassinated at Jenin on 24 August 1938.

the safe and contents belonging to the Standard Oil Company of New York, concerning which the American consul has had something to say.

It is impossible to tell you everything that is going on here. I know of amazing cases: government employees (brave and loyal Arabs) engaged, for instance, on repairing the sabotage of telephone wires for which they may be shot at any moment by the rebels, have returned to their villages after a day's work to find their homes blown up by the British army, and their wives and children sitting homeless upon a heap of rubble. From such instances it is that the rebels are now gaining, not merely reinforcements, but, what is more serious, an ascendancy of morale.

On Saturday, here in Jaffa, the troops were merely shooting at sight anyone they had a mind to aim at. A government surveyor, English-speaking and educated, was returning home from his duties and was shot dead here in the street; also a little girl of seven on the same day.

This morning a cheerful little newspaper boy, who brings my morning paper, did not arrive. I enquired, and am told that he was shot.

I was talking to an English judge a few days ago, who expressed himself violently concerning the sights he had just seen in the Manshiye quarters. The doctor in Herbron could tell of cold-blooded murder and destruction perpetrated in that town by troops and police, apart from looting Arab cafes and shops.

This is the first time the Holy Land has been administered by a Christian government since the days of the crusaders! God forgive us.

"The healing hand of Christ", as understood and applied to the people of Palestine by the people of England, is a source of shame to us all.

The reaction of the Jews, who are also suffering from depredation and destruction, as well as murder and violence (on a very much less scale of course, to that of the Arabs) from the rebels is curious.

Best opinion among them holds that every Arab village destroyed, every herd of cattle and crop of foodstuffs carried off, every collective fine or punitive raid carried out by the government, only marks a step forward for the National Home, since the disarming of the Arab and the destruction of his villages and his resources increase the country's "absorptive capacity" for the Jews.

9. To Charles Francois Baron[1]

Allahabad
December 23, 1938

Dear Monsieur Baron,
I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of the 30th November. I have been travelling about a great deal.

I have discussed the matter with Mr. Subhas Bose and others. We feel that it would be desirable to have some centres in Paris which would help in bringing France and India nearer to each other. But such a centre cannot be officially run by the Congress. It has to be unofficial and the only support it can get is from newspapers in India. In France, I fear, it is not easy to get much help from the Indian newspapers at this stage. So, for the moment, I do not know what to suggest to you.

The critical state of European politics, especially in France, raises another difficulty. Such a centre cannot ignore the most vital questions of the day. If it deals with them, what attitude is it to take up when there are such great differences of opinion? Generally speaking, the attitude in India is completely opposed to the present policy of the British and French Governments. This is a difficulty, but, as I have stated above, the real difficulty is one of finances.

With all good wishes for the New Year,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

10. To Gertrud Baer[1]

Allahabad
December 24, 1938

Dear Friend,[2]
Thank you for your letter of December 12th.[3] I am afraid the situation in Europe, as in other parts of the world, is about as bad as it can be,

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Joint chairman, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.
3. She wrote that in Europe people were obsessed with the idea of war but they passionately wanted peace.

and both peace and freedom, for which we stand, get further and further away. There seems to be a paralysis of the mind. Yet, I suppose that all this is inevitable during this period of transition. Anyway, we have to continue working in our own respective spheres for the cause we cherish.

It was a pleasure to me to meet you and other friends at the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom headquarters. It is comforting to know, even in these days of confusion, that there are people everywhere who work for peace and freedom.

With all good wishes for the New Year,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To Gerta Calmann[1]

Allahabad
December 24, 1938

Dear Mrs. Calmann,[2]

I have your letter of the 17th November.[3] I remember well meeting you in Allahabad, and I have also pleasant memories of your husband and Mrs. Olden.[4]

I need hardly assure you that the sufferings of the Jews in Germany have greatly shocked all people here. I wish we could help these unfortunate sufferers. To some extent I have been trying to do so. I have received scores of applications and I have sent the information to various provincial governments and industrialists. I understand that a number of Jewish refugees have already come to India. But I fear that it will become more and more difficult for others to come, as the difficulties placed in their way by the British Government are very great.

It may however be possible for us to take some experts and specialists. But it is far more difficult for some thousands of men and women to be provided for in a separate colony or otherwise. This could only be done

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. A German Jew settled in London.
3. She requested Jawaharlal to find a suitable place for the Jews for building up "agricultural communities on the model of those in Palestine."
4. Ica Olden, a cousin of Hans, husband of Gerta Calmann.

by setting apart agricultural land for the purpose. India, as you know, is a heavily populated country with a tremendous land hunger among the people, chiefly because the country is mainly agricultural. There are millions of the unemployed on the land. It is one of our principal problems to find land for them or other occupation. It is difficult in the face of this unemployment and land hunger to set aside a large tract of territory for Jewish immigrants. But even apart from this, as I have said above, the governmental difficulties are almost insuperable.

I am terribly sorry that we cannot do more than we are actually doing for the Jews. We know something of being oppressed and persecuted and we are full of deep sympathy for the Jews in their distress. I am sure that in spite of everything the Jews will overcome the obstacles and the difficulties which encompass them today.

With my regards to you and Mrs. Olden,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. Help to China and Spain[1]

There are people who seem to doubt the wisdom of despatch of food for the suffering people of Spain and the medical mission to China.[2] But I would like to emphasise that what the Congress has achieved by this step could not have accrued by spending even lakhs of rupees on foreign propaganda. I do not wish to minimise the importance and necessity of sending people abroad for propaganda work or for enlightening world public opinion on the aims and objects of the national movement in this country. The step which the Congress has taken also served another purpose. It has made manifest to the people of the world the attitude of the Congress towards the problems and issues involved in the fighting in Spain and China. It also showed to the world India's desire to extend cooperation and sympathy to the oppressed and afflicted sections of humanity.

1. Speech at Calcutta, 3 January 1939. From *The Hindu*, 4 January 1939.
2. An Indian medical mission to China sponsored by the Indian National Congress and led by Dr. Madan Atal left India on 1 September 1938.

British foreign policy that resulted in the Munich agreement stands condemned. The attitude that dictated British policy during the Czech crisis was not due to Britain's doubts about the ultimate outcome of any conflict with Germany and Italy. What the British Government seemed to be afraid of was that if they came out victorious in the fight with the help of Soviet Russia, that might enhance the prestige, power and position of the Soviets. I would also like to emphasise that the present foreign policy of Britain, which is directed towards placating the forces of Nazism and fascism, will ultimately prove ruinous to the cause of England.

Within the limitations of the 1935 Act, the Congress ministers are doing their humble bit in the way of constructive work for the benefit of the masses. The Congress ministers are not in office merely for the sake of remaining in office. They are there because the Congress had asked them to accept office. Nobody should therefore think that the Congress has ceased to be a fighting organisation.

13. Britain's Foreign Policy[1]

An acute and intense mental paralysis has overtaken the statesmen of France and England today and the world is in as much a topsy-turvy state as the Wonderland of Alice. Mr. Chamberlain's foreign policy represents an alliance of imperialism with fascism. But imperialism is definitely doomed to disintegrate.

The republicans of Spain are fighting against heavy odds, but their morale is still high and their organisation intact. It is a national fight to eliminate foreign elements from the country. India's heart goes out in an abundant measure to the republicans who have shown an astounding spirit which refuses to acknowledge defeat.

1. Speech at Allahabad University students' meeting, 7 January 1939. From *National Herald*, 10 January 1939.

Mr. Chamberlain has only snatched defeat out of the jaws of victory. The policy pursued by Chamberlain must inevitably reduce England's power unless some effective check is applied to the policy of appeasement. Although Mr. Chamberlain says that he has once more brought back peace with honour, his country continues its war-like preparations at a break-neck speed. No arms factories have stopped work. For the workers in these factories there are no Christmas or New Year Day holidays.

It may be said that the Munich agreement has brought about changes far greater than even those wrought by the First World War. And this transformation is going on at a tremendous pace. Thus a fair portion of the world is now engaged in active warfare.

The world is no doubt passing through a crisis of great magnitude and there has everywhere been a progressive slowing down of activity except in the armament factories. In this respect there is no essential difference between fascism and imperialism.

When the British criticise the Germans for their atrocities against the Jews, the Germans remind them of Britain's activities in Palestine. In fact, fascism in Europe is nothing but the application to home countries of the principles which imperialism has already tried in Asia. Yet the democratic tradition of the British people does place them in a slightly different position in regard to the home policy, which has nevertheless an imperialist background.

One striking fact today is that Mr. Chamberlain has most defiantly kicked out the traditional policy of the British foreign office. This is not a sudden move. It is mostly a pre-conceived plan. War could have been avoided by proceeding along the lines of the traditional British policy. If Britain had made it clear to Germany that in the event of violence being adopted, she would certainly resist it, Germany would have acted differently. It was within the British power to give this warning in the summer of 1938. Yet it was astounding to behold how deliberately the whole situation was planned out by Chamberlain's government. The Runciman mission and the repeated surrenders to Hitler's demands are not merely accidental. They are the results of a calculated policy of surrender to fascist aggression.

The fact is that England had to make a choice between Soviet Russia and Germany. If the British Government had genuinely desired an extension of democracy then Russia would not have appeared a greater danger than Germany. But the deliberate policy has been one of siding with fascism everywhere, either in Asia or in Europe. The struggle in Spain and England's part in it have shown this aspect of the British policy. The British Government has continuously been helping the

rebels. While the rebel aeroplanes bomb the British ships, Mr. Chamberlain comes out with apologies in Parliament.[2] It appears that he is prepared to swallow everything except the fall of the Nazi power, for that would lead to the establishment of an advanced socialistic government everywhere. In order to avoid this, Mr. Chamberlain is prepared even to sacrifice the interests of the British Empire.

Elimination of the British Empire is becoming a near possibility owing to the growing vulnerability of the seat of the empire in this age of aerial warfare. It is for this reason that the British people found themselves even in a greater peril, during the recent crisis, than the French. War seemed to be coming to the home of every citizen.

While I was in Spain, there used to be an average of two or three air raids every night. Despite this daily terror, the life of the ordinary citizen went on normally. Shops were open, traffic was busy, colleges and schools were functioning, while buildings crumbled under continuous bombardment. In spite of all this the republic has, during the last two years, opened 10,000 new schools. It has also built up a big and efficient army in this short duration.

The Spanish people have built up an efficient army, with able generals, without the much-needed experience of generations on which the British officials laid so much emphasis in India while arguing against the rapid Indianisation of the army. The Spanish civil war is only a prelude to a greater European war. The various European powers are experimenting their new instruments of warfare on a small scale in Spain.

Already, the rebels are receiving complete military aid and political advice from Germany, working under a kind of dual system. Hence for the republican government it was a national fight to keep out the foreign element from the country. They are fighting hard and it has disappointed those who expected them to give up the ghost in the very first instance. They have shown an astounding spirit which refuses to acknowledge defeat. Their chief difficulty is in regard to getting sufficient foodstuffs for which voluntary help is forthcoming from the sympathetic sections of people all over the world.

India has to play a great role in this topsy-turvy state of world politics. The disastrous foreign policy of the British Government must inevitably

2. For instance, speaking in the House of Commons on 14 June 1938, Chamberlain said that unless Britain was prepared to depart from the policy of non-intervention, effective protection could not be guaranteed to ships. He repeatedly stressed that effective protection against such air attacks on British ships in ports and within territorial waters could not be given without resort to retaliatory action.

strengthen our hands. But what is highly objectionable is the fact that we, as part of the British Empire, are supposed to be associated with this shameless policy. Ultimately, however, we have to frame our own foreign policy when our country becomes independent. But in the meanwhile, we should do something to dissociate ourselves from this policy. How are we to do this? Passing resolutions and expressing dissatisfaction are not enough. We should send regularly our missions to Palestine, China and other countries which are victims of British foreign policy. It may appear at first sight fantastic that India, which is a starving country, should send foodstuffs to Spain. But there is a better reason in that than appears on the surface. In order to develop international relations we have to bear some cost. We have to formulate our foreign policy from now on. A medical mission may not substantially help China but it will show to the world where our sympathies lay. It has already gained an enormous popularity for India in China.

Secondly, such missions are sure to give us a definite status in international conferences and deliberations. Thirdly, they are useful media for advertisement and propaganda—not of the vulgar type but of the right sort. These missions are therefore important not merely on humanitarian grounds but they also help us in formulating our foreign policy for free India.

I wish to warn the governments of the West that the old systems built on imperialism are today crumbling and that all efforts to keep them going will end in failure.

14. Spain and Europe[1]

Historically speaking the British Empire has ceased to exist. British statesmen do no longer think in terms of dominating the world; but they just want security for themselves and they want to preserve their major imperialist interests like India. But once the decline has begun it cannot stop there. The British have built up their economy in such a

1. Speech at a meeting organised by the Indian Civil Liberties Union, Bombay, 10 January 1939. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 11 January 1939.

fashion that it will not be possible for them to remain even a second-rate power; they will be reduced to the position of a fourth or fifth-rate power.

British foreign policy is a combination of intrigue, hypocrisy and falsehood. Mr. Chamberlain adopted a pro-Nazi-fascist policy because he thought he might have to liquidate his empire if he fought fascism.

I am amazed at the extraordinary sense of futility and utter helplessness which the people in Europe experienced in the face of the international situation. Mr. Winston Churchill stated that a thousand years later historians might be bewildered at the manner in which a victorious nation like Britain had surrendered to the threats of Italy and Germany. How was it that Britain and Germany were acting in a manner patently injurious to their own interests?

The key to understanding the maze of European politics during the last few years is British foreign policy. That policy has always followed a particular trend though not always deliberately. Occasionally, there appeared to be a conflict between Britain and Italy and between Britain and Germany. Britain has participated in the application of sanctions against Italy; she has supported Japan in the conflict between China and Japan; she has even spoken in tones of remonstrance to Germany. Nevertheless, she has consistently followed a policy of supporting the totalitarian countries.

After the Great War two new factors developed. One was the rise of Russia, and the other, the tremendous importance of the United States of America which, from being a debtor nation, has become overwhelmingly a creditor country. She has challenged the leadership of Britain in matters of finance.

But the more important factor has been the conflict between England and Russia. England's policy in the Far East had for a long time been one of support to Japan. Japan has grown under the shelter of British imperialism, and when Japan took Manchuria, Britain supported her because she wanted to utilise Japan against Soviet Russia.

This was the first challenge to the whole system of the League of Nations. Then other breaches of the covenant occurred in Abyssinia, China, Spain and central Europe. British foreign policy, while ostensibly supporting the League policy, played a prominent part in bringing about these breaches. Even when the Nazi regime came, it was Hitler's policy to get British support. He did get it, and Germany forged ahead under the sheltering care of British foreign policy. The Anglo-German Naval Treaty, contracted without informing the League or any other power, was in total contravention of the Versailles treaty. That was the beginning of the break-up of the Versailles system.

The price of the Anglo-German Naval Treaty was that France sought the support of Italy and brought about non-intervention in Abyssinia. Though some sanctions were invoked against Italy, other important sanctions were not at all used. In fact, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company worked day and night to help Mussolini right through. Indeed, British policy encouraged breaches of the League covenant.

Then came Spain. There was nothing more amazing than the policy of England and France with regard to Spain. The war in Spain was not a civil war but an invasion. England has done everything possible to help the rebels despite the fact that British ships were repeatedly sunk.

This policy was truly astonishing because it endangered the British Empire. If Spain was dominated by Italy, the Mediterranean would become a closed lake to Britain. Chamberlain was following a policy that was leading his country to disaster. But the policy pursued by Chamberlain was not so very different from that pursued by Baldwin though the latter might not have gone so far as Chamberlain did. British policy has always been definitely pro-fascist.

The reason for this is to be found in Britain's antagonism to Russia. She felt that if Germany collapsed, it would add to the strength of Russia. But it must be realised that the danger to the British Empire from Russia was only ideological and distant, because no country has so consistently followed a policy of peace as Russia. And yet England chose to support Germany as a counterblast to Russia.

On the other hand, France had developed a policy of friendship with Russia. The Russia-France-Czechoslovakia bloc was very powerful, and if Britain had supported that bloc, Germany and Italy would have been helpless. But Britain refused to support those powers.

Chamberlain's statement issued on the eve of the German occupation of Austria amounted to an invitation to Germany to take action against Austria.[2] The only reason for such a policy pursued by Britain was her opposition to Russia.

The Austrian occupation revealed the weakness of the German army. Military experts were surprised at the inefficiency of the German General Staff. On the other hand, the action of the Czech Government in

2. Chamberlain in his speech in the House of Commons on 23 February 1938 had confessed: "British foreign policy is founded on the principle that the system of collective security has ceased to exist and that smaller countries can rely no longer on the League of Nations or on international law to safeguard them from aggression."

mobilising a million men within the course of a few hours on May 21, 1938, showed the extraordinary efficiency of the Czech General Staff.

The Munich betrayal was the result of the Sudeten demand for autonomy, the fear caused by the Austrian occupation in the minds of the people who thought it safer to turn fascist, the Henleinist victory at the municipal elections, the threat of Nazi invasion, the Czech mobilisation, Chamberlain's intervention and the mission of the notoriously pro-Nazi Lord Runciman. Faced with the prospect of opposition from Britain and France, Czechoslovakia agreed to submit to the Runciman scheme. But on the very day that the scheme was handed over to the Henleinists the London *Times* came out with a leading article[3] suggesting the cession of territory, which was not one of the demands made even by the Henleinists. It has been denied that this article represented the views of the British foreign office, but it is a well-known fact that the article had been read and passed by some prominent members of the British cabinet before it was printed. It is also well known that Chamberlain, in one of his expansive moments, had suggested the cession of territory weeks before that time.

This network of intrigue, hypocrisy and falsehood resulted in Hitler obtaining more than he asked for at Berchtesgaden.[4] Since then Czechoslovakia has practically become a German colony. The Czechs are essentially a democratic and liberty-loving people, and they might rise again, but, at present, they are controlled by elements favourable to Germany.

I can testify from personal knowledge to the extraordinary sense of discipline of the Czech people. In the face of the terror of annihilation of their beautiful city, the citizens of Prague were not so panicky as those of London, the danger to which was more remote. But, unhappily, these people were totally betrayed by Chamberlain in pursuance of his policy of appeasement.

Chamberlain had brought from Munich a piece of paper signed by himself and Herr Hitler, and was triumphantly waving it, crying out that peace had come. But ever since Munich there has been greater talk of war and more feverish preparation for it than ever before.

3. On 7 September 1938, *The Times* suggested the cession of all the Sudeten German districts to Germany as the best solution of the problem.
4. In their talks at Berchtesgaden on 19 September 1938, Chamberlain conceded, in principle, Hitler's claim to bring back into the Reich the three million Sudeten Germans.

Munich has resulted in as big changes as had been brought about by the Great War. Without any war Britain and France have been pushed off the stage and are fast becoming second-rate powers, and still Chamberlain, like one bewitched, is pursuing his policy of appeasement which might ultimately cost him the British Empire.

There is a rough kind of justice in all this. Germany has effectively reminded Britain of its own record. Fascism is only employing in Europe the methods employed by imperialism in other continents. Fascism is a mirror to the past, and to a certain extent the present, of imperialism.

There are only two alternatives before the democratic governments, i.e., either they should become more democratic or less so. They have to grant further extension of democracy to the different parts of the empire or go fascist. The Spanish Government, which is being organised on a democratic basis while engaged in fighting for freedom, is a pointer to this. The same thing is happening in China. Ultimately, Mr. Chamberlain would have to liquidate the empire if he wants to fight fascism.

A French politician stated that India was a nuisance because England had to walk in fear of India and to that extent her foreign policy was hesitant.

I was astonished at the fact that rural Spain was being cultivated in the face of the devastation that was being wrought elsewhere. I was equally astonished at the manner in which life was being carried on in Barcelona. Barcelona looked a prosperous city with its trams running and with its kiosks and bookshops. But here and there were to be seen ruined buildings and gaping shell holes. I can never forget my experience of air raids and my visit to the front. I admire the manner in which the Spanish Government has created an army out of nothing and trained efficient officers. All the while amidst the horrors of war they were building schools and promoting literacy.

So vital a people cannot be easily crushed. It is possible that the republicans might continue to resist. But even if they are overwhelmed, the war in Spain would not end. The people of Spain are hostile to Franco, and as soon as the Italian army of occupation withdraws, the control would pass out of Franco's hands. The victory or defeat of the Spanish Republic is one of the greatest things that would count in the history of the world.

15. To R. Gowtum[1]

Allahabad
January 22, 1939

My dear Gowtum,[2]
Your letter[3] of the 10th January addressed to Bardoli has just reached me. I do not know where you are now—in India or in Burma.

Certainly I shall go through any paper that you suggest, if my advice is needed. But the right persons for you to see are the Congress President and the General Secretary.

My own view is that the time has now come when Burma should go out of the Congress constitution. There is no point in keeping up appearances. Last year's riots have decided this matter for me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-8/1938-39, p. 195, N.M.M.L.
2. General secretary, Burma Congress Committee, 1929-37; member, A.I.C.C., for about six years; edited Anglo-Gujarati paper *Brahmadesh*.
3. He sought Jawaharlal's help in resolving the differences between the members of the Burma Congress Committee.

16. Homage to the Spanish Republic[1]

In this age when black reaction grips the world, and culture and civilisation decay, and violence seems to reign unchecked, the magnificent struggles of the Spanish and Chinese republics against overwhelming odds have lightened the darkness of many a wanderer through the pathless night. We sorrow for the incredible horrors that have taken place, but our hearts are full of pride and admiration for the human courage that has smiled through disaster and found greater strength in it, and for the invincible spirit of man that does not bend to insolent might, whatever the consequences. Anxiously we follow the fate of the people of Spain, and yet we know that they can never be crushed, for a cause

1. 24 January 1939. *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 57-58.

that has this invincible courage and sacrifice behind it can never die. Madrid and Valencia and Barcelona will live for ever more, and out of their ashes the Spanish republicans will yet build up the free Spain of their desire.

We who struggle for our own freedom are deeply moved by this epic struggle of the Spanish Republic, for the freedom of the world is imperilled there. The frontiers of our struggle lie not only in our own country but in Spain and China also.

Meanwhile millions of refugees starve in republican Spain and women and children face not only the enemy bombs from the air but death through lack of food. India cannot remain indifferent to this terrible tragedy and we must make every effort to send them food and succour.

I congratulate those who have organised this performance and those who are taking part in it in order to aid the Spanish people in their dire distress. We can do little for these brave torch-bearers of freedom, but we can at least send them this tribute to their magnificent courage and to the cause to which they have offered their immeasurable sacrifice.

Homage to the Spanish Republic!

17. India Looks at the World[1]

Nationalism is in ill odour today in the West and has become the parent of aggressiveness, intolerance and brutal violence. All that is reactionary seeks shelter under that name—fascism, imperialism, race bigotry, and the crushing of that free spirit of inquiry which gave the semblance of greatness to Europe in the nineteenth century. Culture succumbs before its onslaught and civilisation decays. Democracy and freedom are its pet aversions, and in its name innocent men and women and children in Spain are bombed to death, and fierce race persecution takes place.

Yet it was nationalism that built up the nations of Europe a hundred years or more ago and provided the background for that civilisation whose end seems to be drawing near. And it is nationalism which is the driving force today in the countries of the East which suffer under foreign domination and seek freedom. To them it brings unity and

1. Almora, 25 January 1939. First printed in *Asia*, an American journal, and later reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 335-342.

vitality and a lifting of the burdens of the spirit which subjection entails. There is virtue in it up to a certain stage; till then it is a progressive force adding to human freedom. But even then it is a narrowing creed and a nation seeking freedom, like a person who is sick, can think of little besides its own struggle and its own misery.

India has been no exception to this rule, and often, in the intensity of the struggle, she has forgotten the world and thought only in terms of herself. But as strength came to her, and confidence born of success, she began to look beyond her frontiers. The increasing interest she has taken in the problems of the world is a measure of the growth of her nationalist movement. Perhaps nothing is so surprising in India today as this anxious interest in foreign affairs and the realisation that her own struggle for freedom is a part of the world struggle. And this interest is by no means confined to the intelligentsia but goes deep down to the worker, the petty shopkeeper and even, to a small extent, to the peasant. The invasion of Manchuria by Japan caused a wave of sympathy for China, and Japan which had so far been popular with Indians began to be disliked. The rape of Abyssinia by Italy was deeply felt and resented. The tragic events of central Europe produced a profound impression. But most of all India felt, almost as a personal sorrow, the revolt against the republic of Spain and the invasion of China, with all their attendant horrors. Thousands of demonstrations were held in favour of Spain and China, and out of our poverty we extended our helping hand to them in the shape of food and medical missions.

This reaction in India was not due primarily to humanitarian reasons, but to a growing realisation of the significance of the conflicts in the world and to an intelligent self-interest. We saw in fascism the mirror of the imperialism from which we had suffered, and in the growth of fascism we saw defeat for freedom and democracy for which we struggled. With our long experience of British imperialism, we distrusted the assurances, so often given, of British support of collective security and the League of Nations. Because of this we followed, perhaps with greater clarity than elsewhere, the development of British foreign policy towards cooperation with the fascist powers, and our opposition to British imperialism became a part of our opposition to all imperialism and fascism.

To this British foreign policy we were entirely opposed, and yet, as parts of the empire, we were bound by it. By resolution and public declaration we dissociated ourselves from it and endeavoured, in such ways as were open to us, to develop our own foreign policy. The medical mission that we sent to China or the foodstuffs that went from

India to Spain were our methods of asserting our foreign policy and dissociating ourselves from that of Britain. We laid down, further, our line of action in the event of world war breaking out. It was for the people of India to determine whether India would join a war or not, and any decision imposed upon us by Britain would be resisted. Nor were we prepared on any account to permit our resources to be exploited for an imperialist war.

The Indian nationalist movement has stood for many years for full independence and the severance of our ties with the British Empire. Recent events in Europe have made this an urgent necessity for us, for we cannot tolerate association with British foreign policy and the possibility of our resources being utilised for wrong ends. We must control our foreign policy, our finances and our defences, and have perfect freedom to develop our own contacts with other countries.

Foreign affairs are thus casting their long shadow over the Indian national struggle and the growing consciousness of this makes India look at the world with ever-increasing interest. She thinks of the day, which may not be long distant, when she will be a free country, and already she prepares mentally for that change. The British Empire is fading away before our eyes and everyone knows that it cannot hold India in subjection for long. Responsible statesmen in England no doubt realise this, and yet it is exceedingly difficult for them to give up the assumptions and mental atmosphere of a century and adapt themselves to what logic tells them is the inevitable end.

That is the dilemma of Britain today. There are only two courses open to her in regard to India. The natural and the logical course is to recognise what must be and adapt herself gracefully to it. This means the immediate recognition of India's right to self-determination on the basis of complete freedom and the drawing up of India's constitution by a constituent assembly consisting of her elected representatives. Such a decision, and immediate steps taken to implement it, would immediately bring about a psychological change and the old atmosphere of conflict and hostility would give place to a spirit of co-operation. India, achieving her independence in this way, would not look unfavourably to certain privileges in the matter of trade and commerce being granted to Britain. She might even accept certain financial burdens which in justice should not fall on her. We would be willing to pay this price for freedom with peace, for the cost of conflict will in any event be much greater. India would also be a friend and colleague in world affairs provided Britain stood for freedom and democracy.

The other course is to keep India in subjection and attempt to impose vital decisions on her. This would inevitably lead to a major conflict with Indian nationalism. It might delay Indian freedom for a while, but certainly it would not delay it for very long; and it is possible that the conflict itself might precipitate matters. It was no easy matter for the British Government to suppress the last civil disobedience movement. Today the Congress and the national movement are far stronger than they have ever been, and Britain, on the other hand, thanks to Chamberlain's policy, is dangerously near to impotence in foreign affairs. That does not mean that Britain cannot strike hard at India. She can certainly do so, but it will be a very difficult task to undertake, and if international crisis intervenes, as it well might, a perilous one. It is not surprising therefore that the British Government have no desire whatever to force a conflict in India. They would welcome a settlement with India, if this could be obtained without giving up *their vital and vested interests. But any settlement means, in fact,* a settlement with the National Congress. This, if it is genuinely attempted and is to be successful, means facing up to all the implications of the first of the two courses outlined above. British imperialism, by its very nature, is unable to do this. The British Government will therefore, at all costs, avoid the first course.

That is the dilemma, and there is no middle course except one of marking time. But time runs fast in this age of dictators, and events follow one another with a startling rapidity. At any moment, the edifice of 'appeasement', which Chamberlain has built up so laboriously even at the cost of what nations and individuals hold most dear, might collapse and bring catastrophe. What of India then? What will India do? That is the question that often worries British statesmen. For it will matter a great deal what India does. India will make a difference.

It is not as if India was waiting for a chance to profit by England's difficulty. Even during the Czechoslovakian crisis Mr. Gandhi made it clear that we do not blackmail or bargain.[2] But it is manifestly absurd to imagine that India would in any way help a government which was not only keeping her in subjection, but was also following a foreign policy which she detests and abhors. It is equally out of the question that we should forget our objective of independence and suspend our struggle simply because England was in difficulties. We shall pursue our path, and it seems inevitable that this will bring us into conflict with

2. In a press statement on 16 September 1938, Mahatma Gandhi said that "whatever support is to be given to the British should be given unconditionally."

the British Government, for we shall resist anything that is imposed upon us against our will.

Even apart from the European or Far Eastern situation, internal conditions in India will not permit of marking time for long. There is an apparent quiet on the surface, and in a great part of India Congress governments are functioning in the provinces, but there is an ominous rumbling, and signs are already visible pointing to an approaching crisis.

So the British Government cannot easily mark time for long. And yet they cannot make up their minds about India or any other problem and drift helplessly to disaster. They seem to have lost the capacity to think or act, and perhaps that is the surest sign of the decay of the British ruling classes, which have so long formed governments and controlled the empire. Their attitude to India cannot be considered by itself; it is part of their general world policy. A support of fascism in Europe does not fit in with the establishment of a free democratic state in India. If the latter was aimed at, it would mean the liquidation of British imperialism the world over, the strengthening of democracy in England, and an unrelenting opposition to fascism and all it stands for. It would mean the end of governments like the one under which England has the misfortune to suffer today.

It is clear, therefore, that under existing circumstances the British Government will not adopt the first course mentioned above. They will incline more towards the second course, and yet they will hesitate to adopt it and will try to find some middle way. That middle way is to aggravate some of our internal problems so that we may weaken and be in a mood to compromise with them. If this fails then, subject to the international situation and several other factors, they will adopt the method of repression. Even so, they will try to avoid a direct conflict, and will largely function through and behind various reactionary forces in India, notably the Indian princes and the communalists. We see the development of this line of action today.

The establishment of the Congress ministries in a large number of the provinces have brought new problems to the front. They have increased the Congress prestige and organisational power, and have enormously activised the masses, both peasants and workers. Some legislation has been passed in favour of the peasantry and the industrial workers and many of their burdens have been removed; but this has not always come up to their expectations. Vital economic problems press for solution, and they can only be tackled in a small and sometimes ineffective way, as the power to deal with them fundamentally is lacking under the present constitution with its numerous reservations and safeguards for existing vested interests. Thus social cleavages are appearing, and these have

a tendency to disrupt the national movement. They will probably not result in any disruption, for the sense of unity for the political objective of independence is very great. Foreign observers, used to bitter class conflicts, are astonished at the way the Congress has held together, and effectively disciplined in a single movement various classes and groups whose interests conflict with one another.

The Hindu-Muslim problem has during the past year and a half assumed a new aspect, and is undoubtedly obstructing political progress. It is largely psychological, due to an apprehension in the minds of the Muslims that, under a democratic system, they might be ignored by a Hindu majority. The problem is a serious one and, because of its psychological basis, difficult to tackle. And yet it has no deep roots and it must not be confused with the conflicts of nationalities in Europe. For the vast majority of Muslims and Hindus are the same races, with much the same customs and language. The increasing importance of economic problems, which affect both alike, is the surest way of liquidating this problem. Meanwhile a tactful and generous approach will help in toning it down.

The Indian states have rather suddenly come into the centre of the national political struggle, and their people are astir from Kashmir in the north to Hyderabad and Travancore in the south. In many states active struggles, involving civil disobedience, are proceeding. In some, popular victories have already been won. The most noticeable feature of these struggles is the part the British Government is playing in crushing the popular movement and bolstering up the feudal princes. Indeed, it has become obvious that the real resistance comes either from the British Government or British officers employed by the states. The princes count for little. The Congress had so far adopted a cautious policy in regard to the states but, with this new development, it is taking a more active part and, in particular, is opposing British interference and support of the old feudal order. It is quite possible that this conflict might spread from the states to the rest of India and become a major national conflict, involving even the Congress ministries in the provinces.

The provincial autonomy came nearly two years ago and already it seems to have largely exhausted its potentialities. Federation is yet far off although there is often talk of it. As proposed it is wholly rejected by the Congress and even by the principal Muslim organisation, and if it is sought to be imposed, it will certainly be resisted. The Viceroy and the British ministers say that it is coming, but they go on postponing it for fear of the conflict that seems inevitable. They still hope that some compromise might be arrived at, but there is likely to be none on the basis of this federation or anything like it. Recent developments in the

WITH NAHAS PASHA, 6 NOVEMBER 1938

Heliopolis
6/11/1938

INAUGURATING HINDI BHAWAN, SANTINIKETAN, 31 JANUARY 1939

states also make it exceedingly unlikely that this federation will ever function in India.

Thus India presents today a strange picture of the provinces under Congress governments cooperating in many matters with the British Government but with frequent friction between them, of a continuing background of hostility between the national movement and British imperialism, of major problems all heading for a crisis and a conflict. But the long shadow of Europe reaches us here and affects our movement as well as British policy towards us, and what happens in the world outside will greatly influence events in India. And so India looks at the world anxiously and with deepest interest and prepares for the day when she might have to make great decisions.

18. Our Path is Clear[1]

A year ago I stood in Bannu town on Independence Day surrounded by a host of Khudai Khidmatgars and other men of the frontier. We took the pledge together and, as was fitting, we took it in the Pushtu language. I had picked up a few words of this language during my frontier tour and I tried to repeat the pledge word by word, together with the assembled multitude. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, that gaunt and well-loved figure of the north, was the leader of this solemn chorus, and above our heads floated proudly the national flag, emblem of that independence to which we pledged ourselves.

That day Khan Saheb took me to many other towns and villages and everywhere this solemn and significant ceremony was repeated and the pledge taken. The memory of that day clings to me and the earnest Pathan faces, taking that vow of freedom, form an unforgettable picture in my mind. To them it was no empty ritual, no ceremony without inner meaning, but a vital real thing symbolizing the long-suppressed desire of their hearts, which found some expression in words of promise and power. Thus we sealed our bond of brotherhood in the great cause of India's freedom.

1. Almora, 26 January 1939. *National Herald*, 26 January 1939. The text of this speech seems to have been sent to the *National Herald* in advance.

Today I take the pledge again in another frontier district of India; for Almora, though nearer to the heart of India, is yet one of the frontiers of this country, bordering on Tibet and Nepal. Another multitude gathers together from the distant valleys and the mountain tops, peasant folk from the borderland of Askote, a week's journey from here, and men and women from this ancient town of the Kumaun hills all assemble on this winter day in full view of the eternal snows, to take the pledge of independence.

Eight years have passed since we took this pledge for the first time, years heavy with sorrow for us and struggle, but also with a measure of triumph and achievement. But though success has come to us, we know its meagre worth, and the promised land has yet to be reached when the pledge of ours will redeem itself.

And the world? War rages in the Far East and in Spain to the accompaniment of incredible and inhuman atrocities, and the black night of reaction covers Europe. Multitudes, tortured beyond endurance, become refugees and wander from one country to another, seeking home and shelter, and finding none.

What then does our pledge mean to us today, what significance does it have? Has it grown stale and meaningless through too much repetition, or is it still the vital spark of old which fired us to action and brave endeavour? Have we grown tired and complacent, tied up with offices and the petty routine of administration, thinking in terms of compromise with the evil with which there can be no compromise? Have we forgotten that we still form part of a slave empire which exploits us and keeps us embedded in dire poverty, and which strangles freedom wherever in this world it fights for breath? Is it in this empire that we will find redemption of our pledge?

There are some among us, whose memory is of the shortest, who have already forgotten the pledge they took and the many brave resolutions that they made. But we do not forget, and we will not allow others to forget. We have pledged ourselves to win full independence, to put an end to imperialism in India and to sever our connection with the empire that encircles us. By that pledge we stand.

We stand by it even more than we did eight years ago for that empire has added to its sins by the butchery of democracy and freedom in central Europe and Spain, and the crushing of the Arab people in Palestine. We will not forget this, and, in war or peace, we shall fight this policy which hands over the world to fascism.

We stand by that pledge even more today because we have seen what petty change has come to us by provincial autonomy, and how imperialism still sits entrenched in the citadels. We see how India's will is

repeatedly ignored in the interests of British finance and industry. We see from day to day the employment of British power to crush the people of the states. Ranpur is a wilderness today,[2] and armed troops gather there from distant parts of India in order to terrorise the people of the Orissa states. In Jaipur, an English Prime Minister[3] dares to challenge not only the people of the state but the Congress organisation itself, a challenge that will be accepted. Everywhere it is becoming apparent that the struggle in the states is not with the helpless rulers but with the grim might of British imperialism.

Is this the way in which the British Government seeks the cooperation of the nationalist movement in provincial autonomy and endeavours to prepare the ground for federation? We have had enough of this foolery and the sooner it is ended the better.

The time has gone by for empty and misleading talk. We are up against the hard realities of the situation and the pledge we take today tells us what path we have to tread and what our inevitable goal is. There is going to be no federation in India of England's choosing. We will have no federation except a federation of a free India. To think or talk in other terms is to betray our pledge and to dishonour ourselves and our cause.

There will be no federation and the provincial autonomy of today must itself fade away and give place to an independent India, a bulwark of democracy and freedom, opposing fascism and imperialism alike. That is the meaning of the pledge.

And so we take the pledge realising its full significance and preparing ourselves for all that it involves. There is no peace or quiet for us or anyone else in the world today. We have to keep our knapsacks on our backs and be ready for the order to march. The people of Europe, in the vicious grip of fascism, and its allies, the governments of England and France, stumble helplessly and seek in vain a path through the darkness that envelops them. But our path is clear.

2. On 5 January 1939, two persons were killed in Ranpur, a small state in Orissa, in a firing ordered by the British political agent, Major Bazalgette. The enraged crowd retaliated by killing the agent.
3. Sir Beauchamp John served Jaipur state from January 1934 to April 1939.

19. On the International Situation[1]

Question: What would be the position in Europe if the main contestants were Britain and France on the one side and Germany and Italy on the other?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It appears that Russia would inevitably be drawn into such a war on the side of the so-called democracies. America would aid the democracies with arms and money if she did not actually declare war herself. Italy and Germany probably would be very soon embarrassed by internal disorders and in those circumstances could not possibly win.

Q: What would be India's attitude in case war breaks out?

JN: India's sympathies are very strongly anti-fascist and therefore she will inevitably wish for the defeat of fascism and the triumph of democracy. The policy which Mr. Chamberlain has pursued since the last crisis is highly repugnant to India, and she has dissociated herself from it in every way.

It must be emphasized that India will not submit to any form of exploitation to further Britain's war effort. But how can India fight for democracy if she herself does not have it?

India's participation in any war will have to be decided by herself.

Q: Do you think that Germany will attack Rumania?

JN: In the event of a conflict between Germany and Rumania, England and France cannot stand by and see Rumania being swallowed by Germany. Britain and France must not allow Germany to acquire the vital petroleum resources of Rumania. They were able, it is true, to watch Czechoslovakia being sacrificed to Germany, and still hoped for

1. Interview to the press, New Delhi, 21 March 1939. From *The Hindustan Times*, 22 March 1939.

peace, at least temporary peace. But Rumania, I believe, would be the last straw. Germany has already bitten off more than she can chew. I am absolutely certain that she cannot continue for long on the present lines. These fragments on her borders are quite indigestible and will form a constant menace to her safety.

Q: What have you to say of Italy's challenge to Britain in the Mediterranean?

JN: Italy's challenge to the ascendancy of Britain in the Mediterranean is of the greatest importance to India. The development of the air arm has put an end to sea power in the old sense, and the position in the Mediterranean has changed accordingly. It is not in India's interest that Italy should dominate this sea, but neither is it in our interest that British imperialism should remain dominant. Neither imperialism nor fascism is agreeable to us or offers any solution.

Q: Do you consider Britain and France as decadent races?

JN: I do not uphold the claims sometimes made in the totalitarian countries that Britain and France are decadent races. It is undeniable that the ruling classes of both the nations are somewhat played out and the present British Government is a perfect instance of this. This deterioration is due to the lack, in both England and France, of men capable of leadership. The great mass of British and French people however retain their vitality and strength. Other groups are now pushing up to replace the ruling classes, and these two nations will be the stronger for it. A certain swing to the right is now discernible in nearly all European countries. This is the result of the leanings of the middle classes who have been sitting on the fence between socialism and capitalism since the Great War, and lately, for fear of communism, are swinging over to the right. But in France, for instance, people will never adopt fascism unless it is forced down their throats, and even in Britain, where people are less fiercely individualistic, totalitarianism will not come to stay.

Q: Do you think India will go fascist at any time?

JN: A lot of foreign propaganda, particularly from Germany and Italy, pours into India to stir up trouble and create an atmosphere favourable to Germany and Italy. I am convinced that India would never go fascist though a section of Indians may become fascist-minded.

Q: What is your comment on the present Congress deadlock?

JN: Mr. Bose would shortly get into touch with Gandhiji and set up his Working Committee in accordance with the Congress resolution.[2] I do not believe in the rumours that Mr. Bose may disobey the Congress resolution in either letter or spirit. There is a growing desire for an early meeting of the A.I.C.C., particularly to discuss the international situation.

2. At the A.I.C.C. meeting at Tripuri, a resolution sponsored by Govind Ballabh Pant expressed confidence in the old Working Committee and strongly urged the President, Subhas Bose, "to nominate the Congress Working Committee in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji". Bose replied that the resolution could not be discussed by the A.I.C.C. because neither the constitution nor past practice allowed him to place the resolution before the A.I.C.C.

20. India and Egypt[1]

It has been a great privilege for us to welcome in India the distinguished members of the Wafd Party in Egypt, who have come here to represent their great national organisation as well as the Egyptian people. We welcomed them as our distinguished guests, but there was something more in our welcome, for they came to us as emblems of the spirit of nationalism and freedom from Egypt. We, in India, who have ourselves been imbued by this spirit and have built up a great organisation to embody that spirit and the struggle against a dominating imperialism for the freedom of our people, found ourselves completely in tune with a like sentiment in Egypt. Our peoples had much in common—close intercourse from the dawn of history, the exchange, even in remote ages past, of ideas and culture and merchandise, and then, in the modern period of history, a common struggle for freedom against a common imperialism. The bonds that linked us together in the past had weakened

1. Allahabad, 27 March 1939. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. This farewell message was sent to the Wafd Party delegation which had come to India under the leadership of Mahmood Bey to attend the fifty-second session of the Indian National Congress at Tripuri from 10 to 12 March 1939.

for long but this common interest and objective brought us together again and I earnestly hope that this visit will strengthen those bonds and make the link between the Egyptian and the Indian peoples an indissoluble one. In the world today freedom is being crushed, the lights go out in many places and darkness and reaction triumph. It is all the more necessary that those who adhere to the ideals of freedom and democracy should hold together and combat the common menace. Great and revolutionary changes are taking place all over the world and there can be no doubt that India will achieve independence and, by virtue of her great resources and manpower, play an important part in world affairs. While we believe in national independence we also believe in world cooperation between nations to ensure peace and freedom and world order.

India and Egypt have their own problems and, while we can learn from each other, we have to shoulder the burden of our problems separately. It is not for us to interfere in each other's internal affairs. But in the many larger tasks that are common to us we can cooperate to each other's advantage and to the advantage of the larger international good. The first step in this direction is to have full knowledge of each other and of our national movements. I hope that the visit of the Egyptian delegation will result in laying the foundations for this mutual knowledge and exchange of information.

The Egyptian delegation have had an exhausting time during their brief stay in India. India is a great country and they travelled vast distances, taking little rest. Even so, they saw only a small fraction of the country. I am sorry that they were unable to visit the universities of Aligarh, Allahabad and Banaras, and the great city of Calcutta as well as the whole of the south and east of India. Our countrymen were eager to welcome them in all these places and were disappointed that the shortness of time should have prevented them from having this pleasure. Brief as has been the tour of the Egyptian delegation in India, they will carry away with them, I hope, a picture, howsoever incomplete, of India of today, full of vitality and new urges, pushing her forward in all directions. They will have some idea of how our movement is based on the masses of our people and how, being a living movement, it reflects, as in a mirror, the ideological and other conflicts which stir the mind of India. After a long period of quiescent existence, the dynamics of history have beckoned to our people, and they march in step with it hoping to fulfil the role which history has assigned to them. That role is one of the closest cooperation with all freedom-loving people and more specially with the people of the Orient.

I trust that the delegates will carry back with them pleasant and lasting memories of their visit to India. They leave behind, wherever

they have been, lasting impressions of friendliness and comradeship between the peoples of the two countries and we shall long cherish these impressions. I hope that it will be possible for us to exchange visits frequently in order to keep our contacts ever fresh. I hope in particular that it may be possible for His Excellency Mustafa Nahas Pasha, the President of the Wafd, to visit us in the future. It is my earnest wish that the National Congress should send representatives to attend the Wafd congress which is to be held in April. If at all possible, this will be done. But it is difficult to be certain in view of the grave international and national problems that we have to face.

I would beg of the delegation to convey to His Excellency Mustafa Nahas Pasha, to the Wafd Party, and to the Egyptian people, the expression of our full faith in the comradeship and the solidarity of our two peoples in the realisation of the ideals we have set before us.

21. To Chen Ming Shu[1]

Allahabad
April 6, 1939

Dear Mr. Chen Ming Shu,[2]
Thank you for your letter of February 17th, which I read with interest.[3] We in India have followed with the greatest sympathy and admiration the struggle of the Chinese people against Japanese aggression. We know that this struggle is a hard one but we are convinced that the people of China will triumph. We give full publicity to the cause of China in India.

As you perhaps know, our medical unit, sent by the Indian National Congress, is functioning in China. We hope to keep this there.

With all good wishes to the cause of Chinese freedom.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. President, Chinese People's Foreign Relations Association.
3. Chen Ming Shu denounced the inhuman conduct of the Japanese forces in China and voiced the determination of his country to resist "until collapse of her enemy and until winning of real peace." He wished Jawaharlal "to take concerted action against the aggressor" in the name of humanity.

22. To Kamil El Chadirchi[1]

Allahabad
April 6, 1939

Dear Friend,[2]

I must apologise to you for the great delay in thanking you for the letter you sent me through Mr. Meherally.[3] It was a great pleasure to me to receive it. We have followed closely the developments in Iraq[4] and have sympathised with the struggle for freedom in the Arab world. We feel that there is much in common between the countries of the Orient and that we should develop contacts with each other. It was our great pleasure to welcome a delegation from the Wafd Party of Egypt to our National Congress last month. Unfortunately I have not been able to pay a visit to Iraq, although I have twice had glimpses of Baghdad in my journey by air. I hope that I shall have the opportunity to visit your country which has had such a magnificent past and which, I hope, has a bright future before it.

I entirely reciprocate your wish that India and Iraq should know each other better and should develop contacts.

With all good wishes to you and to your cause,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary, People's Reform Party in Iraq.
3. In his letter of 13 December 1938, Kamil El Chadirchi wrote highly about India's civilisation, her leaders and the personality and intellectual strength of Jawaharlal. He desired closer relations between his country and India.
4. Though Iraq secured membership of the League of Nations through British initiative in 1932, Britain's control over the country's economic, political and strategic interests remained unchanged. The result was extreme nationalist discontent and disorder in the country.

23. Medical Mission to China[1]

The mission is likely to remain in China for at least another year and possibly for a longer period. One of the doctors with it, Dr. Cholkar,[2] will probably return to India in September next after completing a year. Another member, Dr. Kotnis,[3] may return early in 1940. The other members, Dr. Atal, Dr. Basu[4] and Dr. D. Mukherji,[5] intend staying on much longer. Indeed, Dr. Atal and Dr. Basu have expressed their readiness to remain in China for as long a period as desired by the Chinese. We feel that our mission should stay on there and that any premature withdrawal would be unfortunate and would create a bad impression. But for this purpose additional funds are needed. Donations should be sent to the secretary, Indian National Congress Medical Unit, Congress House, Bombay, or to the All India Congress Committee office, Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad.

1. Appeal for funds for the Indian medical mission to China. *The Hindustan Times*, 8 April 1939.
2. M.R. Cholkar, a Congressman of Nagpur, went with the medical mission to China at the age of sixty, but returned in May 1939 because the climate did not suit him.
3. D.S. Kotnis (1910-1942); left for China on 1 September 1938 with other members of the medical mission; worked on the battle fronts in Chungking and Yenang; died while serving in the military hospital at Kokung.
4. Bijoy Basu (b. 1915); served in China with the Indian medical mission, 1938-43; revisited China in 1957, 1958 and 1973; is now a well-known acupuncture therapist.
5. Debesh Mukherji had to return to India in 1939 due to ill health; was imprisoned during the Quit India movement.

24. To Christine Shaddick[1]

Allahabad
April 18, 1939

My dear Christine,[2]
I have just received your letter of the 10th April.[3] I am glad you wrote to me and told me something of what has been happening behind the scenes. This kind of thing is always happening here on a much bigger scale of course and I am not surprised that Krishna is being put out. But one need not attach too much importance to it. If one did, life would become too much of a burden.

It is difficult to write of all that is taking place. Spain has been a terrible blow and from day to day new things happen which hurt. It is not pleasant to read newspapers or to listen to the radio. But I suppose there is something which makes us carry on in spite of everything, and I cannot say that my outlook is completely pessimistic.

Indira has gone back to Europe in spite of the war scare, and she will be soon in London.

I enclose a cutting from a newspaper which might interest you.

I hope all is well with you and that you will not allow the troubles of the world to suppress your youthful spirits.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. An active member of the India League in London.
3. She complained to Jawaharlal against communist efforts to weaken the India League and set up a rival organisation.

25. To William Rust[1]

Allahabad
April 18, 1939

Dear Comrade Rust,[2]
Thank you for your letter of March 30th.[3] In spite of the heart-breaking things that have happened in Spain, I share your optimism and hope that Spain will rise again. Please give my regards to Aurora whom I remember very well.

We are having a difficult time here, but then no one is having an easy time anywhere.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1903-1949); leading member of the British Communist Party; editor, *Young Worker*, 1924, and *Daily Worker* from 1930.
3. Rust regretted the fascist victory in Spain but hoped that "Spain will rise again and fascism will never gain a permanent grip there."

26. The Wooing of Russia[1]

Twenty years ago the young Soviet Republic was assailed on all sides by powerful nations — England, the United States, France, Japan. Within her own territories, counter-revolution, aided from abroad, raised its ugly head. Without an army, without money, without technical resources or industry, and faced by utter disorganisation following war and defeat and revolution, she hung on the brink of collapse and her enemies counted the hours when they would finally triumph over her. Even her friends

1. Signed article written at Allahabad, 30 May 1939. *National Herald*, 2 June 1939. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 129-133.

thought it an impossible venture, doomed to disappear. But the indomitable will and genius of a great man, embodying a new life and a new hope, triumphed over these amazing odds, and Soviet Russia lived.

Yet they looked upon her with contempt and disdain, an untouchable among nations, of the pariah breed that had dared to challenge her betters. They would not recognise her or deal with her, and insulted her and put every difficulty in her way. She still lived on, ignoring these gibes and intent on creating that new life which had inspired her to this great endeavour. Trial and misfortune came her way and often she erred and suffered for error. But still she went on with faith and energy building the world of her dreams.

Perhaps the dreams did not quite come true, the reality was somewhat different from the picture in the mind. Yet a new world did come into existence, a brave new world, with life and hope and security and opportunity for the millions that inhabited her broad territories. Industry spread with lightning speed, new cities sprang up, agriculture changed its aspect and collective farms replaced the outworn methods of yesterday, literacy became widespread, education and culture grew, the sciences were wooed and their planned methods applied to a nation's regeneration.

The world was interested. What was this strange phenomenon of rapid progress and lack of unemployment when the rest of the world was crushed and throttled by the great depression and unemployment grew everywhere? The statesmen and the chancellories did not approve of this abnormal behaviour. It was a bad example for their own people. They set about intriguing to get the Soviet into trouble; they irritated her by offensive behaviour; they tried to entangle her into wars. But she ignored these insults and refused to be drawn into war. Full of her gigantic programme of national reconstruction, she pursued the policy of peace in foreign affairs, deliberately and consistently.

Meanwhile she built her army and air force and as these grew, respect for her also grew, even among those who disliked her. But with respect there grew also fear, and so they still intrigued and tried to isolate her and to encourage the new fascist powers against her. The upholders of democracy in Europe made love to the Nazis and the fascists, put up with their aggressions, brutalities and vulgar insolence, betrayed those who had relied upon them, were treacherous to their friends and allies, all in the hope of crushing the Soviet and turning Nazi aggression against her. They ignored her at Munich although she was an ally[2] of France

2. Under the Franco-Soviet Pact of 2 May 1935, each country undertook to assist the other in case of unprovoked aggression by any European state.

as well as of the very country they had met to dismember. To the last the Soviet was faithful to her allies and commitments.

Eight months have passed since Munich and the policy of 'appeasement' has had full play. And now the gods laugh. There is no longer any ignoring of Soviet Russia. She has suitors galore, each one trying to win her favour. Even Hitler, the great enemy of communism, is respectful to her and seeks accommodation. France and England pursue her and in soft words try to hide their previous dislike of her.[3] Suddenly Soviet Russia has gained the whip hand in international affairs and it is her decision that will make a vital difference.

For Soviet Russia today is the most powerful country in the Eurasian continent. She is powerful not only because of a great army and vast air force but because of her enormous resources and the strength of the socialist structure she has built up. Hitler's Germany with all her armed might has feet of clay and no sustaining strength for war or peace. She is old already and requires frequent tonics to keep her going. The tonics have come to her through each fresh aggression and through the goodwill of England and France. Her resources are limited, her money power strained to the utmost. France, with her fine army, counts but she has already taken a back seat among the powers. England, with her great empire, where is she today? She has great resources but great weaknesses also; the days of her pride and domination are past.

Where would England be today, or France, or the other countries of western and northern and south-eastern Europe, were it not for Soviet Russia? It is a strange thought that the only effective bulwark against Nazi aggression in Europe is the Soviet. Without Soviet help most of the other countries might even collapse without a struggle. Without that help England's guarantee to Poland or Rumania means little.[4]

There are only two powers in the world today which count in the ultimate analysis—the United States of America and the Soviet Union. The United States are almost unapproachable and their resources are enormous. The Soviet Union is not so favourably situated geographically but is yet almost unbeatable. All other powers are of the second rank compared to these two and have to rely on alliances for their protection. And as time passes the disparity will increase.

3. On 6 May 1939, Chamberlain stated in the House of Commons that both France and Britain were examining certain Soviet proposals regarding Russia's entry into an anti-aggression front. But instead the Soviet Union concluded a non-aggression pact with Germany on 23 August 1939.
4. On 31 March 1939, the British Government assured Poland of full-fledged support in case of any threat to her independence. A similar pledge was given to Rumania on 13 April 1939.

And so Soviet Russia, with all her communism, is wooed by those who hated her, and the gods laugh.

27. England's Dilemma[1]

British foreign policy was traditionally based on the protection of the empire and empire routes, on the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe which gave England a dominating voice, and on the consolidation of British financial supremacy which had lasted for a hundred years prior to the Great War. England's industrial domination began to be challenged by the United States and Germany in the second half of the nineteenth century. Conflicts of imperialisms grew which led to the War of 1914. That war left England politically in a very advantageous position but her financial dominance was challenged by the United States. After a hard conflict with America, she managed to retain that financial position in the world, although she was a debtor nation and the United States were far richer and were the sole creditor nation among the great powers. But the price England paid for this seeming victory was a heavy one and unemployment grew and her industries languished. Then came the great slump.

It was curious that while England had been the leader in introducing political democracy, she was backward in the social sphere. Even today England is far more conservative in social matters than most countries in Europe. The strain of social conflict was avoided or lessened because of her prosperity and the wealth that poured in from the exploitation of her empire. To some small extent her working class became sharers in this new wealth and were imperialist in outlook. England's real proletariat was in India and in the British colonies.

The rise of Soviet Russia and the growth of communist and socialist ideas disturbed the ruling classes of Britain and they tried to put an end to the Soviet soon after the Great War. They failed in this but their attitude of hostility continued. Russia was looked upon as both a social and political danger and so the traditional policy of the foreign office

1. Signed article written at Allahabad, 31 May 1939. *National Herald*, 3, 4 and 6 June 1939. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 134-151.

fitted in with this opposition to her. Japanese aggression in Manchuria led inevitably, unless checked, to the undermining of the whole structure of the League of Nations.[2] And yet it was not only tolerated but encouraged by England. Sir John Simon,[3] who was Secretary for Foreign Affairs then, went out of his way to support Japan, and thus sabotage the League.[4] The whole basis of British policy was then and continued to be in opposition to the Soviet Union and the desire to weaken it both in Europe and the Far East. The foreign office or the British ruling classes were quite clear in their own minds and had no doubts. Some elements in the country might shout and protest but they did not influence policy; only occasionally they influenced the manner of enunciating that basic policy.

The coming of Hitler brought a confusing factor into the situation. The confusion arose in two ways; this threatened to upset the balance of power in Europe, and the British public generally was hostile to Hitler and his methods. But the foreign office continued to pursue its old policy. The threat from Hitler was a remote one while the social and political threat from the Soviet was deemed to be more immediate and dangerous. As for public opinion it was soothed by brave words occasionally while the old policy continued. This policy now aimed at utilising Hitler against the Soviet. And so Hitler was encouraged in every way and in fact Nazi Germany grew in power under the direct protection of the British Government. This encouragement went so far as to alienate and frighten France. The Anglo-German Naval Treaty, made in direct defiance of the treaty of Versailles and of the League, and without even the knowledge of the French Government, agitated France so much that she rushed into the arms of Mussolini and gave guarantees not to interfere if Abyssinia was invaded. Mussolini knew that if France did not interfere, neither would England. He had a free field now. Thus the Abyssinian invasion was the direct result of British policy.

It was not wholly liked by Britain for certain British imperial interests were involved—the upper waters of the Nile, the Suez Canal and the

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 54.
3. (1873-1954); lawyer and politician; Liberal M.P., 1906; attorney general, 1915; Home Secretary, 1915-16; chairman, Indian Statutory Commission, 1927-30; Foreign Secretary, 1931-35; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1937-40; Lord Chancellor in the war-time coalition government, 1940-45.
4. Defending the Japanese aggression in Manchuria, Simon stated in the House of Commons on 27 February 1933: "The action of the Japanese army does not in the least resemble the invasion by a foreign force on some other country, because Japan, in fact, has exceptional rights over strips of territory there."

Mediterranean. A conflict thus arose between these British imperial interests and the policy that the foreign office was pursuing. The latter prevailed as the British Government was totally averse to bringing about the downfall of the fascist regime in Italy. Their policy aimed at protecting fascism and Nazism and combating communism through them. The social danger was considered greater than the political. But British public opinion was strongly opposed to Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia and something had to be done to soothe it. The League agreed to some relatively harmless sanctions and Sir Samuel Hoare, then Foreign Secretary, delivered a speech expounding the principles of the League and swearing by collective security—a speech that was duly applauded.[5] England felt very virtuous and pleased with herself, as she always does when her imperial interests are made to fit in with high morality. That same Sir Samuel very soon after entirely forgot his Geneva speech and entered into a secret pact about Abyssinia with Monsieur Laval.[6] This leaked out and came as a shock to the British public which had been given no time to adjust itself to the *volte face*. Sir Samuel had to go and Mr. Eden appeared on the scene.

But there was no great change in policy, and, despite the agitation of the public in England, the foreign office calmly continued on its predetermined course. President Roosevelt's suggestion to introduce oil sanctions,[7] which could have crippled Italy, was ignored and instead the British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company worked night and day to provide oil to Italy. The rape of Abyssinia was completed.

Meanwhile Hitler took advantage of the situation to advance and consolidate his position. France grew increasingly alarmed but England smiled, though sometimes protesting, at each step of Nazi Germany.

5. In his speech at Geneva on 11 September 1935, Sir Samuel Hoare reaffirmed his country's support to the League and the interest of the British people in collective security.
6. Pierre Laval (1883-1945); French politician; Prime Minister, 1931, and again in 1935-37; collaborated with the Nazis, 1940-41; tried for treason and executed after the war. Under the Hoare-Laval plan announced on 13 December 1935 for the settlement of the Italo-Abyssinian conflict, it was proposed to hand over to Italy the effective ownership and control of a half of Abyssinian territory. This plan aroused much indignation in Britain and Hoare resigned on 18 December 1935.
7. Roosevelt announced on 5 October 1935 a ban on export of arms, ammunitions and implements of war to Italy and Ethiopia. But oil which was needed most by Italy was not classified as ammunition or an implement of war. Roosevelt, therefore, resorted to a moral embargo by appealing to American exporters to hold their sales to Italy to normal pre-war levels.

The revolt in Spain followed, carefully engineered by Italy and Germany and with their help. This was the acid test. Here was a democratically elected government being attacked by a military clique at home aided by mercenaries and foreign powers. What would have Mr. Chamberlain done, as Mr. Lloyd George has recently asked, if Russia had fomented revolution in Spain? Would he have smiled at it and signed a pact with Stalin?

There was another difficulty—Britain's imperial interests were directly concerned here and there was danger to the empire if Spain passed into hostile hands. The balance of power in Europe would be completely upset, the Nazi-fascist bloc would gain a dominating position, France would be encircled, the Mediterranean would be controlled by enemy powers, Gibralter could not hold out and the great trade routes would be seriously threatened. Still the foreign office pursued its old policy, for its aversion to the growth of democracy and socialism was greater even than its love of empire. Non-intervention, which meant helping Italian and German intervention and throttling the Spanish Republic, was proclaimed.

British ships were sunk in the Mediterranean and there was an outcry in England.[8] The foreign office was troubled at last and began to think that this immediate danger was perhaps greater than the social danger. For a brief while it showed firmness and at Nyon Mr. Eden announced that England would not tolerate this, and would take swift action if this piracy continued.[9] For the first time England was showing her teeth to the Nazi and fascist powers and there was an immediate improvement in the situation.

Mr. Eden and the foreign office had come to the conclusion that this change was necessary and for a brief while they had their way. But not for long for Mr. Neville Chamberlain thought otherwise. He was completely wedded to the wooing of Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini, and he hated this new democratic Spain and even more so the Soviet Union. So Eden went and gave place to Lord Halifax.[10]

8. Unidentified submarines and aeroplanes sank several ships of Britain, France and other countries. Subsequently, on 14 September 1937, an agreement was signed at Nyon in Switzerland by nine powers including Britain and France for the immediate adoption of anti-piracy patrols.
9. In a broadcast from Geneva, Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, declared: "the problem that confronted the powers at the Nyon conference was that of the masked highwayman who does not stop short of manslaughter or even murder. What we have done is to authorise the patrolling vessels to counter-attack and, if possible, destroy any submarine actually engaged in piracy."
10. Eden who became Foreign Secretary on 22 December 1935 resigned on 20 February 1938 because of differences on foreign policy with Chamberlain.

II

The inner cabinet, after the resignation of Mr. Eden, consisting of the Prime Minister, Lord Halifax, Sir John Simon and Sir Samuel Hoare, had no dissenting voice to trouble them. They could follow the policy of 'appeasement' unchecked whatever the consequences to England and her empire. The dilemma did not trouble them for the most urgent task was not to irritate Hitler or Mussolini.

As Signor Mussolini was bent on destroying the Spanish Republic, the sooner this was done the better. The British Government hurried to conclude a pact with Signor Mussolini and compelled France to close her Spanish frontier. They waited impatiently for the Spanish Republic to expire but, to their great irritation, it refused to die. Indeed it seemed to gather new strength. Mr. Chamberlain looked rather ridiculous with his Anglo-Italian Pact and it became a point of honour with him to justify himself by doing everything to end the republic. If British ships were torpedoed or bombed, he justified this as the natural punishment for those who took the risk of taking food to the republic. The world was divided in sympathy over Spain. Fierce loyalties were aroused. There was no doubt on which side Mr. Chamberlain's loyalty lay.

The policy of appeasement continued. The centre of trouble shifted to central Europe. Hitler threatened Austria. Mr. Chamberlain publicly stated that he would not intervene in Austria. It was an invitation to Hitler and he promptly took advantage of it and marched in.

Czechoslovakia was threatened. The foreign office, perhaps forgetting Mr. Chamberlain, ordered the withdrawal of the British ambassador from Berlin if Germany invaded Czechoslovakia.[11] The Czechs mobilised overnight and the crisis of March 1938 passed. Herr Hitler was angry at this check to his plans. And so apparently were Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax. The foreign office had taken the bit into its own teeth and spoilt the even tenor of appeasement. This could not be tolerated, and so Sir Robert Vansittart, the permanent head of the foreign office, was removed and promoted to some inconspicuous position, and his place was taken by Sir Horace Wilson.

Sir Horace was the right man to push appeasement. He was pro-Nazi and fiercely anti-Soviet. He was closely associated with the important and influential group which functioned on behalf of Nazi Germany in

11. Sir Neville Henderson (1882-1942); British diplomat, sympathetic to Hitler; author of *Failure of a Mission*. The British Government decided on 17 March 1938 to recall him.

England. There was the Cliveden set,[12] and the owner and the editor of *The Times*, and the pro-Franco enthusiasts. Small in numbers, they dominated the government and Mr. Neville Chamberlain was their especial pet. The fifth column was now in full control of England's foreign policy.

Step by step this policy developed in central Europe and in Spain. Lord Runciman was sent to break the back of the Czechs and encourage the Nazis. Munich came and the triumph of appeasement was complete. Mr. Chamberlain was the hero who had brought peace. There was deep tragedy in a million homes in Czechoslovakia and the concentration camps were full. A brave people had been betrayed by those they had looked upon as their friends. There was contempt for England and France all over the world. But what did this matter if the old game, to satisfy Hitler in the west and drive him to attack the Soviet, was progressing satisfactorily? The Soviet had been ignored and isolated. England was the best ally of Hitler and if all went well, a measure of fascism, of course under democratic garb, might be introduced in England also.

But all did not go well, although Spain, Republican Spain, that had shouldered the burden of the world's fight for freedom, lay stabbed to death by England and France. Mr. Chamberlain and his government had paid a heavy price and taken many risks and the time had come when the reward for this persistence in appeasement should come to them, the reward of a Germany, satiated in the west, turning east, and coming to grips with the Soviet. But the reward receded into the distance. There were still succulent morsels in the east and south-east of Europe which Hitler might pick up, but what then? Suddenly it became obvious that Germany had no intention of coming into conflict with the Soviet Union. She had too much respect for the Soviet's military machine, and no desire to get entangled in the vast areas of the Soviet country. It was easier to take the succulent morsels and then lock the backdoor in the east and turn west.

This was an alarming prospect. The whole edifice of appeasement was tottering. The price had been paid not only in the blood and suffering of millions, in the sacrifice of democracy, in the loss of respect

12. Cliveden was the home of the Astor family. Lady Astor's house parties there in the 1930s led to talk of the 'Cliveden set' to which belonged Geoffrey Dawson, editor of *The Times*, J.L. Garvin, editor of the *Observer*, and Lord Lothian. In the late 1930s the 'Cliveden set' greatly influenced the shaping of the policy of appeasement.

and prestige, but also in the handing over of vital strategic points to the potential enemies. And nothing had been received in exchange. Well might the men in power in England and France think sorrowfully of the lost legions of Czechoslovakia, of the great Skoda works[13] which might have worked for them and now would produce munitions for the enemy. Well might they regret bitterly what they had done in Spain.

The final end of the Czech state, the absorption of Memel into Germany,[14] the invasion of Albania, followed each other rapidly.[15] There was mounting alarm in England and even the Tories grumbled and threatened to revolt against the policy of appeasement. There was much talk of democracy in danger, that democracy which had been twice killed by these very people in Czechoslovakia and in Spain. It was not love of democracy or freedom that moved the Tories but fear of losing their empire and perhaps their own country's freedom. The old dilemma faced them with added force now. Shall we safeguard our empire by stopping and destroying the fascists, or should we continue to safeguard our social system by avoiding war and following the policy of appeasement through further concessions and further vacillation? These concessions had so far been at other peoples' cost but the time had come when payment might have to be made out of one's own living flesh. Munich and what followed had terribly weakened England and France; any further appeasement might enfeeble them so much as to make resistance difficult. Russia, the one power that might save them, was sullen and angry and in no mood to fall into any trap.

The immediate danger was too great to be ignored, and the other danger to the social system took a second place. There was a great outcry in England that appeasement must be given up and a firm line adopted against Nazi Germany and fascist Italy in cooperation with Soviet Russia. Mr. Neville Chamberlain, clever politician that he is, bowed to the blast and declared a change in policy. There were rejoicings everywhere and a nightmare seemed to have ended.

But had Mr. Chamberlain changed his policy? He had given guarantees to Poland and Rumania, guarantees which he could not effectively honour without Soviet aid. The choice was to approach the Soviet and

13. A well-equipped arms factory in Czechoslovakia; after March 1939, it provided sophisticated military equipment to Nazi forces.
14. On 22 March 1939, the Lithuanian Parliament ratified the transfer of Memel to Germany.
15. On 7 April 1939 (Good Friday), Italian troops landed at four Albanian ports and occupied the entire country in two days.

come to an agreement with it,[16] or, when the hour came, to forget the guarantee and betray again.

III

Had Mr. Chamberlain changed? This was unlikely. He is a stubborn man with firm ideas about foreign policy, and, despite everything that had happened in central Europe and Spain, he had stuck to that policy. His governing passion was dislike of Russia and all that the Soviet stands for. Was he going to get rid of his complexes and his prejudices and admit the failure of his policy? This was highly unlikely, and his past record of dishonoured assurances and double-crossing had left little faith in his political honesty. Even if he declared a change in policy, how many would believe him?

But his acts spoke more loudly than his words and made it clear that he stuck as of old to appeasement. In spite of Albania he continued with the Anglo-Italian Treaty.[17] In spite of the tragedy and horror of Spain and her starving refugees, his representative graced Franco's victory parade in Madrid.[18] Sir Neville Henderson, that pro-Nazi champion of appeasement, was sent back to his ambassador's post in Berlin—there to be insulted by Von Ribbentrop,[19] who was too busy to see him. *The Times* of London, in its own mischievous way, suggested that Danzig was not worth fighting for and so, as in the case of the Sudetenland last year, invited Germany to take possession of it.[20] It is notorious that *The Times* represents in such matters Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax. In the House of Commons Mr. Chamberlain refuses to give an

16. The Anglo-Soviet negotiations finally broke down when Britain and Poland could not agree with the Russian demand that she should move her troops across north Poland and Galicia in order to forestall an attack.
17. Speaking in the House of Commons on 13 April 1939, Chamberlain stated: "No doubt some would say that we should now declare that the Anglo-Italian agreement must be considered at an end. I do not take that view myself."
18. The victory parade celebrating Franco's triumph in the civil war was held at Madrid on 19 May 1939.
19. Joachim Von Ribbentrop (1893-1948); Nazi diplomat and politician; German ambassador to Britain, 1936; Foreign Minister under the Nazis, 1938-45; tried as war criminal at Nuremburg and executed.
20. Germany demanded the return to the Reich of Danzig, and with the invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939, the reunion of Danzig with the German Reich was proclaimed.

there is no certainty that appeasement will end. Munichs may come during that war. Some able observers are of opinion that it is highly likely that after a few weeks of carnage, when the nerves of the people are thoroughly shaken up, Mr. Chamberlain may be offered and might accept an advantageous separate peace, ensuring fascism at home and abroad. The war would help in establishing the apparatus for internal fascism.

In France today there is a military dictatorship and the Chamber of Deputies does not count for much.[24] Certain democratic liberties are allowed to continue but they are at the mercy of the authorities. France that denied arms and even food to the Spanish Republic is now pouring in arms to Franco. All the arms that the republican troops left in France are being given to Franco. The Spanish gold that was in Paris and was not given to the republic, is also being handed over to Franco, and Franco belongs to the Berlin-Rome Axis. Is this an abandonment of appeasement? Is this the way to build up a democratic peace front?

Let us be clear about it. The same old policy of appeasement continues and the same old betrayals will follow. For the fear of social change is greater than any other fear in the minds of those who govern England and France. So long as Mr. Chamberlain is in control, there will be no essential change, and even if events force his hands, he will hanker after his old way and return to it whenever he can.

But in the minds even of the governing classes of England there is this dilemma: shall we safeguard our empire by stopping fascist aggression and destroying fascism, or safeguard our social system by avoiding war at all costs and giving further concessions to Nazi Germany and fascist Italy? Mr. Chamberlain has no doubt about his answer. He sticks to the social system and to fascism.

We in India have no such dilemma, for we want the end of that empire as well as of that social system. And so whether war comes now or is delayed, we cannot take part in it, except as a free country making a free choice in favour of real democracy and peace. There is or can be neither democracy nor peace under Mr. Chamberlain's lead or under British imperialist control. That is the way of fascism and betrayal of democracy. That way can only lead to the further exploitation and humiliation of India.

24. The Chamber of Deputies adopted a bill introduced on 17 March 1939, which gave the Daladier government special and undefined powers to decree measures for the reinforcement of national defence.

It is an irony of fate that Mr. Neville Chamberlain should pose as the leader of British democracy when he believes in fascism, and has done perhaps more than any other person to enfeeble democracy; that Monsieur Daladier should be the dictator of France, and that Lord Halifax and the pro-Nazi Monsieur Bonnet should be foreign ministers of England and France. Is it from these people that democracy will seek inspiration or hope for deliverance? How petty they all look before a great democratic figure like Roosevelt.

But we should not be misled by these false prophets of democracy. Democracy for us means freedom for our people. That is our acid test.

28. The New China[1]

The news agencies feed us with news of Europe and of what Herr Hitler says or Mr. Neville Chamberlain denies. We hear little about China except that an air raid has taken place and there have been hundreds or thousands of casualties. It is one of our many unfortunate disabilities that we depend almost entirely for our foreign news service on a British agency which looks at news not from our point of view but definitely from the British imperialist viewpoint. Its offices in London decide what is good for us to have and a restricted measure of this is poured out to us from day to day. What Lord Zetland or someone else says may be interesting, but it is not exactly world news. Reuter's, however, still think that we wait eagerly for the golden words that fall from the mouths of the big officials of the India Office. Meanwhile, real world news for which we hanker is denied to us.

Any person who has travelled East, to Malaya or Java, knows the tremendous difference between the news supply there and in India. Fresh news pours in there about China, the Far East, America and even Europe, and not only fresh news but a fresh outlook, which is a pleasant change after the Reuter service. This fresh news comes through the American agencies which unfortunately do not reach India.

So we hear little in India about China. Fortunately the *Herald* has made a particular feature of news from China and although it does not

1. Signed article written at Allahabad, 15 June 1939. *National Herald*, 18 June 1939. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 11-15.

get them telegraphically, it publishes frequently special articles on conditions in China. There is no lack of news if only we can get it, for China today is news in every sense of the word.

She is news because what is happening in China is of enormous significance to the world, to Asia, and to India. China is one of the key countries of the world, and in the world perspective, she counts more than the small warring countries of Europe. In any event, to Asia and to us in India, she and her future are of prime importance.

China is news also because of the vast scale of horrible destruction that the Japanese armies have perpetrated there. Do we realise what the small news items that we read mean? Daily bombing of great cities, the killing of tens of thousands, the cruelty and inhumanity of modern warfare.

But, above all, she is news because of her heroic resistance and the way she has overcome the tremendous difficulties she had to face. Only a great people could have done that; a great people, not merely because they are the heirs to a great past, but because they have established their claim to the future. It is difficult in this changing world to prophesy, but every indication points to China emerging victorious from her present trials. In a military sense, she is stronger today, after two years of warfare, than she was at the commencement of the war. She is hardened, better organised, better equipped, and she has developed a kind of warfare which suits her technical inferiority and her wide spaces. The morale of her people is excellent, and the army and the peasantry pull together in a common undertaking. Most of the old generals, timid, compromising and incompetent, have given place to younger men trained in the hard field of experience. The old ones were politically irremovable to begin with, but when disasters came and their incompetence was manifest, they had to go.

Today it is well recognised in foreign military circles, and this includes the German war chiefs, that unless something very extraordinary occurs, China will win, though it may take her time to do so. The Chinese people and their leaders do not underrate their task. They take the long view and say that, so far as they are concerned, the war has just begun.

What extraordinary event can occur which might imperil China's chances? It is highly unlikely that Japan by herself can succeed in crushing Chinese resistance. But if the United States of America or England deliberately adopted an anti-Chinese policy, it might make a difference. The United States will not do so for it will go counter to their whole Far Eastern policy. What of England? The England of Mr. Neville Chamberlain is capable of anything. Today, however, she is definitely pro-Chinese. What she will be tomorrow only Mr. Chamberlain knows.

Behind the war and inhumanity and violence, there is something happening in China which is of vital significance. A new China is rising, rooted in her culture, but shedding the lethargy and weaknesses of ages, strong and united, modern and with a human outlook. The unity that China has achieved in these years of trial is astonishing and inspiring. It is not merely unity in defence, but a unity in work and in building up. Behind the war fronts, in the vast undeveloped hinterland of China, there are vast schemes afoot which are changing the face of the country. In spite of continuous danger of bombing from the air, industries are growing up, and what is especially interesting, a scheme of cooperatives for the small and cottage industries is taking rapid shape, even within ear-shot of the guns. The great advantage of these cottage and small industries is that they can be quickly established in the devastated regions, and can be moved if danger threatens.

This is the new China that is growing up in the smoke of war and in the midst of devastation on an unparalleled scale. We have much to learn from her.

29. Spain—A Year Ago[1]

A year ago, or to be more accurate, a year and a week ago, on June 14, 1938, we landed at Genoa. We had decided to go to Spain, Republican Spain, as quickly as we could manage it, and so we left immediately by air for Marseilles and flew over the winding and beautiful coastline of the Riviera. Passport and police formalities had to be attended to in Marseilles and, without taking rest or food, we went to various offices there, being referred by one to the other. I had a special visa for Spain

1. This and the following three articles written by Jawaharlal on his visit to Spain in 1938 were first printed in the *National Herald* on 25 June, 30 June, 9 July and 23 July 1939, and later reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 59-85, with the following note by him: "These essays, written a year after my visit to warring Spain, were attempts to capture and imprison in the written word the impressions I had gathered there. Unfortunately, as is usual with me, I had kept no record and made no notes, and impressions fade with the lapse of time and memory plays strange tricks. And yet those impressions were vivid enough and much has remained in my mind and will remain, even though the stock of fresh horror and disaster overlays them. I could not finish, as I had intended, this writing down of past experiences. This is thus an unfinished fragment."

and we held a letter from the Spanish Government inviting us to visit them and charging their representatives to give us every facility and help.

Armed with these we thought that no difficulties would come our way. But we were mistaken, and hour after hour we rushed from one corner of Marseilles to another, from one bureau to a second one and then to a third, only to be sent on to yet another. We discovered that more photographs were necessary and so we searched for and found a photographer, who did the work in a few minutes with his automatic machine.

My visa for Spain was not good enough, I was told by the lady in charge of one office. It was written in English and why should a French office take cognizance of the English language? I offered to translate the few words but the lady was adamant. So we went to the British consulate and obtained another visa, this time in French, and returned to the determined lady of the bureau. But, we were told, you have not paid the fee yet. We offered to do so and she smiled disdainfully at our ignorance. The fee had to be paid at some police office some miles away and the receipt for it brought to the passports bureau.

We had to obey the voice of authority and to the police office we went and made payment and brought back the receipt in triumph. What, said the lady, you have only paid half the proper amount. This is not good enough. Evidently we had misunderstood her or somebody had made a mistake. There was no help for it but to go back wearily to the police office again. We had to hurry for the time for the closing of the bureau was near.

At last the right sum was paid, the proper receipt obtained, and the lady of the bureau, taking pity at our distress, smiled at us and gave us the stamp of authority. She had kept her bureau open for us, though evening had crept in and all other offices had closed down for the day.

And now remained the Spanish consulate, for its permission was also necessary, and there we went, fearing that it may have closed for the day. Closed it was, but the papers we had worked wonders and the locked doors opened and we were given warm welcome.

At last we had got what we wanted. Night was falling and we were tired out, hungry and sleepy. The Spanish consul joined us at dinner but we were poor company and all we could think of was bed and sleep.

So ended our first day in Europe. The early dawn of the next day, at four thirty in the morning, we hastened to the aerodrome to take the plane to Barcelona. The deep-blue Mediterranean lay under us and the coastline of Spain stretched out in the distance. Soon we were flying over Spanish soil and we tried to discover signs of war and destruction. There were none to be seen from that height and peace seemed to reign over the land.

We reached our destination, the airport of Barcelona, a few miles from the city. Some mistake had been made, there was no one to meet us, and for a while we did not quite know what to do. After some waiting a motor bus carried us to the city. We passed between rich and smiling fields, and occasionally there were houses in ruins by the roadside, apparently bombed from the air. But the aspect was peaceful and men and women were working in the fields.

Barcelona appeared in the distance, spread out along the coast and going right into the interior, clinging to the petty hills that dotted the landscape. It had a gracious appearance as it lay basking in the sunshine. Full of years and experience she seemed, with the burden of long history behind her, and yet strong and vital, smiling a warm welcome, despite her present sorrow, to the stranger who approached her.

We crept into her broad boulevards and the streets were full of people, laughing and gay, hurrying to their work or business. The trams, crowded with passengers, were going to and fro; the shops were open; the theatres and cinemas and concert-houses apparently flourished. Amazed, we looked at this moving scene of a great city's life. Was this the capital of a war government struggling for life against foreign invasion and domestic reaction, with the fronts only a few miles away, and life hovering over the edge of death? Was this the city which was daily bombed from the air and which was continually facing death from the skies?

The evidence of war was obvious enough. Huge structures lay in ruins, exposing their charred interiors. Streets and pavements were torn up by the bombs that fell on them, and gaping chasms stared at us. The shops though open were poorly supplied and there were no luxury goods to be seen. Men's clothes and women's were old and often worn out. The soldier in uniform was everywhere in evidence. And though the people laughed, as Spaniards will, their faces were grave and pinched, and sorrow hung in the air. The women of Spain, wrapped in their mantillas, graceful and attractive as ever, with the smile lurking at the corner of their mouths, had anxiety in their dark eyes. Hatless they went, for hats were unnecessary luxuries and they had abandoned them in token of their new freedom. But whether they were gay or sorrowful, there was pride in their looks and gait, and determination.

We reached our hotel, the Hotel Majestic, and telephoned immediately to the foreign office. Very soon a young lady from the ministry of propaganda and publicity came over to see us, profuse with apologies. Very efficient and charming she was, and she took charge of us and made arrangements for our stay and programme. During our brief stay in Barcelona she was our guide and friend and gave thought to every detail connected with our visit.

Five days we spent in this beautiful city, and five nights to the accompaniment of aerial bombardment. Five days and nights, crowded with events and impressions, the memory of which will endure.

II

Was it only a year ago that I was in Spain? Ages have gone by since then with all their burden of shock and sorrow, and the counting of time by the passage of the sun and the moon seems a poor and unreal measure of the flood of emotions and experiences that add to our years. The men and women that I met in Spain, brave and gracious and vital, emblems of a nation's hope, are phantom figures today. Many are dead, many others are wandering refugees. But memory's storehouse is crowded by them and by the impressions I gathered during those brief days in Spain. Sometimes these impressions are so vivid that it seems but yesterday that I was there, and sometimes it seems a thousand years ago, and I feel old, very old. Time is a strange, elusive companion for us, but memory's tricks are stranger still, the haunting memory of things long forgotten, the sudden and fleeting glimpses into the world of the unconscious, the faint impress of the early days of the race and of humanity itself. Very old are we men, and the whisper of Eve's nightingales still sounds in our ears and dreams of Eden disturb us; and the tragedies of past ages bear us down.

We met many people in Barcelona and the neighbourhood and some of them stand out, vivid and living pictures in the mind. And yet the individual lost significance in the mass phenomena that we saw. In the early days of the revolt, as we had read and were told, the government and the people were totally unprepared. Chaos reigned everywhere, government offices did not function, the army, such as it was, went to pieces. Yet behind this chaos there was a fierce will to resist, and the people, unarmed or badly armed, hurled themselves at the advancing enemy. They put an end to the dreams of an easy victory which General Franco nourished, and checked his armies in many places. Madrid was saved by a supreme effort, and for two years the flag of the republic proudly flew over its battlements, although the enemy occupied the outskirts and bombed the city almost daily.

But the checks could only be momentary unless they were backed by trained armies and munitions. The value of human courage and endurance is immeasurable but, in terms of modern warfare, they cannot survive trained armies with their machine-guns and tanks and bombing aircraft. So Franco's armies advanced. They consisted largely of

Moorish troops and Italians and Germans, and were fed by a plentiful supply of munitions from Italy and Germany. Two highly efficient general staffs, the German and the Italian, controlled their major operations and supplied them with competent generalship. The problem before the Spanish republican government was to build up a new army under peculiarly difficult circumstances, when they were fighting with their backs to the wall, and were being harassed by the non-intervention policy of England and France. They had to organise government departments anew and to provide for food and clothing for the army and the people.

It was a vast problem even for peace time; with a life and death struggle going on, it seemed almost beyond human capacity. Yet the leaders of the republic tackled it and, in spite of every difficulty and discouragement, stuck to it. Internal conflicts weakened them and delayed progress. When I reached Spain I saw the result of two years' continuous effort and it was an astonishing sight for me. The old chaos and comic opera situation had given place to the ordered functioning of an efficient government and a magnificent army had been built up almost out of nothing.

I visited many government offices and met the ministers and heads of departments, though unfortunately I did not meet Senor Negrin,[2] the Prime Minister, who was away in Madrid during my stay in Barcelona. These offices were humming with ordered activity, which is the sign of efficiency. There was no slackness visible or indolence, nor excited haste. The people in charge went about their business with a quiet enthusiasm. They were often new to their tasks and their manner was different and more informal than that of an old civil servant who had become a part of the machine itself. But the changing circumstances required adaptability which the civil servant type seldom possesses. This adaptability they had, and what they lacked in experience they made up by their keenness at their work and their desire to get things done. After a few days' observation, it would be improper for me to pass judgment. But the general impression I gathered was one of surprising efficiency and coordination. There must have been, and indeed were, conflicts and failings, but they were not obvious on the surface.

The food problem was grave. There was the army to be fed, and the populations of great cities, and the vast number of refugees from Franco's territories. There was no milk to be seen or butter, and of both meat and vegetables and bread there was a lack. We could judge of this by the kind of food we ourselves got as guests of the government in the best

2. Lopez Juan Negrin (1889-1956); Prime Minister of republican Spain, 1937-39.

hotel of Barcelona. Our breakfast consisted of a cup of black coffee with half a small roll of bread, without any other accompaniment. At lunch and dinner we had one meagre course accompanied by a green vegetable. Even potatoes were not to be had. If that was the lot of the favoured ones, what of the others? A reception was given in our honour by the President or Speaker of the Cortes (the Spanish Parliament). The refreshments supplied consisted mainly of one or two varieties of sandwiches.

But though food was scarce and was growing scarce, the army could not be kept hungry and their demands were first supplied. Next came the children who got such milk as there was. There were vast numbers of children among the refugees and scores of children's colonies had been established by the government. We visited one of these, situated in a fine villa with a garden attached, and there we saw the children at work and play in pleasant surroundings. Many of them were orphans from distant parts of the country, and shock and disaster had come to their homes and left their impress upon them. But the lady in charge of them knew her job well and, with gentleness and affection, she trained them to live their communal life in the colony. Little details were attended to in order to give an aesthetic background to the child. The rooms were simply but agreeably furnished, and even the bed-linen was cunningly devised to please the child.

Apart from the children's colonies or homes, where children lived as at a boarding school, there were children's dining halls in some parts of the city where any child who came would be fed. Such establishments, we were told, were usually started by some organisation or by the soldiers at the front, with the help of the municipality. This, and such-like contacts, brought the new army very close to the people. We were fortunate in being present at the opening ceremony of one such children's dining hall. Lister's famous division in the army had fathered it and representative officers and men from the division with their band came to take part in the ceremony. The soldiers looked to the people to feed them; the soldiers, in their turn, wanted to help in feeding the children of the people. In this dining hall three thousand children could be fed daily.

The dining hall was a pleasant sight with cheerful decorations on the walls. Rows of girls neatly dressed in blue with caps and aprons welcomed the guests and children that came. These girls were the voluntary workers who would serve the children in the hall. Outside and inside the hall, crowds of excited children stood by, full of animation and expectation.

The night before the ceremony, Barcelona had experienced three air raids and some of the bombs had fallen in that particular area, not far from the new children's dining hall whose opening we were witnessing.

III

On our second day in Barcelona we left early in the morning for the front and remained there till late in the evening. It was a two-hour drive, and armed with permits and accompanied by a Spanish officer, we had no difficulty in passing the numerous checking-places beyond which ordinary traffic was not allowed. The villages we passed through bore evident signs of war, but more significant than these visible emblems was the very atmosphere of the place. The air was heavy with that ominous quiet which apparently lies behind the battle line. Life is still there and does not run its normal course, and waits for the periodic outbursts of infernal noise.

We went to Lister's headquarters. We had heard a great deal of Lister and Modesto, two army commanders who had risen rapidly from the ranks and were now among the republic's most trusted generals. Next to General Miaja,[3] the gallant defender of Madrid, these two appeared to be the best known and popular. Miaja was of the old guard, a professional army officer who stuck to the republic when a great part of the army rebelled. But Modesto and Lister were civilians at the time, following very modest and non-martial vocations. One was a tailor, the other a mason. They joined up when the call came for men for the new army to fight the rebels and soon showed remarkable capacity. They rose by successive steps rapidly from the ranks and in two years' time, when I visited Spain, each of them was commanding a hundred thousand men and had a brilliant record of achievement in the war to his credit.

We just missed meeting Modesto and were sorry for this. But Lister we saw and spent the best part of the afternoon with him, sharing in his frugal meal. He was an impressive person with a frank, attractive face, like that of a boy who has grown up quickly into manhood. A curious mixture of boyishness and grown-up-ness he was, his light-hearted and infectious laughter giving place to gravity. The responsibility on him was great and the burdens he had to carry heavy. From day to day he had to face difficult situations, and where the danger was greatest and the enemy were advancing, he or Modesto were hurried to confront

3. General Jose Miaja (1878-1958); republican commander of Madrid during the Spanish civil war.

them. Yet he did not lose his charm or gaiety and his whole bearing radiated self-confidence and assurance. He was the happy warrior whom nothing seemed to dismay and who was a pillar of strength when the outlook was darkest.

I watched him closely for I wanted to find out what these new officers of the popular army were like. We know the old military type, a stern disciplinarian, usually limited in intelligence and wedded to routine, living in the past and hating innovations which upset his conceptions of warfare. This type proved a dismal failure during the last Great War, but yet to a large extent he dominates armies. We know this type well in India and we often have to suffer platitudinous advice from him. Have we not been told often enough by him that it will take generations before Indians can grow up into his semblance (if they can ever reach these resplendent heights) and become senior officers. Alas for this old type which shines so much at polo and bridge and on the parade ground, but is so out of place today. He has had his day and has to give place to the mechanic and the engineer and the highbrow who understands the intricacies of modern mechanised warfare. He will have to give place to the soldier who does not form a superior class apart, far removed from the rank and file, but is the commander of popular forces, maintaining the discipline that is essential to an army, and yet one in comradeship with those he commands.

It was this new type that I saw in Lister. He introduced me to many officers and took me to an officers' training school, and everywhere I sensed the new atmosphere of informality and comradeship and the strong binding link of a cause which they were pledged to defend. Yet there was discipline. In this school I noticed the care that was taken to give political education to the officers. Even after they left their school and joined their regiments this education was not neglected for each regiment had a political commissar attached to it, whose advice on the political aspects of any question that arose was always sought by the commander. It was the business of the commissar to keep up the morale of the troops.

One of the most notable feats of the Spanish Republic was to build up within two years a very fine army with thousands of competent officers. If the republic fell in the end, it was not this army that failed. It was hunger that killed it and the treachery of England and France. The old officers, with a few notable exceptions like Miaja, proved unreliable and incompetent, as in the case of China. Many of the defeats were due to these old officers but as the new popular type officer grew in numbers, the army stiffened. One thing the new officers lacked and that was long training in strategy. They had no time to learn much of theory from

books. Their school-house was too often the battlefield itself. They learned much from this and improved rapidly, but for the superior officers it was a much more difficult task to get used to the quick handling of masses of men as the fortunes of a battle changed and new situations developed. Therein they could not compare with the highly trained German and Italian staffs which directed operations on Franco's side.

This was a serious handicap to the republic but it got over it progressively, and out of the crowd of its officers, some exceptionally able men, like Modesto and Lister, were thrown out. As against this handicap, the republic had a far superior rank and file, and more competent and eager officers of middle rank. Given enough food and munitions, there can be no doubt that the new republican army would have triumphed over Franco's professionals and experts, in spite of their German and Italian staffs and superiority in heavy armaments and aircraft.

I was greatly impressed by this new army and its training. We were taken then to see the International Brigade[4] which had won so much fame during the war. This had been originally composed entirely of foreign volunteers, but when I visited them, sixty per cent of them were Spaniards. The republican government was discouraging foreign volunteers from joining as their object was to demonstrate that they were contending against an invasion of Spain by outsiders—Germans and Italians and Moors—and were not fighting in a civil war in which foreign elements were merely assisting. Always, in Barcelona, the war was referred to as an invasion and not as a civil war. We could not easily trace the International Brigade. It was extraordinary that while large armies were encamped in the neighbourhood, they were not visible and the countryside seemed almost deserted, except for small groups of soldiers or sentries and a military lorry rushing by. The aeroplane had made all the difference and the fear of bombing was a sufficient inducement for avoiding all public display. So the troops lived and worked under cover and their guns were camouflaged. The hillside was swarming with them but only the trees and the shrubs were visible from a short distance.

The International Brigade was spread out over a wide area and we had no time to visit each section of it. We went to the British and American battalions, and once we had spotted them, we found large numbers of soldiers on the sides of the hills and in the valley below. They were camping under most primitive conditions and had made temporary huts out of mud and shrubs or had dug out a small shelter. There

4. The International Brigade, consisting of young men from all parts of Europe, arrived in Madrid on 7 November 1936. By January 1938, the International Brigade was incorporated into the republican army.

was nothing in the way of comfort, and yet they were the jolliest crowd I have come across. Their spirits were infectious and watching their enthusiasm and determination, it was difficult to conceive that the cause they served could ever lose.

We talked to many of them. They had come as volunteers from distant places, drawn by that strange attraction for serving a cause which has moved men and women throughout the ages. They had left their families and homes, their work and their comforts, and of their own free will chosen this hard life, with danger as their constant companion, and death a frequent visitor. As I watched them laugh and play, my mind travelled back to two years of warfare and the proud record of this brigade during these terrible years of misfortune and disaster. They had saved the republic many a time and thousands of them lay buried in the soil of Spain. How many of those light-hearted youths I saw would never return to their homes again and their loved ones would wait for them in vain?

Only a few days after I saw them, they were in the battle-line again, and a little later they were rushed to the Ebro to stem the fierce onslaught of Franco's armies.[5] Many remained there for ever, among them some whom I remembered as having taken my autograph.

Reluctantly I came away from these gallant men of the International Brigade, for something in me wanted to stay on this inhospitable-looking hillside which sheltered so much human courage, so much of what was worthwhile in life.

We were taken away to the headquarters of a Spanish brigade. It was Modesto's I think, although Modesto was not there at the time. In our honour all the officers had gathered together and we feasted on simple fare. It was difficult to remember in that cheerful company that the battle-line was not far and an unwelcome bomb might disturb our harmony. The toast of India and of Indian freedom was drunk after a happy speech by a Spanish officer. I replied in a few words of thanks and of goodwill to the republic and its fine army.

And so back in the starlight to Barcelona.

IV

Lister was one of the outstanding men we met in Spain. Yet another was Senor Del Vayo, then the foreign minister of the republic. Soon after our arrival in Barcelona we went to call on him, and on subsequent

5. The battle of the Ebro started in July 1938. Despite initial advances, the republicans were defeated by Franco's army on 14 November 1938.

days we met on several occasions. He was not the usual type of diplomat, reserved and suave, afraid of saying anything definite, with a long training in the arts of diplomacy behind him. He was a journalist and a writer whom the revolution had thrown up into the front rank of public life and he carried something of the journalist still about him. His ability was undoubted, but what struck me most was his vitality and determination. In Madrid and Barcelona and in Geneva, he had fought for the republic against all odds and tried to counter the tortuous devices of 'non-intervention'. During the dark days of March 1938, and when the long-drawn-out battle of the Ebro was taking place in the summer of 1938, he had been a rock and a lighthouse for the people of the republic. Next to Dr. Negrin, the Prime Minister, he was the key man of the government. These two never lost heart or courage or nerve, whatever disaster or misfortune confronted their cause. Seldom has the head of a state shown such superb nerve as when Dr. Negrin, at the height of the Ebro offensive, went off to attend a scientists' congress in Zurich.

Del Vayo and I had long talks with each other, and he explained to me the position in Spain with frankness, not ignoring or minimising his difficulties. In a military sense, he was satisfied with the progress made by the new army, but there was a lack of good staff work. Many of their defeats and retirements were due, apart of course from the great superiority of the enemy in aircraft and mechanical equipment and big guns, to inexperience of the republican generals in large-scale operations, and sometimes to deliberate sabotage on the part of the old officers who had been employed by the republic. This sabotage was more harmful than the inexperience; it was growing less as the officers of the new army gradually replaced the doubtful ones. Inexperience was often a costly business, but experience was being purchased on the field of battle and mistakes were fewer. The new army increased in efficiency from day to day and, from this point of view, time was a factor in favour of the republic.

A few weeks after my visit to Spain, Franco's armies launched with all their strength, and in full cooperation with their German and Italian allies, a fierce offensive on the Ebro. This battle of the Ebro lasted for several weeks and was one of the major battles of modern times. But our standards of measurement have grown today and the battle has become just an incident in a minor war. In this battle of the Ebro, the republican army thoroughly justified itself and proved itself superior to Franco's. In spite of lack of aircraft and munitions, it held the oft-repeated assaults of massed armies supported by aircraft.

Del Vayo was not worried about the army. He was worried about the supply of munitions and, even more so, of food. The coming winter was a critical period for food. Food and munitions very largely depended on

the policy of England and France, and the governments of these two countries have been consistently, in the name of non-intervention, following a policy of strangling the republic and indirectly aiding Franco.

Munich and all that followed was yet to come, and our senses had not then been completely dulled by repeated betrayal and mendacity. But the farce of this 'non-intervention' was an astonishing thing and showed up how rotten were the standards and methods of international affairs. Non-intervention in Spain was the parent of Munich.

Del Vayo did not use a hard word about Franco before me. He dismissed him airily as a tool of the Nazis and fascists, who were the real enemies and invaders of his country. Even about Germany and Italy he was not bitter. But there was no lack of bitterness when he talked of the British and French Governments who, under the guise of friendship, were doing so much to kill republican Spain. Especially bitter he was against Mr. Chamberlain's government for he considered the French Government to be completely under the influence of Downing Street. Del Vayo told me that, although he could not say so publicly, he and his government were being compelled to consider the British Government as an unfriendly one, aiding the enemy. Within a few days of our talk, the French Government, at the instance of the British, closed the Pyrenese frontier, a fatal step, intended to appease Mussolini, which did more harm to the republican cause than any battle that Franco had won.

We talked of India also, Del Vayo and I, and I presented him with our national flag. Several months later, in that fateful last week of September, when Mr. Chamberlain and his umbrella were carrying appeasement by air to Godesberg, I met Del Vayo again in Geneva. The food problem was growing acute and he begged of me to help in sending food supplies from India. My last glimpse of him was at the midnight hour in a famous cafe in Geneva where politicians and journalists congregate to discuss the latest news and the latest scandal in high politics. They have plenty of material since 'appeasement' descended upon us to put in the shade the franker intrigues of the days of Machiavelli.

The third arresting personality that I met in Spain was that of Dolores,[6] popularly known as Passionaria. I had often heard of her and was anxious to meet her. She had been unwell and we paid a visit to her little chamber. For an hour or so we were with her and we had to converse through an interpreter. Her extraordinary vitality overwhelmed me and I felt that she was one of the most remarkable women I had met. She was a miner's daughter from the Basque country, middle-aged and homely looking, the mother of grown-up children. Her face was pleasant and

6. Dolores Ibarruri (b. 1895); prominent Spanish communist leader.

genial. It was a happy matron's face, smiling easily, and yet behind it lay the infinite sorrow of her class and her nation. In repose, her face was restful but with a hint of turmoil beneath the surface. And then she would begin to speak. Impassioned words would pour out of her lips, tumbling over each other, her face would be lighted up by the fire within, and her fine eyes would sparkle and hold you. I heard her in a little room, only understanding part of what she was saying in Spanish, but the music of her language filled me, and her changing face and eyes were full of meaning. I understood then the power that she wielded over the Spanish masses. If, I wondered, she could thus impress me, who is not easily impressed, what effect would she have on a mass audience of her own people?

A month or so later I met Passionaria in Paris and I saw her addressing a great meeting. She spoke in Spanish and the audience was overwhelmingly French and could not easily follow her. But she held that great audience as few orators could have done, and when the meeting was over, there was an endless succession of women and girls and sometimes men, who came with flowers for her in their hands or gifts for Spain. Their tear-laden eyes were full of love for her and often they broke down when she embraced them and bade them be of good cheer. There she stood, the symbol of Spain's agony and Spain's unconquerable spirit. But she was much more than a national symbol. She personified to that vast multitude the sorrow in their own lives and the hope of ending that sorrow. She was the symbol of the common man and woman who had suffered and been exploited for ages and were now determined to be free.

3

THE COMING OF WAR

1. Socialism, Fascism and Imperialism[1]

In order to improve the living conditions and remove the appalling poverty of the people, the whole structure of society should change. We may not be able to make the new structure strong until it is built on the foundation of socialism. Socialism does not mean harming anyone or destroying anything. Socialism is a means to improve the productive capacity and the economic conditions of a country. I believe that the world cannot progress and poverty cannot be removed without a socialist policy. At the same time, we cannot have socialism until power vests in the people. This gives rise to the question of Swaraj. Therefore our first task is to wrest freedom.

The world today is faced with two obnoxious movements. They are fascism and Nazism which are prevailing in Italy and Germany, and also in Japan. What has been perpetrated by fascism in Europe is being done by British imperialism in India. Fascism is a close relation of imperialism. Such of those capitalists as are opposed to socialism adopt a deceptive method. They first proclaim their sympathy with the poor but when they get power, they abandon the pro-poor slogans. Ten or twelve years ago Mussolini condemned democracy and declared himself in favour of a new method—the dictatorship. He concentrated on increasing his army to enable him to annex other countries by force. The attitude of the countries which posed as defenders of democracy, namely Britain and France, was peculiar. They outwardly favoured freedom but often helped fascism and Nazism, and even went to the length of betraying their friends, for instance, the Czech people.

The reason for this policy of Britain and France is a desire to avoid alliance with Russia. America and Russia are the two most powerful countries, and it is impossible to defeat them. It would be very difficult for any power or powers to defeat a combination of Britain, France, Russia and America, but Britain and France would not like to combine with Russia for they fear that a coalition with that country might lead to the spread of the new ideas of Russia in their countries. Therefore Britain and France chose to allow Germany to increase its power.

Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Halifax and their comrades have been saying that they will not allow aggression, but so far as action is concerned, there is no change in their policy and the basic reason for that attitude is that they do not want to join Russia. Russia is the strongest nation,

1. Speech at Allahabad, 13 April 1939. From *The Leader*, 15 April 1939.

and if there is war, the democratic countries will have to take the help of Russia. So far, Germany has been prevented from dominating Europe because of Russia. I think the present British cabinet is unique in recent British history, because whatever it did, it proceeded along wrong lines. There had never been in England a weaker cabinet than the one which functions today. The ruling class of England has shown that it is lacking in courage and is very poor in statesmanship.

I want you to keep before you the above picture of the world situation. There is also another danger facing India. An effort is being made in England to amend the Government of India Act.[2] The amendment would enable the Government of India, if there is a war emergency, to have authority to do all they wanted in the provinces to promote war effort. So far, the Governor and, in some cases, the Viceroy have the authority to interfere with the executive authority which vests in the ministers. Even this is resented by us; but now the British Government want to give powers to the Government of India in respect of the provinces also in the event of war. This has to be opposed at any cost. I am sorry to note that there has been very little agitation against this move. The council of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee recently took up this question[3] and stated that such a step would not be accepted and allowed to be acted upon. I hope the A.I.C.C. and the Congress as well as non-Congress provincial governments will also do the same.

In the event of war, we will not help imperialism. Nor is it our desire that Germany or Italy should gain power. These two countries are dangerous powers and are opposed to freedom. If, unfortunately, their power increased that would cause a great setback to the struggle for freedom in India. I am pained to see sometimes in the Indian press praise being showered on Mussolini, Nazism, Japan, etc., by communal organizations like the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha. I fail to understand why they praise them so as they have nothing to do with the communal question. It is obviously for the purpose of opposing the Congress that the leaders of the communal organizations have contracted friendship with German consuls and other pro-fascist elements in India. Reports have already appeared to the effect that the Muslim League has Nazi friends, and similar reports are also received about the Hindu

2. On 5 April 1939, a bill to amend the Government of India Act of 1935 was introduced in the House of Lords. One of its clauses empowered the federal executive to give directions to the provinces as to the exercise of their powers.

3. On 7 April 1939, the U.P.P.C.C. council decided not to accept any further limitation of powers of the provincial governments.

Mahasabha. The Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha ought to be opposed to each other, but that is not so, and both are opposed to the Congress. Whatever is done by the Congress, they derive immense pleasure in opposing it. Mr. Jinnah does not say anything against the Hindu Mahasabha, but he is very bitter against the Congress. Similarly, Mr. Savarkar is not saying much against the Muslim League but he is very bitter against the Congress. I am afraid these new developments would result in accentuating sectionalism in this country as against nationalism. Such actions of these communal organizations show that their objectives have no bearing on the question of the achievement of the freedom of the country. They are only helping fascism and Nazism. Unfortunately, our mutual quarrels tend to divert the country's attention from the real problems.

Therefore there is a need for strengthening the Congress *sangathan, which cannot be undermined by any power except by our own internal* weaknesses and quarrels. In this connection I would like to refer to a decision of the council of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee forbidding Congress officials to involve themselves in matters relating to appointments, postings or transfers of government servants. We should also remember the council's resolution about the national volunteer corps.[4]

4. On 7 April 1939, the council, while appreciating the good work done by the volunteers department, laid special stress on the methods and objectives of training Congress volunteers.

2. The Coming of Dr. Schacht[1]

Dr. Schacht,[2] the great financier of Nazi Germany, has come to India to visit the beauty spots of our country, so he tells us. He has chosen

1. Allahabad, 16 April 1939. Editorial in *National Herald*, 19 April 1939.
2. Hjalmar Schacht (1887-1970); German financier and Nazi sympathiser; president of the Reichsbank; visited India in April 1939 to study the prospects of economic cooperation between Nazi Germany and India.

the hot summer months for this journey to our land and his itinerary, so far as we know it, is intriguing. Beauty for him apparently lies in gold and silver and the magic of commerce and barter. In search of this, he goes to Bombay and Calcutta and Delhi. Dr. Schacht, and indeed every foreigner in India, should be treated with courtesy, but it must be made very clear to him that the doctrine and the party he represents are very unwelcome in India. This would have been so at any time, but recent events have vastly increased the hostility of the Indian people towards Nazism and fascism. We want no dealings with these creeds of brutal violence, imperialist domination, race superiority and the crushing of democracy.

Few people can be taken in by Dr. Schacht's plea of being a simple tourist in India. In the same way, we suppose Herr Goebbels and General Goering[3] have been visiting Istanbul and North Africa to admire the mosque of St. Sophia or the solitary grandeur of the desert. Let us face reality. The world is a network of intrigue today, each nation trying to gain a political, strategic, military or economic advantage which may help it in the clash that is coming. Nazi Germany stands supreme in this game of intrigue and every one of her principal exponents is busy at it. Time flies, there is not a moment to lose. Let us get what we can before the decision is finally handed over to the bloody and uncertain arbitrament of war.

Dr. Schacht is here to advance the interests of Nazi Germany in every way he can and more particularly to make a deal in cotton and perhaps other raw materials which Germany needs. We understand that he has a scheme of barter whereby a large quantity of Indian cotton should be exchanged for German machinery. Ordinarily, we would welcome such barter between India and other countries, even though we might not approve of much that happened in those countries. But at the present moment any such arrangement is unthinkable. It would be most unwise for we are not likely to get any payment, even in kind, for the goods we supply. Dr. Schacht is known to have a remarkable way of taking without giving anything in exchange. Is he not the financial wizard of Germany?

But there are deeper and more fundamental reasons against a deal with Germany. Such a deal helps the Nazi power, economically and militarily. Our resources go to strengthen their military machine. We cannot tolerate this.

3. Hermann Wilhelm Goering (1893-1946); German Nazi leader; Commander-in-Chief of the German air force, 1935, and Field-Marshal, 1938; tried at Nuremberg and committed suicide on the eve of execution.

We have noticed with some misgiving that Indian merchants and businessmen in Bombay have been meeting Dr. Schacht. We do not know the nature of these talks but nevertheless we regret them. We regret also the association of prominent Indian industrialists in the welcome that was accorded to Dr. Schacht on arrival in Bombay. It is not fair to India or to Germany to slur over the deep feeling of indignation that exists in India against Nazi ideals and methods.

3. Destiny[1]

The Ides of March brought disaster to Europe and to democracy, and Czechoslovakia vanished from the map of the world. Yet war did not come. Stunned and full of fear, the countries of Europe waited for yet another spring of the beast of prey. It came soon enough, and Memel was the victim. Yet war did not come. We were told that the spring campaigns and offensives were over and peace would reign in Europe till the far-off autumn at least. But autumn was still far off when Easter came with its message of goodwill, and Good Friday saw the rape of Albania. Yet war did not come.

War has not come yet, but who can tell when it will descend on us? Who dare say that peace is assured till the autumn or even till the hot summer envelops us? There is marching and stamping of millions of armed men in Europe, and night and day men and women turn out engines of destruction and dig trenches and erect barricades, and the sky is covered with the messengers of death. Who dare say that the thin thread that holds back these forces will not snap and unleash destruction and doom on hapless mankind? Peace, so-called peace, holds today; what of tomorrow or the day after?

Like some pre-ordained tragedy, inevitable and inescapable, war pursues us and will seize us by the throat. We shall not escape our destiny.

1. Allahabad, 16 April 1939. Editorial in *National Herald*, 19 April 1939. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 152-154.

Meanwhile we discuss the problems of left and right[2] and speculate what the next Working Committee is likely to be. Meanwhile, Durbar Virawala is at his old tricks again,[3] and the rulers of the states or their ministers endeavour to crush their awakened people. And our provincial governments bow down before a hundred problems, and communal conflicts shame our people, and Shias and Sunnis glare at each other.[4] Yet a day will come when suddenly out of the blue a score of ordinances will descend upon us and put an end to our musing and to our trumpery arguments and conflicts. If those ordinances find us unready, then it will be ill for us and ill for our land.

We have had enough of this pettiness, and destiny calls to us, as of old, to shoulder the burden of a great nation's fate. Let us pull ourselves up and behave as men worthy of this destiny. Enough of party strife or communal trouble. Enough of everything that comes in the way of effective action to face the perils that surround us. The Congress must set its house in order and put an end to the deadlock that has so long disabled us. It must plan ahead and guide the nation in the hour of crisis. It must stretch out its hand in fellowship to all who care for India's freedom, for whatever label may attach to us, we are all pilgrims marching together to the same goal. Prestige or past conflict must not be allowed to come in the way of present or future cooperation. To our countrymen in communal organisations, the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha, we would make appeal to set aside all bitterness and mutual ill will and to declare a truce to communal wrangling, forerunner of an enduring peace. And to Shias and Sunnis we would earnestly

suggest that the time has come when they should meet together and settle themselves the problem that has caused so much bitterness and suffering to both.

We have to be ready for the crisis. But the first shock of it will have to be borne by the provincial governments, and it is for them to keep wide awake and vigilant. The Congress policy, as recorded in numerous resolutions, stands clear. This has to be followed, and India is not going to be ordered about by British imperialism, or to carry out the mandates imposed from above upon her. The war emergency envisaged by the British Government stares us in the face and the Parliament in London is considering the new law to restrict and circumscribe still further the power of our provincial governments and provincial assemblies. The council of the United Provinces Congress has given the mandate in regard to this to our provincial government. It is for that government and for the assembly to act up to it and to get ready and prepare for the challenge. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.

4. Relief for Ten Days[1]

In this strange world that we live in we have to be thankful for small mercies. If Herr Hitler rattles his sabre, threatens all and sundry, and declares Germany's God-given right to dominate Europe and the world, we seek consolation in the thought that after all he is not marching tomorrow on a neighbouring country. If Signor Mussolini merely curses and denounces all countries that oppose him and their timid ministers and proclaims that Italy can no longer be a prisoner in the Mediterranean and must expand her empire, we are relieved to find that after all he is not immediately going to march on Tunis or Djibuti or take possession of the Suez Canal. Our standards of examining and judging the spoken word of diplomats and men in authority have changed greatly since fascism and Nazism introduced their language.

War has been very near during these days and the fear of it has induced even Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax to begin a flirtation with Soviet Russia. But for ten days at least there is going to be peace, and

1. Allahabad, 18 April 1939. Editorial in *National Herald*, 21 April 1939. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 301-304.

for that the credit must go to President Roosevelt.[2] After listening to the quibbling of the Chamberlains and Daladiers, it is a relief to hear the clear and firm voice of Mr. Roosevelt. That voice has power behind it, the power of a mighty nation, and it must be heard even by Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini. Because of that stern warning from across the Atlantic, Herr Hitler has summoned the Reichstag for April 28 to listen to his reply.[3] So there will be peace till the 28th at least, and perhaps longer.

Three years ago the British Government addressed a questionnaire to the Nazi government, more or less on the lines of Mr. Roosevelt's present approach.[4] That questionnaire was ignored and thrown into a waste-paper basket. No reply was given. There is going to be a reply this time for America counts more than England, and silence itself is the most significant of replies. We can well guess what the German and Italian replies will be from the tone of their press. These replies will refuse to give the guarantees asked for and will reject the idea of a joint conference with Soviet Russia as one of the parties to it. They will declare an entire absence of intention to act as aggressors, but will proclaim their right to expand and to resist 'encirclement'.

It is possible, though still unlikely, that President Roosevelt's dramatic and forceful intervention might avert war. It may delay it. Such an attitude taken in common with England, France and Soviet Russia eight months ago would have scotched all present chance of war and saved Czechoslovakia and Spain. But Mr. Chamberlain was bent on his policy of 'appeasement', and the consequences of that policy face us today.

It is clear now that throughout the past two years or more, Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax have consistently followed a policy which

2. In a personal appeal for peace on 14 April 1939, President Roosevelt asked Hitler and Mussolini to give an assurance that their armed forces will not attack thirty independent nations named by him. The President stated that complex world problems which affected all humanity should be discussed in an atmosphere of peace which cannot exist "if negotiations are overshadowed by the threat of force or by the fear of war."
3. In his Reichstag speech on 28 April 1939, Hitler called on Roosevelt to redeem President Wilson's promise to consider German colonial claims.
4. In a note sent to Britain on 1 March 1936, Germany explained the reasons for her denouncing the Locarno Pact, and outlined the proposals for restoring peace in Europe. In reply, the British Government sent on 8 May 1936 a questionnaire to the German Government seeking certain clarifications and particularly asked whether Germany could signify that she recognised and intended "to respect the existing territorial and political status of Europe, except in so far as they might be subsequently modified by free negotiations and agreement."

aimed at a political and economic alliance with Nazi Germany. In their attempt to gain this they sacrificed their friends and allies and endangered the safety of their own country and empire. For the fall of Spain is a greater danger to England and France than almost any other possible disaster could have been. For this Mr. Chamberlain laboured with an astonishing blindness and obstinacy. He succeeded and now that very success has shown the utter failure of his policy.

Why did Mr. Chamberlain persist in this dangerous course which could only lead to catastrophe? In the world today three powers dominate the scene; all others are secondary and have lost initiative. These three powers are Nazi Germany on the one side, and the United States of America and Soviet Russia on the other. Mr. Chamberlain knew that England could not function alone in any major policy. She had to choose sides, and he made her choose the side of Nazi Germany for any cooperation with Russia was hateful to him, and, in spite of all the soft words and pious phrases, he disliked American democracy. The only alternative was collective security, with Russia as a partner in the undertaking.

Every act of fresh aggression of the Nazis or the Italian fascists pained him no doubt but he accepted it, stuck to his Munich policy, and made it easier for the next aggression to take place. If British public opinion grew too agitated and alarmed, he delivered a brave speech which soothed people and strengthened his hold on them. But the same policy continued.

It now seems possible that, in spite of himself, he might be forced into a war with Germany, and this possibility has induced him to make friendly overtures to Russia. For without Soviet assistance England and France would put up a poor show. Yet even now the Munich policy shows its face and governs Mr. Chamberlain's mind and hand. Is it right or reasonable to expect him to discard his prejudices and to change his spots overnight?

If conflict with Germany comes, then it will be in spite of Mr. Chamberlain, and yet it will be Mr. Chamberlain who will be in control in England. Chamberlainism will still flourish and may still betray the forces of democracy. Can any democrat view this prospect without dismay? The British Labour Party has already, in accordance with its traditional policy, surrendered to Mr. Chamberlain and the forces opposed to him are weak. Some may cry "Chamberlain Must Go", but let us recognise that his hold on the British public is still strong. And that is the misfortune of the British public and of democracy.

It is true that a war against Nazism and fascism, and especially one in which Soviet Russia is engaged, will release powerful forces which

Mr. Chamberlain cannot suppress. It is also true that everyone who cares for freedom and democracy will desire the triumph of the progressive side. But to line up under Chamberlainism is a hard and difficult task for those who have seen and felt the heart-breaking results of this treacherous policy.

For us in India our path is clear. It is one of complete opposition to the fascists; it is also one of opposition to imperialism. We are not going to line up under Chamberlainism; we are not going to throw our resources in defence of empire. But we would gladly offer those very resources for the defence of democracy, the democracy of a free India lined up with other free countries.

5. The Challenge[1]

Problems and difficulties surround us. The Congress organisation is not functioning as it should, and different forces pull it in varying directions. The Congress President has not fully recovered yet from his long illness. Argument continues as to what took place at Tripuri.[2] Our friends the Liberals are agitated over the employment tax;[3] the Muslim League continues to tell us of the real or imagined failings of the Congress. In

1. Allahabad, 18 April 1939. Editorial in *National Herald*, 21 April 1939. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 155-156.
2. Subhas Chandra Bose was elected President of the Congress on 29 January 1939 by defeating Pattabhi Sitaramayya by a majority of 203 votes. Pattabhi's defeat, Mahatma Gandhi said, "is more mine than his". The election of Bose was followed by sensational developments culminating in the resignation of twelve out of fifteen members of the Working Committee on 9 February. At Tripuri the trouble started when M.S. Aney put forward the resolution proposing that in view of the Congress President's bad health the consideration of the clarification of the misunderstanding that had arisen out of the presidential election should be referred to the A.I.C.C. at some future date. Though the resolution was passed by a clear majority, G. B. Pant moved his resolution on 12 March, according to which the President was to nominate the Working Committee in accordance with Mahatma Gandhi's wishes. This was interpreted by Bose's supporters as an indirect vote of censure. Then followed the shouting and counter-shouting till Aney withdrew his resolution. Subsequently, Bose resigned and Rajendra Prasad was elected President of the Congress on 30 April 1939.
3. The U.P. Government had proposed to levy a graduated tax on an annual salary of Rs. 2,500 and above.

Lucknow the Shia-Sunni tangle has unfortunately not been resolved yet to the satisfaction of all concerned. In the states there is a deep rumbling, precursor of mighty movements, which are checked for a while under Mahatma Gandhi's advice.[4] In the West armies march and politicians intrigue, and the world waits breathlessly for the issue of war or peace.

If war comes all our petty conflicts and troubles will vanish under the strain of overwhelming crisis. India will be tested then to the uttermost, and it is time we got ready for that test.

Meanwhile a challenge has been thrown out to us, a challenge which none of us can ignore. That challenge is the attempt to amend the Government of India Act for war emergencies, in order to emasculate still further our provincial governments. The whole past history of the Congress, the very resolution under which Congressmen accepted office, stand out as a reply to this challenge. It was not necessary for a fresh direction to be given. Yet it was well that the council of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee declared explicitly that this amendment, or any intrusion of the central government on the present power of the provincial governments, will not be tolerated. It was well that they drew attention to this challenge and, in dignified language, made it clear that any such intrusion would be considered a *casus belli*.

This is a major issue for us and for India and this fact must be realised by all concerned, for the consequences that will follow any attempt to coerce a provincial government will inevitably be serious.

We understand that the bill to amend the Government of India Act is likely to be rushed through the British Parliament by the end of this month.[5] Let those who do so realise where they are going to. There are rocks ahead.

4. On 23 March 1939, Mahatma Gandhi declared that after due consideration he had concluded that in the larger interests of the nation, it was not advisable to start civil disobedience in the Indian states for the time being.
5. The bill after passage in the House of Lords was rushed through the House of Commons in eleven minutes. Subsequently, further amendments were made with the object of increasing the Viceroy's powers.

6. The Congress and War[1]

Rashtrapati Bose has very fittingly reminded the country of the Congress attitude to imperialist war.[2] In these days when war hovers over the horizon and may descend upon us at any moment, we must be clear in our own minds about the course that we must follow. That course has been laid down for us by the Congress year after year in clear and unequivocal language. Over eleven years ago the Madras Congress passed the war danger resolution and declared to the world that we would be no parties to imperialist war.[3] Ever since then our policy has been further elaborated in Congress resolutions and explained from thousands of platforms.

That policy consists essentially of the right of the Indian people to decide on peace or war and their determination to resist any imposed decision on them. Further, that they will in no event allow their manpower and resources to be exploited for imperialist purposes. This policy is clear enough and by this we must stand. And yet this policy is largely a negative one and the mere enunciation of principles is not always enough when new and complicated developments require adjustments from day to day. A subject country can only have a negative policy in such matters, the positive side being the struggle for its own freedom. But India, though still subject to British imperialism, has passed the stage of mere protest and agitation. With full consciousness of her approaching freedom, she is building up a constructive policy and in international councils she speaks with weight and dignity. Therefore, when she addresses the world she speaks positively and expresses her desire to line up with the forces of freedom and democracy.

Is there a conflict between these two attitudes? Does India speak with two voices? We do not think there is the slightest contradiction, for the seeming contradiction lies in India's present position and not in the policy we shall pursue.

As a nation, interested in world freedom, India sees with horror the growth of the Nazi and fascist powers which embody the latest and most brutal phases of imperialism. She realises that a world triumph of fascism

1. Allahabad, 22 April 1939. Editorial in *National Herald*, 23 April 1939.
2. In a statement on 19 April 1939, Bose reaffirmed the Congress policy of non-participation in an imperialist war and expressed determination to resist non-violently any attempt to involve India in such a war or to exploit India's manpower or natural resources for war purposes.
3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 25.

will mean the suppression of freedom everywhere and the throttling of her own struggle for freedom. She believes that their aggression can be checked by democratic forces lining together and establishing real collective security. If war comes between such forces and fascism, she would inevitably favour the former and hope for the defeat of fascism. If she was a free nation she would throw her resources in favour of real democracy.

But, and there are many buts, she is not a free nation, and as a subject country she can only be exploited to others' advantage and for the further strengthening of the imperialism that holds her. She cannot submit to that. Nor do we see anywhere that pooling of democratic forces which is necessary for real collective security. Collective security can only be based on freedom and on the elimination of imperialism. The collective security we are interested in is one in which we can join as a free democratic country. There is much talk of the defence of democracy in western Europe today, but that democracy covers the ugly body of imperialism which, frightened by another of its kind, more vital and more brutal, seeks to save itself. This so-called democracy will fight, if it fights, so that the Union Jack might continue to fly over Britain's wide-flung colonies and over India. We have seen Mr. Chamberlain's democracy stab in the back and do to death the real democracies of Czechoslovakia and Spain. Who knows what further betrayals it has in store for us?

No, we shall have nothing to do with Mr. Chamberlain's brand of democracy or with any war that may be fought in its name. We dislike Herr Hitler and his methods greatly but we have no liking for Mr. Chamberlain and his methods, and we have no intention of marching under his banner. Herr Hitler and Mr. Chamberlain both agree that India must remain a subject country, for has not Herr Hitler said that it would be a terrible blow to him if the Indians seceded from the British Empire?[4] We disagree with both and we propose to function so that we might disappoint both.

Thus it is inevitable and inescapable for us to resist our being dragged into a war at the bidding of others. We can no longer be the pawns of others. When India is free we shall consider our position afresh.

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 54.

7. The Gathering Clouds[1]

Within a few days the leaders of the Congress will gather in Calcutta and try to unravel the knot that has tied up many Congress activities during the past three months. The immediate prospect is not as hopeful as we would like it to be, and yet we refuse to be pessimistic. We have endeavoured during these past weeks since Tripuri to keep the *Herald* outside the controversy that has been raging in the newspaper press in some parts of India on the issues that confront the Congress organisation. We are not averse to controversy, and democratic practice demands a full consideration of all aspects of a problem before a decision is arrived at. We would have willingly expressed our own opinions if the controversy had been about matters of principle or vital policy. But, unfortunately, debate and argument have centred round personal matters, and we are strongly of opinion that this approach is undesirable and clouds the issues. Even if this was permissible to some extent during normal periods, this surely is no time for us to get entangled in petty matters and to make our national policy the slave of our likes and dislikes.

We are strongly of opinion that it is imperative for us to hold together during times of crisis, as we have done so often before when danger threatened. The Tripuri Congress may have produced varying reactions among different people. But let us remember that it is the Congress and its decisions that govern our policy and are binding on us. That must be the foundation of our work and our unity. To challenge those decisions is to challenge the Congress itself and thus to attack the very basis of our national movement.

But while we argue about our domestic differences, vital as they might be, clouds gather on the horizon, and through the gaps in them dangerous vistas open out. War, war of many nations and many peoples, still hangs in the balance and we await the development of events with the most anxious interest. But waiting is not enough if our national policy in regard to war, so often proclaimed and repeated, has any meaning.

We have drawn attention to the challenge of the Government of India Act Amendment Bill, recently introduced in the British House of Lords. Probably this will have a swift passage through both Houses in England and will become law. What does this mean? It is not only a challenge

1. Allahabad, 25 April 1939. Editorial in *National Herald*. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 157-159.

to the very conception of provincial autonomy, it is also the first and a far-reaching step towards committing India to war. It is an attempt to mobilise Indian resources for war purposes without India's consent. It is a complete challenge to the war resistance resolutions of the Congress.

Let us admit that in the event of war there must be a central authority in India in control of the war situation. But that central authority can only be ourselves, or else it displaces what little authority we have and makes of provincial autonomy a mockery and a sham. A foreign central authority in full control of all that pertains to war means the establishment in India of a foreign war dictatorship. If we were unwise enough to submit to this, it would mean the paralysis and end of such restricted freedom as we possess.

This is the situation we have to face. By the passing of the India Act Amending Bill the whole basis and the surrounding circumstances under which the Congress decided, after much doubt and argument, to accept office are altered, and a new relationship is created. Are we prepared to accept this? The whole past history of the Congress supplies the answer to this.

Many of us have laid stress on the struggle against federation. If federation is ever imposed upon us there is bound to be a major struggle. But for our part we do not think that there is any likelihood of any such imposition. In any event, federation is a remote issue; the issue today is the India Act Amending Bill and its consequences.

At this critical moment when all our united strength is required to meet the new peril, it grieves us to find national energy being frittered away in mutual conflict. It saddens us especially to read the poignant statement which has just been issued by Mahatma Gandhi about Rajkot.[2] That is not the way Gandhiji has functioned when danger threatens India; that is not the way, we feel sure, he will function. India needs him, India relies upon him, India calls to him. He must answer the call.

2. Mahatma Gandhi stated on 24 April 1939: "Rajkot seems to have robbed me of my youth. I never knew that I was old. Now I am weighed down by the knowledge of decrepitude. I never knew what it was to lose hope. But it seems to have been cremated in Rajkot. My 'Ahimsa' has been put to a test such as it has never been subjected to before."

8. To Harry Pollitt[1]

Allahabad
April 26, 1939

Dear Comrade Pollitt,
I have just received your letter[2] of the 12th April as well as the pamphlets you have sent. Thank you for them.

Those of us here who tried to follow international events carefully, have come to more or less the same conclusion regarding Chamberlain's policy which you have. Very few people are taken in by it but inevitably most people in India are so absorbed in our internal problems that they pay little attention to foreign happenings. Of course, the prospect of war cannot be ignored even by them and there is a growing discussion about India's attitude. The full implications of the situation are not easily understood but the general attitude is one of resisting any imposition on India.

Unfortunately, at this critical time, we have to face an internal crisis in the Congress, as well as a very difficult communal situation leading to frequent riots. I am greatly distressed at these developments and especially the way principles and policies are covered up by criticisms of personalities. I do not yet know how things will shape themselves. I am going today to the meeting of the All India Congress Committee in Calcutta.

The developments in Spain came to us as a great shock and they make one feel terribly sad. I suppose we shall have to suffer many such shocks in the present-day world before we come out of this darkness.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Pollitt wrote that compromise with the fascist powers remained the basic policy of Chamberlain.

About cables, it is necessary in these days to have news sent swiftly and so you had better cable when you think it necessary. But we are terribly hard up and all unnecessary expenditure should be avoided. Perhaps you might spend between Rs. 100/- and Rs. 150/- a month on them.

Do not trouble to send news about petty meetings and events which have no importance.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. The Congress and War Danger[1]

The President, Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, should have moved this resolution in the House, but as he is absent, I have to move it.[2] It is a matter of great danger to the country, and the A.I.C.C. has moved such a resolution many a time. It has proclaimed twice or thrice its determined policy on war, and attempts have been made to renew the policy. There is nothing new in this resolution. We have said that we shall fight against the imposition of any law that seeks to exploit the resources of India. I am not saying anything that is not in consonance with the Congress policy. Every Congress government must act according to the resolution. There has been organised effort against the possible imposition of federation. I have sometimes ventured to say that this question of federation is not a live question. But I don't believe that it is a dead question. Yet, there are other vital questions before us today to be solved in addition to the question of federation.

The principal question is the power that will be given to the central government by this amending bill in case of a war emergency. This question, therefore, demands our greatest attention. Again, think of the

1. Speech at the A.I.C.C. session in Calcutta on 1 May 1939 while moving the resolution on war danger. From *The Hindu*, 1 May 1939.
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war emergency legislation taking place in England. There has been a fair amount of criticism in India of this amendment, but its significance has not been fully realised by our people or even by the Congressmen in the country. This amendment, introduced in the House of Lords, places us at a disadvantage. If we peacefully submit to it, it means nullifying the policy of the Congress which it has adopted since 1928 regarding the participation in war. The amendment, if passed, will put an end to provincial autonomy, which was introduced two years ago.

If there is war there might be a constitutional crisis, which might end all constitutions. It means going afresh into the whole question of continuance in office and therefore this question is a very important and very vital one. This resolution is not a mere repetition of the war resolutions which had come before the House earlier. Some people are of opinion that the Congress governments must resign. I want them to fight without resigning. We must consider the situation as it arises from day to day. I think they must fight without resigning.

The amending bill has now passed only second reading in the House of Lords. It may come before the House of Commons in a few months. You may have to face war danger and war emergency. This is no more an academic question. We have to think in terms of an emergency which may come about. I would like you to think of the present position in India in its true perspective and resist the bill with all your might. In this connection, I would like to repeat the hackneyed saying: "If we do not hang together we hang separately."

11. No Contradiction in Congress Policy[1]

A certain seeming contradiction arises in regard to our policy towards war. On the one hand, we are anti-fascist and we think that a fascist victory will not only be disastrous for the world as a whole, but also bad for our own freedom. Therefore, inevitably, we do not want a fascist victory. On the other hand, to support British imperialism is obviously a wrong policy, for the country is dominated by that imperialism. The contradiction does not really lie in our policy, but in the circumstances themselves.

1. Interview to the press, Calcutta, 2 May 1939. From *National Herald*, 5 May 1939.

If we think of the question in terms of a free India, obviously we are led to the conclusion that we should support the forces of democracy as opposed to the forces of fascism. If we think in terms of a subject India, we are led to the conclusion that we cannot support imperialism that dominates her. The conflict is resolved when the subjection is removed and a free India can choose its own policy in regard to war as well as other matters.

Then, again, even apart from this, to say that the present British Government is a champion of democracy is not true. If it was in favour of real democracy, its first function should be to introduce democracy in its empire. The mere fact of its not doing so—in fact the British Government is resisting it—is sufficient evidence that it is not the democracy that it seems to be. Further, the present British Government is dominated by Mr. Chamberlain and has a record which is as black as possible in regard to world freedom and democracy, which it has succeeded in killing both in central Europe and Spain. The responsibility for this is fundamentally Mr. Chamberlain's.

It is quite clear that Mr. Chamberlain has been pursuing a policy, for some time past, of bringing about economic and political arrangements with Nazi Germany. He has failed in that because of various forces, but he has gone a long way in removing obstructions from Germany's path and adding to the strength of the Nazis. I do not think he has fundamentally changed his policy even now, despite his brave speeches. A brave speech is delivered when there is popular pressure, but the general policy remains the same. It may be that owing to the rapid development in the situation he might drive himself into a war against Germany, but at no time can one trust Mr. Chamberlain to fight for democracy. And it is inconceivable for us to march under his banner. Even a free India, though it would gladly throw in its resources on the side of democracy and freedom in a world struggle, would not, I think, ally itself with Mr. Chamberlain's policy or submit to his leadership. For a subject India dominated by British imperialism to do so is unthinkable.

To the question whether India would not stand to lose heavily in the event of Britain involving herself in a life and death struggle with totalitarianism, unaided by friends of democracy, I would say that India as well as the rest of the world certainly stand to suffer greatly if fascism dominates the world. But India will not suffer greatly if British imperialism fades away. The suggestion that England would prefer defeat rather than a fair deal to the empire and liquidation of her imperialism is itself significant. All major questions in the world today, whether those in Europe or in the Far East, political or economic, fascist or imperialist, are tied up together, and it is difficult to consider one without

I feel that something should be done by the A.I.C.C. office to popularise this resolution and to ask the Congress organisations to educate public opinion on it. Further that the provincial assemblies, where the Congress is in majority, should pass similar resolutions. These resolutions should preferably be official resolutions brought by the government. I hope you will address the Prime Ministers accordingly.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

13. To Eduard Benes[1]

Allahabad
May 31, 1939

Dear Dr. Benes,

Mr. Ladislav Urban, your consul in Bombay, has suggested to me that I should write to you and explain India's attitude towards a possible war in Europe. I gladly do so. Our general policy has inevitably been an anti-imperialist one and has centred round the independence of India. We have, however, seen the Indian problem in its relation to the world problems. With the growth of fascism and Nazism our reactions were wholly anti-fascist and anti-Nazi. We looked upon them as of the same species as imperialism and aggravations of it. We felt that any true solution of the problems of peace and democracy must be based on an elimination of both fascism and imperialism.

There was occasionally apparent conflict between some imperialist powers, like England and the Nazi power, but in reality British imperialism consistently supported Nazi aggression. This became patent last year in Czechoslovakia.

During the Czechoslovakian crisis last year, our sympathies were entirely with the Czechs and it was very painful for us to see how dismemberment was forced on the country by British and French policy.

We are entirely of opinion that aggression must be stopped by the building up of a peace front. If such a real peace front was organised, India would give whole-hearted support to it. But it is a little absurd to ask us to fight for democracy and to deny this very democracy to us. As a subject nation we can only be exploited in the interests of British

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

imperialism. We have therefore declared that we cannot tolerate any decisions being imposed upon us and if the British Government wants to force us into war we shall resist this. Further we have no intention of joining an imperialist war. You will appreciate that it is difficult for us to accept the *bona fides* of Mr. Chamberlain and his government in the matter of freedom and democracy. We have seen too many betrayals.

Recently one of our important provincial committees passed a resolution on the war emergency. As this resolution lays down our policy I am enclosing a copy of it.

May I add that I retain the most lively and pleasant memories of your beautiful country and I share in your sorrow at the tragedy that has befallen her? I have confidence, however, that she will pass through the valley of the shadow and become again a free, progressive and democratic country.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Lucknow
July 7, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have your letter of the 4th.[2] I think that the immediate danger of war has probably passed but there is no knowing and the next two and a half months are critical. I think that as soon as war seems to be imminent, or on the point of being declared, the Working Committee should certainly be called. I agree with you that it would be desirable to invite Subhas Babu, Narendra Deva and Jaya Prakash to this meeting. You might perhaps add one or two others such as some prominent Muslims in the Congress, after consultation with Maulana Azad. Even before the Working Committee meeting the imminence of the crisis would require a public statement from you in which you would state the Congress position of non-participation afresh and call upon the Congress ministries and Congressmen generally to give effect to it. I think in this

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statement you might also say something to the effect that you would welcome the cooperation of the Muslim League in this joint endeavour. I would suggest your writing to Jinnah and telling him that in view of the grave crisis which threatens the country you would welcome his and the Muslim League's cooperation in the evolution of a common programme of non-participation in the war. I do not think any reference need be made in that letter to the Hindu-Muslim problem as such.

I think it would be worthwhile for you to write to the Congress ministries now impressing upon them the vital need of their keeping wide awake in this matter and not permitting any entanglement on their part in war preparations and the like. They should make it clear again to the Governors what their and Congress position is.

Perhaps it would be also desirable if you were to issue a general statement on the subject to the press now.

I am returning to Allahabad tomorrow night and shall remain there till the 12th morning. On the 13th and 14th I shall be in Bombay. On the 15th I leave for Ceylon by air.[3]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Jawaharlal visited Sri Lanka from 15 July to 25 July 1939. He was sent there by the A.I.C.C. to help solve the problem of the Indian settlers.

4

PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY

THE WORKING OF THE MINISTRIES

1. To Gulzari Lal Nanda[1]

Wardha
November 22, 1938

My dear Gulzari Lal,[2]
Thank you for your letter of the 20th November which has just reached me.[3] It is true that I have been greatly distressed at the developments in connection with the Bombay Trades Disputes Bill.[4] I went through the original draft with you and tried to understand some of its main provisions. It was a very complicated measure and you were good enough to explain it to me. It was not possible for me then or later to see it critically and to understand the possible consequences of some of its provisions.

After that the matter came up before the labour sub-committee of the Working Committee. Although I was not a member of that committee I was invited to be present. Unfortunately I could not give much time to it and I did not follow the proceedings in regard to this matter. My mind was full of my approaching visit to Europe and my interest therefore in what was going to happen in my absence was not very great.

I was given to understand by Masani that some changes for the better had been made in the new draft. I was gratified to learn this. But what these changes were I did not take the trouble to find out.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1898); a Congressman and trade union leader; minister in Government of India, 1952-66, and 1970-71; twice acted as Prime Minister.
3. He wrote that the Bombay Trades Disputes Bill was in the best interests of the working class and consistent with the principles of the Congress and mentioned the steps that were taken to meet the criticisms made against it.
4. The Bombay Trades Disputes Bill enjoined compulsory resort to conciliation or arbitration, a fine of Rs. 50/- for resorting to an illegal strike, three months' imprisonment for instigating workers to an illegal strike, and a maximum fine of Rs. 500/- for obstructing a labour officer in the discharge of his duty.

Then I went to Europe. I was asked many questions about the bill by labour people in London. They were very much disturbed by some provisions and pointed out that there seemed to be a going back on many of the things that the labour movement had fought for during the last 50 years or more. I was unable to say much to them because I was not fully posted as to the facts. Some criticisms that were made to me disturbed me greatly. This was not the part dealing with conciliation which was the backbone of the bill, but certain other parts in regard to the recognition of the trade unions. In effect, it seemed that under the bill it would be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to form independent trade unions. Employers' or company unions would usually be formed and, as you know, the labour movement has a horror of such unions. There were some other matters too which disturbed me. But I decided not to form any final opinion before I had seen the full text of the revised bill. Unfortunately I have not seen it yet.

I shall not, therefore, discuss the bill on the merits. But there is another aspect which deserves consideration. The fact is undoubted that large sections of labour opinion are intensely hostile to the measure, and the Congress government has become very unpopular with such sections. Whether this hostility is justified or not, the fact that it exists is in itself highly important. It is perfectly true that some of the hostile elements, like Ambedkar and Jamnadas Mehta and their group, have probably just exploited the situation in an attempt to injure the Congress and to advance their own prospects in the municipal elections and elsewhere.[5] But it is equally true that many others are honestly of opinion that the bill is injurious to trade unionism and labour, and this opinion has spread to a large section of the working class.

You point out in your letter the various steps you took to consult labour people and others at various stages. Still, it is undoubted that many people think that the bill was rushed through without sufficient opportunity being given for the consideration of such a controversial measure. It is a fact that some unions and others accepted the general principles in regard to conciliation but surely this did not imply the acceptance of many other clauses of the bill. It is not usual for a controversial measure like this not to be referred to a select committee or to be passed after suspension of the usual procedure.

5. On 15 September 1938, B.R. Ambedkar had characterised the Bombay Trades Disputes Bill as a civil liberties suppression act. Jamnadas Mehta said on 31 October 1938, "...a strike was due to fundamental causes of discontent against existing capitalist conditions and not to any perversity of a few labour leaders...."

Apart from past history, the present position is an exceedingly unfortunate one. It may happen that attempts to enforce the bill might lead to further trouble and friction and thus the very object of the bill to bring about peace in industry and to give an opportunity for workers' organisations to develop would be defeated. Passions have been roused and these are dangerous companions for the government. Naturally, those who are opposed to the Congress will exploit the situation to the utmost.

It is difficult for me, without further study and information, to suggest any way out of this impasse. I had hoped, as I was travelling back to India, that I would reach here before the bill was passed and would have a chance of meeting you and others concerned and discuss the situation with you. But I arrived too late. All I can say now is that the present situation seems to me full of dangerous possibilities, and I should very much like it not to be treated as a static one. I would make an attempt to distinguish between an out-and-out opponent of the Congress and genuine trade unionists who object to certain parts of the bill. And I would meet the latter and discuss the matter with them. Naturally, I am not in a position to make any suggestion to anybody as I am still not seized of all the facts. But one fact is obvious, and I cannot ignore it, and that is the unfortunate situation that has arisen, and I earnestly trust that the Bombay Government will do something to remedy it.

I shall be grateful if you will send me to Allahabad a text of the new Act as passed as well as the speeches you mention.

I am returning to Allahabad tomorrow. I shall come back to Wardha about the 7th of December for the Working Committee and I might be going to Bombay afterwards.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To G.B. Pant[1]

Allahabad
December 8, 1938

My dear Pantji,

I gave you a list of Jewish experts available for employment. I have received information that things are moving so fast that perhaps many

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

of these unfortunate persons may simply be crushed out of existence unless some way out is found for them. So far as the best experts are concerned they are likely to be employed by other countries. I would suggest to you, therefore, to come to a decision as quickly as possible. To save time you can communicate directly with the persons concerned or, better still, with V.K. Krishna Menon of the India League, 165 Strand, London W.C. 2, who can get in touch immediately with the various refugees' committees in London. The India League can also send you further particulars, or interview the persons concerned, and report to you. I am writing to them to do this work, if necessary.

In the event of your desiring to engage any person you might also let me know the name so that I might write.

As I have told you, I have got further particulars about these persons with me and I can supply them.

I am going to Wardha and shall be there for about six days. After that I shall be in Bombay for nearly a week.

I enclose another copy of the list.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. The Kisans and the Congress[1]

Let me, at the outset, apologise to you for making a departure from the convention of the presidential addresses being written beforehand. I could not write my address, first, because I could not get time and, secondly, because I could not decide what I should write. I used to feel almost everyday that if anything came to my mind, I would sit down to write, if time permitted. That does not mean that I have no ideas. But I felt that if I talked about my recent visit to Europe, the kisans might get confused, for they might say that they had come to the conference to hear things concerning their needs, and thus they might be upset if international politics were discussed. They might not also understand such matters. The kisans' problems are more important than the question of the country's Swaraj, for if kisans are not organised they

1. Presidential Address at the U.P. Political Conference, Ayodhya, 30 December 1938. From *The Leader*, 2 January 1939.

would continue to suffer as their suppression and exploitation would not end. But if we take into consideration the country's other major problems, then Swaraj and the international situation would be found to be interconnected; for, if there is a fire or an epidemic at a certain place, it is bound to affect many others in the neighbourhood. Therefore the kisans, who have assembled at the conference, and who are anxious about their own matters, should also try to understand the international situation because foreign politics and Indian affairs are interconnected. They should not feel that their leaders should not talk about international politics. Their leaders are anxious that the people in the country become wide awake so that every kisan is able to grasp the totality of the problems and is in a position to conduct his affairs without being dependent on others. We do not want that only a few leaders should understand everything, while kisans follow them blindly. The kisans took part in voting at the last elections, and they should understand for whom they had voted, and for whom they should vote in future.

Recently I visited Europe. The first country I visited was Spain, where efforts are being made by some foreigners to suppress the Spanish people. In China, too, world forces are at work to suppress the Chinese people. The imperialist forces are at work elsewhere also.

You should try to understand these developments so that you are prepared beforehand to face the situation in the event of a world war. Fiscal questions arising in other countries affect our country as well. You have to look at the conditions of kisans in other countries. The conditions of kisans in some countries are far better than the conditions of many Indian zamindars. In America, many kisans own motor cars. The main cause of the poverty of the kisans in India, and the country in general, is the imperialist power.

The new Government of India Act is an attempt at deceiving us because it does not give us any freedom. The Congress at first hesitated to accept office under that constitution for the fear that we may forget our main task which was the achievement of Swaraj. After further consideration, we accepted office, and many Congressmen are now in charge of the Congress ministries. What the Congress ministries have done is before you. Making any estimate of the work, good or bad, done by the ministry would take a long time. But there is no doubt that the acceptance of office has resulted in a lot of good. It would lead to the improvement in the conditions of the kisans. But the real advantage accruing to us from the acceptance of office has been that our power and *sangathan* for the work of Swaraj have increased. The kisans no longer feel so oppressed and downcast as they did till recently. Still,

the oppression of the kisans goes on. But during the last one and a half years, there has been much decrease in the extent of the oppression, either at the hands of the police or the zamindars or their *karindas* or anybody else. It is gradually lessening. I know that the kisans want that whatever is to be done for them should be done soon, and I have myself sometimes felt upset on seeing that the work is not being done quickly. But that is how the government machinery works. The kisans are weighed down with the conditions of acute poverty and distress and it is necessary for the ministry to work faster so that immediate relief is provided to the kisans. Therefore I am often upset at the slow progress of work. Of course, theri are many difficulties to be faced. The major difficulty is that the present constitution, under which the Congress ministries have been formed, impinges on our freedom to act. We can do much better if we have Swaraj. The second difficulty arises from our own weaknesses. We have a habit of involving ourselves in petty matters and forgetting the major and real problems. For instance, we raise communal questions. The communal quarrels weaken the nation, but we should remember that in other big countries, when disputes occur, the whole country does not get involved in them. The work of Swaraj is not for any one community. It is for the entire country. Yet, some of our people always adopt a communal outlook, and it is very painful to find that some of our prominent countrymen, both Hindus and Muslims, do things which instead of uniting people cause dissensions among them. There are certain bodies which have taken upon themselves the task of maligning the Congress. If you read papers, you will notice that we we in the Congress do not, as far as possible, even criticise them. What we point out is that whatever is said against the Congress is wrong. I have no hesitation in declaring here that the allegations made against the Congress from time to time are not only wrong but ridiculous and mean. I am ashamed when any educated Indian is a party to such irresponsible methods of public conduct. By such methods they do not only harm the country but harm their own community as well.

The door of the Congress is open to everybody; it is shut against those only who do not want freedom for the country. There are some communal parties whose membership is confined to Muslims, Hindus or Sikhs exclusively. Everybody has no doubt a right to strengthen his community. The Congress does not oppose the existence of the Muslim League or of the Hindu Mahasabha. But what the Congress dislikes is that generally the members of these parties only talk against the Congress and do not discuss the national problems although they also profess the creed of independence. They abuse the Congress, but I would ask them to realise that the person who indulges in abusing others only harms him-

self and not the person who is abused. Many baseless things are said against the Congress ministry, but the ministry deals with such allegations very leniently. Still, a cry is raised that under the Congress government the Muslims are being oppressed. The Congress requested the Muslims to tell them how they are crushed. The Muslim League, I understand, also appointed a committee.[2] The *Bande Mataram* song and the tricolour flag are the instances pointed out to show how the Muslims are being crushed. The colours in the flag were selected after deep deliberations. The tricolour flag represents the whole country, but if it is examined from a communal angle, then it has the green colour also, which is considered to be the colour representing the Muslims. Therefore, if anybody complains against the flag, I would call it an unfair complaint. There can be separate flags of communities, but they can have no place in the national work.

I regret that some elderly persons who have taken part in the national work, and for whom I have respect, talk like misguided people and thereby impede the progress of the national work and create mutual dissensions. The Congress would however remain firm in its policy and cannot be affected by false allegations. One fundamental principle adopted by the Congress has been that it would not involve itself in communal matters. The doors of the Congress are open to all and the Congress is also prepared to look into the problems faced by the people. But it would be a folly to expect that it would give up its old principles on which it has been working for the country. One of its fundamental principles has been protection of the minorities. I therefore hope that you would not involve yourselves in petty matters but push on our national work.

Acharya Narendra Deva has just pointed out that we have now reached the threshold of freedom, and if anybody puts obstacles in the way of our further progress, he should feel ashamed of such conduct.

I would therefore appeal to all to extend full support to the Congress ministry. If the ministry is found doing anything wrong then they should point out where it has acted wrongly. The Congress ministers and all other Congressmen belong to the same force and are fighting the common foe.

2. The committee under the Raja of Pirpur, appointed in 1938 by the Muslim League, reported that Muslims had been victims of a number of atrocities in three Congress provinces. It particularly referred to the *Bande Mataram* song, the Congress flag and the Vidya Mandir scheme of education.

We should not also do anything which would weaken the Congress *sangathan*. I understand that efforts are being made to form kisan sabhas as organizations rival to the Congress.[3] There is no harm in forming such organisations to strengthen the kisans, but if they are intended to weaken the Congress then that would be a wrong move.

The Congress is fighting for Swaraj. That is its primary object. But along with it there is also the problem of the removal of poverty. In my view both questions are interconnected, because poverty can be removed only when we have the reins of government in our hands and are able to have panchayat raj. Everyone should help in the realisation of these objectives.

I often see the red flag among the kisans. The red flag is an old flag of *mazdurs* and, in some countries, it is also a flag of the kisans. I am not opposed to it, but at the moment it is a great mistake to take out the red flag in villages. The kisans would get confused by seeing several flags. They are used to the tricolour flag, which has become a symbol of the struggle for Swaraj, of *sangathan* and of the kisan's strength; for behind that flag there is great strength. Therefore if another flag is taken to the kisans, that would do harm to the position of the tricolour flag. We should take the tricolour flag to every home, and I hope that no efforts would be made to carry the red flag among the kisans. I certainly have respect for the red flag, but, under the present conditions, we have to attain Swaraj under the tricolour flag, and the whole nation should come under it to advance the country's cause.

Recent happenings in some of the Indian states have raised high hopes. The Congress wants the Indian states also to join in the struggle for freedom, and it is a great pleasure to see signs of awakening in the Indian states. An agitation was started in Rajkot by the people of the state, and recently the raja had agreed to introduce the system of panchayati raj.[4] The British dewan was opposed to the people's demands but he had also to submit before the *sangathan* of the state's people. Rajkot is a small state, but the triumph of its people would serve as an example to other states. Some of them have accepted the principle of panchayati raj. In our own province, we have two states—Tehri (Garhwal) and Banaras—and I have heard that the Banaras state has also announced that the government would be run on the basis of panchayati raj. That is really half

3. These were formed by those Congressmen who had failed to obtain office.
4. After the satyagraha launched by the Praja Parishad had continued for three months, the ruler of Rajkot signed on 26 December 1938 a draft compromise with Vallabhbhai Patel agreeing to appoint a representative committee for introducing responsible government.

work done for we want such achievements in bigger states like Hyderabad and Kashmir also. The question of the Indian states is a complicated one. I hope that the Indian states would also cooperate in the struggle for Swaraj and thereby accelerate the pace of our march towards freedom.

The tenancy legislation is now before the assembly. What has really pained me is that though one and a half years have elapsed, the Congress ministry has not been able to get that legislation passed. Before the Congress ministry was formed, some orders such as those staying proceedings against the kisans were issued which gave them some relief, but it is painful to find that no legislation giving them substantial relief could be passed even though the Congress ministry has been functioning for the last eighteen months or so.

The zamindars have threatened satyagraha.[5] It is good that the zamindars are also learning the use of the weapon of satyagraha. But we are not opposed to the zamindars or taluqdars. The question is not of causing harm to anybody but of giving relief to poor tenants and of raising those who are fallen. There is no question of enmity towards anyone. What everyone has to realize is that our country cannot make progress until the conditions of the kisans improve. I hope that the Congress ministry would soon take steps to provide substantial relief to the tenants. The legislation which is before the assembly has many good provisions. The question however is of enforcing the legislation as early as possible. That should be done first of all. All other laws can be passed later. Among other problems, there is one of indebtedness, and I want that the provincial government should soon enact laws which would lessen the kisans' burden of indebtedness. I also want the kisans to consider the question of farming on a cooperative basis, for if fifty or sixty kisans combine to work together and distribute the produce among themselves, they would be better off than if each works separately on a small plot of land.

After the tenancy bill has been passed by the assembly—and it would be passed because the Congress party is in a majority—it would go to the council. The council members are not elected by the kisans, but they are elected by the zamindars and the capitalists. They do not like the bill and might put obstacles. I can only hope that obstacles would not be raised as that would agitate the kisans, and if there are obstacles, it should be the duty of the Congress and the kisans to show that they cannot tolerate them as they have already waited for a long time.

5. On 17 October 1938, the landlords of Avadh passed a resolution threatening civil disobedience if the tenancy [illegible] not revised.

I must also deprecate the tendency to resort to hunger strikes or satyagraha by the students. The Muslim League also declared sometime back that when the time came they would offer satyagraha against the Congress. I am amused that the League hurls abuses at the Congress, and at the same time thinks of imitating its methods.

I think the Congress in the United Provinces has perhaps the greatest *sangathan*. Our membership runs to about fifteen lakhs. There may be some among us who may not be genuine Congressmen, but I feel that the number of such members would not be large and those enrolled are really the members of this organisation. It has greatly pleased me to find such a large enrolment of members done here. We had some disputes at the time of the elections, but the Congress work in the province has improved since then. We have learnt how to conduct ourselves better. Our work would further improve as our strength increases.

I do not like the practice of the kisans showing respect to leaders by touching their feet. You are soldiers in the fight for Swaraj, and therefore you should keep your heads high instead of bending low before others.

Chandra Singh, a Garhwali prisoner, is still lying in jail and from this alone we can form an idea of the limitation of our powers. It shows that although we have a Congress ministry, we cannot do what the British Government does not want us to do.

I would again urge you to put an end to mutual quarrels and make concerted efforts to uplift the masses so that the whole country becomes strong and capable of winning Swaraj. I would also request you to celebrate the Independence Day on 26th January with great enthusiasm.

4. Askote[1]

The first week of January of this year saw a remarkable pilgrimage. Five hundred peasants from Askote marched across the mountains and the valleys to lay their grievances before the Prime Minister of the United Provinces Government at Lucknow.[2] There were no roads or swift means

1. Article written at Almora, 25 January 1939. *National Herald*, 29 January 1939. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 144-146.
2. The main grievances of the peasantry were that they were tenants-at-will and could be ejected at any time. Every peasant was also required to do forced labour without any wages for at least three days in a year on the *rajwar's* (zamindar's) land.

of transport and for a full week they tramped, following the bridle path, to the distant plains below.

Where is this Askote? Who had heard of it before this band of five hundred determined men forced it on people's notice and put Askote on the map of India? Few, I imagine, outside the district of Almora knew of it. Askote is a taluqa in Almora district, a frontier region bordering on Nepal and not far from Tibet. It is a week's march from Almora town. One hundred and forty two villages dot its four hundred square miles, most of which are forest land.

This taluqa is held under a peculiar tenure by the *rajwar*, as the zamindar is called. Before the conquest of Kumaun by the Gurkhas, the *rajwar* seems to have considered himself a semi-independent chief and had freedom to do what he liked, subject to some kind of payment to the overlord. The Gurkhas reduced his status and made him a farmer of land revenue. Even then he had a great deal of freedom and could deal with his tenants as he liked so long as he paid the sum assessed by the government. The coming of the British made no essential difference to him, and though a number of settlements were made, his privileged position continued and he was unlike any other landlord in Kumaun. The British officers were anxious to keep on good terms with this frontier baron, who occupied a position of some strategic importance. Sir Henry Ramsay, the commissioner of Kumaun, wrote in 1873: "If political difficulties arise on the eastern frontier of Kumaun, the *rajwar's* services will be as much required and as valuable as ever, and to maintain his important position, it is most desirable that his former status be maintained."

So the *rajwar* continued, in practice if not in strict law, as a feudal chief far removed from any control from above. The government was obliging enough to make him a special magistrate and his brother the local police officer and *patwari*. (*Patwaris* in Kumaun have special powers.) The *rajwar* family was thus all-powerful and it was impossible for any of the tenants to object or protest against any imposition. There was not even a telegraph office in Askote, and the post to Almora took many days. The peasantry were backward and had to put up with a large number of payments, other than rent, on the ground of custom.

Echoes of the noncooperation movement reached Askote and gradually the peasants began to wake up and agitate against many of the illegal dues. They were crushed by the *rajwar* family repeatedly, and the agitation subsided for a while, but only to rise again. In 1938, the Congress government sent two committees to inquire and lengthy reports

were presented by these committees. The people waited patiently hoping that some relief would come to them at last. They had heard of some of the recommendations made in these reports and did not know that the wheels of governments move terribly slowly. Instead of relief coming there was some fresh aggression on behalf of the *rajwar* and then they lost patience.

They decided to march to Lucknow, and five hundred of them started on the long trail. A mild sensation was created; the whole district knew about it, and the peasantry followed the march with interest. Efforts were made to stop them by promises and assurances, but they continued till they reached the plains at Pilibhit. There, in response to a personal appeal from the Prime Minister, they stopped and sent a small deputation to interview him in Lucknow. They returned with the Prime Minister's word that he would set right their grievances. They are waiting for the fulfilment of that promise.

This Askote march has its lessons for us if we care to learn them. The Congress organisation in Almora was inactive and did little for the Askote people, government was slow-moving, and so these backward peasants, totally ignorant of politics and demonstrations, took the initiative into their own hands and decided to present their case personally to the big people at the top. By taking this step they succeeded more than they had done by years of patient petitioning. Their political education has begun and their progress is likely to be rapid.

5. To G.B. Pant[1]

Wardha
February 21, 1939

My dear Pantji,

As you know, the British Government is trying to amend the Government of India Act with a view to take more powers in the event of a crisis. This is obviously a very objectionable and dangerous move. But I was surprised to learn from Sarup that the answer of your government to this was a somewhat vague and non-committal one to the effect that you are not interested in the amendment to the Act as you want the whole Act to go. This is a perfectly correct position in so far as petty

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

amendments in favour of the people are concerned. But any amendment to restrict the power of the present provincial government is a vital challenge which cannot be passed lightly or academically. I had a talk on this subject with Gandhiji and other members of the Working Committee and they were all of this opinion. I hope therefore that your government will take up a strong attitude on this matter.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
February 24, 1939

My dear Krishna,
I should like to draw your attention to an attempt that is being made by the British Government to amend the Government of India Act. Various amendments have been suggested, most of them more or less minor ones. But the real amendment is to give power to the central government, in case of war, to assume executive responsibility in the provinces. It appears that at the time of the September crisis it was felt that the provincial governments might be in a position to obstruct any measure that the Government of India might adopt. So the Act was examined from this point of view and the new amendment suggested. Of course, it was always open to the British Government to suspend the constitution in the provinces in case of conflict. Under the new proposal they can simply take executive powers from the provinces in regard to matters affecting the war and yet leave the ministries to function. Obviously, this in itself would bring about a crisis.

While it has been our general attitude not to interest ourselves in any amendment of the Act, as we want the whole Act to go, it is obviously a very different matter when existing powers are taken away. I am writing to you merely to acquaint you with what is happening so that you may warn our friends there about possible developments.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

7. To B.G. Kher[1]

Allahabad
March 17, 1939

My dear Kher,
Some little time back I saw a report in the press about certain questions and answers in the Bombay Assembly relating to the Communist Party. It was stated on behalf of the Bombay Government that they had not recommended the removal of the ban on the Communist Party, nor do they want this done as this party stood for violence. I read this report with considerable surprise. To say that the Communist Party stands for violence is far from correct. But quite apart from this, it seems to me that the Bombay Government's answer is in direct contravention of the Congress policy in regard to such matters. So far as I remember, Congress members in the central assembly have asked for the removal of the ban. At the ministers' conference held last year in Bombay, it was agreed that this attempt should be made. In the Working Committee also this has been pressed, and numerous leading Congressmen have expressed themselves strongly on this subject. I should like to know, therefore, whether the answer of the Bombay Government reflects its own particular policy, which is different from the policy of the other Congress governments and Congress policy, or whether it has some further justification. The matter raises vital issues and before I speak or write about it in public I should like to have your views on the subject. For me the policy laid down by the Bombay Government is totally indefensible and is opposed to the general Congress policy of civil liberties.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

8. To C. Rajagopalachari[1]

Allahabad
March 17, 1939

My dear Rajagopalachari,
Many letters have come to me drawing my attention to a certain speech delivered by Mr. Varkey, Minister for Education in your government, at Tinnevelly on March 6th.[2] I enclose a cutting from *The Hindu* giving a brief report of the speech.

I have read this report with astonishment. Mr. Varkey has every right to express his opinion against communism or socialism, but as a Congress minister he has no business to carry on propaganda against the declared policy of the Congress. The Congress has repeatedly expressed itself in regard to the conflict in Spain, and in doing so has condemned the rebels under General Franco, and sent its good wishes to the Spanish Republic. Mr. Varkey is reported to have said that General Franco stood for religion, order and democracy, and was against the communists who have done much harm in that country. Mr. Varkey has every right to hold the opinions he likes in regard to religion, though it does seem strange to me that General Franco should try to protect religion with the help of Moorish Muslims and German and Italian troops. It is stranger still that General Franco's conception of order should consist of the horrible bombings of civilian population, undefended cities and helpless refugees. As for democracy, I have not yet come across any person accusing General Franco of being democratic. Perhaps Mr. Varkey's ideas of democracy differ entirely from those usually held. I wonder if Mr. Varkey is aware that a very large number of Catholics have opposed General Franco, and the Basque country, which is ardently Catholic, fought bitterly against him. Further that a vast number of people in other countries, who are neither communists nor socialists, have condemned General Franco and his methods.

But I need not discuss the merits or demerits of General Franco. There are plenty of books and other materials for any person to judge. What I am concerned with is Mr. Varkey's defiance of the Congress resolutions in regard to Spain. The Tripuri Congress had reaffirmed these

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. C.J. Varkey, Education Minister of Madras, 1938-39, said at a public meeting that General Franco and Spain had been misunderstood and people had often been misled by wrong reports. General Franco stood for religion and democracy and was warring against the communists.

resolutions.[3] It is astonishing that a minister of a Congress government should openly go against the Congress policy. If he feels that it is his duty to preach crusades against the Congress resolutions and policy, then his place is outside the Congress and outside the Congress ministry. It will be highly unbecoming for a controversy of this character to be carried on in public between Mr. Varkey and Congressmen. And yet it is obviously not possible to remain quiet when Congress ministers indulge in these fantasies.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Varkey directly. I shall wait for your and his reply before making any statement of mine on the subject.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. The Tripuri Congress passed a resolution disapproving "the recognition of rebel Spain" by the British Government.

9. To Leonard K. Elmhirst[1]

Allahabad
March 21, 1939

Dear Elmhirst,[2]

Thank you for your letter of March 2nd. I have looked through the two broadsheets issued by P.E.P. which you have sent me and I have found them very interesting. We have already written for a complete set of publications of the P.E.P. both for our Congress office here and for the planning committee.

I met Dr. Sudhir Sen[3] at Sriniketan and had a good talk with him. I hope we shall have his cooperation in our planning work.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1893-1974); founder-director, rural reconstruction institute, Sriniketan, Visva Bharati, and of a similar institution, Dartington Hall, in Devonshire in Britain; agricultural adviser to the Bengal Government, 1943; assisted in the development of the Damodar Valley Corporation and the plant-breeding research institute at Almora.
3. (b. 1906); an economist; assisted in rural development work at Sriniketan, 1939-42; later served the Government of India and the United Nations; author of several books and reports on economic problems.

I am surprised to read in your letter that someone told you that it was not possible for me to meet Ford Robertson[4] at Almora. This of course is absurd. I meet everybody. There never has been a difficulty about my meeting specialists and experts whoever they might be. There have been difficulties occasionally in my meeting persons like the Viceroy of India as such a meeting has certain political significance. But during the last few months I have even met the Viceroy.

It is quite natural for the Congress to try to utilise the services of competent Indians and even to prefer them to outsiders. In the past, a deliberate policy was followed to ignore Indians and to give them no opportunities of growth even though their qualifications might be high. But, in spite of this, I do not think there is any desire whatever on the part of the Congress to push out a competent English officer or expert. Unfortunately the average I.C.S. man, whether he is English or Indian, is generally wholly incompetent for any specialised work. He is also not of much use outside the rut he has functioned in so long. We lack really efficient men especially, both among Indians and Europeans, here. Where we find such a person we desire to hold on to him whoever he might be.

It is true that owing to a state of instability of our political and economic life, it is difficult to develop an atmosphere for real constructive work. Still this has to be done. As you say, even a study and a definition of the problem is a good beginning, and sometime or other we shall profit by this work, even though wars may come with all their horror and destruction.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Deputy commissioner of forests, Almora division, 1938-40.

10. Provincial Governments—Wake Up[1]

Our provincial governments are very busy. It is the busiest time of the year for them. Budgets are being discussed and criticised and, where

1. Signed article written at Lucknow, 28 March 1939. *National Herald*, 30 March 1939. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 147-154.

long-established vested interests are touched, angry and sorrowful cries rend the air. Our ministers work hard and late and wear themselves out in the process. Some may envy their high position, others may intrigue for preferment to ministership. But few who have come in close contact with the work of our ministers would care to take their place and shoulder the heavy burdens and responsibility and drudgery that is their lot. They have worked faithfully and unceasingly for India and for the cause for which the Congress has laboured, and if the success that has come to them has not been as great as we hoped, it is foolish and uncharitable to cast the blame on them. Their achievement has indeed been considerable and worthy of pride.

And yet, and yet, the sands run out and this mad world rushes on, and problems multiply, and if we do not keep pace with them we perish. The world of today is not for the complacent or the slow of foot or those who are the slaves of events.

It is this realisation that has increasingly gripped India, and behind the unseemly controversy about the Congress presidential election at Tripuri, behind the personal conflicts and the growth of adventurism, there lies this vital urge of our people, their desire to shake themselves out of the rut of complacency and to play their part in the dynamic world of today. The resolution on the national demand, unhappily somewhat overshadowed by controversy on personal issues, was the resolution of the Congress and it embodied this vital urge.[2] Provincial autonomy, it said, is rapidly exhausting its possibilities and the time has come, both nationally and internationally, when the great step forward must be taken. If our ministers and provincial governments, as well as the Congress organisation, realise this change in objective conditions and in the temper of our people, and put themselves in tune with it, then it is well with them. Otherwise they will lose grip and grow increasingly ineffective and wrapped up in their petty problems and difficulties. It is not by pursuing a policy of drift that major problems are solved in a revolutionary age. We cannot merely carry on, or else we shall all be carried away to none knows where.

The communal problem faces us threateningly, and yet it grows ever clearer that in its essence it is a political problem and not just a communal one. Bloody riots have occurred in the United Provinces and open and unabashed provocation to murder and violence has had free

2. On 11 March 1939, the Tripuri Congress passed a resolution reiterating the uncompromising opposition of the Congress to the federal scheme, demanded the setting up of a constituent assembly and called upon its members and the people to promote unity and strengthen the Congress organisation.

field. Strange stories come of incompetence and mischief-making and toleration of this new phase of violence. A few riots need not frighten us, distressing as they are. Let us not forget that the vast majority of our population lives peacefully and is unaffected by the mischief of a few. But even so we must discover the secret springs behind these disturbances and take steps to put an end to this growing violence and terrorism. All men and women of goodwill, to whatever party or group they might belong, must desire this. Those who are in official charge of the functions of government in local areas must realise their responsibilities and appreciate that their failure to curb this violence is a black stain on their record and reputation. It is possible that the best of administrators might be overwhelmed temporarily by the course of events. It is also possible, and the presumption is not unjustified, that incompetence or mischief often lies behind these disturbances. We can tolerate neither incompetence nor michief-making, nor can we drift while these flourish.

Our problems fill our minds. Yet the problem of problems today, overshadowing all else, is the growth and triumph of gangsterism in international affairs. The lights go out in Europe and elsewhere, the shadows increase, and in the darkness freedom is butchered and brutal violence reigns. Tragedy envelops us, heart-breaking tragedy, as we see the death of nation after nation, the vast suffering and misery of millions of people crushed by barbarian feet. 'Brotherhood', 'sisterhood' are bastard creeds, says Signor Mussolini; only the sword counts with him, the sword that kills freedom and democracy and puts an end to the culture and civilisation of ages. Spain of the republic and of freedom is no more, only the bright and imperishable memory of her glorious struggle remains. Czechoslovakia used to be on the map of Europe; it is no more, and Herr Hitler's minions trample on her brave children, betrayed so shamefully by England and France. From day to day we await in suspense what this dictator or that says; anxiously we wonder what the next aggression will be.

How does all this affect India? Dare we ignore these tremendous happenings in Europe? India's freedom will not be worth many days' purchase if fascism and Nazism dominate the world. Our own existence is bound up with the fate of freedom and democracy in the world. Only a union of freedom-loving peoples and their mutual cooperation can avert the common peril. For that union India must stand.

But let us not forget recent history. It is not Hitler or Mussolini who have created the present crisis in Europe. Ultimately it is the policy of the British Government supported by the French Government. There is a great deal of talk of the democracies defending freedom against the

onslaughts of fascism. But it is these very so-called democracies of western Europe that have helped and encouraged fascism and Nazism and done to death the Spanish Republic and Czechoslovakia. If one man more than another is responsible for the Europe of today it is Mr. Neville Chamberlain. If there has been and is danger to democracy and freedom it is due more to Mr. Chamberlain and his policy than to any other.

Let us not talk, therefore, of Mr. Chamberlain's government or Messieurs Daladier and Bonnet's government as democracies, and so long as these governments or their like continue, no one will consider them the champions of democracy. They have too much blood of the free on their hands, too many betrayals to their credit, for them to pose as democrats or lovers of freedom. Even if they are forced to fight fascism, no one will trust their good faith or their motives, and they will yet again betray the cause which they trumpet so loudly. Behind the gallant speeches even today, what intrigues are going on, what base manoeuvres, what contemplated betrayals? Even terrible danger on the doorstep and in the sky overhead does not shake Mr. Chamberlain's faith in his Munich policy or bring light to the darkness of his fascist mind.

Certainly India will not fall in line with Mr. Neville Chamberlain's policy in peace or in war. She will oppose it and resist it, for it is the embodiment of the imperialism and fascism which she detests. But England and France have still the instinct of democracy, although this may be hidden by the Chamberlains, Halifaxes and Simons; their peoples still care for freedom. If this instinct finds proper expression and really stands up for the defence of democracy, then India can certainly look favourably on it and lend her hand in support.

But India cannot support democracy elsewhere without democracy for her own people. An India dominated by imperialism can only think in terms of resisting that imperialism. Only freedom and complete self-determination for us can convince us of the *bona fides* of the British Government; only these can create the conditions for mutual cooperation in the face of common peril.

We have been recently told on behalf of the British Government that the Government of India Act holds and will continue. If that is the British answer to us, then our path is clear; it is one of resistance to British imperialism, whatever the consequences might be. It is whispered also that an attempt is being made to restrict the powers of the provincial governments in the event of war, by giving executive authority in the provinces to the central government. If this attempt is made, it will be fought to the uttermost.

It has not been our policy or habit to bargain or blackmail in times of crisis. We function differently, and we shall continue this policy whether war comes or not. But we can only function in terms of the dignity and freedom of the Indian people, and no other conditions are acceptable to us. The issues before us are not academic; they are of the Here and Now, vital for the interests of India, of England and the world. We offer our cooperation for freedom and democracy well realising the imminent peril of today. But we offer the cooperation of a free people and not of a slave nation. The conspiracy against freedom, in the name of 'appeasement' or a bogus peace, has gone far enough, and it is time it was halted, if the world is not to perish in widespread catastrophe.

The provincial governments, functioning in the sphere of the provinces, cannot ignore the wider issues. They have to play their part in this vital drama which is changing the face of things. They may be asked to act in a hundred ways which, though apparently innocuous, yet affect these wider issues. They dare not forget them and every step they might take, big or small, must be guided by these broader considerations and by the basic policy of the Congress. They have, of course, to resist any encroachment on their present powers. But they have to do much more than merely act on the defensive. They have to be vigilant guardians of our cause and to prepare themselves for all eventualities. That is a heavy responsibility and they must prove worthy of it. Wake up, provincial governments!

11. Standards of Public Conduct[1]

I have learnt with deep regret of the deplorable incidents that took place in the Kaisarbagh Baradari yesterday.[2] I have taken considerable care to find out the real facts and have read many reports and had eyewitnesses' accounts. These facts are clear enough and there is a remarkable consensus of opinion in regard to them.

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 30 March 1939. *National Herald*, 31 March 1939.
2. Several Congressmen and their sympathisers were injured in Lucknow on 29 March 1939 when they were attacked by some Europeans and others who had met to protest against the employment tax bill introduced by the Congress ministry in U.P.

There can be no doubt that the behaviour of a few of the organisers of the meeting, including some Europeans, was offensive and undesirable in the extreme, and the way Seth Damodar Swarup and other well-known Congressmen were beaten and ill-treated was not only exceedingly provocative but highly objectionable and wholly uncalled for from any point of view. Many distinguished non-Congressmen who were present agree with this. It is clear that but for this unprovoked violence there would have been nothing untoward in the course of the meeting.

A dozen or so persons could not, even if they so wished, interfere with the course of the meeting. It is also clear that Shri Mohanlal Gautam and other Congressmen present exercised a soothing and restraining influence on the crowd that subsequently came in and thereby prevented worse development.

While I greatly regret the behaviour of some of the organisers and consider it a deplorable sign of the lowering of the standards of public conduct, I am more concerned with what Congressmen and their sympathisers do. I venture to claim that I have a right to advise them and to point out to them the consequences of their conduct. Our policy of nonviolence is not merely a negative policy; it is essentially a positive policy and a technique with numerous implications, and we may not forget this fundamental basis and these implications.

Owing to various causes there is a spirit of violence in the air, most evident in the communal disturbances, and we have to be especially on our guard to do nothing which encourages it or promotes disintegration and indiscipline.

We call ourselves the representatives of the people; if so we have a heavy responsibility. It is not enough that we should individually behave correctly; we have to see that others also do so.

If the Kaisarbagh meeting was a private meeting, limited to those invited to it, it was not desirable for others to attend it. Congressmen should not have gone to it. The mere fact that a private meeting was held indicated that public sentiment was against it. That public sentiment could have expressed itself forcibly in other ways, through a public meeting or otherwise. Therefore I think that it was unfortunate that any Congressmen should have attended the meeting.

I do not think it is proper for Congressmen to attend any such purdah meetings. It is not in consonance with the dignity of the Congress. I feel also that when asked to leave the meeting, on the ground that it was private, Congressmen should have left. Further I feel that the subsequent behaviour of the crowd that came in was deplorable. I do not know who these people were, and I know that they were checked and later controlled by the Congressmen present. But the mere fact

that they came as sympathisers of the Congress makes us all responsible for their actions. I realise fully that the provocation on the part of some of the organisers was very great, but we have never made provocation an excuse for retaliation. And we must remember that the Congressmen who were present at the meeting went on their own initiative and uninvited.

The injuries that have been received by various people are not serious and will heal, but such incidents leave a trail of violence behind them which affects our work in every direction. In the atmosphere of today we must avoid everything that adds to inner conflict and disruption.

12. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Lucknow
April 1, 1939

My dear Bapu,
I have your letter of the 30th March together with copies of correspondence with Subhas. Jaya Prakash met me yesterday for a short time on his way to Patna. I think that there is little to be said beyond what you have written to Subhas.[2]

The Lucknow Baradari incident was very unfortunate. But still I hope that you will not attach too much importance to it. I am sending you the *National Herald* report of this incident. This is a truthful report by a competent eye-witness. The next day I issued a statement in regard to the incident, a copy of which I enclose also.[3] A letter by Gautam in the press also helps in understanding the background.[4]

The communal situation is very disturbing. There are certain novel features about it. In past years, when such riots occurred, there was a great deal of emotion and passion in the multitude. For instance, last

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Subhas Bose on 30 March 1939 that his choice of the Working Committee should be unfettered and the Committee need not be homogeneous in character but may be composed mainly of the members backing Subhas' policy. He himself would not be a party to 'self-suppression' by Subhas Bose as against 'voluntary self-effacement'.
3. See the preceding item.
4. Mohanlal Gautam argued that it was an unprovoked attack made on a few Congressmen.

year the Allahabad riot was clearly of political origin but still large masses of people were affected and were excited. This year it is even more purely political and it is patently superficial. That is to say that there is no passion or emotion visible in the city. There is a certain amount of fear and some resentment. Clearly, these riots tend to be brought about purely to exercise a certain political pressure. It also seems that people are slightly getting used to them and are not quite so frightened by them as they used to be. Today in Allahabad there is no feeling of general panic or suppressed emotion. A fair amount of business is being done. Most shops are open, and yet odd cases of stabbing occur in out of the way places. There are no big crowds or conflict on a mass scale. Generally people are irritated and bored at what is happening. There is no local or religious problem which has to be solved. This forenoon I drove through parts of the city and saw three stabbing cases which had occurred about five minutes before I arrived. In each case the man who had done the deed had disappeared.

In my mind the local leaders of the Muslim League must certainly be held responsible for much that is happening.

I fear this individual violence on a small scale will continue in some of our cities for some days. Gradually it will fade out. It is not easy to deal with it for either the Congressmen or the police.

As for your suggestion about the ministry, I do not think it is at all feasible.[5] No sudden change will make much difference, while it may well give rise to additional problems. Of course, so far as I am concerned, I am perfectly willing to help the U.P. ministry in every way.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

13. To Yusuf Meerza[1]

Allahabad
April 4, 1939

Dear Prince Yusuf Meerza,[2]

I have just received your telegram. I entirely agree with you that Shias, not only as a minority community but as citizens of India, have a right to every protection. As you know, the *Mad-he-Sahaba*[3] agitation has been troubling the U.P. Government for a long time past, and they have given their most earnest consideration to it. It was and is essentially a matter for the Muslims to decide, and for a non-Muslim to intervene in a religious matter seems to be out of place. Unfortunately, in spite of every effort, no such compromise was arrived at. I am not in the confidence of the government, and therefore I can only speak on my own behalf. When there is such a conflict between two groups and no mutual arrangement is arrived at, the government has to accept the principle of civil liberty subject to the preservation of peace. I suppose the U.P. Government thought on these lines. I understand that their last *communique*, following their previous statement, accepted this principle and in order to give it practical application permitted the Sunnis to recite the *Mad-he-Sahaba* on one day in the year. The alternative to this was, as we have seen, a daily recitation of it by large numbers of people; thus there is not only continuous conflict with the government but also a continuous wounding of Shia sentiment. Obviously such matters have to be resolved ultimately by the goodwill and spirit of forbearance of the people concerned. It is not good enough to enforce decisions on unwilling people for long. I would beg of you to exercise your influence in the direction of forbearance so that the spirit of animosity which leads to deliberate wounding of others' sentiments, might end.

I am not directly connected with this matter or with the government's decision. But I am eager and willing to help, where I can, to put an end to mutual ill will and conflict. I am forwarding your telegram to the Prime Minister of the U.P. Government.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1903); a grandson of Wajid Ali Shah, the last ruler of Avadh.
3. The praise of the Caliphs.

14. Kisans Should Strengthen the Congress[1]

The hands of the popular ministers are tied and the Government of India Act has placed one hundred and one hurdles in the way of any popular measure having a smooth passage through the provincial legislatures. The Congress has been doing its best through the legislatures to bring relief to the tenants. The first act in that connection was to stay proceedings for realising arrears of rent. This was followed by other measures like the debt relief acts and so on. At present, the U.P. legislature is engaged in changing the old laws of tenancy. The tenancy bill has passed through several stages, but many more remain to be gone through, and I hope that the Congress Party in the assembly would pilot the bill successfully. I would, however, want the kisans to remember that in a House consisting of 228 members matters have to move slowly. There are a number of zamindars who are opposed to the bill and whose points of view should be considered during the passage of the bill. The bill will again have to go through the provincial council, which consists of men of landed interests who would fight hard against such popular measures. It is, therefore, the duty of the kisans to strengthen the hands of the Congress organisation so that it may fight their battles and win for them what they valued most.

The interests of the kisans are common, be they Hindus or Muslims. The kisans whether they are Hindus or Muslims have to pay rents. They both have to acquire rights over the land that they cultivate. They have to work shoulder to shoulder in establishing their rights and in getting their wrongs redressed and their burdens relieved. The Congress, having taken up the cause of the kisans, has made no distinction between one kisan and another. It is, therefore, the bounden duty of every kisan, be he a Hindu or a Muslim, to strengthen the Congress organisation. There are some people, who, in order to break the solidarity of the kisans, have introduced communal considerations into their ranks. The kisans should be very careful with such people.

It is also not proper for the kisans to run to the ministers seeking jobs and other favours. It would undermine the prestige of the Congress and affect its work. Nor should the villagers go to the police for

1. Speech at a meeting of kisans at Karchana in Allahabad district, 16 April 1939. From *National Herald*, 20 April 1939.

the settlement of their petty disputes and quarrels. They should decide these among themselves.

The kisans should not also imagine that their problems would end with the solution of the questions concerning rent and revenue. They, being the people who supplied men and money for the defence and the running of the government of the country, should know what is going on outside the country. If they would only know what is going on in China at present, they would realise that the tenants in the villages are not free from the effects of war. There is the danger of war ahead of them, which may be just as big as the last Great War. The kisans should also realise that they possess the right to ask the British Government as to why Indians should fight for them. Certain laws are being enacted by the government in England, which would compel Indians to fight British wars. Kisans should therefore see whether their interests would be served if Indians were compelled to join such a war. In other words, kisans would have to ask the government whether such a war was for the freedom of India or not. If not, then they should refuse to fight.

In the elections to the *halqa* committees that will engage you during the next week, I would like to urge upon you to give sufficient chance to the Muslim members to get into the Congress committees.

It would only be through the combined efforts of the Hindus and the Muslims that the Congress organisation would be strengthened.

15. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Allahabad
April 17, 1939

My dear Maulana,

I received your letter yesterday afternoon. I felt that it was perhaps too late for me to go to Lucknow to meet Sir Sultan Ahmed.[2] If, however, my presence there is required or he asks me to go, I shall certainly do so.

I sent your letter in original last night by messenger to Rafi Ahmed and asked him to show it to the other ministers. I fear there has been

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1880-1963); lawyer of Patna; attended the Round Table Conference, 1930-31; law member, Viceroy's executive council, 1937 and 1941-45.

much bungling about this issue. Hafiz Ibrahim was particularly in charge of it and considerable pressure was brought to bear upon him by Maulana Husain Ahmad. The deputy commissioner also was very excited and pressed for an early decision by the government. Pantji, unfortunately, was and has been a very sick man, thoroughly tired out and with no freshness left about him. Rafi also had been unwell and had gone away for a few days' rest. The matter was thus decided in a hurry without full consideration of the consequences. Of course, they should have referred to you. The fact is that the ministry is weary with work and responsibility and tends to become stale.

Pantji was so unwell that he had to leave Lucknow immediately after and I am not sure that he has come back yet.

I understand that Maulana Husain Ahmad is very displeased with Moulvi Abdul Shukur[3] as the latter did not play fair with him. Zaffar-ul-mulk[4] is probably still in prison (though I am not sure of this) because he refused to agree to the settlement.

If I can be of any use whatever, I shall gladly offer myself.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. A Sunni leader of Lucknow.
4. A Sunni leader of Lucknow; took part in the struggle for freedom; member, Kanpur Riots Enquiry Committee, 1931, appointed by the A.I.C.C.

16. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Lucknow
May 12, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Pantji has just shown me your letter dated 11th May regarding the *Mad-he-Sahaba* controversy. It is difficult to write about this in any detail as the subject is frightfully complicated, although on the surface it is simple enough. I have been hung up in Lucknow for the last week because of this as I do not want to go away till the matter is settled.

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.

All the ministers are giving a great deal of time to this matter and everything possible is being done. Our efforts are devoted to bringing about an amicable settlement ****[2]

In the alternative, we want to do something which will at least put an end to the present civil disobedience, and produce a better atmosphere for the settlement.[3] What government intends doing in this case is to keep the *communique* of March 31st, 1939, which gave the right of a procession or meeting to the Sunnis, intact. Also to give an equivalent right to the Shias too for procession and meeting subject to one important qualification that there should be no *Tabarra*. As a matter of fact, the Shias are agreeable not to exercise this right for the present even though it is given to them. We are now considering the terms of the *communique* that should be issued on these lines in case the efforts at compromise fail for the present. We hope that there will be some outcome to all this in the course of two or three days at the most.

We are consulting all manner of people, Shias and Sunnis, so that any step that we might take might be generally approved of.

I am afraid Sir Sultan Ahmed managed to gather many wrong impressions during his visits to Lucknow. He has created a bad impression among his own Shia colleagues here and they are dissatisfied with him. The government's position has all along been that they will gladly give effect to any compromise. Otherwise, they must stick to their *communique* of March 31st. In the course of the negotiations, some Sunni leaders said that they hoped to bring round the others. Thereupon Rafi Ahmed informed Sir Sultan Ahmed that in case the Sunnis agreed, the government would also gladly agree. As ultimately the Sunnis did not agree, the government perforce could not. There was no breach of agreement by either the Sunnis or the government. It is difficult of course in such matters to treat any one or two individuals as recognised leaders of a community.

I am staying on here till this matter is settled one way or the other. I have just had a telephone conversation with Maulana Azad and have explained to him the situation. He agreed with the general line we were adopting.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

2. Portion of letter moth-eaten.
3. As the U.P. Government had granted permission to the Sunnis to recite *Mad-he-Sahaba* in public, the Shias had launched an agitation to get similar permission for public recital of *Tabarra* (cursing of the first three Caliphs).

17. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Lucknow
May 14, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,
After numerous difficulties and hitches we had hoped that the government would issue its *communique* yesterday regarding the Shia-Sunni trouble. All the Shia leaders whom we had consulted agreed to certain drafts and the whole thing was got ready for publication. In the evening we learnt, however, that the *mujtahids* who are the religious leaders of the Shias were not agreeable to the course suggested. So the matter stands hung up for the moment. Perhaps they might be brought round today by their colleagues.

Because of this I have had to stay on in Lucknow and Pantji, who was going to Naini Tal for rest, has also stayed on.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

18. All India Political Prisoners' Day[1]

The Congress President has fixed Monday, May 21, as the All India Political Prisoners' Day. I trust that this day will be observed throughout the province by the holding of meetings, and the demand will be put forward for the release of all political prisoners who are still in prison in some provinces which are not under Congress control. At these meetings, the resolution passed by the All India Congress Committee at Calcutta recently should be read out.[2]

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 15 May 1939. *National Herald*, 16 May 1939.
2. The A.I.C.C., on 1 May 1939, urged the release of political prisoners in Bengal and Punjab and called upon the Working Committee to devise ways and means for starting an all-India movement for the release of these prisoners.

I should particularly like to draw the attention of the Congressmen not only in this province, but all over India, to Thakur Chandra Singh, the Garhwali prisoner, who has spent nearly nine years in prison. All his colleagues of the Garhwali regiment have been released, but this brave man of whom any country can be proud is still kept imprisoned. It is a sad commentary on our present state that we have so far failed to get him released. We should not tolerate this, and I hope that his name will be particularly mentioned on the political prisoners' day.

19. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Lucknow
May 17, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,
Your letter of the 13th May. I am afraid it will be very difficult to find time for the Jamshedpur arbitration.[2] The whole of June will be taken up by various committees in Bombay. In July I shall have to go to the Frontier Province if I can possibly leave the U.P.

Meanwhile the Shia affairs refused to be solved. We are still carrying on but for the moment I have little hope. Pantji has gone to Naini Tal for some weeks. He has been consistently unwell and tired out. Rafii has had a heart attack and is laid up.

I am fairly well now.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Jawaharlal and Rajendra Prasad were accepted by the rival unions in the Tata Iron and Steel Company to act as arbitrators in their disputes following a strike in March 1939.

20. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Lucknow
May 17, 1939

My dear Vallabhbhai,
I have your letter of the 12th May. We were all expecting you in Lucknow. I was here for ten days entirely occupied with the Shia-Sunni dispute. This is a frightful tangle. We thought we had come to a settlement several times but new difficulties arose. Even now some kind of conversations are going on. But for the present I see no way out.

I was away in Allahabad for two days and I have returned to Lucknow this morning.

As I have not been reading Bombay papers, I did not know that Kamath had been delivering public speeches in support of the Forward Bloc.[2] I think this was very improper of him. I am taking the matter in hand.

I was somewhat unwell last week but have recovered now. Pantji has been consistently unwell for a long time past and he has gone away to Naini Tal for some weeks. Rafi had a heart attack two days ago and is bed-ridden.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Vallabhbhai Patel had written that H.V. Kamath, who was a member of the planning committee, had made a speech welcoming the formation of the Forward Bloc and had himself joined it.

21. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Lucknow
May 17, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,
I have just received your letter of the 16th May regarding the Shia-Sunni dispute. I quite appreciate what you say. From every point of

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

view it is injurious to the national cause that this trouble should go on. It is also true that the Shias as a minority community deserve every protection. So far as I am concerned, I am prepared to do my utmost to find a solution. Rafi Ahmed has been working hard for it, and so has Hafiz Ibrahim.

Of the two courses that you suggest, one, the prohibition of the processions on both sides, is a proper one. But I fear under existing circumstances this is almost an impossible course. It will give rise to a feeling that the government does not function at all and collapses before every agitation. There will be a fiercer agitation on the part of the Sunnis. That is why we have tried our best to get the Sunni leaders to agree to give up their right of procession. We have not succeeded thus far. The alternative that both should be allowed processions has been accepted by the government with one proviso that there should be no *Tabarra* as such, though fair and legitimate criticism of historical personages of Islam (Sir Sultan Ahmed's phrase) has been accepted. The Shias stick at *Tabarra*. But not to prohibit *Tabarra* will again lead to all manner of difficulties.

I shall keep you in touch with developments and, if necessary, I shall stay on here till the end of the month. If your coming is helpful, I shall certainly request you to come.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

22. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Lucknow
May 23, 1939

My dear Vallabhbhai,
Thank you for your letter of the 20th.[2] It is indeed unfortunate that the Shia-Sunni dispute has not been settled. The question is an exceedingly complicated one and it is quite possible that a false step by the ministry might lead to a fiercer agitation all over the province. Many of the Shia leaders recognise that the government have offered them very

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He offered to help in settling the Shia-Sunni dispute in Lucknow. He also suggested that the U.P. ministry be strengthened.

fair proposals. In fact, they had accepted them but then some others came in the way. The Shia demand is that either the government should withhold the right given to the Sunnis for a procession in praise of the companions of the Prophet or should allow the Shias to curse these companions in public processions. Suddenly to take away the right from the Sunnis would give rise to an upheaval, and to give the Shias the right to curse openly would be not only highly improper but would again result in trouble on a big scale. What the government has been trying to do is to get the Sunnis to agree to give up their right of procession themselves. This is highly likely provided the Shias stop their public agitation of *Tabarra* which is cursing. At the same time, the government have promised the Shias an equivalent right of procession, etc., subject to there being no *Tabarra*, but fair and legitimate criticism being allowed. I do not see what other attitude the government can take in the matter.

The present position is that about 9,500 persons have been arrested and sentenced to short terms. Of these about a thousand have apologised and come out. Another two thousand have been released after completing their short terms. Within two or three weeks another three or four thousands are likely to be out in the ordinary course. Most of the sentences have been of one month or two months.

It is quite extraordinary to realise the bitterness of feelings between the Shias and the Sunnis.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

23. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Allahabad
May 27, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I received your letter sending copy of a telegram from Raja Manzoor Hussain.[2] The points mentioned in that telegram have been dealt with to a large extent in the U.P. Council to the satisfaction***[3]

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.
2. A Shia leader of the Punjab.
3. Portion of letter moth-eaten.

As for the Shia press, it has been printing the most offensive and violent articles and the government had to stop this by asking security from the press which printed them.

Regarding the Punjab prisoners, it is true that all of them were arrested under section 107. They were behaving in a most offensive and violent way. They used to go up and down between policemen, using very bad language to them and sometimes spitting in their faces, when they were Sunnis. They were threatening violence all the time and there was danger that the Sunnis might retaliate. The district magistrate, therefore, decided to arrest them even before they offered themselves for arrest.

Matters in Lucknow seem to have reached a stalemate. I came away therefore but I have told Pantji that he can send for me when he wants me. A large number of Shia prisoners, probably exceeding three thousand, have been released on completing their short terms or on apologising.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

24. The Problems before the Congress[1]

About the appointment of the members of the Congress Working Committee, I would certainly favour the idea of nomination but I would urge the need for exercise of some check and control over the Congress President. Therefore I would suggest that the Working Committee should be nominated before or at the time of the Congress session, so that the Congress session or the A.I.C.C. might ratify the President's decision.

One of the chief difficulties that faces the Congress is about the organisational work. In the United Provinces, we are faced with such a problem on a provincial scale. Congress membership has become large and there is also a scramble to get into Congress offices with the result that elections have become complicated.

In order to meet the situation, the provincial Congress committee has separated the judiciary from the executive in the Congress organisation. All the election petitions and matters regarding disciplinary action are

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 3 June 1939. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 4 June 1939.

decided by the provincial Congress tribunal, and the decisions are accepted by the parties concerned. The personnel of such a tribunal consists of three persons who have retired from active politics, and they are the persons who are not members of any Congress committees.

Question: Is the decision of the tribunal ever challenged?

Jawaharlal Nehru: No, never. All these twenty years we have never appealed to the A.I.C.C.

Q: Do you think there should be an appellate court?

JN: I don't think there should be an appellate court. No such machinery should be set up at the centre. If, however, the district committees adopted the right method, then the process would be easier.

Q: Does not the tribunal tend to become legalistic?

JN: It is true that the tribunal tended to become legalistic. But there is such a mass of litigation that it has become a day-to-day job.

Secondly, we have tried to introduce a kind of Congress civil service. The service is manned by inspectors, auditors and other officers who are, in a way, unconnected with Congress politics. It is called the Provincial National Service and has at present about sixty persons. They are paid employees and payment is made to them mainly from the four-anna membership subscriptions. Membership subscriptions are divided between groups of villages, towns, districts and the province, so that each unit would get an anna each. The officers in the force have to keep themselves free from various factions.

Q: What have you to say about Gandhiji's undertaking a fast over the Rajkot affair?

JN: Gandhiji's action in regard to Rajkot is not immediately comprehensible. A fast would be, of course, always coercive. But I am not against coercion.

Q: How do you view the struggle going on at present in a number of Indian states?

JN: It is frightfully difficult to profess about the future of the states struggle. I have discussed the situation with some states' leaders and

have tried to understand the position. It seems to me that there is a tendency to shift the burden and responsibility on to the shoulders of others. The people of the states want the burden to be borne by others. Of course, such a situation has developed there due to lack of leadership and good human material and other factors.

Q: Do you think the Congress elections should be held once in two years or so?

JN: The Congress members mainly approach the people through the annual membership campaign. It enables them to go to the villages. I must, however, admit that there are signs of corruption to be noticed in the elections as some monied men can enrol a large number of members and capture the Congress organisation. Large 'bloc membership' is really dangerous because local Congress committees might be captured by some zamindars. It is also possible that British imperialism might influence elections. It is really surprising that it has not done so so far under the present circumstances.

Q: What will be India's attitude to a world war?

JN: There are at present three ways to meet the situation. First, there should be general propaganda. Secondly, by countering such steps as the provincial governments might take, chiefly in connection with the India Act Amending Bill and war preparations. And, thirdly, the Congress Working Committee should be clear in its own mind as to the possibilities, probabilities or developments regarding the war situation. It is true the Congress Working Committee cannot lay down any hard and fast rule because nobody knows what developments are likely to take place. The Congress resolution on war should not be regarded as a simple one, nor is the situation a simple one.

If there is a war between fascism and democracy as such, then inevitably India would desire the defeat of fascism and wish democracy to win. A victory of fascism would mean a loss to us too. As a subject nation, we are bound to be exploited.

Q: Can you imagine the theoretical possibility of India joining in a war for the sake of democracy?

JN: Though I may agree with the suggestion, our attitude would be uncertain because we do not know now how Gandhiji would react to a war which is not being fought nonviolently. What would be Gandhiji's

attitude towards a war being waged for the cause of pure democracy, I do not know. It needs to be emphasised that resistance against aggression cannot be constitutional. In the beginning, constitutional steps might be taken but ultimately the only resistance which would mean anything would be to break away from the British Government and that resistance would not be constitutional. In a sense, Gandhiji's technique might look pacifist but that is the technique he has adopted during the last twenty years.

Q: Do you think a fight will start between the Congress and the British Government?

JN: Acceptance of office has revealed to us our inherent weakness. But starting of a fight lies in our hands and in the hands of the British Government. Gandhiji's main stress has been that we should not force a fight, but when it comes we should not shirk it.

For starting a fight, the presence of certain psychological factors is essential. It is necessary to prepare the organisation for a fight and remove the disruptive and weakening factors arising from the acceptance of office. I must, of course, admit that a fight would liquidate all corrupting influences.

The Congress as it has developed now is not a well-organised organisation. Having toned down at present, it is heading towards an internal crisis. Of course, this is not a new development. The Congress in its long history has passed through many such crises. The people who assume power must show themselves not to be mere agitators. The present switch-over from the sphere of agitation to some other sphere, as a result of the policy of acceptance of office, has been an important factor of development.

Q: What are your views about the Shia-Sunni trouble at Lucknow?

JN: The roots of the Shia-Sunni trouble at Lucknow can be traced to the dispute which had begun about thirteen hundred years ago. The Sunnis insist on praising their Caliphs, but the Shias maintain that some of them were usurpers and intruders. The Shias cannot tolerate the praise bestowed on the Caliphs and hurl abuses on them. The U.P. Government's attitude has been that it is a sectarian matter and the members of the two sects should settle it among themselves. The government's position is very delicate. It is frightfully difficult to impose a settlement on them. There has been a lot of bitterness of feeling. There is, however, no political motive. The bitterness of feeling can also be seen

from the fact that about two to three hundred Shias had given up eating meat because the butchers belonged to the Sunni sect.

It is absurd to say that the Congress is exploiting the situation. I have myself spent three weeks in Lucknow during the trouble and have moved among the people. It has been a terrible nuisance.

Q: Do you approve of hunger strike as a political weapon?

JN: No, I don't approve of it. With the exception of Gandhiji, the use of this weapon has been carried to such ridiculous limits that in my province I had to warn three Congressmen who resorted to it.

25. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Bombay
June 16, 1939

My dear Vallabhbhai,
I am writing to you about Ceylon affairs where the Indian question is becoming very acute. I have no doubt that the Indians there have not been behaving well and have made a mess of things. But the Ceylon Government's activities have been scandalous. I do not know what we can do in the matter, but one thing surely can be and should be done and that is to stop immediately all further emigration of unregistered labour to Ceylon. I understand this is going on still.

Last year the Madras Government took up a strong attitude in regard to the emigration of Indian labour to Malaya and at their instance the Government of India stopped this. The result was that the planters in Malaya became frightened and began to send appeals and deputations to the Government of India. I think that if a similar course is adopted in regard to Ceylon, the government there will begin to see light. I suggest therefore that the Madras Government should insist on a complete stoppage of all kinds of emigration to Ceylon.[2]

I am sending a copy of this letter to Rajagopalachari.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. The Government of India stopped emigration of unskilled labourers to Ceylon from 1 August 1939, but the labour commissioner of Madras was authorised to grant exemptions in particular cases.

26. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Allahabad
July 2, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,
I have received a note from Shri Rahul Sankrityayan[2] which he wrote apparently from the train as he was being taken to prison. He has asked me to request you and the Bihar ministers that in the event of a hunger strike[3] he should not be fed forcibly. He says that if this is attempted his death is likely.

I do not know very much about the kisan agitation[4] in which he has been arrested. But I should like to tell you that his arrest and the controversy in the press about him has deeply pained many people here. He is greatly respected for his scholarship and learning and the reactions of various people here and elsewhere have been strongly in his favour.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.
2. (1892-1963); a scholar of Buddhism and a linguist; founder-member, Communist Party of Bihar and the Bihar Kisan Sabha; taught in universities in Sri Lanka and Leningrad.
3. On 24 February 1939, Rahul Sankrityayan was arrested with twenty volunteers while cutting sugar-cane on kisans' land and sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment on a charge of theft. In jail, he resorted to hunger strike for recognition of kisans' right to be treated as political prisoners. Ultimately the government had to grant some facilities to kisan prisoners.
4. The forcible seizure by the landlords of land over which the kisans had been given the right of occupancy under the Bihar Tenancy Act resulted in a widespread kisan movement in Bihar. It demanded abolition of zamindari, immediate reduction of rent, moratorium on debt payment pending settlement and a higher sugar-cane price.

27. A Governmental Lapse[1]

For some time past references have been made in the public press to a circular said to have been issued by the chief secretary of the U.P. Government to the district officers in the province. No official publication of this circular has taken place but unauthorised copies of it have been published, and, so far as we know, not denied by anyone on behalf of the government. It is seldom safe or desirable to rely on such unauthorised publications or to base one's comment on them. But in view of the circumstances and the controversy that has been raised, it is justifiable to presume that some such circular was issued.

This circular deals with the communal situation and calls for stringent action in regard to it. Towards the end of the circular the following sentence occurs: "I am to make it clear that these orders apply also to cases in which class hatred, other than communal, is preached and, in particular, to the kind of class hatred that is preached by communists and results in industrial strikes and trouble between employer and employed." It is suggested that section 153 A of the Indian Penal Code be utilised.

It is this sentence that has caused all the trouble and I must say that I agree with its critics. I am surprised that the U.P. Government should have made itself responsible for a statement which it is difficult to defend, and I can only presume that the sentence crept into the circular owing to someone's lapse or misplaced enthusiasm. If the sentence had been penned by previous provincial governments, it could have been criticised, but it would probably have evoked no surprise. Those governments, through ignorance or design, had a habit of expressing themselves in this loose way and of imagining that by branding communists as the root cause of trouble, or declaiming against 'class hatred', they had half solved the problem. It is not good enough for a Congress government to function in this way, and it is still more regrettable if they have this background of thought. I feel sure that there has been an unfortunate lapse which does not represent, in this respect, the mind of our ministers.

Class hatred, or any form of hatred, is an evil thing. Does anyone imagine that it is the creation of a few agitators? Every man knows, or ought to know, that the present economic structure of society is based

1. Signed article by Jawaharlal printed in *National Herald*, 9 July 1939.

on a division of classes which are inevitably in conflict with each other. To draw attention to this unfortunate and inequitable state, to endeavour to put an end to this class division and conflict, and to change the structure that encourages it, should be the aim of every person or the government who want a juster and more stable society. Not to do so is to perpetuate class conflict. It has been an old practice of those who possess vested interests and want the continuation of the *status quo* to try to hide the true nature of these interests by having recourse to pious phrases. A housing inspector does not create a slum; he exposes it and tries for its removal. A sanitary inspector is not the author of the filth in the rain.

What is the kind of class hatred that is preached by communists? Such vague language, exhibiting lack of knowledge, does not become a government department or a chief secretary. The communists and socialists believe in an economic theory, and it would be a good thing if all government officials studied this theory before they considered themselves competent enough to criticise it or condemn it. A government does not or should not condemn a group of people; it should only condemn those who offend against its laws. Communists, like others, are good or bad or a mixture of the two. One of the most advanced and powerful governments in the world today, with which the British Government is seeking an alliance, is communist.

It is perfectly true that many people who call themselves communists have misbehaved and caused trouble. Condemn them by all means or take such steps as are considered proper. But this condemnation or action must be against the individual who has offended and for that offence.

The application of section 153 A to labour troubles is a dangerous procedure, and I believe that even high courts in India have differed as to the propriety of its use in such cases. This section, if so used, might lead to the suppression of all criticism of the present social structure and the limitation of civil liberty.

The U.P. Government have, in a recent letter to the mazdur sabha of Cawnpore, laid stress on their desire to maintain the enjoyment of civil liberties by all persons. This province has been fortunate in the wide extension of civil liberties since the present government came into power, although unfortunately communal conflict has often necessitated a restriction of these liberties. This letter to the mazdur sabha is to be commended as a whole as indicating the general policy of the government towards labour, though some parts of it are not so welcome. It is satisfactory to learn that a trades disputes bill has been drafted and will

soon see the light of day.[2] It is hoped that this bill will avoid the serious errors which took away so much from the good effects of the Bombay Act. It is also a satisfaction to note that government will take steps to improve the conditions of labour in shops and commercial establishments.

The government is perfectly justified in condemning the far too frequent resort to strikes in Cawnpore and especially the lightning strikes which can be very seldom defended, even if there are substantial grievances. There can be no doubt that labour in Cawnpore has suffered considerably by these frequent and sudden strikes and has lost a good deal of the public sympathy it possessed.

But is a strike always due to the intransigence or pugnacity of labour? The government would have done well to point out the many failings and provocations on the part of the employers in Cawnpore. Have they forgotten the employers' attitude throughout the labour inquiry last year and their contemptuous rejection of its recommendations? Do they not know how aggravating the behaviour of the employers has been during this past year?[3] If the admittedly just demands of labour are rejected, what is to be done? If labour is unjustly penalised, what must labour do? If the government's labour officer's recommendations are ignored, what will government do? If labour acts wrongly then condemn it by all means. But if it is admittedly right, and the employers are patently wrong, will the government protect labour? Or if labour strikes, then will it be an unjustifiable strike?

It is not clear what the government have in mind when they refer to civil liberty in connection with strikes. It sounds suspiciously like the old argument that group bargaining was an infringement of the sacred right of private contract. If the government refer to the practice of blocking up the highway or stopping all ingress and egress by a group of persons lying down on the ground, then I, for one, would join in their condemnation of this. This practice has grown recently and is adopted by all manner of people on all kinds of occasions. I dislike it extremely as I dislike also the hunger strike. I think it will tend to degrade and brutalise us and will soon lose even such value as it might possess today. It is also clear that the government's primary duty is to maintain public tranquillity.

But if this argument is used to hamper justifiable strikes and to restrict legitimate picketing, then it is to be deplored. It is not the maintenance

2. This bill, drafted on the lines of the Bombay Trades Disputes Act of 1938, could not be passed due to the resignation of the Congress ministry in October 1939.
3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 329-334 and 351-354.

of civil liberty to allow strike-breakers to be imported in order to put an end to a strike.

28. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Allahabad
July 11, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,
Thank you for your letter of the 8th July.

The issues raised by the demonstrations of July 9th are far-reaching.[2] I do not know what you propose to do in the matter. But as affairs have come to a head they cannot be ignored. I am issuing a private note to all the members of the executive council of the U.P.P.C.C. I enclose a copy of it for your information.

There is no question of my postponing my Ceylon visit. I am leaving tomorrow. After two days in Bombay I will proceed to Colombo. Should you wish to communicate with me there you can write by air or wire to Colombo.

It does appear that there is no immediate prospect of war, but it is very difficult to be sure and the next six weeks are very critical. If nothing happens during these six weeks I intend adhering to my intention of going to China.[3] I am waiting for the reactions of the Chinese Government to my proposal. The Chinese ambassador in London is encouraging me to go. He has communicated with the government.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. The Left Consolidation Committee, comprising the Congress Socialist Party, the National Front, the Radical Democratic Party and the Forward Bloc, formed in June 1939, held demonstrations on 9 July 1939 throughout the country to protest against the Congress resolutions directing Congressmen not to offer satyagraha without the prior permission of the provincial Congress committees and urging cooperation between the Congress ministries and the provincial Congress committees.
3. Jawaharlal visited China from 20 August to 18 September 1939.

29. On the Success of Mass Literacy Campaigns[1]

Many of our provinces have started mass literacy campaigns and achieved success in them. But Bihar was the first in the field and gave a lead to India. It richly deserves the success that has come to it. If India is to go ahead, as she must and will, we have to advance on many fronts simultaneously. But the foundation and basis of all advance is education. I welcome, therefore, these great literacy drives and wish them all success.

1. Message to the Bihar Government, Bombay, 14 July 1939. *National Herald*, 15 July 1939.

THE CONGRESS MINISTRIES AND THE MUSLIMS

30. On Jinnah's Charges against the Congress[1]

Mr. M.A. Jinnah referred in a statement[2] to certain remarks of mine at the Ayodhya conference.[3] I expressed my surprise there that responsible leaders of the Muslim League and Prime Ministers of certain provincial governments should make violent attacks on the Congress provincial governments in a language which could not be called responsible or dignified. I also said that the allegations that atrocities were being committed by the Congress governments were unfounded. Mr. Jinnah says that I am ignorant of what is taking place in my own province. May I request him to have the courtesy to inform me of the atrocities committed in U.P. by the Congress government? I do not yet know what the charges are. May I also suggest to Mr. Jinnah, who is an eminent lawyer, that one-sided charges made would have to be proved before they are to be believed? If Mr. Jinnah agrees, I would be happy to have his charges placed for investigation before any independent and impartial person or persons who could be accepted by him and me as such.

1. Statement to the press, Calcutta, 3 January 1939. *National Herald*, 4 January 1939.
2. In a statement on 1 January 1939, Jinnah, commenting on Jawaharlal's speech at the U.P. Political Conference, stated: "Nehru is either utterly ignorant of what is going on in his own province or he has lost all sense of fairness and justice when he characterises the charges against the Congress Governments as baseless."
3. See pp. 312-318.

31. To M.A. Jinnah[1]

Allahabad
January 4, 1939

Dear Mr. Jinnah,
I read in the newspapers in Calcutta yesterday your statement regarding some remarks I had made in the Ayodhya conference. As I felt that the charge made against the Congress provincial governments of having committed 'atrocities' on Muslims was a grave one, I ventured to issue a brief statement to the press, a copy of which I enclose.[2]

As I am particularly connected with the United Provinces, I shall be grateful to you if you will let me know what the complaints or charges of 'atrocities' are in the United Provinces. As I have suggested in my statement, I would welcome an investigation by an independent and impartial person or persons.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See the preceding item.

32. To Sikandar Hayat Khan[1]

Allahabad
January 4, 1939

Dear Sir Sikandar Hayat,
I have read in the newspapers reports of the speech you delivered at the Patna session of the All India Muslim League.[2] This speech was delivered in support of a resolution[3] condemning various atrocities alleged

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Sikandar Hayat Khan said on 27 December 1938: "Happenings like these... if they are not stopped but are allowed to grow in number, may lead not only to civil disobedience, but to worse results..." With special reference to the Muslims in the minority provinces, he said that if the need arose, every Punjab Muslim would lay down his life in the defence of Islam.
3. A resolution moved on 27 December 1938 alleged that great atrocities had been committed on the Muslims in Bihar, C.P. and to a lesser extent in the U.P.

to have been committed by the Congress provincial governments on Muslims and threatening resort to direct action against such governments. As I understand your speech, you offered yourself to take part in such action.

Such an offer by a Prime Minister of a provincial government is unusual and, if seriously meant, likely to lead to grave consequences. It is not for me, however, to criticise your speech or to challenge your right to say anything you consider fit and proper although I might disagree with it utterly. Nor do I propose to discuss the propriety of such speeches. But I think that it is due to those who are criticised and condemned to be told what the exact charges or atrocities are. I am closely connected with the United Provinces and I am totally unaware of any such charges. May I request you therefore to enlighten me?[4]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. In his reply of 14 February 1939, Sikandar Hayat Khan denied that any speaker had attributed any atrocities to Congress governments but had merely referred to high-handedness of the majority community in some of the Congress provinces.

33. On Charges of Atrocities On Muslims[1]

Mr. M.A. Jinnah invites controversy by what he says and the manner of saying it. But I have no desire to carry on a controversy on this or any other subject but rather to end it by getting at the facts. Mr. Jinnah and other leaders of the Muslim League have charged the Congress governments with committing 'atrocities'. This is a very serious charge. Similar charges have been made previously by Mr. Fazlul Huq and he has been asked repeatedly to supply details. He has not done so. Mr. Jinnah draws my attention to the report of the Raja of Pirpur's committee and I shall certainly read it with care. I would have done so already but for the difficulty in obtaining copies of it.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 5 January 1939. *The Leader*, 10 January 1939.

Mr. Jinnah has suggested that I do not know my province and in his last statement[2] has mentioned the names of four places which presumably have been the scenes of governmental 'atrocities' in the U.P. These four places are Tanda, Bhadri, Bhagalpur and Hazari Bagh. Evidently, Mr. Jinnah is mistaken as two of these places are not in the U.P. at all.

I do not think there is any difficulty in having an impartial inquiry into specific charges. No question of sanctions or powers arises. Mr. Jinnah and I are both anxious to get at the truth which may confirm our previously held opinions or be at variance with them. We want the assistance of impartial investigation for this. If we get such an impartial opinion then the next step will be to determine what more is to be done in the matter. It should not be difficult to fix upon one or two or three persons whose judgment and impartiality can be relied upon by Mr. Jinnah and others. Preferably, they should not be connected with the Congress or League viewpoint. I do not come into the picture at all, but I am sure that the U.P. Government will give every facility to any such persons to find out the facts. I suggest that one or two such persons should be chosen and they should be requested to inquire into selected instances of governmental 'atrocities' such as the two instances Mr. Jinnah has mentioned, Tanda and Bhadri. The charge is against the government and they should consider each instance from this point of view, as to whether the government has been guilty of any atrocities or even improper behaviour in regard to it. They should examine all relevant reports and papers, including official papers, as well as such evidence as the Pirpur committee has collected. Further they might make such additional inquiries as they might consider necessary. The inquiry should be limited to specific instances and specific charges, as otherwise it will become a vague, roving inquiry which will produce no helpful results. Later, if necessary, other instances can be inquired into. What I have suggested is a simple feasible course which can be adopted without delay or difficulty. I am making this suggestion on my own behalf without reference to any member of the U.P. Government, but I am sure that the Prime Minister and his colleagues will agree to it.

2. Issued on 5 January 1939.

34. To G. B. Pant[1]

Allahabad
January 16, 1939

My dear Pantji,

I do not know what steps you are taking in regard to Jinnah's challenge to you in his last statement.[2] I suppose you were waiting for his response to my offer. That response has not come yet. I realized when I made the offer that there were some difficulties in the way. But I saw no other way out. We discussed this subject at length at Bardoli. I can only write to you briefly now.

It is obviously necessary for our governments concerned to issue some kind of a reply to the various definite charges made in the Muslim League report. The government need not deal with the objections to the flag or to the *Bande Mataram*. But in regard to specific charges made a reply should be forthcoming. A copy of this reply should be sent to Maulana Azad. The parliamentary sub-committee will probably issue its own reply on the greater questions later. It may be that on our own initiative we might ask some impartial person to examine these charges and report. A person who was suggested for this purpose was Justice Devadoss of Madras who is a Christian. There are one or two other high court judges also probably available.

In regard to the flag and the *Bande Mataram*, the Working Committee was of opinion that we should avoid making this a matter of controversy as far as possible, and private instructions to this effect will probably be sent to you by Kripalani.

He will also write to you regarding cow-slaughter and music before mosques. We decided not to issue any public statement in this matter just on the eve of *Bakr-Id*. But our general view was contained in Gandhiji's original draft. This view was that generally speaking the legal right to cow-slaughter as well as to music and processions before mosques should be recognized and given effect to unless there was definite custom to the contrary. This is slightly different from the prevailing practice, the burden of proof being cast on those who want to stop the legal right. We felt however that the better procedure would

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his statement of 5 January 1939, Jinnah had challenged G.B. Pant's contention that the Mussalmans in U.P. were treated not only justly but generously and asked him to mention the instances of generous treatment of the Mussalmans in U.P.

be for us to inform governments of this general policy and leave it to them to give effect to it in such manner as they thought fit. It was thought that the best course would be for the Prime Minister to have an informal conference with representatives of different groups in the assembly and discuss the approaching *Bakr-Id*. This can easily be done without any fuss as assemblies are sitting and the *Bakr-Id* is near. If, as a result of this informal talk, the government made some announcement of a policy or issued instructions to its officers, it would be better than if a one-sided announcement was made. In a one-sided announcement that part which favoured one party would be accepted while the other part would be rejected. I trust therefore that it will be possible for you to have some such informal consultation with some leaders of the Muslim League and others.

I am writing this in some haste as I am leaving for Almora presently. But I think that I have given you some idea of what our discussions at Bardoli were.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

35. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Almora
January 22, 1939

My dear Maulana,
I have just learnt that the radio has announced your withdrawal from the contest for the Congress presidentship.[2] I am sorry. But I may not criticise your action as you are the best person to judge of it.

I am glad to find from the newspapers that the Jaunpur bye-election matter has been satisfactorily settled.[3] I was very worried over this and I must confess that I disliked the idea of the Muslim League getting

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Explaining his reasons for withdrawal from the contest, Abul Kalam Azad said: "I am unable to endure the additional strain of work and responsibility of the Congress presidentship".
3. The Congress nominee Ali Zaheer was declared elected unopposed to the U.P. Assembly from the Jaunpur-Allahabad Muslim constituency in the bye-election as the Muslim League withdrew its candidate in favour of Ali Zaheer.

their man in, unopposed. I felt that this would have been a very bad precedent. As it happens, the Congress position in Jaunpur was so strong that the first Muslim League candidate withdrew and a second had to be put in. Even then the League feared failure. I am very glad that the Congress agreed to Ali Zaheer's name and thus avoided the bitterness of conflict, and yet got a decent man in.

I am going down to Lucknow on the 27th.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

36. To Abdul Latif[1]

Almora
22.1.1939

My dear Latif,

Your letter. I am sorry to learn that few Muslims have been elected as delegates.[2] This year the competition was very great and many of our prominent Congressmen have been defeated as village people want to elect one of their own members and not a city dweller. If necessary some method by reservation must be devised.

About Hindi and Urdu, we must realise that two definite literary ways of expression have gained currency and it is not easy to change these suddenly. We must go on trying and meanwhile we need not be too critical of words used, whether they are Persian or Sanskrit. What is important is the structure of the language which must be the same. Unfortunately most of us do not know and are far too ignorant of Sanskrit or Persian words which go to enrich the language. Gradually we must build up a rich common vocabulary. It is certainly desirable to lay stress on simple language all the time.

I hope to meet you at Lucknow.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Abdul Latif, *Latif Ki Kahani*, (Meerut, 1969), between pp. 184 and 185.
2. To the Tripuri Congress session.

37. To Mohamed Azizur Rahman[1]

Allahabad
February 25, 1939

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your sending me a copy of your pamphlet *Our Findings*. A short while back, I read in the papers a statement made by Dr. Syed Mahmud, the Minister of Education in Bihar, regarding the national flag and the *Bande Mataram*.[3] That statement seemed to me an eminently reasonable and sensible one.

It seems to me that those who object to either the *Bande Mataram* or the national flag have not considered the question properly and have attached a totally wrong meaning to them. The national flag has absolutely nothing communal and for a generation now has been used in the remotest villages in India without any complaint except on the part of the British Government. The objections to it are of very recent growth and I have completely failed to understand them. Nothing in India represents the national movement so vividly to scores of millions of people more than the national flag which has always been considered a symbol of unity for all the communities in India. Obviously, India must have a national flag. If there was no such flag we would have to invent one. For it is patently wrong to use any communal flag when different communities are represented. You will find this national flag wherever Indians—Hindus, Muslims or others—live in any part of the world. They are proud of it everywhere. I have seen it in the remotest corners of Asia and Europe. It has become very dear to hundreds of millions of our people as a symbol of their freedom. It is a pity, therefore, that anyone should object to it and thus put up a barrier between himself and the sentiments of vast numbers of his countrymen.

As regards the *Bande Mataram*, this has been an integral part of our movement since before the present generation was born. It is quite understandable for some people to approve of it and others not to like

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary, Bihar Muslim Students Federation.
3. In reply to an adjournment motion in the Bihar Assembly, Syed Mahmud stated on 6 February 1939: "In the government's opinion there is nothing objectionable in the first two stanzas of the song and the government has issued instructions that the singing of even those stanzas should not be made obligatory and those who do not like the song should refrain from it. It is in deference to the Muslim opposition that these restrictions are imposed."

it as a song. But to object to an inoffensive song seems to me uncalled for.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

38. To Nemi Saran Jain[1]

Allahabad
May 30, 1939

My dear Nemi Saran,[2]
Your letter of the 25th.[3] I appreciate your writing to me on this subject. Perhaps you have read some recent articles of mine which have appeared in the *National Herald*. If so, you must have noticed that I have been sufficiently troubled about many things in India. I have only given a small glimpse into my mind. I could have said much more.

You have referred to one particular aspect which has troubled you greatly. As a matter of fact that is generally speaking only one aspect, although an important one. The trouble is deep-seated and world-wide. In India we are witnessing a rapid disintegration. This in itself is a world phenomenon. Inevitably we must pass through this stage and I do not know when this period will end.

Coming to the particular point that you have raised, while I agree with you in much that you say, I think that you have laid undue emphasis on it. I do not think that the general Congress policy regarding

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1899); a Congressman of Bijnor; member, U.P. Council, 1923-30; member, Lok Sabha, 1952-57.
3. In his letter of 25 May 1939, Nemi Saran Jain argued that the Congress attitude towards communal problems was wrong. He held that the Congress ministries were afraid of the Muslims and the just rights of the Hindus were being sacrificed with impunity. The 'Ahrars' with their communal flags were recognised and encouraged by the Congress. While the Hindu Congressmen were not allowed to participate in any agitation against the unreasonable attitude of the Muslims, the Muslims were permitted to take part in *Tabarra* and *Mad-he-Sahaba* agitations. The public service commission was asked by the Congress Muslim ministers to advertise for Muslims only for particular jobs. A recent publication of the government suggested that its policy was to bow to the communal prejudices of the Muslims.

the communal question has been very wrong or at all undignified, though there have been some minor lapses. I do think, however, that our ministry has erred on many occasions and has shown weakness in dealing with particular situations. But we must recognise that the situation has been a terribly difficult one. I do not think it is correct to say that the Hindus live in dread of the Muslims. It is perhaps so in some local areas, especially in cities. As a matter of fact, the fundamental fact of the situation is the fear of the Muslims of the Hindu majority. Latterly this has grown even greater.

The Ahrars are certainly no allies of the Congress and we have kept them at arm's length. It may be that in some local places there have been approaches to them.

Generally speaking our attitude to the *Mad-he-Sahaba* and *Tabarra* agitations has been on a par with our attitude regarding the Arya Samajists in Hyderabad.[4] That is to say, we have not interfered with individual liberty of Congressmen to take part in what they consider a religious matter. In fact, many of us have expressed our sympathy with the objects underlying the Hyderabad agitation. It is true that Maulana Husain Ahmad took an aggressive part which was from the Congress point of view not proper. In view, however, of the fact that the *Mad-he-Sahaba* and *Tabarra* agitations are continuing, it is very difficult for us to take any step in the nature of disciplinary action. So far as Ali Zaheer is concerned he is hardly a Congressman and certainly he does not belong to any committee.

I do not know anything about the advertisements for government services that you refer to. It certainly seems to me improper for advertisements to ask for Muslims only to apply.

The publication you refer to was certainly a folly on the part of the publicity department.

If you will look at our problems a little more deeply, you will find matters of far greater concern even than those you have mentioned, both inside and outside the Congress. Our problems tend to overwhelm us as other problems are overwhelming the world. We shall survive them of course and we cannot give in to them. Unfortunately our provincial governments are thoroughly tired out and stale through too much of work and responsibility. I want to go into this matter carefully and have done so to some extent. But the continuation of the *Tabarra* agitation has come in the way. I cannot divest myself, however, of responsibility in the matter, nor can you or anyone else amongst us.

4. The Arya Samaj started satyagraha in Hyderabad state early in 1939 for the vindication of religious freedom and suspended it in July 1939.

I am going to Bombay soon. On my return we shall again face our problems and try to deal with them properly.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5

NATIONAL PLANNING

1. To Anil Kumar Chanda[1]

Allahabad
December 1, 1938

My dear Anil,
Your letter.[2] I have written to Gurudeva separately. So far as the planning committee is concerned I shall associate myself with it because I am intensely interested in planning.[3] But all this kind of work requires a certain background, a certain atmosphere and a certain human material. I fear that much of this is lacking here. Still it is a good thing to begin thinking on right lines and make others do so.

Gurudeva seems to attach more importance than is warranted to the office of the Congress President. No major policy has been determined by the Congress President for some time past. It was because of this that I felt unhappy as President and I came to the conclusion that I would be far more useful without office. The real problems have to be determined quite apart from the presidentship of the Congress.

I hope to visit Santiniketan sometime in the second half of December. Indira is going to Almora soon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On 28 November 1938, he wrote that many at Santiniketan thought that "there are only two modernists in the High Command—you and Subhas Babu", and that Tagore eagerly wanted to see Subhas Bose "elected as President".
3. Subhas Bose, as President of the Congress, set up, in October 1938, the National Planning Committee with Jawaharlal as its chairman.

2. On Industrialisation[1]

I would like to stress the need for the committee to bear in mind that no conflict should arise between village and cottage industries and bigger industries. I would also urge the committee to suggest ways for the

1. Speech at the first meeting of the All India National Planning Committee, Bombay, 17 December 1938. From *National Herald*, 18 December 1938.

coordination of these two kinds of industries. It is also essential that we include a representative of labour in the planning committee.

I also consider it very necessary that the planning committee keeps itself in touch with the national movement. The national movement has affected the lives of the people of the country in many respects. It has also affected the cottage industry which has been the special plank of the national movement. If the activities of the committee or commission[2] in future would have no relation to the national movement then it is likely to be a tame affair because it is not possible to do anything which is super-imposed by a mere resolution. It must have a certain reality, intellectual, objective and psychological. The committee, therefore, should keep in mind that it is essential to keep in touch with the national movement in the country. Otherwise, it would lose itself in the backwaters, and simply discuss individual and isolated bits of industrialisation without the background of nationalism. The problem is indeed a difficult one but it must be faced.

I would also lay stress on the need for the committee to take care that no conflict between cottage industries and large-scale industries takes place.

2. The conference of the ministers of industries had proposed the appointment of an all-India national planning commission consisting of representatives of the British Indian provinces and the Indian states for giving effect to the recommendations of the planning committee.

3. Congress Policy on Large-Scale Industries[1]

The resolutions passed at the conference of ministers in October 1938, in pursuance of which this planning committee is being held, definitely approve of large-scale industries. They indicate that a planning scheme which should include the development of heavy key industries, medium-scale industries and cottage industries, should be drawn up.

1. Note written on 21 December 1938. *The Report of the National Planning Committee*, (Bombay), pp. 35-37.

A question is raised, however, as to whether it is open to the planning committee to consider the establishment or encouragement of large-scale industries, except such as may be considered key industries, in view of the general Congress policy in regard to industry. This Congress policy, as is well known, shows a strong bias towards the development of cottage industries, specially of hand-spinning and hand-weaving. It follows that the Congress would disapprove of any policy which came in the way of its development of cottage industries. But there appears to be nothing in the Congress resolutions against the starting or encouragement of largt-scale industries, provided this does not conflict with the natural development of village industries.

Since 1920, the Congress has laid stress on hand-spinning and hand-weaving and that emphasis continues. In May 1929, the All India Congress Committee passed a resolution to the effect that "in order to remove the poverty and misery of the Indian people and to ameliorate the condition of the masses, it is essential to make revolutionary changes in the present economic and social structure of society and to remove the gross inequalities." This resolution indicates an approval of socialistic theories, but apart from this general approval and some further advances in subsequent resolutions, the Congress has not in any way accepted socialism.

In March 1931, the Karachi Congress passed an important resolution on fundamental rights and economic programme. This resolution contained the following clause:

> The State shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport.

This was stated with reference to the future Swaraj government which the Congress envisaged.

In July 1934, the Working Committee passed a resolution at Benares in which stress was laid on Congressmen using only hand-spun and hand-woven khadi to the exclusion of any other cloth. Further, it was stated that the "activities of Congress organisations relating to Swadeshi shall be restricted to useful articles manufactured in India through cottage and other similar industries." It was further stated in this resolution that "large and organised industries are in no need of the services of Congress organisations or of any Congress effort on their behalf."

Three months later at the Bombay Congress the All India Village Industries Association was formed. It is clear that the Congress considered it unnecessary to push large-scale industries through its organisation and left this to the state as well as to their own resources. It did not decide in any way against such large-scale industry.

Now that the Congress is, to some extent, identifying itself with the state, it cannot ignore the question of establishing and encouraging large-scale industries. Every provincial government has to face this issue and it was because of this that the Working Committee, as early as August 1937, recommended to the Congress ministries the appointment of expert committees for purposes of national reconstruction and social planning. The Working Committee evidently had in mind large-scale state planning which included big industry as well as cottage industry.

As no action was taken by the Congress ministries on this resolution for nearly a year, a second resolution was passed by the Working Committee in July 1938, authorising the President to convene a conference of the ministers of industries. It was as the result of this resolution that the Delhi conference was held, and the resolution under which this planning committee is functioning was passed.

It is clear therefore that not only is it open to this committee and to the planning commission to consider the whole question of large-scale industries in India in all its aspects but that the committee will be failing in its duty if it did not do so. There can be no planning if such planning does not include the big industries. But in making our plans we have to remember the basic Congress policy of encouraging cottage industries.

4. To V.V. Giri[1]

Allahabad
January 16, 1939

My dear Giri,

In view of the conference of the ministers of industries to be held in Bombay towards the end of this month, one fact I think should be borne in mind by our ministers. The Government of India is likely to put forward various schemes. Their attempt will be to take the wind out of the sails of the planning committee. I think the proper course for us should be to examine such schemes as the Government of India put forward and draw their attention to the national planning that we have undertaken. Their schemes should fit in with the general planning

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P.L. 3(i)/1937, p. 225, NMML.

scheme in so far as this can be done. Therefore it will be desirable for their schemes to be referred to the national committee. In any event, no scheme should be finally agreed to at this stage without further consideration by the planning committee. I hope that when you go to Bombay you will have a consultation with the other ministers of industries and put this viewpoint before them.

While in Bombay I had a talk about the office work there. This is still in the early stages. I think it should be pushed and the secretary be given definite lines of enquiry which he could pursue. He must not simply issue circulars.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. To V.V. Giri[1]

Almora
January 27, 1939

My dear Giri,
Your letter of the 20th. I am sorry the Frontier Government refuses to pay. I think they should pay something at least to show their formal association. If you like you can suggest this to them, or in any event we shall probably meet the Frontier people at the Congress time and can discuss it with them.

In regard to the states, their sizes and capacity vary so much that it is difficult to have one round figure for all. But in regard to the major states I think Rs. 500/- would be suitable. The smaller states might be considered separately when occasion arises.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. V.V. Giri Papers, National Planning Committee File, 1939.

6. National Planning and Industrialisation[1]

Industrialisation is essential to the progress of the country, but national planning does not mean industrialisation alone. On the other hand, it embraces the entire national life. There is yet another aspect of the problem. The opening of new factories would not usher in the millennium till the purchasing capacity of the masses, which is very low at the moment, is appreciably raised. That brings us face to face with the problems of currency, exchange and prices.

The National Planning Committee has issued a questionnaire[2] which is by no means complete. You should study it in order to understand the implications of national planning. There are manifold difficulties that are likely to frustrate any attempt at national planning. Some time back the vested interests in London thwarted the proposal for slum clearance. National planning is not possible till we have the power to deal effectively with the vested interests.

Science is a great force in the present age. You should imbibe the spirit of science and think on scientific lines. The impartial spirit of science has to be brought to bear on all the details that confront us in our daily avocations. We must insist on cultivation of a spirit of efficiency in everything that we are called upon to undertake. Those who neglect their ordinary tasks are slovenly in everyday work and never do anything big in life.

1. Speech at Delhi University, 14 February 1939. From *The Hindustan Times*, 15 February 1939.
2. A questionnaire for collecting data relating to industry and commerce and for drawing up schemes for location of industries was sent to provincial governments, universities, trade unions and other public bodies.

7. To K.T. Shah[1]

Lucknow
May 13, 1939

My dear Shah,

I must apologise to you. I have been protesting that I did not receive the draft plan that you sent me. This was true. Nevertheless the draft did come. It got mixed up with old newspapers and was only discovered by chance a long time afterwards. I am sorry.

I have now looked through it. It seems very comprehensive. It is difficult to criticise it without going into details. I suppose some such thing is necessary for us as a basis for consideration. But I am rather afraid of our getting lost in too many details. Perhaps something shorter and more general will be easier to consider during the earlier stages. But I have no doubt that a fuller plan as you suggest would be extraordinarily helpful in putting the full picture before us.

I suppose that we shall have to determine at an early stage what our general objective and policy are going to be. Real planning, I take it, is hardly possible under the ordinary capitalist structure of society where so many vested interests intervene. Some measure of planning might be done in a fascist state. But planning, as most of us conceive it, is inevitably connected with a socialist society.

Obviously, constituted as we are, and constituted as the planning committee is, we can hardly begin tackling the question on a socialist basis. We have to accept to a large extent the present structure, at any rate, as a jumping-off ground. At the same time, we must aim at something different, though that need not be, so far as the committee is concerned, full-blooded socialism. Even according to the present Congress policy it is our objective to nationalise key industries and key services and banking, etc. That is something definite to go upon. You might refer in this connection to the Karachi resolution of the Congress on fundamental rights, etc.[2] Further, we should try to aim at, as far as possible, producing for consumption rather than for profit. In any event, the profit motive should be subordinated to the social motive. How far this is possible under present circumstances, it is difficult to say. Perhaps it is not possible. If so, inevitably we have to consider the changes necessary to make it possible. If we start with the dictum

1. J.N. Papers, National Planning Committee File No. 135 (Pt. II)/1939, pp. 31-32, N.M.M.L.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 511-513.

that only under socialism there can be planning, we frighten people and irritate the ignorant. If, on the other hand, we think in terms of planning apart from socialism and thus inevitably arrive at some form of socialism, that is a logical process which will convert many who are weary of words and slogans.

I imagine that our approach should be something on these lines without challenging the existing structure. At the same time, it would be folly to strengthen the vested interests in the existing structure. We should do nothing to create fresh barriers in the way of the change-over.

Could we then concentrate on a few major items of policy which should guide us in our planning and which are not obviously in conflict with the basic structure today, though they change it considerably?

I feel that in India today any attempt to push out the middle class is likely to end in failure. The middle class is too strong to be pushed out and there is a tremendous lack of human material in any other class to take its place effectively, or to run a planned society, for even in most countries in Europe where conditions apparently are much more favourable, such an attempt has not succeeded and has given place to reaction. Here, in India, a premature conflict on class lines would lead to a break-up and possibly to prolonged inability to build anything. The disruptive forces in the country seem to be growing in strength and it almost seems that we are going the way of China.

These are some odd thoughts which are not directly connected with planning.

I have been tied up here in Lucknow because of the Shia-Sunni controversy. It seems rather absurd for us to talk in big terms when we have to face such absurd conflicts which remind one of mediaeval times.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. To H. Trivedi[1]

Lucknow
May 13, 1939

Dear Trivedi,[2]
... I have no intention of making a speech at the next meeting, nor do I intend encouraging others to make speeches. I hope the committee will function more as a body of experts or as a board of directors in as businesslike a way as possible. But I would welcome a note from Dr. Saha[3] as to his general idea as to what the planning committee should do.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. National Planning Committee File No. 135 (Pt. IV)/1939, p. 28, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. (b. 1909); scientist; member, National Planning Committee, 1937-39; industrial adviser, U.P. Government, 1962-64.
3. Meghnad Saha (1893-1956); eminent astro-physicist and Fellow of the Royal Society; founder, Institute of Nuclear Physics, Calcutta; member, Lok Sabha, 1952-56.

9. The Need for Planning for Free India[1]

The first meeting of the National Planning Committee took place five and a half months ago in December last. A questionnaire was drafted at this meeting and this was sent to various governments, universities, public bodies, chambers of commerce, trade unions, firms and individuals. It was hoped that the next meeting of the committee might take place by the end of March but repeated requests were made by those to whom the questionnaire was issued for an extension of time. These requests were not unreasonable as the questionnaire was a difficult and exhaustive one and required considerable labour if satisfactory answers

1. Note circulated to the members of the National Planning Committee, Allahabad, 4 June 1939. *The Report of the National Planning Committee*, (Bombay, 1949), pp. 38-43.

were to be given. An extension of time was therefore granted and this has led to a delay in holding our second session. I trust the committee will excuse this delay.

In the resolution[2] of the conference of the ministers of industries by which this committee was appointed, it was laid down that the committee was to submit its report to the Congress Working Committee and to the all-India national planning commission within four months of the commencement of its sitting. That period is already over and we are far from the report stage as yet. We have now received a considerable number of answers to our questionnaire and we have to consider them. We may have to appoint a number of sub-committees.[3] I do not think that at this stage these sub-committees will be required to make very detailed investigations and they should submit their reports within a reasonably short time.

I should like the preliminary report of the planning committee to be ready for presentation to the Congress Working Committee by October next at the latest. This report will of course not embody the full planning scheme in all its details. For this further investigations will be necessary. This might be undertaken by this committee or by the planning commission which it is proposed to set up. In any event, it becomes necessary to request the Congress Working Committee to grant us an extension of time, and I would suggest that the 31st October 1939 would be a suitable time-limit.

We have been asked to draw up a national plan for India, or, at any rate, to indicate the general nature of such a plan, the details of which can be filled in from time to time. Before we formulate such a plan of national development, which is likely to cover all branches of material and cultural life of the country, we must be clear in our minds about our objective and the basic considerations which should govern such a plan. It is clear that the drawing up of a comprehensive national plan becomes merely an academic exercise, with no relation to reality, unless the planning authority, or those to whom it is responsible, are in a position to give effect to that plan. If this authority is powerless or is circumscribed and restricted and its activities limited, it cannot plan.

It follows, therefore, that the national authority which plans must also have full power to give effect to its planning. An essential prerequisite

2. It resolved that problems of poverty, unemployment, national defence and economic regeneration in general could not be solved without industrialisation and as a step towards such industrialisation a comprehensive scheme of national planning should be formulated.

3. Twenty nine sub-committees were appointed and the planning committee's work extended until March 1940.

for planning is thus complete freedom and independence for the country and the removal of outside control. This implies that the country possesses in itself full sovereign authority to take any measures, adopt any policies, and form any relations with other countries as may seem best to its governing authority in the interests of the country and its people.

It is possible that in the event of the formation of a world union of free and equal nations, this sovereign authority might be voluntarily limited to some extent by each component unit in the interests of world planning and cooperation. But such a development would not come in the way of national planning. If it takes place on right lines, it might even help the planning within a nation. In any event, we need not take this, for the present, remote possibility into consideration.

National independence is thus an indispensable preliminary for taking all the steps that might be found necessary for carrying out the plan in all its various aspects. It is not even possible to draw up a plan on any other basis. At the present moment, it is clear that not only have we in India no national independence but we are hedged in and obstructed by numerous restrictions, limitations, safeguards and reservations which block our path to planning and progress.

Our plan for national development must, therefore, be drawn up for a free and independent India. This does not mean that we must wait for independence before doing anything towards the development of planned economy. Even under existing conditions we must make every effort to adopt all measures and policies which develop the resources of the country and raise the standard of our people. All such efforts, however, must be directed towards the realisation of the plan we have drawn up for a free India. They should neutralise, as far as possible, the force of the existing restrictions on our constitutional powers, and should not create new vested interests, or further erroneous policies, which might form new obstacles in the achievement of our goal and realisation of our full plan.

We have thus to draw up a full plan which would apply to a free India and at the same time indicate what should be done now, and under present conditions, in the various departments of national activity.

The ideal of the Congress is the establishment of a free and democratic state in India. Such a full democratic state involves an egalitarian society, in which equal opportunities are provided for every member for self-expression and self-fulfilment, and an adequate minimum of a civilised standard of life is assured to each member so as to make the

attainment of this equal opportunity a reality. This should be the background or foundation of our plan.

The Congress has, in view of the present conditions in India, laid great stress on the encouragement of cottage industries in India. Any planning must therefore take note of this fact and base itself on it. This does not necessarily mean a conflict between cottage industries and large-scale industries. A large number of essential industries, which are necessary for the independence and well-being of the country, must inevitably be on a large scale. The very resolution appointing the planning committee calls upon us to provide for the development of heavy key industries, medium-scale industries and cottage industries. It lays down that the economic regeneration of the country cannot take place without industrialisation. We have thus to expedite this industrialisation and to indicate how and where key and basic industries are to be started. We have to demarcate, in so far as possible, the domains of large-scale and cottage industries, and where the latter have been especially fathered by the national movement, to give them every protection and encouragement.

The Congress has laid down in its Karachi resolution on fundamental rights that the state shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport. The general indication of Congress policy is of vital importance and applies not only to public utilities but to large-scale industries and enterprises which are likely to be monopolistic in character. A legitimate extension of this principle would be to apply it to all large-scale enterprises. It is clear that our plan must proceed on this basis and even if the state does not own such enterprises, it must regulate and control them in the public interest.

It may be impracticable to insist on state management of the existing industries in which vested interests have already taken root. But wherever even an established industry, under private control, receives aid or protection from the state or tends to develop into a monopoly or comes into conflict with the general policy of the state in regard to workers or consumers, the state should take necessary steps to assure conformity in all such ventures with its basic policy and with the objective laid down in the plan.

The Karachi Congress resolution on fundamental rights further laid down that:

(a) The organisation of economic life must conform to the principle of justice, to the end that it may secure a decent standard of living.

(b) The state shall safeguard the interests of industrial workers and shall secure for them, by suitable legislation and in other ways, a living wage, healthy conditions of work, limited hours of labour,

suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes between employers and workmen, and protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment.

The resolution appointing this committee does not mention agriculture as such but it is impossible to conceive of any scheme of national planning in any country, and least of all in India, which does not include agriculture. Agriculture is and will remain the largest single industry of this country, and it is associated with a host of subsidiary industries. Any improvement or variation in agriculture has far-reaching results in the economy of the nation. Cottage industries are intimately connected with it, more especially as providing suitable occupations for the spare time of the agriculturists. Agriculture must, therefore, inevitably be considered by this committee in its scheme of national planning.

I suggest that some of the points noted above, and others of a like nature, might be considered by the committee before we proceed to a detailed examination of the answers to our questionnaire and other problems. This will enable us to lay down our general policy and indicate our method of approach to the problem. It will also prevent a repetition of arguments on the same subject. We have to remember that the plan must be a comprehensive programme of national development, each part fitting into the other. It has to be viewed in this perspective and drawn up as such.

Prof. K.T. Shah has, at my request, very kindly prepared a rough sketch of a draft plan. I requested him to do so as I felt that some such draft would help us to view the subject as a whole and to consider its various aspects. This draft has been circulated to the members.

After we have discussed and laid down these points of basic policy, and examined briefly the replies to the questionnaire, we might proceed to the appointment of sub-committees. These sub-committees would then be guided by this policy as well as by such further terms of reference as we might lay down. I think it is important that the sub-committees should meet soon and report as early as possible. We cannot afford to lengthen our work. It is possible that some of the sub-committees might even report before our present session ends. We have asked the members of the committee to come prepared to stay here for a fortnight.

We shall have to reorganise our whole office and make further arrangements about our finances. Work has grown and will grow rapidly and our present staff is unable to cope with it. I suggest that we appoint a sub-committee to go into this matter and report to us within a few days.

Our finances are at present low and the provincial governments and states, who are cooperating with us, should be requested to send further

and substantial contributions. The work this committee is doing is essentially their work and they should not grudge us help. On our part we must organise our work as economically as possible. Although we are supported by various provincial governments and states we need not and indeed we cannot afford to fall into the bad habits of official committees and commissions, which are notorious for spending on themselves large sums of public money. We should rather try to observe the standards laid down by the Congress for its committees.

10. Planning—A Continuous Process[1]

I am very grateful to you, and I may say on behalf of the members of the planning committee, for inviting us to this function and for your kind words. I hope that behind these generous words there is no intention on your part to drive me to say as to what is happening in the planning committee.[2] Some time back, I think on the first or the second day of this present session, we passed a resolution to the effect that no member of the planning committee should say anything in public which might commit the planning committee. So you will see that if I speak anything about planning it would be on behalf of the committee and so I have to be exceedingly careful about what I say. But I think that I and almost all the members of the planning committee will greatly, if not wholly, agree with the remarks which you have made just now.

It is now obvious that in India we must get going very fast as our colleague Sir M. Visvesvaraya has said. It is most encouraging to see a person like him, more or less on the eve of his retirement, so full of vitality and courage, desirous of giving a push to India. So it is obvious we must go on. On the other hand, it is also obvious that one should not go on by merely picking up any one way. One has to find out the

1. Speech at the reception given by the Chamber of Indian Merchants, Bombay, 15 June 1939. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 19 June 1939.
2. The president of the Chamber of Indian Merchants in his welcome address had hoped that nothing would be done to check industrial enterprise.

studying these various aspects of the question. But the point is that planning does involve some consideration of all these aspects, i.e., entering into various details, investigation of all possible data, etc. We may find that development on one side may not fit in with the development on some other side.

We know that Russian planning in the economic sphere has been very successful but we also know that they have had tremendous setbacks too, because while they planned well one aspect of the problem, the other aspects they did not. They produced a lot but the transport sometimes failed. They could not carry the goods to other places. Some such things do happen. So you cannot think and plan about production only. If what you produce is not consumed, what would you do with your production? So you have to think in terms of consumption also. You cannot have mass production unless you have mass consumption. Having the capacity to produce, you have to think in terms of distribution also. You have to think in so many other terms. Again, if we investigate the whole problem in its entirety, it is so vast that we might rather get frightened.

You have also to take into consideration our present resources and the existing political situation and so on and so forth. Now the real planning of a comprehensive scheme obviously needs a deal of planning, years of investigation, planning, checking of data, enquiries and so on. We have not got the data today which most advanced countries possess. We have not got statistics even. Now if we wait for the receipt of all this information, we again do not do anything at all. But to think like this would be absurd. So we have, first of all, to collect the available data and tap various sources and then look at the picture of India. The picture will still not be complete as there will be many gaps in it. Yet, we have to see how to bring about the necessary improvement in the living conditions of our countrymen and for that purpose what should we do. So while undertaking some development work, we have to go on trying to collect further data, make further inquiries from governments and other bodies. Thus planning, in effect, becomes a continuous process, and all that the planning committee has got to do now is to collect details immediately, to draw up a model outline of the future scheme, and to put it before the country right now because we know we cannot back out. We must, as Sir M. Visvesvaraya has stated, start something immediately and not lose ourselves in academic conferences. Therefore both sides of the work have to be done simultaneously.

Obviously, the evolution of the planning scheme requires cooperation of all the members of the planning committee. Much more so does the next stage, that is, giving effect to the scheme which requires the

cooperation of the various elements inside the country. That is essential. All I can say is that we can succeed if this planning committee can put before the country some programme that enables it to start doing some work immediately. To visualise India as she would be ten years hence or five years hence, we shall have to set our hearts to planning and then, of course, we have another five or ten years to work upon and to go on and on. It will be terrible then to back out.

So we all shall have to work, and those who do not work, I hope there will be no room for them in India, and they will have to retire to some other place where they can enjoy themselves. We want to set the whole country to work, but we find that there are two types of unemployed people in this country. There are those who lack work and are starving and then there are also such unemployed persons who have too much to eat and therefore do not require any work. Neither of these two types of unemployment is desired in this country. We want all people to be employed and do some useful activity of producing wealth and sharing it with each other.

11. To G.B. Pant[1]

Bombay
June 16, 1939

My dear Pantji,

Your letter of June 12th.[2] It is unfortunate that the U.P. Government delayed in sending their replies to the questionnaire of the planning committee. There is no doubt that the questionnaire was sent to your government in the early stages. We have as a matter of fact a receipt from one department but some other departments were unaware of this. This does not speak highly of the coordination of the various departments.

This planning committee is likely to do a very useful piece of work and lay the foundations of something big in future. In spite of the very mixed and conflicting elements in the committee, we are pulling on

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He expressed his satisfaction with the work being done by the planning committee.

fairly satisfactorily. We hope to finish our present sessions in another two days. We are appointing about thirty sub-committees and these will include a number of government representatives. I hope the U.P. Government will spare these people for the sub-committees.

As we are planning to do the work on a fairly big scale, we have budgeted for an expenditure of Rs. 50,000/- during the next six months. We have to get this money entirely from provincial governments and states. Industrialists are prepared to supply funds but we do not want to take money from them. I think the U.P. Government should give at least Rs. 5,000/- more for this period. Hyderabad is giving Rs. 4,000/- and Bhopal is giving Rs. 1,500/-.

I am sorry the Shia-Sunni conflict is going on. It seems to me that something is very radically wrong with us in India, or perhaps with the entire world, at the present moment. It is as if the blood of a human being has been poisoned and every little boil refuses to heal. There are so many aspects of this wider question which I wanted to discuss with you, but the Shia-Sunni dispute took up all our time and I wanted this to be over before going on to general issues.

I shall stay on here till the A.I.C.C. meeting.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

12. To V.V. Giri[1]

Bombay
June 16, 1939

My dear Giri,

The planning committee is going on and is likely to end on Sunday. I have received a letter from Sir Chhotu Ram,[2] the Minister of Development in the Punjab Government, promising to cooperate fully in the future work of the planning committee. He complains that he was

1. V.V. Giri Papers, National Planning Committee File, 1939.
2. (1881-1949); founder-member, Unionist Party, and its leader in the Punjab Assembly, 1926-31; president, Punjab Assembly, 1936; Minister for Development and Revenue in the Punjab Government, 1937-45.

ignored in the early stages but in view of what I wrote to him he and his department will cooperate in future.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

13. Guide-lines for Planning[1]

The National Planning Committee has been entrusted with a task which is vast in its scope, vital in its significance, and intimately connected with the progress and future well-being of the people of this country. In order to have the fullest assistance and cooperation of others in this task, the committee has appointed a number of sub-committees consisting of eminent and distinguished experts in various fields of national activity. Planning is a much-used word in the world today; yet in India this is the first attempt to plan on a national basis and to coordinate the manifold activities of the nation. Many fundamental questions arise as to the nature of this planning, the objectives in view and the methods to be adopted. Final decisions on most of these questions will have to be taken at a later stage by the planning committee and the ultimate acceptance of those decisions and their application will lie with the representatives of the people. But there cannot even be an approach to planning without some clarification of the objectives and the methods to be employed.

2. The president of the planning committee, in a memorandum which he presented, drew the attention of the committee to some of the guiding principles and objectives which should govern national planning. A copy of this memorandum is attached to this note and the particular attention of all members of sub-committees is invited to it. This note has been prepared, in further amplification of the chairman's memorandum, for the guidance of sub-committees. It is of the essence of planning that there should be coordination between various activities, and it thus becomes necessary that the various sub-committees should have a common purpose governing their outlook and should cooperate together

1. Note written at Bombay on 19 June 1939 for the guidance of the sub-committees of the National Planning Committee. *National Herald*, 21 June 1939.

in building a national plan which is an organic whole, each part of it having its proper place and fitting in with the other parts.

3. What is planning? Democratic planning is the technical co-ordination, by disinterested experts, of consumption, production, investment, trade, and income distribution in accordance with social objectives set by bodies representative of the majority. Such planning is not only to be considered from the point of view of economics and the raising of the standard of living, but must include cultural and spiritual values and the human side of life.

4. Such a plan thus requires a social objective and the power and authority to give effect to the plan. If this power is limited in any way, or there are other restrictions, political or economic, which come in the way of the working out of the plan, no planned economy can develop. Real planning can only take place with full political and economic freedom, and a national plan must therefore be based on India having sovereign authority. At the same time, in view of the present circumstances prevailing in the country and the restrictions that have been imposed upon us, the plan must also indicate what is immediately feasible and what steps should be taken, even under existing conditions, to work towards the realisation of the plan and to secure the fullest possible utilisation of national resources for raising the standard of life. Such steps must be in keeping with the scheme of a planned economy, and in no event must anything be done which might come in the way of that plan.

5. There is a large measure of agreement about our social objectives and yet there are vital differences also. It is possible that many of these differences might be resolved as a result of this inquiry. To some extent these objectives have been indicated by the National Congress in a number of resolutions and by the general policy it has pursued. We must adhere to this general policy and keep these objectives in view. Reference has been made to these in the chairman's memorandum.

6. The Congress has laid stress for many years on the development of cottage industries and has sought to direct the attention of the country to the conditions of the villagers. We cannot forget the emphasis or forget the fact that all progress in India must be measured in terms of raising the standards of India's millions. An apparent conflict has arisen in the minds of some between the claims of cottage industry and large-scale industry. This conflict is largely one of emphasis. It is clear that in India today the development of cottage industries on a vast scale is essential for the well-being of the masses. It is equally clear that the rapid development of large-scale machine industry is an urgent need of the country. Without industrialisation no country can have

political or economic freedom, and even cottage industries cannot develop to any large extent if economic freedom is absent. Without industrialisation also the rapid and effective raising of the standards of the people is not possible. Key industries, defence industries, and public utilities must be developed on a large scale. Even the development of cottage industries is helped greatly by the supply of cheap power and suitable machinery for cottage use, which are obtainable from the working of large-scale enterprises. To some extent handicrafts and large-scale industrial enterprises are complementary to each other. The problem before the country therefore is one of coordinated growth in both directions and the avoidance, so far as is possible, of conflict between cottage industry and large-scale industry.

7. The emphasis of the Congress on cottage industries is chiefly due to its desire to have a more equitable system of distribution and to avoid the evils that have resulted from indiscriminate and uncontrolled industrialisation. Distribution is the vital corner-stone of any planned economy and the evils of industrialism can and should be avoided if there is an equitable system of distribution. In the national plan for India a proper scheme of distribution must therefore be considered as essential.

8. The resolution of the Delhi conference of ministers of industries, which led to the formation of the National Planning Committee, is a clear direction to the committee to hasten industrialisation, and calls for the development of heavy key industries, medium-scale industries and cottage industries. These are the terms of reference of this committee. It should be further remembered that the Congress has laid down in its resolution on fundamental rights that "the State shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport."

9. The principal objective of planning the national economy should be to attain, as far as possible, national self-sufficiency, and not primarily for purposes of foreign markets. This does not exclude international trade, which should be encouraged, but with a view to avoid economic imperialism. The first charge on the country's produce, agricultural and industrial, should be to meet the domestic needs of food supply, raw materials and manufactured goods. But outlets for surplus goods may be explored to meet the requirements of India's international indebtedness.

10. The fundamental aim to be kept in view is to ensure an adequate standard of living for the Indian masses. An adequate standard of living implies a certain irreducible minimum plus a progressive scale of comforts and amenities.

Estimates of economists in different parts of India put down this irreducible minimum at figures varying from Rs. 15 to Rs. 25 per capita per month in the present value of the rupee. The expression in terms of money is only used for the sake of convenience, the real measure being in terms of goods and services. An approximate estimate puts the average annual income per capita at Rs. 65/-. This implies not only a considerable deficit in food supply but also in the other essential requirements of human existence. The national income must therefore be increased greatly during the next ten years to ensure an irreducible minimum standard. In order to secure this minimum standard for everybody, not only will it be necessary to increase production but also to bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth.

11. A really progressive standard of life will necessitate the increase of the national wealth five or six times. But for the present the minimum standard which can and should be reached is an increase of national wealth of between two or three times within the next ten years. It is with this object in view that we should plan now.

12. Planned advance has to be measured by certain objective tests from year to year. These may be laid down as follows:

i) The improvement of nutrition from the standard of an irreducible minimum requirement of proteins, carbohydrates and minerals (as well as necessary protective foods) having a calorific value of 2400 to 2800 units for an adult worker.

ii) The improvement of clothing from the present consumption of about 15 yards on an average to at least 30 yards per capita per annum.

iii) Housing standards to reach at least 100 square feet per capita.

13. Viewed from another standpoint the following indices of progress should be borne in mind.

i) Increase in agricultural production.
ii) Increase in industrial production.

To meet at least the requirements laid down in 12 (i) and (ii) above

iii) Diminution of unemployment.
iv) Increase in per capita income.
v) Liquidation of illiteracy.
vi) Provision of medical aid on the basis of one health unit for 1000 population.
vii) Increase in the average expectation of life.

Statistical data have to be collected and compared with a view to measure the progress of the plan from time to time. The development

of statistical work will be necessary to keep pace with the development of planning.

14. The different sectors of the plan have necessarily to be coordinated. The essence of planning is an advance on all fronts. There must be agricultural planning, the object being that the country should be self-sufficient as regards foodstuffs measured in terms of the food index given above, and the quantity of raw materials for industries raised by a pre-determined percentage. Soil conservation, afforestation, grass land management, flood control and river management, and improvement of inland navigation and transport are items in the planned programmes which have not yet been taken up systematically. Power development and the conservation and development of coal and other kinds of fuel for industrial power also demand planning. More important is the planning of different kinds and types of industries, large, medium and cottage, which alone may effectively mitigate the present pressure of population on the soil. Within a decade the aim should be to produce a balanced economic structure in which about half the population would depend on agriculture.

15. Reorganisation and control of the currency system are essential for agricultural recovery. Education, technical and developmental research also have to be included in a planned programme.

16. No planning can succeed if the rate of economic progress is outrun by the rate of increase in population. In the planned economy of India, emigration shall not be based on the deliberate policy of developing population so as to create a surplus to settle in other countries, but such surplus may be allowed to emigrate through agreements with other countries, with due regard to the rights of such settlers in those parts.

17. A ten-year limit for the accomplishment of the plan with control figures for different periods and different sectors of economic life should be laid down.

18. Defence industries should be owned and controlled by the state; public utilities should be owned or controlled by the state, but there is a strong body of opinion which is in favour of the state always owning public utilities. Other key industries should be owned or controlled by the state.

19. Other conditions, such as availability of raw materials and resources and ready access to large consuming centres, being equal, special attention should be devoted in the plan to the development of industrially backward regions. Labour legislation and codes, health, sickness and unemployment insurance, national housing and social welfare schemes will have to be coordinated with the plan. The provinces will initiate these, but the national planning commission should lay down

the policy regulating minimum standards of wages and the employment of labour.

20. Provinces vary in capital resources and in the capacity for industrial experimenting and pioneering. It will be desirable for them to work through the National Planning Committee with its appropriate adjuncts.

21. As regards ways and means for a planned economic development in general, the credit of the provincial and central governments should be fully utilised to raise the necessary finance, and the investment policy of the banking and insurance institutions of the country will have to be changed in order to further industrial planning.

22. A complete scheme of planned economy is a vast undertaking requiring full information and data and the willing cooperation of large numbers of persons for a period of years. It is a progressive scheme, being continually adjusted to changing conditions and always taking advantage of the experience gained in its working. The National Planning Committee is obviously not in a position to draw up such a complete scheme, nor does it intend to do so at this stage. What is intended now is to lay the foundations of a planned economy on which the future structure can be built. But even at this stage the full picture must be envisaged and a complete outline drawn up, which can be filled in later as opportunity comes and further materials are available. India is one of the very few countries in the world which has the resources within its own borders of building up a planned system.

23. The committee therefore proposes to proceed on the existing data, imperfect as it is, or on such material as can easily be obtained, and to draw up a broad outline picture. By the end of this year it is hoped to present a preliminary report which can be the basis for the next stage of planning. The sub-committees are requested to bear this in mind as the time factor is important. It is hoped that all sub-committees will send their reports to the National Planning Committee by the 31st October 1939.

24. A schematic outline of national planning is appended herewith.[2]

2. Not printed.

14. The Programme of the National Planning Committee[1]

1. The National Planning Committee have just concluded their second series of meetings lasting two weeks. As the committee surveyed the full extent of the problem of national planning, the subjects they had to deal with grew in number, as each was interrelated to the other, and none could be wholly ignored if a full scheme of planning was to be drawn up. In order to investigate these separate subjects and branches of national activity more fully, and later to endeavour to coordinate them, a large number of sub-committees have been set-up. These sub-committees consist of experts and public men including representatives of provincial governments and the states.

2. The committee have had the advantage of receiving the full co-operation of most of the provincial governments and several important states. During the sessions just concluded, the ministers of industries of Bombay, Madras and Bihar, as well as special representatives from several provincial governments, attended and took part in the committee's deliberations. Representatives from the states of Hyderabad, Mysore, Baroda and Bhopal also participated and helped the committee with their advice. The Punjab Government sent answers to the committee's questionnaire and have promised their full cooperation in future. The Bengal Government have so far not sent an answer to the invitation sent to them seeking their cooperation, but it is hoped that they will agree to cooperate with the committee's work. It is hoped also that many more states will join in this work, notably Kashmir, Travancore, Cochin and Patiala, whose resources enable them to take an effective part in the development of their own and the national wealth. Travancore and Cochin have already promised their cooperation. In the drawing up of a national plan, it is important that the needs and capacities of all provinces and states should be considered in order to avoid a lop-sided development which might be unfair to a province or a state. The presence of the representatives of all the provinces and of the principal states is thus necessary so that no interests are ignored or overlooked and a proper equilibrium is established.

1. Note sent to provincial and state governments, Bombay, 20 June 1939. B.G. Kher Papers, N.M.M.L.

3. The cooperation of the Government of India and their experts is also very necessary, both in order to obtain all the available information and data, as well as to have the benefit of their advice and suggestions.

4. The sub-committees appointed by the National Planning Committee contain the names of a considerable number of officials of the Government of India, the provincial governments and the states. These official members can only join the sub-committees with the permission of their respective governments. We hope that this permission will be readily given. We realise that high officials are busy men and cannot easily be spared for any length of time. It is not intended to take too much of their time and every attempt will be made to have the meetings of the sub-committees concerned at such place or time as to suit them. Even if they cannot always attend, their general guidance will be helpful.

5. Many provincial governments and states have recently had their own enquiries and have drawn up their own programmes or plans of development. All such as have done so are requested to send these plans to the office of the National Planning Committee in Bombay, so that the committee might try to fit these plans in, so far as is possible, with the general scheme. It is important that no provincial or state viewpoint is ignored. In the case of provinces and states where no such enquiry has so far taken place, we would suggest that steps might now be taken to have an inquiry and to collect materials and information for planning.

6. The National Planning Committee will gladly give all the assistance in their power to provinces or states who institute such enquiries. Where desired special investigators can be sent.

7. Many provincial governments and states have also recently passed or initiated legislation relating to land and agriculture, industries, social services, and like subjects. The committee will be grateful if all such legislation, whether proposed or already passed, is sent to them by the governments concerned.

8. It would greatly facilitate the work of both the National Planning Committee and the provincial governments and the states concerned, if each government appointed a special officer to keep in touch with the planning committee, to gather the information required for the purposes of planning, and to keep the committee informed of his government's viewpoint and activities. Such an officer would lighten the burden of the various government departments concerned and would save the time of the governments and the committee. It is not suggested

that he should leave his province or state except perhaps for an occasional visit. He should ordinarily remain at the headquarters of his government. The general secretary of the National Planning Committee or other representative could visit the headquarters of the province or state and confer with such officer and suggest to him the type of information required. This direct and personal contact would be of great help to all concerned and would enable us to avoid needless delay. Such a special officer need only be appointed for six months for the present.

9. The National Planning Committee have suggested to the Government of India and the provincial and state governments that the forthcoming census in 1941 might be utilised, in so far as possible, for the collection of additional information for the purpose of planning. A detailed recommendation to this effect will follow. This additional information will not be available for the use of the committee but it will be of the greatest use for the future development of planning to all governments concerned. The census operations offer an opportunity when this might be done without great additional expense. To endeavour to collect this information later separately will involve the setting up of a new organisation at vast expense. An attempt should also be made to follow international standards in the collection of information through the census and other means. This enables us to fit in this information in international charts and tables.

10. The scope of the work of the National Planning Committee is great and will inevitably involve considerable expenditure. We propose to do it as economically as possible but we do not want the work to suffer for lack of funds. A budget of expenditure for the next six months ending 31st December 1939 amounting to Rs. 50,000/-, has been sanctioned by the committee. This sum has to be collected from contributions from provincial governments and the states. Some of these have already contributed generously to our funds and we hope that there will be no difficulty in getting the full sum required. The work that the planning committee is doing, whatever it may ultimately lead to, will in any event be of very great help to all the provincial and state governments.

11. The committee proposes to pay the travelling expenses of its members as well as the members of its sub-committees, such expenses not exceeding second class railway fares. In the case of government or state representatives on the committee or the sub-committees, it is hoped and expected that the provincial or state government concerned will pay the travelling expenses.

12. The committee have their office and headquarters in Bombay and Prof. K.T. Shah, the honorary general secretary of the committee,

is in charge of the office and organisation. Our office will gladly give every assistance in its power to provincial and state governments in the work of planning. The general secretary will also endeavour to meet the wishes of any government if they desire him to visit their headquarters to discuss the work of the National Planning Committee.

13. It is proposed to issue soon, on behalf of the National Planning Committee, a book containing full information about the committee and their work. This book will be sent to provincial and state governments and to all members of sub-committees.

15. To Jagdish Prasad[1]

Bombay
June 20th, 1939

My dear Kunwar Jagdish Prasad,

I am writing to you on behalf of the National Planning Committee. As you perhaps know, we have just concluded our second session. These have been of a preliminary character, involving a consideration of the approach to the problem of planning. We have appointed a large number of sub-committees and we hope to have their reports by the end of the year or earlier.

2. In this work we seek the cooperation of all the provincial governments and the principal states, as well as the cooperation of the Government of India. It is only with the help of all these governments that all the available information can be collected and a well thought-out scheme can be evolved. In this task the cooperation of the Government of India is very necessary.

3. At a conference of the ministers of industries, held some time back, this question was raised. I understand that Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan[2] pointed out that the Government of India had so far not been invited to participate in the work of the National Planning Committee.

1. Home Department (Political) File No. 66/1939, National Archives of India.
2. (b. 1893); leader of the Ahmadiya movement since early thirties and a lawyer of Lahore; attended the Round Table Conference, 1930-32; member, Viceroy's executive council, 1932-39; judge, federal court of India, 1941-47; minister in the government of Pakistan and its permanent representative at the United Nations till 1964; judge, International Court of Justice, 1964-72.

His criticism was justified. And yet, right from the beginning, there was the desire to have the cooperation of the Government of India. In the early stages, there was overlapping of work and consequent confusion. Dr. Syed Mahmud, the minister for industries in Bihar, and Mr. V.V. Giri, the minister for industries in Madras, were the two principal organisers of the National Planning Committee. Sometimes each gave the credit to the other for doing something which in fact was not done. I came in at a much later stage.

4. I am sorry that a formal invitation was not conveyed to the Government of India previously. I would now request them to give us their cooperation and to send one or more representatives to the National Planning Committee whenever this meets.

5. For the present, we have appointed a number of sub-committees and we have ventured to add to the personnel of some of them the names of officials of the Government of India. They can only function of course as such members if the Government of India permits them to do so. Till such permission is given, we shall not announce their names.

6. We shall let you have very soon the names of these officials and you or the department concerned can then consider this question individually. For the present, I am putting before you the broader question of Government of India officials cooperating with our sub-committees. High officials are busy men and we do not want to take them away from their ordinary duties for any length of time. We can even try to hold some of the sub-committee meetings, with which they are concerned, in Delhi to suit their convenience. Even if they cannot always attend the meetings of the sub-committees, their general advice will be valuable. I hope, therefore, that the Government of India will, as a general rule, permit the cooperation of their officials with the National Planning Committee and our sub-committees.

7. We shall be grateful if the various departments of the Government of India supply us with all the information required by us and which is easily available to them. To facilitate this and avoid delay we are prepared to send our general secretary, or other representative, to the department concerned to confer with the head of the department.

8. I should also like to draw your attention to the desirability of utilising the forthcoming census operations to collect useful additional information for the purposes of planning. This information will not come in time for the work of the National Planning Committee, but the future work of the Government of India as well as of the provincial governments will be facilitated if we possess this information. We hope to address the Government of India separately and in greater detail on this question. Compared to advanced countries we lack many kinds of

I have just received your letter. I think you had better write to the provincial governments first for money. If you want me to write to any particular government I shall do so.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

Bombay
June 21, 1939

My dear Subhas,
The work of the National Planning Committee which you entrusted to me last year grows bigger and bigger and takes up a great deal of time and energy. It is exhausting business.

However I am now writing to you about H.V. Kamath.[2] Last December we appointed him one of the secretaries of the committee for office work. This work has grown so much that we have decided to have a senior and experienced man in charge, and K.T. Shah has been appointed honorary general secretary. He is to have three joint secretaries under him to each of whom we propose to pay an honorarium of Rs. 350/- per month. We proposed appointing Kamath, and Guha[3] and Hutheesing. Indeed I passed an order to that effect.

But a difficulty has arisen. The members of the planning committee, as you know, are a mixed lot and it is no easy matter to pull along with them or to keep them together. Many of them are rather apprehensive as to the direction we are going. Some time back I received complaints about Kamath, our secretary, taking aggressive part in controversial politics. I ignored them for a while but later, when they were renewed, I wrote to Kamath. I pointed out to him the rule we were applying to the staff of the A.I.C.C. which had to function more or less like a civil

1. J.N. Papers, National Planning Committee File No. 135 (Pt. II)/1939, N.M.M.L.
2. H.V. Kamath (b. 1907); resigned from I.C.S., 1938; secretary, National Planning Committee, 1938-39; general secretary, Forward Bloc, 1939-40; imprisoned 1940-45; joined Praja Socialist Party, 1953; member, Lok Sabha, 1962-67.
3. K.D. Guha (1903-1967); industrial chemist; industrial adviser to the government of Ceylon, 1935-39; joint secretary, National Planning Committee, 1939; technical adviser to the government of C.P. and Berar, 1940, and of Assam, 1946-50.

service. This was all the more necessary for a mixed committee like the National Planning Committee. There was no question of anyone being penalised for his views but secretaries of committees should take no public part, by means of speeches, statements, etc., in highly controversial issues. We had some correspondence about this.

The matter arose in the committee and all the members were unanimously of opinion that the secretary should not take part in controversial politics publicly. This was the direction they gave me and later I communicated it to Kamath. Kamath does not seem to be agreeable to these terms although they are for six or eight months only. Under the circumstances, I am helpless and I cannot go against the express directions of the committee. I have suggested to Kamath to think over the matter and, if necessary, to consult you about it. If he cannot accept the directions of the committee, I am afraid the only other course open is for him to resign.[4]

I am writing to you on this subject as you are interested in Kamath.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

4. Kamath offered to resign on 22 June 1939. Jawaharlal wrote to him on 23 June 1939: "It is evident that you are far keener on active political work than on the quiet type of work required in the planning committee. The two types of work represent different mentalities and cannot with ease be carried on at the same time.... As a newcomer into the political field there seems to be no obvious reason why you should be eager to speak in public or write on controversial topics in the press...."

18. The Necessity of Industrialisation[1]

Every individual in the country should be enabled to have 30 yards of cloth per year to clothe himself, and for achieving this aim mills are necessary to produce this amount of cloth, as hand-spinning and hand-weaving alone cannot produce the requisite amount.

With national planning, I believe, the standard of living of the people of India should be raised in every sphere. Cottage industries and khadi should be encouraged but industrialisation of the country on a

1. *National Herald*, 29 June 1939.

wide scale alone can produce the requisite amount of material required for the people if they are to have a higher standard of life.

19. Planning and the Public[1]

The second session of the National Planning Committee ended a few days ago after two full weeks of heavy work. We had the advantage of the cooperation of provincial governments and several important states. Every provincial government, except one, has promised its cooperation to the National Planning Committee, and we hope that the one remaining government will also join the others in this important work, which must necessarily affect every province and every state in India.

The scope of this work has grown and the field we have to cover is vast. The committee cannot, and does not intend to, formulate a full and detailed scheme of national planning within the short time at its disposal. That will require far more detailed information and surveys than we possess today. That will be the work of a more permanent planning committee which the state may establish at a later stage. But even for that more detailed work, a preliminary survey of the entire problem is essential. This survey, broad in outline as it must necessarily be, has to take into consideration all aspects of the problem.

Planning means laying down a scheme of a planned economy for the nation, comprising all its activities, and their proper coordination for the common good. Planning does not mean concentration on a few industries, and ignoring the other aspects of the problem, including the human aspect.

It is with this objective in view that the National Planning Committee has set to work. This planning will require not only the cooperation of the government, but also the cooperation and intelligent appreciation of the general public. It must, if it is to succeed, have the goodwill of the national movement which represents the most vital urge of the country. It must therefore fall in line with the general principles laid down by the Congress.

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 30 June 1939. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 1 July 1939.

In view of the vastness of the problem, the National Planning Committee has appointed twenty nine sub-committees on various subjects. These sub-committees consist of experts and eminent public men from all over India and their labours will result in bringing together of a vast body of coordinated information on all aspects of the various subjects. It will be for the full committee to consider their reports and then prepare its own broad outline of the scheme of a planned economy for the nation.

It is hoped that provincial governments will carry on surveys and inquiries in their respective provinces. Some have already done so. Bombay, Central Provinces and a few others have appointed committees of enquiry. I would especially like to congratulate the Bihar Government and their enthusiastic minister for industries, Dr. Syed Mahmud, on the way they have already tackled this problem.

With a view to cope with this work the office of the National Planning Committee in Bombay has been reorganised and the staff is being increased. Prof. K.T. Shah has been appointed honorary general secretary and under his able guidance we look forward to the office functioning efficiently and rapidly. The committee has decided to have three joint secretaries to assist Prof. K.T. Shah, and accordingly Shri K.D. Guha, Shri H.V. Kamath and Shri G.P. Hutheesing have been appointed. I regret that Shri H.V. Kamath has not found it possible to continue as joint secretary. Shri G.P. Hutheesing has been working in the office for the last six months, and will continue as joint secretary. Shri K.D. Guha brings to us knowledge and experience of the work. He was connected some years ago with the industries department of the Bengal Government. His services were lent to the Ceylon Government. And for the past five years, he functioned as the technical adviser to the government of Ceylon. As such he initiated a number of schemes in Ceylon, including a four-year plan for industrial development for which the Ceylon Government has allotted a large sum of money.

We hope that by the end of this year or earlier the work of all our sub-committees will be completed, and early next year the National Planning Committee will be able to submit its report to the Congress Working Committee and to the provincial governments. The Working Committee has been good enough to extend the time for submission of our report to March 31, 1940.

20. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

Allahabad
July 11, 1939

My dear Subhas,
I have just received your letter of the 8th July.[2] I am afraid we differ on this subject as apparently we do on many others. It would serve no useful purpose to have an argument about it. My own view was this that Kamath had taken up a wrong position in this matter. You have attributed a particular motive to me which is fair neither to me nor to yourself. It was totally immaterial to me what views Kamath had in regard to Congress or other politics so long as his views were not aggressively expressed so as to come in the way of the work he was doing in the planning committee. I had taken exception early in January I think to a statement of his on planning. I did not object to that statement in the least but to the fact that he made it. It seemed to me that he was far more attracted by the publicity side of public life than by the side represented by the planning committee. If that was his desire, which he was perfectly entitled to have, then the planning committee did not afford any scope for him.

You refer to A.K. Saha[3] and suggest that he might have been appointed a joint secretary. Saha as a member of the planning committee might have been appointed an honorary general secretary but he could not be appointed a paid joint secretary unless he resigned his membership of the planning committee. I did not want him to resign this membership as we wanted to profit by his special experience in the sub-committee of which he is a member. He could not have been a member of the sub-committee if he became a joint secretary. I did not think that it was possible to make him general secretary as this required no technical knowledge but a wide acquaintance with Indian economic conditions and people in India. I have been trying hard to get a suitable place for him in some provincial government.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Subhas had complained that Jawaharlal was trying to restrict Kamath's political liberty and the objection to Kamath's views was taken not by others but by Jawaharlal himself; "...you wanted to get rid of Kamath because he gave expression to a particular view."
3. (b. 1900); trained in Soviet Union in power and fuel technology; member, National Planning Committee, and secretary, power and fuel sub-committee.

I am sorry you find it difficult to understand me. Perhaps it is not worth trying.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

21. To V.V. Giri[1]

Bombay
14th July, 1939

My dear Giri,

We had a meeting today of some of the chairmen and secretaries of the sub-committees round about Bombay. We propose to hold another such meeting for northern India in Allahabad on August 3rd. It is not necessary for you to take the trouble to come so far.

We must hurry up to have our collections from provinces and states. We are running short of funds. I understand you asked for an audited statement of accounts. Unfortunately, the auditor has gone out of Bombay. Soon after he returns, we shall send you the audited statement. Meanwhile, a statement of accounts has been sent.

Shah tells me that you asked for the list which contains provincial and state contributions. I thought you had taken the list. Anyway, it does not contain very much information. For the major provinces, the sum allotted was Rs. 5,000. For a province like the C.P., Rs. 3,000. Orissa, Sind, and N.W.F.P. are poor and almost anything can be accepted from them, say, Rs. 500. Hyderabad offered Rs. 4,000, Bhopal, Rs. 1,500.

As Punjab is cooperating now, you should write to the Punjab Government also. I have myself spoken to the U.P. Government, and they have agreed. Please write to all these governments and ask them to send some part of their contributions as soon as possible, if not the whole.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. V.V. Giri Papers, National Planning Committee File, 1939.

6

THE INDIAN STATES

1. Repression in Travancore[1]

There cannot be a free British India or a free federation with fascist cells dotted about the country. It is monstrous that absolute terror exists in one of the most educationally advanced states.[2] The repression is being directed by gentlemen who have openly expressed admiration for Hitler and Mussolini and advocate their system for India and Britain. To retain puppet princes and a totalitarian rule, the British Government has been able to get hold of men of this fascist type to deal with those whose only crime has been that they have agitated for grant of responsible government in the state and whose demand for civil liberties is treated as sedition.

1. London, 21 October 1938. *From The Hindu*, 23 October 1938.
2. The secretary, Travancore State People's Defence Committee, stated on 8 October 1938 that there was a secret agency at work to create violence and discredit the state Congress as a violent organisation and that agency had the support of the police.

2. The New Awakening in Indian States[1]

Three things are quite essential for the well-being of our country: firstly, the possession of military power to guard and defend ourselves, secondly, economic freedom, and, thirdly, complete control over the foreign policy of the country. For the attainment of this objective it is essential that there should be a united front. Various communities and factions should liquidate their dissensions and rally under the Congress banner.

The British Government's attitude in the recent European crisis has been deplorable. Forgetting for the moment Britain's policy vis-a-vis India, her role in the European crisis is a sufficient justification for India to sever her connections with the British Government. The case of Czechoslovakia has no parallel in the entire history of the world.

India is undergoing a process of silent revolution. We are living in stirring times, and wherever one goes, one cannot but feel the strange

1. Speech at Bombay, 18 November 1938. *From The Hindu*, 19 November 1938.

change that has taken place. The peasants, the workers and the people in the states, show signs of a new life and activity. Complete unity for the attainment of freedom and elimination of the reactionary elements which impede our progress should be our aim.

We have reached a point in the history of the world when we have to take a definite path. We have to take either the path of democracy or that of fascism. We, of course, stand for complete democracy and the Congress has made it very clear.

There is a new awakening in the Indian states. In Hyderabad, Travancore, Rajkot and elsewhere, the situation is boiling up. It is not the work of a handful of outsiders who have created this situation. It is all an evidence of the spirit of the times. Even Mahatma Gandhi could not have succeeded if there was not sufficient awakening in the country. I am happy that the message has reached the Indian states where there is a similar awakening and activity for the freedom and betterment of the people. The popular agitation in the states can never be damped down. Let the states' people be united in their efforts, for conferences and meetings would not produce satisfactory results.

In the Congress provinces, while there is very little real power for the ministers to wield, they should not be subjected to embarrassing criticisms. There was firing by the police during the one-day general strike in Bombay early last week and I regret the incident.[2] I am not prepared to apportion the blame. The new questions and problems that arise from day to day sometimes present new difficulties. We are human beings and are liable to make mistakes. We should, however, strive to tread the right path. We may falter, but we shall always go along the right path. My request to the people is not to do anything which would create dissensions among the workers and the peasants.

The frontiers of Indian freedom are no longer her geographical borders but are extended up to Spain and China where the Spanish and the Chinese are fighting the common battle of world democracy.

The devious ways of Britain's pro-fascist policy have closed the door on republican Spain even for getting food supplies from outside. The rival forces ranged against each other are democracy and fascism, and the British Government sympathises with the latter. India must dissociate herself from the policy of this reactionary government.

2. The one-day strike organised by the Bombay provincial trade union congress in cooperation with the Independent Labour Party to protest against the Bombay Trades Disputes Bill on 7 November 1938 resulted in some disturbances which led to firing by the police thrice.

The reactionary European policy of the British Government makes us more determined to get away from this empire. What does Dominion Status mean even to the dominions when under the present dispensation they are denied control of finance, foreign policy and defence? India therefore wants complete independence.

It is foolish for the rulers of Hyderabad, Travancore and Rajkot to believe that they can, with the aid of a handful of men, crush popular movements for freedom. These movements are but a ripple of a mighty wave which under the dominating influence of Gandhiji has engulfed the whole country. I do hope that the rulers would see the wisdom of progressing with the rest of India.

The struggle in the Indian states is not against any individual but against the system that does not allow them to grow.

It is time that all the shackles binding the people are shattered. The map of the world is being re-drawn and I want the states' people to decide their own fate now.

We want freedom for India as a whole and not for a section only. As there has been an awakening among the people of British India through the instrumentality of the Indian National Congress, there should be such an awakening among the people of the Indian states also so that the fight against imperialism and autocracy may go on all over the country at the same time. Our fight is not against any individual but against autocracy and oppression itself. Some rulers of the native states may be good people, but when they get power in their hands, they become inhuman.

3. To Edward Thompson[1]

Allahabad
November 29, 1938

Dear Edward,

I enclose an article by Gandhiji which has appeared in the *Harijan*. I think this will interest you.

The change from Europe to India has its advantages. There is not so much tension and helplessness visible here. But conditions are pretty bad here also in a different sense, and all manner of complicated problems insistently demand solution. The Indian states are coming very much into the picture. In a large number of them popular movements

1. J.N. Correspo[illegible] M.L.

have grown up and there has been severe repression. But the rulers are sufficiently frightened of these new developments.

When are you thinking of coming to India?

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Indian States to Form Part of Free India[1]

Among the many developments in recent years in India, the awakening of the states' people is perhaps the most remarkable. It was time they did so, for it is a notorious fact that the Indian states are terribly backward and reactionary and completely out of place in the modern world.

The States People's Conference has a great responsibility. It has to organise and control these new forces and direct them into right channels. Mere enthusiasm and excitement will lead to no results unless they are disciplined and rightly directed.

It is clear that the only ideal we can have in view is that of an independent India comprising all the Indian states and provinces.

The unity of India cannot be broken up, nor can there be different degrees of freedom in various parts of India. At the same time, there is no reason why there should not be a great measure of autonomy in different states so as to give them the fullest opportunity of self-development. The present objective of responsible government in the states within the framework of a free India is the right objective.

The National Congress has given its full approval to this. It has, at the same time, rightly pointed out that the burden of the struggle must inevitably lie on the people of the states. The wisdom of this decision is shown by the rapid growth of consciousness among the states' people.

I trust that the movement for freedom in the Indian states will keep in the closest touch with the wider national movement, and will follow the methods and policies of the National Congress.

1. Message to *The States' People*, the journal of the All India States People's Conference, published from Bombay. *National Herald*, 30 November 1938.

5. To Gangaram Wazir[1]

Allahabad
January 6, 1939

Dear Sir,[2]

I am in receipt of your letter of the 19th December which I have read with care and interest. I have been taking interest in Kashmir affairs for several years and I have followed recent events there. I have read most of the relevant statements that have been issued, including those written by Professor Gulshan Rai.[3] I have no desire to express opinions about matters with which I am insufficiently acquainted. But there are certain general principles applicable to all states in India, big or small. They apply to Kashmir as well as to Hyderabad.

I am afraid that your letter does not keep these principles in view. Professor Gulshan Rai's articles seem to me in conflict with them also and I found it impossible to agree with his conclusions, quite apart from what the facts might be.

It is quite clear to me that the time has come when the ideal of full responsible government must be accepted by every state and immediate steps should be taken towards this end. I quite understand that these steps might vary in regard to particular states concerned, but they must be substantial steps.

I must condemn all attempts at violence and hooliganism by whomsoever committed and, if any printed posters have been issued as incitement to violence, I should be glad to see them.

The present position is that the state government has applied ordinances[4] which can only be described as monstrous. Any government which uses such measures cannot claim the slightest indulgence. Further, a large number of people are in prison for political purposes.

I think it is correct to say that the popular movement in Kashmir was communal in its origin. I think it has undergone some change and is definitely seeking a wider platform. But even if it was communal, it would not take away from the rightness of the demand made by it.

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.
2. (1883-1969); served the Jammu and Kashmir Government in various capacities; president, Dogra Sabha, Jammu, for many years.
3. A journalist of Lahore.
4. An ordinance, first enacted for a few days on 24 September 1931 to enforce martial law, was again promulgated on 1 June 1933 to suppress the popular movement. It vested the police with wide powers.

The fact that few Hindus have joined it does not redound to their credit or to their wisdom. By this communal policy the Hindus would injure themselves more than anyone else. The point is that a demand, if it is right, must be accepted whosoever makes it, and in a state like Kashmir, a popular movement must inevitably be predominantly Muslim just as in Hyderabad, a popular movement must largely be Hindu. It is curious that in both these states the popular movements are dubbed communal by the governments. The right way to strengthen nationalism in Kashmir is for the Hindus to ally themselves fully with the popular movement and to seek to remove all blemishes from it.

Everyone must realise that the states are going to have responsible government. If so, the obvious course for minorities, even in order to protect themselves, is to line up with the popular movement.

I would very much like to visit Kashmir myself, and I may do so in the future when an opportunity offers itself.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. The Ranpur Incident[1]

state authorities have behaved with extreme brutality towards their people. Even in Ranpur the crowd was fired upon and at least one person killed before it lost control of itself and misbehaved. Life is held cheap in the states when it is a question of poor Indian lives. Surely it must be recognised that this standard of value can no longer be accepted. Nor is the movement going to be suppressed by guns or bayonets.

Events in the states are being followed with the most anxious interest all over India. Let no man think that because we are quiet about them and do not shout, we are indifferent to the happenings in Kashmir and Hyderabad, in Kathiawar and Orissa, in Rajputana and the Punjab states, in Travancore and in the numerous other states of India. We know well that hundreds of brave people lie still in prison in Kashmir and this glorious valley is darkened by ordinances which are monstrous in their severity. We know also that Hyderabad still holds pride of place in the suppression of civil liberties, and recently the treatment of political prisoners there has been shocking. Rajputana, that ancient home of chivalry, is now far better known as the home of reaction and feudal tyranny. Travancore still struggles in the woods.

But there is light also, as in Rajkot, Aundh[3] and in some other states. And there is light in the eyes and hearts of millions of people living m the states throughout India, and that light will not be extinguished by repression and terror.

A significant feature of recent events has been the part taken by the Government of India and its agents in the states. In many states, even the principal ministers are British officials. These agents and officials not only oppose progress and help reaction, but sometimes come in the way of the rulers coming to terms with their people. It is time that this was ended, for this foreign intervention and intrusion can no longer be tolerated.

3. The raja of Aundh, a small state in Maharashtra, granted *responsible* government. He promulgated a constitution which made Aundh a federation of village republics.

7. Aundh[1]

With conflict going on in so many states and major crises developing in others, it is a relief and a pleasure to think of those states where the rulers have put themselves in line with their people and the spirit of the times and accepted the demand for responsible government. We are told that this has been done in Hindole[2] of Orissa and in the Banaras state[3] as well as in some others. Information is lacking as to the steps actually taken to bring about the change, and perhaps it is a little premature to rejoice. We have seen what has happened in Rajkot, and there will be many such slips and obstruction even after victory seems assured. For strange influences are at work behind the scenes and the unfortunate ruler is often a mere puppet in others' hands.

But in the case of Aundh there is no need to doubt or hesitate for the deed is done. The raja of Aundh[4] deserves the fullest congratulations not only for the constitution he has inaugurated but for the graceful manner of doing it. There have been no mental reservations. Having decided on a course of action, he went ahead with confidence and lined himself up with his people. I have not got this constitution before me but I understand that it makes Aundh a kind of federation of village republics. Aundh is a small state but it has done a big thing and set an example which, we hope, others will follow.

1. Signed article printed in *National Herald*, 29 January 1939.
2. The ruler of Hindole announced a number of political reforms to be introduced in the state from April 1939. He declared the goal of his government was to be a full responsible government.
3. Progressive constitutional reforms were introduced in Banaras state.
4. (1868-1951); Bhavanrao Shrinivasrao *alias* Balasaheb Pant.

8. Struggle in the Indian States[1]

The year 1938 saw the sudden emergence on the political horizon of India of the problem of the Indian states. The problem was no new

1. Message to *The States' People*, Allahabad, 3 February 1939. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

one. It is as old as the problem of Indian freedom but nevertheless it had taken a back place till then and all our energies had been concentrated on the rest of India. But the remarkable awakening of the people of the states has forced attention to this vital problem and made us realise, as never before, that there can be no independence for India unless we solve the problem of the states. This problem must be viewed in its true perspective. It is a struggle against a reactionary regime and feudal relics. But even more so and essentially it is a struggle against British imperialism. This imperialism, failing to check us directly, now seeks to do so indirectly and through the states. The year 1939 will be largely dominated by this problem and I trust that it will take us a long way to its solution, thereby bringing us on the doorstep of independence.

9. To G. B. Pant[1]

Allahabad
February 4, 1939

My dear Pantji,
Jamnalalji has just telephoned to me from Agra. He pointed out to me that the Jaipur police had entered with him into British territory on the last occasion. He seems to think that it was improper for them to do so and he wanted me to inform you of this fact. I do not know what the law is about it. He is going again to Jaipur tonight. They will apply the Princes Protection Act and arrest him at the station which is British territory.[2]

I do not know exactly where and how the provincial government can come in. But I think the closest attention should be paid to this matter so that the provincial government should not be put in a false position or exploited in any way by the Government of India or the Jaipur authorities. In Orissa there has been a conflict between the government and the provincial government in regard to certain matters affecting the state, especially the extradition of some people. It may be that some questions might arise here too.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Jamnalal Bajaj, who was associated with the Jaipur Praja Mandal, was arrested on 5 February 1939 for defying the ban on his entry into the state.

Jamnalalji informs me further that the Jaipur Praja Mandal has opened an office in Agra. He hoped that the authorities in Agra will not put any obstruction in the way of their work.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. On Your Feet![1]

The Congress presidential election has attracted, as it should, considerable attention, though perhaps few people know all the facts or realise the background of this election. The press is full of statements made by groups and individuals and the words leftist and rightist are bandied about without any regard to their meaning. There is a spate of good advice. The election will have served at least one good purpose if it serves to make us think clearly about the situation in India and abroad. Vague talk and loud assertions or criticisms do not make a leftist or a rightist or help in drawing up a policy. It is necessary therefore that this talk and criticism should be confined in the narrow channels of reasoning and reality and should lead to the clear and precise definition of our policy, which should be the basis of our future action. The problem before us is the achievement of India's independence and the establishment of a free united democratic state in India. It is from that point of view that everything should be judged. Yet we argue about relatively petty matters and think in terms of this office or that.

Meanwhile, the world rushes ahead and bloody reaction grips it by the throat. Meanwhile, India is shaken afresh by vast popular movements and at the same time disintegrating forces raise their ugly heads. How are we to meet this challenge?

Today the problem of problems is that of the Indian states, of the people of these states who have patiently submitted, too long already, to autocracy and misrule. They submit no longer, and from the northern Himalayan passes to Kanya Kumari in the far south, millions of them are awake and moving to that freedom which has so long been denied to them. Today we face British imperialism in one of its ugliest phases

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 7 February 1939. *The Hindustan Times*, 8 February 1939.

—that of patron and supporter of feudalism and slave conditions in the states. Today, as of old, Gandhiji is the soft but iron voice of India challenging this imperialism and preparing for a struggle with it. Everything else is secondary to this major struggle for in its sweep it will comprise federation, provincial autonomy and the other impediments to our freedom.

Rajkot is in the grip of it already and that noble and beloved lady Kasturba has gone in her old age back to gaol.[2] Jaipur has accepted the challenge of imperialism and India's faithful servant, Jamnalal Bajaj, has disappeared behind prison walls. In Orissa, British imperialism gathers its armies to sustain tyranny, corruption and degradation of the worst type, and to crush the newly arisen people of the states. In Travancore, autocracy assumes a fascist colour and another struggle looms ahead. In Mysore,[3] there are the beginnings of conflict again. In the great states of Hyderabad and Kashmir popular movements are being crushed on the frivolous plea of communalism.

We have grown complacent and petty-minded and forgetful of our great problems. But the call is coming to us again, India calls and the call grows louder and more insistent. On your feet, men and women of India, on your feet, the time for marching approaches. On your feet!

2. The ruler having failed to introduce reforms, the satyagraha was resumed and Kasturba Gandhi was arrested on 3 February 1939 while entering the state for offering satyagraha.
3. Satyagraha was resumed in the state when Congress members were not included in the reforms council.

11. The Anachronisms of the Indian States[1]

The states in modern India are anachronistic and do not deserve to exist. The times have changed, new ideas and new forces are coming into play every day; yet the states remain static. Few of them have any constitutions and if there are any in certain states, they are mere apologies.

The rulers cannot claim to have descended from a long and ancient line of rajas. Many of them came into existence after the disruption of

1. Speech at Allahabad, 9 February 1939. From *National Herald*, 10 February 1939.

the Mughal rule. After the advent of the British there was again a redistribution of territories between various chiefs who gave their support to the foreigners.

British imperialism is fighting the people's movement in the states through the rulers. But the rulers should not think that the British are fighting for them; they are in fact fighting for the existence of British imperialism.

Political and social conditions are changing rapidly and if the institutions that governed society do not also change with the same rapidity, the result will be that, like old clothes, old social systems would have perforce to give place to new ones which we call revolution. Our movement in India till now was concerned mostly with political liberty. We had no time to devote to social movements, such as would improve the living conditions of the workers, kisans and other classes. It is admitted that social conditions cannot be set right without political freedom. The problem of the states comes into the picture at this stage. We cannot bring about any change in the internal affairs of the states without obtaining political rights for the people. The Indian states seem to be but little affected by the new phase through which the country is passing. The states being units under rulers who are protected by the British army have in many cases no constitution. If there are any they are mere apologies for constitutions. The rajas, maharajas, nawabs and chiefs consider the income of the states as their personal money, and instead of spending it on construction of hospitals, schools, etc., spend such income on their personal comforts.

It is wrong to suppose that these rulers, excepting some in Rajputana, are descended from a long and ancient line of rulers. After the fall of the Mughul empire, some assertive men, who had the strength and courage to establish their hold over small territories, occupied them. They were subdued one by one because they were holding their states without any feelings of nationalism. After their conquest, the territories were redistributed by the conqueror, as it suited him.

The important question to be considered is what role these states have played in the history of India during the last 150 years. The life in Europe has changed, the European society has undergone a change and the economic conditions have also changed considerably but the states in India have not been affected in the least by the changes taking place elsewhere. The people of the states are where they were a century ago. This state of affairs is being maintained not so much through the strength of the rajas, maharajas and nawabs but through the might of their British masters.

WITH SUBHAS BOSE AT ALLAHABAD STATION, 1939

AT ALL INDIA STATES PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE, LUDHIANA, 15 FEBRUARY 1939

The British resident and the British dewan are responsible for all that is happening in Rajkot. These British officers are fighting the battle of British imperialism against the popular movement, and nobody should think that they are fighting for the sake of the ruler of Rajkot.

The very fact that the British dewan at Rajkot upset the understanding arrived at between the popular movement and the Thakore Saheb shows that the British do not favour the grant of liberty to the people of the states. The same attitude was adopted in Ranpur state. The people of that state while on their way to make representations were stopped. They were provoked till in their annoyance they lost control over themselves and attacked a British official with lathis resulting in his death. Thus the British officials of the states support the rulers in suppressing the people.

This game is being played by the British rulers in the states in order to counteract the freedom movement and stem its progress in British India. Princes and rulers are a willing party to this game, lest they be turned out, as many of their order have been turned out before. They also fear that if popular movements in the states succeed, their privileges and their rule might be brought to an end. To checkmate the movement in the states, they are branding it as a communal movement. In Kashmir the movement also enjoys the support of Hindus who are in a minority.

In Hyderabad, the Hindus being in a majority the movement was natuially started by them. There the movement enjoys the support of the Muslims also. To call it a communal movement is absurd.

The agitation in Travancore, it is being said, is an anti-Christian movement. I dislike such movements being called communal.

It is idle to suggest that all agitations now going on in the states are due to external influences. No handful of people from outside can bring about any popular upheaval in a state.

The satyagraha in Hyderabad has nothing to do with the satyagraha movement of the state Congress; the latter was started due to the refusal of the authorities to allow even the most elementary rights, such as enrolment of Congress members. A satyagraha movement should always have its origin from inside the state or the territory where it is launched and it should have as its purpose the strengthening of the internal organisation. As such I do not approve of people from outside stirring up agitations in the states. The agitation in the states is, however, most opportune and necessary at present.

Mahatma Gandhi, who has always his hand on the pulse of the people, knows which is the right battle-ground and which is the most important issue to tackle at a given time.

12. Freedom Is Indivisible[1]

Comrades,

Year after year this conference of the people of the Indian states has met in session and discussed the problems of the states. Year after year it has raised its voice in condemnation of the autocracy and misrule, the corruption and the degradation that has prevailed in many of these states. The labours of this conference, and far more so of the National Congress, have borne fruit, and today there is a mighty awakening among the people of the states. When, in after years, the history of India comes to be written, the year 1938 will stand out as the year of this awakening. The historian of that distant future will not wonder at this awakening; but he will marvel that the millions who inhabit the Indian states submitted for generations to intolerable and appalling conditions, and that a system of government which had long vanished in other parts of the world still continued in India.

The year 1938 has become history, and we stand on the threshold of 1939. The movement for freedom gathers pace, and the whole of India looks with sympathy and understanding on this great struggle in the states. At this vital moment you have summoned me to this conference and I have gladly come at your bidding. I come to you not only because I am intensely interested in the freedom of the people of the states, but as the bearer of the goodwill of the rest of India and as a pledge of our solidarity.

Many people have in past years criticised the attitude of the National Congress towards the states, and heated argument has taken place about intervention and non-intervention. That criticism and argument have perished with the yesterday that has gone and are meaningless today. Yet it is worthwhile to consider briefly the development of Congress policy in regard to the states. I have not always approved of all the expressions of this policy or liked the emphasis on certain aspects of the problem. But I am convinced that this fundamental policy was the correct one under the circumstances, and, indeed, subsequent events have justified it completely. A policy aiming at vital change or revolution must keep in touch with reality and the conditions that prevail. As these conditions change, that policy changes. Brave words and gestures

1. Presidential address at the All India States People's Conference, Ludhiana, 15 February 1939. *The Tribune*, 16 February 1939. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 27-46.

or strongly-worded resolutions, out of touch with objective conditions, do not bring about that pregnant atmosphere out of which revolutionary change is born. Nor can that condition be created artificially or mass movements launched unless the masses themselves are ready and prepared. The Congress realised this and knew of the unpreparedness of the people in the states; it husbanded its energy in the struggle outside, well realising that this was the most effective method of influencing the states' people and making them ready for their own struggle.

The Haripura resolution was a landmark in the evolution of Congress policy, and it enunciated this in clear language.[2] The integrity and unity of India was an essential part of the independence we worked for, and the same full measure of political, social and economic freedom was to come to the states as to the rest of India. There could be no compromise on this, and the Congress declared afresh in favour of full responsible government and the guarantee of civil liberty in the states. Further, it declared to be its right and privilege to work for the attainment of these objectives in the states. There was no question of non-intervention; the Congress, as representing the will of the Indian people, recognises no bars which limit its freedom of activity in any matter pertaining to India and her people. It is its right and privilege and its duty to intervene in any such matter whenever the interests of India demand it. Not to do so would be to deny its own function and to betray the cause which it seeks to represent.

But it is for the Congress and the people of India to determine when and where they will intervene and what policy they must pursue, so that their intervention might be effective and fruitful of results. The limitation, if any, is of its own making, or is caused by external circumstances which it is wise enough to recognise. No outside authority can limit the function of the Congress, just as no power or authority can set bounds to the aspirations or advancement of the Indian people.

The Congress knew well that the backwardness of the states hindered our national progress and that there could be no freedom for India unless the states ceased to be what they were. The Congress was eager to bring about this essential and vital change, and yet it knew that the change could only come about from below, when the people of the states grew self-reliant and organised and capable of shouldering the burden of their struggle. It emphasized this. Not to have done so would have been to mislead and encourage vain delusion and delay the building up in the states themselves of organisations which would represent the strength and will of the people.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 379.

The wisdom of the Congress stands amply justified today when we see the developments that have taken place since Haripura. All the states are astir, and in many of them powerful mass movements are functioning. The people of the states are rapidly coming into line with the rest of India; they are no longer a burden and a dead-weight keeping us back. They are setting the pace for India today and our national politics are dominated by their struggle. The time has come, therefore, for the integration of these various struggles in the states *inter se* and with the major struggle against British imperialism. There are no longer many different struggles going on for independence; there is only one mighty struggle for India's freedom, though its aspects may vary and though its battle-grounds may be many. As Gandhiji has said, the struggle for liberty, wherever it takes place, is a struggle for all India.

It is in the fitness of things that at this moment of vital crisis for the states, India's leader, ever thinking of her freedom and jealous of her honour, should step out and in his ringing voice of old, that we remember so well, give faith and courage to our people. Gandhiji's lead has finally settled all the old arguments that obscured the issue, and that issue stands out now, clear and definite.

There are about six hundred states in India—big ones and small ones and tiny ones which one cannot even place on the map. They differ greatly among themselves, and some have advanced industrially and educationally, and some have had competent rulers or ministers. The majority of them, however, are sinks of reaction and incompetence and unrestrained autocratic power, sometimes exercised by vicious and degraded individuals. But whether the ruler happens to be good or bad, or his ministers competent or incompetent, the evil lies in the system. This system has vanished from the rest of the world, and left to itself, it would have vanished from India also long ago. But in spite of its manifest decay and stagnation, it has been propped up and artificially maintained by British imperialism. Offspring of the British power in India, suckled by imperialism for its own purposes, it has survived till today, though mighty revolutions have shaken the world and changed it, empires have collapsed and crowds of princes and petty rulers have faded away. That system has no inherent importance or strength; it is the strength of British imperialism that counts. For us in India that system has in reality been one of the faces of imperialism. Therefore when conflict comes we must recognise who our opponent is.

We are told now of the so-called independence of the states and of their treaties with the paramount power, which are sacrosanct and inviolable and apparently must go on for ever and ever. We have recently seen what happens to international treaties and the most sacred

of covenants when they do not suit the purposes of imperialism. We have seen these treaties torn up, friends and allies basely deserted and betrayed and the pledged word broken by England and France. Democracy and freedom were the sufferers and so it did not matter. But when reaction and autocracy and imperialism stand to lose, it does matter, and treaties, however moth-eaten and harmful to the people they might be, have to be preserved. It is a monstrous imposition to be asked to put up with these treaties of a century and a quarter ago, in the making of which the people had no voice or say. It is fantastic to expect the people to keep on their chains of slavery, imposed upon them by force and fraud, and to submit to a system which crushes the life-blood out of them. We recognise no such treaties and we shall in no event accept them. The only final authority and paramount power that we recognise is the will of the people, and the only thing that counts ultimately is the good of the people.

A new theory of the independence of the states has been advanced in recent years, and it has been advanced by the very power that holds them in an iron grip and keeps them in subjection. Neither history nor constitutional law gives any justification for this, and, if we examine the origins of these states, most of their rulers would be reduced to the status of feudal barons. But we need not trouble ourselves with legal research, as the practice and facts are plain enough. This practice has been for the British power to dominate these states completely, and its slightest gesture is a command to them, which they disobey at their peril. The political department of the Government of India pulls the strings, and the puppets dance to its tune; the local resident is the master of the situation; and latterly the practice has grown of British officials being imposed as ministers of the rulers of the states. If this is independence, then it will be interesting to learn how it differs from the most abject subjection.

There is no independence in the states and there is going to be none for it is hardly possible geographically, and it is entirely opposed to the conception of a united free India. It is conceivable and desirable in the case of the larger states for them to have a great deal of autonomy within the framework of an Indian federation. But they will have to remain integral parts of India, and the major matters of common concern must be controlled by a democratic federal centre. Internally they will have responsible government.

It is clear that the problem of the states would be easy of solution if the conflict was confined to the people and the ruler. Many of the rulers, left to themselves, would ultimately line themselves up with the people, and, if they hesitated to do so, the pressure from below would

soon induce them to change their minds. Not to do so would imperil their position, and the only alternative would be complete removal. The Congress and the various praja mandals have so far made every effort to induce the rulers to side with their people and establish responsible government. They must realise that for them not to agree to do so will not stop the coming of freedom to their people; their opposition will only place an insurmountable barrier between them and their people, and an arrangement between the two will then become exceedingly difficult. The map of the world has changed many times during the last hundred years; empires have ceased to be and new countries have arisen. Even now before our very eyes we see this map changing. It requires no prophet to say with confidence that the Indian states system is doomed even as the British Empire, which has so long protected it, is doomed. It is the path of prudence as well as of wisdom for the rulers to line themselves up with their people and be sharers with them in the new freedom, and instead of being despotic and disliked rulers, with a precarious tenure, to be proud and equal citizens of a great commonwealth.

A few of the rulers of the states have realised this and have taken some steps in the right direction. One of them, the raja of Aundh, chief of a small state, has distinguished himself by his wisdom in granting responsible government to his people, and is doing so with grace and goodwill.

But, unhappily, most of them stick to their old ways and show no signs of change. They demonstrate afresh the lesson of history that when a class has fulfilled its purpose and the world has no need of it, it decays and loses wisdom and all capacity. It cannot adapt itself to changing conditions. In a vain attempt to hold on to what is fading away, it loses even what little it might have retained. The British ruling classes have had a long and brilliant career, and throughout the nineteenth century and after they dominated the world. Yet today we see them nerveless, witless, incapable of consecutive thought or action, and, in a frantic attempt to hold on to some vested interests, ruining their great position in the world and shattering the proud edifice of their empire. It is even so with classes that have fulfilled their function and outlived their utility. If the British ruling classes are manifestly failing, in spite of their prestige and tradition and training, what shall we say of our Indian princes who for generations past have grown up in decadence and irresponsibility? The problems of government require something more than a knowledge of how to manage polo ponies, or recognise the breeds of dogs, or have the skill to kill large numbers of inoffensive animals.

But even if the rulers of the states were willing, their willingness would not take them far. For the master of their immediate destiny is the agent of the British Government and they dare not offend him. We have seen in the case of Rajkot how a ruler who was inclined to come to terms with his people was threatened with deposition, and how later he was made to break his word under pressure from British agents.

Thus the conflict in the states is only incidentally with the rulers. In effect it is with British imperialism. That is the issue, clear and definite. And that is why the interference of the British power in the states against the people has a special significance. We see this interference on an increasing scale, not only by the political department of the Government of India and its many agents and residents, but through its armed forces, as in Orissa. This interference in order to crush the popular movements is no longer going to be tolerated by us. The National Congress will certainly intervene with full vigour if the Government of India intervene to crush the people. Our methods are different; they are peaceful, but they have been shown in the past to be effective.

Gandhiji has repeatedly warned the British Government and its agents in India of the far-reaching cinsequences of this conflict. It is manifestly impossible for the conflict to be confined to particular states and for the Congress, at the same time, to carry on provincial administrations involving a measure of cooperation with the British authorities. If there is this major conflict then its effects will spread to the remotest corners of India, and the question will no longer be a limited one of this state or that, but of the complete elimination of British power.

What is the nature of the conflict today? This must be clearly understood. It varies slightly from state to state, but the demand everywhere is for full responsible government. Yet the conflict is not at present to enforce that demand, but to establish the right of organising people for that demand. When this right is denied and civil liberties are crushed, no way is left open to the people to carry on what are called constitutional methods of agitation. Their choice, then, is either to submit and give up all political and even public activity, and to suffer a degradation of the spirit and a continuation of the tyranny that oppresses them, or to resort to direct action. This direct action, according to our code, is perfectly peaceful satyagraha and a refusal to submit to violence and evil, whatever the consequences. The immediate issue today is thus one of civil liberties in most of the states, though the objective everywhere is responsible government. In Jaipur the issue is, in a sense, still more limited, for the state government objects to the praja mandal organising famine relief.

Members of the British Government, in justifying their international policy, tell us frequently of their love of peace and their horror of the methods of force and violence in the solution of international or national problems. In the name of peace and appeasement they have helped and encouraged international blackmail and gangsterism of the worst type and done mortal injury to democracy and freedom in Europe. By their policy they have enthroned the rule of unabashed violence in Europe and been parties to the greatest tragedy of our time—the defeat of the republic of Spain, which has fought so magnificently and so long against overwhelming odds. Yet these statesmen of Britain talk of the virtues of peaceful settlement and of the wickedness of force and violence. These pious sentiments are applied by them in Europe so that the forces of reaction and violence might have a free field and an ample opportunity to crush freedom.

What do we see in India, and especially in the states? All attempts by us at peaceful propaganda, peaceful organisation, peaceful settlement are met by the brutal violence of the states' authorities, backed by the armed might and political influence of the British power. Thus where changes are sought, howsoever legitimately and peacefully, in the direction of democracy and freedom, all such attempts must be put down ruthlessly and with violence. But where changes are desired by fascism and imperialism in their own interests and in order to crush democracy and freedom, then violence and force are allowed full play, and the policy of peace is only meant to obstruct and hinder those who want to preserve their liberties.

Does anyone still hold that tyranny and autocracy and corrupt administration must continue in the states? Does anyone deny that all these must go and give place to free institutions? If so, how is this change to be brought about normally unless full opportunities are given for peaceful organisation and the development of an intelligent and self-reliant public opinion? The full establishment of civil liberties is an essential preliminary to any progress. It is an insult to India to ask her to tolerate in the states ordinance rule and the suppression of organisations and prevention of public gatherings and methods usually associated with the gangster. Are the states to remain vast prisons where the human spirit is sought to be extinguished and the resources of the people are to be used for the pageantry and luxury of courts, while the masses starve and remain illiterate and backward? Are the middle ages to continue in India under the protection of British imperialism?

In an important state in Rajputana even typewriters are discouraged, and there is an ordinance dealing with them and requiring their registration. In Kashmir a monstrous ordinance, framed on the lines of the

ordinance promulgated for the Burma rebellion[3] some years ago, is the permanent law of the state. In the premier state of Hyderabad civil liberty has long been non-existent, and latterly accounts of brutal ill-treatment of peaceful satyagrahis have seen the light of day. The recent expulsion of hundreds of students from the Osmania University for the offence of singing *Bande Mataram* privately is an astounding instance of the reactionary mentality which prevails in the governing circles of Hyderabad. In Travancore the memory of the outrages of last summer is still fresh in our minds.[4]

But I do not wish to make a list of these states and their misdeeds, nor do I wish to discuss the problems of individual states. If I attempted to do so this address of mine would never end. Here, where we meet, the Punjab states lie close to us, and many of them have had an unsavoury reputation. Their tale of misgovernment, if we heard it fully, would fill our time. But, apart from the difficulties of time and space, I would prefer that you concentrated your attention on the wider problem which embraces all the states, which is in effect the Indian states' problem, rather than lose ourselves in the mazes of each separate problem. We must see the wood and not get lost in the trees. We must realise, and we must make others realise, that it is no longer possible to deal piecemeal with this great problem, for the freedom of India is one and indivisible.

But some states are in the forefront today in the struggle and they must be referred to. Some are peculiarly situated and require consideration.

Rajkot and Jaipur occupy the stage today and both of them raise issues of all-India importance. Many of our comrades are there, engaged in the heat of the struggle, and have been unable to join us in this conference because of that more important engagement. Rajkot has many lessons to teach us. After some months of conflict, it seemed that the people had won and we rejoiced. We saw how effectively the technique of our struggle and the peaceful and heroic sacrifice of the people brought success to us. But we had rejoiced too soon, and the plighted word of the ruler was broken and the struggle had to begin afresh. All India knows how this happened and how British authority by pressure and threats came in the way of a settlement. From this we learn that we must never be misled by temporary success, we can never

3. The *Burma Emergency Powers Ordinance* of August 1931 empowered the government to arrest any person without warrant and confiscate private property.
4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 529-530.

be sure of the triumph of our cause, till achievement has come. Promises and assurances will not be kept, for the real power does not rest with those who make the promise. It rests with British imperialism. In Jaipur there is an English official who, though appointed prime minister by the maharaja, is the real ruler of the state, and rules on behalf of and probably under the instructions of the political department of the Government of India. No one imagines that the youthful maharaja has any important say in vital matters. No one supposes that the English prime minister could function as such for a day without the goodwill and support of the Government of India. The slightest disapproval of his policy by the political department would result in the immediate change of that policy or in his removal from his office.

In Orissa the regrettable murder of the British agent, Major Bazalgette, has led—as such acts even when committed in a moment of folly always lead—to unfortunate consequences. The people of the Orissa states are backward and have to suffer for their lack of understanding of our basic principles. This act is a warning to us to conduct our movement in such a manner that the people realise its significance and adhere strictly to its policy of nonviolence. For them to forget this is to injure their own cause.

The reaction of the British power to the tragedy of Ranpur was significant. Armed forces were brought from distant parts of India and a large concentration of troops in Orissa proclaimed the might of the paramount power. What were these troops supposed to do? There was no rebellion, no violent aggression. The starving peasantry fled at their approach and the state of Ranpur became an uninhabited wilderness. It is said that some trouble was feared from the backward jungle tribes, the Gonds. Was the British army in such numbers required to face the bows and arrows of these poor backward countrymen of ours? But the Gonds have done nothing and will not do anything aggressive unless they are goaded by intolerable misery. They have to be met gently and their grievances removed. But the way of imperialism is different.

It was not the possibility of any action by the Gonds that brought the armed hosts to Orissa. The troops came to overawe the peasantry of the states and to strengthen the rulers in opposing their demands. They were utilised to suppress the movement for freedom. This was an intervention of the most flagrant kind on behalf of the paramount power on the side of tyranny and corrupt administrations. Everyone knows that some of the states in Orissa are the worst and most degraded of their kind in India.

Quite apart from Ranpur and long before the murder of Major Bazalgette there, the tyrannical administrations of Dhenkanal and Talchar

had oppressed their people to such an extent that a great exodus had taken place from these states. From twenty to thirty thousand persons had crossed the boundaries of the states and entered the province of Orissa. A demand came from the rulers for the extradition from the province to the states of the leaders of this exodus, so that they might be made to suffer for their opposition to the state administrations. This demand was supported by the British authority. It was a demand which no Congress ministry could agree to without losing honour and betraying our comrades in the states and being false to our principles.

We do not wish to shield anyone who is guilty. We are perfectly prepared for a full inquiry. But the inquiry that is needed is an inquiry into the offences and maladministration and oppression of the Dhenkanal and Talchar state governments. It is these states' authorities that should be tried for the sorrow and misery that they have brought on their people.

The governments of the major states have been apt pupils in some ways of British imperialism. Among other things they have learnt the art of utilising communal differences to check popular movements. In Travancore a powerful people's movement is opposed and sought to be discredited on the plea that it is a communal movement, consisting mainly of Christians; in Kashmir the popular movement is called communal because it is largely Muslim in composition; in Hyderabad it is said to be communal because it is predominantly Hindu. The demands put forward on behalf of these several movements might be, as they indeed are, wholly national with no communal tinge or bias in them, but some excuse has to be found to discredit and oppose them and the plea of communalism is a useful one.

Hyderabad and Kashmir are the two premier states in India and we might have hoped that they would set an example to the other states by introducing free institutions and responsible government. Unhappily both are exceedingly backward politically and socially. Hyderabad is a predominantly Hindu state with a Muslim ruling class; Kashmir is predominantly a Muslim state with a Hindu ruling class. Both thus present the same type of problem, and both have the same background of extreme poverty among the masses, illiteracy, industrial backwardness and undeveloped resources. In painful contrast with this general poverty and wretchedness, the rulers of both are probably the two richest individuals in India. Kashmir is slightly more advanced politically as it has a kind of legislative assembly, but this has little power, and the ordinances that obtain there are monstrous in their severity. In Hyderabad we have probably the lowest level of civil liberty in India, and latterly attention has been drawn to the prohibition of even certain religious ceremo-

nies. This low level in Hyderabad is not the reaction to any aggressive movement but has been for long the normal state of affairs.

It is distressing that in these two great states such conditions should prevail. It was natural that in both of them popular movements should grow up and spread to the masses. This took place in Kashmir first and later in Hyderabad. It was inevitable that such movements should affect the great majority of the population—the Muslims in Kashmir and the Hindus in Hyderabad. If, under the circumstances, they showed a certain communal tinge to begin with, it was not surprising. Even so, they did not cease to be popular movements representing the urge of the masses and their objective was a national one which would bring relief and progress to all. To condemn them as communal movements was to blind oneself deliberately to the facts, and for the minority groups in either state to lend colour to this condemnation was to injure their own cause. For this meant that the minority was opposed to freedom and progress and clung on to some petty special privileges which, it was thought, the present regime gave it.

As a matter of fact the two movements progressively developed on national lines, and in Kashmir, I am glad to say, a number of wise and far-seeing Hindus and Sikhs threw their weight on the side of the popular movement and supported the national demand which asked for responsible government. I am sure that in Hyderabad many far-seeing Muslims will do likewise. The leaders of these movements in both the states realise the extreme importance of steering clear of communalism and have tried to do so. They must not weaken at any moment in this or else they will injure their cause. The minorities must also realise that it is inevitable that responsible government will come to the states, and freedom will bring rich gifts for them as much as for the others. To oppose this struggle of the people or to be passive spectators in it is to prove unworthy of and false to the future that beckons to us all.

Because Hyderabad and Kashmir have essentially the same problem, though it has a different complexion in each, it should not be difficult to consider the two together and to offer the same solution, in so far as minority rights are concerned. That solution should be in keeping with the broad principles laid down by the Congress and must fit in with responsible government.

In Hyderabad a peculiar situation arose some time back which resulted in producing a certain confusion in the public mind. The state Congress was declared an illegal organisation although its activity was the perfectly peaceful and constitutional one of enrolling members and strengthening its organisation. But the state has been nurtured in the

traditions of the mediaeval age and even this was objected to and stopped. The state Congress thereupon justifiably refused to agree to this ban and attempted to carry on their activities. This involved peaceful satyagraha and hundreds suffered under it. About the same time or a little later a religious organisation and a communal organisation also started some kind of satyagraha. In the case of the religious organisation the reason was the banning by the state authorities of certain religious ceremonials and forms of worship which are commonly practised all over India. It is astonishing that the authorities should have taken this step which strikes at the root of religious liberty in India and goes counter to the professed principles of everyone. It was natural that this should cause resentment. But it was unfortunate that satyagraha should have been started on this basis at that time. This confused the issue and gave an excuse to the state authorities to put the demand for political freedom in the background.

After careful consideration of all the aspects of the situation the state Congress was advised to suspend its satyagraha so that the political issue might not be mixed up with communal and religious ones. The state Congress thereupon suspended their satyagraha. In spite of this the Hyderabad authorities had not the wisdom or the grace to release the satyagrahi prisoners or to remove their extraordinary ban on the organisation.

Unfortunately the communal and religious satyagraha was continued by the other organisations and the communal aspect of the question became intensified and conflicts took place in distant parts of India. Those responsible for it paid little heed to the consequences of their action, nor did they realise that a popular movement is an organic growth from below and cannot be artificially imposed from above. As a result of this the political movement for freedom has received a setback and the communal issue dominates the scene.

In Kashmir also the civil disobedience campaign was suspended last year to give a chance to the state authorities to retrace their steps and remedy some of the evils they had done. But they lack wisdom and grace also, and in spite of this suspension hundreds of civil disobedience prisoners, including the leader of the movement, Sheikh Muhamad Abdullah, continued in prison, and the infamous ordinance known as Notification 19-L as well as the Seditious Meetings Act of 1914 still function.

It is obvious that both in Kashmir and Hyderabad existing conditions cannot be put up with and if the state authorities continue to act in the manner they have so far done, a resumption of civil disobedience will become inevitable.

None of us wants conflict, but in this dissolving age conflict surrounds us at every step and the world rattles back to chaos and the rule of brutal violence. None of us wants this chaos in India for that is no prelude to freedom. Yet while we recognise that our strength grows, the forces of disruption and disintegration, of communalism and provincialism, of irresponsibility and narrow-mindedness also grow. We have to remember that British imperialism, though weakening at its centre, is still a formidable opponent and freedom will have to be purchased by many a struggle. Neither we nor anyone else in the world can view the future light-heartedly, for the present is full of sorrow and disaster, and the immediate future of the world is wrapped in gloom. Yet in India there are gleams of hope though dark clouds surround us. The brightest of these rays come from the newly awakened people of the states. We who presume to shoulder the burden of their struggle have a heavy responsibility, and it will require all our courage and our wisdom to discharge that faithfully. Strong language will not help us; it is often a sign of weakness and a substitute for action. It is action that is demanded today, wise and effective action which takes us speedily to our goal, controls the forces of disruption, and builds up the united India of our dreams.

Petty gains and advantages may lure us from time to time, but if they come in the way of the larger objective, they must be rejected and swept away. In the excitement of the moment we may feel inclined to forget our principles; if we surrender to this inclination, we do so at our peril. Our cause is a great one, so must our means be above reproach. We play for high stakes, let us be worthy of them. Great causes and little men go ill together.

The freedom of the people of the states is a big enough thing, yet it is part of the larger freedom of India, and till we gain that larger freedom, it is struggle for us. If the federation is imposed upon us, we shall fight it and sweep it away. Wherever the British power intervenes against the people in the states, we shall have to face it. The time approaches when the final solution has to come—the constituent assembly of all the Indian people framing the constitution of a free and democratic India.

The States People's Conference has done good work in the past, but this has been only a fraction of the work it might have done. It must now turn to the efficient organisation of all its activities, so that it might become a clearing house for all that pertains to the states, and a source of help and inspiration to all our comrades in the struggle. It must help in building up praja mandals or people's organisations in the states. It must take care to steer clear of all communalism, and it must, above

all, remember, and make others remember, that nonviolence is the basis of this struggle.

It is our great good fortune that in this struggle we have the backing of the National Congress and the support of its leaders. Most cheering of all is the thought that we have Gandhiji to guide us and inspire.

13. Police Firing in Orchha State[1]

For the authorities in the states to shoot and kill and belabour their subjects is becoming a common enough occurrence in India. But the news of the recent incidents near Mau Ranipur in Jhansi district where the police of Orchha state indulged in these normal state activities has a special significance.[2] It is reported that they crossed the border and entered Jhansi district and fired at people there. This is a very serious matter, and I trust that the U.P. Government will take suitable action.

It is also said that it is a common practice for Orchha troops and police to go from one part of their territory to another, crossing Jhansi district in the process. They have no business to do so except for peaceful purposes. If they declare war on the people of the state, they can expect no facilities from the U.P. Government. In this event, if troops or police cross the border they should be treated as foreign belligerent troops and disarmed and interned.

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 18 February 1939. *National Herald*, 19 February 1939.
2. Congressmen of Jhansi district were chased out of the state, lathi-charged and fired at on 16 February 1939 when they organised a protest meeting against the suppression of Congress activities and imposition of heavy land customs and forest taxes.

14. Repression in Orchha State[1]

I have just seen the statement issued by the political and judicial secretary of Orchha state.[2] The criticism I made previously was not made casually but after inquiry by four responsible persons who were specially asked by us to investigate the matter. Since then Mr. Bhagwat Narayan Bhargava, advocate of Jhansi, and others have, at the instance of the provincial Congress committee, conducted a detailed inquiry, examining many witnesses on the spot.

The conclusion they have arrived at is that the police of Orchha state did fire at various people beyond the border and in Jhansi district and caused injury to them. If this is correct then manifestly the Orchha authorities or their police have committed a grave breach which raises important questions of principle.

The political secretary of Orchha states that the Congress volunteers from the boundary villages in Jhansi have been making forced entries into the state with lathis and other weapons. No authorised Congress volunteers or other Congressmen have any business to do so as this is against Congress policy and practice. If any people have done so they have acted contrary to our instructions and we do not support them in any way.

The provincial Congress office has issued and is issuing again clear directions that no *jathas* or groups should cross the border in defiance of the orders of the state authorities and we shall do everything in our power to prevent even the indiscipline of individuals.

The political secretary talks of retaliation. The question was that the Orchha state troops or police should not enter Jhansi district for warlike purposes and if they do so, they should be disarmed.

Does Mr. Shukla intend to use the roads of Jhansi district for such purposes?

15. Firing in Jaipur[1]

Over a month ago a tragedy took place in the city of Jaipur which has attracted less notice in India than it deserved. On January 27 as a result of firing by the armed police over twenty (some say thirty) persons were killed and a hundred or more were wounded. Conflict had arisen over a demand by the local Muslims for the widening of a staircase leading to a mosque. I am not concerned for the moment with the merits of this conflict but it is an undoubted fact that heavy firing took place resulting in great loss of life. In such cases the first duty of the state is to have an impartial inquiry but no such inquiry has been held so far.

About ten days ago Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and I requested Pandit Srikrishna Datt Paliwal, M.L.A., and Dr. Mohammad Ashraf to visit Jaipur and give us first-hand information of this matter. They were good enough to go and we are now in possession of their report.[2] This report, drawn up after a brief stay, cannot be considered a final report but it gives enough facts to warrant a searching inquiry. It was suggested that some eminent jurists might be sent to Jaipur to conduct such an inquiry and I telegraphed to the Prime Minister of Jaipur requesting his cooperation in the matter. From his reply I gather that he does not approve of any non-official inquiry.

It should be remembered that this conflict was not a clash between Hindus and Muslims. Indeed Hindus are said to have given shelter to large numbers of Muslims on the day of the firing and I believe help is being given now to the many sufferers. The need for this help is very great and I hope that the praja mandal, busy as it is, and others will give full assistance in this relief of suffering.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 4 March 1939. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 6 March 1939.
2. The report said that the demand for widening the staircase of the Jama Masjid was resented and when a Muslim priest tried to give expression to this dissatisfaction after the Friday afternoon prayers on 27 January 1939, the gathering was fired upon and the victims treated badly.

16. Conditions in Kashmir State[1]

I have only just seen a *communique*[2] issued by the Jammu and Kashmir Government purporting to reply to certain remarks I made at Ludhiana. I had stated that notification 19-L was 'monstrous' and that it still functions. I am told it is not used in normal times and that it was not even used to put down serious communal disturbances. I entirely agree. It is not used for murderers, thieves, kidnappers, dacoits, brigands, cut-throats or other criminals and scoundrels who are tried by the ordinary law of the land. It has not been used for communal fanatics even when they stab and kill. But when political workers, desiring political change, raise their heads then it is used and has been barbarously used and presumably will be used, or else the Kashmir Government would not keep it on. A law functions so long as it is on the statute book. Notification 19-L is on the statute book and was used recently enough. The penal code provides for the punishment of hanging for murderers. It is not necessary for a continuous series of hangings to take place in order to demonstrate that the penal code is still functioning. I repeat that notification 19-L is a monstrous imposition. It is bad enough that a government should father such a monstrosity, it is worse that it should have the temerity to justify it.

The Kashmir Government states that the civil resisters had forfeited all public sympathy. I cannot obviously speak from personal knowledge. But I should have thought that recent events proved the contrary. Seven members of the assembly were arrested because of their association with the agitation for responsible government. This led to seven vacancies and seven bye-elections. In every one of these bye-elections the party of the civil resisters won. In any event if the Kashmir Government is so certain of public support why not remove notification 19-L and put an end to the Seditious Meetings Act? Why not have a plebiscite?

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 4 March 1939. *The Leader*, 7 March 1939.
2. The *communique* of 25 February 1939 contended that ordinances were never used in normal times and as soon as the emergency disappeared, even the limited enforcement of certain laws was given up.

17. To Harekrushna Mahtab[1]

Allahabad
May 5, 1939

Dear Mahtabji,[2]
I wanted to speak to you about the Gangpur firing[3] but unfortunately we had no time in Calcutta. Since my return here I have discussed this matter with others, notably with a prominent Catholic man here. He was very keen that effort should be made for an inquiry to be held. I was told that many of the sufferers were Catholic converts among the backward tribes. Ultimately I decided to approach the Agent to the Governor General for permission to have such an inquiry. I sent the following telegram yesterday:

> Agent to Governor General
> Orissa States
> Cuttack
>
> Would be grateful if you will permit inquiry into Gangpur occurrences resulting in firing. Intend appoint Dr. D'Souza, retired judicial commissioner, Sind, Harekrushna Mahtab and Beltie Shah Gilani, ex-president, All India Catholic Conference. Would appreciate reply by telegram.
>
> Jawaharlal Nehru
> President States People's Conference

I hope you do not mind my suggesting your name because your association seemed to me to be essential. I do not know if this permission will be given. It seems to me rather doubtful. If, however, permission is given, I hope you and the other persons named in the telegram will agree to act. I shall let you know as soon as I hear from the Agent.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1899); joined the freedom struggle, 1921; Chief Minister of Orissa, 1946-50 and 1956-61; Union Minister of Industries and Commerce, 1950-52; Governor of Bombay, 1955-56.
3. Several persons were killed and many injured when police opened fire on 28 April 1939 to disperse the crowd which had collected to demonstrate against the arrest of some persons.

18. To the Agent to the Governor General, Orissa States[1]

Allahabad
May 5, 1939

Dear Sir,

I sent you yesterday the following telegram : . . .[2]

Today the telegraph office has informed me that the telegram could not be delivered as the addressee had left the station without leaving his address behind. This was somewhat surprising intimation as I should have thought that your office functioned even in your absence and, in any event, that my message could be forwarded to you.

I trust that this letter will reach you either in Cuttack or in Calcutta and that you will be good enough to let me have your answer soon. I shall be grateful to you if you will permit the three gentlemen named in the telegram to visit the scene of occurrence and enquire into the circumstances.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Not printed. For the text of the telegram see the preceding item.

19. Sarila State[1]

The little state of Sarila in Bundelkhand has witnessed recently unusual happenings, though they are not unusual in these days of awakening in the states and repression by the authorities. We understand that there has been a demand on behalf of the people for a remission of the revenue which bears heavily on them. As usual elsewhere, the condition of the peasantry is very bad. The state is surrounded by Hamirpur district and consists of nine villages only.

1. Editorial written at Lucknow, 21 May 1939 and printed in *National Herald*, 24 May 1939.

On the 12th of this month some school boys took out a procession with the national flag. They were beaten and dispersed by the police. Thereupon on the 13th further processions were taken out by the men and women of Sarila. The agency police were drafted in and they began to beat mercilessly both the men and women and to terrorise the villagers. On the 14th specially a big procession of men and women was mercilessly attacked by the agency police and as a result several men and women were badly injured. It is reported that the police entered the houses of some people also and beat them there. Some leading people have apparently been deported as a result of all this. A number of residents of Sarila have left their villages and are in a pitiable condition.

We do not know how far this uncalled for and brutal repression was caused by the state authorities or by the agency police sent there. We understand that the chief responsibility lies with the agency police. The raja of Sarila is a young man from whom much was expected, and it is unfortunate that he should be involved in the deplorable occurrences. We trust that he will put an end to this attempt at terrorising the people and will make peace with them. The agency police have no business to go there to oppress the people. What is urgently needed is a gesture of goodwill from the raja to remove the evil impression of the past few days' occurrences and to assure the people that they can live peacefully. Full freedom should be given to them to present their demands peacefully and their ordinary civil rights should be acknowledged. The economic question affecting the peasantry must be tackled immediately and relief given to them. The question of reforming administration, making it popular and representative, should follow soon after. In a small state like Sarila the example of Aundh is specially applicable.

20. To A. V. Thakkar[1]

Allahabad
May 30, 1939

Dear Mr. Thakkar,[2]
I have your letter of the 25th May.[3] I entirely agree with you that the state of affairs in the Orissa states is exceedingly distressing and deplorable. For many weeks past I have been agitated about the matter especially as I did not know how I could help. I knew that Gandhiji was taking a deep interest in the Orissa states and I hesitated to do anything which might come in the way of what he was doing.

Soon after the Gangpur firing I telegraphed to the resident for the eastern states suggesting an inquiry and even mentioned the names of three persons whom I intended to request to go there for the purpose. These three names were: Dr. D'Souza, retired judicial commissioner of Sind, Mr. Harekrushna Mahtab and Mr. B.S. Gilani, ex-president of the All India Catholic Conference. After long delay I heard from the resident to the effect that he did not consider such an inquiry necessary. I have written to him again on the subject and suggested that at least he might permit one of our representatives to go there and meet the people and help them.[4]

I entirely agree with you that Talchar and Gangpur are scandalous instances deserving of the fullest inquiry and action on our part. It is easy enough for me or anyone else to issue a statement on the subject but I was keen on doing something more. If you can suggest something effective I shall be grateful to you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1869-1951); Congressman of Gujarat; a prominent Harijan welfare worker and social reformer; member, Constituent Assembly, 1946-50.
3. He drew Jawaharlal's attention to the sufferings of the refugees in Talchar and the firing in Gangpur.
4. Letter not printed.

21. Conditions in Indian States[1]

Wrapped up as we are in a hundred problems and in manifold difficulties, do we overlook the tragedy that is being enacted from day to day in scores of Indian states? Yet there is no problem more vital for us, no tragedy more painful than this.

Rajkot has attracted a great deal of attention, and rightly so for Gandhiji was associated with it. It has somewhat overshadowed other states' struggles for a while. But we must remember that Seth Jamnalal Bajaj is still a prisoner in Jaipur, that in Bharatpur, satyagraha is going on, and in large numbers of states fierce repression is in progress.

Gandhiji made a generous gesture of goodwill by advising a suspension of satyagraha in the states and his advice was followed by the people. Not so by the authorities in the states, who, mistaking the gesture perhaps for weakness, have intensified their repressive policy. Political agents and residents carry on in a leisurely way as if it mattered little or nothing at all. How many scores of thousands of refugees were starving or how many others were being crushed by coercion! They made vague promises which they interpret in their own way. But the cup of sorrow and suffering is overfull and those who imagine that conditions are static will be painfully disillusioned.

Among all the states in India the Orissa states stand out today in their agony—Talchar of broken promises and wandering, starving refugees and Gangpur where large numbers were done to death and others driven to the jungles. It is astonishing that all this should happen and there should not even be a proper inquiry. I suggested an inquiry into the Gangpur firing by three very competent persons but the reply was 'no', because some private and departmental inquiry had already taken place. No one knows exactly what happened and all manner of horrible tales reach one's ears. How long will this intolerable burden and tyranny continue?

No one in India can forget the sufferings of these poor backward countrymen of ours, doubly oppressed by feudalism and imperialism. No one dare say that their freedom can wait till we are free. There is no freedom for us or for anyone in India so long as insolent and irresponsible power crushes the people of the states.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 30 May 1939. *National Herald*, 31 May 1939.

22. To G. M. Bakshi[1]

Bombay
June 2, 1939

My dear Bakshiji,[2]
I have your letter of the 24th May.[3] As far as I remember I replied to your previous letter and I certainly sent a reply to Sheikh Sahab. The information you had sent about the repression in Kashmir was sent on by our research bureau to the press and duly published. The research bureau is not supposed to issue comments as a rule and allows facts to speak for themselves. That is the right and dignified attitude for a research bureau. It was possible for me to issue a statement but, as I wrote to Sheikh Sahab, I was in a peculiar difficulty owing to various reasons and felt in no mood to issue statements of any kind. As you know what is happening in Kashmir is happening in a host of other states. Everywhere repression is in full swing and it is becoming urgently necessary for us to consider the whole situation. I dislike the idea of just protesting in a statement. At the same time I did not want to say anything which might conflict with Gandhiji's policy in regard to the states.

I can well appreciate what you tell me is happening in Kashmir. Exactly the same kind of thing is happening in many other places. It is very irritating and yet it is an inevitable development which need not worry us greatly. Such things are signs of a growing national movement which frightens the government.

I think that the advice Sheikh Sahab has given you, not to defy the ban placed on you till the session of the National Conference[4] is over, is a sound advice. It is a hard pill to swallow but in the larger interest of the movement it is not worthwhile for you to defy the order at this stage.

It is proposed to have a meeting of the constitution committee of the States People's Conference here in Bombay about the 17th June. I

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1919-1971); member, Kashmir National Conference; member, Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, 1951-67; Prime Minister, Jammu and Kashmir, 1953-63; member, Lok Sabha, 1967-71.
3. He wrote about repression in Kashmir.
4. In June 1939, the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference changed its name to All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. Its aim was achievement of representative government.

hope that Sheikh Sahab will be able to come, though the distance is great.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

23. Greetings to the Kashmir National Conference[1]

I send greetings to your conference and trust that it will base itself on nationalism and help in bringing freedom to all people in Kashmir.

1. Telegram to Sheikh Muhamad Abdullah, Bombay, 8 June 1939. All India States People's Conference File, 1939, p. 3, N.M.M.L.

24. The Demand of Responsible Government[1]

In my opinion the lowering of demands should never mean giving up the demands. I will not mind postponing the demand of responsible government for the time being, but the postponement should be only for a short period. In my opinion, that period should not exceed two or three years. If we postpone this demand for the time being, then we should struggle more for the fulfilment of the preliminary demands of civil liberty, and of the right of organising the people, so that they may be able to run a responsible government.

Whether the workers on whom the notices have been served should be present before the court, I cannot give any definite answer as I am not in a position to know the local conditions clearly. However, I shall

1. Report of a talk with representatives of the Kolhapur Praja Parishad, Bombay, 11 June 1939. From *The Hindustan Times*, 13 June 1939.

study the matters presented before me in detail. The lull and despondency which is now in evidence in the states' movement is only a passing phase. There is, however, a need to work with vigour and create enthusiasm among the people during this period.

25. To Jaipal Singh[1]

Bombay
June 21, 1939

Dear Mr. Jaipal Singh,[2]
I have your letter of the 14th June.[3] The Gangpur tragedy was a horrible affair and one of the worst that we have had. The very least that should have been done was to have an impartial inquiry. As president of the All India States People's Conference, I intended appointing a commission of inquiry and even suggested the names of the eminent persons. I communicated with the Agent or resident who refused to give permission for it to go to Gangpur. I have had a long correspondence with the Agent. Then I suggested that at least we should be allowed to send one representative to help the sufferers. Even this was refused.

I do not know what the Congress will do or can do under the present circumstances. All I can do is to write in the public press.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. All India States People's Conference File, 1939, pp. 4-5, N.M.M.L.
2. (1903-1970); tribal leader and sportsman; member, Lok Sabha, 1952-70.
3. In his letter of 14 June 1939, Jaipal Singh had drawn Jawaharlal's attention to the firing in Gangpur.

26. Gangsterism in Limbdi[1]

Limbdi has become symbolic of a new technique on the part of some of the rulers.[2] It is a technique which is spreading in Kathiawar and elsewhere. This is a technique of the states encouraging gangsterism, dacoity, and brutal violence by private individuals or hirelings on the people who are engaged in the states people's struggle. This behaviour is bad enough at any time or anywhere. Where it occurs, it is a sure sign of the utter incompetence and bankruptcy of the state authorities. Where a state cannot stop this, it has ceased to function and has lost all claim to the cooperation or allegiance of its people.

But what shall we say to the state which itself encourages this disgusting brutality and goondaism? What shall we say of Limbdi which has exhibited this?

We have much to say and words are feeble vehicles for our thoughts. But we shall say it in other and more effective ways when the time comes. Let no man imagine that violence and gangsterism will suppress a people's movement.

I send my greetings to the people of Limbdi, and I want to assure them and all the people of the states that in spite of the present-day sorrow and distress, the future is theirs, and for that future, we have to work, and will work with all determination and confidence.

1. Message to the people of Limbdi, Bombay, 22 June 1939. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 24 June 1939.
2. On 19 February 1939, organised attacks, inspired by the state authorities, were made on the office of the praja mandal and the houses of the workers.

27. Facts about the Indian States[1]

The problem of the Indian states has come to the forefront in Indian politics and it is everywhere recognised that an urgent solution of it is necessary. It is not only the problem of 582 political units in India but

1. Foreword to the series of pamphlets issued by the All India States People's Conference, Bombay, June 1939. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

of scores of millions of people who inhabit these areas, and the human side of it, though often forgotten, is the most important. The Congress has repeatedly affirmed, and there can be no denial of this, that the states are inseparable parts of India and their fate is bound up with the fate of India as a whole. From the point of view of the Indian struggle for freedom therefore, apart from other reasons, the states cannot be ignored.

There is today a great deal of argument about the states and the newspapers are full of accounts of popular movements and official repression. It is well known that politically and economically the states are very backward and many of them are still in the feudal age. A great part of their revenues goes to support the princely houses that rule over them and only a small fraction is spent on the advancement of the people. All this is known vaguely but of detailed knowledge and accurate information there is a singular lack. All of us have heard of the score or so of well-known states but we are completely ignorant of the hundreds of others. What are they? Where are they? What happens within their borders? A thick veil covers them and even prying eyes may not peep in. These states themselves dislike publicity and discourage visitors, except those superior persons who go occasionally to join in vast organised slaughter of inoffensive animals.

If we are to consider the problem of the states scientifically and methodically, we must have facts and data. Mere sentiment is not enough. What are the states? What are their populations, areas, and revenues? How did they begin, and what are these treaties which have suddenly become so important? How many treaty states are there, and what of the others? What are the administrations like, and where does the money go? These and like questions arise and we can only answer them by collecting facts.

The purpose of this series of pamphlets, issued by the research department of the All India States People's Conference, is to place such facts before the public. There is nothing new about the facts, but so far they have been buried in official reports and other somewhat inaccessible books. It is hoped that this simple presentation will be found helpful in understanding the fundamentals of the problem. Argument can then proceed on a sounder basis.

The first pamphlet deals with the populations, areas and revenues of the states. This simple information, as the reader will discover, is itself extraordinarily revealing. Other pamphlets will follow.

28. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
July 1, 1939

My dear Krishna,
I returned last night from Bombay after just a month's absence. I shall be here only for a few days before I go to Ceylon, that is if war breaking out does not upset my programme. Last night the *National Herald* people from Lucknow telephoned to me your long message to them. It was ominous. We shall await developments. If war comes, probably there will be an immediate meeting of the Working Committee and I shall attend it. The Government of India Act Amending Bill, I suppose, is not going to be passed just yet.

There is one matter about which I have been specially asked to write to you. With war imminent, it seems rather unimportant. Still, I must keep my promise, and it has certain importance of its own. This relates to Hyderabad state, which, as you know, is terribly backward and feudal. Unfortunately it has got the goodwill of the Muslims generally in India because it is a big Muslim state and gives employment to the Muslim middle class. It keeps the moulvis on its side by paying them monthly allowances and giving grants for mosques, etc. Recently it gave a lac of rupees to the Hindu University. Behind this apparent generosity is the dead hand of feudalism. A political movement was developing there last year and civil disobedience was started. Immediately the state called it a communal movement and tried to crush it as such. Unfortunately the Hindu Sabha taking advantage of the situation started satyagraha on their own account, thus making it easy for the state to lay stress on the communal character of the political movement. Inevitably such a movement is predominantly Hindu there, as 85 per cent of the population is Hindu. The services are almost entirely Muslim in the upper ranks and the Muslims are led to believe that they are the ruling race. Owing to the communal situation in India, we advised the political leaders of the state not to get mixed up with the Hindu Sabha or Arya Samaj satyagrahas. We tried hard to get the two latter withdrawn so as to leave the field clear for the political issue. But we did not succeed. Then we advised the political movement to be suspended to prevent it from becoming entangled with the communal one. This was suspended.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

The Hindu Sabha and the Arya Samaj however continued their satyagraha. The former does not count but the latter assumed all-India proportions. The satyagraha was carried on as a protest against religious disabilities imposed on the Hindus generally and specially on the Arya Samajists. There is no doubt that there are these disabilities and the Arya Samaj have a good case, though they would have done better if they had not indulged in satyagraha. Their answer is that for the last five years they have done their utmost to get the disabilities removed without any result.

Thus the Arya Samaj satyagraha has been going on for many months now and about 12,000 persons are in prison. Those in prison have been treated very badly and all kinds of stories of atrocities have come to us.

Our general attitude has been of disapproval of the satyagraha but of sympathy with the grievances of the Arya Samajists and of course of condemnation of the jail atrocities. We have, however, to be cautious about this matter as it has definitely become a communal issue. I have been asked if it is possible to get something done at the English end in regard to this, such as questions in Parliament or other kinds of publicity.[2] This publicity would include of course the general backwardness of Hyderabad state and the utter lack of civil liberty there. I have referred these people to you and probably you will hear from them directly. If any expenditure is involved in this they are prepared to pay a reasonable sum per month. Perhaps you could suggest some competent person to them to deal with.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

2. Krishna Menon replied on 13 July 1939: "the matter has already been messed up at this end. Hitherto on questions concerning the Indian states parties with money have come here and placed themselves in the hands of people who have made use of them. Till now it has been mostly to advance the cause of a prince. The states people have also been at times exploited." He added that the question was further complicated by giving it a communal aspect.

29. The Future of the People in the States[1]

The Indian states have to face today a very difficult situation and each state has its own problems. Recent developments have somewhat disheartened many of our comrades in the states. But there is no sufficient reason for this. In all great struggles there are bound to be ups and downs. It is only gradually that training and experience come to large numbers of people. We are going through a period of hard training through the impact of events. Let the people of the states profit by this and prepare themselves for the future.

The statement issued by the standing committee surveys the whole problem and endeavours to give a lead to the people of the states. They have undertaken a great risk and they must prove themselves worthy of it. Today may be full of difficulty but tomorrow is surely theirs and for that tomorrow they must prepare.

1. Message to *The States' People*, Bombay, 13 July 1939. *National Herald*, 14 July 1939.

30. Feudalism in Hyderabad[1]

Though the grievances of the subjects in all the different states are not the same, the fundamental system of administration is similar, and naturally the States People's Conference has to go deep into the feudal and semi-feudal system of administration which is generally found prevalent in almost all the states.

Unfortunately, this important aspect which is common to one and all the states has not been receiving sufficient attention at the hands of the states people's workers in different states. Their attention is generally drawn towards lesser grievances. The States People's Conference

1. Interview to the press, Secunderabad, 15 July 1939. From *The Hindustan Times*, 16 July 1939.

organisation has very recently established a research bureau to collect sufficient information and data relating to various Indian states to evolve a common policy which can be a sort of guide to the people of all the states.

As regards the attitude which the state Congress should adopt if the Nizam's government is not going to include grant of responsible government in its future reforms scheme, I cannot say anything about this unless I have full particulars with me. Much will depend upon the strength of the local Congress organisation, and there are several indeterminable factors which have to be taken into consideration before any action is taken. The Hyderabad State Congress should not surrender its ideals, but I would not mind if the name of the organisation is changed.

7

THE CONGRESS ORGANISATION

1. Bogus Membership[1]

The resolution of the Working Committee on Congress membership is of the utmost importance.[2] If we are to face the great struggle ahead of us, we cannot do so unless we are a disciplined, well-knit organisation, conscious of our purpose and intent on achieving it. A large membership is welcome but bogus and unreal members weaken our organisation. Therefore we must purge ourselves of them.

This is not a question of pushing forward one policy or another but laying a secure foundation for any effective policy. We may pass some resolutions by temporary majorities but when it comes to action, only real members count. We must, therefore, prepare for action so that in this disordered and ever-shifting world, India may stand strong and prepared for all eventualities.

Our outlook also must undergo a change. We are no longer a crowd of people, who shout, condemn and bemoan our lot. We shall condemn, of course, where condemnation is necessary, but we have to speak with dignity and authority as becomes our great organisation and the future of India, that beckons so insistently to us.

I trust, therefore, that all Congress committees will cooperate wholeheartedly with this resolution of the Working Committee and purge the Congress of the unreal elements. I am glad that, in this matter, the United Provinces Congress Committee had already given a lead[3] and the Working Committee has welcomed this and largely adopted the lines laid down by the United Provinces.

1. Statement to the press, Wardha, 16 December 1938. *The Hindu*, 17 December 1938.
2. Complaints were received by the Working Committee from various parts of the country about Congress committees maintaining membership registers containing fictitious names. The Working Committee asked the provincial Congress committees to scrutinise all membership registers by 31 March 1939 and rectify errors in membership.
3. To eliminate fictitious membership, the U.P.P.C.C. had introduced a register of voters other than a register of four-anna members and the voters were required to present themselves at the Congress office for registration.

2. The United Provinces Congress[1]

The resignation of the provincial Congress executive[2] at Ayodhya received a considerable measure of publicity in the press. This was natural, and yet perhaps the significance of it was hardly realised by most people. It did not obviously represent a split in the provincial Congress, nor did it take place because of ideological differences. There are various groups in the P.C.C., some with an ideological background, some unhappily based on personalities. But no party or group was involved in this resignation. The question at issue was an important one but not a vital one, and no question of principle was at stake. Ordinarily there would have been no resignation.

Why then was this resignation offered? Because the council felt that in the interests of the Congress the time had come when our proceedings should be conducted with a full appreciation of reality and responsibility. The Congress has been for these many years an agitational organisation and it has inevitably developed this background. The demand of a purely agitational organisation is for things it wants, and sufficient attention is not always paid to the manner of getting them or to their fitting in with other demands.

Gandhiji, however, brought an element of reality to the Congress nineteen years ago and we were progressively made to think in terms of action rather than of words and demands. When action was to follow we had to be careful of our words. A measure of responsibility was thus thrust upon us.

The Congress grew in power and its influence extended to millions. By a decision it could shake up the whole country, launch civil disobedience, or start a no-tax campaign. This was a terrible responsibility for those who had to shoulder it. For fear of shouldering such a responsibility some organisations or people give up all thought of effective action and confine themselves to vague and high-sounding words. They become static and divorced from reality. The Congress could not possibly do that; it had to be dynamic if it was to fulfil its historic mission. It continued to function effectively on the plane of action, but it did so

1. Allahabad, 6 January 1939. *National Herald*, 10-11 January 1939. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 136-143.
2. The executive council of the U.P.P.C.C. resigned on 29 December 1938 following the decision of the P.C.C. that members of legislatures were to be debarred from membership of Congress committees.

with a full sense of responsibility. It tried to coordinate its dynamic character with the responsibility which its strength and vast influence thrust upon it.

With the coming of the Congress ministries new problems arose; some of them are of a kind to which the Congress was not accustomed. There was danger of its playing second fiddle to the ministries, of losing its revolutionary approach to national problems, and accommodating itself to the *status quo*. There was an equal danger, on the other side, of a continuous agitational interference with the provincial governments, resulting in a total inability of those governments to keep pace with the demands made upon it. A growing discordance would have taken place and the governments could not have survived, even when there was no deliberate intention of ending them. The only proper course for the Congress was to retain its dynamic character and its revolutionary approach, and yet at the same time to function with full responsibility so as to avoid discordance. The Congress governments had on their part to bear in mind the real objectives of the Congress and to do everything in their power to work in line with the organisation outside.

Right at the beginning, when the Congress ministries were formed, the Working Committee took care to clarify this position. They laid stress on the great importance of work outside the legislatures, and desired the full cooperation of the Congress governments and parties in the legislatures with the provincial Congress committees. They appointed a parliamentary sub-committee to coordinate our activities and supervise parliamentary work.

We have had eighteen months of this now and the mere fact that we have functioned with a measure of success is evidence that we have been adapting ourselves to the new conditions. That adaptation has not been complete nor has the success been as heartening as some of us had hoped. But considering all the circumstances and the inherent difficulties of the problem, we have done fairly well and laid the foundations of greater success.

But while that full success still lingers, difficulties encompass us. They do not frighten us for we have accustomed ourselves to crisis and difficulty and we shall face them in the present and in the future, as we have done in the past, with a stout heart and with courage and responsibility. The fact that there are many newcomers within the Congress fold, some attracted by the lure of advancement, makes it all the more incumbent on us to hold fast to our anchor. We shall only do that if we remember our basic principles, and consider everything with a full sense of responsibility and a realisation of the consequences of our words and deeds. We dare not speak or act irresponsibly. Those who decide on a course

of action must shoulder the burden of carrying it out or else the power to decide and the power to give effect to that decision will be divorced from each other, and this will result in disintegration and chaos.

It was this fundamental problem that was before the provincial executive council when it decided to offer its resignation. This problem will ever be with us and our future progress depends on our solving it satisfactorily.

Let us remember what the Congress is today, what privileges it has, what responsibilities accompany them. Those privileges will fade away if we are forgetful of our responsibilities. We have to view each problem in its larger setting, so that one false step in a particular direction might not upset the balance of our struggle. Ours is an organic movement, as all vital movements are, and our advance forward must be a planned advance keeping all the factors in view.

It is in this light that we have to consider each one of our problems —independence, Indian states, kisans, workers, industry, minorities. It is from this viewpoint that we must build up our Congress organisation.

II

The Congress has within its fold many groups, widely differing in their viewpoints and ideologies. This is natural and inevitable if the Congress is to be the mirror of the nation. But the Congress would cease to be an organisation and a movement if there was not a common purpose and a common discipline binding together these varying groups and millions of individuals. That common purpose has been from the early days political freedom, and to that we have added progressively economic and social freedom. But while there is unanimity about the former, there is disagreement about the content of the latter, though the principle has been fully accepted. And because of this disagreement tension arises and different methods are pursued. Yet it is clear that we must not permit this tension to increase to the point of endangering the common purpose of the movement. As has been repeatedly stated, the basic problem of India today is the integration of the political and the social movements. Without that neither can go ahead and each will founder. Those who in the enthusiasm of the moment forget this injure their own as well as the wider cause.

People will differ, of course, and should differ in a vital movement. It is not difference of views that I have in mind at present, but the fact that every such viewpoint must be held and expressed with full responsibility and acceptance of the consequences of giving effect to it. It must be considered in relation to the totality of circumstances.

The Congress organisation has grown to vast dimensions, and, because of this, greater responsibilities have been cast upon us. We can legitimately take pride in our achievement, but we dare not grow self-complacent. It should be our function, even more than that of our opponents, to criticise ourselves and to probe out our weaknesses and seek to remove them. It is with this purpose in view that the Working Committee has laid great stress on purifying our organisation.

Our provincial Congress committee has not waited for instructions from the Working Committee in this matter. We have, for a year or more, given earnest consideration to it and have already made many changes in our constitution in order to make our organisation more efficient and to root out any element of corruption from it. Last year we established a kind of Congress civil service consisting of persons who were pledged to keep away from election to any Congress committee. They were to be our permanent staff of office secretaries, inspectors, organisers, and auditors, above party strife, and carrying on all routine activities with efficiency and impartiality. Every district and city committee, and of course the provincial committee, was enjoined to keep them and we have, I believe, nearly forty members of this national service now. This in itself has resulted in greater efficiency and to some extent in keeping out party activities from the routine work of our various offices.

Other changes followed. The vital change of having a register of voters other than a register of four-anna members. Only such of the latter as take the trouble to go personally to the Congress office to register themselves can vote. This procedure not only helps in eliminating bogus and fictitious members, but also increases the political consciousness of the people. Qualifications for members of all executives were also raised and, in particular, regular national work was made compulsory for them. We have also constituted a provincial election tribunal,[3] thus separating, to a large extent, the judicial and executive functions within the organisation. These are some of the major changes made and we shall watch with interest how they work. It may be that further changes are necessary in order to tighten up our organisation and make it a more efficient fighting instrument in the cause of Indian freedom.

3. The P.C.C. elected every year a provincial election tribunal which in turn appointed district tribunals as provided under the Congress constitution. The provincial tribunal received appeals from district tribunals relating to disputes about enrolment and elections. The Congress Working Committee could receive appeals from the provincial tribunals.

The lead that the United Provinces gave was approved of by the Working Committee and other provinces have been asked to follow it. This is gratifying for us, but it means also that we must make every effort to keep up to the mark. This can only be done with the willing cooperation of our members and workers. The past year's work, in spite of many difficulties and novel situations, was a record of successful achievement. The test of this is not the membership of fourteen and a half lakhs, gratifying as that is, but the efficiency of our provincial and other offices and the discipline of our organisation. Our provincial office has grown and the president and secretaries and others connected with it deserve commendation for their hard and unselfish labours. We must remember also that all this work of a vast organisation is carried on almost entirely with the income derived from the four-anna membership. We depend on no contribution from the rich. This itself is a sign of our strength and popular basis.

The U.P. provincial Congress has two special features which are not found elsewhere. During the last nineteen years, so far as I can remember, no appeal has come from the U.P. to the A.I.C.C. on any election or other matter. This is remarkable as the A.I.C.C. office is flooded with appeals and complaints from other provinces. But we imposed this self-discipline on ourselves and decided to consider our provincial decisions as final. By that we have stood all these years.

The second feature is still more interesting. We have deliberately sought to increase the prestige of our impersonal organisation and not of individuals. For us our provincial committee or its council have counted, not individual office-bearers of it, howsoever eminent. Of course, personality counts and individuals make a difference. But we have preferred laying stress on the democratic basis of the organisation and on its collective wisdom. Thus our presidents have been honoured leaders but their position has not been much more than that of a member of the executive council. They change from year to year, and last year we made a rule enforcing this annual change for every committee. Whoever is the president, the policy continues, as it is guided by the council.

In some other provinces the presidents of the provincial Congress committees have a much higher status and a more important position. They also continue in office year after year. This has some advantages, but I am sure that in the long run the U.P. convention is the sounder and builds up a stronger and more democratic organisation.

Today the real foundation of the Congress in the U.P. is the *mandal* committee, including in its fold forty or so villages. We have many subordinate committees under the *mandal* but effective and disciplined

organisation begins from the *mandal*. The rapid growth of these *mandals* in the province is a sign full of promise for us.

The year 1939 is upon us with all its horror and dismal prophecy of war and conflict. The problems that will confront us will grow more intricate and difficult, requiring all our courage and determination. We have to be vigilant and ever-ready, holding fast to each other and to our cause, not swept away by temporary success, not deterred by setbacks, and bearing ourselves with dignity in good fortune and ill fortune alike. To my innumerable colleagues in this province of ours, dear comrades in a noble enterprise, I send my greetings for the New Year and my earnest wishes that this year will be one of achievement for us.

3. Uncertified Khadi[1]

I understand that a number of uncertified khadi *bhandars* in the Punjab have not only most improperly adopted my name for their *bhandars* but also exploit me in other ways. As I have no copyright in my name I cannot prevent other people from using it. But I do object very strongly to these uncertified *bhandars* or their owners trying to justify themselves with a fancied reference to me.

When at the instance of Gandhiji the All India Spinners' Association raised the wages of the spinners and fixed a certain minimum living wage for them, I was in entire agreement with this policy. Khadi would have little virtue in it if it was based on sweated labour and the exploitation of the spinners. Therefore if khadi is to flourish, as we want it to flourish, it must be based on a minimum living wage scheme. Those *bhandars* which accept this scheme are certified. Those who do not accept it can obviously not be certified as they use sweated labour for the khadi they produce. It thus becomes the obvious duty of every person, who wants proper wage standards to prevail, to encourage only the khadi which is produced under the minimum living wage scheme. This means that we must only buy our khadi from certified *bhandars*. We cannot individually go about inquiring as to the wages of the spinners. But when we deal with a certified *bhandar* we can

1. Article printed in *Harijan*, 11 March 1939.

feel assured that we are helping the payment of proper wages to the producers. I hope, therefore, that all Congressmen and others who wish to encourage khadi will insist on using certified khadi.

4. The Tasks of the Congress[1]

Originally I had not intended to visit Cawnpore. In fact I do not intend to make tours as I want to attend to some other matters. I have, however, come to Cawnpore as I was pressed to do so. I regret I could not visit Cawnpore during the riots, which it was my duty to do; but the truth is that I did not know what I could possibly do by coming. The riots in themselves are not something very serious, but the atmosphere which they create is vicious in the extreme. We should all instead of feeling discouraged think about it gravely. We should not forget that we have to tackle many important issues and if we are discouraged or lose heart when confronted with those problems, we will not be able to do the real work for our country. The country has before it many difficult problems and what lies behind them is of even greater significance. We have to understand the nature of these problems and find solution.

The main problem which our country faces is that of the workers and the kisans. We have to distribute work and remove unemployment. Many elaborate resolutions have been passed in this connection. The U.P. Assembly for the last several months has been discussing one such measure which probably would soon be passed. In fact, it would have been passed long ago but for the obstructionist policy of the zamindars. I am afraid, probably the same policy may be followed in the legislative council. If the legislation is passed, I expect that some of the troubles of the kisans would be removed. This would strengthen the mass movement and also our organisation.

The big zamindars, coming from all parts of the country, met in a conference in Lucknow to oppose the legislation for the welfare of the kisans. Their cries will however be of no avail. If the kisans show the strength of nonviolent resistance and do not indulge in hooliganism, then the zamindar conference would be able to do nothing.

1. Speech at the Kanpur District Political Conference, Maitha, 9 April 1939. From *The Hindustan Times*, 12 April 1939.

The hardships endured by the kisans are numerous. To remove them we shall have to do a lot. It is for the smaller zamindars and the kisans to think whether the management of their lands on a *panchayati* basis would remove their troubles or not. It is true that this question is not before us at present, but wherever such an arrangement existed, it has all been for the good of kisans. This question is therefore bound to come up before us later.

When there was communal trouble at Cawnpore and a Shia-Sunni friction at Lucknow, it was natural that our minds should have strayed away from the consideration of bigger issues and got entangled in smaller ones.

These quarrels and clashes have nothing whatever to do with religion. Religion is used merely as an excuse to excite the people. All this is done in order to harm the kisans and the movement for Swaraj. If we let our minds get entangled in these quarrels, the purpose of those who are behind them would be served and our main work would suffer. In my view, the leaders of such disturbances are usually those people who are opposed to the kisans and the workers.

For the last twenty years we have been fighting our battle for freedom against the British. We should not forget this and stray away from our main task. We should, therefore, think about all these matters calmly and then take our decisions.

We owe our present strength to our organisation. The Congress which is our most powerful organisation derives its strength from the masses. It is this strength which enables it to fight the might of the great British Empire and shake it. We should therefore do nothing which would reduce this strength. Those who want to weaken the Congress do not in reality want Swaraj. It does not matter who they are and whether they belong to the Hindu Mahasabha or the Muslim League. Our main work, therefore, is to strengthen the Congress, which even today is invincible.

A large number of people have joined the Congress after seeing its growing power. A number of them are self-seekers. If the Congress has to become a fighting machine for Swaraj then all those who join it should do so to become soldiers and not the seekers of office. Quarrels have sprung up among us because we have removed our gaze from the main fight. It is not only in the lower ranks of the Congress that this is happening. It has infected the upper ranks also. The Congress *mandal* committees should, of course, be set up but not with a view to fight with the services. I feel sorry to say that the *mandal* Congress committees attach more importance to the quarrels with the services than they should. Of course, if it is found that some officer is tyrannical or

otherwise guilty, then his conduct should be reported to higher authorities. But it is improper that we should interfere in the day-to-day work of the officials. It has therefore been decided that no Congress official should interfere in these matters, and if he does so, an explanation should be demanded from him. It is unthinkable that we should turn a fighting organization into an office for receiving complaints against officials. The time has now come when we should march forward.

In the present-day world certain nations commit acts of loot and plunder vis-a-vis other nations. The British Government's attitude in these matters is a strange one. While it has repeatedly declared that it stands for peace, it has betrayed its friends whenever it has suited it. Probably, if we search the pages of history, we shall not come across more numerous instances of such betrayals as have occurred during the last eight months. We should regulate our own conduct after carefully watching the turn of world events and the conditions in our country. The resolution passed by the provincial Congress committee declared that the British Government wanted to further reduce the power of the provincial governments during the period of emergency. We should, therefore, be ready to oppose such a move.

The Congress volunteers should be ready to carry on a nonviolent fight. With this as our ideal we have changed the name of the Congress volunteers into that of Kaumi Seva Dal.[2] Members of this force should serve the country in one form or another by spreading out into the villages and towns even though it may be for a service as humble as that of cleaning a village.

2. The name of the Congress volunteer corps in Kanpur was changed from Kaumi Sena Dal to Kaumi Seva Dal by the P.C.C. The post of *senapati* was abolished and a network of volunteer organisations for serving the villagers was proposed.

5. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
April 18, 1939

My dear Krishna,

I have received a number of letters from you dated the 5th and 8th of April.

About the personal matters that you write to me, I can well understand what has been happening and can also appreciate how it must

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

have upset you. I am sorry that my name has been exploited in any way.[2] But, as I write to you previously, I have developed a habit of sending my good wishes to all and sundry, if they ask for them. A sheaf of them goes daily to all manner of people whom I do not know. I take the risk, as to err on the other side seems to be worse. You must not misunderstand this. Now that I know a little more of events at the other end I shall be more careful. Anyway, do not take these things too much to heart. I feel very tired myself with our bright young things and they have had a free run during the last two months. If you could see the kind of letters that I have got, of the continuous press campaign that has been going on, you will form some vague idea of how those who call themselves leftists (quite wrongly) behaved.

Indira has gone and will soon be with you. The doctors here were firmly of opinion that she should not stay in England for more than a week at the most and that she should go to Switzerland. Of course all this depends on the war situation. If war comes there is no point in her staying on in England for long. I am not afraid of the personal danger involved. But the whole situation will be too tense and exciting. I have suggested to her that in case of war she might gradually go to America. She might spend a few months there, if she wants to, and then return to India *via* China. I am providing her with some funds, but in case an emergency arises, I have asked her to get money from you. You will, I hope, be able to arrange this for a few days till I can send the amount.

I have received intimation about the payment of the second instalment of royalties on *Glimpses*. Also of £42 on the Lane royalties.

Did I write to you that Allen Lane was thinking of bringing out a Penguin book containing various essays of mine? I referred him to you. I think it might be easily possible to make a good selection now from the material with you. To that material you can add *Where Are We?*[3] and the Ludhiana address,[4] as well as odd articles like *The Choice Before Us*.[5] All this will be, for England, new material.

Regarding *Glimpses*, I have received about 350 pages of proofs. I have no intention of reading through them. For the moment I do not require more proofs. But it would be desirable to have two more sets for possible translators. I had hoped that the book would come out

2. Krishna Menon wrote that some Indians in Britain were obstructing his activities and using Jawaharlal's name and letters for this purpose.
3. See *post*, section 8, item 5.
4. See pp. 418-431.
5. See pp. 166-171.

early in the year but, from what you say, it will not appear before September.

About an addition to *Glimpses* to bring them up to date, my own idea was that this should be almost a bald narrative of facts. Anything more would mean writing a lot and making the last part disproportionately big. After all we are dealing with the world for some thousands of years. Long chapters on particular events of present-day importance will not fit in. For instance, I do not see how *Where Are We?* fits in, or a special chapter on Spain. Anyway, I suggest that you might send me a brief note, chiefly factual, for 6 months from November onwards.

Kitabistan are a curious lot. But there can be no trouble with them now as they have no further rights in it. I think Drummond had better stick to what I suggested, that is, to have Kitabistan's name in the Indian edition.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

6. The Internal Weakness of the Congress[1]

It is almost a year since I visited Cawnpore last. The year has been a momentous one. One seems to have lived in it not merely 365 days, but within a year it seemed as if the experience of many years had been crowded. And the changes have been so swift and so sudden as to seem bewildering.

I am glad to notice signs of awakening among the kisans, the workers and the others. But while doing so, I cannot merely content myself by seeing only one side of the picture. I would not be honest if I did not see the other side also, and having seen it did not give expression to what I felt or saw. I confess that the mind, however trained and disciplined, often feels bewildered when faced with the huge task of solving intricate problems. It would not be easy to untie the difficult problems confronting us—the problems relating to our own country and to other parts of the world. I would only dwell in passing on some of the outstanding problems.

1. Speech at Kanpur, 21 May 1939. From *The Leader*, 25 May 1939.

I am glad to notice that my countrymen are now instilled with a new courage. But I cannot overlook hard facts. We must admit that forces, both in and outside the Congress, are at work which tend to weaken the great organisation. I do not claim that the Congress is above criticism. There could be legitimate complaints against whatever happened in it as well as against the Congress ministries. In fact, I can criticise both more than most people. But mere criticism will not solve our difficulties. Mere complaints are idle and useless.

Over our country there still hangs the great darkness. The dawn is yet far off, and all that we see is only a faint glimmer. Over Europe there hangs a still darker night. But in our own country, if the Congress failed, an impenetrable night would close in all around us. It is true that our strength has so increased that no power of the British Empire can now check us from reaching our goal. But we must recognise that internally we have grown weak, and this has happened without Britain to blame. I wonder if we do not delude ourselves like the man who saw a flourishing tree, leaves glossy and smooth and the tree full of blossoms, and yet, unknown to him, the roots were being hollowed out and a canker ate into the very vitals of the tree. I cannot, however, bring myself to believe that such is the picture of the Congress. The Congress is a mighty tree nourished by the life-blood of innumerable people who made great sacrifices for their country. I would, therefore, ask you not to let yourselves be beguiled by a spirit of cavil or criticism, but to let your minds rest on deep and fundamental things. This is all the more necessary in a world where things move with lightning rapidity and there is a temptation to lose sight of things of basic value.

I have felt deeply hurt by the happenings at Cawnpore, Benares and Allahabad, resulting in communal clashes. I also feel deeply hurt by the Shia-Sunni strife at Lucknow. But even these happenings, painful as they are, do not fill me with despair. It is the fear that Congressmen are now losing sight of the basic issues that fills me with nervousness. In the past, despite criticism, Congress leaders never lost sight of the basic issues. They recognised that they must hold fast to them whatever may be the circumstances. I am doubtful how far Congressmen keep those basic ideas in mind nowadays.

Personally, I do not think it necessary to say much about the new group[2] formed by Mr. Subhas Bose. There are certain matters over which I agree with Mr. Bose, but there are also matters on which I disagree with him. Similarly, I agree on many questions with Mahatma

2. See p. 352.

Gandhi and disagree on others. I keep my eyes and ears open and do not blindly follow anyone. I do not question Mr. Bose's right to form his own group or organisation, but nothing should be done to create either a split in or weaken the great Congress organisation. Mr. Bose had also said the same thing, but, I am afraid, Mr. Bose's move would weaken the Congress. In a living organisation like the Congress, differences of opinion are inevitable and even in regard to principles, there can be differences, and I recognise groups based on these differences of basic principles. But where that is not so, principles are lost in personalities and groups tend to be formed not on the basis of any differences on principles but due to a clash of personalities. A discussion about basic principles is permissible and the public should be enlightened about these differences by such a discussion, but I deprecate any move to weaken the power of the Congress, as it would be harmful to the interest of the country.

I would also like to draw your attention to certain other important aspects of the situation which concern our own province. I feel happy to notice the awakening among the Muslims and the kisans. While some good has resulted from this awakening, bad results have also flowed from it, and there is a tendency for communal organisations to stray into wrong directions. Besides the evil of communal organisations, I have also noticed a tendency to break into groups or parties. There is mutual suspicion and distrust of tried public leaders. The strength of the Congress has been weakened by the enrolment of bogus members. I want in particular to draw attention to the atmosphere which pervades our country, and more specially Cawnpore. When I last came to the city the great labour strike was on. In Europe, I often received news how the strike was proceeding and I felt glad to hear of the labour victory, and more so of the disciplined way in which that fight was fought.

I would not enter into the details of this question. I notice, however, that the employers did not relish the workers' victory, especially as they felt that they had also the sympathy of the provincial government. Therefore, in a thousand ways, they tried to trouble the workers and embarrass the governments. But the workers had not been entirely blameless. They often went wrong and weakened themselves, forgetting that their adversary was strong and resourceful. They should therefore concentrate their energies on building up a strong organisation and not fritter them away on trifling issues. They should not forget that Cawnpore is an industrial city and anything which threatens its industry would harm the great city and the general public and ultimately themselves. My natural sympathy is with the workers, but with all

this sympathy for them, if they behave in an irresponsible manner, which they often do, or in an indisciplined way, they would not merely forfeit my sympathy but that of the general public also.

The decision of the provincial Congress committee did not alter any basic principle underlying the volunteer movement. It simply removed some misunderstanding. A sense of false pride and show had crept into the old Kaumi Sena. Its name and the designations of its officers had filled the latter with a sense of exaggerated self-importance. I do not like this. While I do not oppose the idea of a big national militia, I want at present that a volunteer should be a public servant, and I want millions of such volunteers enrolled in the province. I also want that these volunteers should be distinguishable from such other volunteers who belong to communal organizations. The volunteers still have to learn much, and I do not think it enough that they should merely be able to move with regular steps. What is most important is that they should be efficient and should be engaged in national service.

I approve of the idea of celebrating the political prisoners' release day in accordance with the appeal made by the Congress President. But I would like to ask how far it is consistent with our dignity that our young men should still rot in jails. Is it not a matter of shame that the Congress should not have had power enough to get these young men released? Nine years ago, in April 1930, a significant thing had happened at Peshawar. The Garhwali soldiers, who had been ordered to fire on the public, refused to do so. At least at nine places this thing happened. Of course, the soldiers were severely punished for disobedience of orders. Chandra Singh, the question of whose release attracted particular attention, was their leader and occupied a high position in the army. I personally met Chandra Singh on several occasions and was deeply impressed by him. His behaviour in jail was exemplary. All the jail officers had recommended his release. It was a pity that the Congress thought that he would be released on the basis of these recommendations and therefore made no effort for it. They should carry on an agitation not only in their own province but throughout the country for his release.

Neither criticism of the Congress nor turning away from it would be of any use in overcoming the difficulties with which the country is faced. The only way of doing it is to help the Congress. Those who betray

the Congress or do anything which weakens it, are traitors to the country.

7. Malpractices in Party Elections[1]

It is unfortunate that our elections should be run on party lines and on group tickets. Such parties have nothing to do with any principles and are entirely based on personal rivalries. In the higher committees of the Congress, questions of principle do arise, but in ward or city or like elections, no such principles arise and the only consideration should be the desirability of the candidate and his past record of Congress work. In group or party voting, each party's ticket contains both desirables and those who have no claims to elections but who are supported for purely party purposes. A peculiarly unfortunate feature, observable in Khuldabad and elsewhere, is the active interest taken by non-Congress elements in Congress elections. Municipal and city politics intervene in this way and undesirable people are thrust forward. Sometimes purely personal rivalries among non-Congressmen affect our elections.

The P.C.C. has framed new rules to prevent corrupt practices during our elections and these will no doubt result in some improvement. But it may be necessary to frame additional rules, and, in any event, existing rules are to be strictly enforced. Every breach of these rules, every misbehaviour at election time, must be severely dealt with. There has been far too much leniency in this respect in the past, and polling officers have allowed too great a latitude to the contestants.

One of the reasons for the great keenness shown in our *halqa* elections is the desire to reach the city and district committees through the *halqa*. A *halqa* committee consists of 21 members and this committee elects representatives to the city committee. Each party is anxious to have a majority in the *halqa* committee so that it may choose its own lot of six members for the city. Thus if one group has eleven members in the *halqa* committee and the other has ten, the former outvotes the latter completely, and the latter has no chance of sending even one representative to the city. This seems to me to be unfair. If party groupings are to function, and perhaps they are not wholly unavoidable,

1. Interview to the press, Allahabad, 30 May 1939. *National Herald*, 2 June 1939.

then it is desirable for this election, of the members of the city committee by the *halqa* committees, to be held by the system of single transferable vote (proportional representation). This is a complicated system but in a small election where the voters number 21 only there should be no difficulty whatever.

I suggest that this system be adopted by the P.C.C. for all such elections by *mandals* and *halqas*.

In considering the names of the candidates for the Khuldabad *halqa* committee, I have tried to ignore completely their party affiliations, and have paid attention only to their record of work. In many cases I had no sufficient information and had to decide on insufficient data. It is quite possible that I have erred in individual cases and left out people whose presence in the *halqa* committee is desirable. I am sorry for this but it really does not matter much. Those who are desirous of doing Congress work have always the opportunity to do so whether they are members of committees or not. Each *halqa* committee should welcome non-member Congressmen at its meetings and seek their cooperation in the work.

Unfortunately the keenness shown at election time is not reflected in subsequent work. This must be changed and every person who has the privilege to be elected to a *halqa* or a *mandal* or city or district committee must show a record of continuous work. I think that each such member should send a monthly report of his Congress activities, and those who have no Congress activities to their credit should resign and give place to others. The honour to be on a Congress committee is no empty honour and it carries with it a responsibility. If any person cannot shoulder that responsibility, it is better for him to retire from that position.

The city committee, as well as the *halqa* committee, should, whenever necessary, form special sub-committees to push our various activities. In these sub-committees non-members of the committees should be taken in to afford them full scope for work. Sub-committees can be formed for the enrolment of members, campaign for volunteers as well as for other purposes. Particular attention, I think, should be paid to developing the Congress volunteer movement.

A question has arisen as to how far the recent resolution of the P.C.C.[2] against those who have opposed Congress candidates in municipal or other elections, affects any of the candidates for Khuldabad.

2. The P.C.C. had debarred those who had opposed Congress candidates in the elections from standing for any office without special permission. It also assumed general powers of disciplinary action.

There are old-standing complaints against some Congressmen in the city who are alleged to have opposed Congress candidates in the 1935 municipal elections. Over two years ago I went into this matter and some disciplinary action was taken or warning issued. I think that so far as Allahabad city is concerned, it is not worthwhile, generally speaking, to have fresh inquiries in these old matters. In one or two particular instances it might be necessary. The *Suba Adalat* has, of course, full authority to do so whenever it chooses. I have not thought it necessary to consider this matter afresh so far as Khuldabad elections are concerned.

I should like, however, to say that the activities of a few persons are so intensely of a party character that the good that they do by their work is more than undone by these activities. They are capable of good work and they have done good work in the past. But when election time comes, they seem to lose all control over themselves and give a good deal of trouble. A Congressman, however good a worker he might be, is harmful to our cause if he cannot keep out of petty personal groupings which intrigue against each other.

In the selection I have made and which I give below, I have inevitably had to leave out some good names as the total number is limited. One name I should have liked to add to the *halqa* committee but have been unable to do so. This is Mr. Abdul Wahab's name. He has been connected with the Congress for many years and usually wears khadi, but not always. He frankly admitted to me that he sometimes wore non-khadi clothes. Under the rules I cannot overlook this lapse and so I regret that I cannot recommend his name. I hope that he will stick to khadi only, in future.

I should like to warn all other *halqa* committee members of this rule of khadi-wearing. This is going to be strictly enforced for all members of our elective committees.

I attach to this note the names of twenty one persons who have been selected for the Khuldabad *halqa* committee. They will constitute the committee forthwith and proceed to elect their office-bearers and their six representatives for the city committee. As I have indicated above, this election of six members of the city committee should take place by the single transferable vote. A very early meeting for this purpose should be fixed up by the returning officer of the city and he should preside over it himself. He should explain the method fully to the voters and make arrangements for voting in his presence. After collecting the voting papers he should adjourn the meeting. The counting and calculation necessary should be done by him later in his own office and the result sent to the president of the city Congress committee.

In view of what I suggest above, it is not necessary for the *Suba Adalat* to consider the matter of the Khuldabad election any further.

Certain objections having been taken to the election to the Khuldabad *halqa* committee, the matter was referred to the *Suba Adalat*. The *Adalat* decided to withhold the announcement of the result of the election till they had considered the reference to them. Their decision would have meant either a confirmation of the election already held or a setting aside of it and the holding of another election. The *Adalat* suggested, however, that it would be desirable to arrive at a mutually satisfactory arrangement among the parties concerned and thus avoid a decision by them on technical issues.

In compliance with this suggestion, I met various candidates and representatives of groups and discussed the matter with them. They were agreeable to having a committee to arbitrate. This committee was to consist of a representative from each of the two main groups with a neutral third member elected by the two. This committee was formed and Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani[3] was chosen as its third member. The committee encountered some difficulties and came to me for consultation. Later it was decided by the parties concerned that the matter be left to me for final decision.

I have gone into the matter carefully and conferred with a considerable number of local men who were interested in it. I have especially taken advantage of Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani's advice in the matter, and the decisions I have arrived at may be considered our joint decisions.

3. (1903-1974); married Acharya Kripalani, 1936; secretary of the women's section of the Congress, 1939; worked underground from 1942 till arrest in 1944; member, Congress Working Committee, 1947; General Secretary of the Congress, 1959; minister in U.P. Government, 1962; Chief Minister, U.P., 1963-64.

8. The Congress and Other Organisations[1]

It has been suggested that the words "or any other" be added after the words "communal". This widens the scope of the clause and it is possible that this new addition might be misused to some extent. I have therefore hesitated to agree to this change.

There can be no doubt that an organisation should have the power to keep out of its committees such persons as are engaged in activities opposed to the objective or policy of that organisation. It may also be necessary to apply this new rule to other organisations as suggested. I think that this power is inherent in an organisation and the Congress possesses it without express authority being given to it by the constitution.

There are in India today many disruptive tendencies and forces which might, unless checked, weaken the Congress internally. Logically, therefore, I appreciate the reason for the change suggested. But in the atmosphere of today such a change is likely to be misconstrued and may lead to wrong results. In my opinion, where action is necessary, it should be taken against individuals who have erred and this should be taken unhesitatingly. Action against organisations should be avoided as far as possible, though on rare occasions this may become inevitable. In any event nothing should be done to create the impression that opinions as such are being penalised.

1. This dissenting note was appended to the report of the constitution sub-committee of the A.I.C.C. which had recommended extension of the ban on communalists from election to the Congress elective bodies to those belonging to any "other" organisation. *National Herald*, 11 June 1939.

9. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Lucknow
July 7, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I am writing to you regarding the minorities problem and how we are trying to deal with it in the U.P. More especially I want to draw your

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

attention to certain difficulties that have arisen on account of the recent changes in the Congress constitution.

During the last two or three years the U.P.P.C.C. has paid a great deal of attention to this problem. We have not concerned ourselves so much with the wider national aspect of the problem, although we have naturally discussed this also. Mostly we have tried to grapple with the day-to-day aspects. It is true that in spite of our efforts, the situation has deteriorated and it may be said that there is more general ill will among the Muslim masses towards the Congress than there has been at any time in the past. Nevertheless, our record of work in this matter is not negligible. We have as our close colleagues in the Congress a considerable number of Muslims of position who have been doing Congress work with enthusiasm. Indeed we worked together not as Hindus or Muslims but as Congressmen. It has been a privilege to us to have this comradeship in all our work during these dark days of communal reaction. The Muslim membership on our rolls during the past year has been considerable. It is not possible to give the exact number but a rough estimate of one hundred thousand has been made for the U.P. I realise fully that such a membership does not mean very much. Yet it means something. It means that in spite of the aggravation of communal feelings among Hindus and Muslims alike and in spite of the intensive activities of the Muslim League in this province, we have a solid core of Congress-minded Muslims. This core includes, as I have stated above, some valued colleagues who have been and are a source of strength to the general Congress movement in the U.P. This fact has to be remembered, although there is no doubt that we have been unable to check the growth of communalism and anti-Congress feelings among the Muslim masses.

We have had various sub-committees trying to deal with this problem. Two or three months back we reorganised our work and put an end to mass contact committees and departments named as such. Instead we appointed a strong minorities committee consisting chiefly of leading Muslim Congressmen in the province as well as some Hindu, Christian and, I believe, representatives of the depressed class also. We started also Hindi and Urdu publicity departments. We wanted to avoid a communal nomenclature. We started a special office of this minorities committee in Allahabad in charge of Maulana Muhammad Mian Farruqui. This was in addition to their office connected with our P.C.C. office in Lucknow.

We are developing this office under the enthusiastic and able supervision of Maulana Muhammad Mian and various schemes for publicity and propaganda are being developed. This work is not being done in

any spirit of hostility to the Muslim League or any other organisation. Our object is not to raise controversies but to explain the Congress position and principles, to remove and correct errors, and to give some elementary political and nationalist education to the Muslims as well as to the other masses. We are appointing a number of inspectors and organisers also. I shall not however go into greater details of our work in this connection unless you require them. Our minorities department and Maulana Muhammad Mian will of course keep in intimate touch with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and seek his advice whenever necessary.

One of the problems we have had to face during the past two years especially has been the non-return of sufficient numbers of the Muslims or the Christians during our various Congress elections. We have no means to ensure a proper return. All we could do was to issue repeated circulars to various Congress committees in the province impressing upon them the necessity of giving due representation to the minorities. These circulars had some effect but generally speaking they did not produce much results. There was usually no feeling whatever against the minority candidates but elections were so keenly contested that the minority stood little chance. This was specially so in our rural elections, as Muslims and Christians are usually town-dwellers. The result was that there was a total absence of them from most of our rural *mandal* committees and only a very small number got into most of our district and town committees. The position was somewhat better in the northern districts where the Muslims formed a large part of the population in the towns. I am glad to say, however, that in our superior committee elections the Muslims on the whole did well, though even there I would have liked them to do better. There are a fair number of Muslims in our P.C.C. as well as in the executive of the P.C.C. and in the A.I.C.C. from the U.P.

During the last year, as I have mentioned above, we enrolled a large number of Muslim members but they were not elected to our district and town committees, apparently because the number of others increased greatly. We have been giving serious thought to it for some time past. Now owing to the new changes in the constitution, fresh difficulties have cropped up—the distinction between urban and rural having been abolished and constituencies made permanent. The result is that urban areas are likely to have less representation than rural areas. As the minorities are chiefly urban, they will be affected by this all the more and the poor chances they have so far had of getting elected to our committees will be lessened all the more. This is a serious matter.

Another point to be considered is that a Muslim who gets elected to a committee is not perhaps the best candidate in the area among the

Muslims. A better candidate gets defeated because he refuses to tie himself to the parties running the election. A nonentity who appears as a party man gets through. This of course applies to all Hindus and Muslims and would inevitably be an undesirable development of the democratic method.

We had a meeting of our minorities committee today where these various problems were considered at length and I was asked to bring them to your notice. I do not know what exactly can be done in this matter, especially now when the constitution has already been changed. That is for the Working Committee to consider. But there are some things which perhaps we can do in our own province so far as our various committees are concerned from the province to the *mandal*. We can introduce clauses in our constitution permitting of co-option of members to various committees up to a certain prescribed limit. So far as our district, city, town and *mandal* committees are concerned, I suppose this is entirely within our competence. So far as the provincial committee is concerned, this is formed by the body of delegates. We would like to have the power to co-opt to the P.C.C. also, such co-opted members of course not being made delegates to the Congress but only remaining members of the P.C.C. If this is possible for us, it might enable us to meet the present difficulty.

This process of co-option might not only help the minorities but also other important individuals who have been left out in these days of party politics. It is better than reservation of seats for a community or group which is objected to by most people largely on the grounds of principle.

We have appointed a constitution sub-committee to bring our provincial constitution in line with the new all-India constitution. This sub-committee can consider this matter also. Our final proposals will of course be sent to the Working Committee for their approval. But even before we do that we should like to have your advice as to whether the course I have suggested above is a right one.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

10. Indiscipline in the Congress[1]

We have observed many an all-India day for one thing or another. They have all been in accordance with the programme of the Congress as decided by the A.I.C.C. or the Working Committee or as desired by the President of the Congress. They have all been to demonstrate against our enemy and on behalf of the Congress as a whole. But it is for the first time that I have come across a proposal of Congressmen appealing to hold demonstrations against the Congress itself.

It is highly improper to organise protest meetings in this fashion against the decision of a parent body. All Congressmen should consider the seriousness of the lapse on the part of those organising such a protest meeting.

What would happen to the issue of indiscipline then? The question should be dealt with by the Congress on a certain future date. Nothing can be said about it at present except that it would, no doubt, be decided by competent authorities in the Congress.

Remember the unique position of the United Provinces which has produced a number of leaders, political, religious or otherwise, both among the Hindus and the Muslims. The Congress workers should maintain that tradition by observing strict discipline in the organisation.

The U.P. has till now never referred any of its grievances to the A.I.C.C. over the head of its P.C.C., while in other provinces this has been done in a large number of cases. It is, of course, not my intention to draw comparisons with other provinces. I, however, wish to draw your attention to some of the good qualities that the Congressmen in this province have so far displayed so that you may maintain the same during the present critical time when there is so much of indiscipline in evidence at several places in the Congress organisation.

If members of executive bodies do not intend to work honestly and sincerely then they should vacate their seats and make room for others.

I also wish to see quick and wide enrolment of members within the coming two months. I would also ask all members to attend monthly flag hoisting ceremonies without fail. For these a register will be maintained.

1. Speech at the Allahabad Town Congress Committee meeting, 10 July 1939. From *National Herald*, 12 July 1939.

8

THE TRIPURI CONGRESS AND AFTER

1. The Congress Presidential Election[1]

For the last ten days I have been somewhat isolated in the Kumaun hills where the newspapers reach me late and sometimes my information is derived from the news given on the radio. Under these circumstances I have no business to intervene in a controversy and, in any event, I had no desire to do so, but from the little news that has reached me, I feel that the presidential controversy has taken an unfortunate turn and wrong issues have been raised. I venture, therefore, to put certain matters before the public which might help to clarify the situation. I have so far not read the various statements that have been issued, except the Congress President's first statement.[2]

To begin with, I should like to make it clear that I am not making this statement in support of, or in opposition to, any candidate for the presidentship. Important as the presidential election is, it is a secondary matter. What is far more important is the policy and programme of the Congress. I have seen in the past that presidential elections do not make much difference to this policy which is ultimately laid down by the Congress itself or the A.I.C.C. A President can, however, make a difference in the carrying out of a policy and a Congress President is not, in my opinion, merely a speaker. May I also say that I am not opposed to an election contest and I think that when definite policies and programmes are in conflict, a contest is usually desirable and helps clarification.

What are the different programmes in conflict in this presidential election? There are many vital problems in India, but as reference has been

1. Statement to the press, Almora, 26 January 1939. *The Hindu*, 27 January 1939.
2. Following the withdrawal of Abul Kalam Azad from the Congress presidential contest, Subhas Bose, in a press statement on 21 January 1939, said: "In discussing this question all sense of false modesty will have to be put aside, for the issue is not a personal one. The progressive sharpening of the anti-imperialist struggle in India has given birth to new ideas, ideologies, problems, and programmes. People are consequently veering round to the opinion that, as in other free countries, the presidential election in India should be fought on the basis of definite problems and programmes so that the contest may help the clarification of issues and give a clear indication of the working of the public mind. An election contest in these circumstances may not be an undesirable thing."

made only to federation, I take it that there is no conflict in the presidential election in regard to the others.[3] Is there a conflict regarding federation? I am not aware of it and the Congress attitude is definite and clear. I gave expression to this attitude in unambiguous language in England and, in doing so, I was not merely expressing my opinion but that of the Working Committee. I took care to send full reports of what I said and did to the Congress President and the Working Committee and asked for directions.[4] I was informed that the attitude I had taken up in regard to federation met with the approval of the Working Committee and of Gandhiji. Since then the position has hardened considerably and it seems to me monstrous for any Congressman to think in terms of compromising on federation.

Is the growing struggle in the Indian states a prelude to our flirting with federation? We drift rapidly towards a crisis in India as in the world and it is in terms of this crisis that we should think. I think it is time that we pushed away the federation from our minds as something that cannot come, because we will not have it, and thought more positively in terms of self-determination, and our own future.

Apart from national reasons, the foreign policy of the British Government is so utterly bad and hateful that I want my country to have nothing to do with such a government. There is, thus, no question of conflict over the federation in this election. There are, of course, many conflicts within the Congress, but none of them are affected much by this election. I should personally like a clarification of these conflicts and problems. The vital question before us is how we are to shape in the coming international and national crisis. We may not do anything which might create a domestic conflict and, thus, disable us when we most need our united strength.

I have some experience of the Congress presidentship during trying times and on several occasions I was on the point of resigning, because I felt that I could serve our cause and the Congress better without office. This year some colleagues urged me to stand again for the presidentship. I refused absolutely, for reasons which I need not discuss here. For those and other reasons, I was equally clear that Subhas Babu should not stand. I felt that his and my capacity for effective work would be

3. In the same statement, Subhas Bose had said: "... In view of the increasing international tension and the prospective fight over federation the new year will be a momentous one in our national history. Owing to this and other reasons ... with what justification can I withdraw from the contest when the issue involved is not a personal one at all?..."
4. See pp. 93-105 and 131-137.

2. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Your telegram.[2] Personally regret Subhas Babu's statement. Would have preferred under present circumstances his not standing. But joint statement you suggest raises difficulties and questions of principle. Would prefer therefore not to be signatory.

1. Telegram sent from Almora, 26 January 1939. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On 24 January 1939, Patel requested Jawaharlal to sign a joint statement of the members of the Congress Working Committee criticising Subhas Bose's intention to contest the Congress presidential election.

3. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

Allahabad
February 4, 1939

My dear Subhas,
We had an hour's talk or more in Santiniketan but I am afraid we did not succeed in clearing up the situation. Indeed we could not, as there are so many uncertainties and I do not know how matters will shape themselves. We have to await these developments but at the same time these developments themselves depend on us, and especially on you.

As I told you, your contested election has done some good and some harm. I recognise the good but I am apprehensive of the harm that will follow. I still think that in the balance it would have been better if this particular conflict had not taken place in this way. But that is a thing of the past and we have to face the future. This future we have to view from the larger viewpoint and not in terms of personalities. Obviously it is not good enough for any one of us to get into a huff because matters have not shaped as we wished them to. We have to

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

give our best to the cause whatever happens. Granting that, it is not easy to see the right path and my mind is troubled about the future.

The first thing we have to do is to understand each other's viewpoints as fully as possible. The framing of resolutions is simple enough if this is done, but with our minds full of conflicts and doubts as to what the other is aiming at, it is no easy matter to try to shape the future. During the past few years I have come into intimate contact with Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai and others of his way of thinking. We have had repeated and prolonged discussions and although we have failed to convince each other, we have influenced each other considerably and we have, I believe, understood each other to a large extent. As long ago as 1933, on my coming out of prison, I went to Poona to see Gandhiji when he was recovering from his fast. We had long talks about the various aspects of our struggle and then exchanged letters which were subsequently published.[2] Those letters and talks revealed both our temperamental and fundamental differences as well as the many things we had in common. Since then, in private and in the Working Committee, frequent discussions have taken place. On several occasions I have been on the point of resigning from the presidentship and even the Working Committee. But I refrained because I thought this would precipitate a crisis at a moment when unity was essential. Perhaps I was wrong.

Now this crisis has come in a manner that is unfortunate. Before I can determine on my own course of action I must have some notion of what you want the Congress to be and to do. I am entirely at sea about this. There has been a lot of talk of leftists and rightists, of federation, etc., and yet, so far as I can remember, no vital matters affecting these questions have been discussed by us in the Working Committee during your presidentship. I do not know who you consider a leftist and who a rightist. The way these words were used by you in your statements during the presidential contest seemed to imply that Gandhiji and those who are considered as his group in the Working Committee are the rightist leaders. Their opponents, whoever they might be, are the leftists. That seems to me an entirely wrong description. It seems to me that many of the so-called leftists are more right than the so-called rightists. Strong language and a capacity to criticise and attack the old Congress leadership is not a test of leftism in politics. It seems to me that one of our chief dangers in the immediate future is the emergence into office and positions of responsibility of persons who are devoid of any sense of responsibility or any true appreciation of the situation, and

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 526-530.

are not conspicuous in possessing intelligence of a high order. They will create a situation which is bound to lead to a big reaction and then the real leftists will be swept away. The example of China is before us and I do not want India to follow that unhappy path, if I can help it.

I think the use of the words left and right has been generally wholly wrong and confusing. If, instead of these words, we talked about policies it would be far better. What policy do you stand for? Anti-federation, well and good. I think that the great majority of the members of the Working Committee stand for that and it is not fair to hint at their weakness in this respect. Would it not have been better for you to discuss this matter fully in the Working Committee or even to bring forward a resolution on the subject and then note the reactions? Surely without first fully discussing a matter with your colleagues it was hardly fair to accuse them *en bloc* of back-sliding. I will not repeat here what I told you of the extraordinary accusation you made about ministries in the federation being already divided up. Inevitably most people thought that your colleagues of the Working Committee were the guilty parties.

You will remember that I sent long reports from Europe to you and the Working Committee. I discussed in great detail what our attitude to federation should be and asked for directions. You sent me none, not even an acknowledgment. Gandhiji agreed with my method of approach and so, I was told, did most of the members of the Working Committee. I do not yet know what your reactions were. But apart from informing me, was that not an opportunity for you to discuss this matter thoroughly in the Working Committee and decide this way or that? Unfortunately in this and other matters you have adopted an entirely passive attitude in the Working Committee although sometimes you have given expression to your views outside. In effect, you have functioned more as a Speaker than as a directing President.

The A.I.C.C. office has deteriorated greatly during the past year. You have not even seen it and letters and telegrams to you are seldom answered with the result that many office matters get hung up indefinitely. Just at the moment when our organisation requires the closest attention, the headquarters function ineffectively.

We have the states question and the Hindu-Muslim question, and the kisans and the workers. There are many viewpoints about them and some conflict. Do you hold definite views on any of them which are at variance with those of your colleagues? Take the Bombay Trades Disputes Bill. I disagree with some of its provisions and if I had been here I would have tried my utmost to get them changed. Do you also

disagree and if so did you try to get them altered? In regard to the general agrarian situation in the various provinces, including Bengal, I do not know what your specific views are.

The provincial Congress governments are rapidly heading towards minor crises, and it is quite likely that the development of the states movement will lead to a major crisis in which all of us, including the provincial governments, will be involved. What do you think should be the course we should adopt? Your desire to have a coalition ministry in Bengal seems hardly to fit in with your protest against a drift towards constitutionalism.[3] Ordinarily it would be considered a rightist step, and especially now when the situation is rapidly developing.

Then there is foreign policy to which, as you know, I attach great importance, especially at this juncture. So do you as far as I can make out. But I do not know yet exactly what policy you envisage. I know generally Gandhiji's viewpoint and I do not wholly agree with it though we can and have pulled on together for the last two or three years of international crisis and he has often accepted my viewpoint without wholly agreeing with it.

These and many other questions arise in my mind and I know that many others are troubled by them, including those who have voted for you in the election. It is quite possible that many of these people may vote quite differently on issues raised in the Congress and a new situation might arise there.

The formation of the Working Committee will raise a host of problems. The final problem will be to have a Committee which commands the confidence of the A.I.C.C. and the Congress generally. This in itself is very difficult under the circumstances. It is not good enough to have a Committee which exists on sufferance of people who are not considered responsible and whose chief title to prominence has been criticism of what they consider the 'right'. Such a Committee will inspire confidence in no one, left or right. It will either be thrown out or will fade into insignificance.

It is quite possible that with the development of the states' struggle, Vallabhbhai and even Gandhiji will get more and more involved in it. This will occupy the centre of the stage in Indian politics and a Working Committee, consisting of others, will function ineffectively and lose

3. Subhas Bose had said on 25 November 1938, that "...Taking into consideration the previous record of anti-Congress ministries, for instance, Assam, I feel sure that even a Congress coalition ministry will bring considerable benefit and will help keep in check the tide of communalism."

importance. During the last decade or more the Working Committee has occupied a very high position in India and even outside. Its decisions meant something, its word had power. It did not shout so much but there was strength and action behind what it said. I fear that many of our so-called leftists believe more in strong language than in anything else. I have no admiration whatever for the Nariman type of public worker and there are a good many of this type about.

We have got into an unhappy tangle and for the moment I see no obvious way out. I am prepared to try my best but the clarification and lead must come from you and then it is possible for others to decide as to whether they fit in or not. *I suggest to you therefore to examine* the position in all its implications, to consider the various problems referred to above, and to write a detailed note on them. This need not be published but it should be shown to those whom you invite to cooperate with you. Such a note will become the basis for discussion and this discussion will help us in finding a way out of the present impasse. Talks are not good enough, they are vague and often misleading and we have had enough of vagueness already. I should like you to develop your suggestion about giving an ultimatum to the British Government.[4] How exactly do you wish to proceed about it and what will you do afterwards? As I have told you, I do not appreciate this idea at all but it may be possible that if you develop it, I might be able to understand it better.

I have seen your statement in the press. It is too vague for me to grasp your position. Hence my request for a full elucidation.

Public affairs involve principles and policies. They also involve an understanding of each other and faith in the *bona fides* of colleagues. If this understanding and faith are lacking, it is very difficult to cooperate with advantage. As I have grown in years I have come to attach more and more importance to this faith and understanding between colleagues. What am I to do with the finest principles if I do not have confidence in the person concerned? The party rivalries in many provinces illustrate this and we find extreme bitterness and often an utter

4. In a speech at Jallianwalla Bagh on 1 December 1938, Subhas Bose had declared: "The moment has almost arrived in the history of our national movement, when we must present the British Government with an ultimatum and fix a time-limit—by no means long but say one month, two months, or at the most six months—during which period they must fulfil our national demand for complete independence.

In the event of our demand not being conceded we must be ready for uniform and organised mass action for bringing to a complete standstill the foreign rule in the country and paralysing the governing machinery...."

lack of scruples among people who are ordinarily honourable and straight. I cannot stomach this kind of politics and I have kept absolutely aloof from them for these many years. I function individually without any group or any second person to support me, although I am happy enough to possess the confidence of many. I feel that this provincial deterioration is now being transferred or extended to the all-India plane. This is a matter of the most serious concern to me.

So we come back to this: behind the political problem, there are psychological problems, and these are always more difficult to handle. The only way to do so is perfect frankness with each other and I hope therefore that all of us will be perfectly frank.

I do not expect you to answer this letter immediately. It will take a few days. But I would like you to send me an acknowledgement.

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

4. The Re-election of Subhas Bose[1]

I have refrained from issuing statements or saying much about the situation created by the Congress presidential contest as I wished to avoid doing anything which might further complicate an already complex situation. Ordinarily, in a static period, such a contest or its natural consequences would not have mattered much as all democratic organisations have to pass through them from time to time. But the ever-deepening international crisis and the rapid trend of public affairs in India towards a deadlock force us to think in other terms. My own mind has been dominated by this thought and I have therefore tried, in so far as lay in my power, to prevent anything happening which might come in the way of our offering a united and determined front. It was because of this that I was opposed to Subhas Babu's re-election as I knew the consequences that would flow from it. It is difficult and perhaps not desirable to enter into the various reasons which led me to this conclusion. But I should like to make it clear that they had nothing to do with right or left. In the course of the election campaign Subhas

1. Statement to the press, Wardha, 22 February 1939. *The Hindu*, 23 February 1939. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 132-135.

Babu made certain statements about his colleagues in the Working Committee which astonished and pained me.[2] So far as I know there was no basis for them. If there was any truth in them then those who were guilty of the activities mentioned, or even those who passively supported them, were unworthy of guiding the destinies of the Congress. If the statements and allegations were not true, then the least that could be done was to withdraw them unconditionally. There was no middle course. It was highly improper for our Congress affairs, at the very top, to be conducted in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion and lack of faith. I suggested to the Congress President that this was the first and most essential point to be considered but no attempt has so far been made to deal with it.

I further suggested to Subhas Babu that in view of the vague and unjustified use of the words, left and right, it was desirable for him to define exactly in writing, to help consideration and discussion, what policy he advocated both in national and international affairs. I had found myself in disagreement with his views in some important matters and I felt that clarification was necessary. Unfortunately no such clarification has taken place and his sudden and regrettable illness has prevented us from discussing these matters with him.

As there seems to be a great deal of misapprehension in the public mind and the Tripuri session is at hand, I feel compelled to issue this statement, especially as the Working Committee has not met and is not going to meet. This Committee has for the time being ceased to be and the President, as he probably wishes, has a free hand to frame and put forward his proposals before the Congress. In accordance with his desire, no meeting was held here even to transact routine business. In view of these developments I fear I cannot be of help to him even in my individual capacity. We cannot consider resolutions in the air, we have to see the background and the surrounding circumstances and I find all these factors to be most uninviting. There is a tendency also for local Congress disputes to be dealt with not in the usual routine way but directly from the top with the result that particular groups and parties are favoured and confusion is increased and Congress work suffers. For many years I have been associated with the Congress head-

quarters office as working secretary or as President and have come into intimate touch with its work. It pains me to see that in the very heart of our organisation new methods are being introduced which can only lead to local conflicts spreading to higher planes.

In spite of my long association with the Congress I have never been closely associated with any particular group in it, though I have had the privilege of cooperating with all kinds of people. I have been an individual in this great organisation and that is always a difficult task. Often I have felt that I was a square peg in a round hole. During the years of my office I have frequently been on the verge of resigning because I felt that I could serve the Congress better if I did not have the responsibility of office. But I refrained from doing so as I was firmly convinced that in the dynamic and critical times we live in, we must present a united front and subordinate our individual opinions where these tended to impair that front. I have been and am a convinced socialist and a believer in democracy and have at the same time accepted whole-heartedly the peaceful technique of nonviolent action which Gandhiji has practised so successfully during the past twenty years. I am convinced that strength can only come to us from the masses, but that strength, either for struggle or for the great work of building a new world, must be a disciplined and orderly strength. It is not out of chaos or the encouragement of chaotic forces that we can fashion the India of our dreams. It is true that sometimes even chaos has given birth to a dancing star, but its usual progeny are suffering and degradation and internecine conflict and reaction. Today we have the strength, if we know how to use it, to march in a disciplined and orderly way to freedom. We are no weaklings today, the victims of an ignoble fate. Why then should we act as such?

In the past I have often felt that I should not belong to the Working Committee. Under present circumstances this conviction is all the stronger for I do not think I can accept the responsibilities of this high position in the background and the atmosphere of today, more especially after the presidential election. I agree with those who think that it is only fair that the President should be free to follow his policy and should choose his colleagues from among those who agree with this policy.

As this internal crisis has come upon us we should try to profit by it by clearing our minds and analysing the situation fully. We have had enough of vague phrases and hackneyed words. I do not think we need be anxious about the future if we are wise enough to learn from the present. If crisis comes we should all be prepared to face it together as we have done in the past.

5. Where Are We ?[1]

The sun was setting as I trudged back, with Kripalani for my companion, along the dusty road from Segaon to Wardha. We had met and parted that evening of the 22nd of February at Segaon, those of us who had for so long been the members of the Working Committee of the Congress, and the long argument was over. There was a relief from the tension of indecision, but the relief did not bring peace of mind or freedom from apprehension. We wandered about the *Ashram* in no great hurry to go back for our work for the moment was over. Meanwhile our colleagues took possession of the two cars and rolled away to Wardha, each carload imagining that we were in the other car. So we were stranded in Segaon. For an hour we waited and played with the children at the basic school nearby, but no car came and we decided to walk back the five miles to Wardha.

How many times I had gone along that dusty path during the past three years, mostly by automobile, sometimes by bullock-cart, once or twice on foot. The scene was a familiar one, with the bare arid plain stretching on every side and hardly a tree in sight. Yet it seemed different, perhaps because I myself had changed and looked at it with different eyes. The sun hung like a ball of fire on the horizon and beauty filled the silent air, but I was in no mood for beauty and felt weary and depressed. Loneliness gripped me in that empty plain and the lengthening shadows seemed ominous. We walked silently, for neither of us was in a mood for conversation. I was walking away not from Segaon but from something bigger, more vital, that had been part of me these many years.

The newspapers say that I have resigned from the Working Committee. That is not quite correct and yet it is correct enough. When twelve members had resigned from a Committee of fifteen, there was not much of the Committee left; the rump could hardly function as such.[2] The

1. Eight articles printed in the *National Herald* on 28 February and 1-6 March 1939 respectively. Later reprinted as a pamphlet, and included in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 86-132.
2. On 22 February 1939, Vallabhbhai Patel and eleven other members of the Congress Working Committee tendered their resignations to the Congress President and requested him to "select a homogeneous cabinet representing the majority."

reasons that impelled me to act as I did differed in many ways from those that moved my colleagues. But apart from reasons, I felt an overwhelming desire to be out of committees and to function as I wanted to, without let or hindrance. It was easy enough to resign from a dying Committee whose days were numbered, but the problem in my mind was a deeper one and the step I took would mean a break from many other contacts. To the onlookers, I had aligned myself along with the resigning twelve. And so I had. And yet in my mind the gulf between them and me had grown and not again would I be a member of a Committee fashioned as the Working Committee had been for three years.

It surprises me that some people should criticise these resignations. There was no other possible course open to these members, or at any rate to several of them, after the charges that had been made against them. Ordinarily, if it was felt that the policy they represented was not approved by the majority, they had to resign. But in the present instance certain grave personal charges were also made against them, and it was quite impossible for them to continue so long as those charges remained. In effect, these charges might be considered to be made against Gandhiji himself as he had been the guide and mentor of the Working Committee. This psychological and personal aspect inevitably overshadowed even the political issues, and I suggested therefore to the Congress President to clear this obstacle before tackling other problems. Unhappily he did not do so. To add to this difficulty the President sent a telegram[3] asking for a postponement of the Working Committee and not permitting it to transact even routine business. It was clear that under the circumstances the Committee had ceased to be.

A great organisation has something impersonal about it, although it might be powerfully impressed by a dominant personality. It carries on though persons may come or go. The Congress has demonstrated this impersonal aspect in a unique manner during past years, when repeatedly all its leaders and principal workers were in prison and the whole might of the law was directed against it. Yet it carried on and showed that sure sign of inner strength which is not daunted by adversity or crisis.

It was obvious that the Working Committee could not and should not, under the existing circumstances, decide any controversial matter of importance or attempt to frame resolutions for the Congress subjects committee. In the absence of the President this would have been improper, and every member present realised this fully. But it was in the fitness

3. Bose telegraphed to Mahatma Gandhi on 21 February 1939 that he was too ill to attend the Working Committee meeting at Wardha and desired the Committee to meet before the Tripuri Congress.

of things that routine matters, and especially those demanding urgency, in view of the approaching Congress session, should be disposed of. But the President's instructions seemed to come in the way, though whether he meant his words to be interpreted so literally I do not know. And so the Committee, having no function to perform, dissolved and faded away. For the first time the Congress had not functioned impersonally.

When the scales are evenly balanced even a little makes a difference, and the President's telegram made a difference. Ordinarily the democratic way was for the old Committee to resign after the presidential election and all that had happened in the course of it, so as to enable a new and more representative Committee to be formed. But the rapid development of an internal and external crisis and the possibility of another struggle on a vast scale overshadowed the usual processes of democracy and made the decision difficult. When, however, it appeared to the members present that there was no confidence in them even in regard to routine matters, the possibility of cooperation in a small executive became remote. The personal element was displacing the impersonal character of the organisation. Personal loyalties began to count more than loyalty to the organisation.

But this was a small matter after all and would not have counted for much if the surrounding circumstances had been different. It led me to think of a defect in our present constitution which leaves the old Working Committee to function with the new President. It would be far better if the Committee's term expired with the presidential election and the President met the Congress with a new Committee. The proceedings of the Congress would then be in the nature of a vote of confidence in this Committee. Under the present constitution the Committee is constituted after the Congress is over and it is quite possible that it might not truly represent the Congress.

And so, with all manner of thoughts surging in my mind, I walked back to Wardha town from Segaon. I had sided with my old colleagues of the Committee on the issue of the moment, for that was the only right course for me, but my parting was with them more than with others. In their letter of resignation they had stated that "the time has come when the country should have a clear-cut policy not based on compromise between incompatible groups of the Congress." If that was to be their clear-cut policy, I had no place with them.

II

If the Working Committee was to consist solely of people believing in a clear-cut policy, where did I come in? Of course, the Committee must be homogeneous and capable of functioning as a unit or else it would be ineffective. It must believe generally in one line of action. But if the homogeneity was to be interpreted in a sectarian sense, then a future Committee would be very different from the Committees that have functioned during the past twenty years. Where would Deshbandhu Das or my father or Maulana Mahomed Ali have been under the new interpretation? They would have found no place in the Working Committee. In the early days of the Swaraj Party vital differences arose even as regards the policy to be pursued. There was an attempt to form a 'homogeneous' Committee but it failed soon afterwards, and the Congress reverted to a joint Committee consisting of representatives of the two principal groups in it. They functioned effectively for a number of years in spite of a difference of outlook. Any other course would have led to ineffectiveness and continuing conflict between the two groups and the weakening of the Congress.

If a new principle was now followed, odd individuals like me would be out of place in the Committee. I would not fit in with the old Committee which I knew; still less would I fit in with a new Committee which I did not know. My not being in the Working Committee would not of course mean that I sulked or held aloof. In any event, I would, as would others, offer such cooperation as was possible and not obstruct in any way.

I am convinced that the right course for the Congress is to avoid sectarianism and this narrow so-called homogeneity, for this would lead to the growth of conflict and the spirit of opposition within the Congress. It is for the Congress to lay down its policy clearly and to ask for a strict adherence to it by its executive. Within the four corners of this there must be homogeneity, but any attempt to narrow this still further would result in the exclusion of vital elements.

This policy of a joint front, though inevitable for us under the circumstances, has its disadvantages, as it leads to a feeling of suppression in the two or more groups that cooperate together. Each feels that it cannot have its way and that its progress is obstructed by the other group. This feeling of suppression has grown during the past few years, and so it is perhaps desirable to have executives consisting of one group only in order to give them full play. In effect, this will make little difference as there is not too much choice of policies and soon after there is bound

to be a reversion to the joint Committee, which alone can be really representative of the Congress and the country.

One need not therefore take the present deadlock in the Congress too tragically, unfortunate as it is. It is a sign of the growth of our movement and it mirrors the ideological conflicts that are troubling the minds of large numbers of our people. But everybody knows that in any action that might have to be undertaken we hold together and a crisis, national or international, will find us united.

What is unfortunate is the manner in which this deadlock has come about, for it represents no clear conflict of ideals or policy. It is the outcome of a desire to control the Congress organisation, whatever the policy. There has been a certain reaction against what was considered an authoritarian tendency in the Congress High Command, and yet curiously enough the new leadership is far more authoritarian than any during the recent history of the Congress. A radical policy for the Congress one can understand whether one approves of it or not. A line of action can be judged and accepted or rejected. But radical slogans allied to authoritarianism is a wrong and dangerous trend. It is wrong because it leads people to think that strong language and much shouting are substitutes for action. It is dangerous because radical slogans delude the people and under their cover authoritarianism creeps in and entrenches itself. I do not think there is any chance of the Congress going this way for we are too much wedded to democratic processes, and we have, these many years, discarded the tyranny of strong language, which enervates, in favour of action that is effective and that strengthens. Yet we may not grow complacent, for recent years have brought strange happenings in Europe, and we have seen the proud edifice of democracy fall before our eyes. Regretfully we recognise how easy it is to wean away a muddle-headed and confused public and then to drive it towards wrong ends.

Therefore it becomes vitally necessary for us to be clear about our policy and our methods, to define with precision our attitude to national and international problems. The world changes and new problems arise, new questions have to be answered, and the well-worn and hackneyed phrases of yesterday may have little meaning today. We live in the post-Munich age and the map changes from day to day and barbarism and black reaction triumph. Even as I write my mind is filled with that supreme tragedy of our time—the murder of Spanish democracy. It was not the rebels who killed republican Spain or traitors' hands that did it. Nor was it ultimately done to death by the fascist powers, much as they tried to do so. Britain and France must be held responsible for this,

as for the betrayal of Czechoslovakia, and history long ages hence will remember this infamy and will not forgive them. The infinite sadness in the looks of the Czechs and the Spaniards, whom they deserted and betrayed and, in the guise of friendship and impartiality, drove to death and slavery, will haunt them from generation to generation.

This is the world we live in. And in India also the problems that are arising are perilously like those in Europe. While we think still in terms of a straight fight against British imperialism, that imperialism changes its shape, and, not so sure of its strength, tries to meet the challenge indirectly and more dangerously. Reaction itself talks a different language, and, using progressive phrases, exploits the unpolitical masses for its own ends. Communalism becomes even more definitely the citadel of the reactionary and the bulwark of imperialism.

Phrases and slogans have become dangerous companions in these days unless they are allied to clear thought and well-considered objectives and methods. Most of us seldom take the trouble to think. It is a troublesome and fatiguing process and often leads us to uncomfortable conclusions. But crises and deadlocks when they occur have at least this advantage, that they force us to think. Let us then profit in this way in our present impasse.

It is for this reason that I am venturing to put forward some thoughts and experiences of mine. In a changing and uncertain situation it is difficult for me to point with any confidence to a way out of the deadlock. It may be that this way will show itself sooner than people imagine. Meanwhile it might be worthwhile for me to trace the various tendencies that have developed in India during the last three years. In doing so I crave the indulgence of my colleagues of the old Working Committee, for it may be necessary for me to refer to certain happenings with which they are connected and which have so far been treated as confidential. I hope I shall not thereby abuse their confidence.

III

In March three years ago I flew back to India from Europe, President-elect of the Congress. My views and opinions were well known, and I was to some extent entitled to presume that the Congress electorate had expressed their approval of them. But I knew well that I could not presume too much, for elections are often governed by other considerations. No one could say that the Congress had turned socialist because the delegates had elected me their President. But this election did mean that there was a general desire for a more radical policy and that socialist ideas were spreading in the country. For the past year the Congress

had been rapidly recovering from the reaction that had set in on the withdrawal of civil disobedience. The elections to the central assembly had helped the process and the more radical elements were chafing at the inactivity of the organisation.

An organised socialist wing had grown up and with the intemperance and exuberance of youth, it criticised and condemned the leaders of the Congress. It spoke a language, borrowed from Western socialist literature, which was seldom understood by the rank and file of the Congress. And so though it won over some, it created a barrier against the many. The vast middle groups of the Congress, politically left, socially vague and undecided, but generally pro-peasant, looked askance at this new type of propaganda which attacked their leaders. Some socialists openly talked of replacing the old leadership, and evidently considered themselves as chosen by destiny for this purpose. They endeavoured to run their candidates for local Congress committees and the impression grew that they wanted to capture and control them. From a democratic point of view they were entitled to do so, but this very attempt and their methods turned against them and the middle groups of the Congress lined themselves up in an opposing camp. Thus the very people to whom socialism should have appealed were pushed away and made hostile. The socialist group, instead of being the crusaders for a new idea, became to some extent a sect seeking power and creating opposition among those who did not fall in line with them. Under cover of socialism purely personal local groups were sometimes formed seeking office or positions of authority in the Congress.

The leaders of the Congress disapproved strongly of these developments. They disliked the intricate theories connected with socialism and thought that socialism was inevitably connected with violence, which was opposed to the basic principle of the Congress. Above all, they were irritated by the personal attacks and criticisms and sometimes reacted in kind.

I found this atmosphere of bitterness and conflict on my return. I was full at the time of the idea of popular fronts and joint fronts, which were being formed in some European countries. In Europe where class and other conflicts were acute, it had been possible for this cooperation on a common platform. In India these conflicts were still in their early stages and were completely overshadowed by the major conflict against imperialism. The obvious course was for all anti-imperialistic forces to function together on the common platform of the Congress. Socialism was a theoretical issue, except in so far as it affected the course of the struggle, till political freedom and power were gained. There could be

no socialism before independence. It was true that vital differences might arise in regard to the methods and the means, but I was not myself troubled greatly over this matter. I was convinced that the Congress technique of peaceful action was the right method and must be pursued not only as a superficial policy, but as a fundamentally sound method which would lead us to our goal.

Some socialists and Marxists, thinking in terms of Europe and its pacifists, tried to ridicule the method of nonviolence. I am no admirer of European pacifists and crisis after crisis has shown them to be not only totally ineffective but often the unconscious tools of reaction and even war-mongering. Theirs has been the negative, passive attitude which surrenders to evil and violence because resistance would lead to a breach of their pacifist doctrine. Political surrender leads almost inevitably to moral surrender also.

But the nonviolence of the Congress was the very opposite of this and the basis of it was no surrender, political or moral, to what it considered evil. It involves, as all policies do, the acceptance of compromises when circumstances dictate them, but essentially, perhaps, it is more uncompromising than other policies. It is dynamic and not passive; it is not non-resistance but resistance to wrong-doing, though that resistance is peaceful. In practice it had proved remarkably successful, not only in achieving visible results, but also in the far more important task of strengthening the morale of the nation and training the people for peaceful, disciplined and united action.

Almost everybody, including the socialists, accepted this as the national policy and realised that there was no alternative. It is true that some did so rather mechanically without accepting its implications and sometimes not acting wholly in accordance with it. So far as I was concerned I had no difficulty in accepting it, although it was no article of faith for me, nor could I say that it would be applicable under all circumstances. It applied fully to India and to our struggle and that was enough for me.

I decided to devote my energies towards bridging the gulf between the old leaders and the new socialist group. To some extent I was fitted for this task, as I had intimate contacts with both. I was convinced that India could not do without either of these groups, and there seemed to me no valid reason why there should not be the fullest cooperation between the two in the struggle against imperialism. The old leaders were tried men with prestige and influence among the masses and the experience of having guided the struggle for many years. They were not rightists by any means; politically they were far more left and they were confirmed anti-imperialists. Gandhiji, standing behind them and supporting them from outside the Congress organisation, was of course

a tower of strength to them and to the country. He continued to dominate the Indian scene and it was difficult to conceive of a big struggle without him. The socialists, though a small group and speaking for a minority, represented a vital and a growing section, and their influence was spreading, especially among the youth. I was akin to them in their ideology and their objectives, and to me and to many others they represented the future.

On the eve of the Lucknow Congress we met in the Working Committee and I was pleased and gratified at the adoption by this Committee of a number of resolutions that I sponsored, and which seemed to give a new tone and a more radical outlook to the Congress. This increased my confidence in my capacity to keep the various groups of the Congress together. But the proceedings of the Congress itself weakened this impression, and I realised some of the difficulties in store for me. The Congress rejected some of my important recommendations and gave its full support to the old leadership. I stood in a minority in the Congress, and doubts assailed me whether I should continue as President. The formation of the Working Committee distressed me still more, as it emphasised the limitations within which I had to function. In theory the Committee had to be nominated by me but I could not override the majority view of the Congress. I decided to resign from the presidentship[4] and my last words at the open session, as the Congress was concluding, were to the effect that, after the glory of the last few days, I was sinking back into oblivion.

IV

The Lucknow Congress was over and a Working Committee was announced. I had decided, after much mental conflict, not to resign, as the consequences of resignation were serious and the whole organisation might have been shaken up by it. I threw myself into the work before me and drew up schemes for developing the A.I.C.C. office and opening various departments in it. With these plans in my head, I went to the first meeting of the Working Committee. No questions of principle or high policy were involved and yet I was surprised to find that my proposals were viewed with suspicion by many of my colleagues. It was not that they objected to them but they did not know where these developments might lead to. After long and exhausting arguments, certain more or less routine proposals were agreed to which should not have taken more than a few minutes.

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 264.

WITH EGYPTIAN DELEGATION, TRIPURI CONGRESS, MARCH 1939

I undertook some tours and visited, among other places, Bombay. Everywhere I spoke about the Congress programme, as decided at Lucknow, and emphasized the need for strengthening the organisation. In the course of my speeches I laid stress on the poverty and unemployment in India and said that a true solution could only come through socialism. But there could be no socialism without independence, and all of us had therefore to concentrate on the latter. I met with an enthusiastic and overwhelming response everywhere.

Early in July 1936, there was another meeting of the Working Committee and I went to it heartened by the enthusiasm I had met with. To my surprise and dismay I found that some of my colleagues did not share this and they were full of apprehension at the developments that were taking place. They offered their resignations from the Working Committee. (Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was one of the absentees from this meeting.) I was stunned. It appeared that they were deeply hurt at what they considered was a regular and continuous campaign against them, treating them as persons whose time was over, who represented ideas that were worn out, and who were obstructing the progress of the country. I was of course not said to be a party to such a campaign, but my ideological sympathy with some of those who indulged in it was taken to be as passive support of it.

All this surprised me greatly. There had been some foolish and objectionable speeches and statements by odd individuals, but that was no sufficient reason for the offer to resign. Perhaps it was the long background of bitterness and conflict which influenced my colleagues, although this was improving rapidly. To some extent there was a feeling that the Congress Socialist Party was not playing fair. Three of their number were in the Working Committee and yet the party continued in a sense to play the part of an opposition. But the dominating reason at the time was, I think, a feeling that my speeches might scare away voters and thus affect adversely the general elections that were coming. Later it was realised that I was a fairly efficient election winner.

Owing to the intervention of Gandhiji the resignations were withdrawn, but I returned from Wardha in a depressed frame of mind. I felt that I should resign and place the whole matter before the A.I.C.C. so that suitable arrangements could be made for future work. I sent a long letter[5] to Gandhiji from Allahabad from which I give some extracts below :

5. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 309-313.

Ever since I left Wardha I have been feeling weak in body and troubled in mind. Partly this is no doubt due to physical causes—a chill which has aggravated my throat trouble. But partly also it is due to other causes which touch the mind and the spirit directly. Since my return from Europe I have found that meetings of the Working Committee exhaust me greatly; they have a devitalizing effect on me, and I have almost the feeling of being much older in years after every fresh experience. I should not be surprised if this feeling was also shared by my colleagues of the Committee. It is an unhealthy experience and it comes in the way of effective work.

I was told, when I returned from Europe, that the country was demoralized and hence we had to go slow. My own little experience during the past four months has not confirmed this impression. Indeed, I have found a bubbling vitality wherever I have gone, and I have been surprised at the public response.... I am grateful to you for all the trouble you took in smoothing over matters and in helping to avoid a crisis. I was convinced then, and I am convinced now, that a break of the kind suggested would have had serious consequences for all our work, including the elections. And yet, and yet, where are we now and what does the future hold for us?....I have written at length, both in my book and subsequently, about my present ideas. Those views are not casual. They are part of me and, though I might change them or vary them in future, so long as I hold them I must give expression to them. Because I attached importance to a larger unity I tried to express them in the mildest way possible and more as an invitation to thought than as fixed conclusions. I saw no conflict in this approach and in anything that the Congress was doing....

With the fixed intention of resigning and leaving the matter to the A.I.C.C. which was meeting next month in Bombay, I left for Sind. News reached me there of the Spanish revolt, and I was greatly affected by it. I saw this rising developing into a European or even a world conflict. Crises on the biggest scale seemed to be at hand and India's part in these was to me a vital matter. Was I going to weaken our organisation and create an internal crisis by resigning just when it was essential for us to pull together? My mind became tense with expectation and all thought of resignation left it.

In Bombay the Working Committee drafted the election manifesto and this, curiously enough, was agreed to without much argument. A new atmosphere of cooperation surrounded us and the tension seemed to lessen. As a colleague remarked with pleasure, it was like old times again.

As the elections approached, all of us plunged into the campaign and our internal conflicts vanished for the moment. For many months I wandered about India and millions of faces passed before my eyes. I saw a thousand facets of this country of mine in all their rich diversity, and yet always with the unifying impress of India upon them. I sought to understand what lay behind those millions of eyes that stared at me, what hopes and desires, what untold sorrow and misery unexpressed. Glimpses came to me that illumined my vision and made me realise the immensity of the problem of the hundreds of millions of our people.

The elections over, the A.I.C.C. decided to accept office subject to certain conditions. The period of the interim ministries intervened. Then the Congress took office in a number of provinces, and this by itself released mass energy, and both the kisan and the worker woke up and began to play an aggressive role. New problems arose and internal conflicts, which had so far been largely ideological, took new shape. No one, not even the opponents of office acceptance, wanted to create crises for the Congress ministries. But there was a continuous attempt to bring pressure upon them by strikes and kisan manifestations which embarrassed the ministries greatly. In Bihar the kisan movement came into conflict with the Congress organisation. Elsewhere also the high hopes that had been raised by the advent of the Congress ministries not being fulfilled, dissatisfaction arose. The machinery of government was working in much the same way as of old, although various reforms had been introduced. In Madras especially the Congress government functioned in some ways perilously like the old government.

To some extent this was inevitable as the old steel frame was still there circumscribing and restricting the activities of the provincial governments. But it was felt in ever-widening circles in the Congress that the ministries could have functioned more effectively in accordance with our principles and that they were growing too complacent. There was not the full cooperation between the ministries and the provincial Congress committees which was essential for effective progress, and various incidents occurred—the Nariman affair,[6] the Batlivala arrest[7]—which added to the internal conflict. It is difficult for me to deal with all these matters in the course of these brief articles, or else I shall continue to write on and take too long a time to reach the present stage. Still it is essential that the background of these incidents and of the Congress in 1937 should be kept in mind and I shall therefore deal with these in a subsequent article.

6. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 278-279.
7. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 360.

The vague but general feeling of dissatisfaction took some shape in the A.I.C.C. meeting in October 1937, and found moderate expression. Long-continued repression in Mysore state was also greatly resented, and a resolution, which was not happily worded, was passed.[8] These resolutions, and especially the Mysore one, were disapproved of by many members of the Working Committee, and Gandhiji, who was seriously ill at the time, was upset by them. He expressed himself at a meeting of the Working Committee in language unusually strong for him and condemned artificial combinations in the Congress. This could not go on, he said, and the organisation must be one from top to bottom. He said that he would have to withdraw completely unless a change was made in the Congress and this drift stopped. What exactly he wanted done was not clear to me but what was clear was that he strongly disapproved of what I had done. I suggested that the A.I.C.C. should be recalled as a crisis seemed imminent. Later it was decided to carry on as we were doing for the time being.

In the columns of the *Harijan*, Gandhiji criticised the Mysore resolution and stated that it was *ultra vires* of the A.I.C.C., which meant that he condemned my action in allowing it to be discussed.[9] This amazed me for I was and am convinced that from a constitutional and legal point of view Gandhiji was wrong. I wrote to him and to the members of the Working Committee on the subject and intended issuing a press statement, but ultimately refrained from doing so in order to avoid a public controversy.[10] But more and more I felt that I could not carry on as a responsible member of the executive. I decided not to do anything to precipitate a crisis but to drop out of the executive at the next Congress session which was approaching. I informed Gandhiji and some of my colleagues accordingly and wrote to the same effect to Subhas Babu who was in Europe then. (He had not been formally elected President then, although his election was certain.)

At Haripura we had suddenly to face the ministerial crisis in the U.P. and Bihar, and my decision not to belong to the Working Committee was shaken. Another consideration which affected me was that my not joining the Working Committee might be looked upon as if I was not desirous of giving my full cooperation to Subhas Babu. This had of course nothing to do with my decision, but I could not go about explaining this to everybody. I decided to join the Working Committee.

8. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 572.
9. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 567.
10. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 567-569 and 571-572.

But I was ill at ease, and in April 1938, I wrote to Gandhiji.[11] I give some extracts from my letter:

> As you know I have been greatly distressed at the turn events have taken in Congress politics during the last six months. Among the matters that have disturbed me is the new orientation of the Gandhi Seva Sangh... It is distressing to find that even the Gandhi Seva Sangh, which might have set a standard to others and refused to become a party organisation intent on winning elections, had descended to the common level. I feel strongly that the Congress ministries are working inefficiently and not doing much that they could do. They are trying to adapt themselves far too much to the old order and trying to justify it. But all this, bad as it is, might be tolerated. What is far worse is that we are losing the high position that we have built up, with so much labour, in the hearts of the people. We are sinking to the level of ordinary politicians...
>
> Partly, of course, this is due to a general deterioration all over the world, partly to the transition period through which we are passing. Nevertheless, it does show up our failings and the sight is painful. I think there are enough men of goodwill in the Congress to cope with the situation if they set about it in the right way. But their minds are full of party conflicts and the desire to crush this individual or that group. Obviously bad men are preferred to good men because the former promise to toe the party line. When this happens there is bound to be deterioration.
>
> For months past I have felt that I could not function effectively in India as things were going. I have carried on of course as one can always carry on. But I have felt out of place and a misfit. This was one reason (though there were others also) why I decided to go to Europe. I felt I could be more useful there, and in any event I would freshen up my tired and puzzled mind....

In this letter I have referred to the Gandhi Seva Sangh. On subsequent inquiry I found that there was no such political orientation at the top as I had been led to believe. The fault lay with certain individuals in local areas who tried to exploit Gandhiji's name as well as that of the Sangh in Congress elections.

V

The working of provincial autonomy, restricted as it was, had many dangers for us. It tended to emphasise, as it was no doubt meant to,

11. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 387-389.

provincialism and diverted our anti-imperialist struggle into narrower channels. Because of this, internal conflicts grew—communal, social, and organisational. The major problems of poverty, unemployment, the land, industry, clamoured for solution, and yet they could not be solved within the framework of the existing constitution and economic structure. The only course open to us was to go as far as we could towards this solution—it was not very far—and to relieve somewhat the burdens on the masses, and at the same time to prepare ourselves to change that constitution and structure. A time was bound to come when we had exhausted the potentialities of this constitution, and we had to choose between a tame submission to it and a challenge to it. Both involved a crisis. For if we submitted, the major problems, finding no solution or outlet, would overwhelm us. If we did not—and we had no intention of doing so—a conflict with British imperialism was inevitable unless the latter surrendered, which it was not likely to do. There was an odd possibility, however, that if the national movement grew powerful enough, and in view of the critical situation, we might gain our objective without a major struggle.

Our strength had certainly increased greatly, and in spite of internal conflicts and sometimes bogus membership, there is no doubt that the Congress is a more powerful organisation today than at any previous period of its history. The masses are more politically awake than ever before. Yet these very signs of strength may turn against us if they are not organised and directed into right channels. For the moment I am not considering the communal problem, in spite of its obvious importance and its repercussions on our national struggle. We had to deal with, both in the organisation and in the provincial governments, the coordination of the political struggle with the social and economic problems of the masses. Failure to integrate the two meant weakness and a growing paralysis. On the one hand, we had to keep our struggle predominantly political and anti-imperialistic; on the other, we had to go as far as we possibly could in the direction of social advance. Above all, it was essential that the Congress must continue to be a disciplined, well-knit organisation, keeping the various aspects of the struggle well under control. If the Congress weakened there was no possibility of effective struggle for us.

As I have indicated, I was dissatisfied with the progress made by the Congress ministries. It is true that they had done good work, their record of achievement was impressive, the ministers were working terribly hard and yet had to put up with all manner of attacks and criticisms, often based on ignorance. Theirs was a thankless job. Still, I felt that progress was slow and their outlook was not what it should be.

Nor was I satisfied with the approach of the Congress leadership to the problems that faced us. It was not so much a question of difference of opinion as of emphasis, though there was difference of opinion also sometimes. What alarmed me was a tendency to put down certain vital elements which were considered too advanced or which did not quite fit in with the prevailing outlook. This was a dangerous drift, though it had not gone far, and it reminded me of the fate of the German Social Democrats and the British Labour Party.

It is true that some of the so-called leftist elements in the Congress had not behaved with responsibility and had deliberately encouraged tendencies which could only lead to internal conflict and the weakening of the Congress. Their idea of a joint front was to have the full protection of the Congress, the advantage of its prestige, and yet to attack it and criticise it from outside. The red flag, perfectly justified in its own sphere, became often a challenge to the national flag. The kisan sabha frequently functioned as a permanent opposition to the local Congress committee and sometimes demonstrations were organised which could only lead to friction and irritation. Much of this took place in the lower ranks, but even the kisan sabha leadership was quite astonishingly irresponsible. In the villages, all manner of undesirables, who had found no place in the local Congress or were otherwise disgruntled elements, found shelter in a local kisan sabha. Even politically reactionary elements sometimes utilised the kisan sabha to weaken the Congress.

All this led to petty conflicts, and what was worse, a growing spirit of indiscipline in the Congress. If this had represented the growth of an organised and disciplined left, it would have been a healthy sign, whether one agreed with it or not. In effect it represented a healthy awakening of the masses which was being exploited by numerous mutually differing groups among those who called themselves the leftists. For a considerable time the conflict among the leftist groups themselves absorbed most of their energy.

Gandhiji was not interested in these ideological conflicts, but, with his extraordinary capacity to sense a situation, he felt that indiscipline was growing rapidly and chaotic forces were being let loose. He was thinking more and more in terms of a great struggle with British imperialism, and indiscipline could not be the prelude to this. I was myself distressed by this development. It reminded me of various unfortunate stages of the Chinese revolution, and I had no desire to see India go through that chaotic process.

The Nariman episode of 1937 and the Khare incident[12] of 1938 were

12. See p. 90.

in their duty if they had not expressed themselves clearly on both these issues. Democracy does not simply mean shouting loudly and persistently, though that might occasionally have some value. Freedom and democracy require responsibility and certain standards of behaviour and self-discipline. Our struggle, more specially the type of struggle we are carrying on, requires all these qualities, and if we do not possess them in sufficient measure we risk failure.

The leftists, using the word correctly, stand for certain principles and policies. Inevitably they attract to their ranks all manner of people, both the finest type of crusading spirit and the intellectually and morally incompetent. If they do not take care they will be swamped by the latter, and lose the reputation that they should possess. It is not in indiscipline or in loose thinking or in irresponsible action that they will find success. The student world of India should be the nursery of new ideas and clear thinking and disciplined action. And yet unfortunately it often shows a lack of all the virtues that it should possess.

There is one matter I should like to refer to although it comes at a later stage in the narrative. This is the Trades Disputes Act of Bombay. It is one of my regrets that I was away from India when this was considered and passed. Perhaps, if I had been here I might have been able to have some changes made in it. The Act as a whole is decidedly a good measure but it has, according to my thinking, certain vital defects which affect the workers adversely and take away from the grace of the measure. The manner it was passed was also unfortunate. On the other hand, it was equally unfortunate for the workers' representatives to ally themselves with the declared opponents of the Congress and to exploit the situation to the detriment of the Congress. Another attitude and approach would have yielded better results.

The Congress ministries have certain definite and substantial achievements to their credit; they have failed in some ways. But one of their achievements which is full of promise is their new approach to mass education. The literacy campaigns have been good. More important and of fundamental significance is the new basic scheme of education which is based on the Zakir Hussain committee's report.[13] I have been deeply impressed by it and I think we have found the right method to educate the growing generation.

13. The committee, appointed in October 1937 at the instance of Mahatma Gandhi, recommended the following changes in the system of education: (1) productive activity in education; (2) correlation of the curriculum with productive activity and the physical and social environment, and (3) intimate contact between the school and the local community.

VI

My visit to Europe last year coincided with a period of intense crisis in the international sphere, and I put myself psychologically in tune with this by going straight to Barcelona, that "flower of the fair cities of the world," as Cervantes[14] called it. Alas, that this flower should be crushed today and enemy hands should hold this ancient home of liberty, which struggled for freedom even in the days of Ferdinand and Isabella![15] But when I visited this gracious city, it was still the home of the unconquerable spirit of man which knows no defeat and reckons death and disaster as of little account in freedom's cause. Nightly I saw the bombs fall from the air, raining death and destruction on the populace. I saw the hungry crowds in the streets, the plight of the refugees; I visited the armies at the front and those brave young men of the International Brigade, so many of whom rest for ever in the soil of Spain. I came back full of the tragedy of Spain, which was being strangled not so much by enemies, but by those who called themselves the friends of democracy.

Later I visited Czechoslovakia and saw yet another tragedy, yet another betrayal, unroll itself before my eyes. All these events impressed themselves powerfully upon me and I tried to understand our own struggle for freedom in relation to them. In this swift changing drama federation and many of the lesser problems of India seemed to lose importance. Bigger things were afoot and it was time that India also thought in terms of them.

I had gone to Europe in a personal capacity, but inevitably I had a certain representative character. In my public or private utterances I could not forget this, and I was anxious not to say or do anything which might embarrass my colleagues in India. I took care therefore to send full and detailed reports of all my political activities, public or private; I inquired if the line I had taken was the correct one, I asked for full directions and put questions to be answered. I sent several such reports and each one went to the Congress President, to the General Secretary of the Congress for the members of the Working Committee, and to Gandhiji. It was my misfortune that the President did not even acknowledge any of them, and consequently I received no directions from him. The General Secretary informed me that the members of the Working Committee generally approved of the attitude I had taken up. Gandhiji also expressed his approval.

14. Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616); author of *Don Quixote*.
15. Ferdinand V (1452-1516); king of Sicily, married Isabella, sister of Henry IV of Castile and heiress to that throne in 1469.

It was obvious that in the course of a discussion or conversation it is not enough to speak in terms of a brief Congress resolution, although that must be the basis of the discussion. All manner of possibilities have to be investigated and various developments considered in the light of the Congress decision. The purely agitational attitude is not good enough for a detailed consideration of a subject. It was because of this that I wanted full instructions from the Congress leaders in India. My own general attitude was that the whole question of federation was out of date now and it was time that the Indian problem was solved by a constituent assembly drawing up a constitution.

I learnt that an attempt was being made behind the scenes in England to impress upon people that what I said about federation did not represent the Congress or Gandhiji and that it was Gandhiji who counted in the end. I wrote to the Working Committee about it,[16] as well as to Gandhiji. Gandhiji sent me a cable in reply expressing his agreement with what I had said, though his language might have been different. He wrote an article in the *Harijan* about that time to the same effect.[17]

The international crisis and the possibility of war also raised vital problems for us and I wanted directions from my colleagues at home. I got no directions from the President and little from the others in this matter. I felt from this and various other indications that the President did not wholly approve of the international policy I was advocating.

In view of the crisis and the rapid developments in Europe most of us, I suppose, were forced to think out afresh what their political faith should be. Perhaps this sense of crisis and tension was not so obvious in India and events did not compel us to examine our premises afresh. Our socialist friends in India have not reacted sufficiently to changing conditions. The communists in Europe might change, under the compulsion of events, but not so the communists of India.

I had been considerably upset by the course of events in the Soviet Union, the trials and the repeated purges of vast numbers of communists. I think the trials were generally *bona fide* and there had been a definite conspiracy against the regime and widespread attempts at sabotage. Nevertheless, I could not reconcile myself to what was happening there, and it indicated to me ill health in the body politic, which necessitated an ever-continuing use of violence and suppression. Still the progress made in the Russian economy, the advancing standards of the people, the great advance in cultural matters and many other things

16. See pp. 93-105 and 131-137.
17. Printed on 10 October 1938.

continued to impress me. I was eager to visit the Soviet Union but unfortunately my daughter's illness prevented me from going there.

Whatever doubts I had about internal happenings in Russia, I was quite clear in my mind about her foreign policy. This had been consistently one of peace and, unlike England and France, of fulfilling international obligations and supporting the cause of democracy abroad. The Soviet Union stood as the one real effective bulwark against fascism in Europe and Asia. Without the Soviet Union what would be the state of Europe today? Fascist reaction would triumph everywhere and democracy and freedom would become dreams of a past age.

On Spain, on Czechoslovakia, and right through the September crisis, the Communist Party seemed to me to take the straightest line.[18] Their analysis of the situation almost always turned out to be correct, and even when the nerves of most of the progressive groups were shattered, the communists, as a rule, kept their heads and continued to function. They had the capacity to learn from events and to shape their policy accordingly, unlike the British Labour Party which has shown an astounding inability to understand a changing world.

The events in Europe, the growth of fascism, the Spanish revolution, and most of all the deliberate encouragement of the Nazi and fascist powers by the so-called democratic governments of England and France, impressed upon me that the dominant urge of the owning classes is to protect their own vested interests. When nationalism means protection of their interests, then they are nationalists and patriots; but when these interests are endangered, then nationalism or patriotism has little value for them. The ruling classes of Britain and France are even prepared to endanger the security of their empires rather than cooperate for the defence of democracy with Soviet Russia, for such cooperation might release forces which would undermine their privileged position. Democracy means nothing to them, nor freedom, though they talk loudly of them; their main concern is the protection of their vested interests and privileges. That they might lose these anyhow, even by the policy they pursue, is their misfortune.

The Marxian philosophy appeals to me in a broad sense and helps me to understand the processes of history. I am far from being an orthodox Marxist, nor does any other orthodoxy appeal to me. But I am convinced that the old liberal approach in England or elsewhere is no longer valid. *Laissez faire* is dead, and unless far-reaching changes are made with reasonable speed, disaster awaits us, whether we live in England or India. Today the community has to be organised in order

18. The reference is to the British Communist Party.

to establish social and economic justice. This organisation is possible on the fascist basis, but this does not bring justice or equality, and is essentially unsound. The only other way is the socialist way.

Liberty and democracy have no meaning without equality, and equality cannot be established so long as the principal instruments of production are privately owned. Private ownership of these means of production thus comes in the way of real democracy. Many factors go to shape opinion, but the most important and fundamental of them is the property relation, which ultimately governs our institutions and our social fabric. Those who profit by an existing property relation do not, as a class, voluntarily agree to a change which involves a loss of power and privilege. We have reached a stage when there is an essential contradiction between the existing property relation and the forces of production, and democracy cannot effectively function unless this relation is transformed. Class struggles are inherent in the present system, for the attempt to change it and bring it in line with modern requirements meets with the fierce opposition of the ruling or owning classes. That is the logic of the conflicts of today, and it has little to do with the goodwill or ill will of individuals, who might in their individual capacities succeed in rising above their class allegiance. But the class as a whole will hold together and oppose change.

I do not see why under socialism there should not be a great deal of freedom for the individual; indeed, far greater freedom than the present system gives. He can have freedom of conscience and mind, freedom of enterprise, and even the possession of private property on a restricted scale. Above all, he will have the freedom which comes from economic security, which only a small number possess today.

I think India and the world will have to march in this direction of socialism unless catastrophe brings ruin to the world. That march may vary in different countries and the intermediate steps might not be the same. Nothing is so foolish as to imagine that exactly the same processes take place in different countries with varying backgrounds. India, even if she accepted this goal, would have to find her own way to it, for we have to avoid unnecessary sacrifice and the way of chaos, which may retard our progress for a generation.

But India has not accepted this goal, and our immediate objective is political independence. We must remember this and not confuse the issue, for else we will have neither socialism nor independence. We have seen that even in Europe the middle classes are powerful enough to suppress today any movement aiming at vital social change, and when danger threatens have a tendency to go to fascism. The middle classes in India are relatively at least as strong, and it would be the extremity

of folly to estrange them and force them into the opposing ranks. Our national policy must therefore be one which includes a great majority of them on the common basis of political independence and anti-imperialism, and our international policy must be one of anti-fascism.

Marxism and socialism are not policies of violence, though, like most other groups, capitalist or liberal, they envisage the possibility of violence. Can they fit in with the peaceful methods of the Congress, not only as a temporary expedient, but in a straight forward *bona fide* manner? It is not necessary for us to discuss the whole philosophy underlying the doctrine of nonviolence or to consider how far it is applicable to remote and extreme cases. For us the problem is that of India and of India of today and tomorrow. I am convinced that the way of nonviolence is not merely the only feasible course for us, but is, on its merits, the best and most effective method. I think that the field of its application will grow as its effectiveness is recognised. But here in India large numbers of people have recognised it, and it has become the solid foundation of our movement. It has proved effective enough already, but it is quite possible, with further experience, to extend its application in a variety of ways. It is easy to belittle it and point to its failures, but it is far easier to point out the innumerable failures of the method of violence. We have seen powerfully armed countries collapse and sink into servitude without a struggle. India, with all her lack of armed might, would never have succumbed in this way.

There are peculiar dangers in India in the use of the violent method. It cannot be used in a disciplined or organised manner. It will come in the way of mass organisation and mass action, and it is bound to lead to internal conflicts on a big scale, resulting in chaos and the collapse of our movement. I am not optimist enough to imagine that out of this chaos a free, united, and advanced India will emerge.

No one in India thinks in terms of this type of violence. It is out of the question. But there is a feeling that a violent mentality increases the militancy of the masses and is therefore to be vaguely encouraged among the industrial workers or even the kisans. This is folly, and if continued the consequences are likely to be disastrous. So long as a government deals gently with it, it flourishes, but a determined government can crush it easily and completely demoralise the workers. Strength comes not from occasional exhibitions of individual or group violence but from mass organisation and the capacity for mass action, which, to be effective in India, must be peaceful action.

In any event the fact remains that the Congress policy is a peaceful one, and if we adhere to it, we must do so fully and in all honesty. Not to do so is to fall between two stools. Any socialist or communist, who

pays lip service to nonviolence and acts differently, does injury to his ideals and makes people think that his acts do not conform to his professions.

VII

We discuss our differences and sometimes over-emphasize them. Yet it is well to remember that our political movement for freedom has a fundamental unity, and all our differences of outlook and approach do not lessen this unity. That unity comes out most strikingly in times of struggle, but even at other times that unity is apparent. Our debates and arguments do not attack that unity; they are, in fact, based on that unity. This is natural enough, for under the circumstances the independence of India and anti-imperialism are the common urges which move vast numbers of our people.

Real disunity creeps in from the communal side, and we must recognise that there is an ideology, fostered by the principal communal organisations, which cuts at the root of national unity. Yet I do not think that this ideology has affected to any large extent even the members of the communal organisations. As soon as there is an improvement in the communal atmosphere this way of thinking will probably fade out.

So far as the Congress is concerned there is no such difficulty. The real difficulty is not so much in what we do or even in the resolutions we pass, but in our approach and interpretation. There are, as there must be in a vital organisation, numerous sets of opinions shading off into one another, and yet bound together by a common link. Broadly speaking, there are two divisions (and this has practically nothing to do with right or left): those who might be called the Gandhiites and those who consider themselves modernists. These words are not happy or precise, for they indicate that Gandhism is something ancient and out of date, while as a matter of fact it is very modern and perhaps to some extent in advance of our age. But it is different from the modernism of the West, and a certain religious or metaphysical tinge about it does not fit in with the spirit of science which represents the best of European thought today. There is little stress on the mind in it or on the processes of the mind, and too much on an intuitive and authoritarian interpretation. And yet there is no reason why the Gandhian technique should not be considered from a purely scientific point of view and made to fit in with this spirit of science.

The so-called modernists are a motley group: socialists of various kinds and odd individuals who talk vaguely of science and modern progress.

Many of these are relics of an out-of-date nationalism and have little to do with modernism or science.

These two broad divisions must not be confused with right and left. There are rightists and leftists in both groups, and there is no doubt that some of our best fighting elements are in the Gandhian group. If the Congress is looked upon from the right and left point of view, it might be said that there is a small rightist fringe, a left minority, and a huge intermediate group or groups which approximate to left-centre. The Gandhian group would be considered to belong to this intermediate left-centre group. Politically the Congress is overwhelmingly left; socially it has leftist leanings, but is predominantly centre. In matters affecting the peasantry it is pro-peasant.

In trying to analyse the various elements in the Congress, the dominating position of Gandhiji must always be remembered. He dominates to some extent the Congress, but far more so he dominates the masses. He does not easily fall in any group and is much bigger than the so-called Gandhian group. Sometimes he is the single-minded revolutionary going like the arrow to his goal and shaking up millions in the process. At other times he is static, or seemingly so, counselling others to prudence. His continuing ill health has brought a complicating factor in the situation. He cannot take full part in national affairs and is out of touch with many developments; and yet he cannot help taking part in them and giving a lead because of his own inner urge to do so and the demand of the people. It makes little difference whether he is formally connected with the Congress or not. The Congress of today is of his making, and he is essentially of it. In any event, the commanding position he has in the country has nothing to do with any office, and he will retain that dominating place in the hearts of the people so long as he lives, and afterwards. In any policy that might be framed he cannot be ignored. In any national struggle his full association and guidance are essential. India cannot do without him.

That is one of the basic factors of the situation. The conscious and thinking leftists in the country recognise it and, whatever their ideological or temperamental differences with him, have tried to avoid anything approaching a split. Their attempt has been to leave the Congress under its present leadership, which means under Gandhiji's guidance, and at the same time to push it as far as they could more to the left, to radicalize it, and to spread their own ideology.

If this is so during more or less normal periods, still more is Gandhiji's guidance necessary when crisis approaches. A split, or anything like it, at such a critical period when all our united strength is necessary would disable us and make us ineffective.

While Gandhiji and the old leaders of his group are essential for our national work and our struggle, it is becoming increasingly evident that without the active cooperation of other vital elements in the Congress and the country, they will be hampered and their work will be ineffective or, at any rate, less effective. This applies to the so-called modernist group within the Congress; it applies still more to a large but vague body of opinion in the country, and to most of the intelligentsia. It may not apply directly to the masses, but indirectly the masses are affected by others of this way of thinking.

Thus we arrive at the conclusion that the full cooperation of this modernist group is also essential for the successful functioning of the Congress. If *bona fide* cooperation between the two groups is lacking, it is difficult to think in terms of a struggle against the common opponent. There will then be no equilibrium in the Congress and our energies will be spent in internal conflict or, even if this is avoided, an atmosphere of mutual tension and want of confidence in each other will grow up, which is fatal for effective work. People at the top might behave and be tolerant of each other, but lower down in the organisation, indiscipline and conflict will be rampant. The Congress ministries will be greatly affected by this and might find it difficult to carry on. They have a difficult enough task in having to face the disruptive tendencies of communalism.

Every line of thought leads to the conclusion that this united working of the Congress is essential. Is this impossible? Or are the elements composing it incompatible, as has been said? In answering this question we must not think in terms of individuals, but rather of broad policies. The past has shown that this unity of working can be achieved, though there are undoubted difficulties in the way. I have no doubt whatever that there is an overwhelming desire in the rank and file of the Congress to have such cooperation and a united front. The difficulties that arose in the past, though real, were not fundamental. I venture to think that the fault lay on both sides.

United fronts are vague words which have been somewhat abused. Examples of such fronts in Europe have not flourished and have left a bad taste in the mouth. But we must remember that the differences there were far more vital. In China, on the other hand, we see full-blooded cooperation between groups that were bitterly hostile to each other.[19] The national peril compelled them to combine. Are we less sensible of the crises and perils that await us?

19. To forge a united resistance against the Japanese aggression, the People's Political Council, including the Kuomintang, the communists and others, was formed in China in 1938.

The Congress cannot obviously be treated as a sectarian group. It represents the nation and its doors are open to all who believe in its objective and its methods. At the same time it cannot possibly be treated as a kind of federation of groups, a common platform where conflicting opinions and methods are pressed forward for acceptance and attempts are made to arrive at a compromise which enthuses nobody. The Congress has been and is a fighting unit. It must remain so if it is to fulfil its historic purpose. Platforms cannot fight, howsoever joint they might be, nor can debating societies carry on effective struggles.

There has been a tendency in the Congress leadership in the past to become sectarian, narrow-minded, and exclusive. That is undesirable and creates barriers between it and large numbers of people in the Congress and the country. There has also been a marked tendency among these other groups to play the role of an aggressive opposition, to adopt methods not in line with Congress policy, to encourage indiscipline and irresponsibility, to weaken the homogeneity of the Congress, even while they talked of unity and united fronts. That way lies peril and disaster.

A time may perhaps come when the real conscious leftists are strong enough to take charge of the Congress and run it according to their policy. Today they are not in a position to do so. They have neither the national backing nor the discipline for the job. There are numerous groups amongst them, each pulling its own way, with little love for each other, and united only for the moment by a common opposition, a link that will break soon enough. The left today can destroy; it cannot build. They still live in a world of agitation, not fully realising that the Congress and the national movement have grown in stature and speak with authority and responsibility now.

Those among the leftists who are socialists must look at our movement in historic perspective and realise what the present stage of development requires. To overreach the mark now might mean reaction tomorrow. If they are conscious of their historic role, they must prepare themselves for it and gain the confidence of the Congress and the country. Above all, they have to strive their utmost to check indiscipline and the forces of chaos, for out of these neither independence nor socialism will emerge.

Any executive must be homogeneous, in the broad sense of the word, or else it will be ineffective. The executive of a fighting organisation, like the Congress, must inevitably be homogeneous in this sense. But I see no reason why this homogeneity should be interpreted in a narrow sectarian sense. At the same time, every member of the executive must be loyal to it and must not sit there just as a representative of another group which commands his primary loyalty. In the past we had mem-

bers of the Congress Socialist Party in the Working Committee. They continued to remain members of the executive of the Congress Socialist Party and often they spoke in different voices. This seems to me to be undesirable, and a member of the Working Committee should not continue to belong to the executive of a party or group which may have occasion to criticise it. This does not mean a break with the other party but the observance of a rule which will help us to function together, and which will give greater dignity to the Working Committee and its members.

Such were my thoughts when I returned from Europe last November and reviewed the situation. I saw a crisis developing in the states and Gandhiji taking the lead, federation and other issues hung in the air, our provincial governments seemed to be exhausting the possibilities open to them, and the future seemed dynamic. The international situation seemed as bad as it could well be. I thought in terms of approaching crisis in India.

I felt that every effort should be made for the two main groups of the Congress to cooperate together (and these groups, as I have said above, were not leftists or rightists). This cooperation should be based, broadly speaking, on the existing programme and methods of the Congress, and especially on an adherence to the policy of nonviolence. The present leadership should not be markedly disturbed, but fresh blood should be brought in representing the so-called modernist viewpoint. This was not meant to disturb the homogeneity of the Working Committee, but to spread out the responsibility of shouldering the burden of work and guiding the movement. Gandhiji's leadership and guidance were essential, and I believed that he would willingly give it on these conditions. Above all, we should all continue to put an end to the indiscipline and disruptive tendencies in the Congress. This was the essential preliminary to preparation for the struggle that was to come.

VIII

Soon after my return from Europe in November I was asked about the Congress presidentship. Who was going to be President next year? Would I agree to accept office again? I had not given a moment's thought to the matter and was not particularly interested. But I was quite clear in my own mind that there was no question of my re-election. What occupied my mind was not the personality of the President-to-be, but the policy that the Congress should follow, both nationally and internationally. I did not know then that Subhas Babu was likely to stand again.

Some time later I had occasion to discuss this matter with Gandhiji. I gave it as my decided opinion that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad would be the right choice for the presidentship. He seemed to me just to fit in from every point of view. He could carry on the old tradition of the Congress and yet not in any narrow or sectarian way. He had breadth of vision, a deep understanding of events, and round him every section of the Congress would gather and offer cooperation. He represented to me the ideal emblem of united working which I sought, especially at this critical juncture.

I learnt that Subhas Babu was thinking in terms of re-election. I did not like this idea for a variety of reasons. I disliked it for the same reason as I disliked my own election. I felt that both he and I could serve our cause much better without the burden of the presidentship. During the past year his presidentship had made little difference to the policy of the Congress, and he had functioned more or less as a chairman. He had taken hardly any interest in the A.I.C.C. office and the organisational side of the Congress, and this had led to a certain deterioration. The rapid growth of the organisation required quick and efficient handling, and the A.I.C.C. office was unable to cope with this owing to the fact that the President was largely occupied with local and provincial affairs in Calcutta.

I felt instinctively that an election contest with Subhas Babu as a candidate would probably lead to various difficulties and to the creation of an atmosphere prejudicial to that united working which I deemed essential. The question of left or right did not arise. Indeed, so far as Gandhiji was concerned, he expressed his wish repeatedly in my presence that he would like a socialist as President. Apart from my own name, he mentioned Acharya Narendra Deva's name. But, for the reasons I have indicated above, I did not like the idea of a socialist being President at this stage. I wanted the burden to be shouldered by those who were primarily responsible for the policy to be followed, and I had no desire to change that policy radically then for fear of producing serious complications in our organization. I insisted, therefore, on Maulana's name. There was, so far as I know, no desire on anyone's part to keep out a leftist as such or to insist on a rightist President.

I had a talk with Subhas Babu on the occasion of the Working Committee meeting and told him how I thought about this matter. I presumed that he appreciated my line of reasoning.

Maulana Azad did not readily agree to our proposal. Extraordinarily sensitive and retiring as he is, it is no easy matter to push him forward in this age of conflict. Still, I thought he would ultimately agree, and indeed when I went to Almora I had the definite news that he had

agreed. But soon after, probably because of the possibility of a contest, he decided to withdraw.

It was only on my way down from Almora, on the very eve of the presidential election, that I read the various statements that had been issued. I was pained to read them and fervently wished that everybody might have suppressed the urge to issue statements to the press and take the world into confidence. There seems to be a particular passion in India for all of us (I am an old and inveterate sinner in this respect) to rush with a statement to the press, and our friends of the press encourage us in this failing.

The charges that Subhas Babu had made in his statements[20] regarding a conspiracy to accept federation, and even plans for the formation of ministries, astonished me, for I had not heard anything about all this. If even a rumour to this effect had reached us, it was up to us to thrash it out in the Working Committee. So far as I know, there was never any difference of opinion in regard to federation in the Working Committee. Indeed, there was hardly any marked difference over any other matter, except to some extent about the formation of coalition ministries, on which Subhas Babu held strong views, which I was unable wholly to share. But this was hardly a matter of principle.

I felt, therefore, that very unfair charges had been made on colleagues, and although no names were mentioned, the public would inevitably imagine that some members of the Working Committee were involved. This was a new and serious development in the upper circles of our political life, and it meant the creation of difficulties which it would not be easy to overcome. A small group could hardly function together in a responsible position if there was utter lack of confidence and intrigue was suspected. If this happened at the top, what of the lower ranks of

20. For instance, in a statement on 27 January 1939, Subhas Bose had said: "Though the Congress resolution on Federation is one of uncompromising hostility, the fact remains that some influential Congress leaders have been advocating conditional acceptance of the Federal Scheme in private and public. Until now there has not been the slightest desire on the part of the Rightist leaders to condemn such activities.... Can anybody challenge the fact that the belief is widely held that during the coming year, a compromise will be effected between the British Government and the Right-wing of the Congress? This impression may be entirely erroneous, but it is there all the same and nobody can deny its existence. Not only that. It is also generally believed that the prospective list of Ministers for the Federal Cabinet has been already drawn up. In the circumstances it is natural that the Left or Radical bloc in the Congress should feel so strongly on the question of the Federal scheme and desire to have an Anti-Federationist in the Presidential Chair."

the Congress, and how was the growing indiscipline which was weakening our movement to be dealt with?

Later, after the President's re-election, he passed certain direct orders in provincial and local matters, sometimes over the head of the provincial Congress committee concerned. Some of these orders seemed to me to be wrong, but what filled me with apprehension was the manner in which all this was done. It seemed to me that our organisation would suffer grievously if this method was followed. Then came the Working Committee meeting which could not be held.

The President's re-election was a tribute to his personality and popularity. It was the delegates' way of showing that they wanted a stiffening up of our policy. It was also an expression of disapproval of what was considered authoritarianism at the top. It was not a defeat for Gandhiji, as he called it, but indirectly it might be considered a criticism of the Working Committee which had functioned under his guidance. The curious part of it is that the President himself had been responsible for what the Working Committee had done.

Under ordinary circumstances it would have been right and proper for those members of the Working Committee who had been dubbed rightists, and so condemned, to retire and be replaced by others. The fact that personal charges had been made against them of a serious nature made their position still more untenable.

What is to be done now? It would be somewhat presumptuous and a little premature for me to suggest what steps should be taken to resolve our internal crisis when unusual events and strange developments are taking place from day to day. The Congress President, on whom the burden primarily rests, is most unfortunately lying ill. Gandhiji has today started a fast the consequences of which no one can tell.

But within a few days we meet at Tripuri and each one of us must shoulder his or her part of the burden and responsibility. We dare not shirk them. Let us hope that all of us will do so with forbearance and dignity, keeping ever in mind the cause for which we have laboured and the high purposes which have animated us. We shall take our part, great or small, in the decisions that will be made and abide by them in all loyalty. For the organisation is greater than the individuals of whom it consists, and the principles we stand for are more important than personalities. We must avoid all personal bickering and private animosity, and view our problems from the high level which befits the Congress and the chosen representatives of the Indian people.

It would be easy and desirable for me, as for others, to make suggestions about matters of policy and programme. But for the moment other issues take precedence, and these affect the very structure and life

of our great organisation. There are no vital differences about policy or programme today, but even if there were such differences, our first concern must be to maintain the Congress as the representative organ of the Indian people and the effective fighting organisation for India's freedom. If it ceases to be so, what do our resolutions matter and where does our brave talk lead us?

Many people talk about the weakness and vulnerability of British imperialism today and imagine that if we shout loudly enough or threaten persistently, the walls of that citadel will fall down. British imperialism is weak today and the empire of Britain seems to be fading away before our eyes. The forces of evil and reaction dominate the world today and are triumphantly aggressive, and British imperialism lines up with them. But it is by no means so weak or vulnerable as our wishes lead us to think, and, outside scripture, shouting has not been known to bring down the walls of citadels or cities. We dare not underrate the strength of the adversary. If we win it will be by our own strength, not the weakness of our opponent, for however weak he might be, he will know how to profit by our lack of strength.

It is a patent fact today that the British Government cannot hinder our progress to independence if we can hold together and act in a disciplined and united manner. It is only our own weaknesses and lack of unity and discipline that give it the chance to hold us down and frustrate us. We are strong enough today, potentially; how can we convert that potentiality into actuality?

Long years of struggle and training have hardened us and disciplined our minds and bodies. Instead of talk we spoke the language of action, and even our mildest whispering had weight because it had the promise of action behind it. Success has come to us in some measure, and that very success has made people forget that training and discipline which had laid the foundation for it. It is strange how short our memories are, how soon we forget.

A generation has gone by since the Congress took to this new path of disciplined and peaceful struggle. Many of our dearly loved captains and comrades are no more, and we, who linger on still, feel lonely as our old companions in the struggle drop out. New people come and fill the ranks and grow rightly impatient at the slowness of change. They are eagerly welcomed with their fresh enthusiasm and desire to achieve. They represent today more than we do, and tomorrow is theirs. But these newcomers have no memory of that training and discipline of the long years of trouble. Will they profit by the experience of the passing generation, or will they stumble along and themselves learn in that bitter school? The world is heavy with sorrow and tragedy

stalks everywhere. Abyssinia, Spain, China, Palestine—can we forget them? Can we forget the mad folly of our communal troubles? There is no easy walk-over to freedom anywhere, and many of us will have to pass through the valley of the shadow again and again before we reach the mountain-tops of our desire.

Dangers and difficulties have not deterred us in the past; they will not frighten us now. But we must be prepared for them like men who mean business and who do not waste their energy in vain talk and idle action. The way of preparation lies in our rooting out all impurity and indiscipline from our organisation and making it the bright and shining instrument that will cleave its way to India's freedom.

6. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

Lucknow
March 1, 1939

My dear Subhas,
I received your second telegram yesterday in Lucknow.[2] I did not send a telegraphic reply as I do not want to complicate the situation further by formally resigning. Under the existing circumstances the Committee cannot function as it cannot raise even a quorum. Apart from this, under the circumstances I feel I cannot be of much help to you.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his telegram of 28 February 1939, Subhas Bose inquired from Jawaharlal whether he had actually resigned from the Working Committee as his resignation had not been received although his press statements indicated so.

7. The Resolution on the National Demand[1]

The Congress has, for more than half a century, striven for the advancement of the people of India and has represented the urge of the Indian people towards freedom and self-expression. During the past twenty years it has engaged itself on behalf of the masses of the country in a struggle against British imperialism and, through the suffering, discipline and sacrifice of the people, it has carried the nation a long way to independence which is its objective.

With the growing strength of the people it has adapted itself to the changing and developing situation; and, while pursuing various programmes, has ever worked for the independence of India and the establishment of a democratic state in the country. Rejecting the Government of India Act and with a full determination to end it, it decided to take advantage of the measure of provincial autonomy, restricted and circumscribed as it was, in order to strengthen the national movement, and to give such relief to the masses as was possible under the circumstances. To the federal part of the Act the Congress declared its uncompromising opposition and its determination to resist its imposition.

The Congress declares afresh its solemn resolve to achieve independence through a constituent assembly elected by the people and without any interference by a foreign authority. No other constitution or attempted solutions of the problem can be accepted by the Indian people. The Congress is of the opinion that, in view of the changed conditions in India as reflected by the increasing popularity and strength of the national movement, the remarkable growth of consciousness among the masses, the new awakening among the people of the Indian states, as well as the rapid development of the world situation, the time has come for full application of the principle of self-determination to India, so that the people of India might establish an independent democratic state by means of a constituent assembly. Not only the inherent right and the dignity of the people demand this full freedom, but also the economic and other problems which press insistently on the masses which cannot find a solution; nor can India get rid of her poverty and keep pace with

1. Moved by Jawaharlal at the subjects committee meeting at the Tripuri Congress, 11 March 1939. *The Hindu*, 12 March 1939.

modern progress unless the people have full opportunities of self-development and growth, which independence alone can give. Provincial autonomy affords no such scope for development, and its capacity for good is being rapidly exhausted; the proposed federation strangles India still further, and will not be accepted. The Congress, therefore, is firmly of opinion that the whole of the Government of India Act must give place to a constitution made for a free India and by the people themselves.

An independent and democratic India will try to resolve our great problems rapidly and effectively, and will line herself up with the progressive peoples of the world, and thus aid the cause of democracy and freedom.

With a view to a speedy realisation of the Congress objectives and in order to face effectively the national and international crises that loom ahead, this Congress calls upon all parts of the Congress organisation, as well as the Congress provincial governments and the people generally, to prepare themselves to this end and to promote unity and in particular to strengthen, purify and discipline the organisation, removing the weaknesses and corrupting influences so as to make it an effective organ of the people's will.

8. On Criticism of the Resolution[1]

I have incorporated certain suggestions made in the amendments of Sardar Mangal Singh and Mr. Meherally,[2] but I am unable to accept

1. Speech at the subjects committee meeting, 11 March 1939. From *The Hindu*, 12 March 1939.
2. Mangal Singh in his amendment suggested that the constituent assembly must be elected on the basis of adult franchise and that the form of government to be established by means of a constituent assembly must be an independent democratic state.

   Yusuf Meherally's amendment sought close contact with the kisans and parliamentary activities for alleviating kisans' conditions, social legislation, civil liberties for coordinating and developing the struggles in the states as an integral part of the national movement and under the Congress guidance, and the organisation of a trained and disciplined volunteer corps.

others, primarily because they are not consistent with the basic principle underlying my resolution. I am fundamentally opposed to the ultimatum tactics.[3] In the first place, it is not proper to expose our cards. Secondly, we might have to begin the struggle earlier than six months. Lastly, I am opposed to the ministers resigning as is suggested in the amendments. In my opinion, the ministers ought to fight the government from within.

The Congress, in recent years, has gained strength. But it is the strength of the inner organisation that counts in winning the country's struggle for freedom. The time for empty threats has passed. The days of British imperialism in India are numbered, and yet today British imperialism is not so weak as to be frightened by mere wordy ultimatums and empty threats as has been suggested in the amendments.

The demand for the resignation of ministers with a view to creating deadlocks is entirely wrong tactics as it would give the impression to the public that all that is required in the coming struggle is the resignation of the ministers and a boycott of British goods. I assure you that the coming struggle is going to be a grimmer one in which thousands may have to sacrifice their lives. We should, therefore, prepare the masses from now onwards and this preparation must be made on proper lines and not on false grounds.

It is wrong to say that the Congress government in Bombay had ever made any provision for federal election. It was the interim government which had prepared the budget, which, within about fifteen days of their coming into office, the Congress government had to present. The provision was thrown out by the Bombay Assembly.

3. For instance, Lakshmi Kant Misra had suggested a six months' ultimatum and this was rejected by the subjects committee.

Subhas Bose, in his presidential address at the Tripuri Congress on 10 March 1939, had also said: "... The time has come to raise the issue of Swaraj and submit our national demands to the British Government in the form of an ultimatum."

9. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
March 16, 1939

My dear Krishna,

The cables about Tripuri must have confused you sufficiently. It is not an easy matter to explain the various developments briefly and I cannot say that I am particularly happy at events. I had a bad time there because I did not fit in with any so-called group. Behind the words, right and left, there were many other factors at play, the most notable being the emergence into prominence of certain adventurist individuals who wanted to exploit the left to their own advantage. Nothing could have been worse for the left than to be closely associated with these individuals and groups and their peculiar tactics.

On the one hand, the presidential election, quite apart from the undesirable features, represented a healthy reaction against certain tendencies in the Congress; on the other hand, the voting in the Congress itself represented, among other things, a reaction against adventurism. Many people in the left realised that they were drifting into an unholy alliance with people who had no policy or programme, or any position in the country. Sarat Bose's speech[2] opposing the main resolution of the Congress on the national demand was an astounding performance.

Leftist circles, after a feeling of triumph due to the presidential election, feel somewhat disheartened by the course events took. The reaction is natural. I think, however, that the left has gained something solid and will profit by this experience. The Congress Socialist Party may be shaken up within its own ranks to some extent but it has gained in prestige in the country, because of its dissociation from the adventurist elements. The Communist Party people tried to follow the same path but not very successfully and changed their attitude three times in the course of the two days, largely owing to pressure from Bengal and some other people.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Sarat Bose stated on 11 March 1939: "This resolution contains nothing but words, ineffective words, which do not lay down any plan of action, words which do not give our people any lead....Do you want to postpone the struggle till all the people are united? If that is what the resolution means, it will be more honest to say, 'Let us abandon our fight'. Let us not deceive our people....If you do not adopt a firm line of action we shall be betraying the cause of the country."

The situation is not by any means clear and the part I am likely to play in future is less clear in my own mind.

Meanwhile, Europe rushes ahead in a fantastic fashion and Czechoslovakia is no more. The policy of appeasement goes on to its predestined end. How events will shape themselves during the next few weeks, I do not know. But the sense of crisis and tension increases. Inevitably, I tend to view Indian problems with this European background. But few others do so.

I do not know what will happen to Nambiar now and whether he will stay on at Prague or not. I think it will be a good thing if he came to India for a while. I am enclosing a cheque for £15 for him. Will you please credit it to his account? This has nothing to do with the *National Herald*.

The Egyptian delegation is having a good reception wherever they go and they have been tremendously impressed by what they have seen so far as they go on saying: "All this is a thousand times more than we had expected." What has impressed them most has been the organisational side of the Congress, for the Wafd Party has hardly any organisation.

On our return from Tripuri, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad managed to slip on the station platform and hurt himself badly. He has got a fracture in the left knee-joint. Most of my time during the last three days has been spent in looking after him.

I am going to Delhi for two days to see Gandhiji.

I am not sure yet about Indira's programme. But probably she will go to England next month. She feels like going and I have left it to her. My sister Krishna and Hutheesing also intend going to England next month. Perhaps they will go together.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

10. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
March 22, 1939

My dear Bapu,
Thank you for your letter. I do not know the names of the Congressmen who are supposed to have approached a government official in Delhi.[2] The names have not been mentioned to me.

I received today the following telegram from Subhas from Jharia:

> Received your telegram[3] only yesterday. Does it represent your personal views or views of others also and if so of whom?

To this I sent the following reply:

> Your telegram. My previous message sent my own behalf but after conversation with Gandhiji who keenly feels Congress work suffering owing lack direction office arrangements. Also national, international crises demand ceaseless vigilance. Later informed him of my message.

Maulana is much the same. His pain is generally less and the swelling has also partly subsided. He is waiting for your visit here and after that intends to go to Calcutta.

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Bhulabhai Desai and some local Congressmen of Delhi had met the home secretary in February 1939 in connection with the state prisoners in Delhi jail.
3. Not available.

11. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
March 24, 1939

My dear Bapu,
I enclose copy of a letter I am sending to Subhas.[2] As you will notice from it I had another telephone message, this time from Sunil Bose[3] from Calcutta, on the same lines as the Jharia one. On learning that you had gone back to Delhi he apparently intended sending you a telegram to the same effect.

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See the succeeding item. The letter was, in fact, written to Sarat Bose and its copy sent to Subhas Bose.
3. (1894-1953); elder brother of Subhas Bose and a well-known cardiologist.

12. To Sarat Chandra Bose[1]

Allahabad
March 24, 1939

My dear Sarat,
Gandhiji arrived here this morning to see Maulana Azad and he showed me your letter to him dated the 21st March.[2] I have read this with sorrow and surprise. There are, as we all know, differences of opinion amongst leading Congressmen on matters of policy and programme and we have often given expression to our respective viewpoints, although we have succeeded in pulling together. Generally speaking,

1. *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 324-328.
2. He had complained to Mahatma Gandhi about what he called "mean, malicious and vindictive" propaganda carried on against Subhas Bose by "some ex-members of the Working Committee" in Tripuri and cited a number of "instances of unfairness and impropriety in the conduct of the proceedings of the Congress" by Maulana Azad.

Gandhiji's programme has been followed by the Congress and his leadership accepted. Personally I do not see any harm in such differences, provided the common link remains and we act in unison. They are signs of vitality in our movement. But your letter hardly refers to any question of policy or programme. It deals with personal issues and brings serious charges against particular individuals. This brings the argument to a lower level and it is obvious that if such opinions are held by any individual or group against another, mutual cooperation in a common task becomes impossible. I do not know how far your letter represents Subhas's views on the subject. In any event it is obvious that the personal questions you have raised, unless cleared up, offer a barrier to any effective cooperation.

Your letter makes the personal issue acute. But the issue was there even before and, as you know, it dominated the scene at Tripuri. When I saw Subhas two or three days after the presidential election, I sensed the importance of this and begged him to clear it up. Very soon after, on February 4th, I wrote to him a long letter in which I asked him to clear up, so far as he was concerned, the political issues involved as there had been far too much vague talk of left and right which threw no light on the situation.[3] Further I referred to the personal aspect. I wrote as follows:

> Public affairs involve principles and policies. They also involve an understanding of each other and faith in the *bona fides* of colleagues. If this understanding and faith are lacking, it is very difficult to cooperate with advantage. As I have grown in years I have come to attach more and more importance to this faith and understanding between colleagues. What am I to do with the finest principles if I do not have confidence in the person concerned? The party rivalries in many provinces illustrate this and we find extreme bitterness and often an utter lack of scruples among people who are ordinarily honourable and straight. I cannot stomach this kind of politics and I have kept absolutely aloof from them for these many years. I function individually without any group or any second person to support me, although I am happy enough to possess the confidence of many. I feel that this provincial deterioration is now being transferred or extended to the all-India plane. This is a matter of the most serious concern to me. So we come back to this: behind the political problems, there are psychological problems, and these are always more difficult to handle. The only

3. See pp. 450-455.

WITH SOME CONGRESSMEN IN DELHI, MARCH 1939

WITH MAHATMA GANDHI IN DELHI, MARCH 1939

way to do so is perfect frankness with each other and I hope therefore that all of us will be perfectly frank.

Unfortunately Subhas did not have the time or the inclination to clarify the political issues or the personal ones. When he was going to see Gandhiji at Wardha I begged him again to deal with the personal aspect frankly as the allegations he had made in his statements were a serious matter and could not be left where they were. His subsequent explanation has not improved matters at all.[4] He promised to talk with Gandhiji about this but it subsequently transpired that he did not even mention the subject.

This matter thus came up before the Congress, as I feared it would, and coloured the consideration of other issues. My own attitude in this was peculiar to myself and I could not wholly agree with the views of any of the others on either side. I refrained therefore from taking any part in the discussion either in the subjects committee or in the open Congress. I felt strongly however that the President's allegations in his statements were unfair to his colleagues and should be withdrawn. My intervention in the open Congress was merely to act as the mouthpiece of the acting President and explain in English the procedure that was to be followed. For some reason or other some delegates did not want me to speak at all, although they did not know what I was going to say, and there was the organised obstruction by them which you saw.[5] I felt that it would be improper for me to retire or give in to this obstruction of a few delegates when nearly a hundred thousand delegates and visitors, who observed the most remarkable calm and discipline, wanted to hear me. So I held on for an hour and a half. I must confess that I lost my temper for a few seconds when I told you that this was hooliganism and fascist behaviour. I was telling you about this and not the audience although some of my words might have been carried on the

4. In a statement on 3 March 1939, Subhas Bose stated: "I have carefully scanned all the statements I made prior to the election. Nowhere do I find any allegation against any individual Congress leader whether he be a member of the Working Committee or not. All that I did was to give expression to what the public were thinking and saying in the country....As a matter of fact, when I happened to speak against the Federal Scheme I was twitted and taunted by people who told me to my face that I was living in a fool's paradise and that in due course office acceptance in the provinces would be followed by the acceptance of the Federal Scheme, perhaps with some slight modifications."

5. On 12 March 1939, as soon as Jawaharlal rose to explain the difficulties of taking a poll on M.S. Aney's proposal to defer consideration of the resolution moved by G. B. Pant, a section of delegates staged a noisy demonstration and refused to hear him.

microphone. I am sorry I lost my temper but you will no doubt realise that the strain on me was considerable.

I have explained this at some length as I was personally concerned in the incident. The other matters that you refer to are largely outside my knowledge, but the charges you make are so surprising that I can hardly believe they are true. There was, I believe, extensive canvassing during the Congress and all manner of things might have been said. Having a distaste for this kind of thing I kept far away and did not even visit the delegates' camps except to attend a meeting of the U.P.P.C.C. right at the beginning. Your charges are however against some leading members of the old Working Committee. I know nothing about these and I am sure you will agree with me that such charges cannot be brought lightly against individuals without specific proof. It was absurd for anyone to say that Subhas's illness was a fake and none of my colleagues even hinted at this to my knowledge. In fact we were all greatly exercised over it.

As for what Bhulabhai Desai is supposed to have said, it is for him to reply. I must presume that you were mistaken as I cannot conceive that he would say such a thing.[6]

It is not for me to say anything about the acting President's rulings or conduct. But I am sure you will agree with me on reconsideration that he occupied a very difficult position and conducted the proceedings with dignity and fairness. He might have stretched a point in allowing you to move your amendment to the resolution on the national demand but, as it happens, you had full scope to place your point of view before the Congress.[7] In the voting you were the one and only person who opposed the resolution. May I say how astonished I was at this for I could not conceive any Congressman who considered himself a leftist opposing it?

During my stay at Tripuri all manner of reports and rumours from the delegates' camps reached me, some of a very unsavoury character. But I refused to give credence to any without proof. One matter, deserving of your enquiry, was the issue of delegates tickets to Bengal delegates. It was stated by responsible persons, and confirmed to some extent by the A.I.C.C. office that a large number of tickets were issued for persons

6. Sarat Bose had alleged in his letter that "sitting on the dais in the subjects committee pandal Bhulabhai Desai went on describing the Rashtrapati and his barrister brother (meaning myself) as scoundrels."
7. Maulana Azad, acting as President, had not admitted an amendment moved by Sarat Bose on the federation and national demand resolution on the ground of lack of notice.

who had not come to Tripuri. Further that large sums had been spent in bringing delegates to the Congress.

I think that it is desirable to have some kind of investigation into the various charges brought by you or others. It is improper that such charges should be made vaguely, and the fact that many people believe in them does not substantiate them. We cannot allow our public life to descend to a level of mutual recrimination.

You refer to the Congress ministers. I am no great admirer of all their activities but I am surprised at your objecting to the part they took at Tripuri. Must they refrain from taking part in the Congress because they are ministers? This is a novel proposition and, I think, a wrong one. So far as I know they acted in their individual capacities, as they were perfectly entitled to do. What do you mean by their 'material influence'? I think this should be cleared up as it has strange implications which are entirely unjustified. I do not understand also why the participation by ministers in Congress activities should mean their dominating the Congress. They are very far from this.

I had hoped that it would be possible, in these days of internal and external crisis, to have a large measure of cooperation among Congressmen and laboured to this end at Tripuri and before. It seems to me obvious that the essential preliminary to any action or leftist programme is that we should function effectively. If we do not do so then all programmes are futile and lead nowhere. And yet it is just this absence of functioning that is creeping upon us slowly but surely. Because of this I wired to Subhas Bose from Delhi suggesting that the Working Committee be formed soon in accordance with the Tripuri resolution. I further suggested that the A.I.C.C. might be held to consider the international situation.

The Tripuri resolution envisaged cooperation between the Congress President and Gandhiji and the policy was more or less to continue without a break. Your letter seems to imply that this is not possible. Whether this is Subhas's view also, I do not know. If it is, then obviously there is an impasse which can only be resolved by the A.I.C.C. and the sooner the A.I.C.C. is held the better.

I feel as strongly as ever that it is essential for us to be clear in our own minds about the policy and programme to be pursued. More especially the so-called left should be clear. It is dangerous for the left to be vague and to allow itself to drift to adventurist positions. I invited Subhas to clarify his position and I would suggest to you to do the same. I find many people who call themselves leftist suggesting methods and policies which are very rightist and moderate. Take the

question of a coalition ministry in Bengal.[8] This may be conceivable under certain circumstances but it is definitely a rightist move now. I do not understand why you should desire a coalition ministry in Bengal, under dubious auspices, and yet object to the Congress ministries elsewhere which function, whatever their failings, under better circumstances.

You refer to obstruction at Tripuri by some of the old members of the Working Committee. I do not know what you mean by this, unless you object to an individual or group putting forward a proposal before the Congress. Apart from this I do not know what obstruction there was.

You have used language in your letter which is exceedingly strong and bitter. I have read this with great regret and I have failed to find any justification for it. What pains me most is the overshadowing of all political issues by the personal equation. If there is to be conflict among Congressmen, I earnestly hope that it will be kept on a higher level and will be confined to matters of policy and principle.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Subhas. Gandhiji has also seen it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. In his presidential address at the Bengal Provincial Political Conference at Jalpaiguri on 4 February 1939, Sarat Bose had advocated the formation of a coalition ministry in Bengal to reduce the Hindu-Muslim tension. Later, in his letter of 4 April 1939, he wrote that once the Congress had decided to accept office which was a "rightist move", there should be no objection to the formation of coalition ministries "provided the Congress programme is also accepted in the latter."

13. Rumours in the Press[1]

I have read with great surprise various accounts of Mahatma Gandhi's recent visit to Allahabad and of the conversations that are supposed to

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 26 March 1939. *The Leader*, 28 March 1939.

have taken place there.[2] All these accounts are entirely fanciful and are full of suggestions which have no basis in fact. When I went to Delhi a week ago I took a message from Maulana Azad to Gandhiji in which the Maulana stated that he had been looking forward very much to meeting Gandhiji and discussing various matters with him but, to his great regret, his accident had incapacitated him from going to Delhi. Thereupon Gandhiji told me that he would try his best to come to Allahabad to see the Maulana although it was difficult for him to leave Delhi then. He managed to find a day and came to Allahabad for a few hours returning the same evening. As he was leaving for the station I had a telephone message from Jharia to the effect that the doctors had no objection to Gandhiji visiting Subhas Babu. I promised to inform Gandhiji of this but pointed out that he was actually on the way to Delhi then, where he had important engagements the next day. Three hours after Gandhiji's departure I had a similar message from Dr. Sunil Bose from Calcutta. Last evening Maulana Azad went to Calcutta for further treatment. The injury he is suffering from is a serious one and he is likely to be bed-ridden for probably two months or more.

May I request newspapers and their correspondents not to indulge in fanciful surmises which complicate a situation which is none too easy?

2. There were rumours that Mahatma Gandhi, Vallabhbhai Patel, Abul Kalam Azad and Jawaharlal had discussed names for the Working Committee and the decision would be communicated to the Congress President, Subhas Bose.

14. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
March 31, 1939

My dear Krishna,

...The situation here continues to be exceedingly complex and disturbing. Subhas Bose's attitude is the reverse of helpful and under his direction a virulent propaganda is being carried on all over Bengal. Subhas has declared that the Congress resolution, which referred to the presidential election controversy, is *ultra vires*, although he himself allowed

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

it to be discussed in the Congress.[2] This means that he will carry on this conflict in various ways. He might even refuse to accept the decision of the A.I.C.C. He has completely alienated the Congress Socialist Party and many other advanced elements.

The communal situation is also very bad. Also there are so many other factors which increase our difficulties. However all this is only a fraction of what you are passing through in Europe.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

2. In a statement on 25 March 1939, Subhas Bose had said, "If the frankly unconstitutional and *ultra vires* clause in Pandit Pant's resolution regarding the formation of the Working Committee had not been passed by the Tripuri Congress, I would, in accordance with the Congress constitution, have announced the personnel of the new Working Committee on 13 March 1939."

15. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

Allahabad
3.4.1939

My dear Subhas,
Your long letter of the 28th March has only just reached me and I hasten to reply. First of all I should like to say how glad I am that you have written to me fully and frankly and made it clear to me how you feel about me and about various incidents. Frankness hurts often enough, but it is almost always desirable, especially between those who have to work together. It helps one to see oneself in proper perspective from another's and a more critical viewpoint. Your letter is very helpful in this respect and I am grateful to you for it.

It is not an easy matter to answer a letter which runs into twenty seven typed sheets and is full of references to numerous incidents as well as to various policies and programmes. I am afraid therefore that my reply will not be as full and detailed as it might be. To endeavour to deal with all these matters properly one would have to write a book, or something like it.

Your letter is essentially an indictment of my conduct and an investigation into my failings. It is, as you will well realise, a difficult and

1. J.N. Correspondence, NMML. Also published in *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 350-363.

to push out, of Gandhiji and his group would weaken us greatly at a critical moment. I was not prepared to face that contingency. At the same time I dislike many of the developments that were taking place and disapproved of the general attitude of Gandhiji in regard to certain matters, such as states and ministries.

I went to Europe and when I came back I was faced by the old problem again. It was then that you met me and probably I told you what I had in mind. My own mind was clear but my action would depend on Gandhiji's reactions to the situation. If he still held to the 'homogeneous' Committee idea, then I was out of it. If not, then I would try to cooperate as a member of the Working Committee. I was not prepared to do anything to split the Congress on this issue. I was full of the developing crises in India and outside and felt that we might have to face a big struggle in the course of a few months. That struggle, without Gandhiji's active participation and leadership, was not likely to be an effective one.

My conception of this struggle was not on the basis of federation. I wanted the Congress to treat federation as almost a dead issue and to concentrate on the demand for self-determination and constituent assembly, and further to place this in relation to the world crisis. I felt that too much positive stress on fighting federation helped in keeping this issue alive and prevented us from thinking, and later acting, on the more fundamental plane. When I was in England you issued a statement to the effect that you would fight federation to the last and that if the Congress accepted it, you would still fight it.[3] Now this statement of yours had exactly the contrary effect in England. Everybody said that if the Congress President is thinking in terms of resigning on the issue of federation, Congress must be on the point of accepting it. I felt helpless and could not easily meet this argument.

I framed two resolutions on this basis. There was nothing extraordinary about them except that the stress was different. All our resolutions for the Working Committee, as you know, have to be framed with a view to being agreed to by other members. It is easy enough to draft something, which pleases one better, but which does not meet with the approval of others. My idea in placing these resolutions before the Working Committee was to prepare the ground, as well as the mind of the country, for a more comprehensive and far-reaching resolution at the

3. Subhas Bose stated on 8 July 1938: "So far as I am concerned, should any unthinkable contingency arise of the Federal Scheme being adopted by the majority within the Congress, it would probably be my duty to relieve myself of the trammels of office so that I would be free to work for what I consider to be in the best interests of the country, namely, open, unmitigated and unrelenting opposition to the monstrous Federal Scheme."

next Congress. However, my resolutions were not agreed to and I was told that they should be considered at Congress time.

It was at this meeting of the Working Committee that I proposed a resolution about the Jews. You will remember that just previously there had been a terrible pogrom in Germany against the Jews and the world was full of this. I felt that we must express our opinion in regard to it. You say that you were "astounded when I produced a resolution seeking to make India an asylum for the Jews". I am surprised to learn that you felt so strongly about this as, so far as I remember, you did not express yourself definitely at the time. But is it fair to characterise my resolution as one seeking to establish an asylum for the Jews in India? I have the old draft before me. It says: "The Committee see no objection to the employment in India of such Jewish refugees as are experts and specialists and who can fit in with the new order in India and accept Indian standards". It was not from the point of view of helping Jews that I considered this question, though such help was desirable where possible without detriment to our country, but from the point of view of helping ourselves by getting first-rate men for our science, industry, etc., on very moderate payment. Quite a number of countries sent special commissions to Vienna, after the Nazi occupation, to pick out good men. Turkey has profited greatly from such specialists. It seemed to me an ideal chance to get the right type of technicians and specialists. Their coming here on low salaries would have helped us also to bring down other salaries. They would have come for a period and not to settle down for ever. And only a limited number would have come, and only such as were of definite use to us and accepted our standards and political outlook. However, this resolution also not being agreed to was dropped.

You refer to a speech I delivered in Delhi after the Congress presidential election. I am sorry I have not seen the press report you refer to although someone told me about it later. As a matter of fact, I said nothing at all about you or your election. I was referring to Delhi and Punjab Congress troubles and disputes and said that there was far too much desire for office and canvassing, etc., for this.[4] I deprecated

4. In his letter Subhas Bose said: "At a speech in Delhi you were reported to have said that you disliked that canvassing should have been done by or for me. I do not know what exactly was in your mind, but you were blissfully oblivious of the fact that my election appeal was made after Dr. Pattabhi's appeared in the press.... The other side had a regular organisation; moreover, they had all the big guns and yourself against me, as well as the full weight of Mahatma Gandhi's name and prestige—and the majority of the provincial Congress committees were also in their hands. As against them, what did I have—a solitary individual?..."

No greater insult could be offered to a person than to suggest that he has secretly betrayed the cause he publicly stands for and even arranged a mutual distribution of ministries in the federation. It was a fantastic statement and it hurt to the quick.

Such a statement was an effective barrier to any further cooperation between you and Gandhiji, for the others in a sense represented Gandhiji. I was keen that there should be cooperation between you two as the alternative seemed to me highly injurious. I pressed you therefore to clear this barrier and to have a frank talk with Gandhiji. I thought you agreed to do so. I was astonished to find later from Jaya Prakash and Gandhiji that you did not even mention the subject. I must confess that this upset me greatly and it made me realise how difficult it was to work together with you.

Gandhiji further told us that the impression he had gathered from your visit to him was that you were not keen on having his cooperation, although you had asked him rather casually for it. It seemed that you were thinking in terms of forming a Working Committee of various persons whom you had already considered (and perhaps promised) for this purpose. You were of course perfectly entitled to do so but all this indicated that you were thinking in terms other than those of cooperation with Gandhiji and his group.

The action you had taken in regard to the Punjab election, the Delhi election, and in Nellore in Andhra alarmed me—not the action so much as the manner of taking it.[6] You took direct action without reference to the A.I.C.C. office or, in the Andhra case, to the P.C.C. In the Punjab, you sent a telegram stopping an inquiry on behalf of the A.I.C.C. office. In Delhi, you took action without previous reference to the P.C.C. Personally I think that your Delhi decision was incorrect but that is not important. I felt that you were allowing yourself to be influenced directly by individuals and groups and overriding the impersonal and routine method of approach which an office should adopt. This method seemed to me full of dangers.

You say that "in the habit of interfering from the top, no Congress President can beat" me. I realise that I am an interfering sort of a person, but so far as the work of the A.I.C.C. is concerned, I do not recollect having interfered with the work of the office of the A.I.C.C. though I sought to influence it frequently. My deliberate policy was

6. This refers to the elections of office-bearers of the provincial Congress committees.

(as circulars to this effect were issued) not to interfere, and in provincial matters even for the A.I.C.C. office not to interfere, unless there was no other way out.

While these various developments were troubling me, your telegrams to Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai came, and these were interpreted to mean that you did not want us to meet at all in the Working Committee or even to transact routine business.[7] As you say you did not mean any such prohibition, but the telegrams were certainly open to this interpretation. It was possible that a further inquiry might have been addressed to you to find out what you meant. But this seemed undesirable as it meant pressing you to allow us to do something which perhaps you did not want done just then.

All this seemed to make clear that you intended to pursue a path with companions of your own choice, and that the old members of the Working Committee were an encumbrance and not particularly wanted. It became quite essential for them to resign; not to do so would have been unfair to you, to the country and to themselves, and contrary to democratic procedure. I do not understand how they could have stayed on or how their resignation created a deadlock. Not to have resigned would have created an impasse as this would have prevented you from taking such action as you thought proper.

I adopted, as you have rightly pointed out, a rather foolish attitude. I did not actually resign and yet I acted as if I had done so.[8] The reason for this was that I entirely disagreed with the whole approach of my colleagues. I felt strongly that under the circumstances I could not offer you my cooperation, but I felt equally strongly that I

7. Bose informed Patel on 21 February 1939 that owing to his illness the meeting of the Congress Working Committee "must be postponed till the Congress" and requested him to "consult colleagues and wire opinion."
8. Subhas Bose stated : "Twelve members resigned. They wrote a straightforward letter—a decent letter in which they made their position unequivocally clear. Considering my illness, they did not say one unkind word about me, though they could have criticised me adversely if they had wanted to. But your statement— how shall I describe it? I shall refrain from using strong language and simply say it was unworthy of you. (I am told that you wanted your statement to be substantially embodied in the general letter of resignation, but that this was not agreed to.) Then your statement gave one the impression that you had resigned, as the other twelve members had done—but up till now, to the general public, your position remains a mystery. When a crisis comes, you often do not succeed in making up your mind one way or the other—with the result that to the public you appear as if you are riding two horses."

was in a sense breaking with the others. In fact, the latter feeling was the stronger as it meant the end of a chapter which had been a long one. If you will read the first of the series of articles I wrote in the *National Herald*, you will perhaps get some inkling as to how my mind was functioning.[9]

There was no question of my statement[10] of February 22nd being embodied in the general letter of resignation. My statement was obviously a personal one and it could not be treated otherwise. I had been pressed hard to join the others in their resignation. I had refused. I did not even see their letter of resignation till after it had been sent to you.

May I explain a little further what has troubled my mind very greatly during the past two months or so? I was against your standing for election for two major reasons: it meant under the circumstances a break with Gandhiji and I did not want this to take place. (Why this should have necessarily happened I need not go into. I felt that it would happen.) It would mean also, I thought, a setback for the real left. The left was not strong enough to shoulder the burden by itself and when a real contest came in the Congress, it would lose and then there would be a reaction against it. I thought it probable that you would win the election as against Pattabhi, but I doubted very much whether you could carry the Congress with you in a clear contest with what is called Gandhism. Even if by any chance you secured a majority in the Congress, this would not represent a strong enough backing in the country without Gandhiji and effective work, and even more so preparation for a struggle, would be very difficult. There were so many disruptive tendencies already existing in the country and instead of controlling them, we would add to them. All this meant weakening our national movement just when strength was necessary.

These were my two main reasons for my opposition to your re-election. What some Bombay friends told you was not wholly correct. What I said was that if you stood for certain definite leftist principles and policies, then there might be some point in your seeking re-election, as the election would then be an education in ideas and policies. But an election on a more or less personal basis did not even have this merit. In any event, I did not think your standing for election desirable for the reasons I have given above.

9. See pp. 488-490.
10. See pp. 485-487.

My statements of January 26th[11] and February 22nd are of course different but I do not think they represent any change in outlook.[12] The first statement was issued before your election and I wanted to avoid, as far as I could, taking sides. I had been asked to appeal for Dr. Pattabhi. I had not agreed to this. My statement was therefore deliberately toned down. Later, certain additional facts came to my notice. I saw your election statements and the various other things happened to which I have referred above. I saw also that you were closely associated with a number of odd individuals who were apparently influencing you considerably. These individuals were, some of them, personally desirable, but they did not represent to my mind any leftist opinion, or any organised opinion. That is why I call them adventurist in the technical political sense. A spirit of adventure is of course a very desirable thing in an individual or a nation. But in a political contest the word has a certain meaning, not by any means dishonourable to the person concerned. I did not at all like this adventurist tendency and considered it harmful to our cause. The association of vague leftist slogans with no clear leftist ideology or principles has in recent years been much in evidence in Europe. It has led to fascist development and a straying away of large sections of the public. The possibility of such a thing happening in India possessed my mind and disturbed me. The fact that in international affairs you held different views from mine and did not wholly approve our condemnation of Nazi Germany or fascist Italy added to my discomfort, and looking at the picture as a whole, I did not at all fancy the direction in which apparently you wanted us to go.

I was not quite sure of this direction or your views, although the general indications disturbed me. Hence I wrote to you some time early in

11. See pp. 477-479.
12. Charging Jawaharlal with inconsistency, Subhas Bose had written: "In your Almora statement you concluded by saying that we should forget persons and remember only principles and our cause. It never struck you that you want us to forget persons, only when certain persons are concerned. When it is a case of Subhas Bose standing for re-election, you run down personalities and lionise principles, etc. When it is a case of Maulana Azad standing for re-election, you do not hesitate to write a long panegyric. When it is a case of Subhas Bose vs. Sardar Patel and others, then Subhas Bose must first of all clear up the personal issue. When Sarat Bose complains of certain things at Tripuri (viz., of the attitude and conduct of those who call themselves orthodox followers of Mahatma Gandhi) he is, according to you, coming down to personal questions, when he should be confining himself to principles and programmes. I confess that my poor brain is unable to follow your consistency."

February and asked you to write a note to clear these matters up.[13] You did not have time to do so and then you fell ill. My difficulties remained and continued to trouble my mind. It is a reflection of all this that you see in my statement of February 22nd and, soon after, in my articles in the *National Herald*. The possibility of a Working Committee being formed with odd elements in it, holding no consistent viewpoint together but linked merely by a common opposition, was not an agreeable one. I did not see how I could join it. I had had difficulty enough with the old Working Committee, although, in spite of differences, we understood each other and had managed to pull on together for years. I had no desire to continue in that position; much less could I welcome association in a small executive, between some of the members of which and me there was not even that link of common understanding.

One personal aspect I should like to mention also quite frankly. I felt all along that you were far too keen on re-election. Politically there was nothing wrong in it and you were perfectly entitled to desire re-election and to work for it. But it did distress me for I felt that you had a big enough position to be above this kind of thing. I felt also that you could influence policies and groups far more if you had acted otherwise.

You remind me of what Vallabhbhai said about you and point out that I have not criticised him for it.[14] So far as the various statements that were issued at election time are concerned, I did not like them at all. I wish that none had been issued. But, speaking from memory, I do not remember anything special in them which required my intervention. Vallabhbhai's phrase that your election would be harmful to the country's cause was used in a private telegram sent to Sarat. I think it does make a difference whether one says something in a public statement or a private letter or telegram. The fact that this message was sent to your brother is also significant. It is a strong remark to make but not one which has any dishonourable intent. If Vallabhbhai is convinced that India's good requires Gandhiji's leadership and that your re-election might deprive India of this leadership, then he can well think

13. See pp. 480-485.
14. Bose had written: "I have already asked you if you consider it fair on the part of Sardar Patel to declare that my re-election would be harmful to the country's cause. You never said a word that he should withdraw such a remark—thereby indirectly supporting his allegation. Now I would like to ask you what you think of Mahatmaji's remark to the effect that, after all, I am not an enemy of the country. Do you think that such a remark was justified? If so then did you put in a word on my behalf to Mahatmaji?"

and say so. Just as however much we might respect Gandhiji, we may well come to the conclusion that his leadership is dangerous and harmful to the country.

I wrote to you that your re-election has done some harm and some good. I still hold to that opinion though the harm might outweigh the good, in the sense that it leads to disruption in our ranks. The good was that it shook up the complacency of some of our old leaders. I have no doubt in my mind that the vote in your favour was largely a vote against this complacency and to some extent against the methods that had been followed. I have pointed this out repeatedly and strongly to Gandhiji and others and begged of them to pay heed to it. There was substance in the protest which took shape in the voting at the presidential election.

You remind me that while on the one hand I object to your interfering from the top, I had written to you on February 4th that you were far too non-assertive and passive as President. That is true. The interference to which I referred came just before and mostly after your re-election. It did not refer to the previous period. When I referred to your non-assertiveness I was thinking of your attitude in the Working Committee during the past year. I had hoped that you would give a stronger lead there, though I did not want a split. Nor did I want you to interfere as President in provincial matters.

You refer to certain members of the Working Committee meeting in your absence and behind your back and deciding to set up Dr. Pattabhi for the presidentship. I think some misapprehension has been caused by Vallabhbhai's statement about this and I am glad you have given me a chance to clear this up. So far as I know there was no such meeting. What happened at Bardoli was that Maulana Azad was pressed by Gandhiji and me, as well as others, to agree to stand. He was reluctant to do so. The day I was leaving Bardoli (the day after you left) I went to say good-bye to Gandhiji and others. Some of us were standing in the verandah of Gandhiji's cottage. I forget who was there apart from Maulana and Vallabhbhai. Maulana again said that he hesitated to shoulder the responsibility. Thereupon Vallabhbhai said that in the event of Maulana finally refusing, Dr. Pattabhi should be asked to stand. I did not fancy Dr. Pattabhi's name for this and so, without contradicting it, I again said that Maulana must be made to agree. I left Bardoli soon after. On arrival in Allahabad I had a telegram informing me that Maulana had agreed. I went off straight to Almora and remained there till the day before the presidential election.

As regards the 'aspersions' resolution the facts are these. Apart from pressing you more than once to clear this matter up, as I considered

joint working between Gandhiji and you impossible unless this was done, I was not further interested in the matter. As to what Gandhiji or Rajendra Babu or Sardar Patel thought about it, it is for them to say. The definite impression they gave me was that they attached great importance to it.[15] When we reached Tripuri, I was told so again. My own definite opinion was that the matter might be referred to by you or by Rajendra Babu or both in brief statements to the A.I.C.C. and that no resolution should be brought up about it. The others would not agree to this. A suggestion was made that a resolution should be drafted for the A.I.C.C. The idea was not, I believe, to avoid the Congress but rather to clear the air before the subjects committee began. As usual, I was asked to draft the resolution. I said I would try to represent their viewpoint in so far as I could, although I did not agree with it. I drafted a brief resolution for the A.I.C.C. which expressed confidence in the old Working Committee and in Gandhiji's leadership and policy and further stated that there should be no break in the policy. There was no reference to 'aspersions' in it nor to the Working Committee being formed according to Gandhiji's wishes. The resolution was not approved and later a longer and amended resolution was produced by Rajendra Babu probably in consultation with others.[16] (Govind Ballabh Pant had not arrived till then.) I did not like this resolution and said so. I said that I did not think the 'aspersions' clause was objectionable *per se*, as it had been put down, but still it seemed to me undesirable and that it would produce resentment, especially as you were ill. I was told that very great importance was attached to some reference to this matter in the resolution as, without some such clearing up of the position for those whose honour had been tarnished, it would be impossible for them to offer their cooperation. For them to function, this was essential, as well as an adherence to Gandhiji's policy. Further, it was added that the reference had been made as mild and as impersonal as possible. Beyond that they could not go.

15. Subhas Bose contended that from talks with Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and Abul Kalam Azad at Tripuri, he gathered that their "main grievance or allegation against me referred to the period prior to the Bardoli meeting of the Working Committee in January last", and "my election statement" was an "additional grievance". He added: "So your clients did not attach as much importance to the 'aspersions affair' as you did as their advocate....I may tell you that since the presidential election, you have done more to lower me in the estimation of the public than all the twelve ex-members of the Working Committee put together."
16. In the resolution, moved by G.B. Pant at Tripuri, the Working Committee also deplored "that any aspersions should have been cast against any of its members."

I had little to say after that. I made it clear that I thought the resolution unfortunate in some particulars, but as it was a matter of honour for them, I had no further concern with it. I would take no part in its discussion.

After that I do not know what happened. It was in the A.I.C.C. meeting that I found that Govind Ballabh Pant was going to move it. You were present there. Later, when the resolution was referred to the subjects committee, I approached some of the sponsors of the resolution and again suggested that some changes might be made. I pointed out that the original resolution was meant for the A.I.C.C. more or less as ending an episode and a controversy. But now that it was going to the Congress, it should be considered in a different light. Again I was told that it was a question of honour and unless this was cleared, how could they think in terms of cooperation. You will remember that they had prior to the Congress told you that they would be unable to cooperate with you. This resolution was looked upon by them as a possible bridge which might lead to an effort at cooperation. Without it there was no bridge.

I made one more strenuous effort to get the resolution varied on the eve of the open session when you were lying very ill. I failed, though there was ready agreement to accept Mr. Aney's proposal to refer it to the A.I.C.C. Mr. Aney seemed to think, and he gave all of us the impression, that his proposal was approved of by many friends in Bengal. We even gathered the impression (it may have been wrong) that you also approved of his proposal. What happened subsequently you know.

The next day at the Congress session held in the subjects committee pandal, as Govind Ballabh Pant was moving the resolution, Suresh Majumdar came to me and suggested that the resolution be referred to the A.I.C.C., that is he revived Mr. Aney's proposal.[17] He said that there had been a misunderstanding the night before and this proposal would be agreed to readily now. I told him that I was helpless in the matter especially at that stage when Pant was actually moving it. I had tried my best in various ways previously and he had better go to the parties concerned. I do not know what he did subsequently.

As for what was happening behind the scenes at Tripuri and in the delegates' camps probably your knowledge is greater than mine. I did not budge out of my hut, except for particular functions, and received few visitors. I was also partly occupied with the Egyptian delegates.

17. See pp. 246 and 292.

You refer to my 'clients'. I fear these 'clients' are not particularly pleased at my advocacy, and I have succeeded in becoming very unpopular with them. Quite a remarkable feat—to displease almost everybody concerned.

Whether this 'aspersions' resolution was unconstitutional or *ultra vires*, it is for you to decide. There is not much point in my giving my opinion on the question. I am naturally interested in Congress work being carried on and to see the removal of the sense of impasse that we have today. I am surprised that you should think that I had commenced a public agitation against you. After my talk with Gandhiji, I was much exercised and thought long over the situation. To my misfortune, I am affected by international happenings more than I should be. A very grave crisis had arisen in Europe which might have led to war. I felt that we should not passively await events. Sarat's telegram to Gandhiji indicated that he was not coming to see him. So nothing was being done while events marched. Thereupon I decided to send the telegram.[18] I showed it later to Gandhiji and one or two others. I did not give it or show it to any pressman. As a matter of fact, I did not mention it to anyone apart from the one or two persons with Gandhiji at the time. Even now I have not shown it to others. Probably somebody got second-hand information about it and gave it to the press.

Do you not think that the comparison between the resignation of the twelve Working Committee members before Tripuri and the position after the Congress is not a sound one? There was or should have been no stalemate because of their resignations. There might have been a stalemate if they had not resigned and insisted on functioning. Far from protesting against their resignations, I think there was no other course open to them on personal as well as public grounds.

When I sent you the telegram from Delhi, I knew well that you could not come over there.[19] I wanted you to suggest that Gandhiji might go to meet you in Dhanbad. I think he would have gone if you had invited him. Naturally he felt rather hesitant to do so uninvited. Whether the Tripuri resolution was valid or invalid, the initiative lay with you. Unless he knew how you would react to it, he could not take any step. Probably you felt that he might not be able to come to Dhanbad. When your secretary telephoned to me here, Gandhiji was

18. See p. 526.
19. In his telegram of 20 March 1939, Jawaharlal had urged the Congress President to meet Mahatma Gandhi early to settle the personnel of the Congress Working Committee in order to resolve the deadlock in the Congress organisation.

actually going to the station on his way to Delhi. Even if a personal meeting in the near future was difficult, I thought you might correspond with each other and thus clear the ground. You are very unjust to me when you suggest that I sent you the telegram from Delhi to embarrass you or to lead an agitation against you.

I might add that, so far as I am concerned, I did not like at all the idea of Gandhiji staying on in Delhi waiting for Gwyer's[20] award. Nor did I fancy his fast or the reference to Gwyer. I did not think a lot of the terms of settlement which terminated Gandhiji's fast.[21] I expressed my pleasure at his ending his fast and no more.

This letter is a terribly long one and I have written it almost at one continuous sitting, immediately after receiving your letter. Yet there are so many other matters which you mention and about which I could say something. There is no need for me to discuss my own failings which you point out. I admit them and regret them. You are right in saying that as President I functioned often as a secretary or a glorified clerk. I have long developed the habit of being my own secretary and clerk, and I fear I encroach in this way on others' preserves. It is also true that because of me Congress resolutions have tended to become long and verbose and rather like theses. In the Working Committee, I fear, I talked too much and did not always behave as I should.

I objected to your use of the words left and right because I thought that you were using them vaguely and loosely. Of course there is such a thing as a left and a right. It exists in the Congress and in the country. But unless the terms are used concisely they might and do create confusion.

I do not think I ever said that Rajkot and Jaipur[22] overshadow other issues. What I probably said was that Rajkot, meaning thereby Gandhiji's fast and its various implications, dominated the scene in many ways.

About the Bombay Trades Disputes Bill, I reached India after it had become law and the firing had taken place in Bombay. I mention this merely as a fact and not as an excuse.

20. Sir Maurice Gwyer (1878-1952); chief justice of India and president of the federal court, 1937-43; vice-chancellor of Delhi University, 1938-50.
21. Mahatma Gandhi broke his fast on 7 March 1939 as the Viceroy assured him that his charges of breach of faith against the ruler of Rajkot would be referred to the chief justice of India. Gwyer in his award held that the Thakore Saheb had undertaken to appoint the persons whom Vallabhbhai Patel might recommend and had not reserved any discretion to reject names which he did not approve.
22. See pp. 413 and 415.

In the U.P. Congress we have a rule that no one can be president for two years running of any committee from the P.C.C. to the village.

You refer to corruption in bringing delegates from various provinces to Tripuri. So far as my own province is concerned, I believe that something of this kind was done, though I am not sure. Probably elsewhere it was done also. May I suggest an inquiry in all the provinces? This would tone up our organisation.

You ask me for my interpretation of Pant's resolution. I do not think it was a motion of no-confidence, but it was certainly one which indicated a want of full confidence in your judgment. Positively, it is a vote of confidence in Gandhiji.

Am I a socialist or an individualist? Is there a necessary contradiction in the two terms? Are we all such integrated human beings that we can define ourselves precisely in a word or a phrase? I suppose I am temperamentally and by training an individualist, and intellectually a socialist, whatever all this might mean. I hope that socialism does not kill or suppress individuality; indeed I am attracted to it because it will release innumerable individuals from economic and cultural bondage. But I am a dull subject to discuss, especially at the tail-end of an inordinately long letter. Let us leave it at this that I am an unsatisfactory human being who is dissatisfied with himself and the world, and whom the petty world he lives in does not particularly like.

I dare not now, in the early hours of the morning, write about my views in regard to national or international affairs. I am not silent about them as a rule. As you have observed, I talk rather a lot and write even more. I shall leave it at that for the present. But I would add that while I champion lost causes frequently and condemn countries like Germany and Italy, I do not think I have ever given a certificate of good conduct to British and French imperialism.

I sent you, a day or two ago, some of the series of articles I contributed to the *National Herald* before Tripuri. One was missing. I am now sending the full set separately. I have not written any article for the *Free Press Journal* or any other paper recently.

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

16. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
April 4, 1939

My dear Krishna,
Indira has postponed her departure by a week as she could not get good accommodation. She will now sail from Bombay by the P. & O. *Strathaird*. It is possible that my sister Krishna and Hutheesing might also go by that boat. But they intend stopping in Egypt for two weeks.

The position here is outwardly static but in reality it grows worse. There seems an unbridgeable gap between Gandhiji and Subhas. Subhas owing to his illness has become even more difficult to deal with and he is full of an idea that there is a conspiracy against him. Gandhiji, on the other hand, does not quite appreciate the numerous failings of some of his own colleagues which resulted in the vote during the presidential election. For the moment Subhas has become a kind of a symbol of Bengal and it is quite impossible to argue with or about symbols. I feel very helpless and I see no way out for the moment.

One of Subhas's grievances against me, which is coming out more definitely in his correspondence, is his objection to the foreign policy I have sponsored. In a recent letter to me he talks about the folly of my espousing lost causes and of always condemning Germany and Italy. He calls himself a realist in foreign as well as internal politics. This realism of his leads him to entirely different conclusions. With this background you can appreciate how difficult it is for me to think of close cooperation with him. On the other hand, Gandhiji thinks more and more on the lines of a homogeneous group forming the Congress executive. Either way I do not see where I come in.

Subhas has lately come to the conclusion, most unjustifiably, that I am pulling the strings against him from behind the scenes. As a matter of fact, I have done my utmost to stand up for him and to tone down the hostility of the old leaders to him. But for some reason or other the Calcutta press has followed this line against me with vigour and I have no desire for argument. This particular hostile attitude will no doubt die down and it has no great importance. But what is more important is the emergence, in Bengal and elsewhere, of communal and semi-communal groups who have become champions of Subhas and who are taking up today a more definite attitude in regard to foreign affairs.

1. J.N. Correspondence, NMML.

You will find in the *Hindusthan Standard* favourable comments on Savarkar's speeches attacking Congress foreign policy.

Apart from the Congress tangle, there are many other distressing developments. There is of course the communal question and the riots. The U.P. Government has had to face this specially and even in Allahabad we have had a little dose again. The thing is almost becoming chronic on a low scale. There is no doubt that it is affecting the police and the lower magistracy. Both of these, in our province, happen to be overwhelmingly Muslim, in spite of the fact that Muslims are only 15% of the population. For the last thirty years or more the government followed a policy of increasing the Muslim element in the police service.

Then there are the higher officials of the I.C.S., often English. Some of these, I believe, have functioned honestly while others, I am sure, have done everything to nurse communal tension.

In Cawnpore and Benares specially, and to some extent elsewhere, there has been a strong upheaval of Hindu sentiment and communalism. They say that the government does not protect them from Muslim attacks, the police and officials usually favour the other side, and so they must organise themselves for their own defence. Defence leads to aggression when something happens. This something has so far usually been an unwarranted Muslim attack on a marriage procession or music in a temple.

But the real thing about the communal riots is still more disturbing. There can be no doubt that they are now political in origin and they are kept up for political reasons, that is to say, the idea that by permitting disorder and terrorist methods the government will be discredited and will surrender. This idea which was vague enough to begin with has developed, though, of course, there are many elements in the Muslim League who are conservatively inclined and fear too much disorder. It is not a question now of gaining this privilege or that but rather of preparing for the day when a big crisis comes to India and the world. There is a general feeling that the British Empire is fading away and will not be able to do much in India. When this happens the group which is organised for violence may succeed and a general state of disorder will help it to succeed. Definitely fascist ideas are spreading not only in the Muslim League but in the Hindu Mahasabha also. You know that the Muslim League has, to some extent, expressed its sympathy with Franco. There is also the belief that Hitler is helping the Arabs in Palestine. The Hindu Mahasabha praises Japan. All this is so far in a minor key.

Have you heard of the Khaksar movement?[2] This started in the twenties, I think, rather quietly. It is called a non-political movement, meant for social service. This has developed rapidly in northern India, almost entirely amongst the Muslims. It has military technique and training (without arms) and absolute submission to the leader, Inayatullah Khan.[3] They have fine military camps annually, last year's one consisting of ten thousand men. The leader Inayatullah has recently come out in praise of Hitler and his methods.

It is said that the Khaksars number about four hundred thousand, well-uniformed, and more or less trained men. Where is all this money coming from? There have been no obvious public collections and I am told that they have large sums at their disposal. It is believed, I think even by government circles, that the funds come from the Nazis.

In western India, Hindu communal volunteers have grown in recent years. There also, it is suspected, that foreign money comes in.

All these are some of the disturbing aspects of the present-day India. There are many others. Unfortunately Subhas is curiously insensitive to all this and, to some extent, is exploited by these various elements. He is not in touch with many developments outside Bengal. Gandhiji senses these things better by instinct. But his way of dealing with them is sometimes difficult to understand.

You might have seen the Chatfield Report.[4] I understand that behind it there lay definite instructions for the rapid increase of munition production in India. What is interesting is that these munitions are of a type which cannot be effectively used against a foreign enemy. They are more suitable for dealing with frontier villages or internally in India.

2. The Khaksar movement aimed at purifying Islam. Politically, it urged the Congress and the Muslim League to resolve their differences and fight for the full independence of India; it was declared an unlawful association by all the provincial governments in June 1941. The movement was disbanded by Allama Mashriqi after independence.
3. (1888-1963); popularly known as Allama Mashriqi; a wrangler at Cambridge; imprisoned several times during the freedom struggle.
4. Alfred Ernle, later Baron Chatfield (1873-1967); first sea lord and chief of naval staff, 1933-38; chairman, expert committee on Indian defence, 1938-39; Minister for Co-ordination of Defence, 1939-40.

   The committee on Indian defence headed by him was appointed in 1938 to indicate "the role of the Land and Air Forces of India in relation to the defence problems of India and Europe". It reported that India was liable for the defence of the empire and recommended that India be made self-sufficient in munitions.

I must end this letter now as I am going soon to Lucknow for a few days. There is so much else that I might write to you about. But for the moment it is enough to set you thinking.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

17. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
April 17, 1939

My dear Bapu,
Pyarelal has been sending me copies of your correspondence with Subhas. I fear that this correspondence has reached a deadlock and I do not see any way out. I am in the unfortunate position of a person who does not agree with either of the viewpoints taken. Because of this, I have thought it best to remain silent and not to write to anybody or say anything in public. But it seems to me that it is not good enough for us to drift along in this helpless manner. The issues are too serious and the consequences distressing to contemplate.

It seems to me that there is no way out unless you are prepared to shoulder the responsibility yourself to a very large extent. You have to give the lead and you cannot wait for things just to happen. Subhas has numerous failings but he is susceptible to a friendly approach. I am sure that if you made up your mind to do so you could find a way out.

I realise the importance of Rajkot,[2] but I think you will agree with me that the larger Congress issue is infinitely more important and is likely to govern all our activities. Therefore I would beg of you to address yourself to the latter, even at the cost of your not attending to Rajkot affairs for a while. The idea that you may not attend the A.I.C.C. meeting is alarming. That simply means that conditions should go on deteriorating and that the Congress should go to pieces. The right way is for some settlement to be arrived at before the A.I.C.C. meeting. To leave this issue to the A.I.C.C. is to make confusion worse confounded.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Also printed in *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 379-381.
2. After Gwyer's award, the claims made by the Muslims, the Bhayats and the depressed classes caused a deadlock in the composition of the committee for suggesting reforms; and Mahatma Gandhi renounced the award and conceded defeat.

I wish you could have met Subhas. Quite apart from any feasible outcome of this visit, this would have been helpful in many ways.

The delay in the formation of the Working Committee has been bad. But for us to meet only to quarrel will be worse. It would be preferable, though I dislike it intensely, for the A.I.C.C. meeting to be postponed by a week or two in order to suit your convenience and to give more chance to have a settlement.

I have just received a letter from Subhas in which he asks me to pay a visit to him for a few hours to discuss the situation.[3] I fear our talk cannot lead to anything definite, for I cannot deliver the goods. Still, I cannot say no to him and I propose to go there in a day or two. What I shall say to him is not clear in my mind. For the moment I think that the only advice I can give him is for him to say to you that he leaves it to you completely to suggest the names of the Working Committee. He may make certain suggestions of his to you but on the clear understanding that you may accept them or reject them. As regards the programme, this will be governed by the resolutions of the Tripuri Congress, which, among other things, indicate definitely that there should be no break with the past programme.[4]

If Subhas agrees to this course, then responsibility rests with you and you cannot shirk it. I think now, as I thought in Delhi, that you should accept Subhas as President. To try to push him out seems to me to be an exceedingly wrong step. As for the Working Committee, it is for you to decide. But I do think the idea of homogeneity, if narrowly interpreted, will not lead to peace or effective working. Some kind of homogeneity there must of course be. Otherwise we cannot function. I do not think that a few individuals in the Working Committee make any radical difference to the policy. Of course, it is difficult to accept individuals whose *bona fides* one does not trust at all. But the principle of homogeneity should not be extended to differences in political approach, provided the common background of work is accepted. After all, we must remember that by having a homogeneous executive we do not create a homogeneous Congress. The latter is easier of achievement if we have a larger homogeneity in view.

3. On Subhas Bose's invitation, Jawaharlal went to Jealgora in Dhanbad district on 19 April 1939.
4. In a resolution moved by G.B. Pant, it was stated that "the Congress declares its firm adherence to the fundamental policies of the Congress which have governed its programme in the past twenty years under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi and is definitely of the opinion that there should be no break in these policies and that these should continue to govern the Congress programme in the future."

You have been greatly distressed at developments in the Congress during the last many months and you have condemned corruption, etc.[5] I think every sane element in the Congress, whatever his political views, is eager to deal with this problem. I have been paying a great deal of attention to many factors outside the Congress and I must say that I am alarmed at the trend of events and the development of new forces. I am not merely referring to the communal question. There are deeper forces at work. If, at this juncture, the Congress weakens and disrupts, the consequences may well be disastrous. We must hold together. I would beg of you, therefore, to make up your mind to settle this matter, even though that way of settlement may not be to the liking of all of us. Only so can we go in the direction of our choice. Otherwise we are stuck up.

A word about myself. It is my misfortune to be too much of an individualist. I found it very difficult to pull on, in the later days, at the Working Committee meetings and probably I became a nuisance to my colleagues also. And this not through any lack of goodwill on either side. Hence I felt that I should not continue in it. For even more potent reasons I felt it difficult to think of joining a Committee of a different kind formed by Subhas. My feelings are still the same. But in view of this deadlock that has arisen, if a way out is found and my presence in the Committee is considered helpful, I shall agree to serve as such.[6] This is not a prospect that I cherish. But I do feel that I cannot shirk this responsibility if it is offered to me under the present extraordinary circumstances.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

5. Regretting large-scale impersonation that took place at Bombay in the election of delegates for the Tripuri Congress, Mahatma Gandhi wrote in *Harijan* of 28 January 1939: "Besides impersonation there is the wholesale tampering with the Congress registers which contain bogus names... Strife at Congress elections is becoming a common occurrence. The indiscipline of Congressmen is on the increase everywhere. Many of them make irresponsible, even violent, speeches...Kisans of Bihar are supposed to be Congressmen. Their leaders are Congressmen. But Bihar ministers live in perpetual dread of kisan risings and kisan marches.

   Out of the present condition of the Congress I see nothing but anarchy and red ruin in front of the country. Shall we face the harsh truth at Tripuri?"
6. Jawaharlal did not join the Congress Working Committee constituted by the A.I.C.C. at Calcutta.

18. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Allahabad
April 17, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I wrote to you a few days ago about the Jamshedpur matter. I do not know how this has progressed. If you want me to go there, please let me know in good time.

I have remained silent and passive in regard to the Congress deadlock for the last three or four weeks. That of course does not mean that I have not been agitated by it. But I saw no way of doing or saying anything helpful and so I remained silent. I have just received a letter from Subhas in which he invites me to visit him for a few hours to discuss the situation. I cannot throw much light on it, I fear, but I cannot say no to him and I propose to be with him on the 19th.

I have just written a letter to Bapu, a copy of which I enclose.[2] This will give you some idea of how I feel about it. I should like to make an earnest appeal to you also to move in this matter. I think that you are one of the very few persons who can help greatly in solving this present tangle. What you should do I will not venture to suggest, but it is essential that something must be done now before the A.I.C.C. meets and we quarrel amongst ourselves and in public view. Perhaps it might be desirable for me to meet you. Could you please let me know where you are likely to be during the next two or three days? As I shall probably be with Subhas on the 19th you might send me a telegram there.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

19. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

Allahabad
April 17, 1939

My dear Subhas,
I have just received your letter of the 15th April.[2] Pyarelal has been sending me copies of the correspondence between you and Gandhiji. I do not know if all the letters have been sent to me. But some of the earlier ones have certainly come.

I must confess that I am very much distressed by developments and I do not quite see what should be done, or rather anything that I see is so out of harmony with what you suggest, or what Gandhiji suggests, that I am left high and dry. Under these circumstances, I feel peculiarly helpless. And yet it is obvious that each one of us must shoulder the responsibility of putting an end to this impasse and cannot shirk it. It is not a personal matter or a question of prestige for the individuals concerned but the far greater question of how the Congress and India are going to function in these critical days.

Your suggestion that I should visit you has come rather suddenly and taken me by surprise. I have a number of engagements during the next few days and for the moment I do not quite see what to do with them. But I cannot say no to you, specially as the question in issue is so important. I shall try my utmost to visit you soon. I shall wire to you when I can come.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Subhas Bose had written that he had told Mahatma Gandhi repeatedly that he could neither form a "homogeneous cabinet" as insisted upon by him nor announce his programme. He added that "after making some alternative suggestions, I have ended by saying that, failing everything, he should accept the responsibility of forming the Working Committee—since I cannot give effect to his advice to form a homogeneous cabinet..." He also wanted the stalemate to be ended before the A.I.C.C. meeting by personal discussions with Mahatma Gandhi.

20. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
April 18, 1939

My dear Krishna,
Your cable came a short while ago and I have sent an answer. It is not easy for me, under present conditions, to say what the Congress may or may not do. Nobody except Subhas can speak in the name of the Congress, and he can speak alone without being sure of the action to follow. This is really unfortunate and I still see no way out. There is a complete deadlock between him and Gandhiji. As for me, I do not agree with the position taken by either of them. Subhas has asked me to see him and I am going to do so tomorrow.

So far as the Government of India Act is concerned, at any rate, our provincial Congress committee has taken up a clear line and treated it as a major issue. We have directed the provincial government to resist it and not to submit to any incursion by the central government.

In the event of war, I am almost sure that conflict with the central government will be precipitated on many issues.

Regarding the Paris conference,[2] I wrote to you some time back that I think you should certainly go there as our member of the I.P.C. It would have been better for you to get an authority from Subhas, but even otherwise you should go. So far as I am concerned, I associate myself with that conference and you can convey my greetings to it.

As for your suggestions about our foreign policy being controlled by a committee, all this is premature when even the Working Committee cannot be formed. Of course, I agree with you that it is very necessary. But there is one difficulty that if we go into details, differences of opinion arise. Subhas, as you know, differs from me considerably in regard to foreign policy. Gandhiji does not differ fundamentally but his non-violence comes in the way to some extent.

I think it is time that we attracted attention to the problems of defence. If you can send material on this to us, it will be welcome.

You should carry on, as you have been carrying on, but you will no doubt realise the difficulty of your, or for the matter of that of my,

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. The World Committee against War and Fascism organised a World Conference on Peace, Democracy and the Defence of the Rights of Man to be held in May 1939 in Paris.

definitely committing the Congress to a policy which might be objected to by Subhas or others.

I am afraid I cannot help you at all in regard to the refugees.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

21. To Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

Allahabad
April 20, 1939

My dear Subhas,
I have sent the following telegram to Gandhiji:

> Had long talk with Subhas. Feel your guidance control situation essential. Earnestly hope you will agree. Meanwhile trust you will not commit yourself by public statement. Please wire when what route going Calcutta.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

22. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
April 20, 1939

My dear Bapu,
I returned this morning from Jealgora. I had several hours' talk with Subhas yesterday. I need not go into this in any detail but two things stand out. One is the absolute necessity of a solution of the present deadlock before the A.I.C.C. meets. Two, that you are the only person who can do it.

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.

As regards the first, it seems to me clear that if we face the A.I.C.C. without any constructive suggestion, there will be a continuation of trouble and conflict which would be bad enough at any time, and disastrous under present circumstances and in view of the deepening crisis.

As regards two, I realise fully the difficulties that have arisen and which have been accentuated by the correspondence you have had with Subhas. I feel, however, that it is possible to tone down those difficulties if you are prepared to take a good deal of responsibility. So far as the programme of work is concerned, there are obvious differences between what Subhas says and what many others feel. But in actual practice, it is clear that there should be no basic change in our programme or outlook, as indeed has been decided by the Congress. In effect, it comes to this that the Working Committee should be formed according to your wishes and the programme should be carried through under your guidance. No one can tell what the future will bring, but for the present there will be general relief, if this is done, and a clearing of atmosphere.

I understood from Subhas that he was agreeable to do this, not in any spirit of resentment but because he felt that it was the right course now. He acts strangely at times and is fond of issuing statements which create difficulties. I hope, however, that this kind of thing will lessen.

I advised Subhas not to publish his correspondence with you, as this would greatly add to our difficulties. May I also suggest to you that no statement might be issued by you committing yourself to any course at this stage? Very soon you will be meeting Subhas, and it will be far better if you issue a statement after meeting him and others.

I should have liked to meet you soon but I do not know how to do so. If you could go to Calcutta early it would be very helpful. I would personally prefer that you meet Subhas at a quiet place other than Calcutta. Perhaps you could break journey to Calcutta somewhere and Subhas could meet you there. If I know your programme I might try to join you *en route*.

I am concerned to read in today's paper that you have got fever.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

23. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Allahabad
April 20, 1939

My dear Maulana,
Your letter of the 17th. Surely you ought to know me better than to thank me for my efforts to look after your comforts here. What else could you expect anyone to do?

I went to see Subhas yesterday at his request and I had a long talk with him. I have looked through the correspondence between him and Gandhiji. This is, as you say, very distressing correspondence, and it creates fresh difficulties. There was some talk of publishing this correspondence but I have dissuaded Subhas from doing so. I have also requested Gandhiji not to issue any statement which might commit him.

I enclose a copy of a letter I am sending to Gandhiji.[2] I am quite sure that the only thing to be done now is for Subhas to leave the formation of the Working Committee entirely to Gandhiji and to promise his loyal support to whatever is done. There are sure to be difficulties because of the way Subhas thinks as well as other matters. But we have to face these difficulties. Any other course means far greater trouble and difficulty. I think that in practice many of these difficulties will be controlled and Subhas also will not add to them. The main thing is that we should not meet the A.I.C.C. before some solution is found. Subhas was agreeable to what I suggested but, of course, I do not know what reservations he might have in his mind. Anyway, I think we shall not trouble ourselves with possible future difficulties. It is something to get over the present difficulty. In view of the national and international situation, it is urgently necessary that we should start functioning here as a Working Committee.

My talk with Subhas was quite friendly and frank. Unfortunately he has been too much surrounded by one-sided accounts and rumours. I think it will be a very good thing if you write to him and express the desire to meet him. He will be in Calcutta tomorrow night.

I have had a long letter from Rafi Ahmed in which he tells me all the developments in the Shia-Sunni affair. He met Sir Sultan Ahmed. It appears that Sir Sultan Ahmed is going to Lucknow again to see the ministers. Hafiz Ibrahim has gone to Delhi to see the Ulemas there.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See the preceding item.

Rafi suggested to him that the government would accept any recommendation of a committee consisting of you and him.

Rafi Ahmed felt that in your letter you had been unfair to Pantji and written in somewhat harsh language about his part in these affairs.[3]

If Gandhiji goes to Calcutta sometime before the A.I.C.C., I shall also try to get there then.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

3. On 18 April 1939, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai wrote: "I am afraid Maulana Abul Kalam in his long letter has not been fair to Pantji. The tone of the letter is very objectionable; but I would not blame Maulana Saheb for it. The responsibility lies with his secretary."

24. Appeal to Subhas Bose to Withdraw Resignation[1]

Two statements have been submitted to the house, one by Mahatma Gandhi and the other by Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose.[2] Many difficulties are ahead of us, and they require a solution. We cannot leave Calcutta before we solve all our difficulties and thereby smoothen our path.

For the last two or three months much mud has been flung so far as the members of the Congress are concerned, and this has distracted our attention from our normal business. This is not surprising in the least. The Congress has grown into a big organisation and hence the controversy that has been going on among its members cannot come as a surprise. But now I appeal to you all to consider all the issues which have caused so much heart-burning among ourselves. I want to do this

calmly. We should do our utmost to bury the hatchet. We must look forward and should forget the past. We have to take stock of the situation that has arisen.

The world at present is heading towards a crisis. A world war may come on us at any moment. We should consider all the problems confronting us today with a calm and cool mind. We have also to consider the issues which will arise in case a world war breaks out. We shall then have no time to consider the sheafs of resolutions that have been given notice of for this session.

The Congress has gathered great strength and has become a mighty organisation. Our enemies, too, are not sitting idle. They are trying to present a united front against us. The communal problem and the question of the Indian states stand in the way of our progress. In spite of our attaining strength, our difficulties have not lessened, but on the other hand they have increased. We must think calmly of all these issues. We must sink our differences and stand united in this hour of crisis.

We have Mr. Subhas Bose's statement already before us. I do not want you to indulge in controversies, as our differences are not over principles but only superficial. Our experience has always been that whenever a serious situation arises, we find ourselves standing united. I have studied the problem that has caused the present deadlock, and have arrived at the conclusion that there is no difference between Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose and Mahatma Gandhi on any issue involving principles.

From Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose's statement, we have come to know that he had been to Mahatma Gandhi with a view to implementing the Pant resolution passed at Tripuri. We have also come to know the difficulties which Mahatma Gandhi apprehends in trying to implement that resolution. In the light of this knowledge, I now appeal to Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose to withdraw his resignation. I also appeal to him to consider the issues which are likely to arise from his action.

I do not want that there should be any party feelings or dissensions in the Congress. Differences among the members of an organisation like ours will weaken it, and cannot certainly be conducive to its continued progress. We do not want to see our opponents rejoice over our differences and the consequent weakness in our ranks. With a view to solving the problem of the formation of the Working Committee, I suggest that the outgoing members of the Working Committee should continue to hold office. We want to maintain the *status quo* and not to deviate from our time-honoured practice. We must, therefore, tide over the crisis facing us at any cost. I do not think that it will be a wise course for us to change horses in mid-stream. Two of our old

colleagues, namely, Seth Jamnalal Bajaj and Mr. Jairamdas Doulatram are not in a position to join the new cabinet. One of them is in jail and the other is ill. *I suggested to the President to replace these two* by two other members.

In conclusion, I appeal to you all to urge the President to withdraw his resignation and constitute the Working Committee as suggested by me and carry on the work of the Congress.[3]

3. Subhas Bose declared that he could not withdraw his resignation if the A.I.C.C. was not prepared to show consideration to his view that the Working Committee should be a composite one in which there should be some inclusion of fresh blood every year, and the next day he resigned the presidentship.

25. Reasons for Not Joining the Congress Working Committee[1]

I did not join the new Working Committee because I felt that at the present juncture I could serve the cause better by remaining outside. For some time past I have felt I should be out of the Working Committee, though even so I would have cooperated with it to a large extent. So far as action is concerned, there is little conflict among the various groups of the Congress. But the ideological differences have inevitably grown. This is natural and is a sign of vitality, if the differences are kept on the plane of principles and are not confused with personal and other issues.

I feel that not only has this gulf grown considerably but it is becoming more and more confusing and issues are getting mixed up. To some extent I am in a position to understand and appreciate the points of view of the old school as well as of the new. I feel that by remaining outside the Committee I may be able to help to some extent in removing the false issues that have grown up and in reducing to some extent the gulf that separates the rival ideologies.

If any crisis occurs it is obvious that all of us, to whatever group we might belong, will join together, and if it is necessary under those circumstances, the Working Committee can be reformed. Even otherwise the Committee will have all the cooperation that I can give. It is true

1. Interview to *The Times of India*, Calcutta, 2 May 1939. *The Times of India*, 3 May 1939.

I had agreed to continue on the Committee, and the resolution that I proposed for the A.I.C.C. in the earlier stages would have led to this. This was because I was keenly desirous of not doing anything which might prevent the formation of the Working Committee agreed to by all. But since that did not come off, the question of my remaining in the Working Committee presently does not arise.

26. On the Ideological Differences in the Congress[1]

I wish to caution the people against blindly following the lead from above. They should try to study the various problems that confront us all in the country at this time. Unless the people understand their own problems, a handful of leaders, however big they may be, cannot give them a lead to any useful purpose. The public mind should be so trained as to understand the international situation and the possibility of war breaking out any moment.

I also want you not to attach importance to the superficial struggle of the different ideologies in the country. For example, there are frequent communal troubles between different communities, and in Lucknow we saw quarrels taking place between two sections of the Muslims. I would therefore stress the need for our going deeper into our problems and trying for the removal of the fundamental differences so that the bonds of unity may be forged between various communities in the country and we may acquire sufficient strength to grapple with our major problems.

The regrettable incidents at the A.I.C.C. are not new to me.[2] I have faced many such demonstrations and I would rather allow myself to be assaulted by the people than be taken like a prisoner by volunteers within a cordon. I would appeal to those outside Bengal not to make much of these demonstrations, but to fraternize with the people of Bengal. To whichever part of India the people may belong, from my wide travels in India, I have found that there lies underneath a fundamental unity among the masses. Our strength has increased considerably and there has been a wonderful mass awakening. This strength

1. Speech at Calcutta, 2 May 1939. From *The Hindustan Times*, 3 May 1939.
2. On coming out of the A.I.C.C. *pandal* on 29 April 1939, Jawaharlal, G.B. Pant and J.B. Kripalani faced a hostile demonstration, and their car had to be escorted out by the volunteers.

also underlines the need to learn to abide by the decisions of the majority in a democratic organisation.

I am a socialist and I feel that the problems of the country would ultimately be solved on socialist lines. Yet I have to do many things for the sake of unity which are not palatable to me. We must always remember the lesson of our past history that India has always suffered on account of petty squabbles.

Though the people attached too much importance to the struggle of ideologies, yet, perhaps, the most important work done by the A.I.C.C. was the passing of the resolution against India's participating in any international war.[3] The present question of war is very intricate.

Such is the state of international diplomacy at present that the policy pursued by the British National Government under Mr. Chamberlain has resulted in the betrayal of Austria and Czechoslovakia. I am so disgusted with England's policies that even if I were an Englishman I would refuse to fight under the banner of Mr. Chamberlain. As far as India is concerned, there cannot be any question of her participation in a world war unless she is free and is allowed to decide on her own course of action.

There is an amending bill to the Government of India Act which is before the British Parliament. If it becomes law, the so-called provincial autonomy would become a farce. The central government can, as a result of this amendment, take control of the provinces any moment war breaks out. I would, therefore, like the people to understand the real significance of this retrograde move, made so soon after the introduction of provincial autonomy, and urge them to oppose with all their strength any such move to usurp the little power that they have secured in the provinces.

I may also say a word about the new Working Committee on which Subhas Bose and I have declined to serve. I have made no secret of the fact that I have all along felt that I would be more useful to the Congress by remaining outside the Working Committee. I, at any rate, have felt that by remaining outside, I can unite the new forces in the country. There is no question of dignity involved in this. The people should not misunderstand me and think that I have cut myself off from the Congress.

3. See p. 300.

27. To K. Rama Rao[1]

Allahabad
May 3, 1939

Dear Rama Rao,

The situation that has arisen as a result of the A.I.C.C. meeting is a difficult one and requires careful handling. I might later write on this subject. Meanwhile, the following hints might help you:

(1) There should be no further reference to the rowdy behaviour of the visitors or the crowds in Calcutta. Importance need not be attached to it.

(2) Subhas Babu's resignation and his refusal to withdraw it should be regretted. So also his and my refusal to serve on the new Working Committee. It should be made clear however that this does not involve any change in our basic policy.

(3) More particularly our policy regarding the international crisis and the war situation remains exactly the same and has the unanimous support of all elements in the Congress. The one resolution passed by the A.I.C.C. which has vital importance was the resolution on the war danger and the amendment of the Government of India Act. On this there was no difference of opinion whatsoever and the resolution, put forward by the new Working Committee and moved by Jawaharlal Nehru, was accepted unanimously by the house. We are apt to attach unnecessary importance to the conflicts about some personal and domestic issues and forget this unanimity on the broad lines of national policy. It is the latter that counts in the end.

(4) It is obvious however that we cannot ignore the differences in outlook and policy in regard to domestic matters, which have been evident within the Congress during the past few months. But while not ignoring them we must look at them in proper perspective and realise that in all the larger matters of national or international policy there is no marked difference of opinion. In regard to national policy, the Tripuri Congress laid down that there should be no break in the old policy and reaffirmed its faith in Gandhiji's leadership. Subhas Babu made it clear in Calcutta that he accepted this basis of our work as indeed all Congressmen must accept the decision of the annual session. The differences that led to Subhas Babu's resignation appear to be connected with the formation of the Working Committee

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

and his desire to have a certain new element in it. We entirely appreciate this desire and think that the Working Committee would be strengthened by such minor changes. Of course, in considering such matters a principle may be accepted, and yet difficulties might arise in giving it application. It appears that there was no agreement in this matter of application. We regret this. Under the circumstances, the only way out was for the old leaders of the Working Committee to be given full charge as has been done. We hope however that they will themselves introduce fresh blood into the Committee soon. We understand that this is their desire also.

(5) Jawaharlal Nehru's decision not to serve on the Working Committee is unfortunate and will inevitably give rise to a great deal of misapprehension and regret. It is a little difficult to think of a Working Committee without him. For many years past he has not only been a prominent feature in it but has usually occupied responsible offices. In particular, he has made himself responsible for the foreign policy of the Congress and has come to be looked upon as the adviser of the Working Committee on foreign affairs. His special knowledge of the subject and his intimate acquaintance with foreign statesmen has made him peculiarly fitted for this task. At this particular juncture when foreign affairs and international crises dominate the scene, his presence is all the more necessary. We are assured by him as well as by President Rajendra Prasad, however, that both Jawaharlal and Subhas Babu will continue to give their full cooperation to the Working Committee. This relieves us somewhat and the first evidence of this was the fact that Jawaharlal moved the war resolution recommended by the Working Committee to the A.I.C.C. We earnestly trust and believe that there will be full cooperation between the Working Committee and Jawaharlal and Subhas Babu, in both international and national affairs.

(6) In the series of articles that Jawaharlal contributed in the *National Herald* prior to the Tripuri Congress, he showed us how he had often come into ideological conflict with his colleagues in the Working Committee and how he had been on the point of resigning from the presidentship on many occasions. That conflict has been and is there and we are not surprised that it should have induced him, for the moment at least, to sever his connection with the Working Committee. He has stated that he felt that he could serve the cause and the Congress better by keeping outside the Working Committee and by trying to reduce the gulf that has arisen between the various groups in the Congress. Perhaps he is right in this because this is an urgent matter for all of us. Whatever these differences

might be, and they are important, it is obvious to the meanest intelligence that they are small as compared to the major problems before us on which there is very little difference. It is up to us therefore to concentrate on these major problems.

(7) The Working Committee must realise that it has to carry with it the vital new elements in the Congress. To ignore them or to try to override them is not the path of wisdom. The country today, and indeed the whole world, is one vast laboratory of ideas and urges, and no great popular movement can flourish or succeed without taking account of this. We feel that we must carry on our work essentially, as the Tripuri Congress has said, without a break from the past. We have, however, to build on that past and take into account the novel situation that has arisen. A living movement changes with the time. Not to do so is to depart from the life of the people and to be stagnant. We trust, therefore, that the Working Committee will give thought to this and learn the lessons of the past few months. We are convinced also that the so-called new elements in the country must also realise what the situation demands from them. If they are to shoulder responsibility at any time they must put on the mantle of responsibility now and consider all questions not purely in terms of dissatisfaction and disgruntled groups but in the spirit of constructive statesmanship. It is not easy to find easy solution of any of our problems. Nevertheless, we have to think in terms of solutions and not merely in terms of dissatisfaction.

(8) In the country today there are numerous tendencies towards disruption. The Congress is the only organisation which can ultimately combat these disruptive tendencies. If the Congress itself falls a prey to it, what hope is there for us? We must therefore discourage all such tendencies within the Congress and thus prepare ourselves to face our problems. It is important therefore that the effort to tighten up the Congress and change its rules so as to make it a more effective organisation should be successful.

(9) The immediate issue before the country is the danger of international crisis and war. To that every Congress committee must address itself and educate public opinion. We must get ready for the crisis that overhangs us.

(10) We trust that Subhas Babu and Jawaharlal Nehru will be back in the Working Committee before long. Meanwhile, we hope that the unpleasant chapter of argument and mutual criticism which began some months back will be considered as closed and the Congress and the country will look ahead and prepare for the future.

I have indicated above the general lines of your criticism. You might incorporate these in one or more leading articles.

I expect to be in Lucknow on the morning of the 6th.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

28. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
May 4, 1939

My dear Krishna,

The recent happenings in Calcutta in connection with the A.I.C.C. meeting must have puzzled you. It is a little difficult to explain the complex situation. I was pressed hard to join the new Working Committee but I decided not to do so, although I promised such cooperation as I could give. Probably I shall be invited to attend their meetings and shall accept the invitation. So far as their general policy is concerned there will be no change and in any event whatever influence I have in regard to it will continue.

I was utterly dissatisfied with many things that happened in Calcutta and I felt that I should register that dissatisfaction by not joining the Committee. If, however, a big crisis comes suddenly, like a war, there will probably be a refashioning of the Committee and I might join.

Subhas Bose, so far as the Calcutta proceedings were concerned, seemed to me to be very accommodating and desirous of pulling together. But there is so much suspicion and prejudice against him and some of his close associates are considered so undesirable that some people find it difficult to think in terms of close cooperation with him. There is some talk of Subhas forming and leading a new party. I do not know much about it but such a party will be a collection of odd elements whose chief slogan will be opposition to the powers that be. M.N. Roy is gaining popularity in Bengal though organisationally he has no strength at all.

You must have seen the war resolution passed by the A.I.C.C. So far as the amendment of the India Act is concerned the resolution is as strong as it can be and the provincial governments have been given

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

explicit directions. Thus there can be no doubt now that this must be treated by the Congress as a major issue and the consequences of conflict faced, if necessary.

Gandhiji is of this opinion. In regard to war also he is perfectly clear that there can be no cooperation at all between us and the British Government and we must oppose every kind of imposition. His reason in doing so is not quite the same as mine or others'. In the main, he opposes India's participation in a war because of his doctrine of non-violence. In effect, however, so far as our policy is concerned, we arrive at the same conclusion.

The A.I.C.C. is likely to meet about the middle of June in Bombay. Probably I shall go to the Frontier Province for the last week or ten days of May. Things there are pretty bad.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

29. To Vishambhar Dayal Tripathi[1]

Lucknow
May 7, 1939

My dear Vishambhar Dayalji,[2]
Your letter of the 6th missed me in Allahabad and was forwarded to me here.[3] I have just read it. When I wrote to you about the youth conference notice and the *Sangram*, I did not show my letter to anyone.[4] I am quite certain that no one at my end saw it or could have given it to the press. Nor did I mention the fact that I had written to you to anyone as far as I remember. It seems clear to me that if one got the contents of it, it must have been from Unao, though how, I do not

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1899-1959); a Congressman of Unao; founder-member, Congress Socialist Party; general secretary, All India Forward Bloc, 1939; member of U.P. Assembly, 1937-40, of Constituent Assembly of India, 1946-50, and of Lok Sabha, 1952-57.
3. He wondered how *The Pioneer* divulged the news that Jawaharlal was not inclined to attend the provincial youth conference.
4. Jawaharlal had taken exception to the notice of the youth conference mentioning him as a prominent invitee without obtaining his consent. He also disapproved of the use of militant phraseology by the kisan sabha workers in *Sangram*, the Hindi newspaper.

know. It is my practice always to write personal letters to my colleagues if I have to bring anything to their notice or to seek an explanation. This often results in the removal of misunderstandings. I quite agree with you that such things should not find their way to the press.

You will remember that the other publication that you complain of, namely the letter from Sri Prakasa, was given publicity by someone in Benares. This was improper, but surely I am not responsible for it.

Regarding your invitation to visit Unao for a conference next week, I am afraid it is quite impossible for me to go anywhere or to attend any conference.[5] The kind of problems I have to face are overwhelming, and apart from the difficulty in finding time, my mind rebels against the idea of attending conferences at present. It is possible that I may have to rush off to Bihar to attend a meeting of the constitution committee.[6]

For many months past, I have been trying my utmost to avoid attending conferences because I wanted to concentrate on other work. I have only attended very special gatherings like the provincial conference or the States People's Conference.

For some years past I have only gone out of my way to attend conferences or meetings organised under Congress auspices. If I had been present at a city where some other conference like a kisan conference or youth conference was taking place, I attended it for a short while. But I have not undertaken a journey during the last three years to attend any non-Congress conference of this kind. As Congress President, I laid down this policy for myself, and I have tried to stick to it since then.

Regarding the youth conference at Unao, I would not have thought of attending it because of the reasons given above. The fact that my name was previously given is another reason that I should not attend it. Thirdly, the manner and text of the notice seemed to me wrong and it became difficult for me to associate myself with a conference of this kind. All this of course has nothing to do with you.

You are perfectly right in saying that as President of the P.C.C., it is my business to stand by my colleagues and to see that nothing is said or done which affects their prestige. You will find that I have not done anything of this kind and the publication that you complain of has nothing to do with me. I regret it as much as you do. Certainly I

5. He requested Jawaharlal to attend the provincial youth league conference to be held at Unao from 13 to 15 May 1939.
6. The Haripura Congress had appointed a committee to consider certain organisational changes in the Congress and frame rules, if necessary, subject to the approval of the A.I.C.C.

shall try my best that such things are not published. As far as I remember, it was not any letter of mine that was published after Tripuri but Sri Prakasa's letter.[7]

You are wrong in thinking that anything you said at Ayodhya displeased me in the sense you mean.[8] Certainly I did not agree with something that you said, though I forget for the moment what it was. It is easy for me to criticise you or for you to criticise me, because we all of us have faults. It is true, however, that I have been distressed for some time past at the way our difficult problems have been faced by some of our colleagues. This does not refer to you particularly and there is nothing personal in it. So far as I am concerned, I have always followed the practice of referring to the persons concerned any kind of complaint that I might hear or have.

I do not see at all why you should think in terms of resignation from the P.C.C. council. There is no question of suspicion or distrust. The only questions that arise are sometimes of disagreement on questions of work or policy. We have to put up with this anyhow.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. He complained that publication of Jawaharlal's letter regarding Tripuri affairs, drafted in a vague manner, created a false impression in the public mind.
8. He felt that Jawaharlal was displeased with him because he had expressed certain views at the subjects committee meeting at the Ayodhya conference of the U.P.P.C.C.

30. To P. Subbarayan[1]

Lucknow
May 13, 1939

My dear Subbarayan,
Thank you for your letter[2] of the 6th May and for the photograph that you have sent.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He regretted that Jawaharlal had not joined the Working Committee and complimented him for trying to effect a compromise at the Calcutta session of the A.I.C.C.

I am quite sure that it was right for me to keep out of the Working Committee as it was formed. I am sorry events took the shape they did in Calcutta. I think it was quite easy to have avoided a totally unnecessary conflict.

I am afraid there is no chance of my going down south this year.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

31. On the Formation of the Forward Bloc[1]

I do not approve of the formation of the Forward Bloc.[2] I, therefore, do not attach much importance to it. Although I would like to allow certain latitude to the people who hold different views to form their own organisation, I consider it improper to weaken the great organisation like the Congress by the formation of separate groups. In any active organisation, there would be differences of opinion, but these differences must not be confused with personalities. Such a course would not be in the interests of the country.

There is an awakening among the Muslim masses but they do not understand the problems of the country and are misdirected by the Muslim League.

1. Speech at Kanpur, 21 May 1939. From *National Herald*, 23 May 1939.
2. The Bloc was founded by Subhas Bose to consolidate the leftists, secure a majority within the Congress, and resume the struggle for independence in the name of the Congress.

32. The A.I.C.C. and After[1]

Friends and colleagues ask me many questions about the recent developments in the Congress, about the A.I.C.C. meeting, the formation of the Forward Bloc, and the happenings in Rajkot. In courtesy to them I discuss these matters, and sometimes to old friends and comrades I give a glimpse of my troubled mind. But their questions are seldom answered as they should be, and I am unable to unravel the tangle that is presented to me. I fear I give little satisfaction to them and yet that is not surprising, for I give even less satisfaction to myself. It is not out of this stuff that leadership comes, and the sooner my colleagues realise this the better for them and me. The mind functions efficiently enough, the intellect is trained to carry on through habit, but the springs that give life and vitality to that functioning seem to dry up. And so I hesitate to write on these subjects and the idea of public speaking is increasingly distasteful to me.

Perhaps a slight lowering of the usual standard of health has reduced vitality, perhaps the heat of the season is partly responsible. But the trouble lies deeper in the inner recesses of the mind and the spirit, or even in the sub-conscious which is said ultimately to mould us.

The tragedy of Spain and much that has happened in the West has been a personal sorrow to me, leaving a deep and lasting impress. But Spain is far, and the problems of India fill my mind and distress me. It is not external difficulty that troubles, but the whole background of India with its conflicts and disruptive forces, its pettiness and mutual suspicion. There is no faith in us today of each other, and every foolish statement and wild charge is believed. Vulgarity, that most distressful symptom, creeps into our public life, in the Congress and even more outside it. Policies and programmes and high principles have their importance; they are vital and urgent. But behind them all lies the human material without which these principles and policies can have little meaning.

Tripuri was a painful experience in many ways, and many of us returned from it heavy at heart. The subsequent press controversy and the fierce personal attacks that accompanied it, filled me with sorrow. I

1. Lucknow, 24 May 1939. *National Herald*, 27-28 May 1939. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 160-167

felt helpless to check these developments, being out of tune with the participants on either side. At the A.I.C.C. meeting in Calcutta I had hoped that we would end this wrangling, and go down to straight work. I laboured for this to the best of my ability, but without success.

In Calcutta I did not agree with all the suggestions that Subhas Babu had put forward, but I was convinced that he was earnestly striving for a united functioning of the Congress, accepting the Tripuri decisions. I saw no reason why there should be any difficulty in bringing this about, but opposition, which seemed to me wholly unjustified, came and led to his resignation. Perhaps that resignation was inevitable under the circumstances, and yet I regretted it deeply, for it led to a deepening of the fissures that separated individuals and groups in the Congress. I regretted even more the absence of a spirit of accommodation during the A.I.C.C. meeting in Calcutta.

Under these circumstances I could not join the new Working Committee. I had long been out of tune with the old Committee, but I had continued membership of it as I believed that the larger interest required it. With the new developments in Calcutta my place was outside, though not in any spirit of opposition or noncooperation. Such cooperation as I could give was always at Rajen Babu's disposal, and I appreciated greatly the courage with which he had agreed to shoulder the heavy burden and to face a disagreeable task.

But it is idle to ignore the differences that exist and tend to grow. Those differences are partly ideological and even more so temperamental, with a strong background of mutual suspicion. The Congress presidential election in January last was no vote of no-confidence against anyone or any policy, for no such issue had been framed or put before the voters. But it was a clear indication of dissatisfaction with things as they were and a desire to mend them. It had a lesson for all of us. That lesson has unfortunately not been learnt.

This refusal to learn and understand, this inability to adapt oneself to a growing situation, leads to resentment in the minds of many. There is a sense of frustration and suppression, which is the parent of suspicion and conflict. I have myself had this feeling of frustration and I can well understand others, less favourably situated, reacting in like manner and to a greater degree. I can appreciate the desire to end or lessen this sense of frustration by an effort to bring together those who, broadly speaking, think alike and are desirous of functioning together and thus get rid of the feeling of individual helplessness which tends to overwhelm them.

But we may not, simply because we are driven by a sense of resentment, take a step which weakens us and leads to worse consequences.

The world is in a sad mess today, tragic to those who are sensitive, heart-breaking to those who feel. We assure ourselves that we are living during an age of transition and that the sorrows of today are but the birth-pangs of the new order. It may be so, or perhaps our wishes are fathers to our thoughts. Meanwhile we go through this agony, almost unendurable at times, and there is little hope of comfort in the future that we can see. Everywhere there is a cracking up, a dissolution of things as they are, but the building up of a new structure is not so evident. Ruling classes and groups, who have dominated affairs for so long, exhibit their utter incompetence and grow increasingly ineffective and incapable of dealing with the problems of today. And yet no other group or class appears strong enough or competent enough to take the reins of affairs in its hands. History has few examples of sheer ineptitude and failure such as Mr. Neville Chamberlain and the British Government have exhibited; but Mr. Chamberlain and his government continue for lack of others to take their place.

The world situation affects us, but even more so internal conditions point the same way. It is not outside the bounds of possibility that fascist elements, with apparently anti-imperialist slogans, may gain strength and power in our country and even in our national organisation. There is sometimes a cry that the Congress High Command is adopting fascist methods. The High Command, as it is called, may have erred often enough, and it has certainly acted sometimes in an authoritarian way. But to suggest that it tends towards fascist methods, is to exhibit ignorance. There is a good deal of fascism in the country today and a little of it even inside the Congress. It flourishes chiefly under communal colours and in some so-called non-political organisations. But the old leadership of the Congress, whatever its other failings, is far removed from it. Curiously enough, among the loudest of its critics are the fascist elements in the Congress.

II

Subhas Babu's step in forming a Forward Bloc is an understandable corollary to what has happened, yet it is not necessarily a desirable one, for there are obvious dangers involved in it. It is, so far as is known at present, a negative grouping, an anti-bloc, whose sole binding cement is dislike of, or opposition to, the individuals or groups that control the Congress today. There is no positive policy based on definite principles, except a desire to ginger them up generally. There is no restriction which might keep out elements which, politically or otherwise, are undesirable. The doors of the Bloc are wide open, and it is evident enough that a very miscellaneous company are likely to find shelter in it. We

have had, and have, plenty of trouble in the Congress itself with the adventurist and opportunist elements that have crept in. Long tradition and the inherent strength of the organisation keep them in check to some extent, and we are now thinking of devising rules to control them still further.

But in a new organisation or grouping without this tradition and checks and without any clear principles and ideology, such adventurist and opportunist elements will find full play, and might even, under cover of fine phrases, play a dominating role in it. It is quite possible that fascist and communal elements might also enter its folds and seek to exploit it to further their animus against the Congress and its anti-fascist policy. How will Subhas Babu deal with this situation when it arises? We must remember that fascism grew in Europe under cover of radical slogans and popular phrases.

It will be easy for fascism to function under cover of our nationalism, and yet to give a wrong and dangerous bent to it. Already we are told that nationalism is in essence racialism, and therefore we must lay stress on the idea of our race and a hostility to other races. That has not been the nationalism under which we have grown up. Take another aspect of the question. Our war resistance policy is of vital importance to us. It has been adopted because of our love of freedom and democracy and our insistence on Indian independence. Now that very policy might be given a twist and made to fit in with fascist desires.

The fascist powers would very much like India to be a thorn in the side of England when war comes, so that they might profit by the situation we create. There is nothing that we would dislike so much as to play into the hands of the fascist powers, just as we dislike being exploited by imperialist Britain. Our anti-war policy must therefore be based on freedom and democracy and opposition to fascism and imperialism. And yet with a little twist it might well be turned into a pro-fascist policy.

These are some of the dangers of the Forward Bloc. It is a little difficult to consider it positively as no clear indication of its policy is available. The only attempt to clothe the Bloc with a garment of a definite policy, so far as I know, has been made by Shri M.N. Roy in a series of able speeches and articles.[3] Do his views represent the policy

3. For instance, M.N. Roy said on 24 May 1939: "If the Bloc is only an *ad hoc* organisation with the purpose of catching some more seats in an A.I.C.C. meeting, I think that would be simply an opportunist fight for some leading positions without effective power of operation..." He hoped that the Bloc "may become an instrument for the mobilisation of the leftists in the Congress and the present vagueness of its policy may disappear in course of that process."

of the Bloc, or do they, at any rate, influence this policy considerably? Their views, whether one agrees with them or not, represent a certain definite outlook and programme which is clearly at variance with anything we have done so far and which means a complete break with the past.[4] I do not agree with this general outlook and approach, and I think that it is utterly out of touch with reality in India today. It is of course at variance with the Tripuri resolution which calls for no break in general policy. It does not fit in with what Subhas Babu has said about his own approach to the present-day problems.

It is not my purpose to discuss the merits of Shri M.N. Roy's proposals here. The point is that they constitute a complete challenge to much that the Congress has stood for these many years and, if accepted, must mean a break-up of the Congress as we know it. That may or may not be desirable, but at any rate let us know what the implications are. I want many changes in the Congress, but I think that they should grow organically from our past work and should not involve too much of a break. We must recognise and appreciate the great value of what has already been done and build on those foundations. Any attempt to act otherwise will certainly lead to complete disruption of our movement for freedom and the probable ascendency of reactionary elements. Conditions in India are plain enough for us to learn from them. The recent history of Europe has a lesson for us which we cannot ignore.

There is one other aspect of the matter. The attempt to form a Forward Bloc or any such grouping inevitably results in the consolidation of other groups opposed to it. That, of course, is no reason why a group should not be formed, but it is a reason for it to be formed only at the proper time and in the proper way. Otherwise the immediate result is to strengthen the opposing groups, and to bring about a bitter conflict within the organisation for control of various communities. Such conflicts have to be faced in a democratic organisation, but it would be unfortunate if we became wrapped up in them on the eve of internal and external crises.

These are some of my difficulties in regard to the Forward Bloc. But whichever way I look I find difficulty. The recent developments in Rajkot have an obvious importance and they are certain to have far-reaching repercussions not only in the states but in all India. How far'

4. At the Serampore political conference on 19 May 1939, Bose declared that "the main programme of the Bloc would be to consolidate all the left forces in the country and to organise a volunteer corps throughout British India and Indian states as well as to prepare the country for the impending fight against British imperialism."

do they represent a change in Gandhiji's approach to political problems, how far will they affect the policy of the Congress which he dominates? Gandhiji may be right in what he has done in Rajkot; without more and detailed knowledge I am not entitled to express an opinion. But the various processes he has gone through during the past few months in connection with Rajkot are exceedingly difficult to understand or appreciate, and I do not see how a political movement can be guided in this way. When I had the honour of being elected president of the All India States People's Conference, I knew well that I could not work any wonders or do anything out of the ordinary. The whole question of the states is a vast and complicated one, varying in form and substance in different areas, and yet having an underlying unity. I hoped, however, to be able to do something to coordinate these various movements and activities and to give them a common background. But I realised soon that any activity of mine might not be in tune with what Gandhiji was doing in regard to the states. I had no desire to say or do anything which might come into conflict with him, as this would produce confusion in the states. And so I remained quiet and more or less inactive. I felt disabled.

That sense of helplessness increases after the Rajkot events. I cannot function where I do not understand, and I do not understand at all the logic of what has taken place. This applies to the wider plane of all-India politics also.

I have had a considerable measure of belief in Gandhiji's vision and instinctive reaction to events. I have welcomed the moral tone he has given to our public life. His vital and prodigious contribution to our struggle for freedom is an essential part of India's history. I think that he has yet to play a greater part in our struggle and in fashioning our future. I hope that it will be India's good fortune to have him for many years.

But more and more the choice before many of us becomes difficult, and this is no question of right or left or even of political decisions. The choice is of unthinking acceptance of decisions which sometimes contradict each other and have no logical sequence, or opposition, or inaction. Not one of these three courses is easily commendable. To accept unthinkingly what one cannot appreciate or willingly agree to produces ultimately mental flabbiness and paralysis. No great movement can be carried on on this basis; certainly not a democratic movement. Opposition is difficult when it weakens us and helps the adversary. Inaction produces frustration and all manner of complexes, and is hardly conceivable when from every side comes the call for action.

That is the problem before many of us.

33. On Ziauddin Ahmad's Insinuations[1]

Sir,

In your issue dated 26th May there appears a letter under the caption 'Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose and Dr. Khare' from Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad[2] of Aligarh. This letter contains so many remarkable and fantastic statements that I hesitate to believe that it has been written by the redoubtable and learned vice-chancellor of Aligarh University. I shall not deal with these various statements and insinuations but, as there is a reference to me in it, I am venturing to presume on your courtesy by writing these few lines. Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad says in the course of his letter: "It is now a well-known secret that Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru has been offered and has accepted the premiership of India in the new federation". I would not have cared to notice or contradict such an astonishingly false and foolish statement if some irresponsible person had made it, but I cannot remain silent when Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad makes it. I shall be glad to know from Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad what justification he has for saying something which, to use moderate and restrained language, can only be called a mischievous lie. Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad's conception of public life may be that of the market place, of buying and selling, of trading in honour and truth and principle, but may I beg of him to confine that conception to those from whom he has derived it, and not to extend it to others whom he does not know?

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Letter to the editor, *The Leader*, Allahabad, 27 May 1939. *The Leader*, 28 May 1939.
2. (1878-1947); member of the Central Legislative Assembly, 1930-47; associated with the Muslim League; vice-chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University, 1935-47.

34. A Dangerous Proposal[1]

The statement by the Congress President in the press today has, for the first time, drawn my attention to a proposal made on behalf of the Left Consolidation Committee to observe next Sunday, July 9, as an all-India day for the purpose of demonstrations against certain decisions of the A.I.C.C.[2] This proposal raises such fundamental and novel issues for the Congress that it would have been eminently desirable for the council of the U.P.P.C.C. to have considered it and pronounced their opinion on it. Unfortunately, the council ended their sittings last night, and it is not possible for members to meet again without due notice. As the matter is urgent and is likely to have far-reaching consequences, I am issuing this statement in my capacity as the president of the U.P.P.C.C. for the guidance of the Congressmen in these provinces.

The question before us is not whether we approve or disapprove of certain resolutions passed by the A.I.C.C. The question is whether Congress committees and Congressmen generally should organise demonstrations on an all-India scale or on a smaller scale against the decisions of the A.I.C.C. The question is whether members of the A.I.C.C. should revolt in action against the resolutions of the A.I.C.C., whether members of the Congress executives in provinces and districts should demonstrate publicly against the supreme executive of the Congress, whose decisions they are bound, under the constitution, to carry out.

I am not aware of such a proposal having been made at any time previously in the history of the Congress. I can only presume that those who are responsible for it have agreed to it in the excitement of the moment and without thinking of the past or the future. At any time it would have been a dangerous proposition, which carried within it powerful elements of disruption and disintegration. To put it forward today, with the world hanging over the brink of a crisis, is to be guilty of a most amazing short-sightedness.

Truly, many of us have lost sight of the wood for the trees, and we can only function in narrow grooves of party and can think of little else

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 7 July 1939. *The Hindustan Times*, 8 July 1939.
2. The Congress President warned the Congress committees and the office-bearers against participating in the demonstrations called by the Left Consolidation Committee to protest against the two A.I.C.C. resolutions. See also p. 352.

but of factions within our own ranks. That is not the nationalism that I have learnt; nor is it the socialism of which I have been and am proud. Is this the way to a united front, of which so much is talked, or a continuation of the struggle of the masses? It is a challenge to the Congress organisation which we have built up with so much love and labour and sacrifice, and it can only lead to disruption if persisted in. Our anti-imperialist fight will recede into the background, our mass struggles will convert themselves into internecine and factional conflicts and thus we shall prepare for the crisis ahead and for enforcing the national demand.

Of course, many people who are said to be of the right have acted wrongly often enough, and in a narrow spirit of faction. They have attempted to hold back or suppress advanced elements in our ranks. It may be that the resolutions objected to might be utilised for this purpose. But the action suggested gives the final justification for these resolutions and weakens the argument. If there is an open revolt in the Congress, then it is time to stop further disruption. The two resolutions of the A.I.C.C. that have been criticized are logical enough as they read, and any organisation which thinks in terms of united and coordinated action might well adopt them. But it is equally true that they might be used for party purposes, and therein lies the danger. Because of this it was my intention, if I had got a chance at the A.I.C.C. meeting, to speak against the resolution relating to satyagraha.

But the question now is not of the merits of the resolutions, but of the very basic discipline of the Congress and of our allegiance to its constitution. We break that discipline and throw off that allegiance at our peril. I cannot congratulate the Left Consolidation Committee on their first appearance in public in the shape of their statement. This augurs ill for their future.

35. On the Defiance of the A.I.C.C. Resolution[1]

I have expressed myself in my statement that the action of the Left Consolidation Committee is partly based on a misconception of the A.I.C.C. resolution. There is such a lot of talk of ban on direct action.

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 13 July 1939. *The Hindu*, 13 July 1939.

The A.I.C.C. resolution does not say any such thing. On the other hand, it gives power to the provincial Congress committees to choose their own course of action.

The Bengal Provincial Committee has lodged a protest against a resolution which gives power to it to decide its own course of action.[2] It is absurd to protest against the grant of such power.

I think a difference should be made between primary Congress members and office-bearers, because the latter are constitutionally bound to carry out the decisions of the A.I.C.C. Primary members have much greater latitude. And even executive members may have some latitude in regard to individual criticism, but it certainly does not include latitude to launch a mass attack on the A.I.C.C.

Such an open revolt must disrupt and weaken the Congress if it succeeds. It seems to me that many people who took part in the demonstrations on July 9 did not realise its implications. Many workers in the districts in my province asked me what the A.I.C.C. resolution was. The resolution has to be explained to people very clearly. It is not clear how the same person in one capacity can carry out and in another capacity attack it. Matters have come to a head in this way. It seems to me that it is difficult to ignore this defiance of the Congress by the left members. But at the same time it appears to me that the question of taking disciplinary action against them might be premature at this stage. The first thing to do is to remove misapprehensions so that the issue may become clear. If a provincial Congress committee can challenge and defy an A.I.C.C. resolution, then a district committee or a city committee can equally defy the provincial committee's decisions.

The result in the end would be disruption, which no organisation can tolerate. But it is not for me to lay down what should be done. Whatever the views I might possess on this subject that would be forestalling and perhaps embarrassing the Working Committee or the A.I.C.C.

To four members of the Allahabad district committee, who participated in the demonstrations on the 9th instant, I asked them, as president of the provincial Congress committee, to tender resignations of their posts, and carry on their agitation against the A.I.C.C. in their capacity as primary members.

I totally disapprove of Mr. Subhas Bose's action in carrying on a campaign against the A.I.C.C. while holding the presidentship of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. I would have had no grievance

2. On 9 July 1939, the executive council of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee passed a resolution deploring the two resolutions passed at the Bombay meeting of the A.I.C.C. on 26 June 1939.

against Mr. Bose had he resigned the Bengal presidentship and then carried on his agitation.

My personal view is that the full provincial committee and not the executive alone must meet first and consider the resolution passed on the 9th instant by the executive committee under Mr. Bose's lead. It should be remembered that the executive committee in Bengal had been nominated by the president. The full provincial committee might have views quite different from those of the executive and the president.

I do not agree with Mr. Bose that the Congress President's view of the requirements of discipline interfere with the basic principles and traditions of democracy. Democracy does not mean licence for one to do anything he likes. The Congress is a democratic body with a certain definite creed and objective. It cannot allow its members to carry on an agitation which injures the cause of the furtherance of its creed.

I must also regret Mr. Bose's criticism of the Bombay Government's prohibition programme.[3] His statement on the eve of the launching of the programme seems to be undesirable and unhappy.

3. The Congress government in Bombay decided to prohibit the sale of liquor and other intoxicants in the city of Bombay and its suburbs from 1 August 1939. Expressing his doubts about the workability of the scheme, Subhas Bose said, on 11 June 1939, that it might adversely affect business and industry and encourage illicit production and sales.

36. Demonstrations against the A.I.C.C. Decision[1]

So far, stress has been laid by socialists and others on what is called a joint front. If that is really the objective of the Consolidation Committee, then the step they took on the 9th July is entirely unintelligible. The only explanation is that it was done unthinkingly and without realising the consequences, as that step leads inevitably to conflict and disruption in which event there will be no possibility of a joint front. If, on the other hand, the desire is to change the Congress leadership at the top completely, and regardless of the consequences, then the step was a right one, although it might not bring about that result.

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 13 July 1939. *The Hindu*, 14 July 1939.

Looking at it from the point of view of the leftists' policy, the course that the Consolidation Committee attempted to pursue seems to me a fatal one. That can certainly weaken the other elements in the Congress and injure the organisation as a whole. But the greatest injury will be to the cause that this committee seeks to represent. It is a boomerang which will come back to them. Technicalities apart, the question is whether the time has come to change completely the present leadership of the Congress at any cost. I doubt the wisdom of this attempt.

37. Dissensions Will Weaken the Congress[1]

The Indian National Congress is a great democratic institution. It must function democratically; the will of the majority must prevail and the minority, though it might not like the decisions arrived at, must bow to them, unless, of course, there is a very vital matter involving a great principle and forcing it to go out of the Congress. During the last six or seven months there has been, within the Congress, a growing tendency of dissension and a spirit of hostility and distrust. If these are allowed to grow, the Congress cannot function efficiently. They will weaken the Congress at a time when we need most of our strength, and when we seem to be on the verge of a world crisis. At such a time as this, it is a criminal folly to allow fissiparous tendencies to grow and weaken the influence of the Congress.

As I sat here looking at the vast multitude, my mind went back to two years and a half when I had come to this very beach and addressed a similar multitude. The memories of the events that took place during this period passed in rapid succession through my mind. I had addressed several meetings all over India, and more especially during the four or five months before the general elections, and had in my own way established a record in the number of meetings I addressed. I had spoken to millions of people of what I had in my mind. But what had been far more important to me was that I tried to understand through those millions whom I addressed what India was. We think of India and talk about her and we also sing *Bande Mataram* and raise slogans like *Bharat Mata ki Jai*, and yet I wonder how many of us have

1. Speech at Madras, 25 July 1939. From *The Hindu*, 26 July 1939.

really thought what exactly the conception of *Bharat Mata* is. In my wanderings, on seeing millions of faces, I have had a vague glimpse of what India is. I felt India's diversity was tremendous, and yet behind it lay an equally tremendous unity. The more I sought to understand her and the more, perhaps, I succeeded in doing so, the more I understood that she was unfathomable. She was too big to be understood. When I passed through fields in rural areas, and saw men and women working in the fields, I was often surprised to find that even in our degradation and poverty, we had produced such fine types of men and women. Wherever I went, I found a powerful urge rising up in India to go ahead, to get rid of the chains that had held her in bondage, and to make her worthy of what she should be.

I have also tried to understand India from outside her borders, because if we really want to know what India is, we have to see her from outside. The people of India had in the past gone farther away from her. It is only in the decadent days of the present that we have got all manner of restrictions. Indians in the past carried on trade outside India. They also spread Indian culture and civilisation in distant lands and built famous structures which are perhaps better specimens of the old Indian architecture and culture than any building we may now find in our country. I am telling you all this so as to give you a proper perspective, as it is necessary to do so for understanding the nation's problems. Today no problem can be isolated and treated separately. Every national problem is linked with international problems. If we look at the world today, it appears to be a jig-saw puzzle, and it may be that some minor happenings in some distant land may upset the equilibrium of the world. For getting a complete view of the picture, we cannot look merely at a part of it.

I am giving this background partly because I want that the picture should be seen against this background, and partly because I like talking about these matters to young men. I must, however, apologise to young men and women for not being able to address them separately. I would have liked to do so because whatever might be done by the present generation, the burden of tomorrow will fall on those who are young today and it is they who will carry on India's struggle and try to solve her problems.

It therefore becomes necessary for us to see things in their proper context now that we have arrived at the present stage in our struggle for independence. We have become, in spite of the fact that we are a subject country, a powerful country in many ways, though not powerful enough, still a strong and consciously powerful nation. In the world, outside India, we count for a great deal today. India has

gone up in the estimation of the outside world not because we have now a number of provincial governments controlled by the Congress. That itself has been the outcome of so many other factors. It might also be the result of the power we possess. We in India, at present, are very much in the thick of the battle, and that battle must continue. There can be no compromise between Indian nationalism and British imperialism. The only way in which these two can combine is by one becoming a complete subject of the other. We have always to keep this in mind and for this reason have to keep alive a spirit of fight.

Like an individual, a powerful nation would also look very foolish in the eyes of the world if it did not develop dignity and self-control. During the last nineteen years of struggle, the people of this country have developed a great deal of strength. That may not have been reflected in our achievements, but we possess that strength and would wield it in a proper manner when the time comes. We have also developed a measure of dignity and self-control, and I am sure that we will not behave in a petty manner before the bar of world opinion. If we have to put up a fight to save our honour, if there is no other course left open except through a conflict, we shall do so. But we would not act like urchins throwing stones in the streets. We have a powerful organisation and must keep its spirit alive. The militant spirit reflected in us reveals the strength that we have acquired. While we ought to keep up the agitational spirit, we also need develop a dignified outlook which would raise India in the estimation of the world. These two things must be coordinated.

There are so many problems facing us. We all have to face them. There is the problem of Ceylon and connected with it is the problem of the Indians overseas. I do not consider Ceylon as a foreign country at all. In fact, it is practically joined up with India. Any person who looks at the map can realise that it is not conceivable in any scheme of things, political or even economic, for India and Ceylon to be cut away from each other. They cannot be; certainly Ceylon cannot be. So far as we are concerned, it is one of the many problems; but for Ceylon it is a great problem. If the two countries are isolated, it would mean a great misfortune to Ceylon. There is no reason why they should be separated.

When I returned this morning from Ceylon, the press reporters asked me questions not only about this particular problem but also about many other problems. They asked me about the betrayal of China by Mr. Chamberlain and many other questions. They asked me questions about the growing indiscipline in the Congress, about the communal issue and other problems. They asked me about the movement

in Hyderabad and about the Indian states. About the Indian states, I have expressed my views frequently. I hold strong views about them. I hold that they have no place at all in India. The sooner they are liquidated the better. I would like to talk about all the problems but I have no time. I can speak on any one of the problems for hours. But my object today is to tell you how to look at these problems. Today we are faced with the grave danger of wasting our energy. We now possess sufficient strength to gain independence, to face British imperialism and face it successfully. But a weakness comes in, the weakness that is within the body politic. Today we are wasting our energy in mutual conflicts. There may be differences of opinion—and I do not say that there should not be any differences of opinion; they are a sign of growth—but these conflicts cannot be carried too far. In our petty conflicts, we forget the real problem. We forget the whole background.

I have received many letters criticising me and accusing me that I have done this or that I have not done that. I have endeavoured to understand the problems in the light of the background which I have given. During the last six or seven months, there has appeared within the Congress a growing spirit of dissension, a growing spirit of hostility and a tendency to hurl accusations at each other. In a big organisation there may be cleavages; there may be differences in outlook. We do not want a purely autocratic type of organisation. That is not the type of organisation that I would like the Indian National Congress to be. We want healthy criticism, and I have myself indulged in a fair amount of criticism of my colleagues. But I find that behind the criticisms levelled against the Congress and its activities, there lies a deep feeling of distrust and hostility.

If within the Congress there are such deep feelings of distrust and hostility that Congressmen should side with its enemies and turn against its friends, then obviously the Congress organisation cannot go very far and cannot function very satisfactorily because all our efforts would be lost in mutual conflict. Even if we have that feeling of hostility and distrust among us, there are certain standards of behaviour which we can forget at our peril. People do not usually go about shouting what they have in their minds about their friends and acquaintances. If we work together in an organisation, we have to put up with the vagaries of our colleagues. There are few men in the Congress about whom we cannot make a balance-sheet of evil and good. I can easily make a long balance-sheet about myself. But what irritates me most is that attention is more and more diverted to that kind of internecine warfare and criticism. This should not be allowed to go very far. Of course, it would not put an end to the Congress because the

Congress is too powerful an organisation to be ended. But it would make us ineffective for the time being, and weaken us at a time when most of our strength is needed, and when we seem to be so close to a world crisis.

This does not mean that we must put up with what is contrary to our principles and deviate from the path that we have laid down for ourselves. Obviously, it does not mean that. Too often some of us in the name of the highest principles act wrongly and break up what we have built after so many years of hard labour. I think that all of us should think about these problems fully, and not be swept away by some slogans. It is not unlikely that we may have to face some dangerous problems if we allow ourselves to be swept away by slogans as has happened in some countries. I believe nobody wants fascism to grow in this country. We remember how it grew up in Germany or in Italy. In Italy, Signor Mussolini was a great socialist in his day. With the aid of socialist slogans, he attained power over the multitude. Having attained that power to some extent, he gained power in the state and then he used that power to crush the old colleagues or friends of his in the socialist ranks, and established a completely authoritarian state where socialism or anything like it is not tolerated. Similarly, Herr Hitler in Germany has used big slogans which are pleasing to the masses. He got into power on the strength of socialist slogans more or less. As soon as he got into power, the first thing he did was to crush everything in the nature of socialism, communism and liberalism. It is, therefore, very dangerous for us to go after slogans merely. A slogan is a good thing because it makes us think in a pointed way about certain ideas. But it is a dangerous thing if it is used for wrong purposes. What I find today in India is that good and powerful slogans are sometimes used in a vague and indefinite way for entirely wrong purposes. That is a dangerous trend, and I wish you to know from the examples of Italy and Germany that if we are not careful and vigilant, we might be led astray, not only in the sense of weakening the great organisation we have built up, but also in a more dangerous and vital way, in turning the life of the country in a direction opposed to what I consider a democratic, socialistic and freedom-loving frame of mind.

I do not want people to accept in a static way what is happening, whether it is done by a ministry or a Congress committee or by anybody else. I am not at all happy about the Congress ministries. I am not at all happy about the conditions that exist in the country today or about the problems that have cropped up as a sequel to the

assumption of office by the Congress. I have said it before and I want to say it again that when the discussion about office acceptance took place, I was entirely opposed to it. But when the Congress accepted it, in spite of what I thought of it, I accepted the Congress decision, and all of us did our utmost to make it a success. Then later on when I reviewed the balance-sheet, what struck me most was that it was inevitable that we should have accepted office under the conditions existing then as also for various other reasons about which I need not talk here. Acceptance of office has undoubtedly done us a great deal of good. We have achieved much by way of mass awakening, and ministers have gained experience in dealing with numerous problems of administration. It is a training for the nation in the establishment of an equilibrium between the agitational and militant side of our organisation and the self-control that is necessary for the good of the country. This is on the credit side. There is also the debit side. We got wrapped up in small problems and forgot bigger ones, and thus we became more and more entangled in petty matters. Personally, I think the existing conditions cannot last very long, because, as I have said before, whether it is the situation in India or elsewhere, the want of equilibrium and the number of unsolved problems are dangerous portents.

Now let us face any question, whether it is one of the Congress ministries or of the Congress organisation, or any other question. Let us face it, and let us understand it and argue about it, and finally decide about it in a democratic way, and having come to a decision, let us abide by that decision. Any other way would lead us to an absolute chaos. Let all of us recognise that the Congress is a democratic organisation which must function in a democratic way, in which the will of the majority must prevail, and a minority, howsoever important it might be, should bow to that decision unless, of course, it involves a very vital matter of principle or conscience. Let us take, for instance, the question of satyagraha being offered by Congressmen. Any organisation must have a certain discipline in it. I am ready to admit that discipline has been enforced for wrong purposes on many occasions. We should try to stop it as far as we can. Nevertheless, we cannot for that reason say that there should be no discipline. Otherwise, the organisation will not remain. Therefore the Congress demands that we should not indulge in satyagraha without the permission of the provincial Congress committees. But even the strongest discipline has its limitations. Suppose I have to decide whether I should break a law or not. Obviously, I have to decide it for myself. I cannot refer the matter to the provincial Congress committee. I would take a decision and if that decision happens to be a right one in the view of the

provincial Congress committee, well and good. If not, I would suffer the consequences thereof. So it is in an army where the strictest discipline has to be maintained. If a commander wants to take a step which he thinks to be right, but which goes against discipline, he has to run the risk in doing so.

You and I have a right to rebel against anything, not only against the British Government, but even against the Congress, if we feel that the matter is vital enough and if a matter of conscience is involved. But we have to realise the consequences of our rebellion. We cannot then go about saying that we are rebelling in order to increase the strength of our organisation to fight imperialism.

Today when the world is wrapped up in war and empires fall and get disintegrated, what would happen to India? We should try our utter-most to see that things happen as we wanted them to happen, so that India may not be a welter of chaos and anarchy. The whole world is moving in that direction. What force in India can prevent it? I want you to think about it. I can tell you that there is no force greater than the Congress that can prevent such a horror from happening. Therefore, if that is the situation, each one of us has to think hundreds and thousands of times before we do anything which would blunt the edge of this instrument, the Congress. We may have the best of intentions and may talk about principles. But we should be able to see if we are increasing the strength of the Congress or are doing something which would weaken it and divert our minds in the direction of internecine warfare. It might be that sometimes the Congress might take a wrong step. But a wrong step might be better than what appears sometimes from the high grounds of principles to be a right step. The latter might actually result in our breaking that great weapon which we have forged for our fight. What is the use of a right step if it leads to a greater wrong? Unfortunately, in this world, more especially in public affairs, it is a frightfully difficult thing to say that a thing is hundred per cent right or hundred per cent wrong. Things get overlapped. One problem is linked with another. A course of action one may suggest may be perfectly right and sensible. But if we think of a problem in relation to half a dozen other problems, it may be that that right course in regard to that one problem has very serious consequences in regard to several others, and thus produce bad results, and so, in the totality of circumstances, that right course might be a wrong one. It is in this light that we have to face national problems today. It is quite easy for us to fight a straight issue in a straight way. But the problems of our country that we have to consider overlap one another in every manner. Groups, individuals,

various interests, provinces, their people, the religions and communities, and what not, have to be considered. We cannot take up one problem forgetting the rest. Therefore if the All India Congress Committee or the Working Committee of the Congress take some decisions, we must realise that they have to consider various aspects of the problems before reaching those decisions.

We have thus arrived at a stage in our national life when we cannot think of one problem singly because we are a responsible people; we are responsible for the future of our movement, for the future of our struggle and for the future of India. Therefore we dare not forget that responsibility simply because in regard to one particular matter we feel that something ought to be done.

I had gone to Ceylon on a particular mission. The Ceylon Government has given notices of dismissal to a number of Indians employed by the government. The original notice of dismissal was for a little over 1,400 persons. Those employees were daily wage-earners. That did not mean that they were temporary employees. A person might be working in a factory all his life getting a daily wage, but he is as much entitled to security of tenure as a person who receives a salary. Many of these daily wage-earners have been in Ceylon for ten, fifteen and even a greater number of years. I did not ask the Ceylon Government not to give preference to the Ceylonese in the matter of employment. But the question is of dismissal of those who are already there. I would expect any government to have labour laws to prevent it. Then there is the scheme of voluntary repatriation affecting Indian daily wage-earners also. If a person takes advantage of the scheme, well and good. But here again a threat is attached that if they do not take advantage of it now, they are likely to be retrenched without any bonus next year. To me it is a question of the whole future of the Indian population. It is a question of the future relations between India and Ceylon. The people of Ceylon are just like the Indian people. I, therefore, feel aggrieved to find that any kind of conflict should arise between the two. So far as the immediate object of my mission is concerned, I have not achieved any great success. I am sorry for that. But I would say that I had had long and friendly talks with the ministers there, and the latter had been very friendly and courteous. Whether we appreciated each other's point of view or not, we have discussed the matters with a desire to overcome the difficulties. The Ceylon Government has the problem of unemployment to face. I have told them that I cannot have any grievance if they completely stop the recruitment of Indians in government service. They, on their part, said that cases of individual hardship would

be considered. Whether I have succeeded in the mission or not, my visit has resulted in increasing the goodwill between India and Ceylon. Although, superficially, some bitterness of feeling has been noticed among certain people there, still the Sinhalese people have feelings of friendship towards India, and they gave me a magnificent welcome wherever I went.

When I speak about this question, I am led to talk about the question of the emigration of labour. It is in the interests of our country, and particularly for the sake of our dignity and self-respect, that it should be stopped. I hope that here, in this province, you will face these problems in the spirit in which I have endeavoured to place them before you and will prepare yourselves to face the great crisis that is bound to come in the near future.

38. The Congress Is the Only Weapon[1]

By twenty years' labour, we have evolved a strong weapon to fight our country's battles and its cause. That weapon is the Congress. That is our only effective weapon. We cannot afford to weaken or blunt that weapon.

I want to appeal to you to remember that the Congress alone is in a position to bring about and maintain unity. If we look back at the sad chapters in the history of our country, we will find that India never lacked valour and intellect, but disunity was her bane, and it is still undoing her.

Democracy without self-control and restraint turns into anarchy. Discipline is the very essence of democracy. I know that younger elements in the Congress are dissatisfied with so many things. So long as there are different heads, opinions are bound to differ. We might make criticisms, but once a decision is arrived at by the majority, that decision should be loyally abided by.

I want the leftists to remember that there are others who are neither leftists nor rightists. There are many patriotic people who are ready to serve the Congress and the country. Let them not gain an impression that leftists are merely destructive. There is a great need for continuing the dynamic, militant and agitational programme and policy of the Congress.

1. Speech at Poona, 26 July 1939. From *The Hindu*, 27 July 1939.

informally about the developments in India. In the course of this conversation, I referred very briefly to the recent happenings and the formation of the Forward Bloc. I was considering this question from the socialist viewpoint. I said that though the Forward Bloc might contain some socialists, its policy had not been declared to be such. So far, it had declared that it would follow the existing policy of the Congress, except that it would ginger it up to make the Congress go faster. While this, I said, was generally desirable, there was the danger of a Bloc of this kind having no clear policy, of attracting opportunist and adventurist elements who were tied to no policy. I used the words in a technical sense, and of course I did not refer to any individual.

I further said that socialist slogans had been used in the past even by fascist organisations in the early stages. Unless, therefore, there was a clear ideology attached to the slogans and to the party, the danger of a drift towards a wrong course was always present.

I strongly deprecate personal criticisms and I have always tried to avoid them. In public life we must presume the *bona fides* of each other, unless facts and circumstances compel us, in the interests of the public good, to do otherwise. Whether I agree with the Forward Bloc or not is a matter of policy and not personal criticism. I trust that all our criticisms will be based on policy and not on personalities. I regret very greatly the tendency of some newspapers to indulge in personal criticisms of a very undesirable kind.

40. Discipline in the Congress[1]

An unfortunate and difficult situation has arisen in the Congress organisation owing to the decision of the Left Coordination Committee to have all-India public demonstrations on a fixed day to protest against certain resolutions of the All India Congress Committee. I would have liked to place this matter before the council for their directions but unfortunately I knew nothing about it when the council met. It was only after the council had ended its session that I read the Congress President's statement and later the statement issued by the Left Coordination Committee. As the matter was urgent and important, I issued a statement in my capacity as president of the P.C.C.[2] I trust I reflected the views of the council in this statement.

1. Note circulated to the members of the executive council of the U.P.P.C.C., Lucknow, 31 July 1939. *National Herald*, 1 August 1939.
2. See pp. 582-583.

This statement was inevitably somewhat brief and the full problem could not be discussed in it. This problem affects the whole of India and the entire Congress organisation and the ultimate decision must therefore be an all-India one. But we in the U.P., while fully accepting and cooperating with the all-India decisions of the A.I.C.C. and the Working Committee, have always endeavoured to maintain our own discipline and to work in a corporate capacity. It is, therefore, desirable for us to consider this matter ourselves and come to certain decisions. Unless any unforeseen developments take place, we can do so when the council meets next early in August.

As there has been some slight misapprehension about the statement I issued to the press, I should like to clear it. I think the primary members of the Congress have and should have every right to criticise and object to Congress decisions, whether these decisions are of the plenary sessions or the A.I.C.C. or the Working Committee or the P.C.C. The only restricting factor in their case is article one of the Congress, as well as the general rule that they must not carry on activities which are anti-national and anti-Congress and which discredit the Congress. This general rule is no doubt vague and has to be applied to each individual case after a full consideration of the surrounding circumstances. We have applied it, for instance, in the case of those Congressmen who have opposed official Congress candidates in elections. The general rule should not apply to ideological differences and their expression or criticism based on them.

The difficulty arises when members of executive committees, who as such are responsible for carrying out the directions and resolutions of superior committees, carry on an agitation against these resolutions. A deadlock then arises which cannot easily be solved constitutionally. The question we have to consider, therefore, is how far members of various executive committees can participate in agitations against resolutions of superior committees or their own committees.

So far as I am concerned, I think a measure of latitude, to express ideological differences, should be allowed even to such members of executives. But where action is concerned, it is another matter. We cannot have an executive pulling in two or more different directions in regard to action. Nor can we have members of the same executive denouncing the action resolved upon by that executive. No executive can function in this way.

The celebration of an all-India day to denounce or protest against resolutions of the A.I.C.C. is action of an intensive kind. Inevitably it brings the A.I.C.C. into disrepute among the public. Let us consider another aspect of this case. Suppose the U.P.P.C.C. passed a certain

resolution. Would it be justifiable for district, city or *mandal* committees or their office-bearers to organise a provincial agitation against it? Suppose the council of the P.C.C. passed certain resolutions. Could members of our subordinate committees refuse to carry them out and organise a widespread agitation against them? It would be right for individual Congressmen to protest and to bring the matter before the P.C.C. whose decision should be final, so far as we are concerned.

The real question is: are Congress committees bodies of action or merely deliberative or advisory assemblies? If they are meant to be the former, then it follows that action must be uniform, pointed and as swift as possible. It follows that all members of executives should give their adherence and energy to it. It is impossible for an organisation to be a body of action and at the same time to have part of its executive opposing that action.

It seems to me that some Congressmen have an idea that generally speaking (apart from special occasions such as civil disobedience on a large scale) the Congress should be a deliberative and advisory body leaving action to other organisations. This would lead inevitably to the Congress ceasing to have the power to act even on special occasions.

There is no reason why other organisations should not act of their own accord. Whenever possible, they can have the sympathy and help of the Congress organisation. But where such action comes in the way of Congress action or disables the Congress, then it would be absurd for Congressmen, more specially members of Congress executives, to encourage it. Each person then has to decide which is the more important from the larger point of view of our struggle. If local action is held by him to be essential he should support it, but he cannot at the same time hold an executive office in the Congress.

Obviously, there are conflicts inherent in the situation and it is not an easy matter to resolve them. We want the strength and prestige of the Congress to grow as most of us feel that there is no other way of achieving our objective. We want to help local struggles of the masses where they are rightly conducted and for right objectives. We have to coordinate these two in so far as we can. In our own province we have had some success in this task and there is no essential conflict among us. But we know that sometimes irresponsible individuals have started a local struggle on entirely wrong lines and have injured the cause of the masses thereby. We have to control them.

So far as we are concerned in this province, the resolutions of the A.I.C.C. hardly affect us as we can well look after ourselves. It is indeed rather strange that we should protest against a resolution which

gives a certain power and authority to the P.C.C. Are we afraid of our own P.C.C. or our council misusing that power? If so, we should change the P.C.C. or the council.

But the question is a wider one and other provinces may have their own peculiar difficulties and problems. In any event it has suddenly come to the forefront and cannot be evaded as the whole future of the Congress organisation is affected by it. What the Working Committee or the A.I.C.C. may do in this matter I do not know. But we in the U.P. should be clear about it. I suggest therefore that this matter be fully considered at the next meeting of the council. This note will be sent to all members of the council and I invite them to send to the P.C.C. office their views in writing on the subject touched upon in this note. I am also having a copy of this note sent to all members of the A.I.C.C. from the U.P. but they need not trouble to reply, unless they especially wish to do so.

41. To Sri Prakasa[1]

Allahabad
August 15, 1939

My dear Prakasa,

I have just received your letter of August 14th. You will remember that I gave expression to my views pretty fully at the provincial Congress committee meeting on this subject. While I agree with much that you said then, I did feel that the context in which we had to consider all such matters had changed and we could not ignore this. I think that Subhas Bose has acted very wrongly and done considerable injury to the cause and more specially to what might be called the left. It is perfectly true that the people on the other side have in the past and in the present acted wrongly also. What I am concerned with is not so much the judgment of individuals as the effect of a particular action on our movement. Unfortunately, we are becoming more and more involved in the consequences of past actions and errors. It is the law of *Karma*, I suppose, which we cannot escape. Or, call it the development of an inevitable Greek tragedy which cannot be stopped.

I confess that I feel very helpless in the middle of two rival groups both of whom seem to me in the wrong. By nature, I do not like

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

forming groups, and in any event, whatever happens, I want to retain a certain integrity of mind and dignity in action. This is difficult enough at any time, more specially in times of extreme crises. As you know, I am overwhelmed with this sense of impending catastrophe. I find that few persons even among our leading politicians have this sense of tension and this premonition of approaching disaster. I fear we are rapidly heading for what might be called civil war in the real sense of the word in India. Our future conflicts are never going to be on the straight issue of Indian nationalism *versus* British imperialism. British imperialism in future is certainly going to play an important part in opposing us. But it will do so more from behind the scenes exploiting all manner of other groups to this end. We talk and argue and debate about relatively small matters with this impending fate reserved for us. Anything that weakens us from this point of view seems to me disastrous. I am therefore forced to consider all developments in this context. *I realise that it is not good enough to analyse and criticise from* a distance. One must do something much more. But so long as the path is not perfectly clear, I hesitate to do so in this ever-changing situation. It is something at least to avoid a wrong step although one may not take the right one.

It seems to me that owing to the changes in the world situation the whole background and foreground of Indian politics like all other politics have undergone a certain change. I am afraid our old leadership is almost entirely ignorant of this change. But even our advanced elements have not grasped very much and continue to talk in terms of yesterday. Subhas Bose with all his emphasis on leftism talks a language which is peculiarly out of date. His ideal is De Valera. Quite apart from the great difference between Ireland and India, I do not think much of De Valera as an ideal. There is also a certain crudity about Subhas which is distressing. It is hardly possible to discuss any matter with him in private or in committee. He only listens and gives you the impression that he agrees with what you say and then does something entirely different. I think he is going in a wrong direction completely, and many of his immediate advisers are entirely unreliable. He is becoming a symbol for many people who are bitterly hostile to the Congress and for what it stands. They are exploiting him to this end.

All that I have written about has little to do with the contents of your letter. But I wanted to put before you something that I had in mind, and I wanted you to appreciate how grave the issues are today, and how everything that we do brings consequences in its train of a most serious nature. It is not good our comparing events today with events that took place during a static period.

I was present at the Working Committee meeting when this matter came up. My main function was to discuss Ceylon and the international situation. I felt a little hesitant in interfering otherwise in the proceedings, on many matters, with the members. When Subhas's matter came up I informed the Committee of the U.P. council's decision.[2] I further told them of your proposal which though not passed appeared to have the goodwill of most of our members. The Committee considered many things some of which are not before you and which indicated the serious consequences that are flowing from certain actions. Their task was not made easier by the persistent defiance which Subhas Bose showed. Nevertheless, I felt sure in my mind that no serious disciplinary action should have been taken.[3] My own idea was that he should resign from the presidentship of the B.P.C.C. Nothing more was necessary. However, after long discussion, the Working Committee decided as they have done. As I have mentioned above, I did not like, as a non-member, to take too aggressive a part in their deliberations or decisions. I placed my viewpoint and that was as much as I cared to do.

I think that the Working Committee's decision has been very unfortunate and it will harm us. But I do not see where decency and morality come in. The whole attitude adopted by Subhas was not in consonance with either of these qualities and it becomes very difficult for an organisation to be tolerant of deliberate defiance specially at a moment when that defiance is being exploited by others for their own ends.

In any event I do not quite see how the action suggested by you for yourself follows from the Working Committee's decision.[4] It is no good acting on the spur of the moment in a matter of grave importance. I hope you will reconsider your position.

2. It said: "The Council...desires to make it clear that office-bearers and all members of executive committees of the Congress should not participate in any demonstrations against the resolutions or the declared policy of the Congress, the All India Congress Committee, the Working Committee, the provincial Congress committees and this Council, nor should they indulge in any activity which might lower any of these committees, or this organisation itself, in public esteem."
3. On 11 August 1939, the Congress Working Committee disqualified Bose from the presidentship of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and debarred him from membership of any elective Congress committee for three years from August 1939 owing to his show of "grave indiscipline".
4. Sri Prakasa proposed to resign from the Congress, but was persuaded by Mahatma Gandhi not to do so.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Narendra Deva who will be functioning as president of the U.P.P.C.C. soon. I am sending your original letter to Gandhiji so that he might know how you and some others feel in the matter. Perhaps he might write to you directly.

I hope to leave for China on the 20th August if war in Europe does not break out meanwhile.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

42. Enough of It[1]

I owe an apology and an explanation for leaving India when so many urgent tasks demand attention. I do not usually play truant. For a long time I have felt strongly that closer contacts should be developed between India and China, and it was a joy for me when the Congress medical unit went to China. Still I felt that I might be of service in developing these contacts, and I toyed with the idea of going there. There was the international situation which might lead to war at any moment; there was the internal situation which was progressively deteriorating. I gave up all thought of leaving the country. But the idea stuck at the back of my mind and I could not get rid of it. I argued with myself that these crises will continue; there is no end to them in our present-day world. I might as well take advantage of a seeming lull. The journey was a short one by air and my absence need not be for long. I was not foolish enough to imagine that I could solve our many riddles by remaining here.

I mentioned my vague thoughts to some friends and immediately entanglement grew. Letters and cables and invitations poured in upon me from China, and I struggled in vain. I surrendered, possibly because I wanted to surrender and felt that I could be of more service to the cause of India by visiting China. After I had decided to go, other developments took place which made me regret my decision. But it was not easy to withdraw at that stage.

1. Lucknow, 18 August 1939, *National Herald*, 19 August 1939. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 168-171.

Yet I am not sorry that I am going. I must confess that recent happenings in India have disturbed me greatly. I am not for the moment referring to our internal conflicts within the Congress, important and far-reaching as they are, but to something that has a deeper significance. I have felt that many of us have not fully appreciated them in our absorption with matters of lesser moment. To the small extent I could, I tried to prevent the rift in the Congress from widening because of the urgency of our facing other problems together. This endeavour of mine pleased nobody, or hardly anybody, and displeased many. Perhaps I was wrong.

It is perfectly true that I have felt puzzled and perplexed. This perplexity is not due to any doubt in my own mind as to what should be done, but rather to the difficulty of inducing any considerable numbers of others to act in a particular way. When organised groups and parties within the Congress function aggressively against each other, I feel singularly out of place, as I have not been used to such functioning. It invariably happens under these circumstances that each group tries to overreach the other, and the immediate and all-important objective seems to be to triumph over the other group. The larger good is often forgotten. Politics, seldom pleasant, become singularly unpleasant then.

I fear I am an ineffective politician at any time, and I have no taste whatever for the variety of politics that has lately developed. That is my weakness. When I cannot act effectively, I try at any rate to preserve a certain integrity of mind, and I wait for the time when I can act more effectively. It is a cheerless task.

Yet none of us dare be onlookers when vital tasks demand attention. I have no intention of being an onlooker.

Before I go I should like to draw the particular attention of my comrades in the United Provinces to the situation which is growing here, as well as in other provinces. Because of our policy and deliberately not wishing to interfere, we have ourselves allowed this to grow. But it is time we called a halt to it.

This situation, at present in its very early stages, is full of undesirable possibilities. Various groups are deliberately trying to foment public disorder by violence and methods of terrorism. It is easy for a handful of persons to do so when large numbers of others passively permit them. And so the handful grows in temerity and repeats its performance, and another handful takes its cue from it. The great majority of people suffer from this and cannot carry on their ordinary vocations or activities.

It is perhaps a little unfair to single out organisations for criticism, for every organisation has good men and bad. But there is no unfairness

in saying that the communal organisations are chiefly responsible for this state of affairs. This is common knowledge and, indeed, they take pride in it.

It is obvious that if this kind of thing is allowed to continue it may lead to complete public insecurity and to armed or unarmed bands terrorizing the neighbourhood. No civilised people can tolerate this. This is not a matter merely for the Congress or the government. Every man or woman of goodwill and good sense must be interested in putting this public hooliganism down. No public or decent private life is possible if bands of roughs or hooligans dominate the scene.

It was time that it was made perfectly clear that this can be tolerated no longer. A government may give a long rope but no government can put up with hooliganism or else it is not worthy of that name. Riots are detestable and have to be prevented, but even occasional riots, bad as they are, are to be preferred to continuing acts of public terrorism and hooliganism.

But for the present I am addressing Congressmen in this province. I have little doubt that the Congress organisation, if it functions properly, can remedy much that happens. Our methods must not and cannot be violent in the slightest. It is not through our violence that we are going to check the violence of others. We function peacefully but none the less effectively. We must tighten up our organisation, and, more particularly, we must pay attention to our volunteers. Every Congress committee must have its trained volunteer corps. Our volunteers are not meant for show or to impress the ignorant with their bright new uniforms. Nor are they meant to interfere in any person's legitimate activity. They are the soldiers of the nation pledged to peaceful methods and service. They should have simple uniforms, of course, to distinguish them and give them a corporate sense. They must be disciplined and trained.

I call upon every Congress committee—district, city, town, *mandal* and *halqa*—in the province to devote itself with all earnestness to the formation of volunteer corps. The provincial office will give all the help it can. But work must be started without waiting for further directions. On my return from China six weeks later I hope to visit some parts of the U.P. and inspect these volunteers.

We have had enough of weak pandering to evil tendencies. Enough of it, and more than enough. A halt must be called. Let us pull ourselves together and set about this business in a business-like way.

9

GENERAL

THE QUESTION OF LANGUAGE

1. A Common Language for India[1]

It is a pleasure to me to come here. We who are submerged in the hectic world of politics know what the peace of a place like this might mean. Not for peace alone, but also for the hope she holds out to younger generations, is Santiniketan's place significant in our country. I remember how Gandhiji expressed genuine surprise when, some ten or twelve days ago, an eminent foreigner very naively told him that Santiniketan was not included in his itinerary. It was because Gandhiji knows, and we all know, that no other institution in India embodies so intimately the hopes and aspirations and ideals which we hold dear to ourselves. And from this point of view Santiniketan represents an essential aspect of our country.

Urdu and Hindi are like the two streams flowing from one parent source; their framework and structure are the very same. Provided we do not attempt to widen the breach, we will—whether we call our language Urdu or Hindi—be laying the foundation of a common language, namely, Hindustani. Our academic or literary language may differ, but let there be a language for the common usage. For achieving this goal we need conforming, wherever and whenever possible, and that will be possible in an atmosphere of liberal give and take. I think, therefore, Santiniketan to be an eminently suitable place for helping in the evolution of a common language for India.

1. Speech while inaugurating the Hindi Bhawan at Santiniketan, 31 January 1939. From *The Hindustan Times*, 2 February 1939.

2. To Manzar Rizvi[1]

Allahabad
March 4, 1939

My dear Manzar,[2]
Your letter. I wanted to send you a Hindustani message but it takes less time to dictate in English.

I have looked through the *Honehar*. Its general get-up and contents have attracted me. I think that all such efforts to write a simple and identical language in both the Urdu and Nagari characters are desirable. And I welcome this particular one. Opinions will no doubt differ as to what simple Hindustani is. Some will incline somewhat towards more difficult Hindi, some towards more difficult Urdu. I do not think this matters at all and the more efforts we have the better, even if we vary. The *Honehar* probably inclines a little towards Urdu. Nevertheless, its language is chaste and simple. I wish it success.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-31(K.W.I)/1939, p. 107, N.M.M.L.
2. Editor, *Honehar*, a monthly magazine published from Patna, in both Urdu and Dev Nagari scripts, for propagating the Hindustani language.

SODEPUR, APRIL 1939

STUDENTS AND PUBLIC LIFE

3. Students and the World Problem[1]

Students of today will have to shoulder the burden of the world that will emerge out of the present international chaos. Will that world be one where freedom and democracy will flourish or will it be a slave world crushed and exploited by dominating fascism and imperialism?

The answer to this question will have to be given by all of us and no one can be more interested in that answer than those on whom this burden of the world will fall tomorrow.

It is right, therefore, that they should face these problems from today and throw their weight on the side of peace, freedom and democracy. These three go together, for there is or can be no peace except on a basis of freedom. We have arrived at a stage when there is a war between freedom and democracy on one side and fascism and imperialism on the other. Each one of us has to choose. Faced with this choice, the British and French Governments with their imperialist backgrounds and traditions and their desire to protect vested interests of those who profit by imperialistic exploitation, have inevitably lined themselves up with fascism. That process of siding with fascism will continue so long as the British and French people do not decide to shed their imperialism.

I trust the *World Students Association* will not hesitate in this hour of crisis to line itself up unhesitatingly on the side of freedom and progressive forces. To hesitate now is to prove oneself unworthy of the task that has been allotted to the coming generation.

1. Lucknow, 6 December 1938. This was written for the journal *World Students Association* published from Paris. *The Hindustan Times*, 7 December 1938.

4. Discipline in National Life[1]

British imperialism is still one of the biggest and the most powerful imperialisms in the world. Nevertheless, from the long point of view of history, it is dead. Historically speaking, it has given up the ghost, though, in actuality, it may survive a number of years—ten years, twelve years, fifteen years—I do not know how many. But the point is that, historically speaking, it is dying. It has lost everything that gave it strength. It may carry on yet because of some impetus it has got, but it has lost the spirit to survive, it has lost the material resources that gave it strength, and, what is more, it has lost the spirit and the heart to survive.

I have not a shadow of doubt that British imperialism cannot keep us down today or prevent us from achieving independence. Today we are strong enough to face it provided certain inner weaknesses do not come in our way, so the problem then becomes for us, in order to remove all traces of imperialism, to remove those weaknesses that come in our way, our own weaknesses, the disruptive and the communal tendencies which weaken us, and such other drawbacks.

There has been in the past one year or two, or perhaps more, a great deal of ferment in the student world in India. That ferment is due to many justifiable causes in many instances. This has often led to strikes and the like. Although I appreciate that there might be occasions when students might take action with regard to them, I have completely failed to understand the extreme facility with which the students have gone on strikes in schools and colleges. I am not aware of students striking anywhere else outside India except on very, very particular occasions, like participating in big national movements. Of course, conditions in India are peculiar, and peculiar conditions require peculiar remedies. Still, I have felt very strongly that students in India are pursuing a wrong path and getting entangled in wrong methods by their too frequent recourse to strikes.

There is no economic conflict or any other conflict between the interests of the teachers and the students. It may be that there are undesirable teachers. But there is no fundamental conflict between the functions of the two. Now the whole idea of education is based on the cooperation of the teacher and the taught; otherwise there cannot be any education. Therefore this impulse to go on a strike, except for

1. Speech at the All India Students Conference, Calcutta, 2 January 1939. From *The Hindu*, 3 January 1939.

very grave reasons, is highly undesirable because I feel this would ultimately lead to the disintegration of the student movement.

Very often, nowadays, people resort to fasting in order to gain certain objectives. I consider such action to be childish.

My advice to the students is to combat sectarian and communal tendencies. The All India Muslim League and the All India Hindu Mahasabha are both communal organisations. If we read through the resolutions that have been adopted by both we will find that the arguments and the methods of approach adopted by both the organisations are remarkably similar.

I have no desire to use strong language when criticising these organisations. But I do wish to express my utter distress at the methods the communal leaders are introducing in our public life, which inevitably are resulting in the deterioration of the whole tone of public life. There are certain standards that we have to follow in public life. And if we leave those standards, we do so at our peril. Let us assume that the Congress is hopelessly wrong, or, for the matter of that, any other organisation is wrong. But right or wrong, if we are to continue our public life with any measure of sobriety and responsibility, we have to observe certain standards of decency, and I regret to say that progressively those standards are disappearing from our communal organisations.

I have no doubt that the time will come when this bitterness will go and a large number of people, who are very decent people, but who, on account of passions, prejudices and other reasons, are in the communal organisations today, will realise where they are going and will gradually come round.

I cannot think of anything more absurd than to talk of a Muslim students federation or a Hindu students federation, just as it is equally absurd to have a Muslim workers union and a Hindu workers union in a factory. That is absurd.

The resolutions adopted by the Congress in its earlier years of development were more strongly worded than those which are being passed now by the Congress. This is but natural and it shows the strength that the Congress has acquired now. Today there is greater purposefulness shown by the Congress resolutions as they have an effect on large sections of people. The outside world also knows that when the Congress passes a resolution, it has behind it the threat of action. It behoves us then to make the resolutions look simple and dignified.

The membership of the Congress in recent years has increased tremendously. The Congress should be careful about the type of men it enlists as members. I suggest a stiffening of the Congress membership rules so that it might have, as a majority of its members, people who

would be ready to fight and make the Congress a fighting organisation. Are we all sure that the large numbers of men who have enrolled themselves as Congress members are really capable of putting up a fight? The problem before the Congress today is how to fuse together the political and social movements. Are these members able to face this problem?

During my recent tour of Europe, I gained enough first-hand knowledge and experience of the conditions prevailing there. I doubt if full significance of what has happened in Europe during the last few months has been properly understood in this country. During these few months several very strange events have taken place in Europe. Those events are as important from the historical point of view as the Great War of 1914-18. The last war was important historically, not from the point of view of casualties or destruction of lives, but from the point of view of the changes that it brought about in Europe.

These events have entirely changed the map of Europe, and, what is more, it is continually changing. And further, I found an extreme paralysis of the intellect in countries like England and France, which still presume to call themselves democratic. An extreme paralysis of intellect seems to have afflicted all the people, be they young or old; people belonging to all manner of highly advanced groups, and less advanced groups, as well as the Conservatives. There is a strange paralysis of the intellect among these people. They appear to be overwhelmed with too many problems and do not appear to find a solution for them. They have, with the rest of the world, the problem of democracy to solve.

In the nineteenth century democracy was only on the political plane. Now it is being increasingly realised that democracy will cease to function unless it is extended to the economic plane. Democracy, in particular, is an institution which requires a certain tradition behind it, a certain habit, and a certain discipline. A democracy without discipline goes to pieces. And this discipline must come from within, not as an imposition from outside.

The Congress today has outlived the days of shouting and vigorous denunciation of British imperialism. Now that it is on the threshold of power and responsibility, not only our countrymen, but also the world at large, expect us to follow up our decisions on any issue by suitable action. That explains why the resolutions of the Congress are progressively becoming milder and more dignified in their wording. But the milder wording of our resolutions must not be taken to indicate any weakness in the position of the Congress. Rather it conveys to all those, whom it may concern, the impression of a strong determination to carry on our decisions to the bitter end, if need be.

5. The Cultivation of a Scientific Outlook[1]

Culture is one of those words which might mean anything, including culture in everything, in history, in society and in every form of human activity.

Certain people in this country, for instance, condemn education in India as a manifestation of British imperialism. I suppose there is nobody in India who is not aware of the fact that the present system of education is bad, and that the basis on which it stands is doubly bad. Attempts are, however, being continually made to change and improve it.

The Wardha scheme of education seems to me a remarkable attempt at improvement of education on modern lines. I am of the opinion that any system of education that might be introduced in this country should integrate the activities of both the mind and the body of the students.

What exactly do you mean by culture? Individual culture, social and national developments and everything akin to them. Development also takes two forms generally. There is the development of individuals which is highly important, and as individuals develop they form social groups. Naturally the more well-developed the individuals, the higher the social groups which we shall have. On the other hand, when we develop a social group, it helps the development of individuals, because one reacts upon the other. So we have to see that both developments take place simultaneously.

Ordinarily, the religious approach in the past has been the way of individual development. It tries to improve the individual hoping that the improvement of the individual will affect the social group. That has been so in every country whatever religion it may have had or whatever method may have been devised for approaching the problem.

Nevertheless, the modern method lays stress on improving the environment so that a person living in a particular environment may grow to his fullest capacity. Both these methods have not been, however, contemporary. Perhaps the stress laid on the improvement of a particular environment is more important today because if the environment is bad you cannot make much progress. We have to think again in

1. Address at the cultural conference organised by the students of the Scottish Church College, Calcutta, 3 January 1939. From *National Herald*, 7 January 1939.

terms of social culture and what kind of environment it develops. What is the good, for instance, of your trying to cultivate unselfishness and noble qualities when the social structure that surrounds you is based on selfishness and produces bad influences on life?

Look at the world today, the international world. It is quite astoundingly immoral and bad. How can you expect influences to be highly moral when continuous pressure of immorality is put on environments, with the result that there has inevitably occurred an all-round deterioration. The deterioration has taken place on the international level, the national level and the individual level.

Today there is a great feeling of paralysis of mind among a large number of thinking individuals in Europe, in America and all over the world. It is so because they feel that the forces of evil are stronger than their combined strength. The forces of evil are indicated by fascism and reaction, and this environment forces them to be far from good.

How to find a way out of this situation? It is not enough for you to imagine that the problem is so simple that by a few slogans you will be able to solve it. Every form of government or state, whether it is fascist, imperialist or communist, indulges inevitably in creating an environment which helps its maintenance. It inevitably tries to spread its influence on the minds of its citizens through educational process.

You have, therefore, ultimately to decide what form of state or society you are going to have. Saying that you dislike imperialism is to make a negative statement. We have to be positive as to what type of 'ism' we want. It depends on certain fundamental axioms of thought and freedom of various kinds of activities. Because various complex situations influence the society as well as the individual, we cannot possibly help develop the conditions we desire.

We must, therefore, have freedom of thought. We must have a democratic process working as far as it can. But, at the same time, we must not forget that the freedom of thought leads to some difficulties. Ordinarily, it does not lead to difficulties because people who avail of the freedom of thought and action are sufficiently disciplined. They are advanced in their thinking and are responsible in outlook.

Today in many countries of the world the democratic process seems to work slow. It does not bring in results quickly when quick results are necessary. We, therefore, find that in this century democracy has not functioned well even in those countries where it has been in existence for many years. When confronted with these difficulties we try to find an answer by resorting to pet phrases which do not really help. They only divert our attention to other channels of thought.

Today mankind is passing through unprecedented changes and a period of transition. We must remember that we are going through the most extraordinary period in history. It has been an astoundingly revolutionary period of changes. From my knowledge of history, I doubt if there has hitherto been any time which was fraught with such revolutionary changes as the period which began in 1914 with the commencement of the Great War and which continues till today.

It is not a question of one year or two. This crisis of change is bound to remain with us for a long time to come.

You hear nowadays a great deal about planning, specially in industrial and economic life; but what is more important is the planning of various activities of life that the nation undertakes so that each activity fits in well with the other. Yet, the approach to the problems must be our own.

In India today there is a conflict going on between two kinds of forces and problems. It is more or less a psychological conflict. There are obviously other conflicts such as political, economic and others. But there is also a psychological conflict, a conflict of minds. Many forces are pulling us in different directions. Many forces of the past have strengthened us. Many others have proved a burden also.

Now look at the various complex forces that have resulted in developing a more or less composite culture in this country. Every culture is equally a composite culture because no culture is purely a national culture in the sense that it has had no influence from other quarters. Of course, there is such a phenomenon as national culture which has a certain influence on the nation, but, generally speaking, even this culture has had a great deal of influence from other quarters, although India is one of those countries which has had an essentially composite culture for thousands of years. Our country has possessed a great capacity for absorbing foreign cultures that invaded this country.

Ultimately, India had to face what we call a new culture from the West which had as its basis science and modern industry which upset for the time being the whole fabric. During the last one hundred years or so, there has been a conflict in India between various types of cultures. There has been a conflict between the Western culture and our own culture. I do not mean to say that there is essentially a conflict between the two in public; but still there is an inherent conflict. If the culture of the West had not come to us in the guise of political conquerers there would not have been any conflict.

Just as in other cases we would have taken it much more readily, we must distinguish it from this political conquest because science as such

has nothing to do with political conquest. It is something which represents the spirit of the age. There cannot be any doubt that we cannot progress nationally or individually unless we profit by the lessons of science.

There is, however, a problem before us when we think of science. We have to think presumably not of science as applied in the fields of industry or politics but science in its wider connotation. What is science? It is a certain way of approaching problems, a certain way of seeking the truth. It is a certain empirical way whereby we get prepared to reject anything if we cannot establish or prove it.

Of course, some of the most established rules of science are often being upset. Newton's theory of gravitation has undergone a change by Einstein's theory.

What I wish to emphasise is that science means an approach to all of life's problems. It is to be applied to the problems relating to our family, religion and everything else. You cannot apply science in your industries keeping other departments of your life free from it. The whole scheme is unscientific. Therefore, if we want to consider various problems that face us as an individual and as a social group, the right way to consider these problems is to adopt the method of science. If we examine our social and economic systems, we will find that these have developed in a most irrational manner. If on one side there is an abundance of production, we find that on the other side there is terrible misery and want.

The League of Nations proclaims peace and cooperation but the very members of the League are preparing for war and indulging in wars of aggression. They are the people destroying foodstuffs so that the prices of those foodstuffs might be kept up for profit.[2] If we want to slove all these problems, we have to approach them in a scientific and rational way, with a proper objective before us. That kind of approach alone can help us to understand and solve the problems.

I am a socialist because I feel that socialism is a scientific approach to the world's problems. It is not necessary that I should agree with every other socialist but generally a socialist approach is scientific and that appeals to me tremendously. It helps me in understanding the problems of history and history itself. If I try to look at history from

2. In mid-thirties, farmers in the United States of America were granted subsidies for producing less. In 1936, nearly thirty per cent of the total produce of coffee was destroyed, and in England, a quarter of the capacities of the Lancashire mills or ten million cotton spindles were destroyed.

a socialist point of view, it helps me to understand the present position because the present has its roots in the past.

Therefore I would like you to consider the various cultural and other problems and apply the scientific approach to your personal life, especially because you are apt to give up this approach in your personal life. When you adopt the scientific approach, you will find a conflict between the personal ideals and the ideals of our public life. This conflict will not, of course, make you happy in your life. But the real joy in life is to work for a great purpose, to understand it, and put all the strength and energy of the integrated mind and personality into its fulfilment. Such an endeavour will give you a sense of fulfilment and real joy.

ON INDIANS ABROAD

6. On Conditions of Indians Abroad[1]

I find it somewhat difficult to send a message to my countrymen in South Africa. And yet it is easy enough to pen a message and feel virtuous at a duty performed. But it is not messages that our people abroad want; they want something more. There seems to be a dead-set at Indians overseas, more especially in the British dominions and colonies. In the Belgian Congo, Indian merchants are being harassed and crushed;[2] in the Italian colonies, Indians are gradually being squeezed out. In Mauritius, where our countrymen form a great part of the population, they have no position; in Jamaica, a recent report told us of their helpless and miserable condition.[3] Our own cousins in Burma and Ceylon have turned against them and are pursuing an ill-conceived and narrow-minded policy which is sowing the seeds of bitterness between them and India. In East Africa a fresh insult has been hurled at us.[4] And now in the Union of South Africa the pledged word of the Union Government has been deliberately broken and an attempt is being made to segregate Indians. Political rights had been denied us for long; now even human rights are being withheld.

This is the empire to which we have the misfortune to be tied. The sooner this empire ends, the better for humanity; the sooner we cut away from it, the better for us.

1. Message to the Natal Indian Congress, Bombay, 5 June 1939. *The Hindustan Times*, 6 June 1939.
2. Many Indian traders were prosecuted on false allegations of theft, refused legal defence and expelled from the Belgian Congo.
3. A memorandum to the Royal Commission on the West Indies had stressed the need for providing adequate facilities of housing, land settlement, education and employment to the Indians settled there.
4. The Kenya Highlands Order-in-Council, passed by the British Government in early 1939, caused great resentment among Indians as it gave sanction to the administrative practice which excluded Indians from buying or occupying lands.

India is weak today and cannot do much for her children abroad, but she does not forget them, and every insult to them is humiliation and sorrow for her. And a day will come when her long arm will shelter and protect them and her strength will compel justice for them. Even today in her weakness the will of her people cannot be ultimately ignored.

To our countrymen in South Africa, I say that we are with you in every act of courage that you perform in honour of India and her dear name. It is never right to submit to evil and national humiliation, and every attempt to impose these must be resisted, whatever the consequences. Dead nations submit to dishonour, but we are a living and a proud people and I would rather say that we faced extinction than submitted to dishonour.

7. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Bombay
June 11, 1939

My dear Krishna,

Some days ago a number of people came to see me about the plight of Indians in the Belgian Congo. I asked them to send their papers on to you and they tell me that they have done so. I do not know what you can do in the matter. But perhaps it might be possible for you to draw attention to this through Parliament or otherwise. These people have already been in touch with Polak who apparently represents the Indians Overseas Association. I do not know what Polak has done. The Government of India has also been moved in the matter.

I have been in Bombay now for the last nine days, all my time being devoted to the National Planning Committee. This is a hard and exhausting business, more so because of the various conflicting elements in the committee. I cannot leave the committee even for a day because in my absence the committee would not function. The subject is a vast one, still I think that some good will come out of our labours....

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

8. To R. Bhamani[1]

Bombay
June 17, 1939

Dear Friend,[2]
I have your letter of the 13th June. I have read the cutting that you have sent me with some surprise. The editor of the *Tanganyika Opinion* has presumed to sit in judgment over the Congress and its labours here in regard to our internal politics.[3] I am afraid this kind of presumption is not going to help the cause of Indians abroad. I find it peculiarly irritating to have people overseas passing airy opinions about difficult problems in India without knowing anything about them.

However, I should like to do what I can in this matter. I do not think that an Indian deputation can be sent from here under existing conditions, nor do I think that a boycott of Belgian goods is feasible. You will no doubt realise that we are facing similar and indeed much worse conditions in South Africa and Ceylon, not to mention the Indian states.

I hope the Working Committee will take the matter in hand and I shall gladly support them.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Representative, Indian Association, Belgian Congo.
3. The paper, in its issue of 16 May 1939, while criticising the Government of India for its apathy towards the fate of Indian settlers in the Belgian Congo, also criticised the Congress for being too busy with its internal problems to take a firm stand on the position of Indians in the Congo.

PERSONAL

9. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
12.4.39

Darling,
So you have gone and I wonder when and where we shall meet again in this mad world. More and more I have been thinking that it was right for you to go to Europe. India is not a happy country at present at any rate for those who are sensitive. Your companionship with me could give you little satisfaction for I am functioning most unsatisfactorily. There is no reason why you should have to put up with the consequences of my actions. It is well therefore that you have gone. Europe is bad, terribly bad, and yet it is for us impersonally bad. But in India the personal factor comes in.

I spent yesterday with Shah, Mahmud and company. Shah left in the evening and then I sat till late at night with Mahmud. Old ties hold when one is depressed. After Mahmud left me long after midnight I sat down to look through the proofs of *Glimpses* which had just come. I read those old letters which I had sent you again and I felt how terribly far away that time was, when I wrote them.

Agatha came today and will stay till tomorrow evening.

Have a good time on board and profit by the sea air.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

10. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
13.4.39

Darling,
I have got a new malady—a toothache. Nothing much but troublesome. Since yesterday I have been nursing it. I expect it will go in a day or two. Mahmud has stayed on, probably not liking to leave me alone. Agatha is staying on for two or three days more till Nan returns to Lucknow.

I listen to the radio news and weigh the chances of war. I still think that it will not come off just yet but one never knows what will happen and it is best to be prepared. Perhaps even before you reach Marseilles the blow-up might take place. I am not afraid of the physical danger to you. That has to be faced anyhow. But the more I think of it, the more I feel that it will not be worthwhile for you to remain in England for long during war-time. You need not hurry away. If you go to America you can stay there some time. But we can see to this later.

I am writing to Louise.[2] But I think you had better send her a telegram from Marseilles.

Do you know these lines of Alfred de Musset?[3]

J'ai perdu ma force et ma vie,
Et mes amis et ma gaieté;
J'ai perdu jusqu'à la fierté,
Qui faisait croire à mon génie.[4]

That is rather how I feel. But I will get over this.
Love,

Your loving
Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Louise Morin (1883-1970); a French journalist and a friend of India; made this country her home; in charge of the French unit of the All India Radio, 1952-65.
3. (1810-1857); a French dramatist and poet.
4. I have lost my strength and my life
And my friends and my cheerfulness;
I have lost even my pride
Which used to make me believe in my genius.

11. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
22.4.39

Darling Indu,

I suppose you are round about Port Said now and will soon enter the Mediterranean with all its battleships and submarines nosing about. I have tried to follow in my mind's eye your journey across the seas and sought relief from my growing burdens in thoughts that take me far away. These burdens grow and take all the spring out of life—not that I have too much spring left. It is five weeks or more since Tripuri and we are where we were. In another week we foregather in Calcutta for the A.I.C.C. and what will happen there nobody knows.

Two days ago I went to see Subhas at his request. We had a long friendly talk and yet from time to time I had a sensation that he was not fully aware of what I was driving at. This lack of awareness and sensitiveness of some people is terrible.

The communal situation is as bad as ever, though there are no riots —the Shias and Sunnis are going for each other. Pantji wants me to be chairman of a committee to consider the communal trouble and suggest a way out—a bad and difficult job.

Then in Jamshedpur there is a lot of trouble between the Tatas and their workers. I am asked to be one of the arbitrators. I do not know how to get out of it.

Meanwhile the P.C.C. and the *National Herald* drain all the energy out of me. I am going to Lucknow tonight.

I enclose a copy of a letter I am sending to Miss Darbyshire.[2]

I have received your L.B.C. book—*Empire or Democracy* by Leonard Barnes. I am keeping it.

Love,

Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Helen Darbyshire, principal, Somerville College, Oxford.

12. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
26.4.39

Darling,
I have come to Allahabad for a few hours and am just going to Calcutta for the A.I.C.C. Upadhyaya has already gone off with my luggage to the station and I am hurriedly scribbling these few lines.

Your letter from Port Tawfeik came today. I am glad you have had a fairly good voyage. Now you must be in Paris. I hope you have looked up our old friend Shah.[2]

You give me a lot of good advice, my dear, to keep smiling, etc. Of course. But it is a little difficult. I suppose age is telling upon me and I am losing my resilience. I enclose a very sad statement which has just been issued by Bapu.[3] His heart seems to be breaking. The world is not meant for the sensitive. I thought I was hardened enough but I was mistaken.

I must go to the station now.
Love,

Your loving
Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Probably Popatlal Shah, a businessman in Paris.
3. See p. 297.

13. To Indira Nehru[1]

Lucknow
12.5.1939

Darling Indu,
It is a month today, is it not?, since you left Allahabad and now you are many thousands of miles away. I do not quite know where you are —I suppose you are still in England, probably in London. But I hesitate to send this letter to the Y.W.C.A. and yet I suppose that is the best

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

address. Louise Morin wrote to me of your arrival in and departure from Paris. Of your arrival in London I have so far not heard.

For the past week I have been so engrossed in Lucknow affairs that I have almost forgotten Hitler, Mussolini and all their unholy tribe. I came here specially for the Shia-Sunni trouble. It has grown to enormous dimensions and nearly 8,700 Shias are in prison and the bitterness between the two is something unbelievable. For this week I have spent long and exhausting hours, nearly all day and till far into the night, talking, discussing, arguing, drafting statements. Gradually we seemed to be coming nearer a settlement, or at any rate a provisional arrangement. We thought of clinching the matter today and then at the last moment everything broke down! And so here we are wondering what to do, at a loose end. Still I suppose we have to go on trying and we shall make another effort tomorrow. Anything more distressing or irritating I can hardly imagine.

To add to my troubles I fell ill. Nothing much but I was confined to bed. I am up again and have been pushed about in the hospital for various X-rays which displayed a fairly healthy inside.

Ranjit lies in the grip of a fierce attack of malaria with his temperature running to over 106°F.

I am for the present held up here because of the Shia-Sunni affair. I do not know how long I shall have to stay on. In any event I have to be here again a few days later for various meetings.

I shall go to Bombay at the beginning of June and remain there for 2 weeks or more. So remember to write to me there.

Agatha has taken with her a gramophone record for you. This is the new *Bande Mataram* tune. Do you remember a doctor who travelled with us when we went to Santiniketan? He promised to send you a python's skin. Well, he has sent it. I do not quite know how to send it on to you. Such things give trouble in the customs. I shall try to find someone to take it.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

14. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
July 3, 1939

Darling Indu,
Early on the 1st of June I left Allahabad for Bombay and on the 30th night I returned after a full month's absence. I have come back for a few days only—brief visits to Allahabad and Lucknow and then back to Bombay on my way to Ceylon. For I am going to Ceylon for a week or ten days, not for pleasure or rest but on business.

It is long since I have written to you—two weeks or so since I wrote to you from Juhu.[2] My letters to you grow infrequent, or at any rate the letters I actually write and post. But other letters take shape in my mind and remain unwritten. Often I think of writing to you, for you are always in my mind, but I hesitate and put it off. A vague feeling that too frequent letters might be a nuisance and a burden to you holds me back. It is hateful to have to write because one has to. I do not want you to feel that way and so the letters I send you go at much longer intervals than they used to.

Perhaps I am undergoing some inner change also due to age and a variety of experiences. I am withdrawing into myself more and more and my incursions into the outer world are being limited. They are far too many still and I am entangled in a hundred ways. One part of me pushes out, the other tries to hide itself from the world. A Jekyll and Hyde existence. Here in Allahabad the introvert prevails and I live in this big house in absolute silence with very few interruptions. A visitor might well think that the house is uninhabited. Most of the rooms are locked and no one visits them. I reach Anand Bhawan and come up to my room and pay a visit to yours and look round and see the familiar pictures and books and articles. Then back to my room where I live day and night except for brief visits down below for food or to see an occasional visitor. I do not encourage visitors and I am glad that they respect my wishes. I am beginning to think that there is something in the old Hindu idea of *sanyasa* after a certain age. There is no chance of my becoming a *sanyasi* but the idea is not without attraction.

Bundles of books awaited me here, most of them sent by authors or publishers. There was Gunther's *Inside Asia* and Edward Thompson's

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Not printed.

new book—*You Have Lived Through All This*, which to my surprise I found he had dedicated to me. I have been reading these and musing on this strange world in which we live.

I have mentioned above that I am going to Ceylon. For some time past the lot of Indians in Ceylon has grown progressively worse. Indeed all over the world they are being ill-treated and, from some places, kicked out. Little Ceylon has been behaving very shabbily. Two weeks ago, I had an indirect and informal invitation from some ministers of the Ceylon Government to go there. I sent a disdainful reply. If Indians were not good enough for Ceylon, Ceylon was not good enough for me. But when the Working Committee pressed me to go on their behalf and the A.I.C.C. passed a resolution to this effect, I had to agree. So I am going by air on the 15th. Probably I shall be in Colombo most of the time but I hope to steal a day for Kandy and a few hours for Anuradhapura where I want to see again the old statue of the seated Buddha in contemplation. For the last seven years I had a picture of this almost always with me, in prison or outside. Do you remember the sonnet I sent you long ago, I think from Almora gaol?...[3]

Desireless I might wish to be, but not immortal or unerringly wise, and to disdain human dreams is to disdain life.

I gladly accepted the job in Ceylon although it is a difficult one and there is little hope of success. It is a matter of a week or two only at the most, and it takes me away from scores of other troubles here. Although it is intensive and hard work, it does not disturb me or distress me. I was indeed thinking vaguely of going to China for a few weeks—did I write to you about it? This Ceylon visit comes in the way somewhat but I have not entirely given up the idea of a China visit. If there are no international complications and no internal bust-up, I might yet go there. If so I shall go by air about the 20th August direct to Chungking, returning if possible by the Burma Road. But all this is in the air and I shall decide on my return from Ceylon at the end of this month.

Indeed everything is in the air because of continuous talk of war, and if war comes, all our little plans will be upset. How it will affect you I do not know but I do not worry for you can well look after yourself. You will decide for yourself what to do and where to go. If you require more money you can get it directly from Bachhraj or write to me. It seems hardly possible that we shall escape war for long. I hate the prospect of war and yet I wish this tension would cease and something definite should take place to end the present instability.

3. Not printed here. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 370.

War of course would end so many things in India and we shall all be on the high road again.

Betty is also going to Ceylon, not exactly with me but at the same time. She has been unwell and a fortnight away will do her good.

Kailas has reached London—I suppose you have heard from him. Birju Bhai accompanied him on the *Victoria*. In Paris he spent two days with Louise Morin and Jean Jacques.[4] Shiela suddenly decided to follow him and has sailed by the P & O boat on July 1st. She is going all the way by sea to Tilbury.

The memorial hospital has at last begun to take shape. The architects and contractors are here and are digging the foundations. It should be ready and functioning within a year.

The hot summer day waxes and wanes and wearily passes into the brief night. It is very hot and stuffy. The monsoon clouds lessen the heat of the sun but increase the closeness of the air.

I go tonight to Lucknow for Congress committee meetings.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

4. Son of Louise Morin; now working in the International Labour Organisation.

MISCELLANEOUS

15. To Rabindranath Tagore[1]

Allahabad
December 1, 1938

My dear Gurudeva,

Thank you for your letter.[2] The state of Bengal is certainly distressing and it is up to all of us to improve conditions there. It is a curious paradox but the very fact of Bengal being clever and advanced in many ways has brought about various crises. As a matter of fact, the whole of India is rapidly going towards a crisis. I do not for the moment refer to a conflict with British imperialism which is always possible, but to an internal crisis due to our own inner weaknesses. I suppose we have to pass through these periods and cannot easily avoid them.

I should greatly like to discuss many subjects with you and to have your advice with regard to them. If you will permit me I shall come a little later, after various executive meetings including the Working Committee which takes place soon. I can well understand your distress at the state of Bengal and India. Every sensitive person in India must feel this distress. I suppose the only thing to do is to face these problems fairly and squarely and do one's best.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Tagore was distressed at the deepening crisis in Bengal, and wanted to discuss it with Jawaharlal.

19. To Madam Sun Yat-sen[1]

Allahabad
December 27, 1938

Dear Madam Sun,

Your letter dated July 7th reached me a few days ago. Mr. Leaning,[2] the bearer of it, missed me in India as I was in Europe at the time. He again missed me in Europe as I was then on my way back to India. Ultimately he posted the letter. I am sorry I did not have the chance of meeting Mr. Leaning and of having from him first-hand information of the situation in China.

It has been a great pleasure to me to have your letter. We have been following with the closest and most anxious interest the situation in China. I wish we could be of some real help to you. But unfortunately we are so restricted and confined that our capacity to help our friends abroad is limited. But we have had innumerable great demonstrations in favour of the Chinese people, and the whole of India has felt at one with them in their hour of trial. To send you our sympathy is a poor enough gift when you have to face great trials and privations, even an account of which makes us shudder. Yet perhaps every little counts in the end and we have to work to the best of our ability in the common cause. I have the fullest faith in China's future and I am convinced that she will triumph over her present difficulties.

It is over 11 years ago that I had the privilege of meeting you for a short while in Moscow, but I have carried ever since a vivid and delightful memory of that meeting. You were good enough to send me later a photograph of yourself and Dr. Sun Yat-sen.[3] I do not know if I ever thanked you for this. I was not sure where to write to and about that time many strange things were happening in China. This photograph has been a treasured possession of mine.

With all good wishes for the New Year to you and your brave people,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. John Leaning, a member of the China Defence League.
3. (1866-1925); founder of the Kuomintang Party.

20. To A.C.N. Nambiar[1]

December 1938

My dear Nanu,
I should like you to get into touch with two Jewish experts in Vienna. These two are:

1. Martin Jahoda, Blechturmgasse 22, Vienna IV. (Age 35. After completing studies joined the family printing house of Jahoda and Siegel in Vienna. Worked in various capacities and raised to the management of the plant consisting of various types of machines, including rotary machines. Claims knowledge of the construction and working of all these machines and can repair them.)
2. Hans Mahler, Windmuhlgasse 11/15, Vienna VI. (Age 47. Worked for many years in the Steyrermuhl Paper Manufacturing and Printing Works, which are said to be the largest and best known in the graphical and newspaper line in Austria, publishing the biggest newspapers. After 15 years' employment became general manager of all the printing work. Claims to be an expert in the graphical and newspaper industry.)

We should like to engage one of them to supervise the printing department of the *National Herald*. It will be necessary to interview them and for this purpose I would suggest your going to Vienna if you can manage it. The following points have to be determined:

1. Their technical knowledge and capacity in regard to machines, printing and the kind of work they will have to do here. This work, to begin with, is on a modest scale, but we hope it will grow.
2. Their general political outlook and how they would fit in with Indian conditions and our movement. They are not supposed to take part in the politics here, but it is desirable that their general outlook should be a favourable one. They should be able to adjust themselves to new surroundings and working with somewhat inefficient workers.
3. We cannot afford big salaries. Generally speaking, I would suggest Rs. 250 a month. In this matter, I would like your own suggestions. Perhaps it might be better to give housing accommodation and a smaller salary.
4. The contract should be for a year to begin with but we hope to extend it. In any event, we shall, of course, not leave them in the

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

lurch. If they are really good, there are plenty of openings for them, and, at the worst, we shall make ourselves responsible for sending them back if they want to. A long contract is undesirable without experience of each other.

5. About the voyage expenses to India, it will help us of course if some of the Jewish agencies could pay them.

These are some of the obvious points. I should like you to take immediate steps in this matter. A copy of the reply that you send me might also be sent to V.K. Krishna Menon. If we choose someone, we shall have to take steps to get visas and Krishna Menon will be able to help in this in London.

You mentioned to me that some good newspaper printing machines were to be had at cheap rates. I should like to have particulars of these. I am not sure that we shall require one but it is just possible that need for them might arise.

Could you also send particulars of the experts of the glass industry about whom you spoke to me? You told me that some Social Democrat Germans in the Sudeten areas were available for employment. If they are not expensive, it is possible that the U.P. Government might engage them.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

21. Keshab Chandra Sen[1]

It is not sufficient for you merely to honour the memory of Keshab Chandra Sen[2] but rather to understand what exactly he had stood for and profit by that and realise with its help what the roots of the present problems are—because all our problems have roots in the past—and try to find the right solution for them.

It is very unusual for me to have to address a gathering on more or less a religious subject, because, essentially, Keshab Chandra Sen was

1. Speech delivered on the occasion of the birth centenary of Keshab Chandra Sen at Calcutta on 2 January 1939. From *National Herald*, 7 January 1939.
2. (1838-1884); joined Brahmo Samaj, 1857; founded Brahmo Bandhu Samaj; advocated women's education; campaigned against the segregation of Harijans and for the abolition of the practice of early marriage of girls and of polygamy.

a man of religion, a man of faith; and although in some respects I may not be entirely devoid of faith, I am certainly not a man of religion. I have felt considerable irritation at the various manifestations of religion in this country and I think as I grow older I may become more tolerant in my action, and perhaps in my words too, but in my mind I would grow more intolerant of such manifestations.

When I say this, I speak of every religion in this country. Of course, whether it is right and proper to judge a religion by certain manifestations is another question; but obviously for the average man religion means these very manifestations and nothing more.

So it is curious that a person like me should be chosen to deliver an address on this occasion. You will forgive me if I deal with the subject not perhaps from the point of view of a man of religion, because I am not particularly interested in that point of view, but from another point of view which appeals to me more.

Keshab Chandra Sen has always struck me as one in the great line of people in India who have tried to bring about a certain synthesis among the various conflicting ideas and ideals which have existed in this country. Now, India more than any other country, as far as I know, has succeeded in bringing about a synthesis between the various conflicting ideals. Indeed the whole of her history is full of attempts to assimilate all manner of religions and thoughts. Perhaps the strength of India in the past has been partly due to this spirit of absorption and assimilation of various ideas. It has also accounted for its weakness. However, the fact remains that if we study Indian history, we find the process of absorption and assimilation going on all the time, as a result of which we find in India, on the religious plane, and on the plane of thought, an astounding tolerance, which no country, except China, has exhibited.

Christianity is older in India than in Europe. In south India, it is a religion of the soil which, like any other religion, has existed for the last 1,800 years, and which bears no connection with the advent of Europeans in India. In fact, the type of Christianity which exists in south India has been wiped out from Europe. It exists in Syria today. References in history can be found to a small group called Nestorians who played a prominent part in the history of the early Christian church and ultimately were wiped out of existence by other Christian sects. But, in southern India, the Christians who came into this country about 1,800 years ago still thrive as a flourishing community.

When Islam came, India was in a very stagnant condition. And unfortunately the Islam that came to India had itself lost much of its vigour. I would not say that it was in a decadent condition, but it

was all the while approaching towards decadence. Islam in India did not come through the tolerant Arabs who had behind them the strength of Islamic philosophy but it came through the Central Asian people who represented the sword in Islam. India thus met Islam in the wrong way. The conflict became a political conflict with the conquerors. This, however, in time became associated in the public mind with the conflict between the Islamic religion and the religion of the country.

Islam brought along with it a new current of thought into India which rightly influenced her architecture, her painting and many other aspects of life.

Though Islam came to India in the wrong way, still the process of assimilation started bringing about some kind of synthesis between these two rival thought-currents. It developed considerably through the efforts of men like Guru Nanak and Kabir and monarchs like Akbar who in his own way deliberately set out to bring about that synthesis in the life of India. He did not succeed to the extent he hoped to but, practically speaking, he was the first king to attempt that task. Unfortunately, the work was not continued after his death. But the process, nevertheless, continued, although before it reached its culmination, another force came in.

It was in the nineteenth century that the reaction to that force was first felt in the country. The first prominent person to give expression to this feeling was Raja Ram Mohan Roy.[3] I feel that as time passes the Raja would be recognised not only in India as one of the greatest men of the nineteenth century but throughout the world.

The process that had already started assumed a very complex aspect. On the one hand, the country was swept with Western ideas and Western thoughts that had come in the wake of the conquerers, and, on the other, there was a natural reaction to the West, because they were the conquerors, which culminated in political and social opposition. It was a terrible conflict; and yet out of that peculiar and complex situation there came up Raja Ram Mohan Roy, having a tremendous breadth of vision to see something which was not obvious. It was indeed very difficult to see through the veil of time and point out the right path.

There came up a number of eminent men in Bengal because Bengal, as compared to other parts of India, came into touch with European culture sufficiently early. And one of the greatest among them was Keshab Chandra Sen who also tried to solve the problems of the age,

though not on a political plane, for the time was not ripe for political action. He, therefore, thought on the mental plane as well as on the social plane and became a great reformer on the social plane.

He tried to get rid of the various superstitious customs and habits which dragged the Indian people down and enfeebled them, and sought to bring into India influences of modern thought. The ultimate conflict in India might be called the conflict between the basic Indian thought and the modern thought but more so between the modern thought and certain old customs and superstitious practices. Keshab's action in discarding what was bad in the existing order, and accepting the good from the West, was certainly of a revolutionary character.

People today talk freely of revolution without realising fully what the term actually signifies. A revolutionary act must be judged keeping in view the time and the environment in which it is performed. For instance, the late Dadabhai Naoroji, whose speeches would today sound extremely moderate, was in fact not less revolutionary than the people who indulged in talks of revolution. That action alone must be regarded as a revolutionary action which produces revolutionary results. A certain action, on the other hand, might prove to be counter-revolutionary the very next day.

22. Problems of Currency and Finance[1]

For a layman to have his say in matters reserved for experts and specialists is a dangerous venture. In the modern world currency and finance are, like the ancient mysteries, a close preserve of the elect. And yet, they govern our destiny far more than the gods of old did when the world was young. Howsoever intricate and mysterious they might be, we must understand these for if we ignore them, we do so at our peril. The controversy about the ratio has been with us now for many years and it has become an urgent problem for the state and the people. Professors and economists may argue and quarrel about the theory of it but the burden of the present ratio falls in practice upon our people and our industry and agriculture. The argument still goes on, but there are few major questions in India on which there has been

1. Allahabad, 9 January 1939. Foreword to *Indian Monetary Policy* by B. P. Adarkar, professor of economics, Allahabad University.

such a consensus of opinion and such a unanimity of opposition to the policy of the Government of India. Most experts oppose this policy; Indian businessmen and manufacturers, having themselves suffered greatly under it, are bitter at its continuance, and the National Congress has again repeated in emphatic language its condemnation of it and demanded a change.[2] I have no doubt in my own mind that the artificially fixed exchange value of the rupee has injured not only our industry but also the mass of our agriculturists.

But the question now before us is not merely one of fixing one and four pence as the value of the rupee. It is doubtful if even that will meet the requirements of today and it might be necessary to fix an even lower figure. We have had our finances and currency juggled far too long in the interests of British vested interests. The time has come when this must end, however much the British Government might object.

I am glad that Mr. Adarkar has written this book, and I hope that many will read it and thus gain an understanding of this important problem.

2. In a resolution, passed on 14 December 1938, the Congress Working Committee demanded that the British Government should take immediate steps to lower the ratio to 1s. 4d.

23. To Gregg M. Sinclair[1]

Allahabad
January 22, 1939

Dear Mr. Sinclair,[2]

I am very sorry that we could not meet and that I missed you even when you came to Allahabad. I have long wanted to go to America, and I suppose I shall manage to get there one day. But for the present, I do not see how I can get away from India for several months. I can realise that if I go to America I must not get tied up with any particular organisation, or even some odd groups of my own countrymen there.

The world is changing so fast and changing in the wrong direction that it is impossible to say what one will have to do in future. India seems to be much quieter than Europe at the present moment, and yet there are deep rumblings and I fear the future is not going to be plain sailing.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

24. To K. Ahmad Abbas[1]

Allahabad
25-2-1939

My dear Abbas,

Your letter.[2] I have heard a great deal about Nazi propaganda in India. But it is difficult to have concise material. Of course, the German consuls take part in it, so also German firms, and sometimes Indian representatives of German firms. Much of this propaganda is supposed to be cultural, i.e., Nazi cultural activities are boomed up in apparently inoffensive articles in the press. These articles are sent sometimes by Indian students in Berlin but they are written probably by the Nazi propaganda department.

I am told that Aligarh Muslim University has become quite a centre for this propaganda as there are a number of Nazi women there who are wives of professors. I understand that both the German consul and the Italian consul were invited to the university to address the students.

Some years back I learnt from a fairly reliable source that the Government of India was encouraging this propaganda in India.

Of course, there is scope for the spread of totalitarian ideas in India, though I think that feeling against them at this stage is very strong specially in Congress circles. They are therefore concentrating on the communal organisations, and both the Muslim League and the Hindu

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-31(K.W.)/1939, pp. 193-195, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 22 February 1939, Abbas requested Jawaharlal to comment on the reported Nazi propaganda in India.

Mahasabha talk definitely in totalitarian language and praise the fascist countries.

It is true that I wrote an anonymous article[3] as mentioned by John Gunther. This article appeared in *The Modern Review* in, I think, November 1937. It was called *The Rashtrapati* by Chanakya.

I am afraid little can be done now to sponsor a tour for the Chinese lady you mention.[4] This may be possible later.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 520-523.
4. While in Europe, Abbas had given to Jawaharlal the address of a Chinese lady who wished to come to India on a lecture tour if it was sponsored by the Congress.

25. Khadi[1]

As I stand before you, I realize how your eyes must be thirsting to behold another figure, your ears to hear another voice that is far away. This exhibition is an incarnation of Gandhiji's dream and it is he who should, in the fitness of things, have performed its opening ceremony. I, therefore, felt no small hesitation when Seth Govind Das asked me over the phone that I should officiate on this occasion. But, I said to myself, men may come and men may go, but our country and our country's fight for freedom must go on for ever. And so I have stepped into the breach.

In exhibitions of the ordinary type you will find that prominence is given to articles produced by big industrial concerns with a name, and a variety of popular entertainments and shows is provided. The Congress exhibition, however, is intended to serve a different purpose. It has constituted a regular feature of the Congress annual sessions now for a considerable time. Some four or five years ago, it was given its present orientation. Since then the object that it has set before itself has been to bring to popular attention handiworks of art and craftsmanship

1. Speech at the inauguration of the khadi and village industries exhibition at the Tripuri Congress session, 6 March 1939. *Harijan*, 18 March 1939.

produced in our villages in order to educate our village folk, particularly our peasantry. The task that confronts us today is to resurrect and popularize thousands of dead and dying handicrafts that once flourished in our villages and to instil fresh hope and courage into the drooping spirits of our masses. Without solving the problem of the villages, India's problem cannot be solved.

Some people think that the revival of khadi and other village industries would put back the clock of our country's progress and that India's salvation can come only through a process of large-scale industrialization. I call myself a socialist, and, as such, I do believe that large-scale industries have a place in this country. Anything that increases the material well-being of the country is bound to have its repercussion on the people. But we shall never be able to move the India of the rural masses through mere multiplication of big factories. It can only be reached through khadi and village industries. By all means let us have big factories for the production of things that cannot be manufactured in our villages. Let the big manufacturer and the small artisan function, each in his own place and within his respective legitimate sphere. There is no inherent conflict between the two and there need be none. Those who call khadi worthless prove their own worthlessness. They will never really understand our country's problems. If we must have big factories, they should not be run on the present lines. We should take care that they do not give a handful of capitalists power to oppress and exploit the masses.

I have spent about an hour in going round the exhibition, but, as a matter of fact, even a whole day would be all too insufficient for it. To do full justice to it, one must devote to it at least two or three days. This exhibition is verily a school for education where we can learn many things that are worth learning. Khadi has added to the prestige of our country. In the beginning, khadi used to be coarse and clumsy. Today all that has been revolutionized and even a hurried round of the various khadi stalls will show to anybody what artistic skill and perfection our village craftsmen are today capable of. During the course of the last hundred and fifty years we have nearly lost all our artistic taste and skill. In our rich men's homes we do not find evidence of a sense of beauty or of comfort. Our village folks' houses are disfigured by cheap, flimsy foreign prints which no one with a claim to culture in any other part of the world would deign to touch with a pair of tongs. They deserve only to be thrown to the flames. Lack of taste stares us in the face everywhere and has spelt our country's ruin. Khadi has served to renovate our artistic sense. Khadi that is produced today is a thing of beauty. It was a perfect feast for

me to see the various khadi exhibits in the Khadi Bhawan. It has gladdened my heart to find that, as a result of the revival of khadi and other village crafts, the artistic faculty of our village masses that had nearly been choked, is now being re-awakened and re-educated.

Spinning provides livelihood to a large section of our sisters in the villages. In order that they might all be able to earn a minimum subsistence wage, the All India Spinners Association has introduced increased rates for spinning. This, in its turn, has led to a rise in the price of khadi. Some people complain that khadi has become dear. But you should refuse to be caught by the lure of cheapness which is obtained by underpaying the spinners, and purchase only such khadi in the manufacture of which standard spinning wage has been paid. It is such khadi alone which deserves the name khadi. But how is the consumer to be sure that the standard wage was paid in the production of a particular stock of khadi? This can be done by restricting the purchase of khadi to khadi *bhandars* which are either run directly by the All India Spinners Association or are certified by it.

I am sure that the khadi and village industries sections and the agricultural section organized by the C.P. Government in this exhibition will do real good to our village folk, and particularly to our peasantry.

I would also invite your attention to the basic education section in the exhibition. Our current educational system has rightly been condemned as worthless as it serves only to make bookworms of our youths; it does not fit them for life. It needs badly to be overhauled. The question of mass education for India was discussed at Haripura. What troubled everybody was, how was it to be financed? A committee was set up under the presidentship of Dr. Zakir Husain to report on the matter. The report which Dr. Zakir Husain's committee has submitted on the Wardha scheme of education, as a result of their inquiry, is a valuable document. I heard it being highly praised even in England. The central thesis of this scheme is that the whole education of the child can be imparted through the medium of a handicraft and that the system if it is properly worked should make education self-supporting. There was a lot of confusion about this aspect of it at that time. Since then the Hindustani Talimi Sangh[2] has come into being and several institutions for imparting basic education have sprung up. Whilst time alone will show how far the Wardha scheme is capable

2. The Congress, at its Haripura session in February 1938, favoured the formation of an all-India education board to draft a programme of basic national education. On 23 April 1938, the Hindustani Talimi Sangh was formed at Wardha under the chairmanship of Zakir Husain.

of fulfilling all the expectations that have been entertained on its behalf, this much at least is clear that it provides us the key which can solve the question of education of India's masses.

26. To Mohammad Hatta[1]

Allahabad
March 17, 1939

My dear Hatta,

It has been a great pleasure to receive your letter of the 12th February.[2] *It is an age since I heard from you and, as you mention, my last* letter to you five years ago was not answered. You have given a sufficient explanation for not having written.

What a long time you have had in prison and internment camps. Having had some experience myself of the thing, I can well appreciate what you have to pass through. But the world is changing rapidly and no one can tell what the future will bring.

I am asking my bookseller to send you my books. I am afraid all of them are not available here and one of my big books is out of print. I shall be happy to send you other books if you would care to have them.

Even before I heard from you, we had made some arrangements for your nephew.[3] I understand from friends in Karachi that he is getting a scholarship and is studying there in some educational institution. Now that I have heard from you, I shall certainly take interest in the young man, and I hope he will profit by his studies. Karachi is very far from Allahabad and it is not easy for me to meet him. But sometime or other I shall go there and have a look at him.

I hope you are keeping cheerful in your internment and fitting yourself by studying and otherwise for the work you may have to do later.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 12 February 1939, Hatta regretted not being able to write to Jawaharlal for five years as he was under arrest. He also wanted to read books written by Jawaharlal.
3. Bustami Darwis, son of Mohammad Hatta's cousin.

27. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
April 6, 1939

My dear Krishna,
Some time back I received your letter of the 7th March sending me particulars about Dr. Salomon Minc and his wife.[2] My sister has been trying hard to find out if they can be fitted in here. But there is a great deal of passive opposition and I do not know if anything will be done.

To give you some idea of the kind of opposition we have to face. Subhas wrote to me recently accusing me of trying to find an asylum for the Jewish refugees in India. He objected to this very strongly. As a matter of fact all I tried was to get a few competent experts and specialists. As for the Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital, my doctor colleagues on the trust are violently opposed to the appointment of any foreigner.

As I think I wrote to you, the question of guarantee need not trouble us, as a Jewish committee in India has been formed to give any guarantee.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Italian Jewish experts in malarial and children's diseases; worked in German refugee camps.

28. To Inayet Ali[1]

Lucknow
April 7, 1939

Dear Kunwar Inayet Ali,[2]
Some friends of mine from Meerut district have told me that a few families of cultivators, living in one of your villages, have displeased you

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. A landowner of Meerut district.

and that thereupon you have ordered them out of the village. I understand that they are statutory tenants and that there is some dispute in regard to rent which is before the court. I would not have troubled you about this small matter but I learnt that these seven families are homeless and are living in the jungles. I am troubled by their fate and I am sure you must be worried by it too. They may have done something to merit your displeasure, but they are ignorant folk, and I hope you will consider their present hardship and allow them to live in their village. You are a man of influence and prestige, and an act of generosity on your part will not only be appreciated by your tenantry but by others also. It is not my custom to interfere in such matters or to write about them, but in the present instance, I have thought it worthwhile to draw your attention to this in the hope that you will be good enough to show kindness to these people.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

29. To K. Rama Rao[1]

Allahabad
April 18, 1939

My dear Rama Rao,
I enclose two articles for the *Herald*.[2] My name should not appear.

I am also trying to send you today a long extract from a book which I got yesterday. I think this is worth publishing *in extenso*.[3] I should like to write an editorial in regard to it also.[4]

Dr. Ganguli who is coming as our general manager has been delayed and will come a week later to Lucknow.

I understand that in Cawnpore there is considerable rivalry with *The Pioneer*, as to which gets there first. We should therefore make every effort to reach Cawnpore before *The Pioneer*. This might mean our starting printing earlier than we do now for the Cawnpore edition. This would also mean our not giving late news. But I still think that it is

1. *J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.*
2. See pp. 289-293.
3. An extract from Leonard Barnes's *Empire or Democracy* was printed in *National Herald* on 20 April 1939 under the title "India—the Crux".
4. Jawaharlal, in fact, wrote an article. See pp. 648-654.

desirable to send our paper early. Most people attach greater importance to getting the paper early than to have a late news. Please therefore issue definite instructions to have earlier printing and earlier supply of copies.

I hope to be in Lucknow on Sunday next for the day for the directors' meeting.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

30. To Frank C. Laubach[1]

Allahabad
April 18, 1939

31. To V. Lesny[1]

Allahabad
April 18, 1939

My dear Professor Lesny,
It was very good of you to send me your book on Rabindranath Tagore. The book was welcome indeed, but even more so, your kindly thought of us in the middle of all your difficulties. Believe me that we have been following, with the most anxious interest, all that has been happening, and we remember the friends we met during our stay in Prague.
With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

32. To Gopi Nath Bardoloi[1]

Allahabad
April 18, 1939

My dear Bardoloi,
Your letter of the 24th March about Rani Gaidilieu.[2] The facts you give are interesting. What I should like to know, however, is the official version in regard to her activities. As Premier you can no doubt get this from the proper authorities. The version that the India Office gave seemed to me a curious one. I want to check that.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Bardoloi had written that, according to reports received by him, Rani Gaidilieu proclaimed herself as the queen of the tribe after her brother's execution and this had not been liked by the British Government. See also *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 501-502.

33. The Defence of India[1]

We have previously drawn attention to Mr. Leonard Barnes's new book *Empire or Democracy* and given some extracts from it relating to India. After dealing with the constitutional and legal aspects, Mr. Barnes considers the problem of military defence. The old argument that is so often put forward—that a free India will be incapable of defending herself—is discussed. If the Japanese or the Germans march into India, as the British march out, how will the Indians profit by the change? The army in India is here for two reasons:

1. To defend Indian territory from foreign invasion.
2. To defend British imperialist interests against the Indian people.

Mr. Barnes considers the first a legitimate reason, but the second is one which every democrat must repudiate. Even in regard to the first it might be added that a foreign invasion might be due to British imperial policy and if this was not controlling India, we would, in this respect, be safer. Our policy will inevitably be one of peace with our neighbours and other countries with no imperialist designs on others. This will not necessarily save us from foreign aggression but it will reduce the chances of invasion.

The problem before us is thus one of ensuring the military security of the Indian people from foreign aggression. This is entirely distinct from the defence of British imperial interests in India. It must be remembered, Mr. Barnes says, that the Indian liberationists stand for democracy and will thus be active allies in the defence of democracy elsewhere, including democracy in Britain. For those who favour democracy it becomes suicidal to oppose the freedom of India. Indeed, quoting President Bose, "the establishment of a socialist order in Britain is impossible of achievement without the liquidation of colonialism, and we who are fighting for the political freedom of India and other enslaved countries of the British Empire, are incidentally fighting for the economic emancipation of the British people as well."

The argument that a free India would fall an easy prey to Japan, Germany or Italy is an illusion which, as Jawaharlal has shown, is merely evidence of a latent imperialism colouring the outlook of those who call themselves democrats and socialists. Such an invasion is outside the

1. Allahabad 19 April 1939. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. This unsigned article was printed in *National Herald*, 22-23 April 1939.

field of political reality, unless, of course, a triumphant fascism dominates the world and the United States of America, the Soviet Union and England have been disposed of.

Quoting Nehru :

> Japan is further away from India, for all practical purposes, than England is. The land route is entirely closed and impossible of passage, even for aircraft. The sea route is very long and terribly dangerous and cannot be negotiated till Japan is master of the sea and air, and Britain and the United States have been wholly disabled. Japan cannot think of coming to India till she has absorbed the whole of China, a task almost certainly beyond her competence and resources. Even after that, the next countries on the list are Australia, the Philippine Islands, the Netherlands and India.
>
> It is equally fantastic to think in terms of a German or Italian invasion of India. Both these countries will have their work cut out for them in Europe and their objectives lie in Europe or north Africa. But if by any chance the fascist powers gain an overwhelming victory in a world war and the world lies prostrate before them, then, of course, anything might happen. Even so, India will not go as a gift to anybody. She will resist the invader to the utmost and, in spite of lack of military and such like resources, she has developed enough strength and technique of her own method of struggle to make an invasion a terribly burdensome operation. We have to struggle today with an entrenched system which has dug itself deep into our very soil. It will be far easier to deal with a newcomer who comes with hostile intentions.

Mr. Barnes expresses the contrast thus:

> So long as India is maintained as a subordinate item in the British Empire, its fate in a general war will be decided on the battlefields of Europe.
>
> While such a war is in progress, India will be a side-show from the standpoint of her British protectors, who will have their hands extremely full elsewhere, and for whom the Mediterranean route will almost certainly be closed. The British forces in India will have as their main duty the crushing of the Indian bid for independence which Nehru assures us will be made. In the process, India will be bled even whiter than she was in 1914-18.
>
> In the event of British defeat in Europe, India would by reason of this bleeding be in poor shape to resist the entry of Britain's conquerors; even then a new invader need not expect to have everything his own way. If Britain came out on the winning side,

the question would be whether a war-worn Britain were too weak to fasten its grip afresh on India, or whether a drained India were too weak to throw off finally the deadweight of the British yoke.

Suppose, on the other hand, the case of an independent India, and estimate, as a military enterprise, its invasion by a power whose home base was in western Europe or the western Pacific and which had no foothold inside India. In this case, it would be necessary for the issue to be fought out, not on any European field or on the high seas, but actually on Indian soil.

The entire attacking force would have to be transported by sea. Even had the power in question to meet no naval challenge and no challenge from the air along its whole line of communications (an unlikely supposition), it would first have to build up a secure land base within striking distance of India; next to break through India's coastal defences and effect landings on a number of wide fronts in India itself; and finally from these advanced bases to proceed to the conquest and military occupation of a vast country solidly hostile and better trained than any other in the discipline of passive resistance. Even if the aggressor were a great world power, this would be at best a very formidable military adventure, fraught with all and more than all the perils and difficulties that confront the Japanese in their war with China.

Mr. Barnes points out that while progressive people in Britain find it relatively easy to see the need for supporting the Chinese liberationist struggle against Japanese imperialism, they understand less readily the need for supporting the Indian liberationist movement against British imperialism. Psychologically this may be curious and interesting; politically it is disastrous. For imperialism everywhere—British, Japanese, German, or Italian—is just as fatal to the basic aspirations of unprivileged classes in the colony-owning countries as it is to the subject peoples at the colonial end. The plain fact is that the defence of British democracy has been sustained in the last few years at least as gallantly and effectively by the Indian National Congress, the Negro strikers of Trinidad and Jamaica,[2] and the cocoa farmers of the Gold Coast,[3] as by the Trade Union Congress and the Labour Party at home. The forces of

2. A widespread labour strike for higher wages in Trinidad and Jamaica, in April-May 1938, in which doctors, sweepers, bus drivers and railway workers also joined, caused serious dislocation of everyday life.
3. A conflict over the fixation of prices between cocoa farmers and buyers led the former to burn a part of the crop in October 1937. The estimated loss amounted to over 250,000 tons.

British capitalism recognise this with complete frankness, and take their repressive counter-measures in the Gold Coast, the West Indies and India.

II

From the analysis of the problem of defence in Mr. Leonard Barnes's new book *Empire or Democracy*, a summary of which appeared yesterday, it appears that the present so-called defence arrangements in India serve little purpose except to maintain the British raj against the wishes of the people of India themselves. Even if this is not entirely so, it is doubtful whether these arrangements could actually protect India from foreign aggression in the kind of concrete situation which we might have to visualise.

Mr. Barnes points out:

> During the last six years, British foreign policy has been a major factor in putting the collective system out of action, in disintegrating international solidarity in Europe, in isolating the Soviet Union, in reducing France to impotence, in driving the U.S.A. and many smaller states back to neutrality, in combining the three fascist powers, strengthening them by the surrender of vital strategic positions, and inspiring them with the conviction that the world is their oyster.
>
> One cumulative effect of this trend is that it has become physically and materially impossible for the small island of Britain to defend the whole vast British Empire single-handed against the triple danger that now threatens it. Once again, it must not be forgotten that the anti-Comintern pact[4] is one of the key factors in the current international situation, and is quite as capable of being employed against the British and French Empires as against the Soviet Union.
>
> What is more, the defence of British imperial egoism against rival imperialisms is, as we have seen, not a cause that commands anything like unity within the empire or among the British people. In India particularly it would cause large-scale disaffection. Congress, which has the masses behind it, has declared its intention of resisting any attempt to defend India for imperialist purpose, and of using the situation created by an imperialist war to make a bid for independence.

4. The anti-Comintern agreement originally signed by Germany and Japan in November 1935 was later accepted by Italy in 1937 and Hungary, Manchukuo and Spain in 1939.

> For these reasons, there can be only one form of guarantee for the defence of the people and territory of India, as distinct from the maintenance of British rule in India. It consists in the pooling of Indian defence in the defence of an "open" group of states within the League, with France, the Soviet Union, and Britain as the nucleus, based on arbitration, non-aggression, mutual assistance, economic cooperation, and an agreement to solve the colonial problem by way of the abolition of colonial status.

How is this end to be attained? Here lies the rub. For this involves a complete change of British foreign and colonial policy, in effect the liquidation of British imperialism, and the freedom of India. The crux is India. As Mr. Barnes says:

> But—and this is the crucial point—such a scheme involves a free India. By free is meant not merely enjoying autonomy in respect of internal affairs, but free to conduct its own foreign policy, to make its own arrangements for defence, and to accept membership of the League of Nations in its own right. Such a scheme cannot be shared by an India faced with the problem of intensifying mass discontent with imperialist exploitation and repression, and at the same time preventing mass disillusionment with Congress ministries because of their inability to terminate that repression and exploitation; nor by an India promoted to a junior partnership in the firm of British imperialism and thereby obliged to identify itself with the repression and exploitation of the non-self-governing parts of the empire.

The problem of Indian defence is thus something much more than a technical problem. It is primarily and essentially a political problem and only when these basic conditions are satisfied can it be treated from the purely military point of view. An increase in Indian armament today is an increase in the power of British imperialism in India. If there is no popular control of the army, we are not only not interested in its growth, we are opposed to it for far more weighty reasons than financial ones. For this growth means the growth of the repressive apparatus of British imperialism.

This is illustrated by the character of the army in India and by the type of ammunitions manufactured in India. We all know the story of muddle and incompetence of the Mesopotamian campaign. The army staff and the officers were good enough for the frontier expeditions against unarmed or badly armed mountain folk, but they failed in modern warfare. Perhaps they have improved somewhat since then,

but evidently even the Commander-in-Chief did not think so a few years ago when he gave a frank talk to officers at Quetta. What is more interesting and quite recent is the result of the Chatfield Commission's investigations. We understand that a great push has been given to the manufacture of munitions in India and they are being turned out at a rapid pace. But what are these munitions? There are very few anti-aircraft guns, so far as we can find out. There are a vast number of bombs for use from the air being turned out, but the remarkable fact is that these bombs are for the most part of the small and light variety which are normally used for dropping on small villages during punitive expeditions.

If this is so then we have a glimpse of the kind of warfare for which the British military machine is preparing. It is not the defence of India that they have in mind but the suppression of India.

We have been deluded long enough by talk of 'defence' into imagining that the army was here for defence. In effect it has alway been, and is, an army of occupation which thinks and functions in terms of holding down a hostile country. The Dehra Dun Academy[5] and all such attempts, and the talk of Indianisation, are the merest eyewash, and are, in addition, futile and ridiculous in this age of highly mechanised units. The defence of India will begin with the freedom of India. What exactly do we defend now?

While these wider considerations are of the essence of the problem, we cannot ignore the purely military aspect. Mahatma Gandhi has told us recently of the duty of pacifists in a war.[6] One can understand that position from an individualist's point of view. But we do not know how far he desires to adopt that policy nationally or collectively on behalf of the nation.

The Congress has certainly given no such indication so far and its creed of peaceful action does not necessarily apply to national defence against foreign aggression. It is difficult for us to understand how in case of violent aggression from outside a purely pacific attitude will prevail under existing circumstances. If peaceful action is to be applied to the alien aggressor there seems to be no particular reason why it should not also be applied to the criminal within, and the police force

5. Indian Military Academy, set up in 1932 for pre-commission training of cadets.
6. On 9 April 1939, Mahatma Gandhi wrote: "A true pacifist is a true satyagrahi ...In the coming test pacifists have to prove their faith by resolutely refusing to do anything with war whether of defence or offence. But the duty of resistance accrues only to those who believe in non-violence as a creed...It follows that such resistance is a matter for each person to decide for himself and under the guidance of the inner voice, if he recognizes its existence."

be disbanded. But the police still flourish and we have not heard of any proposal to put an end to them.

In the same way an army of defence is also likely to flourish, though we should of course associate ourselves in every way with attempts at disarmament, and otherwise have a policy of peace. If the defence forces are to remain, as apparently they must, we must refashion them entirely and give a popular basis to them, and make them really effective for defence. This is a question which is becoming increasingly vital and deserves careful thought.

34. To Mohanlal Saxena[1]

Allahabad
April 20, 1939

My dear Mohanlal,

I presume you are back in Lucknow. I have just received a letter from the auditors which is very disturbing. I do not know what we can do in the matter. It seems that an evil fate is pursuing us, or, to be more accurate, that we are thoroughly incompetent or incapable of managing our affairs. It is not the question of money, although that troubles us, but of inability to manage anything properly. I suggest that you might immediately see the auditors and try to find out what is the best course for us under the circumstances. Obviously on such matters no expense should have been spared in having additional staff to put the accounts right.

I shall come to Lucknow on Sunday morning as arranged. Meanwhile, Saiduddin[2] has sent me a letter from Bhola Nath,[3] which is also a troublesome matter.

I enclose the auditors' letter.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. General Manager, Associated Journals Limited, Lucknow, the publishers of *National Herald*.
3. A paper merchant of Lucknow.

35. To Rafi Ahmad Kidwai[1]

Allahabad
April 20, 1939

My dear Rafi,
Your letter of the 18th.[2] There is no point in your objecting to the tone of Maulana Azad's letter. His letters are dictated in Urdu and then translated by Ajmal Khan.[3]

You will remember that we had decided to have a meeting of the directors of the Associated Journals Limited next Sunday to pass the auditors' report and accounts. The auditors now write to say that our accounts are in such a muddle that they cannot do anything with them for a long time to come. Now this is a serious matter because the time for our annual meeting expires soon. I do not quite know what to do. I am sending a telegram to Mohanlal to see the auditors and try to find some way out of the muddle.

Saiduddin, meanwhile, sends me a love letter from Bhola Nath's who are very angry at the delay in paying them for their paper. I wonder when, if ever, we shall get rid of all the errors and mistakes that have been pursuing us. It is a terribly disheartening work. I shall anyhow come to Lucknow on Sunday next for the directors' meeting.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Kidwai had written that though he would not blame Maulana Azad for the failure to resolve the Shia-Sunni tangle, he would say that the latter should not also blame Pant for all that had happened.
3. (1897-1969); Khilafatist and a Congressman of Allahabad; served as personal secretary to Maulana Azad till the latter's death in 1958; member, Rajya Sabha, 1964-69.

36. To F.J. Warburg[1]

Allahabad
April 21, 1939

Dear Mr. Warburg,[2]
Thank you for your letter of April 14th. Your proposal is an attractive one. But I fear that it is quite impossible for me to undertake any such writing work. My time is taken up entirely with other activities and I can do no writing except occasional topical articles.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Director of Martin Secker and Warburg, publishers in London. He had requested Jawaharlal to write a book on India for the *Voice of Civilization* series.

37. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
April 21, 1939

My dear Krishna,
Your letter of the 11th April about Naidu.[2] I have not heard from Naidu. If he writes to me I shall see what can be done in the matter. In theory we are all intensely interested in the cooperative movement.

When I was in Prague last summer, a German Sudeten girl (not a Jew), employed by the Prague Government in some department dealing with Indian exports, was sent to us to act as our guide. She was with us for a good deal of time and helped us greatly. I liked her. When the Sudeten areas went over to Germany, she and her family had to face considerable difficulties as they were German Social Democrats.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Probably B. V. Narayanaswamy Naidu, an economist of Madras who was greatly interested in the cooperative movement; treasurer of the Madras Cooperative Union, 1944-47; economic adviser to the Madras Government, 1947; chairman, Forward Markets Commission from 1954 till his death in 1955.

Partly to get over this difficulty she married later a Czech and continued in state service. Now since the disappearance of Czechoslovakia, she and her husband evidently find it very hard to remain there and want to come out to India. What they can do here, I do not know. She wrote to me asking me to arrange for their visas to India. I said I could not do this but I sent her a little note, addressed to nobody, saying that I would be happy if they could get their visas to India and when they came here I would try to help them. More I could not do. Now I have received a cable from them to the following effect:

> Your letter is insufficient. Please arrange telegram from Indian authority addressed British consulate Prague granting visas for us. Thanks.
>
> Hertzka-Loew

Obviously I cannot do this and I am informing them about it. I am writing to you about this just to let you know in case the matter may come up before you and you might have something to suggest. The name and address of the girl is:

> Mrs. Gertrud Hertzka-Loew
> Prague VII
> U. Vozovky 1211 (Bohemia)

Nambiar knows the girl well.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

38. To Shanti Prasad Agarwal[1]

Allahabad
April 22, 1939

Dear Shanti Prasadji,[2]

I have your letter of the 18th April.[3] I shall inquire from Mrs. Pandit about the facts. You will realise that in all such matters small things get exaggerated and by repetition, quite unconsciously, get distorted. I

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. An advocate of Moradabad.
3. This latter is not available.

do not know how far you yourself were a witness to what you have written.

I should also like you to consider that those of us who have to carry the burden of responsibility and who have to work very hard, suffer continuously from strain and tension. Anything that appears as obstruction in one's work or in a heavy programme is irritating. Our habits are such that most of our work is done somewhat inefficiently and wastefully. Any person who wants to introduce efficiency appears to be hard and harsh. And yet the problems that surround us are so many and so difficult that we can only face them by acting with speed and efficiency.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

39. Anti-Indian Films[1]

The Indian motion picture industry is celebrating its jubilee in Bombay. The recent growth of this industry has been remarkable and full of promise but we cannot congratulate it on the quality of the work produced, excepting of course some high-class films. We hope that every effort will now be made to improve this quality so that our films might be true interpreters of Indian life. Unfortunately the picture of India that foreign audiences see is entirely derived from foreign films, and almost all of these are unsatisfactory from this point of view. Some of these are definitely objectionable and aim at discrediting the Indian people and carry on imperialist propaganda. Occasionally, we learn that some provincial government or other has prohibited the display of some such picture. But this picture continues to be displayed, to the injury of India, in foreign countries. We cannot of course directly control such displays abroad, but there is no reason why our provincial governments should not express their displeasure at this and even take some steps to prevent it. The obvious step to take is to inform the producers that if they persist in displaying abroad an anti-Indian film which has been disapproved, none of their pictures will be licensed in India. Such a decision would speedily end the exhibition of the highly objectionable films which have been released recently.

1. Lucknow, 6 May 1939. Editorial in *National Herald*, 9 May 1939.

40. Educational Use of Films[1]

All scientific discoveries can be pressed into service for the good of humanity. Only men must have the will to do so. The same is true of this 20th century discovery of movies and talkies. To what great educational and cultural use the films can be put has been best illustrated by the films about China that you have seen. The films have done much to bring all the world peoples together and the process should continue to the benefit of all humanity.

1. Message on the occasion of the silver jubilee celebrations of the Indian motion picture industry. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 6 May 1939.

41. To K. Rama Rao[1]

Lucknow
May 12, 1939

Dear Rama Rao,
I have been in bed for the last two days and have had time to read the *Herald* rather carefully. I have been surprised to find a large number of small errors which should have been corrected by the proof-readers. Some complaints of this were also made to me in Calcutta or elsewhere. I hope that your sub-editors will pay particular attention to this as it is irritating for the readers to come across mistakes.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

42. To Mohammad Habib[1]

Lucknow
May 12, 1939

My dear Habib,
Your letter of April 16th has only just been handed to me by Hafiz Osman.[2] I have had a talk with him. We shall be very glad to utilise his services for Congress work and I hope that some arrangement will be arrived at. There is one difficulty, however. Our national service is regulated by certain rules, as we have tried to make it a kind of civil service for Congress work. People who join it are not expected to stand for election for any Congress office or membership of an elective committee. We want to keep them above party squabbles and to give them a definite status of a permanent organisation running the Congress machinery, apart from conflicts in Congress policy. Our idea is to give a certain prestige to them. Hafiz Osman, however, does not like this prospect. I have suggested to him, however, to see some of my colleagues and I hope that something will be done. It is not a question of giving financial help so much, but of how this is to be done in accordance with our rules. As our organisation has grown, its rules have grown with it and have become more intricate. In any event, a person like Hafiz Osman should be encouraged in every way to do national work and I hope that a way out will be found.

I am afraid all of us who have the misfortune to be tied up with politics have to suffer a great deal of heartache. The world today is a damnably bad place to live in.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. A Congressman of Aligarh; suffered imprisonment several times during the freedom struggle; died 1973.

43. To C. Khaliquzzaman[1]

Allahabad
May 15, 1939

My dear Khaliq,
So you have come back after your long wandering.[2] I wanted to see you in Lucknow yesterday but I heard you were fully occupied as of course you must be on the day of your return. I shall be in Lucknow again for a few days and I hope we shall meet then. I hope you have returned fit and strong and are keeping well.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Also printed in C. Khaliquzzaman's *Pathway to Pakistan*, (Lahore, 1961), p. 213.
2. Khaliquzzaman was one of the Indian Muslim representatives at the Palestine conference held in Cairo in October 1938 to find ways to prevent the partition of Palestine. Later, he visited other places in Europe and the Middle East, and returned to India in May 1939.

44. To Carl Heath[1]

Allahabad
May 16, 1939

Dear Mr. Heath,
You were good enough to write to me some time back about my speech at the States People's Conference.[2] I have not thanked you for that letter yet. The last few months here have distressed me greatly in various ways. But I suppose we must not complain, as it is not better anywhere else.

I am sending you separately a series of articles I wrote six weeks ago before the Congress.[3] They are out of date now to some extent, but still they might interest you.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See pp. 418-431.
3. See pp. 488-520.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

45. Ernst Toller[1]

Ernst Toller is dead, killed by his own hand.[2] His hand may have done the deed, but he was done to death by that malignant spirit of brutal violence which reigns in Europe today under the names of fascism and Nazism. How many murders, and that crushing of the soul that is worse than murder, stand to its credit during the long nightmare of the past six years. For the idealist and the sensitive in spirit the world grows more and more difficult to endure, the wide spaces narrow down and enclose and stifle, and escape comes often only through death. Those of them that are fortunate die fighting for their ideals against the evil that oppresses them. But the real tragedy comes to those for whom life has lost all purpose, all meaning, all hope.

Toller was a rare spirit, gentle and sensitive, with the genius of a poet and with a poet's prophetic insight at times, who found the growing violence and the crushing of freedom an intolerable burden. Those who knew him loved him as a dear and precious comrade, but scores of thousands came to know him intimately through his writings, his brilliant plays, his moving letters from prison, his sad autobiography—*I Was A German*. Right through these books of his the reader saw the inner struggles that shook him, the reactions of a sorrow-laden world on a sensitive poet's mind meant for song and joy. Hater of violence in all its forms, his mind struggled with the problem that faces all of us, how to meet the violence of the oppressor and the tyrant without indulging in the hated violence ourselves. Gradually, and with painful processes of thought, he came to the conclusion that violence against the aggressor was not only justified but necessary to prevent the collapse of what he valued. Writer of winged words and phrases in the German language that he loved, he came to believe that the eloquence of the pen

1. Allahabad, 24 May 1939. Article printed in *National Herald*, 26 May 1939.
2. Toller committed suicide on 22 May 1939. See also *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 279.

has sometimes to give place to the eloquence of the sword in defence of freedom, lest freedom itself die and all eloquence perish. He himself did not take to the sword, but his sympathies went out to those who were fighting for freedom and all his energy was spent in helping their cause.

I met him first twelve years ago in Brussels. A little while before he had come out of prison where the German Social Democratic government had kept him for five years. His fine, young and sensitive face bore the well-known impress of prison and lines of sorrow crossed it. Yet there was much to live for, much to do, and he was full of vitality and love of work for the cause he held dear.

Seven years later I met him again, an exile from his native land, living on sufferance in other countries. He was a Jew and there was no room for Jews in Hitler's Germany. Yet this Jew was such that later he wrote to me that he entirely agreed with what I had written in favour of the Arabs in Palestine. He had married a charming German girl.

Again I saw him many times during last summer in England and France. Munich and the betrayal of Czechoslovakia hit him hard and the shadows deepened on his face. Yet there was something to live for, there was Spain fighting magnificently against the barbarian hordes of fascism. Not the old Spain, but as Spain's great poet Antonio Machado,[3] who died of a broken heart the day after the fall of Barcelona, wrote :

> But another Spain is born,
> A Spain of the chisel and the roller,
> With that eternal youth which springs
> Of the tough past of the race.
>
> A Spain implacable and redeemer,
> A Spain that dawns
> With axe in hand;
> The Spain of fury and of the idea.

So for Spain he laboured feverishly, forgetting his piled-up sorrows in the work in hand. Food was urgently needed, food for innumerable refugees and women and children, food for the hard days of winter. He travelled to America and to various countries in Europe, he pleaded passionately with presidents and prime ministers for government help for the refugees, he addressed popular audiences, he pursued members of parliament and editors of newspapers, full of this one idea. For Spain

3. (1875-1939); author of *Compos de Castilla* (1912) and other books.

was not Spain only but the new world locked in a death struggle with the barbarian hordes of reaction and brutal violence.

Alas for that new Spain that did not survive the winter, murdered by those who spoke fair words to her and prated about democracy and freedom! Franco's victory parade passes by in that great city which, so proudly and for so long, held him at bay, and tearful eyes turn away remembering with a breaking of the heart the million men and women who sought to prevent this and now lie under the soil of Spain. But the ambassador of Britain's government goes to pay tribute to Franco and to greet this parade of victory.

Alas for Ernst Toller, dear friend and comrade, who died heart-broken at the perishing of his last hope! The world of fascism was too brutal for his sensitive spirit, too coarse for his fine nature. But it was democratic England and democratic France with their false promises and betrayals and stabbings in the back that broke him.

46. Society, Crime and Criminals[1]

I am glad to learn of the steps that are being taken to convene an All India Penal Reform Conference. I should like to associate myself with this endeavour. Crime, it is well known now, is not the result of an original sin in a criminal but is much more a product of his environment and his lack of opportunity and training. In a sense, society is to blame for producing the criminal. It is time, therefore, that society sought to understand this question and to deal with it scientifically. A proper social environment and structure should in fact almost eliminate the criminal or, at any rate, should reduce his number greatly. That perhaps is not immediately feasible, but undoubtedly much can be done towards that end. I wish the conference every success.

1. Lucknow, 25 May 1939. Message to the All India Penal Reform Conference held in Bombay on 24-25 February 1940. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

47. Federation[1]

I

One of the tragedies of history is the slowness with which people's minds adapt themselves to a changing environment. The world changes from day to day, not so our minds which are peculiarly static and insist on imagining that today is the same as yesterday and tomorrow will not differ greatly. This lag between our minds and reality prevents us from solving the problems of the day and produces war and revolution and much else that afflicts the world. The great French Revolution came bringing a tremendous release from mental bondage and for nearly a hundred years its ideas governed radical thought in Europe. And yet even before that revolution had passed into history, another revolution of vital import had begun in western Europe and was silently changing the face of things. This was the industrial revolution which has changed the world more than anything that has happened in recorded history. This mighty change was hardly noticed even by those who lived through its early stages, and the thinkers of the first half of the nineteenth century still clung to the ideas of the French Revolution. It was these ideas, already out of date to a great extent, which were of the essence of the mental atmosphere of that century of change.

So it has been throughout history, so it is today, and even the prospect of approaching catastrophe does not push us out of our mental ruts, or does so at too slow a pace to prevent that catastrophe. The war of 1914-18 and the Russian Revolution might have been considered a big enough knock on the head to make even the dull of mind think furiously. But it was not, and most people went back to the old ruts and grew angry at those who thought differently. The events that followed during the next twenty years shook everyone up, with the failure of the capitalist structure and the great depression and unemployment, the rise of fascism and Nazism and the growth of gangsterism in international affairs. Yet the shake-up was not enough. Then came the past year with all its horror and tragedy. That seems to have made some difference to many people, but do they yet realise that the remedy for the disease must be a radical one and nothing else will cure our distemper?

1. Allahabad, 27 May 1939. Article printed in *National Herald*, 31 May-1 June 1939.

In India, even more than in Europe, we are wedded to the old processes of thought, and though externally we differ from each other, the background is essentially the same. That is perhaps inevitable as our main pre-occupation must needs be nationalism and the desire to be rid of British imperialism. There is a vast difference of class and approach between the liberal in India, fearful of change, and the votaries of revolutionary violence, who hate present conditions and seek to change them at any cost.

Between the two extremes most groups of Congressmen come in and yet great as the difference is between these various groups and individuals, and governed as they are in their reactions by class and other considerations, still most of them function in much the same mental atmosphere. They quarrel amongst themselves and range themselves in opposing camps, but essentially they talk the same language and accept the same postulates. That is the trouble with our Congress governments also, which have the additional disadvantage of having to function completely in the old medium.

It is this old medium, this old method of approaching our problems, which is hopelessly out of date and incapable of producing solutions. The old political and economic structure is rotten and moth-eaten and all the king's horses and all the king's men cannot hold it together for long. We discuss the problem of the states as if it was a question of bargaining or give and take between the rulers and the people, with the paramount power taking a share of the spoils. But the states simply cannot fit in the modern world and no amount of argument or soft words can change that fundamental fact. It is on the basis of this fact, that they are out-worn, decadent systems, which should have been decently buried long ago, that all consideration must proceed. Systems like individuals have their span of life and they cannot go beyond it.

The land system again is intimately connected, or should be connected, with a modern economy. If it is not so connected it must inevitably decay, as it has done. The problem is a scientific, impersonal one and has little to do with our love for the zamindar or the tenant. It is patent that our land system is a drag on the development of the nation and impedes our progress; such systems in other countries have given place to others. So it must inevitably go here also. Objection is taken to various measures of land reform brought forward by Congress governments, and those who object do not realise where their objections lead to. These tenancy bills do not radically change the basis of the land system and all they purport to do is to give much needed relief to the peasant. They do not solve the land problem. I should like the bills to become law because the peasants hunger for

relief. But I shall not be sorry if obstruction stops them for then the issue will be clear and the final solution nearer.

This applies to every problem we have to face; we tinker about with it, hoping to ease the situation for a while. But the problem remains.

I had sat down to write about federation but my mind has strayed and led me into other directions. But the issue in every case is the same and we have to consider the question of federation from this wider and more essential standpoint—to fit the political and economical structure of India to reality in our country and the world.

It surprises me that people should talk still of federation in terms of possibility. Even those who oppose it vehemently do so obviously because they think that it might be imposed upon us. My own mind shut the door to federation long ago, not only because I disliked it but because I came to the conclusion that under present circumstances it could not come. Let me explain. I am not a prophet and, in the changing world today, it needs a very brave or a very foolish man to say what will happen. Anything may happen in India and it is a possibility that we might go to pieces and have to submit to something even worse than federation. It is not impossible that the world may be dominated for a while by fascism and all freedom crushed. We have seen that Mr. Neville Chamberlain's government is capable of every species of folly and betrayal and, so far as they are concerned, we can only expect the worst from them.

And yet I do not think that federation as proposed, or any variant of it, can come to India. People talk about it but the idea is as dead as the dodo. It is quite possible that Lord Zetland and our other preceptors have not quite realised this or, realising it, do not wish to say so. Federation cannot come to India in this shape and form because India has changed and the world has changed completely, and the age of the round table conferences is lost already in the dim mists of antiquity. If British folly seeks still to impose it upon us, it will mean deadly conflict and the break-up of much that we have in India today. The ultimate result may be good or bad for us, but it will not be the functioning of federation.

And so I think that federation cannot come. It is dead and there is no magic potion that will give it life.

II

The question of federation has been considered by us almost entirely in terms of a conflict between Indian nationalism and desire for independence from British imperialism. That is obviously an important aspect

of it and it is clear that this conflict is inherent in it and every attempt to impose federation will bring it to the surface. We need not argue about the merits or demerits of the scheme. Enough has been said and written about it. The dominating fact is that India dislikes it utterly and will not have it. That is enough for us and it is totally immaterial what Lord Zetland and his colleagues think about it.

But there is another and a wider aspect which we must bear in mind. We have in recent years tried to consider the Indian problem in its relation to the world problem. Even if we had not done so, events would have forced us and others to this consideration. Everyone must realise that we have reached a stage when separate national solutions of any problem are ruled out as they come into conflict with a real solution. We must think in terms of the world, which has narrowed down so greatly in our own day and become an organic whole, each part of it sensitive to the other parts. More and more people realise this now and yet, as always, our minds lag behind reality. Peace is indivisible, they say; so is freedom, so is India, so is the world in any vital matter today.

Our freedom and our independence must therefore be thought of in terms of the world and of world cooperation. The days of isolated national existence are past beyond recall and the only alternative to world cooperation is world disruption and war and continuous conflicts between nations till they are all involved in a common ruin.

It is difficult to conceive of effective world cooperation at present because there are forces and powerful nations which are bent on following a contrary policy. Yet it may be possible to have the right objective and to lay the foundations of such cooperation even now, though it may not be world-wide to begin with. Intelligent opinion all over the world and vast numbers of people are eager and anxious for this to happen, but governments, vested interests and groups come in the way.

A faint glimpse of this world cooperation came to President Wilson twenty years ago and he sought to realise it. But the war treaties and the statesmen of that generation scotched the idea, and the great pile of the League of Nations rises mournfully today in Geneva like a mausoleum enshrining the dead body of a great hope. It had to die as it started under wrong auspices and with the seeds of death within. It was an attempt to stabilise something which could not endure, to protect the imperialisms and special interests of the victor nations.

Its cry for peace meant the continuation of an unjust *status quo* all over the world, its democracy was a cloak for the subjection of many peoples and nations. It had to die because it was not brave enough to live. There can be no resurrection of that dead body.

But there can be a resurrection of the idea that the League enshrined, not in the limited, twisted and perverse way that took shape in Paris and Geneva, but fuller, more powerful and organic and based on collective peace, freedom and democracy. On no other basis can it seek re-birth or find sustenance.

During the last few years there has been much talk of collective security but England and France killed it and with it the League. Faced by new dangers threatening their very existence, they are trying to find allies in case of war. But even now they do not think in terms of real collective security for peace.

This idea of collective security failed for various reasons. The main reason for this failure was its alliance with imperialism. Collective security is intimately allied to democracy and freedom and in a world where these do not exist except in limited areas, it is bound to fail. The crux of the question thus becomes, as Mr. Leonard Barnes has pointed out in his recent book, the liquidation of imperialism and the independence of India.

Many people are being driven to the conclusion that a closer cooperation between nations is essential for peace and progress. Vaguely they hanker after a world commonwealth which is something much more than a League of Nations. Some ardent Britishers imagine that the British Empire or Commonwealth of Nations offers a nucleus for this, forgetting that the basis of this empire is imperialism and exploitation of subject peoples. Even apart from the dependent part of the empire, the semi-independent dominions are loosening their bonds and tend to drift out of the imperial circle. Canada is even today, in many ways, more closely associated with the United States of America than with England. It is quite possible that this association might take political shape. In case of war, it is exceedingly doubtful if the British Empire, as such, will survive.

There are other suggestions that the nations of the British Empire should draw closer to each other and have a federal legislature. This can either mean a federation of the white part of the empire to dominate over the rest, or the complete liquidation of imperialism in India and the British colonies. In the latter event, India, by virtue of her potential resources and manpower, is likely to have a powerful influence over the other parts, which these other parts may not approve of. In any event, India cannot think in terms of the British Empire or Commonwealth, and the whole logic of history and fact is opposed to our association with a limited group like this. Today with the situation in South Africa, where our countrymen are being humiliated and crushed,

it is an insult for anyone to suggest to us that we should continue as a member of this group.

But the fact remains that world cooperation must come and the independence of all nations must be curbed in the interests of world order and peace. That cooperation cannot and should not be confined to the British group even if that was possible. Indeed to attempt to confine it so is to defeat its very purpose.

A recent book, Clarence Streit's[2] *Union Now*, which has attracted considerable attention, deals with this problem. Mr. Streit recommends a union of the so-called democracies. He mentions fifteen members to begin with: the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Australia, Ireland, South Africa, New Zealand, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. These countries are supposed to form a federal union with a parliament and not merely a league or an alliance.

This conception is certainly an advance over the idea of the British Empire but it suffers from two grave defects—the exclusion of the Soviet, China and India as well as some other countries, and the silence about imperialism. That exclusion is presumably not intended to last but even so it is a bad beginning, full of dangerous possibilities. Many of the countries of this union are already semi-fascist and imperialist. They might drift towards the fascist countries and come to terms with them and oppose the Soviet and the freedom movements in China and India. No progressive union has a chance of survival today without the inclusion of the Soviet.

Nor can a real union be formed except on the basis of the ending of imperialism, otherwise the union becomes one of imperialist powers for the protection of their vested interests in subject countries. Even that they will not succeed in doing as they will quarrel among themselves. Out of imperialism, peace does not come; it is the parent of war.

A world union is necessary today. Unhappily, it will not come because those in authority are children of the old world which has ceased to be and cannot think or act in terms of the new. It will not come before the world is shattered again by war and millions have perished. But it will come because there is no other way out. Such a union can have nothing to do with imperialism or fascism and must be based on the fullest democracy and freedom, each nation having autonomy within its borders, and submitting in international matters to the union

2. (b. 1896); president, international movement for Atlantic Union from 1958; editor, *Freedom and Union* since 1946; *Union Now* was the best known of his many works on international federation.

legislature to which it sends its representatives. Inevitably it will have to work under a planned and socialised economy in order to end the conflicts of today.

To such a federal union India would gladly belong and contribute to her utmost for the peace and progress of the world. The India which belongs to it will also have her own federation, but it will be a federation very different from that mis-shapen and ill-begotten thing that is thrust upon us by Britain. To this we shall give no quarter.

48. To Lady Astor[1]

Allahabad
May 27, 1939

Dear Lady Astor,[2]
Thank you for your letter of the 10th May in which you told me about the steps you took regarding Gaidilieu, the girl of the Naga clan in Assam. The information I have received does not quite tally with the account that the India Office has supplied you. The girl must be an unusually interesting person if she is still supposed to be "a potent source of danger to the peace of Manipur state and the province of Assam." I should have thought that the peace of Manipur state and the province of Assam had a very insecure foundation if it rested on a girl in the twenties to be kept in prison indefinitely.

I am grateful to you for all the trouble you have taken in this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1879-1964); Conservative M.P., 1919-45.

49. To Gopi Nath Bardoloi[1]

Allahabad
May 30, 1939

My dear Bardoloi,
Thank you for your letter of the 22nd sending me particulars about Gaidilieu.[2] All this happened many years ago and the question now is how she feels about it at this stage. Would it not be possible for some person on your behalf to interview her in prison and have a good talk with her to find out what her general outlook is and what she would do if she was released? It seems that Manipur state would not like to have her. Would it be possible to make some other arrangements for her outside the state in the event of her release? A personal interview helps one to understand these matters much more than files and papers.

I am returning your papers.

I am sorry to learn that you have been unwell.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. The official papers sent by Bardoloi charged her with spreading lawlessness in Manipur state.

50. To Anup Singh[1]

Allahabad
May 31, 1939

Dear Mr. Anup Singh,[2]
Thank you for your letter of May 16th. As regards my *Autobiography*, I am afraid it is hardly possible for me to add any chapters to it. This is not so much a question of time, though it is difficult enough to find the time. The book, as it is, is an organic whole finishing where it

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1903-1969); secretary, India League in America, and director of its research bureau, 1937-41; member, Rajya Sabha, 1952-62 and again from November 1962 to April 1964.

ought to finish. If at any time I want to add to it I might write another book. I cannot simply add a chapter or two just to bring it up to date. This can only be a record of facts which will not fit in at all with the purpose or texture of the book. If I cannot think of adding chapters, much less can I conceive of anyone else doing it.

As for the small book about me that you wish to bring out, I have of course no objection. But I do not quite know on what material you will work. If I had to write a similar book about someone else I would have considerable difficulty. You can of course go to my books, such as they are. But it is not easy to get the true background without considerable acquaintance with that background. But, as I have stated above, I have no objection whatever to your bringing out any such study if you so wish it.

I suppose there is plenty of material about, but it is difficult for me to collect it. I write frequently in the press or in magazines on current topics, but all these are spread out. Recently I wrote a series of articles which have appeared in pamphlet form. I am sending you this pamphlet.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

51. To Farid Ansari[1]

Bombay
June 2, 1939

My dear Farid,
Your letter.[2] Do not worry about my health. Look after yourself. That is your job.

I have just reached Bombay and am likely to remain here two or three weeks. Conditions in India are disheartening in many ways, but that is the state of the world today.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 22 May 1939, Ansari expressed concern about Jawaharlal's reported illness. He also referred to the differences in the Congress, especially between Jawaharlal and Subhas Bose.

There is no reason why we should be pessimistic.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

52. To K. Rama Rao[1]

Bombay
June 4, 1939

Dear Rama Rao,
Your letter of June 1st. Why it was sent to Allahabad I do not know as you knew that I was in Bombay. I have gone through the Mainpuri papers. The most important paper—the legal notice you received —is missing and you seem to have lost it.

1. There is nothing that a newspaper should avoid so much as libel actions. It is far better not to be too generous with publishing the truth about someone's misdemeanour if this is likely to lead to a libel action. It is not enough to make sure that a truthful item is being published. You must also make sure that it is a non-libellous item. Newspapers in England have a lawyer on the staff who goes through every line from this point of view. It is bad and a tremendous nuisance for a newspaper to be dragged to a court of law. It might also result in heavy financial loss. Therefore, at all costs, avoid publication of such news. Every member of the editorial staff must realise this. Of course, if we deliberately want to risk a libel action in a matter of political or other importance, then we take a step realising the consequences. But no sub-editor has any business to involve us in trouble because of his carelessness.
2. Your correspondents must be warned that they must take particular care not to send any message of a libellous nature. Your sub-editors must also be told that they must not pass any such message. Usually the change of a word or two or the addition of 'alleged' before a charge is enough.
3. The particular Mainpuri message objected to should not have been passed as received. No sub-editor should have allowed it to be published as it is. The word 'alleged' or other qualifying words should have

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

been used before every charge. As it is definite, charges are made without any possibility of enquiry on your part.

4. Your letters to the lawyer for the municipal board and the chairman seem to me unfortunate in tone and language. It does not matter what they wrote. In such a matter there should also never be the slightest delay in answering. The obvious answer was that you published the news in the ordinary course without any wish to be unfair, that you regret you are unable to disclose the name of your correspondent as this is opposed to journalistic ethics, and that you would gladly publish any statement by the chairman or on his behalf.

You mentioned the first two points—the third (and a very important) point was not clearly referred to, although there is indirect mention of it.

5. You should now write to the chairman or to his lawyer again briefly and courteously to this effect. It should be made perfectly clear that you are still prepared to give publicity in the *Herald* to any contradiction or statement on behalf of the chairman. But you cannot disclose the name of your correspondent as this is opposed to well-established rules and newspaper practice.

6. If in spite of all this there is recourse to a court of law then you must defend the case.

7. Inform your Mainpuri correspondent that you are not disclosing his name but, in the event of a court action, it will not be possible for him, or desirable, to maintain anonymity. In such an event, the only right course for him is to acknowledge himself that he was the sender of news. But this must come from him and not from you. Meanwhile, he should quietly and privately collect evidence to justify his message.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

53. The Monsoon Comes to Bombay[1]

I like Bombay. There is space. The sea and the cool breezes that blow in from the sea temper the heat. The harbour twinkles with many lights and the Back Bay, though it has lost its old sweep and graceful curve, is still attractive, and at night the long rows of lights make it singularly pleasing to the sight. I do not particularly fancy the new buildings that are growing up with such rapidity, and yet a distant view of these monotonous and rather dull structures is pleasing enough.

I like Bombay for the warmth of friendship that I find there. Because of this a visit to Bombay is always something I look forward to. But Bombay has lost some of its flavour, and a film of sadness covers it, since a year ago a dear friend passed away.[2]

Yet much as I like Bombay, I weary of it after a few days and want to get away. Used to the cold and heat of the north, accommodating myself to the cold wind as well as the scorching *loo*, I find this intermediate weather, which changes little, an enervating experience. It seems so static, so moderate, that my changing moods do not fit in with it.

I have been to Bombay so many times but I had never seen the coming of the monsoon here. I had been told and I had read that this coming of the first rains was an event in Bombay; they came with pomp and circumstance and overwhelmed the city with their lavish gift. It rains hard in most parts of India during the monsoon and we all know this. But it was different in Bombay, they said; there was a ferocity in this sudden first meeting of the rain-laden clouds with land. The dry land was lashed by the pouring torrents and converted into a temporary sea. Bombay was not static then; it became elemental, dynamic, changing.

So I looked forward to the coming of the monsoon and I became a watcher of the skies, waiting to spot the heralds that preceded the attack. A few showers came. Oh, that was nothing, I was told, the monsoon has yet to come. Heavier rains followed but I ignored them and waited for some extraordinary happening. While I waited, I learnt from various people that the monsoon had definitely come and established itself. Where was the pomp and circumstance, and the glory of the attack, and the combat between cloud and land, and the surging

1. Bombay, 15 June 1939. Article printed in *National Herald*, 18 June 1939. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 211-212.
2. Jal Naoroji.

and lashing sea? Like a thief in the night, the monsoon had come to Bombay, as well it might have done in Allahabad or elsewhere. Another illusion gone.

54. To Edward M. Groth[1]

Bombay
June 17, 1939

Dear Mr. Groth,[2]

Your letter of June 9th has reached me here.[3] I thank you for it. I am quite sure that we must consider our national problems from the larger world viewpoints.

I had read previously in the *New Republic* Rex Tugwell's[4] article. The copy of a radio address of Dr. Fosdick[5] that you have sent me is very interesting and I am in considerable sympathy with what he has said.

I have read occasionally the writings of Krishnamurti[6] and I met him some years back. He is a very interesting person and I am largely in agreement with what he says. I found, however, that he did not give much help in the solution of concrete problems. I shall be glad to see his recent writings.

Thanking you again for your friendly letter,

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. American consul in Calcutta.
3. He had appreciated Jawaharlal's views on world federation.
4. Rexford Guy Tugwell; professor of economics in the universities of Columbia and Chicago; served as adviser to President Roosevelt, 1933, and governor, Puerto Rico, 1941.
5. Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick; preacher, First Presbyterian Church, New York, 1919-25, and later professor of theology at the Union Theological Seminary.
6. J. Krishnamurti (b. 1895); a spiritual leader.

55. On Obscene Notices and Noisy Processions[1]

Allahabad
July 11, 1939

Dear Chairman,

About a year or more ago I drew your attention to the objectionable and sometimes obscene notices that were pasted or printed on public and private buildings and walls in the city. I requested you to take some immediate action to put a stop to this deplorable exhibition. I am a particular sufferer from this as my house has a long boundary wall adjoining the public road. This wall is covered by these objectionable notices. I should like to draw your attention to this matter again in the hope that something will be done speedily about it.

There is, however, another and more urgent matter to which I should like to draw your attention. It is becoming quite impossible to carry on any work on the Kamta Prasad Kackar Road or the neighbourhood because of the noisy processions that are continually passing it. These processions are meant to advertise various cinema houses and they carry some kind of a rudimentary band with them which makes the most horrid and painful noise. It is enough to upset any person with the least musical and aesthetic sense to have to put up with this infliction. It is much worse when we have to carry on some kind of work or have to address committee meetings. Our proceedings have to be suspended completely for long periods because of this unseemly noise. The whole thing has become an intolerable public nuisance. I have no objection to the cinema houses advertising themselves or their films. I have every sympathy for the cinema, though I might deplore the exceedingly low standard of many of the films. But surely the citizens of Allahabad have a right to be protected from this public nuisance which interferes with their work and occupations. I would beg of you and the board to take immediate steps to put an end to this.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Letter to the chairman, municipal board, Allahabad. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

56. The Significance of Khadi[1]

The Gandhi Ashram, which is the agent of the All India Spinners Association in the United Provinces, is planning a big khadi drive in the province on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti. It is proposed to sell khadi *hundis* at least to the extent of Rs. 2,00,000 during this fortnight. I trust that all Congress committees in the province will help in this task.

Most of us in the Congress now take khadi as a matter of course and do not interest ourselves specially in its behalf. It is time that we gave it a big push ahead. The khadi organisation in this province has grown not only in size but also in efficiency, and it is capable of increasing production to almost any figure. But production depends ultimately on consumption. Therefore it is essential for consumption to be pushed, and in this every Congressman should help.

Many of us are keen on a rapid industrialisation of India and, personally, I think that it is urgently necessary for us to develop many of our key and major industries. But I do not think that this involves any conflict with a special cottage industry like khadi which the Congress has fathered and encouraged during these many years.

Khadi has shown itself to be of political, economic and social value and its significance is apparent. In these days of approaching war, khadi becomes still more important. We must remember that, if war comes, the immediate effect will be for India to have to rely on its own resources for most things.

That is a good incentive for us, but that also may result, unless we are careful, in a sudden rise of prices of mill cloth. We have short memories, but still many of us will remember the rise in prices that took place during the last war and the huge profits that the mills made then. The only way is to have an extensive production of khadi which will automatically check the rise of prices of mill cloth. Mill cloth is apparently cheaper today, but the moment there is less competition, it will soar up.

The possibility of war, therefore, increases the significance of khadi and it is up to all of us to push it, so that there is no exploitation of our workers and peasants on account of the war.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 12 July 1939. *National Herald*, 13 July 1939.

It should be remembered that, when we talk of khadi, we refer to certified khadi, that is, the khadi that has been passed by the Gandhi Ashram of the Spinners Association. This is not intended to create a monopoly in khadi, but to ensure that the spinners and weavers who produce khadi get a minimum living wage.

Certified khadi means that this minimum wage has been paid to the spinners and others. To encourage uncertified khadi is to encourage sweating and payment of lower wages. It is open to any person, who manufactures khadi, to get his khadi certified after due proof that he pays the right wages and carries out the other conditions that have been laid down. It is necessary, therefore, for every person who buys khadi, to buy the right khadi, that is, certified khadi.

GLOSSARY

Bajra	a kind of millet
Bharat Mata	mother India
Bharat Mata ki Jai	victory to mother India
Dewan	chief official of an Indian state
Hundi	a bill of exchange
Izzat	prestige
Mujtahid	a Shia Muslim high priest
Senapati	commander-in-chief
Suba Adalat	provincial court

INDEX

(Biographical footnotes are italicized)

Abbas, K. Ahmad, 639 & fn, 640 fn
Abdul Fattab Tawil Bey, 11 & fn
Abdullah, Sheikh Muhamad, 429, 440–441
Abyssinia—see Ethiopia
Adarkar, B.P., 638
Afghanistan, 23
Agarwal, Shanti Prasad, 657 & fn
Agra, 413–414
Ahmad, Maulana Husain, 336, 363
Ahmad, Z.A., 57
Ahmad, Ziauddin, 581 & *fn*
Ahmadiya sect, 394 fn
Ahmed, Sir Sultan, 335 & *fn*, 337, 341, 561
Ahrars, 362 fn, 363
Akbar, 636
Albania, 261–262, 287
Albert Hall (London), 184
Alexandria, 11, 15, 17
Ali, Inayet, 644 & fn
Ali, Maulana Mahomed, 491
Aligarh, 247, 581, 660 fn
Aligarh Muslim University, 581 & fn, 639
472, 474, 477, 482–483, 496–500, 516, 530–531, 534, 539–540, 545–546, 553–554, 555 fn–556, 559–562 & fn, 564 fn–565 & fn, 566–568, 570–571, 572 fn, 573 fn, 575–576, 578 fn, 582 & fn–584 & fn, 593, 596–599, 601 fn, 623–624, 627
———, resolution on release of political prisoners, 338 fn
———, session at Bombay, 584 fn
———, session at Calcutta, 573 fn, 576, 623
All India Forward Bloc—see Forward Bloc
All India Muslim League—see Muslim League
All India Penal Reform Conference, 664
All India Political Prisoners Day, 338
All India Radio, 622 fn
All India Spinners Association, 457, 642, 679–680
All India States People's Conference, 205, 408, 430, 435, 440, 442, 444, 447, 572, 580, 661
All India Village Industries Association,

Aney, M.S., 292 fn, 529 fn, 546
Anglo-German Naval Treaty, 230–231, 256
Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, 231, 257
Anglo-Italian pact, 25, 200, 259, 262 & fn
Ansari, Farid, 673 & fn
Anschluss, 22
Anti-Comintern pact, 651 & fn
Anuradhapura (Sri Lanka), 627
Aosta, Dowager Duchess of, 9
Aosta, Duke of, 8 & fn–9, 15–16
Arab congress, 174, 177
Aristarchi, F.E., 630 & *fn*
Arya Samaj, 363 fn, 445–446
Ashraf, Mohammad, 433
Askote, 242, 318–320
Asmara, 9
Asquith, H.H., (Earl of Oxford and Asquith), 164
Assab, 9
Assam, 57, 397 fn, 483 fn, 671
Associated Journals Limited (Lucknow), 654 fn–655
Astor, Lady, 260 fn, 671 & *fn*
Atal, Madan, 58, 225 fn, 250
Atlantic Union, 670 fn
Attlee, C.R., 100–101
Aundh, 411 & fn–412, 437
———, raja Bhavanrao Shrinivasrao (Balasaheb Pant) of, 411 fn–412 & *fn*, 422
Aurora (?), 252
Australia, 53, 210, 649, 670
Australian Supreme Court, 100
Austria, 3, 22, 181, 231, 259, 566, 633
Autobiography (J. Nehru), 672
Avadh, 317 fn, 333 fn
Ayodhya, 452, 573 & fn
———, U.P. Political Conference at, 354–355
Azad, Maulana A.K., 174, 305, 335, 337, 358–359 & fn, 433, 472–473, 477 fn, 479, 497, 516, 525–527 & fn, 530 fn, 533 & fn, 542 fn, 544, 545 fn, 561, 562 fn, 655 & fn

Bachhraj, 627
Back Bay (Bombay), 676
Baer, Gertrud, 223 & fn
Baghdad, 249
Bajaj, Jamnalal, 413 & fn–415, 439, 564
Bakshi, G.M., 440 & *fn*
Balasaheb Pant—see Aundh, raja of
Baldwin, Stanley, 161, 163–164, 231
Balkan states, 188 fn, 193
(Banaras), 247, 369, 463, 551, 572
Banaras Hindu University, 445
Banaras state, 316, 412 & fn
Bannu, 241
Bara Wafat day, 288 fn
Barcelona, 16–17, 20, 25–28, 38, 73, 86–87, 91, 93, 111, 162, 212, 233, 235, 268–273, 275, 277, 506, 663
Bardoli, 234, 358–359, 544, 545 fn
Bardoloi, Gopi Nath, 647 & fn, 672 & fn
Barnes, Leonard, 100 & *fn*, 623, 645 fn, 648–652, 669
Baroda, 391
Baron, Charles Francois, 223
Basic scheme of education (Wardha scheme), 613, 642
Basque area (Spain), 278, 323
Basu, Bijoy, 250 & *fn*
Batlivala, B.—see Mansell, Mrs.
———, S.S., 499
Bazalgette, Major, 243 fn, 426
Belgian Congo, 618 & fn–619, 620 fn
Belgium, 670
Bell, George (Bishop of Chichester), 87 & *fn*
Benes, Eduard, 152 & *fn*, 304
Bengal, 40 & fn, 46, 49, 56, 61, 178 fn, 338 fn, 391, 396, 400, 483, 524, 530, 532 & fn–533, 546, 550, 552, 565, 570, 585, 629 & fn, 636
Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, 584 & fn, 601 & fn
Bengal Provincial Political Conference, 532 fn
Berar, 397 fn
Berchtesgaden, 155–157, 161 fn, 181, 232 & fn
Berlin, 23, 92, 94, 151, 193, 259, 262, 264, 639
Bhadri, 357

Bhagalpur, 357
Bhamani, R., 620 & fn
Bharatpur, 439
Bhardwaj, R.D., 303 fn
Bhargava, Bhagwat Narayan, 432
Bhola Nath, 654 & fn–655
Bhopal, 384, 391, 402
Bihar, 40 fn, 126, 348 & fn, 353, 355 fn, 361, 391, 395, 400, 499–500, 555 fn, 572
Bihar Kisan Sabha, 348 fn
Bihar Muslim Students Federation, 361 fn
Bihar Tenancy Act, 348 fn
Bijnor, 362 fn
Bikaner, Maharaja of, 160 fn
Birmingham, 145 fn
Black and Tans, 186, 221
Blickling Hall (Scotland), 4
Blum, Leon, 45 fn, 150 & *fn*–151
Boer War, 118 fn
Bohemia, 263 & fn, 657
Bombay, 2, 6 & fn, 39–40, 81 fn, 127, 201, 204 & fn, 211, 213–214, 250, 286–287, 304, 306, 311–312, 322, 339–340, 352, 364, 370–371, 391–392, 400, 402, 406 & fn, 435 fn, 440, 445, 497–498, 523, 541, 548, 550, 555 fn, 571, 584 fn, 585 fn, 619, 625–626, 631, 658, 673–674, 676–677
———, A.I.C.C. session at, 584 fn
———, Congress session at, 369
Bombay Trades Disputes Act, 311, 351 & fn, 505
Bombay Trades Disputes Bill, 309 & fn–310 & fn, 406 fn, 482, 548
Bonnet, Georges-Etienne, 156 & *fn*–157, 265
Bose, Sarat Chandra, 524 & fn, 527 & fn, 530 fn, 532 fn, 542 fn, 543, 547
———, Subhas Chandra, 1 fn, 2, 57 fn–58, 92, 108, 115 & fn, 129, 147, 223, 246 & fn, 292 fn, 294 & fn, 299–300, 305, 331 & fn, 367, 397, 401 & fn, 463–464, 477 fn–480 & fn, 483 fn, 484 fn–486, 489 fn, 500, 504, 515–517 & fn, 520 & fn, 523 fn, 526–527 & fn, 529 & fn, 531–533 & fn, 534 & fn, 535 fn, 536 fn, 537 fn, 540 fn, 542 fn, 543 fn, 545 fn, 547 fn, 550, 552–564 & fn, 566–570, 574 fn, 576–579 & fn, 581, 584–585 & fn, 595 & fn, 599–601 & fn, 623, 644, 648, 673 fn
———, Sunil, 527 & *fn*, 533
Brahmadesh, 234 fn
Brahmo Bandhu Samaj, 634 fn
Brahmo Samaj, 634 fn, 636 fn
Brazil, 16
British Commonwealth, 64, 97
Brussels, 663
Budapest, 104
Bundelkhand, 436
Burma, 23, 55, 67, 93 & fn, 234, 425, 618
Burma Congress Committee, 234 fn
Burma Emergency Powers Ordinance (1931), 425 fn
Burma Road, 627

Cafe Bavaria, 152
Cairo, 10–12, 17, 176–178
Calcutta, 39, 211, 247, 286, 296, 298–299, 338, 355, 375 fn, 435–436, 516, 526–527, 533, 535, 550, 555 fn, 559–562, 567, 570, 574, 576, 623–624, 659, 677 fn
———, session of A.I.C.C. at, 573 fn, 576, 623
Calmann, Gerta, 224 & fn
———, Hans, 224 fn
Cambridge, 2, 101 fn, 552 fn
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H., 164
Canada, 669–670
Canterbury, 87 fn
Canterbury, Archbishop of—see Lang, Cosmo Gordon
Canton, 28, 73, 87, 111
Cape Comorin—see Kanya Kumari
Cawnpore—see Kanpur
Cecil, Viscount, of Chelwood, 85–86
Central Asian republics, 3
Central Indian Association of Malaya, 218
Central Provinces, 90 & fn, 93, 135, 141, 355 fn, 397 fn, 400, 402
Cervantes, Miguel de, 506 & *fn*

Ceylon—see Sri Lanka
C.G.T.—see French Labour Confederation
Chadirchi, Kamil El, 249 & fn
Chamberlain, Neville, 18, 25, 30 fn, 65, 104, 151–152, 154–157, 161 & fn–165 & fn, 171, 180–183, 187, 189 & fn–192, 203, 226–228 & fn, 230–233, 238, 244, 254 fn, 258–266, 278, 283, 289–292, 295, 298 & fn, 302–303, 305, 328, 566, 577, 588, 667
Chamber of Deputies (France), 264 & fn
Chamber of Indian Merchants, 380 fn
Chanda, Anil Kumar, 367
Charlemagne, 183
Charm of Indian Art (W.H.G. Solomon), 81 fn
Chatfield, Baron Alfred Ernle Montacute, 552 & fn
Chatfield Report, 552 & fn, 653
Chen Ming Shu, 248 & fn
Chhotu Ram, Sir, 384 & fn
Chicago University, 677 fn
Chichester, Bishop of—see Bell, George
China, 8–9, 14, 16, 21–23, 26–27, 31–32, 35–36, 53, 56, 58, 63, 65–67, 73, 77–78, 85, 87–88, 91, 97, 104–105, 115–116, 139, 145, 147, 166, 172, 192, 194, 200, 209–210, 214–215, 217–218, 225 & fn, 229–230, 233, 235–236, 248 & fn, 250 & fn, 265–267, 274, 313, 335, 352 & fn, 374, 406, 482, 513 & fn, 520, 588, 602, 604, 627, 632, 635, 649–650, 659, 670
China Day, 105
China Defence League, 632 fn
Chinese Republic, 105
Choice Before Us (J. Nehru), 461
Cholkar, M.R., 250 & fn
Chungking, 250 fn, 627
Churchill, Sir Winston, 94, 104, 164, 190, 203, 230
Church Takes Root in India (Basil Mathews), 1 fn
Citrine, Sir Walter, 30
'Cliveden Set', 260 & fn
Cochin, 391
Colombo, 352, 627
Columbia University, 677 fn
Communist Party of Bihar, 348 fn
Communist Party (British), 140, 252 fn, 508 & fn
Communists (Chinese), 513 fn
Communist Party of India, 46 & fn, 322, 524
Compos de Castilla (A. Machado), 663 fn
Congress, Indian National, 2, 4, 7, 10–11, 14–15, 18–24, 26, 28–33, 38, 42–43, 48–49, 52–55, 57 fn, 59 fn, 68 & fn–71, 74–75, 77, 81, 84–86, 88, 90 fn–91, 95, 97–98, 100–103, 105, 108 fn, 113, 115 & fn, 121–127, 128 fn, 131–134, 135 fn, 138–139, 141 & fn–142, 146 fn, 148, 159, 160 fn, 166, 169, 174–176, 178–180, 194, 202, 205–206, 219, 223, 225 & fn, 226 238–240, 243, 246 & fn, 248–249, 284–285 & fn, 288–289, 292 & fn–294 & fn, 296–301, 303–306, 309 fn, 310–318, 320, 322–326 & fn, 329 & fn, 330, 347, 349, 352 fn, 356 fn, 357, 359 & fn–360, 362 & fn–363, 367 & fn, 369–371, 373, 377–378, 380, 386, 405–408, 414, 418–420, 422–423, 428, 431 & fn–432, 442, 444, 451–455, 459, 463–468, 469 fn, 470–474, 477–479, 480 fn–481, 483, 485–507, 510–516, 517 fn, 518–519, 521–525, 527 fn, 528–534 & fn, 536 & fn–537, 540 fn–541, 545–548, 551, 552 fn–560, 562–564, 566–569, 571–572 & fn, 574 & fn–580, 582–586, 588–594, 595 fn, 596–600, 601 fn, 603–604, 611–612, 620 & fn, 628, 639–640 & fn, 642 fn, 650–651, 653, 660–661, 673 fn, 679
———, session at Bombay, 369
———, session at Haripura, 118, 133–134, 149, 159 fn, 419, 572 fn, 642 fn
———, session at Karachi, 369, 373, 378
———, session at Lucknow, 496
———, session at Madras, 294
———, session at Tripuri, 296, 323, 324 fn. 326 fn, 360 fn, 486, 489 fn, 523 fn, 534 fn, 554, 555 fn, 567–569
———, ministries, 5, 41, 46, 241, 319, 351 fn, 354 & fn–356, 453, 463,

483, 499, 501–502, 504–505, 513, 652, 666
Congress House (Bombay), 214, 250
Congress *Sandesh*, 299 fn
Congress Socialist Party, 123, 352 fn, 497, 515, 524, 534, 571 fn
Congress Working Committee, 2, 7, 57, 90 & fn, 92–93, 102, 105, 108, 115 & fn–118, 129, 131–132, 135, 137, 141, 146 fn, 159 fn, 174, 246 & fn, 288, 292 fn, 299, 305 & fn, 309, 311, 322, 331 fn, 338 fn, 343, 345, 358, 369–370, 376, 400, 445, 451 & fn, 453, 455 & fn–456, 469 fn, 473–474, 478, 480 fn–484, 486, 488 & fn, 489 & fn–491, 493, 496–498, 500, 504, 506, 515–518, 520 & fn, 527 fn, 529 fn, 530–532, 533 fn, 534 fn, 535 & fn–540 & fn, 543–545 & fn, 547 & fn–548, 553–555 & fn, 557 fn, 558, 560–561, 562 fn, 563–564 & fn, 565–570, 573 fn, 574, 576, 584, 593, 595 fn, 597, 599, 601 & fn, 620, 627, 629, 638
Conservative Party (British), 79, 89, 98, 104, 191, 203, 612
Cortes (Spain), 272
Criminal Procedure Code, 46 fn
Cripps, Sir Stafford, 100, 102
Cushman, James S., 1
Cuttack, 436
Czechoslovakia, 3, 31, 66, 104, 106, 108–111, 117 & fn, 120, 129–131, 137–138, 142, 143 fn–145, 148–151 & fn, 152 fn, 154 & fn–160, 163 fn, 165, 167–171, 178, 180–184, 187–188, 190–191, 192 fn, 193, 200, 203, 216, 231–232, 244, 259–261 & fn, 263 fn, 287, 290, 295, 304, 327–328, 405, 493, 506, 508, 525, 566, 657, 663
Czecho-Soviet treaty (1935), 144 & fn

Daily Worker, 138, 252 fn
Daladier, Edouard, 151 & *fn*, 163, 165, 171, 192, 264 fn–265, 328
Dalton, Hugh, 101 & *fn*
Damodar Valley Corporation, 324 fn
Danzig, 188 & fn, 262 & fn
Darbyshire, Helen, 623 & fn
Dartington Hall (Devonshire), 324 fn
Darwis, Bustami, 643 & fn
Das, C.R., 491
Das, Seth Govind, 640
Dawson, Geoffrey, 260 fn
Delhi, 159 fn, 178 fn, 286, 525–526 & fn, 527, 531, 533, 537 & fn–539, 547–548, 554, 561, 631
———, conference of ministers of industries at, 370, 387
———, session of A.I.C.C. at, 159 fn
Delhi Pradesh Congress, 537, 539
Delhi University, 548 fn
Del Vayo, Alvarez, 212, 276–278
Denmark, 670
Deo, Shankarrao, 6
Desai, Bhulabhai, 103 & fn, 131–132, 526 fn, 530 & fn
———, Mahadeva, 115, 129
Devadoss, Justice Sir D., 358
De Valera, Eamon, 99 fn, 600
Dev Nagari script, 608 & fn
Dhanbad, 547
Dhenkanal, 410, 426–427
Dimitroff, Georgi, 34 fn
Disarmament Conference, 26 & fn
Disraeli, Benjamin, 164
Djibuti, 289
Dolivet, M., 22
Dominion Status, 41, 96–97, 407
Don Quixote (Miguel de Cervantes), 506 fn
Doulatram, Jairamdas, 564
Downing Street (London), 217, 278
Drummond, 462
D'Souza, F.X., 435, 438
Dutch East Indies, 53

East Africa, 67, 618
East India Company, 23, 39
Ebro river, 276 & fn–277
Eden, Sir Anthony, 181, 189, 203, 257–259
Egypt, 11–13, 15, 51, 108 fn, 176–178, 205–206, 246–247, 249, 550
Einstein, Albert, 616

Gandhi Seva Sangh, 501
Gangpur state, 435, 438 & fn–439, 442 & fn
Ganguli, K.L., 645
Garhwal, 3
Garhwali regiment, 339
Garvin, J.L., 183 & *fn*, 260 fn
Gautam, Mohanlal, 330–331 & fn
Geneva, 9, 104, 137, 147, 150, 172–173 & fn, 203, 257 & fn, 258 fn, 277–278, 668–669
Genoa, 4, 8, 16, 106, 267
George V (England), 163 fn
German Social Democrats, 503, 634, 656, 663
Germany, 6 & fn, 31, 94, 99 fn, 107, 120, 129–131, 139, 143 fn, 150 fn, 152 & fn, 153 fn, 155 & fn–157, 160, 161 fn, 164, 165 fn, 167–168, 180 fn, 181–184, 188 & fn, 190, 192 & fn–193, 203–204, 216, 219 fn–220, 224, 226–228, 230–233, 244–245, 254 & fn–264, 271, 278, 283–287, 289, 290 fn, 291, 302, 537, 542, 549–550, 590, 648, 651 fn, 656, 663
Ghana, 650–651
Gibralter, 258
Gilani, Beltie Shah, 435, 438
Giri, V.V., 370–371, 384, 395–396, 402
Gladstone, W.E., 164
Glasgow, 115
Glasgow University, 107 fn
Glimpses of World History (J. Nehru), 461–462, 626
Goebbels, Joseph, 182 & *fn*, 286
Goering, Hermann Wilhelm, 109 fn, 286 & *fn*
Gold Coast—see Ghana
Gollancz, Victor, 34 & fn
Gonds, 426
Government of India Act of 1935, 18, 23, 25, 32–33, 43, 60, 78, 80, 85, 98–100, 134–136, 141, 226, 284 & fn, 293, 300 fn, 313, 320–321, 328, 334, 521–522, 558, 567, 570
———, Amendment Bill, 296–297, 299 & fn, 345, 445
Government of Ireland Act (1920), 99
Gowtum, R., 234 & fn
Graziani, Marshal, 8 fn
Grenfell, David, 102 & *fn*
Groth, Edward M., 677 & fn
Guha, K.D., 397 & *fn*, 400
Gujarat, 438 fn
Gunther, John, 626, 640
Gwyer, Sir Maurice, 548 & *fn*, 553

Habib, Mohammad, 660
Halifax, 1st Earl of, 1 fn, 30, 163, 182, 202, 258–259, 262, 265, 283, 289–290
Hamirpur, 436
Hankow, 87, 111
Harijan, 128 fn, 135 & fn, 141, 407, 500, 507, 555 fn
Haripura, 419–420, 500, 535, 642
———, Congress session at, 118, 133–134, 149, 159 fn, 419, 572 fn, 642 fn
Harrison, Agatha, 1, 3, 128, 621–622, 625
Hatta, Mohammad, 643 & fn
Hawaii University, 638 fn
Hazari Bagh, 357
Heath, Carl, 83 & fn, 132, 661
Heligoland, 99 & fn
Heliopolis, 12
Henderson, Sir Neville, 259 & *fn*, 262
Henlein, Konrad, 110 fn, 232
Henry IV of Castile, 506 fn
Herbron, 222
Hertzka-Loew, Gertrud, 657
Hindole, 412 & fn
Hindu, 323
Hindu Mahasabha, 284–285, 288, 314, 445–446, 459, 551, 611, 639–640
Hindustan Times, 180
Hindustani Talimi Sangh, 642 & fn
Hindusthan Standard, 551
Hitler, Adolf, 107–109 & fn, 117, 130, 144, 150–152, 155 & fn–157, 161 & fn–165 & fn, 167–168, 171, 180 & fn–183, 187, 188 fn, 189–193 & fn, 195, 221, 227, 230, 232 & fn, 254, 256–260, 265, 289–290 & fn, 295, 303, 327, 405, 551–552, 590, 625, 663
Hoare, Sir Samuel, 257 & fn, 259

Hoare-Laval plan, 257 fn
Holland—see Netherlands
Honchar, 608 & fn
House of Commons, 228 fn, 231 fn, 254 fn, 256 fn, 262 & fn, 293 fn, 301
House of Lords, 284 fn, 293 fn, 296, 301
Hungary, 3, 193, 651 fn
Huq, Fazlul, 356
Husain, Zakir, 505, 642 & fn
Hussain, Raja Manzoor, 342 & fn
Hutheesingh, G.P., 116, 147, 211–212, 397, 400, 525, 550
———, Krishna, 251, 525, 550, 628
Hyderabad, 195, 240, 317, 363 & fn, 384, 391, 402, 406–407, 409–411, 415, 417, 425, 427–428, 445, 447, 589
———, Arya Samaj agitation at, 363
———, *Nizam of*, 448
Hyderabad State Congress, 417, 428–429, 448

Ibarruri, Dolores (La Passionaria), 278 & *fn*–279
Ibrahim, Hafiz, 336, 341, 561
Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd., 41
Independent Labour Party (British), 140, 191
Independent Labour Party (India), 406 fn
India Conciliation Group (England), 132
India League (England), 57, 200, 251 fn, 312
India League (U.S.A.), 672 fn
India Office, 132, 265, 647, 671
India Reveals Herself (Basil Mathews), 1 fn
Indian Association (Belgian Congo), 619, 620 fn
Indian Civil Service, 325, 397 fn, 551
Indian Constitutional Reforms, Joint Committee on, 30 fn, 102 fn
Indian Emigration Act, (1922), 219 fn
Indian Military Academy (Dehra Dun), 653 & fn
Indian Penal Code (1860), 46 fn, 349
Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act (1931), 46 fn
Indian Statutory Commission, 256 fn
Inside Asia (J. Gunther), 626
Institute of Nuclear Physics (Calcutta), 375 fn
International Brigade, 275 & fn–276, 506
International Committee for Intellectual Cooperation, 107
International Court of Justice, 394 fn
International Labour Office, 150, 173 & fn, 628 fn
International Peace Campaign, 15, 19–20, 115, 558
International Peace Conference (Paris), 85, 558 (*see also* World Conference on Peace, Democracy and the Defence of the Rights of Man)
Iran, 16 & fn, 23, 104
Iraq, 104, 249 & *fn*
Ireland, 61, 96, 186, 221, 600, 670
Irwin, Lord—see Halifax, 1st Earl of
Isabella (of Castile), 506 & fn
Istanbul, 286
Italian Somaliland (Eritrea), 9
Italy, 8–10, 24–25, 31, 36, 139, 144, 152 fn, 155, 168, 180 fn, 192, 203–204, 210, 215, 226, 230–231, 236, 244–245, 257 & fn–258, 264, 271, 278, 283–284, 289, 542, 549–550, 590, 648, 651 fn
I Was a German (Ernst Toller), 662
Iyer, Sir C.P. Ramaswami, 195 & fn

Jacob, M., 176
Jaffa, 222
Jahoda, Martin, 633
Jahoda and Siegel (Vienna), 633
Jain, Nemi Saran, 362 & *fn*
Jaipur, 243 & fn, 413, 415, 423, 425–426, 433, 439, 548
Jaipur Praja Mandal, 413 fn–414, 423
Jallianwalla Bagh, 484 fn
Jalpaiguri, 532 fn
Jamaica, 618, 650 & fn
Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, 174 & fn, 178 & fn
Jammu and Kashmir State, 440 fn
Jamshedpur arbitration, 339, 556, 623

Japan, 9, 15–16, 30, 53, 60, 89, 96, 209–210, 230, 236, 252, 256 & fn, 266, 283–284, 551, 638 fn, 648–649, 651 fn
Jaunpur, 359 & fn–360
Java, 265
Jealgora (Dhanbad district), 554 fn, 559
Jenin, 221 & fn
Jhansi, 431 & fn–432
Jharia, 526–527, 533
Jinnah, M.A., 57 fn, 59, 90, 93, 95, 115 & fn, 178, 285, 306, 354 & fn, 358 & fn
J.J. School of Art (Bombay), 81 fn
John, Sir Beauchamp, 243 fn
Jones, Morgan, 102 & *fn*
Juhu (Bombay), 626

Kabir, 636
Kaisarbagh Baradari (Lucknow), 329–331
Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital (Allahabad), 644
Kamath, H.V., 340 & fn, 397 & *fn*–398 & fn, 400–401 & fn
Kandy (Sri Lanka), 627
Kanpur, 4, 127, 350–351, 458–459, 460 fn, 462–464, 551, 645
Kanpur Riots Enquiry Committee (1931), 336 fn
Kanya Kumari, 50, 414
Karachi, 211, 369, 373, 378, 535, 643
————, Congress session at, 369, 373, 378
Kashmir, 2, 50, 171, 240, 317, 391, 409–411, 415, 417, 424, 427–429, 434, 440 & fn–441
Kathiawar, 288 fn, 411, 443
Kaul, Kailas, 628
————, Shiela, 628
Kaumi Sena (Seva) Dal, 460 & fn, 465
Ken, 8
Kent, 189
————, Duke of, 163 & *fn*
Kenya Highlands Order-in-Council, 618 fn
Khaksar movement, 552 & fn
Khaliquzzaman, C., 661 & fn
Khan, Abdul Ghaffar, 241
Khan, Ajmal, 655 & *fn*
Khan, Inayatullah (Allama Mashriqi), 552 & *fn*
Khan, Sir Muhammad Zafrullah, 394 & *fn*
Khan, Sir Sikandar Hayat, 355 & fn, 356 *fn*
Khare, N.B., 90 fn, 135 fn, 503–504, 581
Kher, B.G., 322
Khilafat campaign, 178 fn
Khudai Khidmatgars, 241
Khuldabad (Allahabad), 466–469
Kidwai, Rafi Ahmed, 335–337, 339–341, 561–562 & fn, 655 & fn
Kifayatullah, Mufti, 174 & *fn*, 178
Kitabistan, 462
Kokung, 250 & fn
Kotnis, D.S., 250 & *fn*
Kripalani, J.B., 7, 57, 59, 89, 92, 102 fn, 108, 114, 115 fn, 117, 128, 146, 303, 358, 469 fn, 488, 565 fn
————, Sucheta, 469 & *fn*
Krishnamurti, J., 677 & *fn*
Kumaon (Kumaun), 242, 319, 477
Kuomintang, 513 fn, 632 fn

La Passionaria—see Ibarruri, D.
Labour Enquiry Committee (Kanpur), 4 fn, 5 fn
Labour Monthly, 121
Labour Party (British), 78, 80, 98–99, 100 fn, 101–102, 104, 152, 181, 191, 193, 202–203, 291, 503, 508, 650
Lac Leman, 150
Lahore, 394 fn, 409 fn
Lancashire, 616 fn
Lancaster, Duchy of, 101 fn
Lane, Allen, 461
Lang, Cosmo Gordon (Archbishop of Canterbury), 30 & *fn*, 115, 163
Laski, Harold, 100, 102
Latif, Abdul, 360
Laubach, Frank C., 646 & fn
Lausanne, 150
Laval, Pierre, 257 & *fn*

League of Nations, 87, 101, 104, 107 fn, 143, 150–152, 172–173, 192, 204, 217, 230, 231 fn, 236, 249 fn, 256–257 & fn, 616, 652, 668–669
——— Covenant, 151, 231
Leaning, John, 632 & fn
Left Book Club, 34, 38, 623
Left Consolidation Committee, 352 fn, 582 & fn–583, 585–586
Left Coordination Committee, 596 (*see also* Left Consolidation Committee)
Leningrad, 348 fn
Lesny, V., 647
Liberals (British), 98, 256 fn
Liberals (Egyptian), 12 fn
Limbdi, 443
Linlithgow, Marquis of, 90 & fn, 96, 98, 103, 133, 202
Lippmann, Walter, 1 fn
Lister, General, 204 fn, 272–276
Lithuania, 193
Lloyd George, D., 258
Locarno treaty, 152 & fn, 290 fn
Lohia, R.M., 8, 57, 116
London, 2–4, 16, 34, 41, 57, 81 & fn–83 & fn, 90 fn, 91–94, 96, 109, 114–115, 117, 129, 131–132, 150–152 & fn, 160 & fn–161, 163 fn, 174, 178, 200 fn, 202, 204–205, 212, 219 & fn, 224 fn, 232, 251 & fn, 262, 265, 289, 310, 312, 352, 372, 624–625, 628, 630
Lothian, Marquis of, 4, 128 & fn, 132, 134, 202, 260 fn
Lucknow, 5 & fn, 288 fn, 293, 299, 318, 320, 329 fn, 335–338, 340, 341 fn, 343, 346–347, 360, 374, 445, 458–459, 463, 471, 496–497, 520, 533, 561, 565, 570, 622–623, 625–626, 628, 645–646, 654 & fn–655, 661
———, Congress session at, 496
———, Shia-Sunni conflict at, 5, 293, 338–341 & fn, 346, 374, 384, 459, 463
Ludhiana, 434, 461

MacDonald, Ramsay, 49
Machado, Antonio, 663 & *fn*
Machiavelli, 278
Madhar el Din, Moulvi, 178 & *fn*
Mad-he-Sahaba, 288 fn, 333, 336, 337 fn, 362 fn–363
Madras, 211, 347 fn, 391, 395, 499, 631, 656 fn
———, Congress session at, 294
Madras Cooperative Union, 656 fn
Madrid, 87, 91, 111, 235, 262 & fn, 270–271, 273, 275 fn, 277
Maharashtra, 411 fn
Mahler, Hans, 633
Mahmood Bey, 246 fn
Mahmud, Syed, 361 & fn, 395, 400, 621–622
Mahomoud Bassouring Bey, 11
Mahtab, Harekrushna, 435 & *fn*, 438
Mainpuri libel case, 674–675
Majumdar, Suresh, 546
Makram Ebeid Pasha, 11 & fn, 15
Malaya, 22, 89, 210, 218–219 & fn, 265, 347
Manchester Guardian, 141
Manchukuo, 651 fn
Manchuria, 9, 143, 167, 192, 230, 236, 256 & fn
Manipur state, 671–672 & fn
Mansell, Mrs. (*nee* B. Batlivala), 17
Manshiye (Palestine), 222
Marseilles, 212, 267–268, 622
Martin Secker and Warburg (London), 656 fn
Masani, M.R., 309
Masaryk, Jan, 163 & *fn*
———, Thomas, 154 & *fn*
Mashriqi, Allama—see Khan, Inayatullah
Massawa, 8–10
Mathews, Basil Joseph, 1 & *fn*
Man Ranipur (Jhansi district), 431
Mauritius, 103, 618
Meerut, 644 & fn
Meerut trial (Meerut Conspiracy case), 122
Meerza, Yusuf, 333 & *fn*
Meherally, Yusuf, 249, 522 & fn
Mehta, Jamnadas, 310 & fn
Memel, 261 & fn, 287
Menon, V.K. Krishna, 2–4, 115 & fn, 147, 201, 211, 299, 312, 321, 445, 446 fn, 460, 461 fn, 524, 533, 559, 558, 570, 619, 634, 644, 656

Mesopotamian campaign, 652
Miaja, General Jose, 273 & *fn*–274
Minc, Salomon, 644 & fn
Misra, Lakshmi Kant, 523 fn
Modern Review, 640
Modesto, General, 204 fn, 273, 275–276
Moffat, W.S., 221 & fn
Mont Blanc, 150
Moradabad, 657 fn
Moravia, 263 & fn
Morin, Jean Jacques, 628 & fn
———, Louise, 622 & *fn*, 625, 628 & fn
Morrison, Herbert, 102 & *fn*
Moscow, 92, 150, 632
Mount Saleve, 150
Mukherji, Debesh, 250 & fn
Munich, 94, 150, 165 & fn, 180 & fn–181, 187, 188 fn, 189 fn–190, 196, 203, 232–233, 253, 261, 263 fn, 278, 291, 328, 663
——— agreement, 156 fn, 192, 200, 226–227
Murray, Gilbert, 107 & *fn*
Muslim League, 57 & fn, 59 & fn, 109, 115 fn, 146 fn, 174, 178 & fn, 284–285, 288, 292, 306, 314–315 & fn, 318, 332, 354–360, 459, 472, 551, 552 fn, 574, 581 fn, 611, 639
———, Council of, 59 fn, 115 fn
———, session at Patna, 355
Musset, Alfred de, 622 & *fn*
Mussolini, Benito, 15, 165, 168, 171, 192 fn, 195, 221, 231, 256–259, 278, 283–284, 289–290 & fn, 327, 405, 590, 625
Mysore, 415, 500

Nagpur, 250 fn
Nahas Pasha, 11 & fn–12, 15, 108 & fn, 137, 174–175, 205–206, 248
Naidu, B.V. Narayanaswami, 656 & *fn*
Naini Tal, 338–340
Nambiar, A.C.N., 149 & fn, 186, 525, 633, 657
Nanak, 636
Nanda, Gulzari Lal, 309 & *fn*
Naoroji, Dadabhai, 637
———, Jal, 676 & fn
Naples, 16
Napoleon, 183
Naquib Hilaly Bey, 11 & fn
Narayan, Jaya Prakash, 305, 331, 538–539
Narendra Deva, Acharya, 305, 315, 516, 602
Nariman, K.F., 484, 499, 503–504
National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon, 646 fn
National Front, 352 fn
National Herald, 110–114, 148–149, 180, 186, 265, 296, 299 & fn, 331, 362, 445, 525, 541, 543, 549, 568, 623, 633, 645 & fn, 654 fn, 659, 675
National Planning Committee, 372, 375 & fn, 385, 387, 390–400, 401 fn, 619
National Revolutionary Army (of China), 32
Negrin, Lopez Juan, 271 & *fn*, 277
Nehru, Brijlal, 628
———, Indira, 2, 4, 106, 114, 117, 147, 173, 186, 251, 367, 525, 550, 621–624, 626, 631
———, Jawaharlal, 1 fn, 3 fn, 6 fn, 22–24, 26, 34 fn, 48, 52–55, 90 fn, 101 fn, 102 fn, 115 fn, 128 fn, 146 fn, 204 fn, 224 fn, 234 fn, 244–246, 248 fn, 249 fn, 251 fn, 306 fn, 332 fn, 339 fn, 344–347, 352 fn, 354 fn, 367 fn, 398 fn, 401 fn, 438 fn, 442 fn, 461 fn, 480 fn, 520 fn, 529 fn, 533 fn, 535 fn, 542 fn, 547 fn, 554 fn, 555 fn, 565 fn, 567–569, 571 fn, 572 fn, 573 fn, 581, 595 fn, 629 fn, 630 fn, 631 fn, 639 fn, 640 fn, 643 fn, 645 fn, 646 fn, 648–649, 656 fn, 673 fn, 677 fn
———, answers V.D. Tripathi's charges, 571–572; appeals to Subhas Bose to withdraw resignation, 562–564; at International Peace Conference (Paris), 85–89; at Santiniketan, 607; denies Ziauddin Ahmad's allegations, 581; leaves for Europe, 7; moves resolution on national demand, 521–522, and on war danger,

300; presides over All India States People's Conference, 418–431, over Peace and Empire Conference (London), 61–68, and over U.P. Political Conference, 312–318; replies to Jinnah's charges, 356–357, to Sarat Bose's charges, 527–532, and to Subhas Bose's charges, 534–549; returns to India, 201

———, on adventurist elements in politics, 542, 578; on Africans, 67; on agriculture, 379; on agricultural planning, 389; on air-raid precautions, 162; on Ajit Singh, 16; on All India Congress Committee office, 482; on A.I.C.C. resolution on satyagraha, 583–584; on A.I.C.C. session at Calcutta, 565–567, 570, 574, 576; on All India Political Prisoners' Day, 338; on All India States People's Conference, 408, 418, 430–431, 447–448; on amendment to the resolution on national demand, 523, 530; on Anschluss, 22; on appeasement, 238, 260–261, 264, 329, 424; on Arab Congress, 174, 178; on Arya Samaj, 446; on Askote agitation, 318–320; on "aspersions" resolution, 544–547; on attending conferences, 572; on attitude towards Subhas Bose, 535; on Aundh state, 412, 422; on *Autobiography*, 672–673; on *Bande Mataram*, 361; on basic education scheme, 505, 613, 642–643; on battle of the Ebro, 277; on Bengal, 629, 636; on blind obedience, 565, 590; on Bombay Trades Disputes Bill, 309–311, 482, 505; on bombing of civilian population, 17, 18, 20, 25–28, 32, 36, 73, 86–87, 91, 269, 506; on bombing in North West Frontier Province, 26–28, 32, 36, 73–74, 87–88; on Bose, 552, 570, 599–601, his campaign against A.I.C.C., 584–585, his criticism of Bombay Government's prohibition programme, 585, his criticism of foreign policy, 550, 558, his differences with Gandhiji, 539, 550, 553–554, 556–561, 563, his forming a new party, 570, his functioning as Congress President, 482, 539–540, 544, his re-election as Congress President, 480, 485–486, 516–518, 538, 541, 543–544, and his resignation, 562–564, 567, 576; on boycott of Belgian goods, 620, and of Japanese goods, 30, 88, 91; on the breaches of the League Covenant, 230–231; on Britain and China, 266; on Britain and Russia, 230, 255–256; on Britain and Spain, 18, 25–26; on British attitude to the Indian problem, 73, 78, 89–90, 95–96, 98, 202; on British Commonwealth, 64, 669; on British Communist Party, 140, 508; on British Conservative Party, 203; on British Empire, 36–37, 228–229, 237, 618; on British foreign policy, 63, 80, 84, 87–88, 119, 138, 142–144, 148–149, 151, 154–157, 167–168, 171, 181–182, 190–192, 198, 200, 203, 226–227, 230–231, 255, 261, 283, 290–291, 328, 405, 460, 566, and its drift to fascism, 54, 181; on British foreign policy and Congress, 29, 133, 142–143; on British policy and India, 29, 31, 41, 60, 80, 88, 104, 119, 130–131, 146, 149, 216–217, 229, 236, 329, 406–407; on British Government, 3, 77, 133, 136, 143–145, 155, 167, 170, 181, 192, 202, 239, 243, 284, 302, 328, 405, 478, 577, 609; on British imperialism, 36, 54, 66, 75, 220, 283, 302–303, 416, 430, 493, 519, 523, 610; on British Labour Party, 80, 98–99, 104, 191, 202–203, 291, 508; on British rule in India, 38–40; on British ruling classes, 422, 508; on British vested interests, 210; on British withdrawal from India, 55; on Chamberlain, 154, 161–165, 182–183, 187, 189–192, 203, 226–228, 262–265, 291–292, 303, 328; on Chandra Singh, 318, 339, 465; on Chatfield Report, 552; on China, 63, 86, 248, 265–267, 313, 513; on China medical mission, 22, 58, 88, 116, 218, 225, 248, 250; on China relief fund, 147; on Christianity in India, 635; on Churchill, 203; on civil liber-

ties, 46, 55–56, 351–352, 424; on class conflict, 349–350, 509; on collective peace and security, 19, 21, 47–48, 69, 86, 197, 295, 669; on common language for India, 607; on commonwealth of nations, 63–65, 97; on communalism, 48–50, 177, 240, 284–285, 314, 326–327, 331–332, 358, 363, 459, 463, 511, 551–552, 565, 603–604, 611; on communists, 350; on Communist Party of India, 322, 524; on Congress, 69–70, 75, 91–92, 121–123, 125–127, 166, 180, 240, 285, 288, 296, 314–315, 343–346, 451–455, 459, 486–487, 489, 491, 494, 501–502, 513, 519–521, 531, 553, 563, 569, 575, 577, 579, 585–586, 588–592, 594, 598–599, 611–612, acceptance of ministries by, 14, 124–125, 499, 590–591, achievements of, 112, agrarian policy of, 43, 126, 334, 458–459, aims and objectives of, 70, 113, 316, 454, 521, allegations against, 314–315, 354–358, authoritarianism in, 492, 504, 577, bogus membership of, 451, civil service of, 344, 455, 660, committees of, 456–457, 467, 598, constitution of, 490, corruption in, 549, 555, deadlock in, 492, 553, 556–557, 559–561, 563, discipline in, 323–324, 470, 474, 487, 503–504, 519–520, 522, 583–584, 591–592, 594, 597–598, dissensions in, 484, 527–529, 562–564, 567, 586, 589–590, 599–600, 603, elections in, 122, 345, 466–469, executive of, 514–515, exhibition of, 640–641, foreign department of, 57, 59, foreign policy of, 558–559, 568, 574, 576, groups in, 123, 464, 481–482, 486, 494–497, 503, 505, 512, 515, ideological differences in, 564, 566, 568, 576, industrial policy of, 369–370, 378, 386–387, internal weakness of, 463–464, leadership of, 503, 514, left and right elements in, 524, 531–532, 548, 583, 594, ministers of, 127, 226, 326, 531, ministries of, 22, 32, 74, 126–127, 239, 289, 301, 314–315, 317–318, 322, 329, 349–351, 354–357, 383, 453, 483, 499, 501–503, 505, 513–514, 523, 590–591, Mysore resolution of, 500, personal factors coming into functioning of, 489–490, 528–529, 532, policy of, 492–493, 510–511, presidential election of, 414, 477–480, 485, 515–517, 524, 537–538, 576, presidentship of, 367, primary members and office-bearers of, 584, resolution on use of Swadeshi goods of, 369, split in, 535–536, strength and unity of, 71, 405–406, 500, 511, volunteers of, 604, and war resolution of, 303–304; on Congress and fascism, 180–181, and free thought, 48, and Indian states, 140, 240, 408, 418, 420, 423, and International Peace Campaign, 20, 85, and kisans, 38, 121, 125–126, 334, and national demand, 326, and National Planning Committee, 399, and public debt, 101, and *Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix*, 176, and socialism, 42, 494, 496, and Wafd Party, 174–178, and war, 117–118, 294, 300, 303–306, 577; on Congress Socialist Party, 123–124, 497, 515, 524; on Congress Working Committee, 246, 343, 483–484, 486, 489–492, 497, 518, 569, association with, 520, 535–536, 540–541, 543, 555, disciplinary action against Bose by, 601, formation of, 543, 554, 560–561, 563–565, 567–568, a "homogeneous" W.C., 535–536, 554, introduction of new elements in, 568–569, on not joining the new W.C., 555, 564–568, 570, 574, 576, resignation of twelve members of, 538, 540, 547; on crime, 664; on culture, 613; on currency and finance, 637–638; on Czechoslovakia, 109–111, 117, 120, 129, 144, 150–153, 155, 157–160, 165, 167, 169, 184, 216, 232, 304–305, 493, 506; on Dadabhai Naoroji, 637; on daughter's illness, 114, 117, 147, 175, 186, 631; on defence of India, 648–654; on defence services, 60; on defiance of Congress resolutions, 582–585, 596–598; on delegates to Tripuri Congress, 530–531; on demand for responsible government,

441–442; on democracy, 612, 614; on development of individuals and social groups, 613; on Dhenkanal state, 426–427; on discipline in national life, 610–611; on Dominion Status, 96–97, 407; on draft plan, 373; on drain of India's wealth, 23; on education abroad, 107–108; on education in India, 613; on Egypt, 13–14, delegation from, 247–248, 525, and elections in, 12; on election campaign, 499; on election as Congress President (1936), 493–494; on emigration of Indian labour, 347, 594; on England, 183–184, 193, 196–197, 209–210, 245, 254–255, 612; on environment, 613–614; on Ernst Toller, 662–664; on Ethiopia, 143; on European middle classes, 374, 509–510; on European situation, 108, 117, 119, 183, 188, 195–196, 244, 287, 289–291, 327–328, 508, 525, 612, 621, 662; on eviction of Meerut kisans, 645; on exchange ratio of rupee, 637–638; on fascism, 28, 62–63, 65, 76–77, 86, 131, 144, 148, 166–168, 180, 196–198, 200, 210, 227, 233, 236, 283, 327–328, 424; on fascism's growth in Italy, 590; on fascism and nationalism, 578; on fascist elements in India, 577; on fascist powers, 578; on federation, 22, 25, 32, 79, 82, 84, 103, 125, 127, 134, 136, 240, 243, 297, 430, 478, 507, 536, 665–671; on films, 659; on flag, 316, 361, 503; on forces of disruption, 430; on foreign films' misrepresentation of India, 658; on formation of constituent assembly, 19, 22, 29, 33, 43–44, 82, 134, 170, 430; on Forward Bloc, 574, 577–579, 595–596; on freedom and democracy, 149, 196, 247, 377, 505; on freedom of thought, 48, 614; on France, 183, 196–197, 245, 254, 612, government of, 45, 167, 328, 609, and policy of, 148–149, 154, 156–157, 264; on Franco, 270–271, 323; on French Revolution, 665; on future conflicts in India, 600; on Gaidilieu Rani, 647, 671–672; on Gangpur state, 435–436, 438–439, 442; on Gandhi Seva Sangh, 501; on Gandhian pacifism, 179, 191, and British pacifists, 108–109, 179, 191, 495; on Gandhism and modernism, 511–512; on Geneva, 150; on Germany, 181–182, 193, 254, 286; on Government of India Act of 1935, 18, 23, 43, 60, 78, 80, 85, 100, 134–135, 328, 334, 521–522, 558, and Amending Bill, 284, 293, 296–297, 299–301, 320–321, 566–567, 570–571; on Great War, 612; on Gwyer's award, 548; on himself, 2, 34–35, 198, 498, 548–549, 575, 603, 616–617, 621–627, 631, 635; on Hindi and Urdu, 360, 607; on his interference in A.I.C.C. work, 539–540; on Hindu Mahasabha, 284–285, 551, 611, 639–640; on Hitler, 130, 163, 181–182, 193, 289, 590; on *Honehar*, 608; on hunger strikes, 318, 344, 347, 351, 661; on Hyderabad state, 411, 417, 425, 427–429, 445–446, 448; on ideological conflicts, 492; on imperialism, 37, 74, 76, 86, 115, 131, 144, 166, 168, 197–198, 226–227, 236, 328, 420–421, 424, 650, 670; on independence pledge, 241–243; on independent India's policy, 146, 170, 198, 216–218, 522, 648; on Independent Labour Party (British), 191; on India, 33, 86, 127–128, 196, 199, 217–218, 241, 294, 405–406, 430, 499, 586–588, 619, 621, 649; on India and Burma, 55; on India and China, 56, 65, 77, 91, 104–105, 139, 209, 632; on India and Egypt, 15, 246–247; on India and fascism, 23, 92, 119–120, 188, 200, 210, 245, 286, 345; on India and France, 19, 21, 223; on India and Iraq, 249; on India and the League of Nations, 217; on India and Spain, 20–21, 29, 77, 200–201; on India and Sri Lanka, 55, 588, 593–595; on India and war, 18, 22, 31, 54, 68, 82, 84, 92, 110, 118, 125, 129–131, 134, 139, 145, 160, 169, 237, 244, 264, 284, 292, 294–295, 298, 301–302, 304–305,

345, 566, 571, 578; on India and World Youth Congress, 140; on Indian army, 31–32, 652–653; on Indian art, 81; on Indian civilisation, 51; on Indian Civil Service, 325, 551; on Indian culture, 615; on Indian and European dress, 630; on Indian films, 658; on Indian handicrafts, 641; on Indian independence, 18, 21, 79, 82, 96–97, 170, 303, 328, 407, 509, 668; on Indian industry, 23, 39–41; on Indian labour in Malaya, 22, 89, 218–219, and Sri Lanka, 593–594, 627; on Indian languages, 50, 360; on Indian middle classes, 374, 509–510; on Indian nationalism, 86; on Indian Penal Code, 350; on Indian poverty, 23, 38–40, 75, 313; on Indian princes, 46, 415–417, 420–422; on Indian settlers in Somaliland, 9–10; on Indian situation, 31, 40, 51, 74–76, 125, 239, 288, 292–293, 298, 414, 430, 493, 534, 552, 565, 575, 577, 600, 603, 615, 629, 673; on Indian states, 47, 55, 100–101, 142, 193–194, 204–205, 240, 243, 316–317, 344–345, 406–425, 430, 439, 443–444, 447, 580, 589, 666; on Indian unity, 47, 50–51, 407–408, 421, 511, 565; on Indian youth, 140, 587; on Indians abroad, 67, 618–620, 627; on India's conflict with western culture, 615–616; on India's economic problems, 41; on India's international status, 15, 139, 217; on India's stand on world affairs, 4, 14–15, 30, 35, 37, 44, 60, 78, 84, 95, 125, 133, 138–139, 204, 215, 236; on India's struggle for independence, 12, 14, 19, 21, 31, 41–42, 61, 72, 82, 420, 519–520, and conflict with imperialism, 7, 21, 36, 119–120, 127, 141, 146, 169, 328, 519; on Indo-British relations, 18, 79–80, 96–97, 120, 135, 137, 154, 171, 188, 198, 237–239, 329, 588; on Indo-Soviet relations, 92; on industrial revolution, 665; on industrialisation, 378, 387, 398–399, 679; on intention to resign from Congress presidentship (1936), 481, 487, 496, 498; on International Brigade, 275–276; on International Peace Campaign, 20, 115; on International Peace Conference, 558; on Islam in India, 635–636; on Jaipur state, 243, 413–415, 425–426, 433; on Japan, 30, 53, 256, 649; on Jaunpur bye-election, 359–360; on Jews, 116, 177, 185–187, 224, 311–312, 537, 633–634, 644; on journalistic ethics, 675; on Kaisarbagh Baradari incident, 329–331; on Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital, 628, 644; on Kanpur riots, 458; on Kanpur strikes, 4–5, 351, 464–465; on Karachi Congress resolution on fundamental rights, 369, 373, 378–379; on Kashmir state, 409–411, 424–425, 427–429, 434, 440; on Kaumi Seva Dal, 460, 465; on Keshab Chandra Sen, 634–637; on khadi, 457–458, 468, 640–643, 679–680; on Khaksar movement, 552; on Khare episode, 504; on kisans, 24, 28, 33, 74–75, 121, 312–314, 317, 334–335; on kisan sabhas, 316, 503; on Kumaon, 319; on labour legislation, 389–390; on land problem in India, 126; on land system in India, 666; on large-scale industries, 369–370, 386–387, 641; on League of Nations, 150, 172, 616, 668; on Left Book Club, 34; on Left Consolidation Committee, 582–583, 585–586; on Limbdi state, 443; on Lucknow Congress, 496; on Mahatma Gandhi, 52, 72, 92, 123, 179, 297, 344–346, 415, 420, 439, 495–496, 503, 512, 548, 580, 624; on Mainpuri libel case, 674–675; on Manchuria, 143; on Marx, 508–510; on mass literacy, 353, 646; on Maulana Azad, 479; on minorities, 410, 470–473; on mob violence, 410; on monsoon in Bombay, 676; on Munich agreement, 187, 227, 232–233; on Muslim League, 284–285, 551, 574, 611, 639–640; on Muslim masses, 574; on Mussolini, 289, 590; on Mysore, 5; on Nariman episode,

504–505; on *National Herald*, 110–114, 148–149, 265–266, 654–655, 659; on national and international problems, 587; on National Planning Committee, 368, 373, 379–380, 384–385, 391–400, 619; on nationalism, 27, 37–38, 72, 235–236; on Nazi propaganda in India, 639–640; on need for understanding India, 27–28; on news agencies, 265; on newspapers and libel action, 674; on noisy processions, 678; on nonviolence, 52–53, 75, 330, 495, 510; on obscene notices, 678; on Orchha state, 431–432; on Orissa states, 410, 426, 439; on pacifists, 108–109, 179, 191, 495; on Palestine, 66–67, 143, 177, 184–186, 197–198, 220–222; on panchayat system, 459; on Pant's resolution, 549; on party rivalries, 484–485; on Pattabhi Sitaramayya's nomination as Congress President, 544; on peace, 20, 61–62, 141; on Peace and Empire Congress at Glasgow, 115; on personal criticisms, 596; on planning, 367, 370–372, 376–377, 381–382, 385–389, 391–393, 395, 397–399, 615; on planning in Russia, 382; on politicians and statesmen, 36; on press rumours, 532–533; on progressive movements, 63, 168; on provincial autonomy's functioning, 44, 79, 141, 501–502, 521–522; on public debt, 101; on Punjab states, 425; on Rahul Sankrityayan, 348; on Rajkot state, 412, 415, 417, 423, 425, 439, 548, 553, 579–580; on Rajputana states, 411, 424; on Ram Mohan Roy, 636; on Ranpur state, 243, 410, 417, 426; on release of political prisoners, 338, 465; on relief measures for industrial workers, 127; on religion, 635; on revolution, 637; on right to rebel against the Congress, 592; on rivalry between *National Herald* and *Pioneer*, 645; on Round Table Conferences, 122, 220; on Roosevelt, 163, 265, 290; on ruling classes and groups, 577; on Rumania, 244–245; on Russia, 185–189, 252–254, 507–508; on Santiniketan, 607; on Sarat Bose's charges, 527–532; on Sarila state, 436–437; on satyagraha, 52–53, 318, 423, 591; on Schacht's visit to India, 285–287; on science, 372, 615–617; on Sea Customs Act, 34; on self-determination for India, 103, 135–137, 171, 184, 328, 521; on Shia-Sunni conflict in Lucknow, 5, 333, 335–343, 346–347, 384, 561–562, 623–625; on slogans, 590; on small and large-scale industries, 641; on socialism, 48, 283, 494–495, 497, 509–510, 549, 566, 616; on Soviet foreign policy, 146, 508; on Spain, 18, 20, 44–45, 86, 143, 188–189, 196–197, 200–201, 204, 214–215, 226, 228, 233–234, 274–275, 277–278, 313, 492, 663–664; on Spanish Morocco, 68; on Spanish Relief Committee, 211, 213; on Spanish relief measures, 201, 204, 212–214, 216, 218, 225; on spinning, 642; on Sri Prakasa's proposed resignation, 601; on standards of public conduct, 330; on state management and control of industries, 378, 389; on states people's movement, 194–195, 407; on strikes, 351; on students, 609–610, and students' strikes, 318, 610–611; on Subhas Bose's charges, 486, 517–518, 529, 533, 549–550; on synthesis of ideals and religions in India, 635–636; on Talchar state, 426–427; on talks with Subhas Bose, 561, 623; on talks with the Viceroy, 90, 96–98, 202; on tea plantations, 57; on tenancy legislation, 317, 334, 458, 666–667; on *The Times*, 189; on touching leaders' feet, 318; on trade unions, 112; on Travancore state, 141–142, 195, 405, 411, 425, 427; on Tripuri Congress, 323, 326, 521–522, 524, 575–576; on Tripuri resolution, 531, 567; on ultimatums to British Government, 484, 523; on understanding and faith among colleagues, 484, 528; on unemployed persons, 383; on U.P. Congress, 318, 452, 455–456, 459–

459, 474, 549, 597–598, 604; on U.P. ministry, 349–351, 383; on United States of America, 230; on U.S.A. and China, 266; on C.J. Varkey's speech, 323; on *Vasantsena*, 106; on village and cottage industries, 367; on visit to Cairo, 11; on visit to China, 602, 627; on visit to Europe, 6, 8–17, 93–106, 146; on visit to Germany, 94; on visit to Spain, 267–273; on Wafd party, 11–14, 205–206; on war, 85–86, 109, 112, 209–210, 296, 622, 627; on women's role in the Congress, 54; on world union, 668–671; on world situation, 65, 80, 223–224, 563, 577, 592, 614–615, 639, 668; on World Youth Congress, 140, 176; on zamindars, 317
Nellore (Andhra Pradesh), 539
Nepal, 242, 319
Nestorians, 635
Netherlands, 210, 649, 670
New Republic, 677
Newton, Isaac, 616
New York, 140, 150–151, 222, 646 & fn
New York Herald Tribune, 1 fn
New Zealand, 670
Nobel Peace Prize, 165
Noon, Sir Feroze Khan, 160 & fn
North, Lord, 192 & *fn*
North China, 9
North West Frontier Province, 49, 339, 402, 571
Norway, 670
Nuremburg, 262 fn, 286 fn
Nyon, 258 & fn

Observer, 183 & fn, 260 fn
Olden, Ica, 224 & fn–225
Orchha state, 431–432 & fn
Oriental Institute (Hawaii), 638 fn
Orissa, 243 fn, 402, 410 & fn–413, 415, 423, 426–427, 435 fn
Orissa states, 243, 435, 438–439
Osman, Hafiz, 660 & *fn*
Osmania University (Hyderabad), 425
Oudh—see Avadh
Our Findings (Mohamed Azizur Rahman), 361
Oxford, 2, 100 fn, 107 fn, 186, 623 fn

Pakistan, 394 fn
Palace of the League of Nations (Geneva), 150
Palais Wilson (Geneva), 150
Palestine, 66, 107, 143, 174, 176–178, 184–186, 198, 219 & fn–222, 224 fn, 227, 229, 242, 520, 551, 661 fn, 663
Palestine Arab Centre (London), 178
Palestine conference (Cairo), 661 fn
Paliwal, Srikrishna Datt, 433
Palmerston, Lord, 164
Panchgani, 6
Pandit, Ranjit S., 625
———, Vijayalakshmi, 8, 109, 114, 117, 147, 320, 622, 657
Pant, Govind Ballabh, 128, 172, 246 fn, 292 fn, 311, 320, 336, 338–340, 343, 358 & fn, 383, 396, 413, 529 fn, 534 fn, 545 & fn–546, 549, 554 fn, 562 & fn–563, 565 fn, 623, 655 fn
Paris, 3–4, 45, 59, 83, 94, 106, 150, 152, 212, 223, 264, 279, 558 & fn, 624 & fn–625, 628, 630, 669
Patel, Vallabhbhai, 147, 316 fn, 340 & fn–341, 347, 480 & fn–481, 483, 488 fn, 504, 533 fn, 540 & fn, 542 fn, 543 & fn–545 & fn, 548 fn
Patiala, 391
Patna, 331, 335 fn, 355, 608 fn
Peace and Empire conference (London), 61
Peace and Empire Congress (Glasgow), 115
People's Army (Spain), 32
People's Political Council (China), 513 fn
People's Reform Party (Iraq), 249 fn
Persia—see Iran
Peshawar, 465
Philippine Islands, 53, 649
Pilibhit, 320
Pioneer, 571 fn, 645
Pirpur committee, 315 fn, 356–357
Polak, H.S., 619

Poland, 144, 155, 188 fn, 193, 254 & fn, 261, 262 fn
Political and Economic Planning (P.E.P.), 324
Pollitt, Harry, 298 & fn
Pondicherry, 45
Poona, 6, 481
Port Said, 9, 11–12, 15, 623
Port Tawfeik, 624
Prague, 111, 150–154, 157–158, 180, 182, 186, 190, 232, 525, 647, 656–657
Praja Socialist Party, 397 fn
Prasad, Jagdish, 394
Prasad, Rajendra, 4, 128, 288 fn, 292 fn, 305, 336, 338–340, 342, 348, 352, 470, 545 & fn, 556, 568, 576
Prince of Wales Museum (Bombay), 81 fn
Princes Protection Act, 413
Puerto Rico, 677 fn
Punch, 189
Punjab, 16, 46, 50, 221, 338 fn, 343, 391, 396, 402, 539
Punjab Provincial Congress, 537
Punjab states, 411, 425
Puri, 51
Pyarelal, 553, 557
Pyrenees, 88, 278

Quebec, 160 & fn
Quetta, 653

Radical Democratic Party (India), 352 fn
Radical Socialist Party (France), 151 fn
Rahman, Mohamed Azizur, 361 & fn
Rai, Gulshan, 409 & fn
Rajagopalachari, C., 323, 347
Rajkot, 288 fn, 297 & fn, 299, 316 & fn, 344, 406–407, 411–412, 415, 417, 423, 425, 439, 548, 553, 575, 579–580
———, Thakore Saheb of, 417, 548 fn
Rajkot Praja Parishad, 316 fn
Rajkot Reforms Committee, 288 fn
Rajputana, 411, 416, 424
Rajya Sabha, 655 fn, 672 fn
Ramsay, Sir Henry, 319
Ranpur state, 243 & fn, 410 & fn–411, 417, 426
Rao, K. Rama, 299 & *fn*, 567, 645, 659, 674
Rashtrapati (J. Nehru), 640
Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix (R.U.P.), 176
Ravi Varma, 199 & *fn*
Reichsbank, 285 fn
Reichstag, 181, 190, 290 & fn
Rhine river, 158
Ribbentrop, Joachim Von, 262 & *fn*
Riviera (France), 267
Rizvi, Manzar, 608 & fn
Robertson, Ford, 325 & fn
Rome, 23, 92, 264
Roosevelt, F.D., 163 & fn–164, 257 & fn, 265, 290 & fn, 677 fn
Round Table Conferences, 109, 122, 194, 335 fn, 394 fn
Roy, M.N., 570, 578 & fn–579
Roy, Raja Ram Mohan, 636 & *fn*
Royal Society (London), 375 fn
Ruhi Bey Abdul Hadi, 221
Rumania, 117, 155, 244–245, 254 & fn, 261
Runciman, Walter, 108 & *fn*, 153 & fn, 158, 182, 190, 227, 232, 260
Russia, Soviet (Soviet Union), 3, 7, 53–54, 92, 96, 104, 144 fn, 146–147, 155–157, 165, 167–171, 182–184, 187–190, 192 fn, 202–203, 205, 210, 216, 226–227, 230–231, 244, 252–256, 258, 260–263, 283–284, 289–291, 401 fn, 507–508, 649, 651–652, 670
Russian Revolution, 665
Rust, William, 252 & *fn*

Saadists (of Egypt), 12 fn
Saby Abu Allam Bey, 11
Saha, A.K., 401 & *fn*
Saha, Meghnad, 375 & *fn*
Saiduddin, 654 & fn–655
Saint Sophia Mosque (Istanbul), 286
Sama Samaj Party (Sri Lanka), 595
Sangram, 571 & fn
Sankrityayan, Rahul, 348 & *fn*
Santiniketan, 367 & fn, 480, 607, 625

Sarabhai, Bharati, 105
———, Mridula, 106
Sarila state, 436–437
———, raja of, 437
Satyamurti, S., 90 & fn, 131
Savarkar, V.D., 285,551
Saxena, Mohanlal, 654–655
Scandinavia, 3
Schacht, Hjalmar, 285 & *fn*–287
Scottish Peace Council, 115
Sea Customs Act (1878), 34, 46 & fn
Searchlight, 299 fn
Seditious Meetings Act (1914), 429, 434
Sen, Keshab Chandra, 634 & *fn*–637
Sen, Sudhir, 324 & *fn*
Serampore, 579 fn
Shaddick, Christine, 251 & fn
Shah, K.T., 373, 379, 393, 397, 400, 402, 621
Shah, Popatlal, 624 & fn
Shah, Wajid Ali, 333 fn
Shanghai, 111
Shegaon (Segaon), 2, 488, 490
Shia-Sunni conflict, 5, 338–341 & fn, 346, 374, 384, 459, 463, 561, 623, 625, 655 fn
Shukla, R.S., 432 & fn
Shukur, Moulvi Abdul, 336 & fn
Siddiqui, Moulvi Abdul Halim, 178 & *fn*
———, Abdul Rahman, 178 & fn
Simon, Sir John, 256 & *fn*, 259
Sinclair, Gregg M., 638 & *fn*
Sind, 402, 435, 438, 498
Singh, Ajit, 16 & *fn*
———, Anup, 672 & *fn*
———, Chandra, 318, 339, 465
———, Jaipal, 442 & *fn*
———, Mangal, 522 & fn
Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, 292 fn, 537 fn–538, 541–542, 544
Skoda works (Czechoslovakia), 261 & fn
Slovak Diet, 263 fn
Slovakia, 263 fn
Smuts, J.C., 118 & *fn*
Solomon, W.H. Gladstone, 81 & *fn*
Somerville College (Oxford), 623 fn
South Africa, 100 fn, 118 & fn, 618–620, 669–670
South America, 62
Soviet Union—see Russia, Soviet
Spain, 3, 7, 14, 16–18, 20–22, 25–26, 31–32, 35–36, 44–45, 63, 66, 68, 73, 77–78, 87–88, 91, 93, 96, 111, 130, 137–139, 142–143, 145, 148, 155, 160, 165–167, 169, 171, 181, 184, 188–189, 192, 196–197, 200 & fn–201, 203–204 & fn, 212–218, 225–231, 233–237, 242, 251–252 & fn, 258–262, 264, 267 & fn–271 & fn, 273–279, 290–291, 295, 298, 302, 313, 323 & fn, 324 fn, 327–328, 406, 424, 462, 492, 506, 508, 520, 575, 651 fn, 663–664
Spanish Morocco, 44–45, 68
Spanish Relief Committee, 213–214
Sphinx, 11
Sri Lanka, 219 fn, 306 & fn, 347 & fn, 348 fn, 352, 400, 445, 588, 593–595, 601, 618, 620, 626–628
Sriniketan, 324 & fn
Sri Prakasa, 572–573, 599, 601 fn
Stalin, Joseph, 258
Standard Oil Company, 222
Stewart, Findlater, 1 fn, 132 & fn
Steyrermuhl Paper Manufacturing and Printing Works (Vienna), 633
Strathaird, 550
Streit, Clarence, 670 & *fn*
Subbarayan, P., 573
Sudeten Germans, 108 fn, 117 fn, 151 fn, 153 fn, 232 fn
Sudetenland, 188 fn, 262, 634, 656
Suez, 9–11
Suez Canal, 256, 289
Sun Yat-sen, 632 & *fn*
———, Madam, 632
Swaraj Bhawan (Allahabad), 250
Swaraj Party, 491
Swarajya, 299 fn
Swarup, Damodar, 330
Sweden, 670
Switzerland, 16, 108, 258 fn, 461, 670
Syria, 635

Tagore, Rabindranath, 367 & fn, 629 & fn, 647
Talchar state, 426–427, 438 & fn–439
Tanda, 357

Tanganyika Opinion, 620
Tata Iron and Steel Company (Jamshedpur), 339 fn, 623
Tehri (Garhwal), 316
Thakkar, A.V., 438 & *fn*
Thompson, Edward, 184, 407, 626
Tibet, 242, 319
Tilbury, 628
Times, 189, 232 & fn, 260 & fn, 262
Tirunelveli (Tinnevelly), 323
Tokyo, 92
Toller, Ernst, 662 & fn, 664
Trade Union Congress (British), 650
Trade Union Congress (Indian), 122
Travancore, 141 & fn–142, 171, 195, 199 fn, 240, 391, 405–407, 411, 415, 417, 425, 427
Travancore state Congress, 405
Travancore State People's Defence Committee, 405 fn
Trinidad, 650 & fn
Tripathi, V.D., 571 & *fn*
Tripuri, 246 fn, 292 & fn, 296, 326, 518, 524–525, 527 fn–528, 531–532, 542 fn, 545 & fn–547, 549, 555 fn, 562 fn–563, 573 & fn, 575–576, 623
———, Congress session at, 296, 323, 324 fn, 326 fn, 360 fn, 486, 489 fn, 523 fn, 534 fn, 554, 555 fn, 567–569
Tripuri resolution of Congress, 531, 547, 579
Trivedi, H., 375 & *fn*
Tugwell, Rexford G., 677 & fn
Tunis, 289
Turkey, 3, 104, 107, 116, 193, 537

Ulster, 99 fn
Unao (Unnao), 571 & fn–572 & fn
Union Now (Clarence Streit), 670 fn
Union of South Africa—see South Africa
Union Theological Seminary, 677 fn
Unionist Party, 384 fn
United Nations, 324 fn, 394 fn
United Provinces, 49, 126–127, 178 fn, 303 fn, 318, 326, 329 fn, 332 & fn, 339, 343, 354–357, 358 fn, 396, 451, 456, 469 fn–472, 474, 500, 538, 597, 599, 603–604, 679
———, Political Conference, 354 fn
———, Provincial Congress Committee, 284 & fn–285, 289, 293, 299, 352, 451 & fn–452 & fn, 455 & fn, 460 fn, 465–467 & fn, 471–474, 530, 549, 558, 572–573 & fn, 582, 596–597, 601 & fn–602, 623
———, Tenancy Act (1939), 126
United States of America, 7–8, 23, 39, 53, 96, 155, 170, 181–182, 184, 230, 244, 252, 254–255, 265–266, 283, 290–291, 313, 614, 616 fn, 622, 638, 649, 651, 663, 669–670
Upadhyaya, S.D., 624
Urban, Ladislav, 304

Valencia, 111, 235
Vansittart, Sir Robert, 181 & *fn*, 189, 259
Varkey, C.J., 323 & fn–324
Vasantsena (Bharati Sarabhai), 106 & fn
Versailles treaty, 187, 230, 256
Victoria, 628
Vidya Mandir scheme of education, 315 fn
Vienna, 104, 187, 537, 633
Virawala, Durbar, 288 & fn
Visva Bharati, 324 fn
Visvesvaraya, M., 380, 382
Voice of Civilization, 656 fn

Wafd Party (Egypt), 10 & fn–15, 174–176, 205–206, 246 & fn, 248–249, 525
Wafdist Congress, 108 fn, 174–175, 178
Wahab, Abdul, 468
Warburg, F.J., 656 & fn
Wardha, 201, 311–312, 488, 489 fn–490, 497–498, 529, 535 fn, 642 & fn
Washington, 163 fn, 263 fn
Wazir, Gangaram, 409 & *fn*
West Indies, 651
———, Royal Commission on, 618 fn
Where Are We? (J. Nehru), 461–462
Whitehall (London), 185, 217
Wilson, Sir Horace, 189 & *fn*, 259
———, Woodrow, 290 fn, 668

Winant, John G., 173 & *fn*
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 223 fn–224
World Committee against War and Fascism, 558 fn
World Conference on Peace, Democracy and the Defence of the Rights of Man, 558 fn (*see also* International Peace Conference)
World Students Association, 609
Yakub, Sir Mohamad, 178
Yenang, 250 fn
You Have Lived Through All This (Edward Thompson), 627
Young Women's Christian Association, 624
Young Worker, 252 fn
Zaffar-ul-mulk, 336 & fn
Zaghlul Pasha, 10 fn
Zaheer, Ali, 359 fn–360, 363
Zanzibar, 10
Zetland, Marquis of, 1 fn, 16, 30, 90, 133, 202, 265, 667–668
Zurich, 186, 277

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FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling—these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of the East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of

regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles, both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the 'third world' as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.

New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

Four letters to Edward Thompson and a preface, chronologically belonging to earlier volumes but which were located after the publication of those volumes, have been included in the appendix.

CONTENTS

1. Visit to Sri Lanka

1	To B.K. Chengapa	11 June	1939	1
2	To Baron Jayatilaka	27 June	1939	2
3	To John Kotelawala	29 June	1939	4
4	The Necessity of a Settlement	10 July	1939	5
5	The Condition of Indians Abroad	12 July	1939	6
6	A Difficult and Delicate Problem	13 July	1939	7
7	A Question of Principle	15 July	1939	7
8	No Danger from Japan	16 July	1939	8
9	To C. Rajagopalachari	17 July	1939	9
10	Sister Countries	17 July	1939	10
11	To Baron Jayatilaka	18 July	1939	14
12	India's Desire for Friendship	18 July	1939	16
13	The Need for Cooperation	19 July	1939	17
14	The Importance of Training	19 July	1939	19
15	Engagement with the People	19 July	1939	20
16	The Need for Unity Among Indians Abroad	20 July	1939	20
17	The Differences Between India and Sri Lanka	21 July	1939	23
18	To Baron Jayatilaka	22 July	1939	26
19	Plantation Labour in Sri Lanka	22 July	1939	30
20	The Mass Movement in India	22 July	1939	33
21	The Common Heritage	23 July	1939	37
22	No Barriers Are Insurmountable	24 July	1939	39
23	The Result of The Visit	25 July	1939	40
24	To A.V. Pai	27 July	1939	44
25	The Condition of Indians in Sri Lanka	27 July	1939	45
26	To E.W. Kannangara	31 July	1939	49

27	To Baron Jayatilaka	7 August	1939	49
28	To V.K. Krishna Menon	7 August	1939	50
29	To Rajendra Prasad	9 August	1939	51
30	To C. Rajagopalachari	11 August	1939	65
31	To H.M. Desai	11 August	1939	65
32	To A.V. Pai	11 August	1939	67
33	To Jagdish Prasad	30 October	1939	68

2. Visit to China

1	To V.K. Krishna Menon	10 July	1939	73
2	To Mao Tse-tung	11 July	1939	75
3	To V.K. Krishna Menon	28 July	1939	76
4	The Possibility of Going to China	1 August	1939	77
5	To the Consul-General of China	5 August	1939	78
6	To Agatha Harrison	14 August	1939	80
7	I Go to China	18 August	1939	81
8	To Rabindranath Tagore	19 August	1939	83
9	Diary of a Journey	20–24 August	1939	84
10	Sino-Indian Friendship	August	1939	101
11	A Note on the Development of Contacts between China and India	29 August	1939	102
12	China in War Time	7 September	1939	108
13	India, China and Burma	7 September	1939	109
14	China in Travail	24 September	1939	112

3. India and the War I August—November 1939

1	India and the World Crisis	5 August	1939	117
2	On the Future Course of Action	7 September	1939	118

35	Lord Zetland's Apologia	20 October	1939	203
36	To V.K. Krishna Menon	21 October	1939	206
37	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	25 October	1939	207
38	Be Ready	26 October	1939	208
39	The Unchanging Nature of Imperialism	27 October	1939	210
40	Clearing the Decks	31 October	1939	212
41	The Congress Leaves Office	31 October	1939	215
42	To Lord Linlithgow	3 November	1939	217
43	The Standpoint of the Congress	4 November	1939	220
44	To V.K. Krishna Menon	6 November	1939	226
45	To Roger Baldwin	6 November	1939	226
46	To Ralph Harlow	6 November	1939	227
47	The Resignation of the Congress Ministries	7 November	1939	228
48	To V.K. Krishna Menon	8 November	1939	230
49	Freedom is in Peril	8 November	1939	232
50	Reaction to Zetland's Statement	8 November	1939	235
51	To Edward Thompson	11 November	1939	235
52	To V.K. Krishna Menon	13 November	1939	239
53	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	13 November	1939	240
54	To Stafford Cripps	14 November	1939	240
55	What is Stalin Aiming at?	14 November	1939	241
56	Which Way, What Means?	15 November	1939	243
57	Preparation for a Nonviolent Struggle	15 November	1939	247
58	To V. K. Krishna Menon	16 November	1939	248
59	Les Jeux Sont Faits	17 November	1939	249
60	The Next Step	17 November	1939	250
61	We Shall See It Through	21 November	1939	251
62	To V.K. Krishna Menon	25 November	1939	253
63	Presidential Address to the U.P. Political Conference	28 November	1939	254
64	The Myth of the I.C.S.	30 November	1939	258

4. India and the War II
December 1939—March 1940

1	To V.K. Krishna Menon	2 December	1939	263
2	Russia and Finland	3 December	1939	264
3	The Rotten World of Indian Bureaucracy	10 December	1939	267
4	The Prime Problem of Poverty	17 December	1939	268
5	To Stafford Cripps	25 December	1939	269
6	A New Year Message	31 December	1939	270
7	The Responsibility of the Congress	31 December	1939	270
8	To V.K. Krishna Menon	5 January	1940	271
9	India's Demand and England's Answer	6 January	1940	273
10	Prepare for All Eventualities	9 January	1940	283
11	The Pilgrimage to Swaraj	9 January	1940	284
12	The Forward March	9 January	1940	285
13	To J. Holmes Smith	10 January	1940	288
14	Britain Clouding the Real Issues	11 January	1940	290
15	A Fight to the Finish	12 January	1940	293
16	What of Russia Now?	16 January	1940	296
17	To Stafford Cripps	17 January	1940	300
18	A Confidential Note on Congress Policy	20 January	1940	303
19	The Evolving New Order	22 January	1940	308
20	To Mahatma Gandhi	24 January	1940	310
21	No Settlement Without Independence	24 January	1940	312
22	No Half-Way House	27 January	1940	314
23	Internal Disharmony—An Impediment	28 January	1940	315
24	The Present Position in India	January	1940	316
25	To Mahatma Gandhi	4 February	1940	319
26	Nothing Doing	10 February	1940	322
27	Strengthen the Congress	10 February	1940	324
28	No Going Back	11 February	1940	325
29	U.P.P.C.C. Resolution on War	15 February	1940	326

30	No Common Ground with Britain	16 February	1940	327
31	To D.N. Pritt	21 February	1940	329
32	To Abul Kalam Azad	22 February	1940	330
33	To Rajendra Prasad	22 February	1940	335
34	To Krishna Kripalani	26 February	1940	336
35	To V.K. Krishna Menon	27 February	1940	337
36	India in a Federal Union of the Nations	February	1940	339
37	To V.K. Krishna Menon	2 March	1940	343
38	On the Arrest of Congressmen	8 March	1940	346
39	The Power of Nonviolence	9 March	1940	347
40	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	10 March	1940	352

5. The Communal Issue

1	To Abul Kalam Azad	13 October	1939	355
2	To Rajendra Prasad	17 October	1939	356
3	To M.A. Jinnah	18 October	1939	359
4	The Congress and the Communal Issue	25 October	1939	361
5	Draft Agreement on Communal Issue	4 November	1939	364
6	Talks with Jinnah to Continue	4 November	1939	364
7	On the Talks with Jinnah	5 November	1939	365
8	On the Viceroy's Statement	6 November	1939	367
9	The Right and the Wrong of It	6 November	1939	368
10	The Caravan Moves On	7 November	1939	371
11	To Abdul Qaiyum Ansari	14 November	1939	374
12	To Rajendra Prasad	14 November	1939	376
13	To Asaf Ali	16 November	1939	378
14	To Zakir Husain	25 November	1939	378
15	To M.A. Jinnah	1 December	1939	380
16	To Syed Mahmud	2 December	1939	381
17	To Beltie Shah Gilani	8 December	1939	383
18	To Ahmed	8 December	1939	388

19	To Mahadeva Desai	9 December	1939	389
20	To M.A. Jinnah	9 December	1939	390
21	To Master Tara Singh	12 December	1939	391
22	To Syed Mahmud	12 December	1939	397
23	To M.A. Jinnah	14 December	1939	399
24	The 'Day of Deliverance'	14 December	1939	401
25	On Zetland and Jinnah	15 December	1939	406
26	To M.A. Jinnah	16 December	1939	410
27	To V.K. Krishna Menon	21 December	1939	412
28	To V.K. Krishna Menon	23 December	1939	415
29	To Mahatma Gandhi	25 December	1939	417
30	To Syed Abdul Latif	25 December	1939	417
31	To Ahmad Bashir	26 December	1939	420
32	The Congress and the Muslim League	30 December	1939	421
33	On Sikandar Hayat Khan's Proposal	31 December	1939	422
34	Masses the Real Arbiters	10 January	1940	423
35	On the Differences with Jinnah	10 January	1940	426
36	To Sam Ernest Devalal	19 January	1940	427
37	To S. Satyamurti	23 January	1940	428
38	To Sam Ernest Devalal	5 February	1940	428
39	Christian Missionaries in India	27 February	1940	430
40	To V.K. Krishna Menon	3 March	1940	433
41	To Syed Abdul Latif	6 March	1940	436

6. The Congress Organization

1	Hunger Strike of Political Prisoners	29 July	1939	441
2	Basic Education	30 July	1939	442
3	Complaints Against Congress Ministers	6 August	1939	443
4	Congress Will Stand by the Kisans	20 August	1939	444
5	To K.B. Menon	16 September	1939	445
6	Message to U.P. Congress	20 September	1939	446

7	To Syed Mahmud	24 September	1939	447
8	To Rafi Ahmed Kidwai	30 September	1939	449
9	To Dhirendranath Sen	30 September	1939	451
10	To V.K. Krishna Menon	13 October	1939	452
11	To Rafi Ahmed Kidwai	13 October	1939	454
12	On the Solidarity of the Kisans	15 October	1939	455
13	To Rajendra Prasad	17 October	1939	457
14	Keep Ready	18 October	1939	458
15	To Rafi Ahmed Kidwai	23 October	1939	459
16	To Bhulabhai Desai	26 October	1939	460

HUQ'S CHALLENGE AND NEHRU'S ANSWER (17–26)

17	To A.K. Fazlul Huq	30 October	1939	461
18	On Fazlul Huq's Challenge	30 October	1939	462
19	To A.K. Fazlul Huq	13 November	1939	464
20	To A.K. Fazlul Huq	18 November	1939	465
21	To A.K. Fazlul Huq	1 December	1939	466
22	Telegram to A.K. Fazlul Huq	13 December	1939	467
23	On Abdulla Haroon's Statement	14 December	1939	468
24	To A.K. Fazlul Huq	16 December	1939	468
25	On Correspondence with Fazlul Huq	17 December	1939	469
26	To A.K. Fazlul Huq	26 December	1939	470

27	All in a Maze	1 November	1939	473
28	The Congress in the U.P.	7 November	1939	474
29	To Mahatma Gandhi	8 November	1939	475
30	The Art of Adaptation	9 November	1939	475
31	To Rajendra Prasad	11 November	1939	476
32	In Case of Arrest	19 November	1939	480
33	On the U.P. Tenancy Bill	6 December	1939	480
34	Advice to Workers	23 December	1939	481
35	To Rajendra Prasad	3 January	1940	482
36	To Satindra Nath Sen	3 January	1940	484
37	To Rajendra Prasad	4 January	1940	484
38	To Lal Bahadur Shastri	8 January	1940	485
39	To V.K. Krishna Menon	14 January	1940	487
40	Tour of the United Provinces	16 January	1940	489

41	To Brij Kishore Srivastava	19 January	1940	491
42	To G.B. Pant	20 January	1940	492
43	To Secretary, Congress Committee, Hapur	23 January	1940	493
44	To Sri Prakasa	21 February	1940	493
45	To P. Subbarayan	24 February	1940	494
46	Maulana Azad	27 February	1940	495

7. The Indian States

1	Message to Hamdard	13 July	1939	499
2	Firing in Dhami State	31 July	1939	499
3	Arya Samaj Satyagraha in Hyderabad	9 August	1939	501
4	To V.K. Krishna Menon	11 August	1939	501
5	Message to the All Jammu & Kashmir National Conference	4 October	1939	502
6	Message to the Mysore State Congress	17 October	1939	503
7	Conditions in the Indian States	29 November	1939	504
8	To Ghulam Mohamed Bakshi	3 December	1939	505
9	To E.M.S. Nambudiripad	22 December	1939	506
10	Conditions in Dhami State	4 March	1940	507
11	Famine in Bikaner	4 March	1940	508
12	To A.K. Chanda	6 March	1940	509
13	Manipur	8 March	1940	510

8. National Planning Committee

1	To Rajendra Prasad	14 August	1939	515
2	To V.V. Giri	15 August	1939	517
3	To K.T. Shah	18 September	1939	518
4	Future of the National Planning Committee	18 September	1939	519
5	Economic Reconstruction	19 September	1939	520

6	The Importance of National Planning	20 September	1939	521
7	Circular to Members of the National Planning Committee	27 September	1939	522
8	Advice to Sub-Committees	9 November	1939	523
9	To M. Visvesvaraya	26 December	1939	524
10	To Mahatma Gandhi	3 January	1940	525
11	Planning of Distribution	3 January	1940	526
12	Directions to Sub-Committees	7 January	1940	528
13	The Status of Women	28 January	1940	529
14	Chairman's Memorandum	12 February	1940	531
15	To Rajendra Prasad	13 February	1940	534

9. Large-Scale and Cottage Industries

1	To Krishna Kripalani	29 September	1939	539
2	The Cooperative Movement	16 November	1939	543
3	The Value of the Charkha	29 November	1939	544
4	Khadi A War Necessity	19 January	1940	546
5	To Shankarlal Banker	24 February	1940	546
6	Cottage Industries	5 March	1940	547

10. India and China

	3 July	1937	551
	13 October	1939	552
	25 December	1939	553
	2 February	1940	554
	2 February	1940	555
	11 February	1940	557
	12 February	1940	558

8	To Madame Chiang Kai-shek	20 February	1940	559
9	Chinese Industrial Cooperatives	21 February	1940	561
10	To W.H. Donald	27 February	1940	562

11. General

1	Draft of the Jamshedpur Award	5 August	1939	567
2	Flying During the Monsoon	5 August	1939	582
3	To Michael Carritt	16 August	1939	585
4	To K. Rama Rao	17 August	1939	586
5	To the District Magistrate, Allahabad	19 August	1939	587
6	To Mahatma Gandhi	23 September	1939	588
7	Mahatma Gandhi	6 October	1939	589
8	To Frances Gunther	13 October	1939	590
9	To K. Rama Rao	27 October	1939	591
10	Diwali Day	30 October	1939	592
11	To E.P. Thompson	11 November	1939	592
12	To Krishna Hutheesing	13 November	1939	593
13	Preface to Hindustan Ki Samasyayen	17 November	1939	594
14	Lala Lajpat Rai	17 November	1939	595
15	To Abdul Huq	23 December	1939	596
16	To Madame Sun Yat-sen	25 December	1939	597
17	On Education	27 December	1939	598
18	To Edward Thompson	5 January	1940	602
19	To Roger Baldwin	5 January	1940	604
20	To K. Rama Rao	16 January	1940	604
21	To Nicholas Roerich	2 February	1940	605
22	Overcrowding in Trains	6 February	1940	606
23	Holiday in a Railway Train	15 February	1940	607
24	To V.K. Krishna Menon	21 February	1940	610
25	To Cedric Marshall-Fox	21 February	1940	612
26	To Syed Mahmud	21 February	1940	613
27	To Bharati Sarabhai	22 February	1940	614
28	To B.K. Mallik	23 February	1940	615
29	To Mrs. Pratab	23 February	1940	615

30	To the Editor, The Hindustan Times	4 March	1940	616
31	To D.G. Tendulkar	5 March	1940	617
32	To V.K. Krishna Menon	8 March	1940	618

12. Personal

1	To Indira Nehru	30 July	1939	623
2	To Indira Nehru	5 August	1939	624
3	To Indira Nehru	22/23 August	1939	626
4	To Indira Nehru	28 August	1939	626
5	To Indira Nehru	17 September	1939	627
6	To Indira Nehru	30 September	1939	629
7	To Indira Nehru	6 October	1939	631
8	To Indira Nehru	17/18 October	1939	633
9	To Indira Nehru	21 October	1939	634
10	To Indira Nehru	6 November	1939	635
11	To Indira Nehru	16 November	1939	636
12	To Indira Nehru	2 December	1939	640
13	To Indira Nehru	13 December	1939	642
14	To Indira Nehru	5 January	1940	644
15	To Indira Nehru	16 January	1940	646
16	To Indira Nehru	23 January	1940	649
17	To Indira Nehru	4 February	1940	650
18	To Indira Nehru	22 February	1940	652
19	To Indira Nehru	27 February	1940	656

Appendix

1	To Edward Thompson	31 October	1936	661
2	To Edward Thompson	22 April	1937	662
3	To Edward Thompson	15 August	1938	665
4	To Edward Thompson	24 October	1938	667
5	Preface to the Hindi Edition of the Glimpses of World History	21 November	1937	668

ILLUSTRATIONS

Jawaharlal Nehru in 1939 — *frontispiece*

Sri Lanka, July 1939
Addressing a meeting in Sri Lanka, July 1939 — *between pp.* 32—33

With C. Rajagopalachari, Madras, July 1939
Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, Madame Chiang and Jawaharlal Nehru — 80—81

China, 1939
Chungking, 1939 — 112—113

With Rabindranath Tagore, 1939
Wardha, October 1939 — 208—209

Snap Shot
With Edward Thompson, Wardha, October 1939 — 320—321

Facsimile of Rajendra Prasad's letter to Linlithgow, 3 November 1939 — 352—353

With Jinnah, November 1939
With Stafford Cripps, December 1939 — 432—433

1

VISIT TO SRI LANKA

1. To B.K. Chengapa[1]

Bombay
June 11, 1939

Dear Chengapa,
Your letter has reached me here.

I fully realise that affairs in Ceylon have deteriorated greatly. Very probably the Indian leadership in Ceylon has been faulty but that does not excuse the extraordinary behaviour of the Ceylon Government.[2] After that behaviour I have no mind to visit Ceylon. If the government there consider that Indians are not good enough for Ceylon, then I am afraid Ceylon is not good enough for me.

I am surprised at anyone taking exception to Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya's going to Ceylon. Things have come to a strange pass when a member of the Congress Working Committee is to be told that he is not welcome because he comes from a particular province in India. As a matter of fact he is not a Tamil but comes from Andhra. But that is a small matter. Surely it is for us to choose our representative and not for the Ceylon Government to do so. If the Ceylon Government wanted to send a representative of theirs to India, we would have no business to criticise him.

I do not think Dr. Pattabhi will have the time to go to Ceylon as he is a busy man with considerable responsibilities. Babu Rajendra Prasad certainly cannot go, nor can I.

I can find no time to go and in any event I am in no mood to go to Ceylon under present conditions. Even if it was otherwise, your letter would make me hesitate to go. I was astounded to read that in the event of my going to Ceylon, the government there require me not to mix with the local Sama Samajists.[3] During a fairly long public career no government in any part of the world or group or individual has had the presumption to tell me whom I should meet and whom I should avoid. That is for me to decide and no one else has the slightest business to interfere with me.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. The Sri Lanka Government had given notice to a number of Indians, following a resolution passed by the State Council asking for the employment of only Ceylonese wherever possible. See also *post*, item 29.
3. Lanka Sama Samaja Party, a nationalist left-wing group founded in December 1935. In later years it officially accepted Trotskyism.

I do not know much about the activities of the Lanka Samaja group in Ceylon. It is quite possible that some of their activities are misconceived and misdirected. It is also possible that there are some undesirable members in the group. But I have met some of their members who have attended our Congress session in India and I found them to be intelligent and enthusiastic. I met one or two of them in England last summer and I found that they were doing good work there. They created a good impression on many people in England. To dub them as communists and then hang them is a policy which I do not adopt. I do not agree with communists often but I have many good friends amongst them and in regard to final objectives, we have much in common.

I fear, therefore, that I cannot go to Ceylon.[4]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. However, Jawaharlal visited Sri Lanka from 16 to 24 July 1939.

2. To Baron Jayatilaka[1]

Bombay
June 27, 1939

Dear Sir Baron Jayatilaka,[2]

As the Congress President has already informed you by cable, the All India Congress Committee has directed me to proceed to Ceylon and to try to help in finding a just and honourable settlement of the problems affecting Indians there.[3] I realise the difficulties of the task but I have been emboldened to accept it as I look forward to the friendly cooperation of both the Ceylon Government and the Indian community in Ceylon, both of whom must be desirous of finding an honourable solution. It has been a matter of grief to me and to my colleagues

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1868–1944); advocate; president, Young Men's Buddhist Association, Colombo, from 1898; member, Legislative Council, 1924-31, and leader of the State Council, and Chairman of the Board of Ministers and Home Minister, 1931–42; editor of *Sinhalese Etymological Dictionary*.
3. On 24 June 1939, the A.I.C.C. expressed its anxiety over the condition of Indian employees in Sri Lanka and directed Jawaharlal to visit the island.

of the Congress here that any conflict should arise between the people of Ceylon and Indian residents there. Under the changing conditions of today it is inevitable that adjustments are made from time to time and in this process some difficulties often arise. But, given goodwill, there is no reason why such adjustments should not be agreed to and willingly accepted by the parties concerned.

I retain the liveliest memories of my last visit to Ceylon, eight years ago, and of the kindliness and hospitality which met me everywhere.[4] I remember particularly with pleasure my meeting you then and I am looking forward eagerly to a fresh meeting.

I am afraid my visit to Ceylon will be a brief one, extending to about seven or eight days. I want to utilise this to the best advantage. It is a little difficult for me to fix up my programme from here. I should like, however, to have the earliest opportunity to meet you as well as the other ministers concerned. I expect to reach Colombo by air on the afternoon of the 16th July. If it is convenient to you, I should like to meet you on the 17th morning or any other time that suits you.

I understand that some kind of a reception committee is being formed to make arrangements for my stay and programme. I am suggesting to this committee to put itself in touch with you so that it may arrange no programme which may come in the way of any suggestions that you might have to make.

I shall be grateful to you if you could kindly have sent to me to my Allahabad address official papers and information relating to the Indian question in Ceylon.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 517–529.

3. To John Kotelawala[1]

Bombay
June 29, 1939

Dear Major Kotelawala,[2]
Thank you for your letter of the 26th June which I have just received. I am replying to it in some haste as I am returning to Allahabad this evening.

It is very good of you to invite me to be your guest during my stay in Ceylon. I would gladly have accepted this invitation, but two or three days ago I agreed to another arrangement. I was receiving a number of invitations from both Indian and Sinhalese friends and it was difficult for me to decide. I understood that a small reception committee was being formed to make arrangements for me and I decided to leave it to them.

As a matter of fact it does not matter much where I stay provided I have full opportunities for discussing the problems we have to face with those whose immediate concern they are. Therefore in any event I hope I shall have the opportunity of meeting you at leisure so that you can explain the situation from the Ceylon Government's point of view to me. I am anxious to understand this. I would like to meet you very soon after my arrival. I am looking forward to our meeting and I feel sure that, given a friendly approach from both sides, there is no reason why an honourable settlement should not be arrived at. For my part, there will be every attempt to understand and meet the Ceylon Government's point of view. I have no doubt that you will also appreciate the point of view that I shall place before you on behalf of the Indian National Congress.

I expect to reach Colombo on the afternoon of July 16th by air. My sister, Mrs. Krishna Hutheesing, has also decided to pay a brief visit to Ceylon about this time. She will go by sea reaching Colombo on the 16th July morning.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 6/1939, N.M.M.L.
2. Sir John Kotelawala (b. 1897); Minister of Agriculture and Lands, 1933, of Communications and Works, 1935, and Transport and Works, 1947–53; Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, 1953–56.

4. The Necessity of a Settlement[1]

For some time past various friends in Ceylon have been suggesting to me to visit Ceylon and help in so far as I can in finding a solution for the present Indian problem there. Ceylon has always attracted me and I would have gladly availed myself of this opportunity to visit that beautiful country. But I was unable to entertain any such proposition for various reasons, chief among them being my preoccupation with very important matters in India.

I could not easily leave India even for a few days at this critical stage. Apart from our national problems, which demand constant attention, the international situation has been such that it requires the utmost vigilance on our part. An outbreak of war, or any big crisis in Europe, would have immediate repercussions in India, and it would be inevitably necessary for us in India to take immediate steps and give effect to our policy. Because of this it was exceedingly difficult for me to think of leaving India at this stage.

But when this matter came up before the Congress Working Committee, Mahatma Gandhi asked me to visit Ceylon and members of the Working Committee pressed me to do so. They realised the importance and urgency of the problem in Ceylon and they desired earnestly that every attempt should be made to find an amicable solution of it. Under the circumstances I could not say 'no' to Mahatma Gandhi and the Working Committee; and later when the A.I.C.C. passed their resolution directing me to visit Ceylon, it was a command which I could not disobey. I have undertaken this task in no light-hearted spirit because I realise the difficulties of it. But I am heartened by the goodwill that my mission has already received from Sinhalese and Indians alike.

It would be a calamity at any time if we fail to find that amicable solution. More specially at this time of world crisis, it is urgently necessary that all of us should compose our internal troubles and prepare ourselves for the trials to come.

I am deeply grateful for the many invitations that I have received from a wide circle of friends in Ceylon. I have been asked to address various meetings and attend various functions. I am eager to renew my contacts with Ceylon and her hospitable people, and I should like to attend these functions. But I have only very few days to spare and

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 10 July 1939. *National Herald*, 12 July 1939.

I cannot allow the business, for which I am going, to suffer by spending my time over other functions. I hope, therefore, that those friends who have invited me will appreciate my position and excuse me. If I have any opportunity later to attend any function, I shall gladly avail myself of it.

5. The Condition of Indians Abroad[1]

I am going to Ceylon at a time when great problems face the Congress organisation and the international situation continues to hover over the brink of war. I feel I must carry out the directions of the A.I.C.C. My being sent to Ceylon is proof of the importance attached by the Congress to the status and conditions of Indians abroad. This question refers not only to Ceylon but to South and East Africa and elsewhere and it is of paramount importance as the honour of India is involved in it.

Every Indian abroad carries a bit of India with him and he has a right to look to his motherland for help and protection in case of need. Today we may not be in a position to give that help fully or to protect him as we should. But we recognise our obligation and will give full effect in times to come. Meanwhile, I earnestly hope that my visit to Ceylon will bear fruit and will result in an amicable settlement of the problems.

1 Farewell message, Allahabad, 12 July 1939. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13 July 1939.

6. A Difficult and Delicate Problem[1]

I am going to Ceylon in the hope that a satisfactory settlement will be arrived at. More than this I cannot say at this moment, as the problem is a very difficult and delicate one.

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 13 July 1939. From *The Hindustan Times*, 15 July 1939.

7. A Question of Principle[1]

As I draw nearer to Ceylon, my mind is filled with the problem that I shall have to face there. Compared to the big problems of the world and even to many of our internal problems, this problem is a relatively small one, and yet it raises an important question of principle. And, unfortunately, it has got a background now of prejudices and unreasonable talk on all sides. Even simple problems which develop this background become a little difficult of solution as you know in India today. Yet I cannot believe that this problem cannot be solved with goodwill and with advantage to all parties concerned.

No Indian can desire to exploit Ceylon or do injury to her people. No Ceylonese can wish ill to Indians or to India. It is true that, in the modern world, we have got into numerous tangles and knots everywhere and it is not always enough to have goodwill in order to unravel the knots. The problem of Ceylon is, in effect, a small aspect of the big world problem, of the economic system not functioning properly and breaking down under the strains put on it by external circumstances.

Ultimately, the solution of the problem of Ceylon will largely be a world problem and no nation can finally solve it by itself; but each nation can, by taking proper measures, ease the situation for itself. Better still, two or three nations can cooperate in that task. The obvious course for India and Ceylon is to face the problem jointly and try to solve it, or at any rate ease it as far as they can for the present. One thing that heartens me is the kindness and goodwill that are apparent

1. Interview to the press, Madras, 15 July 1939. *The Hindu*, 15 July 1939.

in Ceylon on the occasion of my visit there and these are surely not personal tokens to me but mean goodwill to India. With that goodwill, which I am certain India feels for Ceylon, I hope a way will be found, honourable and profitable to all parties concerned. The Tata Company were good enough to place a special plane at my disposal for my visit to Ceylon. I had an excellent flight from Poona to Hyderabad, the usual journey of three and a quarter hours taking only two hours with the help of a following wind. I am glad I had a comfortable flight, although there was a strong gale which caused numerous bumps. My pilot was an expert at his job.

8. No Danger from Japan[1]

I think there is at present no need to think of Japan as a menace to India or Ceylon. This can only happen if there is a complete fascist victory in the world or if China is completely subjugated by Japan and there is no danger to Japan from the United States or Soviet Russia. Even so, before India or Ceylon is threatened, Japan is likely to think of war with nearer countries like Indo-China, the Dutch East Indies, Australia and the Philippines. By the time these major changes come about, India is not likely to be such an easy morsel to be picked up by any aggressor nation.

Japan today is dominated by militarism which aims at conquest and dominion. However, despite her conquests, intelligent observers think it will not be possible for her to conquer or dominate China.

1. Interview to the press, Colombo, 16 July 1939. From *The Hindu*, 17 July 1939.

9. To C. Rajagopalachari[1]

Colombo
July 17, 1939

My dear Rajagopalachari,
I had a long talk with the Board of Ministers today. They were courteous and cordial and all that but there was no change to be had out of them. They tried to make out that their policy was in no way anti-Indian but was certainly intended to help the Ceylonese. As a matter of fact they realised that they had acted rather foolishly at any rate in regard to these thousand or so of men they are dismissing at the end of this month. Probably they will tone their action down somewhat and out of the thousand, two hundred or more might get some kind of exemption for various reasons. They might also be less strict in regard to the others whom they have offered repatriation on threat of their being dismissed without bonus or gratuity if they did not agree to what is termed 'voluntary repatriation'. All this however will just ease the situation somewhat for the moment and will not make any essential difference. The ministers will then wait to see what is done in India. If any retaliatory measure is adopted in India, they might retaliate themselves.

They have created such a position for themselves that it is very difficult for them to withdraw from it, not that they desire to withdraw from it. They are afraid now of an agitation among their own people against them if they withdraw their last orders. Thus there is no chance of the Ceylon ministers agreeing to any important change suggested by us. I shall meet them again but I expect little good. There is no particular point in my staying on here under these circumstances. My present intention is to spend Friday and Saturday in Kandy and in some estate areas. Back in Colombo on Sunday and leave Colombo on Monday the 24th for Madras, reaching there about midday or in the early afternoon. If so, I shall spend the night in Madras and leave on the 25th morning for Poona. I shall confirm this programme by telegram.

What we can do in this Ceylon matter afterwards is not easy to decide. One thing is quite clear in my mind. Every step should be taken to stop all further emigration to the estates. This will not affect the Ceylon Government at all. It will not produce much result immediately even on the planters for they have made provision for the

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.

next two or three years by getting in more labour than they really required. Nevertheless the prospect rather frightens the planters and would almost immediately result in an increase of bargaining power of their estate labourers. It would produce a good psychological effect on all concerned though the immediate result might not be obvious. Such a step would not be in the nature of retaliation as the Ceylon Government itself says that they would welcome it, though I doubt very much if they really mean this.

The only really effective step which would affect the Ceylon Government would be a duty on coconuts. To raise this duty would be to start an economic war and the Indians in Ceylon will then suffer a great deal in addition of course to the Ceylonese. Most Indians here are for the present at least not keen on any such step being taken. They are all eager that fresh emigration should be stopped.

You told me that the quarantine depot in Madras was run by the Madras Government officials. I am told that this is not so and that the Ceylon Government people run it and harass the emigrants greatly. If emigration is to be stopped, as I think it should be, this depot will of course go. In any event the depot should be changed radically.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. Sister Countries[1]

I remember my visit to Ceylon eight years ago and vivid pictures and images grip my mind. When I think of that visit, it sometimes seems to me as if it was but yesterday. But sometimes, again, it seems to me as if a whole age must have passed since; so many things have happened during the interval. My present visit is not a particularly pleasurable one and the mission I have undertaken has placed a huge burden on my shoulders. Whatever be my capacity to shoulder it, I cannot forget that it is there.

In the eight years that have passed since I visited Ceylon, we have witnessed many events in our lives. The last eight years have been of great importance. Extraordinary events have occurred. Some of you

1. Speech at Colombo, 17 July 1939. From *The Hindu*, 18 July 1939.

must have noticed the rapidity and the completeness with which great changes took place during this period and must have felt broken-hearted at the way in which evil advanced and good fell. You saw the clash of forces, evil, good and indeterminate. There was more shock and suffering than cause for exultation in the changes, which were some of the most tremendous that the world had ever seen. It seems as if it is inevitable that a big tragedy should overwhelm us and we should be unable to do anything to avert it. It is rather strange that people do not realise this and go on with their petty conflicts and petty efforts to solve mighty problems through trivial means, thereby not solving them but deluding themselves into the belief that they are solving while actually complicating the problems.

We should first understand our problem and frame the question before trying to solve the one or answer the other. There is nothing peculiar to Ceylon or India in what is happening today. It is obvious that there is something common behind all the events which work to shake the world, but there is a tremendous lack of appreciation of this. I have a keen sense of the past and can, while thinking or writing about it, live in it; but at the same time I have an equally keen sense of the present. As I look into the past of Ceylon, the whole vista of its past history rises before my eyes, with the close contacts between India and the island in the ages past. I sometimes seek to tear the veil of the future and look beyond not merely with the interest of a looker-on but with the desire to take part in the shaping of the future. It is, no doubt, a tremendous task and it may be presumptuous for an individual to talk in that strain. Unless we all combine to do this, the world will disintegrate.

I feel as if I am in India while in Ceylon, and even if there had not been such a warm welcome as has been accorded to me, I should still have felt that I am still in that psychological atmosphere which I call India. Politically seas might divide us but that enormous psychological, mental and cultural make-up, which constitutes the cultural background of the country, I find here also, notwithstanding minor differences. I cannot conceive of Ceylon and India ever being separated in so far as that atmosphere is concerned. We are apt to be oppressed by a sense of the present in India; but, historically speaking, the present is but a short period.

Many things have happened in the centuries past which have ennobled us and many other things have happened which have degraded us. There are many things achieved by India and her men which the world cannot forget nor feel too grateful for. Can any son or daughter of India or Ceylon forget that magnificent gift that India gave to

Ceylon two thousand five hundred years back? Even if there is no other link, this one link is strong enough and one which can never be broken. Our immediate past might have been one of degradation, suffering and misery. The future will be shaped not by individuals but by forces, and the individual, if he is careful and wise, might divert or utilise but not suppress the forces.

What is wrong with the world today, what are the forces that impel it, that it should be always getting into trouble and misbehaving and attempting to go back into barbarism? India is bound to play a great part in the future of the world, a really dominant and effective part. No country which today is not self-sufficient and is unable to rely on its own resources can expect to play such an important part in world affairs. India, China and a few other countries alone have the potentiality and the capacity to play that great part and I have not a shadow of doubt that India will play it. Unless we look at the whole problem in one perspective, we may not understand it in its parts. We should not, in the spirit of narrow-minded politicians, act in terms of narrow issues. We should look far ahead so that if the flood comes, we should be able to rise above it.

As an Indian, I find it difficult to think of Ceylon as a foreign country. Whatever happens to the two, we cannot be anything but sister countries. India may have been a subject of foreign exploitation but we have tried to assert ourselves against it and not without success. We have also confidence in our ability to meet the future with courage. A country, in its new-found strength, might misbehave towards others. There were times when India, on account of its power, had extensive dominions and a colonial empire. From this point of view, it was once an aggressive nation, misbehaving towards other countries. But those who have followed the course of the Indian struggle for freedom will have noticed that efforts in this behalf had been based on a different conception of our rights.

I am proud to be a nationalist and while saying this I know that nationalism is dying. A man should be something of an internationalist to solve the world's problems. I am a nationalist in the sense that I will not tolerate any foreign interference or dominion over India. But I realise also that nationalism, if carried to an extreme, becomes dangerous. Nationalism so long as it pushes man on to freedom is good; but once it tends to push man over and makes him dominate others it is an evil. The whole of the Indian national movement is based on this international concept.

In the modern world, I do not think it would be possible for a large number of independent countries to exist without coming into conflict

with each other. It is therefore for us to think in terms of a world order to which individual countries, without giving up their independence, would still surrender something for the common good. No grouping such as an empire can approach such a world order. In the National Planning Committee we do our work thinking in terms of carrying on the political, economic, cultural and other activities by coordinating them. We have deliberately laid down for ourselves the rule that our objective should not take us into conflict with other countries in the economic or political sphere.

India wants to do away with the imperialist notion of capturing and exploiting another country. If Indians have any interests abroad it should be based on the goodwill and cooperation of the people of that country. I am proud of being an Indian and will not tolerate a single hair of an Indian to be touched by any other. I do not want Indians to go to a place where they are not wanted. But where they can go, they should go with the goodwill of the whole people. Indians, wherever they are, should not suffer indignities from anyone. Things, as they are, are in a bad way in the world, especially as regards Indians. This angers me and irritates me. I will sooner see Indians crushed to atoms rather than suffer degradation and dishonour.

The contacts of Ceylon and India are very close and have existed over thousands of years. Even if anyone tries by thoughtlessness to disturb this condition, the weight of thouands of years will overwhelm them in times to come. We should take particular care to avoid the growth of suspicions which might create a barrier between us. In times to come, I hope friendliness will mark our relationship and we may march hand in hand towards a common goal.

The contacts between India and Ceylon are different from the contacts of Ceylon, India and South Africa and it is not right that either should go counter to those traditions and contacts of ages. We should not do anything to make the world problems more complicated than they are. Anything which might be misunderstood by the other side and become a barrier to mutual happiness should be put aside. There is a new consciousness impelling the masses of India. India does not want to suppress or restrict this impulse, even if sometimes it might create difficulties. We want India to keep her eyes and ears open. We cannot escape the developments that are bound to occur in regard to world affairs; if anyone really wishes to avoid trouble, as the saying goes, he has chosen a very wrong hour to be born. I have no doubt that India will triumph in the end and ultimately get her national independence. Are we going to waste our energies in small affairs and petty conflicts which distract our attention or prepare ourselves to take part in great events to come?

I thank Sir Wilfred de Soyza[2] and others who have extended such a warm welcome to me. Personally I find it a little difficult to distinguish a Ceylonese from an Indian. I hope that my coming to the island will bear some good result. It is my earnest wish that it should.

2. (1884-1969); Chairman, Agricultural and Industrial Credit Corporation of Sri Lanka, 1943-49; President, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

11. To Baron Jayatilaka[1]

Colombo
July 18, 1939

My dear Sir Baron,

You and your colleagues were good enough to express to me the point of view of the Ceylon Government in regard to matters pertaining to Indians in Ceylon. I am grateful for that. Although we discussed these problems for three hours, our talks were necessarily rather superficial. I was more anxious to understand the background of the problem than to discuss each individual aspect of it.

There was another reason why I found it a little difficult to discuss in any detail the various matters which have affected Indians here. My mind was largely taken up by the immediate issue of notice and dismissal of one thousand daily-wage-earners in government service. For me, as for others in India, this matter has become an acid test and it was with deep regret that I found from the Board of Ministers that they were unable to make any change in their policy in this regard.

If that is so, I do not know that it will serve any useful purpose to discuss any other matters in any detail, although those other matters are of much greater permanent importance. I am deeply interested in the question of the franchise[2] as well as in a consideration of the whole problem of Indo-Ceylonese relations. I think that this question should be tackled in its entirety and not piecemeal by representatives of India and Ceylon. But under present circumstances such an approach seems difficult.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *post*, item 29.

I have already ventured to point out to you the implications of the very unusual step that the Ceylon Government is taking in regard to these daily-paid employees. I am not aware of any such instance anywhere except in fascist countries. Perhaps you know that the International Labour Office at Geneva has laid down definite rules governing the employment of labour. I am sure that the present action of the Ceylon Government will very greatly surprise the I.L.O. in Geneva as it would go counter to all accepted canons. If that is so in the case of private employers, much more is it so in the case of the government as an employer.

I have had many contacts with labour in India and such labour in factories is usually paid a daily wage. In spite of this daily wage it is exceedingly difficult for employers to dismiss workers without very special cause shown. It is an ordinary occurrence for a big strike to be precipitated if a worker has been unjustly dismissed.

It surprised me that the Government of Ceylon should have taken a step of this kind in a hurry and without reference to Indian opinion in India or in Ceylon. As you must know, we learnt of it with a shock of surprise and perturbation. We hoped that perhaps this very unusual and drastic step for a government to take would be varied or at least suspended for full consideration of the problem.

There is another matter to which I should like to draw your special attention. I happened to be informed yesterday for the first time of certain proposals in regard to emigration.[3] I presume that the copy given to me of these proposals is a correct one. I read these proposals with astonishment. In effect they are meant for Indians. If these proposals represent the mind of the ministers, I have to presume that the Board of Ministers desires to harass and humiliate the Indians in Ceylon and to make it impossible for a decent Indian to come here. It seems to me that other questions become trivial if this is the basic approach to the problem.

You are aware no doubt of the agitation that is going on, and which seems to have the support of important and responsible persons, for the boycott of Indian goods. I am told that picketting has taken place before Indian shops and I have myself read in the newspapers very extraordinary reports of speeches and letters on this subject. No one can take the responsibility for individual misbehaviour, even though this may be vulgar in the extreme. But what seems to be going on in Ceylon is something much more than individual misbehaviour.

3. See *post*, item 29.

I hesitate to take up more time of the Board of Ministers unless I can see any way out of the impasse. And yet since I have come here I would like to place before you the viewpoint that I represent and to beg of you to reconsider some of your decisions. I shall be going back soon. I intend going to Kandy and the neighbourhood on Friday and Saturday next. On Sunday I shall be in Colombo and on Monday morning I intend leaving by air for Madras. I am thus here in Colombo till day after tomorrow, the 20th. If it is convenient to you and the other ministers for me to meet you on Wednesday or Thursday, I shall be grateful.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. India's Desire for Friendship[1]

I do not know what the future will bring; but my own advice to the people of India is that if the people of Ceylon really do wrong, let us reason with them.

We want to be friends. We are big and powerful enough not to be frightened by any action of Ceylon, nor will our prestige suffer. But in our present state of development, we are very sensitive about the honour of our people outside India, and of little things which we might ignore if they happened in India. When I speak for the people of India and the Indian National Congress, there is nothing humble about me. I speak with pride. Let me say that even if one side errs, the other should not try to arouse passion. Let us try to grow on the best lines through peace and even in conflict.

It is the approach made that counts and not so much the outcome. One country should not ignore the other in taking action. Compared to the problems facing India, the problem of Indo-Ceylonese relations might be minor and India might even forget it. But Ceylon cannot forget that India and Ceylon are close and that India, by her side, is like a giant. It is easy enough to create psychological barriers and ill will but not so easy to remove them or control them. I cannot conceive of any hostile action on the part of India towards a country like Ceylon

1. Speech at Colombo, 18 July 1939. From *The Hindu*, 19 July 1939.

if it does not threaten her freedom, but I have been pained that there should be any feeling of ill will between the two peoples. India opposes imperialism, whether of others on her or of hers over others.

It is wrong to think of the great movement in India in terms of her great leaders and individuals. It is essentially a mass movement in which individuals are but symbols or landmarks indicating peace and progress.

India is today on the threshold of a new age. Considering the past, the present and the future, I have no doubt that India, with her superior natural resources and manpower, has a great future, not great in the sense of superior position in relation to other countries or domination over others, but better and nobler in the sense of friendliness and co-operation with others with a message for other peoples of the world.

Great events are shaking the world at the present age and a crisis or struggle in one part of the world affects various countries. Grave economic problems are raised. There is tremendous abundance on the one hand and tremendous poverty on the other. For better or for worse the world must change. The nineteenth-century democracy is dying. We have to evolve a new democracy in a spirit of not merely nationalism but internationalism. Ceylon is a small country and India a big one. If we think in terms of conflict, in terms of aggressive nationalism, it would be unhappy. India's nationalism is not based on such an idea. On the other hand, if we think in terms of friendship, being big or small does not matter. It is the best ideal for all nations, small and big, in all spheres, cultural, economic and political. It is not a distant vision that I am describing. I am sure that in India we are nearing it rapidly. It is the only ideal to help and solve our problems. In the case of India and Ceylon, so closely allied, we should not think in terms of conflict but friendship and cooperation. We should face the problems frankly and try to understand each other.

13. The Need for Cooperation[1]

The manner of dismissal of eight hundred men by the Ceylon Government raises moral issues, but I fear that the Ceylon Government is like

1. Speech at a Sama Samaja Party gathering, Colombo, 19 July 1939. From *The Hindu*, 20 July 1939.

an employer wrongfully dismissing men and trying to find out the reasons thereafter. The dismissal might have an economic background but has no economic justification. I cannot remember any instance, barring fascist ones, of a government behaving in this manner to employees. The International Labour Conference has gone deeply into the question of foreign nationals working in a country and has decided that an immigrant worker with more than five years' service cannot and should not be pushed out thus. The Ceylon Government's action is one that should hurt the dignity of any government, for it is ridiculous and undignified.

Socialism in India has gone down organisationally during the last two years. Socialist sentiment might be fairly widespread but organisationally socialism is weaker today than before. The Indian nationalist movement has spread and absorbed every advanced element in the country. It has big anti-imperialist fights to its credit and it is difficult for a rival anti-imperialist movement to be built up. It is not only difficult but highly dangerous, since it undermines organisation and strength, built up through decades.

The Congress could not be made exclusively a peasant organisation. Since the formation of socialist groups, they made it appear that they were out to capture the Congress—a foolish thing to feel or say. This led immediately to the rallying of non-socialist elements. To say that the present leadership of the Congress is reactionary or unfit for the future struggle is wrong diagnosis. But having taken this attitude, new groups have not the strength to follow it through. They function in a way that irritates the middle elements.

The harmony that existed between the socialist and other groups in the Congress and their united work during the elections resulted in the subsequent course of events leading up to office acceptance by Congressmen. Acceptance of office led immediately to a tremendous mass awakening. But new problems arose for Congressmen and engrossed our attention. It might be that in some cases the ministries were slow in making up their minds, but various incidents prevented the Congress ministries from applying their minds to the many other important matters.

Socialists in India are in active conflict among themselves and are unable to cooperate. Recently, a Left Consolidation Committee[2] was formed and also a Forward Bloc.[3] So far God alone knows what this Bloc stands for and what its principles are, except that they want generally to ginger up the Congress. Many people in the Forward Bloc are there not on political grounds—many of them are certainly not leftists

2 & 3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 352 and 574 respectively.

—they are there on personal grounds. A Consolidation Committee was formed and within a few days broke up. There was nothing in common among the component groups. It was purely an opportunist bloc. Its object was merely to push out certain people by exploiting leftist slogans. It is dangerous, indeed, to exploit them for such ends. Fascism came in on leftist slogans.

If the Congress is to be recognised as a fighting, anti-imperialist organisation, nothing should be done to weaken its power to fight. At this juncture it is undesirable and dangerous to do this. In case of a conflict against the left—the left in India is the Congress with reference to other parties—it is quite possible that reactionary elements will assume control and lead to the establishment of fascism, which we do not want.

The British Empire is not strong enough to retain India against her will. India today is held in subjection because of England's strength. If Indian independence is achieved, British imperialism will cease and other imperialisms will not survive long.

I advise you not to overshoot your mark in your enthusiasm. Ceylon is weak and not likely to develop enough strength to oust the British Empire, but India might do it. Do not blindly stick to slogans. The question is not one of slogans but of an appeal to minds. You should get ready organisationally if possible, and mentally certainly, for the coming big struggle, so that when it does come, you might not be unprepared.

14. The Importance of Training[1]

The company of young men and women is always exhilarating. Training is necessary for all walks of life but for politicians no training is considered necessary. I hope education in Ceylon in this respect is better than in India. Nothing can be more ridiculous than the system that has obtained in India for generations.

A student might take part in politics in abnormal times, but the first job of a student is to train himself for the future. It is frightfully difficult to know the reactions of human beings in given circumstances, yet politicians do not get special training. The tendency of democracy is often to throw up the wrong types of human beings. The old type

1. Address to students, Colombo, 19 July 1939. From *The Hindu*, 20 July 1939.

of democracy is rather badly off and the present times are transitional. Economics dominate politics more and more. India may be economically self-sufficient but not Ceylon. Indeed no country can ignore another nowadays. There is superabundance in the world, if only it can be properly distributed.

It is the privilege of most of our politicians to seek to solve problems without understanding them. They apply their patent remedies without diagnosis. What matters is the desire and the will to understand and remedy. I urge you to train yourselves and work with mutual cooperation.

15. Engagement with the People[1]

I must apologise to you for being so late. I could not avoid it. An important, unexpected, unavoidable engagement was forced on me. A thousand people, unknown, uninvited, not caring for the sun or rain, Indians, Sinhalese, Muslims! Why not? My engagement was with that mass of people. I had to keep my engagement with them, who came in that fashion to see me. A mass of people! I was powerless. It was not possible for me not to respect them. I don't know what I have done for them, what I can do for them, what I am going to do. It is all overwhelming.

1. Remarks on arriving at a meeting of the Nattukottai Chettiar's Association, Colombo, 19 July 1939. *The Hindu*, 21 July 1939.

16. The Need for Unity Among Indians Abroad[1]

I do not know and I cannot say what the result of my visit is going to be in regard to the particular matter which brought me here. I am

1. Address to the Indian Mercantile Chamber, Colombo, 20 July 1939. From *The Hindu*, 21 July 1939.

still having talks with the ministers and I hope these talks will yield results. More I cannot say. Whatever happens, I am glad I came here because my coming will help in all probability, irrespective of immediate issues, in promoting a better atmosphere and checking those barriers of suspicion and irritation that are being raised between the Indians and the Ceylonese. Ultimately, however, it is you who will have to create and sustain the goodwill, though you might utilise me for creating such atmosphere as I might be able to. I have always felt it a matter of pride that I should speak in Hindustani when there is a gathering of my countrymen. During our discussions, while I was thinking in terms of major issues, I fear the ministers of the Ceylon Government had only small things in mind. It is not right to talk in terms of a fight. A spirit of hostility once created may not be easily eradicated, particularly if it goes on spreading among the masses. That is why I am anxious that amicable relations should continue to prevail among the peoples of the two countries.

It is despicable when Indians outside India assume a sort of patronising attitude towards the natives of the countries where they had gone and talk of sympathising with their aspirations and laying too much emphasis on their own services to those countries. Such talk always reminds me of the behaviour of Englishmen in India. Ceylon is a small country to whom continued friendship with India is essential. In her own interests it would be better for her to be friends with India. Indians can never misbehave so long as they conform to the ideals of the Congress. I would ask Indians to always uphold the honour of our motherland and above all of the Congress.

There is need for all Indians to pull together in the pursuit of the common good and if you stand together, everybody will think not twice but several times before thinking of interfering with you in any manner. Disunity among Indians in foreign countries always distresses me terribly. By all means have separate organisations for particular purposes; but the main interests of the community as a whole should be looked after by a common organisation. Any action that Indians take in any part of the world should be in consonance with the action taken in India. It would be absurd for Indians to ignore the principles on which the national movement in India is functioning and do something counter to our own declarations in India.

The role of the Chinese, the Japanese and the English in foreign countries has been commendable. The Chinese in Malaya have given an example of an extraordinarily fine spirit in pooling their resources and starting educational organisations for the benefit of their children,

the like of which, perhaps, exists nowhere else in the country. I regret to say that the better class of Indians do not care for the poorer ones.

World conditions are changing and it is essential that you should adjust yourselves to the changes. You have a legitimate right to protect the rights you have acquired. Wherever you are, be proud that you are Indians and refuse to swallow anything which may mean dishonour and discredit to our country and to yourselves. If you do not stand up for your honour and unite you will be knocked down in no time. I have not a shadow of doubt that, instead of spending a lot of energy and money in making certain representations, if only you spend a fraction of the time and energy in organising yourselves you would do more good to yourselves.

In Ceylon in recent times a new mass consciousness has risen, though economically and politically she is backward. The Ceylonese people feel that it is far easier to deal with the Indian interests and leave the imperialist exploitation, the major exploitation, to continue. British vested interests in many countries have begun to look on India as a rival in many fields and it is to their advantage to divert the agitation against us in Burma or Ceylon. Ninety nine per cent of the shops in Colombo are run by Indians and if the Ceylonese wonder at this large number of Indians in their own country, Indians should learn to appreciate their position.

It is impossible for India and Ceylon to be anything but connected. It is inevitable that we should march together. I am entirely opposed to India exploiting in any manner not only Ceylon but any other country, for that matter. Nobody need, however, imagine that Ceylon's economic interests would at all be served well by the expulsion of Indians. If Indians should seek special privileges they might well agitate for them and get them too; but then they would have paid a tremendous price before they have these; they would have lost the confidence and sympathy of the people of the country. They cannot flourish in such circumstances.

I cannot conceive of Ceylon without India, but if I say that, some might think I am imposing my will on Ceylon. I do not want to appear to do that. I know ultimately Ceylon is bound to pull with India and form part of that federation which will be an Indian federation. But whether she becomes part of it or not, Indian interests in Ceylon can only function on the basis of goodwill of the Ceylonese. Fundamentally, you should not do anything which would arouse the ill will of the people. But if conditions are created which are injurious and dishonourable to our country, you are bound to protect your and your country's honour. If you cannot ultimately do it, you must

prepare to march out of the country. Let not your dabbling or interference in politics be such as to cause any harm to the movement for the progress of the greater freedom of the country.

It is an intolerable idea to me that I should go to the British Governor, for instance, and seek his aid to protect us against the interests of this country. By such pressure, let us assume, we may even get some results. But you would have paid a very heavy price for it, because you would have gone to a common opponent to solve your immediate difficulty. In India we protest and affirm that we will not tolerate interference and exercise of special powers by the governors or other officers. Are we in Ceylon to go to the Governor and ask him to use special powers? It becomes absurd. It will be put down as self-seeking opportunism without any principle in it. After all, governors come and governors go till ultimately they will go for ever. What, therefore, is the good of such support? The best support we can get is that of the people.

You have therefore to be very careful when you indulge in political activity here. You should not allow yourself to associate with anybody working against the freedom of the country. Complaints have been made to me that Indian elements are allying themselves with British imperialist elements. I do not know how far that is true. It may even be partly true because it has happened in the past elsewhere. My point is that it will not in the end bring anything but harm to you.

Whatever happens, Indians will ultimately have to depend for their welfare on the goodwill of the people in whose midst they live. You should therefore work for creating or restoring such goodwill and understanding, and utilise me, to the extent I can be useful, in this.

17. The Differences Between India and Sri Lanka[1]

This visit of mine to Ceylon, however short, would not have been complete without coming to Kandy. I have come here to renew my acquaintance with this beautiful and historic place and the friends whom I had met in the past. I visited Kandy eight years ago when conditions were more satisfactory and people were in a contented frame of mind whereas now, I am told, there is unemployment and distress everywhere.

1. Speech at Kandy, 21 July 1939. From the *National Herald*, 28 July

I want you to realise that these evils have deep causes and are maladies all the world suffers from. In seeking a remedy for them we should not be like quacks but go to the roots and apply the remedy when the disease is diagnosed.

I have come now not merely because certain steps have been taken and certain persons have been given notice of dismissal. When I heard of it I was slightly pained but I realised that the issues raised in Ceylon were fundamental so far as my country and I were concerned. The first issue is, it seems, the hurt dignity and pride of India, and India is a country full of dignity and pride today. I am not going to refer to what has happened here as a slight to India as such, but what I mean is that what we conceive India to be is the 350 or 360 millions that live there, the majority of whom are poor peasants. We have taken the peasant to our hearts and if he suffers in India we try to help him. But if he crosses the seas and goes to other countries we cannot help very much. Therefore it becomes a mighty question to India when her children, separated from her by thousands of miles, are treated badly, not as individuals but as Indians, for then it is India that is hurt because it involves the dignity of the nation. This is one of the considerations that makes a big thing of a small thing.

Secondly, and equally important, perhaps more so, is the fact that news came to us that in Ceylon relations between the Indians who are there and the Ceylonese are not harmonious and a measure of bitterness is creeping into them that is raising barriers which might keep them apart. This is a very dangerous thing to happen and something which has potentialities of great evil in it. India is a large country compared to Ceylon, and it is absurd to compare the two, but they are intimately connected with each other and it is impossible, whether they quarrel or not, for Ceylon and India to have barriers between them. Political barriers come and go and do not matter, but associations continue in spite of them and in the days to come these associations are bound to increase. Politically we were brought together on the map because we belonged to the British Empire, and how long that bond is going to continue I do not know.

But two things are happening now. One is the development of a national consciousness in each country on a rapid scale. When such consciousness develops national angularities also develop and difficulties arise. India has gone through the process some years ago and has been tempered by the experience.

We have declared ourselves internationalists and we have fought against the powerful empire that dominates over us and the fight is not without success. It is not that we dislike England because England

dominates over us but that we dislike the system, namely, imperialism, that England represents. It is the system we are against, the system which has exploited and subjugated us. If we object to that inevitably we cannot be parties to that in the reverse way, that is to say, when we grow in power and freedom surely we cannot in any way be parties to imposing either political or economic imperialism on others. Therefore, if Indians go abroad we want them to go as friends of the people in those countries and to cooperate with them for the betterment of those people, certainly on no account to go in any capacity which may have the effect of exploiting the people of the country they go to.

You can take it from me, if I may venture to voice the opinion of nationalist India, that the people of India have every sympathy in your desire for self-development in the political, economic, commercial and other fields, and that, far from obstructing, India will gladly give all help even if its effect is injurious to Indian interests.

The problem of Ceylon is one of the most important problems in India. Ceylon ultimately, if I might put it crudely, is necessary to India, as India is necessary to Ceylon. It is true that in Ceylon there are large Indian interests, many of which serve Ceylon and create wealth for Ceylon. It would be an absurd humbug for anyone to say that they came to Ceylon purely out of goodwill. Nevertheless they have come to Ceylon and have done certain useful work and generally helped the processes of modern business to develop. What is to be done with them? Probably large numbers of them are required by the economy of Ceylon. If changes have to be made they should be made in friendship and cooperation so that major upheavals do not take place. From the point of view of self-interest alone, it is dangerous to upset the existing state of things without finding an equivalent for them and without creating a sense of injury. In other words, whatever is done should be done in a cooperative way after consultation and to the mutual advantage. If that kind of approach is made and a unilateral method is not adopted, you will meet with the fullest sympathy.

Indians in Ceylon might be divided into two classes, rather vaguely. There are those who came here many years ago and have practically no home in India, who have business or work here and who consider Ceylon their home. Of course, they might have cultural and other ties with India which are difficult for them to get rid of, but Ceylon is fundamentally their home. On the other hand, there are Indians who are of a migrant character, whose stay in Ceylon is of a temporary nature and who still regard India as their home. So far because of the common British nationality the point of difference was not considered but

now the difference between the two types is more marked. Those Indians who have made Ceylon their home should be considered nationals of Ceylon completely, without distinction. They should be treated not merely legally and constitutionally as nationals but there should be a desire to absorb them in the larger community of Ceylon. Otherwise, you would be creating a situation which would give you trouble in the future. It may be that Indians are slightly different from the Sinhalese but in the island itself there are Ceylonese who fall into three or four well-known groups who have much in common and yet have distinguishing peculiarities. Anyway, it seems to me that the Indians who are here can be easily absorbed into Ceylon.

In regard to those Indians who have come here more or less temporarily and who do not wish to become Ceylon nationals, their position is different legally and constitutionally and will become different when Ceylon advances towards freedom. They have no business to come here to exploit Ceylon and take advantage of its people.

They have every right to come and do business provided they realise that the policy of India is not in any way to try to dominate politically or economically over other people. If they are interested in Ceylon only in that way and seek special privileges and protection as a group they will have no sympathy in India. But if any injustice is done or the self-respect of India is hurt in any way then India will react in their favour.

I hope the Indians who live in Ceylon will remember this and not clamour in the future for special rights and privileges, and also remember that their first thought must be for the people of Ceylon and then only can they think of India.

18. To Baron Jayatilaka[1]

Kandy
July 22, 1939

My dear Sir Baron,

I hope to meet you and the other ministers day after tomorrow before my departure for India. We have had long talks and presumably we have understood, if not entirely appreciated, each other's viewpoints. I feel, however, that it will be worthwhile to write to you and explain

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.

certain matters to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding. That this possibility is there is obvious for on the last occasion we met, I was a little taken aback by the disinclination of the ministers to agree to a suggestion which, I had been given to understand, had emanated from one of the ministers themselves. That proposal had not suggested itself to me, and when it was made I viewed it without any enthusiasm. It did not get over the difficulties in my mind. But I was so anxious to come to an agreement and thus help in removing to some extent the barriers that were rising up between Indians and Ceylonese, that I brought myself to accept that proposal as a basis for our future talks. When later I found that those, whom I consider the originators of the proposal, were themselves not prepared to accept it, I was surprised and that basis for further discussion disappeared.

Personally, I am not keen on this proposal. I have felt all along that the dismissal of a large number of persons on the sole ground of their being Indians was unjustified and unfair and, as such, had been deeply resented in India. You know how deep and widespread this resentment is. I realise and appreciate that the ministers had no desire to proceed on racial lines or to slight India. But in the result this was so, and when even the request of the Government of India for a postponement of action till the trade talks took place was rejected, people in India were confirmed in their opinion that this was a deliberate policy aimed against Indians in Ceylon, and Indian opinion in regard to it was openly ignored and to some extent treated with contempt. Behind that policy there were certainly many local causes and economic background. But I have still failed to understand how the economic situation imperatively demanded it, or indeed how it was markedly affected by it. I am no judge of the requirements of the local political situation.

I have ventured to point out to you that the steps taken by the Ceylon Government were unique, entirely opposed to international practice, except in fascist countries and in times of war. They would have been abnormal and objectionable even in the case of private employers dismissing foreign nationals. The International Labour Office at Geneva has after full consideration declared its opinion on this subject. India and Ceylon, though to some extent different political entities, are not foreign to each other and have the most intimate contacts, and the Geneva declaration, though not legally binding on them, would apply to them in a far greater measure. Added to this was the fact that a government took action and not a private employer, and this action was unilateral.

The objection to this action was thus based on principle, a principle

which I would not like to forego both in the interests of India and of labour. Hence my hesitation in agreeing to anything which might seem a departure from the principle. I would have liked the Ceylon Government to appreciate this aspect of the question, to which perhaps they had not paid attention previously. If so they could have varied their action and taken other steps which might have brought them the same, or even better, results. Even a voluntary offer of retirement from service and repatriation (uncoupled with any threat) would have produced substantial results.

Unfortunately, I have so far been unable to convince the ministers of the desirability of this approach to the question. I would beg them again to consider it. But realising that I was not likely to bring them round to my viewpoint, and being earnestly desirous of ending the present impasse, I brought myself round to agree to the proposal made to me the other day. It was a hard decision for me to make and I had grave doubts as to what my colleagues in India would think about it. But I had to act on my responsibility and, in view of all the circumstances, I decided in favour of the proposal.

This proposal, as varied somewhat later, was as follows:

I. As regards those labourers who were engaged after March 31st 1934 and to whom notice of dismissal has been given, the following classes will not be affected by the notice:

(i) Any Indian who has married a Ceylonese woman, or has had illegitimate children by a Ceylonese woman, or is living with such a woman and is prepared to marry her.

(ii) Those who have had any previous government service, previous to the present service since April 1934, provided that the total length of service is 5 years.

(iii) People with no homes outside Ceylon. (In determining this the Madras Government would help if necessary.)

(iv) A person who may have come to Ceylon within the last ten years in order to join a spouse, parent, child, mother or sister, who had come previously and was not being affected by any step that was being taken now. (This is likely to apply to exceedingly few persons but where it does apply, the case will be a hard one.)

(v) Those who have resided in Ceylon for ten years or more.

So far as clauses (i), (ii) and (iii) of the above proposal are concerned they had already been agreed to previous to my arrival. Clause (iv) offered no difficulty and affected very few persons. The effective part of the proposal was thus the last clause, under which those who had resided in Ceylon for ten years or more were not to be dismissed

from government service. I suggested that this period of ten years might be reduced to five in order to bring it more in conformity with the I.L.O. suggestions. This not being agreed to, very reluctantly I accepted the ten-year period, only to find later that the ministers did not agree to it.

2. The second proposal related to those to whom an offer of voluntary retirement with gratuities had been made. This offer could not be criticised, but objection had been taken to the threat of subsequent retrenchment on a discriminating basis, which was coupled with it. Apparently the whole scheme was going to be dropped and an assurance was given that, in the possible event of future retrenchment, only those Indians would be discharged who had resided in Ceylon for less than ten years. Indians with longer period of residence would be treated in the same manner as the Ceylonese. The other exceptions, mentioned in proposal one, would also apply, and in both cases the ministers gave an assurance that they would examine other hard cases on their merits and deal with them liberally.

There was thus going to be discrimination in regard to retrenchment in the case of those Indians who had been in government service for less than ten years. Such persons as were affected by this, it was suggested, should be given a gratuity, which they might not have been entitled to if there had been no discrimination.

During our last talks it appeared that the ministers did not fancy some parts of those proposals, more especially the limit of ten years residence. If that is so, I fear agreement will not be possible.

There are so many other and far more important matters relating to Indo-Ceylonese relations and interests which it is desirable to settle, and I should have liked to write about them also. But this letter is already too long and I have no more time to give to it. I should like to mention however that if the cooperation of India and Ceylon is desired, unilateral action has to be avoided. All matters of mutual concern should be discussed by the two parties before action is taken.

There are the important questions of the franchise and the future of immigration. It is no business of India to say what your internal franchise should be, but it does become our concern when Indians have to put up with any discriminatory treatment. Quite apart from the law, the application of the law might be unfair. In the course of our talks, the ministers said on several occasions that the rules in regard to the franchise were going to be tightened up. This produces a certain apprehension in my mind lest further discrimination might creep in. I had ventured to suggest that the rule should be precise and definite to allow little scope for misinterpretation. A rule laying down that a period

of residence, say ten years, should be considered presumptive evidence of domicile would go some way to avoid vagueness.

In regard to immigration to Ceylon, it appears that your government is contemplating legislation. Such legislation will affect every Indian who comes here and will therefore be of great interest to us. I do not myself see the necessity for fresh immigration laws, when immigrant rural and urban labour is controlled by the government or stopped altogether, when the government are not going to employ any non-Ceylonese, and even private employers are told to employ a certain proportion of the Ceylonese. But that is for you to decide. What I am concerned with is that nothing affecting us should be finally decided without reference to us in India.

So far as labour emigration from India to Ceylon is concerned, we are perfectly prepared to cooperate with you in stopping it. Indeed for reasons of our own economy we may decide on this measure.

There are, as I have said above, innumerable matters for consideration between our countries. It would be far better if they were discussed together and as a whole, rather than piecemeal. This obviously I cannot do. But if the present obstacles to discussion are removed, this can easily be done when the trade talks take place. Meanwhile, I trust that every effort will be made to check the racial propaganda that is being indulged in.

I must apologise for the length of this letter as well as for its lack of conciseness. It has been written here in Kandy in the midst of numerous engagements.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

19. Plantation Labour in Sri Lanka[1]

like to do great things for you and so would I; but I am sometimes frightened by the expectations raised.

India today is marching ahead, and all Indians have begun to feel that they are members of one family. They work for great ideals and try to get rid of their disabilities. They want to attain Purna Swaraj. But Purna Swaraj will have no meaning if India remains poor and her children miserable, unemployed and hungry. If Swaraj means anything, it should mean the end of these troubles and exploitation. We want to make every Indian, whatever his caste, religion or community, a nobler person, a fitter person, worthy of maintaining Indian traditions, and living not the life of hewers of wood and drawers of water, but a happy, decent and proper life. The boys and girls among them can, if opportunities are given them, grow in stature and do many things for our country. There are big things to be done in India and we all hope to help the millions of India to march forward to our goal—the ending of poverty and unhappiness in India. This means hard work. Unless they cooperated in the effort, our strength would go to waste, whereas united action would lend strength to our efforts. Indians have gained strength because we have been organised under the Indian National Congress, which has its network of committees and branches in almost every village of India. Those gathered here must have heard the names of at least some of the leaders; but the strength of the organisation is derived more from the millions that make it up. The world knows today that India will surely get Purna Swaraj before long and set her foot on the path of economic freedom and liquidation of poverty.

I have come to Ceylon on a particular mission and in two days I will be going back. The big thing I had in mind when I came to Lanka was the well-being of the large number of Indian labourers and the desire that they and the Sinhalese should live in friendship and amity and nothing should happen to separate them. Many of you have come down to Ceylon with your families and children and settled down here. Although inevitably you think of India, love India and have contacts with India, yet your future homeland is Lanka. It is right that you should treat the place you have settled down in as your home and the people of the land as your own countrymen. India and Ceylon can never be looked upon as separate or different countries.

India does not forget her children howsoever distant they are from her; but India may perhaps not be in a position yet to do all that she wishes for her children, engaged as she is with her own struggle at home. But the day will soon come when the strong arm of India will reach every corner of the world where Indians live and will protect them, if protection be necessary.

SRI LANKA, JULY 1939

Wherever an Indian is, there is a bit of India, with all its merits and failings. I would urge you to remember that those sons of India, who have left her shores, carry with them a special responsibility, that you represent your motherland in a measure wherever you go. You are the living representatives of India in the places to which you go, and anything done to you hurts India. I would like to ask you to keep abreast of the progress in India. As for Ceylon, I want her to march with India. I am convinced that Ceylon can march much faster if she allies herself with India. Ceylon by herself may not have the strength to go forward. It is possible for one to obstruct her path; but if not so obstructed, the advance would be easier. But that advance, in any case, is bound to take place; it is written in the book of history.

I hope that the changes will come in proper order and sequence, without conflict, because conflict is wasteful and causes unhappiness and suffering. But if it is a choice between conflict and a static condition, I would prefer conflict. It is true that there can be no permanent solution of a problem in a world which is changing. But even if it be temporary, the solution should be found. It should be done in cooperation between the peoples of the two countries. We have no desire to upset the economy of Ceylon, but we have one basic and fundamental desire before which everything must give place. It is that the people of Ceylon should advance and nothing should be done to stop them. We are not going to remain in this world just a labour force to be exploited by others, though perhaps earning enough to eat and drink. While we do not upset the economy of the country or create conflict, this fact should be kept in view by all who have to face the problem. I hope it would be kept in view by those who have authority in Ceylon, by those who own and manage estates and by the people them selves because they might themselves forget it while engrossed in thei petty problems. The little children I have seen should be enabled grow into healthy and educated citizens, persons capable of doing a job that comes their way efficiently and well. Anything that comes the way of these things being achieved will have to go. There are vested interests. But the Indian people have the right to live a pr and decent life and before this right every other interest should Even if Indian vested interests come in my way, I would not hesi to push them out.

Those of you who have come here, should remember that you ow duty to your motherland which you can never forget nor ignore. should develop community of interest with the Ceylonese. I have h complaints about the conditions of the estate labour. I am more cerned with the system and not the particular complaints. To rel

the nature of the employers is not good enough. You want a kind of democratic, panchayati raj. I attach more importance to your developing self-reliance and strength. You should not give up attempts to develop these because there is the danger of a wrong person exploiting the situation. I would like estate owners to note that if such organisations are prevented from growing in the normal way, they might grow illegitimately and become perverted and harmful. I thank you again for your warm welcome and want you to keep India, India's ideals and her goal in view. I want you to remember again that though India is full of her own troubles—I do not know what will happen tomorrow or the day after—India does not forget her children. Wherever they may be, India remembers them with love and whatever she can do for them she will always do.

20. The Mass Movement in India[1]

The immediate cause of my visit to Ceylon is a slight misunderstanding that has arisen between the Ceylonese and the Indians. That I have come need not make you think that the misunderstanding is anything very serious; but the Indian National Congress thought that it was as well that such misunderstanding as existed should be cleared at the very outset. I thank you for the overwhelming mark of regard you have shown me this evening. This display of love and affection is not for me individually, but for the person representing something that is bigger than an individual. That something is worthy of affection and respect indeed, because it stands for a cause for which thousands in India have suffered and sacrificed. I also welcome the display of affection because it disproves the contentions of some who talk about the bitterness between the Indians and the Ceylonese. It is no good attaching too much importance to small things, forgetting the opinions and feelings of the people at large, simply because they do not shout loud enough. There might be small unpleasantnesses occasionally; such things arise even among brothers; but these can be removed easily. The relationship between Ceylon and India can be traced back far into the past. The Sinhalese have also drawn inspiration from things which have inspired us.

1. Speech at Colombo, 22 July 1939. From *The Hindu*, 24 July 1939.

ADDRESSING A MEETING IN SRI LANKA, JULY 1939

People cry *Bharat Mata ki Jai* but do they think about the meaning of the slogan Victory to Mother India? Is it the village, district or province where one lives? No, it is the 350 millions that make up India. On one occasion when I explained the import of the word *Bharat Mata* to a gathering of peasants, the peasants saw new light. If anyone wants to picture *Bharat Mata*, he should not think of a beautiful lady, with a sad face and sorrowful look; rather he should think of the semi-naked, unhappy, starving peasant. If all is well with the peasant, everything will be well with *Bharat Mata*, if all is not well with him, it does not matter what happens. The fundamental idea that governs the Indian national movement is the idea of putting an end to the poverty of the millions. Even in regard to the removal of foreign domination, we have adopted methods of peace and much more so are we likely to think in terms of cooperation in regard to the internal problems of the country. But one thing is clear, the final test of every act we put through and every policy we adopt is how far it would be for the good of that representative of *Bharat Mata* I have referred to.

Therefore when I speak, I do not speak as an individual but I speak with the authority of the hundreds of millions of India. I do not claim that we have always adhered to our ideals; we have often stumbled and fallen; but the ideal is still there, and many of us hope to live to see them realised. Having set forth our ideals, the Indian National Congress adopted the same in regard to our foreign policy also. Indians oppose imperialism in India and therefore elsewhere also. We are against fascism that has worked havoc in the East in the shape of imperialism. India's foreign policy is aimed at liquidation of imperialism and fascism. India is one of the four countries which have the potentiality and power to become great, and indeed India is advancing rapidly in that direction. Politically and economically, she is one of the four countries in the world which can stand on their own feet. But there is a possibility of India forgetting her own ideals and seeking to dominate others. Indian nationalist opinion is, therefore, for rooting out the very idea of domination of one country by another.

Ceylon is not foreign to India. How absurd, therefore, that there should be talk of exploitation of Ceylon, economically or otherwise? I would, therefore, assure all Ceylonese that the Indian national movement views with the greatest sympathy and cordiality all efforts on the part of the people of Ceylon to advance themselves economically and politically and in every way. I would also like to assure you that India will not think of doing anything that will come in the way of that advancement. I assure you of the fullest sympathy of India in dealing with the great problems you might have in your country and also that

There is enough in the world today for all humanity, but it is the absurdity of man's ways and the structure in which he lives that keeps him poor and in want.

There is conflict in Ceylon too and, like conflicts elsewhere, this is the result of an awakening. When mass consciousness seeks change, conflict sometimes does arise. Conflict in itself is but a sign of vitality in the people. You will find such conflicts in India in the national movement, in the Congress, in the provinces, and everywhere. One might not like conflict and one might try to avoid it; but it indicates new vitality seeking expression, sometimes proper, sometimes not.

I work for certain ideals but I cannot say how or when they will be realised. The world is passing through a tremendous, dynamic and revolutionary phase of transition and it is full of wars and possibilities of wars. Unemployment, misery and suffering have grown even in rich countries and more so in the poorer ones. I do not think these problems can be solved without our going down deep into the causes and if we are to have a fundamental solution we should go into the hearts and minds of the masses of the people. Indians want freedom and independence. India wants independence, wants to liquidate the poverty of the hundreds of millions of Indians. If we achieve independence, but yet the masses remain in poverty, that independence will be of no avail. We should remove everything that comes in the way of eradication of poverty, every vested interest, foreign or Indian. The biggest vested interest is that of imperialism, under cover of which all manner of vested interests have grown up.

We raise our hands against no group, not even foreign groups. But if in working out the salvation of our people, anything comes in our way, whether it is foreign or Indian, it will have to go if it obstructs our path.

It is because the Congress has gone to the masses with this message that hope has come into the hearts of hundreds of millions of Indians and their sunken eyes are filled with light. They have joined the Congress and given it strength. The people who have been sat upon for years have begun to organise themselves in the Congress. You must have witnessed the combined movement of millions from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, in villages and towns, with the same cry on their lips and the same joys and sorrows in their hearts. They are helpless, powerless, in the ordinary sense; for they have no weapons of warfare. But the weapon that has been placed in their hands is a more effective and powerful one than ordinary weapons. Our first object is to develop in the people self-reliance and self-respect and the capacity for united action.

21. The Common Heritage[1]

Men and women of Lanka,

I arrived here a week ago today and the time draws near when I shall be leaving you and flying back to India. During this week I have met many people, people in authority occupying responsible offices in the government of the country and carrying the heavy burden which this responsibility implies; humble men and women who work in the town or in the field or tea-garden; and many others in all stations of life.

I brought a message of greeting and goodwill from India to Lanka, and I expressed the earnest desire of my people that the bonds of friendship that have knit us together for so long should continue to hold us. To that greeting all of you gave answer and showered your welcome and affection on me in abundant measure, and I have no fitting words to express my gratitude to you.

Yet I know that this was not merely a welcome to an individual whom you have chosen to honour, but rather a testimony to a more enduring thing—the friendship and culture that is our common heritage and that has been our precious companion in ages past. You and I have testified to that afresh, but was testimony needed for what is embedded in the rock of ages? More than two thousand years of history stand witness to it, and much that we value in our lives is interlinked with it.

We live in an age of conflict and war, of hatred and violence all over the world. Never before has the need been greater for all of us to remember that immortal message which the greatest and noblest of the sons of India gave to us and to you and to all the world. That message of two thousand five hundred years ago is a living message today, enshrined in our hearts, and we draw inspiration from it to face the troubles and difficulties that threaten to overwhelm us.

A shadow of that ancient message fell on our national movement and ennobled it, and we sought to interpret it in terms of political action for the freedom of our people. We did so imperfectly, but it has been our high privilege to endeavour to set an example of a new method of political action, a method of peace and goodwill, devoid of hatred, in so far as we were capable, and yet an effective method which brought hope of changing an evil order for one based on justice, equity and freedom.

1. Broadcast at Colombo, 23 July 1939. *The Ceylon Daily News*, 24 July 1939.

you can get a great deal of help from India. Ideologically speaking, India's political movement is one of the most advanced among those of subject countries of the world today. Our mass consciousness is also great. The very fact that we are immersed in big problems is a sure indication that we are far advanced. It is extremely foolish for one to imagine, in the present state of world conditions, that one can push on in an isolated way. It would therefore be in the interest of British labour for instance to see that labour in Ceylon is well paid and well provided for; otherwise the standards of British labour would inevitably be affected. If labour in India is downtrodden and weak, it would inevitably affect conditions in Ceylon. These cannot be cured by laws. If Ceylon wants to raise herself, she will have to think hard and develop some kind of planned economy.

There is growing mass consciousness in Ceylon, and every Indian here should remember that he represents India and the ideals of her national movement. He should not think he can come down here and exploit others. The fundamental policy of the Indian National Congress is there for everyone to follow, and Indian settlers should try to become one in every way with the people of the land. Even those who do not intend to settle permanently on the island can during their stay identify themselves completely with the Ceylonese. Indeed, Indians and Ceylonese are so much alike that I can hardly see any difference, or say that I have come outside India. Indians should associate themselves fully with the Ceylonese in their activities. India can protect them; at any rate she would soon be able to. Indians will, therefore, get the protection they want—I presume this question does not arise in Ceylon. India thinks of her children wherever they are. Those who are better off, look after themselves. But who else can look after the weak child —the poor man—except the mother herself? We want peace, freedom and cooperation with all other people. But we cannot tolerate indignity to our people and to our country.

You have to accept the responsibilities of your position, for you cannot have privileges without responsibilities. Anything you do adds to or detracts from the reputation of your country accordingly. You should not therefore do or suffer anything discreditable to India and the Indian nation but should cooperate with the Ceylonese.

scheme of things and remould it nearer to the heart's desire. This cannot be done in a petty way. Vital problems require vital remedies.

In the present difficulties of Ceylon, she will have the full sympathy and cooperation of India. Let there be no mistake about that. We want to help because injury to Ceylon is injury to us. I came here because of a passing misunderstanding with the desire to clear it up and prevent it from disturbing the minds of people in both our countries. I did not come to bargain, but to greet you and to appeal to you where we thought injustice might have been done.

Speaking for the Indian National Congress, I can give you my full assurance that in no manner or degree do we want to come in the way of the political or economic or other advancement of Ceylon and her people. We want to help in that advance for if we did not do so, we would be false to our own principles. Our hand is always stretched out in friendship and comradeship to all peoples in the East and in the West who stand for freedom and peace.

For Lanka that comradeship is even closer and I earnestly trust that we shall cooperate in full measure for this cause of freedom and peace in our countries as well as in the world.

May I express again my deep gratitude to all of you for the affection, with which you have overwhelmed me and made this short visit of mine a precious memory which will endure.

I bid you farewell, comrades in a common enterprise, and I trust that you will hold fast to your ideals and not lower them for temporary and passing gain. I earnestly hope that the realisation of those ideals will come to you and bring joy and happiness to all the people of Lanka.

22. No Barriers Are Insurmountable[1]

I am confident that I have been largely successful in the real mission with which I came to Ceylon, namely to revive the traditional feelings of friendship and affection which have been rather clouded by some recent developments. It is incidental to the energetic upheaval now visible in all parts of the world that difficulties and problems arise in

1. Farewell speech at Colombo, 24 July 1939. From *The Hindustan Times*, 26 July 1939.

That method that we adopted is not only for us internally in India; it must govern our outlook to the entire world.

If we have desired freedom and peace in India, we want this freedom and peace for every nation and for the entire world. If we have struggled against political and economic domination in our country, it is not to impose this on others, but to live in a world of free peoples, and co-operating to the common advantage. We entered the troubled and turgid waters of political action with high ideals to guide us. Sometimes our eyes may grow dim and the ideals may fade. But if those ideals leave us and our politics become one of the market-place, we shall have been false to our traditions and our destiny, and to those innumerable sons and daughters of India who have sacrificed their all for the sake of those ideals.

If this is our general outlook towards foreign nations, what shall we say of Lanka, which is flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone? Have you forgotten how your forbears came from our land, how your culture and language and thought are intertwined with ours, how the most precious gift that you have came from the heart of India over two thousand years ago? We little men of today may err, but we cannot erase what has been written on the tablet of history, or remove the impress of ages past on our minds and our hearts. What of the present? What of the future?

We see the world in the grip of revolutionary changes and no man knows what tomorrow will bring. If our countries are worthy of our high destiny, we have to add to our stature, and, getting out of the grooves and pettiness of our daily lives, think of the big problems and deal with them in a big way. In these crises that threaten to overwhelm us, when empires may fade away, can we stand apart, with suspicion in our eyes? We have only one path to travel, the path of co-operation with each other in the pursuit of common ideals.

We may be irritated with each other occasionally, we may commit mistakes, for we are erring mortals, but can India ever raise her hand against her younger sister Lanka? Can Ceylon seek to do injury to India?

Ceylon has today to face difficult problems. Her old economy is changing rapidly and she is suffering also from the economic conflicts of the present-day world. Unemployment has grown and brought misery and unhappiness to many homes. That, unhappily, is the fate of almost every country today and none of us can escape that fate. But if we have courage and wisdom we can face destiny itself and conquer it. If we have strength and unity, we can help in shaping this sorry

could not be disturbed by the passing irritations or irresponsible acts and utterances of a few. Yet, it must be recognised that there is tension there, due not only to economic causes but also due to the political background which seems to utilise these economic causes for that purpose.

The Indians in Ceylon are full of apprehensions about the future. They are distressed at many steps that have been taken which affect their position and status in Ceylon and tend to injure some of their interests. I should like to say, however, that the Board of Ministers of the Ceylon Government assured me that they had no wish whatever to act in any indiscriminate way against Indians. And in any step they might take for the relief of economic distress, they would take particular care to avoid causing hardship in so far as it was possible. I had every courtesy extended to me by the ministers and am grateful to them for this.

The future is somewhat uncertain and requires careful watching. Meanwhile, what should be done is a matter for serious consideration by the Congress and the Government of India. I feel that my visit has already brought substantial results in removing many causes of misunderstanding and in laying stress on the innumerable links between India and Ceylon and this is a definite gain.

Another result that my visit has achieved is this. It has laid the foundation of a strong and united organisation of all Indians. Unfortunately, there has been in the past a tendency for groups to function separately and thus ineffectively. I hope that we shall now have a strong organisation, representing all Indians and speaking on their behalf and working for the good both of India and of Ceylon, and protecting and safeguarding the legitimate rights of Indians.

No one wants any Indian interests which are injurious to the growth of freedom of the people of Ceylon and there are many Indian interests which seem to be essential in the interests of Ceylon itself. One matter to be always borne in mind is that, whenever anything is done which affects the people of India as well as the people of Ceylon, the two should always have full consultation with each other before action is taken. Unilateral action is likely to be harmful and dangerous.

Apart from the present difficulties that we have to face, the major question for India is the future of labour emigration to Ceylon as well as to other countries abroad. I think the time has come when a clear policy should be laid down, stopping all such emigration. This policy will be for the good of India as well as of Ceylon and there might well be full cooperation in giving effect to it.

different countries of the world. I hope that with the intimate ties existing between the two nations, no barriers will arise which are insurmountable by mutual understanding and sympathy. It is necessary for us to preserve our friendship, not merely on account of the past traditions, but also from principles of expediency. I assure you of the goodwill and friendship of the Indians and thank the people of Ceylon for the overwhelming hospitality shown to me during my stay in the island.

23. The Result of The Visit[1]

I cannot say now definitely what the result of my visit to Ceylon is going to be. In regard to the particular matter for which I went to Ceylon, I am afraid I am not satisfied with the position as it seems to exist at present. It may be that a measure of relief may come to a few but the principle in which I was interested has not been established. The position remains indefinite and unsatisfactory. I shall, of course, submit my report to the Congress Working Committee and it is for them to consider my advice on the matter.

On the larger issue, however, that of cooperation between India and Ceylon in future, I think my visit has done good. Unfortunately, there has been growing bitterness among some sections of the population there. Economic distress has embittered many people and this bitterness has been used by some against the Indians. Some Indians have also said or done things which are imprudent and have added largely to the tension. I was surprised to find how some people among the Ceylonese were carrying on a regular campaign against the Indians and using language that was astonishing in its violence and irresponsibility. This naturally had a bad effect on the public, both Ceylonese and Indians. But I find to my satisfaction that this is confined to a relatively small number of persons and that both the masses of the population as well as the intelligentsia have no such ill feeling on their part. This was heartening and the welcome that I received from vast numbers of the people of Ceylon was extraordinary in its warmth and friendship. This demonstrated the underlying friendship between India and Ceylon, which

1. Interview to the press, Madras, 25 July 1939. *The Hindu*, 25 July 1939.

Q: What is your view on Britain's attitude towards China, as disclosed by Mr. Chamberlain's reply in the House of Commons yesterday?[3]

JN: Mr. Chamberlain's announcement of a new arrangement with Japan is of a piece with his old policy of appeasement and betrayal of every decent cause of freedom-loving peoples. Some persons have imagined that there has been a change in this policy in Britain because of some plain speaking by Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax. But the shadow of Munich envelops British policy and insidiously helps fascism to spread. There cannot be a change so long as Mr. Chamberlain and his government do not get rid of their hatred for democracy and freedom and their desire to crush them wherever they exist. They are out to make England a full-blooded fascist country. They dare not do it openly, because there are still lovers of democracy in England. Nevertheless, they are going ahead with their plans and the British public is supine and has an amazing capacity to delude itself. Therefore they are likely to succeed in their designs and at the same time hurl the world into a devastating war.

For us, in India, the lesson is crystal clear. Our foreign policy and our internal policy can have absolutely nothing to do with the policy of this pro-fascist Government of England. Whatever Mr. Chamberlain may declare, we stand for China and for all peoples who struggle for freedom. If war comes, it is even more inconceivable now than ever before that we should truckle to this imperialistic Government of Britain and aid it in its repeated betrayals of democracy. There is talk of democratic powers facing fascism. It is idle talk and only those who are blind or deluded can consider that the British Government stands now, or will stand, for democracy. We must, therefore, be prepared to resist with all effort if any war is imposed upon us and refuse to cooperate with British imperialism.

3. On 24 July 1939, the British Prime Minister announced that the Japanese forces in China were entitled "to take measures designed to safeguard their security and maintain order in regions under their control."

Question: What is your view on the hunger-strike of political prisoners in Bengal?[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru: I have followed it with anxiety and distress. This question has been with us for years and every attempt has been made by Mahatmaji and others to seek a solution of it with the cooperation of the Bengal Government. This has been a running sore in the body politic, especially of Bengal. But, in fact, the whole of India is concerned with it. Till a satisfactory solution is found—and it can only be by releasing the prisoners, many of whom have spent already long years in prison—there can be no peace and tragedy will hover over us, disturbing our minds and creating all manner of difficulties. The Bengal Government should deal with this matter with vision and spirit. It is a matter of regret that the Bengal Government have chosen to stand on their prestige. I think it is now recognised by everyone that the release of these prisoners can in no way be considered, even from the narrow point of view, harmful to the state. We are up against the rock of prestige. But, in a matter of this kind, it is exceedingly short-sighted for any government to ignore the vital aspects of the situation and the tremendous harm that may follow any untoward incident. I earnestly trust that the Bengal Government will reconsider this matter and release the prisoners.

I have all along been opposed to hunger-strike at any time and more especially for the sake of getting released from prison. But I well realise what these young men have gone through during these two or three years, especially when the question of their release has been actively before the public. It is a tremendous strain for the prisoner to hang on to the verge day after day, month after month, and year after year. He is too helpless to do anything effectively and even to draw public attention, except ultimately by having recourse to hunger-strike, if all other methods fail. On Gandhiji's request, the prisoners have shown remarkable patience and fortitude. If their patience has now ended, it is no matter for surprise. I cannot think without the greatest distress of the continuance of this hunger-strike, the pain and suffering it involves and the possibility of fatal consequences. I trust these might be avoided.

2. Eighty prisoners went on strike on 7 July 1939 as a protest against the continued detention of political prisoners in Bengal. The strikers terminated their fast on 3 August 1939 on Subhas Bose's assurance that the B.P.C.C. would make "strenuous" efforts for their release.

and others to get additional labour. I think the right course will be for us to wait for another ten days or so when the Working Committee meets. After that the Madras Government can request the Government of India to take necessary action in this matter immediately.

The next question to consider will be how far it is possible and what should be the methods to withdraw some parts at least of estate labour. This is a more difficult matter not only involving a fairly large sum of money but also the question of dealing with that labour in India. Any such scheme should probably be on a voluntary basis. In any event this matter can be considered later after watching developments.

I shall be grateful to you if you will keep me informed of such developments in regard to any connected matter such as immigration rules that are being framed or shop employees, etc.

Thank you for all the help that you gave me.

With my regards to Mrs. Pai whose hospitality I shall remember.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

25. The Condition of Indians in Sri Lanka[1]

I cannot go into the details of the discussions I had with the ministers of Ceylon before I make a report to the Working Committee; but as I feel that our people are not aware of the question except in a vague fashion, I propose to give a survey of the whole question.

The Ceylon Government had some time ago given notice to a number of Indians. The persons so selected were those who had entered government service since April 1934, when a resolution was passed by the State Council asking for the employment of Ceylonese only wherever possible. In spite of this resolution a number of Indians had been employed and, therefore, they should be removed from service. Of course, it is not the fault of the persons so employed. If it was anybody's fault it was that of the heads of the departments who engaged them. It is proposed that all these people should be dismissed from service and in the event of their returning to India a month's gratuity must be given

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 27 July 1939. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 28 July 1939.

24. To A.V. Pai[1]

Bombay
July 27, 1939

My dear Pai,[2]

I arrived here this morning and am in the thick of various activities. I leave tomorrow for Allahabad and from there almost immediately for Jamshedpur. From now onwards to the time the Working Committee meets I have not got a day off to write about Ceylon. Still, I shall try to write a brief note for the Working Committee. Later perhaps I shall write more fully.

I have given some interviews in the press, cuttings of which I enclose.

Apart from the narrative of events, I propose suggesting to the Working Committee that for the present no action in the nature of reprisal should be taken. I think we should try to take advantage, as far as possible, of the somewhat favourable atmosphere created by my visit. At the same time we should not allow the impression to get abroad that we are submitting to what is happening or what might happen. I think, therefore, that for the present our position should be as follows. The trade negotiations must continue to be off till further developments induce us to reopen the matter. No other action should be taken for the time being at least regarding restrictions on the entry of Ceylon produce in India. But I do think the question of further emigration should be tackled immediately, that is to say, that such emigration of labour from India should be stopped completely. We should of course wait for Sir Baron Jayatilaka's letter which I presume will come in the course of the next two or three days. This stoppage of emigration cannot be considered as a reprisal and should not be declared as such, though of course it will have a deterrent effect on the Ceylon Government and on the colonial office. The Ceylon ministers repeatedly stated to me that they would welcome it. How far they meant what they said is another matter. I understand that the Government of India is prepared to take this action and is ready for it. It is obviously desirable to give immediate effect to it as soon as the announcement is made to prevent any sudden influx of labour if a time-limit is fixed. As a matter of fact the mere talk of the stoppage of emigration has been an incentive to planters

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1901); joined the I.C.S. in 1925; agent of the Government of India in Sri Lanka in 1936-40; Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, 1948-49; Home Secretary, 1953-58; Secretary to the President, 1958-62.

take some steps to find employment for the Ceylonese. They felt that they were justified in replacing daily-paid Indian labourers, especially those engaged since April 1934, by Ceylonese. Further they claimed that neither of their proposals involved compulsory repatriation. They involved the termination of services and in case people went back to India they would be paid a gratuity. People, although dismissed, could stay on in Ceylon and forego their gratuity.

Another objection that was raised against the government's action was that it was unilateral, without reference to India, and further that it was not postponed in spite of a request made to that effect by the Government of India.

I was immediately interested in these two matters, although the other questions regarding the position of Indians in Ceylon were of more fundamental importance; but before they could be considered these barriers had to be removed. I made it clear to the Ceylon Government that we did not wish to come in the way of their policy of employing Ceylonese and that they were perfectly justified if they chose to stop the employment of Indians in future. But with regard to others, who had been in employment, the position was different and they should be treated fairly not only to accord with the international standard but because of the intimate relations between India and Ceylon. Secondly, I made it clear to them that we were not opposed to any really voluntary and fair scheme of repatriation, provided there was no element of threat in it.

Our policy was not and would not be one of exploiting Ceylon to the disadvantage of her people. The interests of Ceylon and her people must certainly be given priority, but Indian labour and other Indian interests had built up the prosperity of Ceylon, and, therefore, they deserved particular consideration. It was true that a large part of the wealth created by Indian labour had gone out of the country in the shape of dividends and profits but it had not come to India. It had gone to the owners of the plantations. Further I stated that we were perfectly prepared to discuss all the matters between India and Ceylon having regard to the above principle but we object to unilateral action being taken by one party regardless of the other.

I cannot say very definitely what the outcome of our conversations is going to be. I expect to hear from the Ceylon Government in the course of a few days. But I was given to understand by them that while they were unable to make any basic alterations in the orders issued they would take every care to prevent hardship and to look into all special cases. How far this will make a difference I cannot say. But it will undoubtedly make some difference.

to them. This applies to those who are getting daily wages and not to those getting monthly salaries. Notices were issued to about 1,440 persons and subsequently about 150 were withdrawn as being wrongly issued. About 50 or more were withdrawn as the Indians could not be replaced. About 400 or so were under inquiry for various reasons. That left about 840 persons plus such of them as may perhaps be included after inquiry.

This was one proposal of the government to which exception was taken from the Indian side. Although the government could legally terminate the services of these daily-wage-earners at any time they liked, it is exceedingly unusual even for private employers to act in this way. For a government the procedure was unique. The fact that they were daily-wage-earners did not distinguish them from the salaried employees because though they were employed on a daily basis their employment would last a lifetime. These persons are being dismissed not for any fault of theirs or for inefficiency but to make room for the Ceylonese.

The second step which the government took was to put forward a scheme of voluntary repatriation for all other daily-paid Indians in government service. This was a voluntary scheme with gratuity in case the persons concerned went back to India, but the voluntary part was vitiated by the hint of a threat to the effect that those who did not take advantage of this ran the risk of being retrenched without any gratuity. Retrenchment, it was said, was inevitable and this would be applied to Indians first. No one would take exception to a voluntary scheme of repatriation but the threat attached made the scheme objectionable.

These were the two matters immediately in issue. There are, of course, any number of other matters too, affecting the franchise of Indians and other interests. Objection was taken to both these steps, first on the ground of principle, both from the nationalist and the labour points of view. From the nationalist point of view, it was racial discrimination. From the labour point of view, it was acting in a manner which even the International Labour Office had objected to in other similar instances.

The second objection was that these steps were in furtherance of a general policy of penalising Indians and their interests in Ceylon. Almost every Indian in the island was full of apprehension about what was going to happen. This apprehension was due not only to the steps taken by the government but to many other things which had occurred during the last two or three years.

The case of the Ceylon Government was that no racial discrimination had been or was intended but owing to economic developments and the prevalence of unemployment on a large scale, they were forced to

I enclose a copy of the leading article in the principal Ceylon paper which supports the government there. It is a Sinhalese paper with the largest circulation in Ceylon. This article will give you some idea of the effects of my visit.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

29. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Wardha
August 9, 1939

Dear President,
The All India Congress Committee, at its meeting held in Bombay on June 24th 1939, passed the following resolution about Indians in Ceylon:

> The All India Congress Committee views with grave concern the measures proposed by the Ceylon Government with reference to their Indian employees and hopes that it may be possible to find a way to avoid the most undesirable and grave conflict that, as a result of these measures, is threatened between such near and ancient neighbours as India and Ceylon.
>
> The Committee cannot contemplate without much concern a quarrel between the two countries which are separated by only a strip of water but which have a common culture and which have been intimately connected from times immemorial. The Committee desires to explore every means of avoiding conflict and, therefore, appoints Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to go to Ceylon and confer with the authorities and representative associations and individuals on behalf of the Working Committee and do all that may be possible to effect a just and honourable settlement.

2. In accordance with the direction of the A.I.C.C., I proceeded to Ceylon by air on July 15th and spent nine days there. I received a very cordial welcome during this visit from all communities and classes of people. The Board of Ministers extended to me every courtesy and hospitality. The Sinhalese, the Jaffna Tamils, the Moors, the Burghers, and of course the Indians, joined in this welcome and gave me abundantly of their affection. Apart from my conferences with the ministers

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 46/1939, N.M.M.L.

The talks I had with the ministers were free and frank and they pointed out to me the difficulties they had to face. I appreciated some of these difficulties but yet I thought that it would have been better for a different approach to be made to this problem as in principle we were aggrieved. There seemed to be no great difficulty in the readjustment of our mutual relationship by arrangement.

In so far as the two matters are concerned, therefore, the outcome of my visit has not been satisfactory—so far as I was concerned—although some satisfaction has been given. But my visit did one definite good and this was in creating an atmosphere which was more friendly between Indians and Ceylonese. This I hope will help in getting rid of the psychological barriers that have arisen and the bitterness that was being preached by many people. It was clear to me that there was no real ill will against India so far as the masses were concerned. But some sections of Ceylonese had been worked up to a pitch of racial and national antagonism. It seemed to me that the background of all this was not so much economic as political—not political so far as India was concerned, but political in regard to local affairs. Unfortunately, Indians had to some extent become pawns in local politics.

The development of a better atmosphere as a result of my visit is all to the good but the problems remain unsolved and it will be necessary for us in India to review the situation carefully and to keep watch on all possible developments. What action should be taken on behalf of India is a matter for consideration of the Congress Working Committee and the Government of India. Quite apart from any other steps that may be considered and even apart from the present situation, it seems to be desirable that the whole question of emigration from India should be reconsidered. We cannot afford to send our nationals abroad as urban or rural workers, if they are not assured of security and honourable conditions of living and status.

26. To E. W. Kannangara[1]

Allahabad
July 31, 1937

Dear Mr. Kannangara,[2]
Thank you for the copy of the proceedings of the 3rd conference with the ministers you have kindly sent me.

I appreciate greatly your personal letter and the good wishes contained in it. On my visit to Ceylon I was after something more elusive and yet far more substantial than some material change in a decision of the government. That something was to understand and to reach as far as I could the mind and heart of the people of Ceylon. Your letter and the many other messages that I received there make me believe that I did not wholly fail in this endeavour. I have carried back with me the pleasantest memories of Lanka.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1894); joined Ceylon Civil Service, 1919; secretary, Board of Ministers, 1932; president of the Y.M.C.A., and chief of the Boy Scout movement in Sri Lanka.

27. To Baron Jayatilaka[1]

Allahabad
August 7, 1939

My dear Sir Baron,
Thank you for your letter No. BM 10/39 dated the 28th July 1939. I have been continuously travelling about since my return from Ceylon. Hence the delay in my receiving your letter.

I am glad that you have defined the position of your government clearly in your letter. It is obvious that Mr. Suntheralingam[2] conveyed

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.
2. Chellappa Suntheralingam; Tamil leader in Sri Lanka; Minister for Trade and Commerce, 1948-53; Member of Parliament, 1948-60; founder of *Saiva Vellala* group.

to me something, apparently on behalf of Mr. Senanayake,[3] which did not represent the viewpoint of the Board of Ministers.[4] I had no reason to think so when he came to me on his own initiative. In any event what we are concerned with is the position that you have outlined in your letter. I shall place this letter together with my report before the Working Committee of the Congress which is meeting day after tomorrow in Wardha.

I have no doubt that there should be full discussions between the representatives of India and Ceylon in regard to all matters jointly affecting them. I fear, however, that at present this will be difficult for the reasons I mentioned to the ministers when we met last. But it is obvious that a satisfactory settlement can only come through full and frank discussions between the parties.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Don Stephen Senanayake (1884-1952); leader of the State Council, 1942; first Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, 1948-52.
4. See *post*, item 29.

28. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Lucknow
August 7, 1939

My dear Krishna,

I have not written to you about my visit to Ceylon as I have had no time. The visit was extraordinarily successful from a larger point of view, though the immediate results were small. I think there will be a great difference in future in the Indo-Ceylonese relations. As you must know the Government of India has stopped further emigration. This is right and was done at the instance of the Madras Government. I do not approve at all of any purely retaliatory action like heavy duty on coconuts. I think that all that is necessary at present is to hold up the trade talks and further to investigate the possibilities of having some really voluntary schemes of repatriation. This will exercise considerable pressure.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I enclose a copy of the leading article in the principal Ceylon paper which supports the government there. It is a Sinhalese paper with the largest circulation in Ceylon. This article will give you some idea of the effects of my visit.

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2. In accordance with the direction of the A.I.C.C., I proceeded to Ceylon by air on July 15th and spent nine days there. I received a very cordial welcome during this visit from all communities and classes of people. The Board of Ministers extended to me every courtesy and hospitality. The Sinhalese, the Jaffna Tamils, the Moors, the Burghers, and of course the Indians, joined in this welcome and gave me abundantly of their affection. Apart from my conferences with the ministers

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 46/1939, N.M.M.L.

and with representatives of Indian and Ceylonese organisations, I addressed very large gatherings both in Colombo and in the highlands, and I was happy to meet at these gatherings scores of thousands of plantation and town workers. I should like to express my deep gratitude to all these Ceylonese and Indian friends who made this visit of mine a memorable one for me.

3. Shri A.V. Pai, the Government of India Agent in Ceylon, gave me every help and his special knowledge of the subject was of the greatest assistance to me. I realised how earnestly he had tried to protect the interests of Indian labour in Ceylon.

4. The immediate issue that had induced the A.I.C.C. to send me to Ceylon was the action taken by the Ceylon Government in regard to their daily-paid Indian employees whom they were seeking to remove. This action was two-fold. Those non-Ceylonese daily-wage-earners who had been engaged by the government after the 31st March 1934 were to be discharged, and in the event of their returning to their villages in India, they were to be given free tickets and a bonus of one month's pay, which was to be paid on their return to their villages. The other non-Ceylonese daily-wage-earners, of more than five years service under the government, were offered what was called a scheme of voluntary repatriation; free tickets and gratuities, varying according to length of service, were proposed. This offer was, however, coupled with a threat that if it was not taken advantage of by a certain date, the employees would run the risk of being discharged without free tickets or gratuities. It was stated that retrenchment was inevitable in the near future and, when this took place, non-Ceylonese would go first. Both the government orders referred to non-Ceylonese but as a matter of fact they applied to Indians.

5. These two orders agitated the Indian community in Ceylon greatly and this agitation spread to India. They affected nearly ten thousand Indian daily-wage-earners, many of whom had been for long years in Ceylon. They introduced a principle of discrimination against Indians which was naturally resented. Further, they seemed to indicate that the Ceylon Government had decided upon a general anti-Indian policy of which these were the first fruits.

6. On my arrival in Ceylon I soon found that the problem I had to face was not confined to these two orders of the government. It was far more intricate and it comprised many other measures and activities of the government during the last few years. I had to consider also the economic situation and the growth of unemployment which, I was told, had compelled the government to take these steps. The minorities question still further complicated the issue, and the attitude that

Indians in Ceylon had taken in regard to this and other matters was an important consideration.

7. It is not possible for me in this brief report to deal with all these matters for this will involve writing a political and economic survey of Ceylon covering the last ten years in some detail. It would also be necessary to indicate in such a survey how the plantation system began and the development of Indian labour on the estates. I cannot write about this here but I might mention that a commission on immigration into Ceylon was appointed by the Ceylon Government in 1936 and this presented a comprehensive report in April 1938. The sole commissioner was Sir Edward Jackson,[2] who came to the conclusion that Indian labour had made a great contribution to the development of Ceylon and that the rights of those Indians, who by long residence in the island had made it their permanent home, should be recognised. He was of opinion that Indian labour was still required in Ceylon and that there should be no restrictions on immigration. The Ceylon Government has not, so far as I am aware, passed any orders on Jackson's report, but I was informed by the ministers that they do not agree with his argument or recommendations. The report has in effect been shelved. Nevertheless the report is an interesting document, full of information.

8. The following figures are taken from Sir Edward Jackson's report:

Total population of Ceylon in middle of 1936	5,738,000
Estate Indian population	659,000
Non-estate Indian population	between 190,000 and 230,000
'Workers' included in non-estate Indian population	between 152,000 and 184,000
Total number of workers employed by government in 1936	42,000
Indians employed by government in 1936	11,000

There has been a gradual decrease in the number of Indian workers in Ceylon. Daily-paid Indian workers in the government employ were estimated this year to be about 10,000.

2. (1886-1961); Attorney General of Sri Lanka, 1929-36; Chief Justice of Cyprus, 1943-51.
On 1 October 1936, the Governor of Sri Lanka appointed Jackson to enquire into and report generally on the immigration of workers into Sri Lanka from India and other countries.

9. The population of Ceylon is divided up now approximately as follows :

Sinhalese	About	3,500,000	(65%)
Old Tamils in N.E. Province		600,000	
Moors (Old Muslims)		400,000	
Burghers		30,000	
Indian Tamils		800,000	
Other Indians		4,000	
Europeans	About	10,000	

Leaving out the Sinhalese, who form the majority community, all the other minorities together form about 35% of the population. The present representation in the State Council, however, gives the Sinhalese about 80% of the seats, and the minorities have been agitating against this.

10. There was practically no anti-Indian feeling prior to the Donoughmore[3] report[4] eleven years ago. The demand of the Ceylonese before the Donoughmore commission was for full responsible government but it is significant that many witnesses opposed an extension of the franchise. The report accepted adult franchise but recommended a constitution which is really an extension of a borough council or municipal corporation.

11. With the coming of this constitution new problems arose and conflicts between majority and minority communities became more evident. The old Tamils of the N.E. Province had so far played an important, and sometimes even a dominating, part in public life and the national movement. With the growth of mass consciousness the Sinhalese wanted to dominate the scene, and fearing that if large numbers of Indians got the vote, they would side with the old Tamils, the Sinhalese leaders tried to put obstructions in the way of Indians getting the franchise. The issue originally was thus a political one, and it was only later converted into an economic issue.

12. Attempts to restrict the number of Indians enjoying the franchise led to objection and argument and to the growth of anti-Indian

3. Earl of Donoughmore (1875-1948); Chairman of Committees, House of Lords, 1911-31; Chairman of a special commission on the constitution of Sri Lanka, 1927-28; Chairman, National Radium Commission, 1933-48.

4. The report issued in 1928 advocated the abolition of communal representation and restricted franchise, and recommended universal adult suffrage and redistribution of constituencies on territorial basis. The Donoughmore constitution came into effect from 1931 and with it Sri Lanka became the first British colony to exercise universal adult franchise. It also obtained a large degree of internal autonomy with preponderant political strength of the Sinhalese majority.

feeling. The law as it stood was rather vague and a clause relating to domicile could be variously interpreted. Under the rules made by the Ceylon Government, it worked to the disadvantage of large numbers of Indians who were permanent residents of the island.

13. Subsequently the Village Communities Ordinance[5] gave rise to further protests on the part of Indians as estate labour was excluded from exercising the franchise for these village communities. It is proposed to make these village communities the basis for the formation of district and provincial councils. The great majority of the Indian population would thus have no say in the formation of all these various councils, even though many of them might have the vote for the State Council.

14. This question of franchise for the State Council and the village communities is a fundamental one for the Indians. It is a somewhat complicated one and I cannot consider it here. But it is clear that when a proper adjustment takes place of relations between India and Ceylon, this question must be fully dealt with and settled satisfactorily. The Ceylonese viewpoint cannot be ignored. They say that migrant labour has no permanent interest in the country and therefore does not deserve a vote. In regard to the village communities especially, it is pointed out that estate labour has no organic connection with the old village community. It lives separately in estates and has separate interests. If given the vote it would overwhelm and extinguish the village community. There is some force in these arguments but it should not be difficult to meet them. Thus Indians who have been resident for a number of years might be presumed to be permanent settlers and given the vote for the State Council without further inquiry. Five years have been suggested as a fit period for this, but even a ten-year period might be accepted. As for the village communities, it should not be difficult to form separate communities of groups of Indian workers in the estates.

15. The real difficulty is the growth of the new conception of nationalism. In law both Indians and Ceylonese are British subjects and have the same nationality. But in practice we are beginning to think more and more in terms of Indian nationals and Ceylonese

5. The first attempt made to restrict the powers of Indian settlers in Sri Lanka was by the Village Community Ordinance of 1889, which defined the Indian settler as 'labourer'. In 1924, the Ordinance denied the Indian settler the right to vote. In 1935, the purchasing of crown lands by non-Sinhalese was prohibited. The Amending Ordinance of 1938 deprived the Indians of all civic rights in the village communities.

nationals, which exclude each other. The Ceylonese say that if a person has become a national of Ceylon, he ceases to be an Indian national and cannot claim any special rights or privileges as such. Some such development is bound to take place. During this transition period we can fix periods of residence which should be presumed to qualify a person for exercising the rights of citizenship.

16. The growth of this feeling of a separate nationality made the Ceylonese self-conscious and somewhat resentful of external intrusion. As a colony, they were completely under the economic domination of vested interests in Britain, but these major interests were too big and too well protected by law and otherwise to be combated. Indian interests in business and service, though far less important, were more obvious and vulnerable. So anti-Indian feeling increased. When the economic crisis affected Ceylon (this was later than in other countries) and unemployment increased, the line of least resistance for those in authority was to make scapegoats of the Indians in service. It is interesting to note that the representatives of British authority in Ceylon have all along supported this anti-Indian policy. The British planters are, however, somewhat alarmed at it, as they fear that this might affect their interests in the plantations, which depend so much on Indian labour.

17. During the past two or three years some other steps have also been taken by the Ceylon Government which have been to the disadvantage of Indian residents and businessmen. Even more so, there are rumours of fresh attacks on Indian interests, of more stringent immigration laws, of greater strictures in extending the franchise to Indians, of rules affecting Indian business, and of an elimination of Indian employees from state as well as private service. All this has naturally alarmed the Indian residents of Ceylon, and the two government orders, which were the immediate cause of my visit, should be viewed in this perspective in order to be properly understood.

18. On the part of the Indians, everything has not been as it should be. There are Indian vested interests in Ceylon, which, like all vested interests, exploit others, and it is not surprising that the Ceylonese should view them with disfavour. These interests have not hesitated to seek special protection from the Governor or the British Government as against the Ceylon Government; they have sometimes opposed any extension of freedom to the people of Ceylon and allied themselves with reactionary forces. This has been resented greatly by the Sinhalese and has led to further estrangement.

19. In the tussle going on between the majority community (the Sinhalese) and the various minorities, the latter have joined together in

the State Council and put forward a demand for fifty-fifty. That is to say the Sinhalese, although 65%, should only have 50% representation, and the remaining 50% should be divided up among the minorities. They call this balanced representation. Personally, I think this is an unreasonable demand, although I realise that the minorities have not been well treated. The Indians in the State Council (they are very few) allied themselves unfortunately with this minorities group and supported their fifty-fifty demand. This irritated the majority (Sinhalese) greatly, and it is this majority that controls the government. Almost immediately after this decision of the Indians, the government came out with their two orders for the removal of their Indian daily-paid employees. I do not mean to say that these orders would not have been issued but for the Indian group joining the minorities demand. The orders would have been issued in any case as they were the result of a long-thought-out policy. But the anti-Indian feeling would have been less and the situation easier to handle.

20. I am quite clear in my own mind that when Indians go abroad in any capacity, they should not range themselves with the reactionary elements there. They must remember the principles for which we stand in India and for which the Congress has laboured. They should help in every way the freedom movement in the country of their adoption and make it clear that they are not there to exploit the people. Adopting this basic policy, they should stand up for the rights of their own countrymen and not tolerate any infringement or limitation of them.

21. I come now to the two orders of the government to which I have referred above. The second of these dealt with a scheme for voluntary repatriation which could not have been objected to if it had been really voluntary. But the threat of subsequent dismissal without gratuities attached to it robbed it of all grace and left little of free-will about it. This second scheme applied to about 8,000 daily-wage-earners employed by the government—those who joined service before 1st April 1934.

22. The first order related to those daily-wage-earners who had joined service since the 31st March 1934 and these were discharged. They were not to be forcibly repatriated, it should be remembered, but inducements were offered to them to go back to India. If they preferred to stay on in Ceylon, they could do so, but they would not then get free tickets or a month's salary as a bonus. Legally there is no doubt that the government was entitled to discharge them but there are other and more vital considerations which govern employment, especially state employment.

23. I had long talks with the Board of Ministers and they assured me that they did not wish to discriminate in any way against Indians as such. They had been compelled to take action because of the growing distress and unemployment among their own people, who must have first preference. I pointed out to them that the economic problems they had to face were not going to be affected in any way by this discharge of a thousand or so persons. Other measures would have to be taken and there seemed to be plenty of scope for these as a large part of Ceylon was still undeveloped. I was perfectly agreeable to a complete stoppage of further employment of Indians by the state or indeed of immigration of Indian labour. This in itself would give immediate relief. Further, I suggested that a really voluntary scheme of repatriation should be put forward and I felt sure that many would take advantage of it. But in so far as the Indians at present in state service were concerned, they should not be pushed out in this way. The fact that they were daily-wage-earners made no difference as many of them earned a daily wage throughout their lives.

24. I could not make much impression on the ministers although I pointed out that what they were doing was opposed to the rules laid down by the International Labour Office at Geneva. Further, the fact that they had taken this action unilaterally without reference to India was naturally resented in India, and their refusal to postpone action, when the Government of India had requested them to do so, had been interpreted as an affront to India. I had a feeling that the ministers realised that a mistake had been committed but they could not undo what they had done for fear of the consequences. Hopes had been held out to many Ceylonese who were unemployed, and in some instances arrangements had already been made for them to take the place of the Indians who were being discharged. An anti-Indian agitation had been allowed to grow up chiefly in Colombo and some irresponsible persons were preaching a boycott of Indian shops. The ministers did not feel themselves strong enough, even if they so desired, to go counter to this agitation.

25. At one stage an offer was made to me unofficially which I understand came from the ministers. Under this offer the scheme of repatriation of those Indians, who had joined government service prior to March 1934, was given up. Regarding those who had joined service since March 31, 1934, and who were being discharged, certain important variations were suggested. A number of exceptions were laid down—marriage to a Ceylonese woman, previous service if any was to be taken into account, and generally hard cases of people with no homes in India were to be favourably considered. The most important exception was

that if anyone could show ten years residence in Ceylon, he or she would be excluded from the operation of the order.

26. I did not like this proposal although I recognised that it was an advance on the existing position. I disliked it chiefly because it went against the principle for which I had been contending. I suggested that if the ten-year period of residence could be reduced to five years residence, this would be reasonable and in conformity with the I.L.O. convention. This was not agreed to. Very reluctantly I agreed then to the ten-year period of residence. This would have probably reduced the number of Indians discharged to about 500. It was not the number, however, that mattered to me so much as the desire to have an amicable understanding between India and Ceylon. I wanted this to lead to a full discussion of all problems between the countries and an enduring settlement.

27. I found later that this proposal to vary the government order, which had been made to me as if coming from the other side, and which I had with reluctance accepted, did not represent the viewpoint of the Board of Ministers. I was somewhat surprised at this and it was evident that I had been misled. The ministers were prepared to accept some minor variations but they could not agree to ten years residence being considered sufficient for a person not to be affected by the order for discharge. They suggested ten years government service. Probably there were very few persons, in the class affected, who would have profited by this. I was unable to agree to this. The ministers were unable to go beyond this as it was clear that any substantial change affecting those Ceylonese, who had been promised posts, would have led, according to them, to serious trouble in the country. They assured me again, however, that no discrimination against Indians was intended and that they would examine favourably every hard case.

28. I attach to this report copies of my correspondence with Sir Baron Jayatilaka, as well as the verbatim reports of my three conferences with the Board of Ministers.

29. The net result of my visit was thus apparently not very great. Some slight relief was obtained for the 1934-and-after class of employees who were being discharged. Probably two hundred or so additional persons were exempted and only about 600 to 700 are being discharged. As for the *ante*-1934 class, it appears that 4,000 have accepted the offer of repatriation with gratuities.

30. I am inclined to think, however, that my visit produced deeper and more far-reaching results. It lifted the argument to the higher level of future relations of Ceylon and India and the immediate issues began to be examined in this perspective. The Ceylonese intelligentsia

was greatly influenced and were rather ashamed of the irresponsible behaviour of some of the Sinhalese who were preaching racial boycotts. Almost everyone was convinced that the economic issue that had been raised was a cloak for a political objective, and next year's elections to the State Council were influencing many of the activities of the government. Though it would be folly to ignore the many cleavages that exist between the Ceylonese and the Indians in Ceylon, I do think that my visit has resulted in bringing India and Ceylon nearer to each other, and to that extent it may be easier to find a solution for our mutual problems.

31. For the Indians in Ceylon, both the labouring classes and the businessmen, my visit was very welcome. It was tangible evidence of the great interest that the Congress and India were taking in their welfare. It added to their self-respect and self-confidence. It gave them also, I hope, a new viewpoint. I did not hesitate to point out their errors and to urge them to cooperate with the Ceylonese for the advancement of Ceylon and her people. I warned them not to look for help to the imperial power as against the people of Ceylon, and in no way to range themselves, for the protection of their own special interests, against the interests of the Ceylonese as a whole. I begged them to remember the principles for which the Indian National Congress stood. But keeping in mind all this, they had also to remember that they had to keep up the honour and dignity of the Indian people and to tolerate no affront or injury to them, more especially to the hundreds of thousands of Indian labourers who work in the plantations and the urban areas.

32. As is usual in foreign countries, I found Indians split up in numerous mutually suspicious groups. It was difficult to get them to work together or to have faith in each other. One of the substantial results of my visit was to induce these various groups to join together and form one organisation—the Ceylon Indian Congress. I was assured by all of them before I left that they would cooperate together in all matters affecting the Indians in Ceylon, and would also work in cooperation with the Ceylonese for the freedom of Ceylon. The organisation, the Ceylon Indian Congress, would be guided by the principles of the Indian National Congress.

33. Ceylon is backward in many ways although, till recently, the living standards of her people were considerably higher than those of the Indian masses. The rich soil produced wealth for them without much labour, the coconut trees were laden with coconuts without any special effort on man's part. A great part of this wealth, especially from the plantations, went abroad. Yet some remained to keep the

people of the country more or less contented with their lot. These people were not very industrious and, where hard work was necessary, they preferred to see Indians doing it. Their economy was based on two factors: the tea and rubber plantations and the coconuts. It was an insecure foundation and the economic slump hit them hard. There were restrictions on tea and rubber, and the price of coconuts fell. For the first time large numbers of Ceylonese felt the pinch and were thrown out of employment. Peasants owning land were ejected by forced sales on the part of the Chettiar money-lenders. They flocked to the cities and joined the unemployed. They could not compete with Indian labour which was cheaper and more efficient. In business also, the Ceylonese could not easily compete with the Indians. Big business was in British hands, though Indians were beginning to have a share in it. Small business was controlled by Indians and whole streets in Colombo were full of Indian shops.

34. Ceylon is going through a belated economic revolution and this is a painful process. She cannot subsist on a coconut economy, nor can the plantations continue in their present form for very long. Meanwhile a narrow nationalism grows, the masses, egged on by distress, become aggressively awake, and look upon the Indian as usurper. There is fear of British and Indian capital controlling Ceylon and of Indian labour swamping the country. British capital and interests are too strong and too well-protected to be dealt with; not so Indian capital or labour or interests. Ceylon for the Ceylonese is a natural and popular cry.

35. It is easy to understand all this and India should not withhold sympathy from it. But it is clear that Ceylon cannot politically or economically stand by herself. A glance at the map is sufficient to demonstrate this. When the British Empire fades away, where will Ceylon go? She must associate herself, economically at least, with larger groups and India is obviously indicated. Because of this, it is unfortunate that many of the leaders of Ceylon should help in creating barriers between India and Ceylon. They do not seem to realise that while India can well do without Ceylon, in the future to come Ceylon may not be able to do without India. There is talk of new immigration laws and other restrictions which inevitably would affect Indians more than others. New rules are being framed restricting the employment of Indians in private and even domestic service. To some extent all this may be justified, but the spirit underlying it is very undesirable. I venture to hope that my visit may have done some good in changing this spirit and background.

36. Probably the most important question affecting Indians in Ceylon

is that of franchise. I discussed this matter with the ministers, as I did many other matters also, but I could not, and had no desire to, go deeply into these questions. We were faced with an initial hurdle in the shape of the government order of discharge of Indian employees. So long as this hurdle was not surmounted, it was not easy to discuss other matters. I pointed out however, and the ministers agreed to this, that there should be at some later stage a full and frank discussion of all problems between India and Ceylon.

37. When this later stage will arrive I cannot now say. While I was in Ceylon, the Government of India intimated to the Ceylon Government that the proposed trade talks would not take place. They have apparently been indefinitely postponed. This decision had a very noticeable effect on the Ceylon ministers. They were perturbed by it and feared some untoward consequences. An embargo on Ceylon copra or a heavy duty on it would hit Ceylon very hard. It is true that in an economic war between India and Ceylon, India would suffer more as her exports to Ceylon are far greater than her imports from the island. But India's economy would not be seriously affected, while Ceylon's would be completely upset. The Ceylon ministers were therefore eager and anxious to have the trade talks with India and they pressed me to have these fixed up. Because of this desire of theirs, they were prepared to go far to meet our wishes, but, again, fear of local reactions prevented them from upsetting their previous orders about the discharge of Indian employees.

38. Travancore state, as a measure of retaliation against Ceylon, has increased the duty on Jaffna tobacco. This is hitting Jaffna hard as this particular brand of tobacco apparently has only the Travancore market. It is peculiarly unfortunate that the Jaffna Tamils have been made to suffer, as they are in no way responsible for the decisions of the Ceylon Government. They have consistently opposed these decisions.

39. The question for us to consider now is what, if any, steps should be taken on behalf of India. I am entirely averse to anything in the nature of retaliation, such as an embargo on Ceylon copra. This would begin a cycle of conflict and mutual injury which would result in bitterness and ill will between the two countries. In spite of the unfortunate and ill-advised action of the Ceylon Government, there is a fund of goodwill for India in the country and it would be a great pity to lose this.

40. One step is obviously indicated and this has already been taken by

the Government of India in consultation with the Madras Government.[6] This is the immediate and total stoppage of further labour emigration from India to Ceylon. This is not in the nature of retaliation and yet it is bound to bring considerable, though indirect, pressure on the Ceylon Government. For the present there is no lack of labour on the plantations and for a year or two or even more, the stopping of further emigration will not be felt. But psychologically the effect will be immediate. It will demonstrate that India is not prepared to put up with any ill-treatment of her children abroad. It will also be considered as a possible fore-runner of other action. One immediate and desirable effect will be the betterment of Indian labour on the estates. As the fresh supply is cut off, the existing labour in the plantations will be treated better and will be in a stronger position to bargain. This stoppage of further emigration must therefore be welcomed. Care must be taken, however, that this stoppage is definite and there are no leakages.

41. A necessary consequence of this stoppage of emigration is the closing of the Mandapam Emigration Depot near Rameshwar. In any event it was undesirable for an emigration depot on Indian soil to be in the charge of the Ceylon Government.

42. It may be worthwhile to consider a scheme of voluntary repatriation of Indian estate labour. The great majority of these people are permanently settled in Ceylon and there is no question of their being encouraged to come back to India. But if there was a purely voluntary scheme, this might induce ten or twenty thousand estate workers to return to India. This would take away all the surplus estate population and would leave the barest margin for the plantations. The value of the Indian worker would immediately rise both in the plantations and in the urban areas, and all talk of pushing out Indians would cease. Such a scheme might be drawn up by the Government of India in cooperation with the Madras Government and the Ceylon Government. I make this proposal for the consideration of the Working Committee, realising that it might involve difficulties.

43. Apart from this I do not think any further steps need be taken at present. We should watch developments. Trade talks should not take place till a more suitable atmosphere prevails.

44. I am attaching to this report a number of press cuttings from newspapers in Ceylon. These will enable the Working Committee to

6. On 31 July 1939, the Government of India decided to terminate from 1 August 1939 the employment of a large number of Indians engaged in unskilled work in Sri Lanka but authorised the Madras Government to issue special orders in case of exemptions.

appreciate how my visit was viewed by the people of Ceylon and what reactions it produced upon them. I propose to hand over to the A.I.C.C. office a large number of memoranda, reports and other papers which I received in Ceylon. Some of these are very valuable documents which can be studied with advantage in considering various problems affecting the Indians in Ceylon. They may be kept for future use.

45. I must apologise for this superficial report on my visit to Ceylon. I should have liked to write more fully and to deal with the position of the Indians in Ceylon in some detail. But the very wealth of information at my disposal has prevented me from doing so, for nothing short of a little book would have done justice to the subject. I am unable to find time to write it and the members of the Working Committee may not find time to read it if it was written.

46. There is one matter, wholly unconnected with the object of my visit, which I should like to mention. This relates to the Bodh Gaya temple. There is considerable feeling over this in Ceylon and a strong desire to see it under Buddhist control. An increasing stream of pilgrims comes to Gaya from Ceylon every year. This matter was considered some time back by a committee appointed on behalf of the Congress and, so far as I remember, it was recommended that a joint committee of Hindus and Buddhists should control the temple. Such a solution would be acceptable to the Buddhists. I do not know why no steps have been so far taken to give effect to the committee's recommendation. If this could be done, it would be a graceful and very welcome gesture to the Buddhist world. Even otherwise, it would be the right thing to do.

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal Nehru

30. To C. Rajagopalachari[1]

Wardha
August 11, 1939

My dear Rajagopalachari,
I enclose a copy of my report on Ceylon. We are not publishing this. I also enclose a copy of the Working Committee resolution,[2] and also a copy of my letter to A.V. Pai, the Government of India's Agent in Ceylon.[3]

I think that the two steps which must be taken immediately are: the complete stoppage of emigration not only in theory but in practice and shutting up of the Mandapam Depot. I hope your government will move in these matters.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.
2. The Committee offered "to cooperate in all steps to adjust relationships so as to give every opportunity to the people of Ceylon to advance and find self-fulfilment. But such steps when they affect two parties must not be taken unilaterally," and the great majority of Indians who had settled down in Sri Lanka and made it their homeland had earned the right to be considered on a par with other inhabitants of the island.
3. See *post*, item 32.

31. To H.M. Desai[1]

Wardha
August 11, 1939

My dear Desai,[2]
Your letter of the 4th August has just reached me. I am writing in some haste.

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.
2. Hiralal Maganlal Desai (b. 1893); president, Indian Mercantile Chamber in Sri Lanka, 1939-46.

You must have seen the Working Committee's resolution on Ceylon. I enclose a copy of it. I think that this resolution though mildly-worded will have effect. The chief thing to do now is to stop immediately all emigration and to put an end to the Mandapam Depot.

For the rest, Indians should not lose their heads because of the hooliganism of a number of rowdies in connection with the boycotts. It is right that the Indians take up a strong attitude in regard to it with the Government of Ceylon. But they should maintain their dignity and not allow themselves to get excited. They should build up their own organisation, the Ceylon Indian Congress, and make it strong enough to take any action that may be necessary.

I do not think it will be desirable for you to send a deputation to the Viceroy. Nothing more is going to be done at this end at present and by your sending a deputation you will injure your cause in Ceylon. For the present, therefore, you should watch developments. As a matter of fact all the important cards are in Indians' hands. But we must play them carefully so as not to break with Ceylon and at the same time to get Indians there honoured and respected. If you take up the right attitude you will find that a large body of Ceylon opinion supports you.

If, after a month or two, the situation continues to deteriorate, it might be desirable for a representative of the Ceylon Indian Congress to come over to India to discuss the situation with the Working Committee. Of course if later on trade talks take place it will be proper for your experts to be present.

There is a likelihood of my going to China for a month or so within the next fortnight.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

32. To A.V. Pai[1]

Wardha
August 11, 1939

My dear Pai,
Thank you for your letter of the 2nd August which has just reached me here, also for your previous letters with their enclosures.

I have been greatly rushed since my return from Ceylon and have had no time to write a proper report or otherwise put down my thoughts in writing. Ultimately I wrote a very superficial report overnight for the Working Committee. I enclose a copy of this. We are not publishing this but you can show it to such friends as you may consider necessary. I also enclose a copy of the Working Committee resolution.

It seems to me that for the moment no other steps should be taken. It may, however, become necessary if the situation worsens to take other steps. I have no doubt that the stoppage of emigration is itself a big enough step and it will exercise continuous pressure on the Ceylon Government. But we have to make sure that this stoppage is real and that people do not trickle in. You could help by impressing this fact on the Government of India and the Madras Government. I am also writing to the Madras Government about it. You will notice that in the Working Committee resolution we have asked for the closing down of the Mandapam Depot. I think this should be insisted upon. This in itself will not only be an effective step but also it will have a psychological importance. The planters and others will realise that we are serious.

You will notice that in my report I suggested that the Government of India might consider a scheme of voluntary repatriation. The Working Committee were not keen on making this recommendation as it might lead to difficulties.

Desai has written to me asking my advice about the desirability of the Ceylon Indian Congress sending a deputation to the Government of India. I do not think it will be advisable to do this especially at this stage. It would have no effect at this end and it would have a bad effect at the other end. Of course if and when some trade talks take place it might be desirable for the Ceylon Indian Congress to send representatives who might help as experts.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Regarding these trade talks the Working Committee have said nothing in their resolution because it seems to be uncalled for. But they were clearly of opinion that no trade talks should take place till the situation was more favourable.

Goonesinghe's[2] activities are very undesirable, especially the aggressive boycott of Indian shops. In this matter a strong line should be taken with the Government of Ceylon. It is fantastic that Indians should be forcibly prevented from entering Indian shops.

Generally I feel that our line should be to treat Ceylon as a somewhat spoilt and wayward child, not behaving properly. We should not be too hard and should appeal to its better nature to assert itself. That there is this better nature, I have no doubt.

Sir Baron Jayatilaka sent me a long letter in answer to the letter which I wrote to him from Kandy. There was nothing very new in it and he merely repeated what he had told me.

Do keep me informed of developments. But there is a considerable chance of my going to China for a few weeks towards the end of this month.

I fear that some of the figures given in my report are not very accurate. I have written in a great hurry.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. A.E. Goonesinghe (1891-1967); President of the Ceylon Labour Union; chairman, the Ceylon Labour Party and the Ceylon Trade Union Congress; minister in the first United National Party Government, 1947-52.

33. To Jagdish Prasad[1]

Allahabad
October 30, 1939

Dear Kunwar Sahab,

I have read in the papers that a delegation from Ceylon will be coming to New Delhi soon with a view to participating in trade talks between

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

India and Ceylon.[2] I do not know what recent developments have been and how far the Government of Ceylon have varied their previous policy in regard to India. I find that there is some alarm in Indian circles in Ceylon in regard to these trade talks. In particular, they are apprehensive lest Indian labour emigration to Ceylon be reopened again. I understand that there is a great deal of pressure from the Ceylon planters to have this question reopened.[3] I do hope that the Government of India will not agree to any change in so far as the Indian emigration to Ceylon is concerned. I am quite sure that there should be complete prohibition of labour emigration till such time as the position of Indians in Ceylon, more particularly the workers, undergoes a complete change for the better.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Government of India communique of 13 December 1939 said that the talks to be held in the third week of November had not taken place as the Sri Lanka Government were reluctant to treat Indian labourers justly.
3. In September 1939, a meeting of the Planters' Association of Sri Lanka called for an immediate settlement of the differences between India and Sri Lanka. It sought the lifting of the bar on immigrant labour to prevent injury to the main revenue-producing industries.

2

VISIT TO CHINA

1. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
July 10, 1939

My dear Krishna,
Your letter of the 3rd July has just come.[2] I quite realise that it will not be possible for me to go to China if war breaks out in Europe. That is understood. I also realise that this is a possibility in the course of the next six weeks. Nevertheless one has to make one's plans on the basis of there being no war during the next two months or so. If by any chance I am in China and war breaks out then I shall have to hurry back immediately by air.

I shall wait to hear from you or the Chinese Consul here about the Chinese Government's reactions to my visit. It seems to me that about the only suitable date for me to leave India will be the 20th August, Sunday, by Air France. This line goes direct to Indo-China and Hong Kong and leaves once a week on Sundays from Allahabad. I cannot easily go on the previous Sunday and later will limit my stay in China. I ought to be back at the latest by the 7th October. I should like to go to Hong Kong, to begin with, to meet Madame Sun Yat-sen there and others. But this takes me a little out of the way and it means two or three days spent on the Hong Kong visit. The direct route to Chungking is from Indo-China.

On my way back, as I wrote to you, I should like to come by road to Burma. I am told it takes ten or twelve days from Chungking to Rangoon. By the end of September the road should be in a fairly good condition after the rains. If, however, it is better to spend more time in China itself I could return by air from Chungking and thus save a week.

I think I mentioned to you Carter,[3] the secretary of the Institute of Pacific Relations, whom I met on his way from China to Europe. He had discussed this China visit with me and the other day he cabled to enquire whether I was going. He cabled to me from Moscow from where he went on to London. I sent him a cable in reply to the effect

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He had written that the Chinese Ambassador in London had welcomed the idea of Jawaharlal's visit to China but "...if war is to break out...I cannot see how you would leave India without the serious risk of leaving the national movement without leadership."
3. Edward Carter (1878-1954); American educationist; secretary, 1926-33, and secretary-general, 1933-46, of the American Institute of Pacific Relations.

that I want to go but my programme depended on the international situation. I have had another cable from him saying that he had received messages from China welcoming my visit and that he had mentioned this to Halifax as well as some Chinese name in London which I could not read, but which I take to be the Ambassador's name. I have an idea that Carter has also cabled directly to Chiang Kai-shek.[4] But I am not sure. I have received some letters from China also from odd people, chiefly connected with the Institute of Pacific Relations, welcoming my visit and saying that they would meet me *en route*.

Day after tomorrow I am leaving for Bombay and on 15th I go by air to Colombo reaching there on the 16th. In Bombay I shall meet the Chinese Consul again and find out from him how matters stand. If you wish to communicate with me by cable from the 16th onwards to about the 26th or 27th you can cable to Colombo.

Gandhiji has gone to the Frontier Province. But in view of the international situation it has been decided to hold a meeting of the Working Committee as soon as some crisis is imminent. This will probably be held in Delhi and Gandhiji will come back from the Frontier for it.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

2. To Mao Tse-tung[1]

Allahabad
July 11, 1939

Dear Friend,[2]
Your letter of May 24th[3] has just reached me and given me great pleasure. For years past we have been following with admiration your career and the fortunes of the 8th Route Army.[4] Ever since Japan invaded China, the people of India have felt the fullest solidarity with the people of China. We wish that we could have offered you some help in the vast undertaking in which you are engaged. But, as you know, we ourselves are struggling for our freedom and our energy is taken up by the struggle. But as a token of our solidarity with you and of our desire to be of help to you, we have sent the Indian Medical Unit on behalf of the Indian National Congress. It is a matter of great satisfaction to us that this Unit under Dr. M. Atal has been doing good work with the 8th Route Army.

It is my earnest wish to visit China and to convey personally to the Chinese people the good wishes of the people of India. There is just a possibility of my going to China for a brief period at the end of August or in September if the international situation permits it. In the event of my going there, I shall look forward with great pleasure to meeting you and paying my homage to the men of the 8th Route Army.

With all good wishes to you for the success of the cause of the Chinese people.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1893-1976); Chairman, Chinese Communist Party, 1935-76; led the historic Long March from Kiangsi to Yenan in 1934-35; proclaimed the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949; Chairman, People's Republic of China, 1949-59.
3. Mao Tse-tung in his letter thanked the Indian National Congress for sending a medical unit and goodwill messages "encouraging them in fighting the Japanese imperialists."
4. In September 1937, the army of the Chinese Communist Party was reorganized as the Eighth Route Army.

3. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Bombay
July 28, 1939

My dear Krishna,
On arrival here yesterday from Ceylon, I received three letters from you dated the 13th and 14th July dealing with Hyderabad, China and Walsh's suggestion about my *Autobiography*.[2]

About Hyderabad, I agree with what you say, but the people who are running the show are very irresponsible and one does not know what to do with them. A few days back the Hyderabad Government produced a reform scheme.[3] This is a curious document worthy of some study. They have produced something which is fantastically reactionary. Meanwhile the Arya Samaj have provisionally stopped their satyagraha.[4]

About China, I note what you say. There seems to be a race between developments in Europe and India and the possibility of my going. For the present I am getting ready to go in case this is possible, though I realise it may not be possible. I am taking the necessary visas. I have also got myself inoculated today against cholera and I shall probably have something injected inside me for typhoid. All this not because I am afraid of catching these ailments but in order to keep in line with regulations.

The only other thing to be done is to reserve accommodation. I appreciate what you and the Chinese Ambassador say about not giving publicity. I shall try to avoid doing this, though how this is to be done to the end, I do not know. As I wrote to you, the date that suits me is August 22nd by Air France from Allahabad. I can go a week later,

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Krishna Menon had written that Jawaharlal's proposed visit to China was welcomed by the Chinese Government. He wanted to know to what extent he could associate himself with the activities of certain Hyderabad parties in London. He also referred to the publication of the *Autobiography* in the United States.
3. A new 'constitution' for Hyderabad state was announced on 19 July 1939 on the basis of the recommendations made by the reforms committee appointed in September 1937. The Nizam was declared the supreme head of the state and the embodiment of popular sovereignty. He not merely retained the power to confirm or veto any legislation but could also dismiss his executive or change the machinery of government. The 'constitution' provided for the expansion of the legislative council into an assembly of 85 members of whom 28 were to be nominated. The principle of joint electorates was maintained and Hindus and Muslims were given equal representation in the legislature.
4. See *post*, section 7, item 3.

but this will cut short my stay at the other end. There is only one route for me to take, that is from Allahabad to Hanoi. Beyond that it will depend on what instructions I get. For the present, therefore, I am making no arrangement, though I am fixing up things.

On my return from Ceylon I have got to face a host of important matters. To add to my work Rajendra Babu has dragged me into an arbitration at Jamshedpur between the workers and the Tata Company.[5] My next two or three weeks are going to be terribly full up and the only way I can keep various engagements is to go by air.

Today's papers announced that the Government of India might send Indian troops to Egypt.[6] This is an important matter not only in itself but because the government make it a test of our reactions in regard to their war policy. I understand that a meeting of the Congress Working Committee is likely to be held immediately to consider this. I shall attend this.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

5. In April 1939, Rajendra Prasad requested Jawaharlal to join him as co-arbitrator in the dispute between the Tata Iron and Steel Company and the Tata Workers' Union. The work of arbitration was done in the first week of August 1939. For Jawaharlal's draft of the Jamshedpur Award, see *post*, section 11, item 1.

6. The British War Office announced on 27 July 1939 that troops from India would be soon despatched to Egypt.

4. The Possibility of Going to China[1]

3. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Bombay
July 28, 1939

My dear Krishna,

On arrival here yesterday from Ceylon, I received three letters from you dated the 13th and 14th July dealing with Hyderabad, China and Walsh's suggestion about my *Autobiography*.[2]

About Hyderabad, I agree with what you say, but the people who are running the show are very irresponsible and one does not know what to do with them. A few days back the Hyderabad Government produced a reform scheme.[3] This is a curious document worthy of some study. They have produced something which is fantastically reactionary. Meanwhile the Arya Samaj have provisionally stopped their satyagraha.[4]

About China, I note what you say. There seems to be a race between developments in Europe and India and the possibility of my going. For the present I am getting ready to go in case this is possible, though I realise it may not be possible. I am taking the necessary visas. I have also got myself inoculated today against cholera and I shall probably have something injected inside me for typhoid. All this not because I am afraid of catching these ailments but in order to keep in line with regulations.

The only other thing to be done is to reserve accommodation. I appreciate what you and the Chinese Ambassador say about not giving publicity. I shall try to avoid doing this, though how this is to be done to the end, I do not know. As I wrote to you, the date that suits me is August 22nd by Air France from Allahabad. I can go a week later,

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Krishna Menon had written that Jawaharlal's proposed visit to China was welcomed by the Chinese Government. He wanted to know to what extent he could associate himself with the activities of certain Hyderabad parties in London. He also referred to the publication of the *Autobiography* in the United States.
3. A new 'constitution' for Hyderabad state was announced on 19 July 1939 on the basis of the recommendations made by the reforms committee appointed in September 1937. The Nizam was declared the supreme head of the state and the embodiment of popular sovereignty. He not merely retained the power to confirm or veto any legislation but could also dismiss his executive or change the machinery of government. The 'constitution' provided for the expansion of the legislative council into an assembly of 85 members of whom 28 were to be nominated. The principle of joint electorates was maintained and Hindus and Muslims were given equal representation in the legislature.
4. See *post*, section 7, item 3.

but this will cut short my stay at the other end. There is only one route for me to take, that is from Allahabad to Hanoi. Beyond that it will depend on what instructions I get. For the present, therefore, I am making no arrangement, though I am fixing up things.

On my return from Ceylon I have got to face a host of important matters. To add to my work Rajendra Babu has dragged me into an arbitration at Jamshedpur between the workers and the Tata Company.[5] My next two or three weeks are going to be terribly full up and the only way I can keep various engagements is to go by air.

Today's papers announced that the Government of India might send Indian troops to Egypt.[6] This is an important matter not only in itself but because the government make it a test of our reactions in regard to their war policy. I understand that a meeting of the Congress Working Committee is likely to be held immediately to consider this. I shall attend this.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

5. In April 1939, Rajendra Prasad requested Jawaharlal to join him as co-arbitrator in the dispute between the Tata Iron and Steel Company and the Tata Workers' Union. The work of arbitration was done in the first week of August 1939. For Jawaharlal's draft of the Jamshedpur Award, see *post*, section 11, item 1.
6. The British War Office announced on 27 July 1939 that troops from India would be soon despatched to Egypt.

4. The Possibility of Going to China[1]

Varying reports are appearing in the press about the possibility of my going to China. I stated some time back that, much as I wanted to go, there was not much chance of going. Since then, these reports having reached Chungking and other places in China, I have received many invitations from various organisations there. I am greatly tempted to go but I cannot say definitely whether I shall be able to do so

1. Interview to the *National Herald*, Allahabad, 1 August 1939. *National Herald*, 2 August 1939.

or not. I am distressed by many things in India which demand attention. There is the hunger-strike of the political prisoners, and other matters. There is also the international situation which hovers over a crisis. If it is at all possible for me to leave India, I might go away for a few weeks. The journey does not take long by air, but I cannot decide at this stage.

5. To the Consul-General of China[1]

Jamshedpur
August 5, 1939

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your telegram which was forwarded to me here.[2] I have long been hoping to pay a visit to China but owing to internal conditions in India and the international situation, it was difficult for me to decide finally. Even now the situation is so complex that it is not easy for me to be definite. Still I hope that it may be possible for me to go.

When I was in Bombay I had occasion to discuss this matter with the Vice-Consul for China there and I also communicated, through a friend, with the Chinese Ambassador in London. I wanted to find out whether a visit from me would be considered suitable at this juncture by the Chinese Government. I learnt from London as well as the Vice-Consul in Bombay that my visit would be welcomed. I received also various messages from organisations in Chungking offering welcome to me. Being uncertain of my programme I did not write to you on this subject. As I happened to be in Bombay I had occasions to meet the Vice-Consul several times and I hope that he would keep you in touch with this matter.

The Chinese Ambassador in London sent a message to me that it was better for me to avoid too much publicity about the date of my visit. Presumably he was thinking of any possible Japanese interference on the way. This puts me in some difficulty as it is almost impossible for me to avoid this kind of publicity. However this is a small matter. The Ambassador further gave me to understand that he would try to fix

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. The Chinese Consul-General, in his telegram of 31 July 1939, had extended a hearty welcome to Jawaharlal on behalf of the Chinese people.

up my route and otherwise advise me how to go. My first intention was to go to Hong Kong and then to Chungking. On his advice I decided to drop out Hong Kong and to go direct to Chungking by air *via* Hanoi and Kunming. There is not much choice about the first part of the route to Hanoi. After that I do not quite know and I suggested, therefore, to the Vice-Consul in Bombay that he might make some arrangements provisionally. Although I am not quite sure yet whether I shall be able to go, I am making provisional arrangements to start from Allahabad by air on or about the 21st August. I think this will be by Air France. I do not yet know if any provisional reservation has been made, as I left this in the hands of some friends in Bombay. For the present, therefore, I am provisionally booking up to Hanoi. For my journey beyond Hanoi I have requested the Vice-Consul in Bombay to tell me what I should do. From Hanoi I want to go direct to Chungking.

It was my intention to spend about a month in China and to return, if possible, by the new Burma Road.[3] I want to be back in India early in October. I have made no programme whatever in China, although I have received a considerable number of invitations. I have no very particular purpose in visiting China except to satisfy a long standing wish and to help, in so far as I can, to increase the contacts between India and China. I should of course welcome the opportunity of meeting Chinese leaders and conveying to them the goodwill of the Indian people for their cause.

Perhaps if you will be good enough to communicate with the Vice-Consul at Bombay, he will be able to tell you what he has done in the matter. Possibly he has already kept you in touch with this.

I am leaving Jamshedpur today for Lucknow and from there I hope to go to Wardha on the 8th. I expect to return to Allahabad on the

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

WITH C. RAJAGOPALACHARI, MADRAS, JULY 1939

GENERALISSIMO CHIANG KAI-SHEK, MADAME CHIANG AND JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

7. I Go to China[1]

Some months ago a friend told me that I was always attaching myself to lost causes.[2] He was discussing international affairs and he did not approve of my attachments. Manchuria, Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, Spain—it was a sorry tale of misfortune and disaster, and always I seemed to be on the wrong side. He was for a realist policy, so he said, of making friends with those who were, internationally speaking, on the up-grade, or at any rate not to irritate them too much. I pleaded guilty to the impeachment, though I am not prepared to admit that I am not a realist. That leads us of course to consider what is realism or reality. Is the temporary advantage of the moment to be the test or should we have a longer perspective? Are there any more fundamental tests of principles and ideals, or should we think only in terms of the market place? In this world of ours where it is no longer possible for any country to live in isolation, and where every national crisis has repercussions in distant countries, can we think in terms of one nation alone? The affairs of Danzig[3] shake up Europe today and all the world gives ear to them, for Danzig is not Danzig only, but that never ceasing conflict which consumes our present-day world.

I am unrepentant of my past and present attachments and I am proud that though Spain may lie low today, India stood by her in her hour of need. I am still optimist enough to believe that Republican Spain will rise up again, and the Republic of the Czechs, both slain so treacherously by the hands of friends. But even if that were a vain delusion, I would still stand up for them, for they represent to me precious values in life, values for which we have laboured in India. If I

1. 18 August 1939. *National Herald*, 20 August 1939. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 16-20.
2. On 28 March 1939, Subhas Bose had written: "...foreign policy is a realistic affair to be determined largely from the point of view of a nation's self-interest ...It is no use championing the lost causes all the time and it is no use condemning countries like Germany and Italy on the one hand and on the other giving a certificate of good conduct to British and French imperialism...."
3. From the beginning of August 1939 there was an increase in the tension between Germany and Poland over the free city of Danzig and a consequent deterioration in the general European situation. The German press started a virulent anti-Polish campaign along with a demand for the return of Danzig and the Polish corridor to Germany. This tension was aggravated by the arrest of two Polish customs inspectors and the shooting of a Polish soldier in Danzig.

deserted them, what would I cherish in India, for what kind of freedom do we struggle here?

I go to China for that great country pulls me in a hundred ways. Reluctantly I leave India at this crisis in our affairs. But always there is crisis in India and the world and our senses have grown dulled to its significance. We sit on the edge of a sword, balancing precariously, and waiting for the succession of events. Is it war or not? What does Herr Hitler say, where is Signor Mussolini, what is happening in Danzig or Tientsin[4] or Hong Kong,[5] has Mr. Neville Chamberlain gone fishing? But the unbalanced equilibrium holds for a while longer, and while it holds we have to set about our business.

After long hesitation I decided to go to China. I did so because, far as she is, air travel has brought her near to us, and within two or three days reach. It was easy to go there and come back quickly if need arose. I chose to go because, while I hesitated, loving and comradely hands beckoned to me from China and distant memories of ages past urged me to go. The long perspective of history rose up before me, the agonies and triumphs of India and China, and the troubles of today "folded their tents like the Arabs and as silently stole away." The present will pass and merge into the future, and India will remain and China will remain and the two will work together for their own good and the good of the world.

I go to China because China is the symbol today of magnificent courage in the struggle for freedom, of a determination which has survived untold misery and unparalleled disaster, of unity before a common foe. I go to her with my homage and my greeting.

Friends have warned me of possible danger and probable risks. They have pressed me to give up this foolish enterprise. If millions of our Chinese comrades brave these dangers and risks, surely an Indian may be allowed to share it with them. Surely we have not grown so fearful of risk and danger as to run away from them. The years press down upon me but the call of adventure is still there. Do my friends wish to deprive me of this tonic and this joy?

4. When the authorities in the British Concessions in Tientsin refused to hand over four Chinese terrorists, on 14 July 1939 Japanese troops instituted a strict blockade. The Japanese further wanted the British to reverse their "pro-Chiang Kai-shek policy" on various matters. British nationals were subjected to various indignities when attempting to pass the barriers.
5. British territory on the mainland opposite to Hong Kong was bombed by Japanese warplanes on 21 February 1939 and there were a number of British casualties. Again on 24 May some British, French and German ships were boarded and searched by Japanese warships, just outside Hong Kong.

I go to China heavy at heart at the seeming disruption of what we laboured to build these many years. All the hidden evil comes out of its hiding place and raises its head, and the pathway whereon we trod in pride and confidence sees strange and uncouth shapes invading it. Courage and sacrifice and faith in each other give place to meanness and bickering and foul suspicion. We have forgotten ourselves.

But we shall find ourselves again and meet the evil face to face and scotch it and end it. And we shall enter the fray again with love for India in our hearts and the burning desire to free her people urging us ever on.

I go to China. But my heart will be in India and my mind will carry her picture wherever I go. I have seen that picture in her thousand ever-changing shapes and forms and colours all over this vast country. And millions of friendly faces will haunt me, faces into whose eager eyes I have gazed and sought to find what lay behind them. India and China will mingle together in my mind, and I shall bring back, I hope, something of the courage and invincible optimism of the Chinese people and their capacity to pull together when peril confronts them.

8. To Rabindranath Tagore[1]

Allahabad
August 19, 1939

My dear Gurudeva,
It is always a great pleasure to hear from you.[2] I understand you are in Calcutta today. If by any chance you happen to be there tomorrow evening, I shall certainly come to see you as my plane is breaking journey in Calcutta in the evening.

I would greatly like to go to Japan but I fear this cannot be done in continuation of my present visit to China. It is not possible to cross the fronts and go into the other territory. The only way would be to come right back to Hong Kong and then go by sea. This would be

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 17 August 1939, Rabindranath Tagore had conveyed his good wishes and suggested that Jawaharlal should also visit Japan.

a very lengthy process and I cannot remain away for all this time. Besides, just after a visit in war time to the Chinese Nationalist headquarters I do not think it would be quite suitable for me to visit Japan immediately.

I wish I could go to Java and other Eastern countries. What little I have seen of the East beyond India has made me feel strongly how our cultures intermingle and how much there is in common between us. I feel more and more attracted towards these countries of the East.

With regards,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. Diary of a Journey[1]

On my way to China I started noting down events and impressions at the end of each day. Often in the past I have made the noble resolve of keeping a diary. Like many other good intentions, this resolve faded away soon enough. This time I thought it would be worthwhile to jot down these impressions while they were fresh and to share them with my friends and colleagues in India. So I started. But at the back of my mind I knew that I would not be able to continue this. I sent my first series of impressions from Saigon, the very same evening that I had left Calcutta. The next day I reached Kunming and, tired as I was, I wrote an account of the second day and posted it early next morning. I reached Chungking and again that night I sat up till late writing. So also the fourth night. But both these last efforts of mine were not posted to India. Partly this was due to my realising how very difficult it was to keep to this daily writing after a very heavy day's programme. Partly I felt that my account or diary would take a long time in reaching India, even by air mail. And then there was the usual war-time censorship in Chungking. Nothing that I wrote was likely to offend the censors but still all these reflections induced me to give up any further writing of this description. The real reason of course was that I could not find the time.

1. *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 21-53. Parts of the diary were published in the *National Herald*, September-October 1939.

Only for four nights I wrote and then I gave up this self-imposed task. But events crowded in one after another and new impressions filled my mind. I spent most of my time in Chungking and then went to Chungtu. It was my intention to visit many other places, and especially the north-west where the famous Eighth Route Army held the Japanese forces at bay. There also was our Congress medical unit and I was eager to visit it and see its work. But all this was not to be. For while I was at Chungtu a message reached me, curiously enough at first through the British news broadcast, that the Congress President had summoned me back to India. I hurried back to Chungking and tried to find a seat by an air liner to India. I failed in this endeavour and then the Chinese Government came to my rescue and provided me with a fine Douglas plane which brought me in three brief hours to Lashio on the Burma border. I had intended returning by the new Burma Road; instead I flew over it.

And so, after thirteen days, ended my visit to this great country. Those thirteen days were full and I could easily write a book about the sights I saw, the people I met, and the impressions I gathered. I witnessed five air raids, sitting mostly in a darkened dug-out but peeping out sometimes to see the battle in the skies. The Japanese bomber planes, caught in the beam of the searchlight, shining brightly in the surrounding gloom, trying to avoid the attack of the Chinese chaser planes. I watched the surprisingly calm behaviour of the Chinese crowds when death threatened them from the air. I saw the life in the city being carried on almost normally in spite of the terrible strain of the war. I visited factories, summer schools, military academies, youth camps, and universities, torn from their ancient roots, finding a new life and vitality under bamboo shelters. I was fascinated by the growth of the village cooperative movement and cottage industries. I met scholars, statesmen and generals, the leaders of the new China, and, above all, I had the privilege of meeting on several occasions the supreme leader and commander of China, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, who embodies in himself the unity of China and her determination to free herself. It was my privilege also to meet the first lady of the land, Madame Chiang,[2] who has been a continuous source of inspiration to the nation.

But though I met men and women of note and distinction, I was trying always to understand the people of China and imbibing impressions

2. Mayling Soong (b. 1897); educated in the United States; married Chiang Kai-shek in 1927; member, Legislative Yuan, 1930-32; visited India in 1942, and the United States in 1942-43 and 1948-50.

from them. I had read so much about them and their magnificent record of culture and I was eager to sense the reality. That reality came up to my expectations. For I found not only a race wise and profound, deep in the lore of its own great past, but also a vital people, full of life and energy, adapting themselves to modern conditions. On the face of even the man in the street there was the imprint of thousands of years of culture. That to some extent I had expected. But what impressed me was the tremendous vitality of the new China. I was no judge of the military position, but I could not imagine that a people with this vitality and determination, and the strength of ages behind them, could ever be crushed.

Abundant goodwill and hospitality met me everywhere, and soon I realised that this had far more than personal significance. I was looked upon as a representative of India, of the Congress, although I had no such official status, and the people of China were anxious and eager to make friends with the Indian people and to develop contacts with them. Nothing could have pleased me better for that also was my heart's desire.

And so I came back after thirteen days, reluctantly and yet inevitably, for the call of India in these days of crisis was imperative. But that brief stay had been worthwhile for me certainly, and possibly for India and China.

One regret filled me. I had not been able to meet Madame Sun Yat-sen, that gracious lady who has been the flame and soul of the Chinese Revolution ever since the Father of that Revolution passed away. I had met her twelve years previously for a brief half-hour, and ever since I had cherished the wish to meet her again, for she is of the elect of the world. Unfortunately she was in Hong Kong and I could not journey thither.

I

20 August 1939

We have to wait a long time at the Bamrauli aerodrome. This is always a depressing and somewhat irritating business. No one knows exactly what to do or how to behave. A farewell that is too prolonged is a nuisance. At last the Air France liner arrives and lands in style. We have another forty minute wait while the crew and passengers feed. More irritation.

We start at 1.35 p.m.—an excellent take-off. After some time we pass Benares and have a good view of the city. Then I fall asleep. It is astonishing how much I sleep when flying. Perhaps this is partly the result of previous strain and lack of sleep, but partly also the motion

and vibration induce sleep. I sleep for most of the journey to Calcutta. Once waking up with a start, I notice with surprise that we are flying low over hilly, wooded country. Sometimes we just skim over a hill-top. The hills have peculiar shapes and the whole countryside has an unfamiliar look, very different from the kind of thing we see from the railway train which takes us to Calcutta. I wonder where we are but have no means of verifying and am too sleepy to take the trouble. Probably we were flying over eastern Bihar.

There is a strong head wind against us which reduces our land speed. The journey from Allahabad to Calcutta, which under good conditions might take two and a half hours, and usually takes three, now takes three and a half. We reach Dum Dum soon after five. Calcutta at five-thirty.

Calcutta—I had deliberately refrained from informing friends in Calcutta of my arrival. Why make a fuss for a few hours, especially as I intended staying in a hotel with my other fellow passengers in the plane? When travelling by these air liners, it is always best to go to their hotels and be under their charge as one has to get up at unearthly hours in the morning. If one stays with a friend there is a risk of being late and delaying others or even perhaps of missing the plane. The company therefore includes hotel charges in their ticket for the journey.

I had informed the Chinese Consul-General of my passage through Calcutta as I hoped to meet him. He was present at the aerodrome with other Chinese friends and, to my surprise, there was quite a crowd of pressmen and others.

I learnt that Rabindranath Tagore was in Calcutta. That was too good an opportunity to miss as it is always a delight to meet Gurudeva. I hastened to his house from my hotel and, for all too brief a time, he spoke to me of the intermingling of the great Asiatic cultures and why it was necessary that India should develop contacts with Eastern countries. He was pleased that I was going to China and pressed me to go to Japan also, more specially to tell them not to lose their soul in the present adventure in China. He was anxious that we should make our position towards Japan and the Japanese clear. While we were entirely opposed to their militarism and imperialism and the horrors they had perpetrated in China, we had no ill will towards the Japanese. We wanted to make friends with them but not on this false basis. While China was suffering terribly, Japan would probably suffer greater and more permanent injury of soul by her brutal imperialism. Gurudeva wanted me to go to Japan to say all this—a large order under existing circumstances.

I assured him that I would very much like to go to Japan; I had long wanted to do so. But this seemed hardly possible now as it would take

far too much time. I could not cross from Nationalist China to the Japanese controlled areas over the various fronts. I would have to come back to Hong Kong and then go by sea or air direct to Japan. This meant a much longer absence from India than I had bargained for. Besides, I had no illusions about my capacity to convert the Japanese Government to peaceful and democratic ways; indeed even an approach was not possible then.

The Chinese Consul-General came and took me off to his consulate and then to a Chinese restaurant where two dozen Chinese residents of Calcutta had gathered together for a feast. I was presented with a lovely silk flag with a Chinese inscription on it offering me affectionate greetings and good wishes for the journey.

The dinner, I was explicitly and somewhat apologetically informed, was a light one so as not to delay me. I like Chinese food but I am apprehensive of their feasts. Even their light repasts are apt to be far heavier and longer than I can sustain. We had an excellent dinner of seven courses and as I was going through it and enjoying it, suddenly the prospect of an unending series of Chinese feasts overwhelmed me.

The pleasant function came to a close with expression of mutual goodwill and I hastened back to my hotel. Some letters and other arrangements and just on the stroke of midnight, I went to bed. I had been informed that we would be called at 3 a.m. and would have to leave the hotel at 3.40 a.m. These amazing hours take away a great deal from the joy of air travel. It is not surprising that one dozes away during the journey. So ended the first day.

II

21 August 1939

The Chinese Consul-General and other friends turn up at the hotel at 3.30 a.m. At the aerodrome I am surprised to find at that early hour crowds of Calcutta friends and colleagues, many of them angry with me for not having sent them previous intimation of my visit.

We start off at 4.30 a.m. and soon I am asleep in my easy chair. As dawn creeps in I wake up and have glimpses of Bengal fading away into the sea.

Akyab—At about 7 a.m. we reach Akyab and find the Indian residents of the place all gathered together to welcome me. They had got intimation of my journey from the Delhi radio. We leave half an hour later. I fall asleep again and wake up later with a shiver. Evidently we are flying very high and the clouds are far below us. There is nothing to be seen but the clouds.

Bangkok—We reach Bangkok at about 12 according to our watches but in Bangkok it was one. A fine aerodrome and a large crowd of Indians to greet me. They tell me that some thousands of our countrymen have gathered together a mile or two away and are waiting for me there. I am rushed there in a car and address them for a few minutes and then come back.

It is wrong to say that we reached Bangkok for the city was 18 miles away from the aerodrome. We had a distant glimpse of it from the air.

The Siamese pressmen want an interview. I answer a few questions. Indians want me to promise that I shall stay in Bangkok on my return journey. I should like to. The country attracts me and it is a near neighbour of ours—only seven hours by air. It is not known as Siam but as Thailand, the land of the free. Soon we shall all have to call it Thailand even in foreign countries.

I have never seen such beautiful garlands of flowers as were offered to me in the Bangkok aerodrome, and I have had a wide and varied experience in garlands. They were cunningly and artistically made with perfect colour arrangements.

The Indians whom I met near Bangkok were representatives of various parts of India, but the north and west seemed to predominate. There were many Muslims and Sikhs. I spoke to them naturally in Hindustani. As I was leaving Bangkok a wireless message from Saigon informed me that the Indian community there was organising a reception for me.

Saigon—We left the Bangkok aerodrome at 1.45 p.m. The flying was uneventful. I had a faint hope that we might pass over Angkor and have a glimpse of the ruins there. This was not realised. A little before reaching Saigon we passed an enormous inland lake. Whether this was just a flooded area or a lake I could not make out.

At about five we reach Saigon. A crowd of Indians with garlands and beautiful bouquets. As soon as I got off an Indian started welcoming me in eloquent French. He delivered quite an oration somewhat to my embarrassment, as the passengers had to go to the customs department. Soon I realised even more that I was in a little bit of provincial France—the language, the shops, the boulevards and avenues, the kiosks, all reminded one of France. I took a long drive through the city, although it was raining, and found it an attractive place, very well lighted, with the principal shops having neon lights. There were many French shops, a whole Chinese quarter, and a good number of Indian shops.

There are apparently about 5,000 Indians in Indo-China, mostly middle-class people and watchmen. A very great majority of these come from the Tamil country. Nearly all of them know some French, and many are quite fluent in it. We are an adaptable people. In India we have taken to English, in Indo-China to French. There appear to be a considerable number of Indians in the state service; these are chiefly from Pondicherry. I was glad to find that many Harijans from Pondicherry were magistrates here.

The Chinese are present in large numbers. I was told that the percentage of literacy among the people here was very high—about 30%, many of them knowing French. The Annamite language is now taught with Latin characters, the old Chinese characters having been largely given up.

Politically there is no life and such things as public meetings are hardly known.

In the evening I was taken to a gathering of Indians in the Nattukottai temple here, or rather in the galleries attached to it. I have found in Burma and Ceylon also that the Nattukottai temple is often used for such gatherings as there are no halls available. There was an address of welcome there and I replied to it at some length.

It is pleasing and astonishing to find how these outlying colonies are full of love for and pride in their motherland. Unfortunately they are too cut off from us. We must develop closer contacts.

A traveller to these countries is impressed by one fact—the enormous vitality of the Chinese and the Indians which sends them to far countries where, unaided, they prosper by their own exertions.

So ends the second day. It is an impressive thought that this morning I was in Calcutta, and in the course of the day I have passed Burma and Siam, and am now in Indo-China.

III

22 August 1939

We left Saigon soon after six in the morning and went high up above the clouds. We must have been flying very high as it grew cold. We could not see the ground below and sometimes the rain clouds enveloped us and the flying was blind. We reached Hanoi at eleven after nearly five hours flight. This was the end of our journey by Air France and we bade good-bye to *La Ville de Calcutta* (the name of our plane). I was surprised and pleased to notice that the name of the plane was written in Bengali also on the side. This was, I suppose, a delicate compliment to Calcutta whose name the plane bore.

Hanoi—We were received by the Chinese Consul and a large number of Indians. The Consul told us that a seat had been booked for me by another plane leaving for Kunming that afternoon at three. Our Indian friends wanted me to stay here for a day or two but I could not upset my programme.

A Sindhi merchant bore me off to his house. He had a very big shop where smart and attractive-looking Annamite girls were serving at the counters. We arranged a meeting of the local Indians there and I addressed them. I found that apart from a few Sindhis all the others were Tamils, both Hindu and Muslim. Few of them except the Sindhis and two or three Muslims could understand Hindustani; still fewer could understand English. Apart from Tamil, they were perfectly at home in French. Not trusting my French, I addressed them in Hindustani and then a Muslim, probably the Imam of the local mosque, translated into Tamil.

French was obviously the dominant language, far more so than English is in India. Even beggar boys and girls asked for alms in French. The standard of literacy appeared to be high.

There were between 200 and 250 Indians in Hanoi, all engaged in business and doing well. They were all dressed in some slight variation of European attire. There were no dhotis as there had been in Bangkok and Saigon.

I had a drive through the city, which is bigger than Saigon and equally rather French-looking. Saigon appeared to me the more attractive of the two.

At 3.15 p.m. I left by plane for Kunming. A crowd of Indians and Chinese gave me a hearty send-off. The plane I travelled by belonged to the Eurasia Company, which is a Chino-German corporation. The plane was of German make and had a German pilot. It was much smaller than the Air France liner but had room for ten passengers. We were rather cramped for space.

The approach of China filled me with excitement. The scenery was also fascinating. In the background were the mountains and a river emerging from them meandered through the valley, with wooded hills flanking it. Occasionally there were green fields and little villages. The river looked almost red and the bare patches of the hills were also bright red. Possibly it is because of this colour that the river of Hanoi is called the Red River.

As we approached the mountains we flew higher, till we were flying at about 4,000 feet right over them. An aerial view of scenery is very different from a land view and much that appears magnificent from below loses significance if seen from above. But the sight I saw was

pleasing enough and the ever-changing shapes of the mountains and hills prevented monotony. A deep blue lake surrounded by greenery and red sandstone was a fascinating sight. Soon after another lake appeared in the distance but just then the attendant on the plane came and drew down all the blinds and warned us not to lift them. War precautions, I suppose. The passengers were thus kept in purdah but the German pilot of course had a full view.

We were approaching Kunming and we felt that the plane was descending. Soon there was the slight bump on landing and we were on Chinese soil.

Kunming (or *Yunnanfou*)—A representative of the Kuomintang, Mr. Yong Konta, who is also a member of the Legislative Yuan, had come specially from Chungking to welcome me. The Mayor of Kunming was also there. I was told that I would have to spend the night in the city and proceed to Chungking the next day. I was taken to a hotel.

China was a new country to me, a wonderland of legend and history as well as of great deeds in the present, and I was prepared for almost anything. But I was slightly taken aback when I reached the hotel. It was totally unlike any other hotel I had seen. The entrance to it and the fine courtyards and the general appearance were very attractive and typically Chinese but little in keeping with my ideas of a hotel. I adjusted myself to it and decided that this must be the Chinese way. The room I was given was rather small but clean and comfortable with hot and cold water laid on.

The mystery was solved later when I was told that the place had been a temple but had been converted into a hotel. The visitors rooms were evidently meant for the priests or monks, though no doubt they had been renovated and refurnished since then. Still the monks must have done themselves fairly well. My thoughts went back to our perpetual disputes in India about the temples and mosques. The Chinese were evidently free from these inhibitions and, I was informed, had utilised many temples for schools.

The hotel was under a French manager and he gave us an excellent French dinner with Evian water to drink. He had a good stock of French wines also. Evidently China in war time was not such a hard place to live in. But Kunming was not a typical Chinese city. It was near the frontier and both foreigners and foreign goods crept in. The whole atmosphere of the hotel was French, even the Chinese table boys speaking French.

Both in Indo-China and here I have to dig out my rusty French as there is no other means of communication with some people. It seems odd for me to have to converse with Indians in French. Yet it is no

odder than for Indians to carry on a conversation in English among themselves.

I went for a drive and a walk in the city. It is an ancient city of between 3,00,000 and 4,00,000 inhabitants, the population having gone up recently owing to war conditions, Kunming being one of the doors leading out of China. I discovered that Yunnanfou and Kunming were one and the same place. Till this evening I thought they were two different cities! Yunnanfou is the old name, Kunming the new one, but both are used indiscriminately.

I wandered through the city with a Chinese friend trying to imbibe the atmosphere of China and to find out evidences of war. Except for groups of soldiers here and there, there was no other indication of war. Kunming has not been bombarded. The streets had cobble-stones and were not well-lighted, but the shops were brightly lit and were attractive. There were plenty of foodstuffs and clothing and other goods. Yet there was a lack of luxury goods. There were crowds of people in the streets, and rickshaws plying, and newsboys shouting out the name of their paper and the news. Certainly the city had a drab appearance and there was an absence of colour, but the people seemed cheerful and unconcerned. There were many bookshops, fruit seemed abundant (I saw large quantities of pomegranates). Quite a number of carders passed me in the street carrying their carding bows, having perhaps finished their work for the day. In another place some carders were working away, and a woman was sitting with a large spinning wheel doubling yarn. Bonny little children were playing about and young boys and girls passed us, carefree and laughing.

The general drabness was probably due to the absence of colour in the clothes. Almost everybody, man or woman or child, had a dark-blue or black shirt or gown. I like the Chinese dress. If properly made, it is smart and graceful, and it is obviously efficient from the point of view of work. Essentially it consists of a shirt and trousers both for boys and girls. The shirt is close fitting and may be long or short. The older girls often wear a long gown reaching down to their ankles but slit on one side up to the knee. This long gown is very attractive but not much good from the utilitarian point of view.

The Chinese porters and workers all use straw or bamboo sun-hats. In Hanoi I saw every working man and woman wearing this—an inverted basket—like a sun-hat. It was cheap, light, and good protection against the sun. Sometimes the brim was so broad as to function as an umbrella also in case of rain. I think our Indian peasant should be encouraged to make and wear some such kind of sun-hat. It will be

a great help to him. I believe that sun-hats made of bamboo or some reeds are worn in Orissa and Malabar.

At dinner I met Professor Tien Tuan Sen, Mr. K.T. Huang, a mining expert, and Mr. Hsin Sung, the Director-General of Posts for China, and had a very interesting conversation with them.

I have been shown a provisional programme drawn up for me in Chungking. This is a heavy programme, but an interesting one. I shall reach Chungking tomorrow noon and probably stay there for a week. I am likely to broadcast on the radio.[3]

I cannot quite get over the fact that yesterday morning I was in Calcutta and since then I have passed Burma, Siam, and Indo-China, and am now in China. It is difficult to adjust oneself to these rapid changes. How our minds lag behind modern conditions! We insist on thinking in terms of a dead yesterday and refuse to participate in our heritage of today. Is it surprising that there is so much conflict and trouble in the world?

IV

23 August 1939

Kunming has a delightful cool climate and the change from the heat of Hanoi was very pleasant and agreeable. At night it was quite chilly. Perhaps this was due to the nearness of the lake which, I discovered in the morning, came right up to the back window of my room. Our hotel was named the Grand Hotel du Lac.

Early in the morning a shrill voice reached me from the courtyard. This belonged to the French manageress who was superintending the cleaning and sweeping and giving her opinion of the inefficiency of the Chinese boys in voluble and aggressive French. Other voices floated in—the chanting cries of the newsboys.

After breakfast we went for a drive to the great lake nearby passing groups of young soldiers who marched by, singing. Some of these soldiers or recruits seem to be mere boys, not more than 15 years old, but it is difficult for an outsider to guess the age of the Chinese.

Long before ten we were at the aerodrome where all was bustle. A member of the provincial government was also travelling by the plane and a crowd of functionaries had gathered to see him off. We started at 10.15 in a machine of the Eurasia Corporation. The plane was crowded and there was little space. All blinds were drawn. After a few minutes flight, we were allowed to look out. Evidently it was the

3. See following item.

aerodrome itself and what it contained that was not meant for the public eye.

In the course of the flight I received the following message by wireless. "Dr. Chu Chia-hwa,[4] Secretary-General of the Central Kuomintang, heading representatives of various organizations including Mayor of Chungking, sends you herewith greetings and welcome from the aerodrome."

Chungking—It took us just over three hours to reach Chungking. The entire route was hilly and as we approached Chungking the Yangtse river appeared winding in between hills and precipitous banks. There seemed to be no level bit of ground visible and I wondered how an aerodrome could have been made in that uneven country. The explanation was interesting and, for me, unique. The plane landed on a sandbank in the middle of the river. Many eminent persons had gathered there, headed by some high officers of the army and Dr. Chu, who had sent me the wireless message. As I descended the pleasant and familiar sound of *Bande Mataram* greeted my ears, and looking up in some surprise I saw an Indian in uniform. He was Mukherji of our Congress medical unit.

There was a brief speech of welcome and the presentation of bouquets and then we passed along a line of girls and boys in some kind of uniform who greeted me with a rhythmic waving of flags. Then to a boat to cross the river.

On the other side a long flight of steps stretched out before us and I was asked to get into some kind of sedan chair (*chow tse* it was called) to be carried up. I laughed at this idea of being carried up in this way and started mounting the steps with a great show of energy. Soon I discovered that the task was not such an easy one; there were about 315 big steps and I began to pant and grow tired. I impressed the others no doubt with my vitality but I realized suddenly that I was no longer young enough to indulge in these bright displays. We took a car then to the foreign office guest house where I had been put up. There again we had to mount about a hundred steps. Chungking is spread on hill sides and hill tops and little of the going is on the level.

Many leading officials and others came to see me and I saw the provisional programme that had been drawn up for me for the next week in Chungking. The first item was a meeting at four the same afternoon where an impressive array of 193 organizations were offering me

4. (1893-1963); Governor, Chungking province, 1936-37; Secretary-General, Central Kuomintang, 1938-40; Vice-President, Executive Yuan, 1941-44.

welcome. To this meeting we went. Mr. Wu Chih-hui,[5] an elder statesman, spoke words of welcome and I replied. There were the national slogans, and obeisance before a picture of Sun Yat-sen and the band playing the Chinese national anthem, which was impressive.

I discovered in the course of this meeting that whenever the name of the Generalissimo is mentioned the audience stands up in respect. If a meeting is not to be interrupted repeatedly by this standing up, it is better to refer to the Generalissimo as the leader or by some other title and to avoid the name.

Soon after the meeting I was to have gone to a dinner given by a number of organisations. But word came privately that an air raid was expected and so the prospect of this dinner faded out. We hurried back to our house and found the streets already full of people all going in one direction. The official warning signal had not been sounded yet, but information had been given and men and women were hurrying to the dug-outs for shelter. Chungking has one advantage. Information of approaching enemy planes comes to it early, quite an hour before the planes arrive.

The warning siren sounded soon after and I was told that I must go to one of the dug-outs. I disliked the idea immensely but I could not say no to my hosts and we motored to the special dug-out attached to the Foreign Minister's residence. The streets now presented a much more animated scene and people were running or walking fast, all in the direction of the various air-raid shelters. Some carried little bundles or boxes with them, mothers were clutching their babes, small families were marching together. Lorries full of people rushed by. There appeared to be no panic whatever. It was the usual routine to which they had got accustomed.

We reached the Foreign Minister's dug-out and found his friends assembling. As soon as the second warning signal came, we all marched inside a small, cool place about 15 feet by 10. This had iron doors and we were told that there were 25 feet of reinforced concrete above us. Here we sat down or remained standing, for the crowd increased till there must have been about fifty persons inside. The lights went out. Occasionally an electric torch was used.

There were many interesting people there, high government officials and their wives, generals, professors and journalists, and the time would have passed pleasantly enough if my mind had not been elsewhere. It was also hot and close. Chungking had proved to be a far warmer

5. (1864-1953); scholar, social reformer and an associate of senior members of the Kuomintang.

place than I had imagined. Inside the dug-out it was slightly cooler but much more stuffy. If this was the condition of the favoured few, I wondered what was happening to the tens of thousands who must be crowding into the public dug-outs.

I listened attentively to noises from outside. I could make little of it, but more trained ears detected the dull thuds of bombs dropping, the whirr of the Chinese chaser planes and the heavier sound of the enemy bombers.

So we waited there, occasionally having a peep into the moonlight outside. It looked so peaceful and cool, and the eight-day old moon was unperturbed. Yet murder was afoot, and vile destruction. For some reason or other the anti-aircraft guns were not being used and the searchlights were dark and silent. My neighbours in that dug-out thought a dog-fight was going on between the rival planes. We whiled away the time by discussing recent developments in the international situation. The proposed Russo-German pact of non-aggression[6] and its effect on England, France and Japan. Most of the Chinese were pleased about it, for it indicated to them the isolation of Japan.

For two hours we sat in the darkness of that dug-out. Everybody was perfectly calm and collected and I was told that usually a raid lasted for three or four hours. I did not mind the experience for a change, but I was quite clear in my own mind that I would prefer the risk of being out in the fresh and cool moonlight to being bottled up so for hours at a time. I would prefer to be at the battlefront or in a chaser plane up in the sky to this conversion of a man into a rat in a hole.

Two hours went by and then word came that the Japanese planes were retreating. Out of the twenty-seven that had come, eighteen had already been seen heading for Hankow, and the remaining nine had also gone. The light came and immediately there was bustle and excitement, and all those who had sat together so intimately for two hours parted without ceremony or good-bye and hastened to their respective homes.

The streets were filling again as people emerged from their hiding places. They came more slowly than they had gone. On our way back we passed several groups of men with picks and shovels marching to the places where damage had been done. They went to their particular work, and others went to their own businesses, and Chungking reverted to normality. And some perhaps there were whose work was over and

6. See *post*, section 3, item 11.

who testified by their dead and scorched bodies to the progress and greatness of modern civilization.

We do not yet know exactly what happened during the raid. Apparently the main city escaped but some of the outskirts were bombed, more especially a village which was a centre of small industry.

V

24 August 1939

Last night's air raid was rather a wash-out so far as the Japanese were concerned. It appears that they were stopped by the Chinese chaser planes outside the city and there was a bit of a dog-fight. The searchlights picked out some of the Japanese planes and they hurried to unload their bombs over the fields outside the city and departed. A hut was destroyed and two persons slightly injured. It is said that several Japanese planes were hit by machine-gun fire from the chasers. The extent of the damage done to the planes is not known but it is thought, or rather hoped, that some of them must have had forced landings on the way back.

Probably there will be more air raids during the next few days while the moonlight continues. In the future moonlight must be associated, among other things, with air raids.

I learnt this morning that the Generalissimo had expressed his concern for my safety during last night's raid. He sent word that I should be sent to his own special dug-out but I had already gone to the Foreign Minister's place when this message came.

I have been cordially invited by several persons—ministers and generals—to use their dug-outs whenever occasion arises. I suppose this is the height of courtesy and friendliness in this age of aerial bombing.

I spent the morning in making calls. First I went to the Kuomintang headquarters where I met Dr. Chu Chia-hwa, the Secretary-General, who tried to explain to me the constitution and organisation of the Kuomintang. It is all very complicated and I have still the foggiest of notions of how it is formed and how it functions. I did gather however that it was not a very democratic body, though it calls itself democratic. Later in the day I tried to understand the structure of the government from some ministers. This is still more complex and the relation between the Kuomintang and the government is peculiar. Probably personal factors form the strongest link between them. I have asked for books and papers which might explain the structural side of the government and the Kuomintang.

I then called on Dr. Wang, the Foreign Minister, whose uninvited guest I had been the night before in the dug-out. We had a long and interesting talk. My third visit was to Dr. Hollington K. Tong[7] who is in charge of publicity. I was considerably impressed by him and his work.

Lunch was a big and rather formal affair in a riverside restaurant. It was arranged by the city corporation, the city Kuomintang, and the city garrison commander. These formal gatherings, although the hosts make them friendly enough, are embarrassing. Stilted speeches are delivered and I reply in set, lifeless phrases and translations take place. Military bands break out into music when I arrive or depart and there is any amount of saluting. I fear my informal habits do not easily fit in with all this. But the greatest trial is the meal which goes on interminably and just when I imagine that it is over, half a dozen fresh dishes are placed on the table. I like Chinese food, or some kinds of it. It shows artistry. But I do not understand the meal; it seems to be an enormous variety of *hors d'oeuvres* in successions of dishes. The diners peck away at them, enjoying the delicate tastes in their infinite variety. I do not fancy the manner of eating. I do not mean the chopsticks which are manipulated with skill and great efficiency. I wish I was more expert at them. But all the dishes are placed in the centre and every guest goes on picking dainties out of the common pool and inevitably small bits of the juicy stuffs drop on the table-cloth.

In the afternoon I had an interesting visit from General Yeh Chien-ying[8] of the famous Eighth Route Army. He was accompanied by Anna Wong, who acted as interpreter. She is a German (Aryan) who has married in China and is fully Chinese in her sympathies and work. She has had hair-breadth escapes from Japanese bombs.

General Yeh told me about the Eighth Route Army and the work it was doing, apart from its military activities. He also explained, from his point of view, the present situation in China.

I then went to Dr. Kung,[9] the Prime Minister or, to be exact, the President of the Executive Yuan. From there we proceeded to a big

7. (b. 1887); managing director, *China Press*, Shanghai, 1931-35; managing director, China Publishing Company, 1936; Vice-Minister of Information, 1938; Kuomintang Ambassador to Japan, 1952-56, and to the U.S.A., 1956-58.
8. (b. 1898); served with Chu Teh, 1933; Chief of Staff, Eighth Route Army for some years; member of Chou En-lai's group at Chungking during the war; member of the Politbureau, 1967.
9. Kung Hsiang-hsi (1881-1967); Governor, Central Bank of China, 1933; President, Executive Yuan since 1938; chancellor of Yenching University, 1939; married Soong Ai-ling, the eldest of the Soong sisters in 1914; settled in U.S.A. in 1948.

tea party which a group of eminent men were giving in my honour. Among the hosts were Dr. Chu, three ministers—Messrs. Chang Li-sum, Yih Tsou-tsan, and Chen Li-fu[10]—and General Chen Cheng.[11] This was a very pleasant party and I met a large number of ministers, vice-ministers, ex-ministers, generals and even an admiral! The Chinese admiral surprised me. I enquired about the Chinese navy and I was told that it consisted at present of a few gun-boats. But, in any event, the navy had a marine band which was performing efficiently at the party.

Among those I met at this party was a representative from Sinkiang. He addressed me, to my surprise, in Persian; I understood a word or two of what he had said to welcome me, and regretted my inability to carry on a conversation in that stately language.

There were large numbers of foreign journalists present, especially Americans and some Russians.

Chinese names are a trial, especially when I have to deal with them in large numbers. Many names sound more or less alike. I suppose it was because of this difficulty that the Chinese developed their passion for visiting cards. As soon as you meet someone, out comes his card which he hands to you. I have already collected scores of such cards. Not being used to cards in India, I do not possess many. I had a few old ones with me but the supply will not hold out for long.

To dinner with various ministers and others, including General Chen Cheng, whom I like although we have no language in common. This was an informal meal and the conversation was bright and interesting. The Chinese strike me as a singularly grown-up people. It is a pleasure to talk to them, if the language difficulty does not intervene.

No raid tonight.

10. Director, Social Affairs Board of Kuomintang, 1938-40; Vice-President of the Executive Yuan in 1948; left China in 1950 for the U.S.A.
11. (1897-1965); Nationalist general, and second-in-command to Chiang Kai-shek in both the Kuomintang and the Nationalist Government; Vice-Minister of War, 1937; Minister, Political Training Board, 1938-40; Governor of Taiwan, 1949; elected Vice-President of the Republic of China, 1954.

10. Sino-Indian Friendship[1]

I am speaking to you from Chungking—a place which during these war days is the headquarters of the Chinese Government. Starting from Allahabad by air, I reached China in two days. For long I wanted to come here and have now selected such a peculiar time to come. Fierce fighting is going on and the Japanese armies have occupied a large part of China. Important historical cities of this country have been razed to the ground by bombardment. Lakhs of people have perished. The very evening I reached here the Japanese planes attacked this city but without much success.

I have come here with a message of sympathy from India. I came to know that the Chinese are fighting with grit for their freedom. What I witnessed after reaching here has further convinced me in my heart. The Chinese have proved that they are a proud race and whatever the problem they can grin and bear it. Forgetting their own petty quarrels they unitedly face the enemy. In India we can learn a lot from this.

China is fighting for independence and, therefore, our sympathy for her is natural. But this war has a further significance for it will affect our country and the world. It has thus become inevitable for us to take full interest in it and extend our help. With this war is associated our independence.

The relation of China and India goes back to thousands of years. Many of our principles are similar and our gains and losses are complementary. The time is ripe when we should join hands and proceed on the path of freedom and progress. I hope my visit will result in this. From this far-off country I convey a message to my friends in India. Strange is the state of the world these days, destruction staring in its face. Our country too is faced with many ticklish and difficult problems. We have to face them with courage. It is of no use getting puzzled and perplexed. But one thing is a must, more so in the present conditions —we should forget our mutual disagreements, unite ourselves and keeping our aims in front of us proceed towards independence.

The world is soon going to witness very significant changes. If unitedly we proceed on the right path, I am confident we shall be free and China also will be relieved of her problems.

1. Translation of a Hindi broadcast, Chungking, August 1939. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

11. A Note on the Development of Contacts between China and India[1]

In studying the problems of India, I have been led more and more to the conclusion that in order to understand them fully and find solutions to them, we have to consider them in relation to similar problems elsewhere and the ever-changing world situation. This not only means our learning from the experience which others have bought at bitter cost, our avoiding their failures and profiting from their successes, but also our understanding our own problems in their true significance and perspective. We are apt far too often to fail to see the wood for the trees, for, inevitably, those of us who have to shoulder the responsibility for day-to-day decisions on important matters, are too wrapped up in them to pay attention to the deeper underlying causes. And yet if we are to solve a problem, we must first understand it fully, if we are to answer a question, we must first frame it.

It is an obvious truism to say that all the major problems of the world are interrelated today and act and react on each other. It is equally a platitude to repeat that the whole world is going through a revolutionary period, both in the political and economic sense. The old order was not in keeping with modern scientific and technical development and the changes brought in its train. It has therefore to break up and refashion itself and it is doing so, unfortunately, in a bloody and violent way.

Because of all these considerations, the conviction grew upon me that the Indian problem must be viewed both in historical and world perspective. This necessitated contacts with other countries and an understanding of what was happening there, and this applied both to the countries of the West and of the East. The West was important because it dominated world politics today, and also because it had already gone through various changes through which we in India were now passing. But the East, and especially China, was equally, if not more, important for us, as in some respects there was an amazing similarity of problems between India and China. Unfortunately, however, our contacts with China were very limited. It was the intense desire to add to these contacts and to learn from what was happening in China that brought me here. It has given me the greatest satisfaction to find that the Generalissimo

1. Chungking, 29 August 1939. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

shares this desire with me to add to our contacts and to develop Indo-Chinese relations. I trust that before I return to India something definite will be thought out in this direction. This note, written in a hurry, is necessarily vague and imperfect, but it might help in a further and more detailed consideration of the subject.

It must be remembered, of course, that each country has its own particular problems and its own way of dealing with them. It is folly to generalize too much and to seek similarities where there are none. But it is equally unwise not to look below the surface. China today has to face a mighty problem—how to resist Japanese aggression and hurl it back and establish her complete freedom. That is her chief and primary concern and all else is secondary. So also in India we have the primary problem of securing our freedom; all else is secondary. Essentially, in both cases, it is a question of developing sufficient national strength to overcome the adversary. National power must precede national freedom. This power may be built up or developed in various ways, but whatever its outward aspect might be, it is power which coerces the opposite party and compels it to change its ways. Faced with armed invasion from outside, China had only one way to meet it effectively and that was by armed defence and the building up of efficient popular armies. We in India were and are differently situated and we adopted different tactics and methods. Yet it must not be forgotten that we had to deal with an extremely powerful adversary which held the country in its grip by armies of occupation, and had dug itself deep into our soil, administratively, financially and economically. It was a tremendous task that we faced, increased by the inertia of our people and the apparent hopelessness of an unarmed and demoralised people challenging the might of a proud empire. Yet we faced it and built up our national power to such an extent that even that proud empire was coerced and humbled to a large extent. We did it peacefully by mass organization and mass action. We shook up the old inertia of the people, infused a new spirit into them, became intolerant of the lazy and the inefficient, and did not hesitate to attack our own evils and failings. We gave them pride in themselves and their nation and even the humblest peasant felt that he was a partner in a great enterprise. We spread cottage industries on a vast scale, not only to increase production and to raise the standards of living of the poorest, but to give them self-reliance, political consciousness, and the feeling that they also were parts of the national movement. We sent our trained workers and educated youths to hundreds of thousands of villages to carry the message of national freedom to them and to bridge the gap which had separated for so long the intelligentsia from the masses. We lived simple

lives and wore simple handspun clothes, thus spreading a sense of equality. The organization we built up was wholly democratic from the base upwards, and while giving the greatest freedom of ideas and of discussion, we demanded unity of action.

And so we transformed India from the village upwards and a new life and vitality coursed through her veins. When we spoke, though we did so softly, we did so with power, for with us and behind us were a hundred million people organized for action. We were tested severely on several occasions when British imperialism tried to crush us ruthlessly. They failed completely and we survived the tests. Thus we built up our national strength in a fundamental way which raised the whole character of the people and gave them courage and hope and the capacity to suffer for a cause. And in doing all this we always avoided attacking the English people as such or preaching hatred against them; our quarrel was against a system which we had decided to shatter and put an end to. Always we appealed to the best and idealistic impulses of our people and tried to maintain a high standard of public conduct. We did not always succeed in this, but even the attempt made a great difference and gave us moral prestige and inner strength.

I mention all this at length as I feel that there is much to learn from India's great experiment. It was unique. It was wholly different from the communistic or socialistic way, it was equally different from the purely militaristic way. Because we went to our people all over the vast country and worked with them and suffered for them, we gained their confidence and goodwill, and extreme and disruptive movements could not gain influence among them.

China today is carrying on great military campaigns, but even for their success, popular enthusiasm and cooperation, efficiency, organization, suppression of corruption, the speeding up of the administrative machine, the understanding of the peasant problem, the growth of production and its proper distribution, and many other things are necessary. Hence the New Life Movement[2] and the Industrial Cooperatives[3] and

2. The New Life Movement was promoted by the Chinese Nationalist Government in 1934 to revitalize the people. It laid stress on hygienic practices, punctuality, truthfulness, courtesy and the four traditional virtues of politeness, righteousness, integrity and self-respect.
3. The Industrial Cooperatives Movement aimed at economic reconstruction through widespread distribution of small-scale industry. Under this scheme the government helped the artisans, workers, refugees and crippled soldiers to form cooperative units for the production of consumer goods. By 31 May 1939, there were 1,650 cooperative societies with a total of 20,700 members.

the many other activities which are visible even to a newcomer, and which are pouring new life into the people. I am sure we in India can learn much from all these movements and activities in China. Similarly I have no doubt that China can profit by our experience in many of these directions.

Each country has its own special genius and its own background. China and India have very marked and definite roots and cultural traditions which differ from the countries of the West and even from each other. And yet I do not think that there are basic differences between the problems of the West and the East. Today these differences are obvious enough, but the reason is that Western countries went through a great change a hundred or a hundred and fifty years ago, and we in the East are going through it now. This was the great industrial revolution which changed western Europe and America completely. It was heralded by all manner of other revolutions, political and social, like the American and French. All this meant a complete changeover to a new life, and right through the nineteenth century, Europe, or parts of it, lived this life which was ever changing in a new direction. In the twentieth century Europe seemed to have exhausted the potentialities of its previous revolution and fresh complications and contradictions arose, which led to new wars and these are still continuing. Europe and the world are thus in the midst of a tremendous revolutionary period.

India and China, for various reasons, continued in the old way for a much longer period than Europe and the industrial revolution was delayed in both of these countries. It is now coming with rapid strides and breaking up violently the old structure. But, to increase the confusion, the new revolutionary period of Europe is also affecting our two countries and so we have to face two sets of vital revolutionary changes. They may follow each other rapidly or occur more or less concurrently. In any event the changeover is a painful and violent one. Our difficulties are thus in a sense far greater than those of Europe for we have to take two great steps in order to keep in line, or else we are left behind, and the world has little pity for the weak and the backward. At the same time we have an advantage also, the advantage of ancient and deep-rooted cultures which will stand us in good stead during this period of painful change.

are politically free for the crisis is upon us. So we have to go ahead simultaneously on several fronts. I take it that in essence the main problem of China is not very different—it is the agrarian problem, how to deal with it and coordinate it with industrial growth; how also to utilize her enormous manpower to the nation's advantage.

I am sure that in our attempts to deal with this agrarian problem, we can profit by each other's experience. In India we are devoting ourselves with all earnestness to it.

I am afraid I have written a long essay about matters which do not immediately concern the questions of how to develop Indo-Chinese relations and contacts. But when I sat down to write I tried to think of the background of the problem, and the teeming ideas in my mind compelled me to write on. I must apologise for this exuberance.

Coming to the immediate suggestions, I make some below. But these are sketchy and I am sure they can be added to or varied with more thought. The Generalissimo was good enough to promise to think about this and I hope he will advise us.

1. I think the first thing to be done is to organize an efficient and regular service of information between the two countries. This to comprise all kinds of news. On the Indian side a committee for this purpose might be formed, consisting of some Chinese and Indian members, and an office maintained. This office should serve as a distributing centre of Chinese news to the various newspapers and organizations in India. I should prefer some small charge to be made from the newspapers who take the news, etc. This office can either be situated in Calcutta or Bombay. Both these places have Chinese consuls who would be helpful. Calcutta is nearer to China and has a large Chinese population. The Chinese Consul-General lives there. On the other hand Bombay is a more live centre of Indian nationalism and publicity. This Indian committee could also send Indian news to China and arrangements should be made here for its proper distribution.

2. Special experts might exchange visits for the purpose especially of studying the development of cottage industries and cooperatives. Also, if considered necessary, to study the agrarian problem.

3. Cultural contacts between universities might be established. This can be done immediately in regard to each other's publications, books and journals. Professors might be exchanged for fixed periods, as well as research students. How far this is possible during war time I do not know. I think it would be a good thing for a small delegation from the Chinese universities to visit the Indian universities both to have a

look at them and to discuss with the authorities there future contacts and exchanges.

In this connection I might add that we have recently started a very interesting scheme of mass education, which is good, scientific and peculiarly suited to a poor country. This is called "basic education" and is a seven-year course, from the age of seven to fourteen. It is based on teaching through the medium of a craft, which is the latest scientific method. The way we are developing it is such that the cost of mass education is greatly reduced to the state, which is a very important matter for a poor country. Also this method helps in the development of cottage and other industries.

We are also carrying on a campaign of liquidating adult illiteracy.

I think these approaches to educate us on our own part deserve the careful consideration of Chinese educational authorities. Perhaps if a university delegation goes from China to India, they might examine these methods.

4. There should be direct contact, by post, etc. between the two national movements. On the Indian side this will mean the central office of the All India Congress Committee which is situated at Allahabad. Information, etc. should be supplied to each other.

5. If possible some Chinese representatives might attend the annual session of our National Congress which will be held during Christmas-New Year week. This lasts several days and it will give a good idea of our organization and our methods of work and our hold on the masses.

6. In view of the rapidly developing world situation, it is absolutely clear that, whether war comes or not, great changes are bound to come in Europe and the world. There is always a tendency for the people of Europe to think in their own terms and to forget China and India and the Orient. They cannot of course afford to forget them for long as they are too big and important to be ignored. Still it is desirable that both China and India should develop, as far as possible, a common policy vis-a-vis big European and world changes. I am quite sure that the only solution of the world's problems is the evolution of a world order which comprises all or most of the nations. It is quite likely, however, that the European nations might think in terms of a united states of Europe. This will be dangerous from the point of view of Asiatic nations. It is necessary therefore that emphasis should be laid right at the beginning that any such arrangement must include a free China and a free India, and must be based on the liquidation of imperialism and suppression of aggression. On no other basis can equilibrium be established. Just a united states of Europe might become a very powerful combine to repress and exploit Asia and Africa.

At present the most urgent issue relating to China is the prevention of an Anglo-Japanese arrangement prejudicial to China.[4] Another issue, which has wider and international repercussions, is the freedom of India. If this is obstructed by Great Britain there is bound to be trouble and conflict between England and India, and this will be good for neither.

How exactly a common outlook and policy on certain major international issues can be developed, it is for the Generalissimo to consider. There may be various approaches to this problem.

One useful approach is through the I.P.C. I think it would be a good thing if a small regional conference of the I.P.C. could be held in India before long to which Chinese and other delegates could go. A joint lead given by China and India, through the I.P.C., would have important results.

7. I would suggest that specialised organizations should get into direct contact with each other in China and India. Thus the industrial cooperatives in China might get into direct touch with the All India Village Industries Association (Wardha, C.P., India) and the All India Spinners' Association (Ahmedabad, India) and the women's organization here with similar organization in India.

I fear this note is too long and I am too tired. I have written it at a sitting.

4. The Anglo-Japanese discussion in Tokyo regarding the Japanese demands for handing over the Chinese silver in the British Concession at Tientsin and for the withdrawal from circulation within the Concession of the Chinese dollar and its replacement by the Japanese currency resulted in a preliminary agreement on 21-22 July 1939. This caused uneasiness in Chungking. However, the talks were suspended by Britain on 19 September 1939.

12. China in War Time[1]

I tried to find out how a population in war time looks, while I was in Chungking, the Chinese war capital. I was thunderstruck by the extraordinary normality of the people's behaviour. As soon as an alarm was given the city started emptying out very rapidly. Some went to the dugouts which could accommodate 1,50,000 people, while others went to

1. Address at a meeting in the City Hall, Rangoon, 7 September 1939. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 14 September 1939.

the fields. I noticed they were perfectly calm and composed, but hurrying all the time. In May last a good part of Chungking was subjected to fearful destruction by incendiary bombs which set fire to the buildings.[2] Many new buildings are now springing up and I saw great military academies, munition industries and other factories which have also been bodily transported to Chungking.

In the military sense China today is stronger than at the commencement of the war. In the economic sense it has surprised and pleased me to see how the Chinese Government are trying to increase their production. The men of the Chinese village cooperative units at the risk of their lives, even go to the Japanese occupied areas with a view to increasing their production and preventing the economic domination of the conquered places by the Japanese. Such constructive work ultimately strengthens a nation.

Marshal Chiang Kai-shek's steadfastness and his ability to organise the nation are remarkable. From Marshal Chiang Kai-shek to the man in the street, I have noticed a keen desire for the establishment of closer Indo-Chinese relations. I hope my visit will serve as a landmark in Indo-Chinese relations.

Some people are apprehensive of the opening of the new Burma-China Road. But nothing can be better for Burma's prosperity than to become a centre of tremendous trade for China. Burma will become an important centre of international trade which she cannot do with her own resources. If I were a Burman I should welcome it, because it puts Burma not only on the Asiatic map, but on the world map.

2. Chungking was heavily bombed by the Japanese on 4 May 1939. The official estimate of casualties was 3,000.

13. India, China and Burma[1]

I am rushing from China to India across Asia and on the way I am spending one and a half days in Rangoon. I am glad of the delay although I am eager to get back to India. My mind is full of the great problem in which I hope India will play a worthy part, but the decision

1. Speech at the University Students Union Hall, Rangoon, 7 September 1939. From the *National Herald*, 17 September 1939.

remains with the members of a national organisation of whom I have the honour to be one.

I am glad to address this gathering because what is happening in the world today has a very special importance to young men and women. The world is passing through a great revolutionary phase, and young people will have to bear the burden of the future. It, therefore, becomes exceedingly important for young people to try to understand what part they have to play in this great drama. Problems become interrelated, and it is foolish to think that there is going to be a separate solution of any problem, except the solution of the world problem. Out of this cauldron of war something worthy might arise.

I want you to consider this problem in a larger way. Most of us are too wrapped up in our national problems and we will not be able to solve these problems unless we know something of the world problems.

The work of the youth in Burma will be for the benefit of Burma and the Burmese people. Once you have seen the full picture then only can you see the picture which relates to Burma.

I have tried to look at the problem in India in relation to world problems. I am glad to say that in India a larger perspective has come to the people and, immersed as we are in our own difficulties, we try to relate our own problems to world problems. The people of India have taken part in the Spanish war and in the Czechoslovakian crisis. I myself have witnessed nine bombings of Barcelona. The people of India have also taken an interest in the Palestine affairs and the China war. We have sent ambulances and doctors to China. These were sent as a token of our sympathy for the people of China. I relate all this in order to stress that we are part and parcel of this larger problem.

While in Europe I heard of the riots in Burma[2] and I was pained because the dignity of the Indians had suffered and also because I love Burma. It seems to me that the riots show on what a low plane we have been functioning. People—intelligent people—were swept away by a momentary passion. It is like a plot of land with hillocks and dips before a flood. The hillocks appear to be high but when the flood comes everything is submerged. How many are capable of rising above the floods in a crisis? In the not very distant future we will have to shoulder the responsibility with Burma and if we are not trained enough for this it would be bad.

2. The publicity given to a book written by a Burmese Muslim allegedly containing insults to Buddhism led to a mass protest meeting in Rangoon on 26 July 1938. Disturbances followed, which spread to many towns and districts, resulting in communal riots, directed mainly against the Indian community.

My visit to China has been cut short by my friends in India who want me to return immediately. But even during this short stay I have learnt a lot by watching the common people of China.

During my tours in India, before paying my first visit to Burma, I addressed over ten million people and learnt much by studying people in the villages through which I passed. I was often reminded of the long history of India, of its good periods and bad. I saw a daughter of India working in the fields and was reminded of the Ajanta frescoes. I was struck by the amazing continuity of India. Even after thousands of years all the old vitality of India still exists. On my visit to China I have seen enough to give me powerful impressions. The people of China are not distracted by the war but bear the indelible impressions of five thousand years of culture. I saw the faces of the people of China in a time of peril and they were not the faces of people who were going to be defeated. They were faces of an old race who were young again with a new vitality. I saw the calm courage of the people who were facing perils in a dignified way. Another thing I noticed was the discipline of the people of China. They are an organised people today. I was also impressed by the airmen of China who are taking an active part in the struggle.

There was much more in the last war than stated by historians to be its cause apart from the Kaiser's ambition and other contributory causes. The real cause was the rapid decay of the economic systems in Europe. As the war developed an economic control was evolved and the working of production and distribution was socialised. After the war the countries in Europe tried to go back to the old pre-war structure but they found that they could not settle down. There were scores and scores of international conferences to consider international problems but every one was a failure.

Everybody saw the world going towards a fresh catastrophe. About 1920 there seemed to be an improvement of conditions in Europe but this proved to be a false prosperity. Now, what did this mean? The situation was fantastic and showed that something was wrong at the base. But statesmen did not want to change this structure and as a result of this the present war has come. The immediate cause of the war is Germany's aggression, but the root cause is that the whole economic structure of the world has broken down. In this war the socialised control of commodities will take place and many orthodox theories of economics will be upset.

The time has come when we must forget our own little problems and must play our part in solving the big problems. If we take too narrow an outlook of national problems we will miss the opportunity

of taking part in the big affairs and we will remain a second-rate nation. We must take the larger perspective and try to understand our problems in the larger sense. This is the only way to success.

There will be a disaster of the first magnitude if we, the people of Asia—India, Burma and China—should fall out among ourselves showing that we are people of little stature and are not fit for the freedom to which we aspire. It is essential that we work together to attain these ideals for which we are all striving.

The people of China are eager to develop contact with the people of India and Burma. This war has forced China towards the people of India and Burma. If a new world order is established the countries of the East must play a prominent part in that world order.

14. China in Travail[1]

After two and a half years of war, it is inevitable that the Chinese people should suffer from strain. But it is surprising how well they bear this strain. What struck me most was their calmness and composure and at the same time their fixed determination to see the war through till China is completely free. Marshal Chiang Kai-shek is the embodiment of this determination.

I only saw a very small part of China but as I was in the war-time capital of China, I met most of the important leaders. I also visited many institutions like the big military academy where over six thousand cadets are being trained as officers and the various political academies where university graduates and others are given a political training both for civil service as well as for some kind of army service. These politically trained people are sent to army regiments in battalions to give a certain political background and morale to the army.

I also visited refugee camps, orphan homes, schools, factories, munition works, summer camps for children and universities. Most of the northern universities have shifted to the south-west and are often herded together in one place. This transfer of whole Chinese universities with professors and students to places thousands of miles away is a remarkable phenomenon.

1. Interview to the press, *The Hindu*, 24 September 1939.

CHINA, 1939

CHUNGKING, 1939

This war has resulted in bringing China geographically nearer to India and also in developing its backward western provinces. These provinces are now the headquarters of Chinese industries and the government, and they are now making rapid progress. The opening of the Burma Road has suddenly resulted in facilitating intercourse between India and China. Previously any person going to China went to the great ports of Hong Kong, Shanghai or Tientsin. Now it is far simpler to go across Burma. If there was a direct air route from Calcutta to Chungking, the journey would take less than a day. All this has resulted in a psychological change also and China is looking more and more towards India. I hope and believe that our contacts will increase rapidly.

The Chinese people want all kinds of contacts with India, cultural, educational, scientific, artistic, and in respect of women's organisations, youth organisations and so on. Chinese journalists are anxious to get into touch with Indian journalists' associations. I hope these various organisations will get into mutual contact and possibly arrangements might be made for better publicity and exchange of news.

The universities are eager to exchange professors and students. While China is strongly influenced by the West today, more especially by America, she is developing a strong sense of Asiatic unity. There is a feeling that, in particular, China and India are fitted to cooperate together for not only their own advantage but for the world's good. Their vast resources, populations and intelligence, if harnessed together, can be of great good to the world.

I was present during five air raids, four in Chungking and one at Chengting. At the latter place, I went into the dug-outs and was taken out in the middle of the night to the fields outside the city where we spent two or three uncomfortable hours waiting for Japanese planes, which did not come. At Chungking too I was taken into the dug-outs. I was taken to the special dug-outs which, except on one occasion, were crowded. I wondered what the public dug-outs were like. These certainly must have been very much crowded and very uncomfortable in the darkness. Unfortunately, I did not see much of the air raid itself because my Chinese hosts were so anxious about my safety that they would not let me go out to see any.

On one occasion, however, I saw an air fight between Japanese bombers and Chinese chaser planes. That evening I was spending with Marshal Chiang Kai-shek when the air-raid alarm came. We retired to his special dug-out. Sometimes the Marshal was eager to see what was happening and he came out of the dug-out. During my stay, two or three Japanese bombers were brought down near Chungking.

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I was particularly sorry that I could not visit the north-west front in Yenan which I specially wanted to see partly because our medical unit was there and I wanted to see it, and partly because that corner of China is different from the rest of the country. It has been in semi-communist control for some years past and the headquarters of the 8th Route Army were situated there. During the last two and a half years, of course, there has been unity of administration and army control and I would have liked to meet some of the leaders of the 8th Route Army who had invited me specially. My rapid return to India prevented me from doing this.

I found that our medical unit was greatly appreciated in China. It has been doing good work in the north-west where medical supplies are specially scanty. Apart from the active help given, it is a living symbol of our sympathy and cooperation and is appreciated as such. I was asked if we could send more medical units. I do not know. But I hope the present unit will certainly continue. This, however, depends on financial help from India and I trust that this help will be forthcoming.

3

INDIA AND THE WAR I

August — November 1939

1. India and the World Crisis[1]

A furious storm is raging in the world today and it cannot be tided over without a war. In any event, war seems to be inevitable. After the last war, the world has changed a good deal. There have been freedom struggles and everywhere there has been a cry for freedom. India is no exception to it. We stand to gain much from war, should it break out.

The two formidable powers in the world today are Russia and the U.S.A. These two countries depend on themselves, but the others are dependent on one another. The two would-be mighty powers of the world are India and China. They can also easily depend on themselves. As regards Japan, there is no possibility of her attacking India in the event of war.

India is now on the threshold of freedom. Unfortunately internal differences have arisen in the Congress. I must admit that in a huge organisation like the Congress, it is natural to have men with different ideologies. But this should not lead to the weakening of the Congress. During my term of presidentship, I had differences with my colleagues. Sometimes they demurred at what I had to say, while on other occasions I had to differ from them. Yet, I could not rebel.

The Congress is like a sword. By our own labour we have sharpened it, and if anyone rebels against it, it only blunts its sharpness. I appeal to the people to sink their differences, and march hand in hand at this critical hour. In the event of a war breaking out it is possible that the ministries may have to resign.

1. Speech at Jamshedpur, 5 August 1939. From the *National Herald*, 8 August 1939.

2. On the Future Course of Action[1]

In the present disorganised state of air service, since it is impossible to reach India in time for the Working Committee meeting, I hope that the Committee will proceed without me, but if the meeting continues for some days, I might possibly be able to attend it in the later stages.

I cannot discuss the attitude of the Congress towards war;[2] it is for the Working Committee as a body to decide the question, and individuals should not issue personal statements.

New and sudden crises may necessitate the adoption of new policies and methods and action, and it is impossible for me to say what India's policy towards the war should be till a discussion with the Working Committee.

The European war is the result of outworn economic systems which had survived the shock of the last war. At the end of the present war, I visualise new economic systems and principles, to which many states will subscribe in common. Contrary to prevalent opinion, I believe that the present war might last for a long period as new methods of attack and new psychological factors are involved.

I witnessed five Japanese air raids during my fortnight's stay in China. The morale of the Chinese army and people is excellent. Foreign aggression has unified China in presenting a solid front against Japan.

Since the outbreak of the European war, the strength of the Chinese currency has gone up and if Britain maintains her previous attitude towards China,[3] then China's chances of successful resistance are not gloomy.

There is necessity for more cultural contacts with China, and India's gesture of goodwill in sending out an Indian medical unit has deeply touched the Chinese.

1. Interview to the press, Rangoon, 7 September 1939. From *The Hindu*, 7 September 1939.
Jawaharlal cut short his China tour and returned to India on 9 September 1939 to take part in the discussions of the Congress Working Committee.
2. Nazi Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939. Britain and France declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939.
3. Britain took virtually no interest in China till the U.S. involvement in the war.

3. Evolution of a New World Order[1]

We have repeatedly stated that we are not out to bargain. We do not approach the problem with a view to taking advantage of Britain's difficulties. This war is going to change the face of things. The old order is dead and cannot be revived. If we are making for a new order let us do so consciously, defining it clearly and acting up to it from now onwards. It is perfectly true that in a conflict between democracy and freedom on the one side and fascism and aggression on the other, our sympathies must inevitably lie on the side of democracy and we cannot tolerate with pleasure the idea of victory for the fascist and imperialist aggressor. But the mere repetition of phrases about democracy and freedom does not mean that the struggle is for democracy. The last war showed that and the past year has demonstrated still more how democracy can be betrayed in the name of peace and freedom. The real test as to whether this struggle is for democracy does not lie in the loud enunciations of the principles but in the practice. If England stands for self-determination the proof of that should be India. The proposed federation,[2] again, is a complete denial of both.

I should like India to play her full part and throw all her resources into the struggle for a new order. I hope that my country will look at this problem not from a narrow national viewpoint but from the widest international viewpoint and seek to foster further the good of the world because our own good is involved in it. I hope that all of you will be wise enough and strong enough to forget petty rivalries and conflicts and rise to the occasion thinking only of the freedom of India and the evolution of a new world order.

1. Interview to the press, Rangoon, 8 September 1939. *National Herald*, 9 September 1939.
2. On 11 September 1939, the Viceroy announced that the federal scheme was suspended for the duration of the war.

4. Message to the United Provinces[1]

On my return from China I send my greetings to my comrades of the U.P. I am back again to stand shoulder to shoulder with you in this crisis and the trials that face us. Let us not lose our composure and calm fortitude and let us all pull together whatever peril or difficulty comes our way. Above all, let us put an end to our petty bickerings. The hour calls to us. Let our answer be straight and true and ringing and may our actions lead us to a free India and a free world. Out of the dreadful horror of the war may a world of freedom emerge and a new order which might see the end of imperialism and fascism.

1. Calcutta, 9 September 1939. *National Herald*, 10 September 1939.

5. On the Visit to China[1]

This visit of mine to China has been worthwhile even though it was made at a very inopportune moment. I was astonished and gratified at the desire of the Chinese people and their leaders for close, friendly relations with the people of India. I have brought innumerable messages of goodwill from the leaders of China to the people of India. I have been charged by the Chinese Generalissimo to convey his greetings to Mahatma Gandhi and Poet Tagore.

I have had an adventurous journey back from China by plane, trolley and train. I would have been held up in China but for the courtesy of the Chinese Government who put a plane at my disposal. I saw numerous air raids in China but I did not see a single person get excited.

1. Interview to the press, Calcutta, 9 September 1939. *National Herald*, 10 September 1939.

Question : Are you looking up to Mahatma Gandhi for a lead on what India should do at this hour?

Jawaharlal Nehru : Mahatma Gandhi has not yet given any lead. He has only in the course of a statement reiterated his faith in nonviolence.[2]

At this stage it is right and proper for nationalist India to speak with one voice and in a united way. All of us must sink individual preferences and the desire to express our own private views before the final policy is decided upon. I earnestly hope that the Congress will act worthily at this hour of great crisis and thus advance the cause of India's freedom as well as world freedom.

2. On 5 September 1939, Mahatma Gandhi, referring to his interview with the Viceroy, said: "...I had no instruction whatsoever from the Working Committee....with my irrepressible and out and out nonviolence I knew I could not represent the national mind."

6. Congress Resolution on India and the War

Draft for Working Committee, Wardha, 11 September 1939[1]

The Working Committee have given their most earnest consideration to the grave crisis which has overtaken Europe, resulting in war between Great Britain, France and Poland on the one side and Germany on the other. This war will inevitably have far-reaching consequences in India as well as all other countries, for the crisis is not of Europe only but of humanity

Corrected Draft, Wardha, 12 September 1939[2]

The Working Committee have given their earnest consideration to the grave crisis that has developed owing to the declaration of war in Europe. The principles which should guide the nation in the event of war have been repeatedly laid down by the Congress, and only a month ago this Committee reiterated them and expressed their displeasure at the flouting of

Congress Working Committee Resolution, 14 September 1939[3]

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1. & 2. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
3. *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 410-414.

The Congress resolution on the war was the work of Jawaharlal. We present here the first draft submitted by him to the Working Committee, and all the later versions showing the changes made by him after discussions in the Working Committee.

and will not pass like other crises or wars leaving the essential structure of the present-day world intact. It is likely to refashion the world for good or ill, politically, socially and economically. The crisis is the inevitable consequence of the social and political conflicts and contradictions which have grown alarmingly since the last Great War, and it will not be finally resolved till these conflicts and contradictions are removed and a new equilibrium established. Vast forces are being let loose bringing horror and disaster in their train and with the possibility of a disintegration of civilisation as we have known it. Yet there is also a promise of hope that out of this

Indian opinion by the British Government in India. As a first step to dissociate themselves from this policy of the British Government, the Committee called upon the Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session of the Assembly.[4] Since then the British Government have declared India as a belligerent country, promulgated ordinances, passed the Government of India Act Amending Bill, and taken other far-reaching measures which affect the Indian people vitally, circumscribe and limit the activities of the provincial governments, and otherwise bring India under the absolute control of the British Government.[5]

opinion by the British Government in India. As a first step to dissociate themselves from this policy of the British Government, the Committee called upon the Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session.

Since then the British Government have declared India as a belligerent country, promulgated ordinances, passed the Government of India Act Amending Bill, and taken other far-reaching measures which affect the Indian people vitally and circumscribe and limit the powers and activities of the provincial governments. This has been done without the consent of the Indian people, whose declared

4. On 10 August 1939, the Working Committee directed all Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly not to attend the next session of the Assembly, as a protest against the despatch of troops abroad and the prolongation of the life of the Assembly by another year.
5. On 3 September 1939, the Governor General promulgated the Defence of India Ordinance which curtailed civil liberties. The same day an amendment to the Government of India Act of 1935 was rushed through the British Parliament, enabling the Central Government to nullify provincial autonomy.

terrible catastrophe will emerge a new world order and a better dispensation for the nations and peoples of the world.

At this supreme crisis of history, no one who has to shoulder the responsibility of guiding the policies of a nation dare take a narrow view and endeavour to seek temporary advantage for a group or a people at the expense of humanity. Realising this grave responsibility and with the supreme desire to further the cause of Indian freedom and a new and juster world order, where the nations cooperate with each other for the common good, the Working Committee have given earnest thought to the advice which they should give to the Indian people.

The Congress has repeatedly laid down the principles which should guide the nation in the event of war. It has expressed its entire disapproval of the ideology and

This has been done without the consent of the Indian people whose declared wishes in such matters have been deliberately ignored by the British Government which is seeking to exploit India and her resources for the consolidation and furtherance of the interests of British imperialism. The Working Committee must take the gravest view of these developments.

The Congress has repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit. It has condemned the aggression in which they have repeatedly indulged and their sweeping away of well-established principles and recognised standards of civilised behaviour. It has seen in fascism and Nazism the intensification of the principle of imperialism against which the Indian people have

wishes in such matters have been deliberately ignored by the British Government. The Working Committee must take the gravest view of these developments.

The Congress has repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit. It has condemned the aggression in which they have repeatedly indulged and their sweeping away of well-established principles and recognised standards of civilized behaviour. It has seen in fascism and Nazism the intensification of the principle of imperialism against which the Indian people have struggled for many years. The Working Committee must therefore unhesitatingly condemn the latest aggression of the Nazi Government in Germany against Poland and sympathize with those who resist it.

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The Congress has further laid down that the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people and no outside authority can impose this decision upon them, nor can the Indian people permit their resources to be

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The Congress has further laid down that the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people and no outside authority can impose this decision upon them, nor can the Indian people permit their resources to be exploited for imperialist ends. Any imposed decision, or attempt to use Indian resources for purposes not approved by them, will necessarily have to be opposed by them. If cooperation is desired in a worthy cause, this cannot be obtained by compulsion and imposition, and the Committee cannot agree to the carrying out by the Indian people of orders issued by an external authority.

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Cooperation must be between equals by mutual consent for a cause which both consider to be worthy. The people of India have, in the recent past, faced great risks and willingly made great sacrifices to secure their own freedom and

exploited for imperialist ends. Any imposed decision, or attempt to use Indian resources for purposes not approved by them, will necessarily have to be opposed by them.

These are the principles which govern Congress policy and action, and the Working Committee regret to note that these principles have been ignored by the British Government in India, which has already announced certain decisions,[6] which affect India vitally, without the express consent of her people. If cooperation is desired in a worthy cause, the way of compulsion and imposition is not the way to obtain it, and the Committee cannot agree to the carrying out by the Indian people of orders issued by an external authority. Cooperation must be between equals by mutual consent for a cause which both consider to be worthy. The people of India have, in the recent past, faced great risks and willingly made great sacrifices to secure their own freedom and establish a free democratic state in India, and their sympathy is entirely on the side of democracy and freedom. For the furtherance of that cause they will gladly throw in their resources and all their goodwill. But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom is denied to her, and such limited freedom as she possesses taken away from her.

The Committee are aware that the Governments of Great Britain and France have declared that they establish a free democratic state in India, and their sympathy is entirely on the side of democracy and freedom. But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom is denied to her, and such limited freedom as she possesses taken away from her.

The Committee are aware that the Governments of Great Britain and France have declared that they are fighting for democracy and freedom and to put an end to aggression. But the history of the recent past is full of examples showing the constant divergence between the spoken word, the ideals proclaimed, and the real motives and objectives. During the war of 1914-1918 the declared war aims were the

6. On 3 September 1939, India was declared by the British Government to be in a state of war with Germany without consulting the legislature or the leaders of the principal parties.

by mutual consent for a cause which both consider to be worthy.

In view, however, of the pace of events during the past few days, which has often been swifter than the working of men's minds, the Committee desire to take no final decision at this stage, committing the nation to a definite policy, so as to allow for an elucidation of the issues at stake, the objectives aimed at, and the position of India in the present and the future. The people of India have faced great risks and willingly made great sacrifices in order to establish a free democratic state, and their sympathy is entirely on the side of democracy and freedom. For the furtherance of that cause they will gladly throw in their resources and all their goodwill.

The Committee are aware that the Governments of Great Britain are fighting for democracy and freedom and to put an end to aggression. But the history of the recent past is full of examples showing a constant divergence between the spoken word, the ideals proclaimed, and the real motives and objectives. During the war of 1914-18 the declared war aims were the preservation of democracy, self-determination, and the freedom of small nations, and yet the very governments which solemnly proclaimed these aims entered into secret treaties embodying imperialist designs for the carving out of the Ottoman Empire. While stating that they did not want any acquisition of territory, the victorious powers added largely to their colonial domains. The present European war itself signifies the abject failure of the Treaty of Versailles and of its makers, who broke their pledged word and imposed an imperialist peace on the conquered preservation of democracy, self-determination and the freedom of small nations, and yet the very governments which solemnly proclaimed these aims entered into secret treaties embodying imperialist designs for the carving up of the Ottoman Empire. While stating that they did not want any acquisition of territory, the victorious powers added largely to their colonial domains.

The present European war itself signifies the abject failure of the Treaty of Versailles and of its makers, who broke their pledged word and imposed an imperialist peace on the defeated nations. The one hopeful outcome of that treaty, the League of Nations, was muzzled and strangled at the outset and later killed by its parent states.

Subsequently history has demonstrated afresh how even a seemingly fervent declaration of faith may

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Subsequent history has demonstrated afresh how even a seemingly fervent declaration of faith may be followed by a base desertion. In Manchuria the British Government connived at aggression; in Abyssinia they acquiesced in it. In Czechoslovakia and Spain democracy was in peril and it was deliberately and shamefully betrayed, and the whole system of collective security was sabotaged by the very powers who had previously declared their firm faith in it. For a petty advantage in the present, vital principles be followed by an ignoble desertion. In Manchuria the British Government connived at aggression; in Abyssinia they acquiesced in it. In Czechoslovakia and Spain democracy was in peril, and it was deliberately betrayed, and the whole system of collective security was sabotaged by the very powers who had previously declared their firm faith in it.

Again it is asserted that democracy is in danger and must be defended, and with this statement the Committee are in entire agreement. The Committee believe that the peoples of the West are moved by this ideal and objective, and for these they are prepared to make sacrifices. But again and

7. Various secret conferences between the Allies and Turkey culminated in the Treaty of Sevres (10 August 1920) which liquidated the Ottoman Empire, abolished Turkish sovereignty and led to virtual control of the Turkish economy by the Allies.

colonial domains. The present European war is itself the result.

If the war is to defend the *status quo*, imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests and privilege, then India can have no interest in it, for all this is the negation of democracy. If, however, the issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it. The Committee is convinced that the interests of Indian democracy do not conflict with the interests of British democracy or of world democracy. But there is an inherent and ineradicable conflict between democracy in India and elsewhere and imperialism and fascism. If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism and establish full democracy in India and let the Indian people exercise the right of self-determination by framing

were sacrificed and the future was forgotten and betrayed. That future is the present today and takes its revenge.

Again we are told that democracy is in danger and must be defended and with this statement the Committee are in entire agreement. The Committee believe that the peoples of the West are moved by this ideal and objective and for these they are prepared to make sacrifices. But again and again the ideals and sentiments of the people and of those who have sacrificed themselves in the struggle have been ignored and faith has not been kept with them. Public idealism has been exploited for imperialist and predatory ends, and there is a gulf between what the people are told and believe they are fighting for and the real aims and objectives of governments.

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If the war is to defend the *status quo*, imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests, and privilege, then India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, this issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it. The Committee are convinced that the interests of Indian democracy do not conflict with the interests of British democracy or of world democracy. But there is an inherent and ineradicable conflict between democracy for India or elsewhere and imperialism and fascism.

If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own

their own constitution.[8] As a free democratic state, India will gladly associate herself with other nations for mutual defence and economic cooperation.

The Working Committee has noted that many rulers of Indian states have offered their services and expressed their desire to support the cause of democracy in Europe. While appreciating their adherence to the democratic cause, the Committee would suggest that their first concern should be the introduction of democracy within their own states. It does not advance the cause of democracy if some of its champions are noted for preserving semi-feudal, autocratic regimes which are even more reactionary than the fascist regime

If the war is to defend the status quo, imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests and privilege, then India can have no interest in it. If, however, the issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it. The Committee are convinced that the interests of Indian democracy do not conflict with the interests of British democracy or world democracy. But there is an inherent and ineradicable conflict between democracy in India and elsewhere and imperialism and fascism. If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own possessions, establish full democracy in India, and let the possessions, establish full democracy in India, and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution through a constituent assembly without external interference, and must guide their own policy. A free, democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic cooperation. She will work for the establishment of a real world order based on freedom and democracy, utilizing the world's knowledge and resources for the progress and advancement of humanity.

The crisis that has overtaken Europe is not of Europe only, but of humanity, and will not pass like

8. Linlithgow wrote to Zetland on 18 September 1939: "My own impression is...we have carefully avoided any suggestion that we are in the war to further or to defend democracy....I see no reason why we should let ourselves become entangled in an academic argument about the merits or demerits of the principle of democracy, or the possible reactions on the position in India or in the colonies, to which I see also Nehru has referred, of our views on that abstract question...."

which they condemn. The past year has exposed many horrors and the fullness of autocracy in many Indian states and the British Government in India has given its protection and support to these in spite of public protest and warning.[9] This policy is the very negation of democracy and of the new world order for which Great Britain is supposed to be fighting in Europe.

As the Working Committee view past events in Europe, Africa and Asia, and more particularly past and present occurrences in India, they fail to see any attempt to advance the cause of democracy and self-determination, or any evidence that the present war declarations of the British Government are being acted upon. The Committee are Indian people exercise the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution without external interference and guide their own policy. A free, democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic cooperation. She will work for the establishment of a real world order based on freedom and democracy, utilising the world's knowledge and resources for the progress and advancement of humanity.

The Working Committee have noted that many rulers of Indian states have offered their services and resources and expressed their desire to support the cause of democracy in Europe. While appreciating their professions in other crises or wars, leaving the essential structure of the present-day world intact. It is likely to refashion the world for good or ill, politically, socially and economically. This crisis is the inevitable consequence of the social and political conflicts and contradictions which have grown alarmingly since the last Great War, and it will not be finally resolved till these conflicts and contradictions are removed and a new equilibrium established. That equilibrium can only be based on the ending of the domination and exploitation of one country by another, and on a reorganization of economic relations on a juster basis for the common good of all.

India is the crux of the problem, for India has been the outstanding

9. A resolution on Indian states was passed at the Haripura Congress in February 1938, encouraging individual Congressmen to render active support although Congress as a body could only offer moral support and sympathy; and at the Tripuri session in March 1939 the Congress gave warning that it might abandon its policy of non-interference.

eager and desirous of helping in every way in the struggle for democracy and for a new world order. But the measure of that democracy is the ending of imperialism and imperialist aggression. If present fascist aggression is to be ended, so also present and past imperialist aggression. Only on that firm basis can a new order be built up.

The Committee therefore invite the British Government to declare in clear terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged, and how far these aims are going to be given effect to in the present in India and elsewhere. Such an unequivocal declaration, pledging the government to the ending of imperialism and fascism alike, will be welcomed by the peoples of all countries, and the immediate steps taken to that end will demonstrate that the declaration is meant to be honoured. In favour of democracy abroad, the Committee would suggest that their first concern should be the introduction of democracy within their own states. It does not advance the cause of democracy if some of its professed champions are noted for preserving semi-feudal and autocratic regimes which are even more reactionary than the fascist regimes which they condemn. The past year has exposed many horrors and the fullness of autocracy and misrule in many Indian states, and the British Government in India has given its protection and support to these states in spite of public protest and warning. This policy is the very negation of democracy and of the new world order for which Great Britain is supposed to be fighting in Europe.

As the Working Committee view past events in Europe, Africa and Asia, and more particularly past and present occurrences in India, example of modern imperialism, and no refashioning of the world can succeed which ignores this vital problem. With her vast resources she must play an important part in any scheme of world reorganisation. But she can only do so as a free nation whose energies have been released to work for this great end. Freedom today is indivisible, and every attempt to retain imperialist domination in any part of the world will lead inevitably to fresh disaster.

The Working Committee have noted that many rulers of Indian states have offered their services and resources and expressed their desire to support the cause of democracy in Europe. If they must make their professions in favour of democracy abroad, the Committee would suggest that their first concern should be the introduction of democracy within their own states,

the infinite anguish of war, this pledge will bring some solace to those who suffer and sacrifice.

War has broken out in Europe and the prospect is terrible to contemplate. But war has been taking its heavy toll of human life during the past several years in Abyssinia, Spain and China. Innumerable innocent men, women and children have been bombed to death from the air in open cities; cold-blooded massacres, torture and utmost humiliation, and the killing of the human spirit, have followed each other in quick succession during these years of horror. That horror grows, and violence and the threat of violence shadow the world and, unless checked and ended, will destroy the precious inheritance of the past and bring back the Dark Ages to the world. That horror has to be checked in Europe and China, but it will not end till its root causes of imperialism and they fail to see any attempt to advance the cause of democracy or self-determination, or any evidence that the present war declarations of the British Government are being, or are going to be, acted upon. They see a desire to continue the imperialist structure and to consolidate it, and to retain feudal conditions and their imperialist control over India. This is the negation of the cause of freedom and democracy for which the free peoples of the world are asked to fight and make sacrifices. The true measure of democracy is the ending of imperialism and fascism alike and the aggression that has accompanied them in the past and the present. Only on that basis can a new order be built up. In the struggle for that new world order, the Committee are eager and desirous to help in every way. But the Committee cannot associate themselves or offer cooperation in any way to in which today undiluted autocracy reigns supreme.

The British Government in India is more responsible for this autocracy than even the rulers themselves, as has been made painfully evident during the past year. This policy is the very negation of democracy and of the new world order for which Great Britain claims to be fighting in Europe.

As the Working Committee view past events in Europe, Africa, and Asia, and more particularly past and present occurrences in India, they fail to find any attempt to advance the cause of democracy or self-determination or any evidence that the present war declarations of the British Government are being, or are going to be, acted upon. The true measure of democracy is the ending of imperialism and fascism alike and the aggression that has accompanied them in the past and the present.

fascism are removed. To that end, if that is the end in view in the present war, the Working Committee is prepared to pledge its cooperation.

The Committee wishes to declare that the Indian people have no quarrel with the German people or the Japanese people or any other people. But they have a quarrel with systems which deny freedom and are based on violence and aggression. They look forward to no victory of one people over another or a dictated peace, but a victory of democracy for all the peoples of all countries and a world freed from the nightmare of violence and fascist and imperialist oppression.

The Working Committee are deferring their final decision and advice to the people to enable the British Government to clarify the issues mentioned above. In view of the gravity of the crisis, however, a war which is conducted on imperialist lines and which is meant to consolidate imperialism in India and elsewhere. Any attempt to force Indian cooperation can only strengthen the conviction that the war is not for democracy but for imperialism, and such an attempt will have to be resisted in accordance with Congress policy.

In view, however, of the gravity of the occasion and the fact that the pace of events during the last few days has often been swifter than the working of men's minds, the Committee desire to take no final decision at this stage, so as to allow for the full elucidation of the issues at stake, the real objectives aimed at, and the position of India in the present and the future. But the decision cannot long be delayed as India is being committed from day to day to a policy to which she is not a party and which she disapproves. The recent

Only on that basis can a new order be built up. In the struggle for that new world order the Committee are eager and desirous to help in every way. But the Committee cannot associate themselves or offer any cooperation in a war which is conducted on imperialist lines and which is meant to consolidate imperialism in India and elsewhere.

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they earnestly appeal to the people to put an end to all internal controversies and conflicts and to keep in readiness, so that they might face the perils and dangers to come as a united nation, calm of purpose and determined to achieve the freedom of India within the larger freedom of a world order.

Pending further directions, the Congress ministries should continue in office but they should not agree to any measure which is against Congress policy or which they consider detrimental to national interests.

ordinances are being used to crush the working class and to transfer power from the provincial governments to the agents of the British Authority. To this the Committee take strong exception.

The Working Committee therefore invite the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged. In particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people? Will the present imperialist policy imposed upon her be changed in the immediate future? An unequivocal declaration about the future, pledging the government to the ending of imperialism and fascism alike will

policy to which she is not a party and of which she disapproves.

The Working Committee therefore invite the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new world order that is envisaged; in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people?

A clear declaration about the future, pledging the government to the ending of imperialism and fascism alike, will be welcomed by the peoples of all countries, but it is far more important to give immediate effect to it to the largest possible extent, for only this will convince the people that the declaration is meant to be honoured. The

be welcomed by the peoples of all countries, but it is far more important to give immediate effect to it, in so far as is possible, for only this will convince the people that the declaration is meant to be honoured. In the infinite anguish of war, this pledge will bring some solace to those who suffer and make sacrifices.

War has broken out in Europe and the prospect is terrible to contemplate. But war has been taking its heavy toll of human life during the past years in Abyssinia, Spain and China. Innumerable innocent men, women and children have been bombed to death from the air in open cities; cold-blooded massacres, torture and utmost humiliation and the killing of the human spirit have followed each other in quick succession during these years of horror. That horror grows, and violence and the threat of violence shadow the world, and, unless checked and ended, will destroy the precious inheritance of past ages. That horror has to be checked in Europe and China, but it will not end till its root causes of fascism and imperialism are removed.

real test of any declaration is its application in the present, for it is the present that will govern action today and give shape to the future.

War has broken out in Europe, and the prospect is terrible to contemplate. But war has been taking its heavy toll of human life during recent years in Abyssinia, Spain, and China. Innumerable innocent men, women, and children have been bombed to death from the air in open cities; cold-blooded massacres, torture, and utmost humiliation have followed each other in quick succession during these years of horror. That horror grows, and violence and the threat of violence shadow the world and, unless checked and ended, will destroy the precious inheritance of past ages. That horror has to be checked in Europe and China, but it will not end till its root causes of fascism and imperialism are removed.

unless checked and ended, will destroy the precious inheritance of past ages. That horror has to be checked in Europe and China, but it will not end till its root causes of fascism and imperialism are removed. To that end, if that is the end in view in the present war, the Working Committee are prepared to pledge their cooperation. But it will be infinite tragedy if even this terrible war is carried on in the spirit of imperialism and for the purpose of retaining this structure which is itself the cause of war and human degradation.

The Working Committee wish to declare that the Indian people have no quarrel with the German people or the Japanese people or any other people. But they have a deep-rooted quarrel with systems which deny freedom and are based on violence and aggression. They do not look forward to a victory of one people over another or to a

To that end the Working Committee are prepared to give their cooperation. But it will be infinite tragedy if even this terrible war is carried on in the spirit of imperialism and for the purpose of retaining this structure which is itself the cause of war and human degradation.

The Working Committee wish to declare that the Indian people have no quarrel with the German people or the Japanese people or any other people. But they have a deep-rooted quarrel with systems which deny freedom and are based on violence and aggression. They do not look forward to a victory of one people over another or to a dictated peace, but to a victory of real democracy for all the people of all countries and a world freed from the nightmare of violence and imperialist oppression.

The Committee earnestly appeal to the Indian people to end all

dictated peace, but to a victory of real democracy for all the peoples of all countries and a world freed from the nightmare of violence and fascist and imperialist oppression.

The Committee earnestly appeal to the people to put an end to all internal conflict and controversy and, in this grave hour of peril, to keep in readiness and hold together as a united nation, calm of purpose and determined to achieve the freedom of India within the larger freedom of a world order.

internal conflict and controversy and, in this grave hour of peril, to keep in readiness and hold together as a united nation, calm of purpose and determined to achieve the freedom of India within the larger freedom of the world.

7. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Wardha
September 16, 1939

My dear Krishna,
Kripalani sent you yesterday a long cablegram giving the principal features of the statement issued by the Working Committee regarding the war situation. I am now enclosing a copy of the full statement. How the situation will develop I cannot say but it is obvious that we are in for a dynamic period in India as well as elsewhere. The Working Committee's statement gives a fair idea of the working of their minds.

I have consented to become a member of the Working Committee, and a special sub-committee to deal with the war emergency has been formed.[2] This sub-committee has me for its chairman and two other members—Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The sub-committee has been given indefinite powers to deal with any situation that might arise but it is likely to keep in intimate touch with the full Working Committee as well as with Gandhiji who is keenly interested in the developments.

I wrote to you from Chungking about the possibility of a regional I.P.C. conference to be held in India. The idea was that India should invite this conference which would mainly consist of Chinese and Indian representatives as well as perhaps some old representatives from other Asiatic countries. Also there should be one representative each from England, France and the United States to keep in touch with the Western branches of the I.P.C. This idea originated from Dr. Rajchman[3] of Geneva who was in Chungking at the time. I spoke to Chiang Kai-shek about it and he approved of it. It was suggested that Stimson[4] should come from America, Pierre Cot[5] from France, and some suitable

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. The war sub-committee was appointed by the Working Committee in September 1939 and functioned till the Ramgarh Congress in March 1940.
3. Ludwik Rajchman (b. 1881); Polish physician; director, health section of the League of Nations.
4. Henry Lewis Stimson (1867-1950); lawyer and statesman; U.S. Secretary of State, 1929-33; Chairman, American Delegation to Naval Arms Conference, London, 1930, and Disarmament Conference, Geneva, 1932; Secretary of War, 1940-45.
5. (b. 1895); French lawyer; began his political career as a radical and was Minister of Air in several governments in the thirties; member, Bureau of the World Council of Peace; awarded Lenin Peace Prize in 1963.

representative from England. We could not think of the English representative and I suggested that you might be consulted. The subjects to be discussed were to be:

(1) War and peace issues in Europe in relation to Asia.
(2) Inter-Asiatic collaboration in regard to rural reorganisation, cooperatives, local administrations, etc. (machinery for exchanging information and experience).
(3) Necessity of providing in future war settlement of collaboration on world scale and not on regional scale.

It was suggested that papers should be prepared on all these subjects. T.W. Soong[6] is one of the persons who might be induced to attend.

I do not know how far it is possible to hold this conference now in view of the war and transport difficulties. There is also the possibility of an internal crisis developing. In any event, we have decided today to invite such a conference and I have cabled accordingly to China. I suppose the I.P.C. in China will get in touch with people in England and elsewhere. I have given your name to them. In my previous letter to you I suggested that you might come to India for this conference, but probably this will be difficult now. We have suggested the third week of October for the conference which might be held in Allahabad. Will you find out from the British I.P.C. as well as the headquarters of the I.P.C. what the position is. I suppose Dolivet has been mobilised.

I am going to Allahabad tonight. On the 7th October we are having a meeting of the All India Congress Committee, probably in Wardha.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

6. Tse Wen-soong (b. 1897); brother of Madame Sun Yat-sen and Madame Chiang Kai-shek; studied in the U.S.A.; held office intermittently under the Kuomintang between 1927-45.

8. To Secretaries, Provincial Congress Committees[1]

Camp Wardha
September 17, 1939

Dear Friend,
For many years past all of us have lived on the verge of a world crisis and, preoccupied as we were with our vital national problems, the Congress had often given thought to the approaching crisis and laid down our broad policy in regard to it. Now that crisis has come and war rages in Europe, in addition to the Far Eastern war, which has now been going on for two and a half years. Every Congressman has been deeply moved by this turn of events and has given earnest consideration to our duty at this juncture. Not only the directions of the Congress during these past years, but also the very basis of the Congress and its reason for existence compel us to play a worthy and effective part in the development of events. We have not been onlookers of events in India passively adapting ourselves to what happened. The Congress has essentially been a body of action and struggle in the cause of India's freedom and has shaped India's destiny for many years. That grave responsibility has to be shouldered afresh by the Congress in this crisis which affects India as well as the rest of the world.

As you are aware the Working Committee have given the most earnest consideration to these developments and have issued a statement in which they have clearly laid down India's attitude. We invite your attention to this statement so that your provincial and local committees and all Congressmen should appreciate the position fully and act in accordance with the advice given. That statement is a dispassionately worded document, clarifying the issues as they affect India, in simple language and indicating the road that India has to travel in these troubled times. The implications of that statement and the possible developments must be clear to you.

The Committee has viewed the crisis in the widest perspective and has considered the cause of Indian freedom in relation to world freedom. We who claim to labour for great ends in India cannot lose sight of these perspectives. This crisis will not pass, as the Working Committee say, leaving the essential structure of the present-day world

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.

intact. The world is going to be refashioned and India is going to play her part in this refashioning.

Many questions arise as to our day-to-day activities more especially during this period when our final decision has not been taken. We shall endeavour to answer them as they arise and as they are put to us. As you are aware a special sub-committee consisting of us three has been appointed to deal with the war emergency and we shall always be at your disposal for reference or advice. Our sub-committee will of course be guided by Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress President, Sri Rajendra Prasad.

Two matters, however, have to be borne in mind for they are of essential importance. Whatever the developments might be, we can only face them with dignity and strength if our organisation is well prepared and has put an end to internal controversies and conflicts. No lover of the Congress and of Indian freedom may do anything which impairs our unity and joint will for action. We have all to rise above our petty selves and become, in this crisis of our destiny, true soldiers of India, speaking and acting together with dignity and forbearance and in accordance with the ideals and principles we have cherished.

Our first duty is to tone up our organisation and keep it in fit condition for whatever demands might be made upon it. Secondly, we must not individually or severally, act or speak hastily precipitating a development before its proper time. We must function in accordance with the spirit of the Working Committee's statement and not overreach it or belie it in our words or deeds. That would be a disservice to the larger cause we seek to serve, as well as to this unity which is essential in our ranks.

Your provincial and local committees should give the widest publicity to the Working Committee's statement and explain its implications, more particularly the essential need for tightening up our organisation and preparing it for all the difficulties and trials we may have to face. Unity and discipline have to be emphasised, as well as that the final decision has not been taken yet and this will depend on circumstances and developments. Our position has been frankly and clearly stated before India and the world. To that we shall adhere, and seek, above all, to follow paths which lead to world freedom and reorganisation which must be based on our freedom. But any action taken by an individual Congressman which goes beyond the Working Committee's statement will not only lead to a loosening of our discipline but to a weakening of our cause and to controversy when we have to present a united front. This has to be avoided. Strength will not come to us by individual action or by brave speeches but by discipline and united

effort. The hour of trial has come again upon us. Let us be worthy of it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru
Vallabhbhai Patel
Abul Kalam Azad

9. To Agatha Harrison[1]

September 20, 1939

Dear Agatha,

...It is, as you say, difficult to write about the war. Events are too big and powerful for us but so far as we are concerned it seems to me imperative that the British Government should get a move on immediately in the direction of the Working Committee's statement. Not to do so or to delay matters means that events here also go ahead at headlong speed. I greatly fear that the British Government is not wise enough or far-seeing enough to avoid these developments. They have made such a mess of everything in Europe during the last year or more that it is difficult to expect them to do the right thing in India. However one hopes that the shock of war will perhaps make them think otherwise....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

10. India and the War[1]

Events march on overtopping each other, pushed onward by some implacable urge. Elemental forces sweep the world, disdaining the scheming of those who, from their seats of authority, had sought to stem them. Men and women become playthings of destiny and are drawn into the seething whirlpool of war. Whither do we all go, what will be the outcome of this conflict where peoples and nations fight desperately for survival, none can tell. Yet we can say that the world we have known is dissolving before our eyes—to give place to what?

In this tragic world drama of epic significance what part will India play? In words of power and dignity the Working Committee have indicated the road we have to travel. Though the final decision has not been made, the fundamental principles governing this decision have been laid down. The basic decision has been made already and the application of this to existing circumstances has yet to be made. That application depends now on how far those basic principles are accepted and applied in the present by the British Government. Briefly put, India can no longer consent to be treated as a part of an empire. She will not permit herself to be used as a subject nation ordered about by others. Whether in peace or war she must function as a free nation.

Nothing is so astonishing in recent history as the complete bankruptcy of the British Government prior to the war. Truly it may be said that by their own policy they have brought all their troubles upon themselves and the world. Manchuria, Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, Spain, and the insulting treatment offered to Soviet Russia last year[2] have step by step brought the catastrophe nearer, and now we have all plunged into the abyss. England faces this crisis with courage and determination, but she has to carry the heavy burden of her past policy, and, in the light of that policy, her present declarations in favour of democracy and freedom carry little weight. Even now the chance is offered her to throw the burden and rid herself of her imperialist tradition, and thus unhampered march with equal partners to the goal of freedom for all. There is no other way. Is she wise enough or great enough to follow this path willingly and with faith in it?

1. 20 September 1939. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 21 September 1939. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 152-155.
2. The Soviet Union was not invited to attend the Munich Conference of September 1938, although Czechoslovakia was allied to the Soviet Union by the treaty of mutual assistance of May 1935.

So far she has shown singular lack of wisdom and has taken various steps in relation to India which have been completely at variance with the declared will of the Indian people. Does she think that a proud people, conscious of their strength, can accept such treatment? India can no longer be dragged or pushed or compelled to follow the dictates of external authority. The time has come to put an end to the idea of empire and to seek the friendship and cooperation of free nations. India must be accepted and treated as a free country on terms of equality. Any other course leads to conflict and misfortune for all concerned.

For our own people, as for others, this is a time of trial and testing. If we fail in this test, we are left behind and others march ahead. We cannot and must not think in terms of this party or that, of this community or religious group or another, of right or left consolidations. The hour calls for national consolidation in the great cause of Indian and world freedom. To continue our petty bickerings and lay stress on differences, to suspect evil motives in one another, to seek advantage for a group or a party, is to demonstrate our pettiness when great issues are at stake. That way lies disservice to India and her people.

The Working Committee have given the lead; India has spoken and her voice has found an echo in our hearts. Let us all stand by it and not raise jarring notes in this hour of destiny. Every Congressman must weigh his words and measure his action, so that he says or does nothing to weaken the national resolve or take away from the dignity of the Congress. We hold together, we speak together and we shall act together for the sake of India whose love has inspired us so long and whose service has been our high privilege. The future beckons to us. Let us march in step to the goal of freedom.

11. The Congress Offer of Cooperation[1]

All these new things happening in the world are not just theoretical only. It is necessary that we should look at the happenings of the past few years with practical comprehension. The Congress has been laying down its foreign policy for the last eighteen years or so, at least since 1927 in Madras. Our different resolutions on war have also been taking shape according to the changing of world conditions.

The root causes of the last war were embedded in the great industrial advancement of the Western countries throughout the nineteenth century, and the consequent struggle for raw materials and possessions in Asia, Africa and China.

Inwardly England wanted to maintain the Hitler and Mussolini regimes lest they should be replaced by socialistic or communistic states. However, England was at the same time getting alarmed at the increasing powers of Hitler and Mussolini.

At the time of the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia by Hitler, England and France absolutely ignored Russia. The policy of appeasement resulted in increasing Hitler's powers. In 1935, England entered into an Anglo-German naval treaty unknown to France and in contravention of the Treaty of Versailles.[2] This alarmed France which came to an agreement with Italy that if she invaded Abyssinia, France would not interfere.[3] Alarmed at the increasing strength of Hitler and Mussolini, England and France turned at long last towards Russia for negotiations.[4]

The Russo-German Pact[5] is a non-aggression pact. Russia has made such non-aggression pacts with other powers also, but the way in which these pacts came into existence is not beyond suspicion. This pact is a very clever move and assures Hitler of safety from attack on one frontier. One thing clear is that this pact has brought about war even though, perhaps, ultimately it may not have been avoided.

As for the Russian invasion of Poland,[6] the situation is not clear. It may be that the invasion was really undertaken because of the danger

2. The British Government, soon after protesting against Hitler's violation of the Versailles Treaty, signed a naval pact with Germany on 18 June 1935, which violated the naval clause of the Versailles Treaty and gave Hitler the right to build all the warships his shipyards could construct during the next ten years.
3. In 1935 Laval, then Premier of France, negotiated a secret treaty with Mussolini giving him a free hand in Abyssinia.
4. On 18 March 1939, the Soviet Union proposed a conference to set up an anti-Hitler coalition; on 15 April Britain and France made their first proposals to Moscow; on 17 April the Soviet Union countered with a proposal for a triple alliance. The negotiations were ineffectual and did not end in any agreement.
5. The Nazi-Soviet ten-year non-aggression pact was signed on 24 August 1939.
6. The Soviet Union invaded Poland on 17 September 1939.

of Germany becoming too strong. No one can say clearly at present what it means. We will know about it by and by.

England and France are better off economically than Germany. It is likely that America will ultimately be dragged into the war on Britain's side, if not actively, at least with war materials, food and money. England and France are better equipped for a prolonged war which will wear out Germany. In these circumstances what Russia does would be very material.

We always maintained we should be free to decide whether to go to war or not. Our sympathies are not with Hitlerism. If India were free today, we might or might not jump into the war straight away. We might join it later on.

When Indian troops were sent out recently, the Working Committee advised the Congress members to boycott the Central Assembly. We made our policy clear towards Britain. Our resolution is meant to be acted upon. At the outbreak of the war the Government of India Amendment Act was rushed through the House of Commons in 11 minutes, without seriously considering how it would affect us.

The ordinances have been promulgated. So far as the legal aspect goes, we have not been treated as a free people. The princes also have expressed their loyalty. Such expressions have been often made and repeated and are not surprising. But the princes have affirmed their loyalty in the name of democracy which does not exist in their own states.

Some Congressmen have also said that we should at once act upon our resolutions. But there are difficulties. We cannot look at these things in a theoretical manner only. We want to evolve a new world order to end the present state of affairs. Whatever the results of the present war, new forces will come into being after it. We should not in this moment of tension and excitement take a step which we might not be able to implement in the eyes of the world. All these matters were before the Congress Working Committee when they after long discussions issued their statement.

I would require you all to read it well and follow its argument. England and France say that they are fighting for democracy. We want to see the end of the law of the jungle, but we also want to see the end of imperialism. Some points are clear. Our free status should be recognized. Secondly, the Working Committee's statement has made clear that this declaration of our freedom should be followed by a practical proof. If we were free, we could have raised a national army.

As regards recruitment and help with war material, I would say during the last war the foundations of our industrialism were laid, even though Britain might not have liked it. I feel that possibilities of this

industrial development during this war are tremendous. Lastly, in the final peace, India should have a free voice not only with regard to her own matters, but also in a new world order as a free nation.

We have taken a dignified stand so that we can show the world that we can take wise and statesmanlike decisions. We have acquired a responsible status in the eyes of the world. In a changing world, it is curious that the minds of those who are responsible for the Government of India, especially of those who are representatives of the British Government in India, have not changed.

We must now speak as a dignified free state understanding the world situation. We have not taken the final step; our final step will depend upon a gesture from Britain. There is no bargaining spirit. Bargaining would not be compatible with our professions of freedom. It is up to the British Government to respond.

What is ahead of us we do not know. We must forget our petty affairs and be united. If we are a responsible nation, we should sink our differences based on politics or religion. We should act as a united and responsible nation. Britain's is a decaying imperialism, but we should bear in mind that Hitlerism is also an imperialism and a young and rising imperialism. We should prepare to protect ourselves from both. Whatever strength we have gained so far has been through our strength of unity and sacrifice.

12. War Aims and Peace Aims[1]

I

The statement issued by the Working Committee of the Congress has drawn public attention to certain aspects of the war situation which were sadly ignored. There was a tendency on the one hand to talk in terms of India rushing into the war without thought or aim or purpose, and on the other hand of vague resistance to war. Both these attitudes were negative attitudes which did not take into consideration the realities of the present situation and the numerous developments that have

1. 21-23 September 1939. Editorials in the *National Herald*, 22-24 September 1939. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 156-176. Also in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 305-317.

taken place in the world and in India. Neither attitude was that of constructive statesmanship. The Working Committee have done a great service by their constructive lead to the nation. That service is not confined to India only; it extends to all those who think in terms of freedom and democracy and a new order, and there are vast numbers of such people in the world today. In effect, therefore, the Working Committee have given a lead to the progressive forces all over the world. We do not know how far this voice of India will go in these days of war and difficulty in communication or how many outside India will hear it. But we are sure that those whom it reaches will welcome it and support a clear enunciation of war and peace aims.

The Committee's statement necessarily dealt with certain broad principles. These principles will however have to be translated into concrete terms, and it seems to us desirable that public consideration should be given to this matter. In this grave crisis none of us can afford to take refuge in negation or in mere slogans howsoever pleasing they may sound. The slogans, if they have any relation to fact, must be capable of application in terms of the present. To that application we must address ourselves. It may be that our efforts fail and that application cannot take place today, and we are led by the inheritance of the past and the implacable urges of the present to a conflict with all its unfortunate implications. That would be a misfortune for India and the world, especially at this moment when bold statesmanship is demanded to rid the world of oppression and tyranny and the exploitation of human beings. The path is difficult, yet there is a path, though the obstructions are many and not all of our making; there is a door through which we may pass to the garden of the future, but that door is guarded by folly and ancient privilege and vested interest.

Before we consider war aims and peace aims, let us define our approach to the problem. In India today the war is still a far-away affair, exciting enough, but something apart from us, affecting us little. This is not so in Europe and elsewhere, for there it is constant sorrow and misery, and imminent danger and death and destruction, and a tension that breaks the heart, for innumerable multitudes. There is no home in Europe which is free from this gnawing fear and this sinking of the heart, for the world they have known has come to an end, and horror has descended upon them, horror almost without end for themselves, for their dear ones, for much they have valued in life. Brave men and women, pawns in the hands of elemental forces which they cannot control, face the issue with courage, but the only hope that illumines their minds for a while is the hope of a better future for the world, so that their sacrifice may not have been in vain.

Let us think of these people in various countries, whether that country is Poland or France or England or Russia or Germany, with respect and full sympathy. Let us not presume to make fun of their suffering or say anything unthinkingly which hurts those who have to carry this heavy burden. We have had an old quarrel with England, though not with the people of England. That quarrel will end with our freedom, and only then can we make friends on equal terms with England. But for the English people, in their present misfortune, as for other peoples, we have only sympathy and goodwill. We also know that whatever their imperialist government may have done or may do in the future, there is a large fund of sympathy for freedom and democracy today among the English people. It is for these ideals that they fight. These ideals are ours also, though we fear that governments may belie their words and their professions. Imperialism holds sway still in many parts of the world, and notably in India. And yet 1939 is not 1914. This quarter of a century has brought mighty changes in the world and in India, changes not so much in the outer structure, but in the minds of people and in their desire to change this outer structure and put an end to an order based on violence and conflict.

In India we are very different from what we were in 1914. We have gained strength and political consciousness and a capacity for united action. In spite of our manifold difficulties and problems, we are no weak nation today. Our voice counts to some extent even in international affairs. If we had been free we might have even succeeded in preventing this war. Sometimes the Irish analogy is placed before us.[2] While we may learn much from Ireland and her struggle for freedom, we must remember that we are placed differently. Ireland is a small country which is geographically and economically tied to Britain. Even an independent Ireland cannot make much difference to world affairs. Not so India. A free India, with her vast resources, can be of great service to the world and to humanity. India will always make a difference to the world; fate has marked us for big things. When we fall, we fall low; when we rise, inevitably we play our part in the world drama.

This war is, as the Working Committee have said, the inevitable outcome of all manner of contradictions and conflicts in the present political and economic structure. But the immediate cause of the war is the growth and aggression of fascism and Nazism. Ever since the birth of Nazi Germany the Congress, with true insight, has condemned

2. In 1937 Ireland declared herself a sovereign state within the British Commonwealth, but the six northern counties remained part of the United Kingdom.

fascism and seen in it the intensification of the principle of imperialism. A series of resolutions testify to this judgement of the Congress. It is clear, therefore, that we must oppose fascism and a victory over fascism will be our victory also. But to us that victory has meaning only in the larger context of imperialism. We cannot score a victory over fascism by surrendering our freedom and the struggle to achieve it.

For us to bargain in the spirit of the market-place would ill serve our cause or suit India's dignity at a time of world peril. Our freedom is too precious to be bargained for but it is too precious also to be ignored or put aside because the world has gone awry. That freedom itself is the very basis and foundation of the world freedom that is proclaimed. If we participate in a joint effort for freedom, that effort must be really joint, based on consent as between free equals. Otherwise it has no meaning, no value. Even from the point of view of success in the war, that free joint participation is of importance. From the wider point of view of the objects which the war is supposed to achieve, our freedom is essential.

This, we hold, is the background of any consideration of the problem of war and peace aims.

II

What will be the end of the war? How long will it last? What will Soviet Russia do? Will Herr Hitler seek peace after crushing Poland? We do not claim to have an answer to these and many other questions, and those who seek to answer them have perhaps little justification for doing so. We are, however, convinced that this war, if it does not annihilate modern civilisation, will revolutionise the present political and economic order. We cannot conceive of empires and imperialism continuing in the old way after the war.

Soviet Russia is at present a mystifying factor in the world situation. It is obvious that whatever Russia does will have important and far-reaching results. But as we do not know what she is going to do, we have to leave her out of our present calculations. The Russo-German Pact came as a shock and a surprise to many. There was nothing surprising in it, except the manner of doing it and the moment chosen for it. At any other time, it would have naturally fitted in with Soviet foreign policy. But there can be little doubt that at that particular moment, it brought dismay to many friends of Russia. There seemed to be too much over-reaching cynicism and opportunism about it. That criticism applied to Hitler also, who overnight had dropped his fierce anti-communism and apparently made friends with the Soviet. A cynic said that Russia had joined the anti-Comintern Pact; another that Hitler

was turning communist as well as a patron of the Jews. All this seems to us fantastic nonsense, for there can be, and there is going to be, no real alliance between Hitler and Stalin. But both are willing enough to play at the game of power politics. Russia has suffered insult enough at the hands of England to resent it bitterly.

The Soviet's march into eastern Poland was another shock. But it is as yet difficult to say whether this was to counter the German army or to weaken the Poles or merely to take advantage of a particular situation from the nationalist point of view. From the meagre information that we possess it seems, however, that Russia's advance into Poland has certainly come in the way of German designs. It has prevented German occupation of eastern Poland and cried a halt to the German army. More important still is the occupation of the entire Polish-Rumanian frontier by the Soviet army. This has made it certain that Germany cannot take possession of the Rumanian oil-fields which she coveted and probably that she cannot draw upon the vast wheat supplies of Rumania. The Balkans are saved from German aggression and Turkey breathes with relief. All this may mean little today but in the future, as the war progresses, it will have a vital significance. It may be thus that Soviet Russia has rendered a great service to the cause of the Western Allies and Bernard Shaw's dictum that Stalin has made a cat's-paw of Hitler has some truth in it.[3]

Herr Hitler has ominously hinted in his Danzig speech that he has some terrible secret weapon which he will not hesitate to use, howsoever inhuman it might be, if circumstances compel him to do so.[4] What this novel terror is no one knows. It might well be an idle boast. There are terrors enough for humanity in the armoury of every great power today, and they will be added to, as the war proceeds, and all the powers of science are harnessed to quench its insatiable thirst for blood. We cannot say which side will have the advantage in this gruesome competition.

The aeroplane has so far not been the vital factor which some people expected it to be, though it is murderous and destructive enough. Perhaps we have not yet seen full use made of it. But all the experience in

3. "Mr. Stalin who was very explicit as to his objection to be made a cat's-paw to take our chestnuts off the fire, has no objection whatever to using Herr Hitler as a cat's-paw. The unfortunate Fuehrer is compelled to disgorge half his booty and to face yet another army saying 'This far and no further'." Bernard Shaw's letter to the editor, *The Times*, 20 September 1939.
4. At Danzig, on 19 September 1939, Hitler said: "...the moment may come when we use a weapon which is not yet known and with which we could not ourselves be attacked. Let us hope that we will not be forced to use this means. It is to be hoped that no one will then complain in the name of humanity."

Spain and China, as well as the growth of the means of defence from air attack, indicate that the air arm will not be the deciding factor.

There is a chance, it is said, that Hitler may try for peace after his Polish campaign is over or Signor Mussolini might act on his behalf in this respect. But there will be no peace then, for peace means the triumph of Hitler and the submission of England and France to his might. There may still be some advocates of "appeasement" in England or France, but the temper of their people will not permit it. There is also a chance, a more probable one, of internal trouble in Germany which might shorten the war. The war is thus likely to be a long one running into two or three years.

There are too many uncertainties in war for prophecy to be made. Yet the human mind must look ahead and try to peep through the veil of the future. That future seems to indicate that the area of war will spread and more and more nations will be dragged in. It will in effect become a world war where neutrals hardly count, and it will go on year after year, destroying and killing and reducing the world to waste and ruin, till the common sense of war-worn humanity rebels against it and puts an end to it.

In this long war the advantages are all on the side of the Western Allies. Their economic and financial resources are far greater than those of Germany, and they will have a great part of the world to draw upon. In spite of German submarine activity or attack from the air, the sea routes will be more or less controlled by them. America and Asia and Africa will supply them with many of their needs, while Germany's sources of supply are strictly limited. We ignore for the present the part that Soviet Russia might play. This can be of tremendous importance, both in the military and an economic sense, but we think it highly unlikely that Russia will aid Nazi Germany.

If other countries join the war, the only possible allies for Germany are Italy and Japan. Japan will be immobilized to some extent by Soviet Russia and her Chinese campaign has sobered her. Italy will make a difference in the Mediterranean, but not a vital one. She might even be more helpful to Germany as a neutral country supplying food and other necessities and thus breaking the blockade. In any event war against England and France will be very unpopular in Italy. Even Signor Mussolini is said to have moderated in his love for Herr Hitler. Still it is possible for Italy to join Germany.

On the side of the Western Allies, there would be a tremendous acquisition of strength if the United States of America joined them. There is at present a marked isolationist tendency in the United States, but far stronger than that is the anti-Hitler and anti-Nazi feeling. On no

account will America tolerate a victory for Hitler. It is extremely likely therefore that in the later stages of the war the United States will join England and France. Even before they do that, they will help them in supplying their war needs, and, as in the last war, this very help will become an inducement to join.

Whatever the more fundamental reasons for the war, the conflicts between rival imperialisms, the final cause was Nazi aggression. The last eighteen months of continuing Nazi aggression in central Europe have embittered vast numbers of people all over the world against Nazi Germany, which has become in their eyes the embodiment of evil in the international sphere. This is a powerful psychological factor in favour of the Western Allies. In England and France it has resulted in absolute national unity in the prosecution of the war to the bitter end. It is unlikely that there is such unity in Germany where millions of people are enemies of the Nazi regime. Recent reports of internal trouble in Germany proper may be exaggerated, but such trouble is always likely, more especially if the war drags on and adds to the burdens and miseries of the people. It is certain that there will be continued trouble in Bohemia and Moravia[5] and probably Slovakia.[6] The people of Czechoslovakia, easily subdued because of their friends' betrayal, will take their revenge now.

All this indicates that in a long war—and the war is likely to be a long one—the scales will be heavily balanced in favour of the Western Allies. But that advantage will be theirs only if their war and peace aims are for real freedom and democracy and self-determination, so that the peoples of the world may know and believe that the objective is worth the terrible price they pay. It is not for the continuation of imperialism that they will fight and make sacrifice. And it is the peoples of the world who will have the final say, not the governments that have misled them for so long. If governments do not fall in with their wishes, they will have to go and give place to others.

III

What are the professed war aims of the Western Allies? We are told that they fight for democracy and freedom, for the ending of the Nazi

5. Hitler occupied Bohemia and Moravia (parts of Czechoslovakia) on 14 March 1939 and established a protectorate two days later.
6. Slovakia became an autonomous state within reorganized Czechoslovakia after the Munich Pact and came under German protection in 1938. Germans occupied Slovakia in August 1939.

regime and of Hitlerism, for the liberation of Poland. Mr. Chamberlain has added that Czechoslovakia must also be freed. We agree. But all this is not enough, and hence the importance of the invitation extended by the Working Committee to the British Government to state fully and unequivocally what their war and peace aims are.

Let us carry the argument further. If Hitlerism is to go, it necessarily follows that there should be no truce or pacts with any fascist power, even other than Germany. It means that Japanese and Italian aggression should not be recognized, and our policy should be directed to assist China, in so far as we can, in her struggle for freedom. It means further that the policy applied to fascism should be extended to imperialism and both should be ended. In any event and even apart from international developments, we must have a free and independent India. But for the present we consider Indian freedom in its world context of imperialism. To condemn fascism and seek to defend or maintain imperialism is illogical and absurd. A world which has had enough of fascism cannot tolerate imperialism. It is thus an inevitable consequence of a struggle against fascism that imperialism should also be ended, or else the whole purpose of that struggle is vitiated and it becomes a contest for power between rival imperialisms.

A statement of war aims should thus include: the liberation of countries taken by Hitler, the ending of the Nazi regime, no truce or pacts with fascist powers, and the extension of democracy and freedom by the winding up of the imperialist structure and the application of the principle of self-determination. There should of course be no secret treaties, no conquests, no indemnities or reparations, no bargains over colonial areas. In the colonies also the principle of self-determination should be applied, and steps should be taken to democratise them. All discrimination based on race must go. We can admit no peace settlement over the bodies of colonial peoples.[7]

It is in no spirit of bargaining that we make these suggestions, nor is there the slightest desire to take advantage of another's difficulty. We sympathise with that difficulty, but that sympathy cannot make us forget our own difficulties and disabilities. If we desire the freedom of Poland or Czechoslovakia, much more do we desire the freedom of China, and it is not just narrow self-interest that induces us to give first place to the

7. Linlithgow wrote to Zetland on 30 September 1939: "I cannot think that the propositions he (Nehru) puts forward in the third of those articles as regards war aims and the type of declaration that is to be expected from His Majesty's Government hold out very encouraging prospects of agreement .... The lesson of the last war was a quite sufficient indication of the dangers involved in premature commitments and premature formation of objectives."

freedom of India. Freedom can have no meaning for us if we ourselves do not possess it, and it would be a hollow mockery if we shouted for the freedom of a distant land and submitted to subjection ourselves. But even looking at it from the point of view of the war, such freedom is essential, in order to make this a popular war which moves the people to courage and sacrifice for a cause which they consider theirs. As this war goes on from month to month and year to year, and weariness comes over the peoples of all countries, it is this urge to defend one's own hard-earned freedom that will tell in the end. The war will not be won by mercenary armies with mercenary motives, howsoever efficient they might be.

Coming to India, the first step to be taken by the British Government is to make a public declaration of their recognition of India as a free and independent nation which can draw up her own constitution. We must recognize that this declaration cannot be given full effect immediately, but it is essential, as the Working Committee have pointed out, that it should be applied, in so far as is possible, in the present. For it is that application that touches the minds and hearts of the people and impresses the world. It is this present that will govern the conduct of the war and give it that vitality which can only come from the yoking of the popular will to a great task. Whatever we do must be of our free will and choice, and only then will the joint effort be really joint, for it will then be based on the free cooperation of partners in a common undertaking.

Unhappily, the British Government, as is its way, has taken action already which makes reasonable approach from us difficult. They passed the Government of India Act Amending Bill through the House of Commons in all its stages in exactly eleven minutes, though they knew full well that we were entirely opposed to it. Here in India legislation and ordinances have been similarly rushed through. The India Office and the Government of India still live in an age that is long past; they neither grow, nor learn, nor remember. Even the shock of war has not had much effect on their mental processes or their ancient ways. They take India for granted, not realising that nothing can be taken for granted in this cataclysmic age, much less India which, though quiet on the surface, is shaken by all manner of forces and vital urges.

Yet, in spite of this difficulty of approach, the Working Committee have, in the spirit of true statesmanship, stretched out their hand and offered their cooperation to the British people and all other people who struggle for freedom's cause. But India can only cooperate with dignity and freedom, or else she is not worth cooperation. Any other way is that of imposition and we can no longer endure this.

How and to what extent is it necessary and possible to give present application to Indian freedom? It is clear that whatever we do must be of our free will and based on our decision. In matters pertaining to the war there must be equality of action even though this cannot be put on the statute book. India may be technically at war but there is no war situation in this country and there is absolutely no reason why our normal legislative or judicial processes should be replaced by abnormal measures. These abnormal measures have been passed. They must remain dead letters and all necessary steps should be taken through the provincial legislatures and the provincial governments. The Amending Act passed by the British Parliament should also remain a dead letter and in so far as the provincial governments are concerned their powers and activities should in no way be limited. Such limitations and safeguards as exist in the constitution should not be applied. So far there is little difficulty.

But it is essential that even during this interim period India's representatives should have effective control over the policies and activities in the centre in regard to external affairs, armed forces, and financial matters. Only in this way can a policy based on real consent be carried through. For this purpose some *ad hoc* machinery will have to be devised. Amendments of the present Act are not desirable to bring this about. The Act will have to go as a whole when the constitution of India's making takes its place. Meanwhile effective interim arrangements can be made by consent.

It is clear that if India's war policy is to have popular backing and support, it must be carried on by popular representatives in whom the people have confidence. It is no easy matter to live down the prejudice of generations past and to make our people to look upon the effort as their own. This can only be done by taking them into our confidence, by explaining our policies, and by convincing them that it is to their advantage as well as for the world's good. That is the way democracy functions. We shall have to know the larger policies governing the war also, so that we can justify them before our people and the world.

A war policy for a nation must inevitably first take into consideration the defence of that country. India must feel that she is taking part in her own defence and in preserving her own freedom as well as helping in the struggle for freedom elsewhere. The army will have to be considered a national army and not a mercenary force owing allegiance to someone else. It is on this national basis that recruitment should take place, so that our soldiers should not merely be cannon-fodder, but fighters for their country and for freedom. In addition to this it will be

necessary to have a large-scale organisation for civil defence on a militia basis. All this can only be done by a popular government.

Even more important is the development of industries to supply war and other needs. Industries must develop on a vast scale in India during war time. They must not be allowed to grow in a haphazard way but should be planned and controlled in the national interest and with due safeguards for workers. The National Planning Committee can be of great assistance in this work.

As the war progresses and consumes more and more commodities, planned production and distribution will be organised all over the world, and gradually a world planned economy will appear. The capitalist system will recede into the background and it may be that international control of industry will take its place. India, as an important producer, must have a say in any such control.

Finally, India must speak as a free nation at the peace conference.

We have endeavoured to indicate what the war and peace aims of those who speak for democracy should be, and, in particular, how they should be applied to India. The list is not exhaustive, but it is a solid foundation to build upon, and an incentive for the great effort needed. We have not touched upon the problem of a reorganisation of the world after the war, though we think some such reorganisation essential and inevitable.

Will the statesmen and peoples of the world, and especially of the warring countries, be wise and far-seeing enough, to follow the path we have pointed out? We do not know. But here in India let us forget our differences, our leftism and rightism, and think of these vital problems which face us and insistently demand solution. The world is pregnant with possibilities. It has no pity at any time for the weak or the ineffective or the disunited. Today when nations fight desperately for survival, only those who are far-seeing and disciplined and united in action will play a role in the history that is being made.

13. The Role of Youth in Revolutionary Times[1]

I have been asked to speak in English. I am personally not averse to speaking in English. But I feel that this request would have been understandable if you had a large number of students who cannot understand Hindustani. In China though a large number of Chinese statesmen know a number of foreign languages, yet every bit of their work is being done in the Chinese language. Despite your revolutionary slogans which I have just heard in the meeting, you are slaves in the matter of language at least.

Your loud slogans remind me of the story of the wolf and the boy who used to shout wolf, wolf when there was no wolf, but when actually the wolf came his cries availed him not. Do you realise what lies behind your slogans? Great issues are at stake and big things are happening. You should try to understand things in their proper setting.

Let us not confuse issues but be clear in our minds what we are going to do. The occasion demands unity of effort and all disruptive tendencies should be discouraged. Formation of separate blocs, be it Forward Bloc or any other bloc, will lead to disruption. But at this moment any disruptive tendency will be harmful to the country. You should concentrate all your energy on united effort.

Great events are taking place all over the world and a revolution seems near; but my heart and hands are not palsied and I will as yet take part in many more deeds.

The young are getting impatient. You seem to think that we will not join the fight. But you should first try to understand what actually is the problem before us.

There are grave issues before us. A terrible war is in progress. It is true that fascists and imperialists are fighting among themselves. But you should remember that the conflagration is bound to spread to the whole world. At the same time let us not make fun of those who are prepared to give their lives for their cause, be it fascism or imperialism. These people are prepared to make heavy sacrifices for what they think is right.

Some two and a half years ago there was a civil war in China and the people were fighting among themselves. But when aggression came from outside they shook hands with each other and closed up their ranks.

1. Inaugural speech at the Students' Conference, Lucknow, 22 September 1939. From the *National Herald*, 23 September 1939.

The result is that they are now militarily stronger than what they were two years ago. But what is more significant is the birth of a new China. When I visited that country recently I did not merely find a "shouting" China. I was amazed to find the new vitality and spirit in the people. There is now an efficient and fighting China. Thousands of their women are participating in the actual war. Others are busy building a new China, taking into hand the work of education and rebuilding of their social life.

Do you realise the terrors of bombing? Do you realise the destruction and the horror of it when you come across such reports in the papers? Does the human aspect of the tragedy strike you? Do you know what the tension and strain of war implies? We have not experienced that tension and we are, I think, not mentally cognisant of it. Whether you are rightists, leftists or straightists, I ask you if you realise that a big world revolution is on. I feel that if you actually realised that aspect of the situation your shouts would have created a different impression.

We are now long past the days when we could shout easily and light-heartedly. We have now to shoulder great responsibilities. These would have been great any day. But they are much greater now. There are great possibilities in the situation. A world revolution is bound to occur. Imperialism and fascism will end. Even modern civilisation may be destroyed. This war is likely to go on for some years and will ultimately shake this civilisation and break the present structure. I want you to get out of this unreality, this realm of phrases and slogans. Think of the situation in the proper perspective, otherwise you will not be able to render the service the country needs of you.

The question before you is not only of passing a resolution. Each person individually will have to take a decision, a momentous decision, on which so many vital issues hang. When a resolution or a decision is going to affect millions of people, it is always a difficult decision and a tremendous responsibility. I hope that we will have the courage to take the correct decision in this terrible crisis in the world's destiny.

14. India's Freedom the First Consideration[1]

The greatest contribution of Gandhiji to world thought is nonviolence. Indians are an unarmed people and we would not have been able to face such a mighty empire without this weapon. Through nonviolent satyagraha Indian kisans and workers have begun to realise the importance of self-respect and cooperation.

The great achievement of the last twenty years has been that we have learnt a new technique to fight imperialism. We can be oppressed, we can be suppressed, but we cannot be defeated. The fight is not between two armies but it is between two forces—one armed with guns and ammunition and the other with courage, determination and faith in ourselves. Near Peshawar the Garhwali soldiers had refused to shoot their defenceless countrymen because they had been won over by the spirit of nonviolence.[2] The regiment was disbanded, their Indian officers jailed and Thakur Chandra Singh, one of the superior officers, is still in jail, though eight years have passed. Such incidents have taken place in many other regiments, but the news has been suppressed.

The new technique of fight evolved by Mahatma Gandhi has nonplussed the British Government, as they do not know how to combat it. Their army is powerless against it. They can shoot Indians but they cannot crush their indomitable spirit and courage.

Though her armies have been defeated, Poland has not lost her courage and determination. Her people are undaunted and are resolved to fight their enemy to the last. If Poland had adopted the Indian technique of fighting, she might have been able to harass her enemy more, but what the result would have been nobody can say.

Look at the Russian occupation of Poland. On the face of it, it seems as if Russia is aiding Hitler in his designs. But the fact is that by her occupation of Poland, Russia has saved half of Poland from the clutches of Hitler and closed the road to Rumania for him. Civil disobedience cannot be carried on by individuals. It requires unity and organisation.

The aggression of Japan on China has created a new China. The Chinese people are determined to save their country from foreign domination at all costs. The Chinese people have developed a great sense

1. Speech at Lucknow, 25 September 1939. From the *National Herald*, 26 September 1939.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 802.

of discipline in this hour of need, so much so that even small school children are developing a sense of military discipline.

This war in China has resulted in a great development of its cottage industries. During my visit to China an understanding had been reached that India and China should benefit by the experiences of each other. Some Chinese are to come to India and some Indians are to go to China to study the cottage industries of the respective countries; conferences are to be held. But all this has to be postponed temporarily due to the outbreak of the war in Europe.

Like China, India has also awakened. In these days of general upheaval, when great revolutionary forces are at work, India can hope to survive and achieve her freedom only if our people are united and develop self-reliance.

The Congress enunciated its foreign policy as long ago as the Madras session in 1927. The various resolutions on war passed since then varied according to the changing conditions. Most of them were drafted and moved by me. The resolution in 1927 was passed when Hitler had not come into power. The later resolutions aimed at opposition of fascism as well as imperialism.

The situation has become very complicated. The Congress has passed anti-war resolutions and has declared that India should have the right of self-determination. Another hint was also given to the British Government, when the Congress stopped its members from attending the session of the Central Assembly. But in spite of all this India has been declared a belligerent country by the Viceroy and Indian troops have been sent abroad. Countries like Canada, South Africa and Australia have the right of self-determination.[3] But India is denied that right.

The Congress Working Committee had considerable difficulty in framing their war policy, for if they had decided to take the present world situation as an opportunity to fight the British Government then people outside would have said that the Indians are in the pay of the Nazis and that they are fighting against democracies. The Working Committee by their statement have given an indication to the British Government the need for declaring their policy towards democracy, whose champions they claim themselves to be, with particular reference to India. It could be argued that as Poland is a democracy and is fighting against Nazism, and as Britain is fighting for Poland and, in

3. The Locarno treaties of 1925 had made it clear that the Dominions were not pledged to support the European policy of the United Kingdom. In 1939 they were completely free to determine their own course of action and while Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa declared war, Eire remained neutral.

other words, for democracy, India should support Britain. The Congress has every sympathy for Poland, but it will be absurd to think that the Congress can give precedence to the cause of Poland over that of India. India's freedom is the first consideration.

Whatever the result of the present war, new forces will come into being after it. We should not at this moment of tension and excitement take a step which we might not be able to implement.

All these matters were before the Working Committee when, after a long discussion, they issued a statement. I would require you all to read it well and follow the argument. We want to see an end of the law of the jungle, but we also want to see an end of imperialism. Some points are clear. Our free status should be recognised, and secondly the Working Committee's statement has made clear that this declaration of freedom should be followed by practical proof. We have taken a dignified stand. We have not taken a final step and our final step depends upon the gesture from Britain. There is no bargaining spirit. Bargaining will not be compatible with our professions of freedom.

I am decrying imperialism, but we should also bear in mind that Hitlerism is also an imperialism—a young rising imperialism. We should prepare to protect ourselves from both.

The present world situation is a good opportunity to begin the work of national planning in India. Every effort should be made to increase India's national wealth, to better its economic condition and to develop its industries.

15. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Lucknow
September 26, 1939

My dear Krishna,
I have three letters from you dated the 13th September. Regarding the political situation I fear the position is not improving. The British Government or their representatives seem still to be far from appreciating the realities of the situation. Gandhiji has gone to Simla[2] and

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Mahatma Gandhi met the Viceroy at Simla on 26 September 1939 and made two specific demands: a declaration of British intentions after the war and an immediate sharing of power.

possibly I might have to go also. It is likely that the British Government will try to play off the Congress against the Muslim League and the princes. That kind of thing is just what will irritate Congress people. The Working Committee's statement has been well received but the general feeling in the Congress and the country is very definitely that there should be no toning down of it in practice. You can well understand that unless a satisfactory and honourable settlement is arrived at the situation will deteriorate rapidly.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

16. Britain and the World Crisis[1]

If Lord Zetland's speech[2] represents the mind of the English people or government, I have no hesitation in saying that there can be no compromise between the Congress and the British Government now or a thousand years hence. I doubt whether Lord Zetland's speech represents the true working of the minds of Englishmen.

As a member of the Working Committee I am bound by the discipline of the organisation and so I do not want to say anything which might embarrass the Working Committee in arriving at a decision.

I had noticed, while in England, that Englishmen viewed with horror the recent drift of events and they tried to look at them from a new angle. There has been a mental revolution. There appear to be some differences between the present mental outlook of the English people in general and Lord Zetland's. His Lordship still appears to be too much under the influence of "old education". His mind has not been affected by the currents of modern thought and aspirations. Lord Zetland has not profited by or learnt anything from events during the past twenty years. The very method of Lord Zetland's reply to the Congress demands is so undignified that no self-respecting nation can tolerate it.

1. Speech at Allahabad, 29 September 1939. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 30 September 1939.
2. Lord Zetland said on 27 September 1939: "...the time has been ill chosen by the leaders of the Congress for a reiteration of their claims."

There can be some meaning in this war only when it brings real freedom for the people of the world. Otherwise I do not see why crores of people should be killed in this war. The situation is not free from anxiety for India. In my view Russia has taken its revenge against both England and Germany. It is already dominating Germany. It is not the Fuehrer who is issuing orders to foreign diplomats and ministers today, but Russia, as exemplified in the visit of Herr Von Ribbentrop[3] to Moscow.

I do not like the secret way in which Mr. Stalin as dictator has acted in committing Russia to a particular course. I never did approve of the idea of a dictator in any country. It is extremely undesirable that one man in any country should be in the position of a dictator and commit the entire nation to a particular decision. I would oppose such a dictatorship even in India. I want everything to be done by the majority opinion of the nation which should be correctly focused.

Herr Hitler cannot win. The Russian strategy has made it extremely difficult for Hitler to carry on the war to a successful conclusion.

It looks impossible to me that a nation possessing such vitality as China could be suppressed by Japan.

China is drawing close towards India as she is being pushed back by the Japanese. The Chinese want to have a good relationship with India. I think that the showy military training being carried out in India is ridiculous. If India is to join the war, its defences should be made strong. India needs fifty thousand officers. India must have a national militia. The Indian army is brave, but it has no national outlook. It is mercenary.

3. He had gone to Moscow in August 1939 to sign the Nazi-Soviet Pact.

17. The Need for Immediate British Action[1]

I have read the report of Lord Zetland's statement in the House of Lords with deep regret. I do not wish to enter into any controversy with him on this subject. The Congress Working Committee had explained the position of the Congress at length and with clarity and dignity.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 29 September 1939. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 30 September 1939.

Lord Zetland has not followed the Working Committee's example in this respect.

We had tried to consider the problem of India in the larger context of war aims and peace aims, and had requested the British Government to declare clearly what their aims in this war were, and further give effect to such aims, in so far as it was possible in the present.

It was made perfectly clear by the Working Committee, as well as by Congress leaders, that we were not out to bargain or to take advantage of England's difficulty. But it was essential in our opinion, both from the point of view of India and the world, that these war aims should be clarified and people made to believe in their reality and their *bona fides*. It is astonishing that a request of this kind should be called inopportune and ill-timed.

Are we to wait till the end of this devastating war in which we are asked to take part, before we know what the war aims are? Must vast numbers of human beings suffer unto death without even knowing definitely what they die for?

Every war in the past has begun with fervent deelarations invoking justice, honour and right as against injustice, aggression and might, and yet, when war has ended, there has been little difference and the fervent declarations have been forgotten. The last Great War is a most flagrant example of the failure of governments to profit by the example of the past. Is humanity always going to tread this path of duplicity and violence, and are we to continue to suffer under systems which are essentially based on violence and aggression? If this is so, all sacrifices of this war, as of past wars, will be in vain.

The question is not of India only, but of all the world and all those who have faith in the future of humanity and who are determined to rid the world of all causes of war and human exploitation. Therefore the Working Committee requested the British Government, not only on behalf of India but on behalf of vast numbers of people in the world, to clarify this position, and thus to bring some measure of hope in the despairing hearts of humanity. Being concerned especially and inevitably with India and the Indian people, we wanted to know how these war aims applied to India in the future and in the present. We want to know at the same time how they apply to countries of Europe, to China, and to the various colonies, in effect to the imperialist structure which persists in the world today.

We have condemned fascism and all its works with all our might, but it would be the height of absurdity and of falsehood, if anyone who condemns fascism supports imperialism.

Lord Zetland says that it would be a calamity if the Congress governments withdrew from the administration of various provinces in India. I agree, but it would be an infinite calamity for us and for others, if these Congress governments forgot all ideals that we have proclaimed and lost public support on which they based themselves and became unwilling tools of a policy which they and the people of India disapprove of.

It would be also an infinite calamity if this war went on with no clarification of issues and resulted, not only in terrible destruction and horror, but also in the perpetuation of the very system which was denounced, in the name of freedom and democracy.

Whatever may be said about the statement of the Working Committee, no one can accuse them of vagueness. They have framed clear questions which demand answer. Why does not Lord Zetland give us an answer to these questions? In this grave hour of trial for all the world, when the whole fabric of civilisation is threatened, no responsible person, whether he is an Indian or an Englishman or anyone else, can ignore or set aside these vital questions. Any attempt to do so, in itself, creates doubt and suspicion in the public mind.

No one should talk in terms of petty bargaining, when issues at stake are so mighty and overwhelming. No one also can consider these issues in terms of twenty years ago, because the world has changed, and India has changed, and for anyone to forget this overwhelming fact, is to exhibit his total want of understanding of things as they are. That way lies peril not only for India and for England, but for the world at large. Though the world has changed and is likely to change in the immediate future at a terrific pace, Lord Zetland still speaks in terms of yesterdays that are dead and gone. He might have delivered his speech twenty years ago. It is too late, it is indeed impossible for any of us, whether we are in England or India, to stop the rushing torrent of change. If we are wise, we can control it to some extent, possibly divert it into right directions.

I want to repeat with all the emphasis that I possess that we have not put forward any demand in the spirit of the market-place. It is our duty as responsible Indians to consider the freedom and prosperity of India. That is the essential function of the Congress, and it can never forget that. But we have endeavoured to view this, specially in these dynamic times, from a larger point of view, because we are convinced that no problem can be solved today without reference to world problems.

If it was necessary for the sake of world freedom and prosperity, I am sure, India would even forgo some national advantage, for we realise

that national advantage bought at that cost will not be worth having for long. But we must be convinced of that world freedom, and we must see India in the picture of world freedom. Then only will war have meaning for us, and move our minds and hearts, for then we shall be struggling and suffering for a cause that is worthwhile not only for us, but for all the peoples of the world. Because we feel that large numbers of British people have the same world ideals as many of us possess in India, we have offered them our cooperation in the realization of these ideals. But if these ideals are not there, what do we fight for? Why should we throw ourselves in this inhuman struggle between imperialisms seeking to entrench themselves? They will not succeed, I think, howsoever much they might try, but if wisdom does not come to statesmen at this stage, it may be too late, for India can be no party to a war of imperialisms.

Only a free and consenting India can throw her weight for ideals that are openly proclaimed and acted upon.

18. A Popular War Must Have Popular Support[1]

The spell of violence and inhuman warfare holds Europe and threatens the fabric of civilisation all over the world. Behind the clash of arms there is a deeper clash of ideas and aims and the future of the world hangs in the balance. History is being made not only on the battlefields but in the minds of men, and the vital question for all of us is whether that history is going to be different from that of past ages and whether this terrible war will make an essential difference to human freedom and end the very causes of war and human degradation. To India with her thirst for freedom and horror of war and violence, this question is of paramount importance. She has reacted strongly against the philosophy and methods of fascism and Nazi aggression and brutality and seen in them the negation of all she stands for. World peace for her means freedom and democracy and the ending of the domination of one nation over another. So India condemned aggression in Manchuria, Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, and was deeply distressed at events in Spain and the brutal Nazi invasion of Poland. India will therefore gladly throw in her resources for a new order of peace and freedom.

1. Cable to *News Chronicle*, London, 5 October 1939. *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 177-181.

If this kind of peace is the objective, then war and peace aims must be clearly defined and action today must conform to them. Not to do so or to hesitate is to demonstrate that there are no clear aims and what is said vaguely is not meant seriously; it is to justify apprehensions of all who have learnt from bitter experience that wars overwhelm ideals and result in imperialisms fighting for mastery and entrenching themselves. If this war is for democracy and self-determination and against Nazi aggression, it cannot be fought for territorial annexations, indemnities or reparations, for keeping colonial peoples in subjection, and for maintaining the imperialist system.

For this urgent reason the Congress has invited the British Government to state its war and peace aims clearly and in particular how these apply to the imperialist order and to India. India can take no part in defending imperialism but she will join in a struggle for freedom. India's resources are vast but of even greater value is her goodwill and her moral support for a worthy cause. This is no small offer that India makes for it means the ending of a hundred years of hostility between India and England, a great turning point in world history and the real beginning of the new order we fight for. Only a free and equal India can cooperate of her free will in this task. Till that vital change is made none of us have the power to make the people of India enthusiastic for a war which is not theirs. A popular war must have popular support and people must realise what it means to them. An imposed war will inevitably be resented and rouse public feeling against it.

The whole background of generations of conflict and struggle for freedom in India must be borne in mind. Our present constitution itself has been imposed upon us and has kept hostility alive. This cannot go by vague assurances and half-hearted measures which will fail of their purpose. This historic opportunity must be seized by recognising India as a free nation with the right to draw up her constitution and her charter of independence. Anything short of that will mean losing this opportunity and keeping alive the spirit of friction and hostility between India and England. It will mean that not only we in India but others doubt the sincerity of war and peace aims and there will be divergence between what is professed and what is done.

The first step must therefore be a declaration of India's full freedom. This has to be followed by its application now in so far as is possible in order to give the people effective control of the governance of India and the prosecution of war on India's behalf. Then only is it possible to create the psychological conditions which can lead to popular support. Autocratic and ordinance rule will alienate public sympathy and lead to conflict. Already difficulties are arising, public workers have

been arrested and severe restrictions placed on public and labour activities in some parts of India. This is the old way which has failed in the past and is bound to fail again.

India wants to forget the past of conflict and wants to stretch out her hand in comradeship. But she can do so only as a free nation on terms of equality. She must be convinced that the past is over and we are all striving for a new order not only in Europe but also in Asia and the world. Her invitation to the British Government is not only on her behalf but for all those in the world who believe in peace and freedom and democracy. It will be tragedy for all of us if the deep significance of this gesture is not appreciated and full response not made to it. Such a response will hearten people all over the world and will be a greater blow to Nazism than a victory on the battlefield.

19. To Lord Linlithgow[1]

Wardha
October 6, 1939

Dear Lord Linlithgow,

Mahatma Gandhi has told me of your concern about certain developments in the U.P.[2] and has suggested that I might write to you on the subject. I gladly do so, though it is not an easy matter to discuss such charges without having all the facts. But I am generally acquainted with conditions in my province and know the various forces and tendencies at work. I am also personally acquainted with large numbers of Congress and other workers in the U.P. I should like to place before you certain considerations which might help in understanding the situation.

The U.P. is a large province and, from the point of view of the masses, probably the most wide-awake in the political sense. The Congress organisation is widespread and reaches the remotest villages. There are, I believe, about 70,000 members of various small executive committees of the Congress in the province, apart from our ordinary members. The very magnitude of this organisation, built up on a democratic basis, and allowing free discussion and local initiative, makes it a

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. The Viceroy had written to Mahatma Gandhi expressing his uneasiness at the political atmosphere in the United Provinces.

little difficult to control all its local activities from the top. We want to have discipline but not at the cost of crushing local initiative which gives life to the organisation. As a matter of fact we have a surprising degree of discipline and all decisions made at the top are faithfully and willingly carried out, though we have no effective means of enforcing them.

This vast organisation is active and is holding innumerable public meetings in towns and villages. A subject that has engrossed public attention in the U.P. has been the Tenancy Bill.[3] On this subject we must have held thousands of meetings in rural areas explaining the provisions of the bill. The peasantry have been eagerly expecting the passage of this bill and have lived in this hope for two years. It is this hope which has kept them more or less quiet during this period when otherwise there might have been a great deal of trouble. That bill has just been passed by the provincial legislature and now awaits your assent. On the 15th October the province will celebrate the passage of the bill and I expect that between 1,500 and 2,000 public meetings will be held on that day for the purpose. May I here express the hope that this bill will receive your assent at an early date and will become law, as this will go a long way towards easing the situation in the U.P.? It is the agrarian situation in the U.P. that matters ultimately; other developments are relatively unimportant.

I should like you to consider the complaints received of speeches or other activities in the U.P. in the perspective of these manifold activities. If so considered, they will be seen for what they are worth; a few speeches out of hundreds or thousands.

The second point I should like to place before you is the nature of the reports usually received by the government from its secret agents. Even when *bona fide*, they are often based on informers and not over-intelligent persons. There is a tendency to exaggerate or dramatise ordinary occurrences and to attach undue importance to them or to the words of excitable youths. Still I think there is a core of truth in what has been reported and, so far as I know, the U.P. Government is fully alive to the situation and is prepared to take action whenever any overt act takes place. In the nature of things it is reluctant to take action on hearsay. I understand that action has been taken in some instances.

We are going through a transitional period and have to carry the legacy of an unfortunate past of conflict, and the present and future are

3. The U.P. Tenancy Bill provided for hereditary rights to the tiller of the soil, reasonable rents and ejectment only if certain conditions were satisfied. It was passed by the Legislative Council on 16 September 1939 and by the Assembly on 4 October 1939.

uncertain. A democratic government cannot function like the old governments which could ignore public opinion. It has to avoid repressive measures unless these are clearly indicated, for such measures do not cure the disease and often make it worse.

I think it is true that during the first few days of September a number of very undesirable speeches were delivered in the U.P. The sudden coming of war upset the balance of many people and unloosened their tongues. No clear direction was given for some days as to what the Congress attitude was going to be. As soon as the attention of the provincial Congress was drawn to these speeches etc., immediate action was taken both by public statements and circulars and private letters to stop this development, and this action had a marked result and was followed by a definite improvement. I understand that government also took some action.

One name was mentioned to me, that of Shibban Lal Saksena,[4] whose activities were specially objected to. This gentleman is a Congress M.L.A. and is one of our most honest and hardest working members. He takes his duties as M.L.A. very seriously and is continually touring about his constituency in Gorakhpur. I must confess that he is crude of speech and occasionally his tongue runs away with him when he discusses the plight of the peasantry. We have warned him privately several times and our advice has had effect on him. His speeches were examined recently by officials and though thought undesirable were not considered actionable. His chief offence seems to be the intensity with which he works among the peasantry. He has unfortunately not been on good terms with the district officials of Gorakhpur.

I trust that what I have written may prove of some help in the understanding of the U.P. situation. This situation is serious in many ways but not in the sense of the police reports, although there is some basis for the latter.

This letter, written in the train to Wardha, has grown long. But I want to add a few words to it and to tell you how much I desire that the long conflict of India and England should be ended and that they should cooperate together. I have felt that this war, with all its horrors, has brought this opportunity to our respective countries and it would be sad and tragic if we are unable to take advantage of it. None of us, in India or England, dare remain in the old grooves or think in terms of past conditions. But events are moving so fast that sometimes

4. (b. 1907); member, U.P. Legislative Assembly, 1937-46 and 1964-67, of Constituent Assembly, 1946-50, and of Lok Sabha, 1954-62 and again since 1971; was a prominent trade union leader specially in the field of sugar industry.

I fear that they will overtake our slow moving minds. There are all the elements of a Greek tragedy in the world situation today and we seem to be pushed along inevitably to a predestined end. You told me that I moved too much in the air. Probably you are right. But it is often possible to get a better view of the lie of the land from the heights than from the valleys. And I have wandered sufficiently on the solid earth of India and mixed with the people who labour there to think of India in earthly terms.

May I say how much I appreciate your friendly courtesy to me? It was a pleasure to meet you for a second time, and whenever chance offers an opportunity for this again, I shall avail myself of it. But whether we meet or, as you once said, look at each other from a distance over a gulf that has not been bridged, we shall do so, I earnestly trust, with no trace of unfriendliness, and realising the difficulties which encompass us and which compel us to pursue different paths.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. To Govind Madgavkar[1]

Wardha
October 6, 1939

My dear Sir Govind,

I have just received your letter of the 2nd October.[2] I think you will find that the Congress position as explained in the Working Committee statement and subsequently, goes further than your suggestions. It demands a clear declaration of India's independent status and India's right to frame her own constitution through a constituent assembly. Further it says that this must be applied in the present to the largest possible extent, both in the governance of India and in the control of war so far as India is concerned. This inevitably means India's control

of her defence policy. Whether this is agreed to or not by the British Government, our demands are quite clear and far-reaching.

I do not know why you object to the words "new order." We do not use these words in any sense that is hostile to India's interest.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

21. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Wardha
October 6, 1939

My dear Krishna,

I have just reached Wardha from Delhi. I sent you a cable yesterday[2] from New Delhi which might have given you some indication of how matters stand here. My previous cable from Allahabad was sent after I had heard on the telephone your long message to the *Herald*. I did not quite follow parts of it at the time and so, rather unnecessarily, I sent you a cable asking you not to commit yourself in regard to details. As a matter of fact the line you have taken seems to me perfectly correct. I informed our sub-committee of it as well as Gandhiji and they saw nothing to object to in it; of course some details may be varied if circumstances point that way.

I sent a long cable to the *News Chronicle* yesterday in response to a message from them. I do not know in what form this will appear.

I had a long interview with the Viceroy which did not carry us very far.[3] We explained our respective positions and the Viceroy pointed out his many difficulties in India and in England. Ultimately he said that it was obviously not possible for him to decide or give the final word. This would rest with the cabinet in England with whom he was communicating. He expressed the hope that we would not rush him too much or take precipitate decisions. We told him that we had no

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Not printed.
3. Jawaharlal and Rajendra Prasad had an interview with the Viceroy on 3 October 1939. They demanded a positive and unambiguous declaration committing Britain to "absolute freedom" for India at the end of the war and unfettered liberty to frame her own constitution by means of a constituent assembly.

desire to do so but it was not easy to carry on in the old way when events were forcing the pace.

The Viceroy was not hopeful of meeting our demands, either in regard to the kind of declaration we wanted or regarding its application in the present.[4] Some declaration of course was bound to be made. But we pointed out to him that unless this went the whole hog, it would not meet the situation. Apart from his difficulty in adjusting himself to any big changes, he was especially worried on account of the princes, the Muslims and Sikandar Hayat Khan representing the Punjab. He looks upon it as if he has to choose between these people, who offer to stand by him, and Indian nationalism. It is not an easy matter for him to take the larger view and I suppose it is still more difficult for the present British cabinet to do so. The kind of people the Viceroy sees as a rule are mostly of one type and he gets a very distorted view of things in general. So far as we are concerned we have made it clear to him that we do not wish to raise the question of princes at this stage directly, though inevitably the big changes that we envisage will have great effect on the future of the princes. So far as the Muslims are concerned we are perfectly agreeable to offer reasonable safeguards and compromise. In any event this is a matter between ourselves and does not affect the declaration or its subsequent temporary application. One thing must be made perfectly clear, that the British Government has made up its mind completely to run India even in the present with the consent of and with a great deal of control by Indian popular opinion. This would apply not only to the governance of India but also to the conduct of the war so far as India is concerned as well as the defence of India. We did not discuss any further details. But I put to him more or less the scheme that the India League had put forward.[5]

4. In fact, Linlithgow led Zetland to conclude that the Congress would be satisfied if the 14 September resolution was 'taken at a good deal less than its face value'.
5. The League had put forward a 11 point programme for the readjustment of Indo-British relations. This included an unequivocal declaration of freedom and equality as the objective to be attained by self-determination through a constituent assembly; general election to Central Legislature without altering the proportion of representation and after the elections the Viceroy to appoint executive councillors on the recommendation of the leader of the majority as a *de facto* cabinet; new government to pass bill on fundamental rights, guaranteeing the right of constitutional opposition; establishment of a tribunal which would protect minority rights among other things, devising a plan for constituent assembly with a federal structure enabling the states to join. It also stipulated that there should be direct contact between the Congress and the government and the Congress and other parties.

The Muslim League is unfortunately misbehaving to an extraordinary extent. Anything more objectionable than their resolution on war[6] I cannot imagine. There is really no question of ill-treatment of Muslims in Congress provinces. This is all bogus and we have even offered them to refer any specific instances to Sir Maurice Gwyer, the Chief Justice of the Federal Court or any other similar authority. What the League is aiming at is Muslim domination even in the provinces where Muslims are a small minority. They have gone so far as to repudiate democracy for India. I do not think their resolution reflects the minds of even many of their members. But Jinnah and Sikandar Hayat Khan want to take advantage of the situation. As you might have heard, I had a long interview with Jinnah.[7] It was a friendly talk and at least it removed a certain tension that existed between us. But I fear that we are far apart so far as ideas are concerned. Jinnah is exceedingly backward and reactionary and has opinions and thinks in terms of twenty-five years ago. And yet he is more advanced than many of his colleagues in the Muslim League. As he stands at present, we have to give up every principle of nationalism and democracy in order to meet his wishes. That of course is impossible. I think he has overshot the mark.

The A.I.C.C. meets in two days time. It is our intention to ask it to endorse the Working Committee's statement and the general position taken up by us, and not come to any final decision at present. We want to give every chance to the Viceroy and the British Government. In the event of our negotiations breaking down definitely, you realise no doubt that events will take a very rapid turn for the worse. So far as we are concerned we have no desire to precipitate this crisis, though there are strong elements in the Congress who wish to do so. But the matter cannot remain in the air for long. In Bengal the situation is bad and the Defence of India Act is being recklessly applied.[8] It is not

6. The Working Committee of the Muslim League passed a resolution on 18 September 1939 expressing sympathy with the Allied cause but warned the government that no declaration regarding constitutional advance for India should be made nor any constitution framed without the consent and approval of the Muslim League which was the only organization which could speak on behalf of Muslims in India. It further demanded that Muslims must be given "justice and fair play in the Congress-governed provinces, where today their liberty, person, property and honour are in danger and even their elementary rights are most callously trampled upon."
7. On 3 October 1939.
8. The Governor of Bengal had promulgated certain ordinances in addition to the Government of India's ordinances whereby public meetings were banned, encroachment on the civil liberties had increased and normal Congress activity had been rendered impossible.

possible to hold any meeting public or private. In the Punjab quite a number of people have been arrested. In the Congress provinces the Defence of India Act is not being applied at all. Generally speaking the situation is well under control there but inevitably difficulties are continually arising.

In Cawnpore there is a general strike[9] going on but I have just heard on the telephone that it is likely to be settled.

Gandhiji is completely supporting the Working Committee's statement and position. He has impressed upon the Viceroy in the strongest terms that he should act in accordance with it. What is worrying Gandhiji very greatly is another aspect of the question which has little to do with the point in issue between the Congress and the government. The difficulty of his relates to nonviolence and the war.[10] He does not want to see India becoming a military nation and he does not want to associate with anything in the nature of militarisation. His attitude in this matter is not even accepted, for obvious reasons, by some of his closest colleagues. He says that he cannot go contrary to his cherished beliefs but he realises that he cannot force them down on the country when the country is not prepared for them. This means that in such matters he does not take the lead or guide the Congress. But, as I have said above, this has nothing to do with the issues before us today. In regard to these he is fully and strongly supporting the Congress case.

I expect to be here till the 12th when probably I shall go back to Allahabad. But it is impossible to make any programme.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

9. There was a general strike of the Kanpur mill workers from 2 to 10 October 1939.
10. On 25 September 1939, Mahatma Gandhi wrote: "Of all the countries in the world India is the least military. Though I have failed with the Working Committee in persuading them, at this supreme moment, to declare their undying faith in nonviolence as the only sovereign remedy for saving mankind from destruction, I have not lost hope...."

shaping them. All these resolutions had only one meaning, that of opposing all war, and the policy now suggested is not different from that which has guided the past resolutions, and does not impinge on us in any degree. It is possible that it may lead to certain incidental difficulties. It is for us to consider whether it will be worth while taking the risk for such advantages as there may be, or avoid it for fear of the difficulties.

Functioning on a merely agitational plane may be brave, but we should also bear in mind the legitimate part we can play in the international plane. I would suggest that you should understand the difficulties and be ready to face and overcome them, especially when we may be dealing with unknown factors and possible difficulties in every direction. The Working Committee has taken note of every aspect of the matter, and the step it has taken is wise and far-seeing and does not, in the slightest degree, give in to imperialism. It is not at all cooperation or bargaining. The attitude taken is quite in consonance with India's legitimate share in world affairs.

News is controlled everywhere nowadays. Be cautious and do not be taken in by false fears and bogies. Otherwise totally wrong reactions may be produced. Without claiming to be a prophet I can say that there is no basis for being apprehensive of a Russian invasion of India.

S. Satyamurti: Why not?

Jawaharlal Nehru: My study of the world situation tells me that.

SS: Any other reasons?

JN: I would like to give them, but I might then drift away from the present subject. I am very much interested in the matter, and I would like to explain matters to Mr. Satyamurti. The public mind is being diverted by such fears, and Mr. Satyamurti is perhaps one of such victims. India will certainly resist any imperialist invasion by Russia.

SS: It will be a Bolshevist and not imperialist invasion.

JN: India should not allow bogies to interfere with her pursuit of her legitimate ambitions in the national and international planes, and if she forgets what is due to her in these matters, she will be false to her past and to the resolutions the Congress has passed.

22. On the War Crisis[1]

The passing of the resolution will have a deep effect on the country. For five years now, resolutions relating to war are being passed by the Congress. When the present war broke out, I was in China, and therefore could consider the question dispassionately. The Working Committee has taken an important step and it is now left to the A.I.C.C. to make up their minds on the question. It is desirable that the A.I.C.C. should meet from time to time to take decisions on all important matters, but distances in India are so great that this is often difficult. I suggest, therefore, that the A.I.C.C. should take its decision on the Working Committee's resolution at this session itself.

It is the first time that the Congress leaders have met the Viceroy in this manner.[2] I think the invitation extended to us by the Viceroy after the issue of the Working Committee's statement has a significance. The issues before us are of a momentous nature. We are faced with a situation which might hold many surprises in the future and it is essential, therefore, that we should not take a false step. The international situation is by no means clear. Do not listen to the rumours regarding designs of this or that country, but be prepared for everything.

We have been taking interest in international matters, and this has added to our prestige and strength in the world. The Congress is known all over the country as a body trying to secure Indian independence. In placing the resolution before the House, our aim is to fight imperialism and the question before us is how to do it. In principle, the resolution before us seeks that India should stand for an extension of democracy and freedom to all peoples. You may move amendments if you like, but I am sure you will all accept the principle of the resolution without hesitation.

The new plane in which India desires to play its due part might be unfamiliar, but nonetheless I have no hesitation in placing the resolution before you, because it is right and embodies the right policy. It is possible that we may make mistakes, but on this ground we should not avoid taking the course. During the last few years, a number of resolutions have been passed on war, and I have had quite a good share in

1. Speech on the Working Committee resolution at A.I.C.C., Wardha, 10 October 1939. From *The Hindu*, 10 October 1939.
2. The Viceroy interviewed fifty-two leaders of various kinds from the middle of September to the middle of October 1939.

shaping them. All these resolutions had only one meaning, that of opposing all war, and the policy now suggested is not different from that which has guided the past resolutions, and does not impinge on us in any degree. It is possible that it may lead to certain incidental difficulties. It is for us to consider whether it will be worth while taking the risk for such advantages as there may be, or avoid it for fear of the difficulties.

Functioning on a merely agitational plane may be brave, but we should also bear in mind the legitimate part we can play in the international plane. I would suggest that you should understand the difficulties and be ready to face and overcome them, especially when we may be dealing with unknown factors and possible difficulties in every direction. The Working Committee has taken note of every aspect of the matter, and the step it has taken is wise and far-seeing and does not, in the slightest degree, give in to imperialism. It is not at all cooperation or bargaining. The attitude taken is quite in consonance with India's legitimate share in world affairs.

News is controlled everywhere nowadays. Be cautious and do not be taken in by false fears and bogies. Otherwise totally wrong reactions may be produced. Without claiming to be a prophet I can say that there is no basis for being apprehensive of a Russian invasion of India.

S. Satyamurti: Why not?

Jawaharlal Nehru: My study of the world situation tells me that.

SS: Any other reasons?

JN: I would like to give them, but I might then drift away from the present subject. I am very much interested in the matter, and I would like to explain matters to Mr. Satyamurti. The public mind is being diverted by such fears, and Mr. Satyamurti is perhaps one of such victims. India will certainly resist any imperialist invasion by Russia.

SS: It will be a Bolshevist and not imperialist invasion.

JN: India should not allow bogies to interfere with her pursuit of her legitimate ambitions in the national and international planes, and if she forgets what is due to her in these matters, she will be false to her past and to the resolutions the Congress has passed.

If this resolution is passed, it will mean one thing, and that is that it will shake to the foundations all imperialisms. I want India to play her part in this.

I am glad to find vigorous expression of views on the vital principles before us but I am convinced that the line we are now taking is the correct one. The other suggestions made will, by creating differences, only weaken us. While I appreciate the honest expression of views by the members, I feel that they have overlooked many points.[3] The step we take should be effective, and these will fail if we create a wrong atmosphere of suspicion and doubt. Most of the amendments are weaker than the original resolution and I feel that they will only make us incapable of any action.

The present war will create a new order in the world, and if India plays her part in the right direction, she can influence this change for the better. I warn you against creating confusion and divisions, as it will be dangerous for the country if we start moving in different directions. On the other hand, we should all pull together, conserving our strength and the power we have achieved so far.

Mr. Majumdar's speech[4] did make an impression on me but it is the kind of speech suitable for calling strikes and is not suited to the atmosphere of the A.I.C.C. As for Mr. Majumdar's suggestion for a national militia, while I may be sympathetic towards this proposal as such, I want to make it clear that there are only two courses open to us. One is that pointed out by the Working Committee and the other of opposing war preparations. There can be no other *via media.*

We should make sure of our foundations before launching on action. Some of the amendments are childish. Only four out of the twenty-three amendments were opposed to the approach suggested by the Working Committee. Sixteen amendments suggested verbal changes, some of them making the resolution uneven.

All of us agree with Mr. Aney's amendment.[5] Who is opposed to the ideal of democracy? But there is no need for laying special emphasis on that aspect in the manner suggested by Mr. Aney, as the whole resolution supports the spirit of democracy and freedom. The addition

3. In discussing the resolution, twenty-two amendments were moved, mostly by the left wing, calling for a more aggressive policy against the government.
4. Dutt Majumdar had claimed that the country was fully prepared and if the Congress leaders missed the present opportunity the country would move forward without them. He also wanted a national militia to be created.
5. M.S. Aney had said that while it was necessary to protect minority interests, it should not lead them to entertain proposals which went against the principles of democracy and freedom.

of the world "just" to legitimate minority rights, will only create an atmosphere of suspicion.

The demand for the release of political prisoners does not arise in this context.

We have supported the principle of collective security. When a weaker nation is oppressed the others should go to its rescue, and so it would not be a question of strengthening British imperialism if we decided to support the war. The present resolution will uproot British imperialism, and certainly not help it.

Mahatma Gandhi is firmly convinced that the principle of nonviolence should be applied in the present case also, but I do not see how we can ward off an armed attack by nonviolence.

Our path is slippery and we may commit mistakes. But it is necessary to maintain complete unity.

There is a demand for more information on the Viceregal talks. Nothing more than what I have already reported has happened. I expect that we will be able to know the result one way or the other in a fortnight's time. I agree that delay will be injurious, but we should not be in a hurry.

There are really no differences on principle among the members, but there is suspicion and mistrust. How can we solve this except by an appeal to you not to entertain mutual suspicion.

23. The Alternatives Before the Country[1]

I would like to supplement my earlier statement with the permission of the President. India has arrived at a new stage in the world drama. How she functions depends on Indians and on world events, which today overmaster human affairs. Big changes are coming. In the present situation, India has to choose between two clear alternatives and

1. Speech at A.I.C.C., Wardha, 11 October 1939. From *The Hindu*, 11 October 1939.

there is no *via media*. One possibility is agreement with the British Government and the other is conflict. If there be an agreement in terms of the Working Committee's statement, it will be an honourable one. It will knock the bottom out of all imperialisms. It will start a process which nobody can stop until India gets what she wants. Another possible outcome of the present situation is conflict. A conflict may come suddenly. Either alternative will ultimately lead us to our cherished objective. Seldom has any country been given choice of such a kind.

I appeal to the country to pull together in the crisis, for, if we do not, it would be a sure sign that we are not alive to the seriousness of the situation. Whatever happens in this war, one thing is certain, Hitler cannot win in the manner he wants to. Russia certainly has put an end to Germany's chances of winning the war as Hitler wants her to. A situation will come about when India will soon have enough power to force the pace in world affairs.

We cannot be certain how future events will develop. Many things may happen, but one cannot say how or who will have the initiative then on. But it is incumbent on all Indians to be aware and not take any step which will pin them to a particular course of action irrespective of circumstances. The resolution placed before you leaves us in a better position to take the final decision with reference to contemporary circumstances without committing us dangerously to any particular course.

24. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Wardha
October 11, 1939

My dear Krishna,
I have received here today your two letters of 30th September together with your proposals.[2] I have already sent you by cable and post the

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Krishna Menon had suggested that the Congress demand that Britain should guarantee the freedom of India through a constituent assembly as part of the peace aims, and establish a transitional provisional government without legislation and minimum of disturbance, which reflected the will of the people, guaranteed minority rights and undertook no major [illegible] or ordinance, till an election was held. The Congress should also [illegible] India was attempting no blackmail.

resolutions passed by the A.I.C.C. The voting on the principal resolution was, as I have stated, 188 to 58, but far the greater part of the speaking was against it. The opposition consisted of socialist, communist, the Forward Bloc and a few odd elements. The socialists under Jaya Prakash were the only serious and thoughtful opponents. The others, after the way of Forward Bloc, just shouted and cursed, and sometimes said the most contradictory things. For instance, they would shout for immediate resistance to war and in the same breath demand that the ministries should have large-scale programmes to assist them in this resistance. The absurdity of this was not apparently realised by them, or, which is more likely, they did not think seriously of resistance at all. In India two separate mentalities have developed in recent years. One is represented by the Congress provinces, the other by Bengal and the Punjab which have undergone no serious change during recent years and can think only in purely agitational terms. For Bengal as well as the Punjab the paramount question is one of release of political prisoners. They can hardly think in terms of freedom as a near objective. They are just an opposition, feeling rather helpless and shout a lot.

The socialists were terribly exercised over the matter and after much travail of spirit decided in favour of immediate resistance and pressed this before the A.I.C.C. Somehow people do not seem to realise here the new status of India in international affairs, nor do they realise the magnitude of the changes that are taking place in the world. But some glimmering of understanding is coming through.

Some of the Forward Bloc people stated that they would go ahead with their programme regardless of the decision of the A.I.C.C.[3] But I do not think this means much. The socialists will remain quiet for the time being because they do wish to avoid internal dissensions.

One complicating factor is the continuous repression going on in Bengal and the Punjab. This irritates Congress ranks everywhere. The position in the Congress provinces is more or less under control. But difficulties are continually arising.[4] I do not think this state of indecision can last long. You must also remember that there is a deep-seated antipathy to the very idea of coming to terms with Britain, which means to the average mind, British imperialism.

3. Subhas Bose had said: "The resolution...though finely worded, represents a policy of inaction, which I can neither appreciate nor endorse." Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar, vice-president of the Forward Bloc, had stated that it was the right and duty of every Congressman to resist the war and that they intended to do so by all means available to them.
4. For example, the Khaksar trouble in the U.P. and strikes in Assam, Ahmedabad, Kanpur and Bombay.

In Assam a difficult situation[5] has been created by the declaration by the Government of India of the Digboi oil fields as a protected area. This means that the provincial government has been deprived of all control and the old strike there has been forcibly suppressed. The Governor there has misbehaved and ignored the ministry and this in itself is leading to a crisis. Please realise the depth of feeling here against any cooperation in the war. This might be overcome if the inducement was sufficient and the declaration by the British Government, as well as subsequent reshaping of government, adequate. But nothing short of a full declaration will be adequate.

The proposals you make are generally good. I am not quite clear about a federal court to protect minorities.

It seems to me that under present circumstances we cannot formulate any definite proposals on behalf of the Congress for the transitional period. In our talks with the Viceroy however we adopted the general line taken by you and thus made some definite suggestions. I cannot just see how all this is going to lead to a proper compromise. The forces against it are too strong and the inertia of a century old Government of India is something terrible. Even the shock of war does not affect it much.

I am going back to Allahabad.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

5. A labour strike was on at the Digboi oil fields when the war broke out. Before the recommendations of the conciliation board appointed by the government could be implemented and the labourers reinstated, Digboi and Tinsukia were declared protected areas. The labourers got no redress, and appeals to the Governor of Assam and the Viceroy were ignored. The Assam Oil Company evicted 3,000 labourers involved in the strike.

and self-determination for which the war is claimed to be fought will be applicable to India also.

Poland has been wiped out from the map of Europe during the last five weeks. Europe itself is changing very rapidly economically and politically. A disturbance of the balance of power in Europe affects India.

The statement of the Congress Working Committee and the resolution passed by the A.I.C.C. have given the British Government an opportunity to clarify their war and peace aims. We are not satisfied with an assurance about the principles; we require application of these principles to India. Only a free India can decide whether she can participate in the war or not.

The rulers of Indian states have offered help in the form of men and material. They are suppressing civil liberties in the states under the pretext of war.

A slave India cannot help Britain. We want to assume control of our government and when we are free we can help the democracies. We are not relying on words but we want them to be translated into action.

I appeal to you to compose your differences and present a united front in our march forward.

26. Cable to V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

14/10/39

The standing committee of the States People's Conference meeting at Wardha[2] have associated themselves fully with the Congress statements on the war situation. War and peace aims are equally applicable to the people of the states where there is more reaction to autocracy than even the Nazi regime. The British Government is more responsible for this than the rulers. It is absurd for the rulers to support democracy abroad and retain undiluted autocracy in their own states. The people have not been consulted and are hence unable to accept the commitments of the rulers. The war has been made an excuse for greater repression and for stopping constitutional advance. The committee invites the rulers to accept

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. [illegible] October 1939.

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25. A Slave India Cannot Help Britain[1]

Only a free India can decide whether we can participate in the war or not. We want a declaration whether the principles of democracy, liberty

1. Speech at Wardha, 11 October 1939. From *The Hindu*, 12 October 1939.

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26. Cable to V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

14/10/39

The standing committee of the States People's Conference meeting at Wardha[2] have associated themselves fully with the Congress statements on the war situation. War and peace aims are equally applicable to the people of the states where there is more reaction to autocracy than even the Nazi regime. The British Government is more responsible for this than the rulers. It is absurd for the rulers to support democracy abroad and retain undiluted autocracy in their own states. The people have not been consulted and are hence unable to accept the commitments of the rulers. The war has been made an excuse for greater repression and for stopping constitutional advance. The committee invites the rulers to accept

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

the objective of full responsible government and give effect to it in the largest possible measure in the immediate future. The rulers can expect no cooperation from the people unless fundamental changes are made and the government is made popular and responsible.

The second statement enumerates repression, and suppression of civil liberties in numerous states.

Jawaharlal

27. Kisan Day[1]

Two and a half years ago general elections were held at which the kisans chose their representatives and since the latter's election they busied themselves with their first duty—that is the legislation relating to kisans. They wanted the present zamindari and land system to be changed at once but if that could not be achieved soon they wanted that something at least should be done to lighten the burden of the kisans. Therefore the first question before the kisan representatives in the Legislative Assembly was how to change the tenancy legislation. Many put obstacles in the way of amending the legislation. They said that great injustice was being done to them by the proposed amendment but they forgot who had been doing injustice for 100 or 200 years. Eventually the Tenancy Bill was passed in the U.P. Assembly. When it went before the Council, the Council made some amendments. The Congress did not like those amendments but it was felt that if we opposed those amendments, though we would certainly have won, the legislation would have been delayed by a year or so. Eventually the Bill has been passed by the legislature and now the signature of the Governor remains to be given to it.[2] That is a matter of days and the object of the kisan day is to hold meetings all over the province to explain the new legislation and to urge that it should be enforced at once.

1. Speech at Allahabad, 15 October 1939. From *The Leader*, 19 October 1939.
2. Sir Harry Haig, the Governor, gave his assent on 7 December 1939 and the Bill was implemented on 1 January 1940.

I hope that when the voice of the kisans reaches the proper quarters the assent to the Bill will be forthcoming.

I trust that the new Tenancy Bill will become law but the injustice to the kisans will not stop until you become organised, for if you are not organised even the new law will be thrown overboard by the zamindars. It is, therefore, necessary that you should be so organised as to be able to face and oppose anything which might be done against law. After the present legislation, many things remain to be done. But with this legislation you have taken a great step forward and it is for you, the kisans, to strengthen your *sangathan* to make further steps easy.

War has broken out at last and the British Government has involved India also in the war. That they did so without consulting us is not right. The Congress has asked the British Government to recognise our right to Purna Swaraj and to frame our own constitution through a constituent assembly. We do not want the legislation to be changed at once but we desire that during the transition period they should transfer the reins of government at once into the hands of the people's representatives. That is, we want the recognition of our right to Purna Swaraj and the laying of the foundation of it now. Then only will we have confidence in the British Government and will participate in the war. Questions to this effect were put to the British Government but no reply has been given as yet. I think that a reply will be given to us in two or three weeks because the uncertain situation cannot continue for long.

A peculiar position has arisen as regards the present war. In the first place our sympathies are not with the Germans; secondly, until we get a reply from the British Government to our resolution, we are not prepared to help them; thirdly, as we are waiting for the reply we do not want to oppose the war. At present we have to keep aloof, neither cooperating nor opposing.

The questions which the Congress has put to the British Government are not only for the benefit of India but the whole world and many people in other countries have also appreciated them so that they might know what was the real aim of the war. Many Englishmen in England are also pleased over these questions because they are also in their minds. Therefore, in a way the Congress has taken that step in the interest of the whole world and thus our prestige has risen in the eyes of the world. If, in reply, our right to Purna Swaraj is recognised and the foundation for it is laid, India will undergo a great change and we should be prepared to take up the reins of the administration. If it is not recognised, we might have to revive satyagraha and for that also we should keep in readiness; and preparedness for that will come with

your *sangathan*. I warn you to guard yourselves against such petty things as Hindu-Muslim quarrels for kisans' legislation. Swaraj will be for all and not for any particular community. The doors of the Congress are open to all.

28. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Allahabad
October 16, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,
Your letter of the 13th.[2] I think that it will not be correct for you to say that Jinnah has banged the door by his reply to your suggestion for an appointment of an impartial judge. His reply was not helpful, but it applied to a particular subject. I find that Maulana is also of this opinion. I am going to Lucknow tonight and shall have a further talk with him. I suggest that you might await further communications from him before you take any action.

Some friends of ours who are not Congressmen (they are professors of the university here) made a suggestion yesterday which appeals to me. They said that it would be worth while for us to fix a particular day when meetings all over India might repeat and endorse the A.I.C.C. resolution on the crisis. I think this will be good from many points of view. Our position is somewhat peculiar. We have had our say and now we have to wait for a reply. Meanwhile the tension in the country remains and excitement increases. Unless we attract people's attention in a particular direction we shall become completely passive spectators of events. We must carry on some activity. In the U.P. we have been fairly active, chiefly in connection with the Tenancy Bill. To these we added on a reference to the present situation. We had yesterday a very large number of meetings all over the province. In the district of Allahabad there were over 60 meetings. I attended four of them. I shall consult Maulana on this subject tomorrow in Lucknow and I am writing to Vallabhbhai also.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Along with his letter of 13 October, Rajendra Prasad had enclosed a letter to Azad in which he had said: "You also know that our suggestion for an enquiry by an impartial judge into the allegations against Congress Ministries has been rejected by Mr. Jinnah who has practically barred the door for the present at any rate."

I have been receiving some news from England by letters and have also had long talks with Edward Thompson who has just come to India by air. I gather from all these that our statement and resolution have created some stir in political and journalistic circles in London. But much remains to be done to make the people at that end realise the gravity of the situation. To some extent the very moderation of our language has led them to believe that we do not mean any action. Then, of course, there is the belief that Gandhiji having offered unconditional cooperation for the war,[3] it is quite inconceivable that the Congress will ultimately come into conflict with the British Government. Gandhiji's name is used frequently in this connection. A phrase that has been used there was repeated to me. It was stated that the two major difficulties in the way of the Congress taking any aggressive step were the Muslim League and Gandhiji. All this sounds rather absurd here but that is the way people are talking in London.

The one thing that threatens the British Government more than anything else is the reaction of events in India on American opinion. On no account do they want American opinion to be alienated and they fear greatly that any conflict in India would lead to the stiffening of the American attitude towards the British Government. I am sending copies of this letter to Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

3. Commenting on the Working Committee's resolution on war, Mahatma Gandhi had written on 15 September 1939: "I was sorry to find myself alone in thinking that whatever support was to be given to the British should be given un-

29. The Answer[1]

The Viceroy has spoken[2] and the British Government has given its answer to India's questions. What were those questions that the Congress put, not on behalf of itself only, not only on behalf of the hundreds of millions of India, but for vast numbers of human beings all over the world, who were sick and weary of war and violence, of fascism and imperialism and all their ugly and numerous progeny, and hungered for a new order and peace and freedom? "The Working Committee invite the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged, in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people?"

We have the answer now. The Viceroy "is authorised by His Majesty's Government to say that at the end of the war they will be very willing to enter into consultation with representatives of several communities, parties and interests in India and with the Indian princes with a view to securing their aid and cooperation in framing such constitutional modifications as may be deemed desirable." Further he announces the immediate establishment of a consultative group of all major political parties in British India and of the Indian princes which will associate public opinion with the conduct of the war. In order to comfort us still further, we are told that the pledge given in the preamble of the Act of 1919 still holds.[3]

1. Lucknow, 17 October 1939. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 18 October 1939. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 182-187.
2. On 17 October 1939, the Viceroy announced that at the end of the war, Dominion Status would be granted and the Government of India Act modified to the extent deemed necessary by the British. As for self-government, the situation must be faced in terms of world politics, political realities and practical considerations.
3. This declared that the policy of Parliament was "to provide for the increasing association of Indians in every branch of Indian administration, and for the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in British India as an integral part of the Empire."

We would hesitate ordinarily to comment in haste on these pronouncements for the gravest issues are at stake, and it is right and proper that India's rejoinder should be given by the Congress Working Committee. We presume that the Committee will meet soon and give the only lead to the country that seems possible now. But while it is our privilege to carry the message of the Congress to our readers, and to discipline ourselves and the nation in the pursuit of our objectives and ideals, we may not remain silent even for a day when a challenge has been thrown out to the Indian people, and to the ideals we have cherished for so long.

The last six weeks have seen the elimination of a nation from the map of Europe and the crushing of a proud people. That has been a major occurrence, full of tragedy, and yet it is but a minor prelude to the vast and cataclysmic changes that are taking place before our eyes. Hitler, who dreamed of dominion over Europe and possibly the world, has been compelled by force of circumstances to give up that dream and to submit to the superior might of Soviet Russia. The south-east of Europe lies beyond his reach now, the Baltic states and the Baltic Sea are dominated by Russia.[4] Half Poland has gone and Nazi Germany, with all her armed might, plays second fiddle and lives in fear of what may come.

This is the beginning, the first fruits of the war. What will follow in the months and years to come we can only dimly see now, but only the blind can imagine that the present-day world of empires and colonies and dependencies will survive the holocaust of war. The world of yesterday is dead, the world of today is dying and not all the king's horses nor all the king's men will be able to keep it alive. The new world may be good or bad, but it will be entirely different from the old.

Every man and woman of intelligence has some realisation of these profound changes that are taking place in this era of war and revolution. But not so the British Government and not the Government of India. They live in Whitehall and New Delhi apart from humbler, though perhaps more intelligent folk, and they neither see nor remember. In 1939 they remind us of a preamble of the Act of 1919. For them these twenty years have been but a bad dream that is no more, and though the world may crash and go to pieces, who dare touch the sanctums of Whitehall or New Delhi? But we remember that even in

1919 the preamble was indignantly rejected by the Indian people, that three times since then we have faced the might of the British Empire, unarmed and peaceful and clad in simple homespun, but strong in the strength of our millions, and proud of the spirit of our people and of the ideals we cherished. We remember that in 1935 yet another Act was imposed upon us and the old Act of 1919 was consigned to oblivion. This new Act also we rejected. And now the old preamble of 1919 is fished out of the dustbin and presented to us by His Excellency the Viceroy as a gift worthy of England, fighting for democracy, and worthy of India, insistent on independence.

Need we examine any other parts of the Viceroy's statement? We asked for independence and are promised a consultation at the end of the war for such constitutional modifications as may be deemed desirable.

Perhaps we were foolish in asking our questions. Yet we do not think so, for there is no one in India now, and few, we imagine, in the world who will be deceived by British professions of a war for democracy and freedom. We know now, beyond a peradventure, that Britain clings to her imperialism and fights to preserve it, howsoever her statesmen may cover this ancient habit of theirs by soft and pleasing words. What of the British Labour Party now and all those radicals and lovers of freedom in England who talk so eloquently of the brave new world that is coming? What of America, that great land of democracy, to which imperialist England looks for support and sustenance during this war? Does Britain think that the people of the United States will pour their gold and commodities to make the world safe for British imperialism? What of the free dominions of the British Commonwealth, who have been charmed by brave phrases and made to come to Britain's aid? How will they like this exposure of the reality that lies behind those phrases? The aims and objectives of this terrible war are clear at last, in so far as the present British Cabinet is concerned. Let no man doubt them.

The Congress asked a question, but in asking that question it also gave its own answer—that answer stands. We can never be parties to supporting imperialism. The issues are clear and so are we in our minds. This is not a matter for Congressmen only but for all of us, whether we belong to the Muslim League or Hindu Mahasabha or Sikh League or any other organisation of Indians. For India's honour and India's freedom are involved and nothing else can count where these supremely vital issues are at stake.

The Viceroy has told us to think of the unity of India. His Excellency's reminder was not necessary. But even the unity of India cannot

be purchased at the cost of India's freedom. We want no union of slaves in bondage. We want a united India but a free India, and we have no shadow of doubt that we shall get what we want. Meanwhile we may have to go into the wilderness again, as we have so often done in the past. If the fates so will it, we shall do so gladly, rejoicing that yet again we have been privileged to serve the cause that is dearer to us than everything else. And in doing so we shall help in building the new world order for which millions crave—an order of peace and freedom from which fascism and imperialism have been eliminated, and the days of war and violence are no more.

30. The Reply of the Congress[1]

We have read the Viceroy's statement with deep regret. If this is the final answer of the British Government to the people of India, then there is no common ground between the two, and our paths diverge completely.

The whole statement is a complete repudiation of all that India stands for nationally and internationally. It is a statement which would have been out of date twenty years ago; today it has absolutely no relation to reality. There is no mention in it of independence, freedom, democracy or self-determination; no attempt even to justify the dragooning of India into the war without a reference to her people and her being forced to join an adventure for objectives which are not hers. These objectives appear clearly from the Viceroy's statement to be preservation and maintenance of the British imperial and financial structure, in India and abroad. The "better international system" to which the British Premier has referred is evidently meant to preserve and strengthen this structure. Apart from this, it relates, according to him, to peoples of Europe and not to Asia or Africa. India continues where she is; the colonies remain where they are; imperialism is still meant to flourish.

All this seems to follow from the Viceroy's statement, and if this is the aim of the war, it is difficult to imagine that even the British Government, living as it does in an age that is past and done with, can expect any self-respecting Indian to cooperate with it. The hand of

1. Joint statement issued by Maulana Azad and Jawaharlal, Lucknow, 17 October 1939. *The Hindu*, 18 October 1939.

friendship that the Congress had extended has been spurned by their Government. How far that Government represents them it is for the British to say, but we have to consider the Viceroy's statement as England's reply to India.

What our next step should be, it would be premature and improper for us to say at this stage. That is for the Working Committee to decide and the Committee is meeting for that purpose soon. The hour is a grave one and requires all our united wisdom and courage and discipline and mutual forbearance. Let us bear ourselves with dignity and restraint and hold together in the cause of India's freedom.

31. An Emphatic No[1]

British Government's reply to the Congress invitation for a declaration of war aims is a negation of democracy and freedom. They have spurned the hand we stretched and made it clear that they fight for preserving and entrenching the empire and imperialism. If this is the aim of war India can be no party to an adventure which seeks to keep her and others in bondage. We cannot believe that the British people accept the imperialist aim nor can the free British dominions side with imperialism. British Labour Party does not support the Government in making the world safe for imperialism. The great democracy, America, has not extended her sympathy for this. Yet this is the answer we have got. To this India can only say that our answer is an emphatic no.

1. Cable to *News Chronicle*, 18 October 1939. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

32. What Britain Fights For ?[1]

It is an interesting and instructive exercise for the student of history to collect and read the various declarations of war aims which conquerors and governments have made throughout the ages. Always he will find a justification on the highest moral grounds, either religious or political; every aggression is justified, every brutality is condoned for the preservation of some high principle. Often he will discover that it is only the love of ultimate peace that urges the conqueror and aggressor onward. Has not even Herr Hitler said so? Recently a fascinating anthology of declared war aims was published in England and this went back two thousand years. It was astonishing to read the very same language, the same fervent love of peace, in these declarations made a hundred or a thousand years ago by kings and emperors who launched a war, as we read today. One could almost imagine, with a few verbal changes, that it was Mr. Neville Chamberlain who was speaking and not a medieval ruler.

The anthology dealt with the countries of the West, but we have no doubt that a similar collection can be made from the declarations of Eastern rulers. The desire to hide one's real motives under cover of fine phrases and pious doctrine is a human failing common to the East and the West. There have been few among the rulers of men who have not been guilty of it and who have not sought to cloak their misdeeds in this manner. Once there was in India two thousand years ago, the great Ashoka, who, unique among his kind, felt the horror of war in the full tide of conquest and laid bare his heart.

Looking at this past record of declarations and justifications a measure of despair seizes one, or we grow cynical. Is humanity always to go through the self-same round of deceit; must there always be this vast gap between the spoken word and the shady deed? Yet hope fills us every time these brave declarations are made and we try to believe, against all past experiences, that this time at least the word will be translated into the deed. So it was in 1914 and after, and millions believed, and believed in vain, that the war was to end war and to establish peace and freedom on this unhappy planet of ours. We know

1. Lucknow, 18 October 1939. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 19 October 1939. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp.

the heritage of that war; we know the deceit and treachery and betrayal of politicians; we know well the horror that has pursued us since then.

And now, a quarter of a century later, the same phrases are repeated, the same pious declarations made, and the bright youth of many a country, ignorant or forgetful of past deceptions but full of faith and fine enthusiasm, marches into the jaws of death. Must we go through the self-same round again? Not again, we all say, never again. Perhaps not, perhaps at long last humanity will rise above the petty evasions of politicians and those who have too long ruled our destinies. But let us not be too sure for human beings have an infinite capacity to believe what they want to and so to allow themselves to be deceived.

Ever since the present war in Europe began there was general but vague talk of war aims, and vaguely it was answered by those in authority. Then came the statement of the Congress Working Committee on September 14th, and for the first time an attempt was made by an organisation known throughout the world for a clear definition of war aims. The statement dealt with India, but it dealt also with the main issue before the world, which was exercising the minds of intelligent and sensitive men everywhere. It was a lead for which the world seemed to be waiting and millions reacted to it even in England and America. Let us be clear what we are fighting for, let us pin down our politicians and leaders to clear issues. Enough of vague platitudes. The Working Committee asked clear and definite questions. It was not possible to evade them, for evasion itself was tantamount to an answer.

We realise now, even more than we did before, the signal service that the Working Committee rendered to the cause of India and world peace and freedom. For it brought these vital issues to the forefront of world politics and made it difficult for the British Government to keep its aims and objectives wrapped up in the fog of war. They had to be clear and definite. We sympathise with them for the predicament they found themselves in.

And now we have had the answer with the high authority of His Britannic Majesty's Government. We have read yet again the Viceroy's long statement, and the more we read it, the more our amazement grows. We have been told by His Excellency that "the situation must be faced in terms of world politics and political realities in this country." We have endeavoured to do so, and the only conclusion we can reach is that the Viceroy and the British Government live in a world entirely different from ours, whose politics and objectives appear to us fantasies of the mind which have nothing to do with the realities of the world we live in. Has nothing happened during the last twenty in India and the world that we are asked to look back twenty

years? In this dynamic fast-moving world every day is bringing vast changes, and a year ago seems already distant history. What then of twenty years?

What the Viceroy says is important enough; what he does not say is equally important. There is no mention throughout his statement of independence, self-determination, democracy, freedom. Yet some or all of these words have been bandied about sufficiently by British politicians. We know now what the British Government dislikes.

We are told that it is not possible to declare war aims at an early stage of the campaign. This would be a perfect explanation if the country at war was intent on conquest and could not state how far it could go till it was sure of victory. But it has little bearing on a war of defence or against aggression or for the establishment of certain objectives. How does the progress of the campaign affect the recognition of India as an independent nation, or the adoption of a different policy in the colonies, or the elimination of the imperialist structure?

The Viceroy quotes the British Premier[2] and the latter's words are revealing. He wants no material advantage out of the war. He looks forward to a better international system that will restrict war and give Europe a measure of peace. That is the pith of his statement. It is restricted to Europe. It forgets other continents. It does not talk about democracy and such like vague fantasies. The British Empire does not want to extend itself; it has more than it can hold on to already. But it wants to stick to whatever it can and to have peace, so that it may not be disturbed in its wide domains. The object of the war is thus to preserve the British Empire and to build some international system which gives it security, and to hold on to India as long as possible.

It is astonishing, we repeat, that this should have been put forward to appease the Indian people and that they should have been asked to help in the task of strengthening the imperial system of which they have so long been themselves the victims. Only the most amazing ignorance of India and of the temper of the Indian people could have induced anyone to put forward such a plea.

The world moves and India moves with it and the methods and language of a generation ago are singularly out of place everywhere, and nowhere more so than in India. Our faces are set forward, not backward, and forward we shall march. We have no intention of shouting *Heil Hitler*; neither do we intend to shout *British Imperialism Zindabad.*

2. Addressing the Parliament on 12 October 1939, Neville Chamberla[illegible] clared that Britain sought no national advantage for herself, but [illegible] establishment of a better international system a[illegible]

the heritage of that war; we know the deceit and treachery and betrayal of politicians; we know well the horror that has pursued us since then.

And now, a quarter of a century later, the same phrases are repeated, the same pious declarations made, and the bright youth of many a country, ignorant or forgetful of past deceptions but full of faith and fine enthusiasm, marches into the jaws of death. Must we go through the self-same round again? Not again, we all say, never again. Perhaps not, perhaps at long last humanity will rise above the petty evasions of politicians and those who have too long ruled our destinies. But let us not be too sure for human beings have an infinite capacity to believe what they want to and so to allow themselves to be deceived.

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Manchuria and later in Abyssinia. Hitler took possession of Austria, almost on the invitation of the British Government. And then came the tragedy of Czechoslovakia in September 1938.

All this is past history but we refer to it again for we forget it at our peril. The Viceroy has done well to take us back twenty years, for we shall refresh our minds with events already buried in the pages of history and learn our lesson from them. We shall remember British policy in China, which connived at aggression, and Munich, that turning point in the world's history. And who can ever forget Spain and the infinite horror of her betrayal. We shall remember that the men of Munich are still at the helm of affairs in England and guide her policy. Is it surprising that they should father the new statement of British policy in India, which is as old as British imperialsm itself? It is a policy of crushing all liberal and freedom-loving elements and 'appeasement' of the reactionaries both in Europe and India, of entrenching their empire and protecting their financial and other vested interests.

Is it not true that even after the invasion of Poland by Germany, Mr. Neville Chamberlain still dreamed of the 'appeasement' of Germany and turning her energy and armed might towards Russia? In that fateful meeting of the British Parliament, on the eve of the declaration of war, the British Prime Minister spoke haltingly and cautiously and roused the ire even of his Conservative followers who shouted to the Labour leader to speak for the nation.[2] Sensing the strength of public opinion, Mr. Chamberlain sent that night his ultimatum to Germany.[3]

These are the leaders in this war against aggression and for democracy. The ghosts of Munich and Spain haunt them as they haunt the world, and it is not through them that peace and freedom can come. Can India, who was indignantly and insistently opposed to their foreign policy, now agree to become their tool? But the question has already been answered by the Viceroy.

Twenty years have passed by beyond recall and not even a Viceregal statement can bring them back. India has learnt much from them and developed strength and, in spite of much diversity, unity of purpose. She will not go back, and even if she was weak and badly led, the world

2. September 2 was a day of crisis and last-minute efforts were being made to bring about peace. Parliament met in the afternoon and Chamberlain's temporising statement met with fierce opposition.
3. The ultimatum of 3 September 1939 said that unless the German Government were prepared to give the British Government satisfactory assurances that they had suspended all aggressive action against Poland and were prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, Britain would fulfil her obligations to Poland.

33. Twenty Years[1]

The Great War was over and the great men of the victorious nations sat in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles to refashion the world. One of them, from across the Atlantic, talked eloquently of democracy and self-determination and a League of Nations to ensure peace. But the others, secure now in victory, had no further use for this idealistic talk meant for the multitude. It had served its purpose to rouse public enthusiasm, and now it must not be allowed to interfere with the scheming of hard-headed realistic men. The Big Five met, and then the Big Three, and out of their labours emerged the Treaty of Versailles. By this treaty all the hopes and idealism of the war were buried deep down in the soil which contained the mortal remains of so many brave young men. By that treaty they were betrayed.

We have lived in this era of the Versailles Treaty these twenty years, and each succeeding year has brought war and revolution, horror and misery to the peoples of the world. And yet the old guard of politicians who had brought the war and made this peace continued in command and stuck complacently to their old ways which had so often brought disaster. Not everywhere, for there was one vast area where a new order came into being and challenged continually the old.

Mussolini rose in Italy and the world heard of fascism. Dictatorships were established in many of the countries of Europe. An unprecedented inflation crushed the middle classes of Germany. Meanwhile the wise men met at Geneva or elsewhere and discussed in leisurely fashion the advantages of disarmament or the question of reparations.

Suddenly the great depression seized the world by the throat and rich and proud England was alarmed and prosperous America was shaken up. Year after year it spread, bringing international trade almost to a standstill, and writing with letters of fire the decay of the capitalist structure.

Hitler came, child and avenger of Versailles, and set a new standard in brutality and cruel repression. England encouraged him, in spite of her public opinion, and looked upon him as the champion who would check the Soviet tide. Events moved more swiftly still, overtopping one another, and aggression followed aggression. England stood by, protesting but nevertheless encouraging by her action. So it was in

1. Lucknow, 19 October 1939. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 19 October 1939. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 195-199.

Manchuria and later in Abyssinia. Hitler took possession of Austria, almost on the invitation of the British Government. And then came the tragedy of Czechoslovakia in September 1938.

All this is past history but we refer to it again for we forget it at our peril. The Viceroy has done well to take us back twenty years, for we shall refresh our minds with events already buried in the pages of history and learn our lesson from them. We shall remember British policy in China, which connived at aggression, and Munich, that turning point in the world's history. And who can ever forget Spain and the infinite horror of her betrayal. We shall remember that the men of Munich are still at the helm of affairs in England and guide her policy. Is it surprising that they should father the new statement of British policy in India, which is as old as British imperialsm itself? It is a policy of crushing all liberal and freedom-loving elements and 'appeasement' of the reactionaries both in Europe and India, of entrenching their empire and protecting their financial and other vested interests.

Is it not true that even after the invasion of Poland by Germany, Mr. Neville Chamberlain still dreamed of the 'appeasement' of Germany and turning her energy and armed might towards Russia? In that fateful meeting of the British Parliament, on the eve of the declaration of war, the British Prime Minister spoke haltingly and cautiously and roused the ire even of his Conservative followers who shouted to the Labour leader to speak for the nation.[2] Sensing the strength of public opinion, Mr. Chamberlain sent that night his ultimatum to Germany.[3]

These are the leaders in this war against aggression and for democracy. The ghosts of Munich and Spain haunt them as they haunt the world, and it is not through them that peace and freedom can come. Can India, who was indignantly and insistently opposed to their foreign policy, now agree to become their tool? But the question has already been answered by the Viceroy.

Twenty years have passed by beyond recall and not even a Viceregal statement can bring them back. India has learnt much from them and developed strength and, in spite of much diversity, unity of purpose. She will not go back, and even if she was weak and badly led, the world

2. September 2 was a day of crisis and last-minute efforts were being made to bring about peace. Parliament met in the afternoon and Chamberlain's temporising statement met with fierce opposition.
3. The ultimatum of 3 September 1939 said that unless the German Government were prepared to give the British Government satisfactory assurances that they had suspended all aggressive action against Poland and were prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, Britain would fulfil her obligations to Poland.

would not allow her to do so. For the dominating fact in the world today is the break-up of the old order, both political and economic, and these broken eggs cannot be put together again. The British Empire, representing this dying order, will pass away, and the present economic system will give place to another.

We cannot go back, nor can we remain static and standing in this dynamic world. And those who do not realise this or who cannot keep step with events have already ceased to count and will drop off like stragglers from an army on the march.

The Congress had offered to the British Government and people the hand of friendship and cooperation and the ending of the long dispute between India and England. It was a brave offer, and it was made on the only possible terms, the freedom of India and association in a common adventure on equal terms. The Congress asked for no privileges or power for itself. It wanted power for the Indian people who through their elected constituent assembly would frame their constitution and assume power. That was the only democratic approach to the problem, fair to all, and leading possibly to a friendly association with Britain.

That offer has been rejected. But time marches on and soon it may be too late to give effect even to that offer. The millions of India cannot be held back and if one door is barred to them, they will open other doors.

34. 1919-1939[1]

We have surveyed very briefly, in a previous article, the last twenty years in Europe. That was necessary, even to understand the position in India, for Europe has been the storm-centre of the world, and its inner conflicts and contradictions have had far-reaching repercussions. India has followed this moving and tragic drama with anxious interest and expressed her own opinions in regard to it with emphasis and clarity. Her sympathies inevitably went to the side of the victims of aggression, and her own interest prompted her to resist the advancing tide of fascism and Nazism, as she had resisted imperialism. Events in China,

1. Lucknow, 19 October 1939. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 24 October 1939. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 200–205.

Abyssinia, Austria, Palestine, Czechoslovakia and Spain moved her people profoundly, and British imperial policy in regard to them was resented and condemned. She began to think of the future, of the war that seemed inevitable and laid down her policy for it. The mind of India grew with the times and adapted itself to changing circumstances.

Nineteen nineteen was a turning point in India. Mr. Montagu had come and gone and his report had seen the light of day. As usual with British policy in India, it was too late and the vast majority of the Indian people rejected it as well as the act that was framed in accordance with it. Some eminent Indians, till then members of the Congress, thought otherwise and left the Congress to form later the Liberal Federation. But their very departure showed where the nation stood, for a handful were opposed to the vast majority. The preamble of 1919, that the British Government offer us today, was rejected with indignation in that very year. It was not good enough even in 1919.

The Rowlatt Acts came, and Mahatma Gandhi appeared on the Indian political scene, a mighty and elemental force which was to revolutionise our political life. Martial Law in the Punjab, Jallianwala Bagh, the Khilafat agitation and noncooperation—the masses of India stirred as they had never been stirred before. Swaraj was our goal and for that we struggled, not this preamble or that promise condescendingly made by the British ministers.

We need not go through this survey of recent times, though in the fast onrush of events, they seem today so far away, and many of our present-day generation know little of them. Their memories are short. But the face of India changed during these years and even the poor and humble peasant in the fields became very different from what he had been.

Twelve years ago, in Madras, the Congress spoke of independence, and two years later, by the banks of the Ravi river, we pledged ourselves to this and solemnly resolved to achieve it. Civil disobedience followed and India's manhood and womanhood took that pledge afresh in common suffering and sacrifice. The might of an empire sought to crush them and to create divisions among them, and succeeded superficially for a while, but who could crush or extinguish that bright flame of freedom that warmed our hearts and illumined our minds?

The dreary succession of Round Table Conferences came and British statecraft sought to array and combine all that was most reactionary in India against India's will to be free. The Act of 1935 followed and we rejected it. Yet we decided to accept ministerial office after long controversy. History will decide whether we acted rightly then or not, but we know already the hollowness of that Act and the numerous pitfalls

that surrounded us. Vast problems encompassed us, the legacy of generations of imperialist and authoritarian rule. Feudal princes, autocrats of their domains, were encouraged and supported by British authority. An out-of-date land system bore heavily on our masses. Our trade and industry could not prosper because of the policy of our rulers which protected foreign interests and enterprises, and by their safeguards and special powers prevented us from finding scope for growth. Our financial policy was laid down in the interests of the City of London. Our revenues were largely mortgaged for British interests and the services were protected. This was the provincial autonomy we received and though popular ministers sat on the chairs of authority, all the apparatus of government was the old one, authoritarian and bureaucratic, looking with hostility at the innovations they did not approve, and often doing their utmost to hamper and obstruct. Worse even than this was the constant attempt to encourage fissiparous tendencies and the reactionary elements in the country, so as to weaken the very government they claimed to serve.

Yet the provincial governments did much good work and relieved somewhat the burdens on the masses. But even their difficulties grew and it became obvious that the problems of India could not be solved unless real power came into the hands of the people. An autocratic and irresponsible government might by force of arms hold a country and govern it. A popular and responsible government could do so only if it had real power and with the consent of the people. Any intermediate stage was unstable and unable to survive for long, for responsibility was divorced from power.

So, at the Tripuri Congress, the national demand was put forward as the inevitable and urgent development of past events.[2] Provincial autonomy, such as it was, had exhausted itself and must give place to a constitution of India's making—the charter of Indian independence. This was no new demand for the Congress had asked for a constituent assembly for many years. The Congress had never accepted the Act of 1935. The very first resolution of the provincial assemblies had been to emphasise this non-acceptance and demand a constituent assembly. So this was no new demand but it had urgency attached to it now. There was no other way except that of conflict.

The war came upsetting everything and forcing us to think on novel lines. The existing order in India became utterly inadequate and impossible of continuance. The choice lay between going forward to independence and free nationhood or going back to a shadow of

2. See Selected Works, Vol. 9, pp. 521–522.

he might have been less eager to pay a tribute to him. Some days ago Lord Zetland had referred in terms of patronising condescension to the Congress statement, and we had heard the old voice of British imperialism, hard and metallic to the ear. Foolishly many of us had imagined that Lord Zetland was of the old guard and did not represent the spirit of the times and the new temper of the British people. Vainly we had expected more wisdom from others. But we were mistaken. The old imperialist guard holds the citadel in England and in India and its true authentic voice is that of Lord Zetland.

It is well that we recognise this now and shape ourselves accordingly. In the days to come, with all their trials and difficulties, our minds will be at peace so far as the British Government is concerned. We shall know that between us and them there is nothing in common, no meeting ground, no compromise. And if the British people are truly represented by this government and accept its policy, then we follow difficult paths in war as well as peace. Lord Zetland and his government have put the final seal on this bill of divorce, and the gulf that separates us is wider than the many oceans that intervene between his country and ours.

What is the theme of Lord Zetland's speech, the main burden of his argument?[4] The root cause of difficulty in India is the conflict between various communities which will not agree in spite of Britain's best endeavours. We know this conflict to our sorrow and cost. But what has been Britain's part in it, what is her part now? During these generations of British rule has she composed our differences or sought always to aggravate them? Every student of Indian history knows how this policy of divide and rule has been followed persistently, and how the seeds of conflict and division have been cunningly sown. As the popular movement has grown and nationalism has become a force, the communal problem has ever been intensified by British policy. Separate electorates were the creation of the British, and favour was shown to this group or that to wean it away from the rising tide of nationalism. The Round Table Conferences were significant examples of the art of meeting a national demand by side-tracking it in favour of communal demands. Invite people, the known and the unknown, from all manner of odd groups, see to it that they are of the sort that cannot agree, give weightage to all the reactionary elements, and then proclaim to the world that Indians cannot agree among themselves.

4. Zetland in a statement on 18 October 1939 had said that communal antagonism was the root cause of all difficulties in the domain of constitution-building in India and advised the people of India to strive for an agreement among themselves.

This is the kind of round table conference to which we are again invited, or rather to which we might be invited "if at the end of the upheaval caused by the war, when circumstances may well differ markedly from what they are today, there is a desire on the part of those concerned of modifications of particular features of the plan", then, in such circumstances, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to enter into consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties and interests in India and with the Indian princes, etc. We can well imagine that at the end of the war circumstances will markedly differ from what they are today, perhaps more markedly than the Marquis of Zetland would approve of. But whatever these circumstances might be, we can assure him now with full confidence that we shall have no desire to be invited and that we do not want any "modifications of particular features of the plan", nor are we prepared for any consultations on the proposed basis, now or later. We shall have nothing to do with his round table conferences, and he is welcome to invite whom he wills to them. We recognise no right of the British Parliament or the British people to interfere with our affairs, and we speak to no one except in terms of the independence of India.

What was the Congress demand? The independence of India and the drawing up of India's constitution through a constituent assembly freely elected by her people. There was no claim for the Congress or for any community or group. If we believe in democracy, that was the only way. The minorities may legitimately ask for safeguards and protection. The Congress entirely agrees. Let us sit down and frame them. But that is no matter for the British Government or people. It is our concern.

Which minority, which group in India, can be or is opposed to this demand? The Muslim League stands for independence, the brave Sikhs will have nothing else, and so with others. It is true that there are individuals, hangers-on of imperialism or the possessors of special rights created by British imperialism, who fear a change. Is India's progress to be measured by the capacity to walk of the halt or the lame? Are we to wait till we have converted the feudal princes? That is what the R.T.C. means. It is the spiritual home of all that has ceased to count in the world and India. But we who breathe the vital spirit of new India and draw sustenance from her awakened masses, what place have we in this assemblage of ghosts and shades?

Lord Zetland and his colleagues have conceived a new interpretation of democracy. Before anything is done, everyone must agree, or else the British Government will sit here comfortably and carry off the spoils. It is some such urge, we suppose, that induces them to wage this war

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Lord Zetland and his colleagues have conceived a new interpretation of democracy. Before anything is done, everyone must agree, or else the British Government will sit here comfortably and carry off the spoils. It is some such urge, we suppose, that induces them to wage this war.

We are told that some members of the Muslim League consider the Viceroy's statement as a political triumph for the League and a defeat for the Congress. It may be a defeat for the Congress, though we do not think so. We welcome it and are convinced that out of it good will come and the country will pull itself out of the quagmire in which it has got caught. The removal of a vain illusion is no defeat.

But we hesitate to think that any member of the Muslim League, whatever his communal views may be, can consider an insult to India and her people as a triumph for himself and his organisation. The Muslim League has sworn by the independence of India. Can they forget their pledge and take pride in alliance with imperialism?

In any event our path is clear. We shall rid ourselves of our encumbrances and get ready for the journey. The experienced traveller, who has a long way to go, takes little luggage, so that his march may be swift. We shall go our way, and there shall be no turning back for us, no regrets.

36. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Wardha,
October 21, 1939

My dear Krishna,

I have just reached here for the Working Committee meeting. You will learn about our decision[2] long before this letter reaches you. That decision can only be of one kind. There is not the least doubt in any person's mind about it.

Yesterday in Allahabad I received your letters dated 26th September and 4th October. The former contained an account of your interview with Zetland. In view of developments I need not discuss this now. There really has never been quite so much unanimity in all Congress circles as today. Even in non-Congress circles the reaction to the Viceroy's statement has been strong.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. At its meeting on 22 and 23 October 1939, the Working Committee rejected the Viceregal statement as an unequivocal reiteration of the same old imperialistic policy and decided that under the circumstances the Committee could not give any support to Britain. So it called upon the Congress ministries to resign, but warned Congressmen against any hasty action.

Yesterday I received a cable from Bhandari about Indira's illness. I have cabled and written to him at some length. As a matter of fact I can decide nothing from here. The decision must be made at the other end in consultation with doctors and with Indira's concurrence. If, when she is better, she wants to return to India, she can do so whatever might have happened to some of us meanwhile. There will always be friends to look after her here.

I have sent £50 by cable to Bhandari for incidental expenses. Indu has got some money and can draw on my account there. Further, she can get remittances from her bankers in India whenever she asks for them. So long as I am available I can always help. But even if I am not there, every arrangement can be made without me.

Edward Thompson is coming here tomorrow evening.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

37. Cable to V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

25/10/39

All Congress circles consider that the only course is a complete rejection of the Viceroy's proposals. Gandhiji's condemnation is particularly drastic. Other groups have also condemned it except for some unimportant individuals. Muslim League attitude is uncertain but younger Leaguers are in favour of rejection. Conflict seems inevitable and is apparently desired by the Government of India. No common ground is left after the Viceroy's statement and Zetland's speech. I am going to Wardha.

Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

38. Be Ready[1]

Many thoughts come crowding into my mind and I do not find it easy to give expression to them all. The map of the world is changing rapidly. Europe is shaking under the impact of a terrible war. The war has not begun in earnest yet, though the artillery are spitting fire and bombs are being showered. But India is already feeling the vibration. The reaction is inevitable. The world is knit into one unit by science but it is divided by two forces. These forces sweep the entire humanity. One force is the exploiting clique. The other is the exploited fraternity. India belongs to the latter. Like other nations and other people, India and Indians are struggling to be free.

The curtain is about to be rung down on one act and we are looking ahead with eager expectancy to see what the next act has to reveal. A funny show is going on in Bombay and elsewhere. That show will close down tomorrow. The Congress ministers will be leaving their posts and surrendering their responsibilities.

I have often drawn attention to world problems from the same platform. Today there is a conflagration in foreign lands and we are feeling the heat of it here.

The British Government have been put to the test and have failed. It seems that they have not learnt any lesson from the two years of co-operation with the Congress; nor have they learnt any lesson from the war. The Congress asked them a simple question and an answer has been vouchsafed.

It is the same old voice of imperialism, the same words and the same old gestures. Now India is going to show that hers is also the same old soul, athirst for liberty, and the same old roar. If for a short period, our ministers have sat on gilded chairs and cooperated with the government it does not mean that we have forgotten our aspirations or surrendered our desire to move with the moving world.

There are some young men here who feel that the Congress has been caught in a bog. They wonder why the march has not begun when the objective is known and the path is clear. But the elders have held back because there must be an opportunity and a preparedness. That opportunity has come now.

1. Speech at Bombay, 26 October 1939. From *The Bombay Chronicle* and *Free Press Journal*, 27 October 1939.

WITH RABINDRANATH TAGORE, 1939

WARDHA, OCTOBER 1939

What then should we do? If we were free, the question would have been different. Even then there would have been no reason why we should spill our blood and spend our energy in a war whose aims we did not know. Why should we die that the British Empire may live?

The war undoubtedly is an imperialist war. But it is also true that it is a war which is being waged to stop aggression in Europe. The logic of the position is simple. Britain professes to be fighting for Poland—to be precise, for Poland's independence—for the protection of the principle of democracy and universal peace. Poland has been destroyed and razed to the ground and Britain could do nothing to stop it. The war is now going on in a different sector. But it is bound to develop. It is bound to spread and cross boundaries and frontiers.

The Congress Working Committee has made its decision. It has called upon Britain to declare her aims—whether she is convinced that there is no place for imperialism and fascism and if so whether she will declare independence for India—which means the application of the same principle to our country as she has declared from the housetops that she is fighting for in Europe.

But what is the answer of the British Government? It is not surprising nor shocking, but is a clear indication of the British mind. It provides a test for Britain's sincerity, which I have never discovered! It proves the hollowness of British pretensions. A statement has been hurled at India through the Viceroy, the language and implied meaning of which are altogether familiar to Congressmen.

But Congressmen do not propose to rest content with it. We never believed that Swaraj would be given by Britain in a fit of generosity or in a spirit of philanthropy. Congress has always known its methods; it is always willing to adopt these methods. Congress has never relied on other people's kindness; it relies on its own strength.

Britain now seeks to put the so-called communal differences and minority grievances as the excuse for not coming out with a clear declaration of what the Congress demands. If there are communal differences, they are the creation of Britain herself. If there are minority grievances, it is not Britain's business to speak about them. The Indian people are asking for a constitution to be drafted and adopted by ourselves, so that we can embody in it all that is good and necessary for the various interests and communities of Hindustan. Every community and all interests will have a proper say in such a constitution. A constituent assembly means that.

Congress never asked Britain to settle the details of India's constitution. Congress wants only a clear declaration by Britain of her aims and objectives in India. The details, Indians can and should settle by

themselves. India will create for herself a constitution, where there will be no exploitation of man by man; wherein there cannot be any scope for tyranny by the majority of the minorities.

When the Congress claims to be a representative body, it does not mean that every man in the country is a Congress member. What it does mean is that its demands are presented from the point of view of the whole nation and not from the point of view of any community. This it cannot do even if the Congress has only ten members.

I am greatly pained to note the attitude of the Muslim League.[2] That is not commendable. If once it is agreed that Muslims want freedom, there is no room for bickerings and bargains until that freedom is achieved. I would like the Muslims to ask Mr. Jinnah, whether a Muslim can be a slave, or a slave can be a Muslim?

The hour of trial is drawing near. Let our district and primary Congress committees, our disciplined volunteers and our millions of Congressmen be ready to respond to the call when it comes.

2. The All India Muslim League meeting at Delhi on 22 October 1939 did not reject the Viceroy's declaration but asked for further discussion and clarifications, expressed satisfaction that the government had emphatically repudiated the unfounded claim of the Congress that they alone represented all India and believed that the government had recognized the fact that the Muslim League alone truly represented the Muslims of India.

39. The Unchanging Nature of Imperialism[1]

Twenty years ago there was another Great War. Millions were killed in that war. People spoke of the Kaiser then as they speak of Hitler now. But it is not a question of individuals. It is a conflict between rival imperialisms. The imperial powers have divided up the surface of the earth. Yet their hunger is not assuaged and so they have clashed.

Hitler has proved a menace to the independence of neighbouring nations. Hitler's career of aggression succeeded partly because of the attitude of Britain herself. The culminating act of his career has come with the overrunning of Poland.

1. Speech at Bombay, 27 October 1939. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 28 October 1939.

In this crisis India and the Congress are faced with a difficult problem. We do not want to say or do anything which will in any way help Hitler, nor do we want to strengthen the hands of British imperialism. So the Congress has declared its opposition to Hitler and at the same time has called upon the British Government to make its attitude towards India clear. Of course, the Congress knows what answer it can expect from the British Government. Still we do not want the world to misunderstand our positon or to alienate the sympathy of friends in England, America and elsewhere who sympathise with India's cause.

The declaration of the Viceroy and the speech of Lord Zetland have made one thing clear and that is British imperialism has not changed in any way. So the Working Committee has decided to take a big step forward and that is to withdraw the Congress ministries. It does not mean that we will not take any other steps. Even this first step is a big act of noncooperation and we will take other steps after mature consideration.

Long-winded speeches have been made in the course of the debate in the House of Commons. Many sweet words have been uttered by Sir Samuel Hoare[2] and many affectionate appeals made to induce the Congress to desist from the action it is taking. Secondly, it has also been stated that behind the declarations of the British Government is a clear intention to do good to India. Thirdly, there is a threat that the government intends to take firm action in case any direct action is begun.

I feel that there is nothing in the speech of Sir Samuel Hoare which calls for any revision of the Congress attitude. The words are sweet; the tone is pleasant; but it is the same old voice of imperialism, reciting the same old story. India's answer, too, shall be the same. As long as the British Government does not shed its imperialism and help to build up a new order based on freedom and democracy there is no possibility of cooperation between the Congress and the British Government.

The Congress has extended its hand of friendship and has offered to help in the fight for the general welfare of the world. But that offer

2. Sir Samuel Hoare, replying to a debate on India in the House of Commons on 26 October 1939, said: "...Dominion Status is not a prize given to a deserving community but is a recognition of the facts that actually exist. As soon as these facts exist in India...and sooner the better, the aim of our policy will be achieved. The difficulties in the way...are inherent in the many divisions between classes and communities. It must be the aim of the Indians themselves to remove these...just as it should be our aim to help the Indians in their task."

has not been accepted. It is impossible for India to pour out her men and money into a struggle which will not result in her complete emancipation from her shackles.

I appeal to you to end your small differences and prepare for the big struggle ahead. Do not fritter away your energies but carry on your allotted tasks with discipline and unity.

40. Clearing the Decks[1]

During the last six weeks much has happened in India. Soon after the outbreak of the war various individuals, high and not so high, expressed their opinions on Nazi aggression and there was widespread condemnation of it. There was also considerable sympathy for the Polish people in their sad plight. Mahatma Gandhi spoke forcibly[2] and other leaders condemned Nazi aggression. It is evident that the British authorities were greatly relieved by these various statements and came to the conclusion that India could be taken for granted in anything they did in connection with the war or in this country. They did not realise that our condemnation of Nazism and aggression in Poland had nothing to do with our established policy of opposition to imperialism and the latter perforce continued. They did not appreciate that Congressmen have developed a certain discipline among themselves and, in courtesy to their colleagues and in deference to their organisation, they refrain from giving pointed expression to their individual views on vital matters which involve action. They forgot that we have cultivated a habit of being moderate in language but strong in any action that we might decide upon. In particular, they have not, in spite of a quarter of a century's experience, understood that behind the friendliness and courteous approach of Gandhiji, there is the man of steel who does not bend on any vital matter affecting India's freedom.

1. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 31 October 1939. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 212–217. Also in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 343-346.
2. On 5 September 1939, Mahatma Gandhi said: "It almost seems as if Herr Hitler knows no God but brute force. It is in the midst of this catastrophe without parallel that the Congressmen and all other responsible Indians, individually and collectively, have to decide what part India is to play in this terrible drama."

Then came the Congress Working Committee's statement of September 14th crystallising nationalist opinion and giving clear expression to it. That statement immediately evoked a remarkable response in India. What innumerable people had been feeling vaguely in their minds and hearts was clarified and put down in stately language. Doubts were resolved, many a perplexity vanished, for it seemed that the people of India had found voice and pointed to the world the inevitable path which had to be followed if our present-day problems were to be solved. And the world listened in spite of attempts of censors and the like to suppress this remarkable appeal. The progressives in England hailed it; in democratic America it received considerable publicity; even in war-ridden Europe it evoked a response. Peoples of suppressed and subject nations saw in it a charter for the oppressed. It was in tune with the spirit of the times and whether governments listen to it today or not, they will have to pay heed to it before long.

All that has happened since then has been a logical development of that invitation of the Congress Working Committee for a clarification of war aims. Lord Zetland's speech, the A.I.C.C. meeting, the Viceroy's statement, the Muslim League's resolutions, the House of Commons' debate, and now the war resolutions in the provincial assemblies and the inevitable resignations of the Congress ministries,[3] have all followed each other in ordered sequence, throwing a flood of light on the Indian scene.

What does this light show us? First of all, the high statesmanship and wisdom of the Congress which stands justified today before India and the world. Holding to its ideals and its previous declarations, it has applied them to changing and difficult circumstances, and thus demonstrated that it has the capacity to be idealistic and practical at the same time. The freedom of India, for which it stands, has been woven into the larger picture of world freedom and war and peace aims, and a practical solution offered for the world's ills.

Secondly, the true nature of this war has become evident. The reply of the British Government to the Congress shows, beyond a doubt, that they are moved now, as before, by a desire to preserve their imperialist interests. This is no democratic war in which the forces of democracy are ranged on one side against the forces of Nazism and reaction on the other. True, there are some democratic forces on the side of the Allies, but the governments that control the destinies of England and France

3. In each of the Congress provinces, except Assam, the assembly passed a resolution similar to that of the 14 September resolution. Thereafter all the ministries resigned one by one.

are the old discredited governments which must bear responsibility for the present unhappy state of Europe. We cannot forget Munich and Spain. Today the French Government is a citadel of reaction, and need we say more about the British Government than that Mr. Neville Chamberlain is still the Prime Minister? We knew all this. And yet it was necessary that all doubt should be removed from the minds of the people and the reality should emerge out of the fog of war.

That reality has come and it is not beautiful to look at, and not all the fine phrasing of Sir Samuel Hoare can rejuvenate the aged and the decrepit. Imperialism is a tottering structure today, wholly out of place in modern conditions, but the British ruling class still think in its terms and seek to preserve it. They are even afraid to make a clear declaration about India's freedom. That imperialism is not in love with the minorities or even the princes (though it utilises both to serve its main purpose); it is mainly concerned with British financial and other vested interests in India.

It is an axiom of Indian politics that there can be no compromise between imperialism and Indian nationalism and freedom. Whatever the phase of our struggle that hostility has continued. The Congress offer was that imperialism should be ended, the independence of India recognised, and thus this age-long hostility should give place to friendship and cooperation. That offer has been rejected and we go our separate ways till fate or circumstance unites them again.

Thirdly, the position of the Muslim League has been cleared up beyond any possibility of misunderstanding. We had welcomed the League's acceptance of independence as its objective three years ago and the widening of the basis of its membership. But we were soon to realise that the old politically reactionary outlook held the field still. Under cover of communal propaganda the Muslim masses were prevented from realising this. We are not for the moment discussing the communal demands of the League. They may be right or wrong. It is conceivable for a person to be a communalist and yet an ardent believer in political freedom, though at some stage or other a conflict will arise between these two loyalties. The Congress has often erred in the petty issues of politics, but it has always shown an unerring instinct whenever a major issue arose. The League, on the other hand, has a remarkable record of being wrong on the major issues, though it may occasionally be right on some trivial matter.

It is a tragedy that at this supreme crisis in our national history, the League should have sided with full-blooded reaction. We do not believe that many of its own members agree with this attitude. We are certain that the Muslim masses are firm adherents of Indian freedom.

In some communal matters the League may represent them, but it certainly does not do so in matters political.

The curtain falls. The Congress ministries go out. In all this flood of oratory in the U.P. Assembly there was the background of conflict between progress and reaction. The enthusiasm at the end gave us a glimpse of the true feeling of the U.P. and of the temper of its people. We have cleared the decks and await the action that may be demanded of us.

41. The Congress Leaves Office[1]

One by one the Congress ministries resign and retire from office and provincial autonomy functions no more. The Act of 1935 fades away and the country reverts to the autocratic or bureaucratic rule of the Indian Civil Service. Thus ends an experiment begun two and a half years ago. History will judge of this experiment and of the role that the Congress ministries have played. But whatever that judgment might be, we for our part are convinced that the acceptance of office, with all its difficulties and pitfalls, was a necessary preliminary to the larger freedom to come. It was necessary not because a training was required in the art of government, but because it laid bare many of the essential problems to be faced. It showed us our own failings as well as the failings of others. It demonstrated how difficult, if not impossible, it was for the present structure of government, with its steel-frame—the I.C.S.—to deal with our problems; how we were hedged and circumscribed in every way, and how even the best-laid schemes of popular ministers could be shelved or hung up by unimaginative or hostile subordinates. Burn your files, was the advice of Mahatma Gandhi[2] to the ministers, and in that

1. Allahabad, 31 October, 1939. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 1 November 1939.
2. An official of the Bombay Government had complained that there was no rest under the Congress ministry and that he did not know what to do with the ever-increasing pile of files. Mahatma Gandhi had promptly advised him to "burn them."

lay great wisdom. Files are perhaps necessary accompaniments to any ordered work, but a government which lives and thinks in files and cannot get out of this slow routine, is no fit and proper government for a country eager and anxious for innumerable changes and fast moving reforms in all directions. Gandhiji gave expression in his pregnant phrase to the conviction that the old method of government, even with popular ministers stuck in somewhere, was an anachronism today.

The possibilities of provincial autonomy had long been exhausted, and it was evident to any close observer, even before the war, that the *status quo* could not continue for long. There had to be either going forward or going back. Still, somehow, even these unstable conditions were allowed to continue for there was a reluctance to precipitate a conflict. But the shock of war came to upset the structure.

The Congress ministries go and we would fain hope that they will not come back on the old conditions. There is no going back for any country today, and certainly not for India. Those who think that the new order changes giving place to old will find the error of their thought before many moons have waxed and waned. Monday's scene in the U.P. Assembly, when the long debate ended and the war resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority, was a memorable one.[3] It showed, as not even the arguments had done, the spirit of the assembly, and the true significance of the ministerial resignations. The ministers did not resign because they were defeated. That resignation was their triumph and the triumph of the Congress and as such it was treated by the members. Surely, seldom could such a scene of enthusiasm have been witnessed in any assembly. The Congress had freed itself from the trammels of office and from the bondage of the Act of 1935. It breathed freely again and stretched out its limbs in happy freedom. The journey may be a difficult and arduous one, but we had cut our shackles and could go swiftly forward.

What has been the main achievement of the Congress ministries? There have been many critics of them and we ourselves are not enamoured of all they have done or the manner of doing it. But a day will come when even the bitterest critic will recognise the signal service the Congress ministries rendered to the country in spite of innumerable

3. On 30 October 1939, the U.P. Assembly passed by 127 votes to 2, the Congress ministry's resolution on war. It voiced the feelings of regret which the Viceroy's statement of 17 October had produced in the minds of the Indian people. It also regretted that the British Government had made India a participant in the war without popular consent and had, in complete disregard of Indian opinion, passed laws and adopted measures curtailing the powers of the provincial governments.

difficulties and often the most unfair criticism. We are not going to appraise or criticise their work now. But whether they have failed in this matter or that, they have set a high standard of integrity, of devoted work and, we say in spite of criticism to the contrary, of impartial administration. The realisation of all this will come more fully in the days to come.

But most of all, people will realise what civil liberties they have enjoyed under the Congress ministries when they begin to lose them, as they soon will. For the establishment and maintenance of civil liberties has been the outstanding achievement of these ministries, many indeed there are who say that they went too far in this direction.

In the United Provinces we had the good fortune to have as Prime Minister a man of outstanding character and ability, and we, in common with innumerable others, would like to pay our tribute of respect and admiration to him.[4] He was and is the perfect gentleman, loved by his colleagues and respected by his opponents. Illness has long pursued him. That is the price he is paying for his great and devoted services to the people of his province. We trust that he will triumph over this illness soon for the country and his province want his services in the difficult days to come.

It was a moving sight to see some of the ministers bidding farewell to their office staff. Many of them were in tears and even the humble *chaprasis* wept as if something they had valued greatly was going out of their lives.

4. Govind Ballabh Pant.

42. To Lord Linlithgow[1]

November 3, 1939

Dear Lord Linlithgow,

I thank you for your letter of November 2nd embodying in concrete form the proposition which you had placed before us when we saw you

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India. Rajendra Prasad's letter to Linlithgow was drafted by Jawaharlal. The corrections made by Mahatma Gandhi are shown in square brackets. Jawaharlal's suggested lines which were deleted are in round brackets.

on November 1st.[2] My colleagues and I have given our earnest consideration to it. We have had also the advantage of full talks with Mr. M.A. Jinnah but we find ourselves unable to vary the answer we gave you during the interview. (We are happy to find that there is a substantial measure of agreement between us in regard to the approach to the communal question with a view to removing all causes of friction and misunderstanding between the various communities. We hope to continue these talks to find a satisfactory solution of communal problems.) [At the outset I would like to say that both Gandhiji and I missed at the interview any reference to the main and moral issue raised by the Congress about clarification of war aims without which it was impossible for the Congress to consider any subsidiary proposal.]

The present crisis has arisen owing to the outbreak of the war in Europe and the action of the British Government in declaring India a belligerent country without the consent of the Indian people. This crisis is entirely political and is not related to the communal issue in India. It raises vital questions in regard to the war aims of the British Government and the position of India in relation to them. The Congress Working Committee, as you are aware, issued a lengthy statement on September 14th 1939, in which they invited the British Government to declare these war aims and, in particular, how these aims were going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. It was further stated that the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution through a constituent assembly, without external interferences, and should guide their own policy. On the 10th of October 1939, the All India Congress Committee approved of and endorsed this statement and stated that in the declaration to be made by the British Government, India must be declared an independent nation and present application should be given to this status to the largest possible extent. The Committee further added that Indian freedom must be based on democracy and unity and the full recognition and protection of the rights of all minorities.

Subsequent to this, the policy of the British Government was declared in the Viceregal statement, extracts from which you have been good enough to send me. This statement was considered by the Congress

2. Mahatma Gandhi, Jinnah and Rajendra Prasad met the Viceroy on 1 November 1939 to try to work out an arrangement in the provincial field as a prelude to cooperation at the centre. As per the Viceroy, it was the lack of agreement between the two major communities which prevented him going further than the suggestion for a consultative group. He added that any arrangement would be an *ad hoc* one for the duration of the war quite distinct from the much wider question of constitutional reform at the end of the war.

Working Committee soon after and the Committee expressed their opinion that it was unfortunate and wholly unsatisfactory. As a consequence of this, they felt compelled to declare that they were unable to give any support to Great Britain and to call upon the provincial governments, in provinces where the Congress is in a majority, to tender their resignations. In these provinces the provincial assemblies have passed and are about to pass resolutions repeating the Congress demand.

(May I venture to point out) [It is worthy of note] that the Viceregal declaration of British policy met with disapproval of the overwhelming body of opinion in India, even outside the Congress. (The Muslim League did not accept it and expressed its disagreement with it in many respects.) Subsequent statements made on behalf of the British Government in Parliament have not made any essential difference to the policy outlined in the Viceregal statement, and as you have rightly pointed out, that policy is still governed by the extracts from it that you have [kindly] sent us. I am afraid it is quite impossible for us to accept this policy or to consider any steps to further cooperation unless the policy of the British Government is made clear in a declaration on the lines suggested by the Congress. (As you are aware, some provincial governments have already resigned and others will be resigning soon.[3] In two provinces the Secretary of State has taken charge of the administration through the Governor.)

(As I have mentioned above) [It has pained us to find the communal question being dragged in, in this connection. It has clouded the main issue. It has been repeatedly said on behalf of the Congress that] it is our earnest desire to settle all points of communal controversy by agreement and we propose to continue our efforts to this end. But I would point out (to you) that this question does not in any respect come in the way of a declaration of Indian freedom as suggested above. Such a declaration applies to the whole of India and not to any particular community, and the constituent assembly which will frame India's constitution will be formed on the widest possible basis of franchise and by agreement in regard to communal representations. We are all agreed that there must be full protection of minority rights and interests and this protection should be by agreement between the parties concerned. [The British Government taking or sharing the burden has, in our opinion, made a settlement of the question much more difficult than it should have been. It should allay all real anxiety on the part of the

British Government when the Congress declares that it contemplates no constitution which does not carry with it the protection of real minorities to their satisfaction.]

It seems to us that a clear declaration of the kind suggested is an essential preliminary to any further consideration of the matter. I should like to add that recent developments in the European war have made it all the more necessary for a clear enunciation of war aims. (If such a declaration is made and it is considered satisfactory then we shall gladly discuss with you the other matters arising from it, so that effect should be given to it.) [If a satisfactory declaration is made, a discussion of the proposal made by Your Excellency may be appropriate and useful and we shall gladly discuss it with you.]

[It is perhaps unnecessary to state that Gandhiji is in full agreement with this letter. We propose to leave tomorrow evening for Wardha unless Your Excellency desires otherwise.]

43. The Standpoint of the Congress[1]

Some people used to make cynical comments on my references to the international situation in the course of my speeches and accuse me of thinking more of what was happening abroad than in our own country. But recent events must have convinced these critics that India's problem is indissolubly linked up with international problems. We cannot possibly divorce ourselves from the happenings in the international sphere which undoubtedly leave a deep mark in our country.

The entire map of the world will change in one or two years. We have perhaps never had such a revolutionary period before. The major war has not yet begun. What has happened during the last two months is a misnomer for a war. No doubt, dozens of ships have been sunk and many people killed.

The meagre news about the war received in India leaves us in doubt as to whether a war is actually going on. Without going into the propriety of the action taken by the different powers, the fact remains that

1. Speech at New Delhi, 4 November 1939. From *The Hindustan Times*, 5 November 1939.

Russia has achieved a victory in the present war without fighting. Another outstanding fact that has emerged from the last two months' events is that Herr Hitler's ambitions in eastern Europe, including the Balkan states, Bulgaria and Turkey have received a setback. An impregnable iron wall has been created in his way. In short, Herr Hitler has been defeated in eastern Europe without even a fight. Nobody can refute that patent fact.

Russia is still a dark horse. Nobody can say on which side she will align herself. Russia has had designs against Germany and England. She has explained her own sphere of influence. The entire map of Europe has changed and Russia is now dominating over the whole of Europe. The key to the situation in Europe has paradoxically passed into the hands of Russia and U.S.A., both neutral countries.

I cannot definitely say whether the war will continue for a very long time. There is tremendous fuss about an early peace. So far as I can foresee it will be a long-range war that will continue for two or three years, and if that comes true, then the changes it will produce will also be equally far-reaching.

There is a colossal increase in the burden of taxation in the countries engaged in the war. Even in England, which is a wealthy country, the burden is bound to tell. The expenditure on war per day is staggering. England is counting on loans from America. It is true that America will be prepared to help Britain with war material, as there is great resentment against Hitlerism in the U.S.A. Yet I do not agree that the new legislation passed by the U.S. Congress will materially improve Britain's position.[2] The middle classes in Britain are feeling the burden.

The position in Germany is well-nigh precarious, as it has not the same resources which England possesses. Moreover, Germany's economic position will be considerably weakened by the blockade. There is shortage of currency as all the wealth of the country has been exhausted in producing war weapons.[3] That, however, does not mean that Germany will not fight or has not the endurance for a year's war. I

2. The United States Neutrality Act of 4 November 1939, while allowing the Allies access to United States goods on cash-and-carry basis, forbade U.S. ships from proceeding to France, Britain, Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, south of Bergen.
3. The British Government had also suffered from the same delusion. The experts at the ministry of economic warfare made confident assurances that Germany's military machinery would come to a standstill from lack of oil and other raw materials. Chamberlain claimed that the blockade was the main weapon. In fact, the German standard of living in 1939 was higher than ever before. The decrease in the production of civilian goods was less than that of the British until the last stages of the war.

want to drive home the fact that the economic warfare will produce more tangible results than the military warfare. The whole economic and social structure of the world will undergo revolutionary changes that will make it beyond recognition. The present imperialist domination also cannot stand the strain of the war. British imperialism cannot remain unaffected by the war. They have to consider the situation in India in connection with these revolutionary changes ahead.

Various resolutions have been passed by the Congress during the last twelve years in order to define our attitude in the event of war. These resolutions made it abundantly clear that the Congress would not be a party to an imperialist war. We have also made our position clear in regard to Hitlerism. Our sympathies are not with Hitler. We deem Hitlerism as worse than British and French imperialism. In fact, Hitler created conditions in Germany similar to those prevailing in British and French possessions and it can well be said that the conditions in India will be worse under Hitler's regime. In short, Hitlerism is a thoroughly rotten and tyrannical creed. We in India have expressed our determination to oppose it. Our complaint is that Hitlerism received strength from British imperialism. The Munich betrayal is a historical fact. The betrayal of Czechoslovakia, Spain and Abyssinia is also there. It is deplorable that India was declared a belligerent country without consulting her people. That has created a great deal of resentment which makes it easy for us to take a quick decision, yet we do not want to do anything to help Hitler. At the same time we cannot help British imperialism.

Under these circumstances, we decided to give an opportunity to the other party to clarify its war aims. We put certain questions to them regarding the vague generalizations in which they have indulged. We asked them whether they were really fighting for democracy and freedom and whether they were prepared to liquidate their imperialism. We wanted a declaration from Britain that India is a free country. We also insisted on giving effect to that declaration in so far as it was practicable within the framework of the present constitution. The Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India have made speeches but they have evaded our questions. They have made no mention of democracy, freedom and the right of self-determination. They repeated the declaration that was made twenty years ago. It is an absurd reply. The questions raised by us were fundamental. I am prepared to concede that there are people in England and France who really want to do justice to India, but they do not have much influence with their governments.

The reply to the Congress questions has proved that the present war is also an imperialist war like the last war of 1914. The Working

Committee has decided to call upon the Congress ministries to resign as we cannot help in the prosecution of war and today provincial autonomy has ended in the Congress provinces.

The resignation of the ministries is a great step towards noncooperation in the prosecution of war and its importance should not be underrated. We cannot lightly cry halt to the experiment of the last two and a half years. It will have far-reaching effects and the country must be prepared for all eventualities.

The fissiparous tendencies in the Congress are to be deprecated. A united, disciplined and fully organized Congress alone can fight the government. The small groups in the Congress cannot fight the government. We must unite at this critical juncture in India's history through which we are passing. Some of our short-sighted people may do more to weaken the Congress than our opponents. I am against party action. On the other hand, I am for waiting further to see how the situation develops as in that case we will be in a position to take advantage of the new changes.

There are tremendous things ahead. It is quite possible that we might have to embark on a large-scale campaign of civil disobedience. We should be prepared, therefore, for all eventualities.

There was nothing to hide from you in the talks that the Congress leaders had with the Viceroy and Mr. Jinnah, yet there are obvious difficulties in giving out a detailed account of it. I would, however, like to make it clear that the question discussed with the Viceroy and with Mr. Jinnah was fundamentally a political question. The Congress demand that India should be declared an independent country has nothing to do with the communal question. The Congress does not demand for itself exclusively the right to frame India's constitution. The constituent assembly we want will be elected on the basis of adult suffrage. If the Congress retains the confidence of the people then the people will elect them. The demand is made on behalf of all communities and people of India. There is no question of the distribution of spoils. The question can rightly be raised as to how the proposed constituent assembly is to be convened and how the fear of the suppression of minorities by a majority is to be removed, but no Indian, who does not fear independence, can help supporting the demand for convening such an assembly. The question as to how minorities are to be represented in such a body can be raised. The Muslim League has complete independence for its objective and unless it is abandoned, it cannot but associate itself with such a demand. The League has every right to claim that Muslims' rights must be effectively safeguarded.

I agree with Maulana Nuruddin[4] that Lord Zetland's statement is an undignified one. The very basis of our movement will go, if we accept that statement.

There was a time when the Congress was composed of a handful of delegates, but even then it used to speak on behalf of the country. The Congress is now a powerful organization which has lakhs of people on its rolls and millions among its sympathizers. It would be absurd to suggest that the Congress represents every Indian. It cannot obviously represent those who are opposed to it. It has no communal claims to make. It has always functioned on a broad basis of nationalism. It is quite possible that at times the number of Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs is small, but it represents them. So far as the communal demands are concerned, the Hindu Mahasabha is there which represents, to a large extent, the Hindus. It cannot and does not speak on behalf of the whole country. The portals of the Congress are open to all. The statement of Lord Zetland militates against those fundamentals.

There is no communal issue in the present demand for a declaration from the British Government. The government's reply betrays the same old imperialist voice. They have made an ingenious attempt to give it a communal colour. I do not, however, deny the existence of the communal problem which is quite difficult. We have to solve it and will solve it.

The real intentions of the British Government will be known when one notices the British being bracketed with minorities, vested interests and the princes whose interests are to be safeguarded. It only means giving the key of progress to the British Government. Freedom will be a meaningless thing without economic independence. Most of the princes are the creation of British imperialism and depend upon the government for their existence. It is possible that in a few states the people might tolerate their rulers with certain adjustments, but that is primarily their problem.

Lord Salisbury has stated that the interests of the primitive tribes should be safeguarded.[5] We can very well understand the sympathies

4. Maulana Nuruddin Behari, president of the Delhi District Congress Committee, who presided over the meeting, had been highly critical of Lord Zetland's speech in the House of Lords that "Hindus as represented by the Congress and Muslims as represented by the Muslim League have been invited by the Viceroy to interview him."

5. On 2 November 1939, Lord Salisbury had said in the House of Lords: "What did the noble Viscount mean by Dominion Status, what would become of the safeguards? What would we do about the princes, the primitive tribes, the scheduled castes and the minorities?"

of His Lordshisp with these tribes. So far as the minority problems are concerned, I make it plain that all legitimate rights of the minorities will be fully safeguarded with statutory safeguards by a constituent assembly with the consent of the minorities concerned.

I have played a considerable part in bringing the demand for a constituent assembly to the forefront during the last five years. I recall that when a resolution on the subject was put through in the provincial assemblies, the representatives of the Muslim League had sponsored amendments seeking to clarify that the rights of minorities would be safeguarded. In some provinces these amendments were accepted and in others the Congress premiers gave the necessary assurance. The communal question does not arise at all. The Congress President's reply to the Viceroy which will be published in a few days' time will make it abundantly clear.

During my talks with Mr. Jinnah, no such difficulty as pointed above was felt. I told Mr. Jinnah that we were prepared to discuss all outstanding communal questions and decide them once for all. There are small things which create a lot of bitterness and heart-burning. The first thing that deserved our attention is the constitutional question. Consequently, we postponed our talks for a solution of the communal differences and they will be resumed in a few days. We had talks on the constitutional issue. We were agreed on many things. There were differences also, but they had nothing to do with the communal question. There was a slight difference of approach. At first, we had a hope of sending a joint reply on behalf of the Congress and the League.[6] The publication of these replies would show where we stand in our relations. We should not say anything that might increase the bitterness. We have a right to disagree with each other and criticize each other but we should not attribute motives. Today Mahatmaji has further elucidated the Congress position in his interview with the Viceroy. I cannot say what would be the outcome, but we should be prepared for the worst lest it should be said that we were caught napping.

The Congress Working Committee's statement has received tremendous publicity in America and Europe and it has put new life in the hearts of the oppressed and enslaved peoples of the world who consider it a charter of liberty. I hope that the present war will spell the end of imperialism. It is not the case of a wish fathering the thought. The conviction is hardening on me that the present is an imperialist war, and great forces are rising which I think will work for India's freedom.

6. See *post*, section 5, item 5.

44. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

November 6, 1939

My dear Krishna,

...The recent developments in Delhi will make it perfectly clear that what the Congress wants is not a couple of places on the Viceroy's council. We have refused to consider all such proposals unless a full declaration as desired is made. Secondly, that there is power and not merely responsibility.

The situation is rather obscure but no immediate conflict seems to be likely. Our position is one of noncooperation but have not as yet thought of anything more. That is likely to continue unless some aggressive action is taken by the government.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

45. To Roger Baldwin[1]

Allahabad
November 6, 1939

My dear Roger,

I have just received your letter of October 12th. I am glad you like my book on history, but do not call it scholarly because it is not so.

There is some chance of my *Autobiography* appearing in American garb.[2] The John Day Company propose to bring it out provided it is abridged somewhat and brought up to date. I have undertaken to do this, subject to some reservation. But it is difficult to say what one will do or can do in this changing world.

India though far from the theatre of war is getting into troubled waters. I wonder if you saw our invitation to the British Government to define their aims in particular in regard to imperialism and India.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. First published in 1941 under the title *Toward Freedom*.

Their reply being totally unsatisfactory we have told them that we cannot associate ourselves with their policy or activities and the Congress governments in various provinces have resigned. This may lead to all manner of consequences, pleasant and unpleasant. Probably you will get only the most meagre news but perhaps you might be able to fill in the details. You might be able to get more news of India from the India League, 165 Strand, London S.W. 2. In these days of war-time censorship one has to depend greatly on one's imagination.

I paid a brief visit to China in August last but had to hurry back after only a fortnight because of the European war. Still it was worthwhile going there and I was impressed by the Chinese effort.

With all good wishes,

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

46. To Ralph Harlow[1]

November 6, 1939

Dear Comrade Harlow,

Thank you for your letter of September 15th which I have just received.[2] I am glad you have received my book on history. I am afraid it is very superficial. What else can one expect from a history book written in prison.

As elsewhere, we are having a very difficult time here and all manner of conflicts appear to be likely. I wonder if you saw a statement issued by the Congress on September 14th asking for a clarification of war aims from the British Government. This clarification is not forthcoming and instead it has been made clear to us that the old imperialism still flourishes. As a result of this we have expressed our dissociation from the British policy and the Congress provincial governments have resigned from office, although they had big majorities behind them. What the future will bring, I do not know. But events may march rapidly here.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Ralph Harlow, Professor of Religion and Biblical Literature, Smith's College, Massachusetts, had written that he had just returned from Europe, and asked if there was anything he could do for India or Jawaharlal.

It is difficult to communicate with America during this war period and letters take a long time. I hope you will keep in touch with events in India.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

47. The Resignation of the Congress Ministries[1]

The original statement of the Congress Working Committee, which invited the British Government to state their war aims, has been appreciated all over the world because similar questions are in the minds of the people of other countries also. The reply which the Congress has received to its questions is worthless and it shows that the British Government is going on its old ways. The Congress has given a reply and thereafter the Congress ministries have resigned and other serious steps are to follow; what they will be it is difficult to say. The talks that have been going on are closed, but at the same time talks from the other side continue. From the Congress side there is no particular desire to close the door for further negotiations, while we are proceeding with other things. The Congress tongue has always been mild. The Congress is prepared to meet everybody but with our mildness there is also iron determination, for only strong men can be calm. It has been the policy of the Congress during the last twenty years to keep the door of negotiations for settlement always open. We have given the last opportunity for settlement, but if necessary we will have to revive the struggle. The British Government knows well that whatever the Congress is doing is not paltry and that there are great ideas behind it and one good thing done is the resignation of the ministries.

The resignation of the ministries at the present juncture is a great proof of noncooperation, the results of which will be grave and varied. Having taken that step, it is difficult to check it until the British Government changes its policy or different things happen in India. When the Congress Working Committee asked the question about war aims, we did not expect anything from Mr. Chamberlain, under whom no

1. Speech at Allahabad, 7 November 1939. From *The Leader*, 9 November 1939.

country can have any freedom, not even his own country. The right answer to the questions of the Working Committee would have meant a change in the methods of the British Government and the end of imperialism. I do not find any difference between the 1914 and the present-day imperialisms.

Be prepared for all eventualities. It is very necessary to maintain rigorous discipline in the Congress ranks. It is in the interest of discipline that the Working Committee has stressed that no individual or group should start civil disobedience.

Mahatma Gandhi is always available for advice and guidance although he is not a four-anna member of the Congress. He has been taking very great interest in the Congress activities since the present crisis and his writings[2] show that he is prepared to take up even the leadership of the struggle to be revived. That is a matter for great pleasure because a struggle under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership will be very powerful. But the condition precedent to his acceptance of the leadership will be rigid adherence by the Congressmen to his method and principles. Congressmen must follow faithfully the method of nonviolence for any step to the contrary by any group or party will be harmful to the satyagraha movement.

Poland had a large army; yet it was destroyed in two or three weeks, without even its army getting a chance to fight. I cannot say that if Poland had adopted the weapon of satyagraha it would have been saved; but I am sure if it had done so, instead of spending billions on the army and aeroplanes, it would not have been reduced to the present state of ruin. The same can be said of Czechoslovakia and other countries, destroyed despite their great armies. Anybody who thinks of blowing up a few bridges or cutting telegraph wires is mistaken in thinking that he can do anything. Hence if not on the grounds of principle, on the mere grounds of expediency it is necessary that we should follow the method of nonviolence. Anything, even shouting of slogans, which attempts to create a sense of violence is to be deprecated.

2. In *The Next Step*, dated 4 November 1939, Mahatma Gandhi had written: "I have never felt the weight of responsibility as heavily as I do today in connection with the present impasse with the British Government. The Working Committee alone have the right to declare and regulate civil disobedience. I have undertaken to guide the Working Committee."

48. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

November 8, 1939

My dear Krishna,

I have your letter of the 31st October and 1st November. I am very glad to learn that Sir Stafford Cripps is likely to come to India. Of course he is welcome and you should tell him so. I am writing to him separately also. I do not know what the situation would be in another few weeks time. But even if we have to face a very abnormal condition, there will be people to welcome him. I suppose he will come by air. If so, Allahabad is a suitable landing place. My sister and I will be very glad to have him as our guest there for as long as he chooses to stay. It will be desirable for him to meet Gandhiji and some other people including Jinnah. We can make up a small tour for him. But India is a big country to be covered in three weeks. Wherever he goes there will be friends to meet him and to help him. I should like you to tell him that even if I am not available at the time he will be welcome in our house in Allahabad.

I have read your memorandum. There is nothing very new in it and the situation has developed since you wrote. Whitehall and India Office are under a delusion if they think that the Congress does not mean what it says.[2] We have developed a habit since Gandhiji's advent of using mild language and always talking about goodwill and the door being open. But it is surprising that the British Government should not know what lies behind this talk.

Speaking for the U.P., I can tell you that it is becoming increasingly difficult to hold our organisation in check. We are prepared for any contingency. Gandhiji is continually laying stress on discipline and nonviolence and says that he will not tolerate any civil disobedience unless this is formally decided upon. It is his way to talk about these things when his mind is preparing for a struggle. The only thing that worries him is what he considers violence in the air and the possibility of communal trouble at the instigation of the government. There is of course danger of this but the situation has improved greatly in regard to this since the Congress governments resigned.

It is quite certain that nothing that the Viceroy or British cabinet will do will induce the Congress to agree unless first of all a satisfactory

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. Krishna Menon had written : "Official circles here appear confident that Congress will come round and accept something on the basis of a look-in at the centre."

declaration of Indian independence is made. May I say that I do not like the use of the word self-government in this connection?

I think it is recognised all round that a major struggle is inevitable. There is, however, a desire on either side to avoid precipitating such a conflict and waiting till the other party takes the initiative. This does not injure us for the moment and gives us a little time to be prepared. Developments in the West are also likely to help us in deciding upon our next step. But there is always a possibility that continuing repression by the government might precipitate matters. We are meeting on the 19th November in Working Committee at Allahabad. At the end of the month we are having a big provincial conference for the U.P. at Muttra, over which I am presiding.[3]

I do not quite follow what you would like me to do in regard to the British Labour movement.[4] Certainly you can approach them with direct questions and try to obtain answers. In this connection you can use my name....

There is one matter on which I should like you to be clear. This is the communal issue. Though this is undoubtedly with us in a vague kind of way, it has nothing to do with the present crisis, except in so far as the Viceroy and the British Government have tried to foist it upon us. Apart from this, people realise that there are large sections of Muslims with us. There are the Congress Muslims of course, there is the Frontier Province; a province like Sind, which is predominantly Muslim, is neutral and is certainly not pro-Muslim League. Bengal and the Punjab are in a sense anti-Congress but they are not in any way part of the Muslim League. They stand apart but form a kind of coalition with Jinnah.

Then there are the Ahrars, a powerful Muslim organisation in north India which is anti-Muslim League and pro-Congress and which has declared itself against the war and in fact started C.D. in regard to it. So also the Jamiat-ul-Ulema,[5] the body of Muslim divines, as well as

3. See *post*, item 63.
4. Krishna Menon had written: "I would like to know your view whether it is advisable to put direct questions to the opposition parties and groups on the issue that we have raised and obtain answers. It has also been suggested to me that you as a socialist, and not the Congress, should address an inquiry direct to the British Labour movement and ask for an answer."
5. Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Hind was set up in 1919 by Maulana Mohammad-ul-Hasan and associated itself with Congress activities from 1930. In 1939 the Jamiat-ul-Ulema took the initiative of bringing all Muslim organizations together and forming a joint front against the League. The Azad Muslim Conference consisted of representatives of Ahrars, Momins, Shias, and the kisans of Bengal.

the Momins,[6] a big though somewhat non-political organisation consisting of Muslim weavers. Again there are the Shias, a sect of the Muslims forming about 20% of the Muslim population. Their political organisation, All India Shia Association, is itself against the Muslim League. I need not mention young Muslims who are often politically extreme. So you will see that it is quite absurd to talk of the Congress facing the Muslims. I am quite sure that if matters develop, large numbers of Muslims will be with the Congress. Lord Snell, I observe, has been making foolish remarks in the House of Lords.[7]

In your letter you hint at the possibility of coming to India. It is difficult for me to advise under the present circumstances. You must decide for yourself. But I should imagine for the present you might be more useful at the other end. You will be very welcome here of course whenever you come.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

6. Jamiat-ul-Momineens was founded in 1933 to help the economically and socially backward Muslim sect, the Momins.
7. Labour peer; Under-Secretary for India, 1931; Deputy Leader of the House of Lords, 1940–44. On 7 November 1939, he stated that the declaration as made by the Congress was somewhat harsh. "... it would be a tragedy if, after the great success which has raised the prestige of India in the world, because of communal difference the system of provincial governments should now be suspended."

49. Freedom is in Peril[1]

On innumerable walls and hoardings in London and all over England appears, in large letters, the legend: "Freedom is in Peril, Defend it with all your Might." This is the appeal of the British Government to their people, to join the war and give their lives for freedom's sake. For whose freedom? Not India's, we know, for we have been told so. Not the subject countries of British and other imperialisms, for England's

1. 8 November 1939. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 9 November 1939. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 237–241.

rulers are discreetly silent on that issue, in spite of our invitation. Is it the freedom of Europe that England is fighting for, as Mr. Chamberlain has said? For what country in Europe, for what people? We seem to remember a country that once existed, called Czechoslovakia, "that far away country about which we know so little", as the British Prime Minister said a year ago, and then proceeded to put an end to it. There was also once a gallant democratic republic in Spain, but she was stabbed to death by those who pretended to be her friends and paid lip service to democracy.

There is Poland, now no more. Will the old Poland rise again; does Mr. Chamberlain believe this or fight for it? Half of it knows a greater freedom today than she has ever experienced in the past, and her representatives speak in Moscow's Parliament. It is strange that while we in India talk interminably of constituent assemblies and constitutions, a war-ridden country emerges within a few weeks with a free constitution.

What does England fight for? For whose freedom does Mr. Chamberlain hanker? If it is English freedom, he is well entitled to appeal to his people. But Bernard Shaw and others have told us how freedom is rapidly disappearing under war-time regulations in England's green and pleasant island. The very fascism and authoritarianism that the English people have condemned in Germany creep over and numb their democratic faculties. England is no democratic country today and the imperialism she has nourished abroad is coming back to her in fascist garb.

How can we know what England is fighting for, for they will not tell us, even though we ask. But the passing show is there to enlighten us and give answer to our questions; and though official lips may be sealed, official acts display the intent behind them. We see imperialism in full play in war as in peace, and the ruling classes of Britain holding on to their dividends and vested interests. They have no intention of losing their present freedom to add to their dividends at others' expense. It is for this freedom that Britain's rulers are fighting. It is for the defence of this that they summon the manhood and youth of their country, and want to summon our manhood also.

"His Majesty's Government", we are told by Lord Zetland,[2] "find it impossible to accept this position"—the position being the Congress demand that India be declared an independent nation and should frame her constitution, without external intervention, through a constituent assembly, based on the widest franchise and by agreement in regard to communal representation, such assembly securing the protection

2. On 7 November 1939, at the House of Lords.

of minority rights by agreement. So that is impossible and we are relieved to have a straight answer.

The Marquis of Zetland goes on to say that "the long standing British connection with India has left His Majesty's Government with obligations towards her which it is impossible for them to shed by disinteresting themselves wholly in the shaping of her future form of government". We ourselves vaguely thought that His Majesty's Government would not forget or ignore their obligations to British financial or industrial or other interests in India, and would sternly repress even their love for freedom when this came into conflict with these obligations. We are obliged to the noble Marquis for his statement and elucidation. Let there be no more talk of communal or other issues coming in the way of a declaration of Indian freedom. It is the City of London and all that it represents that bars the way, and noble lords and commoners carry out its will.

We are a little weary of long debates, and patronising advice, and interviews, and all this game of covering and hiding the iron hand of imperialism. We prefer to see and face the reality. It is better to have autocratic rule in India and a suspension of the constitution than a mockery of freedom. It is better for us to be in the wilderness than to be tied up to chairs of office, prisoners of a constitution imposed upon us.

His Majesty's Government find it impossible to accept our position. We find it impossible to accept theirs, or indeed any position except that of a free nation. There we both stand, facing each other across a wide gulf that cannot be bridged. The future will decide between us, the future of war and revolutionary change. We shall not merely await that future but help to shape it. For the present let us accept the conflict of two apparent impossibilities, and think of and prepare for the future.

Meanwhile, may we accept for once the advice of Britain's Government and remind our own people that

Freedom is in Peril!
Defend it with all your Might.

50. Reaction to Zetland's Statement[1]

I am not interested any further in what happens in the British Parliament. We are very busy in India.

1. Remarks to the United Press representative, Lucknow, 8 November 1939. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 9 November 1939.

51. To Edward Thompson[1]

Allahabad
Nov. 11, 1939

Dear Edward,
Your letter from Karachi has just come. The Gwalior letter reached me two or three days ago. I am sorry you saw the Viceroy's statement just before you left and did not see the other statements that followed it. For the Viceroy gave a very misleading account. Or perhaps his slow-moving mind has not yet grasped what we are after, and he and Zetland imagine that a few glittering prizes in the shape of seats in the Viceroy's council will bowl us over. I fear there is little hope of our understanding each other and only the shock of events will decide. You say that we have thrown away our chances. Perhaps. But there never was and there is not going to be an acceptance of such chances. That is one of the fundamental facts of the present situation. Nor is there going to be a return to the provincial cabinets such as we had till recently. It may be that we are wrong but, if so, even our error is a factor to be considered.

The Viceroy met Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad and Jinnah and presuming that his previous statement had cleared the way and that there was no further necessity for a declaration of war aims and India's position, proceeded to tell them to compose their differences in the provinces and then discuss the centre where a few seats on his council will be offered to them. This was an extraordinary approach for his previous statement had been bitterly criticised by almost everybody in India excepting a few individuals. The Muslim League had not committed itself

1. Edward Thompson Papers, N.M.M.L.

but had not accepted it. The powerful Muslim organisations had condemned it and lined up with the Congress. The Sikhs condemned it. The Indian Christians did likewise. Even the Liberal Federation criticised it strongly. The Congress took action and asked the ministries to resign.

All this seemed to have no effect on the Viceroy. He ignored it completely and started talking about communal differences in the provinces. What had this to do with the crisis? The provincial governments had not resigned because of communal differences. They did so because, under the circumstances, they had to dissociate themselves with British policy and war effort. There was no communal question and there was nothing for Gandhi and Jinnah to discuss as under no circumstances could the Congress governments go back till a satisfactory declaration of British policy was forthcoming. The Viceroy was told so. Jinnah agreed that if that was the Congress position (and vaguely he supported the demand for a declaration) then the other questions did not arise. The Viceroy said that he could not go beyond his previous declaration. There the matter would have ended but as the V. wanted a written reply he was asked for his proposal in writing.

If we had been after some seats in the Viceroy's council, why had we taken all this trouble about war aims and declaration? If we were out just to bargain for a few jobs then his proposal might have been worth considering. But the basic fact is that we are not going to associate ourselves in this war for the advancement of Chamberlainism or any other variety of imperialism. It is true that both Chamberlain and imperialism are likely to go under in the war, but that is not what the present Government in England or the British ruling classes are fighting for. The British attitude to India now is proof enough that the old way of looking at things continues. We shall have nothing to do with it even if the whole Viceroy's council is offered to us, with the Viceroyalty thrown in. It is a complete change in the outlook, the system, the structure, the objective that is an essential preliminary. If that does not take place we shall wait for a better day.

You are quite right in saying that we have not beaten the British but you are not right about the Punjab. Whether we have beaten the British or not, we do not propose to allow ourselves to be exploited by them. Certainly we shall not be willing parties to this and we may put up a fair measure of resistance. Probably we shall be set upon. We are prepared for it. But we are not going to be cowed or patronised into submitting to something we utterly dislike. The V. is very sensitive and smells discourtesy. There are a few million people who are also sensitive and who do not like to be taken for granted or to be

treated as chattels. We may be bad diplomats and inefficient politicians. But there we are and we cannot easily change now.

As for the Punjab, do not run away with the impression that it is hostile to us because Sikandar Hayat functions there. The Punjab is likely to give more trouble to the British Government than any other province, and what a large number of Muslims will do will come as an even greater surprise to them. Because of our mild language and continuous efforts at compromise, the Muslim League presumes to boss the Muslims. But as I told you, there are powerful Muslim organisations entirely opposed to the League. There is the All-India Shia Conference, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the Momins and plenty of young Muslims. The Muslim membership of the Congress runs into hundreds of thousands. The province with largest proportion of Muslims—the N.W.F.P.—is predominantly pro-Congress with its very efficient Khudai Khidmatgars. Sind, a Muslim province is favourable to the Congress and the Muslim League was pushed out from there with ignominy. Baluchistan, though politically backward, inclines towards the Congress like its neighbour the N.W.F.P. Assam with a 25% Muslim population had a Congress coalition government. Bengal has a strong Muslim party opposed to the Fazlul ministry which has a majority because of the support of the European businessmen. In other provinces there are usually Muslim groups in the assemblies apart from, and sometimes larger than, the Muslim League group, and they often side with the Congress. Did you observe how the Congress war resolutions were passed in the provincial assemblies with thundering majorities?

There is no greater absurdity than to imagine that the Congress has to face a solid Muslim bloc which opposes it. This was obvious enough before, but since the resignation of the Congress ministries, the Muslim League is rapidly becoming a prey to its own disruptive forces. Perhaps I exaggerate or take from my point of view, too optimistic a view. But all these tendencies are there.

The basic factors of the situation are these: We are in deadly earnest and we mean exactly what we say—indeed we mean a little more than we say in our resolutions as we have developed a habit of understatement. We are not going to allow ourselves to be caught in an unknown and dangerous adventure unless we know what the objective is and unless we can really control our policy. So long as we suspect that the aims of the war are imperialistic, we shall keep far away from it, and we shall thus serve not only ourselves but others who want to pull out this war from the old ruts. In India it is essential that real power passes to the people. We do not want it. The Congress can be ignored. Let there be an election for the purpose. And a constituent

assembly to be summoned later to draw up India's constitution. This must come from the widest mass franchise. We are not thinking in terms of the elite meeting together and deciding. We are not going to associate ourselves with all parties conferences or a gathering got together by the Viceroy. That constituent assembly will be formed by agreement with the principal minorities and will decide upon protection of minority rights and interests also by agreement. Both Jinnah and Ambedkar have told us that they have no objections to this, but of course one never knows what Jinnah may say later. The door for the princes to enter this constituent assembly will be open, but only on the identical democratic basis as the provinces. Or else they can keep out and we shall ignore them for the present. We refuse absolutely to make agreement with them a condition precedent—or an agreement with British financial or other vested interests in India.

That is the position. It is quite impossible, say Zetland & Co. Well then we go our separate ways and trust to fortune or our capacity. There is going to be no giving in on any fundamental question on our side. We could not do this even if we wanted to—the Congress would throw us overboard.

I have written enough and more than enough. Bear with what I have written for it represents something much more than my individual viewpoint. There seems to be a tendency in England as well as in New Delhi not to believe in what we say and to imagine that we exaggerate. That is folly.

I hope you will be able to send the Chinese pictures to Indira by the 19th which is her birthday.

I am sending your letters to Gandhiji as you wanted me to.

I enclose a letter for Palmer.[2] Could you please send it to him.[3]

Yours,
Jawaharlal

2. Edward Palmer Thompson (b. 1924); historian; author of *The Making of the English Working Class*.
3. See *post*, section 11, item 11.

52. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
November 13, 1939

My dear Krishna,
I received your cable last night pointing out that a great deal of confusion has arisen at the other end owing to apparently contradictory reports being made. As a matter of fact I have been sending you long cables. But these cables have often been delayed and have crossed yours. I enclose copies of three cables I have sent you during the last week.

If people at the other end desire to indulge in wishful thinking and are content to delude themselves, that is their lookout. The position here is that there is a complete deadlock and we do not expect the British Government to accede to our demands for the present at least. I am sure that the time will come when they will accept them, but much will have happened in India and elsewhere before that occurs and the position may have completely changed. Meanwhile our minds are thinking more of what we are to do in India than our trying to impress the British Government in England or elsewhere. Therefore the statements made here must be read and understood in this context. Gandhiji is trying to impress the people in the country with the extreme gravity of the position so that they might be fully ready for any further action that we might take. As is his way, he lays stress on the removal of what he considers our weaknesses. If a conflict was not imminent in his mind, he would not function in this way.

In any event I want our friends in England to realise that there is not a shadow of a doubt about our present attitude. There is no question of our giving up or resiling from our present position. There is no question of our accepting odd jobs on the Viceroy's council. Unless there is the clearest declaration on the lines suggested by us, there is absolutely no point in any talks or interviews.

I shall cable to you after the next Working Committee meeting is over. This is likely to be on the 22nd November....

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

53. Cable to V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

13-11-1939

Your cable. I have cabled fully on sixth and eleventh. There is no confusion or doubt here. There is complete unity as regards our position as stated in Rajendra Prasad's letter. Agreement is possible only on Congress conditions. Owing to the Government's refusal to agree, Congress noncooperates with British policy. The first step is the resignation of the ministries. Other steps will necessarily follow. We desire to give the opportunity to the Government to retrace their policy before the final decision on civil disobedience is taken. Meanwhile noncooperation continues. Agreement is unthinkable except on the basis of essential conditions—declaration of war aims, Indian independence and constituent assembly, transfer of real power now and control over government policy.

Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

54. To Stafford Cripps[1]

November 14, 1939

My dear Cripps,

I was delighted to have your long letter and I must apologise for the delay in answering it. There is so much to write about and yet it is not easy to write. To some extent Krishna Menon will keep you in touch with developments here though even his information must necessarily be limited.

The situation in Europe is distressing and I am afraid fascist tendencies are becoming more obvious in the Western countries. France seems to me about the most reactionary country in Europe today.

It seems to me that there is a great deal of misapprehension in England about our position in India. They do not seem to realise at the other end that we are deadly serious in what we say and that we are not

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

out to bargain. I fear that there will be trouble if this is not realised. The issue before us is a purely political issue as between England and India and it is completely absurd to try to divert it into communal channels. I think that people in Whitehall and in the India Office have little notion of what India is today and they will make a complete mess of everything. So far as we are concerned we shall stick to our position.

Sometimes *The Tribune* reaches me and I read it with interest, but it takes five or six weeks for it to come. Many numbers do not come at all.

I am delighted to learn that there is a chance of your passing through India next month. Need I say that you will be very welcome here? If you come by air, as I presume you will, the best place to land will be Allahabad. I would suggest your staying with my sister and me here in Allahabad for a few days and then we could draw up a short programme for you so that you could meet some worthwhile people. It is very difficult to plan ahead when anything might happen on the morrow. But I should like to assure you that you are welcome here whatever might happen. If it is possible for you to send us some early intimation of the date of your arrival, it will help.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

55. What is Stalin Aiming at?[1]

There are few more intriguing questions today than Soviet Russia's policy. On that depends the whole development of the European war. To a large extent, it may be said, that the future of Europe and the world hangs on decisions to be taken in Moscow. Seldom has one country—and that a neutral country during a war between great powers—so dominated the scene as Russia is doing today. Recent events, more especially what Russia has done, have upset many a calculation, and people's reactions have been marked and varied. Some defend Russia with the faith and ardour of a believer, others accuse her of Red Imperialism. We, for our part, believe that both these viewpoints are wide of the mark, though

1. 14 November 1939. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 17 November 1939.

there may be a measure of truth in each of them. No one can say yet what Soviet Russia will do, or pass judgement on her. It is obvious that on the one hand, her policy has given Nazi Germany the one vital assurance that the latter needed before embarking on the risky adventure of war. Being assured of peace on her eastern front, apart from the Polish invasion which did not trouble her much, she could concentrate on a single-front war. On the other hand, Soviet policy in the Balkans and the Baltic has been a severe blow to Germany. It is evident that Russian policy is both anti-Germany and anti-Allies; it is just pro-Russian. Is it also pro-freedom in the larger sense of the word? That the future will show.

We confess that the recent orientation of Soviet policy in the Far East has raised certain doubts in our mind. But our data is still limited. One thing seems to be clear. Russia has no desire whatever to be involved in a major war and she will avoid this at all costs. The vague rumour that all of us have heard about Russia attacking India are based chiefly on someone's lively imagination. They do little credit to his intelligence. They do not even show an elementary knowledge of geography. Recently it was reported, with what truth we do not know, that Soviet troops had entered the Chinese province of Sinkiang. Immediately some of our wiseacres pricked up their ears and began to hear the war drums beating on or near the Indian frontier. As a matter of fact the north of Sinkiang is a vast distance away from India, and not even a fool in his folly would dream of coming to India that way. And Stalin and his generals are no fools, whatever other defects they might suffer from. There are far easier routes to India in the north-west.

It is impossible to prophesy what this war will bring us. But within the limits of intelligent speculation, we can say with some confidence that there is no chance of a Russian invasion of India. Those who think otherwise could not have given much thought to this matter, or, which is more likely, they want to create a scare in India in order to profit by it. Stalin wants peace, for his own reasons no doubt, and peace he will keep unless events force his hands. The real battlefields are in Europe not Asia, and Russia is playing a dominant part in Europe today. She will continue playing that part in war, and later in the peace, without risking her own resources in the adventure of war.

We give in another column an article[2] that appeared recently in the *Evening Standard* of London. This article is of interest as giving an interpretation of events from the British Conservative viewpoint.

2. The editorial, entitled *Stalin Today*, said that to avoid a clash with Hitler, Stalin had entered into a pact with him and Hitler could not force the Soviet Union into a solid alliance with Germany.

56. Which Way, What Means ?[1]

Again we are standing on the threshold of great happenings. Again our pulses quicken and our toes are aquiver, and the old call comes to our ears. We pack up our little troubles and store away our domestic worries, for what do they matter when that call comes to make us forget all else when India, whom we have loved and sought to serve, whispers to us and casts her magic spell on our little selves?

Yet some are impatient and in the pride of their youth they make accusations. Why this delay? Why do we go slow when the blood tingles in our veins, and life calls to us to march? Do not worry, young manhood and womanhood of India, do not fret or grow impatient. The time will come all too soon, when you will have to shoulder this heavy burden; the call to march will also come and the pace may be swifter than you imagine. For the pace is set today by a world rushing headlong into the unknown future, and none of us, whether we wish it or not, can stand when the very ground shakes underneath our feet.

The time will come. May it find us ready, stout of heart and swift of limb, and calm of mind and purpose. May we know well then the path we have to travel so that no doubts might assail us, no divided counsels weaken our resolve.

We know our goal, our objective, our heart's desire. Of that there need be no further argument. But what of the way we have to travel, the methods we adopt, the means that govern our actions? Surely that too is not a matter for argument; for long years we have blazed the trail and fashioned the way so that others may follow on the well-trodden path. Twenty years ago many might have doubted the efficacy of this straight and narrow way, but today we have long experience to guide us, our own successes and failures to teach us. In spite of attempts to divert us from it, we have stuck to it with a firmer resolve, and the millions of India have understood its significance and efficacy and are wedded to it as never before. The Congress continues to declare its firm faith in it; for it there is no other way.

And yet it is necessary that we do not take too much for granted, and that in this hour of destiny we examine afresh its implications and accept them with all our heart and mind. This is no time for theory or

1. 15 November 1939. *National Herald*, 17 November 1939. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 228-236. Also in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 352–356.

idle speculation; action awaits us and action demands concentration of mind and effort, and cannot permit the philosophy of doubt or the luxury of debate in the midst of action. Much less can it permit individuals or groups neutralising that very action by their contrary methods, and by their challenging the very roots of that action.

It is necessary that we examine this question frankly and come to clear and final decisions, for a new generation has arisen which has no roots in our past experience and speaks a different language, and some there are who openly or secretly, and from even the shelter of our organisation, express contempt for our methods and means. It may be, as we well believe, that these doubters and dissidents are few and cannot make much difference to a vast nation-wide movement. But it is possible that they might produce confusion in many minds and lead to happenings which injure our cause. Therefore there must be clarity and decision. We can take no unnecessary risks in the struggle ahead of us.

Nineteen years ago the Congress adopted nonviolence as its method of action and in these years that have passed we have experimented with it on many an occasion. We impressed the world, but what is more important, we impressed ourselves and drew amazing strength from what we did and how we did it. The old choice of a subject people—submission or violent revolt—no longer applied to us. We had a potent weapon, the value of which grew with our growing strength and understanding of it. It was a weapon which might be used anywhere, but it was peculiarly suited to the genius and present condition of India. Our own example is there to justify it and to comfort and cheer us. But world events during the past few years have demonstrated the futility and brutality of the methods of violence.

Few of us, I suppose, can say that the era of violence is over or is likely to end soon. Today violence flourishes in its intensest and most destructive and inhuman form, as never before. Yet its very virulence is a sign of its decay. It will die or it will kill a good part of the world.

The sword, as ever, is a shift of fools
To hide their folly.

But we live in an age of folly and madness and our rulers and those who govern human affairs are the true products of this age. From day to day we face this terrible problem: how to resist violent aggression? For the alternative is often no other than meek submission and surrender to evil. Spain resisted with violence and though she succumbed in the end, her people set a magnificent example of courage and heroic endurance. Forsaken by their friends, they checked for two and a half years the tide of fascist aggression. Who will say, even today after their defeat, that they were wrong, for they had no other

honourable course left open to them. The method of nonviolence was not in their minds and was, under the circumstances, out of their reach. So also in China.

Czechoslovakia, with all her armed might and undoubted courage, succumbed without a fight. True, she did so because her friends betrayed her. But still the fact remains that all her armed might proved of no avail to her in her time of need. Poland was utterly vanquished in three weeks of struggle and her great army and fleets of aeroplanes vanished into nowhere.

The way of violence and armed might is only feasible today, even in the narrowest interpretation of immediate success, when the armed forces are clearly superior to those opposed to them. Otherwise there is surrender without a fight or a collapse after the briefest of struggles, bringing utter defeat and demoralization in their train. Petty violence is completely ruled out as it has not even the virtue of holding out a bare possibility of success, and it brings all the horrors of defeat and disruption.

What the future will bring to India is beyond our ken. If that future is still one of armed national forces, it is difficult for most of us to conceive of a free India without a national army and all the other apparatus for defence. But we need not consider that future now. We have to deal with the present.

In this present these doubts and difficulties do not arise for our course is clear and our path marked out. This is the way of nonviolent resistance to all obstructions to Indian freedom, and there is no other way. Let us be quite clear about it for we dare not proceed to action with our minds being pulled in different directions. I am not aware of any other way offering a ghost of a chance of effective action to us. Indeed there will be no real action at all if we think of other ways.

I believe there is general agreement among Congressmen on this question. But there are a few, somewhat new to the Congress, who, while apparently agreeing, plan differently. They realise that there can be no national and nation-wide movement except through the Congress. All else would be adventurism. They want, therefore, to utilise the Congress and at the same time, to break through it in directions which are opposed to Congress policy. The proposed technique is to embed themselves in the Congress and then to undermine its basic creed and method of action. In particular the continuance of the technique of nonviolence is to be combated, not obviously and patently, but insidiously and from within.

Now it is open to any Indian to put forward his own proposals and ideas, to work for them and convert others to his viewpoint, and even to act up to them if he thinks that it is vital to do so. But it is not

open to him to do so under cover of something else. That would be misleading the public, and out of such deception mass movements do not arise. That would be treachery to the Congress and sabotage of a movement in full flood. If there is ideological conflict, it is all to the good that this should see the light of day and the people should understand it and decide. This should be so at any time, much more so on the eve of great happenings. No organisation can tolerate internal sabotage when it is thinking in terms of coming to grips with a powerful adversary. We cannot have indiscipline in our own ranks or a division of counsel when action calls us.

It becomes essential for us therefore to decide this issue with all clarity and definiteness. We have of course decided it so far as the Congress is concerned and we propose to hold by that decision. Any other course is ineffective and fraught with peril to the nation. It is not difficult for us, if we were so minded, to produce chaos in India, but out of chaos does not necessarily, or even usually, emerge freedom. In India there are obvious possibilities of chaos leading to the most unfortunate of consequences. We cannot always predict the consequences of our action, especially when we move on the plane of the masses. We take risks and must take them. But it would be inconceivable folly to do something which adds to these risks enormously, puts obstructions in the way to our freedom, and takes away that moral stature from our movement which has been our pride these many years. Where the world is aweaying of the methods of violence, for us even to think of a reversion to them would be tragedy indeed.

We must therefore stick, stoutly and whole-heartedly, to the method of nonviolence and reject all substitutes that might be offered to us. We must remember that it is not possible to have a variety of methods functioning side by side, for each weakens and neutralises the other. We must therefore choose wisely and abide by our choice, not spoiling it by flirtation with other ways. Above all we must realise that nonviolence is nonviolence. It is not just a word to be used mechanically, when our minds function differently, and our mouths utter other words and phrases opposed to it and our actions belie it. We have to be true to it in every way, if we are to be just to it, to ourselves, and to our cause.

57. Preparation for a Nonviolent Struggle[1]

The difference between the British Government and India on the issue of India's freedom is like that between the earth and the sky. The British Government has not changed its mentality. Though the Congress has always kept open its door for negotiations on the question of freedom, the two are irreconcilable. This attitude of the Congress may bring the heavy hand of the British Government very soon on the Congress. The arrests have already begun, though in a small number. The Congress leaders might be confined, and new acts and new laws imposed on the country.

But the Congress too is vast and is tried in the ways of nonviolent fight for which it might be very soon called. Do not do anything in haste and in a hurry. The Congress has nothing to lose by the delay, because it will give us more time to prepare and organize. It is Britain which is in a hurry. Complete nonviolence has proved itself as a weapon of efficacy. Openness is the best propaganda, and best suited for the mass movement of satyagraha.

I have been asked what of the nationalist Muslims who are larger in number than the Muslim League and who do not want separate electorates. My answer is that a constituent assembly will have representatives from both the sections, and they will decide that issue. Beware of those who may be set to create communal troubles in order to hamper the national movement.

I feel confident that the All India Muslim League will not go against the freedom movement of the country. I feel that the members chosen for a constituent assembly will bring a new spirit, a new outlook and understanding between sections, and communities will be more easily reached than what appears on the surface today.

1. Speech at Allahabad, 15 November 1939. *The Hindustan Times,* 16 November 1939.

58. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

November 16, 1939

My dear Krishna,

Your letter of the 8th November. I am surprised that one of my letters dated the 6th October went all the way by sea to you. Every letter that I sent you has been by air.

You mention in your letter about a public meeting on the 16th and say that you had cabled for a written message. I did not receive this cable. But on receipt of your letter I have sent you a brief cable to the following effect:

> India holds fast today as before to democracy freedom peace and condemns all aggression. If war is for this then government must state aims clearly agree end fascism imperialism support self-determination declare independence India and act up to their declarations. Then all freedom loving forces in world will rally and establish new order. India cannot support preservation imperialism.

I think I have made it clear to you what our position is at present. Whatever further steps we might take it is perfectly clear that there is no going back on this position. In the course of the next few days the Working Committee might clear it up still further.

About Indira, I am glad that she is making good progress. I suppose that she will succeed in getting a visa for Switzerland. I understand that she is worrying about the expense part of it. She should not do so because this expenditure is by way of a necessary investment. It would be folly to economise and store up trouble for the future. Please make this clear to Bhandari. In order to make satisfactory arrangements about her future expenses I wanted to know how my bank accounts with Lloyds stood as well as what the possible income from royalties might be. I am writing to the bank to find out the present position.

I wish very much myself that I could meet you and that you could come to India. But it is difficult to advise just at present. I shall think about it more. Ultimately, however, you are the best person to judge.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

59. Les Jeux Sont Faits[1]

In the casinos of France and Belgium, where the wealthy unemployed of many nations gather round the gaming tables and stake their money to win or to lose, there is a phrase which is constantly being repeated by the croupiers who preside at these tables. *Les Jeux sont faits, rien ne va plus,* they say, after the manner of a priest performing some ancient rite. The stakes have been laid, nothing more can be put on; there can be no changing of the stakes now, and the players must trust to their luck or good or bad fortune.

So in Europe the stakes were finally put down in the fateful last week of August, and September saw the ball of fate whirling in its mad dance of death and destruction. There was no going back from those stakes, no changing them, for the croupier of death was now in command and he was raking in human beings much faster than his prototype of one gaming table had gathered his gold and silver coins. The gamble of destiny had begun and it would continue till it had exhausted itself and lain many low.

So also in India. These past weeks have finally settled the stakes. We know where we are, we know where the British Government is. We have had a spate of statements and interviews and declarations during the past two months or more, and many an attempt has been made to confuse the real issue. But that issue stands clear; it is the issue of whether British imperialism is to continue in India or not. So far as we are concerned, there are going to be no steps or stages to Indian freedom; so far as the British Government is concerned ours is an impossible demand and they will not agree to it. The stakes have been finally laid down; there is no changing them or going back on them.

One by one the Congress governments have resigned and now the field is clear and we can think of the next step. We are interested of course in what happens in Europe or elsewhere, but our main interest now is in the home front.

Our representative in London has sent us many revealing messages, showing how a continuous attempt is being made by the British Government and press to confuse issues as well as to make out that Gandhiji does not agree with the stand taken up by the Congress President. The answer sent by Shri Rajendra Prasad to H.E. the Viceroy was a clear, reasoned and brilliant statement of the Congress case. It came as a shock

1. 17 November 1939. Editorial in the *National Herald,* 19 November 1939.

to those in England who had tried their utmost to make out that the Congress was overstating its case and would be content with the paltry compromise. Soon after this they got hold of a few odd phrases from Gandhiji's article in *Harijan*, tore them from their context, and started wishful thinking again.[2] We have no objection to any person indulging in such thinking; it is pleasant to avoid the truth when the truth is not to our liking. But unhappily wishes do not get rid of facts, and all the wishful thinking of Whitehall or the British press will not make any difference to the position in India or change the Congress demand.

They have a curious way in England. Deliberately they imagine that the Congress or Gandhiji are prepared to agree to something or to tone down their public demands. When this does not happen, they express their resentment and accuse us of being doctrinaires or even of not playing fair. The capacity for self-delusion exhibited by the British ruling classes has never ceased to surprise us, in spite of repeated experience.

Gandhiji has been the victim of this game on many occasions. His moderation in language and his gentle approach even to an opponent are interpreted as weakness. Twenty years experience has not taught the men of Whitehall that there is steel and inflexibility behind that soft and amiable approach; that the Congress does not bargain or shout but states its minimum demand in restrained language and stands by it. It is that minimum demand that has been put forward now and there is going to be no argument or discussion except on that basis.

That has been rejected. So all eyes on the home front.

2. See *post*, section 6, item 31.

60. The Next Step[1]

Question: Have there been any new developments?

Jawaharlal Nehru: There have been no fresh developments after the recent discussions of the Viceroy with the Congress leaders.

1. Interview to the press, Allahabad, 17 November 1939. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 18 November 1939.

Q: Does your plan to see Mr. Jinnah still stand?

JN: Yes.

Q: What will be the outcome of the Allahabad meeting?

JN: It is difficult to forecast at present what line of action the Working Committee meeting at Allahabad will take.

Q: Is there a move to get the Working Committee to authorise you to reopen negotiations with Mr. Jinnah?

JN: No such 'formal' authorisation is necessary.

Q: Will the Congress launch a fight or will it mark time for the present?

JN: It depends on so many things including the international situation.

Q: What will be the main subject of discussion at the Working Committee?

JN: The present situation.

61. We Shall See It Through[1]

Our present position is one of noncooperation with the British policy and their war efforts in India. Noncooperation itself is not a negative attitude but a positive programme. It leads necessarily to other consequences. It is for us to decide what additional steps we should take and when we should take them.

It is not for me to say when and how this will be done but the fact is clear that the attitude of the British Government has cut the ropes which bound us in some measure in an uneasy alliance with them in the provincial governments. There can be no going back to them on

1. Interview to the press, Allahabad, 21 November 1939. From the *National Herald*, 22 November 1939.

the old conditions. We have launched on a new adventure and we shall see it through.

The criticism made in the press about my recent article[2] in the *National Herald* that it was an attempt to commit the Congress to civil disobedience on the eve of the meeting of the Working Committee is based on ignorance. Such critics neither seem to know very much about Indian conditions nor have they understood the purport of my article. It is not for me to commit the Congress to any particular course but circumstances may well compel the Congress to that course of action. The whole purpose of my article was to discuss means and methods.

It is true that it was written on the assumption that there is a complete deadlock between the British Government and India. If anybody thinks that India is going to remain a passive spectator of events because Whitehall wants this to be done, he is mistaken. The first point to realise is that India's offer has been completely rejected by the British Government. That offer was not made to bargain as Gandhiji has often stated. It was an offer to give a chance to the British Government to prove their *bona fides* in this war by declaring their war aims and acknowledging the independence of India.

As is often the case with them they tried to belittle India's demand and to evade the issue. It is not our custom to bargain or to seek jobs, howsoever high. We do not claim anything for ourselves or even the Congress. What we claim is for the Indian people.

Lord Zetland has said this is an impossible demand. We have nothing further to say to Lord Zetland and in future we shall address ourselves to our own people. And we are prepared for all eventualities and consequences. We are not in a hurry but we are deadly serious and there should be no mistake about that.

So far as the war is concerned it becomes more and more evident that our fears were justified and that it is being carried on in the old imperialist traditions. We can be no party to this.

2. See *ante*, item 56.

62. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Lucknow
November 25, 1939

My dear Krishna,
Your letter of the 14th November reached me yesterday and I read it with interest. I read it out also to Gandhiji who was on the point of leaving for Wardha.

I also received yesterday a letter from Stafford Cripps in which he says that he might reach India on the 10th December with his secretary Geoffrey Wilson[2] and Dick Stokes, M.P.[3] I should like to know as soon as possible the date of their arrival as I have to fit in my own programme accordingly. There is also likely to be a meeting of the Working Committee in the third week of December at Wardha. I should therefore like you or Cripps to cable to me as as soon as possible about the date of arrival.

Pritt's book[4] which you sent me has not arrived yet.

The Working Committee resolution that I have sent you is fairly comprehensive and it means just what it says. There is no question of any manoeuvring between the Congress and the British Government. Ordinarily speaking we are heading for some kind of conflict. On no account are we going to resile from our position but it is Gandhiji's way, and it has been the Congress way, always to talk in terms of a compromise till the last minute. That is Gandhiji's interpretation of satyagraha. I do not mean that the talk is meaningless. But I do mean that such a compromise can only take place on the conditions stated.

You will notice that the greatest stress has been laid on the constituent assembly and this idea has been amplified. Gandhiji has now become a complete convert to this and, as is his way, he wants to lay the greatest stress on it in future. He believes now that this is the only way to settle India's problem and he has written an article on this.[5]

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1910); director, Colombo Plan Technical Cooperation Bureau, 1951-53; Vice-President, International Bank, Washington, 1961; Chairman, Race Relations Board since 1971.
3. Richard Rapier Stokes (1897-1957); Minister for Works, 1950-51; Lord Privy Seal, April–October 1951.
4. *Light on Moscow*, published in October 1939.
5. On 19 November 1939, Mahatma Gandhi in an article entitled *The Only Way* said that in the constituent assembly he saw a remedy "for our communal and other distempers, besides being a vehicle for mass political and other education ...." The way of democratic Swaraj lay only through a properly constituted assembly.

I find from a letter from my bank in London that I made a serious mistake about the amount standing to my credit there. I do not quite know how I did this unless I took for granted that the advance royalties due from Drummonds on *Glimpses* had been paid.

You will be interested to know that the Chinese edition of my *Autobiography* has come out and I have received a copy of it. This is apparently somewhat abridged.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

63. Presidential Address to the U.P. Political Conference[1]

I would have liked to speak to the kisans in their own language, *Braj bhasha*, but I am unable to speak that dialect. Moreover it will be better to speak at such conferences in a language which can be understood by the majority of people.

I have been elected president of this conference four times. I am of the opinion that this is not right. You should give your first consideration to work and not individuals. Our work for the nation must continue whoever be the president.

During the last two months since the Congress Working Committee made its first declaration about the war, this province has made much progress in Congress organisational work. The greatest achievement of these two months is the creation of a strong sense of unity. We have been able to demonstrate that in the face of a crisis we will not let our small differences come in the way of united action. I feel that the time has come now for us to transform our organization into an army. We will, under no circumstances, allow our small differences to mar our fighting capacity. We have to act in a team spirit. Whether I occupy any position in the Congress or not, the United Provinces will remain the main sphere of my political activities.

1. Mathura, 28 November 1939. From *The Hindustan Times*, 29 November 1939.

My visit to the Taj Mahal on my way to Muttra to attend the conference was not merely an excursion trip, although one likes to visit the Taj Mahal on *Kartik purnima.* I have no hesitation in saying that I love to see the beautiful historic building. This brings before my eyes a vivid picture of India's past. My whole purpose in going to the Taj Mahal was to seek a diversion from the conflicts and struggles of the present and catch a glimpse of the past. This enables me to judge the present dispassionately in the light of the past. It is always better to try to understand our present problems in their historical setting. Our objective is to secure the economic welfare of millions of people. We have to tackle the kisans' problems. This raises the question of the future of the zamindari system, whether it is capable of adjustment or should be altogether abolished. We have to build the future on the debris of the past in a proper perspective.

We want Swaraj in order to remove the poverty of the people. Whatever other shortcomings this country had in the past, it was always reputed to be a rich country. That position has now been reversed, and our economic condition is the worst of any people in the world. We cannot remove the canker of poverty till our country is free.

When the Congress ministry came into office I expected that a tenancy legislation would be enacted in a few months; but owing to various difficulties it took us more than two years to pass the Tenancy Bill. And now the Governor is holding it up. But our way is clear. If the delay in giving assent to the bill is going to be prolonged indefinitely then we will have to embark on a fight in this connection, leaving aside even the question of the war.

We have to decide in this conference as to what are to be our future plans. This country is standing at the parting of the ways and there are possibilities of there being a conflict. Twenty years back India embarked on satyagraha, and the movement lasted several years. Ten years back we declared independence as our goal, and since then every Congress member has had to take the pledge of independence. After the declaration of independence, there was again a conflict between this country and the government. It appears that there is a cycle, and after every decade we have to face almost the same situation. Therefore we must prepare ourselves to meet all eventualities.

It would be useful to judge the present war in the light of our experience in connection with the last war of 1914. We had contributed more than a million men in that war. I think that it would be wrong to suggest that wars are waged by individuals. They are, as a matter of fact, the result of a natural sequence of events. I am prepared to concede that Herr Hitler loves war, yet I refuse to admit that

he is responsible for the present war. It is a historical truth that events produced Herr Hitler. For, the last war was the result of misunderstandings between individuals or kings; of a race between powerful imperialistic nations for colonies. The seeds of that war were sown in the scramble for the distribution of spoils. Capitalistic imperialism has ambitions which are insatiable. It wants to exploit ruthlessly the economic resources of the colonies. Germany's defeat in the last war was not the result of a military reverse; it was the result of a blockade which strangled her economically. The issues of democracy and freedom were raised during that war in order to hoodwink the people, but, after the end of the war, everything was forgotten and the powers that participated in it expanded their imperialist gains. It is, therefore, a patent fact that the seeds of the present war were sown in the Treaty of Versailles. It is futile to expect that we can end war, as long as there are imperialism and fascism which, in my opinion, is worse than imperialism.

The Congress has put certain questions to the British Government. We have made it clear that we hate German imperialism. The Congress has repeatedly condemned fascism in unmistakable terms. We are not on the side of Germany. On the other hand, we want to see Germany defeated in the war. Yet, we wanted to know from the British Government as to what were their war aims. Of course, a mere statement of the war aims would not have satisfied us. We also demanded that India be declared an independent country, and practical effect be given to that declaration immediately as far as practicable. When we put these questions to the British Government, we were under no illusions as to the nature of British imperialism. Yet, we had to make the position clear in order to enlighten British public opinion and millions of our countrymen and countrywomen and get their support in the coming struggle. The British Government replied to some of our questions, and evaded others. The evasions, more than the replies to our questions, betrayed the dishonesty of British intentions. That also demonstrated beyond doubt that the present war is an imperialist war and that the British Government wants to strengthen their chains of slavery. The events of the last two and a half months have further confirmed us in this belief. The condition in France and England after the war also supports this view. In France, a semi-military rule has been established. Parliament in France has ceased to function. In England also, it is becoming increasingly difficult to say that a democratic, parliamentary system of government still exists. I do not mean to convey the impression that all the people of England are imperialists. There are people among them who have joined the army in England in the belief that they are fighting for democracy and freedom. Yet,

we have no doubt that the British Government stands for imperialism. They have repeatedly betrayed democracy.

We met the Viceroy several times, yet that did not produce any useful result. The Congress does not launch a fight without taking into consideration all the pros and cons of the situation. Our general, Mahatma Gandhi, is undoubtedly a fighter; yet the fact remains that he does not fight till he has explored all other methods and when he does fight he fights with dignity and in a civilized manner with clean weapons. What the British Government is prepared to concede cannot possibly satisfy us, and the government is not prepared to concede what we want. It is impossible to accept the government's offer as a basis for an agreement. There is, therefore, a complete deadlock. The British Government wants help from India in the war. The Congress policy has clearly demonstrated that we are not out to take tactical advantage of the war for bargaining. But it is pertinent to ask that if the British Government are fighting for freedom, why should they not establish freedom in India and altogether change their methods. Under the circumstances we cannot possibly cooperate in the prosecution of a war which seeks to perpetuate our slavery and hence we have called back our ministries from the eight provinces. We have now the Governors' rule in these provinces.

It was hinted by the Viceroy that we could get some high offices in the Governor-General's council if we came to terms with the government. But that was never our aim. We neither want offices for ourselves nor for the Congress. We only want power for the people's representatives. It has always been the practice in our satyagraha movements that we keep the door open for peace, but that does not mean any weakness on our part. I cannot see any way for a peaceful settlement with Britain for the present; but whenever there might be peace between us that will be on the terms which have been defined by the Congress. It is merely a waste of time to discuss any other questions. Our discussions with the government might continue, but at the same time we must continue our preparations and organizational work. Ultimately our success will depend on our *sangathan*.

We have taken the first step in noncooperation with the government with the resignation of the ministries. Our differences with the government are on the question of war and they do not involve any communal point, although the Viceroy has tried to give it a communal twist. It cannot be said that Muslims do not want freedom for the country. Merely because some people became tools of the third party and incited people to communal disturbances, we cannot conclude that the whole community is opposed to India getting freedom. The betterment of the

country will be in the interests of all. Push on the constructive programme of the Congress and strengthen its organization. You must enrol volunteers, popularize khadi, make efforts for removal of untouchability and bring about communal concord. Khadi and the charkha will strengthen our organization, and that is the political aspect of it.

We are proud of the fact that our leader is one of the greatest men of the world. But in the present age, which is a revolutionary age, no single person, however big, can control events. You need not be restive, as two or three months delay will not matter at all; on the other hand, it should augment our strength and enable us to put up a better fight. You might rest assured that when attacks are launched by the government on our rights and liberties, we may not be able to avoid a fight for long.

64. The Myth of the I.C.S.[1]

With the advent of power, responsibilities increase and the methods as well as the problems also change. Although we are not free, we are on the threshold of freedom. This has greatly increased the status of India in the world.

Though our help to Spain and China is insignificant, it has roused world-consciousness and we have begun to influence policies and events abroad. This is responsible for new questions and our enhanced responsibilities.

The acceptance of ministerial office in eight provinces was also a great responsibility and it gave us immense experience. I am not sorry for the experience. It has exploded the myth of the I.C.S. competence.

The experience of the past twenty-eight months has proved that the cadre of the Indian Civil Service as a whole is absolutely incompetent and inefficient. This does not mean that there is no competent or expert man in the service, but the general body has proved its incompetence and, I think, it is the most inefficient body of service in the world. It is accustomed and trained to work in a stereotyped way and cannot adapt to new changes or directions. It put obstacles and showed deliberate disloyalty to the Congress ministers. It did not like the new life

1. Speech at Motiganj, 30 November 1939. From the *National Herald*, 3 December 1939.

created in the country by the working of the constitution by the Congress.

There are instances where this service or the bureaucrats intentionally created trouble and deliberately flouted the instructions issued by the Congress ministries with the avowed object of bringing the Congress governments into disrepute. That was mainly responsible for so much trouble and communal riots in the provinces. It proved itself very slow and could not execute the orders issued by the ministers with promptitude. In a free India, such an incompetent and inefficient service will have to be abolished and done away with. No doubt the experts who are willing to work under the new regime will be welcomed.

The psychological effect of the change created by the Congress ministries has been immense. The free entry of an ordinary kisan into the corridors of the secretariat, which has been regarded as sacrosanct and open to only the privileged few, is a great experience and has created a big impression on the mass mind.

There can be no compromise for slavery and thraldom. Though we are always ready to negotiate and enter into a settlement with the British Government, we can never return to old conditions. We have placed our cards on the table. No useful purpose can be served by interviews, talks or statements unless the government is prepared to accept the demands of the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi.

We can never accept anything less than independence. We are determined to sever our relations with British imperialism and we will not cooperate with it except on our own conditions.

The modern war with its attendant cruelties has a devastating effect which I myself witnessed in Spain and China. Better organisation and discipline are required to face the world today. Those who believe that the holding of meetings and the delivering of harangues are enough to prepare the country are ignorant of the world revolution going on all around us. It is probable that the world war might ruin the entire present-day civilisation. The last war led to the deterioration of the morals of Europe with the result that they have begun to belittle the importance of human life.

Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin or Chamberlain are not responsible for the present war. They are merely made to go to war by economic stress and the forces around them. The map of Europe, and for the matter of that of the whole world, is bound to change and British imperialism cannot survive the war.

We are in the midst of an unprecedented revolution; in fact, we are standing at the mouth of a volcano ready to explode. We cannot ignore it. Although British imperialism is tottering, yet it requires a strong and disciplined India to face it. Mahatma Gandhi's insistence on the charkha and the constructive programme is justified.

We cannot minimise our shortcomings and the strength of our enemy. I shiver to think of our shortcomings. We have to harness and discipline our forces and energy. An indisciplined mob can easily be dispersed by a handful of disciplined soldiers, though the latter have no enthusiasm for the work entrusted to them.

The resolutions passed at the Muttra Political Conference[2] are important and I ask you to carry them out with firmness and solemnity. The Congress is now a great institution and its actions and slogans must reflect its dignity and grandeur. Slogans of abuse or undignified language cannot meet with approval. India expects every man to do his duty in a dignified way.

The Congress has taken a bold step of noncooperation. We have declared our abhorrence for Nazism and we do not wish its victory, but at the same time we have declared our will to be free.

Things as they stand do not point towards a settlement. It is impossible to prophesy, but it is probable that the gulf between the Congress and the British Government will widen and a clash may not be averted. But, as satyagrahis, we are always prepared to enter into negotiations and conclude a settlement even when we are in the midst of our fight.

We have kept the door open and it is for the British Government to accept it or reject it. We have explained our position in clear and unambiguous terms. We can never compromise on the issue of independence. The students specially must conserve their energy and be prepared for the struggle ahead. I hope that the message of the Congress will be taken from village to village and from door to door and Agra will prove its worth by responding to the call of the country with more sacrifice and suffering than in the past and thus lead the fight as it has done earlier.

2. The resolutions welcomed the awakening and growth of political ideas in the Indian states and condemned the offer of help by the princes to Britain without consulting the people; approved of the U.P. Tenancy Bill and hoped for an early assent from the Governor; and commended the constructive programme of the Congress.

4

INDIA AND THE WAR II

December 1939—March 1940

1. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
December 2, 1939

My dear Krishna,

...Your letter as well as your articles[2] indicate a certain feeling of disquiet in your mind about what is happening here. A measure of disquiet is possible under the circumstances. After all India has many cross-currents which are sometimes conflicting. There are of course difficulties but the kind of difficulties you envisage are unlikely. No one is going to be taken in by the sweet words of Halifax or Linlithgow. Edward Thompson is very keen and all that but it was obviously not easy for him to grasp the situation here and his impressions are likely to be superficial.

I wish you had come out with Cripps. I understand Cripps fairly well. His visit here will make no difference to us, or very little, but I hope it will help him to understand a little more the Indian problem.

Russia's invasion of Finland has come as yet another shock.[3] It is difficult to form any opinion about happenings in Europe on the meagre data available. But some things, and more especially the manner of doing them, hurt.

We are meeting in Working Committee again on the 18th December at Wardha.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. On 20 November 1939, Krishna Menon had written: "There are moments when I am myself confused and uncertain. Gandhiji is not a phenomenon that I understand and I cannot therefore interpret him as you do and are qualified to do....I must not go by Congress resolutions or utterances and take them at their face value for often they are followed by some completely contradictory statement."
3. Soviet troops invaded Finland on 30 November 1939.

2. Russia and Finland[1]

We have refrained so far from commenting on the Russian invasion of Finland and on the conflict between the two countries that has developed into a war. It is natural for our sympathies to go out to a little country which is being attacked by a great power; it is inevitable that we should compare what appears to be unprovoked Russian aggression with recent examples of Nazi aggression. Can we forget that Soviet Russia has for years past condemned all such aggression and asked loudly for action against the aggressor nation?

These reactions are inevitable, and yet let us remember that we live in war time and are surrounded by one-sided news and propaganda. For us to form final opinions on this slender and slippery foundation would not only be unsafe but might lead us into wrong paths. It was never so necessary as now for us to view events in proper perspective and not to be led away by interested propaganda. We sympathise with Finland but we have no sympathy for those powers who want to exploit Finland for their own advantage. Even fascist Italy cries 'poor little Finland' and expresses pious horror at Russia's invasion of Finland.

We live in an age of power politics of the most blatant and offensive type. Violence and the threat of violence are supreme today in human affairs, and international law and moral and spiritual values have ceased to be, so far as governments are concerned. The doctrine of *Mein Kampf* has truly imposed itself upon the world far more effectively than Nazi force or intrigue. That doctrine is no new one, though it has seldom been stated so frankly and unblushingly as in this Bible of the Nazi world. The older imperialisms, having settled down, assumed outwardly the garb of respectability and spoke a softer and politer language. But the policy that governed them in the past and governs them in the present is the policy of *Mein Kampf*, for that is the essence of imperialism, as it is of Nazism. The difference between the two is this: Nazism applies the policy at home as well as abroad, imperialism applies it chiefly abroad and maintains a facade of democracy at home. But that difference grows thin, as reaction and the practice of fascism creep into the homeland of old imperialisms. Under cover of war conditions, France

1. 3 December 1939. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 5 December 1939. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 242-248.

lives today under a military dictatorship; England grows progressively more reactionary.

Soviet Russia, slighted and insulted by England and France for many years, turned the tables on them and showed them that she too could play effectively at the game of power politics. The world was amazed and the whole balance in Europe was suddenly changed, Russia becoming a dominating power whose will could make a vital difference, and everyone hurried to pay court at the palace of the Kremlin. She had played the opportunist game, and played it, after the standards of Western diplomacy, with amazing efficiency. She called herself a realist in action. We have been pained at much that she has done in the name of realism, and her recent policy in Europe and the Far East has been exceedingly difficult to understand.

We believe that adventures in *real politik* have done injury to the cause of Soviet Russia, though in terms of power politics, she may have grown mightier. For the strength of Russia lay in idealism and in the principles for which she stood. Those principles may still be there for aught we know, but the idealism grows thin and the world is infinitely poorer for that loss. Even in these days of war, we dare affirm that success based on pure opportunities divorced from moral principles will not take a country far.

But in judging Russia let us remember that she is paying back the imperialist powers in their own coin. For these powers to hold up their hands in horror, because they have been outplayed and outwitted, need not fill us with sympathy for them.

The fundamental policy of England, and for some time past of France, has been an anti-Soviet policy. They surrendered to Nazi Germany in the hope that Herr Hitler would turn east and break the Soviets. They refused to come to terms with Russia even when danger threatened them. They failed in their intrigues. Even now, with war going on, there is always this background of converting it into an anti-Soviet drive. In spite of all that has happened during the last three months, it is still considered a possibility that a sudden turn of events might line up the Western powers with Germany and Italy in a joint campaign against Russia. The French Government today is more anti-Soviet than any other government. We have recently had—even before the Russian invasion of Poland—a concentrated and bitter anti-Soviet campaign in the British, American and French press. It is reported that Italy has been sending arms, aeroplane parts and munitions to Finland. Italian volunteers are likely to be sent there also.

Obviously all this is something much more than an affair between Russia and Finland. It all points to a sinister development of that

anti-Soviet front which has been the nightmare of Russian statesmen for many years. Fearing this, Russia has tried to fortify herself to meet this menace and all her policy in the Baltic states points this way. It is not Finland that she is afraid of, but the possibility of Finland being used as a jumping-off platform for other powers to attack her.

It has been a well-known fact for some years that Nazi strategy had worked out plans for the invasion of Russia through Finland. A look at a map will demonstrate how very feasible this is, and how the great city of Leningrad lies within an easy march from the Finnish frontier. Bearing this in mind, one can understand the eagerness of the Soviet Government to protect one of their vital and famous centres.

Ever since the Anglo-French-German war began, Soviet policy has been one of protecting Russia from any possible attack and of consolidating her position. That policy has been both anti-Nazi (in spite of the Pact) and anti-Britain. It has indeed been selfishly pro-Soviet. We disagree with much that Russia has done recently, but we can fully understand this earnest desire for self-protection against a possible combination of enemies. In effect this policy has led to a weakening of Nazi Germany far more than to a weakening of the Allies. The German power is caught in a vice in the north-east and south-east and all dreams of Nazi expansion in these directions end unless the Soviets are dislodged.

Let us again remember that the hatred of British and French imperialisms for Soviet Russia is far greater than their hatred of Nazism. It is a possibility which we cannot ignore that a new combination of powers may take place ranged against the Soviet and threatening to destroy her. We do not think they can succeed even then, but it would be a tragedy if the mighty Russian experiment was hindered and broken. That experiment has many undesirable features which we have deeply regretted, but it is still the hope of the common man in his hundreds of millions.

It was Soviet Russia that willingly conceded independence to Finland, and only a few days ago the Finnish Prime Minister[2] himself stated that Finnish independence was not threatened by the Soviet demands. But Finland became the stalking-horse of other powers and the struggle in Finland today represents this wider conflict.

Let us therefore beware of coming to premature conclusions on partial and one-sided material. But, so far as we in India are concerned, the

2. Professor Aino Kaarlo Cajander (1879-1943); Professor of forestry, University of Helsinki, and later Director General of State Forests; Minister of Defence, 1928-29; Prime Minister of Finland, 1922, 1924 and 1937-39.

lesson is clear. Each country in the world today has to shift for itself and every people have to rely on their own strength. Let us build up our own strength in our own nonviolent but effective way, so that we can withstand every onslaught of imperialism and win freedom for India.

3. The Rotten World of Indian Bureaucracy[1]

The Indian nation is not a nation of cowards. It is not dead. The struggle for freedom will continue. We must strengthen the Congress. We need not blame Mahatma Gandhi. The Mahatma is not a magician, but in the past the country under his leadership has reached very near magic. So we must follow him and be disciplined.

It is only weak people who abuse others. The Congress is strong and it will maintain its dignity. It is not going to lose itself in a maze of futile controversy. The Congress is a dignified body. It feels the heavy responsibility that lies on its shoulders. So it is not going to be side-tracked by heated controversy.

The Government of India Act[2] has been amended in order to defeat the U.P. Employment Tax Bill.[3] This is very unjust. Why was the Bill not referred to the Federal Court? Sitting in London, they have destroyed the Bill. This shows up the realities of the situation. The advisers to governments receive higher salaries than what they got before. That is in keeping with the old traditions, but I hear that the salaries of peons and *chaprasies* are being reduced and peons are being dismissed by way of economy. It is a rotten world in India.

1. Speech at Allahabad, 10 December 1939. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 11 December 1939.
2. The India and Burma (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill sought to restrict the tax imposed (by the Employment Bill), by limiting the amount which might be levied on any one individual in one year.
3. The U.P. Employment Tax Bill was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 14 April 1939. Graduated tax was imposed on those who derived their income from employment. The Bill was reserved by the Governor for the assent of the Governor-General.

4. The Prime Problem of Poverty[1]

It is heart-rending to go from village to village in India and see the picture of utter poverty presented by the Indian villager. The first problem before us is how to end the poverty of our peasants and how to end it quickly. All else is secondary and if the independence of the country will not put an end to this poverty then I say to hell with such independence.

What image does this thousand-faceted India present to you? In the course of my travels from one end of India to the other, from the frozen snows of the Himalayas to the tropical regions of Kanyakumari, two images persistently haunt my imagination: the submerged ruins of Mohenjo-daro which show the high state of Indian culture five or six thousand years ago as it flourished in the valley of the Indus and the frescoes of Ajanta, the noble proportions of whose art are eternal and beyond all time and space.

In my travels through the villages here and there I have come across peasant women gracefully bending over their fields who looked as though they were the frescoes of Ajanta which had come to life. Such is the continuity of Indian culture.

It is true that the heritage of India is burdened by traditions and social customs which are a drag and a shame on the people. If it lay in my power I would gladly put an end to the dead weight of meaningless and unjust customs and practices. I would at the same time cherish and perpetuate a great deal which has given India its strength and the continuity of its culture.

I feel strongly the necessity of the adoption of the scientific method of approach to all problems, for in science lies the seed of human salvation as much as its misuse will entail the possible destruction of civilization.

It is likely that the next few years will see the end of imperialist systems and vast changes will take place, which are bound to react upon India also. It is not possible to prophesy that out of this war will emerge unadulterated good—it may also bring in its wake much evil, degradation of the human spirit and love of hatred and violence. It is wrong to suppose that the war is the result of any individual or group

1. Address to the students of Elphinstone College, Bombay, 17 December 1939. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 18 December 1939.

of powerful persons desiring it, but it is the natural culmination of the unleashing of vast elemental forces, which could not expand in their political frameworks. In such a situation of clashing dynamic forces India cannot afford to be static. The least that India can do is to prepare to meet the torrent of world changes. I advise you to cultivate self-reliance, and a sense of unity, and intellectual understanding of world problems so that you may not be taken unawares by the political currents which are sweeping across the world.

Though the communal problem is important, it looks rather less important when judged on a world scale. My advice to you is—develop your political perspective from the international as well as the historical angles. The latter gives us courage and confidence in ourselves, for 150 years of foreign domination is like a brief page which is already turned and when compared to the six thousand-year-old unbroken cultural heritage of India, it is like an insignificant, if unpleasant, interval.

5. To Stafford Cripps[1]

Allahabad
December 25, 1939

Dear Stafford,
You will be leaving India tomorrow morning, after 18 days which must have brought innumerable impressions. I hope that the visit has not tired you too much and the complexity of our problems not troubled you greatly. I do not suppose any major problem in the world today is easy of solution. I am glad you came...

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

6. A New Year Message[1]

In this world of conflict and war and misery it is not easy to wish happiness to anyone. To be happy today is to be insensitive to human sorrow. So I hesitate to give the conventional message of a Happy New Year. The New Year that can soon be with us is full of the dark shadows of violence and conflict and no man can foretell what the outcome will be. But though an individual or a nation may not control the play of circumstances they can rise superior to them and thus defeat fate and destiny even. Let us, therefore, hold fast to our anchor, to our principles and objectives and work for them with all might and main and in this endeavour itself we shall find fulfilment. No success is worth having at the cost of the basic principles for which we stand, for such success is no real success but is a prelude to failure.

It is fitting that on the threshold of the New Year here in the city of Lahore our minds should travel back ten years when we took to independence and pledged ourselves to it on the banks of the Ravi. The pledge still stands unredeemed. Let us address ourselves to it with goodwill to all, working for the establishment of an independent, united and democratic India where every individual has the gates of opportunity open before him and life for all is one cooperative effort for the good of one and all. It will be time enough then to think in terms of personal happiness. Meanwhile, I wish my countrymen a New Year of straight, hard work for the fulfilment of our dreams.

1. Lahore, 31 December 1939. *The Hindustan Times*, 1 January 1940.

7. The Responsibility of the Congress[1]

Our help to China and Spain, though insignificant, has enhanced our prestige in international politics. India can no longer remain isolated from the influence of other countries as the present war is affecting our economic life.

1. Speech at Amritsar, 31 December 1939. From *The Hindustan Times*, 1 January 1940.

The responsibility of the Congress has grown. Communal organisations are creating obstacles which the Congress has to remove. The Congress has no sympathy with Germany as Herr Hitler has adopted aggressive methods. We have declared that we do not like to strengthen British imperialism. We merely seek a declaration of Britain's war aims. If we are wanted to fight for the freedom of the world, we should first be made free and our opinion should then be taken. The Congress has undertaken a big step with the resignation of the ministries. We have further demanded a constituent assemb'y to determine the future constitution.

As for the Viceroy's consultations with the leaders, Mr. Jinnah, instead of bringing up political issues, has raised the communal question. Separate electorates are a curse. Mr. Jinnah refuses to accept the constituent assembly. He wants a few nominated hands to decide the question, whereas the Congress wants the entire country to decide. As against Sir Sikandar's body of twelve persons,[2] I would prefer twelve crores to decide the future of the country.

Question: When will the Congress take the next step?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It would depend on circumstances. Mahatma Gandhi wants that the country be fully prepared before the next step is taken.

2. On 16 December 1939, Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan had suggested that to solve India's political problems a dozen accredited leaders should meet in conference, the Viceroy helping in the selection of personnel if the scheme commended itself to Jinnah and Gandhi.

8. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
January 5, 1940

My dear Krishna,
I am writing to you after some time and I have not heard from you recently either. I saw your cable to the *Herald* about Cripps' visit many days after it appeared. I can understand your apprehensions and there was some basis for it. But there is nothing doing in that direction for

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

the present at least. Cripps made certain suggestions[2] which in my opinion had certain grave objections, though the general framework was not bad. He informed me that he discussed his proposals at some length with Hailey, Halifax, Zetland, Findlater Stewart and Schuster. These people would not commit themselves to anything but seem to think that it might be possible to work along the lines suggested. It seems to me that apart from two or three grave objections, there were far too many loop-holes in these proposals. I did not myself see that they could lead to anything worthwhile.

Gandhiji hardly discussed this matter with Cripps and only remarked that if there was complete honesty at the back of any such proposal, then it might be considered as the basis of a talk, subject to such changes as would be necessary. He added that he had not paid much attention to the details but only looked at it as a whole.

Cripps said that he felt that the British Government would not like to go beyond this under existing circumstances and he felt that it will be worth our while to go ahead on this basis. He was oppressed by the difficulties of the communal problem and thought that a conflict should be avoided if this was at all possible.

There the matter ends and we need not consider these proposals. I do not see any common grounds here between the British Government and us. It is possible that the Viceroy might make another effort. I am quite sure that that effort is foredoomed to failure. The whole approach of the India Office and the Viceroy is miles away from ours. In their attempt to divert attention from the political to the communal issue, they have undoubtedly put difficulties in our way, but they have added to their own difficulties also.

It is true that for the moment the communal issue is dominant in the people's minds. All question of talks with Jinnah is off. It seems to me that he had deliberately brought this about as he had nothing to talk about and wanted to avoid coming to a political decision. There has been quite considerable annoyance, even in reactionary Muslim circles, at Jinnah's 'day of deliverance'.[3] The Muslim League is functioning

2. He had proposed the formation within the 1935 constitution, of an executive council consisting of national leaders and of a constituent assembly which would take decisions on the principle of majority. As an alternative he had suggested that the government should be willing to accept any other plan agreed to between the two communities subject to the rights of minorities being guaranteed for fifteen years.
3. Jinnah had called on Muslims throughout India to observe 22 December 1939 as a 'day of deliverance' from the "tyranny, oppression and injustice" of the Congress regime in the provinces.

very feebly, as the only thing it has so far learnt is to curse the Congress. I think it is likely that more and more Muslims will become critical of the League. Meanwhile Sikandar Hayat is trying to play off his own bat so far as communal issues are concerned. Nothing much is going to happen there.

I intend doing a bit of touring in the U.P.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

9. India's Demand and England's Answer[1]

The war in Europe grips our attention, for whether we are in it or out of it, our future depends so much on its outcome. For the moment our attention is diverted from the tragic struggle in the Far East, yet we know that this struggle is of essential significance and what happens in China will affect us all. So also in India, though here there is no obvious or external struggle in progress at present. For China and India will have a powerful effect on the shape of things to come, whatever that ultimate shape might be. This is not only so because of the vast numbers of human beings that live in these two countries—between 800 and 900 millions; not only because of their rich and tremendous past heritage; but because of their enormous resources and potential political and economic strength. There is much talk of a new order and of world cooperation. There can be no stable order or effective cooperation in the world if India and China are ignored, and relatively weak though they might be today, they are not so weak as to submit to any such treatment.

As an Indian, the future of India and her people is of tremendous importance to me, but the real significance of the Indian problem lies

1. 6 January 1940. Published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1940. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 357-369.

in its relation to the world problem. For the Indian problem is part of the world problem and neither can be considered fully or understood apart from the other. Even in the present war in Europe, India can make a difference.

It is right and proper, therefore, that what happens in India should attract attention in the United States of America and that they should seek to understand India's problems in relation to the world, for on them ultimately will fall the burden of the future, whether they will it or not. Their great material resources and dominating position in the world have cast this burden on them today, but even more so has this responsibility been cast upon them because of their leadership of the forces of democracy. If, in the words of President Roosevelt, the American people are going to "keep ablaze the flames of human liberty, reason, democracy and fair play",[2] they will have to throw their weight on the side of liberty and democracy in other parts of the world also, so that out of present-day chaos and violence, real peace and freedom might emerge. Peace is indivisible, it has been said; so is freedom, and there will be no enduring equilibrium unless it spans the world and is based on peace and freedom.

As India has grown in strength and self-reliance and approached the gates of freedom, she has thought of herself more and more as a part of a larger order, and has considered her own problem as a part of the world problem. In recent years there has been the greatest interest and even anxiety in India in regard to happenings in Manchuria, Abyssinia, Spain, Palestine and Central Europe. Indians have begun to develop an international outlook, and though they have been passionately attached to Indian independence, they have viewed it not in isolation but in terms of cooperation in a world order.

It was because of this that we followed events in Europe, Asia and elsewhere closely and as the prospect of a second world war approached, the Indian Congress laid down its policy in regard to it. We had bitter memories of the war of 1914-18 and what followed it. In that war India's help had been considerable, over 1,200,000 men being sent to various theatres of war. All manner of promises were held out to us about the future status of India. What really followed was intense repression, martial law in the Punjab and the famous Amritsar massacre. Out of all this the noncooperation movement of Mr. Gandhi

2. In his annual message to the Congress on 3 January 1940, Roosevelt said: "We must as a united people keep ablaze on the continent the flames of human liberty, of reason, of democracy and of fair play as living things, to be preserved for the better world that is to come."

was born and for the past twenty years the struggle for Indian freedom has gone on, peacefully but effectively and on a mass scale. That struggle would have come in any case for the time was ripe for vital changes in India and both political and economic problems demanded them insistently. The war and its aftermath brought matters to a head; and we saw how Indian men and resources had been exploited for the strengthening and furtherance of British imperialism.

So, as early as 1927, the Congress declared that the Indian people could not permit the exploitation of Indian resources for the furtherance of imperialist aims and that they would not cooperate in any imperialist war. Year after year this policy was reiterated and developed. With the growth of the Nazi power, the Congress condemned fascism and Nazism and disapproved of their theory and practice. We approved of collective security to check aggression, and noticed that British policy, in spite of occasional declarations to the contrary, was deliberately sabotaging this idea on which the League of Nations had been based and was often encouraging aggression. Munich came as a terrible shock and the so-called non-intervention and betrayal of Spain was a tragedy which affected us deeply.

These events gave shape to the external policy of the National Congress. While on the one hand we disapproved of fascism and Nazism, we dissociated ourselves entirely from British foreign policy and made it clear again that we could be no parties to a war imposed upon us and for imperialist ends. Any such imposition would be opposed and resisted. But the British Government has meanwhile amended the existing Indian constitution so as to concentrate all power, in the event of a war emergency, in the hands of the irresponsible Central Government, which they controlled completely. The powers of the provincial governments were made subject to the direction and control of the Central Government at its discretion, and provincial autonomy and ministerial responsibility were thus reduced to a farce. The measure met with strenuous opposition.

In August 1939 Indian troops were sent abroad to Egypt and Malaya without any reference to the Central or provincial assemblies. As a protest against this, the Congress withdrew all its members from the Central Assembly and again warned the British Government of the consequences of dragging India into a war without the consent of the Indian people.

In spite of all this, India was declared a belligerent country immediately on the outbreak of the war in Europe and the Indian Constitution Amending Bill was rushed through the British Parliament within a few minutes. This was deeply resented and ordinarily the Congress

would have been justified in following up its previous decisions by advising the Indian people to abstain from the war. Apart from these developments, we could not conceive that Mr. Neville Chamberlain's Government, in spite of its professions, could stand or work for democracy and freedom. At the same time we did not want a Nazi victory and our sympathies were entirely on the side of the victims of aggression.

The Congress thereupon, on September 14th, 1939, issued a long statement on the war crisis in which it made it clear that if the war was to defend the *status quo*, imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests and privilege, then India could have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue was democracy and a world order based on democracy then India was intensely interested in it. She could not support imperialism or fascism in any form, but she would throw her weight on the side of democracy, provided that democracy functioned in India also. It was manifestly absurd for a subject India to become the champion of liberties abroad which were denied to her. The Congress therefore invited the British Government to declare their war aims in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that was envisaged, and in particular, how these aims were going to apply to India and be implemented at the present. A declaration of Indian independence was asked for and the recognition of the right of the Indian people to frame their own constitution through a constituent assembly, without external interference.

It was in no spirit of bargaining that this claim was put forward. It was the inevitable outcome of our long struggle for freedom, and it was the essential preliminary to any effort to make the war popular in India. We have a background of a hundred and fifty years of conflict between Indian nationalism and British imperialism. It is not easy to get rid of it. England may be partly democratic at home; to us in India she appears in imperialist garb only and we have suffered under this imperialism for many generations now. Her recent policy, both in India and abroad, has only strengthened our conviction that her outlook is still completely imperialist. It was only by a full declaration of Indian independence that the great psychological barrier which separates India from England could be broken down. It was only then that the *bona fides* of England in this war could be established. Otherwise why should we be parties to imperialist adventures and allow our resources to be exploited for imperialist ends?

The answer that the British Government gave us demonstrated that our fears and apprehensions were fully justified. They refused to define their war or peace aims, and in regard to India, it was stated that "at the end of the war" His Majesty's Government "will be very willing to enter into consultation with representatives of several communities,

parties and interests in India and with the Indian princes with a view to securing their aid and cooperation in framing such constitutional modifications as may be deemed desirable." Among the interests and parties, it was made clear, were British financial and mercantile interests.[3]

The war in Europe may shake up the world and the whole political and economic structure may be on the verge of collapse, but Whitehall still spoke in the old voice and language of British imperialism. We must wait till the end of the war when Whitehall will decide. The elected representatives of the Indian people did not count; various odd groups would be consulted and then what was deemed desirable would emerge. Among the groups that must have their say were the Indian princes and British vested interests, both of whom are completely opposed to the idea of Indian freedom. The Indian states, ruled by the princes, are relics of a bygone medieval age where full-blooded autocracy, and often something like a feudal system, prevail. They would have vanished long ago if the British Government had not protected them. During recent years a people's movement has arisen in these states demanding freedom and democratic rights. This has been, and is being, crushed to the accompaniment of brutal repression and gangster methods, which have nothing to learn from Nazi methods. The British Government has given full support to this repression in the states.

British financial, mercantile and other vested interests are the stronghold of imperialist control and exploitation in India. It is ultimately on their behalf and for their sake that Britain controls India. To ask us to obtain the agreement of the princes as well as British vested interests to agree to any change is to put a barrier which can never be surmounted. It means that the final decision about the liquidation of British imperialism must rest with that imperialism itself.

The British Government's answer was an affront to the people of India, who saw in it the desire to consolidate the imperialist regime in India and elsewhere. If this was so, the war in Europe became obviously a war of rival imperialisms and India could be no party to it. Not only the Congress but all groups and parties condemned this answer. The Congress decided that, under these circumstances, they could not associate themselves with the war and, as a first step in noncooperation, they called upon the provincial governments to resign. Eight such governments resigned and as it was not possible to have any other alternative popular

3. On 18 October 1939, the Viceroy listed among the minorities and special interests which stood in the way of accepting the Congress demand not only the great communities of India but also European business interests and the Indian princes.

governments in seven of them, the constitution was suspended and the Governor became the autocrat.[4] In the eighth province, Assam, a precarious ministry was formed and its future is uncertain. So we have gone back to autocracy and completely irresponsible government.

Taken aback by the volume of resentment in India, the British Government made another approach and offered some seats in the Viceroy's Executive Council to popular representatives, whom the Viceroy would nominate. This was an attempt to buy up by high office some prominent leaders. It ignored completely the issues at stake and avoided a declaration about India's freedom. If the Congress had been foolish enough to accept this bait, it could have been said with justice that it was bargaining for personal preferment. The offer was rejected.

Another significant move was fathered by the British Government. This was to shift public attention from the political problem to the communal problem. The problem which had assumed importance since the war was a purely political one—the freedom of India and the right of her people to frame their constitution. The communal problem, though important in its own sphere, had nothing to do with it. The British Government, however, sought shelter in communal difficulties and made the agreement of certain reactionary communal groups and minorities a prerequisite for any further consideration of the political problem. The Indian Congress declared that it was prepared to go to any lengths to recognise and protect minority and communal rights and interests, provided that Indian unity, democracy and freedom did not suffer. It could not satisfy, under any circumstances, those who were politically reactionary and opposed to the very conception of freedom and democracy. These reactionary groups, communal or princely, have lined up now, as they have done in the past, behind British imperialism, to resist any change which will give power to the people.

The National Congress did not ask for any power or privileged position for itself. It demanded a declaration of India's independence and the framing of India's constitution by a constituent assembly, freely elected under adult franchise. This assembly would elect representatives to meet the representatives of the British Government for the settlement of all problems of mutual interest and for a treaty between two free nations. This was the obvious and only democratic procedure possible, in order to ascertain the will of the nation as a whole, giving full opportunity to all. Any other course would mean the imposition of the will of Britain or of some privileged groups in the country.

4. On resignation of the ministries the Governors, though they had advisers, had no formal executive councils; and the legislatures were suspended.

The question of the minorities or of different communities is worthy of consideration, but it has to be remembered that whatever minority claims or objections might be, they cannot come in the way of a declaration of India's freedom by Britain. Such a declaration would state the intention and decision of the British Government and it does not come in the way of minority protection. Whitehall has, however, made the minority problem an excuse for making no declaration at all.

What is this minority problem in India? The word minority is misleading as we are not dealing with racial minorities or nationalities as in Europe, but with religious groups usually of the same racial stock. The smaller religious groups are Christians, Sikhs (an offshoot from Hinduism), Parsees, etc. The main divisions are Hindus and Muslims, the former constituting about two-thirds of the entire population. The Muslims, though theoretically a minority in the whole of India, number eighty millions and are in a majority in five northern provinces. Under provincial autonomy they can, if they function communally or religiously, control these five provinces. The distribution of the population and the administrative areas is such that there is a balance, and it is hardly conceivable that either of the great communities, even if so inclined, can ignore the other or misbehave towards that other. If this happened there would immediately be repercussions in other parts of India.

It is absurd to imagine that these two huge religious groups are ranged against each other in the country, although it is unfortunately true that conflicts have taken place from time to time, chiefly in towns. There is a long history behind this, and a British policy, consistently followed, to encourage disruptive tendencies. While Indian nationalism has sought to unify India and has to a large extent succeeded, British imperialism has tried to introduce barriers to unity. One of the most unfortunate of these has been the introduction of separate electorates, each group voting separately for its own candidates. The result of this is the perpetuation of a feeling of separation and the encouragement in either group of the more extreme communal and bigoted elements. This bigotry and communal feeling has often been exploited, and is being exploited, by political reactionaries to their own advantage.

In spite of all this, the National Congress has met with considerable success in developing political unity of outlook and action. The Congress is open to all Indians who subscribe to the objective of Indian independence, without any religious or other distinction. It has, inevitably, a very large Hindu membership, but it has also hundreds of thousands of Muslims on its rolls. The North West Frontier Province, which is 95% Muslim, is dominated by the Congress and had a Congress Muslim ministry.

Both the Hindus and Muslims have their own communal organisations, the Muslim organisation being the All India Muslim League. The Muslim League is controlled by reactionary politicians who have taken little or no part in the struggle for Indian freedom during the last twenty years, and who have often opposed it and sided with British imperialism. Apart from the Muslim League there are three other important Muslim organisations which are politically more advanced and which have often cooperated with the Congress, and which today entirely support the Congress demand for Indian independence and a constituent assembly.

The Congress has repeatedly laid down that the rights of all minorities must be fully protected by fundamental laws in the constitution. Every conceivable minority right—religion, freedom of conscience, culture, language, etc.—could be thus protected, apart from other civic rights which will apply to everybody. Any infringement of such a right could be challenged in a supreme court.

In the demand for a constituent assembly, minority rights have been especially considered. The assembly would be elected by adult suffrage, but to ensure that minorities can send the representatives of their own choice, they have been given the option to have separate electorates for the purpose, much as we dislike this separatist machinery. Further, it has been suggested that all questions directly affecting any minority's interests, as such, should be settled by agreement and not by the greater voting power of the majority. If such an agreement is not arrived at in regard to any particular point, it can be referred to arbitration to the League of Nations or the International Court at the Hague or any other impartial body, mutually agreed upon.

It passes the wit of man to devise further safeguards for a minority, but if any other expedients to ensure confidence in a minority or to protect its interests suggest themselves, the Congress will gladly consider them, for the Congress is anxious to settle this problem to the satisfaction of all. But nothing can be agreed to which goes against Indian freedom or democracy or disrupts India. Nor can a minority be allowed to dominate or override the majority. After all the majority has also some rights.

Our communal or minority problem would have been settled long ago, if a third party had not been always there to play it up, and holding all manner of political gifts in its hands. So long as British imperialism functions in India, it will be exceedingly difficult to arrive at a real communal settlement. The bid of the British Government can always be higher than that of the other party, and reactionary groups take advantage of this fact and barter away national freedom for apparent

communal gains. It is for this reason that the constituent assembly has been suggested. Settlement of the communal problem will come about only when everyone realises that this is the final authority, and no outsider can intervene. The pressure of events will then force a solution, for the alternative is internal conflict.

Stress has been laid on adult or near-adult franchise for the constituent assembly. Apart from political reasons for this, such a wide franchise is desirable even from the point of view of the communal problem. This problem is essentially a middle-class problem and does not affect the masses at all. If the members of the constituent assembly are elected by the masses, they will bring an economic outlook with them and will be more concerned with mass problems than with others. The Hindu and the Muslim peasant or worker or shopkeeper or artisan or businessman has the same problem to face. He is not worried by communal or religious divisions in regard to his work or business. For this reason we are opposed to a restricted electorate which will be largely controlled by the communally-minded classes, intent on preserving their own narrow interests.

Objection is raised to adult franchise because this will give an enormous electorate in India and vast constituencies. This difficulty can be overcome by indirect election and the formation of electoral colleges.

The world is full of problems today and some of them, not finding solution, have led Europe into the dreadful holocaust of war. No problem is an easy one and each is tied up with so many others. None of us minimises the difficulties we have to face in India, difficulties of our own creation or due to our own failings, besides those created by the British Government. But the Indian problem is yet capable of solution peacefully and keeping in view the larger problems of the world. That solution is being hindered by reactionary elements in England and in India. Meanwhile the problem grows more serious, for behind it lie all manner of economic conflicts, the vast poverty of our country, the agrarian question, the feudal princely areas, and the dominance of British vested interests. The tragedy is that Britain should have encouraged, and should continue to encourage, disruptive and reactionary tendencies in India in order to preserve her imperial interests. She will not preserve them for they are destined to go, but they will go in hostility and conflict if no better way is found. The day when India could submit to external impositions is past.

It was a brave offer made on behalf of India to England for a declaration of war aims and Indian independence. If that had been accepted in the spirit in which it was made, there would have been an end to generations of conflict and struggle between the two countries,

and for the first time we would have had willing cooperation between equals. If England had accepted it, she would have startled the world and proved that she really stood for democracy and freedom. She would have gained a greater victory than any she can possibly achieve on the battlefield, and the moral backing of the world would have been with her.

But imperialisms die hard and British imperialism is old and tough. It was too much to expect that Mr. Chamberlain's Government should liquidate it, even under stress of war. It is clear to us that this imperialism is functioning and is seeking to preserve itself. India will be no party to this and therefore she has dissociated herself from the war. We have taken the first step in noncooperation, and though we have been in no hurry to take another step, events carry us inevitably towards further conflict.

Attempts will no doubt be made again by the British Government to come to terms with Indian nationalism. But they are foredoomed to failure unless they recognise that there are no half-way houses to Indian freedom, and that this can no longer be reconciled with British imperialism. That imperialism will have to be liquidated and India recognized to be an independent country. Dominion Status and the like have ceased to have significance and, in any event, they have no application to India. We have to think of the world in terms other than those of empire, whatever the degree of internal freedom it offers. If we have international cooperation, as we must, it has to be on a world scale. To that conception of international cooperation or world order India is fully attached and she would gladly associate herself with it.

In our struggle for freedom we have adhered to peaceful methods and have conceived of political action in moral terms, though we may have failed often enough in acting up to that conception. We have had misfortunes enough in the world, but if even this war is to be carried on in the old imperialist way with no higher aims, if it results in no essential difference to the world or to human freedom, if it does not end the root causes of war and human degradation, then that will be tragedy indeed. India would gladly work to prevent this tragedy. It was in this spirit that we invited the British Government to state their aims. It is in this spirit also that we shall try to continue, even though our path leads to conflict with England. We would ill serve the cause we cherish by submitting to that very evil of imperialism against which we have struggled for so long.

10. Prepare for All Eventualities[1]

Our country is passing through strange circumstances. The greatest question before us is that of the alleviation of poverty and the suffering of the poor and this can only be done by winning Swaraj, so that the masses might live in real peace and happiness.

We should all understand what is going on in the world. The world is in the grip of a devastating revolution and we must try to understand it. Nobody knows what its results will be and how it will affect India, but this much is certain that its effects will be felt in India also. You may say that we have no connection with the war going on in Europe —it has no direct concern with us—but I want to ask, will you not extinguish the fire if your neighbour's house is burning? As a matter of fact, we have to understand all these things and to think what to do, if not today, some day surely; then why not earlier?

The Working Committee has thought over the question and has asked the government to declare their war aims and to include India's freedom in these. We have declared our intention not to help in a war fought for imperialist purposes. We are not helping Germany either for we know that Nazism is no better than imperialism.

The government has given a roundabout answer to our demand. This clearly shows that the intention of the government is not good and there is some imperial motive behind the present war. How can we help in such a war? Consequently, we decided to noncooperate and took a big step in this direction by submitting the resignations of the Congress ministries in the eight provinces. If we had not resigned we would have been considered to have helped the government by our association. This policy of noncooperation continues and there are rumours of the launching of civil resistance and satyagraha. None can say what is in store, but this much is certain that we have to prepare ourselves for all eventualities.

It is necessary at all times to organize and more so now when we are preparing for the next step. Our method of *sangathan* is a unique one, for ours shall be a nonviolent army ready to suffer all. Swaraj is nearer today and we need *sangathan* most at this hour. Enrol yourselves as Congress and Seva Dal volunteers and shed internal party factions, which are eating into the very vitals of the national organisation.

1. Speech at Ghaziabad, 9 January 1940. From *The Hindustan Times*, 10 January 1940.

The communal question is the creation of a handful of job-hunters who have their own axes to grind to the detriment of the common cause. The Congress wants Swaraj not for one community or caste but for all. In fact, the winning of Swaraj has no reference to the communal question for if an act is passed for the benefit of the kisans or the labourers or the tradesmen, all of them will benefit equally without any distinction of caste or creed. Only those persons raise such questions who want to distract the nation's attention from the real issue, and we should be wide awake not to fall in their trap. Religion cannot be an impediment and should not be a bar in our fight for freedom. We can stick to our religion and still be soldiers of liberty.

Khadi is our uniform for Swaraj. Charkha will solve our impending difficulties consequent on the stoppage of import of foreign cloth. If we do not take to charkha, the millowners will become richer still and thus those morsels which would have gone to the mouths of the poor will be snatched away by the capitalists.

Celebrate the Independence Day with due enthusiasm and act up to the pledge to be taken on that day. Men may come and men may go, but the work for Swaraj shall go on and you should continue to contribute your quota towards our cherished goal of complete independence.

11. The Pilgrimage to Swaraj[1]

All talk of ultimatums[2] is useless. The real question is that of strength. If we had strength enough, we could have asked them even today to quit. The reason that assent was given to the Tenancy Bill is that the government knew very well that if assent was not given a sort of fire would break out in the country from one end to the other. Not only in the matter of the Remission of Arrears Act[3] but in all matters, big or small, it is strength

1. Address at Pilkhwa, 9 January 1940. From *The Hindustan Times*, 10 January 1940.
2. In the address of welcome, Jawaharlal had been asked to serve an ultimatum on the government if assent was not given to the Remission of Arrears of Rent Bill.
3. The Stayed Arrears of Rent Remission Bill of 1939 was passed to give permanent effect to the temporary legislation enacted by the Congress ministry as soon as it came into power to stay collection of arrears of rent in order to give immediate relief to tenants. The delay in giving assent caused uneasiness among Congress leaders as such delay might deprive the kisans of the full benefits of the Tenancy Act. The assent of the Governor was given on 31 January 1940.

that counts. Ministries could have done nothing if they did not have the popular sanction behind them. So it is only *sangathan* that can or will bring salvation to India. Leaders cannot help much. The pilgrimage to Swaraj will have to be done by you on your own legs.

The world conditions demand that we should be strong, otherwise we will be swept away and all the points gained so far would be snatched away. The real workers are those who work even if they do not occupy any offices. This chasing after offices has brought degeneration in our ranks which must be fought out to the last. Many things are in the offing and we will have to make an all-round preparation.

The coming Town and Notified Area elections have relation to the common good and, if contested in the proper spirit, will increase the strength of the Congress. I ask you to give your votes in favour of the Congress nominees in Pilkhwa,[4] where elections will be held in a few days.

If there is no early settlement with the government, our policy of non-cooperation, initiated with the resignation of Congress ministries, will go on and, perhaps, we will have to resort to civil disobedience.

4. A town in Ghaziabad *tehsil.*

12. The Forward March[1]

I thank the various associations for the addresses and purses presented to me. Aligarh is an important centre to India as it possesses a university and is an abode of the intelligentsia who mould politics and public opinion.

The history of the growth of nationalism in India dates back to the time when the masses had no voice and the kisans were looked down upon and trampled mercilessly by the capitalists and the zamindars. There is a marked difference between the present India and the India of twenty-five years ago.

Even in foreign countries India has now begun to be held in greater esteem than before as the experiences of my recent tours to China,

1. Speech at Aligarh, 9 January 1940. From the *National Herald,* 10 January 1940.

Spain and other countries have revealed to me. I also notice that the higher authorities of foreign countries are anxious to make friends with India. It is because they have realised that India is making headway towards independence and nationalism by breaking the fetters of slavery and that she has brains to guide her.

The resolutions passed by the Congress from time to time have had a very impressive effect on other countries. Indians should, therefore, march forward instead of going backward. It is high time that we make a united effort to gain freedom when the whole of Europe is involved in a war which is sure to affect the imperial system of government of every country, such as England, France, Japan and Germany.

The freedom of Egypt, Palestine and other Western countries is linked with that of India. The present war is the outcome of the maladies that had been in existence when the last war broke out in 1914, and they will never end unless the imperialistic system has gone and the capitalist system ceases to exist.

We have to put an end to imperialism. We are bitter enemies of British imperialism, and so also of Hitlerism. The Congress withdrew its ministers as it did not like that India should be dragged into the war without knowing her own position now and after the war.

This was the reason that led the Working Committee to pass a resolution asking the British Government to declare its war aims about India. That they did not do so is evident from the reply given by the Viceroy. In order to divert us from our path, problems of communal nature, Indian princes and minorities were brought to the forefront. The Congress does not want to remain in suspense for long. There is no hope of any understanding with the British Government on the lines chalked out by the Working Committee. There appears to be no alternative other than the weapon which was used in 1930. But before doing so we have to tackle some problems that have arisen out of the differences between the Congress and the Muslim League. I am sorry that the Muslim League has not joined us in putting forward a common demand for independence, but, on the other hand, has raised new questions.

The Working Committee has recently passed a resolution demanding a constituent assembly in order to frame the future constitution of India.[2] The whole of India should be divided into electoral colleges

2. The Working Committee resolution of 22 December 1939 criticised the statement of the Secretary of State for India and reiterated that a constituent assembly was the only way to attain a final settlement of the communal question.

from which representatives might be elected on the basis of adult franchise. Such an assembly will doubtlessly be a fairly large one, but the size can be reduced either by indirect election or by forming a small sub-committee to frame the constitution and to get it ratified by the assembly.

The Muslims are not a minority community as they are themselves in a majority in five provinces. The majority cannot dare to overlook the claims of the Muslims in the provinces where they are in a minority, as it will create repercussions in other provinces too.

Notwithstanding this, the Congress is ever ready to remove suspicions, if there are any. We have no objection to Muslims electing their representatives by separate electorates of their own; they will be free to replace them at any time by the joint electorate. There will be a declaration of the fundamental rights of minorities regarding the safeguard of their religion, language, and culture; and all questions arising from day to day can be decided by a supreme court like the Federal Court.

In the constituent assembly, proposed by the Congress, the question of minorities will not be decided by a majority of votes, as understood by some of you, but by common consent; and failing that by referring it to an arbitration board, not of British people, but of other nations preferably the League of Nations. The present problems of minorities in India are not religious as alleged, but more of an economic and political nature. I cannot think of any other method of satisfying a minority community, and if there is any we are ready to consider it. I would appeal to you to give up suspicion and work for the independence of India.

I have already expressed my views about the common language to be used in India in my booklet.[3] In my view Hindustani is the only language that can be treated as a national language for the whole of India. The question of script can be solved later on.

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 829-845.

13. To J. Holmes Smith[1]

Meerut
January 10, 1940

Dear Mr. Holmes Smith,[2]
I received your letter of January 1st a little before my departure from Allahabad. I gladly send this letter in reply and I hope that it will serve the purpose of putting you into touch with friends in America and of giving a message to your colleagues there.

I have welcomed your great enthusiasm for the cause of Indian freedom and your desire to do something to advance this cause in the U.S.A. Because of this you have not hesitated to sever your connection with the Lal Bagh Ashram. I hope you will carry with you our greetings to our friends and sympathisers in America. While we fully realise that the struggle for Indian freedom will have to be carried on and won in India itself, we value very greatly the good opinion and the sympathy of the people of America. In the world today they represent the most powerful democracy, and they will no doubt play a dominating part in the reshaping of world affairs. As we are ourselves devoted and committed to the ideal of a democratic free state in India we naturally look to America in many ways. It seems to me obvious that there can be no proper settlement of the world's problems unless India and China are also included in this settlement and are treated as free nations. Naturally we demand independence for ourselves. But we have made it clear that we stand for a new world order and India will gladly cooperate in such fashioning of the world's affairs. This can only be satisfactorily done on the basis of peace, freedom and democracy. Therefore it becomes essential that India and China should have freedom and democracy. Otherwise there will be no satisfactory political or economic settlement and the present want of equilibrium and conflict will continue. It is obvious that the tremendous resources, both actual and potential, of India and China must play an important part in the world's affairs.

For the present we have to concentrate on India's freedom but we try to view this in the wider perspective of the world, and inevitably in doing so we think of America.

1. *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 422-423.
2. American clergyman who came to India in 1930; professor of philosophy, Jabalpur, 1930-33; Principal, Mission High School, Belgaum, 1933-35; co-founder of the Lal Bagh Ashram in Lucknow and its acting Acharya until he was forced to resign and return to the United States because of his public expression of sympathy with the independence movement.

You know the attitude that we have taken up in regard to the European war. We have always been opposed to the fascist and Nazi doctrine and have condemned all aggression. If we had been sure that the present war was a conflict between freedom on the one side and Nazism on the other, we would gladly have thrown our weight on the side of freedom. But the invitation we issued to the British Government for a statement of war aims and for the treatment of India as a free country met with a rebuff and it was made clear to us that this war is essentially meant for the preservation of British imperialism. For this objective we cannot agree to the utilisation of our men and resources. If we are against Nazism, we are also against imperialism. This war, as it is at present being waged, seems to us a conflict between rival imperialisms and we can be no party to it unless it is made clear that the objective is freedom and democracy. That can only be made clear by the treatment accorded to India. Our demand is a simple one, though it raises fundamental issues. We want the declaration of Indian independence and the recognition of the right of the Indian people to frame their constitution through a constituent assembly without any interference from outside. If this is done, we feel that the whole fabric of British imperialism, as well as other imperialisms, will undergo a vital change and imperialism itself will be liquidated.

We should like the American people to understand the position we have taken up, for we are sure with this understanding there will follow sympathy and goodwill for a cause in which they must believe.

This is the message I should like you to take to our friends in America. As you know, the present situation in India is very unstable and at any moment there may be serious developments. Whatever these developments might be, we shall hold to these objectives and struggle to achieve them.

The minorities problem has been made to appear as an obstruction in the way of our freedom. But in reality this is not so, for we are prepared to give every conceivable guarantee to the minorities in India within the limits of democracy, freedom and Indian unity.

With all good wishes to you and your colleagues,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. Britain Clouding the Real Issues[1]

The present political situation in the country and in the world is very complex. I do not know how to untie the several knots that present themselves before us in several forms. During the transition period of a nation or of a country, thousands of difficulties have to be faced. We have declared complete independence as our goal and to achieve this we have had to make innumerable sacrifices. We regard British imperialism as our enemy and are giving it a fight. Swaraj appears to be nearer and just at the moment when it appears to be within our grasp new and difficult problems have sprung up to thwart our onward march and put us in doubt. Every problem is linked with some other big problem and we cannot understand these problems clearly unless we put before us the picture of the whole world.

The world is in a dynamic state. And for a changing world, as for a growing man, one has to prepare new garments to suit the needs. One's dress proves troublesome and becomes a burden as one grows up. The old dress tends to obstruct the growth. But the growth cannot be prevented by it. As one would grow even tearing one's clothes, so the society will change in spite of the obstacles put in its way by interested persons. This is what is known as revolution. India cannot be immune to the developments on the world stage since the last Great War. The last war was the beginning of the end of the old system of things and the process is still continuing. I cannot say how long it would take to die altogether. But it is bound to die. No one can foretell the future but one thing is certain and that is the old system of things will never come back in its former shape. It is possible that something worse than that might come. The present war will not benefit anyone. It will prove injurious to all. Even the Hindu-Muslim question, which appears to be of local interest, is part of a bigger world problem.

The greatest difficulty in our country which is to be regretted is that everyone is prepared to prescribe a remedy and none to diagnose the disease. In order to solve a problem we must be able to understand it. During the last twenty years India has changed rapidly. The national movement in the country has made rapid strides. The downtrodden Indian nation has become bold and courageous. And whenever a nation

1. Speech at Meerut, 11 January 1940. From the *National Herald*, 12 January 1940.

grows strong a period of revolution sets in. We do not care for restrictive laws. They come and will continue to come. We only want strength in our people, for with it we can resist any undesirable measure. In the past our naked and starved peasant has given a successful fight to the mightiest power in the world and if we are strong enough we cannot be suppressed by anyone.

Poland and Czechoslovakia have been wiped off from the map of the world. In spite of their bravery they have been defeated. The present warfare has become such a complex affair that if a power is slightly inferior to its foe it is doomed.

Historically, the British Empire is dead. It might take a few years for the total removal of its present form. Its naval supremacy has been thrown to the winds by the progress of aerial warfare. England, which was considered a safe and protected island, is now no more invulnerable.

The chief source of the power of a nation lies in the organisation and strength of its masses. Even the greatest leaders cannot do anything unless they have the people's backing. Secret actions will not enable the masses to participate in the nation's struggle for freedom. The weapon of nonviolence is most suited to our needs.

It is true that the Congress is not absolutely pure. It has its weaknesses. I feel pained and distressed to see our internal strifes. Still I think that there is no other organisation in the world which can equal it. The Congress has always worked honestly and sincerely for the good of the Indian people.

Swaraj is not a Hindu or a Muslim commodity. Every community is bound to benefit by it and get its due share in a free India. There can be neither a Hindu nor a Muslim raj.

Every free country must allow members of every community full liberty to discharge their religious duties and protect their language and culture. And when every basic thing is conceded I do not know of any problem that cannot be solved. Muslims in India are about eight or nine crores in number and to call them a weak people is not correct. In five provinces they have their majority. None dare suppress such a strong people and if one attempts it the result will be disastrous to the country.

We have no sympathy with Hitlerism. Herr Hitler has painted us, as every other man of Asia except the Japanese, in black colours. As we have no sympathy with Hitlerism so also we have none with imperialism.

If we had declared a war against British imperialism at once we would have degraded ourselves in the eyes of those countries of the world which are against Hitlerism. We would have been accused of siding with Herr Hitler. The anti-Hitler countries would have thought that we had been bribed by Herr Hitler. And our voice could not have easily reached them.

The reply given by the government to the Congress Working Committee's demand for the declaration of war and peace aims of Britain is hollow and absolutely unconvincing. It makes it clear that they are not fighting for the independence of others but for the protection of their own empire. We have made our intentions clear to the world, and we cannot be a party to the present war under the existing circumstances.

There is a growing impatience to launch the struggle for freedom. But we have to be very cautious regarding every step we take, for every step taken in the present times cannot be retraced and God alone knows where it will lead us. Before deciding on the next step we have to weigh everything very carefully. The country's greatest general is preparing the country for a big fight and when the time comes he will order the march. The Congress is the only organisation in the country which will bring independence and other organisations can only assist it in achieving that goal.

The present European war has nothing to do with our communal problems, but as a little time elapsed after the war, this question was propped up by the bureaucracy to cloud the issue of India's independence. Much in the present war depends on America's help and Britain wants to enlist its sympathies. Britain is very anxious to see that India's problems do not create a bad impression about it in the minds of the Americans and, in order to show to the world that Indians themselves are divided, the communal question has been thrust forward. The question before us in relation to the war is political and not communal. We will decide our communal problems at the appropriate hour. There are very few people who will say that they do not want India's independence for if they said that no one would listen to them. They, however, in different ways put forward such notions as would hinder us in achieving freedom.

15. A Fight to the Finish[1]

The world is in for vast and fundamental changes which will alter its shape. As a matter of fact, it is on fire, and if we are not prepared we may all get burnt. When such is the case, it is disgusting to hear talks of percentages and claims, as if we were cattle or sheep. We are not starting civil disobedience in a hurry. We must make full preparations for this, as this time it has to be a fight to the finish. We are glad that our organization in U.P. is strong, especially among the tenants. We can effect a revolution if we like. But any steps that we take should be taken after full preparation, consideration and organization. The Congress is the only body in India which has been fighting for the country's freedom all along. Other bodies, whatever their pretensions, do not act up to their professions.

I had last come to Muzaffarnagar about twenty years ago. Since then, a vast change has come over India and Indians. The backs of Indians have straightened, and their eyes have begun to shine with a new light. Previously we were cowed down, as a slave nation naturally is, but twenty years ago our diffidence vanished, as if by magic, and unarmed, starved and downtrodden though we were, we gave a splendid fight to the mighty British. Since then, we have continually progressed. We used to be looked down upon by other countries. All this is changed. A new international respect towards India has developed. Gandhiji and the Congress are familiar terms even among the common people of other countries. It became clear that India could not possibly remain much longer a possession of England. The moment it becomes free, a great country like ours is bound to play an important part in all international affairs.

Side by side with our increasing self-respect, our complaining mentality also changed. We began to assert ourselves and take independent lines, so much so that today some countries speak of India as if it was an independent country. On behalf of the Congress we sent help to Spain and China. True, the help was not much in terms of money and material. But this showed that the Congress had a foreign policy not only independent but often opposed to the official policy of British rule in India.

1. Speech at Muzaffarnagar, 12 January 1940. From *The Hindustan Times*, 14 January 1940.

We are going to win freedom soon; of this there is no doubt. I do not mean provincial ministries and such like things. The people got them, not because of anybody's courtesy or kindness, but because the people of our country had strength. The people utilized the ministries for their good, however limited under the peculiar circumstances. No power on earth can prevent our getting our birthright. This has been realized by all concerned. Not daring, therefore, to oppose our onward march in a direct manner, the British Government and its allies have begun to play upon side issues. Religion in the name of which so many evils have been seen flourishing is being adopted as an excuse, so that the mind of the people might be diverted from the principal issue, that is the battle of freedom.

The Hindus are in a big majority over all other religious groups in India. That is a fact which nobody can help. The Muslims, a minority no doubt, are by no means a small minority. They form majorities in five out of the eleven provinces. Even if one were to wish it, it will be an idle dream to think of suppressing them, however one might try. Oppression by one community over the other in one province is bound to have reactions in other provinces where the relative population strength of the communities is reversed. Congress has given a guarantee—it can do no more—for the protection of religion, culture, language and script of the minorities in a free India. It may be argued that this is hardly sufficient as safeguards might easily be washed away under majority rule. The remedy suggested for this is the constituent assembly.

The constituent assembly will be a representative body of the people of India elected by them. The minorities will have the right to select their representatives by separate electorates, if they so choose. The Congress and I personally are opposed to separate electorates, as even after satisfying all the demands of the minority community, the minority will still remain a minority and there will always remain a sense of frustration. Questions affecting minorities are to be decided by themselves, failing which they can be decided by arbitration. No better or fairer solution seems possible; there is no feasible alternative.

Objections have been raised by various parties. Mr. Jinnah has said that the masses are ignorant and they cannot well be expected or entrusted to judge and decide rightly. Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan has suggested the convening of a small committee of twelve men. These would include not only the princes but also British interests. What remains will be allotted to the various parties, communities and interests in India to be nominated by the Viceroy. There is a whole world of difference between this mentality and the stand that the Congress has taken up. The Congress wants that representatives of the teeming millions of India

who have their good at heart and who can suffer for them should decide the question. Sir Sikandar wanted twelve nominees of the Viceroy, all or most of whom have never given even a moment's thought to the plight of the Indian masses, to decide their destiny.

The question of Swaraj does not admit of delay. You cannot very well tell a famished man to wait for two days or ten days for his food. The constitution that the people want must satisfy the people themselves, and not a few people selected by the Viceroy. Subhas Babu's objection is that the Congress demand is for Purna Swaraj, so why has the question of constituent assembly been dragged in?[2] Presuming, for instance, that we succeed in sending away the British, we would still have to sit together and devise a constitution.

I fail to see how legislation on day-to-day problems can possibly differentiate between one community and the other. Swaraj is equally for all, not for this community or that community.

The Viceroy has taunted us with failure to arrive at an agreement on the communal question. We ask the British Government: why has it entered the war? It replies that it is in defence of freedom and democracy. This is very good, but did it not say the same thing when it entered the last Great War; yet after its termination it acted quite differently. We also like freedom, we also like democracy, we want to help Britain if it can demonstrate to us the sincerity of its purpose. It has only to recognize our independence; it has not got to consult anybody for this. The prosecution of the war cannot possibly be a hindrance to its making such a declaration. The reply is that these questions do not arise during the war. After the war the British Government will consult all Indian opinion, including the princes and other vested interests, together with the representatives of the British interests. It is clear from this reply that the war is being waged to preserve British imperialism, and not in defence of people's freedom or democracy. Opposed as the Congress is to Hitlerism, it is resolved that it cannot associate in this war to regain others' freedom when we ourselves can be easily freed but are not freed.

The ministries have resigned and now the Governors reign supreme. They are going on merrily with full autocratic powers. The Tenancy Act has been placed on the Statute Book, not because the Governor

2. On 1 January 1940, Subhas Bose had said: "... the Congress Working Committee substituted the demand for a constituent assembly in place of the National Demand for Purna Swaraj." He argued that the constituent assembly could be convened only by a national government; if convened under "the aegis of an imperialist government and elected on the basis of separate electorates (it) would end in disaster to the Congress and to the Indian people."

knows the power of the people. The Rent Remission Bill is similarly awaiting his signature. If this is not done, we cannot sit silent, but will certainly act.

I appeal to the people to join the Congress as members and to the young men who are present here to enrol as volunteers. I hope you will make the Independence Day an unprecedented success.

16. What of Russia Now?[1]

The last few months have brought many changes and many disasters, and the world sinks deeper into the morass. The future is uncertain and full of gloom, and the bright idealism, which persisted even through the conflicts and betrayals of the thirties, seems to fade away. War and violence, aggression and duplicity, and unadulterated opportunism overshadow the world, and the shape of things to come grows more and more amorphous and shapeless. None pays heed to or believes in the fine phrases of politicians or gives credence to their promises. The new order that was to come, the dream that was to find realization, where is it now? From whose womb will it find birth? Will this growing chaos give birth to the bright star of freedom and world cooperation?

Perhaps we grow unduly pessimistic and lack faith and courage and the future is not so dark as the present would lead us to think. But the future must have its roots in the present and must grow out of the soil on which we stand today. It is this today that depresses—not so much the war and all the horror that accompanies it, as the weakening of the ideals which have given us strength for so long. Those ideals remain, but doubts creep in and disturb the mind. Is humanity prepared for the realization of those ideals? Can it achieve them in the near future?

Nothing is more significant today, or more full of sorrow, than the weakening almost everywhere (though not so much in India) of the

1. 16 January 1940. *National Herald*, 19 January 1940. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 249-257.

progressive forces. Shock after shock has shattered them and laid them low, and today they are a disbanded and disgruntled army, not knowing which way to turn. Soviet Russia, their symbol of hope and fulfilment, has descended from the pedestal on which her ardent champions had placed her, and bartered away her moral prestige and the friendship of so many of her friends for seeming political advantage.

It has never been easy for anyone to be neutral about Russia; there has either been open-mouthed admiration and enthusiasm or bitter hatred. Both attitudes were inevitably wrong and yet both could be understood. For hatred was natural among those who clung to vested interests and ancient privilege and saw in Russia the uprooter of both; and enthusiasm for a new order based on a juster and more scientific economic system filled the minds of those who were weary of the conflicts and misery of the old order. Joy at this tremendous step made the enthusiasts overlook or excuse many an error that accompanied it. That was right, for what counted most was the basic change in Russia, and yet it was no good turn to her to accept unthinkingly everything that came out of her. No nation or people prosper if they grow complacent or avoid all criticism.

The prestige of Russia grew with her planning and her wonderful advances in many directions. Then came the batches of trials which cast a gloom on this picture. Those trials, or most of them, may have been justified, but why should so much intrigue and sabotage occur on such a scale even in a country which had passed through a mighty revolution? All was not well internally, and violence and suppression of criticism grew. But the masses were not affected by the conflicts at the top and they continued to progress. The economic order was justifying itself.

Whatever doubts there were about internal conditions, there were none about Russia's external policy. Year after year this policy was based on peace, collective security and the aiding and encouragement of those who resisted aggression. While the Nazi and fascist powers were openly carrying out their programme of unabashed aggression and England and France were aiding them by their foreign policy, Soviet Russia stood as a symbol of a straightforward and integrated policy of international peace. Because she did not fall in line with the tortuous intrigues of the western European powers she was ignored, insulted and humiliated.

This was a hard pill to swallow for a great power and resentment grew and the desire to avenge itself. The pill was rejected, but in this process Russia overreached herself by adopting a policy of a too facile opportunism even at the cost of what she had stood for in the eyes of the world.

The Russo-German Pact was a shock and the manner and timing of it smacked patently of this opportunism. Yet it could be understood and partly explained. Subsequent policy in the Baltic regions carried us a step further. There was explanation for this also for the Soviet wanted to protect its north-western frontier from attack and everyone knew that this was the danger zone. Yet our doubts increased.

Then came the attack on Finland. The demands made on Finland had some justification from the point of view of Russia's future security. Yet it must be remembered that every great power tends to extend its frontiers on the plea of security. In war time and with the possible danger of a shift in Europe which might bring about a concerted and joint attack on Russia, the desire to protect these frontiers and the great and vital city of Leningrad was understandable. But the armed invasion of Finland passed these bounds, and Russia lined herself with aggressor nations, and thereby was false to the tradition she had herself nourished for these many years. She has paid heavily for this vital error, and paid in a coin which cannot be counted, for it is made up of the wishes and ideals of innumerable human beings. No individual, no nation can play about with this priceless coinage without suffering grievous loss, much less a nation which has prided itself on its basic principles and ideals.

It is probably true that Soviet Russia never expected any serious resistance from the Finns and believed that they would capitulate rather than risk war, as the other Baltic states had done. It is also probable that the Soviet Government expected the Finnish workers and peasantry to welcome the invasion by the Red Army. In both these beliefs they were wrong. It is an undoubted fact that Finland was and is being assisted by Italy, France and England, and has thus become the nucleus of an anti-Soviet combination. It is also true that the news that comes to us is tainted and one-sided and we cannot place much reliance on it. But there can be little doubt that the Finnish people are resisting the invasion as a united nation, and both the Finnish trade unions and the peasantry are backing this resistance. A small democratic nation is fighting gallantly for its freedom and against aggression and it is inevitable that sympathy should go to it.

To the forces of reaction everywhere this war in Finland has come as a special dispensation from heaven. Under cover of it they have hidden their own aggressions and betrayals, and presumed to stand up as the champions of the oppressed against aggression. Their hatred of socialism and Soviet Russia as a socialist state now finds a congenial atmosphere to function. The League of Nations, which had slumbered peacefully throughout the rape of Austria and Czechoslovakia, which had philosophically accepted Munich and connived at the infamous policy of

non-intervention in Spain, which had said nothing about the Nazi invasion of Poland, now suddenly wakes up and is used as a weapon to strike Soviet Russia.[2]

But the real tragedy is the effect on progressive opinion everywhere—in Europe, America and Asia. Those who are in charge of Russia's Government have themselves dealt a more severe blow to their cause than any enemy or combination of enemies could have done. They have lost that enormous fund of goodwill that they possessed, and injured, by associating aggression with it, the cause of socialism itself. There is no necessary connection between the two, and it is well that we separate them. But for us to advocate and defend Soviet aggression, or even to acquiesce in it passively, is to do grave disservice to socialism. There are those who have made it their creed to defend every activity of the Soviet Government, and who consider it a heresy or *lèse-majesté* for anyone to criticize or condemn any such activity. That is the way of blind faith which has nothing to do with reason. It is not on that basis that we can build up freedom here or elsewhere. Integrity of mind and sincerity of purpose can be given up only at peril to ourselves and to our cause. We are not tied down to any decisions made for us elsewhere. We make our own decisions and fashion our own policies.

We have to beware of the spate of propaganda that comes to us from tainted and partial sources against Russia. We have to keep on guard against the atrocity campaigns worked up in foreign countries or in India against the Soviet. We have to hold to our belief, if we so believe, in socialism and the socialist order as a solvent of the world's ills. We have to remember that Soviet Russia, in spite of her many failings, has gone a long way to establish this economic system, and it would be a tragedy if this mighty scheme of things, so full of promise for the future, was ended or crippled. We can be no parties to this.

But we must also realize that the Soviet Government has erred egregiously in many matters and based itself too much on violence and opportunism and authoritarianism. They have not sought to keep their means above reproach and so their ends are being twisted to fit in with these means. Means are not ends, though they control them. But means must be in keeping with the ends, or else the end itself becomes a misshapen thing, totally different from the objective aimed at.

We in India, therefore, extend our friendly sympathy to the socialism of Russia, and any attempt to break it will meet with our strong

2. In response to Finland's request for the League's intervention in the Soviet-Finnish conflict, the League Assembly passed a resolution on 14 December 1939, naming Soviet Russia the aggressor and calling for her expulsion from the League.

disapproval. But we do not give our sympathy to the political manoeuvres and aggressions of Russia's Government. In the war against Finland our sympathies are for the people of Finland who have struggled so gallantly to preserve their freedom. If Russia persists in this, the results will be disastrous for her and for the world.

We have to remember yet again that in this revolutionary age of transition and change, when all our old values are upset and we seek new standards, we must retain our integrity of mind and purpose and hold fast to means and methods which are right and which are in conformity with our ideals and objectives. Those objectives will not be achieved through violence or authoritarianism or the opportunism of the moment. We must adhere to nonviolence and right action and evolve through this the free India for which we labour.

17. To Stafford Cripps[1]

Allahabad
January 17, 1940

My dear Stafford,

I reeeived your letter two weeks ago and I have been thinking of writing to you ever since. But then I waited for some new development so that I might inform you of it. There is no great change in the situation here. The Viceroy spoke the other day[2] and except for defining Dominion Status a little more fully, he did not say much else. I have no doubt that he desires to find a solution for this deadlock and that he is himself worried because of the communal problem. But there can be no doubt that the new phase of it has been brought about by Linlithgow and Zetland by their utterances in public as well as in private. Many things that might have been done two or three months ago are more difficult today. We drift. Meanwhile the Muslim League is visibly weakening. The 'day of deliverance' business did a good deal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On 10 January 1940, the Viceroy said at Bombay: "I assure you that His Majesty's Government's concern and mine is to spare no effort to reduce to the minimum the interval between the existing state of things and the achievement of Dominion Status." He asked the leaders of the great political parties of India to help terminate the constitutional deadlock as early as possible.

of injury to it and the absence of the Congress ministries has made it lose the only job it had.

I have just returned from an intensive tour of some of the north-western districts of our province.[3] These districts have a large Muslim population and I went there specially to find out the reactions of these people. I visited the cities but more specially the rural areas and addressed about two dozen very large meetings, apart from many road-side gatherings. I was astonished at the response and the enthusiasm which was like what I had seen three years ago at the time of the general elections. The Muslim peasantry were happy at the new Tenancy Act. There were large numbers of Muslims working for the Congress. The average reaction among the Muslim middle class was definitely against the League, though it was not always wholly pro-Congress. Most of them did not quite know what to do. They were worried at what was happening and did not like the way Jinnah had been behaving.

The real conflict in India at the present moment can be analysed as follows: with the Congress we have overwhelmingly the Hindu lower middle class as well as the Hindu and Muslim peasantry (though in the Punjab and Bengal the peasantry is neutral owing to lack of work, but it will always be roused on a peasant issue). The industrial workers, both Muslim and Hindu, are either for the Congress or more advanced. The Muslim League represents upper middle class Muslims as well as the feudal class. It has always a fair following among the lower middle class Muslims. The Hindu feudal and other classes drift towards the Hindu Mahasabha or tag themselves on to the British Government. They do not count very much as against the Congress. Jinnah's hold being largely confined to upper class people, he is afraid of any appeal to the mass electorates of Muslims. There is a very marked feeling against the Muslim League growing among the lower class Muslims. Hence Jinnah objects to any reference to the wide electorates, even though this may be on separate Muslim electorate. Much more does he object to adult suffrage. Other Muslim organisations which are more in touch with the masses are keen on adult suffrage or something like it. Essentially the conflict between the Congress and the League is a conflict between the lower middle classes with a large mass following and the Muslim feudal and middle classes. Of course the religious element confuses the issue and excitement can be roused up in the name of Allah and Islam.

3. From 7 to 13 January 1940 Jawaharlal visited Aligarh, Bulandshahr, Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur and Moradabad districts.

It is Jinnah's wish to control the political situation and to prevent what might be called advanced politics by using the communal question. The real conflict is essentially political and economic.

I think I told you that nothing short of a declaration in favour of Indian independence is likely to go down with the Congress. It is not so much a question of breaking entirely with England as an intense feeling that we must fashion our own destiny. If the Dominion Status of the Westminster variety is as good as independence, why be afraid of using the word independence? The avoidance of the use of this word itself creates suspicion and leads people to think that there is something wrong and something else is intended.

The question of an electorate being very wide, and preferably adult, is also important. Unless we go down to the masses, there is always danger of our remaining tied up with our communal or other class problems. I do not see any reason why a constituent assembly should not be elected indirectly by adult suffrage.

The course of the war is making it more and more difficult for any enthusiasm to grow up in India in favour of cooperating with Britain and France. What might have been done in the early days of the war, if conditions had been suitable and a proper approach been made by the British Government, is not so easy now. There seems to be a stalemate and this is likely to continue for some time. I do not expect anything spectacular to happen till the next annual session two months hence.

Under these circumstances, I hardly feel like pressing you to come back at this stage to India, though of course you will be very welcome at any time. For the present you have done what you could and if any new development takes place which might require your presence, I shall certainly let you know. Now that you are in China I think it will be worthwhile for you to stay there as long as you can conveniently do so and get first-hand knowledge of the situation there.

It was very delightful to have you and Geoffrey here for a few days and I felt rather sad when both of you went away. It is difficult at the best of times in these days of war and conflict and disruption to feel cheerful, and it is a great privilege to meet with friends who can rise above the difficulties of the moment and view events calmly and with vision.

I hope your visit to China will be fruitful of good results.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. A Confidential Note on Congress Policy[1]

In considering the present position and what should be put forward as India's demand, it is important that we keep in mind the complexities of the international situation and the war and the possible outcome of this war. All this is entirely uncertain and it is difficult to base any calculation on it, and yet it cannot possibly be ignored, or else we might get entangled with all manner of commitments which we find difficult or undesirable to accept. It was for this reason that the Working Committee laid stress in their statement of September 14, 1939 on these wider implications and the whole background of the war, and asked for a declaration of war aims. Any precise announcement of war or peace aims is perhaps difficult at this stage, but this difficulty does not arise in a general and somewhat vague declaration which may deal with the ending of the imperialist method of governing and exploiting countries and introducing the principle of self-determination to the largest possible extent in colonial and dependent countries. The cooperation of peoples and nations, both political and economic, on a democratic foundation and a world basis, should be aimed at. Disarmament would be essential.

There is at present a great deal of talk about a united states of Europe or a loose federation of democratic countries, including England, France, U.S.A., some minor European countries and some British Dominions. It seems almost inevitable that some such attempt will be made at the end of the war, if there is anything left then. But all such talk completely ignores Asiatic countries and colonial areas. It is confined to European peoples. It is thus a dangerous objective from our point of view, as well as that of China or other countries. It means European consolidation to hold on to and exploit Asia and Africa.

It is necessary therefore that we must insist now and continuously on the wider objective of world cooperation of free nations, including Asiatic nations, and ending colonial domination. Few thinking people imagine that the British Empire, as constituted today, will continue after the war. If, unhappily, it does continue, this will mean three or four vast groups in the world, hostile to each other and preparing against

1. Written at Wardha, 20 January 1940. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

each other for political and economic conflicts. It would be unfortunate for us to be associated with such an empire.

For the present, the immediate and pressing problem for us is India and what should be done here. Is it possible to come to terms with Britain and, if so, what should these terms be? While this is the real problem for us, it would be unwise to separate it from the wider problem referred to above. We shall then see it in wrong perspective and this might lead us to wrong conclusions and dangerous entanglements. The war situation has all manner of sinister possibilities. It is safer for us not to commit ourselves at this stage unless that commitment is based on clear principles which we hold, and on our ability to prevent ourselves being dragged in directions we disapprove of. It must always be remembered that the present British cabinet is excessively reactionary in outlook and to expect good to come out of it, except under stress of circumstances, is to expect something that is beyond the bounds of probability or even of possibility. Nothing can be taken for granted by us, nothing can be left vague. Every loop-hole that is left will be used against us. Every possible misinterpretation of equivocal phrases will be made. The problem is not one of satisfying the Viceroy or of getting assurances from him. The Viceroy counts, as everything counts when the scales are evenly balanced, but the conflict is a far deeper one and individuals do not vitally affect it.

We desire a settlement of course, for the failure to have such a settlement will inevitably lead to conflict on a big scale and no one knows the consequences of such a conflict. Even if the British authority is weakened or eliminated, the internal forces of disruption may gain the upper hand and lead to chaos and anarchy. We want to avoid that. But a settlement on a wrong basis will be no settlement at all and might lead ultimately to that very chaos when even the central cohesive force of the Congress will become powerless to shape events, and adventurers and communalists will do as they like. It is better, therefore, not to have a settlement and to await the development of events than to accept something which is a feeble and a wrong settlement with the seeds of evil and conflict in it.

Coming to the particular problem that confronts us in India today, we must not view it merely as a disagreement between us and the British Government but as an integral part of a world problem. A settlement involves an ending of that disagreement but from that larger point of view. Both from the standpoint of England and India this is the right approach, and this approach will be understood and appreciated in other countries. Viewed as such, our communal problem falls into its proper place and does not dominate us, as otherwise it might.

The British Government should therefore make some general declaration about its aims and the future of its empire. In regard to India it should recognise the right of India to independence and self-determination, that is, the right of the Indian people to frame their own constitution as that of a free state, and to determine the relations of this state to England. So far as the British Government is concerned, it may express its own wish that a free India may continue as a partner in a British federation of free nations, but it will be for the Indian people to determine this and it will be open to them to sever this connection if they so wish. For the present, this connection inevitably continues till that decision is finally made.

Thus though we do not expressly deny the possibility of Dominion Status after the Westminster model, we cannot commit ourselves to it because:

(i) We do not know what the position will be at the end of the war and how this conception might develop.

(ii) We think that the ideal should be a larger world group and not one confined to the British group, which necessarily would mean other and possibly hostile groups. To this larger group we would gladly owe allegiance, as we hope England will.

(iii) We do not know what political or economic policy England or her Dominions will follow then. If this is not in conformity with our policy we cannot find a place in her group.

(iv) We cannot be parties to a group which denies us racial equality and treats our countrymen in the manner they are treated today in parts of the empire.

(v) The conception of Dominion Status developed as between England and her own people spread out in various colonies. There was and is much in common between them. These common bonds are lacking here and it is difficult to see how Dominion Status fits in with India.

(vi) Psychologically, Dominion Status is bitterly opposed in India and it cannot be accepted quite apart from its context because in many minds it is still a symbol of alien domination to some extent. A free India, deciding for itself, may choose its own way and may ally itself closely with England. But before it does so it must clearly have this freedom to decide. Not to have it itself means that something is being imposed upon her. Not to be called independent is itself significant as it means that something less is meant.

If the British Government make a proper and acceptable declaration then steps have to be taken to give effect to it. There is no reason why

this process should be delayed till the end of the war. We should not agree to this postponement though circumstances may perhaps lead to that. In any event the process will take a year or so. A constituent assembly being agreed to, its details should be worked out. I think adult suffrage is essential both from the political and communal points of view. But, to avoid difficulties, indirect election should be accepted, the primary electors electing electoral colleges. Separate electorates for those recognised minorities as desire it.

Minority problems will be settled, as stated, by agreement and in case of no agreement, by arbitration. Even before the constituent assembly meets, the fundamental laws protecting the minorities and citizens generally should be agreed to, and the constituent assembly should not touch these. These laws may be those incorporated in the Karachi resolution[2] as well as possibly some others.

The constituent assembly will elect by proportional representation a committee to draft the constitution for its consideration. Proportional representation will enable minorities to be represented on it. The constitution as framed by the constituent assembly will be final. We need have no objection to the British Parliament passing it in any way it likes, provided that in doing so it divests itself of further authority over India and the constitution. The proper course, however, would be for the constituent assembly to elect representatives to confer with representatives of the British Government in regard to the many matters—defence, trade, finances, services, etc.—which have to be settled by mutual agreement. This agreement will form the basis of a treaty between England and India and it may be for a period of ten years or so. It is this treaty, of which a part will be the Indian constitution, which will be ratified by the British Parliament on the one hand and the new Indian parliament on the other hand. How this will be done is a matter for lawyers to determine.

If there is such a treaty, it means naturally some kind of an alliance for that period. What legal relationship should subsist between us then will depend on world developments and cannot be decided now.

The financial part of the treaty will probably give rise to more trouble than the rest, especially the question of India's public debt. If this is not agreed to mutually, the matter to be referred to the arbitration of an impartial authority like the Hague Court.

The question of minorities will offer difficulties. Possibly some guarantees about them might be incorporated in the treaty with the proviso that if there is an alleged breach of the guarantees, either party can demand impartial arbitration.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 511-513.

British financial or vested interests cannot be given a privileged position over Indian interests. At the most they will be given the most favoured nation treatment.

If any such settlement is arrived at between the British Government and the Indian people, it should be made clear that our attitude to the war will depend upon us. They will have our moral support and such other support as India may consider desirable and within her power. But she cannot be dragged about in any direction by British foreign and war policy. Fundamentally India's policy will have to be determined by India's representatives. At the conclusion of the war, India must have her own representatives at the peace conference.

A settlement involves numerous adjustments during the present transitional period so that in effect, if not so much in law, Indian opinion must prevail. These implications must be fully accepted and the Viceroy and his advisers must realise that their position will change considerably. The Viceroy's executive council should be largely composed of elected members of the Central Assembly. It will be desirable to have a composite cabinet under the circumstances so as to avoid communal trouble. The details of this can be considered separately. It would be much better for a fresh election of the Central Assembly to be held but on the provincial register.

It would be essential for the war committee—or whatever it is called—to have popular representatives whose decisions count. The committee would also of course have permanent heads of the defence departments.

There would be reversion to provincial autonomy. Ordinarily this would offer no difficulty, it being made clear that under the new circumstances, the governor must act purely as a constitutional chief, and the special ordinances, etc., will not function, unless the legislature decides in favour of any. The real difficulty will be the communal one. After all the shouting about the 'day of deliverance', the Muslim League will object strongly to the old ministries going back. They will demand coalition or composite ministries. I am entirely opposed to composite ministries and dislike the idea of coalitions unless there is real agreement about policies and discipline. It is possible to have a minorities department of each government and a committee elected by proportional representation in each assembly to safeguard the interests of the minorities.

One thing is important—the various Government of India Act Amending Bills, which restrict the powers of the provincial assemblies, should not be given effect to. There is one such Amending Bill now before the British Parliament, chiefly due to the passing by the U.P. legislature of the Employment Tax Bill. As proof that Parliament is not going to interfere, this and the like must be given up.

This is one matter. The real point is that the whole outlook and basis of the Government of India must change completely if there is settlement, and it must be recognised that the new phase is entirely different from the past. It is a phase of popular government through popular representatives and popular goodwill. It is not possible for popular representatives to govern through repression.

In many respects the policy of the Government of India has been thoroughly bad in recent months—in regard to the states, appointments, etc. This will naturally undergo a change.

The question of the states has not been touched in this note. I do not think we should raise it directly at this stage but indirectly they will be powerfully affected. The door of the constituent assembly should be left open to them but on the same democratic conditions as the others. If they do not choose to come, they can stay out for the present. We can deal with them later.

19. The Evolving New Order[1]

I admit that the Viceroy's recent Bombay speech is an advance on the previous stand taken up by him, but I still think that the present British cabinet is not capable of meeting our demand for Swaraj. We have to keep up our fight for freedom and for that purpose we may even have to resort to satyagraha.

The time has come when none dares speak against Swaraj, even though he or she does not like it. Impediments are, however, being put in its way in the name of religion and minorities. The differences are not really religious but political. It is the final effort of the feudal classes and others, who do not want Swaraj, to combat Swaraj but they dare not say so. It is for this reason that the Congress wants to gauge public opinion through a constituent assembly, and it is for this reason also that the idea is being vigorously opposed by some men.

Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan suggested that India's fate should be decided by a dozen men, but these dozen will frame a constitution only favouring themselves. If the constitution is to be framed for the general public it should be framed by the masses themselves.

1. Speech at Nagpur, 22 January 1940. From the *National Herald*, 23 January 1940.

The world is in a melting pot and the times are critical. The world in which we are living is changing and a new order is evolving. Great changes have taken place. The peasant is now not the same helpless creature of twenty years ago, but can raise his head. A change in their attitude towards India can also be seen in other countries. Hearing of our satyagraha movements, they have greater respect for us and they believe that India will soon be free. India's position has put her on par with other countries and they are now anxious to have better relations with her. They are trying to befriend India, as though she is free or is going to be free. The Indian's tone and outlook has also undergone a change and an Indian now does not talk with a foreigner in complaining terms, but in terms of equality and dignity.

There is hardly any national body in the world to match the Congress. Foreigners always ask questions about two things—Gandhi and the Congress. I admit that there are some weaknesses in the Congress organisation, but they are only to be expected in such a vast body. But in such critical times as the present, its members should behave like soldiers in a disciplined manner. It is inexperience and folly that make people move in different ways. That is not the way to fight a big battle. That everyone is expressing his views freely is to be appreciated but at the same time everyone should ultimately follow on the lines decided.

The Congress demand had a good effect in various countries and its stand has been upheld as against the Viceroy's reply. The Muslim League is opposed to a constituent assembly. The League's attitude indicates that it is not right to say that it wants Swaraj. Nobody, however, can stop Swaraj and I trust that we will be able to solve our differences. We may get Swaraj if not by our strength, then by the British Government's weakness.

People are anxious about starting satyagraha and feel that the Congress is showing great weakness by not starting it. I feel, however, that it would have been a great weakness on the part of the Congress, if at the commencement of the war, satyagraha had been launched. If that had been done, it would have been suspected that we had been bribed by Hitler. We might then have been misunderstood but we will not be misunderstood now. The resignation of the Congress ministries is the first step and we will take the next when we find it necessary, for which preparation is necessary.

No other body besides the Congress can solve the Indian question and take us towards the goal and it is, therefore, necessary to strengthen it. I hope that minor differences will be dropped and there will be general unity in the Congress.

I appeal to you to celebrate Independence Day in a fitting manner. The charkha has always been in the Congress programme, though not in the pledge.[2] Taking this pledge does not mean that we do not want big industries. I myself favour large industries, not under individuals but under state control. Side by side, cottage industries should be supported. The pledge is only meant to stress the beneficial nature of cottage industries to India.

2. See *post*, section 6, item 40.

20. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

January 24, 1940

My dear Bapu,

You asked me at Segaon about Molotov's speech about the war[2] and I said something in reply which was rather vague. Since Molotov's speech was made much has happened and the position has grown very difficult. I have no doubt in my own mind that Russia has acted very wrongly in regard to Finland and she will suffer because of this. But what concerns us even more is the fact that behind the Anglo-French-German war, what is really happening is a consolidation of the imperialist and fascist powers to fight Russia. It is clearer now than it was even before that the war is a purely imperialist venture on both sides. Fine phrases are being used by politicians as they were used in 1914. It seems to me highly important and vital that we should not be taken in by these phrases and pious protestations. All this has an intimate bearing on our own position in India and any talks with the British Government. The object of the government is to gain our goodwill for their war. Under existing circumstances, quite apart even from the question of India, I do not see why we should give our moral support to an imperialist war. Of course if Britain changed her attitude radically towards India and acknowledged our independence that in itself would mean that her

1. *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 424-425.
2. On 1 November 1939, Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, had laid down the aims of Soviet foreign policy as a free hand in international affairs, continuation of the policy of neutrality and cessation of the war.

imperialism has undergone a vital change. But what is more likely to happen is that this imperialism will fundamentally continue and the war will continue to be waged for its sake, though under stress of circumstances some vague declarations are made in regard to India. Even these declarations, it will be said, will be honoured at the end of the war. That seems to me a very dangerous position for us as we shall be involved, whether we want it or not, in supporting British imperialist policy in all manner of nefarious undertakings. I feel, therefore, that we must be very cautious and wary and should make it perfectly clear that we are not going to support these imperialist objectives of the war.

As I have mentioned above, the position is likely to grow much more complicated soon if the Western powers mobilise against Russia and their intrigue with Italy succeeds. They will call it a holy war against communism and under cover of that not only try to strengthen their own empire but break up the socialist state of Soviet Russia. That would be a calamity from every point of view, quite apart from our agreement with Russian policy or not. I would beg of you to bear this in mind and to view Indian talks in this perspective.

You will notice that one or two optimistic phrases in your article,[3] as well as some minor occurrences like the U.P. Governor's visit to Anand Bhawan,[4] have led to an extraordinary impression everywhere that some kind of a settlement is coming with Britain and that the Congress ministries will soon be back in office. Jinnah profits by this by making fun of our independence,[5] the Muslim League gets an opportunity to raise its head a little, and as for our newspaper editors, they misbehave as usual.[6] All this creates a wrong impression in the minds of the public in India as well as England. It makes even a possible settlement far less likely. What will happen again is that the Viceroy will complain that he was misled. The *Pioneer* has come out with a heading "Congress Ministries' Resignation Bluff—Called by

3. Mahatma Gandhi had said that he discerned in the Viceroy's statement of January 1940 offering India Dominion Status of the Statute of Westminster variety at the end of the war, the germs of an honourable settlement.
4. Sir Maurice Hallett and his wife unexpectedly visited Anand Bhawan on 18 January 1940. Jawaharlal was not present.
5. Jinnah, writing to Mahatma Gandhi in January 1940, said: "India is not a nation nor a country. It is a sub-continent composed of nationalities, Hindus and Muslims being the two major nations... Your peculiar doctrines regarding khaddar, ahimsa and spinning are not going to win India's freedom. Action and statesmanship alone will help us in our forward march."
6. *The Times of India* editorial of 22 January 1940 said: "Mr. Gandhi's pronouncement is on the lines hoped for... a settlement is now possible."

Viceroy" and so on. Everywhere there is questioning, what is happening behind the scenes?[7] Everywhere there is expectation of some big and sudden development.

All this not only does not square with the facts and with the existing situation, but creates a wrong atmosphere for any kind of mental or other preparations.

Personally, I feel sure that there is no real chance of a settlement, although the British Government would no doubt like it. But they are very far from agreeing to what is our minimum. The British Government today is more reactionary and imperialist than it has ever been and to expect it to give in to us is to expect something that cannot happen at this stage. To raise false hopes is unfair and inexpedient and may even weaken our position. I would suggest that it is fairer to lay stress on the other side so that the other party may know exactly how matters are and should adjust itself accordingly.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

7. On 22 January 1940, Subhas Bose had said: "Mr. Gandhi's latest statement heightens my worst suspicions, namely, that serious efforts at compromise with the British Government have been going on behind the scenes."

21. No Settlement Without Independence[1]

On the coming of Independence Day again I send my greetings to our comrades in U.P. This day is a fateful and solemn day for us, and this year we observe it under the shadow of a greater crisis than ever before. I earnestly trust that all those who participate in this day's function will realise the significance of what is happening in the world, and will pledge themselves in all sincerity to labour for Indian independence.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 24 January 1940. *National Herald*, 25 January 1940.

We may have our differences but in the case of Indian independence we should be one. Therefore it is not desirable for us to do anything on this day which emphasises our differences or which mars the solemnity of the occasion. With this purpose in view the Congress President has made it clear that those who wish to take only the old part of the pledge should do so. No part of the pledge, old or new, should be taken without understanding its full implications and living up to them. It is a voluntary pledge, and it would defeat its very purpose if any compulsion was exercised.

The essence of the pledge is that we must attain complete independence and sever our connection with imperialist Britain. That is India's decision and demand for all the world to know and for us to attain by our own labours and disciplined sacrifice. Every person who accepts this essential demand is a comrade with us, and we join him in celebrating this day. Those who do not accept this go different ways from us. A certain confusion has lately arisen owing to newspaper reports about the possibility of a settlement between India and Britain. To some extent newspapers are to blame for this as they attach importance to trivial occurrences and lose sight of the basic facts.

The Congress is always agreeable to have a settlement and to work for it, because peace is preferable to conflict. But peace cannot be purchased at the cost of our ideals and objectives. There can never be peace between imperialist Britain and nationalist India which is in any way dominated by it. There can be—and will be—no settlement in India except on the basis of Indian independence and India's right to frame her own constitution without any intervention from outside.

The conflict is not a personal one and cannot be resolved by the goodwill of individuals. It is due to basic causes which cannot be removed till the structure of British imperialism in India is itself removed.

Therefore let there be no confusion or mistaking what is happening. There is going to be no going back on the step that the Congress took two and a half months back in declaring that it would not cooperate in the imperialist war and in withdrawing its ministries. The ministries are not going back unless the whole fabric of India's present government changes, and independence of India is recognised. Every conclusion or any inference that does not fit in with these basic facts is wrong.

We hold to this position nationally in India even apart from world affairs. But these world affairs make it doubly incumbent on us to hold fast to these essentials.

In this age of revolution and vast changes it would be a betrayal of India's cause to think or act in terms of petty changes or temporary settlements.

The war in Europe becomes more obviously an imperialist war where empires are fighting for mastery. Sinister developments are foreshadowed when imperialism and fascism may even join hands. We must, therefore, be wary and keep our ideals, our objectives and our honour intact.

Because of all this Independence Day this year is of vital importance. The conflicts of the world, which are reflected in India, press forward relentlessly towards struggle everywhere. We cannot and we will not escape these conflicts or struggle. We must prepare for it. For, whatever the future may have in store for us, only the strong, the united, the disciplined and the stout of heart will play an effective part in that future.

22. No Half-Way House[1]

The Congress stands for an ideal and a cause. It has set out certain principles for its guidance, and during the last twenty years it has often come into conflict with imperialism, which came in its way. The Congress invited the nation many a time to fight out this mighty imperialism, and thousands of our countrymen, cheerfully accepting the call, underwent ordeals and sacrifices to honour and preserve these principles. They have clung to them with all their strength and might, and all the forces of the British power have failed to shake their faith in them. Therefore, when there is any talk of a compromise with Britain without settling the fundamentals which have been the cause of strife between the Congress and the government hitherto, it is simply childish. The Congress can never think of such a peace.

I do not share the optimism for a compromise entertained by many of my countrymen. So long as Britain does not bid good-bye to her imperialistic spirit, ways and dealings, there can be no settlement. She will have to recognize India as an independent state, free to frame her own constitution and determine her attitude towards international problems in her own way and in her own interest. There can be no patched-up or half-way meeting. The Congress ministries resigned in furtherance of the same ideal, and so their come-back is impossible so long as the independence of India is not recognized. The Congress

1. Speech at Itarsi, 27 January 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 29 January 1940.

will rather remain in the wilderness for ever than barter or betray its principles at any price.

We made many efforts for an understanding with the Muslim League, but we found that its standpoint is diametrically opposed to that of the Congress. Its approach to existing problems, both national and international is entirely different. How could we continue compromise talks with an organization which does not see eye to eye with the Congress on any fundamental issue? Of late the League has been gathering all anti-Congress elements in the country under its banner, and Mr. Jinnah is championing their cause.

The Russian invasion of Finland is most staggering and shocking. While our sympathies must go to Finland and we must condemn Russia in no uncertain terms, we must see that we are not playing the game of imperialist and capitalist powers. While we condemn Russia for aggression, we cannot for that reason condemn socialism or forget the fine economic structure which Russia has produced after years of effort.

We wait for Gandhiji's orders. But I am sure that we will emerge victorious, more united and stronger out of this fight, which I hope, if it comes, will be fought to the finish.

23. Internal Disharmony—An Impediment[1]

There is no possibility of a settlement at present. If at all there is any settlement, it will not be arrived at behind doors but will come for ratification before the people.

The shouting of slogans appears to me to be meaningless. The shouting of such slogans as *samraj ka nash*[2] will not set the country free. The question before us is not how we destroy but how we can construct. We have yet to travel along a difficult path and have to face difficulties. Those difficulties are our own weaknesses and our differences. What pains me most is not the British Government's doings but our own weaknesses. The pledge you have taken means that whatever might be the difficulties, we would not deviate from the path indicated in it.

1. Speech at Allahabad, 28 January 1940. From the *National Herald*, 29 January 1940.
2. Destruction to the empire.

Those who do not want freedom can go their own way but we cannot tolerate obstacles being put in our way. I am pained to find our own people opposed to independence and creating obstacles in the attainment of that goal. I cannot tolerate those who help the enemy in keeping us enslaved. India would have attained freedom long before had not our own people placed impediments in our path. You should not forget your pledge because some people will not accept the principles contained in it.

To think in the changing world that Dominion Status will continue is strange. It is also strange to think that British imperialism will remain as it is. It is wrong to think of an independent India, cut off from the rest of the world.

It will certainly be a good thing to have a settlement between Britain and India, if the settlement is made on the conditions laid down by the Congress Working Committee. If those conditions are not accepted then the question of a further step forward in the fight will arise. Mahatma Gandhi controls the situation at present. On the basic principle of satyagraha he has always kept the door open for negotiations. But it is impossible to have any settlement behind doors. If there is any it will be first put before the people. However, I do not see the possibility of any settlement at present.

24. The Present Position in India[1]

As regards a note on the present position in India and the possible future developments, it is not an easy task to write in a letter. But, as you know, I have been writing and speaking on this subject frequently. I agree with Elmhirst that so far as the princes are concerned, they would have no alternative but to set up democratic machinery in their states if the British Government told them to do so. In effect the princes today, barring perhaps a very few, and not even they to any large extent, are incapable of functioning without the active support of the British Government. The policy of the government in regard to

1. *The Hindustan Times*, 2 May 1940. Dr. Sudhir Sen had written that Elmhirst wanted to have Jawaharlal's reactions to the situation in India. This was the reply sent in January 1940 to Dr. Sudhir Sen for forwarding to Elmhirst.

the princes has been deplorable in recent years. The government has supported every species of reaction and repression in the states. Our conflict even in regard to the states' issue is thus ultimately with the British Government.

The larger issue, however, dominates the scene at present. You know that the Congress has not only asked for a clear enunciation of war aims by the British Government, but also the recognition of Indian independence and the right of India to frame her own constitution through a constituent assembly. Unless this matter is clearly decided, everything else is secondary and does not arise. Indian independence need not necessarily mean a final break with Britain. But it does mean a complete recognition of India as a separate entity deciding for herself. It will be for the constituent assembly to determine finally our relations with Britain. If Britain has ceased to be imperialistic, then there is no reason why we should not cooperate with her in the closest manner. But any attempt, to begin with, to impose a relationship on us means that the decision is not with us and, therefore, cannot be accepted.

So far as the minorities are concerned, we are prepared to give the amplest guarantees both as mutually agreed fundamental laws of the constitution protecting minority and civil rights in regard to religion, culture, language, etc., and even in regard to the framing of the constitution itself. Thus we have stated that if any minority chooses to get its representatives elected by a separate electorate we shall agree. Further, that in all matters strictly pertaining to minority rights, decisions should be by consent of the parties and not merely by a majority of votes. In the event of an agreement not being arrived at on any particular point, the matter might be referred to impartial international arbitration of the League of Nations or the Hague Court, or any other such body. Thus minority rights are given every conceivable protection. It should be remembered that so far as the Muslims are concerned it is a misnomer to call them a minority. In effect they are in a majority in five provinces of India, and there is no question of protecting their rights in those provinces where they will have the amplest provincial autonomy. The distribution of population is such in India that there are many balancing factors and it is inconceivable that the two major groups of religious communities—the Hindus and the Muslims—can suppress or tyrannise over each other. The small minorities are placed differently. But even they profit by these balancing factors, and in any event, they should be protected as suggested above.

All this is so even presuming ill will and a functioning on the basis of religious groups, but of course it is highly unlikely that any such functioning will take place when India is dealing with economic and

political problems. The division will then be on economic lines and not religious lines.

The whole minority question, if analysed, is an attempt on the part of political reactionaries and feudal elements to resist the progress and freedom of India. As usual, the British Government has not only taken full advantage of this, but has actively encouraged every such disruptive and reactionary element, and is doing so even now. The only basis for the consideration of the Indian problem is what the Congress has suggested, namely, a recognition of Indian independence and a constituent assembly. Meanwhile immediate steps should be taken to carry on the Government of India, in as large a measure as possible, without any major changes in the law, with popular consent. This intervening period should not be long, and steps to change over should be taken as rapidly as possible.

We have suggested that the constituent assembly should be elected on the basis of adult franchise. We attach great importance to this as only in this way can we bring real economic programmes to the front and solve communal problems, which are essentially middle-class. Objection is taken to adult franchise because it is unwieldy. This can be got over by having indirect election, the primary electors electing electoral colleges, which then will choose the members of the constituent assembly.

In order not to confuse the issue, the states' question need not necessarily be tackled at this stage. It should be laid down that any state can participate in the constituent assembly provided it does so on the same democratic basis as the rest of India. There need be no compulsion in the matter except the compulsion of events which will be considerable. There will also be the compulsion of the people of the states themselves. Very probably, the great majority of the states will immediately fall in line and join the constituent assembly. It is possible that a dozen or so major states might hold out for a while. This problem can be tackled later. If we go thus far, there is not likely to be much difficulty in coming to an agreement with these major states. All this of course depends on the British Government cooperating fully in this policy. If there is a conflict, then it is difficult to say what will happen except that the conflict will be on a big scale and will bring for a while at least disruption and disorder in India.

There is one thing more I should like to put before you. The development of the war has made us feel more and more that it is being waged for imperialistic ends. Imperialisms are in conflict and unless it is clear that the war is for something better, it is not possible for India to throw in her lot in order to preserve British imperialism.

Perhaps this letter, if you forward it to Elmhirst, will give him some idea of my mind. I have not discussed the question of the immediate transition stage regarding the federal centre. It is important, of course, that this should function under popular guidance even during the transition stage.

25. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
4 February 1940

My dear Bapu,
You will reach Delhi tomorrow and it appears that you are going to stay there for a week or more. I do not know what development there will be and whether it may become necessary for you to summon any of us. Personally I do not think there is the slightest chance of this happening as I do not see the least bit of a change in the government's attitude. In any event I wanted to inform you that it is exceedingly difficult for me to think of going to Delhi during the next two weeks. I am fully occupied all this time. Tonight I am going to Lucknow for two days. On the 7th I shall come to Allahabad for a day, leaving on the 8th morning for Bombay, where I have to attend important meetings of the Planning Committee which I have convened specially to consider certain matters. The whole meeting would be completely upset and would become infructuous if I did not go there. I shall be in Bombay from the 9th morning to the 12th night when I leave for Lucknow. On the 14th, 15th and 16th I shall be in Lucknow for our provincial Congress and delegates' meetings. During the next two days I expect to be in Gorakhpur for vast gatherings there. This is for the moment my programme for the next two weeks.

Everything that has happened during the last month or so confirms me in the belief that there is not the slightest ground for hope that the British Government will accept our position. In fact many things have happened which demonstrate that they are following a very definite imperialist policy. You must have seen that the British Parliament has just passed a bill amending the Government of India Act which limits the powers of provincial governments in regard to taxation. This was specially in view of the Property Tax in the U.P. which is thus vetoed.

1. *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 425-429.

Apart from the demerit of such a decision which reduces the powers of the provincial assembly, the time and the method chosen for it are eloquent of the imperialist outlook of the British Government and indicate that this has in no way changed.

I wonder if your attention has been drawn to a recent social function in London, organised by the Royal Central Asian Society.[2] Lord Zetland presided and a number of cabinet ministers were present. The ostensible object was to establish a centre of Muslim culture and religion in London; the real object was to encourage pan-Islamism and to exploit this sentiment in India and in the Islamic countries to the advantage of the Allies in the war. It is extraordinary how the war is developing along true-blue imperialist lines and how events are repeating themselves.

All this does not fit in with the notion that England is preparing to deliver up her empire. Nor is it at all encouraging to find that we are going to have again a procession of people headed by you to interview the Viceroy. The same old game is played again, the background is the same, the various objectives are the same, the actors are the same, and the results must be the same.

There are, however, some unfortunate indirect results also. An atmosphere of approaching compromise pervades the country when, in effect, there is no ground for it. It is enervating and depressing because it does not come out of strength but, in the case of many individuals, from the excessive desire to avoid conflict at all costs and to get back to the shreds of power which we had previously. Conflict is undesirable but obviously conflict cannot be avoided at all costs, for sometimes such avoidance itself is a more costly and harmful affair. For the moment, however, there is no immediate question of conflict. The question is of maintaining our position with dignity and not weakening it in any way. I fear that the impression is widely prevalent in England as well as in India that we are in no event going to have any conflict and therefore we are going to accept such terms as we can get. This kind of impression is demoralising. I have noticed during the last fortnight that even our Congress delegates' elections have been influenced by this. Many people, who for fear of possible conflict were keeping in the background, have now pushed themselves in front again when the possibility of enjoying the plums of office and power seem to dangle again in front of them. The effort of several months to keep undesirables out of the Congress has partly failed because of this sudden change in the Indian atmosphere which has led them to believe that a compromise was imminent.

2. Held on 30 January 1940.

SNAP SHOT

WITH EDWARD THOMPSON, WARDHA, OCTOBER 1939

The British Government is also reacting in a way unfavourable to us, though it may use soft language. Of course it wants to come to terms with us because it wants our support in the war. But it is much more certain that it does not wish to give up any shred of real power or change its fundamental imperialist policy in order to come to terms with us. It is carrying on and will carry on its old intrigue on the communal issue, though occasionally it uses a few critical words against the Muslim League in order to soothe the Congress. So far as it is concerned, it will try to win us over, keeping its present position intact. If this is possible, well and good for it. If this does not take place, as seems likely even to it, then to carry on from time to time conversations with Indian leaders, to prolong the issue, to make it appear that we are on the verge of a compromise, and thus to soothe both world opinion and Indian opinion. This second policy has the additional advantage, from their point of view, of exhausting our energy and toning us down, so that, if ultimately a conflict does come, the requisite atmosphere is lacking for it. It is the general belief among official circles in England that their policy of parleys and postponement has had this result and the situation in India, which was threatening when the Congress ministries resigned, is much easier now and no dangers are to be feared.

It seems to me that while we cannot and must not precipitate a conflict and, while we need not bang the door to a possible and honourable compromise, because your methods are never to bang the door, still we must make it crystal clear that there can be or will be no compromise except on the conditions stated by us previously. As a matter of fact even these conditions have to be slightly reviewed from the point of view of developments in the war. We cannot now say, as we then said, that we want to know whether this war is imperialist or not. The British Government's answer to us as well as their consistent policy in the war and in foreign affairs has been one of full-blooded imperialism. We must therefore necessarily proceed on this admitted fact that it is an imperialist war, any profession to the contrary notwithstanding. The war and British policy grow more and more sinister every day and I would hate to see India entangled in any way in this imperialist adventure from which India can only lose, not only materially but spiritually. This point seems to me of vital importance today.

Thus it seems to me that the most important thing for us to do is to make our position perfectly clear to the world, to the British Government and to the Indian people. There is too much misunderstanding on this issue of compromise and this misunderstanding is entirely to our disadvantage and to the advantage of British imperialism which meanwhile is exploiting our resources for the war and even pretending

to have a large amount of our goodwill. An approach by us to the British Government or to the Viceroy increases these misunderstandings and leads the British Government even further away from a right compromise.

Some recent speeches of Rajagopalachari have distressed me because they talk too compromisingly of Dominion Status and the like.[3] The Congress speaks with too many voices and it is not surprising that confusion and embarrassment should result. On the question of independence at least there should be only one voice.

I have inflicted two long letters[4] on you today for which I seek your indulgence and forgiveness.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

3. On 25 January 1940, Rajagopalachari said: "We should not allow posterity to say that a great opportunity was spoiled by internal differences... Dominion Status today might be equivalent to complete freedom. It might even be better because we get a navy without paying for it, but it is not the same thing as complete freedom." On 28 January, he said that even the British people were not satisfied with the present position and desired that Indians should take up the responsibility for the administration. He, therefore, believed that before long they would of their own accord permit Indians to govern themselves.
4. The first letter is not available.

26. Nothing Doing[1]

The present position in India can be summed up in two words, namely, "nothing doing." That position is clear enough, but still, according to the usual practice, Mahatma Gandhi is perfectly prepared to meet the Viceroy and discuss the situation with him. The result is also clear in that, as matters stand today, there is nothing in common between the Congress and the British Government. In other words, what Indian nationalism stands for is far removed from what the British Government is prepared to accept.

1. Speech at a press conference, Bombay, 10 February 1940. From *The Hindustan Times*, 11 February 1940.

This is not a matter of friendly individuals talking together, but of fundamental conflicts between vast forces and ideas, namely, nationalism aiming at independence, and imperialism trying to consolidate itself and continue its hold. As between the two there is no compromise unless one disappeared or submitted to the other; it is manifestly inconceivable for Indian nationalism to give up its objective and basic position. So far as British imperialism is concerned, everything that has happened since the war began, both internally in India and in regard to British foreign policy, shows that there is not the least intention on the part of the British Government to give up its imperialism, though owing to the pressure of events it might tone it down. Fundamentally, therefore, the grounds for a compromise between India and England are at present lacking.

If the position of India is analysed, it will be found that the British Government relies more and more on reactionaries, whether they are princes in feudal areas or communalists. The obstacle in the path of Indian freedom is the combination of British imperialism with reaction in India. The recent passing of the Amending Act in Parliament of the Government of India Act, limiting the powers of the provincial assemblies, shows how far away the British Government is from any progress in India. How can such a wide gulf be bridged? Events, which move fast, and the strength of the respective parties, will be the ultimate arbiters. We live in an age of stark reality and we must, therefore, think in terms of reality. There is going to be no peace in India except on the basis of Indian independence.

The fact that the Muslim League or certain other minority leaders object to a constituent assembly means that they are afraid of our masses and they want to keep the control of the respective groups in the hands of the upper classes. The constituent assembly cannot possibly injure any minority, and certainly not the Muslims. Already there is a revolt visible among various minorities against those reactionaries and sometimes feudal or upper-class leadership, which does not allow our masses to function.

If the British Government cannot fulfil its obligations to the princes or other minorities by submitting to the Congress demand, that simply means that the British Government has tied itself up in a knot of its own creation. In any event the demand for Indian freedom, with full safeguards for minorities, cannot be given up because the British Government finds itself in a difficulty.

27. Strengthen the Congress[1]

The growing strength of the Congress organisation has resulted in a change in its tone, language and method of expression. The Congress has passed through several phases; it has offered nonviolent fight and has also ruled eight out of the eleven provinces in this country.

The result is that it has become more powerful and more responsible. The tone and the nature of the language used by the communal organisations in this country can be cited as a clear contrast to those used by the Congress. It is not the way of the Congress at present to shout mere slogans. Rather it has assumed the position of any government of a free country in the diplomatic language in which it conceals its intention. It is in keeping with the method followed by governments in other countries. If the government of one country wants to declare war against that of another then the former would only announce that the latter was unfriendly.

Great changes are taking place in the world. Events are moving fast and the map of the world is being changed with a quickness and rapidity, unparalleled in the history of the world. What is India's share in the shaping of coming events?

A nation which is robust and alive will not keep quiet in such a fast-moving world. Least of all a nation in bondage can do so. And if it did, it would be a sign of decay and death. The method of fight might vary from time to time; but the fight is bound to go on.

There are several organisations in this country which subsist on mere slogans. But those who are responsible and the most fitted to carry on the fight, would pause and ponder, till the right moment came. And when that moment arrives, millions of people would be stirred and roused, and nobody can say what will be the end or when we will stop. Therefore the present time is one of reconnaisance, precedent to the launching of any action.

The organisational strength of the Congress has increased by leaps and bounds. The workers and the peasants are better and more organised. But certain disruptive tendencies have crept in. It will not be in our interest to shut our eyes to our own weaknesses or to belittle the opponents' strength.

1. Inaugural address at the All Maharashtra Youth Conference, Bombay, 10 February 1940. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 12 February 1940.

Separate electorates have driven a wedge into the solidarity of the country. Provincial autonomy was granted with the express intention of inculcating provincial spirit in this country and tearing it to pieces. The Congress has tried to stop the spreading of provincialism and sectarianism because they will be a serious impediment in the march of this country to freedom.

In this modern age, when the radio and the cinema bring, as it were, the whole world to one's door, provincialism is out of date and out of place. It is inconceivable that one part of the country should get independence while the other remains in bondage. We have to stand or fall together. It is important that we should concentrate our attention on matters of major importance. I hope that the youth who have gathered here will devise ways and means to increase our strength for the coming struggle instead of passing pious and platitudinous resolutions, advising others as to what they should do.

The part played by Maharashtra in the struggle for freedom in the past was great and glorious and I hope that this province will be a great centre in the coming fight.

28. No Going Back[1]

Many people in this country hope that the deadlock will be resolved as a result of the Gandhi-Viceroy meeting.[2] But Mahatma Gandhi cannot perform the miracle. It is not a matter of two individuals meeting in a friendly way and solving a minor problem. It is a great issue—the independence of India—affecting the millions in this country. The Congress has formulated its demands, and Mahatma Gandhi cannot go back on them. I understand that Lord Zetland and other British statesmen are alarmed at the phraseology of the Congress demands. There

1. Speech at Bombay, 11 February 1940. From *The Hindustan Times*, 12 February 1940.
2. An interview between the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi on 5 February 1940 was inconclusive. Commenting on this, Mahatma Gandhi said: "The vital difference between the Congress demand and the Viceroy's offer consists of the fact that the Viceroy's offer contemplates final determination of India's destiny by the British Government whereas the Congress contemplates just the contrary."

is nothing new in those demands. For decades the Congress has proclaimed them and is striving for their fulfilment. A resolution expressing loyalty on the part of the Congress might be welcomed by those statesmen, but it would be very difficult for the Congress to convince those who are benefited by the subjection of India. The Congress standpoint, as set out in the resolution of the Congress Working Committee soon after the war, holds the field today and there will be no going back.

29. U.P.P.C.C. Resolution on War[1]

The first meeting of the newly elected U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, held at a time of grave crisis in India and the world, records the firm conviction of Congressmen in this province that nothing short of full independence with control of foreign policy, and a constituent assembly, elected on a basis of adult franchise, to frame India's constitution, can resolve this crisis so far as India is concerned, and no other attempted solution can be acceptable to the people of India. Ever since the outbreak of the war, the conduct of the British Government, as well as their pronouncements in regard to India, have demonstrated that imperialism still continues, as of old, to guide their policy and to govern their objectives. This policy, as consistently followed in Manchuria, Abyssinia, Palestine, Spain and Central Europe, crushed democracy, encouraged aggression and made war inevitable. Now that war has come, while the declared objectives seem to be different, the fundamental imperialistic policy of the British Government continues. Freedom is denied to India and to other parts of the British colonial empire, and a declaration of war aims is avoided, and the purposes of the war grow more and more sinister and imperialistic. Repression meanwhile grows in India and considerable numbers of Congressmen and others have been arrested and convicted for political activities, usually connected with giving publicity to the Congress attitude to the war.

1. 15 February 1940. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
The resolution drafted by Jawaharlal was moved by Lal Bahadur Shastri at the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee meeting on 16 February 1940.

This Committee is of opinion that, even apart from the urgent question of Indian freedom, the people of India can support in no way a war which is patently imperialistic and which is carried on by an imperialist government, and any further attempts to entangle India in this war must be prevented. Particularly in view of possible developments in the war situation, it is essential that the people of India must remain fully prepared to resist British imperialist policy.

30. No Common Ground with Britain[1]

This is not merely a formal resolution reiterating our policy. It is that of course, but is something more, and it is necessary that we pass it to clear the many misunderstandings that have arisen.

First of all it is quite clear now, even if there had been some doubt previously, that British policy is imperialistic. That has been demonstrated both by events in Europe and by the British stand for imperialism in India and elsewhere. We in India stand for the fullest independence. There is no common ground, no meeting place between the two, at present at least and in the near future.

No one can say what the future will bring, for events may force the pace and bring about fundamental changes. Let us, therefore, be clear that all talk of an understanding between Britain and India at present is without any real foundation. Gandhiji will always be willing to discuss the matter with the Viceroy or anyone else for that has always been our practice. We do not shut the door. But let not anyone mistake this for any change in our fundamental position. Conflict, therefore, continues and is bound to continue.

The war situation in Europe is developing rapidly and becoming more and more sinister. Although the war in the West has hardly begun in earnest, a great struggle is going on behind the scenes on the diplomatic and propaganda fronts. In this it is clear that the British Government is playing its old imperialistic game and we must beware of getting entangled in it.

This morning's news states that England and France are sending armed forces to Finland. This may mean war between England and

1. Speech on U.P.P.C.C. resolution, Lucknow, 16 February 1940. From the *National Herald*, 17 February 1940.

France on the one hand and Russia on the other, and it is not inconceivable that the whole character of the European war may change and Germany may also line up with England in its onslaught against Russia. Such a development will bring the war very near to India and we will be powerfully affected. We must be clear as to what we should do. We cannot then, as now, support British imperialism.

Sometime back I had expressed my sympathy for Finland and criticised and condemned the Russian invasion of Finland. This statement has been used by the British Government for their own propaganda purposes. I am still of the opinion that the Soviet Government has badly erred in attacking Finland. I am certainly not prepared to accept blindfold everything that Russia does internally and externally and I have often criticised much that has been done. But, nevertheless, I believe in a great deal that Soviet Russia stands for and will consider it a tragedy if this great work is crushed or hindered.

Howsoever much I may dislike the Russian invasion of Finland, I dislike far more the idea of British imperialism triumphing over Russia and I hope that India will resist this with all her strength. British policy has for twenty years past aimed at this, persistently and consistently, and it is clear that this policy has not changed. Even the war against Nazi Germany is only a side event compared to this major policy and, in the development of this policy, Britain will not hesitate to spread the area of war right up to the frontiers of India. We cannot be a party to this and we must resist it.

The resolution before this house does not go into these details, but it indicates clearly enough our present and future policy. We do not propose to be caught unawares by these sinister developments and we must prepare to meet them.

31. To D.N. Pritt[1]

February 21, 1940

Dear Pritt,
It was good of you to send me a cablegram.[2] I am looking forward to your new book[3] and if and when it reaches me, I shall read it with great interest and profit. I have no doubt that all the facts are not before us. We should like to have them. Yet inevitably one has to reach some tentative conclusions on such facts as one has and such inferences as one can draw from them. I shall very gladly reconsider any conclusion of mine in the light of further information. In any event, however, our reaction to British imperialist policy is much the same and we have no intention of being used as pawns in their game.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. It read: "Very sorry your condemnation Soviet action Finland, urge reconsideration, feel whole information not before you. Copy my book *Must the War Spread?* on way to you."
3. *Must the War Spread?* was planned by Pritt in the middle of November 1939 with the object of making a general exposure of the schemes to form a common front of capitalist powers against the U.S.S.R. Finland was invaded on 30 November and the book, which was published in January 1940, was turned into one of defence and explanation of Soviet action. This book was one of the causes for the expulsion of Pritt from the Labour Party.

32. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Allahabad
February 22, 1940

My dear Maulana,
There are some points which I should like to place before you for your consideration.[2] We had very little time to discuss anything at the station yesterday.

1. The whole policy of the British Government since the war began has gone to show that they are deliberately and consistently following an imperialist line. Before the war the Chamberlain Government was well known to be utterly reactionary and on many occasions they encouraged the fascist and Nazi powers and crushed democracy in Europe. This was evident in the case of Abyssinia, Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Albania. Their policy in Manchuria was also of the same kind. Mr. Chamberlain's Government was known to be the most reactionary and imperialist government that England has had for more than a hundred years.

When, however, their own empire was threatened, they took refuge under pleas of democracy and started the war. It was difficult to believe that they had become suddenly democratic. Subsequent events have shown that their old policy has not changed at all and indeed it is being more intensively followed now, with this difference that they want to remove Hitler who has become a danger to their empire. This old policy was one of encouraging all the reactionary elements in Europe and the Far East and even in America, and trying to weaken Russia which stood as a challenge to all these reactionary elements as well as to imperialism. While on the one hand fear of the growing Nazi power made them sometimes look to Russia for help, their dislike of Russia and of the growth of democracy was so great that they could not cooperate in any way with Russia. So till the last moment they followed the policy of appeasement towards Hitler and Mussolini and thereby strengthened them greatly. Their object was to get Hitler entangled in a war against Soviet Russia and thus weaken their two chief enemies. On no account did they want Germany or Italy to have a progressive regime.

1. *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 429-434.
2. The election of Maulana Azad as President of the Congress was announced on 16 February 1940.

In this way they played about till Russia felt that there was great danger for it in the situation and, full of suspicion against British policy, it tried to upset it by coming to an agreement with Nazi Germany. This upset British plans for the moment.

The fundamental anti-Soviet British policy continued and it is curious to notice that even today, while England is at war with Germany, the British Government is far more anti-Soviet than anti-German. They are aiming at some kind of an internal change in Germany whereby Hitler might give place to the control of the German army leaders and then to make peace with them. This to be followed by joint attack by England, France, Germany and other countries on Russia. Whether this development will take place or not, it is difficult to say. But the point is that British policy before and after the war has been consistently reactionary and pro-imperialist, notwithstanding all their proclamations.

2. Russia has made many mistakes and notably, I think, her invasion of Finland was a very serious error, both from the point of view of principle and expediency. It is true that Finland was being used by England as a place for intrigue against Russia and as a future jumping-off platform for an invasion of Russia. Munitions were being accumulated there. Russia was frightened of this development and tried to forestall it by a rapid invasion. This was very foolish and it played into the hands of England and France and at the same time alienated progressive opinion all over the world. It gave the chance which England wanted of posing as the friend of democracy and of making people forget its own sins in the past few years. The League of Nations, which had never even discussed fascist and Nazi aggressions and invasions, suddenly woke up to condemn Russia. Now there is no doubt in my mind that Russian policy recently has been wrong and must be condemned. But at the same time one must remember how this policy took shape because of the consistent attempts on the part of the British Government to encircle Russia. What is more important now is that we should realise that England is trying to exploit the situation in Finland to its own imperialist advantage and to spread the war to Russia. This is full of danger for us, because if there is war between England and Russia, our own frontiers become involved and it becomes important for us to be clear about our policy. While we must criticise and disapprove of much that Russia has done, it will be dangerous in the extreme if we permit British imperialism to use that to its own advantage.

I think it would be a tragedy if Soviet Russia was crippled and weakened by a war against her, for then the only powerful opponent of imperialism would be removed. But even apart from this, anything that goes to strengthen British imperialism is dangerous for us. Therefore it is

very important that we should be clear in our minds about the present British policy towards Russia and that we should declare that we are against it and in no event can we support or approve of British action against Russia. I think a clearly expressed policy on our part will make a difference. If Britain thinks that India will accept everything that she does without much objection, then there is every chance of the war spreading and Russia being involved in it with consequences to our own Indian frontier. On the other hand, if England feels that there is strong objection in India to any attack on Russia by England and that any such policy would be resisted in India, then England might well hesitate before she spreads this war to other regions. The British Government is doubtful at present as to what it should do. It wants to attack Russia but is afraid of the consequences. If it is assured that it will have peace in India, it will go ahead with the attack. Otherwise it will hold its hand. Therefore our attitude in this matter counts, and it is desirable to express it as clearly and as strongly as possible.

3. What is happening in England and France shows how very reactionary these countries are growing. France today is a military dictatorship with complete suppression of civil liberty. Scores of members of Parliament there have been arrested because the government does not like their views. Several hundred municipalities have been suppressed for the same reason. In England matters have not gone quite so far but the tendency is the same. In effect both England and France are becoming more and more fascist in their government, though they talk about democracy. They refuse to say anything about war aims and are clearly aiming at, as they did in 1914, entrenching their own empires and weakening their rival imperialisms as well as all progressive forces within or outside their empires. The question that the Congress put to the British Government in September has been answered very clearly by British policy as well as French policy. That answer is that we stand for imperialism and we fight to maintain it. Now we condemn fascism and Nazism and it would be bad if Hitler won in the war. We do not want that. On the other hand a victory of British imperialism means a continuation of Chamberlainism, more strengthened than before. That is equally bad and would lead to constant wars. Hence it would be folly for us, from every point of view, national and international, to help in any way such a victory. Quite apart, therefore, from any internal solution of India's problem as between England and India, it should be clear that we are not going to throw our weight in an imperialist war to preserve the British Empire.

4. You will have noticed the rebirth of the idea of pan-Islamism. This is not merely due to the Muslim League here or to other organisations.

This is fundamentally due to the desire of the British Government to encourage it. Pan-Islamism in 1914 and later was an anti-imperialist force. It weakened the British people in their war effort and later it coloured the background of the Khilafat movement in India. Today this very idea is being used in support of British imperialism. This breaks, to some extent, the national front in India and helps to influence Muslim opinion in the Near East in favour of England. The fact that Turkey is a friendly power in alliance with England also helps British policy in this regard. I do not know what the effects of the British propaganda have been in the Muslim countries. But what I wish to point out is the definitely imperialist character of the new phase of pan-Islamism.

5. All this shows how all our own internal problems, whether it is the communal problem or the larger problem of independence, are intimately connected with the larger war issues and those of British foreign policy. If we consider India apart, we fall into an error. The main difficulties of the communal problem are due to the attitude of the British Government today. It becomes very difficult for us to solve it even if the Muslim League or Sikandar Hayat were agreeable. Of course the British Government wants a solution of the Indian problem in order to strengthen itself in the war and entrench its own imperialism. Sikandar Hayat, acting entirely on behalf of British policy, wants to do the same. But fundamentally this policy is based on strengthening British imperialism. Our policy on the other hand is based on weakening imperialism. That is the basic difference which prevents compromise and no amount of talks with the Viceroy or with the Muslim League will get over that, till the British Government itself is prepared to renounce its imperialism. The Working Committee's statement of September 14th demanded this renunciation. Far from that having been done, the British Government has affirmed its imperialism. India's attitude is of great importance because it affects America and other neutral countries. America at present is very strongly anti-Hitler, and in that sense, pro-British. At the same time it is certainly not in favour of British imperialism and, therefore, it hesitates to join the British. If the British could explain to America that they had come to terms with India, it would be a tremendous help to them.

6. During the last few months there has been so much confusing talk about compromise with the British Government that both our own people and the world at large have been misled and no one knows what is going to happen. It seems to me that we should make it clear once for all that there can be no compromise with us in the structure of imperialism and the sooner all such attempts are given up the better. There must be a finality about this.

7. British policy in India during the last few months has progressively been a reversion to autocratic rule and it is surprising to people outside India how we have calmly submitted to it. Not only have the popular provincial governments been upset but actually the scope of provincial autonomy has been limited by Amending Acts in Parliament. This kind of thing shouts louder than all the sweet words of the Viceroy. Ordinarily even a suspension of the constitution should have led to a severe conflict. But we have calmly put up with it. We have also put up with the Amending Bills. This amendment of the constitution is not important so far as we are concerned except in so far as it shows the trend of British policy. All this indicates that there is nothing in common between us and the British Government, and British imperialism is going as strongly as ever.

8. As I mentioned to you last evening, it seems to me very dangerous to agree to a constituent assembly consisting of the present provincial legislatures. That is giving up our basic demand of adult franchise which we have made for the last four years. That means also that our constituent assembly will be within the framework of British imperialism. This would lead, under present circumstances, to the same communal and other conflicts and thus our own weakness will be shown up and there will be no agreement as regards the constitution. It would mean, in effect, that we are functioning almost within the framework of the Act of 1935 with some minor changes. If a constituent assembly is to succeed it must be completely outside the framework of this Act as well as of British imperialism. The question of our relations with the British Government can only be considered after the constituent assembly has framed our constitution. The technical difficulty of adult franchise can be got over by having an intermediate step of indirect election. The point is that this constituent assembly must be looked upon as the organ of the Indian people functioning completely outside the orbit of British imperialism and the British Parliament. Otherwise it will just become an offshoot of some enactment of the British Parliament.

9. I think it should be made clear also that there can be no going back by our provincial governments under existing conditions of services, controls, etc. I am glad that Pantji has laid stress on this.[3] The whole structure of the government must change from top to bottom.

3. On 16 February 1940, Govind Ballabh Pant, speaking at the U.P. Provincial Conference, said: "...an overhaul of the existing executive machinery will be necessary to enable a popular government to achieve the best results and the maximum amount of public good."

I hope you will forgive me for writing at such length. There are so many other ideas in my head but I must stop now.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

33. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Allahabad
February 22, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,
Regarding the cablegram received by Bhulabhai from C.B. Vakil,[2] I am clearly of opinion that there should be no invitation from us, formal or informal, to members of the British Parliament to visit India.[3] I think that any such move on our part, howsoever noncommittal it might appear to be, will undoubtedly put us in a wrong position. It would be a kind of an appeal to Parliament. It would mean that we constitute the members of Parliament, if not as judges, at least as counsellors. It would further mean that we are prepared to function within the structure imposed upon us by Parliament. Lastly it would indicate an excessive desire on our part to come to terms anyhow with the British Government. All this will have a bad effect in England as well as in India. More especially so after the recent speeches of Zetland[4] and company. Officially the British Government has told us what it thinks about us——[5] us then to go to semi-official people is a sign of weakness which will be interpreted as such everywhere and will strengthen Zetland and company.

Apart from this, there is no doubt that a Parliamentary delegation will consist of second-rate or third-rate people. They will come here and try

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.
2. Solicitor; took an active part in the Home Rule League movement in Bombay.
3. It was proposed that an all-Parliamentary delegation should visit India and attend the Ramgarh Congress to "gauge the strength of Indian feeling."
4. In an interview to the *Sunday Times* of London on 11 February 1940, Lord Zetland referred to the material and mental ties binding the peoples of India and Britain which could not be rudely shattered without grave injury to both and pointed out that the very man who led the Congress owed his inspiration to English literature and English political thought. He urged on the Congress leaders an "escape from the tyranny of phrases and a descent from idealism, from the abstract to the concrete."
5. Moth-eaten.

to boss it over everybody and to balance the scales evenly, as they will put it, between the Congress and the Muslim League and other groups. All this will bring out all the wrong and disruptive tendencies in India.

Thirdly, I do not understand who is fathering this move. Dr. C.B. Vakil is a good man against whom I have nothing. But he is not in touch very much with political occurrences. I believe that the nationalist group which is mentioned is a small group under the inspiration of Pulin Seal[6] who is an unsafe man to deal with in this connection.

I am, therefore, definitely of opinion that no encouragement whatever should be given on our part to this move. In fact it should be clearly stated in the course of a letter that we see little good from British Parliamentarians visiting India. We are not appealing to them or asking them to examine or judge us. We deal with the British Government and it is for them to deal with that government. Of course any M.P.s or others, who may care to come to India, may do so and we shall gladly meet them if they come.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Bhulabhai and another to Maulana.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

6. Pulin B. Seal was the Chairman of the Committee of Indian Congressmen in Britain.

34. To Krishna Kripalani[1]

Britain, I am thinking in terms of Britain ceasing to be imperialistic. Of that there is no indication whatever at present or in the near future. Everything goes to show that the British Government is functioning completely as an imperialist power, intent on preserving its empire and on strengthening its imperialism. It is obvious that in any future order, unless there is a continuation of the present disorder, there must be close cooperation between different nations. There is a great deal of talk about a federal union of the world. To such a real union a free India would naturally belong. But if a union of European states is proposed, or of Europe and the United States and the British Dominions, this will possibly mean a consolidation of the imperialist powers to exploit Asia and Africa. To that we cannot agree.

"The whole point is that we cannot consider the future of India as in any way bound up with the imperialist structure. If we talk about the constituent assembly, it is not something within the fabric of British imperialism, but out of it. It is not cooperation with England or other countries that is objected to, but it is cooperation with any structure that is imperialistic."

The other day I wrote a long letter to some Federal Union people in New York.[3] Possibly this letter might interest you. I am therefore sending you a copy. If you like you can print extracts from it....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. See *post*, item 36.

35. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
February 27, 1940

My dear Krishna,
I promised to write a long letter to you and to say something about the situation here. I fear I cannot say much now as I am pressed for time and am leaving tonight for Patna where the Working Committee meets tomorrow.

It is difficult to say much anyhow. There are all manner of forces at play. You can probably observe them even from a distance, but the

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

way news goes from India emphasises certain aspects far more than they deserve. It is these aspects that disturb you as they disturb me. While we talk of independence the meaning and interpretation of the term is very different in different minds. The essential question is of course whether we should go completely out of the imperialist orbit. Everybody agrees in theory to this. But some people imagine that a major step in this direction will necessarily be followed by so much strength for us that the rest must inevitably come. This kind of argument may have some force ordinarily but today with the war situation and grave developments impending, it is a dangerous viewpoint. Generally speaking the position is such that even the so-called rightists or moderates in the Congress camp realise that no understanding with the British Government is possible under these circumstances. I must leave it at that now.

I shall write to you about the Muslim organizations some time later, though I cannot possibly give you any definite information about them. They have no definite data. There is likely to be a big nationalist Muslim conference in Delhi early in April.[2] This is not being organized by the Congress as such, though Congress Muslims will take a leading part. Other organizations cooperating will be the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the Ahrars, the Momins and some independent Muslim groups. The object appears to be to dissociate themselves from Muslim League politics and to assert the general Congress demand....

Yours,
Jawaharlal

2. Representatives of various Muslim nationalist groups gathered in Delhi in April 1940 and held the Azad Muslim Conference. It supported the Congress plan for a constituent assembly and condemned the partition plan of the Muslim League.

36. India in a Federal Union of the Nations[1]

I am glad you have written to me at some length about Clarence Streit's book, *Union Now*,[2] and cleared up some of the misunderstandings that have arisen. The whole basis of the Indian national movement has been a democratic one. We have claimed independence for India but we have laid emphasis on the fact that there can be and should be no absolute independence of any nation in the future as this independence leads to conflicts and a cutting up of the world. More and more we have stood for some kind of world union. Nationalism in the West, specially as exemplified in Italy and Germany, has become a terribly reactionary force. But nationalism in a country which is under foreign domination is a progressive force leading to wider perspectives. It is perfectly true that there is a danger that even this nationalism may lead to something that is undesirable in the end, if it is not checked. In any event there is a strong desire among the politically conscious people in India for a world union of which India should be an equal member.

The ideal therefore of Streit's book is attractive, but the manner of approach towards that ideal has given rise to a great deal of suspicion in India. That suspicion is not due to any feeling as to the *bona fides* of the author, but rather to the fear that the imperialist powers will inevitably take advantage of any such development to consolidate their position. You will remember the fate of the League of Nations. We all know why it failed, although there can be no doubt that the spirit behind it was admirable. But ultimately it became an instrument in the hands of England and France chiefly for the advancement of their own policies, which had little to do with the spirit that gave it birth. So also a federal union which is demanded by a few great powers with colonial domains attached to them, might well be converted into an instrument of their policy. It is certainly likely that in the process of forming such a union certain new forces will be released. These might tone down the present forms of exploitation and gradually lead to better results. Still there is that great danger.

1. *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, February 1940. Extracts from Jawaharlal's letter to an American Federal Unionist.
2. This book which was published in 1939 recommended a federal union of the democracies of the North Atlantic.

There is also the danger that any European union (including the United States and the British self-governing Dominions) may become a solid racial and imperialist bloc attempting to exploit and control Asia and Africa. This would result in big conflicting blocs of nations and wars on a world-wide scale.

It seems to me that the whole conception of a federal union must be based on a preliminary liquidation of the idea and practice of imperialism. That involves a change in the social and economic structure to a large extent, at any rate in so far as international activities are concerned. If internationally we proceed in a different way than heretofore, it becomes necessary for the national economic structures to conform to this international structure, or else there will be no coordination and conflicts will arise. Our present-day conflicts and wars are after all fundamentally due to a breakdown of the structure of capitalist imperialism. If that is not recognized, we shall never deal properly with the causes and all our attempts may fail to yield fruit.

Ignoring for the present other countries and areas in the world, it seems to me that no federal union can possibly ignore the Soviet Union, China and India. These are not only enormous areas in themselves with half the world's population between them, but also economically and politically they have a great importance. Both India and China may have their difficulties to face today, but potentially they have enormous resources. No world economy can possibly succeed unless they are included in it. This inclusion might be through compulsion. If so there is bound to be continuous conflict. The only other way is their consent. To leave them out means to leave out certain vital factors which will later on upset the apple-cart.

It may be said that all this can follow later. But the time for steps towards a certain ideal is almost past. We have to jump over a chasm and one cannot take this in several steps. Even to attempt this is to invite disaster.

The idea that the British Commonwealth will gradually expand into a larger federal union seems to me fundamentally wrong. First of all because the very basis of the Commonwealth is opposed to this idea. It is essentially a combination of a few self-governing countries with a large colonial empire which is exploited to the advantage of the former. It is much more likely that the disintegrating influences in the empire itself will prove stronger than the integrating influence and that the British Commonwealth as such will cease to be. In the colonial Empire of Britain, including India, it is not possible to expect any such imaginary fulfilment of its wishes. There are of course psychological reasons and these as you know are sometimes very strong. But the political and

economic reasons are obvious enough. What is likely to happen is that under a facade of political self-government, we shall have continuance of economic control and exploitation by the City of London. That is to say, we shall continue with the imperial fabric, though our bonds might be loosened. In foreign policy we shall be tied to British policy and the growth of India will be impeded in a hundred ways. The real Indian problems, the problem of poverty, the land problem, the growth of social services and the like, will all remain tied up, because there is no ultimate solution for them in this fabric of empire. Then there is the important question of the treatment of Indians in the British Dominions. You cannot expect us to combine with people who treat us in a disgraceful way.

For these reasons, as well as many others, the whole conception of India reaching a federal union through the British Commonwealth is alien to us, though we are perfectly agreeable to joining such a union of which England and the British Dominions are members. India is at the present moment powerfully attracted by China and our contacts are growing. We have much in common with each other and thousands of years of cultural contacts. We should like to be associated with China in any large world organisation. Why should we be cut off from her and be associated with a narrower group?

Our position today is one which is perfectly compatible with that of a federal union. But it is not compatible with our reaching that union through the British Empire. At the beginning of the war we had asked for a declaration of war aims from the British Government as well as an application of the principle of democracy to India and to British colonies. That declaration of war aims never came and instead British policy has been progressively becoming more and more imperialistic. In India itself we have reverted to complete autocratic British rule and our provincial parliaments in most of the provinces have ceased to function. Even so the British Parliament has gone out of its way to limit still further the powers of the provincial assemblies in India. Everything which has happened in India during these five months has demonstrated that British imperialism is functioning as of old and that there has been no change of vision.

Internally we asked for a constituent assembly elected on adult franchise to frame India's constitution without any external interference. This constitution would have inevitably been on a democratic basis. In order to get over the difficulty of large masses voting directly under adult franchise we have suggested that there might be an intermediate stage involving indirect election. Further to meet all the possible apprehensions of minority groups, we have stated that minority problems

should be settled not merely by a majority of the votes in a constituent assembly but by agreement with the minority in question. In case there is no agreement the matter to be referred to an impartial international tribunal whose decision we shall accept. This is a perfectly democratic method of procedure, it is absolutely fair to the minorities, and it is easily feasible, that is to say if the British Government does not come in the way. When this constituent assembly meets and draws up India's constitution, it can elect representatives to meet the representatives of the British Government in order to discuss and determine our common interests. These representatives can be authorised to consider proposals for a federal world union. I have no doubt that the Indian nation will gladly enter such a union as a free unit, provided that union itself does not consist of a narrower group which is opposing other big groups.

The British Government has opposed our demands and has tried to encourage every minority and disruptive element in India to come in the way. They are now encouraging pan-Islamism in India and abroad as well as such reactionary and feudal elements in India which are opposed to the democratic ideal. It is obviously impossible under these circumstances for us to offer any present or future cooperation to the British Government. We have avoided active conflict but the conditions are such that the present deadlock cannot continue indefinitely.

I have written to you at some length to explain our position. I hope I have made it clear that we are all in favour of the idea of the federal union. But past experience has shown us that no amount of idealistic language can restrain the evil motives and practices of politicians. These motives spring largely from economic profit under the present system. If that system continues the best laid schemes will go wrong. Therefore the federal union must be based on a different system and on an elimination of that evil motive.

37. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
March 2, 1940

My dear Krishna,
Your letter of the 24th January enclosing an article for the *Herald* reached me soon after I had sent you my last letter. I did not send your article to the *Herald* as I thought that this was completely out of date and was obviously based on many misconceptions.

I read your letter and the article carefully. It appears that you have been impressed very greatly by various items of news from India as well as statements of some individuals and newspapers. You wrote that letter on the eve of Gandhiji's interview with the Viceroy. You know what happened at that interview. Instead of there being any further approach between the Congress and the government, there was a definite break. You will thus see that your judgement of the situation then was not correct. Ever since then this break has become more and more emphasised. The resolution passed by the Working Committee for the Congress is clear on this subject. Probably the Congress will adopt this resolution as it is and it will be the only resolution passed by the Congress.[2] This resolution is fundamentally Gandhiji's, except for the language here and there. From this you can understand somewhat how Gandhiji's mind is working. In view of what the British Government stands for, there is not a shadow of a chance of any agreement.

You need not apologise when you write in criticism of me. Not only have you a perfect right to do so but I welcome it very much. What is more, this is not a matter of personal likes and dislikes. We are dealing with vital matters of great importance and personal feelings cannot be allowed to come in the way. So you must write what you feel like.

But it does appear from your letter that you were much more worried than you need have been. There is cause enough for worry of course in this world of ours. There is no point in adding to it. I have to function in a way so as to bring about the maximum possible results

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On 1 March 1940, the Working Committee meeting at Patna endorsed the earlier resolutions on the war, passed by the A.I.C.C. and the Working Committee, and declared that the Congress would unhesitatingly resort to "civil disobedience as soon as the Congress organization is considered fit enough for the purpose, or in case circumstances so shape themselves as to precipitate a crisis."

and at the same time to avoid any giving up of a fundamental principle. I have tried to do so with moderate success and I think I can view questions and problems impersonally and without being influenced by the personal factors too much. The personal factors come in not because they influence me but because they influence events. Then they are important and cannot be ignored.

It is obvious that Gandhiji is one of those personal factors which influence events greatly. It is conceivable that that factor may function in such a way as to imperil some vital matter. It is also not only possible but probable that all that great influence may be used in furtherance of that principle. He is not a static factor or person. His language is very different from the language of politicians. There are all these well-known factors of course, but the fact remains that he is a tower of strength for Indian freedom and his yeas and nays make a difference.

Ever since the war began he has gone through many painful processes of thought and gradually he has accepted various propositions and made them his own, which means that they have become part of his present ideology. Previously he accepted them in a much vaguer way and sometimes interpreted them according to his own fashion. This applies both to the idea of constituent assembly and to independence. For long his interpretation of independence was compatible with Dominion Status with a declared right to sever the British connection. Having got that right which could be exercised at any time, he felt that that was independence. In a sense that might have been so if one forgot the nature of the British Empire and of British policy. He has now come to see that even that idea of Dominion Status is completely incompatible with independence. This I hope has been finally cleared up in the recent resolution passed by the Working Committee for the Congress. As regards the constituent assembly, very probably his idea is not quite the same as yours, especially in regard to the manner of its being called. But it goes far enough for all practical purposes. Then again in regard to princes and minority problems, he definitely looks upon them as offshoots of British imperialism and refuses to consider them apart from this.

Regarding world politics he is vague and possibly has no very clear opinions. But he feels more and more that the whole trend of British policy in the war and outside is based on imperialism and therefore cannot be supported in any way.

He is convinced that events are moving towards a conflict in India which means some form of civil disobedience. When this takes place he envisages it as something on a very big mass scale, though of course there is a possibility of the initial stages being restricted. He feels that

any such development cannot be played about with and used as a temporary expedient. There will be an element of finality about it and, once set going, it will pursue its course depending on the strength of the people behind it. Under these circumstances he wants the people to be as strong as possible and does not want to precipitate matters on his part. He recognises, however, that events may force the pace and he might be goaded into action by these events.

This being his general outlook, it seems to me essential for all of us to support him, unless something happens which makes this almost impossible. If you keep all this in mind, you will be able to understand Indian events better.

You seem to have a grievance against me, which has been expressed in some articles, that I remain silent when I should give a lead or should contradict some wrong statement. I am not very silent as a rule, but it is true that I dislike publicly criticising my colleagues even though I might disagree with them. My criticisms are private and often make a difference. Public controversies between colleagues do not help matters and do not bring about the required results.

Kripalani sent you a cable from Patna yesterday giving a very full summary of the resolution for the Congress. I now enclose a copy of it.

On my return to Allahabad today I received your long cable about the summoning of a convention. For the present I think this is not feasible. But I shall think over the matter and consult with others.

Subhas Bose is going to pieces and has definitely ranged himself against the Congress.[3] This is very unfortunate, but there it is. The pity of it is that Bengal is badly affected by all this development. As a matter of fact, the real conflict about the Bengal affair has its basis in Bengal itself.[4] There is a strong feeling, more especially in the districts of Bengal, against the Bose brothers' dictatorship. In Calcutta the youthful elements are largely with Subhas. There is also in Bengal bitter feeling against some members of the Working Committee. I

3. After the outbreak of the war Subhas Bose became vehemently critical of the Congress. He denounced spinning as a method of political struggle and held separate meetings and demonstrations on the Independence Day. The Congress demand for a constituent assembly seemed to him a convenient device for avoiding a struggle for independence.
4. The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, in its resolution dated 6 January 1940, refused to recognise the *ad hoc* committee for conducting Congress elections in Bengal, and called upon the subordinate committees not to cooperate with the *ad hoc* election committee. On February 27, the council of the Bengal P.C.C. passed a resolution disaffiliating the Mymensingh, Hooghly and Jessore district committees for cooperating with the *ad hoc* committee. The Working Committee retaliated by suspending the Bengal P.C.C.

have no doubt that the Working Committee has acted on occasion very wrongly in regard to Bengal, but I have also no doubt that Subhas Bose has made it exceedingly difficult for the Working Committee to act otherwise. He now talks the most arrant nonsense about rival Congress and the like and is organising a big demonstration at Ramgarh called the Anti-Compromise Conference.[5] The Forward Bloc, which represented an anti-programme rather than anything constructive or definite, is fading away in other provinces. Subhas Bose does not seem to have an idea in his head, and except for going on talking about leftists and rightists he says little that is intelligible.

The Congress Working Committee meets at Ramgarh on the 15th, the A.I.C.C. on the 18th and the open session on the 19th. In view of developments there is not much new work for the Working Committee there and it is conceivable that the whole session may not last long. Probably only this one resolution will be taken up and considered. The idea is not to fritter away energy over a number of resolutions but to concentrate popular attention on one resolution and the impending struggle.

I shall be leaving Allahabad for the Congress a couple of days earlier, that is, on the 12th night, as I want to relax a little and visit some places in Chhota Nagpur on the way to Ramgarh. The Chhota Nagpur area in Bihar is exceedingly rich in minerals and other facilities for heavy industries. Tatas are situated there. It is possible that this area may develop in a very big way industrially.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

5. Simultaneously with the Congress session at Ramgarh an Anti-Compromise Conference presided over by Subhas Bose was held on 19 March 1940.

38. On the Arrest of Congressmen[1]

For some months past, ever since the resignation of the Congress ministries, various provincial governments have been picking up and arresting

1. Statement to the press, 8 March 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 9 March 1940.

Congressmen for speeches or other activities. Often these activities consist of giving publicity to the Congress position in regard to the war. In the Punjab and Bengal such action has been continuous ever since the war began. In Bengal civil liberties have been sought to be completely crushed; in the Punjab hundreds of Congressmen and Ahrars have been imprisoned and the process continues. In the other provinces the process was slower but it has gradually gained momentum. We have said little about this for it is not our way to protest too much. We have held ourselves patiently for the time when action was to be demanded of us. That patience did not signify acceptance of this growing attack on us.

Now comes news of Jaya Prakash Narayan's arrest in Patna.[2] That is vital news for Jaya Prakash is one of the dearest and most valued of our comrades and his arrest has a deep significance. It means the determination of the government to declare war on the Congress. We do not regret or protest against this as against other arrests. But we realise what it means and we are prepared for it. It is fitting that this arrest should have taken place in the province where the Congress is going to meet soon for it is that Congress that will give answer to British imperialism.

2. Jaya Prakash Narayan had gone to Jamshedpur to advise the striking workers of the Tata Iron and Steel Company. He was arrested on 7 March 1940.

39. The Power of Nonviolence[1]

Various ideas have been expressed by the previous speakers, through their questions. I will first give my reactions to them before giving replies.

It was said before the Levellers' Society yesterday that in human history there is a lag between ideas and events. The questions put by the speakers more than confirm that view. They were fit to be put a hundred years ago. They have been answered over and over again. I ask if revolutions, wars and events like earthquakes have not affected

1. Speech at the meeting of the Political Science Association, Allahabad University, 9 March 1940. From the *National Herald*, 10 March 1940.

their thoughts. The whole background of their thoughts seems to belong to yesterday and not to today.

You question whether the Working Committee of the Congress possesses knowledge of the history of yesterday. I ask what knowledge have you of the history of today? Admitting you know some facts and dates of the past hundred years, I would say that it is one thing to know them and another to know their significance. The French Revolution, which occurred 150 years ago, was a phenomenon that shook the world. It made men think again. Many books were written on it. The Radicals and Liberals were influenced alike by it in England. But even then it was late. The Industrial Revolution had changed the face of things even more radically than the French Revolution, not with thunderstorm but with the steady flow of tidal waves. In the first half of the nineteenth century there was very little organised thought on account of the Industrial Revolution. They were still thinking in terms of the French Revolution due to the mental lag.

Mentally speaking, we are a static lot. We grow up with static views. Whether it is religion or politics, we are tied to fixed notions and think that the world will not change. Though we are being faced every day with new ideas and events that are affecting the whole world tremendously, we think we are living in an unchanging world.

After all, what will it matter what happened or did not happen after the Moghul rule? It does not matter a jot when the whole country is facing a new situation and has to face a crisis ahead. It may be that I cannot face a university teacher on the exactness of dates and events of history, but it is certainly astonishing that the members of the Working Committee should be thought ignorant about India's economic and other ruination during British rule. It is not proper either for an Indian, or an Englishman, to put that question.

It is quite natural that in a matter like that, some good things can be made into a list as bad things might be. Very often some good things result out of bad deeds without the perpetrator knowing it himself or intending to do so. A kick might bring self-respect to the receiver. The result is good enough; it does not mean that to be kicked is a good thing. It is astonishing that any professor of history should say that British rule has not brought about the economic ruination of India.

It is a patent fact that India was far more advanced in banking and trade, and had better financial prosperity before the British. We are today made passive agents of British manufacture, which is the result of an outrageous economic policy on this country. Is it necessary for me to argue that an autocratic foreign rule in this country has not done its

best to exploit the economic resources to its advantage? If I have to, it means the questioner is living in a century-old world.

One night please himself by saying that we had a great culture in the past and we were great spiritually. But they have not proved in themselves vital for the preservation of our freedom and strength. What is more, our culture, in the sense of leading an artistic life, has been made most deplorable. We need not go far to prove it. The homes of our middle and upper-class people are so shabby and undecorous in the matter of artistic fittings that the less we talk about the standard of some of our cultural attainments the better. So also with spiritual standards. They are, however, not so vital to the point. The villager has a greater artistic sense in him and his home has greater beauty in it, since having sprung from the soil his instincts are natural. Very often the arrangements of pictures and other decorations of a drawing or sitting room of a middle or upper-class man in this country are revolting from the artistic point of view.

If one examines the national movement in India and how it has grown and what the noncooperation and civil disobedience movements have done, one can understand what changes have come about in the country in their wake. The civil disobedience movements are a conflict with ourselves to overcome our own weaknesses.

The students who have gathered here do not know what was actually the condition twenty years ago; the shouts they raise today in the streets for their freedom, even the greatest of us was afraid to whisper in private. That was the state of affairs, but the movements have made us bolder, and regain the sense of individual rights and duties.

In 1931, when the civil disobedience movement was in full swing its leaders were all clapped in jails. But the women, who were till then behind the *purdah* and were so shy to come out in public, took up their stand in the gap created by those who were removed to jail. This is not an ordinary change in the life of a nation; the whole outlook of half the humanity of a nation changed. Whatever changes have happened in the country are quite noticeable on its face.

Regarding violence and nonviolence, those who run down nonviolence are those who advise us to sit quiet and do nothing. They are afraid of the alternative or think that it will not succeed, and would have us do nothing at all.

Professor Dube argued that nonviolence was not strong enough to achieve independence and hence independence should be given up and Dominion Status accepted since it was being offered instead. Such arguments mean that we should give up the object of our struggle.

If we go on giving in, it would mean that we will never be able to generate in ourselves the power to take what we want. Everyone agreed that without the power to transfer no transfer is possible. Even for the transfer of the power of Dominion Status a certain power has to work for the creation of such a situation. It is absurd to say that such a power can only be violence.

The problem, therefore, is how to produce that power, that strength. Whether it should be a violent method or a nonviolent method, to produce it is the point. If it is accepted, according to Mr. Dube, that Dominion Status is being given to us, it means that the British are not giving it to us for having done nothing on our part. We must have grown sufficiently strong for it.

Interruption : "Because of war pressure."

Granting that it is war pressure, even then if we were only of a negative value to the British, the war pressure would not have made them come to terms with us. It shows that we have some strength which we have built up in the course of our struggle, or we have some nuisance value for the British at the time of the war. No amount of mere protests and prayers, as had been done by some in the past or is being done by some even now, would have made them come to terms with us.

It may be that violence would have brought better results. It may be that it is a mistake on the part of the Congress not to adopt violence, as there have been many other mistakes that happen in the course of a long struggle of a country. But the fact that in spite of years of experience, the Congress is sticking to the cult of nonviolence, should show that there are strong reasons for it.

It is not possible to build an army in India to fight by a violent method for the people. Those who have resorted to violence have done it in despair. Individual actions might draw the attention of the country towards awakening the people. But violence can never be a mass technique. It cannot reach the masses. Even from the technical point of view it is bad, because it comes in the way of organising the masses.

The conditions of the French Revolution do not exist today. An armed rebellion cannot be raised from among the poor. The Indian army is kept so much in isolation that it is not yet affected by the national movement, though there are chances, after a series of movements, that they will feel the pinch since they are drawn from the rural population and will be affected in the course of the struggle in which their own kith and kin will be involved. But the British army of occupation is there, which is in possession of artillery. One would not want to make the Indian army cannon fodder for the British soldier. In a violent struggle these and many others are risks which have to be

faced. To defeat force through violence, a greater force is necessary. The happenings in Czechoslovakia, Poland and other places should be enough to prove this.

Hence the first part of the struggle of nonviolence is to remove the fear of the people, and make them courageous. In all military operations he who becomes a general knows a special technique superior to that of the enemy. On a great many occasions of world warfare new weapons have been discovered unknown to the enemy. Chengis Khan did it; so also Napoleon. Even in modern warfare it is done.

India also discovered a technique of warfare, the method of nonviolence. When Mahatma Gandhi launched it, the people laughed and the British Government was amused. The then Viceroy did not take any notice of it and laughed. But their laugh soon turned into grave anxiety, because it was a technique unparalleled in the history of the world and they did not know how to meet it. It made our hearts brave, we faced what we were afraid to face. The British soldier, whenever he was sent to deal violently with it found it difficult, except in some cases, to fire at a quiet people. It demoralised him to shoot the people who, within their civil rights, acted without violence.

The next question is whether it is valid to adopt it for the achievement of independence. I have no doubt that the nonviolent technique will take us a long way in the struggle. I am even hopeful of the seizure of power at the peak of a movement by means of nonviolence. It certainly is a difficult question to answer fully. It might be that the repeated application of the method will make the enemy liquidate his power and retire.

I feel, therefore, that it is not impossible to reach the ultimate stage of the struggle through nonviolence. The Russian Revolution was quite a peaceful revolution at the time of the seizure of power. It was only after the seizure and when the counter-revolutionaries came in the way of the revolutionaries that violence broke out.

I am damned if I should call the British army to my aid in case of external aggression. If the British withdraw and if we have a civil war, well it is better to have it than to be emasculated in the present way. No doubt, no civil war is good for a country. It is distressing and unhealthy for the nation.

The building up of India is a tremendous problem. Such methods should be adopted as will ensure a harmonious understanding and avoid communal riots that will degrade us. Such happenings can be avoided by holding fast to our ideals.

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40. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
10 March 1940

Jaya Prakash's arrest was because of his speech at Jamshedpur. The details are unknown. It is a significant indication of the Government's attitude. There have been no large scale arrests except in Punjab but the momentum is increasing. The labour situation is growing critical. The main demand is for war allowance owing to increased prices. The general textile strike at Bombay[2] is continuing. The situation at Cawnpore[3] is worsening. Imperial Tobacco Cigarette factories strikes[4] are continuing. Many sugar factories are on the verge of a strike. The new excise duty on sugar[5] meant a fall on consumers' price passed on to cane producers by lowering the price of sugarcane thus hitting the UP and Behar peasantry hard. The political and industrial situation is hardening owing to Government aggression.

Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. A general strike began on 4 January 1940 in Bombay following the failure of the employers and the textile workers of Bombay to agree on a fair dearness allowance to cover higher prices in war time. Some 150,000 workers were involved. It ended on 14 April 1940.
3. Discontent prevailed among the workers of Kanpur over the refusal of the employers to grant 'dear food allowances'. The Mazdoor Sabha had asked the government to intervene and at the same time was mobilizing the workers for a struggle.
4. The strike began on 15 February and ended with the Governor's intervention on 14 June 1940.
5. It was proposed to increase the excise duty on sugar from Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 per hundredweight bringing in an additional revenue of Rs. 190 lakhs per year.

5

THE COMMUNAL ISSUE

1. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Camp Wardha
13th October 1939

My dear Maulana Saheb,
You have seen the statement of Sir Sikandar Hayat published in the papers which we got this morning.[2] There is a direct suggestion that the Congress should have consultation with the Muslim League regarding the communal question and come to an agreement with it. It is a public invitation. You also know that our suggestion for an enquiry by an impartial judge into the allegations against the Congress ministries has been rejected by Mr. Jinnah who has practically barred the door for the present at any rate.[3] I should like to have your views in the matter. I had a talk with Mahatmaji. He is of opinion that I should write to Sir Sikandar Hayat asking him for definite suggestions and pointing out to him that Mr. Jinnah has practically barred the door at present. But Mahatmaji has said that I should first consult you and get your advice in the matter.

I am leaving this evening and shall be staying at Benares on the 15th, 16th October with Babu Shivaprasad Gupta, Sevaupvan, Benares Hindu University, Benares, and reaching Patna on the 17th. I shall be obliged for an early reply.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On 11 October 1939, Sikandar Hayat Khan had stated: "It is my firm conviction that if to our misfortune a solution regarding the fundamentals is not reached between the two major parties in this country, the hopes of an early settlement of our political future might recede indefinitely....both the Congress and the Muslim League are anxious to settle their differences....if an informal invitation is extended to Jinnah he will be willing to cooperate with the Congress."
3. See *ante*, section 3, iten

2. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Lucknow
17-10-1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,
I had a talk today with Maulana Azad on the subject of your letter of October 13th.[2] While we were talking Sir Sikandar Hayat telephoned to Maulana. Maulana is writing to you on this subject and suggesting what should be done. I agree with him and am writing, from my own viewpoint, what the result of our conversation was, so that you might have a clear picture.

I might also mention that two days ago I had a letter from Raghunandan Saran[3] from Delhi. He informed me that Nawabzada Liaquat Ali[4] had summoned him by telephone, soon after I had left Delhi, and wanted to know what additional steps were going to be taken in furtherance of my talk with Jinnah. He expressed his eagerness to have the Hindu-Muslim question settled and said that Jinnah having explained his fundamental position to me, the next step lay with us. Jinnah, the Nawabzada added, was in a friendly mood and wanted, as far as possible, to avoid controversies. He, Jinnah, was staying on in Delhi and it was hinted that he would be available there and something should be done before the Viceregal announcement.

Saran also wrote to me about his meeting Subhas in Delhi. Jinnah wanted to meet Subhas before the latter met the Viceroy, but this could not be arranged and Subhas saw him afterwards. Subhas reported afterwards that Jinnah distrusted entirely the Congress 'High Command'. To some extent, it was hinted, that I might be a suitable person to deal with him, provided I had full authority to do so. It was suggested that there would be little difficulty if Subhas was in charge of the matter.

I sent a brief reply to Saran[5] pointing out, first of all, that when I was leaving Jinnah I had told him that I would gladly see him again if he wanted me to do so and sent me word. I told him how long I

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, section 3, item 28.
3. (1897-1953); Congressman and industrialist of Delhi; personal friend of Jawaharlal.
4. Liaquat Ali Khan (b. 1895); general secretary of the Muslim League, 1936-47; finance member of the Interim Government, September 1946-August 1947; Prime Minister of Pakistan from 1947 till his assassination in 1951.
5. Not printed.

would remain in Delhi. No message however came to me from him. Our conversation had been of a general character and was complete in itself.

Further, I added that we have always been eager to discuss and settle our points of disagreement with the League. We are prepared to go far, but we can on no account give up our national and democratic basis or endanger the unity of India. Subject to that, we shall gladly discuss minority demands and grievances. We could not proceed on the lines of India being two nations, etc.

I suggested to Saran that he might inform Nawabzada accordingly in his own language. So much for Saran's letter and my reply.

Regarding your letter of the 13th, both Maulana and I feel that it will be undesirable for us to treat Jinnah's letter as banging the door to compromise. This letter of Jinnah's was certainly a turning away from a friendly approach and it demonstrated how his mind continues to work in a way hostile to the Congress. Still it is not meant to end anything.

Now I come to Sikandar Hayat's telephone message today. He said to Maulana that in the course of a conversation between him (Sir Sikandar) and Gandhiji last summer in Bombay the difficulty of the preamble had been got over and no longer presented an obstacle. This being so Gandhiji might write to Sir Sikandar or Rajendra Babu might write to Mr. Jinnah saying that the Congress and the Muslim League should appoint representatives to discuss the actual matters in dispute. Further that he (Sir Sikandar) was prepared to go to Delhi during the next three or four days to settle details with Jinnah.

Maulana replied that he would consider the matter and get into touch with you. It was a short conversation.

Now it is not clear what Sir Sikandar means by saying that the question of the preamble was satisfactorily solved last summer between him and Gandhiji and I fear that this has not been wholly disposed of. I do not want anything to be done under misapprehension. Apparently some phrase was used to the effect that the Muslim League was an important (*aham*) organisation. Of course, the League is an important organisation and there can be no objection to saying so. But I doubt if that is what Mr. Jinnah meant. I think this should be cleared up and I have suggested to Maulana to write to Sir Sikandar about it. Gandhiji might also be asked about that conversation last summer.

At the same time it is not desirable to delay matters when Sir Sikandar wants an immediate answer. I think therefore, and Maulana agrees with me, that you should write to Sir Sikandar. You might refer to Sikandar Hayat's public invitation for the Congress and League to come together

as well as his telephone message to Maulana and say that the Congress has always been ready to do so, but unfortunately some obstacles have come in the way. As Sir Sikandar says that the difficulty of the preamble has been got over, if this is so, you will gladly advise the Congress executive to take further steps in the matter. If necessary representatives of the Congress and League can meet together. You might add that you do not yourself fully know or remember what this conversation was last summer between Sir Sikandar and Gandhiji but in any event if the difficulty about the preamble no longer exists, as he suggests, then this need not come in the way and the real questions can be tackled straight away. You should like, however, to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding which unfortunately has often occurred in the past and made progress difficult.

I think you might add, if I may say so, that you and your colleagues are anxious that at this moment of national and international crisis, we should all pull together for the good of India. You trust that the Muslim League will give its support to the demand put forward by the All India Congress Committee in regard to a clear declaration of war and peace aims by the British Government, and, in particular, a recognition of India as an independent nation and the immediate implementing of this to the largest possible extent. Within the framework of this demand, it is up to us to settle our problems *inter se* and we should make every effort to do so. In the last A.I.C.C. resolution reference has specially been made to the recognition and full protection of minority rights.

I do not know if I have expressed myself clearly. You will forgive me for suggesting to you what reply should be made to Sikandar Hayat. I have put it down for your consideration and you will no doubt do what you consider proper. It is obvious that some reply must be sent soon and that reply cannot be anything in the nature of shutting the door. I think it is better that you write to Sir Sikandar than to Mr. Jinnah at this stage as the suggestion has come from the former.

I am sending copies of this letter to Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

3. To M. A. Jinnah[1]

Lucknow
October 18, 1939

My dear Jinnah,

Nandan has written to me about his meeting you yesterday and his conversation with you. I am sorry that there was some misunderstanding which led you to think that I would get into touch with you again in Delhi, and made me think that you would ring me up. I was in fact looking forward to meeting you again and waiting for some message from you. It is true that this was in connection with the talks with the Viceroy. Our other conversation, though lengthy, had been general and I wanted to have another opportunity of coming to closer grips with the subject.

I shall gladly meet you again. If I had time now I would have come up to Delhi for the purpose, but I fear this is difficult as I have to go to Allahabad tomorrow and, after a few hours' stay there, to Wardha for the Congress Working Committee. You are also likely to be very busy during the next few days. The situation is likely to develop very rapidly after the Viceroy's statement[2] and it is not easy to make plans for the future. But I shall make every effort to meet you either in Bombay or Delhi, whichever is convenient to you, after the Wardha meeting. If you go to Bombay soon I can also go there from Wardha. Or I could go to Delhi.

I entirely agree with you that it is a tragedy that the Hindu-Muslim problem has not so far been settled in a friendly way. I feel terribly distressed about it and ashamed of myself, in so far as I have not been able to contribute anything substantial towards its solution. I must confess to you that in this matter I have lost confidence in myself, though I am not usually given that way. But the last two or three years have had a powerful effect on me. My own mind moves on a different plane and most of my interests lie in other directions. And so, though I have given much thought to the problem and understand most of its implications, I feel as if I was an outsider and alien in spirit. Hence my hesitation.

But that does not come in the way of my trying my utmost to help to find a solution and I shall certainly do so. With your goodwill and commanding position in the Muslim League that should not be so

1. *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 402-403.
2. See *ante*, section 3, item 29.

difficult as people imagine. I can assure you with all earnestness that all the members of the Working Committee are keenly desirous of finding a solution. It is a matter of enormous surprise and regret to me that we have so far failed in this endeavour. For, after all, the actual matters in dispute should be, and indeed are, easily capable of adjustment.

I shall therefore try to meet you as early as possible after the Wardha meeting. Will you please let me know your programme? When we meet I shall gladly discuss all the aspects of the question. But I suppose it will be better at a later stage for some representatives of the League to meet Congress representatives.

At the present moment, as you will no doubt appreciate, my mind is full of the rapid developments that are taking place. I do not know where they will land us in the course of the next few weeks. The Viceroy's statement has been astonishing in its imperialist challenge to all of us. As far as I can see there is no course open to the Congress except to reject his suggestions in their entirety, and this will necessarily have far-reaching consequences for us as well as others. I do not know what you and your colleagues in the Muslim League will decide, but I earnestly trust that you will also express your strong disapproval of the Viceroy's statement and refuse to cooperate with him on the lines he has suggested. I feel strongly that our dignity and self-respect as Indians have been insulted by the British Government. They take us for granted as hangers-on of their system, to be ordered about when and where they will.

I do not know if you read the *National Herald* of Lucknow. An article written by me appeared in it this morning and another will appear tomorrow morning.[3] These articles give in restrained language my reactions to the Viceroy's statement. I am enclosing both.

I shall try to telephone to you tomorrow—Thursday the 19th October. My future programme is Allahabad 20th October, Wardha 21st and onwards.

May I say how happy I was to meet you in Delhi?

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. See *ante*, section 3, items 29 & 32.

4. The Congress and the Communal Issue[1]

Question : What is the future of the National Planning Committee?

Jawaharlal Nehru : Almost everything in India is bound to be affected by the various developments, so I do not see any reason why the Planning Committee should not continue to function. At the present moment there are many sub-committees of the Planning Committee that are working hard. This work will be continued in any event. The National Planning Committee will then consider the various sub-committees' reports.

All manner of changes are likely to take place in the world and it is of paramount importance that there should be a scheme for the whole of India. Whether the scheme is given effect to in its entirety or not, it seems essential to me to carry on the work of the Planning Committee.

Q: What is the Congress attitude towards the claims of the minorities?

JN: Everybody recognises the importance of the communal issue in India, but the way it is being pushed forward, as has been pointed out by the Congress Working Committee, it is a screen to avoid difficult questions. The Congress is perfectly prepared and willing to face the question in all its aspects but the approach of the British Government to this question is to make the communal issue an excuse for avoiding political progress.

It is said that the Congress does not represent the whole of India. Of course not. It does not represent those who are opposed to it. But what has been said in regard to the Congress is that it tries and claims to speak for India as a whole which is a different matter. That is to say what it demands is not for any particular group or community but for the nation as a whole. It is inconceivable to me how any Indian can take exception to this demand, although it is open to people to say that within the framework of that Indian demand special interests like those of the minorities should be protected.

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 25 October 1939. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 26 October 1939.

The Congress demand is based on democracy as it aims at the establishment of a democratic state in India. Democracy certainly does not exclude full protection to minority rights and interests. But it becomes an absurdity if on the plea of minority rights democracy itself is abandoned.

Q: What are the alternatives to democracy in India?

JN: The alternatives to democracy in India are fascism, the Soviet form of government or India's continued subjection to foreign rule. I cannot think of any other way out. I take it that we are all agreed that we do not want foreign rule in India; so the only alternative left is the Soviet form of government which may or may not approach democracy. Recently the democratic ideal has been criticised by various people in India. I do not know if they have thought of the inevitable consequence of giving up that ideal. I cannot conceive of any objective other than democracy in the present state of India. With proper protection and safeguards for the minorities this will be fairest to everyone concerned.

Of course, the majority will remain a majority, as nothing can convert a majority into a minority except a rule by a fascist or military clique. So far as the Muslims are concerned it is a little misleading to talk in terms of majorities and minorities. A religious group, seventy million strong, cannot be considered a minority. As they are spread out in India, in certain provinces they are in a majority, and in such provinces the minority issue is entirely different from the rest of India.

It is quite inconceivable to me that in these circumstances either the Hindus can tyrannise over the Muslims or the Muslims can tyrannise over the Hindus or, I would add, both the Hindus and Muslims together can tyrannise over anybody else. The Sikhs are very small in numbers, but I do not think there is the slightest chance of their being tyrannised over by anybody. It is unfortunate that this communal question has taken this new shape and is being used as a barrier to India's freedom.

Nothing has astonished me and pained me so much, during the last year or two, as the amazing charges brought against the Congress and the Congress governments of suppressing Muslims and committing atrocities against them. The Congress governments have made many mistakes, as was natural, in regard to various departments of government but I am personally quite convinced that, in regard to the treatment of minorities, they have taken the greatest care possible not to offend against any minority rights or privileges.

We have so often asked for an impartial enquiry into the vague charges brought forward and our offer still remains unaccepted and yet totally unfounded statements continue to be made. So far as the Congress is concerned it is prepared today, as it has always been prepared, to consider the communal or minority question in all its bearings, so as to put an end to all misapprehensions and suspicions and arrive at a satisfactory settlement. But the Congress cannot consider any proposal which goes against India's unity and freedom and which is opposed to all democratic ideals.

Q: What does the Congress propose to do about the propaganda carried on by the Muslim League?

JN: Our fight is against British imperialism. We do not propose to fight any countryman of ours or any organisation of Indians. It is the misfortune of India if any Indian or any organisation in India allies itself with British imperialism; but I am sure India will survive such a misfortune. One of the great advantages of the present crisis is that it forces people and organisations to show up their real cards. It becomes impossible then to play with vague phrases and indulge in brave talks because such talks have then to be followed by action. So, in the present instance, this crisis will result in removing this fog from Indian politics which has confused the issue for so long and the public will understand what the real objects of individuals and organisations are.

Q: Does the Working Committee resolution mean that they stop with the resignation of the ministries or do they have plans for future action?

JN: It is obviously difficult for me to discuss the future. It depends on various factors. The resignation of the ministries in itself is a tremendous step. It need not have been a tremendous step but in the particular context in which the decision was taken, it is a big step towards noncooperation with the whole apparatus of British imperialism. Big consequences will follow from it and we want the country to be prepared for those consequences. When and what those consequences will be it will not be proper for me to discuss at this stage. In circumstances like the present, a bald neutrality is an almost impossible proposition.

5. Draft Agreement on Communal Issue[1]

During the last few days we have met together on several occasions and have had long, frank and friendly talks. The immediate occasion for us to meet was the political crisis in India caused by the European war and subsequent developments. Although there was much in common between us on this political issue and about our general objective, we did not wholly see eye to eye in regard to some matters affecting the approach to this question and the immediate steps to be taken. We are glad to say, however, that our talks have resulted in considerable clarification and in the removal of many misunderstandings, and have emphasized how much we have in common.

We took advantage of this occasion to discuss the communal aspect of the problems facing India. We were all entirely willing to discuss this aspect fully with a view to a settlement of the outstanding causes of friction. For the present the political issue dominated the scene and so we could not give much time to the communal problem. But we hope to continue these talks and it was agreed between us that we should do so at an early and convenient date. Mr. Jinnah has promised to get into touch with Jawaharlal Nehru on the subject later so that this date may be fixed.

1. 4 November 1939, J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. This draft of Jawaharlal was to have been issued under the joint signatures of Rajendra Prasad, Jinnah and Jawaharlal in Delhi in November 1939. But Jinnah did not agree, so it was not issued.

6. Talks with Jinnah to Continue[1]

We recognize the existence of the communal problem and the necessity of solving it but it should not be confused with the demand for the declaration of India's independence and her right to frame her own constitution. In fact, the communal question does not fit in with that

1. Address to some journalists, New Delhi, 4 November 1939. From *The Hindustan Times*, 5 November 1939.

context, and should not come in the way of convening a constituent assembly for framing India's constitution.

It is inconceivable that in a broad-based body like the constituent assembly, which will be elected by millions of people, the majority could attempt to ride roughshod over the rights of the minorities. On the other hand, such a body will make every effort to safeguard minorities' rights by agreement. We must start on the assumption that goodwill will prevail on all sides as those of us who will be called upon to compose such an assembly will keep it in our minds that we have been charged with the task of shaping India's future and our decisions will be final. The consciousness that the breaking up of such an assembly on account of the inability of the two major communities to come to an agreement on the communal question will have disastrous consequences and may even lead to a civil war, will strongly react against any fissiparous tendencies. Moreover the mass mentality that will prevail at any such gathering will tend to give an economic orientation to the deliberations.

I have had friendly discussions with Mr. Jinnah and there is nothing like a breakdown. I will resume negotiations with Mr. Jinnah in the near future. I am unable to say whether the difficulties that were felt during the negotiations by Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose at Bombay are still persisting.[2] However, let me make it plain that nothing is static and we have to discuss everything in the light of the new development.

2. In May 1938, Mahatma Gandhi and Subhas Bose had inconclusive discussions with Jinnah.

7. On the Talks with Jinnah[1]

I am glad that in my talks with Mr. M.A. Jinnah I found that there was no difference as to the final objective to be achieved by our country even though our political viewpoints differed in detail. There was no difference in what is to be achieved but only in how we should attain it. It is regrettable that we had to decide to submit our replies separately

1. Speech at Allahabad, 5 November 1939. From *The Hindustan Times*, 7 November 1939.

to His Excellency the Viceroy. Consequently Rajendra Babu has submitted to the Viceroy a reply on behalf of the Congress.[2]

My talks with Mr. Jinnah were primarily of a political nature, although the communal problem also came up for discussion. Even as regards this there is not really anything big in the way of its settlement, although, of course, there are a number of minor things that cause a lot of misunderstanding and difficulty. But the British Government has deliberately put this problem to the fore in their declarations. These talks were a continuation of my earlier talks with Mr. Jinnah. I am hopeful that the misunderstandings will be removed and the day is not far when we will be able to take a joint step forward.

India is not out to take advantage of Britain's difficulties but is only raising fundamental issues. Behind the Congress there is enormous strength and the people who are aware of their own strength never take any hasty action. The door for negotiation is always open. It need not be supposed that these talks show any weakness of the Congress. Strict discipline is most essential and nonviolence is the only method we should adopt. Violence and slogans show our weakness.

The Congress has taken its calm decision after mature thought and you should not get impatient. The Congress leadership is not spent and the Congress is watching the situation and the trend of the war and has been taking decisions in the light of events. The resignation of the ministries is one of the biggest steps taken by the Congress in its fight against Britain's treatment of India. I consider it as the opening of the first flood-gate of noncooperation. I am not in a position to say what other steps will be taken in the coming days. But I ask you to be prepared for all eventualities.

What we need is perfect obedience to Mahatma Gandhi's instructions without which he will not be able to lead the country. You must realize what a great asset Mahatma Gandhi's leadership is for the country. Even Poland which was fully armed was ploughed down in three weeks. Nonviolence will prove the greatest weapon in the coming fight.

2. See *ante*, section 3, item 42.

8. On the Viceroy's Statement[1]

The Viceroy's statement issued last night[2] has surprised me as it conveys an entirely different impression of what transpired in Delhi from what I had gathered from contact with some of the principal parties concerned. From his statement it would appear that the question to be considered was a communal one and he adds that "there remains today entire disagreement between representatives of the major political parties on fundamental issues." This seems to me an entire misapprehension of the situation, and I am not aware of any such disagreement on fundamental issues. But there is a fundamental disagreement between the Congress and the British Government and it was because of this that the Viceroy's proposals could not be considered by us. The question before us was a political one and as such it was considered by all of us. It was agreed between Mr. Jinnah and me that the communal question should be discussed fully by us at an early convenient date. This did not affect the Viceroy's proposals so long as the political difficulty was not got over. Hence it was not discussed in this connection.

The crisis has arisen over a political issue, namely, the European war and the declaration of India as a belligerent country. The Congress Working Committee asked for a statement of war aims and how these were going to be applied to India. Subsequently a declaration was made by the British Government through the Viceroy, and this was considered entirely unsatisfactory. As a result of this, the Congress felt that it could not associate itself with the war and called upon the Congress governments to resign.

These resignations were offered and in some cases have already been accepted. All this had nothing to do with the communal situation.

The Viceroy then suggests that the Congress and the Muslim League should come to an agreement in regard to the provincial field, consequent on which proposals for the centre would be considered. This suggestion, howsoever desirable at any other time, had no application to the present situation as we had voluntarily retired from the provincial field because of disagreement with the British Government on vital matters of policy.

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 6 November 1939. *The Hindustan Times*, 7 November 1939. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1940), pp. 349-351.
2. On 5 November 1939, the Viceroy published his correspondence with the leaders along with a resume of the negotiations. He deplored the total lack of agreement between the parties on fundamental issues and said that he would continue to strive for unity.

Our withdrawal from the provincial governments was in no way due to a communal conflict.

It was surprising, therefore, that the Viceroy should forget or ignore the basic issue and take our cooperation with Britain for granted subject to minor changes. As Dr. Rajendra Prasad has stated in his letter: "Both Mahatma Gandhi and I missed at the interview any reference to the main and moral issue raised by the Congress about the clarification of war aims without which it was impossible for the Congress to consider any subsidiary proposal."

It must be remembered that this clarification does not affect the communal problem, and the proposal for a constituent assembly, as amplified by Dr. Rajendra Prasad in his interview with and letter to the Viceroy, also overcomes any communal objection.

Does the Viceroy imagine that Mr. Jinnah or the Muslim League are opposed to such clarification or the declaration of India as a free country? If so, I fear he is very much mistaken. I found, to my pleasure, that in regard to the objectives Mr. Jinnah and I had a great deal in common. He did not entirely agree with our approach to the political problem and so we decided to send separate answers to the Viceroy. Our talks removed many misapprehensions and brought us much nearer to each other than we had been for some years past. I am convinced that such differences as exist politically or communally can be and will be got over. Even during the last week it was not any differences between Mr. Jinnah and us that came in the way, but the fundamental difference between the British Government and us. Let there be no mistake about this. No one stands in the way of an unequivocal declaration of war aims and India's freedom by the British Government except themselves. Till such a satisfactory declaration is made, other issues do not arise and we cannot associate ourselves in any way with British policy. To drag the communal question in this straight issue is to befog people's minds and divert them into wrong channels.

9. The Right and the Wrong of It[1]

For several days we lived in an air of mystery and picked up titbits of news and anticipations of the doings of the High Command and the

1. 6 November 1939. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 7 November 1939. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 219-222.

Men of Note who had foregathered in New Delhi. And now we have had a spate of information—letters and statements and even a radio broadcast by the Viceroy. His Excellency has spoken and written in moving terms and yet he will forgive us, we hope, if we are not moved overmuch by his statement. We are bad boys, we are told, who will not compose our differences in spite of every attempt of the British Government and every appeal addressed to us by the Viceroy. We have our faults and our failings, as we are only too painfully aware, but must we consider the British Government the White Angel of Peace that it claims to be? We have some experience of this government, stretching over an odd hundred and eighty years, and it is hard to forget this. We have some knowledge of how the communal question took shape in India and was nurtured, and grew and grew, under the benign influence of successive viceroys and governments. It is evident that the old tradition still holds and finds expression in British policy in India. The Viceroy has spoken, so has the Marquis of Zetland, and Sir Samuel Hoare, and others of high or low degree, not forgetting His Lordship of Salisbury who has shown a worthy interest in the 'primitive tribes' of India. Through all these utterances runs the old thread of the White Man's Burden and of British statesmen and administrators grappling with the internal troubles of this unhappy land.

What happened in Delhi? The Viceroy met Mahatma Gandhi, Shri Rajendra Prasad and Mr. Jinnah and put forward a proposal that if they could agree about the provinces, the problem of the centre could be tackled with greater ease. It would appear that the Viceroy looked upon the crisis as something that had taken place between Mr. Jinnah and the Congress with which he had no direct concern except in the capacity of a benevolent arbitrator. What exactly had happened in the provinces which required adjustment? The Congress governments had resigned but they did not resign on any communal issue. They resigned because of British policy with which they did not agree and from which they wished to dissociate themselves. The conflict was with the British Government.

What then were Shri Rajendra Prasad and Mr. Jinnah to decide in regard to the provincial governments? If Mr. Jinnah controlled British policy and could speak on its behalf, he might have been able to help. But he is himself an opponent and critic of that policy and has his own grievances against the British Government. What then was to be done about the provincial governments? It is beyond our capacity to understand what the Viceroy expected from his visitors, unless we presume that he has not followed or understood recent developments.

There has seldom been such widespread resentment in India as was noticed when British policy was stated by the Viceroy two weeks ago.

Apart from a few individuals who, however eminent, have no representative character, everyone reacted strongly against that statement. The Muslim League, let us remember, did not approve of it;[2] the Hindu Mahasabha criticised;[3] even the Liberal Federation was unkind to it.[4] The Congress reaction was the strongest of all and resulted in the resignations of the Congress governments.

And yet, in spite of all this, the Viceroy meets our leaders and, ignoring everything, asks them to go ahead with the provincial governments. If there were not tragedy behind all this, we would be inclined to appreciate the humour of it. But it is tragic that His Excellency should endeavour to play this role and imagine that we can be made to play fast and loose with our innermost convictions and with our firm resolves. It is still more tragic to realise that not all the catastrophic changes that have happened and are happening in Europe, have affected the complacency of the British ruling class, or made it think in terms other than those of divide and rule. But the plane of catastrophe moves east and complacency and self-deception will not stop its progress.

It is clear that the conflict in Delhi was centred round the declaration of war aims and Indian freedom that the Congress demanded and the British Government was not prepared to make. That was the straight issue and it should have been faced frankly and in a straightforward manner. Till this is settled satisfactorily, everything else is subsidiary. Till this "main and moral" obstruction is removed, there is no going back of the Congress ministries, nor any cooperation with the British Government. Till then we dissociate ourselves completely from British policy and war effort.

Let us also be clear in our minds that there is no obstruction on the Indian side to such a declaration. The Muslim League may not agree with us in some matters, but the League stands for independence and Indian freedom. Mr. Jinnah, so far as we know, approves of such a

2. On 22 October 1939, the Muslim League resolution on the Viceroy's statement asked for further clarification before accepting the proposals and empowered Jinnah, should he be satisfied, "to give an assurance of support and cooperation on behalf of the Muslims of India to the British Government for the purpose of the prosecution of the war."
3. On 19 October 1939, V.D. Savarkar, President of the Hindu Mahasabha, stated: "The Viceroy should realise that India is sick of running after this wordy mirage. She refuses to look upon Dominion Status as her ultimate goal but instead insists upon it as an immediate step to be taken. A constitution based on that status must be conceded by Britain to India just at the end of war at the latest..."
4. On 22 October 1939, the council of the All India National Liberal Federation said that the Viceroy's declaration was unsatisfactory and that internal differences should not be permitted to bar the way to a free constitution.

declaration though he may not attach the same importance to it as we do. The Congress President has now made clear that the constituent assembly that we demand "will be formed on the widest possible basis of franchise and by agreement in regard to communal representation." Further "that there must be full protection of minority rights and interests and this protection should be by agreement between the parties concerned." That surely removes every vestige of apprehension from the minds of minorities. There will be many difficult matters for us to consider and settle but the principles are firmly established and agreed to. There is no major communal difficulty about the framing of India's constitution by such a constituent assembly.

And so the whole fabric of communal disunion as a bar to India's progress, conjured up by the Viceroy, fades away and vanishes at the touch of reason and reality. The only reality that counts today is Britain's carrying on a war, which becomes more and more imperialistic, and her refusal to declare her war aims explicitly. If that is so, we have made our decision and by that we shall stand.

10. The Caravan Moves On[1]

The recent happenings in Delhi tended to mystify people and confuse issues in men's minds. But the veil has now been lifted and the real facts stand out in all their clarity. We are glad that these conversations took place in Delhi for they have helped greatly in clarifying the situation both as between the Congress and the British Government, and between the Congress and the League. The position of the minorities in a constituent assembly, and in the constitution to be framed by that assembly, can no longer be the subject of speculation. The Congress President has put an end to all apprehension, and Mahatma Gandhi in his "sporting offer" has put the seal to this solution.[2]

Let no one, therefore, delude himself that the question of the minorities or the communal problem comes in the way of India's future. The

1. 7 November 1939. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 8 November 1939. Reprinted in *China, Spain and the War*, (Allahabad, 1940), pp. 223-227.
2. On 6 November 1939, Mahatma Gandhi had said: "The Congress has made a handsome and sporting offer. Let a Constituent Assembly of elected representatives frame a constitution for the future Government of India, subject to the protection of the rights of minorities to their satisfaction. Will the British statesmen play the game?"

conflict today, as in the long and dreary past, is between British imperialism and the Indian people. That conflict must and will continue till it is finally resolved by the liquidation of imperialism itself and the establishment of India's independence.

All that has happened during the last few weeks has made it clear where Britain stands. None of us could possibly imagine that Mr. Neville Chamberlain's Government could stand or fight for freedom or democracy. The record of Munich and Spain stands witness to their hatred of democratic freedom. Everywhere they supported reaction till even the liberal imperialism of Britain gasped with shame. Yet, realising that Mr. Chamberlain's policy was of the essence of fascist imperialism, the Congress made an appeal for a declaration of war aims. That appeal was addressed to the British Government but it was meant for the British people and the conscience of the world.

The world, busy with its own troubles, has looked with appreciation on that appeal, for it struck a responsive chord in many a disillusioned heart. Even the British people, or many of them, expressed their admiration of the Congress stand. But public opinion counts for little in the England of today; Britain has long ceased to be a democracy. That public opinion has been against Mr. Chamberlain's Government, yet that government continues. In this age of power politics, it is only power and strength that count, and India will have her way when her will and strength are strong enough to compel attention. That day, we are convinced, is not far distant.

The Viceroy's statements and the various speeches in the British House of Commons, and all the strange manoeuvering and clever play with the minorities, have demonstrated exactly what the British Government stands for. It is imperialism of the reddest variety and it is for empire that they fight, and the game of creating dissension amongst us continues as of old. But even the blind are beginning to see through it and India is far too politically conscious today to be misled as she was a quarter of a century ago.

When the Working Committee issued their famous statement of September 14th, there was some attempt to belittle it on the plea of bargaining. It was even hinted that all that the Congress was after was some seats on the Viceroy's council. There will be an end to this folly now that the Congress has even refused to consider such offers. Not all the seats on the Viceroy's council, with the Viceroyalty thrown in, have any attraction for the Congress if the "main and moral issue" is not defined to our satisfaction. Not all the incentives, personal and human, will induce the Congress to support a war which it believes to immoral and imperialistic. If we were out for bargaining we would

not care for war aims and Indian freedom, but would eagerly grasp the prizes offered. But no prizes are of any avail to us if the aim in view is other than our national objective.

What do we want? Proof that this war is for freedom and democracy and to put an end to imperialism. How will that proof come? By an explicit declaration of war aims to that effect and by an immediate application of that declaration, in the largest possible measure, in India and elsewhere.

In India this means not just seats in the council, not merely responsibility at the centre, but power in the hands of the people to control and guide India's government and war policy. It means immediate steps by this provisional government to set the machinery of constituent assembly in motion so that this assembly might meet, as soon as it is convenient, and frame the constitution of a free India. That assembly will then choose its representatives to meet the representatives of the British Government and settle the future economic and other relations between India and England on the basis of a treaty between them. That treaty, as envisaged, might have been a treaty of friendship. But England seems to have chosen otherwise, and the inexorable tide of events points now in another direction.

What does India want? No bargaining. No talk about inessentials and subsidiary matters. She wants to be considered and declared an independent nation. Only on that basis can she discuss or talk. For there is pride in India and love of freedom, and what shall it profit her if she gain offices and posts of honour and lose her soul and her ideals and her pride, and all that has meant so much to her during these long years of struggle?

Only a few years ago, a leading member of the British Government of today, then Secretary of State for India, told us that the caravan moved on though dogs barked.[3] Why is the caravan worrying today and seeking the cooperation of these humble and noisy animals? Let the caravan move on. We shall part company with it and live our own lives and dream our own dreams.

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 27.

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The essential problem of India thus became one of helping and raising these masses. This was more important than just political freedom, but political freedom was essential as without it nothing much could be done. Hence the demand for Swaraj and independence. But this independence must be of the masses; if small classes controlled it, then the masses would not profit much.

This has been, and is, the outlook of the Congress. The old outlook was to look for services of this group or that under the government. But services can only be for the few, not for the vast numbers. You know also how the Congress has laid great stress on cottage industries, notably hand spinning and hand weaving. During the last twenty years the handloom weavers have benefited to some extent by this Congress policy. We know that the lot of the handloom weavers today is a terribly hard one and it is the duty of the government to help in solving their problems. This can only be done by a state policy of helping cottage industries as well as starting other industries.

Apart from this every effort should be made to help the Momins, and others who stand in need of it, educationally by giving them both general and technical education. This will give solid strength to such communities when they stand on their own legs. Reservation of seats, etc., weakens a community and for a great community like the Momins, it might retard their growth.

Every barrier to state, military, police or other services should of course be removed.

While therefore I entirely agree with you in your analysis of the problems and in your final objectives, I do not think that some of the six points you have given are feasible or desirable. As for the first—appointment of a minister—I am sure all of us would welcome a Momin minister. But it is very dangerous to lay down a policy that ministers should be appointed communally. If we did that you will realise that all democracy will be at an end, and many Hindu castes or groups will make a similar demand which it will be impossible to fulfil.

As for the reservation of seats for Momins in the central and provincial legislatures, do you not think that such reservation, though perhaps somewhat advantageous to begin with, will be injurious to a great community like the Momins? The kind of reservation we have today has not done us much good. To extend it communally would add to our difficulties. The way to approach the question is to have a large number of suitable Momin candidates stand for election. This would apply to local bodies also, where again reservation would be bad.

As a matter of fact all these questions are beside the mark at present. We are facing a very serious crisis and the world is in turmoil. There

11. To Abdul Qaiyum Ansari[1]

Allahabad
November 14, 1939

Dear Mr. Abdul Qaiyum Ansari,[2]
I am in receipt of your letter of the 30th October 1939 enclosing copy of a letter dated 8th October which you have sent to the President, Indian National Congress. I am grateful to you for sending me this copy of your letter and thus acquainting me with the viewpoint of the Jamiat-ul-Momineen. I have previously had occasion to meet many of the leaders of your Jamiat and have discussed your problems with them.

I do not know whether the Congress President has replied to you yet or not. Probably you will have occasion to meet him in Patna. But as I have been greatly interested in the future of the Momin community, I am writing this letter to you on my own behalf. I think, however, that in this matter I can claim to represent the Congress viewpoint.

First of all, may I say that I entirely agree with you in your remark that certain upper class groups among the Muslims have more or less dominated the Muslims in India, much to the disadvantage of the others. This applies even more so to the Hindus, as you well know, where some upper class groups have dominated vast numbers of other people. The problem is essentially similar in both cases. This domination has been cultural, educational, etc., but essentially it has been economic. A group which is economically in a bad condition, usually deteriorates culturally and educationally and can be exploited by others.

You have yourself pointed out that owing to the decay of handicrafts during the last century, artisans suffered greatly and the Momins, in particular, were the worst sufferers. Indeed the whole problem of Indian poverty and unemployment is connected with this economic setback in India. New classes, associated with the British Government in services, professions and as owners of land, came into prominence, and these became the 'upper classes' you mention. Meanwhile the masses of the country, both Hindu and Muslim, became poorer and poorer and unemployment grew. Probably the class most affected was the great weaver class in India which comprised many crores.

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.
2. (b. 1905); started the Momin movement in Bihar; president, Bihar Provincial Jamiat-ul-Momineen, 1938-47; minister in Bihar, 1946-52, 1955-57 and 1962-67; president, Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee, and member, Congress Working Committee, 1959-63; member, Rajya Sabha since 1970.

is that he is waiting for political developments before having any talk with me. I am quite content.

I think we should studiously avoid any discussion of the communal problem except on the basis indicated above. Therefore I do not quite see how we are going to discuss this at the next meeting of the Working Committee. I have not quite appreciated the manner of Bapu's references to the communal problem[3] recently as this puts this problem in front of the political problem which we are facing now.

From this point of view there is no point in discussing the communal problem with the Jamiat or with the Sikhs. But it is perfectly true that the Jamiat and other Muslims as also the Sikhs are alarmed and annoyed at our talks with Jinnah while they are being ignored by us. It seems to me necessary therefore for us to meet them and to explain the situation fully to them and then discuss the political aspect of the problem facing us.

I would therefore suggest to you that Mufti Kifayatullah might be invited as also one or two representatives of the Akali Dal. Also Master Tara Singh to represent the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee which is rather wobbly. They need not be invited to participate in the Working Committee meeting but to meet some of us for a private talk. I think the 20th November will be the right date as Bapu will be silent then. The 19th will be very full.

I am very sorry to learn that you had another attack of asthma.

I am writing this letter in haste but I hope I have made myself clear. More when we meet.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

3. On 7 November 1939, Mahatma Gandhi, in an article entitled *Opinions Differ*, said: "British refusal to make the required declaration of Britain's war aims about India has perhaps come as a blessing in disguise. It removes the Congress out of the way to enable the Muslim League to make its choice unfettered by the Congress administration in eight provinces as to whether it will keep the British yoke by vivisecting India or whether it will fight for the independence of an undivided India."

are going to be revolutionary changes everywhere, including India. We can no longer think in terms of old constitutions and methods. The old constitution is almost dead and we no longer think of ministries and the like. For the present we have to think in terms of facing this great crisis and evolving a free India out of it. In this great task I trust the Momin community will take a full and honourable part. By its own action it will thus make for itself a position of dignity in the India of tomorrow.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Allahabad
November 14, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Masani has just given me your letter of the 12th[2] and I hasten to reply.

I am fully conscious of the fears that are troubling you in regard to the communal talks. All the dangers you point out are present. So far as I am concerned, I am certainly not going to fall into any trap. We shall speak about this more, later when we meet. Meanwhile my own view is that the communal question does not arise now and Jinnah is not interested in having any talks. His interest in this question was purely political and with the resignation of the Congress ministries a situation has been created which prevents him from tackling the question in his own way. If he talks to me now I cannot possibly discuss provincial or central political matters because all this depends on the British declaration which is not forthcoming. All I can talk is about purely communal questions and this does not interest Jinnah. The result

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-42/1939, p. 329, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter Rajendra Prasad wrote that by offering not to accept "any constitution which will not have the support and concurrence of the minorities and particularly Muslims" they would be placing a veto in Jinnah's hand. As Jinnah had stated that he was "ready to make up with the Congress and Hindus on the basis of equality" which he would interpret as "a division of power on equal shares...half for Muslims and half for Hindus leaving all others to be included in one half or the other", Rajendra Prasad felt doubtful of any settlement.

You must know that all of us are exceedingly keen to put an end to the communal tension and to come to terms with the Muslim League if that is possible. You must have heard of our meetings with Mr. Jinnah. These meetings were agreeable and friendly. That was all to the good. But I sensed a deep political difference, not a real communal one. The curious thing is that we never seemed to get talking about the communal difficulty. I must have spent over five hours with Jinnah the last time I was in Delhi. All this time was spent in talking over the political situation and communal matters were only casually referred to. Mr. Jinnah was not very much interested, as far as I could gather, in the so-called purely communal issues. He was very keen on our giving up our entire political policy which we have followed for these last twenty years or so and shaping ourselves differently. On no account would he countenance any action on our part which might lead to a conflict with the British Government. Essentially it was the liberal, moderate attitude in politics. This was so, so far as the political question is concerned, and under the circumstances he felt that unless this matter was cleared up, other important questions did not arise. For instance the proposal to have coalition ministries in the provinces.[2] This was perfectly correct because politically speaking there is not a shadow of a chance of our forming any ministries at all in the provinces under existing circumstances. As we were not forming any ministries unless the British Government radically changed its attitude, the question of coalition ministries did not arise. In effect we had to give up our policy in regard to the war and the British Government as well as our general political policy before we could usefully discuss subsequent steps with Jinnah. This as you will realise was a matter of most vital importance to us, and agreeing with him on this question meant the complete disruption and the end of the Congress which has been wedded to these ideas for twenty years. In fact, as you must know, the present policy of the Congress is considered by large numbers of Congressmen as politically not advanced enough. It is with great difficulty that we have been able to restrain our advanced elements. Personally I am quite convinced that for us to offer cooperation to the British Government on their terms is to put an end to all the idealism that we have had and to let loose all manner of warring factions and sections in the country. In fact we would thereby not even gain the goodwill

2. In his talks with the Congress leaders, Jinnah had asked for coalition ministries in the provinces, formed on the basis that the Muslim ministers appointed should enjoy the confidence of a certain proportion of the Muslim members in a legislature.

13. To Asaf Ali[1]

Allahabad
November 16, 1939

My dear Asaf Ali,
Your letter of the 14th. It is difficult to speculate about future happenings in the war. But one thing seems to me certain. Any combination—anti-Soviet or otherwise—will not be of long duration. They have upset the apple-cart in Europe and it is going to be very difficult to set it up again. In India there is no going back to the pre-war conditions and the Congress is not going to resume governments in the provinces on the old conditions.

I do not know what exactly you envisage in regard to communal talks with Jinnah. I am perfectly ready, as I told Jinnah, and I wait to hear from him. But essentially there is no communal difficulty in the way as between Jinnah and us. It is the political difficulty. He cannot reconcile himself to any action of the kind that the Congress is used to. Therefore to talk in terms of united political action on the basis of the settlement of the communal problem is to ignore this basic reality. I do not mean that the Hindus and Muslims cannot have united action. I think they can and will to a large extent. But this at the present moment does not depend on any communal issue.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 407-408.

14. To Zakir Husain[1]

Lucknow
November 25, 1939

My dear Zakir Husain,
I am delighted to hear from you again as well as to learn from a common friend that you have greatly improved in health and that your eyesight is much better.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

be in Bombay about the third week of this month or later? This information might help him to arrange his programme. He is coming by air and will land in Allahabad.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

16. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Allahabad
December 2, 1939

My dear Mahmud,
Mahadev Desai has sent me a copy of a note on the minority problem which apparently you sent to Gandhiji. I wonder how you could have taken the trouble to write this note in your present state of health. I take it that you asked someone else to draft for you. I have read the note and have been exceedingly astonished at it. While of course there is much in it that is true and worthy of consideration, the whole background of it seems to me utterly wrong and the final conclusion is amazing. I can hardly conceive of anyone who has studied the Indian problem from the Congress point of view writing this note. In some ways it shows entire ignorance of the present position, both nationally and internationally. I do not propose to discuss this matter in this letter because that would take too long a time. One or two things, however, I might mention. The events that have happened in recent weeks, which are referred to in your note as a "tragic drama," are not all tragic so far as we are concerned. The Congress has done remarkably well in this crisis. Most of us feel particularly satisfied at the turn of events. You are right in saying, however, that the British Government and the Muslim League are dissatisfied because both of them are hit by these events. It may interest you to learn that the view held in London is that "the man who regrets the resignation of the Congress governments most is Mr. Jinnah as he has lost his main weapon of attack against the Congress."

The statement in your letter that "the Congress has no place in the scheme of things, its political existence in world affairs is almost negligible," is also remarkable for its incorrectness. As it happens, the

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

of Muslims in general as they will realise and say that we were frauds who shouted loudly and meant very little.

You will see that this is not a question of the Congress giving anything to the League because the League does not get anything by our political surrender except a certain prestige that they have pulled down the Congress. I am entirely at one with you in believing that the Congress cannot be too generous in regard to the communal matters. But at the same time it cannot give up the very basis of its existence and its fundamental objectives. So far as the communal aspect is concerned, I have assured Mr. Jinnah that I shall gladly meet him at any time and any place to discuss it fully. He told me that he would let me know and I am waiting to hear from him. I fear, however, that he is not very eager to discuss this matter with me as he does not seem to be very much interested in it. The political aspect governs the situation.

I am going to Muttra for the U.P. Conference.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. To M.A. Jinnah[1]

Allahabad
December 1, 1939

My dear Jinnah,

When we met last in Delhi, it was agreed that we should meet again to discuss various aspects of the communal problem. You told me that on your return to Bombay you would write to me suggesting some date for such a meeting. I have been looking forward to your letter since then. I hope that whenever it is convenient for you to fix a date you will kindly let me know.

Sir Stafford Cripps is coming to India soon and is likely to spend two or three weeks in this country. He is on his way to China. I do not yet know exactly when he will reach here, but probably he will come in about one week's time. During his brief stay in India he would like to meet you if that is possible. I do not know his programme at all, nor do I know what cities he intends visiting. But I take it that he will go to Bombay. Could you kindly let me know if you are likely to

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.

17. To Beltie Shah Gilani[1]

Allahabad
December 8, 1939

My dear Beltie Shah,
Thank you for your letter of the 5th.[2] I am glad to learn that Dr. H.C. Mookerji[3] and you have convened a small informal conference of Indian Christians from all over India to meet in Allahabad on the 17th and 18th of this month. I should have liked to have met those who respond to your invitation but unhappily I cannot do so as the very dates you have fixed are dates of the Congress Working Committee meeting.

I have noticed with pleasure that many prominent Indian Christian leaders, both Catholic and Protestant, have dissociated themselves from certain reactionary views which have been expressed by some people who claim to speak on behalf of the Indian Christians. In the past there was a tendency for the Indian Christians to consider themselves as a class apart and cut off from the great majority of the Indian community. This was perhaps natural to some extent, especially in north India where Christianity was associated in the public mind with the ruling power. Unfortunately the religious issue was dominated by this political aspect and Indian Christians looked to the foreign ruling power for protection. As you know Christianity came to India in very early days long before it spread in Europe, and for hundreds of years it flourished in south India without any political help or hindrance. As a whole India was remarkably tolerant in matters religious. But later on when the British power became dominant in India, there was an increasing tendency to associate Christianity with this power and most people forgot that Christianity is one of the oldest religions in India, more specially in the south. This association in the public mind with a dominant

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Beltie Shah Gilani wrote that as Jinnah claimed to speak on behalf of all minorities including Christians, he and H.C. Mukerji, the President of the All India Council of Indian Christians, had decided to convene a conference of Indian Christians at Allahabad on 17 and 18 December 1939. Enquiries had shown that no important Indian Christian organisation had authorised Jinnah to champion their cause, and the conference would present the Indian Christian view.
3. Harendra Chandra Mukherji (1877-1956); President, All India Council of Indian Christians, 1937-39; member, Bengal Assembly, 1937-42; head of the department of English, Calcutta University, 1937-42; Vice-President, Constituent Assembly, 1947-51; Governor, West Bengal, 1951-56.

Congress has a very big place in the scheme of things and its influence in world affairs at this stage is important.

Another statement in your note is revealing. This is: "What is little understood and never learnt in India is facing facts." This kind of statement could never have come from you. The parent of it can only be some very ignorant and self-satisfied person who himself has no notion of what the real facts in India or abroad are.

The proposal that the minorities should have such powers given to them by the constitution that they ought to be able to throw out the government of the day whenever they want to do so is a proposal which is so astonishing in its futility and dangerous consequences that I am surprised that you should have permitted anyone to make it in your name. Which minority, I should like to know, does it refer to? To the Muslims only, or to the Sikhs, Christians and the Parsis, etc? Does it refer to the Hindu minority in Bengal and the Punjab? Of course, this is the very negation of democracy but this is something much worse. It makes all government impossible and creates a complete deadlock everywhere which makes a change or progress inconceivable and leads to continual struggle on a biggest scale in the country. It means the dictatorship of odd minor groups.

As a matter of fact the whole conception of the memorandum is politically so reactionary that it is difficult even to criticise it seriously. This conception is based on the British Government being top dog in India. It is not based on Indian freedom at all.

It seems to me that somebody has imposed this very extraordinary and very childish note on you and that you have not considered it at all with care.

I hope you are improving in health. Do not hold to your teeth if they give trouble. I should like to visit you and the children and I shall try to do so before very long. I cannot say when.

With love,

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

way. It thus becomes essential from the point of view of Indian Christians that they must get rid of this friction and psychological barriers, and throw in their lot politically and otherwise with Indian nationalism and Indian freedom. Thereby they secure by their own efforts and sacrifices a secure and honoured place in a free India. To rely on a foreign power for protection is a fatal policy even from the point of view of the narrowest self-interest, because no foreign power can or is going to give protection for long.

Indian Christians have, therefore, acted very wisely in opposing the political divisions of the Indian people on the basis of religious beliefs and in declaring against communal electorates. Such divisions can only injure them without giving any effective protection. In spite of this, however, the Government of India Act of 1935 put them into a separate compartment. This was unfortunate and yet it was the inevitable development of British policy in India which has deliberately sought to encourage disruptive tendencies in India and thus weaken Indian nationalism and unity. The only way to counter this injurious move of the British Government is to hold tight to the principles which have been repeatedly affirmed at various conferences of Indian Christians which have condemned the communal electorates and such like fissiparous devices. Positively the policy to be pursued should be, if I may say so, one of complete lining up with Indian nationalism in the cause of Indian freedom.

You have suggested that it is necessary to concentrate on discovering a formula whereby the religious rights of people can be secured in the context of democracy. I see no difficulty about this because we are committed to both these concepts, namely, full democracy as well as a protection of religious rights. In effect this has been suggested in all-embracing language in the Karachi resolution of the Congress. If the language can be bettered let us do so by all means. Sometimes it has been suggested that a religious group or minority group should have the right to veto anything which it considers as religious and affecting it. While it is right that anything affecting religious beliefs or practices of a group should only be touched or altered with the full concurrence of that group or with the approval of the majority in it, still any such constitutional rule would lead to all manner of difficulties and absurdities. First of all it is exceedingly difficult to define what exactly is a religious question. Some questions are obviously religious without any shadow of doubt. Others are essentially political or economic, but may be considered by some people to have a religious significance. We have seen recently all manner of economic, political and educational questions criticised from a religious point of view. Thus

imperialism had inevitable reactions. On the one side the general public, Hindu and Muslim, reacted adversely to Christianity on political considerations. They felt that it was a symbol of their political subjection and that the ruling power wanted to force Christianity on Indians. On the other hand Indian Christians began to lean on that ruling power for special protection and thus created further barriers between themselves and the mass of the people.

This was a temporary phase, if we look at things in the perspective of history, and it is bound to disappear with the coming of Indian freedom. Meanwhile it is perfectly true that we have to face a certain psychological friction between Indian Christians and others. This friction can only be removed ultimately by the establishment of freedom in India and thus by removing the cause of it, that is, the political association of Christianity with foreign domination.

The future Indian free state, after we have gained independence, must necessarily be a secular state, that is, the state cannot represent any one religion. While it is a secular state, it must give the fullest freedom in matters of conscience and religious observances, subject only to public order and morality. No other solution is possible. Every other solution will lead to conflict and would be out of keeping with modern conditions and views of state organisation.

It is right that a constitution should make it perfectly clear that a religious group or minority will have its religious rights protected. You are no doubt aware of the Karachi resolution of the Congress and many subsequent resolutions, in which it has been clearly stated that this protection of religious as well as cultural rights should be made a fundamental law of the constitution. I take it that we are all agreed about that. Nevertheless one has to remember that the satisfactory working of any law or constitution requires a great deal of goodwill and a certain psychological background. This goodwill and background can only come if the relations between the Indian Christians and others in India are on a friendly and cooperative basis, or, to put it differently, if the Indian Christians are vital parts of Indian nationalism. If this is not so, friction will continue.

The Indian Christians form a small minority of the population of India. I do not think of religious groups in political terms. We all know that political divisions today are essentially economic and not religious. Therefore it is entirely wrong to consider Indian Christians or any other religious group as a political group. But if for a moment we consider Indian Christians as a political group, it is clear that their numbers are not sufficient for them to play a dominating role. If there is friction between them and the others, it is the others that will have their

were deemed necessary and helpful to the Congress governments and to supply them with useful information; and to keep in touch with minority problems so that nothing important was overlooked by the provincial governments. Unfortunately such a department never got going properly. I feel that this was a grave mistake on our part. It seems to me very necessary that some such coordinating agencies should exist. Even now, when the Congress provincial governments have resigned, it would be helpful to us and to others if a department was created in the A.I.C.C. office to keep in touch with the problems of minorities and religious groups. Such a department of course would not lay down any policy. For that would be the function of the Working Committee or the All India Congress Committee. But it could keep an eye on the problems and the difficulties of minority and religious groups and inform the Working Committee of them.

We are at present living in very abnormal times and no one knows what the immediate future holds for us. There appears to be a big conflict in store for all of us and it is a little difficult under these circumstances to start new departments or to function in the constructive sense indicated above. But it is right that however big the crisis we have to face, we should give thought to other problems also so that we can be ready with our solutions when the time comes. I welcome, therefore, the opportunity that you have given me of dealing with this question and I hope that your informal conference will result in decisions which are profitable both to Indian Christians and the nation.

I have given expression to my own views in this letter, but I have little doubt that they also represent the views of the Working Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

if any such power of veto was given, it might apply to every single question, howsoever remote from religion it might be. Secondly there are all kinds of minorities and religious groups in the country. Some are so big that they can hardly be termed minorities, others are very small. A rule such as this must necessarily be applicable to all, big and small. This might result in some tiny group possibly consisting of a fraction of 1% of the population resisting all political and economic advance on some fancied ground of religion. This would create an impossible situation and would result in conflict. You tell me that so far as the Indian Christians are concerned they have no desire to mix up political and economic questions with religious rights. That may be so but no constitution can leave these matters vague and lay the foundations of future deadlocks and conflicts. Democracy of course cannot possibly function in these circumstances, but, as a matter of fact, even an ordinary progressive government can hardly function. Therefore it seems to me that any such idea of a right to veto, or anything like it, cannot be considered in the context of democracy.

What is desirable and necessary is that the views of the smallest minorities should be heard and should not be just ignored. How this is to be done constitutionally I do not know, but it should not be difficult in practice to do this. I do not think that any real difficulty in this respect will arise when the country is politically awake and alert, especially so in the case of the Indian Christians who are educationally far more advanced than others and who can be expected to keep alert and to see that nothing which injures their religious rights is done inadvertently.

You will realise that in this age of revolutionary and rapid change, it is exceedingly difficult for anyone to play the prophet. Nevertheless we can try to lay down right principles and train public opinion in accordance with them, so that when big changes come, they will carry the impress of these principles. Fortunately the Congress for all these years has thought along these lines and has embodied them in various resolutions. The value of those resolutions lies not only in committing the Congress, which must inevitably play an important part in the future of India, but also in training public opinion.

Soon after the acceptance of office in the provinces by the Congress ministries, it was proposed to have a special department in the A.I.C.C. office to deal with all matters which come up before the Congress governments. The object of this was to keep the Congress Working Committee fully informed of all developments to coordinate, in so far as this was possible and feasible, the work of the various provincial governments, and to avoid conflicting activities; to make such suggestions as

were deemed necessary and helpful to the Congress governments and to supply them with useful information; and to keep in touch with minority problems so that nothing important was overlooked by the provincial governments. Unfortunately such a department never got going properly. I feel that this was a grave mistake on our part. It seems to me very necessary that some such coordinating agencies should exist. Even now, when the Congress provincial governments have resigned, it would be helpful to us and to others if a department was created in the A.I.C.C. office to keep in touch with the problems of minorities and religious groups. Such a department of course would not lay down any policy. For that would be the function of the Working Committee or the All India Congress Committee. But it could keep an eye on the problems and the difficulties of minority and religious groups and inform the Working Committee of them.

We are at present living in very abnormal times and no one knows what the immediate future holds for us. There appears to be a big conflict in store for all of us and it is a little difficult under these circumstances to start new departments or to function in the constructive sense indicated above. But it is right that however big the crisis we have to face, we should give thought to other problems also so that we can be ready with our solutions when the time comes. I welcome, therefore, the opportunity that you have given me of dealing with this question and I hope that your informal conference will result in decisions which are profitable both to Indian Christians and the nation.

I have given expression to my own views in this letter, but I have little doubt that they also represent the views of the Working Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. To Ahmed[1]

Allahabad
December 8, 1939

Dear Mr. Ahmed,

Your letter of November 22nd[2] came here while I was away. Any inquiry or objective survey of the conditions of life of the people is always worthwhile. I welcome, therefore, your desire to have such an inquiry. Most of our problems have an economic basis. But it is well to remember that no problem can be simplified in this way. There is a certain historical background, a very important political aspect and a psychological aspect.

The questions you have framed do not seem to me very happy. It really does not matter very much how a question is framed provided one collects facts. But the framing of a question gives a particular bent to an inquiry which may not be wholly justified.

I do not think there is any conflict between Hindu capitalism and Muslim capitalism. Indeed they cannot be considered separately. There is a certain conflict between Indian capitalism and foreign, more especially British, capitalism.

It is difficult for me within the limits of a letter to deal with this problem. Briefly stated it is, I think, as follows:

After the Indian Mutiny of 1857 there was a period of intensive repression and both the Hindus and Muslims suffered from it, but the Muslims probably suffered more. Gradually people began to get over this suppression. The Hindus took to English education, which led to state services, much more than the Muslims. The Hindus also took to the professions and to industry in larger numbers than the Muslims. Among the Muslims the reactionary elements prevented the spread of modern education as well as industry. The Hindus developed a new middle class during this period, while the Muslims still continued to remain largely feudal. The Hindu middle class laid the foundation of the nationalist movement. But about a generation later, the Muslims went the same way, took to English education and state services and professions and developed a new middle class also. A conflict arose

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Ahmed of Philander Smith College, Naini Tal, was engaged in research on economic conditions in India. In a questionnaire he had sent Jawaharlal he had wanted to know, among other points, if it were not a fact that Hindu capitalism was "consciously or unconsciously permitting itself to be presented as an object of hate before the half-starved Moslem masses?"

between various middle class elements for state services and this was a beginning of the communal problem in its modern phase.

The national movement spread to the lower middle classes and ultimately to the peasantry. Large numbers of Muslims took part in it, although their leaders continued to be influenced much more by the feudal elements, that is, big zamindars and the like. Among the Hindus, there are also these feudal elements but their political influence is very limited as the middle class elements have grown strong and even the peasantry makes its influence felt. Among the Muslims, the old semi-feudal leaders felt that their position was threatened. They could not hold their masses on political or economic grounds but they were largely successful in trading on anti-Hindu and anti-Congress sentiments which kept the political and economic issues in the background.

I do not know if what I have written above is at all helpful to you. As I have said, the subject is too big to be dealt with in this manner.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

19. To Mahadeva Desai[1]

December 9, 1939

My dear Mahadeva,
Your letter of the 5th. I am afraid I entirely disagree with Zakir Husain's suggestion to Bapu. It is not a question of our acknowledging the Muslim League in a particular way. It involves far-reaching implications and the giving up of all basic principles in the Congress. It means the complete disruption of the Congress.

You must have seen Jinnah's new statement.[2] There is a limit even to political falsehood and indecency but all limits have been passed. I do not see how I can even meet Jinnah now. Only two days ago I wrote to him that I would be going to Bombay and I hoped to meet him then.[3] Since yesterday I have given a great deal of thought to the matter and I have decided to send another letter to him, a copy of which I enclose for Bapu's information.[4]

1. *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 412-413.
2. See *ante*, section 4, item 8.
3. Not printed.
4. See the following item.

Stafford Cripps has been here and is leaving for Delhi and Lahore tomorrow. He will go to Bombay and Wardha from there. Provisionally he is due to reach Wardha on the 17th morning which is Sunday and to stay there for two days. I do not like these dates as they conflict partly with Bapu's silence and the Working Committee. It would have been far better if he had gone there on the 18th and the 19th. This would have suited Cripps better.

Cripps has been having long talks with Hailey, Schuster, Findlater Stewart and Zetland. I think he has also met Halifax. He made a certain proposition to them which he says met with a favourable response, though no one committed himself to it. I have seen this proposition.[5] There are some desirable features in it but I think it suffers from two or three fatal defects. I might send a copy to you for Bapu later, but I should like you to keep it completely confidential.

I might mention that while Cripps is thoroughly straight and his abilities unquestioned, his judgment is not always to be relied upon.

I shall probably go to Bombay about the 13th.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. See *ante*, section 4, item 8.

20. To M. A. Jinnah[1]

Allahabad
Dec. 9, 1939

My dear Jinnah,

Two days ago I sent you a letter informing you that I intended going to Bombay soon and hoped to meet you there. Yesterday morning I read in the newspapers your statement fixing December 22nd as a 'day of deliverance and thanksgiving' as a mark of relief that the Congress governments have at last ceased to function. I have read this statement very carefully more than once and have given twenty-four hours' thought to the matter. It is not for me, in this letter, to enter into any controversy about facts or impressions or conclusions. You know my views about these, formed, I hope, in all earnestness and with a desire to find

1. *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960); pp. 413-414.

the truth. It may be that I am mistaken, but I have sought more light and that light has not come.

But what has oppressed me terribly since yesterday is the realisation that our sense of values and objectives in life as well as in politics differ so very greatly. I had hoped, after our conversations, that this was not so great, but now the gulf appears to be wider than ever. Under these circumstances, I wonder what purpose will be served by our discussing with each other the problems that confront us. There must be some common ground for discussion, some common objective arrived at, for that discussion to yield fruit. I think I owe it to you as well as to myself to put this difficulty before you.

You were good enough to show me in Delhi a letter you had received from Bijnor.[2] I enquired into the matter and I am informed that the version of facts given to you is not correct and is wholly misleading. If you would care to have an explanation of what happened, I could obtain it for you from Bijnor. For this purpose, I would like to have a copy of the letter you showed me in Delhi.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Abdus Sami of the Muslim League had written to Jinnah complaining about Abdul Latif of the Congress who was the chairman of the Bijnor Municipal Board.

21. To Master Tara Singh[1]

Allahabad
December 12, 1939

My dear Master Tara Singh,

Shri Rajendra Prasad has forwarded to me a letter dated December 7th sent to him by Sardar Kartar Singh.[2] Babu Rajendra Prasad has unfortunately been ill for a long time and is at present bed-ridden. He has asked me to reply to this letter on his behalf. I am sending this reply to you with a copy to the secretary, Shiromani Akali Dal, as suggested by Sardar Kartar Singh.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1901); general secretary, Shiromani Akali Dal for many years; left the Congress in 1941; member, Punjab Legislative Assembly, 1957.

Stafford Cripps has been here and is leaving for Delhi and Lahore tomorrow. He will go to Bombay and Wardha from there. Provisionally he is due to reach Wardha on the 17th morning which is Sunday and to stay there for two days. I do not like these dates as they conflict partly with Bapu's silence and the Working Committee. It would have been far better if he had gone there on the 18th and the 19th. This would have suited Cripps better.

Cripps has been having long talks with Hailey, Schuster, Findlater Stewart and Zetland. I think he has also met Halifax. He made a certain proposition to them which he says met with a favourable response, though no one committed himself to it. I have seen this proposition.[5] There are some desirable features in it but I think it suffers from two or three fatal defects. I might send a copy to you for Bapu later, but I should like you to keep it completely confidential.

I might mention that while Cripps is thoroughly straight and his abilities unquestioned, his judgment is not always to be relied upon.

I shall probably go to Bombay about the 13th.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. See *ante*, section 4, item 8.

20. To M. A. Jinnah[1]

Allahabad
Dec. 9, 1939

My dear Jinnah,

Two days ago I sent you a letter informing you that I intended going to Bombay soon and hoped to meet you there. Yesterday morning I read in the newspapers your statement fixing December 22nd as a 'day of deliverance and thanksgiving' as a mark of relief that the Congress governments have at last ceased to function. I have read this statement very carefully more than once and have given twenty-four hours' thought to the matter. It is not for me, in this letter, to enter into any controversy about facts or impressions or conclusions. You know my views about these, formed, I hope, in all earnestness and with a desire to find

1. *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960); pp. 413-414.

to the Sikhs as a whole and it was largely because of their insistence that it was given up at the Lahore Congress.

At the Lahore Congress also, entirely because of the Sikh demand, steps were taken to change the national flag. The present national flag is due to those steps. You will realise what a vital matter this was for the Congress and yet we did not hesitate to change a well-established flag to meet the wishes of the Sikh leaders.

I do not wish to enter into past history too much because we have to deal with the present now. I should like however to warn you and other friends against accepting as a fact all that appears in the daily papers. It has been the Congress policy to be ready to meet anybody and everybody to discuss our problems. We have often expressed our willingness to meet Mr. Jinnah for instance and some of us met him in Delhi a few weeks back. This has nothing to do with prejudicing the interests of the Sikhs or any other group. It is inevitable that where Sikh interests are concerned they must be consulted. You can rest assured that the Working Committee will gladly welcome every cooperation from the Sikhs in this matter.

About the constituent assembly that has been proposed there has been some elucidation in the last Working Committee resolution.[3] I do not remember the reference made to Mahatmaji's article in this respect. But the Working Committee resolution is quite clear. It says:

> This assembly can frame a constitution in which the rights of the accepted minorities would be protected to their satisfaction, and in the event of some matters relating to minority rights not being mutually agreed to, they can be referred to arbitration. But the constituent assembly should be elected on the basis of adult suffrage, existing separate electorates being retained for such minorities as desire them. The number of these members in the assembly should reflect their numerical strength.

It is true that we would very much like the basis of separate electorates to be done away with altogether, as this has been the root cause of communal trouble. But we want to leave this matter in the hands of the accepted minorities and the Sikhs are obviously one of the accepted minorities. If therefore the Sikhs desire such separate representation they can have it. In regard to weightage to a minority, the question does not ordinarily arise when the basis is adult suffrage. If weightage is given to one minority, there is no reason why it should not be given

3. At its meeting between 19-23 November 1939, the Working Committee reiterated its demand for a constituent assembly, as the only adequate instrument for solving the communal and other problems.

About three weeks ago we received a long representation from Sardar Kartar Singh for the consideration of the Working Committee. Soon after, Sardar Kartar Singh and other Sikh leaders met many of us separately as well as jointly and we had the advantage of discussing the situation with them fully. In the course of over three hours' talk which I had with them, I explained to them fully the Congress position and dealt with various matters referred to in their memorandum. Later they met Shri Rajendra Prasad as well as other members of the Working Committee. The memorandum itself was considered by the Working Committee.

I shall not repeat all that I said to Sardar Kartar Singh and others as that would lengthen this letter too much. But I shall briefly deal with the principal points which arose in the course of our discussion.

Complaint was made in the memorandum that the Congress had ignored the claims of the Sikhs in regard to communal settlements, in spite of the sacrifices made by the Sikhs in the national struggle. I venture to say that these complaints are not justified and the Congress has always paid special attention to the very special position of the Sikhs. It is true that in the Congress-League Pact of 1916, so far as I remember, prominent Sikhs were not consulted. It would have been better if they had been consulted and their views considered. But it is difficult for me to say much about this old episode as I was not intimately connected with it. In those days the Sikhs, as far as I remember, had not put forward any special claims which were before the Congress and the League. The League had approached the Congress and come very near to it, politically and otherwise, and had joined in the Congress demand for reforms. Only a minor matter of representation in the legislature remained. Only this was settled by the Lucknow Pact. You will remember that this was the old Congress which underwent a great change three years later when the Congress became a mass organisation under Gandhiji's leadership.

For some years the Congress was not concerned at all with communal pacts and the like and was busy with the struggle against British imperialism. Later various all-parties and unity conferences were held and always the Sikhs were represented in them and every attempt was made to meet their wishes. For various reasons these conferences did not yield substantial results. For a number of years the Working Committee had a Sikh member also.

Then came the All Parties Committee which produced what is known as the Nehru Report. In this report every attempt was made to discuss the Sikh position and to meet it. The report however was not acceptable

such guarantee is at all desirable and it will be highly injurious to the development of a national defence force, when this is considered necessary. If any guarantee is given to one group, there is no reason why it should not be given to another group. A multiplicity of guarantees of this kind will reduce the whole thing to a farce and produce all manner of dangerous conflicts which disrupt the country.

It is clear that any individual or group that takes part in the national movement against British imperialism and for the freedom of India, offends that imperialism. The British Government, so long as it is dominant in India, will try to injure the interest of that group. It is also clear that the British Government is not going to be dominant in India for long. Obviously there can be no bargaining on such issues and each individual and group must decide for itself and take the risks and consequences of that decision. I do not think that the British domination of India can survive this war. Those who oppose that domination will suffer in such conflicts as may come, but will also ensure their own honoured position in a free India. No guarantee can equal this security which is obtained by one's own self-reliance and self-sacrifice in a great cause. It seems to me wrong to think in terms of religious groups having power as such in a free India. Those who will stand for that freedom, whoever they might be, will have power.

In regard to enlistment in the army, the Congress policy at present is this: for the moment we have withdrawn from the provincial governments, we have declared that we cannot support the war. We are to that extent noncooperating with the British Government and we cannot encourage any help being given to a war, either in men or money, when this war has been imposed upon us against our will and our questions put to the British Government have not been satisfactorily answered. Therefore we are not supporting the war. But we have refrained from taking any aggressive steps so far as we do not wish to close all avenues of settlement till this position is forced upon us. We have, therefore, explained the Congress position to the masses but have not carried on any intensive movement against enlistment. Our general appeal to the people stands—not to help in the war. We have left it at that during this temporary phase which cannot last very long. Time may come, however, when we may have to issue definite and specific instructions in regard to the enlistment in the army. Even so, we would not interfere with any individual who chooses to do so in spite of our advice. That general advice would, however, hold.

It has always been our desire that the Sikhs should have an important and an honoured place in the Congress organisation, because they have been and are our comrades in the national struggle. But it is not an

to others. This, as you will realise, produces difficulties and complications. The Working Committee thought that the fairest way out of it was to have no weightage but to adhere to adult suffrage on a population basis. This is a matter which can be discussed in detail when the constituent assembly is agreed to and is being formed. Ordinarily it does not make much difference to a small minority if weightage is given. Suppose 50% weightage is given, and that is a great deal, it will mean a slight addition to the numbers. It will also mean a certain ill will on the part of those groups who have suffered from giving this weightage. This weightage does not confer any additional political influence but it vitiates the atmosphere and in this sense weakens the minority.

The question of the proportion of the Sikhs in the Indian army is one of undoubted importance to the Sikhs, but it is entirely out of the control of the Congress at present. What the future policy is likely to be depends upon many important factors. No one can say what the future of any army is likely to be after this war is over. The result of the war may conceivably abolish large armies and have large-scale disarmament. On the other hand it is also conceivable that our general policy in India might not be one of keeping large armed forces. It is also possible that the world situation may compel a free India to develop her defence forces.

Then again the whole nature of the defence forces has changed rapidly. More and more importance is attached to the air arm and to mechanised units like tanks, etc. It is thus impossible to say what the future of the army as such will be in India. Possibly our regular first-line defence forces will be limited in numbers, while a large militia will form the second line.

It seems to us therefore that it is impossible for anyone to guarantee what the army of the future will be. If, however, a free India has to develop its armed forces, it will naturally do so on a national basis and not on the present more or less mercenary basis. A national army cannot and should not be confined to particular groups and it should be open to a member of every class or group to join it. It must be remembered that whatever the future may be, the army in India cannot play that dominant role, politically and economically, which it plays under British imperialism. It will be a subordinate instrument of the national will. No community or group can flourish to any large extent merely by dependence upon the army. The industrial, commercial, cultural and economic development of the country will absorb the energies of the vast majority of the population.

As you know, Sir Sikandar Hayat has proposed that the Muslim proportion in the army should be guaranteed. I do not think this or any

22. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Allahabad
December 12, 1939

My dear Mahmud,

Your letter.[2] I am going to Bombay tomorrow morning and I am writing to you briefly in answer. You seem to mix up two things: your complaint against Congress governments' work and the communal problem. The two might overlap here and there but they are essentially different. You may be right about your complaints about the Bihar Government. I am quite sure that all the same complaints do not apply to the U.P. Government or to some other former Congress governments. Let us by all means probe into such complaints, so that we may not repeat our errors.

But your letter was essentially concerned with the communal problem and Jinnah, and the suggestions you have made in it are, I repeat, most extraordinary and reactionary. Indeed they can only result in a complete collapse of our national movement. I do not understand what is meant by a majority sharing power with a minority or with minorities. It is inconceivable to me how any government, especially a progressive government, can function when governments have been formed on a communal basis. It is entirely wrong for a Hindu majority or a Muslim majority to form a government. In this sense it is right that the majority or the minority communities should group together for political purposes. But when we talk about political majorities it seems that that majority represents a political viewpoint. It is absurd for a politically advanced majority to give up its advanced views to please a politically reactionary minority. That is the problem we have today in India, and that is what you suggested in your previous letter, although you did not realise it.

I can assure you with all earnestness that I am exceedingly pleased that the Congress governments have resigned. I am pleased from every possible point of view and for the last six months or more I had been wanting them to resign.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Syed Mahmud, in his letter of 9 December 1939, wrote that in the two years that the Congress had held office in Bihar it had "failed to properly and efficiently govern." It was "full of provincialism, caste prejudices and revivalism." The opportunity they now had, on the resignation of the ministries, should be utilised to probe into the matters "before you allow your followers to get into office again."

easy or a desirable method for any group as such to be given a place in a democratic organisation. The members of our committees are chosen by elections from primary members or delegates. We have sought to advise the electorates to give special preference to minority interests and our advice has had some influence. But beyond the advice it is not possible to go either constitutionally or otherwise. We have as a matter of fact many Sikhs functioning in our organisation.

So far as the Working Committee is concerned we would welcome a Sikh member but it would be a dangerous precedent for any person to be appointed, because he is a Hindu or Sikh or Muslim. The Committee is a small one for a large country and the ultimate choice must be made from prominent Congressmen who represent the Congress policy. It would cease to be an effective body if it was otherwise constituted. Subject to this, I agree with you that it would be desirable for the Committee to have prominent Sikh Congressmen on it whenever this is possible. I agree with you also that in selecting Sikh candidates on behalf of the Congress for legislatures, etc., regard should be paid to their influence among Sikh Congressmen.

Apart from this constitutional question of elections, I think it is very necessary that there should be close cooperation between the Sikh leaders who are Congressmen and the Congress organisation as a whole. The Working Committee would very gladly keep in the closest touch with such Sikh Congress leaders and consult them in regard to the views of the Sikhs in matters of national policy.

I think I have dealt with the principal matters touched upon in Sardar Kartar Singh's letter and memorandum.

I was sorry that you could not come to Allahabad last month as we would have been glad to meet you and discuss all these matters with you. In particular I should have liked to meet you. There is just a chance of my going to Amritsar for a day on December 30th. If so, I hope that we shall meet there.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

return about the 24th. I shall try to pay a visit to Patna or Chapra as soon as I can.

With love,

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

23. To M.A. Jinnah[1]

14-12-1939

My dear Jinnah,

Thank you for your letter of the 13th December[2] which was delivered to me in the forenoon today on my arrival here. I sent you my last letter from Allahabad after reading and giving full thought to your statement about the celebration of a 'day of deliverance and thanksgiving' by the Muslims. This statement had distressed me greatly as it made me realise that the gulf that separated us in our approach to public problems was very great. In view of this fundamental difference, I wondered what common ground there was for discussion and I put my difficulty before you. That difficulty remains.

In your letter you have emphasized two other preliminary conditions before any common ground for discussion can arise. The first is that the Congress must treat the Muslim League as the authoritative and representative organisation of the Mussalmans of India. The Congress has always considered the League as a very important and influential organisation of the Muslims and it is because of this that we have been eager to settle any differences that may exist between us. But presumably what you suggest is something more and involves some kind of repudiation by us of or dissociation from other Muslims who are not in the League. There are, as you know, a large number of Muslims in

1. A *Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 415-417.
2. Jinnah, in his letter of 13 December 1939, while agreeing with Jawaharlal that "there must be some common ground for discussion", once more insisted that the Muslim League should be recognised as the authoritative and representative organisation of the Muslims of India. The League could not "endorse the Congress demand for the declaration as laid down" in the A.I.C.C. resolution of 10 October 1939 "apart from the nebulous and impracticable character of it till we reach an agreement with regard to the minority problem." The charges against the Congress ministries should be thoroughly examined by a royal commission.

As for the tragic drama that you refer to, the tragedy is that there should be people in India so irresponsible as the leaders of the Muslim League and that they should have so much influence. And yet all this is a very minor matter in the major events that are taking place. It really astonished me beyond measure that you should write in the vein you did in your previous letter and talk superiorly about Congress leaders being blind to facts. This is the height of absurdity. Circumstances may be too big for us and we may be overwhelmed by them occasionally, but allow me to tell you that there is more statesmanship in the Congress even today than there is in most of the big cabinets in Europe put together. The other day a well-known observer in England wrote that all the cabinet ministers of England were not up to the standard of a third rate Congressman. That was no doubt exaggerated. But it is worthwhile your thinking about this matter again.

When you talk about the tackling of communal problem on a provincial basis, it shows that you have not fully considered it. The communal problem as such is there of course but it is a very minor problem. The real problem is a political problem—the conflict between an advanced organisation like the Congress and a politically reactionary organisation like the League. It is true that the present leaders of the League have exploited the communal problem and the name of religion. Nevertheless the problem is not communal but essentially political. Jinnah admits as much and his latest outbursts have demonstrated this more. Have Jinnah's recent statements anything to do with a communal conflict? Can you put forward your previous proposal[3] now even after Jinnah's statements? Obviously you cannot, and that shows how wrong you were to make that proposal and how you had completely misunderstood the situation.

I wish you had spoken to me about this matter and shown me your note before you gave it to Gandhiji. You upset him completely and he is very unhappy about it. As a matter of fact you should try to forget all that is happening and look after your health. A person who is not well enough to take part in public activities fully is not competent to judge. You worry yourself needlessly and impede your recovery to health. That is not wise or helpful to anyone.

I do not propose to meet Jinnah unless something extraordinary occurs.

I should very much like to visit you and see the children. But what am I to do? I must go to Bombay now, then to Wardha. I shall

3. See *ante*, item 16.

There is a resolution of the All India Congress Committee, endorsed by a thousand meetings all over India, and I am powerless to ignore it.

It thus seems that politically we have no common ground and that our objectives are different. That in itself makes discussion difficult and fruitless. What led me to write my last letter to you also remains —the prospect of a celebration of a 'day of deliverance' by the Muslims, as suggested by you. That raises very vital and far-reaching issues, into which I need not go now, but which must influence all of us. That approach to the communal problem cannot be reconciled with an attempt to solve it.

I feel, therefore, that it will serve little purpose for us to meet at this stage and under these conditions with this background. I should like to assure you however that we are always prepared to have free and frank discussions of the communal or other problems as between the Congress and the League.

I note what you say about the Bijnor incident. It has been our misfortune that charges are made in a one-sided way and they are never inquired into or disposed of. You will appreciate that it is very easy to make complaints and very unsafe to rely upon them without due inquiry.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

24. The 'Day of Deliverance'[1]

I would have to repudiate all my past, my nationalism and my self-respect if I were to resume the talks with Mr. Jinnah in the face of his appeal to the Muslims to observe a 'day of deliverance' to repeat the unproved allegations against the Congress. I have written to Mr. Jinnah that it would not be possible for me to have, in the circumstances, a discussion with him to arrive at a communal settlement.

1. Speech at Bombay, 14 December 1939. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 15 December 1939.

the Congress, who have been and are our closest colleagues. There are Muslim organisations like the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the All India Shia Conference, the Majlis-e-Ahrar, the All India Momin Conference, etc., apart from trade unions and peasant unions which have many Muslims as their members. As a general rule, many of these organisations and individuals have adopted the same political platform as we have done in the Congress. We cannot possibly dissociate ourselves from them or disown them in any way.

You have rightly pointed out on many occasions that the Congress does not represent everybody in India. Of course not. It does not represent those who disagree with it, whether they are Muslims or Hindus. In the ultimate analysis it represents its members and sympathisers. So also the Muslim League, as any other organization, represents its own members and sympathisers. But there is this vital difference that while the Congress by its constitution has its membership open to all who subscribe to its objective and methods, the Muslim League is only open to Muslims. Thus the Congress constitutionally has a national basis and it cannot give that up without putting an end to its existence. There are many Hindus, as you know, in the Hindu Mahasabha who oppose the idea of the Congress representing the Hindus as such. Theu there are the Sikhs and others who claim that they should be heard when communal matters are considered.

I am afraid therefore that if your desire is that we should consider the League as the sole organisation representing the Muslims to the exclusion of all others, we are wholly unable to accede to it. It would be equally at variance with facts if we made a similar claim for the Congress, in spite of the vastness of the Congress organisation. But I would venture to say that such questions do not arise when two organisations deal with each other and consider problems of mutual interest.

Your second point is that the Muslim League cannot endorse the Congress demand for a declaration from the British Government. I regret to learn this for this means that, apart from communal questions, we differ entirely on purely political grounds. The Congress demand is essentially for a declaration of war aims and more especially for a declaration of Indian independence and the right of the Indian people to frame their own constitution without external interference. If the Muslim League does not agree to this, this means that our political objectives are wholly dissimilar. The Congress demand is not new. It is inherent in article one of the Congress and all our policy for many years past has been based on it. It is inconceivable to me how the Congress can give it up or even vary it. Personally, I would be entirely opposed to any attempt at variation. But this is not a personal matter.

Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan and Mr. Fazlul Huq also made charges against the Congress ministries. When challenged, the Punjab Premier wrote to us that his public utterances need not be taken seriously. Mr. Huq said that he had a pure heart and no significance need be attached to his public speeches. But Mr. Huq again repeated his charges against the Congress ministries. This time he accused the Bombay Government of having committed a few atrocities. When the latter refuted the charges, he said that he meant the United Provinces Government. When the U.P. Premier challenged him to specify where the atrocities had been committed, Mr. Huq mentioned a few places which actually belonged to Bihar and stated that he had evidence with him ready. When I asked him to forward the evidence, Mr. Huq wrote to me the other day that he was still preparing them. I have asked for his permission to publish my correspondence with him on this subject.[3]

With all my sense of responsibility, I emphasise that the allegations made against the Congress ministries are baseless. The whole campaign is a malicious one. To observe a 'day of deliverance' and to repeat these unfounded charges is a dangerous course and certainly not calculated to promote communal unity. To swallow this, and resume negotiations with Mr. Jinnah is an utter impossibility. If I were to open discussions with Mr. Jinnah in the face of these baseless allegations, the courses open to me are, either to retire from politics and go to the Himalayas as a *sanyasi*,[4] or go out of India to a foreign land for good, never to come back, or commit suicide. I would do none of these three things, even if ordered by Mahatma Gandhi, our great leader. The country has to wait for the day when discussions for a communal settlement could be resumed in an atmosphere of cordiality.

The Congress commands the allegiance of all communities in India. Under Gandhiji's inspiring leadership, the Congress has been fighting against British imperialism. There have been differences among Congressmen in regard to the method of carrying on this fight. When the Congress accepted office, the war against British imperialism was not over. The Congress accepted office to force the pace and to offer to fight on all fronts, inside as well as outside the legislatures. There can be no coalition ministries, firstly because the Congress seeks always to represent all communities and secondly, the League is not agreeable to accepting the Congress parliamentary programme calculated to help in the fight against imperialism. I repeat communalism is not the main problem that India has to face. Imperialism is the issue to be tackled.

3. See *post*, section 6, items 17-26.
4. Hermit.

The Congress ministries have resigned not on any communal issue, but on political grounds. The Working Committee's resolution resulted in the withdrawal of the ministries, soon after the Viceroy issued a statement setting forth the British Government's policy. His Excellency called Gandhiji, the Congress President and Mr. Jinnah for a discussion and advised Gandhiji that it would be necessary for the Congress to settle its differences with the League in regard to provincial matters. The Congress view was made clear to the Viceroy that if a constituent assembly was summoned and India was given an opportunity to draft her own constitution, the differences would disappear of their own accord.

I had, in Delhi, talks with Mr. Jinnah whether it would be possible for the Congress and the League to send a joint reply to the Viceroy regarding the political goal of India. The Congress, I pointed out, stands for independence and the League also has declared independence to be its goal. And at the end of the talk I told Mr. Jinnah that I was ready to discuss the communal problem with him. But Mr. Jinnah replied that he would meet me in Bombay as he was not physically keeping fit. On Mr. Jinnah's return to Bombay, I waited for three weeks to receive a call from him. Hearing nothing from him, I reminded him and asked him when I could meet him in Bombay. Mr. Jinnah replied that he would remain in Bombay for three weeks and that he would be glad to meet me on any day convenient to me during the three weeks. I replied to him that I would go over to Bombay on the 14th instant and phone him on my arrival. The very next day I read Mr. Jinnah's statement appealing to his co-religionists to observe a 'day of deliverance'. It pained me to read his statement. It was dangerous to call demonstrations to repeat unfounded and unproved charges. These charges have not been specified in spite of our repeated requests. The Muslim League appointed a committee to collect evidence in support of their charges. They first made unfounded charges and then started collecting evidence. The Pirpur Committee[2] went round the provinces collecting whatever the complaints that were made by all and sundry. The Committee never took the trouble to verify these complaints which they catalogued and published as 'atrocities committed by the Congress ministries'. The report was not available to the public. I myself got one only after a vigorous hunt. The report contained very astonishing statements. For instance, it was said that Muslims were massacred in Gorakhpur. No details were given as to when the incidents took place and how many were killed, their names, etc. There was not a shred of evidence in support of these charges.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 315.

Many eminent men who were in the Congress once, are not there now. When the Congress wedded itself to nonviolent noncooperation many left it, simply because they were unable to subscribe to the new political doctrine. Mr. Jinnah was one of them. He did not leave the Congress on communal grounds. Staunch supporters of the British in the past can be found in the League ranks today and they continue to help the British. I would request Congressmen and those who sympathise with the Congress to study the situation well. There is considerable confusion on the communal issue. If one should probe under the surface, one is sure to realise that the question is mainly political.

I could have understood if the League had insisted on the protection of minorities, and, at the same time, demanded independence and also the right of framing the constitution by Indians themselves. This the League did not do. The idea of independence, according to the League resolution, has gone by the board.

Independence is for all, and once it is achieved the main task of the Congress would have been done. The Congress, besides, wants that the future constitution should be framed by the Indian people and not by the Congress. The minorities issue can be settled with the consent of the minorities themselves, failing which it can be referred to an international tribunal.

I appeal to you to carry out earnestly the constructive programme of the Congress. There are some who are impatient and demand that the Congress should immediately undertake a struggle for the realisation of its objective. But I would advise them to abide by the advice of Mahatma Gandhi. We must be careful about the steps we take. After all, the next move, which should necessarily be a big move, cannot be undertaken because an individual wants it or even a group of politicians want it. Circumstances and the time factor are most important. If these factors are not taken into consideration, then the result will be bad. Congressmen should lose no time in making the Congress strong, both organisationally and otherwise. The step, which the Congress will take on Mahatma Gandhi's advice, will be a forward step, and it is going to be a decision from which there will be no retracing at all.

As for the demand for a constituent assembly, it should be remembered that it is not the Congress or any political party as such that is going to frame the constitution. So far as the minorities are concerned, their rights will be fully protected. The constitution will be framed only with their consent. If no agreement can be reached on minority rights, the issue can be referred to a high international tribunal for arbitration. So far as the Congress is concerned, it might even be dissolved when Swaraj is won. Since the days of Lord North, England has never had a more unimaginative cabinet than Mr. Chamberlain's.

Every province must work hard and get ready for satyagraha if launched by Gandhiji when all attempts to settle the Indian political problem prove unavailing. So far as my province is concerned, it is ready, and will be in the vanguard when the order to march is given by Gandhiji. I hope other provinces will also endeavour to pass Gandhiji's test.

The communal problem is not communal in the accepted sense of the term, but purely political. The communal situation as it has developed during the past two years, the Congress stand vis-a-vis the Muslim League during the last few weeks, the three statements of Mr. Jinnah regarding the 'deliverance day', the League's attitude towards the constituent assembly and Jinnah's latest pronouncement, in which a demand for a royal commission has been made, leave me in no doubt that the whole issue is pre-eminently political and not communal.

I had over seven hours' discussion with Mr. Jinnah over the reply to be submitted to the Viceroy. I did not discuss anything about the communal situation. The discussions were purely political. It is a well known fact that Mr. Jinnah declined to send a joint note to the Viceroy presenting India's demand. The Congress ministers resigned not for communal reasons, but because they were unable to associate themselves in this war. I refuse to believe that there is any Muslim who will not agree with the Congress demand for India's independence.

Communal issues, one would think, related to music before mosques, killing of cows and so on. But the trend of the communal question in this country for the past two years has been to develop on an altogether different line having a deep political significance. For example, there was the question of representation for the Muslim League members in the ministries and the formation of coalition ministries. This is not a communal issue. Now that the Congress ministries have resigned there is no question of any coalition. Even if Mr. Jinnah and I had agreed, it would have left the Congress attitude vis-a-vis the war unchanged on the ministerial resignations. But Mr. Jinnah does not agree with the steps pursued by the Congress.

the confidence of the people, their nominees will be elected to the constituent assembly.

I agree with Lord Zetland that it is a little absurd to consider the Muslims in India as a minority.[3] Not only their great numbers but the fact that in large areas of the country they are in a majority makes it clear that no minority question really arises. Ordinarily speaking, such numbers warrant no protection as they can well look after their own interests and it is quite impossible in practice for any so-called majority to ignore these interests.

As a matter of fact, in predominantly Muslim areas like Bengal, the Punjab, Sind, the North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan the minorities are non-Muslim and many of them have demanded protection. If India is looked at as a whole, these various factors balance one another and prevent the misbehaviour of any religious or racial group.

Lord Zetland, unfortunately, still thinks in terms of a bygone age and has a semi-feudal outlook on life. He does not realise that new forces are convulsing India. Even among the Muslims the mass of the people are claiming their own rights from their upper-class and sometimes semi-feudal leaders.

The problems of India are essentially economic, though a continuous attempt has been made by Lord Zetland to make them appear to be racial and minority problems.

Lord Zetland still possibly thinks of the princes of India as the hereditary rulers and of Rajputs and other classes as obvious military classes. But things are very different in the India of today and all this attempt to hide the real issues cannot last long in this dynamic situation.

I can well understand the opposition of the British Government to the idea of the constituent assembly because such an assembly necessarily puts an end to British imperialism. Between the position of Indian nationalism and that of British imperialism, there is no common factor. If the British Government is unable to agree to India determining her future, we are equally unable to agree to the British Government interfering in any way in such a decision. We agree to differ and the future will decide whose will is to prevail.

I think that the alternatives in the absence of a free constitution for India are a continuation of British domination and development sporadically or otherwise of the Soviet form of government in India. I do not know how the mass of Indian people will decide any particular

3. Lord Zetland had said: "The Muslims on a purely arithmetical basis are less in number than the Hindus; but they are a community of from 80,000,000 to 90,000,000 with race memories of the days when for two hundred years the Moghul dynasty ruled over the greater part of the Indian sub-continent"

25. On Zetland and Jinnah[1]

Lord Zetland occupies a high office but many of his recent utterances can hardly be termed responsible or helpful. I have no desire to discuss his latest speech in any detail.[2] He has raised some novel points and arguments and has laid stress on the minority question specially. No one in India can possibly ignore this question and all of us are obviously desirous of solving it to the satisfaction of various parties concerned.

How is it to be solved within the context of democracy? Obviously the fundamental principles governing any consideration of any aspect of Indian problems are democracy and unity of India.

The suggestion put forward by the Congress that all these matters should be decided by a constituent assembly meets in principle all the difficulties raised. This does not mean that all our problems are simple of solution or that there will not be complications or difficulties to face. But it does offer not only a suitable method but the only way within the context of democracy. The mass of people by adult suffrage would elect their representatives. All the principal minorities would be represented and have a voice in the shaping of India's future. In regard to their particular problems, it may be said that the minorities' rights might be over-ridden by a majority vote. That has been got over by the suggestion that such rights should be settled by agreement. If there is no agreement about a special issue then the only proper course is to refer this to an independent arbitration such as the League of Nations or the International Court at the Hague.

Nothing can be fairer than this and no minority can possibly object to it. It avoids the possibility of a majority forcing its will on a minority with regard to its special rights and interests. It avoids also the absurdity of a minority imposing its will on a majority. The importance of the constituent assembly procedure is to get the real opinion of the masses such as the Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, etc., through their elected representatives. The question does not arise then of who the Congress, the Muslim League or any other body represents. If these organisations command

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 15 December 1939. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16 December 1939.
2. On 12 December 1939, Lord Zetland had stated that not the least of the obstacles in the way of an honourable settlement was a difference of opinion between the Congress and the Muslim League. No constitution could be expected to function successfully which did not meet with the general assent of the minorities who had to live under it.

the confidence of the people, their nominees will be elected to the constituent assembly.

I agree with Lord Zetland that it is a little absurd to consider the Muslims in India as a minority.[3] Not only their great numbers but the fact that in large areas of the country they are in a majority makes it clear that no minority question really arises. Ordinarily speaking, such numbers warrant no protection as they can well look after their own interests and it is quite impossible in practice for any so-called majority to ignore these interests.

As a matter of fact, in predominantly Muslim areas like Bengal, the Punjab, Sind, the North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan the minorities are non-Muslim and many of them have demanded protection. If India is looked at as a whole, these various factors balance one another and prevent the misbehaviour of any religious or racial group.

Lord Zetland, unfortunately, still thinks in terms of a bygone age and has a semi-feudal outlook on life. He does not realise that new forces are convulsing India. Even among the Muslims the mass of the people are claiming their own rights from their upper-class and sometimes semi-feudal leaders.

matter, but I am prepared to leave it to them and take the risk. The days of the small groups at the top deciding the fate of India cannot last.

In view of the situation created by Mr. Jinnah's call for the celebration of the 'day of deliverance', it has become impossible for me to discuss communal or other matters with him, because one cannot discuss anything in this background. This indicates such a vast difference of outlook and sense of values and objectives between us that any common approach to the problem seems well-nigh impossible. Therefore, regretfully, I have to give up the idea of meeting Mr. Jinnah on this occasion.

This does not mean that we are not desirous of meeting him or others to discuss common problems, whenever a common approach seems possible. For our part we are always willing to have a frank discussion of all problems without any condition whatsoever, provided there is no such background as has now been created. It is also obvious that any conditions which go against the basic ideologies of the Congress cannot be the basis for a discussion.

The real difficulty seems to me to be a vital political difference and not a communal difference because we are discussing political matters today vis-a-vis the British Government. The Congress outlook for the last 20 years has been governed by a certain ideology which may roughly be called satyagraha. We have varied our activities from time to time; but this essential basis will always remain. But today, in the face of a crisis, inevitably we revert to the more active form of satyagraha such as noncooperation and even civil disobedience movement is in the air as a possibility. Other organisations possibly do not accept such a political outlook and it is this political difference which counts and not the communal difference.

Jinnah's proposal about a royal commission raises far-reaching questions. We have always been eager to have judicial or other inquiries made in regard to any allegations against the Congress governments. In spite of repeated requests, these instances have not been enumerated, nor has our offer of inquiry been accepted.

Apparently what Mr. Jinnah desires now is a royal commission to sit in judgment over the whole work of the Congress governments. This is an astoundingly retrograde idea and goes counter to everything that Indian nationalism has stood for during the last many years.

We who have always demanded our right to frame our constitution without Britain's interference are now asked to submit to a foreign commission to judge our worthiness. Such an idea indirectly puts an end to our demand for independence and directly postpones all other issues

till such future time when the British Government may think it fit and proper to consider what we deserve at their gracious hands. I am astonished that Mr. Jinnah should not have realised the extraordinary or objectionable consequences of any such procedure. It has nothing to do with an inquiry into alleged misdeeds, which we always welcome. It is a submission to the might and wisdom of British imperialism which we can never accept. None of us has been enamoured of a royal commission even for smaller purposes, but for a royal commission to sit in judgment over us outrages the dignity of the Indian people and their will for freedom.

Question: What is your opinion of Russia's invasion of Finland?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is exceedingly difficult to form correct opinions regarding Russia and Finland, because our sources of news are strictly one-sided. Still, I will say that the original Russian demands were not very improper, as there can be no doubt that Russia has feared an invasion through Finland and her great city of Leningrad lies within a few miles of the Finnish frontier. It is also well known that both the German and the British military diplomats have long had in the past plans for a possible invasion of Russia through Finland. I believe that the British military mission to Russia stayed in Finland for a considerable time and even Hitler's plans are well known. Nevertheless Russia's invasion of Finland came as a great shock to me and it has injured Russia's cause greatly.

It is curious to compare the sudden activities of the League of Nations in the case of Finland[4] with its complete torpor when Poland was invaded, when the western war broke out and when Czechoslovakia and Austria were invaded; not a ripple troubled the surface of the lake of Geneva when this happened, but all the powers and the principalities rushed to the palace of the League when Finland was invaded.

This gives one food for thought. The result is that every country, today, is acting in a shamelessly opportunist manner and the only lesson for India is to strengthen herself and rely on her own strength.

4. See *ante*, section 4, item 16.

26. To M.A. Jinnah[1]

Bombay
16-12-39

My dear Jinnah,
Thank you for your letter of December 15th.[2]

I realise the difference you have pointed out. Of course the Muslim League cannot oppose the idea of any declaration to be made by the British Government. The only question can be about the nature and content of that declaration. What the Congress had asked for was an enunciation of war aims and a recognition of India's independence and the right of her people to frame their constitution, a right that must necessarily be inherent in independence. All these are basic principles which flow from our objective of independence, and as the Muslim League has the same declared objective, there should be no difference of opinion about them. In the application of these principles many important matters will no doubt have to be considered. But so far as the basic demands are concerned, they are of the very essence of Indian nationalism. To give them up or to vary them materially is to knock down our case for independence.

In regard to the war also the Congress has repeatedly declared its policy during the last eleven years. The present declaration is a logical outcome of that policy. I have personally had some share in shaping this policy and I have attached importance to it. You will appreciate that it is exceedingly difficult, apart from the question of desirability, to vary such long-established and fundamental policies. These policies are political in their essence and, I would venture to say, are the only policies which flow from a demand for Indian freedom. Details may be considered and discussed, their application should be worked out in mutual cooperation and, in particular, the interests of various groups and minorities should be considered carefully and protected. But to challenge the very basis of that declaration is to demonstrate that there is a great difference in political outlook and policies. This, as such, has nothing to do with the Hindu-Muslim problem. It is because of this that I feel that there is little in common in our political objectives.

1. *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 418-419.
2. Jinnah in his letter said that the Muslim League's objection was to endorsing the Congress demand as laid down in the A.I.C.C. resolution of 10 October 1939 and not to the Congress demand for a declaration from the British Government. So he asked if the Congress could see no way of modifying it. "You say that personally you would be entirely opposed to any attempt at variation. ...may I know in these circumstances what do you expect or wish me to do."

May I say again that no one on our behalf, so far as I know, challenges or minimises the authority, influence and importance of the Muslim League. It is for this reason that we have been eager to discuss matters with it and to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the problems that confront us. Unfortunately we never seem to reach even the proper discussion of these problems as various hurdles and obstructions, in the shape of conditions precedent, come in our way. These conditions precedent, as I have ventured to point out to you, have far-reaching significance. I do not know why they should be allowed to obstruct all progress or prevent us from considering these problems. It should not be difficult to remove these hurdles and come to grips with the subject itself. But as these hurdles continue and others are added to them, I am compelled to think that the real difficulty is the difference in political outlook and objectives.

At the present moment, the decision to have an all-India demonstration on December 22nd has added a psychological barrier which effectively prevents mutual approach and discussion. I regret this exceedingly and have earnestly wished that you would see your way to remove this barrier which is leading and can only lead to ill will. I still hope that you may be able to do so.

I do wish to assure you that for my part I do not want to leave any stone unturned which can lead to mutual understanding and settlement. But you will not have me, as I do not want to have you, leave integrity of mind and purpose in pursuit of anything. Nothing worthwhile can be gained that way. I have deep political convictions and I have laboured in accordance with them these many years. I cannot leave them at any time, much less now when the world is in the throes of a terrific crisis.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

27. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Wardha
December 21, 1939

My dear Krishna,

I have not heard from you for a long time although I have a brief note from your office today. I have been here for the Working Committee meeting and I am now returning to Allahabad.

Stafford Cripps has had a busy time since he came to India. I was with him in Allahabad, Bombay and here. Apart from well known Congress people he has met Sikandar Hayat Khan, some Delhi officials, Jinnah, Ambedkar, N.M. Joshi, Krishnamachari, the Dewan of Baroda[2] and Sir Akbar Hydari[3] at Hyderabad. He has just gone off to Calcutta, breaking journey midway to visit a jungle in a small state *en route*. Then he goes to Calcutta and Santiniketan. He goes by air probably on the 26th to Rangoon, then to China by road.

He seems to be uncertain about his future programme after China. Ordinarily, I suppose, he will go to America, but he said he will try to come to India if he could help in any way, either here or in England. His present visit here will undoubtedly help him to get acquainted more closely with India's problems. At the same time it is quite possible that this further knowledge might confuse him more.

It is a confusing situation though basically it is simple enough. The communal stunt is being played for all it is worth and Jinnah and Ambedkar[4] have said things and behaved in a manner which passes all bounds of decency. Perhaps this very extremism and falsehood and indecency on their part might lead to good results. Meanwhile all this produces bitterness and difficulty.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. V.T. Krishnamachari (1881-1964); dewan of Baroda state, 1927-44; Prime Minister, Jaipur, 1946-49; deputy chairman, National Planning Commission, 1953-60.
3. (1869-1942); Finance Minister, Hyderabad, 1921-37; member, Governor-General's Executive Council, 1941-42.
4. On 18 December 1939, Ambedkar decided to join the celebration of the 'day of deliverance' and said: "I read Mr. Jinnah's statement and I felt ashamed to have allowed him to steal a march over me and rob me of the language and sentiment which I, more than Mr. Jinnah, was entitled to use." He asserted that if Mr. Jinnah proved 5 out of 100 cases of alleged oppression he would prove 100 out of 100 cases before any impartial tribunal. He denied that the call was an anti-Hindu move and characterised it as "anti-Congress and therefore purely political."

As I wrote to you some time back the Working Committee sanctioned £200 for you for expenses in connection with Indian publicity work. I understand this sum has been sent to you by air and should have reached you. It is not necessary for you to send any detailed account for this money. But it would be desirable if you could give some rough idea of expenditure under a few main heads, for instance, cables, meetings, travelling expenses in connection with Indian publicity work, postage, office expenses, etc. Some of these will no doubt overlap with expenses incurred for other purposes. But you can give a general idea of how the money has been spent so far. No voucher need be sent, only a brief statement of account which need only be approximate as you may have difficulty in sending a detailed account and, as I have said above, there might be some overlapping. Some such statement will help the members of the Working Committee to form an idea of how this money was utilised. It may be possible, two or three months later, to send you some more funds if they are needed.

I have received your two cables about Indira reaching Paris and Leysin. I am glad she has got there at last.

In regard to the communal tangle here, I should like to point out a few facts to you. One is that this question suddenly assumed importance because of the Viceroy's initiative in the matter when he called us to Delhi. Till then the questions arising from the war were purely political. He gave a communal turn and Jinnah has taken full advantage of it because he is always averse to facing a political issue which is likely to split up the Muslim League. He opposes now the constituent assembly, although he did not do so in Delhi. We have gone so far as to say that minorities can have separate electorates for the constituent assembly if they so desire. Further that minority problems should be settled by the agreement of the minority concerned. If there is no agreement on any specific issue concerning the minority rights, the matter might be referred to an arbitration, preferably of some international tribunal. I cannot conceive what more can be given to the minority without converting it into a majority, or without putting an end to every vestige of democracy. Remember also that five provinces in India—Bengal, Punjab, N.W.F.P., Baluchistan and Sind have Muslim majorities. It is inconceivable that anything could be done in the rest of India which would not have serious repercussions in the Muslim majority provinces. The distribution of population is such that it is an automatic balancing factor, preventing all excesses on either side. There will also be fundamental laws to protect minority rights and then, as I have said above, a provision about independent arbitration where there is no agreement in the constituent assembly. Anything more it is

difficult to conceive of. If Jinnah claims to represent the Muslims, why is he afraid of an election by adult franchise for the constituent assembly on separate electorates? The fact of the matter is, he does not trust the Muslim masses. What he is after now is to have a statutory provision to have Muslim League ministers in every cabinet, that is, his own nominees. It is possible to have coalition cabinets by agreement, though a cabinet of this type will always create difficulties and prevent rapid progress. It will mean that there are two parties in the cabinet and this will inevitably bring in a third party as a kind of arbitrator. Under present circumstances the third is going to be the governor. The whole idea of cabinet responsibility goes and the governor steps in as the real boss. Apart from this, if this idea of statutory coalition, or a coalition by nomination, is accepted at the point of the bayonet so to say, the result will be disastrous. It will mean the consolidation of the reactionary Muslim League elements and very great dissatisfaction in Congress and other circles. The way the British Government has been behaving is to make it next to impossible to come to terms on the communal issue. The only redeeming feature is that Jinnah by his extraordinary behaviour and offensive language has upset many of his own followers and there are signs of revolt within his own ranks. This may not take shape soon, nevertheless it may develop.

Jinnah has now asked for a royal commission to inquire into 'Congress atrocities'. I do not suppose there is the faintest chance of such a commission being appointed and, in any event, we cannot accept any such thing. What Jinnah wants is not the investigation of any specific instance but a sitting on judgment on the whole administration of the Congress provinces. Every effort made by us for an inquiry on any matter that he wanted, by judicial inquiry or otherwise, has been rejected. Fazlul Huq has also backed out of such an inquiry which he had himself suggested in a moment of excitement. Having done so, he now produces a long list of so-called atroeities. It is really astonishing and fantastic how these people behave. The fact of the matter is that Fazlul Huq's government is notorious for its misdeeds. But we have remained silent because we do not want to run down our own people.

Ambedkar has lined up with Jinnah and issued a statement which for its impudence and falsity beats even Jinnah's. If there is one thing that the Congress governments have concentrated upon, it is in giving relief to the depressed classes. One would almost say that decent and honourable behaviour in politics not only does not pay but is considered an offence.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

28. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Wardha
23/12/39

My dear Krishna,

I have had to stay here two more extra days. I am not cabling to you the Working Committee resolutions as there is nothing very special to cable about and I understand cables are being sent to the *Manchester Guardian* by their correspondent here. Most of our time is taken up not by the framing of resolutions but by a full consideration of a complex situation and the far-reaching implications of any action that we might take.

For the moment the development of the communal situation has overshadowed other matters. I do not think this will last long but there it is. I wrote to you something about it in my last letter. I should like to point out to you some other aspects of it.

You must have noticed that both the Viceroy and Jinnah have rather suddenly laid emphasis on this and of course Zetland & Co. have done likewise. For the first month or so after the war there was no such thing. The political side was dominant. Then the communal aspect was emphasised and you noticed this in London and cabled to me. The Viceroy began to make it the pivot of his talks.

Why was this so? When the Congress ministries came into existence the governors and the I.C.S. thought that the ministry would not be able to pull together and it would be possible for the governor to play an important part and more or less control policy. After two years of office they were convinced that this was not possible, for whatever the other failings of the ministries they always put up a united front. The governor inevitably played a minor role and became less and less important. Even so, he interfered and delayed matters considerably but it was obvious that this could not last long. The I.C.S. and British commercial interests did not like this at all and wanted to devise some method of checking this process. Jinnah's formula of joint or composite cabinets appealed to them as providing this check. As a matter of fact Linlithgow was keen on a composite cabinet in the Joint Committee. He still wants it. And this because he does not want strong cabinets or the development of real responsible government. A composite cabinet would lead to domination by the governor and the preservation of the vested interests of the services and mercantile interests. It would prevent progress.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

This is bad enough. But if such composite cabinets are to be made at the dictation of Jinnah, this would mean the consolidation of the reactionary elements in the Muslim League.

There is in fact today a joint front developing between the reactionary elements in India and the British Government and mercantile interests. The Muslim League, Ambedkar, some people in the Hindu Mahasabha, the Justicites, etc., all stand together and more or less support the British Government and the princes, with whom they are developing close relations. They oppose the constituent assembly as well as a proper declaration by the British Government on the lines demanded by the Congress. Another object of Jinnah's in doing this is to prevent the political issue coming up too forcibly for this makes his position in the League difficult.

Thus the problem essentially is not a communal one but a political one—progress *vs* reaction. Jinnah is completely and deliberately ranging himself on the side of reaction. Perhaps this itself will bring about a clarification and might do good.

On the 26th January we are having our Independence Day celebrations on a big scale.

Edward Thompson has written to me that it is possible that the Rhodes Memorial trustees might invite me to deliver the Rhodes Memorial lecture next summer at Oxford. He points out that this is the highest honour that Oxford can give to a foreigner, that it will be a good opportunity for me to go to England and meet people etc. etc., and insists on my accepting. There is no question of my accepting or even considering the matter till the proposal is formally made, and in any event I do not know what will happen or where I shall be next summer. Anyway I should like your reactions.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

29. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

December 25, 1939

My dear Bapu,
I enclose a letter for you from Chiang Kai-shek.[2] The original is in Chinese but he has sent a translation in English. I hope you will not destroy this Chinese letter. It is worth preserving at Maganwadi. Should you care to answer it, please send me your reply and I shall forward it through the Chinese consul.

The 'deliverance day' did not prove much of a draw in the U.P. In fact it was on the whole a failure. Many of the meetings started off in a very small way, but then curious sight-seers, chiefly Hindus, joined them to find out what was happening. Some meetings were held on that day by Muslims, both in mosques and outside, condemning the Muslim League proposal. I enclose a letter to give you one such instance. You can destroy this letter after reading it as I do not want it back.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He had written asking Mahatma Gandhi to pay a visit to China.

30. To Syed Abdul Latif[1]

Allahabad
December 25, 1939

Dear Dr. Latif,
I am grateful to you for sending me your book—*The Muslim Problem in India*.[2] I have read this book with interest and have tried to understand your argument. I am afraid I am wholly unable to appreciate it.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Syed Abdul Latif of the Hyderabad Academy, in his letter of 8 December 1939, wrote that he was sending his book *The Muslim Problem in India* which contained an outline of a constitution of a "federation of culturally homogeneous states."

You say in your letter that you are not a politician but you have written as a politician, and accepted as facts many assertions which have yet to be proved.

With much that you say regarding the background, I might agree and yet the inferences you draw do not seem to be justified. The background is important but still more important is the future for which we build. It is not clear in your essay what political or economic structure you are ultimately aiming at. And, as you know, economics today governs politics. The fundamental problem of India today is not political but one of poverty and unemployment and low production and vested interests, both foreign and Indian, which prevent progress. There is nothing in your essay which touches these problems. You seem to take it for granted that the British imperial domination should continue, though it may function less than it has done in the past. Apparently you take for granted a continued existence of the Indian states as they are.

I proceed from different premises completely. Historically speaking, the Indian states are complete anachronisms in the world today. As you know, similar political entities in Europe and elsewhere ceased to exist long ago. The Indian states represent a feudal regime which cannot be reconciled with greater production and juster distribution. A feudal regime is wholly inconsistent with any type of democracy or even with capitalism in its modern form, much less with more socially advanced forms. British imperialism is an effective barrier to economic growth in India, apart from its political consequences.

You have criticised Hinduism as opposed to democracy. Your criticism is largely justified in so far as the organisation of Hindu society is concerned. The social ideal behind Islamic society has been more democratic. But politically Islamic states have been in the past feudal autocracies which had nothing to do with democracy. Where democracy is creeping into the Islamic states, it is on the basis of modern scientific political theory which separates the state from religion though keeping religion intact for the individual and the group. Turkey is an outstanding example of an Islamic state which has deliberately ceased to call itself Islamic as such. The same tendency is visible in the other Islamic countries more or less.

A parallel to all this can be found in the Europe of one hundred and fifty years ago or more, when Christendom as a political theory dominated the state, but was gradually separated from the state.

I feel, therefore, that your background is somewhat medieval and does not fit in at all with modern theory or practice, and does not take into consideration the fundamental importance of the economic side.

It seems to me that inevitably both so-called Hindu and so-called Muslim cultures will be powerfully shaken and influenced by the scientific culture which has impressed itself on the world today. So long as it does not do so we shall remain backward economically and therefore politically and also culturally. In so far as this happens, a certain homogeneity is produced. This does not mean that the essential traits of our culture, whether Hindu or Muslim, should be suppressed or should disappear. That would be unfortunate and would lead to India becoming culturally a rootless country. I think that India can only progress truly if those roots of real culture are nourished and led to imbibe the culture of modern science. It is essential, therefore, that nothing should be done to suppress these cultural traditions, Hindu or Muslim, though their extravagant and undesirable accretions might well be done away with. In any event it is highly improper for the Hindus even to attempt to vary any cultural growth of the Muslims, just as it is improper for the Muslims to make a similar attempt in regard to Hindu culture. Healthy changes cannot be imposed from outside but must come from inside the group.

I agree with you, therefore, that the fullest latitude should be allowed to group cultures. I do not see why this should not be done within a framework of political unity and freedom.

Your scheme of redistribution of population and areas in India seems to me somewhat fantastic from the practical point of view, apart from its other features. I do not see any particular difficulty in giving freedom to these group cultures without having the surgical operations that you suggest and which are wholly impracticable. As a matter of fact India, as constituted today from the point of view of division of population, provides many balancing factors which go to protect communities and cultures. Personally I would willingly agree to autonomous areas being carved out of larger provinces so as to give these areas cultural autonomy and a sense of freedom.

The subject is a vast one and can hardly be dealt with in the course of a letter. It seems to me, however, that every approach to it must keep the dominant economic factor in mind—the poverty of India and how to remove it as rapidly as possible. We forget this at our peril. The alternatives that we have to face are: a united democratic India with the fullest protection of cultural rights and the interests of all communities, and an attempt at the Sovietisation of India in order to deal more directly with the poverty problem. I prefer the former.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

31. To Ahmad Bashir[1]

December 26, 1939

Dear Mr. Ahmad Bashir,

Thank you for your letter of 6th December.[2] It is very good of you to write to me at such length and to explain to me your point of view. Perhaps it is true, as you say, that I look at facts from the Westerner's point of view, though I have not divorced myself from facts in India. I move about the country a great deal and see vast numbers of people in the villages and in the towns. Nevertheless it is true that my outlook on life and politics is what might be called scientific.

It seems clear to me that the unity of a free India can only continue with the goodwill of the Hindus and Muslims. If that goodwill is lacking, that unity will be endangered. I cannot conceive of any of the major communities in India being coerced into submission by the other. Therefore when I talk of Indian unity, I refer to it on the basis of this goodwill. I think that your scheme will weaken both parts of India and lead to conflict.

I do not see why the fullest cultural freedom should not be allowed to every group, nor do I understand why you should object to a constituent assembly where Muslims have a right to elect their own representatives, and further, where it is definitely stated and laid down that all minority rights must be settled by agreement and not by a majority vote. For myself, I have considerable faith in decisions being taken at the instance of the masses of the people.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Ahmad Bashir, the secretary of the Majlis Kabir Pakistan, wrote that the emergence of so many schemes of separation and of numerous Pakistan Majlis were evidence of popular support for the division of India; "the sooner men of your influence came round to this view the better for India as a whole."

32. The Congress and the Muslim League[1]

Question: What is the Congress attitude towards the Muslim League?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Congress will not enter into negotiations with the Muslim League through Mr. Jinnah who is bent upon preserving British domination in India. The door of the Congress, however, is still open for negotiations, but the possibility of negotiations through Mr. Jinnah no longer exists.

Q: What is your opinion on the constituent assembly?

JN: It can be formed even when the British Government is here because in that case we will be able to prove that we can still form a united India. Besides, the people will cease to think in terms of communities.

Q: Could you not find a place for the Muslim League in a Congress cabinet?

JN: In that case it would have become impossible for us to work as one body and differences in our ranks would have enabled the governors to use their dictatorial powers.

Q: What is the future programme of the Congress?

JN: It is useless to start a struggle without preparation. It will be akin to the fate of Poland which ceased to exist after a fortnight.

1. Interview with political workers, Amritsar, 30 December 1939. From the *National Herald*, 31 December 1939.

33. On Sikandar Hayat Khan's Proposal[1]

The proposal of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan seems to me to be entirely unworkable,[2] partly because a small group is not likely to evolve a democratic constitution and partly because the British Government is supposed to have a hand in this business and the essential preliminary to the success of such a venture is that the British Government should decide to liquidate itself in India and the decision should lie with the Indian people themselves.

The constituent assembly will be representative of the masses whose interests are fundamentally economic. Though conflict might arise over economic issues, we are bound to succeed in communal and other fields. When the constituent assembly meets, it is bound to elect a small committee to frame proposals. Nothing can be considered as a bar to any action that might be taken by the Congress. It is not correct to say that if there is no agreement on the communal question civil resistance will not be launched. It is, however, highly desirable that there should be a favourable communal atmosphere for such a movement. No decision has as yet been taken to launch civil resistance, but in case there is any interference, we must resist it.

Quite apart from an agreement with the Muslim League, it is our business to cooperate on political issues with all parties. For instance, the Congress has no political differences with the Majlis-e-Ahrar. The Ahrars have cooperated with the Congress in the past and I hope they will continue to do so in the future. The question of coming to an agreement with the Muslim nationalists on the communal question, therefore, does not arise.

The essential difficulty seems to be the political objective and method of the League. The conditions advanced by Mr. Jinnah have made it extremely difficult to come to an agreement. His conditions are not only political but psychological. The Congress policy, however, has always been one of willingness to negotiate with everybody.

I refuse to answer any hypothetical question about the invasion of India by a foreign power, but I disapprove of the attack by Russia on Finland. That has retarded the cause for which Russia stands.

1. Interview to the press, Lahore, 31 December 1939. From the *National Herald*, 1 January 1940.
2. See *ante*, section 4, item 7.

Question: Is the Congress going to make any declaration on Independence Day?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I do not think anything will be decided on that day. If anything is going to be declared, it will be done after the meeting of the Congress Working Committee.

The step taken by the Congress in giving up offices is a big step of noncooperation. It is a positive and dynamic step. Our dissociation from the prosecution of the war is not a small matter.

34. Masses the Real Arbiters[1]

During my last three days' tour of the west United Provinces, I have addressed about four lakhs of villagers. There is a vast difference between the village and city gatherings. I find a great contrast between the cities and the villages in the matter of internal dissensions. I have found very few such districts in the United Provinces which can boast of such strong and brave villagers as the Meerut district. These villagers are quite immune from any such canker as internal, mutual dissensions. The city people are educated people. Is this the outcome of your education? You must realize your responsibility. You have taken the torch of new ideas and light to them and if you forsake your post of duty, the time is not far off when the villager will himself shoulder his responsibility with whatever result.

You live near Delhi, the centre of British imperialism. You have to show by your actions the influence of the great organization, the Congress, and tell the Viceroy, who wants to decide India's fate by calling 40 or 50 men, that the times are now changed and the real decision of India's problems lies in the hands of the villagers who constitute the masses.

Three years ago I made a tour in connection with the election campaign on behalf of the Congress. My real purpose was to see the picture of real India in the eyes of the masses that came to hear me. This picture aroused feelings both of satisfaction and disappointment.

1. Speech at Ghaziabad, 10 January 1940. From the *National Herald* and *The Hindustan Times*, 11 January 1940.

I have again undertaken the tour to satisfy myself about the real situation in the country. During these years a great change has come over the country. The Congress is not only an agitating body now, though it is still a part of its duty. Now we have been going from one step to another and are face to face with important and big issues.

If you compare the Congress with other organizations, not in volume but in method and underlying principles, you will notice the difference. While other organizations specialize in making a hubbub and hurling abuses, the Congress is facing the real problems with responsibility and is trying to solve them with sincerity. It does not mean that the Congress does not commit mistakes. In fact, mistakes are unavoidable in such an organization of crores of people. We, however, do not want to hide our mistakes but to remove them. The time for youthful, bombastic opinions expressed by the young men of today has passed. You will realize the injury caused by such expressions when you become older and get the opportunity of solving India's problems with responsibility. You will then know how many thousands are the viewpoints that govern our steps. But, of course, you have a right to show your enthusiasm.

During the last twenty years we have started movements several times and have witnessed the unity of India from one end to another. Though there are ups and downs in such movements, we placed high ideals before ourselves and pinned our faith on nonviolence. Though we fight British imperialism and want to kill this system, we still have love and affection for the British in our hearts.

It is true that we have not yet reached our cherished goal and this is because of our weakness. But surely the picture of India of today is different from what it was 20 years ago, during which period we have yoked ourselves to the big task with a dignity which cannot be found even in the biggest political bodies of the world. The result is reflected in the brightness of the eyes and erectness of the body of the poorest villager, which shows the strength of India.

The communal and other organisations in the country have discarded all limits of decency and are out to discredit and abuse the Congress. We have also to analyse the reasons why our repeated efforts for a communal settlement have failed. Swaraj today is within easy reach but our friends are pulling us away from grasping it.

Mr. Fazlul Huq, the Bengal Premier, has gone out of his way to abuse the Congress. To win freedom for India I am prepared to crawl on my knees, but I will never stoop to meet Mr. Fazlul Huq after what he has recently said. The Bengal Premier has made allegations against

the Congress and then side-tracked the issue when called upon to substantiate the charges.

To win freedom for India we will have to fight not only the British Government but the organisations and interests created and backed by the British in this country. These interests will not bear to see power pass out of their hands, and in the name of religion are creating difficulties today. For instance, I am sure that a free India cannot tolerate the Indian states for a day and yet the government, which professes to fight for democracy in the West, is backing the states to crush the life and liberty of those people. Some zamindars are sympathetic to the Congress, but as a group they are opposed to power passing out to the people. The same fear actuates the opposition to the constituent assembly proposal.

In order to allay the fears of minorities, the Congress has offered that if the minorities so desire they can send in their representatives to the constituent assembly by the method of separate electorates. Furthermore, decisions on communal issues are not to be taken by a majority vote but by common consent and, in the event of a deadlock, by such international bodies as the League of Nations or the International Court of Justice at the Hague.

Interlinked with the question of India's liberty is the question of preventing the upper classes oppressing the lower classes. India has no sympathy with Nazi Germany, but we cannot support the British with men or money unless we know that it is our own war just as much as it is that of the British.

It is impossible to cooperate with the government if India's freedom is not recognized. Not to speak of accepting ministries, we will have to go forward till the goal is achieved, if no compromise consistent with our self-respect is evolved.

No responsible man can predict when civil disobedience will be launched for in making such a move many things have to be considered. But we should be prepared for this at all times, so that when the call comes we may not be found wanting.

I have again undertaken the tour to satisfy myself about the real situation in the country. During these years a great change has come over the country. The Congress is not only an agitating body now, though it is still a part of its duty. Now we have been going from one step to another and are face to face with important and big issues.

If you compare the Congress with other organizations, not in volume but in method and underlying principles, you will notice the difference. While other organizations specialize in making a hubbub and hurling abuses, the Congress is facing the real problems with responsibility and is trying to solve them with sincerity. It does not mean that the Congress does not commit mistakes. In fact, mistakes are unavoidable in such an organization of crores of people. We, however, do not want to hide our mistakes but to remove them. The time for youthful, bombastic opinions expressed by the young men of today has passed. You will realize the injury caused by such expressions when you become older and get the opportunity of solving India's problems with responsibility. You will then know how many thousands are the viewpoints that govern our steps. But, of course, you have a right to show your enthusiasm.

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the Congress and then side-tracked the issue when called upon to substantiate the charges.

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Interlinked with the question of India's liberty is the question of preventing the upper classes oppressing the lower classes. India has no sympathy with Nazi Germany, but we cannot support the British with men or money unless we know that it is our own war just as much as it is that of the British.

It is impossible to cooperate with the government if India's freedom is not recognized. Not to speak of accepting ministries, we will have to go forward till the goal is achieved, if no compromise consistent with our self-respect is evolved.

No responsible man can predict when civil disobedience will be launched for in making such a move many things have to be considered. But we should be prepared for this at all times, so that when the call comes we may not be found wanting.

35. On the Differences with Jinnah[1]

I have seen the correspondence between Mr. Jinnah and myself, which Mr. Jinnah has released to the press. In the preamble to the correspondence, Mr. Jinnah has used strong language about me.[2] I have nothing to say about this. Mr. Jinnah is entitled to use any language he likes but I am sorry that Mr. Jinnah should think this way. So far as I am concerned, I have never said anything derogatory to Mr. Jinnah. I am opposed entirely to personal criticism in public matters. In particular, I would not think of saying anything improper about Mr. Jinnah personally, whom I have respected for many years. It is another matter to discuss his political views and criticize them.

There is an enormous difference in the political outlook of Mr. Jinnah and myself. This is not recent, but dates back to the noncooperation movement, twenty years ago, when Mr. Jinnah felt compelled to leave the Congress, because he disagreed with its objective and methods. It is this vital political difference that prevents any common ground of discussion. I would like to make it clear that the recent report from the Punjab about what I had said is not correct. It is difficult to keep pace with errors in press reporting, more especially regarding reports of private gatherings. What I said was that the condition laid down by Mr. Jinnah made a common approach exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. I was wrongly reported to have said that it was impossible for me to resume conversations with Mr. Jinnah personally. There is no personal question in the matter, but there is a vital political difference which has been made an even greater barrier by Mr. Jinnah's decision about the 'day of deliverance'.

1. Statement to the press, Meerut, 10 January 1940. From *The Hindustan Times*, 11 January 1940.
2. On 7 January 1940, Jinnah stated that Jawaharlal had made an attack on him "in a manner unworthy of any responsible leader", characterized his attitude as "not only unwarranted but mean" and described Jawaharlal's statements as "reckless and irresponsible".

36. To Sam Ernest Devalal[1]

Wardha
January 19, 1940

Dear Mr. Devalal,

It was good of you to give me an opportunity to meet many Indian Christian friends in Meerut. Although I spoke at some length then, unfortunately I was rushed and could not deal with many points in your memorandum.[2] I should have liked to refer particularly to this memorandum because I had read this with surprise. The outlook behind the memorandum seemed to me somewhat unusual. You have criticised the Congress and the Congress governments. You refer to 'nameless tyrannies' and to 'strong currents and under-currents which ultimately threaten the very existence of Muslims and the minorities.' These are serious statements to make, for which so far as I know there is not a shred of evidence. I think that you should justify these statements if you make them. It seems obvious from your memorandum that you have kept completely aloof from the living stream of Indian nationalism. You even object to the songs people sing, the slogans they use, the clothes they wear, the salutation they observe, the etiquette they follow and in fact everything else which indicates to you the desire to revive old Hindu culture. Will you please indicate to me what songs we should sing, what clothes we should wear and what slogans we should use and what salutation we should have, etc?

There is much else in your memorandum about which I should like to write to you but I have little time now. But it does seem to me, after reading your memorandum, that we view problems from very different points of view and I regret to say that I do not agree with much that you have written.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. S.E. Devalal, the director of the central distillery at Meerut, had stated in his memorandum that the "Indian Christian community, since they did not protest and agitate, suffered at the hands of the two major communities." It was "essential that Congress should have definite proposals to safeguard and protect those who may not be so vocal and aggressive."

37. To S. Satyamurti[1]

Allahabad
January 23, 1940

My dear Satyamurti,
Your letter. Of course I agree with you that separate electorates should be done away with. But unhappily, situated as we are, we have to take the present difficulties into consideration. For the last four years or more whenever a constituent assembly has been mentioned it has been suggested on our behalf that separate electorates will be conceded if the minorities so desire. This is of course only for the purpose of the constituent assembly and not the new parliament that might be elected. If we have adult franchise, it is just possible that we might get over this separatist tendency as the masses will think more along economic lines. That is why adult franchise is essential and that is why Jinnah is opposing a constituent assembly generally and adult franchise specially. The whole conception of the constituent assembly only takes shape once the independence of India is recognized and the right of the Indian people to frame their own constitution.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. S. Satyamurti Papers, N.M.M.L.

38. To Sam Ernest Devalal[1]

Lucknow
February 5, 1940

Dear Mr. Devalal,
Thank you for your letter of January 30th. You have raised many questions which it is difficult to discuss in a letter. As a matter of fact I have dealt with some of them at length in my books. I do not think that there is a difference between the philosophy of life of the East and of the West as you mention. You will find all the roots of Western philosophy, whether Greek or Christian, to be much the same as

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

what is called the Eastern. Industrialisation in the West produced a different concept of life which is inevitably spreading to the East. At the same time in the West there is a definite swing back from that attitude. The problem before us in India is essentially one of raising standards tremendously and no one that I know of stands for anything else.

You refer to the mentality of Congressmen. You will find the conflicts between political parties in the West far more acute than in India. No one can deny the right of being nationalist to non-Congressmen. But each group must push its own political programme and it has to oppose other groups which stand against that programme. More specially where the conflict is a nationalist one against alien domination, those who side with the dominating imperialism naturally part company with the others.

Your reference to nameless tyrannies has been explained by you to me not as anything definite but a vague fear of the revival of Hindu culture. I do not understand the terms the Hindu culture or Muslim culture except in a very superficial sense which does not ultimately count. Cultures are national and not religious. There is no such thing as Muslim culture. There is Arabian culture and Persian culture which have both influenced India greatly, and which have partly been imbibed in Indian culture. At the present moment, the industrial culture of the West is spreading in India and is likely to be imbibed also, producing a composite whole. What this composite will be, will depend on many factors. It is right that any minority should claim that its own culture should be preserved and protected. It is absurd for it to call upon other groups to change their own culture.

When a living movement takes place in a country affecting the masses, it touches almost every aspect of life. The Congress movement in India during the last twenty years has convulsed the Indian masses and made them politically or otherwise conscious. Inevitably this has affected them socially, culturally and in many other ways. The very first consequence of such a living movement is to use the language of the people as well as, generally speaking, the clothes of the people. There is no barrier to any other clothes being used or language, but this prevents intimate contacts with the masses.

The Congress slogans are anti-imperialist slogans which have no religious significance.

In political matters it is not correct to speak of religious groups as necessarily being political groups. Many Christians may be and are completely identified with the Congress, many of them may be opposed to its political creed. So also the Muslims. The attitude of bargaining

for any group ultimately is injurious to it, for it separates it from other groups and it does not take that living part in a national renascence which it otherwise would. Each group makes a place for itself in the nation by the part it plays in a national revival. That is what I stressed at your place the other day.

The question of money is obviously highly important but I can hardly discuss this technical matter in a letter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

39. Christian Missionaries in India[1]

For some months past a controversy has been carried on among Christian circles in India in regard to the missionary pledge.[2] Two American missionaries, who sympathised with India's demand for freedom, and wished to give public expression to that sympathy, have had to sever their connections with the missions and one of them has returned to the United States.[3] Some Indian Christians connected with missionary establishments in India have also been affected. A *Krishtagraha Manifesto*[4] on behalf of these foreign missionaries who wished to align themselves with Indian nationalism and freedom was published in the press and attracted attention. Mr. Cyril Modak[5] has further discussed this question in a series of interesting articles in the *Herald*.

1. 27 February 1940. *National Herald*, 29 February 1940. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (Allahabad, 1941), pp. 50-52.
2. American missionaries had to sign a pledge before leaving the United States that nothing would be done by them against the lawful authority of the country where they were going to serve.
3. J. Holmes Smith and some others wrote an open letter to the Viceroy stating that India's aspiration for freedom was right and just and that her being dragged into a war against her will and out of harmony with her soul was a sin. For this they were accused of violating the missionary pledge and were asked by the church authorities to leave India.
4. The *Krishta-yaha* movement was started in 1939 as an attempt to demonstrate "Christian realism in action." The *Krishtagraha Manifesto*, which was anti-imperialist, anti-war and pro-nationalist, was signed by Cyril Modak, Mr. and Mrs. Templin, Paul Keene, J. Holmes Smith and others.
5. (b. 1906); writer; Head Master, Mission High School, Jabalpur, 1933-38; joined an Ashram at Lucknow in 1938; his works include *India's Challenge to Christians* and *India's Destiny*

I am glad that this question has been raised and public attention has been drawn to it. For my part I did not even know, till recently, that there was such a thing as a missionary pledge. This knowledge throws a great deal of light on the background of mission work in India.

Many of us are apt to forget that Christianity is one of the oldest of religions in India. It came to our country more than eighteen hundred years ago, long before it spread in Europe. Not being associated with political domination in any way, it found a welcome, as India has always welcomed religions and ideals from abroad, and it spread in south India. There is a large population of Syrian Christians (that is Indians belonging to the Syrian type of Christianity) in south India, notably in Malabar and Travancore. During the Mughal period Catholic missionaries and Jesuits came and their work also bore substantial results in the south.

With the coming of the British power, a new type of missionary came to India. He was attached to British officials, and the British army of occupation, and represented British imperialism far more than the spirit of Christ. An ecclesiastical department grew up, as a part of the government machinery, and the burden of this, in the shape of taxes, fell on the non-Christian population. Even now this department is a reserved subject under the Government of India Act and no provincial government may touch it.

Even the private missions that were established here were affected by this government patronage and connection. In the average Indian mind, the Christian missionary was almost indistinguishable from the alien official. The Indian Christians, in the north especially, reacted to all this by tending to become a sect apart, not only in matters of religion but in other matters also and in clinging helplessly to government patronage. The national renaissance which swept the country and brought new life to millions, passed them by, leaving them unaffected and uninspired. They drew no strength from it, as others did. Many individuals among them, of course, took part in this movement.

Christian missions in India have undoubtedly done good work in many fields, notably in education and we must be grateful to them. But they have always worked with a political background that was favourable and, in the public eye, they have been allies of imperialism. This has somewhat lessened their capacity for good work even in the constructive field, and the barriers that separated them from the mass of Indian humanity have remained. To some extent I understand this better now that I know about the missionary pledge. Inevitably, even if as individuals they do not wish it, they have to line up with imperialism in India. That may have certain advantages for them under the

existing order, but it is clear that they purchase these advantages at a cost to their cause which is bound to grow as the months and years go by. Even from the point of view of expediency, the bark of imperialism is a sinking one. India must and will be independent and the future of India will be decided by the Indian people alone.

But there is a more vital aspect and a more dangerous consequence. Is it good for Christianity anywhere, more especially in India, to be associated with foreign domination and imperialism? Can what we consider the truth spread, if it is tied to untruth and violent rule? Can a man of truth submit to, or even be a passive agent of, the processes of untruth and injustice? It makes all the difference in the world, as a famous bishop once said, whether we give truth the first place or the second. The missionary pledge seeks to prevent the full expression of the truth and suppresses the conscience of the individual. It lines up Christianity in India, to some extent at least, with the forces of reaction. It is strange that the gospel of Jesus, the gentle but unrelenting rebel against untruth and injustice in all forms, should be made a tool of imperialism and capitalism and political domination and social injustice.

Christianity went to China much later than it came to India. Some famous and very learned Jesuit Fathers became mandarins and even governors of provinces. Later with the coming of Western imperialism, Christian missionaries became the forerunners of foreign trade and intervention and became very unpopular. But during the last generation or more Christian missionaries and mission colleges, on the whole, have sided with the national movement, and as a result of this Christianity holds a high place in China today.

Whether there should be a missionary pledge or not in India is a matter directly concerning the missionaries themselves or Christians in India. But indirectly it concerns others also and therefore it is right that others should consider it. If Christianity is to be a popular religion in India, it must dissociate itself from such pledges and from official patronage and ecclesiastical departments. It must rest on the strength of its message and on the goodwill of the people.

WITH JINNAH, NOVEMBER 1939

WITH STAFFORD CRIPPS, DECEMBER 1939

40. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
March 3, 1940

My dear Krishna,

In my yesterday's letter or previously I forgot to say anything about the suggestion to send a parliamentary delegation from England to India. References to this have been appearing in the press. About two weeks ago Bhulabhai Desai received a cablegram from Dr. C.B. Vakil from London, suggesting that the Congress might invite such a delegation. Vakil was apparently representing the Indian Swaraj League or some such organization. Bhulabhai Desai after consulting the Congress President and others cabled back to say that it was not possible for the Congress to issue such an invitation.

Personally of course I do not approve of this idea at all. At any time this mixed crowd coming here and patronizing us would have been undesirable. Under present circumstances it is far more so.

I have received a copy of Pritt's new book.[2]

Regarding Muslim organizations in India, the position is vague. Apart from the Muslim League there are the following principal organizations. The Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the Majlis-e-Ahrar-e-Islam, the Majlis-e-Ansar or Momins, the Shia Political Conference, and certain independent Muslim groups in assemblies, notably in Bihar. In Bengal there is the Praja Party of Fazlul Huq.

The Jamiat-ul-Ulema, though politically advanced and anti-imperialist, is, socially speaking, reactionary and represents the viewpoint of Muslim divines. They have really no political outlook as such, except an anti-British imperialist sentiment. It has a certain influence, specially in Delhi and in the northern part of the U.P. The influence is not so much organizational as personal. In Delhi, on Jinnah's 'day of deliverance', the Jamiat's anti-Muslim League demonstration was a very big affair, while the Muslim League demonstration was insignificant in comparison. The membership of the Jamiat cannot be considerable. I do not know what it is. Till recently no attempt was made to have a large membership. Now there is some talk of it, but little is done. The Jamiat was certainly weakened in public influence during the last two or three years since the rise of the Muslim League. The Muslim League has tried to father a rival Jamiat but this exists only in name.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, section 4, item 31.

Many of the members of the Jamiat have been closely associated with the Congress politically for many years past.

The Ahrars were originally a group of Muslim Congressmen in the Punjab who started an organization of their own for local and personal reasons. They have never gone against the Congress as a whole, though they have come in conflict with it sometimes locally in elections. Their policy has often been entirely lacking in vision and opportunist in the sense that they do things for some temporary advantage. They have some good and popular leaders with a capacity for mass oratory. In order to strengthen themselves they took part in several communal movements. At one time they appeared to be the most powerful Muslim organisation in the Punjab. But they have lost ground greatly, partly owing to the clever and consistent opposition of the Sikandar Hayat government and partly because they opposed to some extent the Shahidganj Mosque agitation, which was a sensible thing to do. They have spread out to some extent in the U.P. also. They have undoubted strength in the Muslim masses in north India, but it is difficult to measure it. Some of their men are undesirable and very communal. They are entirely anti-Muslim League, anti-Sikandar Hayat government and anti-Khaksars. They are pro-Congress in a general sense, though they like to maintain their identity and occasionally they do things which are not to the Congress advantage. Their misfortune has been a lack of really intelligent leadership.

The Momins are still organizationally very weak, but they have a vast field to operate in, consisting largely of the old weaver class. They are definitely a class movement, though they do not realise this in the socialist sense. They are against the upper strata of the Muslim society which according to them has oppressed them and exploited them. They have no competent leadership and have limited resources. For the present they function chiefly in some parts of the U.P. and Bihar. But they are beginning to touch other fields. They try to keep aloof from both the Muslim League and the Congress, partly because they feel that association with the Congress might hinder their growth among the Muslim masses in view of the present atmosphere. Generally speaking, however, they are much more favourable to the Congress, although there are some amongst them who are Muslim Leaguers. It is not possible at all to give any numbers but they are undoubtedly a growing movement.

The Shia Political Conference is a reaction against the domination of the Sunnis in Muslim politics. They are not politically advanced at all. But they are not Muslim League in a vague sense. They have found

from experience that separate electorates for Muslims means the exclusion of Shias as a rule, so they are all for joint electorates or in the alternative for separate electorates for Shias also. There are some prominent Muslim Leaguers with them also, notably the Raja of Mahmudabad. This is not a mass organization by any means, though it has influence among the Shias generally.

The Khaksars are a semi-military organization which claims to be non-political, which has latterly functioned more and more in a reactionary way. They say they have nothing to do with any political organization like the Muslim League. But they tend to support the reactionary elements of the League. They also talk about a Muslim raj in India. Their organization and outlook is very like that of the Nazi Party in Germany. There is bitter feud between them and the Ahrars.

The Muslim League advanced in numbers rapidly from 1936 onwards after it changed its objective to independence and reduced its membership fee to two annas a year. But the old feudal reactionary leadership continued unchanged. It profited by the Congress governments and carried on a virulent campaign against them. It has never put forward any constructive proposal. Latterly it has been inclining towards Pakistan and pan-Islamism with the theory of two nations in India which should maintain their separateness and have some kind of an agreement. Being more or less of an anti and negative organisation it suffered by the resignation of the Congress ministries. I believe its membership has gone down tremendously. In fact no attempt has been made to enrol large numbers of members. Such attempts require a well-knit organisation and hard work, both of which are lacking in the Muslim League. So the League has gone down lately except in Hyderabad state where it is being utilized to meet the demands of the Hindu majority for political reform. There is considerable dissatisfaction with the leadership among the younger people and a feeling that Jinnah is taking them nowhere. And yet there is no alternative to Jinnah and so they stick on to him. While undoubtedly the League has lessened in strength and power during the last six months, it is true that the anti-Congress feeling among Muslims, which the League has sedulously propagated, is still very evident, though even that is less than it used to be. The 'day of deliverance' stunt was an effort to keep this feeling going. Even more so it was an attempt to influence foreign opinion.

It should be remembered that both Sikandar Hayat and Fazlul Huq, although formally associated with the Muslim League, are far from being real members. It is a political alliance, each retaining complete freedom in his own province. Sikandar Hayat is the prize boy and mouthpiece of British imperialism. Communally considered he is far better than

most of the leaders of the League and he is undoubtedly competent and able at his job. Fazlul Huq, in spite of his ravings, is not a communalist, but he is fully prepared to take advantage of the communal spirit. He is an opportunist *par excellence*. He won in the Bengal elections on the basis of an agrarian programme. His Praja Party subsequently split up and some of them joined the Congress. But the majority continued to support him because as members of the assembly they got all manner of patronage from Fazlul Huq. The Bengal Government is quite amazingly corrupt.

The Congress Muslim membership is difficult to determine. I think in the U.P. during the last year it must have been anything from 50 to 75 thousand. But it must be remembered that many people come in order to influence elections and without really being of the Congress. The Congress strength lies in this province in the rural areas and Muslim peasants are favourable to the Congress. But it is possible to shake their allegiance to the Congress by an appeal to religion, to God and to the Quran. Still I think that if there were fresh elections in the rural areas, the Congress would win at least some of the Muslim rural seats.

The Frontier Province is predominantly pro-Congress, chiefly because of Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

41. To Syed Abdul Latif[1]

Allahabad
March 6, 1940

Dear Dr. Latif,

I must apologise for the delay in acknowledging receipt of your letter of the 10th January and for the copy of your letter sent to Dr. Rajendra Prasad. You will appreciate and understand the causes of this delay. We have to face a critical situation and the future is dark with uncertainty.

I fear that your approach to the Hindu-Muslim question is so entirely different from mine that I find it difficult to see any reality behind your

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

proposals. That makes it difficult also to discuss them with any profit to you or me. The whole tendency in the world today is for inter-dependence economically, scientifically, commercially, financially, artistically and even culturally. Politically the tendency is there also but there are powerful factors both in the political and economic fields which come in the way of modern growth.

Your proposals seem to me opposed to this world tendency and are therefore reactionary. They proceed from a static conception of society which is singularly out of keeping with the modern dynamic age. In trying to solve one problem, rather superficially, they produce any number of additional problems and in fact aggravate and perpetuate the very problems that they intended to solve.

I am entirely in favour of all real cultural strands in a people to be protected and given full freedom of growth. Indeed it is essential for advancement that every individual and group should have a sense of freedom and liberty and that all repressions should be removed. Those repressions may be political, economic or cultural. I do not think your way is the way to remove these repressions or to tone down the conflicts that exist.

So far as I am concerned, there is nothing confidential in what I have written to you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6

THE CONGRESS ORGANIZATION

1. Hunger Strike of Political Prisoners[1]

The situation arising out of the hunger strike by the political prisoners[2] in Bengal does not warrant the resignation of all Congress ministries. Why should they resign? There is a hopeless confusion on this issue. Let us understand the difficulties. We must first understand what exactly is an all-India issue. I often wonder at people who say, 'make it an all-India issue'. As a matter of fact the release of political prisoners is not a provincial issue and it is already an all-India issue in a sense. But we must make it a fundamental issue. When I say that the Congress ministries should not resign on this clear issue, it does not mean that they should not resign on a hundred other issues. Let us understand this very clearly. I should be happy if our ministries resigned on some fundamental issue, say, the war issue.

The conflict at present is not a direct conflict with the British Government. The Bengal Government has to take full responsibility for the situation. It must also be remembered that the Huq ministry has got an elected majority behind it. It is a very important matter. Therefore we must think of some practical measure to meet the situation.

The Bengal Government cannot be influenced by mere excitement. The hiatus in the argument is this, that if you approach the Government of India they will say, 'we have nothing to do with it; it is the concern of the Government of Bengal'. If I were the Premier of the United Provinces and told the Viceroy that I was going to resign because the Bengal prisoners were not released by that government, he would say, 'how do you expect me to interfere with the Bengal Government? You yourself had objected to my special powers and had definitely stipulated that there should be no interference'. Furthermore, let us consider what will be the effect on the Bengal Government itself consequent on our resignation. They will simply say, 'Do resign'. That is all.

This is really an extraordinary state of affairs. I should be exceedingly happy if the provincial governments resign on a vital issue affecting the whole of India. On the one hand, you criticise the ministries, and very rightly, and on the other hand the only weapon which comes to your mind is to ask the Congress governments to resign. This is nothing but utter helplessness. If we were strong, such a thing should

1. Speech at a public meeting, Bombay, 29 July 1939. From the *National Herald*, 30 July 1939.
2. See *ante*, section 1, item 22.

never have happened. Because of our essential weakness in Bengal and the country generally, such a thing has happened. What are we going to do? The remedy suggested is to let somebody else do something.

Democratically speaking, the Bengal ministry represents the electorate. The government can only be pushed out by those who have supported it before. There is considerable sentiment over the political prisoners' issue in Bengal felt by the supporters of the ministry, but, at the same time, they are not prepared to risk the government being defeated on that issue. Unfortunately, there are so many currents and cross-currents that I do not feel competent to talk of the domestic situation in Bengal.

You do not know my distress on this issue, but there are other issues in the struggle for freedom, equally important. If the Congress ministries are forced to resign on such an issue, several other similar issues will be forgotten. Our responsibility in this regard is great. We can offer satyagraha but the action must be thought out and carried out in a manner that would be purposeful and useful.

We are not having an easy time. Everything we do and every problem we face has got an answer, but, at the same time, it upsets half a dozen other problems. The world is in the grip of a dynamic and terrible situation. If we are wrapped up in local struggles and get ourselves entangled, we will fail to take action at the psychological moment when the major struggle presents itself.

2. Basic Education[1]

I am very glad to learn that the education department of the United Provinces Government is going to push ahead with the basic scheme of education. The inauguration ceremony, I understand, will take place in Allahabad on August 8, and it is proposed to convert the first class of one thousand seven hundred and fifty existing primary schools into class one under the basic scheme. I should have liked to participate in this ceremony in any event, and more specially because Allahabad will have the distinction to have this inauguration. But unfortunately I shall be travelling on that day and speeding away from Allahabad.

1. Message to the U.P. Government, Allahabad, 30 July 1939. *National Herald*, 6 August 1939.

I should like, however, to express my deep gratification at this substantial step in the remodelling of our education on correct lines. I am a believer in the basic scheme of education and I am looking forward to the day when all the villages in the U.P. will have their little basic schools, and on this solid foundation the noble structure of our education would be built up.

The world and India are full of conflicts and so much of our energy is wasted in these conflicts. But there are some matters which are above controversy and above conflicts. One such matter of essential and fundamental importance is the spread of education on right lines. The old methods have been tried and found wanting both in quality and in quantity. We have now to improve their quality, to make them fit in with our lives and circumstances, and at the same time to increase the quantity tremendously. We have to assault the citadels of illiteracy and take them by storm.

This is a matter in which everyone can join whatsoever his differences in other fields might be. After all, all our future progress ultimately depends on the education and training of our people. I wish every success to this brave endeavour.

3. Complaints Against Congress Ministers[1]

Had I been a minister I would have definitely put up a notice at my house or office that personal matters would not be considered. Before making allegations against the ministers on petty matters, the members should think about them well. Here I have not come across even a single suggestion in the speeches of the members present that might lessen the difficulty of the ministers in passing the Tenancy Bill.[2]

Have you any idea how hard your ministers have to work? You are not aware that every minister is wearing himself out. Shri Rajagopalachari, the Prime Minister of Madras, is a very good speaker and has a wonderful capacity for work, but do you know that because of this strain he

1. Speech at the meeting of the executive council of the U.P.P.C.C. held at Lucknow under the presidentship of Jawaharlal on 6-7 August 1939. *Aaj*, 17 August 1939. Original in Hindi.
2. See *ante*, section 3, item 19.

feels difficulty in walking even a short distance? The ministers of Bombay are at present whole-heartedly immersed in implementing prohibition. They have to work beyond their capacity. Do you not have any sympathy for them?

Question: We understand that the people of other provinces think that our ministry is lagging behind in every respect.

Jawaharlal Nehru: I know more than you. I tour about outside the province much more than you and meet people. How could you know what the people of other provinces were thinking about our ministry?

4. Congress Will Stand by the Kisans[1]

I am going to China for a short period to convey the affection and sympathy of the people of India to the Chinese people. I take leave of the kisans and ask for their forgiveness in going away at this critical juncture in our history.

For the kisans the most important question is that of the Tenancy Bill. During the last two years the unhappy kisans have heard of this Bill and waited with longing and patience for it to become law so that their miserable condition might be bettered. In the assembly long arguments took place and the big zamindars opposed the Bill. At last, it was passed and sent on to the council, where again some big zamindars are opposing it and trying to delay it. For two long years the kisans have been expecting this law. How much longer can they be expected to wait? But the kisans should not be perturbed. The provincial Congress will stand by them and use its full strength in their favour. If there is any further delay in the passing of the Bill owing to the obstruction caused by some people, the Congress will whole-heartedly face this contingency. It is no longer possible for us to tolerate the sufferings of the kisans.

The kisans should peacefully increase their strength, and by becoming members of the Congress strengthen themselves further for future action. They should also become volunteers in all the *mandals*. Many

1. Message in Hindi to the kisans of U.P. *National Herald*, 20 August 1939.

people have been creating trouble and mischief in order to weaken the kisans and injure them. By becoming volunteers the kisans would stop this mischief.

5. To K.B. Menon[1]

Wardha
September 16, 1939

My dear Menon,[2]
Mrs. Sarojini Naidu told me yesterday that she was much put out by the fact that the Bombay Civil Liberties Union was making a dead-set against the Bombay Government.[3] Further that you had associated yourself with some demonstrations[4] and she felt it difficult to continue as our chairman. I do not know what the exact matters objected to were, but it seems to me that certain individuals and groups who are notoriously anti-Congress are trying to exploit the situation to their own advantage. Under these circumstances it is not desirable for you to associate yourself with these elements in public demonstrations. This would have been so at any time but, in view of the crisis that has developed, this is peculiarly necessary.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1899-1967); joint secretary, All India States People's Conference, 1937; secretary, Indian Civil Liberties Union, 1936, and general secretary, 1938; interned in 1942; left Congress after independence and joined the Praja Socialist Party; member, Madras Assembly, 1952-56, Lok Sabha, 1957-62, Kerala Assembly, 1965-67.
3. On 21 August 1939 the Bombay Civil Liberties Union passed a resolution protesting against the arrest of some labour leaders and the demand for securities from several newspapers, and called upon the Bombay Government to change their policy. The meeting accepted the resignation of Sarojini Naidu from the chairmanship of the Union.
4. On 14 September 1939 the Bombay Civil Liberties Union held a public meeting protesting against the Defence of India Ordinance and the government policy toward the press. K.B. Menon took an active part in it.

6. Message to U.P. Congress[1]

I hastened back from far China to be with you in this time of trial and to share with you the burdens and responsibilities of the hour. We shall shoulder them together as we have done in the past, not in a spirit of opportunism but with faith in our cause and holding to the ideals that have guided us throughout these years. The future may be more difficult than the past. We shall face it with courage and confidence and play our part in shaping a free world and a free India. The Working Committee has given a lead not only to India but also to other peoples in the world. We must abide by this lead in letter and spirit and not say or do anything which goes counter to it.

Discipline is always necessary in a fighting organization such as ours. Today it is of paramount importance and it is folly for individual Congressmen to break this discipline and go along their individual paths. It is expected, therefore, that all Congress committees and Congressmen will abide by this discipline of the Congress and act within its direction.

Our immediate duty is to put our organization in district, city, town and *mandal* in proper trim for disciplined action, wherever this is required of us. We must forget our election contests and concentrate on organization. It is possible that as events develop, normal election procedure may become difficult. Elections have little importance for us when crises confront us. Some Congressmen in the province have been using loose and undignified language not in keeping with Congress policy or tradition. I trust this will stop. The Congress is a great and powerful organization, powerful because it has received the confidence and affection of our people. It does not speak in tones of helpless anger but with dignity which is a true measure of strength. It speaks as a free nation should speak, so also must we who are of the Congress, speak and act if we are to discharge worthily the responsibility that is ours.

1. Lucknow, 20 September 1939. *The Hindustan Times*, 21 September 1939.

7. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Lucknow
September 24, 1939

My dear Mahmud,
Your letter of the 23rd and the file have reached me today. I was busy all day and it is only late at night that I am looking through the papers.

So far as the question of principle is concerned I am perfectly clear in my mind that we cannot admit the contention of the Government of India that, defence being a central subject, military training cannot be given in schools by provincial governments. I agree, therefore, with the position that you have taken up.

As for the question of nonviolence, I do not quite see how it applies to such a matter. I suppose provincial governments train their police in firearms and expect them to use firearms also, if necessity arises. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, with whom I discussed this matter, said that the principle of nonviolence hardly applied under the circumstances to such a matter. Inevitably the provincial governments are committed to the preservation of law and order by violent means if necessary. There seems no reason whatever why they should not train people for defence also. I do not know what other provincial governments have done in this matter, but Sampurnanand is very keen on military training in the schools.

It is clear that any action you should take should be with the concurrence of your colleagues in the ministry. As the legislature has already made provision for your military college and your colleagues had also agreed to it, I cannot understand why any of them should show reluctance in the matter now.

Quite apart from the desirability of military training, the question raised by the Government of India is one of importance, both constitutionally and politically. I think it will be very dangerous and wrong if your government agrees to the contention of the Government of India. This would be a very bad precedent at any time. Under the present circumstances it will be peculiarly unfortunate. As a matter of fact I think that, among other things, one of the terms of agreement now between us and the Government of India should be the nationalisation of the army and the development of militia under popular control. I should like this to be done on the widest possible scale. Your scheme is just a very petty beginning of it.

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

It is true that there is some danger in the development of provincial armed forces. This might lead to disruptive tendencies in India. But so far as your scheme is concerned there is no question, at this stage at any rate, of any such force being raised, regular or non-regular.

Apart from this it should be possible later on when we are thinking of large-scale militia to avoid provincial separatism. That of course can only be done properly if the centre is under our control.

I am therefore in entire agreement with you that on grounds of principle, as well as other grounds, you should not give up your scheme. You should proceed with it as arranged. I am sure the Prime Minister and the other ministers of the Bihar Government will agree with this line of action because of these principles that have been raised.

There is a possibility of my going to Simla during the next few days. But whether I go or do not go, I fear there is little chance of an honourable settlement being arrived at between the Government of India and the Congress. If this does not take place, the ministers are not likely to continue and there may be conflict between the Congress and the government. I suppose the next two weeks will show us definitely what is going to happen. You should all be prepared for it but at the same time you should carry on.

At this present juncture it is the height of absurdity for the Government of India to put difficulties in your way when you want to start a military school. They will be put completely in the wrong if you proceed with your intention. What they will do then, I do not know.

I am returning to Allahabad tomorrow the 25th night. I hope you will soon get over your eye trouble and that your visit to Calcutta will do you good. You must look after your eyes and get well before you do anything which puts a strain on you. I hope to meet you after your return from Calcutta.

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

8. To Rafi Ahmed Kidwai[1]

Allahabad
Sept. 30, 1939

My dear Rafi,

As I told you on the telephone Vallabhbhai informed me that after consultation with Rajendra Babu and Gandhiji they had decided that the assembly resolution should be postponed for the present.[2] I suppose you must have direct intimation on this.

Now another question arises. In the assembly meeting on the 3rd it seems to me quite absurd for the Speaker and the ministry to ignore completely the events that have happened in Europe and in India, more specially the new laws that have been passed limiting the powers of the provincial governments. I have just had a talk with Tandon and he tells me that as Speaker he will feel bound to refer to these changes and make some comment on them. I think he is perfectly right and he should do this. If he does it, it is right and proper for someone on behalf of the government to say a few words also. Indeed not to do so would be noticed. Possibly the Leader of the Opposition may make some remarks also. Therefore you should be ready to make a brief statement on behalf of the government.

You might have a talk with Tandon about his statement and about yours to follow it. It would be desirable to note down what you have to say, although you need not read it all out. Your statement should be quite brief and generally on the lines of the Working Committee's statement or rather of the resolution that was sent to you. You might begin by endorsing the remarks of the Speaker and stating that your government had given anxious consideration to the situation and were following events carefully. The declaration of war in Europe and more particularly the declaration of India as a belligerent country affect the province and the government intimately. Important constitutional principles were raised by this commitment of India without any reference to the Indian people. As an elected democratic body the assembly or their representatives should have had a say in the matter. Further, legislation had been passed abroad affecting powers and activities of the provincial governments and thus limiting provincial autonomy. All these were serious matters for the consideration of the House. It had been the intention of the government to give an opportunity to the

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, section 3, item 40.

House at an early stage of this session to discuss these important developments which affected them both as individuals, as Indians and as members of the legislative assembly. In view however of delicate negotiations that were going on between national leaders and the British Government the government had decided not to press consideration of this issue at this stage. He hoped that the House will have an opportunity before long. Meanwhile the government wished to make clear that they endorse entirely the declaration made by the Working Committee of the Congress at their recent meeting in Wardha. Government regret that the British Government should have declared India as a participant in the war between Great Britain and Germany without the consent of the Indian people and without consulting this assembly. In the opinion of the government this declaration as well as the recent laws passed in England and India limiting the powers and activities of the provincial governments are a contravention of the spirit of provincial autonomy.

The British Government have stated that the war in Europe is for the preservation of democracy. But their policy in India does not fit in with this profession. Government have the fullest sympathy for the cause of democracy and freedom and condemn the aggression of the Nazi government but they hold that these principles of democracy should be applied to India also and her policy should be guided by the Indian people. Government associate themselves with the request made to the British Government to make a clear declaration in regard to war aims and peace aims and in particular to state that they have decided to regard India as a free nation entitled to frame her own charter of freedom. Government are further of opinion that this declaration should be accompanied by suitable action in so far as this is possible even in the prevailing war conditions. In this statement the government are convinced that they are giving expression to the views of the people of this province with whose consent and cooperation alone they can act.

The above is some rough indication of what you might say. Of course you can change the words after consultation with Tandon or others. I think some such statement from you following the Speaker will be desirable. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to say something he must be given a chance. But it is undesirable to have other speeches on it.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

9. To Dhirendranath Sen[1]

Allahabad
September 30, 1939

My dear Mr. Sen,[2]
Your letter of the 23rd September.[3]

You are right about the Assam ministry. There has certainly been an interference there by the Governor supported by the planters. This ministry, as you know, is a weak one in the sense that it depends on non-Congress votes and is a coalition ministry.[4] I do not think it can continue. I do not know the exact facts but I take it that they did not wish to precipitate a crisis for a few days pending developments elsewhere. It is true, however, that they cannot and should not continue for long under present circumstances.

I do not know the state of affairs in other Congress provinces but generally speaking there has been strong resistance on the part of the ministries to any action taken under the ordinances. I do not think there is a single instance of such action in the U.P. On the other hand there was, specially in the first half of September, a spate of very violent speeches by Congressmen and others which could not be defended from the Congress point of view and were contrary to Congress policy. This created difficulties but even so every attempt was made to avoid repressive action. The position is essentially difficult as local magistrates sometimes go ahead of their own accord.

The position in Bengal and in the Punjab is even more difficult.[5] But you know that better than I do.

It is clear that this passing phase cannot last long. It leads to inevitable contradictions and conflicts and must be ended this way or that. At the same time one cannot precipitate matters and thus lose the

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Dhirendranath Sen (1902-1961); scholar and journalist; lecturer, Calcutta University; editor of *Hindusthan Standard*; author of *The Problem of Minorities*.
3. Sen had referred to Assam where the Governor had not consulted Bardoloi, the Prime Minister, in "applying the Defence of India Ordinances in certain protected areas including Digboi". He further wrote, "unfortunately the situation in the provinces especially in Bengal is distressing. Private ambition, narrow provincialism and utter distrust between the communities seem to dominate the scene."
4. The Congress had 32 members out of 107. A coalition ministry had been formed in October 1938.
5. Bengal and Punjab had ministries which were opposed to the Congress attitude towards the war.

chance of gaining a great advantage for Indian nationalism and freedom. I have personally no fear of British imperialism surviving this war, nor do I think that there is any serious danger of foreign invasion in India. The real danger is of internal dissension leading to splitting up of the country and possible civil war if the central authority weakens. The attitude of the Muslim League, various organisations like the Khaksars and in the west, Hindu volunteers, the princes and even the army may all prove to be disruptive influences. I do not relish this prospect and would like to avoid it as far as possible. If it cannot be avoided then of course it must be faced. Over and above all this is, as you say, the lack of truth and decency which is invading our public life. The only organisation which might hold India together as well as keep up certain standards is the Congress. If the Congress itself weakens through internal dissensions, then the outlook is bleak indeed.

Even in this first month of war the balance of power in Europe seems to be shifting rapidly and new forces are being released which will ultimately upset the present order.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

October 13, 1939

My dear Krishna,

I arrived here this morning from Wardha. To my surprise Edward Thompson turned up this evening. He says that both he and you had written to me about his coming. I received no such intimation. I have had some talk with him today of a rather general nature. Tomorrow he is shifting over to my place from Sapru's and we shall have further talks.

I do not at all like the way things are developing here. The Viceroy is sending for all kinds of people and they are trooping up for interviews.[2] It was quite right for him of course to meet the prominent leaders of various substantial groups but he is even sending for the leaders of the opposition parties in some of the assemblies, as for instance

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, section 3, item 22.

Madras. I do not mind whom he sees but all this indicates the revival of the old desire to play off one group against another, or rather to play off a number of petty groups against the Congress. If this is the mentality, it is obvious that nothing good will come of it. The Government of India as constituted has not wholly appreciated the fact that we are living in the fourth decade of the twentieth century. Their minds move terribly slowly.

On the other hand opinion on the Congress side is hardening because of all this and because of the numerous war measures that have been adopted. In the Congress provinces these war measures are not being applied except in very rare instances or for purposes of profiteering. But it is very different in Bengal and the Punjab. The Government of India is continually bringing pressure to bear on the Congress provinces, and there is some kind of a tug of war. This situation is obviously unstable and cannot last too long. Under these circumstances I do not see what further step we can take on behalf of the Congress. The next step must lie with the British Government. If they do not take it in time or if it is not adequate, the consequences will be bad for them and bad for us.

Day after tomorrow we are celebrating all over the rural areas in the U.P. the passage of the Tenancy Bill. This now awaits the assent of the Viceroy. We have organised this celebration on a big scale. There will probably be about 2,000 meetings all over the province on that day. In the Allahabad district alone there will be 66 meetings, three of these, which I propose attending, big ones. At all these meetings we propose also to explain the Congress attitude to the war.

In this matter of propaganda and publicity the U.P. is ahead of other provinces.

The Working Committee has suggested to all the Congress provincial governments to put forward an official resolution in the assemblies generally supporting the Congress attitude on the war. I enclose a copy of this resolution. They have been instructed to agree to the addition of a clause safeguarding minorities' rights. Only one assembly is sitting at the moment. The others will have to be summoned especially for this purpose within a fortnight or less.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

11. To Rafi Ahmed Kidwai[1]

Allahabad
October 13, 1939

My dear Rafi,

I enclose a draft of the resolution which was finally agreed to by the Working Committee and the various ministers present at Wardha. This draft is somewhat different from the o'd draft. An attempt has been made to avoid any form which might be constitutionally objected to. But the purport of it has remained the same.

There is no reference in this resolution to minority rights. It was thought better not to add it at this stage but to give discretion to the ministry to add it later. The words to be added should be in conformity with the words used in the A.I.C.C. resolution at Wardha on this subject. I think the right course will be for you to send notice of the resolution and then to consult a few leaders of the opposition and ask for their support. They are bound to raise this minority issue and you can agree to its inclusion in the form indicated, or you may agree to accept an amendment that is put forward in the House. Of course you will remember to avoid anything that makes our freedom subject to minority approval, or anything that goes against democracy or the unity of India. It would be desirable for you also to place this resolution before the party's executive and explain to them the procedure you intend adopting. They should not change the resolution as we must have uniform resolutions in all the provinces. The principal speakers should be settled beforehand.

Yours,

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

12. On the Solidarity of the Kisans[1]

I very much appreciate the interest you have shown in coming from long distances to demonstrate your *sangathan*. This very day, hundreds of meetings are being held at various centres in the province in order to demonstrate to the British Government the solidarity of the kisans and to urge that the Tenancy Bill should be passed into law by the assent of the Governor and the Governor-General without undue delay. Both the kisans and the Congress have as yet a lot to do and we have to be watchful of all events and incidents that might occur and decide upon the best line of action to accomplish our joint task. It is not that you should blindly follow what comes from the Congress like an order to you. You must also think for yourselves all the implications of such orders, and carry them out in a spirit of understanding and unity.

The Congress panchayat—the Working Committee—considers all issues arising day after day in the cause of the country and its people, including the kisans. Whatever decision is taken by the Congress panchayat at the head, should be considered and followed, without indiscipline or irregularity, by all the subordinate committees—from the provincial Congress committee to the village *mandal* Congress committees—without which the Congress organisation, which is so vast and so powerful, will not be able to function efficiently and effectively.

The kisans also should observe such discipline and ensure unity, and success. Lal Bahadur Shastri has explained to you about the Congress legislators' work for you during the past two years in the assembly.[2]

The Tenancy Bill has been passed and I have no doubt that the assent of the Governor and the Governor-General will be forthcoming in due course. But with the mere signatures of the Governor everything will not be accomplished. The zamindars may tear off and throw away the new rules if you do not organise yourselves and build up your strength. The kisans will realise only a part of their rights under the Tenancy Bill and they have yet to work a lot before they are able to get their full rights. The first and foremost step for attaining them is *sangathan*.

The kisans have also to know what is going on in the world. Wars and revolutions are like earthquakes. You must be aware that a war

1. Speech at Allahabad, 15 October 1939. From the *National Herald*, 18 October 1939.
2. Earlier, Lal Bahadur Shastri had talked of the efforts of the Congress in subduing the opposition of the taluqdars and zamindars in order to secure the passage of the Tenancy Bill in the Legislature.

has broken out between England and Germany, like the war that broke out twenty-five years ago. A large number of people of this country were killed in the last war but we did not get freedom for our country. We have been asked to help Britain in this war. The Congress is considering what to do in this connection, whether to participate in it or not. The question is why should we participate in it if we cannot have our freedom. If it is only to strengthen imperialism then we will not participate. The British Government has involved us in this war without consulting us. This is a great mistake. The Congress Working Committee has been seriously considering the whole issue as it is affecting the lives of crores of our people. I wish you know in detail what were all the points that the Working Committee had deliberated upon in this connection.

England says that she is fighting for the freedom of other countries, some of which have already been conquered by Germany. We have no quarrel with Germany, but yet we care for the freedom of the countries that are deprived of it. As we are also ruled by Britain freedom is as essential to us as to other countries. Britain should therefore ask us to fight only when she frees our country from subjection. If we fight for her when she still holds us in subjection, it means that we are fighting against our own freedom. That is why the Congress has asked Britain to declare what her aims and principles in this war are. We want that she should not only declare our freedom, but also implement it immediately by making a beginning with it.

It can do so by having a truly representative body of Indians to take over the responsibility for the governance of India. The Congress has as yet received no reply to its recent demand, but we may expect an answer within two or three weeks. But no one can say what sort of reply is forthcoming. Till a reply is given, the Congress has no alternative but to postpone a decision on what it should do in regard to the present war. It cannot decide one way or the other. No one is assured of the help of the Congress till it is known where India stands. The Congress demand to the British Government to declare its war aims has been appreciated by many countries in the world.

Anyway we must be prepared for whatever changes that may be forthcoming. The kisans should also be prepared for them. For this organisation is necessary. Congress has always fought for such issues as are beneficial to the whole nation. There should be no differences between Hindus and Muslims as regards nationalism. For instance, the Tenancy Bill is useful both to the Hindus and the Muslims. We would only help the enemy by our differences.

13. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Lucknow
October 17, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,
I arrived here this morning and had a long talk with Maulana Azad. Among other things he told me that the U.P. taluqdars have written to you again about the proposed interview. Also that they had approached the Governor and the Viceroy on the subject, fixing the interview with the Governor sometime in November. Maulana told them a day or two ago that he did not appreciate this attempt on the part of the zamindars to ride two horses at the same time. They must choose between them.

It seems to me that if the zamindars are going to the Governor and the Viceroy, they can only do so in order to ask them to refuse their assent to the Tenancy Bill. If their interview with the Governor is fixed for sometime in November, this means at least a month's delay in the Bill becoming law. This delay will in any event be unfortunate but for us to be parties to it, even indirectly, will have an exceedingly bad effect. Day before yesterday we held a couple of thousand meetings in the U.P. asking for the Viceroy's assent to be given immediately. The peasantry are eagerly waiting for the Bill to be law and every delay has an irritating effect on them. These delays are being exploited by many zamindars to do something against their tenants which they will not be able to do as soon as the Bill becomes law. The tenants, knowing the provisions of the Bill, are surprised and irritated by these continual pin-pricks and excitement grows.

Therefore it is essential that the Bill should receive the Viceroy's assent very soon and thus become law. All our efforts should be directed in this direction and we should do nothing which gives an excuse to others for delay. We should in fact object to zamindars' interviews with the Governor leading to this delay.

So far as our interview with the zamindars is concerned, it must be clearly understood what this is about and on no account must this be exploited for the purposes of delay. It is clear that we are not meeting the zamindars to discuss the Bill which has finally passed both Houses. It is not possible now to go behind that Bill and it must stand as it is at present. This Bill is a moderate measure, not going nearly far enough from the point of view of the peasants, and if a suspicion

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

spreads that we are thinking of going back even on this, there will be trouble.

I suggest, therefore, that we should make it perfectly clear to the zamindars that we cannot go back on this Bill in any way whatsoever, nor can we discuss this with them. If they do not accept the Bill as it is, then there is no point in our having any interviews with them. They should, in fact, inform the Governor that they accept the Bill and that it should become law soon.

Then again there is another point. If the zamindars are going to the Governor and the Viceroy, then there is no point in their interviewing us and they should be told so. We cannot be parties to a double game. It is necessary, therefore, for this situation to be put clearly to them. Maulana agrees with this and in fact told them so. But he could not say anything finally without reference to you. I hope you will also agree and will inform the zamindars accordingly.

I understand that the zamindars and taluqdars here have sent a message to the Secretary of State throwing their weight on the side of no-compromisers, between the Congress and the British Government.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Vallabhbhai.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

14. Keep Ready[1]

The crisis that began in Europe spreads and envelops the world. Its shadow has extended to India and it may affect us intimately and directly. You have no doubt read carefully the Working Committee's statement on the war crisis and the British Government's reply to it as given by the Viceroy. This reply, so utterly opposed to our aims and ideals, has created a grave situation. We shall as disciplined soldiers wait for developments and the directions of the Congress. Meanwhile, we must be prepared for all eventualities. In this hour of crisis we must forget all internal controversy within the Congress or outside the Congress. Let us not criticise each other but bear with each other's minor differences and face all together the onrush of events. We are

1. Message to the U.P. Congressmen, Lucknow, 18 October 1939. *The Leader*, 20 October 1939.

all just Indians now wedded to India's freedom and honour. As Congressmen we shall gladly stand shoulder to shoulder with all others who share this love of India and her freedom with us. The past goes into oblivion. The future with its hopes and perils faces us. Let us get ready for it. There is no need for excitement and there must be restraint in word and deed. Keep ready. And whatever happens do not forget that we may do nothing against our high principles and not in keeping with India's honour. Keep calm and cool and disciplined. Keep ready.

Your comrade,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. To Rafi Ahmed Kidwai[1]

Wardha
October 23, 1939

My dear Rafi,

I enclose a copy of the corrected resolution for the assembly. I understand that Vallabhbhai is writing to you separately also. You will notice that one sentence has been omitted and a sentence has been added at the end. You will make such arrangements as may be necessary for the amended resolution to be passed. Perhaps an amendment might be proposed in the House itself by some private member and accepted by the government. You had better settle all this previously with the Speaker. The party should also be informed of the decision of the Working Committee and of the proposed resolution and amendment.

You will remember what I wrote to you previously about the addition of a minorities clause. This can be done if the Muslim Leaguers or others desire it at any stage by agreement. It will be desirable for you to meet the leaders of the Muslim party in the assembly to explain the position to them and ask for their cooperation in passing the resolution. Probably they will not agree, in any event, to the last sentence of the resolution.[2] At least they might remain neutral in the voting as many people in Bihar did.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. This read: "... the committee approves of the formation by the Working Committee of the war emergency sub-committee and authorises the Working Committee to take such steps as may be necessary to give effect to this resolution and to their statement on the war crisis."

I am going to Bombay tomorrow evening and expect to remain there two days. I shall then probably return to Allahabad or, if you want me, to Lucknow direct.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

16. To Bhulabhai Desai[1]

Bombay
October 26, 1939

My dear Bhulabhai,
You will remember that we spoke about the Indian Civil Liberties Union in Wardha and you promised to help it. I am now sending K.B. Menon, the secretary, to you. He will explain the present position. Menon has carried on these two or three years with a quite remarkable loyalty and persistence and in the face of great difficulties. We had promised to pay him Rs. 100/- a month. As a matter of fact he has never drawn this sum and usually the most he has got has been about Rs. 70/-. Whenever finances have been low he has cut his own salary. He has practically starved himself from time to time because of this.

I do not think that the Civil Liberties Union has done any remarkable piece of work during these last three or four years but I felt all along that such an organisation may suddenly become very useful and therefore it should be continued. Lately because of various difficulties I had come to the conclusion that though we might carry it on formally we should practically wind up its office to save money. On further consideration I feel that this would be a wrong step at this juncture when the Congress ministries are resigning and a conflict with the British Government is probable. Owing to these changes it will become all the more necessary for civil liberties to be guarded and for protest to be made against their infringements. Probably the Congress organisation will not be in a position to protest much and a civil liberties union will then play a very important role both here and for purposes abroad. Therefore I am inclined to think that we should carry on this office and see what developments take place.

1. All India States People's Conference Papers, File No. 6/1937-41, N.M.M.L.

The present position is: a debt of about Rs. 800/-. Our monthly expenditure is about Rs. 160/- on the lowest scale and not including the full salary of the secretary. If it is possible to meet these liabilities, I think we should certainly carry on as Civil Liberties office will be of extreme use to us in many ways when perhaps our offices do not function. I shall be grateful to you if you could help.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

HUQ'S CHALLENGE AND NEHRU'S ANSWER

I

17. To A. K. Fazlul Huq[1]

Lucknow
October 30, 1939

Dear Mr. Fazlul Huq,

On my journey from Bombay to Lucknow yesterday, I read in the newspapers a statement by you in which reference was made to me.[2] As this contained a "challenge" from you to me and proposed an inquiry by you and me into certain incidents, I have issued a statement to the press today in reply to it. I enclose a copy of it for your information. As

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
Huq-Nehru correspondence between 30 October 1939 and 16 December 1939 was released to the press on 17 December 1939.
2. On 27 October 1939, Fazlul Huq had stated that he had definite evidence that "the most inconceivable atrocities" had been committed and the Congress governments would not or, at any rate, did not take any action to protect the Muslims. "I give a definite challenge to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Let him fix a convenient time and I will take him to a dozen places which I am sure would open his eyes to the atrocities which the Congress has committed on the Muslim minorities."

you will notice, I gladly accept your proposal and I am ready to participate in any such inquiry at the earliest possible moment. I shall be glad therefore if you will kindly let me know what you propose to do in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

II

18. On Fazlul Huq's Challenge[1]

I have read in the daily press what Mr. Fazlul Huq is pleased to call his challenge to me. I am not gifted with Mr. Fazlul Huq's rich imagination, nor has the education and training that has come my way fitted me to use the virile language that comes so naturally to him. My mind is more earthy and likes to dabble in facts before it arrives at conclusions. And so I welcome this long belated offer of Mr. Fazlul Huq and accept it in its entirety.

He and his colleagues have been in the habit of making fantastic charges against the Congress governments, and every time we have requested them to specify these charges and to justify them, and every time they have avoided this obvious course, either by remaining silent or by a fresh outburst of virulent abuse. Being a lover of words and phrases and their varied patterns, I have admired this infinite capacity for avoiding the issue and wrapping it up in innumerable folds of quibbling and vituperation.

Does Mr. Fazlul Huq remember the invitation so often extended to him by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, in public and in private, to specify his complaints and charges and to establish them? But he has consistently refused to take advantage of this invitation, and often said that he uses words in the heat of the moment which he regrets afterwards.

I accept therefore his offer or challenge, and am prepared to inquire into specific instances in his company. He has stated that his quarrel

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 30 October 1939. *National Herald*, 31 October 1939.

is with the U.P. Government, but the instances he cites relate to two other provinces also. He mentions instances:

(1) A circular about the hanging up of Gandhiji's picture.[2]
(2) The firing at Tanda.[3]
(3) The Cawnpore firing.[4]
(4) The "Bhagalpur outrages",[5] whatever they might be.
(5) The firing on Khaksars even in jails,[6] and
(6) The action taken against newspapers calling for securities.[7]

I suggest to Mr. Fazlul Huq to state his case in regard to these instances, beginning with those relating to the United Provinces, so that he and I can immediately start our inquiries in regard to them.

The Congress ministries have resigned or are resigning for more vital national reasons which do not affect Mr. Fazlul Huq, and I am not particularly interested in what Mr. Huq does in the matter of resignation. But I am interested in finding the truth and I invite Mr. Fazlul Huq's cooperation in this.

2. On 27 October 1939, Fazlul Huq has stated: "...I would ask Pandit Nehru just a few questions. What about circulars issued even to Muslim institutions to hang up Mahatma Gandhi's portraits to worship?"
3. Police opened fire on communal rioters at Tanda on 21 August 1938. An enquiry committee found some Muslims guilty and they were later sentenced by the court.
4. On 19 June 1939, there was a clash between a Hindu *rath jatra* (chariot drive) procession and some Muslims resulting in communal riots. Police opened fire killing three persons and injuring thirty-six.
5. Hindu-Muslim clash over a *rath* procession in July 1938.
6. On 8 October 1939, police opened fire on a batch of Khaksars who refused to enter the Bulandshahr jail, killing five and injuring many.
7. The U.P. Government Press Emergency Act of May 1939 demanded securities from a number of newspapers in view of their systematic promotion of communal hatred.

III

19. To A. K. Fazlul Huq[1]

Allahabad
November 13, 1939

Dear Mr. Fazlul Huq,

Thank you for your letter of the 4th November[2] which I have only just received owing to my absence from Allahabad. I am sorry to learn that you have been unwell.

Like yourself I am eager that the charges made against the Congress ministries should be investigated and so far as I am concerned I shall do my best in the matter. But I do not understand how you propose to deal with the question. In your statement which was published in the press you accused the then U.P. Government by name and mentioned certain instances which you referred to as atrocities for which the government was responsible. I completely agree that these charges against the U.P. Government should be enquired into by you and me and I suggested in my letter to you that some kind of a charge-sheet might be framed for the purpose by you specifying exactly what was complained against. The next step to this should be to ask the government concerned for their reply. Having received this material further enquiries should be conducted. Any other course would be most unbusinesslike and is likely to lead nowhere. The U.P. Government, as it then existed, exists no more. But the old ministers still exist and the present U.P. Government will no doubt give facilities to find out the truth of any matter. This present government will certainly not err on the Congress side and if anything, is likely to incline against the Congress.

May I suggest to you therefore that you might take the three U.P. instances to which you had referred and elaborate them, pointing out what exactly the charge is. We shall then send this both to the ex-ministers concerned and to the present U.P. Government.

After dealing with the U.P. we might proceed with Bihar in the same way. I do not understand how any enquiry can be made without this preliminary investigation and without an opportunity being given to the persons accused of misgovernment to state their case. As Premier of

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Fazlul Huq had written: "I feel very strongly that this question of the alleged excesses committed on Muslims by the Congress ministries should be settled once for all. I am, therefore, much obliged to you for having accepted my invitation to participate in the inquiry."

your province you will no doubt realise that it is unusual and extraordinary for any charges to be made against a government without that government being given a chance to explain its position.

While I am perfectly agreeable to spend time and energy on such an enquiry with you, you will appreciate that my time is booked up considerably in advance and during these critical days it is not easy to upset my engagements. But the procedure I have suggested above can be followed in spite of other engagements which might keep you or me occupied.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

IV

20. To A. K. Fazlul Huq[1]

Allahabad
November 18, 1939

Dear Mr. Fazlul Huq,

I thank you for your letter of November 16, 1939.[2] I note that you are very busy at the present moment and that you will communicate with me again on the subject.

You do not say anything about the course that I suggested to you in my previous letter. This was that certain specific instances should be put down and the charges against the Congress ministers should be detailed. The Congress ministers concerned should then be asked to let us have their version of the facts. If necessary, the present government in the province might be requested to help us in the matter. It is immaterial whether this government is partial or impartial. We want to get at facts if they can supply them. Having got these facts, we can go through them and take such other steps as may be necessary. Any investigation without this preliminary and essential survey would be

1. *The Hindustan Times*, 18 December 1939.
2. He had written: "I have been in communication with my friends . . . in various provinces in order to collect material for making an effective tour programme. . . . We can then go to the localities, send for the people, hear them, take evidence and if we find a *prima facie* case made out we shall decide what to do."

entirely pointless as well as unfair to the parties concerned. You will agree with me that a vague talk of investigations without taking these preliminary steps would be most unbusinesslike.

In your first statement you mentioned two or three instances in the U.P., namely, Tanda, the Cawnpore firing and the Khaksars in the U.P. These three are definite instances on which presumably you based your charges against the Congress ministry in the U.P. I suggested that we might take these three and find out what the facts were.

The question before us relates to the behaviour of the Congress ministers and not to local officials and the like. This behaviour of the Congress ministry depends on their general policy as well as the particular orders issued by them to the local officials. All these can only be got from headquarters and not locally. I am personally quite willing to have the local investigation in a particular case where this is necessary. But this can follow other real investigation.

It might be helpful also for purposes of comparison to have certain facts about the services, etc., and the policy that the various governments have pursued in the matter, both in Bengal and the Punjab as well as in the other provinces in India.

I entirely agree with you that we shall proceed about this business without any spirit of vindictiveness or any feeling of spite, but with a desire to get at the truth and to remove misapprehensions. It is our earnest desire that Hindus and Muslims as well as others who live in India should learn to trust each other and should remove all suspicions which might lurk in their minds of each other's motives.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

V

21. To A. K. Fazlul Huq[1]

December 1st, 1939

Dear Mr. Fazlul Huq,

I have been anxiously waiting for a further letter from you regarding the inquiry into "Congress atrocities" which you have suggested. I trust that this matter will be dealt with as soon as possible.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

In my previous letter I had requested you to send me some details of the charges against Congress ministers that you had in mind. In your first statement you stated that you have "got definite evidence that most inconceivable atrocities have been committed." May I suggest again that you should send me this evidence?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

VI

22. Telegram to A. K. Fazlul Huq[1]

Bombay
December 13, 1939

Sir Abdulla Haroon[2] makes extraordinary statement that I have withdrawn from the inquiry proposed by you.[3] I consider the publication of our correspondence necessary. Please wire your consent.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1872-1942); president, Sind Provincial Political Conference, 1920; president, Sind Provincial Muslim League from 1920; member, Central Assembly, 1926-42; member, Working Committee, Muslim League, 1938-42.
3. On 13 December 1939, Abdulla Haroon had expressed surprise at Jawaharlal's statement affirming his willingness to cooperate with Fazlul Huq as he had in his possession a letter from Fazlul Huq which stated that Jawaharlal was not prepared to fulfil the programme drawn up by Huq.

VII

23. On Abdulla Haroon's Statement[1]

On my journey to Bombay I was astonished to read a statement by Sir Haji Abdulla Haroon in which he says that I have withdrawn from the enquiry which Mr. Fazlul Huq proposed. If Sir Abdulla's other facts are in piece with this statement, then they are completely wrong and unfounded. Far from withdrawing I have been pressing Mr. Fazlul Haq immediately to fulfil his pledge to have the enquiry for which I have expressed my complete readiness. The delay has not been of my seeking and is entirely due to Mr. Huq's. I am ready now as before to participate in any such enquiry and I have requested Fazlul Huq to send me the evidence which he claims to possess. I have now requested him to consent to the publication of our correspondence. As soon as the consent comes I shall release the correspondence.

1. Statement to the press, 14 December 1939. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 15 December 1939.

VIII

24. To A. K. Fazlul Huq[1]

16 December 1939

Dear Mr. Fazlul Huq,

I thank you for your telegram of 15th December, stating that you have no objection to the publication of our correspondence. Accordingly I am issuing this correspondence to the press together with a brief note, a copy of which I enclose.

In your letter dated 4th November you stated: "I feel very strongly that this question of alleged excesses committed on Muslims by the Congress Ministries should be settled once for all. I am, therefore, much obliged to you for having accepted my invitation to participate

1. *National Herald*, 17 Decemb[illegible]

in the enquiry. Nothing but good can come out from such joint efforts if made honestly and in the right spirit."

It now appears from a press statement issued by you that you do not wish to proceed with this matter any further so far as your challenge or offer to me was concerned and that you propose to place the evidence you possess, or may gather, before a royal commission which has been suggested by Mr. Jinnah.[2] I do not know whether such a royal commission is going to be appointed by anybody, and if it is appointed, what its fate will be. But in any event it is clear that nothing can be done in this respect for a long time to come. I take it, therefore, that the matter ends so far as your previous offer was concerned. I regret this as I was happy to accept your offer in the hope, which you have yourself expressed, that this question of alleged excesses should be settled once for all. I should like to assure you that I am still ready to deal with this matter, together with you, in accordance with your previous suggestion.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. On 15 December 1939, Huq stated: "I notice that he (Jawaharlal) wants me to submit evidence to him. This I am not going to do. If I have to submit the evidence, it will be to a Royal Commission of the kind which Mr. Jinnah has indicated."

IX

25. On Correspondence with Fazlul Huq[1]

On October 27, Mr. Fazlul Huq, the Premier of Bengal, issued a statement to the press in which he stated that he had got definite evidence that most inconceivable atrocities have been committed on Muslims and the Congress Government would not or, at any rate, did not, take any action to protect the Muslims. In particular he was referring to the U.P. Government. He further said: "I give a definite challenge to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Let him fix a convenient time and I will

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 17 December 1939. *National Herald*, 18 December 1939.

take him to about a dozen places which, I am sure, would open his eyes to the atrocities which the Congress has committed on the Muslim minorities."

As soon as I saw the statement I wrote to Mr. Fazlul Huq informing him that I gladly accepted his proposal and was perfectly prepared to participate in the inquiry at the earliest possible moment. Thereupon some correspondence took place between him and me. It now appears from the press that Mr. Fazlul Huq has given up the idea of having this inquiry or of sending materials that he might have in his possession to me. Apparently he proposes to submit these materials to the royal commission which has been suggested by Mr. Jinnah. I take it that Mr. Fazlul Huq's challenge to me ends. So far as I am concerned, I am still ready and willing to go into any matter or to visit places for the inquiry that he had himself proposed. With Mr. Fazlul Huq's permission I am issuing the correspondence to the press.

X

26. To A. K. Fazlul Huq[1]

Allahabad
December 26, 1939

Dear Mr. Fazlul Huq,

I am in receipt of your letter of December 21st.[2] We have been exchanging letters for nearly two months but this process does not seem to lead anywhere. I realise fully that as Premier of Bengal you are a busy man, and no doubt you appreciate that I am also fully occupied with the work I do. It was not my desire to interfere with or add to your work. But you thought it fit, in the last week of October, to issue a "challenge" to me and stated that you "have got definite evidence that most inconceivable atrocities have been committed on the Muslims and the Congress government would not or, at any rate, did not, take any action to protect the Muslims". You gave a challenge to me to fix a

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Huq had written insisting on placing his documents before some impartial tribunal and not to Jawaharlal as that would "acknowledge the right of the Congress to adjudicate in the matter."

convenient time when you would take me to a number of places to prove your charges. This was your proposal and I accepted it willingly and ever since then I have been trying my hardest to have "this question of alleged excesses committed on Muslims by the Congress Ministries settled once for all," as you yourself put it in your letter of November 4th. But my efforts have been in vain and have been thwarted. You will agree with me that the fault is not mine. Meanwhile the same charges continue to be made by you as well as other Muslim League leaders and every attempt at an enquiry is rejected or put off. This seems to me to be extraordinarily unfair, but it may be that my standards of measuring public or private conduct are not the same as yours.

The recent proposal about a royal commission, which you seem to have approved, can only mean an avoidance of an enquiry, as there is no such commission anywhere, nor is there any chance of its taking shape. In your last letter you mention that you are going to undertake a tour in the last week of January, and that you will be good enough to send me a copy of your tour programme. I do not know what you expect me to do. Is this tour the enquiry you had suggested? If so I shall certainly endeavour to participate in the enquiry. But I must know how the enquiry is to be held. An enquiry is not a tabulation of grievances but a testing of them to find out their truth or falsity.

You will not be surprised to learn that I have often received complaints of your administration. Some of these complaints have been of a very serious nature. But it is not my habit to form conclusions on one-sided complaints, nor do I like interfering in another's work. I took no steps in regard to these complaints therefore, nor did I make any public reference to them. Even a private reference to you would have been, I thought, misunderstood and I refrained from doing so. If, however, I had thought it necessary to make some public reference, I would have considered it my duty to refer the matter to you first to have your reactions to it, and then to make such other enquiry with your help as was feasible. Only then would I have considered myself justified in saying anything on the subject. Apparently you do not consider it necessary or desirable to enquire from the other side before you form your opinion, and give public expression to it, on the basis of one-sided complaints, some of which are of a fantastic character.

I have gone through your list of charges as published in the press, especially those relating to the U.P. It may interest you to know that some of these very charges have been brought against the Congress Government in the U.P. by the Hindu Mahasabha and their sympathisers, on the ground that they show the partiality of that government for Muslims. These Hindus have complained bitterly that they, the Hindus,

have been crushed and unfairly treated as the government was desirous of pleasing and placating the Muslims.

It has also been stated by very responsible persons that many of the riots and communal troubles in the U.P. were deliberately brought about on behalf of local Muslim Leaguers in order to embarrass and discredit the government. It is obvious that no government likes riots or other troubles and it tries its best to prevent them. It is usually to the interest of the opponents of the government to have such troubles.

Then again such riots and conflicts lead to criminal cases in the courts, as well as other enquiries, and a mass of evidence is thus accumulated. You know that the whole civil and police administration of our provinces continues to be what it was, only the superstructure was affected by the new ministries. It is these local officials who have to deal with local situations. In the U.P., surprisingly enough, the police force is overwhelmingly Muslim.

The charges made by the Hindu Mahasabha of the old U.P. Government being pro-Muslim may be entirely untrue; the complaint of others that local Muslim Leaguers had brought about trouble in their areas may or may not be justified. But the point is that it is impossible to accept one-sided complaints, and no responsible person can come to a conclusion without the fullest enquiry into all aspects of a case.

It is easy enough to make long lists of charges, including in them even private feuds and all manner of local conflicts. It is not so easy to arrive at the truth, and if a responsible statement is to be made that truth must be seen. I am writing at length to you as all my attempts to arrive at the truth continue to be thwarted, and yet the charges against Congress governments continue to be repeated in unrestrained language. So far as I am concerned I shall welcome every opportunity of finding this truth so that it may be exposed to public view.

I have spent a good part of my life in public activities and I have tried to follow certain standards of behaviour in regard to those who may be opposed to me or to my opinions. But I must confess that recent events and the flinging about of serious and wholly unsubstantiated charges have shocked and pained me greatly. This can only lead, as it is in fact leading, to a progressive deterioration in our public life. If this is to be the end of our endeavours, then it is a tragedy for all of us.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

27. All in a Maze[1]

For ordinary mortals, used to a fixed routine and to an ordered sequence of events, this is an extraordinary time to live in. The world is all awry and nobody knows what is happening from day to day. Everything is in a maze, drums and trumpets rend the heavens, armies marching, "kingdoms and stoles at sixes and sevens", blackouts and aeroplanes threatening to bomb, vast numbers of armed men facing each other on the western front and doing very little, statesmen shouting at each other through the radio, and censorship and deception and the fog of war enveloping everything. Truly this is a strange war where the greatest victory so far has been won by a power which is neutral. Everybody proclaims his love for peace and rattles his sword.

Here in India we are no less in a maze. The High Commands may know what is happening or is going to happen, but the ordinary citizen and even the unhappy newspaperman is left guessing. The Congress ministries resign and we are all left in doubt as to what the next development will be. In one province the Secretary of State takes charge, in others whispers go round of strange happenings behind the scenes. Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress President rush up to Delhi and make friends with Mr. Jinnah and the three together go off to the Viceroy's house. They return and summon Maulana Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru to Delhi, and soon after they leave for Wardha and Segaon.

In Lucknow city it is not clear whether the ministers are still functioning or not. The policy they lay down does not seem to go beyond the desks of their subordinates. Section 144 still prevails in the city but large bands of Khaksars roam about and the local officials watch complacently. We had long wondered in Lucknow and elsewhere in the province why the district officials found so much difficulty in understanding the instructions issued to them. During the last few days our amazement has grown. It is all a maze which we do not profess to understand.

1. 1 November 1939. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 2 November 1939.

28. The Congress in the U.P.[1]

The U.P. Provincial Congress Committee has played a notable role in the crisis that has enveloped the country since the European war broke out. It is evidently no believer in the policy of drift or of allowing events to take charge of shaping our destiny. From September onwards it has bestirred itself and the province has hummed with Congress activity and organisational effort, and every town and village has been reached and has heard the Congress message. Vast demonstrations have taken place and it is calculated that on one day alone, October 15th, the kisan day to celebrate the passage of the Tenancy Bill, thirty five lakhs of people took part. But far more important than these demonstrations have been the workers' meetings held in every district where the details of future work were discussed. The Congress Working Committee issued a call to the country to be prepared. The U.P. may well say: We are ready and prepared.

The resolution of the council passed yesterday[2] was a dignified survey of recent happenings and a call for further preparation. We would especially invite the attention of all our readers to it. The council, as was right and natural, have welcomed Mahatma Gandhi's leadership at this supreme hour of crisis. In that leadership lies hope and strength and that moral stature which has ennobled our movement. With him as our guide we have victory and freedom assured. The council have promised him their loyal and disciplined support, and millions of people in the U.P. and other provinces will echo that sentiment.

Mahatma Gandhi stands above all for nonviolence and we would be false to him and to our cause if we forgot the lesson he has taught us. In the fateful days to come we must remember it and abide by it.

1. 7 November 1939. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 8 November 1939.
2. This resolution endorsed the Congress attitude towards the war.

29. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Lucknow
November 8, 1939

My dear Bapu,
I enclose for your information a copy of the resolution passed by the council of the U.P.P.C.C. yesterday.

All the members were desirous of having an opportunity of meeting you if this was possible during your stay in Allahabad, without inconvenience to you. I wrote to you about this yesterday.

The Working Committee is likely to last up to the 21st or possibly the 22nd. May I suggest the 23rd for an informal meeting between you and some of our prominent workers in the U.P.—say about 30 or so? If you think this is possible, kindly have a telegram sent to me to Allahabad.

Zetland's speech[2] puts a lid on to all talks between the Congress and the British Government.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, section 3, item 35.

30. The Art of Adaptation[1]

It was the seventeenth July nineteen hundred and thirty seven. There was bustle and apprehension in the corridors of the stately buildings which housed the Secretariats, where for so long red-coated *chaprasis* had guarded the sacred precincts. Tradition and routine were upset and no one knew exactly what to do, for a new species of human beings had invaded these halls reserved for the elect, and the vulgar throng accompanied them. They were all clad alike in simple homespun and

1. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 9 November 1939.

all had the Gandhi caps perched on their heads. How was one to distinguish between the minister and the worker or the peasant? The old barriers crumbled and the corridors resounded with the vulgar tongue.

A sense of adventure filled the air and, through many a province in this land of ours, this excitement crept into the remotest villages and intoxicated the people. There was little enough to be excited about or intoxicated, but everywhere there was relief from the burden of the old and a glad welcoming of the new.

The old order has come back again for a while and the Secretariats have returned to their ancient routine. The corridors are silent; where there was life and energy and enthusiasm, today there is the hand of death. No midnight oil burns, no misplaced enthusiasm, no working overtime. The labourer is worthy of his hire. Let his price be high and let him not be overworked. There is tennis at four and the club afterward to refresh him.

And so the new order gives place to the old and destiny fulfills herself in many ways, lest even good deeds might corrupt us and weaken our resolve. But many there are who have learnt the secret of nature's ways and the art of those fascinating animals who can adapt themselves to any shade or colour. They fit into the old and into the new, and back again into the old, and the colour changes with their changing environment. Like the brave and famous Vicar of Bray they might well say or sing:

> That whatsoever king shall reign,
> I will be the Vicar of Bray, Sir.

31. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Allahabad
November 11, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I was sorry to learn from the press that you have been unwell again. I hope you have recovered. I do not quite know whether you are going to Wardha or not.

Friends in Allahabad are very keen on having a public meeting at which they could hear you and Vallabhbhai. I have told them that it is not easy for us to fix engagements during the Working Committee

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.

meetings. Possibly after the Working Committee is over we might have a public meeting. It would be a good thing to have such a meeting here when you come. Our Working Committee begins on the 19th, Sunday. It is bound to continue till the 21st. On the 20th Bapu will be silent and though we shall no doubt meet, our work will be of a somewhat desultory character. Do you think it is possible to have a public meeting on the 20th, Monday evening at 5 p.m. or thereabouts? I shall be grateful to you if you send me a telegram.

I have been receiving letters and cables from London which are disturbing. It appears, various phrases and sentences extracted from their context are cabled there and produce an entirely wrong impression. The result is complete confusion at the other end and a belief that Congress is not serious and does not mean business and is only out to bargain here and there. The British attitude is to play up to this and talk on and on without doing anything, thus allowing the issue almost to be talked out. What seems to me essential is a very clear enunciation of our position which would make it impossible for anyone in England or here to misunderstand it. It is unfair even to the opponent and certainly to our own people to leave them in doubt as to where we stand and whether we are in earnest or not.

Certain remarks of Bapu's in a recent statement seemed to me unfortunate.[2] He said that we cannot have civil disobedience so long as the Viceroy is carrying on the talks and so long as we have not come to an agreement on the Hindu-Muslim question. There is no doubt great force in his argument and we should not precipitate civil disobedience so as to bring about a Hindu-Muslim conflict at a time when it appears that efforts are being made on the part of the Viceroy to come to an agreement. But a positive statement of a kind made by Bapu really makes settlements and agreements far more difficult because it leads the other parties to feel that they have the key in their hands. There is no doubt that at the present moment there is a complete impasse between the British Government and us. There has been a final and absolute refusal by Zetland and others to meet our demands. He has said that it is impossible for the British Government to agree to what we want. Bapu's statement after all this must lead people to think that we are not serious in our demand and in any event the Viceroy can play with us for as long as he likes to.

2. On 8 November 1939, Mahatma Gandhi had stated: "There can be no civil resistance so long as the Viceroy is exploring the possibilities of a settlement, the Muslim League blocks the way, and there is indiscipline and diversity in Congress ranks."

Jinnah has been placed politically and even communally in a difficult position and he does not quite know what to do. Communally he has nothing to talk to us about except on the basis of provincial and central governments. This we cannot do till a satisfactory declaration is made by the British Government. His not joining us in this declaration weakens him and the League and there are many people in the League who are thoroughly dissatisfied with him. If, however, we say to him that we are going to do nothing in the nature of aggressive action till he agrees to it, he knows that he is in a dominant position and can play the tune.

I am enclosing for your information a cutting from the *National Herald*[3] giving a special cable from London. Private cables to me also indicate complete confusion at the other end.

There is one other matter which is worrying me. In many provinces very little is being done by way of propaganda or organisational work in order to prepare them for any contingency that might arise. There is a general feeling that this present impasse will soon give place to an understanding with the government and so all we have to do is to wait. This seems to me totally unjustified and wrong tactics. It is essential that we should use this time in intensive effort and activity.

I have refrained from issuing any statements on the situation except one in answer to the Viceroy's regarding recent Delhi talks.[4] I felt that I had to say something then because the Viceroy had tried to mislead the people as to the true significance of what had happened. Apart from this statement that I had issued I have hesitated to say anything under my name, though I have been writing frequently in the *Herald* unsigned articles. The reason for my not writing or making statements under my name was so that I might say nothing that might possibly create more confusion and come into conflict with what Bapu had said or written. This would have been wrong as it is right and proper that Bapu should give the lead under existing circumstances.

3. This said that "reports arriving from India have practically undone the results of Babu Rajendra Prasad's letter. They have created confusion again and revived fears and rumours of the Congress playing for tactical advantages and seeking minor improvements and at all events not willing to launch resistance to the imperialist war policy. Mahatma Gandhi's reference to his reliance on the Viceroy's sincerity has been probably misquoted and his statement, headlined "Resistance barred by Gandhi", suggests that he anticipates a settlement as a result of the Viceroy's intervention.... The opinion is widely held in all parliamentary circles that the situation can be played upon and the issues settled by Viceregal diplomacy."
4. See *ante*, section 5, item 8.

I presume you saw the long resolution passed by the council of the U.P.P.C.C. four days ago. I must say that I have been agreeably surprised at the discipline and sense of responsibility shown by Congressmen in this province ever since the crisis arose. This was no doubt due to a feeling that a conflict was coming and they must all pull together. There are elements in the U.P. which show wrong tendencies and there are some people more or less outside the Congress who go about writing mischievous stuff on walls and hoardings. These people are few and have recently come here from the Punjab and Bengal. It is impossible to check such a handful of persons but I do not think much importance will be attached to them. The Congress organisation as a whole here has functioned in these recent weeks with considerable efficiency, responsibility and discipline. The old party groupings have almost disappeared. The Forward Bloc practically does not exist here now.

I do not quite know what the position of our war emergency subcommittee is now.[5] I take it that it does not function and that nothing should be done on its behalf.

I have been keeping Bapu fully informed of developments in the U.P. and I am sending a copy of this letter to him, partly in case you are at Wardha. I have suggested to him that it would be worthwhile for him to spend two or three extra days in Allahabad after the Working Committee meeting so as to meet a number of U.P. workers and find out what has been done here as well as to advise us. As you know there is some apprehension in the minds of a number of people that the U.P. has a tendency to go wrong and to precipitate matters. It is necessary, therefore, to understand the position here and to give directions for future work. I should like you as well as Bapu to spend a few days in Allahabad and we could get people from other parts of the province to meet you here. From the 26th November onwards we are having our provincial conference at Muttra.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

5. See *ante*, section 3, item 7.

32. In Case of Arrest[1]

Our policy is to dissociate ourselves from the war policy of the British Government and not to help it in any way. It is a policy of non-cooperation. But there is no civil disobedience and, therefore, no order should be disobeyed.

If any false reports of the speeches have been made this should be corrected in a statement to the court. If the speeches are correctly reported and embodied the Congress policy, they should be accepted. In case of false reporting, it is open to the parties concerned to cross-examine the witnesses. It should be noted that nothing in the nature of civil disobedience should be indulged in. But the Congress organisation should prepare itself for any contingency and any future decision of the Working Committee.

1. *National Herald*, 19 November 1939. Extracts from the reply sent by Jawaharlal to a letter received by him in connection with the arrest of two Congress workers at Khurda.

33. On the U.P. Tenancy Bill[1]

I am glad to learn that the Governor of the United Provinces has given his assent to the Tenancy Bill and this Bill now becomes law.[2] The Arrears of Rent Bill apparently still remains.[3] I hope this will also soon become law. A first substantial step in the forward march of the kisans has been taken after long and weary waiting and struggle, but for us, there is no resting on our laurels, for this very step involves a great deal of labour on the part of the Congress organisation in the U.P. The best of laws are of little use unless they are properly enforced and

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 6 December 1939. *National Herald*, 7 December 1939.
2. See *ante*, section 3, item 27.
3. The Arrears of Rent Remission Bill was passed by the assembly on 20 July 1939. It remitted arrears of rent, the recovery of which had been stayed by legislation unless it could be paid without hardship. The Governor of U.P. gave his assent on 30 September 1940.

the people concerned know how to take full advantage of them. The peasantry in the U.P. will require our help in many ways so that they may benefit from this legislation as they are intended to.

All our Congress committees must immediately get ready to render this help. Instructions will soon be issued from the office of the Provincial Congress Committee about the steps to be taken. Meanwhile, Congressmen in the district and *mandal* committees all over the province should inform the peasantry of the final passage of the Tenancy Bill and of the new rights that have accrued to them.

34. Advice to Workers[1]

Get yourselves ready for the fight for independence by a well-knit Congress workers' and volunteers' organisation in towns and villages, specially in the latter by carrying the Congress message from door to door. The world is in a vortex, a new order is being evolved in which India has to contribute her share. Discipline is necessary for a nonviolent fight.

You must utilise the present camp life for studying the current problems and try to solve them. The volunteer organisation should be on the lines of the Frontier Khudai Khidmatgar organisation which is more useful and less expensive.

I want to see people walking erect, prompt in their actions, not loud in their talk. We cannot afford to be spending money on a costly volunteer organisation, but we should train some workers, who would tour in the villages and train them to supervise work. The organisation in the United Provinces was very useful for propaganda in villages, specially in October when kisan demonstrations were held in connection with the tenancy legislation. We avoided communal clashes, saved many lives and rendered useful service. You should follow your leaders' directions under the Congress banner.

1. Address to the provincial Congress workers' camp, Wardha, 23 December 1939. *National Herald*, 25 December 1939.

35. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Allahabad
January 3, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,
I have just returned to Allahabad and received your letter of January 1st about Bengal.[2] There can be no doubt that the resolution passed by the executive of the B.P.C.C. is in defiance of the Working Committee. The first question to be considered is how far the election committee appointed by the Working Committee can function now. If it can function it must of course do so as effectively as possible.

If some members of it resign, they might be replaced by others by you as President. Even if this committee can function in some districts and not all, it should function there for the purpose of electing delegates to the next Congress.

If it cannot function at all then it means that Bengal cannot return any delegates to the next session of the Congress and is otherwise disaffiliated from the Congress organisation. We can have the satisfaction of disaffiliating Bengal, but it is clear that for some time at least there will be no proper functioning of the Congress in Bengal. A vacuum is created and we cannot do anything further in the matter unless people in Bengal get a move on.

It seems to me that very little can be done by a meeting of the Working Committee in mid-January, except to disaffiliate the B.P.C.C. I would suggest that for the present no such meeting be held but that some action be taken by you as President. This action will be in continuation of your letter to the B.P.C.C. dated January 1st.[3] You might inform them definitely that the resolution of the Working Committee stands in so far as elections are concerned and the election committee will continue to function for the purpose of electing delegates to the

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Rajendra Prasad had referred to the resolution passed on 30 December 1939 by the executive council of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, expressing its inability to accept the resolution of the Working Committee passed on 21 December 1939, appointing an *ad hoc* committee to make arrangements for conducting the election of delegates from Bengal to the annual session of the Congress as well as other elections.
3. In this letter, Rajendra Prasad had asked for authenticated copies of the resolution regarding the decision of the Working Committee and an explanation for the adoption of this resolution "by the 10th January 1940 at the latest". He added that it was open to the B.P.C.C. to send a representative to appear before the Working Committee.

next Congress. Further that any opposition to this and defiance of the Working Committee's resolution is a very serious matter which must be considered by the Working Committee. They can show cause why further action should not be taken against the B.P.C.C. But this showing of cause as well as any possible appeal that the B.P.C.C. might make should not delay the work of the election committee which must go on. It will not injure us in any way if there is some delay in the final decision of the Working Committee in the matter. It might indeed be advantageous from the point of view of the elections, though the difference will not be great.

Regarding the Rs. 10,000, you have already suggested that effect should not be given to the B.P.C.C. resolution to hand over this fund to Subhas Babu. I doubt if you can control this money in any event under existing circumstances, even if it exists.

All you can do is what you have already done in the matter and you can make your directions clearer.

If you feel that a meeting of the Working Committee should be held about the 15th January then the Committee might meet on that date, but it will be exceedingly inconvenient for me to attend it as I have already fixed up various tour programmes which I would not like to upset. In any event the Committee can meet without me this time.

At such a meeting Maulana Azad's presence is of course desirable as he is intimately connected with Bengal affairs. It is possible that this meeting might interfere with his visit to the Punjab. This will be exceedingly unfortunate as already people in the Punjab have lost all faith in his ever visiting them owing to numerous postponements of his visit. If it is at all possible, he should go there as early as possible and stay there at least for 10 days.

I cannot for the moment trace your letter about Orissa.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

36. To Satindra Nath Sen[1]

Allahabad
January 3, 1940

Dear friend,[2]
Your letter of the 29th has just reached me. I quite realise that conditions in Bengal are highly unsatisfactory.[3] I would gladly do what I can to improve these conditions. All of us know well that the human material in Bengal for political purposes is splendid and, if but rightly directed, it can achieve very fine results. I can assure you that whenever I feel that I can be of service to Bengal I shall willingly devote time and energy to it. At present, however, I do not see what good a tour on my part will do. The background and the atmosphere is bad and my visit might lead to embitterment and conflict. But a time may come before long when such a visit will be useful. I shall go then even if I have to leave other important work.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Satindra Nath Sen (1894-1955); joined the freedom movement as a student; secretary, Political Prisoners' Relief Committee, Bengal, in the 1930's; imprisoned in East Pakistan after independence and died in prison.
3. Sen had written about the low condition of the Congress organization in Bengal and had requested Jawaharlal to devote some time and energy to the Bengal Congress.

37. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Allahabad
January 4, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,
have just sent a telegram to you to the following effect:

> Suggest your sending one hundred pounds on behalf Congress to Turkey for earthquake relief.

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.

I think that it would be a graceful act for the Congress to send a contribution to the Relief Fund in Turkey.[2] The earthquake has been a terrible one and a gesture from us will be appreciated. It is not usual for the Congress directly to contribute to relief funds of this kind even in India. Ordinarily we start separate funds for the purpose. I feel, however, that an exception should be made in this case. It will not be worthwhile to start a relief fund on behalf of the Congress. As you perhaps know Sikandar Hayat Khan has started a fund. It would seem as if we were competing with him. If you agree to my proposal, our contribution should be sent to the Turkish Consul-General in Calcutta. Before this is sent, an intimation should be sent to him by telegram and letter.

I have just seen in the press that you have sent a cable[3] to the Turkish President.[4] I am glad of this. It is just possible that the U.P.P.C.C. might send a contribution of Rs. 500. I am consulting with my colleagues.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

2. In January 1940, the Congress Working Committee endorsed the grant of Rs. 1,000 by the Congress President towards the Turkish Relief Fund.
3. This read: "On behalf of the Indian National Congress, I tender the heartfelt sympathy of India in the unparalleled disaster that has overtaken your country."
4. Ismet Inonu (1884-1973); close associate of Kemal Ataturk; Foreign Minister of Turkey, 1922-23; Prime Minister, 1923-24 and 1925-37; President, 1938-50; Prime Minister, 1961-65; leader of the opposition, 1950-60 and 1965-72.

38. To Lal Bahadur Shastri[1]

Siana
January 8, 1940

My dear Lal Bahadur,
As I told you at the Cawnpore station, the money donated by us to the Turkish Relief Fund (Rs. 500/-) should be sent to the A.I.C.C. treasurer in Bombay. I think you had better refer to Rajendra Babu's statement[2] and find out the address where the money is to be sent.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On 3 January 1940, Rajendra Prasad had issued a statement seeking contributions to the Turkish Relief Fund.

In regard to the quotas due from districts and the action to be taken thereon, I entirely agree with you that great care should be taken not to penalise any person without just cause and to give as much leniency as possible. Only in proved cases of non-payment without any proper cause shown, should the ban be imposed. The time for payment can be extended as you suggested. I am inclined to think that the list of non-paying D.C.C.s that you have made requires careful consideration. For instance, in the case of Aligarh, Malkhan Singh[3] assures me that full payment was made and the sum was deposited but the P.C.C. office has not considered the account yet. I enclose a letter from Malkhan Singh. If these facts are correct, then it is obviously impossible to ban any person from Aligarh. Even if there is doubt, this should not be done.

Take another case which raises an interesting point. This is of Bulandshahr. The Bulandshahr D.C.C. were supposed to owe us a certain sum of money. As a matter of fact this particular sum was never paid to them by some *mandal* committees which are practically in rebellion against them. Under your threat they have paid up the sum to the P.C.C. although they have not realised it from their *mandal* committees. No question arises now but a similar question may arise in other cases where owing to party rivalries the *mandal* committees may not pay off their quotas. Ordinarily it is difficult to realise this by the District Congress Committee unless strong action is taken. But such strong action itself is difficult because of the party rivalry and sometimes possibly because matters are pending in the P.C.C. I think in such cases the D.C.C. should not be made to suffer by the banning of its president or secretary.

In Bulandshahr there seems to be a very unfortunate state of affairs owing to these party rivalries. This district is a very fine one from the point of view of rank and file. No other district impresses me so much and, indeed, in spite of these difficulties, good work has been done here. It appears, however, that a certain party in the D.C.C. is bent on obstructing work. Even my visit was objected to and Seva Dal work is continually hindered, so I am told. The local M.L.A.s do not take any interest or take wrong interest. The present office-bearers are not supposed to be connected with parties but are still opposed by the minority group. The president of the D.C.C., Mahmud Aslam Khan, seems to me a very good person, though inexperienced. His brother, Asadullah Khan, is also good and is a regular attendant at our conferences.

3. Thakur Malkhan Singh (1889-1962); Congressman from Aligarh; elected to the U.P. Legislative Assembly in 1937, 1946 and 1955; left Congress in 1948 and joined the Socialist Party; rejoined Congress in 1955; president, Aligarh District Congress Committee for a number of years.

There is some complaint about the D.C.C. account which is pending before the *Suba Adalat.* I am told that your inspector, having examined these accounts, found nothing wrong with them. In any event they relate to the last office-bearers. The *Suba Adalat* summoned the parties a few days ago. They waited the whole day but their case was not taken up as the *Adalat* was busy with other work. They had then to come back for my tour, having spent a hundred rupees on the journey to Lucknow and back. Quite a large number of persons were summoned. This kind of wasteful expenditure seems to me very unfortunate.

On the other hand your inspector Darbari Lal tells me that some of the *mandal* accounts are full of objectionable features, but nothing has been done about it, although he has drawn attention to them. These *mandals* are generally opposing the D.C.C. I think we should revise our rules about such matters to avoid delays, waste of time and unnecessary expenditure.

I have had a very good tour in Aligarh and Bulandshahr. The meetings have been very good indeed and all along the route there has been great enthusiasm. I have been pleasantly surprised to find many Muslims participating in Congress work.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

39. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Lucknow
January 14, 1940

My dear Krishna,
For the last week I have been touring about intensively in rural areas in the north-western districts of the province. These areas are specially the Muslim areas of the U.P. My tour has been very successful and it reminded me of my election tour three years ago. The Muslim League has definitely lost ground. Muslim peasantry were enthusiastic and even others, though not joining the Congress, are friendly and feel that the Muslim League will lead them nowhere. The new Tenancy Act is popular with the peasantry. It is quite possible that if we had the general

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

elections we might capture some of the Muslim rural seats. The only doubtful feature in such elections is the sudden intrusion, on behalf of the Muslim League, of God and Islam, which naturally has a tendency to divert people's attention and excite them. Even so the League seems to be on the downgrade.

Your cable about the pledge reached me in the course of tour. I have today sent you the following reply:

> Pledge old form plus additions involving repetition previous Congress resolutions regarding constructive programme stop consider additions unsuitable there but not involving declaration faith economic matters stop no question purge split though unfortunate consequences creating discontent stop those disagreeing additions may take old form stop additions unnecessary for Indians in foreign countries para Amending Bill aimed U.P. Employment Tax[2] limiting powers provincial assemblies stop highly objectionable.

The new additions to the pledge are unfortunate, though as a matter of fact they are but repetitions of previous declarations in the Congress resolutions. It is possible to consider these as a declaration of faith in a new economic orientation but it was made clear by me and by others that this should not be the case. We accept the constructive programme of the Congress not as something opposed to large-scale industry or industrialisation, but as something which is definitely good under present circumstances and which need not come into conflict with industrialisation if properly planned. The vast population of India cannot be industrialised in sufficient numbers within any reasonable time. Large numbers remain poor, partly employed or unemployed and all their manpower is wasted. Village industries, planned so as not to come into conflict on any material scale with large-scale industry, can utilise this manpower and increase production tremendously. A conflict comes in regard to one industry, the textile industry, in regard to which Gandhiji is very keen on pushing hand-spinning. This can be adjusted if properly attended to. There are at present vast numbers of handloom weavers on the verge of starvation. The conditions created by the war lead to a paucity of textiles and the Indian mills, as they did in the last war, will exploit these to their own advantage completely. It is therefore necessary to push the khaddar programme even with a view to keeping down prices, as well as to supply the increased need for cloth.

Then there is the question of a certain discipline. It is obvious that many difficulties arise by this new form of pledge. But it was not

2. See *ante*, section 4, item 3.

intended and I do not think it will have the effect of any purge or split. Those who are not prepared to take the full pledge can take it in the old form. Essentially the additions are meant for the peasant masses as well as Congressmen working among them. Indians abroad can hardly take the full pledge as it will not apply to them fully. They may of course express their adherence to the constructive programme.

I appreciate what you say about China but I do not think that the position is applicable to India at present. There are, as you know, certain inherent difficulties in the situation and Gandhiji is not easy to understand or to follow. We have to face these difficulties.

I have not seen the new Amending Bill which is coming up before the Commons but I understand that it deals chiefly with the situation created by the U.P. Employment Tax. There are some other minor features which may not be objectionable. But the attack on the Employment Tax is highly objectionable in itself as it limits the power of the provincial assemblies and thereby reduces provincial autonomy still further. The manner of doing it is also objectionable. The normal course might have been to challenge it in the Federal Court. Nothing of the kind was done and without any reference to the ministry, Zetland comes out with his statement[3] and the new Amending Bill. It is essentially meant to protect vested interests and the services still further. It should therefore be opposed.

There is much that I should like to write to you about but it is difficult to do so and just at present I have no more time.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

3. On 7 December 1939, Lord Zetland termed the Employment Tax an income tax in disguise and said that it was a serious invasion on one or more important sources of federal revenue.

40. Tour of the United Provinces[1]

I have just returned from a week's tour in the north-western districts of the province. This brief tour has demonstrated to me the vitality of

1. Circular to the town, city and district Congress committees of the U.P., Lucknow, 16 January 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 17 January 1940.

our province and the great enthusiasm that prevails among our people for the cause which the Congress serves. In particular, our peasantry, both Hindus and Muslims, came out to welcome me as representing the U.P. Congress, and it was gratifying to note that our Congress organization had, by its services to the masses, found a secure corner in their hearts. I have returned from my tour full of confidence in our future and in our people. I should like to extend my grateful thanks to all our comrades, office-bearers and workers as well as Congressmen generally in the districts of Aligarh, Bulandshahr, Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur and Moradabad, on whom the burden of organizing my tour fell.

It is my desire to visit the other districts of the province also, but owing to heavy work of other kinds it is not possible to find much time for touring. I shall try, however, to find a few days now and then for such brief tours. I cannot visit individual districts singly, as this takes up too much time. I can be of much greater use and service by visiting districts apart from these conferences. I trust, therefore, that no invitations for conferences will be sent to me. I would also request my friends not to write to me directly about visiting their districts. Arrangements can only be made when time permits by the provincial Congress office.

In several places that I have visited, I was asked by the office-bearers of the local Congress committees as to what attitude they should take up in regard to tours organized for Mr. Subhas Bose or other leaders. So far as any official tour is done on behalf of the Congress organization in the province, this is arranged or authorized by the provincial Congress office. If Congress leaders tour independently on their own account or on behalf of some other organization, the position is different. Well-known Congress leaders, of course, should be treated with every courtesy and consideration, but it will be improper for Congress committees as such to associate themselves with any tours or visits which have for their purpose opposition to or denunciation of the Congress policy or programme.

Certain criticisms have been made in regard to the new form of the independence pledge.[2] It should be noted, however, that the additions to the pledge are merely repetitions of the Congress programme which has so often been repeated in Congress resolutions. These additions do not involve any confession of faith in any economic policy except the

2. The socialists, followers of M.N. Roy, Forward Bloc members and some others had objected to that part of the independence pledge which related to spinning and the constructive programme.

It is not the function of any Congress committee to enquire into appointments, dismissals, or transfers of any individual either from a public or a private institution. No Congress committee should interfere with the internal management of any such institution. If there is a case of gross ill-treatment of an individual or group, the Congress committee may interest itself in the matter and try to give relief, but this has to be considered very carefully by the full committee before any action can be taken. On no account must a committee get involved in factional quarrels.

It was highly improper because of a complaint received from an individual to write to the Bishop of Lucknow. If any such writing had to be done the matter should have been referred to the Provincial Congress Committee.

I shall await your reply as to the authority of the City Congress Committee demanding an inquiry. Meanwhile please understand that this inquiry is not only suspended but ended.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

42. To G. B. Pant[1]

Wardha
January 20, 1940

My dear Pantji,

You must have seen some time back, the list of Fazlul Huq's charges against the U.P. Government. At that time I did not think any action was necessary. But I find that this silence on our part is being misunderstood and both in India and England some effect has been produced by his statement. It is desirable, therefore, to have some kind of an answer prepared. Gandhiji also thinks so. This should not be difficult. Upadhyaya tells me that you are taking some steps in this direction. I do not think it desirable for any such answer to be made by you. At the same time obviously some responsible person should do it. Possibly an ex-parliamentary secretary. But you are the best judge of this.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

In Bihar, Sri Krishna Babu[2] drew the attention of the present government and pointed out to them that it was their business to issue a reply. The Chief Secretary said that it was difficult for him to do this but he would gladly place all the papers before anyone who did it.

I am returning to Allahabad probably tomorrow.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Sri Krishna Sinha was the Prime Minister of Bihar from 1937 to 1939.

43. To Secretary, Congress Committee, Hapur[1]

Allahabad
23.1.40

Regarding Subhas Babu's visit[2] Congress committees should not participate in functions but Congressmen should not obstruct others. No discourtesy should be shown.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. Papers, File No. P-20/1939-40, N.M.M.L.
2. Subhas Bose toured the United Provinces from 20 to 27 January 1940.

44. To Sri Prakasa[1]

February 21, 1940

My dear Prakasa,
Your letter has just come.[2] I am very sorry to learn of all your difficulties. I wish I could help you but I fear that in this matter I am of no use.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On 19 February 1940, Sri Prakasa had written to Jawaharlal that he wished to keep aloof from public life because of personal problems.

I must apologise to you for not answering your previous letter which reached me in Bombay and got mixed up with a number of other papers. I was not quite clear what advice to give you but the question does not arise now.

What took place during provincial Congress elections in Lucknow did not please me very much. It was a pity that Paliwal acted too much as a party man in his nominations to the council. However that is done and I do not think it makes too much difference either way. May I suggest to you not to take any step in a hurry? There is a council meeting on the 9th March. Why not come to it and have a talk. I should also like to consult you about the *Herald* then, although we are not having a formal directors' meeting.

With love,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

45. To P. Subbarayan[1]

February 24, 1940

My dear Subbarayan,

Your letter of the 20th. I do not remember having met Srinivasa Iyengar during the last three years except for a very brief while at the A.I.C.C. meeting in Calcutta after Tripuri. I had very little talk with him and I could not have discussed the Madras ministry certainly. What he is reported to have said is therefore entirely incorrect.[2]

It is true, however, that I have often written about and spoken about the ministries in public, though not of course on the lines indicated by Srinivasa Iyengar. If you have seen a little collection of articles of mine called *Where Are We?*[3] which appeared after Tripuri, you will find there much criticism of various policies followed or not followed by the ministries. In regard to the Madras ministry, I felt that it was probably the most efficient of all the ministries, but politically speaking it was less advanced than some. For some time, even previous to the resignations,

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Srinivasa Iyengar was reported to have said that Jawaharlal was greatly dissatisfied with the Congress ministry in Madras and felt it should resign.
3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 488-520.

I was of opinion that our ministries had exhausted the good that they could do under the circumstances and should resign unless conditions changed.

All this of course is very far from what Srinivasa Iyengar is reported to have said.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

46. Maulana Azad[1]

A comment in a British newspaper on the Congress presidential election seems to indicate that Maulana Azad's election was arranged, especially as he was a Muslim, and that in view of the communal situation, this would be to the advantage of the Congress.[2]

Nothing could be further from the truth. The suggestion is unfair to the Maulana and the Congress. Of course, Maulana Azad is eminently qualified to tackle the communal problems, and the Congress and the country should take full advantage of his services in this as in other matters. But Congress Presidents today have to bear a terribly heavy burden, and they are elected because Congress delegates consider them worthy of this. Never before has India had to face a more difficult problem in the national and international sphere than today. Even the communal problem, important as it is, occupies a back place in relation to these vast issues.

It is right that Muslims and members of minority groups should occupy the honourable and responsible position of Congress President, as they are as much concerned with this election and with India's future as any others. We welcome, therefore, the election of a Muslim. But it is wrong to think that Congress Presidents are elected for communal reasons. Certainly not Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

We welcome the Maulana's election because he represents in an eminent measure the Congress tradition and the Congress viewpoint. I

1. Allahabad, 27 February 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 28 February 1940.
2. The *Manchester Guardian* had remarked that the election of a Muslim had been deliberately contrived as a political strategy to demonstrate that the Congress stood for the Muslims and the Muslims stood by the Congress.

do not speak of his great ability and learning, which he carries so lightly, or his long and proud record of service in the cause of Indian nationalism and freedom, for every child in India knows about them. Though young in years, he is one of the giants of old, still fortunately with us, and he combines in a rare measure the solidarity and strength of the old guard with a flexibility of the mind and understanding of youth and the new currents that are disturbing and yet vitalizing the country.

It is well known that for some years past the Congress Presidentship has been his, if he would but agree to accept it. Last year, after much persuasion he agreed, but then changed his mind.[3] Probably, he would have been elected unopposed then, if he had not withdrawn. This year he has at last agreed, though not without hesitation, for he is not of the sort who care for honour and office. It is good for the Congress and for India that he placed the interest of the country over his own personal inclination. We welcome him, therefore, as a brave and tried captain of our forces in an hour which will demand from him and from each one of us the best that we can give.

3. On 20 January 1939, Azad withdrew from the Congress Presidential election.

7

THE INDIAN STATES

1. Message to Hamdard[1]

Allahabad
July 30, 1939

I send my good wishes to the *Hamdard*. I am glad to learn that it is growing and from a weekly it is being converted into a daily. I hope this growth of the *Hamdard* is symbolic of the growing strength of the nationalist movement in Kashmir. Kashmir, like all other states as well as the rest of India, has great and difficult problems to face. If we hold to our anchor and do not forget our basic principles, we shall win through. We are often tempted by some petty and temporary advantage to compromise with these principles. While some kind of compromise is often necessary in public life, there can be no compromise with a fundamental principle.

The recent birth of the Kashmir National Conference[2] is a good omen for the future. I hope that the spirit of nationalism will spread and will gradually eliminate all narrow feelings of communalism or sectarianism. This nationalism must necessarily be based on the freedom of the people and this freedom must be shared by all.

As a child of Kashmir the fate of that beautiful land is dear to me and I send my greetings.***[3]

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 440.
3. Missing in original.

2. Firing in Dhami State[1]

Firing on inoffensive human beings resulting in death and serious injury to large numbers of persons has now become a normal occurrence in some of the Indian states. Yet the tragedy that was enacted[2] in the little state of Dhami[3] in the Simla hills on July 16 has a peculiar

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 31 July 1939. *The Leader*, 2 August 1939.
2. The Dhami Riyasati Praja Mandal was formed in July 1939 and sent a deputation to the Rana for redress of grievances and grant of civil liberties. Its leader was arrested and the crowd which attempted to follow him was fired upon.
3. A state under the Punjab hill states agency with an area of 28 square miles and a population at that time of 5,232.

significance and throws a flood of light on the conditions in these petty states and more specially on the attitude of the paramount power towards them. Therefore I, for one, am not sorry that this tragedy took place, for out of it good may come to the unhappy inhabitants of these states. Dhami is a tiny state nestling in the hills in the very shadow of imperial Simla. There is no school there of any kind, big or small, no hospital, not even a single doctor. Forced labour flourishes as also other illegal exactions in addition to a heavy revenue demand which crushes the people. This true relic of feudal times exists near and under the protection of Simla, and thus demonstrates the close ties which bind British imperialism with feudalism in India. Seeking relief from their misery and intolerable burdens, the people organize themselves in a praja mandal and go to the ruler to present their demands. They are met by volleys of gun-fire. Some are killed and many are wounded. Terror-stricken, the people run away from the state territory seeking relief. Their leader is arrested and tried. No one may interview him in prison, no lawyer can go near him. All this within easy walking distance of Simla when a whisper from the paramount power would have brought instant relief.

It is natural for us to react with resentment and anger at such conditions and happenings. But hysteria does not help. We have to follow our course calmly and peacefully but with determination. We propose to do that. Something has happened that shouts out for a proper judicial inquiry. A non-official inquiry has been rightly instituted, but what is wanted is an impartial judicial inquiry. If no inquiry is held, we shall draw the inevitable conclusions adverse to the ruler and the British authority. Dhami and Simla will be judged together and will be condemned together.

To the people of the hill states and their leaders I should like to give a note of warning. They must not act precipitately and every action must be fully considered and advice taken before it is undertaken. There must be less of shouting and more of quiet organization and concentration on immediate issues. They must concentrate first of all on the abolition of *begar* or forced labour and other illegal exactions. This must go immediately. They should then seek relief from the heavy burden of land revenue and establish civil liberty. The small states of the hills are tiny units which cannot continue as such, nor can real progress come to them so long as they do not become parts of much larger units. But, large or small, *begar* and all illegal exactions must go immediately, land revenue must be reduced and the rule of law established. It is clear that the petty rulers are merely pawns in the game. It is the British Government that functions in these hill states, as it

functions in Simla town, and it is this government that must shoulder the responsibility for the misrule and oppression, for the *begar* and illegal extortions, and for all else that crushes the life of these unhappy hill folk.

3. Arya Samaj Satyagraha in Hyderabad[1]

I am glad to learn that the long and distressing episode of the Arya Samaj satyagraha in Hyderabad has come to an end.[2] It has involved a great deal of sacrifice and suffering for the cause which, *prima facie*, was so obvious that it was hard to believe in any opposition to it. It is said that many of us, for larger political reasons, disapproved of the satyagraha in Hyderabad. But we realised and stated that the objective of religious freedom for which satyagraha was carried on was a right objective. Both the Arya Samaj and the Hyderabad Government are to be congratulated on this satisfactory solution to an unhappy episode.

1. Interview to the press, Wardha, 9 August 1939. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 10 August 1939.
2. Consequent to the announcement of reforms in the Hyderabad state, the Arya Samaj which had been fighting for religious and cultural rights in the state suspended the satyagraha campaign for the time being. See also *ante*, section 2, item 4.

4. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Wardha
August 11, 1939

My dear Krishna,
I understand that copies of the report of the inquiry committee on the Orissa states[2] have been sent to you. I should like you to go into these

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. The Orissa States Enquiry Committee was appointed in June 1937, with Harekrushna Mahtab as its chairman, by the Orissa States People's Conference. In its report, submitted in July 1939, the Committee recommended that the *sanads* (title-deeds) granted to the rulers of the states should be cancelled and that the states be merged in the province of Orissa.

reports. They reveal a scandalous and fantastic state of affairs. I hope it will be possible to give publicity to this report. If you want more copies please let us know.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

5. Message to the All Jammu & Kashmir National Conference[1]

The Conference is meeting at a time of very great crisis in the world which will be reflected more and more in India. We cannot escape that crisis or ignore this revolutionary period of the world's history. I believe that the next few years will see vast changes in the political and economic structure of the world and of India. All of us, therefore, must appreciate the full significance of what is happening and fashion our activities accordingly. We cannot take just a narrow view of events because if we do so we shall fail to understand them. All the world is on the move and India must move with it, not separately or in isolation. India must attain her full freedom based on unity.

I send my greetings to the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference on the occasion of its session. I had hoped to visit Kashmir in the course of last summer, but events forced me to go to Ceylon and then to China. Very regretfully I had to give up my Kashmir visit this summer. But, as I have often said, I am continually drawn to Kashmir, and as soon as I am able to do so, I shall visit that beautiful country which it is a privilege for me to call especially my own.

I trust that Kashmir will play an honourable part in the events to come. I hope that the Conference will view all these events that are happening in true perspective so that the people of Kashmir may attain their freedom in the larger freedom of India. Above all, it is necessary for us to pull together whether we live in the Indian provinces or in the states, whether we are Hindus or Mussalmans or Sikhs or any others inhabiting this great country. I trust that under the able leadership of Mr. S.M. Abdullah all the people of Kashmir will work with courage and sobriety for the objective in view. I send my good wishes to the Conference and to the people of Kashmir.

1. 4 October 1939. *The Hindustan Times*, 8 October 1939.

6. Message to the Mysore State Congress[1]

It is curious that when everyone is talking about a war for democracy and freedom and condemning Nazi aggression, the Indian states system should continue in all its pristine autocracy and attempts to alter and make it responsive to popular will should be suppressed. The writing on the wall is clear, but there are people who still refuse to see it. As Mahatma Gandhi has said, petty Hitlers continue to function in many states.[2]

Of Mysore much is expected, for industrially and otherwise it is somewhat more advanced than other states and it is more ripe for the introduction of responsible government. But autocracy is still entrenched there and popular demands are spurned and promises made to the people have not been kept.[3] I had hoped that wisdom would come to those who control the state government and they would realise that the time has gone by when they can check the torrent of change. But I have been mistaken and am distressed. And so a conflict has begun again there between the people and those who seek to prevent change and retain autocracy. That conflict can have only one outcome here as elsewhere.

The world is in the throes of vast revolutionary changes and Indian states cannot escape them. Already I am told that 1,200 representatives of the Mysore Congress have been arrested and sentenced. Many of the leaders are in prison. Let this not dishearten anyone, for nations are only made by testing and trial. I hope that the people of Mysore will hold fast to their ideals and be scrupulous about their means, so that nothing may be done which discredits their cause. I wish them all success.

1. 17 October 1939. *The Hindu*, 18 October 1939.
2. "...every Indian Prince is a Hitler in his own state. He can shoot his people without coming under any law. Hitler enjoys no greater powers." Mahatma Gandhi in his article, *Unfortunate People of Travancore*, *Harijan*, October 1939.
3. The struggle of the people of Mysore state against repression led to the shooting at Vidurashvatham, when police fired on the crowd killing and injuring many. A settlement between the state government and the Congress reached by Vallabhbhai Patel and J.B. Kripalani proved short-lived.

7. Conditions in the Indian States[1]

The phraseology of the resolution which is mild does not reflect the intensity of our feelings on the question.[2] I want to leave no doubt in anyone's mind in regard to our attitude on the problem of the Indian states.

The Indian states in their present form are the creation of British imperialism and are being supported in maintaining their present position by them. I am sure that the present feudal system in the Indian states would have disappeared long ago, if the British Government had not supported it with all their might. As the movements in the Indian states for freedom are gathering strength, the princes are rallying their supporters proportionately, particularly the communal organizations.

The repression in the Indian states, particularly in Orissa and Kathiawar states like Limbdi, is highly condemnable.[3] I think that the rulers of these states have been guilty of barbarous acts and they should have been removed. I feel that the paramount power is indirectly responsible for these acts, as it connived at them. I particularly condemn the methods of gangsterism that were employed in Limbdi and other states to put down popular agitation. I deplore the policy of the paramount power which never interferes for good administration in the Indian states, but to put down popular movements. It is a strange commentary on the "progressive" outlook in Travancore state that as many as five hundred persons have been arrested there on the occasion of the birthday of the Dewan, Sir C.P. Ramaswami Iyer.[4] The state of affairs

1. Speech on the resolution on Indian states, U.P. Political Conference, Mathura, 29 November 1939. From *The Hindustan Times*, 30 November 1939.
2. The resolution, moved by R.S. Pandit, advised the people of the states within the province and of the neighbouring states to continue to press their demands with determination and nonviolence and strengthen their organization. It also expressed disapproval of the offer of the princes to help Britain in the war without consulting their people.
3. In the Orissa states civil liberties were almost unknown. Peaceful movements for basic reforms were ruthlessly crushed, often with the assistance of British troops. In Limbdi the state government encouraged communal organisations to undermine the political movement of the Praja Mandal. Village officers and unruly elements were encouraged to use coercion against workers and sympathisers of the Praja Mandal. 6,000 out of a total population of 41,000 were driven to migrate to the adjoining districts of British India.
4. The Travancore State Congress was declared illegal and about 660 people were arrested in 1938. As the government was reluctant to carry out genuine reforms, civil resistance was renewed in 1939 and large-scale arrests were made on 12 November 1939.

in Hyderabad,[5] the premier state of India, verges on medievalism. In political reaction and backwardness, it could be compared to the smallest of the Indian states. When one goes to that state, one feels that he is in quite a different world of several centuries back. The conditions there have no relation to modern conditions and standards. They spend the major part of their income on their own personal comforts. They have no money for public utility work. I have no doubt that we have no use for these states, although we have deliberately refrained from saying so in our resolution. The country cannot move forward unless the states are done away with.

5. Hyderabad, though the most important state as regards population and resources, was politically among the most backward. The struggle launched jointly by the Hindu Mahasabha, the Arya Samaj and the state Congress lasted from September 1938 to August 1939. No reforms were carried out and the Nizam banned the Hyderabad State Congress on the allegation that it was "constituted on communal lines."

8. To Ghulam Mohamed Bakshi[1]

Allahabad
December 3, 1939

My dear Bakshiji,
Niranjan Nath Raina has given us the lovely apples which you sent from Kashmir. They have been greatly appreciated and I am grateful to you for them.

Niranjan Nath tells me that you are under the impression that I have forgotten Kashmir. I am surprised to learn this. Surely you do me little credit if you think so. Kashmir occupies a warm corner in my heart, not only because of the personal associations, but because of my being intensely interested in the national freedom movement there. But you know how rapidly developments are taking place in India and the world and we have to be continuously on the alert. Every three weeks or so we have a meeting of the Congress Working Committee which lasts for a week and then there is very important other work. I want to tour about but am unable to find the time for it.

There is no place in India which calls me more than Kashmir. My desire to go there is far greater than yours to summon me. I shall

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

come, have no doubt about it, but I cannot say now when this will be. Meanwhile all of us, wherever we may be, must keep alert and prepare for all eventualities.

With all good wishes to Sheikh Sahab and to other colleagues in Kashmir.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. To E.M.S. Nambudiripad[1]

Wardha
December 22, 1939

Dear Comrade,

I regret the delay in answering your letter[2] of December 11 which reached me late owing to my travelling about.

I have considered the correspondence between Dr. A.R. Menon,[3] minister, Cochin, and the secretary of the Cochin District Congress Committee.[4] As this matter involved a novel principle I have consulted some of my colleagues also.

The basic principles of the Congress apply to all of us whether we are living in the Indian states or in the provinces. Yet the application necessarily may vary in the states. The resignations of the Congress ministries, for instance, did not necessarily involve the resignation of anybody in a state. It may be of course that a state follows a policy which is so entirely opposed to national policy that it is not possible for a Congressman to associate himself with it in any way. But the matter has to be considered on the merits of that state policy and not as a necessary corollary of what is being done in the provinces. Ordinarily the question of a Congressman acting as a minister in a state does not arise, as Congressmen are not ministers in states. The case of

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Nambudiripad had asked if Dr. Menon was violating the principles of the Congress Party by associating himself with the "war purposes" committee.
3. Ambat Ramunni Menon (1889-1960); Minister for Rural Development, Cochin, 1938; resigned in February 1942; left Congress, 1954; Health Minister, Kerala, 1957-59.
4. Menon had written to say that in view of the fact that the president and members of the assembly, etc., were still continuing in office, he felt that his action in joining the war purposes committee was not against the spirit of the Congress.

Dr. A.R. Menon, who is both a minister in Cochin and a primary member of the Congress, is unusual and possibly unique. The fact that, as such a minister, he has joined the Congress is in his favour as a nationalist with Congress sympathies.

As such a minister he has to perform certain ex-officio duties. The question may arise whether it is in keeping with his responsibility as a Congressman to retain that ministership or not. But so long as he is minister he has to perform those ex-officio duties. As far as I can see the duties termed "war purposes" relate to the regulation of prices of foodstuffs and supply of articles of prime necessity to the people. These duties are by no means inconsistent with Congress membership. Under the circumstances there appears to be no reason why he should not continue as minister and as such continue these ex-officio duties. If another situation arises in which he has to undertake additional duties which are clearly in opposition to Congress principles and policy, then he can consider the matter afresh. For the present, therefore, no question arises about his dissociating himself from the ministership or from those ex-officio duties.

In his letter dated 19th November, Dr. A.R. Menon has stated that Mahatma Gandhi and the Working Committee have indicated that there should be no noncooperation with the British Government. This is not wholly a correct position to state. The Congress has in fact taken a big step in noncooperation by the resignation of the ministers. This does not mean complete noncooperation but partial noncooperation, to be followed later, if necessary, by other steps.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Dr. A.R. Menon as well as to the president of the Cochin District Congress Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. Conditions in Dhami State[1]

In July last year the little state of Dhami near Simla suddenly gained notoriety because of firing by the state authorities on a deputation of its residents who had gone to the ruler to place their grievances before

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 4 March 1940. *National Herald*, 6 March 1940.

him and ask for reforms. Several persons were killed and wounded. An enquiry was demanded but refused. A non-official inquiry took place and revealed a deplorable state of affairs, the responsibility for which was shared by the political agent. Later a further inquiry into the grievances of some of the Simla hill states was conducted on behalf of the All India States People's Conference.[2] These petty states living under the shadow of Simla are extraordinarily backward and the combination of the political agent and the ruler has produced most unfortunate results which bear down heavily on the people. There is continuous ferment and continuous repression. Dhami became a symbol of all this and its peasantry have suffered greatly during the last eight months.

Ten days ago matters came to a climax by the political agent arranging a tour of the state accompanied by a batch of government police. Many villages have been visited and it is stated that the villagers are panic-stricken and in a state of terror. Large numbers of refugees, especially men, have gone outside the state but even in neighbouring states they are being harassed. The reports of what the police have done and are doing are amazing and almost unbelievable. Yet we know that nothing is incredible in a state. All this is happening not only under the shadow of Simla but with its active help.

2. In 1939 Jawaharlal had, on behalf of the States People's Conference, ordered a thorough and comprehensive assessment of the land revenue system, the living conditions, the position of women and popular rights in the numerous hill states surrounding Simla.

11. Famine in Bikaner[1]

In Hissar famine conditions have existed for a long time[2] and the attempts at relief have been on too small a scale to meet the situation. In Bikaner there have been successive famines and last year there was a failure of crops, and the Hissar Congress Committee did some relief work in the neighbouring villages of Bikaner.

This state of affairs has a vital lesson for us from the larger political point of view as it tells more eloquently than legal arrangements how

1. Allahabad, 4 March 1940. *National Herald*, 6 March 1940.
2. Famine conditions had prevailed in Hissar since 1928 and the failure of the monsoons in 1936-39 led to acute shortage of food.

medieval and backward some of these Indian states are, and how people suffer under their misrule. But for the present the humanitarian aspect is most prominent for vast numbers of people are involved and in dire straits. A large number of people from the Bikaner state have migrated to the neighbouring areas, chiefly to Hissar which itself is sorely stricken. I trust that public help in the shape of donations or material will be given to the Congress Committee of Hissar which is endeavouring to relieve this distress.

12. To A K. Chanda[1]

Allahabad
March 6, 1940

My dear Anil,
Possibly you have heard of Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah, the leader of the popular movement in Kashmir. He is a youngish man who was educated at Aligarh. The popular movement in Kashmir had a tendency to become a communal movement as the vast majority of the people in Kashmir are Muslims. Sheikh Abdullah, however, has given it a different turn in spite of the opposition of communalists, Muslim Leaguers and the like. He has built up a powerful organisation and is very popular in the country. It is true that his strength lies chiefly among the Muslim masses, and the relatively small numbers of Hindus who looked forward to state service and the like were apprehensive of his movement. But gradually he is wearing down this fear and more and more Hindu young men are supporting him. His movement is definitely a national movement and he has more or less put himself in line with the National Congress in India. He is definitely a man who counts and will count.

All this introduction is necessary as Sheikh Abdullah wants to visit Santiniketan in order to see the place and pay his respects to Gurudeva. He is staying with me at present and will be going to Calcutta today or tomorrow....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

13. Manipur[1]

The Manipur state in Assam is little known in the rest of India. We have heard of the Manipuri dance which deservedly grows increasingly popular. We think of this state also in connection with Rani Gaidilieu, the brave Naga girl who still lies in prison somewhere in Assam because of what she is alleged to have done ten years ago. When the demand for the release of this girl was made, a minister of this state, who is an English official, issued an offensive statement, on which we had occasion to comment.[2]

Latterly strange news has filtered through from Manipur, of official oppression becoming unbearable and the women of the state deciding to resist it, of thousands of these women marching to the Darbar and being met by a bayonet charge. It is strange that there is no prominent mention of men in these reports; the leadership and the active element comes from the women, although the grievances are common to all.

Who are these Manipuris of whom so little is known? They are a charming, clean-limbed and bright-eyed people, living in some of the rural areas of Assam. It is said that they came many generations ago from Burma and settled down in these parts. They have lost touch with Burma completely and have adopted the Hindu religion, but in spite of the passage of time, they still retain much of the gaiety and charm of Burma, more especially of the women of Burma. They have little to do with city life and keep together in their villages. They spin and they weave and they till the fields, and, as in Burma, life for them has plenty of play and laughter. Their simple clothes are spotlessly white, gracefully worn and their womenfolk look frankly into your eyes, unafraid and without shyness. They have no background of the *purdah* or seclusion. They play their equal part in the life of the community.

This perhaps explains somewhat the prominent part which these women have played in the popular movement in the state.

1. 8 March 1940. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 10 March 1940.
2. On 5 June 1939, the President of the Manipur State Durbar in reply to a request for the release of Rani Gaidilieu had written that she should not be called a Rani as she, at best a political rebel, was in reality a sorceress, addicted to the cult of human sacrifice; and that the title Rani was given to her by Jawaharlal who was totally ignorant on this subject; this was "to be expected from a political agitator speaking without serious preparation."

We publish elsewhere a report on the recent agitation in the state. It tells us how this simple and delightful community, far removed from political currents and agitation, has felt the burden of economic exploitation and the feudal regime of an Indian state. How their joy and laughter is being smothered and how they are compelled to rise in protest and demand rights. Look through that long list of taxes. It is illuminating, though many of the names are unknown to us. Note that six of these taxes are for the private expenses of the ruler and some officers.

The immediate trouble arose over the question of rice export, which the people wanted stopped.[3] A mass of women went to the Darbar to make this demand on December 12th 1939 and were met by a bayonet charge, resulting in severe injuries. But neither this, nor the criminal cases started against the demonstrators, put an end to the agitation which has continued.

On the 29th February a thousand women from the Lamlai area assembled at the Cherap court.[4] Many of them had been summoned to appear on a charge brought by two shopkeepers. The women claimed that they were peacefully picketing the shop but the charge was one of looting. These women waited in the open in the rain. The complainants meanwhile asked for an adjournment and got it. The object of this, according to the women who had been summoned, was to harass them for they could not return home and had to remain in that little town for the night.

We have drawn special attention to this matter, surrounded as we are with graver issues, as we are convinced that the sympathy of all those who learn the facts will go out to these brave women struggling so gallantly against heavy odds.

3. In 1939 there was a heavy flood in Manipur causing great damage to the rice crop. The public requested the Darbar to stop the export of rice.
4. There were two subordinate courts, the Cherap court and the Panchayat court, which heard both criminal and civil cases.

1. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Allahabad
August 14, 1939

My dear Rajendra Babu,
I have just received your letter of the 12th August[2] from Wardha about the Planning Committee. I am sorry that this question could not be discussed in my presence. The red pamphlet, to which you refer, is a full record of the work done by the Planning Committee till the end of its last session. Since then a few sub-committees have met informally and some chairmen and secretaries of the sub-committees have met in Bombay and Allahabad to discuss the procedure and method of work. You will remember that I sent you a brief report of what we had done in June last. That report has been followed by this fuller report which was sent to all the members of the Working Committee.

You can form a fair idea of the scope of our activities from these collections of papers in this red book. We are trying to keep the Working Committee informed of all the activities of the National Planning Committee.

You point out that the Planning Committee seems to have undertaken much more than was intended by the resolution of the Working Committee. Probably this is correct. Yet when references are made to a plan it is difficult to draw a line. The real resolution, however, that gave birth to the Planning Committee was passed by a conference of ministers of industries, which was held at the instance of the Working Committee. You will find this resolution at page 9 of the red book. It is not a very happily-worded resolution, if I may say so, but it covers a large field. It has been the experience of every country or group that has attempted planning that in order to develop a coordinated scheme a large number of subjects have to be considered together. Indeed the very idea of planning involves this extensive consideration and coordination. I do not see how planning can be approached otherwise. It is naturally open to the authority to whom the report is submitted to accept or not to accept any or all the recommendations. But it seems to me that a full consideration of various departments of national activity is essential so that a planned scheme can be drawn up. If you will

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.
2. Rajendra Prasad had protested that the Planning Committee had given publicity to certain conclusions without placing them before the Working Committee and said that it "was never intended that the resolution should go directly to the provincial governments for action."

refer to page 77 of the red book, paragraph 3, you will find a suggested definition of what planning is.[3] It is true unfortunately that the Planning Committee does not consist only of disinterested experts. But we have to work with the material we have.

You refer to certain conclusions of the committee which have been given publicity without being placed before the Working Committee. I do not quite understand your objection. Do you desire our proceedings to be kept secret till they have been approved of by the Working Committee? As a matter of fact we have tried hard to avoid any full publicity of what we do. But brief reports have been issued to the press because a great deal of interest has been taken by the public. One of the objects of planning should be to increase public interest in this subject and to make people think of this question as a whole and not in separate compartments. It would of course be improper for any vital resolution to be thrust upon provincial governments before the Working Committee has approved of it. So far as I can remember all our re-

their directions to the provincial governments. We have been informed by these governments that they will consider this matter with the members of the parliamentary sub-committee at the conference of ministers to be held in the near future in Poona.

You point out that an objection has been raised to the notes printed on page 65 and page 77 of the red book. The note on page 65 refers to various Congress resolutions which directly or indirectly bear on planning. From these resolutions I have drawn what I consider the correct conclusion. I shall be glad to know wherein it is incorrect. The note on page 77 is long and deals with many subjects. It is difficult for me to say anything about it till I know what the objections are. The first note is supposed to represent what I think is the Congress policy. The second note deals with the question, as the Planning Committee itself sees it, keeping in view the Congress outlook.

I quite agree with you that no local government should be made to feel that it is called upon to give effect to any resolution of the Planning Committee so long as the Working Committee has not approved of them. As you will notice no such resolution, barring the suggestions on licensing, has been passed. The Planning Committee being itself a body largely constituted by the provincial governments, the question of bringing pressure to bear upon them in regard to any matter does not arise.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

2. To V.V. Giri[1]

Allahabad
August 15, 1939

My dear Giri,

We had a meeting of some of the chairmen and secretaries of the sub-committees here on the 13th. It was a fairly good meeting. I found out from Shah that the state of our finances is terribly low. Indeed they have nothing to meet the establishment charges at the end of the month. It is urgently necessary therefore that we should get some money from the provincial governments and the states. I am informed that the U.P. Government will pay their contribution soon. I am, however, sending a reminder to them. I am writing to the Prime Minister

1. V.V. Giri Papers.

of Bihar also. Dr. Mahmud is unfortunately suffering from very serious eye trouble.

I wish you would get the other governments and states to move.

I am going to China next Sunday for about five or six weeks.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To K.T. Shah[1]

Allahabad
September 18, 1939

My dear Shah,

I do not quite know where you are. If you are anywhere in north India I hope you will get into touch with me and see me on your way back.

You must have seen the Working Committee's statement. This makes it clear, and indeed everything makes it clear, that the future is not going to be like the past. Big things are going to happen one way or the other. I cannot say exactly what will happen in the near future but I think we should carry on with the National Planning Committee regardless of these developments unless of course we are compelled by *force majeure* to shut up shop. As a matter of fact the war situation increases the importance of the Planning Committee. If we had not had a Planning Committee already we ought to have formed one.

I do not know what date you suggest for the next meeting. The later it is in October the better as we are likely to have our hands full in the first two or three weeks of October. Among other things there is a possibility of a conference between some Indian and Chinese representatives to discuss various common problems.

I suggest that in the agenda of the next meeting of the N.P.C. the war situation should be included and its repercussions on industrial development in India. It might be desirable to have a special sub-committee for this purpose. I enclose a circular letter which I should like to send to all the members of the N.P.C. as well as to the chairmen or secretaries of the sub-committees.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. National Planning Committee File No. 135/1939, p. 92, N.M.M.L.

4. Future of the National Planning Committee[1]

Dear Friend,

I have been asked on my return from China about the future of the National Planning Committee and as to how the war situation is going to affect it. It is obvious that the war in Europe is going to have big repercussions in India. Whatever the changes that take place these are going to be big changes and the India of tomorrow will greatly differ from the India of yesterday and today. While one cannot say definitely what these changes are going to be, it is clear that the industrial and other development of India is likely to be speeded up. The National Planning Committee has thus to consider an immediate problem which comes well within its scope. Indeed if we were not fortunate enough to have this committee, it would be necessary to form one.

We have, therefore, to carry on with this work with redoubled energy. I trust that all the sub-committees will try to expedite their work. Some of these sub-committees might consider the war situation and its effect on India and make suitable suggestions in regard to it. May I suggest also to all the members of the National Planning Committee to consider this important development so that we might discuss it at our next meeting? One of the items on the agenda of the next meeting will be the war situation and its effects on Indian industry. It may be necessary to appoint a sub-committee on this subject.

We have not yet fixed the date of the next meeting of the N.P.C. We shall try, however, to hold it sometime in October, probably in the latter half.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Circular to members of the National Planning Committee. National Planning Committee File No. 135/1939, p. 91, N.M.M.L. Presumably written on 18 September 1939; see previous item.

5. Economic Reconstruction[1]

Few subjects in India are of more vital importance than the economic reconstruction of the country on a planned basis. I have long been a believer in planned economy, and my past experience with the National Planning Committee has convinced me all the more that any progress or reconstruction of our economic or social life must be undertaken on this planned basis. I welcome therefore this book which deals with the various aspects of economic planning. I hesitate as a rule to associate myself with books dealing with current problems, lest it might be thought that I accept the argument or the objectives laid down in the book. In this particular instance I am suffering under a further disability. I have seen but not read any part of the book so far. I cannot therefore express agreement or disagreement with its arguments or conclusions, nor obviously can I commit the National Planning Committee, of which I have the honour to be Chairman, to any suggestions or proposals put forward in this book.

I have, however, looked through the table of contents of this book and the mere enumeration of the chapter heads and sections has interested and fascinated me. Any attempt to deal with this vital and vast subject in this comprehensive way is worthy of attention and encouragement. We are too apt to concentrate on separate issues and not attempt to see or understand the full picture of a nation's activities. And yet it is only this full picture that enables us to understand each component part of it. It is the business of the National Planning Committee to draw up this full picture in outline so that all of us may know the road we have to travel and the objective in view. Real planning will then take place on this basis and the noble structure of a nation's life and economy built up in proper proportion and symmetry.

Shri Khagendranath Sen's[2] book appears to give an outline plan of this national picture and something must be said in it in regard to most of the subjects that are coming up before us in the National Planning Committee. I do not know, not having read the book, how far I am in agreement with his approach, but in so far as I can judge from the table of contents, the book is worthy of consideration from all those who are interested in planning and the economic reconstruction of India. It is

1. Allahabad, 19 September 1939. Foreword to Khagendranath Sen's *Economic Reconstruction of India, A Study in Economic Planning*, (Calcutta, 1939).
2. Educationist and journalist; principal, Ashutosh College, Calcutta, and chief editor, *The Nationalist*.

not very material whether we agree or disagree with his arguments and conclusions. I am sure that we can in any event profit by this comprehensive survey of an urgent present-day problem.

Economic planning and reconstruction are necessary at any time, but in these days of war and impending collapse of the economic order to which we have been used, it becomes still more urgently necessary for us to give thought to this vital problem. The day will soon come, if it is not already upon us, when we shall have to build hard and build extensively. We can only do so with advantage if large numbers of people in our country have given thought to this matter and we have drawn up in our minds, as well as more concretely, blueprints of the India of tomorrow.

6. The Importance of National Planning[1]

Many inquiries have been addressed to me about the future of the National Planning Committee. Some of the members are afraid that war conditions might interfere with the normal activities of the Planning Committee. It is true that this war is going to interfere with many of our normal activities but there is no reason why we should allow the work of the National Planning Committee or any of its sub-committees to be obstructed or delayed by the war. I suggest, therefore, to all my colleagues in the committee to carry on their work in the usual way and indeed to expedite it as far as possible.

National planning is of vital importance to a nation at any time. In war time, this subject becomes even more important. Our committee thus has an even more important task before it now than it had when it was formed. Our national attitude towards the war has not finally been determined yet and much will no doubt depend on this. But in any event India is on the eve of industrial development on a big scale and we must be prepared for this.

I hope to continue to give such time as I can to the National Planning Committee. But my colleagues will realise that other important matters occupy my time also. I hope still that the committee will meet sometime in Bombay in the latter half of October to review the situation and more particularly the new factors created by the war.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 20 September 1939. *The Hindu*, 21 September 1939.

7. Circular to Members of the National Planning Committee[1]

Bombay
27th September 1939

Dear Colleague,

I have already addressed a letter to you and pointed out that the war in Europe has cast an additional responsibility on us. There is no question of our stopping our work because of this war. Indeed our work has to be carried on with greater vigour because of this war. We cannot say what developments will take place in future, but it is quite certain that there will be great changes, political and economic, in India as well as in the rest of the world. Also that the industrialisation of India will take place rapidly. All this makes it incumbent on us to carry on our work and to influence the vital decisions of the future.

It may be that future developments may put some obstructions in our way, more especially in regard to finances. We shall then have to carry on our work much more economically. What is important is that the sub-committees should continue functioning and gathering material and preparing their final reports. It does not matter so much if the National Planning Committee cannot function for a while as it should. If the sub-committees have done their work thoroughly, we shall be ready for our final meeting and for our final decisions and no further time will be wasted.

Therefore, whatever happens, the sub-committees should continue to function. In case our funds are low we may have to reduce our expenses in many ways. The principal item of expenditure has been travelling allowance to members of the committee and of the sub-committees. This may have to be drastically reduced. The women's sub-committee have set an excellent example by deciding that no member of it should charge travelling allowance if she can possibly manage without it. Nor should any halting allowance be charged. If travelling allowance is at all charged, it should be on the basis of third class railway fare. Further, the women's sub-committee has made some separate collections for its own work.

I do not know how far it is possible for other sub-committees to follow this example, but I do suggest that in future intermediate class fares only should be charged.

It is also desirable, in order to limit expenditure, not to have too many meetings of sub-committees. Of course meetings should continue to

1. Purushottamdas Thakurdas Papers, File No. 220/1938-49, N.M.M.L.

be held at convenient centres, whenever necessary. The most convenient centres are Bombay and Calcutta. Bombay is particularly suitable as it has our central office and affords other facilities also. Calcutta can also offer special facilities. If it is really necessary, some other venue might be chosen. Much of the work of the sub-committees might be done by correspondence.

I am sending this circular to you, and I am giving more detailed instructions to our office, so that whatever future developments might be, we might be prepared for them. It is possible that I might not be able to give as much time to the N.P.C. as I should like to. But I want the members to remember that I am exceedingly keen on the work of the N.P.C. and have considered it of the utmost national importance, more especially at this juncture. I shall, therefore, give such time as I can possibly find for it and I earnestly hope that all other members will continue to interest themselves in this work.

Provisionally we are fixing the 25th October for the next meeting of the N.P.C. in Bombay. Some of the sub-committees will meet earlier in Bombay.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. Advice to Sub-Committees[1]

The chairmen of various sub-committees should hold no formal meetings of their respective bodies at present in view of the political conflict in India but carry on the work allotted to them at full blast. Their work should be done quietly and without any fuss so that their reports should be perfectly ready for final consideration on the subject when the time comes for it.

There will be the difficulty of finance; as it is, we are hard up and in case of conflict we shall get no more money. However, we shall have to accommodate ourselves to this in some way or other.

After full consideration we have decided not to convene a meeting at this juncture with the political situation so obscure. We should now

1. Circular to members of the National Planning Committee, 9 November 1939. *National Herald*, 10 November 1939. Extracts.

concentrate on the work of the sub-committees and when the sub-committees have finished their work separately their draft reports should be considered together by the allied sub-committees to prevent overlapping and contradiction. Then will come the time for our final consideration.

9. To M. Visvesvaraya[1]

Allahabad
December 26, 1939

Dear Sir Visvesvaraya,

Your letter of the 21st December has just reached me. You will remember that at the last meeting of the National Planning Committee there was full discussion as to how our work should be carried on. It was generally felt that the sub-committees should function first and then the N.P.C. will be in a position to come to definite conclusions and make recommendations on a comprehensive scale. It was also then decided to have a meeting of the N.P.C. during the *puja* holidays.

You are perfectly right in stating that the meetings of the N.P.C. have been few and far between. The last announcement for such a meeting had to be eancelled because many members wrote to us to say that the dates did not suit them. You will remember that I sent a letter to the members on this subject as I found it difficult to suit the convenience of many of them. There was no desire on our part to postpone that meeting and it was to meet the wishes of others that this was done. Meanwhile, as you know, the war crisis came and this naturally brought various difficulties with it. The political situation has been very uncertain. Many of the provincial governments that brought the Planning Committee into existence have ceased to be. Under all these circumstances I sought the advice of the members as to what should be done and I suggested that perhaps it would be desirable to postpone the meeting to a later period when some at least of the reports of the sub-committees were available. Many of the members whom I saw personally agreed with this. None of them, so far as I am aware, wrote to me on the subject. Yours is the first letter I have received yet on the subject. You will appreciate, therefore, that we have tried to accommodate the members of the N.P.C. and to carry on our work in accordance with their wishes.

1. National Planning Committee File No. 135/1939, pp. 99-100, N.M.M.L.

The sub-committees have been meeting regularly and have done a good deal of work. Many of them asked us for further time and under the circumstances this was considered a reasonable request and was agreed to.

I would regret greatly if you cease to be a member of the N.P.C., specially when the time is coming soon when your experience and advice will be especially valuable. I trust therefore that you will not insist on resigning at this stage.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

January 3, 1940

My dear Bapu,

I have just returned to Allahabad and received your letter of the 28th.[2]

I do not quite know what one should do about Fazlul Huq's indictment.[3] It is possible for some Congress ex-minister to deal with the matter.

About Kumarappa's correspondence with the Planning Committee, I was told by Ambalal and Dr. Nazir Ahmad[4] that they had approached him for certain information in regard to cottage industries and sought his cooperation on some other matters connected therewith.[5] Both of them were very much hurt at the reply received from Kumarappa which seemed to them to refuse any kind of cooperation or help. Both Ambalal and Nazir Ahmad spoke to me about it in an agitated way and said

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Mahatma Gandhi had written: "Have you read Fazlul Huq's indictment? Should nothing be said or done about it?
"You have not sent me Kumarappa's letters to which you had raised strong objection... so please send me what you may have."
3. See *ante*, section 6, items 17-26.
4. (1898-1951); head of the department of science, Islamia College, Lahore, 1925-40; director, Cotton Technological Laboratory, 1931-45; member, National Planning Committee, 1938-41; member, Indian Tariff Board, 1945-47; secretary, Development Board, Pakistan, 1947-50; chairman, Tariff Commission, Pakistan, 1950-51.
5. Ambalal Sarabhai was the chairman and Dr. Nazir Ahmad the secretary of the manufacturing industries sub-committee.

that it would be very unfortunate if this attitude is taken up, as the information gathered by the Village Industries Association will not influence them in coming to their conclusions.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

11. Planning of Distribution[1]

The present structure of the world is breaking up. We may not be always very clear as to what will replace it. But this much is certain that as far as world economy is concerned the problem of distribution has to be the main pivot in all planning.

As far as the world is concerned the problem of production has been successfully solved. It may be that in India due to foreign domination and other causes we have not been able to solve the problem of production successfully but even so the problem of distribution should receive our attention in the main. Distribution has to be planned. This is the main idea before the National Planning Committee.

People believe that the committee will build some factories and set up some heavy industries, that is, it will concentrate on production. But with already so many vested interests in India it would be undesirable to add further interests in planning India's economy. In fact, these vested interests go to the very root of the problem. The committee must have power to implement its decisions which would be impossible without political freedom which in turn depends upon economic freedom and economic freedom cannot be achieved unless we deal with the vested interests. Thus in one sense it may be that the committee is only thinking in the air and indulging in a good exercise for the mind. But it is preparing for the future. The task before the committee is very comprehensive and it will be enough if the committee could indicate the lines for the future and give us something to think about and act upon.

The twenty-nine sub-committees will submit their reports in the middle of March. In the first week of April the National Planning

1. Speech at the Indian Economic Conference, Allahabad, 3 January 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 4 January 1940.

Committee will meet to consider these reports and make a draft report. The final report will be ready by the end of June.

The economic ills of the world are not due to individuals but to fundamental economic causes. The old capitalist system has broken off and with the end of this war we will finally see the last of it. Some form of state control of production, transport and distribution, not only nationally, as due to the exigencies of war, but also internationally, will gradually come into its own.

Although many things which have happened have tarnished the idealism of the new system which has arisen in Russia and although one disapproves of some of the political trends of Russia, one thing is certain that the economic foundations of Russia are sound and they do point a way to the final solution. There is no way out except a socialist economy. Political democracy has failed. To make it successful it must be allied with economic democracy and it must be based on socialism. Of course, to apply everything blindly to India from Russia will be foolish. The essential thing is to solve the problem of distribution without which everything would go by the board.

Some people find a conflict in the placing of big industries and village industries in the scheme of India's planned economy. But the matter, if gone into deeply, will show that in the present state of India's economy it is necessary that both village industries and big industries should work and be built up in coordination.

No country can be free or keep its independence without developing big industries. However, for India, development of big industries does not seem to be near for a generation at least. Village industries are necessary, but they can develop only with the state action in the form of protection which involves economic and political independence and, to retain independence in the economic sense, big industries are necessary.

Thus I want industrialization in India as much as anybody else. I also think that village industries are essential and should be developed in coordination with big industries.

12. Directions to Sub-Committees[1]

Bombay
7th January 1940

Dear Friend,

When I addressed you last[2] I suggested that we should concentrate for the present on the work of the sub-committees and have a meeting of the N.P.C. later, when most of these sub-committees' reports were ready. Since then good work has been done by many of these sub-committees. But I regret to find that some of these sub-committees have not made much progress yet. It is obvious that we cannot delay our general progress because of a few of the sub-committees. I had suggested that all sub-committees should report at the latest by the end of February; I suggest that this date should be kept in mind and that we should draw up our programme accordingly. At the very latest sub-committees' reports should reach the central office by the 15th March.

The N.P.C. can then meet in the first week of April to consider these reports and to come to decisions about the principal points which we have to consider. These decisions will then form the backbone of the report of the N.P.C. itself. It is therefore suggested that at the April meeting of the N.P.C. we should go thoroughly into the subject and indicate the scope and nature of our final report, although the actual language of it can be settled later. This meeting of the N.P.C. might last from ten days to a fortnight.

Thereafter the report should be drafted on the basis of these decisions of the N.P.C. and this draft should be circulated to the members.

Early in June the National Planning Committee should meet to consider the draft report and to pass it finally. By the end of June this report should be ready for publication.

We must make every effort to adhere to this time-table and to finish this preliminary round of our work by the end of June of this year. We cannot afford to delay our report much longer and we cannot delay our other work because a particular sub-committee has not reported. Therefore all sub-committees should realise that their work must be completed at the latest by March 15.

When I was in Bombay last month, various important matters involving principles and vital policies regarding state control of industries etc.,

1. Circular to members of the National Planning Committee. Purushottamdas Thakurdas Papers, File No. 220, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, item 8.

were referred to me by the members of some sub-committees. We have already in the N.P.C. given some general directions on these subjects, but it is obvious that they require a closer consideration. It was pointed out to me that unless some clear instructions were given, different sub-committees might work on different lines and with differing objectives. It was suggested, therefore, that a joint meeting of the sub-committees concerned might be held for this purpose. Later it was thought that a meeting of representatives from the sub-committees or the chairmen or secretaries would perhaps be more suitable, as a joint meeting of the full sub-committees would mean a very large gathering. It has therefore been decided to hold a meeting of the chairmen and secretaries of not only the sub-committees concerned but of all the sub-committees in Bombay on February 10th and onwards. Members of the National Planning Committee who care to attend this meeting will be welcome. The meeting will consider not only the points noted above but such other points of principle as might be raised. Of course all such decisions will have to be in conformity with the previous decisions of the N.P.C. and will be subject to subsequent ratification by the N.P.C.

I trust you will make a note of all these dates so that you can keep yourself free for these meetings. Formal notices will of course be sent to you later.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

13. The Status of Women[1]

Friends,

I am speaking in English, as I was asked by the president[2] and by others, several days before, to speak in English. I would prefer to call you comrades but I have not done so firstly, because I do not know whether you like being called so, and, secondly, because I do not know whether you deserve it.

1. Address at the All India Women's Conference, Allahabad, 28 January 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 31 January 1940.
2. Begum Hamid Ali.

For many years I have been watching from a distance the activities of the All India Women's Conference.[3] I am told that yours is not a political organization; but there are so many questions to be dealt with that I fail to understand how an organization which deals with any vital problems can cut itself off from other vital problems which are interrelated. I think that if you consider any problem you would come up against politics. Therefore, there is no use saying that you are not a political body. The problems we are facing are so interrelated and complicated that it is impossible to separate them.

We hear a lot about superstition in India among women. No doubt, there is a lot of superstition among women in India, but I think it is presumptuous to talk about superstition among women in India, when there is much superstition among men. All over the world there is much superstition and prejudice among men with regard to women, for the woman has been a prisoner through the ages in every country in the world.

Whatever problem we touch, whether economic or political, we would come to the question of the status of women in the body politic. If we talk of the freedom of India, it is impossible to think of it, leaving women out of the picture. There are men who advise women to work but I think that when men tell women to work it should be viewed with suspicion. There has been enough of service by women of men. The real and fundamental problems of human life ultimately are the relations of man to man, man to woman and man to society.

When I suggested that the Women's Conference represented the middle class I did not say this in a spirit of criticism. It is essential that the women's movement should start work among the masses. The world is changing and, therefore, we cannot consider any problem of today with reference to ancient traditions.

As Chairman of the National Planning Committee, I thank all of you and your organization for the enormous help you have given us in our work. I feel that of all the sub-committees of the National Planning Committee, the sub-committee which has done the most work, and which has not only worked as a sub-committee but has really built up almost a movement for the purpose, has been the women's sub-committee.[4] That has come as an eye-opener to some people, because it shows how much room there is for work among women in India. I was astounded at the questionnaire produced by the women's sub-committee and it made us realize how earnestly and effectively they tackled the job.

3. Founded in October 1926.
4. The women's sub-committee was formed with Rani Laxmibai Rajwade as chairman and Mridula Sarabhai as secretary to examine the place of women in a planned economy and evaluate their social, economic and legal status.

I trust that the criticism that I have hinted at will not be taken to mean that I have not appreciated fully the great work that the All India Women's Conference have been doing.

14. Chairman's Memorandum[1]

February 12, 1940

The manufacturing industries sub-committee made certain references involving decisions on important matters relating to the control and functioning of industries. As these questions affected many sub-committees, it was decided to have a meeting of the chairmen and secretaries of all the sub-committees for the purpose. This meeting was held on February 11th in the office of the Planning Committee in Bombay. A considerable number of chairmen and secretaries of sub-committees, as well as several members of the National Planning Committee, were present. A questionnaire had previously been distributed to the members. There was a full discussion lasting for nearly six hours. As a result of this discussion, it was decided that I should embody the decisions in a memorandum and circulate them to all the sub-committees for their guidance.

The National Planning Committee had previously laid down certain general principles in regard to these matters. These will be found in the red book. I should like to draw particular attention to:—

(1) The Karachi Congress Resolution which states that "the State shall own or control Key Industries, and Services, Mineral Resources, Railways, Waterways, Shipping and other means of public transport."
(2) Page 74 of the red book, paragraphs 12 and 43 of my memorandum dated 4th June 1939. This memorandum was subsequently approved by the N.P.C.
(3) Page 102 of the red book giving a tentative list of defence industries, key industries and public utilities.

It will thus be seen that the National Planning Committee has already gone far in laying down the principle that defence industries, key industries and public utilities should be either state-owned or controlled. A

1. National Planning Committee Files, January-May 1940, N.M.M.L.

discussion took place at the meeting on the 11th February as to which of these should be state-owned and the measure of control in regard to the others.

In regard to defence industries, it was decided that they must be owned and controlled by the state. Regarding key industries, the majority were of opinion that they should also be state-owned, though a substantial minority considered that state control would be sufficient. It was made clear, however, that any control of such industries must be a rigid one.

Public utilities, it was also decided, should be owned by some organ of the state, such organ being either the central government, provincial government, or a local board. It was also possible to have something of the nature of the London Transport Board controlling such public utilities.

In regard to the other important and vital industries, which are not key industries, or defence industries, or public utilities, no special rule was laid down. But it was made clear that the very nature of planning required control in some measure. What this measure should be might vary with the industry in question.

As regards the agency in state-owned industries it was suggested that, as a general rule, an autonomous public trust would be suitable, the nature of such trust being varied in the case of different industries. Such a trust would ensure public ownership and control, but would avoid the difficulties and inefficiency, which creep in from a democratic control. This suggestion was approved of by some members present, while others thought that no definite rule should be laid down and the sub-committees should be left free to make their own recommendations. It was also suggested that there might be cooperative ownership and control. These suggestions are being forwarded to the sub-committees for their consideration. It is open to them to make their own recommendations.

In regard to private industries aided or supported by the state, the measure of state control is likely to be greater than in unaided industries. The state may appoint directors or representatives to see that the state policy in regard to planning is carried out. Such representatives of the state will not be supposed to interfere in the day-to-day administration of the industry, but it will be their function to see that the industry is coordinated with the national planning scheme and the general policies of the state are being carried out by the industry. Any planning will involve a close scrutiny of the development of industry in all its branches and a periodical survey of the progress made. It will mean the training up of the technical staff necessary for the further expansion of industry and the state may require industries to train up such staff.

In the event of a private industry being taken over by the state, fair compensation should be paid. In calculating this compensation, a number of factors will have to be taken into consideration, so that the interests of the general public do not suffer and at the same time, the owners of the industry are not victimised. It was not thought necessary to go into any further details in regard to this matter at this stage.

As decided by the N.P.C. previously, it was made clear that in order to prevent the growth of future barriers to planning, effort should be made to avoid the establishment of new vested interests.

The relation of industries on a large scale to village and cottage industries was also considered. The fact that the National Congress has laid great stress on the development of cottage industries, and more specially on hand spinning and hand weaving, was to be borne in mind. Large-scale industries and cottage industries have, therefore, to be coordinated in the national plan. It may not be possible at this stage to define accurately the scope of each but in view of the Congress policy, which may be later the state policy, nothing should be done to erect barriers to the carrying out of such a policy. Therefore it should be laid down that any large-scale industry, which may come into conflict with a particular cottage industry encouraged and supported by the state, should itself be controlled by the state. Such control will prevent any conflicts arising and coordination will be easy.

It is important to bear in mind that the outlook governing a planned scheme is different from the outlook of an unplanned private economy. It is this outlook which must be kept in view in drawing up the plan, so that all the different sections of the plan may be integral and coordinated parts of the full programme. Such control as may be necessary to bring this about will have to be taken by the state.

The meeting also passed the following resolution in regard to the place of women in planned economy:

> In the scheme of planned economy, every care should be taken to secure for woman, irrespective of civil conditions, not only theoretical equality of opportunity for training and employment, but also to see that such training and particularly employment are made available to her, as the consequence of the planned economy and at the instance of the planning authority.

In addition to what I have said above, the discussion which took place at the meeting was very helpful in throwing light on some aspects of the problems facing us, and those who were present profited by it. But, as no further decisions were made, it would not be worthwhile for me to incorporate that discussion in this memorandum.

I should like to remind you again that the time factor is most important at the present stage of the activities of the Planning Committee. The work we have undertaken is of a vast nature and it is possible to continue it for many months and even years without exhausting it. But it is essential that we should produce our preliminary survey and report in the course of the next four months, that is, by the end of June. The presentation of this report will not, of course, end the work of planning. That will be only the beginning, the foundations on which the structure of planned economy, we hope, will be built.

It is important, therefore, that all sub-committees should present their reports by the middle of March. Even if they are unable to send their final and full reports before that date, they should send as full a report as possible, following it up by an additional report later, if necessary. If the sending of a report is delayed beyond mid-March, that report may not be considered in the draft prepared for the Planning Committee's consideration. It is hoped that the full Planning Committee will meet early in April to consider these reports and to lay down the general line of their own report. The N.P.C.'s report will then be drafted and placed before the N.P.C. early in June. That is the present programme and we must try to adhere to it. For this, it is necessary that the sub-committees should function according to time-table and send us their reports by mid-March. Even after sending their reports, if they have any further investigations to make, they should continue to make them and to collect material for future use.

Some sub-committees are on the eve of presenting their reports, but there are many who are still somewhat behindhand. I would beg of them to expedite matters.

Jawaharlal Nehru

15. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Bombay
13 February 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,
I enclose a copy of the circular I have issued to the members of the Planning Committee and the chairmen of the sub-committees. We

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.

had a meeting of the chairmen and secretaries of sub-committees on the 11th February and this circular embodies the various tentative decisions arrived at. This will give you some general idea of our line of approach.

I am very sorry that our work has been delayed and we have not been able to keep to the time-table which was submitted to you last year. We hope, however, to finish with the present stage of the Planning Committee and to be ready with our report by the end of June or possibly in July. This report when ready will, of course, be presented to the President of the Congress. I might add that it is our intention to deal with the various points in a somewhat tentative way so as to express the various viewpoints advanced and, though indicating preferences, leave the final decision to the Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

9

LARGE-SCALE AND COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

1. To Krishna Kripalani[1]

Allahabad
September 29, 1939

My dear Krishna,
Your letter of September 25th has just reached me.[2] You are not very considerate to a person who is heavily occupied. Ordinarily I would have asked you to excuse me from writing anything on this subject at this moment, important as the subject is. But when I read Professor Saha's letter to you I find so many statements in it which are incorrect that I cannot remain wholly silent lest misapprehensions might be caused. He has referred to me repeatedly and made various statements regarding me which are bound to convey an entirely wrong impression of what I said in the Planning Committee.

I am afraid I cannot write fully on this subject now. I shall only try to remove any misapprehension in the mind of Professor Saha or others.

There was no discussion at any stage of the Planning Committee's sittings about Gandhiji's principles as such. We did discuss Congress principles as laid down in Congress resolutions and thus indirectly we referred to Gandhiji's principles which have influenced the Congress greatly during the past twenty years. I did not at any stage say that I claim to know Gandhiji's views better than Shri Kumarappa[3] or anyone else. I think that in this particular matter Shri Kumarappa is certainly entitled to speak for Gandhiji much more than I am. He has been connected with him intimately in village industries work for several years and he is therefore perfectly entitled to speak both for village industries and for Gandhiji's views in regard to cottage industries.

What I stated in the Planning Committee was that the Congress had never declared itself against large-scale industries but it has laid great stress on cottage industries for a variety of reasons, which I for one appreciate. I am personally a believer in the development of large-scale industries. Nevertheless I have wholeheartedly supported the khadi movement as well as the wider village industries movement for

1. Extracts published in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, November 1939, pp. 249-252. Full text in *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 390-394.
2. Krishna Kripalani had enclosed an article by Meghnad Saha in which it was stated that Jawaharlal and Gandhi believed that 'large-scale industries could look after themselves, but cottage industries required state and public help.'
3. Kumarappa said that by accepting the Chairmanship of the Planning Committee Jawaharlal had violated the principle of nonviolence, for the use of machines represented some kind of violence.

political, social and economic reasons. In my mind there was no essential conflict between the two, although there might occasionally be conflict in regard to certain aspects or developments of both. In this matter I do not represent Gandhiji's viewpoint to any large extent, but in practice so far there has not been any marked conflict between the two viewpoints.

It seems to me obvious that certain key and vital industries, defence industries, and public utilities must be on a large scale. There are certain others which may be on a large scale or a small scale or a cottage scale. A difference of opinion might arise in regard to the latter. Behind that difference there is a difference of outlook and philosophy and, as I understood Mr. Kumarappa, he laid stress on this difference of outlook. His point was that the modern large-scale capitalist system ignored the problem of distribution and was based on violence. With this I entirely agree. His solution was that with the development of cottage industries there was a much fairer distribution and the element of violence was much less. I agree with that too but it does not go far enough. Violence and monopoly and concentration of wealth in a few hands are produced by the present economic structure. It is not large-scale industry that brings any injustice and violence but the misuse of large-scale industry by private capitalists and financiers. It is true that the big machine multiplies the power of man exceedingly both for construction and destruction, both for good or for ill. It is possible, I think, to eliminate the evil use and the violence of the big machine by changing the economic structure of capitalism. It is essentially private ownership and the acquisitive form of society that encourage a competitive violence. Under a socialist society this evil should go, at the same time leaving us the good which the big machine has brought.

It is true, I think, that there are certain inherent dangers in big industry and the big machine. There is a tendency to concentrate power and I am not quite sure that this can be wholly eliminated. But I cannot conceive of the world or of any progressive country doing away with the big machine. Even if this was possible, this would result in lowering production tremendously and in thus reducing standards of life greatly. For a country to try to do away with industrialisation would lead to that country falling a prey, economically and otherwise, to other more industrialised countries, which would exploit it. For the development of cottage industries on a widespread scale, it is obvious that political and economic power is necessary. It is unlikely that a country entirely devoted to cottage industries will ever get this political or economic power, and so in effect it will not even be able to push cottage industries as it wants to.

I feel, therefore, that it is inevitable and desirable to encourage the use and development of the big machine and thus to industrialise India. I am convinced at the same time that no amount of industrialisation in this way will do away with the necessity of developing cottage industries on a large scale in India, and this not merely as feeders but as independent units. I do not know what science may achieve in the course of the next generation or two but as far as I can see cottage industries will be essential for India in addition to large-scale industries, which should be encouraged in every way. The problem, therefore, becomes one of coordination between the two. It is a question of planning by the state. It cannot be successfully tackled under the present anarchic capitalist system satisfactorily.

I have tried to explain briefly my own views on this subject. I cannot presume to interpret anyone else's views. But I do feel that it is easily possible for me to cooperate fully with the advocates of cottage industries, even though I might not accept their fundamental outlook.

Unfortunately we are not dealing with a socialist state at present but are passing through a transition stage when the capitalist system is cracking up. This gives rise to innumerable difficulties. In any event it is clear that the principles to be applied even today should be those laid down by the Congress, that is, the state should own or control key industries and services, transport, etc. If the term key industries is held to include all vital industries we get a large degree of socialisation. I would add further as a necessary corollary to our policy that where there is any conflict between a privately owned large-scale industry and cottage industry, the state should own or control that large-scale industry. The state would then have the power and liberty to adopt any policy which it lays down and it can coordinate the two.

With considerable experience of Congress policies during the last twenty years, I can say with confidence that they have been of great economic and social advantage to India. It is perfectly true that the Congress proceeded on the assumption that large-scale industries were strong enough to look after themselves and therefore more attention should be given to cottage industries. This must be considered in a proper context. We were a non-official organisation and the economic structure of the state was entirely outside our control. Encouraging large-scale industries under these circumstances meant encouraging private vested interests, often foreign vested interests. Our objective was not only to increase production by utilising the wasted manpower of India as well as the wasted time of a large number of people, but also to create self-reliance among the masses of India. The Congress achieved a great measure of success in this.

This subject cannot be considered in the air as a matter of pure theory but must be related to the circumstances and the facts of life as they exist in a country. We can never ignore the human factors. In China today there is no particular bent towards cottage industries. But circumstances have forced the Chinese to develop their village industries and cooperatives with extraordinary rapidity. There was the greatest interest in China in our village industries movement and I was asked to send some of our experts in these to China. It is possible that some Chinese experts may come to India to study our village industries methods.

Professor Saha says that cottage industries should not depend on ancient technique. Nobody says that they should. The latest scientific technique should be taken advantage of. But in doing so one must remember what is feasible and available to the villager. If something is out of his reach, then it is not a practical proposition. Thus if power was very cheap and easily available in the village, it should be taken full advantage of. If the latest type of cottage machine is too expensive, or cannot be easily repaired in the village, it is not much good to the villager under present circumstances. Even a simple machine based on ancient technique, like an ordinary spinning wheel, today produces something out of nothing because it is worked in the spare or wasted hours of the villager. Give that villager a better machine by all means.

The example of Japan that Professor Saha gives is not a very happy one. There are no cottage industries there but decentralised industries. It is doubtful how far this is preferable to full-blooded large-scale industries.

Professor Saha seems to imagine that some people in India do not realise that the control of key industries is in the hands of foreign exploiters. He blames our leaders as if they are consenting parties to this. This is really extraordinary and shows that Professor Saha is not conversant with what has been happening in India. This is not a question of small industry or big industry. Every Indian deplores the growth of foreign vested interests in our industry and continuous efforts have been made to check these. Professor Saha again talks without the slightest knowledge when he says that Congress ministers are mere puppets in the hands of big industrialists, most of them foreigners. Our ministers, it is true, are puppets in various ways to circumstances and they cannot function as they would like to. Any government today is largely bound down by the capitalist economic structure. But to talk of our leaders committing the crime of the Moghul emperors and allowing foreign trade to pass into the hands of European adventurers is amazing and

displays a lack of appreciation of the whole political, social and economic events in the recent history of India.

This subject is a vast one and I have merely touched upon one or two aspects as they strike me. It is worthy of discussion and full consideration, but it is unfortunate that Professor Saha's letter has been written in a spirit which is far from scientific or dispassionate.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Cooperative Movement[1]

I visited the cooperative court in the Swadeshi Exhibition last evening and was much interested in the exhibits. I like Shri V.A. Mehta's enthusiasm for the work. Considerable ingenuity has been shown in the utilization of waste products. I take it that the object of this is to make people exercise their inventive bent of mind and give them a sense of creative effort. This is good and should be encouraged even apart from the economic value of utilizing waste materials. The cooperative movement has an enormous future before it, provided it rids itself of the red-tape and functions from the point of view of the masses. It must think of mass needs and try to meet them, and above all it should try to make the masses think of it as their own. Otherwise it will function only in a limited way.

1. Note written in the visitors' book of the cooperative court at the All India Swadeshi Exhibition, Allahabad, 16 November 1939. *The Hindustan Times*, 19 November 1939.

3. The Value of the Charkha[1]

I had no hand in drafting the resolution,[2] which was drafted by the council in Anand Bhawan when I was busy with the Working Committee meeting. I want the members to remember that you are considering these resolutions in a historical setting, when we are about to launch a struggle. You should not, therefore, advance arguments merely for the sake of arguments. Our resolutions are to be acted upon.

I have no hesitation in saying that the charkha has helped us in the economic and political fields. Yet, I refuse to recognize the charkha as a *mantra* or something mystifying. It is one of our political and economic weapons. Let me frankly admit that several things that have been said by Gandhiji in regard to the charkha do not appeal to my head and heart. Yet, I realize the importance of the charkha for several good reasons that can be understood by everyone. I have spun the charkha for years. I have ceased to spin regularly for the last three or four years, but when I returned from China, I called for my old charkhas and purchased a new one. I thought I might have to go to jail and counted on the charkha to keep me occupied in jail. I am not a blind follower of the charkha. By temperament, I refuse to accept a thing unless it appeals to my reason. Charkha has a political aspect as well, but the younger people in the Congress, though they have brought new blood in the Congress, have not the experience of the last two decades, and do not understand its implications. While I was in China the Chinese people made inquiries about the charkha and village industries in India. In China the people, under the stress of war, are being attracted by small cottage industries which are immune from air bombing.

Let us face facts while yielding none of our enthusiasm for the industrialization of India. We cannot solve all our problems merely by opening new factories. We have the problem of over-population in India as well. Some enthusiasts have advocated the introduction of Ford tractors in India. While they are quite suitable for Soviet Russia where there are vast tracts of land, they are not suitable for our fields. Ford is under no illusion. He told me that whereas tractors were eminently suitable for the fields of Siberia they were of no use to over-populated India. I am quite confident on this point, yet people say that we

1. Speech at the subjects committee meeting, U.P. Political Conference, Mathura, 29 November 1939. From *The Hindustan Times*, 30 November 1939.
2. The resolution elaborated the Congress programme with special emphasis on the use of the charkha.

are mad and that our thinking is confused. I have no complaint against such critics. I have a scientific brain and let me remind you that I had got a degree in science when some of my present critics were not even born. The suggestion that the charkha is worthless as an economic weapon is absurd. I will not blindly accept any creed simply because Gandhiji's name is connected with it. Even the Chinese people are thinking of sending out their experts to India to learn spinning and to study our cottage industries. We are not accepting the resolution merely to bribe Gandhiji in order to persuade him to give us the lead. We should give a free hand to Gandhiji in the present fight. Nothing can prepare us for a fight unless we have enthusiasm for it. Charkha can, however, discipline us for a fight. Mere verbosity will not produce a revolution. It is not enough to tell the kisans to remain prepared to go to jail. We have to give them the charkha, the symbol of our fight. You must take to it earnestly, seriously and vitally. I strongly commend the resolution for the acceptance of the House.

Question: What will be the position of the Congress workers engaged in spinning vis-a-vis the All India Spinners' Association?

Jawaharlal Nehru: In order to reply to this question we should look back twenty years ago when the charkha was made an integral part of our programme. We should take stock of the situation in the light of our experience during the last twenty years. If we look at the question in that light, we will feel the necessity to collaborate with the Charkha Sangh which has specialized in this field. Twenty years ago we were novices in the art of spinning and hence there was a lot of wastage in money and effort. The Charkha Sangh has had twenty years experience and is now a past master in the art of spinning. It is ridiculous for anyone to say that he could not learn spinning even after practising continuously for two years. I offer to teach spinning to anyone who is keen to learn it, in three days time. I myself can spin very fine yarn. It is absurd to say that only the rich can spin fine yarn.

4. Khadi A War Necessity[1]

Encouragement of khadi is a necessity imposed by the war. The continuance of the war in Europe is bound to lead to a stoppage of import of foreign cloth and thus to a paucity of cloth in India. This will lead to a rise in prices of mill cloth. This is an additional reason why khaddar manufacture and use should be rapidly extended. Otherwise, the masses will suffer, and the Indian mills will make exorbitant profits at their cost. This aspect must be borne in mind and explained to the public. If sufficient quantities of khadi are manufactured, this will not only bring about some economic betterment of the masses and prepare them for any other disciplined effort but also help in keeping down prices of cloth.

1. Circular to Congress Committees in the U.P. Printed in *The Hindustan Times*, 19 January 1940.

5. To Shankarlal Banker[1]

February 24, 1940

My dear Shankarlal,

Some time back I suggested to you that my name should be removed from the executive of the A.I.S.A. At your request then I did not press the matter. The more I think of it, however, the more incongruous is my position there. The question is not one of my sending you my yam subscription. I can easily do that as I am spinning fairly regularly now. But it is absurd for any person to be just a pro-forma member of an important executive. That is my position in the A.I.S.A. and I have not attended its meetings for years.

Secondly, it seems to me that there is a very radical difference in outlook in regard to such matters between Bapu and me. I am all for pushing the charkha and khadi for various reasons into which I need not go now, but it appears that the charkha and khadi represent a far-reaching outlook on life with which I am in disagreement. Bapu has recently written again that this outlook on life is the same as the one

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

he wrote about in *Hind Swaraj*.[2] I am afraid I disagree with this outlook completely and I think it is quite impossible, apart from being desirable, to give effect to it in the world today. Under these circumstances it is best that I should not be a member of the executive of the A.I.S.A. You can drop me simply without any fuss at the next elections.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. On 9 January 1940 Mahatma Gandhi, in an article entitled *The Charkha* had said: "I am enunciating no new ideas here. They are to be found in *Indian Home Rule (Hind Swaraj)*.... The nearest approach to civilisation based upon non-violence is the erstwhile village republic of India.... It is from that germ that I have developed the technique of non-violence. If the charkha can bear the ample interpretation I have put upon it, it becomes the most effective weapon in the armoury of satyagraha."

6. Cottage Industries[1]

There are not only economic but also psychological reasons why we should pay special attention to the development of cottage industries. Every individual should not only be a consumer but also be a producer. He should be able to take part in increasing the wealth of the country —whether artistic or material. The development of cottage industry will not only bring about the economic uplift of the villager but it will also bring about a psychological change in him inasmuch as it will satisfy his creative instinct.

I hope that thousands of stores like the present one will be opened throughout the country, so that the marketing facilities for products of cottage industries may be greatly enhanced. Every municipality should open a commercial museum of indigenous products on the lines of the Calcutta Corporation. That would serve as a permanent exhibition of local products.

I am glad that the basic scheme of education is giving encouragement to cottage industries. I hope that a time would soon come when the basic education facilities will be available to every child in India.

1. Speech at the inauguration of a rural development store, Allahabad, 5 March 1940. *National Herald*, 6 March 1940.

10

INDIA AND CHINA

1. India and China[1]

I am glad that this little book of mine is putting on a Chinese dress. It is just a collection of odd speeches and writings on various subjects, and, ordinarily, I would have hesitated to place such a casual work before the Chinese people. I would have preferred that my first approach to them should deal more directly with the common problems and common tasks of China and India, and how these bear on the world situation today. I should have liked to have glimpses of the long past of these countries, their innumerable contacts, their present predicament, and then, trying to pierce the veil of the future, imagine what both these countries will be like when today with its troubles and conflicts is past and gone.

For India and China are the two ancients in the world today with an astonishing record of cultural history going back to the dim past. But with all that ancient heritage and ancient burden, they are still full of vitality and inner strength and the troubles that beset them will pass as they adjust themselves more thoroughly to the modern world.

But I am afraid that I cannot make the offering of my choice to the Chinese people today, and so I am glad that at least this little gift goes from me to them, telling them something of what India thinks and feels and hopes and works for. I am grateful to Mr. Chwang Lauland who has made this possible by his translation.

India and China—vast countries, but bigger than the size of these great countries are the problems that face them. Both are world problems of the first magnitude, and what happens ultimately in India or China is of great significance to the world at large. It is right, therefore, that we should know each other well and understand each other, for we may have much to do with each other in the future. I trust that this little book helps a little towards this understanding.

1. Foreword written by Jawaharlal at Allahabad on 3 July 1937 for a Chinese translation of *India and the World*. But, because of the war, the translation was not published. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. To Madame Sun Yat-sen[1]

Allahabad
October 13, 1939

Dear Madame Sun,

Dr. Mukherji gave me your letter[2] and your photograph a few days back in Wardha, where we were having one of our Committee meetings to consider the present situation. I was delighted to have your letter and I appreciated more than I can say your sending me your fine photograph. Perhaps, you will remember that you sent me about eleven years ago a photograph of yourself and Dr. Sun Yat-sen. I have treasured this since and I see it daily in my room whenever I am here. You have now added to my treasures and I am grateful to you for it.

I learnt for the first time from your letter that you sent me a telegraphic message to Chungking. I did not receive it. I had fully intended to make every effort to meet you, but the war situation compelled me to return home quickly. I am so sorry I was unable to meet you. I share your hope that we might meet before long when both China and India are free.

I wish we could do more to assist the China Defence League.[3] At present however everything is in the melting pot here as elsewhere. The next few weeks will decide this way or that. We might then be in a better position to help or in no position at all for the present. I might add that in discussing the future of India and war aims and peace aims with the British Government, we have laid stress on a free China. We cannot expect the British Government to say anything which might create difficulties for them with Japan. But we do expect that they will not alter their Chinese policy to the disadvantage of China.

Perhaps you have heard of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. In addition to being a poet she has been and is one of our foremost political leaders. She is a great admirer of yours and asks me to convey her regards and good wishes to you.

In the event of your changing your headquarters and address please let me know.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In her letter of 15 September 1939, she had expressed her disappointment at not having met Jawaharlal during his visit to China. She had suggested that a branch of the China Defence League should be set up in India to assist China.
3. A non-official organization for relief work in China with T.V. Soong as president and Madame Sun Yat-sen as chairman.

Some months back E.C. Carter sent me a letter of introduction for you. This was not necessary but I intended giving it to you when I met you as there is a personal message in it for you. I enclose this letter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To Madame Chiang Kai-shek[1]

December 25, 1939

Dear Madame Chiang,

Your letter of the 17th November, together with the Generalissimo's letter to Mr. Gandhi,[2] has just reached me. I was happy to get them and I am grateful to you for having written. I have read with deep interest the report of your visit to Changsha front.

I am sending the Generalissimo's letter to Mr. Gandhi. I am afraid there is little chance of Mr. Gandhi being able to leave India during this present crisis. Unfortunately he does not keep good health and yet he works very hard. He is just over 70 now.

A few days ago I learnt in Bombay that the President of the All India Women's Conference had sent you a cable requesting you to send representatives of the Chinese women's organisations to attend their Conference in Allahabad. This Conference, I believe, begins on the 27th January. I am afraid the notice is rather short but it would be an excellent thing if Chinese representatives could attend this Conference, thus coming into direct touch with many prominent women. They will be very welcome here if they could. Possibly my sister, Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, has also written to you on this subject.

Sir Stafford Cripps has been with us for a few days in India and has just left for Burma on his way to China. I envied him his visit to your country and felt sad that I had to come back so soon.

In these days of dynamic change, with the future so uncertain, it is inevitable that our minds should try to peep into this future. I am quite convinced that China and India have an important part to play

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 21 November 1939, Chiang Kai-shek had requested Mahatma Gandhi to pay a visit to China.

in world affairs and will play this part. But for the present all of us have to go through the valley of the shadow. It is a good training, I suppose, and nations that have grown slack and decadent rediscover their souls in this way.

Your letter ends up with the disturbing information that you were suffering from a severe attack of influenza. And yet you were good enough to write a long letter to me. I hope that you recovered soon after.

The new year approaches somehow. Each succeeding year has brought a deterioration of the international situation and has been full of sorrow and suffering for humanity. It is difficult, therefore, to get enthusiastic about the coming of a new year. May I, however, express the earnest hope that this new year will bring success to China's cause which is so much ours also?

With all my good wishes and regards to the Generalissimo and my homage to you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Madame Sun Yat-sen[1]

Allahabad
February 2, 1940

My dear Madame Sun,

The All India Women's Conference met recently in Allahabad at their annual session. They had sent previously an invitation to the Chinese women's organisations to send representatives to their annual session but there was no response to this invitation; possibly it did not reach in time. The Conference has now passed a resolution sending their greetings and goodwill to the women of China and suggesting that women's delegations might be exchanged between the two countries. I think this is an excellent idea and I do hope that it will bear fruit. The Conference here has decided in any event to send a delegation of their representatives to China provided this is considered desirable in China at this stage. I think that women representatives of our countries will

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

bring us closer to each other than even a men's delegation. Such a visit would have a certain international significance.

In the event of such a delegation going, I do hope that it will be possible for them to visit Hong Kong and to meet you. I know that they are eager to meet you and to pay their homage to you. We do not yet know who will be going but probably there will be three to five members of the delegation and my sister, Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, may be one of them. They have suggested that the month of May will probably be the most suitable time. But in regard to this they will be guided largely by suggestions received from China.

You will probably get a letter from a friend of mine, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur. She is one of the leading members of the Women's Conference here and is closely associated with Mahatma Gandhi.

Perhaps you have heard that Dr. D. Mukherji has been unable to proceed to China, as his passport was taken away from him when he reached Rangoon and he had to return to Calcutta. He was carrying medical supplies with him and he left these with the Chinese Consul in Rangoon.

With regards and good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. To C.C. Huang[1]

Allahabad
February 2, 1940

Dear Mr. Huang,

Some two months ago, Rani Lakshmibai Rajwade, the then President of the All India Women's Conference, sent a letter by air mail to Madame Chiang Kai-shek, inviting representatives of the Chinese women's organisations to the annual session of the All India Women's Conference. As no reply has yet been received to this letter, it appears that perhaps the letter went astray or was delayed in transit.

The All India Women's Conference held its session in Allahabad during the last week of January and they passed a resolution conveying the sympathy and goodwill of the Indian people to the women of China,

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

and further suggesting that women's delegations might be exchanged between the two countries. They have invited the Chinese women's organisations to send a delegation to India, and they have themselves decided to send a delegation to China. I understand that the President of the Conference, Begum Hamid Ali, is writing to you on the subject and is also writing directly to Madame Chiang Kai-shek. Probably you will hear from her in the course of the next two or three days. Meanwhile, I am writing to you to inform you of this development and to suggest to you that you might find out from your government as well as from the Chinese women's organisations whether such a delegation from India should go in the near future or not. Naturally a delegation like this should only go at a time suitable to the Chinese Government. If they think that it is desirable for this delegation to visit China, then further arrangements can be made in this matter. Otherwise the sending of the delegation can be postponed to a more suitable opportunity.

Personally I would greatly welcome the visit of a delegation of Indian women to China. This would result in drawing our two countries closer to each other and the mere fact of representative women from India going to China during war time would have a considerable significance.

Probably the most suitable time for such a delegation to visit China would be, from the Indian point of view, the month of May or end of April. The visit might last three to four weeks. I imagine that the only suitable route would be *via* Rangoon, Lashio and the Burma-China route, or by air along the same route. For this purpose the cooperation of the Chinese Government would of course be necessary.

If the delegation goes, they would naturally be most interested in all forms of women's activities, in educational institutions, summer camps, orphans' homes, industrial undertakings and specially village cooperatives and industries. They would like to find out how the women of China are helping both in war-time activities and in the reconstruction of the country. Social work is bound to interest them. As a matter of fact there is so much of absorbing interest in China today that it is difficult to make a list of it.

It has not been decided yet as to who should form the personnel of the delegation. This question can only be settled after it is definitely known that such a delegation is going to China and the time when it is going. I imagine that the delegation will consist of three to five nembers. Probably my sister, Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, will join the lelegation.

I shall be grateful to you if you will kindly communicate with your government and let us know what their reactions are to this proposal. The sooner this is known here the easier it will be to make the neces-

sary plans and arrangements. I am interesting myself in this matter especially as I am eager to see some of my countrywomen going to China and thus drawing the two countries closer to each other. A women's delegation, it seems to me, will serve this purpose even better than a men's delegation.

I had the pleasure of meeting the Rev. Tai Hsu[2] and his colleagues of the Chinese Buddhist Mission in Benares two days ago.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Rev. Abbot Tai-hsu, Chinese Buddhist monk and reformer, advocated the education of monks and the revival of scholarly traditions.

6. To Purushottamdas Thakurdas and Others[1]

Bombay
February 11, 1940

I have received a letter from Chungking, from a person influentially connected with the Chinese Government, suggesting that efforts might be made to increase trade and financial contacts between India and China, and, in particular, that Indian exports might figure largely in Chinese trade returns. It has also been suggested that a mission of some leading Indian manufacturers and financiers might visit China to explore the possibilities of profitable economic intercourse between the two countries. I do not know what can be done in this matter, or what is possible under existing circumstances. I am inviting a few friends to meet me at the National Planning Committee's office (.....) on Tuesday February 13th at 11 a.m. to discuss this question informally. I shall be grateful to you if you will find it convenient to attend this small informal gathering.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

7. To Purushottamdas Thakurdas[1]

Bombay
February 12, 1940

My dear Sir Purushottamdas,[2]
I give below extracts from the letter from Madame Chiang Kai-shek which I showed you. The letter is dated Chungking, 17th January 1940.

> It is interesting that you should have remarked upon the part that China and India are destined to play in world affairs in the future, because your friend, Sir Stafford Cripps, only yesterday expressed similar thoughts.
>
> He sees immediate possibilities of profitable economic intercourse between our two countries. He thinks that India has several contributions that it could make to China's war needs, and suggested that a mission of a few of your leading manufacturers and financiers might find it worthwhile to visit China.
>
> Sir Stafford told me that he had written to you on the subject. As you have been here I would like to have your reaction to the suggestion. Do you think that India could supply products to aid us in our resistance, such as railway materials, munitions, chemicals, etc? Is there any possibility of Indian financiers being interested in this market, and particularly in our financial needs?
>
> If mutual arrangements could be made there is no reason why Indian exportations should not figure largely in our trade returns at the moment and in the future. I know there are difficulties in the way, but the idea might be explored if you could put it to some of your countrymen in a position to do something to develop such relations.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1879-1961); industrialist of Bombay.

8. To Madame Chiang Kai-shek[1]

Allahabad
February 20, 1940

Dear Madame Chiang,
Thank you very much for your letter of the 17th January. I am glad to learn that you are well again. Illness is indeed a luxury which persons like you, on whom so much depends, can ill afford to indulge in. And yet perhaps that is nature's way of giving you a rest.

You mention in your letter that you had sent a telegram expressing your inability to attend the All India Women's Conference. So far as I know, no telegram from you was received by anyone connected with the Conference. They realised of course that it would hardly be possible for you to leave China at this juncture. They hoped however that possibly you could send some representatives of the Chinese women's organisations.

As you have been informed already, the Conference has repeated its invitation to you and to the Chinese women's organisations. They have further decided to send a delegation of Indian women to China if you approve of such a step. In the event of such a delegation materialising, it is probable that my sister will accompany it.

Conditions everywhere, including India, are so uncertain that it is very difficult to make any long distance plans. I cannot say what the state of affairs here will be two or three months hence. But I do hope that it will be possible for some of our women representatives to visit China and to draw inspiration from the work and activities of Chinese women in the midst of trial and crisis.

Your letter reached me when I was in Bombay presiding over a meeting of our National Planning Committee. As this committee includes many leading industrialists and manufacturers, I decided to consult them immediately in regard to the possibilities of increasing economic intercourse between our two countries. I invited a number of them to an informal meeting to discuss this matter. They were all agreeably disposed but, as you know, businessmen are hard-boiled and do not give way to sentiment and the like. They said that they would like to have fuller information and more concrete proposals. Regarding the proposal that an Indian delegation should go to China, they said that this might be possible. They preferred, however, a visit to India of Chinese representatives who could speak to them authoritatively. I think that if this could be arranged, it would facilitate matters.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I have drawn up a memorandum giving the purport of our discussions at this informal meeting and I am enclosing a copy of it for your information.[2] I have sent copies of this memorandum also to the Chinese Consul-General in Calcutta and to the Vice-Consul in Bombay. I shall be happy to help in any way that I can. My own contacts with Indian business-circles are somewhat peculiar. Some of the leading manufacturers are my personal friends. With many of them I came into touch in my capacity as Chairman of the Planning Committee, and generally they would go out some way to please me. At the same time they are rather apprehensive of what they consider my radical views in regard to the organisation of industry. In any event what influences them most, after the manner of their kind all over the world, is the profit side of an undertaking. They feel friendly towards China and latterly I have found a definite anti-Japanese sentiment growing up among them. I think they would be prepared to go as far as they can to help China as well as to develop further contacts with her. But they will fight shy of anything that is likely to lead to substantial loss.

The political situation in India will also inevitably affect this development of economic intercourse with China. If the British Government view this with disfavour and put obstructions in the way, they might frighten away many of our businessmen. If the British Government remains more or less neutral, then something might be done.

There is a possibility of my going to Europe and even to America in the summer. This will of course depend very largely on the developments in India as well as elsewhere. My daughter is at present in Switzerland undergoing treatment and I should like to see her if I can manage it.

With all good wishes and regards to you and the Generalissimo.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

[2] Not printed.

9. Chinese Industrial Cooperatives[1]

The magnificent way in which China has stood up to Japanese aggression has won for her the sympathy and admiration of India and of people throughout the world. Resistance by arms has gained publicity but the other form of resistance, the constructive building up of a nation, in the midst of trial and difficulty, does not attract so much attention. And yet it is this latter which goes to prove the vitality and the greatness of a people, and it is this which tells in the end. The Chinese people, engaged as they have been for two and a half years in a life and death struggle, have yet paid a great deal of attention to these constructive activities. Nationalist China is full of organised effort to this end, in which the women and the youth of the country have taken special part. Most interesting of all, perhaps, has been the growth of the vast network of Chinese industrial cooperatives in the villages and hinterland of China, and sometimes even behind the Japanese lines. Village industries have been organised and encouraged, new industries on a small scale have been started, and thus not only has production been increased greatly but the attempt of the Japanese to gain a stranglehold on the economic life of China prevented.

A recent instance shows how these industrial cooperatives deal with major problems. The magnificent road that has been built from Kunming to the Burma border is now one of the main routes into and out of China. This road brings China very near to Burma and India and along this road, and the railway that is being built alongside, will no doubt flow merchandise and all manner of goods. The economic intercourse between India and China will thus grow and the bonds that unite China to India will increase to their mutual advantage. Now is the time for Indian industrialists and manufacturers to develop these contacts.

There are at present a large number of motor trucks plying up and down the Kunming-Burma Road. But still transport facilities are insufficient for the growing volume of business. Except in cases of urgency, motor trucks are expensive to run. The Chinese industrial cooperatives have therefore decided to supplement this motor traffic by the use of handcarts. They intend organising the villages along the road, and especially near the Burma-Yunnan border, into:

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 21 February 1940. *National Herald*, 23 February 1940.

(1) Cooperative societies for the manufacture of simple handcarts with rubber-tyred wheels, and

(2) transport cooperatives to pull materials into China from Indian and Burmese sources on these carts.

These cooperatives will help greatly in solving the problem of transport along this new road, and will at the same time provide employment, on cooperative lines, to large numbers of people.

An appeal has come to us from the Chinese industrial cooperatives for old motor tyres which can be used for these handcarts. I do not know how far it is possible to collect these old tyres but I am sure there must be many motorists in India who would willingly make this small gift to the people of China. If there is a sufficient response, there will be no difficulty in making collections. Congress committees and other organisations can help in this. Those who are interested in this can communicate either with the Secretary, Foreign Department, A.I.C.C., Allahabad, or the Secretary, I.N.C. China Committee, Congress House, Bombay.

10. To W.H. Donald[1]

February 27, 1940

Dear Mr. Donald,[2]

Sir Stafford Cripps has written[3] to me about the development of economic intercourse between India and China. He has suggested that I might write to you on the subject as he was likely to be away. His letter, though coming by air, took nearly six weeks in the process and this delay may prevent my answer reaching him in time.

As a matter of fact I had a letter from Madame Chiang Kai-shek on this subject about two weeks ago and I consulted a number of Indian industrialists, manufacturers and financiers in Bombay immediately. I have sent a full report of our talks to Madame Chiang.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. An Australian adviser at the Generalissimo's headquarters.
3. On 14 February 1940, Sir Stafford Cripps had written: "I want to do all I can to encourage trade and economic relationships between China and India as in the future for a free India I am sure it will be important. There are masses of openings of every kind from finance to second-hand machinery."

Briefly, the result of these talks was this. There is a general desire on the part of our business people and industrialists to encourage economic intercourse with China and to lay the foundations of closer trade contacts in the future. But, like all business people, they are hard-headed, not adventurous, very cautious and generally afraid of losing money. They wanted all manner of information which I was unable to supply. I have put them in touch with the Chinese consuls here.

There is the political difficulty. It will not be easy for much to be done at this end if the Government of India is at all obstructive, and the Government of India today is just an off-shoot of the British Government. War-time conditions here also create obstacles as the government controls, to a large extent, trade and financial operations. The war in Europe also has created certain conditions in India which are profitable to our industrialists here. They want to take full advantage of these conditions and to put their money in undertakings which promise quick and substantial results.

In spite of all this there is a possibility of something being done because the goodwill is there. The industrialists here were strongly of opinion that it would be desirable for representatives of the Chinese Government to visit India and to confer with them authoritatively. They felt that if they sent a mission to China, that would not be conducive to any substantial results at this stage. It would be a good thing therefore if one or more persons from China could come here with full information and authority. They might visit Calcutta and Bombay and possibly Delhi and meet industrialists and businessmen. This should not take much time.

So far as I am concerned, I should very much like to help in the development of these trade relations.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11

GENERAL

1. Draft of the Jamshedpur Award[1]

The Tata Iron and Steel Co. Ltd. and the Tata Workers' Union have jointly appointed us[2] arbitrators and submitted certain points for our decision. They have agreed to abide by our decision in regard to the matters referred to us. The terms of reference consist of five points submitted by the Company and nine points submitted by the Union. Although these points are thus separately listed, both the sets of terms were agreed to by the two parties. There is a slight overlapping of these terms and some of them are connected with the same set of events. We give these terms of reference in the appendix[3] attached to this award.

2. Many of these terms refer to relatively unimportant matters which normally should have been settled between the parties or by a reference to the Labour Commissioner. All important questions relating to the relations between capital and labour, and employer and employee in this province have been fully considered by the Bihar Labour Inquiry Committee and their report is likely to be published before long. This report and its recommendations will probably lead to legislation. It would have been improper for us, after a brief consideration of certain relatively unimportant matters, to come to a decision on the more vital issues which the Labour Inquiry Committee is considering. We trust that this Committee will suggest effective methods for the avoidance, as far as possible, of labour disputes, and for the rapid and equitable settlement of any dispute that might arise. We have therefore confined ourselves to the immediate points placed before us. Any suggestions that we might make about future procedure may have to be varied later in view of the recommendations of the Labour Inquiry Committee.

3. We have accepted this arbitration because of our desire to remove, as far as possible, the tension that exists between capital and labour in Jamshedpur, and, more especially, between the Tata Iron and Steel Co. and the Tata Workers' Union. The points referred to us, as we have said, are not of great importance, nor do they have any basic significance. But it is important that in this industrial city there should be coordination between labour and capital, that the energies of either

1. Jamshedpur, 5 August 1939. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Jawaharlal and Rajendra Prasad.
3. Not printed.

should not be wasted in unnecessary conflict, that healthy trade unionism should grow up, that industry should function efficiently. All this would have been important at any time and in any event. It is more so now, when we are on the eve of great industrial expansion. This province of Bihar is rich in its mineral and other resources. It is more fortunate in that respect than any other province in India, and given proper direction and cooperation, it can advance with great rapidity. But this advance will be checked and impeded if there is a background of continuous tension and labour trouble. A measure of prosperity has come to it because of new industries that have grown up, but far more of it is within its grasp if the government and the people work to this end. Those who control industry must realise that the workers have to share in this prosperity or else there will be continuous dissatisfaction and tension; they have to appreciate that the worker of today claims to be treated not merely as a commodity whose labour has been bought in the market place, but as a person with human rights and privileges. The workers have to realise that those who claim rights have to undertake obligations also; that in the new status that should be theirs by right they have to behave with dignity and discipline; that their strength lies in unity and in the development of strong, democratic trade unions.

4. It is because we had in mind these vital considerations, and because we were anxious and eager to help in the development of disciplined workers' organisations as well as of efficiency in industry, that we accepted this arbitration. We are encouraged to think that our visit to Jamshedpur with this object has already met with some success. The representatives of the Tata Iron and Steel Co. and those of the Tata Workers' Union have assured us of their desire to avoid conflict as far as possible, and to cooperate with and show consideration to each other in the interests of the workers and the industry. Tension and occasional conflicts are unfortunately inherent in the present relations of capital and labour. Nor can suspicion of each other be wholly avoided. But we are convinced that it is to the interests of all concerned at present to avoid conflict and to cooperate. It is to the interest of the employers to have a strong and healthy trade union which can look after the interests of the workers and deal with them collectively on their behalf. It is to the interest of the workers to have efficiency and discipline in industry as well as in their own ranks. This applies even more to Jamshedpur and the Tata Works than to other places.

5. We have spent four days in Jamshedpur and have daily met in conference—Sir Ardeshir Dalal, Managing Director, Mr. J.J. Gandhy, General Manager and Mr. S.K. Sinha, Tata's Agent in Calcutta on behalf of the Tata Company, and Professor Abdul Bari, President of the

Tata Workers' Union, and Mr. Mittra of the Tin Plate Workers' Union, who assisted Professor Bari. It was unfortunate that Mr. John, the Secretary of the Tata Workers' Union, suddenly fell ill on the first day and was unable to meet us again. His absence made a difference to the workers' case as, being working secretary of the Union, he was the only person who knew about many matters. He could not be replaced by another. Mr. Pillai, the Labour Commissioner, was also present throughout and gave us great help with his special knowledge of labour conditions in Jamshedpur; so also Mr. Vidyabhushan Sharma, the assistant to the Bihar Minister for Labour.

6. We were informed that the cases of Debnath, Lanka, Ramakrishna, Sheonath and Jaganaikulu (which were mentioned in No. 7(c) of the Union's terms of reference) had been settled to the satisfaction of the parties. These were therefore not considered by us.

7. Before we consider any of the terms in detail, it is worthwhile to refer briefly to the past history of labour troubles in Jamshedpur. Without some knowledge of this background, it is difficult to understand what has happened or what is happening, or to appreciate the amount of distrust and suspicion of each other that unfortunately exists between the workers and their employers in this city. Jamshedpur became notorious in past years for its *goonda* element; there were frequent clashes between sets of workers belonging to rival unions, meetings were broken up, violence and the throwing of stones were common occurrences. Under these circumstances no strong and disciplined trade unions could grow up and the interests of the workers were sacrificed by ambitious leaders. It was commonly thought that the Company was not averse to these conflicts between rival unions and encouraged them in the hope that they would lead to the weakening of the labour movement. Some of the undesirable elements were supposed to be subsidised by them. With their pronounced American background in those past years, they were charged with introducing American methods in dealing with labour troubles. Some of the labour leaders and their henchmen were openly accused of receiving subsidies from the Company. It appears to us that there is some truth in these allegations. Whatever the motive or reason might have been, and it must have been largely the fear of the hooligan elements, the Company adopted dubious methods to deal with them. This unfortunate reputation clung to them even when they had given up those methods, and clings to them to some extent still. We are assured by their high officers, however, that for some years past they have had nothing to do with these methods, and we see no reason to disbelieve. They assure us that in their own interests they are eager to cooperate in the building up of a strong and disciplined trade union

organisation and to eliminate all elements of *goondaism* from Jamshedpur.

8. These past rivalries and conflicts between workers led to a great deterioration in their standards of behaviour. The wildest charges were hurled at each other and believed and an atmosphere of suspicion enveloped the city. Personal accusations of extraordinary virulence were made against individuals by name and everybody's motive was suspect. Even when there was a basis of truth in an allegation, this was grossly exaggerated. All this resulted in bitterness and suspicion of everybody and it is difficult to live down this legacy. Public speeches in Jamshedpur even today are stronger in language and more personal in their context than in most other places, and the public, used to this strong meat, does not appreciate vegetarianism in language. Indeed, moderation in language itself leads to suspicion of motive, and there is a tendency to outdo each other in charges and accusations. It is time that language and writing were more controlled and circumspect. Neither public life nor the labour movement can thrive for long on the insecure and undesirable basis of strong language. The workers of Jamshedpur are a fine body of men and women and they deserve something better than this fare. They ought to give the lead to India by building up strong and dignified labour unions, which do not shout too much but act with dignity and strength whenever occasion arises.

9. By the end of 1937 a number of unions of workers in the Tata Company had faded away, among these being the Labour Association and the Metal Workers' Union. The Labour Federation still continued, though it was much weaker than it had been in the past. It was not a registered union and it had not been recognised by the Company. It was connected, in the minds of many persons, with the hooliganism which had been so characteristic of labour work in Jamshedpur in past years.

10. Early in 1938 Professor Abdul Bari started the Tata Workers' Union in Jamshedpur. He was a leading Congressman in the province, very popular in labour circles, and with a reputation for rectitude. In the prevailing atmosphere of Jamshedpur, where labour was weary of its old leaders, who had so often led it astray, he had an immediate success. His Union, of which he became President, and Mr. John, a well-tried and respected labour worker in Jamshedpur, became the General Secretary, was registered and was recognised by the Tata Company. Workers flocked to this Union and very soon it became far the most powerful trade union in Jamshedpur. Professor Bari was also associated as president with a number of other trade unions in Jamshedpur. There was no overlapping of these unions as each one of them was formed for a separate industrial concern.

11. On the 29th March 1938 there was an agreement between the Company and Professor Bari in regard to the increase of shifts from 12 to 15. It was further agreed that this should be kept confidential till the 3rd April when Professor Bari would himself announce it in a publice meeting. Meanwhile it appears that Mr. Homi, the President of the Labour Federation, got to know of this and, desiring to take the credit for announcing it first, issued large numbers of notices to this effect on the 3rd April. The officers of the Company, when they heard that Mr. Homi was going to do this, decided to forestall him by issuing their own notice.

Professor Bari unfortunately missed his train that day and arrived later than was expected. He was exceedingly annoyed at what he considered a breach of his agreement with the Company whom he accused of giving private information of the proposed change to Mr. Homi. Mr. Homi had announced that it was due to his efforts that the number of shifts had been increased. Professor Bari felt that he (Mr. Homi) had been helped by the Company's officers to take unfair advantage of him. He requested the management to contradict Mr. Homi but no such step was taken.

12. Just about this time another occurrence took place which distressed Professor Bari and increased his distrust of the Company's management. His rival union, the Labour Federation of which Mr. Homi was President, had been in existence for many years but it had not been registered. The union had not been active for many years, from 1931 to 1936, as its President, Mr. Homi, had been sentenced to a long term of imprisonment for certain criminal offences. Throughout 1937 the union's application for registration had been pending before the government and apparently the Registrar was reluctant to register it. But suddenly the union was given registration about the end of March 1938 and forthwith the Tata Company recognised it. This was just within a day or two of the announcement of the increase of the number of shifts.

13. These two events happening more or less simultaneously convinced Professor Bari that the Company was not acting fairly towards him and the Tata Workers' Union and he accused the Company of *mala fides*. The management stated that they had recognised the Labour Federation because of an old promise that they would recognise it as soon as it was registered. It is difficult for us to say that there was any *mala fides* on the part of an officer of the Company. Probably there was a leakage from their office. It would have been better, however, if subsequently the management had corrected the wrong statement made by Mr. Homi according to which he claimed credit for the increase in the number of shifts. We also feel that the Company was

precipitate in recognising the Labour Federation just at that particular moment. If they had given a promise, they had to keep it, but a few days' delay would not have mattered. As it was, it is not surprising that Professor Bari and members of his Union should have felt that they were being overreached.

14. Soon after these incidents, a petty communal riot took place in Jamshedpur. It was alleged that the Company's management or some officers had encouraged this. We think this charge extremely unfair on the Company. It may be that some of the Company's employees took part in the riot. But the Company employs many thousands of persons and cannot be held responsible for the misdeeds of some of its employees. It would be equally unfair to hold the Union responsible for the misbehaviour of some of its thousands of members. It is necessary at any time, and more specially when there is suspicion in the air, to be careful of the truth of the charges made. There has been a singular laxity in this respect in Jamshedpur.

15. Later in April Professor Bari met the General Manager and, according to him (Professor Bari), arrived at another settlement with him, which Professor Bari immediately announced in a public meeting. The General Manager, however, denied this settlement and Professor Bari accused the Company of again going back on its word. We have gone into this matter with some care and we are convinced that there was misunderstanding on both sides. Various matters were discussed. In regard to some minor matters the General Manager agreed to Professor Bari's proposals. In regard to some others, he said he would consider them. Professor Bari evidently got the impression that he had accepted these also. It is exceedingly curious that no attempt was made to reduce the talk to writing. It is quite impossible to accuse a person of not adhering to a complicated oral agreement which has not been put down in writing. Misunderstandings are bound to arise under such circumstances. Besides, there is absolutely no point in agreeing to something one day and repudiating it a day or two later. Several attempts were made later on the part of the management to meet Professor Bari in order to clear up any misunderstandings, but unfortunately he avoided any meeting then.

16. Soon afterwards, Shri Subhas Chandra Bose arranged a meeting between Sir Ardeshir Dalal and Professor Bari in Calcutta. This led to another meeting on June 4th, 1938 when Sir Ardeshir Dalal and Professor Bari came to a settlement in the presence of the Prime Minister of Bihar. It is Professor Bari's contention that that settlement also was not adhered to on behalf of the Company. We do not think he is justified in saying so, although there might have been some little delay in

giving effect to some of the terms. Sir Ardeshir Dalal also admits that there was a mistake in giving increases in bonus in some cases without reference to Professor Bari. This was done by newcomers in the office who were not aware of that particular agreement.

17. Owing to these various incidents, Professor Bari's distrustful attitude towards the Company continued. There was, it should be remembered, the whole past background of Jamshedpur which bred suspicion of everything. Nevertheless we think that personal meetings and frank talks would have dispelled some at least of the misapprehensions. Unfortunately these were rarely indulged in and a state of tension continued to exist. Early in 1939 the Company organised the centenary celebrations of the founder. Professor Bari and his Union decided to boycott these. This was unfortunate as, whatever the grievances might have been against the management, they should not have been transferred to the founder, who is respected throughout India as a great Indian. It is true that Professor Bari made it clear that he meant no disrespect to the memory of the founder, but he objected to the Company trying to divert the workers' attention by games and celebrations from their grievances and demands. This boycott led to very unfortunate incidents, which we shall consider later, and further resulted in estrangement and bitterness.

18. We shall now consider the terms of reference. The first point of the Company deals with the dismissal of five men from the Sheet Mill for trespass, intimidation, violence and destruction of property on March 1st 1939. This was in connection with the centenary celebrations. The incidents that occurred on the night of February 28th-1st March and subsequently have been carefully and fully inquired into by Mr. Pillai, the Labour Commissioner. We have had the advantage of reading his account of them as well as the evidence recorded by him. On the basis of this, however, we have come to our own findings. Mr. Pillai examined 26 witnesses in the presence of the parties concerned, including representatives of the Union who cross-examined the witnesses. Professor Bari tells us that the Union could have produced additional evidence but preferred not to do so. He suggested that he might produce this evidence now. We felt, however, that no useful purpose would be served by our taking further evidence at this stage, over six months after the occurrence.

19. The charge was that there was a lightning strike in the Sheet Mill on the night of the 28th February-Ist March and thereupon a group of men, shouting and indulging in acts of indiscipline, went to some other departments and induced the workers there also to stop work for a while. Further, acts of sabotage are alleged. On behalf of

the Union it is stated that Mr. J.D. Price, the Superintendent of the Sheet Mills, wanted some of the workers to help in making decorations for the centenary celebrations. The workers refused to do so and thereupon Mr. Price forcibly took and dragged Ganga Singh, a foreman of the Sheet Mill, to decorate a car. This was resented by the workers who stopped work. The fact that work was stopped is not denied but the responsibility for it is laid on Mr. Price.

There is no doubt that some attempts at sabotage were made, though fortunately they did not succeed to any appreciable extent. It is admitted by everybody, including the representatives of the Union, that any such attempt is highly reprehensible and dangerous and must be severely dealt with. In any factory sabotage is most objectionable but in an iron and steel works this is exceedingly dangerous and cannot be tolerated. Any person indulging in deliberate sabotage cannot be excused. It must be proved, however, that a person was guilty of this before any action can be taken. It is clear from all the evidence recorded by Mr. Pillai that there is no sufficient proof to connect any of the five persons charged with acts of sabotage. We must, therefore, acquit all of them of sabotage.

There is, however, some evidence to show that Lachman deliberately damaged some of the centenary decorations.

20. Ganga Singh's evidence is important to explain the beginning of the trouble. He says clearly enough that he was not dragged by Mr. Price, and that he went to decorate the car on being asked to do so. It is possible of course that Ganga Singh dare not say otherwise for fear of offending his superior officers. Nevertheless the fact remains that his evidence, as well as that of others, goes to show that there was no physical compulsion. In any event, this was a small affair and was by no means a justification for a stoppage of work by the workers in the Sheet Mill.

21. It is clear also from the evidence that a group of persons from the Sheet Mill went to other departments and called on the workers there also to stop work. This was even more unjustified. These hartals were sudden and spontaneous and had not been authorised in any way by the Union. Later in the night Professor Abdul Bari came to the Sheet Mill and induced the workers to start work again. In the other departments work was stopped only for some minutes.

22. We are of opinion that these stoppages of work were unjustified and were breaches of discipline. Further in the early morning of 1st there was a destruction of certain decorations and models [illegible] for the centenary celebrations. This was also objectionable and reprehensible. It was open to anyone not to take part in the

celebrations or help in them, but it was not open to him or proper to destroy or damage the work done by others.

23. We shall now consider the case of the five men charged with various offences in connection with the occurrences of February 28th-March 1st.

Ghulam Mohammad and Ban Singh are accused of damaging decorations and models. There is no satisfactory evidence of this and we are of opinion that no steps should be taken against them.

G.L. Mukherjee is charged with stoppage of work, leading the group that went to the Duplex Plant in order to stop work there, and with throwing stones. There is no satisfactory evidence to show that he threw stones or did any other damage. It is admitted that he stopped work, and it is proved, we think, that he went to the Duplex Plant and helped in creating a disturbance there. He thus committed acts of indiscipline.

Fatehdin is charged with stoppage of work and with going to the Duplex Plant along with others. He admits stoppage of work. It is satisfactorily established also that he was among those who created a disturbance in the Duplex Plant. He thus committed acts of indiscipline.

Lachman is accused of wanton destruction of centenary decorations, notably an eagle which had been made with great care and labour. We are of opinion that Lachman did take part in this destruction and there could be no excuse for this.

24. In view of our findings we think that G.L. Mukherjee, Fatehdin and Lachman have laid themselves open to disciplinary action. What this action should be depends on many circumstances—the nature of the offence proved, whether it was on the spur of the moment or of deliberate design, whether it was persisted in even after the initial excitement was over, and the general record of the person concerned. It is possible that a good worker may, under stress of circumstances, do something which is utterly wrong and which he himself regrets. If so, it is desirable that he should be given another chance and not dealt with too severely. In view of our desire, which is also the desire of all parties concerned, that an atmosphere of goodwill should be created, this factor has also to be borne in mind. On the other hand, it is impossible to carry on an industry with indiscipline and disturbances within the works. When the indiscipline is proved it is the business of the management to take such action as it thinks proper, provided this action is not in the nature of victimisation. A trade union should itself be interested in maintaining discipline both in the works and within its own ranks.

With regard to G.L. Mukherjee our attention has been drawn to a long list of petty offences and failure to discharge his duty properly prior to the incidents discussed above. These relate to sleeping on duty, absence without notice, refusing orders and the like. He has been repeatedly warned, suspended for a few days at a time on seven separate occasions, and once the rate of payment to him was reduced from Rs. 1/4 to Re. 1/- a day for some months. This record is certainly not a good one. We do not therefore desire to come in the way of the exercise of the management's discretion in regard to the disciplinary action to be taken against these three men, namely G.L. Mukherjee, Fatehdin and Lachman.

25. The second of the terms of reference of the Company relates to the enrolment of the work guards as members of the Tata Workers' Union. The Union claims that they should be entitled to join it. This has been the past practice not only among Tata workers but in other companies in Jamshedpur and elsewhere. Even now this practice continues elsewhere. In the course of his evidence before the Labour Inquiry Committee, an officer of the Indian Cable Co., an important concern in Jamshedpur, admitted this fact. On behalf of the Tata Company, it is stated that the work guards are essential for safety against thefts in times of industrial peace, and even more essential during times of industrial strife where there is danger of violence or destruction of property. Even if the strikers are peaceful and disciplined, hooligan elements from the town might take advantage of the situation and commit sabotage. In the case of an iron and steel works protection from damage is even more necessary than elsewhere as such damage might lead to dangerous and disastrous consequences. Therefore, the Company argue, work guards should not be members of a union which might indulge in a strike.

26. The important nature of the duties of work guards is admitted on behalf of the Union. It is also agreed that even if there is a strike the guards should remain at their post of duty and should not strike. But why should they be deprived of the benefit of collective bargaining?

27. The question is a difficult one and unfortunately we are not fully acquainted with the practice in India or foreign countries. We understand that this question is under the consideration of the Bihar Labour Inquiry Committee. We do not wish to come in the way of their decision. The suggestions we make therefore are for this intervening period and subject to that decision.

Once it is admitted that guards are in the nature of safety-men who should not leave their work even during a strike, the point of difference is narrowed down. There is no reason why the guards should not have

the benefit of collective bargaining just as other workers, and, therefore, of forming a union with office-bearers of their own choice. If so they can either belong to the main Union or have a separate but allied union of their own. Even if they are not members of the Union, there is always a possibility of their being swept away by a wave of excitement when a strike takes place. The best guarantee against this is a definite understanding that they will not leave their jobs whatever happens. If this guarantee is given with goodwill and in good faith then it will be kept even under the strain of a strike. If so we would imagine that there is no great risk if the guards remain members of the main Union, subject to this guarantee. But in view of all the circumstances and as it is desired to distinguish them to some extent, because of their peculiar duties and the necessity of a stricter discipline, we suggest that they might be allowed to form a separate union, which however would cooperate in many ways with the main Union. Such a union would elect its own office-bearers. As we preclude strikes so far as they are concerned, there must be a method of settling any disputes relating to them. Where these are not settled amicably between the Company and the Union, we suggest that the matter be referred to the arbitration of the Labour Commissioner, whose decision should be final.

28. We do not think it is proper for the Company to take any disciplinary action against any work guards on the ground that they are members of the Tata Workers' Union or have formed a separate union of their own.

29. Numbers three, four and five of the Company's terms may be taken together as they relate to Professor Bari's activities. Objection is taken to the language of his speeches and to his imputing motives to officers of the Company. It is alleged that he is responsible for the slackening in discipline and frequent slowing down of work. Further, it is stated that he did not implement his undertaking to cooperate in the suppression of *goondaism* in Jamshedpur.

30. We agree with regret that Professor Bari's speeches have often been very intemperate and the language he has used has been undesirable. We regret still more that he has sometimes made statements, based on hearsay, which were not in fact correct, and that he has imputed unworthy motives to the Company or its chief officers. We have already referred to the peculiar atmosphere of Jamshedpur where for years past these practices have been indulged in. We realise that there is a tendency for people to be affected by this atmosphere and past history. We know also that in disputes between labour and capital passions and suspicions are easily roused, and sometimes there are grounds for suspicion. But no solid labour movement can prosper on

this basis or command the respect of others. Rumours and vague suspicions, though devoid of foundation, become translated into facts in the minds of unthinking people when they are referred to by a leader of the position of Professor Bari, and this becomes the breeding ground for future troubles. A labour leader and a trade union have to be ever vigilant in defence of the rights of the workers, and there are many ways of making them slip or go astray. But a labour movement must be carried on with dignity and courtesy, and with strict regard to proved facts. In particular, personal attacks or insinuations have to be avoided. We have every hope that Professor Bari will appreciate what we say on this subject and will set an example which Jamshedpur so sorely needs.

31. There is no doubt that there has been a slackening of discipline in the Works and that this has led to lightning hartals, slowing down of work and other consequences. We are entirely opposed to lightning hartals, or sudden slowing of work, or anything that lessens discipline. The right to strike is a much prized possession of labour, but if this is not exercised with propriety and discipline, it loses its value. Lightning strikes are breaches not only of the discipline of the Works but also of the discipline of the Union, for they take place without reference to the Union itself. Any group of workers can indulge in them when they feel like it. This must be discouraged.

As for Professor Bari's responsibility for this, we are definitely of opinion that his influence has been cast on the side of discipline and good work ever since he came to Jamshedpur. He may not have succeeded to the extent hoped for. He had and has a difficult task and it is not easy to live down the past legacy of indiscipline. Whenever there has been a slowing down in the Works, or a sudden stoppage, Professor Bari has always come and put an end to it. No doubt he, in common with others, has to shoulder part of the responsibility for much that has happened. But it would be absurd to make him responsible for it all. It is probable that but for him conditions would have been far worse. We have every hope that in the future his influence will be exercised in favour of discipline and efficiency. This is always a matter of give and take and cooperation between the parties concerned. Given this desire to cooperate, progress should be rapid.

32. The suppression of *goondaism* in Jamshedpur should be, and we hope is, the desire of all parties. It should be the business of the government to take the necessary steps in this direction. Professor Bari apparently did not approve a particular measure which was suggested. We have not seen this and can express no opinion about it.

But we are sure that Professor Bari will cooperate in all effective steps to this end.

33. We now come to the Union's terms of reference. The first is that the Tata Workers' Union be the only Union recognised by the Company. At present the Company also recognises the Labour Federation. This recognition was given rather hurriedly, as we have mentioned above. It would probably have been better if recognition had been delayed, especially in view of the fact that Mr. Homi, who controls the Labour Federation, was convicted and sentenced to a long period of imprisonment for misappropriation of labour funds. In any event the Federation was recognised and we have to deal with the situation as it is.

It is obvious that the recognition of two rival associations is likely to lead to practical difficulties and to possible attempts at playing off one against the other. In the interests of labour as well as of the Company it is desirable to have one strong, disciplined and democratic union. The *goondaism* that has prevailed in Jamshedpur in the past has been partly due to the rivalry of unions. We are therefore entirely in favour of one strong union. But under the existing circumstances it is difficult for us to suggest how this is to be brought about. We do not even possess any data to show the membership or present position of the Labour Federation. We suggest that this matter might be considered by the Labour Commissioner to the Government of Bihar and his advice sought by the Company.

34. The question of payment of departmental bonus is a difficult and complicated one. Yet the principles are not in dispute. The actual rate of payment has been agreed to and it is also admitted that it should apply to those workers who are engaged in some way in the production or operation departments. It is difficult, however, to draw a hard and fast line between the operation and other departments.

35. We understand that there are three kinds of bonuses in the Tata Co. There is a profit-sharing bonus, a general production bonus, and a departmental bonus. The first two go to all the workers. The third was at first meant for certain key men on the production side as an incentive to greater effort. This affected about 2,000 workers. Later this was extended to all workers in the production departments, comprising 7,000 to 8,000 workers. Further extensions took place to bring in certain others who were partly concerned with production. Some of these extensions are not very logical and there seems to be no valid reason why some others should not also be included.

On behalf of the Company it is urged that if they extend it much further, to the detriment of the principle they have tried to follow, then

there is no limit to the extension and it will ultimately comprise all the workers. It will in effect become a general bonus and will lose its peculiar character as an incentive, apart from involving the Company in very heavy additional burdens. There is some force in this argument.

36. For a proper decision of this point, it will be necessary to examine all manner of intricate questions and we are wholly unable to do this. Probably it is desirable for the whole system of bonuses to be reviewed, with a view to evolving a more satisfactory scheme. Perhaps the Bihar Labour Inquiry Committee will go into this matter and make suggestions.

37. For the present all we can suggest is a formula which might be applied to the payment of departmental bonus. We suggest this formula. The departmental bonus should be paid to all workers, in receipt of general production bonus only, who are borne on the rolls of the operation departments, as well as to workers on the rolls of other departments who are employed on direct production or maintenance or inspection work in the operation departments for the period during which they are so employed. The interpretation or application of this formula may give rise to difference of opinion. If such a difference arises, the question whether any worker or any body of workers comes within the formula or not should be decided by the Labour Commissioner whose decision should be binding on the parties to this arbitration.

38. Serious charges have been made against Mr. Kutar who is Assistant General Superintendent in the Mills. He has denied these. He has, however, admitted that in past years he was associated, under orders from the Company, with the steps taken to counteract and check various *goonda* elements. We have already referred to these activities of the Company in the late twenties, which were patterned after American methods of repressing labour. We can quite understand that this past association has clung to Mr. Kutar and made some people suspect his activities, howsoever innocent they might be. The actual charges brought against him of happenings in the present or recent past are somewhat trivial, except one which relates to other companies. An offer was made to produce evidence. We did not encourage this as it would have led us nowhere. In view of Mr. Kutar's earnest and emphatic denial we thought that the matter should rest there and, we are glad to say, the representatives of the Union agreed to this. We hope that there will be more cooperation in the future between the Union and the officers of the Company and therefore it is undesirable to put up any barriers to this.

39. The conduct of Mr. Price on the night of the 28th February has already been referred to earlier in this Award. The evidence

recorded by Mr. Pillai does not indicate anything which demands further inquiry.

40. So far as we can find out, no work guards have been discharged merely because of their membership of the Tata Workers' Union. We have already said that this should not be a reason for discharge. But if any guards have been discharged for dereliction of duty since 1st March 1939, it is a matter of internal management with which we are not called upon to interfere. We cannot therefore say that those guards who have been discharged should be reinstated. It is always open to any of these guards, as to any other employee of the Company, who feels himself aggrieved, to seek the advice of the Labour Commissioner. The work guards who have been discharged may, if they so desire, approach the Labour Commissioner, who will, where he considers this necessary, bring to the notice of the Company any case where injustice appears to have been done.

41. Regarding the case of Satya Narain, we feel it is difficult for us to interfere with the discretion of the Company. It is a much more serious matter to demand a person's dismissal than to ask for reinstatement.

42. No fines were imposed, as stated in No. 6 of the terms of reference, for the stoppage of work on February 28th. On that night some employees stopped work for about two hours and forty minutes. The Company has not paid them their wages for this period during which they did not work. This non-payment of wages for this period cannot be characterised as fines levied on the men.

43. Nurse Das—Very elaborate inquiries have been made in this case by the General Manager and Mr. S.K. Sinha. The nurse was discharged on October 8, 1938 for impertinent conduct and disobedience of orders. We see no reason to differ from the findings of the officers of the Company. We would however suggest that in case she apologises unreservedly for her conduct and undertakes to conform to the discipline of the hospital, the question of her reinstatement might be considered by the Company, provided the General Medical Officer approves of this.

44. The case of Ekbal Hussain is one of promotion to the post of shearman. Barju and Sirkar were his seniors as assistant shearmen but Ekbal Hussain was senior to them in total service. The Company's case is that Ekbal was considered the most efficient and was recommended by the foreman. This is a matter entirely of internal departmental management and we see no reason to interfere.

45. On behalf of the Union it is stated that there has been great delay on the part of the management in dealing with the letters and

complaints sent by the Union. We found that a large number of letters were answered after a month or two. Many were answered much sooner. What we are concerned with, and both the Company and Union desire this, is the quick disposal of all complaints in the future. No time-limit can be fixed but there is no reason why there should be any delay. Letters should be answered as quickly as possible. If there is a delay a telephone reminder would expedite matters. What is important, however, is frequent meetings between the secretary of the Union and the labour officer of the company. There is already a practice of joint committees to meet once a week to consider such complaints as arise. These committees should try to dispose of all pending matters even though this means sitting for more than one day. This would prevent delay. Apart from this the Union secretary can always approach the labour officer to clear up any matter or to draw his attention to it.

46. Both the Company and the Union have pressed upon us the necessity of a government labour officer living in Jamshedpur permanently to deal with all labour matters that arise. We entirely agree with this proposal and would strongly urge upon the Bihar Government to appoint such an officer. The Labour Commissioner has the whole province to deal with and it is not possible for him to spend too much time here. Jamshedpur is a key place and of great importance in labour matters. Therefore a labour officer should be appointed here. He will function under the Labour Commissioner.

47. The last term of reference on behalf of the Union deals with the delay in extending electric light to the lower-rented quarters. There has been some delay but the Company is not responsible for this. One of the principal contractors has been the chief cause of delay. However, we are assured that the work for the year will be completed next month, and next year's programme is well in hand.

2. Flying During the Monsoon[1]

I have done a fair amount of flying in India, both in the north and in the south. But this was my first experience of flying during the monsoon and I saw a new and pleasing sight. Ordinarily the countryside

1. 5 August 1939. *National Herald*, 13 August 1939. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 213-215.

looks dry and parched and the eye gets tired by the monotony of the landscape. Not so during the monsoon. We all know how the monsoon brings welcome rain to the parched earth, and the pleasant smell of fresh rain-water on the dry land, and the greenery that blossoms at that magic touch. But to see this from on high brought home this change more vividly. Everything was green, though there were many shades to that greenery, and abundant water often flooded the fields. The trees stood out, cool and clean-looking and even the little villages that dotted the landscape lost some of their drab appearance. The eye rested and lingered over this sight and did not get tired. India seemed to be a green and pleasant land, rich in beauty and the wealth of its soil.

We flew low, usually about five or six hundred feet and the land rushed passed us. Above us were the clouds and we had to keep under them in order to avoid blind flying. And because we flew low we saw the landscape in some detail and observed men and women working in the fields, and cattle straying lazily on the pasture grounds. We could take in that picture from that height, and while seeing a wide expanse of earth, yet be near enough to be of it. Sometimes a hill would approach us, and we would just go over it and leave it far behind. Sometimes rain poured down on us and battered on the glass screen. We did not worry much about it. Nor did we really mind air pockets which made us jump. But when the clouds and mists began to envelop us, flying low as we were, then my pilot was a little worried. When we reached Bamrauli it was raining hard and a mist covered the aerodrome, so that it was difficult to distinguish it.

I had wanted to start early in the morning from Jamshedpur and reach Lucknow in the forenoon at the latest. But reports of thunderstorms and high winds were not encouraging and my pilot, an expert at his job, was in no mood to take risks. We postponed our departure till a better report came and eventually took off a little before noon. We flew fast with a following wind pushing us on. Towns and villages passed us, and the river Sone and the Ganga with Benares in the distance. It had been good flying so far with only occasional bumps. As we approached Allahabad black and threatening clouds came nearer and nearer and it was obvious that we were going into a big thunderstorm. Out of these clouds suddenly appeared an Imperial Airways flying-boat a little to our right and sailed majestically by. It was big enough to go through that storm but our small plane was beginning to be buffeted.

Our pilot decided in favour of discretion and turned back to Benares. We landed there on the military aerodrome. After some waiting, which we utilised in filling up with petrol, we decided to venture up

again. But the ground did not have much of a runway and our plane felt heavy. So I dropped my luggage in Benares and parted also with Upadhyaya who had been accompanying me. Thus lightened we flew easily enough and headed for Allahabad. As we approached the city the low-lying clouds enveloped us and rain lessened the visibility still further. We crossed the Ganga and my eyes spotted Anand Bhawan and Swaraj Bhawan and many other familiar landmarks. Even the Alfred Park looked singularly attractive from above, perhaps because of the monsoon. We flew right over the High Court, flying low and I could see large numbers of the men of the law crowding in the verandahs to see this impertinent little plane rush by.

And so to Bamrauli in just half an hour from Benares. There was little chance of our going further by air that day and I bade goodbye to our pilot and the gallant little plane that had brought us, and decided, regretfully, to continue my journey to Lucknow by the slow-moving railway train.

The big airliners usually fly high. The K.L.M. has taken me 18,000 feet above sea-level and flown over the snow-covered Alps. We flew so high even over the Dead Sea in Palestine that frost covered our window-panes. Once I had a curious experience in an Imperial Airways liner flying over the deserts of Sind. This was my first experience of long-distance flying. It was early morning and the dawn was stealing over the earth. I saw stretched out far below me a magnificent snow-field. There it was stretching as far as I could see on every side of us, a glistening uniform mass of snow. I rubbed my eyes in amazement and looked again. There could be no mistaking it. But it was absurd to have snow in Sind. Was it cotton-wool then, masses of it strewn on the ground? That was an equally fantastic notion. We were flying high and the sky above us was clear and blue. Below us also for some thousands of feet there was no cloud and then there was this white shining mass apparently covering the ground. The mystery was solved soon enough when we came down about five thousand feet and lost ourselves in the clouds. We emerged out of them and under them, and found we were still flyng nearly ten thousand feet above the ground.

Flying high, one loses touch with the earth. It seems distant, apart from us and very few details are visible. A big river may be a silver streak but even a mountain, unless it is very high, is hardly distinguishable from the low-lying land. There is little sense of speed as one gets in a car or a railway train with objects rushing past us. But if a plane flies really low, under a hundred feet, then the earth simply rushes up and away.

3. To Michael Carritt[1]

Allahabad
August 16, 1939

Dear Carritt,[2]
I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of the 18th July. I have been away in Ceylon and now I am leaving for China. I expect to return early in October.

I think that it would be a good thing if a British youth delegation comes to India. The right time for it to come would have been the middle of November. It is desirable that the delegation should attend the annual session of the Indian National Congress which will be held during Christmas week. February is not a good time as the student world is preparing for its examination then.

I shall be glad to help in such ways as I can. But it is difficult for me to take the initiative in this matter. I am so tied up with many other activities and, as I have mentioned above, I am going to China. But I shall gladly help in drawing up the programme or otherwise.

You tell me that you have written to a number of persons in India. All of these are very desirable persons. But I doubt if you will get much actual help from them. They might associate themselves with the welcome and sometimes help locally. But they are all busy people, spread out all over India, and you cannot expect much from them. The right course will be for a small committee to be formed here and for this committee to seek the general cooperation of the persons you have mentioned as well as others. As I am leaving very soon I cannot do much till I return in October. If there had been a proper youth organisation here, this should have formed the nucleus of such a committee. The Students Federation here will no doubt help, but it is confined to students only.

In this matter I suggest to you to consult V.K. Krishna Menon of the India League who will no doubt be in a position to offer you useful advice and also to put you in touch with people here. I think you might also get in touch with my sister, Mrs. Krishna Hutheesing, Carmichael Road, Bombay. She has been in touch with youth organisations here and is a fairly energetic person who will be interested in this work. I am sending your letter and other papers to her. She

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Member of the British Youth Peace Assembly.

could get in touch with others and with their cooperation fix up a small committee as well as your programme.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To K. Rama Rao[1]

Lucknow
August 17, 1939

My dear Rama Rao,

A fat envelope was handed to me at the afternoon meeting of the Directors today. I did not open it then, partly because I thought it was a confidential document which I should read at leisure, and partly because we were busy with other matters. On return home I opened the envelope and discovered a number of copies of your memorandum to me as Chairman of the Board of Directors. I have read through these and I appreciate what you say about the members of your staff.

Although we did not have your memorandum before us at the meeting of the Board, we had as a matter of fact briefly considered the questions which you had touched upon in your note. As you know, we are having a hard time with the *Herald* in many ways, more especially financially. We have lost very heavily on it and are still losing very heavily, though I think there are definite signs of improvement visible. Still we are very far from having turned the corner. The next few months are most important. We expect that with the beginning of the rotary period our circulation will go up and advertisements will also increase fairly rapidly. According to our calculations we should definitely turn the corner within six months but indications should be obvious long before that period is over.

This rotary period means heavy additional expenditure for us. It becomes a race, therefore, between two opposing factors: the progress we are making towards self-sufficiency and the heavy loss that is draining our resources. I am personally certain in my mind that, catastrophe apart, we shall make good, given the time. But there is this serious danger that we might find it difficult to survive till that period when we make good. The last straw proverbially breaks the camel's

1. National Herald Papers, N.M.M.L.

back. And every little additional expenditure may ultimately become the last straw. We have, therefore, to be exceedingly careful. That is why I have impressed upon you in the past to avoid all unnecessary expenditure. At the same time we cannot and must not avoid such necessary expenditure as goes to making the paper a more attractive and popular organ. A balance has to be struck between these two tendencies.

I believe that a labourer is worthy of his hire, although I am not in favour of the high salaries that sometimes prevail in India. I should very much like the *Herald* staff and workers to be paid well and I hope it will be possible for us to do so before very long. Meanwhile there is this great difficulty that any rise in salary or wages is sure to be resented unless a fairly large number of persons profit by it. For instance in the press department there are men who are being paid much less than others for the same kind of work, although they are admittedly as competent. These persons have the first consideration for a rise.

I would suggest to you, therefore, to consider these aspects and to tell some of your colleagues in confidence about them. I am not in a position to judge of the individual merits of your colleagues but your recommendation naturally weighs with me.

There has been improvement in the *Herald* but it has not come up to my standard yet, even apart from printing. Possibly this may be due partly to different pages having to be composed at different times. I think the lay out of the news can be improved upon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. To the District Magistrate, Allahabad[1]

Allahabad
August 19, 1939

Dear Sir,

I have received the enclosed papers from you regarding the applications of Mr. and Mrs. Jan Loew for the grant of visas for India. I am asked to state whether I am willing to furnish a guarantee of permanent maintenance in India on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Jan Loew. I am

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

afraid it is impossible for me to furnish such a guarantee for anyone. Indeed it is difficult for me to conceive of such guarantees being given. As I have previously stated, I have known Mrs. Gertrud Loew and I wrote to her to say that I would be glad if she got a visa for India and that I would help her in so far as I can. That is as much as I can do.

It appears from the papers that one of the references that the applicant has given, namely Dr. Franz Sichel, is prepared to guarantee the couple to the extent of a minimum of £300. It further appears that Mrs. Loew intends coming here on behalf of the Czechoslovak Export Institute where she has been in charge of the Indian department. She is thus coming on business and is likely to earn at least enough for her residential purposes and to enable her to go back when the time comes. It is further stated that Mr. and Mrs. Loew intend to stay in India for a period of twelve to sixteen months. Under these circumstances I do not quite understand what further guarantees are necessary.

I might mention that Mrs. Gertrud Loew is also known to Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, the Minister of Local Self-Government, who met her in Prague last year. If it is considered necessary further inquiries can be made from her. But she would not be able to give any more information than I have given above.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Lucknow
September 23, 1939

My dear Bapu,

I enclose four articles[2] which I have written. The first one, *India and the War*, was sent under my name to various papers in India. The set of three articles—*War Aims and Peace Aims*—has been contributed by me as editorials to the *National Herald*. My name has not been given. I felt that it would be better for this subject to be considered impersonally.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, section 3, items 10 & 12.

I am here for another two or three days. After that I do not quite know. I might visit one or two big towns.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

7. Mahatma Gandhi[1]

A few months ago Shri Radhakrishnan wrote to me that he was compiling a book for Gandhi Jayanti which would contain articles on Gandhiji by many eminent men of the world. He had also asked me to write an article for this book. I agreed but with some reluctance. To write anything on Gandhiji was not an easy task for me. Then I got involved in so many problems that it became still more difficult for me to write, and ultimately I did not write any such article.

Often I do write something or the other and I am fond of writing. Then why this hesitation? Sometimes I have written on Gandhiji also. But the more I thought about it, the more I found it beyond me to write this article. It was easy for me to repeat some superficial things which the world already knew. But what was the use? Often, I could not comprehend what he said; in certain matters I had differences of opinion with him. For a long time I was with him and worked under his guidance. I was powerfully influenced by him. My views changed, my mode of living changed. Life took a turn, our spirits soared, we grew in stature a little, a light came into our eyes, new paths appeared, and on those paths lakhs and crores of us marched together. How can I write about such a person who completely overwhelmed India and me and who made an entire generation his own?

How can we assess the times in which we grew up? They have left their imprint upon the very fabric of our lives and we are but fragments of these times.

Wherever I have been outside India, to Europe or China or any other country, the first question put to me has been: "How is Gandhi? What does he do now?" Gandhi's name, his fame, had reached far and wide. To strangers, Gandhi was India and India Gandhi. Our nation grew in prestige and influence. The world took note of the fact that

1. 6 October 1939. Sasta Sahitya Mandal Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

a man of extraordinary calibre was born in India—once again there was light to dispel darkness. The glimmerings of answers to questions which were agitating the hearts of millions seemed to emerge. If the solution is not acted upon today, it will be done tomorrow or the day after. We will find more answers from that solution, more light will be shed on the darkness. But the foundation is strong and we will build upon that.

The present-day world is beset by strife and it is a period of trial and test for everyone. What should we do? This is the question before every Indian. Time alone can provide the answer. But the foundation for whatever we do should be the principles which we have learnt during this period. We are in the midst of great happenings. We have cast our eyes towards the mountain peaks and we progress with long strides. But the journey is a long one. Therefore we have to be big and not belittle our country by getting involved in petty matters.

8. To Frances Gunther[1]

Allahabad
October 13, 1939

My dear F.G.,[2]

It took a long time for your note of August 2nd with its enclosures to reach me. I read your old articles and enjoyed them, for your writing is always so full of life. And yet all that you have written about seems so far away and distant. An age has passed away since then and the war is trying to bring out something totally different. What that something will be, I suppose, no one knows.

Meanwhile we in India have to face our problems which have become terribly difficult since the war began. We argue and make temporary decisions but all the time there is a feeling that fast-moving events have taken charge of the situation everywhere and men and women have become their play-things.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. At that time wife of John Gunther; foreign correspondent of the *News Chronicle*: works include *Revolution in India*; personal friend of Jawaharlal.

I wonder if you have seen a statement that was issued by our Working Committee on the war crisis. I enclose a copy. The next few weeks will probably make a big difference in India, this way or that.

I am sending you back your old articles.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. To K. Rama Rao[1]

Bombay
October 27, 1939

Dear Rama Rao,

I have been surprised to see certain headlines in the *Herald* which are definitely pro-German.[2] This is highly objectionable and entirely opposed to our policy. It is clear that the person who was responsible for this, I presume he was a sub-editor, has no conception of what our policy is, and he is putting us in a wrong position. I do not know who the person is but I do feel that it is about time we took action against such irresponsibility. He should be asked to leave if you have no strong objection to this. Personally I am fairly clear in my mind, if the *Herald* is to continue, there should be no laxity about such matters and we must set an example. There has been far too much of looseness and irresponsibility about the work of some of the subs.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. National Herald Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Jawaharlal probably had in mind "Hitler Makes His Last Offer" (7 October 1939), "Britain Rejects Hitler's Offer" (13 October 1939), "Germany Sues for Peace?" (14 October 1939) and "Hand of Peace Rejected by Britain" (25 October 1939).

10. Diwali Day[1]

Diwali is the festival of light. Let us celebrate it by all means for the darkness of primeval passion and war and violence and social injustice threaten to overwhelm us. Light and freedom will only come to us when we have rid ourselves of this social injustice in all its forms and more specially by putting an end to untouchability and the suppression and subjection of one class by another. That is the light we must aim at, and when it comes in a flood to brighten our land, then Diwali will come into its own and be an emblem of the new freedom for all.

1. Message broadcast on Diwali Day, 30 October 1939.

11. To E.P. Thompson[1]

Allahabad
November 11, 1939

Dear Palmer,

Your father suddenly turned up here one day without any previous notice when I was thinking that he was far away in Buckinghamshire. It was delightful to meet him again and we had long talks far into the night. We met not only in Allahabad but all over the place in India—in Wardha, Bombay and Delhi. He managed to put in a good bit of travelling and work in three weeks' stay in India. He told me that you had written a letter to me which, for some reason or other, he had not brought with him. I was sorry, for I would have liked to have your letter. In case he might forget to carry my letter, I am sending this by post to him and I hope he will forward it on to you.

I suppose you will be at your school when this reaches you. War-time conditions must have affected school life as everything else. I hope that when you grow up and leave school, you will have a better and saner world to live in than many of us of an older generation have had.

1. Edward Thompson Papers, N.M.M.L.

I do not know when I shall go to England again. But if and when I go there, I hope to meet you and make friends with you, if you do not think me too old and out of date for the purpose.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. To Krishna Hutheesing[1]

Allahabad
13.11.39

Darling Betty,
Thank you for Bhaiya Duj telegram. I thought it was the brother's job to produce a gift but your brother is far too careless and preoccupied. It was pleasant to get your message.

Bijji Bhabi[2]—whom I met in Delhi—was in a state of suppressed anger at me. Why I could not imagine for a while. Then she told me. Because some years ago I had forgotten to congratulate her on the birth of a grandson! It was a true charge and I pleaded guilty but the punishment was undeserved. She produced the grandson—a jolly and attractive kid—and introduced him by saying: "This is the very same grandson on whose birth you did not even congratulate me." It was no joke. She was angry and for an hour afterwards she held forth pointing out to me my many failings. I saw myself in my true colours and I hope I profited by the experience.

I have just had a cable from Indu. It was a birthday cable but she added good news about herself. For the last nineteen days she has had no temperature, the inflammation has subsided and she has put on 5 lbs. of weight. So she has progressed satisfactorily but she will remain in hospital for another two weeks. After that she will go to Switzerland—either Leysin or somewhere near Davos. Probably Agatha will accompany her there but will not remain with her. The doctors intend keeping her there four or five months. After that one does not know where the world will be, or any of us.

I am worried about you. You were looking absolutely tired and fagged out when I saw you last. If you are not extraordinarily foolish—

1. *Nehru's Letters to His Sister*, (London, 1963), pp. 61-62.
2. Rameshwari Nehru.

and I have no reason to think that you are—you must take yourself in hand immediately. I think you, Raja and the kids should all place yourselves under Kaivalyanand[3] and carry out his directions. Also give up late nights. Try to go to bed at 10.30 every night for a month. It won't do you much harm to miss a few dinners or social engagements.

An American edition of my book is coming out. I want to send them the picture of our grandfather for it. Could you let me have this before long?

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

3. Swami Kaivalyanand, an authority on yogic excercises.

13. Preface to Hindustan Ki Samasyayen[1]

This is a collection of some of my old articles. These articles were written in English during the last three years. In these three years the world has changed and new and complicated problems are before us. Therefore I eannot say how far these articles are relevant now. However, since the roots of our present-day problems lie in our past actions, perhaps these old writings may throw some light on the new problems.

What the future of the world or India will be no one can say. All around us is war, revolution and turmoil and only one fact is clear. We are witnessing the ending of the old order. A new world is yet to be born and we, caught in between, are facing the problems of the transition. This new world will not be evolved automatically. It will evolve only through the toil, sacrifice and efforts of crores of people. But labour bears fruit only when there is an objective before us and the path to be followed is clear. Without that, people wander aimlessly.

Therefore the Congress posed these questions to the British Government: why was it fighting with Germany, what was its objective and whether it accepted the idea of Indian independence? The British Government refused to answer these questions or evaded them. It is clear from this that its old imperialist policy continues and it is not

1. 17 November 1939. Sasta Sahitya Mandal Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

fighting for freedom. It is fighting to maintain its imperialism. Therefore we resorted to noncooperation.

We have to ask these questions of ourselves also. What is our objective? It is true that it is Swaraj, it is freedom. But what kind of Swaraj? The time is past for evasive words. What kind of political and social change do we want? Only when our ideas are clear can our work proceed smoothly.

14. Lala Lajpat Rai[1]

It is eleven years since Lala Lajpat Rai left us—eleven years fateful in Indian and in world history. So much has happened during this period that it almost seems as if a century has passed. Yet the essential nature of our problems is much the same, both politically and socially.

It is right and proper not only that we honour Lalaji's memory but that we learn from his example. For Lalaji was the first among our all-India leaders to combine politics with social problems. Today there are many who do so because it is realized that social and economic problems are more important and govern political problems.

On this celebration of the eleventh anniversary of his death, I pay my homage to his memory and I trust that we shall remember his example and his sacrifice in dealing with the great problems that confront us.

1. Message on the eleventh death anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai. *The Hindustan Times*, 17 November 1939.

15. To Abdul Huq[1]

Wardha
December 23, 1939

Dear Maulvi Sahab,

Thank you for your telegram inviting me to the All India Urdu Conference at Delhi on the 29th and 30th December. I am afraid I have got important engagements on those dates in the Punjab and am thus unable to avail myself of your kind invitation.

May I send my good wishes to your Conference and express the hope that it will advance the cause of Urdu? Perhaps you know my views on this subject. It has seemed to me unfortunate that the advancement of Urdu or the advancement of Hindi should be considered in terms of mutual conflict as if one impeded the other. It seems to me that in effect they ought to help each other and approach each other for the enrichment of our great national language which has so many roots and which should find nourishment and sustenance from all these roots. My belief is that Urdu and Hindi should on the one hand come nearer to one another so that they might develop into one powerful language, with two scripts, for India. At the same time their present literary forms, which represent a certain individual genius and background, should be allowed to develop without interference from the other. This seems to be mutually a contradictory process but I do not think it will prove so, and ultimately each will help in enriching the other.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

16. To Madame Sun Yat-sen[1]

Allahabad
December 25, 1939

My dear Madame Sun,
Thank you for your letter of December 16th[2] as well as for your beautiful card of greeting. It is always a pleasure to have a letter or news from you.

I am glad that the books I sent you have reached you. They will give you some idea of past events in India. But India and the world are changing rapidly and all such books are apt to become out of date very soon. If there is any other book that you would care to have and which is available in India I shall gladly have it sent to you.

I am very sorry to learn of the death of Dr. Norman Bethune[3] and I can well realise what a loss this must be to the medical work being done in the North West. Perhaps you know that the doctors of our Congress unit have gone to Wutaishan.

Dr. Mukherji is leaving on the 29th from Calcutta for Rangoon. He proposes to go *via* Lashio over the new Burma Road. He is taking a quantity of medical supplies with him.[4] I am informing him of your new address. But I suppose he will not be going to Hong Kong soon.

Sir Stafford Cripps has been with us here for the last two weeks. Tomorrow morning he goes by air to Rangoon and after three or four days stay there he proceeds to Lashio and then by road to Kunming and possibly Chungking. His programme is uncertain but he intends spending a month or six weeks in the interior of China and then going to Hong Kong and Shanghai. I am sending him your new address as he wants to meet you very much.

With all good wishes for the New Year.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. She had thanked Jawaharlal for sending her copies of his books.
3. Canadian heart specialist; surgeon, with the Republican forces during the Spanish Civil War; organised medical services for the Chinese Eighth Route Army; director, International Peace Hospital at Wutaishan, North West China; died of gangrene in November 1939.
4. He was arrested at Rangoon on his way to China and the medical supplies were confiscated.

17. On Education[1]

When your friendly invitation to inaugurate this Conference reached me by telephone at Wardha, I hesitated for a moment, but for a moment only, for one may not dally with a long-distance call. I felt honoured that a body of learned men should have summoned me to their select gathering. For though I have not been a stranger to the halls of learning, for many years my path branched off from them and took me to strange and dusty byways. Often I had dipped into those wells where lie imprisoned the thoughts and dreams and experiences of past ages, but fate and circumstances conspired together to drag me away from that pleasant and ordered life and cast my lot among the vast unlearned of this country. I met multitudes of men and women, the vast majority of whom had never known school or college, nor had they ever been touched in any way by the education that the state or private enterprise had organised.

I felt attracted by your invitation for what is there more attractive and vital today than education? In this warring world, full of sorrow and conflict, with a thousand problems oppressing us, how shall we find peace and a solution for these problems except through right education?

So I have come to you to wish you well and to commend your labours. It would ill become me, a layman and an amateur, to discuss the intricate problems which are meant for experts. But there is danger in the expert's specialised way of looking at things, for he may lose the right perspective and forget to see life as a whole. That danger has to be guarded against especially now when the very foundations of life are challenged and are at stake. What is your objective, your aim in education? Surely you train the rising generation for life. What pattern of life do you envisage, for unless you have that clear picture in your minds, the education that you give will be superficial, faulty and aimless, and your problems and difficulties will ever increase. You will go on lecturing on navigation while the ship is going down.

The ideal of education has long been the improvement of the individual. That ideal must inevitably hold, for without individual advancement there can be no social progress. But even that care of the individual must today be considered in terms of the mass of the people or else the enlightened individual will be submerged in the unenlightened

1. Inaugural address at the All India Educational Conference, Baradari, 27 December 1939. *National Herald*, 28 December 1939.

mass. And, in any event, is it right or just that a group of individuals should have opportunities of advancement and growth which are denied to the many?

But, even from the standpoint of the individual, a vital question has to be faced. Can an individual truly advance, except in the rarest cases, if the environment that surrounds him is pulling him back all the time? If this environment is evil or injurious to him, the individual battles in vain against it and must inevitably be crushed by it. What is this environment? It consists of inherited ideas, prejudices and superstitions which restrict the mind and prevent growth and change in a changing world. It is the pressure of political circumstances that keeps the individual and the group in enforced subjection and thus starves his soul and crushes his spirit. It is, above all, the stranglehold of economic conditions which denies opportunity to vast masses of people. It is this complex of prejudice and superstition, political and economic conditions, that form our environment which holds us in its grip.

Through your educational system you may teach all the well-known virtues, but life today teaches something else, and the voice of life is louder and more effective. You may teach the advantages of cooperative effort, but our social structure is based on cut-throat competition, and each one tries to rise on the dead selves of others. The glittering prizes go to him who is most successful in knocking down and crushing his rivals. Is it any wonder that our youth should be attracted by these glittering prizes, and should hold acquisitiveness as the most desirable quality in an acquisitive society?

We swear by nonviolence in this country, yet violence envelops us not only in its more obvious forms of warring nations but in the very social structure in which we live. Out of this violent environment no real peace or nonviolence can ever come, unless we change that environment itself.

Our educational system, in spite of the ideals which it may profess, is itself an outcome of and a part of this environment. It seeks sustenance from it and, consciously or unconsciously, supports it. Yet if there is anything clear in the world today, it is this: that this environment is the cause of most of our troubles, and to leave it as it is, is to head straight for disaster.

Indeed, it may already be too late to prevent that disaster, and the war that is raging in Europe may yet shatter the edifice of modern civilisation. We shall not escape this tragedy, and even if we survive this general collapse our own problems threaten to overwhelm us, unless we see aright and act aright. Recent events have shown how strong the forces of evil and disruption and narrow-minded bigotry are in this

country. We have seen also how the dominant political and economic interests resent and combat change.

These are larger problems which will not come up before this Conference, and yet they affect our education vitally and all our educational efforts will be in vain if these problems do not find proper and early solution. But even apart from the problems of the moment, no educationist can ignore the vital question of what education should aim at in the social and economic sphere. All education must have a definite social outlook and must train our youth for the kind of society we wish to have. Politicians may strive for political and economic changes in order to bring that society into existence, but the real basis of that society must be laid in the teaching of our schools and colleges. The real change will have to come in the minds of men, though that change can and will be helped greatly by external changes in the environment. The two processes go together and should help each other.

Our present-day social fabric is a decadent and dying thing, full of its own contradictions, and leading continually to war and conflict. This acquisitive and competitive society must be ended and must give place to a cooperative order, where we think in terms not of individual profit but of the common good; where individuals cooperate with each other and nations and peoples work in cooperation for human advancement; where human values count for more and there is no exploitation of a class or group or nation by another.

If this is the accepted ideal of our future society then all our education must be fashioned to that end and must not pay homage to anything that is against this conception of the social order. That education will always have to think in terms of the hundreds of millions of our people, and not sacrifice their interests for any group or class. The teacher will then be not just a follower of a profession which gives him a livelihood, but one who has chosen his vocation in the ardent spirit of a missionary in a sacred cause which fills his being.

Recently much thought has been given in India to educational progress and people's minds are astir and expectant and full of hope in this world of today which has so little hope. You will no doubt consider the new Basic Scheme of education. The more I have studied this and watched it grow, the more fascinated I have been by it. Further experience will no doubt bring changes and variations but I have little doubt that we have found in this scheme the path that leads to mass education on the right lines, when education keeps in tune with life and prepares for life. Particularly it is suited to a poor country like India.

As I have wandered about India and seen her millions of unhappy, sorrow-laden people, with sunken eyes and hopeless look, I have felt

overwhelmed with the tragedy of India. Yet I have always sensed the tremendous vitality of our people and felt confident that they will pull themselves out of this miserable condition and recover the bright and happy faces and hopeful eyes that should be the birthright of every individual. They hunger and have not the wherewithal to eat, they seek work and find none, their bare bodies shiver in the cold, their homes are mud huts, continually tumbling down, bright-eyed opportunity never comes their way.

All this is tragedy and must be remedied. But the greatest tragedy is the killing of the spirit, when there is no hope or sense of adventure or pride left in them. It is this that we have to end before India is reborn.

Let not young souls be smothered out before
They do quaint deeds and fully flaunt their pride,
It is the world's one crime its babes grow dull,
Its poor are ox-like, limp and leaden-eyed.
Not that they starve, but starve so dreamlessly,
Not that they sow, but that they seldom reap,
Not that they serve, but have no gods to serve,
Not that they die but that they die like sheep.

It is pleasant for intellectual and enlightened people to discuss calmly the affairs of a troubled and distant world. They feel secure and well-contented in their limited spheres, cut off from reality. But reality is upon us now and the troubled world is no longer distant but threatens to envelop and overwhelm us. Those who are frightened of this unpleasant reality and seek refuge from it, struggle helplessly and bitterly against fate, and function more and more like marionettes controlled by unseen forces. None of us dare to act in this weak ineffectual way when everything that is worthwhile in life calls to us to clear thought and brave deeds. The world is unpleasant; let us realise it and then, like men, seek to change it and make it a pleasanter, juster place for all of us to live in.

18. To Edward Thompson[1]

Allahabad
January 5, 1940

Dear Edward,
News has come to me that your younger brother died some days ago. I was grieved to hear of this because of what it must mean to you. In your last letter you referred to his illness and how little hope there was for him. I have hesitated to answer your letter because of this bad news.

Yesterday's mail brought me two of your books, *John Arnison* and your *Collected Poems*. I am so glad you have sent these, especially the *Poems*. You are so obviously the poet in spite of your wanderings in other fields.

I have also been reading some of your letters and articles in the press and have liked them. The situation here is not essentially different from what it was when you came, though of course many odd things have happened. You must have heard of Jinnah's 'day of deliverance'. He has made it impossible for any kind of a reasonable approach to him. But he has somewhat overshot his mark this time and there has been considerable resentment among Muslim circles.

I have heard from Indira from Leysin. She seems to be happy there and likes the place. The doctor has told her that he proposes to transform her into a Diana in the course of three months. Naturally this has cheered her up immensely.

The army difficulty that you mention is of course there, though I don't think it is quite so important as you make out.[2] Punjab supplies about 52 per cent of the army and the Muslim percentage, I am told, is about 32 per cent all over India. Whether the British Empire will pass into a wider grouping of equal nations, a united states of the world, I do not know. But if your old dream materialises I shall be most happy. It would be a very good thing if something like a Pilgrim Trust would take interest in India as you suggest. As for your second proposal that I should suggest some name of an Indian scholar to give a course of lectures on some Indian historical or literary subject, it is

1. *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 420-421.
2. On 3 December 1939, Edward Thompson had written: "I still think it impossible to ask that India be declared an independent state, until the army lopsidedness has been modified.... Anyway, in my opinion, you could hardly leave the Punjab in control of the army and must sort out that malproportion somewhat."

difficult to suggest a name off-hand. For the moment one name occurs to me—Dr. Tara Chand. I do not know if you know him. He was in Oxford some years ago and took his doctorate there in some historical subject. He is at present a Professor here in Allahabad University. He has specialised in the Mughal period of Indian history and specially on the way Islam and Hinduism acted and reacted on each other and tended to produce some sort of a synthesis. He read a very good paper on this subject before the Historical Society a few days ago.

My own acquaintance with professors and the like is somewhat limited and it is quite possible that there may be better men about.

Having shaken my ears I have listened carefully to your suggestion about the Rhodes Memorial Lecture. I shall take your advice and not say no rather suddenly. I appreciate all you say about the honour and distinction and all of us are greedy for both. But, though you may not believe me, I am a rather modest person and I hesitate to venture into new fields. Anyhow, I shall keep my mind open and see how things shape themselves. It is impossible to say what any one of us is going to do a few months hence. For various reasons I should very much like to go to England and possibly to America. I always feel that I can be of more use to India outside India. The feeling that I do not quite fit in here pursues me and depresses me.

I enclose two pictures which will remind you of Allahabad.

Allen Lane wants me to write a Penguin on the present situation in India. This kind of thing is really your job, not mine. I do not quite know what I will do about it. It is very difficult to find time for writing.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

19. To Roger Baldwin[1]

January 5, 1940

Dear Roger,

Thank you for your letter of December 11th. I have not yet seen Dr. Anup Singh's book[2] to which you refer. As for my *Autobiography* we have agreed on principle but all manner of things are causing delay. It takes a long time even to communicate through letters.

I shall be very glad if you could arrange to have clippings from *The New York Times* sent to me from time to time.

It is very gratifying to learn that one is a world figure, but the world grows progressively less worth figuring in. Everything seems to go wrong and all our fine idealisms become tarnished. Still I suppose one must carry on.

I wish I could go to America. But then there are so many things I want to happen. There is a faint chance of my going to Europe in the summer for various reasons. One of these is my daughter who unfortunately has been unwell again and is in Switzerland.

I am glad you met Kamala Devi.[3]

With all good wishes for the New Year,

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. *Nehru—The Rising Star of India.*
3. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya was then touring the U.S.A. visiting social and educational institutions.

20. To K. Rama Rao[1]

Allahabad
January 16, 1940

Dear Rama Rao,

I am sending you an article for the *Herald* entitled *What of Russia Now?*[2] Please publish this as early as possible under my name.

1. National Herald Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, section 4, item 16.

I have not been able to see the *Herald* regularly for many weeks past as I have been travelling about and so I have not read the leading articles which appeared. But from an article of Dr. Lohia's which he gave me I gathered that your leading articles have been apologetic in regard to Russian action in Finland. I do not think this was necessary. It is for this reason that I have thought it worthwhile to write the article I am sending you. This should serve as an indication as to what our policy should be in this matter.

I am going to Wardha tomorrow. Please ask the management to send me the *Herald* for the next three or four days to Wardha.

A book of mine is appearing soon from Allahabad. It is called *China, Spain and the War*[3]. In this most of my writings on this subject which have appeared in the *Herald* are being given. I have included many of the unsigned articles also.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. In the preface Jawaharlal had written: "In this rapidly changing world, it is difficult to keep pace with events, and sometimes the ink is hardly dry before the written word is out of date. These writings therefore are obviously of yesterday and it is doubtful if they are of much use today. Yet even yesterday's impressions and ideas may have some value, for out of them emerges today with its own problems. Friends have urged me therefore to collect and publish these fragments and I have willingly acceded to their desire."

21. To Nicholas Roerich[1]

February 2, 1940

Dear Dr. Roerich,
Some time back, Pandit Braj Mohan Vyas of the Allahabad Municipal Museum gave me a volume containing reproductions of some of your paintings. I was delighted to receive this very beautiful gift from you and I appreciated it very greatly and the kindly thought which inspired it. I must apologise to you for the delay in my thanking you for this. But I am tied up in the coils of our present-day politics and I wander about a great deal. You will forgive me, therefore, for this apparent discourtesy.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I have long been an admirer of your magnificent paintings and I have read some of your books with pleasure. Nothing could delight me more than the splendid book that you have sent me, for not only does it bring beauty to me, but it takes me away from the depression of political activity and transfers me to higher regions.

I hope I shall have the privilege one day of visiting you in your beautiful retreat in the Kulu valley.

Thanking you again and with regards and good wishes.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

22. Overcrowding in Trains[1]

The treatment of the third-class passengers by the railway authorities in India is a long-standing scandal. But to see the train tonight packed with human beings in such a way that it is difficult to move a finger or even to breathe properly is shocking in the extreme. A third-class compartment meant for twenty closely seated together contains forty or more people bulging out of windows.

On the platform thousands of people are waiting in the cold night without much to cover them, yet the railway authorities calmly look on and say that in the course of the night they might arrange a special train. We know that there is a big *mela* at Allahabad and huge crowds go there. The railway people know it too. Why do they not make proper arrangements in time? If I was a third-class passenger in this train I would go on pulling the chain and prevent it from moving till proper arrangements were made. It is scandalous in the extreme that human beings should be treated worse than cattle, and it is from these human beings that the revenue of the railways comes and not from the upper-class passengers.

1. Interview to the press, Lucknow, 6 February 1940. *National Herald*, 7 February 1940.

23. Holiday in a Railway Train[1]

Most people dread long journeys in a railway train, and even those fortunate beings who travel first or in air-conditioned carriages complain woefully of the discomforts they have to face. The prospect of having to journey in a second-class compartment is too painful for them to contemplate, and an intermediate or third class is to them a chamber of horrors full of the sufferings of the damned, or the unhappy poor who are so far removed from them and perhaps considered too insensitive and coarse-bodied to experience those finer feelings which are reserved for the upper classes of humanity. It is true that the difference between the air-conditioned carriage and the third class in this country is vast; they signify two worlds utterly different from each other; they represent the unbridgable gulf that separates different classes of human beings. It is true also that the treatment accorded to the third-class passenger in India, who brings the revenue to the railways, is a continuing scandal.

I have no experience whatever of travelling in the air-conditioned coaches on the Indian railways. They are, like so many other things, beyond my reach, and I can only gaze from the outside at the soft comfort that they contain. First-class travel also is a dim memory of the past with me and for many years I have not ventured into a first-class compartment in India. My travelling is done third, or intermediate, or sometimes second.

Often some of my friends, who are among the fortunate and used to comfortable living, are upset at my travelling about in the lower classes and imagine that I suffer untold agonies. They worry themselves needlessly for these long journeys are restful to me and bring me relief. Though not perhaps coarse of body, I am tough and can adapt myself without much difficulty even to the third class, unless this is very crowded. I sleep and rest and read and forget for a while my daily routine of work and meeting people. Fortunately, I can always sleep when I want to and have never been a victim of insomnia. I do not have to woo sleep; I treat it with indifference and the fickle jade comes to me and overpowers me. And so I look forward to long journeys.

1. Lucknow, 15 February 1940. *National Herald*, 17 February 1940. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 216-219.

Two days ago I left Bombay after five strenuous days there and I was tired and wanted a long rest and sleep. I had to come to Lucknow and I chose a slow train which took thirty-four hours, two full nights and a day in between. The prospect of this long journey with no engagements and interviews, with full freedom to sleep as long as I liked and read books, delighted me. I ventured to travel second to enjoy this rest fully.

At ten-thirty at night, as the train steamed out of Victoria Terminus, I crept into my berth, and though I wanted to sleep, old habit made me take up a book. It was Stefan Zweig's[2] *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, and this tender and moving tale, written in beautiful prose, held me till near midnight. And then to sleep for ten hours continuously. There was nothing to be done the next day and my mind was, for the moment at least, free of care and the burden of having to get up at an appointed time did not oppress me.

I shaved and dressed and made myself comfortable with a bunch of books by my side. I took up first W.B. Curry's *The Case for Federal Union*[3] and read a chapter or two. The book was interesting, the subject important today, and yet I wanted some lighter reading and so I put it by for the present. But I felt that this book was probably more worthwhile than Streit's *Union Now*, which had envisaged a federal union leaving out India, China and the Soviet Union.

I went on then to D.N. Pritt's *Light on Moscow* which appeared serially in the *Herald* some time back. I had read part of it then, but I wanted to read it as a whole and I found this well worthwhile. Memories are short, and engulfed in war propaganda, we are apt to forget the astounding series of events that have led up to the war in Europe, events that throw a searchlight on British policy and tell us the true nature of Mr. Chamberlain's Government. It is this Government that is carrying on the war; it is this Government that we have to deal with in India. So it is well that we remember that this is the most reactionary Government that Britain has had for generations past; that this Government has consistently encouraged fascism and crushed democracy in Europe and elsewhere. If the British people choose to hang on to this Government, and if we judge them by it, is it our fault? If we see only imperialism behind its actions, before as well as after the outbreak of the war, are we in any way wrong?

And so to another book—H.G. Wells' collection of old essays, *Travels of a Republican Radical in Search of Hot Water*.[4] Interesting and

2. (1881-1942); Austrian writer.
3. Published in 1939.
4. Published in 1939.

provocative to thought as all Wells' writings are, and yet just missing touch with the reality of the moment.

I took up yet another book—Georg Buchner's[5] famous play *Dantons Tod* or *Danton's Death*, translated into English. Written over a hundred years ago, it took me back to the wild and stirring days of the French Revolution, and my mind rushed backwards and forwards from that Revolution to the mighty one on whose threshold we stand today. Buchner's words, written to his fiancee, stood up before me, of how he was impressed by the elemental and historic urge behind the Revolution. "I have been studying the history of the Revolution. I felt as if annihilated by the terrible fatalism of history. I see in man's nature a horrible uniformity, in human relations an unavoidable violence, exercised by all and by none. The individual only foam on the wave, greatness a mere accident, the mastery of genius a puppet play, a ridiculous struggle against an iron law, to understand which is the highest that can be achieved, to rule it impossible.... The 'must' is one of the curses with which man is baptized. The saying: it must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh—is horrible. What is it in us that lies, murders, steals?"

Is it so? Are we mere puppets of destiny, mere foam on the surface of the waters? A hundred years have gone by since Buchner wrote, a hundred years of vast human achievement and of man's conquest over the elements. And yet he has not brought under control the passions that consume him, or the elemental urges that move him as an individual or in the mass. And we go from tragedy to tragedy. And the tragedy of many an individual, as of Danton,[6] is that he is left behind by the processes of history; he has no function to perform; no longer is he the agent of destiny. And so because his moment is passed, he cannot act; he can only protest and bemoan his lot, and weakness comes over him and consciousness of his approaching doom.

From the French Revolution back to the twentieth century; to the yesterdays that we have lived through; to the twenties so full of achievement for us in India, so fatuous in Europe; to the thirties with ever-growing fear and consciousness of catastrophe coming; and now the step over the abyss. I took up another book and read a fascinating account of this period of which we have ourselves been witnesses, and which has influenced us so powerfully. This was Pierre Von Passen's autobiography called *Days of Our Years*.

5. *(1813-1837); posthumously acclaimed as a brilliant dramatist and literary figure; influenced by the *Young Germany* movement of the 1830's.
6. Georges Jacques Danton (b. 1759); a Jacobin leader who was executed on 5 April 1794.

And thus to the end of the day, and Jhansi, and, after a little more reading, to sleep again. The morning brought Lucknow and the brief holiday was over.

24. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
February 21, 1940

My dear Krishna,

I returned to Allahabad yesterday after a more or less continuous absence for some time. I received your cable asking me whether I had received a memorandum that you had sent on the 10th January. I do not remember having received any such memorandum. But I wanted to make sure if any letter bearing that date had reached me. I did not therefore cable my reply to you immediately. I hope to do so tomorrow after going through all the papers. As far as I can see the recent letters I have received from you are dated December 23rd, January 20th and January 31st. Letters come in any order. Very often later letters come earlier. Some of your letters addressed care of me to various Muslim organisations have only just reached me.

You will realise that it is not easy under the circumstances to analyse and write fully about the political position here. It is obviously a confused one. Generally speaking all the elements that you have mentioned in your letters and criticised are present, but possibly you exaggerate their importance. I shall write to you more fully soon. This letter will deal only with some outstanding matters.

I note what you say about Raja Rao as well as about the Penguin books. I have had another letter from Allen Lane suggesting a book by me for the Penguin series. In view of what you say, I shall take no further steps in the matter.[2]

As I have told you, Kitabistan are bringing out a book by me called *China, Spain and the War*. This book contains some odd writings about China and Spain and a large number of articles, signed and unsigned, which have appeared in the *Herald* about the war situation. The book is likely to be out in a week or two. I do not think this will

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Krishna Menon had advised Jawaharlal not to write a Penguin book for Allen Lane.

come in the way of any collection that you might make at the other end. There is some point in bringing it out in India now and avoiding delay. This Kitabistan collection does not contain most of the material that I have been sending you during the last 18 months or more. I wish you could send me a list of the material you have got—in manuscript or typescript. I could immediately fill the gaps.

About Drummond's royalties for *Glimpses,* I suppose you are checking them. As far as I can see he did not pay the full advance royalty, even allowing for the deductions made. But I have no figures with me.

I agree with you that it is undesirable for individual Congressmen to instruct members of Parliament.[3] But it is difficult to check this kind of thing. Katju has legal relations with Jowett[4] and probably he wrote to him about the Amending Bill.

I note what you say about John Day.[5] As we have agreed to this, we must go through it as quickly as possible. So far as I am concerned, I will not delay and it will not take me much time to write a few thousand words. If John Lane's permission is to be taken regarding any additions, this might be done. I suppose the additional matter could be used by John Lane also if they so wanted.

I have not received Pritt's new book yet. I had a cable from him and I am writing to him in reply.[6] It is quite possible of course that all the facts do not come to us and one must make allowances for that. Yet I cannot understand how the Russian action in Finland can be justified, either on grounds of principle or expediency. That of course does not mean that we should approve, in any way, of British action in the war generally or against Russia particularly. I have made this very clear. I think that any other attitude on our part would lead to unfortunate consequences and might even come in the way of a strong line later on.

News from Indira is not very encouraging in the sense that she is not making any obvious progress.

There is a meeting of the Working Committee on the 28th at Patna to consider the programme for the next Congress.

3. He had written that Jowett had received letters from Congressmen and such behaviour was politically bad and contrary to Congress policy.
4. William Allen Jowett (1885-1957); Liberal M.P., 1922-24; joined the Labour Party and became Attorney-General, 1929-32; joined the National Government in 1931 and was expelled from the Labour Party; rejoined the Labour Party in 1936; M.P., 1939-45; Solicitor General, 1940-42; Lord Chancellor, 1945-51.
5. John Day, the American publisher, had asked for an additional chapter for the American edition of Jawaharlal's *Autobiography*. This was written on 17 October 1940 under the heading *Five Years Later.*
6. See *ante,* section 4, item 21.

It is difficult and next to impossible to give you membership figures of the various organisations you mention.[7] But I shall try to give you some idea about their present position in my next letter.

I enclose a letter for D.N. Pritt. Could you kindly have it sent to him?

Yours,
Jawaharlal

7. Krishna Menon had asked Jawaharlal for accurate figures on the total membership of the Muslim League, and other Muslim organizations as well as the Muslim membership in the Congress.

25. To Cedric Marshall-Fox[1]

February 21, 1940

My dear Cedric,[2]

A few days ago, on looking through my foreign mail, I stopped for an instant. The handwriting on the envelope brought a vague and distant memory back to me. I thought of you immediately, although I had not received a letter from you, I suppose, for a quarter of a century. Yet I doubted my own memory and hardly imagined that you would be writing to me. On opening the envelope, my memory stood justified. So you see, far from forgetting you, I did not even forget your handwriting. I have a good memory and in any event one does not forget the friends of one's youth. I remember, long long ago, I wrote to you. But I had no reply. Probably my letter did not reach you.

Anyway I am happy to hear from you again. I do not propose to write about the big problems that confront all of us. Nor even about India. What you write about my country shows that you have many wrong ideas, or ideas based on wrong information. For instance, you refer to the two hundred and twenty languages of India. This is one of the fantastic things often said about India which has not the least basis in fact. But it is true that we have very difficult problems. Which country is free from them in this warring world of ours?

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Jawaharlal's friend at Harrow; he later settled down in the United States.

I wonder if you have seen my *Autobiography*. I am sending you a copy of the book. I have written several other books. In fact I have almost been more of an author than a politician. It is a curious mixture.

Four years ago I was in England and I visited Harrow and met old Edgar Stogdon[3] who was functioning as the Vicar of Harrow. He produced, to my surprise, a number of pictures taken of us when we were at school. He was tremendously effusive. I was again in England summer before last. But I could not find time to visit Harrow, although I was invited there.

Possibly one of these days I might turn up in America. I should like to go there very much but nothing is certain in this uncertain world.

With all good wishes.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. (1870-1951); Jawaharlal's old school teacher at Harrow; Vicar of Aldenham, 1914; Vicar and Rural Dean of Harrow, 1923; Chairman, Harrow Education Society.

26. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Allahabad
February 21, 1940

My dear Mahmud,

Your letter reached me on my return to Allahabad. I do not quite know where you are now and so I am sending this letter to Chapra.

I am glad to learn about Sarwar's approaching marriage. I hope that Sarwar will find happiness in this marriage. I should like very much to be present when the wedding takes place. But the middle of April is just the time when I am likely to be in Bombay for the Planning Committee.

The world is in a curious muddle and we in India are also tied up in many knots. But there is no need to worry overmuch either about our personal affairs or about national affairs. When there is so much that is bad taking place in the world, we can shoulder our own burdens, which are relatively light, more easily.

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

As you know, the Working Committee is meeting in Patna on the 28th and I shall be there for a few days. I wonder if I shall see you then.

With love to the children,

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

27. To Bharati Sarabhai[1]

Allahabad
22-2-40

My dear Bharati,

Your letter has been with me for nearly a month and I have kept it back to answer at leisure. But leisure or peace of mind do not come easily in this world to some of us. You say that when we talk we go round and round. It is true. But that is not because life is round. Life is inconclusive and its problems unending but it is very pointed, painfully so. Perhaps we talk vaguely because we have no particular subject in mind, or perhaps because we have different subjects in mind. It is difficult to discuss life as a whole. That simply means that we have not come into direct and pointed contact with life and it is only a vague, pleasurable or painful or both, notion in our minds. Today especially life comes to those who are involved in it with terrible poignancy and its problems almost overwhelm one. Inevitably each conception of life revolves round the self and personal experience, and so that conception is limited. And yet to conceive of life one must get out of the self, forget it and think in other terms. And so we go round and round entangled in self and no-self though sometimes one succeeds in rising above this argument in action and very very rarely in pure thought.

I am sending you a copy of the picture I took of you. It is one of my successful efforts.

Love,

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

28. To B.K. Mallik[1]

Allahabad
February 23, 1940

My dear Mallik,
Your letter of the 27th December.[2] I shall look forward to your new book and shall read it with interest. I cannot say whether Gandhiji will be able to read it. It is difficult enough for all of us to read much owing to the pressure of day-to-day activities. I try hard to continue some reading. Gandhiji lives under extremely high pressure of work which makes it difficult for him to do much reading. Still I think you should send your book to him.

It is not an easy matter to keep a balanced mind as you suggest. Possibly one might retain a certain balance in oneself but this does not fit in with the external environment. The choice then becomes one of retreating into a shell or conflict with the environment. Anyway one tries to keep mentally sane even though the world seems to go mad.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He had written that he wanted to send copies of his book to Jawaharlal and Mahatma Gandhi.

29. To Mrs. Pratab[1]

Allahabad
23.2.40

My dear Mrs. Pratab,
I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter. I delayed not so much for lack of time, although I have been very busy and often travelling, but because it is always difficult to advise anyone on personal questions. How am I to advise you about yourself? I should like to help you if I can, but such deeisions can only be made by oneself. No

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

one else can do it for you. Naturally the shock of your husband's death was great and upset you. And yet one has to face the world and do one's job. It is never good enough to drift through life. Therefore, it is highly desirable that you should engage yourself in some worthwhile activity. What this activity should be can only be decided by you.

Children generally speaking are far better trained, physically and mentally, in the company of other children. An only child living at home may develop all manner of complexes. But desirable schools for little children are rare in India. If you can find such a school, it will probably be better for your son to be sent there.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

30. To the Editor, The Hindustan Times[1]

Allahabad
March 4, 1940

Dear Editor,

I received your letter of the 18th February with the proofs of H.G. Wells' articles. I am sorry that I could not deal with this matter earlier, and even now I must do so only briefly. I give below my reactions to Wells' articles.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Anything that Mr. H.G. Wells writes is interesting and provocative to thought. I have read with great interest, therefore, his proposal that there should be a new declaration of the Rights of Man. Generally speaking, I agree with what he says. But I have a feeling that all such declarations do not take us very far. They have no doubt a certain value in educating public opinion and exercising public pressure on governments. And yet we have seen so many declarations, which read and

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

sound so well, lead to nothing at all. Apart from the major declarations, everyone will remember the Briand-Kellogg Pact for the outlawry of war.

But my main difficulty is that this declaration does not indicate at all how it is going to be given effect to. I do not mean the details, but rather the fundamental principles of social and economic organisation. If it is true, as I hold it is, that the present ills of the world are largely due to the political and economic structure of the world, then it becomes essential to change this structure and to bring it in line with the objectives suggested in the declaration. I do not think that Mr. Wells' declaration can possibly be realised under a system which is dominated by capitalism and imperialism. Thus both of these have to go before one could build anew.

Mr. Wells lays down that every man is entitled to various things. I agree. But how is he to get them under capitalism or if any nation or class is dominated by another? The way lies through socialism and a socialised structure of society.

31. To D.G. Tendulkar[1]

Allahabad
March 5, 1940

My dear Tendulkar,

Your letter. I have read your article with interest. I am sorry I have not read the book you gave me yet. But I shall certainly read it before long.

I agree with you that our newspapers have completely gone astray and lost their balance. *The Bombay Chronicle* is a particular sinner when it deals with foreign politics. It does not seem to have much idea about it.

If you have any good material or cutting from foreign papers you can send them to the *National Herald* for publication.

I am not thinking of going on a tour just at present. I do not know what I should do after the Ramgarh Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. D.G. Tendulkar Papers, N.M.M.L.

32. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
March 8, 1940

My dear Krishna,
This is to acknowledge two of your letters dated the 13th February and 21st February. The latter came a week earlier.

I have already written to you that I have dropped the idea about writing for the Penguin. Indeed I never had any clear idea on the subject and even if I had it, I could not find the time. I cannot think of writing at all under the existing circumstances and the way things are developing.

As for a biography of Gandhiji[2], it is quite impossible for me to undertake it for reasons other than those of time. An active politician can never write frankly and freely about his colleagues. I have refused to write even articles on the subject.

About an American edition of the *Autobiography*, however, I am keen about getting it through as early as possible and, short of absolute disability, I shall write the concluding chapter as soon as I get the corrected copy. I am sending a number of new photographs to John Day for this edition. This includes one of my grandfather. This is interesting as showing the great change in three generations. He looks like a Mughal nobleman and is dressed as such.

As soon as I get the list of my articles which are with you, I shall send you the remaining ones. It is no good my doing so before I get your list. This list will begin of course from sometime towards the end of 1937 when *Eighteen Months in India* came out. You can of course choose any of the articles from *Eighteen Months*.

I note what you say about the Rhodes lecture.[3] My own reaction to it was much the same. But I wanted to know what you said. In any event the question does not arise.

It is obvious that British authorities are trying to boom pan-Islamism and give prominence to the Muslim League. News here is very scarce about what is happening in the Middle and Near East. From such

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Menon had suggested that Jawaharlal write a biography of Mahatma Gandhi which should be "not necessarily an encyclopedic one but whatever you think is the best presentation of his life story."
3. Menon had advised Jawaharlal not to agree to deliver the Rhodes Memorial Lecture for that year on grounds of principle; "it really turns on whether one wants to see you as General Smuts or as Jawaharlal Nehru."

accounts as we have, it appears that Muslim feeling in the Islamic countries is not at all pleased with the activities of the Muslim League in India. Two prominent Muslim Leaguers who have recently visited the western Asiatic countries have been expressing their resentment here at the way the Congress and Jawaharlal Nehru have misled Islamic opinion, show that the Muslim League is condemned there and the Congress is spoken of highly. As a matter of fact we have hardly any contacts with these countries and such opinions as have been formed there are based entirely on ordinary newspaper reports. I am to some extent known there and so is the Congress. The fact of the matter is that the Muslim League in India is such a frightfully reactionary body that nationalist movements in Islamic countries cannot understand it, while they can understand the Congress to some extent.

I should like you to send to me or to the *Herald* such news as is available about the Middle East.[4]

Much that you wrote in your two letters about the general position is out of date and needs little reply. Besides I have written to you recently on this subject and you will realise that your fears had little justification. You must not allow yourself to be taken in by propaganda.

It is true, I think, that in some matters not immediately relating to India, there is a difference in viewpoints between you and me. I entirely agree that the British and French Governments are exploiting some of the small nations for the furtherance of their imperialist designs. It follows from this, as well as from our own national reasons, that we must not be parties to this game in any way whatsoever. We must keep a vigilant eye on the sinister developments that seem likely and not allow ourselves to be deluded by the one-sided propaganda that is taking place. At the same time it does not follow, to my thinking, that we must plump for the other thesis that Russian action in Finland has been right or justifiable. Personally I do not even think it was expedient. It is true that one has to choose frequently between lesser evils in life. But one need not necessarily choose an evil if one can avoid it. In any event, constituted as I am, it is difficult for me to accept anything unthinkingly and to change my opinions and policies because an organisation has suddenly said so. You discuss this question of faith in your letter in another connection. I can agree with you, not being a man of faith myself. Faith only comes in as an objective factor when other people are influenced by it. It seems to me that there is as much of this malady of faith in Europe as in India. Only it uses different langu

4. Menon had complained [illegible] the Indian press did not give a [illegible] events in West Asia bu[illegible] provided the 'official news'.

But I must stop here. How I wish that I could have long talks with you. But that seems to be beyond our reach for some time at least. How the situation will develop it is difficult to say. But obviously there are possibilities of rapid developments. Some newspapers say that the government is thinking of banning the Congress. No doubt it will think about it. But I do not think that any such action is likely very soon. Today has brought the news of Jaya Prakash Narayan's arrest for a speech he had delivered at Jamshedpur. This is significant.

I have sent you by ordinary mail two or three recent pictures of mine. I thought they might be of some use to you.

In the recent all-India budget proposals an additional excise duty has been put on sugar. This was stated to be so arranged as to fall on the consumer. The U.P. Government, however, have cleverly passed it on to the cane producers, that is the peasants, and thus tried to undo some of the good work done by the Congress government. This is going to be felt by large areas in this province and there will be repercussions.

Ordinarily I would send you an air-mail copy of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's presidential address of the Congress. But this will take too long a time to reach you. I should suggest to Kripalani to send a cabled summary. Remember that the address is going to be delivered on the 19th March.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

12

PERSONAL

1. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
30.7.39

Darling Indu,
Last night I returned from Ceylon but only for a day and a half. Tomorrow I go off to Jamshedpur where the iron and steel come from, and then to Lucknow, and Wardha. As this world seems to become more and more purposeless and futile, our activities become more strenuous. I am going by special plane to Jamshedpur to save time and from there I shall fly to Lucknow. And so we create an illusion that we are making ourselves very useful.

It was a delight to receive your letter and postcard and more so to find that you have benefited by your stay in Suisse. The pictures you have sent are very good and you certainly look fuller and fitter in them. Why cut short your stay in Suisse? If it is doing you good, lay by a store of energy and good health. They will stand you in good stead when you have to face the November fogs of England. An extra fortnight or month now might mean a great deal. Anyway it will be foolish to go back to save a little money.

I do not know how you stand for money. I forget what arrangements were made with Bachhraj but anyway they were for a short time only. You had better look through them and write to them directly what your needs are. Meanwhile I enclose a cheque for £ 22.

The Ceylon visit was strenuous but still exhilarating. We were feted by all the big guns. This was not exhilarating. Ceylon high society is singularly uninspiring. It is a pale reflex of suburbia. But the popular welcome was something immense, in spite of the ill feeling that has arisen between Indians and Ceylonese. I enclose some pictures taken with my camera. Betty is still in Ceylon. She returns to Bombay on the 11th August or thereabouts.

I am still revolving in my head the idea of visiting China. It takes shape. It is frightfully difficult to disentangle myself from the odd jobs I do here. But that in itself is an inducement to go away. As a preparation for the visit I have had myself vaccinated, and inoculated against cholera and I am carrying about with me some stuff which will be injected inside me for protection against typhoid. This is a new experience for I have not had any such thing done to me since my boyhood. But I wanted to avoid difficulties with regulations. Having

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

protected my body from disease, the only danger that remains is from man. There is no vaccine or injection for that. But the danger is not great and what there is will add spice to the visit. I wish there was real danger. I want to know how I feel when I have to face it. I imagine that I have lost the vivid desire I had to live, but I know well that when the test comes I shall not lose grip easily.

A difficulty however has arisen. The Chinese Ambassador in London urges me not to broadcast my visit but to go quietly. This is no easy matter. If I go I shall start about the 21st August by air *via* Hanoi in Indo-China. From there to Kunming and Chungking—a matter of three or four days from Allahabad. I hope to be back by the first week of October, that is if war does not break out earlier.

I had a letter from Kailas. He has taken a flat near Bhandari's house and seems to be happy. Shiela had not reached there.

I do not know where to send this letter. You say that you might leave Suisse by the end of July. Still I am sending it to your last address.

Here is a criticism from a fairly competent person[2] of my pamphlet *Where Are We?*—"Then the technical perfection of your style—the way you take the most difficult and subtle and complicated subject matter, and turn it into spring water flowing in the sun—it's a miracle..."! This 'perfect' piece of writing, you will remember, was written in a great hurry overnight just before the Tripuri Congress.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

2. Frances Gunther in her letter dated 6 July 1939.

2. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
Aug. 5, 1939

Darling Indu,

An unexpected occurrence has suddenly landed me in Allahabad and here I am for a few hours with nothing particular to do. Of course

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

there is heaps to be done but my mind is not tuned to it and all my papers are away. So I sit down to write a few lines to you. And perhaps later I might write a मजमून[2] for the *National Herald!*

I was in Jamshedpur where I had gone by air for an arbitration between the Tata Company and their workers. I was expected in Lucknow last evening or at the latest this morning. By train this was a complicated journey involving several changes. I had decided therefore to go by plane. I could not start yesterday as the weather was not good and I had not quite finished my work there. We intended starting very early this morning—about six or earlier—and reaching Lucknow by ten. But the weather reports were very bad and the pilot said it was no good starting till better reports came in. We waited. At about eleven he sent word that he was prepared to risk it and so Upadhyaya and I started off at 11.30. We flew low because of the clouds and went fast, having a following wind. It was slightly bumpy but otherwise there was no trouble. We passed Benares and headed towards Allahabad. Halfway between Benares and Allahabad we came up against a thunderstorm and the pilot, overcautious perhaps and thinking discretion was the safer course, returned to Benares where we landed. We took in more petrol there and started towards Allahabad again. The landing ground was small and in order to lighten the machine I left Upadhyaya and all my luggage in Benares. It took us just half an hour to cover the distance between Benares and Allahabad. We passed through a thunderstorm and landed in a heavy mist at Bamrauli. There was no question of going further by plane today so I came home and reached here at tea time. Tonight I go by train to Lucknow.

No one was expecting me of course and I felt a little lost. Even my faithful companion Upadhyaya was not with me. I realised how helpless I was in many ways. I am writing to you but this letter will not be posted here. It will go to Lucknow as I have no stamps and do not even know what stamps to fix.

Flying low over the fields was very pleasant. India during the monsoon looks very different from other times. It is green and cool-looking with masses of water everywhere.

This letter has unfortunately been delayed. I enclose the मजमून.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

2. *Majmun*—Article. See *ante*, section 11, item 2.

3. To Indira Nehru[1]

Kunming (or Yunnanfou)
Aug. 22/23, 1939

Darling Indu,
I am so tired but I must write to you a few lines. I have been thinking of you so much today and wishing that you were with me in this voyage of discovery. China fills me with excitement but this excitement pales off when I think that I am alone. This travelling business all by myself is becoming a heavy burden to me and the next month, inviting enough in many ways, is full of terror because of this.

I am in China at last. Strange that I should have been in Calcutta yesterday morning and should have passed through Burma, Siam (which should be properly called Thailand), Indo-China, and now should be in China! It is not easy to adjust one's mind to these swift changes.

I cannot write much to you because I am very tired and it is getting on to 2 a.m. I shall have to be up early tomorrow morning and prepare to go to Chungking where I reach by midday. I have a heavy programme there. I expect to be in Chungking for a week.

I am sending fairly long notes of my journey to the *Herald*.[2] Read them.

Love,

Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, section 2, item 9.

4. To Indira Nehru[1]

Near Chungking
28.8.39

Darling Indu,
There is so much expectation of war that it is impossible to make any plans. If war breaks out in Europe, which seems unlikely, I shall return immediately to India. Otherwise I shall stay on here for another three weeks.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

We had another air raid here tonight. I had a glimpse of the Japanese bombers caught in the searchlights and of a fight between them and the Chinese chaser planes. But then I was hurried into a dug-out. I am spending the evening and night at the Generalissimo's house right out of Chungking. Madame is a delightful hostess.

Love,

Papu

5. To Indira Nehru[1]

September 17th, 1939

Darling Indu,

I have just returned to Allahabad after nearly a month's absence. I found your letter of 7th September awaiting me here. I was very happy to get it. It seems ages since you wrote to me. I think your last letter came about two months ago before I went to Ceylon. I returned from Ceylon and after two or three weeks in India went to China. From there I had to hurry back when I heard of the declaration of war. Probably I would not have been able to come back so soon if the Chinese Government had not helped me by getting a special to carry me direct to Burma. The ordinary air services were suspended and the few airliners that were functioning were completely booked up. The Chinese Government got a fine Douglas passenger plane from Hong Kong for me and this took me from Chungking to Lashio on the Burma border. Lashio is in the northern Shan States and is the railhead in Burma. I did not however wait for the next train but went on by car to Mandalay which was 180 miles away. *En route* I was stopped at several places and Burmans and Indians had gathered together to welcome me and there were small meetings. Long before I reached Mandalay, our old friend Mrs. Galliara met me on the road and accompanied me from there. She was very excited at seeing me and, as usual, was full of affection. She wanted me to send you her love.

From Mandalay I went by train to Rangoon, but there were floods on the way and the railway line was covered by a foot of water. The

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

train was stopped. I was in too much of a hurry to reach Rangoon and it was arranged that I should cross the flooded area by rail trolley. Ultimately I reached Rangoon seven hours late to find a huge crowd of about ten thousand or more persons still waiting for me. There was a great deal of pushing to reach me and as I was coming out of the station the rush was too great and many persons were unfortunately injured as they fell down and were trampled upon. Even I in trying to save others fell down. A troop of Chinese girl guides had come to welcome me and seven or eight of these were among the injured, one getting a fracture of the collarbone. I was very much distressed at this but fortunately no injury was really serious.

From Rangoon I hurried by K.L.M. to Calcutta. I had hoped to come to Allahabad direct but the K.L.M. stopped for the day in Calcutta, as the weather was bad. Thereupon I went by train direct to Wardha where the Working Committee was meeting. I spent several days there and have just arrived here.

The air journey from Chungking to Lashio was very interesting and over mountainous and wooded country. At times I had a feeling that we were on the point of colliding against a mountain which loomed up alarmingly near. But our Chinese pilot was good. The plane returned from Lashio to China soon after landing me and unfortunately took back with it to China a little bag of mine by mistake.

I wrote to you last from a place near Chungking, the country-house of Chiang Kai-shek where I was spending a day and night. I wonder if you got that letter. I was less than two weeks in China. But these few days were full of incidents and I could write much about them to you. I must not, however, do so now.

The war has brought tremendous responsibilities to all of us and our hands are going to be full. What is going to happen in India in the near future I do not quite know. But one thing is quite clear—we are in for a dynamic situation and big changes will take place.

I am enclosing a copy of the statement issued by the Working Committee. The Committee has also appointed a small war emergency sub-committee of which I am the chairman and the other two members are Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. I have again joined the Working Committee because of this crisis. I shall be going to Lucknow in a day or two. The All India Congress Committee will meet at Wardha on the 7th October.

I have had this typewritten as in these days of censorship this might facilitate matters. You have not acknowledged my previous letters, especially the cheque and the bank instructions I sent. As for your

future programme, you will decide for yourself. You are the best judge.

All my love,

Your loving
Papu

6. To Indira Nehru[1]

September 30th, 1939

Darling Indu,

I wrote to you a week ago. Every day since then I have wanted to write to you but I have restrained myself. You have been in my thoughts so often, so near to me and yet so far. This war has increased distances and lessened contacts and all manner of barriers have grown up keeping countries and people cut off from each other. My mind goes back to the last big war, before you were born, and when I was very much younger. We were all excited of course by it but it was a distant excitement as that of an onlooker at a game. But none of us are mere onlookers today wherever we might be. And to some of us the war means a terrible burden of responsibility. It is a difficult and terrible business to carry on a war. And yet the decision is made and all energy is concentrated to that end. But when vital decisions have to be made it is an even more painful task. And that is our fate in India today.

The last war! How gradually we grew accustomed to it as month by month and year by year it dragged on with its highlights and its long dreary periods of trench fighting. It is likely to be different this time, but who knows? Yet a month of it has brought vast changes and Poland is no more and Russia dominates the scene more and more. There was no radio at the time of the last war. Now everybody is becoming a radio fan and the people of leisure hover round it for a good part of the day. I am not one of the fans but every night after dinner I spend some time over it.

I have been going backwards and forwards between Allahabad and Lucknow and tomorrow I am going to Delhi to see the Viceroy. What will come of all this I do not know. Somehow I have lost that keen

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

incentive that gave me vitality and drove me to action. I am not so frightfully interested as I used to be. Perhaps it is age, yet I do not think so. It is just a sense of weariness and futility that has been stealing over me these three years or more. I tried to ignore it and to suppress it by my incessant touring and hard work. I impressed others but not myself, for I realised that I was trying to escape from an inner weakness. And now this weakness seems to grow and with it a carelessness of what happens. Probably I am not a big enough man for the job that fate has thrust upon me.

We are having moonlit nights. The moon has become an inseparable companion in my mind to bombing from the air, and crowded dug-outs, and warning sirens, and searchlights playing on the sky, and the conflicts of the air. A month ago I experienced all this almost daily in Chungking. It is the bright fortnight of the moon, invitation to and signal of the bomber. I feel tense when I think of this and I am surprised at the casualness of others here.

In China I expressed a desire to get a few souvenirs. I had little time to go shopping and I was not encouraged. Some things were brought to me. They were lovely woven silks (pictures etc.) and rich embroideries. I chose a few thinking them to be expensive. But the exchange was very much in my favour and so the price was reasonable. I chose a few more. And then I stopped for I discovered that my Chinese hosts would not let me pay. They added a few more to the lot and insisted on presenting them to me. This kind of thing is an embarrassing business, yet I could not get out of it. I wanted particularly to get some inexpensive jades but after my first experience I desisted from further shopping.

So I brought with me a box full of silks and woven and embroidered pictures. I went to Wardha first and started distributing them. There was Sarojini Naidu and I gave her some for herself and Bebe and Papi. Then to Amrit Kaur and Psyche and Bul; to Savitri and to some of my political colleagues. I sent a packet to Betty. On coming to Allahabad three silks to Rup and Bappi and gave other pieces to various friends. Suddenly I discovered that I was exhausting my stock. In alarm I have removed what I had left from prying eyes and locked them in your little cupboard. I hope they will remain there when you come and you will use them in some way. There are some silver trinkets also.

My Contax camera has had a long journey. When I got on the K.L.M. in Rangoon, the camera as usual was handed to the steward and locked up by him. In Calcutta, where I got off, he did not give it to me and for the moment I did not remember to ask him. When a

little later I asked him in the hotel, he said that it was not easy to get at it as the camera was in the plane at Dum Dum, many miles away. The commander of the K.L.M. plane suggested that he might carry it to Allahabad and leave it there. I agreed and went off to Wardha by train. On my return to Allahabad I was told that the sealed camera box was opened here but my camera was not found in it! Some days later I was informed that when the plane reached Amsterdam they found an extra camera in it which presumably belonged to me. They brought it back but the Karachi customs authorities took possession of it and kept it. And there it is at present. I am trying to get hold of it and I shall probably succeed but many of the pictures I took in China and which were on the spool in the camera will be lost. Anyway I have large numbers of Chinese pictures with me.

Madame Chiang gave me some lovely Chinese men's gowns. Some are in silk, others in very fine linen which I was told was made from some kind of grass....

Write to me whenever you can. Letters are irregular, still they will manage to reach some time or other.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

7. To Indira Nehru[1]

Wardha
Oct. 6, 1939

Darling Indu,

I have just reached here from Delhi and received your letter of September 19th. Air-mail letters seem to take a full fortnight now. You say that you have been writing to me twice a week. Since my return from China I have received three letters from you. I have also written three letters, excluding this one. I sent you a letter also from Chiang Kai-shek's house in Chungking. I wrote to Agatha also from there telling her that Madame Chiang made all manner of inquiries about her and wanted me to convey to her, her affectionate regards. In case Agatha has not got my letter please tell her about this.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

As you are not likely to get the *Herald* by ordinary post I am stopping this and asking the people there to send you cuttings from it twice a week by air mail. I hope you will get them. You can send them on later to Louise Morin.

I do not know where you are. Probably you have gone to Oxford but I shall continue sending letters c/o Agatha.

I met Satish Kalelkar[2] here today. He came back by the *Biancamano* and had an unusual experience. He was due to arrive in Bombay by the end of August but the prospect of war breaking out induced the Italian authorities to direct the *Biancamano* to a non-British port. So it went to Batavia in Java, not touching even at Colombo. Later it came to Singapore where the unfortunate passengers for India had to wait for many days. Then they came back by different boats *via* Ceylon.

In Delhi I had a long interview with the Viceroy and I also met after three years my old friend Mr. Jinnah. The position is entirely uncertain and is likely to remain so for another two weeks or so. Probably the A.I.C.C. which is meeting on the 9th will come to no final decision and leave this to the Working Committee. The prospects of a settlement are not hopeful. If this is the ultimate result, you will realise that events will take a rapid turn.

I am quite sure that breathing exercises will do you good. You will remember that I recommended them to you when you were here. But obviously you must not do anything which the doctors forbid. I imagine that very gentle exercises cannot possibly do you harm and Bhandari will agree to them. Why not get him to meet Birju Bhai and find out what exercises he suggests? The point is regularity in doing these exercises however simple they might be. Even ordinary regular breathing for a while daily is very good. I am all in favour of simple regulated breathing exercises. Let Bhandari and Birju chacha settle the matter between them.

Yesterday from Delhi I sent a long 850-word cable message to *News Chronicle*[3] at their request. I wonder if it has appeared.

Is it possible for you to get Delhi on the radio? If so you will get Indian news, including my movements which are fully reported. Try it. They have news several times a day. Usually I tune in at 6 p.m. or 9 p.m. (Indian time). This will mean 5 hours or so earlier for you. Perhaps someone could tell you if it is possible to get Delhi in England.

There is much that I would like to tell you. I have had it on my mind for long. But it is not possible to write and I do not know when

2. Contemporary of Indira Nehru at Oxford; later member, Indian Information Service.

3. See *ante*, section 3, item 18.

we shall meet—months or years hence. And these months and years will bring great changes and perhaps so many fresh experiences to each of us. How uncertain everything is. Life has become more of a question mark than ever.

I wrote to Louise Morin and Jean-Jacques a few days ago. I wonder if my letters will reach them. Anyway write to Louise and tell her that I have written to her.

I propose to write to you at least once a week, probably oftener. If you do not get my letters regularly, the fault is someone else's.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

8. To Indira Nehru[1]

Lucknow
17/18-10-1939

Darling Indu,

I wrote to you three days ago.[2] I told you then that Edward Thompson had suddenly arrived in Allahabad. He shifted over to Anand Bhawan and spent two days with me and I had long talks with him. He is rather erratic in his conversation—the quality of a poet I suppose—but it was a pleasant change to have him and talk to him. He helped me to form a better picture of England today and Europe, and I helped him a little perhaps to understand the amazing complexity of India. He went off to Delhi and I came to Lucknow. Before he went I gave him two small pieces of Chinese silk for you—one has a woven picture and the other is an embroidery. I could have sent you more but I did not wish to burden him or cause him difficulties over the customs. These are a birthday gift for you. Soon that birthday will be coming and I do not know where I shall be then. So I have seized hold of this opportunity.

I am writing this at midnight. I have just read the Viceroy's speech which he has made in answer to the Congress demand. The door is banged. I suppose events will march more rapidly now and I do not

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Not printed.

know for how long I can write to you as I have done. Anyway it does not matter.

Look after yourself, my dear, and keep your body and mind fit and strong. You will require all your strength in the days to come.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

9. To Indira Nehru[1]

Itarsi Station
21-10-1939

Darling,
So you have gone back to Brentford Hospital, where I visited you so often last year! But such mishaps occur and one should not worry. If a hurdle comes our way, we take it in style, concentrating on it for the moment, and forgetting about other hurdles. Life is unfortunately full of hurdles and obstacles, and today these are very much in evidence all over the world. But we shall take them one by one.

I have written fully to Dr. Bhandari. You are in good hands and many friends are near you to look after you and help you in every way. That is a comfort. When you are better, you can decide your future programme. There is no hurry about it and no need to think about it till you are out of hospital. Bhandari suggests that you might go to Devonshire first. Afterwards, *nous verrons.*[2]

India, like every other place, is a curious, uncertain place today where anything might happen. But whatever might happen to us, there are always plenty of friends who can look after you if you decide to come back.

Yesterday as I was going to Allahabad station, I went to the telegraph office to send you a cable. I signed it, as I always do, Papu. But the telegraph people said this was not good enough. The censor required the full name. I was irritated, quite needlessly, and crumpled up the

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. We shall see.

form and came away! Today I have sent that cable signing it 'Papu Nehru'! !

I am on my way to Wardha.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

10. To Indira Nehru[1]

Lucknow
6-11-1939

Darling,

I have not written to you for about ten days and so have broken my promise made in my last letter of writing at least once a week. But life is a hard taskmaster and these days have been particularly hard. One lives in a state of tension, not knowing what will happen, and meanwhile rushing about in railway trains—Allahabad to Wardha—to Bombay—to Lucknow—to Delhi—to Allahabad—to Lucknow again. I came here today and am staying for the last time at 6 Couper Road, the ministerial mansion. The Congress governments are over and the ministers have reverted to humbler roles. Indeed I would not have come here at all if *puphi* had not stayed on owing to illness.

A cable jointly sent by Agatha and Bhandari informed me that you were going to Switzerland and that one of them (or both?) was accompanying you. I do not exactly know when and where you are going. I presume you are going to Leysin. That is a safe and quiet corner and your friend Madame Hemmerlin will be near you! If you go to Dr. Rollier's place, as I hope you will, you will meet a Gujarati boy there who was sent by Jivraj Mehta. I forget his name.

For some time past building operations have been going on next to Anand Bhawan on the Memorial Hospital. The foundations have been laid and on November 19th Bapu is going to lay a corner stone. The date was fixed to suit Bapu's convenience and then I suddenly remembered that it was your birthday. I wonder if you will get my little birthday gift in time—the Chinese pictures I have sent through Edward Thompson. He is leaving by air tomorrow morning.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

I enclose two pictures recently taken in Delhi. The one of Bapu and Jinnah is very characteristic. Also two cartoons of Shankar's. Did you read Samuel Hoare's speech in which he referred to my being a Harrovian and put in a good word for the old school which had produced four such distinguished persons in a generation as himself, Baldwin, Winston Churchill and me![2] The old school tie appeal was made to me in the crudest manner....

Love,

Papu

2. On 26 October 1939, in the House of Commons.

11. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
16-11-1939

Darling Indu,

Your message was very welcome because of the news it gave about your progress to health. The reminder of the birthday is not a pleasant one after one approaches or passes a certain age. In China I believe the fiftieth birthday is a great event for age is honoured there and everyone is keen on appearing older than he is. My own enthusiasm for age is not so great and the figure fifty in connection with my age frightens me. Perhaps wisdom comes with the years, but wisdom by itself does not take one very far. There must be the urge and capacity to act up to that wisdom. *Si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait.*[2] So the oncoming of age is not such a pleasant event. I must confess that I do not feel frightfully old. It surprises me to realise that I am fifty—why I shall be sixty and three score and ten, a doddering old person who is a burden and a nuisance to everybody.

Sometimes I feel very old and tired. It has nothing to do with the years. It is mental weariness and a feeling that I am something apart from the world I live in. My contacts lessen and grow more impersonal, and I grow more and more a spectator in the very drama in which I take part. Life is a curious affair and puzzles and perplexes me far

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. If the young knew, and old age could.

more now than it used to do when I was younger and had more assurance. That assurance fades out. What do I know, what do I understand? Every individual is a mystery which cannot be fathomed. We carry on in our respective spheres by old habit or just conceit and the years pass on and we pass off.

The Gunthers sent me a cable from New York: "Birthday greetings second fifty years are easiest when you stand fast love." What a horrible prospect to think of a second fifty years! Among the other messages was one from Mussoorie: "*Salgira mubarak jhanda uncha rahe hamara*[3] love Chand Tara Rita Tangle Amma." Do you remember Tangle the spoilt little dog which is Rita's delight?

I have spent the last few days in comparative peace and leisure, that is I have had very few public engagements. I have been out of Allahabad for so long that piles of correspondence have accumulated. The more important letters or such as the office considered important enough were forwarded to me. The others remained and I faced this accumulation with alarm. I was astonished to find a large collection which had come when I was in China and had not read at all. Fortunately most letters answer themselves if one leaves them to their own fate and I had the pleasure of tearing up many baskets full of letters and papers. I have long given up my old methodical habit of trying to answer almost all the letters that I received. This became physically impossible and perhaps I grow more slipshod in my work.

So after three or four days of intensive application, I removed large quantities of papers and even books from my room which were all lying about the floor. The room looked clean and businesslike for once—but for how long?

Birthdays are occasions for renewing one's wardrobe. Except for a new *kurta* and dhoti I had not added to my sartorial belongings in India for many years. This time there was a regular conspiracy afoot to induce me to have a new *sherwani* made and I surrendered although my old ones were quite good enough. Hope Bros. were summoned and they reminded me of the last occasion when I had a *sherwani* made—just ten years ago before the Lahore Congress! Now I am the proud possessor of a new *sherwani* and I do not quite know what to do with it.

In another two or three days a crowd of people will descend on Anand Bhawan. There is the Working Committee and the corner-stone ceremony of the Kamala Memorial Hospital. We are having tents put up.

I was surprised to read in your letter that you did not propose to go to Switzerland till after Christmas. The climate there is quite good by

3. Birthday greetings. Let our flag fly high.

the end of November and if you are going there, the sooner the better. I suppose the visa difficulty will be got over. I have had a letter from Dr. Samson who visited you in Brentford Hospital. As you write, he is all for German Switzerland. We know well how people from different parts of Switzerland swear by their own particular areas. I do not think one need worry about this. They are both more or less alike from the treatment point of view. You will remember how old Stephani used to say that Montana was the sunniest spot in Suisse. It really does not matter where you go to in Switzerland—the French part or the German part. Go to whichever place attracts you most.

One thing you really must not worry about, that is the question of expense. Apart from other considerations, this is a necessary investment and it is folly to economise when the result of present economy will be or might be more trouble and expense later. It is best to do things well and get the most out of them. That is why I have suggested your going to a sanatorium to begin with even though this might be more costly, if doctors think this will do you more good. For this may result in shortening your stay in Suisse and in helping more rapidly in your recovery.

We have never worried about money matters. Why should we do so now? We can carry on easily enough if not on income then on capital. If capital runs out we have the capacity to add to it. In this changing world, with all manner of revolutionary possibilities, no one knows what our present money may be worth a few years or even months hence. The real capital we have is our intellectual and other capacity for work and that no one can take from us. And then we have the very useful and worthwhile capacity for reducing our expenditure and changing our mode of life when necessity demands this. That in itself will be an adventure which adds zest to life. But there is no question of that for the present or the near future. Personal money matters never worry me. I am so confident about my own capacity both to earn enough and to reduce my own expenditure that the future does not trouble me.

The little book I wrote—*Letters from a Father to His Daughter*—has become quite a gold mine, though I am not going to profit by it. It is becoming a text book in many provinces in English, Hindi and Urdu and vast numbers have been printed. I was hardly aware of this fact when I discovered that Kitabistan had made about Rs. 20,000 out of it. Something to the tune of Rs. 2,500 or so trickled to me also. But I disliked the idea of exploiting poor students and so I have made a present of my rights in the book to provincial governments and universities on condition that the book was issued at a very low price. The U.P.

Government are selling it to students at 4 annas and yet making a substantial profit. At my suggestion they are using this money for scholarships for poor students, to be named after Kamala.

I suppose I could have made a lot of money out of my books if I had been a businessman. But I have a knack of choosing impecunious publishers or even bankrupt ones. The Tamil edition of my *Autobiography* has sold very well but I have not profited at all by it as the publisher is half-mad and half-knave and is in addition an insolvent! I cannot even keep in touch with the numerous editions of my books in India. Still I must not complain. Some money comes in regularly and is of great help —not in personal expenditure which is not great, but for other purposes. A great drain on me has been the *National Herald*. I do not know where this will land me. Personal expenditure, yours or mine, makes little difference.

The Calcutta *Statesman* offered me Rs. 500/- a month for a column a week—4 columns a month of comments on international affairs. I rejected it of course. It is easy enough for me to earn a decent livelihood by writing. But other matters engross my attention and even when I write, it is not for payment.

So please do not worry at all about the expenses involved in your trip to Suisse. Get well, store up health and energy, become a capitalist in health and the rest does not matter....

It is perfectly delightful weather here now, though I would prefer it to be somewhat colder. The nights are cool, the days very pleasant.

I enclose a card that has come for you—a pre-war card from Germany. It took two months to come here. As it would not fit in my envelope I had to cut it down! Now I have chosen another envelope.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

12. To Indira Nehru[1]

December 2, 1939

Darling Indu,

I returned yesterday from Muttra (what an awful way of spelling a sweet sounding word like मथुरा[2]) and found your letter of the 19th/21st November awaiting me. I am so happy to learn that you had an enjoyable birthday with plenty of flowers and fruit and sunshine—not to mention chocolates. But in your description I missed one thing. Has not Edward Thompson given you the Chinese pictures I sent through him? He is very absent-minded and might easily forget. The pictures are in an envelope—a big one—and can be overlooked.

The problem of your going to Switzerland seems to get more and more intricate. Where to go? Leysin, Montana, Davos, or the Stunnes' place. It is absurd for me to say much about it as the decision must be made at the other end, and so far as I am concerned, it does not matter much where you go. I do feel that Montana—Lady Maharaj Singh's choice—is not very desirable for a variety of reasons. Jivraj Mehta still sticks to Leysin as he is a believer in Dr. Rollier's ability and also thinks that Leysin is preferable as it is more easily accessible and probably cheaper.

I liked my visit to Muttra. On my way there I spent a few hours at Agra just to see the Taj on the night of the full moon—the कार्तिकी पूर्णिमा.[3] I like the Taj very much, not only because of its exceeding beauty, but also because it takes me out of the present. It is something to feel detached for a while and away from this world of strife and war. Muttra again was full of the atmosphere of a bygone age with the Krishna legends and its delightful and melodious *Brij bhasha.* It was extraordinary to notice how the peasantry were full of this old culture and tradition. In course of conversation, they would refer to some old story or quote a line from Tulsi Das. There is something in an old culture after all, which gives poise and distinction to life.

Early one morning some of our party went to a neighbouring well for bath. This was situated amidst the fields and the peasant owner or tenant came with his bullocks to draw out water from the well for his fields. They use a big leather bucket called a मोट.[4] When the first bucket came up our people wanted to start bathing. But the peasant asked

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. Mathura.
3. *Kartiki Purnima.*
4. Mote.

them to wait as the first lot of water was dedicated to कन्हैया जी[5] (what a sweet name this is). He said that he liked pouring out the first five मोटfuls to Kanhaiyaji and other favourite divinities, but in any event the first one should not be touched. Sometimes, he said, people would come and use even this first lot of water, much to his dismay. But he did not want to quarrel about it and so he let them. Our people told him that they were certainly not going to interfere with his old custom. They were Congressmen and between the Congress and the peasants there was सुमति[6]. Yes, said the peasant, and immediately quoted a famous line of Tulsi Das जहाँ सुमति तहाँ सम्पति नाना[7] —where there is goodwill and cooperation, there is an abundance and variety of wealth.

I regretted nothing so much in Muttra as my ignorance of *Brij bhasha.* I felt how cut off I was from the life of the people and the roots of their culture, and how much I had missed because of this. And straightway I resolved that when I have to put up with my next period of enforced retirement I shall devote myself to the study of Hindi and Urdu literature. After all it is the language that is the closest bond between people and is the mirror where one sees their minds and hearts....

It is somewhat expensive to send the *National Herald* cuttings by air but it is worth it in order to keep you in touch with events here. I offered to pay the *Herald* people the postage but very magnanimously they said that they would not charge me as I was their most frequent unpaid contributor! Very generous of them, only the ultimate burden of the *National Herald* comes back to me! But if you like and if it amuses you, you can yourself pay for this by sending good cuttings from newspapers for reproduction in the *Herald.* Or sometimes, when you are much stronger and better, you can write a brief essay on conditions in Switzerland in war time or anything else—the more informal the better, just like a personal letter. You write good letters. But you must only do this for the fun of it, if you like doing it. It is amusing to write once you get into the hang of it.

Thank you for the cuttings about Byrd's expedition.[8] This kind of thing is good and should be appreciated. My foreign papers have started coming again but they come most irregularly and in batches. Some numbers do not reach us at all. I have been getting both *Time* and *Life*—both are gifts from friends in America. It is difficult to read all this stuff, especially when a month's mail comes all in a bunch. And

5. Kanhaiyaji.
6. *Sumati.*
7. *Jahan sumati tahan sampati nana.*
8. Richard Evelyn Byrd (1888-1957); American naval officer, aviator and explorer; led four Antarctic expeditions in 1929, 1933-35, 1939-41 and 1946-47.

then it is so out of date. *Time* has been interesting. After glancing through *Time* and *Life* I have been sending them to Chand at Mussoorie. She loves these American weeklies. She and Tara and Rita will be coming here soon for their winter holidays.

Yesterday, on my return to Allahabad, I took things easy as is my custom after a tour. I revive by slackening for a few hours, pecking at my accumulated mail and generally lounging about. I sat down at the radio—it is a very neglected radio—and started listening in to all manner of stations. I must have listened to at least half a dozen languages. Curiously India was mentioned in almost every broadcast and sometimes very pertinent things were said and sometimes they were rather ridiculous. It is quite extraordinary how even petty happenings in India are immediately reported in some foreign broadcasts. Soon the news and the comments began to bore me and I switched on to music. I had quite a feast of music, and apart from European music, I listened to Chinese and Balinese. I like Chinese songs, or some of them, but I like especially Balinese music. It is rather plaintive, as most Oriental music is, but nevertheless it is pleasant and soothing. And so I spent two and a half hours at the radio at a stretch.

I understand that Sir Stafford Cripps is arriving here on the 8th December. Krishna has casually mentioned the date and I am rather put out at this late information which upsets my programme. I expected Cripps or Krishna to be more businesslike and send me a cable in good time.

We are having a Working Committee meeting at Wardha on December 18th. That means my absence then for about a week—probably I shall go to Bombay afterwards.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

13. To Indira Nehru[1]

December 13, 1939

Darling Indu,

We have had three strenuous days. Stafford Cripps and his secretary Geoffrey Wilson have been staying with us and many people from nearby

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

towns came to meet them and the house was very full. The children have also come from Mussoorie. Poor Cripps was exhausted right at the beginning of his tour. I wonder how he will manage to go through the next two weeks. He started his journey badly by having an accident in a sleeper in Italy. He fell off from the upper berth and nearly broke a rib! He has now gone to Delhi and Lahore and then to Bombay. I am myself going to Bombay today....

The fifty years do not bother me much, so do not worry. I have been told, on the unimpeachable authority of an astrologer (the man who has made most of the family horoscopes), that I have now entered some new phase which is under the influence of the moon, and this is supposed to be very good for me!

Then again someone told me that he had discovered the secret of my activity. He was a believer in Cheiro and had closely studied his theory of numbers. It appears that I am under the influence of No. 5 because I was born on the 14th of the month (4+1=5). No. 5 denotes activity. So now you know.

In honour of Cripps we have put up a number of Chinese pictures and woven silks in the drawing room. They look charming and give distinction to the room....

We have had a young Pathan boy staying with us for the last six weeks. He is named Yunus.[2] Abdul Ghaffar Khan sent him to me for some kind of training. He is a very charming boy. But what will interest you is that he has got 41 brothers and sisters—in all they are 42! One father but I think 7 or eight mothers. He is about 22, his eldest brother is 70. Bit of a record, I should think. Everyone who hears about it collapses.

You ought to be soon going to Suisse and probably this letter will follow you there. I hope you will cable to me your address in Suisse.

I enclose some of my recent snaps. The Taj was taken by moonlight.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

2. Mohammed Yunus (b. 1916); member, Indian Foreign Service 1947-74; Prime Minister's Special Envoy, 1975-77.

14. To Indira Nehru[1]

Jan. 5, 1940

Darling Indu,

Your letter from Leysin dated 22nd December reached me on January 2nd when I returned to Allahabad. It had come here a day or two earlier. So that it took a little over a week—much less time than letters from England to India. This is comforting.

I am glad you like Leysin and Dr. Rollier. From what you write about him, he must be an attractive and competent person. I shall now eagerly look forward to the transformation of Indira Nehru into a Diana.

I was in Amritsar a few days ago to attend a scout *mela* and I had a narrow shave in an accident which might have been serious. Punjab crowds are astonishingly overwhelming and indisciplined. They are full of affection and enthusiasm but will not observe any discipline, which is surprising as the Punjab is supposed to be a military province. I had gone to Amritsar after nearly three years and the scout *mela* there was attractive. There were nearly 7,000 scouts from all over India gathered there—both boys and girls—looking quite smart. Amritsar decided to observe a holiday and all the shops were closed for the day. Men and women poured into the scout area. They were made to line up outside a huge field which was kept for parade and various exercises. Everything seemed to be well organised and there were barricades and eight rows of scouts to keep the crowds back. I arrived and went into the centre of the field and suddenly the crowd rushed, broke all barriers, swept aside the scouts and filled the field. Over a hundred thousand men and women, shouting slogans, full of enthusiasm, surrounded me. It was impossible to move them away and the programme for the day could not be started. I decided to get on horseback and move about the surging crowds. A fine, big spirited horse was produced. It was wholly unsuitable as it was unused to crowds. It shied continually and reared up on its hind legs. Suddenly there was a rush by the crowd and the horse grew frightened and reared up so much that it lost its balance and fell back. For a fraction of a second I saw myself being crushed by the huge weight of the beast. Visions of being a cripple for life rose before me. It was surprising what a lot of images passed before my mind during that tiny fraction of a second. Meanwhile, instinct and old habit functioned and I just managed to extricate myself as the horse touched the ground. There he rolled a little and my foot

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

was pressed by his body—not much, otherwise it would have been crushed. The stirrup where the foot was an instant before was all buckled up. I got up with some pain in the foot but otherwise sound and immediately mounted the horse again. To show off I suppose, but partly also because walking was a little painful. The foot has almost recovered since then.

I went to Lahore also for a day and addressed a vast meeting there. Again an absence of discipline and bad management. Whenever I go to Lahore I stay with Iftikharuddin (an Oxford man) and meet many Muslim young men and women. It is surprising how Muslim young women of the upper middle classes are taking to socialism, or at any rate think they are. There is friction in many a home because of this. But this theoretical approval of socialism does not come in the way of the joys of life, which in Lahore consists of the most inane and unsupportable round of parties and dances.

Do you remember Sappho, the Great Dane babe at Betty's place in Bombay? The babe grew and grew and was about a year and a half old last month. We were all tremendously fond of her and I looked forward to seeing her and playing about with her whenever I went to Bombay. Raja doted on her—Harsha and Ajit took all manner of liberties with her. Suddenly the poor thing developed rabies and died within two days. Betty and Raja were heart-broken. Just at this time Nan, Chand, Tara and Rita were also there. So everybody—Betty's family and Nan's—have since had to take daily injections of some anti-rabies serum. Sappho had not bitten anybody but she was always licking and sometimes scratching people's hands. This has been a real tragedy. I don't think I could keep a dog. They die too soon.

I enclose rather a good picture of Nandita[2] which I took a couple of months ago. This is just to show you how I am progressing in the art of photography. She is leaning out of the window in my room; in the background is the door leading to your room.

Did I tell you that I have stopped the sending of *Herald* clippings to you by air mail? The full *Herald* will now go to Leysin by the ocean route.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

2. Wife of Krishna Kripalani and grand-daughter of Rabindranath Tagore.

15. To Indira Nehru[1]

16-1-1940

Darling Indu,

I have not written to you for about ten days. For nearly all this time I have been touring intensively in some of our north-western districts of the U.P.—Aligarh, Bulandshahr, Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur and Moradabad. It was a tour after the old style, going from town to town and village to village, addressing huge gatherings, being stopped at numerous wayside places by peasant groups. The day's work began early and went far into the night, sometimes till after 2 a.m. I was tired out and could not summon enough energy to write letters then. So I could not write to you. I returned yesterday and got your letter of the 2nd January. I wanted to write to you immediately but a stream of visitors kept me occupied and I went to bed early to recover somewhat from the fatigue of the tour.

Such tours are of course tiring. But they are invigorating also, at any rate I find them so. Our peasant masses depress me with their poverty but their enthusiasm is catching. More and more I feel in tune with them rather than with the listless and argumentative folk of the cities. I have even begun to appreciate just a wee bit the peasants' attachment to the soil. The good earth has something solid, substantial and permanent about it, which is comforting in these days when everything else seems to be fleeting. Wars may rage and decimate humanity, but the seasons follow each other in regular succession, and the flowers bloom, and the soil produces food, and the fields look peaceful and gay. I felt the call of the good earth and the joy of seeing things grow out of this soil.

The districts I visited are relatively prosperous and compare very favourably with our eastern districts like Gorakhpur and Ballia where the poverty is extreme and the multitudes that gather are semi-naked. This poverty is oppressive and tragic, especially in these winter months when there is no covering except a cotton sheet. But in our northern districts, as in the Punjab, standards are a little higher and people are properly clothed. Many of the peasants who came had fat *razais*[2] with them to wrap themselves in. They were healthier looking. Often they came on their bullock carts from many miles around, bringing their wives and children with them. Hundreds of these bullock carts used to

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Quilts.

surround our meetings, giving the place the look of an encampment or fair.

The Jats are strong in these areas. They are perhaps more passionately attached to the soil than any other group. Hefty, weather-beaten and healthy looking, they are almost part of the country landscape. Always when I go to these rural areas, I am pleasantly surprised by the handsome types of humanity that I see. There are ever so many attractive looking young women and the children are very bonny. In spite of my heavy programmes, I manage to spend a few minutes at almost every meeting with the children. I get large numbers of garlands and I take these to the children and distribute them. Sometimes there is a petty riot as the children gather round me, each one demanding a garland. But unfortunately there are never enough to go round.

On my way back I spent a few hours at Lucknow and a deputation from the Uday Shankar Company, which was performing there, waited on me and invited me to attend. I was glad of the chance and I went to see them perform. I liked the show but I must confess that I am less impressed by it than I used to be. There was a new item or rather series of items—The Rhythm of Life. This is an ambitious theme. The conception is good and the execution of parts was also not bad. I enclose a part of the programme dealing with this.

I can quite understand how boring it must be for you to keep in bed most of the time. But I suppose that after the initial month you will gradually be getting up more and more. Lying in bed makes one weaker and more listless but it is meant to give rest to the lungs so that they might get strong. In other words, the rest of your body is for the moment being ignored to some extent for the sake of concentrating on the lungs, pleura, etc. Having got a strong foundation to build upon, more emphasis can be laid on general development. To hurry the initial process might lead to lack of results later. I am sure, however, that progress will be rapid as soon as you move about. In the past the lungs and pleura not being quite as they should be, it was difficult to build anything substantial on them. I am a sinner in this respect for, being impatient and being myself tough in body, I am inclined to push others too far. I do not therefore trust my own judgement in such matters. As Rollier told you, your lung capacity is small and this has to be increased. This will be done by breathing exercises when the time comes. But before you start such exercises the lungs should have rested and must be fit. Do not worry therefore about a few days or even weeks delay. What is important is to lay a firm and lasting foundation for health. You are in very good hands and I am content that you are being well cared for.

Of course you will have to follow Dr. Rollier's advice regarding breathing exercises and practise his own system. The directions I sent you were for Dr. Rollier to see. As a matter of fact Birju Bhai's note shows how a normal breath should be taken. There is nothing complicated about it although the description is long. I have been taking these breathing exercises, off and on, for many years. They revive me when I am tired.

Your weight is not likely to go up much in bed. It is only the first month in bed that pushes up the weight and you were in bed at Brentford for a long time. When you are up and about, the weight will soar up.

I have not had much illness myself and have not been tied up to bed for long. But I have lived for long periods in isolation, confined to a small space. So I have sufficient experience of this kind of thing. The only way to keep normal and sane in prison is to live in the mind, intellectually, as well as manually, with some handicraft. One must find mental and physical equilibrium in oneself and then it does not matter. Indeed I think this is excellent training for one and it helps one greatly in life afterwards. Modern conditions are very upsetting as they provide excitements and sensations in quick succession and prevent an equilibrium from developing. Hence the great value of restful and uneventful periods. Do not worry or feel discouraged. That is not like you. I wonder if you have taken to some definite work, both mental and manual. Anything of this kind regularly done is very helpful.

My foot has not yet recovered from the slight injury received at Amritsar. It would have recovered soon enough if I had given it even three days rest. But I have been continuously touring about, often running and pushing about in crowds. We age. I cannot judge about myself but I am often surprised to see others around me showing signs of age. Nan's hair is almost all grey now. Betty is very matronly.

In about ten days time the All India Women's Conference is meeting in Allahabad. There is a great deal of running about because of it and the women of Allahabad are quite excited. The arrangements are on a big scale. Anand Bhawan will be invaded by many guests.

I am going to Wardha tomorrow for a Working Committee meeting. The amount of time one spends on these long journeys!

Love,

Your loving
Papu

16. To Indira Nehru[1]

Jan. 23, 1940

Darling,

This morning I returned from Wardha. I feel somewhat out of place here for the moment. The All India Women's Conference is filling the picture and our house will be, and partly is already, full of the distinguished delegates. The president, Mrs. Hamid Ali (plus husband), Rani Rajwade, Amrit Kaur, Sarojini Naidu, Padmaja, Papi, Mridula and possibly some others will be staying here. The Conference camp is in Durbhanga Castle and over a hundred delegates will put up there. There is tremendous bustle and activity and women getting excited and shouting at each other. A week of this.

The Gunthers have sent me a lovely book—*The Last Flower* by James Thurber. I almost felt like ordering a copy for you as you are sure to enjoy it. But in these war days it is difficult to send books. In one of the recent numbers of *Life*, some of Thurber's pictures and text is reproduced. I am enclosing these two pages. They will give you some idea of the book.

What do you do for books? I suppose you brought a supply with you and then Mlle. Hemmerlin sent you some. It is easier for you to make direct arrangements with booksellers in England than for me to do so. I thought of ordering the American *Life* and *Time* for you but again I thought it was easier for you to get them if you want them. Are you getting the *National Herald?* This should go weekly by ordinary post.

Today I received the number of *Life* containing Gunther's article on *Nehru of India* and the close-up picture, about which you wrote to me. I wonder where they got the big picture from.

Suddenly I have begun to feel as if I had nothing special to do—kind of feeling I have had when I have gone out of India. Curious things are happening in India and all over the world and all manner of doubts fill me. I do not like playing the spectator's role and yet there is no other obvious job to be done. Of course there is plenty of work of various kinds but it all seems so ineffectual. Perhaps it is the desire to see you that makes me so restless. But anyway there is no escape for me for the present and in the near future.

I hope that your progress continues. After your long rest, the changes and exercises will probably have to be slow, but so long as they are sure,

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

it is all to the good. I am quite sure that as soon as you are up and about, you will go ahead fast. Do not worry about the slowness at first. You have to lay sure foundations and nature is usually very slow and does not easily forgive lapses. I understand that Rollier does not believe in medicine much. He leaves much to nature, to sunlight and a careful regime.

The Memorial Hospital building is growing up rapidly here. The Governor came to see it last week and then expressed a desire to come to Anand Bhawan next door. He came and spent some time here. I was in Wardha then. His visit created quite a sensation and all manner of foolish and unwarranted conclusions were drawn.[2]

Chand, Tara and Rita are here and I like to play about with them. They are jolly kids.

Can I send something to you—magazines or anything else which will keep you in touch with India and things Indian?

Love,

Your loving
Papu

2. See *ante*, section 4, item 20.

17. To Indira Nehru[1]

Feb. 4, 1940

Darling Indu,

The shouting and the rushing about has ended and the women who had gathered in Allahabad for the All India Women's Conference have gone home to their various provinces. Anand Bhawan is quiet again. During these ten days of guests and bustle, my own daily programme was much upset, although I had next to nothing to do with the Conference. But many friends and old acquaintances had come and I had to meet them, and then there were bus-loads of women invading Anand Bhawan to see it and examine its chief exhibit. They were all very nice and all that and it was pleasant to meet many of them whom I had known off and on for long years, but I felt very lonely and somewhat depressed throughout this week or so. My thoughts were continually going to you and the desire to see you held me.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

For two days I went to Benares to meet a Chinese Buddhist mission that is touring India. We gave them a good welcome and then there was a great procession and a huge meeting. We celebrated the day as Ashoka Day. I went to Sarnath again though I had no time to wander about as I should have liked to have done. Two hours were spent in a laborious conversation with the mission and especially its leader, the Rev. Abbot Tai Hsu. Laborious, because all conversations through an interpreter are heavy and tiring. The old Abbot—but he was far from old looking—was delightful and had the face of a cherub. The more I see of the Chinese the more I like them.

There is a chance of the Women's Conference sending a small delegation to China, if the Chinese Government are agreeable.

Crowds of women who came here, both those I knew and those I did not know, asked me to send their love to you.

Today is what is called Literacy Day in the U.P. This was started last year by the Congress government and it has met with fair success. Today was its anniversary and from early morning school children have been shouting slogans vigorously—down with illiteracy, (in Hindi of course). It is quite exciting to see these children and grown-ups seize hold of illiterate workers and others and try to teach them to read and write.

Tonight I am going to Lucknow for two days—then to Bombay. Up and down I travel to attend various committee meetings or other functions and I try to deal with them as well as I can. But my mind is elsewhere and my heart still further away. Doubts creep into my mind if all this is worthwhile or not. Still I go on as most of us do. For the last year or two I have avoided engagements and only those I cannot refuse have been accepted—responsibilities I have undertaken must be discharged. The responsibilities grow in spite of me and the coils of fate bind me. Not that I have any desire to shirk them but the future is so uncertain that the urge to activity lessens. Activity to what end? I wish often enough that I could retire for a while in some remote, far-away place where I could read and write and there is no engagement, no visitors, no letters, no newspapers—preferably somewhere near to you, so that your presence and company might fill the emptiness within me. Sometimes a foolish desire to be ill and to lie in bed—but this illness should not be serious—comes to me. How pleasant it must be, I think, to laze and not be forced to do this and that when the mind is unwilling and rebellious.

Do you get the *National Herald* now? It will bring you news, stale but still news for you of India. I often think of what I can send you from here that might interest you. But there is little I can send and

in war time parcels to neutral countries are a nuisance. Still if you can think of anything, let me know....

I am sorry to find in your last letter a note of depression at having to remain confined to your bedroom and chiefly the bed, for all this long period. This is tiring business no doubt and yet what do a few weeks matter when one is planning for a life of health and activity? You will make rapid enough progress soon. This very unusual cold must have come in the way. If the Thames was frozen over and there was 25° and 30° of frost in London, what must it have been at Leysin? What was your minimum temperature there? Here the winter has been unusually mild and the last week of January was just like English summer weather. Already there is the breath of spring in the air and soon Vasanta Panchami will be upon us. The seasons follow one another, and the trees bloom and the flowers come out, while we poor mortals get entangled in our problems and war with each other and destroy what careful labour has built up.

Do you know anything about Efy Aristarchi?

Love,

Your loving
Papu

18. To Indira Nehru[1]

Feb. 22, 1940

My darling,

Your last letter of February 9th has put me out somewhat. It cannot be too cheerful of course resting all the time, and this terrible cold which you have been having must be depressing. But to suffer from lack of books and papers is something that never struck me. I know well how I would feel if I had to do without them. I could bear almost anything but that. Even then I could write if paper was not denied me but, much as I want to write, it would bore me after a while if there was no other activity or diversion. I never thought that there would be much difficulty in getting books from England, and it seemed rather absurd for me to send books from here, unless they were published here. Ever since I got your letter three days ago I have been trying

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

to find books from the library which I might send you. There were many of course and yet it was not easy to pick and choose. Then I went to Kitabistan. There was not much to choose. They complained that books were not coming in. Still I picked up a few odd books and these were sent to you by parcel post today. I hope they reach you. One never knows what happens to letters and parcels during these war days.

I enclose a list of the books sent.[2] I have not read several of them but they seemed interesting, especially *The Dragon Book* on Chinese literature. Capek is always worth reading. *The Oxford Book of English Verse* is a very good collection. Kropotkin's book is an old classic —perhaps heavy reading but still often extraordinarily interesting. I have added Arnold's two little books: *The Light of Asia* and *The Song Celestial,* both of which Kitabistan have recently brought out in a new Indian edition.

It must be pretty bad with you if you have to fall back on *Glimpses of History!* Somebody would have to give me a prize if he wanted me to read it again. It was bad enough to revise it. I refused to read the proofs.

I am asking Agatha to arrange to send you some books and papers and am sending her £ 5 for this purpose. Will you indicate to her what you would like to have?

I am also arranging to have the *Harijan* and the *Hindu Illustrated Weekly* to be sent to you regularly. They are not very exciting but they will at least keep you in touch with events here to some extent. That is if they reach you. Evidently the *Herald* is not reaching you. For the moment I can think of nothing else that I can do in this respect. If I have a brainwave I shall act up to it.

Has not Dr. Rollier suggested some hand-work for you? I thought that was a part of his treatment and a very good part too. I almost felt like sending you a *takli.* I have been spinning off and on recently, that is when I am in Allahabad, and I find it very soothing. You can knit as you did in England. Or play about with cardboard. I hear children in the basic schools here make delightful boxes and other things out of cardboard. It is a fascinating pastime.

2. (i) *Literature and Society*—David Daiches, (ii) *The Mother*—Karel Capek, (iii) *Week-End Caravan*—S. Hillelson, (iv) *Ding Dong Bell*—Walter De La Mare, (v) *The Oxford Book of English Verse 1250-1918*—Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, (vi) *The Dragon Book*—E.D. Edwards, (vii) *The Light of Asia*—Sir Edwin Arnold, (viii) *The Song Celestial*—Sir Edwin Arnold, (ix) *Ur of the Chaldees*—Sir Leonard Woolley, (x) *Mutual Aid*—Prince Peter Kropotkin.

But I do hope that by the time this reaches you, you will be moving about a little more. Spring will be nearing then and the breath of it will invigorate you. You will grow stronger and stronger and push out all traces of weakness from your body. I wish I could transfer some weight from my body to yours. I have been growing disgustingly plump. Perhaps I exaggerate, but the tendency is there and I am worried about it. Indian clothes, both dhoti and pyjamas, adjust themselves to any size of waist and one does not notice changes in its size. When I went to China in August last, I put on European clothes and I discovered immediately that all was not well. The other day in Bombay I weighed myself and I was horrified to find that I had gone up to 143 pounds. This was 3 lbs. more than I have ever been. It is true that I was well-clad at the time and was wearing a heavy *sherwani*. Still! Another weighing machine a fortnight later gave me 135 pounds as my weight, which was much more satisfactory. Probably both the machines were wrong. Anyway I have had a fright and, after a long gap, I have taken to some kind of physical exercises again, when I am in Allahabad. I feel a little better for them, or at any rate I hold myself better and that makes a difference.

My foot is 95% right now. It is curious how these little ailments hang on. In Bombay I took electric treatment for it and this did good.

I have seen again and again the technicolor photos of you that Feroze sent me. They are very fine and I love looking at them. But they are so tiny and I do not know how they can be enlarged. I have lost all, or nearly all, interest in my Contax camera. It lies unheeded. I wish you had taken it with you. Anyway it will reach you some time or other and will then be of some use.

Makkhi Atal's[3] marriage with Ganga Raina is coming off here in two or three days and there are numerous parties and feasts. The world may go hang but an Indian marriage must take place in the old style, with all the usual waste. I never feel more out of place than at these feasts and indeed I hardly ever go there. But on this occasion I must put in an appearance once at least, lest all manner of wrong political inferences are drawn.

I have been reading a new book—Von Passen's[4] *Days of Our Years* which Alex Fraser sent me for the New Year. It is a press correspondent's account of his life and adventures and is very interesting and worth reading. You might ask Agatha to have it sent to you. Why

3. Jai Kumar Atal (b. 1914); joined I.C.S., 1936; served in the Indian Foreign Service after 1947.
4. Pierre Von Passen (b. 1895); essayist; author of *That Day Alone: Time is Now!*

did you not get a copy of *Glimpses?* This is absurd. It was not necessary for me to mention this to Krishna. He ought to have known. But as a matter of fact I sent him a list of persons to whom complimentary copies should be sent and your name topped the list. I did not give an address as I did not know where you might be when the book came out. Please ask Krishna to have a copy sent to you or to Mlle. Hemmerlin.

In reading any serious book (I am not referring to *Glimpses*) it would be a good thing if you took copious notes. This slows down the pace of reading and allows time to think and absorb the book. Otherwise the book leaves only a fleeting impression and too many fleeting impressions, one after the other, create confusion. I always remember that Erasmus (or some other big scholar of the Middle Ages) had a library of only fifty or sixty volumes. And yet he was one of the wisest and most learned of men.

I suppose Louise Morin could send you interesting reading matter if you suggested it to her.

You complain of some pain on the left side of the lungs. Of course it is for the doctor to say what this is. But from some slight personal experience I would say that this is nothing to worry about. Pleurisy is an extraordinarily sticky thing and sometimes adhesions and thickenings are formed which pain. Do you know that even now, and quite frequently, I get a pain due to some ancient pleurisy? Whenever I am at all low in health, I get this pain—or when I am tired. And yet my general health is A1. It was this slight hangover from old pleurisy that induced me to allow myself to put on a little weight as a kind of insurance. But unfortunately weight attaches itself at the wrong place!

I am vastly interested in your account of the stroboscope and of nylon. I know nothing about them but your account of them is exciting. All our day-to-day politics seem so silly and childish when such discoveries are made, which might change human life so much. I wish you could send me some more information about these two—that is if you can easily do so.

It is almost a year now, or at least ten months, since I saw you. It seems an age, and I long to have a glimpse of you again. Every little while, whether I am at work or in a crowd, my mind wanders away and centres itself round you, and the desire to be near you almost overwhelms me. You are lonely at Leysin. There is also a loneliness in the midst of crowds. If there is no other way, I might not be able to restrain myself from packing up a suitcase and taking a plane to Europe.

But meanwhile there is the Congress coming at Ramgarh in Chhota Nagpur—a lovely spot, I am told, nestling at the foot of the hills. It is

far from cities and the like. After the Congress, no one knows what will happen. How helpless we all are in the hands of vast forces! We shout and imagine that we are doing great things and yet we are prisoners of these forces and of destiny. Big things apart, which may come unheralded and drag us in their wake, I am tied up especially after the Congress with the National Planning Committee. This is going to be heavy labour. I hope however to finish with it by early July.

And now to other work. So goodbye for the present, *carissima mia,* and may it be well with you.

Love,

Papu

19. To Indira Nehru[1]

Feb. 27, 1940

My darling one,

Tonight, in an hour's time, I go to Patna and I had decided to send you a brief letter before I left. Not that there was anything special to write about. But it is pleasing to write to you and I did not know how I would fare at Patna with the Working Committee there. I went to a tea party (one of the Makkhi Atal wedding ones) and on returning found your letter of February 18th waiting for me and I looked at your handwriting with joy. By the same *dak* came a letter from Krishna from London dated 25th January by air. While your letter took nine days, Krishna's took over a month. Partly the delay is no doubt due to our friend the censor who must take a very special interest in Krishna's letters for they are political. Indeed some of his letters do not reach me at all. Your letters being personal fare better.

I am happy to learn that you were feeling better and that cod liver oil and phytine, *qui forme la partie essentielle du principe phosphore,*[2] etc., are doing you good. I am sure that with the coming of somewhat milder weather you will gain in appetite and weight. I do not suppose you will ever be a heavy-weight or will have to indulge in Hay diet or something else in order to slim. You are not made that way. But your

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Which forms the essential part of phosphorus.

weight should be at least 100 pounds. It will be that presently when you move about.

You complain of your pen. I am myself feeling very sad at present for I have just lost my favourite one. I guard nothing so jealously as my fountain pens, especially those that I like. As a matter of fact I lose them seldom. But at this afternoon's tea party I was giving autographs and something unusual happened to it. It has disappeared.

I am not depressed, *cara mia,* although the world, as well as my own particular world, goes all awry. I have become completely बेहया.[3] If you want to know what depression is you should read Krishna's letters to me. He works himself up terribly and, bad as the world is, imagines all manner of things which are worse. And then with many apologies, he gives me a lot of good advice, not knowing how I would take it all. I like him of course to give the good advice. It helps. But I wish he would not get so excited. It is not good for him. His nerves have never been his strong point.

About the Stunnes, there is no hurry for you to decide. We shall see later and if you feel like it, you can go there for a while.

Tara has just come in and sends you her love.

The Atal-Raina wedding has taken place with all pomp and circumstance. It was the first Kashmiri wedding I attended since my own! *Puphi's* wedding in 1921 was not a full-blooded Kashmiri one and apart from that I have attended no other similar function. *Chhoti puphi's* was a simple registration ceremony. I was glad I went as this enabled me to see the new generation. Children whom I knew long ago were grown-up boys and girls and young women. The pictures in my mind had remained static and it was surprising for me to discover how they had grown. They looked an attractive crowd. Ganga looked very pretty in her wedding dress but exactly like a doll.

Cheers! Upadhyaya has discovered my pen. So all is well. You will notice the change in the writing.

My mind goes back to a year ago. Were we not at Almora then? And one day I broke off a cactus cone or bundle of leaves, and here it is lying in front of me now, all dried up. But I keep it and often handle it for it reminds me of Almora and you.

The Congress is coming. Last year I was busy writing a series of articles—*Where Are We?* I have not been writing much lately but possibly I might burst out suddenly with a series. My mind is full of it but I am not sure of other factors. The Working Committee might give a push to my mind. Meanwhile I have been trying to clear up my

3. *Behaya*—shameless.

odd commitments so far as I can and I have done a good bit of work during the last few days. All my A letters have been disposed of—all my foreign letters (they are becoming voluminous)—but the fat B lot still remains. I have gone through vast numbers of odd papers and destroyed them or filed them. Indeed my room has undergone a spring cleaning and I have even rearranged my books. I started doing this rather casually one evening after dinner and went on and on till 2.30 a.m. At this attractive and witching hour the floor of my room was full of books and papers lying in complete disorder! The next day was devoted to arranging them.

If I could get a clear week or more I would tie up many of the loose strings in my activities and have a clean slate for intensive work in future. I like this feeling of a clean slate. My mind feels relieved and in a mood to go ahead. Life's burdens seem less.

I must go now. A hurried dinner and then to the station.

I gave Betty your address.

All my love,

Papu

APPENDIX

1. To Edward Thompson[1]

Allahabad
31/10/36

Dear Thompson,
I have read your note and the questions. I would have liked to have sent you my answers today before you left but I could not find the time to attend to them. If possible I shall try to deal with them before I go to Calcutta for afterwards I am likely to be fully occupied.

Your first question, as framed, refers to a speech of mine. I speak almost always in Hindustani and reports in English are seldom accurate. I do not remember to which speech reference is made, nor the context. But I imagine I was referring specially to the Federal Constitution.

But questions apart, I am very much surprised at your statement that the national movement is weaker today than it has been for the last twenty years or more, and that we are in a position of humiliating helplessness such as we have not been in for many years past. That we are to a large extent helpless today is undoubted and this is humiliating. But I am quite convinced that this feeling of helplessness is far less than in the past, except during certain moments of intensive activity such as during the noncooperation movement or in 1930 and 1932. But fundamentally we are infinitely stronger than we have ever been and I agree with you that the international situation is likely to help us. You judge, I imagine, from the individuals you have met, mostly Liberals, communalists and the like. It is true that they feel terribly helpless because they have no remedy for our present ills. They see no way out and hence are depressed and hopeless. But a nation's strength has to be judged from the condition, political consciousness, economic urges, and organisation of the larger masses. If this is the test, our strength is far greater today than it has ever been. We suffer of course from a certain reaction after a great effort; we suffer also from the general line up of the fascist and other reactionary forces all over the world which has for the moment made progressive elements everywhere feel helpless. There our problem becomes a part of the larger problem and I sometimes think that the final solution will only come with a world solution. Everywhere we are up against fundamental conflicts between rival forces. These cannot be charmed away by political manoeuvring but by a realisation of the real issues and a preparation to meet them.

You lay great stress rightly on the poverty of India. But having done so you seem to forget it when you suggest a line of action for the future.

1. Edward Thompson Papers, N.M.M.L.

That line of action has no reference at all to poverty or unemployment. I agree that it is necessary that the vital forces in India should pull together. But what are these vital forces? Are we to sacrifice some of them in an attempt to rope in some persons who, however estimable they might be, represent no such force and have no understanding of the real issues?

I have written in haste. I wish I had some more time with you. Our conversation was a fairly long one yesterday and yet inevitably we talked round the point. It is not easy to grapple with it at a first meeting, especially when the backgrounds and premises are so different. But I am glad we had that talk.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To Edward Thompson[1]

Allahabad
April 22, 1937

Dear Thompson,
I have not written to you since your departure from India. I have not even acknowledged the letter you sent me last December. You will forgive me I hope. Partly this was due to incessant travelling all over India. For months I was constantly on the move, hardly stopping at one place for more than a few hours. I overdid this, I am afraid, and my body rebelled at the end of last month. For three and a half weeks I have been laid up in bed with occasional fever and an excessive tiredness. I am now slowly recovering.

But there was another reason why I did not write to you. There was such a vast difference between your interpretation of India as it is today and mine that I wanted events to show to some extent who was right and who was wrong. You made a number of prophesies in your *News Chronicle* articles. Events have shown them to be far from right. That does not mean much of course for ultimately you may turn out to be right. But I have not ceased to wonder at the fact that all your stress in discussing India, was laid on unimportant and irrelevant factors—Ramanand

1. Edward Thompson Papers, N.M.M.L.

Chatterji and *The Modern Review*, Syed Hussain and Rezmie, Aurobindo Ghose, the liberal group in India or the few individuals that comprise it. I would even add the Muslim communal leaders, though they are not wholly unimportant and they can and do play a role that matters. Still that role is a fading role and I think that this political influence is not likely to last long. This has nothing to do with all these people as individuals. They may be good or bad, intelligent or otherwise. But they have all ceased, or are progressively ceasing, to represent vital forces in India. Therefore in the final analysis they do not count. Only those individuals and organisations that represent these vital forces count today and will count in the future.

The princes are there of course and they are a nuisance. How does one deal with a nuisance? We cannot possibly pull together. They will have to go.

Your analysis of the Congress, again, astonishes me. I may be partisan and prejudiced but I have been very intimately connected with the Congress for over 20 years and I have come into touch with millions of our people all over India. During the last year I addressed audiences, not callow youths, but large peasant and city audiences, totalling, it is moderately estimated, ten million persons. Big audiences may not mean much and yet there is significance in these figures. And I saw these enormous crowds from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, I mixed with them, I sensed some of the ferment that moved them.

The Faizpur Congress came and the expected splits and divisions (expected by those who knew nothing about the Congress or India) did not take place. That Congress was one of the most efficient, business-like, and successful that I had known. Then came the elections and people (again those who know little of the minds of India's millions) were surprised at the overwhelming success of the Congress. May I tell you that in June last I had, after careful thought and some touring and personal visits to places, stated that we were bound to win 100% of the general seats in the U.P. with the exception of a very few due to entirely extraneous causes. The results of the elections bore me out but others, who lived in a world of their own creation, were astonished.

Today I venture to prophesy that in a future election we are going to capture a good number of Muslim rural seats. Indeed many of these Muslim elected members are likely to line up with the Congress soon in the U.P. which, culturally speaking, is the most important Muslim province. The Muslim masses are increasingly looking to us because our programmes affect them as much as the others. The Muslim intelligentsia is fed up with its self-seeking communal leaders. There is consternation in the communal camp.

What does all this mean? Surely it means that the Congress is the only living, growing, vital organisation in India. It responds to the needs of the people and more and more it represents all groups and communities. Individuals and small groups drop out of it and march to the other side, afraid of this growing democracy of the Congress. You talk of democracy and regret the failure of it in Europe, and yet you fail to appreciate the only real democratic organisation in India, and you think in terms of handfuls of people at the top imposing their will on others.

The Congress may act wrongly, of course. But even when it does so it represents the failings of the Indian people. And being a dynamic, moving thing it has the capacity to right itself. It seems to me that you forget or ignore the fact that Indian politics are more and more shaped by mass urges and by the conscious opinions of hundreds of thousands of persons. We have to work with that human material, we cannot have the tools that we want, nor unhappily can we build the castles of our dreams. Of course we work for success. We want to gain our objective.

You have taken exception to parts of *Glimpses of History*. I have almost forgotten what I wrote four or five years ago. But there is talk of another edition of the book coming out and I shall be grateful to you if you could draw my attention to errors of fact and errors of opinion.

I don't think I object to criticism even from an Englishman! I really don't mind what you say or write to me. But I confess that when Zetland talks pompously and patronisingly to us it is not appreciated. That is not criticism. It is the sergeant-major trying to bully or the superior being talking to inferiors and half-wits.

I think the policy you recommend is too much influenced by fear of physical force—the force of empire, of the princes, etc. That force is there of course, can we possibly forget it? But force cannot be met by succumbing to it. It has to be met by some kind of force, though inevitably in India it cannot be the same kind of force. As you yourself recognised, India can make a difference in a crisis. There are risks and dangers, how can any country avoid them? But the only real safety for India lies in building up a strong organised democratic and essentially peaceful force to which the millions of India can turn in times of crisis. That is the force which the Congress is building up and has largely ıcceeded in building up. There is no alternative to it, except anarchy ıd widespread disruption and misery.

I have written more than I intended. A convalescent has to obey ›me rules. And so I stop but hope that I have conveyed to you some ‹ ırt of my mind. I have not discussed the present constitutional crisis

in India. That is just an outer and almost a minor indication of the permanent crisis and conflict that exists in India.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To Edward Thompson[1]

Praha
15.8.38

Dear Edward,
I have your letter. Czechoslovakia is not a place to cheer one up just at present. I have just returned from the Sudeten German areas. It was a profitable visit and I learnt much. The majority of the Henleinites are past reason and live in an emotional state of exaltation expecting the millennium, in the shape of Hitler, to come at any moment and unloose their bonds to take vengeance on their opponents. I believe careful records and even pictures of many of their local opponents are kept for the purpose. A minority of Henlein's party is in it through sheer terror. After the collapse of Austria it seemed that the fate of Czechoslovakia was sealed and it was natural for them to take refuge in Henlein's party. Apart from this the principal reason for the growth of Henlein's party has been the collapse of the glass industry throwing large numbers into unemployment.

The German Social Democrats in the Sudeten areas are depressed but are bearing up fairly well. They know well the fate in store for them if Hitler comes. The Czechs are behaving well, though occasionally perhaps a little chauvinistically. Long years of suppression and the past months of continued insult and aggression from across the frontiers have put their backs up and they have come to the conclusion that they will have to fight for their existence. They keep in readiness for this and believe that they can give a good account of themselves, though they have no illusions about the power of their opponents and the terrible nature of the struggle. Having come to this conclusion they are singularly calm and ready for all eventualities.

It seems to me quite clear that war can be avoided if only England and France made it clear that they would not tolerate any German

1. Edward Thompson Papers, N.M.M.L.

aggression in Czechoslovakia. Hitler would not dare to strike then. But it is equally likely for war to begin and to develop rapidly elsewhere, if England and France adopt another course and indirectly encourage Hitler. And that is exactly what they are doing. Runciman's visit is being played up by the German press and Henlein's party to show that England is on their side. Runciman himself has done something to give this impression, perhaps unconsciously. He spends his week-ends with a well-known sympathiser of Henlein. Indeed his appointment itself was a blow to the prestige of the government here.

But something that has astounded me enormously is the attitude of our 100% pacifists. Lord Allen of Hurtwood, one of the 100%, has been here practically as an emissary of Hitler, and I am told that he has done everything in his power to influence Runciman in favour of a complete capitulation to Hitler's demands. According to him this is a sure way of avoiding war. As a matter of fact this will have an exactly opposite effect and make war dead certain for it is impossible for the Czechs to commit hara-kiri and they have no intention of doing so. I don't suppose Runciman will go so far in his recommendations but even if he goes part of the way, it will be enough to encourage Hitler. What many people imagine here and fear is that he might suggest a plebiscite of the Sudeten areas. Ordinarily this seems reasonable enough but at present it would be a fatal step.

People also expect that Henlein will probably produce numerous incidents, involving clashes with the authorities, and even sacrifice in this way some hundreds of his followers. This would give an opportunity to Hitler to intervene.

I find it nauseating to think that Lord Allen should go backwards and forwards between Ribbentrop and the Czechs and do all the dirty work of Hitler—and all in the sacred name of peace. Why does he not transfer his energies to the Trentino where Germans are really being oppressed by Mussolini?

What a tremendous responsibility the British Government has to shoulder today for ultimately it is its policy that will lead to peace or war in Central Europe. And that policy is leading to war today.

I am likely to be back in London on August 25th or thereabouts to meet my sister who will reach three days earlier.

I would love to visit the studio. We shall see if it can be arranged.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

4. To Edward Thompson[1]

London
24.10.38

Dear Edward,
Thank you for your book. I hope to read it on the voyage home.

My sister has been giving me a lot of trouble. She managed to fall ill at the wrong moment. It was nothing serious but it upset my programme and hers. At last she is recovering. I now propose to leave with Indira on Thursday next for Paris and Marseilles. Nan will then go to some friends for a few days and later to Broadstairs for a week. She returns by air to India on November 9th, reaching there before I do. She has had a stiff time during the past ten days and requires quiet and rest before she leaves for India. Probably she will return to London a couple of days before her departure.

I am sorry I could not manage to visit Denham and meet Korda. That must wait for a future occasion. If Korda wants to do a really good film about India, certainly he will get cooperation from us. I do not know that we can do much and both Nan and I are tied up in many things. But he will, and more so you will, have our goodwill and such odd help as we can give.

We have all had some pretty bad shocks and the outlook is about as evil as it could well be. It is a little difficult, even for me, to rouse up enthusiasm for this wretched world. Still I suppose one has to go on and fight the monster. The official Labour attitude to Lindsay has amazed me. They seem to have a peculiar knack of doing the wrong thing.

Visit us in Allahabad when you come East. And remember that the Himalayas are always there as a refuge for a while at least, from fascism and its friends.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal

1. Edward Thompson Papers, N.M.M.L.

5. Preface to the Hindi Edition of the Glimpses of World History[1]

I finished writing this book in Dehra Dun jail four years ago. Some time after that it was published in English. I wanted it to be published in Hindi and Urdu also. I even made some arrangements for it, but unfortunately I was not successful at that time as I went back to jail.

Now I am glad that these letters of mine to Indira are coming out in Indian garb. The fault is mine for having clothed them in a foreign attire. It was originally easier for me to write in English as I was more accustomed to writing in that language; and the subject was such that most of the books on them are in European languages and I had read only those.

It requires courage for anyone to write about the history of the world. It is strange for me to have dared to do so as I am neither a writer nor do I count among the scholars of history. My intention was not to write a voluminous book. But during the long and solitary days of jail life I wanted to do something and my mind was moving away from the present-day world and its difficult problems and was wandering about in the past. What lessons does this ancient history teach us? What light does it throw on the present-day darkness? Is there a pattern in all this, has it some meaning, or is it some meaningless game having no rules, regulations or purpose, and does everything happen by chance? These ideas troubled my mind and to resolve these doubts I read history and tried to understand the conditions of today. By putting down on paper the flow of thoughts it becomes easier to ponder over them and new aspects strike us. So I began writing. Then the thought of Indira drew me towards her and my writing took the form of letters to her.

Months passed—I came out of jail for some time, and went back again. Winter came to an end, spring arrived, then the summer and the rains. A year was complete, the second began and again the same winter, spring, summer and the monsoons. I continued writing and gradually the heap of papers grew mountainous. Even I was astounded by it. In this manner, almost by chance, the book was written.

There are innumerable defects and shortcomings in this book. But even so I think that it could be of some use. Such books written by

1. 21 November 1937. Sasta Sahitya Mandal Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

Englishmen or other Europeans deal mostly with the European world and there is very little mention in them of the ancient history of Asia. I have endeavoured to write more in detail about Asia. A complete picture emerges only when both are seen together. That picture, however unworthy and howsoever defective and faulty it might be, is the complete picture. I believe that we cannot understand the condition of one country unless we know about other countries. No country has ever existed nor can exist by keeping aloof from other countries. In the present-day world it is very evident that all of us either support each other or fall.

European languages abound in books on world history, but there is a great dearth of such books in Indian languages. Therefore, I particularly wanted my book to be published in Hindi and Urdu. In spite of its defects and shortcomings, and these are numerous, this book fills the gap to some extent. It is now being published in Hindi and I hope it will soon appear in Urdu also.

It is four years since I wrote this book. What are four years in the history of the world? But we are born in a strange period when the pace of the world is fast and all of us are being carried away in its current. Nobody can say where it will take us. In these four years revolutions and great upheavals have taken place in many countries. Abyssinia was crushed. In Spain, the growing liberation movement had to face a fearful opposition and even now a life and death struggle is going on. In Palestine, our Arab brethren are being strangulated. The famous cities of China, inhabited by lakhs of people, have been reduced to rubble and beneath lie crushed innumerable men and women, boys and girls, and children. Imperialism and fascism are making inroads everywhere and are trying to crush the new aspirations of the world. In the face of this the ideas of socialism and nationalism are spreading and they do not shy away from this conflict.

At the end of this book I have talked of the shadow of war. In these four years this shadow has spread all over and a terrible cloud is hanging over us. Every country is making preparations day and night for this war and the one question on everyone's lips is : when will this storm engulf the world and what miseries will it bring? What will be the result—will it be beneficial to us or harmful?

I wanted to write in brief about the events of these four years and add it at the end of this book. But I am so engrossed in other work that I have not found the time.

To translate from one language to another is a difficult task as the meaning can never be fully conveyed. Still, this work has to be done. In this translation there was one other difficulty. All of us wished that

it should be in simple Hindustani, and not in difficult Hindi or Urdu. This simple Hindustani has to be promoted in our country. A lot of difficulties have to be faced initially as there would be opposition from scholars on both sides. Objection is raised that it is such a hybrid thing: neither Hindi nor Urdu. I apologise to the lovers of literature, but in my view it is only by following this middle path will we be able to create a powerful and lively literature. Mistakes are bound to occur in any such attempt and sometimes the senses may be offended. But soon the time will come when we will recognise the strength of this new product, which would originate from the common man and would be for him alone, and we should devote ourselves to enriching it.

GLOSSARY

INDEX

(Biographical footnotes are italicized)

Abdullah, Sheikh Muhammad, 502, 506, 509
Abyssinia—see Ethiopia
Agra, 260, 640
Agricultural and Industrial Credit Corporation of Sri Lanka, 14 fn
Ahmad, Nazir, 525 & *fn*
Ahmed, 388 & fn
Ahmedabad, 108, 183 fn
Ahrars, 231 & fn, 338, 347, 434–435 (*see also* Majlis-e-Ahrar-e-Islam)
Air France, 73, 76, 79, 86, 90
Ajanta frescoes, 111, 268
Akyab, 88
Albania, 330
Aldenham, 613 fn
Alfred Park (Allahabad), 584
Aligarh, 285, 301 fn, 486 & fn–487, 490, 509, 646
Aligarh District Congress Committee, 486 & fn
Allahabad, 3–4, 44, 73, 76–77, 79–80, 87, 101, 107, 140, 174, 177, 184, 188, 206, 230–231, 241, 251, 288, 319, 345–346, 359–360, 381, 383 & fn, 396, 399, 412, 442, 448, 453, 460, 464, 475–476, 479, 482, 493, 515, 525, 553–555, 562, 583–584, 587, 592, 603, 605–606, 610, 613, 624–625, 627–631, 633–635, 637, 642, 644, 648, 650, 653–654, 667
Allahabad City Congress Committee, 491 & fn–492
Allahabad High Court, 584
Allahabad Municipal Museum, 605
Allahabad University, 603
Allen, Lord, of Hurtwood, 666
All India Congress Committee, 2 & fn, 5–6, 51–52, 64, 107, 140, 176, 178, 180, 183, 185, 188, 213, 218, 343 fn, 346, 358, 386–387, 399 fn, 401, 410 fn, 454, 485, 494, 562, 628, 632
All India Council of Indian Christians, 383 fn
All India Educational Conference, 598, 600
All India Forward Bloc—see Forward Bloc
All India Momin Conference, 400
All India Muslim League—see Muslim League
All India Shia Political Conference, 232, 237, 400, 433–434
All India Spinners' Association, 108, 545–547 (*see also* Charkha Sangh)
All India States People's Conference, 185, 445 fn, 508 & *fn*
All India Swadeshi Exhibition (Allahabad), 543
All India Urdu Conference, 596
All India Village Industries Association, 108, 526
All India Women's Conference, 530–531, 553–556, 559, 648–651
All Jammu & Kashmir National Conference, 499, 502
All Parties Committee, 392
Almora, 657
Ambedkar, B.R., 238, 412 & fn, 414, 416
America—see United States of America
American Revolution, 105
Amritsar, 274, 396, 644, 648
Amsterdam, 631

Boy Scout movement (of Sri Lanka), 49 fn
Brentford Hospital, 634, 638, 648
Briand-Kellogg Pact, 617
British Commonwealth, 150 fn, 192, 340–341
British War Office, 77 fn
British Youth Peace Assembly, 585 fn
Broadstairs, 667
Buchner, Georg, 609 & *fn*
Buckinghamshire, 592
Bulandshahr, 301 fn, 486–487, 490, 646
Bulandshahr District Congress Committee, 486–487
Bulandshahr jail, 463 fn
Bulgaria, 221
Burma, 22, 73, 85, 90, 94, 109–113, 510, 553, 561, 626–627
Burma Road, 79 & fn, 80, 85, 109, 113, 556, 561, 597
Byrd, Richard Evelyn, 641 & *fn*

Cajander, Aino Kaarlo, 266 & *fn*
Calcutta, 83–84, 87–88, 90, 94, 106, 113, 345, 412, 448, 485, 494, 509, 523, 555, 560, 563, 568, 572, 597, 626, 628, 630, 661
Calcutta Corporation, 547
Calcutta University, 383 fn, 451 fn
Canada, 162 & fn
Cape Comorin—see Kanyakumari
Capek, Karel, 653 & fn
Captain, Goshiben (Psyche), 630
———, Nargis (Bul), 630
Carritt, Michael, 585 & fn
Carter, Edward, 73 & *fn*–74, 553
Case for Federal Union (W.B. Curry), 608
Caveeshar, Sardar Sardul Singh, 183 fn
Cawnpore—see Kanpur
Central Bank of China, 99 fn
Central Europe, 274, 326, 666
Central Provinces, 108
Ceylon—see Sri Lanka
Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, 14 fn
Ceylon Civil Service, 49 fn
Ceylon Indian Congress, 60, 66–67
Ceylon Labour Party, 68 fn
Ceylon Labour Union, 68 fn
Ceylon Trade Union Congress, 68 fn
Chamberlain, Neville, 43 & fn, 82, 155, 195, 197 & fn, 199 & fn, 214, 221 fn, 228, 233, 236, 259, 276, 282, 330, 372, 404, 608
Chanda, A.K., 509
Chang Li-sum, 100
Changsha front, 553
Chapra, 399, 613
Charkha Sangh, 545 (*see also* All India Spinners' Association)
Chatterji, Ramanand, 662–663
Chattopadhyaya, Kamaladevi, 604 & fn
Cheiro, 643
Chen Cheng, General, 100 & *fn*
Chengapa, B.K., 1
Chengis Khan, 351
Chengting, 113
Chen Li-fu, 100 & fn
Cherap court (Manipur), 511 & fn
Chhota Nagpur, 346, 655
Chiang Kai-shek, 74 & *fn*, 85 & fn, 96, 98, 100 fn, 102, 106, 108–109, 112–113, 120, 139, 417, 553 & fn–554, 560, 562 fn, 627–628, 631
———, Madame (Mayling Soong), 85 & *fn*, 140 fn, 553, 555–556, 558–559, 562, 627, 631
China, 8, 12, 43 & fn, 66, 68, 73 & fn–88, 91–94, 99, 100 fn, 101–103, 105–114, 117–118 & fn, 120, 133, 136–137, 140, 146, 153, 155, 159–162, 165–166, 178, 199–200, 227, 245, 258–259, 270, 273, 285, 288, 293, 302–303, 340–341, 380, 412, 417 fn, 432, 444, 446, 489, 502, 518–519, 542, 544, 551–563, 585, 589, 597 & fn, 608, 610, 623, 626–628, 630–631, 636–637, 651, 654, 669
China Defence League, 552 & fn
China, People's Republic of, 75 fn
China Press (Shanghai), 99 fn
China Publishing Company, 99 fn
China, Republic of (Taiwan), 74 fn, 100 fn
China, Spain and the War (J. Nehru), 605, 610
Chinese Buddhist Mission, 557, 651
Chinese Communist Party, 75 fn
Chinese Revolution, 86

Chou En-lai, 99 fn
Chu Chia-hwa, 95 & *fn*, 98, 100
Chungking, 73, 77–80, 84–85, 92, 94–97, 99 fn, 101, 108 & fn–109 & fn, 113, 139, 552, 557–558, 597, 624, 626–628, 630–631
Chungtu, 85
Churchill, Sir Winston, 636
Chu Teh, 99 fn
Cochin, 506 & fn
Cochin District Congress Committee, 506–507
Collected Poems (Edward Thompson), 602
Colombo, 3, 4, 9, 16, 22, 52, 58, 61 74, 632
Colombo Plan Technical Cooperation Bureau, 253 fn
Committee of Indian Congressmen (Britain), 336 fn
Congress House, 562
Congress, Indian National, 2–4, 6, 16, 18–19, 21, 31, 33–36, 39, 41, 57, 60, 64, 75 & fn, 86, 107, 117–118, 121–126, 131 fn, 134–135, 141–142, 145–147, 150–151, 162–167, 169–170, 172–173 & fn, 175 fn, 176 & fn–179, 180 fn, 182 fn–192, 194, 200–202, 203 fn, 204–211, 213 & fn–216, 218–220, 222, 230, 231 fn, 232–233, 236–238, 240, 243–247, 249–260 & fn, 263 fn, 267, 270–271, 272 fn, 273–280, 283–287, 291–296, 301–304, 308–310, 313–315, 317–326, 330 fn, 332, 335 fn, 336, 338 & fn, 343 & fn, 345 & fn–347, 350, 355 & fn–358, 360–363, 366–372, 374–375, 376 fn, 377 fn, 378–382, 384–386, 389–390, 391 fn, 392–396, 397 fn, 398–406, 408, 410 & fn, 412, 414, 416, 421–427 & fn, 429, 433–434, 436, 443–444, 445 fn, 446, 448, 451 & fn–453, 455 & fn–456, 458, 460, 461 fn, 464, 470 & fn, 474 & fn–475, 477 & fn, 478 fn, 479–485 & fn, 486 fn, 487–488, 490–493, 495 & fn–496, 503 fn, 506 & fn–507, 509, 517, 525, 533, 535, 539, 541, 544 & fn–545, 562, 585, 594, 597, 611 & fn, 612 fn, 619–620, 633, 641, 655–657, 663–664
———, session at Faizpur, 663
———, session at Haripura, 131 fn
———, session at Lahore, 393, 637
———, session at Madras, 162
———, session at Ramgarh, 139 fn, 335 fn, 346 & fn, 617, 655
———, session at Tripuri, 131 fn, 202, 624
———, ministries, 135, 167, 188 fn, 206 fn, 211, 213, 215, & fn–217, 219 fn, 223, 227–228, 236–237, 249, 255, 259, 284 fn, 301, 309, 311, 314, 321, 346, 355, 362, 367, 369–370, 376, 381, 386–387, 390, 397, 399 fn, 402–404, 408, 415, 427, 435, 441–442, 453, 460, 461 fn, 462–463, 466, 468–473, 506, 620, 635, 651
Congress Working Committee, 1, 5, 40, 44–45, 48, 50–51, 63–68, 74, 77, 118 & fn. 121 fn, 122 & fn–135, 137–139 & fn, 141–145, 147–150, 155–156. 162–167, 173 & fn, 176–180, 182. 185, 189 fn, 190–191, 194, 196, 206 & fn, 209, 211, 213, 218–219. 222–223, 225, 228–229 & fn, 231, 239, 248, 251–254, 263, 283, 286 & fn, 292, 295 fn, 316, 326, 333, 337, 343 & fn–346, 348, 359–361, 363, 367, 372, 374 fn, 377, 383, 386–387, 392–394, 396, 402, 412–413, 415, 423, 446, 449–450, 453–456, 458–459 & fn, 474–477, 479–480, 482 & fn–483, 485 fn, 505, 507, 515 & fn–518, 544, 591, 611, 614, 628, 632, 637, 642, 648, 656–657
Congress-League Pact (1916), 392 (*see also* Lucknow Pact)
Conservative Party (British), 199, 242
Constituent Assembly, 172 fn, 383 fn
Cot, Pierre, 139 & *fn*
Cotton Technological Laboratory, 525 fn
Cripps, Sir Stafford, 230, 240, 253, 263, 269, 271–272, 300, 380, 390, 412, 553, 558, 562 & fn, 597, 642–643
Curry, W.B., 608
Cyprus, 53 fn
Czechoslovak Export Institute, 588
Czechoslovakia, 81, 128, 144 & fn, 146. 154 & fn–155, 168. 199, 201, 222, 229, 233. 245. 291, 298, 330, 351, 409, 665–666

Daiches, David, 653 fn
Dalal, Sir Ardeshir, 568, 572–573
Danton, Georges Jacques, 609 & *fn*
Dantons Tod or *Danton's Death* (Georg Buchner), 609
Danzig, 81 & fn–82, 152 & fn
Darbari Lal, 487
Das (Nurse), 581
Davos, 593, 640
Day, John, 611 & fn, 618
Days of Our Years (Pierre Von Passen), 609, 654
Debnath, 569
Defence of India Act, 176–177
Defence of India Ordinance, 123 fn, 445 fn, 451 fn
Dehra Dun, 668
De la Mare, Walter, 653 fn
Delhi, 74, 88, 174, 210 fn, 226, 319, 338 & fn, 356 & fn–357, 359–360, 364 fn, 367, 369–371, 379–380, 390–391, 393, 402, 413, 423, 433, 473, 478, 563, 592–593, 596, 629, 631–633, 635–636, 643 (*see also* New Delhi)
Delhi District Congress Committee, 224 fn
Denham, 667
Denmark, 221 fn
Desai, Bhulabhai, 335–336, 433, 460
———, H.M., 65 & *fn*, 67
———, Mahadeva, 381, 389
De Soyza, Sir Wilfred, 14 & *fn*
Devalal, Sam Ernest, 427 & fn–428
Development Board (Pakistan), 525 fn
Devonshire, 634
Dhami state, 499–500, 507–508
———, Rana of, 499 fn
Dhami Riyasati Praja Mandal, 499 fn
Digboi, 184 & fn, 451 fn
Ding Dong Bell (Walter De la Mare), 653 fn
Disarmament Conference (Geneva), 139 fn
Dolivet, M., 140
Dominion Status, 190 fn, 211 fn, 224 fn, 282, 300 & fn, 302, 305, 311 fn, 316, 322 & fn, 344, 349–350, 370 fn
Donald, W.H., 562 & fn
Donoughmore, Earl of, 54 & *fn*
Donoughmore Commission report, 54 & fn
Dragon Book (E.D. Edwards), 653 & fn
Drummonds (publishers), 254, 611
Dube, Professor, 349–350
Dum Dum (Calcutta), 87, 631
Duplex Plant (of Tata Co.), 575
Durbhanga Castle, 649
Dutch East Indies, 8

East Africa, 6
East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), 484 fn
Edwards, E.D., 653 fn
Egypt, 77 & fn, 275, 286
Eighteen Months in India (J. Nehru), 618
Eighth Route Army (China), 75 & fn, 85, 99 & fn, 114, 597 fn
Eire, 162 fn (*see also* Ireland)
Elmhirst, Leonard, 316 & fn, 319, 336
England, 2, 19, 24–25, 43, 56, 97, 108 & fn, 118 & fn–119, 122, 126–127, 129–133, 139–140, 144, 146 & fn–148, 150 & fn, 152–154, 162 & fn–167, 169, 172, 174 & fn, 182 fn, 183, 185, 187, 189, 192, 194–196, 197 fn, 198–200, 203 fn–204, 206 fn, 209–211, 213, 219, 221 & fn–222, 232–234, 236, 238–241, 250, 256–257, 260 fn, 265, 271, 273, 276–279, 281–282, 286, 290–293, 295, 297–298, 302–306, 310–311, 313–314, 316–317, 320–321, 323, 327–328, 330–333, 335 & fn, 336 fn, 337, 339–341, 348, 366, 368, 370 fn, 371–373, 377 fn, 398, 404, 412, 416, 433, 450, 456, 477, 492, 504 fn, 591 fn, 593, 603, 608, 613, 623, 632–633, 644, 649, 652–653, 665–666
Erasmus, 655
Estonia, 191 fn
Ethiopia, 81, 128, 133, 136, 144, 146 & fn, 168, 199, 201, 222, 274, 326, 330, 669
Eurasia Company 91, 94
Evening Standard, 242
Executive Yuan (China), 95 fn, 99 & fn, 100 fn

Faizpur, 80 & fn
———, Congress session at, 663

Fatehdin, 575–576
Federal Constitution, 661
Federal Court, 176, 267, 287, 489
Federal Union (New York), 337
Finland, 263 & fn–266 & fn, 298, 299 fn, 300, 310, 315, 327–328, 329 fn, 331, 409, 422, 605, 611, 619
Ford, Henry, 544
Forward Bloc, 18, 159, 183 & fn, 346, 479, 490 fn
France, 89, 97, 118 fn, 122, 126, 128, 139, 146 & fn–147, 150, 153–154, 213, 221 fn, 222, 240, 249, 256, 264–265, 286, 297–298, 302–303, 327–328, 331–332, 339, 665–666
Fraser, Alex, 80 & fn, 654
French Revolution, 105, 348, 350, 609

Gaidilieu Rani, 510 & fn
Galliara, Mrs., 627
Gandhi, Feroze, 654
———, Mahatma, 5, 42, 74, 120–121 & fn, 139, 142, 161, 163 & fn, 170 & fn, 174, 177 & fn, 181, 189 & fn, 201, 203 & fn, 207, 212 & fn, 215 & fn–216, 217 fn–218 & fn, 220, 225, 229 & fn–230, 235–236, 238–239, 249–250, 252–253 & fn, 257, 259–260, 263 fn, 267, 271 & fn–272, 274, 293, 309–310, 311 fn, 312 fn, 315–316, 319, 322, 325 & fn, 327, 343–344, 351, 355, 357–358, 365 & fn–366, 368–369, 371 & fn, 377 & fn, 381, 389–390, 392–393, 398, 402–405, 417 & fn, 449, 463 & fn, 473–475, 477 & fn–479, 488–489, 492, 503 & fn, 507, 525 & fn, 539 & fn–540, 544–546, 547 fn, 553 & fn, 555, 588–589, 615 & fn, 618 & fn, 635–636
Gandhy, J.J., 568
Gaya, 64
Geneva, 15, 27, 58, 139, 198, 409
Geneva declaration, 27
German Social Democrats, 665
German-Soviet Boundary & Friendship Treaty, 191 fn
Germany, 81 fn, 111, 118 fn, 122, 124–125, 126 fn, 146 fn–147, 150, 152–155, 165, 182, 191, 198–199, 221 & fn–222, 233, 242 & fn, 256, 265–266, 271, 283, 286, 328, 330–331, 339, 425, 435, 450, 456, 591 fn, 594, 639
Ghaziabad, 285 fn
Ghose, Aurobindo, 663
Gilani, Beltie Shah, 383 & fn
Giri, V.V., 517
Glimpses of World History (J. Nehru), 254, 611, 653, 655, 664, 668
Goonesinghe, A.E., 68 & *fn*
Gorakhpur, 172, 319, 402, 646
Government of India Act of 1919, 190–192
Government of India Act of 1935, 123 fn, 157, 190 fn, 192, 201–202, 215–216, 267, 319, 323, 334, 385, 431
———, Amending Act, 147, 157, 323, 334
———, Amending Bill, 123 & fn, 156, 275, 307, 334, 488–489, 611
Grand Hotel du Lac (Kunming), 94
Gunther, Frances, 590 & fn, 624 fn, 637, 649
———, John, 590 fn, 637, 649
Gupta, Shivaprasad, 355
Gwalior, 235
Gwyer, Sir Maurice, 176

Haig, Sir Harry, 186 & fn
Hailey, 1st Baron, 272, 390
Halifax, 1st Earl, 43, 74, 263, 272, 390
Hall of Mirrors (Versailles), 198
Hallett, Sir Maurice, 311 & fn
Hamdard, 499
Hamid Ali, Begum, 529 & fn, 556, 649
Hankow, 97
Hanoi, 77, 79–80, 90–91, 93, 624
Hapur Congress Committee, 493
Harijan, 250, 503 fn, 653
Haripura, Congress session at, 131 fn
Harlow, Ralph, 227 & fn
Haroon, Sir Haji Abdulla, 467 & *fn*–468
Harrison, Agatha, 80, 143, 593, 631–632, 635, 653–654
Harrow, 612 fn, 613 & fn
Harrow Education Society, 613 fn
Helsinki, University of, 266 fn

Hemmerlin, Mlle., 635, 649, 655
Henlein, Konrad, 665–666
Hertzka-Loew, Gertrud, 587–588
———, Jan, 587–588
Hillelson, S., 653 fn
Hind Swaraj (Mahatma Gandhi), 547 & fn
Hindu Illustrated Weekly, 653
Hindu Mahasabha, 192, 224, 301, 370 & fn, 400, 416, 471–472, 505 fn
Hindustan Ki Samasyayen (J. Nehru), 594
Hindustan Times, 616
Hindusthan Standard, 451 fn
Hissar, 508 & fn–509
Hissar Congress Committee, 508–509
Hitler, Adolf, 82, 146 & fn, 151–155, 161–162, 165, 182, 191, 195, 198–199, 210–211, 212 fn, 221–222, 242 fn, 255–256, 259, 265, 271, 291, 309, 330–332, 409, 503 fn, 591 fn, 665–666
Hoare, Sir Samuel (later Viscount Templewood), 211 & fn, 214, 369, 636
Holmes Smith, J., 288 & fn, 430 fn
Home Rule League movement, 335 fn
Homi, Manek, 571, 579
Hong Kong, 73, 79–80, 82 & fn–83, 86, 88, 113, 555, 597, 627
Hooghly, district Congress committee of, 345 fn
Hope Brothers, 637
House of Commons, 43, 147, 156, 211 & fn, 213, 372, 489, 636 fn
House of Lords, 154 fn, 165, 203, 224 fn, 232 & fn, 233 fn
Hsin Sung, 94
Huang, C.C., 555
———, K.T., 94
Huq, Abdul, 596
———, A.K. Fazlul 237, 403, 414, 424, 433, 435–436, 441, 461 & fn–470 & fn, 492, 525 & fn
Husain, Zakir, 378, 389
Hussain, Ekbal, 581
———, Syed, 663
Hutheesing, Ajit, 645
———, G.P., 594, 645
———, Harsha, 645
———, Krishna, 4, 585, 593, 623, 630, 645, 648, 658
Hydari, Sir Akbar, 412 & *fn*
Hyderabad, 8, 76 & fn, 412 & fn, 435, 501 & fn, 505 & fn
———, Nizam of, 76 fn, 505 fn
Hyderabad Academy, 417 fn
Hyderabad State Congress, 505 fn

Iftikharuddin, 645
Imperial Airways, 583–584
Imperial Tobacco Cigarette factories, 352
India and Burma (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill, 267 fn
India League, 175 & fn, 227, 585
India Office, 156, 230, 241, 272
Indian Cable Company, 576
Indian Civil Liberties Union, 445 fn, 460–461
Indian Civil Service, 44 fn, 215, 258, 415, 654 fn
Indian Constitutional Reforms, Joint Committee on, 415
Indian Foreign Service, 643 fn, 654 fn
Indian Historical Society, 603
Indian Information Service, 632 fn
Indian Medical Unit (to China), 75, 85, 95, 114, 118
Indian Mercantile Chamber (of Sri Lanka), 65 fn
Indian Mutiny, 388
Indian National Congress China Committee, 562
Indian Swaraj League, 433
Indian Tariff Board, 525 fn
India's Challenge to Christians: (Cyril Modak), 430 fn
India's Destiny (Cyril Modak), 430 fn
Indo-China, 8, 73, 90, 92, 94, 624, 626
Industrial Cooperatives Movement (China), 104 & fn
Industrial Revolution, 348
Inonu, Ismet, 485 & *fn*
Institute of Pacific Relations (American), 73 & fn–74
Interim Government, 356 fn
International Bank (Washington), 253 fn
International Court of Justice (Hague), 280, 306, 317, 406, 425
International Labour Conference, 18

International Labour Office (Geneva), 15, 27, 29, 46, 58–59
International Peace Campaign, 108, 139-140
International Peace Hospital (Wutaishan) 597 fn
Ireland, 150 & fn, 221 fn (*see also* Eire)
Islamia College (Lahore), 525 fn
Italy, 81 fn, 146, 153, 198, 264–265, 298, 311, 330, 339, 643
Iyengar, S. Srinivasa, 494 & fn–495
Iyer, Sir C.P. Ramaswami, 504

Jabalpur, 288 fn
Jackson, Sir Edward, 53 & *fn*
Jaffna, 62
Jaganaikulu, 569
Jaipur, 412 fn
Jallianwala Bagh, 201
Jamiat-ul-Momineens, 232 fn, 374 (*see also* Momins)
Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Hind, 231 & fn, 237, 338, 377, 400, 433–434
Jamshedpur, 44, 77, 79, 347 fn, 352, 567–570, 572–573, 576–579, 582–583, 620, 623, 625
Jamshedpur Award, 77 fn, 567, 580
Japan, 8, 43, 75, 83 & fn–84, 87–88, 97, 99 fn, 117–118, 153, 161, 165, 286, 542, 552
Java, 84, 632
Jayatilaka, Sir Baron, 2 & *fn*, 14, 26, 44, 49, 59, 68
Jessore, district Congress committee of, 345 fn
Jhansi, 610
Jinnah, M.A., 176, 188 & fn, 210, 218 & fn, 223, 225, 230–231, 235–236, 238, 251, 271 & fn–272 & fn, 294, 301–302, 311 & fn, 315, 355 & fn–359, 364 & fn–370 & fn, 376 & fn–381, 383 fn, 389–390, 391 fn, 393, 397–399 & fn, 401–406, 408–410 & fn, 412 & fn–416, 421–422, 426 & fn, 428, 433, 435, 469 & fn–470, 473, 478, 602, 632, 636
ohn, 569–570
ohn Arnison (Edward Thompson), 602
ohn Day Company (publishers), 226
John Lane (publishers), 611
Joint Committee—see Indian Constitutional Reforms, Joint Committee
Joshi, N.M., 412
Jowett, William Allen, 611 & *fn*
Justice Party, 416

Kaivalyanand, Swami, 594 & fn
Kalelkar, Satish, 632 & fn
Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital (Allahabad), 635, 637, 650
Kandy, 9, 16, 23, 30, 68
Kannangara, E.W., 49 & *fn*
Kanpur, 177 & fn, 183 fn, 352 & fn 463, 466, 485
Kanyakumari, 34, 268, 663
Karachi, 235, 631
Karachi resolution of Congress, 306, 384–385, 531
Kashmir, 499, 502, 505–506, 509
Kathiawar states, 504
Katju, K.N., 611
Kaul, Kailash, 624
———, Shiela, 624
Kaur, Rajkumari Amrit, 555, 630, 649
Keene, Paul, 430 fn
Kemal Pasha, Ataturk, 485 fn
Kerala, 506 fn
Khaksars, 183 fn, 435, 452, 463 & fn, 466, 473
Khan, Abdul Ghaffar, 436, 643
———, Asadullah, 486
———, Liaquat Ali, 356 & *fn*–357
———, Mahmud Aslam, 486
———, Sir Sikandar Hayat, 175–176 237, 271 & fn, 273, 294–295, 308 333, 355 & fn–358, 394, 403, 412 422, 434–435, 485
Khilafat agitation, 201, 333
Khudai Khidmatgars, 237, 481
Khurda, 480 fn
Kiangsi, 75 fn
Kidwai, Rafi Ahmed, 449, 454, 459
Kifayatullah, Mufti, 377
Kitabistan, 610–611, 638, 653
K.L.M. Airways, 584, 628, 630–631
Korda, Sir Alexander, 667
Kotelawala, Sir John, 4 & *fn*
Kremlin, 265

Kripalani, J.B., 139, 345, 503 fn, 620
———, Krishna, 336, 539 & fn, 645 fn
———, Nandita, 645 & fn
Krishak Praja Party, 433, 436
Krishnamachari, Sir V.T., 412 & fn
Krishtagraha Manifesto, 430 & fn
Krishtagraha movement, 430 fn
Kropotkin, Prince Peter, 653 & fn
Kulu valley, 606
Kumarappa, J.C., 525 & fn, 539 & fn–540
Kung Hsiang-Isi, 99 & fn
Kunming, 79 & fn, 84, 91–94, 561, 597, 624
Kuomintang, 74 fn, 92, 95 & fn, 96 fn, 98–99, 100 fn, 140 fn
Kutar, 580
Letters from a Father to His Daughter (J. Nehru), 638
Letter from an Unknown Woman (Stefan Zweig), 608
Levellers' Society (Allahabad), 347
Leysin, 413, 593, 602, 635, 640, 644–645, 652, 655
Liberal Federation (India), 201, 236, 370, 661
Liberals (British), 348
Life, 641–642, 649
Light of Asia (Sir Edwin Arnold), 653 & fn
Light on Moscow (D.N. Pritt), 253 fn, 608
Limbdi state, 504 & fn
Limbdi Praja Mandal, 504 fn
Lindsay, 667
Linlithgow, 2nd Marquis, 130 fn, 155 fn, 162, 170, 174–178, 184, 190, 192–194, 196–197, 199, 203, 206–207, 209, 211, 213, 217 & fn, 222–223, 225, 230–231, 235–236, 238–239, 249–250, 257, 263, 271–272, 278, 286, 294–295, 300, 304, 307–309, 311–312, 320, 322, 325, 327, 333–334, 343, 356, 359–360, 366–372, 402, 404, 413, 415, 423, 441, 452–453, 457–458, 473, 477, [illegible] 637

International Labour Office (Geneva), 15, 27, 29, 46, 58–59
International Peace Campaign, 108, 139-140
International Peace Hospital (Wutaishan) 597 fn
Ireland, 150 & fn, 221 fn (*see also* Eire)
Islamia College (Lahore), 525 fn
Italy, 81 fn, 146, 153, 198, 264–265, 298, 311, 330, 339, 643
Iyengar, S. Srinivasa, 494 & fn–495
Iyer, Sir C.P. Ramaswami, 504

Jabalpur, 288 fn
Jackson, Sir Edward, 53 & *fn*
Jaffna, 62
Jaganaikulu, 569
Jaipur, 412 fn
Jallianwala Bagh, 201
Jamiat-ul-Momineens, 232 fn, 374 (*see also* Momins)
Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Hind, 231 & fn, 237, 338, 377, 400, 433–434
Jamshedpur, 44, 77, 79, 347 fn, 352, 567–570, 572–573, 576–579, 582–583, 620, 623, 625
Jamshedpur Award, 77 fn, 567, 580
Japan, 8, 43, 75, 83 & fn–84, 87–88, 97, 99 fn, 117–118, 153, 161, 165, 286, 542, 552
Java, 84, 632
Jayatilaka, Sir Baron, 2 & *fn*, 14, 26, 44, 49, 59, 68
Jessore, district Congress committee of, 345 fn
Jhansi, 610
Jinnah, M.A., 176, 188 & fn, 210, 218 & fn, 223, 225, 230–231, 235–236, 238, 251, 271 & fn–272 & fn, 294, 301–302, 311 & fn, 315, 355 & fn–359, 364 & fn–370 & fn, 376 & fn–381, 383 fn, 389–390, 391 fn, 393, 397–399 & fn, 401–406, 408–410 & fn, 412 & fn–416, 421–422, 426 & fn, 428, 433, 435, 469 & fn–470, 473, 478, 602, 632, 636
John, 569–570
John Arnison (Edward Thompson), 602
John Day Company (publishers), 226
John Lane (publishers), 611
Joint Committee—see Indian Constitutional Reforms, Joint Committee on
Joshi, N.M., 412
Jowett, William Allen, 611 & *fn*
Justice Party, 416

Kaivalyanand, Swami, 594 & fn
Kalelkar, Satish, 632 & fn
Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital (Allahabad), 635, 637, 650
Kandy, 9, 16, 23, 30, 68
Kannangara, E.W., 49 & *fn*
Kanpur, 177 & fn, 183 fn, 352 & fn, 463, 466, 485
Kanyakumari, 34, 268, 663
Karachi, 235, 631
Karachi resolution of Congress, 306, 384–385, 531
Kashmir, 499, 502, 505–506, 509
Kathiawar states, 504
Katju, K.N., 611
Kaul, Kailash, 624
———, Shiela, 624
Kaur, Rajkumari Amrit, 555, 630, 649
Keene, Paul, 430 fn
Kemal Pasha, Ataturk, 485 fn
Kerala, 506 fn
Khaksars, 183 fn, 435, 452, 463 & fn, 466, 473
Khan, Abdul Ghaffar, 436, 643
———, Asadullah, 486
———, Liaquat Ali, 356 & *fn*–357
———, Mahmud Aslam, 486
———, Sir Sikandar Hayat, 175–176, 237, 271 & fn, 273, 294–295, 308, 333, 355 & fn–358, 394, 403, 412, 422, 434–435, 485
Khilafat agitation, 201, 333
Khudai Khidmatgars, 237, 481
Khurda, 480 fn
Kiangsi, 75 fn
Kidwai, Rafi Ahmed, 449, 454, 459
Kifayatullah, Mufti, 377
Kitabistan, 610–611, 638, 653
K.L.M. Airways, 584, 628, 630–631
Korda, Sir Alexander, 667
Kotelawala, Sir John, 4 & *fn*
Kremlin, 265

Kripalani, J.B., 139, 345, 503 fn, 620
———, Krishna, 336, 539 & fn, 645 fn
———, Nandita, 645 & fn
Krishak Praja Party, 433, 436
Krishnamachari, Sir V.T., 412 & *fn*
Krishtagraha Manifesto, 430 & fn
Krishtagraha movement, 430 fn
Kropotkin, Prince Peter, 653 & fn
Kulu valley, 606
Kumarappa, J.C., 525 & fn, 539 & fn–540
Kung Hsiang-lsi, 99 & *fn*
Kunming, 79 & fn, 84, 91–94, 561, 597, 624
Kuomintang, 74 fn, 92, 95 & fn, 96 fn, 98–99, 100 fn, 140 fn
Kutar, 580

Labour Association (of Tata Co), 570
Labour Federation (of Tata Co.), 570–572, 579
Labour Party (British), 192, 194, 231 & fn, 329 fn, 611 fn, 667
Lachman, 574–576
Lahore, 270, 390, 643, 645
———, Congress session at, 393, 637
Lajpat Rai, Lala, 595
Lal Bagh Ashram (Lucknow), 288 & fn
Lamlai area, 511
Lane, Allen, 603, 610 & fn
Lanka, 569
Lanka Sama Samaja Party, 1 & fn–2
Lashio, 79 fn, 85, 556, 597, 627–628
Last Flower (James Thurber), 649
Latif, Abdul, 391 fn
Latif, Syed Abdul, 417 & fn, 436
Latvia, 191 fn
Lauland, Chwang, 551
Laval, Pierre, 146 fn
La Ville de Calcutta, 90
League of Nations, 127–128, 139 fn, 198, 275, 280, 287, 298, 299 fn, 317, 331, 339, 406, 409, 425
Left Consolidation Committee, 18–19
Legislative Council (Sri Lanka), 2 fn
Legislative Yuan (China), 85 fn, 92
Leningrad, 266, 298, 409
Lenin Peace Prize, 139 fn
Letters from a Father to His Daughter (J. Nehru), 638
Letter from an Unknown Woman (Stefan Zweig), 608
Levellers' Society (Allahabad), 347
Leysin, 413, 593, 602, 635, 640, 644–645, 652, 655
Liberal Federation (India), 201, 236, 370, 661
Liberals (British), 348
Life, 641–642, 649
Light of Asia (Sir Edwin Arnold), 653 & fn
Light on Moscow (D.N. Pritt), 253 fn, 608
Limbdi state, 504 & fn
Limbdi Praja Mandal, 504 fn
Lindsay, 667
Linlithgow, 2nd Marquis, 130 fn, 155 fn, 162, 170, 174–178, 184, 190, 192–194, 196–197, 199, 203, 206–207, 209, 211, 213, 217 & fn, 222–223, 225, 230–231, 235–236, 238–239, 249–250, 257, 263, 271–272, 278, 286, 294–295, 300, 304, 307–309, 311–312, 320, 322, 325, 327, 333–334, 343, 356, 359–360, 366–372, 402, 404, 413, 415, 423, 441, 452–453, 457–458, 473, 477–478, 629, 632
Literacy Day (U.P.), 651
Literature and Society (David Daiches), 653 fn
Lithuania, 191 fn
Lloyds, 248
Locarno treaties, 162 fn
Loew, Gertrud—see Hertzka-Loew, Gertrud
———, Jan—see Hertzka-Loew, Jan
Lohia, R.M., 605
Lok Sabha, 172 fn
London, 73 & fn–74, 76 fn, 78, 80 fn, 189, 202, 227, 232, 234, 242, 249, 254, 267, 320, 325 fn, 341 381, 415, 433, 477–478, 624, 652, 656, 666–667
London Transport Board, 532
Long March (China), 75 fn
Lucknow, 79, 188, 288 fn, 319, 360, 430 fn, 460–461, 473, 487, 494, 583–584, 608, 610, 623, 625, 628–629, 633, 635, 647, 651

Lucknow Pact (1916), 392 (*see also* Congress League Pact)

Madgavkar, Sir Govind, 173 & fn
Madras, 9–10, 16, 146, 162, 201, 443, 453, 494 fn
———, Congress session at, 162
Maganwadi, 417
Maharashtra, 325
Mahmud, Sarwar, 613
———, Syed, 381, 397 & fn, 447, 518, 613
Mahmudabad, Raja of, 435
Mahtab, Harekrushna, 501 fn
Majlis-e-Ahrar-e-Islam, 400, 422, 433 (*see also* Ahrars)
Majlis-e-Ansar, 433
Majlis Kabir Pakistan, 420 fn
Majumdar, D., 180 & fn
Making of the English Working Class (E.P. Thompson), 238 fn
Malabar, 94, 431
Malaya, 21, 275
Mallik, B.K., 615
Manchester Guardian, 415, 495 fn
Manchuria, 81, 128, 144, 168, 199, 274, 326, 330
Mandalay, 627
Mandapam Emigration Depot, 63, 65–67
Manipur state, 510, 511 fn
Manipur State Durbar, 510 & fn–511 & fn
Mao Tse-tung, 75 & *fn*
Marseilles, 667
Marshall-Fox, Cedric, 612 & fn
Masani, M.R., 376
Mathura, 231, 255, 380, 479, 640 & fn–641
Mazdoor Sabha (Kanpur), 352 fn
Meerut, 301 fn, 423, 427 & fn, 490, 646
Mehta, Jivraj, 635, 640
———, V.A., 543
Mein Kampf doctrine, 264
Menon, A.R., 506 & *fn*–507
———, K.B., 445 & *fn*, 460
———, V.K. Krishna, 50, 73, 76 & fn, 139, 163, 174, 182 & fn, 185, 206–207, 226, 230 & fn, 231 fn, 239–240, 248, 253, 263 & fn, 271, 337, 343, 352, 412, 415, 433, 452, 487, 501, 585, 610 & fn, 612 fn, 618 & fn, 619 fn, 642, 655–657
Metal Workers' Union (of Tata Co.), 570
Mission High School (Belgaum), 288 fn
Mission High School (Jabalpur), 430 fn
Mittra, 569
Modak, Cyril, 430 & *fn*
Modern Review, 663
Moghal dynasty, 407 fn
Mohammad, Ghulam, 575
Mohammad-ul-Hasan, 231 fn
Mohenjo-daro, 268
Molotov, V., 310 & fn
Momins, 231 fn, 232, 237, 338, 374 fn, 433–434 (*see also* Jamiat-ul-Momineens)
Montagu, Edwin, 201
Montana, 638, 640
Moradabad, 301 fn, 490, 646
Moravia, 154 & fn
Morin, Jean-Jacques, 633
———, Louise, 632–633, 655
Moscow, 73, 146 fn, 165 & fn, 233, 241
Mother (Karel Capek), 653 fn
Mukerji, H.C., 383 & *fn*
Mukherjee, G.L., 575–576
Mukherji, Debesh, 95, 552, 555, 597
Munich Conference, 144 fn
Munich Pact, 43, 154 fn, 199, 214, 222, 275, 298, 372
Muslim League, 164, 176 & fn, 189, 192, 205–207, 210 & fn, 213–215, 219, 223, 224 fn, 225, 231 & fn–232, 235, 237, 247, 272–273, 280, 286, 300–301, 307, 309, 311, 315, 321, 323, 332–333, 336, 338 & fn, 355 & fn, 356 fn, 357–360, 363, 367–368, 370 & fn–371, 377 fn, 379–381, 389, 391 fn, 392, 398–406 & fn, 410 & fn–411, 413–414, 416–417, 421–422, 433–436, 452, 471, 477 fn, 478, 487–488, 612 fn, 618–619
———, Working Committee of, 176 fn, 467 fn
Muslim Problem in India (Syed Abdul Latif), 417 & fn
Mussolini, Benito, 82, 146 & fn, 153, 198, 259, 330, 666

Mussoorie, 637, 642–643
Must the War Spread? (D.N. Pritt), 329 fn
Muttra—see Mathura
Mutual Aid (Prince Peter Kropotkin), 653 fn
Muzaffarnagar, 293, 301 fn, 490, 646
Mymensingh, district Congress committee of, 345 fn
Mysore state, 503 & fn
Mysore State Congress, 503

Naidu, Leilamani, (Papi), 630, 649
———, Padmaja (Bebe), 630, 649
———,Sarojini, 445 & fn, 552, 630, 649
Nambudiripad, E.M.S., 506 & fn
Napoleon, 351
Narayan, Jaya Prakash, 183, 347 & fn, 352, 620
National Herald, 174, 252, 271, 343, 360, 430, 478, 494, 586–588, 591, 604–605, 608, 610, 617, 619, 625–626, 632, 639, 641, 645, 649, 651, 653
National Planning Commission, 412 fn
National Planning Committee, 13, 158, 319, 361, 515 & fn–531, 533–535, 539 & fn, 557, 559–560, 613, 656
National Radium Commission, 54 fn
Nationalist, 520 fn
Nattukottai temple, 90
Naval Arms Conference (London), 139 fn
Nazi Party, 435
Nazi-Soviet Pact, 97, 146 & fn, 151, 165 fn, 266, 298
Nehru, Brijlal (Birju Bhai), 632, 648
———, Indira, 80 & fn, 207, 238, 248, 413, 593, 602, 611, 623–624, 626–627, 629, 631, 632 fn, 633–636, 640, 642, 644, 646, 649–650, 652, 656, 667–678
———, Jawaharlal, 2 fn, 42–43, 51, 73 fn, 76 fn, 77 fn, 78 fn, 80 fn, 83 fn, 118 fn, 121, 122 fn, 130 fn, 155 fn, 174 fn, 179, 217 fn, 227 fn, 250–251, 271, 284 fn, 301 fn, 311 fn, 316 fn, 326 fn, 356 fn, 361–364 & fn, 388 fn, 399 fn, 409, 421, 423, 426 fn, 444, 461 fn, 463 fn, 467 fn, 469 & fn, 470 fn, 473, 480 fn, 484 fn, 493 fn, 494 fn, 508 fn, 510 fn, 539 fn, 545, 552 fn, 567 fn, 590 fn, 591 fn, 597 fn, 605 fn, 610 fn, 611 fn, 612 fn, 613 fn, 615 fn, 618 fn, 619, 635
———, arbitrates at Jamshedpur dispute, 567–582; clarifies Congress attitude to Sikhs and other minorities, 391–396; disagrees with Syed Abdul Latif, 417–419, 436–437, and with Syed Mahmud, 381–382, 397–399; drafts communal agreement, 364, Congress Working Committee resolution on the war, 122–138, reply to the Viceroy on his proposals, 217–220, and U.P.P.C.C. resolution on war, 326–327; inaugurates All India Educational Conference, 598–601; justifies Abul Kalam Azad's election as Congress President, 495–496; leaves for China, 84, and returns to India, 112; leaves for Sri Lanka, 7, and returns to India, 40; presides over U.P. Political Conference (Mathura), 254–258; reacts to British response to Congress demands, 190–193, and to Jinnah's 'day of deliverance', 390–391, 399–405; replies to Fazlul Huq's challenge, 461–472, and to S.E. Devalal's charges, 428–430; writes confidential note on Congress policy, 303–308
———, on adult suffrage, 281, 302, 306, 318, 428; on age, 636; on Ahrars, 434; on A.I.C.C. resolution on war, 183; on Ajanta frescoes, 268; on Allied Powers, 153–155; on All India Women's Conference, 530, 553–556, 649; on Ambedkar, 414; on Amritsar *mela* incident, 644–645; on appointments on communal basis, 375; on the approaching new year, 554; on A.R. Menon's case, 506–507; on Arya Samaj satyagraha in Hyderabad, 501; on Assam oil fields strike, 184; on Assam ministry, 451; on "atrocities charges" against Congress, 362–363, 403, 464, 466–467, 471–472; on basic education scheme, 107, 442–443, 600; on being arrested, 480; on being

a world figure, 604; on Bengal, 183, 345–346, 484; on Bengal government, 441–442; on Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, 482–483; on Bihar, 568; on Bihar Labour Inquiry Committee, 567; on Bikaner and Hissar, 508–509; on Bodh Gaya temple, 64; on bombing, 160; on boycott of Indian goods in Sri Lanka, 15, 68; on break-up of old political and economic order, 200; on Britain and Russia, 328, 330–332; on Britain's support of reactionary elements, 278, 281, 317–318, 323, 342, 416, 425; on Britain's war and peace aims, 129, 132, 135–136, 154–158, 166, 169–170, 197, 213–214, 222, 233, 279, 295, 303, 317–318, 368, 370, 372–373, 410, 450, 594–595; on British Commonwealth, 340; on British Empire, 19, 197, 291; on British Government, 123–124, 143–144, 156, 163–164, 189, 191, 208–209, 214, 224, 234, 304, 312, 321, 323, 369, 619 and its betrayal of democracy, 128–129; on British Government and the communal question, 278, 280–281, 292, 294, 413, 415; on British imperialism, 192, 211, 214, 233–234, 259–260, 282, 291, 310–311, 326, 329, 332, 337, 372, 403, 452; on British imperialism and Indian nationalism, 214, 276, 282, 313, 323, 407; on British imperialism's support of feudalism, 500–501; on British pacifists, 666; on a British Parliamentary delegation to India, 335–336, 433; on British policy, 43, 199, 201, 265, 275, 277, 327, 330, 334, 341; on British policy of divide and rule, 204, 279, 370, 372, 385; on British response to Congress demands, 190–194, 196–197, 203, 205, 222, 227–228, 233–234, 252, 256, 276–277, 283, 286, 292, 458; on British vested interests in India, 277, 307; on a British youth delegation to India, 585; on Burma Road, 109, 113, 561; on Burma riots, 110; on a capitalist economy, 540; on capital-labour relations, 567–569, 577–578; on Ceylon Indian Congress deputation to the Viceroy, 66–67; on Chamberlain, 43, 197, 199 and his government, 330, 372, 608; on changes and revolutions, 290; on charkha, 544–545; on Chiang Kai-shek, 85, 109, 112; on China, 82, 92, 101, 103–105, 108–109, 111–113, 117, 160–162, 165, 542, 544, 561; on China in war time, 113, 118; on Chinese Buddhist mission, 561, dress, 93, food, 88, 99, industrial cooperatives, 561–562, names, 100 and people, 85–86, 101, 111–112; on the Chinese in Malaya, 21–22; on Christian missions and missionaries, 431–432; on Christianity in China, 432, and in India, 383–384, 431; on Christianity and imperialism, 431–432; on Chungking, 95–96, and air raids there, 96–98, 113, 627; on civil disobedience, 161; on civil war in China, 159–160; on class domination, 374; on common heritage of India and Sri Lanka, 11–12, 37–38; on common language for India, 287; on communal organisations, 424; on communal question, 219, 224–225, 231–232, 279, 284, 333, 359–362, 364–365, 369, 371, 377, 388–389, 398, 404–405, 412, 415, 422; on communal troubles in U.P., 472; on communists, 2; on composite or coalition ministries, 307, 403, 414–416, 421; on compromise with Britain, 314–315, 321–322, 327, 333, 338, and with Muslim League, 357–358, 411; on conflicts, 32, 34; on conflicts in India, 301, and in Sri Lanka, 54–55; on Congress, 18, 31, 33–35, 39, 103–104, 117, 124–125, 141, 210, 213–214, 223–224, 228, 230, 237, 250, 260, 267, 271, 279, 291–293, 309, 314, 324, 361, 366, 381–382, 386–387, 400, 424, 429, 446, 452, 663–664, acceptance of office by, 18–19, 201–202, 215, 258, 403, 475–476, constructive programme of, 488, discipline in, 142–143, 229, 245–246, 405, 446, 455, dissenting elements in, 244–245, governments of, 167, 202, 216–217, 259, 415, leaders of, 398, ministers of, 443–444, 542–543

organisation of, 142, 258, resignation of ministries by, 211, 215–216, 219, 223, 228, 236, 257, 283, 286, 363, 366–369, 404, 423, 463, 476, resumption of office by, 334, 370, and unity in, 142, 223; on Congress-League relations, 301–302, 315, 333, 355, 357–358, 380, 398–402, 408, 410–411, 416, 421–422; on Congress and the British Government, 123, 164, 204, 209, 234, 238–240, 247, 249–250, 253, 257, 259–260, 275, 322, 325, 367, 456, 477; on Congress and fascism, 124–125, 150–151, 275; on Congress and Government of India, 448, 453; on Congress and imperialism, 314; on Congress and large-scale and small scale industries, 533, 539–541; on Congress and the minorities, 278, 280, 294; on Congress and Sikhs, 392–396; on Congress and war, 118, 125–126, 131–135, 163, 237, 277–278, 313, 372–373, 395, 410; on Congress Working Committee demands, 167, 173–174, 205, 226, 256, 289, 325–326, 400–401, 410, 456; on C.W.C. resolution on the war, 141–142, 149, 162, 166–167, 173–174, 178–181, 187, 189–190, 196, 209, 213, 218, 222, 225, 228, 276, 303; on C.W.C. war sub-committee, 139, 142; on a constituent assembly for India, 202, 223, 225, 238, 247, 253, 278, 280–281, 286–287, 294–295, 306, 318, 323, 334, 341–342, 365, 371, 373, 393, 404, 406, 421–422; on the cooperative movement, 543; on a

654–656; on declaration of India as a belligerent country, 449; on declared war aims down the ages, 195–196; on democracy, 17, 362, 385–386; on a democratic government, 172, 202; on development of industries, 158; on Dhami state, 499–500, 507–508; on dictatorship, 165; on differences with Mahatma Gandhi, 546–547; on dismissal and repatriation of Indian daily-wage-earners by Sri Lanka Government, 1, 14–15, 17–18, 24, 27–30, 45–48, 52–53, 57–59, 67; on disruptive tendencies, 159; on distribution of population in India, 413, 419; on district Congress committees, 486–487; on doctrine of *Mein Kampf*, 264; on Dominion Status, 305, 316; on Donoughmore commission, 54; on Eastern countries, 84; on the East and the West, 105, 428–429; on economic exploitation of India by Britain, 348–349; on economic freedom, 526; on economic ills of the world, 527; on economic planning and reconstruction, 520–521; on economic survey of the country, 388; on education, 445, 598–600; on education in India, 19; on election of Abul Kalam Azad as Congress President, 495–496; on emigration of Indian labour to Sri Lanka, 9–10, 15, 30, 41, 44–45, 48, 63, 67, 69; on England, 128, 144–147, 233, 240–241, 256–257, 276, 332, 372; on English people, 150; on environment, 599; on European situation, 200, 240, 249, 327, 452, 458, 665–666; on European

394, and guaranteeing communal proportion in it, 394–395; on free joint participation in the war, 151; on a free secular India, 384; on French revolution, 348; on Gaidilieu Rani, 510; on Germany, 154, 221–222; on *Glimpses of World History*, 664, 668–670; on a government formed on communal basis, 397; on Government of India, 156, 184, 191–192, 308; on Government of India Act of 1919, 192, 201, of 1935, 192, and amending acts, 267, 275, 307, 319, 489; on Govind Ballabh Pant, 217; on Grand Hotel du Lac, 92; on the great depression, 198; on growth of new classes, 374, 388; on *Hamdard*, 499; on Hanoi, 91; on H.G. Wells, 616–617; on himself, 11, 420, 603, 629–630, 636–637, 649, 651; on Hindi and Urdu, 596; on Hindu Mahasabha, 224; on Hinduism and Islam, 418; on Hindustani, 670; on a historical perspective, 269; on Hitler, 163, 198–199, 210, 222, 291; on horrors of war, 133–134, 136–137, 149; on hunger strike of political prisoners in Bengal, 42, 441–442; on Hyderabad state, 76, 505; on imperialism, 155, 163, 166, 168, 256, 264–265, 286, 340, 669; on the imperial powers 210; on independence pledge, 270, 310, 313, 488–491; on India, 11–13, 16–17, 31, 33, 35, 83, 103, 105–106, 110–111, 117, 145, 148, 150, 162, 208, 268, 270, 274, 285–286, 290–291, 293, 309, 424, 600–601, 664; on India, Burma and Sri Lanka, 112; on India and China, 83, 162, 273, 340, 551, 553–554, contacts between them, 101–102, 106–108, 113, 120, and economic intercourse between them 557, 559-560, 562–563; on India and England, 150, 169–170, 241, 311, 373; on India and imperialism, 24–25, 35, 212, 275–276, 337–338, 363; on India Office, 156; on India and Russia, 299–300; on India-Sri Lanka relations, 3–4, 7–8, 10, 12–14, 16–17, 21–25, 27, 29–33, 35–41, 44, 56, 62–63, 68, and trade talks, 62, 68–69; on India and the war, 125, 129–131, 144, 147–149, 155–157, 168–169, 180–182, 184–185, 187, 192, 202–203, 209, 211, 236, 248, 252, 269, 275–277, 283, 286, 289, 292, 295, 304, 310, 327, 332, 456; on India and World War I, 274–275; on Indian army, 165, 350, 602; on Indian Christians, 384–385, 431; on Indian Civil Liberties Union, 460–461; on Indian Civil Service, 258–259; on Indian estate labour in Sri Lanka, 32, 45, 63; on Indian independence, 34, 151, 218–219, 302, 317, 323, 326, 336–337, 373, 375; on Indian labour, 15; on Indian manufacturers, 560, 563; on Indian marriages, 654; on Indian medical unit to China, 75, 114, 118; on Indian national movement, 17–18, 35, 37–38, 103–104, 339, 349, 388–389, 661; on Indian poverty, 255, 268, 283, 418; on Indian princes, 185, 238, 316–317, 663; on Indian problems, 102, 273–274, 281, 333, 407; on Indian situation, 473, 552, 559, 590, 610; on Indian states, 130–133, 185–186, 277, 308, 318, 418, 503–504, 509; on Indians, 13, 31, 127, 293, 600–601; on Indians abroad, 6, 13, 21, 24, 32, 57; on Indians in Sri Lanka, 5, 7, 22–23, 25–26, 32–33, 36, 41, 47, 56–57, 60, 66, and franchise for them, 29, 54–55, 61–62; on Indian women's delegation to China, 556, 559; on India's role in the future, 12, and in international affairs, 178–179; on India's struggle for freedom, 201, 255, 275, 282, 290, 308; on Indo-British relations, 172–173, 181, 304–307, 317, 319–320; on industrial revolution, 105, 348; on industrialisation of India, 540–541, 544–545; on industries in India, 527; on internal disharmony, 315–316, 452; on interrelation of national and international problems, 220; on the inter-war period, 198–203; on Ireland, 150; on Islamic states, 418, and Congress, 619; on Italy, 153; on Jamiat-ul-Ulema, 433–434; on Jamshedpur Award, 567–582, labour troubles leading

to urbitration, 569–573, terms of reference of arbitration and judgement, 567, 573–577, 579–582, and workers, 570; on Japan, 8, 117, 153, 542; on Jats, 647; on Jaya Prakash Narayan's arrest, 347; on Jinnah, 176, 271–272, 301, 379, 389, 405, 414, 426, 478, 602, his 'day of deliverance', 272, 300–301, 390–391, 399, 401–403, 408, 411, 417, 435, 602, and his proposal for a royal commission, 408–409, 414, 469, 471; on journey to China, 86–95, and journey home from China, 627–628; on Kashmir, 499, 502, 505; on keeping a balanced mind, 615; on keeping a diary, 84; on khadi, 284, 488, 546; on Khaksars, 435; on kisans, 187, 444–445, 455; on Krishna Menon, 657; on Kunming, 92–94; on Kuomintang, 98; on Labour Federation (of Tata Co.), 571; on lack of books and papers, 652–653; on Lajpat Rai, 595; on Lanka Sama Samaja Party, 2; on large-scale and cottage industries, 310, 533, 540–541; on League of Nations, 298–299, 339, 409; on Left Consolidation Committee, 18–19; on life, 614; on Limbdi state, 504; on Literacy Day in U.P., 651; on living in isolation, 648; on long journeys, 607–608; on Lucknow Pact, 392; on Madame Chiang Kai-shek, 85; on Madame Sun Yat-sen, 86; on Madras ministry, 494–495; on Mahatma Gandhi, 177, 181, 201, 212, 229–230, 239, 250, 253, 257–258, 267, 325, 344–345, 366, 474, 589–590; on making charges on one-sided reports, 471–472; on Manipur, 510–511; on Meghnad Saha's criticism, 542; on message of the Buddha, 37–38; on military training being given in schools, 447–448; on minorities and their rights, 219–220, 225, 279, 287, 289, 306, 317–318, 341–342, 363, 365, 371, 382, 384–386, 404–407, 413–414, 425, and giving weightage to them, 393–394; on misrepresentation of Indian news in London, 249–250, 477; on missionary pledge, 430–432; on modern warfare, 291; on Mohenjo-daro, 268; on Momins, 374–375, 434; on moonlit nights, 630; on music, 642; on Muslim communal leaders, 663; on Muslim League, 176, 206, 210, 214–215, 223, 237, 247, 273, 280, 286, 301, 309, 370, 398, 400, 435, 487–488; on Muslims not being a minority, 287, 291, 294, 317, 362, 407; on Muslim support for Congress, 231–232, 237, 301, 399–400, 436, 663; on Mysore state, 503; on national consciousness, 24; on national demand, 202; on *National Herald*, 586–587, 591, 605; on National Planning Committee, 13, 361, 515–524, 526, 528, 534, and its sub-committees, 523–525, 528–529; on national power, 103; on nationalism and internationalism, 12, 339; on Nazism, 212, 264; on need for cautious action, 292, for discipline and unity, 121, 158, 260, for national consolidation, 145, for propaganda and organisational work, 478, and for *sangathan*, 283–285, 291; on Nehru report, 392–393; on a new world order, 12–13, 107, 119, 193, 282, 288, 594; on noncooperation, 251, 283; on nonviolence, 37, 161, 229, 243–247, 291, 300, 349–351, on the old world order, 102, 290; on overcrowding in trains, 606; on pan-Islamism, 320, 332–333, 618; on personal finances, 638–639; on Pirpur Committee, 402; on planned economy, 533; on planning, 515–516, national, 163, 521, and state, 541; on Poland, 161, 229, 233, 245; on political cooperation with all parties, 422; on politicians, 20; on private industry, 532–533; on production and distribution, 526–527; on Professor Bari, 577–578; on provincialism and sectarianism, 325; on Punjab, 183, 237; on Punjab crowds, 644; on quickness of air travel, 94; on Rabindranath Tagore, 87; on reading serious books, 655; on realism and reality, 81; on a regional I.P.C. conference, 139–140; on religion and freedom, 284; on religious and political groups, 429–430; on reservation of seats in legislatures, 375; on resigning

from executive of A.I.S.A., 546–547; on resolution to be passed by state assemblies, 454, 459; on rival trade unions, 579; on role of youth, 110, 159–160; on Round Table Conferences, 201, 204–205; on Russia, 151–152, 165, 221, 265–266, 297, 299, 311, 328, 527; on Russian policy, 241–242, 266, 297–298; on Russia's invasion of Finland, 263–264, 298–299, 310, 315, 328, 331, 409, 611, 619, of Poland, 146–147, 152 161, and a possible invasion of India, 242; on Russian Revolution, 351; on Russo-German Pact, 146, 151, 298; on sabotage, 574; on Saigon, 89–90; on satyagraha, 161, 408; on science and scientific approach to problems, 268; on security guards joining trade unions, 576; on self-determination for India, 209–210, 218, 223, 238, 308, 404–405; on separate electorates, 325, 393, 425, 428; on a settlement with Britain, 304, 311–313, 315–316, 319–320, and terms of settlement, 306–308; on Sheikh Abdullah, 509; on Shia Political Conference, 434–435; on Sikandar Hayat Khan, 402–403, 435, and his proposals, 294–295, 308, 422; on Simla hill states, 500–501, 508; on socialism in India, 18; on socialist economy, 527; on socialists in India, 183; on Spain, 81, 233, 244–245; on Sri Lanka, 5, 19, 22, 32, 38, 60–61, nationalities in, 55–56, and political conflicts in, 56–57; on standards of public behaviour, 472; on state control or ownership of industries, 531–532; on strikes, 578; on students, 19; on Subhas Bose, 345–346; on superstitions in India, 530; on suppression of civil liberties, 175–176, 347; on Swaraj, 31, 187, 284, 291, 295, 308; on Syed Mahmud's complaints against Congress, 397–398; on taking hurdles, 634; on talks with communal leaders, 377, with Jinnah, 176, 225, 356–357, 365–366, 368, 376–379, 391, 401–404, and with the Viceroy, 174–175, 223; on Dr. Tarachand, 603; on Tata Workers' Union, 570; on textile industry, 488; on tour of north west U.P., 646–647; on training, 19; on Travancore state, 504; on travelling by trains, 607; on Treaty of Versailles, 198, 256; on Turkish Relief Fund, 484–485; on turncoats, 475; on United Provinces, 170–173, 473; on U.P. Congress, 170–171, 254, 474, 479, 490; on U.P. Tenancy Bill, 171, 186–187, 255, 444, 453, 455, 457–458, 480–481; on United States, 153–154, 221, 274, 288–289, 333; on unity of India, 192–193, 420; on Viceroy's interviewing prominent leaders, 452–453, on his proposals, 207, 219, 235–236, 257, 278, 367, 369–370, 372–373, and his statement on Congress demands, 175, 193, 196–197, 206, 218–219, 235–236, 360, 367, 369–370; on Village Communities Ordinance in Sri Lanka, 55; on village and city gatherings, 423; on violence, 244–246, 349–351; on visit to China, 73–74, 77–80, 82, 85, 120, 444, 623–624, to Mathura, 640–641, to Sri Lanka, 1–3, 5–6, 21, 40–41, 48–52, 59–60, 623, to Taj Mahal, 255, 640, and a proposed visit to Japan, 83–84, 87–88; on the war, 111, 127, 144, 151, 153, 159–160, 165, 168, 208–209, 213–214, 225, 256, 259, 268–269, 273, 282, 286, 289, 310, 314, 318, 599, 628–629, 669, its causes, 111, 150, 154, its prospects, 154, and its repercussions, 221, 519, 522; on wars, 166; on weakening of progressive forces, 296–297; on weapons of war, 152–153; on women's role in national struggle, 349; on women's sub-committee of N.P.C., 522, 530; on working of provincial autonomy, 202, 294, 450; on world changes, 11, 309, 324, 669; on world cooperation of nations, 303; on a world federal union, 337, 339–342; on world freedom, 167–168; on world situation, 5, 17, 34, 82, 102, 117, 144–145, 167, 243, 283, 293, 296, 473, 502, 613; on World War I, 111, 126–128, 130–131, 146, 166, 196, 210, 255–256, 629; on writing history, 668; on writing about Mahatma Gandhi, 618; on Yenan, 114; on Zetland, 164, 167, 203–205, 407, 664

———, Kamala, 639
———, Rameshwari, 593 & fn
———, Rup, 630
Nehru Report, 392
Nehru—The Rising Star of India (Anup Singh), 604 fn
Netherlands, 221 fn
New Delhi, 68, 174, 191, 238, 369 (*see also* Delhi)
New Life Movement (China), 104 & fn
News Chronicle, 174, 590 fn, 632, 662
New York, 337, 637
New York Times, 604
New Zealand, 162 fn
North, Lord, 404
North East Province (Sri Lanka), 54
North West Frontier Province, 74, 231 237, 279, 407, 413, 436
Norway, 221 fn

Orissa, 94, 483, 501 fn
Orissa states, 501, 504 & fn
Orissa States Enquiry Committee, 501 fn
Orissa States People's Conference, 501 fn
Ottoman Empire, 127–128 & fn
Oxford, 416, 603, 632 & fn, 645
Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250–1918 (Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch), 653 & fn

Pant, Govind Ballabh, 217 & fn, 334 & fn, 492
Paris, 413, 667
Passen, Pierre Von, 609, 654 & *fn*
Patel, Vallabhbhai, 139, 188–189, 358, 449, 458–459, 476, 503 fn, 628
Patna, 337, 345, 347, 355, 374, 399, 611, 614, 656
Peshawar, 161
Philander Smith College (Naini Tal), 388 fn
Philippines, 8
Pilgrim Trust, 602
Pilkhwa (Ghaziabad district), 285
Pillai, 569, 573–574, 581
———, K. Shankar, 636
Pioneer, 311
Pirpur Committee, 402
Planters' Association of Sri Lanka, 69 fn
Poland, 81 fn, 118 fn, 122, 124–125, 146 & fn, 150–152, 155, 161–163, 168, 185, 191 & fn, 199 & fn, 209–210, 212, 229, 233, 245, 265, 291, 299, 351, 366, 409, 421, 629
Politbureau (Chinese Communist), 99 fn
Political Prisoners' Relief Committee (Bengal), 484 fn
Pondicherry, 90
Poona—see Pune
Prague, 588
Praja Party—see Krishak Praja Party
Praja Socialist Party, 445 fn

Punjab hill states agency, 499 fn

Quiller-Couch, Sir Arthur, 653 fn

Race Relations Board, 253 fn
Radhakrishnan, S., 589
Radicals (British), 348
Rafi, Rev. J.R., 491 fn
Raina, Ganga, 654, 657
———, Niranjan Nath, 505
Rajagopalachari, C., 9, 65, 322 & fn, 443
Rajchman, Ludwik, 139 & *fn*
Rajwade, Rani Laxmibai, 530 fn, 555, 649
Rajya Sabha, 374 fn
Ramakrishna, 569
Rameshwaram, 63
Ramgarh, 346 & fn, 655
———, Congress session at, 139 fn, 335 fn, 346 & fn, 617, 655
Rangoon, 73, 109, 110 fn, 412, 555–556, 597 & fn, 627–628, 630
Rao, Raja, 610
———, K. Rama, 586, 591, 604
Revolution in India (Frances Gunther), 590 fn
Rezmie, 663
Rhodes Memorial Lecture, 416, 603, 618 & fn
Ribbeutrop, Joachim Von, 165, 666
Roerich, Nicholas, 695
Rollier, Dr., 635, 640, 644, 647–648, 650, 653
Roosevelt, F.D., 274 & fn
Round Table Conferences, 201, 204
Rowlatt Act, 201
Roy, M.N., 490 fn
Royal Central Asian Society, 320
Rumania, 152, 161
Runciman, Walter, 666
Russia, Soviet (Soviet Union), 8, 117, 144 & fn, 146 & fn–147, 150-153, 161, 165, 179, 182, 191 & fn, 199, 221, 241–242 & fn, 263–266, 296–300, 310–311, 315, 328, 329 fn, 330–332, 340, 409, 422, 527, 544, 608, 611, 629
Russian Revolution, 351
Russo-German Pact—see Nazi-Soviet Pact

Saha, Meghnad, 539 & fn, 542–543
Saharanpur, 301 fn, 490, 646
Saigon, 84, 89–91
Saint Peter's Church (Moradabad), 491 fn
Saiva Vellala group (Sri Lanka), 49 fn
Saksena, Shibban Lal, 172 & *fn*
Salisbury, Lord, 224 & fn, 369
Sami, Abdus, 391 fn
Sampurnanand, 447
Samson, Dr., 638
Santiniketan, 412, 509
Sapru, Tej Bahadur, 452
Sarabhai, Ambalal, 525 & fn
———, Bharati, 614
———, Mridula, 530 fn, 649
Saran, Raghunandan, 356 & *fn*–357, 359
Sarnath, 651
Satyamurti, S., 179, 428
Satya Narain, 581
Savarkar, V.D., 370 fn
Schuster, Sir George, 272, 390
Seal, Pulin B., 336 & fn
Segaon, 310, 473
Sen, Dhirendranath, 451 & *fn*
———, Khagendranath, 520 & fn
———, Satindra Nath, 484 & *fn*
———, Sudhir, 316 fn, 336
Senanayake, Don Stephen, 50 & *fn*
Seva Dal, 283, 486
Sevres, Treaty of (1920), 128 fn
Shah, K.T., 517–518
Shahidganj Mosque agitation, 434
Shan States, 627
Shanghai, 99 fn, 113, 597
Sharma, Vidyabhushan, 569
Shastri, Lal Bahadur, 326 fn, 455 & fn, 485
Shaw, Bernard, 152 & fn, 233
Sheet Mills (of Tata Co.), 573–574, 580
Sheonath, 569
Shiromani Akali Dal, 377, 391 & fn
Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, 377
Siam—see Thailand
Siberia, 544
Sichel, Franz, 588
Sikh League, 107

Simla, 163 & fn, 448, 499–501, 507–508 & fn
Simla hill states, 508 & fn
Sind, 231, 237, 407, 413, 584
Sind Provincial Muslim League, 467 fn
Sind Provincial Political Conference, 467 fn
Singapore, 632
Singh, Anup, 604
———, Ban, 575
———, Thakur Chandra, 161
———, Ganga, 574
———, Sardar Kartar, 391 & *fn*–392, 396
———, Lady Maharaj, 640
———, Thakur Malkhan, 486 & *fn*
———, Master Tara, 377, 391
Sinha, S.K., 568, 581
———, Sri Krishna, 493 & fn
Sinhalese Etymological Dictionary, 2 fn
Sinkiang, 100, 242
Sirkar, 581
Sitaramayya, Pattabhi, 1
Slovakia, 154 & fn
Smith's College (Massachusetts), 227 fn
Smuts, J.C., 618 fn
Snell, Lord, 232 & fn
Socialist Party (India), 486 fn
Song Celestial (Sir Edwin Arnold), 653 & fn
Soong Ai-ling, *99 fn*
Soong Mayling—see Chiang Kai-shek, Madame
Soong sisters, 99 fn
Soong, T.V., 140 & *fn*, 552
South Africa, 6, 13, 162 & fn
Soviet Union—see Russia, Soviet
Spain, 81, 128, 133, 136, 144, 153, 168, 199, 201, 214, 222, 233, 244, 258–259, 270, 274–275, 286, 293, 299, 326, 330, 372, 610, 669
Spanish Civil War, 597 *fn*
Sri Lanka, 1–17, 19–41, 44 & fn–47, 49 & fn–69 & fn, 76–77, 90, 502, 585, 623, 627, 632
Sri Prakasa, 493 & fn
Srivastava, Brij Kishore, 491 & fn
Stalin, Josef, 152 & fn, 165, 242 & fn, 259
State Council (Sri Lanka), 1 fn, 2 fn, 45, 50 fn, 54–55, 57, 60
Statesman, 639
Stephani, Jacques, 638
Stewart, Findlater, 272, 390
Stimson, Henry Lewis, 139 & *fn*
Stogdon, Edgar, 613 & *fn*
Stokes, Richard Rapier, 253 & *fn*
Streit, Clarence, 339, 608
Students Federation, 585
Stunnes family, 640, 657
Subbarayan, P., 494
Sudeten German areas, 665–666
Sunday Times, 335 fn
Suntheralingam, Chellappa, 49 & fn
Sun Yat-sen, 74 fn, 96, 552
———, Madame, 73, 86, 140 fn, 552 & fn, 554, 597
Swaraj Bhawan (Allahabad), 584
Sweden, 221 fn
Switzerland, 80 fn, 248, 560, 593, 604, 623–624, 635, 637–639, 640–641, 643
Syrian Christians, 431

Tagore, Rabindranath, 83 & fn, 87, 120, 509, 645 fn
Tai-hsu, Rev. Abbot, 557 & *fn*, 651
Taiwan, 74 fn, 100 fn
Taj Mahal, 255, 640, 643
Tamil country, 90
Tanda, 463 & fn, 466
Tandon, Purushottamdas, 449–450
Tarachand, Dr., 603
Tariff Commission (Pakistan), 525 fn
Tata Iron and Steel Company Ltd., 8, 77 & fn, 346, 347 fn, 567–573, 576–582, 625
Tata Workers' Union, 77 fn, 567–574, 576–582
Templin, Mr., 430 fn
———, Mrs., 430 fn
Tendulkar, D.G., 617
Thailand, 89–90, 94, 626
Thakurdas, Purushottamdas, 557–558 & *fn*
That Day Alone: Time is Now! (Pierre Von Passen), 654 fn
Thompson, Edward, 189, 207, 235, 263, 416, 452, 602 & fn, 633, 635, 640, 661–662, 665, 667
———, Edward Palmer, 238 & *fn*, 592

Thurber, James, 649
Tientsin, 82 & fn, 108 fn, 113
Tien Tuan-sen, 94
Time, 641–642, 649
Times, 152 fn
Times of India, 311 fn
Tin Plate Workers' Union, 569
Tinsukia, 184 fn
Tokyo, 108 fn
Tong, Hollington K., 99 & *fn*
Toward Freedom (J. Nehru), 226 fn
Town and Notified Area elections, 285
Travancore state, 62, 431, 504
Travancore State Congress, 504 fn
Travels of a Republican Radical in Search of Hot Water (H.G. Wells), 608
Trentino, 666
Tribune, 241
Tripuri, 494
————, Congress session at, 131 fn, 202, 624
Tse Wen-soong—see Soong, T.V.
Tulsi Das, 640–641
Turkey, 128 fn, 152, 221, 333, 418, 484–485 & fn
Turkish Relief Fund, 485 & fn

Uday Shankar Company, 647
Union Now (Clarence Streit), 339, 608
United Provinces, 120, 170 & fn–172, 183 fn, 188, 215, 217, 230–231, 254, 273, 293, 312, 352, 417, 423, 433–434, 436, 441, 443, 451, 453, 457, 463–464, 466, 471–472, 474–475, 479–481, 487, 489, 493 fn, 646, 651, 663
U.P. Arrears of Rent Remission Bill, 284 & fn, 296, 480 & fn
U.P. Employment Tax Bill, 267 & fn, 307, 488–489 & fn
U.P. Government Press Emergency Act, 463 fn
U.P. Political Conference (Mathura), 254, 260, 380
U.P. Property Tax, 319
U.P. Provincial Conference, 334 fn
U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, 326 & fn–327, 446, 474–475, 479, 481, 485, 490–492
U.P. Stayed Arrears of Rent Remission Bill, 284 fn
U.P. Tenancy Act, 284 fn, 295, 301, 487
U.P. Tenancy Bill, 171 & fn, 186 & fn–188, 255, 260 fn, 284, 443–444, 453, 455 & fn–458, 474, 480–481
United States of America, 8, 76 fn, 85 fn, 99 fn, 100 fn, 105, 113, 117, 118 fn, 139, 140 fn 147, 153–154, 192, 194, 196, 198, 211, 213, 221 & fn, 225, 228, 274, 288 & fn–289, 292, 299, 303, 307, 330, 333, 337, 340, 412, 430 & fn, 560, 603–604 & fn, 612 fn–613, 641
United States Congress, 221, 274 fn
United States Neutrality Act (1939), 221 fn
Upadhyaya, S.D., 492, 584, 625, 657
Ur of the Chaldees (Sir Leonard Woolley), 653 fn

Vakil, C.B., 335 & fn–336, 433
Versailles, 198
Versailles, Treaty of, 127, 146 & fn, 198, 256
Victoria Terminus (Bombay), 608
Vidurashvatham, 503 fn
Village Communities Amending Ordinance (Sri Lanka), 55 fn
Village Communities Ordinance (Sri Lanka), 55 & fn
Visva-Bharati Quarterly, 336
Visvesvaraya, M., 524
Vyas, Pandit Braj Mohan, 605

Walsh, Richard, 76
Wang, Dr., 99
Wardha, 50, 79, 108, 140, 172, 174, 185, 207, 220, 253, 263, 359–360, 390, 399, 450, 452, 454, 460, 473, 476, 479, 515, 552, 592, 598, 605, 623, 628, 630–631, 635, 642, 648–650
Week-End Caravan (S. Hillelson), 653 fn
Wells, H.G., 608–609, 616–617
West Bengal, 383 fn
Western Allies, 152–154, 221 fn, 266, 320

Westminster, Statute of, 302, 305, 311 fn
Where Are We? (J. Nehru), 494, 624, 657
Whitehall, 191, 230, 241, 250, 252, 277, 279
William II, Kaiser, 111, 210
Wilson, Geoffrey, 253 & *fn*, 302, 642
Wong, Anna, 99
Woolley, Sir Leonard, 653 fn
World Council of Peace, 139 fn
Wu Chih-hui, 96 & *fn*
Wutaishan (China), 597 & fn

Yeh Chien-ying, 99 & *fn*
Yenan, 75 fn, 114
Yenching University, 99 fn
Yih Tsou-tsan, 100
Yong Konta, 92
Young Germany movement, 609 fn
Young Men's Buddhist Association (Colombo), 2 fn
Young Men's Christian Association (Sri Lanka), 49 fn
Yunnan, 561
Yunnanfou—see Kunming
Yunus, Mohammed, 643 & *fn*

Zetland, 2nd Marquis, 130 fn, 155 fn, 164 & fn–167, 175 fn, 203 & fn–207, 211, 213, 224 & fn, 233–235, 238, 252, 272, 300, 320, 325, 335 & fn, 369, 390, 406 & fn–407 & fn, 415, 475, 477, 489 & fn, 664
Zweig, Stefan, 608 & *fn*

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FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling—these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of the East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in

civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles, both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the 'third world' as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.

New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

EDITORIAL NOTE

This volume opens with the Ramgarh Congress where the only resolution reiterated the inability of the Congress to participate in a war undertaken for 'imperialist ends' and reaffirmed that nothing short of complete independence could be accepted by the people of India. The Muslim League reacted with the 'Pakistan resolution' which Jawaharlal dismissed as a 'mad scheme'.

Jawaharlal as always advocated immediate action but Mahatma Gandhi felt that any step toward direct action would only result in defeating the very purpose of civil disobedience. The July resolution of the Congress Working Committee offered to cooperate with the British Government in the defence of the country if a full national government was set up. In their usual unimaginative fashion the British Government responded with the 'August Offer' which boiled down to a few seats in the Viceroy's Executive Council.

The Congress went back to its stand of noncooperation and resolved upon 'individual satyagraha'. Jawaharlal was chosen by Mahatma Gandhi to be the second satyagrahi but was arrested even before he could stage 'symbolic satyagraha'. At his trial he stated that it was his particular function and privilege to spread disaffection against the British Government in India. He was sentenced to four years rigorous imprisonment but from the very beginning felt that he would not serve the full term. This volume ends with his release on 4 December 1941 when all civil disobedience prisoners including Jawaharlal and Azad were set free.

Biographical footnotes which have appeared in earlier volumes are not repeated. Editorial omissions are indicated by dots.

Much of the material in this volume has been selected from the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru. The cooperation extended by the staff of the Nehru Memorial Library is acknowledged.

Shri Krishna Kripalani has permitted us to consult his papers. The Maharashtra Government and the National Archives of India have authorized us to utilize material in their possession. *The Bombay Chronicle, The Hindustan Times, National Herald,* and *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* have allowed us to reprint texts of speeches, statements, articles and editorials first published by them. The Asia Publishing House has permitted us to reprint one letter from *A Bunch of Old Letters.*

Our grateful thanks to Vivan Sundaram for allowing us to reproduce the photograph of Jawaharlal with Amrita Sher Gil.

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CONTENTS

1. India and the War

1	On the Eve of Ramgarh	11 March	1940	1
2	Why We Ask for a Constituent Assembly		1940	4
3	On the Edge of a Supreme Crisis	14 March	1940	7
4	The Task Ahead	17 March	1940	8
5	On the Patna Resolution	20 March	1940	11
6	To Carl Marzani	23 March	1940	12
7	To Edward C. Carter	8 April	1940	13
8	On the German Invasion of Scandinavia	10 April	1940	13
9	To V.K. Krishna Menon	12 April	1940	14
10	The Demand for Pakistan	13 April	1940	17
11	True Significance of a Constituent Assembly	18 April	1940	18
12	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	19 April	1940	21
13	No Change in Congress Attitude	19 April	1940	21
14	To V.K. Krishna Menon	27 April	1940	22
15	To Morris Henry Frank	29 April	1940	24
16	Dangers of Adventurism	6 May	1940	25
17	The Fundamental Issues at Stake	10 May	1940	27
18	On the New Secretary of State	May	1940	28
19	To Rajendra Prasad	16 May	1940	29
20	To V.K. Krishna Menon	16 May	1940	33
21	To Abul Kalam Azad	16 May	1940	34
22	U.P.P.C.C. Resolution on the War	19 May	1940	36

23	On the New Phase of the War Crisis	19 May	1940	39
24	To V.K. Krishna Menon	21 May	1940	40
25	To H.N. Spalding	22 May	1940	41
26	No Provisional Solutions	24 May	1940	45
27	The Unbridgeable Gulf	24 May	1940	46
28	Resist All Aggression	25 May	1940	48
29	To V.K. Krishna Menon	2 June	1940	50
30	On Mahatma Gandhi's Statement	12 June	1940	51
31	Congress Policy Unchanged	12 June	1940	52
32	Our Countrymen Abroad	14 June	1940	53
33	Working Committee Resolution on the War	14 June	1940	55
34	On the Resolution of the Working Committee	23 June	1940	63
35	The Pertinence of Nonviolence	30 June	1940	66
36	On the Political Situation	2 July	1940	67
37	A Realist Resolution	8 July	1940	68
38	No Compromise by the Congress	9 July	1940	70
39	Quatorze Juillet	16 July	1940	71
40	A Crumbling World	16 July	1940	73
41	To Abul Kalam Azad	16 July	1940	76
42	What of Us?	17 July	1940	77
43	To Abdul Ghaffar Khan	18 July	1940	80
44	To Vallabhbhai Patel	18 July	1940	81
45	To Peter J. Alvares	18 July	1940	82
46	India, China and England	21 July	1940	83
47	Dominion Status is Dead	27 July	1940	87
48	Fundamental Policy Unchanged	27 July	1940	87
49	Prudence or Courage?	28 July	1940	89
50	The Price of Freedom	28 July	1940	91
51	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	29 July	1940	96
52	To Mrs. Rallia Ram	5 August	1940	97
53	To Mumtaz Shah Nawaz	6 August	1940	97
54	Seva Dal to Continue	7 August	1940	99
55	India in Travail	9 August	1940	99
56	The Parting of the Ways	10 August	1940	101

57	To Edward C. Carter	10 August	1940	114
58	Time for Action	11 August	1940	115
59	On the Ban on Volunteer Organizations	12 August	1940	118
60	Free India and the World	12 August	1940	119
61	A World Federation	16 August	1940	120
62	To Mohammed Yunus	20 August	1940	121
63	The Arrests in the United Provinces	21 August	1940	122
64	Nonviolence and the State	25 August	1940	123
65	Empires Must Go	27 August	1940	127
66	Cable to the President, India League, U.S.A.	29 August	1940	130
67	A Challenge to Indian Nationalism	1 September	1940	130
68	The Next Step	8 September	1940	133
69	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	8 September	1940	134
70	The Imminence of Satyagraha	10 September	1940	135
71	The Twofold Task	14 September	1940	136
72	No Indefinite Bondage	16 September	1940	139
73	Gandhi Jayanti	17 September	1940	140
74	The Coils of War	19 September	1940	141
75	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	19 September	1940	142
76	On the Verge	28 September	1940	142
77	Settlement with Britain Unlikely	29 September	1940	145
78	The Role of Kisans	3 October	1940	147
79	Swaraj and Social Justice	3 October	1940	148
80	Air Bombing of Cities	4 October	1940	149
81	The Congress and the Kisans	6 October	1940	150
82	The March of Mighty Events	6 October	1940	156
83	On Mahatma Gandhi's Statement	16 October	1940	160
84	On the Detention of Jaya Prakash Narayan	16 October	1940	161
85	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	17 October	1940	162
86	Five Years Later	17 October	1940	162

87	The Meaning of Swaraj	18 October	1940	181
88	A Report on His Own Tour	22 October	1940	183
89	To Mahatma Gandhi	24 October	1940	186
90	To H.C. Puxley	25 October	1940	187
91	Eastern Nations Unite!	25 October	1940	188
92	To Charan Singh	25 October	1940	189
93	To Arthur D. Wiser	26 October	1940	190
94	The Eastern Federation	28 October	1940	191
95	Conversations with Mahatma Gandhi	29-30 October	1940	192

2. The Congress Organization

1	To Rajendra Prasad	11 March	1940	203
2	To V.K. Krishna Menon	14 March	1940	203
3	To Jaipal Singh	15 March	1940	206
4	India, Burma and Ceylon	25 March	1940	207
5	To H.M. Desai	26 March	1940	209
6	To H.M. Desai	9 April	1940	210
7	To H.M. Desai	20 April	1940	211
8	To Abul Kalam Azad	21 April	1940	212
9	To N.S. Hardikar	24 April	1940	214
10	Rally Round the Congress	28 April	1940	215
11	To V.K. Krishna Menon	6 May	1940	216
12	To Abul Kalam Azad	11 May	1940	217
13	To B.I. Ali Khan	16 May	1940	218
14	The Problem of the North West Frontier	28 May	1940	219
15	Message to the Frontier	28 May	1940	219
16	An Appeal to the People of the Frontier Province	30 May	1940	220
17	No Return to Office	15 June	1940	221
18	The Khaksars	18 June	1940	221
19	To Mrs. Rallia Ram	11 July	1940	222
20	To J.B. Kripalani	11 July	1940	223
21	To Mahatma Gandhi	17 July	1940	224
22	To J.R. Jayewardene	1 August	1940	225

23	To the Secretary, Karnataka P.C.C.	4 August	1940	227
24	To Abul Kalam Azad	4 August	1940	228
25	To Mohammed Yunus	6 August	1940	229
26	To Abul Kalam Azad	7 August	1940	230
27	To J.R. Jayewardene	24 August	1940	231
28	To J.B. Kripalani	28 August	1940	233
29	Cable to the President, Indian Congress, Durban	29 August	1940	234
30	To Lal Bahadur Shastri	10 September	1940	234
31	On the Resolution of the Working Committee	18 September	1940	235
32	To Mahatma Gandhi	23 September	1940	236
33	To M.N. Roy	23 September	1940	237
34	To Sampurnanand	24 September	1940	239
35	The Coming Struggle	29 September	1940	239
36	A Note on Indo-Sri Lanka Relations	4 October	1940	240
37	To Syed Mahmud	12 October	1940	242
38	The Sikhs and the Congress	17 October	1940	245
39	On the Discussions of the Working Committee	17 October	1940	246
40	To Abul Kalam Azad	18 October	1940	247
41	To Vallabhbhai Patel	20 October	1940	248
42	To M.N. Roy	23 October	1940	249
43	To Abul Kalam Azad	24 October	1940	250
44	To Abul Kalam Azad	24 October	1940	251
45	To Abul Kalam Azad	25 October	1940	252

3. The Indian States

1	A Cry from Jobat	28 March	1940	257
2	To V.K. Krishna Menon	9 April	1940	259
3	Arson in Bidar	20 April	1940	261
4	To V.K. Krishna Menon	21 April	1940	262
5	What of the Indian States?	27 April	1940	264
6	The Congress and the States	1 June	1940	266
7	The Minority Problem in Kashmir	3 June	1940	267

8	Farewell Message to Kashmir	12 June	1940	268
9	To Dwarka Nath Kachru	1 July	1940	269
10	To the Secretary, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind	3 July	1940	272
11	To Amrit Kaur	28 July	1940	274
12	To Mahatma Gandhi	10 August	1940	275
13	The Anachronisms that are the Indian States	18 September	1940	277
14	To K.B. Menon	25 October	1940	280

4. National Planning Committee

1	To Begum Hamid Ali	24 March	1940	283
2	To Lakshmibai Rajwade	30 March	1940	284
3	To Abul Kalam Azad	20 April	1940	287
4	The Progress of Planning	1 May	1940	289
5	On the Work of the Sub-Committees	15 May	1940	298
6	Planning for India's Future	15 May	1940	300
7	The Importance of Planning	30 June	1940	302
8	The Task Ahead	30 June	1940	303
9	To Abul Kalam Azad	1 July	1940	304
10	To V.K.R.V. Rao	10 July	1940	306
11	To P.N. Katju	13 August	1940	308
12	To K.T. Shah	21 August	1940	309
13	The War and Planning	30 August	1940	310
14	The Purpose of Planning	4 October	1940	315
15	The Content of Social Welfare	20 October	1940	316

5. Large-Scale & Cottage Industries

1	The Demands of the Workers	10 April	1940	321

2	Boycott of Imperial Tobacco Company	13 April	1940	322
3	The Sugar Muddle	12 July	1940	323
4	To B.M. Birla	21 July	1940	326
5	To Rajendra Prasad	4 August	1940	327
6	The Handicrafts of Kashmir	20 August	1940	329
7	In Gorakhpur	13 October	1940	331

6. India and China

1	To Purshotamdas Thakurdas	6 April	1940	339
2	To Chu Chia-hwa	20 April	1940	339
3	To Chu Chia-hwa	16 May	1940	340
4	To Madame Chiang Kai-shek	11 July	1940	341
5	The Closing of the Burma-China Road	16 July	1940	342
6	To Madame Sun Yat-sen	20 July	1940	343
7	To Cheng Yin-fun	10 September	1940	344
8	Aerial Bombardment of China	4 October	1940	345
9	A New Road to China	28 October	1940	346
10	A Distinguished Visitor	28 October	1940	347

7. National Herald

1	To Sri Prakasa	9 July	1940	353
2	To K. Rama Rao	9 July	1940	353
3	To Raghunandan Saran	18 July	1940	354
4	To K. Rama Rao	23 August	1940	356
5	To M.N. Tholal	10 September	1940	357
6	Two Years of Storm and Stress	10 September	1940	358
7	On the Government Order	27 October	1940	358

8. Freedom of the Press

1	To the Editor, Hindusthan Standard	4 March	1940	365
2	To Tushar Kanti Ghosh	4 March	1940	365
3	How India is Defended	26 April	1940	369
4	The Newspaper Man, the Censor and the Public	24 October	1940	371

9. General

1	To V.K. Krishna Menon	13 March	1940	377
2	To Michael Carritt	23 March	1940	377
3	To Edward Thompson	23 March	1940	378
4	To Syed Mahmud	27 March	1940	381
5	C.F. Andrews	5 April	1940	381
6	To Edward Thompson	7 April	1940	382
7	To Anne V. Paston	8 April	1940	385
8	To J. Vijayatunga	8 April	1940	385
9	To Jane Seymour Blomfield	8 April	1940	387
10	To Traverse Clement	24 April	1940	387
11	To Richard J. Walsh	27 April	1940	388
12	To Agatha Harrison	4 May	1940	390
13	To Edward Thompson	22 May	1940	392
14	The Role of Students in Politics	4 June	1940	392
15	To J.R.D. Tata	26 June	1940	393
16	To Eslanda Goode Robeson	10 July	1940	395
17	To W.E.B. Du Bois	12 July	1940	397
18	To Margaret W. Patterson	13 July	1940	398
19	To Florence Garvin	13 July	1940	398
20	Mohan Lal Kashmiri	13 July	1940	399
21	Kashmir	24-31 July	1940	401
22	To Surendraray Bapubhai Mehd	4 August	1940	416
23	To Richard J. Walsh	5 August	1940	417
24	To Amrit Kaur	6 August	1940	418

25	To V.K. Krishna Menon	9 August	1940	419
26	To Krishna Hutheesing	19 August	1940	421
27	To Constancia de la Mora	10 September	1940	422
28	Cable to Indira Nehru	10 September	1940	423
29	To Narinder Chand	10 September	1940	423
30	To Bharati Sarabhai	10 September	1940	424
31	To Hidayat Ullah Ansari	21 September	1940	424
32	To Mahatma Gandhi	21 September	1940	425
33	To Rajnikant M. Patel	21 September	1940	427
34	To V.K. Krishna Menon	21 September	1940	428
35	To R.S. Nimbkar	23 September	1940	429
36	To Horace G. Alexander	23 September	1940	430
37	To Krishna Kripalani	24 September	1940	430
38	To G.P. Hutheesing	25 September	1940	431
39	To Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya	25 September	1940	432
40	To R. Ramani	25 September	1940	433
41	Home-Coming	29 September	1940	434
42	To Mahatma Gandhi	2 October	1940	436
43	To Mridula Sarabhai	17 October	1940	438
44	Union of Free Nations	25 October	1940	438
45	To Rajan Nehru	25 October	1940	439
46	To Rajan Nehru	25 October	1940	440
47	To Brahma Prakash Sharma	25 October	1940	440
48	To Rajnikant M. Patel	26 October	1940	441
49	To Dorothy Enge	27 October	1940	442

10. Personal

1	To Indira Nehru	11 March	1940	445
2	To Indira Nehru	19 March	1940	447
3	To Indira Nehru	23 March	1940	449
4	To Indira Nehru	7 April	1940	452
5	To Indira Nehru	8 April	1940	456
6	To Indira Nehru	10 April	1940	457
7	To Indira Nehru	20 April	1940	458
8	To Indira Nehru	25 April	1940	459
9	To Indira Nehru	1 May	1940	463

10	To Indira Nehru	10 May	1940	464
11	To Indira Nehru	11 May	1940	465
12	To Indira Nehru	16 May	1940	467
13	To Indira Nehru	23 May	1940	468
14	To Indira Nehru	23 May	1940	469
15	To Indira Nehru	29 May	1940	472
16	To Indira Nehru	3 June	1940	473
17	To Indira Nehru	16 June	1940	474
18	To Indira Nehru	1 August	1940	475
19	To Indira Nehru	11 August	1940	476
20	To Indira Nehru	20 August	1940	477
21	To Indira Nehru	12 October	1940	478
22	To Indira Nehru	25 October	1940	479

11. Prison Diary with Letters I
31 October 1940—21 May 1941

Prison Diary with Letters 485

12. Prison Diary with Letters II
26 May 1941—4 December 1941

Prison Diary with Letters 601

13. Postscript to the Autobiography

Postscript to the Autobiography 753

ILLUSTRATIONS

Kashmir, 1940 — *frontispiece*

Ramgarh, 1940
Ramgarh, 1940 — *between pp.* 16—17

With U.B. Lwin, Allahabad, March 1940
With a Burmese Buddhist Monk, 1940 — 96—97

At U.P. Congress Volunteers Camp, Allahabad, April 1940
With Amrita Sher Gil — 224—225

With Members of the National Planning Committee, Bombay, April 1940
With Mohammed Yunus and Sheikh Abdullah, Srinagar, June 1940 — 288—289

With Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Kashmir, June 1940
At Congress Working Committee Meeting, Bombay, August 1940 — 400—401

At his Trial at Gorakhpur Prison, November 1940
A Page from the Prison Diary — 496—497

Facsimile of a Letter to Padmaja Naidu
A Page from the Prison Diary, August 1941 — 672—673

1

INDIA AND THE WAR

1. On the Eve of Ramgarh[1]

The Ramgarh Congress[2] approaches and the city of huts grows up on the plains of Chhota Nagpur. And we who are fortunate enough to be delegates, or are mere journalists or visitors, pack up our khadi clothes and roll up our beddings and prepare for the annual pilgrimage. What is the prospect surrounding us? What are we going to do there?

In a sense the Working Committee has taken the kick out of this Congress by the resolution it has framed, for the decision has been made already. Yet the kick remains in the very circumstances and in the nature of this dynamic crisis. There will no doubt be much argument and debate, but this resolution will in all probability be passed by a huge majority. It is well that it should be so passed for it clarifies our position and says exactly what we stand for.. There is no room left for controversy about certain vital points. The war in Europe is, so far as we are concerned, an imperialist war between rival empires, each trying to gain the mastery and strengthen and extend its imperialist power. All the talk about democracy and freedom is just the stuff out of which poor deluded mortals seek escape in fantasy from the ugly reality of life. All the fine ideals proclaimed by statesmen but cover their evil designs. Democracy and freedom will come to this long-suffering world sometime or other, but never will they grow out of the poisonous soil of imperialism. This war, though it may consume the bright lives of innumerable young men and exploit their idealism, is a war run by the old guardians of imperialism. So to this war we shall give no countenance, no support, and when the time comes we shall take such further steps as we can enforce to give effect to the national will.

That is the first point that is settled. The second is that all vague talk about Dominion Status of the Westminster or any other variety must end. We have had enough of it by well-meaning people who have tried to ride two horses at the same time. Let there be no more of it. Nothing that keeps us in the orbit of imperialism, howsoever slender the threads that bind, can be tolerated by the Indian people. Only full-blooded independence is our aim and objective, and the right to do as we will with our constitution and our future.

1. 11 March 1940. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 14 March 1940.
2. The fifty-third session of the Indian National Congress was held on 19 and 20 March 1940 at Ramgarh, a village in Bihar.

The time had long come for the realisation of our desire, the achievement of our freedom. The war, with all its horror and intrigue and false assurances, has added fire to that consuming urge, and demonstrated the urgency of vital change.

Let us look round. On the Western front little happens, the war is elsewhere. It is being fought in Finland, it is being prepared for in the Middle East and all manner of odd places. The Finnish war may end soon, as appears likely, or it may not.[3] Left to the Finns, it would undoubtedly end soon, but it is clear that it is not being left to the Finns. The British and French Governments want it to go on and possibly to develop and extend itself to other far-away fronts. We have expressed our sympathy for Finland and have condemned Russian action there. We hold that this action was wrong. But we may not forget that this is not an affair just between Russia and Finland; it is an extension of the major war to other fronts. It is the modern way of fighting by intervention and so-called non-intervention, and not by declaration of war. Finland is just a battleground for England and France to attack Russia. Field-Marshal Mannerheim[4] is a chip of the old Tsarist block whose consuming passion since the Soviets came into power is to destroy them. In the Tsarist days when the Finns struggled for national freedom, Baron Mannerheim sided with the Tsar and not with his own people. When freedom came to the Finns in 1918 and a socialist national government was established, Baron Mannerheim destroyed it with the help of German troops. Finland became for all practical purposes a German colony and might have remained so but for Germany's defeat in the last Great War. During the last twenty years, Finland has presented a spectacle of the White Guards and the fascist Lappo movement[5] dominating the parliament, occasionally raiding it, arresting its members, suppressing trade unions and outlawing Left parties. During this period British military, naval and air missions have visited Finland to help in strengthening its armed forces, and in matters of trade, Finland became a hanger-on of Britain.[6]

3. The first phase of the Finnish-Soviet war, which had begun when the Soviets attacked Finland in November 1939, ended with the signing of a peace treaty on 12 March 1940.
4. (1867-1951); commanded Finnish forces against the Bolsheviks, 1918, and against Soviet forces, 1939-40 and 1941-44; elected President of Finland, August 1944 and retired in 1946 because of illness.
5. The Lapuan movement, strongly religious and nationalist, had been organized to oppose communism. It gradually took on a fascist complexion and was banned in 1932.
6. A trade agreement was signed between Britain and Finland on 30 September 1932, which sought to facilitate the import of British goods into Finland. Britain in turn agreed to give the 'most favoured nation privileges' to Finland.

It was not love of Finland or a passion for the independence of the small states of Europe that moved various British governments to act in this fashion. It was hatred and fear of Soviet Russia and the desire to strike at her through Finland. When the chance came they seized it, in the name, of course, of freedom and democracy.

So let us remember that the struggle in Finland is essentially a part of the larger struggle.

Let us now turn our attention to that huge but undefined area known as the Middle or Near East. We have little news about it. The fog of approaching war seems to cover it and in this semi-darkness the legions gather. Reuter's special correspondent in those regions tells us that "the Transjordan Frontier Force, like the rest of the huge concourse of imperial troops in the Near East, is ready for an instant call to arms". "If the war moves to the Near East, Britain will be in a far stronger defensive position than the Turks were in the last war." Are not Egypt, Palestine and Transjordania, full of British camps and troop concentrations? And nearby is Syria with masses of French troops. It is interesting to note, as Reuter's correspondent takes pains to tell us, that the British imperial unit in Transjordan has, among other nationalities, White Russians.

And that perhaps gives us the clue to all this mysterious propaganda that has surrounded us for so long. Why should there be war in the Near East? Who wants it? Who profits by it? Certainly not Soviet Russia. Any person with the least knowledge of international affairs can say with confidence that Russia does not want war in the Middle East. Who else then? All these frantic troop concentrations lead to only one result—that the British and French Governments want to entangle Russia in the East. It is a well-planned preparation for that attack which has so long been the dream of British imperialism, and all the resources of propaganda are being used to prepare for it. The Arabs, for a change, are patted on the back, pan-Islamism is whispered from ear to ear, even our own particular Muslim League gets more attention than it is used to.

And all this to bring about the consummation of that devout and long-cherished wish—to attack the Soviet and try to enfeeble it; to remove thus from the field of effective action the one irreconcilable opponent of all imperialism. The path will be clear then, or so it is imagined. How many of us remember today that just twenty years ago Britain's chiefs dreamt of a new Middle Eastern empire stretching from the shores of the Bosphorus to the frontiers of India?

This is the prospect, and if we understand its inner significance, all that is happening or not happening on the Western front, or in Finland,

or in the Near East begins to have meaning. The Western war becomes just a side-show, a preparation, for the real war in the East where British imperialism plays for the high stake of empire. For it, the real enemy, as ever, is Soviet Russia.

Even if this was not so, we had taken our decision about this war. But this being so, it becomes doubly necessary for us to be on our guard against the propaganda and activities of the imperialism that holds us in its grip.

2. Why We Ask for a Constituent Assembly[1]

I was a member to something they might not like. So, without even looking into the book, I refused.

There was also another difficulty—the problem of finding time on the eve of the Ramgarh Congress when there was so much to be done.

And yet I was drawn to the manuscript and I glanced through it. I began to relent. I did not like everything it contained, but I did feel that it was a job competently done and deserving commendation. The subject was a vital one. Everyone was talking about it and some had written about it. And there were the critics, of course. And yet it was astonishing how few had given serious thought to the matter; and perhaps our critics, who had favoured us with their criticisms so generously, had given the least thought of all. There are a number of worthwhile writings on this subject. Shri M. N. Roy has written frequently; Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia has issued a pamphlet on behalf of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee.[2] Yet there is room for far more. It is immaterial whether one agrees or not with everything that is written in these brochures. It is enough that they force us to think of the varied implications of this idea which has become a solid fact in our politics today.

So I thought that I should commend this booklet to all who are interested in the constituent assembly. And this thought has led me to pen these lines in the small hours of the morning.

I can understand, though I do not appreciate, the criticisms of those who differ from us fundamentally in politics; those whose ideas of Indian freedom are limited by the will and desire of the British Parliament; those who are afraid of revolutionary change; those who are terrified at the prospect of the masses marching along the stage of Indian politics. But it has surprised me greatly to find some—there are not many—among those who claim to be the most ardent champions of Indian independence, who have also joined this band of critics.

I am convinced that there is no way out for us, if we aim at real democratic freedom, except through a constituent assembly. The alternatives are: (1) continuation, in a greater or less degree, under the control of the British Parliament; (2) some kind of fascist or military dictatorship or dictatorships; (3) Soviet communism in some parts of India with disruption and chaos in other parts; (4) complete disruption and chaos.

For my part I would like to have a socialist economy all over India, and I think that the Soviet form of government, with certain variations and adaptations suited to India, may well fit in here. Thereby I do

2. *Constituent Assembly*, published in 1940.

not mean that the Russian system or methods should be introduced here *in toto*. I disapprove of much that has been done there. I think that the Soviet system can be allied to a vast deal of real democracy. But any attempt to introduce Sovietism in India would, I am sure, now and for some time to come, lead to terrible conflicts and disruption. Whatever the outcome might be, and the outcome would be doubtful, the cost would be almost unbearable.

Therefore, of necessity, I am led to the conclusion that the way of the constituent assembly is the only way. But let it be remembered that this way is not the way of advancing step by step to the haven of Dominion Status. It means the creation of a new state; it means the walking out and away from the economic foundations and structure of imperialism. This cannot be done by the wisest of lawyers sitting together in conclave; it cannot be done by small committees trying to balance interests and calling that constitution-making; it can never be done under the shadow of an external authority. It can only be done effectively when the political and psychological conditions are present, and the urge and the sanctions come from the masses. Hence the vital importance of adult suffrage.

Are these political and psychological conditions present today? No, obviously not, or else we would have got the constituent assembly already. But I cannot say about tomorrow or the day after, for we live in dynamic and swiftly-moving times and all manner of forces are at play.

Why do we ask the British Government for a constituent assembly? Strictly speaking, we are not asking for any gift. We are stating what we propose to have and are going to have sometime or other. We shall have it when we are strong enough for it, no sooner, and probably after a struggle. But, then, are we to refrain from saying what we want and aim at, because for the moment we cannot attain it? Surely that is not even the way of preparation. And then it is never wise to rule out the odd possibility of gaining our objective otherwise, for our strength and world events may force the pace. To envisage this possibility does us no harm, unless it leads us to complacency and a giving up of the idea of struggle.

Why do we ask the British Government to acknowledge the independence of India? Does that make any difference? Of course it does, though it does not mean that we have gained our objective or that the British Government will not go back on their word. The mere fact that they refuse to acknowledge it, itself shows what value they attach to such a declaration. If there was such a clear declaration of Indian independence, of the right of the Indian people to frame their own constitution through a constituent assembly elected by adult franchise and

without any external interference, that in itself would create a psychological situation of revolutionary significance. That in itself will not take us to our goal but it will strengthen us enormously and bring the masses into play.

The question of a constituent assembly is an acid test for all of us. It shows where each one of us stands. Britain refuses because she will not give up her imperialism. The Liberals in India, or the Muslim League, or other protestants, oppose because they do not want real independence and they have no conception of a new state, or, if they can conceive of it, they dislike it. Howsoever much they might dislike things as they are, they prefer them to that new free state where the people can make or unmake. Hence the objection to adult suffrage, and even to large numbers of people being associated with this undertaking. Small committees of the elect are suggested whose chief function will be to move warily within the limits laid down by the British Government and to discuss interminably communal claims and counter-claims.

That is not our idea of Indian freedom or the state that we seek to build.

3. On the Edge of a Supreme Crisis[1]

I welcome the publication of a souvenir volume on the occasion of the Ramgarh session of the Congress. A souvenir inevitably means thinking of what has been. There is a great deal to think about in the past history of the Congress, a great deal to inspire us and a great deal to teach us and warn us. For, after all, the last fifty-four years of the Congress are intimately related to half a century's Indian history. And yet, though there is so much to look back, everyone's mind is thinking of the present, of today with its problems and difficulties, rather than of yesterday.

And we think of today because it is the prelude to tomorrow. What that tomorrow is going to be here in India as well as in the rest of the world no one can foretell. Vast elemental forces, above and below the surface of ordinary human activity, are shaping destiny and individuals appear to be helpless agents of these forces. Yet, individuals count and

1. 15 March 1940. *National Herald*, 16 March 1940.

often count for a great deal in moments of crisis. Ultimately, they count because they put themselves in line with the great forces which are moving humanity. If they do not do so, they become ineffective and the world passes on.

Here in India, it has become a trite saying for us to go on repeating that we stand at a crisis of our destiny. There have been so many crises; we live in an age of crises. Nevertheless, who can doubt that we do stand on the edge of a supreme crisis. That crisis may be and is likely to be a prolonged one.

It is at this stage of war and revolution and crisis that the Ramgarh Congress meets. Those who have, in a measure, the shaping of our future policy have a terrible burden to carry. In this age of power politics, only strength tells in the end and neither the arguments of the lawyer nor loud shouting carry us far, unless behind them lies the strength of an organized nation.

We see glimpses of that mighty strength in India. We see also disruptive forces trying to weaken that strength. Even the conception of Indian unity is challenged and our demand for independence is made subject to all manner of reservations.

We have to hold to our anchor and stand fast by the essentials that have guided us so far—Indian unity, Indian independence, mass organization and the peaceful way of struggle. We are clear enough about Indian independence, but we have to be clearer about the social and economic goal. There is going to be no peace in India or the world unless a new social fabric emerges out of the dissolving structure of modern capitalist imperialism.

Let us keep that in mind and build for that, so that the hundreds of millions of our people may have the gates of opportunity opened to them and the poverty and ignorance and misery that have pursued them for generations past may be driven out from this fair land.

4. The Task Ahead[1]

There has been discussion on the question of a constituent assembly. The resolution before the House is plain enough. Whatever kind of

1. Speech at the Subjects Committee meeting, 17 March 1940. From the *National Herald*, 18 March 1940.

constituent assembly is contemplated it must be clearly understood that it shall be out of the orbit of British imperialism. It may be a very difficult task to achieve. The point to consider is India's claim to decide her own fate, to decide what is good or bad for her without any extraneous interference.

Some critics claim that it is absurd to demand a constituent assembly under the aegis of Britain. They insist that it should come out of the inherent strength of the nation. I agree. But there is nothing wrong in our agitating for a constituent assembly now and pressing our demand for the convening of such a national assembly. Whatever may be our differences in approach to this important question, nothing prevents us from declaring that we want a constituent assembly.

Difficulties there are, undoubtedly, but we must face them. What will happen in a few months time, I cannot say now. I know many people are opposed to the idea of a constituent assembly for their own reasons. For example, the Liberals oppose the idea because they are fundamentally opposed to the very idea of complete independence. There is nothing surprising in this, but it is surprising that those who demand independence for India should oppose our demand for a constituent assembly.

The communal problem has been cited as an impediment in the way of convening a constituent assembly, but I am convinced that the so-called communal problem of India can never be solved so long as the third party, namely the British, remain and continue to offer temptations.

Dominion Status even of the Westminster variety is not a practicable proposition for India. I am not opposed to India having friendly connections with Great Britain, because I am a firm believer that no country can afford to live in isolation in these days of international complications, but such friendly relations can be only on the basis of equality and not on the basis of domination.

Two important factors have to be taken into consideration in this respect. First, the economic structure and second, foreign policy. Dominion Status even of the Westminster variety will keep us under British economic structure and British foreign policy to some extent. India can never agree to enter into such a framework. We must carry on our relations with other countries on the basis of equality and independence. While I admit there are difficulties in the way of our achieving this independence, I am not for a moment prepared to ask for protection of the British sword to overcome such difficulties.

I am convinced that Britain is not fighting to destroy Nazism or to save democracy, but only to further strengthen her own imperialist interests. Therefore, India cannot be a party to such a war. In the circumstances, a conflict in India is inevitable.

Some struggle, therefore, may become necessary. Whatever the nature of that struggle may be, it will be on a mass scale, and it will surpass all past movements in respect of its extent and magnitude. When that struggle will come, I cannot say. That is for others to decide. But I can say that it will mean much more than mere waving of the flags and singing of the national songs. It will mean a much greater national effort, and we will all have to make greater sacrifices and face greater suffering than we have done in the past.

I am surprised that people ask us to immediately start civil disobedience, but I ask them, why are they indulging in tall talk instead of starting direct action if they have the courage to do so!

Unity and discipline are essential before we start any fight on a mass basis. Whoever wants to fight is at liberty to do so. Why don't they do it? But if we are to do it properly, and march forward with confidence and strength, we must organise ourselves and ensure complete discipline and unity in our ranks.

I challenge those who are clamouring to start a fight to say what they have done to ensure complete unity and discipline. I want to know from them if they have thought of the grave implications of the new campaign.

What is wanted today is a country-wide effort to create a national wave of strength and determination to win freedom. This is more urgently necessary today than the launching of a fight. Anyone who obstructs such a national effort should be regarded as an enemy of the cause of the country's fight for freedom.

We should launch the fight only after the country is fully prepared. Otherwise we will have to repent for our rash action and lack of foresight. Civil disobedience may, however, become necessary, because of the action of the British Government. We cannot take things lying down if our hands are forced.

We are no longer going to pass a resolution expressing our anger. The cup of anger is full to the brim. The time has come for us to decide and take some action.

5. On the Patna Resolution[1]

Yesterday's downpour was unfortunate, but it had its good points also. It has shown our preparedness to face difficulties. I compliment you, the delegates, visitors and kisans, on the manner in which you have conducted yourselves during the downpour.

One of the main points of the resolution is that it declares anew that independence is the goal of India. Not that it requires further reiteration, as it has all along been our goal, but because doubts are being expressed in certain quarters about the exact nature of this demand. It is just as well that we reiterated and affirmed this as our goal. Another point in the proposal embodied for the constituent assembly, that is a panchayat of the people of India, is a competent body to frame India's constitution. The third point refers to the minorities. It lays down clearly that the rights of all the minorities will be completely protected and the minorities therefore need have no apprehension that their rights will be jeopardized by the majority. If no agreement can be reached on the question affecting the minorities it is open to them to get the matter settled by arbitration.

The minorities problem can never be solved by the good offices of the British Government and so long as the people look to this quarter for the solution of the problem, it will remain unsolved. It is for us to settle this problem among ourselves. A constituent assembly comprising representatives of the people should be the final arbiter of India's problems. The Swaraj we seek will not be a Hindu raj or a Muslim raj or a Christian raj. It will be Swaraj for the whole country in which it will not be a top few who will wield power, but the masses.

The war is a war between two imperialisms. We do not want the victory of Nazism with its unjust and repressive rule. Neither do we want a further strengthening of British imperialism.

It has become clear now that a struggle is inevitable, but how and when will have to be decided for us by our leaders and Mahatma Gandhi. We should be ready for everything. There should be unity and discipline so that we may create a favourable atmosphere for the struggle.

1. Speech at the Congress session at Ramgarh, 20 March 1940. From *The Hindustan Times*, 21 March 1940.

It is a critical time for the Congress and we hardly know where and when the next Congress will meet. The resolution should set at rest all uncertainties and doubts regarding the future course of action. Misguided enthusiasm of a few people to go head-on for any objective has often caused disruption in fighting forces. Such enthusiasts are counter-revolutionaries and rebels. Our object should be to get the entire army moving and not a few headstrong people who can be described as adventures. They are no better than terrorists. These people are not led by reason but by cheap sentiment. India is renowned for her high level of intellect. I regret that attempts are being made to solve national problems by mere shouting and bluster.

6. To Carl Marzani[1]

March 23, 1940

Dear Carl Marzani,

Your letter of January 30th has just reached me, and I have read it with great interest. I have been following from the newspapers and otherwise the course of events in the U.S.A. and have noticed the developments you write about.

I agree with you that it is very desirable for Indian news and views to be properly represented in America and yet the difficulties at the moment seem to be great. There are not too many people who can do this job well. Possibly I am one of the number. My leaving India in the near future is exceedingly difficult and even unwise from many points of view. I should myself like to go to America for many reasons. But apart from the difficulty of leaving India at present or in the near future, I am not quite sure that such a propaganda tour at this moment will be right for me to undertake. It is difficult, however, to say what the future will bring us. Anyhow, I fully realise the implications of all you say. I expect to meet Rajni Patel[2] on his return to India.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Rajnikant M. Patel (b. 1915); thrice jailed for taking part in the freedom struggle; President, Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee, 1972-77.

7. To Edward C. Carter[1]

Allahabad
April 8, 1940

Dear Carter,

... So far as I know, there has been no deliberate group attempt in India at working out war aims or peace aims.[2] It is not, however, correct to say that our line is to ask Britain to state them. We have in the very first statement we made on behalf of the Congress indicated what the war and peace should aim at. We were naturally interested in India most of all and secondly in other countries subject to various imperialisms. These were referred to in greater detail. We felt that unless certain fundamental propositions were agreed to discussions about details would be fruitless. There has been a good deal of individual writing on the subject in India. Inevitably all this is dominated by the present crisis between India and the British Government which threatens to develop rapidly....

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. He had asked Jawaharlal to help in arranging for a study of India's economic and political relations with the countries of the Pacific for the Institute of Pacific Relations.

8. On the German Invasion of Scandinavia[1]

The German invasion of Scandinavia[2] is a further evidence that aggressive imperialisms observe no rules of decency and behave as beasts of prey. Our sympathies are with the Scandinavian countries.

These developments make no difference to our attitude to British imperialism. If Britain stands for freedom, she must shed her imperialism and acknowledge Indian independence. She cannot have it both ways.

1. Interview to the press, Allahabad, 10 April 1940. *National Herald*, 11 April 1940.
2. German troops invaded Norway and Denmark on 9 April 1940.

9. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
April 12, 1940

My dear Krishna,

I have received your two letters dated the 27th and 29th March...

I have already sent you a goodly collection of my old essays, etc. These have been sent by ocean mail but lists have been sent by air. There may be some others lying about, but I cannot easily trace them and probably they are not worthwhile. I think the title—*The Unity of India and Other Essays*—is good. I had thought of this independently. There are, however, some speeches also. They can hardly be described as essays. Drummond need not send me a copy of my article on the unity of India. I have got my manuscript. *Foreign Affairs* made some slight changes in it but they are not important. I should not like to change this essay but it might be added to at the end. For the rest, you have got all the material to choose from and you can go ahead with it, letting me know what you have selected. I understand that the *Atlantic Monthly* article has appeared but I have not seen it yet.[2]

Do not worry about the report about Bhulabhai's speech.[3] That may have been his own view; it certainly does not represent the Congress viewpoint or Gandhiji's, as explained by him at length.

The news that Jinnah was inviting Gandhiji to discuss the partition of India is entirely unfounded. There has been no such invitation and there is likely to be no such discussion. Maulana Azad's address was

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 273-282.
3. On 10 March 1940, Bhulabhai Desai had stated: "Whether India should be free to choose British alliance after the declaration of independence, or whether she should be free to go out of it, is not necessarily a matter of substance, for, once her independent status is recognized, the basic imperialistic idea of her being a part of an empire in which there is different status for different constituent parts of it disappears, and further, the empire condition and empire spirit, to which objection is taken, and the sense of superiority equally disappear."

entirely a translation and a very literal one at that. But it was done skilfully in good English.[4]

The news about one hundred thousand or eight hundred thousand Afridis mobilising against the Soviet is entirely bunkum. There is no truth in it.

I am not satisfied at all about our news contacts with America. There are plenty of people there, full of goodwill for India. I get large numbers of letters expressing goodwill and wanting to know when my *Autobiography* will be available. That is one reason why I am keen on the *Autobiography* appearing even in a truncated form. About the news, I do not quite see what can be done under present circumstances. If you have any suggestion to make, you can write to me or to Keskar.[5] Or you can develop your own contacts with the States. You realise of course that the difficulties due to war-time conditions and censorship are considerable.

It is clear to me that there is still no clear appreciation among people in England of conditions in India. To talk about Dominion Status after the war and defence and foreign affairs being handed over twenty years later, is to talk not about India but about the moon. Even the Viceroy in India has gone further than this. Opinions and conditions have hardened here and events move forward implacably. The problem is, as you say, insoluble in terms of what the British Government says and what we say. We are as the poles asunder. There is no chance of any bridging of the gulf, but at any rate, it is worthwhile to understand what the position is. Even that British politicians refuse to do. We cannot help their slowness of mind or their refusal to understand the obvious. Generally speaking the tendency in India is to forget what is taking place in England or in the minds of British officials or public men. We think more and more of our job in India and how to prepare for it.

4. The translation of Maulana Azad's Presidential address at the Ramgarh Congress had been done by Jawaharlal himself. Writing about this to Jawaharlal on 27 March 1940, Azad had said: "The impression it has created on me compels me to shake off my usual reserve for the moment, and offer my sincere tribute to your first-rate intellect and your exceptional talents ... what particularly strikes me in your translation is the fact that no feature of the original has suffered through it, and you have conveyed my Urdu literary style so successfully in English that I should not be surprised if it occurs to the reader that the original was English and not Urdu!"
5. B.V. Keskar (b. 1903); general secretary, Indian National Congress, 1946; member, Constituent Assembly, 1948; Minister for Information and Broadcasting, 1952-62; Chairman, National Book Trust, 1962-73.

Jinnah's fantastic proposals[6] are mildly deprecated by the authorities but at the same time they are used as an answer to the Congress.[7] That is the usual technique. Sikandar Hayat is opposed to these new proposals.

It is not Jinnah's opposition which has killed the constituent assembly demand. Nothing is going to kill it. But it cannot be acceded to by the British Government except in the context which the Congress has suggested. That is too big a pill to swallow for the present and so constituent assembly, like other things, remains.

Everything remains here and elsewhere and awaits some kind of a decision on a world scale. I do not suppose that any of our present-day knots will be untied till big developments cut them.

Maulana Azad wanted me very much to become the general secretary of the A.I.C.C. but in spite of his strong desire I have not agreed to it. I need not go into the reasons for this. I have, however, promised to take some interest in the office work and more specially to look after the Foreign, Overseas and the States departments.

Odd arrests are taking place in various parts of India from day to day. Some Forward Bloc young people are courting arrest. Possibly the pace may quicken as events are moving faster in the war and otherwise. But Gandhiji will not be hurried into any big steps. Indeed the steps he has taken already are big enough if we understand them and act up to them. The point is that we must realise that the real decision has been taken and there is no going back on it; all else is in the nature of a corollary.

The spreading of the war to the Scandinavian fronts must accelerate the speed of all events in Britain as well as in India.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

6. On 22 March 1940, at the Lahore session of the Muslim League, Jinnah said: "... Muslims are a nation according to any definition of a nation, and they must have their homelands, their territory and their state...." The next day the League unanimously adopted the famous "Pakistan resolution," which said that "... no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the area in which the Muslims are numerically in the majority... should be grouped to constitute independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."
7. Zetland, in a broadcast on 3 April 1940, said: "... no lasting settlement in India will be possible without real reconciliation between Muslims and Hindus."

RAMGARH 1940

RAMGARH 1940

10. The Demand for Pakistan[1]

All the old problems, associated with the so-called communal question, namely, separate electorates, composite cabinets and communal representations in different services, pale into insignificance before the latest stand taken up by the Muslim League leaders at Lahore. There can be no more Hindu-Muslim problem that the Congress can talk with the League, because the latter's Lahore resolution precludes any such talks. There have been complaints in the press that the Congress leaders had not successfully negotiated with the League. The Lahore resolution has shown clearly the mentality of the League leaders and is an answer to such complaints.

The whole problem has taken a new complexion and there is no question of settlement or negotiation now. The knot that is before us is incapable of being untied by settlement; it needs cutting open. It needs a major operation. Without mincing words, I want to say that we will have nothing to do with this mad scheme. I do not know what the consequences to the country would be. Who can say?

The League is not interested in the Indian nation but in something else, and hence there can be no common meeting ground between the Congress and the League. On the other hand, it has become the clear duty of the Congress to fight out the League and its scheme of denationalising India.

However, I welcome this stand of the League leadership inasmuch as it clears all misunderstanding that might have prevailed in some minds, and shows up the League leadership in its true colours. The latest attitude has simplified the issue without solving it.

Where has the League leadership drifted? There was a time when Sir Mohammad Iqbal, a prominent Muslim League leader, sang of the common motherland with pride. But today the League leadership feels itself to be an alien in this country, and thinks it has no roots in it. Look at the picture presented by the League leadership today, with its contempt for the country and its hymn of hatred. It has at last unmasked itself and left no room for misunderstanding. We will, of course, oppose the partition scheme, but our goal is clear and we will march on our path. A struggle is inevitable now.

1. Speech at Allahabad, 13 April 1940. From the *National Herald*, 14 April 1940, and *The Hindustan Times*, 15 April 1940.

11. True Significance of a Constituent Assembly[1]

A few weeks ago I wrote a foreword to a book on constituent assembly. Another little book dealing with the same topic, but in a different way, has now come before me and at the author's request I am contributing this foreword. This question of a constituent assembly has become one of the most vital questions of our day in India. It represents our demand for independence and full self-determination, and therefore it is desirable that every aspect of it should be fully considered by the public and its significance realised. Every book on the subject, if competently written, is therefore to be welcomed, from whatever viewpoint it may approach the subject. Mr. Krishnamurti's brochure deals not only with the constituent assembly but with many of the problems which may come up before such an assembly. It touches on a variety of subjects briefly and is a useful little book for reference.

It is right that we should have some knowledge of the history of the idea of the constituent assembly and how it has worked in different countries. And yet it is far more important that we should understand the dynamic significance of this idea and to appreciate what this demand really means for us in India. A constituent assembly may be any assembly which draws up a constitution of a country. And yet this is a poor enough definition of it. The real conception of such an assembly is a dynamic one. It does not mean a body of people, or a gathering of able lawyers, who are intent on drawing up a constitution. It means a nation on the move, throwing away the shell of its past political and possibly social structure, and fashioning for itself a new garment of its own making. It means the masses of a country in action through their elected representatives. It has thus a definite revolutionary significance. At any time this would be so, much more so at present when all the world is in the throes of a change and a rebirth. Therefore to consider a constituent assembly divorced from this revolutionary background of masses in action and vital change is to miss entirely its significance.

1. Wardha, 18 April 1940. Foreword to *Constituent Assembly and Indian Federation* by Y.G. Krishnamurti.

It is because of this that the Congress has laid stress on the recognition by the British Government of Indian independence and of the right of a constituent assembly to frame India's constitution without any external interference. It is also because of this that adult suffrage is postulated, for that brings in the masses in its fold. A recognition of all this does not necessarily lead to revolutionary conditions. But it does create a psychological revolution in men's minds and gives freedom of action to that assembly. Obviously such an assembly can only function satisfactorily as a sovereign body for the particular object for which it is elected, and giving place to a sovereign legislature of its own creation.

Ordinarily, such sovereign assemblies come into existence after a successful revolution in a country. But it is certainly a possibility, if not a probability, that the shadow of coming events and world changes might lead to an agreement that such an assembly should be elected and should function as formulated. The demand for such an assembly is ultimately a declaration of what we intend to do whenever we have the power to do so. That power may conceivably come to us by agreement without a conflict, or it may come after a conflict. Like the demand for independence, this is not the request for a gift from a dominating authority, but a declaration of our objective and will, which may be realised in a variety of ways. Whatever these ways might be, they represent ultimately a recognition of the power of the Indian nation. In the case of a successful revolution, there is a clean slate to write upon. In the event of an agreement, howsoever specific that might be, the slate is not so clean and all manner of difficulties might arise. Those difficulties have to be faced. It must be remembered that the acceptance of the premises of a real constituent assembly itself adds to the strength of the nation. The election and constitution of such an assembly adds still further to that strength and makes it difficult for external and internal disruptive forces to come in the way of its work.

The ideal of the Indian National Congress is the creation of an independent democratic state and so far we have thought in terms of some kind of parliamentary democracy. If this is the objective, then the only fully democratic method is the method of the constituent assembly elected by the mass of the people. The alternatives to this are no democracy or the Soviet form of democracy. The absence of democracy means either a continuation of foreign rule or individual or group dictatorship. Those who criticise the proposal for a constituent assembly should be clear in their own minds as to which of these alternatives they prefer. It is not good enough to adopt an attitude of mere negation. So far there has only been this negation from some of the critics. It is legitimate for us to know whether the opponents to this proposal

do not like democracy, or they do not like independence for India and a break-away from British imperialism. I take it that few of them will agree to go a step further and advocate the Soviet form of government.

Behind our many problems, and ultimately behind the demand for independence itself, lie vast social and economic problems which insistently demand solution. Any constitution that fails to solve them will have a short life. Similar problems in other parts of the world have brought about the present war in Europe where rival imperialisms fight for mastery. Even if one of these imperialisms triumphs in the end, it will have to face these very problems in an accentuated form. It is well recognised today that if peace and freedom are to exist in the world, the imperialist structure must vanish and a new world order must be established. Such a world order will have to be largely based on socialistic principles.

For us in India also this aspect of the problem is important and cannot be ignored. We seek political freedom, but this freedom must lead rapidly to vital social and economic changes which will facilitate a solution of our many problems. The content of political freedom is therefore important. It may be arguable that these basic economic problems cannot ultimately be solved within the structure of a parliamentary state on the old model. And yet it need not necessarily be so. But it is quite clear that there is no chance of a solution if the content of political freedom is such that power rests in the hands of small groups at the top. The giving of the vote for the constituent assembly to the adult masses does not give them real power. But it does mean something and they can influence events and developments. To limit this franchise can only indicate a deliberate desire to keep out the masses and to avoid any vital economic change.

From the point of view of minority interests, a constituent assembly procedure is far the best. The Congress has laid down definite provisions further to safeguard these interests, for instance, declaration of fundamental rights, election by separate electorates where desired, decision of special minority problems, where this is not possible, by arbitration. It passes the wit of man to devise any further safeguards for a minority in India. But if any new suggestion is made which can be incorporated without offending the basic concept of Indian freedom, unity and democracy, that can also be considered.

Despite all this, if the idea of a constituent assembly is opposed, one must regretfully come to the conclusion that the idea of Indian freedom itself is opposed.

Recently proposals have been put forward for a partition of India. It is doubtful if these proposals are seriously meant, for they are fantastic

in the extreme and they exhibit a strange ignorance of Indian history and of India's culture, as well as of present conditions in India and the world. All over the world today there is a demand for a removal of national barriers and for a closer union among nations. In India, however, to our misfortune, there are some elements who still think in medieval terms and on whom the lessons of history and even the tragedies of the present day have been completely lost.

I do not wholly agree with everything that Mr. Krishnamurti says, but I need not discuss these matters here. At one place, however, he refers to 300 language groups in India. I do not know where he has got this extraordinary figure from. There are only a dozen main languages in India.

12. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

19.4.1940

Your cable. No marked change in the situation. Congress committees under Gandhiji's directions are converting themselves into satyagraha committees,[2] enrolling pledged satyagrahis and making other preparations. No precipitate action is likely. Individual arrests and the application of section 144 continues. Repression in the states is worsening.

Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On 25 March 1940, Mahatma Gandhi had instructed that every Congress committee should convert itself into a satyagraha committee and enrol volunteers and carry out the Congress constructive programme.

13. No Change in Congress Attitude[1]

There is nothing new in Lord Zetland's statement.[2] Our position has

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 19 April 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 20 April, 1940.
2. Zetland had said on 18 April 1940: "I shall labour for reconciliation between these two great communities, the Muslims and the Hindus....the Congress Party have aroused in the minds of many Muslims apprehensions which only they can allay."

been laid down by the Congress, and to that we are going to adhere. We are interested in work in India and in preparation for what is to come here, and not in what is said in the British Parliament or elsewhere.

14. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Bombay
April 27, 1940

My dear Krishna,
I enclose a copy of a letter I have sent to Richard Walsh of the John Day Company.[2]

I have read in today's papers the report of some of the speeches delivered in the House of Commons in the course of the India debate, last week. Most of them were after the usual pattern. But I must confess to a feeling of amazement at what Ellen Wilkinson said.[3] I do not expect her to agree with our viewpoint, but what she has said is not a matter of agreement or disagreement. It is a fundamentally different approach, an approach which I could not have conceived from any person really acquainted with Indian conditions or looking at them from the viewpoint of a Socialist or even an advanced Liberal. It is indeed a completely imperialistic approach to the problem. If Ellen thinks in this way, I can well imagine what must all your other so-called Leftists and advanced politicians think. It shows the enormous gap between India and England. I had not realised, when I was in England last, that this gap, which was obviously present, was quite so wide and unbridgeable as I

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *post*, section 9, item 11.
3. On 18 April 1940, Ellen Wilkinson had said : "We here tend to think of the civil disobedience movement of the 1929-32 period as a purely political movement.... It was much more an economic than a political movement.... the real strength behind it was derived from the fact that the world depression had reached India.... and had hit India hard.... I recall the number of occasions on which older men in the movement....explained that really the English were being too awful for words but even this treatment was better than anything they would be likely to get from any other quarter."

now feel it is. Of course the war makes a difference and confuses people's minds. But what a difference!

The other day here I had a long talk with Sir Malcolm Darling,[4] the Punjab civilian who has written about agricultural matters. He is retiring and going to take charge of some big job in the B.B.C. Of course, there is little in common between my approach and Darling's approach to the Indian problem. He is an old type civilian, with certain leanings towards the peasant and interested in the agrarian conditions in India, but still thinking in terms of India as it has been. Yet even a man like him was more conscious of the crisis in India than Ellen or your Labour leaders in England seem to be.

Darling and Lionel Fielden are apparently going to start Hindustani broadcasts from the B.B.C. Possibly even in English there might be more broadcasting relating to India. Inevitably this will be from the British viewpoint.

I enclose a kind of general introductory letter which might be of use to you if you go to America.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

Allahabad
April 27, 1940

I am glad to learn that Mr. V.K. Krishna Menon is going to pay a visit to the United States of America. Mr. Krishna Menon, for many years past, has served the cause of India with great ability and perseverance in England through the India League of which he has been the Honorary Secretary. He has been particularly helpful to us in developing our international contacts. He has represented the Indian National Congress on the Executive of the International Peace Campaign since 1937.

It is a matter of satisfaction to me that he is visiting America. Though he is going there in his personal capacity, he will carry with him our goodwill and will convey our greetings to the American people. It has not been our practice to send representatives to foreign countries as we have realised that the burden of our struggle for freedom must be carried by ourselves and that the real work has to be done by us in India. We have, however, thought of the freedom of India progressively in terms of world freedom. We have realised that in the modern texture of the

4. (1880-1969); member, Indian Civil Service, 1904-40; Chairman, Punjab Land Revenue Committee, 1938; Indian editor at the B.B.C., 1940-44; consultant to Indian Planning Commission, 1957; his works include *Wisdom and Waste in the Punjab Village* and *At Freedom's Door*.

world, freedom is indivisible, and no real solution of the world's problems can be undertaken in isolated bits. So, while we have struggled for Indian freedom, we have tried to develop international contacts and to have friendly relations with the peoples of other countries. India, perhaps more than any country in the world, stands for peace. Even in our own struggle for freedom, we have deliberately avoided all methods of violence. But the peace that we seek and that can endure in the world, must be based on freedom for all nations and peoples. That peace and freedom cannot now be the isolated freedom of each group but the cooperative freedom based on a world order. That is our objective. We have emphasised this in the various aggressions that have taken place in the past, in Abyssinia, in Spain and in China as well as in Europe. In the war that is raging in Europe, it was our attempt to get the British Government to define their policy precisely in terms of this freedom, but our attempts have met with failure.

Of all countries in the world, the United States of America has a vital part to play in the terrible crisis that envelops all of us. It is in the power of the American people, to a large extent, to shape events so that they might ensure the establishment of this free order everywhere and in ending all imperialistic aggressions and continuing wars and conflicts. We in India value American opinion and the idealism and democracy that underlie it.

I trust that our countrymen in America, as well as American friends and sympathisers with our cause, will help Mr. V.K. Krishna Menon during his visit to the United States, and that this visit of his will lead to a closer understanding between the two countries.

Jawaharlal Nehru

15. To Morris Henry Frank[1]

April 29, 1940

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter of April 6th.[2] I realise fully the evil that is afoot in the world today. I doubt if there are any people in the world

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Frank, an American lawyer, after reading Jawaharlal's article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, wrote to say that as the Allies were engaged in a death struggle with the worst form of evil forces, Jawaharlal should cease to arouse anti-British feeling and devote his time to educating American people in understanding the problems of India.

who are more averse to violence and aggression than the Indian people. Throughout these past years, we have protested vigorously against such forms of aggression wherever they have taken place. You are aware, no doubt, that these aggressions, whether in Manchuria or Spain, Abyssinia or Czechoslovakia, were either actively encouraged or passively acquiesced to by the British Government of the day.

You refer to a certain incident which occurred in April 1917 in New York City.[3] Surely you do not come to vital decisions because of odd incidents that impress you, or because any individual might misbehave or be wrong. And yet the moral of the flag incident that you mention points another way. A quarter of a century ago, we heard a great deal about the evil against which civilization was contending. We heard of democracy and freedom and self-determination. The history of the past twenty years belies everything that was said then. It would be a tragedy if this experience is repeated. We invited, therefore, the British Government to declare that it was fighting for the right cause. They have not chosen to do so and, instead, have continued their imperialist policy in various parts of the world. Who prevents them from changing this policy? Not surely the evil against which they are fighting.

Perhaps your acquaintance with conditions in India in the past and the present is limited. Unfortunately for us, we have lived in these conditions and we cannot escape them. It does not seem unreasonable to me that India should demand the application to India of the principles for which the Western Allies are supposed to be fighting.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. He had referred to an incident when he and a friend stopped a flag-bearing Indian from abusing Britain.

16. Dangers of Adventurism[1]

During the last two years or so we have passed through a very difficult phase which has brought many problems which have often embarrassed

1. Message to Bihar Students' Convention, *The Free Press Journal*, 6 May 1940.

us. This is not peculiar to India but is the common lot of almost all countries today. A deepening crisis brings new problems and exposes many underlying conflicts. There is no reason why we should be dejected by these developments. We must realise that the very difficulties that face us are, in a sense, a measure of our advance. Nevertheless the difficulties are there and they have to be faced squarely and without any attempt to cover them up. We have to understand them objectively and ideologically and consider them in the context of India today. It is helpful to us to study what has happened in other countries for essentially the problems are similar. But there can be no greater error than to look at our own problems cut off from the actual conditions in this country. If we do so, we function in the air and are ineffective.

The whole history of Europe during the past few years shows how reaction has grown in spite of powerfully organised Leftist and advanced movements. In many countries these movements have been completely crushed. We have also seen a strong country like Czechoslovakia becoming a subject nation without even fighting and a country like Poland, with a big army and brave fighters, succumbing to conquest within a few days. All this has a lesson for us. We may not for the sake of adventurist Leftism produce reaction which injures that very Leftism. We may not lose sight of our means or adopt any means in the hope of attaining our objective. Means by themselves may be nothing. But they vary and govern ends and the objective itself changes in accordance with those means.

We have built up a powerful sentiment of unity in India, but let us remember that there have been and are strong disruptive forces in the country. Today they are talking in fantastic terms. It becomes our duty therefore not to do anything that encourages disruption within the Congress or in the larger domain of the country. In particular we must hold together in a disciplined way in the Congress for it is the Congress only which promises the unity of India and the freedom of India. Adventurist action will injure the Congress and the cause we have at heart.

To students particularly I should like to say a few words. It is inevitable that the burden of India will have to be shouldered by them in the near future. Ours is a passing generation. Let them be ready and be prepared for this burden for it is a heavy one and the world crisis demands the best that is in us. Cruel and naked facts confront us in all their brutality. We cannot chase them away by brave words and slogans, good as such slogans are to cheer us and enthuse us. Each one of us will be tested to the uttermost and it will be ill for us if we are found wanting at the time of trial. I have found during the

last year or two a great deal of enthusiasm among students but also an amazing indiscipline and lack of responsibility. They will do little that is worth while and effective.

It is easy to criticise others. It is much more difficult to shoulder the burden of some action oneself. Let us hold together, disciplined and prepared for whatsoever may befall us. The finger of destiny beckons to us in these days of crisis and revolutionary change. We shall have to answer that call but we shall do so effectively only if we grow in stature and see the real vision of freedom, forget our petty squabbles and disputes and hatreds and animosities, and march together towards the common goal.

17. The Fundamental Issues at Stake[1]

The new developments in the European war, involving the invasions of Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg, mean that the war has now entered a new and Napoleonic phase.[2] They are surprising only because we have got accustomed to the static phase during the last eight months. When the war started one almost expected some such thing to happen. It is clear that this extension of the war is going to have far-reaching and frightful consequences, and all of us must regret it deeply. There is no escape for the world now from an all-embracing war.

While a measure of admiration goes out to the efficiency and thoroughness of the military machinery of Germany, it is obvious that the menace of Nazi domination of Europe and to some extent other parts of the world is a real one. On the other hand, it is equally obvious that the British Government is continually falling between two stools, and it will continue to do so till it makes up its mind on fundamental matters affecting it, the British Empire and the world. On the one hand, it talks vaguely in terms of standing up for democracy in Europe and freedom of small nations and on the other hand it sticks like a leech to its empire, and is not prepared to divest itself of it. The result will surely be that events will divest it of that empire, and what might have been done with grace and advantage to itself and the goodwill of large numbers of human beings will be brought about by

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 10 May 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 11 May 1940.
2. On 10 May 1940, Germany invaded Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg.

external forces which are too strong for it, because Britain cannot make up her mind. The clinging on to the empire and fight against fascism cannot go together with any effectiveness.

It has been an astonishing thing that the leader of this struggle in England could have been for all these months a person who must bear a great deal of the responsibility for the growth of the fascist menace. That in itself inevitably had to lead to England's incompetence in dealing with the situation. That leader may possibly be changed under the new stress of circumstances, but if the ideals he stood for remain and if Britain still thinks in terms of the empire, she will fail in her endeavour and fail grievously.

All of us, whether in England or in India, have to make this final choice. There is no room for halfway houses anywhere. While India is completely opposed to the idea of the triumph of Nazism, it is no good asking her to come to the rescue of a tottering imperialism which still presumes to speak of her with arrogance and in terms of domination. That language could have only one answer from India, and that answer has been given. Whatever happens, we shall cooperate with no person or country if we are ordered to do so, or if we are treated in any manner other than that as a free country.

The pace of events is so fast and the forces that have been unleashed are so great that individuals matter little now, and perhaps it is not possible to stop this avalanche till it has gone its way.

It is no good getting excited and losing our head and balance because events happen which we do not like. We shall face everything whatever befalls us, and let us be prepared for it.

18. On the New Secretary of State[1]

In February 1933 a debate was held in the British Parliament on Japan's invasion of Manchuria. In the course of this debate many leading British statesmen, including cabinet ministers, supported Japan. Sir John Simon (now Lord Simon and still a prominent member of the British Cabinet) supported Japan's case, as he had done in the League of

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

Nations at Geneva. One of the most interesting and significant speeches delivered was that of Mr. L.S. Amery[2] in the House of Commons on February 27, 1933. He said:

> I confess that I see no reason whatever why, either in act, or in word, or in sympathy, we should go individually, or internationally, against Japan in this matter. Japan has got a very powerful case based upon fundamental realities.... When you look at the fact that Japan needs markets and that it is imperative for her, in the world in which she lives, that there should be some sort of peace and order, then who is there among us to cast the first stone and to say that Japan ought not to have acted with the object of creating peace and order in Manchuria and defending herself against the continual aggression of vigorous Chinese nationalism? Our whole policy in India, our whole policy in Egypt, stand condemned, if we condemn Japan.

Mr. L.S. Amery is today a prominent member of the British Cabinet and is Secretary of State for India[3] and as such is responsible for British policy towards India.

2. (1873-1955); Conservative politician; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1922-24; Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1924-29 and for India and Burma, 1940-45.
3. He replaced Zetland on 10 May 1940.

19. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Wardha
16-5-40

My dear Rajendra Babu,
I came here today to see Bapu. Ever since the last meeting of the Working Committee, I have been in Bombay engaged in the Planning Committee meetings. These ended, or rather were adjourned, on the 14th and I have come here for a day to meet Bapu. I am going tomorrow to Lucknow for our P.C.C. meeting and from there to Allahabad. I intend going to the Frontier Province later. I understand from Maulana Azad that he intends having the next meeting of the Working Committee on the 15th June.

Bapu showed me your letter to him together with a copy of your letter to Maulana dated 14th May. I had seen previously your brief statement in the press.[2] Curiously enough that very day a statement from me appeared also.[3] I had no particular intention of saying anything then but I was surrounded by insistent pressmen and I capitulated and dictated a statement. I do not know if you saw this in full. I am enclosing a copy.

The new developments in the war situation are surprising and disconcerting in some ways, and yet they did not surprise me overmuch. Ever since the war began, and even earlier, I had given much thought to this matter and all these possibilities were before me. I have been convinced for a long time that the disruption of the British Empire must take place soon, and it is with this background that I have considered our problems. Hence all the talk of Dominion Status and the like seemed singularly unreal to me.

For some months past I have had a personal reason to try to anticipate events in Europe. My daughter is in Switzerland and I was concerned about her future programme. Long before the invasion of Holland, Belgium etc., I wrote to her and to her doctors putting these possibilities as well as others to them. After full consideration we decided that she should remain where she was, even if Switzerland became involved in the war.

I mention all this simply to indicate that the new development did not shock me or upset me. I was prepared for them. My mind had reasoned out the consequences and it was clear to me what our attitude should be. Subsequent events have justified abundantly the line we took up at the beginning of the war. That line must be continued without the least change. That line was dictated not by the war situation but by what transpired between us and the British Government. Therefore the war in Europe made no essential or direct difference. Indirectly it might affect the attitude of the British Government but that was their concern, not ours. Our attitude and line of action must inevitably remain unchanged so long as no effective change took place on the other side.

2. On 10 May 1940, Rajendra Prasad had stated: "We have undoubtedly our grievances against England and we know she has not behaved fairly and squarely towards India. At the same time we realise that England is any day better than the totalitarian states and I cannot but wish that England and France should win the war."
3. See *ante*, item 17.

What has surprised me more than the invasion of Holland etc., has been the quite singular obtuseness of the British. Not even the Nasmyth hammer of war and disaster has made any dent on their imperialist outlook or their attitude to India. The last debate in the British Parliament demonstrated that even the Labour members shared this outlook completely.[4] I do not see how we can have any dealings with people who continue to think and treat us in this way.

To say that Nazism is worse than the present form of British imperialism is true in some respects, though I doubt if there is fundamentally much difference. But to say that because Nazism is worse therefore we must prefer the domination of the British is surely dangerous doctrine. It means that we are helpless people who must have a master and the little choice we have is to choose masters. To say this is to put an end to all our pretensions and to admit the fundamental basis of British rule. I think we can never do this, whatever the consequences. We stand for independence and we shall resist any and every foreign authority which seeks to dominate over us. If we fail, it is better that we perish than willingly put on a yoke which we think might be a lighter one than another.

But I do not think there is the slightest chance of a German or Japanese invasion of India. Hitler may win this war. This grows more likely. But Hitler will not dominate the world. He will fall as Napoleon fell. The real possibility of trouble in India is not from external invasion but from internal adventurism and conflict. That possibility has to be faced and we cannot seek the help of British imperialism to overcome it. Indeed British imperialism will hardly be in a position to help effectively. The only thing we can do is to add to our strength, in so far as we can do so, and to keep a nucleus going round which various elements can gather in time of need. The only possible nucleus is the Congress, and apparently the most effective way of gaining strength is to continue to prepare for satyagraha. That satyagraha is not immediately indicated even if we were ready for it. I think it would be wrong at this particular moment when Britain is in peril for us to take advantage of her distress and rush at her throat. That would be wrong from the larger as well as the satyagrahi point of view; it would also be wrong tactics. But we want the discipline and training of satyagraha to meet other perils also.

4. During the debate on India on 17 and 18 April 1940, Labour leaders like Lord Snell, Wedgwood Benn, Graham White and Ellen Wilkinson supported the official policy and blamed the Congress for the political deadlock.

Any other course is full of dangers for us, apart from the great injury to our self-respect and dignity. Indeed such other course is likely to lead to that very internal commotion which we wish to avoid or provide against. The Congress would then lose the moral prestige it possesses and cease to be the nucleus round which the nation might gather. That other course might even facilitate external attack. In any event, whatever we may do will not make much difference from the military point of view. Modern warfare demands very special mechanised training and we cannot produce this, in large enough numbers, within a short time.

I am convinced that the British Empire has had its day. It will go to pieces and not all the king's horses and all the king's men will be able to put it together again. We surely are not going to indulge in the vain attempt to join together these pieces. If the British people are still imperialistic enough and proud enough to think of holding on to that empire, they deserve failure and no one can save them.

In any event I am quite clear that we cannot change our line of action in the least. Indeed we must resist the slightest variation of it and hold firmly to the recognition of Indian independence and the full and unfettered right of our people to frame our constitution through a constituent assembly. Every suggestion that a small body of men should do this must be rejected. Nor am I prepared to take any promises for the future. I do not understand why vital chanpes in India should wait till the war is over. The preparation for giving effect to them may take a little time but that has nothing to do with the ending of the war.

I would further add that even if all this is agreed to, it does not follow that we throw our manpower into the war. That will depend upon us, and our decision will no doubt be governed by the conditions then prevailing.

I do not myself like a negative attitude. I wish ours was more positive. Yet just at present I think a negative attitude has certain advantages—the positive side of course is preparation for satyagraha. I am glad that the Working Committee is not meeting for another four weeks. This period will help us to understand the situation better.

One other matter I might draw your attention to: so far as our newspapers are concerned, we get very one-sided and partial news. The radio helps in giving other viewpoints.

I do not know if I have succeeded in explaining my viewpoint. I am writing rather late at night and I have been feeling a little sleepy.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Maulana and giving another copy to Bapu.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

20. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Wardha
16.5.1940

My dear Krishna,
I wonder if you saw a statement I made to the press a few days ago. I enclose a copy. I suppose other statements made by Rajendra Babu and others have been given publicity.[2] I just want to tell you that none of these represent the Congress viewpoint or Gandhiji's viewpoint. Gandhiji agrees with the line I have taken up. So do not be misled. Our policy has not changed and will not change. In any event this would have been so. But the recent speeches made by Labour members in Parliament have put the lid on. They can have the satisfaction of having defended the empire so successfully that we are prepared to consider them as differing in no way from the others.

Stafford Cripps, I understand, is back in London and is interviewing all manner of people—Chamberlain, Halifax, etc. Chamberlain is gone[3] but others like him carry on. I suppose some bright statement will be made one of these days. I fear Stafford has completely failed to understand the elements of the Indian problem.

As you must know Indira has decided to stay on in Leysin. Perhaps it is as well that she does so.

I am on my way back to Lucknow and Allahabad for our P.C.C. meeting. After that I go to Lahore and Peshawar and possibly to Kashmir for four or five days.

We are not having a Working Committee meeting till the 15th June. Nothing has happened to warrant us to expedite this meeting.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On 11 May 1940, S. Satyamurti had said: "I think the future of the world and of India depends on the decisive defeat of the totalitarian states and the triumph of democracies. India must range herself fully on this side." See also previous item.
3. On 10 May 1940, Winston Churchill replaced Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister.

21. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Wardha
16.5.1940

My dear Maulana,
Thank you for your telegram agreeing to the 15th June for the Working Committee meeting. This date enables me to go to the Frontier Province and the Punjab. I have to be back in Bombay on June 21st.

Of course the Working Committee meeting should not be postponed just to suit individual convenience. If the situation demands it, it should be held regardless of other factors. I feel however, and Mahatmaji agrees, that it is better for us to wait some time so that we might know how the present situation develops. Events are marching ahead rapidly and even a month may make a great deal of difference. Therefore, from this point of view also, it is desirable not to have an early meeting of the Working Committee.

I came here today and had a talk with Mahatmaji. I was very glad to find that his reaction to international developments was more or less the same as mine. I wonder if you saw a statement I made to the press five or six days ago. I enclose a copy. I was sorry to read Rajendra Babu's press interview on that day. And now I learn from the radio that Asaf Ali has issued some kind of appeal[2] for political parties to come together and join in helping Britain and in organising our defence. I think it was very improper of Asaf Ali, as a member of the W.C., to issue such a statement. It must lead people to think that the W.C. is prepared to adopt this line and, so far as I know, this is certainly not going to be done.

Rajendra Babu has written a letter to Gandhiji and sent him a copy of his letter to you dated 14th May. At Gandhiji's suggestion I am sending a reply to him, a copy of which I enclose. This will give you some idea of how my mind is working. I hope that the U.P.P.C.C. which meets on the 18th will pass a resolution on these lines.

I am quite clear in my mind that our policy must remain unchanged and we must go ahead, as before, with our organisational and other preparations. Our enrolment and training of satyagrahis must go on. I do not think that satyagraha should be started soon, even if we are ready for it. But the possibility of a loosening of central authority

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Asaf Ali, in a statement on 15 May 1940, had said that the time had come when, given an honourable understanding with Britain, a national coalition government responsible to the people could be immediately formed in India.

demands that we should be ready to meet any situation that might arise.

To talk about our joining hands in the defence of India is ridiculous. Defence against whom? and to help the British Empire? I think this will be wrong and degrading, apart from the fact that we are not in a position to do anything effective on these lines. Even the defence of India can only be undertaken by us on the lines of developing the satyagraha organisations. I do not myself see any real danger of foreign invasion. I do see a danger of internal trouble. For that also we have no other remedy except on disciplined satyagrahi lines.

I am quite clear that we must not budge an inch from the position we have taken up, and, what is more, we must not be caught in any trap laid out by the new British Government or the Viceroy. I think they are bound to take some step—invite Gandhiji and others, or make some other vague statement. Our answer to all this must be clear. We are not going to cooperate in the preservation of empire. The independence of India must be recognised—not Dominion Status and the like—and the people of India must frame their constitution through a constituent assembly. No small group of men for this purpose will be accepted. It is only on this basis that we can talk. If this basis is not present, then there is no good talking.

The British Empire is doomed. It is almost a thing of yesterday already. And yet, such is human folly and arrogance, that the British Government in India continues to behave in an imperialist manner. There is not the slightest change. The members of the British Parliament still patronise us and advise us and behave generally in a manner which I find to be intolerable. If even catastrophic events cannot open their eyes to realities, I do not see why we should join the company of the blind.

To say that because Nazism is worse than British imperialism, therefore we prefer to be ruled by the British, is to me the height of degradation. If we are so helpless that we cannot look after ourselves, then the sooner we perish the better. We are not going to change masters. We shall fight against all domination.

Gandhiji has shown me your letter about Dr. Gopi Chand[3] and the appointment of Sardar Sampooran Singh[4] as leader of the Punjab Assembly Party. I entirely agree with you that this was improper but I am

3. He resigned his seat on 30 April 1940 to devote himself to the constructive programme of the Congress.
4. (1889-1951); leader of the opposition, Punjab Legislative Assembly, 1940-45; member, Central Legislative Assembly, 1945-47; Deputy High Commissioner for India in Pakistan, 1947-50.

not clear as to what should be done now. I am going to Lahore for two days soon to attend the satyagraha camp. Iftikhar has invited me. If you have any directions to give me, please send them soon.

I enclose a copy of my reply to a correspondent of Gandhiji's.[5] This also deals with the Akalis and the Congress.

My provisional programme is as follows, but the exact dates have not been fixed yet:

In Lucknow for P.C.C. meetings	May 18, 19, 20
In Allahabad	May 21, 22, 23
In Lahore	May 24, 25
In Peshawar	May 26 to 30th
Srinagar, Kashmir	May 31st for a week.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. See *post*, section 2, item 30.

22. U.P.P.C.C. Resolution on the War[1]

The U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, meeting at a time when vast armed forces clash and struggle for mastery in Europe and the fate of empires hangs in the balance, has given its most earnest consideration to the problem as it affects India. Events are taking place, with ever-increasing speed, which affect the entire political and economic structure of the world, and will change it vitally. It is clear that the empires of today disintegrate and will cease to be; small independent countries, howsoever advanced they might be, are helpless and can have no future as independent units unless they are parts of a larger federation. The menace of a new and vast fascist empire looms over Europe, and yet even the possibility of military triumph can give it no stable foundation. The forces which the war has unleashed will find no resting place except in an equilibrium based on political and economic freedom for nations, a new social order, and a world federation of nations.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. This resolution as drafted by Jawaharlal was passed at the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee meeting at Lucknow on 19 May 1940.

The Committee has noted with anxious concern the invasion of small and free nations by Nazi Germany, and sends its deep sympathy to the peoples of Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg, who have become the innocent victims in the struggle between rival empires.

The Committee notes also that, in spite of the peril that encompasses it, the British Government still thinks and acts in terms of empire and imperialism, and in India we continue to see the force of British imperialism, and to hear its voice. Instead of recognising Indian independence and fashioning itself so as to give the earliest effect to it, British authority denies and refuses this demand and birthright of the Indian people, and speaks in terms of empire and patronising domination. In India the people's representatives have no authority or place and autocracy holds sway. Large numbers of Congressmen and others have been condemned to prison, public activities interfered with and civil liberties taken away. The picture of India is still the picture of British imperialism in action.

The Committee can never tolerate or agree with this picture, whatever may happen in the battlefields of Europe. India's policy towards Britain is determined by Britain's attitude towards India, and not by other and external considerations. If Indian independence is not recognised and given effect to, if British imperialism still flourishes in India, intent on preserving its vested interests and supporting feudalism and encouraging disruption, then India must continue to refuse all cooperation and to resist imposed decisions.

The Committee is convinced that the decision of the Ramgarh Congress that satyagraha is inevitable and should be prepared for, must be acted upon in its entirety and nothing has happened which should be allowed to vary it. The new turn in world events makes it all the more imperative that India's independence should be secured and that the Indian people should determine the form to be given to this. The Committee deprecates all attempts to confuse this fundamental issue by raising other questions of cooperation with Britain in defence. India will defend herself when she is free against all who seek to deprive her of this freedom; she cannot defend an empire which holds her in its grip and comes in the way of her freedom.

In the supreme crisis that confronts the world, all other questions become secondary and unimportant, and it becomes essential for the Indian people to hold together, to sink their differences, and to face the perils and demands of the future as a united and determined people. Empires fade away, and it is inevitable that the people of India will have to decide for themselves what that future is going to be for them. Our

internal conflicts and disputes have no place today, when the age that we have known passes and gives place to an unknown future, when only nations and peoples, who are strong and disciplined, and capable of looking after themselves, will have an honoured place. The Committee calls upon the people of the province to prepare themselves for this future and to face whatever may happen with fortitude, discipline and confidence in themselves. The Committee earnestly invites the cooperation of all, whether in the Congress or outside, so that all groups and individuals may work together for the larger good of the country and for India's freedom and unity. If India falls a prey to disunity and disruption, all suffer equally and the realisation of our freedom is delayed. At this moment of crisis and ordeal, we must all rise superior to the minor issues and conflicts which have no place when the fundamentals of our existence are in question. There must be no argument for petty advantage, no excitement that weakens, no doubting that confuses.

Whatever the future may hold for India, it is clear that real strength comes to the country by the organisation of disciplined and peaceful satyagrahis, pledged to united action and sacrifice for India's freedom. These satyagrahis are not opposed to any other group working for the same cause and will cooperate wholeheartedly with all who desire India's independence.

The Committee welcomes the transformation of Congress Committees in the province into satyagraha committees and the enrolment of satyagrahis. While fully appreciating the response that has already been made to this appeal for satyagraha volunteers, the Committee desires to emphasize that this work must be continued with full vigour and that every Committee and satyagrahi must carry out the duties laid down. Real strength comes not from mere numbers but from disciplined and coordinated activity.

The Committee further desires to lay stress on the enrolment and training of volunteers in villages and towns alike. In the days of stress and trial ahead of us, many tasks of local defence and self-protection may fall on the residents of urban and rural areas and Congressmen, in cooperation with others, should prepare themselves for them.

All the members of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, assembled at this meeting, pledge themselves anew to the cause of India's independence and unity, to work for this great end to the utmost of their capacity, to maintain the peaceful discipline of the Congress, and to carry out the decisions of our great organisation.

23. On the New Phase of the War Crisis[1]

I did not intend to take part in the P.C.C. discussions but as the President had asked me I am doing so. I have however been feeling of late that I do not fit in with the present atmosphere and feel a little lonely. It may be that I am getting old and therefore cannot appreciate all that is said or the manner of saying it.

New times are coming and the old order is being destroyed. However I regret that even good things of the old order might be destroyed with the bad. This rather saddens me.

While I welcome the ending of old empires which have existed for long and look forward to the liquidation of British imperialism, I will be sorry if the great culture of France with its magnificent heritage also suffers in the cause of human freedom. I will also be sorry if English culture and civilisation goes down. I want to separate them from the imperialism which has corrupted them and ultimately weakened them.

I regret the light tone adopted by some members who spoke on the resolution. They have indulged in catch phrases and high sounding words. All that does not appeal to me. They have attacked our leaders and have tried to show that they are keeping back the country. They have alleged that Mahatma Gandhi does not want to start a struggle. They cannot have it both ways. They have to choose their path and their leader and stick to him till such times as they want to change their leader which they should do deliberately then.

In regard to our objective and the method of attaining it there is no difference of opinion though in some cases there is a difference in approach. It might be that another approach is a better one, let us decide definitely and stick to our decision. It is no good deciding on something and then criticising it all the time.

There is a lot of talk of struggle. Struggle is indeed surrounding us all over the world. In India we live in the midst of a struggle against British imperialism. That struggle will inevitably grow and develop into satyagraha. There can never be an end to our struggle till India is independent. But a struggle or any kind of fight requires leadership and generalship as Macaulay had once said. Bad generals have sometimes won victories but nobody has ever known a debating society to win a battle. Let us, therefore, if we are serious, develop a mentality of

1. Speech supporting the U.P.P.C.C. resolution, 19 May 1940. From the *National Herald*, 20 May 1940.

struggle and discipline and not imagine that we can have the struggle in the manner of a debate.

By saying that Mahatma Gandhi will not start a struggle you are actually hampering the starting of satyagraha. For we cannot go on criticising our leader and saying all the time that he does not mean business and yet expect that he would launch a struggle immediately.

The Congress which has long been a fighting organisation has become more often an electioneering organisation. Far more interest is taken in elections inside and outside the Congress leaving more vital matters; this is not the way of a struggle. We will have to convert the Congress again into a fighting organisation. This is the object of having satyagraha committees.

I am personally opposed to the starting of satyagraha at this particular moment even if we consider ourselves quite ready for it. It seems to me improper to strike at a person when he is surrounded by peril and difficulty. That is not the way of satyagraha. Nor is it good tactics. We have to think in terms of the world and of the ultimate object but the time may not be far distant when we would have to start the struggle. Let us get ready for it. Events are marching fast and they will dictate our policy far more than individuals. I consider the work I have been doing in the National Planning Committee important as it helps us to form a real picture of our objectives in India. Without a clear picture in our mind of what India is going to be when independent, we will waste our time and energy when the opportunity comes.

24. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
May 21, 1940

My dear Krishna,

I have received a long letter from you enclosing a cutting of some interview of Gandhiji's which appeared in the *News Chronicle*. Events move so fast that to answer old letters is hardly worthwhile. I should like to warn you, however, not to attach too much importance to odd sentences and phrases cut off from their context which are cabled out to England. Quite possibly you might have seen a brief report of what I said at the U.P. Provincial Congress meeting three days ago. I have myself seen some reports of this speech which might convey a wrong impression.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

You must remember that a difference in emphasis creeps in sometimes when one is addressing our own people on a particular resolution or amendment and when one is addressing the world at large. Addressing one's own people the tendency is to emphasise some of our own failings which must be got rid of—one must prepare for action and not talk loosely and so on and so forth.

I enclose a copy of the resolution passed by the U.P.P.C.C. regarding the present situation. I think this represents not only the general Congress view but Gandhiji's view also. Certain very unfortunate statements have been made recently by Rajendra Babu, Asaf Ali and others. These statements are in a sense repudiated by this resolution. I might inform you that Gandhiji, Vallabhbhai and many others of their groups were put out by Rajendra Babu's statement.

The position is that while it is considered improper just at this particular moment of crisis in the war to launch civil disobedience the question of satyagraha has by no means been put off. I think myself that we should wait for a while, which need not be very long, and prepare rather than plunge in at this stage.

Gandhiji has at no time thought in terms of a small body of men deciding anything about India. He sticks completely to his old position, that is a recognition of Indian independence and a full-blooded constituent assembly. It is only on the basis of this that he is prepared to talk. But as is his way, he always says that he is prepared to discuss the matter with anybody.

I have returned to Allahabad today after a long absence and am leaving again day after tomorrow for the Punjab and the Frontier Province. I hope that you have received the £100 which were sent to you by the A.I.C.C. office.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

25. To H.N. Spalding[1]

Allahabad
May 22, 1940

Dear Mr. Spalding,[2]
Edward Thompson has sent me your letter of the 18th April. I received this only yesterday on my return to Allahabad. A letter from you is

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Henry Norman Spalding (1877-1953); endowed the Spalding professorship of Eastern Religions and Ethics and a lecturership in Eastern Art at Oxford University.

deserving of every attention and I have read your letter carefully. I am glad you have written to Mahatma Gandhi and me on this subject. I am forwarding the Mahatma's letter to him.

You will forgive me if I write to you briefly and in haste. I want to send you an answer immediately as I am leaving Allahabad again for the Frontier Province.

Events have moved so rapidly during the last few days, that anything one might say now may be out of date a few days hence. Very probably this march of events will itself decide many problems for good or ill. It is at present enough to find how helpless we all are before these tremendous forces which seem to fashion our destiny.

What these events will ultimately lead to, I do not know. But, if anything, they have confirmed me in the views I held previously. I agree with you entirely that the idea of the independent sovereign state has completely broken down.[3] It is clear enough that there can be no independent small states in the future. There may possibly be huge groups of states united together in each group and each group in a state of latent hostility to the other. Though this is a possibility it is obviously a very undesirable possibility and it leads to no stability, but to future wars on a tremendous scale. Therefore we come back to the conclusion that the independent sovereign state must be put an end to, and the political and economic organisation of the world must keep pace with the technique of science, which has united the whole earth. That is to say that there should be a real commonwealth of interdependent states, each state foregoing that part of its independence which is necessary for the sake of this commonwealth or federation.

While I accept completely this ideal, I am quite convinced that this ideal cannot be realised through such groupings as the British Empire, even though that empire may change its imperialist characteristics and become a truer commonwealth. I do not think that it is possible for an empire like this ever to shed its imperialism without liquidating its old structure and building afresh on a new basis. So far as India is concerned, it is almost impossible for it to become a really free member of a free British Commonwealth. But India can much more easily become a member of a wider commonwealth which embraces all countries.

3. Spalding had written: "While freedom and self-government remain a true ideal for every state—independence has become a false ideal. If freedom is to be preserved, statesmanship must aim at a Commonwealth of Man—not of independent but of interdependent states or groups of states."

Similarly I do not believe in a united states of Europe or of Europe and America. This will mean ultimately either the exploitation by Europe and America of Asia and Africa or the building up of vast groups of nations hostile to each other. I think therefore that any approach towards the future world commonwealth through either a British group or a European group is fundamentally wrong and will not lead to a real commonwealth. As you have said in your letter, India is bound to have the closest relations with her neighbour China and other Asiatic countries. Our contacts with China have already increased greatly and there is a desire on both sides to develop them. This cannot happen satisfactorily if we are tied up to any group which excludes China and these countries.

It is worthwhile remembering also the psychological aspect of this question. A long period of British rule and British exploitation of India has put up enormous psychological barriers between us and England. Nationalism is always a somewhat dangerous doctrine. It isolates and is essentially based on an anti feeling. Fortunately for us in India our whole movement, as directed by Gandhiji, has tried to break down this psychological barrier and to lessen the evils of a narrow nationalism. Still they remain and the only way to break them down completely is to have the feeling of complete freedom from British imperialism. Otherwise these barriers and complexes will continue and embitter our relations. This is not merely a psychological question but an economic question. The essential difficulty in England's way is the fear that her enormous vested interests in India will suffer if India is free. There is no doubt that all illegitimate interests will suffer, though we have no desire to injure any legitimate interest. We lay emphasis on independence because we do not want them to have this economic hold on us in any way. If the matter was approached from the world point of view, it would be entirely different.

It is a surprising and depressing thing to note that in spite of everything that has happened and is happening, British authorities in India and in England behave and speak to us in terms of imperialism. There has been not the slightest change in this respect. While Britain has undoubtedly done much good to India consciously or unconsciously, she has injured us greatly in regard to many of the basic things of life. Even today when there was the greatest need for cooperation and consolidation, she has encouraged all the disruptive tendencies in India and made our problem far more difficult than it might have been. It is something which is hard to forgive for it means that India may have to go through a terrible period of internal disruption before she finds herself again.

I feel therefore that an essential preliminary to any reorganisation, is the severance of India from the British Empire. This should not lead to sovereign independence of India or of England or any other country. It should lead to the commonwealth of man to which you refer.

I am sure there are many men of goodwill in all countries at present, including Japan and Germany. But it is sad to find that men of goodwill do not seem to go far in this world of evil and therefore just to trust to goodwill is not enough.

If you have followed events in India in recent months you will have found how the Congress under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership has done everything in its power to avert a conflict between England and India. We have tried to do so in spite of strong feeling to the contrary. Our attitude has been one of conciliation throughout. But conciliation has led people to think in England that we are not serious in what we say and are incapable of doing anything. We have made it clear that we do not wish to hamper Britain or to take advantage of her difficulty. But at the same time there is grave danger that if we allow ourselves to be utilised to imperial advantage, we shall suffer greatly and so will the men of goodwill in Britain and elsewhere. Civil disobedience is, as conceived, the most honourable and civilized way of asserting the dignity of a people without desire to injure the other party. Not to assert that dignity and to submit to evil is itself a dangerous course to adopt. Is it not curious that in spite of all that has happened Britain should still desire to hold on to her empire and vested interests? What a tremendous difference it would have made to England's cause if she had deliberately proclaimed the end of her empire and sought the freely given help of India and other countries. But she cannot get out of her imperialist way of thinking and acting.

It is inconceivable to me that when this war ends and if it ends in the victory of the present governments in the allied countries, that their imperialism will still flourish. Why is England afraid of admitting Indian freedom in the context of world federation and recognise our complete right to self-determination?

I believe myself that science today can supply all reasonable material needs of the whole present population of the earth and give leisure also. It is a tragedy that when we have all this at our door almost we should carry on these terrible conflicts.

My daughter is at present in Switzerland. I shall gladly send her your message.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

26. No Provisional Solutions[1]

We live in a rapidly changing world and astonishing things are happening from day to day, but one of the most astonishing of these happenings is the continuing attitude of the British Government towards India. Perhaps it is this very static and unchanging view that has brought so many difficulties and dangers to England.

The past few years of peace and war have been a succession of the most amazing blunders on the part of the British Government in foreign policy, in their Indian policy, and in other directions. The law of cause and effect is now having its revenge.

The new Secretary of State for India speaks[2] in a tone which is no doubt meant to be conciliatory but the content of his utterances has no relation to facts in India or in Europe. We know the difficulties of the Indian problem. We know that there are differences of opinion here. We know that there are reactionaries here and communalists and feudal rulers and enormous vested interests. We do not underrate the complexity of this problem, no problem in the world today is free of difficulty and complexity. But in spite of this, it is completely out of place for Mr. Amery to talk of a revision of the present Act and of what may be done after the war is over, or of provisional solutions and the like. There can be no provisional solution of the problem, nor can there be any solution within the orbit of British imperialism. There is no question, so far as we are concerned, of amending this act or that act. Nor do we want a part in devising our form of constitution.

The British Government must give up completely its conception of being the patronising overlord of India, generously allowing us to have a say now and then. They must recognize the complete independence

1. Statement to the press, Lahore, 24 May 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 25 May 1940.
2. On 23 May 1940, Amery had stated: "The attainment by India of free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth is the goal of our policy...it is for Indians themselves to play a vital part in devising the form of constitution best adapted to India's conditions and to India's outlook...that the present scheme of the Act of 1935 and the policy and plans on which it is based are open to re-examination at the end of the war, necessarily implies discussion and negotiation and not dictation ... Even if no final agreement on the major issue is immediately in sight, I cannot think that it is beyond the resources of Indian statesmanship to find at any rate such provisional accommodation as would admit the resumption of office...."

of India and the right of the Indian people alone to do what they like in regard to their future constitution as well as in regard to the problems arising from the war. We should try to settle our internal problems however difficult they might be. We shall strain every nerve to come to a settlement which is agreeable to various groups in India and to the vast majority of the people. If we fail, that will be our look-out and we shall face the consequences of the failure. But on no account and under no circumstances can we accept any interference with our future from the British Government or any other foreign authority. We realize fully the serious implications of the present world situation and its possible consequences in India. I wish the British Government would realize this also as well as we do and fashion their course accordingly, giving up all idea of empire and domination.

I said the other day that I thought it against the dignity and honour of India, just to take advantage of England's present difficulty. We are not out to bargain because one does not bargain about one's freedom. We are not out to embarrass at a moment of peculiar difficulty, because that has not been India's way. But we are out to assert and gain our freedom and we cannot give that up because the war situation has developed to England's disadvantage. Our internal policy must be governed by one consideration only—the freedom of India and the attitude of Britain towards that freedom. Any other course would be against the honour and dignity of India.

It must be remembered also, in spite of everything that is happening abroad, there has been no change in British policy in India. Many of our comrades are in prison and they continue to be sent to prison. We are treated as a hostile people and then it is expected that because of fear of consequences we should help in the maintenance of the British Empire. Whatever the consequences, we cannot help an empire to maintain its hold over us.

27. The Unbridgeable Gulf[1]

Proposals have been made that the Congress should help the British authorities in maintaining peace under the present circumstances. While

1. Interview to the press, Lahore, 24 May 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 25 May 1940.

the Congress has always desired a peaceful transition and wants to avoid internal disturbances, it cannot possibly become a handmaiden of the British Government, helping it to preserve its domination. In its own way, it will no doubt in cooperation with other Indian groups try to prevent internal disturbances.

The main sanction behind the Congress is the moral sanction and the sympathy of millions who look up to it and follow its lead. That sanction would disappear if we weakened in our opposition to imperialism and became the agents of that imperialism even for the maintenance of peace and order. There are many risks, of course, in a situation like the one envisaged and many dangers, but the surest way of meeting it is for the Congress in cooperation with all others who desire Indian freedom to exert its moral appeal and to back it up by organization. It may be that even so we have unfortunately to pass through a period of trouble, but I feel sure that the good sense of the Indian people and the strong sense of unity that has grown up all over the country will triumph in the end. In any event it does not help us at all to get frightened and lose heart at the prospect. We should face whatever happens with a stout heart and, I hope, with good humour.

The world situation is so rapidly changing that any decision taken today may have to be varied tomorrow. We are living in an era of revolutionary changes. An old age is passing and inevitably at such a time there is disintegration and dissolution of things as they were. Many people in India are frightened at the prospect. Undoubtedly that prospect has many dangers in it, but it is no good getting frightened or excited over it, and in any event by our excitement we cannot stop it. I do not think there is any real danger of external attack on India. The two countries mentioned in this connection are Russia and Japan. Neither is in a position to attack India effectively. Even if the present structure collapses in India, Japan would have to meet the hostility of the United States as well as Russia. That would be a very big job. Even if Japan was aggressively inclined, the Dutch Indies and the Philippines are more likely prey. Russia in case of an overwhelming Nazi victory would be in considerable danger from Nazi Germany and of course there is Japan in the East. It is obvious that the Russo-German pact is not going to hold for long and there is an essential conflict between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. This was hidden by their mutual distrust and conflict with imperialist Britain. Once that is out of the way, the old conflict revives. So the danger of any power attacking India is remote.

The situation has changed since the Ramgarh Congress session decided that satyagraha was inevitable. It left the time and method to

Mahatma Gandhi. That position remains. It is very difficult for anyone to say when and how satyagraha will be launched. The other day, an amendment to a resolution of the U.P. Congress Committee to the effect that satyagraha should be immediately launched was opposed by me partly because I said that this matter should be left to Mahatma Gandhi, partly also because I thought just at this moment when the war situation was perilous for England it would be very ungenerous of us to take advantage of it in this war. That referred to the immediate situation and not to a lengthy period.

Any steps that we take should be carefully thought out as it would inevitably lead to far-reaching consequences. It would be improper to take any step precipitately in a situation which changes from day to day. It is never Gandhiji's intention or desire to do anything deliberately to embarrass or injure his opponent; much less would he think of doing so at a moment when that opponent was in great peril. Nevertheless, if the honour of India and circumstances demand certain actions, he would take it, although a consequence of that action might be embarrassment for the opponent. It should not, therefore, be thought that satyagraha must be postponed till the end of the war. Satyagraha ultimately depends not on the war but on the attitude and activities of the British Government in India. The mandate of the Ramgarh Congress is clear and the British Government's attitude has not changed at all. We cannot accept for long the present state of affairs in India. It is right, however, that one should wait for developments in the external and internal situation before launching on satyagraha. The next few weeks may bring about vital changes. So far as I can see the internal situation does not mean any kind of agreement with the British Government. In spite of war and everything, the gulf that separates us seems to be unbridgeable. There is no question of the Congress ministries going back to office or of our cooperating in the war in any way or of any other patched-up agreement at the centre. The fundamental disease India suffers from requires fundamental remedy which means the rooting out of every form of imperialism.

28. Resist All Aggression[1]

We must learn to understand and appreciate the realities and know what our own position and strength is. If we do not do so, we will soon find

1. Speech at Lahore, 25 May 1940. From *The Tribune*, 26 May 1940.

ourselves vanquished and trodden under the heels of others. We in India, situated as we are, are soon going to be put to hard tests and I ask you to be ready for that. There is great necessity for creating discipline among the people for without that we will not be able to hold our own.

British imperialism is tottering. It is on its last legs. The disease from which British imperialism is suffering has reached its last stage. I therefore ask my countrymen not to bother about ending British imperialism because I have faith in the capacity of my countrymen provided they are willing to be disciplined. If the present order collapses the only organisation which will be able to control the situation in India is the Congress and I therefore want everybody to give his loyalty to it instead of always criticising it. I am sure when the hour of trial comes it is not slogans or blind enthusiasm but the spirit of cohesion which will be of avail.

I refuse to believe that India is in any danger of attack from any foreign power. I am pained and perplexed at the suggestions of those who want India to help in the present war because they think that if the British are defeated some other foreign nation will come and rule over us. Such people think that British rule is better than Nazi rule. I refuse to agree to help in the war on these grounds because I think such men presuppose that we in India are born to remain slaves. If and when the present structure crashes, even if we fail to oppose the new aggressor it will not matter. But once we succeed in throwing away our present yoke we will rather perish than let any new aggressor come and saddle us. I want my countrymen to learn to be brave men ready to face consequences instead of being always calculating. With that end in view I think it will perhaps be good if some bombs are thrown in some Indian cities so that people will at least understand the dangers involved and feel like doing something.

I will be sorry if the French civilisation and culture which has played such a great part perishes. But I cannot persuade myself to help in the war in order to strengthen the hold of British imperialism on India. I do not wish to take advantage of the present difficulties of the British. But I will go my own way and if in that any embarrassment is caused to anyone I will be helpless but I will not take any course of action to embarrass anyone.

The status and position of India has grown very high, and even the most ignorant in the countries outside know at least of two names in India, one that of Mahatma Gandhi and the other that of the Congress. The pity of it is that Indians themselves have forgotten their own country. Because of the increased importance and status of India in

world opinion Congress can no longer remain a body of protesting people. The Congress voice has not grown dim, but on the other hand it has become more stern.

Satyagraha has no relation to the war. It will be started when considered opportune by Mahatma Gandhi. But we will not choose to strike simply because the British Government is in great difficulties. I think it will not only be not very honourable but the world opinion will also stand against India.

One thing which has now come to be a fact is that in the new world order there will be no place for smaller countries. The idea of federation or federations of big countries is now getting popular. Even that will not put an end to conflict in my opinion but lead to greater suspicion. The war resulted from not so much the greed of one person but from economic causes. I think that a socialistic form of state as the basis of the new world federation is the only remedy. Even though I am anxious to have full independence for India I will be prepared to have India join in that federation. But it is a sad commentary on our intelligence that while nations and countries are thinking of a federation, demands for cutting India into pieces are being sponsored.

I appeal to the youth of India whose responsibility is increasing not to be caught in the web of 'isms' but to know their implications and understand them.

29. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Srinagar
June 2, 1940

My dear Krishna,

I have been in Kashmir for the last four days and I am writing this letter from Srinagar. I have just received two letters from you, one dated the 18th May and the other undated. The latter letter deals with the American edition of my *Autobiography*.

I was glad to read your long letter but I shall not try to answer it in any detail. Just at present I am tied up with a very heavy programme here. But the real reason is that one cannot say much under present conditions and the situation changes rapidly from day to day.

I should like to make it clear that in spite of all difficulties in England and in the war zones, our fundamental policy remains the same,

1. J.N. Correspondence. N.M.M.L. Extracts.

as laid down at Ramgarh and previously. I have written to you about this before. But it is quite possible that you might be misled by odd extracts from people's speeches cabled to England. I have seen it so often even here. There are of course people like Satyamurti and Asaf Ali who have issued very foolish statements.[2] But it is quite clear that they do not represent Congress sentiment in any way. So far as I know, Gandhiji disapproves greatly of what they have said and he is clear that our policy should remain unchanged. This present policy is to go on preparing for satyagraha. Ordinarily we would not have started satyagraha in the course of the next few weeks or so unless the government had forced our hands. Even apart from this, Gandhiji feels that just at this moment of extreme crisis in the war, it would be highly undesirable to launch satyagraha. This does not mean any indefinite or even long postponement. This does not depend on the end of the war. I think it is definitely right and wise that no satyagraha should be started just at this moment or in the near future. But we should continue to prepare for it and should not allow anything of a compromising nature to divert us from this path.

The Working Committee meets on the 17th June and I shall be going back in time to attend it at Wardha....

Yours,
Jawaharlal

2. *On 16 May 1940, Satyamurti had stated that it was the ardent wish of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress and every right-thinking Indian that Britain should triumph in the war and that Britain which stood for justice and fair play in Europe, ought not to have a different policy with regard to India. See also ante, items 20 & 21.*

30. On Mahatma Gandhi's Statement[1]

It means apparently just what it says and nothing more. It does not mean that he has given up the idea of civil disobedience for the duration of the war or for a long period. That will depend on other circumstances. It means, as far as I can understand, that during the

1. Lahore, 12 June 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 14 June 1940. In an article entitled *Not Yet*, on 1 June 1940, Mahatma Gandhi had written : "I fear that any step toward direct action is bound to cause embarrassment. If I start now, the whole purpose of civil disobedience will be defeated.... We do not seek our independence out of Britain's ruin."

present intense phase of the conflict when great changes are taking place from day to day he would like to hold his hand and watch developments. This intense phase is not likely to last a long time. It may lead to some conclusion or to some kind of equilibrium in war itself. Civil disobedience could be aimed at British imperialism exploiting India for its own purposes. At the present moment British imperialism itself is in an exceedingly bad way and no one can say how long it will survive.

The question for the Congress to consider, even apart from the larger issues, is what it should do in regard to the intensive war preparations in India which have been hinted at and which obviously go contrary to the declared policy of the Congress.

It should be clearly understood that there is no question of a minor settlement in regard to provinces or even temporary makeshift regarding the centre. The Congress is not going to resume charge of Congress ministries from which they have resigned. The question can only be solved by the basic recognition of India as an independent country with all its natural consequences which would involve the popular control of the Government of India, steps being taken for a constituent assembly and, as a corollary, provincial ministries. These cannot be separated from each other; there is no half-way house left.

Meanwhile the Congress policy is to prepare for all contingencies including civil disobedience and such difficulties as may arise in India from the development of the war situation. In the latter naturally the Congress would like to cooperate with all groups who are interested. The situation here, as elsewhere, is a difficult one and the future is uncertain, but there seems to be absolutely no reason why people should grow panicky about it or anticipate trouble.

31. Congress Policy Unchanged[1]

I have a great deal of sympathy for the people of France and the people of England in their hour of trial. I have no sympathy at all for the manner in which Italy has declared war[2] after sitting on the fence so long. A more blatant example of sheer opportunism it would be difficult to find.

These developments in the war situation are no doubt very serious, but I do not see how they affect directly the political situation in India.

1. Interview to the press, 12 June 1940. *National Herald*, 13 June 1940.
2. Italy entered the war against the Allies on 11 June 1940.

more especially the Congress attitude. As has been stated before, India's attitude towards the British Government does not depend on the war situation but on the British Government's attitude towards the Indian problem.

We remain, therefore, exactly where we were, that is as laid down at the Ramgarh Congress session. The next Working Committee meeting will no doubt give an authoritative lead in this matter.

It is unfortunate that a number of statements have been made which may lead to some confusion in the public mind. So far as I know the Congress position is completely unchanged. This being the position, the Congress cannot take any part in war measures such as recently suggested by the Viceroy[3] and the Commander-in-Chief[4] nor can we become party to the proposed Civic Guards.

3. On 5 June 1940, the Viceroy announced the formation of war committees in each district as well as of a civic guard which was intended to be a voluntary organization affiliated to the police.
4. On 31 May 1940 the Commander-in-Chief announced certain plans for the strengthening of the defence services.

32. Our Countrymen Abroad[1]

Ever since the national movement took shape in India the problem of our countrymen abroad has been with us, as indeed it must be. And so it will remain till that movement triumphs and brings freedom and independence to India. For the two are inseparably connected and the status of an Indian abroad must ultimately depend on his status at home.

On many an occasion we have been deeply hurt by the indignities heaped on our countrymen abroad and for a while India has been roused to a widespread agitation and sometimes even to action. Occasionally some results have been obtained. More often these results have been transitory and the attack on the human rights of Indians overseas has been maintained. Our agitations have waned and we have lapsed into inactivity. Yet all the while our people have had to face the continuous pressure and humiliation of an aggressive racial imperialism or of newly awakened national consciousness in other countries, which was easily diverted by this imperialism into anti-Indian channels.

1. Allahabad, 14 June 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 20 June 1940. Foreword to *Our Countrymen Abroad* by Dharam Yash Dev published in 1940.

It is true that India has never forgotten her children abroad, but it is also true that she might have taken greater interest in them than she has done. With the notable exception of Mahatma Gandhi, many of our prominent leaders have little personal knowledge of Indians overseas, and even when they go abroad, they visit the countries of Europe and America. With this lack of knowledge there is inevitably an unconscious limitation of outlook. And yet it is perfectly true to say that if you would know India well, you must go out of India. Not only is this true about the plight of Indians abroad and of our international relations, but it applies with even greater force to a study of our past culture. Some of the finest examples of true Indian sculpture are outside India.

The status of Indians abroad depends on their position in their homeland. This question is, however, tied up with the continuance of the imperialistic system, for imperialism inevitably leads to the domination of one country by another. It is usually closely allied to racialism. We cannot therefore expect a satisfactory solution of this problem till the liquidation of imperialism. It is surprising that some people should still think in terms of any freedom for India, or betterment of the condition of Indians abroad, within the orbit of empire. It is within this empire that they have been treated worst and racialism has been most rampant.

But empires fade away, and whatever good or evil the future may hold for us, the present empires will not survive. The old age passes away, the new one is still hidden from us. It is in terms of the new age that we must think of the problems of our countrymen abroad.

It is clear that there must be perfect racial equality and equality in all the privileges and obligations of citizenship. If an Indian cannot have this in any country, or otherwise cannot live honourably there, it is far better for him not to go to that country.

The free India of the future will not be an imperialist or an aggressive country, nor will she desire to thrust her children where they are not wanted. She will not plan emigration as empire countries have done, but she will only send her people to countries where they are welcomed and treated honourably as friends and comrades.

The old order changes giving place to new. Let us prepare ourselves for this new order by learning something about our numerous countrymen abroad. That new order, so far as we are concerned, must include them. And so I commend this book by Dharam Yash Dev[2] to all who are interested not only in Indians overseas but in the new order towards which we are rushing ahead.

2. (b. 1910); Secretary, Department of Indians Overseas, A.I.C.C., 1940; first Indian Commissioner in Mauritius, 1948-50.

33. Working Committee Resolution on the War

Draft, 20 June 1940[1]

The Working Committee have been deeply moved by the tragic events that have taken place in Europe in startling succession and, in particular, by the misfortunes that have befallen the people of France.[3] These events have already had far-reaching consequences, and they are likely to be followed by other happenings which will lead to novel situations and complex problems in India and the world. This Committee have given earnest thought to these, for they have to bear the heavy burden of advising the people of India as to the course they should adopt in this dynamic and revolutionary crisis.

Ever since the commencement of the European war, the Congress has followed a deliberate policy in its resolutions and the action it has taken, which found its natural culmination in the Ramgarh resolution. That policy was based on the principles of the Congress, its past declarations, the response of the British Government to its invitation, and the desire

Resolution passed on 21 June 1940[2]

The Working Committee have been deeply moved by the tragic events that have taken place in Europe in startling succession and, in particular, by the misfortunes that have befallen the people of France. These events have already had far-reaching consequences, and they are likely to be followed by other happenings which will lead to novel situations and complex problems.

Ever since the commencement of the European war, the Congress has followed a policy which was based on its principles and on the attitude of the British Government towards the demand that India should function as a free and independent country. This policy was confirmed in the Ramgarh resolution. The manner of the application of this policy will necessarily depend on the situation which changes from day to day. The problems which were distant are now near at hand and may soon demand solution. The problem of the achievement of national freedom

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
   The draft was prepared by Jawaharlal.
2. *National Herald*, 22 June 1940.
3. On 14 June 1940, German troops entered Paris and the French Government sought an armistice.

that India should function as a free and independent country. Subsequent events have abundantly justified the wisdom of this policy, and the Ramgarh resolution of the Congress holds and declares this policy to the world. The manner of the application of this policy will necessarily depend on the situation which changes from day to day. Problems which were distant are now near at hand and may soon demand solution. The Committee which has so far considered the question of the achievement of power, has now also to consider how such power is to be maintained, and how a state should function in accordance with the principles which the Congress holds. In particular, this applies to the principle of nonviolence which it has been the proud privilege of the Congress to proclaim to the world for the past twenty years.

The war in Europe, resulting from a suicidal race in armaments and a desire for imperialist domination over other countries and peoples, has already led to inhumanities and barbarities on a mass scale, to the wanton butchery of civilians and non-combatants, including women and children, and to human sorrow and misery on a vast scale. It has led to certain temporary triumphs of organised and intensive violence, but it has also demonstrated the inefficacy of organised violence for the defence of national freedom and the liberties of peoples. This war has shown beyond

has now to be considered along with the allied one, its maintenance and the defence of the country against possible external aggression and internal disorder.

The war in Europe, resulting from a desire for imperialist domination over other peoples and countries, and a suicidal race in armaments, has led to human sorrow and misery on a scale hitherto unknown. It has demonstrated the inefficacy of organised violence, on however vast a scale, for the defence of national freedom and the liberties of peoples. It has shown beyond a doubt that warfare cannot lead to peace and freedom, and the choice before the world is uttermost degradation and destruction through warfare or the way of peace and non-violence on a basis of freedom for all peoples. Mahatma Gandhi has presented to the peoples of the world, crying for relief from the crushing burden of war, a weapon in the shape of organised non-violence designed to take the place of war for the defence of a people's rights and freedom against armed aggression. He feels that at this critical phase in the history of man, the Congress should enforce this ideal by itself declaring that it does not want that India should maintain armed forces to defend her freedom against external aggression or internal disorder.

a doubt that modern warfare cannot lead to peace and freedom, and the choice before the world is destruction and uttermost degradation through warfare or the way of peace and nonviolence on a basis of freedom for all peoples. At a time so critical in the history of man, the Congress, under the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi, has presented to the peoples of the world, thirsting for relief from the crushing burden of war, a weapon in the shape of organised nonviolence designed to take the place of war for the defence of a people's rights and freedom.

But the Working Committee are fully aware of their limitations and of the limitations of Congressmen in the practice of nonviolence, which, because of these limitations, has not proved efficacious in the solution of communal distemper and other internal disorders. Nevertheless, ever since the Congress adopted nonviolence as its policy in the pursuit of its goal of complete political and economic independence, Congressmen have tested its efficacy in the fight against British domination. They have witnessed under its spell a phenomenal awakening among the masses.

The Working Committee desire to proclaim afresh their belief in the principle of nonviolence and their firm faith that in the effective application of this

While the Working Committee hold that the Congress must continue to adhere strictly to the principle of nonviolence in their struggle for independence, the Committee cannot ignore the present imperfections and failings in this respect of the human elements that they have to deal with, and the possible dangers in a period of transition and dynamic change, until the Congress has acquired nonviolent control over the people in adequate measure and the people have imbibed sufficiently the lesson of organised nonviolence. The Committee have deliberated over the problem that has thus arisen and have come to the conclusion that they are unable to go the full length with Gandhiji. But they recognise that he should be free to pursue his great ideal in his own way and therefore absolve him from responsibility for the programme and activity which the Congress has to pursue under the conditions at present prevailing in India and the world in regard to external aggression and internal disorder.

Many of the problems which the Working Committee have considered in this connection are not of the present, though they may be of the near future. The Committee wish to make it clear that the methods and basic policy of nonviolence in the national struggle for freedom continue with full force and are not affected in the least by the inability

principle will the world find relief from war and its horrors. To that end, and with this principle always in view, the Committee will continue to advise the people of India in the struggle for national independence and world freedom and cooperation. True nonviolence is a weapon of the strong and not a refuge for the weak as some people have considered it. But the Committee cannot ignore the present imperfections and failings in this respect of the human nature they have to deal with, and of the possible dangers in a period of revolutionary transition, if the masses have not imbibed sufficiently the lesson of organised nonviolence and the Congress has not acquired nonviolent control over them. Nor can the Committee lay down now that in all circumstances, and whatever world conditions might be, a free India must necessarily discard the use of arms in repelling external aggression or in dealing with internal disorder. A state has certain duties and obligations to its people and it should make every endeavour to discharge them peacefully and without violence or coercion. But if circumstances prevent it from discharging them in this way, it cannot abdicate its functions, so long as it has the confidence of the people, and is compelled to use, under existing circumstances, armed force. The Committee earnestly hope that, out of the horror and catastrophe of the present war,

to extend it to the region of national defence.

The War Committees that are being formed are definitely aimed at increasing the war effort. In view of the Congress policy, they cannot be supported and Congressmen cannot participate in them or contribute to war funds. Nor can Congressmen associate themselves, under the present political conditions, with Government controlled Civic Guards.

Congress committees should organise, wherever necessary, people in villages and other areas for self-defence and in order to maintain a sense of public security in their respective areas. This should be done on a non-communal basis and in full cooperation with all other groups interested in this task.

In view of the difficult times that loom ahead, it is essential that the Congress should function as an active and disciplined organisation. Provincial Committees are enjoined to take necessary steps for this purpose. They should realise that it is of urgent and vital importance that the Congress should function in this way in these days of crisis, and should not be merely a roll of vast numbers of inactive members. All members of executive committees, in particular, are expected to take a continuous and active part in Congress work, and those who are unwilling or unable to do so are failing in their duty

conditions will arise which will eliminate the use of armed force.

The Working Committee have deliberated over this vital question at length, and they owe it to the public to take them into their confidence and to place before them their viewpoint with clarity. This is necessary all the more because in this matter of the application of nonviolence to external aggression and internal disorder, they have the misfortune not to be wholly in agreement with Mahatma Gandhi, whose leadership and advice it has been their high privilege to have for the past twenty years. That leadership and advice will, they are convinced, still be theirs and India's in the trials ahead. But Gandhiji's firm faith in the efficacy of nonviolence, under all circumstances, does not permit him to tolerate any deviation from it and he desires to have complete freedom for himself, and without any commitment to the Congress, to pursue a policy of active nonviolence in the pursuit of the goal which he shares with the Congress and with vast numbers of people in India.

Many of the problems which the Working Committee have considered are not of the present, though they may be of the near future. In any event the Committee wish to make it clear that the creed of nonviolence of the Congress continues with full force

to the country and are of no service to the organisation.

The critical situation that faces the world today requires vigilant attention and action whenever needed. For this purpose the Working Committee will meet at frequent intervals, and all members must keep in readiness to obey an urgent summons. The All India Congress Committee should be summoned to meet in the last week of July.

and all Congressmen and Congress volunteers must abide by it.

Some Congressmen have advocated that the Congress should resume office in the provincial governments in order to utilise the government machinery at their disposal to take steps for training citizens in the use of arms. Such a proposal is entirely opposed to Congress policy and the Committee cannot envisage any return to office except in a free India. Only a free India can also consider, if she so chooses, the training of her citizens. Any such training, given under present conditions, may well be to the disadvantage of India and may militate against the national policy.

Nor can Congressmen associate themselves in any way with the proposed official Civic Guards. The War Committees that are being formed are definitely aimed at increasing the war effort, and, in view of the Congress policy, they cannot be supported and Congressmen cannot participate in them or contribute funds to war loans. While the Congress has gone to the utmost length in not taking any step so far to cause embarrassment to the British Government, it must always be remembered that the Congress policy is not to give any cooperation in the pursuit of war. This policy is laid down in the

Ramgarh resolution and Congressmen are expected to adhere to it.

In view of the difficult times that loom ahead, it is essential that the Congress should function as an active disciplined organisation. Those who have taken the satyagraha pledge[4] must abide by the terms of the pledge, and if they are not prepared to act up to it, their names should be removed from the list of satyagrahis. Members of the Congress who are in basic disagreement with the principles and policy of the Congress and express this disagreement publicly should resign from the Congress. Provincial Committees are authorised to take necessary steps for this purpose. They should realise that it is of urgent and vital importance that the Congress should be an active, functioning and disciplined organisation, and not merely a roll of inactive members.

The critical situation that faces the world today requires vigilant attention and action whenever needed. For this purpose the Working Committee will meet at frequent intervals and all members must

4. After the Ramgarh session a new satyagraha pledge was drawn up on the lines of the pledge adopted at the Congress session at Ahmedabad in 1921. The satyagrahi pledged himself to remain nonviolent, promote unity among all races, work for the eradication of untouchability, spin regularly and use hand spun and hand woven cloth and be prepared to be imprisoned and in the event of imprisonment make no claims on the Congress to support him or his dependents.

keep in readiness to obey an urgent summons. An Emergency Committee consisting of the President and..... is hereby formed with authority to act in the name of the Working Committee when occasion may demand. The All India Congress Committee should be summoned to meet in the last week of July.

SELECTED WORKS OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

34. On the Resolution of the Working Committee[1]

The Working Committee have rightly taken the people into their confidence about the basic problems that confront them and about the future that seemed so distant and is now so near. It is exceedingly difficult for most of us to get out of the mental ruts we fall into and we continue to think in terms of a yesterday that is dead and gone.

France has fallen for the moment because she did not adapt herself to today. England's troubles are essentially due to the same reason. Both France and England represented more than any other country the old epoch whose foundations had been uprooted and which is passing before our eyes. England, full of the self-assurances of an old empire and a long period of dominance and security, was blind to the changing age and blundered in India and in her foreign policy despite every warning.

It is absurd to think that the revolutionary developments of recent weeks in Europe are due purely to military reasons or to Germany's superiority in armament or numbers. They are essentially due to the fact that the British and French ruling classes have lost their grip and do not understand the world we live in. They seek to hold on to something which belongs to a past age, and everything slips from their hands. We in India must beware of these mental ruts. Unfortunately too many of us are incapable of getting out of them and it is amazing how they continue to blind themselves to the obvious logic of events.

Let us remember that an age is over and we are witnessing the bloody transition to a new age. I do not know whether this new age will necessarily be better, but I do know that it will be very different. The old empires end, even the old national boundaries fade away. Could a more astonishing proposition have been made than the British Government's suggestion that France and England should become one state?[2]

Greater than any individual or any army, vast elemental forces are at work changing the face of things. Much is happening which grieves us

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 23 June 1940. *National Herald*, 24 June 1940.
2. On 16 June 1940, the French Government were deliberating on the question of armistice. Winston Churchill offered an indissoluble Franco-British Union. The French Government rejected this and concluded an armistice on 22 June.

and moves us deeply. It is no good getting angry at it or excited. For one does not get angry at an earthquake or at the fury of the elements. But one must seek to understand it, for only then can we fashion our course truly.

In India the time is past for gestures and declarations by the Secretary of State or the Viceroy. Uncontrolled events dictate what happens. New problems have arisen and the achievement of national freedom itself, for which we have laboured so long, has to be considered with the problems that arise after the restrictions to that freedom are removed.

Some people may have thought that what the Congress has said during these past nine months was not seriously meant. They have deluded themselves and suffer for that delusion. The Congress has been and is in deadly earnest and it will follow its consistent policy. This is no time for tall talk. But the full independence of India and our functioning as a free nation is no tall talk for us and this cannot afford to wait till the end of an uncertain war. We have to deal with it here and now. Events are on the march with giant strides and we shall try to keep pace with them.

The Working Committee's resolution makes it clear that in spite of war developments the Ramgarh resolution stands, as indeed it must. Our policy and action must be fashioned accordingly. The Committee are now concerned above all with what is going to happen in India and want the people to prepare for it. They have little interest in declarations made by a foreign authority.

I trust that the people of the country will also think in these terms and rally round the Congress at this supreme moment, for it is the Congress only which might be able to control the situation as it develops from day to day. No other organisation can possibly do so.

The difference between Gandhiji's approach and that of the Working Committee must be understood and the people must not think that there is a break between him and the Congress. The Congress of the past twenty years is his creation and child and nothing can break this bond. I am sure that his guidance and wise counsel will always be available to the Congress.

Even as regards nonviolence the Congress has not gone back on any of its professions and it holds to them strictly. But new problems raised new issues which necessitated the further extension of this principle or the recognition that under present circumstances it was hardly possible to do so. Gandhiji, with the flame of his cherished ideal burning brightly before him, could not tolerate any deviation from nonviolence, even in cases of external aggression or internal disorder. He could not reject the logic of his own argument.

The Working Committee was powerfully attracted by this ideal but they realised the imperfections in this respect of the human material they had to work with and could not lay down that in all circumstances and whatever world conditions might be, a free India must necessarily discard the use of arms in repelling external aggression or in dealing with internal disorder. Indeed Congress governments have used the police. The state has certain duties and obligations to its people and it should endeavour to discharge them peacefully and without violence or coercion. But if circumstances prevent it from discharging them in this way, it cannot abdicate its functions, so long as it has the confidence of the people. This question might appear philosophical and yet it might well be a real question for us soon. It hardly arises so long as India is a subject country but a free India will have to deal with it immediately.

I should personally like to say that this war and the events that preceded it have impressed upon me more than ever the futility of violence, and in India as she is circumstanced today, the idea of our organising violence for defence against the external aggression of a major power is futile. We cannot do so effectively in this present crisis at least and in any event we are not going to do so in order to help an empire that dominates over us.

I am convinced that the very excess of violence and horror that we see today will ultimately burn themselves up in their own fire, or else the world will rapidly revert to barbarism. If I did not believe that and if I thought that armed force and brutal violence will always rule the world, life would have little meaning for me. But if a people are not ready to fight nonviolently, I would sooner that they fought violently than succumb timidly to evil and violence and a slave's fate.

I do not think there is the slightest likelihood of a major invasion of India. There is always a possibility of internal trouble during times of crises and transition. I do not envisage communal trouble, but adventurers and anti-social elements may seek to take advantage of the situation. There is nothing to frighten us. But we should be prepared for this and for all other difficulties of this period of transition, so that India can emerge out of it a free, united and strong country. Hence the Working Committee have asked the Congress committees to organise the villages and other areas for self-defence and have demanded strict discipline and active national service from Congressmen.

Whatever the future may bring, the bonds that unite us to Gandhiji will remain as strong as ever and his inspiration will strengthen and guide us.

Recent developments in regard to China have been distressing. France, defeated by Germany, has been bullied by Japan into closing the door

from Indo-China to China.[3] And now Japan is trying to repeat these tactics in regard to the Burma-China route.[4] If Britain agrees to this, it will be a betrayal of China, which will be deeply resented in India. Britain's policy for some months past has shown a desire to placate Japan even at the cost of India as well as China. Recent Indo-Japanese trade talks have been ominous and the interests of India are threatened.[5] It must be clearly understood that this anti-Indian and anti-Chinese policy will produce strong reactions in India.

3. Japanese southward expansion had begun with the fall of France in June 1940, when Japanese demands obliged the French to close the Haiphong-Kunming railroad as a supply route to free China. On 6 August, Japan demanded from the Governor-General of Indo-China the right to control airfields and to move troops into the northern provinces of that country. The French gave in and on 23 September 1940, Japanese forces moved into the northern provinces.
4. On 16 July the British Government announced its decision to close the Burma Road for 3 months.
5. The Indo-Japanese trade talks were held for the renewal of the Indo-Japanese Trade Agreement of 1937-40, which limited Japan's sale of cotton textiles in India and linked them with the purchase of Indian raw cotton.

35. The Pertinence of Nonviolence[1]

India has never asked for an empire while putting forward the demand for her complete independence. A federation of free nations should arise so that no strong nation will dominate the weaker ones. Certain sections of the public want that India should raise an army of her own. This war has made it clear that if at all a country has to raise any army it must be very big and powerful and capable of defeating the biggest enemy. Even France with its traditional military glory and supremacy extending over centuries in Europe collapsed within a short period before the German mechanised forces; the gun and the sword have been reduced to the position of mere toys in these days of highly mechanised warfare. If India wants to raise an army it should be powerful enough

1. Speech on unfurling the National Flag at Congress House, Bombay, 30 June 1940. *Maharashtra Government Records, File No. 3036/H/XII—5/1940.*

to withstand the onslaught of the most powerful mechanised forces in the world, otherwise it is better that India should not have any army at all. In the event of foreign aggression there is urgent necessity for developing organised nonviolence, with which India has fought British imperialism in the struggle for freedom. Though the weapon of nonviolence will be of no use in the present warfare it can make it impossible for any aggressor to establish and continue his rule in India. I appeal to you to strengthen the Congress by developing organised nonviolence. The Congress does not desire to participate in the imperialistic war and I advise you not to take part in it.

There is no break between the Congress Working Committee and Mahatma Gandhi. It has always been Mahatma Gandhi's habit to place his views before the Working Committee, and the members of the Working Committee also place their own views before him. The old order is gradually giving place to a new one. Be prepared to meet the coming events so that we can all live in peace and freedom. The Congress is ever ready to have negotiations with a view to achieving complete independence for India, and there is nothing unusual or harmful in Mahatma Gandhi's recent talks with the Viceroy.[2]

2. The Viceroy, in an interview with Mahatma Gandhi on 29 June 1940, suggested the grant to India of a status similar to that of the self-governing dominions within one year after the end of the war. He also indicated possible lines of a new constitution, subject to an agreed understanding with regard to British commercial interests, defence, external affairs, the rights of minorities and princes. Mahatma Gandhi did not respond favourably.

36. On the Political Situation[1]

Question: Do you share the pessimism about the outcome of Mahatma Gandhi's interview with the Viceroy?

Jawaharlal Nehru : I never had any high hopes about it. The time for declarations in regard to India's political goal or British war aims and gestures from the Viceroy and the Secretary of State has passed.

1. Interview to the press, New Delhi, 2 July 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 3 July 1940.

Q: Do you agree with Mr. Rajagopalachari that there is no immediate prospect of civil disobedience?[2]

JN: That is so, inasmuch as the British imperialism against which civil disobedience movement is proposed to be launched is tottering.

2. He had stated that the then policy of the Congress was noncooperation but not satyagraha and if civil resistance was started it would create anger in the opponents' heart and there would not be the true atmosphere of satyagraha.

37. A Realist Resolution[1]

The resolution[2] of the Working Committee has been passed after a prolonged discussion and consideration of the various factors, internal and external. In fact, the resolution merely repeats, in somewhat different language, what the position of the Congress has been since the European war broke out, that is, that the independence of India should be recognized and affirmed and that it should be acted up to at the present. If this is done, it not only leads to the ending of the conflict between England and India on the question of our freedom, but it shows also that British imperialism is being rapidly liquidated, and under these circumstances, it becomes inevitable and right for real popular control to be established provisionally in the Centre and the provinces. This would be the preliminary and transitional stage towards the establishment of a new popular constitution framed by a constituent assembly. Such an assembly would take some time to meet and frame the constitution. Meanwhile provisional arrangements have to be made to carry on the government under popular control. This is all the more necessary at critical times like the present when empires are tottering and an old age is passing away. The Working Committee not only repeat their own demand but put it in concise language capable of being

1. Interview to the press, New Delhi, 8 July 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 9 July 1940.
2. The Working Committee resolution of 7 July 1940, called for a declaration of complete independence for India and the formation of a provisional national government at the Centre and offered to cooperate in the defence of the country on those terms.

given effect to immediately. It is a realist resolution and not merely an essay and a theory. It must be remembered, however, that behind the resolution lie the previous decisions of the Committee as well as of the Congress. It is these decisions which give a full picture of the Congress attitude. We have not repeated all this in view of the critical situation in world affairs which demands instant action this way or that. It is obvious that neither for the Congress nor for the British Government in India can the present unsatisfactory conditions continue for long. It must be settled one way or the other. We cannot easily tolerate the methods of compulsion that are being increasingly used by government officials in regard to the war effort or the thousands of arrests that have taken place of Congressmen and others. We do not forget them because we have not mentioned them in our resolution.

The resolution says that with the coming of independence we shall immediately shoulder the burden of India's defence. That is a natural corollary. We have made it perfectly clear in the past that we cannot help the war effort of British imperialism or become its recruiting sergeants. That position continues completely unchanged, but to maintain our own independence for our defence and the defence of freedom, we are prepared under our own direction to do our best.

There is much else the Working Committee could have said about the present conditions in India as well as about the future, but we have deliberately avoided doing so at this stage in order to keep the immediate issue clear. We realize, however, England's critical condition and have frankly stated our position in clear terms. If even now, these terms prove unacceptable to Britain, the other way is clear for us.

It is clear that during these critical times the strength of the country lies in the strength of the Congress and the strength of the Congress lies in the sanctions it has behind it. Therefore, whatever the future may bring us, these sanctions have to be developed and the satyagraha committees that have been formed must be kept up to the mark and strengthened, so that they may be capable of use as agents of the people's will, whenever the need arises. Nothing could be greater folly than for us to relapse into complacency. That way peril lies. We shall have to face in this hard world of conflict many difficult trials and we shall survive only if we are strong and organised and determined enough. Therefore, it is essential for all Congressmen to continue their efforts to strengthen the satyagraha committees, to put an end to all minor conflicts and to bring about harmony among the different communities and to maintain perfect discipline.

There has been an argument about nonviolence. It should be clearly understood that there is no member of the Working Committee who is not convinced of and pledged to nonviolence as indeed every Congressman

should be. In spite of the terrible violence that is going on in the world, we adhere to our old policy of nonviolence in our struggle for freedom in all its implications. We are anxious and eager to extend this principle to other fields also and, so far as we can, we shall do so. But it is difficult in this changing world to commit ourselves in the future to an extension of this principle to foreign invasion and the like. This is largely a theoretical question at present. In practice, there is no difference of opinion. The Working Committee at Wardha have dealt with the question. They asked Congressmen to organize self-defence groups in the villages and elsewhere. It should be remembered that these groups must also follow the methods of nonviolence.

38. No Compromise by the Congress[1]

World conditions are changing rapidly, and it is difficult to say what will happen tomorrow. There are some who ask why the Congress has not registered its protest against the recent arrests in the country. My answer is that mere protest is futile, when we are demanding control over the administration of the country. Congressmen must remember that the present is not the time to indulge in petty disputes. I agree with Maulana Azad that the Congress resolution on the war which was reaffirmed at the Ramgarh Congress still stands.

There is nothing inconsistent in the resolution adopted by the Working Committee yesterday and the Ramgarh resolution. The Congress still adheres to the demand for a constituent assembly to frame India's constitution. However, since it will take a long time to summon such an assembly, the Working Committee has, as an immediate step to meet emergency conditions, demanded the formation of a provisional national government at the centre as a transitory measure.

The solution contained in the Working Committee's resolution is one which should be readily acceptable to the British Government. Some people have asked me when the Congress will start satyagraha. I do not know when the satyagraha campaign will be launched, but my only

1. Speech at New Delhi, 9 July 1940. From the *National Herald*, 10 July 1940.

advice to the people at this juncture is to develop their strength, get rid of their weaknesses, and thus be prepared for the future.

39. Quatorze Juillet[1]

Quatorze Juillet, the Fourteenth of July, seventeen hundred and eighty-nine. The people of Paris storm the Bastille and capture the old prison and set free the prisoners. But the fall of the Bastille was a symbol and a portent of much else; it broke down many other props and barriers of the old world, and it liberated many forces which would fashion a new order. The Revolution came and the Terror, and then Thermidor and Napoleon. Back again for a while to the Bourbons, and then fresh revolutions and changes, till, in the midst of defeat and disaster, the Third Republic of France was born.

And now the Third Republic is no more, and it would appear that France's ruling class has sold her glorious heritage and magnificent tradition for not even the proverbial mess of pottage. Defeat in battle brings sorrow and humiliation; yet it may be borne if the spirit lives. But what shall we say when the spirit dies and the soul of a country surrenders?

On this fourteenth day of July my thoughts go back a hundred and fifty years and survey the exciting course of French history, since the day that France became the mother of freedom. I have loved that France even in her decay and imagined that, whatever might befall her, her immortal spirit would survive and triumph. On this fourteenth of July, for these hundred and fifty years, the people of France have celebrated the fall of the Bastille. It was their *Fete Nationale*, the Day of the Nation, which symbolised the free spirit of France. There came, a few years ago, the National Front and what a magnificent Fourteenth of July that was, when it was celebrated with an added significance and an overpowering popular enthusiasm.

What is happening in France today, I wonder. For the first time in these hundred and fifty years, there is no *Fete Nationale*, no Fourteenth of July to celebrate. The Bastille fell in 1789, but a hundred

1. *National Herald*, 16 July 1940.

and a thousand Bastilles have arisen today, and the lamps of freedom flicker and go out all over the world. And Paris the beautiful is a conquered city, grovelling at the feet of the conqueror.

A few days ago a post card came to me from a dear friend in Paris,[2] written just before Paris fell. Anguish and sorrow enveloped her at what was happening to her dear land and to the gracious city where she lived. Her bright young son had been torn from college and his fate was uncertain. Yet her faith in France did not fail, and knowing how France was dear to me also, she assured me that all would be well. In the face of adversity, her courage would grow and triumph, as she had so often done in the past when danger overwhelmed her. *"Je me represente,"* so my friend wrote to me, *"l'angoisse et la sympathie avec lesquelles vous devez suivre les evenements actuels. Je pense bien a vous. Le coeur se serre en pensant a tant de souffrances et de ruines. Mais soyez assure que la France voit grandir son courage en face de l'adversite".*[3]

But the France of Petain[4] and Laval did no such thing, and has now forsworn all that the old France stood for. But there is another France, there must be one, for the heritage of a thousand years does not vanish in a night. That other France will rise again and assert the invincible spirit of freedom which made her great. Again we shall hear the stirring strains of the Marseillaise, the song of the Revolution; again she will celebrate the fall of the old Bastille and the new Bastilles that have arisen. Again she will have her *Fete Nationale* on the Fourteenth of July.

And so today, on this great anniversary, let us pay homage to the France of the Revolution, the breaker of the Bastille and of all the bonds that hold the human body and spirit captive.

2. Louise Morin.
3. I am well aware of the agony and sympathy with which you must be following recent events. I frequently think of you. My heart aches at so much suffering and destruction. But please rest assured that the courage of France increases in face of adversity.
4. Marshal Petain (1865-1951); victor of Verdun in the First World War; collaborated with the Nazis and became head of state, 1940; condemned to death after the war but sentence commuted to life imprisonment.

40. A Crumbling World[1]

During the last few weeks India has suddenly been forced to think hard about international happenings and their reactions on her. Some of us have been dabbling in international affairs for many years, and occasionally a passing interest was aroused among large numbers of people in the country in the fate of Abyssinia, Palestine, Czechoslovakia, Spain, and China.

Fundamentally, however, we were, as a people, far too much absorbed in our own national problems. The coming of the war in Europe led inevitably to a deeper interest in events abroad. Even so, the struggle was a distant one, and our excitement was that of an onlooker. May 10th, a date famous in Indian history, brought the invasion of the Low Countries of western Europe, and the rapid developments that have followed each other since then have galvanized our minds and brought the possible consequences of the war very near to us. New problems suddenly confront us, entirely novel situations have to be faced.

The last two meetings of the Congress Working Committee met under these difficult conditions and tried to adjust themselves to them. The public has seen their resolutions and there has been some argument about them. It would be worthwhile, however, for us to consider dispassionately what has happened in Europe, with all its future implications, if we are to understand the curious and changing world that we live in. Wishful thinking is at any time an unhelpful occupation; today it is full of peril. All of us are much too apt to remain in the old ruts, to think the old thoughts, to utter the old slogans, even though everything else may have changed beyond recognition. Fundamental principles and objectives must have a certain stability and continuance, but in other ways reality demands that we adapt ourselves to it.

What has happened? The map of Europe has changed utterly and many nations have ceased to be. Poland went, Denmark and Norway succumbed, Holland collapsed, Belgium surrendered, France fell suddenly and completely. All these went into the German orbit. The

1. Lucknow, 16 July 1940. *National Herald,* 17 July 1940. Reprinted in *The Unity of India,* (London, 1941), pp. 318-321.

Baltic countries and Bessarabia have been more or less absorbed by Soviet Russia.[2]

These are mighty changes and yet it is being increasingly realized that they are but the prelude to what is to come. We are not merely witnessing a great and overwhelming war with all its destructive horror. We live today in the midst of a revolutionary epoch of vast significance, more important and far-reaching perhaps than any given in recorded history. Whatever the outcome of this war may be, this revolution will complete its appointed course, and till this takes place there will be no peace or equilibrium in this planet of ours.

We must realize that the old world dies, whether we like it or not. Already those who were most representative of it have become phantom figures, ghosts of a yesterday that is no more.

If the Nazis win through, as they well might, there is little doubt of what they would try to make of Europe and the world. They will create a new type of European union under German leadership and control, a Nazi empire of Europe. The small states would go and so would democracy, as understood by us, and the capitalist system as it has prevailed. A form of state capitalism would flourish in Europe and big industry would be concentrated in the Germanic lands, the other countries, including France, being reduced largely to an agricultural status. This system would be based on a collective supernational economy and would be subject to authoritarian control. The Nazi empire would have its colonies, chiefly in Africa, but it would also try to control the economy of other non-European countries and harness the labour power of their peoples. The economic weight of such a mighty authoritarian union would be tremendous and the rest of the world would have to adapt itself to it.

Such is the Nazi thesis. What of England if this happens? If there is a complete German victory, England ceases to be a power that counts. In Europe she has no influence left; she loses her empire. It is almost immaterial whether she joins the Germanic-European union or not. The centre of gravity of the British race shifts elsewhere, most probably to Canada and they become closely allied to, or even absorbed in, the United States of America.

Much will depend upon Soviet Russia. There is little doubt that she dislikes intensely the rapid growth of Nazi power which may threaten her later. Nevertheless she will adapt herself to the change unless the war draws on for a lengthy period and brings exhaustion of the combatants. A swift German victory would thus lead to a Nazi empire in

2. The Soviet Union occupied Bessarabia on 28 June 1940 and incorporated the Baltic states on 14 July 1940.

Europe with outlying possessions. This may be allied to Japan in the East. Two other great federations will remain—Soviet Russia and the United States of America, both essentially hostile to Germany. The war may have ended, but the seeds of future wars will remain between these mighty groups.

What happens if the Nazis do not win within the next few months? Probably a long and exhausting war in which both combatants suffer greatly and are completely exhausted. The economic structure of England and Europe collapses and the only possible future is one of large federations of nations, or of a world federation, based on a different economy and on strict world control of production, transport and distribution. The present-day capitalist system goes. The British Empire ends. Small states cannot exist as independent units. Possibly even the conception of money changes.

In any event, therefore, this war will bring about a fundamental political and economic change, a change that will be more in keeping with modern conditions which demand closer intercourse between nations and a breaking down of international barriers. The strength of Germany today lies not so much in her ruthless efficiency and military machine as in the fact that, perhaps unconsciously, she has become the agent of a historic process. She is trying to turn it in an evil direction; she may even succeed in this for a while. The weakness of France and England was essentially due to their desire to hold on to forms and structures which were doomed to disappear. They represented something that was dying, whether in their empires or in their economic system. They had repeated chances during the past twenty years of putting themselves in step with history, of being the leaders in building up a real international order based on social justice and national freedom. They preferred to hold on to their past gains and vested interests and empires and now it is too late and everything slips out of their hands.

France passes away for a while. But England still fails to learn the lesson. Still she talks in terms of empire and seeks to preserve her special interests. It is sad to see a great people so blind to everything except the narrow interests of a class, and risking everything but not taking the step which would put them right with the world and with the great historic processes that are marching on with giant strides.

41. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

16 July 1940

...I read the other day your explanation of the Working Committee resolution in which you stated that the resolution clearly meant full support in the war efforts.[2] Also that every member of the Working Committee was unanimous about this. Rajendra Babu has also said something to this effect.[3] My own recollection is somewhat different and I thought I had made it clear that I was not prepared to go so far. Indeed the words in the original draft were changed from war efforts to the country at my instance. I stated that it was conceivable that we might later have to take part in the rest of the war effort and therefore I could not rule this out completely. But I was not prepared to commit myself to any such proposition at this stage. I thought this would be contrary to our previous decisions as also wrong tactics. I want to make this clear, as you have stated that every member of the Working Committee was unanimous. This would not represent my attitude nor the deliberate change in the wording of the resolution.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. Home Department Political File No. 33/40, National Archives of India. Extracts.
2. On 11 July 1940, Azad had said that it was wrong to say that the Congress had only shown its readiness to defend India and not participate or help in the war. "When we passed the resolution every one of us was quite clear on this point that if India's demand is fulfilled it will be the duty of India to participate in the war. The resolution had no other meaning in the mind of even a single individual out of the fifteen members of the Congress Working Committee present".
3. On 9 July 1940, Rajendra Prasad had stated that the Congress had plainly told the British Government that India could not give voluntary help in the successful prosecution of the war until India had been declared an independent country.

42. What of Us ?[1]

Whether Germany wins or loses will obviously make a great difference to the future of Europe and the world. And yet, in either event, certain changes and developments of far-reaching significance are bound to take place. Small states will disappear and give place either to some world federation or to three, or possibly four, federations or empire states. If the latter emerge, there will be continuing hostility and conflict, both internal and external. Internal, because an empire state necessarily involves the enforced subjugation of other peoples and nations, which will continually attempt to free themselves. External, because there will be rivalry between the different empire states or federations. Each may try to develop some kind of autarchy or self-sufficient economy within its territories. But this can bring no equilibrium or stability, and either peacefully or through war, a single world federation must emerge. It is inevitable that this should be so, for the alternative is continuing mutual destruction on a vast scale and a relapse into barbarism. Such a world federation must be a real union of free nations. An imposed order means that the so-called federation is really an empire state with the seeds of disruption within it.

Whatever is the outcome of the war, it seems clear enough that the British Empire ends. There are inherent reasons why this should be so, but the course of the war has made this obvious. Even if a number of empire states emerge, the British Empire, as constituted today, will not be one of them. There might conceivably be an Anglo-American federation, to which some other countries adhere, or an empire state. In such a federation or empire, England's part will be a subordinate one. The type of spread-out empire which England possesses today cannot exist in future, except in the remote contingency of a world empire state being established. Such a far-flung empire necessitates a command of the seas and the world's trade routes as well as an effective command of the air. No country or group of states is likely to have this world predominance. If empires exist, therefore, they must essentially be compact empires, with possibly some distant colonial possessions, which do not make any essential difference.

1. 17 July 1940. *National Herald*, 18 July 1940. Reprinted in *The [illegible] India*, (London, 1941), pp. 322-325.

For a year or so before the war began there was considerable discussion about the possibility of a union or federation between various nations. Clarence Streit's *Union Now* attracted much attention and there were many other proposals. Nearly all of them suffered from the vital defect of looking at the world as if it consisted of Europe and America only. China, India, and other Eastern countries were almost ignored. These proposals, though much discussed and welcomed, never had a chance of adoption in the pre-war world. No major country had the least intention of countenancing them. And so the time for this passed, when it could have made a difference, and how bitterly must some countries and governments regret this lost opportunity. As the French Republic lay dying, England's Government, compelled by the peril of the hour, made their remarkable proposal for a union with France. It was too late then, as so much has been too late in England's story. But it demonstrated, in a flash, how the old ideas of independent countries, and even of the British Empire, no longer applied.

And yet some people talk still of Dominion Status and the like, not realising that this idea is dead and cannot be revived. Some people again suggested a partitioning of India, on some strange and fantastic basis, forgetting that the world demands not further splitting-up, but a gathering together and a union of nations. It will tolerate no longer the small state.

What about our independence then? Is this not a breaking-up of a present grouping of nations, and how does it fit in the future of world federation? It is perfectly true that we want to end the British Empire because out of imperialism no true federation can emerge. And, in any event, India is not going to remain in this empire, whatever happens. But the independence that we seek has never been looked at as isolation or the mere addition of a new national state to a crowd of others. We have always realised and looked forward to the world gathering closer together, and functioning through a federation or union, which we would gladly join. But to ask us to accept Dominion Status, or to try to impose a particular union on us against our wishes, is something which, in the world context today, is singularly absurd, and is in any event not going to be tolerated by us, whatever the consequences.

The third inevitable change of the war is likely to be the ending of present-day capitalism and the introduction of far more planning and control in the economic system throughout the world. Together with this, capitalist democracy will also change, for it is a kind of luxury system for well-to-do nations, and it will not survive the hard times that will come. Under stress of war this democracy has already gone in many countries.

It will be unfortunate if democracy itself disappears and gives place to forms of dictatorship. There is that danger and we must try to guard against it. But the democracy that can survive will have to be different in some ways and more efficient than the type we have seen fading away in the West.

In this picture that unrolls itself, where do we come in, where does India stand? That has been made clear enough. We are entirely opposed to Nazism and we think that it would be a tragedy if Nazi Germany dominated the world. But we are sick and tired of being imposed upon by British imperialism, even as it passes away, and we would sooner perish than be the tools of this or that imperialism. It is astonishing that even now the independence of India sticks in the throat of the British Government; it is amazing that they still behave in the old lordly way and expect us to carry out their behests. Still they threaten us with pains and penalties. Still they preach to us their homilies. Still they are blind to what is happening. Do they imagine that they are strengthening themselves for this war by the policy they are adopting in India? Do they think that threats and compulsion are the keys to India's heart and India's help? They may get some money in this way, but they are running up an account against themselves in a currency that counts far more than gold or silver. There is anger today in India at what is happening and at the insufferable ways of numerous underlings.

To us waiting patiently for months and deliberately trying not to embarrass the English people in the hour of their trial and distress, this functioning of British imperialism has come as a revelation. Many of us sympathise with the British people but we cannot help seeing that one of the war fronts of Britain today is in India and against us. If that is so we shall face it whatever the consequences. One thing may be taken for certain—we are not going to put up with dictation from any authority.

43. To Abdul Ghaffar Khan[1]

Allahabad
July 18, 1940

My dear Khan Sahab,
Thank you for your letter[2] which I received this morning on my return from Lucknow. I am glad you are better. I still hope that you will come to Poona because the meetings in Poona are of the most vital importance for our future. They may break the Congress or change it out of recognition. Possibly they may be the last meetings that some of us will attend and we may not have the chance of meeting again for a long time. I should like Dr. Khan Sahib also to come.

I was surprised to read Maulana's interpretation of the Delhi resolution. I do not think that was the correct interpretation. In any event the Delhi resolution ought to die a natural death at Poona because there has been no response from the British Government. We cannot remain where we are. We must go ahead. In fact our Provincial Congress Committee has taken steps to do so.

There is going to be a meeting of the Volunteer Committee at Poona on the 28th. I hope that your representative will certainly attend it.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan had resigned from the Congress Working Committee on 8 July 1940 as he disagreed with the Congress decision on the non-violence issue. In his letter of 13 July he had written: "I shall not be able to come to Poona if the All India Congress Committee passes the same resolution there also. I shall be at liberty to tender my resignation from that body as well."

44. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Allahabad
July 18, 1940

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have just returned from Lucknow where we held a meeting of our P.C.C. Council. There were prolonged discussions about the present situation and the interpretation of the resolution of the Working Committee. I am afraid that the recent statements made by Rajagopalachari[2] and Maulana have carried things much further than some of us thought. They have produced an amount of confusion in the Congress mind. I wrote to Maulana that I did not think his interpretation was wholly correct. And in any event he could hardly say that all the fifteen members of the Working Committee held to that interpretation. Prafulla Babu writes to me that he does not agree with Maulana's interpretation. I have had several letters from odd people saying that while they understood the Working Committee's resolution, the Congress President's interpretation of it has given an entirely different complexion.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan writes to me that he does not intend coming to Poona. I think he should come if it is at all possible. Perhaps you could suggest it to him. He further says that if the Working Committee's resolution is accepted by the A.I.C.C., then he will have to resign from the A.I.C.C. also. So far he has resigned from the Working Committee only. He mentioned in this connection Maulana's interpretation.

I am reaching Bombay on the 23rd morning. I should like to see you that day if you are in Bombay.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On 10 July 1940, Rajagopalachari had stated: "It is for Britain to consider, whether it is worthwhile to get a free India when she has lost France although seemingly we ask for a big price. Those who read the Congress resolution in anger, will not see its essence. The spirit of friendship and voluntary alliance that is contained in it can be seen only if a disinterested mind is brought to bear on it." And on 11 July 1940, he had said: "The defence of India is now an integral part of the defence of Britain. This is the key to understanding the resolution of the Working Committee. If our offer to throw in the full weight of the Congress in the defence efforts is accepted by the British government we should be enabled properly to fulfil our undertaking."

I have refused to say anything to the press about the new Orissa Ministry.[3] I hope however that you will take strong and swift action against those Congressmen who are helping it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. The Nationalist Party of Orissa had considered the question of forming a coalition ministry with Pandit Godavaris Misra and some others of the Congress. However no ministry was formed. The Orissa Congress Parliamentary Party expelled the Congressmen who had been prepared to join the new coalition ministry in Orissa.

45. To Peter J. Alvares[1]

Allahabad
July 18, 1940

Dear Mr. Alvares,
I have your letter of the 14th July.[2] The question you have asked me is very very difficult and opinions differ. The Delhi resolution of the Working Committee means essentially that if the independence of India was recognised by the British Government, a vital change was not only made in India but in Britain's attitude to her empire. The imperialist idea was more or less given up. Under such circumstances we could give a certain moral support to England's cause and more especially undertake the defence of our own country. It would be open to us then acting in our own interests, if we so chose, to give further assistance to the war effort. The Congress President's interpretation as you rightly point out goes further than this and I am not sure that he is wholly correct. But it is not our practice to criticise each other in public, more especially as the matters are likely to be clarified within the next two weeks by the All India Congress Committee. I am writing this to you confidentially and I should not like you to state anywhere about differences in interpretation, etc., among the members of the Working Committee. Of course it is not fair to the public to leave them in a state of confusion, but as I have said above the matter will be clarified very soon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

46. India, China and England[1]

I hope *The Statesman and Nation* will forgive me for reproducing here a poem by Sagittarius which appeared in their issue of May 11, 1940. This poem is entitled *Stand of the Old Brigade* and it was written before Mr. Neville Chamberlain resigned from the Premiership and was replaced by Mr. Winston Churchill.

Members in front of him,
Members each side of him,
Members *behind* him,
Volley'd and thunder'd,
Why had the Nazis won?
Why were we on the run?
What had been left undone?
What would be left of him
If he had blunder'd?

Stormed at from here and there,
Calmly he said "Beware
Lest by land, sea and air
All of our forces are
Shatter'd and sunder'd!
Ours not to set the pace,
Ours not to seize a base,
Ours to pursue our course,
Bound for another place
When battle thunder'd
Though the whole Nazi race
Conquer'd and plunder'd".

Back from the Norway fjord
Stepped the Old Guard aboard,
Safe, while the Commons' horde
Questioned and thunder'd.
No one should lose a seat,
Safe back to Downing Street

1. *National Herald*, 21 July 1940.

He led the Cabinet,
Safe till the next defeat,
While the world wonder'd,
For it had seemed to them
Someone had blunder'd.

"Close up the ranks", he said,
"Hands off the Old Brigade,
Not to be sunder'd
Neutrals, be not afraid!
England, be not dismay'd!
No *one has blunder'd!*"

So England under Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Chamberlain followed a foreign policy of amazing ineptitude which had no moral background and could not even be justified by expediency. They betrayed her friends and encouraged her enemies to become strong. Mr. Churchill warned that Government in a striking speech that the day would come when England would stand friendless in a hostile world. That prophecy proved true.

One remembers now Sir John Simon's defence of Japanese aggression in Manchuria, the failure to check Italian aggression in Abyssinia, the Runciman Mission to Prague and the betrayal of Czechoslovakia, and the slow and cruel murder of Spanish democracy. 'Appeasement' flourished like the green bay tree. It did not stop the war; it only made England friendless and disliked everywhere.

The war came and, so far as Germany was concerned, appeasement had to end. But so far as the fundamental British policy was concerned there was no change. On India's behalf certain vital questions were put to the British Government which were meant to demonstrate whether this policy had changed or not, and whether England still functioned on the imperialist plane. We know the answer as well as the lack of answer. With all our desire to help real democracy and to combat the aggressor, we were forced to the inevitable conclusion that this was a purely imperialist war. So finally the Ramgarh Congress declared.

The growing danger to England, and the possible developments in India and the world, led the Congress Working Committee to give yet again the most earnest consideration to the problem. They passed the two last resolutions which have given rise to so much argument. These resolutions kept our fundamental position intact, and yet they went as far as the Congress could possibly go in offering a way out of the impasse, honourable and profitable alike to India and England. There were risks and dangers for India in this course, but the Working Committee decided to face them.

A practical offer was made in all sincerity; what has been the response? Silence reigns in Simla and Whitehall, but the activities of the British Government in India are even more eloquent than this silence. Thousands of our colleagues have been picked up and put in prison. All our countryside is full of strange stories of compulsion and coercion to get subscriptions for war funds and loans. This is the British Government's way to win the goodwill and cooperation of India.

And now comes news from China. The Burma Road has been closed and the British Government has come to terms with the Japanese Government. The old game of appeasement continues and, as in Spain when the Pyrenees route was closed, supplies are cut off and a gallant

people fighting for their freedom are stabbed in the back; China's answer has already come from the lips of her great leader, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, and it is in the nature of a prophecy for England.[2] England will not win the goodwill of Japan, but she has surely ensured for herself the ill will of China's millions. And the United States of America, on whom England relies so much, how will they react to England's betrayal of China?

We can do little for China, nor can we influence British policy. But we can influence our own policy and the time will come when what we do will count in England and in China. At this time of cruel desertion of China by England, we want to assure our comrades of China that we shall hold by them and we shall not forget the new bonds that have been forged between our country and theirs.

But this is not just a matter of sympathy for China or of disapproval of a certain British policy. India must judge of any action that she takes from the point of view of her own freedom, for only a free India can look after her own interests or be of service to others. This Chinese development, as well as recent happenings in India, clarify the situation, and bring out the motives and objectives of this war. With those motives and objectives we have nothing in common.

We have seen that the British Government cannot accept or tolerate the idea of independence for India. We, on our part, cannot tolerate the idea of Dominion Status or any other status, except that of an independent state. That was the acid test and it has shown that between England's Government and us there is nothing in common. We go our separate ways. The British Empire must inevitably fade away, but India will remain and, in spite of all her present trouble and difficulty, will forge her way to independence and unity and a partnership in a world order.

There has been enough of appeasement of the aggressor. We want none of it, whether the aggressor is German or Italian or Japanese or British.

2. On 17 July 1940, Chiang Kai-shek had stated: "If by closing the Burma route she (Britain) hopes to shorten the war in the Far East, I am sure, on the contrary, she will lengthen the duration and widen the scope of hostilities."

47. Dominion Status is Dead[1]

The recent resolution passed by the Working Committee of the Congress represents my attitude towards India's future and the war. I am quite convinced that if the British Government had been courageous and wise enough to accept India's independence at an early stage of the war, this would have made a tremendous difference in their favour. Such a declaration is an essential preliminary to any other step that we might take in the nature of cooperation.

I might add that while we talk of the independence of India, we realise fully that the future order must be one of interdependence between various nations. But the idea of Dominion Status and the British Empire is dead and we cannot accept any declaration but that of independence.

1. July 1940. From the *National Herald*, 27 July 1940. This was the reply sent by Jawaharlal to Dr. G.S. Arundale's query: "Immediate declaration self-government India will turn tide of war Allies' favour. If you agree, may I have your approval?"

48. Fundamental Policy Unchanged[1]

The Congress still adheres to the policy of nonviolence but the Congress, which is a political organisation, has to look upon the question of the country's defence from a political and not an ethical angle.

Mahatma Gandhi has appealed to all Britons to adopt nonviolence and lay down arms.[2] If I were an Englishman I would not accept that

1. Speech on the Working Committee resolution, Poona, 27 July 1940. From the *National Herald*, 28 July 1940.
2. On 2 July 1940, Mahatma Gandhi had appealed *To Every Briton* "to lay down the arms you have as being useless for saving you or humanity. You will invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to take what they want of the countries you call your possessions.... You will give all...but neither your souls, nor your minds....I want you to fight Nazism without arms or, if I am to retain the military terminology, with nonviolent arms."

advice knowing that my people are not ready to adopt complete nonviolence and the alternative would be slavery, which was certainly worse than violence.

It is impossible for any political organisation like the Congress to lay down its future policy in advance.

I do not think there can be two opinions on the subject of the resolution[3] in a political organisation like the Congress. Nonviolence to which the Congress has been wedded all these days and which still remains its policy has raised our prestige considerably. The Working Committee's statement does not mean that we are going to raise an army immediately. Of what use can a mere army of men be under the present conditions of warfare if we are not properly equipped. Even if every man in India carries a gun we cannot withstand an invader who has modern equipments of warfare. Bombs, tanks, aeroplanes and other mechanical equipment and armaments have to be provided for defence.

When I talk of nonviolence it is only in the political sense and not in the ethical sense. Nonviolence as a political weapon has been tried by us with success for the advancement of our cause and so there is no question of giving it up. The only question is how far are we prepared to go with it. Can you think of an independent state in the present world conditions depending on nonviolence to meet any form of force? We do not know what the world will be like after the war. In some quarters statesmen are thinking in terms of a confederation of states instead of small states existing by themselves. We cannot foresee world conditions emerging out of the war.

It is utter futility under present conditions of warfare to regard a particular class or race as martial and some others as non-martial. The six-foot soldier does not count any longer. What count now are armaments and nothing else.

In the new conditions that will emerge out of the present chaos it will not be possible for us to say that we need not have an army and the Working Committee has only made our position on this question clear.

49. Prudence or Courage ?[1]

There comes a time in the life of every individual, as well as every country, when great decisions have to be made, risks have to be taken, perils have to be faced, so that greater perils may be avoided, and fulfilment of that individual's or nation's objective achieved. If that individual is strong enough to take that decision, he marches ahead with self-confidence and self-assurance, and a sense of fulfilment fills his being; otherwise he joins the throng of the helpless and the dispirited, the cantankerous and those who are always complaining against others. If that nation takes that great decision, it has already justified itself in its own eyes and the eyes of others and strength and greatness come to it as the day follows the night. But if it is afraid of taking that vital step, and doubts and hesitates, and lingers while the world marches on, it sinks into insignificance, without honour and respect, abroad or at home.

Such a time came to us twenty years ago and, under the inspiration of a great leader, we threw the balanced calculations of careful politicians to the winds and made direct appeal to the millions of our people. We took risks gladly, not caring for the consequences, and found joy and strength in our combined endeavour. Out of that tussle and conflict between a nation's soul and a foreign dominating power, modern India took shape. It was a very different India that emerged. The old cringing slavish India was no more and a self-reliant people, conscious of their strength, now faced the world.

We had many failings and weaknesses still and during periods of reaction these became only too evident. Inner weaknesses crept in, communalism spread and spoke and acted in terms of vulgarity and indecency which corrupted our public life. Yet not even this fall from grace could take away that strength and cohesion which we had evolved.

We face again that psychological moment when great decisions have to be made. And not only we but every nation in the world. England, with the greatest stake of all, had this choice before her. For several years her policy had been bereft of statesmanship and she had drifted to disaster. Even when this war began, it was just possible for her to give

1. *National Herald*, 28 July 1940.

a moral basis to her case by willingly giving up her imperialism and really standing for human freedom. We offered her, in all sincerity, the chance to do so. She rejected it.

It was a brave offer that we made, for it is no easy matter to put an end to the hostility of a hundred and seventy years between India and England. Yet we offered to do so, but the only conceivable basis was the independence of India. Months have passed since then and the sands of time have run out. Perhaps it is already too late now and destiny must take its course.

France fell because, in the ultimate analysis, it had a fascist government. England with an imperialist government can never put forward that strength which a great step towards establishing human freedom could have given her. But we realise fully that such considerations are beyond the ken of Simla or Whitehall. They think that they can hold India by force and compel her cooperation. They think very wrongly.

And yet England has shown in her past history a capacity to adapt herself to changing circumstances. Campbell-Bannerman[2] and his Government had the courage to confer freedom on their enemies of the Boer War. In the Irish Treaty of 1921 also the British Government showed vision and statesmanship, though they did not go so far as they might have done. But that vision and statesmanship have been singularly lacking these many years, and today in India have ceased to be so far as the British Government is concerned. The talk addressed to us is petty, selfish, irritating talk which has no relation with reality. That reality demands a liquidation of imperialism itself and the independence of India.

Everyone knows that the British Empire cannot survive. Everyone knows that India must and will be free. And yet they seek to preserve what is doomed to end; they try to hold on to something which already slips from their grasp. They imagine that they can postpone a decision, or allow matters to drift, thinking that India is quiescent, and though resentful, will not show this resentment in action. They allow, as they have so often done in the past, the right moment to pass when the courage to make a great decision was necessary. Those who miss these moments, do so at their peril.

Nearly nineteen years ago a British Conservative statesman, Sir Austen Chamberlain, delivered a remarkable speech in Liverpool. He spoke about the Irish Treaty, which was then being discussed, and referred to the conferment of freedom on South Africa after the war there. He

2. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman (1836-1908); British Prime Minister, 1905-08; after the Boer War achieved a settlement by which responsible government was granted to the Transvaal and the Orange Free State in 1907.

had opposed this in Parliament at the time but he confessed that he had been wrong in doing so:

> I voted against them. I thought it a rash and wicked thing to do. If I could have seen further into the future, if I could have voted on that division with the knowledge I have today, I should have known that the great act of faith was not, as I thought it, the destruction of our policy, but its completion and its fulfilment.
>
> That is the vote that I would undo if I could undo a vote once given. That great act, that daring act of faith, led directly to the reconciliation of the races in South Africa.

Sir Austen, a man who was noted for his caution and prudence, went on to say:

> Now and again in the affairs of men there comes a moment when courage is safer than prudence, some great act of faith, touching the hearts and stirring the emotions of men, achieves the miracle that no arts of statesmanship can compass. Such a moment may be passing before our eyes now as we meet here. I pray to God with all my heart and soul that to each of us to whom responsibility is brought there may be given vision to see, faith to act, and courage to persevere.

In that fervent appeal we can all join in full sincerity. But the world has changed greatly since the days of the South African war and the Irish Treaty, and what might have been an act of courage and faith then, may well fall completely flat today. Today requires something much bigger, vaster, more fundamental. It demands not the constant talk of this empire and that, but the ending of empire and reorientation of the world. It calls out for the full independence of India within the framework of a new world order.

50. The Price of Freedom[1]

I crave the indulgence of this Committee to make a personal statement. We live in strange and stirring times and the responsibility for great

1. Poona, 28 July 1940. *National Herald*, 29 July 1940. Jawaharlal made this statement before the A.I.C.C. and later addressed the session.

and vital decisions has been cast upon us. The world we have known crumbles all around us and the future is dark with uncertainty. New problems arise, new questions are put to us, and we have to find an answer to them. It may be that today's question dies with today, and the answer we frame for it has no application tomorrow. Yet certain fundamental problems remain for us, whatever else changes—the problem of achieving the political and economic independence of India. By that we judge everything else. And whatever minor changes or variations may come our way, our course has been set and we must run it.

Developments have taken place recently in India and in Europe which have far-reaching consequences, and each one of us has had to search in his heart to determine what his course should be. Gandhiji has not parted company from us, for that cannot happen. But he has, for the moment, left us to shift for ourselves, and that, at any time, would have significance.[2] At the present moment of crisis and change it has an even more vital consequence, and the whole structure and future of the Congress is affected thereby. We of the Congress, who have, in common with innumerable others, built up this great organisation and set it on its course, have a terrible responsibility to shoulder. We may not drift away from that set course; we must not change our objective or forget the idealism that has inspired us; we must, at the same time, have a firm grip on reality. We must keep our organisation strong and steady when so much is happening to unsteady it.

It is with this background that I have thought earnestly of the present situation and considered the Delhi resolution of the Working Committee which is before the A.I.C.C. for approval. As a member of the Working Committee, I must share responsibility for it. It is known to you that this resolution was not passed light-heartedly, and that it caused many of us in the Working Committee much heart-searching. This was not because of the resolution itself or its working, which was in keeping with Congress policy as declared from time to time. The independence of India was the foundation of this resolution, and the way suggested for the immediate formation of a provisional national government, as a necessary prelude to the full national government which the people of India would form after a constituent assembly, was the only immediately feasible method. The difficulties in our way lay not in the resolution itself but in the possible implications of it, which might lead us astray. There was that risk and danger, but the situation demanded a lead and a definite course of action, for the sands

2. On 21 June 1940, the Congress Working Committee absolved Mahatma Gandhi of all responsibility for the programme which might be adopted in the future and left him free to pursue his creed of nonviolence in his own way.

of time were running out for Britain and for India. We took the risk hoping that the strength and good sense of the Congress would prevent any going astray, and the declared policy of the Congress would keep us on the right path. Time became an essential factor in the ever-changing situation and it was obvious that the Congress could not stay its hand for long. There had to be a quick decision this way or that. We had waited patiently long enough. There could no longer be a passive acquiescence in matters which were injurious and derogatory to India.

Three weeks have gone by since then and it would appear that only one course of action is left open to us. Yet it may well be that we should put the seal of this Committee's approval on the Working Committee's decision, and then, soon enough, choose our path.

Whatever the future may bring us, it is my conviction that our full freedom will not come without struggle and travail and sorrow. In this world of war and conflict, we may not escape the price of freedom. To expect otherwise is to delude oneself. That future will ultimately depend on the strength of the Indian people and on the organised power of the Congress. To increase that organised strength, therefore, all our energies must be directed. We must think of the immediate future and grasp whatever opportunity that offers itself to advance our cause.

I have been finding it difficult to decide dogmatically on the issues before us. I was never guided by dogmas and slogans but by certain principles. There might be many things which I may love to do and which may result in glorifying me but ultimately I will not be advancing our cause. I have no use for those things. Our one objective is the independence of the country. I am not afraid of internal chaos or other disorders that might be in store for us. Nevertheless I cannot be a party to creating chaos for chaos' sake and I believe none of us will be party to it. The Congress should remain the powerful organisation it has been all these years. It will be no good to the country if the Congress goes to pieces.

I do not want to blaze a trail and leave it to the future to achieve the fruits of it. I want to achieve those fruits now and today, if I see a possibility for doing so. I want to think in terms of power in the immediate future. This has restrained me. The other members of the Working Committee and I have the responsibility for guiding the affairs of the Congress and I feel that the time has now come when we should think in terms of achieving things and not merely in terms of speeches or shouting from platforms.

It may be that the dancing star of independence may emerge out of chaos, but it may also be that nothing but black clouds may emerge. So it may be wise not to create chaos at certain times.

Some people have thought fit to criticise me for my earlier statement that I do not want to embarrass the British Government. They could not expect me to speak in the tones of the market-place. I have spoken with the dignity and responsibility of a statesman who has the privilege to represent a great organisation. We cannot think in terms of petty things like embarrassing Britain. Our aim is something much more noble.

The Communist cause is becoming a weak cause as they have a peculiar manner of irritating others without any reference whatsoever to the circumstances and conditions around them. They talk about workers and peasants. I too know something about workers and peasants, and even today I can hold my own at a meeting of workers and peasants as against the whole Communist Party in India. They get lost in their dogmas and slogans, without bothering to know if these are suitable and have any relation to our country.

The Communists always talk in terms of fight, fight against British imperialism, fight against Congress, fight against everybody round them. I am afraid this can only result in their making enemies of everyone.

I am proud to regard myself as a socialist, but that does not mean that we should do anything to make ourselves ineffective.

I want the Congress to become as powerful an organisation as it could be. I want it to remain the same well-knit, united organisation it has been. I want the wise leadership of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, I want the great captaincy of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. I want the brilliant talents of Rajaji. I want every one of you, comrades, who are the leaders of your provinces and districts.

So I say, we should marshal our forces and not allow any split. We cannot escape a struggle. And, therefore, the fundamental thing is to get ready for it mentally, psychologically and otherwise.

My sympathy for the British faced with a crisis is different from sympathy for the British Government and British imperialism. I do not want you to get confused between these two. I can continue to sympathise with the British people in their hour of trial, but that has nothing to do with British imperialism which I want to see humbled.

I do not regard the resolution placed before you as an indefinite resolution. There has necessarily to be a time limit. We cannot go on waiting indefinitely though it will not be right to lay down time limits in our resolutions. We will all have to have some time limit in our own minds. In the course of the next few weeks we will have to take a final decision, and that final decision can only be one decision. I cannot

possibly think of the resolution before us hanging over our heads for ever. We will have to act.

Mahatma Gandhi's interview with the Viceroy has not the faintest connection with the Delhi resolution. And as far as I know—and I am sure that I am correctly informed—there have been no negotiations or correspondence between the Viceroy or any other representative of the British Government and any member of the Working Committee since the Delhi meeting of the Committee.

The British Government's answer to us has only been *nothing doing.* Our answer to this should be to strengthen ourselves and not weaken ourselves in any manner. I admit that there are points included in the resolution which might prove dangerous. But we should not mix up things. The whole basis of our demand has been the acknowledgment of India's independence immediately. We want the constituent assembly, but the constituent assembly cannot be formed immediately and, therefore, we have to think in terms of a machinery that can take over the government immediately on the basis of our independence.

A full-blooded declaration by the British Government has its value when it is followed by the control of the government at the centre and in the provinces by popular representatives. Of course the Viceroy and the Governors and the I.C.S. would continue in the interim period but then against the background of the declaration of our independence. Their presence will not be on the same irritating basis as it had been in the provinces.

I agree that a central assembly as constituted now is certainly not a desirable machinery. But then I cannot think of anything better than that for the purpose of immediate formation of a national government if that becomes possible.

Much has been made of lending material help to Britain in the war. Material help falls under three categories—goods, money and men. As far as goods are concerned I do not think that even as a neutral country I will have any objection to our goods going out in as large quantities as possible to Britain as that will only be to our good. As far as money is concerned I have the strongest objection to money flowing out of the country and I hope that any government that might be formed will stop the flow of money from this country. As for men the decision in this matter must rest with the future government who can judge the question on the basis of existing circumstances.

I request Shri Rajagopalachari to clear one point, and that is, are we going to have this resolution hanging over us indefinitely, say, more than a reasonable period of two or three weeks, if by then we have no

satisfactory response from the British Government? I feel that a reply to this question will clear the atmosphere considerably.[3]

3. Rajagopalachari in his reply said: "I agree with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that this offer cannot be holding the field indefinitely. At the same time I do not like to lay any particular time limit. I can only assure you that the Working Committee will consider this aspect of the question and you need have no worries about it."

51. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Poona
29/7/40

All India Committee confirmed Working Committee's Wardha statement of June 1940 and the Delhi resolution after strong opposition. President stated that the continuance of the present situation was intolerable and that definite further action must be taken soon. Gandhiji's withdrawal has created a new and difficult situation. There are possibilities of inner conflicts. It is necessary to prevent this and prepare for early inevitable conflict on a united basis. Present demand is the unequivocal declaration of Indian independence, immediate establishment of provisional national government at the centre, full powers to responsible elected members of Central Assembly and the formation of a constituent assembly later. There is no expectation of satisfactory response hence the Working Committee is meeting again within a month to determine the future action. There is no question of Congress weakening its present position. In all probability we will be going ahead.

Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

WITH A BURMESE BUDDHIST MONK, 1940

52. To Mrs. Rallia Ram[1]

Allahabad
August 5, 1940

Dear Mrs. Rallia Ram,
I have your letter of the 20th July. There are many difficulties and hard problems before us, but I do not see why you should take such a tragic view of the situation. Every country in the world today is going through a very severe crisis and there are many countries where conditions are infinitely worse than in India. Very probably we shall have a bad time. If so we shall face it and overcome it.

You refer to certain pamphlets and leaflets. I do not quite know which ones you mean. Recently a small notice was issued by us in large numbers asking people not to give forcible donations to the war fund. I do not think this would serve any useful purpose in the Punjab at present and it may not even reach you if I send it. As a matter of fact I have got no copies with me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Mahatma Gandhi Papers from Outside Agencies, National Archives of India.

53. To Mumtaz Shah Nawaz[1]

August 6, 1940

My dear Tazi,[2]
As you have put me a question of a political kind,[3] I am replying immediately in a businesslike way.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Daughter of Begum Shah Nawaz; at this time a Congress supporter, she later joined the Muslim League.
3. On 3 August 1940, Mumtaz Shah Nawaz had written: "I seemed to find in your speech the realization of the inevitable coming struggle, an appeal to Congressmen to close their ranks to unite and to prepare. But in the speeches of the other 'leaders' I did not find anything of that sort. It seems to me that they are prepared to accept what they can get, nor do they seem to be visualizing a struggle... Why is there this apparent difference in your outlook and that of the others? Or ... is there a difference at all?"

The situation in India, as elsewhere in the world, is exceedingly complicated and naturally so, because we are passing through a tremendous period of transition. It seems to me quite inevitable that in India there will be conflict between the popular movement and the British Government and that this conflict cannot long be delayed. It is true that there are people in the Congress who would like to avoid this at all cost. It is also true that there are others who have no intention of avoiding it, and yet others who would welcome it. The position, as it grew up in Poona, was this. There was this conflict mentioned above and there was another inner conflict due to the partial withdrawal of Gandhiji from the Congress. This withdrawal shook up the Congress and brought up all the disruptive influences.

The Delhi resolution that was brought up at Poona was an effort of those who wanted to avoid conflict but that effort had undergone considerable change, so that in view of the attitude of the British Government, there was exceedingly little chance of accommodation. There were risks in that resolution and danger. And, therefore, I did not like it at all, more especially because I knew, that those who were sponsoring it might go to any length. On the other hand, if that resolution was defeated then and there, there was an immediate disruption of the Congress as we have known it. This would have led to complete ineffectiveness in the present. I considered that a very undesirable contingency and wanted to avoid it, knowing that in all likelihood the British Government would continue to play the fool and so we would present a united front in the conflict to come. My anticipation has been justified earlier than I thought.

You are right in saying that I was unnecessarily hard on the Communist members of the A.I.C.C. I was not hard on Communism at all. In fact I spoke in favour of it. But some of the Communist members spoke in a most offensive and aggressive way and I must confess that I was irritated by it. I pointed out that this method of approach was the most futile and it had led, not only here but in other countries also, to complete isolation of the official Communists. I might mention that Iftikhar's speech[4] was good.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Mian Iftikharuddin opposed the resolution and said that the Congress leadership was not fighting for independence but to compromise with British imperialism. The Congress by joining the national government would only help British imperialism.

54. Seva Dal to Continue[1]

The new order issued by the Government of India in regard to volunteering[2] will have far-reaching consequences. The Congress Working Committee will no doubt issue clear instructions in regard to it and so far as our province is concerned the executive of the Provincial Congress Committee will consider the matter.

The government order is comprehensive and yet it is not clear how and in what manner it will be applied. It is clear, however, that the Congress Seva Dal, as our volunteers are called, is not going to be wound up or put an end to its activities because the Government of India have issued an order. That is not our way.

We have at present many training camps for Seva Dal volunteers in the province. In these camps practical and some intellectual training is being given quietly, without any fuss. All these camps will continue functioning. Next Sunday, I am going to Cawnpore in connection with the Congress Seva Dal activities there. This programme will be carried out as arranged.

I should like to add that all Congress Seva Dal volunteers have to take a pledge of nonviolence. This has only recently been specially emphasised by the Congress Working Committee. There is no question also of these Seva Dal volunteers wearing any uniform which might be mistaken for a military uniform. They wear shorts and shirts.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 7 August 1940. *National Herald*, 8 August 1940.
2. On 5 August 1940, the British Government placed a ban on military drill and the wearing of uniforms by members of non-official voluntary organizations.

55. India in Travail[1]

The hounds of war are yet distant from India, but the drums of war are heard here also and their sound grows louder. In India, as in Europe

1. *National Herald*, 9 August 1940.

and the Far East, vast forces are in action breaking up the old world we knew. Behind the physical break-up that is taking place in Europe, there lies mental conflict and travail of spirit. We in India have escaped thus far the physical impact of forces, but we cannot escape this conflict and travail, which is often more distressing than the clash of arms.

It was inevitable that this conflict should develop in the mind of India and should be mirrored to some extent in the Congress ranks. We have been long used to a certain uniformity in Congress work and our arguments have often been based on certain assumptions. But no dogma, whether of religion or of politics, has the same solidity today as it used to have; no assumption goes unchallenged. The world is fluid and seeks new levels before it solidifies afresh. Let us not, therefore, worry overmuch because things are not as they were or as we imagined they were going to be. It is a sign of our vitality and life that we are affected by the changing times and seek to adapt ourselves to them. But in this process of our adaptation we cannot let go the anchor of our faith, nor forget the objective that has shone as a star illumining the gloom of the past and the present.

Behind the resolutions that were discussed at the A.I.C.C. meeting in Poona lay this travail of spirit and mental conflict. We argued with passion and conviction, we even exchanged hot words, and yet it was extraordinary how all of us looked in the same direction, how much there was in common between those conflicting groups, and how each member of the A.I.C.C. gazed at that bright star which beckoned to us. The brotherhood of the Congress, the bond that has held us through storm and tempest, kept us together, as it will hold us in the trials that now seem so near.

There was a danger, however, of this bond snapping under the stress of the moment, and that was the significance of Poona. There was a fear in some people's minds that the British Government might be clever enough to take advantage of the situation. But they gave credit for intelligence where it was not due. More than any group in the world today, the British ruling class in India belong to the shadows that have lost substance and have no place tomorrow, and like all such groups that have had their day, they lose the capacity to act intelligently or even to protect themselves. Nothing is more astonishing than the ineptitude of the British ruling class in England during the last few years, with one notable exception. That exception is the Government of India. Peril and disaster do not teach them any lesson, the nearness of catastrophe has no meaning for minds that are closed and are incapable of understanding. The Old Brigade still continues as of

old, the old gang holds on, imagining that the Colonel Blimps of the empire will triumph. *Quem deus vult perdere prius dementat.*[2]

Poona has come and gone and already the situation is changing and that long argument has little application. If any there were in Poona who imagined that the tiger of imperialism had changed its skin, they must revise their opinion. If any there were who thought that in this hour of grave peril, British imperialism would hand over power to the Indian people, they must realise how mistaken they were. To surrender that power is to put an end to imperialism and the control of India for the sake of British vested interests. That the Old Brigade will not do, though logic and reason and even enlightened self-interest may point that way. *Theirs not to reason why, theirs not to make reply, theirs but to do and die.*

And so we have a fresh ordinance or order dealing with volunteers. We shall probably have ordinances galore. But we shall go our way unperturbed and unaffected, though ordinances come and ordinances go, till the empire itself goes from this land of ours.

Our course is set and we shall run it. There is no stopping, no resting-place, for us till we have created the free India of our dreams.

2. Those whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad.

56. The Parting of the Ways[1]

To say that anything has happened in India which leads to a parting of the ways as between Britain and India is incorrect. For their ways have been separate, as they were bound to be, so long as England was the dominating imperialist power and India was subject to her will. Such a relation could only be based on coercion, and coercion cannot lead to a marching together hand in hand. It can only lead to the dominant party chaining and pulling the other and dragging it against its will, or to a breaking of this chain.

So our ways have lain in different directions and a continuous tug of war has resulted; sometimes the conflict has been psychological and

1. Allahabad, 10 August 1940. Parts published in *Asia*, November 1940. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 373-389.

wordy, sometimes it has been rebellious. In 1857 a bloody rebellion took place and it was suppressed in a ghastly manner. The conflict continued, bitter and persistent, though it was not so obvious on the surface. It took shape in the organisation of the national movement, which spoke softly for a while and then its voice grew harder as it came to represent the real feelings of the people. Another rebellion against the dominating authority took shape, a peaceful one, discarding all methods of violence, but more powerful and widespread than any previous one. The hundreds of millions of India, weary of their long subjection and poverty and exploitation, shed their fear and, looking the dominating imperialism in the face, demanded freedom.

There were many ups and downs, and much suffering and sorrow came to these millions, but there was no looking back for them. The conflict continued in various ways and, meanwhile, the world rushed towards the abyss of self-destruction. India's problem began to be viewed in a larger perspective and in relation to the difficulties that encompassed the world. Though our vision became broader and deeper, and though it tried to peep into the future, yet the problem remained essentially one of Indian nationalism versus British imperialism. India's freedom and independence were the prerequisites for us in order to play our part in the larger world. And in that larger world, also, it seemed to us a sham and a mockery to talk of freedom and democracy, and yet hold on to imperialism.

Fascism and Nazism were anathema to us and the horrors of Central Europe produced a powerful reaction on India. Yet we remembered—how can we ever forget?—the horrors we had witnessed in India. Yet we saw and felt, to the innermost core of our being, the day-to-day humiliation and exploitation of our own people. We were not wise or clever enough to understand that, though fascism and Nazism were definitely bad, imperialism was not so bad after all!

War came in Europe, and we discovered that India had also been declared a belligerent country, without so much as a formal reference or intimation to any representatives of the people of India. The Congress might be considered an unofficial organisation, but there was the Central Assembly, there were the provincial governments enjoying, it was said, provincial autonomy. None of these was told or asked for its opinion.

The air resounded with loud cries invoking freedom and asserting the sanctity of democracy. They sounded good. But we had heard these cries so often before and experienced for ourselves the aftermath. We could not be easily swept away; we were cautious, doubly so because of the way in which the war had been imposed upon us, despite our

repeated warnings. Was this freedom and democracy meant for us also, or only for the favoured mortals who lived in Europe and its extensions? Did it mean that imperialism would go from here and elsewhere?

We inquired from the British Government and asked to be enlightened, so that we might know what course we should pursue. Our inquiries were considered irrelevant and impertinent. Yet the answers that they gave indicated sufficiently clearly that there was no intention and, so far as they were concerned, no possibility of the ending of the imperialist structure in India, no question of power being transferred to the people's representatives. The National Congress had not asked anything for itself. It wanted no jobs in high places, which it could have had even without asking for them. It wanted a declaration of independence for India and a constituent assembly, elected by the people, to frame the constitution of a free India, with full safeguards for the protection of all minority rights.

In the mind and heart of India there was a conflict. There was an intense dislike of fascism and Nazism and no desire to see them win. If India could but be convinced that this war was being fought for a new world order, for real freedom, then indeed India would throw all her weight and strength into it. But imperialism and we were old acquaintances, very old, with many generations of contact. We knew each other, suspected each other, and disliked each other thoroughly. There was this background of one hundred and eighty years of hostility, of exploitation, of bitterness, of promises unfulfilled, of disruptive and reactionary movements encouraged, and attempts to break up the national unity of India. It was no easy matter for us to get over these tremendous hurdles, or remove the complexes that had grown up. Yet we said we would do it, but we could not even attempt it unless a great psychological shock was given to the people, a pleasant shock, which would suddenly change the air of India and get rid of fears and complexes. That pleasant shock could only come by an unequivocal declaration of independence and immediate steps to give effect to the popular will in the carrying on of the administration. Unless this was done, no man in India, no group, could make the people move in the direction of willing association with the war.

Wars today require mass support and even authoritarian countries have to whip up their people by ceaseless propaganda. No war can be fought effectively by a professional army in an atmosphere of public ill will or indifference. So even from the narrower point of view of organising India's defence or India's participation in the war effort, a popular representative government was essential. Imperialism can coerce; it cannot win public approval and goodwill.

The Viceroy and the British Government said "No" to us, and our course seemed to be clear. The Congress governments in the provinces resigned, and parliamentary government in these provinces ceased, because it was not prepared to submit to the British Government's fiat against the wishes of the people it represented. It was the old conflict between king and parliament taking a new shape; the Viceroy and the governors represented the King's Veto, our elected assemblies the will of the people. In western Europe this conflict had raged hundreds of years ago and resulted in establishing the authority of Parliament. A king lost his head in the process in England; another king also lost his head in France. In America a proud and freedom-loving people resisted the authority of a distant king and his ministers and, after a long struggle, established their own freedom.

But in India, in the twentieth century, on the eve of the new order that was promised, in the face of loud declarations in favour of freedom and democracy, parliamentary government, in so far as it existed in the provinces, was suspended. The Viceroy's authority was supreme; he could make laws and unmake them, tax people and coerce them without the slightest reference to any representative body.

The Congress ministries had resigned, it is true, though they had the great majority of the members of the assemblies behind them. They resigned because they could not accept the Viceroy's mandates or the British Government's policy. But the assemblies were still there. The Viceroy or the governors could have dissolved them and had a fresh election. But they knew well that such an election would result in an overwhelming majority in favour of the Congress governments that had resigned. No other ministry was possible, as it could not command a majority. So the only course was for the provincial assemblies to be suspended, no fresh elections, and the Viceroy and governors to exercise dictatorial powers. It was a clear case of conflict between the people and Parliament on the one side and the King's representatives on the other. One party had to be suppressed or to give in. Parliament was suppressed. It was as if Mr. Neville Chamberlain, unable to carry Parliament with him, had advised the King to suspend it and to rule by decree; or President Roosevelt, in a like predicament, had ignored the House of Representatives and the Senate and constituted himself the dictator. We hear a great deal about authoritarianism and dictators and England's chiefs condemn both in resonant and forcible language. Yet in India today there is full-blooded dictatorship and authoritarianism.

Our course was clear. Yet we restrained and held ourselves, even though many amongst us were indignant with us, even though many colleagues of ours found their way to prisons for the offence of

explaining our policy to the people. We were hesitant because we hoped against hope that England's Government, including some progressive and Labour elements, might, in this hour of supreme trial, shake itself out of its deadening imperialism, and act according to its professions. We had no desire to encourage the Nazi rulers in any way; the thought of their domination over Europe and elsewhere was a painful one. We who had suffered as a subject people knew well what this would mean for others. We, of all people, could not tolerate the racial views and racial oppression of the Nazis. The horror that enveloped Holland and Belgium, the supreme tragedy of France, deeply moved us. The imminent peril of England made us feel that we should not add to her difficulties and embarrassments. Though England's ruling classes may have treated us badly and her imperialism may have crushed us, we had no ill will for her people, who were bravely facing peril and extreme danger. We tried hard to find a way out, honourable and advantageous to both India and England. We made new proposals, even going beyond our own mandate given at the last sessions of the Congress at Ramgarh. We pledged ourselves for the organisation of Indian defence and help in the war effort. But we could only do so as free people, with the goodwill and cooperation of India's millions. That freedom must be declared and a provisional national government formed, which would represent not one party only but all the important elements. The fundamental basis for this proposal was the recognition that the imperialist structure had to go.

The Viceroy and the British Government have said a final "No" to us and to India. On the eve of the French collapse, Britain's rulers were unorthodox enough to propose a union of England and France. That was an astonishing proposal. It came too late. But it showed that the British Government had got out of the ruts and could take a big step if the situation demanded it. But where their own interests are so vitally concerned as in India, they still live in the ruts, and not all the shock of war and danger has taken them out. Even an obvious advantage in this war cannot make them give up the special position that imperialism has conferred upon them. They talk complacently still of their empire and of their desire to maintain it, forgetting, perhaps, that the word, which sounds so good to them, is a symbol to us of our subjection, degradation and poverty.

I repeat that it is incorrect to say that there is any new parting of the ways, for our ways never lay together. But this declaration of the British Government means the final breaking of such slender bonds as held our minds together, it means the ending of all hope that we shall ever march together. I am sorry; for in spite of my hostility to British

imperialism and all imperialisms, I have loved much that was England, and I should have liked to keep the silken bonds of the spirit between India and England. Those bonds can only exist in freedom. I wanted India's freedom for India's sake, of course; but I also wanted it for England's sake. That hope is shattered and fate seems to have fashioned a different future for us. The way of cooperation is not for us; the hundred-year-old hostility will remain and grow in future conflicts, and the breach, when it comes, as come it must, will also not be in friendship, but in hostility.

I am told that the British Government has been led to believe that we shall tamely submit to their decrees because so far we have been quiescent. Our very restraint appears to have made them think that we were incapable of any action. In this world of force, of bombing aeroplanes, tanks, and armed men, how weak we are! Why trouble about us? But perhaps, even in this world of armed conflict, there is such a thing as the spirit of man, and the spirit of a nation, which is neither ignoble nor weak, and which may not be ignored, save at peril.

To those of us who are intimately connected with Indian politics, the British Government's reply needs no analysis or clarification. To do them justice, it is clear enough and there is no ambiguity. Yet others, perhaps, might miss its significance and be misled by the use of resounding words into thinking that something worthwhile was offered, that the people of India were getting some power in her government.

It is proposed to appoint some non-official Indians to the Viceroy's Executive Council.[2] This Council is no real executive or cabinet; it is merely advisory. Real power rests with the Viceroy, who does not always take members of his Council into confidence. They are heads of departments, advising the Viceroy about their special subjects. All policy emanates from the Viceroy. In fact, his is the responsibility, and he is answerable to the Secretary of State for India in the British Parliament. If the constitution remains unaltered both in law and convention, it makes little difference who or how many people are added to the Council. They do not make an atom of difference to the Viceroy's position, power or authority, except in so far as they might try to influence him by their powers of persuasion.

2. On 8 August 1940 the Viceroy declared that after the war a body representative of the principal elements in India would be set up in order to devise the framework of a new constitution. Meanwhile the decision to enlarge the Central Executive Council and to establish a War Advisory Council would be immediately implemented.

Apart from this, the addition of a few non-officials to the Executive Council does not make an essential difference to it; the majority continues to be of the nominated official and service members, who may have their virtues (which are not very obvious) but who represent the hundred per cent imperialist bureaucratic type. They are completely dependent on the Viceroy for their position and are obsequious to him. They are wholly cut off from the life, thought and activities of the people, and live in an official world of their own. Such efficiency as they have consists in running the old type of police state. They are remote from the modern world and its problems and do not understand them. They belong to an order which has passed elsewhere and which must pass in India.

Then, again, the so-called "representative Indians" who may be appointed to the Viceroy's Executive Council will be chosen, presumably, from groups which are opposed to each other, some completely reactionary. All of them will not even represent the progressive elements in India, and in the Council, they will either neutralise each other or strengthen officialdom. They will not be elected by the people in any way and will not be responsible to them. They will be chosen by the Viceroy in their individual capacity.

It is obvious that the addition of these few odd Indians to the Viceroy's Executive Council means less than nothing from any national point of view, or from the viewpoint of any power being transferred to the people.

The second proposal is the creation of a War Advisory Council composed of an odd assortment of people, including some representatives of the semi-feudal Indian states. This will meet from time to time, apparently to listen to good advice and to act as recruiting sergeants and the like. They will have no executive power of any kind or, indeed, any other power. It will be just a show body of no relevance or importance.

These are the two proposals for the present and, as the Viceroy has made perfectly clear, the British Government do not contemplate the transfer of any power or definite responsibility. Further, it has been stated by the Secretary of State for India that when he refers to "the principal elements in India's national life," he includes the European vested interests in India. Probably the conception of India's 'national' life that Mr. Amery and the Viceroy cherish is one which consists chiefly of British vested interests, Indian feudal princes, big landlords, communalists, and other reactionaries. According to them, these 'national' interests form the warp and woof of our national life and deserve protection and representation. The three or four hundred odd millions of people who live and labour and often starve are an excrescence.

So much for the present and so long as the war lasts. The golden future of our dreams, that new order of freedom of which we hear so much, is envisaged as follows: after the conclusion of the war, "a body representative of the principal elements in India's national life" will be set up to devise the framework of the new constitution. We have seen what, in the opinion of Mr. Amery and the Viceroy, these elements in India's national life are. We shall have (or so it is proposed, but destiny may dispose otherwise) a noble company of bejewelled Maharajahs, belted knights, European industrial and commercial magnates, big landlords and taluqdars, Indian industrialists, representatives of the imperial services, and a few commoner mortals, all sitting together, possibly under the presidentship of the Viceroy himself, drawing up India's constitution. Thus will India exercise her right to self-determination. It will be a pretty pattern that this assembly will produce, with a flower for every vested interest and feudal relic and with the background of British imperialism. Above all, British interests, which are so important a part of India's national life, will have been preserved and given their rightful due. This will be called Dominion Status so that every one may be pleased.

But let it not be forgotten that even this assembly cannot have it all its own way. The British Government cannot divest itself of its high responsibility to protect British vested interests whatever happens. So whatever this assembly decides must be "subject to the due fulfilment of the obligations which Great Britain's long connection with India has imposed upon her and for which His Majesty's Government cannot divest themselves of responsibility."

Meanwhile, it is suggested that the Government will welcome every sincere and practical step taken by representative Indians to reach a basis of friendly agreement on the form that the post-war representative body should take and the principles and outlines of the constitution. These representative Indians must, of course, come from the principal elements of India's national life as outlined above.

If some of us in the outer darkness do not approve of this pattern or fancy this picture, it is, no doubt, our misfortune. If we wonder sometimes how any British Government can presume to make this offer to the Indian people in this age of change and revolution, when empires are disappearing, and the old structure collapses all over the world, it must indicate how simple and naive we are. We ought to have known that imperialisms do not abdicate; they hold on even when it is manifest folly to endeavour to do so. But in our simplicity we cannot help feeling a mild surprise at the fact that leaders of the British Labour Party, those champions of freedom and socialism, should be jointly responsible

for this "offer" to India. But it is no offer. It is a decision announced and intended to be imposed upon us whether we like it or not.

The Congress had ventured to suggest another way—that the constitution should be framed by a constituent assembly elected by adult franchise by the people. This had the misfortune of being a democratic way and of giving an equal importance to each individual. It is true that "the principal elements of India's national life," as conceived by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State, might have found some difficulty in getting elected. Democratic elections are not always just to these important elements, like those representing British or Indian vested interests.

The Viceroy has further stated that: "It goes without saying that they (the British Government) could not contemplate the transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life. Nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a government."

This statement is worthy of close consideration. It is obvious that any system of government that might be proposed for India will find many odd groups and interests opposed to it. No system can possibly be devised which would be unanimously accepted by all those groups and interests and by the four hundred millions of India. All agrarian legislation has to deal with the inherent conflicts between the landlord and the tenant; all labour legislation is looked upon with disfavour by the captains of industry. Even among industrialists in India, there is continuing conflict between British vested interests and the rising Indian industry, which has been deliberately prevented from expanding so that the former might not suffer. So the conflicts of interests run through the whole of national life as it is constituted today, because there are different classes with conflicting interests. Some of us would like to have a classless society and I have no doubt that it will ultimately come. Meanwhile the only known method of resolving these conflicts, other than that of force and coercion, is the democratic method. If any group can hold up a political or economic change, even though this is desired by the great majority, it must lead to a disruption of the state and possibly to civil conflict.

The British Government's statement means that there can be no far-reaching political or economic changes, for some group is bound to object to them. There are Indian reactionary groups that will play that role. Even if no Indian group objects, British vested interests will do so. This means that the *status quo* will largely remain to the great

advantage of British imperialism. This is the way to perpetuate the present order, to make India safe for British vested interests.

The idea that the British Government should be asked to coerce any group is absurd. No one has ever hinted at this, except the reactionaries and communalists, who want the coercion of the progressive elements. The British Government is asked to put an end to all its present coercion; in fact, to retire from the Indian scene as a government. Only then will conditions be produced in India which will induce various elements in India to seek a basis of agreement among themselves, for the alternative is civil war. So long as the British Government remains, it plays off one against the other, and produces an unhealthy desire in the minds of some to seek its favour as against their own compatriots.

The British Government says it will not coerce an important group and impose a system of government which it does not like. The alternative surely is that it will coerce other groups who want that particular system of government. What exactly has the function of the British Government in India been, and what is it today? It is to coerce the Indian people as a whole, every group, in order to maintain its own hold and special position. It is to suppress Indian industry in favour of British industry in India. It is to maintain an army of occupation whose chief function is to coerce the Indian people. It is to uphold Indian princes by coercing their subjects into submission. It is strange to be told that the British Government does not want to use coercion. What else does it do in India?

Again, how is one to tell that an important group does not want a particular system of government? Ordinarily that group votes and other groups vote and then it is possible to know what the feeling or intentions of various groups are. They may come to a mutual arrangement, trying to find some common measure of agreement, or, if unhappily they do not, there is a difference which can only be reconciled by democratic methods, such as impartial arbitration.

The British proposal is ideally suited to prevent any progress or major change. British interests in any case will bar the way. As a matter of fact the government have gone further and stated that in any event they are not going to divest themselves of responsibility for the protection of these interests. Whatever happens, these interests remain; and so, whatever happens, the British financial and industrial structure dominates India. It so happens that this is exactly what we want to get rid of. There can be no progress or lessening of India's appalling poverty till we succeed in this. All else is secondary.

We have an intimate glimpse from the Viceroy's statement of the blessings of Dominion Status which is held out to us as a lure. Many of us, however, are not attracted by this picture.

It may be said that the Viceroy's statement about not coercing any large element which disapproves of a system of government applies chiefly to the religious minorities. Certainly let us agree that there must be no such coercion, and the British Government must on no account employ coercion. Nor should others. But where does coercion come in? Who suggests it?

The Congress proposal was not that the Congress or any party or religious group should be given power. It asked for power for the Indian people as a whole, and wanted the Indian people to decide what they desired in a democratic manner. It went further in its desire to protect all minority interests. It agreed to separate electorates for such minorities as desired it, and laid down that matters relating to minority rights must not be settled by a majority vote. They must be settled by agreement or, if unhappily this is not possible in regard to any particular matter, through an impartial tribunal. It is difficult to conceive any more comprehensive or effective method for minority protection short of throwing overboard all pretence at democracy and establishing a dictatorship of the minority.

So far as the Muslims in India are concerned, they are only technically a minority. They are vast in numbers and powerful in other ways, and it is patent that they cannot be coerced against their will, just as the Hindus cannot be coerced against their will. If the two cannot agree as organised groups, it will be unfortunate for India, and no one can say what the consequence will be. But let us always remember that in political and economic matters people do not function as religious groups. The lines of cleavage are different.

The question of minority protection arises for others, who are neither Hindu nor Muslim. It seems amazing to me that any Indian, whether he is a Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian or belonging to any other faith, should seek protection against his own compatriots from a foreign authority. As a matter of fact, they do not, except a few, who do it not because of religion, but because of vested interests.

Let us be clear about it. This communal question is essentially one of protection of vested interests, and religion has always been a useful stalking horse for this purpose. Those who have feudal privileges and vested interests fear change and become the camp followers of British imperialism. The British Government, on the other hand, delights in using the communal argument to deny freedom, democracy or any major change, and to hold on to power and privilege in India. That

is the *raison d'etre* and the justification of communalism in India. Someone has recently rightly called the Indian princes Britain's fifth column in India. Communalism and its champions might well be included in this column of present-day disrepute. It is not surprising, therefore, that communalists and princes get on well together and co-operate with each other. They have a common purpose to serve—to obstruct India's freedom so that vested interests might flourish.

It is not, of course, enough to dispose of communalism by this simple analysis, although this is the basic explanation. There are so many other factors, and it is perfectly true that mass elements, who may be affected by communalism, have neither vested interests to preserve nor have they any love for British imperialism. To understand how they have been influenced by communalism, and have often acted against their own interests, is to understand how Hitler came to influence mass elements among the German people. The analogy is not complete, but it helps. People are swept away by slogans which appeal to them, and then they are used for entirely different purposes. There has been a strange similarity in the recent development of the communalist technique in India to Nazi methods.

Communalism began in India by a demand for a specified share in services and in representation in the legislatures. It has now developed into an openly anti-national, anti-democratic movement, demanding the partition of India. For a long while it had no programme, constructive or otherwise. It lived on invective, violence and general offensiveness. It is amazing how it vulgarised our public life. It discovered that what it had valued most in the past—separate electorates—brought little good. In fact, they weakened the minority groups. Then by the very force of the logic of hatred and separatism that it had pursued, it had to go to the extreme of demanding a partition of India. The medieval theory of religious groups constituting a political community, which collapsed before an advancing nationalism in Europe, was revived. An idea similar to that of the Crusades, of Christendom *versus* Islam, suddenly appeared (it is said with British inspiration) in India. It was an astonishing throw-back. Whoever else benefited or suffered from it, it was clear that British imperialism was the gainer.

It is curious that even in early and medieval India, this theory never functioned in the Western way. Other religions were welcomed and accommodated. The early Christians came in the first century and found a home. Jews were accommodated, Muslims were welcome to spread their religion and settle down (till invasion brought political conflicts), Parsis came and were absorbed. Later, Muslim rulers

thought in terms of building up a single nation of the Muslim newcomers and the Hindus and others. The great Akbar laid the foundations for this. The new cultural elements were absorbed and a common culture gradually developed, especially in northern India.

And now we are told to go back to the pre-Akbar days, to reverse the process of history, to think in terms of medievalism. When nationalism is giving place to internationalism, an even narrower creed than nationalism is advanced, and this finds favour and protection with our British rulers. When the world is groping blindly towards a real federation of nations, it is suggested that India should be split up into various parts.

Muslim countries—Turkey, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Persia—have long discarded this medieval theory. They are intensely nationalist and are proud of their ancient culture. Some of them deliberately go to their pre-Islamic days to find cultural inspiration. The Chinese Muslims are proud of their Chinese culture and fight for China's freedom. That is the course of history. Indeed, it is a course that has already been run, and the mighty revolution that is taking place in the world today will lay down another course—the way to world federation based on national freedom and a juster economic system. Privilege and vested interest will have to go.

That is the goal of India—a united, free, democratic country, closely associated in a world federation with other free nations. We want independence, but not the old type of narrow, exclusive independence. We believe that the days of separate warring national states should be ended.

We want independence and not dominion or any other status. Every thinking person knows that the whole conception of Dominion Status belongs to past history; it has no future. It cannot survive this war whatever the results of this war. But whether it survives or not, we want none of it. We do not want to be bound down to a group of nations which has dominated and exploited us; we will not be in an empire in some parts of which we are treated as helots and where racialism runs riot. We want to cut adrift from the financial domination of the City of London. We want to be completely free with no reservations or exceptions, except such as we ourselves approve, in common with others, in order to create a federation of nations, or a new world order. If this new world order or federation does not come in the near future we should like to be closely associated in a federation with our neighbours—China, Burma, Ceylon, Afghanistan, Persia. We are prepared to take risks and face dangers. We do not want the so-called protection of the British army or navy. We will shift for ourselves.

If the past had not been there to bear witness, the present would have made us come to this final decision. For even in this present of war and peril, there is no change in the manner of treatment accorded to our people by British imperialism. Let those who seek the favour and protection of this imperialism go its way. We go ours.

57. To Edward C. Carter[1]

Allahabad
August 10, 1940

Dear Carter,
I have just received your two letters—May 28th[2] and June 3rd. I am looking forward to the books[3] you have sent and as soon as I have read them, I shall send them on to S. K. Datta.

The appointment of Stafford Cripps as Ambassador to Moscow certainly showed that the British Government was beginning to develop some understanding of the realities of the situation. But I fear this will not take them far in the present circumstances. Indeed they do not seem to be prepared to go far. In India their attitude has been and is an impossible one. The labour element in the British Parliament has made no real difference so far as India is concerned. It appears that we are in for all manner of conflicts here. Nobody in authority seems to be big enough to keep pace with events. And I suppose that the great forces that have been released all over the world will go their own way till ultimately some kind of an equilibrium is established again.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He had written: "In these very black hours it is encouraging to learn that under Churchill there is a sufficient change in policy to make it feasible for the Cabinet to send Cripps on a public mission. Let us hope that the Cabinet is serious in sending him."
3. Raymond Leslie Buell's *Isolated America* and *War, Peace and Finland.*

58. Time for Action[1]

I have several times thought of coming to Cawnpore as I have heard good reports about the work of the Congress Seva Dal. I had first planned to come here on August 4, but owing to certain urgent engagements the visit had to be postponed. In the week that followed new developments have taken place. The government has prohibited the marching of volunteers in formation. The wearing of uniforms is also banned. Naturally great interest has been aroused in the present rally not only in Cawnpore but also outside.

It is for the Working Committee of the Congress to define its policy in the matter finally. But in the meantime there is the immediate question of what is to be done to various volunteers' camps and rallies planned in the province. Congressmen have got worried as to what is to be done about them. I have, therefore, issued a small statement a few days ago.[2] While we have no desire to deliberately defy the ban we cannot at the same time suspend all our normal activities.

Some parts of the order banning volunteer organisations are not unreasonable but at the same time it is ridiculous in certain respects. The order says there should not be private unofficial armies in a country and that there should be one national army only. But the order goes further to say that drills, marching and other things will not be allowed. It is not only I who am astonished at this sweeping order. Even officials are perplexed. According to it, it is not permissible for even two men to walk on the roads with regulated steps. The government must have considered the matter before issuing this order. The fact, however, is that this government is only accustomed to rule by force.

No king or government can rule against the wishes of the people. I recall the history of Cromwell's revolt in England when following the tussle between Parliament and the King the latter was dethroned and beheaded. A similar thing happened in France during the French Revolution.

The British Government in India is going against the wishes of the people. The governors and the Viceroy want to run counter to the will

1. Address at Kanpur Volunteers' Rally, 11 August 1940. From the *National Herald*, 12 August 1940.

of the assembly. Now the assemblies have ceased to function. The assembly chambers have been closed. But no person, however exalted, be he a king or a governor, can rule against the people's will. It may be that the people for the time being submit to an order, be it out of weakness or for other considerations, but such orders cannot be respected for long. Frequently we read of new regulations or orders from Whitehall or Simla for the first time in newspapers. How can such orders which are issued without the consent of the people be obeyed? I have personally been exercising much restraint but even my patience has come to an end.

Great events are taking place in the world and my view is that neither British nor any other imperialism can last any more. It is a revolutionary period and imperialisms are bound to end. Personally I have always been an opponent of British imperialism. Today British imperialism is in great danger. I have love for the average Englishman. Many Englishmen are my friends and I sympathise with Britain in her present plight. But it is really surprising that even when Britain is in great trouble and danger the utterances from Simla are full of *hauteur* and false pride.

It is a well-known saying that at the time of destruction people lose their heads. Why did the French people lose the war? They were good and brave soldiers. But somehow in their overconfidence they failed to keep pace with the times. They thought that they were well protected behind the Maginot Line. But when the Maginot Line was crossed the French lost their head and could not stem the German advance.

I am really surprised that the British have not learnt the lesson from the downfall of France and are as self-complacent as ever. In Simla there are several highly paid army officials. But they appear to be terribly smug, unaffected by what is happening in Europe, in East Asia and in Indo-China. The British officials in Simla are behaving as of old. Their pronouncements and orders do not give any indication as to whether they appreciate the gravity of the situation.

Cawnpore witnessed one of the biggest processions in recent times and the most spectacular volunteers' rally followed a huge mass meeting. There is an atmosphere of expectancy, determined enthusiasm and cool courage reminiscent of the civil disobedience days. It appears as if the whole of Cawnpore has turned out to offer its support to the Congress as against the reported move of the government to ban even a rally of the nonviolent Seva Dal volunteers.

At several places, funds are being collected forcibly from the people. Many of our friends are at present in jails for raising their voice of

protest against it. In England no force is being used, yet every Englishman thinks it his duty to contribute whatever he can. What is necessary is for the British Government to convince the Indian people that it is their war. But what has Britain done about it? Her attitude has only made it clear that it is an imperialist war.

Practically no responsible Congress leader has expressed his opinion on the Viceroy's recent announcement. No circular was sent that Congressmen should not express their views on it. They have all however thought it proper that whatever is said on the subject should be said by the President or by the Working Committee. This silence on their part has a great significance for it denotes that it is time for action and not words.

The Viceroy's statement that representative Indians would settle the future constitution after the war at first appears attractive to some people. But who will be representative Indians? In answer to a question in Parliament it has been stated that representative Indians included European interests and European vested interests will be safeguarded. Ultimately therefore this proposed conference amounts to an all parties conference, so that Britain will be the final arbiter. The old plea of minorities has also been taken. The announcement stated that all that will be done will only be with the full consent of all the various interests. So even if all Indians agreed European interests would torpedo any proposal.

The question is whether the majority decision can be overruled by any minority. For instance if there is a proposal for the benefit of the peasants can a handful of vested interests overrule it? These are in fact only excuses to deprive the people of their rights.

The Congress has captured the imagination of the people for the last several years. It has no army. But lakhs are ready to follow its lead when it gives the call. The strength of the Congress does not lie in its organisation of volunteers. The Congress is strong and has commanded the willing allegiance of the people in the past because it stands for certain ideals and because it devotes itself to the cause of the country's freedom. In such things lies the power of the Congress and so long as Congress keeps to its ideals it will command the allegiance of the people even if there are no volunteer organisations.

There is an unbridgeable gulf between the Congress demand and the Viceroy's pronouncement and I do not see how we can accept it.

59. On the Ban on Volunteer Organizations[1]

I cannot express an opinion at present on the government order prohibiting military exercise or drill with or without arms by non-official volunteer organizations on behalf of the Congress because different voices should not be raised on important questions. The Working Committee or the General Council of the provincial Congress committee will give a decision on this question. However, I feel it necessary to let you know what you should do in this matter and I have, therefore, issued a statement advising you to carry on the work undertaken in connection with the volunteer movement.

The order is a peculiar one. Some of its points appear to be reasonable, for instance, the prevention of the formation of private armies on communal lines. The formation of such armies is detrimental to the interests of the country. But it is not understandable why it seeks to prohibit the drill and disciplined movements of volunteers.

The Congress governments have resigned over the question of co-operating in the war. Consequently the government has now passed into the hands of the governors which means in effect a challenge to the popular governments. The suspension of the constitution is not an ordinary affair. There is no power in the world which can resist and defy the voice of the people.

Britain was never in greater danger for the last thousand years than it is today. Most of the countries in Europe have been wiped out and France has been defeated. But the British Government do not seem to realize this and their attitude towards India remains unchanged.

The Congress derives its power from the people and does not depend on a volunteer army. The volunteer movement is intended to discipline the people and train them for service. In the National Planning Committee I have considered this problem and suggested compulsory volunteering in schools and colleges. I would also like to recommend that every Indian, whether man or woman, should work for the country for one year. Just as in European countries where there is conscription for the army, so also in India I would like the people to do some compulsory work for the good of the country.

1. Interview to the press, Kanpur, 12 August 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 13 August 1940.

As for the Pakistan scheme I cannot consider the Indian problem apart from world problems. Smaller nations will have to be included in a world federation of which India will also be a member as a free state. If such a federation cannot be formed, India will form its own federation in which neighbouring countries like China and Afghanistan can be included. I appeal to you to strengthen the volunteer organizations on nonviolent lines with a view to serving the country.

60. Free India and the World[1]

The students of the country have to shoulder a great responsibility because the future of the country depends upon them. You should be prepared to undertake the burden in an age of conflict when the fittest alone will survive. The youth of the country should pause to think over the vital problems which lie before them. I feel that there is an awakening among the younger generation and they now take an interest in world problems. Students who shout revolutionary slogans are not always very helpful. Students in European countries are fighting for their country at this critical juncture, and I ask you to bear this in mind as it is your duty to work for the good of the country.

The growing militarism prevailing in Europe is greatly detrimental to the cause of civilization in the long run. The spirit of militarism might make a country powerful for war but it is bound to result in the deterioration of intellectual progress, which in turn will prove fatal to the cause of the country.

India will play an important role in the affairs of the world by becoming a united nation. One man cannot control the destiny of the world, however powerful that man might be. Only those persons who follow international events and understand them correctly can control the destiny of a nation.

I have now begun to think of something more than the freedom of India which, in my opinion, is bound to come. I am now devoted to thinking what part free India will play in the affairs of the world. Free India cannot live apart from other nations. She will have a great

1. Address at a students' meeting at Kanpur, 12 August 1940. From *The Hindustan Times*, 13 August 1940.

share in shaping world history. The question is: how many students or young men of the country are preparing themselves for this task?

Society is a complex organism. If society can be properly organized, everyone will have an opportunity for intellectual or other advancement. In the absence of such a social organization there is a great struggle going on in the world. The world might learn new lessons from the war and a new order might be created which would benefit all. Great empires are engaged in the present war and it might be possible for empires to exist even after the war, but I do not think that the British Empire will exist in its present form. In the world of the future, no country will be able to subjugate the greater part of the world.

There can be no peace unless equal justice is done to all. These are the great problems before us. If we do not keep an eye on the changes taking place in the world, progress is impossible. The present educational system is so defective that the relation between master and pupil appears to be that between employer and employed.

61. A World Federation[1]

I am thinking of India's freedom, but at the same time I am thinking of a world federation of nations. I cannot support the idea of a federation of the British Empire. I am fighting to bring about the end of British imperialism, but I want closer relations with the people of Britain. In fact, the sufferings of the British people are to a great extent similar to those of the Indian people. We are also suffering under British capitalism.

India's relations with China and other neighbouring countries are not very close, and I feel that these should improve. I suggest that if a world federation is not practicable just now, at least India and her neighbouring countries can form a federation of free and equal units.

1. Speech at Banaras, 16 August 1940. From *The Hindustan Times*, 17 August 1940.

Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Maulana Azad have expressed their clear opinions on the Viceroy's statement.[2] The situation is grave. We cannot lose time in fruitless discussions with representatives of the British Government. The ways of the British Government have been such that we will have to face them very soon. There has been so much repression and so many arrests of people interested in the freedom of India. The latest order of the Government of India is about the volunteers' organizations. The Congress Working Committee which is meeting on Sunday will consider the situation and everyone should be prepared to carry out its programme.

This is not the time for organizing meetings and processions and shouting slogans such as *inqilab zindabad*. This is the time for work, hard work—24 hours' work, for the country. The world is passing through a struggle and revolution and the people of India cannot keep themselves out of them. I am sure that a country whose people are brave and efficiently organized will survive.

I was very sorry when I read the news of the fall of Paris, as I knew that France is a great country with a noble civilization. I will be really very sorry if Britain is defeated, as I value its great civilization.

2. Azad refused Linlithgow's invitation to discuss the 'August Offer'. Mahatma Gandhi said: "It widens the gulf between India as represented by the Congress and England." Patel said there was nothing new in the offer "...which makes it worthy of special consideration...history will record that another great blunder was committed by those who...should have known better."

62. To Mohammed Yunus[1]

Wardha
August 20, 1940

My dear Yunus,

Thank you for your letter. We enjoyed the *sharda* and *garma* you sent.

The political situation has taken a very grave turn. It is very unfortunate that at this time when all our united energies have to be harnessed to the task, a new confusion should have arisen in the Frontier

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Province. I have seen the resolution of the Frontier P.C.C.[2] It is good as far as it goes.

I should like you to tell Badshah Khan that, though it is impossible for us to forecast events, it is highly likely that these events may overtake us. Therefore we must keep perfectly ready and prepare and forget all our inner disputes. At any time we may suddenly have to face conflict and we should keep perfectly ready for it.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Mohammed Yunus had written on 11 August 1940 to say that there was a strong move at the F.P.P.C.C. meeting to pass a resolution for a break with the Congress over the Badshah Khan affair. But nothing came of it. See *ante*, item 43.

63. The Arrests in the United Provinces[1]

I must congratulate my comrades of the United Provinces on the arrest of the President of our Provincial Congress Committee.[2] Probably in no province in India have so many hundreds of arrests been made for carrying on Congress activities as in the United Provinces. In spite of this persistent and continuing attack on the U.P. Congress, we have carried on our activities with dignity as disciplined soldiers of the Congress, and we shall continue to do so with redoubled vigour. The arrest of our President is a challenge to us and a warning. The time for our trial approaches, and the zero hour for us, as for others, is near. The cause we have loved and have been privileged to serve, beckons to us again and demands our wholehearted allegiance and service. We have no prizes in store for us. We can only look forward to hardship and suffering and a long parting from those we love.

1. Statement to the press, 21 August 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 22 August 1940.
2. Sri Krishna Datt Paliwal, President of the U.P.P.C.C., was arrested at Farrukhabad on 20 August 1940.

Hard and heavy times lie ahead of us, but we shall transmute that suffering into joy as we march along again on the road we know so well, and there will be peace in our hearts and minds after the travail of the spirit that we have gone through.

Sir Maurice Hallett, the Governor of the U.P., said recently that 'those who are not with us are against us'. If he spoke for the British Government and British imperialism, then let me assure him that we are not with him, and we are entirely opposed to this government and imperialism, and this opposition will not lessen or fade whatever may befall us. We owe allegiance to India alone, and we serve the cause of her freedom.

As soon as I can, I shall join my comrades of the U.P. My place is with them and my heart longs to be by their side. I hope that every Congress committee and Congressman will give all his strength and time to Congress work now and carry the message of the Congress to every nook and comer of the province. Men and women of the United Provinces, dear comrades in many a noble adventure, be ready on your feet now and straighten your backs and let there be no faltering.

64. Nonviolence and the State[1]

There has been much argument on the question of nonviolence and the application of this principle to the governance of a state. A difference of opinion appears to have arisen over this question between Mahatma Gandhi and some members of the Working Committee. This difference may be due largely to misunderstanding. In order to remove any misunderstandings and to facilitate a clarification of the issues involved, the various points that have to be considered are noted below.

This note deals only with the application of this principle to a state and, in particular, to the use of armed forces for the purposes of repelling external invasion or quelling internal disturbances.

As the question has arisen for our consideration, it has two parts: the general principles which should govern our policy as a state and as Congress, and the situation created by the Delhi resolution, subsequently confirmed at Poona. We shall consider these separately.

1. Confidential note written at Wardha, 25 August 1940. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

A. 1. Both because of our adherence to the principle of nonviolence and from practical considerations arising from our understanding of world events, we believe that complete disarmament of all national states should be aimed at, and is in fact an urgent necessity if the world is not to be reduced to barbarism. (It is manifestly impossible for disarmament or even a reduction of armaments to take place while the war is going on. The question can only be considered on a world basis when peace is re-established. But even while the war is being carried on, the objectives of full disarmament should be kept in view, so that public opinion may be cultivated.)

2. Complete disarmament means in essence the ending of wars between national states. This will only take place when the causes of such wars have been eliminated or reduced very greatly. If the causes remain, there will be continuous conflict, political and economic, and this will lead to wars. Therefore, if real disarmament is to come, it is essential to tackle this problem and to remove these causes of conflict and war. These causes are many, but briefly they may be summed up as the suppression of one nation by another, of large masses of people by privileged groups, of the uneven distribution of the world's resources which are essential to modern life in any state, of inequalities between nation and nation and group and group, of haves and have-nots as between nations as well as between groups or classes. There may also be religious or racial causes or historical animosities, but these are likely to die out if the more fundamental causes are removed. Over-population may also be a cause.

3. The most important causes of recent wars have been the desire of industrialised nations to get raw material cheap and markets for manufactured goods. The easiest way to get both of these is to take possession of a country or to get an economic stranglehold over it. This has led to the recent phase of imperialism. This again has led to the latest phase of financial imperialism (like that of the United States of America) where actual possession of territory is not necessary but an economic empire is established. Heavy investments are made in the colonial and subject country and thus vested interests are created to the disadvantage of that subject country. These vested interests require the protection of armed forces. Two kinds of conflicts or wars take place due to rivalries between imperialist powers which lead to major wars, and the suppression of a colonial people, which is usually called a colonial campaign or just police measures against rebellious people.

4. This question is too vast for any detailed consideration here but the main facts stand out. Disarmament ultimately depends on far-reaching changes in the political and economic structure of the world, leading to

a removal of the basic causes of war. So long as this is not done, the conflicts continue and lead to wars. Even the existence of entirely independent national states leads to conflict between them, and some kind of world union or federation will have to be evolved.

5. The question of complete disarmament thus becomes tied up with fundamental political and economic changes in the world. It cannot be tackled, much less solved, by itself.

6. It is said that actual disarmament must be preceded by moral disarmament. There is some truth in this but, as a matter of fact, there is widespread horror of war among the people of all countries, and disarmament would be immensely popular. Only some privileged or interested groups as well as governments may feel differently. As a result of the present war the revulsion for war is likely to be tremendous. But one must not forget that even this feeling lessens and fades away and hatred and the desire to revenge remain, if there is no proper settlement and the seeds of war remain.

7. There is another important aspect of disarmament. What exactly is disarmament? Not to keep an army, or navy, or military aeroplanes may be the obvious answer, yet this is totally insufficient. In modern warfare armies have become secondary factors. The air arm counts for most. Even if military aeroplanes are abolished, civil and commercial planes can very easily be converted for use as bombers. And every chemical factory can produce bombs at a moment's notice. Thus even if a country disarms totally in the ordinary sense of the word, it may be potentially armed and capable of offensive and destructive warfare. It is obviously out of the question to put an end to all chemical factories, which produce essential products for human needs, or to stop commercial and civil flying altogether. Even if this was done outwardly, a country which possessed scientific and technical skill could arm rapidly. It does not cost much, relatively speaking, to produce aeroplanes or bombs.

8. Thus the question of disarmament is full of difficulty and we come back to the prior necessity of removing the causes of war. This means the evolution of a new world order based on a different political and economic system which avoids conflict. This must lead to a world federation and the distribution of the world's resources fairly among different countries and peoples.

9. Another aspect is that, as the world is constituted today, no country can be isolated from the others, nor can it for long follow a policy which is totally at variance with that of others, howsoever much it might try to do so. A country may go one step ahead and give a lead to others but the gap cannot be great.

10. Even if there is total disarmament, it is too much to expect that all anti-social elements in various countries will disappear. Such elements will try to take advantage of the disarmament of a state to seize power by force. It will be necessary, for a longish transitional period, to keep an international police force (apart from national police) to deal with such aggressors.

11. In India a method of meeting armed aggression by nonviolent direct action has been evolved. This may in theory be applicable to a state defending itself, but it obviously requires a high stage of development among considerable numbers of people. If that stage is not reached, then it may not only fail, but lead to disastrous results—hypocrisy, meanness, cowardice and a servile mentality. To say that it must be applied even if the people are not ready for it, means the degradation of the people.

12. On the other hand, India cannot at present imaginably become a military power of first class importance. It can at best become a third rate power and that too at a cost which is almost unbearable for a poor country. It is therefore essential for India that world disarmament should take place.

13. The policy that India should pursue, therefore, is:

i) To stand resolutely for complete world disarmament.
ii) To state that she is even prepared to take a lead in this, if this is at all possible, even though other countries hesitate.
iii) At the same time to realise that an absolute commitment is not possible, as any action taken must depend on external as well as internal factors.
iv) To take every step towards this end, that is possible, during the transitional period, realising that full achievement may not come immediately and some steps may be necessary.
v) To train people, psychologically and otherwise, in nonviolent direct action.
vi) Even if an army has to be tolerated during the transitional period, to give it progressively more of the character of a militia or national police force.
vii) To develop the physique of the people and train them in drill and methods of organised action. This is necessary also from the point of view of giving an outlet for the suppressed militarism of the people.
viii) To build up a civil and commercial air service.
ix) To endeavour by all means in her power to help in bringing about a new political and economic order in the world and thus remove causes of war. In particular, to follow such an

economic policy within the country, and a foreign policy to fit in with this abroad.***

*** Incomplete in the original.

65. Empires Must Go[1]

In this complex and bewildering world, the recent declarations of the British Government in India, and the Congress Working Committee's reply to them, have at least brought a measure of clarity. For over eleven months now there has been statement and counter-statement, and though the issue was clear enough, yet confusion resulted. Some of us may not like what has happened, but we know where we are and what we must do. Difficulties and dangers lie ahead of us, but the travail of the spirit has ended. We have peace now in our hearts though outside there may be conflict and turmoil.

The Viceroy's statement and Mr. Amery's speech[2] have made two points crystal clear. The British Government have no intention whatever of giving up any real power to the Indian people. This is obvious enough in the present, for the appointment of any number of executive councillors does not give power to the people. The Viceroy's Executive Council is not a cabinet and is just a collection of heads of departments who advise the Viceroy and whose advice may be rejected. The Viceroy is still the repository of power, responsible to none in India. The manner of the proposed extension of the Viceroy's Executive Council is also such that the popular will may not have much chance of influencing the policy. We are supposed to be camp followers, carrying the heaviest burdens, and faithfully follow the lead that is given to us.

1. Address at a press conference, Bombay, 27 August 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 28 August 1940.
2. On 14 August 1940, Amery had said: "India cannot be unitary in the sense that we are in this island, but she can still be a unity." The Congress demand for a constituent assembly "really raises the whole unsolved constitutional issue and prejudices it in the sense favoured by the Congress and rejected by the minorities." As for the Viceroy's offer, "...*In spite of the discouraging attitude shown in Congress quarters*, I hope that they will all be willing to take part"; if not, "Lord Linlithgow will, of course, still go ahead prepared to work with those who will work with him...."

The glimpse of the future that is shown to us, that dim and distant future when this uncertain war has ended, does not promise us any kind of freedom. The conditions laid down are such that it is hardly possible for us to fulfil them. It may be that 90 per cent of the Indian people want a particular change or type of government. But no, there is some group which objects. It may be that even 99 per cent are in favour of something, but the princes veto it, or the European vested interests, who are such important elements in India's national life. The result is that the *status quo* must be maintained and British imperialism must flourish and hold the scales; the white man must wearily continue to shoulder his burden. The whole thing is fantastic and absurd and has not even the merit of decent phraseology about it.

The second and even more significant point is the obvious and deliberate attempt to disrupt and break up India. We have long known that British policy was to divide India, but this outrageous attempt to (using the language of the Working Committee's resolution) create, maintain and aggravate every disruptive tendency passes understanding.

There is a lot of talk of the British Government not wanting coercion in India. Who wants coercion of any group? Who has suggested it? Certainly not the Congress. The Congress has never even asked anything for itself. It was easy enough for Congressmen to get soft jobs in the Centre and in the provinces. Evidently the high priests of British imperialism judge the Congress by their own standards and are surprised that we refuse these jobs. We have asked for power to be transferred to the Indian people. Let them choose whom they will; let them decide, with full protection for foreign vested interests. And there lies the rub for the minority issue is made much of, simply because British imperialism will not give up its special privileges and interests.

According to the British argument it is improper to coerce a handful of privileged people, even though they may be foreigners, but it is entirely proper to coerce 99 per cent of the people. What exactly is the British Government in India except a mighty instrument of coercion, intimidation and exploitation? What is it doing today in India except this?

India has suffered many an indignity at the hands of the British power. During the past year we have put up with much, and, in spite of provocation, restrained ourselves. But this new British approach is an insult to every self-respecting Indian. The Congress of course cannot tolerate it unless it is to forget its objective, its tradition, its pledges, its past history, and commit suicide. But this is not just a Congress matter and has a deeper significance. Indian nationalism, the hope of a

free India which we have cherished, India's honour, and the liberties and vital interests of our people are tied up with this. We must, therefore, and will, resist this, whatever the consequences.

The Delhi resolution of the Working Committee, confirmed by the A.I.C.C. at Poona, is dead and gone, past all resurrection. Many of us who did not fancy it may well feel relief at this escape from its dangerous implications. We are back at the Ramgarh resolution, with this difference that it has to be given effect to immediately. The time for waiting is past.

We have seen the temper of the British Government. That demands only one kind of answer from us and I have no doubt that the A.I.C.C. will give it. Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, the Congress and the country will march ahead again along the hard path of suffering and sacrifice which leads to freedom.[3]

There have been some differences between Gandhiji and the Working Committee recently, but these have been greatly exaggerated. The scrapping of the Delhi resolution, after the British response, removes a major obstacle. The Working Committee holds to nonviolence firmly, not only to its application to our struggle for freedom, but even afterwards, in so far as this can be practicable. Our national policy must inevitably be of complete world disarmament. Indeed, it is exceedingly likely that this terrible war will result in disarmament, or else we all revert to barbarism. We must not only stand for world disarmament but be prepared to give a lead in this matter. Naturally a nation's policy is largely governed by external as well as internal factors which cannot be ignored. Nevertheless the Congress must stand for disarmament and try its utmost to push it forward in India as well as in the larger world. There is no hope for the world otherwise.

The war goes on and grows fiercer and more destructive day by day. We talk of peace, and some people ask us to forget our problems or the future, and give all our thought and energy to this work of destruction. But what do we fight for, apart from killing and destroying? That is the question the Congress asked in September last, and this is the question that must be answered if the war has any meaning. The war may go on and on, never-endingly; no formal peace may come and the real end may only be utter exhaustion and destruction and anarchy, and that will be no end. Is it for this that millions fight? Or is it some ideal

3. After rejecting the 'August Offer', the Congress went back to the position taken up at Ramgarh and requested Mahatma Gandhi to resume active leadership of the Congress.

worth striving for, worth dying for? Nazism is bad and brutal, oppressive and pitiless. But so long as it is not realized that the system that British imperialism represents is also bad and must also go, there will be no end. Empires must go. Only a new political and social order will end the horror of the present day.

We have seen how the Viceroy and the Secretary of State and the British Government envisage this new order of the future. With this we can have no compact. We shall oppose it unrelentingly and with all our strength for so long as it continues the new world cannot be born.

66. Cable to the President, India League, U.S.A.[1]

Bombay
29 August 1940

Statement cabled through Associated Press and United Press. Congress rejects Viceroy's offer which perpetuates autocracy.

Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

67. A Challenge to Indian Nationalism[1]

As I sat here gazing at the sea and the stately homes of Bombay and wondering what I might say to you, my mind went back to the thatched huts of the poor people of my province, where my comrades are in the midst of a struggle and are being arrested.

The spark that has been lit in my province is sure to spread throughout India and annihilate many of us and will certainly put an end to

1. Address at Bombay, 1 September 1940. From *The Hindustan Times* and *Free Press Journal*, 2 September 1940.

the British rule in this country. Those of you who have been shouting *inqilab zindabad* at the top of your voices take heed, the time is drawing nearer when your zeal for that freedom will be put to test. I have been receiving telegrams daily informing me of the arrests of my friends and colleagues. I feel that my place is in my province, but I have come to Bombay for a specific purpose, namely, the work before the National Planning Committee and hence I have a responsibility to shoulder here. I hope to finish and go away in three or four days.

I will be back in eight or nine days as I have to go to Wardha for the Working Committee meeting and come to Bombay for the A.I.C.C. meeting for a few days. Perhaps I may not be free to come. I do not care, but my only anxiety is—what is the next step for the people of India? How are we to go ahead? The recent Viceregal declaration has clarified issues.

I am glad that the stalemate has ended. We see our way clearly before us, and this has given us peace of mind. The only question before us now is how to advance and achieve independence for the teeming millions of India.

I shall not weary you by repeating what will form part of the history of free India, for the opportunity has arrived for you and me to make history by relying on our own strength. None of us can remain aloof from this struggle. We will have to take part in it and lead it to a successful termination. It is a revolutionary period and none of us can remain unaffected by it. Personally I do not want to remain untouched. The present war has been going on for the last 12 months and several nations have fallen a victim to it and nobody can predict when the hostilities will cease. The people of Britain are in great difficulties.

When I say we are opposed to British imperialism, it does not mean that we are against the British people. The people of Britain, who are going through untold suffering, are quite different from the British Government. Distant as we are from the theatre of war, we can have only a dim idea of the orgy of devastation that is going on there. My heart is pained to hear what the British or for that matter the German people are facing. But can I forget my duty towards my country? We cannot be taken in by the threat that if we do not cooperate with Britain's war effort and if Britain loses the war we may be enslaved by Germany. Merely raising the bogey of Hitler cannot make us participate in the war effort.

We have taken an oath to secure our freedom which does not mean slavery to Hitler instead of Britain. And we will fight whoever it is who tries to subjugate us. It is true that we cannot fight Hitler or anyone else by armed strength. Thanks to the British Government, we have

no armed forces to combat any aggression. And even though we are unarmed the British Government does not feel quite at ease. They are afraid of four men walking abreast and hence they have banned all military drill.

Although we are unarmed and have not the military strength to face any foreign power, we have the strength of courage to oppose any enemy for the sake of our own freedom. If the necessity arises we would rather die for the freedom of our country following the path of nonviolence.

We are not afraid of Hitler. If ever Hitler succeeds in coming here, I am quite confident that the brave people of India would prefer to die than to capitulate to him, so that all the enemy will find will be one long graveyard.

By the Poona decision we had declared that we were prepared to shoulder the responsibility of defending India on certain conditions. This was a situation fraught with grave danger as we might have been caught in some trap. Though we were confident that we would be able to overcome it, we might have been entangled in a tricky situation.

The British Government through the Viceroy have not only rejected the hand of friendship offered by the Congress, but have raised other issues. My heart was set at ease on reading their reply. I was glad that we were saved from any possibility of falling into a quagmire.

So far, it has been the policy of the British Government to divide and rule. As our national movement gathered strength, the greater were their efforts towards creating conflict among the people and thereby consolidating their position. If they had any forethought they would have at least put into practice what they professed, namely, that they were fighting for democracy and freedom. They would rather be destroyed than grant freedom to India. It looks as if they wanted to create disturbances and weaknesses in India when they realised that they would have to give up India eventually. Their vision is blurred. They strengthened their enemy—Hitler—by refusing to befriend Russia at a time when the Soviet Union was anxious to make friends with them.

They let down their friends and have brought about the downfall of Czechoslovakia and of Spain. Even now their vision is blurred, for they have decided not to part with any power in India.

We tried our best to come to a settlement with them, not because we wanted to help British imperialism as some people seem to think. Our demand was such that had it been conceded we would be fighting not for British imperialism, but for a Britain that had shed all semblance of imperialism. We are ever prepared to come to a settlement with the people of Britain; but never, never, with the British or any other imperialism.

We did not wish to start our struggle in view of the world situation and we tried to avoid it. But our efforts have not met with success. But once our struggle starts nothing can check it, or obstruct it. And it won't remain a political struggle only but will touch the economic and other issues also, so that we won't be talking in terms of this community or that, but on behalf of the crores of people of India whether Hindus, Muslims, Parsis or Christians; I am glad that we will soon get the opportunity to do so.

I do not wish to belittle the Hindu-Muslim problem; in fact it would be futile to do so. But whether this problem is big or small you will find that it is in reality a problem of the upper classes—of those who aspire to share the spoils of office—and the masses are not in the picture.

The Congress had assumed office so as to advance the cause of the people and it gave it up when it found it could not make any progress. I feel, and you will all agree with me, that we should not assume office again until India is free.

I wish god-speed to those who are aspiring to occupy the chairs in the Viceroy's Executive Council. But is that what we have been fighting for, all these 20 years? It is a shame that the Viceroy should have made such an offer at this critical time when countries are falling one after the other. He must be blind-folded to tell us to accept office at such a time.

The way they have rejected our offer of friendship, leaves room for only one reply. And we have to prepare ourselves to give that reply. So far we have restrained ourselves but from now on we shall shout at the top of our voices and declare openly what is in our minds. If the British Government want to force a trial of strength on us we are prepared to accept the challenge. If they are fighting for imperialism we would rather die than participate in such a war.

68. The Next Step[1]

The time has come for the measuring of strength. The struggle may be fierce and prolonged, but the time for negotiations has gone. If given full responsibility we will accept it, but not one iota less than that will do. We might have been led a little astray during the last few years and I

1. Speech at Allahabad, 8 September 1940. From the *National Herald*, 9 September 1940.

was even afraid that we might fall into a trap. But now the one and only path before us is clear and we must tread it.

What immediate form that step will take I do not know but it will be in keeping with our basic creed and principles, and I hope Mahatma Gandhi will lead us. There is no difference between Gandhiji and ourselves now on the immediate practical issues involved.

Whether the struggle is to be civil disobedience on a mass scale or individually is not the pressing issue compared to the fact that the step taken by millions of men should be measured and well considered. The burden of the struggle will fall on every individual.

Two things seem clear. The British Government seems to be out to destroy the rise of nationalism fostered by Indians for the last 55 years. And, secondly, the British are exaggerating our internal differences which are being put up as obstructions. Emphasis is being laid upon disruptive tendencies and various conflicting interests.

The ostensible object given out for the ban on military drill by private organisations was the banning of private armies, but the practical effect of the ban is to prohibit the normal activities of the Congress volunteers. However we do not wish to precipitate a struggle on this issue. The struggle will be on bigger and greater issues.

We do not want Nazi domination in the world because Nazism is wicked and dangerous and Nazis look upon the Asians with hatred and contempt. But we attach no importance to mere appellations.

At the end of the war, which may last long, vast and far-flung empires will not be possible. There will be revolutionary changes and India will not be isolated from them. That is why the question is not one of accepting the enlargement of this or the formation of that council.

69. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
8 September 1940

Your cable. British Government's attitude was fully realised. We had no expectations of Labour members who are following the imperialist

1. Extracts from Government of Maharashtra File No. 532-Q-VII, p. 159, 1940.

line as before.[2] Gandhiji is of the same opinion. He is attending the All India meeting.[3] The theoretical differences between him and the Working Committee regarding the future have been adjusted. Expect his leadership of the movement. There is no question of negotiating with the Viceroy. It is difficult to send instructions as to whether it is better for you to stay there or go to America. Our position is clear as has been repeatedly stated. The Delhi resolution has lapsed. We revert and adhere to the Ramgarh decision whatever the consequences. Future communications are very difficult.

Jawaharlal

2. The Labour Party had supported the 'August Offer' and had said that the Viceroy's statement went a good way in the direction of the establishment of a stable government in India, acceptable to the Indian people. If the door was partly open, it was for India to push it still further and show her capacities for leadership. The government had accepted the principle that the framing of a future scheme should be the responsibility of Indians themselves and this marked a tremendously important advance.
3. Mahatma Gandhi attended the A.I.C.C. session at Bombay on 15-16 September 1940.

70. The Imminence of Satyagraha[1]

We do not desire to carry on satyagraha in connection with the Seva Dal's activities because this Dal has not been trained with any specific purpose of carrying on satyagraha. But the circumstances are such, the issues involved are so fundamental and the march of events may prove so pressing, that we may be in the thick of a struggle very shortly—maybe within a few weeks or even a few days.

The Congress stands for the whole of India and not for any one community in particular. When we asked for a national government we did not say that it should be a Congress government. We said that it should be chosen by the people. We do not want any rights for ourselves. Our demands are for the people. Our strength is not the

1. Valedictory address to Kaumi Seva Dal volunteers, Allahabad, 10 September 1940. From *The Hindustan Times*, 11 September 1940.

strength of office, but of the people. We hold the scales even between the various communities. We tread the middle path—the just path—so that every community can repose its trust in us.

The Congress demand is for complete independence, its form to be decided by the people. The Congress does not want the country to be governed by a few people—even Indians—on the top, but by the people. The country will be given the lead by the A.I.C.C. within a few days.

71. The Twofold Task[1]

The situation in the whole world has become so complicated that it has become very difficult to understand events in their proper perspective but then we have to make efforts to understand them all the same. We must also think back as to what has happened during the last one year since the war started and what steps have been taken by the Congress from time to time. This war is becoming so disastrous day by day that we cannot predict as to what will happen in the near future. This war will bring about a revolution in the world. The map of Europe is changing fast and besides that there are more important problems to be faced. Britain alone is spending crores of rupees every day on this war and other countries are also spending a lot. From where are these countries going to repay the loans that they are incurring to meet the expenditure of war? If this war continues it will change the present position of the world. London and Berlin have been bombed and if the war goes on at this rate involving as it does the great loss of life and wealth, it will result in total ruin which will take years to set right. Although we are far away from the theatres of war yet we cannot save ourselves from its effects and hence we will have to prepare ourselves to face all eventualities.

As soon as the war started the Congress asked the British Government to declare their war aims and the reply given was so vague that it became clear that they were not fighting for freedom as declared by them. After that the Congress ministries resigned and the Congress passed

1. Speech at Bombay, 14 September 1940. From *Bharat Jyoti*, 15 September 1940.

resolutions in favour of satyagraha. The war then took a new turn and there came the fall of Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, France, etc., and if the war continues in this manner it cannot be said as to how long Britain will retain her freedom. British imperialism is bound to come to an end whether Britain wins the war or not. The Delhi resolution was passed in the hope that it could be given effect to easily and immediately. But it was rejected, and we were told that no settlement could be arrived at till we came to an agreement with the minorities and the princes. Even in these troubled times British policy towards India remains unchanged. After all what was the Congress demand? It did not ask for independence or power for the Congress; but all that we demand is a constituent assembly chosen by the people irrespective of caste and creed. The British Government's reply seemed calculated to ridicule us as it is impossible that all the interests in India, especially the princes and the English traders, will ever stand united on a common point. By this attitude the government has tried to put down the Congress through the communal organisations and those other organisations who are opposed to India's freedom. When Britain seeks to divide our country into hundreds of small bits we cannot remain idle. Thousands of Congress workers have been arrested in various provinces. It is our duty to fight back when the nation's unity and integrity are in danger. We have tried our level best to come to an agreement with Britain, but we did not even manage to satisfy the Liberals. Britain is not prepared to part with power even when faced with a life and death struggle. If we do not face the offensive of the government now, then all the progress that has been made by us during the last fifty years will be retarded.

What are we to do in order to achieve our goal of independence? India can launch satyagraha. Some people are of the opinion that we should not start satyagraha now when Britain is in difficulties. Satyagraha has never been launched in order to embarrass the adversary found in a tight corner. But the point is that Congress is the victim of aggression and is likely to be annihilated if it does not stand up and fight. We have not the least sympathy with the Nazis. Supposing we were free and even if we sympathised with Britain we need not necessarily join the war. America sympathises with Britain and is giving her all aid but hasn't actually joined the war. But India has been involved in the war without even being consulted. The question before us is how to protect India and how to achieve our freedom. When demands are being made on India and men and money are being taken by force, it has become our duty to resist this. We have tried our best and have given every kind of chance to the British Government to come to some

settlement on the question of India's freedom. We were prepared to tolerate many things, which in the ordinary course we would not have tolerated, merely because Britain was in trouble.

Our struggle is not against the English nation or the German nation but our fight is against British imperialism as well as all other imperialisms and because the British Government wants to maintain her imperialistic policy, we have to make a stand against the British Government and achieve our country's freedom. Various kinds of attacks are being made on the activities of the Indians. Recently a new order was enforced to suppress the activities of the Congress volunteers who were pledged to nonviolence. It was said that this banning order was meant for the Khaksars, but that is not true as a settlement had been arrived at between the Khaksars and the government when this order was issued and there was no necessity to issue such an order.[2] The British Government has tried its best to strengthen all those forces which are against the Congress. The task before us is twofold. We have not only to achieve our independence but we must also concentrate on counteracting the anti-nationalistic tendencies and strengthen the forces of Indian nationalism.

The reasonable demands of the Congress have been rejected by the government. We have no other alternative but to start satyagraha and in what form it should be started is still to be decided. Mahatma Gandhi is our great leader and he will lead the satyagraha because this weapon was introduced by him. In what form he will start satyagraha will come to light shortly. He will of course in accordance with his usual practice give sufficient notice to the opponent. When satyagraha is started it will affect the whole world. The British Government would do its utmost to crush the movement as they are already involved in war and are risking their lives. We should also be prepared to risk our lives if we want to carry on the fight for freedom; it cannot be done by timidity and cowardliness. We must be prepared to pay the price of freedom which cannot be paid in gold or silver but by laying down our lives. The question is now before the All India Congress Committee and when a great organisation like the Congress takes a step it will have its effect on millions of people and hence it has to consider the issue not only from one point of view but from a hundred points of view. The Congress is a democratic organisation and hence it requires

2. There was a proposal to use the Khaksars as a branch of the civic guards. No agreement was reached between the government and the Khaksars as they insisted on wearing their own uniforms and adherence to their own code of conduct.

the support of the people. The people too must realise their responsibility and be prepared to do their duty.

Congress is the only organisation which has got the power to offer sacrifices and hence it is our duty to strengthen it and to direct it on the right path. When I left Bombay recently I was not sure that I would be able to come to Bombay again because I thought that I might be arrested. Many arrests are being made in India and will be made in the future but this will not stop the work of the Congress.

The citizens of Bombay have become slack towards the work of the Congress. Now this sort of slackness will not do because now the real test of ours is ahead and hence we should prepare ourselves to come out successful in the test. It is our duty to get ourselves in readiness to act upon any decision that may be arrived at by the Congress in a disciplinary manner strictly abiding by its principles. If it is decided that only selected persons should take part then only they should do so. Keep yourselves in readiness to act upon the decision of the A.I.C.C., whatever it might be.

72. No Indefinite Bondage[1]

Some critics of the resolution[2] want to launch the movement on a mass scale involving strikes, no-rent campaign, etc; it is no use merely talking of these things; in deciding on important issues like this, we have to take into consideration the prevailing conditions. Personally, I am not opposed to mass movement but if they are to be undertaken only for the sake of slogans, I do not approve of them. I am convinced that Britain cannot keep India in bondage for an indefinite period. Forces are working which will lead to the liberation of India soon.

1. Speech on the A.I.C.C. resolution, Bombay, 16 September 1940. From *The Hindustan Times*, 17 September 1940.
2. The resolution said: "The A.I.C.C. cannot submit to a policy which is a denial of India's natural right to freedom... The A.I.C.C. sympathize with the British people...can have no ill will against them, and the spirit of satyagraha forbids the Congress from doing anything with a view to embarrass them. But this self-imposed restraint cannot be taken to the extent of self-extinction. The Congress must insist on the fullest freedom to pursue its policy based on non-violence."

Imperialism is on the wane though I am not sure if it will die out completely. What we are concerned with is, who is the best man to lead the country and what is the most practical solution to the problem facing India. Critics of the resolution have failed to take note of this vital factor and have even gone to the extent of using language which is not worthy of them. They have failed to understand the resolution in its proper spirit.

India has every right to launch a struggle to assert her elementary rights which are being throttled. The Congress which had been built up through the sufferings and sacrifices of millions of Indians is threatened with self-extinction. The Congress cannot brook this prospect. While we do not want to embarrass the British Government at the present juncture, we cannot also sit quiet allowing our superstructure to be demolished. It is a question of the very existence of the national movement and urge for freedom. If a struggle has been forced on the Congress, no one is to blame but the British Government.

Most of the amendments were not to the point but were in the nature of expression of personal views. I wonder how a responsible member of the House can suggest mass revolt except as a joke.

Question: Will you give an assurance that the Working Committee will not repeat the history of Poona, if the Viceroy sought India's armed assistance?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Poona offer is dead and gone.

73. Gandhi Jayanti[1]

Gandhi Jayanti is here again and the stormy seas surround us and the skies are full of thunder. And yet again the captain of our ship at the helm beckons us and we get ready to embark and face the tempest and the angry waves. So, buckle on your armour of khadi, get ready for the voyage, for the distant shore beckons. With stout hearts and strong arms and this livery of freedom, we shall cross the stormy seas and reach the haven of our desire. Put on khadi, therefore, this livery of

1. *The Hindustan Times*, 17 September 1940.

freedom, and tell the world that you are also a champion of India's independence. Put on khadi and stretch out your hands in fellowship to your brother, the kisan. Put on khadi and thus give a birthday gift to our captain and leader, a pledge and a token that you are also a fellow brother to Swaraj.

74. The Coils of War[1]

The coils of war increasingly strangle the world and men devote their strength and energy to the work of destroying each other and the civilisation they have built up laboriously through the ages. It becomes more and more evident that if this infinite tragedy is to be stopped and avoided in future, the root causes of war and national conflict must be removed, and that the many problems that afflict the world are really interrelated and can only be finally solved together. What happens in Europe is of great consequence to America, to India, to China. What happens in India and China is of equal consequence to America and Europe. War is indivisible now; once started, it spreads and affects the rest of the world. So is peace indivisible, and so also is freedom. If the world is to have peace and freedom, it cannot have it in parts. We in India desire full independence for this great country, so that we may grow and develop and play our part in cooperation with other countries, in the progress of humanity. But we realise that our freedom is intertwined with world freedom. Because of this we are intensely interested in the freedom of China and our whole-hearted sympathy has gone out to her people in their heroic struggle against aggression.

India, more perhaps than any other country, stands for peace. Even in our national struggle we have adopted peaceful methods and shown our readiness to pay the price of freedom in our own suffering. We want a democratic free state in India cooperating with all other peoples and nations in the establishment and maintenance of peace, progress and freedom.

In the destruction and desolation that grips the world, the great free Republic of the United States of America has a special responsibility to

1. Bombay, 19 September 1940. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

bear, for countless eyes from all over the world look up to it for leadership in the paths of peace and freedom. That peace and freedom will only come when fascism as well as imperialism have ended and no nation or group dominates over another.

To the people of America we send our greetings and our assurance that we shall stand by them in everything that leads to this peace and freedom.

75. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Bombay
19/9/40

. . .Behind Gandhiji's friendly words lies a firm and unyielding attitude.[2] Rajni Patel was arrested on arrival here.[3]

Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. On 16 September 1940, Mahatma Gandhi had declared: "I wish to make it clear that we do not wish ill to Britain. We do not want her defeated. At a time when Britain is engaged in a life and death struggle we do not want to embarrass the government." Independence was no longer the immediate issue. "Our demand is for freedom of speech" and if this were rejected a campaign of nonviolent civil disobedience would be inevitable.
3. On 17 September 1940.

76. On the Verge[1]

For many months past friends and acquaintances come and whisper: Do you know that lists of Congressmen have been prepared for immediate arrest as soon as the signal is given. Every district and every town has such lists, possibly even our village *mandals*. There is list A and

1. *National Herald*, 28 September 1940. Reprinted in *The Unity of India*, (London, 1941), pp. 391-394.

list B, or whatever it is called, and, it may be, other lists also. All manner of questionnaires are issued confidentially to the district authorities and passed on by them to the smaller officials. Who are the principal Congress workers; what is their status and income; what are their failings; can they be bought over or influenced? The Seva Dal especially demands attention and must be fully enquired into. Where does the money come from for Congress work, and how is it spent?

So this whispering has continued and there has been some excitement among our friends and the general public. But curiously enough Congress workers, who ought to have been affected the most by these rumours and happenings, have remained singularly cold to them. We have long been used to all this and, anyway, why worry?

Now that satyagraha seems at hand, the whispering grows fiercer and all manner of good advice is given to us by our well-wishers. Our letters are opened, our telephone conversations tapped, our bank accounts secretly examined by the emissaries of the government. True. But why worry or grow excited? We are grateful for the solicitude of our friends and value and appreciate their goodwill. But we do not mind overmuch all these preparations made by the government to crush Congress and the national movement. We do not ignore them for we can measure, more accurately than others, what they will amount to in human agony and suffering among our people. Yet we do not grow excited and we pursue the even tenor of our ways, ever ready for the time when the button is pressed and the whole weight of a mighty state machine is turned against us.

Why blame the government? An alien imperialist government must, so long as it exists, function in this way. It must have recourse to coercion, exploitation, methods of terror, corruption, secret services and the like. The Gestapo and the Ogpu must have their counterparts there to shadow and threaten, to punish boys of fourteen with the lash for shouting slogans, and to curb and crush the free spirit of man. If we put up with such a government, why complain of its inevitable ways? If we go to bed with a tiger, why wonder if it digs its claws into us and tries to make a meal of us?

But howsoever calmly we may view the present and the immediate future, there is a tinge of excitement in living on the verge of big happenings, especially when our personal lives are involved. Even those of us of an older generation, who have schooled and trained ourselves and grown somewhat accustomed to sudden changes in our environment, cannot wholly escape this feeling of abnormality. So we try to tie up the loose ends in our lives and work, to pack up our tooth brushes, and generally to prepare ourselves mentally for whatever may come.

On the verge. Not only of satyagraha and big happenings in India but of world upheavals and changes. Mighty things are afoot, and the satyagraha we may begin will merge itself in these great happenings, will influence them and be influenced by them. The people of India will keep step with this changing story of humanity and resolutely pursue the goal they have set before them.

That goal is national independence, social freedom, and world co-operation for peace and progress. It is this that governs all our activities, that fills our minds, and makes our blood tingle and course through our veins, whatever the immediate step we take might be.

For a while we thought that the people of England, with the experience of the past few years of disastrous misgovernment by their leaders, and faced by perils and disaster, might turn away from their old paths and take to new ones. But that was not to be and they still bow down *to their old gods and pin their faith in maintaining their empire. The* appeasers may have failed with Germany but they will continue to appease Franco and the militarists of Japan. Mr. Winston Churchill may have put vigour in the defence against German attack, but Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Halifax, Lord Simon and Sir Samuel Hoare are still there to tell us what the British Government stands for. The Labour Party toes the line.

It was open to the British people to change all this and not only to do the right thing but the profitable thing. Not just to rely on superior violence to crush the Nazi military machine—a risky and doubtful business—but to summon the conscience and active goodwill of the world to their side. To set aside empire and declare themselves in favour of freedom for every nation and people, to proclaim the new order for which people hunger everywhere, to act immediately in accordance with these professions. What an astonishing response that might have evoked all over the world, not only in the subject colonial countries but among the peoples of Europe, now under Hitler's sway. Victory in war depends ultimately on morale, on the demoralisation and cracking up of the enemy. This was within Britain's grasp. But Britain's rulers preferred to hold on to their empire and to stick to imperialism even though this might help Hitler.

They have chosen their path and in doing so have not hesitated to insult and injure the people of India. They have lined up with all the reactionaries in India and have tried to sow the seeds of disruption and civil conflict in this country. They have given us an intimate glimpse into their minds and what we have seen there was not a pleasant sight and we shall not forget it for a long time to come.

We do not know what the future will bring to us, to our country, and to the world. It does not much matter what happens to us as individuals. We shall pass out anyhow sooner or later. But it does matter very much what happens to India, for if India lives and is free, we all live, and if India goes down, then who lives amongst us?

But India will live and live in freedom, for she has not survived through the ages to go down today before insolent might. And there will be no peace in India and no peace between India and Britain till the proud imperialism of England is ended and India is free and independent.

In a recent debate in the British House of Commons (I think it was on the eve of the fall of Mr. Chamberlain's Government during the debate on Norway) Mr. Amery ended his speech by quoting some words of that great Englishman, Cromwell. Mr. Amery was addressing Mr. Chamberlain's Government. I address a larger audience—the British Government certainly, the British financiers who shape policy in India, the British ruling class, viceroys, governors and all who hang on to them. So, in the words of Cromwell, I say:

> You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing. Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go.

77. Settlement with Britain Unlikely[1]

I do not think there is any common meeting ground between Mahatma Gandhi's stand and the Viceroy's viewpoint and, therefore, I am not optimistic of any settlement as a result of the Gandhi-Viceroy talks.[2]

1. Speech at Lucknow, 29 September 1940. From the *National Herald*, 30 September 1940.
2. Mahatma Gandhi met the Viceroy on 27 & 30 September 1940 and demanded the right to preach against participation in the war effort. Free speech was the test of Britain's professed devotion to democracy. The Viceroy asked if Mahatma Gandhi would be satisfied with the liberty allowed to conscientious objectors in England. Mahatma Gandhi replied that this was not enough as the collective conscience of England was belligerent whereas India was a subject country.

The A.I.C.C. at Bombay requested Mahatma Gandhi to reassume leadership of the Congress, which he has agreed to do. Before taking the next step Mahatma Gandhi had decided to see the Viceroy. The talks are as yet continuing in Simla. Mahatma Gandhi is to see the Viceroy again on Monday. But I am not hopeful of an amicable settlement.

Mahatma Gandhi has stated that if a movement is forced on him he might start individual civil disobedience. But let no one be misled by this term in thinking that there will only be a handful of individual civil resisters. There may be thousands. What Mahatma Gandhi means by the term is that the movement must be disciplined and controlled. The mass sympathy will be there all the same.

The Congress volunteers till a short while ago, were going on with their normal activities despite the ban and many have courted imprisonment. They did not stop the drill and the camps because they are afraid of going to jail, but because discipline demanded it.[3] They have stopped their camps out of strength.

I appeal to you to celebrate Gandhi Jayanti with the greatest enthusiasm as this is a significant year when Mahatma Gandhi has reassumed leadership of the Congress. Who knows we may shortly have to launch civil disobedience. I appeal to the people to wear khadi which is the symbol of our struggle for freedom. It is our national uniform and it is every Indian's duty to wear khadi.

We are passing through revolutionary times. Events which took centuries to happen are now occurring in a few months. There is revolution in the air and none can say what is going to happen next. Political events are not the only factors of this great revolutionary era. The fortunes of a war in Europe or Asia alone cannot decide the future. The war in Europe is only a part of the great world revolution now in progress. There are other no less important factors like industrial progress, scientific inventions and social and economic factors which are bringing about changes. The entire economic structure is in the melting pot.

None of the warring nations can carry on without borrowing large amounts. Britain in this war is spending about 16 to 18 crores per day. Even the richest nation cannot afford such heavy expenditure. In the war of 1914-18 Britain could not do without borrowing huge sums from

3. On 18 September 1940, the Congress Working Committee had called upon all Congress organizations to stop all civil disobedience, individual or other, pending definite instructions from Mahatma Gandhi. He regarded this suspension as indispensable for his forthcoming interview with the Viceroy and as a test of discipline.

the U.S.A. But what happened to those loans? Britain ultimately could not pay either the interest or the capital. So even if a nation wins its whole economic structure might break up following the economic strain of a war.

So long as the problem of unemployment and poverty remains unsolved revolution cannot be prevented. The progress of revolution and unrest will continue so long as normality is not restored through the eradication of unemployment and poverty. I stress that it is not only the countries involved in the war which are on the brink of great changes but even distant countries. I am, therefore, greatly surprised when in this era of change and revolution people in India are quarrelling over little things like rights and privileges of various communities. To talk of Pakistan at this hour when small nations are finding it difficult to exist is ridiculous.

British imperialism is bound to end in the near future, though it might not be through our strength but due to the weaknesses of the British Empire itself. Every nation looks to its benefit first, though it should not seek its good by injuring another. At the same time no nation can deviate from its essential duty of regaining and fighting for its freedom. The fight for freedom is India's clear duty and it cannot deviate from that path even though it might mean embarrassment to Britain. If Britain does not want to be embarrassed it is her clear duty to free India. But Britain does not want India to be free irrespective of whether she was embarrassed in her war efforts. She has taken up the plea of minority and vested interests with a view to denying India the right to be free. That is an attitude which no self-respecting nation can tolerate and India will be fully justified if she launched a struggle as a reply to this insulting attitude of Britain.

78. The Role of Kisans[1]

I am explaining to you in the simplest possible language the political situation. You are being exploited and the Congress has pledged to end your poverty and ignorance. The Congress is of the peasants and stands

1. Address at Bharwari, Gorakhpur, 3 October 1940. From the *National Herald*, 7 October 1940.

for them. It has nothing to do with communalism. It is the organisation of the masses. It is the duty of the kisans to become its members and strengthen it more and more.

The British Government has no intention of parting with power. It is creating disruption in our ranks in different ways. It will do its best to keep its tight hold on India, but the Congress will make such designs impossible, as it stands for the salvation of the masses. I do not want anybody to rule India and oppress its masses. I do not want a few individuals to rule India. India will have panchayat raj, where the real representatives of the people would plan its policies and programmes. I want to see India a rich country where the people may have proper opportunities to develop their personalities. Proper education for the children, proper food and proper shelters—it is for this that the Congress stands. When Swaraj comes, do not think that you would be able to sit idle. Your responsibilities will be greater then.

The Congress has shown great patience in dealing with the government. They have patiently waited for one year, but the British Government has not changed its attitude. Mahatmaji gave the government one more chance, but even then the government did not mend its ways. It is monstrous that a nation should be dragged into war despite its wishes. It is for the people of India to decide whether they would participate in the war or not. It is clear that they have nothing to do with the war, when they were not even consulted.

Repression will come in its full swing but that need not dishearten you. We are out for great sacrifices. Join the Congress. Unite together for the onward march. Become volunteers. We have once again to start a movement for the achievement of our goal.

79. Swaraj and Social Justice[1]

I regret that I have not been able to come to the Ashram earlier. It is not because I am not interested in the work. It is very dear to me. But because I think that the wider political work, which I am carrying on, includes a revolutionary change in the social and political structure

1. Address at Harijan Ashram, Allahabad, 3 October 1940. From the *National Herald*, 4 October 1940.

of the country and thus it will ameliorate the conditions of the Harijans. No substantial good can be done to the Harijans without changing the social and political structure of the country.

Swaraj is not merely political but it should create conditions of social and economic justice and lead to welfare of the masses. It does not mean change of officials but change in the fundamentals of the life of a nation. Mahatma Gandhi's greatest contribution is the inclusion of social justice along with political freedom. His desire for social justice has found expression in Harijan work and charkha. These will create conditions of real Swaraj. You should remember this great contribution of Mahatma Gandhi and try to complete the work begun by him. He has infused new life and given a new light to the people of the country.

The cause of degradation of India is untouchability and unless it is removed there is no chance of India rising to her full stature as a great nation among the nations of the world. It is foolish to talk of one being higher and another low when we are all enslaved by a common foreign ruler. It does not become a Brahmin to consider himself superior to a Harijan when he himself is living in continual slavery. If Harijans are given opportunities of education and economic facilities, there is no reason why they should not be able to compete favourably with the rest of society.

To me the greatest religion is humanity. I shall devote myself to its service. I dream of a time when there will be social justice and economic equality.

80. Air Bombing of Cities[1]

I commend this appeal[2] from our friends and comrades in China to the Indian people, especially those who live in cities, and I hope that they will join in the protest and condemnation of this most inhuman and

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 4 October 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 6 October 1940.
2. The Executive Secretary of the Chinese section of the International Peace Campaign had appealed for sympathy and for protests against wanton aerial bombardment of civilians in Europe and China and invited a world-wide demonstration on October 15 against such bombardment.

brutal practice. Aerial bombardment of civilians is bad, whether it takes place in London, Berlin, or Chungking.

We have again emphasized the nonviolent basis of our movement and yet we are apt to take rather casually this quintessence of violence, brutality and inhumanity which the aerial bombardment of cities is making us familiar with. A daily dose of horror dulls even sensitive minds. It is right, therefore, that our comrades in China should draw our attention to this savage practice, which is reducing many a famous and historic city to ruin, and exterminating in this process innocent men, women and children.

81. The Congress and the Kisans[1]

Kisan brethren! A kisan just told me that the kisans of Maharajgunj tehsil are confused and frightened. I did not like to hear this. Those who get frightened and confused so easily can do nothing. I have come to Gorakhpur today and am touring about in this district. A great problem has arisen. It is not known what will have to be done in ten days' time. It will be very beneficial if we understand it and understand it together. I have come here in connection with a very important work—a very big work indeed about which I have been hearing for the last two years.[2] There is a great dispute over it. Shibban Lal Saxena, the leader of this tehsil, used to see me very often and relate the facts. I do not tour now. Three or four years ago I travelled far and wide in this vast country. There were big problems before us. These days the biggest problem before us is about our country. There is the question of labourers and artisans, but the most important is that of the kisans as to the ownership and the possession of the land. Poverty of this country cannot be removed unless this question is solved. Hindus go on pilgrimage. I also used to do so, but my pilgrimage was for Swaraj. But Swaraj was not to be attained. The Swaraj which we want, in which all our Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian and Parsi brethren can participate, has not been attained. The zamindar attempts to

1. Speech at Maharajgunj, Gorakhpur, 6 October 1940. Home Department File No. 3/18/40-Political(I) V.K.W., National Archives of India.
2. See *post*, section 5, item 7.

realise rent from every kisan, whether he be a Hindu or a Mohammedan. Therefore, whether one be a shopkeeper, a kisan or a labourer, the question of religion does not arise. Whatever we do shall be done honestly and the laws and the regulations that we shall frame will be for the whole of India. Therefore it would be beneficial to Hindus and Mohammedans alike to get Swaraj. Our country should have a government of the people. We do not want foreign rule. We are now ruled by the British. You know that even if the collector or any other officer is an Indian the ultimate authority is the British Government. The Governor remains at Lucknow and the Viceroy lives at Simla. The Viceroy draws Rs. 20,000 as his pay and lives in a palatial building. Where does this pay of Rs. 20,000 come from? All that goes from your pockets. The salaries of Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 20,000 are paid from the rent collected from you. These people live upon your own earnings and then rule over you. You should understand who holds the reins. The British rule in our country is a capitalistic one. They want to start such business as may enable them to get all the money of the country. The English capitalists have taken possession of our land. When a land comes under the possession of a capitalist, it is very difficult to get it out from him. This is how all our wealth goes to foreign countries. We must, therefore, remember that we have got to do away with it. Even if high English officials are replaced by Indians, it would be of no avail. It is very difficult to obtain Swaraj unless the capitalistic system is eradicated from India.

We must change the very system. We have got to change it. The government of our country should be on different lines, with the consent and advice of the public and by their panchayat. Who is the *panch* these days? You cannot do anything against them. Leave them alone. You cannot even remove your petty officials like *teshildars* and *thanedars*. You cannot do anything against them. But, if the officers are elected by you, they will not do anything wrong for fear of being removed from office. We want the reins of government in the hands of the public. We may all appoint our own *panchas* in our districts and provinces. If they do not manage properly, they can be replaced by others. We have to establish such a government and put an end to the British capitalistic form of government. When you are in trouble, you run to the collector, to the superintendent and to the Congressmen. You entreat them and are thus put to a lot of trouble. It may be that they may listen to a few, but what will happen to the thousands of your fellowmen? We want that the whole system should be changed, so that your troubles may come to an end. You people can come to me. I am neither a judge of the High Court that I may give any decision, nor have I got the

power to remove your grievances. I can only let you know the way. I have got no medicine which may cure your disease. If there be any injustice we will face it. We should not be afraid of anyone whether he be the highest official, a zamindar or a policeman.

It is twenty years now since Mahatma Gandhi taught us this very lesson. The condition of our country has become so bad due to fear. The capitalistic rule has ruined us. It has destroyed our factories, it led to further unemployment and people began to cultivate land which was divided into small parts. In this manner our business decreased and the whole money started going into the pockets of British capitalists. It is a well-known maxim that one who is poor becomes weak and frightened. He begins to tremble if a *thanedar* rebukes him and gets confused if threatened by a peon. Kisans are much harassed. Mahatma Gandhi came and taught us this lesson—if we strengthen our hearts, our fear will be removed and we shall be united. When everyone works unitedly they gain strength. With a view to make the public strong, I tried all over the country to form *sangathan*. We have brought together Hindus, Muslims and Christians. When we united, our voices carried weight among the high officials. We faced the Englishmen again and again. The power of the British is great, but we have faced it well. But this fight of ours is a nonviolent fight. We were imprisoned. We filled their jails. Then they had to yield. We have weakened the British Government, but have not succeeded completely in turning them out of the country. You should understand that when we face the British Government, the zamindars and the police do not count. Oppression has been going on in your tehsil for the past two or three years. How will you face it? It would be difficult if you are frightened. The British Government wants to crush Swaraj and to create friction amongst us and to break our *sangathan*. They want to create friction between Hindus and Muslims, so that we may be weakened. Had Germany been at war with India, we would have sent our young men to fight in the war. But they did not listen to us and declared that all the Indians should join Britain against Germany in this war, give donations and allow our men to be slaughtered. It was great injustice. We could not tolerate it.

These days the British Government is in great trouble. It is true. There are rumours that irrespective of whether the British lose or win against Germany they will not recognise Swaraj for India. They will only consider it later on, if all the people put in a joint claim after the termination of the war. Do you remember what we asked them—that we wanted Swaraj for our country. There may be complete Swaraj in India. We did not even tell them to go away. Even if we had said

this, we would not have been unjustified, because our *sangathan* is strong. But we did not say this. We said that all those who are 18 years and upwards may be empowered to elect their *panchas* and that all the *panchas* should sit together and whatever they may decide would be acceptable to us. We also said that it was not acceptable to us that big Rajas and Maharajas only may frame laws, because these laws cannot benefit the poor. We want to remove big zamindars who are elected by them. If we leave Swaraj to them, they cannot do any good for the poor. What will we do with a Swaraj in which we have to have as our judges men whom we want to remove?

We have been dragged into this war. Our money and men are being taken away. In other districts a rupee was extorted from each kisan. What else can a kisan do except pay up when *tehsildars* and *chaprasis* set upon them and threaten them with the attachment of their property if they refused to pay. A large number of our men and workers have been arrested in this connection. Those who work for the kisans are arrested at once. When we saw all this going on and our leaders being arrested, we decided that we were not going to sit idle. If the public gets confused, these *tehsildars, chaprasis* and *thanedars* would jump upon them and spoil our twenty years' labour.

We fight only in one way—by the nonviolent method taught by Mahatma Gandhi. When we resolved to start satyagraha we elected Mahatma Gandhi as our commander. Mahatmaji was already our leader, but this time we again elected him as our leader. A meeting was convened and it was passed by a great majority. We want to establish a panchayati raj in this country, but in a fight it is essential to be guided by one man. Therefore, we have elected Mahatma Gandhi as our commander, and asked him how to start the fight. Mahatma Gandhi expressed his desire to see the Viceroy again. He told him (the Viceroy) that if he went on differing with him (Mahatma Gandhi) we would offer opposition. He said this to the Viceroy plainly and the latter told him that he would not listen to him. So we must be ready.

It is not known when and what orders Mahatma Gandhi will give. I will now be going to Ballia and Ghazipur. Thereafter I am going to Wardha where Mahatma Gandhi resides. There will be a sitting of our Committee. Mahatmaji will tell us what we should do. However long Swaraj may take it will be for your benefit. You should now be prepared and remain careful. I have, therefore, come from Allahabad to deliver this message to you. This fight is not going to end in a few days. It will be a long fight. We have resolved to remove the poverty of the kisans somehow or other. It is most likely that we may all lose our lives in this fight, but the people will be benefited by it.

This fictitious *sir* land of the zamindars of Maharajganj is the property of the fifty thousand kisans whose possessions have not been recorded. It is most regrettable. You must have noticed that the big zamindars, taluqdars and *mahajans* placed great obstacles in the way of the Congress in framing the law (Tenancy Act). Even then that law was enacted and passed. But one thing was left out in Gorakhpur district—the cases of those who had been cultivating land for years had not been heard. It is possible that this thing might have been left out for some reason. This can be considered later on. Now the Congress is not in power. Shibban Lal Saxena tried to get your names entered on the records, even then a large number of men were left out. I know that the names of a good number of the kisans have not been entered on the *sir* land. Thousands of people are about to be ejected. The provisions of law framed by us are being contravened. The zamindars today are taking advantage of it.

Formerly I was a *vakil*. I do not practise now and have got no love for those who go to the *vakils*. Therefore, I cannot give any advice. Let me remind you that the question of ejectment in Maharajganj tehsil does not concern only two or four men, but two or four or ten thousands of persons. Therefore we have decided to oppose it. In doing so you will have to face a lot of trouble. But what can be more troublesome than to be dispossessed of our land. I have heard that the same thing is to happen in the Padrauna Tehsil. It is the duty of your district and *mandal* Congress Committees to propagate satyagraha in this connection. You should say it not once, not twice, but again and again, that you are not going to agree to it and that if they want to send you to jails, let them do so. But whenever a big problem arises we should step forward collectively.

I will tell you one thing. I am not going to make any promises, because I am neither a *hakim* nor a court that I can pass any judgment, nor am I a zamindar that I can give you land. One day when the kisans and the public gain strength and the Congress government comes into power, all those ejectment papers will be torn and thrown away. I cannot say when that day will come. But I do promise to you that if anybody is ejected, his land will be given back to him.

Life is full of worries, but do not be confused on account of your troubles. Much change is taking place in the present-day world. You raise and shout slogans. Do you know what is *kranti?* Do you know *inqilab* means to turn over or change. If we change the British Government, it will be called *inqilab*. If we make an end of the zamindari, it will be *inqilab* of zamindars. If we change our social customs, it will

also be an *inqilab*. We shall cause a change in the country. If our public gains strength, it is good, we will manage the country in such a manner that everybody gets work, and those who have got no land may get employment in the factories. They may earn their livelihood somehow or the other. One should get his earnings himself. These days the earnings of the kisans are taken away by the big zamindars, *mahajans* and the government. The remainder of his earnings is spent by the kisan on litigations.

It is my belief that we can drive poverty away from this country, if we change our methods after due consideration. If there is proper distribution of employment in this country, we can remove poverty. There may not be a single beggar in the country. People may work and earn their livelihood and others may not take away their earnings. We want to train each and every child in such a way as to be able to do some work for the country. We do not want to make them *babus*. We want that they should go and work in the fields. The children of our country should be educated. It is this change that we intend to make. We have to uproot the old things and plant the new ones. Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders cannot do this alone. We can all do it together.

The way of Swaraj is very difficult. At least three or four crores of men will have to follow this path. Our Hindu brethren go on pilgrimages and Muslims go on *haj*, but the road to Swaraj is very difficult. If you hear the news of my arrest and that of other big leaders, you need not get confused, but you must understand that the work is going on at a faster speed. When arrests start, news, letters and telegrams are stopped. If you do not get any news it does not matter. I will send information through men. You should now bear in mind that the satyagraha work has started and it must proceed forward. You should explain in your villages that it should be started by a small number at first by the orders of Mahatma Gandhi, and then in large numbers. Tell those who file ejectment suits that you will not leave the possession of land whether they bring judgments of the courts or anything else and that they may do anything they like. We cannot tolerate such injustice.

82. The March of Mighty Events[1]

The war is changing the map of the world and will continue to do so. This war has many problems behind it which have to be understood. The world has never seen such a war. All previous wars were either political or religious or social and the revolutions that followed in their wake affected one or two nations. But the present war is something quite different.

The world has never been so closely linked as it is today. An important incident in one part of the world is bound to influence the entire world. It is indispensable for us to understand the history of the world as it exists today. We cannot blind ourselves to what is taking place in China or Japan or any other country of the world. The problems that the war is going to solve are problems of the world. These problems cannot be of one particular country. It is impossible to solve the problems of America or Japan individually and to leave apart the problem of India, because the world is so closely linked together that solving of one country's problems involves the solving of the problems of other countries. So the steps that we in India have to take must be firm and steady. The present revolution, which confronts the world, is not only political, but is also social and economic.

During the past few years Europe and America have accumulated immense wealth by draining the wealth of Asia. But at the same time unemployment has gone on increasing in those continents, so much so that today the registered figure of the unemployed in America stands at 12,00,000 and in England at 22,00,000. Unemployment always retards the progress of a country. This problem is one of immense importance. The present economic structure of the world has completely failed to solve this problem. It has no solution for it.

A great upheaval swept over Russia and it has changed the present economic structure of the world to a certain extent. That system has solved the problem of unemployment and the Russian Government has assured the people that it has sufficient work for its countrymen. There are many things in Russia with which I might not agree but I think that Russia has at least devised some means to solve the baffling problem of unemployment.

1. Address at Lal Diggi, Gorakhpur, 6 October 1940. From the *National Herald*, 9 October 1940.

It is true that Hitler has usurped the freedom of Germans but he too has driven unemployment out of his country. If we were to choose between freedom and starvation, we would certainly forego freedom than undergo starvation. That is why the whole German nation is behind Hitler today. Other countries, except Russia and Germany, have failed to solve the problem of unemployment. The progress of Great Britain has come to a halt before this wall of unemployment as the system of administration has no solution for it. This problem has to be solved and I think that some phases of it are disappearing in the present war.

We are living in a very eventful period of history and we have to face many odds. There are some among us who are terrified at the march of these events, but there are also those who welcome it. The events will march on whether we face them with a weak and timid heart or we face them boldly and it is only natural that the strong will overpower the weak. But if we face them strongly we have the power to bend the trend of the revolution in our favour.

Big achievements demand equally big sacrifices. If we want to win freedom, we must make sacrifices worthy of that freedom. We must bear in mind that the march of the mighty events of the world will have to be faced and we cannot escape them. But at the same time we must see that we pay the price and do not fail to turn the hour to our advantage.

The war has made it quite clear that there is no place for small nations in the present-day world. We cannot go single-handed. We can no doubt exist in a federation of smaller nations. There is hardly any room for bigger nations. It is becoming impossible for any country to command an empire spread over the entire world. For to do so that country must command all naval bases and must rule over important sea routes; otherwise it might be challenged by other countries. The invention of aeroplanes cannot be ignored nor can we ignore the changes it has wrought in the world.

However mighty a nation might be, it cannot command all air bases and sea routes of the world and so it is impossible for an empire to exist. But such empires as are linked together or federated can exist. Hitler succeeded in forming the European countries into a federation. Such a federation can exist, but empires like those of Great Britain cannot exist. That is why just before the surrender of France, Great Britain had proposed to link the two countries together.

The other important thing which has become quite clear is the changing economic structure of the world. Great Britain is spending a huge sum of between 15 to 20 crores of rupees a day on the war. Nations involved in the war are floating huge loans and borrowing enormous

sums of money from other countries. How long can they do this? They can hold on for some time by introducing paper money and inflating the currency but the way the war is proceeding a stage will soon come where things would become impossible.

This aspect of the war is bound to influence the economic problems of the world. Maybe it might entirely displace gold and silver out of the currency system of the world. What changes will take place cannot be forecast. But it is quite clear that the present system is bound to go out. The revolution which will follow the war will work many changes.

Perhaps to the common mind the word *inqilab* might connote the idea of freedom from British bondage, and no doubt this is included in it, but no *inqilab* can be a real *inqilab* if it cannot wipe out poverty once for all. What are we to do then? India has been dragged into the war unwillingly and in spite of protests. We could have refused to be dragged into it and we had every right to do so, but we restrained ourselves.

We are passing through a revolution and every step that we take forward must be steady. This question of India's participation in the war has been subjected to prolonged discussions and we have tolerated this insult for over a year, but we cannot tolerate it any longer. Mahatma Gandhi, who is a great man and whose views are also great, does not think it proper to embarrass the British Government at such a time. But our silence is interpreted as our weakness.

Attempts are made to aggravate communal matters and it is asserted that India is not fit for democracy, nay, every attempt is made to demolish the edifice of our nationalism. The British think that if their country is being ruined, they must ruin India too. We cannot sit silent when an attempt is being made to divide India. Thousands have been arrested and forced subscription is being levied for purposes of war. Things have become intolerable.

We did not want to resort to satyagraha. All these things came up for consideration before the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. and Mahatma Gandhi was empowered to lead the country. His talks with the Viceroy failed. The time for action has come. When the satyagraha will begin, I cannot say, but it is only a question of days.

The fight for our freedom will also become a part of the world upheaval. It is being asked how the step taken by the Congress can be confined to a chosen few. When the movement starts, none of us know what form it will take. None knew that the Dandi march of Mahatma Gandhi would inaugurate a country-wide agitation. This time too, it will not be confined to a few. All of us will have to join it in some form or

other. At such a juncture a question arises as to what will be the plight of the country if some other country invades India. This question has taken the form of a threat. Happen what may, we are not going to beg the Englishmen to come to our defence. It will be a matter of shame for us. They hold us in bondage and even at this hour of peril, when their very existence is threatened, they are unwilling to restore freedom to us. We will face all odds even if we perish in the attempt.

It is not easy for any country to step into India unless that country brings the whole world under its sway. Japan might try to invade India but bear it in mind, that the battles that are being fought will not be decided in India. They will be decided in the Pacific or in Europe and America. However, the fear that another country might enslave us cannot daunt us and keep us away from a fight to tear away the shackles of bondage.

I have undertaken my present tour of the eastern districts of the U.P. to bring this message of the Congress to every door. But there is a definite reason why I have selected Gorakhpur first of all. I have come to Gorakhpur so many times, because here I can see the most terrible picture of the poverty of the Indian masses. Nowhere in India are tenants so downtrodden. Anyone who looks at the abject poverty prevailing in this district can say that it betrays the worthlessness of those who are responsible for it and that they must be turned out of the country.

How can those, who raise communal issues, link this question of poverty with their communalism. Communal organisations of the country want to divide India into parts, they want to ruin its unity and even wipe out its name. The sacrifices that we have made for decades were made for unity and freedom and for effacing poverty. And the freedom of the country means the removal of the poverty of the tenants and the labourers of Gorakhpur. The question of India's freedom is related to the conditions of tenants and *mazdoors* and is in no way connected with a few seats on the Viceroy's Council.

The agrarian situation in Maharajganj[2] has been very annoying to me. Thousands of tenants are being ejected out of their holdings. I am sorry I cannot help them. I cannot plead their cases in courts. I would certainly advise you to resist the aggression of the police and the zamindars, but at present I do not want to raise any other question. But the problem of Maharajganj cannot be left aside.

A time will come when the *patwari* papers will be burnt and the fields of the tenants would be returned to them. For three years the Congress Government in U.P. laboured to pass the present Tenancy Act for decreasing rental and for ensuring possession on holdings of those in

2. See *post*, section 5, item 7.

whose possession they were. There are some defects in the Tenancy Act which have escaped the notice of its framers. Had the Congress Government remained in office, those omissions would have been set right. But today authorities and zamindars are taking advantage of those defects in the law and are heartlessly ejecting tenants out of their holdings. This problem of Maharajganj will one day become an all-India issue and we will see what we can do.

Then again, the district was faced with the sugarcane crisis of the year 1936-37 due to the follies of the millowners who raised the price of sugar for harvesting huge profits during the war. This too is a baffling problem. Then there is the victimisation of the labourers who took part in the last strike, although the millowners have promised the collector not to resort to victimisation. These are the problems which demand immediate solution in Gorakhpur and if the Government is anxious they can be easily solved in a way that no party need be put to unjust loss. These questions will be placed before the U.P.P.C.C. and before Mahatma Gandhi and the A.I.C.C. when necessary.

I exhort you to muster courage and get ready for the ensuing struggle. The days at your disposal are few and during this period you must strengthen the hands of the Congress by becoming primary members and volunteers and bridging your differences. I do not know when I am to be pushed behind the bars but as long as I am free I will strive to utilise every minute of my time. I appeal to you to use khadi which is the national uniform. With this changing world the country is determined to change its whole appearance and this is no boast and no verbosity, but will be made real.

83. On Mahatma Gandhi's Statement[1]

Congressmen in the United Provinces will have read carefully the statement issued by Mahatma Gandhi.[2] Some of them may think that the

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 16 October 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 17 October 1940.
2. On 13 October 1940, the Working Committee approved Mahatma Gandhi's plan of 'individual satyagraha'. On 15 October 1940, Mahatma Gandhi announced that "direct action will be commenced by Shri Vinoba Bhave and for the time being confined to him only."

steps indicated in that statement are not big enough for the occasion. But I would have you remember that it has been the Congress way to start big movements in a small and sure way. Events themselves are pushing all of us forward and at any time they may come to us in overwhelming measure. Each one of us therefore must do his allotted task in a spirit of perfect discipline and keep ready for all emergencies whenever they might arise. Instructions issued by Gandhiji should be carefully observed and implicitly followed. The Congress and we have to face our greatest trial in the future that is unfolding before us. Let us all be ready for it in a spirit of confidence and without fretting and impatience.

84. On the Detention of Jaya Prakash Narayan[1]

I have learnt from Shrimati Prabhavati, wife of Jaya Prakash Narayan, that she was summoned recently to Hazaribagh Central Jail. Jaya Prakash Narayan is due to be discharged on completion of his sentence in two or three days time. For the last three months he had given up his interviews with his wife and others because of the restrictions placed on them and on his conversations during these interviews by the C.I.D. officers present. On this occasion when Shrimati Prabhavati went to Hazaribagh Jail she did not meet Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan himself but interviewed some of his colleagues. She was informed that they had been given to understand that Jaya Prakash would not be released even on the expiry of his sentence and that he is likely to be detained under the Defence of India Act afterwards. How far this is true I do not know. But it seems to me monstrous that after sentencing a man and making him serve the term of the sentence he should be detained further indefinitely without trial. We may be used to this kind of thing in India but it is a very significant indication of how the British Government in India functions.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 16 October 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 17 October 1940.

85. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

17 October 1940

Your cable. We are fully aware of all the implications. Congress is definite that no settlement is possible except on the basis of unadulterated independence but the present emphasis is on the war issue. The developments are likely to be in the right direction. Effective action must carry the whole of Congress and hence anything leading to disruption is undesirable.

Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

86. Five Years Later[1]

Five and a half years ago, sitting in my prison barrack in the Almora District Gaol, I wrote the last line of my *Autobiography*. Eight months later I added a postscript from Badenweiler in Germany. That *Autobiography*, published in England, had a kindly reception from all manner of people in various countries, and I was glad that what I had written had brought India nearer to many friends abroad, and had made them appreciate, to some extent, the inner significance of our struggle for freedom. Unfortunately this book did not reach the American public and various happenings conspired to delay an American edition. I am happy that at last it is going to appear in a new garb in America.

My publisher has asked me to add to it in order to bring it up to date. His demand is reasonable and I could not deny it. And yet I have found it no easy matter to comply with it. We live in strange times, when life's normal course has been completely upset, and it is difficult for me even to communicate with my publisher. With my approval, my *Autobiography* has now been abridged considerably, for

1. Allahabad, 17 October 1940. Published as Epilogue in the American edition of the *Autobiography* entitled *Toward Freedom*, The John Day Company, (New York, 1941).

much that it contained is perhaps of little interest today, especially to American readers. And yet I do not know what this abridgement is, what has been taken out, what remains. We have been unable to overcome the difficulties of communication which war brings in its train. America seems to be very far away from India now, and sometimes it takes many months for letters to cross the oceans. And then there is the censor.

But a more serious difficulty confronted me. I wrote my autobiography entirely in prison, cut off from outside activity. I suffered from various humours in prison, as every prisoner does; but gradually I developed a mood of introspection and some peace of mind. How am I to capture that mood now, how am I to fit in with that narrative? As I glance through my book again, I feel almost as if some other person had written a story of long ago. The five years that have gone by have changed the world and left their impress upon me. Physically I am older, of course, but it is the mind that has received shock and sensation again and again and has hardened, or perhaps matured. My wife's death in Switzerland ended a chapter of my existence and took away much from my life that had been part of my being. It was difficult for me to realise that she was no more and I could not adjust myself easily. I threw myself into my work, seeking some satisfaction in it, and rushed about from end to end of India. Even more than in my earlier days, my life became an alternation of huge crowds and intensive activity and loneliness. My mother's death later broke a final link with the past. My daughter was away studying at Oxford, and later under treatment in a sanatorium abroad. I would return to my home from my wanderings almost unwillingly and sit in that deserted house all by myself, trying even to avoid interviews there. I wanted peace after the crowds.

But there was no peace in my work or my mind, and the responsibility that I had to shoulder often oppressed me very greatly. I could not align myself with various parties and groups; I did not even fit in with my closest colleagues. I could not function as I wanted to, and at the same time I prevented others from functioning as they wanted to. A sense of suppression and frustration grew and I became a solitary figure in public life, though vast crowds came to hear me and enthusiasm surrounded me.

I was affected more than others by the development of events in Europe and the Far East. Munich was a shock hard to bear and the tragedy of Spain became a personal sorrow to me. As these years of horror succeeded one another, the sense of impending catastrophe overwhelmed me, and my faith in a bright future for the world became dim.

And now the catastrophe has come. The volcanoes in Europe spit fire and destruction, and here in India I sit on the edge of another volcano, not knowing when it may burst. It is difficult to tear myself away from the problem of the moment, to develop the mood of retrospection and survey these five years that have gone by, and write calmly about them. And, even if I could do so, I would have to write another big book, for there is so much to say. I shall endeavour, therefore, as best I may, to refer briefly only to certain events and developments in which I have played a part or which have affected me.

I was with my wife when she died in Lausanne on February 28, 1936. A little while before news had reached me that I had been elected President of the Indian National Congress for the second time. I returned to India by air soon after and on my way, in Rome, I had a curious experience. Some days before my departure a message was conveyed to me that Signor Mussolini would like to meet me when I passed through Rome. In spite of my strong disapproval of the fascist regime, I would ordinarily have liked to meet Signor Mussolini and to find out for myself what a person who was playing such an important part in the world's affairs was like. But I was in no mood for interviews then. What came in my way even more was the continuance of the Abyssinian campaign and my apprehension that such an interview would inevitably be used for purposes of fascist propaganda. No denial from me would go far. I remember how Mr. Gandhi, when he passed through Rome in 1931, had a bogus interview in the *Giornale d' Italia* fastened on to him. I remembered also several other instances of Indians visiting Italy being used, against their wishes, for fascist propaganda. I was assured that nothing of the kind would happen to me and that our interview would be entirely private. Still, I decided to avoid it, and I conveyed my regrets to Signor Mussolini.

I could not avoid going through Rome, however, as the Dutch K.L.M. aeroplane I was travelling on spent a night there. Soon after my arrival in Rome, a high official called upon me and gave me an invitation to meet Signor Mussolini that evening. It had all been fixed up, he told me. I was surprised and pointed out that I had already asked to be excused. We argued for an hour, till the time fixed for the interview itself, and then I had my way. There was no interview.

I returned to India and plunged into my work. Within a few days of my return I had to preside over the annual session of the National Congress. For some years, which I had spent mainly in prison, I had been out of touch with developments. I found many changes,

new alignments, a hardening on party lines within the Congress. There was an atmosphere of suspicion and bitterness and conflict. I treated this lightly, having confidence in my own capacity to deal with the situation. For a short while I seemed to carry the Congress in the direction I wanted it to go. But I realised soon that the conflict was deep-rooted and it was not so easy to charm away the suspicion of each other and the bitterness that had grown in our ranks. I thought seriously of resigning from the Presidency but, realising that this would only make matters worse, I refrained.

Again and again, during the next few months, I considered this question of resignation. I found it difficult to work smoothly with my own colleagues in the Congress executive, and it became clear to me that they viewed my activities with apprehension. It was not so much that they objected to any specific act but they disliked the general trend and direction. They had justification for this as my outlook was different. I was completely loyal to Congress decisions but I emphasized certain aspects of them while my colleagues emphasized other aspects. I decided finally to resign and I informed Gandhiji of my decision. In the course of my letter[2] to him I wrote that: "since my return from Europe I have found that the meetings of the Working Committee exhaust me greatly; they have a devitalising effect on me and I have almost the feeling of being older in years after every fresh experience. I should not be surprised if this feeling was also shared by my colleagues of the Committee. It is an unhealthy experience and it comes in the way of effective work."

Soon afterwards a far-away occurrence, unconnected with India, affected me greatly and made me change my decision. This was the news of General Franco's revolt in Spain. I saw this rising, with its background of German and Italian assistance, developing into a European or even a world conflict. India was bound to be drawn into this and I could not afford to weaken our organisation and create an internal crisis by resigning just when it was essential for us to pull together. I was not wholly wrong in my analysis of the situation, though I was premature and my mind rushed to conclusions which took some years to materialize.

The reaction of the Spanish War on me indicates how, in my mind, the problem of India was tied up with other world problems. More and more I came to think that these separate problems, political or economic, in China, Abyssinia, Spain, Central Europe, India, or elsewhere, were facets of one and the same world problem. There could be no final

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 309-313.

solution of any of them till this basic problem was solved. And in all probability there would be upheaval and disaster before the final solution was reached. As peace was said to be indivisible in the present-day world, so also freedom was indivisible, and the world could not continue for long, part free, part unfree. The challenge of fascism and Nazism was in essence the challenge of imperialism. They were twin brothers, with this variation that imperialism functioned abroad in colonies and dependencies while fascism and Nazism functioned in the same way in the home country also. If freedom was to be established in the world not only fascism and Nazism had to go but imperialism had to be completely liquidated.

This reaction to foreign events was not confined to me. Many others in India began, to some extent, to feel that way, and even the public was interested. This public interest was kept up by thousands of meetings and demonstrations that the Congress organised all over the country in sympathy with the people of China, Abyssinia, Palestine and Spain. Some attempts were also made by us to send aid, in the shape of medical supplies and food, to China and Spain. This wider interest in international affairs helped to raise our own national struggle to a higher level, and to lessen somewhat the narrowness which is always a feature of nationalism.

But, inevitably, foreign affairs did not touch the life of the average person, who was absorbed in his own troubles. The peasant was full of his growing difficulties, his appalling poverty, and of the many burdens that crushed him. The agrarian problem was, after all, the major problem of India and the Congress had gradually evolved an agrarian programme, which though going far, yet accepted the present structure. The industrial worker was little better off and there were frequent strikes. Politically-minded people discussed the new constitution that had been imposed upon India by the British Parliament. This constitution, though giving some power in the provinces, kept the reality of power in the hands of the British Government and their representatives. For the Central Government a federation was proposed which tied up feudal and autocratic states with semi-democratic provinces, and was intended to perpetuate the British imperialist structure. It was a fantastic affair, which could never work, and which had every safeguard that the wit of man could devise to protect British vested interests. This constitution was indignantly rejected by the Congress, and in fact there was hardly anyone in India who had a good word for it.

At first the provincial part of it was applied. In spite of our rejection of the constitution, we decided to contest elections, as this brought us into intimate touch not only with millions of voters, but also others.

This general election was a memorable affair for me. I was not a candidate myself but I toured all over India on behalf of Congress candidates, and I imagine that I created some kind of a record in the way of election campaigns. In the course of about four months I travelled about fifty thousand miles, using every kind of conveyance for this purpose, and often going into remote rural areas where there were no proper means of transport. I travelled by aeroplane, railway, automobile, motor truck, horse carriages of various kinds, bullock cart, bicycle, elephant, camel, horse, steamer, paddle-boat, canoe, and on foot.

I carried about with me microphones and loud speakers and addressed a dozen meetings a day, apart from impromptu gatherings by the roadside. Some mammoth gatherings approached a hundred thousand; the average audience was usually twenty thousand. The daily total of persons attending was frequently a hundred thousand, and sometimes it was much greater. On a rough estimate it can be said that ten million persons actually attended the meetings I addressed, and probably several million more were brought into some kind of touch with me during my journeying by road.

I rushed about from place to place from the northern frontiers of India to the southern seas, taking little rest, kept up by the excitement of the moment and the enormous enthusiasm that met me. It was an extraordinary feat of physical endurance which surprised me. This election campaign, in which large numbers of people took part on our behalf, stirred up the whole countryside, and a new life was visible everywhere. For us it was something much more than an election campaign. We were interested not only in the thirty million voters but also in the hundreds of millions of others who had no votes.

There was another aspect of this extensive touring which gripped me. For me it was a voyage of discovery of India and her people. I saw a thousand facets of this country of mine in all their rich diversity, and yet always with the unifying impress of India upon them. I gazed at the millions of friendly eyes that looked up at me and tried to understand what lay behind them. The more I saw of India, the more I felt how little I knew of her infinite charm and variety, how much more there was for me to find out. She seemed to smile at me often, and sometimes to mock at me and elude me.

Sometimes, though rarely, I took a day off and visited some famous sight near by—the Ajanta Caves or Mohenjo Daro in the Indus Valley. For a brief while I lived in the past, and the Bodhisatvas and the beautiful women of the Ajanta frescoes filled my mind. Some days later I would start with surprise as I looked at some woman, working in

the fields or drawing water from a village well, for she would remind me of the women of Ajanta.

The Congress triumphed in the general election and there was a great argument as to whether we should accept ministries in the provinces. Ultimately it was decided that we should do so but on the understanding that there would be no interference from the Viceroy or the governors.

In the summer of 1937 I visited Burma and Malaya. It was no holiday, as crowds and engagements pursued me everywhere, but the change was pleasant and I loved to see and meet the flowery and youthful people of Burma, so unlike in many ways from the people of India with the stamp of long ages past upon them.

New problems faced us in India. In most of the provinces Congress governments were in power, and many of the ministers had spent years in prison previously. My sister, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, became one of the ministers in the United Provinces—the first woman minister in India. The immediate effect of the coming of the Congress ministries was a feeling of relief in the countryside, as if a great burden had been lifted. A new life coursed through the whole country and the peasant and the worker expected big things to happen immediately. Political prisoners were released and a large measure of civil liberty, such as had not been known previously, was established. The Congress ministers worked hard and made others work hard also. But they had to work with the old apparatus of government, which was wholly alien to them and often hostile. Even the services were not under their control. Twice there was a conflict with the governors, and the ministers offered their resignations.[3] Thereupon the governors accepted the viewpoint of the ministers and the crisis ended. But the power and influence of the old services—the civil service, the police, and others—backed by the governor and buttressed by the constitution itself, were great and could make themselves felt in a hundred ways. Progress was slow and dissatisfaction arose.

This dissatisfaction found expression in the Congress itself and the more advanced elements grew restive. I was myself unhappy at the trend of events as I noticed that our fine fighting organisation was being converted gradually into just an electioneering organisation. A struggle for independence seemed to be inevitable and this phase of provincial autonomy was just a passing one. In April 1938 I wrote to Gandhiji

3. In 1938, the Congress ministers of the United Provinces and Bihar had offered to resign on the question of the release of political prisoners.

expressing my dissatisfaction at the work of the Congress ministries.[4] "They are trying to adapt themselves far too much to the old order and trying to justify it. But all this, bad as it is, might be tolerated. What is far worse is that we are losing the high position that we have built up, with so much labour, in the hearts of the people. We are sinking to the level of ordinary politicians."

I was perhaps unnecessarily hard on the Congress ministers; the fault lay much more in the situation itself and in the circumstances. The record of these ministries was in fact a formidable one in numerous fields of national activity. But they had to function within certain limits, and our problems required going outside these limits. Among the many good things that they did was the agrarian legislation they passed, giving considerable relief to the peasantry, and the introduction of what is called basic education. This basic education is intended to be made free and compulsory for every child in the country for seven years, from the age of seven to fourteen. It is based on the modern method of teaching through a craft, and it has been so evolved as to reduce the capital and recurring costs very greatly, without in any way impairing the efficiency of education. For a poor country like India, with scores of millions of children to educate, the question of cost is important. This system has already revolutionised education in India and is full of promise.

Higher education was also tackled vigorously, and so also public health, but the efforts of the Congress governments had not borne much fruit when they finally resigned. Adult literacy, however, was pushed with enthusiasm and yielded good results. Rural reconstruction also had a great deal of attention paid to it.

The record of the Congress governments was impressive, but all this good work could not solve the fundamental problems of India. That required deeper and more basic changes and an ending of the imperialistic structure which preserved all manner of vested interests.

So conflict grew within the Congress between the more moderate and the more advanced sections. The first organised expression of this took place in a meeting of the All India Congress Committee in October 1937. This distressed Gandhiji greatly, and he expressed himself strongly in private. Subsequently he wrote an article in which he disapproved of some action I had taken as Congress President.

I felt that I could no longer carry on as a responsible member of the executive but I decided not to do anything to precipitate a crisis. My term of office as Congress President was drawing to an end, and I

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 387-389.

could drop out quietly then. I had been President for two successive years and three times in all. There was some talk of my being elected for another term but I was quite clear in my own mind that I should not stand. About this time I played a little trick which amused me greatly. I wrote an article[5] which was published anonymously in *The Modern Review* of Calcutta, in which I opposed my own re-election. No one, not even the editor, knew who had written it, and I watched with great interest its reaction on my colleagues and others. All manner of wild guesses were made about the writer, but very few people knew the truth till John Gunther mentioned it in his book *Inside Asia*.

Subhas Bose was elected President of the next Congress session which was held at Haripura, and soon afterwards I decided to go to Europe. I wanted to see my daughter, but the real reason was to freshen up my tired and puzzled mind.

But Europe was hardly the place for peaceful contemplation or for light to illumine the dark corners of the mind. There was gloom there and the apparent stillness that comes before the storm. It was the Europe of 1938 with Mr. Neville Chamberlain's appeasement in full swing and marching over the bodies of nations, betrayed and crushed, to the final scene that was staged at Munich. I entered into this Europe of conflict by flying straight to Barcelona. There I remained for five days and watched the bombs fall nightly from the air. There I saw much else that impressed me powerfully; and there, in the midst of want and destruction and ever-impending disaster, I felt more at peace with myself than anywhere else in Europe. There was light there, the light of courage and determination and of doing something worth while.

I went to England and spent a month there and met people of all degrees and all shades of opinion. I sensed a change in the average man, a change in the right direction. But there was no change at the top where Chamberlainism sat triumphantly. And then I went to Czechoslovakia and watched at close quarters the difficult and intricate game of how to betray your friend and the cause you are supposed to stand for on the highest moral grounds. I followed this game during the Munich crisis from London, Paris and Geneva and came to many strange conclusions. What surprised me most was the utter collapse, in the moment of crisis, of all the so-called advanced people and groups. Geneva gave me the impression of an archaeological remains of a past age, with the dead bodies of the hundreds of international organisations that had their headquarters there, lying about. London exhibited

5. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 520-523.

tremendous relief that war had been averted and cared for little else. Others had paid the price and it did not matter; but it was going to matter very much before a year was out. The star of Mr. Chamberlain was in the ascendant, though protesting voices were heard. Paris distressed me greatly, especially the middle-class section of it, which did not even protest overmuch. This was the Paris of the Revolution, the symbol of liberty the world over.

I returned from Europe sad at heart with many illusions shattered. On my way back I stopped in Egypt where Mustafa Nahas Pasha and the other leaders of the Wafd Party gave me a warm welcome. I was glad to meet them again and to discuss our common problems in the light of the fast-developing world situation. Some months later a deputation from the Wafd Party visited us in India and attended our annual Congress session.

In India the old problems and conflicts continued and I had to face the old difficulty of how to fit in with my colleagues. It distressed me to see that on the eve of a world upheaval many Congressmen were wrapped up in these petty party rivalries. Yet there was some sense of proportion and understanding among Congressmen in the upper circles of the organisation. Outside the Congress, the deterioration was much more marked. Communal rivalry and tension had increased and the Muslim League, under Mr. M.A. Jinnah's leadership, was aggressively anti-nationalist and narrow-minded and continued to pursue an astonishing course. There was no constructive suggestion, no attempt even to meet half way, no answer to questions as to what exactly they wanted. It was a negative programme of hatred and violence, reminiscent of Nazi methods. What was particularly distressing was the growing vulgarity of communal organisations which was affecting our public life. There were, of course, many Muslim organisations and large numbers of Muslims who disapproved of the activities of the Muslim League and favoured the Congress.

Following this course, the Muslim League inevitably went more and more astray till it stood openly against democracy in India and even for the partition of the country. They were encouraged in these fantastic demands by British officials, who wanted to exploit the Muslim League, as all other disruptive forces, in order to weaken the Congress influence. It was astonishing that just when it became obvious that small nations had no further place in the world, except as parts of a federation of nations, there should be this demand for a splitting up of India. Probably the demand was not seriously meant, but it was the logical consequence of the two-nation theory that Mr. Jinnah had [illegible] d little to do with

religious differences. These admittedly could be adjusted. It was a political conflict between those who wanted a free, united and democratic India and certain reactionary and feudal elements who, under the guise of religion, wanted to preserve their special interests. Religion, as practised and exploited in this way by its votaries of different creeds, seemed to me a curse and a barrier to all progress, social and individual. Religion, which was supposed to encourage spirituality and brotherly feeling, became the fountainhead of hatred, narrowness, meanness and the lowest materialism.

Matters came to a head in the Congress at the Presidential election early in 1939. Unfortunately Maulana Abul Kalam Azad refused to stand and Subhas Chandra Bose was elected after a contest. This gave rise to all manner of complications and deadlocks which persisted for many months. At the Tripuri Congress there were unseemly scenes. I was at that time very low in spirit and it was difficult for me to carry on without a breakdown. Political events, national and international happenings, affected me, of course, but the immediate causes were unconnected with public affairs. I was disgusted with myself and in a press article I wrote: "I fear I give little satisfaction to them (my colleagues), and yet that is not surprising for I give even less satisfaction to myself. It is not out of this stuff that leadership comes and the sooner my colleagues realised this the better for them and me. The mind functions efficiently enough, the intellect is trained to carry on through habit, but the springs that give life and vitality to that functioning seem to dry up."[6]

Subhas Bose resigned from the Presidency and started the Forward Bloc, which was intended to be almost a rival organisation to the Congress. It petered out after a while, as it was bound to do, but it added to the disruptive tendencies and the general deterioration. Under cover of fine phrases, adventurist and opportunist elements found platforms, and I could not help thinking of the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany. Their way had been to mobilise mass support for one programme and then to utilise this for an entirely different purpose.

Deliberately I kept out of the new Congress executive. I felt I could not fit in and I did not like much that had been done. Gandhiji's fast in connection with Rajkot and the subsequent developments upset me. I wrote[7] then that the "sense of helplessness increases after the Rajkot

6. Article entitled *The A.I.C.C. and After*. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 575-580.
7. *Ibid.*

events. I cannot function where I do not understand, and I do not understand at all the logic of what has taken place." "More and more", I added, "the choice before many of us becomes difficult, and this is no question of Right or Left or even of political decisions. The choice is of unthinking acceptance of decisions which sometimes contradict one another and have no logical sequence, or opposition, or inaction. Not one of these courses is easily commendable. To accept unthinkingly what one cannot appreciate or willingly agree to produces mental flabbiness and paralysis. No great movement can be carried on on this basis: certainly not a democratic movement. Opposition is difficult when it weakens us and helps the adversary. Inaction produces frustration and all manner of complexes when from every side comes the call for action."

Soon after my return from Europe at the end of 1938, two other activities claimed my attention. I presided over the All India States People's Conference at Ludhiana and thus became even more intimately connected with the progressive movements in the semi-feudal Indian states. In large numbers of these states there had been a growing ferment, occasionally leading to clashes between the people's organisations and the authorities, which were often helped by British troops. It is difficult to write in restrained language about those states or about the part that the British Government has played in maintaining these relics of the Middle Ages. A recent writer has rightly called them Britain's Fifth Column in India. There are some enlightened rulers who want to side with their people and introduce substantial reforms, but the Paramount Power comes in the way. A democratic state will not function as a fifth column.

It is clear that these five hundred and fifty odd states cannot function separately as political or economic units. They cannot remain as feudal enclaves in a democratic India. A few large ones may become democratic units in a federation, the others must be completely absorbed. No minor reforms can solve this problem. The states system will have to go and it will go when British imperialism goes.

My other activity was the chairmanship of a National Planning Committee which was formed under Congress auspices with the cooperation of the provincial governments. As we proceeded with this work, it grew and grew, till it embraced almost every phase of national activity. We appointed twenty-nine sub-committees for various groups of subjects—agricultural, industrial, social, economic, financial—and tried to coordinate their activities so as to produce a scheme of planned economy for India. Our scheme will necessarily be in outline which will have to be filled in later. The Planning Committee is still functioning and is

not likely to finish its labours for some months more. For me this has been fascinating work and I have learnt much from it. It is clear that any scheme that we may produce can only be given effect to in a free India. It is also clear that any effective planning must involve a socialisation of the economic structure.

In the summer of 1939 I paid a brief visit to Ceylon as friction had grown there between the Indian residents and the government. I was happy to be back again in that beautiful island, and my visit, I think, laid the foundations for closer relations between India and Ceylon. I had the most cordial of welcomes from everybody, including the Ceylonese members of the government. I have no doubt that, in any future order, Ceylon and India must hang together. My own picture of the future is a federation which includes China and India, Burma and Ceylon, Afghanistan and possibly other countries. If a world federation comes, that will be welcome.

The situation in Europe in August 1939 was threatening and I did not want to leave India at a moment of crisis. But the desire to visit China, even for a short while, was strong. So I flew to China and within two days of my leaving India I was in Chungking. Very soon I had to rush back to India as war had descended at last upon Europe. I spent less than two weeks in free China, but these two weeks were memorable ones both personally for me and for the future relations of India and China.

As I flew to China, my mind went back to the long line of illustrious pilgrims and travellers who had journeyed between India and China for thousands of years. Across vast deserts and mighty mountains, they had marched for many months and sometimes for years, encountering dangers and perils, but full of enthusiasm and the spirit of adventure, for they were the bearers of the treasures of thought and culture from one country to another. In those far-off days they had forged the imperishable links which bound India and China together. I imagined myself as one of that long line, yet another link joining together these two Ancients in history and civilization, who had found rebirth and youthful vitality again, and were facing the future with hope and confidence.

Almost my first experience in Chungking was of an air raid, and these were repeated nightly while I was there. I was interested in the behaviour of the Chinese crowds and I watched with admiration how calm and untroubled they were when death threatened them from the skies. I saw the life in the city being carried on almost normally in spite of the terrible strain of the war. I visited factories, summer schools, military academies, youth camps, and universities, torn from their ancient

tents, finding a new life and vitality under bamboo shelters. I was fascinated by the growth of the village cooperative movement and cottage industries. I met scholars, statesmen and generals, the leaders of the new China, and, above all, I had the privilege of meeting on several occasions the supreme leader of China, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, who embodies in himself the unity of China and her determination to be free. It was my privilege also to meet the first lady of the land, Madame Chiang, who has been a continuous source of inspiration to the nation.

But though I met men and women of note and distinction, I was always trying to understand the people of China. I had read much about them and of their magnificent record of culture, and I was eager to sense the reality. I found not only a race wise and profound, deep in the lore of its own great past, but also a vital people, full of life and energy, adapting themselves to modern conditions. On the face of even the man in the street there was the imprint of ages of culture.

I found, to my joy, that my desire that China and India should draw closer to each other was fully reciprocated by China's leaders. Often, as we sat in a dug-out and enemy planes were bombing the city, we discussed the past and the present of our two countries and the bright promise of their future cooperation.

I returned to India full of this thought, and the vague ideas I had nourished for many years now began to take definite shape in my mind. There had been much talk in the West of a federation of Europe, and of a federal union which seemed to exclude India and China. I had dreamed of a wider federation, comprising all the nations and peoples of the world. Perhaps the time for that was not yet. But if there were to be regional federations, then surely there must be an Eastern federation of China and India and other Eastern countries.

I returned in haste.

War and India. What were we to do? For years past we had thought about this and proclaimed our policy. Yet in spite of all this, the British Government declared India to be a belligerent country without any reference to our people, to the Central Assembly, or to the provincial governments. That was a slight hard to get over for it signified that imperialism functioned as before. The Congress Working Committee issued a long statement in the middle of September 1939, in which our past and present policy was defined and the British Government was invited to explain their war aims, more particularly in regard to British imperialism. We had frequently condemned fascism and Nazism, but we were more intimately concerned with the imperia-

lism that dominated over us. Was this imperialism to go? Did they recognise the independence of India and her right to frame her own constitution through a constituent assembly? What immediate steps would be taken to introduce popular control of the Central Government? Later, in order to meet every passible objection of any minority group, the idea behind the constituent assembly was further amplified. It was stated that minority claims would be settled in this assembly with the consent of the minority concerned, and not by a majority vote. If such agreement was not possible in regard to any issue, then this was to be referred to an impartial tribunal for final decision. This was an unsafe proposal from a democratic point of view, but the Congress was prepared to go almost any length in order to allay the suspicions of minorities.

The British Government's answer was clear. It left no doubt that they were not prepared to clarify their war aims or to hand over control of the government to the people's representatives. The old order continued and was to continue and British interests in India could not be left unprotected. The Congress ministries in the provinces thereupon resigned as they were not prepared to cooperate on these terms in the prosecution of the war. The Constitution was suspended and autocratic rule was re-established. The old constitutional conflict of Western countries between an elected parliament and the king's prerogative, which had cost the heads of two kings in England and France, took shape in India. But there was something much more than this constitutional aspect. The volcano was not in action, but it was there and rumblings were heard.

The impasse continued and, meanwhile, new laws and ordinances descended upon us by decree, and Congressmen and others were arrested in ever-growing numbers. Resentment grew and a demand for action on our side. But the course of the war and the peril of England itself made us hesitate, for we could not wholly forget the old lesson which Gandhiji had taught us, that our objective should not be to embarrass the opponent in his hour of need.

As the war progressed, new problems arose, or the old problems took new shape, and the old alignments seemed to change, the old standards to fade away. There were many shocks and adjustment was difficult. The Russo-German Pact, the Soviet invasion of Finland, the friendly approach of Russia towards Japan. Were there any principles, any standards of conduct in this world, or was it all sheer opportunism?

April came and the Norwegian debacle. May brought the horrors of Holland and Belgium. June, the sudden collapse of France, and Paris, that proud and fair city, nursery of freedom, lay crushed and fallen.

Not only military defeat came to France but, what was infinitely worse, spiritual submission and degradation. How did all this come about, I wondered, unless there was something rotten at the core. Was it that England and France were the outstanding representatives of an old order that must pass, and therefore they were unable to hold out? Was it that imperialism, though apparently giving them strength, really weakened them in a struggle of this nature? They could not fight for freedom if they denied it themselves, and their imperialism would turn to unabashed fascism, as it had done in France. The shadow of Mr. Neville Chamberlain and his policy still fell on England despite the change in premiers. The Burma-China route was being closed for three months in order to appease Japan. And here in India there was no hint at change, and our self-imposed restraint was understood to mean an incapacity to do anything effective. The lack of any vision in the British Government amazed me, their utter incapacity to read the signs of the times and to understand what was happening and adapt themselves to it. Was this some law of nature that in international happenings, as in other fields, cause must inexorably be followed by effect; that a system that had ceased to have any useful function could not even defend itself intelligently?

If the British Government was slow of understanding and could not learn even from experience, what can one say about the Government of India? There is something comic and something tragic about the functioning of this government for nothing seems to shake it out of its age-long complacency; neither logic nor reason, neither peril nor disaster. Like Rip Van Winkle they sleep, even though waking, on Simla hills.

The developments in the war situation posed new questions before the Congress Working Committee. Gandhiji wanted the Committee to extend the principle of nonviolence, to which we had adhered in our struggle for freedom, to the functioning of a free state. A free India must rely on this principle to guard itself against external aggression or internal disorder. This question did not arise for us at the time, but it occupied his own mind and he felt that the time had come for a clear enunciation. Every one of us was convinced that we must adhere to our policy of nonviolence, as we had so far done, in our own struggle. The war in Europe had strengthened this conviction. But to commit the future state was another and a more difficult matter, and it was not easy to see how anyone moving on the plane of politics could do it.

Mr. Gandhi felt, and probably rightly, that he could not give up or tone down a message which he had for the world. He must have freedom to give it as he liked and must not be kept back by political

exigencies. So for the first time, he went one way and the Congress Working Committee another. There was no break with him for the bond was too strong, and he will no doubt continue to advise in many ways and often to lead. Yet it is perhaps true that by this partial withdrawal, a definite period in the history of our national movement has come to an end. In recent years I have found a certain hardness creeping into him, a lessening of the adaptability that he possessed. Yet the old spell is there, the old charm works, and his personality and greatness tower over others. Let no one imagine that his influence over India's millions is any the less. He has been the architect of India's destiny for twenty years and more, and his work is not completed.

During the last few weeks, the Congress, at the instance of C. Rajagopalachari, made yet another offer to Britain.[8] Rajagopalachari is said to belong to the Right in the Congress. His brilliant intellect, selfless character, and penetrating powers of analysis have been a tremendous asset to our cause. He was the Prime Minister of Madras during the functioning of the Congress Government there. Eager to avoid conflict, he put forward a proposal which was hesitatingly accepted by some of his colleagues. This proposal was the acknowledgement of India's independence by Britain and the immediate formation at the centre of a provisional national government, which would be responsible to the present Central Assembly. If this was done, this government would take charge of defence and thus help in the war effort.

This Congress proposal was eminently feasible and could be given effect to immediately without upsetting anything. The national government was inevitably going to be a composite affair with full representation of minority groups. The proposal was definitely a moderate one. From the point of view of defence and war effort, it is patent that any serious effort involves the confidence and cooperation of the people. Only a national government has the chance to get this. It is not possible through imperialism.

But imperialism thinks otherwise and imagines that it can continue to function and to coerce people to do its will. Even when danger threatens, it is not prepared to get this very substantial help, if this involves a giving up of political and economic control over India. It does not care even for the tremendous moral prestige which would come

8. On 23 August 1940, Rajagopalachari made what was termed "a spotting offer": "If His Majesty's Government agree to a provisional national government being formed at once I will undertake to persuade my colleagues to agree to the Muslim League being invited to nominate the Prime Minister and to let him form a government as he would consider best."

to it if it did the right thing in India and the rest of the Empire. So the Viceroy gave reply on behalf of the British Government and rejected the Congress proposal. The alternative proposal that he put forward was identical with what he had suggested nine months before. This was to add some popular leaders by nomination to his council and to have an amorphous war advisory council. The Viceroy's council is not a cabinet and all power is concentrated in the Viceroy. So the addition of a few persons to this council made no essential difference.

The Viceroy made it further clear that no major change would take place even after the war unless this was approved of by various groups in India. Thus he gave a power of veto not only to any minority group, but to the feudal princes, and even to British vested interests. This was a complete negation of democracy. It was much worse. For he laid down conditions which were impossible of fulfilment and which made Indian independence even in the future impossible. What came as a peculiar shock to us was the deliberate attempt made by the British Government to encourage every disruptive and reactionary tendency and thus to break the unity of India.

The British Government's proposals had to be rejected and the Congress had no other course left open but to defend itself and the people from the onslaughts that were being made upon it. Thousands of Congressmen had been arrested[9] and forced collections were being made even from the poor peasantry.

The All India Congress Committee withdrew the previous offer made by it and decided in favour of civil disobedience. Mr. Gandhi was appointed as the leader of this movement. As I write this we stand on the verge of this new adventure.

For more than thirteen months now we have given earnest and painful thought to the war developments and to their effect on the Indian situation. We had often proclaimed our faith in democracy and we had condemned aggression. The fate of Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France distressed us exceedingly and we disliked the prospect of a Nazi order being established all over Europe and possibly elsewhere. Our sympathies went out to the people being ruthlessly bombed in the great cities of Europe and elsewhere. And yet, in spite of a world changing before our eyes, we saw the old face of imperialism still in India and we continued to hear its old and harsh voice. The language was the same and the content changed in no way. The sands

9. From September 1939 to October 1940, about 4,000 persons were arrested for speeches and propaganda supporting the attitude of the Congress to the war and demanding independence for India.

of time ran out in India, as in Europe and the world, but wisdom and foresight did not come to those who might have checked catastrophe.

More and more this terrible war seemed to me something much more than a war between mighty powers. It was a prelude to vast changes in the world, a revolution not only of the political map but of the social and economic structure. Unless this basic fact was grasped, governments and armies would function in vain. The old world had ended and was dying before our eyes. What would the new world be like? Unless we had that vision of the future before us, for what were we fighting? It was the old question put by us to the British Government in September, 1939, and to which there had been no answer. The people of Britain, suffering so grievously and facing constant danger bravely, would perhaps understand our plight in India and help in solving our problem. But governments come in the way, and no government in the world can be so blind to change as the present government of India. Victory and defeat have little meaning unless we know whose victory and for what.

The world of today hangs together, and it will survive or perish together. Only a world order of free nations cooperating together for the common good, and based on social justice, can solve the problems that overwhelm us. It is fantastic to imagine that India or China can be excluded from this order or can be given a subordinate place. The full freedom of India and China is an essential prerequisite to a world settlement. There will be no peace or stability otherwise, whatever may happen in the battlefields of Europe.

So the Indian Congress is again going into the wilderness. With no desire to embarrass the people of Britain, we are being compelled by the imperialism that dominates over us to defend our elementary rights and to insist on our independence. We cannot be willing parties to our humiliation and subjection.

Most of us look upon this question from a political point of view, though all of us are ardently desirous of ending wars and ensuring peace. Mr. Gandhi, as an apostle of nonviolence, and many others who agree with him, are opposed to all wars. For him it is also a matter of conscience not to participate in this or any war. For others the reason is mainly a political one—the denial of the right of India to decide for herself in regard to the war, and the denial of freedom to her. Both avenues of approach lead to the same conclusion. Though the immediate issue is the war issue in India, the real question remains, and must remain, the independence of India.

So many of my colleagues have gone back to prison and I envy them somewhat. Perhaps it is easier to develop an organic sense of life in

the solitude of confinement than in this mad world of war and politics, of fascism and imperialism.

But sometimes there is an escape for a while at least from this world. Three months ago I went back to Kashmir after an absence of twenty-three years.[10] I was only there for twelve days, but these days were filled with beauty, and I drank in the loveliness of that land of enchantment. I wandered about the glorious valley and the higher mountains and climbed a glacier, and forgot for a while the pain and torment of soul which are the lot of humanity today. Life seemed to be worth while.

10. See *post*, section 9, item 21.

87. The Meaning of Swaraj[1]

Brother peasants,

It is about three years ago that I visited your tehsil last time. Before that I visited the interior of this tehsil twenty years ago and I still have friends among the colleagues of those days. I have come to you today and am going to other places with the message that again there is a crisis in the country. But we should not get perplexed, we have to grasp the situation and prepare ourselves; we have to take such steps forward that will benefit the masses. Just now you raised the cry of *inqilab zindabad* five to six times, but I fear that there are few amongst you who realise its meaning. You also raised the cries of *Bharatmata ki jai* and *Bande Mataram*. But who is *Bharatmata?* She is not a woman, *Bharatmata* means the people living in India and we wish them victory. The people of India consist mostly of peasants and when we wish them victory it means that we are wishing victory for ourselves. When we raise cries of *inqilab zindabad* it means that we want to do away with things like British rule, the taluqdari system, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and disease. When we say Swaraj we mean power in the hands of the masses, the government in the hands of the chosen representatives so that they may be in a position to bring about the desired changes. By bringing about revolution we want to purge ourselves of unemployment and slavery. This is, however, a great problem.

1. Address at Patti, Pratapgarh District, 18 October 1940. Home Department (Political) File No. 3/3/1940, National Archives of India.

You know these days a terrible war is going on in Europe which is revolutionizing the whole world. This revolution is coming to our country also and this we will not be able to check. We do not know what the consequence of the revolution will be but what we want is that the British rule may come to an end and such a government of the people may be established which may banish poverty and unemployment. It is only the strong that are able to take advantage of the revolution. When the Congress organisation grew vast and strong the authorities began to feel anxious to keep the people satisfied. We have, therefore, to strengthen ourselves to take advantage of the revolution. If we act wisely we can not only benefit our country but can also do good to the world. This is the message with which I have come to you. A very terrible war has been going on for the last year, bombs are being thrown on England and Germany, killing men, women and children. In this war our country has also been entangled without consulting a single person out of the forty crores. There was a great deal of discussion on the subject, Mahatma Gandhi saw the Viceroy but to no avail. Still we decided to do nothing that might create an agitation. But the people are continuously being suppressed, there have been forcible collections in the Sultanpur district, people were arrested for doing Congress work and there was danger of our work of twenty years being totally destroyed.

The Congress Working Committee met to consider the future programme as the British Government was prepared to give nothing. And what is this British Government? Big capitalists of England who have been draining our wealth for the last hundred and fifty years. Unless an end is put to this capitalist government the masses of India cannot prosper. The British Government clearly refused to change its system and began to suppress the people. The Congress Committee meeting was held in Bombay to consider this very question and resolved to start satyagraha as a protest, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. He decided to start the satyagraha by men chosen by him and not the general public although the time will come for them also. He asked his old disciple to offer satyagraha near Wardha two or three days ago.[2]

So now these things have started. You are not to offer civil disobedience at present but to do everything in a disciplined way like a soldier. As you see I too have come in the uniform of the Seva Dal because we have to behave as soldiers. At present you are not to offer satyagraha

2. On 17 October Vinoba Bhave began delivery of anti-war speeches. He was arrested on 21 October and sentenced to three months imprisonment.

unless you are told to do so by Mahatma Gandhi or the Congress, but you have to keep ready. It is also possible that the British Government may begin its repression and we have to keep ready for that also. Strengthen the Congress organisation in every village and tehsil and enrol members. You have also to enlist as volunteers. We have stopped training in drill for the present. You should use khaddar and ply the charkha as khadi is now the uniform of Swaraj. You should not be perplexed if you hear that I have been arrested but should conclude that the fight for Swaraj is gaining momentum. It is also possible that the British Government may get confused and prevent the publication of news. You should not get confused if news does not appear in the papers but conclude that it is good news, therefore the British Government has not permitted it to be published. You have to stand up and reach the goal of Swaraj.

I do not like people touching others' feet as this custom breathes slavery. I want people strong, self-respecting and fearless. Many peasants come to me with petitions. I am no official or zamindar to do anything for them. Of course I can do a great deal for all peasants as a class. I am interested in one thing—in one ejectment—that of the British Government. I have taken up this work. Other problems are smaller ones and bound up with this. The great question before us is that of slavery. Remember we have to work peacefully, we have not to resort to rioting. Many people are out to create disorder, they are rajas and maharajas, you are not to follow them as their aim is to turn your attention away from the fight for Swaraj. Your fight is for Swaraj and you have to comply with the instructions of the Congress peacefully. If you will do so you will bring victory to *Bharatmata*, that is to your own selves.

88. A Report on His Own Tour[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru returned to Lucknow, late tonight, after concluding a five-day tour of some of the Oudh districts. He spent the day in Bara

1. Lucknow, 22 October 1940. This report which was published in the *National Herald* of 23 October 1940 was written by Jawaharlal.

Banki district, holding meetings at Rudauli, Safdarganj, Haidergarh and Dewa.

The river Gomti had to be crossed by boat in order to go to Haidergarh. This place, being somewhat difficult of access, is seldom visited by outside leaders and Jawaharlal Nehru's visit was, therefore, a great event and attracted a large gathering.

The meeting at Dewa, which is seven miles from Bara Banki town, was unique and memorable. The shades of evening were falling when Jawaharlal Nehru arrived, accompanied by the president and secretary of the District Congress Committee. A vast concourse of people had gathered to hear him.

Many of these had come over from Bara Banki, but the audience was predominantly kisan. Very soon this great audience settled down in an orderly manner and presented a spectacle which will live long in the memories of those who saw it. A sea of heads stretched away into the far distance and lost itself in the gloom. As far as one could see, there were masses of India's kisan humanity, and beyond the range of vision there were still more of them. It is difficult to estimate such a huge crowd, but conservative estimates placed the number at 50,000.

The size of the crowd was impressive and overpowering. Their demeanour was still more impressive. There they sat, row upon row, eager, expectant, a little excited and yet perfectly calm and disciplined.

Jawaharlal Nehru spoke for just an hour and there was perfect silence throughout. Right at the beginning he had asked them not to interrupt his speech by slogans and they carried out his instructions to the letter and held themselves in leash, although their excitement was apparent. Occasionally a quiver of appreciation at something said ran through that mighty gathering.

This was a political gathering, but it was something much more. Jawaharlal Nehru spoke in a serious vein and with feeling. He was evidently moved. There was a sense of vast issues, of great decisions, of the call which might come to anyone at any moment. The multitude of listeners seemed to be in tune with the speaker and seemed to rise above themselves for the moment. There was a hush and a solemnity, which pervaded the atmosphere.

The proceedings began with a very moving poem in Hindi, describing the plight of the kisan in the kisan's own homely language. The audience appreciated this greatly. It struck home. It was obvious that Nehru was moved. This poem set the tone for his speech. He referred to it right at the beginning—to this picture of present-day India.

And then he spoke, with a quiver in his voice, of the dream that had made life worth while for him—the dream of the India of tomorrow.

He developed this theme and the picture became a living and glowing one. And then, suddenly, he grew sad. For 20 years and more, he said, he had seen this vision and sought to make it a reality. And yet when he saw the condition of the people round about him, their appalling poverty, their miserable environment, his heart misgave him. Was this all the result they had obtained after 20 years' travail and labour?

Then again, he changed his mood and spoke triumphantly of the vast inner changes that had come over the people. They were poor still, and overburdened with care and sorrow, but they had got rid of the fear that oppressed them and the hopelessness that enveloped their lives from birth to death. That was a mighty change, which had brought them nearer to Swaraj. And now they stood on the threshold of the future, a future which would mean a changed world and a new India. What this new India would be, he could not say. That would depend on their stout hearts and strong arms. Fate, Destiny, Karma! We were not going to be their slaves, but we would bend them to our will and build India after the picture in our own hearts.

So he spoke on, and that vast audience listened rapt, unmoving but deeply moved. He spoke of Swaraj, panchayati raj and what this was; of the mighty revolution that was taking place all over the world; of the war in Europe and how India was dragged into it; of the satyagraha started at Gandhiji's instance by Vinoba Bhave; of the next step that would follow; of the vast responsibility of each one of us at this tremendous crisis. Be ready and disciplined! Organise yourself, hold to nonviolence, put an end to all internal squabbles and differences and face the future with unity, strength and confidence.

For slightly more than an hour he spoke and he ended by appealing to the audience to give up the habit of touching the feet. They must behave as free men and give up all habits which reminded one of subjection and slavery. Let them hold themselves erect always, bending to no one.

When the meeting ended, Nehru asked the audience to remain seated till he had left and to make a narrow passageway for him to go through. His instructions were carried out and not a single person got up. Right through that mighty gathering he marched, none moving or touching his feet, as they had done when he came. Only their hands were folded in a silent salute and their faces were alight with a new experience. The stars were shining brightly as Nehru motored away to Bara Banki and that multitude of human beings dispersed, filled all the roads, and marched towards their villages.

89. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

October 24, 1940

My dear Bapu,

I enclose copy of a letter I am sending to Maulana.[2] You will remember that you referred to Mahmud one day. I do not know what your source of information was, but in this matter at least I think Mahmud is not to blame.

On my arrival here today I received your letter dated 21st October.[3] I have sent you a brief telegram in reply.[4] It is difficult of course to express anything clearly in a telegram. My mind is by no means clear as to what the future is going to be. More and more I think about the problem in India in its larger world perspective. I think of this, naturally, from the political point of view. I think that your plan has great possibilities and therefore I would like it to go ahead and to help it in so far as I can. But not knowing exactly how you intend to develop it, I feel a little confused.

I do not know whom you consider to be the spiritual leaders of the world (the phrase you have used somewhere), but if they are the leaders of organized religions or religious groups, I am quite convinced that they are a hopeless lot. It is the common man who might ultimately make a difference and the approach to him will have to be such that he can grasp it. If that approach is entirely beyond his reach or understanding, it will fall flat. I think the horror of war is bound to lead to a strong reaction. But this reaction will only come when some way out, which guarantees individual and national freedom, is found. Without this guarantee nonviolence becomes associated in people's minds with submission to slavery and force. That argument applies to India also. I have found a deceptive atmosphere among our people, also a certain confusion about the future and as to what they should do.

I have received Mangal Singh's letter. I do not know what you expect me to do about it. I realise all the implications of what he says. Mangal Singh is not a very reliable person, still I think he is right in

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *post*, section 2, item 45.
3. Mahatma Gandhi wrote: "I would still like to ask you whether you can see anything to commend itself to you in all I am writing and doing. I would not like you to go in merely as a disciplinarian. My present conception requires those who believe in the plan."
4. "Your letter. Agree generally."

the main about this matter. I am writing an article for the press on the *Sikhs and the Congress*. This will be a fairly frank statement.

During my visit to Sultanpur district I found numerous complaints of forcible realisations for war funds. I enclose a letter about this. On enquiry, I found it to be perfectly correct. Scores of boys came to me and complained to me that they had been forced by their school authorities to pay a monthly sum of 1 anna each for the war fund with their tuition fee, in spite of their protests. It seemed to me a particularly mean thing to do to make these boys pay.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

90. To H.C. Puxley[1]

25 October 1940

Dear Mr. Puxley,

I have your letter of October 23, 1940. I have fixed no tour programme yet and I do not know if I shall tour at all for some time. I am afraid I am quite convinced that the conflict between Indian nationalism and British imperialism is much more deep-rooted than you imagine. This has nothing to do with the goodwill of the British people as a whole of which I have little doubt. The personal equation counts for little and I do not think any good can come out of my further approaches to the Viceroy. The whole outlook of the British Government will have to change before the question can be profitably discussed with them. Of that there are no signs yet. I do not expect any good from any direct or indirect contacts at this stage between us and the government. I would therefore request you not to mention the Working Committee or any of its members, by name or otherwise, in this connection. This will create misapprehensions, and it would be contrary to the wishes of the Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

91. Eastern Nations Unite![1]

The Editor of *The Hindustan Times* has asked me to write something on the occasion of the meeting of the Eastern Group Conference.[2] I am afraid I do not know much about this Conference, and so I am unable to judge of the significance of this gathering, or why anyone should write special articles because of this meeting. But from what little I have learnt, I gather that people from many odd countries, generously if inaccurately labelled Eastern, are meeting together presumably to discuss war needs and production. What then is the significance of it all? Is it merely that representatives from various countries are meeting here, or that anything dealing with the war must needs be important?

I am afraid I cannot say anything that can be helpful to the eminent members of the Eastern Group Conference. I am not interested in India helping in the war, or rather my interest is of an opposing variety. But the very name 'Eastern Group Conference' makes my mind run to a future day when a real conference of Eastern nations will be held.

I am convinced more than ever that a stable future must be built on world-wide international cooperation—political and economic. Indeed I think that some kind of world union or federation is inevitable. But that seems a far-off ideal in this world of war today. It is clear, however, that the day of separate individual nations is past. Probably, as an intermediate stage, several world groups of nations will arise, and their latent hostility may lead to war again on a vast scale.

What are the likely groupings? England cannot continue either as an imperial power or even as a separate nation. Her empire will, of course, go and it is highly likely that Britain will be absorbed in the United States, as also Canada and Australia. The Continent of Europe, minus the Soviet territories, may form another group. The Soviet Union is already a vast federation and will continue, possibly, with some other nations added on to it.

What then of India and the East? Are they to be just hangers-on or dependent entities of these major groups? The advocates of federal union conveniently forget the East. The advocates of a European

1. *The Hindustan Times*, 25 October 1940.
2. Representatives of the governments of India, Burma, Malaya, Ceylon, Hong Kong, Palestine, Union of South Africa, East Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Australia and Newzealand met in conference on 25 October 1940 to ensure "that the best possible use is made of their resources, existing and potential, for the purposes of war."

federation apparently imagine that Asia and Africa will continue as they are, more or less, under the leadership of Europe.

India and the East are not going to put up with any such arrangement, and, therefore, so far as we are concerned, we oppose all these attempts to federate the Western world to the exclusion of the Eastern. A federated Europe, or Europe and America taken together, will exploit Eastern nations and delay their freedom.

We have to look forward for the present, and till such time as a real world union takes place, to an Asiatic federation of nations. Obviously this is the next major step in Asia.

Such an Asiatic federation will be based on the close association of the two great nations of the East—India and China. Other members of the federation might be Burma, Ceylon, Afghanistan, Nepal, Malaya and the Dutch Indies. Of course, if Iran, Iraq or Thailand wish to join it, they would be very welcome. This Eastern federation should have the friendliest contacts with the United States of America and the Soviet Union. It is this Eastern federation that we should aim at. Nothing short of it will be adequate in the world to come.

I look forward to the day when a real conference of all these Eastern nations will be held and will lead to an Eastern union of nations.

92. To Charan Singh[1]

October 25, 1940

My dear Charan Singhji,[2]

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of the 15th. It is difficult to discuss fully the situation in a letter. I am myself troubled about many matters. But you are wrong in thinking that satyagraha is to be confined to out and out believers in nonviolence. Gandhiji has made it clear that others are to be included.

I would love to come to Meerut and I shall try to include Meerut in my next tour. But I must await developments before I make any further arrangements.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1902); joined the Congress in 1929 and took part in the freedom movement; general secretary and president, Meerut D.C.C., 1940-46; Minister, U.P., 1951-67; Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh, 1967-68, and again in 1970; Chairman, Bharatiya Lok Dal (earlier Bharatiya Kranti Dal), 1969-77; Union Home Minister, 1977.

Do not be in a hurry to think about reverting to normal life. There is no normality possible for any one of us or, for the matter of that, for anyone in the world. I am quite sure that the situation here will develop more rapidly than we think.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

93. To Arthur D. Wiser[1]

October 26, 1940

Dear Friend,
I have received your letter of August 13th[2] and read it with interest. I am happy to learn that you want to come back to India and to devote yourself to work here. You would indeed be welcome, as would the girl whom you intend marrying.

It is a little difficult to give you advice as to how you can prepare yourself for coming to India. I suppose the best way to do that is to read worthwhile books. I do not know that I can suggest any special names of people in America who might help you to understand Indian conditions. There are no doubt many such people in America. But India is changing rapidly, as indeed the whole world is. I think it would be a good thing for you to study social and economic planning because that is a subject which is bound to occupy our attention. I have been functioning as the Chairman of a National Planning Committee for the last two years and I have been fascinated by the prospect of planning on a vast scale.

But for the present we are tied up with other matters which bring conflict and prevent constructive work.

I am passing on your letter to a friend who might be able to suggest some books to you.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. F.D. 5/1940, p. 55, N.M.M.L.
2. Wiser, a student of Cornell University, had written that he proposed to settle and work in India after the completion of his studies and had sought Jawaharlal's advice on how best to prepare himself for this.

94. The Eastern Federation[1]

Everyone who has been following the course of events, and everyone who can at all pierce the veil of the future, must have come to the conclusion that we have come to the end of an age. The old world we have known so long is dead or lies dying before us. That of course does not mean that the world will cease to be. That does not even mean that civilisation will perish. But it does mean that the many things that we have known, political forms, economic structures, special relationships, and all else connected with these, will undergo a vast transformation. If any person thinks in terms of the continuation of the world as we have known it, he thinks in vain.

It is patent that the day of small countries is past. It is also patent that the day of even big countries standing by themselves is past. Huge countries like the Soviet Union or the United States of America may be capable of standing by themselves, but even they are likely to join themselves with other countries or groups. The only intelligent solution is a world federation of free countries. Perhaps we are not wise enough to seek that solution or strong enough to realise it.

If there is going to be no world federation in the near future, and if the day of individual nations is past, what then is likely to happen? There may be groupings of nations or large federations. There is a grave danger in this as it is likely to lead to hostile groupings and therefore to the continuation of big wars. It is possible also that these groupings may be the first steps to the larger world grouping of nations. In Europe people talk of a European federation or union; sometimes, they include the United States of America and the British Dominions in this group. They always leave out China and India imagining that these two great countries can be ignored. There can be no world arrangement which is based on ignoring India or China, nor can we ever tolerate the exploitation of Asia and Africa by the combined European and American powers.

If there are to be federations, India does not fit in a European federation, where it can only be a hanger-on of semi-colonial status. It is obvious that under these circumstances there should be an Eastern federation, not hostile to the West, but nevertheless standing on its own feet, self-reliant and joining with all others in favour of world peace and world federation. Such an Eastern federation must inevitably consist

1. Allahabad, 28 October 1940. *National Herald*, 2 November 1940.

of China and India. Burma, Ceylon, Nepal and Afghanistan ought easily to fit into it. So should Malaya. There is no reason why Siam and Iran should also not join, as well as some other nations. That would be a powerful combination of free nations joined together for their own good as well as the good of the world. Power would not be merely material power but something else also which they have represented through these long ages. It is time, therefore, in this fateful period of the breakdown of empires, that we thought in terms of this Eastern federation and worked for it deliberately.

With two nations, even more than with others, this Eastern federation will be intimately connected. These nations or groups will be the Soviet Union and America.

There is a great deal of talk about the downfall of Western civilisation. This is probably correct in so far as the financial imperialism of the West is concerned, as well as the capitalist order. But ultimately much that is best in European civilisation should survive. Nevertheless, it is true, I think, that present-day civilisation is ending and out of its ashes a new civilisation will be built up, continuing, I hope, the best elements of the East and the West. No country can do without the science of which the West has been the exemplar. That science and the scientific spirit and method are the basis of life today, and there is in science the search for truth on the one hand, and the betterment of humanity on the other. But the application of that science to evil ends has brought disaster to the West. It is here that India and China with their restraining influence and long background of culture and restraint come in.

So let us look forward and labour for an Eastern federation, never forgetting that it is a step towards the larger world federation.

95. Conversations with Mahatma Gandhi[1]

29 October 1940

Mahatma Gandhi: I may foresee and be prepared for all events. But nevertheless it may be a surprise for me. I had hoped they would not behave in this manner. Therefore I can say your repression knows no bounds. I can do my worst too—for example mass civil disobedience. But I may not do this yet. The government still have the capitalists and the princes with them.

JN: I don't see why you should change your whole plan of action because what was probable has happened.

MG: I must because I did not think they would go so far. They won't allow us anti-war propaganda. I accept his interpretation of what I want. He should admit that if I have the power to convert people they should have India out of the war. We are not independent but we are 'at war' with you. We must assert ourselves as far as we can.

JN: You can't isolate your case in this way. It would be better now to say we want independence; nothing limited in the sense of free speech.

MG: I have said independence is not in their hands. They are struggling for their own independence.

JN: But it is there still. When they are defeated it will be another matter.

MG: If they have failed to give us independence, I say at any rate let us not join them in a war against our wishes. I say this according to our strength and internal position today. If they seize my own weapon of nonviolence I must fight for it. I leave independence because they say they cannot discuss that today. So I say all right. I prepare myself for nonviolence for the time being. They won't allow me. Our case is not weakened by the position I have taken up. My civil disobedience as I had envisaged it is not being allowed to proceed. The effect on the government is that they stiffen. Even one man offering civil disobedience has made them harsh. Vinoba Bhave was an unknown quantity outside my and his circle. Now I have to think if I send the next man I don't think I shall get the same result as from the उपवास.[3] The latter will get at world conscience in a

3. *Upvas*—fast. On 24 October, Mahatma Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy: "I told you about the possibility of a fast, prolonged or unto death. I am waiting on God to find what is to be the case. I am trying hard to avoid it but I may not be able to do so. You will have another letter from me when I have come to the final conclusion."

way which nothing else can. Take the example of salt satyagraha.

JN: The case is not analogous. Here it is a case of their empire going. The step they have taken against Vinoba Bhave is a step against a symbol. They wanted to nip our protest in the bud. Your step of 'limitation' put them in a false position. I do not understand, even if you did not expect this development, why should you be driven to your last resort straightway?

MG: I can't explain.

JN: I understand there is no matter for logic or reasoning. One must think impersonally. I can only judge from what I imagine will be the result. I want to ask you whether in the excitement of the movement you have taken a premature step.

MG: I want to avoid it really. I won't hasten it. I am nervous of it. Yet I shall fulfil it if it comes on me. I am fighting *against* my desire. But I see no other way at the moment.

JN: Leave your nonviolence aside for the moment. Aeroplanes have altered everything. No frontiers left—no safety left. Either every nation must be armed to the hilt or else air warfare be banned. Whither are we going, is the question. We have to find a way out. The solution can even come from Linlithgow, Halifax and Churchill etc. God knows when the war will end. There can only be a *world* peace. Or else we shall all be nervous wrecks. Linlithgow personally can't help however much he may want to. The solution lies deeper. Inevitable revolution in the world. Britain fighting it. In a way Hitler is more in tune with it. The fabric of their society must change. I feel your step is very premature. You have only started the movement 12 days ago.

MG: I must tell you one thing. You say the face of the world is changing. I agree. It may be pride in me. But I feel this is the opportune movement not only for us but for the world. I am known all over and I feel I ought to sacrifice myself now. If it is pride in me, nothing will come of my sacrifice and I am then really a drag on you. If my last resort shakes the world, then I feel there will be a great result fraught with much good.

I am therefore placing the best weapon in my armoury to see what I can do with it. I can go to jail also.

JN: All this doesn't make much difference. I have to think what I am to do before and after your fast. It is impossible for me to remain outside jail if you fast.

MG: That brings them still more in the wrong if they do that. Our policy has been never to take a wrong step. Always let them do the wrong. This happened in salt satyagraha too.

JN: You cannot compare salt satyagraha with this. The issues are different.

MG: They have to swallow a great deal. They are bound to as time goes on.

JN: You are premature—I maintain. You must see what happens. I am clear in my mind that I have to go. There is such confusion in people's mind. They imagine all kinds of foolish things. Granted your step may have a tremendous effect on India and outside. What do we do?

MG: You must watch. You must carry on agitation. Explaining the fast is one thing. Out of my 21 days fast was born the All Parties' Conference. While the fast goes on either you do nothing or else you go to jail straightway.

JN: We must explain to the people. If we do it on a big scale we shall be stopped. If we are stopped are we to submit or not?

MG: I feel while I am alive they will not stop explanations. But they may send you to jail. You go. After me you must carry on the fight. Individual civil disobedience presumably.

JN: Tell me. You fast. Then what do we tell the public to do?

MG: My manifesto will be there.

JN: Positive?

MG: One—constructive programme.

JN: Supposing meetings, etc. are banned?

MG: Then you must take the decision. Mass civil disobedience will be born out of it.

JN: Supposing they decide to let you fast. They will seize us all. Then what?

MG: If they become callous—fast goes on—all of you in jail, I feel crores will die refusing to help them. That is my belief. The other thing is that decent millions of the world are veering towards nonviolence. I may be wrong. But all this will be made plain and if it is my pride that tells me all this, then too I shall be happy that I as a drag will be removed from the world. I have worked for 50 years—not a short time—result will be seen after I have gone. I have not so far ever done anything premature. It may be so. I am averting it as long as I can. I have always felt this to be the strongest weapon in my satyagrahi armoury. There is *hara-kiri* and there is *sati* of Rajasthan. History gives glorious instances of the latter. In Junagadh even Muslims died rather than submit to *zulum*.

JN: But this is not nonviolence.

MG: Of course not. I only say the courage to die is in our bones. I want to do it nonviolently. I feel the face of India will change. How I can't say. But I shall die in that hope. I can't think of anything else that can be effective at this stage.

Mahadev Desai: You don't want to embarrass them. Won't your fast be a terrific embarrassment to them?

MG: Yes and no. But India's nonviolent strength grows. That is my mission. Any embarrassment born of nonviolence will serve them. Mass civil disobedience will give birth to violence. They have no room for lakhs of prisoners. I am embarrassing them. I cannot reduce my strength by not embarrassing them. If they are callous there will be no embarrassment to them. I have used all my strength to convince them. I have no other weapon except this fast wherewith to teach nonviolence to my people.

JN: The embarrassment question is but one of motive.

MG: Yes. But my motive is pure.

JN: I feel I must follow Vinoba.

MG: All right. But we'll talk of it tomorrow.

JN: When?

MG: All right. Supposing you leave here tomorrow, you can do it on the 4th or 5th.

JN: Yes—it must be after *Id* which is on the 3rd. But on 4th we have a conference of workers. Would it matter if they were all there?

MG: If I give notice they won't allow conference, i.e. you won't be there. So have the conference and you go on 8th or so. I would prefer a village because of the significance of that step. History will record the importance we gave to the village in this our last fight—at least the last conducted by me.

JN: I wanted Allahabad. But if you insist on a village I will select a village. How can we send notices to the people? And what about your notice?

MG: I will wire the date and time to the village for the people?

JN: We shall have to duplicate and distribute. It will require 5 or 6 days.

MG: If you are arrested before the meeting you will leave a message.

JN: Will the man who reads my message be arrested?

MG: He will only stress the constructive programme. After some talk—date to be 7th or 8th—*after* the conference in Allahabad.

30 October 1940

JN: I still feel, after sleeping over it, that I must go to jail. But your fast—the last resort, so to speak, is inopportune. It will create

confusion in the mass mind. It will be interpreted by the government that individual civil disobedience had failed. I feel you ought to get the members of the Working Committee to offer civil disobedience.

MG: I do not think this is right. I cannot mix up issues. My own idea was not to send more than three. The fast was always in my mind. What the effect of it will be on the minds of the people or the government does not bother me. If I send the Working Committee it will defeat my whole purpose. I have always felt that Vinoba was to go and you and then I have felt one woman should represent her kind. Someone wholly fitted—a believer in nonviolence who will remain steadfast to the end. While I am alive the question of leadership does not arise. I do not want the Working Committee in jail. I want the Working Committee to restrain themselves. In any case I do not want them to go to jail and I fast afterwards. They must go on working. I will keep on directing them so long as I am alive. I feel I shall not become senseless even this time. My fast is a substitute for everything—an integral part of satyagraha. I have been prepared specially for it. I have specialised in fasting previous to any reference to politics. I feel the masses will understand the fast and respond as they should.

JN: What is the response to be?

MG: Go on with the constructive programme, keep to nonviolence and give no help to Britain in war. They must be prepared to die rather than pay. I feel my fast will awaken people too. It is terrible the way our people allow themselves to be wronged and forget and go on being suppressed. I would like you to stay out too.

JN: That cannot be. I must go. It is possible my arrest may have repercussions. How is one to guide it in the right channels?

MG: By what you say to them previously.

JN: In effect—every man who becomes a 'walking newspaper' is really committing civil disobedience. He can be held up under the Defence of India Act. And the sentence is much heavier than it has ever been.

MG: But this is illusive. It would be difficult to arrest people. I don't agree with you that it will be converted into an offence. Duplication of statements is another matter. That comes under the Act. Therefore I have said we don't want to do anything secretly. But of course a certain amount has to come in. Have you any idea of instructions you want to give? I will have to give instructions to Kripalani—maybe daily—for Working Committee members and other addresses too. If they intercept these even we will have to employ persons. We may not have meetings but we can talk as you and I are talking.

JN: Why?

MG: For the reason that we do not want people to be arrested wholesale. They won't allow meetings for publicity. We should not invite the restriction and we strengthen our people—no newspapers, no meetings and yet our work goes on.

JN: After getting there I am to inform you—confirm my programme by phone or wire. When will you inform Vallabhbhai?[5]

MG: I am preparing him for it in my letter today. And I will send him a wire later. You can announce on arrival in Allahabad regarding the meeting on 7th. No harm even if it goes to the papers. Just that you are addressing a meeting. You can announce at the meeting of 4th that you are offering civil disobedience on the 7th.

JN: Till now I have avoided the press. But can I now tell them?

MG: Yes—you may.

5. Vallabhbhai Patel was chosen to be the third of the individual satyagrahis. He was arrested on 17 November 1940.

2

THE CONGRESS ORGANIZATION

1. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Allahabad
March 11, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,
There are some Burmese people who will be attending the Ramgarh Congress. I shall particularly like them to be treated as guests of the Reception Committee during their stay there. In view of the strained relations between the Burmese and Indians, and the want of proper contacts, this visit of some Burmese should be welcomed.

Among those who are coming is a noted Burmese educationist, U.B. Lwin,[2] who used to be the Deputy President of the Senate there. Then there are some young men belonging to what is called the Dobama or Thakin group.[3] This is a progressive group calling itself vaguely socialist but essentially nationalistic. In the welter of parties in Burma, they are the only people who have something other than a personal programme. In regard to the Indian question, their attitude has not been wholly sound but it has been better than that of other people. They are not well off. I hope, therefore, that it will be possible for the Reception Committee to treat them as its guests and to give them free tickets for the Congress and the Subjects Committee.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.
2. (b. 1898); Chairman, Public Service Commission from 1947; Deputy Prime Minister, 1959-60.
3. A group of radical nationalists who aimed at political and economic revolution in Burma, if necessary by armed conflict.

2. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
March 14, 1940

My dear Krishna,
I wrote to you a few days ago that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's Presidential Address might be sent to you in summary by cable. I have

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

now seen it and I do not think it will be necessary to cable it. A copy of it is being sent to you by air mail today. Probably you will get it before you get this letter.

The address was not only written in Urdu, but, if I may say so, it has the Urdu mind behind it. In that sense it is more representative of many Congressmen than my addresses are. To you the address may come as a disappointment and surprise chiefly because it does not deal with many matters which to you are of vital importance today and deals with other relatively unimportant matters at far greater length. During my years of presidency I set a different standard for the presidential address, dealing with foreign affairs and various internal problems in a different background. Then came Subhas's address at Haripura which was a kind of half and half performance. At Tripuri there was hardly any address. So the change to the new style and content is marked.

The address was written entirely in Urdu by the Maulana. Later he asked me to take the responsibility for translating it into English. This was a novel job for me, as I have done no translation work in my life, except some odd sentences here and there and of course the Latin translations I did at school. But Maulana insisted and I did not wish to say no to him. Because of this I had to give up the idea of leaving Allahabad two days earlier and am now leaving only tonight. I asked someone else to do the translation and then went carefully through it. To some extent therefore the language in the English bears my impress. But I have nothing whatever to do with the content which was sent to me without any previous consultation or talk. I tried to make the translation as correct as possible.

Urdu style is so completely different from English style that anything written in good Urdu sounds rather flamboyant in English. Maulana is a Urdu stylist and writes and speaks a choice, though somewhat redundant, language. Remember when you read this that you are reading a translation from another language with a different type of genius.

The Maulana has practically dealt with only two matters in his address. The first part deals with the political issue and narrates what has happened during the last six months, justifying the Congress attitude and saying that it inevitably leads to action in the near future which is of the nature of conflict between the Congress and the government. What this conflict is to be and when, he does not specify.

The second and longer part deals with the minority problems, more specially the Hindu-Muslim question. He has considered this in its political aspects and not in regard to the social forces at work. He has in effect addressed the Muslims of India. Some of his passages in Urdu are very eloquent though they do not read well in English and there is

much repetition. His address is bound to create a marked impression in Muslim India. It may also be appreciated in Islamic countries. It is the address essentially of an advanced and liberal Muslim divine.

Maulana is a curious mixture. Born in Mecca, he spent his early years in Egypt at the Al Azhar University. Then he came back to India and before he was twenty he began to attract attention by his writings in Urdu as well as in Arabic. He started Urdu and Arabic weeklies,[2] the latter having a good circulation in the Arabic-speaking countries where consequently he became well-known. While yet a boy he was considered one of the most learned of the Ulemas or the Muslim divines. His general approach to questions however was not that of dogma but, within the limits of a few basic beliefs, of rationalism. In fact he is very much the type of 19th century or late 18th century rationalists. He reminds me in some ways of the French encyclopaedists of the 19th century. For a Muslim divine to give this impression is very unusual.

Unfortunately he never studied any European language. He has just picked up enough English to read books and newspapers. But he cannot speak it. He knows Arabic and Persian well. Probably he is the ablest among the Muslim divines even from their point of view. Most of them are rather afraid of him because he can floor them in any argument, his knowledge even of the scriptures and traditions being very great. He tries, after the fashion of reformers, to give a very broad and liberal interpretation to religious tenets. In his youth he played an important part in influencing Muslim educated opinion. That influence was definitely an anti-imperialist influence. Consequently when the last war began he was interned and for four years he was kept in this fashion. On coming out of his internment, he joined the Congress and took a prominent part in its work. Unfortunately he is not the type of man who likes the rough and tumble of politics. He is very sensitive and rather avoids crowds and publicity. He lacks a certain vital energy and thus we have not really taken full advantage of his gifts. While he is a magnificent speaker in Urdu, it is hardly possible to induce him to address a meeting. Partly, of course, this is due to ill health.

In the modern world he is rather out of place as he thinks on political lines and hardly at all on social or economic lines, though he is intelligent enough to appreciate a certain development. But he cannot change his background. In the Muslim world of India, however, he is tremendously in advance.

2. The *Al-Hilal* and the *Al-Balagh*.

I am writing this long and rather unnecessary letter to you to give you some background of our new President. This will help you to understand somewhat. I might add that though he has cooperated closely with Gandhiji, he is not prepared to accept everything that he is told.

The real reason for writing this letter is that suddenly I found I had some time at my disposal.

This morning's paper brings the very unusual news of an Indian having shot down Sir Michael O' Dwyer and wounded others at a Caxton Hall meeting.[3] The name of the Indian that is given seems to be a fictitious name. Other facts are lacking.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

3. He was shot dead by Udham Singh at a meeting of the East India Association at Caxton Hall London, on 13 March 1940. Lord Zetland was also wounded.

3. To Jaipal Singh[1]

Ramgarh
March 15, 1940

Dear Mr. Jaipal Singh,

I have received your letter dated the 11th March today for which I thank you. I am afraid it is impossible for me to leave the Congress session and its various committees during the next week. It is to attend to these meetings that I have come here.

You will no doubt realise that the fundamental question before the country today is the political question of Indian independence and allied to it is the war in Europe and India's part in it. This question overshadows everything else, howsoever important it might be. Each community or group in India has to decide this basic issue and its subsequent conduct in regard to other issues will depend on this major decision. For instance, if any group or organisation is opposed to Indian independence and relies upon the British Government for help and special privileges, it ranges itself on the imperialist side on this major issue. With all those who are anti-imperialist and desire the complete

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

independence of India, the Congress will gladly cooperate, even though there might be differences in regard to internal problems. But if there is a vital difference in regard to this major issue, then the basis of co-operation is lacking.

I do not know much about the Adibasi Sabha or the Sanatan Adibasi Sabha and am therefore not in a position to express an opinion. But I am quite sure that the Adibasis should be provided with every opportunity for development and should have all the rights and privileges which we claim for the people of India. I am sure that in this matter the Congress will give its full support to anything that promotes the progress and advancement of the Adibasi community. But this question, like all other questions, must be considered in the larger context of national freedom and independence. Otherwise it may become a narrow issue which comes in the way of this larger freedom and therefore comes in the way of the progress of the Adibasis themselves.

I am afraid I do not know much about the proposal to create Jharkhand into a separate area, to which you refer. There is always a danger in creating small areas artificially and in any event such divisions do not make any vital difference till the major issue is solved. The Adibasis are of course welcome to the Congress if they agree to its creed and objective and its fundamental policy. It is open to them to advance any proposal in the Congress or outside. But you will appreciate that it would be improper for the Congress to bargain for admission of any individual or group to its faith. As it is, the Congress has numerous groups which hold different views but which work together for the independence of the Indian people as a whole.

I do not know anything at all about the promulgation of Section 144 at Ramgarh. In fact I learnt about this for the first time from your letter. I am sure that Congressmen cannot approve of any such action.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. India, Burma and Ceylon[1]

The central political issue dominated everything else at Ramgarh, as it was bound to do. Yet we must take heed of other developments, not

1. Editorial for the *National Herald*, 25 March 1940.

only because of their intrinsic importance but also because they are parts of the larger problem.

The vast sea of humanity, that gathered at Ramgarh, contained people from all parts of this vast country. Among them also were representatives from our sister countries of Burma and Ceylon. This was no new feature in our Congress sessions and yet there was great significance to it at this time of the day. It was a pity that owing to the rain and the consequent disarrangement of normal working, the visit of Burmese and Ceylonese fraternal delegates did not receive the attention that it deserved. They came not merely as curious sight-seers, but as persons grappling with similar problems and trying to find a remedy in joint action.

We are glad to notice that these delegates have taken this visit of theirs seriously and are touring various parts of India and meeting important people. We extend our greeting and welcome to them, our younger brothers, and we earnestly trust that their visit will prove fruitful of cooperation between the peoples of Burma, Ceylon and India. There has been enough of conflict in Burma and Ceylon between our various peoples; there has been enough of bad blood raised by interested parties. But we have always known that below this superficial conflict, there lay the solid roots of mutual interest and cooperation. These roots, which go down into our past history of many a thousand year, cannot be torn out from our hearts and minds, and again we shall see rich flowering in the spring of Asia that is coming to brighten our lives afresh.

The people of Ceylon are our own people, tied to us by race, tradition, language and culture. Economically it is exceedingly difficult to separate them, and why should we separate when it is to our mutual advantage to pull together?

The people of Burma have always formed a golden link between the two mighty countries of India and China. Rightly has this land of Burma been called *Suvarna Bhumi*, the Golden Land. Today, India and China grow closer to each other and it is but natural that their comradeship should embrace the people of Burma also.

We welcome particularly the representatives from Burma of the Dobama Asiayone, the Burmese National League, which is essentially an organisation of the youth of the country and which includes in its fold all the people in that country including Indians, Muslims, Chinese and others. This organisation is full of the vitality of youth and its future in Burma is assured. It looks at Burmese problems in the wider international setting.

There is talk today in Europe of a United States of Europe. We have welcomed all proposals towards a closer union of the free countries of the world, and we gladly associate ourselves with such a union which must be based on freedom for all. But danger lurks in an association of European nations, for this might mean the exploitation of Asia and Africa by the countries of Europe. In any event the time has come when the countries of Asia should look to each other for their protection and common advancement, not for any aggressive design on the rest of the world but to cooperate with others for human good. India is peculiarly and happily situated to be the centre and nucleus of this Asiatic cooperation. It has been for ages past the meeting ground of the two great cultures of Eastern Asia and Western Asia. These two have influenced Indian culture and have been influenced by it. So let us work for this closer drawing together of the countries of Asia, of India, China and Burma and Ceylon and Persia and Afghanistan and Iraq and Palestine and Arabia, as well as the other countries of this great continent.

5. To H.M. Desai[1]

Allahabad
March 26, 1940

My dear Desai,
Dharam Yash Dev has shown me your letter of the 11th March. I am sorry that owing to an office error invitations were not issued to the Ceylon Indian Congress for Ramgarh. I am of course not personally responsible for this unfortunate error as I am not connected with the work in the office. Nevertheless please convey my apologies to our friends of the Ceylon Indian Congress.

Ordinarily invitations are issued to a large number of foreign organisations through our Foreign Department. The mistake probably arose from the separation of the Indians Overseas Department from the Foreign Department of the Congress.

You need not be afraid that the representatives of the Ceylon National Congress will misrepresent facts regarding the position of Indians in Ceylon. The question of Indians in Ceylon has not even been discussed by them or by us with them. If any such discussion was to take place, it could only be done profitably if your representatives were present

1. A.I.C.C. File No. FD-13/1940, N.M.M.L.

also. Jayewardene[2] and Amaratunga are staying with me here today. We have discussed many subjects, but not even referred to the Indian question in Ceylon. I think that such visits do good. People who come from Ceylon or from Burma to India get a much wider viewpoint and come into contact with the new forces that are agitating India. They begin to see to some extent their own problems in a proper perspective.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Junius Richard Jayewardene (b. 1906); lawyer and politician of Sri Lanka; held several cabinet posts intermittently from 1947 to 1960; secretary, Ceylon National Congress, 1940-47; Vice-President, United National Party, 1953; leader of the opposition, 1970-77; Prime Minister, 1977.

6. To H.M. Desai[1]

Allahabad
April 9, 1940

My dear Desai,

Your letter of the 1st April. I am glad to learn that the Ceylon Indian Congress has got a membership of 60,000. I can appreciate the difficulties which arise when a special workers' organisation is started. It is not easy to prevent such an organisation from being formed. Labour problems are very special problems which a national organisation cannot always take up in the same way. Thus the Indian National Congress, though interested in Indian labour, cannot object to the formation of trade unions. In fact it encourages them, provided they are started on right lines. In the same way I do not see how you can prevent a workers' federation. I do not like, however, any workers' union to be racial. Any workers' union should be open to all workers in that industry, whether Indian or non-Indian. It may be that in practice the membership is dominantly or exclusively Indian. Still, it is improper to confine it to Indians. It will be much better to call it a tea estates' workers' union or some such name.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. FD-13/1940, N.M.M.L.

In any event, great care should be taken to avoid any conflict between the labour federation and the Ceylon Indian Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To H.M. Desai[1]

Bombay
April 20, 1940

My dear Desai,
Dharam Yash Dev has sent me extracts from your letter to him and the cutting from the *Ceylon Observer*. I have read the interview given by Mr. Jayewardene. It is true that in parts of this interview he has emphasised some matters which will give a wrong impression. But it is not possible to contradict anything that he has said. First of all because no names are mentioned and one cannot contradict what an unknown person might have said. Secondly because it refers to "those Indians in Ceylon who impede our political progress." The words do not refer to all Indians and no one can say that there is not a single Indian in Ceylon who has not impeded Ceylon's political progress.

Again when it is said that false news is sent to India, it is impossible to check the statement or deny it except in a particular context.

It is obvious that Mr. Jayewardene has indirectly tried to lay the blame on Indians in Ceylon. But his interview as a whole is a friendly one and shows how impressed he was with his visit to India. I do not see how you can just issue a denial of the statement because nobody denies qualified statements. If you choose, however, you can issue a statement expressing your satisfaction at the visit of Mr. Jayewardene and others to India where they could see for themselves the background and the ideals of the Indian national movement which were entirely friendly to Ceylon and against all exploitation in India or elsewhere. At the same time you may express your regret that he has indirectly tried to lay the blame on Indians in Ceylon. There may be some Indians in Ceylon who might not have behaved correctly just as many Ceylonese have not behaved correctly, but it is unjust to make general remarks of this kind without specifying them or substantiating them. Indians,

1. A.I.C.C. File No. FD-13/1940, N.M.M.L.

whether in India or Ceylon, were all against exploitation of anyone and certainly they did not want to impede Ceylon's political progress. As for news sent out to India, if Mr. Jayewardene will point out any false news sent by responsible Indians you will be grateful to him. You do not put these questions to Mr. Jayewardene with a view to have a controversy but to remove misapprehension.

Some such approach seems to me the right one. I have no doubt whatever that Jayewardene's visit to India has been a good thing from the point of view of relations between India and Ceylon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Bombay
April 21, 1940

My dear Maulana,

You will remember your discussing with me the question of someone going on our behalf to America. No suitable person could be thought of at the time and in view of the developing political situation here, it is even more difficult now to think of sending any prominent person.

At the same time it seems to me very necessary to do something about America, not just a propaganda tour delivering speeches, etc., but someone with sense who could meet our many friends in America and make arrangements for future work on an efficient basis. America is full of goodwill for us and I-have many friends there among Americans who write to me repeatedly that something should be done. Unfortunately the Indians in America are a very unsatisfactory lot. They shout a lot and do no good work. Often they do injury to our cause. We cannot rely upon any single one.

My own view is that we should not have any formal or official representation in America, but at the same time we might have close unofficial contacts with some group who could work efficiently and responsibly. Something of the kind we have had in London through the India League, which does not represent us in any way or commit us and

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

yet which does good work for us. Whether this is possible or not in America, I do not know. But an effort should be made.

As it is not possible to send anyone from here, I have been thinking of some suitable person going from England to America for this purpose. This is much more feasible and would not cost much. The only such person I can think of in England is Krishna Menon who might go for a month or two to America. Even if he went, I should like him to do so not as our formal representative but unofficially, though with our goodwill.

I had not mentioned this at all to Krishna Menon, but he has been thinking on the same lines and he has written to me independently that he was considering the prospect of going to America. His chief difficulty is one of funds and he has asked me whether it would be possible for some private arrangement to be made for a hundred pounds. He realises that it would not be fitting for him to commit the Congress in any way or to have any official authorisation. All he would like is a letter of goodwill from you which would contain briefly a reference to our present Congress position and to our desire to have international contacts with men of goodwill.

Personally, I think that it would be a very good thing for Krishna Menon to go to America. The position in England is such that little good work can be done at present. In America many of our people have made themselves thoroughly objectionable and decent Americans, who are our friends, do not want to have anything to do with them. It is essential that any work on our behalf should not get tied up with particular parties or groups abroad. Krishna Menon's visit will be good in itself and will lay the foundation for future work.

I do not know what can be done in this respect by you or whether you approve of my suggestion or not. You will remember that sometime in December or January, the Working Committee sanctioned £200/– to be sent to Krishna Menon to cover the cost of cables and other expenditure incurred more or less on our behalf. It was then thought that further financial help might be sent to him two or three months later if necessary. Those three months have expired and in view of the developing political situation, it seems to me essential that we should make some further provision for further work there. We may not have a chance to do this later. I would have liked, therefore, for a further sum of £200/- to be sent to him on the same conditions as before. This sum may be utilised at his discretion for work in England or, if he so chooses, for a visit to America or for both. Having regard to the magnitude of the work both in England and America, this sum is a very small one. If, however, the sum is considered too

much then we should send less at present. I would suggest that at least £100/– be sent to him as soon as possible. Apart from this, I shall personally try to contribute something to this end.

I shall be grateful to you if you could let me have your opinion as early as possible. Events are developing rapidly and it may become too late to take any such action after some time. I would also request you, if you agree, to send a letter to Krishna Menon expressing your goodwill at the prospect of his visiting America and hoping that he will explain the Congress viewpoint to our friends there. You might add that all we desire is that the world should be correctly and truly informed of the facts in India and of what we stand for. It would be good if you would add a note as to the present Congress position in India. You could send this letter and note to Krishna Menon directly or through me. It would be preferable to do both to avoid your letter going astray. Krishna Menon's address: V.K. Krishna Menon, C/o India League, 165, Strand, London, W.C. 2.

As you know, I expect to be here for another two weeks or more.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. To N.S. Hardikar[1]

Andheri
April 24, 1940

My dear Hardikar,

Your letter of the 22nd. I shall gladly see you whenever you come here. I expect to be round about Bombay till about the 10th of May. I am fully occupied with the Planning Committee's work and have in fact a few odd engagements in Bombay. I am at present living in Andheri in order to work without interruption. Whenever you can come to Bombay during this period, I shall gladly fix up a meeting.

As you might have seen in the papers, Ranjit Pandit has been asked by the Working Committee to enquire into and report about the present state of volunteer organisations within the Congress. He is undertaking a brief tour and will probably go to the Karnataka soon for a day or two. I hope you will meet him and have a talk with him. You will please give him all the available literature on the subject as

1. N.S. Hardikar Papers, N.M.M.L.

well as a personal note by you containing your suggestions. In particular given him information about the old Seva Dal people and what they are doing now.

There is no reason to be excited about the Muslim League Conference at Hubli.[2] It is no good taking these things lying down. There has been enough of that. At the same time one must proceed with discretion. I do not know whether Congress Muslims have any strength in Hubli or the Karnataka. It is their business to work hard to explain the Congress viewpoint among Muslims. Within the next few days an Independent Muslim Conference is going to be held in Delhi.[3] I do not know how successful this will be and whether its decisions will be good or not so good. If the resolutions are the right ones, the fullest publicity should be given to them among the Muslim masses.

As for your political conference, I am afraid it is quite out of the question for me to preside over or even to attend it. I do not attend conferences nowadays. I have neither the time nor the inclination to do so. I am fully occupied with other work.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Bombay Muslim League Conference was held on 24 May 1940 at Hubli under the presidency of the Raja of Mahmudabad.
3. This was held from 27 to 30 April 1940. Khan Bahadur Allah Baksh presided.

10. Rally Round the Congress[1]

The Pakistan scheme is a foolish scheme which will not even last twenty-four hours. It is highly anti-national and pro-imperialistic to which no freedom-loving man could agree.

The All-India Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha are both communal organisations and have no social basis in the masses, but have reactionary and semi-feudal supporters in the princes and landlords. These organizations can never represent the masses and fight for the independence of the country. The Congress, which has a social basis in the masses, insists on the demand for a constituent assembly on behalf

1. Speech at Poona, 28 April 1940. From *The Hindustan Times*, 30 April 1940.

of the people. The first fundamental of this demand is that the decision of a constituent assembly should be regarded as final and the British Government must accept it as the demand of the whole country.

Secondly, the representatives to the constituent assembly must be elected by the masses. Unless these principles of self-determination and democracy are accepted, India can never be satisfied.

The charkha, which is full of potentialities, has a great part to play in the freedom of India, though some sections of the people think otherwise.

The Congress will fight for these demands and I appeal to you to support the Congress in this fight.

11. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Bombay
6 May 1940

My dear Krishna,
Your letter of the 24th April has just come. I have not been able to write to you for some time. This Planning Committee business is exhausting me completely and the other members are also drooping away. We spend six to seven hours daily in session and this is hard work. Then I have to make all manner of drafts and discuss matters with individuals. I have hardly time left to read my letters.

I want to tell you that Maulana Azad approved of your going to America and he said that he would try to get the A.I.C.C. office to send you a hundred pounds. I understand that this money has been sent to you. This is not particularly for your American visit but in continuation of the last remittance to you. You may of course utilise this for your visit.

About the other matter that you write, I have no time now to say much. But I should not worry about these odd statements in the press about what Gandhiji has said.[2] Journalists are too apt to exaggerate and put on interpretations. The position remains as it was.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1 J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Krishna Menon had sent a press cutting in which it was reported: "Mr. Gandhi favours the immediate appointment of a joint committee representing the best elements of Britain and India to devise a formula acceptable to both countries. He seems confident of its success provided that a determination to reach a settlement exists on the British side."

12. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Bombay
May 11, 1940

My dear Maulana,
Thank you for your telegram and your letter of the 9th. It was my intention to go to the Frontier Province towards the end of this month as I stated at the time of the Working Committee meeting. But if you intend holding the Working Committee meeting early in June, I cannot go to the Frontier in this month.

Achyut Patwardhan's[2] address is Ahmednagar. That I think is enough. I am writing to him that you wish to appoint him a member of the Working Committee and that he should write to you directly. If you consider it necessary, you might write to him directly. I am afraid I can suggest no name for the Committee.

I am thinking of going to Wardha for a day on the 15th on my way back to Allahabad and Lucknow. In view of international developments I should like to have a talk with Gandhiji. After that I shall be busy with our provincial Congress meetings and at Allahabad. I have been away for so long that a great deal of work has accumulated.

I am afraid I cannot come to Naini Tal as I have too much work to do which I cannot do there. Apart from this, I dislike greatly going to these hill stations like Naini Tal or Mussoorie. These places do not suit me at all and the crowds of people who are there do not fit in with my temperament. At this time of great world crisis it would specially produce a feeling of tension in my mind if I went to a hill station.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1905); leader of the Congress Socialist Party; joined the civil disobedience movement in 1932 and was imprisoned several times; member, Working Committee, 1936; participated in the 'Quit India' movement and was underground, 1942-46; retired from politics in 1950.

13. To B.I. Ali Khan[1]

Wardha
16/5/40

My dear Mr. Ali Khan,
As I was passing through Wardha today, Gandhiji spoke to me of your letter to him of the 2nd May and suggested that I might answer it. The question you have put is not an easy one for me to answer as, in doing so, I might commit the Congress Working Committee. It would be right and proper for them to consider it and lay down a rule which can be followed. I understand that the matter is being considered by the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

Speaking for myself for the moment, I would say that your criticism of Akali leaders becoming Congress leaders is largely justified. There is however one important consideration to be borne in mind. The Congress has not said, and does not say, that a member of a communal organisation cannot join it. What it has said refers to communal organisations who have political objectives opposed to those of the Congress, and who therefore come into conflict on the political plane with the Congress. Where this is obviously so, the Congress Working Committee names the particular organisations concerned. Following this practice, the Working Committee has named two organisations so far—the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League. At the time this was done, the question of the Akali Dal or any other organisation did not arise. I am not quite clear in my mind even now what the Akali Dal's political objective is, or whether it is in conflict with that of the Congress. The questions being entirely confined to the Punjab, it was not considered on an all-India plane.

However this may be, I personally think it is undesirable for leaders of communal organisations to function as leaders of the Congress. This dual functioning is not healthy.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

14. The Problem of the North West Frontier[1]

It is a matter of profound sorrow that people entertain fears of intensification of forays and inroads into the settled districts from their own neighbours in the event of a further deterioration in the international situation. Never has this problem been approached correctly although it has engaged the attention of the British Government for a long time.

The Congress approach to the problem is different from the government's.[2] Although it is not prepared to tolerate depredations directed against India and Indian subjects, it is always ready to extend its hand of friendship and sincerely try to investigate the real difficulties besetting the tribes.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan has so often expressed his desire to proceed to the tribal areas and work among those people for the purpose of reforming them, but how can the government brook this insult that a task which the full military strength has apparently failed to achieve should be successfully performed by the Congress.

The Frontier Provincial Congress Committee applied to the government for permission to send a deputation to Waziristan but nothing has come of it as yet. Just as there need be no panic in India on account of the bogey of a foreign invasion of the country, similarly there need be no uneasiness on this account as there is no reason why the Congress, when the time comes, should not be able to find a satisfactory solution of the problem.

1. Speech at Namak Mandi, Peshawar, 28 May 1940. From *The Hindustan Times*, 29 May 1940.
2. The British Government's policy towards the North West Frontier sought to maintain full control over the tribes by establishing large cantonments and at the same time professed to work for the economic betterment of the tribes. The Congress tried to reach friendly agreements.

15. Message to the Frontier[1]

A visit to the Frontier is always an exhilarating experience. This brief visit of mine filled me with confidence for the future of the Frontier

1. Peshawar, 28 May 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 29 May 1940.

and of a free united India. I wish the people of the Frontier well. I hope that the next Congress will be held here and show the rest of India the homeland of a brave and gallant people who have done so much in the cause of India's freedom.

16. An Appeal to the People of the Frontier Province[1]

I have come to consult the Fakhr-e-Afghan[2] and other colleagues when the country is faced with a great revolution which might have far-reaching consequences. How are we to meet the coming events and save the country from internal chaos, civil strife and loot that may possibly follow during the period of transition after the fall of a tottering imperialism?

Every Indian must devote his attention to this supreme problem and not keep his eyes shut against dangers. Of course, panic will not help. Rather it will be a standing invitation to peril. Therefore, I advise you not to lose your nerve but prepare yourself for facing every emergency. It has been suggested to me that tribesmen may swoop down upon the country or dacoits hold the field during such a crisis. While all such possibilities may present themselves, I am of opinion that a solution has to be found.

I appeal to you to cooperate with Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and supply him with selfless workers. In him the Frontier is fortunate to have a great leader. He is a dynamic personality in India and behind him is a great organisation of faithful soldiers, the Khudai Khidmatgars. You should send your names to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and volunteer for preserving safety and avoiding possible internal strife, chaos and loot during the coming changes. It will be to our pride and glory to guarantee safety to every English child, woman and man in India during such perilous times.

The English and the French are brave people; they are fighting Hitler with all their might and resources. They may win; nobody can predict the outcome of the war, but even if Hitler wins, his triumph will be short-lived for there are great powers who will not tolerate Hitler dominating the world.

1. Speech at Abbottabad, 30 May 1940. From *The Hindustan Times*, 31 May 1940.
2. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

If Hitler or any other invader attacks us, we Indians would fight to the death; we would rather perish in the struggle than submit to his will, even as we have fought British imperialism bravely. For we do not want ourselves to be offered as a present from one imperialism to another.

17. No Return to Office[1]

To imagine that the Congress will go back to provincial ministries in order to cooperate in the war effort is to delude oneself. We stand for the independence of India. We have to think and act in terms of a new order that is coming and to prepare India to assume the command of her house. There may be trouble and difficulty in the transition stage. We should face it like men and take what is ours without the permission of others who have too long usurped it.

1. Allahabad, 15 June 1940. From *The Hindustan Times*, 16 June 1940.

18. The Khaksars[1]

I referred to the great excitement prevailing in Lahore City and advised the people not to be panicky at the close of a long speech[2] dealing with the political situation.[3] The situation was no doubt serious in India and all over the world, and we were living in the midst of vast changes, but it was no use getting excited about it.

In regard to the Khaksars, I said that I could not pass any opinion about the recent events in Lahore, as I did not know enough about

1. Statement to the press, 18 June 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 19 June 1940.
2. Not printed.
3. On 22 February 1940, the Punjab Government had imposed restrictions on the formation of volunteer bodies as they were thought to be organizing themselves into private armies. The Khaksars started a campaign defying the government order and held demonstrations. On 11 June 1940, the Government of Punjab declared the walled city of Lahore to be "in a disturbed and dangerous state" and increased the number of police.

them, but I had long noticed and deplored that the leaders of the Khaksars had introduced fascist methods and encouraged violence. This was injurious to the country. It was curious that in moments of crisis, this leadership disappeared and left the rank and file to shift for themselves. I expressed my opinion that there must be large numbers of people among the Khaksars who had been misled by this leadership and who were themselves hardly responsible for its vagaries. The charge that the leaders were a kind of fifth column may be true if there was evidence to that effect, but I doubted if the rank and file could have knowledge of this.

I referred to the long five-column statement issued by the Punjab Government, in which it was stated that those who do not actively support the war effort will be presumed to belong to this fifth column.[4] This argument struck me as remarkable. It could not be made to apply to every Congressman who followed the Congress policy of noncooperation with regard to the war.

4. On 11 June 1940, Sikandar Hayat Khan had said: "There are forces in the province and elsewhere waiting for a suitable opportunity to create disruption and disorder... It is hardly necessary to emphasise that any organisation engaged in undermining law and order and creating unrest is guilty of directly helping the enemy."

19. To Mrs. Rallia Ram[1]

Allahabad
July 11, 1940

Dear Mrs. Rallia Ram,
Thank you for your letter[2] of the 8th July. I fully appreciate what you say. All I can suggest is that you should keep in touch with the Punjab P.C.C. and see what can be done through them. We are likely to have a difficult time in India but it is no good losing our nerve about it. We shall stick it out.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-16 Part I/1940-41, p. 395, N.M.M.L.
2. She had asked Jawaharlal to do something about the existing state of communal disharmony in the Punjab.

20. To J.B. Kripalani[1]

Allahabad
July 11, 1940

My dear Jivat,
The Minorities Department of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee has decided to issue fortnightly, in English, a review of the Urdu press. The first such review has just come out and I am having it sent to you. This is the first attempt and it is hoped that subsequent issues will be fuller and more detailed. It seems to me that this enterprise of the U.P.P.C.C. is worth while. Indeed the A.I.C.C. office might well take it up. For a long time past most of us have been living in complete ignorance of what the Urdu press contains. The most astounding lies and misrepresentations are repeated from day to day and there is not even an attempt on our part to contradict them. This press review will help at any rate to keep us informed of what is being said in the Urdu press. Because there is no proper reply or contradiction to these, it is inevitable that the Muslim masses should believe in these. You will notice even in the brief review sent how Congress speeches and statements have been completely twisted and misrepresented.

The next step after issuing this kind of review is to seek to correct these misapprehensions by letters or articles in the Urdu press. Part of the Urdu press will gladly accept anything that we send. So far there is no machinery to send it, but the U.P. Committee is prepared to help in every way in this matter.

Thirdly it is necessary to issue some small pamphlets frequently which can be widely sold or distributed among Urdu-knowing people. There is a definite field for them. At the present moment there is a mass of such literature from the Muslim League side. On our side there is next to nothing.

We discuss the Hindu-Muslim question frequently but so far we have taken no steps even to approach the Muslim mind through the press, pamphlets, etc. It is true that a great part of that mind is prejudiced against the Congress and is not likely to listen to us with any confidence. Nevertheless, there are vast masses who want to know and understand and who would gladly welcome any such approach by us.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-2/1940, N.M.M.L.

If you would care to make any suggestions in regard to the Urdu press review, we shall gladly welcome them.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

21. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Lucknow
July 17, 1940

My dear Bapu,
I have just received your post card.[2] A great deal can be done on the lines you suggest and, as it happens, we have quite competent men to do it. Unfortunately we have not got enough money for any such work on a big enough scale.

As a matter of fact we have had a Urdu weekly for the last two years. This was not officially started by the Congress but it was sponsored by leading Congressmen in this province. It is called *Hindustan*. I think it is far the best Urdu weekly in India, so far as literary and political contents are concerned. But, as it so often happens, the managerial side was hopelessly incompetent and, in spite of all efforts, the weekly has become an increasing burden. Because of the rise of the cost of paper due to the war, it has become almost impossible to carry it on. Very probably the last issue will come out this week. That will be a pity.

A weekly does not cost very much and it could do a lot of good but the finances must be forthcoming. With a weekly like the one you have mentioned and a number of pamphlets in simple Urdu, I am quite sure that we would create a marked impression on the Muslims. They are just in the mood to understand and the feeling against the leadership of the Muslim League is growing. In the U.P., in spite of everything we have always had some Muslim backing and good Muslim workers. In Delhi the anti-Muslim League sentiment is strong.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Mahatma Gandhi had suggested that a Urdu weekly be started to give dispassionate replies to the allegations of the Muslim League.

AT U.P. CONGRESS VOLUNTEERS CAMP, ALLAHABAD, APRIL 1940

WITH AMRITA SHER GILL

22. To J.R. Jayewardene[1]

Bombay
August 1, 1940

Dear Mr. Jayewardene,

Your letter of the 20th July unfortunately missed me in Allahabad and had to follow me to Poona, where I received it only two or three days ago. The handbook and pamphlets that you sent me reached me and I was grateful for them. I read them with interest. The photographs have not reached me yet, but they might be awaiting my return in Allahabad.

I entirely agree with you that the pace of events in the world is very rapid and is likely to lead to big consequences in India and Ceylon. Indeed for the last two or three months we have given the most earnest attention to not only the present situation but the possible developments in the near future. This has led us to a consideration of certain basic matters which did not arise merely in our struggle for freedom. To some extent there has been a re-orientation of our policy, though this does not affect the present. This has resulted in Gandhiji dissociating himself, to some extent, with certain policies of the Congress.[2] This does not mean of course that there is any separation between the Indian National Congress and Gandhiji. But it does mean that he is not prepared to take the responsibility for the decisions of the Indian National Congress and to that extent he wants a free hand.

What the immediate future will bring, no one can say. But it is clear that the present position cannot continue. Personally, I am quite convinced that whatever the result of the war may be, the British Empire cannot survive it, nor can such spread-out empires exist in the future. It is too much to hope that a real world federation of free nations will emerge out of this terrible conflict. But one must presume that the day of small nations is past and only large federations or compact empire states will survive. India is a big enough country, with sufficient potential resources in men, material and ability, to stand by itself even in such a world. But it will take some years to arrive at that stage, and in any event I see no reason why India should not join a larger federation if that is conducive to her own good as well as the advancement of the world. I do not see India remaining part of a fundamentally British federation, though it is conceivable that we might

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, section 1, item 50.

be members of a federation which includes Britain as well as non-British countries. In the event of the defeat of Britain in the war, it is exceedingly unlikely that any British federation will emerge. What might then happen is some federation with its centre in America.

Personally, I should like India to be closely associated in a future order with China, Burma and Ceylon as well as other countries which fit in. Our relations with China have become very close during the last year or two, and I am sure that the leaders of China look upon this possibility with favour.

Ceylon is too small a political and economic unit to stand by itself in the future world. I quite agree with you that there might be danger ahead for Ceylon under these circumstances. It will, therefore, be highly desirable to discuss the future relations of India and Ceylon, so that our minds may be clear and we should know what we are aiming at. Your proposal, therefore, is a welcome one.[3]

I have today discussed this matter with our Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and he told me to convey to you that he welcomed the idea very much and he and his colleagues would gladly meet a deputation from the Ceylon National Congress to discuss this matter. It is a little difficult to fix any definite date for this at present. It would not be desirable to delay such a discussion too much. At the same time the present situation is so complex and many new developments are so likely to take place within the next few weeks, that the future is uncertain. Still, provisionally, some time in the latter half of September or early in October might be suitable.

If Gandhiji's presence is necessary, and we think that his presence is certainly desirable, we shall have to meet at Wardha.

If you let me know the dates that suit you we shall keep them in mind.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. He had suggested that representatives of the Ceylon National Congress should come to India and meet Congress leaders including Mahatma Gandhi.

23. To the Secretary, Karnataka P.C.C.[1]

Allahabad
August 4th, 1940

Dear Comrade,

I have your letter[2] of the 31st July enclosing a letter from Coorg D.C.C. Your reference should really be made to the President of the Congress or the General Secretary. I presume you have written to them. I shall however give you my own opinion. It seems to me clear that in any public institution whether it is a municipal or a district board or a cooperative or a bank, if Congress members are in a clear majority, they should not contribute to a war fund, that is donations, nor should they utilize their machinery to collect such donations. In regard to war loans however the position is somewhat different. Such institutions have usually to invest their money in certain gilt-edged and approved securities which are usually government loans. War loans may be treated as such government loans and where there is a desire to invest money they need not be affected. That is a matter for the directors to decide as to which investment is more desirable from the point of view of the share-holders. In any event I do not see why any cooperative or bank should give a donation for war purposes. In regard to your staff it should be clear that no pressure should be exercised upon them by the union president or others. If they as individuals choose to act in a particular way they are free to do so but not under pressure.

If there is any question of conflict with the government on this issue that conflict must be willingly faced. No government can order a contribution to a voluntary fund from any individual or organisation. There is no direct conflict in this with the Defence of India Act. But if indirectly it is said to cause a conflict there should be no hesitation in adhering to the position which is in conformity with Congress decisions.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P–10/1940-42, p. 204, N.M.M.L.
2. He had written asking for clarification as to what the attitude of Congressmen toward war-fund collections should be, as individuals and as members of an institution.

24. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

August 4, 1940

My dear Maulana,

I have just returned from Bombay. I find in today's paper a statement that the Working Committee might meet towards the end of August or early in September. I hope the meeting will take place about the 26th as previously suggested. As I told you, we have tried to fit in the Planning Committee's meeting with this date and have fixed it for the 30th August. This session of the Planning Committee is likely to last from the 30th August to the 8th September. I do hope that the Working Committee meeting will not conflict with these dates.

Ranjit Pandit has gone to the Frontier Province this morning in connection with volunteering. The situation in the Frontier, from reports received by me, is a difficult one and has to be handled very carefully. Abdul Ghaffar Khan's resignation from the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. has naturally created a great deal of consternation in people's minds and confusion prevails as to where everybody is. The average Pathan does not understand the finer points of politics. He sees that Badshah Khan has resigned from various Congress committees and he thinks there must be something wrong somewhere. This applies to Khudai Khidmatgars especially.

There is likely to be trouble on the border. In fact there has been trouble. It appears that the Faqir of Ipi[2] wants to assume the offensive on a biggish scale. We have heard about this Faqir of Ipi for a long time and curiously enough no one that I came across knows much about him. Not even Khan Sahib. He needs a great deal of watching.

Under the circumstances, I think it will be definitely better for you to invite Dr. Khan Sahib to join the Working Committee, of course through Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Not to do so may lead to further complications.

According to your advice I have written to Ceylon people welcoming their suggestion. I think this matter might be placed before the Working Committee at their next meeting.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Haji Mirza Ali Khan, the Faqir of Ipi, conducted a determined offensive against the British in Waziristan in 1936-38. Repeated British military raids failed to break his resistance.

25. To Mohammed Yunus[1]

Allahabad
August 6, 1940

My dear Yunus,

I have your letter of the 31st July from Srinagar. I received your previous letter also. I suppose you have gone back to Peshawar now and have met Ranjit.

I can quite understand that the proceedings of the A.I.C.C. were confusing. The whole situation is very confusing, not only in India but all over the world. Added to this Mahatmaji's articles have produced even more confusion.[2] The fact is that we are all going through a tremendous period of change and it is very difficult to adjust to these changes. I think that the situation is developing very rapidly and that within the next few weeks, here in India at least, there will be some clarity of action. We must not therefore bother too much about intellectual arguments but prepare for this inevitable step. In fact all that has happened in the past few weeks here is essentially a preparation in a way. If other steps had been taken there was fear of all manner of internal disputes in the Congress. We have tried to avoid that.

Badshah Khan's statements were right in so far as he was concerned. But I wish he had not resigned in a hurry because in any event we have to face conflict and we shall of course face it all together.

The new Ordinance of the Government of India applying to volunteers is a very important and aggressive step which will bring matters to a head very soon.[3] It will affect the Khudai Khidmatgars and we shall have to think carefully what we should do. There are many Congress volunteers' camps going on in the U.P. at present. I have advised them to go on exactly as before except that for a few days they need not take out processions in the cities. Next Sunday I am going to Cawnpore for a big volunteers' rally. This too will take place as arranged so far as

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On 21 July 1940, Mahatma Gandhi wrote: "Now that I am no longer in the Congress, I may not offer civil disobedience even in my own person in its name, but I am certainly free to offer civil disobedience in my individual capacity whenever it may be necessary. No one need suppose that all civil disobedience will necessarily be taboo while the country is still being educated in ahimsa of the strong." On 4 August he wrote: "If the Congress is goaded to it the science of satyagraha is not without a mode of application in spite of the internal weaknesses."
3. See *ante*, section 1, item 54.

we are concerned. We cannot possibly submit to a break-up of our volunteer organisation because of the government's action. I have no doubt that the Congress Working Committee will issue directions about this. But for the next few days we shall watch developments, meanwhile carrying on our work.

Badshah Khan will be thinking of what steps he should take in regard to the Khudai Khidmatgars. If I may suggest, he should carry on quietly as before and there should be no change in the work of the Khudai Khidmatgars. There need not be for the present any big aggressive demonstrations, but other work should not suffer in any way. What is more important is that Badshah Khan should explain the situation to his colleagues and lieutenants of the Khudai Khidmatgars and tell them that the conflict is impending all over India. We must be ready for it and must all pull together.

Under these circumstances you should certainly remain with Badshah Khan. I am glad you have profited by your stay in Kashmir. You might show this letter to Badshah Khan and to Ranjit.

With love,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

26. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Allahabad
August 7, 1940

My dear Maulana,

I have just received your letter of the 5th.

About the sugar industry, I wrote to Rajendra Babu fully on the subject giving my views only a few days ago.[2] But, as you say, after the action the government has taken, we need not take any further steps just now.

I wrote to you yesterday about the new government order regarding volunteering. It was not my desire to issue a statement on the subject but there is so much confusion and so many people come to me about it that I am issuing the enclosed statement.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. *See post, section 5, item 5.*

You will be welcome in Allahabad whenever you come. My programme is: 11th Cawnpore, 14th Lucknow, and possibly the 15th, 16th Benares. I hope to be back in Allahabad on the 17th and to stay on here till the meeting of the Working Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

27. To J.R. Jayewardene[1]

Wardha
August 24, 1940

Dear Mr. Jayewardene,
Thank you for your letter of the 15th August[2] which I have shown to our President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. We shall be glad to meet the deputation from the Ceylon National Congress whenever it comes here. I agree with you entirely that our discussions should not be restricted to any particular issues but should cover future relations between India and Ceylon.

If you have been following developments in India, you will no doubt notice that the situation here is undergoing a complete change and the crisis that I hinted at in my last letter has arrived. This makes it very difficult for us to say definitely when and where we can meet you. It may be that long before November we shall not be in a position to meet you, or rather, that we shall be incapacitated from doing so. But apart from this uncertainty about the future, we shall look forward to meeting you early in November. Gandhiji will be pleased to meet your deputation.

The developing world situation makes it incumbent on all of us to look ahead and to think of the future. Whatever this future may be, it is certain that it will be very different from the past and the present.

About the exact position of the Communist Party in the Indian Congress not much can be said. The Communist Party is not a legal party

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He had written to say that a deputation from Sri Lanka would visit India in November 1940.

in India. For many years the Government of India has banned it.[3] Nevertheless many individual Communists exist and proclaim their faith in communism. They describe themselves openly as Communists. There are a fair number of others who, though not official Communists, are near Communists. Between the Communist and Socialist Parties here, there has been almost continuous conflict. For some time the Communists were members of the Congress Socialist Party but later many of them left it.[4] Since the war began many of the well-known Communists have been arrested under the Defence of India Act and interned.

So far as the Congress is concerned, it has no rule banning any organisation or individual except one preventing members of communal organisations with objectives opposed to that of the Congress. All other persons can join the Congress if they accept its objective and methods. Of course they are supposed to remain within the general discipline of the Congress. If Communists wish to join the Congress, they are perfectly at liberty to do so and, indeed, many have joined it in the past. Some of these have been important office-bearers in different provinces or districts. There has often been some trouble in local committees with Communist members and strictly speaking they have not always kept within the Congress discipline. But no disciplinary action has been taken against them except in very rare instances. This was partly due to the fact that they are often good and earnest workers and partly because the British Government here is persecuting them so much.

It is not easy to write briefly about the recent differences of opinion between Gandhiji and the Working Committee. These differences are largely based on the theory and application of nonviolence. They have been exaggerated somewhat in the press and it is quite likely that they will not affect materially any action that the Congress might take. There is no question of Gandhiji doing anything hostile to the Congress or of forming a different organisation. All that he intended doing at one time was to invite those who fully believed in nonviolence, even for a future state, to get into touch with him so that he might take some action through them. Such action would of course not have been against the Congress in any way. It is quite possible, and indeed

3. In July 1934, the Communist Party of India and its branches were declared unlawful.
4. Since 1936 the Communists had been working in collaboration with the Congress Socialist Party. However, the relationship was not cordial and in March 1940 the Congress Socialist Party resolved to expel the Communists from its ranks.

probable, that by the time you come here all these problems will be of the past.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

28. To J.B. Kripalani[1]

Bombay
28.8.40

My dear Jivat,

I hope you have addressed all P.C.C.s drawing their attention to W.C. resolutions asking for public meetings to be held to explain the Congress position. This has to be emphasised and it has to be further made clear that this should be done before the A.I.C.C. meeting. Afterwards it may be too late (though this of course need not be mentioned).

Bombay city is behaving very badly. I mean the P.C.C. here, not the public. They are sitting tight and doing nothing. Vallabhbhai is also put out by this but he is going away to Gujarat. I suggest that you might write separately to the President and Secretary of the Bombay P.C.C. calling upon them to give effect to the W.C. resolution and hold meetings immediately. Just one show meeting is not enough. Everyone should have one or more meetings.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. Maharashtra Government Records, File No. 3590/H/II-2.

29. Cable to the President, Indian Congress, Durban[1]

Bombay
29.8.40

Your cable received late. Indians cannot accept any position regarding racial inferiority and segregation. You must demand full citizenship rights.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

30. To Lal Bahadur Shastri[1]

September 10, 1940

My dear Lal Bahadur,
I hope you have communicated the M.N. Roy resolution[2] both to Roy and the A.I.C.C. office. It is not enough to just send the resolution to Roy. It should be pointed out to him that the resolution itself is explicit. The main charge is that Roy has carried on persistent propaganda in public against the Ramgarh Congress decision. He has full freedom to criticise Congress decisions in the A.I.C.C. itself but it is quite another matter to carry on intensive propaganda outside on lines which are entirely contrary to the Congress directions. In particular the fixing of an All India Day[3] appears to be objectionable. No one objects to an anti-fascist demonstration as such but the whole purpose of this All India Day appears to have been to cultivate public opinion to support the British Government in the war. Now this is the very opposite of what the Congress has laid down repeatedly during the last year. This policy has led to all manner of results already, including a large measure of noncooperation with the British Government. It is likely to

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On 7 September 1940, the U.P.P.C.C. passed a resolution suspending M.N. Roy from the membership of all elective organizations of the Congress for breach of discipline and demanded an explanation of his conduct.
3. M.N. Roy had called for the observance of an All India Day on 14 July 1940 (the 151st anniversary of the French Revolution), supposedly to mobilize the anti-fascist forces.

lead in the near future to civil disobedience. The policy Roy has been urging is, whatever the reason for it may be, one of cooperation with the British Government in the war. At any time such propaganda is undesirable and likely to injure the Congress. At the present time it is doubly so. Therefore Roy should be asked definitely to say whether he has been in fact carrying on this propaganda against Congress decisions or not. If he admits it, then no further proof is necessary of the fact and the only question to be considered is what conclusion should be drawn from such a fact. If, however, he denies the fact, then reference will be made to his articles, statements, etc.

Please inform Roy that the Council is meeting on the 22nd and if he cares to come in person he can do so to explain his position, or he can send his explanation in writing. Tell him also that the information of this has been sent to the A.I.C.C. and if he so chooses, he can send a copy of his explanation direct to the Working Committee. A copy of the letter you send to Roy should be sent to the General Secretary of the A.I.C.C.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

31. On the Resolution of the Working Committee[1]

The resolution passed by the A.I.C.C.[2] brings us to the verge of a great crisis in this country and each one of us has to shoulder a part of this responsibility. There is no room for further argument and debate amongst us. We have to function individually and collectively as disciplined and peaceful soldiers of our nonviolent army and carry out the directions issued from time to time by Gandhiji and the Working Committee. To my comrades in the United Provinces I make a special appeal. Today the Working Committee have passed a resolution warning Congressmen not to offer any form of civil disobedience till further

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 18 September 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 19 September 1940.
2. On 15–16 September 1940, the A.I.C.C. meeting at Bombay resolved to launch a nonviolent struggle for the preservation of the elementary rights of the people under Mahatma Gandhi's guidance.

directions are issued by Gandhiji. The U.P. Emergency Committee meeting in Bombay have drawn the attention of all Congressmen and Congress committees in the province to this resolution and called upon them to act up to it immediately. They have further asked for full publicity to be given to the A.I.C.C. resolution. Volunteer camps should conclude their period of training and no new volunteer camps should be started till further directions are issued. All our volunteers have to undertake other work and to shoulder heavier responsibilities. To that end let us all now address ourselves.

32. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

September 23, 1940

speech. When objection was taken to this kind of a report, the magistrate said that we could not expect the police to arrange for the reporting of the speeches that were being made and so he would proceed on that very inadequate basis. This is interesting doctrine.

I have just received a letter from Horace Alexander in which he mentions that the British Government is obdurate in regard to India because Anglo-Indian officialdom has assured them that Congress is weak and Gandhiji's influence is waning.

I am going to Lucknow on the 26th night and I expect to remain there for four days. We are having our Provincial Congress Committee meetings there as well as some other committee meetings.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

33. To M.N. Roy[1]

Allahabad
September 23, 1940

Dear Comrade,

I sent you a letter from Bombay in which, among other things, I requested you to let me know, for submission to the Council of the U.P.P.C.C., your reactions to the recent resolution of the A.I.C.C. I felt that the Council would like to know whether you were prepared to abide by this resolution and to observe the discipline of the Congress, at a moment when action may be demanded of every Congressman, or whether you would oppose such action.

I have now seen in the daily press a message circulated by the Associated Press which purports to give your comment on the A.I.C.C. resolution.[2] This is dated Dehra Dun, September 20th. I enclose a cutting from *The Statesman* giving this message. I shall be glad to know if this is a correct report of what you have said.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. This letter was drafted by Jawaharlal for Lal Bahadur Shastri.
2. M.N. Roy had stated that the A.I.C.C. resolution "will only please Berlin and Rome. It is beyond mortal understanding how moral support for Britain and professed abhorrence for fascism are reconciled with anti-war propaganda. The Bombay resolution is sure to lead to the extinction of the Congress.... The Congress leaders having chosen the wilderness, a joint effort should be made by more realistic politicians to form popular ministries in the provinces."

In this report you have severely condemned the A.I.C.C. decision and called it a betrayal of democratic and progressive forces. Further that this resolution is sure to lead to the extinction of the Congress, whose leaders are to be thanked for that inglorious end. You refer to this releasing of popular forces (which presumably are outside the Congress) which will assert themselves under different leadership and oppose the policy of the Congress.

You have invited "more realist politicians" to form popular ministries in the provinces. This appears to be an invitation to all those who are outside the Congress, and such in the Congress who may be opposed to the Congress policy, to combine together as "realist politicians" to oppose the Congress policy and programme and help in the war effort of the British Government. *Prima facie* this is not just indiscipline but an invitation to revolt against the Congress and to organise anti-Congress elements for the purpose. Under cover of fighting fascism, it is an attempt to help British imperialism at a moment when that imperialism is determined to crush Indian nationalism and our movement for freedom.

I am putting to you my own interpretation of what you have been reported to have said. It will be of course for the Council to decide. It is obvious to me, however, that what you have stated has raised very vital and far-reaching issues, and I have therefore thought it only fair to you as well as to the Council to draw your attention to these.

I have consulted the Acting President on this subject and he desires me to inform you again that you will have full opportunity, should you so desire it, of addressing the Council in explanation of what you have said or written. In view of the gravity of the matter he will be prepared to allow you to address the full meeting of the P.C.C. also, which will be held on Sunday 29th September, in Lucknow. Any written explanation that you may send will of course be considered.

Yours sincerely,
Acting Secretary, U.P.P.C.C.

34. To Sampurnanand[1]

September 24, 1940

My dear Sampurnanand,

Your letter has just come.[2] I am afraid it is not much good our thinking about past happenings and wishing them otherwise. We cannot change the past.

I am sorry you will not be able to come on the 29th. Why not come for the 28th? Come at least for one of the two days.

About the University Committee, I shall remember what you have written and see what can be done in the matter.[3]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On 23 September 1940, Sampurnanand had written: "I cannot help feeling that with a little more strength of character and self-confidence, we could have made a more revolutionary use of our opportunities. There need have been no hurry about running away from the ministries... Our bargaining power, if I may use the term, would have been far greater if we had had certain positions in our hands during the critical times through which we are passing and are likely to pass, as the war progresses."
3. He had said that the Report of the Universities Enquiry Committee which was set up when he was the Education Minister of U.P., was now ready. He felt that the Committee should continue to function although it was felt by some Congressmen that they should withdraw from all government committees.

35. The Coming Struggle[1]

The U.P. Provincial Congress Committee respectfully welcome the resolution of the A.I.C.C. passed in Bombay on September 16, 1940, and pledge themselves to such disciplined and peaceful action as may be demanded of them in furtherance thereof. The Committee hold that the time has come to resist the imposition of the will of the British Government on the Indian people, to prevent the exploitation of India's manpower and resources for the war, and to assert by dignified and

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. This resolution passed on 29 September 1940 was drafted by Jawaharlal.

effective action India's right to independence and to shape her own destiny.

The Committee call upon all local committees and Congressmen generally, in this hour of grave crisis when a vast struggle in the country is impending, to prepare themselves in every way to face this struggle with dignity, fortitude and confidence.

36. A Note on Indo-Sri Lanka Relations[1]

For some time past the question of the treatment of Indian residents in Ceylon has been before us. Last year I visited Ceylon in this connection.[2] Now, owing to the development of the world situation and the possibilities opening out of far-reaching political and economic changes in the near future, this question has become absorbed in a much larger question — what should be the future political and economic relationship of Ceylon and India? Representative Ceylonese have approached the Congress with a view to our discussing this with them and have envisaged a much closer union than exists today. Some kind of a federation of India and Ceylon, and possibly other countries, with internal freedom for each country, has even been hinted at. We, on our part, have welcomed this new trend of opinion in Ceylon.

An official Ceylonese delegation is visiting India soon to confer with the Government of India about Indo-Ceylonese trade and other matters. This delegation has expressed a wish to meet Congress leaders for a discussion of the much wider issues referred to above. We have willingly agreed to have this discussion. About the same time a delegation from the Ceylon Indian Congress will also visit India.

It is desirable for our office to prepare a full brief for all these forthcoming talks. All the necessary papers and information should be collected together, and indexed for ready reference. Brief notes should be added to the longer documents. The papers I brought with me from Ceylon last year should be examined and all relevant documents sorted out and arranged.

Apart from this, a full note or notes should be written giving a *resume* of Indo-Ceylonese relationship and allied subjects. This note is likely

1. 4 October 1940. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10. pp. 1-69.

to be a lengthy affair and will require time and labour. I suggest that it may be divided into two main parts: (1) A historical, political and economic account of Ceylon with special reference to the contacts between India and Ceylon in the past and the present; and (2) a separate account of the special conditions, disabilities or privileges of Indian residents in Ceylon today.

This work should be divided up between the Foreign Department and the Overseas Department, the former dealing with the first part, and the latter with the second part. There might be some overlapping. This does not matter. But of course an attempt should be made to fit in one part with the other.

Part I Shri Keskar will deal with this. There should be a brief historical sketch of Ceylon — past contacts with India (cultural, political, trade etc.) — the effects of British rule in changing the economy of the island — the mixture of races, religions, languages, cultures — statistics about these as well as the problems which have arisen because of them — constitutional developments during British rule and, more particularly, during recent years — the growth of the national movement and conflicts between this movement and the British authorities — the part that Indians have played in this movement and the part they now play — the Donoughmore Commission and the present constitution — constitutional conflicts in recent years and the present national demand—attitude to European war — attitude, if any, to foreign happenings, such as Spain, Abyssinia, Munich, Sino-Japanese conflict — relations with Buddhist countries — economic problems — trade with India and other countries — growth of tea and rubber industries and consequent dependence on world markets — effect of depression in 1930 and after — dependence on Indian trade — growth of unemployment — measures taken to check this — future economic prospects — what would be the effect of a closer union of India and Ceylon on either country?—what would be the economic effect on Ceylon of collapse of British Empire or of breaking away from it?

Part II Shri Dharam Yash Dev will deal with this. This should include an account of the growth of Indian business, trade, and labour in Ceylon — the nature of this business and vested interests now (financial, moneylending, land-owning, plantations, big business, small shops, state services, municipal services, domestic services, shipping, import and export business) — the legislative and executive measures taken to check Indian business and restrict Indians in services — the growth of plantations with Indian labour — conditions governing this labour, privileges,

disabilities, grievances — statistics of labour, business and services — immigration rules and regulations — Government of India's or Madras Government's checks and control of immigration and supervision of Indian labour conditions in Ceylon — system of recruiting labour for Ceylon in India — immigration depots — growth of labour organisation in the plantations as well as in services and shop assistants — are there labour unions confined to Indians or are they mixed unions consisting of Indians and Ceylonese workers?—reasons for growth of bitterness between Indian workers and Ceylonese — movement to boycott Indian shops, labour, business and domestic staff — is this boycott movement toning down now? — effect of stoppage of emigration from India last year on Ceylon's economy — the problems which arose last year necessitating Jawaharlal's visit — effect of this visit — subsequent developments — the franchise as it affects Indians as a whole and Indian labour especially—proposal to restrict all kinds of immigration — the present position of Indians — their grievances, disabilities and demands — the case for the Ceylonese in answer to these — the question of a double nationality (Ceylonese and Indian), with privileges of both — or must every person choose between the two?—the growth of Indian organisations in Ceylon.

I have indicated above the kind of notes that should be prepared. These are meant for the members of the Working Committee and may thus include confidential matter. If they are to be published later, they can be revised for the purpose. A number of typed copies should be prepared.

37. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Wardha
Oct. 12, 1940

My dear Mahmud,

I was half expecting to meet you here and was disappointed. I felt that I must have a talk with you both in fairness to you and to myself. We have known each other for a long stretch of years and have not only been personal friends but comrades in political work. Our personal

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

friendship will, I hope, continue. But, it seems that we are drifting far apart so far as political work is concerned. Some things have happened in recent months which have shocked me greatly and pained me. Of course there is nothing strange for me to differ from others. In some ways I differ from every one of my colleagues. I have long known that your viewpoint and approach are different from mine. Still, I imagined that there was a fundamental agreement about essentials between you and me. I now realise that there is no such basic agreement and that we are as the poles apart. This surprises and distresses me and it was for this reason that I wanted to talk to you to find out for my own satisfaction what you felt. And yet recent events have left little doubt in the matter.

I have long felt also that you avoided discussing many important matters with me. I had no business, of course, to make you discuss them, and so I avoided, as a rule, having a serious discussion with you. I laughed and talked casually and so passed over various subjects. Lately I have come to feel also that you resented somewhat my overbearing manner of discussing anything. I am sorry for my manners. Anyhow, if that was your feeling about it, it made it still more difficult for me to talk to you seriously. Ordinarily therefore I would have simply given up serious political talk with you though this was not easy with an old colleague. I propose to do this. But, as I have said, it did not seem quite fair to you or to me to do so without one at least final talk with you. So I had hoped to have an opportunity of a talk with you here. That has not come off and so I am writing, but inevitably what I am writing conveys only a small part of my mind. If it is possible for you to see me in Allahabad I shall be happy.

Last year, in November, it amazed me to find that you should give a long letter containing your views on important matters to Gandhiji without any reference to me, although you and he were in Anand Bhawan at this time. The contents of that letter (copy of which was sent to me by Gandhiji) stupefied me. I could not possibly conceive that a Congressman could write it, least of all you. You will remember that I wrote to you then.[2]

Since then it has dawned upon me that both on the political question and the communal question our approaches are entirely different and in fact somewhat hostile to each other. Your outburst at the last Bombay Working Committee meeting knocked me over. Not that I mind a loss of temper. I am often guilty of it. But the ideas you gave expression to were astonishing. This had nothing to do with facts. It

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 381–382.

was the whole approach that was stupefying. Because you said something there about my trying to impose my will and opinions on you, I decided then and there not to discuss this or other serious matters with you.

I now learn that quite unknown to any member of the Working Committee, you made a proposal to the Muslim League, which the League turned down. This was really amazing and I cannot conceive how anyone could have done so behind the backs of his colleagues. I do not know the facts except what Maulana has told me. It appears that people were talking about it in Delhi. If these facts stated to me are correct, then you were grossly unfair to all your colleagues and indeed to our cause. Merits apart, this action was injurious both to the Congress and to the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity.

But the merits of the proposal made, make matters worse. So far as I am concerned, you know that I hold very strong views on this subject. I have often expressed them in your presence. Knowing this and knowing what Maulana and other colleagues of yours thought, you deliberately made a proposal which, I think, was hopelessly and absolutely wrong, and which puts us in a completely false position.

There is one other matter which has troubled me. I am told that you were responsible for telling people outside the Working Committee about Gandhiji's threat to fast. We had all solemnly promised not to say a word about it. I have not mentioned it to a soul.

I really cannot make out whether you have done all this casually and enthusiastically or deliberately and of set purpose. However this may be, all this creates a vast gulf in public affairs between you and me. My life is wrapped up in public affairs. I have hardly any other life. I hold strong views and I am not likely to give them up. My mind is full of world problems and their relations to India. I am certain that we are in the midst of the biggest revolution in history. I broke with my father on political questions. So you can imagine how deeply I have felt what you have said or written. It has upset me completely.

The future is dark and uncertain for all of us but so far as I am concerned, I have put an end to my normal life. Probably I shall soon be in prison. But that is a small matter. I do not propose to compromise any more and it may be that I go under completely or at least for years. I felt therefore that I must write to you by virtue of our old friendship before it is too late to communicate with each other. I repeat that if it is possible for you to meet me, I shall be glad.

You will remember that in 1931 or 1932 I was unhappy that you avoided jail. I told you so later. But today, if I may venture to suggest to you, you should not go to prison, if you believe that all this

programme is foolish and farcical. We should stick to our beliefs and principles.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

38. The Sikhs and the Congress[1]

Your resolution has my sympathy in so far as I regret any differences between the Congress and the Sikhs. It is strange, however, that you address the Working Committee to attend to these differences. They have done or said nothing to create any differences. On the other hand, various Sikh leaders have made statements and have adopted an attitude which is at complete variance with the fundamental policy of the Congress. In the present war situation they have advised the Sikhs to cooperate with the British Government in a large measure and have dissociated themselves from the Congress noncooperation with the war.[2]

It is not possible for anyone or any group at this critical moment in our country's history to have it both ways and try to gain the favour of both the British Government and the national movement at the same time. Each individual as well as each group must choose definitely on which side it proposes to stand. It is a matter of deep regret for me that some Sikh leaders have chosen this moment to create confusion in the public mind by their dual and non-committal attitude. I am sure that the Sikh community as a whole is fully in sympathy with the national movement and the struggle to come.

1. *The Hindustan Times*, 17 October 1940. This was the reply sent by Jawaharlal to the Gujranwala District Congress Committee's representation to the Working Committee to settle the differences between the Sikhs and the Congress in the Punjab.
2. On 9 August 1940, Master Tara Singh had written to Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Azad asking the Congress not to do anything to prevent recruitment to the army. On 30 September 1940, the All India Sikh League appealed to the Sikhs to continue to cooperate with the war effort, and on 7 October 1940, the Akali Political Conference called upon the Sikhs not to embrace the creed of nonviolence which was opposed to the basic spirit of the Sikh religion.

39. On the Discussions of the Working Committee[1]

I have seen in some newspapers reports from Wardha of what purports to be an account of the discussions in the Working Committee. Some of these reports are quite fantastic and entirely wrong. Some have a grain of truth in them. It is obvious that every matter that comes up before the Working Committee is fully discussed from various points of view. It is obvious that there are differing points of view and approaches in a vital matter. It is the duty of each one of us to give expression to his own opinion fully before a final decision is taken. Often a decision is not wholly in keeping with a member's viewpoint. Yet for the sake of democratic discipline he agrees with it, unless it is such a vital matter that he cannot do so.

Mahatma Gandhi's approach to many problems is often a non-political approach. Some of us, including me, view these questions from a political angle only, though all of us, I hope, keep in mind the moral aspect of every question. I have sometimes found it difficult to understand Gandhiji's approach, because my mind functions differently. While fully appreciating the political aspects of nonviolence in our struggle, I have been unable to appreciate many of its implications.

Gandhiji, though he lays emphasis on certain ethical and other aspects, does not ignore political aspects as everyone knows. It is perhaps a question of emphasis for him.

He has developed a certain technique of action which has yielded great results to our movement for freedom. It is clear that the Congress and the country want that technique to be continued and it is obvious that Gandhiji is best fitted to lead a movement with that technique.

In many matters I have ventured to disagree with him, and probably I may continue to disagree with him. But at the present moment I have no doubt that we must give full and loyal cooperation to him, so that he may have full opportunities of developing this great movement. Any other course would be a foolish one leading nowhere.

Events are likely to develop fast. Let us be prepared for them and not waste our time in theoretical arguments. This does not mean my accepting all the implications of everything that Gandhiji may put forward, but I do propose to function as a disciplined soldier so long as I can.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 17 October 1940. *National Herald*, 18 October 1940.

I should like to clear up a misunderstanding which seems to have spread among many people about the present objective of our movement. Our objective can only be independence and no kind of settlement with any power or authority is possible except on that basis. The immediate issue has been raised by the war and by the necessity of our declaring our position in regard to this war.

It is not an issue of civil liberty or freedom of speech except in so far as these are related to the war issue. The issue is : India and the war. And this is intimately related to our right to independence. The objective today and till we achieve it is unadulterated independence. There should be no mistake about this.

40. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

October 18, 1940

My dear Maulana,

You may have noticed a message that appeared in the *Hindusthan Standard* from Wardha in which it was stated that you had offered to resign. In *The Leader* today there is another message which I am sending you.[2] This is patently false. I wanted to tell you that no word of mine here or in Wardha to anyone could possibly lead him to come to any such conclusion. In fact I have said nothing at all about this matter to anyone. I did not mention it to the members of the Emergency Committee who were present at Wardha, and in fact met no pressman except Shiva Rao with whom I did not discuss any internal politics.

I issued a brief message yesterday which I enclose. It is just possible that I may issue something more in view of the misstatements in the press.

I am leaving tomorrow morning for a five or six days tour. My programme is: October 18th Pratapgarh, 19th Rae Bareli, 20th Sultanpur, 21st Fyzabad, 22nd Barabanki, 23rd Lucknow, 24th back in Allahabad.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. It was reported that Jawaharlal and Azad had pleaded for a more effective campaign and said that the Working Committee should be allowed to frame its own scheme and if Mahatma Gandhi did not like to take the responsibility for it he could be relieved of leadership. Mahatma Gandhi was supposed to have retorted that they had no right to overrule his scheme. Jawaharlal and Azad were thought to have said that they might as well give up all idea of civil disobedience rather than indulge in the child's play which Mahatma Gandhi had invented for them.

Probably I shall leave Allahabad again on the 25th night. 26th Farrukhabad, 27th Mainpuri, 28th Etah, 29th back in Allahabad.

During these tours I shall be going to rural areas and returning in the evening to the headquarters of the districts where I spend the night. I intend spending a few days in Allahabad during Diwali and *Id* and then to go out again, probably to Meerut and other places in the north.

All this is of course subject to developments. I am inclined to think that these developments will be quicker than I imagine.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

41. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Camp Sultanpur
October 20, 1940

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am in the middle of a heavy tour at present. I hope to be back in Allahabad on the 24th morning. So far I have no programme after that. I have informed Kripalani to telephone to Bapu that I am perfectly prepared to follow Vinoba if and when Bapu wants me to do so. I shall await his instructions.

I should like to make a suggestion about the Vithalbhai Trust that you are creating.[2] Would it not be better to add Maulana Azad to it as one of the permanent trustees, apart from his capacity as President of the A.I.C.C. This will mean that when the President changes, Maulana will continue to be a trustee and there will of course be the new President also. This is just a suggestion for your consideration.

All manner of difficulties are arising about the reporting of Vinoba's satyagraha.[3] You know what the government is doing and what instructions the government has issued to the press. Should the *National*

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He had written to Maulana Azad that a Vithalbhai Memorial Trust be set up to administer the Rs. 1,00,000 which was a bequest of Vithalbhai Patel to the A.I.C.C.
3. On 18 October 1940, newspapers were instructed that "no account of the incidents leading up to satyagraha by Vinoba Bhave and no reports of his speeches or any subsequent developments should be published without previous reference to the Chief Press Adviser of Delhi."

Herald follow these instructions or not? This difficulty will arise also in connection with Bapu's statements and articles in the *Harijan*. I should like your opinion about this.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

42. To M.N. Roy[1]

Lucknow
October 23, 1940

Dear Friend,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 20th October. You have pointed out certain apparent contradictions. But on re-examination you will perhaps find that there is no inherent contradiction. While the Working Committee confirmed the decision of the Council of the U.P.P.C.C., they recommended to the Council a manner of dealing with this matter which avoided, as far as possible, anything being done which might hurt your feelings.[2] It is not their purpose, I take it, as it was not the purpose of the Council of the P.C.C., to do anything which would be personally discourteous to you. This was a matter of policy and organisational unity and the personal aspect was not involved. As you yourself point out, your letter was not clearly a resignation but was an intimation that you would resign under certain circumstances. The Council felt, therefore, some difficulty in treating it as a resignation. The Working Committee, however, perhaps strained this point a little and were prepared to consider it as an offer to resign.

It is true that as a result of the Council's resolution, you ceased to be a Congress member, subject to what the Working Committee might finally decide.[3] In view of the Working Committee's recommendation,

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. The letter was drafted by Jawaharlal for Lal Bahadur Shastri.
2. The Working Committee had recommended that M.N. Roy may be allowed to resign from the Congress and had asked the Council of the U.P.P.C.C. to accept his resignation.
3. On 29 September 1940, the Council of the U.P.P.C.C. resolved that M.N. Roy's name be removed from the list of primary members of the Congress and he be not permitted to become a primary member of the Congress for a year from the date of decision.

the Council will gladly reconsider this matter and vary their previous resolution accordingly. My object in writing to you my last letter was to enable the Council to take this step in a formal way. This would have been facilitated by some communication from you regarding your desire to resign. I cannot of course commit the Council to anything and my suggestion was a personal one. It is entirely open to you to take such steps as you might like in the matter.

In order to get over the difficulty pointed out by you, you might write to the effect that it was your desire, under the circumstances that have arisen, to resign your Congress membership. If this membership is still supposed to continue or if the Council takes any step which would enable you to resign from the membership, you are sending your formal resignation.

Some such form of words is suggested for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,
Acting Secretary, U.P.P.C.C.

43. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

October 24, 1940

My dear Maulana,

I enclose a telegram which I received from Shaukat Ullah Ansari[2] yesterday, at Lucknow. The telegram reached me late as I was touring. It is too late to take any effective action and in any event I do not know what effective action we can take. Still it might be worth while for you to send a letter to the Swiss Consul. You could say that you had received a cable from Iqbal Schedai in Switzerland to the effect that he had been ordered to go out of Switzerland. His going out meant necessarily his going to either Italian or German occupied territory and this was bound to lead him to a great deal of trouble. You hoped that the Swiss Government would be good enough to consider the case and not to take this unfortunate step against an Indian.

You need not say anything about the date mentioned or anything else about the man in question.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1908); nephew of M.A. Ansari; member, Lok Sabha, 1952-57; Governor of Orissa, 1968-71.

Iqbal Schedai as a boy took part in the *Hijrat* from India about 1920. Since then he has been living in Europe, in Italy, France and Switzerland. I believe he has also got married there. I met him for the first time in 1926 and since then I have seen him occasionally during my visits to Europe. I cannot say much about him or hold myself responsible for him. But a non-committal letter from you to the Swiss Consul, as suggested above, would do no harm and might possibly do some good.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

44. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

October 24, 1940

My dear Maulana,

At my suggestion, Kripalani has sent you a telegram requesting you to agree to an extension of the period of making Congress members this year. I hope you will agree to this for many reasons. Just after *Ramzan* and Diwali, will be the best time for making Congress members.. But the chief reason is that people should have some definite work like this to do during the next few weeks.

You will remember that I told you that I had written to Mahmud from Wardha.[2] On my return here today I found that Mahmud had been here for the last four days. He had not received my letter yet or any other during the last 12 days as he had been living in a remote village.

I had a talk with him about many matters. He denied vehemently having made any suggestion, direct or indirect, to the Muslim League people. The very idea seemed to shock him. He said that he had casually met Khaliquzzaman and Jinnah at Brelvi's place just before he left Bombay. Khaliq suggested to him that the Congress should agree to accept the Viceroy's proposals. Mahmud in reply said that this was impossible. This was all the talk he had with him, and he met nobody else and did not write to anybody in regard to the communal or political question. He mentioned to me that both Khaliq and Nawab Ismail

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, item 37.

had met Bhulabhai twice at the latter's house. What talk they had, he did not know.

I asked Mahmud also if he had in any way mentioned that Gandhiji at one time intended having a fast. I asked this question as Bapu suggested that Mahmud had told some people about this. Mahmud expressed the greatest astonishment and definitely and categorically denied having said anything even casually, or whispered anything on this subject to anyone. The very idea of his doing so pained him.

I mention these two definite facts to you as I think you ought to know them. I think that in these two matters Mahmud must be believed. About other matters he told me that it was true that he had been feeling completely unnerved largely owing to physical ill health. I shall probably have further talks with him.

You need not worry about my accident. It was a very minor one and I am quite well.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Gandhiji.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

45. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

October 25, 1940

My dear Maulana,

Your letter of the 24th has just come. I am glad to learn that you are getting over your indisposition. So far as I am concerned, I am quite well.

Yesterday, on arrival here, I received a letter from Bapu asking me if I was in general agreement with what he was doing.[2] If so, to write to him, presumably so that he might instruct me accordingly. It was a difficult matter for me to deal with in a telegram. Ultimately, however, I wired to him briefly "Agree generally". I wrote to him somewhat more fully.[3]

I do not think there is any purpose in my staying back. And so I have informed Bapu.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, section 1, item 89.
3. *Ibid.*

About the Working Committee meeting, I do not think that any useful purpose will be served by all of us going there. Perhaps if you went and conferred with Gandhiji it would be enough. But this is for you to decide.

If you intend holding a Committee meeting in Wardha early in November, this might suit the Ceylon people who would like to get there on the 10th or thereabouts. I suppose the meeting would be after *Id.* We have a function in Allahabad on the 5th November which I should not like to miss.

Personally I think it would be a good thing if you and I met the Ceylon delegation in Allahabad at some leisure. In Wardha everything is so rushed. Later they could go to Wardha and meet Gandhiji and the others. Even if a Working Committee meeting is held in Wardha it would be desirable for us to meet the Ceylon people in Allahabad. I have had a very long memorandum prepared on India and Ceylon by our Foreign Office and Overseas Department. This deals with the question, historically, culturally, economically, etc.

So far as the China Mission is concerned, there is no point in its going to Wardha to meet the Working Committee. In fact this will be undesirable and they will not like it. They have come here to meet individuals and not organisations. I am helping them in drawing up their programme and I proposed to the Consul-General in Calcutta that I am prepared to send Dr. B.V. Keskar of our Foreign Department to help in making up the programme. This programme appears to be a lengthy one and includes a visit to Kashmir and Ajanta and Ellora. I have written to Sir Akbar Hydari and am writing to some people in the Kashmir Government. In other places we shall get into touch with our friends. It may be worth while for Keskar to accompany the Chinese Mission.

I have today received a cheque for Rs. 500 from the Scindia Steam Navigation Company for the *Hindustan.* I do not know however how long these papers will continue. I agree with you that so far as we can, we should keep the *National Herald* going. I have just heard that Gandhiji has stopped *Harijan* because of restrictions placed upon it.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3

THE INDIAN STATES

1. A Cry from Jobat[1]

Those who have to deal with the Indian states have lost the capacity for surprise. Nothing is too fantastic, or tyrannous, for it to happen there. But I must confess to a feeling of surprise when I learnt of an order passed recently in Jobat state in central India. The Dewan of this state ordered a certain Mr. Shamsuddin to leave the state forthwith. That was not enough. His sons (names not given) were included in the order. That too was not enough. The heirs and successors of Mr. Shamsuddin and his sons were also included, and all these people, born and unborn, were commanded not to re-enter the state without special permission, previously obtained, from the Darbar.

This remarkable order, which is passed on future generations for ever and ever, will delight the heart of a lawyer and a constitutionalist. It will no doubt be one of the prized specimens in the future museum where the relics of the princely order of India will be preserved for the instruction and amazement of our people. It deserves no commentary and so I give below a statement on Jobat as I received it:—

> Jobat is a small state in Central India Agency. Its area is 131 square miles, with a population of 21,152, and having an annual revenue of Rs. 79,000. The state is connected by Dohad (Gujarat) B.B. & C.I. Railway, which is 45 miles from it.
>
> The heart-rending tale of repression on the people and kisans of the state came into bold prominence, when they in their scores, carrying posters and placards, walking all the way, came to put forward their grievances at Dohad before the Central India States People's Conference held under the presidentship of Acharya Shree Narendra Deva.[2] The Conference after deliberating over the matter resolved to investigate into the misrule of Jobat state.
>
> The following order served by the state on some prominent residents of Jobat state, who have been there for hundreds of years, and who owned extensive lands, properties and buildings, and who had lived peacefully and contributed to the well-being of the state, and whose family had produced cricketers and sportsmen of all-India reputation, throws vivid light on the vagaries of the irresponsible and autocratic rulers of the Indian states.

1. *National Herald*, 28 March 1940.
2. On 13 February 1940, at Khandwa.

Order :

Dewan office, Jobat state, C.I., Office order No. 157 of 1938.

In pursuance of the Darbar order No. 24 dated the 18th February, 1938, it is hereby ordered that Mr. Shamsuddin and his sons with all their heirs and successors shall leave the Jobat state territory on or before the 26th February and shall not re-enter the same either by themselves or their heirs or successors without special permission previously obtained from the Darbar except in the course of transit on the Barjhad Sewria Pucca Road only in the conveyance usually meant for the purpose but while doing so shall not be allowed to alight from the conveyance.

(Sd.) S.L. PANDE
(Dewan, Jobat state, C.I.)
Feb. 21, 1938

Later on similar externment orders were executed affecting about 150 souls, and their properties, estates and buildings valued at thousands of rupees were snatched away from them without even the farce of a trial.

It will be seen from the above order that without any provocation or offence, numerous families have been turned out and the order further seeks to penalize the future children of the externees who may be born hereafter. Such an order is unheard of in recent memory and has surely no parallel anywhere. No wonder the people, groaning under the heels of such a tyrannical rule, take recourse to sporadic action.

If an indictment against the Indian princes is required the above order is sufficient to condemn the whole princely order and the Paramount Power, who acquiesces in such orders, as also equally responsible. No wonder that even Gandhiji in his characteristic style has dubbed the Indian princes as so many Indian Hitlers.[3]

The people of the states cannot suffer this condition of things any longer. They demand that the British Government shall either secure and guarantee to them the same form of government as their brethren across the borders in British India enjoy, or, if the British Government deny their responsibility in this behalf, the people demand that they should be left to secure the administration they desire by peaceful and legitimate means, and that the British Government should withdraw the protection given to the princes.

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 503.

2. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
April 9, 1940

My dear Krishna,

I am not writing to you much about general conditions here because short of writing long essays, which may or may not get through, there is no other way of dealing with such a situation. Generally speaking developments that are taking place are expected. The various groups line up according to programme. Gandhiji goes forward, step by step, in his own way. That way is often unusual and sometimes a little difficult to follow. Nevertheless it is the only effective way at the present moment and the country is moving in that direction, at any rate the Congress as a whole.

The new orientation of the Muslim League since the Lahore session is, in a sense, to be welcomed because it clears up matters and removes so many doubtful and confusing middle situations. In a sense of course it creates difficulties of which undoubtedly the British Government will take advantage. But the League has taken up a fantastic position which puts it out of count with large numbers of people completely. The issues become clearer.

There has just been an attempt in Bombay to form a Centre Party.[2] There is nothing in this. Some old Liberals are trying to change their name and to rope in Ambedkar.

The Executive Council of the U.P. Congress Committee passed a resolution recently which was sent to you by air.[3] I should like to draw your attention to this specially.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. The All-India National Liberal Federation met informally on 7 April 1940 to consider the formation of a central party in India whose object would be to bring pressure on the British Government to grant Dominion Status speedily and prevent another civil disobedience movement.
3. The U.P.P.C.C. resolution of 1 April 1940 endorsed the Ramgarh resolution on war.

Another matter which is important is the intensive repression that is going on in the Indian states, notably Ratlam[4] and Jodhpur.[5] The Central Assembly has just passed an enactment trying to make it more difficult for any activity to take place in the states.[6] This deserves special notice as it shows how completely the British Government is supporting reaction in the states.

A new organisation has been started called "The Muslim States' People's Conference" or some such name.[7] This is in effect a move of some Hyderabad Muslims to prevent reforms in Hyderabad. It has naturally the support of the Muslim League.

The Forward Bloc, after a lot of shouting, has staged a few petty demonstrations which do not amount to much.[8]

Yours,
Jawaharlal

4. In 1938, the Ratlam Praja Mandal put forth a list of eight demands asking the government to provide the basic amenities of a responsible government, including reorganization of land revenue system and establishment of panchayat boards. The state authorities placed a ban on the Praja Mandal, arrested workers, refused entry into the state for the sympathisers of the movement and banned all meetings and processions. On 30 March 1940, some prisoners were beaten inside the jail. Hearing their cries a number of people gathered outside and formed a procession, and were in turn lathi charged. There was complete hartal in the state and even schools were closed in protest.
5. The Jodhpur Lok Parishad was declared unlawful by a proclamation of the Maharaja on 1 April 1940. Thereafter, huge processions were taken out in protest and lathi charges and arrests became a daily occurrence.
6. On 2 April 1940, the Central Assembly passed the Bill extending the Defence of India Act to Indian states and tribal areas.
7. An All India States Muslim League was formed in 1939 with the declared aim of preserving and advancing the rights and interests of Muslims in Indian states. It was intended to counter the increasing influence and activities of the All India States People's Conference led by the Congress.
8. The Anti-Compromise Conference held at Ramgarh in March 1940 under the leadership of Subhas Bose resolved to begin countrywide satyagraha on 6 April 1940, against India's forced participation in the war. The agitation was started in different parts of India by the Forward Bloc, but soon petered out with the arrest of the leaders.

3. Arson in Bidar[1]

The Holi day on March 23 last saw a strange and tragic happening at Bidar in Hyderabad state to which little attention has been paid in the press. Some newspapers have had reports but the Associated Press has not troubled itself in the matter, and this silence about a major important occurrence is deserving of enquiry.

On that day, following a petty altercation between some boys, a large mob, directed by well-known persons, collected at the heart of the bazaar and deliberately set fire to 117 houses and shops which were burnt down with a loss of over fifty lakhs of rupees. Bidar is not an out-of-the-way place. It is the headquarters of the district. For over three hours, the mob looted and burnt, and no one tried to check them. Policemen, it is said, looked on. After the work of destruction was completed, the curfew order was promulgated, which, in effect, prevented owners of shops and houses from going to the burning heap and attempting to rescue what they could. Those fires burnt on for many days. It is clear that this burning was a calculated and premeditated affair. It could not have taken place otherwise in such an organised and deliberate way as is indicated.

The reaction of the Hyderabad Government was significant. They seemed however to attach no great importance to this ghastly deed. They tried to prevent news from going abroad. No help was given by them to the sufferers and a reasonable demand for an impartial enquiry and compensation was turned down. A very high official,[2] passing near Bidar, did not care to go to the spot where the fires were still smouldering, although requested to do so. Meanwhile, 2,000 merchants and others, deprived of what they possessed, have left Bidar and taken to the villages.

What the Hyderabad state will do further in the matter I do not know. But this tragedy has thrown a lurid light on the conditions that prevail in this premier state of India which is premier not only in size, but in backwardness and medievalism.

Do mobs take the place of government in this state? And do they have passive or active support of the representatives of the authority? This is a negation of government, and of all decency. One's sympathy goes to the unfortunate people of the state who have to endure this.

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 20 April 1940. *National Herald*, 23 April 1940.
2. Sir Akbar Hydari, President of the Executive Council.

4. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Bombay
April 21, 1940

My dear Krishna,
Your letter of the 6th April has reached me here. I have come today to a suburb of Bombay in order to escape the numerous engagements that pursue one in Bombay itself. I propose to devote some time here to the material collected for the Planning Committee, which begins its session on the 1st May. I shall be round about Bombay for the next three weeks or so.

Your cablegram followed me from Allahabad. I sent you a reply from here.[2] It did not contain very much. But then it is not easy to write much under the circumstances. I can quite understand the lack of news at your end. News of a dramatic kind is no doubt lacking but all manner of happenings are taking place from day to day which have significance and which point in one direction. It is not an easy matter to write about all this and, even if I wrote, I doubt if I could get through. The point is that the situation has hardened on every side and all these debates in Parliament and good advice or threats that are doled out to us are hardly read here. Our minds are turned in a different direction now. We realise fully all the implications of the situation and of its difficulties. But in regard to certain fundamental matters there is no doubt left and this makes it clear that sometime or other a conflict is inevitable. Gandhiji has stated repeatedly that he will not precipitate a struggle but events sometimes do not wait for permission. It seems to me clear that the present British Government has made up its mind to try to down the Congress in every way. All its policy points this way. Its attitude to the Indian states, to the communal question as well as to the larger political question is of one piece.

Meanwhile, although nothing dramatic has occurred, there is a continuous invasion of ordinary liberties. Many individuals, chiefly belonging to the Forward Bloc, or labour workers or other leftists have been picked off in various parts of India.[3] There is no direct attack on the Congress as such or on noted Congressmen. But many Congressmen, here and there, have suffered arrest. Yet it would be wrong to say

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, section 1, item 12.
3. In March and April 1940 the Defence of India Rules were directed against the left wing, peasant and labour leaders in different parts of India.

that these arrests have been on any big scale, having regard to the extent of India and our past experience.

Advanced socialistic literature is being suppressed. This was always so in Bengal and other parts.[4] But even Allahabad has now come into line. And Kitabistan has had a large number of their publications and other books confiscated, chiefly those dealing with socialism or Russia. The U.P. Government have applied the Defence of India Rules to such publications and any matter which is prohibited under section 19 of the Sea Customs Act 1878, is prohibited.

In Bengal there is almost a complete denial of civil liberties, right of meetings etc.[5] In other places this is being gradually restricted. The Indian states are behaving more aggressively. There has been severe repression in Ratlam and Jodhpur as well as several other states. Many of these states have English administrators or Dewans, and these people can do what they like over the head of the ruler. It is clear that the policy is a uniform one, dictated by the Political Department of the Government of India.

Last month, on the 23rd March, an occurrence took place in Bidar in Hyderabad state. Bidar is a district headquarters. A very petty private affair was given a communal turn and what appears to be an organised and premeditated attack, took place on all the shops owned by Hindu merchants. One hundred and seventeen shops were completely burnt and an enormous damage was caused. No effort was made by the authorities to stop this, and it would appear that the authorities were aware of it from the beginning. Efforts were made to prevent the news from leaking out and the Associated Press man sat tight on the occurrence. Most of the newspapers contained nothing about it, though *The Hindu* of Madras gave some accounts. All this was clearly an attempt to terrorise the political demand for reform.

I am afraid you will have to do in future without any regular supply of intelligent news. I shall of course continue writing to you but it is not easy to write intelligently about a complex developing situation under existing circumstances. You know the background.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

4. On 5 April 1940, an order was imposed which prohibited the publishing in Bengal of any document in connection with the National Week programme of the Bengal Congress under Subhas Bose. On 10 April 1940, the Bengal Government placed a ban on public processions, meetings or assemblies in the province for six months from 21 April 1940.
5. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 176.

In the crisis that is upon us, it is clear that the Indian states' governments stand fully ranged with British imperialism. Not only that, they have flirted and come to private arrangements with all reactionaries. It is well known that communal organisations are in high favour with the authorities in the states. There is nothing communal about this marriage of convenience. It is a political coming together — reaction clinging to reaction. And so Hindu rulers come to terms with and encourage Muslim communal organisations, and Muslim rulers are friendly to Hindu communal organisations. The opposition of both is to progress and freedom and the growth of national unity and strength.

The old intrigue has borne fruit and the British Government relies upon communalism and the feudalism of the states to meet the tide of advancing nationalism. Let us realise fully who our opponents are. Recent developments are to be welcomed for this reason at least, for they separate the wheat from the chaff, and all of us can see the picture of present-day India in all its brutal nakedness.

What are the states' people to do? In this hour of crisis, discipline is needed and no two voices should command. It is for our leader in the struggle, Mahatma Gandhi, to issue directions and we should adhere to them. As I understand him, he does not want the states' people to launch satyagraha the moment Congress starts it in the rest of India. Obviously widespread satyagraha in India will have a powerful effect on the states and their people. The whole of India will be shaken up and no one knows what the consequences will be, except that they will be far-reaching. The states' people cannot be mere lookers-on and they will have to bear many trials and tribulations. They must prepare themselves for them and be ready for all eventualities. What they ultimately do will depend on the course of events and their own strength. The ultimate decision will rest with them.

While therefore the states' people should not automatically join a Congress satyagraha movement, some of them may have to start their own satyagraha for reasons which apply to them. Even today a satyagraha movement would be justified in many states where the cup of humiliation and repression is overfull. But let them not act hastily or precipitately but with deliberation which is the sign of strength. Haste at the wrong moment leads to adventurism and demoralisation. The time of trial and testing will come soon enough; let them work hard and get ready for it. The Indian states have hitched their wagon to the chariot of imperialism. They have both had their day and will go together.

6. The Congress and the States[1]

The Congress has been accused of not taking any interest in the states. This is incorrect. No sane person would wish British India to attain freedom and allow the states to remain backward. In fact, the Congress policy is to concentrate our power at one place to fight a powerful government, instead of splitting that power in several places. The Indian states will necessarily march abreast of the rest of India. At this juncture of history, when we see the end of small countries, it is idle to think of dividing India. We are seeing the end of the present world. The present war has proved the impossibility of the existence of smaller countries. Under such conditions no patriot can think of dividing India into parts.

The Congress has to face several new problems. Communal organizations are opposing the Congress at every stage and on every question, and they are exploiting their co-religionists. There is no communal problem in India, but under the guise of religion, vested interests have created difficulties. They cannot oppose the freedom movement as they did twenty years ago, but they in the same breath demand freedom and also place obstacles in the way of freedom.

Communal organizations have also sprung up in Indian states and strangely enough state governments are helping communal organizations and suppressing state Congresses, or other non-communal bodies. Some Hindu states are even financing communal Muslim organizations, while Muslim states are financing Hindu associations. The Kashmiris are to be congratulated on their bold decision to be above communalism and for having a common platform. I assure the states subjects that they will not be left behind while British India marches ahead.

Twenty years ago Mahatma Gandhi started a new movement in India. He made the poor peasant his soldier. The Indian peasant, who was already overburdened, fought for freedom successfully. India has undergone several changes in the course of twenty years. Though much difference is not visible in her constitution, the downtrodden and oppressed Indians can raise their heads now. How is India to achieve complete freedom? By violence or by Mahatma Gandhi's new technique of nonviolence? The war has again proved the futility of violence. Violence as a means of attaining independence is an antiquated method. Even the French Revolution and other revolutions were violent, but the

1. Srinagar, 1 June 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 2 June 1940.

difference between regular troops and people at that time was slight; both were armed with the same sort of weapons. Now the case is quite different. Armies are equipped with the latest methods of warfare, while the civil population is totally disarmed and guns are quite ineffective when bombs are dropped from the air by armed forces. This is an age of new scientific inventions. It is difficult to fight against tanks and aeroplanes without being equally well equipped and strong.

It is no use talking of resorting to violence for attaining independence in a country which has no armies. In our method of nonviolence, even if we are invaded by lakhs of troops and thousands of planes, the result will be the same. Nonviolence, therefore, is best suited for India.

A revolution is bound to come and India must be fully prepared for that. The map of the world is fast changing, and India's millions should be prepared to have an effective voice in preparing a new map of the world.

7. The Minority Problem in Kashmir[1]

In Kashmir, as in British India, there is a tug-of-war over the majority and minority question. In British India the majority is that of Hindus and in Kashmir, Muslims are in an overwhelming majority. Quite the reverse conditions prevail in Hyderabad. During my few days stay in Kashmir I have found the same fears and doubts entertained by the Hindu minority as the Muslims entertain in British India.

There is some truth in the doubts and fears, but the way in which the question has been magnified with government help is blocking the path of freedom. The enemies of India's freedom attach great importance to this question, and they want safeguards and weightages. After getting separate electorates, the minorities may feel that they have succeeded in getting more than their due, but they still remain minorities. Minorities can never be turned into majorities even with all the safeguards, but mistrust crops up.

A constituent assembly can alone solve India's problems; and the question has to be settled by different communities without reference to the third party. The only solution for Indian problems is that the communities should put their heads together and come to an agreement, or if they disagree, break their heads. No sane person will prefer the latter

1. Speech at Srinagar, 3 June 1940. From *The Hindustan Times*, 4 June 1940.

course; the only course, thereofe, left open lies in the spirit of cooperation.

Big issues are facing India, the most important being freedom, on the face of which the problems of Kashmiris appear insignificant. Kashmiri Pandits form 5 per cent of Kashmir's population. Even if safeguards are given, they might get 10 per cent, but what security can be given in this revolutionary world? Kashmiri Pandits can go ahead by dint of their ability. During the fifty-five years of its existence the National Congress happened to be presided by Kashmiri Pandits for seven years, not because Kashmiri Pandits were given special protection but because they have a broad sphere of work. The struggle has been going on in Kashmnr for some years, but the happenings of 1931[2] disturbed all patriots, and I decided to help the Kashmir movement if I could. There is a mass movement in Kashmir, and it is possible that the masses might commit mistakes, but they are never wrong. Mistakes can be mended by cooperation. The masses here alike are ignorant, but we cannot shun them; they are the real India.

I will be leaving Kashmir shortly, but would like to go with the satisfaction that communal harmony will prevail and the mass movement will run on Congress lines. Beware of the machinations of the government, but at the same time I ask you to rise above service politics and work for the common good of the country.

2. The arrest of a Muslim in June 1931 led to communal rioting. The British Government intervened and ordinances were imposed, resulting in imprisonment, public flogging and shooting at Anantnag, Shopyan, Baramula and Sopore.

8. Farewell Message to Kashmir[1]

I am grateful to all the organisations and individuals who did me the honour of welcoming me. I am especially grateful to Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and the Kashmir National Conference whose guest I was privileged to be during my stay. Sheikh Abdullah has shown remarkable qualities of mass leadership and has combined them with the vision of a statesman. He has steered the bark of the people's movement from communal channels towards nationalism, in spite of opposition and difficulty, and has made of Kashmir a bulwark of our national movement. Kashmir is fortunate in having this brave and far-seeing leader.

1. Statement to the press, Lahore, 12 June 1940. *National Herald*, 13 June 1940.

To the Kashmiri Pandits I would make a special appeal, for I have claims on them as they have on me. Let them play a brave part in the mighty happenings of today and seek not a narrow protection which binds and restricts, but the joy of taking part in the great movements which are changing this old world of ours.

The old order changes and only those who are capable of adapting themselves to the new order have any future before them. The old orthodoxy is a chain that binds and prevents progress and it must go. The old questions and arguments and objections are dead today and are of no significance. Only the major questions that grip the world and India have real meaning.

To the solution of these and the establishment of an independent and united India and the liquidation of her poverty, let us all address ourselves. In this great game of life the women of Kashmir must play their full part.

9. To Dwarka Nath Kachru[1]

Bombay
July 1, 1940

My dear Dwarka Nath,[2]

I enclose a letter of introduction for you for Miss Padmaja Naidu. Please call on her soon after reaching Hyderabad. In the event of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu being there, you should meet her also.

You should proceed to Hyderabad as early as possible. You may stay there up to two weeks. If you consider it necessary, you may prolong your stay even beyond this period. The main thing to aim at is that you should do your work thoroughly and efficiently. If this involves a slightly longer stay, I do not mind. You must try, however, to make it a worthwhile job.

I am also enclosing a kind of a letter of authority. This need not be shown to anyone except when this is necessary. In regard to the authorities in Hyderabad state, you need not approach them on your own initiative. Your visit, however, is not a secret one and if you are asked by

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Dwarka Nath Kachru; secretary, *All India States People's Conference*; joined Jawaharlal's secretariat in 1947 to deal primarily with state affairs; died in an air crash, 1950.

any official or non-official, you should tell him the objects of your visit. It is not desirable for you to try to develop any contacts with the authorities or to write to them for any particulars. Try to get your material without such official writing to any high authority. Later on if you find that it is not possible to get some important report or papers otherwise, you can write to the particular department. Even then you should not write to any of the ministers. In case, however, you have to write to any high official or any other official, do not enter into any argument with him, even if he invites you to do so by letter or orally. Tell him that your purpose is not to interfere in any way in Hyderabad with any work, or to come into conflict with the authorities. Your business is to collect material from all sources and to collate it and present it to me.

Your first approach will naturally be to the State's Congress people who will no doubt give you every assistance. You should consult Miss Padmaja Naidu also as to how you can get further material, more especially any official material. Later on you should approach any other important organisation in the state, political or economic, and ask them if they can supply you with any material. It does not matter whether that organisation is opposed to the national demand or not. But it must be an important organisation.

You should not waste your time over unimportant groups or individuals. In this matter as to whom you should approach or not, you should consult Miss Padmaja Naidu and abide by her advice. You should also consult her in regard to official communications that you may get or that you may have to send.

If necessary, you should visit various parts of the state, more especially some typical village areas. You will probably be asked to go to Bidar in connection with the recent incidents there.[3] You can go there because Bidar is an important place anyhow. You may also collect such material as you can about those incidents and find out what popular reactions are. It is not your business, however, to investigate closely into these incidents.

It is desirable that as you proceed with your work, in Hyderabad or in other states, you should work methodically, taking full notes of all you do and the important conversations that you may have. A daily record should be kept. This will help you later in drafting your report. Trusting to memory is not good enough.

Your general line of inquiry should be as follows :

1. A historical retrospect of Hyderabad state, more specially from the

3. See *ante*, item 3.

15. The Khaksar movement in the state. How strong is it and who are its leaders?
16. Apart from the state Congress, what other organisations exist in the state including communal or semi-religious organisations?

These are some of the points which you should bear in mind. Others will no doubt occur to you.

You can show this letter to Miss Padmaja Naidu as well as some of the leading members of the State's People's Congress. It must be remembered, however, that this letter is not meant for publication and should not be shown to pressmen. Indeed you should not seek any contacts with pressmen or any publicity. Such publicity will come in the way of your work.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. To the Secretary, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind[1]

Delhi
July 3, 1940

Dear Sir,

I have received today your letter of July 2nd in which you have been good enough to send me copies of two resolutions which were passed by the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind at Jaunpur last month.[2] I understand that copies of these resolutions have been sent to the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, also. I presume he will write to you about them.

In acknowledging these resolutions, however, I wish to express to you my own personal opinion in regard to them.

The first resolution refers to the riots at Bidar in Hyderabad state. Possibly the reference in this resolution is to a statement I made about the riots.[3] I might inform you that I issued that statement in my capacity as President of the All India States People's Conference after duly satisfying myself that what I had stated had sufficient foundation. I do not know what grounds you have for challenging my statement unless you are relying on statements issued by the Hyderabad Government. I

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. From 7 to 9 June 1940.
3. See *ante*, item 3.

presume you appreciate that statements by governments, whether the government is the Government of India or the Hyderabad State Government, cannot always be accepted as a true narration of facts, because these governments themselves are parties to the occurrences and desire to protect their prestige. I am certainly not prepared to accept, without due inquiry, a statement issued by the Hyderabad Government, for I know from considerable experience that these statements are not to be relied upon. So far as I am concerned, I took great care to inquire into the matter to the extent I could before I issued my statement. Therefore the reference in the resolution to hasty comments being made without inquiry is not correct. My statement was neither hasty nor without inquiry. I do not know what steps you have taken to inquire into the matter independently and how far such steps were calculated to bring out the truth of the incidents. I shall be glad to know which particular statement of mine you think, from the evidence in your possession, was incorrect. I should also like to have the nature of this evidence so that I can judge for myself. I can assure you that in the event of any comment of mine proving untrue, I shall gladly withdraw it.

I have not got my statement with me at present but as far as I remember, I gave certain facts about the Bidar incidents and then referred to the absence of civil liberties in Hyderabad and the general backwardness of the state in political and economic matters. I shall be grateful to you if you will let me know wherein you disagree with me — whether this is in regard to the facts stated about Bidar or about the lack of civil liberties and the general backwardness of Hyderabad state.

Your second resolution refers to a case apparently going on in the Central Provinces.[4] It is unusual for conferences to express their opinions in regard to such matters even though they may pass their resolution on an opinion expressed by a High Court. I do not know if you or your conference have taken the trouble to inquire into this matter or have gone through the evidence. To express an opinion without doing this is extraordinary. I am surprised that on the slender evidence you should expect the Congress to take disciplinary action against Mr. Shukla[5] and other ministers. I would have thought that if such a matter was to be brought up before a conference previous steps would be taken to have a thorough enquiry into it.

4. This referred to certain charges levelled against the Congress ministry for ill treatment of Muslims in 1937-39. A judge enquired into these charges and found them baseless.
5. Ravi Shankar Shukla (1877-1956); Prime Minister of Central Provinces, 1938-39, and Chief Minister, 1946-56.

The Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind is an organisation commanding respect and one is entitled to presume that it will discharge its functions with responsibility. I regret, therefore, that these two resolutions should have been passed at an open conference.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To Amrit Kaur[1]

Poona
July 28, 1940

My dear Amrit,[2]
I have your "Strictly Personal" letter as well as another. I shall write to you more fully later. This is just to acknowledge your letters and to say how glad I am that you have agreed to join the Standing Committee of the States People's Conference. We are trying hard to put this Conference on a sound and responsible basis. Gradually we have got new men into it. Probably we shall reorganise the office completely.

I have known Suman[3] off and on for some years and rather like him. As for the other person I am not at all impressed by him and consider him very irresponsible. Your suggestion that we should have a reliable worker in every state or group of states is good but is not feasible. Firstly because we have not got so many people to go round, secondly because it is not easy to impose people from outside. What we are trying to do, however, is to have a number of competent men attached to our Central Office who will be touring continuously and reporting to us about conditions and workers in the state. Their busisess will not be to take part in any activity or to advise in any way the local people but to observe and to report to us. We have already begun this on a small scale and it has had good results.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1889-1964); secretary to Mahatma Gandhi for 16 years; Union Minister of Health, 1947-52; member, Rajya Sabha, 1957-64.
3. Shridev Suman, Chairman of the Parvatiya Praja Parishad of Simla; secretary of the non-official enquiry committee which investigated the firing in Dhami in July 1939.

12. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

August 10, 1940

My dear Bapu,

I have just received your letter of the 8th.[2] About Hyderabad, I can make no suggestion. So much depends on the strength of the people and their organisation. I think, however, that it is far better for them to concentrate on the rural areas where the chances of communal clashes are probably less. I do not see how they can remain passive under the circumstances. Yet it may be perhaps better not to precipitate a big crisis immediately in view of the rapid developments of the political situation in India as a whole. When this all-India situation advances further, Hyderabad people might be in a better position to assert their right.

In a sense I am not sorry at the developments in Hyderabad. The impossible attitude that Bahadur Yar Khan and others have taken up will react on them.[3] It may of course lead to a great deal of trouble and bloodshed. In any event the state Congress people should make it perfectly clear that they cannot reduce by an iota their demand for responsible government.

I understand the Working Committee is likely to meet in Wardha in eight or nine days time. I hope to meet you then.

About the exactions for war funds, I have written to the secretary of the U.P.P.C.C. to send you some particulars. Some have been published in the press and are clear enough. Some others, though equally clear, might be explained differently. For instance, a usual case is for a person to be approached for a donation. He refuses or offers a smaller sum than what is demanded. Immediately or a day or two after he is arrested on the charge of preventing others from subscribing to the war funds, and thereby coming in the way of war efforts.

I have just had a case like this from Allahabad district. A poor village shopkeeper was asked to give Rs. 15/- or Rs. 20/-. He said the most he could possibly give was Rs. 5/-. He was cursed and sworn at and immediately a notice was given to him to appear to show cause why he

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Mahatma Gandhi had written that he had read a very depressing report on Hyderabad. He asked Jawaharlal for any suggestions for remedying this situation as well as for any authentic evidence of war exactions.
3. The Muslim communal organization in Hyderabad, the Ittehad, was headed by Bahadur Yar Khan. It opposed the scheme of reforms announced by the Nizam in 1939.

should not be proceeded against under the Defence of India Rules. His case is up today in a court here. Usually this kind of thing is not done with full-fledged Congressmen who are expected to refuse anyhow. Another case which has come to me today is from Kasganj in Etah district. A *Naib Tehsildar* went to the shop of a Congressman on 2nd of August and demanded money for the war funds. This was refused and the man stated that as a Congressman he could not do so. Thereupon the *Naib Tehsildar* threatened to take action and had the name of the person noted down. On the next day this man, who is the nephew of a well-known Congressman in the district, was suddenly arrested for non-payment of a punitive police tax. He was put in the lock-up and for 30 hours he was not given any food or facilities for bathing etc. This arrest was completely illegal as punitive tax can only be recovered by attachment of property and the person concerned, whose name is Omprakash, has considerable moveable and immoveable property. The amount of punitive tax concerned was only Rs. 6/- which could easily have been realised by attachment. Omprakash's uncle, Manpal Gupta, thereupon created a lot of fuss and ultimately Omprakash was discharged. That is how the matter stands now.

Another interesting case is that of Thakur Surendra Bahadur Singh, Taluqdar of Simri in Rae Bareli district. He is a Congress M.L.A. His father, the Taluqdar, recently died and thereupon, at his own request, his taluqa was taken under the court of wards. The Deputy Commissioner informed him that he should contribute Rs. 1500/- to the war fund. He refused to do so as a Congressman. He was then told that he held his taluqa on conditions of loyalty and good service and the court of wards has a perfect right to give the donation out of the revenues of the taluqa. Thereupon he sent a registered notice to the Deputy Commissioner protesting against this imposition and saying that it was wholly illegal. His case was that it might or might not be open to the government to confiscate his taluqa for want of loyalty to them. But it was certainly not open to them to give a donation on his behalf and against his will. In spite of this the Deputy Commissioner has already paid or is going to pay this sum to the war fund and Surendra Bahadur Singh is thinking of bringing a declaratory suit in a court of law.

I am getting complaints from various districts of pressure being brought on kisans to pay eight annas or a rupee or more per plough. It is obvious that they do not want to pay but are compelled to do so.

Petty government servants and minor officials dare not say no when they are asked to contribute. A recent case which came to my notice informally but nevertheless correctly was that of a stenotypist of a district magistrate. He was asked to give Rs. 200/-. His salary was

Rs. 125/- a month. He pointed out hesitatingly that he had a large family and it was entirely beyond his capacity to pay that sum. He was then told that in any event he and his family would have to starve if the British lost the war. So this was a kind of insurance that he had to pay. A curious thing is that one does not hear very much about donations from higher officials. They think it is enough for them to serve the cause by giving their very efficient service at a high rate of payment.

The number of new appointments at high salaries grows from day to day. Probably a very large proportion of the funds that are being collected goes towards the payment of these high salaries. Simla, I understand, is crowded with this type of officials serving the great cause by drawing a fancy salary for little or no work. There was a recent case of an English official who was till recently drawing Rs. 750/- a month suddenly being pushed into some war work and is being given Rs. 2500/- a month. It was stated that he had accepted this new job at considerable sacrifice to himself.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

13. The Anachronisms that are the Indian States[1]

A real crisis, when it confronts a nation, brings up all manner of problems to a head. A revolutionary situation tears the veil which covers inner conflicts and disorders in the body politic and shows them for what they are. We have a crisis in India and the world today: we have a devastating war which threatens to spread and prolong itself till a great part of modern civilisation is in ruins. This is big enough and overwhelming in its significance, and yet behind this crisis and war lies something bigger and more significant. It is a mighty revolution that we are passing through, marking the end of the political and economic structure which has dominated Europe and America, and through them the rest of the world, for more than a hundred years.

That structure has come to a full stop and can no longer deal with current problems. It can no longer provide work and security for the

1. First published in *States People* and reprinted in the *National Herald*, 18 September 1940.

people, and no social and economic structure which fails to do so can endure. The choice before Europe is not one of carrying on, as it has carried on so far, or of changing. The change must come; it has already crept in to a large extent because of the war. The old order is dead.

The immediate choice is what shape the new order will take. Will it be a fascist reorganisation of the political and social structure, or a socialist? The former is the enemy of all democratic processes, but it is relatively easy for imperialism to change to it and thus keep the reins of authority still in the hands of the old gang. The latter may retain much of democracy but it must liquidate imperialism and vested interest.

We have seen in France how easily it has gone fascist at the top, though there is little doubt that the people generally are opposed to this and are lovers of freedom. A similar development cannot be ruled out for England, not necessarily through defeat in war, but because the imperialist tradition is still strong there. We have seen how England even now, in spite of peril and danger, reacts to the demand for Indian freedom.

But whatever may happen in Europe and America, one thing is as certain as anything in human life can be — the complete reshaping of the political and economic structure, with the state largely controlling production, distribution, transport and financial structure and in fact most departments of organised human activity. That has already taken place for war purposes; it must continue after the war, though the state itself may change its form and content.

If the essence of the present world situation is this vast revolutionary change, how will this affect the Indian states? It is patent that India as a whole or the Indian states cannot remain apart from this world change. Viewed from this point of view, the states are astonishing anachronisms which still exist as if they were in the eighteenth century or earlier. It will be difficult for them to skip the nineteenth century and land themselves suddenly in the middle of the twentieth. Yet there is no help for it, for the pace of events today does not permit of slow progress or transition.

The break-up of the British Empire will have a powerful effect on them for they have survived because of this empire. They dread this break-up and, curiously, at the same time, the rulers or the ministers of some of the larger states indulge in dreams of extending their domains when this break-up comes.

It may be, of course, that we have to go through, to our misfortune, a period of disruption and disorder in India, and that some of the major states play a leading part in it. But if history and current events can

teach us anything, this is certain that the Indian states system must end. It is an absurdity, a relic of medievalism, an offence to all intelligent political and social thought, immoral and unjust, and a challenge to every ideal that we cherish. Above all, it is entirely out of keeping with modern conditions. It must therefore go, though it is likely to give a lot of trouble before it does. Without any of the virtues of a fascist economy, it has all its vices. It will grow increasingly fascist and ally itself to other fascist elements in the country.

It has been our aim and purpose to solve the Indian states problem peacefully and, wherever possible, with the cooperation of the parties concerned. We have put forward the objective of full responsible government for the people. Our efforts have not succeeded to any appreciable extent and the authorities in various states have progressively become more oppressive, and have refused to take even moderate steps towards the people's freedom. If they insist on shutting their eyes to obvious facts and if they are ignorant of the world's happenings, they will not thus stop the pace or extent of change. Indeed the change will then be more sudden and more far-reaching than we have imagined.

For all of us it must be clear that we cannot, under any circumstances, give up our objective of full responsible government and civil liberty. At any time this would have been wrong; in the middle of world revolution today, any weakness in this respect is grave disservice to the cause we represent. Petty compromises will not help us. We are not going to sell our birthright for a mess of pottage.

India seems to be on the verge of a great internal crisis and satyagraha is in the air. Obviously any such movement will have far-reaching repercussions in the states. It is difficult to give any advice which can apply to all the states, because conditions vary so much. Ultimately the decision and responsibility for steps to be taken must rest with the people of each state. The fact that there is satyagraha in a great part of India does not necessarily mean that it should be started immediately in the states. But it does mean that all of us, whether we live in the states or elsewhere, are caught up in the coils of revolutionary change, and we must prepare with all our might for this, and function bravely and steadfastly when the call comes to us.

14. To K.B. Menon[1]

Allahabad
October 25, 1940

My dear Menon,
Your letter of October 19th. I am sorry I have been unable to write about Jaipur. If possible I shall deal with it later.

I am quite clear that the *States People* should continue as long as it can. There is no question of the privilege of going to jail being denied to anyone. Jail going comes in the course of work and we accept it with pleasure. The main thing is work, not seeking jail. It is quite possible and probable that from fairly small beginnings a very big movement may develop in India. All of us will have our full share of risk and adventure. Meanwhile we must carry on and do the jobs entrusted to us as well as possible.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. All India States People's Conference File No. 6/1937-41, N.M.M.L.

4

NATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

1. To Begum Hamid Ali[1]

Allahabad
March 25, 1940

My dear Begum Hamid Ali,
I have received your telegrams in which you say that you do not agree to the interim report of the Women's Sub-Committee and therefore you withhold your name from it.

I have not myself seen the interim report but I suppose it has been sent to our office in Bombay. Such reports are provisional reports indicating the general line taken and the subjects touched upon. They do not finally commit a sub-committee. But they are necessary to keep our office informed and to help in the coordination of our work; I had hoped that the full reports of the sub-committees would be available by this time. But as this could not be done satisfactorily, I requested the sub-committees to send interim reports. Ordinarily the question of a member of a sub-committee signing such a report or withholding signature from it does not arise as the interim report embodies the general sense of the committee and the line of approach. In almost every committee dealing with far-reaching issues, differences of opinion are bound to arise and an attempt is made to reach as large a measure of common agreement as possible. In the event of there being disagreement or several viewpoints in regard to some particular matters, this is indicated in the body of the report. Usually such differences are limited in number, while the agreement is more fundamental and widespread. I have no doubt that so far as the Women's Sub-Committee is concerned, there will be this fundamental agreement in spite of minor differences which can be indicated in the final report.

I was a spectator at one of the meetings of the sub-committee in Bombay and I must say that I was pleased and surprised at the earnestness and ability of the members in tackling their problems and I have great hopes that the report of the sub-committee will be a worthy document. A full consideration of all viewpoints, especially yours, is essential before the final report takes shape. It was chiefly because of this that I consented to an extension of time for the final report. I would rather that it was delayed than that it should be unsatisfactory. With your large experience of women's work and women's problems in India

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

and elsewhere, your criticism and cooperation is of essential importance and I am sure the committee will benefit by this very greatly.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To Lakshmibai Rajwade[1]

Allahabad
March 30, 1940

My dear Tai,
As you felt that it was not possible at all to hold a meeting of your sub-committee in Delhi on the 3rd April, a postponement became unavoidable. But I must confess that it was unfortunate that such a postponement should take place. I have considered all the circumstances which you pointed out and they were important. Still I think it would have been better to hold the meeting even though you were totally unprepared for it. I think this postponement will, instead of facilitating matters, cause much more trouble. However we need not discuss that now.

It is no doubt your objective, as it is mine, that the report of the Women's Sub-Committee should be an able, well-written, well-argued, persuasive document, which has the approval not only of your committee but of a large section of opinion, and which forcibly draws opinion towards the many problems with which it deals. This necessitates not only very careful decisions but also very careful drafting, so that the approach should be as friendly as possible to the reader. This involves also an attempt to avoid being side-tracked by internal controversies inside the sub-committee as well as outside among the general public. The best of reports may turn out to be a complete flop, if it does not bear all these factors in mind. Many of the subjects dealt with by your committee relate to intimate details of personal life and to all manner of prejudices and customs. It is right that these prejudices and injurious customs should go and we should work to that end. But the way to remove them is not always the way of merely denouncing them. One has to approach the subject in a manner which is the least offensive to large sections of people and which does not irritate them to such an

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

extent as to blind their reasoning capacity. Otherwise there is great danger of the whole report being condemned off-hand as a fantastic Utopian and airy document which has no relation to fact. Or, even worse still, it might be dubbed as an immoral and injurious document. Few people will care to read the report carefully and most will condemn it off-hand. The result of this will be bad for the women's cause and it will also be bad for the whole National Planning Committee. As it is, we are being accused of being visionaries, out of touch with reality and evolving doctrinaire schemes. If this is added on to a feeling that our committees are bent on uprooting every established rule and custom in India, the result will be a mass opposition which will bury all our efforts at reforms. I do not think that because of this we should accept anything that is evil. But there are ways of approach and suggestion, which, while not accepting the evil and not giving up the ideal in view, yet make the approach gently and persuasively with a full realisation of existing conditions. After all we have to build out of existing conditions and we may not ignore them. The alternative is that it should prove totally ineffective and a waste of labour.

I write all this as your interim report, which I have read carefully, has proved a great disappointment to me. Such a report, I am quite sure, will not carry your cause any further. It will indeed injure it. Of course it is not right for me to base any conclusion on an interim report. Still this gives some indication of what the final report is likely to be. This interim report seems to me a collection of assertions or proposals, often overlapping each other, sometimes by no means clear, and generally badly drafted. From beginning to end it is completely doctrinaire and does not even seem to envisage the problem that has to be faced. It only looks at a certain future that is aimed at. Of course that future must be considered, especially with a view to a planned society. But I am quite certain that that future will never be realised in this fashion and by this approach.

You will forgive me for writing frankly on this subject, but I do attach importance to your report and I think that it might well be a landmark in the women's movement in India. I am anxious, therefore, that it should fully come up to the mark. Among other things, it was essential that the greatest consultation and cooperation should take place between the various members of your sub-committee. Otherwise the sub-committee itself, or part of it, might sabotage the report or divert public attention from the major questions to minor issues, which will make people excited. We have to face a danger now that howsoever well the report may be drafted, and the interim report gives no promise of good drafting, it will meet with a certain opposition in the sub-committee and greater opposition outside. It is far safer to try to eliminate this

opposition at an early stage by having as much cooperation as possible between the various members of the sub-committee. I would have suggested that even at this stage, when drafting is being undertaken, some of the members of the sub-committee should be invited to cooperate and help in this work. I do not know how far this is possible now, but I still think that an attempt should be made. I spoke to Professor Shah briefly on this subject as well as others contained in this letter. Unfortunately he was here only for half an hour. But I think that I gave him my general viewpoint. He agreed with me that it would be desirable to have other members of the sub-committee to function if possible. Mridula of course will be with you. I have asked Sarup to try to go to Bombay to help you and, though she is not very well, she has agreed to do so. She is going to Delhi. From there she expects to reach Bombay about the 5th April morning. She is prepared to remain there a week or ten days. I cannot approach any other member and indeed I should not like to do so. That is for you to fix up.

Although we are pressed for time in the N.P.C., I would much rather give you more for your sub-committee's report rather than get something which is not AI. If I can be of any help to you in any way, you can always command me.

I suggest that you should not fix the next meeting of your sub-committee till you have completely finished this job of drafting with the help of as many members as possible. Having done that, the date can be fixed and it might be desirable for Mridula to pay a visit to Begum Hamid Ali with the draft to discuss it with her.

I have written to you at some length but I have only put before you a small part of my mind on the subject. I have spoken about it to Sarup and Mridula also.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

3. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Bombay
April 20, 1940

Dear Mr. President,

I have to report to you about the activities of the National Planning Committee. It was our hope and intention to finish the preliminary work of this Committee within a year from its inception, but the magnitude of the task has prevented us from completing it within that period. I addressed last year's Congress President, Shri Rajendra Prasad, on this subject and he was good enough to extend the period for our report. The National Planning Committee at their last sessions appointed 29 sub-committees on various subjects. Each of these sub-committees in effect has to deal with an important sphere of economic and other activity and there has been great delay in the sub-committees presenting their reports. This has reacted on the National Planning Committee which cannot proceed with its work till it has received the reports of its sub-committees. Because of this reason, we have repeatedly had to postpone our meetings.

The full Committee is now meeting on the 1st May and will probably continue in session for two weeks. We have now received full reports from 5 sub-committees, namely:

1. Heavy Engineering 2. River Training and Irrigation 3. Labour 4. Population 5. Horticulture.

Interim reports have been received from the following sub-committees:

1. Chemicals 2. Public Finance 3. Transport.

Final or interim reports are expected within the next few days from the following sub-committees:

1. Rural Marketing 2. Industrial Finance 3. Housing 4. Animal Husbandry 5. Communications 6. Currency and Banking 7. Insurance 8. Manufacturing Industries.

Apart from the above mentioned sub-committees, there still remain 13 sub-committees to report. The next meeting of the National Planning Committee will consider such reports and interim reports as are placed before it and may also discuss some general issues of policy. After that we shall have to give some more time to the remaining sub-committees for their reports. When all the reports have come in, they will have to be considered together and the final report of the Planning Committee itself drafted and considered. All this is likely to take at least 4 to

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-23/1940-42, pp. 72-74, N.M.M.L.

5 months more, and maybe 6 months. In view of the critical political situation, it is possible that our work may suffer or be delayed. It is our desire, however, to complete as rapidly as possible the work of the sub-committees so that all the material may be ready for any future use.

We have tried to carry on our activities within the limits of our restricted finances. This has often resulted in delay. Owing to the expansion of our work and the heavy burden that this has cast on us, our expenses have been considerable. And yet I would venture to say that work has been carried on far more economically than is usually possible under such circumstances. We have carried on our work for a year and five months with funds which were intended for half this period. Our present resources will probably be exhausted about the end of June. It is necessary for us, therefore, to arrange for further contributions for another four or five months and, in particular, for the printing of our own report and the reports of the 29 sub-committees. This printing is likely to be a heavy item in our budget.

I am giving you this information of our financial position so that you may be in touch with developments in the National Planning Committee. I am not making a request for a grant from the Congress funds. It is our desire not to burden the Congress with this expenditure in so far as we can help it. We have avoided of course accepting any money from any private or non-official agencies so far, as this was not considered proper by us. We have depended solely on contributions from provincial governments and some state governments (Hyderabad, Mysore, Baroda and Bhopal). It may be that these governments might help us a little still further. I am addressing them on the subject.

Our office is sending to the A.I.C.C. office the audited statement of our accounts up to the 31st December 1939 and another statement till the end of March 1940.

We are also sending to the A.I.C.C. office copies of the reports of the sub-committees received by us so far.

In view of the circumstances mentioned above, I would beg of you to extend the time for the submission of our report. I cannot suggest any definite time but provisionally it might be fixed at the end of September 1940, or to be on the safer side, till the end of the year.

There is a considerable demand from the press and the public for the reports of our sub-committees. We have so far treated them as confidential but it is difficult to keep them so, as unauthorised reports go to the press and sometimes mislead the public. It is our intention, therefore, to issue a brief synopsis of our sub-committees' report to the press after the report has been presented to the N.P.C. I trust you approve of this procedure. The sub-committees' report or the synopsis will of course in no way bind the National Planning Committee, much less the

WITH MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE, BOMBAY, APRIL 1940

WITH MOHAMMED YUNUS AND SHEIKH ABDULLAH, SRINAGAR, JUNE 1940

Congress. It is just a report of certain experts appointed for a particular task. This fact will be made clear.

It is quite likely that in these sub-committees' reports there will be considerable variety of opinions and sometimes even conflict in regard to vital matters of principle. This is inevitable, as the number of people working in the N.P.C. is large and represents a variety of opinions. The N.P.C. will try to coordinate these opinions as far as possible, though this may not always be possible. And finally it will be for the Congress Executive to consider the N.P.C. report and give its own opinion in regard to it.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the General Secretary of the A.I.C.C. at Allahabad. As I have mentioned above, sub-committees' reports are also being sent to him, as I did not wish to burden you with this voluminous material. Should you, however, desire to have these reports or any other information, we shall gladly send them to you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. The Progress of Planning[1]

1. We are meeting today after a long interval and I owe an apology to the members of the Committee both for this delay and for the repeated changes of date. We met on the last occasion in full committee in June 1939 and it was decided then that we should hold our next sessions in the second half of October 1939, though no exact date was fixed. Owing to the delay in the work of the sub-committees, it was felt, however, that no useful purpose would be served by our meeting then. I consulted all the members by circular letters, and many of them personally also, and found that this was the general opinion. The war in Europe, which began early in September 1939, had created a new situation in India, both politically and economically, and various crises were developing. October was a changing and uncertain month, and later months added to this uncertainty. Under these circumstances, it was the general

1. Chairman's note to the members of the Committee, 1 May 1940. National Planning Committee File No. 135/1940, N.M.M.L.

feeling that we should postpone the third sessions of the N.P.C. and carry on with the work of the sub-committees. Members will, I trust, appreciate the reasons for the delay in holding this session, and realise that the fault lay in the circumstances, and that no one was to blame for it.

2. Recent and repeated changes in the date of this meeting must have been disconcerting to members and I must apologise for them. It is not an easy matter to suit the convenience of all our members, who are busy men, living and carrying on their businesses or professions in distant parts of India. We have tried our utmost to meet their wishes and their convenience, but inevitably what suited some, did not suit others.

3. We meet under strange conditions in India and the world. It is a curious anomaly and contradiction that while we think and plan to build up India, and thereby help also in building up the world on a more secure foundation, that world is engaged in the work of destruction on a vast scale. The future that we envisage seems to recede further away, and even the heritage of the past stands in danger of being lost. A dispassionate consideration of the world's problems yields place to the crime and folly of war, where reason and logic and goodwill have no place, and passion and hatred reign and the sword decides.

4. To some it may appear that this is a most unsuitable time for planning, which is essentially a labour of peaceful cooperation. It may be argued that we should wait for better times and more stable conditions, for who knows what the outcome of the present conflict will be? On what foundation shall we build, when no man can foretell what that foundation will be? And yet though we are so uncertain of the future, this we know well that the future will be very different from the past or even from this changing present. Already we see vast political and economic changes taking shape in the womb of the future. Can we plan in India with all this doubt and uncertainty?

5. These considerations fill our minds, as they should, and we must give careful thought to them. And yet these very considerations lead us to a contrary conclusion. For it is this very time of change and uncertainty that demands mental activity and a vision of the future that we desire. If we are mere onlookers now, and passive and helpless agents of circumstances or the will of others, we barter away our claim to that future. Instead of preparing for it, we hand the reins to others. Every conflict ends some time or other, every war is followed by a peace, temporary or more enduring, every work of destruction has to be followed by construction. That construction will be chaotic and wasteful unless previous thought has been given to it. A period of war and dynamic change therefore demands, even more than the static times of peace, the

planned activity of the mind, so that, when time and opportunity come, this may be translated with all speed into the planned activity of the nation.

6. Another change, intimately affecting us, has taken place during the past few months. Most of the provincial governments, which fathered this Planning Committee and cooperated with our work, are no more, and in a large number of provinces, the structure of a limited provincial autonomy has given place to autocratic rule by alien authority. The outlook has changed completely and we see from day to day the reversal of the old policies. India, which was emerging gradually into a semi-colonial stage, is now again being treated as a full colony and its resources used for anti-national purposes.

7. This change is obviously of great significance for us. Under these circumstances our planning becomes even more divorced from present conditions than it was before, and the structures that we might build, might appear to some as castles in the air. Yet that would be a foolish thought, for everyone knows that present conditions in India, as well as elsewhere, are transitory and must pass. And in passing, they will not give place to the limited and restricted autonomy of the provinces that we had, but to a much broader freedom. And so, though the circumstances have changed, the necessity for planning is all the more vital and urgent.

8. The political changes in India have added in many ways to our difficulties and it is conceivable that additional obstructions may hamper our work still further in the future. I was asked at one time whether it was desirable to continue the activities of the National Planning Committee. I had no hesitation in giving answer that we must continue this work, even though the difficulties that encompass us increase and make normal functioning hardly possible. In any event, our sub-committees should carry on their labours and finish them; in any event, we must collect all our material and arrange it and give it shape. If this is done, we shall be in a position to deal with it rapidly and effectively when the time comes.

9. I should like to express my indebtedness, as well as, I am sure, the appreciation of the Committee, to the chairmen, secretaries and members of the various sub-committees that we appointed, for the way they have tackled their difficult tasks, and given their time and energy to them. I should also like to express my gratitude to the members of our office staff who have worked hard and willingly, often far beyond the usual office hours.

10. It is a matter of sorrow and deep regret for all of us that Mr. P.N. Mathur, the Chairman of our Engineering Industries and Transport

Industries Sub-Committee, died suddenly a few weeks ago. Mr. Mathur took the deepest interest in the work of the N.P.C. and the report of his sub-committee, which he completed shortly before his death, is one of the most valuable and practical of our reports. It is exceedingly unfortunate that a man of his ability, training and earnestness should leave us in the prime of his life, when so much good work could be expected from him.

11. We have so far received reports from the following sub-committees, and these reports have already been circulated among members. Some of these reports are final, others are interim reports, as indicated opposite each.

1. Engineering Industries and Transport Industries	...	Final
2. Population	...	Final
3. Housing	...	Final
4. Labour	...	Final
5. Horticulture	...	Final
6. River Training Part I	...	Final
7. Manufacturing Industries	...	Interim
8. Chemicals	...	Interim
9. Transport	...	Interim
10. Public Finance	...	Interim
11. Currency and Banking	...	Interim
12. Land Policy	...	Interim
13. Animal Husbandry	...	Interim

12. I understand that we are also likely to receive very soon the following reports :

14. Rural Marketing	...	Final
15. Industrial Finance	.	Final
16. Power and Fuel	...	Interim
17. Women's Role	...	Interim

14. Almost every report complains of the unsatisfactory nature of the statistics and data available. It is clear that adequate data and information is of the essence of planning, and therefore the very first step that a planning authority must take is to organise the proper and scientific collection of statistics, both for the formulation of the plan and for its checking from time to time. It might have been worth while for us to have a special sub-committee to deal with statistics for this science is becoming highly specialised. It is not merely a question of collecting facts, but of doing so in the most advantageous way, of arranging them properly and of drawing the right conclusions from them. Fortunately we have in India an efficient organisation which deals with this subject—The Indian Statistical Institute and the Statistical Laboratory of Calcutta. Professor P.C. Mahalanobis,[2] who is in charge of this laboratory, has kindly offered his cooperation to us in every way and has sent us two notes on the subject, which are being circulated to members.

15. I have gratefully accepted the offer made by Professor P.C. Mahalanobis to examine all our sub-committees' reports from a purely statistical point of view and to send us his suggestions thereon. Copies of these reports have been sent to him.

16. The procedure to be followed during this session of the National Planning Committee will be determined by the N.P.C. itself on the first day. Provisionally, separate dates have been fixed for the presentation of each sub-committee's report and the chairman and secretary of that particular sub-committee have been invited to be present on that day. It is suggested that a general discussion might take place on the report then and advantage might be taken of the presence of the chairman and secretary to elucidate the report. If the N.P.C. desires to take any decisions on the report at that stage it will do so.

17. A very detailed discussion of all the recommendations made in the reports at this stage may perhaps not be desirable, as this might delay the presentation of the other reports. Many of the fundamental questions that arise are common to many reports and it would probably be better to consider them as a whole after the various reports have been presented and generally discussed.

18. We have arrived at a stage when some of these fundamental questions of policy have to be considered and some indication given as to

2. (1893-1973); Fellow of Royal Society; Principal, Presidency College, Calcutta, 1945-48; founder and director, Indian Statistical Institute—member, Planning Commission, 1955-73.

the method of approach to planning. It is inevitable that some of the sub-committees adopt differing methods and even make recommendations which do not fit into each other. The N.P.C. itself represents many viewpoints, and while we must endeavour to bring them together and agree as far as possible, the possibility of disagreement on certain vital issues need not frighten us. A discussion of these different approaches and points of disagreement will be helpful to us, as well as later on to the public at large. That in itself has importance as the ultimate policy of the state will necessarily depend on public opinion, and the more informed this public opinion, the better it will be for us. It may be desirable, when our report stage arrives, to give fully these differing viewpoints.

19. It must be remembered that final decisions in regard to national planning will have to be taken by the state when it has the power to do so as well as the ability to give effect to its decisions. It is even more important to remember that the very basis of our planning is a free India, democratically fashioned, where no external authority can interfere or obstruct the nation's work. There can be no planning otherwise; if there is interference or obstruction from outside, it means the imposition of external authority and other people's decisions on us. Full political and economic freedom is thus an essential prerequisite to planning.

20. It is obvious that at present we are far from this political and economic freedom. Political domination is patent enough, but a far more dangerous and insidious thing is economic domination. While the public can see and feel political domination, and therefore reacts to it, it is not so conscious of the economic stranglehold which throttles the life of the nation and prevents industrial and other growth. We have had enough experience of this in the past and the present is full of dangerous possibilities owing to the war and its far-reaching consequences. These consequences are affecting Britain's economy vitally and may shake up completely or even upset her economic structure. Under present circumstances, it is exceedingly likely that the burden of this upsetting will be shifted as far as possible on to India, and we shall suffer because of it. Our financial and currency policy have long had no relation to the interests of India or the good of the Indian people. They are controlled by alien authority for other ends. As the war progresses and the tension grows the necessity and desire to exploit India will also grow. All the misfortunes of the pound sterling will be passed, with something added on, to the rupee which has been forcibly connected in unholly marriage to the pound. Our gold continues to flow away at a time when every nation tries to conserve it.

21. All these and similar considerations are of vital importance for us in the present as well as in the future. They do not affect our planned scheme as that is based on an elimination of these factors and of all external authority. But it is possible that improper and unjustifiable advantage might be sought to be taken of a part of our scheme in order to consolidate and strengthen foreign authority and interests in India. We must be on our guard against this. Our scheme is conceived for a free India and not for a colonial India with the strings of political and economic authority held elsewhere. It cannot be transplanted on different soil.

22. To give an instance: many of our sub-committees' reports have recommended state ownership or control of certain industries, services and enterprises. Indeed we have already come to some general decisions on this subject. Obviously, when we refer to the state we mean a free and democratic India; we do not mean the present state in India, subordinate to and controlled by foreign authority and interests. It would be absurd for the present state in India to interpret our recommendation in its own favour and thus add to its own political and economic power. This present state is carried on in the interest of British vested interests in India, and for this state to have more power means that British vested interests are further entrenched and added to. We know to our cost how Indian industry and enterprise have suffered because of this in the past. The Government of India Act of 1935 tried to perpetuate this state of affairs by preventing us from touching British interests in India. That policy continues and will be intensified under the pretext of war economy.

23. I have laid emphasis on this aspect of the question as it is important that all of us, and the public, should bear it in mind and prevent our exploitation as far as we can. Keeping this in mind, we should proceed with our planning.

24. Thinking and planning for the future is essential if that future is not to end in misdirected energy and chaos. It is foolish to imagine that when the present crisis at long last ends, a new or better arrangement of world affairs or our national affairs will automatically emerge out of it. It is equally unwise to allow matters to drift, protesting occasionally perhaps, but otherwise looking on helplessly, for fear that what we may do might involve a risk or be taken unfair advantage of by our opponents. The world is full of risks and dangers today. We cannot escape them. The greatest risk and danger is to drift and not give thought and energy to finding a way out. It is manifest that the old order has had its day and is dissolving, whether we like this or not. It has led to wars and upheavals and continuing conflicts which involve not only passion and hatred and an enormous waste of energy and resources,

but also prevent us from achieving what is otherwise easily attainable. We have to understand the conflicts of forces that dominate the world today and seek to resolve these conflicts. It is certainly a possibility that the world may inevitably be led to social dissolution. We have to avoid that, if we can, but we cannot do so by shutting our eyes to the fact that the existing order is incapable of preventing this catastrophe. Something else, more in keeping with modern condition, has to be evolved. Politics, in our country as elsewhere, dominates the scene and occupies men's minds. But the real changes that are shaping the world are deeper than politics. If we plan, we must consider them and have clear minds about them.

25. We shall thus have to consider, at this stage or later, the basic and fundamental policies that must govern our planning. Without a definite and clear-cut objective in view, and an understanding of the path we must pursue, we shall plan ineffectively or perhaps even in vain.

26. Already the N.P.C. has given some thought to this matter and we have come to some general but fundamental decisions. It is well to recapitulate some of them. We are aiming at a free and democratic state, which has full political and economic freedom. In this state the fundamental rights of the individual and the group—political, economic, social and cultural—will be guaranteed, and the corresponding duties and obligations laid down. The state will be progressive and will utilise all scientific and other knowledge for the advancement of the people as a whole, and for the promotion of their happiness and material as well as cultural and spiritual well-being. The state will not permit the exploitation of the community by individuals or groups to the disadvantage of the former and to the injury of the nation as a whole. To realise the social objectives, the state has to plan through its representatives for the nation (whenever possible, in cooperation with other nations) and to coordinate the various activities of the nation so as to avoid waste and conflict and attain the maximum results. This planning will deal with production, distribution, consumption, investment, trade, income, social services, and the many other forms of national activity which act and react on each other. Briefly put, planning aims at the raising of the material and cultural standard of living of the people as a whole. In India our standards are so terribly low and poverty is so appalling, that this question of raising standards is of the most vital importance. The N.P.C. has suggested that national wealth should be increased between two and three times within the next ten years, and this should be so planned as to raise the general standard at least in a like measure.

26. The principle of state ownership or control of key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means

of public transport, has also been accepted. This principle was laid down first by the Congress at Karachi in 1931.

27. Further it has been decided that defence industries should be owned and controlled by the state; and that public utilities and all key industries should be owned or controlled by the state. A strong body of opinion in the N.P.C. was in favour of the state always owning public utilities. The principle of state ownership or control legitimately applies to other large-scale industries or enterprises which are likely to be monopolistic in character, or even to other large-scale enterprises.

28. This change may be impracticable in the near future in existing industries. But wherever even an established industry, under private control, receives aid or protection from the state, or tends to develop into a monopoly, or comes into conflict with the general policy of the state, the state should take necessary steps to assure conformity in all such ventures with its basic policy and with the objective laid down in the plan.

29. It is clear that the very nature of planning requires the control by the planning authority in some measure of even other than key or vital industries. This control might vary with the industry in question, but it will have to be rigid for the key or vital industries.

30. It has further been decided that efforts must be made to avoid the establishment of new vested interests or anything else which may come in the way of planning.

31. A tentative list of defence industries, key industries and public utilities is given at page 102 of the red book. These lists will no doubt be revised by the sub-committees concerned.

32. The N.P.C. has also declared that cottage industries, in conformity with the national policy, should be protected and encouraged. I have dealt with this matter in previous notes to the members. It will have to be considered more fully when we have the sub-committees' reports before us.

33. At the instance of the Manufacturing Industries Sub-Committee, a meeting of the chairmen and secretaries of all the sub-committees was held in Bombay on February 11th 1940, in order to consider matters relating to the control and functioning of industries. A full discussion took place then which was very helpful to those present. I have already sent to all members of the N.P.C. a memorandum about this meeting. Some decisions were taken in conformity with those of the N.P.C. as mentioned above. It was further recommended that in the event of a private industry being taken over by the state, fair compensation should be paid. In calculating this compensation, a number of factors will have to be taken into consideration, so that the interests of the general

public do not suffer and, at the same time, the owners are not victimised. It was not thought necessary to go into further details in regard to this matter at that stage.

34. This meeting of February 11th also laid down that any large-scale industry, which may come into conflict with a particular cottage industry encouraged and supported by the state, should itself be controlled by the state. Such control will prevent any conflicts arising and coordination will be easy. This viewpoint had previously been expressed in the N.P.C. also.

35. I must apologise to members for the length of this note. I have written it in order not to take the time of the Committee by having to talk about these subjects, and also to put the issues before us as concisely as possible.

5. On the Work of the Sub-Committees[1]

Bombay
15th May 1940

Dear Friend,

The third sessions of the National Planning Committee began on the 1st of May and continued till the 14th of May. During these two weeks the Committee worked hard and considered many of the reports that had been presented to it. We came to certain conclusions in regard to these reports. These have been published in the public press and we hope to issue them for your information and for reference in the form of a book soon. These conclusions, taken separately by us in regard to each report, will have to be reviewed by us as a whole so that they may fit in with each other. This process of coordination will come at a later stage.

Unfortunately, all the reports of the sub-committees were not ready for this meeting of the N.P.C. Some final reports came to us and some interim reports. It is of urgent importance that those who have not sent in their reports yet must do so early. It is not desirable or possible to hold up the activities of the Planning Committee because one or more sub-committees are not functioning satisfactorily or have not sent in their reports. I would beg of you, therefore, in the event of your

1. Circular to the chairmen, secretaries and members of the sub-committees of the National Planning Committee. Purshotamdas Thakurdas Papers, N.M.M.L.

6. Planning for India's Future[1]

After a fortnight's strenuous session, the National Planning Committee concluded its present series of meetings yesterday. We met daily, in the mornings and in the afternoons, and worked hard and I am afraid most of the members were exhausted by this process. I am very grateful to the members and to the representatives of the provincial governments and states who attended this session, and helped us to hammer out some bits here and there of the planned scheme that we hope to evolve. It has been an intensely interesting experience for me, and I hope it has been so for others, to consider all these vital problems not separately by themselves but in relation to the nature of things and with insufficient data at our disposal to prepare a detailed scheme for all forms of national activity. That will take a long time and all the resources of the state. But the Committee has done something which, I feel more and more, is of vital significance. This feeling has grown upon me during this fortnight's work when we came to grips with our subject. This is the first time in India when these various subjects have been seen as parts of a coordinated whole. At any time this is necessary, but today when the world, as we have known, is tumbling all around us, it is doubly essential to keep this picture in our minds so that we may not lose ourselves in trivialities and in chaotic and unplanned development when the time comes. This Planning Committee, I hope, will lay the foundation of the planned India of the future. The super-structure will inevitably come later. But if even the foundation is laid in men's minds a great national task will have been done.

In regard to many matters opinions differ very greatly. But it has been a pleasant surprise to me how even those who differ can very often arrive at an agreement when we have a common objective in view. Even when the differences persist, it is worth while to pursue our course, noting down the differences wherever they exist. If the material is ready, various viewpoints represented and facts collected, decisions can be taken by the state when the time comes.

It must always be borne in mind that we are thinking in terms of a planned society, and, therefore, our recommendations must be taken as a whole, and not in bits. Occasionally, of course, some bits might be desirable in themselves and they can be taken separately. Often also

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 15 May 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 16 May 1940.

it might be injurious just to take one bit and not the rest, as this would break up any equilibrium that may exist without bringing a new equilibrium in its place. Therefore, it must be borne in mind that this scheme must be viewed as a whole. We intend at a later stage to indicate what may be done in the earlier transitional stages, though in the changing order of today it is not an easy matter to say much about the present.

We propose, therefore, to carry on our work with vigour, and we are meeting again in full Planning Committee on June 2, 1940, to consider the remaining reports of sub-committees. In this work that we are doing we require, of course, the fullest intelligent cooperation of the public and the press. Ultimately it is not the Committee that will decide the future of India or of its political or economic organization but the people of India who will take the final decision. It is for them, therefore, to pay attention to what this Committee is doing. Perhaps one of the most important and desirable consequences of our work is to make people think of planned work and a cooperative society. This thinking has been too rare in the past. In order to reach the public the obvious medium is the press.

We would have liked to take the press and the public into our confidence about all our work, and we have tried to do so as far as we can, but, inevitably, our meetings have to take place in private so as to give the fullest opportunity to members to express their opinions. Also it is right and proper that our reports should be submitted to the Congress before we give publicity to all of them. We have, however, given publicity to most of our resolutions dealing with these reports. We hope to print them soon in book form for facilitating reference.

Our work grows as we enter into deeper waters. It takes more time and energy and it costs more. As a matter of fact, the total expenditure of the Planning Committee so far has been relatively small. Compared to the average official committee or commission which deals with one subject only, our expenditure has been little. With this, it must be remembered that we were not dealing with one subject, but with a vast number of vital subjects dealing with every phase of national activity. When this is borne in mind it will be realized how economically we have worked. I am grateful to the provincial governments and to the states who have sent us contributions for our work. I trust that in view of this work enlarging itself and taking more time, they will continue to send some contributions so that this vital work might not suffer for lack of funds.

All of us today are inevitably absorbed and oppressed by international happenings and yet in spite of that we cannot and must not lose our balance or get excited or forget that whatever may happen, we have to

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We have completed the consideration of about 20 reports. A few more remain, and this will be taken up at our next sessions. This next sessions, which will be held in the last week of August of this year, will chiefly devote itself to the consideration of general policy which should govern the drafting of the N.P.C. report.

It is essential that every sub-committee which has not reported so far must send in its report at the earliest possible moment. Secondly, those that have sent in interim reports should send their full reports. Thirdly, those who have already prepared their full reports and submitted them should get these reports finally revised for publication.

All this should be done at the latest by the last week of August, when we meet next. I trust that all members of the N.P.C. and of the sub-committees will cooperate in this task during its final stages, so that we may be able to put before the public, in the shape of our many reports, something that is worthy of the great problem with which we have been charged and worthy of India.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. The Task Ahead[1]

The work of the National Planning Committee will be of enormous use to the statesmen of the future who will have the shaping of a new and free India. Therefore, we are proceeding with this task with all earnestness and perseverance regardless of external events and the mighty happenings that are transforming the world.

Indeed, these very revolutionary changes that are coming all over the world make it incumbent on us to proceed with our task. Some of our members were of opinion that under present conditions we should postpone our activities but the great majority were convinced that we should not and we have continued and shall continue. The great lesson to be learnt from the happenings in the world today is that the present order in the world, political, economic and social, is all awry, and requires complete reshaping. India will have to face this problem with all its fundamental implications very soon and if we are not ready for it,

1. Statement to the press, 30 June 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 1 July 1940.

we shall miss great chances that circumstances and history will offer to us. Therefore, it is even more important today, than it was yesterday, for us to pursue our task and to complete it in such a measure as we can under the present circumstances. The task of the National Planning Committee is, in effect, never completed, for it goes on with the life and progress of the nation. But we shall complete drawing up this initial and inadequate picture of a planned society in India and we have no doubt that whatever changes may be made in it in future, this edifice will serve as a secure foundation to build upon.

9. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Bombay
July 1, 1940

Dear Mr. President,
I write to inform you that the fourth sessions of the National Planning Committee concluded yesterday. During these sessions we considered the reports of several additional sub-committees and passed resolutions on them. The present position is that we have considered reports, final or interim, of over twenty sub-committees. Seven sub-committees have still to report to us and some reports which have only partly been considered will have to be more fully considered later. Among the reports that still require consideration are those on crop planning, public health, technical education, trade and women's role in planned economy.

Our work has grown more and more intricate and comprehensive as we have proceeded with it. There is much still to be done but we are gradually approaching the end of our labours. We have to finish the sub-committee stage before very long and then to proceed to the drafting of the report of the National Planning Committee. This task will be a heavy and difficult one.

Our present programme is to have another session of the Planning Committee in the last week of August next. During the sessions we shall deal with some more sub-committees' reports and then lay down the broad principles on which the report of the Planning Committee should be based. Many of these principles have already been laid down in the resolutions so far adopted by the National Planning Committee in the course of our consideration of the sub-committees' reports. The report

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 23/1940-42, pp. 38-39, N.M.M.L.

of the National Planning Committee is likely to be a big document and it will require great care in its drafting. It will have to be preceded by a careful collation of our previous decisions and then an attempt to put forward a picture of planned activity in India. This drafting of the final report is likely to take two to three months. This means that it will not be ready for final consideration before the end of November. After that this draft report will have to be circulated among the members and we shall later have to meet to consider it formally and to adopt it. So far as I can see this final consideration cannot take place before the middle of December. At the earliest, therefore, the report cannot be passed before the end of December. It will then require revision to give it its final shape before it is presented to you. If this programme is adhered to, our report should be ready for presentation to you sometime in January next, but it is difficult to fix a definite time-table.

I sent you a letter at the end of our third session in May last requesting you to be good enough to extend the time for the presentation of our report. I did not receive any reply to it but I presumed that you were agreeable to the proposal I had made. I would beg of you now to extend the time further to the extent suggested above.

After our report is presented to you and considered by the Working Committee, it will have to be printed for public circulation. Should you so desire it, it may be printed at a somewhat earlier stage to facilitate its consideration by the Working Committee. We feel that all our subcommittees' reports should also be printed at some stage or other, as they have been presented to us, together with our resolutions on these reports. This volume of literature will be bulky and may run over several thousand pages. But I have no doubt that it will be of considerable value. The final decisions will have to be taken by the Working Committee. But it will certainly be worth while to place all the reports before the public to enable them to profit by the large amount of information that has been gathered together, and by the attempt made by us to coordinate it and bring it into a single picture of planned activity.

As I pointed out to you in my last letter, we have been considerably handicapped by our lack of sufficient funds. We are however carrying on our work in as economical a manner as possible. We are likely to have difficulties in the future and certainly we shall not have enough funds for the publication of the reports. This question does not arise immediately but I am keeping you informed of our position. Not much help is likely to be forthcoming in future from the provincial governments or states cooperating with us. Indeed many of these provincial governments have informed us that they cannot send us any contributions in the future.

We realise that the extreme gravity of the international and national situation must fill your mind as well as the minds of the members of the Working Committee. It was even proposed to us by some of our members that we should postpone our work till this crisis was over. But a great majority of our members were strongly of opinion that our work must be carried on, so long as this is possible, and indeed that the international situation made it all the more incumbent on us to proceed with this work and to bring it to a successful conclusion. The problems we are facing in the Planning Committee are vital problems for India and it may well be that we shall have to solve them in the near future. This present work of the Planning Committee must of necessity help greatly in the future consideration of these problems as well as in their solution. We have, therefore, proceeded with our work and intend to continue to do so.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. To V.K.R.V. Rao[1]

Allahabad
July 10, 1940

My dear Rao,[2]
You will remember the talk we had in Srinagar. You were good enough to tell me that you had some little time at your disposal now and could help me in our Planning Committee work. I am now going to take advantage of your offer.

You must have received the two little books—red book 1 and red book 2, issued by the N.P.C. These books give the resolutions so far passed by the N.P.C. as well as other relevant matter. A third little book, red book 3, is being issued shortly giving our recent resolutions. So far we have considered in a way the interim or final reports of about 20 sub-committees and passed resolutions on them. Seven or eight sub-committees still remain to be dealt with. Out of these two or three are unimportant or, at any rate, have no particular bearing on the larger issues. The

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1908); economist; Vice-Chancellor, Delhi University, 1957-60; director, Institute of Economic Growth, 1960-63; Union Minister for Shipping, 1967-69 and for Education, 1969-71; director, Institute for Social and Economic Change, 1971-77.

resolutions we have passed so far give a fairly good indication of the way we are working and of the kind of picture we have in our minds. This picture is in outline only and parts of it are necessarily blurred. In regard to some important matters of policy, we have been deliberately somewhat vague or non-committal.

In the ordinary course we should complete the consideration of the remaining sub-committees' reports, and then go on to consider our own draft report. This draft will have to be based on the resolutions passed by us on all the sub-committees' reports as well as such independent resolutions that we passed. It was thought desirable for us to lay down certain general principles which should govern our draft.

It is proposed to hold our next sessions in the last week of August. Ordinarily we will have to continue with the sub-committees' reports then. To some extent we will of course do so. But I am anxious that the writing of the draft should not be delayed and that the next sessions should lay down these general principles. Even if some sub-committees' reports stand over, the drafting can begin as this is likely to take a good deal of time. But this cannot even begin unless these general principles are decided upon. Some of these, as I have stated above, have been decided upon. But others remain. Therefore it is my intention to ask the N.P.C. to consider these general principles at their next meeting and then to appoint a small sub-committee, probably consisting of three persons—the General Secretary, the Chairman and one other member—to prepare the draft.

I should like you to go through the resolutions in the three red books and keeping them in view, note down what further general decisions we should take which would enable us to proceed with the draft. That is to say, I should like you to put down such further questions of policy and principle as we should decide at our next stage. In putting down these questions, please indicate what in your opinion the decisions should be.

I should also like you to write a brief note on the general picture of national planning in India which you would recommend.

You are no doubt aware of the conditions under which we have been working. We are a mixed body representing a variety of opinions, often hostile to each other. It has been no easy matter to arrive at any conclusion sometimes. On the whole I think we have succeeded remarkably and done a useful job of work. There are many contradictions in what we have done, much overlapping, but still the general drift is fairly clear and is in the right direction. These decisions do not represent wholly what I would like them to be, nor do they represent anyone else's viewpoint completely. What I am anxious about is that we

should collect all information through the sub-committees and a number of informed reports on various sub-committees. Then to put forward our own report trying to collate these and draw up a single picture. I do not mind at all if there are minutes of dissent and the like. We shall at least have done something which will help the public as well as those in authority to consider these many problems together in an organic way. We would have laid the foundations of future planning and the next step will be easier and swifter whenever the time comes for it.

I hope therefore that you will be able to draw up a list of general principles as well as specific matters which should be decided by us at the next stage, and also write a note on planned economy as a whole as it should be. I should like to have this by the middle of next month.

I do not know how the Cottage Industries Sub-Committee is carrying on. I hope that this question will be dealt with not in the region of pure theory but of practice, taking into consideration the strong sentiments in favour of cottage industries in India. It seems to me that most of the argument centres round fine points of theory of philosophical approach. In actual practice the points of difference are narrowed down. I see no harm in these points of difference being dealt with in separate notes, though of course every attempt should be made to arrive at a common understanding in regard to most matters.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To P.N. Katju[1]

Lucknow
August 13, 1940

My dear Pyare,[2]
I received your letter today and I have read through your letter to *The Hindustan Times*. You can always write to me or send a note to me on any particular subject which you think is of importance and is of topical interest. But you must realise what you may want done is not always possible under the present circumstances, just as a hundred things that we want done cannot be done. It is no good getting depressed about

1. National Planning Committee File No. 135/1940, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1901); chemist; member, Rajya Sabha, 1962-67.

I have been thinking whether it is worth while postponing the N.P.C. I think it is best to continue with it. You need not take up the general principles at the meeting in my absence. But you could deal with the various sub-committees' reports.

I am writing this to you just to let you know how my mind is thinking. But everything is uncertain.

I enclose a letter which might be dealt with in your office.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

13. The War and Planning[1]

August 30, 1940

The work of the National Planning Committee has unfortunately synchronised with a developing crisis abroad and in India. For the past year the war in Europe has dominated events and men's minds. It has, inevitably, had far-reaching repercussions in India, and it would appear that grave developments are likely in the near future in India and outside. Such developments may come in the way somewhat of the activities of the N.P.C., but there is no reason why we should not endeavour to carry on with our work, to the extent we can, even if untoward happenings take place. We shall, however, have to adapt ourselves to them.

2. We have done in the N.P.C. and in our numerous sub-committees a great deal of solid work so far. It is true that much still remains to be done, yet it is also true that the final and most important stage is in view now, and we stand on its threshold. This stage consists in bringing together the conclusions of the various sub-committees and drafting our own report. Some sub-committees have not yet completed their labours; the reports of some others have so far only been partially considered by us. Ordinarily, this sub-committee stage should be completed before we enter the next stage. But if we wait for the few remaining sub-committees to finish their work, our other work will be unnecessarily delayed. I suggest therefore that we should now begin to think of the drafting of our final report. This will be heavy and

1. Chairman's note on the fifth session of the National Planning Committee. National Planning Committee File No. 135/1940, N.M.M.L.

difficult work involving the preparation of a preliminary draft, which may be considered by a small drafting committee; the circulation of this draft to the members of the N.P.C. and then the careful consideration of it by the N.P.C. in full sessions. These various processes are likely to take six months.

3. Meanwhile, of course, the remaining sub-committees will be asked to finish their labours, and all sub-committees will finally revise their reports and prepare them for publication. Before the N.P.C.'s final report is considered, we shall have the advantage of having all this voluminous material before us.

4. The report of the N.P.C. will naturally be based on the decisions so far taken, or to be taken, by the Committee. We have already got a body of decisions which indicate the direction in which we have to travel and the kind of society which will exist under a planned system. The picture is still vague and there are many gaps, which the N.P.C. will no doubt fill from time to time.

5. We are seeking to draw up a picture of a new pattern of organised society which will be able to solve the many problems which afflict us, and help in rapidly raising the material and cultural standards of the Indian people. We are thinking in terms of making these rapid changes through peaceful and democratic means. Some people may think that these assumptions are hardly justified in a world in the grip of a devastating war, and our own country on the eve of far-reaching conflicts. It is beyond our province to consider these essentially political matters, but we cannot ignore them as they affect vitally every scheme of planning. The future is dark and uncertain and the immediate prospect for the world is one of uttermost destruction. What will emerge out of this mad orgy of hatred and violence, no man can say. It is not outside the bounds of possibility that this war may go on and on, spreading to more and more countries, till it becomes almost impossible to have a formal and effective peace. The disease may become too deep-rooted and widespread to be controlled; there may be none left who can control it. The war itself may peter out ultimately leaving a trail of anarchy and horrible destruction and starvation behind it.

6. All this may happen and more, and India and every country in the world will be powerfully affected by it. Even if the war ends more normally, the post-war problems will be overpowering. We have seen that even so-called democratic states engaged in the war have adopted, under stress of circumstances, a totalitarian economy with strict state control of production, transport and distribution—in fact of almost all national activities. War has compelled planning, though this planning is for the specific purpose of destruction. When the war ends, this

planned economy and state control cannot be given up and there appears to be no possibility of a reversion to pre-war capitalism. Any such attempt at reversion would mean unemployment on a prodigious scale as the demobilised millions go back to civil life and war-time industries stop functioning. No state or government can possibly face this problem in the pre-war way.

7. The coming of the war itself, and the *inter-bellum* period 1918 to 1939, demonstrated that the economic structure was no longer capable of solving the major problems of the day. An ever-growing unemployment became a permanent feature of the national life of even rich and prosperous countries like Britain and the United States of America. There appeared to be no solution for it within the framework of the existing economy. The feeling of insecurity grew within large numbers of people. War and war industries have temporarily absorbed most of these unemployed, and yet it is astonishing that in spite of millions being under arms and millions more being employed in war industries, still there is a substantial core of unemployment in Britain. In any event, it is a curious economy which requires a major war to solve the unemployment problem.

8. If pre-war conditions were bad and the economic structure was cracking up, it is patent that the war and after will give a death-blow to that structure. It may be that during the war itself revolutionary social and economic changes will take place in Britain and other countries. Certainly just after the war this must inevitably happen. The vast expenditure on the war and on the work of destruction is already lowering standards of life greatly in Britain. The burden will become intolerable in all countries and these astronomical war debts can never be paid by any country. It may even happen that the whole system of money economy will undergo a radical change. The British ruling classes have resisted social change longer than almost any country. But the last few years, and the conduct of the war itself, have shown how inefficient and incompetent they have grown. They and the economy of which they are the products no longer fit in with the modern world in peace or in war.

9. If these changes are likely or almost inevitable in a country like Britain, what will happen in India? Obviously the problems of poverty, unemployment, low standards of living are far more serious here. Some people thought that the war may bring a temporary prosperity to Indian industry and to the agricultural producers. This may well have taken place, though this would have been no solution of any major problem. As a matter of fact the hopes of our industrialists and of the mercantile

community have not materialised and there is widespread disappointment. Even as compared to the war of 1914-18, developments in India have been slow in these directions. Political considerations apparently come in the way and British vested interests disapprove of the growth of Indian industry. Recently there has been much talk of the establishment of an automobile factory in India, as also of an aeroplane factory. It appeared that both these would materialise soon. But even the stress and difficulty of the war has not essentially altered the outlook of the British Government towards India, and all manner of obstructions are continually being raised to any real progress in this country. At an early stage of the N.P.C.'s work we made it clear that any system of planning must presume full liberty to plan, that is a completely free national state, both politically and economically. Recent events have justified even more this approach of the N.P.C. to planning.

10. As we have proceeded with our work, it has become abundantly clear that any real planning requires coordination between all sectors of national life. This, in its turn, requires the control of the community in all these various sectors. There has been much discussion as to the extent of this control, but a measure of control is inevitable. We have agreed to full state ownership and control in regard to many basic industries and services; in regard to others we have said that there may be either state ownership or state control, such control, however, being rigid. Yet in other cases we have envisaged a varying degree of control. In regard to land, while we have not ruled out private enterprise in the shape of peasant proprietorship, we have decided that the objective should be the introduction of the cooperative principle to the largest possible extent and the organisation of land collectives and cooperatives.

11. Thus, whatever the avenue of approach has been, we have been led to a rapid increase in the socialisation of national activities and state control. Our general objective, which emerges from this, is one of a socialistic planned structure run by the community for the benefit of the community. Private enterprise has certainly not been ruled out but it has to be strictly controlled and coordinated to the general plan. The whole motive of the plan must be a social and cooperative one and not a competitive one based on private profit.

12. These general conclusions, which seem to emerge from our discussions and decisions, are confirmed and justified by a consideration of the world situation, a reference to which has been made earlier in this note. It is evident that there is no other solution of the Indian or the world problem except on this basis. No social or economic structure which does not provide work and security to the people, can endure. In India we have too long thought in terms of the upper

groups and ignored the vast numbers of our peasantry. This can no longer be done, and this forgotten creature, the Indian peasant, who has borne so many grievous burdens for centuries, must find relief and security and advancement in our plan.

13. Our plan and our final report must therefore be based on this social outlook, and all the decisions we have so far taken, and are going to take on the reports of sub-committees, should be strung together and linked by this objective of socializing our national life in all its many sectors. I suggest therefore that, if the Committee agrees, this general direction might be given for the drafting of the report. That report will be necessarily bound by all our specific decisions, but many gaps will have to be filled and this general direction is therefore necessary. It may be desirable to appoint a small committee of three to prepare the preliminary draft which, when ready, should be circulated to all the members, who should be given ample time to consider it and send their suggestions in writing, if they so desire. Later the N.P.C. can consider this draft carefully.

14. It is possible that circumstances over which I have no control may prevent my active association with the work of the N.P.C. for a while. If such should happen, it should not be interpreted as meaning that the work of the N.P.C. is suspended or postponed. Much of what I have indicated above can continue to be done—the remaining sub-committees should revise their reports and prepare them for publication; our own final report should be drafted. All this is hard and important work which will take time. All this can be done. If I can join in it, in any way, I shall gladly do so. In any event I hope to take part in it at the later and final stage when we have to consider and pass our report.

15. I should like to express my deep gratitude to all my colleagues of the Planning Committee and of our many sub-committees for their unfailing kindness and consideration to me. Professor K.T. Shah, of course, has been the pivot round which all our work has revolved, and he will continue to shoulder the burden till this great work is done. To the members of our staff, I should also like to express my gratitude and appreciation.

14. The Purpose of Planning[1]

The octopus of war grips and strangles the world and the energy of mankind is more and more directed to destroying what man has built up with infinite patience and labour. Yet it is clear that war by itself cannot solve any problem. It is by conscious, constructive and planned effort alone that national and international problems can be solved. In India many people thought, with reason, that it was premature to plan, so long as we did not have the power to give effect to our planning. The political and economic freedom of India was a prerequisite to any planning, and till this was achieved our national and international policy would continue to be governed, as heretofore, in the interests of the City of London and other vested interests. And yet we started, wisely I think, a National Planning Committee and we are trying, even in these days of world conflict and war, to draw up a picture of planned society in the free India of the future.

Our immediate problem is to attack the appalling poverty and unemployment of India and to raise the standards of our people. That means vastly greater production which must be allied to juster and more equitable distribution, so that the increased wealth may spread out among the people. That means a rapid growth of industry, scientific agriculture and the social services, all coordinated together, under more or less state control, and directed towards the betterment of the people as a whole. The resources of India are vast and if wisely used should yield rich results in the near future.

We do not believe in a rigid autarchy, but we do want to make India self-sufficient in regard to her needs as far as this is possible. We want to develop international trade, importing articles which we cannot easily produce and exporting such articles as the rest of the world wants from us. We do not propose to submit to the economic imperialism of any other country or to impose our own on others. We believe that the nations of the world can cooperate together in building up a world economy which is advantageous for all and in this work we shall gladly cooperate. But this economy cannot be based on the individual profit motive, nor can it subsist within the framework of imperialist system. It means a new world order, both politically and economically, and free nations cooperating together for their own as[illegible] the larger good.

1. 4 October 1940. Message sent for the Inter[illegible]n of the *Textile Journal* edited by Francis Hickman.

15. The Content of Social Welfare[1]

What exactly is social welfare? The well-being of society, I take it. If so, it includes almost everything that one can think of—spiritual, cultural, political, economic and social. It covers thus the entire field of human activity and relationships. And yet, this wide and all-embracing sense is seldom applied to it, and we use the words in a far more restricted sense. The social worker, often enough, considers himself or herself as working in a field which is strictly separated from political action or economic theory. He or she will try to bring relief to suffering humanity, will fight disease and slum conditions, deal with unemployment, prostitution and the like. He may also seek to bring about some changes in the law in order to remedy present-day injustice. But he will seldom go down to the roots of the problem, for he accepts the general structure of society as it is and seeks only to tone down its glaring injustices.

The lady who visits the slums occasionally to relieve her conscience by the performance of good and charitable deeds is a type we need not consider. The less we have of this patronizing and condescending approach to the problem the better. But there are large numbers of earnest men and women who devote themselves to the service of their fellow creatures in the somewhat narrow way conceived above. They do good work, and to whatever extent they may benefit others, they certainly benefit themselves by the discipline and training that this service gives them.

Yet, it seems to me, that all this good work is largely wasted, because it deals with the surface of the problem only. Social evils have a history and a background, roots in our past, and intimate connections with the economic structure under which we live. Many of them are indeed the direct products of that economic system, just as many others are of religious superstition and harmful custom. Any scientific consideration of the problem of social welfare must, therefore, inevitably go down to these roots and seek out the causes. It must have the courage to look deep down into the well of truth and to proclaim fearlessly what it finds there. If it avoids politics and economics, and all that goes by the name of religion, for fear of treading on dangerous ground, then it moves on the surface only and can neither command much respect, nor achieve results.

1. *The Hindustan Times*, 20 October 1940.

For nearly two years now I have been associated with the National Planning Committee, and the conviction has grown upon me that it is not possible to solve any major problem separately by itself; they all hang together and they depend greatly on the economic structure. To social problems, in the limited sense, this applies with equal force. Recently, the Planning Committee considered the report of their Sub-Committee on Women's Role in Planned Economy. This sub-committee, more than any other, had to deal with social problems and it tackled them in all earnestness and with great ability. In doing so it was all the time coming up against political conditions and even more so economic aspects and religious injunctions, or just prejudices with the force of custom.

It is not easy to say which is more difficult to deal with—economic vested interests or religious vested interests. Both these series of vested interests want to maintain the *status quo* and are opponents of change. The path of the real reformer is thus a difficult one.

Before we seek any particular reform, we must be clear what our general objective is and what kind of society we are aiming at. It is obvious that if we have a social structure which assures work and security to all adults, proper education for the young, a widespread distribution of the necessities and amenities of life, and a measure of individual freedom for self-development, this, in itself, will solve many of our social problems. Crime will decrease rapidly and the criminal type will become an extreme rarity, prostitution will be infinitely less and there will be far better adjustments of human relations. If this background and basis are not provided, then the roots of evil remain.

The problem, therefore, has to be attacked on all fronts and possibly the greatest difficulty will be along the so-called religious front. Religion as such need not be touched, but there are so many rules and regulations which are presumed to have religious sanctions that any attempt to vary them is likely to meet with the solid and passionate opposition of the votaries of organized religion. Inheritance, marriage, divorce are all supposed to be parts of the personal law of various communities and this personal law is supposed to be part of religion. It is obvious that no change can be imposed from the top. It will thus become the duty of the government of the day to try to educate public opinion so as to make it accept the changes proposed. It should be clearly laid down, in order to avoid suspicion, that any change of this type will only apply to a community when that community itself accepts it. This will give rise to difficulties and a lack of uniformity but any other course will lead to greater difficulty and ill will, and laws passed may become dead letters so far as their application is concerned.

It seems to me that a uniform civil code for the whole of India is essential. Yet I realize that this cannot be imposed on unwilling people. It should, therefore, be made optional to begin with, and individuals and groups may voluntarily accept it and come within its scope. The state should meanwhile carry on propaganda in its favour.

One urgent need is the extension of the Civil Marriage Act to cover marriages between any two persons, to whatever religion they may belong, without any renunciation of religion, as at present. This will of necessity be optional.

Another desirable step is to have records kept of all marriages. This will be useful in many ways and it will gradually make people think in terms of civil marriages. The sacramental forms of marriage should certainly continue for all who want them, but it will be desirable later to have a civil registration also which the state will recognize.

Divorce laws, especially for the Hindus, are a crying need, and so indeed are so many other changes. We want changes which apply to both men and women, we want changes also especially applicable to women, who have suffered for ages past under a double burden. Let us accept the democratic principle of equal rights and equal obligations as between man and man, and man and woman, and frame our laws and social structure accordingly.

5

LARGE-SCALE AND COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

1. The Demands of the Workers[1]

The political crisis and the approaching struggle inevitably absorb our attention. But we may not therefore forget the economic turmoil and conflicts that are taking place all over India, for these are the resultants of the same objective conditions which have brought about the political crisis.

The war in Europe has upset much and while, on the one hand, it has given opportunities for profit-making to a few, it has brought the burden of increased prices on many. It is right that the agriculturists who have suffered so long and so grievously should take advantage of higher prices. But it is essential that workers should not suffer, especially when the war has brought a measure of prosperity to certain industries. Hence the demand for dearness allowance on behalf of industrial workers and lower-paid salaried employees.

This demand, in essence, is thoroughly justified and public opinion must support it. Indeed the demand has been recognised in England and elsewhere. The economic struggle that is going on in various parts of India today is based essentially on this demand for an adequate dearness allowance. It ill becomes employers to refuse it and to rely on their resources to crush the workers' movement.

Where the principle is admitted and only the amount is in dispute, it is proper that the matter be referred to conciliation or arbitration. The refusal of certain employers to submit to this is itself a confession of the weakness of their case and is an affront to public opinion.

The great textile strike in Bombay[2] has rightly drawn public attention and sympathy and the attitude of the employers has seemed most unreasonable. Such an attitude, even though temporarily successful, must inevitably lead to bitterness and continued conflict. It is totally out of keeping with the changing conditions of today.

Another vital strike has long been going on in the factories of the Imperial Tobacco Company in India, at Saharanpur, Monghyr, Bangalore and Calcutta. This has a peculiar significance, for here a relatively small number of workers are facing a very powerful foreign trust which has built up a monopoly in India. Such monopolies are always dangerous, more so when they are foreign.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 10 April 1940. *National Herald*, 11 April 1940.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 352.

In spite of the great odds, the cigarette factory workers have carried on bravely and peacefully for nearly two months. Today is the fifty-sixth day of the strike and everyone has appreciated the discipline and nonviolence of the strikers. I understand that the strikers have expressed their willingness to accept certain terms suggested by the district authorities, but the owners have so far not agreed.

The Council of the U.P.P.C.C. have already expressed their full sympathy with the Saharanpur strikers and have given them such help as they can.[3] They have further recommended to the people of the province to avoid purchasing the products of the Imperial Tobacco Company. The time has come when attention should be paid to this recommendation, and if the company continues to act in an intransigent manner, the full force of the Provincial Congress should be used to this end.

3. The resolution was passed on 9 March 1940.

2. Boycott of Imperial Tobacco Company[1]

Only two or three days ago I drew public attention to the strike in the cigarette factories of the Imperial Tobacco Company at Saharanpur, Monghyr, Bangalore and Calcutta. Grave news now comes to us. Many of our colleagues have been arrested and a lathi charge has severely injured a large number. Section 144 and the Criminal Amendment Act have been applied. It is time now that our sympathy for the workers should take concrete form and that the public be asked to refrain from buying any of the products of the Imperial Tobacco Company. I hope Congress committees and Congressmen will attend to this. The P.C.C. will no doubt issue further and detailed directions.

1. Statement to the press, 13 April 1940. *National Herald*, 14 April 1940.

The syndicate, taking advantage of the shortage in sugarcane, raised the price of sugar considerably. This matter was later considered by the governments in consultation with the representatives of the manufacturers and a sliding scale for the price of sugarcane in relation to the price of sugar was fixed. In the 1939-40 season the production of sugarcane had increased; nevertheless the coming of the European war induced the manufacturers to continue to raise the price of sugar. This resulted, according to the sliding scale, in a rise of the price of sugarcane also. The war, however, did not have any appreciable effect on the consumption of sugar or on any export abroad, with the result that a large stock of sugar was left undisposed of in the hands of the manufacturers. Meanwhile the great rise in the price of sugarcane induced the peasantry to increase the area of sugarcane cultivation very greatly. The result of this is that, while on the one hand a vast quantity of sugarcane is being produced, on the other hand huge stocks of sugar remain and a great part of the sugarcane might not be required by the factories. This will inevitably lead to a tremendous fall in the price of sugarcane and the peasantry will face disaster. Much of their sugarcane might find no market at all and have to be simply wasted or burnt up. The position, indeed, is likely to be more acute than it was in 1936-37. At any time this would have been a dangerous situation to face. At this particular time of war and change and an unsettling of people's minds, there is grave danger ahead.

Obviously this state of affairs required state intervention and control to an even greater degree than before in order to prevent the development of chaotic conditions. But curiously enough the present Provincial Governments of the U.P. and Bihar have moved the other way and have announced the withdrawal of recognition from the syndicate. What this withdrawal exactly means I do not know. Apparently it means the removal of such restrictions as existed before and the introduction of cut-throat competition between the manufacturers.

It was apparently thought that such competition would automatically lead to a new level of prices and would encourage sales. To some extent this might be so, but the other results which are sure to follow are dangerous in the extreme. We shall have a repetition, on a bigger scale, of the crisis of 1936-37, the collapse of sugarcane prices and the consequent ruin of the peasantry engaged in the sugarcane cultivation, and also probably the collapse of large numbers of smaller factories which cannot compete with a few big ones. It will thus mean the development of monopoly on a big scale in the sugar industry to the detriment of the peasantry as well as of large numbers of the smaller manufacturers. Monopolies in private hands are always dangerous from the point of view of the state, the consumer and the producer of raw

materials. They are peculiarly dangerous in the sugar industry which affects intimately the peasantry of Bihar and the U.P. In considering this problem, this vital human element can never be ignored, and certainly a state can only ignore it at its peril. That way lies agrarian upheaval on a vast scale.

It is clear to me that the sugar industry is pre-eminently meant to be controlled wholly by the state. It is also clear that in regard to this industry the various provincial governments must arrive at an understanding to prevent mutual competition. It would be disastrous if some provinces where there is no state regulation or protection of the interests of the cane growers began competing with the other provinces where this protection was given. This does not mean that the sugar industry should be the monopoly of any one or two provinces, but that wherever it can flourish economically and due to favourable natural conditions, it should be subjected to the same rules and regulations and protection of the grower as in the U.P. and Bihar. This all-India regulation and co-ordination is bound to come some time or other. If it is delayed, the price paid for this will be chaos in the industry and the misery of millions of our peasants.

Whether complete state control of the industry is possible immediately or not, I do not know. But it seems to me excessively unwise for the existing control to be lessened and for matters to be allowed to drift according to the discredited theory of *laissez-faire*. What is necessary is far stricter control to be introduced in regard to the price of sugar as well as the price of sugarcane and for some sales organization to be built up on behalf of the syndicate. In any event the growth of private monopoly must not be tolerated.

We are faced today with very grave national and international problems. In spite of this, I have thought it worth while to draw attention to this approaching crisis in the sugar industry, because it is no small matter for millions of people to be brought to the verge of ruin and for a great industry to go to pieces. If this happens, it will not only have economic consequences of the first order but grave political consequences, and no person, whether he thinks in terms of the industry or the state, can ignore these consequences.

4. To B.M. Birla[1]

Allahabad
July 21, 1940

Dear Brij Mohanji,[2]
Thank you for your long letter of the 18th July[3] and the copy of your letter to the Government of India. These two letters have helped me to understand a little more the present situation in the sugar industry. This is obviously bad, and the worst feature of it seems to be the competition between different provinces. I have no doubt that ultimately similar rules and regulations will have to be laid down for all the provinces, otherwise cut-throat competition will produce disastrous results everywhere. For the present some provincial governments may refuse to agree, but they will inevitably have to agree some time or other.

The situation as it has existed for some time past has been highly undesirable. The syndicate did not function as it should have functioned. I do not see, however, how a real improvement can be brought about by a complete loosening of control. This *laissez-faire* attitude of the government may be advantageous for a short while in getting rid of accumulated stocks, but it must produce other undesirable reactions. The way to deal with it therefore was a variation of that control and possibly a stricter control, including control of sales. In the modern world *laissez-faire* does not solve any problem, it only aggravates the situation.

The matter is too complicated and intricate for me to give a definite opinion about the recent steps that have been taken. But whatever these steps might be, they must be coordinated under government auspices, and they must bear in mind the reaction on the peasantry. Otherwise any scheme, however logically sound, is bound to fail.

I am grateful to you for having sent me these papers which help me to understand the situation better.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Allahabad
August 4, 1940

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I enclose a note I have received from Raja Jwala Prasad[2] on the present condition of the sugar industry.

The subject is a complicated one and the fact that we cannot influence the government directly makes it still more difficult for us to deal with it. It is likely that the provincial governments will have some decisions soon.

Briefly put, my own views are :

1. Only by planning carefully on an all-India basis can the present crisis be got over satisfactorily. This means planning of cane production, sugar production, sales etc.

2. The sugar industry has made enormous profits in the past and therefore it should bear the burden to a large extent of a bad period which is partly due to its own improvidence in not building up reserve funds and partly to the huge profits that were taken out. I realise that much of these profits were re-invested in fresh plants. That was a very risky thing to do. It is unfair under the circumstances for the industrialists to want to cast the burden on the consumers or the cane-growers.

3. At the same time it is obvious that a big crisis may break up the industry completely and this must be avoided.

4. All-India planning necessarily requires not only some general all-India rules but also state control in cooperation with representatives of the industry and the cane-growers. Absence of state control means cut-throat competition, chaos and disaster. Such state control, it is true, under present conditions will be exercised by a state which is irresponsible. But any rules that we may lay down will necessarily have to ignore this fact.

5. If all-India rules or planning is out of the question, there should at least be joint planning in the U.P. and Bihar as hitherto. Unfortunately this did not go far enough and even the rules that were laid down were not observed. There have been serious complaints of individual

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Raja Jwala Prasad, the pro-Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University, had written proposing that excess sugar be distributed at a low price to those who could not pay more.

industrialists not abiding by the rules and thereby making illegitimate profits.

6. There is bound to be considerable over-production of sugar during the next season and there is already a large stock, estimated at four hundred thousand tons, which is three times the normal carry over. To stop cane-crushing by factories during the current season to any large extent would be disastrous for the cane-grower. I think that the factories will have to be encouraged to continue crushing almost as before. It may, however, be possible to reduce somewhat this crushing and encourage the peasants to turn some of their sugarcane into *gur*. I understand that this can only be done satisfactorily in the early part of the season, otherwise the cane is not good enough for the purpose. Therefore a clear decision must be arrived at by experts as to the quantity that should be allotted to *gur* production. This should be evenly distributed so as not to cause undue loss to particular individuals. I do not, however, expect the greater part of over-production to be converted into *gur*. Only some part of it will go that way. The rest must be consumed by the factories.

7. The price paid for sugarcane during the last season rose unduly, chiefly because of the desire of the factory owners to get high prices for sugar. The sliding scale resulted in the cane price going up also. I suppose both the price of sugar and the cane price will have to be reduced. But neither should be reduced unduly, especially the latter. What the exact figures are likely to be, I cannot say. That is a matter for expert computation.

8. A similar problem had to be faced by President Roosevelt's administration in America in regard to over-production of certain commodities. The New Deal provided for this. It was not considered desirable to reduce prices and it was found that at this price level if 70 or 80 per cent or thereabouts of the commodities were sold, this brought a sufficient return to the factory owners and, at any rate, prevented loss. The balance of over-production was taken over for free distribution by ration cards among people who were too poor to buy. This distribution did not affect the buying public which continued to be the same. At the same time it gave a much needed article to those who could not afford it. It was considered undesirable to have two prices for the same article. I was recently discussing this matter with Ambalal Sarabhai and he strongly advocated this New Deal for the sugar industry in India.

9. Ambalal alternatively suggested that the government should make themselves responsible for the industry at least during this coming season and should see to it that the factory owners just get their running

expenses and nothing more. If this was done there was every chance of the All India Excise Duty being removed.

10. Under any circumstances it seems desirable not to apply this All India Excise Duty during this season at least.

11. I do not know what the commitments are about the Indian export of sugar. I understand that the Government of India have agreed that no Indian sugar should be exported. Why this should be so, I do not know, nor do I know what India got in exchange for this. I do not see why India should not export when and where it can.

I would suggest to you to consult, especially among the industrialists, Brij Mohan Birla, Lala Shriram[3] of Delhi and Ambalal Sarabhai. Each of these has a separate viewpoint, to some extent, in conflict with the others. Of course representatives of the cane-growers must be consulted and Katju and Mahmud who have dealt with this matter and are intimately acquainted with it.

I have just seen a press report about the new decision of the U.P. and Bihar Governments.[4]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. (1884-1964); industrialist.
4. On 4 August 1940, the governments of Bihar and United Provinces decided to restore statutory recognition of the Indian Sugar Syndicate and to set up a sugar commission to regulate the production, price, sale and distribution of sugar.

6. The Handicrafts of Kashmir[1]

For hundreds of years, Kashmir has not only been famous for her natural beauty but also for the skill of her craftsmen and artisans. In spite of this fame, however, these crafts withered away and cheap foreign machine-made goods took the place of the beautiful hand work of the Kashmiri workers. Some crafts continued in a small way for the benefit of tourists and the like, but there was no longer any nation-wide demand.

1. Extracts from a letter to the All India Spinners' Association, Kashmir. *The Hindustan Times*, 20 August 1940.

There was still some fine wood work, silver work and papier-mache, but the pride of Kashmir—the beautiful weaving and embroidery which produced the famous shawls and other woollen textiles—sickened almost to death.

The great national revival in India which began in 1920 had for one of its chief planks the encouragement of handicrafts and cottage industries, more especially those of hand spinning and hand weaving. Dying crafts woke up all over India, and the skilled fingers of her craftsmen and artisans, that had remained idle for so long, began to ply again and produce articles of beauty. The powerful wave of national revival reached Kashmir also and her dying crafts woke up. In the whole of India a demand arose for Kashmiri articles, and the market for them was no longer restricted to the tourists.

In this great work of putting new life into our crafts and cottage industries in Kashmir, as in the rest of India, the All India Spinners' Association has played a great part. The Kashmir branch of this Association is known all over India and the demand for its products can hardly be met, although production increases continuously.

I was glad, therefore, to visit the principal production centre and showroom of the Kashmir branch at Pampur, near Srinagar, and to see for myself how this work was carried on. I was impressed by what I saw and by the general efficiency that prevailed there.

The A.I.S.A., like every competent concern, must be run efficiently and on business lines. But it is no mere business concern and no individual profits by its dealings. It came into existence in answer to a national demand, and it can never forget this national outlook. All its activities must be governed by this. It was because of this that a system of minimum wage was introduced in all its branches so that every worker should have a living wage. This was not good business from a narrow profit-making point of view, for it raised the price of the manufactured articles. Nevertheless, it was essential if the objective of the A.I.S.A. is to hold. An attempt must, therefore, be continuously made to raise the wages of the craftsmen and workers.

This applies especially to Kashmir where wages are absurdly low, both relatively to the fine skilled work done and absolutely. I trust that this important aspect will always be borne in mind. I understand that something has already been done in this respect. More is needed as soon as this is possible.

It is the function of the A.I.S.A. to gain the goodwill of its workers and the public generally. The enterprise, though not cooperative in the technical sense, is essentially based on the cooperation of the workers and the public. It may easily be extended later on a cooperative basis; I

hope this will take place. Even now possibly some beginnings can be made on a small scale.

Kashmir is a wonderful place to do this work. Skilled human material is abundant and its reputation is world-wide. There is no reason whatsoever why Kashmir should not become a hive of industry and her present poverty-stricken aspect changed to one of plenty, and smiling happy faces take the place of the misery that one sees everywhere. That is, of course, a large question, involving fundamental political and economic issues. But the work that is being done by the A.I.S.A. in Kashmir helps in this change for the better in howsoever small a way, and deserves every encouragement from the public and the state government.

The A.I.S.A. should not confine its activities to the purely business side of production and sale. It must take interest in the human side of its workers and all those with whom it comes into contact in Kashmir. It could help them in many ways by doing village uplift work wherever its workers live. Literacy, sanitation, village organization, medical relief, the organization of small cooperatives, are the types of work that might be undertaken. This will give the proper background to its main function and connect it organically with the life of the people. I know that something of this kind has been attempted already. This might be extended.

During my recent visit to Liddarwat, I came into intimate touch with many *Gujar* families living in their primitive shelters in the higher valleys, and sometimes having no shelter at all. It seemed to me that something should be done urgently to help them. I do not know whether the Kashmir branch of the A.I.S.A. can help in the matter. It would please me greatly if it could do so. I wish every success to the Kashmir branch of the A.I.S.A.

7. In Gorakhpur[1]

Our vast province offers a variety of problems which are sometimes common to the whole province and sometimes peculiar to some areas. Gorakhpur district has a number of special problems affecting it. It is an enormous area, with a vast population. From many points of view, including that of population, it is about one-hundredth part of India. Probably the peasantry in this district are the poorest in our province.

1. *The Hindustan Times*, 13 October 1940.

For some time past two problems have specially affected Gorakhpur and its enormous population has been much excited by them. One of these is the position of scores of thousands of peasants who have suddenly been reduced to a state of utter insecurity. These peasants have been tilling their lands, sometimes for generations, but their names were not recorded in the *patwari's* papers. They paid a rent which was mutually agreed upon, but which was not recorded. Unfortunately, the new Tenancy Bill[2] did not say anything about such tenants. The result has been that the very purpose of the Tenancy Bill, that is to give security of tenure and a relief from the burden of too high rent, has been defeated in Gorakhpur, and possibly elsewhere. An effort was made by the Congress government to remedy this by a new inquiry. The matter affected, first of all, Maharajganj tehsil where a new settlement was being made. Shri Shibbanlal Saxena took enormous pains to get proper records made in this new settlement and to the extent of twenty or thirty thousand tenants he succeeded. But a vast number still remained. Since the resignation of the Congress government, the attitude of the district officials has changed completely and they appear to have supported the zamindars in regard to these unrecorded tenants. The land occupied by these tenants, which was a kind of fictitious *sir* land, has been treated as *sir* and tenants have been ejected in thousands. In many cases records have been made without the rent being fixed and so an opportunity has been given for a very unfair enhancement of the real rent paid so far, which is wholly against the spirit of the Tenancy Act. This has created a tremendous commotion in Maharajganj tehsil where scores of thousands of tenant families are affected and are being ejected. In many cases the tenants who have continued to till the land have been ejected when the harvest was due. It is said that the big zamindars gained the favour of the district officials by contributions to the war loan and recovered by this process of ejectment many times more than what they had paid to the war loan. Thus this is a very paying and profitable business for them.

But meanwhile vast numbers of the peasantry of Maharajganj are on the verge of despair and this human factor is dominating the scene. This same process is now taking place in Padrauna tehsil where also a new settlement is being made.

It is perfectly clear that this kind of thing cannot be allowed to continue or accepted as a final settlement. It is going to have the most serious consequences and it will be quite impossible for the tenants to bear this additional burden or to be expected to pay their rent, or, in

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 171.

some cases, petty holders of land their revenue. What they will do under the circumstances is a very serious matter for us to determine. But I am quite clear that they cannot submit to this gross injustice which will break them up. As for the new settlement that is being made, if it is based on the considerations referred to above, it will be just scrap paper which will have to be destroyed.

The second major question in Gorakhpur district is that of the sugar industry. This may be divided up into two parts—the position of the industry as a whole and the effect on the cane-growers specially, that is, a vast body of peasants. Gorakhpur is full of sugar mills and its fertile lands are covered with sugarcane cultivation.

Some time back, I issued a statement to the press drawing attention to the gravity of the situation in the sugar industry and the very serious consequences that might follow if a wise course was not pursued. It appeared then that matters were being left to chance and no effort was going to be made to plan and regulate. That was the way of unwisdom, an invitation to trouble. Since then the governments concerned have reverted to a policy of control and regulation. So far so good, but obviously everything depends on the nature of the steps taken and of the kind of control and regulation.

We all want the sugar industry in the U.P. and Bihar to survive and prosper, not only in the national interest, but also in the interest of vast numbers of cultivators who grow sugarcane. Anything that injures this industry will lead to untold misery in the countryside and all manner of upsets. If the cane-growers cannot sell their sugarcane crops, or cannot sell it to advantage, they will not be in a position to pay their rent or revenue, and forcible attempts to recover them will lead to conflict and agrarian trouble on a big scale. If this stage is reached, rents will have to be remitted.

If all these possible consequences are borne in mind, then it becomes clear that it is essential that this year's cane crop must be disposed of advantageously to the peasantry. That is the crux of the problem, although it is not the only aspect of it.

The cane-growers have been told to make *gur*. That is right, in so far as it goes, but it does not take us very far. If *gur* is made in large quantities, the price of *gur* is likely to fall and the money income will be small. Still, this must be encouraged.

The vast proportion of the sugarcane grown can only find an outlet through the factories. Here last year's huge surplus comes in the way. Nevertheless, arrangements must be made to prevent the sugarcane from remaining unused or from rotting away in the fields. Surplus or no surplus, it has got to be bought up, and bought up at a fair price.

This process cannot be carried out without balancing the economy of the sugar factories. They need not and should not look forward to profits this year; indeed, they should be prepared to suffer some loss. But the capacity to suffer loss is, after all, limited. Beyond that limit, it may break and end that factory. This is where the government comes in. By wise control and regulation, relief from governmental burdens, fixation of a minimum price under which the sugarcane should not be allowed to fall, help in disposing of the surplus of last year's stock, the government can tide over the crisis, without any substantial injury to the cane-growers or the factories.

The average sugar factory owner has not got a very bright record. He was intent on huge dividends and large profits, though often these profits were employed in extending the factory. The sugar industry grew up rapidly in the U.P. and Bihar without any planning or foresight and for a short while it prospered exceedingly and supplied almost the whole Indian demand. Other provinces then came into the field, without such regulation as had been imposed in the U.P. and Bihar, and began to come in the way of the U.P. and Bihar industry. No one can say that the sugar industry must be the monopoly of the U.P. and Bihar. Yet it is obvious that the right course is to have the same measure of control and regulation in the other provinces and states as in the U.P. and Bihar. Also that all growth of this industry anywhere in India must be carefully thought out and planned and not left to chance when there is already supposed to be over-production. An all-India planning and control are essential.

The present crisis is partly due to the fact that factory owners raised the price of sugar unduly soon after the war began in the expectation that the war would lead to an increased demand. They were mistaken and the war did not encourage movement of goods, except such as were intimately related to the prosecution of the war itself. The rate paid to the cane-growers went up with the price of sugar, and large stocks of sugar, manufactured at this rate, were left over.

The immediate problem is how to get rid of this surplus. As I have said, it would be wrong and dangerous to reduce production during the next season substantially because of this surplus. It would also be wrong to reduce the price of sugarcane below a certain minimum limit. If either of these courses is adopted, distress and trouble on a large scale will follow.

In the United States of America a similar problem arose in regard to various commodities in the early thirties, soon after Roosevelt became President. He tried to solve it by adopting various measures known as the New Deal. He did not wholly solve the problem, but he tided over

the crisis. I think we can learn from this New Deal and we can apply it with advantage to the sugar industry.

If sugar can be exported abroad, this would relieve the burden greatly. It was not easy to export last year's stocks as their cost price was high. But next season's sugar will be priced much lower and it should not be difficult to find a market for it abroad. If contracts were entered into now for next season's produce, at a reasonable price, it would be easy for the factories to work at full pressure and consume nearly all the sugarcane produced. This is a matter in which the government can help greatly, if it so chooses.

I should like to mention a third matter which is relatively not so important, but which is causing considerable excitement among the workers in the sugar factories in Gorakhpur. There was a strike in these factories about seven months ago. This was settled on the basis of no victimization and the factory owners and the District Magistrate of Gorakhpur pledged themselves to carry out this settlement. Shri Shibbanlal Saxena and others, on behalf of the workers, agreed to the settlement on this express condition. It appears, however, that in fact there has been a great deal of victimization and long lists of names were shown to me. In some cases, I am told, the workers were formally taken back, but many of them were dismissed soon after for some other alleged offence. This seems to me to be very unfair, after the straight pledge that was given. I hope the pledge will be kept and the workers will be reinstated.

6

INDIA AND CHINA

1. To Purshotamdas Thakurdas[1]

Allahabad
April 6, 1940

My dear Sir Purshotamdas,
Thank you for your letter of April 2nd. I realise the difficulties in the way of increasing our trade contacts with China at the present moment. Still I feel that our manufacturers and merchants might be more enterprising. However, I shall allow the matter to rest there till any further development takes place, or till I hear from the Chinese authorities.

I hope to meet you in Bombay when the N.P.C. meeting takes place on the 21st April.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. To Chu Chia-hwa[1]

Bombay
April 20, 1940

Dear Dr. Chu,
Thank you for your letter of the 11th November.[2] It is extraordinary that this should have only reached me four days ago, that is five months after you wrote it. I do not know why letters to and from China take such a great deal of time. It is difficult to keep up contacts when answers are delayed for months. In regard to several letters that I have sent to China in recent months, I have found that they take a very long time in getting through even when they are sent by air.

I am happy however to have heard from you and have noted your suggestions for closer Sino-Indian cooperation. As you know, I entirely agree with all the proposals that you have made. There may be some difficulty under present conditions to give effect to them. But I am prepared to do my best.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He had suggested that India and China exchange professors, students, publications, information and textiles.

The Buddhist mission[3] that you refer to visited India some months back and I was very happy to meet Rev. Tai Hsu, the leader of the mission, and his colleagues. This mission got a fine reception wherever they went in India and helped greatly in bringing China and India closer.

The war in Europe is having strong repercussions in India and I fear that this will come in the way of our doing much that we want to do. Apart from this, the situation in India is verging towards a crisis and I do not know when events may take a turn for the worse.

Some months back, the All India Women's Conference decided to send a mission to China. They wrote to China about this and also informed the Chinese Consul-General in Calcutta. They have had no reply yet and I fear it may be difficult for them to undertake a mission now for some time.

We are following with the deepest interest the situation in China and all our sympathy and goodwill are with you. I cannot forget the cordiality and hospitality which met me everywhere in China.[4] I am convinced that under your great leader, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, China will win through, and that India and China will draw closer to one another.

With my deep regards and good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 557 & 651.
4. Jawaharlal had visited China in 1939. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 73-114.

3. To Chu Chia-hwa[1]

Wardha
May 16, 1940

Dear Dr. Chu,

As Mr. Chen, the Chinese Vice-Consul in Bombay, is returning to China, I am sending this letter through him. In recent months it has been difficult to carry on correspondence with people in China. There have been very great delays and sometimes letters have not reached at all.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Probably the difficulties in the way of this correspondence will increase. I am taking this opportunity, therefore, to send you these few lines, to greet you and the great organisation that you represent. I wrote to you some time back acknowledging your letter and told you that we were perfectly willing to give effect to the various suggestions that you had made. But of course it must be realised that not much can be done under the war conditions of today. The situation in India also is very complex and difficult. Therefore, though we may not be able to keep such intimate contacts with China as we want, we shall always try to remain in touch and do what we can. Even if in the days to come we do not remain in frequent touch with each other I wish you to realise that we shall be thinking of you and of the friendship and cooperation of China and India. The world is changing rapidly and all of us have to face troubles and difficulties. But whatever the outcome of this may be, this friendship will, I trust, endure.

I shall be grateful to you if you will convey my deep regards and greetings to the Generalissimo.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Madame Chiang Kai-shek[1]

Allahabad
July 11, 1940

Dear Madame Chiang,

Your letter of April 29th[2] reached me in a far valley of Kashmir. I had stolen a few days from my work to go to this old homeland of mine. They were just a few days, barely two weeks, but during this brief period I managed to wander a lot and even climb a glacier. In Kashmir I was not far from Chinese territory and my thoughts often went to China and what was happening there. There was Tibet, not far from us, and Chinese Turkistan. But mighty mountains stood as barriers between us.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. She had proposed that Indian and Chinese manufacturers come to a "business-like" agreement and that economic missions be exchanged.

I have read your letter carefully and I hope that ultimately some permanent improvement will take place in the economic contacts between China and India. You can rest assured that so far as we are concerned we shall work to that end with all our might. But little can be expected *during these days of semi-world war. What will emerge out of all this* mess, it is difficult to say. But whatever happens I earnestly trust that India and China will hold together to their mutual advantage and the world's good.

British policy has been ominous lately so far as China is concerned and there is obviously the political motive to come to some terms with Japan. The Indo-Japanese trade talks have disturbed us, and even the Indian industrialists greatly, for they involve injury not only to Chinese but also to Indian interests.[3] We have given expression to our opinion in this matter. You must remember that on our side these talks are carried on by representatives of the British Government, and we have at present little say in the matter. But the time will come when we shall have a great deal to say.

We follow with deep interest the developments in China. Sometimes we can get Chungking on the radio and this brings China very near to us.

I hope you and the Generalissimo will look after yourselves well, for both of you mean much not only to China but to the whole of Asia.

With regards and all good wishes to you,

Very sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. See *ante*, section 1, item 34.

5. The Closing of the Burma-China Road[1]

The news about China is ominous. We were told recently that the British Government had agreed to close the Burma-China Road during the monsoons. We are now informed that this government are engaged in a peace move in the Far East.

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 16 July 1940. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 17 July 1940.

Peace is preferable to war. But one is forcibly reminded of Sir Walter Runciman's mission and attempts to secure peace in Czechoslovakia two years ago, which resulted in the betrayal and enslavement of that country.

England may be in a perilous condition today, and it is easy to understand that she does not want further entanglements. But betrayal of China will not bring her relief. It will have far-reaching consequences affecting American opinion as well as Indian opinion.

The policy of appeasement of an aggressor has proved to be disastrous in the past; it will not succeed now. It will expose still further the pretension that Britain fights for democracy, and confirm us in our resolve not to be a party to this. India and China are drawn close to one another, and they will hold together, for their interests are one.

6. To Madame Sun Yat-sen[1]

Allahabad
July 20, 1940

My dear Madame Sun,

Dr. Atal has arrived, and he has given me your kind messages and the beautiful photographs that you sent. I appreciate these very much and I was happy to have news of you.

The recent developments in regard to China have been distressing. We have been watching them carefully and so far as Indian opinion is concerned, I need not assure you that it is entirely with the people of China. We have made it perfectly clear. Events move rapidly in the world and no one knows what the next few months might bring. But whatever it may be, I hope that the people of India and the people of China will hold fast to their principles and ideals. I feel that in spite of the horror of the present day, we shall emerge as free peoples in a free world some time or other.

I wrote to you some time back that a women's delegation from India might go to China. There has been some delay in this, but now Madame Chiang has invited them to go in October next. I cannot say what will happen between now and October and whether this delegation will be able to go or not, but I hope still that it may be possible for it to go. I

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

should like nothing better than to see contacts developing between the women of India and China.

With my deep regards to you and all good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To Cheng Yin-fun[1]

September 10, 1940

Dear Mr. Cheng Yin-fun,[2]

Thank you for your letter of August 21st.[3] I was happy to have news from you and of China. Indeed China is very much in our thoughts and more and more people believe that China and India must pull together. We are having our own troubles here and we are on the verge of critical days. I am afraid British statesmanship is following here, as in China, a path of extreme unwisdom. Yet through all this error and tragedy, I trust that ultimately freedom will emerge.

I wish I could send you newspapers from here but it is difficult to do so under present war restrictions.

With all good wishes to you and to your cause, I am,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. Aerial Bombardment of China[1]

I have received the following cablegram from Mr. Yin Pao-yu,[2] Executive Secretary of the Chinese section of the International Peace Campaign :

> Greetings. Sympathy innocent sufferers and protest wanton aerial bombardment civilians in Europe and China. Chinese IPC invites world wide demonstration against bombardment innocent civilians mass meetings simultaneously October fifteenth throughout cities world. Concrete measures relief victims and prevention continuance savage practice. Your response cooperation India requested for success demonstration. Best wishes success in name justice humanity.

We in India are at present wrapped up in a grave crisis and we prepare resolutely to face the perils of the future. That crisis is not of India only but of the world. We have emphasised again the non-violent basis of our movement. And yet we are apt to take rather casually this quintessence of violence, brutality and inhumanity which aerial bombardment of cities is making us familiar with. A daily dose of horror dulls even sensitive minds. It is right therefore that our comrades in China should draw our attention to this savage practice which is reducing many a famous and historic city to ruin and exterminating in this process innocent men, women and children.

I commend this appeal from our friends and comrades in China to the Indian people, especially those who live in cities and I hope that they will join in protest and condemnation of this most inhuman and brutal practice. Aerial bombardment of civilians is bad whether it takes place in London, Berlin or Chungking. Of these three cities probably Chungking has suffered most of all. But though its houses lie in ruins burying the corpses of many of its citizens, the spirit of China shines forth still, unhurt, confident and resolute.

The world sinks daily and reaches new levels of degradation. I hope that the voice of India will be raised against this, and will join other voices the world over in condemnation of a practice which is the negation of all humanity and civilisation.

1. Statement to the press, 4 October 1940, J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. This seems to have been censored.
2. (b. 1908); acting director, China Branch, International Peace Campaign and Free World Association from 1940.

9. A New Road to China[1]

Recently there has been much controversy about the Yunan-Burma Road. The building of this road was a big achievement for the Chinese Government. So much depended upon it that they devoted all their energies, in the middle of a devastating war, to build the road and the railway which would give them access to Burma and thereby to the wider world. The road was built and the railway, from all accounts, is also nearly ready.

Suddenly the fortunes of war in Europe underwent a swift change and France fell. Immediately Japan succeeded in getting the road to China from Indo-China closed. Soon after the British Government continued its policy of appeasement to Japan by closing the Burma Road for three months. That act of appeasement did not bring satisfactory results to England, for immediately after it Englishmen were arrested and humiliated in Japan.

But appeasement of one country often leads to irritation of another. When this other country is the United States of America, the results are far-reaching. England could not afford to displease America and when the three months were over, the Burma Road was reopened.

This Burma Road has been helpful to China in her war. But it has had a far greater significance so far as we were concerned. It has brought China and India closer to one another. China for the first time for some generations began to look towards her western and south-western neighbours. Her outlook which had been governed so long by the treaty ports was changed by circumstances, and the hand of destiny began to link together again the fate of India and China. Burma, the old time *Suvarnabhumi,* was the golden link which joined China to India. So for us in India and for the people of China, this Yunan-Burma Road had great significance and it opened out long vistas of mutual contact and cooperation.

The question has often arisen why there should also not be a more direct route between China and India. The high mountains intervened and separated us. But the mountains are no longer barriers to the intercourse of human beings and the intellect of man has devised methods to overcome even these great sentinels of the north-east frontier of India.

We learn that it is proposed to develop a new route between China and India *via* Sadiya in Assam. The idea is to build a road on the

1. Allahabad, 28 October 1940. *National Herald,* 31 October 1940.

Chinese side connecting the railhead in eastern Assam with it. Also to have an air service to Sadiya and possibly beyond, to Calcutta. This would not only shorten the journey very greatly, it would also reduce the cost of transport for goods. Chittagong would be the natural port for this traffic, though perhaps Calcutta might also be used for this purpose.

If such a route was developed, there can be no doubt of the great advantages to Chittagong, Calcutta and Bengal. A large part of the huge traffic to China would begin to flow through Bengal.

In the event, ultimately, of a railway line being built up to Sadiya from the Chinese side it would result in connecting China with the Indian railway system and thus in the future possibly with the European-Asiatic railway system.

But apart from the commercial and other material advantages which such a route would bring to India, our interest in its development would be great for cultural and psychological reasons. India and China would then be in direct and intimate contact. The future points that way; the moving finger has written, and such contact and friendship must develop.

We welcome therefore this proposal to have a direct air and land route between China and India *via* Sadiya in Assam and we hope that it will bear early fruit.

10. A Distinguished Visitor[1]

The Eastern Group Conference[2] in Delhi has collected together a host of people of greater or less degree. Few of us are interested in this gathering or its objectives. Nor do we know much about the delegates who have come from various parts of the Empire of Britain. But one group of delegates is known to us and is very welcome in India. These are the delegates from our neighbour Ceylon.

In the revolution that is encompassing the world and is likely to bring about vast changes, it is desirable for us to come into touch with our

1. 28 October 1940. *National Herald*, 5 November 1940.
2. See *ante*, section 1, item 91.

friends in Ceylon. We hope that their visit here will lead to the removal of many misunderstandings.

A very distinguished visitor, not connected with the Eastern Group Conference, will also be soon coming to India. He is from China and he is a leading statesman and a noted scholar of that ancient land. His name is Tai Chi-tao. He is a Minister of the Government of the Republic of China and is the President of the Examination Yuan, which is an important group of departments of the government.

President Tai Chi-tao is due to arrive in Calcutta by air from Rangoon on or about November 3 and he intends to spend about six weeks in India. We can assure him, on behalf of the Indian people, of a very warm welcome for many reasons. He comes as a representative of a great people and of a country struggling with amazing heroism for her freedom. That in itself would make him welcome here. He comes as an eminent scholar, deeply interested in the cultural contacts between India and China during the past ages. We understand that he is particularly desirous of visiting the historical places connected with the Buddhist faith in India as well as other cultural centres of this vast country. He comes also on a mission of goodwill to this country and as a symbol of the growing friendship between India and China.

That friendship is very precious to us not only because of the thousands of golden links that have bound us in the past, but because of the future that beckons to both of us. The present is full of difficulty for all of us and none may avoid this sorrow and travail. But the future that is taking shape in death and disaster, will be a future in which India and China are bound to play a great part. This will be so not just because of the huge collections of human beings which inhabit these two countries, amounting to two-fifths or possibly nearly half of the entire population of the world. There is something much more than the weight of numbers involved in this, although numbers may not be ignored.

India and China have represented throughout the ages two distinct and deep-rooted civilisations and cultures, each very different from the other and yet with numerous common features. Like all ancient countries they have gathered round them all manner of debris in the form of old custom and tradition which hinder growth, but underneath this mess of useless material, there lies the pure gold that has kept them going for all these ages. Not all the degradation and the misfortunes that have befallen both India and China have melted this golden core which made them great in the past and which even today gives stature to them. In regard to China, as of India, it may well be said in the words of the poet Iqbal :

Yunan-o-Misr-o-Roma sab
mit gaye jahan se
ab tak magar hai baqi nam-o-
nishan hamara.
Kuchh bat hai ki hasti mitti
nahin hamari
Sadiyon raha hai dushman
daur-e-zaman hamara.[3]

For many years now, and more especially for the last three years and more, China has been going through the ordeal of fire. How can we measure the immeasurable suffering of the Chinese people invaded and attacked by an imperialist aggressor, bombed in their cities night after night and made to face all the horrors of modern war by a first-rate power? London has suffered greatly from bombing during the last two or three months. But what of Chungking that has had to face this bombing for years now, and yet lives. We cannot measure this suffering, nor can we measure the determination and epic courage which has faced these disasters and sufferings unmoved and unbent. In the magnificent story of the Chinese people from the dawn of history to today there are many glorious periods and fine deeds. But surely the past three years will stand out even in that great record.

These years have been years of swift transition from the past to the present and preparation for the future that is to come. The dross and the debris are being burnt away in the fire of a nation's suffering and the pure metal comes out. We in India have had our own share of trials and tribulations and are likely to have much more of it in the near future. So nations, who are slothful and who have sunk into subjection, are made again; so China and India are being rejuvenated.

Both of them have a great part to play in the future; so let both hold together and learn from each other. We welcome again President Tai Chi-tao to this ancient land and trust that his visit will bear rich fruit in bringing the two peoples nearer to each other.

3. Ancient Greece and Egypt and Rome have all vanished from the face of the earth. But our name and civilization still live on. There is something in us that makes our being indestructible, although for centuries the trends of the world have been against us.

7

NATIONAL HERALD

1. To Sri Prakasa[1]

Allahabad
July 9, 1940

My dear Prakasa,
... We have arrived at a stage when I do believe that with sufficient finances we can pull through. On the other hand the political situation marches to some kind of zero hour. The last resolution of the Working Committee and the situation itself are bringing matters to a head.[2] I think that the next three weeks or so should decide one way or the other. If it means continuing conflict, that conflict will be intensified. That will have its own effects on a paper like the *Herald.*

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. See *ante,* section 1, item 37.

2. To K. Rama Rao[1]

Allahabad
July 9, 1940

My dear Rama Rao,
I have just returned to Allahabad after an absence of nearly a month. During this period I have been completely cut off from the affairs of the *Herald* and have seldom seen a copy of it. I was so overburdened with other work and worry that I could do little for the *Herald.* Some news came to me of various difficulties and more especially of the very generous way in which the staff was cooperating to lessen these difficulties. I should like to express my deep appreciation to you, to Tholal[2] and to all members of the editorial staff as well as the staff of other departments for the way they have offered their whole-hearted cooperation at considerable sacrifice to themselves. Newspapers which can command this service and sacrifice from those who run it cannot go down.

1. National Herald Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Senior Assistant Editor of the *National Herald.*

We are very far from having got over our difficulties and there are serious obstacles to surmount. But there is a silver lining and it is possible that things may take a turn for the better before very long. I hope to go to Lucknow in the course of the next few days to meet you all.

The political situation seems to be coming to a head and the next three weeks will probably see a decision one way or the other. Present conditions cannot continue unchanged. Probably the Government of India will take some action in the way of reforming the government, which will put an end to any possibility of compromise on this issue. That inevitably will lead to greater conflict between the Congress and the government.

In Delhi yesterday I gave a long interview to *The Hindustan Times'* representative about the Working Committee resolution.[3] I wish I could have sent this to you separately but the interview was dictated. I do not know if the A.P. has sent any part of it out. I asked him to give it to the A.P. also. But the interview was long. I think it will be worth while for you to reproduce this full interview from *The Hindustan Times* stating it is from the *Times*.

I have not written for the *Herald* for a long time. I have not been in the mood to write, nor have I had the time. Possibly I shall write something in the course of the next few days.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. See *ante*, section 1, item 37.

3. To Raghunandan Saran[1]

Allahabad
July 18, 1940

My dear Nandan,

I am very sorry that you could not attend the directors' meeting. I hope you are better now and your mother is also recovering.

I gave you a letter for Jamnalalji's daughter. This was enclosed in the envelope I gave you. I hope you have sent this on to Jamnalalji.

We went carefully into the affairs of the *Herald* at Lucknow. The position though serious is undoubtedly better than it has been for some

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

time. I found a very good spirit prevailing among all the members of the staff—editorial, managerial and the press. They have all undergone considerable sacrifices and are bent on making a success of the *Herald*. This is really more important than the purely financial side and I feel very much heartened by it. There is a definite tendency for the circulation to go up and for more advertisements to come in. I expect that in a couple of months or so the circulation may reach ten thousand in spite of the reduction in pages. This itself means an addition to our income. But of course the main income must come from advertisements. I feel sure that an organized attempt to get the advertisements will lead to good results.

Meanwhile the position is that our monthly deficit on current expenses is between 1,500 and 2,000. It is hoped that this will come down by about a thousand within two or three months. This is not a true figure as at present the staff is taking very much reduced salaries and some not taking any salary at all. To get at the true figure about 1,500 should be added. But, at any rate, for another two months we shall carry on at the reduced figures. This does not include of course instalments. With luck, at the end of about three months from now our current loss should be less than 2,000 including everything and possibly even less.

We have had to meet an additional burden as we have started paying our staff every fortnight. This is more satisfactory from every point of view. But it means that we have to find a fortnight's expenses earlier.

Generally speaking, our debts apart, our position is good and we ought to be paying our way within six months. We really require a lakh of rupees to pay off a good portion of our debts and instalments and to cover deficits in the next few months. Even if we could get fifty thousand we could go a very long way. The best way to get this is to get a lump sum of 25 thousand or 30 thousand rupees and monthly contributions of between 4 and 5 thousand for six months. Katju has promised to give a thousand a month for the next six months.

I am sorry you could not agree to become managing director. I realise your difficulties, but we must have a change. We shall consider this matter again next month.

We met Gulabchand and had a talk with him. I do not know much about him and so we decided to leave the matter entirely to you to fix up with him. He is a man of energy, but apparently he has had nothing to do with newspapers so far. Anyway, it would be worth while trying him. But care should be taken that he does not come into conflict with the present running of the *Herald*. Sinha, functioning as manager, is doing fairly well and there is perfect coordination between the editorial and the managerial.

About Dharam Yash Dev I wrote to Kripalani and have had no answer yet. I think he will be useful but where exactly would you fit him in?

I am going to Bombay on the 22nd morning and from there to Poona. I shall have a talk with Jamnalalji and others.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To K. Rama Rao[1]

Wardha
August 23, 1940

Dear Rama Rao,

I have noticed in the *Herald* long letters protesting against the use of Urdu words in the All India Radio broadcasts. Considerable prominence is being given to them. I understand there was some editorial comment also on the subject. I did not myself see this. But the letters that I have read seem to me completely misconceived. While some objections can be taken here and there to a word, the actual objections raised to many words were perfectly ridiculous. The subject of language is a very difficult one, especially when an attempt is made to evolve a common language out of two different literary forms. But an attempt has to be made or else we continue to maintain these separate forms and thus begin to influence our daily life also. As a matter of fact the All India Radio has made many attempts to use the commoner words. They have consulted Maulana Azad on the subject also and possibly others. I have no doubt that they continue to use difficult words occasionally which could be replaced by better and simpler words. Opinions on this subject are bound to differ. But it is absurd to carry on any intensive propaganda on this subject as is being done by some people who write to the *Herald*. The question should be considered impartially and scientifically. I find that a demand has arisen that there should be two broadcasts—one in Urdu and one in Hindi. This is not only absurd but harmful. I should like you, therefore, to speak to the members of the editorial staff on this subject so that a proper balance may be preserved and the *Herald* should not be accused of participating in an agitation

1. National Herald Papers, N.M.M.L.

which has a communal tinge about it. Public opinion need not be suppressed but both sides of the question should be represented and you should not take sides. In any event this is not a matter deserving prominence.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. To M.N. Tholal[1]

September 10, 1940

My dear Tholal,
Your letter of September 7th which I showed to Maulana Azad. So far as the general principles are concerned, as laid down by you in your leading articles and other notes, there is no difference of opinion. I think also that there has been a strong tendency in the A.I.R. broadcasts to use rather difficult Persianised words. I think an attempt has been made in the recent past to improve in this direction. Bokhari has been consulting Maulana Azad among others about the use of many words. It is quite extraordinarily difficult to solve this question to the satisfaction of even impartial judges. The literary forms of Urdu and Hindi have diverged more and more. Still we have to develop the common spoken and later even a written language, though literary forms may still continue to be different.

I have not followed this controversy closely but I remember reading a letter in the *Herald* in which objection was taken to the use of certain words, many of which seemed to me common enough, and I have never read Persian, much less Arabic words. I suppose we have to go through this transitional period.

Personally, I think a living language should always throw open its doors to foreign words which can be assimilated. I see no harm whatever in Hindustani deliberately trying to assimilate English and French words, instead of producing archaic translations in Persian or Sanskrit.

Apart from the merits of the question, it has to be remembered that the prevailing atmosphere, especially in regard to language, is full of suspicion, and even a right approach sometimes leads to unfortunate

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

consequences. Hence the need to be careful lest we produce a reaction which is the reverse of what we want.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. Two Years of Storm and Stress[1]

Two years, an infant's age, and the *Herald* is but an infant as years go, but two years of storm and stress and the bitterness of frustration and war. All of us who have gone through this period of horror are aged today, whatever our years and the *Herald* has grown old too with the rest of us.

Two years ago, when the *Herald* was born, I was in Europe watching the betrayal of Czechoslovakia and the agony of Spain. Later I saw the bombs fall in China and in India travail of spirit and conflict and doubts in this mad and uncertain world. The *Herald* launched out hazardously on its stormy course and was tossed hither and thither. And more and more its fate was wrapped up with the larger happenings that govern our future. Today the *Herald* and we stand together on the edge of chance, ready once again to hazard our bark on the stormy seas which lead to an unknown future. But we are stout of heart and used to difficulty, and we face the dangers ahead with joy and confidence.

And so all good wishes to the *Herald* and may it always remain a true soldier in freedom's cause.

1. Message on the completion of two years by the *National Herald*. *National Herald*, 10 September 1940.

7. On the Government Order[1]

In view of the Order dated October 26, 1940 issued by the Government of India under rule 41 of the *Defence of India Rules*, a number of

1. Note for the editorial and managerial departments of the *National Herald*, Allahabad, 27 October 1940. National Herald Papers, N.M.M.L.

Directors of the Associated Journals Ltd. met in Allahabad on October 27, 1940 to consider the situation. The following Directors were present: Jawaharlal Nehru (Chairman), Kailas Nath Katju, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, Mohanlal Nehru and Raghunandan Saran.

2. It was decided that, in spite of the Government Order, the *National Herald* should be continued, but that certain changes be made. A note to this effect on behalf of the Directors should appear in the *Herald* in the issue dated October 29, 1940. A copy of this note is attached. This note should be given in the editorial column just under the Government Order.

3. In each subsequent issue of *Herald*, the Government Order should be reproduced in the editorial column. Below this should appear the following note daily:

> As the above Order of the Government of India prohibits newspapers from giving expression to India's attitude to the war and to many vital aspects of Congress policy, the Directors of the Associated Journals Limited have decided to discontinue leading articles and other editorial matter in the *National Herald*. They regret also that they will be unable to give important news in regard to Congress activities.

4. No leading articles or other editorial matter should appear until further notice.

5. Any message received from the censors or others, in the nature of war propaganda, should not be published. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish the presentation of news from propaganda. This cannot be helped. News has to be accepted and published even if this is presented in a one-sided and propagandist way. Speeches of the Viceroy or a governor, even if they are propagandist, should ordinarily be given, as they have news and a public value.

6. War loan advertisements must not be published.

7. Special articles on particular topics—Indian or foreign—should be published.

8. A special feature should be made of articles reproduced from the foreign press. These may deal in an objective way with the war also.

9. Any contravention of the Government Order mentioned above should be avoided.

10. The managerial and press departments should also keep in line with the above directions especially in regard to printing anything as job work.

11. In view of the changing situation and possibility of rapid developments, it is desirable that the editor should consult, whenever he considers necessary, the available directors, or the chairman if he can be reached.

Jawaharlal Nehru
Chairman

This is to appear in the *Dak* and morning edition of the *Herald* dated 29th October 1940. It should be given in the editorial column. The Government Order referred to should be given above it.

> The Directors of the Associated Journals Limited have given their careful consideration to the situation created by the directions issued by the Chief Censor at Delhi and the local censors to editors and publishers of newspapers, and, in particular, to the Order dated October 26, 1940 issued by the Government of India under rule 41 of the Defence of India Rules. This Order is a comprehensive invasion of the elementary and well-established rights of newspapers and a prohibition from giving publicity to facts and occurrences, as well as to opinions widely held in the country. The Directors have followed a policy of giving full publicity to all well-authenticated facts in the *National Herald*, regardless of their implications, as they have believed that it is the duty of a newspaper to give news fully and frankly to the public. In the editorial columns, the *Herald* has adhered to the policy of the Indian National Congress. The Directors as well as the editorial staff of the *Herald*, having faith in this policy, have endeavoured to serve the nation's cause by doing everything in their power to advance it through the columns of the *Herald*.
>
> The censorship regulations and the new Order of the Government of India, which has the force of law, make it impossible for the *Herald*, as for any other newspaper, to continue giving important news, in which the public is deeply interested, or to interpret the course of events or the mind of the people, without coming into conflict with the law as now framed. Such news does not relate to military movements, or any like matters, which may affect the fortunes of a campaign. To a censorship of any such news, the *Herald* has willingly agreed. But the new Order endeavours to suppress news and expressions of public or individual opinion in regard to war, and this may well be extended to include all news and opinions which the government of the day does not approve of. It is no doubt meant to include many vital Congress activities. No

independent newspaper or press can carry on its service of the public under such conditions, and it may well become a means of deluding the public by the suppression of vital information.

The Directors, after giving the most earnest thought to the new situation that has been created, have come to the conclusion that they should still endeavour to continue to serve the public through the *Herald,* although the opportunities of such service are strictly limited now. They are sure that the numerous readers of the *Herald,* and the vast number of sympathisers with the *Herald,* will appreciate their difficulties and will help them in overcoming them, in so far as this is possible.

As the *Herald* is prohibited from expressing its opinion regarding war policy in relation to India, and may not even discuss Congress policy, there will be no leading articles or other editorial matter in future. Special articles on particular topics will, however, appear from time to time. The *Herald* will give, as far as possible, a factual account of the war. Messages received from the censor's office or through other sources, meant as war propaganda, will not be published. War loan advertisements will also not be published.

The Directors crave the indulgence of the readers of the *Herald* and of the public, and seek their help and cooperation in this time of grave crisis when the fundamental and elementary liberties of the people are sought to be crushed. They hope and trust that with the goodwill of the public, whose cause it has endeavoured to serve, the *Herald* will continue its labours and its service in the cause of India's freedom.

8

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

1. To the Editor, Hindusthan Standard[1]

Allahabad
March 4, 1940

Dear Sir,
I have your letter of February 24th. I am sorry I am unable to send you special articles at present, as I am overburdened with work.

I should like to tell you, however, that I learnt with regret and amazement of the order served upon your newspaper by the Government of Bengal. I think this order, asking you to submit all editorial matter to the censor before publication, was highly objectionable and I am glad you did not submit to it. No self-respecting newspaper can accept such a pre-censorship of articles. This is a matter of importance not only to you but to the newspaper press in general in India as well as to the public at large.

I have today sent a long letter dealing with this and other questions, relating to the liberty of the press, to the President of the Journalists Association of India,[2] who had addressed an enquiry to me. I have asked him to release this letter to the press for publication and I trust that you will get it soon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Tushar Kanti Ghosh (b. 1899); founder of *Jugantar*, *Allahabad Patrika* and *Amrita*; Director, United News of India; editor, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

2. To Tushar Kanti Ghosh[1]

Allahabad
March 4, 1940

Dear Friend,
Your telegram reached me late as it missed me in Patna.

I am certainly of opinion that it was unfortunate and unwise for the B.P.C.C. Executive to pass a resolution boycotting the *Jugantar* newspaper.[2] I am not personally aware of the articles or other matters that

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. Published in *The Hindustan Times*, 12 March 1940.
2. The resolution was passed on 27 February 1940.

have been appearing in the *Jugantar* and can say nothing about them. But I am a strong believer in the freedom of the press and consider that the fullest latitude should be given to it to express opinions and criticise policies. This of course does not mean that any newspaper or individual should indulge in malicious attacks on anyone, or should indulge in the low type of journalism which has been a feature of some of our communal organs. But it is my firm belief that public life should be built up on the foundation of a free and independent press. I therefore regret greatly the attempt to boycott the *Jugantar*.

I should like to add that the recent order of the Bengal Government on the *Hindusthan Standard* to submit all editorial matter for censorship before publication, seems to me an amazing misuse of official authority. If this kind of thing is to be permitted, there will be a complete end of independent editorial writing in newspapers. Their leading articles will not be theirs, but the censor's, and nobody wants to read what the censor thinks about a particular matter. A government has every right to express its own opinion and to place it before the public directly as coming from it. But the indirect way of giving publicity to its own opinions through the editorial columns of newspapers, or of suppressing criticisms of its own actions, is something that has always been considered vitally wrong to the working of a newspaper. It is far better for a newspaper not to have any editorial matter than to submit to this degradation or surrender of its soul. I am glad that the *Hindusthan Standard* preferred this course and stopped giving editorial matter. Every journalist and newspaper man in India, as well as every person who is interested in the vital question of having a free press, must condemn the action taken by the Bengal Government in this matter.

I understand that the Bengal Government has also tried to suppress newspapers by asking securities from them. A recent case has been brought to my notice of the demand of the Bengal Government of security from the *Rozana Hind*, a nationalist Urdu daily of Calcutta. A security was taken from this paper and now again further securities have been demanded both from the *Daily Hind* and the *Weekly Hind*. Apparently one of the offences of these papers was to publish a bulletin issued by the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee. It may be that the Bengal Government does not agree with or disapproves of the views of the U.P.P.C.C. but I can say with confidence that this P.C.C. has issued no bulletin or pamphlet which any person can call, in the slightest degree, irresponsible. The U.P.P.C.C. speaks and writes with dignity and deals with problems impersonally. In regard to the communal problem especially it has always maintained a high level and has never sunk to the level of just controversy and criticism. If even the bulletins of the

U.P.P.C.C. are enough to upset the Bengal Government and to induce it to demand security from newspapers publishing them, it does not speak well for the Bengal Government.

Famous nationalist newspapers which have established their position are, to a large extent, able to look after themselves. Anything that happens to them draws public attention and public support. Smaller and less known papers often have to suffer from government interference because they are not so well-known. It is dangerous, however, to allow even the smallest and the weakest of our journals to fall a victim to official interference and suppression. For this habit grows with use and gradually the public mind gets accustomed to the misuse of its powers by the government. Therefore it is necessary for the Journalists Association, as well as for all newspapers, not to allow even such cases relating to the lesser known papers to go by default. If they are at all anxious to retain the liberty of the press, they must be vigilant guardians of this liberty and must resist every encroachment from wherever it might come. This is not a matter of political views or opinions. The moment we acquiesce in an attack on a newspaper with which we happen to disagree, we have surrendered in principle, and when the attack comes on us we have no power left to resist it.

The freedom of the press does not consist in our permitting such things as we like to appear. Even a tyrant is agreeable to this type of freedom. Civil liberty and freedom of the press consist in our permitting what we do not like, in our putting up with criticisms of ourselves, in our allowing public expression of views which seem to us even to be injurious to our cause itself. For it is always a dangerous thing to seek a temporary advantage at the cost of the larger good or of the final objective. If we set wrong standards and adopt wrong means, even in the belief that we are furthering a right cause, that cause itself will be affected and prejudiced by those standards and those means. The end in view will itself be governed partly by these standards and means and may ultimately become something entirely different from what we had envisaged.

If our aim is democracy and freedom, then we must keep that in view always in our work and our activities. If this work and activity is carried on in a way which is opposed to democracy and freedom, then surely the end will not be democracy and freedom but something different.

It is true that it is easy to lay down high principles which are logical and which sound well. It is more difficult to put them into practice. For life is not very logical and the standard of human behaviour is not as high as we should like it to be. We live in a jungle where, often

enough, predatory individuals and nations roam about at will and seek to injure society. Crises arise, like wars or struggles for national freedom, or class struggles which upset the normal course of events. It becomes very difficult then to adhere, in their entirety, to the high principles we lay down which presume a certain standard of human behaviour. During these crises or revolutionary times, it becomes necessary to reconsider, to some extent, the ordinary freedom of the individual or the group. Even so, it is a dangerous thing and likely to have bad consequences unless the greatest vigilance is exercised. Otherwise we succumb to the very evil we fight against.

When we talk of democracy and freedom as well as of civil liberties, we must always remember that they involve responsibility and discipline. Without discipline and responsibility in the individual or group, there is likely to be no true freedom. In the change-over from a state of subjection and denial of liberties to a free state, a certain tendency towards licence is perhaps inevitable. This is regrettable but it is not difficult to understand, for it is the reaction from long continued suppression. To some extent this should be tolerated, for to suppress it is to emphasize the very complex that produces it. Nevertheless we have all to be on our guard to prevent freedom from degenerating into licence and irresponsibility and indiscipline.

In India we have a magnificent record of tolerance. No country in the world, excepting China, has this record. While Europe and other countries were deluged in blood in wars of religion and in the attempt to suppress this opinion or that, India and China, with the assurance of millennia of culture behind them, opened their doors wide to ideas and religions from abroad. This tremendous background of toleration and culture is a precious inheritance for us.

Today passions are roused on other issues which affect us vitally. It is right that we should feel deeply about these issues, for on their outcome depends the future of our country and of the world. It is right that we should put all our strength in the advancement of the cause that we hold dear. But it is not right that we should give up or tone down the very principles which have been the glory of Indian civilisation in the past and which are, in a somewhat different sense, the foundations of democratic freedom. Above all we should try to combine freedom and civil liberty with discipline and responsibility.

As this letter of mine to you may be of interest to newspapers and the public, I would suggest to you to issue it to the press for publication.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. How India is Defended[1]

We have such a thing as the Defence of India Act and gradually it is spreading its tentacles. It is interesting to note how this Act functions and to understand the conception of the defence of India in the minds of our rulers.

Some time ago the Special Branch of the U.P. Police swooped down on the bookshop in Allahabad of Messrs Kitabistan and seized and carried off 1,779 copies of various books, several of them published by Kitabistan. These books dealt with socialism or Russia and three of them were by that well-known writer Ralph Fox, who died as a volunteer in the Spanish War.

On inquiry being made, the District Magistrate of Allahabad stated that some of the books that had come from London "were seized as contraband literature the import of which is prohibited under the Government of India notification No. 61 dated the 10th of September, 1932." The reason given was interesting. Obviously the books were not banned. Indeed they could not have been banned by that notification as they had not been written in 1932. What was banned then was a certain type of literature which was called "contraband literature." What this contraband literature is I do not know, nor have I come across any official specification of it. But from the type of books seized recently, apparently books dealing with socialism and Russia are considered contraband.

It is a remarkable phenomenon to ban a whole branch of literature, without any regard to the merits or demerits of books, simply because the subjects are not to the liking of the authorities. In practice a still more remarkable result is achieved, for the limbs of the law, who have to interpret and carry out the directions of the government, are usually entirely ignorant of all branches of literature and whose acquaintance with the empire of books is limited to a few thrillers and detective stories. It is bad enough to have any kind of censorship, but to have one's mental diet regulated by ignorant policemen and other ignoramuses is a refinement of torture for those who do not take pride in being "low-brows".

Another interesting point to be noted is that the notification is dated 1932, when the last Civil Disobedience movement was in full swing. We are back again from the point of view of government repression and

1. *National Herald*, 26 April 1940.

suppression of civil liberties to those palmy days. But how came these contraband books to be introduced into India? They came openly through the post or as parcels and successfully passed the customs barriers, in spite of the government notification. They were offered for sale and were in fact sold publicly by a hundred bookshops. Was the notification in abeyance all this time and has it since been revived? Or has some bright new person been put in charge recently of contraband literature and his ideas on the subject are more extensive and far-reaching than his predecessor's?

The District Magistrate of Allahabad further states that certain other books, which had been published by Kitabistan, contain matter which is prohibited by the U.P. Government notification dated January 19, 1940. This notification applies the Defence of India Rules and prohibits the printing or publishing of "any matter contained in any document the bringing of which into British India is for the time being prohibited under Section 19 of the Sea Customs Act, 1878."

What has been prohibited under Section 19 of the Sea Customs Act, I do not know. Certainly the framers of that Act of 1878 knew nothing of Soviet Russia and probably gave no thought to socialism or communism. We know, however, how this Act has been misused in the past by the government to stop books and periodicals from coming in. That was bad enough. But now its scope has been widened to cover all printing, publication, reproduction and sale of any book or periodical. Not, be it noted, of any book banned or specified, but a book belonging to a vague class which the government does not like or sometimes which the local policeman does not approve of.

These are extraordinary happenings, and in spite of the grave issues that confront the country, I should like to draw public attention to them. They are not only a very serious infringement of civil liberty, but they strike at the root of one of the most valued possessions and rights of human beings. As a politician I object to this kind of thing, as a democrat I protest vigorously, but as an author my whole soul rises in revolt against this invasion of the realms of thought by ignorant and tyrannical wielders of authority.

If socialism and Russia are contraband subjects then I am contraband too for I write frequently about them. Kitabistan have suffered a heavy loss by the seizure of many of their books by the police. They are my publishers also and they had better beware of publishing more of my stuff. For I propose to continue writing and speaking about socialism, and trying my utmost to have a socialist order established in India. I want some sanity in government and economic affairs, a little intelligence, social justice, and freedom for myself and my people.

4. The Newspaper Man, the Censor and the Public[1]

The life of a newspaper man is not an easy one. Trials and dangers beset him and he must walk warily. It is his business and his duty to give the news of the day as fully and truthfully as he can, and to comment upon it frankly and outspokenly but without malice for anyone. But his frankness and truthfulness will not save him if he oversteps the bounds of the law of libel. Nor will he escape if he comes anywhere within the purview of the other laws dealing especially with the press.

In India a popular newspaper must inevitably be a critic of official ways, and irresponsible officialdom does not like criticism. Whether the official in India has any conscience or not we do not know, but he has tender toes, and he has the power to punish those who may happen to tread on them. It is always a problem for a newspaper man how to deal with the civilian authorities of India, who, like the king, are not supposed to err.

This problem becomes infinitely more difficult when war comes and there is a marriage of convenience between the soldier and the I.C.S. man. The I.C.S. mentality is difficult to deal with, the military mentality is worse, a combination of the two is most difficult of all.

War inevitably brings certain restrictions. Troop movements, military dispositions and like arrangements have to be shrouded in mystery lest this information might help the enemy. Every journalist appreciates this and governs himself accordingly. But governments are not content with this and they claim the right to suppress all manner of other news and criticism, not realising that there is danger in this even from their own point of view. In England an attempt to introduce this hush-hush policy raised an outcry recently and the executive had to retrace its steps.

But France is the most flagrant example of the dangers of suppressing news and criticism. Before the fall of France, an authoritarian regime imposed a rigorous and all—embracing censorship, thereby not only suppressing legitimate criticism which might have helped, but also keeping the people almost entirely ignorant of developments. Nervous tension increased, wild rumours flew about and, when the shock of truth came, there was a total and amazing collapse.

These lessons, I suppose, like all other lessons, are of no use to the British authorities in India. And yet it is just where authoritarianism

1. *National Herald*, 24 October 1940.

prevails that these lessons must be learnt for there are no popular checks there, and the public easily believes everything that is said against the government. The wildest rumours find credence. That is after all the concern of the government and is not our responsibility. But as public men or journalists we cannot divest ourselves entirely of responsibility. We want the truth to be known, and we believe that though this might hurt occasionally, it is always safer and better in the long run.

The war censorship has been strict in India and, so far as the war is concerned, it has been accepted, though the manner of its application has been objected to and criticised. But this war censorship, and indeed the Defence of India Act, have been stretched to cover many other activities and a progressive suppression of news, other than the war news, has taken place. This has now suddenly jumped up to a pre-censorship of all news relating to Shri Vinoba's satyagraha or subsequent developments. And now comes the new Ordinance[2] embracing everything that the wit of man can think of, and either prohibiting its publication or making it liable to pre-censorship.

This has clearly nothing to do with the war, although it might casually mention the war. It deals with 'the public safety' and 'the maintenance of public order'—phrases which are dear to the British authorities in India and whose meaning we know to our cost. It includes satyagraha of course, but it embraces also every kind of public activity which might not be to the liking of our British rulers. This means the killing of all independent expression of news or views. That is a serious matter for the public; it is a still more serious matter for the journalist and the purveyor of news. Ultimately the authorities will find that it recoils upon them in a way they have not foreseen.

The journalist owes a responsibility to the public. He may not forget that he is in a sense a trustee and he must not abuse his trust. But when everything, or almost everything is pre-censored, where does he come in? Is he to function just as a mouthpiece of the censor or of the government of the day? It would be better for a government gazette to be issued giving only the news that the government wants the public to know, and not to give this news the disarming and deluding garb of a so-called independent newspaper.

I suppose we cannot convince the government of our viewpoint, not only about satyagraha but also about most other matters. We function in different spheres and think differently. Our objectives differ. But with the public we have a more intimate relationship and it distresses us to think that we might become the unfortunate agents for

2. See *ante*, section 1, item 95.

deluding this public. Ordinarily a journal would be responsible for the news it gives. That news today may be such that we are in no way responsible for it, for it has passed through the sieve of the censor. And yet the public may consider it the correct news or the news that we would have given in the ordinary course. We know for a fact that this misapprehension has been created in the mind of the public in regard to events connected with Shri Vinoba's satyagraha.

A straight way of dealing with this situation is to state clearly before each item of news, which has passed through the censor's hands, that it has been censored. But the censor is a shy person. He does not like to have his name mentioned or to appear before the public. He prefers to function in secret, seeking no reward for his labours from an ungenerous public. And so we are told that no mention of the censor should be made, no mention even of any suggestion or order from him, lest the public might be put out.

It is necessary therefore for the public to be warned. Let them remember that the long shadow of the censor darkens all the pages of Indian newspapers. Let them not think that the news we give is full or conveys a correct impression of any event. We shall try of course to do our duty by the public to the best of our ability. But the handcuffs and iron chains of censorship are on our wrists and feet. Let the public remember.

9

GENERAL

The war in Europe makes it difficult to keep up contacts and even the news that comes is terribly lop-sided. The censor is always there. But perhaps the worst development of all is the way people are swept away by the passions of the moment and cannot easily consider any question dispassionately. As far as I can make out something of this kind is happening in England and in India also we have to face the same reaction though it is on a different plane. Events are leading us almost inevitably to further crisis and conflict and I do not know what the outcome will be.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To Edward Thompson[1]

Allahabad
March 23, 1940

Dear Edward,

I have your letter of February 8th.[2]

It is exceedingly difficult to advise you about a visit to India. Indeed, it is presumptuous to advise anyone in this incalculable world. It is not merely the Mahatma who is incalculable but events also. Here in India, these events drift slowly but surely towards greater crisis and conflict, and I cannot say what the next two or three months will bring us. I would love to meet you again of course and I do think that there is plenty of scope for agricultural experts here. The present governments, central or provincial, are not going to do anything of note in regard to agriculture or anything else, and it is not easy for private enterprise to do much. What I am interested in however is to prepare the ground

for future activity when we have the chance to go ahead. We have tackled the Planning Committee's work with this objective. We have had and are having considerable difficulties. Are we to fit in our future plan of action on the existing economic structure or on something entirely different? It seems that we cannot go very far under existing conditions and we must therefore plan differently.

Much of course will depend on the agricultural expert and what his general outlook in regard to such problems is. If he wants just to tinker with the problem and improve it superficially only, then he will not do too much good. But if he is prepared and is competent to go deeper down, then he will be very useful. It should certainly be possible for him to meet a number of people, outside the University circle, who are keen and interested in agricultural progress. I can offer myself as one such person who is not a university wind bag and who possesses, I hope, intelligence and individuality.

Basic education has made considerable progress. I feel that this is the most solid and substantial and worthwhile achievement of the Congress governments. The more I watch it grow, the more I am impressed by it. It is still in the nature of an experiment but that experiment has abundantly justified itself during these few months or year. Many variations may have to be made but fundamentally the principles underlying it will I think hold. The Muslim League of course curses it as it curses everything which it is too stupid to understand. But it has taken root and even the present provincial governments, with all their ill will to the Congress, cannot easily uproot it. In different provinces, differing methods have been adopted. In the U.P. perhaps more attention has been paid to quantity rather than quality, which is a risky business. Still the results have been good. We have in this province now 6,000 basic schools or rather primary classes. The whole scheme depends ultimately on the training of competent teachers. The present lot of teachers have been selected from the old District Board and Municipal teachers, and have been given a hurried course. This was found to be not quite enough and the period is being increased now. Still they have done some good work.

Here in Allahabad, and many other places there are training colleges for graduates, who in their turn train teachers for the primary schools. These teachers have refresher courses from time to time.

One very noticeable feature of these schools is the fact that children like them tremendously. On no account are they prepared to go back to the old type of schools. Also children are encouraged in every way to develop their creative faculties. An attempt is made to give an artistic background to their education. Various crafts are used as the central

medium of instruction, but more and more it is found by practice that spinning is the easiest, cheapest and the most liked by the children.

If you come here, I should very much like you to study this basic scheme in various provinces where it is working. Some months back a Government of India expert, who has recently come from England, went to inspect these schools. He was full of dislike for the scheme to begin with, but was converted to it to a large extent. Burmese educationists have come here and have become enthusiastic about it and want to introduce it in Burma. One of the leading government educational officers in the U.P., a Muslim, had to take it up under the Congress government. He was not at all keen about it. Today he is possibly one of the most enthusiastic advocates of basic education in India.

Apart from the type and method of education, the school structures that are being evolved are full of interest. Previously a primary school building cost Rs. 5,000/- or so and had dark and cheerless rooms. It was no doubt a pukka brick affair. Now the new village school is started by opening one class in a very attractive-looking bamboo structure which is fairly substantial and which costs about Rs. 30/- to make. Additions are made to this as fresh classes are added and the average primary school costs altogether about a hundred to a hundred and fifty rupees.

You will notice that I am myself becoming quite enthusiastic about this basic scheme of education. Among so many depressing things in India, this at least is something that cheers one up.

Indira's progress in Switzerland has not been as rapid as I had hoped it would be, still she is making progress. As soon as she is well enough, I hope she will come back to India. There is no point in her staying on in Europe.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

4. To Syed Mahmud[1]

March 27, 1940

My dear Mahmud,

I have received your letter of the 23rd.[2] I am sorry you have been unwell and I am shocked to learn of the attitude of the local Muslim League in regard to the funeral of your mother-in-law. This is scandalous and I can well understand how your wife must be hurt by it. We are all hurt at the trend of events and the way the Muslim League is deliberately not only trying to sabotage the whole conception of Indian freedom, but also poisoning personal life and lowering the standard of public life. Yet I think that, bad as this is, it will bring about a natural reaction. Anyway we have to observe our own standards of behaviour.

We were all fairly well after Ramgarh, though tired. I was glad to spend a day visiting Bodh Gaya, Nalanda and Rajgir.

Tomorrow I am going into a volunteer camp on the outskirts of Allahabad. I shall stay there for about ten days. But I shall be in touch with Anand Bhawan.

With love,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He had written: "Here Muslim League people canvassed that nobody should take part in the burial of my mother-in-law as mine was a Congress family.... This is your country....Amongst the Mussalmans this is the greatest form of insult conceivable."

5. C.F. Andrews[1]

I have learnt with the deepest grief of Charlie Andrews' death.[2] Though his long illness had somewhat prepared us for this, nevertheless

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 5 April 1940. *The Hindustan Times*. 6 April 1940.
2. On 4 April 1940.

and art, the mythological origins of the Ganga might be referred to, that is, Ganga falling on the matted head of Shiva, the matted head apparently representing the Himalaya mountains. This, I suppose, could best be done by reproducing some of the well-known sculptures depicting it. There are many such.

Then certain famous historical scenes ought to be shown, for instance, the coming of the Aryans and their reaching the Ganga for the first time and their joy at seeing this majestic river. There are two famous lines of Sir Mohammad Iqbal in his song: *Sare Jahan se Achchha, Hindostan Hamara.*[2] These refer to the coming of the Aryans. It would be worth while bringing in these lines into the picture. These are:

> *Ai ab-e-rod-e Ganga wah din hai yad tujh ko*
> *Utara tere kinare jab karavan hamara.*[3]

In these days of Pakistan agitation, it is interesting to note what one of the leaders of the Muslim League said about this.

Then there are so many battles that have taken place round about the Ganga. The Greek invasion during the time of Chandra Gupta Maurya was stopped somewhere near the Ganga, possibly not far from Allahabad. It would be an excellent picture to show life in Chandra Gupta's time. Kannauj was a great city then, famous for its wares and especially its swords and steel weapons. References to Kannauj swords occur in accounts of Sohrab and Rustam, as well as, I think, in the *Shahnama*[4] describing Alexander's invasion.

Earlier than this the Ramayana and Mahabharata stories can be woven in. Later Ashoka's period with his great capital, Pataliputra, on the Ganga.

Indian literature is full of the Ganga and you find her name mentioned in songs in Burma and Indo-China and elsewhere. In Harsha's time the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang, describes the *Kumbha Mela* at Allahabad, which was even then an ancient festival. There are of course innumerable historical incidents that can be dealt with. The Gangetic valley, and more particularly the *Doaba*, that is the area between the Ganga and the Jamuna, is full of history and tradition and song. If you take the Jamuna, that very beautiful and gracious river, you get the whole of the Krishna legend round about Muttra and Brindavan and of the sweet songs in *Braj Bhasha.*

2. My country, this Hindustan, is the best in the world.
3. Oh! Waters of Ganga, do you remember the day when our caravans landed by your banks.
4. A Persian epic by Firdausi.

It is difficult to suggest a definite time for this survey. During winter the Ganga shrinks and is not much to look at in many places. The rainy season would be the proper time. But the big *melas* take place mostly during the winter. The biggest of them is the Allahabad *Kumbha* which takes place once in 12 years. You are fortunate that this *Kumbha* is taking place next year in January and February.

I do not know if you can reach Gangotri, the source of the Ganga. It is a difficult journey and may take you a fortnight from the railhead. Most of this journey will have to be done on horseback, as there are no cart roads. Possibly you might reduce it to a week if you ride hard. I have not been there myself, but two years ago, I followed the Ganga in the Garhwal mountains for a considerable distance and later flew to Badrinath by plane and saw the Ganga from the skies.

Hardwar and the neighbourhood, where the Ganga emerges from the hills, is of course important.

There is no particular difficulty about staying. Usually there are inspection houses or dak bungalows. In a place like Patna there are third-rate hotels also. But it is easy to make arrangements with friends.

I have just spent over a week in camping near the Jamuna and am becoming more and more attached to this river.

I hope you will not use the name 'Ganges'. I dislike it. 'Ganga' sounds infinitely better. I wonder how our forebears managed to change this good name into Ganges. A friend has suggested an explanation which sounds feasible. Ganges, he says, is a corruption of Gangaji.

Nan and Ranjit and I, all stay together in Anand Bhawan. So the address is the same. Nan is at present in Bombay.

Indira is progressing, but I wish the pace was faster. She is terribly keen on returning to India soon and I myself think that she should do so after another three months or so. But the doctors, I suppose, will have the last word.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

7. To Anne V. Paston[1]

April 8, 1940

Dear Friend,
Thank you for your letter of March 2nd which I have read with interest. You need not have worried yourself as to how to address me because the less formalities we have in such matters the better it is. 'Comrade' is as good a word as any and I do not see why the word should be a monopoly of orthodox Communists.

I have myself been very much influenced by the books of Karl Marx. They have helped me greatly to understand past history and current events. But I find difficulty in accepting many of the subsequent Communist developments. I feel that the fundamental outlook of Marx and his scientific method are invaluable. But there has been far too great a tendency latterly among Communists to consider that any means are good enough to secure the objective aimed at. I think this is a dangerous policy because the means themselves often change the objectives.

I am very glad to have your friendly letter of sympathy. I quite agree with you that our problems are essentially similar wherever we might live and the ultimate solution will affect us all.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

8. To J. Vijayatunga[1]

Allahabad
April 8, 1940

Dear Vijayatunga,[2]
Your letter of the 28th March. I am sorry I did not have a chance of having a talk with you at Ramgarh. Everything was upset by the storm and the rain.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Sinhalese journalist settled in India.

I am returning to you the three copies of *Horizon* which you gave me. I am afraid I can find no time for writing any articles for it at present. I should like to do so later on if I can manage it.

The three questions you put are curiously worded and I can hardly reply to them briefly. Indeed the way they are framed indicate a superficial knowledge of Indian problems and a somewhat doctrinal way of looking at them. A country progresses organically in many directions and if progress is prevented in any one important direction it pulls back others. It is wrong to say that economic problems cannot be tackled unless Swaraj comes. Much can be done even under present conditions. But it would be right to say that no effective or fundamental tackling of these problems can be done till there is political freedom. This will remove one great obstacle. But much depends then on the content of that freedom.

I think it is incorrect to say that India's economic condition is hopelessly rotten. India is backward, which is a very different thing. India's capitalism is fairly stable and growing. Agrarian conditions are certainly much more critical. But such conditions have a way of persisting for long periods.

(2) I did not know that Gandhiji stood for the inevitability of gradualness in the usual sense of the word. Political and even economic changes can certainly be brought about suddenly. But human changes are inevitably more gradual and unless human changes take place no ultimate political or economic change has a firm enough foundation. To desire a quick change is one thing, but to have the capacity to bring it about is another. In India it seems to me quite a possibility that a change might be in the direction of greater reaction and that an indigenous type of fascism might arise and control the situation. We have seen in Europe during the last few years the victory of reaction in most places in spite of organized and ideologically conscious leftists and advanced groups. In India the classes out of whom fascism emerges are relatively stronger than in many countries in Europe and any attempt to push them aside completely might lead to disaster.

Your third question is vague and I do not quite know what you are driving at. My own belief is that Indian civilisation and the fabric of her social life is far from delicate. Indeed it is tougher than almost any similar phenomenon elsewhere. It will stand many shakings up without going to pieces. It is true that modern conditions are weakening it and will ultimately displace it, though even then I think it will retain a good bit of its old background.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. To Jane Seymour Blomfield[1]

April 8, 1940

Dear Friend,
Thank you for your letter of February 15th[2] and for your sympathy and good wishes. I have read with great interest the quotation from a Russian author's letter to you. It is significant and I can well understand it. It is good to realise that there are so many people in different parts of the world aiming at a new order. Our problems are, after all, all linked up together and probably the solution will come for all of us.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. She had written that more and more responsible people were looking to a free India with her great leaders, to lift her vast masses into life and light.

10. To Traverse Clement[1]

April 24, 1940

Dear Comrade Clement,
Your letter of February 26th reached me yesterday,[2] April 23rd, that is 8 weeks after it was sent. Your National Convention must be over now and I am sorry that the delay in your letter reaching me has prevented me from sending our good wishes to you.

We, who stand for the independence of India, think of this independence in the larger context of world freedom and social justice. We welcome, therefore, all those abroad who are working to secure these ends. Personally, as a socialist, I am convinced that the new order that we seek can only be founded on the principles of socialism.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Traverse Clement, the secretary of the National Convention (held from 6 to 8 April 1940) of the Socialist Party of the United States, had written that the delegates would be extremely pleased to receive Jawaharlal's "comradely greetings."

11. To Richard J. Walsh[1]

April 27, 1940

Dear Mr. Walsh,

I sent you a brief letter yesterday in reply to your letter of March 4th. I did not deal in this with some of the points raised by you in your letter to Krishna Menon. I cannot fully deal with them till I see the actual corrected and abridged book that you have prepared. But I should like to make some observations in regard to what you have suggested.

1. As I wrote to you last year, it is not an easy matter for me to abridge the book considerably. It is of course possible to delete certain parts which had some importance at the time of writing but have no such importance now. Some other matter could also be profitably left out. Indeed I would have done so anyhow even apart from the question of abridgement. But the way I would have looked upon it was to make the book more compact and concise and not just to abridge it. However, at your suggestion, I agreed to a fairly considerable abridgement in principle. I have no idea yet how this has worked out in practice and how far it affects the organic character of the book. As far as is possible, I should accept such abridgement as you suggest.

I find that in spite of your desire to reduce the book to 1/3rd, you have not succeeded in reducing it by more than 1/4th. If you have partly failed in your endeavour, it is unlikely that I shall succeed in cutting it down still further. The value of the book, I suppose, is partly the detail that it gives sometimes as well as the psychological background of happenings in India. This value might grow less if the book became more factual with the details and musings left out.

2. I do not know how you have dealt with the part containing the agricultural situation in the United Provinces. Generally speaking I should say that this part, though dealing with what might be called a minor political detail, is important as it lays stress on the fundamental agrarian problem of India.

3. Most of the names and personalities discussed in the book are not known to American readers. And yet their elimination might take life out of the book. This would apply also to a discussion of the Indian Liberals, though probably there is some repetition in this.

4. The book tries to give a picture of how I thought and developed and what effect events produced upon me. It is a record of what I was

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

at the time. It is immaterial, therefore, as to what I might have become later and am now. I do not think that I have changed my opinions fundamentally since the book was written. But, even if I had done so, it would not affect the book itself, except that a final chapter might indicate a new approach or a slightly different viewpoint. I have not the book by me now, but I do not think that any references to Germany or Russia would require any vital change.

5. I should imagine that the epilogue should remain as it is though the postscript might be absorbed in the additional chapter that I write.[2] The epilogue has a certain importance and expresses my mood at the time of writing. I cannot capture that or repeat it in a chapter that is added. It seems to me that the best way to deal with the additional chapter is as a kind of an addendum, not affecting the book as previously written, but containing a brief survey of these past years and the effect they have had on me. From this point of view it might be worthwhile to keep the postscript also.

6. The preface can be rewritten if so desired.

7. It might be possible to add one or two appendices. For instance, a statement, made by the Congress in September last in regard to the war crisis, is important and might be given.

8. It will be a good idea to give a glossary of Indian terms. If you require any help in this, you can send me a list of the terms and their English equivalents will be given. The index should certainly be prepared at your end.

You will realise no doubt that postal communications now are exceedingly slow. In the case of a book or a manuscript, it is hardly possible to say how long it will take to reach. It may take months. I am merely pointing it out to you. I do not know how to get over the difficulty.

There is some slight chance of Mr. Krishna Menon going to America. If he goes there, this will facilitate your work greatly, as you can discuss the book with him in all its aspects.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. See *ante*, section 1, item 87.

12. To Agatha Harrison[1]

Bombay
May 4, 1940

Dear Agatha,
Your letter of the 19th April has reached me here in Bombay. I quite agree with what you say about Indu. She is going through a very difficult period of her life. None of us can be very much help to her. She will have to find her way out herself. All we can do, and that is very little, is to enable her to find herself. I have been terribly afraid of interfering in any way and thus adding to the difficulties of the situation. When she wrote to me that she was very anxious to come to India, I was put in a difficulty. To discourage her seemed to me wrong, to encourage her was also not very desirable. I was convinced in my mind that she had really no desire to come to India, but her affection for me and a wish to be of some help to me were forcing her to want a return to India. This was not a sufficient reason and it would have led to an intensification of the conflict within her. In a sense this conflict would have taken the shape of what she considered to be her duty, overriding her own clear wishes. I do not want her to have that conflict. She should come back to India not because of me but because of herself when she feels that way. I wish she could realise this and put away any sense of obligation from her. That in itself would relieve the tension in her mind.

Recent international developments have raised new questions and I cabled to Bhandari accordingly. I hope he has been able to go to Leysin. There is obviously a possibility of Indu not being able to stay on in Switzerland. What she should do then, it is for her and the doctors to decide. Many of our friends here grow excited and ask me to arrange for her immediate return to India. I am going to do no such thing.

About what I said in Rangoon soon after the war was declared, I am afraid I cannot easily get a copy.[2] It was a press interview and, as it happened, the interview was mutilated by the censor and only a part of it appeared in the press in India. Possibly a still smaller part went across to England. It was this mutilated edition of it that possibly gave wrong impressions. I kept nothing in writing about this interview with me. It was dictated. Possibly the Rangoon papers gave it in full.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 119.

Repeating it from memory, I said something to the following effect:

I began by saying that it would be improper for me to anticipate the decision of the Working Committee which was going to meet soon. In this vital matter, India should speak with one voice. Our general policy, however, had been repeatedly laid down by the Congress and the question now was how to apply it in the particular circumstances of the case. It was clear that the Congress was entirely opposed to aggression by one nation over another and it had condemned previous acts of aggression in Manchuria, Abyssinia, Spain and Czechoslovakia. The Congress therefore equally condemned the brutal aggression of Germany on Poland. Our sympathies must necessarily be with the victims of aggression and we hoped that the forces which stood for democracy and freedom would triumph. What India did was a matter for the Indian people to decide and we could not accept anyone else's decision in this respect. We were not out to bargain or to seek to take advantage of England's difficulty but whatever we must do would have to be in consonance with India's freedom and dignity.

What I said then was something to the above effect. There was and has been no question of my changing my attitude in the slightest after that interview was given. Subsequent events have led to a clarification of that attitude as the issues became clearer. As a matter of fact within three days of this interview I drafted the Working Committee resolution of September 14th which dealt with the matter much more fully. I had those identical ideas in my head at the time the interview was given in Rangoon.

If you can find a cutting of that interview, please remember that it had been mutilated and was not given in full. Even so, it appeared differently in different newspapers in India. For instance, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* gave a longer report than *The Statesman*.

I am here in Bombay in connection with the National Planning Committee. I am likely to remain here for another ten days.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

13. To Edward Thompson[1]

Allahabad
May 22, 1940

Dear Edward,
Your letter of May 2nd together with Spalding's letter. I am forwarding the letter to Gandhiji to him. I am also enclosing a copy of the hurried reply I have sent to Spalding.[2]

It is difficult to write when the world we have known seems to be disintegrating and dissolving. I am much troubled and distressed and more so because I feel how very helpless I am.

I am just going to the Frontier to see Abdul Ghaffar Khan and some other friends. From there I shall steal four or five days to have a peep at Kashmir. I do want to have this look at it before the onrush of events makes it impossible. It seems rather futile for the likes of you and me to discuss high problems as if we could influence them to any large extent.

It must be hard in England now and the strain from day to day must be terrible.

The prospect here is also most depressing. Still it is no good giving in and one must carry on.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, section 1, item 25.

14. The Role of Students in Politics[1]

In the address you have just presented it was said that Kashmiris are the most intelligent race of mankind in the world. Though it is admitted that the Kashmiris are an intelligent race, they cannot be more intelligent by drum beating their intelligence. I wonder if they deserve to be called the most intelligent race of mankind. During my tour of the world my experience is that every nation thinks that they are the only

1. Address to the Kashmir Students' Federation, Srinagar, 4 June 1940. *The Hindustan Times*, 6 June 1940.

deserving sons of God, while all others are barbarians. The Americans call their country as God's Own Country and the Japanese also profess their relationship to the skies. Similarly the England and the French think that they are the most cultured people all over the world. I think that those people who cannot attain freedom have no right to call themselves intelligent. While Kashmiris have good brains they are very backward in certain respects. It is not only the intellectual progress that counts, but progress should be all round to make them integrated human beings.

It is an admitted fact that during the last 20 years' struggle in our country the intellectual people have not taken sufficient part and the burden of it fell on the poor and ignorant peasants. Nobody is going to judge you from your intellectual capacity but you will be judged by your actions.

Questions are asked what part the students should play in the country. While you are students you are required to mould your brain in the right direction and get prepared for the huge task that awaits you. Again students ask whether or not they should take part in politics. In normal conditions my reply should have been in the negative, but India is now passing through abnormal conditions. Students in European countries do not ask such questions at present when they are confronted with revolutions. Students in India can also decide what part they can and have to play when they have to face a similar situation. The first duty of the students is to prepare themselves for the struggle ahead. The ideal before the students should be that they are members of the Republic of Youth and they should refuse to be shut up in water-tight compartments. They should keep religion out of politics. The last but not the least duty of the students is to wear khadi, the symbol of India's freedom.

15. To J.R.D. Tata[1]

Bombay
June 26, 1940

My dear Jehangir,[2]
I am looking forward to meeting you and Thelly on Friday evening. The world is changing very rapidly, too rapidly, and India will be inevitably

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Jehangir Ratanji Dadabhoy Tata (b. 1904); son of R.D. Tata; Chairman, Tata Industries Pvt. Ltd and Tata Iron & Steel Co. Ltd; Chairman, Air India International, 1948-78.

17. To W.E.B. Du Bois[1]

Allahabad
July 12, 1940

Dear Dr. Du Bois,[2]

It was a pleasure to have your letter of the 15th April. Before replying to you I waited for the copy of *Phylon* that you sent. This reached me a couple of days ago. I should very much like to write something for *Phylon* because I am greatly interested in the future of the American Negroes. But we are living in strange times at present and it is difficult to make any promise. Communications have become very slow and often letters do not reach at all. Very probably there will be a progressive deterioration in this in the near future. I am myself so tied up with many activities and responsibilities that I find it difficult to write. It may be that I might become physically incapacitated from writing before long. But if it is at all possible, I shall try to send you something for *Phylon*.

Many years ago, when I was a student in England, I came across one of your books, and I still remember the powerful impression it created on me. It has therefore been a pleasure to get into personal touch with you.

May I send you all my good wishes for the work you are doing and for the advancement of the Negroes of America.

Very sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868-1963); American educationist and writer; Editor-in-Chief, *Encyclopedia of the Negro*, 1933-45; Head of the Department of Sociology, Atlanta University, 1934-44; Editor, *Phylon*, 1940-44; leader of the 20th century black protest movement; advocate of pan-Africanism.

18. To Margaret W. Patterson[1]

Allahabad
July 13, 1940

Dear Mrs. Patterson,[2]
I received your letter some time back and read it with appreciation.[3] I can assure you that we do not ignore the aspect of the question that you have presented. But there are many other aspects also and it is a complicated world we live in. We try to hold fast to certain ideals and not to be swept away by momentary passion. We try also to think of Indian freedom in the context of world freedom.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Wife of R.P. Patterson, American jurist and Secretary of War, 1945-47.
3. She had written: "Of course there are things you want to change in India.... Can you say truly that these English have forced conditions on India which are worse than she might have had under your own rule?... You might now be in the position of Czechoslovakia or China... You have great influence with millions of people. When you advise them to put obstacles and worries in the way of harried England you may be misguiding them."

19. To Florence Garvin[1]

July 13, 1940

Dear Miss Garvin,
Thank you for your letter which I read with interest. The problems of today overlap each other and cannot be treated separately. They all hang together and I suppose we shall either all go down together or survive and make progress together.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

20. Mohan Lal Kashmiri[1]

Many years ago—it is so long ago that I have forgotten where and when it was, in England or in India—I came across two battered volumes, heavy with age, as I was indulging in the pleasant pastime of browsing in a bookshop. They had been published in the early forties of the nineteenth century in England and the title attracted me. They were the *Memoirs and Journal of Mohan Lal Kashmerian*. The title was attractive and even more so the picture of a remarkably handsome young man which was given as a frontispiece. Who was this very attractive young Indian, I wondered, hailing from my old homeland of Kashmir, who had ventured so far, and, what is more, written about his travels in the English language, so long ago? I had never heard of him. I was filled with excitement, as of a new discovery, and concluding my bargain with the keeper of the bookshop, hastened away with these volumes.

I read them and my interest and excitement grew. Here was a person full of the spirit of adventure, to whom adventure came in full measure before he was out of his boyhood. He did not shrink from it, but welcomed it, and wrote about it, so that others might share it a little with him. Danger and difficulty were his constant companions, and disasters sometimes overwhelmed his party. But he never seems to have lost his resourcefulness and his quick mind and soft tongue were equal to any occasion. He had an amazing aptitude for the ways and intrigues of diplomacy, and it is astonishing how he could win over even hardened opponents to his side. The British Power profited by Mohan Lal's ability fully. Often, as Mohan Lal admits sorrowfully, he gave definite pledges on behalf of the British authority, which were not subsequently kept.

In a free India a man like Mohan Lal would have risen to the topmost rungs of the political ladder. Under early British rule, whatever he might be or whatever he might do he could not rise higher than the position of a *Mir Munshi* or at most a Deputy Collector. After his first exciting fifteen years or so, his life seems to have become dull and empty. There was apparently no place or activity suitable for him in India, and he must have lived largely in the past when he was the honoured guest of the Rulers of Asia and Europe, or when he was a central figure in

1. Allahabad, 13 July 1940. Foreword to *Life and Work of Mohan Lal Kashmiri 1812-1877* by Hari Ram Gupta, published in 1943.

a stirring drama of life and death. Probably this very prominence that came to him early in life became an obstacle in later years. His superior British officers were jealous of his ability and of his contacts with sovereigns and others, who were beyond their reach. Mohan Lal's later years are pathetic and depressing. Accustoming himself to an expensive standard of living, he was continually in debt and sending appeals to the British authorities for help or compensation for the moneys spent by him during the Kabul campaigns. These appeals were rejected.

When I first read Mohan Lal's *Journal and Memoirs*, I was eager to know more about him. I managed to obtain his life of Dost Mohammed, but this did not help me much. I enquired from Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who is a repository of all manner of curious information and knowledge. Sir Tej Bahadur knew of Mohan Lal and his family but he could not enlighten me much. I was delighted to learn, therefore, from Dr. S.K. Datta that one of his students had undertaken to write a life of Mohan Lal. Shri Hari Ram Gupta has evidently taken great pains over this work and he has done something that was worth doing.

This book enables us to know something about a fascinating person. It gives us intimate and revealing glimpses of the early days of British rule in north India, of the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, of the British campaigns through Sind and in Afghanistan, of the disasters in Kabul, and of the prevailing conditions in Central Asia in the thirties of the nineteenth century. These glimpses are not flattering to the British.

For a student of history and of economic and social conditions, this book has importance. There is one thing, however, that I miss in it. There is very little about Mohan Lal as a man or about his personal life. That he was an adventurer there is no doubt, but he was something much more, and even his adventures have a high quality. Welcoming risk and danger, and facing death often enough, he was yet a lover of pleasure and the soft ways of life—a politician and scholar, with something of the poet and the artist in him, which peeps out continually from his *Memoirs and Travels*. In the middle of a narrative of political happenings and economic data, he begins to admire the charm of nature, or to describe the beauty of the women he saw in the market-place or drawing water from a village well.

I should like to know more about this unusual and attractive and much married man. I should like to know what happened to his daughter who was sent to England for her education. Perhaps now that attention is being directed to Mohan Lal by this book, more information will be forthcoming from various sources.

WITH ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN, KASHMIR, JUNE 1940

AT CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING, BOMBAY, AUGUST 1940

21. Kashmir[1]

Yea, in my mind these mountains rise,
Their perils dyed with evening's rose;
And still my ghost sits at my eyes
And thirsts for their untroubled snows.

Nearly six years ago I quoted these lines from Walter de la Mare as I sat in prison writing the story of my life and thinking of my last visit to Kashmir. In prison or outside, Kashmir haunted me, and, though many years had passed since I had set eyes on its valleys and mountains, I carried the impress of them on the tablets of my mind. I yearned to visit them again, and struggled against this yearning. Was I to leave my work that took all my time, play truant to it, to satisfy the hunger of my eyes and the desire of my heart?

But days passed and months and years, and life is short, and a fear gripped me with this passing of time. Age may have its advantages, and the Chinese, above all other people, have praised them. It gives, or should give, stability and equilibrium to the mind, a sense of poise, an appearance of wisdom, even a keener appreciation of beauty in all its forms. But age is stiff and crabbed and unimpressionable and reacts slowly to outside stimuli. It cannot be moulded easily; its emotional reactions are limited. It looks to comfort and security more than to the fine frenzy of enthusiasm. While it gives its sober and reasoned appreciation to the beauty of nature and art, it does not mirror this beauty in its eyes or feel it in its heart. It makes all the difference in the world whether one visits Italy, not fascist Italy, but the Italy of song and music and beautiful art, of Leonardo and Raphael and Michaelangelo, of Dante and Petrarch, in one's youth or in later years. Besides, what can age do to a mountain except sit and gaze in silent wonder?

So with the passing of time and the slow but irresistible coming of age over me, I began to grow afraid lest I might no longer be capable of experiencing that emotional reaction to the beauty of Kashmir when at last I went there again.

Friends in Kashmir invited me repeatedly to go there. Sheikh Abdullah pressed me again and again, and everyone who was of Kashmir reminded me that I too was a son of this noble land and owed a duty to it. I smiled at their insistence, for the urge within me was far greater than

1. Published in the *National Herald* in six parts between 24-31 July 1940. Reprinted as foreword in *Kashmir: Eden of the East* by S.N. Dhar, pp. 1-27.

any that they could have placed before me. Last year I made up my mind to go and, if it was possible, to take Gandhiji with me. But at the last moment fate willed otherwise and I hurried by air to the other end of India and across the sea to Lanka, and on my return I flew to China.

Meanwhile events marched on with amazing speed. War came in Europe and began to spread its tentacles to India. New problems arose, new difficulties, and I noticed with alarm that I was being caught more and more in the clutches of these events. Would the possibility of my visiting Kashmir again recede into the far distance? My mind rebelled against this fate, and even as the future of France hung in the balance, I went to the Frontier Province and on from there to Kashmir.

I took the route *via* Abbottabad and the Jhelum Valley, a pleasant route with the panorama of the valley slowly unfolding in all its charm and beauty. But perhaps it would have been better if I had gone *via* Jammu and over the Pir Panjal. This is dull going most of the way, but as one crosses the mountain and goes through a long tunnel the sight that meets the eye is overpowering in its magic beauty. Out of the darkness one comes into the light, and there, far below, lies the vale of Kashmir, like some wonderland of our dreams, encircled by high mountains that guard it jealously from intrusion.

I did not go this way, and my approach was more sober and the change was slower. But my mind was filled with the excitement of my return and it pleased me to be welcomed everywhere as a brother and a comrade, who, in spite of long absence, was still of Kashmir and was coming back to his old homeland. With joy I saw the reality of the pictures in my mind which I had treasured for long years. I emerged from the mountains and the narrow valley, down which the Jhelum roared and tumbled in youthful abandon, and the vale itself spread out before me. There were the famous poplars, slim and graceful sentinels, beckoning a welcome to you. There was the lordly *chenar* in all its majesty, with centuries of growth behind it. And there were the beautiful women and bonny children of Kashmir working in the fields.

We approached Srinagar, and there was cordial welcome and friendly faces greeted me everywhere. Up the river we went in a stately barge with numerous *shikaras* following, and the riverside steps and houses filled with cheering men and women and children. I was moved, as I have seldom been, by this affection that was showered upon me, and I became tongue-tied by the emotions that surged within me as the panorama of Srinagar passed by. Hari Parvat was in the background, and Shankaracharya or Takht-e-Suleiman loomed in the distance. I was in Kashmir.

I spent twelve days in Kashmir, and during this brief period we went some way up the Amarnath Valley and also up the Liddar Valley to the Kolahoi glacier. We visited the ancient temple at Martand and sat under the venerable *chenar* trees of Brijbehara, which had grown and spread during four hundred years of human history. We loitered in the Moghal gardens and lived for a while in their scented past. We drank the delightful water of Chasme Shahi and swam about in the Dal Lake. We saw the lovely handiwork of the gifted artisans of Kashmir. We attended numerous public functions, delivered speeches, and met people of all kinds.

I tried to give my mind to the activity of the moment, and perhaps, in a measure, succeeded. But my mind was largely elsewhere, and I went through my engagements and the day's programme, and functioned on the public stage, like one who is absorbed in some other undertaking or is on a secret errand whose object he cannot disclose. The loveliness of the land enthralled me and cast an enchantment all about me. I wandered about like one possessed and drunk with beauty, and the intoxication of it filled my mind.

Like some supremely beautiful woman, whose beauty is almost impersonal and above human desire, such was Kashmir in all its feminine beauty of river and valley and lake and graceful trees. And then another aspect of this magic beauty would come to view, a masculine one, of hard mountains and precipices, and snow-capped peaks and glaciers, and cruel and fierce torrents rushing down to the valleys below. It had a hundred faces and innumerable aspects, ever-changing, sometimes smiling, sometimes sad and full of sorrow. The mist would creep up from the Dal Lake and, like a transparent veil, give glimpses of what was behind. The clouds would throw out their arms to embrace a mountain-top, or creep down stealthily like children at play. I watched this ever-changing spectacle, and sometimes the sheer loveliness of it was overpowering and I felt almost faint. As I gazed at it, it seemed to me dream-like and unreal, like the hopes and desires that fill us and so seldom find fulfilment. It was like the face of the beloved that one sees in a dream and that fades away on awakening.

When I went to China I marvelled at the artistry and exquisite craftsmanship of the Chinese people. India has long been famous for her artisans and craftsmen, but China seemed to me to be definitely superior in this respect. In Kashmir I had the feeling that here was something which could equal China. How beautiful are the articles made by the deft fingers of Kashmir's workers! To look at them was a pleasure, to handle them a delight.

Kashmir has been famous for its shawls for hundreds of years. Yet in spite of this fame the making of these fine shawls languished and shoddy articles from Western factories took their place. That was the fate also of other fine hand-made articles of Kashmir. A limited tourist trade survived, but, generally speaking, the rich people of India preferred foreign goods to these things of beauty and artistic worth that Kashmir produced.

The national movement in India, which took a new turn twenty years ago, had far-reaching results in many fields. Our insistence on hand-made products gave a new life to these products, and many a dying industry was revived. Kashmir was affected by this renaissance also, and gradually a new market for Kashmiri goods sprang up in India. The All-India Spinners' Association played a leading part in this, and their Kashmir branch became the supplier of hundreds of sales-depots all over India. Yet the pace has been slow and might well have been quicker. This growth of handicrafts has brought work to many of the skilled unemployed, and points the way to prosperity.

But wages are low, and the contrast between the loveliness of the work done and the wages paid for this skill shames one. Kashmir, even more than the rest of India, is a land of contrasts. In this land, overladen with natural beauty and rich nature's gifts, stark poverty reigns and humanity is continually struggling for the barest of subsistences. The men and women of Kashmir are good to look at and pleasant to talk to. They are intelligent and clever with their hands. They have a rich and lovely country to live in. Why, then, should they be so terribly poor?

Again and again, as I was wrapped in pleasurable contemplation of Kashmir's beauty, I came back to hard earth with a shock when I saw this appalling poverty. Why should these people remain so miserably poor, I wondered, when nature had so abundantly endowed them? I do not know what the mineral or other natural resources of Kashmir are. I should imagine that the country is rich in them, and in any event a very full survey is one of the first steps that should be taken.

But even if no additional wealth was disclosed, the existing resources are enough to raise the standard of living considerably. Provided, of course, that they are properly utilized and coordinated and a planned scheme is drawn up. Cheap power is available and many small and big industries can be started. The field for the development of cottage industries and handicrafts is enormous. Then there is the tourist traffic, for which Kashmir is an ideal country. It can well become the playground, not only of India, but of Asia.

I do not personally fancy a country depending largely on tourist traffic. Such dependence is not good, and external causes may put a sudden

end to it. But there is no reason why tourist traffic should not be developed as a part of a general scheme of all-round development. There is at present a department but its activities appear to be strictly limited and of the flat, official variety. I could not even obtain simple guide-books of Kashmir. Some of the descriptive accounts of the routes to and in Kashmir were so badly got up and printed that it was painful to refer to them. Even now, possibly the only decent guides are those written a generation or more ago. The first job that the tourist department should take up is to produce cheap and simple guides and folders with full information about the various routes up or across valleys.

Kashmir is an ideal place for youth hostels such as have grown up all over Europe and America. The whole country should be dotted with these hostels, and young people, boys and girls, should be encouraged to tramp over the hills and valleys and thus gain an intimate knowledge of the country.

I have mentioned cheap power. On my way up the Jhelum Valley, I visited again the hydro-electric power works. More than twenty years had made no difference to them or increased their utility; much of the power produced was being wasted, and much that could be produced was not produced at all. These works symbolized for me the static condition of Kashmir.

For Kashmir has been singularly static. Srinagar city may have grown and there are more houses on the outskirts. New boulevards skirt the Dal Lake, and the Maharaja likes to build palaces. His new palace, a vast affair, looked chaste and attractive, unlike the usual palaces of ruling chiefs in florid and exuberant styles. But a few boulevards and palaces do not make much difference to a city or a country, and, apart from these minor changes, the aspect of Srinagar was not greatly changed.

I wish that some great architect would take charge of the planning and rebuilding of Srinagar, that the river fronts should be attacked first of all, that slums and poor men's houses should be removed and airy dwellings and avenues take their place, a proper drainage system introduced, and so much else done to convert Srinagar into a fairy city of dream-like beauty, through which runs the Vitastha and the many canals wind their way sluggishly with the *shikaras* plying on them and the houseboats clinging to the banks. This is no fancy picture, for fairyland lies all round it; the magic is there already, but unfortunately human hands and human folly have tried to cover it here and there. Still it peeps out through slum and dirt.

But if this planning is to be resorted to, the building of palaces for a few rich must be held up and the resources of the state applied to this

great work. There can be no planning with great vested interests consuming a great part of the wealth of the state and obstructing public progress. Nor can there be any such real planning when the standard of the people is very low, and poverty consumes them, and evil customs bar the way. We shall have to think differently and act rapidly if we are to achieve substantial results in our generation.

While Kashmir appeared so static and unchanging, one change pleased me greatly. This was the introduction of Basic Education in the state schools. I visited some of these schools and saw the happy children with bright and intelligent faces at work and at play. It is for this generation that we struggle and build, and it is well that some at least among them are learning rightly the business of life and developing in their early years an integrated personality and adaptable minds and hands. I hope that Basic Education will spread throughout Kashmir and bring into its fold every little boy and little girl.

I have written that Kashmir had a static appearance. Yet there was one major and fundamental change, which I sensed as soon as I set foot on its soil. I had heard of political awakening there, of the growth of a big organization, often of troubles and conflicts, of good happenings and bad. I had taken interest in all this and read about it, and sometimes discussed it with those most concerned. So I expected to see this change.

I have enough experience of mass movements, some sense of the crowd, a way of judging rapidly and almost intuitively the strength and depth of popular movements. A big crowd may welcome me, and yet to me it might convey no sense of power or of feelings deeply stirred; it might even have an air of artificiality, of groups of sightseers out on a holiday, to have a glimpse of a well-known personality. A much smaller crowd might produce a deeper impression on me and give me a glimpse of strange currents and powerful forces beneath the surface of the life of the people.

I try to be receptive, to tune myself to the inner mood of the masses, so that I can understand it and react to it. That understanding and reaction are necessary before I can try to impose my thought and will on them. So my mental temperature varies with the environment, and for a while I allow it full rein, before I pull myself up lest I go astray. Sometimes a contrary reaction is produced in me by some untoward event, which affects me far more then because of my receptive mood.

With this experience behind me, I set myself out to understand the inner significance of the popular movement in Kashmir. People came

to me to speak in praise of it or to criticize it, and I listened to them patiently and sometimes learned something from them. But my rod of measurement cared little for the incidents that seem to excite some people. I was not out to measure individuals, though to some extent that also had to be done, but to grasp what the mass of the people felt, what moved them, what they aimed at, though vaguely and semi-consciously, what strength they had developed, what capacity for united action.

I sensed that Kashmir was astir and the masses were on the move. That had been a common experience to me in many parts of India during the past twenty years. But it was an uncommon experience on that scale in an Indian state. There could be no doubt of the widespread awakening among the people, and of a growing feeling of self-reliance and strength. In this respect, in some ways, Kashmir seemed to be in advance. It was difficult to judge of the discipline and self-imposed restraint that accompanied this new-found strength. I think there was a measure of discipline also, though perhaps not so much as in the more politically developed parts of India. Perhaps, also, that idealism, which has been so marked a feature of the Indian nationalist movement, was not present to the same degree. The political awakening had not yet brought in its train that hard experience and close thinking which we had had elsewhere. That was natural, for the Kashmir movement was comparatively young, though even in its few years of life, it had gone through many an experience which had moulded it and given it shape.

Considering the brief life of this movement, I was surprised to find how vital and widespread it was, although I saw it during a period of quiescence. It had changed the face of Kashmir during these few years, and, if properly led and controlled, it held promise of great good for the country.

In its leadership it was fortunate, for Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was a real leader of the people, beloved of them, and with vision which looked ahead and did not lose itself in the petty conflicts of the moment. He was the founder and initiator of the movement. At first it began on communal lines and became entangled in many unfortunate occurrences. But Sheikh Abdullah pulled it out of these ruts and had the courage and statesmanship to steer it out of the narrow waters of communalism into the broad sea of nationalism. Dangers and difficulties still remain—which one of us is free from them?—and he will have to steer carefully and to overcome them.

It was a remarkable feat for any person to have brought about this political awakening among the poverty-stricken and helpless people of Kashmir. It was still more remarkable to check it from overflowing

into wrong channels, and to guide it with a strong hand along the right path. The difficulties were increased during the past three years by the growth of the communal spirit all over India, which inevitably had some effect on Kashmir also. Sheikh Abdullah performed these remarkable feats and rightly earned the title of *Sher-e-Kashmir*, by which he is popularly known. He did not, and he could not, get rid of all the ills—communal or other—that a popular movement suffers from. But the measure of his considerable success is obvious enough in Kashmir today.

This movement has so far affected Kashmir proper far more than Jammu province, which is partly allied to and affected by Punjab politics. In a sense Kashmir is a definite historical, cultural, and linguistic unit, and it was natural for a popular movement to spread there first without producing the same effect on Jammu. Kashmir proper has an overwhelmingly big proportion of Muslims in the population; there are about 95 per cent of them. If Jammu province is included, the Muslim proportion is reduced to about 75 per cent which is substantial enough.

The Hindus of Kashmir proper, chiefly Kashmiri Pandits, though only about 5 per cent, are an essential and integral part of the country, and many of their families have played a prominent part in Kashmir's history for a thousand years or more. Even today they play a significant part in the state services and administration. Essentially these Kashmiri Pandits are the middle-class intelligentsia. Intellectually they compare very favourably with any similar group in India. They do well in examinations and in the professions. A handful of them, who migrated south to other parts of northern India during the last two hundred years or so, have played an important part in public life and in the professions and services in India, out of all proportion to their small numbers.

A popular mass movement, especially in Kashmir proper with its 95 per cent Muslim population, was bound to be predominantly Muslim. Otherwise it would not be popular and would not affect the masses. It was also natural that the Hindu minority of 5 per cent should not view it with favour, both from the communal and the middle-class point of view. Certain unfortunate occurrences and communal riots in 1931 added to these fears and suspicions. The Kashmiri Pandits, though small in numbers, impelled by a desire for self-protection, started organizing themselves as a communal group. Since then the situation has certainly improved, and, though fear and suspicion remain to some extent, the feeling of hostility is much less. This has been brought about by a keener appreciation of the realities of the situation as well as by Sheikh Abdullah's consistent policy to give the popular movement a national basis. A number of Kashmiri Pandits, especially some bright young men, have definitely joined the National Conference. The great

majority, however, hold formally aloof, though in no hostile sense, and a definite attempt to have friendly and cooperative relations is visible. I am leaving out of consideration the activities or reactions of individuals, who do not make much difference when considering the various currents and group forces at play.

I imagine, though I have no definite data for this, that the development of the Congress movement and of the Khudai Khidmatgars in the North West Frontier Province had considerable influence on Kashmir during the last ten years. The two are neighbours and have many contacts, and yet the Afghans and the Kashmiris differ from each other markedly. It is surprising that such close neighbours, who have lived next to each other for nearly a thousand years, should differ so much physically, intellectually, culturally, and emotionally. But in spite of these differences there is much in common, and the political upheaval in the Frontier Province was bound to produce its reactions in Kashmir.

I was exceedingly fortunate, therefore, in having as my companion during the Kashmir visit Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who has been the cause of this political awakening in the Frontier and who symbolizes it so much in his own person. It was obvious that he was a favourite of the Kashmiris, as he has become of people in all parts of India. *Fakhr-e-Afghan*, or Badshah Khan, as he is popularly and affectionately known, was a delightful companion, though a hard taskmaster occasionally.

Both the Frontier Province and Kashmir adjoin the Punjab. Both complain that it is the communal spirit of the Punjab that creeps in and creates friction and trouble, otherwise there would be communal harmony. This complaint is especially bitter against certain sections of the Punjab press, both Muslim and Hindu owned, which spread out into these adjoining territories, which have no proper newspapers of their own. As a reaction against this press invasion from the Punjab, there is a tendency for Kashmir and the Frontier Province to hold together. These contacts are likely to grow, and I think they should grow, to the mutual advantage of both.

I addressed many great gatherings in Srinagar and outside, but I had gone to Kashmir more to learn and to understand than to teach. Two of the Srinagar meetings I addressed were held under the auspices of the National Conference, whose guest I was. Two others in Srinagar were held under the auspices of the Yuvak Sabha, the organization of the Kashmiri Pandits, and one of these meetings, held at my particular request, was specially meant for the *Panditains*.

I spoke at some length on the minority problem at the Yuvak Sabha meeting. I need not repeat what I said then, for it has been said often

enough, but I warned them not to fall into the trap into which minorities so easily fall. I spoke frankly and freely, for having been born in a Kashmiri Pandit family, I could take liberties with my own people.

While every individual and group deserved equal protection and help from the state, the idea of special safeguards for a minority group was full of peril for that group. For such safeguards led to dependence on extraneous help and weakened the group's spirit of self-reliance; the special privileges amounted, in effect, to little, but they created walls of prejudice which injured the group, and barriers which prevented growth.

Above all, they led to a narrowness of outlook and to isolation from national activities and the life-giving currents which moved the masses. At any time such safeguards and special protection were dangerous gifts to ask for or to receive. In the dynamic world of today, with vast revolutionary changes taking place before our eyes, it was folly of the first order to imagine that such safeguards or privileges could hold and protect. Only strength of mind and purpose and unity of action could give some protection.

Safeguards and special protection might, perhaps, be needed by a group which was very backward educationally and economically. They were in the nature of crutches for the lame and the halt. Why should those who were sound of mind and swift of foot require them? No one had ever accused the Kashmiri Pandits of lack of intelligence or of ability to adapt themselves to a changing environment. All that they should demand is a free and open field for talent and ability.

I pointed out to them what an outstanding part Kashmiris, both Hindu and Muslim, had played in the whole of India, although they were small in numbers. In public life, professions, services, in the states, in cultural activities, they had done remarkably well, without the least help or protection from anybody. Many of the Muslim Kashmiris are not known as Kashmiris, and so people do not appreciate this fact. But, as a matter of fact, Muslim Kashmiris are prominent in many walks of life in India. One famous name stands out above all others—that of the poet, Sir Mohammad Iqbal, who was a Sapru.

Kashmiri Pandits are more recognised in India as Kashmiris. They have done astonishingly well, although in numbers they are probably under five thousand outside Kashmir. I told my audience, with becoming modesty, that during the fifty-five years of the life of the Indian National Congress, for seven years Kashmiri Pandits had been presidents —a remarkable record for a handful of people who had migrated from Kashmir to the plains below.

The whole question of minorities and majorities in India is tied up with foreign and third-party rule. Eliminate that rule, and the basic

aspect of this question changes. That process of elimination is going on now.

So I spoke and I said much else, laying especial stress on the necessity for every group, if it was to count in the future, to throw its weight on the side of the masses, to join the national movement and draw strength and sustenance from it. No group or community which was continually shouting about itself, and demanding this and that special privilege or protection, would make much difference to the future that was being shaped. That future would be shaped without it.

The women's meeting was an extraordinary sight. It rained heavily throughout, and the meeting was held in the open. I had imagined that the meeting would be abandoned. But for hours before the time of the meeting thousands of women gathered and stood in the pouring rain, and when Badshah Khan and I got there these girls and young women and old women were standing in ankle-deep mud and water. I am partial to the women of Kashmir. They are beautiful and full of charm, and there was many a bright and intelligent face there in that eager audience. I spoke to them of women's problems, of what women had done and were doing in our national movement, of what their own kith and kin had done. And I urged them to rid themselves of the barriers of purdah, where such existed, an evil custom. The old orthodoxy must go, and the women of Kashmir, who were so eminently fitted in many ways, must play their part in the new India which we were all building together.

Wherever I went these women of Kashmir came to welcome me and to treat me as a brother or a son. It was a joy to meet them and to see the affection in their eyes. At Mattan, old Kashmiri ladies came to bless me and kiss me on the forehead, as a mother does to her son.

We spent three and a half days in Srinagar and then sought a week's respite in the higher valleys. The vale itself and the gardens and country round about Srinagar could have held me indefinitely, but I hungered for the mountains and the narrow paths over precipices and the glaciers. I wanted to crowd as much of experience and sensations as I could during these few days, to fill the storehouse of my memory with a picture gallery which I could visit at leisure when I chose to. Srinagar was also, inevitably, too full of engagements and interviews and meetings; it repeated too much the old pattern of my life. We went to Verinag and Achhbal, Anantnag or Islamabad, and Mattan or Martand. The weather was unkind and the rain pursued us, but this did not prevent crowds gathering to welcome us and often I had to say a few words to them in the pouring rain. I was tired and soaked to the skin when we

reached Pahalgam in the evening. Pahalgam had grown since I had seen it last many years ago, and was something much more now than a mere camping-ground.

The next day we went, again to the accompaniment of rain, to Chandanwari on the Amarnath road. We went on horseback and on foot. Some of our party did not like this trip because of the rain, and returned tired, bored, and exhausted. But I felt exhilarated by the beating of the rain on my face, and I loved to watch the rushing mountain torrent, whose winding course we followed. Leaving the party at Chandanwari, I went on some miles farther up with a friend. To my great regret, we could not go for lack of time, to the lovely mountain lake of Shishnag, which was the next stage on the journey to the cave of Amarnath.

We came back from Chandanwari to Pahalgam the same day, and early the next morning our caravan proceeded to Liddarwat following the course of the Liddar river. There was a midday halt at Aru, a lovely camping-ground, and then to Liddarwat and a well-earned rest. The weather had cleared and we scanned the skies hopefully and anxiously, for the next day we were to go to the Kolahoi glacier.

It turned out to be a fine, clear day, and it was well that it was so, for the going was bad, over rocks and boulders and across several small mountain streams. We reached the glacier at last and had our midday meal at its base. We then climbed up it for some distance, avoiding the pits and crevasses. We could not go far or stay long, as we had to hurry back to Liddarwat. But even that brief visit to the glacier was exhilarating and satisfied an old craving of mine.

The return journey was very tiring, and we reached our camp late in the evening. Badshah Khan was particularly exhausted, partly because he insisted on walking more than the others, who stuck to their hill ponies as much as they could. But whether he was tired or not, the pace of his walk did not slacken, his stride was no shorter, and those of us who tried to keep step with him panted in despair and were gradually left behind. To see his six feet two of Pathan manhood striding along those mountain paths was a sight which impressed itself very forcibly on me, and this is the picture of Khan Sahab that comes most often to my mind.

During this trip to the Kolahoi glacier there were a number of small accidents, and almost every member of our party had a fall from horseback or on the boulders, or on the glacier itself. I was one of the fortunate few who escaped.

The next day we decided to rest at Liddarwat; not quite, for we went on a tramp on the path which leads across the mountains to the Sind Valley. I wanted to go this way to visit Sonamarg on the other side, for

the valley where Sonamarg is situated is a miracle of beauty. But in order to get there we had to go over a high pass, which was not an easy matter at that time of the year. Our party was too big and the time at our disposal limited. This pass has the expressive name of Yamher —the ladder of death, or the ladder of Yama, the god of death. It is covered with slippery ice, which no doubt facilitates the passage to the other world.

So we gave up the idea of crossing over to the Sind Valley, but nevertheless we went a small part of the way and visited a number of *Gujar* encampments. Those *Gujars*, semi-nomads, come up to these higher valleys during the summer with their cattle, in search of grazing grounds. They build temporary shelters for themselves which could neither keep out the rain nor the cold wind. Sometimes they live under some overhanging rocks.

The *Gujars* were followed a little later in the summer by another tribe, the *Bherawalas,* who came with thousands of sheep and pushed the *Gujars* and their cattle away to higher regions. Then armies of sheep covered the whole valley and the hillside, and ultimately the *Gujars* had to take refuge almost at the foot of the glaciers, till they came down to the lower valley at the end of the summer. As we were returning from Liddarwat the next day we passed these armies of sheep on the march, going up and up in search of pasture.

We visited many of these *Gujar* shelters and, to my surprise, we were welcomed everywhere. Ordinarily these people do not take kindly to strangers, for the stranger and city dweller is to them a person who comes to exploit them. He buys their milk products cheap and sells city goods dear, and they are ever in his clutches because of debt. They are simple folk, not knowing reading or writing or arithmetic. They cannot keep accounts or check what the dealer from the city says to them. They are continually being cheated and exploited and live in extreme poverty.

But we were received in all friendship, probably because Sheikh Abdullah was with us and they had heard his name, possibly also because a good reputation had preceded us. In one of these shelters—about 30 feet by 20 feet—we enquired how many people lived there. No one knew; they could not count thus far, and, anyway, they had never bothered themselves about it. Then we proceeded on another line of enquiry. How many families lived there? There were six or seven families. We enquired from the head of each family about his wife and children. And so we arrived at a total figure of fifty-three or fifty-four for that one shelter! This was an unusually large shelter; others we visited were smaller.

We talked to these people and they spoke to us in a mixture of Hindustani and Punjabi. They were not Kashmiris and could hardly speak the Kashmiri language. They told us of their misery and poverty and of all their other difficulties. They invited us to break bread with them, and it was, perhaps, the best bread I have ever eaten. It was *makki-ki-roti,* and there was some kind of green *sag,* or vegetable, with it.

I do not know where the *Gujars* come from, to what racial stock they belong. But they were a fine-looking people, and their women-folk had striking, clean-cut features. Their children were attractive, and Badshah Khan used to gather them and play with them, for there is nothing he likes better than to have the little children of the poor about him. I remembered seeing him on many an occasion in the Frontier Province with a group of Pathan children clustering around him. His face was lighted up with affection for them, and the little ones looked with adoration on this Badshah Khan, who was their great big friend and leader.

The women of these *Gujars* looked one straight in the face, and there was little shyness or self-consciousness about them. In one shelter I was a little surprised when one of the ladies of the house came forward and, taking my hand, bade me welcome. She invited us to come inside and share their meal of bread and vegetable, which she had been cooking. That gesture of hers and her manner were so full of grace and self-assurance that I could well have imagined that some great lady was inviting me to her noble mansion.

Our visit to the *Gujar* shelters led to a minor crisis in our camp. Badshah Khan had a habit of filling his pockets with sweets and fruits to distribute these to the poor children we met on the road. His stock soon gave out when we met scores of children in the shelters. So he invited them to come to our camp.

On our return he sent for our camp cook and demanded that he produce all the foodstuffs he had, especially rice and flour and sugar. The cook was not very enthusiastic about this, and he returned with a small supply. Badshah Khan was not to be taken in, and he insisted on more. The cook pointed out that he had to feed a large party for another two days and he could not empty his limited stock. Our hosts also did not fancy the idea of having next to nothing left with us. But Badshah Khan insisted and said that anyway our party ate too much—which was perfectly true—and it would do us all a lot of good to have to put up with limited rations or even to starve for a day. There was no denying him, and the cook had to produce much more.

The next day we returned from Liddarwat to Pahalgam. For four or five days we had been completely cut off from news of the outside world,

just when mighty decisions were being made on the battlefields of northern France.[2] We got some belated news at Pahalgam and found how very grave the situation was.

After spending the night at Pahalgam, we motored to Srinagar. On the way we visited the ancient temple of Martand, and inside those massive and eloquent ruins local friends had made arrangements for sumptuous refreshments. Then to Anantnag, or Islamabad, and a big meeting, or rather two. Another gathering at Brijbehara under the spacious *chenar* trees. The platform where I stood was erected round the most ancient and majestic of these noble trees, with a girth of 55 feet at the base. It was about four hundred years old, we were told, and the course of this long span of history passed rapidly before me as I stood under its cool shelter. What strange happenings and revolutions and human follies it had witnessed during these centuries! While men had come and gone, living their brief lives of joy and sorrow, and generation had followed generation, this king of trees had stood, surveying the human scene, unmoved and unperturbed.

Back to Srinagar. Packing and leave-taking, a party at the Amar Singh Club, where I met many old friends, and a final public meeting to bid good-bye to the people of Srinagar.

The next morning we left Srinagar and sped towards Jammu. The road left the valley and mounted up the Pir Panjal. As we went higher, the panorama spread out before us and broader vistas came into view. We stood near the mouth of the tunnel and had a last look at the valley below. There lay the vale of Kashmir, so famous in song and history, in its incomparable loveliness. A thin mist covered part of it, and a soft light toned down the hard edges of the picture. Above the clouds rose snow-capped peaks, and down from the valley below came the faint and distant sound of running water. We bade a silent farewell and, turning away with regret, entered the dark tunnel which took us to less favoured lands.

The night we spent at Kud on the Jammu road and met some friends there. The next morning to Jammu and the heat of the plains. Jammu gave us a great reception and an exhausting one, for the sun was hot in the daytime. Processions, interviews, engagements, and finally a great meeting at night. This meeting was held in an old dried-up tank with steps all round, and this amphitheatre made a perfect setting for

2. The first fortnight of June 1940 witnessed the defeat of the Allied forces in France. The French Government left Paris on 10 June and Paris fell on 14 June 1940.

a big gathering. I was particularly pleased to see thousands of women at this meeting.

Badshah Khan left us that evening for Peshawar, but Sheikh Abdullah and some other friends from Kashmir accompanied us up to Lahore. The next morning we left by automobile for Lahore, but there was business still on the way. At Sialkot there was a huge gathering, also in an old dried-up tank as in Jammu, and at Wazirabad another big public meeting.

And so to Lahore and new problems and difficulties. Here I left Sheikh Abdullah and other Kashmir friends who had been such close companions during the past fourteen days. They had overwhelmed us with their hospitality, and this companionship and comradeship had made us know and understand each other a little better.

Twelve days in Kashmir, twelve days after three-and-twenty years! Yet one vital moment is worth more than years of stagnation and vegetation, and to spend twelve days in Kashmir was good fortune indeed. But Kashmir calls back, its pull is stronger than ever, it whispers its fairy magic to the ears, and its memory disturbs the mind. How can they who have fallen under its spell release themselves from this enchantment?

22. To Surendraray Bapubhal Mehd[1]

Allahabad
August 4, 1940

Dear Mr. Mehd,

I was glad to meet you and to learn from you of how conditions stood in South Africa. I have already given to you my opinion as to what should be done. Mahatma Gandhi is the best person to advise. So far as I can see our countrymen there should never accept anything in the nature of segregation or lowering of national or racial status. Quite apart from the question of the treatment of Indians in South Africa, India stands for complete racial and national equality in the world and we are going to press for it at every stage in the future. That is one of the basic principles on which we must stand and we cannot agree, even for a temporary advantage, to give that up. If that is our world position, much more must that be so within the ambit of the British Empire. Indeed that is one of the reasons why we cannot associate ourselves with a group of nations which enforces racial injustice.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Therefore, I hope that our countrymen in South Africa will never agree to any such humiliation of themselves and their home country. What they should do is another matter and in regard to that they must be the judges. They will realise of course that under present conditions we in India cannot give them any direct assistance. The burden of any struggle must necessarily be borne by them. At the same time our own struggle for freedom will be of great indirect help to them.

Whether they are strong enough for a struggle or not, it is for them to decide. But in any event they cannot morally submit to wrong doing. In the world of conflict today they must, like all of us, be ready to face any consequences. Those who submit to evil today will not have much of a tomorrow.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

23. To Richard J. Walsh[1]

Allahabad
August 5, 1940

Dear Mr. Walsh,

In answer to your cable I have already informed you that I hope to send you the concluding chapter for my *Autobiography* by the middle of August. I have returned to Allahabad for a few days and, though I have many other things to attend to, I shall now take this matter in hand. I cannot say exactly when I shall be able to finish the chapter as I have to put up with many interruptions in my work. But I shall try to send it as soon as possible. It will be sent by Clipper air mail.

It is unfortunate that I have not been able to see the abridged edition of the *Autobiography*. But under the circumstances this could not be helped. In one of your letters you suggested that the Epilogue and the Postscript, or perhaps the latter only, might be left out, as a new concluding chapter is being added. I do not think this would be desirable. I think both of them should be left where they are and the concluding chapter, which I intend heading *Five Years Later*, should follow them.

1. J.N. Papers, NMML

You have also suggested that some further appendices might be added. At present there are three and I think they might well remain as they have a certain importance and relevance. I suggest that two more appendices might be added. These are: the Congress Working Committee's statement[2] dated September 14th 1939 on the war crisis and an article on myself written by me anonymously two and a half years ago. The former is a very important document which explains the Congress policy. It has been given as an appendix in my new book that I sent you —*China, Spain and the War*. I do not know if you received this book. In any event I am enclosing a copy of this statement with this letter.

My anonymous article, copy of which I also enclose, is likely to interest readers. I wrote it to amuse myself and to watch other people's reactions. It remained more or less of a secret till John Gunther referred to it in his book *Inside Asia*.

As for the name of the book, I leave it to you. If possible, you can consult Mr. V.K. Krishna Menon. The title should certainly be attractive, but I do not particularly fancy anything dramatic.

I have already sent you a number of photographs from which you can choose.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 122-138.

24. To Amrit Kaur[1]

August 6, 1940

My dear Amrit,

One of your early letters reached me after I had replied to the later ones. It had just missed me in Allahabad.

I am now able to communicate with Indu by letter. I have not so far heard from her but she has cabled to me that she is writing. She is doing well.

I have not read Laski's essay[2] but I have got the book and I shall try to find the time to read it.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. *The danger of being a gentleman.*

I received Percival Spear's pamphlet and read it.[8] The basic idea seems to me that there should be two chambers in the Centre—one democratically elected without any special representation of different communities, the other a communal chamber where there is more or less equal representation of different communities. Some such proposal has been made previously. I think that there is much in it and it might provide the basis for an equitable arrangement. There are difficulties but they could be avoided. The proposal is not unlike the Russian constitution in theory. In Russia they have or had two Chambers at the top, one of which is called the Council of Nationalities where each nationality has the same representation as another.

What is likely to happen is that either there will be conflict between the two chambers or, what is more likely, the democratic chamber will have a dominating voice.

Events seem to be marching rapidly in India and it seems to me a matter of weeks, and possibly days, before odd things happen.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

3. *Communal harmony.*

25. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
August 9, 1940

My dear Krishna,

I have just sent you separately the additional chapter for the American edition of the *Autobiography*. This has been sent to Walsh by air mail as well as by ordinary mail. Presumably it will reach him much earlier than this letter reaches you. Nevertheless you might find out from him if he has got it, and, if not, supply him with it.

About the Drummond volume, I have already sent you a large amount of new material. This was sent in two batches—on March 25th and April 9th. Further I sent you the new book *China, Spain and the War* published by Kitabistan in March 1940. I presume you received all these,

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

though I do not remember getting any acknowledgements. All these taken together practically exhaust my writings subsequent to *Eighteen Months*. I should have imagined that this gave you more than enough material to choose from.

Since April last I have not written very much—a few odd articles and a small series on Kashmir. I am enclosing some of those for you to choose from. I am afraid I cannot write anything specially to fill in the gap of 50 pages that you mention. The next few weeks are going to be very busy ones for me and will not permit me to write anything at all. So please do not expect anything more from me. Of course if I write anything I shall send it to you.

As regards my writings on the communal question, it is perfectly true that they date. It is difficult for me to judge whether they will fit in with your book or not, as this depends on the nature of selection made. I have just been glancing through the articles reprinted in *Eighteen Months*. They are out of date certainly, and yet there is much in them that might interest people. I leave this matter entirely to your discretion. Keep anything you like or push it out.

Drummond wrote to me some time back and sent me the *Foreign Affairs* article on the *Unity of India*. He wanted me to add to it. I find great difficulty in adding to an article previously written or in changing it materially. It is easier to write a new article. So I left it at that.

I am cabling to you today on this subject of Drummond's book.[2]

It is difficult to say much about the political situation. It is patent that the British Government's declaration, made through the Viceroy, is not worthy even of being looked at.[3] In some ways it is a going back on what the Viceroy himself had hinted at. It is a clear indication that the government wishes to have nothing to do with Congress. There is only one way that we can react to it. I suppose the Working Committee will meet fairly soon. The situation seems to indicate rapid developments.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

2. Not printed.
3. See *ante*, section 1, items 56 & 58.

26. To Krishna Hutheesing[1]

Wardha
19.8.40

Darling Betty,

Thank you for the *rakhi*. It was very welcome.

So you were nervous because I went to Bombay in uniform! My dear, do not let the atmosphere of Bombay affect your nerves so. We function differently in the north. *Poor and proud business.* The going in uniform had no particular importance. What is far more important is that 800 uniformed volunteers went through their entire programme as arranged regardless of the government orders. You should have seen our procession. It was worth it. Zero hour will suddenly descend upon us one of these fine or rainy days. We might as well be prepared for it and take it in the proper spirit. It is no good grousing.

Give Kay[2] my love and tell her not to be too credulous, nor too dispirited. Yesterday was bad, today is worse, but

> We have tomorrow
> Bright before us
> Like a flame.

Or so some of us imagine, and it is good to imagine and dream or life would become too hard and barren in this hard world.

I do not know where I shall go from here. Nor do I know how long I shall have to stay here. Work in the U.P. calls and I may return there. When the mind is rushing along it is difficult to keep still or to lounge about. But I may also go to Bombay from here.

Love,

Jawahar

1. *Nehru's Letters to His Sister,* (London, 1963), pp. 63-64.
2. Wife of Robert Stimson, who was at that time editor of *The Times of India,* Bombay.

27. To Constancia de la Mora[1]

September 10, 1940

Dear Friend,[2]

Many months ago I received a postcard from you. I wanted to reply to it, but did not know where to write. Last week I was in Bombay and I saw your book—*In Place of Splendour*—in my sister's house there. I hastened to get a copy for myself and my long twenty-four hour railway journey from Bombay to Allahabad was occupied in reading it.

It was not necessary for me to read a book to remind me of the heroic and tragic events of the Spanish War. These are imprinted in my mind, and few things that I have experienced in the course of a life full of unusual happenings, have affected me so much. But to read your book was to see these pictures vividly again and to feel intensely all the courage and endurance and sorrow that lay behind them. Your book is great and one is not likely to forget the reading of it, or the brave and fine personality that glows through it. How well I remember our brief meeting in Barcelona. You were one of the first persons I met there, and so, to begin with, I judged of Republican Spain from you. That high opinion that I formed then endured and was strengthened later.

I do not know if this letter will reach you in these days of war and world upheaval. I am sending it through your publisher in London. If it reaches you, I want you to realise how many of us in India cherish the memory of the Spanish Republic, how we grieve at your misfortunes, and how we believe, in spite of all that is happening, that the Republic will come into its own again. All of us, wherever we may be, have to pass through the valley of the shadow, and the future is dark. But I hope and believe that freedom will triumph in the end and that this dark night will pass.

In any event you have all our good wishes for yourself and your country, which we have grown to love and admire.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Constancia de la Mora served as an interpreter to Jawaharlal when he visited Spain in 1938.

28. Cable to Indira Nehru[1]

10/9/40

Delighted to learn that you are stronger. No letters are reaching. The situation here is rapidly verging on a crisis. Early resumption of old pilgrimage is likely.

Love,

Papu

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

29. To Narinder Chand[1]

September 10, 1940

Dear Friend,

I think you are right in saying that my speech[2] on the 8th was more Urdu than Hindi. Partly this was because I was speaking in a city like Allahabad, partly because I was dealing with certain difficult ideas and I spoke in the language which came most easily to me. The object of a speaker is to make his audience understand his idea and not to speak in a set language, whether that is Urdu, Hindustani or Hindi. If I speak in Delhi or Lucknow, my language is pure Urdu. If I speak in Benares or Patna or Nagpur, I try to make it as much Hindi as I can. If I speak in the villages I try to simplify my ideas and use simpler words. Hindustani should be based on the simplest words which are commonly used. But inevitably when difficult ideas have to be expressed difficult words have to be used. A language cannot be based entirely on the capacity for understanding of literate circles, because the latter's range of thought and vocabulary is limited.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Not printed.

30. To Bharati Sarabhai[1]

Allahabad
September 10, 1940

My dear Bharati,
Your letter reached me some time ago when I was in Wardha. I am just writing a few lines to you now to tell you how glad I am that you are thinking of doing something definite and constructive. What you should do must ultimately be decided by yourself according to your inclinations. The theatre obviously requires complete reform in India. In fact it hardly exists so far. But I fear that under present conditions of storm and stress, this will not fit in with what is happening. Any real movement, in order to succeed, must be in tune with the currents that are moving people.

I am going to Bombay tomorrow for the A.I.C.C. I suppose things will be moving rapidly now and I may even get an opportunity to cultivate more detachment and to do some writing.

Love,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

31. To Hidayat Ullah Ansari[1]

September 21, 1940

My dear Hidayat Ullah,[2]
Maulana Azad and I discussed with Gandhiji the proposal to have his articles appear regularly in *Hindustan*. I was surprised to find that he had never seen *Hindustan* and that no copy of this was being sent to him. Will you please arrange immediately to send him *Hindustan* regularly and send also a number of selected past copies.

Please write him also that you will be very glad to issue his articles weekly and to make this a special feature of *Hindustan*. You would like

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1911); editor, *Hindustan*, 1937-42, and *Qaumi Awaz* since 1945; member, Rajya Sabha, 1966-70.

to receive a copy of his articles as early as possible. When they are being sent for publication in *Harijan* a typed copy can be sent at the same time to you. He will of course choose such articles as he wants to appear in Urdu. I do not know how much space these are likely to take. Possibly they might take about three pages of *Hindustan*. Anyway I am sure that it will be very good for *Hindustan* to give these articles regularly in a good and simple translation. This will increase the circulation of the paper and give it a certain significance, especially at this time.

We mentioned to Gandhiji something about your financial difficulties and told him that you were gradually getting over them. We suggested that if it was possible for Rs. 100/- a month to be given to you for some months this will probably meet your present deficit. I suggest that you need not ask him for money but you might explain to him what your present position is in regard to circulation, finances, etc., especially indicating how many copies are going to libraries and the like.

Please do this immediately. Please also send a few specimen copies to Miss Mridula Sarabhai with a covering letter. She told me that she would try to get a number of libraries in Ahmedabad and Gujarat to take it up.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

32. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

September 21, 1940

My dear Bapu,

There was one matter I forgot to mention to you. On the 17th of September, that is when we were in Bombay, a young boy named Rajni Patel was arrested in Bombay on landing there. I am particularly interested in this young man and I consider him a very intelligent and competent person. He was returning to India after five or six years spent abroad and was greatly looking forward to his home-coming. In particular he had been writing to me that he would come to see me immediately on arrival so that he might take up worthwhile work immediately in connection with the Congress or some connected activities. It was a

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

curious home-coming for him to be arrested on landing under the Defence of India Act. None of his people were present when he landed as the time of arrival was not known previously. In fact I heard of his arrest for the first time from the evening paper in Bombay. I tried immediately to get an interview in the police lock-up but this was refused and we were informed that no interview could be given unless special permission of the Bombay Government was taken. The next morning he was sent to Nasik Jail.

Rajni Patel comes from the village Sarsa near Anand in Gujarat. He was sent to England some five or six years back—I do not know exactly the date—for the Civil Service Examination. He prepared for this and actually went to the examination hall. As he was sitting there, however, he was asked to go out because his political opinions were not approved of by the India Office. He had been expressing these opinions at meetings and elsewhere. I remember this matter being brought up in questions in the Central Assembly at the time.

After that he continued his studies in various places and ultimately became a barrister, though he had no particular desire to practise the law. I had come into intimate contact with him during my visits to England and I found him to be very intelligent and very likeable. In fact he was exceedingly popular among all kinds of people in England, especially among English students. He associated himself with the student movement there, with youth leagues, with the Labour movement and with the India League. In fact these various activities somewhat came in the way of his studies.

When I was in England last I promised him that on his return to India we would try to utilise him for some worthwhile work. I have been in correspondence with him and in every letter he had told me how he was looking forward to working under my directions.

Sometime last November, that is after the war began, he finally left England and went to America intending to spend a month or two there and then return to India *via* China. As he was well-known in the British Youth Movement, the American Youth Movement took him up and made him tour all over the country. He spent nine or ten months in America and visited all parts of the United States as a youth representative. He appears to have been very popular there. He delivered, I suppose, rather strong speeches against British imperialism. During his visit there, he was invited to the White House to tea by Mrs. Roosevelt.

Ultimately he left America with various letters and messages for the Chinese Youth Movement. To his surprise and indignation he was not allowed to land at Hong Kong by the British authorities and was compelled to proceed to India direct. At Singapore he was not even allowed

to land for a short while as other passengers were. Probably this must have happened at Colombo also. On arrival in Bombay he was arrested on the plea that he had many books and papers with him which were objectionable. As a matter of fact the policemen told us that they had been on the lookout for him for a long time and would have arrested him anyhow.

I have no idea what the exact charge against him is or what books or papers he had with him. Returning home after a long absence, he must have got many books which must have accumulated. So far as I have read reports of speeches they have been strong but not very different from the kind of speeches many of us deliver here. He is a frank, straightforward person and not given to underhand work. He is not a Communist, though he has no doubt come into contact with Communists in England and possibly in America. His general outlook is what might be called socialist.

Just before I left Bombay, I spoke to Vallabhbhai about Rajni and also mentioned the matter to Bhulabhai. I asked them to do what they could to help him and also to get into touch with his people. Rajni Patel's father's address is: Motibhai Venibhai Patel, Sarsa, *via* Anand (Gujarat).

I have a faint notion, but I am not quite sure of this, that Rajni took part in the civil disobedience movement in the early thirties and also went to prison.

I am writing all this to you to keep you informed and in the hope that possibly you might be able to do something for him.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

33. To Rajnikant M. Patel[1]

Allahabad
September 21, 1940

My dear Rajni,
I received your letter from Hong Kong a few days ago. In Bombay I heard suddenly that you had arrived and had been arrested on landing. I tried to get into touch with you, but was informed that an interview

1. Maharashtra Government Records, File No. 3590/H/II-2.

could not be granted without the special permission of the Bombay Government. This was late in the evening of your arrival and early next day you were sent to Nasik.

I am sorry I missed meeting you. But I suppose it could not be helped under the circumstances. I have written to your father[2] about you and I have also informed Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.[3] We shall do what we can to help you in the matter. It is a somewhat curious home-coming for you, after many years. But then everything is curious nowadays. Don't worry, and, if you can, write to me.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2 & 3. Not printed.

34. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

September 21, 1940

My dear Krishna,

It is no pleasure to write letters when it may take months and months for these letters to reach the addressee. It does not seem to make much difference to send a letter by air mail or ocean mail. They both take months. Still I am writing to you because not to write is worse.

I enclose copy of a letter I have sent to Walsh about the American edition. It seems to me that all the matters have been covered now and nothing remains to be done at this end. If you have not already signed the contract you can do so. All the matter I had to send has been sent six weeks ago. Copies of all this additional matter were sent to you also at the time. I hope you have received them. I can well imagine how confused you must be at the various developments in the Indian situation. They are confusing anyhow, and then you have to judge by such scrappy information as you may get. To add to this the Gandhian technique of action is never very easy to understand unless one has been in close contact with it. I am not going to discuss this matter here for obvious reasons. But generally speaking I am satisfied with developments. There are obvious risks and dangers but no course of action is free from them. Remember always that the language Congress uses, at

1. J.N. Correspondence, NMML. Extracts.

through textbooks. Anyhow, I could not get out of this contract made on my behalf by my publishers and I am now waiting for its expiry. It will not be renewed. I have made it clear however that even now I am at perfect liberty to give the book in the original or in translation to any provincial government or university free of all author's or publishers' rights.

It has amused me considerably to see how our universities as well as provincial governments prefer the old way of prescribing privately-produced books as textbooks rather than accept a free offer of producing the book themselves. However this is their lookout.

What I am writing to you about is this. If Viswabharati, or any publishing concern connected with Santiniketan, will care to take up the Bengali translation of my *Letters from a Father to His Daughter*, I would gladly let them have it free of all rights and encumbrances. This would be not only for their own use but also for the use of other schools or colleges. If they make any profit out of it it will be theirs. This little book has proved a golden mine for some publishers and for the Oxford University Press, much to my annoyance. I want to put an end to this profiteering.

The old edition in Bengali will not come in their way at all as I have made it clear to them previously. I am writing to them about this matter also. I should have very much liked to pay a visit to Santiniketan and have a glimpse of Gurudeva. But I do not know how to fit it in just now and events are moving fast. Anyhow, please convey to him my affectionate homage and tell him how much even his silent presence in Santiniketan inspires us all in these difficult days.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

38. To G. P. Hutheesing[1]

Allahabad
September 25, 1940

My dear Raja,
Could you let me know Napier's[2] full name as well as the name of his regiment.

1. Maharashtra Government Records, File No. 3590/H/II-2.
2. See *post*, item 42.

This year we have lived in a state of permanent crisis and it is not possible for me to leave India. I realise fully the advantages of going to America but there are some things which simply cannot be done. One of these things is for me to leave India at this stage.

As it happens, we seem to be on the verge of big developments. Whither they will lead us, I do not know. But anyhow I hope that the people of India will function bravely and honourably whatever happens. It is indeed impossible to forecast the future anywhere in the world.

I do not know if it will be possible for me to send letters or receive them for long. Anyhow I hope that you will write to me from time to time. How long do you expect to remain in the far West?

Rajni Patel arrived in Bombay last week and was forthwith arrested on landing and interned. I do not exactly know why this was done, though it was stated that he had objectionable books and papers in his possession. I do not know what these books and papers were. None of us had a chance of meeting him as we did not know exactly when he was due to arrive. As a matter of fact he was *persona non grata* anyhow and he was prevented from landing in Hong Kong and Singapore.

I have told the A.I.C.C. office to send their publications. I hope you will get them.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

40. To R. Ramani[1]

September 25, 1940

My dear Ramani,[2]

I am sorry I have delayed in answering your letter. But you will no doubt understand how occupied I have been.

Indira has been in Switzerland since November last. She suddenly fell ill in England in October. Although she recovered soon enough it was decided to send her to Switzerland then for a fairly lengthy cure. War developments in June last year have made it almost impossible for her to leave Switzerland. So she continues to remain there and I

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. An advocate of Kuala Lumpur; later Malayan representative at the United Nations.

I understand that Betty intends coming to Allahabad sometime in October. I am glad to hear this as October is a good month here and the children will enjoy their stay. It would be a good thing if you could also come for some time. As you know, the times are out of joint and I do not know where I shall be and what I shall be doing.

Even if nothing very extraordinary occurs soon, as it well might, I propose to tour about a good deal in the Province. But every programme is vague and uncertain.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

39. To Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya[1]

25th September 1940

My dear Kamala,
Some time back I received your letter of 23rd May from Ottawa. Your letters are always very welcome and I was happy to get it. I have delayed in answering it, as the situation here has been very complex and I have been travelling about a great deal. I wrote to you a long letter some months ago. Evidently you had not received it when you wrote. Mails are so uncertain and take such a long time nowadays that the urge to write fades away. There is not much difference left now between air mail letters and ocean mail letters. Both take about two months between India and America.

From your letters and other accounts, which we have been following with great interest, you have had an extraordinarily interesting time in America. I have long been attracted to America and I seem to have a large number of friends there, or at any rate I get letters from people who write as friends. They go on asking me to visit America and indeed I should very much like to do so. You know that I have the wanderlust and I feel strongly in need of a journey outside India at least once a year. In 1938, I went to Europe with the full intention of visiting America also. The Czechoslovakian crisis and other developments prevented this. Last year I paid a brief visit to China, much too brief, as I had to hurry back when the present war broke in Europe.

1. Maharashtra Government Records, File No. 3590/H/II-2.

This year we have lived in a state of permanent crisis and it is not possible for me to leave India. I realise fully the advantages of going to America but there are some things which simply cannot be done. One of these things is for me to leave India at this stage.

As it happens, we seem to be on the verge of big developments. Whither they will lead us, I do not know. But anyhow I hope that the people of India will function bravely and honourably whatever happens. It is indeed impossible to forecast the future anywhere in the world.

I do not know if it will be possible for me to send letters or receive them for long. Anyhow I hope that you will write to me from time to time. How long do you expect to remain in the far West?

Rajni Patel arrived in Bombay last week and was forthwith arrested on landing and interned. I do not exactly know why this was done, though it was stated that he had objectionable books and papers in his possession. I do not know what these books and papers were. None of us had a chance of meeting him as we did not know exactly when he was due to arrive. As a matter of fact he was *persona non grata* anyhow and he was prevented from landing in Hong Kong and Singapore.

I have told the A.I.C.C. office to send their publications. I hope you will get them.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

40. To R. Ramani[1]

September 25, 1940

My dear Ramani,[2]

I am sorry I have delayed in answering your letter. But you will no doubt understand how occupied I have been.

Indira has been in Switzerland since November last. She suddenly fell ill in England in October. Although she recovered soon enough it was decided to send her to Switzerland then for a fairly lengthy cure. War developments in June last year have made it almost impossible for her to leave Switzerland. So she continues to remain there and I

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. An advocate of Kuala Lumpur; later Malayan representative at the United Nations.

do not know when she will be able to come out. She is much better now and in the ordinary course she might well have returned to India in another month's time.

There are several books about the constituent assembly. Two recent ones are: 1. Jaigopal Narang's *Constituent Assembly and Our Demand*—Minerva Book Shop, Lahore. 2. Y.G. Krishnamurti's *Constituent Assembly and Indian Federation*—New Book Company, Bombay. Both of these books have a brief foreword[3] from me. I am sorry I have not got spare copies here, otherwise I would have sent them to you. I have however got a proof copy of Krishnamurty's book without the foreword and introduction. I am sending this to you.

Neither of these books is at all exhaustive or satisfactory. But they are useful little publications.

As you will no doubt realise, we are now right on the verge of a very big crisis in India. Of course the crisis really covers the whole world.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. See *ante*, section 1, items 2 & 11.

41. Home-Coming[1]

Rajni Patel had been out of India for many years. Now he was returning home and he was filled with excitement at the prospect. Air mail letters and cables came from him to me from his various stopping places and in each of these he gave expression to his joy at coming back.

Rajni had gone to England five or six years ago for the Civil Service Examination. His parents had set their hearts on this. They lived in the heart of Gujarat in the village Sarsa, near Anand, which is a stronghold of the Patel clan. Because of his name, Rajni was sometimes in England taken to be a relative of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. But he was not so connected.

He prepared for the Civil Service and even got thus far as to sit in the examination room. But he was soon informed that he could not

1. *National Herald*, 29 September 1940.

appear for the examination as his views and opinions were not approved of by the authorities, presumably the India Office. So he was pushed out of the examination room, a somewhat unusual occurrence.

He took up other studies and ultimately was called to the Bar. Apart from his regular studies, he interested himself in many activities and became a popular figure in various student groups and associations. He was of the type that wins interest and approval easily. Intelligent, agreeable and pleasant, and with an ability above the normal. He was interested in socialism, in the Labour movement, in the youth movement, and of course in Indian affairs. He worked for some time with the India League in London. His very popularity came in the way, to some extent, of effective and continuous work.

At last, in November last, in the early months of the war, he left England with the intention of returning to India *via* America. Having been intimately connected with the British Youth Movement, he got into touch with the American Youth Congress and for many months his American friends would not agree to his leaving America. They made him tour extensively in the United States and he had a very favourable reception everywhere. He addressed numerous meetings and conferences organised by the Youth Congress.

At last, after nearly nine months' stay in the United States, he took ship for China, where he intended to break journey for two or three weeks. He was the bearer of greetings and various messages from American Youth to Chinese Youth. At Hong Kong, however, the British authorities refused to allow him to stay and he was sent back to his ship. At Singapore he was not even permitted to land, as other passengers were, for a brief while.

On September 17, he reached Bombay. The time of arrival of ships is not notified and so there was no one to meet him. None, that is, of his friends. But the police apparently had long waited for him and they seized him on the plea of his having objectionable books and papers. But they would have arrested him anyhow as they had long been in wait for him. They did not approve of the speeches he had delivered in America.

I learnt for the first time of his arrest from an evening paper in Bombay. I tried immediately to find out where he was and, if possible, to interview him. The police refused to tell us where he was being kept and, as for an interview, we were informed that none could be granted without the special permission of the Bombay Government. Early next morning he was sent to Nasik Jail.

So Rajni, whom I had expected for so long, had come at last. His own eager wish to be back home was fulfilled. He was home in India,

but what a strange home-coming it was! Or perhaps it was not so strange after all. For in India the way to home for those who are straight and true leads often to the gates of prison.

42. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
2-10-40

My dear Bapu,
About six weeks ago, when I was in Bombay for the Planning Committee, I had a remarkable experience, which has oppressed me often since then. I should have told you about it when you were in Bombay last but the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. filled my mind and I forgot. I did not want to write about it through the post.

I came back from the Planning Committee during the midday interval for food. I had to go back soon after and was pressed for time. Just then a young English boy turned up at my sister's flat. He was dressed in khadi—a shirt and loose pyjamas and cap. He told me that he was an officer in the army—a Second-Lieut.—and had decided to leave the army and face the consequences. He produced a copy of a document which he said he had given to his commanding officer and which had been forwarded to Army headquarters at Simla.[2] I read this and was amazed. It was a fine statement. I enclose a copy of it and you can read it for yourself.

His name was Napier. He was the great-grandson of the Napier who is said to have conquered Sind. The family since then had been intimately connected with the army. Apparently it had come down in the world. Young Napier joined as a private a few years before the war began. But because he was a bright lad, and possibly also because of his family, he got a scholarship for Sandhurst and later became a commissioned officer. He was sent with his regiment to India a month or two after the war began. He was stationed at Mhow in Central India. Evidently he did not fit in with his brother officers. He was more serious and intellectual and he felt drawn towards India, especially of the

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. In his note of August 1940, he had condemned the British Empire in India in stringent terms and put forth his reasons for wanting to leave the army and join the struggle for freedom and the alleviation of the misery of India's poor.

poorer classes. He avoided officers' messes and spent his time in the bazaar or elsewhere talking to paltry shopkeepers, labourers etc. He tried to pick up Hindustani. I think he gave a good part of his salary to the poor.

This was not liked by his brother officers. The C.O. spoke to him about it and they had many arguments. He began to dislike his profession, and especially service in India, more and more. He wanted to leave it but this was not possible in war time. Ultimately he gave the enclosed note to his C.O.

His regiment was transferred from Mhow to Jhansi. This gave him a day and a half or two to join up at Jhansi. He decided to burn his boats whatever the consequences and went and sold his uniform. This was done chiefly to put a definite end to his military career—also to raise some money. He did not particularly want to be sent back from India to England.

He then telephoned to Allahabad to get into touch with me and learnt —found I was in Bombay and got my address. Went straight to Bombay and to my sister's house from the station.

This was a novel situation for me and I was completely taken aback. My heart went out to this young and terribly sincere boy of 25 but I did not know what to do. By coming to Bombay he had deserted—and that too in war time. This is the gravest offence in military law and there was no doubt that he would be arrested in a day or two and court-martialled. I found from him that he was due to report at Jhansi the next morning. There was just a chance of his getting back to Jhansi in time if he took the next train which left soon after.

I wanted to have a much longer talk with Napier but already I had kept the Planning Committee waiting. If he had to go back to Jhansi by the next train then there was going to be no other chance. I felt he must go back. To be charged with desertion was to confuse the issue apart from other consequences. He had already made his position perfectly clear to the army authorities and he could face them and fight them on that issue. I could hardly conceive of his remaining in the British army after his declaration of faith. Nor could I see how he was to get out of it. Army authorities do not permit this kind of thing. What was going to happen to him I could not guess, but it seemed to be clear that he would have a very hard time. Anyway I felt that this question must not be mixed up with desertion. I advised him therefore to go back by the next train to Jhansi and to report himself to the C.O. there. I further suggested to him not to go in khadi kurta and pyjamas. He said he had shorts, etc. and he would wear them. I asked him if he had enough money. He said he had quite enough for his purpose.

He accepted my advice and said he would go back. I asked him to communicate with me, if possible, or with my sister, and to let me know what happened. We have had no news of him since. I am told now that every regiment that is sent to Jhansi, goes off soon after to Egypt. I am trying to find out now what has happened to Napier's regiment. It is quite likely that because of his views and his escape he was kept under arrest and prevented from communicating, and later sent out of India.

His face haunts me and I often wonder if I advised him rightly.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

43. To Mridula Sarabhai[1]

17/10/1940

My dear Mridu,

I got your letter in Wardha. You need not worry yourself as to what you should do. If you are released you will then look round and carry on Congress work as long as you can. The main thing is carrying on work, not just to seek prison. If prison comes, one takes it in the course of one's work without worrying about it.

I propose to get certain shares of the Associated Journals Limited (owning the *National Herald*) transferred to you. Some of the money that you gave me was first given to the *Herald* and then transferred to the U.P.P.C.C. I think these shares should be in your name.

Keep cheerful and do not worry.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Maharashtra Government intercepted letters.

44. Union of Free Nations[1]

The ideal solution of the world's problems would be a world union of free nations, big and small, each nation being completely free within its

1. Message to *The Indian* (Sinhalese weekly). *The Hindustan Times*, 25 October 1940.

own boundaries, and at the same time a social order which is not based on profit for the few but on the good of the many.

Whether this world union comes soon or late it will have to come some time, if the world is to be saved from destruction. Meanwhile, we can think of something nearer home and that is the future of many of the countries of Asia. I look forward to the day when there will be some kind of confederation or international union between some of these nations of the East—India, China, Ceylon, Burma, Afghanistan and Nepal. Such a union ought not to be an exclusive one, but rather a basis for a larger union. Manifestly all the countries mentioned have many interests in common; they are adjoining, they are not aggressive and they ought to be able to work together to their own advantage and for the good of the world.

Each will have the fullest freedom for itself. But it is clear that in the modern world, nations cannot stand singly whether they are big or small. China and India are great and big nations. They might stand by themselves. But there is no reason why even they should not draw closer to each other as they have done in recent months. Ceylon inevitably must tie herself closely, culturally and economically, with these neighbours of hers, retaining her national freedom.

I hope that more and more people in India and in Ceylon and in the other countries of the East will look to this ideal and work for it and more particularly for the development of friendship between the people of India and the people of Ceylon.

45. To Rajan Nehru[1]

Allahabad
25-10-1940

My dear Rajan,

Your letter came a little while ago but I waited for the book to arrive before answering. On my return yesterday I found the book. Thank you.

I suppose social conditions will change here also with a bang some time or other. We are tied up in so many ways. Real social change is intimately connected with the political and economic structure.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I had a letter from Indu two days ago after four months. It was just three months old. She was not feeling at all happy in Switzerland though physically she was progressing. I suppose all of us will be very much older by the time we have got through the present mess —if we get through.

I am afraid there is not much chance of my going to Delhi in the near future.

Love,

Yours,
Jawaharlal

46. To Rajan Nehru[1]

Allahabad
25-10-1940

My dear Rajan,
Your letter came soon after I had written to you today. Do not worry about me. I am tough and not the kind of person who has accidents. I got a knock on the head. It stunned and dazed me for a while but no real harm was caused and I am quite well now.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

47. To Brahma Prakash Sharma[1]

Allahabad
October 25, 1940

No. 7 of Dasta[2] No. 2 of the Naini Seva Dal Camp begs to report to his Nayak[3] that the report of the injury received by him recently is

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Jawaharlal was in the Naini Volunteer Camp with Brahma Prakash Sharma, a Congressman of Muzaffarnagar.
2. Group or batch.
3. Captain.

much exaggerated. It has already healed. He is grateful for the enquiry.

Jawaharlal Nehru

48. To Rajnikant M. Patel[1]

October 26, 1940

My dear Rajni,

I was happy to receive your letter of the 10th October and I am glad that you are more or less settled down in your present habitat. It is best to adapt oneself to these changes and to have a regular programme. This keeps one physically and mentally fit. I have found many people in prison who tend to go to pieces simply because they have no such regularity in their life there and do not exercise their minds and bodies.

I would have loved to hear from you about your experiences in America, Japan, China and Shanghai, but that must wait for possibly a longish time. I shall certainly write to you from time to time. But I fear even this may not be possible soon.

I have written to my Hindi and Urdu publishers to send you some of the translations of my books as well as some other books also. I hope they will reach you.

Indira is still in Switzerland. She is well but cannot leave the country till some major change takes place in the war situation. My sister, Mrs. Pandit has not been keeping very well. I have had no letter from Krishna for a long time but I had a brief cable about ten days ago.

I have much of course to tell you, but that also will have to wait for a more favourable occasion. Meanwhile I should like you to feel that life in detention or in jail has certain advantages if one can but avail oneself of them. It leads to some introspection and a certain development of the person. The chief thing is not to worry about outside happenings. As one cannot take part in them it is needless worrying.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

10

PERSONAL

1. To Indira Nehru[1]

March 11, 1940

Darling,

Your letter of the 20th February has just come. It does not make cheerful reading. I long to help you or to do something for you but I feel so helpless. Not only are you far from me, with a major war coming in the way, but otherwise too I am hardly capable of even advising. Only you can judge or your doctors or others whom you can consult. I wish I could take the burden somewhat from you but I have lost faith in myself in many ways. I am writing to Bhandari and I hope you will also keep in touch with him.

Thinking about you so often, it has struck me how little we have been together during these years, especially since 1930. You were a babe in arms when I became entangled in noncooperation and the like and for some years I saw you irregularly. Then we were together in Geneva for some months before you went to Chesieres. From 1930 onwards I was often in prison and you were first at the Poona school and then at Santiniketan. Later Switzerland, Bristol, Oxford, etc. You came to India in 1937 and I went to Europe in 1938. Again you came to India for a few months but even here you were mostly at Almora. It is almost a year since you went.

Off and on we have met but my mind has been full of you and has formed a thousand pictures which keep me company. Long ago when you were at Mussoorie and I was in Allahabad, I tried to fill the gap created by your absence by writing to you those letters which came out later as a little book. I continued this practice because it soothed me and pleased me and supplied something that I lacked. I seldom thought of writing books, I was thinking of you. But books resulted.

During all these years of separation and thinking of you, you came very close to me, or rather the image I made of you became part almost of me. But then that was a creature of my thought. You were far away.

I moved about in crowds, my days filled with incessant activity. To save myself from being submerged in these crowds I lived my own life of the mind, where I had myself for companion and those pictures of my dear ones which were largely my own creation. The crowds gave something to me of value but they took a lot out of me. Gradually I came to realise that while perhaps I understood crowds a little, I did

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

not understand individuals. Probably this deficiency, which distressed me, was innate in me and had little to do with the crowds or my activity. Only that activity covered and hid it from my eyes. I realised with something of a shock how little one person really knows another, and how often those that are nearest and dearest to us are almost as strangers to us. I had read this somewhere in French poetry and hardly realised its significance. This knowledge with all its disturbing consequences, came to me. I wondered if this was the general rule or at least a common occurrence, or was it peculiar to a few? Meanwhile life passed on leaving many an impress upon me. The crowd ceased to fascinate me as it used to, and I found how utterly alone I was. I had learnt much in the passage of years, but I had failed in the hard test of life. I had proved incompetent and life is hard on the incompetents. Large numbers of people, men and women, came to me or wrote to me for advice about their own personal problems. Because of my political notoriety, they took me to be an expert in matters beyond my ken. The success that had apparently come to me and made me known to large number covered a failure in much that counts in the life of the individual.

Public and private life act and react on each other, and this sense of failure has pursued me in almost all I do. With this lack of faith in myself, how can I advise anyone? What right have I to interfere in another's life? I have not made my own a brilliant success and all my good intentions, or so I imagined they were, have not prevented me often from making a mess of things. In my pride I thought that I could do great things, but life has humbled me and shown me the error of my thought.

So, my darling, I am a poor kind of person to seek advice from. Everything that I can possibly give you is yours for the asking, but do not seek advice from me for my mind is disturbed and lacks clarity. Even this letter, I suppose, is a jumble of ill-assorted ideas which will possibly confuse and worry you. I am sorry. But it represents a fraction of my mind.

I had written to you that I intended going by car to Ramgarh from Patna. I do not like motoring much, but I wanted to get away from myself—if that is ever possible—and visit Nalanda and Gaya and especially the thick jungles of Chhota Nagpur. A jungle, I thought, would certainly bring relief. Now all that is off and I am staying on in Allahabad till the last moment, that is the 14th night. This is at the bidding of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, our new President. He has written his Presidential Address in Urdu and he wants me to translate it into English. I am no good at this job and have never done any translation

work—except from Latin in school. The whole address even has not reached me yet. It is coming in driblets. Yesterday I spent about eight hours over it wrestling with Maulana's graceful and flowery Urdu. I had taken the precaution to have a draft translation made first by some others. I merely revised and yet this was a terribly fatiguing affair.

Maulana is a curious type, very attractive. He reminds me very forcibly of 18th century Rationalists and French Encyclopaedists. That does not mean that he is reactionary but he is out of touch with many modern developments. Most people who might even consider themselves advanced and talk the jargon of the day, are really quite medieval in outlook. Maulana has got a mind like a razor which cuts through a fog of vague ideas—only it functions in the atmosphere of 18th & early 19th century Europe. It is always a pleasant surprise to realise that a person whose education has been entirely a religious one, and who is steeped in Muslim religious lore should be so rational and keen-minded. If he had had the chance to learn well one or more European languages and had thus come more in contact with modem thought, he would have been a very remarkable person. Even now he tries to grapple with these problems and succeeds more than many others.

... I have sent you during the last week or two some new pictures of mine. This is not to flood you with my pictures or to add to your luggage. They were recently taken and I thought they might interest you. You can pass them on to others. One of them was taken in my room. I was sitting at my writing table, as I am doing now. So much of my life is spent at this table that this picture is characteristic.

All my love to you, my dear one,

Your loving,
Papu

2. To Indira Nehru[1]

Ramgarh
19.3.40

Darling,
Your letter of the 3rd March did reach me at Ramgarh. I got it with a huge bundle of letters from Allahabad this afternoon and picked it out and read it hurriedly. I had to go out just then and I carried it in my

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

pocket intending to read it more carefully at leisure. Soon after I had to go to the opening session of the Congress and there many adventures befell all of us. It was a magnificent sight. An enormous arena, well filled with colourful people, with these artistic gates leading into it. At the back were low hills and a small river gurgled at their foot. Dark clouds covered the sky. They were threatening for if they brought rain, the open air session became difficult. But the threat apart, it was a perfect setting. The whole audience was sitting in an enormous natural bowl. Delegates and visitors were streaming in. The volunteers, both boys and girls, were patches of colour. Most of us, members of the Working Committee, arrived about 20 minutes before the time fixed for the beginning of this session. We waited for the President and Bapu to arrive for the formal Presidential procession. Two bands were in readiness. And then it began to rain. Not merely to rain, but to pour in torrents. Within a few seconds the scene changed. A few visitors left hurriedly but the vast numbers remained. But suddenly the people almost disappeared from view. There was a sea of bamboo mattresses to be seen and many umbrellas. In order to protect themselves from the fierce onslaught of the pouring rain, the people picked up the mattresses they were sitting on and crept underneath them. I went about from place to place, getting thoroughly soaked in the process and was delighted to find how cheerful almost everyone was. The women were specially in difficulties because of their sari. But it was a jolly crowd. The rain continued. Soon the bottom of the huge bowl, where the dais was situated, was a lake, two or three feet deep. Yet people stood in it. The President arrived. Bapu did not come. In spite of the rain the President insisted on starting the session. Unfortunately the loud speakers failed just then for their engines were completely under water. Still we began formally and after a few words of welcome from the Chairman of the Reception Committee, the President spoke for a while and then I proposed formally the one and only resolution for the Congress. This was seconded formally and then the session was adjourned till tomorrow.

We waded back through lakes of water. It was surprising how well everybody took these untoward occurrences. They were singing and shouting slogans. And so we marched to our respective camps—a good distance. Here we found that most of our goods and chattels had got wet. The roofs were leaking all over the place. We shifted as best we could. It was vastly entertaining to see the leaders of the Congress sitting perched up in odd corners trying to escape the rain.

It struck me that if conditions were so bad in this "Leaders' Camp" how much worse they must be in the delegates' camps. So I went for a tour of these and especially visited some of our guests from abroad.

Everywhere I found jolly groups almost enjoying their discomforts. I felt quite exhilarated by the experience and sensed the strong bond that united us all in a common endeavour. An American girl,[2] who was my guest, was much impressed by this attitude of the crowd and by their good humour in spite of acute discomfort.

Many of us spent the whole evening in fixing up people, providing extra blankets, and in putting on extra mats on some of our roofs. And thus at last late at night we retired. That was not such an easy matter for it was difficult to escape the rain dripping from the roof. Here I have been sitting writing to you, trying to dodge these rain drops, not very successfully.

I am tired now but I wanted to write to you. We do not know what will happen tomorrow but anyhow the Congress will meet and get through its business. The one resolution means a lot. It opens out a whole vista of possibilities and conflicts. It seems inevitable that these should come, and not distantly. Fate or destiny or whatever it is drives us on.

I shall write to you more later. But I want to say how happy I am to learn of your progress. This is rather slow but I am not very worried about that. It must be sure and the pace quickens as you get along. When you come to India there will be no difficulty in your staying in the hills. Certainly not the housekeeping difficulty.

All my love,

Your loving,
Papu

2. Kay Stimson.

3. To Indira Nehru[1]

23.3.1940

Darling Indu,
Yesterday we came back to Allahabad from Ramgarh *via* Gaya. I found to my joy three envelopes, with your familiar handwriting, waiting for me here. I picked these out of a bundle of letters and read them. I

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

was very tired. The Congress is always an exhausting affair and the rain and storm this time had made it even more so. Then our journey back was not a simple affair. So ever since my return I have been slowly recovering from the fatigue and by tomorrow morning I hope to be normal.

I wrote to you from Ramgarh just after the deluge of rain which washed away the pandal and much else. Even as I wrote that letter, water dripped all round me and sometimes on me and on the notepaper. The next morning it continued to rain with occasional lucid intervals. It was impossible to hold the Congress in the normal way and ultimately a hurried session was held in the open. Fortunately we had only one resolution to get through. So ended the shortest session on record and everyone began to pack up and go. Indeed we had to as it was very difficult to stay on. The water supply was failing as the pumping wells had disappeared under the flood water. In spite of all this the Congress session was an exhilarating affair and most people who attended it enjoyed the novel experience. The only resolution passed was the one I have already sent you.

nirvana. Here in the middle of a beautiful lotus-covered lake, stands a lovely temple. It is lovely from a distance, not so from nearby, for our worthy Jain millionaires have lavished money on it and succeeded in converting it into a cross between a gorgeous lavatory and a seaside pier with the most blatant electric posts and marble everywhere. They love marble.

Back in Gaya at 9 p.m., dinner, and then two meetings. To bed after midnight for less than 3 hours for our train left at 3.30 a.m.

All this was tiring but I enjoyed it, as I always enjoy my new discoveries of India. I am always discovering something new in this wonderful land and the hold of India grows upon me. Long ago, do you remember it, when we were travelling in the air-conditioned coach in Malaya toward Penang, I sat down to write an essay on the Discovery of India. I wrote only a few lines then though my mind was full of ideas. That unfinished sheet is still with me. I suppose I shall write on the subject one day, for it grows upon me.

Thank you for the cuttings from *Life* about the stroboscopic pictures. As a matter of fact I get *Life* regularly, or irregularly since the war, but I seldom see it or look through it with care.

In Ramgarh there was not much of a family reunion although Nan and Ranjit and Betty were there. Raja could not come as he was busy with the Planning Committee. I was so busy that I hardly had time for any members of the family, and Betty was busy in her own way. She has a large and very miscellaneous circle of acquaintances which is a source of some surprise to me occasionally. Whenever I stay with her in Bombay I meet many new people and I have a succession of dinners etc., to which I am not used.

In one of your letters you say that when you leave Switzerland, you will return to India after a brief visit to England to gather your belongings. Also that Bhandari wants you to spend two years without a break in Kashmir. You seem to be thinking already of the difficulties of housekeeping in Kashmir or the hills. I do not myself see why you should spend the winter in the hills or in Kashmir, but if you want to do so there will be no difficulty about it. Remember that India is a very friendly place, especially for us, and wherever you might go you will find friends who want to help. Housekeeping on a small scale offers no difficulty. I have lived in Anand Bhawan all by myself for months and the cook has done what he liked about housekeeping. I have never even asked him anything about it. It may be that I could have saved a little money otherwise. But it was not worth while and I wanted peace.

To add to this, all manner of people came to Allahabad to see me and they were important enough for me to find time somehow for them. To begin with there was a crowd of Burmese, and then came the Ceylonese, all of them stopping at our house. An American couple turned up and a Chinese young man on his way from England to China. Most important of all was the Congress President, Maulana Azad, who chose this very time to visit Allahabad. I was hard put to it to fit in all these engagements with our camp routine and the process was an exhausting one. During the whole of yesterday I tried to recover from it and I feel better today.

Your letter of the 22nd March reached me in just a week's time, on the 29th March. I could not reply to it properly then but I dictated something hurriedly to Upadhyaya. I hope you received that typewritten letter.

As you say yourself, the doctors will have the last word. So I wrote immediately to Jivraj Mehta and Bhandari and told them how you felt about it, for your own viewpoint is the most important consideration. I suggested to them also that they might write directly to Rollier. I have not heard from them in reply yet, and indeed I could not within this brief period. But I know, more or less, what they will say. Jivraj is very keen that you should let good alone and give every opportunity to yourself to eliminate all disorders from your system. That is fundamentally a sound proposition. It would be folly to do anything which would undo the good already done. His inclination will therefore be to ask you to stay on in Leysin for the whole of the summer and to return to India in the early winter. Bhandari will think likewise but will be more amenable to a variation or to a somewhat shorter stay. But both would press you to stay as long as you can manage it. If Rollier falls in with our wishes, then, of course, it would be much simpler. I think we had better leave it at that for the present.

Need I say what I feel about it? I want so much to see you and touch you and hear you, but I am not fool enough to allow my wishes to interfere with your treatment. We absolutely must build on a firm foundation this time, and if we have to err, we must err on the safe side. You know well enough that weak lungs or pleura take a devil of time to strengthen. They will not be hurried and attempts at speed often mean greater delay. So we must accept this position. After all, howsoever much this might inconvenience us, two or three months this way or that do not make a vital difference. Oxford is out of the question now, and you have more or less decided to return to India. The sooner you come the better, certainly, but that sooner must not be at the cost of your health.

I suggest that you should now wait for the advice of your doctors. Meanwhile you should settle down till June at least. If you like, and if Rollier allows it, you can go for a change to La Pelouse for a week or so. But you come back to Leysin. I suppose it is possible for you, if you so choose, to move from Clinique Frenes to some other clinique in Leysin, under Rollier of course. The latter might be cheaper. But this is not desirable if it interferes with your treatment or otherwise inconveniences you. This is entirely for you to judge.

Some weeks ago Krishna Menon wrote to me suggesting that as you were lonely Betty might go and join you. When you first fell ill Betty offered to go to you. I doubt if it will be desirable or feasible for Betty to go. She does not feel happy anywhere out of her particular set in Bombay or away from her children. If she comes to Allahabad, she feels bored. Leysin will not amuse her at all. She has fixed up going to Mussoorie this summer in company with some of her Bombay friends.

I think therefore that it will not be right to press her to go. This will be costly business also. And then as there is some chance of your returning before very long, this will be pointless.

I have been thinking however that it will be well worth while to find a suitable companion for yourself. This is not an easy matter but it can be done. Are you in touch with Lou or Eva? Could either of them join you for a while (you paying their expenses, etc. of course) or could they suggest someone?

Subject to what the doctors say, I think it would be a good idea for you to go to England sometime in June and spend a fortnight there. You could pack up and send all your heavy luggage and such as you do not require direct from London to Bombay. Keep the rest with you. I suggest then that you should go back to Switzerland for another few weeks' rest, say a month. You may go back to Leysin, or to Montana where you have your friend Dr. H. Roache. It will be a good thing for you to refresh yourself by this stay in Suisse on the eve of your departure for India. This will also give you and the doctors an opportunity to observe how you have reacted to travelling and a fortnight in England.

You can then travel to India direct from Switzerland by the Italian Lloyd Triestino from Genoa or Venice. This line will be more suitable than P & O. I presume you would not care to come by air. It is difficult to get accommodation and I doubt if the sudden changes due to too rapid travelling will be good for you.

According to this programme you should be back in India about the end of August. It is not a very good time climatically, but it is not too bad. If another month or so in Suisse makes a difference to your

health, I would not hesitate to stay on. Early October is a much better time to reach India. I have told you what I think about it. But my opinion should count least. It is the doctor's opinion and yours that count.

Do not bother yourself about my programme or what becomes of me. It is absurd to trouble oneself about matters outside our control. I have not the ghost of an idea of what is likely to happen to me. Everything changes rapidly nowadays and I am not prophet enough to peep into the future. It is clear that I am not going to leave India. The rest is unclear. In one of your letters you mentioned that I would be going to Kashmir in May. I had casually said so but nothing is decided. The idea of going to Kashmir obsesses me—it is so long since I have been there and I do so want to have a look at it. Even if I go, it will be for a few days only, possibly a week, just to satisfy my thirst for a sight of its beauty. Meanwhile, I shall be going to Wardha on the 14th and from there on the 19th probably to Bombay for the National Planning Committee. I expect to remain in Bombay for a fortnight. Then Allahabad and to whatever place calls to me.

... It was a delightful and worthwhile experience for us middle-aged folk, feeble of limb and short of breath, and some actually unwell, to try to live the strenuous life of a volunteer camp. We were drilled and made to do exercises and sentry duty, and spinning of course, and first aid, games etc. etc. Up in the morning at 5.30—lights out, in theory at 9.30 p.m. It was all very ridiculous for us to behave like boy scouts, but there was a deeper and a psychological aspect for, by doing so we raised the idea of volunteering. All of us were just ordinary volunteers taking training—no officer class or the like. Apart from actual drill which we had morning and evening, and a route march, and camp fires at night, the games were very popular. After more than thirty years I seized hold of a cricket bat again. After 18 years I played volley ball, and played it rather well. Volley ball became the favourite game, and fiercely contested matches were played.

I am afraid I could not do my full duty owing to important visitors barging in. Nevertheless I did a bit of sentry work in the middle of the night, and I liked it.

Ranjit was the only really qualified man amongst us as he has spent two or three years in a cavalry regiment. Unfortunately he could not stand the strain and got a bad heart attack.

We lived on the other side of the Jumna and I made friends with her and became her ardent admirer. What a lovely river she is and how she used to change her colour and her mood as the day progressed. In

the early dawn she was a sight of rare beauty and even the ugly waterworks building on the other side caught the spell and seemed almost like a moated castle.

At night we had camp fires and folk songs—delightful village songs sung in the village way. Some of the villagers from the surrounding villages trooped in and joined. But I must stop now. I have written enough.

Have you heard that Charlie Andrews—Uncle Charlie—died two days ago in a Calcutta nursing home? He had been ill for a long time and had been operated upon several times. His death has distressed me greatly. I do not know that I have ever come across a more lovable or more generous-hearted man. In these days of hatred and passion and conflict, it is good to remember this man who was so childlike, so foolish sometimes, and yet so utterly devoid of hatred or ill will against anyone, and so full of love and goodwill. If there is such a thing as godliness, he had it. It is very sad to think that he is no more.

I fear Gurudeva cannot last very long. He grows weaker and weaker and his eightieth birthday approaches. Charlie's death must have been a terrible blow to him. India changes. The old guards fade away. The old lamps go out and it is not clear what the new ones are like.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

5. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
8.4.1940

Darling Indu,

Yesterday I sent you a long letter. Today is *Naoroz* and so I feel I must send you my good wishes for the New Year. Our old customs fade out and sometimes this is a pity. No one brings the *thali* in the mornings. Indeed one almost forgets that *Nauroz* has come. Usually I am alone in the house and Hari reminds me and produces new clothes for the occasion.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

But *Nauroz* is a good day to remember and celebrate. And so I send you my love on this our New Year's Day.

Your loving,
Papu

6. To Indira Nehru[1]

10/4/40

Darling,
I have just had a letter from Kailas in which he suggests that Sheila would like to join you at Leysin for a while. Bhandari, of course, jumped at the idea when he heard this. I like the idea myself. It will be good for Sheila and good for you. She can stay at Leysin for a month or six weeks or as long as you and she like. It will be a change for her as well as you. She must have had enough of the black-outs. If she comes over, she might stay in a pension near you. Anyway Leysin is not a big place and you can easily fix her up.

... I make all kinds of suggestions because I cannot help my mind working. But remember that they are just suggestions. Your programme must be decided by you in consultation with Bhandari. I do not want the good process of your recovery to be interfered with. Why should we take any chances? We must build soundly so that no untoward circumstance upsets your system again. We have had warning enough. But you are wise enough to realise that health is not merely a physical condition. It is very much a mental affair. You complain of nerves. We are all more or less nervy but we must not be dominated by them. Do not worry about an odd month or two extra at Leysin or the expense involved. So long as there is money available, it is meant to be spent. When it is not there, well, we don't spend it. The point is that you must do your present job thoroughly and for that you should deliberately put worry and nerves on the shelf. It can be done, it has been done.

I hope there is no question of your having to stay at Leysin till next spring. The end of this summer is the most that I envisage. But after all this depends on your own mental determination to get well and your

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

capacity to keep worry away. Remember that you need not stay at Leysin all the time. Later you can go to Montana or elsewhere. Even at Leysin you need not stick to Les Frenes. It is possible, as I have already suggested, that you might pay a visit to England and return to Suisse for another brief stay before returning to India.

Your weight etc. are outward indications of your recovery. But the real process is going on inside you and this, in the nature of things, is slow.

If I may suggest it to you, be perfectly frank with Bhandari. You owe this to him and to yourself. Only then can he advise you properly. Tell him how you feel about any matter for your feeling is itself a factor to be considered.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

7. To Indira Nehru[1]

Bombay
20.4.1940

Darling,

This is a funny, topsy-turvy world. Here I am in Bombay intent on planning, planning of industry, of agriculture, of social life, of everything; thinking or trying to think of an ordered sane world, a new order as they call it. And way across the seas war rages and spreads and casts its shadow on us here. Even Bombay, far from the war zone, has semi-darkened streets. I read and write and answer letters normally but civil disobedience looms ahead and I do not know when this normality will be suddenly interrupted. I have long accustomed and trained myself to occupy myself with the work of the moment and not to think of the troubles and difficulties ahead. Yet the mind wanders and it is not easy to hold it in leash. And now vague rumours come of the possibility of the war spreading and, it may even be, of coming nearer to you. Even if Switzerland escapes, it may well become isolated or difficult of access and communication. The Mediterranean may become a closed sea and the normal routes between Europe and India barred. What of you then, my dear?

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

I think of you so often. Suddenly, in the middle of a conversation, you intervene and your picture takes possession of my mind and I lose the thread of the talk. Or I may be reading a book or writing on a sheet of paper and the page or the sheet is blotted out as my mind travels to you. I comfort myself that you are marching on the road to health, and though the pace be slower than one wishes, the march is steady and sure. It is better to hold on to this job and get it done well. But then the tragic drama of this war forces itself on my attention and I wonder what new complications it might bring.

In Bombay it is the season of the Alphonso mangoes and that again reminds me of you and I think of your liking for them. But the crop is poor this year.

I came here yesterday after spending four days in Wardha. I have a long stay here to look forward to. But Bombay wearies me in spite of the large circle of acquaintance that I have here. I am in no mood for meeting large numbers of people, and here in Betty's flat, there are always people coming to meals and at other times. They are nice people and I like many of them. But my mind is elsewhere and it is a strain to fit in. My work suffers.

So tomorrow I am going to Andheri—Psyche's house—and possibly I might move to Juhu later. This will mean coming to Bombay daily but I shall have my mornings and evenings free.

It is long since I heard from you—or is this just my imagination? Perhaps your letter has reached Allahabad.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

8. To Indira Nehru[1]

Andheri
25.4.1940

Darling Indu,

It is long since I heard from you, nearly three weeks I think. But in these days of war, letters have a way of coming in bunches after long gaps. I suppose they accumulate in the censor's office and when he or she has leisure, they are passed.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

In my last letter I wrote to you that the new international developments had made me wonder if it would be possible for you to stay on in Switzerland, even if you wanted to. I wrote to Bhandari about it, for it is as well to be prepared for all eventualities. Then I decided to cable to him. His reply came yesterday that he was going to Leysin himself to fix up arrangements. I am glad he is going to you. He mentioned in his cable that in any event Leysin was about as safe a place as any and it was always possible to go to France from there as the French frontier was not far. Which of course is true. This was a reason why I inclined towards Leysin when you were considering where to go to in Switzerland.

Anyway I hope everything will be fixed up provisionally in case of need. To worry about what might happen is foolish but one must always be prepared for it. That gives peace of mind. You know, of course, that Mademoiselle Hemmerlin will gladly help you in case of need.

Rollier has sent a long report to Jivraj Mehta about you. It is a good report full of scientific words which I do not wholly understand.

I have been in Andheri for four or five days and it is very pleasant here, far better than Bombay. The chief advantage is the quiet. I try not to go to Bombay, though I do not always succeed, and sometimes people come to see me here. This house (it is Psyche's) is well situated and has a pleasant garden. It is a very old fashioned house and the furniture belongs to some antique age. Everything is heavily carved and the rooms are overfull of these massive articles. I do not fancy this style. It is depressing and uncomfortable. But this is a minor point. The house is delightful and Psyche sees to it that I have a quiet and restful time. She herself lives in Bombay but comes here sometimes in the afternoons.

We overlook the Juhu aerodrome and the noise of planes flying about is constantly with us, in the day time at least. At night the red lights of the aerodrome peep through the palm trees.

This evening I went for a walk. I wanted to go to Juhu and I managed to reach there before it got dark. But the way back was more difficult as it was quite dark and I lost my way. Ultimately I took a bus to Santa Cruz (the busman refused to charge the fare) and from there a taxi brought me. How helpless I get when I venture out by myself. I am so used to not going anywhere, or to being accompanied by someone, that by myself I get lost. Today was my first experience of a bus ride in Bombay. And even a taxi I hardly ever take as there is some car or the other available. Usually I do not have any money with me. Without Upadhyaya I get into difficulties about posting letters, as I do not

have stamps! So you see to what a helpless state I have reduced myself.

I had a glimpse of the Vakils yesterday. They have gone off to Kashmir for the holidays.

Yesterday I met Sir Malcolm Darling, a Punjab civilian who is retiring and is taking up some job in the B.B.C. He asked me if you could give talks on the microphone from the B.B.C.

Raja, Betty and the children are coming here tomorrow. Day after tomorrow I am going to Miraj for a day to visit an old acquaintance who is lying very ill there. I have not seen him for years but I remember how he came to me twenty years ago after having noncooperated from school or college. He has begged me to see him and I do not know how to refuse. The journey is a long and tiring one and this visit will interfere with my work.

I met Mrs. Bhagwandin Dube here. She is a terribly lonely person with more money than she wants and a villa in Cannes which is totally useless to her.

My love to you, my dear,

Your loving,
Papu

26 April, 1940

Last night I wrote to you and I gave my letter to be posted this morning. Soon after your letter of April 13th, forwarded from Allahabad and Sakina Mansion, reached me. I found that my letter had not been posted. So I am adding this postscript.

It is no good my writing to you about your programme as I have already discussed this matter fully in previous letters and now that Bhandari is going over to see you, he and you should fix it up. I quite agree with you that we must aim at 'permanent' results, even though the way to them seems long and is full of *ennui*. As a matter of fact any other course takes far longer time and is infinitely more depressing. If this objective is kept in view, then we have only to fix up details with the help and advice of doctors. I should not bother now about making a hard and fast programme for a whole year. But you might decide to carry on till the autumn at least and then see how matters stand. Of course political developments may make a difference. But they are outside our control and we can only keep ready for any emergency that might arise. Bhandari's visit should fix all these matters up.

You say something about 'funds permitting'. Funds will permit of course so far as your treatment and stay abroad are concerned. The future can be left to take care of itself. You have quite enough money in your account with Bachhraj to cover any possible expenses for a year or more. You can draw upon these directly when you like. I mention this in case I am not in a position to arrange for a remittance. There is one thing I want you to make sure—the proper transfer of monies from London to you. It is becoming increasingly difficult to send money from one country to another. There are even difficulties in transfers from India to England. From England to Switzerland it must be far worse and new rules and regulations follow one another in quick succession. Lloyds people have given me some trouble.

...I am sorry to learn that the books I sent you have not reached you yet. I suppose one is helpless in this matter and inquiries are pretty useless. The post office here will say they have sent them, the P.O. at Leysin will say they have not received them. It is in between that they disappear or are held up. The books, as you know, were entirely innocent from the political or war point of view. They dealt with poetry, etc. You might however write a note and enquire from the Leysin post office. I think they were sent in two, possibly three, parcels, all registered.

Your account of D.C. Peather's book: *Flowering Earth* is fascinating. I must try to get this book. Science, in all its manifold aspects, is almost a new adventure for your mind, but I have been thrilled by it for long years. Remember that at one time, long long ago, I studied chemistry and physics and geology and botany, and even took my degree in them. Science has given more faith and confidence and peace of mind than almost anything. Without it I would have been rudderless. For me it has taken the place of religion. But science must be allied to life—to the earth—to flowers and trees and mountains and rivers, and human beings. Otherwise it is lifeless—"A little primrose by the brim, a yellow primrose was to him, and it was nothing more."

As you are so interested in biology and the early forms of life, I wish you could see them under the microscope.

Harsha and Ajit have just turned up and it is not possible to continue writing.

Love,

Papu

9. To Indira Nehru[1]

Andheri
May 1, 1940

Darling Indu,

Today it was announced that the Mediterranean route is closed and ships are coming *via* the Cape. And so the barriers grow and this tight little world, which flying and the rest of it had made so small and accessible, again expands. The waste land spreads and we live our lives cut off from each other or at least with fewer contacts. And you go further away from me in the physical plane. I suppose these processes will continue and develop and our days will progressively grow darker in the black-out which envelops the world.

I wonder how long letters will go by air from India to Europe. I wonder when this note will reach you. However that might be, I shall continue writing till it is certain that the letters cannot get through. And then also we shall find some means of communication.

All manner of people are asking me continually, why do you not cable to Indu to come back immediately. It is curious how generous people are with their advice. Anyway I hope Bhandari will have reached you by this time and he will help you to fix your programme for all eventualities. Whatever you decide in consultation with him will be best for you.

... The Planning Committee started today. We are having long sittings, both morning and afternoon, every day. It is not easy now to stay on in Andheri as it takes too long to go to Bombay from here. So tomorrow I move to Bombay.

I saw "Snow White" for the first time here and liked it.

It is warm here but the sea breeze is pleasant.

All my love to you, darling.

Your loving,
Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

10. To Indira Nehru[1]

Andheri
10 May 1940

Darling Indu,

For the last week or more I have been wanting to write to you daily but this Planning Committee exhausts me and by the end of the day I am hardly in a fit condition to do anything. We sit daily from nine in the morning to six in the evening with an interval for lunch. At night I have to do some hours' work to prepare for the next day. All this is hard concentrated work which takes a great deal out of one. I had moved to Bombay from Andheri and I stayed there for a week. Yesterday, however, I fled from Bombay and came back to Andheri in order to escape visits from well-meaning friends and also to have more restful nights. I spend an extra hour coming and going daily but the night makes up for it and is much pleasanter here.

Anyway our work will end soon or rather will be forcibly ended. There is yet mountains of it but all the members are tired and want to go away, so perforce we must adjourn. Probably we shall wind up for the present on the 14th and I may go on the same day or the 15th. I want to go to Wardha for a day to have a talk with Bapu. Strange developments are taking place all over the world and I want to know how Bapu is reacting to them. Then Allahabad and Lucknow.

A reason for my delaying writing to you was an expectation of a cable from Bhandari. This came in due course from Leysin sent by you and Bhandari. As you have come to this decision after full discussion with Bhandari, the matter must rest there and we must all reconcile ourselves to it. It is best that you should give first place to a complete recovery to health, even though that means a few months more. That is obviously the first essential and having come to this decision, one need not worry about it further.

And yet, Europe is becoming such a cauldron that it is a superhuman feat not to worry. There is no certainty, no security about anything or any person. Still I suppose Leysin is about as quiet a place as you could find anywhere in Europe and I do not see why anyone should intrude on this quiet dullness of Leysin. Anyway it is no good being oppressed by the future. The present is troublesome enough, when the future comes we shall face that also, whatever it might be.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

Today brought the news of the German invasion of Holland, Belgium etc. Bombay is naturally excited and so I suppose is a good part of the world. Events are moving rapidly. The old world seems to be passing. What will the new one be like?...

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

11. To Indira Nehru[1]

Andheri
11.5.1940

Darling,

I have just written to you and it is rather absurd for me to write again and separately. But I fear that communications between Europe and India will grow more and more irregular and we may not get each other's letters for long periods. There are one or two things I want to tell you. Indeed there are many but it is not easy to write about such matters, especially when prying eyes look through our letters. Not that there is anything secret about it all. Still the fact itself is sufficient to restrain one somewhat. And then I have to contend against a lifetime habit of restraint in expression of intimate personal matters. So these matters must wait till we meet and have the desire and opportunity to discuss them.

Meanwhile I wanted to clear up something and thus perhaps lighten your mind. It is obvious that you have had to put up with a great deal of mental trouble and conflict. This is reflected in your letters. You know how this must come in the way of your full recovery to health. Knowing that does not help much for it is never an easy matter to resolve these conflicts and difficulties. We cannot run away from them —they pursue us wherever we go. People come to me and press me to go to some place for rest. As if by going away to a mountain or a jungle I can escape from my thoughts and the problems that oppress my mind.

Such conflicts within one have to be faced without much help from outside. No outsider can really help. Certainly I cannot help you, howsoever I might try. I might make matters worse and so I wish to err on the safer side of complete noninterference. I do not even know how

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

your mind works, though vaguely I might sometimes guess. You told me very rightly once how blind I was. That is perfectly true, I miss the most obvious things. And so we have grown progressively more and more ignorant of each other, and even our love for each other has not brought any understanding. You are such a stranger to me, and perhaps you do not know much about me. That by itself is nothing to worry about. In some small measure every new generation appears strange to its predecessor. Anyway the position is that I cannot presume to advise you about any matter and even if I was in a better position to do so, it would be improper for me.

In your letters you have written repeatedly that you want to return to India, to come to me, that this thought has become an obsession with you. The question of your return for some time does not arise now but still I should like you to analyse a little what this desire amounts to. I do not know—I can only guess. Does it not amount to this—You have no desire to come back to India just yet, indeed the idea rather disturbs you. The prospect of living anywhere in India, whether in Anand Bhawan or elsewhere, is itself somewhat oppressive. But still you have wanted to come because of your affection for me and a sense of obligation that you carry. You feel that you must help me as much as you can. Your duty, you feel, indicates that you must return to India and to me—Now that is not the right way of looking at anything. It involves doing something which fundamentally you do not want to do, and worse still, mixing up your affection with a sense of obligation to me. In such a mixture, affection always suffers, and the mind becomes confused. Affection, if it is to endure, must not be tied to obligations; it must be free and unfettered.

All of us have to carry a host of obligations. But it is entirely wrong for the parents to come in the way of their children's growth and become burdens to them in the shape of obligations.

Suppose you came to India, when at the back of your mind there was no desire or urge to do so. You will begin regretting your act and will feel unhappy. Even your affection that brought you here will assume the guise of an enemy for did it not force you to do something you did not want to do?

So please get rid of all notions of having to do your duty by me. You will do that duty far more by acting as you think you should act. You should come to India when you feel the urge to do so, not otherwise and not because of me, though I might count for much in other ways.

If once you are clear in your mind that you have not got to act in order to fulfil an obligation or a duty, then the mental conflict lessens.

You should act just as you think, after full consideration, that you should do. Ignore other people's opinions and wishes. Follow your own urge. If this urge tells you to come to India, then you will fit in here—otherwise you will not. It is always a difficult matter for young boys and girls who have spent their formative years abroad to fit into Indian conditions. I found some difficulty at first. Later, though I never fitted in and do not fit in even now, very strong bonds grew up between India and me, if I may say so. India is in my blood now and though I like going abroad, I could not possibly keep away for long. Therefore to some extent I fit in.

I have written this letter when I was feeling very tired and sleepy. It is 2 a.m. I hope I have written intelligibly. But I cannot go on. My mind refuses to function and my eyes to remain open.

Your loving,
Papu

12. To Indira Nehru[1]

Sevagram
May 16, 1940

Darling Indu,

I am in Sevagram for a day—the Shegaon that was. The name of this village where Bapu lives was changed a few months ago by the Post Office, because there was another Segaon and this led to confusion. I have come here for a few hours to see Bapu on my way back north. The temperature is 114°F in the shade and the hot winds blow. Allahabad, I suppose, is just slightly hotter.

... What strange things are happening in Europe today and with what vast consequences to the future. Because my mind has been wrapped up in all these possibilities for years past, it is not surprised or taken aback. But others who never gave thought to the obvious, are shaken up. Their old world totters and they do not know what the new one will be like. It was quite interesting to watch the reaction of businessmen and others in Bombay.

The Planning Committee ended its third sessions day before yesterday. It meets again on June 21st which means that I have to return

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

to Bombay for another spell within five weeks. Meanwhile I go to Lucknow, Allahabad, Lahore, Peshawar and possibly four or five days in Kashmir. The old hunger for going to Kashmir holds me though it will hardly be satisfied by a week-end visit.

Get well, my dear, in mind and body. We have to face much in the future that will require the best in us.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

13. To Indira Nehru[1]

May 23, 1940

Darling,

The world we knew seems to disintegrate and dissolve and to give place to something new. My mind is restless and sometimes distressed, and at all times it tries to peer into the future, but it does so in vain. But whatever may happen to the world, you are there, and I hope it is well with you. It is curious to think of you in the quiet restful valley of the Rhone, surrounded, as it were, with the clash and butchery of war. How helpless we all seem. And yet in the aggregate we are not perhaps so helpless, if we only knew how and what to do. Possibly some day we will.

Do my letters reach you, I wonder. But I shall continue to write and hope that some of my letters at least will manage to reach you.

...I have had an interesting guest today. He is a distinguished Chinese who is on his way back from Tibet to China—they have to go *via* Darjeeling. He went to represent the Chinese Government at the installation of the new Dalai Lama—a lad aged 4 or 5. This new Dalai Lama has been recently chosen because he is supposed to show signs of his predecessor. One of the strong points in his favour was that he never laughs or smiles. He sits gravely through the various ceremonies and behaves in a lordly manner to all who approach him. But, I was told, he grew very tired one day after two or three hours of prayers and ceremonies.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML. Extracts.

I am off to Lahore & Peshawar and then Kashmir, just for five days. It is rather absurd to go to Kashmir for this short period, but if I do not seize this opportunity I might have to wait for a long time again. I have waited long enough. I want to freshen the picture I have in mind. It will help me in the days to come.

And now to bed. I am frightfully sleepy and it is 2 a.m. The Chinese occupied me for the whole day and so I had to work in the night.

Love,

Papu

14. To Indira Nehru[1]

Ghaziabad Station
23.5.1940

My darling,

I sent you a letter this morning from Allahabad. A little later, just before leaving for the station I received your letter of May 8th. I was so glad to get it just then. If it had come half an hour later I would have missed it and it would have followed me about to Kashmir.

I have had to change here and the Frontier Mail is late. So I have sat down to write to you.

Your account of Bhandari's visit to Leysin is not quite what I had gathered from him. He informed me that you and he and Rollier had come to the unanimous decision that you should stay on. The decision, it appears, was chiefly Rollier's and partly Bhandari's and you were more of a consenting party. However, there it is and there seems to be no other alternative for the present. So we had better accept it with grace and derive as much benefit from it as possible. I would not bother about next autumn and spring and all that. Things happen quickly nowadays and no long distance programme is possible. We have to carry on without excitement and yet be ready for any sudden change of programme. It is inevitable that a person under treatment has to carry out doctor's orders to a large extent. But doctors are not always as wise and infallible as they make themselves out to be and final decisions must rest with oneself. Make up your mind therefore to decide for yourself

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

whenever the need for this arises. Indeed you may be compelled to do so. You have got the general hang of it now and know what the doctors feel about it. But you have one great advantage over them. You know, or ought to know, how you yourself feel in the matter.

... You must not bother to economise at the cost of your treatment or health or comfort. But economy where easily possible is desirable. This war, apart from its major consequences, has innumerable minor results affecting each individual. I am rather careless about money and usually have a very foggy notion about what I can afford to spend. Invariably I exceed it. So far it did not matter very much as a fair and increasing income came in from royalties on books. But the war has put almost an end to this and I realised two days ago in Allahabad that it was not an easy matter to pay next month's servants' salaries. This state of affairs is likely to continue and make matters a little difficult. Fortunately my scale of expenditure is very elastic and at least 60% of it is on non-necessaries—books, telegrams, postage, travelling, etc. Much of this can be reduced immediately. It will do me no harm not to buy books for a while as in any event I have little time to read new books. Travelling can be controlled by reverting to third class. And so on. Many people are much more affected than I am. I suppose this is so everywhere. It will not make any fundamental difference to me, except that it will be rather painful not to help so many deserving people who come to me.

Lahore—Near Station
May 24, 1940

... I have just been to the Shalimar Gardens which are opposite our camp. An old world air of a bygone age hung about them and I thought of the Moghal emperors who had their pleasures there and have passed away. I like being transported to the past. As I wandered about them I thought of the present age which is so rapidly passing before our eyes and I wondered what relics of this will remain for future generations.

How rapidly events march. The old world goes in thunder and destruction. It takes away perhaps much that is good and one feels a little sad about it. At least one hopes that much of the bad will also go.

Meanwhile we live in this peaceful age of transition which is neither here nor there and strong nerves and stout hearts are necessary. Neither countries nor individuals can rely on others. They have to shift for themselves or not shift at all. I should like you to do something which

I know well you can do if you make up your mind. Rely upon yourself, take your own decisions and act up to them. Do not permit yourself to become a passive agent of fate. That is not good enough at any time, much less in the present age. I think this attitude and determination will help you enormously in your return to good health. It will remove many a burden from your mind—needless burdens which are often of our own making. All of us may err or take wrong steps. That can't be helped. But always to be in doubt, and not to know what to do is a far greater affliction. I wrote to you a few weeks ago to get rid of any feeling of responsibility or duty to me. I want your love, my dear, not your duty or responsibility, which becomes a burden to you and to me. Of course we all have duties and responsibilities and not only rights. Bapu said in answer to H.G. Wells the other day that besides a declaration of rights, there should also be a declaration of obligations. That is true for otherwise we become self-centred individuals always making claims on others. But however true that might be in the larger context, it has no place in the relation of individuals who care for one another. If the urge to do a thing is absent, a sense of responsibility or duty cannot and should not take its place. So pull yourself together and march ahead to health and a full life of activity.

Whatever my failings might be, and they are many, I do not go to pieces when trouble or danger or difficulty threatens. They revive me and strengthen me. I do not get excited then, though at other times I am apt enough to misbehave in this way. People tell me now that I am looking better than I have done for a long time past. Perhaps this is the effect of the pace of events. I want to be ready for all eventualities and my mind reacts in that way. So do not worry about me at all. And do not worry about yourself. Become the mistress of your own life, your present and future, and go ahead. Consult your doctors, consult your friends, consult me certainly, but decide for yourself. There is always a great danger in sanatorium life. It is mentally debilitating. One falls into a rut, which howsoever boring, makes life easy with no responsibilities, no vital decisions to make. One drifts. That is bad and that is why I am always against a long stay in a sanatorium, unless this is absolutely necessary. Doctors, however eminent, think too much of the physical condition. Have you read Thomas Mann's *The Mountain?* It describes life in a sanatorium.

I have written a long letter and my pen runs on and on—But I must stop now.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

15. To Indira Nehru[1]

Rampur
Jhelum Valley—Kashmir
May 29, 1940

Darling Indu,

I am at last in Kashmir and I feel a little excited and moved about it. Probably I would be still more excited if I was not oppressed by the rapid developments of the war situation. These are disturbing in many ways but, apart from this, there is always a possibility that I might be called back at any moment. It was on this understanding that I came.

I spent two days in Peshawar. I was the guest of my young Pathan friend about whom I wrote to you once—Mohammad Yunus—who stayed with us in Allahabad. I told you that he had 43 brothers and sisters—many of them half-brothers etc. All these having one father. There were 8 mothers or rather 8 wives successively, though sometimes overlapping. Yunus was the youngest of the family and he was born when his father was 89 years old. The old man was hale and hearty to the end and died partly through an accident when he was 99. The family mansion was in the heart of the city of Peshawar, a big house of the old style, as solid as a fortress. The mother-tongue of the family was Persian in a way and conversation was carried on alternately in Persian, Pushtu, Hindustani and sometimes in English.

It is really astonishing how much a Pathan can eat, and remember that he does not waste time and energy over vegetables and rice and the like. He concentrates on solid chunks of meat, rich *pulao* and thick very wholesome bread. The bread is as big as a *thali* and an inch thick. A day of this food in the extreme heat of Peshawar upset me and I have been gradually recovering since then.

We left Peshawar yesterday—Abdul Ghaffar Khan was with me. We stopped at Attock where the Indus meets another river and had a dip in the cold water of the Indus. There we passed within ten miles of Taxila and I was sorely tempted to go there. But our programme was heavy and I resisted the temptation. We spent the night in Abbottabad. This morning we started from Abbottabad and followed the road to Kashmir joining the Jhelum Valley route at Domel. My mind was continually going back to the autumn of 1916, nearly 24 years, when I had gone by this very road out of Kashmir with Dadu, Mummie & others. There were numerous halts as people had gathered to welcome

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

Pahalgam and from there to the Kolahoi glacier. I shall be back in five days and then I return *via* Jammu and the Banihal Pass. My future programme is:

Allahabad	13 to 17th June
Wardha	17 to 19th „
Bombay	20th to end of June

All my love,

Your loving,
Papu

17. To Indira Nehru[1]

June 16, 1940

Indu Darling,

Will this letter reach you, and if so how and where? I do not know. But I take the risk in the hope that ultimately it will get to you. All round little Switzerland are belligerent powers now and war rages. For the present, I suppose, all idea of your leaving Switzerland for another country is out of the question. There appears to be no feasible way. But events are taking place with astonishing speed and the future may be more certain. Anyway I know that you can look after yourself, especially when crisis comes, and I do not worry.

I have paid my brief visit to Kashmir and I am exhilarated by it. What an enchanting land with an air that vitalizes. Taken as a whole I am convinced that it is superior to Switzerland and, I would say, healthier. I am sure that a stay there in the higher valleys would be of enormous benefit to you. I wish I myself could go there for two months every year—one month trekking towards Ladakh or Baltistan or the various glaciers and upper valleys, and one month rest and intensive reading, writing also in a higher valley. That would be an ideal life. But ideals are difficult to realise!

I wrote to you from Srinagar. During my brief stay I went to the Kolahoi glacier *via* Pahalgam. I loved this trip and came back thoroughly tanned. Indeed my skin—such as was exposed, is peeling off.

I am going to Wardha today for a Working Committee meeting and from there to Bombay for the National Planning Committee. I shall be back in Allahabad early in July.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML. Extracts.

... I think of you almost continuously. There are so many inquiries about you. The world changes—an epoch is over. Let us keep cool and steady and not allow ourselves to be bowled over by any change. If you have news of Louise and Jean-Jacques let me have it.

All my love,

Your loving,
Papu

18. To Indira Nehru[1]

Bombay
Aug. 1, 1940

Darling,

On my return from Kashmir, I wrote half a dozen articles on Kashmir.[2] I enclose the first of these. It might interest you as it gives my emotional reactions to the long deferred visit. Possibly I imagined much that I write about. But the visit had a powerful effect upon me. Even physically it made me feel fitter and everyone remarked on this. Actually, to my disgust, I put on 2 pounds in weight, in spite of the strenuous life I lived there. And yet my waist measurement lessened by an inch or two! Which shows what a healthy animal I am.

On my way back from Poona I paid a visit to the little state of Aundh. I wrote to you once about this. This tiny state has become a group of village republics, partly because the Raja is a go-ahead person, partly because of the influence of his son, recently returned from Oxford. It was an interesting visit, though Aundh is too small a place for any effective experiment. Kirloskarwadi and Oglewadi are in Aundh and we visited both of these industrial concerns. At Oglewadi I was reminded that some years back you had gone there, probably with the Vakils.

The Raja of Aundh is a delightful and extraordinary person. He is 73 but considers himself, and is in many ways, a young man. He is famous for his *surya namaskars*, the old form of exercise, in the form of salutation to the sun. Every school boy & girl in the state does these *namaskars* and the Raja himself does a hundred of them every morning, in addition to a brisk run up and down a hill. His energy is extraordinary.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, section 9, item 21.

He remarked casually to me that in another twenty years' time, perhaps he might begin to grow old and not be able to run up & down a hill! For 30 years or more he has done these *namaskars* without a day's break and during all this period he has not had a day's illness or even a cold.

This letter must end now as I have to go out. This evening I go to Allahabad. I shall have to come back here within a month for the Planning Committee.

All my love, darling.

Your loving,
Papu

19. To Indira Nehru[1]

Cawnpore
11.8.40

Darling,

The situation here is developing rapidly and this has kept me busy and moving. We have had a meeting of the A.I.C.C. in Poona. I spent some days in Allahabad—about a week—and I tried to clear up various arrears of work and to tie up loose ends. One must keep ready for emergencies. One matter which was worrying me, I tried to dispose of, though not very satisfactorily I fear. This was the writing of an additional chapter for the American edition of my *Autobiography*.[2] This book has been considerably abridged in America and I have not been able to see the abridgements. I had promised to write a final chapter giving a survey of the last five years, since I finished my book. This was a hard job. I did it at express speed writing about 8000 or 9000 words in a little over a day. Inevitably the writing is hurried and does not fit in with the leisurely narrative of the book. It was difficult also to compress the events of the past five years within these limits. And then there is the censor. The thought of him cramps one's style.

In Allahabad a major occurrence has been Lado Bhabi's efforts at fasting. For reasons of health, she decided to go in for a long fast. She did well for a week and then there was a sudden upset inside her and her condition became rather serious. She is slowly recovering now.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. See *ante*, section 1, item 87.

I think however that the fast will do her good, and she will be better for it.

Today I came here for various functions, especially to see the Congress volunteers. It is unusual for me to tour in this way now. I have not the time nor the inclination. A certain Government of India order about volunteering, however, produced a curious situation and this visit of mine to Cawnpore today became an all-India event. There was a procession, a march past and speech by me to a huge crowd of about 50,000. For an hour during the procession I stood at the back of the car. Then I stood saluting while nearly 1000 volunteers marched past, and then I held forth for an hour and forty minutes! How long-winded I have become! But I seem to have so much to say, my mind is full and I want to share it. Anyway I am tired now...

I go to Lucknow from here—then to Benares—Allahabad—Wardha for the Working Committee. This is tiring business. Perhaps I shall have real rest soon.

Bappi is ill in Lucknow and Amma is with her. I shall see them.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

20. To Indira Nehru[1]

Wardha
20.8.1940

Darling Indu,

Over a month ago I had your cable that you were writing to me. But no letter has come yet. I must not be impatient.

I have come here to Wardha for a meeting of the Congress Working Committee. I think I wrote to you that I was going to Bombay from here for the Planning Committee. All that seems to be in a melting pot now and everything is uncertain. The situation in the U.P. is particularly difficult and I feel I cannot keep away. Anyway the next fortnight at the most will decide many things.

Quite a long time ago a letter came for you in French from 'Catherine' from a place called 'Olli Viller'. Evidently Catherine was with you at La Pelouse. I am not enclosing this as I do not know if it will reach you.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

... I do not quite know what to write to you. My mind today is somewhat agitated and all manner of thoughts tumble over one another. It is a queer world we live in. I shall write to you more later, when I have the chance.

Meanwhile, may it be well with you, my dear.

Love,

Papu

21. To Indira Nehru[1]

Wardha
Oct. 12, 1940

Darling,

Your letters do not come to me and presumably my letters do not reach you. Yet I continue to write to you from time to time in the hope that perhaps, sometime or other, the letter might reach you. It is a curious and depressing world we live in where we can neither meet nor communicate with those we love. When will I see you again, I wonder. Will it be months or years? I do not know, just as I do not know anything about the future that is unfolding so painfully for all of us. This process ages one and most of us grow older faster than the years warrant. It does not matter much for those who are already, like me, past the half century mark. But it does matter for the young who have their lives before them.

A letter that came reecntly to me brought joy to me. It was from Louise Morin. How it came from France to me I do not know. Perhaps it got through in the early days of the change. I was glad to have news of her. But what pleased me especially was her account of the visit she paid to you at Leysin. She gave me a very satisfactory account of how you looked and how healthy you seemed to be.

I am here in Wardha for the usual Working Committee meetings. The strain of uncertainty about the future is bad. No one knows how many morrows we have to face in the normal way and the feeling of voyaging through strange lands grips me. There seem to be no resting places on the way—one must move on and on—I have no objection to

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

movement—I like it to be rapid. But to move blindfolded, as it were, is not so pleasant.

And yet, I often wonder, do not most of us go through life rather like sleepwalkers, unaware of what is happening all around us. A slow awakening comes to some, and others do not awaken at all. Perhaps the somnambulists are not so unfortunate. They escape the horror and tragedy—but who would willingly be a sleepwalker?

I write foolishly to you, words and phrases which may have some significance and yet which may be just words. Suddenly I felt like writing to you, but there was little to write about. I can't write about the odd happenings here for they would be stale and flat by the time this letter reached you. Still it is good to write and to think of you in a far corner of the world.

Madan Atal seems to be obsessed with the notion that you should join a Swiss university. I wrote to you about this previously. Your health is the primary consideration and then you will do as you think best. We are all going through the university of life and that is the hardest of all.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

22. To Indira Nehru[1]

Allahabad
25-10-1940

Darling,

At last, after long waiting, a letter from you has just, or almost just, reached me. Was it four months ago when I got your last letter? It took full three months for this to come. I was in Lucknow when it came in a bundle containing about twenty or more letters. I looked at it and handled it carefully and was in no hurry to open it. I had waited so long for it—why hurry? I wanted to read it at leisure when I was alone. So I opened and read the other letters and later retired to my room with the message from you.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

Three months for a letter to come! My mind goes back to the old days when mails went to Europe *via* the Cape in slow-moving vessels. Are we going back in this as in other matters? Or is this going back only to spring forward with greater speed and energy? I wonder. I cannot quite believe that the world will go back, even though much of what is called modern civilisation lies in ruins.

I thought of you a great deal as I read that letter and all day as I carried it about with me. Not that the inducement of a letter was required. You are seldom out of my mind and sometimes I have a feeling that you are very near me. The door between your room and mine is always open and I walk in and out of it frequently for no apparent reason. Your room is as it was. I do not like to have changes made or even an alteration of the furniture. In my own room you look at me from every side. You will be amused to learn how many pictures of you I have round about me. Yesterday I counted them up. There were 26 of them—all different ones of course—in my sitting room and dressing room! From babyhood upwards you sprawl or sit or stand and the past comes up before me and becomes more real than the present.

I have had many reports of the fall of Paris and France. Suhrawardy —do you remember him?—was in Paris when the Germans came and he gave us a vivid account. Then the letter from Louise Morin after her return from Switzerland. For sheer tragedy and drama the sudden collapse of France would be hard to beat. It made people realise suddenly that the old world we knew was cracking up. It was the end of an era. And yet, I suppose, most people in India, both Indians and English, still fail to appreciate what is happening. They stick to the old ruts and close their minds in sheer self-defence. But the ostrich does not save himself by hiding his head.

What a world we live in! It is a nightmare. And yet even the most sensitive grow used to its daily horrors. I read about the bombing of London and then remember that Chungking has had this kind of thing for years—and still carries on. I do not suppose any city has had this experience for such a length of time. I do not know how people feel when they are bombed. I did not feel the slightest bit nervous as I watched the bombing of Barcelona and Chungking. I was fascinated by the sight. Indeed I resented being pushed into a dug-out.

I sent you a cable day before yesterday. I suggested in this that you might visit other parts of Switzerland for a change. This was not only because of what you wrote about the oppressive atmosphere at Les Frenes. Movement and changing scenery divert the mind and give it some rest. That is very necessary in these days of stress and strain. Unfortunately

you cannot come out of Switzerland or, at any rate, without great difficulty. Perhaps it is as well at least for another three months. It would have served little purpose for you to have gone to England. You would have not been able to do anything worthwhile and you might well have experienced a hitch in your progress to complete health. And then you would have had to be looked after by others. Of course there should be no question of our avoiding the risks or dangers of bombing or anything else. We might as well know the world we live in by personal experience. I think it would be a good thing if many people in India had that experience. Perhaps they will, sometime or other.

But one must face risk in the course of doing something worthwhile. Otherwise this becomes just a gesture and a foolhardy one at that. We have a long road to travel and I have no doubt that there will be plenty of dangers for all of us. Let us get our minds and bodies in fit condition.

I do not suppose it is very necessary for you to remain at Leysin all the time. The climatic and other benefits of Leysin could be obtained at many places in Suisse. So it might be worth while to visit other places. The visit to Bex must have been a pleasant change, though Bex is a dull enough place.

I am glad you met Nanu. I wish I could help him. But I cannot get into touch with him. The last time I wrote to him many months ago my letter did not reach him. And it contained a cheque.

You ask for news. What news am I to give you? There is plenty of course but then there is also an army of censors to get through. We also have a perpetual crisis and this is an exhausting affair. But we seem to be on the eve of big events. Indeed they have begun already.

For the rest life goes on—Betty is coming here tomorrow with her children for a few days. I am at present quite alone in the house, I have just returned from a very heavy tour.

If at any time in the future you are able to return to India, it would perhaps be better to come *via* America and China.

Within a month you will have your birthday. This letter will reach you long afterwards, if it reaches you. And that makes me wonder if my letters are reaching you at all.

Send my love to Nanu, if you can reach him, and lots of it to you my darling one.

Your loving,
Papu

11

PRISON DIARY WITH LETTERS I

31 October 1940—21 May 1941

EIGHTH CONVICTION[1]

THE TRIAL[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru : I will not take part in the trial but will informally help the prosecution in elucidating any points on which it wants to base its case. I don't propose to defend myself or take any formal part in this trial. This is not with any intention to obstruct proceedings. It is because I am not particularly interested in these legal proceedings. I have prepared a statement which I wish to read out to you now or at a later stage. After reading it out, I shall hand it over to the court and it need not be recorded by the court in writing.

I admit to having made the speeches referred to.[3] The official reports produced reveal an extraordinary lack of intelligence or knowledge of shorthand on the part of the reporter. They hardly make sense in many places. I try always to talk sense.

Some words convey meaning, some do not, some give an entirely different meaning. The speeches I made often lasted over an hour and the reporter could not probably keep pace with me, with the result that, when they were transcribed in long-hand it all became a curious jumble. While I am not prepared to make any general observation on the thirty and odd bits from my speeches that have been put in my hand, many of them appear to be correct though badly worded.

I have always preached independence for India and removal of British rule. I am fully committed to this and I have tried my utmost by speech, by writing and by other activities during the last quarter of a century to bring this about.

Some extracts relate to war. I have dealt with this question in my written statement showing the origins of the war and the policy which the Congress has adopted in regard to a possible war during the last four or five years or more. And finally I have dealt with the question of the imposition of the war on India without any reference to the people of India.

1. In this and the following section the diaries kept by Jawaharlal in jail from 14 November 1940 to 2 December 1941 have been printed. The letters written by him during this period have been interspersed chronologically. Editorial omissions have been indicated by dots. The diaries are available in N.M.M.L.
2. Gorakhpur, 3 & 4 November 1940. *National Herald*, 5 November 1940.
3. See *ante*, pp. 150-160.

As a matter of fact during the last four weeks I have deliberately avoided saying many things in regard to the war which I ordinarily would have done because our leader, Mahatma Gandhi, wanted only the person of his choice to say them for the moment. In my speeches here and elsewhere, therefore, I laid stress chiefly on the compulsory levies for the war fund especially from the poor and advised them not to submit to this. Usually, however, I have refrained latterly from expressing this opinion because of the orders of my chief.

STATEMENT TO THE COURT

I have been told that the charge against me is based on the reports of three speeches I delivered in the Gorakhpur district early in October last. Copies of these reports, and in one case a translation into English, have been given to me. I have read these and I cannot congratulate the persons who were responsible for the reporting. These reports, though presumably taken down in shorthand, are scrappy and incomplete, confusing and often making little sense. I am a lover of words and phrases and try to use them appropriately. Whatever my opinions might be, the words I use are meant to express them intelligibly and in ordered sequence. A reader of these reports will find little intelligence or sequence in them, and is likely to obtain an entirely distorted impression of what I actually said.

I make no complaint of this reporting and I do not suggest that deliberate distortions have been made. But I do want to make it clear that what I said was in many respects entirely different from what the jumble of words in the reports would lead me to imagine. If this is so in the reporting of my speeches, when particular care is taken and more qualified men are employed, I cease to wonder at what happens when the speeches of others are reported by totally unqualified persons, and these are made the basis of charges in courts of law.

It is not my intention to give details of the many errors and mistakes in these reports. That would mean rewriting them completely. That would waste your time, Sir, and mine, and would serve little purpose. I am not here to defend myself, and perhaps what I say in this statement will make your task easier. I do not yet know the exact nature of the charge against me. I gather that it has something to do with the Defence of India Rules and that it relates to my references to the war and to the attempts being made to compel the people of India to take part in the war effort. If that is so, I shall gladly admit the charge. It is not

necessary to go to garbled reports to find out what I or other Congressmen say in regard to India and the war. The Congress resolutions and statements, carefully and precisely worded, are there for all the world to know. By those resolutions and statements I stand, and I consider it my duty to take the message of the Congress to the people of India.

As a matter of fact, ever since the Congress came to the conclusion that, in order to give effect to the Congress policy, satyagraha or civil disobedience should be started, I have endeavoured to check myself in my utterances and to avoid what might be termed satyagraha. Such was the direction of our chief, Mahatma Gandhi, who desired that satyagraha should be confined to particular persons of his choice. One such person was selected and he expressed in public utterances the Congress attitude to the war, laying some emphasis on the Congress policy of non-violence. It was my good fortune to have been selected to follow him and to give expression to the Congress viewpoint, with perhaps greater emphasis on the political aspect. It had been decided that I should do so, after giving due notice to the authorities, from November 7 onwards, in the district of Allahabad. That programme has been varied owing to my arrest and trial, and the opportunity to give frank and full expression to the Congress policy in regard to the war has come to me earlier than I anticipated.

If I was chosen, or before me Shri Vinoba Bhave was chosen for this purpose, it was not to give expression to our individual views. We were symbols of the people of India. As individuals we may have counted for little, but as such symbols and representatives of the Indian people, we counted for a great deal. In the name of those people we asserted their right to freedom and to decide for themselves what they should do and what they would not do; we challenged the right of any other authority, by whomsoever constituted, to deprive them of this right and to enforce its will upon them. It was monstrons that any individual or group of individuals, deriving no authority from the Indian people and not responsible to them in any way, should impose their will upon them and thrust the hundreds of millions of India, without any reference to them or their representatives, into a mighty war which was none of their seeking. It was amazing and full of significance that this should be done in the name of freedom and self-determination and democracy, for which, it was alleged, the war was being waged. We were slow in coming to our final conclusions; we hesitated and parleyed, we sought a way out honourable to all the parties concerned. We failed and the inevitable conclusion was forced upon us that so far as the British Government or their representatives in India were concerned, we were still looked upon as chattels to do their will and to continue to be exploited

in their imperialist structure. That was a position which we could never tolerate, whatever the consequences.

There are very few persons in India, I suppose, whether they are Indians or Englishmen, who have for years past so consistently raised their voices against fascism and Nazism as I have done. My whole nature rebelled against them and, on many an occasion, I vehemently criticised the pro-fascist and appeasement policy of the British Government. Ever since the invasion of Manchuria, and subsequently in Abyssinia, Central Europe, Spain and China, I saw with pain and anguish how country after country was betrayed in the name of this appeasement and the lamps of liberty were being put out. I realised that imperialism could only function in this way; it had to appease its rival imperialisms, or else its own ideological foundations were weakened. It had to choose between this and liquidating itself in favour of democratic freedom. There was no middle way.

So long as appeasement applied to Manchuria, Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, Spain and Albania, "to far-away countries about which few people had ever heard," as the then Prime Minister of England put it, it did not matter much and was faithfully pursued. But when it came nearer home and threatened the British Empire itself, the clash came and war began.

Again there were two alternatives before the British Government and each government engaged in the war—to continue to function in the old imperialist way or to end this in their own domains and become the leaders of the urge for freedom and revolutionary change the world over. They chose the former, though they talked still in terms of freedom and self-determination and democracy. But their conception of freedom was, even in words, limited to Europe, and evidently meant freedom to carry on with their Empire in the old way. Not even peril and disaster have weakened their intention to hold on to their Empire and to enforce their will upon subject peoples. In India we have had over a year of war government. The people's elected legislatures have been suspended and ignored and a greater and more widespread autocracy prevails here than anywhere else in the world. Recent measures have suppressed completely such limited freedom, as the press possessed, to give facts and opinions. If this is the prelude to the freedom that is promised us, or to the 'new order' about which so much is said, then we can well imagine what the later stages will be when England emerges as a full-blooded fascist state.

I am convinced that the large majority of the people of England are weary of empire, and hunger for a real new order. But we have to deal not with them but with their government and we have no doubt in our

minds as to what that government aims at. With that we have nothing in common and we shall resist it to the uttermost. We have therefore decided to be no parties to this imposed war and to declare this to the world. This war has led already to widespread destruction and will lead to even greater horror and misery. With those who suffer we sympathise deeply and in all sincerity. But unless the war has a revolutionary aim of ending the present order and substituting something based on freedom and cooperation, it will lead to a continuation of wars and violence and uttermost destruction.

That is why we must dissociate ourselves from this war and advise our people to do likewise and not help in any way with money or men. That is our bounden duty. But even apart from this, the treatment accorded to the Indian people during the past year by the British authorities, the latter's attempts to encourage every disruptive and reactionary tendency, their forcible realisations of money for the war from even the poor of India, and their repeated affronts to Indian nationalism, are such that we can never forget them or ignore them. No self-respecting people can tolerate such behaviour, and the people of India have no intention of tolerating it.

I stand before you, Sir, as an individual being tried for certain offences against the state. You are a symbol of that state. But I am also something more than an individual. I too am a symbol at the present moment, a symbol of Indian nationalism, resolved to break away from the British Empire and achieve the independence of India. It is not me that you are seeking to judge and condemn, but rather the hundreds of millions of the people of India, and that is a large task even for a proud Empire. Perhaps it may be that though I am standing before you on my trial, it is the British Empire itself that is on its trial before the bar of the world. There are more powerful forces at work in the world today than courts of law; there are elemental urges for freedom and food and security which are moving vast masses of people, and history is being moulded by them. The future recorder of this history might well say that, in the hour of supreme trial, the Government of Britain and the people of Britain failed because they were drunk with the wine of imperialism and could not adapt themselves to a changing world. He may muse over fate, of empires which have always fallen because of this weakness, and call it destiny. Certain causes inevitably produce certain results. We know the causes; the results are following inexorably in their train.

It is a small matter what happens to me in this trial or subsequently. Individuals count for little; they come and go, as I shall go when my time is up. Seven times I have been tried and convicted by British

authority in India, and many years of my life lie buried within prison walls. An eighth time or a ninth, and a few more years, make little difference. But it is no small matter what happens to India and her millions of sons and daughters. That is the issue before me and that, ultimately, is the issue before you, Sir. If the British Government imagines that it can continue to exploit them and play about with them against their will, as it has done for so long in the past, then it is grievously mistaken. It has misjudged their present temper and read history in vain.

I should like to add that I am happy to be tried in Gorakhpur. The peasantry of Gorakhpur are the poorest and the most long-suffering in my province. They are the products of a hundred and fifty years of British rule and the sight of their poverty and misery is the final condemnation of the authority that has dealt with them these many years. I am glad that it was my visit to Gorakhpur district and my attempt to serve its people, that has led to this trial.

I thank you, Sir, for your courtesy.

Court Charge: Jawaharlal Nehru in his Maharajganj speech of October 6, used expressions which tended to excite disaffection towards the Crown Representative or Government established by law in British India and adversely influenced the conduct of the public in regard to the Defence of India or the efficient prosecution of the war—an offence punishable under Rule 38 (a) read with clause 5 of the same rule.

JN: I do not wish to plead at all, but it is my particular function and privilege in life to spread disaffection against the Crown Representative in India and the Government established by law at present in British India.

Public Prosecutor: Under section 256 of the Cr.P.C. the court will have to wait for the next day to give the accused an opportunity to cross-examine the prosecution witnesses if he wants. Would it be desirable to adjourn the hearing and take up the case after some time in the course of the day?

JN: I do not intend to cross-examine anyone. Why this concession? Neither am I going to change my mind overnight about the procedure I have already adopted.

Court: Do you have anything further to say?

JN : The government advocate has taken a lot of trouble for nothing in proving what is already proved. What I wanted to prove has been said in my statement. I assert that the Government of India Rules are the greatest insult that can be inflicted on the country and are monstrous and I want to break such a government.

Nov. 5, 1940[4]

Darling Indu,

Again I am writing to you from prison after many years. When was it last that I did so? Over five years ago and then also you were in Europe. The five years have gone with all their shocks and changes and I revert to my normal routine. It was difficult enough to write to you during these past five months and I yet do not know if any of these letters of mine have reached you across the warring armies. Now fresh obstacles arise. But I shall continue to write to you, while I may, and perhaps months hence, some of my letters may overcome these many impediments and reach your hands.

I came here with the new moon and it is five days old now. The slender crescent has put on more substance and nightly it grows fuller. I was arrested the day after Diwali and brought here from Allahabad. The next day after my arrival was *Id*, the great Muslim festival ending the *Ramzan* fast. So in feasting and rejoicing I came here, or was brought here. My trial lasted two days and today I was sentenced. There were three counts on three speeches I had delivered a month ago in Gorakhpur district and on each charge I was sentenced to a year and four months rigorous imprisonment, each sentence to run consecutively, that is four years in all. That is the biggest sentence I have so far had in my longish experience, but then I suppose this was only proper as I grow in years and presumably in importance.

Four years seems a long time to look to. And yet in this world of shock and change, it makes little difference what period is fixed for a sentence. For my part I might as well be here as elsewhere. For the last five days my tired mind and body have been clamouring for rest and I have slept more than I have done for many months. The mind has not been so restful. It is a wayward creature and not easy to control. Soon, I suppose, it will get into tune with my surroundings....

And now about you, my darling one. My arrest and sentence must not make the least bit of difference to what you intend doing. Do not

4. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

worry in the slightest. I have deliberately chosen my path, well knowing the consequences, and have trained myself to it. Age creeps upon me but I am young enough still in mind and body and hardened to most occurrences. It would distress me greatly if I felt that the odd things that happen to me upset any plans that you may make for yourself. I cannot help you much in the making of these plans and indeed this is not necessary. You are well enough I hope now and will be quite fit soon. To a large extent circumstances and world happenings control our lives today. You are tied up in Switzerland and cannot easily get away. The barriers that confine me are much narrower. We shall put up with these temporary impediments and mishaps without being affected by them too much. Anyway, my life is on the wane, though it may take an unconscionable time about it. Yours is to come. Each generation has to solve its own problems, and that perhaps applies far more today, in this fast-changing world, than ever before. For a passing generation to impose itself on a new one is bad. Yet we are always doing it, consciously sometimes, unconsciously most of the time. I have no doubt that I do it. And yet I do not want to and I would like you to help me in this. Do not therefore consider me, or what you may think are my wishes in anything, as a burden and an obstacle in your way. I have almost ceased to have any wishes about others, individually considered, though I have these wishes for large impersonal objects. I have learnt from experience that I am not wise enough to advise others. I find difficulty in deciding many questions for myself; how can I decide for others, even though they are dear to me?

In the solitude of prison I shall think of you a great deal. I shall sit here wrapped up in my thoughts and you will be a constant companion bringing joy and solace to me. So I shall not be really lonely, and the years or months that I pass here will perhaps bring peace to my mind. I shall make friends again with the stars and watch the moon wax and wane, and see the pageant of the world, with all its beauty and horror, as an onlooker from a distant place or a different world. I have worked hard during most of my life but I have worked as I wanted to, and life, in spite of many hard knocks, has been gracious to me. I suppose I have hard work still to do. There are no ways of escape from it. But at present I feel somewhat weary in mind. When I feel this way I seek refuge in poetry and the classics. What is wisdom, asks Euripides:

> What then is Wisdom? What of man's endeavour?...
>
> To stand from fear set free, to breathe and wait,
> To hold a hand uplifted over Hate.
> And shall not Loveliness be loved for ever?

Do I not betray my age and generation in what I write, and in my quotations?

The safest address for you to write to me will continue to be Anand Bhawan, though I do not know what will happen to Anand Bhawan in the months to come.

If you are in touch with Louise and Nanu send them my love. If it is possible for you to help Nanu in any way, I wish you would do so. For months I have been worried about him not knowing what to do. You will remember that when you want money cable directly to Bachhraj.

All my love, *carissima*, and may it be well with you.

Your loving,
Papu

Nov. 14, 1940

After a gap of many years, five and a quarter to be accurate, I begin writing a diary again. My diaries are entirely jail productions, and now that I am back in prison again, I pick up the old habit.

I have been two weeks in prison, but I had no proper note book. Today this little book as well as others, came and I had no excuse left for not writing.

Today is my birthday—51st. Perhaps a suitable day for beginning a journal. It is a terrifying thought, this creeping on of age. Fifty-one is a goodly age. In China it entitles one to all the respect that is paid to age. I can't get used to the idea that I am getting old, and others help me to delude myself. To some extent I have become associated in the minds of many with youth, and, most irrationally, this association continues, even though age may descend upon me heavily. True, I do not particularly feel the weight of it and am still full of vitality. Compared to nearly all my contemporaries, I am younger in appearance and even more so in vitality.

I think I am almost indifferent to death. There are no strong personal bonds which would hold me back if death beckoned to me. In a narrow personal sense I am rather detached, or so I imagine myself to be. And yet I am tied up with so many things and vaguely, at the back of my mind, the idea persists that I have yet to do big work. There is always an element of preparation for this in whatever activity I might indulge in. The N.P.C. was training me—in prison or elsewhere much of my reading has this background.

At the river Moss Dist. Mgst. & Vinayanand S.P. of Gorakhpur met me. We crossed the river as the early dawn was just beginning—Better cars on the other side—better road—36 miles, we reached Gorakhpur Jail at 6 a.m. on Nov. 1st.

My trial was fixed for the next day Nov. 2nd but the Govt. Pleader jibbed as this was *Id*. So it took place on Sunday Nov. 3rd inside the jail—a big tent put up—Moss, the Dist. Magte., presiding.

Nan, Betty, Kay, Madan Atal, Mohanlal Saxena, Rama Rao & many Gorakhpur friends & Congressmen present.

Curious unreal proceedings—Nan whispered this is 'Alice in Wonderland'—Kay said the whole thing was fantastic and, but for the reality of the prison sentence at the end, one could not take it seriously.

I read out my statement, which I had written out the night before—It was rather hurriedly prepared and I had taken no particular pains over it. For a while I had thought of writing something that might be worthwhile, a full presentation of the Congress case, &c. But I was tired and I had made so many statements previously—besides, the papers would not publish it anyhow for fear of the Defence of India Act. So I wrote hurriedly and more or less briefly.

The trial continued the next day rather unnecessarily but the Govt. Pleader insisted. He wanted to show off how well he could do the job and perhaps earn another day's fee. Towards the end of the proceedings I made some more remarks rather aggressively, though there was nothing wrong or improper in what I said. Something that the Govt. Pleader said irritated me. I was a little sorry for this afterwards. But it was a small matter.

Moss the D.M. said he would deliver judgement the same day at 4 p.m. Nan and others turned up but there was no Moss. After waiting for an hour they telephoned to Moss who told them that it was a harder job than he had imagined and he could not say when he would be ready. So Nan and Betty & Madan left Gorakhpur that night.

The next day, however, Moss was ready with his judgement. (Nov. 5th) a 'deterrent sentence was necessary'. I was charged with 3 offences —3 speeches and each offence was punishable with 5 years R.I.

> I, therefore, find the accused guilty on all the three charges and convict and sentence him under Rule 38(1)(a) read with clause (5) of the Defence of India Rules to rigorous imprisonment for one year and four months on each count, the sentences to run consecutively, making a total of four years rigorous imprisonment.

Four years! It seemed a terrifically long time. Yet what did it matter? The Alice in Wonderland element was still there. It was almost inconceivable that I would serve the full sentence, and if I did then it was

as well that I was in prison & not outside. A long sentence was good. It would shake people up. Quite a time in fact!

How dull and visionless our rulers are! It just amazes me how they are blind to all that is happening. They can only think and act in the old way.

The day of my sentence—Nov. 5th was also the day of the American Presidential election. We both got a four-year term that day! I am afraid I shall not be able to keep up with him. He is likely to complete it; I am not.

That day also was Guy Fawkes day!

The sentence over I wrote a long letter to Indu.

Four years! I might as well settle down—Sooner than I expected, I fell into my jail routine. Spinning, reading &c.—fixed hours. Regular exercise—I walk in front of & near my barrack morning & evening—Do some other exercises & *asans*—Cleaning, washing &c. To begin with plenty of sleep—about 9 to 10 hours a day. Now it is between 8 and 9. I had to make up for arrears.

It is surprising how I can cease worrying about outside politics in prison. Not entirely of course. But I became a distant onlooker—In fact what has repeatedly come to my mind is some odd thing (non-political) which I intended doing and left undone.

On Nov. 11th I received a cable from Indu *via* Allahabad:

'Am well—Trying come India. Have enough money. Constant thoughts love to all.'

This had been sent to Nan and was evidently in reply to the one informing her of my arrest. It had been sent on Nov. 5 from Bex before she knew of my conviction.

I was happy to get this cable and happy to know the reaction on her of my arrest. Yet how could she return—a difficult and precarious job. I sent her following cable on Nov. 12th to Bex:

"Darling your cable fourth don't upset your programme because my conviction keep me informed your movements love."

The Supt. of the Jail is Dr. R.N. Sewal, the Civil Surgeon of Gorakhpur—He is very anxious to add to my comfort. When my books ran out he sent me some worthwhile ones.

Here ends the record of the last fortnight—The eighth term of imprisonment is well on its way and, what is more important, I am launched on my 52nd year. The burden of both has to be borne.

AT HIS TRIAL AT GORAKHPUR PRISON, NOVEMBER 1940

Nov. 16

I am leaving Gorakhpur Jail tonight. Moss the D.M. accompanied by a procession of others came and informed me at 6.15 p.m. We leave after ten for Dehra Dun.

I expected the transfer but it came rather suddenly after I was settling down for the evening, had arranged my bed &c. Nan & Ranjit came to see me today and told me that the transfer was impending. It was a pleasant and soothing interview. I wonder when I shall see them again, possibly not for a long time as both of them are likely to go to prison within a week or two. But I may see Nan again at Dehra as she intends going to Mussoorie soon.

They gave me some glimpse of outside happenings—Big developments are likely—My arrest seems to have shaken things up, especially the sentence which came as a shock to everyone. Bapu, I am told, was quite taken aback by the sentence.

The sentence, apparently, was the Governor's own decision. It was meant to shock but in a different way. They are rather sorry for it now.

And so away from Gorakhpur Jail after sixteen days to my old home in Dehra. I have spent more time there than anywhere else uninterruptedly. How long more will I spend there?

Meanwhile war and tumult and destruction and death in a great part of the world. And in India? What will happen?

Nan brought many more birthday telegrams for me—one was from Frances Gunther from New York. Another from Louise from Dieulefit —I was happy to have them.

Nov. 18, 1940[5]

Darling Indu,

I wrote to you about two weeks ago from Gorakhpur on the day my sentence was passed. A few days later I received the cable you sent to *puphi* at Allahabad. The idea of your coming back to India and of my seeing you fills me with joy. Still I cabled to you not to upset your own programme because of my conviction. You have now been in Switzerland for nearly a year and that is a long enough time. At the most, even in normal times, you might have spent some of the winter months there,

5. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

say till March, and then left the place. Winter is good in Suisse. But there are other factors also and I can well understand your anxiety to leave the place. I suppose that even if you tried your utmost, it would take you a month or two to get away. Indeed I am not at all sure that you will succeed even then.

The only possible route seems to be for you to go *via* Marseilles to Barcelona and Lisbon, chiefly by air, and then also by air to London. You wrote about this once to me. Whether that route is open now I do not know. Even after you reach London the problem of returning to India is not solved. I am told that there is a long list of persons, including children, waiting to be sent to India. It takes months to get a passage on a convoy. I do not know how far it is possible for you to return to India without going to London, that is from Lisbon directly *via* the Cape. You must have all these factors in mind and will be able to decide for yourself.

Bear in mind that the good you have derived from your stay in Switzerland is not jeopardised. I want to see you healthy and strong and it is better to curb one's impatience for a while if thereby one can lay the foundations of sound health. All of us, including you of course, will have to bear heavy burdens in this mad world and the fitter we are for them, the better.

Personally, even from the health point of view, I think India has numerous ideal spots to recuperate, if that is necessary. That depends so much on the individual's liking and on, what might be termed, psychological reactions. If I was ill, of which there appears to be not the least chance, even a short stay in the higher valleys of Kashmir would fill me with energy and vitality.

It is quite impossible for any of us to forecast the future. Anything may happen in the world at large or in India. All we can do is to face our job and do it as well as we can and remain tranquil in spite of shock and disaster. We of this generation are fated to have these shocks in over-abundant measure and to carry this terrible burden of war and conflict and sorrow whether we like it or not. Perhaps the next generation, your generation, may have a better and happier time. That hope keeps us going. But you overlap with the passing generation and cannot escape its burdens. We grow old mentally with amazing rapidity when we come up with these stark and cruel realities of life. Perhaps we grow wiser also, though there is little wisdom in evidence anywhere.

I quite agree with you that it is not good enough for any man or woman to sit at ease, doing nothing, while millions have to risk everything they possess from day to day. Life is something much more than a round of eating and sleeping and amusing oneself. Indeed, as someone

has said, one can enjoy life properly only after resolving not to count the cost. I am not of the calculating variety, neither are you, and I would not like you to be one. We must face the risks and perils of the adventure of life. If I was an Englishman, I would not leave England now whatever happened, in spite of bombing and everything else. Being an Indian, my job lies in India and I would not leave India now even if I could.

Let us therefore not be frightened of perils, real or imaginary—the real ones are bad enough, but to be frightened of them is far worse. But to face danger calmly and courageously is one thing; to be foolhardy and melodramatic about it is quite another thing. It is folly. Therefore one avoids needless risk and danger. You will do so I hope.

I wrote to you in my last letter that with the passing of years I have grown more and more reluctant to force my advice on others about matters involving personal decisions. I am free enough with my advice on larger questions involving the mass. That is my job in life and I cannot escape it. But individual decisions must be taken by oneself. In this rapidly changing world, where we are forced to learn from the shock of events, the gap between two generations is apt to grow wider in the sense of understanding each other. I have tried hard to understand the new generation and perhaps I have not wholly failed. But this very attempt has taught me not to impose myself.

I write this letter to you well knowing that the chances are that it will not reach you. It will be lost somewhere in the 'fog of war'. But it may reach you some time or other and in any event it gives me pleasure in writing it. So why deny myself that escape from myself in thinking of you and imagining you to be beside me and listening to me?

Long before this letter reaches you, if it reaches you at all, you will have come to your decisions and possibly made your arrangements for your future programme. I can be of little help from here. But fortunately you have plenty of friends across the seas to help you.

Two nights ago I was suddenly informed in Gorakhpur Jail that I was being transferred to Dehra Dun. Soon after I left and by a devious and complicated route, partly by train and partly by motor car, I reached here last night. I travelled in comfort by train, in a small saloon, but as a *purdanashin*, with all the shutters and blinds up, lest an evil eye might fall upon me.

I am back again in my old place in Dehra which I left over six years ago—in August 1934 I think it was. What a six years they have been!

Tomorrow is your birthday, my darling one. At Bex it will pass off rather quietly, but you will be in the mind of numerous people who care

you feel about it, but I am clear that you should hold this meeting. If that particular date is not suitable, you can fix some other nearby date. But it would not be right to postpone the meeting indefinitely because the chairman cannot attend.

I realise fully that many difficulties will arise. I think you should face them and get through the remaining sub-committees' reports. That job at least will be done. Where there are vital differences of opinion on important matters, it might be better to note down the two sets of opinions rather than to decide by a bare majority. Of course such noting down can only be provisional as one opinion will have to be followed in drafting the final report. But this course will enable you to get on with the work and to reduce the points of difference. Later these points of difference can be considered.

I do not think that at the next meeting of the N.P.C. you should nominate the drafting committee for the final report. This might await further developments. But if the N.P.C. so desires, I have no objection even to this step being taken. Whether I shall be able to help in that I do not know. It is just possible that even in prison, I might be allowed to see your drafts.

Meanwhile, before the final report stage is reached, we have to prepare the note showing what picture has emerged from our decisions so far taken. I do not know if you have prepared one this year. I forget who was put on the sub-committee. Saha was on it and so was I. These people can be consulted. If you could send me your draft, probably there will be no objection to my seeing it as it is a business matter connected with the N.P.C. I do not know of course how far I shall be able to or allowed to help from prison.

You should not have any major financial difficulty. Under the circumstances, the Ambalal Committee is bound to help.

I am sending this letter through my sister. You can write directly to me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

DEHRA DUN JAIL

Nov. 23, 1940—Saturday

It is a week today since I wrote last as I was on the point of leaving Gorakhpur Jail. Six days I have been here in my old quarters in Dehra

Jail and a sense of settling down for a long stay has come upon me. And so I have been busy to make this place as agreeable as possible—also to divert my mind now and in the near future from outside worries.

Immediately I thought of converting my little yard with a bit of a garden. The season was propitious; the jail people were helpful. For four days we dug hard. The soil is stony and none too good and it was hard going—digging and then sorting the stones and rubble, and arranging the flower bed, & putting in the seedlings. Harish Chandra Bajpai,[7] my companion in the barrack, joined and worked hard. So did the warders and, of course, some of the prisoners allotted for this task.

This job is over for the present and all the beds are ready and all that is necessary now is to water them and look after them carefully. Even this is likely to take a good bit of time daily, but it will be pleasantly spent. We have put in sweet peas, hollyhocks, nasturtiums, candytufts, lupins, stock, dianthus, and many other varieties. It was difficult to spot the seedlings, I am no good at it and the jail *mali* distorts the names so much that it is no easy matter to recognise them. He was telling me of something he called 'Ali Haq'. This, it transpired, was hollyhock.

The digging and the other processes were extraordinarily tiring. I felt rather ashamed of myself at getting tired so easily, when the other prisoners were working away all the time with little rest. I improved a little with practice but not much. Is it just lack of practice, I wondered, or age? I consider myself fit and full of energy. But fifty-one may not be denied.

This old barrack of mine revives memories, and yet these memories are not clear. When was I here last and how long did I stay? I cannot remember except that I came here from Alipur Prison in 1934 and left for Allahabad when Kamala was very ill. It was the rainy season and I remember well the almost continuous rain. I was not allowed to go out of the barrack at all and was by myself. I felt terribly depressed. I must have left this place in August 1934, going straight to Anand Bhawan, where I spent eleven days, and then Naini. How long was I here altogether? I have no notion. Possibly three months.

And yet I remember very distinctly my previous stay of fourteen and a half months in the neighbouring cells, where the warders live now. That long stay resulted in *Glimpses of World History*.

My journey from Gorakhpur to Dehra Dun was a complicated one. But it was done in style and comfort. A special saloon from Gorakhpur to Daliganj, near Lucknow. Then by car to Rosa, near Shahjahanpur—By train, again in a saloon, from Rosa to Roorkee, and from Roorkee by car to Dehra. This meant about 150 miles by motor & the rest by train.

7. Congressman of Unnao, Uttar Pradesh.

The saloons were comfortable but I travelled as a *purdanashin* with all the shutters up, lest someone might see me. Indeed, I was told by my escort that the 'plan of campaign' was such as to avoid large stations and crowds. Everything was done in extreme secrecy. Outside the saloon, on the platform, sat two armed policemen with guns! Inside there was every courtesy. I was accompanied by a police officer, Conlin, who is apparently some high officer in the railway police—He used to be S.P. in Allahabad. There were a number of constables hanging round also.

Conlin was an interesting man, better read than the average policeman or I.C.S. man—Cambridge, modern languages—war service as liaison officer with French & Italian armies.

At Rosa a crowd collected despite all precautions. At Roorkee I was handed over to Luck, the S.P. of Dehra Dun, who drove me to Dehra. It was a delightful moonlit drive over the hills.

I reached Dehra Jail at 10.30 p.m. on Nov. 17th, almost exactly 24 hours after leaving Gorakhpur Jail. The Supt. of the Jail who is also the Civil Surgeon met me—He has an unusual name: Major Worseldine.

I found Harish Chandra Bajpai here. He was to be my companion—But his term is ending and he is going to be released early in December.

Everybody has been very decent to me here—the jail staff of course, the Superintendent, the District Magistrate (Hifazat Hussain, I.C.S.) and others in Dehra who have sent me flowers. My little veranda is full of these flowers and they brighten up the place tremendously. The Supt. and the Dist. Magte. have visited me and had fairly long talks about the world in general.

This unusual courtesy is somewhat embarrassing. It comes in the way of concentrated work which I have been in the habit of doing in prison. It reduces certainly the abnormality of prison life.

Partly I suppose this is due to instructions from above; partly also to the fact that I am supposed to be a more important person than I was previously. I think my books have helped in this greatly. I am, in a sense, personally known to many who have not met me, and personal knowledge makes a vast difference. It leads to personal interest.

I go out in the mornings and evenings for a little walk between my barrack and the main jail. In the evenings quite a crowd collects on the public road some distance away to have a distant look at me. Mostly young men & boys; sometimes a few women also. They are quiet and well-behaved and salute me from a distance. The police & jail authorities are worried about them and try to keep them away.

I suppose a powerful inducement for treating me well is the belief that some time or other the Congress will be top dog and I might have

influence and power. Conlin asked me to remember the Police provident fund when the Congress came back to power!

On the 18th morning I sent a cable to Indu for her birthday (on the 19th). I am anxious to have news of her and ever since she has suggested returning to India, my mind has been excited about it. But in any event it will be some months before she can come back.

Nan passed through Dehra yesterday, or was it the day before? I did not see her but she sent me some things I had asked for. She will be going down on the 26th with the children and I am likely to meet them then.

On Dec. 4th her 'performance' takes place somewhere in Cawnpore District.[8] This means that our next interview is going to be the last one for a long time.

I am on the whole quite satisfied with political developments outside. The movement grows like an avalanche—so far quite deliberately as envisaged by Bapu. What will happen later?

My mind has not been as agitated as it usually is in prison. It is surprising how little I think of outside happenings. And yet if I went out of prison I would get enveloped in this.

The Viceroy's & Amery's speeches[9] however excited one somewhat. They seem to have no realisation of what is happening in India. Or is it that they are held up in a blind alley and do not know which way to turn?

Amery's reference to me was revealing. About my jail conditions he says:

frequent letters, personal interviews and a great many compensations which deprive him of little except liberty to go about repeating the speeches he has recently made.

Perhaps strictly accurate, and yet all this seems to give a curious picture which is far from reality. 'His own quarters'! And 'a great many compensations' &c &c.

Nov. 24, Sunday

Till yesterday I was feeling peculiarly fit physically. Three weeks of good sleep and regular exercise had made a difference. I was doing again the *sarvangasana* and the *shirshasana* tolerably well. My weight had gone down slightly to about 140 lbs which was quite enough. The tendency to accumulate fat in the wrong places was disappearing. I felt full of energy and vitality. Indeed I have been indulging in a great deal of physical labour and activity.

Today a slight toothache and the beginnings of a cold made me feel somewhat depressed. The day was spent in a cleaning up of my room or cell—quite a laborious process. Latterly I have been spotting bed bugs (खटमल) occasionally to my great horror. So the *newar* bed (which has apparently been hired by the jail authorities) was examined and treated to boiling water in its joints. This produced a number of these bugs. To do the job thoroughly we took off the *newar* and washed and disinfected it. This was a very lengthy and fatiguing business—the *newar* must be over 150 yards long.

Nov. 27

Interview yesterday—Nan, Tara, Rita and Amma— Two hours. We had tea together. I felt happy. Wonder when I shall see Nan again. She will be in prison soon.

A cable from Indu today from Geneva— Said she was leaving Switzerland on the 27th and going to England *via* Lisbon— Then she was going to try to come to India *via* the Cape. I was pleased and excited and then slightly apprehensive— The journey will be a ticklish one with a fair amount of risk.

She must have started today presumably by air, or possibly by motor bus, to Marseilles and from there by plane to Barcelona—Lisbon— Again

by air to London. This journey should take her a week or less. Then probably a long wait in London before she gets a passage. I have read that there is a long waiting list and people have to wait for months. I imagine Agatha is busying herself over this matter and trying to get the India Office to help. They might well do so as a favour to me! They have bungled enough.

At the earliest Indu can hardly leave before the end of December. This would mean that she might be in India before the end of February. More likely March— She will find me in Dehra Jail!

Prakash, the dentist, visited me today. Wants to pull out one tooth and mess about with a number of others. A long business, likely to take seven or eight visits to his place.

The Supt. suggested that I should give my 'parole' on my visits to the dentist and then Prakash could fetch me and no one else need accompany. The parole being for not doing political work during these visits.

I told him that I disliked the idea of 'parole' and would much rather have a jail official accompany me. There was no question of doing political work there. The idea was absurd. If I wanted to do this I had a hundred other ways open to me. I could tell the Supt. privately that I certainly would not indulge in any such activity during the visits to the dentist, as, among other things, this would be unfair to him & to Prakash and might put them in a false position. But to give 'parole' formally was another matter.

So tomorrow I go to Prakash with the Jailor.

Mahavir Tyagi arrested and brought to this jail this evening.

I finished reading Edward Thompson's *Life of Metcalfe* today. Very good book. I wish I had read it carefully earlier. Edward sent it to me three years ago and I just glanced through it then. It is helpful in many ways— Throws light on present conditions—princes, land problems &c. But what is most interesting is the whole background & also Canadian problems then, so like, in some ways, Indian problems now.

December 1st, Sunday

A month over— If there was any chance of my forgetting it, which was not at all likely, the new moon was there today to remind me.

A month's account: Read a score of books, spun 5000 yards of yarn, did a great deal of digging and gardening, regular exercise, and plenty of sleep. Also lost a tooth which Prakash drew out.

I have taken things easy—I am far from settled down but on the whole my mind is not agitated as it used to be. The change to Dehra delayed

the process of settling down. I was alone in Gorakhpur and was just getting used to it. Was working, reading, &c more there. Here there have been distractions, company. This was more normal and certainly better in the long run. But work grew less and I allowed myself to slacken.

Now I am alone again. Harish Chandra Bajpai was discharged yesterday and I felt rather lonely today.

I visited the jail proper yesterday and met & fed with the B class prisoners: Mahavir Tyagi, Prakash, Mukherji &c. Rashida[10] (Mahmud uz Zafar's wife) who is a jail visitor also came.

10. Rashida Jahan; Urdu short-story writer.

Dec. 2, 1940[11]

Darling Indu,
So you are on the move again and have left Switzerland on your way back to India. For the present that way has led you further away from India. The prospect of your return fills me with excitement. You have to pass perilous oceans but no one can keep away from the perils of the modern world and so we might as well face them.

I am writing to you knowing well that there is hardly any chance of my letter reaching you. My last two or three letters sent to Switzerland could not have reached you. They were fairly long ones. I took the risk and it does not matter. I am sending these few lines to you on the off chance of your being held up in London owing to delays in getting a passage. Your cable reached me a few days ago and on the same day I got your letter from Leysin of August 20th.

...I am keeping well. Anand Bhawan is getting rather empty. Within two or three days the only occupants will be Chand, Tara and Rita—and of course Upadhyaya, who has been strictly directed to hold on.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

11. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

2.12.40[12]

Betty dear,

Your letter, with Raja's note, reached me in Gorakhpur Jail. Yesterday I learnt that you had written to the Superintendent here about an interview. I suppose you will get a reply from the Jail Office. The normal rule is two interviews a month and two letters a month. Abnormally or as a special case or for business purposes, this rule may be stretched. Has not Amery said that I live in my own quarters and have frequent interviews and may correspond and read books? A description with which I have personally no quarrel, though some may imagine that I live in a kind of private shack and otherwise get a queer notion.

Raja and you will of course be very welcome whenever you come here. I should like to see Raja especially as I may not have a chance of doing so for some time to come. I was sorry to learn that he was rather put out on learning of my conviction. I have seldom felt quite so peaceful in mind as I have done lately, and that is some feat in this mad world of ours. Through some practice I have learnt to draw myself in and shut the various drawers of my mind which relate to activities which have been suspended.

As you have been recently in Allahabad, I would suggest to you not to hurry back. See how things develop and then it may be more helpful to have an interview. But come any time you like. I shall be in Dehra Dun Jail—no touring, no engagements. Psyche, I understand, may come with you. That will be good.

You must know that Indu has left Switzerland and is trying to get back to India. She ought to reach London soon. The journey is a roundabout one. I think one goes by Antibes from Geneva to Marseilles, or probably beyond. Then by air to Barcelona, Lisbon and London. From London she will have to come by sea convoy. It is not at all easy to get passages and there are long waiting lists. She will have to wait at least a month, maybe two or more. So even if all goes well, she is not likely to reach Bombay before the end of February. More likely March.

I am glad she has decided to return. There are all manner of risks and dangers of course but it is better to face them than to feel isolated

12. *Nehru's Letters to His Sister*, (London, 1963), pp. 65-67.

and miserable. If she wants to return then she must do so or take the consequences. Life grows harder for all of us and the soft days of the past already belong to an age that is gone. When will they return? No one knows. Or will they return? We must adapt ourselves to life as it is and not hunger for what is not. Physical risk and suffering are often all petty compared to the troubles and tempests of the mind. And whether life is soft or hard, one can always get something out of it—but to enjoy life ultimately one must decide not to count the cost.

Raja must not worry at all. He need not think that he is tied down to the N.P.C. If he feels like going ahead in another way he should do so but of course in the proper way. There is no hurry. He will have his chance. Meanwhile he should prepare himself mentally and otherwise, and during this interval, carry on at the N.P.C. It is important that he should carry on with regular and preferably hard work. In times of excitement there is nothing like work. It would be a good thing if he went and saw Bapu. I have gone through nearly six years of prison with relative ease because of the work I have done. I bear prison lightly. And always I am thinking of preparing myself in mind and body for my next job. I store energy so that I might be able to squander it later on.

I have been a month in prison—out of the 48 months! If there was any likelihood of my forgetting this, the new moon was there to remind me. I came to the prison with the new moon—the day after Diwali and on the eve of *Id*. During this month I have read a score of books, spun a good deal of good yarn, taken regular exercise and slept abundantly. And not once, so far as I can recollect, have I lost my temper! That in itself is a sure sign of physical and mental health.

I have taken things easily during this month. I wanted to get rid of a feeling of tiredness, and it takes some time to settle down. I have done little hard work intellectually. I wanted to let my mind lie fallow—to busy myself with odd physical activities. It is surprising how many such jobs can be done in prison. Cleaning and washing and generally keeping 'my own quarters' in as decent a condition as is possible, absorb quite a deal of time. Then I started digging. I decided to make the most of the digging. It was hard work for the soil is stony. Digging anyhow is not a light occupation, and I was annoyed at myself when I found that I got tired easily. I improved with practice. Having done this, I played about with the fresh earth—how delightful it is! and we put in some seedlings and flower seeds. Like a fond but foolish parent, straightway I started spoiling our work by too much attention. I think I watered them more than was necessary and some of the seeds and seedlings seem to have rolled away. However, I shall get over these

minor difficulties and if you come here after three months or so, you will have to admire the result of my Herculean labours.

Love,

Your brother,
Jawahar

Dec. 7, Saturday

So Nan is in Naini Prison where Ranjit had preceded her. But of course they live in separate barracks and cannot meet. The female barrack in Naini is not an attractive place. Perhaps Nan will be removed to some other jail. But everywhere the female barrack is the worst part of the jail.

Anand Bhawan now has Tara and Rita—and Amma and Upadhyaya. Chand will join them soon.

When will Indu come? Where is she now? I am restless for news of her. She left Switzerland ten days or more ago and still there is no news of her arrival in England. Yesterday I sent a cable to Agatha to enquire.

It will not be easy for her to get a passage from England to India. She may have to wait long. The U-boat campaign has also been intensified.

I had a visit two days ago from Dr. Martin, who used to be the Ethiopian Minister in London. He has temporarily settled down in Dehra Dun, though he looks forward vaguely to going back to London as Minister. Born in Abyssinia, he came in his childhood to India and took his medical degree from the Lahore Medical College—subsequently England.

I was disappointed in him. A very mediocre and simple-minded man —Tried to impress upon me how foolish we were in resisting or opposing the British Govt. Knew nothing about Indian affairs or recent developments and was not trying to learn. Terribly afraid of a Muslim invasion of India!

I am told that Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim is likely to join me here soon. In some ways I shall be glad to have him with me. Learning Urdu for one. But we shall be rather crowded with two warders. I shall have to adjust my life afresh here.

I have been going to the dentist frequently. A few more visits are necessary.

Last night there was an experimental black-out in Dehra and aeroplanes whizzed and roared over us.

I have been spinning a good deal.

Dec. 8, Sunday

I am likely to have quite a number of interviews during the next two weeks. Chand and Yvonne[13] are coming on the 10th—day after tomorrow. Vidya[14] has written to say that she will be passing through Dehra on the 14th—Bebee may come on the 14th or 16th, and K.T. Shah is due on the 19th for a business interview about the N.P.C. Then later Betty & Raja.

After this abundance, there is likely to be a dearth of interviews from next month onwards. Most of the possible interviewers will be themselves in prison.

I had a cable today from the New York *Nation*, forwarded from Delhi:

'Urge article English Indian relations and war simultaneously emphasizing German defeat.'

Evidently the *Nation* people imagine I am perfectly free to write articles from prison.

Dec. 12

Cold and rainy and dismal for two days. Some hail last night. I was worried about my plants & seedlings. I had just put some fresh ones in. Much of my time for these two or three days has been spent in gardening. I was quite tired yesterday.

Little damage was however done on account of the rain or hail—Probably because only light showers fell.

This morning I saw that the hills were covered with snow—Even Mussoorie had a sprinkling—rather early in the year. The clouds rolled away in the afternoon and patches of brilliant deep blue sky peeped through. The evening was magnificent. Wonderful colours on the hillsides & the clouds. Much of the snow had melted away.

13. Yvonne Gueveric; classmate of Chandralekha Pandit.
14. Vidyavathi Dutt; daughter of Kishenlal Nehru and wife of Vishnu Dutt.

As I was taking my evening constitutional, a Swiss woman came inside the jail compound and accosted me. She is Mlle. O Colin. I had met her some time ago but had forgotten her—She is bringing out a monthly—the *Oasis*—and wanted me to write an article—a 'journal of optimism'—mystical & yet practical—yoga—masters—science &c &c. She gave me a book to read—*The Path of the Masters (Santon ki Shiksha)* by an American doctor Julian Johnson. It is about the teachings of Sardar Saman Singh Maharaj (of Beas in the Punjab) who is described as the greatest of the masters! He is over 80 now. A photograph was shown to me. A very fine face.

I think Amrit Kaur once spoke to me about him. Or was it someone else?

Chand & Yvonne came to see me day before yesterday. Padmaja is coming on the 14th—so also Vidya. Betty & Raja on Christmas Day.

Betty gave extracts from my last letter to her to the press. I was a little surprised & put out. I had described my various activities in prison, but most people who read about this will imagine that I am made to do all this.

The Acting Supt. Dr. Joshi came this morning and mentioned this. He and the Jailor were rather worried. So I have decided to write to Betty again tonight—three days before time.

No news from or about Indu yet. It is just a fortnight since she left Geneva and the journey *via* Lisbon to London is supposed to be a four or five-day one. But delays are always possible in war time; hold-ups or postponement of services. So I try not to worry.

Our little dog Captain, which Bajpai has left me as a legacy, has suddenly disappeared this evening. He has not been seen for the last two hours and is nowhere to be found in the jail compound. This is very unusual as he comes back to his cosy corner regularly in the evening. He is growing and becoming very venturesome and it is quite possible that someone has grabbed him. I miss him and so does everyone else here, including the warders—Curious how I become attached to these mongrel dogs. He was popular with everybody—the prisoners, jail staff, police, &c. The warders are very worried and are continually discussing him.

He had learnt the trick of knocking at the barrack gate to get it opened. He did it very efficiently & the warder used to rush to open the gate thinking it was some jail official.

If Captain returns late at night, he can't come in as the gate is locked and the key is at the jail gate.

12–12–40[15]

Darling Betty,

I understand that you and Raja are likely to visit me on December 25th, Christmas Day. That is good. I suppose you will put up in Dehra Dun with Rashida. The best time for the interview is the afternoon—two or thereabouts. It is warm and pleasant then, unless it rains, when it turns cold and dismal rather suddenly. Christmas time usually has this rainy weather. But you may be lucky. Anyway come prepared for the cold. It is not really very cold here, but the change from Bombay will be considerable. So have enough warm clothes and blankets. I do not want Raja to develop a cold here.

I was a little surprised to find certain extracts from my last letter to you appearing in the newspapers. There was no harm in your sharing them with others who take interest in me. But I just wondered if some people might not get a wrong idea about my life and activities in prison. I mentioned casually some of these activities—digging, cleaning, etc. This might lead some people to imagine that I am made to do this kind of thing. That would be entirely mistaken. I get all the help that is necessary for my purposes and I need not, if I so choose, indulge in any activity. But I am not constituted that way, as you ought to know. Even my advancing—and oh, so advanced! years do not seem to affect appreciably my energy and vitality and capacity to mess about things and make others move about also. If other outlets for energy are denied me, I have to seek new ways for the good of my mind and soul. Also long experience of jail life has taught me many things, among them the necessity of physical activity in prison. It is not possible or desirable to do mental work only. That way does not lie sanity or harmony. I have therefore deliberately not done very much reading or desk work and have occupied myself with odd jobs which soothe the mind and give a pleasant feeling of tiredness to the body.

Then there is the kitchen, which on the whole interests me least, provided I get clean and fairly wholesome food. But again, as I have leisure, there is no reason why I should not interfere. (How can I get rid of the old habit of interfering in other people's affairs?) My interference is only occasional and my experiments sometimes produce startling results. Generally speaking I have settled down to a 'cooker' regime which satisfies me as it is a clean way of producing wholesome food. It

15. *Nehru's Letters to His Sister*, (London, 1963), pp. 69-71.

is not exciting of course. But I find enough excitement in other ways without desiring to tickle my palate.

So you see there are so many things to be done which I need not do, but being a busybody I am always barging in.

It is not just superfluous energy that leads me to dabble in all these various activities. I do it deliberately to have peace of mind and a certain harmonious and well-ordered life. I succeed. I keep physically fit and mentally fit and sane. It is a fact, I think, that every visit to jail has done me good in some way or other; not merely the actual work I have done there, but some kind of development on, I hope, the right lines has taken place. I succeed very largely in cutting myself away from the worries and responsibilities that encumber me outside. I do not forget them but I think about them more calmly and dispassionately and look at them from a larger perspective.

In the world today, torn by war and disaster and possibly on the brink of vast changes, not to do so would lead to mental collapse. Long periods in prison are apt to make one either a mental and physical wreck or a philosopher. I flatter myself that I kept myself very well during all these years. I do not know if they have led me far towards philosophy.

I give below some lines which are by a 15th-16th century English poet, John Skelton:

So much striving
For goods and for wiving
And so little thriving,
Saw I never.

So many capacities,
Offices and pluralities,
And changing of dignities,
Saw I never.

Among them that are rich
No friendship is it to keep touch,
And such fair glosing speech,
Saw I never.

So many poor,
In every border
And so small succour
Saw I never.

And so on....

Love to the family,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

Dec. 13, Friday

Captain returned this morning looking tired and pulled down—He had evidently had a bad night.

I wrote a long letter to Betty last night with enclosures for Indu & Amma. Soon after sending it today I received her letter.

I have just learnt that Ranjit is going to be transferred here soon. Hafizji is not coming. I am glad Ranjit is coming. We shall fit in easily.

Dec. 17, 1940[16]

TO CHIANG KAI-SHEK

Dear Generalissimo,

I am writing to acknowledge with thanks the letter you were good enough to send me through Dr. Tai Chi-tao. I am writing, as you will notice, from an unusual place, and your letter has only just reached me after Dr. Tai's departure from India. Under the circumstances, I cannot write much, but I should like to express my gratitude for all you have written and for your friendship which I value very greatly. For me that is a symbol of a far greater thing, the friendship of China and India and of the freedom and cooperation of our two great nations.

In spite of our own travails and difficulties, we have followed with the closest interest the developments in China and the truly heroic struggle for freedom against an unscrupulous aggressor nation which is being carried on under your great leadership. Daily my thoughts have been with you and the people of China, and I pray that it may be given to me and to my people to be of some service to China. Whatever has happened,

16. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

and whatever may happen, will not shake my firm conviction in the triumph of your cause, just as I am equally convinced of India's bright future, though the way to it may be long and dark. I realise fully, as you do, that all our problems in Asia and Europe are inextricably connected, and we have to follow closely world developments.

It was a great disappointment to me not to meet Dr. Tai Chi-tao during his visit to India. I had looked forward to it. But I am very glad he met my sister and many other friends. In spite of the new situation that has developed in India, which prevented him from meeting many worthwhile people, I think his visit has helped greatly in making the Chinese struggle even more real to our people and in drawing India nearer to China. He will no doubt give you his own impressions of his visit.

I must apologise to you and to Dr. Tai Chi-tao that, under the peculiar circumstances, we could not give him the welcome that we would have liked to have given. But I trust that you and he will understand and forgive us.

I send you my warmest regards and good wishes for you personally and for your great cause. I am sorry I cannot write in the beautiful Chinese characters, but I am signing this letter in our script, which is the old Sanskrit script.

Yours sincerely,
जवाहरलाल नेहरू

Dec. 17, 1940[17]

TO MADAME CHIANG KAI-SHEK

Dear Madame Chiang,

Two days ago I received your two letters, dated 10th September and 5th October 1940. The beautiful gifts that you had sent me through Dr. Tai Chi-tao also reached me in this rather odd place where I am at present.

Need I say how much I appreciated your letters and your gifts? They came like a ray of sunshine enlightening the gloom of a dark and dismal world, full of suffering and disaster. I read with pain and sorrow your description of Chungking now, but behind it all there rose the unconquerable spirit of Man, which you and the Generalissimo and the men and women of China represent so magnificently, and I was comforted.

17. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

The embroideries that you have sent are beautiful and very precious to me. I shall treasure them. I like the old gentleman who represents the star of longevity, though longevity itself is rather a frightening prospect. Sometimes one lives through years in a few brief months and weeks, and in the world today sensations pile up one on top of another and give the feeling of long passage of time, till one becomes, in self-protection I suppose, dulled to sensation.

You write generously about my book.[18] I finished it five and a half years ago and it seems now as if ages had passed since then. Almost I feel, when I refer to it, that I am reading someone else's book. Many people expect me to continue the story. Perhaps I may do so, but so much depends on the mood. If I make the attempt, it is likely to lead to another book for so much has happened during these five years in the world, in India, and to me personally. China will figure largely in it, for China has grown very dear to me, and all my thoughts are mixed up with her.

An American edition of my book has long been pending but it has been delayed largely because of me. I was required to write an additional chapter to bring it up to date, and I had little time and I found difficulty in compressing these five years in a chapter. At last I sent something but I am not sure if it reached the publishers—John Day, the *Asia* people. The book may come out in spring.

I read with great interest the two articles you sent me. I think they are very enlightening and important and, presuming your consent, and with acknowledgements to *Harper's* I have suggested that they might be given some publicity.

For the last two years I have been functioning as the Chairman of the National Planning Committee here. The work of this Committee grew and grew and included almost every phase of national activity—agricultural, industrial, social, educational, financial, medical relief, public health, trade and commerce, &c—and we appointed a vast number of sub-committees to deal with these various aspects. One of these sub-committees was on women's role in planned economy. This sub-committee, consisting entirely of women, has produced an interesting report. This is not final yet and is in a somewhat crude condition. As all our work has been hung up, owing to abnormal happenings, I do not quite

18. She wrote: "It is a great document—your book—for it is the record of pilgrimage of a human soul lifted above the turmoil of daily strife into a realm of an intellectual and emotional world unspoiled by sentimentality but so humanly moving that it well deserves to be ranked amongst the great documents of all ages."

know when this work will be resumed. Meanwhile I am asking the Planning Committee to send you the draft of this Women's Report. I know how terribly busy you are with far more important work and I do not want you to spend any time over this. But some of your women's organisations might be interested.

Dr. Tai Chi-tao's visit to India has been quite an event here and I am sure has produced deep impressions. Unfortunately I missed him, but I am glad he met my sister and others. He came during an abnormal period and yet perhaps that itself had some value and gave him an insight he might not otherwise have had. He will no doubt give you and the Generalissimo his first hand impressions. We realise more than ever that all our problems are inter-connected, and that we have to be always on the alert and to follow closely world developments.

I spent a bare fortnight in China last year, but that brief period has affected me more than I can say. Perhaps the ground had long been prepared and I was receptive and eager to be affected. But China means to me a great deal and, above all, I value the privilege of your friendship and that of the Generalissimo. That is no small thing for me in this world where so much seems to go wrong. But the world will right itself. It must.

With my warmest greetings and homage to you and to China and good wishes for the New Year.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Dec. 17, 1940[19]

TO TAI CHI-TAO

Dear Dr. Tai Chi-tao,
I had long looked forward to meeting you in India and it has been a great disappointment to me that when you came to my country, I was unable to meet you and welcome you. I have also been troubled by the fact that owing to the peculiar conditions at present prevailing in India, we could not give you the service and welcome that we desired. You will, I trust, understand and forgive us.

19. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I was very happy to learn that you met my sister and spent a day in our house. I am grateful to you that in spite of your indifferent health, you took the trouble to go to Allahabad.

I have received the photograph which you have been good enough to send me and the letters and beautiful gifts from Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek. I shall treasure that photograph with your very generous and beautifully written inscription and it shall be another bond between China and India. To the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang I am writing separately. But I would beg of you to convey to them my deep appreciation of and gratitude for their friendly messages and their beautiful gifts.

I have received a report of your conversation with my sister and given it the earnest consideration it deserves. I realise fully that in this world of chaos and trouble we have to be wide awake, and that all our problems are inter-connected. In particular, I am convinced and I ardently desire the closest of understanding and cooperation between China and India for the sake of our two countries and the world.

Your visit to India took place at a peculiar time and unfortunately you could not meet many of our friends. But I am very happy that you came. I am sure that you will understand our problems much better now and, through you, other people in China will also do so. Your visit has also brought China much nearer to our people and strengthened our links. Even from my seclusion I could judge what a marked effect your visit was producing on the mind and heart of India.

I trust that the long and strenuous journeys you have undertaken in India have not fatigued you too much and that you are returning to China in good health and spirit for the great work before you. You are carrying back with you the warmest good wishes of our people for you personally and for the great cause which is yours and, which we know well, is ours also.

With my own regards to you and again thanking you.

I am yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Dec. 19, Thursday

I have not written anything in this diary for six days, and yet these days have been unusual and rather full—almost exciting in the dull routine of prison. There has been, first of all, the daily expectation of Ranjit arriving here. But he has not come so far and there is no further news.

Then interviews. Bebee came on the 14th—the next day she came again to leave some things for me and this developed into a second interview. This was the first time I had met her in prison.

Vidya and Padma[20] also came to see me on the 14th on their way down from Mussoorie.

Bebee brought me letters from Chiang Kai-shek & Madame Chiang—also some gifts from them. These are beautiful embroideries. Dr. Tai Chi-tao had brought all these from China. I was happy to read these letters, especially the two from Madame Chiang. But the descriptions of Chungking now—a mass of debris, unrecognisable as a city—was very sad. A day or two later I wrote answers to Chiang & Madame—Also a letter to Tai Chi-tao. All these were sent to Huang, the Chinese Consul General in Calcutta.

Dr. Tai's visit to Anand Bhawan went off well. I had delightful accounts of it from Bebee & from a letter from Nan. He is a very likable person and he has impressed everybody. I am very glad he came just now and his visit has been quite an event. China & India grow closer together.

Absence of news about Indu was upsetting me. I decided to send a cable to Agatha and this was written and sent off to the jail office. Very soon after I had a cable from Agatha informing me that Indu was in Lisbon waiting for a priority air passage to London. I just managed to stop my cable. This means that there is no chance of Indu reaching India before March at the earliest, more probably in April. A long way off.

K. T. Shah came today and we had a long talk about the affairs of the National Planning Committee.

Some Punjabis, whom I do not know, sent me a Pashmina shawl, a huge case of fine-apples and a basketful of dried fruits.

Dec. 23, Monday

Ranjit suddenly arrived this morning. All day was spent in cleaning and arranging our 'cell'. It is a tight fit—Looks like a crowded railway compartment or cabin.

The new Supt. Colonel Lucas took his first parade today.

20. Padmavathi; daughter of Kishenlal Nehru.

Dec. 29, Sunday

The year is near its appointed end and I have been almost two months in prison. I have been spending these days quietly (of course in prison) and peacefully. In fact I was rather surprised at my own peace of mind. Not once did I get ruffled in temper or really put out either at happenings in prison or events outside. This was an unusual and comforting experience and I came to the conclusion that I was 'growing' and developing.

But I was a little premature and the temper has not behaved latterly as it ought. Since the arrival of the new Supt. the atmosphere in jail has changed. He has been to see us three times and there was nothing wrong in what he said or did. He was anxious that we should not suffer from the cold. Evidently he felt the change from Allahabad very much and was continually complaining of the cold. He even suggested—or someone else suggested—an electric radiator. He said he would write to the I.G. for permission. As a matter of fact I do not feel the cold very much and anyway do not mind it. I thought, however, that Ranjit might feel more comfortable with a heater.

On his first visit to the jail, Lucas, the Suptd., evidently put the fear of God in all the jail officials. Reprimanded some and generally frightened everybody over relatively trivial matters. His reputation for sternness had preceded him.

Then an incident occurred which concerned me. One of the prisoners serving us was Brijlal who had been given a short sentence, about 6 months, for pilfering or some such thing. He was being discharged after completing his sentence. He was a bright young person and I was naturally interested in his future. I gave him good advice and told him to behave &c. His home was somewhere in the north of the Punjab but he was arrested in Dehra Dun. He was worried about not having any proper clothes to wear on release or blanket, as well as his railway fare to his home in the Punjab. He had Rs. 15/- deposited in his account at the jail office.

On the day of his discharge he was given his Rs. 15/- and he went and made some purchases, a blanket and then came back to the prison. He came to see me and told me that he expected to get his railway fare from the jail people. A little later he came again and said that the Jailor had told him that he would not get this fare as he possessed Rs. 15/- of his own which was enough to see him home. He was in a quandary as he had already spent a good part of this money. So I gave him a note for the Jailor suggesting that Rs. 10/- might be given to him

from my personal account. Otherwise he would be destitute and unable to get home.

The Jailor came to see me about it and told me that he was unable to do this without the Suptd.'s sanction. I asked him to refer the matter to the Suptd. and forgot about it. I could not imagine that there would be any difficulty.

The next day I learnt that the Suptd. had not only refused this but had demanded all manner of explanations as to how Brijlal had been allowed to see me after his discharge. The poor warder who had admitted him into my barrack was in trouble.

This incident irritated me. Brijlal had been serving in this barrack for many weeks, coming & going between this barrack & the main jail several times a day. It was natural for the warder to let him in even though technically he might be discharged. As a matter of fact I did not know for certain that he had been finally discharged, although he was wearing his own clothes. I thought there was something still to be done about the fare business. Anyway I failed to see any harm in his coming to say goodbye to me.

The matter is still undisposed of, so far as our warder is concerned, as the Supt. has gone off to Delhi for the Christmas holidays. If any punishment is awarded to the warder, I cannot remain silent. I have told the Jailor that if anyone is guilty, I am the person and I shall ask for punishment.

Numerous changes have crept in. Very great care is now taken about allowing anyone to come into our barrack. The contractor, who used to come daily with vegetables &c, may not come in—nor can the dhobi—or the *mali*. Indeed no one can come in (apart from the jail staff) except the sweeper. Our barrack gate is locked both from the outside and inside—two fat locks with keys with two different persons. Much more work for the warders, especially the head warder who has to come every time to open it from outside. This makes no real difference to us, but it is just irritating.

One morning when we were thinking of going out for our morning exercise in the jail compound, we were delayed as the outer lock could not be opened till the head *jamadar* came.

When we walk outside, our warder watches us—although there is a whole bunch of warders all the time in front of the jail gate where we take our walk.

Yesterday we learnt that some food had been sent for us from outside. This was evidently from Sahabzada Saiduzzafar Khan[21] who had arranged to send us some kind of a European meal every week. This had come

21. An old friend of Motilal Nehru.

the previous week. There was delay in this coming to us and we finished our usual midday meal. It was then ushered in and we learnt that a message was given by the Jailor to the man who had brought it, that in future nothing should be brought.

This upset me. Chiefly because it was so discourteous to Saiduzzafar Khan who had taken so much trouble over the matter; also because this restriction of outside food was a novel one in my experience of jail life. Not that I want it at all. I would much rather not have it. But new restrictions give a sensation of suffocation—I refused to accept the food and, I am afraid, showed some temper to the Jailor.

This evening the *Naib* Jailor rolled in with two fat registers and a stamping machine. Wanted to take our finger prints. He had casually mentioned this a few days ago and I had informed him that I did not intend giving any thumb or finger impression. Now he came armed with a letter from the I.G. saying that the thumb impression should be taken. We refused rather curtly.

Our letters are now sent to the local C.I.D. for being passed—they bear the signature of Luck the S.P.

I mention all these trivial details of jail life because they have upset my composure. Possibly they may have further developments. Amery's description of my 'quarters' and way of living in prison gets curiouser and curiouser. Indeed in regard to most matters I was better off in Dehra Dun Jail during my long stay in 1932-33.

I had a long interview with Betty, Raja & Nandan on Dec. 25th—Christmas Day.

No further news of Indu from Lisbon or London—A letter came from Agatha today dated Nov. 1st in which she tells me of Indu's plans to return to London—Evidently these had been maturing for some weeks and had nothing to do with my arrest.

A letter also from Edward Thompson—What a dear, sensitive person he is! I like him more and more, though he is usually grousing. He is unhappy. So, I suppose, are all sensitive persons. He has done a splendid bit of work for India's cause by writing his new book[22]—His article in *Time & Tide* after my arrest was also very good.[23] His letter was written before my arrest.

22. *Enlist India for Freedom!* published in 1940.
23. *The Drift to Niagara in India.* Reprinted in the *National Herald*, 11 January 1941.

January 3, 1941

The New Year has crept in quietly as if it was a little ashamed of itself. For us it was chiefly notable for three events: a beautiful bunch of roses came from a friend in Dehra Dun, a telegram from Betty & Raja from Calcutta, a book from Padmaja. For the rest we carry on in the old way.

Yesterday I heard that Wazir Hasan our old warder (who has been transferred now from our barrack) had been fined Rs. 2/- by the Supt. for the Brijlal incident. I was upset for he was totally innocent from every point of view and I was concerned in the matter. I wrote a long letter to the Supt.[24] giving all the facts and mentioning also many of the changes that have taken place here since he came. This letter went this morning and soon afterwards he came to see us. He seemed to take it well. On the whole he impressed me as a man who means well but who tries to cover his want of understanding of human beings and events by sticking to 'discipline' so as to make an impression—He said he would refer the whole matter to the I.G. It seemed rather odd to do so but he was not willing apparently to assume any responsibility.

A cable today from Agatha and Bhandari:

'Indira writes date departure uncertain owing demand seats even with priority stop among friends in good climate don't worry.'

It is raining and cold and clammy—Probably it is snowing on the Mussoorie Hills.

January 6, Monday

No cable from Indu or about Indu but the *Herald* had a cable from London to say that she arrived last Friday Jan. 4th.

I was pleased with my spinning progress today—I spun 540 yards in exactly 1½ hours, that is 360 yards per hour—The yarn was fine—probably approaching 30 count.

Jan. 7, Tuesday

Cable from Indu today—five days old—to announce arrival in London —Future plans uncertain.

24. Not printed.

Jan. 8th

Cable from Bhandari to say that he had examined Indu and found her lungs in a completely satisfactory condition. Was going to consult Hebert.

Betty & Raja coming for an interview tomorrow.

The jail rules, as they apply to us, are being tightened all round. All letters, periodicals &c, received or despatched, have to pass the C.I.D. Everything that I ask for has first to be passed by the Supt. and then, when it has come from the bazaar, is again inspected by him. This happened to tooth brushes today. Amusing but sometimes irritating also.

Jan. 9th. Thursday

Interview with Betty, Raja and Janak.

Jan. 10, Friday

Anniversary of mother's death—three years—My mind was full of her last night and today. Had a restless night.

Sent my fortnightly letters. Principal covering letter to Padmaja who is still in Anand Bhawan—Enclosures to Indu, Agatha, Edward & Amma.

Jan. 10, 1941[25]

Darling Indu,

So you are in London now. Long before your cable came—for cables take time nowadays, especially to reach in prison—I learnt of your arrival in London from the newspapers. Another cable came from Bhandari later informing me that he had found you in excellent condition. I am very happy to learn this. I am glad you have got out of dismal and

25. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

depressing Leysin. I did not want to press you to leave the place so long as you felt that your health might improve there. But on general principles I am entirely opposed to very long stays in sanatoria, unless there is no choice left in the matter.

Now that you are fit you can fix your future programme as you choose, taking just a little care to remain fit and not overtax your strength and health. Long before this reaches you—it may not reach you at all—you will have decided upon your programme. Perhaps you may have left England. Anyway you are in the best position to decide.

What a changed London you must have found ! Changed not merely in outward appearance but in so many other ways. It is a symbol of the titanic changes that are convulsing the world. London has had a bad time, like so many other cities in various countries. And yet perhaps no city has suffered more during the past years than Chungking.

Some time back I had a letter from Madame Chiang Kai-shek. She said in this: "If you were to visit Chungking now you would not recognize it. Square miles of the most prosperous business districts have now become shambles, and so far as the eyes can see nothing but debris and ruins stretch out in all directions. All of us, who are still sound in limb, have worked and toiled incessantly for the relief of the tens of thousands of homeless refugees deprived of every means of livelihood through the insensate destruction of human lives and property with the most calculated cruelty ever conceived by man."

Such is our world today. Something much more vital than buildings has gone to pieces. It will not be pieced together after the old patterns again whatever happens. Meanwhile we as individuals feel rather lost, at least the older generation do, lost most of all in a spiritual sense. Out of that feeling of loss one forgets oneself and then finds oneself perhaps in a vast movement where individuals count for little. And yet through this impersonal finding of ourselves, the individual also recovers.

I have been reading a book about China—Lin Yutang's new novel of Chinese life—*Moment in Peking*. It is a tremendously long book and rather unlike a modern novel. And yet it is worth reading and I hope you will get hold of it. China is very different from India and yet there is so much in common. Both have been passing through a tremendous period of transition in their inner lives and this transition has suddenly to face a world change. I have been drawn more and more towards China and admire her culture greatly.

Betty and Raja and Janak came to interview me yesterday. Betty and Raja have gone back to Bombay and my interviews are not likely to be regular in future. There are not many people available whom I am anxious to interview. I should like to see Amma and perhaps she will

come next fortnight or later. Amma is anxious about Kailas, having had no news of him for a while. I have sent her Bhandari's address.

Anand Bhawan has fewer occupants now that Chand has joined college in Lucknow. There are Tara and Rita. For the present Padmaja is there for a few days. She will be leaving next week. I am sending this letter through her. (The letter is going direct.)

I understand that Lindsay Drummond is bringing out a collection of my writings and calling it *The Unity of India*. Please ask Krishna to have complimentary copies sent on my behalf to various friends of ours. You can make a list. Copies should be sent to Bapu and Gurudeva. Also to Madame Chiang Kai-shek (Chungking) and Madame Sun Yat-sen (27 Grampion Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong) and to the Chinese Ambassador in London. To Agatha, Edward Thompson and Carl Heath. You can add to this list in England and India. Also to Mrs. Frances Gunther, 300 Central Park West, New York City. Mrs. Gunther has written to invite you to America and says she will look after you.

It has been cold here, not nearly so cold as you must be having. But in just three weeks on February 1st *Vasanta* begins and that means a change to spring.

All my love to you, my darling one.

Your loving,
Papu

January 10, 1941[26]

TO EDWARD THOMPSON

Dear Edward,

I was happy to receive your letter, which reached me just before the New Year came in. I am writing a few lines just to send you my good wishes, if they are worth anything. Under existing circumstances it is not a cheerful task to write letters. But it is cheering to hear from friends and your letter, though far from cheerful, was very welcome.

It is difficult for most of us to adapt ourselves to the vast changes that are taking place and will take place. They are too big for pessimism or optimism. We have lost ourselves in the maelstrom and the process of

26. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

ceremony. It should be announced that the real ceremony in connection with it will take place later and will, we hope, be performed by Bapu. I realise that this may mean a fairly long delay. That does not matter. Anyway we are not committing ourselves about the future. There is Indu also coming and it would be desirable to have her here at the time. If Jivraj likes there may be a simple local ceremony (not by Bapu) but it should be understood that this is not the real one which will come later.

Will you please convey this opinion of mine to Bapu soon? Of course I shall abide by his decision, whatever it is.

Please ask Upadhyaya to get from Kitabistan or Bombay or Calcutta Lin Yutang's *Moment in Peking* (Macmillan). I have read this book and like it. It was Betty's copy and I am returning it to her. But I want to have the book (not here) and to send it to Nan. So as soon as the book is received, Upadhyaya is to send it to Nan.

He might also send her Shelvankar's *Problem of India* (Penguin Series). This ought to be in my room.

Tell Nan, if you see her, that I shall try to send her books from here direct from time to time. There is one book which she might like to read, though it is not light reading. If you can find it in my room you can send it. Unfortunately I cannot remember the name of the book or of the author! It is a book dealing with political theory from Aristotle and Plato to Marx and Mussolini & Hitler, &c. It is a fair-sized book running into 500 or so substantial pages and I think has a dark blue cover. The author's name begins I think with an S. It is an unusual name. The book is prescribed for the Oxford honours course and Indu had to read it. I know it is in my room. It is either in the dressing room shelf or in the shelves near my writing table. If you can find it, please send it to Nan.[28]

Ranjit wants me to tell you that Wilson's *Theatre of the Hindus* 2 vols. should not be ordered from Kitabistan. This is an old out of print book and even if Kitabistan can find it, they will want a fancy price for it. If the order has been given, please have it cancelled. If the book comes from Rajkot, well & good. Otherwise you should be able to get it from either the Allahabad University Library or the Allahabad Public Library.

I am told you have produced a wonderful change in the library & in my other books and all manner of lists have been prepared.

Please ask Upadhyaya to send the enclosed four letters to their respective addresses. The English ones should go by air mail.

28. Jawaharlal appears to have had in mind George Sabine: *A History of Political Theory*.

There is one thing more I should like to have. Ask Upadhyaya to send me *mal* for my charkha. There is a bundle of this string in my dressing room drawers. All this might be sent by post.

Keep well and strong and smiling—of course you will.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

There are two books I should like to have. They are new books and Upadhyaya might try to get them. They are:

J.R. Fyvel: *The Malady and the Vision* (Secker & Warburg 10/6)
Harold Laski: *Where do we go from here?* (Penguin Special)

I am told that I cannot send any enclosures with this letter. So the enclosures remain with me. Please write to Agatha Harrison by air mail that in case Indu has left England she can open my letters to Indu.

Jan. 11, Saturday

The Supt. came this morning and pointed out that I could send only *one* letter a fortnight and not more in the shape of enclosures. He showed me a letter from the I.G. which had come in connection with my letters to Chiang Kai-shek, Madame Chiang & Tai Chi-tao. These letters, I learnt, had been sent to the I.G. who had forwarded them on to the Chinese Consul-General in Calcutta. I did not know this. The I.G. had in fact pointed out that having sent three letters in that Chinese bunch I had used up my letters for three fortnights!

There was some argument. I was told that there were separate orders to the effect that I could write to Indu apart from my fortnightly letters. Ultimately my letters to Padmaja & Indu were sent separately with no enclosures. The letters to Agatha, Edward & Amma were suppressed.

So the practice of previous years in jail, of sending enclosures, does not hold now.

I am writing to the Supt. about N.P.C. work. I am receiving the subcommittees' reports for revision. Can I do this work? If I am not allowed to send the revised copies back or my notes on them, then why take trouble over them?

Ranjit has not been well today. He felt poorly all day. In the evening his temperature was 99.4°F.

Judgement was delivered today on the Mussoorie Murder Case[29]—transportation for life for all three accused. Two boys and a man. One of the boys is English. The other two are Parsees. They have been kept in the European lock-up opposite our barrack and I have seen them, from a little distance daily. They were confident of getting off. Even after the sentence the English boy did not appear to be depressed. He was now confident of getting off in appeal to the High Court.

Both the boys are in their middle teens—they are just school boys. What a curious way of reforming them or punishing them by keeping them for 15 or twenty years in prison.

Jan. 11, 1941[30]

TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, DISTRICT JAIL, DEHRA DUN

Dear Mr. Superintendent,

In view of what you told me about my letters this morning, necessitating the suppression of three brief personal enclosures, I should like to know how the rules or the discretionary power are going to be applied in regard to another matter. I do not want to take the trouble to do something which I am subsequently informed is against the rules and I should not have done.

I have been functioning for over two years as the Chairman of the National Planning Committee. This Committee has consisted of representatives of all the provincial governments, some important Indian states, prominent businessmen, economists, engineers, and some other experts. The Committee appointed twenty-nine sub-committees on various subjects—agricultural, industrial, financial, educational, cultural etc. Most of these sub-committees, consisting of experts in the particular subject entrusted to them, presented their reports, which were considered by the full Planning Committee. The Committee will of course carry on its work in my absence, but in regard to many matters they, or the General Secretary, desire to make references to me to obtain my views

29. On the night of June 9 and 10, 1940, Noel Bankwalla, a senior student of St. Fidelis School, was murdered by Homi K. Gandhi, Malcolm Fordham and J. Barrons.
30. J.N. Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.

about the procedure to be followed. With this object in view, the Hon. General Secretary of the Planning Committee, Prof. K.T. Shah, had a business interview with me here on December 19th last. I gave him then the necessary instructions. Presumably he will make further references to me from time to time.

The General Secretary has sent me some of the sub-committees' reports for me to revise them or make any suggestions in regard to them. I have, in the course of the last week or ten days, received reports on Irrigation; River Training and Protection from Floods; Soil Conservation and Afforestation; and Rural Marketing and Finance. I am supposed to return them with such corrections or notes as I might choose to add to them.

Ordinarily I would attach a piece of paper to each report pointing out any errors and making suggestions. Sometimes even this may not be necessary. Or it may be that occasionally a longer note by me is needed. As soon as I have finished with a report, I would like to send it back.

I should like to know how far I am allowed to proceed with this work of revision etc. of the reports sent to me. Can I return them at any time I choose? Or is the sending back of a report with a brief note attached equivalent to a fortnightly letter? Or am I to desist from sending any such thing at any time?

I shall be grateful if you will kindly let me know, so that I might adjust myself accordingly. I am naturally anxious that the work of the Planning Committee should not suffer or be delayed by my absence. But this depends very largely on the facilities offered to me to deal with these reports and other references. If it is decided not to offer me these facilities then the other people concerned have to be informed so that they might make their own arrangements. In any event I want to know where I stand so that there might be no further misunderstandings and waste of effort and time.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

January 15

After two days' of fever Ranjit gradually recovered. He is still a bit groggy. His brief illness rather frightened me because of his previous history of pleurisy &c.

I had a letter today from Essie Robeson.[31] I was very pleased to get it. The letter bubbles over with her amazing vitality.

Jan. 22nd

Yesterday the Supt. came and showed me the I.G.'s reply in connection with my long letter about the fine on the warder & the general change in treatment in jail. The I.G. said that there was no appeal from the fine but under the circumstances a warning seemed to him enough. So the fine has been remitted.

About other matters he said that he would discuss them with me when he came here.

Today I learn that the I.G. is coming tomorrow morning. There is a great deal of bustle in the jail in preparation for the 'Jandaili.'

No news from or about Indu for three weeks now. I am worried a little and for some days have thought of sending a cable. But then I have held myself back.

23.1.41[32]

Darling Betty,

I am writing to you, as promised, but I am not sure if you will welcome my letter for I am going to suggest a great deal of work for you. During my previous terms in jail I was allowed, and so were others, to send some personal or business enclosures with my fortnightly letters. This did not go very far but it helped a little. I am now told that this is against the rules which do not permit enclosures or anything else of the kind. So I must content myself with one letter, without enclosures, every two weeks. Personally I feel inclined to avoid writing letters as far as possible, unless there is some special need for them. It is not necessary for me to write just to assure you and others that I am alive and kicking for you have sufficient faith in my vitality to believe that. To retire into one's shell is a good thing, for some at least. So many odd

31. She had asked him to suggest titles of books which she could send from America.
32. *Nehru's Letters to His Sister*, (London, 1963), pp. 72-74. Extracts.

things turn up and, in spite of all efforts to detach oneself, life has so many holds that something had to be done about them. So I suppose I shall write once a fortnight either to you or to someone else....

My love to you and Raja and the children and all our friends in Bombay.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

Jan. 24, Friday

Col. Sheikh, the I.G., visited this jail yesterday. He was very friendly to Ranjit & me and seemed anxious to help us, within limits. But the limits, as laid down by the jail manual, were rigid and his vision did not extend beyond it.

About taking thumb impressions he told me that a new rule had been framed, apparently because of refusal to submit to the old rule and the reference to him. The new rule says that signatures might be taken instead of thumb impressions at the discretion of the Supt.

About letters—no enclosures to the fortnightly letters— The rule said one letter a fortnight and one it must remain. But, as a special favour, I could write to Indu apart from the fortnightly letter.

The N.P.C. matter is under consideration of Govt. They will let me know later how far I can do this work from prison.

Outside food not permitted to us or to any A or B class prisoners— This was only allowed to detenus. I had not asked for it but the question had arisen because of the Saiduzzafar Khan incident.

Govt. is apparently considering whether some further facilities for receiving letters should be granted to me.

I sent a long letter this morning to Betty to Bombay instructing her to write a large number of letters on my behalf—to Walsh, Krishna Menon, Frances Gunther, Essie Robeson, Padmaja, Agatha Harrison, Amma, Upadhyaya, Pocha &c, &c. Dealt with the Urdu edition of *Glimpses* & the suggestion to bring out an American edition of it.

I sent the following cable to Agatha today:

'Have had no news Indira since her arrival London stop would be grateful for news.'

I finished my 50th hank (of 500 yards) of yarn today, counting from time I came to prison this time. That is 25000 yards so far spun in 2½ months.

Jan. 25, Saturday

The Supt. came this morning and said that as only one letter a fortnight could be delivered to me, and many came, the whole lot might be sent to my secretary for him to pick out the right one! This seemed rather extraordinary procedure. I suggested that I might be told the names of the senders & then I could pick out one—the rest being sent to Allahabad. This was agreed to— How it will function I do not know.

I find that even the formal resolution of the Managing Committee of the K.N.M.H. which came to me for signature, has been detained in the office pending Govt.'s orders. Also of course all my N.P.C. papers.

I am afraid my descriptions of the present Govt. to the Supt. was not at all deferential or polite. It was forceful.

Independence Day

A full day and I feel the better for it. Earlier than usual, before five in the morning, I woke up. For long I sat up in bed and thought of the past eleven years—the first Purna Swaraj Day in 1930 and all that has happened since. 1930 with all its enthusiasm & excitement & jail-going —1931—I was discharged on this very day to see my dying father and the ten days that followed— His death—and so my mind wandered to the other anniversaries of the Day in prison—and Kamala's illness and after.

Four years ago in the height of the election campaign. Where was I then? I forget. Three years ago in the Frontier Province where I took the pledge so many times thus in Pushtu as I wandered from village to village with Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

Two years ago in Almora with Indu, and Nanda Devi and the snowy peaks of the Himalayas looking down upon from their eternal solitude as we repeated the oft-repeated pledge.

Last year? Where was I then? Probably in Allahabad. I do not remember clearly.

And now again in Dehra Jail where I am likely to remain for a long long time. For there is no ending of this prison business this time till the cause of it goes. Of that I felt sure and I was glad of it.

So I thought, and in the silence of the star-lit pre-dawn I repeated the pledge in my mind.

I went out for a wash; it was about 5.30. Distant echoes came to me. Gradually the voice of the *prabhat feri* singers came nearer and the slogans and songs were clearer. I stood and listened and I felt strong and glad. It was cold and chilly in the open but I stood there listening. The voices came nearer and stopped outside the jail compound. Then someone with a powerful voice made an announcement about the day's programme. It was a little speech in which he referred to the aged rishi doing *tapasya* for Swaraj at Shegaon and then to others. As I stood listening to him I found myself, unconsciously almost, straightening myself and standing to attention.

I had decided to spin at least 1000 yards today as a small offering of labour to the Day. It was not a difficult task by any means, although I had never done so much in a day before. It meant about 3 hours spinning. But there were all manner of interruptions. The District Engineer came to examine the roof of our cell and pronounced it unfit & totally unreliable. It might collapse at any time without much notice.

Then there were visitors—interviews—which took up a good part of the day. I started off by showing considerable irritation at the jail authorities—I was expecting Bijju & Fory & Madan for the interview. But in the morning the Jailor informed me that Bijju had not been informed— In fact permission for him & Fory to see me today had only come this morning from the District Magistrate! How that permission could be availed of at this late stage I could not make out. Evidently the matter had been referred to the U.P. Govt.— Everything has to be referred to them. So I was a little angry at this mess.

A little later, however, Bijju & Fory did turn up on the off chance of being allowed to see me. So we had the interview after all.

After this interview followed another—Madan and Nandu.[33]

It appears that Nan, though fit, is feeling very lonely all by herself in Naini prison. No wonder. It is a trial to live in a big barrack all by oneself. Sloan—one of the advisors, who used to be a Secretary to Govt. under Rafi—visited her and rubbed her up the wrong way. How insufferable and absolutely insensitive these old English civilians are. One thing is certain. There is going to be no lining up with this class even in the future. At least I hope so. Either they remain top dogs and we in prison or its equivalent, or they have to pack up and leave this country which they have misgoverned for so long. There is not room enough for both of us in India.

33. Anand Narain Mulla (b. 1901); judge, Allahabad High Court, 1954-61; member, Lok Sabha, 1967-70; member, Rajya Sabha since 1972.

After our visitors had gone and we had cleaned up, it was nearly five in the evening—the time fixed for the Independence Day meetings. So Ranjit and I held our little meeting and we repeated together the pledge.

My promise to myself to spin today 1000 yards of yarn still remained unfulfilled. I had managed to spin about 600 yards in the morning in spite of interruptions. I sat down again and spun nearly 5000 yards more. So I finished my two hanks of 500 yards each today and had about a 100 yards over. This little experience of intensive spinning gave me the assurance that I could, without much difficulty, spin 2000 yards in a day—and, under duress, even 2500 yards, though that would be very tiring.

And so another Independence Day is over— When will the real Day come?

January 27, Monday

Interviews and the like in prison disturb the mind— And then there was Independence Day and all the thoughts connected with it— And so last night was a troubled and disturbed affair. I am told I groaned and talked in my sleep—I woke up many times and dreams filled my mind, which faded out of my consciousness soon after awaking.

January 29, Wednesday

A letter came today from Indu. It was dated 14th December from Lisbon and came by Clipper *via* New York. It told me all about her journey from Geneva to Lisbon and, in the event of accidents happening, gave me information about certain monies of hers in banks!

I was very happy to get it. It came as a complete surprise. Any letter now would come as a surprise for none are being delivered to me and, I am told, they are piling up in the jail office. But to get one from Indu, with a bright little snap shot of hers enclosed, was joy indeed.

I was in no hurry to read it. Or rather I was so full of it that I could not rush through it. I looked long at the envelope and was surprised to find some change in her handwriting. It was hers and yet somewhat different. It seemed more formed and solider.

She has been in my thoughts continually for many days and I have been waiting impatiently for an answer to my cable to Agatha. Now I

feel a little more peaceful, though Indu's letter has nothing to do with later news of her.

I am eager to write to her but I suppose I had better wait for Agatha's reply.

The ways of our Supt. become stranger and stranger. Yesterday a barber came to cut my hair and Ranjit's. The Jailor has been asked for an explanation why an outside barber was allowed.

I received a parcel of lovely Malta oranges from Chaman Lal today. We are overflowing with supplies now—indeed many totally unnecessary things have been sent to us or left with us by Bijju & Fory & Madan & Nandu.

Jan. 30, Thursday

A cable from Indu from London :

'Ashby Hall Hebert Bhandari satisfied condition am awaiting passage India love.'

Good, but no indication of how long this waiting is going to last.

Jan. 31, Friday

I wrote to Indu today to London.

Hifazat Hussain the D.M. came to visit us today. Talked about our letters—N.P.C., &c and our cell—a tent has been put up here and we are supposed to move into it lest the roof of our cell fall on our heads.

My month's total of yarn spun in January: 26 hanks of 500 yards each —total = 13000 yards. Which is good. The average count is 30. Total since I came to jail this time:

57 hanks = 28500 yards

Tomorrow is *Vasanta Panchami.*

January 31, 1941[34]

Darling Indu,

For more than three weeks I had received no news of you and though

34. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

it is not my habit to worry, I decided to cable to Agatha. I sent the cable to her as I was not quite sure where you might be. And even if I cabled to you it would be care of Agatha. Your answer to this cable came yesterday and I was happy to get it. It gives no indication whatever of when you are likely to get a passage. This, I suppose, is a mystery which is not revealed till the last moment.

Day before yesterday I received your letter from Lisbon dated 14th December. It took just a month and a half to travel round the world *via* New York, Manila, China etc. Perhaps a good part of this time was taken up by the various censors reading your letter. What a crowd of these not very lovable individuals must have pored over it from Portugal to India! It would be interesting to make a list. In India alone it has to pass, I think, four scrutinies, three of these being in Dehra Dun. It is not an easy matter to get excited about letter-writing under these circumstances. Anyway I have no occasion for excitement as letters for me or from me are rare indeed.

I looked long at the envelope which contained your letter. Your handwriting on an envelope had not come to me for some months. (The letter you sent from Bex has not reached me yet.) Like a treasure which has come my way unexpectedly and out of which I wish to take full delight before examining it, I gazed long at the envelope. It seemed to me that your handwriting was not quite the same as it used to be. It was yours of course and yet it made me imagine that someone was trying to copy it. Handwriting of course changes and develops and there was nothing surprising about a slight change which seemed to have crept in yours. But then, I wondered, does this indicate some change in you also? We all change as the days and years roll by and I am myself conscious of very definite changes in my own make-up. As I look back I seem to see a procession of different personalities merging into each other and yet each with its own distinctive features. Whether the changes are for the good or not I do not know. Or perhaps it is not so much a change of personality that takes place as the emergence of different aspects of the same personality. We are, each one of us, a group of different individuals, all tied up together with no hope of release, and sometimes they quarrel amongst themselves and we feel the tension and the pain.

So, I wondered, during these two years since we met, how have you progressed and changed in this changing and moving world. I looked at the snap shot you have sent me. It is a good one and I like it. But it did not help me in my enquiry.

I have read your letter several times and, as I read it, travelled with you from Geneva to Lisbon. We stayed at Barcelona for a while but

the thought of that lovely city produces a catch in my throat and a pain in my heart. And then your adventures in Lisbon. Anyway you are out of all that and facing fresh adventures.

Three weeks ago I tried to send brief letters to Agatha and Edward Thompson but I was not successful. The rules regarding correspondence that are being enforced this time are different and stricter than on previous occasions. You are an exception and I am allowed to write to you and to receive your letters when they come—there are not too many of them!—but otherwise I am rather cut off from the world. It does not matter. It is a change for me to which I am rapidly adapting myself. The change is big enough for, as you know, my normal existence is overfull with correspondence. I grope about in a very jungle of letters and make mighty, and seldom wholly successful, efforts to cope with it. And now to receive practically no letters and to write once a fortnight will no doubt do my soul good.

I am glad you sent some money to Nanu. I wish I could help him more. For years past I have been trying to induce him to come to India for a change at least and to make himself fitter for his work. But he is or was extraordinarily in certain ruts and cannot pull himself out till fate gives him a kick. Send him my love if you can get through to him. Louise Morin and Jean-Jacques also. It will cheer them up if they get messages of love and friendship from outside.

I was amused to read your testamentary dispositions of the money you had deposited at Cooks. You must have got the money in London and you will no doubt make good use of it. No more will be sent to you. But I am glad I had that 70 sent to Agatha for you. If you do not require it, you can pass it on to others who might stand in greater need of it—there is Kailas, Krishna, Feroze or Nanu or anyone else. During these days of abnormality and uncertainty all manner of difficulties arise and grip one and so many of our friends may stand in need of a little help.

I wish you would send me a brief cable at least every two weeks just to say how you are getting on. Any message from you cheers me and seems to lessen the distance between us.

I am having odd interviews from time to time—usually even beyond the normal fortnight. I am not particularly keen on them. Last week Bijju and Fory motored up from Delhi to pay us a visit. Next week probably Chandar and Sri Handoo will turn up. They are being transferred to Burma again and want to say goodbye to me. I should have liked to see Amma but she is busy looking after Bappi in Agra.

The Memorial Hospital in Allahabad is practically ready now and the question has arisen as to whether there should be a formal and big

opening ceremony by Bapu. I was not very keen on it under the circumstances but Jivraj Mehta is anxious to have it. Jivraj has taken enormous trouble over this hospital and his wishes carry weight. Perhaps Bapu may agree to come over next month for the opening ceremony. The hospital is an attractive and efficient looking building. Some time or other, I suppose, Anand Bhawan will become an annexe of it, perhaps for little children. That will be for you to consider and decide.

The flowers in our barrack are slowly appearing. In another few weeks' time they should be in full bloom. The cold weather is still with us but its last stage has come. Tomorrow is *Vasanta Panchami*, the day which heralds the coming of spring. Usually it is remarkable how the season changes after this day, though perhaps in Dehra Dun the change may be slower. To me this day is an anniversary which I can never forget.

The little barrack we live in is a very ancient affair. I am told it was built nearly a hundred years ago. The roof has been pronounced unreliable and so we are being shifted to a little tent in our small courtyard while the roof is repaired or changed.

Give my love to Agatha and Krishna and Feroze and Kailas and all our other friends.

Ranjit sends you his love. He is busy with his translation work from Sanskrit—an old play written 1300 years ago dealing with Chanakya's time. Extraordinarily interesting some of these plays are. I wish I knew Sanskrit and could read them in the original.

My love to you, my darling one, and all good wishes.

Your loving,
Papu

February 4, Tuesday

About a week ago I happened to find out that Bapu had sent me a letter. Ordinarily this would not have come to my notice and his letter, like the others, would have been piled up with the rest in the jail office. But his letter happened to be under-stamped and I was asked at the time whether it should be accepted or not. I saw his handwriting and told the jail people to pay the extra charge.

Since then no news of the letter. It was obvious that Bapu would not write a trivial letter. There must be some purpose behind it. Probably it dealt with the Kamala Memorial Hospital and he wanted me to answer some enquiry. I was irritated a little at the letter not being delivered to me although it was clearly a business letter. But I said nothing about it. I disliked asking for what might be considered favours.

Today the *Naib* Jailor turned up and showed me a list of 17 or 18 letters addressed to me which had piled up in the jail office— There was Bapu's letter in the list, three from the N.P.C., two or three from the Secretary of the Kamala Memorial Hospital Committee. I asked to be given Bapu's letter. I then learnt that this cover contained also a letter from Amrit Kaur but this was considered a separate letter and I could have only one of them.

I took Bapu's— He wrote, as I had anticipated, about the Hospital— Jivraj was keen on Bapu performing the opening ceremony and Feb. 28th had been provisionally fixed for it. Bapu wanted to know if I agreed to this and had asked me to send a telegram. He thought a reference to me necessary as I had previously expressed an opinion that there should be no big *tamasha* under present circumstances.

On reconsideration I am inclined to think that it is desirable to have a formal opening by Bapu now. Anyway this has been fixed up already and I would have conveyed to him my willing consent. February 28th is a fit date— Five years ago Lausanne.

This afternoon I wrote a long letter to the Superintendent.[35] I have asked him if I can send a telegram to Bapu, as suggested by him—I have also asked him about N.P.C. papers and reports and the formal references to me by the Kamala Memorial Hospital Committee which are piling up in the jail office. I have suggested that all these might be sent back to the senders with a note that they cannot be delivered to me.

Bapu wrote at the top of his letter: "This is a business letter— urgent." In spite of this no effort was made to give me the letter or even to mention it. This is the first time that such a thing has happened in my jail experience during the last twenty years. It astonishes me how petty and little-minded our rulers are.

Chandar has written to the Superintendent to say that one of her children has got measles and so she will not come to interview me next Sunday, as had been arranged. So no interview for me this time or, for the matter of that, next time.

I have been feeling poorly today. Slightly feverish, tired, and a curious slight pain on the left side of my face— Perhaps the pain has something to do with the teeth.

My thoughts run to Indu so many times a day and I wish that news of her departure from England would come. I hardly realise myself how much I want to see her— But my present anxiety is due to a fear that

35. Not printed.

her departure might be indefinitely postponed owing to war developments. The papers are full of the coming 'invasion' of England and of an intense U-boat campaign. If something of this nature begins then sailings might become still more limited.

I complete 3 months today after my sentence — one-sixteenth of my full term.

Feb. 5th, Wednesday

The Supt. has not deigned to send any reply to my letter sent yesterday —not even an oral message as to whether I can send the telegram to Bapu. Probably he wants to consult the S.P. or others or refer this too to Govt.

I learnt casually today that the various packets of books I am endeavouring to return by post are not being sent at all and are piling up in the jail office. I knew of course that the N.P.C. bundles were there but it did surprise me to find that even books which were being sent to Nan and Betty were being treated in the same way. I am reluctantly coming to the conclusion that our Superintendent is soft in the head.

An old lady, American I think, named Miss Stehalin, who has a farm near Dehra Dun, has been sending us very beautiful flowers. 'From one lover of flowers to another.' Ranjit has met her once at a Congress meeting which she attended.

I felt below par all today, but a little better than yesterday.

February 6, 1941[36]

TO PADMAJA NAIDU

Bebee dear,

I am glad you are still at Anand Bhawan and likely to stay on till the end of the month. I was under the impression, till your letter came for Ranjit, that you had gone back.

36. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

... I suppose Betty has conveyed to you my message about the Urdu translation of *Glimpses of World History*. I went through all the correspondence with Nawab Manzoor Jung. I am very keen on this translation coming out soon, provided of course it is competently done. I wanted the Jamia people to take it up for they would have made money out of it, but their ideas of business are really fantastic. They are very admirable folk and I like Zakir Husain and Abid [37] and the others very much indeed. They work themselves to death almost on starvation allowances. With all that they have no idea of doing any job in a businesslike way. They could have made far more money out of me than they have actually done. I am afraid it is no good leaving *Glimpses* completely to them, much as I would like this. But I want to be quite fair to them. I have no doubt that Abid's translation must be a good one and it would be a pity not to use it. I do not know anything about Nawab Manzoor Jung's capacity or ability. Probably you know him or about him. All I can say is that I like his enthusiasm.

It appears that the Nawab has already come to terms with some Lahore press which is prepared to finance the undertaking. Precious little financing is really necessary and if the Jamia knew its job they could have printed the book without any financial resources to begin with, or hardly any. The book is not a drag; it is going to be a paying proposition. However I cannot help other people's failings. It might have been possible for the Jamia and the Lahore publisher to combine in the publication—that is the book to appear under their joint auspices. The Lahore man to pay the initial costs and the Jamia to give their copyright as well as the translation or such part of it as is done. This is often done. The business side of such a combination should be perfectly simple, for instance, a fixed royalty to be given to the Jamia for their rights as well as the translation. This might be 5% or so on the published price of books actually sold. This should go entirely to the translator. The balance of profit (apart from the author's royalty of 10%) would be a matter of arrangement between Nawab Manzoor Jung and the Lahore publisher. If the Jamia could get more I would be happy. I have suggested the lowest figures (according to English practice). I think the usual rates in India are higher. The payment of royalty on sales is no burden on the publisher.

If this arrangement is not agreed to by the parties then a lump sum will have to be paid by the Lahore publisher for the translation as well as the copyright to the Jamia. What I would prefer is the association of the Jamia's name with the publication. This will be good for them.

37. S. Abid Hussain (b. 1896); Urdu scholar who translated Jawaharlal's *An Autobiography*, *The Discovery of India* and *Glimpses of World History*.

It is always a little difficult to come to an arrangement when three parties or more are concerned. These difficulties will increase enormously if everything has to be referred to me here. So I want you to take charge of the matter and decide as you think best. You can discard any of the suggestions made by me. I am only anxious that the settlement should carry the Jamia's goodwill and assent. Also that it should be a precise businesslike one. I am weary of the casual ways of our publishers in India. Please remember that Horrabin's illustrations and maps must be reproduced and the latest edition of the book used. Horrabin will of course have to be paid, but that can be settled later. It won't be very much.

Give my love to Nan when you see her. And tell her that I am still keen on her going to China. I am quite sure that this will be good for her as well as for others. It is such an easy matter now—two days by plane or less. Altogether a fortnight or say three weeks if Hong Kong is included, as it should be, so that Madame Sun is visited. I really think this should be done. I have, I am afraid, rather large ideas and distant visions haunt my mind. But there is a great deal of reality about them. Tell Nan to think over all this and, if she agrees, to set about it in right earnest as soon as she is in a position to do so. Let it be a private visit and if no one goes with her, let her go alone. All the money spent will be well spent in rich experiences. What more does life offer?

Betty, I see from the papers, has been to Benares or was to have gone there. If so perhaps she visited Allahabad also.

Our little garden is just beginning to take shape. The winter sat heavily upon it but now with the coming of *Basant*, the plants have brightened up. The flowers have appeared on the Lupins, Verbena, Dianthus and Calendula. Marguerite, Candytuft and Phlox show buds. Sweetpeas are going strong. The sunny side of our little yard is doing well. Soon the other side will waken up also. We have also some pots of Carnations. Ranjit is already thinking ahead and trying to fix up matters so that the present lot may be succeeded by others. Two weeks ago I wrote to Betty and asked her to get Pochas of Poona to send me their new catalogue— But this has not come yet.

I have got a number of books which I have read and want to return. And presently I shall want some more. I think it will be better if a man brought me a bunch of books from Anand Bhawan to choose from and he could take back those I want to return. The post is a troublesome affair. But the man who comes must be prepared to stay here a day or two for the processes and ways of a jail are peculiar. Even if I want to return a book it has to be carefully examined and passes through the hands of various censors. I live in an atmosphere of Sherlock Holmes and his kind.

Don't send a man too soon. I think about the end of February will be about right. Give him a boxful of books of your choice. It is difficult for me to make many suggestions. Here are a few however:

1. There is a fat book on National Planning for India by I think Sen with a preface or foreword by me. Published probably by the Calcutta University.

2. There are two books on the Minorities Problem. One fat one also published by the Calcutta University (perhaps this is by Sen and not the Planning one) and the other by K.B. Krishna(?).

3. Aziz ul Haque's *The Man and the Plough* (or some such name). The author is the Speaker of the Bengal Assembly.

4. Brailsford's *Voltaire*

5. Laski: *The State*

6. Alberuni's *India* (I doubt if you will find this. I think I lost the copy some time ago.)

7. Two novels about Siam—Siamese writers and authors.

I think you gave me one of them. They used to be in my room on the southern side left.

I have suggested that the man who brings these books might come here about the end of February. But that might be inconvenient as the Hospital opening ceremony will be taking place then. He can come after that.

Will you ask Upadhyaya to find out if any of my books are with Dhawan.[38]

Please send my love to your mother. I hope she is keeping well.

Ranjit is well now. I am so of course.

Our love to the children. Allahabad must be having delightful weather now.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

38. Shanti Swaroop Dhawan (b. 1905); lecturer in law, Allahabad University, 1940-54; High Commissioner for India in the United Kingdom, 1968-69; Governor, West Bengal, 1969-71.

Feb. 7th, Friday

Wrote a long letter to Padmaja last night and sent it to the jail office this morning. This was my usual fortnightly letter. I told her to tell my friends not to write to me unless there was urgent reason for doing so. Also that I proposed to write only if there was some particular news or message to convey. Not merely because a letter was due. Padmaja is still in Allahabad.

This evening I received the following cable from Bhandari and Agatha Harrison:

'Further to cable re Indira fortnight ago Hebert found may (?many) appearances satisfactory and absence abnormal signs chest possibility or (? of) recurrence if she overtaxes strength Indira to be regarded delicate not in normal health pressed her return to India.

February 13, Thursday

The Superintendent is getting more and more on my nerves. Little things happen from day to day which rub me up the wrong way. He is not a pleasant man to deal with—indeed I do not think he is quite normal. I am told that his wife left him. I am not surprised. He had T.B. at one time. He bullies the jail staff continuously and has made life hell for them. Today I heard that the Jailor has been transferred to Banda.

A number of books and a heap of foreign periodicals accumulated for me in the jail office. So also the parcels of books and periodicals I was sending from time to time to Nan, Betty & others. Everything—including slips containing advertisements—has to be censored several times and bears numerous initials & signatures. All this censoring business had been gone through with my books & periodicals and yet they were kept for nearly three weeks. They were delivered to me two days ago.

This morning the Supt. told me that a parcel containing dried fruits had come for me from someone in Rawalpindi. Did I know the man? I did not. How then could it be delivered to me? So the parcel has been returned to Pindi!

I have almost decided not to receive or write any letters or take any interviews at least for some time. I shall write to Padmaja next week to tell her of this. She is still at Anand Bhawan.

A letter came to the Supt. from Amma asking for an interview with me next month. I have informed the jail people that I propose to take no interviews for the present.

No answer yet from Govt. about the N.P.C. Meanwhile N.P.C. papers pile up in the jail office.

Two other matters are troubling the Superintendent—our clothes being washed by the dhobi outside and a barber coming to cut our hair occasionally. These have been referred to the I.G.!

Feb. 14, Friday

Yesterday I came to the tentative decision not to take interviews for a while. I was put to the test today. Rajan & Ratan were in Dehra Dun for a day and they had obtained permission to see us. Would I agree? I had not the heart to refuse. I wanted to meet them of course but even apart from this if I refused, how could I explain the reasons to them? They would naturally be irritated and distressed and imagine all manner of things. So I agreed to have the interview and they came in the afternoon with masses of flowers and fruits.

I felt lighter and better for their visit. It struck me that it was not very sensible for me to avoid interviews. Whatever the effect on me—it was not fair on others. So my resolution of yesterday is fading away.

Ranjit had the beginnings of a heart attack today. Fortunately it passed off fairly soon. Apparently he brought it on by a quick and strenuous movement of the arm in throwing something over the jail wall. How delicate he is.

Feb. 15, Saturday

It appears that an anti-corruption police officer has been sent to this jail to make inquiries into the past conduct of the jail officials and notably the Jailor. The chief charge of corruption is said to be a certain laxness in enforcing rules where politicals are concerned!

February 16, 1941[39]

TO THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF PRISONS, U.P.

Dear Sir,

I have been informed by the authorities of this jail that I am permitted to receive and to deal with correspondence relating to the Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital. I am grateful for this, but, as a matter of fact, I do not propose to avail myself of this facility as I have already sent instructions that no papers connected with this Hospital should be sent to me here. I have also sent my resignation from the Chairmanship of the Hospital Committee. The great delay in the disposal of certain formal matters referred to me were holding up important work and I did not wish this to happen. A formal resolution about certain appointments of the junior staff of the Hospital, sent for my signature, was received here almost exactly a month ago. This resolution already bore the signatures of some of the members of the Managing Committee and was required back immediately for necessary action. It contained no writing by me, except my signature, but it was held up and, I am informed, that it was sent back only yesterday.

A brief and formal letter relating to the opening of the Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital was addressed to me by Mahatma Gandhi. It was received in the jail office on or about January 28th. It was marked: 'This is a business letter—urgent' and it required an answer by telegram. This letter was delivered to me, as my usual fortnightly letter, a week later on February 4th. It was already rather late then to send a telegram in reply but still I inquired from the Superintendent of the jail if I might do so. Eight days later, on February 12th, I was told that I could send such a telegram. It was much too late then and the matter was so old that there was no point in sending a telegram, and so I did not send it.

In view of these developments and the retention of other letters in this connection, as well as the extraordinary delays that were holding up important work of a social character, I decided to resign from the Hospital Committee and to make it clear to them no further reference to me should be made. I communicated this message in my usual fortnightly letter home.

I have so far received no intimation about the National Planning Committee's papers in spite of repeated requests made by me. I

39. J.N. Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.

understand that many packets containing reports of sub-committees of the National Planning Committee and other papers have lain in the jail office for many weeks now. They are neither given to me nor sent back to the office of the Planning Committee. I wrote fully on this subject to the Superintendent of the jail on January 11th, 1941, explaining the nature of these reports and papers and asking for directions about the future. The matter was, I understand, referred to you and through you to the U.P. Government. Since then I have sent several reminders.

If I had anticipated any difficulty or obstruction in this work, I would have prevented, at the outset, such papers being sent to me. But from my fairly extensive experience of jail life in various U.P. prisons, extending over nineteen years, I have found that similar matters, as well as all correspondence of an official nature, were permitted and I could deal with them. Labouring under this impression, I was a little surprised to find that entirely new rules, or new interpretations or applications of old rules, came in the way of such activities. Whether these rules are in the Jail Manual or not is no concern of mine. That Manual and the jail administration of this country are notoriously out of date and bear little relation to existing facts or to the well-recognised methods of prison administration and the treatment of prisoners as human beings. What concerned me was the marked difference in the normal facilities for business correspondence and the like which were accorded to me during previous convictions and were being denied this time. I am not eager to have any special facility, nor am I anxious to have any favours in this behalf, although it is well known that modern prison administrations give full facilities of this kind, as well as many others, to encourage the human side of prisoners, to every prisoner, and not merely to a few. I realise that the present U.P. Government is in this, as in other matters, very much behind the times and one cannot expect it to function as a modern and efficient state. What I wanted to know was the present position, especially in regard to the National Planning Committee and my connection with it. It is now exactly five weeks since I wrote first on this subject. Sometime next month, or early in April, there is going to be a full meeting of the National Planning Committee and this inordinate delay and the holding up of its papers in the jail office here is inevitably causing harm to the work of the Committee. The Committee has functioned as an efficient, business-like body and it distresses me that inefficiency, red-tape and delay should affect its work now.

This is a matter, I realise fully, which is now beyond the jail department and is in the hands of the provincial government. If it is possible to make this government to come to some decision, whatever that may be, I shall be grateful. Possibly the government does not attach much importance to planning; possibly it is even opposed to it and does not

wish to encourage any activity in that behalf. I can well understand that, though I totally disagree with that attitude.

Recently, the Home Member of the Government of India, Sir Reginald Maxwell, in a speech delivered in the Central Assembly in Delhi, defined the attitude of the government in regard to security prisoners and detenus.[40] I take it that this exposition of policy by a prominent member of the Government of India holds good, *mutatis mutandis*, and with possible variations, to other prisoners also, and the U.P. Government, as a subordinate branch of the Central Government, adheres to the general lines laid down. Sir Reginald Maxwell expressed his extreme aversion to and contempt for those of my countrymen who have been interned, a feeling which he probably extends in a large measure to all my countrymen. It so happens that I have the honour of friendship with many of these detenus and I have considered it a privilege to be associated in various activities with some of them. But apart from such personal contacts, my own reaction, and, I take it, the reaction of every sensitive Indian, to the Home Member's remarks would be not to seek the slightest association with or favour from a government he represents. It would be entirely natural for Indians to reciprocate the sentiments to which the Home Member has given such forcible expression.

I seek, therefore, no privilege or favour. I desire merely to know what the decision of the provincial government is in regard to the National Planning Committee's papers which have long reposed in the office of this jail.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Feb. 17, Monday

Last night I wrote a long letter to the Inspector General of Prisons, U.P. It was mainly about the N.P.C. and the Kamala N.M. Hospital papers

40. (1882-1967); joined Indian Civil Service, 1936; Secretary to Government of India, Home Department, 1936; Home Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1938-44; adviser to the Secretary of State for India, 1944-47. On 12 February 1940, he had said that acknowledged Communists and active supporters of the Communist programme of violent mass revolution represented the majority of security prisoners held in detention camps. He also said that the men formed the central directorate of the Communist organization in India and that detention was necessary to cripple the Communist organization.

coming to me. But the real reason for writing was a feeling of suppressed anger at the speech delivered by Reginald Maxwell, the Home Member of the Govt. of India, in the Central Assembly about the detenus at Deoli. I wanted to have some outlet. The writing of the letter gave me a chance for this.

This letter was sent to the Supt. this morning. Later he came and told me that orders had come from the Govt. that I would not be permitted to deal with the N.P.C. papers. So that's that! My long letter was answered. Still he said he would forward it to the I.G. The I.G. won't like it nor will the U.P. Govt. if they see it.

In today's paper there was a brief message to say that Indu was sailing for India this month. I understand that a telegram to the same effect has come for me but it is being censored and so has not reached me yet. This news suddenly made me feel light-hearted and the strain of the past few days lifted.

Now that I cannot do any N.P.C. work, for which I had reserved three months, my mind has begun to think of other writing work. To continue the *Autobiography*. I must do some concentrated writing to keep mentally healthy.

I am gradually but continuously losing weight. I think I was about 144 pounds or so when I came back to prison. (My jail history—[41] says 141 but this weight was taken some days after my arrival and I lost some weight then). Yesterday my weight was 134½. A loss of nearly ten pounds. I think so far it is all to the good. But a future fall may not be so good.

Feb. 18, Tuesday

Agatha's cable, forwarded by Padmaja, received by me today:

'No need anxiety Indira secured passage but sailing this month meanwhile staying Bhandari see her constantly all send love.'

Feb. 19

It struck me today how near akin to the Gestapo is our own C.I.D. It works in the same way, more or less. Its chief function is not the

41. Word indecipherable.

detection of normal crime but the tracking and hounding of people whose politics the British Govt. does not approve.

The anti-corruption drive of the Congress Govt. has been given a new turn now. Corruption is now sympathy with Congressmen. The anti-corruption inquiry that has been going on in this jail is to find out what facilities or special privileges the Jailor has given to Congress political prisoners.

Received my fortnightly letter today—from Betty. It was dated Feb. 4th and had been in the jail office for nearly two weeks.

Feb. 21, Friday

Yesterday I wrote my fortnightly letter and addressed it to Padmaja[42] who is still in Allahabad. On the 28th of this month Bapu is to perform the opening ceremony of the Memorial Hospital there.

Today I got a cable from Walsh, New York, who is publishing the American edition of my *Autobiography*. The cable said: 'Book published magnificent notices regards!' I was greatly bucked-up of course and I am eager to see the book. I have no idea of what it is like and what it contains, for parts of the old book have been left out and some new matter has been added. I do not yet know how much of the new matter reached the publisher and what he used out of it.

This cable set my mind working in another direction—why should I not begin writing again and continue the *Auto?* It will be good for me and the thing has to be done. For some days I have been playing about with this idea and it has been growing upon me. Ideas and phrases creep into my mind. Now at last I am coming to grips with it, and I shall set about it in a definite way. That means I shall peep for a day or two in the old *Auto* to try to get the mood and the swing of it; then glance through some subsequent writings of mine—or such as I have here—and lastly to make some notes of the chapter heads, &c—some vague outline of this scheme, which will of course be entirely changed in the course of writing!

But today I am feeling tired and limp. A tendency to lie down rather than sit. Possibly very slightly feverish. I hope this will pass.

42. Not printed.

February 24, Monday

Ranjit's birthday today. I tried to cook the birthday lunch with not too disastrous results. मीठा चावल[43] &c.

The Supt. informed me this morning that he had received further directions from Govt. about my correspondence. These were: I could write and receive letters without any weekly or fortnightly limit, that is within reason when I liked. But the prohibition about the N.P.C. work continued. There was a further proviso: I must give an undertaking that what I write will not be published.

Remarkable brain-wave of Govt.! I am asked to give an undertaking that *others* will not publish my letters. I told the Supt. that I was not in the habit of giving undertakings to Govt. and anyway this was an exceedingly odd undertaking on behalf of others.

Tonight I am writing to him to the same effect.

February 24, 1941[44]

TO MAJOR LUCAS

Dear Superintendent,

You were good enough to tell me this morning that you had received further directions from the government about my correspondence. These directions were, as I understood them, that I could receive and write additional letters without any fortnightly or weekly limit, except in regard to the work of the National Planning Committee which I was not permitted to participate in by writing in any way. There was, however, a proviso attached to the effect that I should give an undertaking that the letters that I send should not be published in the press or otherwise. I trust that I understood you correctly.

The question of my giving any undertaking raises a wider issue, apart from that of correspondence. I do not remember ever having given any

43. *Mitha Chawal*—sweet rice.
44. Maharashtra Government Records, File No. 3590/H/II-2.

kind of undertaking to the government at any time during past years and when, on certain occasions, this point was raised, I had to express my inability to do so. I need not go into this matter again except to say that the reasons that impelled me to act thus on previous occasions hold good still. I try to act, in prison or outside, in a manner that seems to me proper, and I constitute myself the judge of that propriety. I am not prepared to abdicate that function or to submit of my free will to limit it, except in so far as circumstances may compel me to do so. Apart from this larger question, the undertaking asked for from me is curious and unusual. It is an undertaking relating not to what I may or may not do, but to what others, who receive my letters, should or should not do. I do not understand how any one can be asked to or can give an undertaking on behalf of others, whom he cannot control. The undertaking obviously cannot relate to the letters I receive for there can be no question of their publication. Even the letters I send are only despatched after being previously censored with every thoroughness.

For the reasons mentioned above I regret I cannot give any undertaking.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Feb. 25, Tuesday

The Supt. came dashing in this morning to say that he had made a mistake. No undertaking was required of me. All that was desired was an 'understanding' that my letters to others would not be published in part or whole. I repeated my difficulty about agreeing to anything which referred to others' actions—I asked him to refer the matter to Govt. It appears that the Governor, Sir Maurice Hallett, had personally interested himself in this matter and issued the latest instructions.

The old Jailor—Baldev Sahai—is being transferred to Banda and will leave in 3 or 4 days. The new Jailor—Jafar Hussain Qazmi—has arrived from Banda. The secret inquiry into the old Jailor's conduct is proceeding and apparently will be carried on in his absence after he is gone. The charge is showing favour to politicals—giving them facilities &c. This applies to the time before I came here.

February 27, Thursday

11 p.m.

At 8 p.m. this evening the old Jailor and the new came here together and casually announced that we were being transferred to Lucknow District Jail tomorrow. We shall probably have to leave by car tomorrow morning at 9 a.m. So we have spent the last 2½ hours in packing. What a lot of books and papers we have collected here, as well as other oddments, and it takes some packing.

A journey, even from one prison to another, is always a welcome change for a prisoner. Probably we are being sent for a few weeks only to allow the roof of our barrack to be changed. We may come back within a month or a little more.

I am sorry about our plants and flowers and seedlings. Ranjit has taken so much care of them and many seeds have not sprouted yet. I suppose they will all die now, and if and when we come back, we shall have a barren place to return to.

Captain, the dog, will also have to be left behind. The new Jailor has promised to look after him.

A curious day they have chosen to shift us. Tomorrow is Kamala's anniversary and Bapu is performing the opening ceremony of the new hospital in Allahabad. Ranjit and I had decided to do more spinning than usual tomorrow.

I had decided to begin some writing work at last. March 1st was mentally fixed for this. Now this is again postponed and my mind is unsettled.

LUCKNOW DISTRICT JAIL

March 5, Wednesday

Ranjit and I travelled in the same saloon from Dehra Dun to Lucknow (or rather a nearby station) as the one in which I had gone from Rosa to Roorkee on my way to Dehra. Conlin, the police officer, whose saloon it was, accompanied us. We came by a slow train and it took us the whole day and a night to reach Lucknow. We reached here on the early morning of March 1st.

We were placed in the old Civil Ward, where over 19 years ago I came on my first pilgrimage to jail. The circle is completed. Is it?

We found here Chandra Singh, the Garhwali, and five 'revolutionary' prisoners, the only one of whom I had met previously being Kapur. Kapur was out on parole for a few days and met me during the Ayodhya U.P. Provincial Conference. Some of these boys, as well as Chandra Singh, have been in prison now for over 10 years! We were glad to be with them both for our sakes and theirs. This gives us an opportunity to know them and already we have found them to be jolly and attractive, in spite of their long confinement.

They have made a presentable garden full of bright flowers. Kapur especially and some others, have become very keen gardeners and work hard in the garden.

It is good for these boys to meet us and be with us. It must make a tremendous difference to them to have fresh company. They were also excited about the books we had with us.

Shiv Verma told me this morning that before our arrival here they had formed from odd reports of prison companions, an opinion about Ranjit and me, and especially about me, which they had had to alter completely after personal acquaintance. They had been told that I had a frightful temper and was very unsocial and difficult to get on with. What a reputation to have! Anyway now they had found how very mistaken they had been.

Since coming here all our old programme is upset. We have tried to fit in with the routine of our companions. It is pleasant to have people to talk to and there is much to say to each other. Every meal is prolonged somewhat because of this conversation, and then there is badminton in the evening. I have also started giving a semi-formal talk for an hour every afternoon. All this leaves much less time for reading and spinning.

We have been put in a large barrack—Ranjit and I. The others are in a separate barrack nearby. We are locked up at about 7 p.m. (we were not locked up in Dehra Dun but in Gorakhpur Jail my cell was locked in the evening).

The Superintendent here is Colonel Jafarey—a pleasant and mild looking individual. This place is far less comfortable, physically, than Dehra. We live in the middle of a wide expanse and everything is full of dust. But in many petty matters there is a change for the better. The attitude of the jail officials, &c. Any jail official would probably shine in comparison with Major Lucas of Dehra! All our accumulated letters were handed over to us soon after our arrival. If books come they are passed by the jail people and do not go to the Jailor or the C.I.D., as

in Dehra. Yesterday we sent telegrams to Sharda on the occasion of her wedding. They were sent off immediately. So in small matters we have more peace here, and that counts for a lot.

There are about 70 'C' class satyagrahis in this jail. They are not allowed to spin or possess a charkha.

In the Central Prison next door are Uma Bhabi, Shammi and Sucheta Kripalani. I sent some books to Sucheta yesterday.

On March 3rd I had an interview. I was expecting Betty who had come to Allahabad for opening of the Memorial Hospital. But she went back to Bombay owing to her children's illness. Psyche, Pan and Mridu saw me. As Chand, Kripalani and Sitaram[45] had an interview with Ranjit at the same time, we met all together. The interview cheered me.

It so happened that the day was Chand's 17th birthday. She was looking very sweet. She is growing up well.

Sham Sunder Tankha[46] came to the jail today as an official visitor and we saw him.

In my bunch of old letters and new which had accumulated in Dehra Jail and had been sent to the Supt. here, I found a letter from Indu. This was dated Nov. 7th 1940 from La Feloun probably (but the top seemed to have been tom off.) It was her first letter after she had heard of my arrest. Many lines had been smudged by the censor. I was happy to get this letter although it was nearly 4 months old.

No further news of Indu. I think often of her and am excited at the prospect of seeing her. Possibly she has sailed already.

Particulars of our companions in the Lucknow District Jail.

1. Thakur Chandra Singh—Garhwali Regiment Case. Born in 1891 in Garhwal (on the borders of Almora Dist.) Joined Indian Army in 1914. Served in France during the 1st World War. Rose to rank of Havildar Major in the II/18 Royal Garhwal Rifles. Was the leader of the Garhwalis who refused to fire on a peaceful Congress procession in Peshawar. Arrested 23 April, 1930—Court Martial—Sentenced to transportation for life, later sentence reduced to 14 years R.I.

Age 50 now. Has actually been in prison now for nearly 11 years. Including period of remission, &c he completes his full sentence in August or September next.

45. Sitaram Gunte; Maharashtrian Congress worker settled in Allahabad; worked for the *National Herald* for some time.
46. Pandit Sham Sunder Narain Tankha (b. 1898); lawyer; member, Rajya Sabha, 1952-70.

Jaideo Kapoor—(Lahore Conspiracy Case)

Born in 1910 at Hardoi—Matriculated at Hardoi in 1925 and joined D.A.V. College Cawnpore. In 1927 joined B.Sc. class in the Science College of the Benares Hindu University. Later admitted to the Engineering College B.H.U. While studying there warrant for arrest issued. Arrested along with Shiv Verma and Gaya Prasad in May 1929 at Saharanpur. Taken to Lahore for trial in Lahore Conspiracy Case. Took part in hunger strike in jail (1929) in which Jatin Das died. Sixteen months' trial, ending in October 1930. Sentenced to transportation for life. Transferred to Madras Jails in Jan. 1931. Various jails—Trichinopoly, Vellore, Cannanore and lastly Rajahmundry. Flogged. This followed by 5 months' hunger strike. Transferred to Cellular Jail, Port Blair (Andamans) in 1933. Hunger strike then. Repatriation in 1937 to Lahore Jail. Transferred to U.P. Jails in Feb. 1938 (owing to efforts of Congress ministry) which urged release but Punjab Govt. would not agree.

Age now 30—31.

Has actually been in prison now for nearly 12 years.

Shiv Verma—(Lahore Conspiracy Case).

Born 1907 in Hardoi District.

Left his studies and took part in Congress work and movement in 1921.

Matriculated at Hardoi and joined D.A.V. College Cawnpore. Studying for B.Sc. when arrested.

Arrested at Saharanpur in May 1929 in what was described by police as the Saharanpur Bomb Factory Case. But sentenced later in Oct. 1930 in the Lahore Conspiracy Case to transportation for life.

Transferred to Madras Jails in Jan. 1931—Rajahmundry Jail. Continuous trouble leading to flogging of Jaideo Kapoor in 1932, followed by hunger strike which continued for over 5 months, ending in April 1933.

In June 1933 transferred to Port Blair Jail (Andamans). Took part in hunger strike there in 1937. Repatriated in Sept. 1937 to Lahore Jail. Transferred to U.P. Jails in Feb. 1938.

Age now 33/34.

Actually in prison for nearly 12 years.

Gaya Prasad—(Lahore Conspiracy Case).

Born 1902 in district of Cawnpore.

Medical practitioner (Allopathy & Unani) at Bilhaur (Tehsil—in Cawnpore Dist.) was a Congress worker.

Arrested at Saharanpur May 1929.

Tried and sentenced in Lahore Conspiracy Case (Saunders' murder and Delhi Bomb Case) together with Jaideo Kapoor and Shiv Verma and others. Took part in hunger strike in jail which led to Jatin Das's death. Trial by special Tribunal lasting 16 months (The Special Tribunal was formed under a special ordinance issued by the Viceroy in 1930.)

Gaya Prasad did not go to court and produced no defence. *Ex parte* trial so far as he was concerned.

Judgement in the case on 7th Oct. 1930: Bhagat Singh, Sukhdeo and Rajguru sentenced to death. Gaya Prasad, Shiv Verma, Jaideo Kapoor, Bejoy Kumar Sinha, Kamal Nath Tiwari, and Mahabir Singh sentenced to transportation for life.

Two others got 7 years and 5 years R.I.

Bhagwati Charan and Chandra Shekhar Azad could not be arrested and were declared absconders.

Gaya Prasad transferred to Madras Jails in Jan. 1931— Kept in Bellary Central Jail for 2 years. Sent to Cellular Jail, Port Blair (Andamans) in Jan. 1933. Took part in hunger strike there in 1933, in which Mahabir Singh, Mohan Kishore and Mohit Maitra died. Again participated in 1937 hunger strike. Repatriated to Lahore Jail in Sept. 1937. Transferred to U.P. Jails in Feb. 1938.

Age now 38/39.

Actually in prison for nearly 12 years.

Ram Singh

Born 1912 in Muttra District.

Brought up in Ajmer.

Active peasant worker.

Arrested in April 1935 at Agra in connection with the Ajmer Shooting Case in which the Police Suptd. Mr. Dogra was shot at and seriously injured.

Sentenced in Nov. 1935 to 7 years R.I.

In May 1936 transferred to Cellular Jail, Port Blair. Took part in hunger strike of 1937. Repatriated to Ajmer Jail in Sept. 1937. Transferred to Lucknow District Jail in Feb. 1939.

Age 29/30.

Actually in prison for nearly six years. Release due, after serving out sentence with remissions, early in April next, that is within a month from now.

Jai Bahadur Singh

Born 1915 in Azamgarh District.

Educated at Benares and Allahabad.

Active social worker. Took part in Behar Earthquake Relief work. Studying in Allahabad for B.A.

Arrested Feb. 1938 in connection with Pipridih Train Dacoity.

Sentenced to 8 years R.I. & fine of Rs. 500/-.

Age now 25/26.

Actually in prison now for 3 years.

J.N.
L.D.J.
5/3/41

March 7, Friday

Received a telegram from Betty today to the effect that Agatha had cabled to say that Indu had left (England)....

March 9, Sunday

Interview today with Padmaja—(I gave up my fortnightly letters—hence this early interview). My mind completely upset by some news as well as a jail incident. After the interview, Chandra Singh spoke to me for a long time about his family troubles. I have not the faintest idea what he told me as my mind was elsewhere.

Tonight I have drafted a letter for I.G. which will be sent tomorrow morning. This concerns an incident that happened in the course of the interview. The fruit that Padmaja brought for me from Allahabad was not allowed in! New rules—or new interpretations of old rules. I was irritated—hence the letter.

I was very happy to see Bebee, although some of the news political and other that she brought me was upsetting. Intrigues, manoeuvres going on as usual. Srinivasan of *The Hindu* apparently playing a leading role.[47] Rajaji probably falling in line. Others wobbling. Bapu distressed, though I am glad he is keeping healthy.

Nan, after becoming fitter and fitter—now in Naini prison, suddenly became very ill—the old stomach trouble—giddiness, &c. She is now slowly recovering.

On March 3rd when I had my interview, I gave the yarn spun by me in jail, up to the end of February, to Psyche for the G.S.S. There were 79 hanks in all, totalling 39500 yards. Counts varied from about 30 to 45:

For November	— 10 hanks	Nos. 1–10	— 5000 yards
December	— 21 hanks	Nos. 11–31	— 10500 yards
January	— 26 hanks	Nos. 32–57	— 13000 yards
February	— 22 hanks	Nos. 58–79	— 11000 yards
	79 hanks	Nos. 1–79	39500 yards

March 10, 1941[48]

TO THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF PRISONS, U.P.

I did not understand or appreciate this fine distinction, which had never been previously applied; but there it was. Before this as well as afterwards I continued to receive parcels of fruits and other articles from my friends and relatives. Now I am told that even this is a contravention of the government's decree or ordinance. As soon as I am clearly and definitely informed of what the exact position is, I should like to convey this information to my friends and relatives so that they might govern themselves accordingly. I have the good fortune to possess a very large number of friends and others who take an interest in me. I do not see why they should suffer for the vagaries and indecisions of the government.

I should like to point out to you another difficulty that I am faced with. When the parcel of dried fruit was returned from Dehra Dun to Rawalpindi I mentioned this fact in my fortnightly letters home. I also mentioned the fact that letters addressed to me were not being delivered and were accumulating in the jail office. I suggested, therefore, in my home letters that a brief statement might be issued by my secretary to the effect that no one should send me parcels or letters as they were not likely to reach me. It appears that this request of mine was blackened out from my letter by some of the many censors whose duty it is to look after my morals. Indeed the letter in question had little in the shape of reading matter left in it as most of it had been smudged and blackened out. It does not seem worth while to write letters under these circumstances. Presumably this also is in accordance with the new policy of the government that is at present functioning in this province.

You will no doubt remember that Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, was good enough to refer to me and to the conditions of my prison life, in a statement made in the British House of Commons last November. In this statement he gave a fanciful account of these conditions. It mattered little to me what he said, for Mr. Amery is at perfect liberty to draw upon his imagination in this, as in other matters. But large numbers of people have been deluded by this statement, and have an entirely wrong idea of how the present U.P. Government runs its prisons and, in particular, how it treats its political prisoners. This wrong idea must be removed. It is for this reason that I have taken the liberty to write to you.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

March 14

Holi today—some playing about with coloured water, &c but quieter than I expected. Our cook, who is a professional *halwai*, from Cawnpore, excelled himself, and produced all manner of मिठाई[49] and नमकीन[50]. Our kitchen worked hard and we fed *puries*, &c about 70 C.O.s and other prisoners who came in groups. We also sent some fruit and sweets to the 'C' class satyagrahis. There are about a hundred of them in this jail. We were not allowed to go to them, nor were they allowed to come to us. But eventually four of them came to us for a short while.

March 16

Interview with Amma—Mohan Bhai and Nandan—saw Kishan Bhai, Vidya, Padma & Upadhyaya outside the gate.

About 5000 yards of yarn spun by me before I returned to jail. I have asked this also to be sent to Psyche for the G.S.S. Thus so far I have sent them about 45000 yards.

19-3-1941[51]

TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, DISTRICT JAIL, LUCKNOW

Dear Mr. Superintendent,

About a month ago, I asked for a tube of Neem tooth paste to be obtained for me at my cost. I have so far not received it although I am in urgent need of it. I could have easily obtained it without delay if I had asked my home people to send it or mentioned it to any of my interviewers. But, in view of the new orders of the government which prevent me from getting anything except through the jail staff, I did not ask anyone else. Presumably I have to pay more as the contractor engaged by the jail must charge his commission also. Why we should be made to pay contractor's commissions I do not know. But that is a relatively small

49. *Mithai*—sweets.
50. *Namkeen*—savouries.
51. J.N. Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.

matter. What I would suggest is that this process of obtaining articles required by us might be made more efficient and delays might be avoided.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

March 21

The Superintendent has informed me in writing that he has received the following reply from the Govt. regarding my correspondence:

> Govt. did not mean to imply that Mr. Nehru should give an assurance that his letters would not be published, but that if any letters were published, then Govt. would be free to reconsider the concession. If Mr. Nehru does not desire to warn correspondents against publication, this is his own affair.

...It appears now that no further answer is required from me and therefore I can write and receive letters without the usual restrictions about the number of letters. Accordingly I was given a few letters today that had accumulated in the office. As a matter of fact they were all unimportant as I have warned my friends not to write to me.

I have not myself written for just over a month. My last letter was dated February 20th. I gave up my usual fortnightly letters so that I could have extra interviews. I have already had 3 interviews since I came to Lucknow and tomorrow I shall have a fourth—with Sir Vijaya of Vizianagram.[52]

I do not exactly know how matters stand—anyway I do not intend writing to any one for the present. My next interview will probably be with Nan after her release early in April. After that I hope I shall see Indu.

I have given up badminton for some days at least. I found that after each game my right arm and chiefly the forearm and wrist pained greatly. Why, I do not know. Of course I was unused to the game and had not played it for many years. Still—.

Ranjit went yesterday to the dentist.

My weight is 137—stationary since I came here.

52. Sir Vijaya Ananda Gajapatatiraj (1905-1965); Rajkumar of Vizianagram; settled in Banaras.

March 22—Saturday

Interview today with Sir Vijaya the Maharaj Kumar of Vizianagram. At the same time Ranjit had an interview with Chand, Tara and Rita and so I met them also. Khaliq and Buddhi[53] hovering in the background.

March 27

Cable from Indu:

'All well so far much love.'

The office of *Origine: Sans Origine.* The date and time of despatch: nil.

So I do not know where the cable has come from. But I suppose she had passed the Atlantic danger zone and was nearing the Cape. The cable must have been despatched about the 20th March as it reached Dehra Dun on the 23rd.

In Dehra Dun Jail we were told that only one letter could be delivered to us once a fortnight. It appears, however, that this was against the new rules. I have been shown this new rule here in Lucknow D.J.:

Rule No. 9 for B. Class

Old Rule: The prisoner may receive and write one letter and have one interview monthly.

Changed Rule: B Class prisoners should be given all the in-coming letters on one date of the month and be allowed to write one letter and have one interview in a month. Otherwise they shall be subject to the general rules regarding letters and interviews.

Ref: correction slip No. 183—

Aug. 20, 1938—Jail Manual.

Sanctioned in G.O. No.: 2035/VI-1295. 1936, dated July 23, 1938.

The B Class rule applies to A Class except that the monthly period is a fortnightly period for A Class.

53. Chauffeur and cook of the Pandits.

March 30

Unexpectedly I was asked to go out for an interview. Sitaram and T.N. Singh.[54]

I saw Chand also who had come to interview Ranjit.

March 31

Spinning done in March:
27 hanks of 500 yards each. Total = 13500 yards.
Hanks Nos. 80 to 106.
Counts 32 to 40. Average 35.

CAMP JAIL, LUCKNOW[55]

This is a temporary jail, newly constructed for accommodating the overflow number of C class political convicts from the various jails in the United Provinces. The number of prisoners in it on the 2nd February, 1941 is said to have been about 1500.

The walls and roofs of the barracks are made of corrugated iron sheets. Just now the roofs have been ordered to be tiled. No berths have been constructed for sleeping purposes as we find in every other jail. The convicts have to sleep on undressed and uneven ground which hitherto was under cultivation. White ants, at times, not only eat up the clothes of the prisoners but also bite them during the night. There are no lights inside the barracks. In days of bitter cold the prisoners who had only two blankets and one piece of mat each for bedding and covering, passed the night sometimes shivering with cold. In barracks, meant for 25 convicts, often 35 are kept. Latrining arrangements for the night inside the barracks are both insufficient and indecent.

Fetters put on prisoners during transfers are removed as soon as the prisoners reach their destination. But in the camp jail, Lucknow,

54. Tribhuvan Narayan Singh (b. 1904) General Manager, *National Herald*, 1940-42; member, Lok Sabha, 1952-62, and Rajya Sabha, 1965-71; Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh, 1970-71; Governor, West Bengal since 1977.
55. J.N. Prison Papers, N.M.M.L. Presumably written at the end of March 1941.

prisoners have often to remain in fetters for ten days or even more after their arrival, there being no arrangement for their immediate removal.

On the night of 30th January last, about 40 prisoners were transferred to this jail from Bareilly. It is said that none of them had blankets. Only a few had blanket coats and they had all to pass the night shivering with cold in the train.

The latrines outside the barracks consist of 20 seats for 160 prisoners and all the 160 it is alleged are allowed about 15 minutes for answering the call of nature.

Hospital arrangements are also said to be very insufficient and unsatisfactory. As regards food, even invalids are given gram in place of sago or *dalia* in the morning.

It is alleged that on the 20th of January when the prisoners were asked to parade, 4 or 5 of them out of 1200 refused to do so. At this the Deputy Superintendent, one Mr. Lang, began personally to beat the five prisoners with a stick. They were then dragged into the barrack. On this the other prisoners got excited and began to shout national slogans. Mr. Lang ordered all of them to be locked up. For 36 hours after this all these prisoners numbering about 1200, about 200 of whom were juveniles, were kept constantly locked in their barracks without food. They were not permitted to come out even for answering the call of nature.

It is said that as a protest against this behaviour of Mr. Lang, one Syt. Hulas Varma of Dehra Dun and a few others hunger struck on the 21st of January. They had taken no food up to the 2nd of February. During this hunger strike on the 29th of January water was refused to Syt. Hulas Varma who was confined in a solitary cell. He asked his fellow prisoners in the adjoining cells for water, who being themselves locked up could not help him and so got excited and began to shout national cries which spread from barrack to barrack. This shouting lasted for about 15 minutes, but no water was supplied. Instead alarm was sounded. Mr. Lang with his men entered into the cells and the juvenile barracks and belaboured the prisoners causing serious injuries.

On the 30th of January one boy was removed to the district jail and there given 30 stripes for refusing parade. Juveniles are said to have been beaten for singing the flag song.

Some very young boys are alleged to have been put on hard tasks like flour-grinding and oil-pressing. As these prisoners could not complete their task on the 31st of January and on the 1st and 2nd of February about 1400 prisoners were given practically no food. On the 1st they were given only a little *dal* boiled in water once in the day and on the 2nd only a little vegetable similarly boiled in water again once in the day and absolutely no *chapaties* on either of the two days. Some of them

April 7

I have interview with Nan and Chand. Nan looks definitely thinner. Had a long talk—am inducing her to go to China for two or three weeks.

I was rather put out to learn of the irresponsible talk that Keshav has been indulging in since his release. In spite of his energy and capacity for good work, how terribly narrow-minded and stupid he is. He cannot rise above the party or clique.

Very good news of the new hospital. It is doing well and is already tremendously popular.

Probably I shall have another interview about the 16th—with Nan and K.T. Shah.

April 8

Some trouble today among the 'C' class satyagrahis in this jail. Apparently a jail official misbehaved. Then the question arose—must they all come out in twos, every morning and evening, to be counted. So far they had been counted inside the barrack and they objected to the innovation. I do not know yet what was decided.

Since yesterday nearly a hundred Muslims arrested and brought to this jail—Shia-Sunni affair. Day-after-tomorrow is *Barawafat* when trouble expected.

Ghafur who has been serving us for the last five weeks, since we came to Lucknow, discharged today. He is a trained servant and has done his work well. Would like to help him but do not know how to do it.

April 9

The 'C' class satyagrahis affair was settled more or less satisfactorily.

Today one of the 'C' class satyagrahis died—He had just come two or three days ago and was very old. He gave his age as 97 and the jail doctor says he looked it! How such a person was allowed to perform satyagraha is strange. But stranger still is that the police should arrest him and get him sentenced. Probably he was an unauthorised satyagrahi who joined in his enthusiasm. He has had his heart's desire and perhaps it is as well that he died in this way.

April 10

Today is *Barawafat*—trouble brews in Lucknow—all manner of news of conflicts—firing—arrests—Processions banned &c. Great Shia-Sunni tension. At first Govt. allowed the Sunnis to take out their procession. Then they also gave permission to the Shias for their separate procession in a different quarter. The Sunnis objected and at the last moment both processions banned. This to the liking of the Shias who are keener on the Sunni procession being stopped than on taking out their own. The Sunnis flame up. Gather in thousands at the Idgah mosque and start C.D. by reciting *Mad-he-Sahaba* in batches—arrests of over 600 &c. &c.

All this affected our present and future. The District Jail being prepared for a large influx of Sunnis (or Shias or both). Arrangements being made for a thousand or two thousand. The camp jail also being got ready.

We must make room for these newcomers. At 12 noon we are told that Ranjit and I are being transferred to the Lucknow Central Prison, which adjoins the District Jail. We have to go over at five.

And so packing and final talks with our companions of the last forty days (who remain on here). A break-up of the routine we had got used to.

At five forty-five we march out of our barrack—say goodbye—and follow a long procession of prisoners carrying our goods and chattels. We go through the District Jail garden and then the Central Prison garden and emerge in the prison proper. Crowds of excited-looking prisoners trying to peep out at us through their bars. They had been locked up for the night.

L.C.P.

And then we reach a small group waiting for us: Banne[56] and Brajesh Singh and Thakur Hukum Singh and another group of B class satyagrahis including Shiva Murti, Khanna, &c., Avasthi, &c.

We are lodged in the 'Gora' barrack in separate cells, Banne is here and Brajesh and Hukum Singh. Banne has been here for 13 months as a detenu. Brajesh came a few days ago, also as a detenu.

56. Sajjad Zaheer.

April 11—Good Friday

The Sunni satyagraha is still hanging fire. The hundreds arrested yesterday were let off with nominal fines. *Pour parlers* continuing between officials and Sunni leaders.

All day today large numbers of ordinary prisoners—C. O.s and others—manage to find some excuse to visit me. Some of them old friends from Naini days—'lifers.' One of them was distressed. 'What, Panditji, you have grown very old, I could not at first recognize you'.

I gave a talk to the A & B class satyagrahis this afternoon. We feed together and this gives us the chance to meet.

The Suptd.—Col. Jafarey—has told us that we are likely to be sent to Dehra Dun on the 17th or 18th of this month.

April 12, 1941[57]

TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, CENTRAL PRISON, LUCKNOW

Dear Colonel Jafarey,

I am writing to you with some hesitation as I have no desire to add to your burdens or to interfere with the jail administration. But I have been distressed about the reported hunger strike of two of my colleagues and friends, Mr. Vishnu Saran Dublesh and Mr. Yusuf Hussain, both of whom I have known personally for a large number of years. Mr. Dublesh has been a colleague of mine for several years on the Executive Council of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee and I have great regard for him. I know nothing about this hunger strike beyond the brief note that has appeared in the papers, and I do not even know whether it is being continued or not. At any time this would distress me, but in this weather, it is all the more distressing. I do not know if I can do anything in the matter but I would very much like to feel that this unfortunate incident has been satisfactorily settled.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

57. J.N. Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.

April 12, Saturday

I have written a brief letter to the Supt. about the reported hunger strike of Dublesh and Yusuf. Later—I am informed that the hunger strike ended this morning.

April 15

Interview with Nan, Tara and K.T. Shah—News that Indu due to arrive at any time during the next four days.

I had a letter from Indu from South Africa two days ago.

Apparently we have to stay on here in Lucknow C.P. for another week or so.

April 18

I was suddenly woken up last night—it was after midnight—by a C.O. who told me that a telephone message had come from Bombay to say that my daughter had arrived. Odd time to telephone to a prison.

This morning the news appeared in the *Herald*—Later I had Indu's telegram from Bombay and then Nan's telegram from Allahabad.

4 p.m. I am informed that we have been transferred back to Dehra Dun Jail. We are due to leave at 5.30 p.m., that is in an hour and a half's time. And so to pack and say goodbye to our prison mates.

DEHRA DUN JAIL

April 19—Saturday

A shorter journey than the one from Dehra to Lucknow. We came by the express and reached Dehra in the morning at 7.30. We travelled in the same saloon (Conlin's) with Conlin—Interesting man Conlin with a varied experience of men and countries and languages. A Catholic from Ulster. Served in the last war—Was in the Andamans for some time.

Coulin told me that after his first meeting with me, I reminded him of a Jesuit priest! This was meant to be a compliment in a way as he admires the Jesuits. I told him that I had myself been favourably impressed by the Jesuits I had met. They were cultured, intellectual, delightful conversationists—far better and more interesting than Protestant clergymen who, though often pleasant and agreeable, seemed rather shallow. And yet, with all my admiration for the culture, discipline and self-sacrifice of the Jesuits, I felt there was an impassable barrier between them and me. I could not tolerate the idea of submitting my will to another or to any dogma.

A new Superintendent and a new atmosphere in Dehra Jail. Lucas has gone, if not to the wars at least in preparation for them. In his place as Civil Surgeon and Supt. of the jail has come R.B. Dr. Ram Sarup Srivastava who has been called back from retirement. He seems to be very anxious to be helpful in every way. So for the matter of that is the new Jailor Kazmi. The entire staff breathes more freely now that Lucas has gone.

It was good for us, and for the others, for us to live in the Lucknow District Jail and the Lucknow Central Prison. Human contacts, meeting old colleagues, and having long talks with them daily. Rather exhausting business and because of it I could do little work. Especially in the Central Prison, I could not settle down. We were daily expecting a transfer.

In the Central Prison crowds of ordinary prisoners—chiefly 'lifers'—came stealthily to visit me, and again I had a glimpse into the mind of the convict world. My stay in a big prison creates quite a commotion there as news travels to all the barracks and attempts are made to visit me for *darshan*. I had talks with many of these 'lifers'—I think nearly a hundred ordinary prisoners came to see me in L.C.P. More and more I am impressed by the ordinary 'lifer'. He is far better than the petty thief or the pickpocket.

There is no doubt that the few reforms that the Congress Govt. introduced in the jails were greatly appreciated by the jail population—Hindu and Muslim. The Congress is popular with them! And yet little enough was done—I wish it had been more.

The essence of the change was not any particular reform but more self-respect. The petty jail officials began to behave better. They were afraid of the consequences of misbehaviour. The convicts felt this change and several told me so. On the very day the Congress Govt. resigned, some of the jail officials told the convicts that now they would deal with them in the old way! It is not surprising that prisoners like the Congress.

The new I.G., Sheikh, does not appear to be a success. Ordinary prisoners at least are of this opinion and, I think, their opinion has value. They compare him, to his disadvantage, with Salamatullah, who, with all his rugged discipline, was always prepared to listen to any grievance patiently. Not so Sheikh.

April 21, Monday

Settling down, gradually. It is definitely cooler and pleasanter here than at Lucknow. Ranjit feels better—But curiously enough I have not been flourishing in body or mind. I do not know what the matter is, I feel listless and tired. My weight has gone down to 133 pounds.

I have been reading off and on for the last two weeks, Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom.* The book has held me, not only because of its fine writing but also because of his problems and difficulties with himself. Sometimes—not always—that problem was not unlike mine in some ways. And yet of course there is little in common between him and me. I remembered, however, what Naomi Mitchison[58] said to someone after she met me for the first time in Birmingham in November 1935—(This was before my *Auto* came out.) She said that in some way I had reminded her of Lawrence.

This afternoon I received a letter from Josiah Wedgwood—also his memoirs and another book &c. The letter was dated Jan. 5, 1941 and it had come to me through Amery, the Viceroy and the U.P. Govt.! An impressive route, likely to lead people to think that it dealt with high matters of state policy. Nothing of that kind. It was just a friendly letter of good wishes. I was glad to have it—I remembered how 19 years ago he wrote to father in prison and sent the letter through the Viceroy, Lord Reading.

April 22

Daily I have been expecting a letter from Indu. She wired to me on the 17th from Bombay that she was writing. I follow her movements from the daily papers. She has gone to Wardha.

58. (b. 1897); wife of G.R. Mitchison, M.P.; her works include *What the Human Race is Upto* and *Memoirs of a Space Woman.*

April 23, Wednesday

Indu must have reached Allahabad this morning. Possibly in another two or three days she might come here. I am glad I shall be meeting her in the Dehra Jail rather than in the Lucknow Jails. The meeting will be less formal here and possibly longer. But it is odd to meet her after two years just for a jail interview. My mind is full of what I would like to say to her and to ask of her. But I simply can't do it in a business-like way with a jail official assisting at the interview.

I spent the greater part of the afternoon in writing to J.C. Wedgwood in answer to his letter. Sent this to the Supt. who will forward it to the U.P. Govt., which means presumably the Governor, who is in Dehra Dun now.

The Jailor, for some odd reason, imagines that the Governor might visit the jail (and me) tomorrow. And so there has been a great deal of cleaning and washing and scrubbing going on.

I do not know why I feel so dull and poor spirited.

The letter I wrote to Wedgwood today was written after a gap of over two months. My last letter was written on Feb. 21st to Padmaja, just before Bapu came to Allahabad for the Hospital opening ceremony. Why have I not written all this time? Mostly cussedness, I suppose, especially after the intimation sent to me from Govt. that I can write when I choose. Partly also because I was taking interviews instead at Lucknow. But in reality I did not feel in the mood to write. Now that Indu is back it will probably be different.

I have not even been receiving letters, except occasional begging ones.

April 23, 1941[59]

TO J.C. WEDGWOOD

My dear Mr. Wedgwood,

Two days ago I received your letter of January 5th 1941 together with your memoirs, the Pelican anthology, *Forever Freedom* and the press

59. J.N. Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.

cutting containing an article by you.[60] I was happy and grateful to have your letter and these very welcome gifts. At any time I would have been glad to hear from you and have news of you; in prison this was doubly welcome. It is many years since we met and much has happened since then. When I was in England on the last occasion in 1938, you were absent, I believe, in America.

During the last two days I have read your memoirs with great interest and they have brought you near to me. Contrary to your suggestion, I do not propose to leave the book in the gaol library. Our gaols seldom have anything that can be called a library. But, in any event, I should like to keep with me this brief record of a very gallant life, the story of your ceaseless struggle for freedom and justice. You have been good enough to inscribe the copy of the book to me in generous language, and this adds to its value for me.

The press cutting I have also read though without that strong emotion which you expected it to arouse in me. I am not old enough or wise enough, in spite of what you call 5000 years of authoritarianism, not to be swept by emotion occasionally, but it is very difficult to feel angry with an old friend who is always on the side of the angels, whether he is right or wrong in the particular task he undertakes.

The anthology is a delightful treasure. It contains so many old favourites of mine and so many other fine pieces that are not easily traceable, that this little book is likely to be a close companion to me. Were you doubtful of my reaction to this collection of writings on freedom? I have grown up in this mental climate and ever sought to bring my actions in line with it. But I have often found that the magic of

60. He had written: "I send you herewith (a) my *Memoirs* to amuse you, (b) an article to make you angry.... (c) the touchstone *Forever Freedom* to test your judgement.... You represent 5000 years of authoritarianism, the Viceroy 500 years of aristocracy and Amery just philosophy like myself. Ought one to teach anarchy? Is it too dangerous to teach it to the blind?....This is only to show one prisoner that he is not forgotten and much loved even by the 'enemy'." The article, *Don't make martyrs in India—make Arms*, urged Amery to release all political prisoners; "their job for the last 20 years has been demanding self-government for India and votes for 350,000,000 uneducated people. The nearer they got to it, the less they liked it, and the more impossible they made their demands so that there should be no risks of acceptance....I should let them all out and talk to their hearts' content. We do not want Indian troops...we want only the produce of Indian skilled hands and brains... When the war does end, Indian capacity and self-respect will be a surer pledge of freedom than any juggled compromise formula blackmailed out of a harassed Viceroy."

words and ideas is used for other purposes, and sometimes, in all honesty, we twist them to our own less noble ends.

I hate anarchy of all kinds, of the mind, the body, and the social organism. I dislike a mess, and my own predilection is entirely in favour of order. And yet there are worse states than that of anarchy and disorder, and in this mad world of ours, the choice often lies between evils. War is an undoubted evil: who wants it? Very few, I imagine. And yet it comes with all its horror and brutality, in spite of us, and many who hate it and all its works are drawn into it, for fear lest a worse evil befall them. Life is a perpetual risk, a gamble, and you have yourself repeatedly condemned the 'safety first' attitude.

India has changed much during these last twenty years since you were here, though twenty years is a drop in the ocean of her long history. The outward aspect may not show this change, and foolish people, who cannot go underneath the surface, may seek to ignore it: they do so at their peril. We, who are of India, have changed also, though it is always difficult to measure and weigh the texture of our minds and spirit. Thought-riddled, we have sought to understand this world of ours; we have tried also to understand India. We have undertaken many a voyage in time and space, as well as geographically in the present, for the discovery of India. We have looked into millions of eyes and endeavoured to find out what lay behind them. It has been an amazing quest, full of adventure, full of hope-filling new discoveries, though sometimes evil and its brood have shown their ugly heads. It is this strange and powerful mixture of the past, the present and the future to be that is India today. Not an easy problem; no, certainly not. No worthwhile problem is easy of solution today. But utterly incapable of solutions except in one direction—that of full-blooded freedom. The old way of threats and compulsion and division is childish and worsens the disease.

No, I am not a Communist, nor indeed do I belong to any other 'ism'. Having failed to find anchorage in religion, I refuse to give up my mental freedom in favour of any dogma or binding creed. Yet I believe in the socialist structures; it seems to me inescapable if the world is to survive and progress.

Did you see my *Autobiography* which came out five years ago? I would have sent it to you but it is not easy to arrange such matters from prison. I mention this book because to some extent, feebly, it gives expression to the conflicts in my mind. Since I wrote this, I have grown, developed for good or bad I do not know. These last five years of horror in the world have had a powerful effect upon me, and my mind's assurance about the future of humanity has been considerably shaken. Perhaps I might write about this, a kind of sequel to my

Autobiography. But just at present with a world shattering to bits, it seems almost an impertinence to write for the future. But whatever the future may hold, one functions in the present for the ideals one has, and functions with all the strength at one's command.

Five thousand years of authoritarianism, you say; perhaps there is a measure of truth in it. But have you forgotten the generations of enforced submission to others' authority? And could not something be said for that old authoritarianism, of the mind controlling the body, of service to the community and sacrifice for it being the measure of authority, of brute force having to bow down to learning, of wealth never having pride of place, of a culture that survived many thousands of years of shock and change, of a civilization which thought deeply of the problems of life at the dawn of history and found solutions which gave it a stability and continuity for thousands of years? All that is over now, or almost over, for it will not go entirely. The new culture and civilization that will come will (or I hope it will) produce a classless society and will make Brahmans and Kshatriyas of all of us wherever we may be.

It may interest you to know that Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* had a powerful influence on me when I read it first many years ago. I cannot say that I became a single-taxer to the exclusion of all else, but I was convinced that there should be taxation of land values. In the middle twenties I happened to be Chairman of the Allahabad Municipality and I tried to introduce the taxation of land values there. But our municipalities have no real power and the superior ones who were supposed to look after us from on high, told me not to indulge in wild and impracticable schemes. Probably they did not even know what all this was about. Anyway I resigned from the Chairmanship soon after.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya would, I am sure, welcome your book for the Benares University Library. He has grown very old and feeble.

This letter has grown unconscionably long. I have not written a letter for over two months now and so my pen ran on. The length of this will at least indicate how much I appreciated your letter. I send you all my good wishes for you personally and for the cause of freedom and justice all over the world for which you have stood throughout your life. My regards to Mrs. Wedgwood.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

April 24

Indu is coming to see me on Sunday next—the 27th. I am excited. But a vague uneasiness fills me when I read in the papers that she still looks weak and far from healthy. Still, I feel lighter and better today.

April 25—Friday

The Jailor appears to be almost as excited about Indu's visit here as I am. Anyway he shows it even more. He asked me what arrangements should be made for her stay in Dehra—at Ugra Sen's,[61] Khurshedi Lal's or the Tankhas—He had already arranged for someone's (Ugra Sen's) car to go to the station to meet her. I told him not to worry as no doubt proper arrangements would be made by Upadhyaya. I agreed, ultimately, that the Tankhas might be informed and a car sent to the station.

He is anxious also that Indu should come here at meal time (midday) so that his wife could send something specially prepared by her.

April 28—Monday

So April 27th came and went and I had the interview with Indu—a long interview. The Jailor stretched it to the uttermost.

Indu was looking bright but very frail. She had not been keeping well on board and since arrival. She was not well now and I was filled with anxiety about her future. Apart from health, other difficulties. I was very happy to see her, and yet my mind became engrossed with these difficulties. Some years back I would have worried more. Now I suppose I have developed more equilibrium and am not easily upset. We do our best and take things as they are. All good luck and happiness to her in life's way. But it is not going to be a soft way. She has determination and self-reliance, which is good. But she is so—or it seems to me—immature and perhaps tends to take things superficially. Yet she must have depths. She will reach them slowly. I hope the process is not too rapid or else there may be shocks. Delicate and sensitive people can hardly avoid shocks and upsets.

61. Businessman; resident of Dehra Dun.

My mind was full of her and of life's queer ways after she left, and at night also I had curious dreams.

April 30

Yarn figures:

Spun in April 29 hanks of 500 yards each.
No. 107 to 135—total 14500 yards.
Counts 32 to 38—average 36.
Total spun in prison since November last to end April—6 months—67500 yards.

November 1940	5000 yards
December „	10500 „
January 1941	13000 „
February „	11000 „
March „	13500 „
April „	14500 „
	67500 yards

Counts from 30 to 45
Mostly round about 32-35.

April 30th 1941[62]

TO PADMAJA NAIDU

Dear Bebee,

Your letter was delivered to me today. A day or two earlier the packet containing bulbs reached us and Ranjit immediately took charge. He has already put some of them in pots for the time being. Dehra Dun has an odd climate, hot enough now, but still not too bad for most things to grow if a little care is taken. Our chief difficulty is lack of space. While we were in Lucknow a large assortment of seeds and

62. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

seedlings came from Kashmir for us here. Ranjit has been busy with them.

Our transfer to Lucknow took place just when our little patch was beginning to show colour. We are told that during our absence it was gay and bright with flowers, but by the time we came back, most of these had faded. Only the hollyhocks were going strong.

Our 'new' quarters are exactly the same as the old! Only the roof is solider and does not threaten to come down. Why you imagined that anything else, more 'spacious,' was being put up, I do not know.

... Will you tell Bapu that I have at last received the 'Dhanush Takli.' It came in an enormous wooden box, about half the size of a cabin trunk. I was amazed. Today for the first time I tried it with moderate success. My first reactions are not in its favour—this apart from the spinning which I cannot judge without some practice and experience. The big box put me off. It was out of keeping with something that was supposed to be exceedingly simple and cheap. And then it is odd looking, queer, lop-sided and far from beautiful. It is a come down from the grace, beauty and symbolism of the wheel: the wheel is a rather wonderful thing and can be made to mean so much. The box charkha does not possess the charm of the old style wheel, but it has undoubted virtues; there is compactness & grace in it, and it has a look of quiet efficiency. So I begin with a slight prejudice against the Dhanush Takli—I am inclined to think also that it tends to make one bend the back somewhat, which with neither the wheel charkha nor the box one need do. Any thing that involves back-bending even slightly is not, to that extent, desirable either psychologically or physically. I imagine that the Dhanush Takli will tire me sooner than the others. But that, I suppose, is a question of practice.

Probably at the back of my subconscious mind there is resistance to the D.T. as my hand is now fairly set on the box charkha, and it does not fancy my trying to learn a new, a presumably slower, process. I spin fairly regularly and in spite of many interruptions—transfers &c.—have produced during the last six months about 68000 yards of yarn. I want to finish my first hundred thousand at the same rate and do not want this disturbed. My counts vary from 32 to 45.

I spent quite a long time over Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom.* It fascinated me. I had read his *Revolt in the Desert* long ago—the memory has almost faded. Reading this bigger book now became almost a mental adventure. The fine writing of course attracted but even more so his digressions and self-analysis led me into all manner of trains of thought. He irritated me often enough because he appeared morbid or a poseur or an exhibitionist of the mind. Yet he

made me think and his problems were not always unlike mine basically, though they might differ in outer dress. I suppose I am very very different from Lawrence—still sometimes we touched....

Ranjit is definitely better here than he was in Lucknow.

Give my love to your mother and Papi.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1/5/41[63]

FOR WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA

Answers to their card index.

Each syllable pronounced separately as written, the long vowels being marked: NEHRU, JAWAHARLAL (JAWAHAR and LAL being really two names usually tacked on together).

After school and college education in England, practised as a lawyer in India for six years. Connected with Mrs. Annie Besant's Home Rule for India movement. Then gave this up when Mr. Gandhi started non-cooperation in 1920 and gave full time to public activities, especially political activities connected with Indian National Congress and Indian freedom movement. Was jailed repeatedly for political activities—seven terms from 1921 to 1935, varying from six months to two years. General Secretary of National Congress from 1923 to 1925. President Indian Trade Union Congress 1929. President Indian National Congress 1929 and again in 1936 and 1937. Has been continuously member of supreme Congress executive—the Working Committee—for last 17 years. Has been specially identified with demand for independence of India as democratic state, and has laid stress on international problems in relation to India. Socialistic views. Belief in ultimate world federation of free states. Speeially favours closer association between China & India, politically and culturally, and revival of ancient bonds between these two

63. D.G. Tendulkar Papers, N.M.M.L.

countries. Took leading part in condemnation of Japanese, Italian and German aggressions, and fascism and Nazism generally. Cooperated in international actions to send help to Republican Spain during Civil War —and arranged for Indian medical mission to visit China.

Visited Barcelona in June 1938, saw air raids. Czechoslovakia during Sudeten Crisis in summer 1938. Contacts with Wafd Party in Egypt and international organisations like International Peace Campaign, Anti-Fascist Association. Visited Chungking (China) in August-Sept. 1939.

Intimately connected with reform movements in Indian feudal states; President of Indian States' People's Conference since 1939.

NATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Arrested on Oct. 31, 1940 and sentenced to 4 years R.I. for certain political speeches. Now serving this term which is his eighth prison sentence....

Books :

Soviet Russia—1928

Letters from a Father to his Daughter—1929

Glimpses of World History—1933

Autobiography 1936—American Ed.—*Toward Freedom* 1941

India & the World—1936

Eighteen Months in India—1938

China, Spain and the War—1940

The Unity of India—1941

and numerous articles, &c.

Achievement: That I have so far kept more or less sane in a mad world.

Date of marrying 6.2.1916.

Misc.—Dislike of politics but forced by circumstances into them.

Official honours and awards are given by the British Government in India. These are not accepted by nationalists.

Jawaharlal Nehru

May 1st

May 2, Friday

The Supt. received a letter today from Indu saying that her medical adviser, Dr. Atal, would like to have an interview with me next Sunday, May 4th. Also that Feroze Gandhi will accompany him. The Supt. has agreed to the interview, though after some hesitation (the last one having been only a few days ago and a letter having been written also). But he has permitted Atal only to see me.

3.5.41[64]

Darling Indu,

I am writing this note before seeing Madan. Presumably he is coming tomorrow morning. There was some difficulty about the interview as it came only a week after the last. Not realising the consequences, I wrote a letter about the Urdu translation of *Glimpses* two days ago and this was sent off. The publication of this book was hung up because of some references to me. Having written a letter, I could not, in the ordinary course, have an interview within a fortnight. As a matter of fact I had written a letter after two and a half months. It is all rather vague and the rules as applied to me are not clear. Anyway it is well to remember the restrictions on letters and interviews. In a very special case, the Superintendent will probably give special permission. But, as far as possible, I should like to avoid this as it might mean references to higher quarters. Probably, however, I shall continue to receive letters sent to me. There is some delay before these are formally delivered to me as they have to go for censoring to the District Magistrate, who is often in Mussoorie. I have been shown your letter of the first May but it will not be formally delivered to me for two or three days more.

The Superintendent told me this morning that he had allowed the interview with Madan as he was coming as your medical advisor, but he had not allowed it to Feroze as there was no special reason for this.

The weather is getting hotter and hotter—this is the worst time of the year and it will last for nearly two months. It will be a great trial for you to take long journeys during this weather and a risky business. I

64. Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML.

do not propose to write any letters for the present in order to keep interviews open. But do not take this journey to Dehra Dun and back without special reason.

Puphi, when she comes, will ask for an interview with Ranjit. That is due and she can have it when she chooses. I shall meet her incidentally as it were, as interviews have to take place in our yard.

You will decide as you think best in consultation with Madan Bhai and others. I can hardly be of help to you from here. In drawing up your programme, it is best to proceed on lines which do not appear as odd to other people, especially those connected with us in various ways. Unfortunately all of us attract a great deal of public attention and our movements are chronicled in the press. This attention is a friendly and affectionate one but it creates difficulties. Then there are those, like Ladli Chacha, who have been good enough to help us in family matters for the last ten years or more, ever since Dadu died. All these people have to be treated in a friendly way and made to feel that they are not being ignored or not consulted about matters on which they are usually consulted. Life is rather a complicated business as no doubt you will realise as you grow older. To me, personally, there are few complications left and I run a more or less straight course. But for me other lives, and notably yours, have inevitably great interest, to put it mildly. They impinge one upon the other. But even so, the burden of decision will rest with you. That would have been so if I was out of prison and with you. It is even more so when I am in prison and thus disabled from action or capacity to help. Age is sometimes just a passage of years with no other distinguishing feature; sometimes it is record of worthwhile experiences which may lead, it may be, occasionally to glimpses of wisdom, or an understanding of the extraordinary thing that is life and human relations on this planet. That wisdom in its fulness comes to very very few; even in part it does not come to many. It is something deeper than the facile formulae with which we often seek to confine it. And because it is deeper, it cannot be easily passed on to others who have not experienced it in their own lives and minds. And so again and again that experience has to be gone through and often the price we pay in such experience is great.

In politics, I am a little weary of those—and they are so many—who without taking the trouble to understand the intricacies of a complicated problem, seek to solve it out of hand. We are always announcing answers to questions which we have not even framed. If that is so in politics, it is even more in life itself, with its amazing diversity and complexity. As I grow older and experience upon experience piles up within me, I am appalled at my own smallness in this mighty scheme of things.

Perhaps that is the effect of age. Youth is fortunately free from this disability.

I write all this because circumstances have put you on the threshold of life and at every turn you will have to face a question mark. By your answers to these questions, your future will be moulded, and often those answers will not be entirely pleasant ones. Distress and suffering consume the world today. Nobody can avoid them. But integrity of mind and action can be ours, whatever happens. And if we are fortunate enough to possess this, then it does not much matter what else we lack.

This note or letter sounds perilously like sermonizing—It is not meant so. It is only an attempt to express some odd thoughts that came into my mind as I was thinking of you—I talk too much and write too much —I grow garrulous with age. But the period when as a father it was my function to guide you in many ways has ended, because you have grown up and because of other things. And I wonder so often if during these past years I guided you aright or failed to do what I should have done. Anyway that period of life for you and for me is past history. The moving finger has written and moved on. And now you face another period and the burden of that is much more on you.

I have written above about Ladli Chacha. Of course I do not mean that he should be taken into every confidence. What I mean is that he should not be made to feel that he was being ignored.

As for telling *puphi* or not—as you have decided for the present not to consult her on the subject, I shall do likewise, and await the development of events.

I want my old razor (Gillette type). There are two old ones in my bathroom in Anand Bhawan. Someone might bring them here—*puphi* when she comes next.

Love,

Papu

May 4, Sunday

Fairly long interview with Madan Atal this morning.

It is proposed that Indu should spend a couple of months at Solan where Madan will also be staying and can look after her.

4.5.41[65]

Darling Indu,

I have had a long talk with Madan Bhai and he will no doubt tell you all about it. Though there is not much to tell. I have already told you that under the circumstances you should decide about your programme. I cannot be of much help anyway. Madan seems to think that Solan will be a suitable place for you for two months or so and after that when the rains are well set, you will be fit enough to go elsewhere—to Allahabad or Kashmir or where you like. If you agree with this, certainly go to Solan. Madan Bhai will be there to advise you. You can decide later what to do afterwards. Even when the rains come the weather in Allahabad is very close and depressing and you will not improve under it. Perhaps it may be desirable and worth while then—some time in July or so—to go to Kashmir for a couple of months. That will tune you up and you can return to Allahabad about the end of September, just when the autumn is beginning and the nights at least are cool.

On your way to Solan you can pay me a visit, also on your way down. My next interview is due on Sunday or any day afterwards. I shall take no other interview and shall not write any letters which might come in the way of an interview. But you can write to me.

These jail interviews, even when the authorities are lenient (and this is not likely to be repeated on the same scale), are very unsatisfactory, welcome as they are. I do not know how to unlock the doors of my mind and heart, which burst with things to say. Nor do you I fancy for you have found it even more difficult to do so even outside jail. And then in my long moments of silent thought I wonder often if words are so important after all. They help of course but only slightly and when the doors of understanding have been unlocked. Otherwise they are valueless—just hot air. Having used an abundance of words all my life, I grow more and more to distrust them. Something that is vital escapes them. I wonder sometimes if my love for you has been so wanting in something as to prevent those doors from opening. I seek to find the error, to purge the fault. Meanwhile we grow older and time passes and events happen—and I draw into my own shell.

In the quiet of Solan, or wherever you may be, you will also do a lot of thinking. Try to think out things for yourself and build your

65. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

thoughts on an integral and integrated mind. There is nothing so important as integrity of thought which is not swept away by momentary gusts or rumours and hearsay. If we can keep that hard gem-like flame of mental integrity, our actions are coloured by it and we grow in the process. Else we remain petty, inconsequential and unimportant in any real analysis. We live in times of chaos or of approaching chaos. It may be years before any ordered living comes back to us. There is no chance of my coming out of prison for a long time, and I do not want to. I should like to develop more peace and strength of mind and more charity than I possess. Perhaps the Bodhisatva will help!

You might write to Birju Chacha that you will not be going to Kashmir just yet. Tell him that we have received the seeds and saplings he has had sent to us and we are tending them carefully.

Some foreign papers are being returned. *Nation* has a review of my book. This might be taken out. Ask Upadhyaya to keep them separately. *Time* had one. I enclose another.

Love,

Papu

May 7

My mind has been troubled and uneasy—constantly thinking, brooding about various matters which chiefly revolve round Indu. Restless nights.

May 8

I have sent my yarn to Betty. Early in March, I had given a lot (spun from Nov. to Feb.) to Psyche for the G.S.S. I gave her 39500 yards. I have now sent 31500 yards—upto hank No. 142 dated May 7th—totalling 71000 yards spun since I came to prison this time. In addition I asked Upadhyaya to send about 4000 yards of my yarn, previously spun. (My old yarn sent by Upadhyaya to G.S.S. amounted to 7 hanks of 667 yards each=4669 yards plus a few odd smaller hanks. In all over 5000 yards. All this spun from January to March 1940).

May 12, Monday

No news from Indu—no letter from her, nor any mention of an approaching interview— Because of her I have refused to fix up any other interview or write any letter, lest this come in the way. Meanwhile several demands for interviews: Rajan, Bijju Bhabi, Nora, and Jai Narayan Vyas (sec. A.I.S.P.C.)—I am keeping them hanging.

Nan is coming tomorrow to see Ranjit. Of course I shall see her also as I am here.[66]

May 15, 1941[67]

Indu,

Why have I suddenly begun writing to you—and today of all days? This letter is not meant to be sent to you in the ordinary course and I do not know when you will see it. I do not know when you will come to interview me again. Yet the writing of this has suddenly become an imperative need, an urge I cannot resist, even if I would, and indeed I have no desire to do so. I hope you will see it some time.

Letters from prison, with all manner of evilly inclined folk and knaves and fools running their eyes through them and, often enough, blue-pencilling or blacking out passages. How can one write a real, intimate letter under these circumstances? For months I have hardly written a letter from here, except for one or two semi-business communications. I was annoyed at the Govt.'s attitude, irritated at parts of my letters—innocent enough I thought, they were—being blacked out. And so in sheer perversity I did not write just when Govt. relaxed the rule for me and allowed me to write frequent letters. Probably I would still have written to you but you were out of reach and expected every moment to leave England for India.

And yet this business of censorship is no new thing, although jail and C.D. aggravate it tenfold. During the last twenty years, ever since the first C.D. movement or even earlier, I have always had the idea at the

66. The entries for the period, 13 to 21 May 1941, are missing in the original.
67. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

back of my mind that my letters might be read by censors and the like. Even during the slack periods, politically speaking, some kind of censorship always continued. Possibly all our letters were not censored, but some always were, and I could never write as freely and frankly as I wanted to. My political life and methods were such that there was little secrecy about them, though inevitably there were things I did not want to shout from the housetops. But when it came to personal matters it was a different story. Not that there were any great secrets of mine which I wished to hide from the public gaze. But no one likes to undress his mind and soul in public. So, always, through all these long years, whenever I took pen in hand to write a letter, subconsciously I kept a check on myself, feeling that strangers would see that letter. I could write with a certain measure of clarity and even my restraint of language gave some evidence of the mind and thought behind. But that could only be a fleeting glimpse and sometimes an irritating one, for there was a suspicion of a veil hiding much.

Perhaps even before these iron bars of censorship enveloped us and made me retire a little more into my shell, I had developed a measure of restraint in expression and behaviour. That too, I am inclined to think, was a way of self-protection against a fear I always had of being swept away by too much sentiment. You will be surprised to find me accusing myself of sentiment, for I show precious little of it and am much more of a hard-boiled egg, now at any rate. Yet, I fear, this hardness is only at the surface and underneath lies a sea of sentiment which has often frightened me. A life-time of disciplined living and deliberate training of the mind and body to make them efficient instruments for the purpose I had in view, has thrown a hard shell over this turbulent mass and on the whole I feel fairly sure of myself. This has given me a certain degree of self-confidence and usually a crisis or difficulty makes me clearer-headed and calmer. Yet on occasions the shell bursts to my great discomfiture.

Apart from this fear of my own tendency to wallow in sentiment, there was another reason which induced me to fortify my shell—that mighty Maginot Line which could after all be so easily turned. I realised that any slackening on my part produced far-reaching reactions on others, and I was alarmed at the consequences. I could not live up to them and indeed I had no intentions of doing so. Thus I caused needless pain to others and I blamed myself for this. And so again I retired into my shell and peeped out of it.

What is Papu driving at? you will say. Why all these patches of early autobiography? Well, I really do not know myself. My mind cooped up for months past is just bursting and if, by some miracle, I could transfer

all those ideas and thoughts to paper suddenly, a fat volume might materialise! The ideas are not methodically arranged as they would have to be if I tried to write a book, and they just tumble over each other and the poor pen cannot possibly keep pace with them. But I am not writing a book and I do not just see myself writing a book for some considerable time. I toyed with this writing idea for weeks and months. I almost sat down to it. But I could not begin and it grows harder to do so, as time goes by.

Why so? Because I cannot write superficially, unless I am writing a political or non-personal article, and even then it is frightfully difficult for a person who is an active politician. He may not say everything he wants to say, he may not discuss frankly his own colleagues or his opponents, for he has to think of a hundred consequences. Every word spoken or written has to be weighed, consciously or subconsciously. How cribbed and confined and imprisoned we are by these iron bars of the spirit.

If this is so about political matters, how much more difficult it is about personal matters. Can anyone be ever really frank about oneself, one's own emotions and mental struggles, one's urges and desires and those half-conscious imaginings which float, dream-like, through the mind?

My *Autobiography* is, I think, about as frank and truthful a document, both politically and personally, as I could make it. Probably it compares favourably with others of its kind in this respect. I poured out myself in it at a time when I was going through much agony of soul. And yet, in spite of all the pouring out, all the restraints and inhibitions were there, and I suppressed much that filled my mind and heart. To that extent I was untruthful. Especially this was so in the last few chapters dealing with my personal life. It was impossible for me to lay bare my heart before anybody, much less before the world at large.

But these last six years since the *Autobiography* was written have had a powerful effect upon me. I have suffered greatly, experienced many hard knocks in my personal as well as my political life, saw some of my ideals become airy nothings and some of my dearest personal relations fade away. I have survived all this, hardened, matured, call it what you will. I am not just one and fifty years old. Somehow my body keeps healthy and fit in spite of a growing tiredness with it. But I feel as if I was hundreds of years old in mind and the weight of these centuries lies heavily upon me. If this is the beginning of wisdom, then I am on the threshold of Saraswati's haven. But I would barter this wisdom and experience, so dearly bought, for the lighthearted unwisdom of my younger days.

How can I write about these six years with any frankness and throw my naked soul before the public? And if I miss out everything that really mattered to me, what remains that is worth while? These six or seven years are bound up in my inner life with Kamala and you. Of course even before this period both of you played a major part in my personal and inner life. But one takes many things for granted in one's younger days; even our struggles have a passing quality. Apart from this, in the twenties I was totally abnormal. I had a flame-like quality, a fire within me which burned and consumed me and drove me relentlessly forward; it made me almost oblivious of all other matters, even of intimate personal relations. I was in fact wholly unfit as a close companion of anyone except in that one sphere of thought and action which had enslaved me. Gradually I woke up to other matters. I realised then, and I realised now even more, what an impossible person I must have been to get on with. My very good qualities which made me an efficient instrument for political action, became defects in the domestic field. Yet I found, to my infinite joy, that those I cared for above all else had gladly and willingly tolerated me and put up with my vagaries. As my awakening proceeded I yearned above all else for those closer human contacts of the spirit with those I loved with all my heart. Unfortunately long and trying periods of jail came, year after year, and normal life and contacts were denied. It was in those days of the early thirties that I wrote those hundreds of letters to you which came out subsequently as *Glimpses*. That was one attempt of mine somehow to quench a little the insatiable thirst that consumed me.

Dadu was dead. He had meant a great deal to me; I was infinitely proud of him and of the traditions of our family which he had set up—the traditions of great ability, great courage, great perseverance, great sacrifice, all directed to the service of India. That tradition, it was my ambition, to keep alive in so far as I could.

But father was dead. Dolamma was there, frail, ailing, enveloping me with the overwhelming love of a mother for her son. I was very fond of her, but she could take no part in the life I was living. I was anxious to give her peace and comfort during her few remaining years. There were my sisters, both of whom were so much younger than me that my relation to them was partly paternal and partly brotherly. One of them had married and was, what is called, settled in life. She had lived since her marriage chiefly in Calcutta, Rajkot and other places and had lately taken a house with her family in Allahabad. Although I was very fond of her, she had largely gone out of my life and lived her own life. The younger sister was with us. The difference in our ages was so great that I had looked upon her more as a child than as a sister.

Soon after she married and went away. My family life revolved and centred round two persons—Mummie and you. The others, however much I liked them, lived their own lives apart from ours, though there were of course contacts.

Ever since father's death I felt the burden of a new responsibility: I was the head of the family and as such must look after, in a sense, my sisters and make them feel that nothing had changed in their old home.

But I cannot go on and on with this past history—certainly not now when the lights are going out. I had not intended to write all this but it is strange how the pen becomes almost an independent entity when one writes and sometimes does just what it likes.

May 16

Last night, when I sat down to write, I was trying to explain why the urge to write to you suddenly took possession of me. And instead of doing this in a straight fashion, I wandered into the past and began to lose myself in its mazes. It is an unfortunate way I have with you—as if I was talking casually and inconsequentially. I go on and on and do not give you much time to put in a word.

What I was driving at was the extraordinary difficulty of my writing about these past six years in a book. I dared not do it and expose all my inmost feelings and torments to others. Not that there was any great secrecy about them, but some things are private and sacred because of that, especially when others are concerned. I am not a secretive person but there are limits even for me. There is much that I could tell you for you have the right to know. But even to you I could not say everything. It would hurt me and it might hurt you.

So a feeling of suppression grew upon me. In jail this is always so and I try to find a way of escape in hard work, a regular routine, spinning, reading etc. In the past, writing, being creative work, has helped me tremendously. This avenue seemed to be closed this time. I looked forward to your coming back. You filled my mind and this thought of you, tinged with anxiety about your health and journey, kept me more or less calm in spite of occasional worry.

You arrived—you came to see me. That was an event for me. It was an event for many others. It was extraordinary how odd people were interested in this. Every one in jail was somewhat excited about it. English police officials and others who saw me on business spoke about it with some enthusiasm. I felt how both you and I represent something more than our individual selves. We become symbols in the minds of countless people.

You arrived and I was happy. But soon a cloud fell on my happiness for I realised that you were not as well as I had hoped and that there were troubles ahead of you. My training held however and immediately I grappled with the new problem and gave you advice as to what you might do. You accepted it for the moment and, though I had a dull feeling inside me about your health, I felt that we were going to face the situation in the most effective manner. To take the best possible action when a difficulty confronts one itself brings relief to the mind. It is always inaction and doubt and uncertainty that crush one.

You went away. Then Madan came and I learnt that on further consideration you had decided to follow a different course. I was sorry that partly at least you had not followed my advice but I tried to convince myself that the other course might be equally suitable. Anyway Madan told me he had made arrangements at Solan and everything was practically fixed up. So nothing more seemed to be necessary. Still I did not quite like this development, it preyed upon my mind. Life is a complicated business and is always playing us tricks. I have, in much hardship and pain, learned to understand it a little, very little, and to proceed warily where it is concerned. Each act has a hundred consequences and those who would step with assurance have to keep all these in view. No one can possibly expect you to think of all these consequences and possibilities. You have not the experience. Even Madan, a dear friend and valuable counsellor though he is, is very inexperienced in the by-ways of life, or even on its highways. I am quite sure that if I had the chance and the time to explain to you and Madan why I advised as I did, you would have agreed with me unhesitatingly from your own point of view, not mine. Indeed I gave the advice from your point of view.

In spite of this disappointment I accepted the new arrangement. When I heard later, however, that the Solan visit had fallen through and that no arrangement was visible, then suddenly I was completely upset. Very casually inquiries were being made in Mussoorie for houses and even there it was not easy to get them. What was this casualness and inefficiency, I thought, when every day counted and the heat was at its worst. This was not the way to do things and if the beginning was casual what about developments later. It seemed to me clear that Madan by himself would find great difficulty in fixing things up. I grew almost ill with anxiety and could do nothing but pace up and down like a caged animal, fretting at my inability to help you. It was absurd my not being able to help my own daughter when she required this help most. A word or a whisper from me and thousands all over the country would gladly do everything in their power for you. Yet things had taken such a shape that I could do

little and had left everything to Madan. The whole thing was fantastic, absurd in its folly. Fancy everything being hung up because you had nowhere to go to!

So I raged for two days and life became a terrible burden. I could do no work, could not even spin which soothes me. I could sleep with difficulty and would suddenly sit up in the middle of the night unable to control or direct the ideas that battered my mind. Yesterday morning I got up about 4 a.m. and decided to write to Madan. I sent him this letter. This relieved me somewhat for at any rate I had taken some step.

But still my mind was ill at ease. I longed to meet you and talk to you. The desire to do so almost overwhelmed me. Yet I could not even write for an official jail letter was no good.

In the evening it struck me suddenly that I could write to you fully and frankly, even though my letter might not be sent to you. Later perhaps you might see it. This was just a subterfuge, a trick, and yet, would you believe it? my mind calmed down immediately. I grasped at this way out. Just then Ranjit and I went out for our short stroll in the evening. It had been cloudy and stormy during the day but the evening had cleared up and the outline of the hills stood out sharp and clear. It struck me how equally rapidly the stormy weather of my mind had subsided because of this new idea and I had felt calmer and more at peace.

We came back to our barrack and I was eager to begin to write to you. Ranjit spoke to me. I could hardly follow his words for my mind was with you. I must have behaved oddly. There were interruptions. At last I sat down to write to you. And this was the beginning last night.[68]

68. This letter does not seem to have been completed.

12

PRISON DIARY WITH LETTERS II

26 May 1941—4 December 1941

May 26, 1941[1]

Darling Indu,

I am very glad you are (more or less) comfortably established in your little cottage. This does appear to be rather small but even that might be an advantage. One can make a small place cosier. It is pretty dismal to live by oneself in a large place.

It is a comfort to know that you are not far from me and that news of you can reach me quickly. But I am sure that the first thing you should attend to is your rest and treatment. All this long journeying, ever since you left Switzerland many months ago, must have been exhausting and we can take no risks with your health. So rest a lot even if this is a trifle boring. Indeed for the next month or so I would not recommend even an interview with me here. I would love to see you of course as often as possible, but this business of running up and down between Mussoorie and Dehra Dun must interfere with rest and treatment. So till the end of June at least, stick to Mussoorie. We shall see afterwards about future interviews. As for your treatment you should carry on what has been recommended to you and there is Madan Bhai always there to consult. It is not necessary to refer matters to me. Madan Bhai and you can always decide any matter that arises.

I am very fond of Beethoven—But my life has been spent far from the cultivation of the graces and pleasures which sometimes accompany it. I suppose I must not complain for I have got a great deal out of it in my own way. Happiness is rather a fleeting thing, a sense of fulfilment is perhaps more abiding. The world changes and I grow old-fashioned already. All of us claim certain rights—individual, national etc.—and quite rightly so. But in the old days I was taught that rights carried obligations and duties with them, and I have got rather entangled in this sense of obligation and duty. Even so, life has been very generous to me, and even the knocks and kicks it has given me have had their lessons and have perhaps benefited me.

But I was writing about music. Get the gramophone and records by all means. It struck me that a radio might be useful. So with the help of some friends I have tried to make arrangements for a radio to be sent to you. I hope it will get there and function properly.

About money, you will remember to draw as much as you require from Allahabad. You can also, if need arises, get it from Bachhraj in Bombay (from my account, not yours).

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

Within a fortnight, I think, or possibly three weeks, the monsoon will reach the little hill on which is perched Mussoorie. There is a tremendous deal of rain during the first month especially. So be prepared for it.

That reminds me, I had asked Upadhyaya to bring my raincoat. He did not do so. Do not worry about it now.

Did Upadhyaya order the books I wanted? I forgot to ask him. I sent the list with *puphi*. They were chiefly Plato's and the Greek plays translated by Gilbert Murray.

Another book I have been wanting for a long time (and asking Upadhyaya for it) has been कविता कौमुदी[2] Part I. We had it in the library, but it has disappeared. So a new copy can be obtained. It is published and sold in Allahabad.

Keep cheerful and well and grow strong.

All my love,

Your loving,
Papu

26.5.41[3]

Darling Betty,

It is ages since I have written to you, or indeed to any one. It is just three months and a quarter since I stopped writing letters. During this period I have written two more or less business letters, and these too fairly recently. Why did I behave in this way? I do not quite know. A streak of perversity in my nature I suppose. But there was a more substantial reason also behind it. After our transfer in February to Lucknow there was the possibility of more frequent interviews and so I gave up the alternative of letters. To Indu I could not write in any case as she was expected to sail or was actually on the high seas. Others know well that however troubled or perplexed my mind might be occasionally my body keeps going in an aggressively healthy way. So only the ignorant need ever worry about my physical well being.

I was very happy to have news of Raja and to learn that he was carrying on well. I suppose Nasik must be pretty hot now, but I have always held that any heat is better for one's health than the enervating climate

2. *Kavita Kaumudi.*
3. *Nehru's Letters to His Sister,* (London, 1963), pp. 75-76.

of Bombay. Perhaps, as a true citizen of Bombay, you might resent this statement. I hasten to add, therefore, that in spite of its climate, I like Bombay very much and am very fond of many people who live there.

Write to me, my dear, when you feel like it—even though you do not get an answer from me. Remember that letter writing from jail depends on many factors and limitations. I should like to have frequent news of Raja and the children, and of course, yourself. Do not worry much about the petty riots that are taking place in Bombay.[4] Such things are ghastly certainly, but it is a ghastly world we live in and the sooner we get accustomed to it and come out of our glass houses the better. We shall have many shake-ups—the old life is gone, never to return.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

May 26, 1941[5]

TO RAJAN NEHRU

My dear Rajan,

Your letter reached me some time ago. I did not answer it myself as I was not writing letters to any one just then or later, as these came in the way of interviews. I would much rather have had a glimpse of you than send you a brief note.

You mentioned in your letter that you were likely to visit Dehra Dun within four or five days. That meant the 12th or 13th. The jail authorities were agreeable to your coming on the 13th and I was told that a letter to this effect was sent to you from the jail office. I half expected you that day. Probably that letter from jail went astray and you never got it, or else you would have replied to it.

According to your programme you must now be in Kashmir or perhaps in Simla, *en route* for Kashmir. So you are far away and the

4. From 22 May 1941, Bombay city was in the grip of communal riots, in which 43 persons were killed and many more injured. Sporadic incidents continued till the 5th of June.
5. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

possibility of interviews in the near future does not arise. I envy you Kashmir. It is the one place which always calls to me.

The books that Foot[6] of the Doon School sent me through you were returned to him long ago. We were transferred to Lucknow on the last day of February and before we went we returned the books. Later, on our return here, I made sure that he had got them back.

Ranjit is well, putting the finishing touches to his translation of the *Mudrarakshasa*.

Indu is staying in Mussoorie or rather on the way to Mussoorie, in a little cottage. She is far from well yet and is supposed to have full rest.

Have a good time in Kashmir. The air of the higher valleys there is the most vitalizing thing I have come across.

Not knowing exactly where you are, I am sending this to your New Delhi address.

Fond love to you and Ratan,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

May 29, 1941

Madan came to see me a few days ago on his way down from Mussoorie. He brought a letter from Indu. An angry, agitated letter, angry at me, angry at events. All the long screeds I had written to her and for her and which I had perhaps foolishly given to her, had a very different effect on her from what I had desired. So much for my insight into human beings and my general competence! Not learning from this, I suffered myself to seize hold of pen and paper and write on and on to relieve my fevered brain. The idea of course was to send these sheets to her later. Fortunately I held on to them and indeed there was no chance of sending them, and later was wise enough to destroy the lot.

It is terribly sad how this jail business prevents me from getting nearer to Indu just when I want to so much. And yet, would I succeed if I was out? Like Malaviyaji in politics, I seem to think that cold reason and logic must ultimately convince—an idle thought which leads to false hopes and wrong actions. How many times I have failed in this endeavour during past years, both in private & personal life as well as in

6. A.E. Foot (1901-1968); eminent educationist; first Headmaster of the Doon School, 1935-48.

public life. As my experience of life grows I feel more and more perplexed at its vagaries and complexities. I am losing confidence in my ability to cope with it in its personal aspect. I cannot even gain the confidence of my daughter! Not that I want her to do anything against her will. And yet there it is. Extraordinary. For years and years, while I was busy with my politics &c, or was in prison, or Indu was in Europe, her mind has been filled with queer ideas about me—fantastic accounts which just amaze me. And I cannot explain them away and each attempt to do so irritates her!

...Are we—am I—so completely out of touch with the younger generation as not to understand them at all? Is the gulf too wide to be crossed by either party? I wonder. And yet I had always thought that I was a link and could understand both—and indeed my own leanings were towards this younger generation. Or is Indu not representative of this generation?

...For all these long years, twenty-three years ago and since then, how much has Indu meant to me, and how many thousand times I have thought of her future. How to help, how not to hinder her growth. Hundreds of pictures come to my mind of her babyhood, infancy, early girlhood. How many talks I had with Kamala about her! And how I longed to have her show confidence in me; to come to me and ask questions, to inquire, to confide. To a slight extent she did so in childhood, and of course I was not often available. I made the most of this and referred to it in my *Letters from a Father* & in *Glimpses*. But even as I was writing, she had drawn into herself—These last ten years separated her from me, till now we look at each other as strangers almost. Ten years! I saw little of her. First I was in prison for years—then she was in Switzerland and England.

What is to be done? What is to be done? Nothing. One cannot cheat the fates in personal matters or make them hurry.

May 29, 1941[7]

TO J. R. JAYEWARDENE

Dear Mr. Jayewardene,

Your letter of the 7th May has reached me and I was happy to hear from you again. As you realise it is not possible for me at present to

7. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

carry on an intelligent correspondence about things that matter and are in our minds. Events are marching fast all over the world and it surprises me that many people are still thinking in the old way and cannot get out of the ruts. But the future, whatever it is going to be, is not going to wait or to conform itself to their slow-moving minds.

In prison especially, when one is cut off from friends, the mind fixes itself more on the future. In the thoughts that fill my mind, Ceylon often recurs and the difficulties of the present day do not worry me much.

My good wishes to you and to the people of Lanka.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

June 2, Monday

June, sweet June (not so sweet in India!) is upon us with all its oppressive heat but also with the promise of the rains soon. Indeed we have had a few light showers already here in Dehra and there has been a noticeable improvement in the temperature. But in Allahabad and elsewhere it is fearfully hot.

Madan, who went to Calcutta to see Bidhan Roy, wired to say some time back that Bidhan was in Shillong and so he was going there. I expected as much. Then later that Calcutta doctors wanted Indu to go there for a thorough examination &c. and stay there for a week or two. Further that he was making arrangements accordingly. This was not at all surprising to me. I could not conceive Bidhan giving an opinion without personal examination. And yet what a time to go to Calcutta—the worst time of the year for travelling and staying in Calcutta and so soon after Indu had come up to Mussoorie! All the fuss about taking a house & fixing it up for nothing! If she had to go to Calcutta she might have done so before going to Mussoorie. But Madan is not very bright where such things are concerned and lives in a world of hopeful optimism. Everyone will wonder why Indu has to go suddenly to Calcutta and anxious inquiries will pour in.

And yet after receiving Madan's telegram I felt greatly relieved. At any rate she will be in competent hands in Calcutta. For the rest, it is no good worrying.

I was expecting to hear from Madan again or suddenly to learn that he had returned. But there has been no further news from him. A

short while ago I was told that Indu wanted to interview me tomorrow —Is she on her way to Calcutta? Probably.

The Supt. is very decent to me in allowing frequent interviews. Only yesterday I had an interview with Nora who came down from Mussoorie to see me—This was supposed to be my normal interview. Indu's will apparently be a special one.

June 4, Wednesday

Yesterday I did not spin!—a gap day after many months. I was expecting Indu in the morning but long before she came (she turned up in the early afternoon) the American edition of my *Autobiography—Toward Freedom*—was delivered to me. I became absorbed in it—how one likes to see one's own books in print! And I decided not to spin that day. I deserved a holiday from it after my regularity and long perseverance in it.

On the back cover of the book are given some American press opinions. They are extraordinarily eulogistic and, reading them, satisfaction and pleasure filled me. My opinion of myself probably went up—a risky business requiring careful watching!

Reading the book I felt that the abridgement was not always happy —There is a scrappiness about it and sometimes it is difficult to see the connection between one paragraph and the other. Indeed there is no connection. I am still reading the book.

Indu's visit yesterday brought me a strange peace although my mind continues to be worried about her health. She gave me a note—she is so shy of talking—and this note was entirely different from anything she had written to me for years. Evidently she had had a tussle with herself, and her previous plans having gone awry, she realised how wrong and foolish she had been to reject my advice and to suspect it. She felt, as she wrote, how helpless she was without having me for a prop, and for the first time the barriers which had grown up between her and me seemed to fade. I felt immensely relieved and yet I knew that barriers do not disappear so easily. She is easily moved and influenced by happenings and people. Still it was a good beginning and I do not think it can ever be so bad again as it has been—We had a long talk, the talking, as usual, being mostly done by me.

She left for Calcutta last evening. My thoughts are with her.

Wrote letters today to Indu, Betty and Mridula.

June 4, 1941[8]

Darling,

I hope your journey was not too bad and that you reached Calcutta fit and well. But Calcutta itself must be hot and close. Perhaps a week or so will not matter and then you can rest and recuperate in Mussoorie. My thoughts will be with you and I hope you or Madan will send me a brief letter to say how you are getting on and when you expect to be back. Now that you have gone to Calcutta, it is as well to take full advantage of your visit and have yourself thoroughly overhauled by the doctors and take full directions about the future.

If your previous X-rays are required I think it might be better for Upadhyaya to run up himself to Allahabad and get them. This will be preferable to some one else bringing them from Allahabad. The cost will be the same. Ask Dr. Roy if he wants them.

Give my love to Dr. Roy and tell him that though fortunately I do not stand in need of doctors, it is a comfort to know that such wise and clever doctors as he is exist!

I have got plenty of books with me to carry on for weeks and weeks, and besides I am just flirting with the idea to begin writing! But still the old failing asserts itself and the desire to see new and worthwhile books. So I am giving on a separate sheet a list of books which should be handed over to Upadhyaya. He might go round the bookshops in Calcutta, beginning with the Book Company, to find out if any of these are available. I doubt if you can get them there, as they are mostly new American publications. Still he can try. Some of the books have probably been published in England also. These books could not be obtained in Bombay.

All my love to you, my dear, and may you grow strong and healthy.

Remember to get a good light mackintosh for yourself in Calcutta. Ask Dr. Roy for the address of the Indian firm. If you cannot get a good readymade one, get some strong Assam silk (preferably double-thread) and have a mac made out of this.

Your loving,
Papu

8. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

4.6.41[9]

Darling Betty,

For the first time in some months I did not spin yesterday! The John Day book you sent was delivered to me in the morning and such is human vanity that I was absorbed in it. Then Indu came.

Indu has rather suddenly gone to Calcutta. I have been dissatisfied with her health. Madan Atal going to Calcutta consulted Bidhan Roy, who, as was to be expected, said: bring her here and we shall overhaul her. So Madan wrote to Indu to go to Calcutta for a week or so and in the middle of this heat, she has departed. It all seems rather crazy but I hope she will be back soon.

I have sent for another packet of my yam. Tell Psyche that I have not yet really tried the Dhanush Takli, as other people were after it. I hope to begin seriously with it soon.

I am rather concerned at Walsh not replying to your letter. This implies that he might not have got it. One can never be sure in these days. If you have a copy of the letter, could you send it to him. Or reproduce it briefly.

Yesterday I received Pan's parcel of mangoes and as Indu was here just then, I gave her some. But I was horrified, tell Pan, to see that a parcel bearing a label from P.A. Narielwala Esq., Bombay House, 26 Bruce Street, etc., had SUNLIGHT SOAP inscribed on it in big characters on either side. How has this fifth column activity penetrated to Bombay House?

Send me Napier's letter. I should like to see it. You might also send the news about Napier to Bapu. He is interested in him and once wrote to the Viceroy about him.[10]

You know I suppose, that a small cottage—St. Clair Cottage—has been engaged for Indu in Mussoorie. I do not know how long Indu is likely to stay there but the cottage is for the season. It is a tiny affair—2 bedrooms and 2 other rooms. If at any time you would care to come up there with the children, I am sure Indu would be glad. You need not

9. *Nehru's Letters to His Sister*, (London, 1963), pp. 77-78.

10 On 7 October 1940, Mahatma Gandhi had written to the Viceroy: "I enclose herewith Pandit Nehru's letter and its enclosure. Though it relates to an individual British officer who has risen against the tradition, I think the case merits sympathetic treatment. The Pandit's letter I send in order that you may know the inner working of the mind of one who will be the future leader of all India. You will please tell me if I have overstepped the limit in sending you these papers." See also *ante*, section 9, item 42.

come because of Indu. I think a month or so of full quiet and rest will be good for her. But later if the children require a change or you feel like it yourself, you can think over this. It is just possible that in August or thereabouts Indu might like to go to Kashmir. But that is too far off yet.

I was sorry to learn about Kay. I hope she will pull herself up and keep cheerful.

Love to Raja and the children and yourself.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

9.6.1941[11]

Darling Indu,

I have just received a note from Madan to say that you are under some treatment and that Dr. Roy has not come back from Shillong yet. I hope he will come back soon. Meanwhile it is as well that his associates and assistants should prepare the ground for him so that he might have all the data.

Madan says that you are not likely to return before the 21st as Bidhan will want to keep you under observation for some days. A few days this way or that do not matter, though Calcutta is hardly a desirable place to stay in at this time of the year. But now that you have gone all the way to Calcutta you might as well do the job thoroughly. Dr. Roy's advice must have first place. I have great faith not only in his ability as a doctor but also his sound common sense and thoroughness. He and Jivraj Mehta are the two persons I think of whenever I have to worry about medical matters. They are stolid and careful and can be relied upon. So, while I am sorry that your programme was messed up a bit and you had to rush down from here, I am glad that Bidhan Roy is looking after you and I hope you will follow his advice and directions.

Fortunately the monsoon has started early and this must have lowered the temperature of Calcutta. It is pleasant here and there is some rain almost daily. In Mussoorie, I am told, it has been dismal owing to too much rain.

I have received my raincoat from Allahabad—also some books! Murray's translations of the Greek plays. Please remember to get a

11. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

raincoat for yourself in Calcutta. All you have to do is to choose some stuff, preferably thick Assam silk, well-woven, and leave your measurements. It can then follow you, if it is not ready by the time you leave.

Mridula has just wired to say that her visit to Lucknow has been postponed to 24th. So she will come here before or after that date.

All my love,

Your loving,
Papu

June 12, 1941[12]

Darling Indu,

I wonder when you will come back this way. I suppose you will stay on in Calcutta for another week at least as Dr. Roy wants to keep you under observation. On your way up to Mussoorie you will of course come to see me. I am taking no other interviews, except for Mridula's and that is likely to be about the 26th.

Here it rains every day, though not too much so far. Considerately it clears up for a while in the mornings and evenings to allow us to walk up and down a little. The rain soon runs off or is abated by the soil which is stony. I like the rain unless there is too much of it. I suppose by mid-July I shall begin to get tired of it.

Just outside our barrack wall there is a little channel for canal water to pass through to the field. Right through the summer this channel was used once or twice a fortnight and the water pouring down it, and gurgling as it went, made a merry noise. Especially at night it was pleasant to hear this sound of running water. Now the rains fill this channel and we hear this sound more frequently, though often it cannot be heard on account of the beating rain. Yet it is a pleasant and soothing noise when it comes through.

A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune...

12. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

I suppose in prison one's ears grow sharper and many other senses, which lie dormant during an active life outside, waken up and so open out a new world of sensation, just as a blind man becomes far more sensitive in other ways. Birds and insects and of course flowers become real companions whose acquaintance we renew from day to day. A creeper is a fascinating thing—Have you ever watched its sensitive feelers, how full of life they are: creeping on and on and holding on to twig or string or wall? In Sanskrit poetry women are always likened to creepers! Bengali names of girls are full of Lata's.

Good friends in Dehra Dun have been sending us fruit—luscious, delicious fruit grown here on the foot-hills or from other places. Grapes, locally grown, plums, pine-apples (not grown here!), *langras* and *dasehris* just beginning and fine apples. Yesterday we had a pleasant surprise when a basket of lovely cherries all the way from Kashmir came our way. They were not the choicest variety as these are too thin-skinned and delicate to travel. Still they were very good and very welcome and they made me think of Kashmir, where just a year ago I used to eat them in large quantities. So you see we have compensations in jail!

I am beginning to think again of doing some writing work. For the moment I am just playing about with the idea, revolving it in my mind, sometimes pushing it away, and then allowing it to come nearer. I know that once I give in to it, it will obsess me and my pen will become a tyrant ordering me about and interfering with my programme and other activities.

American reviews of my book have had curious reactions on me. Pleasant of course. It is so delightful to be praised and I swell up with satisfaction. And yet all this talk about style and lucidity rather frightens me. I wrote previously without thinking of style. I had to say something and I said it as simply and effectively as possible. Now I cannot forget that I have to keep up to a certain style and standard and this continuing reminder is a nuisance.

What is this much-praised style of mine, I begin to think? A certain simplicity and a certain lucidity in short sentences, partly due to clear thinking and having something to say. But partly also, I think, to a certain rhythm and a love of the sound of words. I hate an ill-balanced sentence. It jars. Why this rhythm? I do not know. It is not just an external thing, an ear for it or an eye to balance it. It has to do ultimately with a mental rhythm, or perhaps something even deeper than that. During these past twenty years or so, while you have been growing up, slowly this sense of rhythm in life has grown within me as ideas and actions fitted in, or at least approached each other. It is a soothing and comforting experience and it helps greatly in the tug-of-war

of life. The shouting and cursing become unimportant and rather silly, and much of the vulgarity that surrounds us lessens in significance and effect.

It is curious how the manner of writing (even more than the manner of speaking) betrays a person. The style is the man they say. In old China they judged people for high appointments from the style of an essay. Perhaps that is going too far, but there is a lot in it. When outside prison I get a large number of letters from strangers and I have developed a habit of drawing a mental picture of the writer from the few sentences he may have written. Sometimes just one sentence, a few words, give me an intimate glimpse and I feel drawn to the person.

How my letters taper down to absurd topics. But, as I said, when I take pen in hand, it is the tyrant pen that is master and it goes its self-appointed way. And yet what I have written is not so absurd after all. More and more I have come to think that what is important in a person is not what he says or proclaims but what he is and does. There is something after all about these ancient civilizations, like India and China : thousands of years of cultural continuity which has sunk deep into the racial consciousness. Even the poverty-stricken peasant in China and India has some impress of that on his face and in his manner.

I should like you to ask Dr. Roy about breathing exercises. Can you do them regularly? Personally I am a great believer in them, not only for bodily health but to some extent for mental health also. These exercises bring rhythm (I am at it again!) to the breathing and through it to the whole bodily system. They create the background and environment for composure and mental calm. Look at a person in a temper or one who is agitated. He breathes heavily and shortly. It is a little difficult to conceive of a person who breathes deeply and regularly to become easily agitated! So I would like you to try these exercises and hold on to them.

I wonder if you can borrow or buy any books by Admiral Mahan[13] who wrote long ago about sea power. He is an American whose books became classics. There are a number of books by him:

The Question of Sea Power, The Problem of Asia, The American Interest in International Problems etc. etc.

I should particularly like to have *The Problem of Asia.* Possibly some of these books can be obtained from a library in Calcutta. If so

13. Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914); naval historian and theorist.

you can bring one or two and I shall return them later. Please ask Dr. Roy if he can help.

I must desist now and stand up to my pen. So my love to you,

Your loving,
Papu

June 16, 1941[14]

TO PADMAJA NAIDU

Dear Bebee,

Two letters from you I have had since I wrote to you last. Both dated May 1941. How helpful these dates are. But they are a definite improvement on 'Thursday' or 'Saturday' which usually adorn a woman's letters. Tell me, why do women deal so casually with Time, the tyrant king of all of us? Is it that they are too afraid of him to approach close to the presence? Or is it that woman lives in the present so much that the day, with its joy or sorrow, is enough for her and the past and future just a blurred outline? Or, perhaps, with her faculty of intuition, she has somehow, instinctively, grasped the idea that there is neither time nor space, but only a mysterious combination of the two, which we, who possess just ordinary three dimensional brains, cannot easily understand? How odd time is. I read once a curious analogy which stuck in my mind. We travel, let us suppose, from Bombay to Calcutta, passing various stations one after the other, and we get the impression that Wardha, Nagpur, Raipur &c &c succeed each other in point of time. Yet they are always there. It is only we who somehow sense them in a time sequence. So also the events and happenings of our lives. There they are all the time but we experience them in what we call a time order. The future is there, like the past and the present, but our eyes have not seen it yet. Which all sounds very mysterious and rather silly. But time is odd, I repeat.

So you have been ill. How sad. It is a bad habit. Habits, any habits, are generally bad; though I think I would except the habit of

14. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

keeping good health. Yet that exception too cannot be accepted whole and entire. I suppose illness, some time or other, is a useful experience. People who are always aggressively healthy may develop undesirable mental traits. Still there is no doubt that the habit of keeping good health is a good one. I wish I could transfer to you some of my physical health. I hope you got over your bronchitis and are keeping well now.

You never told me that you were the guardian spirit of Ajanta. But then there are so many things you have not told me, or perhaps I have been too deaf to hear them. I am fascinated by your story of the reproduction of the Ajanta designs, and the colours and pigments. I had an idea that one of the chief colours used was derived from the *parijat* or *har singhar* flower. To succeed in getting these lovely colours from the rocks around is an achievement. I shall look forward to seeing these lovely designs and colours some day.

It is curious how little I know about ancient Egypt. I have written something about it, of course, as I have a way of writing about things I know nothing or very little about. Akhenaton is a very attractive creature and when first I read about him many years ago— I think it was in Wells' *Outline*—I wanted to follow it up.

To some extent I have been living in the distant past recently. I have been reading and re-reading Greek plays. Another book that I have read has been one of De la Mare's collections of essays. Interesting of course, sometimes very much so. And yet I was disappointed. I love some of his poems and I expected much from his prose. It fell rather flat. Too ornate—too long sentences—and apparently too much of the midnight oil about them.

About two weeks ago I received a copy of the American edition of my *Auto—Toward Freedom*, they call it. The copy sent to Ranjit early in January has not arrived yet. A bunch of six however was sent to Betty and she sent me one. I wish I could send you one but the whole six were quickly disposed of—Nan, Indu, Bapu & Tagore being sent a copy each and Betty keeping one herself. As soon as I get more copies I shall send you one— Or perhaps I shall send the copy I have got. Just at present I require it for reference.

The book is attractively got up and all that. Yet reading it I missed many of the passages left out and there seemed to me jumps and breaks. Perhaps the new reader will not notice these. I have seen very few reviews so far, but such as I have seen have been quite extraordinarily eulogistic—fulsome. One was reproduced in the press here—the *New York Times*' one. Perhaps you saw it.

My book published in London—*The Unity of India*—has not come yet. No news of it at all.

Yes, I have read Wilfrid Blunt's[15] *Diaries* and I remember being moved by Dhingra's statement.[16] I quite forget his memorandum on prison reform. Mahmud was quite a pal of his and visited him in his country house several times. I never met him or saw him. Did you notice the passage in which Blunt describes his meeting with Gokhale and Lajpat Rai? It is very revealing.

I am ashamed to confess that so far I have given no fair trial to the Dhanush Takli, the chief reason being that others were experimenting with it. I have now—for the last three days—begun using it for a while daily. I have not given up my wheel. The Dhanush is functioning fairly satisfactorily but I must try it for two or three weeks before giving a more definite opinion. On the wheel I have just completed 92000 yards. So I am well on my way to the hundred thousand. Not that this is worth shouting about. It is only about 60 miles or so—I read in Mahadeva's articles that some bright or, at any rate, frightfully industrious person, has spun at the rate of 75000 yards a month! I suppose this noble example is held up for the emulation of others. Being perverse, it has an opposite effect on me. But not really so. It takes all sorts to make this world of ours and why should I object to or be envious of others who are not like me. Anyhow I am not in the 75000 a month line. For me 15000 a month, or 500 a day, is a mighty achievement.

Ranjit finished his translations some time ago and has since been busy with notes &c. He wants to send a copy of the whole thing to you for your critical opinion. Probably he will do so soon. Delay has been caused by the slowness of the typing. There is not much left—perhaps 3 days honest typing work—but it is not easy to say how long this will take.

All the bulbs you sent have prospered—dahlias, gladioli &c. Just before we got your batch, we received a large variety of seedlings, bulbs &c from Kashmir. So there is some competition between the two. Now that the rains have started, they are all looking up and should flower within a month.

Indu went off to Calcutta some days ago with Atal to have herself fully examined by Bidhan and others. It was not a happy time to go,

15. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt (1840-1922); diplomat; author of *My Diaries*, in two parts, published in 1919 and 1920.
16. Madan Lal Dhingra (1887-1909); sentenced to death for the assassination of Sir Curzon Wylie, adviser to the Secretary of State for India, in London on 1 July 1909. At his trial, he stated: "... I am proud to have the honour of laying down my humble life for my country. Poor in wealth and intellect, a son like myself has nothing else to offer to the mother but his own blood, and so, I have sacrificed the same on her altar."

just before the rains. But she wanted to go. I expect she will be back in Mussoorie soon.

Nan is at Khali. She will visit us on her way back—probably in the second week of July.

Where is your mother? I have not heard anything about her for some time. Give her and Papi my love.

Keep well and smiling.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

June 16, 1941[17]

TO RAJAN NEHRU

My dear Rajan,

Your letter reached me. I am sorry you have been unwell and have had to give up the visit to Kashmir and other places. Why are young people like you so frail and delicate when the aged, like me, are so tough? Think over it and get tough.

Your parcel of mangoes reached us and we enjoyed them. Thank you.

We keep fairly busy, Ranjit and I, and go through our day's programme with unfailing regularity. It is not, naturally enough, an exciting programme, but it keeps us busy enough and perhaps it does us good. Ranjit's efforts are just beginning to bear fruit in our little garden. Within a few weeks it ought to be a mass of flowers. I try to function as an assistant to the head gardener.

Your account of the Bombay meeting of the Women's Conference Committee amused me. Women are odd, especially when they meet in numbers, intent on doing themselves and others good. But, as a matter of fact, human beings are odd, both men and women. Whether I meet them individually or in the mass, their strangeness impresses me more and more. Even when we are supposed to be intimate with anyone, the stranger so often looks out of his eyes. This is disconcerting sometimes, and yet it adds to the adventure of life. Life is a difficult business at best, but I could never understand why anyone should ever be

17. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

bored with it. I am not bored with it even in prison! Sometimes I enjoy it thoroughly, sometimes I am angry and disgusted with it—but bored never, or hardly ever.

Look after yourself and keep fit.

Love to Ratan and you,

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

19.6.41[18]

Darling Indu,

Your letter of the 16th has just been delivered to me. I was happy to get it. A few days ago I received a telegram from Madan to say that you were well. That was comforting. There is no indication in your letter of the date of your return. Calcutta, as you say, is cool now and so it does not matter much. But I am looking forward to your return. That depends of course on Dr. Bidhan's advice....

I have had no letter from Krishna ever since I came to prison this time— Indeed for two or three months earlier even. I have had no letter from anyone in England for ages now. Oh, I was forgetting, I have received a letter from Dear Miss Rathbone[19] recently. Agatha wrote to me once about six months ago or more. It was to tell me that you were leaving Switzerland.

Mridula is likely to see me here on the 25th or 26th of this month. She has a *Herald* directors' meeting to attend at Lucknow on the 24th and she will come immediately after. I wrote to her suggesting that she might spend a few days with you when she comes up. She has willingly agreed, subject to unforeseen developments in Ahmedabad. But I do not know where you will be then. I hope you are back. I should have liked Upadhyaya to meet her at the Dehra Dun station and to give her all necessary help. Or, in case you are coming up about that time, Upadhyaya could meet her at Lucknow.

I should like you to get to know Mridu. She is a remarkably fine young woman, a tremendous worker, a great organiser and with amazing grit and courage. I take some personal pride in her because, to some

18. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
19. Eleanor F. Rathbone (1872-1946); interested in social reform; Independent M.P. for Combined English Universities, 1926-46. She wrote an *Open Letter to Indian Friends* on 28 May 1941.

extent, I have helped and advised her during the past few years. She lacks one thing—her formal education was never completed as she plunged into work from the days of her early girlhood. This lack of intellectual training has been a drawback, but how much bigger she is than so many of those who have received this intellectual training.

Do not bother about books for me. I have plenty.

Puphi and the children are likely to come down from Khali about July 12th. Probably they will pay a visit to Dehra Dun on their way down.

The rain has held off from here for the last 3 days.

You will probably receive money from Bachhraj by telegram. They have their agents in Calcutta.

Two parcels of mangoes addressed to you have finally reached us and have been consumed by us. One was sent by Feroze from Bombay. The other was the produce of our garden at Anand Bhawan and very good they were.

All my love,

Your loving,
Papu

June 22, 1941[20]

TO ELEANOR F. RATHBONE

Dear Miss Rathbone,

The Secretary to the Governor of the United Provinces has sent me through the Superintendent of the Jail, a copy of the letter you have addressed to 'Some Indian Friends.' Some days ago I read the letter in the newspapers. It struck me as odd then that you should thus publicly address people who were in prison and incapacitated from answering in like manner. Your letter was perhaps meant more for the public than for those to whom it was apparently addressed.

In the course of that letter, however, special reference is made to me and to what I have written, and you have further taken the trouble to send me a special copy of the letter. I feel, therefore, that some kind of an acknowledgement is due from me.

20. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I find some difficulty in answering your letter. That difficulty is partly due to my being in prison and subjected to prison regulations forbidding me from taking part in any public activity. Partly also it is due to the tone and content of your letter, for it can hardly be considered an appeal to reason or a dispassionate consideration of a difficult and vital problem. It is an indictment admittedly partial, and it exhibits the anger and passion of a war mentality. That is perhaps natural under the circumstances for, as is well known, truth and reason are the first casualties in war time. Nevertheless it does not help and it adds to the bitterness and confusion. Perhaps you have already seen some of the reactions to your letter in Indian minds, more especially the statement issued by one who is not a politician or a member of the Indian National Congress, but who is revered and admired by every Indian and large numbers of people in other countries—Dr. Rabindranath Tagore.[21] Tagore has just passed his eightieth year and is far removed from the dust of politics and the heat of controversy. Yet he felt compelled to come out of his retirement to challenge and repudiate the charge you had made. If such was the reaction of a calm-eyed sage, who long years ago left the narrow confines of nationalism and devoted his life and precious gifts to the love of beauty and truth and art and the promotion of international understanding, what then would be the reaction of humbler mortals? So you will notice that the effect of your public letter has been the reverse of what presumably you intended, and you have succeeded, unwittingly, in adding to the bitterness and ill will which unfortunately are as broad and deep as the oceans which separate India from England.

I would not like to say anything in reply which might add to this bitterness and widen the gulf between us, for I am deeply conscious of the vital issues at stake, which should transcend human passion and pettiness, and I am fully aware of the agony of spirit which you and others in England are passing through. I would not willingly add to this. Yet what am I to say or to write if I am to avoid the very controversial issues that you have raised and the charges you have

21. On 4 June 1941, Tagore had stated: "I have been deeply pained at Miss Rathbone's open letter to Indians....The lady has ill-served the cause of her people by addressing so indiscreet, indeed impertinent, a challenge to our conscience.... The British hate the Nazis for merely challenging their world mastery, and Miss Rathbone expects us to kiss the hand of her people in servility for having riveted chains on ours.... I should have thought that the decent Britisher would at least keep silent at these wrongs and be grateful to us for our inaction, but that he should add insult to injury and pour salt over our wounds passes all bounds of decency."

brought against me and my people? Indeed, your indictment is so carelessly wide flung, so far removed from facts, so ignorant of India and the fire and sorrow that have consumed us, that even to venture a brief reply would mean my writing at great length, and no letter can contain what I have to say.

There is another difficulty that faces me. In approaching any subject, there must be at least some common ground, some accepted basis of discussion. Otherwise we talk in different languages unintelligible to each other. I fear greatly, judging from your letter, that there is hardly any common ground between us when we consider the relations of England to India. Some of the so-called gifts of Britain to us, which appear to you as blessings, have been to us insult and humiliation which we have rejected and condemned. You refer complacently to the steps towards Indian self-government culminating in the statute of 1935, the promise of Dominion Status and the latest offer that the framework of India's future constitution should be drawn up by Indians themselves. I am afraid you do not know much about all this or else you would be deeply troubled. And certainly you do not seem to know anything of how the people of India have reacted to all this pompous language, full of sound and meaning little. It is not merely people like me who have rejected all this patronising insult to a great nation, but the moderate of moderates, the over-cautious, and even those whom we consider reactionaries in India. Do you know how these very moderate gentlemen have viewed the present crisis and the answer they have received from the British Government?

It is true that I owe a great deal to English thought, to English literature, English history, English men of science, sociologists, etc. I owe a great deal also to the inspiration I have drawn from the American Revolution, the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution; to the magnificent record of Chinese thought and culture. But most of all I owe to India, to Indian thought and culture, to that amazing continuity of a many-sided culture that has been our glorious and proud tradition and heritage for five thousand years. I am part of it and, howsoever humble, a symbol of it. It is a debt I can never repay: but it is an obligation that I cannot forget and which I shall seek to discharge to the end of my days.

I have tried to weave these numerous strains into one organic pattern for my country and for the world, for I am convinced that in the modern world there must be some such joint pattern, taking the best from each and removing all causes of disharmony. I have looked forward passionately to the emergence of a world order, wherein each culture has a place and combines with other cultures to produce a rich,

colourful and harmonious pattern for all, and wherein our narrow nationalisms and petty hates have ceased to be. That language of internationalism I am prepared to talk to any person, and for the sake of that ideal, India, I am sure, will give much.

But Empire and all that goes with Empire, vested interest and exploitation, poverty and misery, the thwarting and crushing of millions of people, the children who have no joy in their lives, the men and women who never smile but labour continuously so that others might prosper—that Empire I hate and I shall have none of it whatever the consequences. You, perhaps, look at this picture from a distance with rose-coloured glasses. But I am not a spectator: I am a victim, an actor in this tragic drama.

I have admired much in English thought and learnt much from English history. It may surprise you to learn that I have tried to apply those lessons to India, and even in my present action. I have found help and justification in English precedents. Do English thought and English history justify Empire and the crushing of fine institutions? Do you think that the India Office or the Government of India or their underlings represent that thought and history? I would have thought otherwise: that these authoritarians represent the very ideas and institutions against which, in earlier times, the English people rebelled and rebelled with success. In India today the speakers of provincial parliaments, those who have been prime ministers and ministers, and many hundreds of members, are in prison. These parliaments are suspended and not allowed to function. No new elections are held, and if there is any difference in theory or practice, between Hitler's *Gauleiters* and those whom we have to suffer as viceroys and governors, I am not aware of it. I would ask you to remember what English history teaches us when a king or his representative suppresses parliament and attempts to rule autocratically.

I do not want to injure England or interfere with her in any way. It is India and her future that concern me. You seem to forget that fact and the further fact that it is the British Government that is continually interfering with us, humiliating us and injuring us. If we cannot get on together, why does not the British Government leave us to our own devices? Do you think that self-respecting individuals and nations can ever agree to be coerced into any action? Can friendship and cooperation be secured by the whip or the knout or threats of future punishment?

England stands now for the independence of Abyssinia: we welcome it—England vicariously offers independence to Syria: we are glad of it,

though it is odd to notice how England can be generous at other people's expense. England guarantees every little Balkan country its future freedom. But where India is concerned, independence becomes an evil thing, and we have instead platitudes and insults and a riveting of all the chains that hold us in bondage. For us to ask for independence is to help Hitler, to take advantage of England's difficulty. It seems to be forgotten that most of us have spent our youth and manhood in prison for a generation now in making this very demand. Hitler was not heard of then. Now that Hitler has become a menace and a danger, we are told we must forget that demand, forget the all-consuming passion of our lives, and fight for and in the name of an empire which has crushed us and which we have been combating in our own peaceful way all our lives. Does all this seem to you reasonable? Do you realise how the word 'Empire', which Mr. Churchill is so fond of using, hurts and angers us?

You have referred to my mention of Amritsar in my new book: *The Unity of India.* I am afraid I have not seen this book yet. Perhaps the censorship here does not think it desirable that I should see my own book. I do not, therefore, know the context of the reference. But it surprises me that you should object to my casual reference to Martial Law and Amritsar as something that followed the last Great War. It is a little difficult to deal with such matters briefly as your knowledge of the course of events in India appears to be very limited. As a matter of fact since the Amritsar massacre we have repeatedly had far worse and more horrible experiences in India. I did not even mention these in my writings. But it is inevitable for any person not swept away by momentary excitement to consider events, their causes and consequences, and to learn from them. It was inevitable for us to think of the war of 1914-18, the promises made and broken and what followed. We have had enough of these resounding words meaning just less than nothing.

I do not for an instant challenge your personal goodwill to the people of India or that of many other Englishmen and Englishwomen. But if there is one vital lesson which recent years have taught us it is this: that well-meaning individuals and groups have no influence whatever on state policy or on predatory imperialisms. The last Great War shouted out this lesson and all the intervening years with their tragedies have done likewise. Only a fool or a half-wit refuses to profit by previous experience, and a nation that is so foolish deserves to perish.

In these days of horrible and inhuman bombing from the air, do you remember the repeated bombings in the North West Frontier of India? This was a regular and continuing operation for years. And when it was sought to ban all air bombing (in the League of Nations or the

Disarmament Conference) the British representatives came in the way of this as they wanted to make a reservation in favour of what they termed 'police' bombing in the Frontier Province and in other colonial areas.[22] I am sure that the average Englishman disliked this reservation intensely but he was powerless before the system which governs him.

Do you also remember what Mr. Amery said about Manchuria and India eight years ago, when Japan was invading Manchuria? Mr. Amery, speaking in the House of Commons, defended Japan's action as according to him it was based upon fundamental realities, and Japan was quite right in acting "with the object of creating peace and order in Manchuria and defending herself against the continual aggression of vigorous Chinese nationalism. Our whole policy in India, our whole policy in Egypt, stand condemned if we condemn Japan". So said Mr. Amery. I do not usually agree with him, but I do agree entirely with his comparison of Japanese aggression in Manchuria with British policy in India and Egypt. If that is so, then the whole of British policy in India and Egypt and the colonies, in other words the whole British imperialist policy, must be abandoned and liquidated in favour of an utterly different policy, if Britain has radically changed her attitude towards aggression. If, however, her imperialist policy continues unchanged, then we are led to doubt whether there has been any fundamental change in her attitude towards aggression. The fact that Mr. Neville Chamberlain's appeasement policy was ended does not lead to the conclusion that Britain's policy underwent any basic change, though the results, in the shape of war, etc., were far-reaching. Appeasement ended not because it was thought bad but because there was nothing more left to be handed over to the aggressors, short of vital interests and bits of the British Empire. So long as appeasement could be carried out at other countries' and other peoples' expense, it was continued—when payment had to be made out in one's own coin, it ended and war came. All this does not indicate any vital difference in outlook, though the mere fact of war itself was a revolutionising factor in the situation.

I have endeavoured, in the preceding paragraph, to analyse the attitude of the British Government. That, I know, was not the attitude of the average Englishman, and this is just my difficulty: the well meaning do not count in national and imperial matters, except very rarely when some wave of excitement sweeps them. Usually they are completely taken in by the statesmen and politicians who use fine and resounding phrases which enthuse people, and who later on revert to their old sharp practices, and it is too late to check them then. Disillusion results.

22. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 457-462.

That was the story of the last Great War. That is likely to be the story of this one unless people are more wary. With this difference that this war is much more vital and far-reaching in its consequences and events are likely to take charge of themselves, as indeed they are doing, unless there are men who can understand them and to some extent control them. It is worse than folly to blind ourselves to these events of revolutionary significance for to do so is to lead ourselves to disaster. This war is much more than a military contest, though it is that of course. It is moving men's minds in all manner of revolutionary directions and is upsetting the old world, for better or worse. Do you expect to gain the adherence of these millions all over the world by telling them that you are fighting for the *status quo ante bellum*, when that *status quo* meant slavery and misery for them? Do you expect to satisfy people's yearnings to be rid of this slavery by telling them that you will look into this matter when the war is over and won? That is not the path of wisdom and it comes very seriously in the way of winning the war itself.

It is obvious from your letter that you do not know what the Indian Congress has been saying and doing during the past dozen years. You accuse us of taking advantage of England's difficulty, of reviving civil disobedience, precisely at the time of your greatest peril after the fall of France. Every careful observer, English or Indian, knows that that is precisely what we did not do.

It was in December 1927 that we first laid down our policy in the event of war. We stated that under no circumstances could we submit to being coerced into a war and this question must be decided by the people of India. Further that we could not join any imperialist war. This attitude was consistently held by us year after year. With the advent of Hitler and later, we condemned Nazism and all aggression—Japanese, Italian and German. But always we made it clear that the only way to deal with Nazi or other aggression was to do away with the earlier imperialist aggressions and to liquidate the Empire and replace it by freedom. We could never separate these two for to us they were twin brothers. And in any event, no policy which supported the old imperialisms and attacked the new Nazi or fascist imperialisms could be logical or effective.

This warning we repeated time and again, year after year. It was not our fault that the wise people who sit in Whitehall or in Simla or Delhi did not attach importance to what we said. Then, a few months before the war started, we learnt that Indian troops had been sent overseas. We were taken aback and saw that this was a prelude to India being dragged into the war that seemed to be coming. We passed a resolution of course reiterating our old attitude to the war. But we did much

more. In protest, we withdrew all our members from the Central Legislative Assembly at Delhi. We could not have made our attitude to war clearer and more emphatic. Yet ignoring all shades of Indian opinion, including our assemblies and provincial governments, the Viceroy declared by a fiat that the three hundred and seventy millions of India were at war.

A wave of anger passed through India and we were asked by our people to give effect to the Congress resolutions which had been repeatedly passed. We resisted this demand, we hesitated, we made every effort to avoid conflict, for the issues were of the gravest. There was no question before us of prestige. Where the fate of nations and the whole future of millions of people are involved, prestige is the cloak of fools and weaklings. We had to consider the future of our people in the context of world freedom. That we could not give up or bargain with just because the very crisis had arisen which might decide these mighty issues one way or the other. At no time could we give up the very essence of our being, the sheet-anchor to which we had held for so long; much less could we give it up when the necessity for holding on to it was greatest. We tried therefore to find a way out of the difficulty and to give the British Government a chance of retrieving their grievous error. We asked for a declaration of war aims in regard to Empire and imperialism and more especially in regard to Indian independence; also for implementing this to the utmost in the present.

Was that an unreasonable demand? We had not asked for anything which the British Government could not itself agree to, if it so chose, or anything that depended on the issue of the vast conflict that was going on, except very indirectly. Right in the middle of the war, the British Government has seen fit to proclaim the independence of Syria over which it had no dominion. But India which has so long been its own preserve, and about whose future no other power can have any say, must not be mentioned.

The British Government's answer to us was clear, definite, uncompromising. We withdrew our provincial ministers as they could not cooperate in a policy which was forced upon them from above. They were popular ministers answerable to their majorities in the legislatures and to the electorate at large. They could not ignore their mandates and the will of the people who elected them.

Yet we took no other action and continued to seek ways of settlement, often to the great resentment of our own people. Every effort we made was thwarted by the Government of India or the British Government. Meanwhile our colleagues including many members of the Legislatures were being arrested in large numbers and often detained without trial.

This was long before civil disobedience was started. Our organisation was attacked in various ways and every disruptive tendency in India was encouraged. It is our belief that deliberate attempts were made to create conditions in India which could only lead to civil conflict on a wide scale. Our desire to avoid conflict with the British Government and our attempts to restrain our people were contemptuously dismissed by Whitehall and Delhi and were considered to be obvious signs of weakness and incapacity to take any action.

Were we to look on passively and see our country go the way of ruin and all the dynamic and progressive elements in it crushed? That has not been our way and I hope it never will be. Even so the action we took in the shape of selected individual civil disobedience for a specific object (right of speech to declare our attitude towards the war) was such that it was meant to interfere as little as possible with the actual conduct of the war. Of course it attacked the moral basis of the war so far as India was concerned. This action was taken fourteen months after the war began and nearly 5 months after the fall of France.

You ask me what our answer would have been in the event of our having been previously consulted regarding India's participation in the war. Our answer would have been precisely what it has been, that is, we would have asked what we were fighting for, and we would have asked to be masters in our own house. You call this, strangely enough, trying to gain a tactical advantage and of having the satisfaction of paying off old scores against England. Is it part of the heavenly order that Britain should rule and exploit India? And is it satanic for us to want to free our country and get rid of the octopus of imperialism which has sucked us dry and made our poverty a byword among nations? How does our freedom lead to our callously sacrificing the interests of every other country to our own? I despair of understanding you or making you understand me. May I not say that even in this hour of peril Britain's ruling classes are prepared callously to sacrifice the interests of every other country, or even the masses of their own people, of a free world order, but on no account will they agree to give up their imperialist hold of and vested interests in India. Suppose, as you say, that India's attitude were to prove the last straw that turned the scale in favour of Germany, would not that be a terrible responsibility for the British Government and Britain's ruling classes? For that would mean that they prefer to risk defeat in this war, with all its terrible consequences, rather than give up willingly the domination of India. Am I not justified in saying that by this selfish and short-sighted policy, the British Government is playing into the hands of Hitler?

You compare us to the men of Vichy. I have been unable to grasp where the comparison comes in. But there does seem to me a possible comparison in regard to imperial policy between the men of Vichy and the British Government. Can there be anything more despicable than the talk of continuing to retain their Empire by these men of Vichy, who have betrayed and sold their own country to the enemy, and humiliated themselves and their great country beyond measure? The British Government has put up a magnificent fight against its enemies and all honour to the British people for their courage and endurance. But when the British Government talks of Empire, and it does so frequently, something of the Vichy tone creeps in. Strange how this love of domination and Empire has entered the very blood of ruling classes, even though that Empire must cease to be. How it imperils the freedom of their own people for which they are so gallantly fighting.

It is not just a theoretical adherence to the cause of Indian independence that makes us put forward that demand not only now but for long years past, and refuse to tamper with what is called Dominion Status, and much less the promise of this in the distant hereafter. It is not theory with us, it is solid fact, for on it are based all our hopes of solving the terrible problems of poverty, unemployment, insecurity and widespread misery which have been the heritage of British rule. It is patent that the root cause of the disease cannot cure it by its own continuance. It is also obvious that we can never agree to being members of a group which treats us like helots in many of its homelands and which imposes all manner of disabilities on us in our own country.

But there is something more to it just now in war time. If this war was really India's war, it would be essential to stir the public imagination and harness popular goodwill and effort to it, as has been done in England. No wars can be fought effectively in the present age without that widespread popular cooperation. No foreign government, even if it were efficient, could possibly stir a people's imagination or gain their cooperation. That is an absolutely impossible task for the British Government in India for it is associated in the people's mind with two hundred years of travail and suffering and scores of national tragedies. You object to a casual mention I have made of Amritsar. But Amritsar is just an incident in a long and sorry record. Living in a world cut off from reality so far as India is concerned and getting their ideas from fantastic and one-sided accounts, the English people have no conception of what India is and how her people feel. If you go to the villages and gain the confidence of the people, you will still hear songs and tales of the inhumanities perpetrated on them during the suppression of what has been called the Indian Mutiny.

How is one to eradicate this deep-seated racial consciousness of barbarous oppression and humiliation? How is one to change this widespread hostility into goodwill and cooperation? And unless this was done no war effort would be popular and effective. It was a very difficult task and it was not a question of some of us deciding to do this or that. We are not miracle workers. We are human beings working with the material we have got and in the historical setting in which fate has put us. Yet the task might have been attempted, but only on one condition: that some tremendous idea was realised giving a shock of pleasant surprise to the people. Only then could they get over their age-old complexes and hostility. That great idea, the realisation of which was necessary from the point of view of the war, if no other, was the idea of Indian freedom and independence. That would have electrified the masses and produced an atmosphere in which great things were possible. Without such a psychological change, our efforts would have been largely individual and ineffective in any big sense. With it, not only our own people would have been thrilled, but the whole world would have seen this war in a new perspective, realising that imperialism had been laid low in its oldest and mightiest domain. Do you not think that if this had taken place, a fresh wave of hope and enthusiasm would have coursed through all countries and all peoples and a vital difference made to the war?

There is yet another point to be considered. The present Government of India is notoriously inefficient in carrying out any new or big undertaking which lies outside the scope of its routine business. That routine business is to collect taxes and to repress people opposed to it. It is the perfect police state with the policemen's mentality behind it, and relying on a widespread secret service net-work, which might be compared to the Gestapo. Some individuals in the governmental framework may be good-intentioned or efficient, but the whole system is not only hostile to the Indian people, but incapable of big action in any constructive field. The fault is not so much of individuals as of the system and of the whole background and environment. The atmosphere which surrounds us in India and chokes us is wholly different from what you are used to in England. And this atmosphere and background inevitably lead to the deterioration of the individual officials who have to function in it. It is well known how lamentably the British Government in India has failed to tackle any of the major problems of India—poverty, education, public health, industry &c. They have not succeeded even in regard to defence which, from their own point of view, ought to have been important. They failed because they

always functioned in a vacuum, and treated the Indian people as a hostile people inhabiting an invaded country.

Do you remember the famous Mesopotamia muddle of the last war when the Government of India came in for severe condemnation and castigation from a British Commission for its complete inefficiency and incompetence? The Minority Report of the Mesopotamia Inquiry Commission went even further and charged the then Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief in India with something much more serious than even error and incompetence. This report states: "It is precisely Lord Hardinge[23] and Sir Beauchamp Duff[24] whom I cannot merely charge with honest human error. Throughout their conduct of the war, they seem to me to have shown little desire to help and some desire actually to obstruct the energetic prosecution of the war." That was a very serious charge. But the fault lay not so much with any individual: it was the whole system which was rotten to the core. The British Government in India has been called (by an eminent Englishman) the refuge of fossilized traditionalism. It is a relic of ages gone by.

Do you expect these slow-witted and slow-moving representatives of an authoritarian tradition, living in the mental climate of the eighteenth century, to do anything big in peace or war? Their whole past record is against it, and even the past twenty-two months of war have demonstrated how completely incapable they are of arranging effective help for the war. India can produce much that was needed at a great and ever-increasing pace. There is enormous room for expansion in her industry and nearly all the material for it is here. Only the goodwill and active assistance of the state was necessary. But that goodwill was lacking for the Government does not like the idea of Indian industry growing too big and perhaps, later on, challenging the hold of English financiers and industrialists in India. Even in war time, therefore, progress was checked and obstructed, and I have known cases when high Government officials frankly said that they did not wish to help Indian industry to compete with Imperial Chemicals and similar British concerns. These are not a politician's views. Hard-headed Indian businessmen, eager to expand Indian industry by manufacturing goods needed in war time, are full of resentment today at the treatment they have received.

One would have thought that in war time at least every encouragement would be given to the manufacture of automobiles, ships and aeroplanes. You know well how vastly important the last two are now.

23. (1858-1944); Viceroy of India, 1910-16.
24. (1855-1918); Commander-in-Chief, India, 1913-16.

Yet Government has been obstructing these three and putting every conceivable difficulty in their way. Their treatment of Indian shipping has long been a public scandal. War or no war, they prefer to keep down the growth of Indian shipping lest this might come in the way later of the great British shipping lines. Most revealing of all was the way the Government of India dealt with an offer to start an aeroplane factory in India. Indian industrialists came to terms with a well-known American manufacturer (who has already set up such factories in China) for the manufacture in India of aeroplanes. All that was necessary was the permission of the Government of India. This permission was asked for in December 1939 by cable and it was stated that within nine months of the permission, aeroplanes could be supplied. No answer or even acknowledgement was received. Another cable was sent: still no answer. Months later a leisurely correspondence took place and the Government viewed the scheme with disfavour. Meanwhile war was raging in Europe and elsewhere and France had fallen and the cry was for more planes everywhere. Our Government took the cool air in Simla and was deaf to those vulgar noises.

It is astonishing that such things could be when the whole course of the war seemed to depend on planes and more planes. But then we have long ceased to be astonished at anything that the Government of India might do or, more often, might not do. It is in a class by itself and believes in masterly inactivity except where its own perquisites and privileges are concerned. There is nothing like it in the whole world and I am afraid we are not at all impressed by the pomp and circumstance that surround it. Resounding titles and amazingly high salaries and allowances do not necessarily signify competence or efficiency in India.

The whole official attitude to industrial development in India is further exemplified by the orders of Government prohibiting me from having any dealings in writing or otherwise from prison with the National Planning Committee of which I happen to be Chairman. This Committee which consisted of experts, industrialists, economists, engineers etc. from all over India and on which various provincial governments were represented, had done very good work for two years through its twenty-nine sub-committees. We were just reaching the stage of drafting our report. My imprisonment naturally interfered with this work, but it might have been possible for me to help by drafting or revising other drafts. I was told I could do no such thing or have any dealings with the Planning Committee. The Committee, under the circumstances, is not functioning and its two years labour cannot be taken advantage of just when the need was greatest.

This is the fossilized, slow-moving, devoid of ideas and energy, and out of date structure of government that is perpetuated in India, both in the central government and in the provinces. We were asked to function under it and accept its general direction when we knew that this direction was entirely wrong, and indeed was hardly a direction or any movement at all. It was just sitting still and carrying on as before, occasionally having the sensation of movement. This was not our way of running a war or of meeting a world situation pregnant with revolutionary possibilities. Can you expect intelligent people full of ideas and brimming over with the desire to carry them out, to yoke themselves to this medieval chariot? Quite apart from our desire for freedom, the necessities of the war itself demanded that this chariot should be scrapped and a more modern and swiftly moving conveyance take its place.

The Government of India and the provincial governments as at present constituted (which means an autocratic Viceroy and autocratic governors) are no doubt interested in the war and desire to help, but their limbs through long inaction cannot move and their minds can only function in set grooves. They are afraid of the very people whose cooperation they demand, and spend all their energy in police and secret service activities to suppress them. Unfortunately the war and the international situation are far from running in set grooves. And in any event, war is a secondary question for our rulers: the first question for them, as always for an authoritarian Government, is to put down those who criticise them or oppose them. To arrest and imprison, with or without trial, increase their jails, have special concentration camps and the like. In spite of our discouragement of indiscriminate jail going and only selected persons being allowed to do so, there are, I think, about 25,000 or more political prisoners in India at present. There are also large numbers of others who are arrested and kept as common criminals without even a formal trial. The treatment accorded to both prisoners and detenus has shocked people in India. It is cruel, vindictive and full of meanness and pettiness. We do not complain of suffering: that has been our lot for long years now. There is an infinity of suffering in the world today and death has cast its grim shadow over millions. But deliberate and calculated cruelty to helpless people in prison is not a pleasant thought to contemplate, and it shows up the mentality of those who govern us and creates bitterness, the consequences of which it is terrible to contemplate. In a recent speech President Roosevelt said that freedom from cruelty and inhuman treatment is a natural right. It is not a grace to be given or withheld at will by those temporarily in a position to exert force over defenceless people. Our present rulers evidently do not believe in this doctrine.

So long as it remains in India it will prevent us from acquiring the capacity to defend ourselves. It is only after it goes that we shall begin moving in the right direction.

I am not a pacifist or a conscientious objector, though I hate war with all my mind and heart and I am convinced that no civilised life can function in the world of the future unless war is ended. To that end of abolishing war by establishing a political and social order which does not lead to periodic wars, as the present order does, I trust India will address herself in common with other countries. I do not believe that war is something inevitable or a biological necessity. But I do believe that it is inevitable under the present political & social system in the world. Therefore this system must be changed.

Still I am not a pacifist. If I had been an Englishman I have no doubt that I would have taken my part in defending my country against invasion. Even so I would not have done it as a mere upholder of the *status quo* but as one demanding fundamental changes. As an Indian, if unfortunately necessity arises for it in the independent India of the future, I shall help in building up efficient defence services. But that future is yet distant and a great deal will happen to us all before we reach it. In the present we are incapable of offering effective armed resistance in India to a foreign invader. But do not delude yourself into thinking that this means surrender by us. If we have to face such a contingency, we shall not give in, as a great armed nation like France and so many other smaller nations have given in. We shall die, peacefully defiant and unyielding, and Hitler has yet to find a weapon which can subdue the spirit of man which refuses to bow down or submit. True, in spite of all this, India may be invaded and occupied. Everybody is not a hero. Even so we shall not submit and our case, in any event, will be better than that of France, and we shall find regeneration sooner. Do not imagine that a human being can retain his dignity and self-respect only by brandishing a sword. The wielder of the sword, we have seen too often, surrenders before a bigger sword.

No, we are not satisfied with a policy for India of "Sinn Fein—Ourselves alone." We have never believed in a narrow nationalism, although it would have been natural enough for us to do so after our cruel subjection of nearly two hundred years. We have dreamt of and worked for a new world of which India would be a free and equal partner. We would gladly agree to the abolition of national sovereignties on that basis. For us the problem of India is a part of the larger problem which includes China and the rest of Asia, Europe, America, Africa, and the present war. But it does not mean for us the preservation and continuation of the British Empire or any other empire, or the

subjection of one people by another. Would it not be more true to say that the British Government is following, very foolishly, the policy of 'Ourselves alone' and 'Our Empire' at all costs? Why can they not give up this evil thing that is imperialism but continue to hold on to it, even as the men of Vichy do, whatever befall? A time will come when the passions of today have subsided, when the people of England and other peoples will realise and recognise the service that India is rendering, in the midst of war's horror and tumult, to the larger cause of human freedom.

Is the British attitude to Empire today your interpretation of English thought and English history and struggles for freedom in the past? It is not ours, and perhaps we are carrying on that tradition now far more than you are, though you are defending your own freedom with magnificent courage and fortitude. But freedom is not a monopoly of England and Europe. It is dear to us also: dearer because you have deprived us of it. We can compromise about anything but not about our freedom and independence. What would you think of England if she compromised away her own freedom and honour? We are human beings also with the same urges and desires. To ask us to present this claim or that for the beneficent consideration of England, now or later, is to insult us. India is not an appendage of England, even though we may have been forcibly subjected to her rule for many years. India is a great country with a magnificent tradition, with resources, with ability, and a will now to freedom which nothing in the world will finally overcome.

Have we failed you in the hour of your trial? If so, is not that itself a judgment on the long record of British rule in India? That rule itself has created the conditions which led to that failure. But may it not be said that it is your Government that failed not only us, but the British people and the world at large? What a magnificent opportunity it had to cut itself away from the chains of imperialism and give leadership to the world! But it chose otherwise, and may we not say that it is bitter for us to think that even in the hour of supreme peril, the British Government not only failed us but the great cause to which it had given lip sympathy?

I do not blame the British people and I am full of admiration for their heroism and fortitude during the past year of horror. I hope they will survive successfully through this terrible ordeal. But sorrow fills me that all this magnificent courage should not have been yoked to a right cause which would have inspired the world. England's Government must shoulder a heavy responsibility for this; and who can judge how much this has affected, and will affect in future, the course of the war?

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In this hour of supreme trial for all of us wherever we might be, when death overshadows everything, and the future is dark with unimagined perils, every person must search his or her conscience from day to day and seek to be guided to right thought and right action. I have searched my conscience time and again, and I hope my colleagues and I have the courage to retrace a step if subsequent thought proves it to be wrong. We have done that in the past; our great leader has never hesitated to do so, whatever the consequences and even if this has brought public disapproval in its train. In past years sometimes I have been in doubt about the correctness of a step taken and I have, through pain and anguish, struggled within myself. But during the past eight months I have never doubted that we did the right thing—there was no other way for us. It was not only logically straight and correct and in perfect tune with our policy and declaration; it was right also for reasons which transcend logic. And, therefore, in spite of the horror that surrounds us and increases in intensity, my mind has been strangely at peace. You would not have me, I am sure, give up what I believe in from the innermost core of my being; just as I cannot ask you to do any such thing. For to give up what we believe in can never be right. And so, even if we think differently and act differently, let us at least give credit for sincerity to the other and hope that the future might bring our thoughts and actions more in line with each other.

I have written to you at very great length and in all frankness. You must forgive me both for the length of this letter and for anything in it that might distress you. For nearly eight months now I have been in prison and have naturally felt bottled up. When I started writing this letter my pen flowed on and I could not easily restrain it. I felt also that I owed it to you and to myself to let you see what I had in my mind Whether you and other friends agree with me or not, you should at least know how we feel and what are, for us, the springs of action.

I do not know whether this letter will reach you. A prisoner can only hand a letter to the Superintendent of the Prison.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

June 23, Monday

A long gap— That itself shows that I was carrying out my routine duties without any marked mental upsets. News of Indu from Calcutta

was satisfactory and the one letter she has sent me from there was pleasing— She is still in Calcutta— What a long stay! I wish she would come back soon.

I have been regular with my spinning and have rather suddenly made marked progress. My speed has gone up to over 450 yards an hour. I have begun with the Dhanush takli now and am beginning to get over my first depressions— It is rather fun.

News came that Narendra Deva was going to be transferred here from Agra. We expected him from day to day and everything was ready for him in this *gora* barrack. But he has not come and the papers say that he will not be transferred now owing to ill health.

On the 18th I was given a copy of Miss Rathbone's letter addressed to 'Some Indian Friends.' I had seen this previously in the papers. The letter was sent through the Governor— Probably it came to him through the India Office. For a day or two I was not clear whether I should reply to it or not— Then I decided in favour of replying. The reply turned out to be prodigiously long—probably the longest letter I have ever written. I made a draft of it first and then the terrible boring business of copying it out— There were 22 closely written foolscap pages! I sent it to the Superintendent today.

Last evening and night I had a novel and rather terrifying experience —a fierce headache. I had never experienced anything like it before and it made sleep impossible. The Amrutanjan I applied was no good. I could not make out why this attack came. I think it must have been neuralgic—I was all hot and perspiring after badminton last evening and I went and had a cold bath. Perhaps this did the trick. But even so, it is annoying that such a thing should occur. Today I have been much better but the head is a little heavy.

So Germany and Russia are at war![25] In spite of some previous preparation for this development, it came as a thundering surprise. Somehow I expected war between the two some time or other—but much later. For Hitler to attack Russia at this stage and without any real or ostensible reason is extraordinary—What will happen, it is rash to guess —Probably early German victories, even big victories— But this seems to sound the death knell of the Nazi regime some time or other.

News of this invasion came last evening when I was busy copying out my letter to Miss Rathbone. Suddenly I felt how futile that letter was after this development. Yet I decided to leave it as it was and rush it off before anything else happened which made it completely out of date.

25. On 22 June 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union without declaring war.

Mridu is coming in two or three days' time to interview me. I wish Indu was here then to meet her. I should like the two to know each other better. I had suggested to Mridu to spend a few days with Indu at Mussoorie.

June 26

Indu is coming tomorrow at last.

Yesterday Pratap came to interview Ranjit. It was pleasant to have him here and we feasted together.

Mridu not coming yet.

Feeling tired and bored—otherwise fit.

June 29, 1941[26]

Darling Indu,

It was a joy to see you day before yesterday after three and a half weeks. The interview ended all too soon. I want to make up for all your long absences from me. There is so much I want to ask you, to tell you, to discuss with you. Not argument and debate—the less we have of that the better. I have enough of it in my life outside and I am weary of it. But just a calm consideration of all the odd little & big things that surround us and make life so rich and yet sometimes so distressing. Today in the world it is distressing enough. Fate in many ways has been kind to us. Yet in some ways it has been most unkind and its greatest unkindness to me has been the enforced separation it has brought repeatedly between you and me. All these long years in prison with only an occasional interview thrown in, and then your years in Europe. Now again I have to wait for each coming interview. I am looking forward to your next visit already. Suit yourself about the date. Probably round about the 9th July, as you suggested, would be suitable. Remember to avoid Sundays for interviews. They are busy days in jail. I have no news of Mridula.

Some little time after you left us day before yesterday we sat in our little yard as the evening glided into the night. I searched the skies (it was rather misty) for the new moon and discovered it bashfully peeping

26. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

through a veil of mist. It was not very new as it must have been three days old; but it was lovely enough and so arch! You know of course, your pet name Indu means the moon. I told you this when you were almost a baby. I have always been fascinated by the new moon. Lately it has become somehow connected with my imprisonment for I was arrested on the first day of the moon. And so whenever I see the new moon it means another month gone by, another month begun. Possibly not exactly as the calendar goes, but it is good enough for me, and it is far pleasanter to judge of the flight of time by the waxing and waning of the moon.

I am writing today to Dr. Zakir Husain of the Jamia Millia of Delhi to send you some elementary books in Urdu. I am also asking him to send some books to me. The account for all this will be sent to you.

Apart from Urdu and Hindi, it might be worth while for you to start on a voyage of discovery of India. For many years now I have been travelling in these oceans of time and space. I have seen a great deal of the physical aspect of this country of ours and met thousands, and indeed millions, of its varied people. It is a fascinating journey, not so much in just sight-seeing but in its mental aspect, when the past and present get strangely mixed together and the future flits about like an insubstantial shadow, or some image seen in a dream. The real journey is of course of the mind; without that there is little significance in wandering about physically. It is because the mind is full of pictures and ideas and aspects of India that even the bare stones—and so much more our mountains and great rivers, and old monuments and ruins, and snatches of old song and ballad, and the way people look and smile, and the queer and significant phrases and metaphors they use—whisper of the past and the present and of the unending thread that unites them and leads us all on to the future. When I have the chance—and alas! it is not too often—I like to leave my mind fallow and receive all these impressions. So I try to understand and discover India, and some glimpses of her come to me, tantalise me and vanish away.

The real voyage of discovery cannot be confined to books. And yet books are essential for they tell us of the past—of history, of culture, of the way people lived, thought, acted. So why not dip into this treasure and try to understand what our forefathers were?

There are many books which I could suggest to you, though unfortunately good books about India or Indian history and culture have yet to be written. But we cannot wait for them. We must profit by what we have got. Indeed there are far more books now on the subject than there were when I was a boy. I remember well still the excitement with which I saw and read Vincent Smith's *Early History of India*. I was

very young then and did not understand all I read. But this book suddenly opened out vast vistas before me and India's past, which had been a blank in my mind, became filled with great deeds. That book of Vincent Smith's, though far from good (no English I.C.S. man can write a really good book about India) was the first of its kind and it created, not only in me but in others, a new outlook and a certain pride in our past. That book is still a standard book though it is out of date because of recent discoveries. For instance, it does not mention Mohenjo Daro. Still it is worth reading and you might get it. Our old copy at Anand Bhawan disappeared long ago and so a new copy had better be purchased. It is worth having and keeping.

Havell's *History of Aryan Rule in India* is not very good history (official historians dislike Havell intensely) but it is a good book, imaginative, understanding and based on the artistic record of India. Havell was an artist. There are many other books I could tell you of but they must wait. One book worth reading for the British period is Thompson & Garrett's *Rise & Fulfilment of British Rule in India.* (Thompson is our old friend of Boars Hill.) This is a hefty tome but light reading. We might as well know something of this sorry record of British rule which we want to displace. The book is in Anand Bhawan.

It would also be worth while for you to go to our oldest history book —the *Rajatarangini* which Ranjit translated in prison. This book is a big one. Many parts of it are dull reading, some parts are very interesting. As a whole it is a *tour de force* of Kalhana, the author. Ranjit's translation has many appendices &c., which are important.

Have you read Kalidas's *Shakuntala?* Or the *Mrichhakatika?* The play Ranjit has been recently translating—the *Mudrarakshasa*—should be read also... Perhaps he will be able to let you have a spare typed copy when you come next. It is peculiarly interesting just at present as it deals with politics and war and spying and fifth column activity &c.—all over 2000 years ago!

Apart from Ancient Greece, India was the only country which developed a regular drama, which was performed, in the old days. No other country has anything comparable to these two.

I have received three big bottles of excellent honey from Psyche. You should take at least one of them away when you come next.

Write to Amma (Nani) some time. When you do so send her my love.

Love,

Your,
Papu

June 29, Sunday

Indu came and we had a long interview—and yet not long enough. I felt happy and we seemed to come nearer to each other. She has gone up to Mussoorie and probably I shall now see her at least two or three times a month.

I have now been nearly 8 months in prison. What is the total output of work during this fairly long period? Precious little—The only solid output is nearly 1,00,000 yards of yarn (97,000 to be accurate). I have not even read very much. It is really surprising how little has been done—There has been no real writing work, no progress in Urdu or Hindi —the three things I had in mind. I have written far more and far longer letters than I used to during previous terms. Also I spend more time on newspapers. We get more papers and then there is the war! I must pull myself up.

No rain for three weeks now. The monsoon seems to have dried up after an early burst—or perhaps the real thing has not come yet. Our little garden pants and suffers.

June Spinning: 30 hanks Nos. 167 to 196
= 15000 yards counts c 27 to 32
(of these 2 hanks on Dhanush takli.)
Coarser owing to faster spinning.
Total since November last: 98000 yards

July 3rd, Thursday

Mahadeva and Mridu coming tomorrow. I am very glad Mahadeva is coming. He will give me some idea of how Bapu is feeling and thinking.

Nan & children coming on 10th July.

Mahadeva's visit tomorrow will synchronize with my completing my 1,00,000 yards of spinning. This is purely accidental. I have done my 199th hank today and have over 300 yards left over. So the 200th hank tomorrow is easy.

Some odd things have been happening in the jail to satyagrahi detenus. I give some facts below briefly:

1. Ghanshiam Singh Rawat (member D.D. District Board & ex-dictator Dist. Satyagraha Committee)

Arrested 7.4.41 under sec. or rule 129 D.I.R. & kept in D.D. jail for 2 months. This period was to expire on 6th June. On 5th June an

order from U.P. Govt. dt. 27/5/41 under rule 26 (c) (d) (e) (f) D.I.R. conveyed through Supt. Jail directing him to

1. Reside & remain in his village Azadpur.
2. Report his presence in person once a week at the police station.
3. Submit to check of his presence in village Azadpur through police officers visiting the village.
4. Refrain from any activities in any way connected with the satyagraha movement.

He stated immediately to the Supt. that he would not abide by these conditions. Therefore he was not discharged then (as he would have been otherwise) and his objection to the Govt.'s directions was conveyed to the Jail Supt. and the District Magte. Although his two months' period of detention expired on the 6th, he was not released till the 8th —2 days over detention; in spite of full warning being given to the local authorities. On the 8th a magistrate came and read out the Govt. order to him and he signed it in token of having heard it.

On 23 June he was rearrested for non-compliance of condition No. 2 above. Tried & convicted the following day in DD Jail by P.F. Barrett I.C.S. Jt. Magte.—S.D.M. Dehra Dun—6 months R.I. & Rs. 1000/- fine, in default 6 months R.I. No defence.

2. L. Mithan Lal

Case as above—rearrested—same sentence.

3. Pt. Shanti Prapanna Sharma[27] Chairman District Board D.D.

Ex officio jail visitor—

Arrested 16th April—on 5th June order similar to one on Rawat conveyed to him in D.D. Jail. He refused in writing to abide by it. His discharge (for which arrangements made on 5 June) put off till last day, 16th June—when Barrett Jt. Magte. came to jail office and read out Govt. order to him—This order did not bear the signature of the Chief Secretary (the only lawful issuing authority)—This defect detected then—Shanti P.S. signed on being pressed, in token of having heard it read to him.

Released on 16/6. Rearrested on 1st July for non-observance—Case twice adjourned already without accused being produced before Magte. Probably attempt being made to remove defect in Govt. order.

Shanti P.S. has taken steps to defend himself in the case—not to get off, but to show up ways of local authorities.

27. (b. 1912); Minister for Industries and Transport, U.P., 1969-70, for Power and Parliamentary Affairs, 1970-71 and for Cooperation and Cane Development, 1976-77.

The whole manner of serving new orders to people in jail—their refusal to abide by it, releasing them & rearresting them a few days later—farce of a trial and heavy fines of Rs. 1000/- on very simple & modest people, who get C class treatment, indicates a shameful frame-up. The Rs. 1000/- fine was the maximum which Barrett could give—He had no further powers.

9.7.41[28]

Darling Indu,

I have been thinking about our conversation of yesterday's, or at any rate of the fag end of it. A little before you went away you put a question to me which rather surprised me in the manner it was put and the impatience that lay behind it. Otherwise there was no occasion for surprise.

I am writing this to you so that you might be able to think about it calmly, have talks with Madan Bhai (to whom you can show this letter if you like) and then, when you come here next, we can have a further talk.

You will remember that when you were going to Calcutta you gave me a note and also said something to the effect that you felt very muddled and helpless in dealing with many things that crop up and wanted my help. That help, my dear, you have always had and always will have so far as I am concerned. It depends upon you to take it and profit by my advice or not. Sometimes I have felt, and indeed you have told me frankly and directly, that you distrusted me and imagined things about me which naturally made it very difficult for me to help you in any way. Those were perhaps moods of the moment which passed. Still, every mood we experience, every thought we have, leaves its impress upon us and moulds our future. It is the letter you gave me on your way to Calcutta that impels me to give you advice again so that your way in life may be as far from difficulty as possible. Life is a difficult enough job and it never forgets or forgives our mistakes.

I have made it clear to you repeatedly that in no way will I obstruct you in following your own decisions about yourself. That is not only a general principle I believe in but I came to this decision about you long ago and have held to it. Naturally as one who is intensely interested in

28. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

you and attached to you, I have thought about you and your life and future ever since you were a child. I have made innumerable plans about you; I have thought again and again how to help in making you a person who can face life and its problems serenely and with confidence; who can make good in any department of activity that you might take up. What this activity might be, what work you might take up was not for me to determine. As you grew up the choice would be made by you. About your marriage I never worried as that, above all, would depend upon your own choice. What I was most interested in was your bodily and mental development, keeping pace and harmony with your emotional development and thus creating and building up what is called an integrated human being. Once that is achieved or partly achieved it does not much matter what one does or who one marries, for one's choice comes out of a well-regulated and ordered scheme of the body, mind and emotions.

I had hoped that after your formal education at a university was completed, you might supplement it by some travel in various countries and especially by specialising in two or three languages, other than English. I wanted you to go to Russia to see things there for yourself. This background of mental training and intellectual experience and knowledge would just be the foundation on which you would build your future life and growth. College etc. does not teach very much but it serves an important purpose by training and developing our minds and making us capable of self-educating ourselves in life's ways later on.

Then with this background of mental training and a wider culture I expected you to return to India and discover the fascinating thing that is India. In this task I wanted to help you personally and I expected you to help me somewhat also. There are very few persons in India, I think, who could give effective help not only in public life but almost for any activity, other than technical, better than I could. Hundreds and thousands of young men and girls have wanted to serve with me as secretaries or in some way to get this training. I have never encouraged anyone and have shouldered my burdens alone, for I had always imagined you to occupy that niche. Till you come, that niche had better be left empty. No one else could take your place.

It was with this idea ever hovering in my mind that I wrote piles and piles of historical and other letters to you. I wanted gently, slowly but yet surely to train your mind in that wider understanding of life and events that is essential for any big work.

Of course I did not think of you just as a secretary to me or otherwise attached to me all the time. That would have been excessively selfish of me. I knew you would marry and I wanted you to do so and thus to live your own life. I only wanted to give you some special

training which would stand you in good stead in later life. It was a training for which many people hanker and hanker in vain.

All these and hundreds of other ideas passed through my mind day after day, month after month, during these past years. There were so many interesting and odd kinds of work that I could find for you, which would help you in developing and becoming more efficient. So that when the time came you could with assurance tackle any big national job. And the time for this will surely come for our people before long.

Somehow things did not turn out as I had hoped. Your ill health came in the way, your education was interrupted and the world's troubles and wars and conflicts, and our own national difficulties were always intervening. This has to be accepted and all one can do is to adapt oneself to it all and still forge ahead to achievement. Difficulties and obstructions should not frighten us or upset us. Often they train us and harden us much more than the soft things of life.

All this is the past. It is largely over. I mention it so that you may realise how I have pictured you to myself and woven tales about your picture in my mind. It takes a good deal of adjustment for me to throw all these tales and fancies into the scrap heap.

All this again had little to do with the question of your marriage. Having left that to you, I gave no thought to the matter.

Gradually what began to worry me was a feeling that you were very far away from me, from my thoughts, my fancies and ideas, my hopes and dreams. A gulf existed between these thoughts and ideas of you in my mind and you. I thought it was a passing phase and that as soon as we could be together again the gulf would disappear and I could tell you about my dreams and share them with you.

Then I realised that some things that meant a great deal to me had little significance for you. Our sense of values seemed to differ vastly. That hurt. For a sense of values lies at the very basis of life and governs it. All culture is after all a sense of values, certain restraints, certain responsibilities joyfully undertaken.

What pained and surprised me was the casual way in which you were prepared, and even eager, to discard very precious traditions and heritage, some things that were part of my being and which I hoped would be yours. It was rare good fortune for us to have this heritage and I, for one, was proud of it.

Life does not give its gifts over and over again, and we kick away its valuable gifts at some peril to our future.

All this as a background. Now for the present.

I should have thought that the obvious thing for you or anyone else to do on return from abroad, after a fairly long absence, was to look

round and get your bearings. Try to understand your environment, the changes that have taken place and so gradually adapt yourself to them, and then go ahead. This was the normal course for any student returning home. It was perhaps more necessary for you and at this particular time of war and conflict. You have been seriously unwell. You require physical and bodily rest. Above all peace of mind to consider all problems especially those relating to your own life, calmly and without excitement. Marriage is an important thing in life. It may make or mar one's life. And yet marriage is something smaller than life. Life is a much bigger thing. It is difficult enough to understand it, still one has to try.

So I had thought it natural for you to have a period of rest from conflict in your mind. Why any conflict? If you want to marry Feroze, well go ahead and do it. No one will stop you. So why worry about it? Therefore no conflict or worry was necessary.

As it happens even your present health indicates, I believe, an avoidance of marriage for some time, some months at least. But that is for doctors to say. Apart from that, from most points of view there is an element of absurd haste in your returning from Europe in frail health

helps our own thought. To avoid such discussions is to admit the weakness of one's own thoughts and positions and allow oneself to drift or be driven—and both are bad. Each one must be master or mistress of one's own fate.

Therefore do not worry yourself. Remove any burdens you have in your mind and look at the world and every one with clear and bright eyes, unafraid and uncowed. Remember that every vital decision rests with you, not with others. So why worry? Take your time, develop calmness and restraint and when the moment comes take the step indicated openly and after telling your friends. Any other course will inevitably add to future worries and be a burden to your mind. It is not worth while. Also try not to break with your past and the world you have lived in. That will be painful for you and for others and will bring fresh problems in its train. Besides it is not necessary. There is so much worth while in that old world, so many people who would do anything to help you, that to walk away from them, as if they did not count for anything, is unjust to you and to them.

I would suggest therefore your trying to have a peaceful rest in Mussoorie for the next three months or so and trying at the same time to free your mind of your worries and problems. Do not go out to meet a problem or trouble. Meanwhile have a talk with Madan Bhai. Such talks with friends relieve the mind and bring peace.

I would also suggest, later on, your inviting Amma to stay with you for a few days at Mussoorie. So far as you are concerned, two persons count for me more than anybody—Amma and Bapu. Bapu because he has been very intimately associated not only in public life but in private life with mummie and me. Also, apart from his other activities, he is one of the wisest men I know. He understands and appreciates the other's viewpoint and his advice is always valuable, even if we cannot always follow it.

So have Amma with you. That is due to her and she will help you.

Afterwards in October or thereabouts return to Allahabad. I hope you will be much stronger and fitter then. A little after your return write to Bapu that you would like to pay him a visit. Go to him and spend three or four days with him. Have frank talks. For frankness is essential when you are dealing with men like him.

On your return to Allahabad you should have brief talks with Nan and Betty—or better still you can go to Bombay from Wardha and meet Betty there. It will be advisable if you go to Bombay to have a talk with Psyche also. She can be very very helpful. On coming back to Allahabad speak to Nan. I should also like you to speak to Ladli Chacha and Mohan Chacha—not that I expect much advice from them. But

they are senior members of our family and good men. They have always been very decent to all of us and ordinary courtesy requires that they should be consulted.

These are the persons I would like you especially to talk to. It is also desirable, at this stage, for you to write brief letters to Kishan Chacha and Birju Chacha, as you are not likely to see them.

When you go to Wardha, I would very much like you to meet and have a frank talk with Jamnalalji also. He has been a particular friend of the family and in many ways he can help you. On your return from Wardha come & see me.

After all this come to your decision and act accordingly. It is likely that many of the persons I have mentioned above may disapprove of the step you contemplate. You should be prepared for this and not avoid a talk because of it.

When you come to any decision think out the future consequences in detail, in so far as you can. It is not good to jump into any action without previous thought about the consequences.

I have given you above my ideas on the subject. Think about them —discuss them with Madan Bhai—and then forget about it all for the present and do some regular work in Mussoorie.

If you want to discuss this matter with me further when you come next, I shall gladly do so. But I have had my say in this letter and told you how, I think, you should act, feeling as you do. To that for the present I have nothing to add.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

July 10, Thursday

A week gone by—a full week as time goes by in jail. We have had three long interviews. On the 4th Mahadeva and Mridula, on the 8th Indu, and today Nan and the children—Yet I have written nothing in this diary although my mind was full. Why? I do not know—Not the mood for it perhaps. Laziness—a feeling of lassitude. The only thing I have been fairly regular in doing has been spinning—a regular 500 yards a day. (Today was a gap day.) As it happened, on the 4th of July, when Mahadeva and Mridu came I finished my 200th hank, that is 1,00,000 yards. I gave that particular hank to Mahadeva for Bapu.

Mahadeva told us much about past happenings and Bapu. Nothing very new in any vital matter, and yet all this filled in the background of the past eight months. While generally agreeing with Bapu's policy, I have had a vague feeling of uneasiness about certain trends. Difficult to define, except that it is becoming static. The dynamic part of our movement is gradually lessening or disappearing. To some extent this was natural after so many months. Also new developments in the war —the Russo-German conflict—make some difference and divert people's minds and confuse them. Still there is far too great a lack of clear thinking and clear exposition in the newspapers and statements made by Congressmen who are out. Being full of ideas, my mind itches to throw them out—to speak and write. But what is the good of writing on a topical subject for publication in the distant future when the world may have changed?

It is clear that some of our prominent Congressmen—Bhulabhai & his like—are fed up with this slow motion and have had enough of prison. They want satyagraha to be wound up. Bhulabhai indeed has made privately a remarkable suggestion—that symbolic satyagraha should continue but the movement should be called off otherwise. Symbolic satyagraha, according to him, need only necessitate Vinoba's and my remaining in prison! We are the two symbols—non-political and political. Thus honour will be satisfied and most people can return to their normal lives and businesses!

How Bhulabhai must hate Bapu's insistence on a long—five-year—struggle and on no peace except with independence! He had not bargained for this— But how can he get out without breaking with the Congress? Poor Bhulabhai! His is a sad case. I suppose people in Nasik Jail must be full of stories about his moods and unguarded utterances. Raja has recently been released because Harsha was ill. Perhaps he will come here with Betty and the children to see me. He will be full of Bhulabhai. And Bombay must be teeming with stories about him. There may be some others like him. But not many. Munshi's resignation from the Congress may serve to bring some others out also.[29] Good thing.

But it is not the Bhulabhai mentality which is going to make much difference to the Congress or the country. What is more important is a general malaise, a confusion of ideas, a feeling that not enough is

29. K.M. Munshi resigned from the Congress on 26 June 1941, saying that while he accepted in theory the principle of *ahimsa*, he felt the greatest difficulty in acting up to it.

being done, and yet no clear notion of what should be done. Communal riots and Bapu's statements in regard to them has added to this confusion.[30] There is a feeling that India is slowly disrupting and we are not doing anything to check this rot.

Then again there is the reaction to the Russo-German war. Probably this is most marked among the Communists and near Communists, but it affects large numbers of others also.

Mridula told me about the affairs of the *National Herald*. A dismal tale. What a poor lot our editors and others are— They continue quarrelling among themselves and adding to their own as well as our worries. Then the financial side which continues to be bad. The paper's tone has been rather feeble also, sometimes apologetic.

Indu's visit. As usual I talked and talked. How foolish it is to talk so much— When will I learn to believe in silence? Jail might have taught me this lesson, and to some extent it did on previous occasions when I was alone for long periods and had very few interviews. But this time there are too many interruptions to settle down in the old way. Some time or other I must return for a while to the high mountains, preferably in the higher regions of Garhwal about which I have been reading so much.

So I talked a lot to Indu about India, the world, the war, socialism and all manner of subjects, when very probably her mind was elsewhere. As she was leaving I discovered, with a little shock, that her mind had been elsewhere.

How frightfully difficult it is to reach a person. And yet sometimes how easy. I am terribly keen on reaching Indu, on becoming really intimate with her, but I do not make much headway. Foolishly I imagine that talks and long letters will help. And then I discover that I am where I was. How is one to overcome the gap and the gulf of these years and all that has happened in between?

After Indu's visit, I was worried over this matter and thought a great deal about it. She makes me feel so lonely. She is so far.

The interview today. Somehow all these children, jolly and cheerful, made me feel lonelier still. Slowly I [illegible]

Mridula is staying with Indu for a few days. She might visit me again on her way back.

So many people want to see me, some on business, some just to see me, some because they think that I might help them in their domestic entanglements. Curious how I am asked to help others, when I have not been a success in my own domestic affairs.

July 11, 1941[31]

TO PADMAJA NAIDU

My dear Bebee,

Two of your letters have reached me, one accurately dated 23rd June, the other, with a reversion to old habit, July 1941.

So you have had another accident! What a number you have had and mostly connected with automobiles. I have a way of escaping them, though I come near enough. Is it luck? But I often wonder why there are so few motor accidents in India. Drivers here are usually quite amazingly careless and reckless. They have something of what one calls the Latin temperament in Europe. I do hope you have quite got over your injury.

About *Glimpses*, I quite agree with the arrangements made by the Maktaba Jamia. I have not the book with me but I imagine the division is sensible. Do they intend selling the different volumes separately or in a bunch? I think the former method is far the preferable.

I have written to Walsh myself. He seems to be worried about the royalties and to whom to send them. I have had messages from Nan and through Gertrude Sen. Evidently he has been writing to various people and only some of his letters have got through. Of the 10 copies of the book he sent only six reached Betty. Ranjit had none. The reviews have also not come.

I have asked Walsh to send the royalties to Bachhraj & Co. and probably Nan will cable to him to this effect also. But to make sure you can write also and tell him to send them to: Bachhraj & Company Ltd., Jehangir Wadia Building, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Fort, Bombay (Post Box No. 179). For cable purposes the name and Post Box 179 would be enough (cable addresses being barred.)

[31] Naidu Papers, N[illegible]

I am not at all sure what the rules are about dollar remittances and I have an idea that they are not permitted without special licences. That is for him to find out.

I have sent Walsh a list of corrections to be made in the book when the opportunity offers itself.

I have not seen Rushbrook Williams' book called *Great Men of India*. Ever since I knew him slightly in Allahabad about twenty-two years ago (what an age has passed since then!) I took a dislike to him. That of course has nothing to do with his book.

Ranjit has not quite finished his appendices yet though he has been at work at them. He has not been keeping too well. It seems to me that he spends too much time and energy on the appendices. It would be far more sensible for him to write a separate book, say on the Sanskrit Drama, than to push all this information at the fag end of a book. With a fat book like the *Rajatarangini*, a number of appendices are necessary and do not spoil the balance of the whole. The tail is not bigger than the dog itself. But a play of the size of the *Mudrarakshasa* might well be overweighted by this tail. I have not so far read the appendices. I am sure, however, that they will be interesting and will add to my knowledge greatly.

Nan and the children visited us yesterday and we had unusual excitement in our little yard. They were all looking well and Rita of course was full of Uday Shankar.

When you write to Walsh, you might mention to him that I have asked the *Atlantic Monthly* people to pay them $150 on my account. This sum was sent to me for an article about a year and a half ago but the cheque was lost in transit. So now I have asked them to pay the sum to the John Day Company.

Our little garden is progressing but the long absence of rain has had a bad effect. The Kashmir dahlias have grown enormously—over 7 feet—without flowering, except for one small specimen. The dahlias you sent are likely to do better. Gladioli have done well.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

July 14, Monday

Three lines in the papers—a cable from London that I was on the point of being released. I am almost sure that there is nothing in it, except

the efforts of some earnest souls in London whose conscience pricks them but whose minds fail to grasp the situation in India. It is absurd to release me with things as they are; and even to release the whole W.C. makes no difference.

And yet when I read those three lines immediately and spontaneously my mind began functioning in a different direction. Jail and the daily routine of jail was forgotten for a while; I had important work to do. What was I to do on release? All manner of problems rushed through my head and it was only gradually that I quietened down.

Tara, Rita & Amma came to us for a little while on their way to Allahabad from Mussoorie. It was pleasant to see them. They also said that the papers had a good deal about my forthcoming release.

I received a letter from an American girl today which moved me. She had been greatly affected by reading my *Autobiography*.[32]

Two or three days ago I received a list of forthcoming publications from John Day. To my surprise I noticed that *Glimpses of World History* was included in it and is due to come out in September next. I was pleased at this.

Today in an article by Arthur Moore[33] it was stated that during his air journey from England to India in an American Clipper, he had noticed Americans reading my *Unity of India* very earnestly. Also that the book was prominently displayed in book shops in New York, Washington and Los Angeles. Surprising to find a book published in England so displayed and sold in America. Not a single copy of the book has so far reached me or probably anyone else in India.

This piece of news again tickled my vanity! I seem to take political booming up without much excitement, having got partly used to it. (Not that it is not gratifying!) But praise of my books is still an experience the novelty of which has not worn off. I always feel bucked up when I come across it. One of my present grievances is that the bunch of American reviews of my *Autobiography* (*Toward Freedom*), which Walsh sent me, has not reached me—The censor I suppose thought that they were not good for my soul. Perhaps he was right. The few

32. On 15 April 1941, Jean Frost had written: "I have been reading your *Autobiography*.... It has made me feel thoroughly ashamed of myself. I have wasted so much time in the past wallowing around in a personal slough of despond and disillusionment.... I have at last learned that past happenings cannot be altered yet I feel that perhaps in some small way I can atone for... that thing that was me.... I do have you to thank for this change in attitude on my part."

33. William Arthur Moore (1880-1962); managing editor, *The Statesman* (Calcutta), 1933-42; president, Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society, 1939-43.

very good they are. Or else we get jams and marmalades from Mussoorie where they make excellent jams, better, I think, than the foreign ones, though the tins are not so attractive. Indian biscuits are also very good. Indeed one can get now most things of Indian make.

I am pointing this out to you as perhaps you had not thought about it previously. There is no reason why you should not yourself patronise good and relatively fresh Indian goods rather than old and stale foreign ones.

Thank you again,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20 July 1941[35]

TO SYED MAHMUD

My dear Mahmud,

It is ages since I have had news of you. I had hoped to have an interview with you when I was in Lucknow Jail but unfortunately you fell ill and could not come. I hope you got my message to the effect that you must look after yourself and get well, and not worry about other matters till you were well enough to do so.

I shall be glad if you will write to me and let me know how you and the children are and what they are doing now.

I am keeping fit and well, as I always do in jail or outside. But Ranjit has not been so well. He is troubled with his breathlessness occasionally.

When you are quite well enough to do so and have the leisure for it, I should like you to visit me and have an interview. But you must not come till you are well enough. I just want to see you and have a chat with you, in so far as one can do this in prison. The interview is not meant for any business. When I know that you can come here and what time suits you, we shall try to fix up a date. This cannot be

35. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

before the fourth week of August as I am having an interview on the 12th August.

Indu is at Mussoorie and sees me from time to time.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

July 24, 1941[36]

TO KRISHNA KRIPALANI

My dear Krishna,

Disquieting news about Gurudeva's health have again been appearing in the press. Could you send me just a few lines to say how he is? And give him all my love and homage.

I see in the *Visva-Bharati News* the announcement of a *Tagore Birthday Number*. I should like to see this.

All good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

July 24th

Yesterday I finished reading Hitler's *Mein Kampf*—a full and unexpurgated edition. Previously, when Hitler seized power in 1933, I had read long extracts from the book and had formed a very unfavourable opinion of it and its author. What had struck me particularly was an element of vulgarity about him.

I must say that I have been impressed by the book now. Not by its main argument and thesis, but by the power behind it. I think I can understand Hitler better now and can appreciate how he has been instrumental in bringing about the mighty changes in Germany. It is astounding what he has done in seven years since he took control.

36. Krishna Kripalani Papers.

The first thing that struck me was his burning sincerity—fanaticism. Secondly, his thorough analysis of the German people, their strength and weaknesses, and the amazingly clever approach to them. He may be an idealist in his own way but he is intensely practical. The very weakness and falsity of the argument—its racialism and the position of a master race allotted to the German people—was just such as to appeal to the Germans.

It is not surprising that this approach, *mutatis mutandis*, should be welcomed by England's ruling classes as well as other ruling classes. It said plainly what they thought and felt about themselves but which they could not say openly because of untoward consequences and the democratic cloak which they had fashioned to hide their imperialist ventures. But in the Empire itself there was, and is, not even this cloak, and the full-blooded Nazi gospel has long prevailed. That's what we have to contend against today in India. And it is far more dangerous as it does not proclaim itself frankly and openly. Yet if anyone is deluded by the soft-spoken words which sometimes accompany harsh deeds, they must be fools and half-wits, or else they deliberately want this state of affairs to continue. Why should they want it to continue? Either because they profit under it to some extent and are afraid of losing their special position and privileges under a new and totally different order, or because they are so conscious of their own weakness and the British Empire's strength that they think it the height of rashness and folly to challenge this power, or simply because they have the coward's mentality. Hitler's description of the German bourgeoisie is singularly applicable to many of our people. How contemptibly they behave from time to time! But the prize for cowardice, lack of intelligence, and degradation must surely be awarded to some of the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha.[37] It makes me sick to read their contemptible and disgusting fulminations.

37. On 2 July 1941, B.S. Moonje condemned the Pakistan scheme of the Muslim League and appealed to the Hindus to organise themselves and join the army in their thousands, setting aside class and caste distinctions. If Sikandar Hayat Khan could promise the British Government 5 lakhs of Muslim recruits, "why could not Hindus with a population of thirty crores recruit one crore and a half;" and on 5 July, pointing out the impracticability of nonviolence, he said untouchability was a wrong ideal, the charkha an ineffective weapon and Hindu-Muslim unity an impossible proposition. He exhorted the Hindus to shoulder the responsibility of the defence of India in cooperation and association with the British Government, "therefore the Hindu Mahasabha offers unconditional cooperation to the British Government in the realisation of its objective of militarisation of the Hindus."

My personal feeling at present is this—and I am sure that is a representative feeling: civil war is very bad, a foreign invasion of India would be deplorable but I am prepared to face the risk of civil war and invasion. But I am sick and utterly weary of British rule in India and I am not prepared to put up with it any longer. Whatever may happen I cannot cooperate with it or reconcile myself to it. I can only keep on rebelling against it.

The British will go. They must and will have to. But what are we to do with the traitors and quislings and lick-spittles that abound in this country? That is the problem.

24 July 1941[38]

My dear Bapu,

...I have been taught self-restraint about my personal feelings and emotions and the habit of confessing to people or taking them into one's confidence is totally alien to me. I live a lonely personal life and the only person who could occasionally peep into it was Kamala. Few people even know or realise how I felt about Kamala. It seems rather silly to say so and the expression is a trite one, but throughout our married life I was very much in love with her. Why this was so, I do not know; such feelings are spontaneous and often utterly unreasonable. It was not just because she was my wife or because she had certain good qualities. Neither of these facts lead to a man's love for a woman. Affection there may be, a feeling of contentment with each other and all that through close associations and mutual interests. But love as I conceived it and as it came to me was something different, something electric, something often painful. It was not the conception of duty owed or an obligation to be discharged. I would hate to have someone feel that it was his or her duty to love me. I want no such purchase....

My conception of marriage and sex may strike you as odd; they certainly differ from yours. In my own married life there was this unusual fact (I think it is definitely unusual in sedate and long-married people) that while I might be irritated with Kamala or quarrel with her, her touch would always thrill me. I was the worst possible husband for any woman owing to my intense public activities, preoccupations, absences and jail. Yet always there was a certain magic in our relationship. She

38. J.N. Papers. Extracts.

was a mystery to me and I was a mystery to her and something of the initial novelty and surprise never wore off, and though we grew older in years, we remained very young in our outlook. It is rather odd that I should make this confession to anyone, and more especially to you, whose ideas of the relationship between man and woman seem very extraordinary to me. I am a pagan at heart, not a moralist like you, and I love the rich pagan culture and outlook on life of our ancients, their joy in beauty of all kinds, in richness of life and a wise understanding of human nature with all its virtues and frailties.

India grows upon me more and more and I am ever discovering something new in her. It is a voyage of discovery which has no end. And yet people call me, because of my ways and outlook, a European and an Englishman. They are right in a way and yet only superficially so. I do believe intensely in India, though it would be hard to define this belief. I have never yet been disappointed in the common people of India perhaps because I did not expect too much from them. But I am irritated and disgusted often enough by our middle classes (my own kind) who have lost all sense of values, of beauty, of what is essential in life. Their vulgarity and weaknesses and limited outlook appal me. Always they seem to be willing to sell their immortal selves for a dirty mess of pottage.

I am at peace here and, as usual, quite fit and feeling absurdly young for my advanced years. The realisation that I am over fifty-one always surprises me. I can't quite believe it! I do not worry at all, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, that I worry seldom. At no period previously in jail have I had this feeling of inner calm. The days pass easily enough with reading, spinning and various other activities. The present does not engage my attention much; whatever I might be doing, my mind tries to probe into the future, to imagine what this mad world will be like tomorrow and how and where India will fit into it. Why do people worry so much about getting something quickly and now, and fear that if they do not get it, it might elude their grasp? Do they not realise that we have come to the end of an age and there is no further room for quibbling and political trickery and manoeuvre and all the arts of the average politician? Only strength counts in this naked age which lays bare all weaknesses. It may be the strength of armed might, which is above law and lawyers, or some other form of inner strength, which also is above law and lawyers. A people or a nation which still thinks in terms of law and lawyers is lost.

With my love to you,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

July 27th, Sunday

I have been writing a long note for Bapu—a very long one. It is about Indu as I wanted to tell him all about recent happenings. I have suggested to Indu to visit him when she goes down from Mussoorie next October or November and seek his advice. So I wanted to prepare Bapu with such facts as I knew. In writing about Indu I touched on many other personal matters about which I had never previously spoken to anyone. I feel lighter after putting all this before Bapu—though I do not know when my letter will reach him.

We have had a delightful visitor yesterday and today—Saleha, a seven or eight year old girl. She is the daughter of a prominent Shia leader from Lucknow who is staying in Dehra. She comes to the Jailer's house on holidays & so visited us. She is bright, intelligent and attractive. Yesterday she told us all about her school routine—she is a boarder. Today she came with a takli and wanted to learn how to spin on it.

Day after tomorrow Amrit Kaur, Nandan and Raksha are coming to visit me.

July 28, 1941[39]

Darling Indu,

...I have had no news from you since we met last. I hope you are keeping well and putting on weight. At last we have had some rain here. Our plants were badly in need of it. I suppose you are having a good deal of rain also.

During the past few months I have read many books on mountaineering in India—almost always among the Garhwal mountains. This has been fascinating reading. I was surprised and pleased to find that there is complete agreement among those Englishmen & Americans who have taken part in these expeditions that Garhwal has the most beautiful mountains and valleys in the world. The men who gave this opinion were widely travelled and knew what they were talking about. This really applies to the higher regions of Garhwal and not to the dusty and rather bare valleys and hillsides below. In these upper regions there is an extraordinary and enchanting mixture of magnificent snow peaks, thick forests and valleys carpeted with lovely flowers. Indeed of one

39. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

such valley, appropriately named the Valley of Flowers, it is said that it has no rival anywhere.

I have been to Garhwal only once for a few days. It is not easily accessible as even roads are lacking, except bridle paths for pilgrims. I only visited some of the towns in the lower regions. I had a glimpse however of the whole vast area and beyond from the air. For we took a plane from Hardwar and flew right over Badrinath till we seemed almost to collide against the huge snow wall of the mountain barrier which separates India from Tibet. That flight lasted a few hours only—there and back—and I carried away vivid impressions which endure. Two impressions especially: the snowy range, with its mighty peaks, majestic and fiercely beautiful, and the silver thread of the Alaknanda river, winding its way deep down below through the mountains. The Alaknanda, as perhaps you know, is one of the principal source streams of the Ganga.

You and I, in our respective abodes, are on the verge of Garhwal. I can see the Garhwal foothills from here and a longish walk will take you to the district boundary. The knowledge of this surpassing beauty so near us and yet so far from this warring world, so peaceful and unperturbed by human folly, excites me. Those strange people who were our ancestors in the long ago felt the wonder of these mountains and valleys and, with the unerring instinct of genius, yoked this sense of awe and wonder to man's old yearning for something higher than what life's daily toil and conflicts offered, something with the impress of the eternal upon it. And so for two thousand years or more, innumerable pilgrim souls have marched through these valleys and mountains to Badrinath and Kedarnath and Gangotri, from where the baby Ganga emerges, so tiny and frolicsome, but to grow and grow in her long wandering till she becomes the noble river that sweeps by Prayag and Kashi and beyond.

Shall I ever go wandering again in these mountains, and pierce the forest and climb the snows and feel the thrill of the precipice and the deep gorge? And then lie in deep content on a thick carpet of mountain flowers and gaze on the fiery splendour of the peaks as they catch the rays of the setting sun? Shall I sit by the side of the youthful and turbulent Ganga in her mountain home and watch her throw her head in a swirl of icy spray in pride and defiance, or creep round lovingly some favoured rock and take it into her embrace? And then rush down joyously over the boulders and hurl herself with a mighty shout over some great precipice? I have known her so long as a sedate lady, seemingly calm, but for all that, the fire is in her veins even then, the fiery vitality of youth and the spirit of adventure, and this breaks out from time to time when her peaceful waters seem angry and tumble over each other and spread out over vast areas.

I love the rivers of India and I should like to explore them from end to end, and to go back deep into the dawn of history and watch the processions of men and women, of cultures and civilisations, going down the broad streams of these rivers. The Indus, the Brahmaputra, the Ganga, and also that very lovable river of ours—the Jamuna.

Heigh ho! How many things I would like to do, how much there is to see, how many places to go to! What wonderful dreams we can fashion out of the past and out of the unknown future that is still to be! Men come and men go but man's dreaming and quest go on, and when failing hands can no longer hold the torch, others, more vigorous and straight, take hold of it, and they in their turn pass it on to yet others still.

How I begin musing when I write to you.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

July 28th, Monday

Two incidents happened yesterday which upset me a little. A few days ago an undertrial was brought to this jail. I heard vaguely that he was mad. Some said he was pretending to be so and had actually been caught with stolen goods. Then I learnt that he had been beaten rather badly before he came to jail—who by it was not clear. Possibly by the police. His eye was swollen. He was not treated well here and the jail doctor paid no attention to him. He behaved oddly.

Last evening when I went inside the jail proper for badminton (Ranjit & I have been doing this for some time) I heard talk of this man and some complaints of his treatment. I spoke rather strongly to the Jailer and said that whether he was mad or not, he had obviously been injured and required care and treatment. If he should die, a heavy responsibility would rest with the jail staff.

My words had effect and the Jailer rushed to find the Superintendent, who had just returned from Mussoorie. The Superintendent, tired as he was, came to the jail and gave some injections to the unfortunate man.

This morning we learnt that the man had died in the course of the night. There was much feeling about it among the prisoners, especially the satyagrahis who complained that no proper attention had been paid

to an obviously serious case, and demanded an inquiry. Many of them refused to take their morning meal.

The Superintendent promised to refer the question of an inquiry to the District Magistrate, passed strong remarks on the inefficiency of the jail doctor, and, after a post-mortem, reported that death was due to injuries in the head received before the man came to jail. Possibly the head injury had affected the brain. All this calmed down the other prisoners—But the Superintendent was worried over these recurring troubles. He is a retired officer, oldish, and the work he has to do as civil surgeon and Supt. of the jail is fairly heavy.

All this led him, as we learnt this evening, suddenly to send his resignation. The Jailer was much put out by this. I shall be sorry if he really goes for he has been very decent and has tried to do his best under difficult circumstances.

The other incident: our dog Captain or Koela as I now call him, bit the Deputy Jailer's son, a sweet little boy of about seven, last evening. The injury is not much and it is not clear whether it was caused accidentally in play or was a deliberate bite. Anyway one cannot take risks and the poor little boy has to take injections and the dog has to be watched carefully for the next ten days.

Ranjit has had trouble again with his breathing today. This is becoming more frequent.

July 29, 1941[40]

TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, DISTRICT JAIL, DEHRA DUN

Dear Mr. Superintendent,

I shall be grateful to you if you will kindly make the undermentioned reference to the Inspector General of Prisons and seek his directions in regard to it.

I have, in my home in Allahabad, a considerable number of letters which belonged to my father, Pandit Motilal Nehru. They are letters written to him and letters written by him. A great deal of this correspondence took place between him and me in the course of a large numbers of years; some of the letters and papers were unfortunately lost or destroyed by white ants, but many still remain. Such as remain have

40. J.N. Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.

been kept all mixed up together without any order or arrangement, and, ever since my father's death ten and a half years ago, I have not had the chance to arrange them properly.

I should like to know if it is possible for me to send for these letters and papers from Allahabad and keep them for some time with me in prison, so that I might sort them out and arrange them in proper order. Probably they will fill a moderate sized trunk.

I shall be obliged to have the Inspector General's directions in regard to this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

July 29

send a telegram from Naini Prison to Bapu, requesting him to call off the satyagraha movement because Russia has entered the war. Govt. refused to permit this telegram being sent—a deserving snub for Balkrishna but no doubt he will survive it and misbehave again.

But Balkrishna, in spite of his repeated follies, is a brave though emotional man. He is not afraid. Not so others. Satyapal is a good riddance in the Punjab;[42] Munshi in Bombay.

What an utter mess Bhulabhai has succeeded in making of Bombay so far as Congress work is concerned! He has done what seemed hardly possible—scotched the fine spirit of Bombay by his petty ways & intrigues during the past three or four years. And now, his son, Dhiru,[43] is Bombay's Congress chief! Anything more ridiculous it would be difficult to imagine.

The old Congress or the old W.C. cannot continue. It must undergo a vast sea-change.

July 30th, 1941[44]

Darling Indu,

Your note and the bundle of Urdu books. What a bunch! I have not seen them separately yet but the number itself was impressive. Curiously enough Raghunandan Saran yesterday also brought a number of Urdu books for me. So now I have a respectable Urdu library—quite enough, I imagine, to last me for the rest of my term!

I am sending you a basket of fruit—chiefly apples from Amrit Kaur's garden in Simla, which she brought yesterday. Also some foreign newspapers and Arthur Koestler's new book: *Darkness at Noon*. I liked this book. It is amazingly well written (although it is a translation).

About our next interview—my dear, I would like to see you every day. But that would be sheer extravagance even if it was feasible, and it would mean far too much trouble and fatigue for you. I think we might have these interviews roughly once a fortnight, unless there is some special need for an interview in between or you wish to see me. Suit your convenience. In jail almost all days are alike. It is already 12

42. He resigned from the Congress on 14 July 1941 as he was "extremely disappointed with the inactivity and inertia that dominates the Congress policy at the present moment" and had no faith in the satyagraha movement.
43. Dhirajlal Bhulabhai Desai (1908-1950); President, Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, 1941; Ambassador to Switzerland and The Vatican, 1947-50.
44. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

days since you came. Perhaps some day towards the end of the first week in August, say round about the 6th or 7th, might suit. But this is for you to decide and to let me know.

I have had no further news from Betty. My interview with Mridula & Nandan on August 12th holds. Perhaps *puphi* (Nan) might come on that day also. As for Upadhyaya coming to meet Mridula, it will hardly be necessary if others are accompanying her. I do not know her programme—where she goes to from here.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

July 31, Thursday

A bunch of Urdu books from the Jamia—Also some Ahrari literature which Nandan brought. So I am abundantly supplied with Urdu books, if only I would read them.

A letter from Padmaja—She has again been ill and in great pain owing to an accident—What a record of illness and pain! For some days past my mind was worrying about her and I sensed that she was ill.

Nine months completed today! Very poor from the point of view of work turned out. Health good—feel very fit and supple.

At any rate a fair amount of yarn produced—All this is being sent to the G.S.S. in Bombay and piling up there.

Here is the record for the nine months (really it is 8½ months' effective spinning):

1940—November	..	10 hanks	Nos. 1 to 10	..	5000 yards
December	..	21 „	„ 11 to 31	..	10500 „
1941 January	..	26 „	„ 32 to 57	..	13000 „
February	..	22 „	„ 58 — 79	..	11000 „
March	..	27 „	„ 80 —106	..	13500 „
April	..	29 „	„ 107 —135	..	14500 „
May	..	31 „	„ 136 —166	..	15500 „
June	..	30 „	„ 167 —196	..	15000 „
July	..	29 „	„ 197 —225	..	14500 „
9 months		— 225 hanks	Nos. 1—225		—112500 yards

JN 31/7/41

The dog — Koela — is still going. I feel relieved.

		During 1st and 2nd quarters several transfers from one prison to another	
First quarter	28500 yards	monthly average	9500 yards
2nd quarter	39000 „	„ „	13000 „
3rd quarter	45000 „	„ „	15000 „
	112500 yards		

Monthly average for the nine months: 12500 yards

August 5, 1941[45]

TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, DISTRICT JAIL, DEHRA DUN

Dear Mr. Superintendent,

You were good enough to inform me today of the answer received from the Inspector General of Prisons regarding my enquiry relating to father's letters. I understand that I am permitted to get all the letters under reference. The District Magistrate is, however, to be "requested to go over these prior to these being handed over".

I should like to know what this signifies and how this process of 'going over' is likely to be accomplished. As I informed you, there are a very large number of these old letters and papers and they are all mixed up without any order or arrangement. Some of them may be 40 years old or more and are in a semi-torn and faded condition, on the point of going to pieces. The latest of them are over eleven years old. Any person attempting to read through all these letters would probably find it difficult to arrange even many of the single letters in proper order, and, in any event, it would take him a long time to read many hundreds of manuscript letters. If the District Magistrate intends reading them himself, it may well take him several weeks to do so. He might perhaps appoint someone else to do so on his behalf, but unless that person is particularly careful as well as efficient, his handling of these old letters might well result in injury to them. You will no doubt appreciate that these letters and papers are very valuable to me and to many others and I would not like to risk any injury to them or the loss of any of them. The signing or even initialling of them by anyone would go some way

45. J.N. Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.

towards spoiling them. I am very anxious to preserve them properly and it was for this reason that I requested facilities for arranging them. If there is the slightest chance of loss or injury or defacement, then I would rather not send for these letters. As I have already stated, none of these letters or papers is dated later than the year 1930, and most of them are of a much earlier date.

I should be glad to have some light thrown on the above points, so that I might decide whether it is worth while for me to send for these letters etc.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Aug. 6, 1941[46]

TO PADMAJA NAIDU

Bebee dear,

I had some kind of a premonition that you were ill. Perhaps your previous letter had disturbed my mind; perhaps I thought that you would write about Ranjit's translation and as no letter came I felt something was wrong. What a terrible time you have had, and all because you were foolish enough to carry on with your tour and write reports when you should have been in bed and being treated. That was not very wise, surely, even from the point of view of the work you were doing. But that is over anyway and now you are slowly recovering. How we have to pay, pay in terms of pain and suffering.

Thank you for the Ajanta pictures and Yazdani's[47] lecture. I was happy to have these reproductions. After keeping them some time with me, I am passing them on to Indu, who has unfortunately never been to Ajanta.

I am sorry I forgot to mention in my previous letter the catalogue of books in Anand Bhawan which you sent me. This reached me and I was amazed to find how much trouble you had taken over it. It has been useful to me here. I do not know how far you have rearranged the books to fit in with this catalogue. I am afraid it is not possible for me to keep any order in most of my books, at least for any length of time.

46. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
47. Ghulam Yazdani (1883-1962); writer in Urdu and English; archaeologist and historian.

My life is too irregular and I am too much of a bird of passage. I struggle between two impulses: the desire to hold on to my books, and the desire to make others read them. The two being obviously contradictory, the result is no definite line is adopted and I drift, at least in regard to this matter. It seems to be extremely selfish and asocial for large numbers of books to be kept in purdah when there are so many people wanting to read them and unable to get them. Large libraries should always be open to the public.

I have lost many books—usually the newer ones and such as I would have liked to keep. But I have also given away many hundreds to the A.I.C.C. library. It was my intention to give almost all my old books to the A.I.C.C., except some personal ones. But then I was alarmed to see the empty shelves in the library. The place began to look desolate and I stopped the transfer of books. Some time or other, however, the transfer will take place.

The Unity of India has not reached me yet. I suppose you have not got a copy either. I asked the publisher to send you one. Strangely enough I find that the book is being well displayed in America, which is unusual for books published in England.

You need not trouble to write to Walsh. I am dealing with him directly. But I suppose you have already written.

We have had unusual weather—much too little rain. Indeed in parts of the province there are famine conditions. Dehra Dun is 22 inches behind normal. For the last three days it has been raining intermittently. All this has not been too good for our little garden. Still it flourishes in its own way. One of your dahlias produced a very lovely flower, the colour of a lotus. Indeed from a slight distance one might almost think it was a lotus. The Kashmir dahlias go up and up—they are about 9 feet high—and seldom produce flowers. One of our sunflower plants has also gone up to about 9 feet and is still growing.

Ranjit has definitely not been well. He has frequently been troubled with breathlessness. He is carrying on still with his innumerable appendices. I suppose some time or other they will end.

Indu is still in Mussoorie and likely to remain there till October or November. She is making progress and putting on weight. I see her about twice a month.

Let me have news that you have got rid of your pain and are up and about again.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

August 7, Thursday—Raksha bandhan.

So Gurudev has passed away! News came in the afternoon today through the Radio and the Jailer came and told us. Indu was with me then. For two days news had been discouraging and the end seemed to be near. Yet we hoped that he would get over this crisis as he had overcome other crises.

Ever since I came to jail this time the thought haunted me that I would never see him again. The long sentence confirmed this. Whenever there was any whisper of my release I decided that I must take the earliest opportunity to visit him.

It is almost two years now that I saw him last—when I was returning from China early in September 1939. Half a dozen times I have seen him during the past five years and every time I drew ever nearer to him. He was magnificent still and yet he was very old and the weaknesses of age were upon him. His memory sometimes failed him in the course of a conversation, and then he would say something which showed how clear and active his mind was.

Two or three months ago, in the course of his 80th birthday celebrations, I sent him a message through Nan—Word was sent to me that he was greatly pleased and indeed affected by this message. He said he wanted to answer it himself when he was well enough to do so. And so he would not allow Krishna or Anil to write in answer. He was never well enough—the answer never came. I learnt that he had this in mind and was rather worried over it. I was looking forward so much to that letter of his, which I knew would be his last to me.

Such a letter, if it had come, would have been very precious to me. And yet, I wonder, if it was not largely vanity on my part to desire to have this letter from him, for it would undoubtedly have been immensely pleasing to my vanity. Anyway it has not come.

But could I have a better message from him than the few lines he wrote to me in 1936 on reading my *Autobiography*?[48] How thrilled and proud I felt when I got that letter.

And his wonderful little speech about Kamala.[49]

The past few years brought me much nearer to him and I grew to admire him and love him as I had never done previously. How I wish I could have been more with him. Yet the time was past for that perhaps.

I sat this evening as the shadows lengthened and thought of Gurudev

48 & 49. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 134 & p. 166.

and then my mind wandered to Bapu. Life had thrown me very close to Bapu and for the last 22 years we had worked together and saw each other function through many a crisis and difficulty. I had grown tremendously attached to him, and in spite of my persisting differences, I admired him vastly. What a mighty man he was. And yet spiritually I was, I suppose, far nearer to Gurudev. I loved his love of life and all things beautiful; with him I was a pagan. How different is Bapu!

So Gurudev is dead—An age seems to be over. Perhaps it is as well that he died now and did not see the many horrors that are likely to descend in increasing measure on the world and on India. He had seen enough and he was infinitely sad and unhappy. He seemed to have little faith left in his people, especially in Bengal. Eighty was a noble age to die after the magnificently full and creative life he had lived. Why live longer and submit to slow decay?

During the past few months all his pent up anger against the British Govt.—against Western civilisation also to a large extent—came out in a number of deeply moving statements. His message on his 80th birthday[50]—his fighting answer to Eleanor Rathbone.[51] He grew more aggressive; he went back more to India's ancient wisdom.

In the message I sent him through Nan, I pledged myself to do my utmost for Santiniketan. I know that he was troubled about the future of Santiniketan and Visvabharati and nothing would please him better than such an assurance from me. That pledge I must keep.

Gandhi and Tagore. Two types entirely different from each other, and yet both of them typical of India, both in the long line of India's great men. How rich and extravagant is India to produce two such men is a generation—just to show what she can do even in her present distress and lowly state. Judged as types of men, I have felt for long that they were the outstanding examples in the world today. There are many of course who may be abler than them or greater geniuses in their own line. Einstein is great. There may be greater poets than Tagore, greater writers. Gandhi, of course, is so different from others that it is difficult to compare him with the modern brand of men. He is the prophetic type and yet the man of action. Some are attracted to him

50. On 14 April 1941, Tagore said: "... One day I saw the English as a healthy nation, full of youthful vigour....and today I see them prematurely old, worn out by the plague of evil that has surreptitiously robbed the nation of its well being....It is now no longer possible for us to retain any respect for that mockery of civilisation which believes in ruling by force and has no faith in freedom at all."

51. See *ante*, p. 620.

because of this prophetic aspect; others (like me) because he is a man of action and a man who does not bend or falter.

It is not so much because of any single virtue but because of the *tout ensemble*, that I felt that among the world's great men today Gandhi and Tagore were supreme as human beings. What good fortune for me to have come into close contact with them.

Gandhi and Tagore. Who else have I met whom I would put in the category of greatness? Father and C.R. Das were both magnificent men and they were limited in their own ways. Who else? I can think of no other in the present generation of politicians in India or men and women in other fields of activity—although many of them were and are first rate.

Outside India? Mrs. Besant I would certainly put in the first rank, though she deteriorated greatly in her old age. I think I would put Madame Sun Yat-sen in the very first rank, little as I know her. But even my brief meeting with her thrilled me and affected me powerfully. Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang are both undoubtedly great in their own way. Yet Chiang is curiously limited and circumscribed.

I have met a large number of prominent Englishmen and Englishwomen and liked and admired some. Many were first rate, but none, so far as I can make out, truly great. Winston Churchill I have never met. He has something of greatness in him certainly but I do not think it is the real stuff. So also Roosevelt probably.

Hitler has definitely proved himself to be an extraordinary man by his deeds. His achievements in Germany during the last 15 years have been truly amazing. He has greatness but the greatness has a terrible bent towards evil.

I sent a long message by telegram to Rathindranath Tagore[52] today.

7 August 1941[53]

TO RATHINDRANATH TAGORE

Gurudev's passing away has left us all who have grown up in the shadow of his genius and mighty personality and enveloped by his great tradition forlorn and in the dark. India's greatest star illumining not only

52. (1888-1961); only son of Rabindranath Tagore; author of *On the Edges of Time*.
53. J.N. Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.

our own country but the world with a synthesis of the wisdom of the past and of present has set and our hearts are empty. Yet his voice sings in our ears and the flaming message of his recent utterances will be our guiding star. In line with the great Indian sages of the past he has left us an imperishable inheritance and even at his passing away we think with pride and gratitude and love and reverence of this magnificent life and its achievements. That precious inheritance we shall treasure and I earnestly trust that every Indian will consider it his duty to help in the development and growth of Santiniketan and Visvabharati which embodies Gurudev's ideals.

My sorrowful homage to the memory of the beloved founder.

Jawaharlal Nehru

August 10, 1941[54]

Darling,

You asked me in one of your letters if it was necessary for Upadhyaya to come down to Dehra Dun when Mridula or Betty come to visit me. I forgot to say anything about this during our last interview. It is not necessary but it might be desirable if he came. Anyway it is perhaps too late for him to come down on the 12th when Mridula, Bharati & Raghunandan Saran are expected. About Betty I do not know yet. If Upadhyaya is otherwise engaged, he need not come. But I suppose it will be a change for him to descend from Mussoorie. It is easy enough for him to take the bus. Or, if he prefers, he can roll down to Rajpur on foot and take the bus from there. In the old days when there was no motor road beyond Rajpur, I used to walk down from Mussoorie to Rajpur. When going up I always took a pony and treated it rather mercilessly in the sense that I wanted to canter or gallop most of the way. But coming down on a horse was no good and I disliked a *dandy*, the only other alternative conveyance. So I walked. Once I walked from Lyndale to Rajpur and Lyndale is a good 3 miles beyond the Library. That meant a walk of 11 miles and I had to do it in very quick time as, owing to a misunderstanding, I started very late and had to catch a train.

I remember well earlier days still before the motor car had appeared on the Rajpur Road. There were *tongas* in those days to carry us from

54. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

Dehra to Rajpur and then a halt and rest before the next stage, which again was broken at Half Way House—Poor Half Way House! I suppose it has ceased to exist now. The automobile has killed it.

I mentioned something to you about making inquiries from some publishers of my books regarding royalties. I enclose a note giving addresses &c. Please write to Ladli Bhai first and having got his answer, then have the other letters written. Upadhyaya can send these other letters, but you might revise them.

I hope you will visit Prakash and have your teeth examined. There is no decent dentist in Allahabad and it is as well to take advantage of your stay in Mussoorie. If nothing else is needed, a general cleaning will be worth while.

When you come next please bring a bottle of Dettol with you. Also an Aryan tooth brush (adult *hard*) and one youth's size also hard. There is no hurry for either.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

August 14, Thursday, Janmashtami

Two days ago an interview with Mridula, Bharati & Nandan. All manner of stories about Congressmen in jail & outside—chiefly in Bombay & Gujarat. In Bombay the Congress under the brilliant leadership of Dhirajlal Desai does not function at all—not surprising! Indeed it has hardly functioned, except for occasional public meetings, during the past few years. I was forgetting—there have been quarrels and conflicts in abundance. The inevitable and preordained price to pay for Bhulabhai. How he has throttled all vital & progressive elements and held on like a vice to his office of president B.P.C.C. The surprising part is that Bapu and Vallabhbhai should have pushed him on all these years, especially Bapu. How I remember my objection to the inclusion of Bhulabhai in the W.C. after the Lucknow Congress. I was on the point of resignation from the presidentship chiefly on this issue. But I surrendered as I usually have done to Bapu in the end.

I wonder if it would not have been better for me to have resigned then and brought matters to a head. I still think I acted wisely, for

then the conflict would have been in a way with Bapu and his particular group and Bhulabhai would have taken shelter under Bapu's wings and presented himself to the world as a staunch Gandhiite fighting subversive tendencies. Now he has himself made it almost impossible for the Congress to give him a responsible position. Soon the public at large will understand.

It is clear that he is over-eager to get out of this satyagraha & jail business. But how is he to do it? Like Munshi? But Munshi has been a damp squib and is probably feeling sorry for himself. He is, I understand, now blaming Bapu for driving him out of the Congress! 'I follow the Mahatma'! How comic & ridiculous it all is.

All manner of intrigues going on, chiefly in Bombay & Gujarat. Probably elsewhere too, only news has not reached me fully. The Bombay Chief Justice[55] has long interviews with Congress leaders in Yeravda, or to be more precise with Bhulabhai. The other interviews with Vallabhbhai, Kher &c. were brief and probably not to his liking. But in Bhulabhai he met softer and more malleable material, more after his own heart, and he had over an hour with him. Apparently Bhulabhai did not divulge what transpired during this interview.

In Gujarat the Congress hierarchy—Vallabhbhai's creation—is misbehaving in some ways and going against Vallabhbhai's directions. Vallabhbhai greatly annoyed and distressed and sending out frequent directions which are ignored! Mridula complains she is not allowed to work and no one else doing any solid Congress work or satyagraha. Most people pretend to be busy with relief work—floods &c.

Gujarat has demonstrated how wrong has been Vallabhbhai's approach to Congress work— Too much bureaucracy, too much leadership from above. With all our faults, and they are many, the U.P. shines in comparison with the other provinces.

Sarojini, it appears, also carrying on some indirect propaganda against the satyagraha movement—and she is adept at this kind of thing, full of hints and suggestions without any definite attack.

Rajendra Babu very ill. Rajagopalachari apparently not overpleased with developments, though he is not likely to do anything against Bapu's wishes. But it is doubtful if he will go back to prison after release.

Maulana Abul Kalam also is said to be dissatisfied. What exactly he wants I do not know, except that he sticks to the old Poona resolution still. That makes no difference to anybody as nobody, and least of all the Govt., is thinking in terms of giving effect to it. Probably he is distressed at the stress laid by Bapu on the far-reaching implications of

55. Sir John William Fisher Beaumont (1887-1974).

nonviolence.[56] Therein I agree with Maulana to some extent. But all this is more a question of theory and the distant future than today's technique. So far as present action is concerned I have very little fault to find with Bapu's technique. Where he has erred, I think, is the unnecessary emphasis on certain personal aspects of nonviolence. The result has been to direct many people's attention to this question when they should be made to think of one fundamental question only—India's independence and the removal of British control completely.

In all this welter and confusion among the higher circles of the Congress, Bapu stands like a rock. He has sent a message to Bihar to say that while he had often doubts during previous movements, this time he was quite contented and *nishchint*.[57]

Curiously enough I feel that way also. I worry very little. I have accustomed myself to think in terms of long perspective and the petty conflicts and arguments of the day do not trouble me overmuch. This war will go on and on and changes will come one after the other upsetting the old order here and elsewhere.

At any rate the old order in the W.C. is over, or largely so. I can hardly conceive of the old W.C. surviving without major changes.

The *Herald* carries on, not very brilliantly though. Nandan has been a tower of strength to it. And Mridula has been very helpful. But what a second rate and quarrelsome staff we have got.

Tomorrow Nan is coming for an interview with Ranjit, and tomorrow is her birthday!

I suppose she will be full of our troubles in the U.P. Mutual jealousies, quarrels, lack of money, and disillusion about people and things! Yet if one analyses all this, most of the trouble is of middle class origin— And it is due to our trying to function in a low key—just carrying on somehow without faith and vital energy. If the right person appears and, throwing discretion to the winds, acts with faith and energy the clouds vanish and people roll up.

Every evening, and this is the tenth month of my imprisonment, crowds gather at the jail gates just to have a glimpse of me when I go out for my evening walk in the jail compound— They see me from a

56. On 7 July 1941, Mahatma Gandhi had stated: "... the present civil disobedience is not only not designed to embarrass the authority but care is being taken as far as possible to avoid all embarrassment...since our struggle is going to be indefinitely prolonged, I give no less than 5 years, there need be no hurry to fill jails. Mere filling of jails can bring us no nearer our freedom than we are now. Virtue lies in the people learning through restricted civil disobedience the necessity of discipline, suffering and self-sacrifice."

57. *Nishchint*—Unperturbed.

distance and we salute each other silently with नमस्कार.[58] Then they go away— Right through the monsoon they have come and stood there for hours, getting thoroughly soaked in the process, just for that distant glimpse— Many women come, usually Punjabis— Why do they all come day after day? Probably it is a new lot every day. There is something very significant about it all. It gratifies me of course; it strengthens me also to see all this faith—faith not in me personally but in the thing I have come to represent in their eyes. And that is uncompromising adherence to an objective, to India's independence.

Come to think of it, I have a fairly good record and during the past 22 years I have held on fairly consistently. Changes took place in my mind, and conflicts, but in action I carried on doggedly without giving in. It is this persistence and consistence, regardless of consequences, that has produced an impression on the public mind.

This is a week of interviews, an abundance of them. On the 12th Nandan, Mridu & Bharati; on the 15th Nan and also Zohra Ansari; on the 16th Betty, Raja and the children, and also Jamnalalji.

Nan's interview is with Ranjit; the other two with me— That is I am having my two allotted interviews in a month within four days of each other— No more interviews during August, except Indu of course— She is not included in the normal routine.

Whenever there is an interview, I am asked about my writing work. Why do I not write something? I must do so. I suppose I should. Repeatedly I have come near it and then edged away. Again the idea is buzzing round my mind. Then frequently interviews upset the mind. And the war. And so many other things!

Ranjit has not been keeping well. His asthmatic trouble, and, it is said, chronic appendicitis. Yesterday and today he has been taken to the local hospital for X-rays to be taken. He goes tomorrow again.

Our jail is celebrating the *Janmashtami* today & tomorrow—*bhajans, kirtan* &c,— Or rather the jail officials & warders are celebrating and Dehra Dun residents have been invited to attend.

Our dog, Koela, has not appeared for 24 hours—a very unusual occurrence.

August 15, Friday

A long interview today with Nan and Chand—Chand was a very pleasant surprise as we were not expecting her. Ranjit's X-rays were not

58. *Namaskar*—salutation.

over yet. He had to go again this morning to the hospital. This matter of going to hospital has appeared in a somewhat alarming form in a press message. So Nan came early in the morning, soon after Ranjit's return from hospital. She and Chand stayed till tea time. Zohra joined them in the afternoon.

It was a very pleasant day and I feel the better for it. Odd news, all kinds of news, yet nothing very new after all! The world goes on much as it did—the Indian world—while vast armies fight for mastery in the plains of Russia. And satyagraha goes on with all its weaknesses and strength. And people worry. How strange it is that I do not worry.

Tomorrow Betty & Raja & Jamnalalji expected. And after that the quiet of jail undisturbed for a while.

Two days ago I had a letter from Louise from Dieulefit. It was dated 15th! I was happy to get it.

Koela has not appeared. I am afraid some mischance has befallen him. I am sad and miss him.

Nan told us that some notable astrologer has informed her, after an examination of my horoscope, that from next November onwards I shall be on the upgrade, whatever that might mean. Three or four months of that more or less slow movement and then the pace quickens and I go up and up! So that's that!

August 16—Saturday

Today's interview was preceded by an unlucky and very unfortunate accident. Near Doiwala station Raja cut his finger very badly—the shutter falling upon it. He was taken to the hospital immediately on arrival in Dehra Dun and his finger was attended to. No bones broken but the finger is likely to be permanently deformed. Meanwhile it is very painful. And so the whole interview had this background of his pain.

Raja, Betty, Harsha, Ajit & of course, Agnes the nurse. Later Jamnalalji. Harsha thin and weak-looking but still somewhat better than I expected.

Raja full of Bombay gossip—Bhagat (the V.C.)[59] has been telling them a lot about conditions in Abyssinia, north Africa &c. The high points were: the Indian troops and their officers have fought remarkably well, indeed they were better in this respect than all the other 'Empire'

59. Lt.-General P.S. Bhagat (1918-1975); Director, Military Intelligence, 1959; Commandant, Indian Military Academy, 1962; Army Commander, 1970-74.

troops. The Australians & New Zealanders good fighters as individuals but not enough discipline (which the Indians possess) and hence not so good as an army. The British troops not much good. The order of fighting: Indians in front, then Australians, New Zealanders and last of all British troops! On one occasion on the frontiers of Abyssinia & the Sudan, a sudden flank attack by Italians frightened the Britishers so much that they ran away with the greatest speed taking possession of all the lorries belonging to other regiments. The Indian troops left stranded. The British rout and flight was so bad that the British C.O. of the Indian regiments threatened to get the Britishers machine-gunned by the Indian troops— This stopped the rout to some extent but many had already escaped in the motor lorries. These went on and on, so long as petrol lasted, and only stopped when they were 250 miles on the Sudan side of the frontier!

The whole fighting in Abyssinia practically done by Indian troops. They conquered Abyssinia for the British, and yet the South Africans got all the kudos. South African casualties (or deaths) 26 only. Indian casualties (or deaths) 6000. In the triumphal displays in Addis Ababa and when the Duke of Aosta surrendered the Indian officers & troops in the background.

Round about Tobruk also brunt of the fighting done by Indian troops.

In spite of all this, treatment of Indian troops very bad. Plenty of whisky for the Britishers, not even enough water for the Indians. Good food for the former, not so for the latter. Great resentment among the Indian officers and troops. Many court-martialled & punished.

The story of how Bhagat got the V.C. illuminating. He became fed up with the treatment he was getting. Month after month he and his troops chosen for the hardest job—perhaps because they were supposed to be grumblers. At last in sheer despair he wanted to put an end to his existence and did the most reckless & dangerous things. And so, he earned the V.C.! But even so no promotion for him; he remains a Lieutenant, while British officers of the same standing, living comfortably in Poona, have developed into captains, and one is even a major.

On getting leave at last, partly because he was injured, Bhagat & his men were to travel back to India on the same boat as some British troops. The British troops bagged all the available cabins, and the Indians left on the deck. Bhagat refused to travel by that boat unless his men were treated in the same way as the Britishers. The boat left without him & his men. They came some weeks later.

Trouble also in Singapore over discriminatory treatment. Many Indian officers & men sent away to African fronts.

Bhagat has already succeeded in profoundly irritating British circles in Bombay by his outspoken remarks and criticisms—Probably Army headquarters have been informed— He was invited by some big gun to dine and bathe at the Beach Candy Club in Bombay, where Indians are not admitted. He refused to go.

So much for the military mentality in India and elsewhere in regard to Indian officers and troops. The political background is even worse. Hodson,[60] the new Reforms Commissioner, is stated to have explained to select British audiences that after the war it would be inevitable for the British to occupy Palestine, Syria, Abyssinia &c. In India their policy was to encourage the Muslim League to the furthest possible limit, so as to create conditions in India which would compel the Indians themselves, or many of them, to ask for British protection.

Jamnalalji's reports of Simla gossip. Rather nervous atmosphere—Worried over developments in Iran & Kabul. The relief at Russia being dragged into the war now waning as fresh dangers approach.

Jamnalalji had an odd story of Subhas, who is said to be in Germany now.

Raja & Betty & children staying in Dehra for another 3 days because of Raja's finger. Then Mussoorie—Kashmir is off.

Jamnalalji met today Anand Mayi Devi—the *mataji* of whom Kamala used to speak.

Tomorrow is Gurudev's *shradh* day. We shall fast.

18.8.1941[61]

TO RAJAN NEHRU

My dear Rajan,

Your letter came some little time ago and I was glad to have it. I have delayed in answering it as I have to regulate my letters.

Going down to Allahabad after visions of Kashmir is a bit of a comedown. Personally I do not mind the hot weather and I think there is far too much shouting about it. I thrive during it. I like the mountains of course but that has nothing to do with my desire to escape the

60. Henry Vincent Hodson (b. 1906); Reforms Commissioner, Government of India, 1941-42; Editor, *The Annual Register of World Events*, since 1973; author of *The Great Divide*.

61. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

heat. And the mountains I like are not the hill stations with their crowds of excessively dull humanity but rather the higher regions, beyond 9000 ft. or so.

Yes, I have received the American edition of my *Autobiography*. A copy came to me some months ago. It has had a very remarkable success in America and the reviews were extraordinarily good.

I am glad you liked the hospital. From all accounts it has got on very well and already there is talk of enlarging it. I am told that Dr. Mazumdar is an excellent surgeon but is nevertheless not an easy person to get on with.

I have not read the *Diary of a Staff Officer*.

As usual, I keep very well. But not so Ranjit, who has been frequently troubled with breathlessness.

Love,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

August 18, 1941[62]

TO AMAL HOME

My dear Amal,

Some time back I received your *Tagore Birthday Special Supplement* and I appreciated it very much. It was a fine production. Now your second letter has arrived asking me to send contributions for the *Tagore Memorial* Number. I am afraid that you do not realise that a person confined in prison has to live within all manner of limitations and restrictions. Anyway I am not supposed to send contributions to papers or magazines for publication. Even if there were no such bar, I would hesitate to do so from prison, for I cannot write within the narrow ambit of numerous censorships. So I cannot send you anything.

My mind goes back to nearly ten years ago when I was in this very jail and you wrote to me for a message for the *Golden Book of Tagore*.

62. *The Calcutta Municipal Corporation Gazette*, 13th September 1941. Also printed in *Tagore Memorial Special Supplement*, Vol. 34, p. 31.

I sent you then a few lines.[63] A few lines, or many lines, of formal appreciation or sorrow now would almost be an impertinence to the memory of Gurudeva. When the time comes, I suppose I shall write about him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

August 23, Saturday

My calm has been ruffled today, or rather, the ruffling process attained a climax today. This has nothing to do with happenings here. It is due to news about happenings in the Lucknow Camp Jail where, it appears, the treatment of the satyagrahis has been barbarous in the extreme.[64] I have written today about this to the Inspector General of Prisons, through the Jail Supt. It is a stiff letter and I have hinted at my giving up various privileges &c. I must be prepared for all this.

For some days past I have been thinking of beginning some writing work. At last I have actually begun today—6 foolscap pages for a start. Now that the ice has been broken, I suppose I shall get on with it soon and keep it up.

Muniji—Narain Prasad Bhargava—has been transferred to Agra Jail today— He has been treated disgracefully by the District Magistrate here. It is a long story.

Our dog, Koela, has not appeared. We must bid goodbye to him in our minds. What has happened to the poor thing?

63. This read: "For those who have grown up in the Tagore tradition in India it is a little difficult to measure the great influence it has exercised on them and on the country. I cannot venture to do so. But I wish to pay my deep homage to one who has been as a beacon light to all of us, ever pointing to the finer and nobler aspects of life and never allowing us to fall into the ruts which kill individuals as well as nations. Nationalism, specially when it urges us to fight for freedom, is noble and life giving. But often it becomes a narrow creed, and limits and encompasses its votaries and makes them forget the many-sidedness of life. But Rabindranath Tagore has given to our nationalism the outlook of internationalism and has enriched it with art and music and magic of his words, so that it has become the full-blooded emblem of India's awakened spirit."

64. On 18 August 1941, about 200 policemen lathi-charged the 1700 political prisoners in the Lucknow Camp Jail for protesting against the roll call and the treatment meted out to them. As a result 300 prisoners were injured.

August 23, 1941[65]

TO THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF PRISONS, UNITED PROVINCES, LUCKNOW

Sir,

For some time past various complaints have appeared in the public press in regard to the bad treatment accorded to the satyagrahi prisoners in the Camp Jail in Lucknow. Recently some very amazing charges have so appeared, which state that on at least two occasions lathi charges were made on the prisoners by orders of the jail staff and a large number were badly injured; that the conditions prevailing in the jail are abominable in the extreme; that food is frequently not given and when given is utterly unfit for human consumption; that about 200 of the prisoners were put in fetters and a large number in solitary cells; that prisoners are deliberately starved and kept in such a manner that they grow faint and utterly weak; that threats are continually being held out to them and are sometimes translated into attacks upon them; that sanitary conditions are non-existent; that there is no proper medical arrangement; that no newspapers or books are provided or allowed; that letters are seldom, if ever, received or despatched; that two deaths recently took place among the prisoners, who were removed to King George's Medical Hospital on the point of death, where they expired within a few hours; that even when the Inspector General inspected the jail, the prisoners were locked up in their barracks and were thus unable to approach him. These are some of the charges made. I am not aware of any official denial of these charges, and, in any event, such official denials seldom err on the side of veracity and little faith is attached to them.

I have refrained from addressing you on this subject, in spite of repeated complaints appearing publicly about the Lucknow Camp Jail and other jails in the province, as I had no desire to interfere in any way with the jail administration of the province. That administration, and the Provincial Government behind it, are notoriously backward and incompetent, and the ideas that govern them in regard to the treatment of prisoners are reminiscent of the middle ages. But when gross, deliberate and inhuman ill-treatment is added to the general incompetence, it becomes difficult to tolerate this state of affairs and to submit to it with quiet resignation. You have been good enough to accord me various conveniences and privileges which ordinarily are denied to the average

65. J.N. Prison Papers, N.M.M.L.

prisoner. But these very conveniences and privileges become hateful to me when I realise that my friends and colleagues are being subjected to a treatment which can only be called barbarous. As you are no doubt aware, it has been our general policy to submit to jail discipline, unless this is considered humiliating. On the whole, we have all done this, and we have even put up with conditions which were deliberately meant to harass and annoy, but there is a limit to this and I fear, that if the conditions in the Lucknow Camp Jail are any indication of the policy of the Government functioning at present, it may become necessary for us to revise our policy and to refuse to submit to jail discipline, and invite the consequences of such disobedience.

I have ventured to write to you on this subject as it is of considerable importance and likely to have far-reaching consequences. I cannot remain a silent spectator of the insults to and the sufferings of my colleagues.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Aug. 25, 1941[66]

TO MOULVI ABDUL LATIF

My dear Latif,

I was happy to get your letter though the contents of it were not pleasing. I am very sorry to learn of your ill health and the illness of your son. I hope both of you are progressing towards health.

I am keeping well as usual. I have often thought of you here in Dehra Dun Jail where we were together for so many months eight years ago. How much has happened since then and how much more is likely to happen in the future!

With all good wishes to you,

Very sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

66. Abdul Latif, *Latif Ki Kahani* (Bijnor, 1964), between pp. 184 and 185.

August 25, Tuesday

My letter to the I.G. was sent on to him yesterday, so I was informed. This has naturally ruffled the Supt. & Jailer somewhat. They are worried not because of the occurrences in Lucknow Camp Jail or because I have written to the I.G., though the strong language of my letter is disturbing to them. Their main concern is where they come into the picture! They might be asked how I managed to get news of these occurrences, why were the newspapers delivered to me not censored? Why the particular items not blacked out or cut out?

So the Suptd. sent Shanti Prapanna Sharma on to me yesterday morning to say that he would send on my letter to the I.G., but that in future particular passages in the newspapers relating to other jails would be removed. I was angry as it was, full of indignation, and Shanti's message did not improve matters. I burst out at him and cursed the jail administration and all its works, and of course the Provincial Govt. & the British Govt. I told him that if any newspapers, with parts cut out of them, were delivered to me, I would hurl them out of my barrack. I was going to put up with no insults. Did they think that they could buy my silence or acquiescence in this evil deed by giving me a few so-called privileges? To hell with all these privileges. Did they think that they could separate us from our comrades and treat the latter as they wanted to? Every insult to the latter was an insult to me, every lathi blow to them was a blow to me. I was at war with the British Govt. and all its underlings and I wanted no consideration and would give none ——and so on. Poor Shanti was paralysed, and standing behind him the Deputy Jailer, in all his official glory of parade-day uniform, was also somewhat unnerved.

So Shanti went back, apologising profusely, as if he had been in error or was in any way responsible! Later the Supt., Dr. Srivastava, came round on his parade day inspection. He referred briefly to having sent on my letter to the I.G. and to the fact that newspapers were already censored by the Press Department of Govt. and so no further censoring was necessary! And then he went on to speak to Ranjit about his health &c.

The *National Herald* came with a lurid tale of Jungle Law in Lucknow Camp Jail giving details of the number of persons injured during the lathi charges—over 300 casualties, quite a large number of them serious. Other particulars. Anger blazed up within me and for the rest of the day

kept smouldering. What should I do? What could I do? Just writing to the I.G. was ridiculously little. Yet what more could I do?

Towards evening a new idea formed itself in my mind—I should send out a statement for publication in the *Herald*, without the knowledge or approval of the jail authorities. That is, I should smuggle out a statement and thus deliberately commit a breach of jail discipline and an offence under the Prisons Act. The statement to be published under my name of course, and therein I would invite the jail authorities and the Prov. Govt. to take action against me, to deprive me of my so-called privileges, in fact to do their damnedest. In that statement I would unburden myself on the Lucknow Camp Jail occurrences, other happenings in jails, the behaviour & incompetence of the Govt., and my contempt generally for the breed of quislings in this country!

How was I to send this out? Nan might come to visit Ranjit on the 30th or thereabouts and she could be made the messenger. Yet I did not like the idea of involving her directly. But whatever step I took, others would be involved—Ranjit of course.

And then my mind went on to consider choice phrases for this statement. The Battle of Lucknow Camp Jail! It was an angry and slashing draft that framed itself in my mind. Later it began to tone itself down —when the action was in a way strong, why use strong & undignified language—I would be making a public statement after ten months. It should be dignified.

Having thought of this method of taking action, I felt more at ease. And then it struck me that my days of writing and receiving letters were numbered. All this would be stopped soon enough. Therefore I hastened to write a few letters last evening and by tomorrow or the day after I shall finish off all that are necessary. Interviews also will stop.

Meanwhile I had an interview. Indu came yesterday. It was as well that she came and I could tell her how I was feeling. I warned her that this might be our last interview. I also asked her to write to Bapu briefly that I was upset & angry at these happenings in Lucknow Camp Jail and had written to the I.G. about them—possible developments.

I wrote last night to: Richard Walsh; Times Book Club; Amma; Indu (sending her a cheque for Rs. 150/-); Abdul Latif; and the Urdu Encyclopaedia people in Hyderabad Dn. who were sanguine enough to expect an article from me.

The new moon last night—not very new but new enough—It was three days old. The clouds drifted away and we could have a full view of it. That marks the end of ten months of my imprisonment—ten lunar months.

Aug. 27, 1941[67]

TO PADMAJA NAIDU

My dear Bebee,

Your two letters have come and the flower seeds, and the book—*Four Faces of Shiva*. We have now an abundance of flower seeds, for our own efforts have also yielded us rich results. Our space, as you know, is limited and we have to think hard and deep about utilising it to the best advantage. A long gap in the rains and then too much rain has rather spoilt many of our pots, notably carnations. The lotus-dahlia has been blooming though the later flowers did not quite catch the magnificence of the first hour. Another of the dahlias you sent produced flowers of a very beautiful pale gold colour. Our giant sunflower has now attained the height of 13 feet or so, but the flower is not very big.

You need not be anxious about Ranjit. The press message was inaccurate and misleading. He has had, as I wrote to you, trouble off and on with his breathing—a kind of asthma. This is distressing enough when it comes but it need not alarm. In order to find out the basic cause of this, various examinations were made, including X-rays. It was suggested that perhaps there might be some chronic appendicitis—nothing, anyway, involving an operation in the near future. The X-ray, however, did not seem to indicate this. His heart also is fairly sound. There appears to be some digestion trouble. He is being treated for this as well as for the breathlessness. For the last few days he has been much better. Probably the slow change in the weather has something to do with this.

In view of your suggestion, Ranjit has made some changes in the translation of the *Mudrarakshasa*. I have myself felt all along that he has been too literal. Sanskrit constructions are involved and full of clauses and sub-clauses, the verb coming at the end. The genius of English is entirely different. German construction is somewhat nearer to the Sanskrit. Ranjit has also finished his numerous appendices and he is sending the full book to Nan. He wants you to send your copy of the translation to Nan also.

The dog has disappeared. Vanished without leaving a trace behind. Either it has met with some accident (there are plenty of motor lorries

67. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

about) or someone has kidnapped him. It is now quite a fortnight since he failed to turn up. I miss him a little.

I am well. There is just a breath of autumn in the air and it grows pleasanter day by day.

Perhaps I might not be able to write to you for some time.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

August 27, 1941[68]

TO KRISHNA KRIPALANI

My dear Krishna,

Just a month ago you wrote to me and soon after I received the *Tagore Birthday Number* of the *Visvabharati Quarterly*. I liked this *Birthday Number* very much and some of the pictures and articles were good.

How long ago it all seems! People must die some time or other and Gurudeva could not have lived much longer. And yet his death came as a grievous shock to me and the thought that I would never see his beautiful face and hear his gentle voice again oppressed me terribly. Ever since I came to prison this thought had haunted me. I wanted to see him once again so much. Not that I had anything special to say to him, and certainly I had no desire to trouble him in any way. Perhaps the premonition that I was not fated to see him again itself added to the grieving.

However all that is over and, instead of sorrow, let us rather congratulate ourselves that we were privileged to come in contact with this great and magnificent person. Perhaps it is as well that he died when he was still pouring out song and poem and poetry—what amazing creative vitality he had! I would have hated to see him fade away gradually. He died, as he should, in the fullness of his glory.

I have met many big people in various parts of the world. But I have no doubt in my mind that the two biggest I have had the privilege of meeting have been Gandhi and Tagore. I think they have been the two outstanding personalities in the world during the last quarter of a century. As time goes by, I am sure, this will be recognised, when all the generals and field marshals and dictators and shouting politicians are long dead and largely forgotten.

68. Krishna Kripalani Papers.

It amazes me that India in spite of her present conditions (or is it because of it?) should produce these two mighty men in the course of one generation. And that also convinces me of the deep vitality of India and I am filled with hope, and the petty troubles and conflicts of the day seem very trivial and unimportant before this astonishing fact —the continuity of the idea that is India from long ages to the present day. China affects me in the same way. India and China: how can they perish?

There is another aspect which continually surprises me. Both Gurudeva and Gandhiji took much from the West and from other countries, especially Gurudeva. Neither was narrowly national. Their message was for the world and yet both were 100% India's children, and the inheritors, representatives and expositors of her age-long culture. How intensely Indian both have been, in spite of all their wider knowledge and culture. The surprising thing is that both of these men with so much in common and drawing inspiration from the same wells of wisdom and thought and culture, should differ from each other so greatly! No two persons could probably differ so much as Gandhi and Tagore!

Again I think of the richness of India's age-long cultural genius which can throw up in the same generation two such master-types, typical of her in every way, yet representing different aspects of her many-sided personality.

My love to you and Nandita.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

August 31, Sunday

Yesterday I was completely upset. I read in the *Herald* the statement issued by Nan & Kripalani on the Lucknow Camp Jail happenings.[69] To

69. This said: "We interviewed representatives of the prisoners in the camp jail, Lucknow. We had a long and detailed talk with them and also with the jail authorities. Our main purpose in seeking this interview was to bring about, if possible, a better atmosphere. We hope that we have been successful in our effort. The prisoners have assured us of their desire for this. The prisoners feel that they have certain grievances and it is our intention to bring these before the government and we trust that they will receive favourable consideration. We were naturally obliged to inquire into the happenings of the last few days, but as our main objective has been to restore peace, we feel that no useful purpose will be served by dwelling on these painful incidents."

say that I was amazed at this naive and apologetic statement is to put it mildly. I was angry, very angry. Then followed the news that Nan had interviewed Sloan, the Adviser. This put the lid on completely. For several hours I was obsessed and terribly depressed—I told Ranjit that the whole thing was sickening and I had come to the conclusion that women had no understanding whatever of politics—They should keep away from it.

Yet it was obvious that Kripalani must have been largely responsible. Possibly even Bapu to some extent—It was hardly Nan's fault.

Still—why does this kind of thing happen? The whole outlook, approach, is so vitally different from what I would like it to be. Why do people behave so? They seem to have no guts, no courage to carry on and damn the consequences.

I hate this hobnobbing with officials—this approach to them for favours. Some days ago when I read that Dr. Murari Lal had gone to see Sloan about the Lucknow Camp Jail I was annoyed and told Ranjit so. And now Nan! And the statement issued by her & Kripalani.

For some people this seems to be a game—we come to jail from time to time and then go out, and meanwhile we accept things as they are and common courtesies between our people and the officials go on. As if nothing seriously was the matter. As if we were not at war. As if our sole function was to go to jail and appeal to our superiors for better treatment.

If our top people behave in this way, what of others? I feel very unhappy.

All this has of course put an end to my ideas about taking some drastic action. What can I do now, when Nan & Kripalani have declared an end to the incident and pleaded for a peaceful atmosphere—to forget what has happened. Forget the insult and the injury! To accept the decisions of these people who presume to rule over us, maybe with minor variations and vague promises.

It is possible that the accounts given in the papers were exaggerated —But Sloan's statement itself was insulting.[70]

Well, well—thus it is.

Tomorrow Nan is coming to interview Ranjit. It is as well that two days will have elapsed by then and presumably I shall have cooled down

0. Following the visit of T. Sloan, the Adviser to the Lucknow Camp Jail, on 27 August 1941, the U.P. Government claimed in a press note that the accounts of the incident of 18 August were "grossly exaggerated and distorted"; that no more violence was used than was necessary to get the prisoners into the barracks; and that the complaints in regard to food were due to the refusal of the prisoners to grind a reasonable amount of grain.

a little. If I had seen Nan yesterday, I would have said much that I would have subsequently regretted.

Tomorrow also Iftikhar is coming to interview me.

I have spun less this month than has been usual with me. Probably I shall spin still less in future as I intend to devote more time to writing. But I shall continue the spinning. It is soothing and is a change from reading and writing.

Spun during August—24 hanks—Nos. 226 to 249 inclusive=12000 yards.
Previous total (see page 41 *ante*) 112500 yards
Total to end August 1941...124500 yards

September 4, Thursday

I am beginning to get wrapped up in the writing of the new chapters of the *Autobiography*—what shall I call this book? The first few pages I wrote ten days ago and then there was a gap. For three days now I have given practically the whole afternoon to the writing and the subject grows upon me. It fills my mind and I find myself thinking about it at odd hours. My afternoon rest has gone—Spinning has become a burden—I am not reading much, apart from magazines & foreign papers. Not that the progress has been great, yet it has been satisfactory—The early part dealing with the Badenweiler days was difficult.

So now I am fully launched on this undertaking and I want a clear three months for it. Rumours of a jail delivery in October or thereabouts are not welcome. Any such happening will interfere with the writing. There is no chance of my doing it outside prison.

Just when I have got entangled in this work, I am told that I can send for father's old letters and arrange them &c. I really intended preparing the chosen ones for publication—another two months work. How to fit in all this is a problem.

Then there is the reading of Urdu & Hindi books. Somehow this always gets left out! I suppose I must go through my four-year term in order to finish the work I have in mind.

Three days ago Nan came with Rita to see Ranjit—Iftikhar also came the same day.

We heard the story of the Lucknow Camp Jail—a sorry affair & a good bit of exaggeration on the part of our people there. Still I think Nan & Kripalani were very wrong to go to Sloan. Why should we accept official promises?

It is distressing to see how our own people misbehave—There is no dignity about it.

Sheikh the I.C. has written a very courteous letter in answer to my angry note about the Lucknow Jail incidents. One up against me! Anyhow this incident closes for the present so far as I am concerned, and all my expectation of challenge & conflict vanishes.

Iftikhar—disillusioned Iftikhar—seeing no light except in a compromise with the Muslim League—which of course enrages me and I shout at him till I am hoarse. Of course Iftikhar & his close colleagues have been thinking along these lines for the last three years or so, and all my previous shouting has had no effect whatever on them, except to quieten them for a while in my presence.

It seems to me that those who have been backing a Communist ticket, or their near allies, are the most helpless today. They are losing the very foundation on which they stood and so they clutch feverishly at every straw. I was really amazed to hear Iftikhar advance arguments in criticism of Congress policy during the past year or more. They were puerile, absurd, completely foolish. Much of course can always be said in criticism and rightly said—But the Communists (and for that matter other groups also to a lesser extent who deign to support the movement although they consider it a tame and ineffective thing) have shouted so much at the top of their voices that they have lost all power of reasoning or logical thought.

I spoke so much and so loudly to Iftikhar that I felt quite tired that evening. How unused I have become to the active life of a politician.

Nan dropped in today for a few minutes on her way back from Mussoorie—She is likely to go to Bapu soon and we are sending, through her, flower seeds, grown here, for Sevagram.

September 7, 1941[71]

TO S. KARUNA

Dear Friend,

I have your letter. I do not, as rule, autograph photographs from prison, but as you come from Thailand and are returning there soon, I gladly agree to your request.

71. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

It is my earnest desire that India and the people of India should develop greater contacts with all our neighbour countries, and especially those which have been culturally connected with us for ages past. I should like these contacts to grow between Thailand and India, and I rejoice therefore when young men like you come from Thailand to India for study. I hope you will take back with you, when you return, pleasant memories of India, and that you will be yet another link between our two countries.

With all good wishes to you and to Thailand.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Sept. 10, 1941[72]

TO N. R. MALKANI

My dear Malkani,

I have your letter. Of course you must have your way. I agree to what you say. You can go ahead and do what you like about it.

But allow me to tell you that politicians, professors and even experts in Harijan and other constructive work do not know much about the publishing of books and the encouragement of authors. It is obvious that you, as an author, have been hopelessly exploited by publishers and you have submitted to it tamely. Or the publishers did not know their job. I realise that the position in Sind is peculiar—the reading public is very limited—and therefore one has to go slow.

I have had a good deal to do with publishers in England, America and India. I suppose I must have had dealings with at least thirty of them. And I know a large number of authors in England and elsewhere. So, in spite of being a politician, I have got to know something about the authors' and publishers' business. The first thing to remember is that publishers always try to exploit authors, except those fortunate few who are well known and can dictate their terms. From an author's point of view, publishers are an evil crowd.

72. N.R. Malkani Papers, N.M.M.L.

Secondly, it is all wrong to imagine that you are serving the public by cutting the poor author's throat. You pay your printer for composing and printing; the publisher wants at least to get back his expenses; the book seller wants his commission and so on. But the author—the person who counts most—is supposed to live on thin air and produce books for the greater glory of all the others who try to make money out of him. I do not understand this. If you analyse this, you will probably feel that most of us do not attach any real value to creative literary work. We pay the carpenter, the cobbler, the smith, the tailor and so on, but we expect our author to work for nothing.

This is not the way to build up the writing business and you will never get good writing done when a man cannot devote himself to it wholly. Is writing just a pastime for the leisure moments of politicians like me or others whose main work is different?

I disagree entirely also with the theory and practice of the Navjivan Karyalaya in Ahmedabad which, in the name of social service, does not pay the author or anyone else.

If I could function as an author, and not so much as a politician, I would set about building a trade union of authors who would refuse to accept less than the required and fixed royalties. Anyone breaking this rule should be treated as a black leg.

Unfortunately book writing in this country consists chiefly in producing those hateful things—text-books. I would ban this and make all text-books a state monopoly.

But I must not go on thrusting my odd ideas on you. As I have said, you can do just what you like with the Sindhi translation of my *Autobiography*.

A woman must of course have the last word, more especially a charming young woman, who knows that she has an unfair advantage over others. So please tell Miss Kripalani that I apologise, withdraw and generally humble myself for having forgotten our previous correspondence. As a matter of fact I had not quite forgotten it and I retain a vivid recollection of her giving me a sumptuously bound book in a silken bag.

I am glad to learn of the constructive work you have been doing especially in the villages. All good luck to you. But don't swallow too much quinine. It is hateful stuff.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Sept. 17, 1941[73]

Darling,

I hope you are flourishing and profiting by the drier weather. The real good weather in Mussoorie will begin soon. I hope also that Raja is quite well now. I had a letter from Betty about ten days ago to say that he was very much better.

Upadhyaya passed this way. I think that he should come back to Mussoorie after he has spent some days in the bosom of his family. I told him so. He might be useful to me here.

I sent you through Ram Saran a fat packet of foreign papers. I hope it reached you.

For the past two years it has been my practice to buy some khadi *hundies* during Gandhi Jayanti and distribute these—some to Upadhyaya, some to the servants &c. I think this might be kept up. I am therefore enclosing a cheque for Rs. 100/-. Buy the *hundies* in Allahabad preferably but it does not matter much where you get them. You can send the cheque direct to the Khadi Bhandar, Allahabad, and ask for the *hundies*—or send it to Upadhyaya if he is in Allahabad. You will have to endorse the cheque.

The *hundies* should be distributed in this way:

Upadhyaya	— 30/-	
Bhola	— 10/-	
Hari	— 10/-	I suppose he will soon be out.

Other servants — 50/- division as you like.

But remember that my favourite is Lachiminia, who is the oldest member of our household.

I have got a copy at last of *The Unity of India*. It was sent by a friend who purchased it in Delhi. I like the get-up of the book. Krishna has taken a lot of trouble over it. I have not heard from him at all. You

73. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

must have seen his long letter[74]—and the Edward Thompson correspondence[75] in *The New Statesman*.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

September 19, Friday

Big bundles of foreign papers have come and have taken up a good deal of time. But my main occupation has been writing the new *Auto*. I have so far written about 110 foolscap pages. The next chapter is difficult—I call it *The Discovery of India*—and so I am giving a rest to the writing for a few days and allowing my mind to play with the subject. Probably I shall read a book or two before going back to the writing.

At this rate, I imagine, I shall finish this particular writing work by the end of November, provided there are no big gaps or stops, and provided also that I do not write at inordinate length about the numerous side issues that are always cropping up.

I am continuing my spinning as before.

Nan sent me a letter yesterday by messenger (Sita Ram) from Lucknow. She has been offered, or at any rate some group in the University wants to offer, the Vice-Chancellorship of the Lucknow University. She refused to consider this on the ground of being a satyagrahi, whereupon the representatives of the group telephoned to Bapu and got his permission. Then Nan spoke to Bapu on the phone and was told by him that she should accept. She wanted my opinion & Ranjit's.

74. On 24 May 1941, he wrote refuting Sir Alfred Watson's letter of 17 May in *The New Statesman and Nation* which said that special privileges were accorded to Jawaharlal in jail and accused the Congress of doing propaganda in England and the United States.

75. Replying to Sir Alfred Watson's letter, he wrote on 24 May 1941: "....If what we have done in India is not wrong, then nothing is wrong. Nehru.... said plainly that if it was really war for democracy India would gladly join us.... If the war ends with this matter unchanged, no Indian group will forgive us (except the Princes).... There is more unity about India than our leaders realise...." On 7 June 1941, he wrote: "....The estrangement is great and increasing, and our cause is wronged by such men as Nehru being in jail. Yet even now I believe India could be won to cooperation."

What was I to say? I was entirely opposed to it for a variety of reasons, the principal one being that this would be a diversion from satyagraha activities which must have first place. As an ex-minister she must keep in front of Congress work. Also I felt that the Vice-Chancellorship was or should be an experienced educationist's job and she would hardly fit in. Then there were so many cliques and it was undesirable to get entangled in them.

Ranjit seemed to favour the idea of her accepting as Bapu had recommended this.

In my answer to her too, I mentioned my own instinctive and thought-out dislike of her taking up this job but refrained from stressing this in view of Bapu's opinion. I left it to her to decide.

Indu had not written to me for ages and I was a little unhappy at her ignoring me in this way. I had not met her since Aug. 25th— Our last interview. Meanwhile I had sent her two or three brief letters.

Yesterday I was given a letter from her dated Sept. 11th. This had reached Dehra the next day & had actually been passed by the Superintendent on the 13th. But our worthy *Naib* had forgotten to give it to me. In this letter she had mentioned that Amma was coming and wanted to know when she could see me. The delay in my answer—which went today—has probably upset Amma's programme.

I have just been given a phone message that Indu is coming to see me tomorrow.

Nearly a month ago I fixed Sept. 22 for an interview with K.T. Shah. I asked Mahmud also to come then and Subbarayan. No answer from Subbarayan. No clear & definite answer from Shah or Mahmud but I think these two are likely to come.

Eclipse of the sun on the 21st. A few days ago there was a partial eclipse of the moon—Rather an extraordinary phenomenon to have these two eclipses occurring within a few days of each other, or so people say. It is even said that this is a very rare phenomenon and is a purge of evil. Such a concurrence occurred at the time of the Mahabharata! Anyway there is enough of evil & death & disaster all over the world now.

I feel sick and greatly depressed sometimes when I read the war news and the tremendous slaughter that is going on in the Russo-German war especially. The war previous to this appears now to have been child's play almost. Even the collapse of France, from the fighting point of view, was just a minor engagement compared to this.

What will be the outcome of all this? Terrible destruction of course all round, but what else? Russia will undergo a vast change even if she wins or avoids defeat. And England & America? And the mountain of hatred and evil passions that is piling up!

I sit here in prison, reading about this slaughter and mounting passions, and an awful sense of futility comes upon me. What is the good of writing some totally useless stuff which nobody can be interested in? Or spinning away? Or doing anything else?

Sept. 20, Saturday

Indu came today. Good to see her. But she doesn't put on weight and continues to look delicate & feeble.

I have been feeling rather odd since this morning. I am physically well and nothing special has happened to upset me mentally. Yet my mind has been playing me strange tricks. It is a little difficult to describe—something like the feeling one has during a convalescence after an illness, or better still, the half-asleep, half-wakeful state in the morning, when fact & fancy are hopelessly mixed up. Repeatedly, this morning, as I sat spinning, I found I had no clear grip on my mind and vague ideas floated in and out, leaving me in some doubt, for a short while, whether they had a basis in fact or not— An odd experience.

Some days ago I had a letter from Jaksch, the old Sudeten German S.D. leader, who is now a refugee in London— The letter was sent through the Governor, probably by the India Office. With the letter came two pamphlets, reviving memories of the Sudetenland struggle three years ago and my visit there. The letter is very friendly but with a hint that we in India should throw in our lot with the British in this 'war of liberation'. This letter & the pamphlets took me back three years and the old scenes came before my eyes.

September 21, 1941[76]

TO WENZEL JAKSCH & RICHARD REITZNER

Dear Friends,

Your letter of August 13th, 1941 has reached me here together with the two pamphlets you were good enough to send. It was a great pleasure to me to have news of you and I am grateful to you for having written.

76. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I have read the pamphlets and they have brought back to me the very painful memories of three years ago when I had the privilege of visiting the Sudetenland and seeing with my own eyes the tragedy that was being enacted there. I have never forgotten that visit and I shall always remember the courage and dignity with which you and your party faced a situation which was full of peril for you all. I cannot believe that so much courage and faith can ever be wasted, and so I console myself that your sufferings and sacrifices will bear fruit one day. Many thousands, as you point out, have been living a life of terrible persecution in Dachau; many have perished. But I am very glad that, at the last moment, 3,000 of your comrades managed to escape, and though they live as exiles in far countries, they keep the old flag flying and, with faith and courage, bide their time.

I appreciate the spirit in which you have written, and I want to assure you that during these last three years or more I have held fast to my old beliefs. At the time of the Sudeten crisis, before and after the Munich decision, I wrote a good deal on the trend of events,[77] and it is no satisfaction to me now that what I wrote then has largely come true. I had no doubt then, and I have no doubt now, that Hitler and his subordinate colleagues, Mussolini and Franco, represent a system that is evil and fundamentally bad for Europe as well as the rest of the world. A victory for him would be a tragedy for all who believe in a free life for individuals as well as nations. You know well that Hitler was powerfully helped by the so-called policy of appeasement. That appeasement represented not just a foolish and short-sighted wish to escape trouble in the present; it represented even more sympathy and agreement with the general outlook of Hitler. It is true that there was no such feeling among the people generally in England or France. But powerful elements in the Governments of the two countries certainly felt that way and acted accordingly. Perhaps it may help you to understand, when I tell you that it is this outlook, and its translation into action and government, that we have to face in India. A change has come over that outlook in regard to the domestic situation in England because of perilous developments; but that does not apply to India. We are where we were.

All my sympathies are with those who are resisting Hitler because I feel that Hitler's triumph would be disastrous for the world's freedom. As I write to you, vast and terrible battles are taking place in Russia and we are naturally following these with the most anxious interest. I have not been enamoured of everything that Russia has done and I criticised her attack on Finland last year. But I am convinced that it would

77. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 1-206.

be a very great tragedy if Russia's great experiment in a socialistic order was crushed in war.

During the past few years, as I saw war approaching, I had hoped that all our resources, the resources of a free India, would be thrown in on the side of freedom and democracy. It was a world conflict for me from which no one could or should keep away. But always I realised that only a free India could do so effectively, a slave country cannot fight for other people's freedom. Perhaps you will remember that this was the answer I gave you to the question you put to me in that fateful summer of 1938. That was what I wrote on my return from Czechoslovakia before Munich had occurred, as well as afterwards. There is a book of mine, recently published in London, which gives some of these writings. It is called *The Unity of India* (Lindsay Drummond).

But all our hopes were destined to be crushed. This has nothing to do with the Hindu-Muslim problem. Difficult as that is, it is different from, and perhaps basically much easier than, the Sudeten problem, for it is not a racial problem: we have to deal with more or less the same racial and linguistic background. But anyhow, that problem stands apart from the main problem; that of England and India.

I cannot discuss all these intricate matters in this letter. But I want to tell you that, in spite of every desire to do so, we were not put in a position to render effective national assistance in this war. Even so, and in spite of our conflict with the British Government, we have deliberately refrained from coming in the way of the war effort. It is obvious that we could have injured and lessened this greatly if we had attempted to do so. But in the larger context, and whatever our own reactions to England's policy to India, we did not wish Hitler to win.

India happens to be a very big country with a population approaching 400 millions. It is obvious that no world settlement can be durable which ignores this great country or seeks to treat it as somebody's possession, regardless of the wishes of her people. I quite agree with you that Europe needs the partnership of a free India, and that India needs the partnership of a free Europe. But the partnership, in order to be fruitful, must be based on freedom.

I hope one day to have the privilege of being your guest in Prague and at Badenhock when I visit again the green hills and blue forests of your beautiful mountain country.

With all good wishes to you and the cause you represent.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

September 22, Monday

A full and unusual day. Mahmud & K.T. Shah came and we had long talks. Mahmud looking older & not well—his legs swollen up, but still cheerful. I think our talk did him good. It was a change for him from Chapra & his village. I am afraid he will never get well—He will at best carry on.

K.T. full of talk and information about Bombay and its magnates. How money is pouring in through war contracts. Bombay has 40 crores worth of them. The Tatas doing exceedingly well. Mody, in spite of his conservatism, shaking up the old tin-hats at Simla & Delhi. Walchand[78] going ahead with his aeroplane factory at Bangalore (which is actually producing planes) and his shipbuilding. Though stymied in his efforts to build up an automobile factory he is spreading out in other directions. An efficient & wide awake person with an amazing amount of push and imagination. The war, of course, just suits him.

K.T. told me of a curious dream he had—it was vivid & impressed him. In fact he had hesitated to tell me and only decided to do so after long thought. The dream was a simple one—He saw me going away in some conveyance—Someone was with me, Indu or someone else. He had a definite sensation of my going away having nothing to do with time or space, whatever that may mean. Anyway he was so moved that he, who is not liable to this kind of thing, broke down completely and wept copiously. I told him not to worry.

There does not seem much in this dream to worry about but he did worry. It was the vividness that had impressed him. According to certain rules of interpretation of dreams (Jain?) Shah said that his dream signified that I would pop off (this was not his language!) in about three years time—I am not quite clear how the three years comes in except that the dream came at little after 3 a.m.

It was curious how Shah, the materialist, the non-believer in every kind of superstition, was worried by this dream. If Mahmud had been upset, I could well understand. Mahmud had his own story which he said was widely spoken about. This was that I was to shine with increasing brilliance from 1942 onwards for four or five years and then—meet a sudden death, presumably by assassination, though this was not quite clear.

78. Walchand Hirachand (1882-1952); pioneer of shipping and aircraft production in India; president, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries. 1932-33.

Another astrological forecast, which was sent to me some time ago, stated that the stars were favourable for me from November next onwards, and then after a year or some months (six months I think) the period is still more favourable for two or three years. Then trouble!

They all seem to indicate a sudden end—That will be luck. But really, why do people waste so much time and energy over this kind of thing?

I have no particular desire to live on and on. And yet I am full of ideas and energy and I suppose I shall live an intensely active life again when the opportunity comes my way. When life approaches its end, slow or sudden, it will not find me, I think, afraid or unready.

K.T. told me (from Nandan) of some rather disturbing developments in the *Herald*. Tholal has been pushed out because of indiscipline. I suppose he had to go but I am sorry all the same. It appears also that the *Herald* is likely to get entangled in a libel action on account of the Lucknow Camp Jail incidents. I do not mind that at all but I am worried at Nan being entangled in it and entangled the wrong way. She has not acted very wisely and is apt to jump to conclusions. Her political sense is not fully trained and developed yet.

The lovely moon of दूज[79] was just visible today. Yesterday was the partial eclipse of the sun.. And so the *Ramzan* fast begins from tomorrow—Meanwhile *Dasehra* celebrations are going on and *Vijayadashmi* will come round within 6 or 7 days.

The moon tells me that eleven lunar months of my imprisonment are over. Soon Diwali will come and complete the year.

September Spinning

26 hanks—Nos. 250 to 275 (inclusive)
=13000 yards counts 27 to 32

Previous total (see p. 41 & p. 74 *ante*)	.. 124500 yards
Total to end September 1941	.. 137500 yards

Sept. 24, 1941[80]

TO P. A. NARIELWALA

My dear Pan,

Thank you for copies of *Life*, a bundle of which arrived, duly insured by

79. *Duj*—second day after the new moon.
80. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

you, and an odd copy came later. What do you want me to do with it after I have seen it? Shall I return the copies to you? Meanwhile I have passed on the bundle to Betty.

I hear you are very busy and new burdens and responsibilities are descending upon you, and Bombay House is humming with very profitable activity. I am engaged in lesser activities which can be of no particular consequence to the mighty men of business. For instance, I look at the new moon, just visible against the darkening sky, and then day after day watch its ethereal beauty transform itself into something garish and opulent. Or I gaze at the outline of the Himalayan foothills as the morning sun creeps up behind them. Not very exciting or worthy of mention perhaps. But what else is one to do in jail?

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

24.9.41[81]

Betty dear,

I have not written to you for a long time and I have not even answered your letter which came nearly two weeks ago. For many days, I did not feel in a mood for writing letters—one has moods in jail, as you know. But really there was little to write about, I refuse even to develop a cold which might be some kind of news to be conveyed in a letter. And for the rest, day succeeds day and the same routine is followed.

Your letter told me that Raja's finger was healing well. I hope this business is over now or nearly over, and Raja will not be troubled by it. How quickly your period at Mussoorie has gone and soon you will be thinking of returning to the more sophisticated life of Bombay. On your way you will visit us here. Come whenever it suits you, that is, in October.

I hope Harsha and Ajit have prospered in Mussoorie. My love to them and to you and Raja.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

81. *Nehru's Letters to His Sister*, (London, 1963), p. 79.

27.9.41[82]

Darling Betty,
Your letter came today. I am so sorry to hear of Jitley's accident. It is very upsetting to see little kids suffer so. The danger lies not so much in the actual hurt—unless this is serious—as in the mental reactions. But I think Jitley is old enough not to be affected by this. It is even possible that he may profit by it and get hardened. Anyway one has to make the best of it.
Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

Sept. 30, 1941[83]

TO JIVRAJ N. MEHTA

My dear Jivraj,
I am writing to you about a matter which has been hovering in my mind for many years. It is about Anand Bhawan, our house in Allahabad. When Kamala was alive we discussed the future of this house and the public use to which it might be profitably put. We were agreed that the house should not continue to remain private property indefinitely and we disliked the idea of strangers possibly gaining possession of it later for private use. The house is relatively new but already it is full of associations for our family, and even in the public mind it is something more than a private house. During the last dozen years or so many public activities have centred round it and for large numbers of people it has almost become a place of political pilgrimage. The idea, therefore, that it should be public property grew in my mind and Kamala's, and sometimes we associated this idea with a memorial for my father. But father needed no memorial in brick and mortar or stone and cement, and anyway it was not our family's business to concern itself with it. From time to time I discussed this idea rather vaguely

82. *Nehru's Letters to His Sister*, (London, 1963), p. 80.
83. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

with my sisters also and with others. Kamala's idea and mine was that some children's institution might be established there.

After Kamala's death the idea of devoting this home and grounds to some public purpose became more definite and some three years ago I discussed it with Indira. She agreed. Meanwhile the Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital grew up and I began to associate the two with each other.

It is perhaps a little premature yet for any definite action to be taken. For a considerable time to come I am likely to be in jail and I cannot take such action from here. Besides, this would mean a refashioning of my life to some extent. I cannot therefore say when any such step should be taken and it may well have to be delayed for some years. But whatever the delay might be, I want to be clear in my own mind that it is going to be done and that nothing will happen to put a stop to it. So far as I am personally concerned, the feeling grows upon me that the possession of land and property is a nuisance and a burden. Those who wish to travel far should have as little luggage as possible and I want to get rid of my superfluous luggage. As you know, I am not ascetically inclined and I have not been an adherent of the simple life, if by that is meant the renunciation of many of life's graces and pleasures. I am capable of taking joy in life and even of participating in some of its luxuries. So I am not being moved by any idea of renunciation. I want to feel lighter and more free during the remaining years of my life's journey. It is true that all of us require some peg to hang from, some corner to which one can go for rest or quiet work or as an escape from life's calls. I suppose I shall continue to have many such pegs and corners even though I might not possess a house of my own.

I should like, therefore, to dispose of Anand Bhawan with its land, outhouses, etc. and including much of its equipment. Apart from certain personal articles I hardly want anything from it. The books could go to the A.I.C.C. library where they will be of much greater use to the public.

To what use can we put Anand Bhawan? I should personally like it to be associated with children, the voices and laughter of children, more especially poor children who have known nothing of comfort and little of laughter. I do not particularly fancy the idea of Anand Bhawan being just an extension of the K.N.M. Hospital. Perhaps it could be associated with it as a home for convalescent children.

Whatever purpose Anand Bhawan might serve, I think it should be under its own managing committee and not under the hospital committee. But the whole property might be vested in K.N.M.H. trustees.

These are just some vague ideas for you to consider. There is no

grew amazingly but produced few flowers. The dahlias went up to about 10 feet and then produced tiny flowers. Only the colouring was good. Cosmos also went up to 9 or 10 feet and produced very few flowers. A sunflower made a valiant attempt to peep over the walls. It actually went up 14 feet before it flowered. I suppose the winter flowers will be better. You need not send any flower seeds as we have a good collection already and our space is very limited.

Indu is still at Mussoorie. Probably she will stay there another month: she is still not as well as she might be.

Do not worry about us. And keep cheerful.

Love,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

October 3, Friday

I have been engrossed in writing work. It fills the mind. The last two chapters have been difficult—*The Discovery of India* and *What India Stands For*. So far I have written about 150 foolscap pages—This is five weeks' work with several gaps of many days each. As usually happens, I am getting on much slower than I had imagined. I expected to finish this book by the end of November. This is not possible now and I shall take at least a month more. Of course if I devoted most of my time to it I could finish it earlier. But many interruptions take place even in jail and an interview usually means two days off. It disturbs. My stay here this time is not quite so solitary as it used to be. In the evenings we go to the jail proper for badminton &c and spend some time there. The Jailer usually comes more than once a day and takes up time. The morning is spent in spinning. Arrangements for food, &c have to be looked into. And I write far more letters.

But apart from all this, I suddenly leave off writing for four or five days as I begin to feel stale. So progress is going to be slow. It all depends on how I feel. Latterly I have been far from cheerful. Many things have contributed to a feeling of depression—Indu, the political situation in the country, the war.

Yet writing has been a great help in keeping me mentally fit and sober. I have got a task now which demands thought and work.

Vijayadashmi has come and gone (It was on Sept. 30th). *Ramzan* is nearly half over. And a fortnight later Diwali will be upon us to remind me of last year.

Indu came and Amma on the 29th. Certain remarks of Indu rather upset me. What a tangle we have got into! Amma is staying with her at Mussoorie.

Tomorrow Mahadeva is coming to see me, sent by Bapu. I am taking my two October interviews close together: tomorrow Mahadeva, and Raja & Betty on the 9th. No more interviews this month, except Indu's.

Betty's letters—always full of complaints against odd things that have happened to worry her. Raja has dashed off to Delhi to show his finger to Dr. Joshi. The finger giving some trouble again.

Nan has sent a message suggesting that she & Ranjit should leave Anand Bhawan so that Indu might have a free hand there. That is no solution. Anyway this note of Nan's decided me to take some step about Anand Bhawan and I have written to Jivraj Mehta offering the house for some public purpose. But have made it clear that for some time I intend to hold on.

Saturday, October 4

Mahadeva came today and Devadas—Both on their way to Mussoorie to Ghanshiam Das Birla.

Talk with Mahadeva about Bapu cheered me up. How full of vitality & optimism Bapu is! He said to somebody a few days ago that while he was naturally optimistic, he had never felt so sure of himself and so full of optimism as he did today. He had a definite feeling of growing from day to day. It was clear that the war would not end in any overwhelming victory for either party—India with her faith in her peaceful ways will win through.

Trouble about Sind—Maulana does not agree with Bapu about the advice to be given to Allah Bux the P.M. there. Bapu definitely of opinion that Allah Bux should resign from the Defence Council & dissociate himself from the war efforts. Maulana of a contrary opinion. Allah Bux says, after a long talk with Bapu, that he agrees with him, but how can he convince Maulana? Two days ago he saw Maulana in Naini. Mahadeva going soon to Naini to visit Maulana.

It seems to me dangerous & unwise for Maulana to give positive guidance from prison. He shoulders the responsibility without the power.

Vallabhbhai not keeping well at all—Trouble with his intestines.

Bhulabhai also not well—trouble physical but even more mental—He is a complete misfit in the Congress now, and especially in the satyagraha movement. He can't get out of it openly & completely and yet he yearns for something to be done to stop it.

Bapu, on the other hand, firm that nothing is going to stop it so long as the war lasts & maybe afterwards. Very probably the real struggle then. He is consolidating the Congress position for that struggle & feels that this is being done. He is satisfied. Of course if the question of free speech about war effort, &c is settled in terms of the Congress demand, satyagraha would be off, but the deadlock will continue. That can only end with independence—So Bapu says.

Aney's visit to Bapu. How low he has sunk[85]—he and the *Kesari* lot of Maharashtra politicians. Bapu, in all courtesy of course, gave him short shrift.

Iftikhar, with his keenness for developing contacts with Jinnah, was not at all encouraged by Bapu. Ultimately Bapu told him that if he wanted to he could see Jinnah personally, but for his part he did not expect any good to come out of this. Anyway on no account was he (Bapu) going to see Jinnah as a representative of the Hindus whatever happened. Ifty telephoned to Jinnah who said that as an old friend he was prepared to meet Ifty but not in (Ifty's) capacity as a nationalist Muslim! So the interview did not come off.

I spoke to Mahadeva about Indu so that he might tell Bapu. Extraordinary that the message I gave to Amrit for Bapu more than three months ago has not reached him. Amrit has been unwell & has been unable to go to Wardha. She is still in Simla.

Bapu was worried because he had heard through Jamnalalji that Indu was unhappy and not keeping well. My talk with Mahadeva (on behalf of Bapu) cleared my own mind somewhat—I felt easier and the desire to see Indu and have a long frank talk with her increased.

Asaf Ali wants to see me! I wish he wouldn't. Our talk is not likely to please either party. However I have suggested that he might come on the day when Betty, Raja, &c come—the 9th—in the morning.

Bustami Darwesh of Java also came today. I rather liked the boy.

Ranjit not well today.

85. Defending his acceptance of a seat on the Viceroy's Executive Council, Aney had said that he had accepted it in order to solve the Indian deadlock and that Congress had committed a mistake in resigning from the ministries and handing over powers. "The present satyagraha movement is inopportune at a time when long-denied opportunities were offered by the British Government for Indianisation although they were offered as war measures."

October 6, 1941[88]

TO RICHARD J. WALSH

Dear Mr. Walsh,

I have received your letter of September 5, 1941. Apparently this was the Ocean mail copy as some clippings accompanied it. I have received no other clippings so far, nor has any one received the other copies of *Toward Freedom* that you sent—apart from the 6 sent to my sister, Krishna Hutheesing. I suppose, under present conditions, one must be thankful for what one does get.

Bachhraj & Co. have informed me that they have received from you the equivalent of $2069.08 for credit of my account.

I am sorry the list of persons to whom complimentary copies were to be sent did not reach you. It is not worth while repeating it now. But I should have particularly liked the book to be sent to Madame Sun Yat-sen and Madame Chiang Kai-shek.

I have noted that you have come to some arrangement with Lindsay Drummond about *Glimpses of World History* and that the book is likely to come out in America in January.

It seems rather odd that, sitting here in jail, I should consider your proposal about my becoming a contributory editor of *Asia* magazine. It is obvious that I cannot contribute anything at all for a considerable time and even when the difficulties that exist today are removed, I am likely to have enough of work and responsibility to make writing difficult. Everything everywhere is in such a state of flux that any arrangement for a fairly distant future is rather a gamble. I have always hesitated to accept future responsibilities when I was not at all sure that I would be able to fulfil them. Having said all this, I want to tell you that I would gladly help *Asia* and I am happy that Pearl Buck[89] and you have taken charge of it. As you assure me that the position of contributory editor is one of almost complete irresponsibility and involved no undertaking, I can hardly refuse, in spite of the drawbacks mentioned above. So I am agreeable and you can add my name to the distinguished list headed by Pearl Buck and Lin Yutang.[90]

88. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
89. Pearl S. Buck (1893-1973); wife of Richard Walsh; well-known American novelist; Nobel Prize winner for literature, 1938.
90. (1895-1976); well-known writer in Chinese and English; author of *The Wisdom of China and India* and *My Country and My People.*

5/10/41[86]

Darling,
Mahadeva Bhai saw me yesterday. Probably he will visit you. Bapu is rather worried to learn from Jamnalalji that you were not keeping well or sleeping well.

I have been thinking over various matters and I would like to speak to you about this. Perhaps this will help you & me not to worry. Come and see me when you can—the sooner the better—that is soon after Betty's interview. She is likely to come on the 9th. Nan is coming on the 8th.

I think Amma had better not come with you next time. This is tiring for her. But the real reason is that I am having several interviews during the first half of October and I do not want to add to them or ask for an extension of the privilege. She can come with you when you come the time after next.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

6.10.41[87]

Indu Darling,
Saturday the 11th October will suit. So come then and bring Nani with you. I shall expect you but still it would be as well if you sent a phone message to say that you were coming.

It is quite astonishingly warm still here and I am told that it is definitely hot in Allahabad & Lucknow. I suppose the weather will turn some time or other this month. It might be unwise for you to return to Allahabad before it is fairly cool there. You would feel just limp and weak.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

86. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
87. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

October 6, 1941[88]

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Since writing to you on June 9th, I have sent you two other letters, dated July 1 and August 25. I hope they have reached you.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

October 7, Tuesday

Ranjit & I have been upset today. Our faithful warder, Pancham, has been dismissed at a moment's notice today, for a most ridiculous reason. He was only an apprentice warder although he had been in service for over a year. He was a bit of a gardener and helped us a lot. Among the warders, he was probably the straightest and he never pinched things as most others do. Yet he has been dismissed for theft.

The theft consisted of his taking a *chakotra* from the garden yesterday afternoon when off duty and giving it to his little son who asked for it. In any event it was a trivial offence; to call it theft is monstrous. He took it casually when many people were present.

It appears that the Jailer was bent on engaging someone else whom he considered a better gardener. A vacancy was needed, and hence poor Pancham had to go. Some time back his wife ran away from him, leaving a number of children with him.

Quite a number of interviews are coming. Tomorrow Nan & Pratap come to see Ranjit—Day after tomorrow Betty, Raja and the children, preceded by Asaf Ali! On the 11th Indu and Amma.

Diwali is approaching and yet it is still very warm.

October 10—Friday

Two full and rather exciting days—yesterday and the day before. Nan and Tara came on the 8th and I had long talks and unburdened myself fully about various matters. Yesterday was crowded. Pratap came—he ought to have come the day before but was detained in Delhi by a Govt. Committee—, then Asaf Ali, and later Betty & Raja and the children. Again long talks.

Asaf Ali said what I more or less expected. Feeling very flat. Of course, he always does. One thing that he told me was interesting—

the marked effect on Muslims of recent happenings in Islamic countries. They are greatly disturbed and are in a mood for self-questioning. Feel that they are in a blind alley. Muslim States losing their freedom and becoming hangers-on of others. No apparent future for them.

To Nan and Betty and Raja I spoke about Indu and felt much better for having said what I had kept to myself for so long. Indu is coming tomorrow with Amma. After that no interviews for some time.

Kamaladevi has sent me a letter from Madame Chiang and a pot of marmalade which she (Madame Chiang) made herself. Delicious stuff. Also a book which Madame Sun sent us. This is by Nym Wales and is about Chinese Cooperatives.[91] I felt very happy to receive these gifts. Madame Chiang's letter was moving and I was deeply touched. These instances of affectionate remembrance from afar make life worth while and jail is forgotten. Referring to the marmalade, Mme. Chiang says: "I am sending you a Szechwan product which symbolises to me what life holds—the rind, the juice, the seed—the sweetness, bitterness, and spice which comprise life."

I felt pleasantly tired yesterday evening. And yet as the shadows lengthened, a feeling of sadness and emptiness took possession of me.

21.10.41[92]

Darling Indu,

Your letter. Psyche and Pan are also coming for the interview on the 27th together with Jivraj Mehta. They will all be attending the meeting of the Hospital Managing Committee on the 23rd at Allahabad.

I shall deal with the letter received from Krishna Prasad Dar. I am glad the *Atlantic Monthly* have paid up the $150. Every little helps.

To celebrate the occasion I am enclosing a cheque for Rs. 100/- Rajji has been supplying various things to me. He should be paid for them. Also I would like Upadhyaya to send a money order for Rs. 50/- to Bustami Darwesh. He can pay out of this amount for the books he purchases and keep any balance for other odd expenditure. He must be hard up and should have some pocket money. The cheque is crossed. It can be cashed through Pushkar Nath.

91. *China Builds for Democracy*. On 2 July 1942 Jawaharlal wrote the foreword for the Indian edition of this book.
92. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

I should like you to bring a number of things for me when you come next. I give the list overleaf. Apart from this list we want some stuff to mend broken china. We have managed to break the pot Madame Chiang sent me and we should like to mend it, if possible. Unfortunately there are too many pieces. You will get this at a chemist's—try Hamer—We had a tube which was very good but I have forgotten its name. The stuff is used in museums &c. to mend broken china, pottery &c.

It is getting cooler here now and I am therefore sending for some blankets from Allahabad. Possibly Hari might bring them on the 27th, if his son is better. I hope you have purchased a good blanket. I understand it is possible to get a *gudma* here—the 6 yard soft woollen blanket usually made in the Simla Hills. If you would like to have it, I shall inquire further into the matter. Ask Upadhyaya to send my love to Narendra Deva.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

October 26, Sunday

A long gap since I wrote last in this diary which means a life of routine with very little that was extraordinary. My writing work (*Auto II*) took up a lot of time—so much so that I have little. And yet the progress made has not been much. At this rate I might carry on for another three months or more. Sometimes I simply can't write for days. Not in the mood.

My chief reading—apart from foreign periodicals—has been Plato's *Republic*. A fascinating book.

Interviews from tomorrow—Jivraj Mehta, Psyche & Pan coming to see me tomorrow, and Nan to see Ranjit— So there will be quite a crowd. Two days later Indu and Amma.

Diwali and *Id* have come and gone, completing a year for me—for I was arrested the day after Diwali and on the eve of *Id*.

I have started Agarwal's eye exercises from today— Sitting facing the sun with eyes closed &c., &c. I am sure this will do me good.

October Spinning—Twelfth month

25 hanks—Nos. 276 to 300=12500 yards
Counts to 32. Average 28.

Previous total (see pp 41, 74, 89 *ante*) 137500 yards
Total to end October... 150000 yards

This completes a year of spinning in prison this time. (It is really slightly less than a year.)

Record for the year—300 hanks of 500 yards each totalling 150000 yards.

I gave Psyche hanks 276 to 298 when she came to see me on Oct. 27th.

26.10.41[93]

Darling Indu,

Your note has just come. Yes, do come on the 28th, that is day after tomorrow, with Nani.

About Psyche— If you are coming to Dehra on the 28th would it be worth while for her to go up on the evening of the 27th? She might spend the night in Dehra and go up if necessary the next day with you. However I do not know what she wants to do & how long she can stay round about here. It would be a good thing if both Psyche and Pan went up to Mussoorie for a few days.

Anyway I shall expect you on the 28th. If you have any particular message to send to Psyche tomorrow, you can send it by phone to the jail office. I am glad you are keeping better. The weather is just right now. Profit by it as long as you can. From today I have started new eye exercises which I am sure will do me good. I hope within a month to give up wearing glasses for reading. Part of these exercises is to sit facing the morning sun with closed eyes for a few minutes.

I should like to see Feroze. I think the best thing will be for him to get into touch with Mohanlal Saxena. I have promised him my next interview in November and Dr. Mahmud, if he is well enough, will probably come too. Feroze can be the third. No date has been fixed. I have asked Mohanlal to arrange with Mahmud.

Here are some more articles which Upadhyaya might get for me.

1. Fountain pen ink—Quink
2. 3 quires foolscap paper (as supplied last time)
3. Matches
4. A bakelite tumbler
5. To write to A.C.J. Press to send me direct 1 copy of *Letters from*

93. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

a Father to His Daughter, English edition (a good copy for presentation) 2 copies of Ditto Urdu edition.

6. Order more *punis* for me

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

28.10.41[94]

Darling Betty,

I loved to receive your telegram on *Bhaiya Duj* which you never forget to send. And then came your letter.

Keep me informed about Raja's finger. I hope the scraping will be enough and nothing more will be needed.

About Anand Bhawan nothing is going to be done in a hurry though, for my part, I came to these conclusions long ago. I put them tentatively in writing so that the few people concerned might think about them and grow used to the idea. Do not think of it in terms of our losing Anand Bhawan—we shall not lose it. Our lives have become part of the larger life of the nation and we go up and down with it. If that is so, why not share the house also? But, as I have said, I do not propose to take any definite step yet.

My dear, how can I advise you or Raja about family affairs? The decision has to be made by the persons concerned and by no others because it depends entirely on one's own outlook on life as well as one's reaction to what is happening in India and the world. No rule of thumb can be applied. If I had been personally concerned in such a matter, I would have had no difficulty in dealing with it as my mind is quite clear about relative values in life and what my own duties and obligations are. But if the mind is not clear then difficulties arise and endless and inconclusive argument. Going to jail is a trivial matter in the world today which is being shaken to its foundations. As a mere routine it has no doubt some value and I think does one good. But that value is not very great unless there is an inner urge to do it. If an inner urge is present then little else matters, for that represents something vital.

Raja and you should try to be clear in your minds about the kind of future you are arriving at and try to realize that future, in so far as you

94. *Nehru's Letters to His Sister*, (London, 1963), pp. 81-85.

can. The large and joint families of the past no doubt served a useful purpose and fitted in with the social structure we had evolved through long ages. But that structure is cracking up now and it cannot survive in its old form. It is pulled in two different directions at the same time—the individual asserting his right to his own way of living, and the larger social group, the community or nation, demanding a unified pattern and equal opportunities for all. Between these two pulls, the middle pull of the joint family becomes less and less; it comes in the way of the individual life as well as the larger natural life. It does not fit in with the thought and elemental forces that move the world today. So it must fade away, as it is indeed doing. But we are such a huge country and with such deep roots in the past, that major changes take time. Yet in these days time itself moves quickly.

I do believe that the family as a unit is important, especially the smaller family, and fulfils a psychological need. It will survive. But the economic bonds that tie up large numbers of persons in a joint family tend to become real bonds, helping the individual often but also suppressing him and preventing growth. Where a common outlook on life is lacking they become a nuisance to all concerned and a constant source of irritation. There is a feeling, and you have mentioned it, that the burden falls on some and not on others, that some are not pulling their weight, that some sow while others reap, and so on. One cannot argue against this for it all depends on our sense of values. Is money-making our test or some other also?

Then again consider even money-making today. Only a fool or an infinitely wise man will dare to prophesy for the future in a changing world. But even a man of average intellect can say that everything is going to change during the next few years all over the world, including India. It is indeed changing before our eyes, and it is quite likely that the millionaire may become a thing of the past. The whole conception of money may change and all our friends who are piling up gold or silver, or mostly paper in the form of securities or currency notes, may suddenly find the bottom knocked out of their treasure chest, and the chest empty. Whoever wins in this war, that may well happen. We shall see before we are much older.

In times of storm and stress the only capital that counts is intelligence, individual capacity to face a crisis calmly and to overcome it. The Bank of France and the French millionaires did not save France—indeed they helped in her downfall—and now they have to part with their millions also. If we in India as individuals and as a nation have the necessary intelligence, moral fibre and staying power, it will go well with us; otherwise not.

Do not forget that India and China, in spite of their present difficulties, have shown tremendous staying power for ages past. They have done so, I believe, because of their sense of moral values.

I have written quite an essay and I could write on almost indefinitely. But I must have pity on you and desist. The point is that a time comes in the life of every individual when there should be some certitude of his way of life—objectives etc. He may change repeatedly with changing circumstances even afterwards but all the essential adaptations and the background remain much the same, or it changes subtly producing more certainty. Without this there is continuous shifting and consequent distress of mind.

I do not know what life holds for me but I am not afraid of it and I do not think anything is likely to happen to India or the wide world which will bowl me over. At least so I think in my conceit. I am slowly developing a measure of serenity, of poise, of strength of purpose which is impersonal. It does not matter if I die, as die I must some time or other. Millions are dying daily in war or otherwise. The smaller and more personal problems gradually lessen their hold on me and I feel more detached. I want to be unburdened, if not entangled personally. I do not know that I shall succeed, or indeed that I want to do so. For I am attached enough to life and its diversity and richness. I am perfectly willing to face it as pleasantly as I can and to take such joy from it as is possible, subject to my own mental limitations. But I want to be equally willing and prepared for the full stop when that comes.

Meanwhile there is much to do and I want to do it with every ounce of energy. And if, as at present, I cannot indulge in activity I prepare myself for it, physically and mentally, and store up energy.

So there! Do not take me too seriously when I begin talking about myself. That comes with age. It is a sure sign—this mounting a pulpit and holding forth. I began by writing about you and drifted inevitably to the first person. I am sorry. I apologize.

But the point is that you people worry too much and often about unimportant matters. Do not do so. It makes one dull and that is bad. One should take life as it is—and it isn't much to shout about—and just refuse to allow petty or big troubles to put us out. It is remarkable how they vanish if one treats them in this way. Just think of the big things and the major upsets that are happening all over the world, and thinking of them you will gain a sense of perspective and your own little troubles will sink into insignificance.

Yesterday Psyche came to see us and it was good to see her. I acted up to your advice and spoke harshly to Psyche and insisted on her spending a week or so at Mussoorie. Somewhat reluctantly she agreed and

there she is now. Mussoorie, I am told, is just delightful now. Of course you would come at the wrong time.

This letter will reach you round about your birthday. A fitting gift—a long and very dull lecture! But you will survive it unhurt and so it does not matter.

All my love to you, my dear, and may you have many and many happy birthdays and the days in between bringing fulfilment and joy.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

November 2, Sunday

Betty's birthday—sent her a telegram. I wrote to her a long letter also a few days ago. The Suptd. liked this letter so much that he asked me if he could keep a copy to show his friends!

Yesterday the Suptd. came to us with excitement writ large on his face. He told me confidentially(!) that the correspondent of *The Hindustan Times* had been to see him with a telegram from his paper which stated that I was going to be released. He came to inquire and make sure.

Today the Jailer came with the same message, only this time the A.P. man had come with a similar message from his headquarters. Excitement all round. Evidently the news has spread in the town and people came to inquire. In the evening a large crowd gathered at the jail gate.

I have refused to take the news seriously and I do not see how it can be true. Of course there is always an odd possibility. It creates a mental disturbance and the routine of the day is affected. The next few days will not be normal till the rumour dies a natural death. I am not at all anxious to be released; indeed I would rather not go. I want to finish my present writing work and that will take me at least two months, if not more. I am proceeding slowly and get stuck up, or to put it differently, the mood for writing escapes me. So far I have written about 260 manuscript foolscap pages and I have reached 1937-38—the period of the Congress ministries.

Then I should like to deal with father's letters. Another two months' job. And then a few months devoted to Hindi & Urdu chiefly.

But there is no end to the work I can do and want to do.

The real point is that I cannot do much outside just at this juncture. I might make a little difference. Bapu's long statement, containing a

review of the position, definitely a good one.[95] He is clearly in good form and in good spirits. Evidently he has given short shrift to Rajagopalachari and others.

Today an unusual occurrence in our jail. We organised sports. The idea came to me some time ago in connection with the satyagrahi prisoners. We extended it to include the other convicts as well as the jail staff, warders &c. Kheiri was the ideal man to take charge for he is keen on sports and has been connected with them since his boyhood. He entered into the business with energy and enthusiasm. Others also. We formed a committee.

As Sunday is the only off day for the prisoners, we have decided to have some events on every Sunday afternoon. We began today with long jumps, standing & running, and a three-legged race. Many entries and considerable interest. Two under-trials being tried for murder (and consequently in fetters) expressed a desire to participate— The Jailer was decent enough to have their fetters removed for a while and they carried off the second prize in the three-legged race.

Generally speaking the satyagrahis better at sports. But one of our best boys— Durga—was suddenly discharged two days ago. He had developed into our best badminton player and he would certainly have carried several of our sports prizes. Another boy has come—a Saharanpur satyagrahi—who promises to shape well in games. He is a *bhangi* by caste and I understand that there was some little trouble about him among the ordinary prisoners. It was good to see him run the three-legged race with another satyagrahi who put his arm around him. How the Congress movement is breaking down old prejudices! The boy is named Yatindra Kumar and has an intelligent and sensitive face.

Among the satyagrahis here from Saharanpur is a good runner with a fine style—Tara Chand. He has taken part in the U.P. Olympic games.

Our prizes, which consisted of toilet soaps for firsts and washing soaps for seconds and thirds, were shared by the satyagrahi and the ordinary prisoners. The soaps were much appreciated.

95. On 30 October 1941, Mahatma Gandhi had said: "I contemplate no change in the Congress programme as it is going and am full of hope for the future of the country.... To give up civil disobedience would be folly. It is a duty in the face of violence without parallel. In the present case it means assertion of the right to speak against participation in this war and all war.... Civil disobedience is restricted to select individuals. It does not matter if the number is reduced to ten or two."

"Parliamentary programme will have definite place when we have a parliament of our own. Let it not be forgotten that this is expected to be a fight to the finish."

The prize giving ceremony took place at the end and I distributed them. There were brief speeches by me, the Jailer and Kheiri. It was odd speaking in jail at such a function. What a difference all this must have made to the prisoners—ordinary as well as satyagrahi.

Ranjit acted as judge.

It was good to see Psyche and Pan last week. Jivraj gave me a good report of Indu whom he went to see. Nan looked very much pulled down and worried.

Nov. 3, Monday

The Supt. rolled up this morning and told me that he felt in his bones that my release was coming. He had received no intimation or orders. It was just intuition!

This afternoon Shanti came as usual at 4.30 and asked me when I was leaving. He added casually that orders had come from above. Had I not been informed of them? He mentioned that perhaps I might be transferred to Delhi... The news had spread in the jail and Lala Mithan Lal, with the Jailer's permission, had sent for Rs. 10/- worth of sweets!

All very odd. When Ranjit & I went inside the main jail there was excitement there. The badminton court had been transformed and various sweets &c were spread out. There we sat about 40 or 50 of us including Kheiri & some jail officials. After feeding I was asked to speak and I held forth. Very odd—

Yet not a word to me. There seems little doubt that some intimation has come and is being treated as confidential. What it is, is not clear—Probably about a transfer.

The Jailer, who is usually very communicative, does not say a word. Ordinarily he would bubble over with the news. Very odd!

Nov. 4, 1941[00]

TO PADMAJA NAIDU

Bebee dear, So you have given a special significance to this day and added to the various anniversaries we should remember. For my part

96. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

the anniversary came on the night of the 31st October when I was arrested; all that happened subsequently was of little importance. The real change was on the 31st. Trials and sentences have a certain importance, I suppose, in the scheme of things, but not very much. Certainly not in relation to me. But not only you but others also have caught hold of the fourth of November—Why fourth? Except that the 365 days end there. The fifth is the real anniversary and has the added advantage of being Guy Fawkes' Day.

This anniversary business can be overdone and it is overdone in India. It is a sobering thought that when I am dead some people will insist on meeting once a year in Purushottam Das Park and proclaim to a small and indifferent audience the many virtues that I was deemed to possess. And then, duty having been performed, they will go home and relax.

Anyway anniversaries are pleasant when they bring delightful letters and a book meant to remind me that I am in prison, lest I forget. But the book is attractive and I think I shall read it soon. That in itself shows my appreciation of it. You will be surprised to learn that I have hardly read a book for over two months. *The Four Faces of Shiva* looks down upon me reproachfully. It is a light book, a day or two's reading. But it remains unread so far—The only book I have gone back to again and again, to read in small doses, is Plato's *Republic*. Is that a sign of grown-upness or just age or a kind of second childhood? Anyway there it is and you can draw any inference from it you like.

Only three years more—that is so but not quite so. For you must remember that well-behaved prisoners get what is called remission—four or five days a month with a bonus thrown in from time to time. So in effect I suppose I have completed fourteen months or so. But these dates and periods do not interest me. It is not the sentence or the jail manual that govern my period in prison, and I fear that the period may end far too soon for my liking. I am just beginning to get settled down to a quiet bit of work. It would be irritating to have to leave it unfinished. I require a full six months to round off various jobs—another six months for some other things in mind. That is the minimum—It is easy enough to extend it to last four years or so. Have you not realised that I am a confirmed jail-bird? I just fit in and my mind adjusts itself. Soon I get, as you might say, my second breath and then there is little chance of my panting and puffing. It surprises me how soon some people manage to get out of breath and almost out of mind, talking the most drivelling nonsense and imagining that the world is like their own pale and shivering image. The bull-dog breed.

should keep you warm. You need not return the other *thulma*, the grey one, which I sent for Psyche. I shall not require it for at least another month. Of course if it is of no use to you, then you can bring it back and it will be kept here.

I do not know why you have developed so many scruples about staying with people. Do not worry about this at all. There is no difficulty about arranging for your stay in Dehra Dun, even apart from the Tankhas'. I know that the Tankhas are going to the wedding on the 25th. You will not come in their way at all. I could easily fix you up elsewhere right from the beginning but the Tankhas would not like this. So I suggest that you go to the Tankhas to begin with and spend two or three days with them or as long as you like. You can then go to Ugra Sen's and stay there as long as you are in Dehra. I do not know if you remember Ugra Sen. You have been there before with me and Dadu. He is a very old friend of ours and he will be very happy to have you in his house. There is one drawback which you will have to put up with there—he is frightfully deaf! Anyway we can talk about this matter when you come here next.

I have had another talk with Prakash about your teeth. He says that he would like to X-ray the teeth before giving his final opinion. This is eminently sensible. So as soon as you come here you should pay him a visit and have this X-ray taken. Afterwards discuss the pros & cons and decide finally. If he is decidedly of opinion that the teeth should be out soon, then act accordingly. If, however, he thinks that there is no urgency about the matter and it can easily be delayed for six months or a year, then it might be worth while to postpone it.

In order not to waste time in Dehra, you might fix up your first appointment with Prakash before you come down to Dehra. Unfortunately his telephone in the new house has not been fixed up yet. You will have to write to him and tell him of the day of your arrival here and ask for some time then, or at the latest on the next day. He is fairly busy. His address is Dr. R. Prakash, Rushmi, 13 Lytton Road, Dehra.

I had a letter today from Louise Morin. It was dated 1st August 1941 from Dieulefit.

My cold is much better. It will probably disappear completely in another day or two.

Glimpses does not give the *samvat* date of your birth. It gives the corresponding Gregorian date for that year. Of course this can be worked out but it is a troublesome affair. You had better write to *puphi* for it.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

Nov. 7, 1941[98]

TO PADMAJA NAIDU

Bebee dear, I have your note about Manzoor Jung. Certainly he can go ahead with an Urdu translation of *The Unity of India*. It is a good idea to take the book as it is. It has been compiled very intelligently. As for the Appendices I leave it to Manzoor Jung to have them or not. Personally I think that Appendix B should certainly be given and Appendix A is desirable also. Appendix C is not necessary.

He need not bother about the permission I gave long ago to the Holi Publishing House. These people have done nothing so far and I doubt if they will do anything. I am writing to them today.

Nandu (Anand Narain Mulla) brought out some months ago Volume I of his collection of some of my essays.[99] I think he intends bringing out a second volume some time or other. This latter may contain some matter given in *The Unity of India*, for instance, the essay *Escape*.[100] But Nandu is very slow and anyhow it does not matter very much if there is slight overlapping, though this should be avoided as far as possible. I am writing to Nandu to tell him of Manzoor Jung's arrangement. I am also asking him to send you two copies of مضامین نہرو. Give one to Manzoor Jung.

So Manzoor Jung can go ahead with the translations & publication of the Urdu translation of *The Unity of India* as fast as he likes. As for the second part of the Epilogue I agree with Manzoor Jung that it should be given.

I should like to know who the publishers are going to be and when, approximately, the book is expected to come out.

I must protest against your various insinuations about the photograph given in the book. I do not remember seeing this picture before it appeared in the book, though I have a faint recollection that it was taken by a Rus photographer in Geneva in August 1938. I did not choose it for the book. But why this exhibition of rage and abhorrence? The picture is not bad; perhaps it does not make me look as spiritual and dreamy as you imagine I ought to be. It is a clean-cut, rather practical

98. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
99. *Mazameen-e-Nehru*.
100. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 873-876.

looking face with some strength in it. It is more of a Western politician's or businessman's face than of a nonviolent satyagrahi. It represents that aspect of my character, I suppose. Certainly there is nothing of the lounge lizard in it. All I can say is that your experience of lounge lizards must be limited—Ranjit disagrees with you also. Maurice Collis,[101] writing in *Time & Tide*, said I looked in this photograph like a distinguished Turkish diplomat—why Turkish I do not know. Of course there is no obvious reason why a Turkish diplomat should not be a lounge lizard. However, have it your own way if you want to.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

Nov. 9, 1941[102]

TO ELEANORF RATHBONE

Dear Miss Rathbone,

Your letter of August 28th reached me a few days ago. I have not yet received the copy of *Hansard* and your book on India which you have been good enough to send me.[103] Some time ago I read a book by you on India. I do not know if this same book has been sent by you or another.

You mention in your letter that you have come to the conclusion that there seems to be an unbridgeable gulf between us, and that my 'hostility' is likely to be unchangeable because its roots are in the unchangeable past. I think you are right and it is some gain, at any rate, that this fact is realised. We start from different premises and aim at different objectives, though there may be much in common in belief in freedom, democracy and social progress. It is exceedingly difficult, under

101. (1899-1973); art critic of *The Observer* & the *Time & Tide*; author of *Siamese White*, *Trials in Burma* and other works.
102. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
103. *Child Marriage: The Indian Minotaur* (published in 1934).

these circumstances, for us to convince or convert each other and it is hardly proper for me to take up your time by writing a long and argumentative letter. But there are a few matters you have mentioned to which I should also like to refer.

My 'hostility' to the system that has existed in India under British rule is complete, and yet I have tried, not without success, to distinguish between that system and the British people. I think that this system, like all such systems, has been, and is, an evil. Out of evil sometimes some good may come, but it remains nevertheless evil and its net result is injurious. I have largely succeeded in separating in my mind the system from individuals or the British people generally, because I have many dear and intimate friends in England, because also of my knowledge of English literature and my appreciation of many aspects of the English way of life. I have been fortunate and somewhat unusual in gaining these friendships and knowledge. Very very few of my countrymen have had that advantage and you can well imagine that the factors that tone down my hostility do not affect the vast majority of people here. I have often had to plead with them not to let their hostility apply to persons or the English people. That widespread and deep-rooted hostility is the background in India. Is it surprising? Try to place yourself, though it must be difficult to do so, in the position of an Indian. Or try to imagine a foreign government established in England. Your whole mind and soul would rebel against this.

Do not imagine that the Congress organization has a monopoly of this hostility. You may be surprised to find that among the leading personalities of the Congress there is far less of ill will than among others. We may not have come up to the mark but all of us have been influenced, in a greater or lesser degree, by Mr. Gandhi's continuing emphasis on an absence of ill will. You will find this hostility against British rule everywhere, in Hindu or Muslim or Sikh in India. The members of the Muslim League are as full of it as anyone else. The humble peasant and his landlord share it, the mill-worker and his capitalist employer both feel it. Even the Indian princes are full of it, though they may not express it. If you will glance through any detailed history of India under British rule, you will read many government minutes, generation after generation, emphasizing this widespread hostility. In the present war crisis there are some individuals and groups who are apparently co-operating with the British effort in India. That cooperation may be right or wrong but it is certainly not based on an absence of hostility. It is usually based on a desire or a hope to gain some advantage for their group; or a fear that political or social changes might affect their vested interests. At the most, it may be said, that the general and widespread

hostility to British rule is occasionally overcome by a more powerful, though temporary, hostility to another group.

That is the extraordinary, though not unnatural, position in India after many generations of British rule, and that might well be considered the judgement of the Indian people on that rule. The unchangeable past pursues us, as it does every one, but it is not the past that ultimately influences our actions but the present, for that present seems to us to be a reflection and a continuation of the past. It is always difficult to get rid of the past but it can be done—by a break from it. Unless that definite break comes, we cannot shed it. It is we who want the break and it is the British Government that clings to the past, which is so hateful to us.

As we grow older, most of us, I suppose, believe in the inevitability of gradualness where human progress is concerned. We are an old race and we have six thousand years of culture and civilization, with all their ups and downs and joys and sorrows in our blood and our bones. We know all about patience and gradualness, for we have been in the habit of measuring human progress not just by material achievements, valuable as they are, but by more enduring values. To raise an individual, a community, a nation, in any real and fundamental sense, requires patience and ceaseless and often long-continued effort. A political change at the top may mean nothing at all unless it has a social and economic background in harmony with it.

But gradualness has its obvious dangers as history has repeatedly shown. You cannot be gradual in putting out a fire that is consuming your house; you cannot be gradual in meeting the menace of a flood. You cannot be gradual in modern war, or else you will be overwhelmed. Gradualness has led to the bloody revolutions you mention for the changes would not come in time, and nature, in its wasteful way, had a human earthquake which shattered an old and effete system to bits. Individuals apart, and surely individuals however important they might be at a particular moment are but symbols of other forces, is it not true to say that the present ghastly and terrible war is a result of gradualness, of inability to get out of the old ruts, the old ways of thought, and of evolving new ways to meet the new conditions of life? How much of the responsibility for this failure must be shouldered by the statesmen who were so enamoured of gradualness as to blind themselves to the inevitability of change?

During the last two or three generations there have been enormous changes all over the world. Many countries have changed beyond recognition. I need not give a list of these countries for you know them well. Only in India we have still the background of the eighteenth or

the early nineteenth century. During these hundred years and more, even England with her conservative traditions has undergone vital changes. Europe is entirely different. The United States of America have emerged as the wealthiest and industrially the most developed country in the world. We remain more or less where we were and even the minor changes that have come, have emphasized the retention of the various steel frames which have encased India during the entire period of British rule.

Again, gradualness in human progress may be unavoidable. But even that gradualness depends on a certain environment which helps progress. If that environment is absent and if, on the other hand, the surrounding factors are all brakes and impediments to progress, then gradualness does not begin functioning, except incidentally and because of the inherent tendency for change in human society. National freedom and the opportunities for self-growth and development that accompany it, are essential prerequisites for progress, gradual or otherwise. The conception of gradualness cannot apply to national freedom, except possibly in rare cases where very backward people are concerned, though even there I would hesitate to apply it. It is absurd to think of it in connection with India, and astonishing that any Britisher should advance this argument after a century and three quarters of British rule. Does time stop running when Britain rules over another country and must changes then be reckoned in geological terms? India is not a land colonised by the British people, gradually learning from the mother country how to step forward, and thus developing into a dominion. We do not look to England as a mother country. We are a mother country ourselves and the vigorous progeny of our mind have been scattered over Asia for two thousand years or more and yet look to India as a mother country.

You are right in saying that many Indians are "gradualist" in regard to social reform and that urgent reforms are necessary. Yet many are not gradualist even in regard to that. But nearly all feel that effective and far-reaching social reform is bound up with political freedom and more food to eat. Without political power to give effect to social reform, reformist energies are largely wasted. Political subjection inevitably leads to social stagnation and an alien ruling class looks to reactionary elements for support and therefore encourages them. Hence the vital energies of the nation are largely concentrated in the struggle for political freedom. Even so the question of raising the depressed classes and the ending of untouchability have been made essential planks in our national movement and I am sure that they are nearing solution. In regard to the status and rights of women, the Congress has wholly

identified itself with their demands for equality. Apart from this theoretical adherence, the national movement has brought about a widespread awakening among women and this is the real and permanent basis for all reform. Purdah is on its last legs, except to some extent among the Muslims, but even they have been affected.

One of the most important of the sub-committees of the National Planning Committee was the one on women's role in planned economy. This sub-committee consisted entirely of Indian women well known in the women's movement. They worked hard and started branches in many parts of India for investigation as well as propaganda. They produced ultimately a report embracing practically all the problems relating to women and made far-reaching recommendations. But their work, like the work of the parent body, came to a sudden stop owing to the policy adopted by the government.

You are surprised at my comparing British viceroys and governors in India with Hitler's *Gauleiters*. I am afraid I still see no difference in the extent of authoritarian powers each of these possesses. In theory, therefore, there is no difference whatever. In practice the difference will naturally vary with individuals as well as with the political exigencies of a particular situation. India, for all her weakness, has developed strength and cannot easily be treated in the *Gauleiter* way. Yet in essence the system functions in that way, especially during a crisis and racial arrogance is still very much in evidence in India. In a strongly-entrenched system the individual is just a cog in a machine. In private life a policeman or a jail official may be cultured or humane; yet that same man becomes an inhuman and unfeeling robot when functioning as a part of a machine whose chief aim is repression. That applies to the whole of officialdom, from the highest to the lowest, in a police state such as India is even today. Only a prisoner knows how a prison official behaves in the prison.

I have recently read a book dealing with English prisons. There was a sentence in it which struck me for it had a larger application: "Basically, the English jailer's reaction to any crisis is to abolish immediately and illegitimately all the prison reforms of the last fifty years—In crisis the jail goes swiftly back to normal, and the pretty phrases of the reformers are seen for what they are".

That is exactly what happens in India during a crisis, not in the jails only but in the whole system of administration. We revert to normal, and the normal here is the authoritarian and police rule of the Indian Civil Service. It is significant how easily the Indian administration reverted to the procedure and practices of the nineteenth century as soon as the constitution was suspended in a number of provinces two years

ago. It is immaterial whether the Congress was right or wrong in withdrawing its ministries. The assemblies remained, the members who had been elected by their respective constituencies were still there. A fresh election was possible. But the Civil Service had had enough of this democratic foolery, as it no doubt considered it, and wanted to go back to normal. The ease and rapidity of the reversion showed what, in the minds of the ruling groups, was the normal and the permanent background. Everything else was superficial which could be swept away when it became a nuisance. In view of this, was our criticism of the 1935 Act or other so-called reforms wanting in justification?

I realise that the mood of the British people has undergone a great change as a result of the war and the dangers and disasters that this has brought. But I have entirely failed to see any real change in their mood or reactions to India and her problems. So far as the Government of India is concerned, I am convinced that even the war has not changed their mentality in the slightest. Possibly they mean well. But it is distressing for intelligent men and women to have to deal with and to be subjected to a group of unintelligent and slow-thinking individuals whom nothing can wake to reality. I should have thought that the exigencies of modern warfare, if nothing else, required a swift transition from the nineteenth to the middle of the twentieth century.

The fundamental policy, according to you, pervading my letter seems to be its assumption that I speak for India and the Indian people as a whole. I made no such claim. I speak for myself only, though I imagine that a great many people agree with me. Probably you would not trouble to write to me if you did not think that I had a certain representative character. It is obvious that in every country there are all manner of differences of opinion on political, social and economic questions. Are you free from these differences in England? Would you say that a country where there are such differences should be subjected to alien rule? In the United States of America there is a strong and aggressive body of opinion disagreeing with President Roosevelt's policy and trying to prevent him, as far as they can, from leading his country to war. That is a very vital issue today and probably behind this difference of opinion lie deeper differences. I have no doubt that you deplore this isolationist attitude as you have every right to. But you do not say that President Roosevelt and his Government should cease to function because various groups do not agree with them.

I do not and cannot ignore the problems that face us in India. But I know also that many of these problems have been created and aggravated by British policy. That policy has created all manner of special and vested interests in India and now we are told that the British Government

cannot betray or desert their interests. What would you say if the Japanese Government pointed out that they were committed to the up-keep of Wang Ching-wei's[104] puppet regime in Nanking? What a tangle the British Government has got itself into by its amazing ineptitude in the past and its attempts to play off one group against the other and instead of trying to unravel this, it goes on adding knot after knot to it! We have suffered because of this but probably the ultimate injury to England has been more far-reaching. I do not wish to discuss British policy in India or elsewhere and whether it has been honourable or not. We are likely to differ completely on this question. I am not responsible for all the absurd and injurious commitments the British Government has made in the past in spite of opposition in India; yet I cannot help having to face some of the consequences of these commitments. The only test I can apply is this: what is right and proper for and advantageous to the vast majority of the Indian people, without being harmful or unjust to any group or body of opinion? When there is conflict of interests, those of the masses must prevail.

That is evidently not the test which the British Government applies. For my part, my honour is pledged to the Indian people and to the cause of Indian freedom, and if the British Government is pledged to something else, I regret it and come into conflict with it.

I do not see where the question of betrayal or desertion of anybody comes in, except the betrayal of democracy and freedom in India. Nor is there a question of a capitulation to any political party. The Congress has not claimed any power or privilege for itself or its supporters. We have stood for the independence and the complete freedom of India and the right of the Indian people to determine their destiny, without any interference from Britain or anyone else. Is that a party claim? Indians may differ among themselves on any number of matters, but if there are any Indians who are opposed to independence and freedom, and want foreign bayonets to protect these particular privileges, do they differ in any way from those who are now called quislings and used to be known by other hard names?

It is easily conceivable that the British Empire may fade away and cease to exist, and that the British Government may not continue as a coercive apparatus in India. What happens then to us? I do not know. But the obvious thing to do is for the people of India to choose their representatives who should meet and try to come to an amicable and

104. (1884-1944); follower of Sun Yat-sen and political rival of Chiang Kai-shek; unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate the Prince Regent before the Revolution of 1911; exiled in 1926; abandoned the Kuomintang Government and became head of the Japanese puppet regime in Nanking in 1940.

enduring agreement, whatever that may be, and should also help in establishing a juster and more satisfactory international order. They may fail to do so, or they might succeed only after much travail and suffering.

You mention the example of Ireland.[105] Surely this is a dangerous parallel from another point of view. India is a much tougher proposition than Ireland was.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Nov. 10, Monday

A full week of jail not only for Ranjit & me but to some extent for all the prisoners. The sports we have introduced, and in which the Jailer is greatly interested, have cheered up all the prisoners. Something new and amusing in which they could take part. Most of the ordinary prisoners were reluctant to take part; they preferred watching. About a dozen of them participated and three or four were good. Some jail officials also joined. The satyagrahi prisoners of course were keen about them. On Saturday and Sunday there were various items in these sports. Even on the other days people were practising jumping &c at odd moments. I got one first prize—fast walking (about 100 yards) for people over 45. I took part in the standing, high & long jumps also but was not placed—I jumped a little over 6 feet (standing)—and 3 ft 8 inches high. I joined also in the sack race and in the one legged race and in the blind men in the ring! The sack race was very tiring and last evening I was physically more tired than I have been since I came to prison.

Today there was a preliminary spinning show. There will be a regular competition soon.

Next Sunday—children's sports—the children of course all coming from the families of the jail officials and warders. There are over twenty of them of various ages and sizes.

The rumour of our release is still strong, but it is evident that no official information has been received so far by the jail authorities—not even

105. She wrote: "May I remind you that our experience over Ireland and the Treaty Ports has not exactly encouraged that kind of act of faith. Nor, if I may say so, does the whole tone of your letter, your book, and the utterances of others of your party. These rather breathe a hostility which is likely to be unchangeable because its roots are in the unchangeable past."

for our transfer, as we had imagined. Some statistics are, however, being prepared about satyagrahis. Probably something definite will emerge in two or three days' time when the Assembly at Delhi discusses Joshi's resolution for release of prisoners.[106] Meanwhile this uncertainty has a certain unsettling effect on our daily routine. I have not done any writing work for a week or more.

Indu came last Thursday. On Friday Choithram & Mohanlal Saxena turned up rather unexpectedly. A long talk in which I grew a little excited. Anyway Choithram, after his dose of defeatism given him by C.R. and the Assembly Congress Party meetings, cheered up. What astounding weaklings these Assembly members are! I am afraid C.R. is going to be troublesome. But Bapu is as firm as a rock and nothing matters very much because of that.

Had a letter from Eleanor Rathbone a few days ago through the U.P. Govt. as usual. Sent her a longish reply today. It was this letter of hers, coming in a sealed cover from the Governor's office, that led the jail officials to conclude that my release was imminent!

Also a letter from Louise from Dieulefit dated August 1st. Took full 3 months in coming.

I have been visiting Prakash for my teeth. Another two, or possibly three, visits remain.

My birthday approaches—Indu will be coming then and, I am told, she is preparing a birthday cake and special foods for the occasion.

Nov. 11, Tuesday

Our cell whitewashed today which meant a lot of work, moving in and out. The Supt. who came late said that this was hardly worth while as we were likely to go soon. Apparently we are going though there is little more than rumour. But the rumour is persistent. Usually the prospect

106. On 18 November 1941, N.M. Joshi moved his resolution that steps should be taken in agreement with provincial governments for the immediate and unconditional release of prisoners and for the removal of restrictions imposed on some persons regarding their movements or actions, where "the detention or restriction was due to holding or expressing opinions which, in the opinion of the Government, were prejudicial to the conduct of the war, or on charges for actions connected with industrial disputes, whether the detention or restriction was with or without trial under the Defence of India Act or under the ordinary law."

of release brings excitement in its train. This time I am singularly free from excitement. Vaguely my mind draws up plans of what I should do. First thing probably go up to Indu in Mussoorie for a day or two and possibly return with her.

Today's papers contained the Govt. announcement that Subhas was either in Berlin or Rome and had entered into a pact with the German Govt. Curious and significant reactions on people. One of the head warders asked us if this was true and added that it was like Vibhishan leaving his brother Ravana to join Ramachandra! The British Govt., with all its अत्याचार[107] in India, was like Ravana, he said. Probably this represents a fairly widespread public reaction.

14.11.41[108]

Darling Betty,

Your letter, the books and the telegram have all come. There appears to be a deal of shouting and excitement about the release of political prisoners. I hope you are not affected by it. Anyway I am not. I carry on in my usual way somewhat disdainful of the shouters. If any change occurs in this routine I shall speedily adjust myself to it.

Bul has sent me another dozen of her lovely handkerchiefs. They are so dainty that I hardly dare use them and last year's supply has hardly been touched. I do not know where Bul is. I have a vague idea that she has gone off to the wilds again. If you can reach her, tell her that the handkerchiefs reached me and I stroked them with loving admiration.

A suggestion has been made which I pass on to you and Raja. It is about his finger. Perhaps grafting a bit of skin might do it good. Ask your doctors.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

107. *Atyachar*—atrocities.
108. *Nehru's Letters to His Sister*, (London, 1963), p. 86.

Nov. 16, 1941[109]

TO PADMAJA NAIDU

Bebee dear,

Your letter reached me at the right time—so also various telegrams from Zaheer Manzil and the books. I observe that you are growing more respectful to time, at any rate so far as other people are concerned, and even refer to the alarming speed at which time hurries us into senility. The speed, I presume, is the same throughout, only we become conscious of it more, or some of us do while others go about looking like children fresh from school. I have almost decided to adapt myself to the Chinese attitude to age. I suppose that this is sheer self-defence, though I tell myself that China attracts me and all that. Well, anyway, for two days now I have carried about with me the burden of fifty two years and am gradually getting used to it. I suppose in ten years' time, if I live that long, I shall sigh and wish to be back at 52! The other day I read in a book a man of 75 pining to be vigorous and sixty again.

I like the books you have sent. Do not trouble to send Pearl Buck's new book. I have read it and liked it. I have taken to reading again. I can't write or settle down to any useful occupation with all this silly and absurd feeling of insecurity. Surely one comes to jail for serenity and continuity.

Phelan's *Jail Journey* was good and gave us an insight into English jails. Recently I have also read Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and Remarque's *Flotsam*. The former was powerful stuff. Just at present I am reading a fascinating book by a French aviator: *Wind, Sand and Stars* by Antoine de Saint Exupery.

Indu is going to Allahabad soon—she will spend a few days in Dehra *en route*. She was with me on my birthday.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

109. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

our interview on the 14th, I wrote to *puphi* and asked her to fix it up. I also mentioned this in one or two other letters—to Tara &c. *Puphi* is now difficult to reach as she is due to leave Lucknow on the 18th for Udaipur in Rajputana. I do not even know if she got my letter. Probably it was forwarded to her to Lucknow. She is not due back in Allahabad till the 24th. You can speak or write to her yourself and tell her how you feel about it. I try to avoid these errors but unconsciously I fall into them as I think along certain lines which are evidently different from yours.

The uncertainty about me continues. Perhaps some light might be thrown on this odd subject in the course of a day or two. But I would suggest your fixing up your programme regardless of these vague and uncertain developments. Even if I am free I shall have to adjust myself to various activities and I shall spend most of my time in Allahabad and the U.P.

You might come to see me just a day or two before you intend leaving Dehra Dun. It would be better to come then rather than during the earlier part of your stay here, for then I might be in a better position to judge of events.

As you know, Ugra Sen will be happy to have you as his guest whenever you feel like going there.

I presume Hari is leaving for Allahabad soon. The boxes he has to take with him from us are ready. He can come and take them whenever he likes.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

Nov. 18, Tuesday

The birthday has come and gone—some telegrams & letters and many flowers—Also a visit from Indu. Hari came from Allahabad bringing letters & gifts from Nan and the children. I saw Hari after more than a year—He was fat—much too fat. Yet he says that he has reduced himself somewhat since he came out of prison.

Indu has come down from Mussoorie today and is spending a few days in Dehra. Tomorrow, the 19th, is her birthday. I had suggested to her, when she came to see me last, that some celebration of this, in a small way, might take place on her return to Allahabad—a tea party &c. This would give her a chance to meet some people also whom she

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me to accept the British Prime Minister's dictation in regard to India. You have referred to the morale of the Russians. Since you wrote they have given us astonishing examples of reckless bravery and sacrifice. You admire that, I am sure, as I do, yet that has not converted you to communism. And so, in so far as British rule in India is concerned, my admiration for what the British people may be doing in their own country does not make any difference to my reactions or make me an admirer of the British Empire. I have been a rebel against that rule and am likely to continue as such till either that rule goes, or I go. It is intolerable for me that I should have to carry out the decisions or orders of governors or viceroys or secretaries of state. What are these governors today, even according to British Constitutional theory and usage? They are usurpers displacing the elected provincial legislatures and governing autocratically with the help of armed forces. It is absurd to say that the Congress governments struck work and gave up the job. They refused to carry on unless they could do so in their own way and in accordance with the wishes of their electorate. No self-respecting government could have done otherwise. Yet you say in your speech that each province in India is as self-governing as each United State in America —an astonishing statement. Did you forget all the special powers of the governor and the Viceroy? and the mortgaging of a great part of the revenues of this province? and the privileged position of the services (with all their authoritarian traditions) which could not be touched in any way, however incompetent and unsuitable and expensive they might be? and the totally irresponsible central government behind it all?

You seem to think that all or most of us acted in a huff and are repenting of our folly, and that if we are told to behave like good children we shall mend our ways. Is that not rather naive? If you think that we do not count for much and our attempts are doomed to failure, why worry about us? I should like to tell you that I have never been so sure of any decision in my life as of this one and nothing has happened to induce me to change my views. Indeed I have been more confirmed in them by subsequent events, more especially the arrogant attitude of the British governing apparatus in India. There is some talk of my release from prison. I am not interested in it. But I think it only fair to Mr. Amery and to myself that he should know what my views are. Mr. Gandhi has, fortunately, made the Congress position clear.

You do not seem to like Mr. Gandhi though you have a partiality for me. It is good of you to speak generously of me; perhaps what I have written will lead you to revise your opinion about my statesmanship. As a matter of fact I am in entire agreement with Mr. Gandhi in regard to the political policy which the Congress has adopted at his instance.

I am no pacifist as he is and I am not in entire agreement with his economic outlook. And yet this very war has shown that we shall have to think differently in many matters if we are to set aright this world. Anyway I am at present concerned with his policy in the political field and with that I wholly concur.

You suggest that I might go to England and shake hands and all that. I am always prepared to shake hands but that does not take one far. I have no desire whatever to go to England for I expect nothing from the ruling groups there. Probably only the hard blows that we are all receiving and the harder blows to come will forge our respective countries into something more worth while than in the past.

In August 1940 I wrote an article called *The Parting of the Ways* which subsequently appeared in a book—*The Unity of India* published in London. I said in this that my hope that the silken bonds of the spirit should continue between India and England has been shattered. That was no empty phrase for me. I felt it deeply and I was very sad about it. For I had thought that the very urgency of the peril would shake us out of our old ruts. The hour had struck and urgent and vital questions were hurled at us from all the points of the earth. We put some of these questions to the ruling authorities in England. There was no answer, only a repetition of the old shibboleths. The petrification of mind and system had gone too far there for any understanding even of these problems and questions. How terribly England had deteriorated because of her imperialistic dominion over India!

I am afraid I have no high opinion of the statesmen of England. I do not look to them for any vision or brave step towards a new world. Perhaps events will teach them as well as all of us.

Forgive me for the length of this letter. I do not want to write all this but I must try to remove wrong impressions. We must at least try to understand each other's viewpoint even though we are unable to agree.

Yours ever,
Jawaharlal Nehru

November 22, Saturday

Indu came today for her last interview before she leaves Dehra for Allahabad—She will probably go tomorrow night. I had a long talk with her about all manner of things—India, our heritage, national and cultural; family traditions, what our family stood for involving privileges and obligations; politics, communism, socialism, the student movement &c—I

read out to her also some chapters from my new book. This was the first time we had a really frank & more or less full talk on such subjects in which she joined—I felt happy and contented.

Two days ago I was needlessly aggressive to Dr. Srivastava the Superintendent. I suppose my nerves were on edge because of the constant talk of the release of prisoners and finally Maxwell's speech on it. Dr. Srivastava has been frequently referring to the impending release and this upset me slightly. I did not mean of course to be offensive to him personally in any way. Yet I was a little sorry afterwards for my tone and manner of speech. He has been very decent and undoubtedly meant well.

This release business has become very complicated, apparently. Even the London *Times* (under the new editorship)[116] has joined the outcry for release,[117] and of course some other newspapers in England. This obviously means that there is something behind it. It is said that the Indian members of the Viceroy's Executive Council (or the new members) have threatened to resign if there is no release. Evidently I am the crux of the problem. It is also said that the U.P. Govt. has refused to countenance my release and stated that they cannot assume any responsibility for it or for its consequences. Hallett, *on dit*, has on his part also threatened to resign if my release is forced upon him from above. Probably this is an exaggeration but there can be no doubt that the U.P. Govt. is the stumbling block. A pretty kettle of fish!

I have not helped in the solution of this problem by writing a letter two days ago to Col. J. Wedgwood. I wrote in answer to a curious letter of Wedgwood's. Also the report of the speeches on India in *Hansard*. I felt irritated at these speeches—superior, patronising stuff. So I wrote to Wedgwood in order to remove misapprehensions and to make it clear that I held to my opinions and agreed wholly (on the political issues) with Gandhiji. Release from prison did not interest me and so on.

This letter, if it goes, will not reach Wedgwood for many weeks or months. But probably it will first be sent to the U.P. Govt. and Hallett will not change his opinion about our release after reading it!

116. In 1941, Robert Barrington Ward took over as editor of the London *Times* from Geoffrey Dawson.
117. On 10 November 1941, the editorial in the London *Times* said: "...recognition that the destiny of India is closely linked with that of the English-speaking democracies has never been stronger than at this moment when they are faced by the same imminent peril. The recent partial remission of sentences on a number of political prisoners gave ground for supposing that release might soon be made general, and that it might be extended to Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru..."

Anyway Ranjit is going within a fortnight—any time early in December—in the normal way. I think that, in spite of my efforts to the contrary, I might also be discharged. An unsavoury prospect with all that is happening outside, especially among this crowd of gallant and irrepressible speechifiers, the Congress M.L.A.s (Central) led by the redoubtable Bhulabhai. Anyhow, if it comes, it will have to be faced with composure. What a tower of strength Bapu is!

Govind Ballabh Pant coming to see me tomorrow morning—The day after Ladli Bhai & probably Yunus also coming for an interview with Ranjit (and inevitably me also).

And so to bed.

Nov. 24, Monday

Pantji came yesterday— He looked well, better than I have ever seen him. Rest in jail has obviously done him good. We had an hour's talk—rather inconclusive but indicating a somewhat different approach—As it seems to be taken for granted that I am likely to be released soon, we left many matters over for future discussion.

Today Ladli Bhai and Yunus came—The interview, we were told, was strictly limited to one hour. The interview was officially with Ranjit.

Ladli Bhai seems to have grown older and a little heavier. He made one or two rather naive suggestions about Indu.

Good to see Yunus. He was bright and cheerful as ever, though he has gone through a bout of cholera.

This business of release—Yes, no; no, yes— is getting on my nerves a little. It is nearly a month now since it started. I took no notice of it, but constant repetitions & references to it both in the newspapers & in interviews, gradually forced me to take it seriously. My first reactions were against it. I did not want to go out primarily because I wanted to finish some work I was doing—also because I saw no obvious outlet for my energy outside. But familiarity with the idea made me think of what I should do on release. My mind started functioning in a new direction and during the last two or three days many activities and new approaches in writing, &c have suggested themselves to me. While it is true that our continuing in jail has value and I am sure that it is strengthening our cause among the masses, and, at the same time, weakening the opposite party, still it is a fact that there is tremendous confusion. No one speaks with any clarity and almost every one, Bapu excluded, seems to suffer from arrested thinking. There is constant repetition of

slogan and jargon which have lost all meaning. Perhaps I might help if I was out for a while.

So I begin to want to be out.

Indu peeped in yesterday to say goodbye. She left for Lucknow-Allahabad last night.

November 26, Wednesday

Ranjit will be discharged on December 1st after completing his term—so the Superintendent told us this morning. Another five days.

Some days ago I had a letter from Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji asking me to deliver the Kamala Lectures in Calcutta whenever this might suit me in the future. I declined politely. He has written again a very decent letter and, on Ranjit's persuasion, I have agreed! The subject I have suggested—Shyama Prasad made a similar suggestion—is *The Discovery of India*. But I have made it clear that I will not permit this or anything else to come in the way of political work and so it is possible that I may not be free to undertake it for a long time.

Shanti Prapanna Sharma discharged on appeal today. He is an attractive and sensible young man and I had grown quite fond of him. I shall miss him.

Kamaladevi writes that she & Mridula will be coming here for an interview early in December.

November 30, Sunday

Ranjit is being released tomorrow morning, December 1st, after completing his term. So I go back to solitary living, though not quite, as, in the evenings, I shall continue my visits to the jail proper for badminton. But the badminton players grow scarce and some of the best of them have been discharged.

This evening news came that the District Magistrate Hifazat Hussain was coming for his inspection. Immediately Ranjit's mind led him to think that this might have something to do with my release. Or else why should the D.M. come so late in the day? I had not thought of this but on Ranjit mentioning it, the idea did not seem wholly improbable— However nothing of the kind happened—Hifazat Hussain turned up with his wife, whom I saw for the first time. She is attractive and appears to have some charm of manner— But it is difficult to judge after a brief visit to jail. She brought some flowers for us—early sweet peas &c.

The D.M. released four more of our satyagrahis. The policy of pushing them out continues, either because they are supposed to be juveniles, or short sentences, or any other ostensible reason. Twenty-two satyagrahis remain here still, including two women from Saharanpur. Most of these are from Saharanpur.

Saleha and her little sister came to visit us this afternoon after a long interval. They looked much healthier and better. Saleha brought a message from her mother (who is, I understand, a Persian lady): Tell Panditji that there is another prisoner—the Muslim woman! A pregnant message.

Yesterday I received a letter from Sir George Schuster from London. It was a friendly letter and yet what is one to do when people think differently and have entirely different premises? He reminded me of our meeting at Peterhof in Simla ten years ago and of his two young sons, fresh from school, who met me there. One of them is dead in the war, the other is in the danger zone somewhere. I felt very sad and our politics seemed rather poor stuff face to face with these human factors. Wars and conflicts—is there no way of getting out of this terrible morass which sucks in our best? My thoughts travelled to Edward Thompson and his son. What has happened to his son? The last I heard about him was that he was in Crete or Greece before the evacuation.

We think of this war as a huge, fascinating and exciting game of chess, often forgetting the infinite tragedy behind it all.

And Louise and Jean-Jacques—living a hard and dismal existence in what is still called France. It must be worse for those who have to live through this crushing of the spirit.

December 2, 1941[118]

TO GEORGE SCHUSTER

Dear Schuster,

Your letter of the 23rd September reached me three days ago.[119] I have

118. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

119. He had written: "I am fully conscious that to you it must constantly seem an impertinence for any of us who are aliens to write about what is your country ...still more to preach to you what you should do. I have often felt that I personally...on those occasions when we have come in contact...have irritated you in this respect, as for example on that last occasion when you spoke at Chatham House."

not yet received your book.[120] It was good of you to write to me in the friendly way you have done and, may I say, that I shall always appreciate letters from you even though I may not be able to agree with all you say. So do write to me when you feel that way. As for your book I shall certainly read it carefully and let you have my reactions. But I must say that sometimes I feel, when writing to friends in England about the Indian problem, that our approaches are so different that we do not really meet intellectually even though that meeting may lead to a difference of opinion. Much less do we meet emotionally or psychologically and that is far more important. And yet when we discuss some other subject, political, economic or cultural, where India is not in the centre of the picture, we meet easily enough. Why is that so? The fault may lie with individuals on either side but I think it is due to essentially deeper causes. It lies in the unnatural relation of England and India and I feel that till this goes even the best of us will be at cross purposes.

I think you are wrong in imagining that you have particularly irritated me on any occasion. I had completely forgotten the Chatham House episode till your letter reminded me of it. Not that my memory is not good but I had attached no importance to it. Probably I felt a momentary irritation and, having had my say, it passed. But I did feel something deeper than irritation (not about you) when I read the full report in *Hansard* of the Indian Debate in the House of Commons last August.[121] It brought home to me the wide gulf that separated us and, as I think, the utterly unreal and often perverted way in which India was looked upon by Britishers in Parliament. Perhaps fundamentally this is due to a mental revolt against sermons from others, sermons which are seldom disinterested, and at the compulsion we have to face every time. That is the natural reaction of every Indian, in varying degrees, to whatever group or party he may belong. But there is something more than that.

120. *India and Democracy* by George Schuster and Guy Wint, (London, 1941).

121. On 1 August 1941, Amery said: "Today the major issue is not whether India should govern herself but how she is to govern herself." The expansion of the Viceroy's Council and the formation of the National Defence Council, would be indications of Britain's desire to transfer to Indian hands a steadily increasing share of the control of India's destiny, thus marking "a change, not indeed in the form of the Constitution, but in its spirit." Sir George Schuster said that these measures had made the Government of India representative and had brought the Government into a position in which it could really demand the respect of the Indian people.

I remember well and with pleasure my visit to Peterhof ten years ago. I was happy to meet your wife and sons and I think it must have been the presence of the boys, bright and fresh from Oxford, that took me out of the political shell that usually surrounds me and made me feel at home. I am distressed to learn that one of them is no more. What an infinity of human misery has descended upon this world because of this war? It would indeed be a tragedy greater even than that of the war, if all of us cannot sweep away trivialities and reach down to the fundamentals and find a way to a better world.

I try to be sincere with myself and with the world, in so far as I can, and I try also to believe in the sincerity of those who differ from me. But all of us are tied up in so many ways and are creatures of our environment and have to function with the human material that surrounds us. Even so it should be possible for humanity to behave with some reason if only to escape self-destruction or complete degradation. Perhaps this terrible war is meant to teach us that lesson, but at what a cost!

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2.12.41[122]

TO P. A. NARIELWALA

My dear Pan,

Thanks for your letter & *Life*. Ranjit left yesterday and so he missed seeing the note on Khali you sent me. I am forwarding it to him. I suppose he will be going to Bombay some time or other.

The children's books you sent me reached me safely. They were suitable. Thank you for them.

I am distressed to learn that Roshan is competing for the heavy weight championship. Something must be done about it. Why not try the *shirsasana*—standing on the head? I am keen on it and anyway it would do you good to wave your legs gracefully in the air instead of allowing them to sprawl all over the place. Come to think of it, it would be

122. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

good if all the directors of Tata Steel also indulged in it from time to time and saw the world from a different perspective from their usual perch.

Love,

Yours,
Jawaharlal

December 2, Tuesday

So Ranjit has gone—He left yesterday morning at 9.15—I spent partly in finishing off his packing, bedding, plants &c, & partly in cleaning up the place and rearranging our cell or little room—This rearrangement just to give me the sensation of change.

Ranjit came in the evening at 5 to pick up his luggage and say goodbye. He was a little tired and excited—the change from a year in jail and then paying visits and seeing many people, discussing the present situation with local Congressmen, answering questions, &c.

Rather odd today without Ranjit—After several days' gap I spun again—In the afternoon I felt tired and slept rather heavily for an hour —rather unusual for me—I am beginning to think of going back to the writing job after just over a month's abstention from it.

I had a long and dismal letter from Sri Prakasa today—Poor fellow, seems to be feeling completely down and out and yet he is physically well. News of Narendra Deva bad—News of Shiva Prasad worse.

Tonight I have written many letters: to Schuster, Edward Thompson, Prakasa, Pan, Nandan, Kamaladevi, Mohanlal Saxena, &c.

Indu has not written to me since she left nine days ago. How very casual she is.

13

POSTSCRIPT TO THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

29/8/41[1]

BACK IN PRISON

It was the evening of Deepavali, popularly known as Divali, the Festival of Light. All over India that day millions of houses and huts put on a gay appearance with row upon row of tiny glimmering lights, little earthen cups with oil in them and wicks of twisted cotton, their flames swaying in the breeze and looking like starlets from a distance. Even the poorest hut had its cup or two; the houses of middle-class folk had hundreds of them on the terraces and roofs and the verandahs; while the rich, as is their wont, vied with each other in giving a garish display. Some of these rich people hung Chinese lanterns in their houses and gardens; others in the cities used electric lights, and hundreds and thousands of white or coloured bulbs gave their mansions the appearance of cinema houses.

The streets of the cities were full of people wandering about to see the illuminations or visiting each other. There was an air of revelry abroad, bordering on license, and that night there would be much gambling. Commercial houses and shopkeepers started their new financial year that day with new account books, and every one was anxious to begin the year with at least one favourable transaction on that auspicious day.

I spent that day in Sevagram, Gandhiji's village ashram near Wardha. The day before I had been summoned by telephone and I had travelled all the way from Allahabad, a twenty-four-hour journey. My younger sister had just arrived from Bombay with her children on a visit to us and I was loth to leave her almost immediately after her arrival. And yet it was well that I journeyed to Wardha for that was the last chance I was going to have for a long long time to see Gandhiji.

We met and we talked that day of the present and the future, and in the evening we parted. As I was going away the gentle lady of the house, Gandhiji's wife, insisted on putting the *tilak*, the mark of good fortune, on my forehead, and said "God bless you." "Ba," I replied, "God is asleep."

... I try to view the great war that is going on impersonally as one would look at some elemental phenomenon, some catastrophe of nature,

1. Extracts from the postscript to the *Autobiography*, written between August and November 1941 in Dehra Dun Jail. We have omitted those parts which were later incorporated in *The Discovery of India* or in other documents included in the *Selected Works*. The postscript is available in the N.M.M.L.

a great earthquake or a flood. I do not wholly succeed of course. But there seems to be no other way if I am to protect myself from too much hurt and hatred and excitement. And in this mighty manifestation of savage and destructive nature, my own troubles and self sink into insignificance.

The new moon has come again reminding me of the passage of time, and I have been ten months in prison, and the war in Europe is two years old. When big things are taking shape in the womb of time, it does not matter much what I do or do not do. But still, perhaps, it is desirable for me, for my own sake, to take to the pen and write of the past, and thus give some content to the long and barren days of prison. I go back, therefore, from Dehra Dun Jail to the mountain jail of Almora, where, in the month of February 1935, I wrote the Epilogue to my *Autobiography*.

IN ALMORA JAIL

I had finished writing the story of my life and I tied up my manuscript and put it away till the time of my release from prison. There was no hurry, for another year of my sentence remained. For eight months, with long barren intervals in between, I had occupied myself with this work of writing and sought refuge from the dull monotony of prison life in a renewal of the past. That work was over now and, for the time being, I experienced a sense of relief. Relief at the ending of a task, relief also at the freedom from the bondage of the past. The present was distasteful, but the present would give place to the future, and the future was interesting for anything may lie hidden in its shroud of mystery.

I wanted rest from writing and for some weeks I refrained from it and often lay bare-bodied in the winter sun. Spring was coming and a new life was visible even in my little yard. I busied myself with my garden and watched with fascination the growth of this new life all around me. As the buds broke into flower I was as proud of them as any father could be of his offspring. Had I not laboured for many months over them? And indeed they were beautiful and my rare visitors were full of admiration for them. Sometimes I took these flowers to my wife when I paid my fortnightly visits to her at Bhowali. But, even so, it was with some regret that I broke them off.

These fortnightly visits were the red-letter days of my existence, to be awaited impatiently and then, on my return, to be thought of for many

days. Kamala was in the Bhowali sanatorium, cheerful and laughing as ever, giving us the impression that she had made progress. She was indeed better than when she had come, but how far was this a cure of her dreadful disease, how far just a temporary betterment? The doctors said that an operation on her lungs, if successful, would go a long way to a cure, and the best place for such an operation was Germany. I disliked the idea of her going away so far from me and yet I had no hesitation in agreeing. The risk had to be taken. She might have perhaps spent a few more months in Bhowali, but the monsoon season was approaching and we could not send her across the Arabian Sea during this stormy weather.

So on a May day in 1935 she left Bhowali and I was brought over from Almora Jail to bid her goodbye. I saw the car take her away to the plains below and I returned to greater loneliness, unrelieved by fortnightly visions of hope. How far she was going. Would I see her again? Surely death could not yet come near that face so full of life and gaiety. Death was an impertinence on one so young and with so much to do.

She went to Allahabad and then to Bombay and, because she had wished to see him for what was going to be the last time, Gandhiji travelled from Wardha to Bombay and had his last long talk with her. She asked him, among other things, not to forget the small Congress Hospital she had helped in starting in Allahabad. He did not forget, and now, because of him, a fine and efficient Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital in Allahabad brings succour and relief from suffering to innumerable women. She sailed with our daughter Indira and a doctor friend, Dr. M. Atal, who, in later years, did so much good work in Republican Spain and Free China.

I spent my days in Almora Jail, waiting for news. Again, to relieve the tension of this waiting, I thought of writing. Not in English this time; I had had enough of this. I must try in Hindustani and in the Hindi or Nagari script. I had seldom written anything in Hindi except letters and because of this I hesitated. The spoken language came naturally to me; it was, after all, my mother tongue which I spoke daily and in which I had addressed thousands of public meetings. But to write concisely, and to say no more and no less than I wanted to say, required a mental training in the language which I had not had. My vocabulary also was limited. I read a number of Hindi magazines to enlarge my vocabulary of modern words and phrases, made notes of many of these words, and sat down to write.

I had disliked the ornate and involved style of much of the Hindi and Urdu writing and the new political language used in newspapers and

books was a particularly odious journalese. Many of the modern political and scientific terms had been hastily and too literally translated by newspapermen who paid little attention to the real significance or the historical background of those terms, and these mistranslations had gained currency. Other words and phrases used for new concepts and ideas were difficult and complicated and not easy of grasp by the average man. To some extent this was unavoidable and inevitable, but still a great deal could have been done if the state had been interested in evolving a suitable modern vocabulary or if a recognised body of scholars had taken the matter in hand. But the state was controlled by foreign authority and these foreigners were supremely ignorant of and uninterested in the languages of the country, and our scholars spent most of their time in attacking and criticising each other. Another misfortune was the controversy between Hindi and Urdu, different aspects of our identical language, written in different scripts. As commonly spoken, there was not much difference between them, but they had evolved separate literary forms and modes of expression. Both had literature behind them, old Hindi literature being particularly rich with some magnificent poetry, and being a lineal descendant, in thought and language, of Sanskrit. Urdu was basically the same language, but it had derived inspiration also from Persian and, to some extent, Arabic. It was the mixed product of Moghal times, when Persian was the official language of the court, and this slight variation of the popular language grew up in the towns and royal camp. Urdu literature was also considerable and in recent years it had shown vigour and vitality.

The introduction of modern terms and their translation in different ways in Hindi and Urdu led to a widening of the gulf between them. Political causes led to fierce arguments between the protagonists of the two over matters which ought to have been left to scholars and specialists to decide and not to politicians. Behind all this was also the fact that the Hindi version was predominantly the mass language while the Urdu version was largely confined to the North and to the towns. The villagers spoke a vulgarised Hindi, yet, even the illiterate among them were well acquainted with some of the famous Hindi classics. These had been handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation, and it was not unusual to find simple village folk knowing hundreds and thousands of verses by heart. In their talk they were full of quotations and stories from these classics, which gave them a deep cultural background which many a modern university graduate lacked.

When we went to the villages for our political work, we were not troubled about the niceties of the language used. Our object was to understand the villager and make him understand us. Language performed for

us its primary function: it was a means of exchanging ideas and thought. So we adapted ourselves to our audiences, in so far as we could, and even tried to speak the vulgarised dialect of the particular area. Many of us town folk could not do so with any great success, but among our workers were partly educated villagers themselves and they performed to the entire satisfaction of the audience. But even we had to vary our language somewhat when we went to the villages and this variation was always in the direction of the Hindi form of it. I spoke the same language, Hindustani (or Hindi-Urdu), all over this enormous country of India from the Khyber Pass in the extreme north to central, eastern and western India. Only in the southern areas where the Dravidian languages prevailed—Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam—was my Hindustani of little use. But the Hindustani I used varied with the locality. In the North-West and in the Punjab I would stress the Urdu side of it, and so also in many of the cities of northern India. Elsewhere, and almost always in the villages, I tried my best to speak Hindi, or as near an approach to it as I could. Even in the non-Hindustani-speaking areas, such as Bengal, Maharashtra and Gujarat, Hindi would be largely understood, as Bengali, Marathi and Gujarati were very closely allied to Hindi and were descended from a common source, Sanskrit.

I had rather an odd background in regard to language. My spoken home language, as with most Kashmiris, was more Urdu than Hindi, and I could therefore speak simple Urdu with ease and even introduce in my conversation certain courtly phrases, in which Urdu abounds, thus giving an impression to the listener of knowing more than I did. I had never had occasion to study Urdu seriously and could only read the Urdu script laboriously. In Hindi I had a little more command over the script as I had studied some Sanskrit in my early boyhood. With Hindi literature I was largely unacquainted till I read it in later years.

The political work in our province was almost entirely carried on in Hindustani and officially we used both scripts, Hindi and Urdu, in our notices and circulars. But the large mass of our correspondence used always to be in the Hindi script for that was used by a far greater number of people. This carrying on of correspondence in Hindi and village contacts helped to educate me somewhat, though not much, in Hindi. From any literary point of view, however, I remained equally ignorant of both Hindi and Urdu.

When I took to writing in Almora Jail, I naturally used the Hindi or Nagari script with which I was better acquainted and yet what I wrote had an Urdu background to it. It was not what an average Urdu writer would write, nor was it at all the product of a trained Hindi writer. It was a peculiar *melange* which often irritated those used to the accepted

literary styles. I was ignorant of the use of both of these styles and, in so far as I had seen them, I was not particularly enamoured of either of them. So I went my own way.

To my surprise and pleasure I found that I could write in Hindustani without much difficulty. The words and ideas flowed, except when I was stumped for an appropriate word or phrase for a particular concept. I wrote a number of essays and improved with each successive writing. The partial success of these experiments gave me a certain confidence and I began to regret greatly how much I had lost by not having received a suitable training in my early days in Hindi and Urdu. If I had learned them then as I tried to learn English, and with my instinctive knowledge of my mother tongue, what good work I could have done. As it was, I had become, like so many others, a bilingual person, with a certain facility in the use both of Hindustani and English, but missing that command over a language which results in really worthwhile writing. For that command, except very rarely, can only come over the mother tongue. As it was, I could write better in English than in Hindustani, but not as well as I would have written if English had been my mother tongue. In speaking, much depended on the subject, the occasion and the audience. Sometimes I could express myself better in Hindustani, at other times in English. As a matter of fact in India I seldom spoke in English at public gatherings.

So I busied myself with writing in Hindustani in Almora Jail. But not for very long. Events took place which put an end to my writing and drew me out of the prison before my time was up.

Kamala had gone to Vienna and from there she had been advised to go to Berlin where a famous surgeon had specialised in that particular operation. So to Berlin she went and was operated upon. I rejoiced to learn by cable that the operation had been a success. I was informed that there was every hope that she would recover soon. Within a few weeks she ought to be moving about. She was sent to a sanatorium in Badenweiler in the Black Forest to recuperate and for some days after her arrival there all seemed to be well. Then slowly it appeared that all was not well. Her condition became worse and began to deteriorate rapidly. An urgent summons came for me and the government was considerate enough to release me to enable me to hurry to Badenweiler. I had spent already a little over a year and a half out of my two-year term. Another five and a half months remained.

EXCURSIONS TO LONDON AND PARIS

Badenweiler was a quiet backwater and I noticed few changes from the

old Germany I knew. Occasionally I would pass little boys and girls marching along in military formation and singing Nazi songs or shouting 'Heil Hitler.' Or the Fuehrer would speak on the Radio. The assistant director of the sanatorium had to leave suddenly because of his Jewish wife.

Freiburg was near by and we went there sometimes on business or to make purchases. There Nazism and the swastika were much more in evidence and a boycott of Jewish shops was in full swing, each such shop having a notice to this effect pasted outside. We decided to patronise, whenever possible, such shops and it was pathetic to see their owners overcome with joyful surprise at seeing us.

It has long been a continuing irritation to me to realise that the Nazis have almost monopolised for their purposes the ancient Indian symbol of the swastika. The word itself is Sanskrit and from my childhood upwards I was familiar with it. Every Hindu home knows it as a symbol of good fortune and it is to be seen at all our ceremonials. In western India and elsewhere the mark of the swastika is made at every meal. It is as old as Indo-Aryan civilization, and it is older still, for it has been found, I believe, in the remains of the Indus Valley civilization at Mohenjo Daro. With this honourable history of five or six thousand years behind it, it is a typical symbol of India. And now I must accept it as a mark and sign of Nazism and all that this conveys: I find this singularly irritating. And yet I suppose that it will remain with us, and Hindu homes will continue to use it long after Nazism has ceased to be.

There was no interference with me in any way from the authorities in Badenweiler. I was left to myself. My letters were of course censored and I had a sensation also that I was not exactly forgotten or ignored. I had two visits from some Indians in Berlin, whom I had not known previously and who seemed to be on good terms with the authorities there. It was evident that they had been sent to sound me and to invite me to visit Berlin in order to meet some prominent Nazis. My dislike of Nazism was known.

On one occasion I came into distant contact with the Gestapo. I had ordered a large number of books from a London bookshop and, quite forgetting the new order in Germany, had included in this list several books which had been banned. There were Ernst Toller's plays and books on Soviet Russia and Communism. When only half the books ordered reached me, I wrote to the customs people to inquire about the rest. I was told that these books were banned and the matter was therefore being dealt with by the Gestapo who had referred it to Berlin for instructions. I wrote again to say that I had not realised that these books were proscribed and requested them to return the books in question

to my booksellers in London. No answer came but after two or three weeks all these books were delivered to me.

As my stay in Badenweiler prolonged itself, invitations from Indians in England poured in upon me. They came from all over the country and especially from London, Oxford and Cambridge. Many English friends were also anxious that I should go there. I paid two visits to England, each of about a week's duration. On both occasions it so happened that I had chosen an odd time to go there. One of the visits was immediately after King George's death, the other on the eve of a general election.

I had not been to London for eight years and my previous visits had been entirely private ones. So was this one for I had no official status or business, but nevertheless there was a difference. This became obvious as I landed with my daughter at Dover. We were met by a representative of Scotland Yard who informed me that he had been deputed by the Home Office. Whether he was to guard us from some unknown danger or to keep a watch on us for other purposes, I did not know, but the latter seemed more likely. In India we have long had to suffer such companions who on behalf of the C.I.D. (Criminal Investigation Department) follow us everywhere and often do so very unintelligently. However, the man from Scotland Yard proved helpful. At a whisper from him the customs people passed our luggage without examining it. And then he told me that elaborate arrangements had been made for our reception at Victoria Station in London, and he had reserved a special first class compartment for us in the train, so situated as to stop at the right place. When I pointed out to him that we possessed second class railway tickets, he was nonplussed. He was evidently used to accompanying people who went about in special saloons or at least first class compartments, and, I fear, we fell in his estimation. Observing his embarrassment, I offered to pay the balance of the fare and thus to convert our second class tickets into first class ones. To that he would not agree. So we travelled in a special first class compartment with our second class tickets and I do not know who made good the difference.

A 'Nehru Reception Committee' had been formed in London and a large crowd, consisting mostly of Indians but with a number of English people also, was present at Victoria when we reached there. The warmth of the welcome and the pushing and jostling reminded me of India.

All this, and London itself, pulled me out rather suddenly from that contemplative state of mind which had grown upon me in prison and in Badenweiler. I could not adapt myself easily to the change and the first big reception that I attended had an element of unreality for me.

I spoke in that vein, and because this was unusual, I produced a more abiding impression.

Gradually I got used to the new environment. Yet it was an odd change, not merely because of the crowds and the bustle and activity of a proud and rich imperial city, but more so because of the friendly atmosphere that surrounded me. My countrymen naturally made much of me: others also were eager to show their friendliness. Many were curious to find out what manner of man I was; many were oppressed with the thought that I had been too harshly treated by their government and wanted to make up for this by their own individual good behaviour. It was a kind of vicarious atonement for others' sins. But the real attraction lay in the fact that I had achieved some notoriety in India, and many outside India had heard of me. It was likely that I would play a still more important part in the future in the public life of India.

All this was nevertheless odd. Here was I almost a ticket-of-leave man with an unexpired sentence of six months hovering over him. It was true that there were no restrictions on my movements or activities. I had made this perfectly clear before my release from Almora Jail, and it was agreed that I could go where I liked in Europe or do what I wanted to. But it was also clear that part of my sentence remained and I might have to go back to prison on my return to India, especially if I returned within those six months.

I met all kinds of people during my two brief visits to London and my days were crowded with interviews or other engagements. There were politicians of all varieties from die-hard Conservatives, Liberals, Labour people and Socialists to Communists; and youth organizations, writers, publishers, editors and newspapermen. Apart from a few personal friends, I took no initiative in meeting people. I was not eager or anxious to do so and I did not expect anything to come out of these various meetings. I had no illusions on that score and I knew that my work lay in India, and these pleasant and agreeable people I met were going to make no difference to that work. But it was nevertheless good to meet them and have intelligent talk. Subject to the limitation of time, I was prepared to meet anyone who desired to see me. But there was one exception.

I was not prepared to meet any member of the British Government. This objection was not a personal one, nor did it relate to any individual. It was an impersonal affair. I was not prepared to meet anyone officially responsible, as a member of Government, for the British policy in India at that time. That policy had not only been brutally oppressive, as it often had been; it had also been studiously offensive and insulting to our leader, Mahatma Gandhi. Whether the British Government was responsible for this or Lord Willingdon, the then Viceroy, was no concern

of mine. Both must shoulder the responsibility. If Lord Willingdon refused to see Gandhiji, I saw no reason why I should agree to see a Viceroy or a British Cabinet Minister.

British politicians, Cabinet Ministers, leaders of parties, and the less distinguished members of Parliament seldom had the chance of meeting an important leader of the Indian nationalist movement. Congress leaders rarely went to England as they were either in prison or busy with their work in India, and, in any event, they attached no importance to such visits. But some Indians of a more pliable and moderate disposition paid frequent visits to England and went from door to door and pillar to post, thus giving an impression to British politicians that they were much sought after. Even the average member of Parliament, not noted for intelligence or knowledge of Indian affairs, would frequently take it upon himself to admonish us and give us good advice. There was a remarkable instance of this recently when a woman member of the British Parliament, utterly ignorant of India's problems, addressed a lengthy and offensive message to many of us who were in prison. Rabindranath Tagore was so upset by this that he issued a spirited reply from his death-bed.

I had no desire to encourage the vanity or self-esteem of British politicians, and, I am afraid, I have not held them myself in great esteem during all these pre-war years when they seemed always to have a peculiar knack of doing the wrong thing.

While I was at Badenweiler, Lord Lothian sent me several friendly letters. In one of them he said that Lord Halifax (who, as Lord Irwin, had been Viceroy of India) was anxious to meet me and he regretted greatly not having done so during his stay in India. Lord Halifax, at that time, occupied high office in the Government. I forget what it was. In my reply to Lord Lothian I expressed my regret at my inability to meet Lord Halifax as he was a member of the Government and as such directly responsible for its Indian policy. I added that if any member of the Government wished to discuss Indian problems, he should travel to India and meet Mahatma Gandhi. I was not prepared to walk over Gandhi's body to meet anybody. It was probably thought that there were some differences of opinion between him and me. That was a domestic matter entirely between us two and no Englishman had any concern with it. Gandhi was our leader and I, in common with my countrymen, resented any slight to him.

I wrote strongly because I felt strongly. Subsequently I learnt informally that Lord Halifax appreciated my attitude because it was based on loyalty to my chief. However much he might have differed from me, the old school-tie tradition enjoined loyalty to a colleague.

One of the letters I wrote to Lord Lothian from Badenweiler was later published in my book *India and the World*, although Lord Lothian's name was not mentioned and a few personal references were left out. I met Lord Lothian in London and on many occasions later, both in India and England, and in spite of the great difference in our outlook, grew to like him. It surprised me that one so intelligent and liberal in outlook should, in those pre-war years, have been attracted to Nazism and fascism.

So I did not meet any member of the Government during those two visits of mine to London from Badenweiler. But when I revisited England two years later, conditions had changed and Congress governments were in office in many provinces in India. I had no objection then to meeting even Cabinet Ministers in England and, in fact, I met most of them, including Lord Halifax.

London was very friendly, and even England's ruling class, or such persons as I met, helped to produce this atmosphere and tried to make me feel that as an individual I was on the same level as they were, and above the common herd. It was a pleasant, suggestive, barely-hinted approach which was agreeable for the time being, and full of interest. How far it had carried them in the past with their own people and with others and helped to strengthen their position? But did they realise that it was not enough now and something more was necessary to solve the problems that faced them? Apparently not; they took themselves as they were and their privileged position in the world for granted. The awakening was going to be a painful one.

In London, rather reluctantly, I addressed a gathering of members of Parliament in one of the Committee rooms of the House of Commons. Then I went to Oxford and Cambridge and saw these ancient places of learning full of a ferment of new ideas of revolutionary significance. They had changed from the days of my undergraduate youth. I wondered what lay in store for these ardent young men and women and how long their idealism would last in this cruel world. Oxford and Cambridge seemed to be cut off from that world; they were cases of dreams and pleasant contemplative living, with a soft pervasive atmosphere that lulled the senses and attracted them.

I paid a brief visit to some friends in Birmingham also and then went back to Badenweiler.

My visit to Paris was a briefer one. I went there simply because I loved that beautiful city and wanted to see it again after many years. I had no business there of any kind except to renew acquaintance with some friends.

On arrival I had an unexpected experience. An emissary from the French Foreign Office visited me, as soon as I had reached my hotel and, very courteously, informed me that the French Government would not like me to criticize the British Government in public. The international situation was delicate and they had no wish to complicate it. They had no objection to my saying anything I liked at private gatherings. He added further that the Government knew that I had been released from prison because of my wife's illness and I was not supposed to do any political work.

I was irritated by all this. I had not come to Paris for political work at all but to be ordered about, however courteously, was annoying. I think I addressed one or two semi-private gatherings.

Those were the early days, I think, of the *Front Populaire*. I met a number of French writers and was especially impressed by Andre Gide and Andre Malraux.

10/9/41

LOOKING ROUND

Soon I plunged into public activities and within a few days of my return I went to Delhi to take part in the meetings of the Congress Working Committee. I was attending a formal meeting of this Committee after four and a half years although I had continued to be a member of it throughout this period. I met my colleagues after more than two years. There was Gandhiji, not a member of the Committee, but attending its meetings occasionally, and guiding it in all important matters. There was the old guard, brave fighters for India's freedom and wise and experienced counsellers, who had been so long associated with the Working Committee that it was hardly possible to think of it without any of them—Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the retiring president Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and C. Rajagopalachari. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, also an old member and a dear friend, was there, and Jamnalal Bajaj, who had been a member for a longer period than any of us, in his capacity as honorary treasurer of the Congress. There was Jairamdas Doulatram, and the new general secretary but an old friend and colleague in my province, J.B. Kripalani. It was good to see them all and I felt heartened at the meeting.

of enthusiasts who did not know much about socialism, except a few slogans, but who felt attracted to it because of its idealism and promise. Many others joined it for less attractive reasons, considering it a stepping stone to political advancement. They were eager to get on and thought, rather foolishly, that the time had come for them to push out the older leaders and take their place. Their attempts to do so not only irritated these leaders but also antagonised many of the middle groups and the rank and file who resented these attacks.

... I was proud of the Congress organization and of Congress work in my province. In some ways it was different from other provinces. The Congress was a unitary organization for the whole of India, with the same policy and discipline for all the provinces. But inevitably a measure of autonomy prevailed in the vast areas which were called provinces. Their work was carried on entirely in the provincial languages and they had to deal sometimes with provincial and local problems. Because of this, each major provincial Congress committee had developed a tradition of its own, and a newcomer would have been surprised to find the provincial variety within the rigid framework of the all-India unity of Congress work.

Probably the United Provinces Congress had a more democratic background than any other province. We had well-known Congress leaders of all-India fame in our provinces, but no one dominated our organization. Only the Provincial Congress Committee and its smaller Executive Council counted. We changed our presidents every year and even our general secretaries had to change every two years. In many other provinces—Bengal, Bihar, Punjab, Gujarat, Bombay—the same president functioned year after year. This had certain advantages: a continuity of policy and a certain rigidity in the organization. In Gujarat these advantages were most apparent for there under the able leadership of Vallabhbhai Patel a strong and widespread organization had been built up. In Bihar, Rajendra Prasad, most modest of men and with no desire for being the boss, was chosen president year after year because he was considered indispensable, as indeed he was. In Bengal and Punjab, on the other hand, there was continuous trouble and party rivalry, which was very unfortunate for both these provinces had magnificent material. Ever since the death of Deshbandhu C.R. Das, Bengal had faced these difficulties and wasted much of its energy in party conflict. There was hardly a meeting of the All-India Congress Working Committee which did not have on its agenda some dispute from Bengal or Punjab.

It was our tradition in the United Provinces to abide by the decisions of our executive council and never to appeal to the all-India authority.

In spite of all manner of conflicts, and later of party rivalry, in our Provincial Congress, leading often to stern disciplinary action, there was no such appeal for twenty years. The only exception took place recently when Mr. M.N. Roy, who hardly belonged to our province, preferred such an appeal. This is an extraordinary record when one remembers that our membership approached a million and a half, that thousands of local committees were functioning under the Provincial Congress, and that every year we held a vast number of Congress elections. All these people accepted voluntarily the self-discipline of their organization, for we had no means of enforcing it, except the strength of public opinion.

Ever since 1920, a small group of men had largely influenced the activities of the United Provinces Congress organization. They differed from each other in many ways but they respected each other and, above all, they were devoted to the organization. Among them were: Purushottam Das Tandon, who later became Speaker of the Provincial Assembly, Shiva Prasad Gupta, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Narendra Deva, Sri Prakasa, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Mohanlal Saxena, Tasadduk Ahmad Sherwani, Shri Krishna Dutt Paliwal, and, later, Govind Ballabh Pant, who became the Prime Minister of the U.P. Government. I was also one of the number. None of these men, in those days, was desirous of occupying any high office in the organization; it was difficult enough to persuade them to accept it even when there was a general demand for this. And so personal rivalries and bitter election contests were avoided. I remember how very difficult it was for us to induce Ganesh Shankar to accept the presidentship of our Provincial Committee. It was as our President that he offered his life to the mad frenzy of a communal mob.

In this way we had built up our fine Congress organization in the province. We had shouldered the burden ourselves and not troubled our seniors, like my father or Pandit Malaviya or Dr. Bhagwan Das. When I came to Lucknow in March 1936 I was prepared to find that all was not well. Rumours had reached me of conflicts in connection with the approaching Congress session in Lucknow. Unable to agree to any other name for the chairmanship of the Reception Committee, they had elected me while I was still in Almora Jail. Now that I was going to be Congress President, I could not very well welcome myself, and so I had resigned from the chairmanship. Sri Prakasa was chosen instead.

I was deeply distressed by the atmosphere I found prevailing in the Congress Committee meetings in Lucknow. There were many new faces there whom I did not recognise; many old ones also. But old and new were both absorbed in their party manoeuvring and were filled with

the party spirit. I was astonished at the intensity of this spirit and the bitterness which sometimes accompanied it. The parties had not been formally established or named, but there they were. Vaguely they justified themselves in ideological terms, and there was some basis for this in regard to certain individuals. But the whole thing seemed to me a misuse of those ideologies. In the name of Gandhism or socialism most of the party members simply wanted to get on.

What pained me most was the fact that this disruptive tendency had even affected many of the members of the old group that had held together during all these years and built up the Congress organization in the province. If this was the state of affairs in my own province, what of some other provinces where such tendencies had been stronger? A gradual comprehension of the difficulties in store for me came to me and I was less sure then of my capacity to deal with them.

I have referred to this matter in some detail as this was the background of our work throughout India during the following years. We grappled with it and in our province, even succeeded in keeping it in check but there it was to remind us that the fine idealism of the Congress was being tarnished and a new variety of politician was coming to the front. The very success of the Congress hastened this process and filled us with apprehension about the future. I have seldom troubled myself as to what the British Government might or might not do in India. Some peculiarly fatuous utterance of those in authority in Whitehall or Simla has made me angry, but even that anger has passed for, in any perspective, the British Government in India no longer counts for me. It is a fading concern. But our own people do count and do matter, both in the short and the long run, and their failings hurt much more.

The professional type of politicians and party-men, so long associated with the democratic type of government in other countries, began to appear in India and I did not take very kindly to them or their methods. I cooperated with them in a variety of ways because I had to and because I believed in democracy, in spite of its present-day failings. But there was always discontent within me and a vague distaste for this kind of thing. I felt much better when I came into direct contact with the crowds and masses of men and women. I liked them and they liked me, and perhaps each idealized the other and saw something which was far removed from reality.

While certain developments in India distressed me, each visit to Europe made me realise that, basically, conditions there were much worse. Compared to people in Europe, we still had idealism and faith in a cause and a capacity for disciplined sacrifice (I speak of the pre-war days).

And so, curiously enough, these visits to foreign countries led me to form a higher estimate of our nationalist movement.

All these impressions that I gathered in those days, depressing as they were, did not succeed in suppressing me in any way. I was bubbling over with energy and my mind was full of ideas. Perhaps it was this very energy and exuberance of ideas that filled some of my colleagues with apprehension.

...The position of the Congress President was, and is, a peculiar one. He is elected directly by all the Congress delegates throughout India and, immediately after the Congress session, he is supposed to nominate his Cabinet or Working Committee from the elected members of the All India Congress Committee. The Working Committee is responsible to this All India Committee, and must resign if it fails to carry the latter with it. Both the President and the All India Committee derive authority directly and independently from the full body of delegates, which number several thousand. In case of conflict between the two, the President has to give way or resign.

In theory, the President can nominate anyone he likes to his Cabinet and can thus choose such persons as are likely to support his viewpoint. In practice, however, these nominations had always taken place in consultation with Gandhiji and some of the older members of the Working Committee, who, by virtue of their position and prestige, were inevitably chosen. Thus there was a tendency for the Working Committee to perpetuate itself, so long as it could carry the All India Committee with it. And this it could almost always do if it had the backing of Gandhiji. The whole constitution of the Congress is democratic to a degree, but not even a perfect democracy can ignore a dominating personality whose strength lies in his popularity and hold on the people. Such a tremendous personality was, and is, Gandhiji, and the fear of losing him would lead our people and our committees sometimes to make decisions which, left to themselves, they might not have made. This was not Gandhiji's fault for he functioned in a democratic way and always warned us not to accept his advice if we did not believe in it. But he could not help his personality or his influence...

15/9/41

CONGRESS PRESIDENTSHIP

...A Congress President had first of all to pay attention to the organizational side of the Congress. This, in itself, was a terrific job as the

Congress had grown into a vast organization spread out all over the towns and villages of India. Its structure being completely democratic, it was not always easy to control or bring in line the various conflicting elements that went into its making. We had to face all the evils of democracy—the presence of undesirable elements, careerists, local bosses and elections innumerable—because we were convinced that these were outweighed by its virtues and we believed that through the democratic process alone could we achieve our objective and lay the foundations of true freedom. It was not difficult then, and it is not difficult now, to build a monolithic, authoritarian party in India which would be strong and effective in action. There have been many elements in India, tired and impatient of the slow process of democracy, who would have welcomed this, and these elements grew with the growth of fascism and Nazism in Europe. But the Congress wisely stuck to democracy, both in its ideology and in its structure and methods, and it was strong enough in the political field to prevent the growth of any authoritarian organization.

We stuck to democracy for many reasons. Partly because the fathers of the Congress had been attracted by the nineteenth century democracy of western Europe and America and had given this impress to the organization. But this would not have taken us very far if we had not believed in it ourselves. The old Congress had undergone many a change since its beginnings in the eighties, till this mighty structure of the people of India could hardly be compared to the select gatherings of upper-class folk of its early days. But all these changes had been towards broadening its basis and making it more democratic. We adhered to democracy because we believed that by this alone we could raise the masses of our people and make them self-reliant, cooperative and capable of united action. We had faith in our people and expected that a full application of democratic method would release their tremendous energy that had been suppressed for so long, and lead, first of all, to success in our political struggle for independence, and, immediately after, to the solution of social and economic problems. We had no illusions that this success would come easily or without fierce and exhausting struggles, nor did we think that the social and economic conflicts would be resolved without the greatest difficulty. The power of British imperialism which had dug itself deep into our soil and drained our wealth and sapped our vitality for nearly two hundred years, was tremendous. The inherent conflicts and contradictions of the social and economic structure were obvious enough, and became still more obvious when we saw what was happening in the rest of the world. But the potential strength and resources of the Indian people if properly and democratically organized, were also tremendous. The objective before us was always the positive one of

increasing that strength of the people, and not the negative one of embarrassing the British Government, though the latter often followed from our activities. Certainly we did not think it in any way wrong to embarrass those who were dominating over us and oppressing us. We would have been perfectly justified in doing so, and when, during a civil disobedience movement or at other times, we actually did so, there was no hesitation or compunction about it. But always we tried to think of the future and to build for that future—a future which could only be secure for us if it had developed the strength and the qualities which achieve and preserve freedom.

During these past years it would have been easy enough on several occasions to raise hell in India, from a major upheaval to widespread sporadic outbreaks. It would not have been difficult to put an end, for the time being, to British administration in many rural areas; to make life almost impossible for a government official living away from the larger cities or military cantonments. Deliberately we set our faces not only against all this, but even against minor manifestations of this kind. There was our policy of peaceful work of course, but there was something more than an adherence to an ethical concept. The immediate result would very probably have been a bloody suppression of the revolts and outbreaks and the demoralisation that follows, for on the plane of violence it was folly for an unarmed people to challenge the military might of a modern state apparatus, backed as it was by a powerful imperialism. A more dangerous consequence might have been the growth of internal disruption. A national war against a foreign aggressor nation often leads to internal cohesion in the face of a common danger from abroad. To some extent that might also happen in a revolt of a subject people against a dominating foreign power, but the chances of disruption and internal conflict are far greater in such a case. The foreign state controls all means of communication and propaganda and its policy is always based on encouraging disruptive tendencies and preventing a national front from developing. A quisling class is created which depends entirely on the patronage of the foreign power; and various reactionary social classes also look up to it for protection and fear a change which might endanger their position and special privileges.

The whole conception of a free India was that of a united India, not only for the Congress but also for every other group or individual. It is only very recently that this conception has been challenged by some communal groups. This idea of Indian unity, which was axiomatic with us, prevented us from taking any step which might injure it in the long run, although that step might embarrass the British Government or even be politically advantageous to us for the time being. Indian freedom and

unity could only be envisaged by us in terms of democracy, though we thought of that democracy as something richer in content than the kind prevailing in western Europe. What were the alternatives? A Soviet form of government might have been admired by some, but not even the handful of Communists proposed it for India, though they may have thought of it as a future development. Any attempt to introduce it was doomed to failure, so long as the whole political and social structure had not broken down. The only other possibility was the domination of certain groups or classes, religious or economic, over others. This, apart from being opposed to our basic principles, could never have produced a stable structure of government and would have led to continuous friction and conflict.

Thus both directly and by a process of exclusion we arrived at democracy. We saw the edifice of democracy totter in many parts of the world and we realised that political democracy by itself was not enough. Economic democracy in some shape or form, providing security with freedom, was necessary, if it was to survive. Some of us, thinking on socialist lines, laid stress on this economic democracy; others, disliking socialism or its advocates, were yet compelled by circumstances to accept some of its major premises. There were no advocates of nineteenth century *laissez faire* in India; indeed there could not be in a subject country.

The Congress, as a whole, stood very definitely for the under-dog, but, being a nationalist organization and including in its fold all manner of people, it wanted to please the top dogs also, except those who were definitely aligned with our foreign rulers. It had no desire whatever to encourage class conflict, but the very logic of its activities led it to espouse the cause of the peasant, and that meant seventy or eighty per cent of India, and thus to alienate most of the bigger landlords. In the industrial field also it was supporting labour demands for higher wages, better living conditions and trade union organization. But in spite of this inevitable drift towards economic issues, the real and basic objective of the Congress continued to be political independence, and there was always a tendency among its leaders to slur over economic conflicts. There was danger that this might divert attention from the political objective which was all-important, both in itself and for progress in other directions. The Congress thus, in spite of its many changes and ever-broadening democratic basis, continued to function as a nationalist organization and to claim that it represented the various elements in the national life of India. It could not represent of course those who were opposed to it or those who were attached in some way or other to British imperialism. It was an anti-imperialist joint front in India.

Ever since Gandhiji's domination over the Congress, he had laid emphasis on another aspect which was not political. This was the liquidation of untouchability in all its forms. He had made this an essential condition for freedom, and, chiefly because of him and the Congress, this curse of our social structure has had its ancient foundations shaken. Beyond this the Congress as a body did not go, although there were many other evils in our social system which demanded attention and removal. Many Congressmen attacked these evils as individuals or through special organizations. For the Congress to have attended to all these matters would have been to lose itself in a maze of social reform activities, when the very power to give effect to these reforms through legislation was lacking.

We wanted the Congress to be a political arrow-head cleaving its way to independence, and at the same time shaking up the old economic structure, feudal relics, and social customs. The collapse of British imperialism and the establishment of a democratic state would release such tremendous force and energy that these old customs and relics would not long survive and, inevitably, a new economic structure would replace the old. What that new structure would be the Congress would not definitely say. All this depended on the fullest democracy, for if the old privileged groups retained their positions and inherited power from the British, there was no essential change, and no release of mass energy, which might be a solvent of many of our troublesome problems, such as the communal problem. It was for this reason that we insisted on adult franchise for the constituent assembly which was to draft India's constitution. It was for this reason also that we made the Congress Constitution as democratic as possible.

...Democracy cannot function satisfactorily in war time; it has then to give up some of its cherished processes. The Congress in India has functioned during the last twenty-one years in a continuous atmosphere of conflict, which has blazed out from time to time into civil disobedience. For many years it has been an illegal organization. It is in this environment that it has grown and maintained its democratic basis. It has been a revolutionary body fighting against a powerful imperialism; it has also functioned as a legal, but hardly ever as a constitutional, body, assuming responsibility in many ways for constructive activity. Between these two aspects of it there has always been a kind of internal tug-of-war but essentially it remains revolutionary in outlook, if not always in practice, because it cannot fulfil its historic role unless it has achieved the freedom of India. Gandhi combines the two aspects in himself and, probably, if he had not been with us, there would have been a split. To a world used to thinking of revolution in terms of violence and hatred

and destruction, this courteous and gentle-mannered apostle of non-violence, who refuses to hate or to get angry, may seem an anomaly. Yet, he is the most revolutionary human being that I have come across.

The whole background of the Congress, in which we have grown up and functioned, has thus been of Indian unity and democracy. I imagine that the Indian Congress represents far more than any other organization, the famous Three People's Principles of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, *San Min Chu I*, nationhood, democracy, livelihood. The Kuomintang, as it exists today, has, for various reasons, not got far beyond the first principle though it proclaims its allegiance to all of them.

...Freedom was to us a step, a great step, which enabled us to go right ahead in raising the terribly low standard of living of our people. Most of us had ceased to think in political terms only and the only worthwhile objective was to tackle and get rid of the appalling poverty of the Indian people by a greater production of wealth and a juster distribution. Because of this objective, and quite apart from the desire to protect a backward group from exploitation, we were anxious to pay particular attention to all such educationally and economically backward groups and to bring them up to a common level, which was to go up as rapidly as possible. For a backward group always tended to pull back others.

...This was the general background of Congress thought, though there were innumerable variations in it, and each group emphasized its own particular viewpoint. Some, purely politically minded, ignored the economic side; others, chiefly the socialists and Communists, emphasized that economic side. The reaction of each group depended on its social contents, and all of them found expression in the Congress. Yet, whatever the variations, there was agreement on Indian independence, based on democracy and India's unity, and with full safeguards for all minority groups.

...If there is some ambiguity and vagueness in the utterances of British statesmen, there is none in what Mr. Jinnah, the President of the Muslim League, says. He considers both the concepts, Indian unity and democracy, as absurd and puerile. He demands a division of India into several independent entities—he has not said exactly how many. He has stated that "they would not live under any system of government that was based on the nonsensical notion of Western democracy." He has taken a long time also to realise that what he stood for throughout a fairly long life was nonsensical.

It is interesting to observe these developments in India while a great war is going on ostensibly in the name of democracy and when it is widely recognized that small nations have no future and some kind of international order might grow up as a result of the war.

I have drifted away somewhat from the subject of this chapter because I wanted to say something about the background of Congress work in India. It must be remembered always that the Congress has been and is much more than a political party seeking power for itself or jobs for its members. There are people in it who want jobs and who might be satisfied with limited power for their group. But they do not represent the spirit of the Congress or the dominant urge which has moved millions in India, although, unfortunately, they push themselves to the front whenever there is a reversion to constitutional work. The Congress has represented the idealism of the Indian people and given direction and purpose to their crusading spirit. It has tried to convert this idealism and spirit, through struggle and effort, into the solid strength of the Indian masses. For always it took the long view; we were out to build a great nation, strong and self-reliant, fearing none and friendly to all. What would a petty advantage mean to us if it did not help in the long run? What could we do with lawyers' quibbles when only the people's strength mattered? There was no adventurism in the Congress, though there may have been many adventurers within its fold. We dreamed of India as it should be, as it must be, as it was going to be; and all that happened, whether it was civil disobedience or Congress ministries, could only be looked upon as steps to that end, and judged accordingly. They had no other importance, and the individuals who happened to become ministers or legislators, had even less importance, except in that wider and more distant context. Filled with these thoughts and with this picture of the India of the future in our minds, it surprised us that some people should waste their time in talking of dominion or some other status or some petty changes in the government. All that had nothing to do with our picture; it was an irrelevance and an impertinence. We aimed at big things, and if we were not fortunate enough to reach the journey's end before we passed away, then our children, profiting by our endeavours, would do so. On no account could we veil that picture or replace it by another, even temporarily, for to do so meant our giving up the idealism and crusading spirit that had moved us, to break the pledges we had taken, and betray the cause we had espoused.

And so for these twenty years and more the Congress has consistently and logically followed the path of its choice. It has made many mistakes, failed often enough in small matters, but it has kept its pledge to the Indian people and never done anything which might bring discredit or dishonour to them. It has refused to bow its head, whatever happened, to the might of British imperialism, and kept the shining star of Indian freedom ever before it. I imagine that few, if any, popular organizations anywhere in the world can easily equal this record.

The Congress is a large and widespread organization with its annual paying membership varying from year to year, but running into millions. The number of members on its rolls is hardly any test of its strength or popularity, and sometimes when its membership was the largest, its fighting strength was low. A fighting organization is weakened by an influx of lukewarm members among whom there are bound to be many careerists. During the period of the Congress ministries in the provinces, we viewed with alarm the new type of member who obviously was not a fighter but hoped to profit in some way by his connection with the Congress. We had to vary our constitution in some provinces to meet this new situation. Gandhiji has always laid stress on the quality of membership and discouraged mere quantity.

The real influence of the Congress extends far beyond its formal membership and affects scores of millions of people of all classes all over India. It is this widespread influence which has given it its strength. A Congress President therefore does not merely think of the members of the organization but of the hundreds of millions of the Indian people and his appeals are made to them, even though many of them may not listen to him. He may not address himself to one religious group or a class to the detriment of another, but in the case of a downtrodden or exploited class, he may and should give it full sympathy and support. The touring that he, as well as other prominent Congressmen, have to do is formidable. Even attendance at the frequent meetings of the executive, the Working Committee, involves lengthy journeys, sometimes of a thousand miles.

Apart from this, he is supposed to travel all over the country to keep in touch with the organization as well as the people generally. Everywhere he goes he is welcomed in some state: there are exhausting processions, meetings, addresses of welcome, deputations and the like. During my two years as President I collected a very large number of caskets in which these addresses of welcome had been presented; these are now on exhibition in the Allahabad Museum. Some of these are beautiful examples of exquisite carving in sandal wood, walnut-wood, silver or some other material. But most of the expensive ones, I regret to say, are not good to look at. They were presented to me by chambers of commerce, merchants' associations and other prosperous organizations whose ideas of beauty were governed by the massiveness of the metal and its market price. One dainty and very expensive gold casket which was given to me by the Indians in Singapore was stolen from the Museum.

The physical side of a Congress President's life is strenuous enough, both in office work and touring, but his real difficulties arise from the

responsibilities he has to shoulder, the decisions he has to give, and the continuous effort to see each problem in proper perspective and in its right setting in relation to other problems. Internal conflicts within the organization add very greatly to his worries, and there has been no lack of these during the past few years.

The job has indeed become too big for any man, unless he is assisted by specialized departments under competent heads. The beginnings of some such departments existed in the office of the All India Congress Committee but they were not properly organized or of much use. I set about enlarging and organizing these and appointed bright and intelligent young men to take charge. There was and could be no objection to this, but it so happened that the men I had appointed were ardent socialists and this gave rise to some suspicion in the minds of my colleagues. Was I trying to over-reach them in this way? and was this process of infiltration a part of some deep-laid design? As a matter of fact I had chosen them because they were able and competent and had gained doctorates in London and Berlin. They could not lay down any policy: they had merely to carry out the directions given to them. But the suspicion grew, partly because, in their spare moments, they continued to function as aggressive socialists, and I had an unhappy time in the Working Committee. There was no question of principle or high policy involved, nothing very specific that was objected to, but a vague feeling of alarm and doubt as to where these developments might lead to. We had exhausting meetings, where we eyed each other with suspicion, and we came repeatedly to the verge of a breakup. But on every such occasion Gandhiji intervened and smoothed over matters. My enthusiasm for developing the All India office, however, suffered a check.

The real reason, I think, for the growing alarm of my colleagues was the fear that I might injure the Congress prospects at the coming general elections by my imprudence and needless emphasis on socialism. That fear was unjustified, as they realised later on, for the tremendous enthusiasm that met me everywhere added greatly to the Congress strength. As election time approached there were frantic demands for me from all over India, for my presence was supposed to ensure success.

The Working Committee, as constituted after the Lucknow Congress, included three prominent members of the Congress Socialist Party: Jaya Prakash Narayan, Narendra Deva and Achyut Patwardhan. Jaya Prakash Narayan dropped out later owing to an irregularity in election. The others continued, but the Committee was essentially the old Committee, functioning under the guidance of Gandhiji. It was a good and experienced Committee, but an ageing and a rather tired one. I think many of our difficulties during past years have been due to the fact that

new blood was not taken into the Committee and the same people functioned year after year. They may have been the most experienced and they were undoubtedly popular as individuals, but they had lost touch with the new generation and new ideas were not welcome to them. A feeling of dissatisfaction grew in Congress ranks against this state of affairs.

My chief virtue consisted in the fact that I was a link between the old and the new, and with both of these groups I was at home. And yet with both I felt a little dissatisfied. The older ones seemed to me to shut their eyes to obvious happenings and to move in the ruts; the younger set was often irresponsible and had little ballast.

My election to the presidentship of the Lucknow Congress and subsequent activities certainly had one result which I had hoped for. The bitter controversies and personal charges made against each other within the Congress almost faded away and the political atmosphere was clearer. But doubts and suspicions could not disappear so easily and they came out of their hiding places from time to time.

Once, in the summer of 1936, I had decided to resign from the presidentship and I informed Gandhiji accordingly. Just then an event taking place far from India affected me powerfully and made me revise my decision. This was General Franco's revolt in Spain, which seemed to me a prelude to a European conflagration or even a world conflict. I could not precipitate an internal crisis at this stage.

So I carried on. The general elections were approaching and we issued our Election Manifesto which was well received by the All India Committee and the country generally. Thereafter there was not much argument or discussion in the Working Committee. A new atmosphere of cooperation grew up and we concentrated on the elections. This was a big job as we were running about fifteen hundred candidates all over India.

The Faizpur Congress was an election Congress as it was held on the eve of the general elections. I was re-elected President, to avoid any argument or dispute which might have occurred in the case of a new election, and the old Working Committee was nominated again.

The elections came and resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Congress. The old argument about the acceptance of ministerial responsibility broke out afresh; the decision could no longer be postponed as the Congress had big majorities in most of the provinces and, normally, should have formed the ministries. We decided to accept office subject to certain definite assurances that the Governor would not interfere m the work of the ministries. There was an impasse for several months and then a way out was found and Congress ministries began to function in seven provinces.

Entirely new problems now arose and within the Congress itself there was a continuing conflict between two forces and outlooks—the old revolutionary, agitational, direct-action approach and the new cooperative and constructive one. The burdens and responsibilities to be shouldered by the President and the Working Committee increased enormously.

It is not surprising that under this continuous strain the health of almost every prominent Congressman should break down. Conditions in India—the lack of proper sanitation or medical facilities, the wide prevalence of malaria, the bad water supply, and, of course above all, the great poverty of the people, leading to semi-starvation and undernourishment—have reduced the standard of health in the country to a deplorable level. Even the semi-prosperous and well-to-do are affected by this environment and succumb to disease far too easily. Those who can carry on hard and responsible work continuously, without rest or holiday, for months and years without serious illness, must be exceptionally healthy. Nearly all my colleagues fell ill from time to time and even when they were not actually ill, they were below par, but refused to rest or leave their work. Gandhiji, however, in spite of trouble with his blood-pressure, kept amazingly fit and shamed us all by his energy and the amount of work he did. He has no liking for machinery, or at any rate big machinery, but in his work and his daily routine he functioned with the regularity and precision of a machine. There were no wasted moments, no loose ends in his day, and it seemed that every minute was accounted for.

I kept well during this period of two years, physically well, in spite of all the heavy work and worry. But I was often tired and mentally depressed, and I wondered if all my fierce activity and the activities of others made very much difference to India. All manner of things that I did not like continued to happen, people misbehaved and quarrelled about petty matters, and the bright idealism of our earlier days grew tarnished. We functioned adequately enough, but the glory seemed to have departed, and we behaved largely after the manner of politicians the world over. In Europe and in China, wars raged and fascism advanced. It was not well with the world, and future prospects were still darker.

To escape from this tiredness and feeling of disillusion, and as a refuge from daily work and worry, I tried to cultivate a certain detachment. My mind was prepared for this more than it had been previously because of the changes that had occurred in my personal life. I had ceased to attach much value to myself or to what happened to me. I succeeded to some extent, though not much, I am afraid, as there is too much of a

volcano within me for real detachment. But even the success I achieved was very helpful and, in the midst of activity, I could separate myself from it and look at it as a thing apart. Sometimes I would steal an hour or two and, forgetting my usual preoccupations, retire into that cloistered chamber of my mind and live, for a while, another life. And so, in a way, these two lives marched together, inseparably tied up with one another, and yet apart.

17/9/41

ELECTIONS

I was new to electioneering. The Congress had taken part in some elections during previous years but this had been on a small scale and with a very restricted electorate. The Swaraj Party had conducted the elections in the later twenties on behalf of the Congress; I had been in Europe then. In 1935, when I was in Almora Jail, the elections to the Central Assembly had been contested with success. On both these occasions the Congress organization, as a whole, had taken little part, and the number of candidates was small. What I had read of these elections, as well as what I had seen of electioneering in India and other countries, had filled me with a distaste for this business. It was an odd affair, when sober and upright men grew excited and lost their mental balance, and sanctioned many a practice which they must have disapproved of in their minds. Some of the evils connected with a war mentality flourished during election time and the standard of public conduct fell noticeably. Municipal elections particularly seemed to generate passion and a desire to win at any cost and by any means.

We had innumerable elections every year within the Congress organization itself and with these I was fully acquainted. Fortunately for me, I did not have to stand for election to most of the committees as, being an ex-president of the Congress, I was an ex-officio member of many of them. But I saw what was going on all around me during these elections, and frequently had to consider election complaints and appeals. My extreme dislike of elections and electioneering grew with each fresh experience, and I often wondered how, short of improving human nature, we could rid them of their abuses. We discussed this matter many times in Working Committee and in our Provincial Congress Committee, and devised new rules and checks which had some effect. As

well organized. They refrained, therefore, from setting up the full number of candidates, only to discover, during and after the elections, that they had underestimated their own strength. There was no doubt that we could have won many more seats, both in the general and the special communal electorates, if only we had run candidates for them.

In most provinces, however, we put up candidates for all the general seats and for some of the special seats. For the Muslim seats not many candidates were put up by the Congress, partly because our hands were already full, and partly because groups friendly to the Congress amongst the Muslims were contesting these seats. We did not want to divide the votes and thus enable a reactionary landlord to get in. Our real contest, it must be remembered, was against these reactionaries, who were supported by Government officials. It is true, however, that we felt unsure of winning these Muslim seats, because of their separate electorates, and wanted to husband our resources for the large number of other contests. Here again, as we realised later when we saw the popular enthusiasm for the Congress, we could have won many Muslim seats, especially the rural ones, if we had attempted to do so.

Each province had to face its special set of problems and no single rule could be made to apply to all of them. In Bengal Mr. Fazlul Huq, who later became Prime Minister, had organized a peasant party, the Praja Party. He had had a varied career, in and outside the Congress, and even in organizing this party, he expressed his friendliness to the Congress. I remember his coming to see me, during a visit of mine to Calcutta prior to the elections, and telling me that he and his party were wholeheartedly for the Congress.

The Muslim League had so far not had large all-India backing among the Muslims. It was now trying hard to organize itself for the elections and wanted to run Muslim candidates in all the provinces. It met with disaster in the two major Muslim-majority provinces—Bengal and Punjab—where the Muslim leaders, Mr. Fazlul Huq and Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, refused to come to terms with it, and ultimately defeated most of its candidates. Long after the elections a kind of joint front was set up between the League and these two provincial leaders, who were then Prime Ministers of their respective provinces.

In the United Provinces, the Muslim League was not very important prior to the elections. It was not in touch with the masses and did not come in our way. Our relations were, on the whole, friendly. It was growing in influence and the prospect of getting the League's backing in the elections began to attract people to it. A few prominent Congressmen in our province joined it and even became members of its election board. This was not even considered at the time as a marked

breach of Congress discipline, though I disapproved of it. Many leading Congressmen, like Dr. M.A. Ansari, had in the past been associated with the Muslim League. But elections made a difference.

I remember a prominent Muslim Congressman of our province writing to inform me that he was joining the League's election board as he hoped thereby to prevent the old reactionaries of the League from controlling it. He hoped to arrange that control should remain in progressive hands, so that the League's candidates could cooperate with the Congress. I pointed out to him the dangers of such an opportunist policy. It was a slippery path which would take him further and further away from his old moorings and from us. He expected to overreach others; it was far more likely that he would be over-reached himself. I felt sad at the step he was taking and all my fears were justified subsequently.

Although we had not decided about the acceptance of ministerial responsibility, the lure of ministerships was there for many. Some of the Muslim Leaguers in our province confidently expected that the elections would result in the Congress and the Agriculturist Party of landlords being more or less evenly balanced, and neither in an absolute majority. In such a contingency, the Muslim League Party, however small in numbers, could play a deciding and determining role. It would be in a position to levy tribute and lay down conditions. Some such development had taken place in the Central Assembly where Mr. Jinnah's Independent Party, though relatively small in number, held the balance between the Congress Party there and the official members. It was not realised by the leaders of the Muslim League in our province that our outlook was entirely different and we were not thinking of ministerships and the like.

When the elections resulted in an overwhelming majority for us and we had a very clear and absolute majority over all other groups combined, the Muslim League group in the Provincial Assembly was considerably put out. They felt that somebody had not given them a square deal. That somebody had certainly not been the Congress, for we had hardly come into conflict with them during the elections. It might have been an adverse fate.

In the United Provinces we avoided, wherever possible, opposing Muslim League candidates. Only in two or three instances did we directly oppose them, and in a few other cases we supported independent Muslim candidates who were opposing them. For the rest we actively supported Muslim League candidates as against more reactionary candidates. I must have spoken from scores of platforms in favour of the Muslim League nominees. Because our influence was considerable

among the Muslim peasantry, we were especially asked for messages by these League candidates. Probably the person who worked hardest for the Muslim League during the elections in our province, and made the greatest difference, was Maulana Hussain Ahmad, a prominent Congressman and a noted scholar and divine. Soon after the elections, he resigned from the Muslim League as he disagreed with later developments of the League's policy.

28/9/41

THE DISCOVERY OF INDIA

...Few countries have been marked out by geography for unity as India has been. But India is not a mere geographical entity. It is something much more and deeper. It is an Idea which has influenced the people who have lived here and who have come here from other countries and found a home here since the beginnings of civilization. That Idea may have had the germs of both good and bad in it; but whatever it was, it was a thing of power or else it could not have survived for thousands of years, not only in a changing world but in a changing India. It is a futile process to test that Idea in terms of the present, or to judge it as if it took shape in the environment we know. We must remember that the Idea originally took shape at the earliest dawn of civilization in the world and the books that contain it are possibly the oldest extant records of the working of the human mind. Through long ages, while the world slowly emerged from darkness, that Idea developed and underwent many changes, yet clinging to its old foundations. It is in this context that we must consider and judge this Idea, never forgetting that old environment and the circumstances in which it grew and developed.

It may be that this Idea exhausted its utility long ago and has been a drag and a hindrance to us ever since, or that the accretions of later ages have smothered the good in it. It may be that while there is still good in it, the evil in it is more dominant today. It may be that it is completely out of date now and unsuited to our present environment and problems, and must therefore undergo a radical change, or give place to another, and more desirable, Idea. All this is possible. But whichever way we may intend to go, we cannot ignore that past, which,

whether we like it or not, has shown such amazing powers of recuperation and adaptation again and again. Even to break off completely from it, we must understand it....

2/10/41

WHAT INDIA STOOD FOR

I write about the Idea, the Idea behind India, the vital spark which lighted up the civilization that grew up in this country, and, in varying degrees, continued to influence its people through historical ages. It sounds well and impressive, and yet does this mean anything definite and precise?

...My approach has been that of a man of action. It is the call of action in the present that has compelled me to think of the past and the future—the past that inevitably controls and governs many of our activities, the future that we desire to shape. It is not good enough for us in India or elsewhere to blunder on from day to day without anchor or lighthouse. The terror of the present holds us and drains the energy of mind and body. We cannot escape that. Yet this very catastrophe which overwhelms us in the present makes it imperative for us to take a longer perspective. And so, unsuited as I am for the purpose, I must take to philosophizing.

I cannot forget the world and isolate myself in India. The fate of every country is linked up together now and success or failure will be their common lot. But I have to function more particularly in India and therefore I seek to understand India. That understanding is bound to be limited and will emphasize some aspects and ignore others. I can only put down my own reactions and draw certain conclusions from them which may have to be changed with further knowledge.

...This cultural inheritance of the ancient Indian past, as well as what followed it in later years, is not confined to any one race that inhabited India or came to it. It is the common heritage of all of us, to which every race in India contributed, though the governing and controlling impulse came from the earliest times at the very dawn of history. Indeed, so far as those very early times are concerned, when thought began and developed, it is the heritage of the human race and the world would be infinitely poorer without it. But we in India, whoever we may be, have a particular claim to it, for our forefathers created it and built it

up on foundations strong enough to endure for thousands of years, and whether we are conscious of it or not, we are influenced by it still. This has nothing or very little to do with religious faith. Some of us may change that faith but the heritage remains ours; if we give it up or forget it or ignore it, it is we who suffer.

The religion of ancient Greece is no more, and the altars of its gods and goddesses attract no votaries. But the heritage of Greek culture lives and inspires us. Iran changed her religion but she still proudly looks back to her pre-Islamic culture and inheritance. In China the Taoist, the Confucian and the Buddhist melt into one another and it is difficult to draw a line between them. The followers of Christianity and Islam in China, strong in their respective faiths, are stronger still in their devotion to China and her magnificent culture.

And we in India with this superb inheritance? Some of us have forgotten it or, not knowing it, speak lightly of it; or they mix up the mass of evil with the good and wish to discard both; and then to build a new house without the strong foundations that we already have. Yet some others, blinded by their narrow passions of the moment, wish to discard and destroy and betray their ancient motherland which gave them birth and to which they owe so much. In forgetting India, the India that was and the India that is, they have forgotten themselves. If they denounce her and discard the precious and life-giving garment of her age-long culture, they go out naked into this world of storm and strife.

But India will carry on, as she has done for countless ages, and forge yet another synthesis between the past and the present and between the varied elements that go to make her. Another spring will come after the winter of her suffering and degradation, and her culture will flower again in freedom and unity.

16/10/41

A VISIT TO BURMA AND MALAYA

The general elections in India were over in February 1937, and on April 1st that part of the Government of India Act which dealt with provincial autonomy came into force. But for many months the majority party in the legislatures of most of the provinces could not agree to accept ministerial responsibility unless it was assured that there would

be no interference on the part of the Governor or the Viceroy with the work of the ministries. There was an impasse.

Early in the summer I decided to pay a visit to Burma. I had long cherished a desire to go there and ever since my boyhood the country had attracted me. I think it was Fielding Hall's book, *The Soul of a People*, that first drew me to Burma, and then I read other books. I liked the Burmese I met. For many years we had as neighbours in Allahabad some of the exiled members of the old royal family of Burma, who were not allowed to go back home. Subsequently a cousin of mine spent several years in Burma and was fascinated by the country and the people. Repeatedly he invited me to visit him but I had already got far too much entangled in political affairs to think of long holidays.

The immediate urge to go was provided by new developments—the political separation of Burma from India and the many new problems this raised. So far Burma had been politically an Indian province, but from April 1st 1937 it started off as a separate unit of the British Empire, unconnected with India. I wanted to study the situation on the spot. But this was an excuse, the real reason was my desire to see Burma and her people.

My daughter, Indira, had returned from Switzerland by air for the summer and she accompanied me to Burma. We spent two weeks in Burma and then proceeded to the Malay Peninsula, where also for two weeks we wandered about from north to south. Altogether, we were away from India for six weeks.

Many things in Burma reminded me of India, which was not surprising for our contacts had been more or less continuous for two thousand years, ever since Buddhism went there as a precious gift from India. The British connection was of recent date, and it was as late as 1885 that the third and last Anglo-Burmese War (at India's expense of course) led to the annexation of the whole country and its incorporation in the British Indian Empire. Rangoon had developed since then as a great port and had a large Indian population. Indeed from the point of view of population and business and labour, it was probably more Indian than Burmese. I was interested in my countrymen there, especially as their future was dark and all manner of conflicts were arising. But, above all, I was interested in the Burmese people.

Burma was definitely not India, in spite of its fifty-year-old political connection which had now been broken. Ceylon, on the other hand, though not so connected with India (except as a part of the British Empire), was far more India; it had its own definite individuality and yet it bore the impress of India, racially, culturally and linguistically. Even geographically and in the economic sphere, Ceylon could not easily

separate itself from India. It is too small as an economic unit to subsist by itself, and it has therefore to ally itself to a larger unit. Obviously this larger unit can only be India, unless Ceylon continues to be dominated over by some empire. With their genius for creating trouble and friction, so as to weaken opposition to their own scheme of things, the British Government have, in recent years, produced two additional problems: the Indo-Burman and the Indo-Ceylonese. Whatever the future of Burma might be, it is perfectly clear that India and Ceylon must be closely associated, unless India breaks up and comes near to perishing. If the British Empire ends, as it must, what will happen to Ceylon? It is far too important a place, both strategically and as a producer, to be left to shift for itself without any larger contacts.

But Burma and the Burmese people were different. They appeared to be racially much younger than Indians; the stamp and burden of long ages was not upon them, nor had the agony of thought and mental strife through untold generations shadowed their eyes or furrowed their bright young faces. It was pleasant to watch them, care-free and gay, delighting in life and bent on taking joy in the passing moment. Their women were full of charm as well as activity, and laughter peeped out of the corner of their eyes. Evidently life was not too hard a taskmaster or burden to them, and if it was, as it often must have been, they sought to ignore its drawbacks and forget them in song and dance. Even a funeral was an occasion for festivity.

After the dull ache that India often produced in me, I found this atmosphere exhilarating and soothing to the sense. The politician in me was sometimes irritated at the light-hearted way in which they treated serious problems. But I was not there primarily for politics, and I bathed in the exuberant welcome that was showered upon me by Burmese and Indians alike. As was my habit, I tried to make myself receptive to the many influences that surrounded me, of the past and the present; deserted halls of the Gem Palace at Mandalay would be filled with ghosts and old memories, and the Shwe Dagon pagoda, towering in all its strength and beauty over the city of Rangoon, would embody for me the soul of a people.

Yet politics could not be ignored. I had gone there at a psychological moment following the separation from India, and Indo-Burmese relations were none too good and every effort was being made by interested parties to worsen them. I had gone as Congress President and could not discard that mantle of responsibility.

... Prior to the separation, Burma, like any Indian province, was part of the Congress Constitution and had a Provincial Congress Committee. This Committee had some important Burmans on it but it was

dominated by the Indian element in Burma. It represented India in Burma rather than the Burmese, and thus it had no deep roots in the soil. Noncooperation and civil disobedience in India affected Burma and were closely followed, but there was no corresponding upheaval there. In 1930 and 1932 peaceful rebellion in the shape of civil disobedience convulsed India. There was no civil disobedience then in Burma. There was instead a peasant revolt which lasted quite a considerable time in 1930 and 1931 and was suppressed by the British Government with great cruelty and brutality.

Burma's non-participation in the civil disobedience movement was natural as the Congress, representing the Indian national movement, had no strength in the masses there. That movement itself, though attracting sympathy, was not a Burmese movement. It was super-imposed and flourished to some extent in an artificial atmosphere. But there was something more about this non-participation than Congress weakness in Burma. Noncooperation, satyagraha, civil disobedience, had been conceived by Gandhiji with the Indian background before him and the Indian masses as the human material through whom he worked. It fitted in with that background, with the genius of the people, and with the capacity of the masses for such action. It was preceded by years of training and education in this new technique and by personal contacts between Gandhiji and millions of people in India. There was no such training period in Burma, no real understanding of the technique or the significance of the struggle, except that it stood for freedom and was aimed against British domination. Gandhi was popular in Burma, but there was no such emotional and spiritual link between him and the Burmese masses as existed in India. Possibly even an attempt to train the Burmese people in this technique would have failed, at any rate for the time being, as their whole approach to life was different and lacked the capacity for patient and peaceful endurance together with refusal to surrender or submit to evil. They were inclined to be hasty, temperamental and violent, in a youthful way. Burma's record in crime is high but this is certainly not due to any criminal taint. It is caused more by a boyish exuberance and lack of self-restraint.

It is surprising that in a country where the religion of the Buddha is not merely passively accepted but greatly honoured and actively followed, violence and the spirit of violence should be so common. For Buddhism is eminently the religion of peace and nonviolence. Buddhism was largely instrumental in spreading vegetarianism in India, but in the Buddhist countries a real vegetarian is a rare phenomenon. It would appear that racial traits are strong enough to resist even religious inhibitions and mould the latter in their own particular nationalistic way. But

why should I be surprised? Have we not seen how those who profess the religion of Christ have behaved in the past and are behaving today?

... The advantages of being in the British Empire become daily more obvious to us. We have troubles enough at home with every reactionary and disruptive movement smiled upon by British authority. But, as we are supposed to march towards the haven of Dominion Status, we are being branded and hounded out of other countries which have been favoured by destiny or divine Providence in being made parts of the British Empire. In the Dominions we are not wanted, and in South Africa, in particular, for thirty years or more a fierce racial policy has been followed against Indians and every attempt is made to eliminate them, including many who have been settled there for generations and have never seen India. In East Africa we are pushed out of all the desirable uplands which are reserved for White settlers. Even in Ceylon, we are told that Indians are not wanted. Possibly, a time may come, if the British Empire lasts and continues to function in India, when nobody will want us and we might even be considered superfluous in India.

It is really extraordinary how these advantages of British rule have pursued us not only in our own country but wherever we may go abroad, more especially in other parts of the British Empire. We have not gone anywhere under favoured conditions with a gunboat or financial privileges backing us. No laws have functioned to our advantage. Everywhere we have struggled against unfavourable conditions and unjust and discriminating legislation. Because of an outraged public opinion, the Government of India has sometimes supported the cause of Indian settlers abroad, but it has usually done so weakly and ineffectively. Often it has adopted an apparently neutral attitude or has even sided with the opposite party. Yet we have made good in far corners of the world by our labour and our intelligence, having competed with those who were far better situated than we were. We have reclaimed waste lands and added greatly to the wealth of the country we went to; we have developed trade and industry and built up great businesses; and all we have asked for is a free field with no favour. But even that has been denied us for in open competition we were likely to succeed. For thousands of years we have had little trouble and few conflicts with our eastern and southern neighbours; and even when conflicts have come they have been superficial and have not affected friendly relations for long. Now, under British rule, they form the very texture of our daily life.

It is true that conditions differ now and conflict is inherent in the capitalist industrial civilisation under which we live. The British Empire has long been a ramshackle affair, imposing enough, but built on the insecure foundations of racial, industrial and financial domination. It has two

flood of Chinese immigrants. The larger implications of the Burma-Yunnan road and railway were hardly realised, nor was sympathy for China in her struggle against Japan anything like what it was in India. Even from the narrowest national viewpoint, the direct links between Burma and China were of great advantage to Burma as they brought enormous trade to Rangoon. Apart from the Sino-Japanese war, it was clear that the development of the Chinese hinterland, more especially the areas bordering Burma, would be advantageous to Burma, for Burma would be a golden link connecting these with the outside world. In ancient Sanskrit literature Burma is often referred to as *Suvarna bhumi*, the Golden Land. The new turn of events in China could indeed help to make Burma again a Golden Land.

The early Burmese reactions to the war in China were largely due to a lack of appreciation of international happenings. In this field, as in the domestic political field, Burma was still a long way behind India. Latterly that appreciation has grown, and the exchange of many cultural and other missions between Burma and Free China has brought about a deeper understanding.

The Burma-Yunnan road and railway fascinated me for they brought China much nearer to India. Now another step is being taken which will directly connect India and China—the building of a road and railway from the Chinese side to Sadiya in Assam. This will mean, when ready, the direct land contact by road and rail of China with not only India but with the Asiatic-European landways. Perhaps, in the long perspective of history, this turning of China towards her western and south-western neighbours, and the new links joining her with India, will be among the major events of the age.

From Burma we went to Penang in the Malay Peninsula and, from there, motored down in leisurely fashion to Singapore. We stopped *en route* at many places, especially Kuala Lumpur, and everywhere there were the usual meetings, processions and tumultuous receptions.

Malaya was not unlike Ceylon in its tropical beauty, its forests of regimented rubber trees, its palm-fringed sea-shore. The smell of the tropics came back to me, soothing and languorous and enervating, and it was pleasant to relax and enjoy it to the full. The world of politics and conflict and hustle faded away, only nature remained in all its shimmering beauty of forest and greenery and sea. In spite of many engagements, I stole a few days of loneliness by the sea-side.

...The day I reached Singapore I was taken in a huge procession from the railway station. An editor or reporter of an English daily, going to his office, was caught in this procession and he was amazed at what he saw. Nothing like this mad enthusiasm had been known in that solid

outpost of the British Empire. Am I in Singapore, he wondered (so he wrote), or have I been suddenly transported elsewhere?

It is strange how little our rulers know of the people they rule over. They live in a world apart and meet only selected and approved specimens of humanity. And when, unexpectedly, they have a glimpse of reality, they are amazed and upset, and cast the blame on others.

When I went to Malaya the world was slowly recovering from the great slump of the early thirties. Almost every country had been hit hard by it and to balance its budget was a difficult problem. Throughout this period Malaya produced huge surpluses every year, and not knowing what to do with them, made gifts of cash, a million pounds sterling at a time, to the British exchequer. This remarkable record has probably not been beaten by any country. And Malaya, so far as I can remember, had no income tax. But in spite of this abundant wealth, Malaya had the poor and the illiterate. Wages and standards of living were much higher than in India, but every attempt to form a trade union was frowned upon.

What amazed me was that Malaya should have practically no arrangements for higher education. There was, I think, some kind of a medical school and an arts college in Singapore—nothing more for this big country. Students who wanted any kind of higher education had to go to some distant foreign country. The surpluses that went to the British exchequer could have built up a fine university and revolutionised education in the whole peninsula. Indeed the wealth and natural resources of Malaya could have converted the place into an earthly paradise for all its inhabitants. I wondered afresh at the paradox and the tragedy of this world, where there was so much, and yet because of man's folly, all this plenty remained beyond his reach.

As our stay in Malaya drew to a close, invitations poured in upon us from Java, Sumatra and Thailand. I longed to visit these countries and to make acquaintance with these parts of Asia. I wanted to find out how they were reacting to the new waves of thought in the world. They attracted me also because of their very close association with Indian culture. Thailand was Buddhist; Java, Sumatra and Malaya were mainly Muslim, but everywhere there were Indian influences and Indian cultural remains. In the Thai language, Sanskrit words are common, and in coining new words to express modern scientific and technical terms, they have often gone to Sanskrit. Their court ceremonial is still largely based on Sanskrit sources. The magnificent ruins of Angkor bear testimony to Indian architectural inspiration. The lovely dances of Bali are Indian in conception, and Borobudur remains one of the greatest of Indian achievements.

But I could not accept any of these tempting invitations for India was calling me back. New developments were taking place from day to day and my colleagues demanded my return. And so, regretfully, we left the tropics and ploughed our way across the Bay of Bengal to Chittagong.

I had with me a large number of caskets, given to me with addresses of welcome in Burma and Malaya. Some of these were very beautiful and some were expensive. At Chittagong, to my great surprise and annoyance, the customs authorities demanded £150 as duty on these caskets. I did not have this sum with me and, anyhow, I could ill afford to pay this large sum for the pleasure of having some caskets. To make a present of them to the customs authorities was also unthinkable. Ultimately I decided to arrange for the payment of the money through a local friend and to claim a refund on the ground that all the caskets were going to be presented to a museum. After long correspondence with the Government of India, the money was recovered. Unfortunately, the most valuable of the caskets was later stolen from the museum.

20/10/41 Diwali Day

CONGRESS GOVERNMENTS IN THE PROVINCES

Soon after my return from Burma and Malaya the Congress Working Committee met and decided to permit Congressmen in the Provincial Legislatures where they were in a majority, to accept ministerial responsibility and form cabinets. It had been made clear that any interference on the part of the Governor in the work of these ministries would lead to conflict. The policy to be pursued was that laid down in the Congress Election Manifesto on the basis of which we had fought and won the elections. This was a dual policy: to combat the new Act in every way, and to carry through constructive measures of reform. It was not easy to reconcile these two aspects of our work, but the contradiction lay, not in our policy, but in the situation itself.

... Even at the beginning, Congress governments were under no illusion as to what they could do. We realised well enough how we were hedged in and circumscribed; hence our opposition to the Government of India Act of 1935. The great expectations roused among the people by the acceptance of office by the Congress, the release of mass energy, frightened us in a way, although we welcomed this awakening. We knew that it would be followed by a reaction in the public mind

when those expectations were not realised. We tried our best to warn them of this and to explain what we could do and what we could not do. We told them that this sham and restricted provincial autonomy was still far from Swaraj and independence, for which we would have to struggle afresh.

Soon after he became Prime Minister of the United Provinces (he was also Finance Minister), Govind Ballabh Pant said: "I am oppressed by a sense of helplessness. On the one hand, we cannot abolish certain posts, though we see no need for their retention; we cannot touch the salaries and the allowances of the higher services. On the other hand, the possibilities of effecting savings or tapping fresh sources are really negligible. From inside the government one realizes even more than from the outside the terrible poverty and destitution of our people, and the fact that they are already over-taxed to an impossible extent."

... Both in Bengal and Punjab, the Muslim League had been opposed and defeated at the elections by representatives of the parties now holding power. But changing circumstances and their own growing weakness made them seek the cooperation of the League. This was essentially a marriage of convenience, and Mr. Fazlul Huq has repeatedly come near to a divorce. Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan said to me once (I think it was in 1938): "What have I got in common with Jinnah? Nothing, except," pointing dramatically at me, "common opposition to you."

1/11/41

THE WORK OF THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENTS

... Probably the Bombay Congress Government was the most efficient of all the Congress governments, with the Madras Government a close second. The Central Provinces Government was the weakest and suffered from internal friction. The Bombay Premier, B.G. Kher, was an unusual head of a government. Quietly efficient but singularly unassuming, retiring and modest to a degree. There was a great deal of trouble over the leadership of the Congress Party in the Bombay Legislature and quite unnecessary heat was engendered. But in spite of bitter controversy, during which all manner of offensive charges against all and sundry were flung about, no one ever breathed a word against B. G. Kher. That in itself was a remarkable tribute to the man and his sterling character.

The main burden of work fell on the prime ministers. I knew them all fairly well and I had been intimately connected with three of them —Dr. Khan Sahib of the Frontier, Govind Ballabh Pant of the United Provinces and C. Rajagopalachari of Madras. Khan Sahib was an old and dear friend of my college days in England. A typical Pathan, fearless and laughter-loving, though occasionally indulging in outbursts of temper, he was loved by his people. He did not take kindly to office work but his frank and winning personality carried him a long way.

Govind Ballabh Pant is a big man, tall and heavy of body and slow of movement. He is a son of our mountains and carries something of their imperturbability about him. I had sometimes seen him irritated and a little angry, but I have never seen him lose his temper. He and I had shared together the lathi blows of the police in 1928 and we had also had adjoining cells in prison. A man of outstanding ability, he was the obvious leader of the Congress Party in our province. It was an aggressive Party, more so than in any other province, and not easy to manage. But by his unfailing good humour and tact and his amazing patience, he surmounted every obstacle, and was liked even by his critics and opponents. He is not a revolutionary type and his whole bent is towards constitutional activity. But, like so many others in India, circumstances have impelled him towards other courses. The chief criticism made of him has been that he is too good, too soft. He is indeed the perfect gentleman.

C. Rajagopalachari, known all over India as C.R., is a much more subtle and complex character. He has one of the finest minds in India, keenly analytical and like a razor's edge. He represents the best type of the South Indian Brahman intellect, and the standard among the Brahmans of the South is high. He is brilliant and yet an iron discipline keeps even that brilliance in check and there is no ornate display of it. A successful lawyer turned philosopher, and then man of action and politician, he has come to the top, apparently without any effort, in whatever activity he has indulged in. His life has been one of selflessness and of giving up what he had or could have had, and he has sought nothing for himself. But there is a trace of intellectual arrogance and impatience at others' slowness. He is efficient and keen on getting things done, but in his own way.

C.R. is not attractive at first sight, especially with his dark glasses which make his face look harder than it is. But the face itself is a striking one and full of sadness. It bears obvious traces of the many battles he has fought within himself, which have produced in him a strange mixture of serenity and absence of temper, with flashes of inner turmoil and hardness. His relations with Gandhi have been peculiar and

full of interest. He was attracted by him and his outlook on life even before Gandhi became an all-India figure. Deliberately and through his mind, he accepted that outlook and adapted his own life to it. But he was utterly unlike most of the others who fell under Gandhi's spell, for he was not the kind of man who mentally submits to another. Having accepted a philosophy of life, he interpreted it in his own way and would not always accept even Gandhi's interpretation. Quietly and without raising his voice, he would argue for his own viewpoint and gradually undermine the mental defences of those who disagreed with him. If, even so, he failed to convert the majority, he would accept the decision as a matter of discipline, but his mind continued its rebellious career. The mind did not surrender or submit, though the voice agreed to the inevitable.

Such a man seldom gains popularity with the crowd, but his outstanding ability and the record of his life of self-denial were such that he triumphed even in this. He gained popularity and, even more so, respect. There were those who did not like him, and they either hated him or feared him. Yet he had the capacity to win over those who had disliked him.

Between C.R. and me there was an instinctive and fundamental difference in political outlook and this has not lessened as time has gone by. But the more I knew him, the more I liked him, and always I was discovering new points in common. It was always a pleasure to talk to him and discuss any subject—his range is wide and his reading extensive. Underneath his hard and sad exterior, he is surprisingly human and his public speeches are full of flashes of humour which light up a dry subject. He is strangely emotional and very sensitive beneath that hard surface of his, and sometimes this has led him to sudden acts. In 1936 he was upset by some developments in the provincial politics of Madras and he retired completely from the Congress and all public life—to return as Prime Minister a year later. Always there is a sense of mystery about him, of unplumbed depths, and he draws himself in, producing an impression of shyness. He has found refuge in the philosophy of the Bhagwad Gita and the Upanishads, but his aggressive mind occasionally breaks through that refuge.

Because of his political attitude, Rajagopalachari was not popular among the advanced sections of the Congress. During his premiership he became the special object of irritation to the Socialists. I think he committed several errors which were wholly unnecessary, and these made him the butt of criticism and diverted attention somewhat from the achievements of his administration. These achievements were considerable, and perhaps it might be said that the Madras Government did

more during its brief career than any other provincial government. Even Muslim League critics of the Congress have paid him the most handsome of tributes and deplored the resignation of his Government. Unfortunately it could not complete one great task it had undertaken—the revision of land laws. After exhaustive examination by an expert committee, the Revenue Minister, T. Prakasam, produced a scheme which would have revolutionised the present archaic system in Madras. On the resignation of the Congress Government, that scheme and report were duly pigeon-holed by their successors.

Rajagopalachari was terribly keen on making Provincial Autonomy a success and making it lead to Swaraj and independence. The alternative to this appeared to him to be a long and bitter struggle at heavy cost and perhaps disruption and chaos. He wanted to avoid that alternative and so he put the soft-pedal on the extra-parliamentary activities of the Congress. Our dual policy was one of combating the Act and strengthening the Congress for the struggle ahead, and of legislation and other constructive activities through the Legislature. C.R. concentrated on the latter. When the final break came in the autumn of 1940, and every effort made on behalf of the Congress to come to terms with the British Government was rejected by the latter, C.R. was a completely disillusioned and disappointed man. He had taken the lead in all those attempts and done so even at the risk of parting with Gandhiji. That failure had a personal aspect and was felt by him probably more than by any other person.

Apart from having to choose our ministers, we had also to choose the speakers of our Legislatures. Our speakers turned out to be uniformly successful, but perhaps the least conventional and most successful of them was Purushottam Das Tandon of the United Provinces. He made it clear, right at the beginning, that while it was his duty to be absolutely impartial and to observe the rules of procedure, he had no intention of resigning from the Congress or of abstaining from Congress activities outside the Legislature. He refused to follow the English practice and preferred the American. As a matter of fact the position in India was such that it required an extension of the American practice. Tandon pointed out that it would be absurd for him, as it should be for every Indian, to say that he was neutral as between those who wanted independence for India and those who were opposed to it. All his life had been devoted to the cause of Indian independence and was he to forswear this because he had been elected Speaker? The difference was not between two or more parties accepting the fundamental structure of the state and wrangling about more or less unessential matters: it was a basic difference and there could be no neutrality on that issue. So he

declared that he would remain an active member of Congress Committees and take full part in Congress work outside the Legislature.

Used as we are to English conventions and procedure, this was a novel attitude to many, and most of the other speakers did not agree with it. But Tandon stuck to his position, and when some Opposition members raised the issue, he told them that he did not wish to depend on the majority party (that is, the Congress) for his Speakership; he would resign if even the small minority constituting the Opposition asked him to do so. It was a brave challenge which none accepted. As a matter of fact everyone recognised his ability and absolute impartiality, which not even his own passionately held opinions could deflect, and wanted him to continue. And so he continued as long as the Congress Government continued in office, and throughout this period he carried on Congress work publicly outside the Assembly. And now, though the Congress Government has ceased to be, he continues as the Speaker of a House that cannot meet, and, in common with other Speakers, is in prison.

I entirely agreed with Tandon in this matter. He was an innovator in another respect also. The Government of India Act had laid down that members were to address the Legislatures in English unless they were unable to do so. This was a very remarkable provision. We were asked to speak in a foreign language in our own Assembly, and our own languages were only barely tolerated when there was no other alternative. Almost every one in India, in Congress or outside, objected strongly to this provision, but there was the law which was interpreted in various ways by the different Speakers. For the sake of a few English members or officials our proceedings were to be conducted in a language which the majority of the members did not understand. This majority naturally resented being converted into dummies, and a speaker, even if he knew English tolerably well, wanted to be understood by the House as a whole. Tandon held that an Indian must be presumed to express himself better in his own language than in any foreign tongue and if he chose to speak in the provincial language, which was Hindustani, he was at perfect liberty to do so. He left it to the member himself to judge of his capacity to speak in a particular language. This interpretation led to the proceedings being conducted largely in Hindustani. The official reports were also prepared in Hindustani as well as English.

Purushottam Das Tandon and I had been close comrades in our public life for a quarter of a century, and though neither of us is yet terribly old, we began to be considered as elder statesmen in our province. The venerable and highly-respected Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, on the verge of eighty, had practically retired, and so had another elder

Bhagwan Das. Among non-Congressmen in our province there were other elderly and prominent figures, like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. But in the Provincial Congress the mantle of the elder statesmen had almost unawares fallen on Tandon and me. Even Govind Ballabh Pant had come later within the Congress fold.

We were a curious pair, Tandon and I, very different in our outlook on life and our methods of work, each sometimes irritating the other. Yet during all these years we hardly ever fell out on any important matter and we had an abiding affection and respect for each other. I came to realise that friendship and comradeship did not depend so much on similarity of views but far more on a certain faith in the bona fides of the other party, provided of course that the basic approach and objective were the same. Tandon was straight, his character solid, his sincerity and selflessness unchallengeable. He could not be swept knowingly into devious courses even though some temporary gain might be in sight. He has numerous fads, and has a peculiar way of getting entangled in words and phrases and details, and sometimes forgets the passage of time. But whenever occasion demanded it, he could rise above the passing phases of a problem and judge it in relation to more fundamental things. His keen intelligence and wide experience of public affairs made us seek his counsel whenever any difficulty presented itself, and difficulties came fast and furious. I hardly ever took any step in the political field, especially in our province, without consulting him. I valued his advice for many reasons but above all because of his straightness and intellectual independence....

GLOSSARY

Barawafat	the twelfth day of the Arabic month Rabi-ul-Awwal, observed in commemoration of Prophet Mohammad's death
Bhajan	devotional song
Chakotra	citron—a kind of large sweet lemon
Dasheri	a variety of mango
Dhanush takli	bow-spindle
Doaba	tract of land between two confluent rivers
Garma	a variety of melon
Halwai	confectioner
Har singhar	flower of the weeping nyctanthes
Kirtan	singing aloud in praise of God
Kranti	revolution
Langra	a variety of mango
Mahajan	money-lender
Makki-ki-roti	unleavened bread made of maize
Parijat	synonym of har singhar
Prabhat pheri	early morning procession chanting songs or slogans to celebrate an occasion
Sharda	a variety of melon
Shikara	a hooded boat used in Kashmir
Shirshasana	a yoga posture—standing on one's head
Sir (land)	self-cultivated land
Thulma	a kind of furlined blanket used in the hills
Tilak	mark on the forehead

INDEX

(Biographical footnotes are italicized)

Abbottabad, 402, 472
Abdullah, Sheikh Muhammad, 268, 401, 407–408, 413, 416
Abyssinia—*see* Ethiopia
Abyssinian campaign, 164
Achhbal, 411
Addis Ababa, 679
Adibasi Sabha, 207
Afghanistan, 113, 119, 174, 189, 192, 209, 400, 439
Afridis, 15
Aga (S.P., Allahabad), 494
Agarwal, Dr., 714
Agnes (nurse), 678
Agra, 540, 560, 637, 654
Agra Jail, 682
Agriculturist Party, 784
Ahmad, Maulana Hussain, 785
Ahmed, Z.A., 309 fn
Ahmedabad, 425, 618
————, Congress session at, 61 fn
Ahmednagar, 217
Air India International, 393 fn
Ajanta Caves, 167–168, 253, 615, 668
Ajmer, 560
Ajmer Jail, 561
Ajmer Shooting Case, 560
Akali Dal, 36, 218
Akali Political Conference, 245 fn
Akbar, 113
Akhenaton (King of Egypt), 615
Al Azhar University (Egypt), 205
Al-Balagh, 205 fn
Albania, 488
Alberuni, 546
Alexander (of Macedonia), 383
Alexander, Horace G., 237, 430
Al-Hilal, 205 fn
Ali Khan, B.I., 218
Alipur Prison, 502
Allahabad, 29, 33, 36, 41–42, 153, 197, 199, 204, 217, 225, 231, 243, 247–248, 253, 262–263, 275, 289, 353, 359, 369–370, 379, 381, 383–384, 417–418, 422–423, 429, 432, 437, 445–447, 449–450, 453–455, 459, 461, 464, 467–470, 472–474, 476–477, 487, 491, 494, 496–497, 500, 502–503, 508, 519, 521, 528, 535, 540, 545–547, 553, 556, 558 fn, 561–563, 574, 577, 589, 594, 601–602, 606, 608, 610, 647, 652–653, 661, 663–664, 674, 680, 695, 704, 710, 713–714, 736, 738–739, 743, 746, 753, 755, 788
Allahabad High Court, 536 fn
Allahabad Municipality, 580
Allahabad Museum, 777
Allahabad Patrika, 365 fn
Allahabad Public Library, 529
Allahabad University, 546 fn
Allahabad University Library, 529
Allah Baksh, 215 fn, 708
Allen & Unwin (publishers), 430
All India Congress Committee, 16, 41, 54 fn, 59, 62, 80 fn, 81–82, 91 & fn–93, 96, 98, 100, 129, 131, 135 & fn–136, 138–139 & fn, 146, 158, 160, 169, 179, 216, 223, 228–229, 233–239, 248 & fn, 288–289, 424, 433, 436, 476, 669, 705, 770, 778–779
A.I.C.C. and After (Jawaharlal Nehru), 172 fn
All India Day, 234 & fn
All India Editors' Conference, 562 fn
All India Excise Duty, 329
All India Forward Bloc—*see* Forward Bloc
All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health (Calcutta), 395

All India Muslim League—*see* Muslim League
All India National Liberal Federation, 259 fn
All India Radio, 356–357
All India Science Congress, 395 fn
All India Sikh League, 245 fn
All India Spinners' Association, 330–331, 404
All India States Muslim League, 260 & fn
All India States People's Conference, 173, 260 fn, 269 fn, 272, 274, 585, 591
All India Women's Conference, 340, 617
All Jammu & Kashmir National Conference, 268, 408–409
All Parties Conference, 195
Almora, 445, 535, 558
Almora District Jail, 162, 754–755, 757–758, 761, 768, 781
Alvares, Rev. Peter J., 82 & fn
Amaratunga, 210
Amarnath, 412
Amarnath Valley, 403
Amar Singh Club (Srinagar), 415
Ambalal Committee, 501
Ambedkar, B.R., 259
American Interest in International Problems (A.T. Mahan), 613
American Revolution, 621
American Youth Congress, 435
American Youth Movement, 426
Amery, L.S., 29 & *fn*, 45 & fn, 107–109, 127 & fn, 145, 504 & fn, 508, 523, 564, 576, 578 fn, 624, 742, 748 fn
Amrita, 365 fn
Amrita Bazar Patrika, 365 fn, 391
Amritsar, 623, 628
Anand (Gujarat), 426–427, 434
Anand Bhawan (Allahabad), 243, 381, 384, 451, 466, 493, 502, 507, 510, 520, 525, 527–528, 541, 543, 545, 548, 588, 619, 640, 668, 704–705, 708, 716, 739
Anand Mayi Devi, 680
Anantnag, 268 fn, 411, 415
Andamans, 574
Andheri, 214, 459–460, 463–464
Andrews, C.F., 381–382, 456
Aney, M.S., 709 & fn
Angkor Wat, 795
Anglo-Burmese War (Third), 788
Annual Register of World Events, 680 fn
Ansari, Hidayat Ullah, 424 & *fn*
———, M.A., 250 fn, 765, 784
———, Shaukat Ullah, 250 & *fn*
———, Zohra, 677–678
Antibes, 508
Anti-Compromise Conference, 260 fn
Anti-Fascist Association, 585
Anzac reports, 664
Aosta, Duke of, 679
Arabia, 209
Aristotle, 529
Arora, Gopi Krishna, 570
Aru, 412
Arundale, G.S., 87 fn
Asaf Ali, 34 & fn, 41, 51, 709, 712
Asafjah dynasty, 271 & fn
Ashby Hall, 538
Ashoka, 383
Asia, 517, 711
Assam, 346–347, 794
Associated Journals Limited, 359–360, 438
Associated Press, 130, 237, 261, 263, 354, 719
Atal, Madan, 343, 479, 495, 536, 538, 586–589, 596–597, 601, 604, 606, 608–610, 616, 618, 643, 647–648, 755
At Freedom's Door (Sir Malcolm Darling), 23 fn
Atlanta University, 397 fn
Atlantic Monthly, 14, 24 fn, 652, 713
Attock, 472
'August Offer', 121 fn, 129 fn, 135 fn
Aundh, 475
———, Raja of, 475
Australia, 188 & fn
Autobiography (Jawaharlal Nehru), 15, 50, 162, 417, 419, 476, 544 fn, 552–553, 576, 579–580, 585, 593, 607, 615, 653 & fn, 670, 681, 691, 694, 753 fn, 754—See also *Toward Freedom*

Auto II, 696, 714
Avadh districts, 183, 723
Avasthi, 572
Ayodhya, U.P. Political Conference at, 557
Azad, Abul Kalam, 14, 15 fn–16, 29–30, 33–34, 70, 76 & fn, 80–81, 82 fn, 94, 121 & fn, 172, 186, 203–205, 212, 216–218, 226, 228, 230–231, 244, 245 fn, 247 & fn–248 & fn, 250–252, 272, 287, 304, 356–357, 424, 446–448, 453, 675–676, 708, 764
Azad, Chandra Shekhar, 560
Azadpur, 642
Azamgarh District, 561

Bachhraj & Co. Ltd., 462, 493, 601, 619, 651, 711
Badenhock, 700
Badenweiler, 162, 691, 758–760, 762–763
Badrinath, 384, 661
Badshah Khan—*see* Khan, Abdul Ghaffar
Bajaj, Jamnalal, 354, 356, 648, 677–678, 680, 709–710, 764
Bajpai, Harish Chandra, 502 & fn–503, 507, 512
Baldwin, Stanley, 85
Bali, 795
Balkan states, 623
Ballia, 153
Baltic states, 74 & fn
Baltistan, 474
Banaras (Benares), 231, 423, 477, 545, 561, 566 fn, 661
Banaras Hindu University, 327 fn
Banaras Hindu University Engineering College, 559
Banaras Hindu University Library, 580
Banaras Hindu University Science College, 559
Banda, 547, 555
Banerji, Purnima (Nora), 591, 607
Bangalore, 321–322, 701
Banihal Pass, 473–474
Bank of France, 717
Bara Banki, 183–185, 247
Bara Banki District Congress Committee, 184
Baramula, 268 fn
Barcelona, 170, 422, 480, 498, 505, 508, 539, 585
Bareilly, 569
Baroda, 288
Barret, P.F., 642–643
Barrington-Ward, Robert, 744 fn
Barrons, J., 531 fn
Basic scheme of education, 169, 379, 406
Bastille, fall of, 71–72
Beach Candy Club (Bombay), 680
Beas district, 512
Beaumont, Sir John William Fisher, 675 & *fn*
Beethoven, 601
Belgium, 27 & fn, 30, 37, 73, 84, 105, 137, 176, 179, 465
Bellary Central Jail, 560
Bengal, 263 & fn, 347, 671, 757, 767, 783, 797
Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, 263 fn, 365
Benn, Wedgwood, 31 fn
Berlin, 136, 150, 237 fn, 345, 735, 758–759, 778
Besant, Annie, 584, 672
Bessarabia, 74 & fn
Bex, 481, 496, 499, 539
Bhagat, P.S., 678 & *fn*–680
Bhagwan Das, 768, 802
Bhagwati Charan, 560
Bhandari, Dr., 377, 390, 445, 451, 453, 457–458, 460–461, 463–464, 469, 524–525, 527, 538, 547, 552
Bharatiya Kranti Dal, 189 fn
Bharatiya Lok Dal, 189 fn
Bhargava, Gopi Chand, 35
——, Narain Prasad, 682
Bhave, Vinoba, 160 fn, 182 fn, 185, 193–194, 197–198, 248 & fn, 372–373, 487, 649
Bhola, 695
Bhopal, 288
Bhowali, 754–755
Bhuta, Messrs. (architects), 706
272–273

Bihar, 1 fn, 168 fn, 323–325, 326 fn–327, 329 & fn, 333–334, 676, 767
Bihar Earthquake Relief, 561
Bilhaur Tehsil (Kanpur Dist.), 560
Birla, Brij Mohan, 326 & *fn*, 329
———, G.D., 326 fn, 708
Birmingham, 576, 763
Black Forest (Germany), 758
Blomfield, Jane Seymour, 357
Blunt, Wilfrid S., 616 & *fn*
Boars Hill, 640
Bodh Gaya, 381, 450
Bodhisatvas, 167, 590
Boer War, 90 & fn
Bokhari, 357
Bolsheviks, 2 fn
Bombay, 29, 54, 81, 82 fn, 130–131, 135 fn, 139, 146, 182, 214, 228, 233, 235 fn–237 & fn, 239, 251, 259, 262, 283, 286, 297, 309, 321, 339–340, 356, 384, 390–391, 421 & fn–422, 424–427, 429, 433, 435–437, 451, 454–455, 458–460, 463–465, 467–468, 474, 508, 513, 526, 529, 534, 558, 574, 576, 601, 603 & fn, 608, 614, 617, 619, 647, 649, 665–666, 674–675, 678, 680, 701, 703, 739, 749, 753, 755, 767
Bombay Muslim League Conference, 215 & fn
Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee, 12 fn
Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, 233, 665 & fn, 674
Book Company (Calcutta), 608
Borobudur, 795
Bose, Subhas Chandra, 170, 172, 204, 260 fn, 263 fn, 680, 735, 765
Bosphorus, 3
Bourbons, 71
Brailsford, 546
Brelvi, S.A., 251
Brijbehara, 403, 415
Brijlal, 521–522, 524
Brindavan, 383
Bristol, 445
British Broadcasting Corporation, 23 & fn, 461
British Commonwealth, 42, 45 fn
British Home Office, 760
British Youth Movement, 426, 435
Buck, Pearl S., 711 & *fn*, 736
Buddhi, 567 & fn
Buell, Raymond Leslie, 114 fn
Burma, 29 fn, 113, 168, 174, 188 fn-189, 192, 203 & fn, 207–210, 226, 346, 380, 383, 439, 540, 664 fn, 787–790, 792–794, 796
Burma-China Road, 66 & fn, 85, 86 fn, 177, 342, 346, 793–794
Burma Provincial Congress Committee, 789
Burmese National League—*see* Dobama Asiayone
Burmese Public Service Commission, 203 fn
Burmese Senate, 203
Butler Palace (Lucknow), 723

Calcutta, 170, 253, 321–322, 340, 347–348, 366, 394, 395 fn, 456, 520, 524, 529–530, 594, 606–611, 613–614, 616, 618–619, 636–637, 643, 739, 746, 783
Calcutta University, 394–395, 430, 546, 739 fn
California, 394
Cambridge, 503, 760, 763, 765
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir Henry, 90 & *fn*
Canada, 74, 188
Cannanore Jail, 559
Cannes, 461
Cape of Good Hope, 463, 480, 498, 505, 567
Captain, Goshiben (Psyche), 459–460, 508, 558, 562, 565, 590, 609, 640, 647, 713–715, 718, 721, 724
Carritt, Michael, 377
Carter, Edward C., 13, 114
Catherine, 477
Cawnpore—*see* Kanpur
Caxton Hall (London), 206 & fn
Cellular Jail (Port Blair, Andamans), 559–561
Central Asia, 396, 400
Central Europe, 165, 488
Central India Agency, 257

Central India States People's Conference, 257
Central Legislative Assembly, 175, 178, 260 & fn, 426, 551–552, 626, 734, 781, 784
Central Provinces, 273 & fn
Ceylon—*see* Sri Lanka
Ceylon Indian Congress, 209–211, 240
Ceylon National Congress, 209, 210 fn, 226 & fn, 231
Ceylon Observer, 211
Chaman Lal, Diwan, 538
Chamberlain, Sir Austen, 90–91
————, Neville, 33 & fn, 83–85, 104, 144–145, 170–171, 177, 624
Chanakya, 528, 541
Chand, Narinder, 423
Chanda, Anil Kumar, 670
Chandanwari, 412
Chapra, 701
Charan Singh, 189 & *fn*
Chasme Shahi, 403
Chatham House, 747 fn–748
Chattari, Nawab of, 723
Chattopadhyaya, Kamaladevi, 432, 713, 746, 750
Chaubeypur, 504 fn
Chen, 340
Cheng Yin-fun, 344 & *fn*
Chesieres, 445
Chheoki, 494
Chhota Nagpur, 1, 446
Chiang Kai-shek, 86 & fn, 175, 340–342, 515–516, 518–520, 530, 672, 732 fn
————, Madame, 175, 341, 343, 516, 519–520, 526, 527, 530, 672, 711, 713–714, 723, 737
Child Marriage: The Indian Minotaur (E.F. Rathbone), 726 fn
China, 24, 43, 65–66 & fn, 73, 78, 83–86, 113, 119–120, 141, 149 & fn–150, 156, 165–166, 174–175, 180, 189, 191–192, 208–209, 226, 339 & fn–349, 358, 368, 398 fn, 402–403, 426, 432, 435, 439, 441, 453, 468, 481, 488, 493, 515–520, 526, 539, 545, 571, 584–585, 613, 631, 670, 689, 718, 736–737, 755, 780, 787, 792–794
China Builds for Democracy (Nym Wales), 713 & fn
China, Spain and the War (Jawaharlal Nehru), 418–419, 585
Chinese Buddhist Mission, 253, 340
Chinese Cooperatives, 713,
Chinese Revolution (1911), 732 fn
Chinese Turkistan, 341
Chinese Youth Movement, 426, 435
Chittagong, 347, 796
Chopra, R.N., 395 & *fn*
Chu Chia-hwa, 339–340
Chungking, 150, 174, 342, 345, 349, 480, 516, 520, 526–527, 585
Churchill, Sir Winston, 33 fn, 63 fn, 83–85, 114 fn, 144, 194, 623, 672, 741–742
Civic Guards, 53, 58, 60
Civil Marriage Act, 318
Clement, Traverse, 387 & fn
Clinique Frenes, 454
Collis, Maurice, 726 & *fn*
Colombo, 427
Columbia University, 396
Communal harmony (Sir Percival Spear), 419 fn
Communists (British), 761
Communists (Indian), 98, 232 & fn, 650, 692, 773, 775
Communist Party of India, 94, 231–232 & fn
Congress Hospital (Allahabad), 755
Congress, Indian National, 1 fn, 7, 12–14, 15 fn–17, 19–23, 26, 31 & fn–33, 35 fn–36, 38, 40–41, 44, 46–47, 51 & fn–53, 55–61 & fn, 64, 67–70, 76 fn, 80 & fn–82 & fn, 85, 87–88, 92–94, 96, 97 fn–98 & fn, 100, 102–103, 109, 111, 116–118, 121 fn–123, 127 fn–130, 132–140, 143, 146 & fn–148, 150, 154, 158–162, 164–173, 176, 178–180, 182–183, 189 fn, 204–208, 210, 213–225, 226 fn, 227–229 & fn, 231–232, 234 & fn–238, 240, 244–246, 249 & fn–251, 259, 260 fn, 262, 265–266, 268, 270, 273, 287, 288–289, 301, 354, 359–361, 379, 381 fn, 389, 391, 410, 418, 420, 425, 428, 429, 438, 448–450, 477, 485, 487, 495, 503–504, 543, 553, 558 & fn–560, 575, 584, 620, 625–626, 649 & fn, 650 fn, 665 & fn, 675–676, 692, 696 fn, 697, 709 & fn,

720 & fn, 727, 729, 731–732, 742, 762, 764–784, 790, 793, 796, 799–802
———, session at Ahmedabad, 61 fn
———, session at Faizpur, 779
———, session at Haripura, 170, 204
———, session at Karachi, 297
———, session at Lucknow, 674, 768, 778–779
———, session at Ramgarh, 1, 5, 7–8, 15 fn, 37, 47–50, 51, 53, 55, 61 fn, 70, 85, 105, 203, 208–209, 234
———, session at Tripuri, 172, 204
———, Delhi resolution of, 80, 82 & fn, 92, 95–96, 98, 123, 129, 135, 137
———, Election Manifesto of, 779, 782, 796
———, Patna resolution of, 11
———, Poona decision of, 132, 675
———, Ramgarh resolution of, 55–56, 61, 64, 70, 82 fn, 129, 135, 234, 259 fn
———, satyagraha pledge of, 61 & fn
Congress ministries, 48, 65, 104, 118, 136, 160, 168–169, 176, 273 fn, 323, 332, 379, 382, 409, 553, 559, 575, 719, 742, 763, 776–777, 779, 796–797, 800–801
Congress Seva Dal, 99, 115–116, 135, 143, 182, 215
Congress Socialist Party, 217 fn, 232 & fn, 766, 778, 799
Congress Working Committee, 1, 29, 32–34, 51, 53, 55–65, 67–70, 73, 76 & fn, 80 fn–82, 85, 87–88 & fn, 92 & fn–93, 95–96 & fn, 99, 115, 117–118, 121, 123, 127–129, 131, 135, 140, 146 fn, 153, 158, 160 fn, 165, 175, 177–178, 182, 187, 198–199, 213–214, 217 & fn–218, 228, 230–233, 235, 241, 243–246, 247 fn, 249 & fn, 253, 275, 305–306, 353–354, 391, 418, 420, 436, 448, 474, 477–478, 584, 653, 665, 674, 676, 764–765, 767–768, 770, 777–781, 796
Conlin, 503–504, 556, 574–575
Conservatives (British), 761
Constituent Assembly, 15 fn
Constituent Assembly (R.M. Lohia), 5 fn
Constituent Assembly and Indian Federation (Y.G. Krishnamurti), 434
Constituent Assembly and Our Demand (Jai Gopal Narang), 434
Coorg District Congress Committee, 227
Cornell University, 190 fn
Council of Nationalities (Russia), 419
Crete, 747
Criminal Amendment Act, 322
Criminal Investigation Department, 161, 525, 552, 760
Cripps, Sir Stafford, 33, 114 & fn
Cromwell, Oliver, 115, 145
Crusades, 112
Czechoslovakia, 25–26, 73, 85, 132, 170, 343, 358, 391, 398 fn, 488, 585, 700

Dachau, 699
Daily Hind, 366
Dal Lake, 403, 405
Dalai Lama, 468
Dalal, Sir Ardeshir R., 395 & *fn*
Daliganj, 502
Dandi march, 158
Danger of being a gentleman (H. Laski), 418 fn
Dante, 401
Dar, Krishna Prasad, 713
Darjeeling, 468
Darkness at Noon (Arthur Koestler), 665
Darling, Sir Malcolm, 23 & *fn*, 461
Darwesh, Bustami, 709, 713
Das, C.R., 672, 767
———, Jatin, 559–560
Das Gupta, Prabodh Chandra, 430
Datta, S.K., 114, 400
D.A.V. College (Kanpur), 559
Da Vinci, Leonardo, 401
Dawson, Geoffrey, 744 fn
Defence of India Act, 161, 198–199, 227, 232, 260 fn, 262 fn–263, 276, 358, 360, 369–370, 372, 426, 486, 490, 495, 570, 641–642, 734 fn
Dehra Dun, 237, 497, 499, 502–504, 506, 510–511, 513, 521, 524, 539, 541, 543, 548, 556–558, 564, 567, 569, 573–574, 577, 581 & fn–582, 587, 601, 603, 606, 612, 618–619, 642, 660, 673–674, 677–678, 680, 697, 715, 724,

736, 738–739, 743
Dehra Dun District Board, 641–642
Dehra Dun District Jail, 501–503, 506, 508, 523, 528, 531, 535, 557–558, 563, 567, 574–575, 577, 641–642, 654, 663, 667, 684, 739, 754
Dehra Dun District Satyagraha Committee, 641
De La Mare, Walter, 401, 615
De La Mora, Constancia, 422 & fn, 442
Delhi, 95, 215, 224, 244, 248 fn, 284, 286, 329, 347, 354, 360, 423, 440, 511, 522, 540, 551, 625–627, 639, 695, 701, 708, 712, 721, 723, 734, 739, 764–765
Delhi Bomb Case, 560
Delhi University, 306 fn
Denmark, 13 fn, 37, 73, 179
Deoli, 552
Desai, Bhulabhai, 14 & fn, 252, 427, 649, 665, 674–675, 709, 745
———, Dhirajlal B., 665 & *fn*, 674
———, H.M., 209–211
———, Mahadeva, 616, 641, 648–649, 708–710
De Saint Exupery, Antoine, 736
Dewa, 184
Dhami state, 274 fn
Dhawan, Shanti Swaroop, 546 & *fn*
Dhingra, Madan Lal, 616 & *fn*
Diary of a Staff Officer, 681
Dieulefit, 497, 678, 724, 734
Disarmament Conference, 624
Discovery of India (Jawaharlal Nehru), 544 fn
Dobama Asiayone or Thakin group (Burmese National League), 203 & fn, 208, 452, 793
Dogra (Police Supt.), 560
Dohad (Gujarat), 257
Doiwala, 678
Domel, 472
Dominion Status, 1, 6, 9, 15, 30, 35, 78, 86–87, 108, 111, 113, 259 fn, 621, 628, 791
Donoughmore Commission, 241
Don't make martyrs in India—make Arms (J.C. Wedgwood), 578 fn
Doon School (Dehra Dun), 604 & fn
Dost Mohammed, 400
Doulatram, Jairamdas, 764
Dover, 760
Downing Street, 83
Drift to Niagara in India (Edward Thompson), 523 fn
Drummond, Lindsay, (publishers), 14, 419–420, 527, 700, 711
Dube, Mrs. Bhagwandin, 461
Dublesh, Vishnu Saran, 573–574
Du Bois, W.E.B., 397 & *fn*
Duff, Sir Beauchamp, 630 & *fn*
Durga, 720
Dutch East Indies, 47, 189
Dutt, Vidyavati, 511 & fn–512, 520, 565
———, Vishnu, 511 fn

Early History of India (V.A. Smith), 639
East Africa, 188 fn, 791, 793
Eastern Group Conference, 188, 347–348
Eastern Group Supply Committee, 664
East India Association, 206 fn
Egypt, 3, 29, 113, 171, 205, 349 & fn, 438, 585, 615, 624
Eighteen Months in India, (Jawaharlal Nehru), 420, 585
Einstein, Albert, 671
Ellora, 253
Encyclopedia of the Negro, 397 fn
Enge, Dorothy, 442
England, 2 & fn, 3, 7, 9–10, 13, 15–16, 22–23, 25 fn, 28, 30 fn–31, 34 & fn, 37, 40, 43–46, 48, 50–52, 63, 66, 68–69, 74–75, 77–78, 81 fn–86 & fn, 89–90, 93–95, 100–101, 104–106, 108, 115–118, 120–121 & fn, 131–132, 136–139, 142 fn, 144–147, 152, 156–157, 162, 170, 176–178, 180, 182, 188, 194, 198, 213, 216 fn, 226, 236, 278, 294, 312, 321, 343, 346–347, 371, 378, 380, 390–392, 397, 398 fn–400, 426–427, 433–435, 437, 451, 453–454, 458, 562, 473, 481, 488–489, 499, 505, 510, 526–527, 530, 542–543, 546 fn, 561, 578, 584, 591, 605, 608, 618, 620–625, 627–629,

635, 653, 657, 669, 693, 696 fn–697, 699–700, 727, 729, 731–732, 741, 743–744, 748 & fn, 760, 762–763, 792–793, 798
Enlist India for Freedom! (Edward Thompson), 523 fn
Escape (Jawaharlal Nehru), 725
Etah, 248, 276
Ethiopia, 24–25, 73, 85, 165–166, 241, 391, 488, 510, 622, 678–680
Euripides, 492

Fa Hien, 450
Faizpur, Congress session at, 779
Fakhr-e-Afghan—*see* Khan, Abdul Ghaffar
Farrukhabad, 122 fn, 248
Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, 701 fn
Fielden, Lionel, 23
Finland, 2 & fn–3, 176, 699
Finnish-Soviet War, 2 & fn
Firdausi, 383 fn
Flotsam (Erich Maria Remarque), 736
Flowering Earth (D.C. Peather), 462
Foot, A.E., 604 & *fn*
Fordham, Malcolm, 531 fn
Foreign Affairs, 14, 420
Forever Freedom (Pelican anthology), 577, 578 fn
Forward Bloc, 16, 172, 260 & fn, 262
For Whom the Bell Tolls (E. Hemingway), 736
Four Faces of Shiva, 687, 722
Fox, Ralph, 369
France, 2, 30 fn, 52, 55, 63, 65–66 & fn, 71–75, 78, 81 fn, 84, 90, 104–105, 115–116, 118, 121, 137, 157, 176–177, 179, 251, 278, 346, 371, 402, 415 & fn, 460, 478, 480, 558, 625, 627, 631, 634, 697, 699, 717, 747
Franco, General Francisco, 144, 165, 699, 779
Franco-British Union, 63 fn
Frank, Morris Henry, 24 & fn
Free World Association, 344 fn, 345 fn
Freiburg, 759
French Encyclopaedists, 205, 447
French Foreign Office, 764
French Revolution, 71–72, 115, 171, 234 fn, 266, 621
Front Populaire, 764–765
Frost, Jean, 653 & fn
Fyvel, J.R., 530
Fyzabad, 247

Gajapatatiraj, Sir Vijaya Ananda—*see* Vizianagram, Maharajkumar of
Gandhi, Devadas, 708
———, Feroze, 540–541, 586, 619, 646, 715
———, Homi K., 531 fn
———, Kasturba, 753.
———, Mahatma, 11, 14, 16, 21 & fn, 29, 33–36, 39–44, 48–51 & fn, 54, 56–57, 59, 64–65, 67 & fn, 87 & fn, 92 & fn, 95–96, 98, 121 & fn, 123, 129 & fn, 134–135 & fn, 138, 142 & fn, 145 & fn–146 & fn, 148–149, 152–153, 155, 158, 160 & fn–161, 164–165, 168–169, 172, 176–177, 179–180, 182–183, 185–186 & fn, 189, 192 & fn, 193 fn, 206, 216 & fn–218, 224 & fn–226 & fn, 229 & fn, 231–232, 235 & fn–237, 243–244, 245 fn–246, 247 fn–249, 252–253, 258–259, 262, 265–266, 274 fn, 275 & fn, 378 & fn, 386, 392, 402, 416, 424–425, 428–429, 436, 448, 464, 467, 471, 486–487, 494, 497, 504, 509, 527–529, 541–543, 549, 553, 556, 562 & fn, 577, 583–584, 609 & fn, 615, 641, 647–650 & fn, 658, 660, 665, 671–672, 674–676 & fn, 686, 688–690, 692, 696–697, 706, 708–710, 719, 720 fn, 727, 734, 742, 744–745, 753, 755, 761–762, 764–766, 770, 774, 777–780, 790, 798–800
Gandhi Jayanti, 140, 146, 695
Gandhi Seva Sangh, 562, 565, 590, 666
Gandhi-Viceroy talks, 145 & fn
Gangotri, 384, 661
Garhwal, 384, 558, 650, 654, 660–661
Garhwali Regiment Case, 558
Garret, G.T., 640
Garvin, Florence, 398

Gaulciters, 622, 730
Gautama, the Buddha, 450, 790
Gaya, 446, 449–451
Gaya Prasad, 559–560
Geissler, Eva, 454
———, Lou, 454
Gem Palace (Mandalay), 789
Geneva, 29, 170, 445, 505, 508, 512, 537, 539, 725
Genoa, 454
George V (of England), 760
George, Henry, 580
Germany, 2, 27 & fn, 37, 44, 47, 63, 65, 75, 77, 79, 85, 131, 144, 152, 157, 162, 172, 182, 389, 391, 627, 637 & fn, 656, 672, 680, 755, 759
Gestapo, 143, 552, 629, 759
Ghafur, 571
Ghazipur, 153
Ghosh, Prafulla Chandra, 81
———, Tushar Kanti, 365 & *fn*
Gide, Andre, 764
Gidwani, Sir Choithram, 734
Giornale d' Italia, 164
Glimpses of World History (Jawaharlal Nehru), 502, 534, 544 & fn, 585–586, 594, 605, 651, 653, 711, 723–724
Gokhale, Gopal Krishna, 616
Golden Book of Tagore, 681
Gorakhpur, 150, 154, 159–160, 331–333, 335, 486, 490–491, 494–497, 502, 507, 654, 739
Gorakhpur Jail, 495–497, 499, 501, 503, 508, 557, 654, 739
Government of India Act of 1935, 45 & fn, 264, 295, 621, 731, 787, 796, 800–801
Grant, J.B., 395
Great Divide (H.V. Hodson), 680 fn
Great Men of India (Rushbrook Williams), 652
Greece, 349 & fn, 640, 664, 747, 787
Guatemala, 396
Gueveric, Yvonne, 511 & fn–512
Gujarat, 233, 425–427, 434, 674–675, 757, 767
Gujranwala District Congress Committee, 245 fn
Gulabchand, 355
Gunte, Sitaram, 558 & fn, 568
Gunther, Frances, 497, 527, 534
———, John, 170, 418
Gupta, Hari Ram, 400
———, Manpal, 276
———, Omprakash, 276
———, Shiva Prasad, 750, 768
Gupta period, 528

Haidergarh, 184
Haiphong-Kunming railroad, 66 fn
Halifax, first Earl, 33, 144, 194, 762–763
Hall, Fielding, 788
Hallet, Sir Maurice, 123, 555, 577, 619, 637, 698, 734, 744
Hamid Ali, Begum, 283, 286
Handoo, Chandar, 540, 542
———, Sri Krishna, 540
Hansard, 726, 740, 744, 748
Haque, Azizul, 546
Hardikar, N.S., 214
Hardinge, Lord, 630 & *fn*
Hardoi, 559
Hardwar, 384, 661
Hari, 452, 456, 695, 714, 738–739
Harijan, 192 fn, 249, 253, 425, 562 fn
Harijan Ashram (Allahabad), 148
Hari Parvat, 402
Haripura, Congress session at, 170, 204
Harper's Magazine, 517
Harrison, Agatha, 390, 506, 510, 520, 523–525, 527, 530, 534, 537–541, 547, 552, 561, 618
Harshavardhana, 383
Hasan, Wazir, 524
Havell, E.B., 640
Hazaribagh Central Jail, 161
Heath, Carl, 527
Hebert, 525, 538, 547
Hemingway, Ernest, 736
Hemmerlin, Mlle., 460
Hickman, Francis, 315 fn
Hindu, 263, 562 fn
Hindu Mahasabha, 215, 218, 657 & fn
Hindustan, 224, 253, 424 & fn–425
Hindustan Motors, 326 fn
Hindustan Times, 188, 308–309, 354, 719
Hindusthan Standard, 247, 365–366

Hirachand, Walchand, 701 & *fn*
History of Aryan Rule in India (E.B. Havell), 640
History of Political Theory (George Sabine), 529 fn
Hitler, Adolf, 31, 84, 87 fn, 112, 131–132, 144, 157, 194, 220–221, 529, 622–623, 625, 627, 633–634, 637, 656–657, 672, 699–700, 730, 759
Hiuen Tsang, 383, 450
Hoare, Sir Samuel (later Viscount Templewood), 144
Hodson, H.V., 680 & *fn*
Holi Publishing House, 725
Holland, 27 & fn, 30–31, 37, 73, 84, 105, 137, 176, 179, 465
Home, Amal, 681
Home Rule movement, 584
Hong Kong, 188 fn, 426–427, 433, 435, 527, 545
Horizon, 386
Horrabin, J.F., 545, 723
House of Commons, 22, 29, 145, 564, 624, 740–741, 748, 763
Housman, A.E., 452
Huang, C.C., 520, 723
Hubli, 215 & fn
Huq, Fazlul, 783, 797
Husain, Zakir, 544, 639
Hussain, Hifazat, 503, 538, 746–747
———, S. Abid, 544 & *fn*
———, Yusuf, 573–574
Hutheesing, Ajit, 462, 678, 703–704
———, G.P., 431, 451, 461, 494, 500, 508–509, 511–513, 523–526, 534, 602–603, 610, 649, 677–678, 680, 695, 703, 708–709, 712–713, 716, 735
———, Harsha, 462, 649, 678, 703
———, Krishna, 421, 432, 451, 454, 459, 461, 481, 494–495, 508, 511–513, 515, 523–526, 528–529, 533–534, 543–545, 547, 553, 558, 561, 590, 602, 607, 609, 615, 647, 649, 651, 654, 666, 673, 677–678, 680, 695, 703–704, 708–713, 716, 719, 735
Hydari, Sir Akbar, 253, 261 fn
Hyderabad state, 260–261, 263, 267, 269–270, 272–273, 275 & fn, 288, 686
———, Nizam of, 271, 275 fn
Hyderabad State Congress, 271–272, 275
Hyderabad State's People's Congress, 272

Ibrahim, Hafiz Mohammad, 510, 515
Idgah mosque (Lucknow), 572
Iftikharuddin, Mian, 36, 98 & fn, 691–692, 709
Imperial Chemicals, 630
Imperial Tobacco Company, 321–322
Independent Muslim Conference, 215
Independent Party, 784
India (Alberuni), 546
India, China and England (Jawaharlal Nehru), 344 fn
India and Democracy (George Schuster and Guy Wint), 748 fn
India League, 23, 130, 212, 214, 426, 435
India Office, 426, 435, 506, 622, 637, 664 fn, 698
India and the World (Jawaharlal Nehru), 585, 763
Indian Civil Service, 23 fn, 95, 371, 503, 551 fn, 640, 642, 730–731
Indian Congress (Durban), 234
Indian and Eastern Newspapers Society, 653 fn
Indian Military Academy, 678 fn
Indian Mutiny, 628
Indian National Congress medical mission to China, 585
Indian Science Congress Association, 395 fn
Indian Statistical Institute, 293 & fn
Indian Sugar Syndicate, 329 fn
Indian Trade Union Congress, 429, 584
Indo-China, 66 & fn, 116, 346, 383
Indo-Japanese trade talks, 66 & fn, 342
Indus Valley, 167
Indus Valley civilisation, 759
In Place of Splendour (Constancia de la Mora), 422, 442
Inside Asia (John Gunther), 170, 418
Inside the Empire, 377
Institute of Economic Growth, 306 fn
Institute of Pacific Relations, 13 fn
Institute for Social and Economic

Change, 306 fn
International Peace Campaign, 23, 149 fn, 344 fn–345 & fn, 585
Ipi, Faqir of (Haji Mirza Ali Khan), 228 & fn
Iqbal, Sir Mohammad, 17, 348, 383, 410
Iran, 113, 189, 192, 209, 680, 787
Iraq, 113, 189, 209
Ireland, 733 & fn
Irish Treaty (1921), 90–91
Isolated America (R.L. Buell), 114 fn
Italy, 52 & fn, 164, 251, 401
Ittehad, 275 fn

Jafarey, Colonel, 557, 573
Jail Journey (Phelan), 736
Jaipur, 280
Jaksch, Wenzel, 698
Jamia Millia, 544–545, 639, 666
Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, 272, 274
Jammu, 402, 408, 415–416, 473–474
Japan, 28–29, 44, 47, 65–66 & fn, 75, 86, 144, 156, 159, 176–177, 342, 346, 441, 624, 794
Jaunpur, 272
Java, 709, 795
Jayakar, M.R., 236
Jayewardene, Junius Richard, 210 & *fn*–212, 225, 231, 605
Jhansi, 437–438
Jharkhand, 207
Jhelum Valley, 402, 405, 472
Jinnah, M.A., 14, 16 & *fn*, 171, 251, 709, 775, 784, 797
Jobat state, 257–258
Jodhpur, 260, 263
———, Maharaja of, 260 fn
Jodhpur Lok Parishad, 260 fn
John Day Company (publishers), 22, 517, 609, 652–653
Johnson, Julian, 512
Joshi, Dr., (Acting Suptd., Dehra Dun Jail), 512
———, Dr., 708
———, N.M., 734 & fn, 739–740
Journalists Association of India, 365, 367
Jugal Kishore, 309 fn
Jugantar, 365 & fn–366
Juhu (Bombay), 459–460
Junagadh, 196
Jung, Nawab Manzoor, 544, 725
Jwala Prasad, Raja, 327 & fn

Kabul, 400, 680
Kachru, Dwarka Nath, 269 & *fn*
Kalidas, 640
Kamala Lectures, 739, 746
Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital, 528, 535, 540–542, 546, 549, 551, 553, 558, 577, 705–706, 755
Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital Committee, 542, 549, 713
Kannauj, 383
Kanpur, 99, 115–116, 229, 231, 477, 504 & fn, 565
Kapoor, Jaideo, 557, 559–560
Karachi, Congress session at, 297
Karnataka region, 214–215
Karnataka P.C.C., 227
Karuna, S., 692
Kasganj, 276
Kashi—*see* Banaras
Kashmir, 33, 36, 50, 181, 230, 253, 267–269, 329–331, 341, 392, 396, 399, 401–411, 415–416, 420, 451, 455, 461, 468–469, 472–475, 498, 583, 589–590, 603–604, 610, 612, 616–617, 680
———, *Maharaja of*, 405
Kashmiri, Mohan Lal, 399–400
Katju, Kailas Nath, 355, 359
———, P.N., 308 & *fn*, 309 fn, 329
———, Swarup (Bappi), 309 & fn, 477, 540
Kaul, Kailas Nath, 457, 527, 540–541
———, Rajpati (Amma), 477, 505, 510, 515, 525–527, 530, 534, 540, 548, 565, 640, 647, 653, 686, 697, 708, 710, 712–715
———, Sheila, 457
Kaur, Amrit, 274 & *fn*, 418, 512, 542, 660, 664–665, 709
Kausarnag, 473
Kazmi (Jailor), 575
Kedarnath, 661

Kesari, 709
Keskar, B.V., 15 & *fn*, 241, 253, 494
Khadi Bhandar (Allahabad), 695
Khaksars, 138 & fn, 221 & fn–222, 272
Khali, 617, 619, 749
Khaliq, 567 & fn
Khaliquzzaman, C., 251
Khan, Abdul Ghaffar, 80 & fn–81, 122 & fn, 219–220 & fn, 228–230, 392, 409, 411–412, 414, 416, 472, 535, 765
————, Ajmal, 765
————, Haji Mirza Ali, *see* Ipi, Faqir of,
————, Nawab Ismail, 251
————, Roshan, (Mrs. Abdul Ghani Khan), 749
————, Saiduzzafar, 522 & fn–523, 534
————, Shyam Kumari, 558
————, Sikandar Hayat, 16, 222 fn, 657 fn, 783, 797
Khan Sahib, 80, 228, 798
Khandwa, 257 fn
Khanna, 572
Kheiri, 720–721
Kher, B.G., 675, 797
Khudai Khidmatgars, 220, 228–230, 409
Khyber Pass, 757
Kidwai, Rafi Ahmed, 359, 494, 536, 654, 768
King George's Medical Hospital, (Lucknow), 683
Kirloskarwadi, 475
Kishore, Mohan, 560
Kitabistan, 263, 369–370, 419, 529
Koestler, Arthur, 665
Kolahoi glacier, 403, 412, 474
Kripalani, J.B., 199, 223, 233, 248, 251, 356, 558, 689–691
————, Krishna, 430, 656, 670, 688
————, Miss, 694
————, Nandita, 689
————, Sucheta, 558
Krishak Praja Party, 783
Krishna, K.B., 546
Krishnamurti, Y.G., 18, 21, 434
Kuala Lumpur, 433 fn, 794
Kud, 415
Kumbha Mela (Allahabad), 383–384
Kuomintang, 344 fn, 775
Labour Party (British), 23, 31 & fn, 33, 105, 108, 114, 134, 135 fn, 144, 426, 429, 435, 761
Lachiminia, 695
Ladakh, 474
La Feloun, 558
Lahore, 17, 33, 36, 221 & fn, 416, 468–469, 544, 559
————, Muslim League session at, 16 fn, 17
Lahore Conspiracy Case, 559–560
Lahore Jail, 559–560
Lahore Medical College, 510
Laithwaite, Sir John Gilbert, 664 & *fn*
Lajpat Rai, 616
Lal, Khurshedi, 581
————, Murari, 690
Lang (Dy. Supt.), 569
La Pelouse, 454, 477
Lapuan movement, 2 & fn
Laski, Harold, 418, 530, 546
Latif, Abdul, 684, 686
Lausanne, 164, 542
Laval, Pierre, 72
Lawrence, E.O., 394 & *fn*–395
————, T.E., 576, 583–584
Leader, 247
League of Nations, 28–29, 623
Les Frenes, 458, 480
Letters from a Father to His Daughter (Jawaharlal Nehru), 430–431, 585, 605, 715–716
Leysin, 33, 390, 453–454, 457–458, 460, 462, 464, 469, 478, 481, 507, 526
Liberals (British), 137, 761
Liberals (Indian), 7, 9, 259, 588
Liddar Valley, 403, 473
Liddarwat, 331, 412–414
Life, 451, 702, 749
Life of Metcalfe (Edward Thompson), 506
Linlithgow, 2nd Marquis, 15, 35, 55 & fn, 64, 67 & fn, 95, 104–109, 111, 115, 117, 121 & fn, 127 & fn, 130, 132–133, 135 & fn, 140, 145 & fn–146 & fn, 155, 158, 168, 179, 182, 187, 193 fn, 194, 251, 359, 420, 504 & fn, 576, 578 fn, 609 & fn, 626, 664 & fn
Lin Yutang, 526, 529, 711 & *fn*
Lisbon, 498, 505, 508, 512, 520, 523,

537, 539–540
Liverpool, 90
Lloyds, 462
Lohia, Ram Manohar, 5, 309 fn
Lok Sabha, 250 fn, 536 fn, 568 fn, 739 fn
London, 33, 113, 136, 150, 170, 206 fn, 212, 214, 315, 345, 349, 369, 422, 435, 454, 462, 480, 498, 506–508, 510, 512, 520, 523–527, 534, 538, 540, 615, 616 fn, 652–653, 698, 700, 743, 747, 758–761, 763, 778
Los Angeles, 653
Lothian, Lord, 762–763
Lucas, Colonel, 520–521, 554, 557, 575
Luck (S.P., Dehra Dun), 503, 523
Lucknow, 29, 33, 36, 80–81, 151, 183, 217, 231, 236–238, 247, 250, 354, 423, 429, 464, 468, 477, 479, 502, 527, 556, 566, 571–572, 574, 576–577, 582–584, 602, 604, 611, 618, 660, 683, 696, 710, 738, 746, 768
———, Congress session at, 674, 768, 778–779
Lucknow Camp Jail, 568, 682 & fn–686, 689 & fn–692, 702
Lucknow Central Prison, 558, 572–575, 577
Lucknow District Jail, 556, 558, 561, 565, 567, 572, 575, 577, 655
Lucknow University, 696
Ludhiana, 173
Luxembourg, 27 & fn, 37, 137
Lwin, U.B., 203 & *fn*
Lyndale, 673

Macaulay, T.B., 39
Macmillan (publishers), 529
Mad-he-Sahaba, 572
Madras, 178, 798–800
Madras Jails, 559–560
Magic Mountain (Thomas Mann), 471
Maginot Line, 116
Mahalanobis, P.C., 293 & *fn*
Mahan, Alfred Thayer, 613 & *fn*
Maharajgunj, 150, 154, 159–160, 332, 490
Maharashtra, 757
Mahavira, 450
Mahmud, Syed, 186, 242, 251–252, 329, 381, 494, 616, 655, 697, 701, 715
Mahmudabad, Raja of, 215 fn
Mainpuri, 248
Maitra, Mohit, 560
Maktaba Jamia, 651
Malady and the Vision (J.R. Fyvel), 530
Malaviya, Keshav Deva, 571
———, Madan Mohan, 580, 604, 768, 801
Malaya, 168, 188 fn, 189, 192, 451, 787, 794–796
Malay Peninsula, 788, 794
Malkani, N.R., 693
Malraux, Andre, 764
Man and the Plough (Aziz ul Haque), 546
Manchuria, 25, 28–29, 85, 391, 488, 624
Manila, 539
Mann, Thomas, 471
Mannerheim, Baron, 2 & *fn*
Marseilles, 498, 505, 508
Martand, 403, 411, 415
Martin, Dr., 510
Marx, Karl, 385, 529
Marzani, Carl, 12
Mathur, P.N., 291–292
Mathura, 383, 560
Matton—*see* Martand
Mauritius, 54 fn
Maurya, Chandra Gupta, 383
Maxwell, Sir Reginald, 551 & *fn*–552, 633, 664, 740 & fn, 744
Mazameen-e-Nehru, 725 & fn
Mazumdar, Dr., 681
Mecca, 205
Meerut, 189, 248
Meerut District Congress Committee, 189 fn
Mehd, Surendraray Bapubhai, 416
Mehta, Jivraj, 453, 460, 528–529, 541–542 610, 704, 708, 713–714, 721
Mein Kampf (A. Hitler), 656
Memoirs (J.C. Wedgwood), 578 fn
Memoirs and Journal of Mohan Lal Kashmerian, 399–400
Memoirs of a Space Woman (Naomi Mitchison), 576 fn

Menon, K.B., 280
———, V.K. Krishna, 14, 21–24, 33, 40, 50, 96, 134, 142, 162, 203, 213–214, 216 & fn, 259, 262, 377, 388–389, 418–419, 428, 441, 454, 527, 534, 540–541, 618, 695
Mesopotamia, 630
Mesopotamia Inquiry Commission, 630
Mexico, 396
Mhow, 436–437
Michaelangelo, 401
Miraj, 461
Misra, Godavaris, 82 fn
Mitchison, G.R., 576 fn
———, Naomi, 576 & *fn*
Mithan Lal, Lala, 642, 721
Modern Review, 170
Mody, Sir Homi, 701
Moghal emperors, 470
Mohenjo Daro, 167, 640, 759
Moment in Peking (Lin Yutang), 526, 529
Monghyr, 321–322
Montana, 454, 458
Mookerji, Shyama Prasad, 739 & *fn*, 746
Moonje, B.S., 657 fn
Moore, William Arthur, 653 & *fn*
Morin, Jean-Jacques, 475, 540, 747
———, Louise, 72 fn, 475, 478, 480, 493, 497, 500, 540, 678, 724, 734, 747
Moscow, 114
Moss (Dist. Magis., Gorakhpur), 495, 497
Mrichhakatika (Sudraka), 640
Mudrarakshasa (Visakhadatta), 528, 604, 640, 652, 687
Mukherji, 507
Mulla, Anand Narain, 536 & *fn*, 538, 654, 725, 739 & fn
———, Kamala, 739 & fn
———, Tej Narain, 739 & fn
Munich Pact, 163, 170, 241, 699–700
Munshi, K.M., 649 & fn, 665, 675
Murray, Gilbert, 602, 610
Muslim League, 3, 7, 16 fn–17, 97 fn, 171, 178 fn, 215, 218, 223–224 & fn, 244, 251, 259–260, 379, 381 & fn, 383 657 fn, 680, 692, 727, 775, 783–785, 797, 800
———, Lahore resolution of, 16 fn, 17, 657 fn
Mussolini, Benito, 84, 87 fn, 164, 529, 699
Mussoorie, 217, 445, 454, 497, 500, 511, 520, 524, 586, 596, 601–602, 604, 606–611, 617, 638, 641, 647–648, 653, 655–656, 660, 662, 669, 673–674, 680, 692, 695, 703, 707–708, 715, 718–719, 735, 738
Mussoorie Murder Case, 531 & fn
Must the War Spread? (D.N. Pritt), 377 & fn
Muttra—*see* Mathura
Muzaffarnagar, 440 fn
My Country and My People (Lin Yutang), 711 fn
My Diaries (W.S. Blunt), 616 & fn
Mysore, 288

Nagpur, 423, 614
Nahas Pasha, Mustafa, 171
Naidu, Leilamani (Papi), 494, 584, 617
———, Padmaja, 269–270, 272, 494, 511–512, 520, 524–525, 527–528, 530, 534, 543, 547–548, 552–553, 561–562, 577, 582, 585, 614, 651, 666, 668, 687, 721, 725, 736
———, Sarojini, 269, 494, 675, 764
Naini Prison, 502, 510, 536, 562, 570, 573, 665, 708
Naini Seva Dal Camp, 440 & fn
Naini Tal, 217
Nalanda, 381, 446, 450
Nambiar, A.C.N., 481, 493, 500, 540
Nanking, 732 & fn
Naoroji, Khurshed (Bul), 735
Napier, Sir Charles, 436
———, 2nd Lieut., 431, 436–438 609
Napoleon, 31, 71
Narang, Jai Gopal, 4, 434
Narayan, Jaya Prakash, 161, 766, 778
———, Prabhavati, 161
Narendra Deva, Acharya, 257, 637, 714, 750, 766, 768, 778
Narielwala, Feroza, 494
———, P.A., 494, 558, 609, 702, 713–715, 721, 749–750

Nasik Jail, 426, 428, 435, 602, 649
National Book Trust, 15 fn
National Defence Council, 708, 748 fn
National Herald, 236, 248–249, 253, 353 & fn–361, 438, 494, 524, 558 fn, 568 fn, 574, 618, 650, 676, 685–686, 689, 702
Nationalist Party of Orissa, 82 fn
National Planning Committee, 29, 40, 118, 131, 173, 190, 214, 216, 228, 262, 285–294, 296–307, 309–311, 313–315, 317, 339, 379, 391, 394–395, 436–437, 451, 455, 463–464, 467, 474, 476–477, 493, 500–501, 509, 511, 517–518, 520, 530–532, 534–535, 538, 542–543, 548–552, 554, 585, 631, 730
Nautiyal, Govind Prasad, 654
Navjivan Karyalaya (Ahmedabad), 694
Nehru, Brij Kumar, 536, 538, 540
———, Brijlal, 590, 648
———, Fory, 536, 538, 540, 739
———, Indira, 33, 377, 380, 384, 390, 418, 423, 430, 433, 440–441, 445, 447, 449, 452, 456–459, 463–465, 467–469, 472–479, 491, 496–497, 504–508, 510, 512, 515, 520, 523–525, 529–530, 533–535, 537–538, 542, 547, 552, 558, 561, 566–567, 574, 576–577, 581, 586, 588–591, 601–602, 604–607, 609–611, 615–616, 618, 636, 638–639, 641, 643, 648, 650–651, 656, 660, 665, 668–670, 677, 686, 697–698, 701, 705, 707–710, 712–715, 721, 734–740, 743, 745–746, 750, 755, 788
———, Jawaharlal, 13 fn, 15 fn, 24 fn, 82 fn, 91 fn, 96 fn, 183–185, 190 fn, 222 fn 242, 247 fn, 269 fn, 275 fn, 340 fn, 344 fn, 359, 387 fn, 422 fn, 440 fn, 490, 529 fn, 544 fn, 566, 573, 584 fn, 566, 573, 584, 609 fn, 696 fn, 713 fn, 744 fn, 747, 792 fn
———, arrested, convicted and sentenced (eighth conviction), 485–491; drafts Congress Working Committee resolution on the war, 55–62 and the U.P.P.C.C. resolution on the war, 36–38; justifies Congress policy and action, 620–636; reacts to the 'August Offer', 106–114, to the 'Pakistan' resolution of the Muslim League, 17, 20–21, 215 and to resolutions passed by Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, 272–274; visits Kashmir, 401–416; writes confidential note on Congress policy on nonviolence, 123–127 and a note for the editorial and managerial departments of *National Herald*, 358–361
———, on Abdul Ghaffar Khan, 220, 409, 412, 414, and his resignation from C.W.C and A.I.C.C., 228–229; on Abyssinian campaign, 679; on Adivasis, 207; on aerial bombing of cities, 149–150, 345, 349, 480, 516; on agrarian problem in India, 166; on aims and means, 26, 367–368; on an alien imperialist government, 143; on All India Radio broadcasts, 356–357; on All India Spinners' Association, 330–331; on All India States People's Conference, 274; on American Negroes, 397; on Amery, L.S., and his statements, 45, 107, 504, 564, 624; on Amritsar massacre and similar incidents, 623, 628; on Anand Bhawan, 704–706, 716; on ancient civilizations, 787; on anniversaries, 722; on Assembly Congress members, 734; on association with the Congress, 4; on Aundh state, 475, and its Raja, 475–476; on authoritarianism and dictatorship in India, 104, 116, 730; on authors and publishers, 693–694; on *Autobiography*, 162–163, 517, 579, 593, 754, on its continuation, (*Auto II*), 553, 691, 696, 707, 714 and on its American edition (*Toward Freedom*), 163, 388–389, 417–419, 428, 476, 517, 553, 607, 612, 615, 653–654, 681; on avoiding a meeting with Mussolini, 164; on banning of books, 369–370; on basic scheme of education, 169, 379–380, 406; on becoming a contributory editor of *Asia* magazine, 711; on Bengal, 263; on Bengal government, 366–367 and its order on *Hindusthan Standard*, 365–366; on Bhagat, P.S., 679–

680; on Bhulabhai Desai, 649, 665, 674–675, 709; on Bidar incidents, 261, 263, 272–273; on Bidhan Chandra Roy, 610; on books on India, 639–640; on Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, 674; on Brijlal incident, 521-522, 524; on Britain and China, 85–86, 342–343; on Britain's encouragement of disruptive forces in India, 43, 128, 134, 152, 179; on Britain and Japan, 346; on Britain's response to Congress demand, 103, 176, 626; on Britain and the Soviet Union, 3–4; British army in India, 633–634; on British declaration of war aims, 25, 102–103, 136, 626; on British Empire, 30, 32, 35, 42, 77, 120, 225, 622, 657, 732, 791–792; on British Government, 27, 35, 37, 45, 79, 84, 100–101, 105, 110, 121, 127–128, 134, 148, 177, 182, 262, 265, 430, 488–490, 496, 622, 627–628, 635, 699, 732; on British Government and India, 114, 487–489; on British imperialism, 10–11, 13, 31, 39, 44, 49, 52, 94, 101, 105, 116, 123, 128, 147, 178–180; on British imperialism and India, 37, 39, 78–79, 138, 625, 628; on British Labour Party, 33; on British civilians, 536, officials, 116, politicians, 762, statesmen, 743, and viceroys and governors, 622, 730; on British people, 144, 180, 635, 727, 731, 741–742, and sympathy for them, 94, 105, 116, 131; on British policy, 66, 84–86, 89–90, 132, 623; on British policy in India, 132, 137, 624, 680, 732; on British proposal for a post-war constitution for India, 108–110, 117, 128; on British recognition of Indian independence, 6, 19, 32, 35, 46, 52, 68, 87, 95; on British rule, 151, 628, 635, 658, 727, 741–742, 791–792 and ruling classes, 63, 312, 627, 743; on British vested interests, 313; on Burma, 789–790, 792–793; on Burma and China, 793–794; on Burma-China Road, 346, 793–794; on Burma Provincial Congress Committee, 789–790; on Burmese delegation to Ramgarh Congress, 203, 208; on campaigning for the Congress (1937), 167; on camping, 452–453, 455–456; on capitalistic rule, 152; on causes of conflicts and wars, 124–125; on the censor and censorship, 373, 539, 547, 564, 591–592, 623; on changes in the world and in India, 73–74, 100, 146, 269, 527–528, 728–729; on Charles F. Andrews, 381–382, 456; on China, 348–349, 368, 403, 517–518, 526, 613; on Chinese Buddhist mission, 340; on choice between two evils, 579; on Chungking, 174, 345, 349, 480, 516, 520, 526; on civil disobedience, 44; on civil liberties, 262–263, 368, 370; on close linking up of world today, 156; on the common man, 186; on a commonwealth of nations, 42–44; on communal organisations, 159, 215, 266; on communalism, 9, 111–112, 133, 158, 171–172, 700; on Communists, 94, 98, 232, 385, 692; on Communist Party of India, 231–232; on conflict between King and Parliament, 115; on conflicts within oneself, 465–466; on Congress, 7, 26, 31–32, 34, 40, 44, 47, 49–50, 64, 69, 91–94, 117–118, 128, 135–136, 138–140, 147–148, 160–161, 180, 182–183, 207, 428–429, 732, 771–773, 775–777, acceptance of office by, 168, 787–788, 796–797, attempt at cooperation with government by, 626–627, conflicts in, 100, 165, 169, 171–172, 765–766, 768–769, constitution of, 770, decision to contest elections by, 166–167, decision and action of, 636, 742, demand of, 11, 32, 35, 70, 96, 111, 137, 176, 215–216, discipline in, 58–59, 61, leaders of, 664–665, ministers and ministries of, 168–169, 575, 780, 797–802, objective of, 19, 138, 144, 247, policy of, 51–52, 55–56, 64, 266, 487, President of, 770, 777–778, proposal for a constituent assembly by, 109, resignation of ministries by, 104, 118, 133, 176, 626, 742, resumption of office by, 60, 221, unity in, 100; on Congress and British Government, 47,

69, 105, 121, 129, 132–133, 137, 143, 148, 178, 262; on Congress and communal organisations, 218, 232, 266; on Congress and Communists, 232; on Congress and democracy, 773; on Congress and the elections, 782–785; on Congress and the League, 17; on Congress and Muslims, 215, 223–224; on Congress and nonviolence, 57–58, 65, 69–70, 87–88, 129; on Congress and Sikhs, 245; on Congress and social reform, 774; on Congress and the states, 266; on Congress and the United States, 212–214; on Congress and the Wafd Party, 171; on Congress and the war, 58, 60, 625; on Congress Seva Dal, 99; on Congress Socialist Party, 766; on Congress Working Committee, 246, 764, its differences with Mahatma Gandhi, 57, 59, 64–65, 67, 92, 123, 129, 135, 177–178, 225, 232, and its various resolutions, 68–70, 76, 81–82, 85, 87–88, 92–96, 98, 129, 132, 137, 235–236, 418; on a constituent assembly for India, 5–7, 9, 11, 16, 18–20, 68, 216, 267; on contributions to and collections for war fund, 116–117, 153, 187, 227, 275–277; on cottage industries, 297, 308; on Criminal Investigation Department, 552–553; on customs and prejudices, 284–285; on cyclotron, 394–395; on Czechoslovakia, 170; on the Dalai Lama, 468; on danger of external attack on India, 31, 47, 49, 65, 159; on daughter, 377, 380, 384, 390, 396, 433–434, 440, 445, 449, 451, 453–455, 457–459, 461, 464, 466–467, 469–471, 474, 480–481, 491–492, 497–499, 505–509, 539–540, 542, 581, 587–588, 595–597, 601, 604–607, 609, 613, 638, 643–648, 650, 665–666, 738–739; on dearness allowance, 321; on death of an undertrial prisoner, 662–663; on decision to start civil disobedience movement, 179; on declaring India a belligerent country, 102, 175, 182, 487, 626; on Defence of India Act, 369, 372; on Delhi resolution, 80, 82, 92, 94–96, 98, 129, 137; on democracy, 79 and democratic method of resolving conflicts, 109–110; on Dhanush Takli, 583, 616; on his diaries, 493; on differences with his colleagues, 163, 165, 172–173; on difference of opinion among people, 731; on disarmament, 124–126; on discovery of India, 451, 639, 659; on dismissal of warder Pancham, 712; on disruptive forces in India, 26; on Divali, 753; on Dobama Asiayone group, 203, 208, 452, 793; on Dominion Status, 1, 9, 15, 78, 113; on drifting aimlessly, 295; on Eastern Group Conference, 188, 347; on economic domination of India, 294; on economic structure of present-day world, 156–158, 277–278 and changes after the war, 180, 312; on Edward Thompson, 523; on his eighth arrest, conviction and sentence, 485–491, 494–497, 753; on Eleanor Rathbone's letter and indictment, 620–621; on elections and electioneering, 779, 781; on empires in the future, 157; on England, 28, 63, 74–75, 78, 90, 144, 170, 177, 188, 278, 622; on English thought and history, 622, 635; on Europe, 26, 163–164, 170–171, 299, 464, 467, 769; on European war, 55–57, 63, 118, 310, 321; on evolving a common language, 356–357; on fall of Bastille, 71–72; on family as a unit, 717; on fascism, 102, 166; on a fascist reorganisation of the world, 278; on fast-moving events, 606; on his father, 594, 704, and his letters, 663–664, 667–668; on a federation of nations, Asiatic or Eastern, 189, 191–192, 209, 439 and European, 191, 209; on financial imperialism, 124; on Finland, 2–3; on forces at work bringing changes, 489; on foreign goods, 654–655; on Forward Bloc, 172; on France, 63, 66, 71–72, 75, 90, 116, 121, 177, 278, 371, 480; on a free future India 54, 119–120, 296, 633, 772–773, 776; on friendship and cooperation, 622; on freedom of the press, 365–373; on the future, 7–8, 478–479, 498 and dreams

for it, 662; on gaining experience, 481; on gaining goodwill and cooperation of India for war effort, 629; on Ganga river, 382–384, 661; on Garhwal mountains, 654, 660–661; on generations, 492, 498 and generation gap, 499; on Germany, 75, and her attack on Russia, 637; on giving an undertaking to the government, 554–555; on giving parole, 506; on *Glimpses of World History*, 594, its Canarese edition, 723, and its Urdu translation, 544; on Govind Ballabh Pant, 798; on Gorakhpur kisans, 331–333, 490; on Government of India, 100–101, 177, 180, 629–633, 731, 769; on Government of India Act of 1935, 166, 264, 295; on Government action against Congressmen, 236–237; on Government's attitude to industry, 630–631; on Government order on press, 360–361, and on volunteering, 99, 115, 118, 134, 138, 229–230, 477; on gradualness in change and progress, 728–729; on growing old, 401, 493–494, 587, 736; on *Gujars*, 413–414; on Gujarat Congress, 675; on hard work, 509; on Harijans, 149; on himself, 445–446, 460–461, 471, 488–489, 492–493, 499, 508, 513–514, 521, 579, 584–585, 593–594, 634, 659, 676–677, 698, 702, 718, 731, 780–781; on Hindi, Hindustani and Urdu, 356–357, 423, 756–757; on Hindu Mahasabha, 215, 657; on the *Hindustan*, 224, 424–425; on Hitler, 31, 157, 220, 672, 699, his attacking India, 221, and his *Mein Kampf*, 656–657; on hot weather, 680; on House of Commons debate on India, 740–741, 744, 748; on human beings, 617; on Hyderabad, 261, 269–273, 275; on imperialism, 13, 20, 31, 54, 102–103, 116, 130, 140, 166, 488, 623; on independence for India, 35, 78, 113, 159, 180, 206, 398, 623, 628–629, 635, 775; on Independence Day, 535–536; on India, 24, 49, 65, 89, 126, 141, 145, 167–168, 181, 225–226, 266, 279, 312–314, 348–349, 368, 416, 579, 613, 634–635, 659, 700, 728–729, 741, 769, 785, 792–793, her cultural heritage, 786–787, the Idea behind her, 785–786, what she stands for, 786 and what he owes to her, 621; on India and America, 15; on India and Britain 15, 22–23, 37, 43, 46, 48, 53, 90, 94, 101–102, 105–106, 137, 145, 147, 176, 237, 621, 623, 726, 740–741, 743, 748; on India and British Empire, 791; on India and Burma, 208, 788; on India and China, 43, 226, 340–341, 343–344, 348–349, 515–516, 519, 718, and economic contacts between them, 339, 342; on India and disarmament, 126, 129; on India and imperialism, 28, 35, 54, 79, 103, 627; on India and international affairs, 73, 166; on India and internationalism, 634; on India and her neighbours, 120, 693; on India and Sri Lanka, 208, 211, 226, 240–242, 788–789; on India and the war, 1, 10, 30, 48–49, 69, 103, 129, 131, 133–137, 152, 158, 179, 391, 489, 625–628, 700; on Indian administration, 730–731; on Indian civilization and social life, 386; on Indian Liberals, 9; on Indian middle classes, 659; on Indian nationalism *vs* British imperialism, 102, 128–129, 187; on Indian rivers, 382–384, 455–456, 661–662; on the Indian situation, 8, 64, 98, 262, 353–354, 378, 420, 428–429; on Indian states, 173, 257–258, 260, 263–266, 278–279; on Indian troops in Abyssinia, 664, 678–679; on Indian women's delegation to China, 340, 343; on Indians abroad, 53–54, 234, 791, 793, in South Africa, 416–417, 791 and in Sri Lanka, 209–211, 791; on India's attitude to violence and aggression, 24–25; on India's cultural association with other countries, 795; on India's defending herself, 633; on India's potential for industrial expansion, 630; on India's problems, 20, 26, 45–46, 386, 731; on India's struggle for freedom, 10–11, 43, 93, 102, 131–135, 138, 144, 147, 152–153, 157, 183, 404, 729–730; on individual civil

disobedience, 146, 487, 627; on Indo-Japanese trade talks, 342; on industrial workers in India, 166; on inevitability of war under present political system, 634; on *inqilab*, 154–155, 158; on integrity, 588, 590; on intention to resign from Congress (1936), 165, 779; on internal conflicts in India, 31, 109; on international trade, 315; on interrelation of national and international problems, 141; on jail garden, 502, 541, 545, 556, 583, 616, 652, 669, 687, 706–707, 754; on jail going, 716; on jail interviews, 548, 589; on jail rules and new restrictions, 523, 530, 533–535, 537, 540–541, 543, 545, 547–550, 554–555, 562–567, 586, 688; on jail sports, 720–721, 733; on Jammu, 408; on Jamuna river, 455–456; on Jayakar, M.R., 236; on Jaya Prakash Narayan, 161, 766; on Jayewardene's visit to India, 211–212; on Jesuit priests, 575; on Jivraj Mehta, 610; on Jobat state, 257–258; on joint families, 717; on journey from Gorakhpur to Dehra Dun Jail, 502–503; on *Jugantar*, 366; on Kamala, 755, 758; on Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital, 528–529, 540–542, 571, 706; on Karl Marx, 385; on Kashmir, 267–269, 331, 396, 401, 403–410, 416, 473–474; on Kashmiri handicrafts, 329–330, 403–404; on Kashmiris, 392–393, 408–411; on keeping books in order, 668–669; on keeping busy in prison, 441; on Khaksars, 221–222; on Kher, B.G., 797; on kisans, 150–152, 154; on Krishna Menon, 23, and his visit to U.S., 213–214, 216; on Lahore resolution of Muslim League, 17; on language, 357, and adapting it to suit the audience, 756–758; on launching satyagraha movement, 31, 34, 40–41, 48, 50–51, 137–139, 144, 158, 182–183; on Lawrence, T.E., 576, 583–584; on leaders of freedom struggle, 765, and of religious groups, 186; on *Letters from a Father to His Daughter*, 430–431; on life, in general, 498–499, 509, 596, 617–618, 737 and his own, 601; on London, 526; on Lord Lothian, 763; on Lucknow Camp Jail incident, 568–570, 682–683, 685–686, 689–692; on Lucknow Congress, 768–769; on Maharajganj, 159–160; on Mahatma Gandhi, 41, 48, 51–52, 56–57, 59, 138, 142, 146, 149, 153, 178, 246, 259, 266, 636, 647, 649, 671, 676, 708, 734, 742–743, 770, 774–775, and his undertaking a fast, 193–195, 197–198 and his withdrawal from the Congress, 96, 98; on Mahatma Gandhi and Tagore, 671–672, 688–689; on making money, 717; on Malaya, 794–795; on his marriage, 658–659; on marriage and divorce laws, 318; on Maulana Azad, 205–206, 447, 675, 708, and his Presidential address, 203–205, 446–447; on medievalism and nationalism, 113; on meeting members of British Government, 761–763; on men of Vichy, 628; on Mesopotamian campaign, 630; on Middle East situation, 3–4; on militarism, 119; on minorities, 11, 20, 111, 176, 267, 410–411; on M.N. Roy, 234–235, 238, 249–250; on modern warfare, 32, 57; on Mohammad Ali Jinnah, 775; on Mohan Lal Kashmiri, 399–400; on his mother, 594; on mountains, 680–681; on Mridula Sarabhai, 618–619; on Muslims in India, 111; on Muslim League, 171, 215, 259, 381, 783, and its leadership, 17; on Napier, 436–438; on Narendra Deva, 766; on *National Herald*, 353, 355–361, 650, 676, 702; on National Planning Committee, 173–174, 216, 285, 287–291, 294, 296, 298–307, 309–311, 313–315, 464, 500–501, 517–518, 531–532, 631, its report, 305, 307–308, 311, 314, 501 and reports of its sub-committees, 283–289, 292–293, 298, 303–304; on nationalism, 43, 634; on Nazi Germany and Nazism, 27, 31, 74, 102, 105, 130, 134, 166, 759–760; on need for unity and discipline, 10–11, 26, 37–38, 49, 94, 122; on Neville Chamberlain, 28, on a new road to China, 346–347; on the newspaper man, 371–372; on a new

world order, 42, 50, 125, 180, 188, 278, 311, 621–622, 634; on nonviolence, 57–58, 65–67, 69, 88; on nonviolence and the state, 58, 65, 123–127, 177; on nonviolent resistance to external aggression, 65, 88; on North West Frontier Province, 219–220, 228, 409, 623–624; on the old authoritarianism in India, 580; on the old order, 39, 63, 74, 295–296, and its destruction, 39, 191–192, 470, 605; on output of work in first eight months in jail, 641; on pacifism, 634; on participation in defence efforts, 35, 37, 69, 82, 95, 105; on past five years of his life, 163, 593–595; on the Patna resolution, 11–12; on peace and freedom, 24; on Percival Spear's proposal, 419; on personal finances, 462, 470; on planning, 290–291, 293–297, 300–302, 313, 315, 405; on policy of appeasement, 84–85, 488, 624, 699; on political freedom and economic changes, 20, 386; on political prisoners and detenus, 551, 632–633, and their shameful frame-up, 641–643; on political prisoners in Lucknow Jail, 557–561, 571; on political and social reforms, 729–730; on Poona resolution of C.W.C., 132; on Poona session of A.I.C.C., 100; on possessing land and property, 705; on praise of his books by others, 653; on predictions about his future, 701–702; on preparedness for the coming struggle, 10; on the present and the future, 737; on the press, 302, and press restrictions, 248–249, 367, 371–372; on previous confinement at Dehra Dun Jail, 502; on prison life, 441, 503, 509, 513–514, 612, 617, 659, 665, 681, 703, 707, 722–723; on professional politicians, 769; on proposed partition of India, 20–21, 78, 147, 171–172 215, 266; on prospective arrest of Congressmen, 142–143; on provincial autonomy, its working, 168 and suspension, 104, 291; on provincial Congresses, 767; on Punjab press, 409; on Purushottam Das Tandon, 500–502; on Rabindranath Tagore, 456, 620, 670–673, 688; on Rajagopalachari, C., 178, 675, 798–800; on Rajni Patel, 425–427, 433–435; on Ramgarh Congress session, 448–450, and resolution, 55–56; on Ranjit Pandit and his translation of *Mudrarakshasa*, 616, 640, 652, 669, 677–678, 687; on re-election as Congress President, 170; on Reginald Maxwell's speech, 551–552; on religious groups constituting political community, 112–113; on religious tolerance in India, 112–113; on religious vested interests and sanctions, 317; on responsibility and discipline, 368; on resuming public activities in 1936, 764; on risk of civil war and foreign invasion, 658; on rumours of his release from prison, 653, 719, 721, 733–735, 739, 744–746; on Russo-German war, 697; on *sangathan*, 152; on satyagraha and satyagrahis, 38, 69, 135, 504, 709; on science, 44, 192, 462; on scrappy and incomplete reporting of speeches, 496; on Sea Customs Act, 370; on self-determination, 153, 216; on self-restraint, 592; on self-rule 151; on settlement with Britain, 52, 132, 137–138, 145–146, 162; on Shah, K.T., 701; on Shalimar Gardens, 470; on shaping of modern India, 89; on Sheikh Abdullah, 265, 407–408; on Shia-Sunni conflict, 571–573; on social changes, 439, social evils, 316, social organization, 120, social problems, 317, and social welfare, 316–318; on socialism, 5–6, 278, 313–314, 387, 765–767; on solving problems, 587; on some great men and women, 671–672; on Soviet system, 6, and Soviet Union, 156, 699–700, 742; on Spain 165, 422; on special courtesy shown to him in jail, 503; on Sri Lanka, 226, her delegates to Ramgarh Congress, 208, and a workers' federation there, 210; on Srinagar, 403; on state control or ownership of industries and production, 278, 295–298, 311–313; on statesmen and politicians, 624; on states people's movement, 173;

on strikes in tobacco industry, 521–522; on students, 26–27, 119, 393; on style of writing, 612–613; on Subhas Bose's election as Congress President (1939), 172; on Sudeten crisis, 699; on sugar industry, 323–329, 333–335; on the Superintendent of Dehra Dun Jail, 521–522, 524, 547; on Swaraj, 149–153, 155, 181; on the Swastika symbol, 759; on Syed Mahmud, 242–244, 251–252, 701; on Tai Chi-tao, 348 and his visit to India, 516, 518–520; on taking a bold decision, 89; on taking risks, 481, 499; on taluqdars and zamindars, 723; on taxation of land values, 580; on his term as Congress President, 777–779; on the theatre in India, 424; on time, 614; on touching others' feet, 183; on tour of U.P., 183–185, 248; on tourism, 404–405; on Trade Union Congress, 429; on his trial, 495; on unemployment and poverty, 147, 155–157, 312, 315; on a uniform civil code for India, 318; on United Provinces, 130, 676, 683–684, 783–784; on U.P. Congress, 122–123, 767–768; on U.P. Muslim League, 784; on U.P.P.C.C., 239–240, 366, and its issuing a review of the Urdu press, 223; on U.P. Tenancy Act, 154, 159–160, 332; on United States of America, 24, 141–142; on *Unity of India*, 669, 695; on untouchability, 149, 720, 729, 774; on vested interests, 111; on the Viceroy, 504, his Executive Council, 106–107, 127 and his proposal to enlarge it, 106–107, 127, 133, 179; on Vijayalakshmi Pandit being offered Vice-Chancellorship of Lucknow University, 696–697, and on her visiting China, 545; on visit to Bodh Gaya, Nalanda, etc., 450–451, to Burma (1937), 168, 788, to China (1939), 174–175, to hill stations, 217, to Jammu, 415, to Kashmir, 181, 396, 401–416, 455, 469, 472–473, 475, to London, 760–761, 763, to Oxford and Cambridge, 763, to Paris, 763–764, and to Sri Lanka, 174; on visiting America, 432–433; on violence and violent resistance, 56, 65–66, 266–267; on Vithalbhai Memorial Trust, 248; on volunteers, 38, 118, 146, 421, on the war, 1–2, 27, 30, 99–100, 129, 136–137, 141, 146–147, 156, 176, 180, 182, 277, 290, 311, 315, 378, 458, 468, 489, 625, 747, 749, 753–754, and its consequences, 75, 77–78, 463, 625; on a War Advisory Council, 107; on war and Indian industry, 701; on war loans, 227; on wars today, 103; on wartime censorship, 371–372; on wartime government in India, 488; on winning freedom, 157; on Winston Churchill, 672, 741–742; on women's attitude to time, 614; on Women's Sub-committee of N.P.C., 283–286, 730; on a world federation of free countries, 50, 66, 77–78, 119–120, 125, 157, 175, 180, 188–189, 191, 225, 438–439; on world problems, 165–166; on world situation, 36, 42, 47, 91, 97, 221, 480, 526; on writing down his thoughts, 593; on writing in Hindustani, 755, 758; on writing letters from prison, 465, 577, 591, 602; on writing in prison, 677, 754–755; on youth, 119

———, Kamala, 309 fn, 472, 502, 535, 556, 594–595, 605, 647, 658, 670, 680, 704–705, 754, 755, 758, 764

———, Kishenlal, 511 fn, 520 fn, 565, 648

———, Mohanlal, 359, 565, 647

———, Motilal, 472, 522 fn, 587, 594, 663, 672, 691, 704, 719, 724, 768

———, Rajan, 439–440, 548, 591, 603, 617, 680, 706, 737

———, Rameshwari, 591

———, Ratan, 548, 604, 618, 706, 737

———, Swarup Rani (Dolamma), 594

———, Uma, 558

Nepal, 189, 192, 439

New Book Company (Bombay), 434

New Deal, 328, 334–335

New Delhi, 604—*see also* Delhi

News Chronicle, 40
New Statesman and Nation, 83, 511, 590, 696 & fn
New York, 25, 497, 527, 537, 539, 553, 653
New York Times, 615, 654
New Zealand, 188 fn
Nimbkar, R.S., 429 & *fn*
Nizam-ul-Mulk, 271 fn
Nobel Prize, 394 & fn, 711 fn
North West Frontier Province, 29, 34, 41–42, 121–122, 217, 219 & fn, 220, 228, 392, 396, 402, 409, 414, 535, 623–624, 757, 765, 798
North West Frontier Provincial Congress Committee, 122 & fn, 219
Norway, 13 fn, 37, 73, 83, 145, 179
Not Yet (Mahatma Gandhi), 51 fn

Oasis, 512
Observer, 726 fn
O'Colin, Mlle., 512
Ode to the Spanish Civil War (Dorothy Enge), 442 fn
O'Dwyer, Sir Michael, 206
Oglewadi, 475
Ogpu, 143
Olli Viller, 477
On the Edges of Time (Rathindranath Tagore), 672 fn
Open Letter to Indian Friends (E.F. Rathbone) 618 fn
Orange Free State, 90 fn
Orissa, 82 fn, 250 fn
Orissa Congress Parliamentary Party, 82 fn
Osmania University, 271
Ottawa, 432
Oudh—*see* Avadh
Outline of History (H.G. Wells), 615
Oxford University, 41 fn, 163, 445, 453, 475, 529, 749, 760, 763
Oxford University Press, 430–431

Padrauna Tehsil, 154, 332
Pahalgam, 412, 414–415, 473–474
Pakistan, 35 fn
Pakistan scheme, 17, 119, 147, 215, 383, 657 fn
Palestine, 3, 73, 166, 188 fn, 209, 680
Paliwal, Sri Krishna Datt, 122 fn, 309 fn, 768
Pampur, 330
Pancham (warder), 712
Pandit, Chandralekha, 494, 500, 507, 510–512, 527, 558, 567–568, 570–571, 677–678
———, Nayantara, 494, 500, 505, 507, 510, 527, 567, 574, 653, 712, 738
———, Pratap, 638, 712
———, Ranjit S., 214, 228, 230, 382, 384, 451, 455, 494, 497, 500, 510, 515, 519–521, 528–529, 531–532, 534, 537–538, 541, 543, 545–546, 548, 554, 556–558, 566–568, 570, 572, 576, 582–584, 587, 591, 597, 604, 615–617, 638, 640, 651–652, 655, 662–663, 668–669, 676–678, 681, 685–687, 690–691, 696–697, 706, 708–709, 712, 714, 721, 726, 745–746, 749–750
———,Rita, 494, 500, 505, 507, 510, 527, 567, 652–653, 691
———, Vijayalakshmi, 168, 286, 384, 394, 441, 451, 494–497, 500, 504 & fn-505, 510, 520, 529, 536, 543, 545–547, 562, 566, 570–571, 574, 587–588, 591, 602, 615, 617, 619, 641, 647–648, 651–652, 666, 670–671, 676–678, 686–687, 689–692, 696, 702, 705, 708, 710, 712–714, 721, 724, 738–739
Pant, G.B., 745, 768, 797–798, 802
Paris, 55 fn, 71–72, 121, 170–171, 176, 415 fn, 480, 758, 763–764
Partab, Mrs. S., 654
Parting of the Ways (Jawaharlal Nehru), 743
Parvatiya Praja Parishad (Simla), 274 fn
Paston, Anne V., 385
Pataliputra, 383
Patel, Motibhai Venibhai, 427
———, Rajnikant M., 12 & *fn*, 142, 425–427, 433–435, 441
———, Vallabhbhai, 41, 81, 94, 121

& fn, 199 & fn, 233, 248, 427–428, 434, 674–675, 708, 764, 767
————, Vithalbhai, 248 fn
Path of the Masters (Santon Ki Shiksha) (Julian Johnson), 512
Patna, 365, 384, 423, 446
Patna resolution of Congress, 11
Patterson, Margaret W., 398 & fn
————, R.P., 398 fn
Patwardhan, Achyut, 217 & *fn*, 494, 778
Pawapuri, 450
Peather, D.C., 462
Penang, 451, 794
Persia—*see* Iran
Peshawar, 33, 36, 229, 416, 468–469, 472, 558
Petain, Marshal, 72 & *fn*
Peterhof (Simla), 747, 749
Petrarch, 401
Phelan, 736
Philippines, 47
Phylon, 397 & fn
Pipridih Train Dacoity, 561
Pir Panjal, 402, 415
Planning Commission, 23 fn, 293 fn
Plato, 529, 602, 714, 722–723
Pochas, 534 & fn, 545
Poland, 26, 73, 391
Poona—*see* Pune
Poona Offer, 140
Port Blair (Andamans), 559
Portugal, 539
Prague, 85, 700
Praja Party—*see* Krishak Praja Party
Prakasam, T., 800
Prakash, R., 506–507, 674, 724, 734
Prasad, Rajendra, 29, 30 fn, 33–34, 41, 76 & fn, 203, 230, 287, 327, 675, 764, 767
Pratapgarh, 247
Prayag—*see* Allahabad
Presidency College (Calcutta), 293 fn
Prisons Act, 686
Pritt, D.N. 377
Problem of Asia (A.T. Mahan), 613
Problem of India (K.S. Shelvankar), 529
Progress and Poverty (Henry George), 580
Pune, 80 & fn–81, 98, 100–101, 123, 129, 140, 225, 356, 445, 475–476, 545, 679
Punjab, 23, 34, 41, 97, 218, 222 fn, 400, 408–409, 512, 521, 665, 757, 767, 782–783, 797
Punjab Land Revenue Committee, 23 fn
Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, 222
Purushottam Das Park, 722
Pushkar Nath, 713
Puxley, H.C., 187
Pyrenees route, 85

Qaumi Avaz, 424 fn
Qazmi, Jafar Hussain, 555
Question of Sea Power (A.T. Mahan), 613
'Quit India' movement, 217 fn

Rae Bareli, 247, 276
Raipur, 614
Rajagopalachari, C., 68, 81 & fn, 94–95, 96 fn, 178 & fn, 562, 675, 720, 734, 764, 798–800
Rajahmundry Jail, 559
Rajasthan, 196
Rajatarangini (Kalhana), 640, 652
Rajgir (Rajagriha), 381, 450
Rajguru, 560
Rajkot, 172, 529, 594
Rajpur, 673–674
Rajputana, 738
Rajwade, Lakshmibai, 284
Rajya Sabha, 274 fn, 308 fn, 424 fn, 536 fn, 558 fn, 568 fn
Rallia Ram, Mrs., 97, 222
Ramani, R., 433
Ramgarh, 1 & fn, 51, 129 fn, 207–209, 260 fn, 381, 385, 446–447, 449–452
————, Congress session at, 1, 5, 7–8, 15 fn, 37, 47–51, 53, 55, 61 fn, 70, 85, 105, 203, 208–209, 234
Rampur, 473
Ram Saran, 695
Rangoon, 348, 390–391, 788–789, 794

Rao, B. Shiva, 247
———, K. Rama, 353, 356, 495
———, V.K.R.V., 306 & *fn*
Raphael, 401
Rashida Jahan (Mrs. Mahmud uzzafar), 507 & fn, 513
Rathbone, Eleanor F., 618 & *fn*–619, 620 fn, 637, 671, 726, 734
Rationalists, 447
Ratlam, 260, 263
Ratlam Praja Mandal, 260 fn
Rawalpindi, 547, 563–564
Rawat, Ghanshiam Singh, 641–642
Reading, Lord, 576
Reitzner, Richard, 698
Remarque, Erich Maria, 736
Republic (Plato), 714, 722
Revolt in the Desert (T.E. Lawrence), 583
Rhone Valley, 468
Rise & Fulfilment of British Rule in India (Thompson and Garret), 640
Roache, H., 454
Robeson, Eslanda Goode, 395 & fn, 533–534
———, Paul, 395 fn–396
———, Pauli, 396
Rockefeller Foundation, 394
Rollier, Dr., 453–454, 460, 469
Rome, 164, 237 fn, 349 & fn, 735
Roorkee, 502–503, 556
Roosevelt, Eleanor, 426
———, F.D., 104, 328, 334, 632, 672, 731
Rosa, 502–503, 556
Roy, Bidhan Chandra, 606, 608–611, 613–614, 616, 618
———, M.N., 5, 234 & fn–235, 237 & fn, 249 & fn, 768
Royal Garhwal Rifles, 558
Royal Society (London), 293 fn
Rozana Hind, 366
Rudauli, 184
Runciman, Sir Walter, 343
Runciman Mission, 85
Russia, Soviet (Soviet Union), 2–4, 15, 47, 74 & fn–75, 84, 132, 156–157, 176, 188–189, 191–192, 263, 369–370, 389, 419, 637 & fn, 644, 665, 678, 680, 697, 699–700, 759
Russian Revolution, 621
Russo-German Pact, 47, 176
Russo-German War, 649–650, 697
Rustam, 383

Sabine, George, 529 fn
Sadiya, 346–347, 794
Safdarganj, 184
Saha, Megh Nad, 394–395, 501
Sahai, Baldev, 555
Saharanpur, 321–322, 559–560, 720, 747
Saharanpur Bomb Factory Case, 559
Saint Fidelis School, 531 fn
Salamatullah, 576
Saleha, 660, 747
Sampurnanand, 239 & fn
Sanatan Adibasi Sabha, 207
Sandhurst, 436
San Min Chu I (Sun Yat-sen), 775
Santa Cruz (Bombay), 460
Santiniketan, 431, 445, 671, 673, 792
Sapru, Sir Tej Bahadur, 400, 802
Sarabhai, Ambalal, 328–329
———, Bharati, 424, 673–674, 677
———, Mridula, 286, 425, 438, 558, 607, 611, 618, 638, 641, 648, 650–651, 666, 673–677, 746
Saran, Raghunandan, 354, 359, 523, 565, 660, 664–666, 673–674, 676–677, 702, 723, 750
———, Raksha, 660, 664
Sarsa, 426–427, 434
Satyamurti, S., 33 fn, 51 & fn
Satyapal, 665
Saunders, 560
Saxena, Mohanlal, 495, 715, 734, 750, 768
———, Shibban Lal, 150, 154, 332, 335
Scandinavia, 13
Schedai, Iqbal, 250–251
School of Tropical Medicine (Calcutta), 394, 395 fn
Schuster, Sir George, 747, 748 fn, 750
Scindia Steam Navigation Company, 253
Scotland Yard, 760
Sea Customs Act (1878), 263, 370

Secker & Warburg (publishers), 530
Segaon, 467
Sen, 546
————, Gertrude, 651
Sen Gupta, J.M., 765
Seth, Padmavati, 520 & fn, 565
Sevagram (Shegaon), 467, 494, 536, 664, 692, 753
Seven Pillars of Wisdom (T.E. Lawrence), 576, 583
Sewal, R.N., 496
Shah, K.T., 286, 302, 309, 314, 500, 511, 520, 532, 571, 574, 697, 701–702
Shahjahanpur, 502
Shahnama (Firdausi), 383
Shah Nawaz, Begum, 97 fn
————, Mumtaz, 97 & fn
Shakuntalam (Kalidasa), 640
Shalimar Gardens, 470
Shamsuddin, 257–258
Shanghai, 441
Sharma, Balkrishna, 309 fn, 664–665
————, Brahma Prakash, 440 & fn
————, Shanti Prapanna, 642 & *fn*, 685, 721, 746
Shastri, Lal Bahadur, 234, 494
Shegaon—*see* Sevagram
Sheikh, Col., (I.G.), 534, 576, 692
Shelvankar, K.S., 529
Sher-e-Kashmir—*see* Abdullah, Sheikh Muhammed
Sherwani, Tasadduk Ahmad, 765, 768
Shia-Sunni conflict, 571–573
Shillong, 606, 610
Shishnag, 412
Shiva Murti, 572
Shopyan, 268 fn
Shriram, Lala, 329 & *fn*
Shukla, Ravi Shankar, 273 & *fn*
Shwe Dagon Pagoda, 789
Sialkot, 416
Siam—*see* Thailand
Siamese White (Maurice Collis), 726 fn
Simla, 85, 90, 116, 146, 151, 177, 277, 436, 603, 625, 631, 664–665, 680, 701, 709, 714, 747, 769
Simon, Sir John, 28, 85, 144
Simri, 276
Sind, 400, 436, 693, 708
Sind Valley (Kashmir), 412–413
Singapore, 426, 433, 435, 679, 777, 794–795
Singh, Bhagat, 560
————, Brajesh, 572
————, Chandra, 557–558, 561
————, Thakur Hukum, 572
————, Jai Bahadur, 561
————, Jaipal, 206
————, Mahabir, 560
————, Mangal, 186
————, Ram, 560, 570
————, Maharaja Ranjit, 400
————, Sardar Saman, 512
————, Sardar Sampooran, 35 & *fn*
————, Thakur Surendra Bahadur, 276
————, Master Tara, 245 fn
————, Tribhuvan Narayan, 568 & *fn*
Sinha, 355
————, Bejoy Kumar, 560
Sinn Fein, 634
Sino-Japanese conflict, 241, 794
Sita Ram, 696
Skelton, John, 514
Sloan, T., 536, 690 & fn–691
Smith, Vincent A., 639–640
Snell, Lord, 31 fn
Socialists (British), 761
Socialist Party (of United States), 387 fn
Sohrab, 383
Solan, 588–589, 596
Sonamarg, 412–413, 473
Sopore, 268 fn
Soraon (Allahabad district), 494
Soul of a People (Fielding Hall), 788
South Africa, 90, 188 fn, 416–417, 574, 791
Southern Rhodesia, 188 fn
Soviet Russia (Jawaharlal Nehru), 585
Spain, 24–25, 73, 85, 132, 163, 165–166, 241, 358, 391, 422 & fn, 488, 585, 755, 779
Spalding, Henry Norman, 41 & *fn*, 42 fn, 392
Spanish Civil War, 165, 369, 422, 442, 585
Spear, Sir Percival, 419
Sri Lanka, 113, 174, 188 fn–189, 192, 207–212, 225–226, 228, 231 & fn,

240–242, 253, 347–348, 402, 439, 606, 788–789, 791, 794
Srinagar, 36, 50, 229, 306, 330, 402, 405, 409, 411, 415, 473–474
Srinivasan, Kasturi, 562 & fn
Sri Prakasa, 353, 750, 768
Srivastava, Dr., 685, 744
———, Ram Sarup, 575
Stalin, Joseph, 84, 633
Stand of the Old Brigade (Sagittarius), 83
State (Harold Laski), 546
Statesman, 237, 391, 653 fn
States People, 280
Stehalin, Miss, 543
Stimson, Kay, 421 & fn, 449 & fn, 494–495, 610
———, Robert, 421 fn, 494
Streit, Clarence, 78
Subbarayan, P., 697
Sudan, 679
Sudeten Crisis, 585, 699–700
Sudetenland, 698–699
Suhrawardy, H.S., 480
Sukhdeo, 560
Sultanpur, 182, 187, 247
Suman, Shridev, 274 & fn
Sumatra, 795
Sun Yat-sen, 732 fn, 775
———, Madame, 343, 527, 545, 672, 711, 713, 723
Swaraj Party, 781
Switzerland, 30, 44, 163, 250–251, 380, 390, 396, 430, 433, 440–441, 445, 451, 454, 458, 460, 462, 474, 480–481, 492, 497–498, 505, 507–508, 510, 601, 605, 618, 665 fn, 765, 788
Syria, 3, 113, 622, 626, 680

Tagore, Rabindranath, 431, 456, 527, 615, 620 & fn, 656, 670, 671 fn–673, 680, 682 & fn, 688–689, 762
———, Rathindranath, 672 & *fn*
Tagore Birthday Number, 656, 688
Tagore Birthday Special Supplement, 681
Tagore Memorial Number, 681
Tai Chi-tao, 348–349, 515–516, 518, 520, 530
Tai Hsu, Rev., 340
Takht-e-Sulaiman, 402
Tandon, Purushottam Das, 768, 800–802
Tankha, Sham Sunder Narain, 558 & *fn*
Tankhas, 581, 724
Tara Chand, 720
Tata, J.R.D., 393 & *fn*
———, R.D., 393 fn
———, Thelma, 393
Tata Charities, 394–395
Tata Industries Pvt. Ltd., 393 fn, 701
Tata Iron and Steel Co. Ltd., 393 fn, 750
Taxila, 472
Textile Journal, 315 *fn*
Thailand, 189, 192, 546, 692–693, 792, 795
Thakin group (Burma)—*see* Dobama Asiayone
Thakurdas, Purshotamdas, 339
Theatre of the Hindus (Wilson), 529
Thermidor, 71
Tholal, M.N., 353 & fn, 357, 702
Thompson, Edward, 41, 378, 382, 392, 506, 525, 527, 530, 540, 640, 747, 750
Tibet, 341, 468, 661
Time, 590
Time & Tide, 523, 726 & fn
Times (London), 744 & fn
Times Book Club, 686
Times of India, 421 fn
Tiwari, Kamal Nath, 560
Tobruk, 679
To Every Briton (M.K. Gandhi), 87 fn
Toller, Ernst, 759
Toward Freedom (Jawaharlal Nehru), 585, 607, 615, 653, 711—See also *Autobiography*
Trade Union Congress, 429
Transjordan, 3
Transjordan Frontier Force, 3
Transvaal, 90 fn
Treaty Ports, 733 fn
Trials in Burma (Maurice Collis), 726 fn
Trichinopoly Jail, 559
Tripuri, 204
———, Congress session at, 172, 204

Turkey, 113
Tyagi, Mahavir, 506–507
U-boat campaign, 543
Udaipur, 738
Uday Shankar, 652
Ugra Sen, 581 & fn, 724, 738
Ulster, 574
Union Now (Clarence Streit), 78
United Nations, 433 fn
United National Party (Sri Lanka), 210 fn
United News of India, 365 fn
United Press, 130
United Provinces, 122–123, 159–160, 168 & fn, 224, 229, 235, 239 fn, 309 & fn, 323–325, 326 fn–327, 329 & fn, 333–334, 379–380, 388, 421, 432, 477, 550, 562, 568, 619, 675–676, 683, 738, 767, 783–784, 797–798, 800—*See also* Uttar Pradesh.
U.P. Jails, 559–560
U.P. Olympic Games, 720
U.P. Political Conference (Ayodhya), 557
U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, 5, 29, 33–34, 36–41, 48, 80–81, 99, 122 & fn, 160, 223, 234 fn, 235–240, 247, 249 & fn–250, 259 & fn, 275, 322, 366–367, 429, 438, 573, 767–768, 781, 802
U.P. Tenancy Act, 154, 159–160, 337
U.P. Tenancy Bill, 332
United States of America, 12, 15, 23–24, 43, 47, 54, 74–75, 86, 104, 124, 130, 135, 137, 141–142, 147, 156, 159, 162–163, 188–192, 212–214, 216, 226, 277–278, 312, 328, 334, 346, 389, 394, 405, 426–427, 432–433, 435, 441, 481, 527 533, 578, 653, 669, 681, 693, 696 fn–697, 711, 729, 731, 742, 771
U.S. House of Representatives, 104
U.S. Senate, 104
U.S. Supreme Court, 236
Unity of India (Jawaharlal Nehru), 14, 527, 585, 615, 623, 653, 669, 695, 700, 723, 725, 743
Universities Enquiry Committee, 239 fn
Unnao (Uttar Pradesh), 502 fn
Upadhyaya, S.D., 453, 460, 494, 500, 507, 510, 529–530, 534, 546, 565, 581, 590, 602, 608, 618, 666, 673–674, 695, 713–715
Uttar Pradesh, 189 fn, 568 fn, 642 fn, *See also* United Provinces

Vakils, 461, 475
Valley of Flowers (Garhwal), 661
Varma, 494
———, Hulas, 569
Vatican, 665 fn
Vellore Jail, 559
Venice, 454
Verdun, 72 fn
Verinag, 411
Verma, Shiv, 557, 559–560
Viceroy's Executive Council, 504 fn, 551 fn, 709 fn, 744, 748 fn
Vichy, 628, 635
Victoria Cross, 678–679
Victoria Station (London), 760
Vidyarthi, Ganesh Shankar, 768
Vienna, 758
Vijayatunga, J., 385 & fn
Vinayanand (S.P., Gorakhpur), 495
Visva-Bharati News, 656
Visvabharati Quarterly, 688
Visvabharati University, 431, 671, 673
Vithalbhai Patel Memorial Trust, 248 & fn
Vizianagram, Maharajkumar of, (Sir Vijaya Ananda Gajapatatiraj), 566 & *fn*–567
Voltaire (Brailsford), 546
Vyas, Jai Narayan, 591

Wafd Party, 171, 585
Wales, Nym, 713
Walsh, Richard J., 22, 388, 417, 419, 428, 534, 553, 609, 651–653, 669, 686, 711 & fn
Wang Ching-wei, 732 & *fn*
War Advisory Council, 106 fn–107, 504 fn
War, Peace and Finland (R.L. Buell), 114 fn
Wardha, 51, 70, 96, 131, 153, 182, 217–218, 226, 246–247, 251, 253, 275,

424, 438, 455, 459, 464, 474, 477–478, 494, 562 fn, 576, 614, 647–648, 709, 739, 753, 755
Washington, 653
Watson, Sir Alfred, 696 fn
Wazirabad, 416
Waziristan, 219, 228 fn
Wedgwood, Josiah C., 576–577, 740, 744
———, Mrs. 580
Weekly Hind, 366
Wells, H.G., 471, 615
West Bengal, 546 fn, 568 fn
Western Allies, 24 fn–25, 52 fn, 87 fn, 415 fn, 633
What the Human Race is Upto (Naomi Mitchison), 576 fn
What India Stands For? (Jawaharlal Nehru), 707
Where do we go from here? (Harold Laski), 530
White, Graham, 31 fn
White Guards, 2
Whitehall, 85, 90, 116, 625, 627, 769
White House, 426
White Russians, 3
Whittle, (Dist. Magis.), 494
Wilkinson, Ellen, 22 & fn–23, 31 fn
Williams, Rushbrook, 652
Willingdon, Lord, 761–762
Wilson, 529
Wind, Sand and Stars (Antoine de Saint Exupery), 736
Wint, Guy, 748 fn
Wisdom of China and India (Lin Yutang), 711 fn
Wisdom and Waste in the Punjab Village (Sir Malcolm Darling), 23 fn
Wiser, Arthur D., 190 & fn
Woodstock, 500
Worseldine, Major, 503
Wylie, Sir Curzon, 616 fn

Yamher, 413
Yar Khan, Bahadur, 275 & fn
Yash Dev, Dharam, 54 & *fn*, 209, 211, 241, 356
Yatindra Kumar, 720
Yazdani, Ghulam, 668 & *fn*
Yeravda Jail, 675
Yin Pao-yu, 345 & *fn*
Yunus, Mohammad, 121, 122 fn, 229, 472, 745
Yuvak Sabha, 409

Zaheer, Sajjad (Banne), 572 & fn
Zetland, 2nd Marquis, 16 fn, 21 & fn, 29 fn, 206 fn
Zutshi, Janak, 525–526
———, Laddo Rani, 476
———, Ladli Prasad, 587–588, 647, 674, 745

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FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling—these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of the East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his f

civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles, both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the 'third world' as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.

New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

EDITORIAL NOTE

This volume covers the short period of about eight months, from 4 December 1941, when Jawaharlal, along with the individual satyagraha prisoners, was released from prison, till 8 August 1942, when the A.I.C.C. meeting at Bombay passed the 'Quit India' resolution, whereupon the Government of India arrested Mahatma Gandhi and the members of the Working Committee. During this period, the war in Europe was at its most bitter stage. The Nazis had attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, and the German advance was halted only at the gates of Moscow in December. Thereafter the two sides were locked in grim battle along the whole front. In December 1941, Japan also had come into the war, and, after her rapid occupation of Malaya, Singapore and Burma, landings on India's eastern seaboard seemed imminent.

In face of this extreme crisis, the British Government, to Jawaharlal's exasperation, continued to display a total lack of imagination. Churchill's announcement that the Atlantic Charter would not apply to India had already angered Indian opinion. Jawaharlal was clear-minded about the need to resist any Japanese invasion, and he toured the country urging his countrymen to be courageous and to build up their self-reliance. But he was not prepared to compromise with the British, and — in contrast to Rajagopalachari — urged that the only solution to the Indian problem was transfer of full power to a national government. He welcomed the visit in February 1942 of Marshal Chiang Kai-shek and his wife although this led to no practical results. A month later, Sir Stafford Cripps brought proposals from the War Cabinet. The prolonged negotiations, conducted on the Congress side primarily by Jawaharlal, ended in failure. The repression that followed and the growing evidence of Britain's policy of racial discrimination while withdrawing from Malaya, Singapore and Burma confirmed Mahatma Gandhi in his view that Britain was incapable of defending India and should, therefore, withdraw. Jawaharlal had considerable reservations but ultimately drafted the resolution adopted by the Congress in August 1942, demanding British withdrawal so as to enable Indians to defend themselves and prevent India from sliding into passivity. For vindication of India's right to freedom, the resolution sanctioned the starting of a nonviolent mass struggle on the widest possible scale under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

Much of the material in this volume has been selected from the

CONTENTS

1. India and the War I
December 1941–April 1942

1	Hold Fast to Our Anchor	5 December	1941	1
2	On War	8 December	1941	2
3	Freedom the Only Basis of Action	9 December	1941	3
4	India's Unchanged Attitude to War	9 December	1941	7
5	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	11 December	1941	10
6	The Meaningless Release of Prisoners	11 December	1941	11
7	To Abdul Latif	12 December	1941	14
8	To Sampurnanand	14 December	1941	15
9	The Priority of Independence	14 December	1941	16
10	To Hajrah Begum	15 December	1941	29
11	Simla and Vichy	15 December	1941	30
12	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	16 December	1941	32
13	India Can Only Be a Rebel	17 December	1941	33
14	The Right to Rebel	18 December	1941	36
15	The War in Malaya	20 December	1941	42
16	To Syed Mahmud	21 December	1941	43
17	India's Attitude to the War	26 December	1941	43
18	Bardoli Resolution on Political Situation	25–30 December	1941	45
19	Instructions Issued by the Congress Working Committee	30 December	1941	56
20	Reply to H.G. Wells	30 December	1941	58
21	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	31 December	1941	60
22	Bardoli and Mahatma Gandhi	2 January	1942	60
23	Congress Unity	2 January	1942	61
24	The Reality in India	3 January	1942	72
25	To Mahatma Gandhi	5 January	1942	73
26	The Bardoli Resolution	15 January	1942	74

papers of Jawaharlal Nehru. The cooperation extended by the Director and staff of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library is acknowledged.

Some letters written to Kamala Nehru, Padmaja Naidu and V.K. Krishna Menon in the late twenties and thirties are included in the Appendix. We have so far been unable to trace few letters written to Madame Chiang during the period covered in this volume.

The National Archives of India have authorized us to utilize material in their custody. *The Hindustan Times, The Bombay Chronicle, The Hindu, The Tribune, National Herald, Amrita Bazar Patrika, The Statesman* and *The Leader* have allowed us to reprint speeches, statements, articles and editorials first published by them. Acknowledgments are also due for permission to reprint to: (1) Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London (eight extracts from *The Transfer of Power in India* 1942–47, Vols. I and II); (2) Public Record Office, London (one letter to Sir Stafford Cripps in the British Cabinet papers); (3) *The Spectator* (article in issue of 15 May 1942); and (4) Asia Publishing House, Bombay (two items from *A Bunch of Old Letters*).

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CONTENTS

1. India and the War I
December 1941–April 1942

1	Hold Fast to Our Anchor	5 December	1941	1
2	On War	8 December	1941	2
3	Freedom the Only Basis of Action	9 December	1941	3
4	India's Unchanged Attitude to War	9 December	1941	7
5	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	11 December	1941	10
6	The Meaningless Release of Prisoners	11 December	1941	11
7	To Abdul Latif	12 December	1941	14
8	To Sampurnanand	14 December	1941	15
9	The Priority of Independence	14 December	1941	16
10	To Hajrah Begum	15 December	1941	29
11	Simla and Vichy	15 December	1941	30
12	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	16 December	1941	32
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17	India's Attitude to the War	26 December	1941	43
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20	Reply to H.G. Wells	30 December	1941	58
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22	Bardoli and Mahatma Gandhi	2 January	1942	60
23	Congress Unity	2 January	1942	61
24	The Reality in India	3 January	1942	72
25	To Mahatma Gandhi	5 January	1942	73
26	The Bardoli Resolution	15 January	1942	74

27	Violence and Nonviolence	16 January	1942	76
28	Congress and the War	18 January	1942	77
29	Mahatma Gandhi and Swaraj	23 January	1942	79
30	To C. Rajagopalachari	26 January	1942	91
31	Resistance to All Aggression	26 January	1942	93
32	To Bhagwan Singh Gimdi	29 January	1942	99
33	To Ethelind Higginbottom	29 January	1942	100
34	The War and the People	31 January	1942	102
35	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	2 February	1942	116
36	U.P.P.C.C. Council's Instructions to Congressmen	5 February	1942	117
37	Workers and the War	8 February	1942	121
38	A World Federation of Nations	9 February	1942	129
39	Power Must be in National Hands	13 February	1942	132
40	The World Revolution	21 February	1942	133
41	Students and the War	21 February	1942	136
42	No Compromise with Britain	21 February	1942	138
43	Russia, China and the War	22 February	1942	140
44	The War Situation	24 February	1942	143
45	Greetings to the Detenus	24 February	1942	145
46	On Evacuees from Burma	24 February	1942	145
47	To Mirza Rashid Ali Baig	27 February	1942	147
48	To Bhulabhai Desai	28 February	1942	149
49	To Jagannath	6 March	1942	150
50	To Irene R. Ray	6 March	1942	151
51	To Anath Gopal Sen	6 March	1942	152
52	To Gopinath Bardoloi	6 March	1942	153
53	Solution Only on Basis of Freedom	8 March	1942	154
54	The Importance of Public Morale	10 March	1942	155
55	Civil Defence and Self-Sufficiency	11 March	1942	156
56	Japanese Pledge for Freedom	12 March	1942	162
57	The Problem of Food Supplies	14 March	1942	164
58	Racial Discrimination in Evacuation	18 March	1942	167
59	India's Day of Reckoning	March	1942	168
60	The Condition of Refugees	4 April	1942	177

1	To Stafford Cripps	20 March	1942	181
2	Cripps' Report of His Interview with Jawaharlal and Maulana Azad	29 March	1942	183
3	Cripps' Report of His Interview with Jawaharlal	30 March	1942	185
4	To Stafford Cripps	1 April	1942	187
5	Resolution of the Congress Working Committee	2 April	1942	188
6	Cripps' Report of His Interview with Jawaharlal and Maulana Azad	2 April	1942	191
7	To Stafford Cripps	3 April	1942	192
8	Reply to American Press Comments	4 April	1942	193
9	Interview with Louis Arthur Johnson	5 April	1942	194
10	To A.E. Foot	5 April	1942	195
11	To Louis Arthur Johnson	8 April	1942	197
12	Reply to American Press Comments	9 April	1942	200
13	To Louis Arthur Johnson	9 April	1942	201
14	To Stafford Cripps	10 April	1942	202
15	Hour of Peril for India	10 April	1942	208
16	To Stafford Cripps	11 April	1942	209
17	To Franklin D. Roosevelt	12 April	1942	212
18	The Congress and the Cripps Offer	12 April	1942	213
19	To Louis Johnson	13 April	1942	227
20	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	13 April	1942	227
21	To Tai Chi-tao	13 April	1942	229
22	Rejoinder to Stafford Cripps	13 April	1942	230
23	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	15 April	1942	231
24	Cable to Anita Blaine	15 April	1942	232
25	Freedom First	15 April	1942	233
26	British Distrust of Indians	20 April	1942	235
27	To Tuan-Sheng Chien	April	1942	236
28	The Mission and the War	24 April	1942	237
29	On Cripp's Press Conference	25 April	1942	238

27	Violence and Nonviolence	16 January	1942	76
28	Congress and the War	18 January	1942	77
29	Mahatma Gandhi and Swaraj	23 January	1942	79
30	To C. Rajagopalachari	26 January	1942	91
31	Resistance to All Aggression	26 January	1942	93
32	To Bhagwan Singh Gimdi	29 January	1942	99
33	To Ethelind Higginbottom	29 January	1942	100
34	The War and the People	31 January	1942	102
35	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	2 February	1942	116
36	U.P.P.C.C. Council's Instructions to Congressmen	5 February	1942	117
37	Workers and the War	8 February	1942	121
38	A World Federation of Nations	9 February	1942	129
39	Power Must be in National Hands	13 February	1942	132
40	The World Revolution	21 February	1942	133
41	Students and the War	21 February	1942	136
42	No Compromise with Britain	21 February	1942	138
43	Russia, China and the War	22 February	1942	140
44	The War Situation	24 February	1942	143
45	Greetings to the Detenus	24 February	1942	145
46	On Evacuees from Burma	24 February	1942	145
47	To Mirza Rashid Ali Baig	27 February	1942	147
48	To Bhulabhai Desai	28 February	1942	149
49	To Jagannath	6 March	1942	150
50	To Irene R. Ray	6 March	1942	151
51	To Anath Gopal Sen	6 March	1942	152
52	To Gopinath Bardoloi	6 March	1942	153
53	Solution Only on Basis of Freedom	8 March	1942	154
54	The Importance of Public Morale	10 March	1942	155
55	Civil Defence and Self-Sufficiency	11 March	1942	156
56	Japanese Pledge for Freedom	12 March	1942	162
57	The Problem of Food Supplies	14 March	1942	164
58	Racial Discrimination in Evacuation	18 March	1942	167
59	India's Day of Reckoning	March	1942	168
60	The Condition of Refugees	4 April	1942	177

21	On Amendments of the War Resolution	1 May	1942	293
22	On Rajagopalachari's Resolution	2 May	1942	294
23	To R. Jumabhoy	5 May	1942	295
24	To Mulkraj	5 May	1942	296
25	To Florence Wedgwood	5 May	1942	297
26	To Abul Kalam Azad	8 May	1942	298
27	Tribute to the Soviet Union	8 May	1942	299
28	Communists and Congressmen	10 May	1942	299
29	To Louis Arthur Johnson	11 May	1942	300
30	Note on the Indian Background	11 May	1942	301
31	Distorted War Propaganda	15 May	1942	312
32	Evelyn Wrench's Report of His Talk with Jawaharlal	15 May	1942	313
33	Writers and the War	16 May	1942	316
34	To Yashwant Rao Holkar	19 May	1942	318
35	The Dangerous idea of Pakistan	21 May	1942	320
36	Unsolved Indian Problems	22 May	1942	325
37	Congress Foreign Policy	31 May	1942	330
38	Prepare to Face the Challenge	31 May	1942	333
39	To J.J. Singh	4 June	1942	339
40	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	5 June	1942	339
41	To B.C. Roy	13 June	1942	340
42	India and the War	18 June	1942	341
43	To John B. Grant	23 June	1942	345
44	Another Casualty	5 July	1942	346

4. Quit India

1	J.L. Berry's Report of Interview with Jawaharlal	24 May	1942	351
2	To Louis Arthur Johnson	25 May	1942	352
3	Independence the Only Basis	28 May	1942	353
4	To Abul Kalam Azad	30 May	1942	354
5	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	1 June	1942	355
6	To J.L. Berry	3 June	1942	355

30	To Evelyn Wood	1 May	1942	240
31	To Evelyn Wood	5 June	1942	241
32	Independence and Independence Alone	16 June	1942	242

3. India and the War II

April 1942–June 1942

1	Freedom from Aggression	7 April	1942	247
2	To Chu Chia-hua	13 April	1942	249
3	To Peter Johnson	13 April	1942	250
4	To Ganga Singh	15 April	1942	251
5	Non-belligerency and Not Neutrality	18 April	1942	251
6	Cable to I. Badoo	19 April	1942	252
7	No Toleration of Any Aggression	19 April	1942	253
8	India's Survival	19 April	1942	255
9	No Surrender to the Aggressor	23 April	1942	261
10	Defence by One's Own Strength	23 April	1942	262
11	Fight Hitler and Japan to the End	24 April	1942	262
12	On His Assam Tour	25 April	1942	263
13	Embarrass the Aggressor	25 April	1942	267
14	Congress Resolution on Evacuation Orders	27 April	1942	268
15	The Lessons of Rangoon and Lower Burma	28 April	1942	269
16	Evacuees and Refugees from Malaya and Burma	28 April	1942	271
17	The Banned Resolutions	29 April	1942	272
18	A.I.C.C. War Resolution	27 April—1 May	1942	276
19	Evacuees from Burma	30 April	1942	286
20	Discussions of the Working Committee on War Resolution	27 April—1 May	1942	286

34	Struggle—Eternal Struggle	1 August	1942	426
35	Suppressio Veri, Suggestio Falsi	5 August	1942	427
36	A Struggle for Survival	5 August	1942	428
37	Free India As An Ally	5 August	1942	431
38	Stray Notes—August 1942	5 August	1942	432
39	Quit India Resolution	5–8 August	1942	436
40	On 'Quit India' Resolution	7 August	1942	454
41	Offer of Cooperation	8 August	1942	457

5. India and China

1	Cable to Madame Chiang Kai-shek	15 December	1941	465
2	To S.K. Datta	24 December	1941	465
3	Cable to Madame Chiang Kai-shek	20 January	1942	466
4	Goodwill Message to China	5 February	1942	466
5	On the Visit of Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek	10 February	1942	466
6	Tribute to Chiang Kai-shek	11 February	1942	467
7	To Chiang Kai-shek	13 February	1942	470
8	India's Aid to China	15 February	1942	471
9	Imperialism and China	20 February	1942	476
10	Visit of Chinese Leaders to India	28 February	1942	478
11	China Brought Nearer	6 March	1942	479
12	India-China Friendship	7 March	1942	480
13	We Shall keep Faith	8 August	1942	482

6. The Congress

1	To Mrs. B.L. Rallia Ram	12 December	1941	485
2	To Sri Prakasa	5 January	1942	485
3	To Narendra Deva	5 January	1942	486
4	To Abul Kalam Azad	24 January	1942	487
5	Concentrate on Major Issues	4 February	1942	489

7	To Abul Kalam Azad	5 June	1942	357
8	The British Must Leave India	10 June	1942	358
9	Note on Conversations with Mahatma Gandhi	12–14 June	1942	359
10	To James Lampton Berry	14 June	1942	362
11	Mahatma Gandhi's Letter to Chiang Kai-shek	14 June	1942	364
12	The Passion that Moves Gandhi	16 June	1942	367
13	To Mohammad Yunus	22 June	1942	373
14	To James Lampton Berry	23 June	1942	373
15	Message to the Aligarh District Conference	26 June	1942	376
16	Mahatma Gandhi's Letter to President Roosevelt	1 July	1942	378
17	A Vote of No-Confidence	3 July	1942	380
18	Time to Wrest Independence	3 July	1942	382
19	Need for Large Sacrifices	5 July	1942	383
20	Develop the Spirit of Resistance	8 July	1942	384
21	Congress Working Committee Resolution on British Withdrawal From India	9–13 July	1942	386
22	Resolution of Congress Working Committee Passed on 14 July 1942	14 July	1942	398
23	Demand for British Withdrawal	16 July	1942	400
24	J.L. Berry's Report of Interview with Jawaharlal	16–17 July	1942	404
25	Call for Free India	18 July	1942	409
26	Plunge into the Tempestuous Wave	19 July	1942	413
27	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	21 July	1942	414
28	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	23 July	1942	415
29	Instructions to Congress Workers	24 July	1942	415
30	Freedom Will Create Enthusiasm	26 July	1942	418
31	Reply to Stafford Cripps	27 July	1942	419
32	To Sampurnanand	28 July	1942	422
33	The Demand to 'Quit India'	31 July	1942	423

34	Struggle—Eternal Struggle	1 August	1942	426
35	Suppressio Veri, Suggestio Falsi	5 August	1942	427
36	A Struggle for Survival	5 August	1942	428
37	Free India As An Ally	5 August	1942	431
38	Stray Notes—August 1942	5 August	1942	432
39	Quit India Resolution	5–8 August	1942	436
40	On 'Quit India' Resolution	7 August	1942	454
41	Offer of Cooperation	8 August	1942	457

5. India and China

1	Cable to Madame Chiang Kai-shek	15 December	1941	465
2	To S.K. Datta	24 December	1941	465
3	Cable to Madame Chiang Kai-shek	20 January	1942	466
4	Goodwill Message to China	5 February	1942	466
5	On the Visit of Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek	10 February	1942	466
6	Tribute to Chiang Kai-shek	11 February	1942	467
7	To Chiang Kai-shek	13 February	1942	470
8	India's Aid to China	15 February	1942	471
9	Imperialism and China	20 February	1942	476
10	Visit of Chinese Leaders to India	28 February	1942	478
11	China Brought Nearer	6 March	1942	479
12	India-China Friendship	7 March	1942	480
13	We Shall keep Faith	8 August	1942	482

6. The Congress

1	To Mrs. B.L. Rallia Ram	12 December	1941	485
2	To Sri Prakasa	5 January	1942	485
3	To Narendra Deva	5 January	1942	486
4	To Abul Kalam Azad	24 January	1942	487
5	Concentrate on Major Issues	4 February	1942	489

7	To Abul Kalam Azad	5 June	1942	357
8	The British Must Leave India	10 June	1942	358
9	Note on Conversations with Mahatma Gandhi	12–14 June	1942	359
10	To James Lampton Berry	14 June	1942	362
11	Mahatma Gandhi's Letter to Chiang Kai-shek	14 June	1942	364
12	The Passion that Moves Gandhi	16 June	1942	367
13	To Mohammad Yunus	22 June	1942	373
14	To James Lampton Berry	23 June	1942	373
15	Message to the Aligarh District Conference	26 June	1942	376
16	Mahatma Gandhi's Letter to President Roosevelt	1 July	1942	378
17	A Vote of No-Confidence	3 July	1942	380
18	Time to Wrest Independence	3 July	1942	382
19	Need for Large Sacrifices	5 July	1942	383
20	Develop the Spirit of Resistance	8 July	1942	384
21	Congress Working Committee Resolution on British Withdrawal From India	9–13 July	1942	386
22	Resolution of Congress Working Committee Passed on 14 July 1942	14 July	1942	398
23	Demand for British Withdrawal	16 July	1942	400
24	J.L. Berry's Report of Interview with Jawaharlal	16–17 July	1942	404
25	Call for Free India	18 July	1942	409
26	Plunge into the Tempestuous Wave	19 July	1942	413
27	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	21 July	1942	414
28	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	23 July	1942	415
29	Instructions to Congress Workers	24 July	1942	415
30	Freedom Will Create Enthusiasm	26 July	1942	418
31	Reply to Stafford Cripps	27 July	1942	419
32	To Sampurnanand	28 July	1942	422
33	The Demand to 'Quit India'	31 July	1942	423

8. The Indian States

1	Message to the Indore Rajya Praja Mandal Conference	30 December	1941	531
2	To Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah	7 January	1942	532
3	To The Law Member, Bhopal	27 January	1942	533
4	Individual Satyagraha in Benares State	31 January	1942	534
5	A Note on Rewa	6 March	1942	535
6	The Indian States and the Treaties	6 April	1942	537
7	Jodhpur	6 June	1942	539
8	To Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah	29 July	1942	540
9	The States People and the 'Quit India' Resolution	8 August	1942	541

9. Industry And Agriculture

1	Cottage and Large-Scale Industries	7 December	1941	545
2	The Gandhi Ashram of Meerut	14 December	1941	547
3	The Government and the Automobile Industry	6 January	1942	548
4	Price of Sugar-cane in the United Provinces	12 January	1942	550
5	Message to the U.P. Cane-Growers Conference	27 January	1942	550
6	The Kisans and the War	31 January	1942	551
7	The Task of Engineers	31 January	1942	556
8	Rejoinder on the Automobile Industry	3 February	1942	557
9	The Kisan Sabhas and the Congress	24 February	1942	558
10	Kisans Should Follow the Congress	28 February	1942	560

6	Congressmen and Other Organisations	4 February	1942	489
7	To Choithram P. Gidwani	7 February	1942	490
8	Dirty Politics in Orissa	27 February	1942	491
9	To Abul Kalam Azad	4 March	1942	492
10	To Abul Kalam Azad	5 March	1942	493
11	To Syed Mahmud	17 March	1942	495
12	Defence of Subhas Chandra Bose	19 March	1942	495
13	On Election of Delegates to the U.P.P.C.C.	30 May	1942	496
14	Gorakhpur	6 June	1942	498
15	To Anumela Rama Govind Sarma	11 June	1942	499
16	Campaign Against Abdul Ghaffar Khan	2 July	1942	499
17	On Assumption of U.P. Congress Presidentship	9 July	1942	501
18	To P. Subbarayan	10 July	1942	502
19	To S.K. Patil	27 July	1942	503
20	Communists and the Congress	1 August	1942	504

7. The Communal Issue

1	To Ranjit M. Chetsingh	12 December	1941	509
2	To Muhammad Abdus Sattar Kheiri	8 January	1942	510
3	To Syed Mahmud	2 February	1942	511
4	To Syed Mahmud	7 February	1942	514
5	To Allama Mashriqi Inayatullah Khan	12 June	1942	515
6	To Allama Mashriqi Inayatullah Khan	23 June	1942	516
7.	To Allama Mashriqi Inayatullah Khan	8 July	1942	517
8	Can Indians Get Together?	19 July	1942	518
9	To K.G. Gagai	27 July	1942	523
10	To Amaranatha Jha	28 July	1942	524
11	To Abdul Latif	6 August	1942	526

3	Jamnalal Bajaj	12 February	1942	602
4	Foreword to "Larkharati Duniya"	8 March	1942	603
5	Message on Imam Husain Day	8 March	1942	604
6	To Victor Hugo Sword	27 April	1942	605
7	Foreword to "Frontier Speaks"	5 June	1942	606
8	To Jagannath	10 June	1942	610
9	Abul Kalam Azad	24 June	1942	610
10	Asia and America	June	1942	612
11	To D.N. Wadia	8 July	1942	614
12	Lifting of Ban on the Communist Party	24 July	1942	615
13	To Richard J. Walsh	25 July	1942	616
14	Rabindranath Tagore	7 August	1942	617

13. Personal

1	To Mrs. Nellie Sen Gupta	12 December	1941	621
2	To C. Vijayaraghavachari	12 December	1941	621
3	To Padmaja Naidu	16 December	1941	622
4	To Ghanshyam Das Birla	8 January	1942	622
5	On Indira's Choice	26 February	1942	623
6	To K. Govinda Rao	1 March	1942	624
7	To P.A. Narielwala	9 March	1942	624
8	To P.A. Narielwala	13 March	1942	625
9	To Lachhmi Dhar Shastri	16 March	1942	626
10	To P.A. Narielwala	17 March	1942	627
11	Public Acknowledgement of Congratulations	28 March	1942	628
12	To Stafford Cripps	7 April	1942	628
13	To Indira Gandhi	7 April	1942	629
14	To G.P. Hutheesing	17 April	1942	630
15	To Indira Gandhi	5/6 May	1942	631
16	To Padmaja Naidu	5 May	1942	631
17	To Louis Fischer	27 May	1942	632
18	To Indira Gandhi	27 May	1942	633
19	Cable to Frances Gunther	4 June	1942	634
20	To Padmaja Naidu	9 June	1942	635
21	To Indira Gandhi	9 June	1942	636

11	The New World Order	10 March	1942	561
12	To the Editor, "Hindusthan Standard"	31 May	1942	562
13	British Economic Policy in India	24 June	1942	563
14	India's Backwardness	26 June	1942	565
15	China Rebuilds for Democracy	2 July	1942	568

10. National Herald

1	To R. Dalmia	21 December	1941	575
2	To K. Rama Rao	5 January	1942	576
3	To K. Rama Rao	2 April	1942	578
4	To Rafi Ahmed Kidwai	17 April	1942	578
5	The Herald	2 June	1942	579
6	The Shape of Things to Come	6 July	1942	582

11. Civil Liberties

1	Detention Without Trial	5 March	1942	587
2	The Suspension of Newspapers	25 April	1942	588
3	The Punjab Order on the Pratap	12 May	1942	589
4	To Sikandar Hayat Khan	17 May	1942	590
5	Continuance of the Order on the Pratap	21 May	1942	592
6	To Shaukat Usmani	12 June	1942	594
7	Internments and Externments	30 June	1942	594

12. General

1	To Mian Iftikharuddin	18 December	1941	599
2	Message to the All India Students Conference	20 December	1941	601

ILLUSTRATIONS

Bombay, August 1942 *frontispiece*

Draft resolution for Working Committee, Bardoli, 25 December 1941
With Bhulabhai Desai, Syed Mahmud, C. Rajagopalachari and Asaf Ali at A.I.C.C. session, Wardha, January 1942 *between pp.* 48—49

With Madame Chiang Kai-shek, February 1942
Arriving at a public meeting, Delhi, February 1942 128—129

With Mahatma Gandhi at Ramrajatala station to receive Madame Chiang Kai-shek, February 1942
With Mahatma Gandhi, Chiang Kai-shek Madame Chiang and others, February 1942 176—177

With students at Visvabharati, February 1942
At Indira's marriage, 26 March 1942 208—209

With Sir Stafford Cripps and Maulana Azad, New Delhi, 30 March 1942
Letter to Sir Stafford Cripps, 7 April 1942 240—241

Letter (drafted by Jawaharlal) from Maulana Azad to Sir Stafford Cripps, 10 April 1942
With Nicholas Roerich, Kulu, May 1942 304—305

In Aligarh, June 1942
First page of notes taken at the Congress Working Committee, Bombay, August 1942 432—433

With Mahatma Gandhi at meeting of Working Committee, Bombay, 5 August 1942
At A.I.C.C. session, Bombay, 7 August 1942 496—497

With Mahatma Gandhi and J.B. Kripalani at A.I.C.C. session, Bombay, 8 August 1942
Bombay, August 1942 608—609

22	To Indira Gandhi	13 June	1942	637
23	Telegram to Indira Gandhi	11 July	1942	638
24	To Duncan Greenlees	27 July	1942	638

14. Appendix

1	To Padmaja Naidu	16 February	1929	641
2	To Padmaja Naidu	10 July	1929	642
3	To Padmaja Naidu	23 July	1929	643
4	To Padmaja Naidu	24 October	1929	644
5	To Padmaja Naidu	23 March	1930	645
6	To Kamala Nehru	8–9 July	1930	646
7	To Kamala Nehru	23 July	1930	650
8	To Kamala Nehru	2 September	1930	654
9	To Kamala Nehru	10 September	1930	656
10	To Padmaja Naidu	22 October	1930	657
11	To Padmaja Naidu	10 April	1931	659
12	To Padmaja Naidu	29 June	1931	659
13	To Padmaja Naidu	18 August	1931	661
14	To Padmaja Naidu	24 October	1931	662
15	To Padmaja Naidu	27 December	1931	662
16	To Padmaja Naidu	12 January	1932	663
17	To Padmaja Naidu	10 January	1933	664
18	To Padmaja Naidu	7 February	1933	666
19	To Padmaja Naidu	16 May	1933	669
20	To Padmaja Naidu	14 September	1933	671
21	To Kamala Nehru	26 May	1935	672
22	To Kamala Nehru	7 June	1935	675
23	To Kamala Nehru	21 June	1935	677
24	To Kamala Nehru	5 July	1935	680
25	To Kamala Nehru	19 July	1935	682
26	To Kamala Nehru	2 August	1935	687
27	To V.K. Krishna Menon	15 November	1935	691
28	To Padmaja Naidu	23 December	1935	692
29	To Padmaja Naidu	16 February	1936	693

1

INDIA AND THE WAR I

December 1941—April 1942

1. Hold Fast to Our Anchor[1]

To all my comrades, to Congressmen, to the people of the United Provinces, greetings.[2] It is good to meet old friends again, to see familiar faces, to feel the warmth of the welcoming smile and the embrace and grip of comradeship. It is good to see the wide fields and the crowded streets and ever-changing panorama of humanity. But it is not good to go in and out of prison at the bidding of alien authority. It is not good to come out of the narrow confines of a jail into the larger prison that is India today. The time will come surely when we break through and demolish all the prison walls that encompass our bodies and minds, and function freely as a free nation. But that time is not yet and we may not forget this or rejoice at a trivial change which has no meaning.

In this world of infinite suffering, where violence and hatred and the spirit of destruction seem to reign supreme, there is no rest or avoidance of travail. In this India, where foreign and authoritarian rule oppresses and strangles us, there is no peace for us and the call for action in the interest of a free India and a free world comes insistently to our ears. The call of India is there for those who wish to hear, the call of suffering humanity becomes more agonising from day to day. So there is no rest for us but to carry the burden of the day and hold fast to our anchor.

We have watched from afar the heroic courage and infinite sacrifice of other peoples struggling for their freedom, especially of the people of China, after four and a half years of terrible struggle; and of the people of Soviet Russia, pouring their hearts' blood and destroying their own mighty achievements so that freedom may live.[3] Our conditions are different, our ways of struggle are not the same. Yet there is the same call for sacrifice and discipline and iron determination.

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 5 December 1941. *National Herald*, 6 December 1941.
2. Jawaharlal was released from jail on 4 December 1941.
3. On 22 June 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union without prior declaration of war. The Russians suffered several defeats and lost much territory before they halted the Germans at the gates of Moscow in December 1941. The Dneproges Dam on the Dnieper River, in East Central Ukrainian S.S.R., built in 1928-32 with American aid, was blown up by the Russians on 27 August 1941 as they fell back before the Germans.

3. Freedom the Only Basis of Action[1]

Every sensitive person must feel to a greater or less degree the agony of the world today. No individual or nation can or should think in terms of narrow self-interest in the face of this great catastrophe. We have to take the wider outlook ultimately even in terms of self-interest for there can be no doubt that national isolation is dead and the future is hardly likely to consist of a large number of separate national entities. Whatever attitude we take up in India we must keep the wider aspects in view. This war is something much bigger than a war, and out of its womb all manner of changes will arise.

I should like India to use its strength and resources in favour of possible good changes. In the grouping of powers struggling for mastery, on both sides there seem to be dreams entertained by governments of world domination. Undoubtedly this is so on the part of Hitler. It is not proclaimed as such by the other side. I have no doubt that any attempt at world domination by any group of powers will be harmful and must be resisted. Still I think that in the grouping that exists there is also no doubt that progressive forces of the world are aligned with the group represented by Russia, Britain, America and China. In addition to these progressive forces this group has also got strongly entrenched reactionary forces as evidenced by the treatment accorded to India. This treatment inevitably governs our own policy. Yet at the same time we must sympathise and wish well to the group which contains the progressive forces, more specially those of China and Soviet Russia.

In regard to India we have amongst us many differences of opinion, some of which are vital. Yet I think so far as Indians are concerned, to whatever group they might belong, one thing should be common and that is the freedom of India. It should be possible for all of us to accept this common basis for the present, and cooperate together to that end, keeping, if necessary, all our differences for future consideration and settlement. Possibly even this period of working together, in spite of our differences, will help in resolving those very differences. We are up against very big things in the world. None of us can forget this without becoming petty and little-minded. We have seen how some countries of Asia have in the course of this war lost their independence—

1. Interview to the press, Lucknow, 9 December 1941. From *National Herald*, 10 December 1941.

The call of India continues to resound in our ears and tingle the blood in our veins. So let us go forward then along the path of our choice and take all the trials and tribulations with serenity and confidence and with smiling countenance.

2. On War[1]

I shall be sorry if Russia loses, though I do not entertain that fear; if I were asked with whom my sympathies lay in this war, I would unhesitatingly say with Russia, China, America and England. But, in spite of my sympathy for the group, there is no question of my giving help to Britain. How can I fight for a thing, freedom, which is denied to me? British policy in India appears to be to terrify the people, so that in anxiety we may seek British protection.

The release of political prisoners has not changed the situation; so far as Britain's policy towards India is concerned, it remains the same. While I cannot off-hand say what course the Congress will pursue, it has been demonstrably proved that the Congress stand is very correct. I admire the way Mahatma Gandhi has conducted the satyagraha movement[2] and affirm my confidence in the Mahatma's leadership.

You are aware of the latest developments in the Far East[3] where a new curtain has been rung down and no one knows what will follow. The war might even spread to India.

You should think for yourselves and should not be carried away by slogans. I am against disruption amongst students, which is a sign of weakness. You should work together, for you will have to shoulder responsibility in the future.

1. Speech at Lucknow University, 8 December 1941. From *The Hindustan Times*, 10 December 1941.
2. The individual satyagraha or civil disobedience was started by Mahatma Gandhi on 17 October 1940 as a protest against the British denial of the right of freedom of speech to Indians to preach against the war and India's participation in it.
3. Japan attacked Pearl Harbour and declared war on the United States and Britain on 7 December 1941. Thailand, by an agreement with the Japanese on 8 December 1941, allowed Japanese troops passage through its territory. The Japanese also attacked Singapore and Malaya.

air force which might be used for police purposes. But it is essential that this should not be under the control of a few great powers who can thus impose their will upon others. National freedom for each nation is essential before any such step can be taken.

Q: What is the position of the Congress vis-a-vis the war?

JN: The Congress position was first fully stated in the declaration of September 1939[4] and subsequently added to by the All India Congress Committee resolutions. It remains till it is modified. Its application must necessarily depend on many factors. For instance, if it were made clear by the British Government that they accept that position completely, not just for the Congress, but for India, and give effect to it, this in itself would be a major international event, changing the whole character of the war. Inevitably the many drawbacks and obstacles towards giving support to the Allied cause would then be removed.

How India would give practical effect to its undoubted moral support to that cause then would be a matter for full consideration; it will have to be decided by the representatives of the people of India. The immediate object before India would necessarily be to defend itself.

Q: Will you advise Congressmen to cooperate with the Government in A.R.P. measures?[5]

JN: I am not fully in touch with the situation. Congressmen obviously will always give help in the protection of life, whenever such danger arises. Ordinarily, cooperation with the authorities means submission to the authorities. To my mind there are few people in this wide world who are so incompetent as the authorities in India in any matter. It is very difficult for intelligent people to submit to the decisions of unintelligent people.

Q: What do you think about the Indianisation of the Viceroy's Executive Council?[6]

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 122-138.
5. Air Raid Precaution exercises were organised by civic administrations in cities and towns for the safety of life against air bombardment.
6. The Government of India stated on 22 July 1941, "As a result of the increased pressure of work in connection with the war, it has been decided to enlarge the Executive Council of the Governor-General in India in order to permit the separation of portfolios...." Accordingly, M.S. Aney and Sultan Ahmed were appointed to the Viceroy's Executive Council.

Iraq,[2] Iran[3] and now practically Thailand. We must, therefore, take this larger view and if we cannot make up our differences now, at least keep them for a future occasion, and meanwhile work together for the independence of India within the framework of larger world freedom.

Question : In the given conditions today, would you comment on Mahatma Gandhi's leadership?

Jawaharlal Nehru : Mahatma Gandhi's leadership has been brilliant; he has stood firm as a rock on certain fundamental principles and has not allowed himself to be diverted by various smaller happenings. It is very very easy for me or anyone else to criticise here or there certain minor developments with which we may not wholly agree but, looking at the scene as a whole, I think that Gandhi's leadership has not only been straight and sound but brilliant.

Q: What are your views in regard to nonviolence?

JN: I have been unable in the past to accept all the implications of the doctrine in so far as its practical application is concerned. But I have held that this is an ideal worth striving for, with all our might, and even this World War has demonstrated the utter folly of continued application of violence to the settlement of any problem. In fact, violence today can be effectively used only by three or four big powers; the others may be hangers-on. By themselves, they are completely incapable of thinking in terms of violence.

Q: How do you reconcile yourself to nonviolence in international affairs?

JN: I am convinced that the only way out for the world is complete disarmament or else more or less complete destruction. I can conceive, however, of general disarmament being accompanied by an international

2. After King Ghazi's death in 1939, his infant son, Feisal II, became king under the regency of his pro-British uncle, Abd-ul-llah. In April 1941, the ruling group of colonels under Rashid Ali went to war with the British but was defeated. Iraq was again on the side of the Allies under the regency of Nuri-al-Sa'id.
3. Iran proclaimed her neutrality in 1939 but in 1941 the British and Russians sought rights of transit through Iranian territory. Permission having been refused, the two powers invaded and occupied Iran on 25 August 1941 and divided Iran into two zones. The Russians occupied the north of the country and the British the south. Reza Shah abdicated in favour of his son Muhammad Reza.

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JN: I have never been able to understand the significance of Indianisation in anything, whether it is the Government or the army. One does not talk of the Anglicisation of the British army or the British Government. One talks about nationalisation of the country's government or army, one talks of power being transferred. The question, therefore, is not one of Indianisation but of transfer of power and the authority controlling that power. If the Executive Council of the Viceroy consisted of Indians of his choice, under the present circumstances it would make no difference to the seat of power; but if representatives who are responsible to others are chosen, that means an independent, responsible government and the Viceroy fades out.

Parliamentary activity means nothing unless there is a responsible parliament functioning. Mere going to the Central Assembly, delivering speeches or asking questions are not functioning in parliament at all, but whether it is desirable or not is another question. We must not delude ourselves by such vague phrases. But to me this kind of activity is entirely ineffective and unjustified and not in accordance with the general policy of the Congress at the present moment.

Q: What is the present policy of the Congress?

JN: The present policy of the Congress is not hundred per cent but largely one of noncooperation. But if you have followed the various movements conducted by the Congress during the last twenty years or so, you will have some picture of what that means. When we were not doing anything effective or taking any action we allowed the opposition to function, but it does not now fit in.

Q: What are your views about the Muslim League's demand for minority protection in the Constituent Assembly?[7]

JN: I cannot conceive of any valid opposition to that suggestion. I can conceive of an organisation or a minority saying that in certain matters which it considers important the will of the majority should not prevail against its own wishes. In such cases either there is agreement between the so-called majority and the so-called minority in the Constituent Assembly or there is disagreement. The question then arises how

7. Speaking in the Working Committee meeting of the Muslim League, on 24 February 1941, Jinnah stated that the Congress really demanded a Hindu raj and the Muslims would not accept a Constituent Assembly based on adult franchise or even an Interim National Government at the centre such as the Congress demanded.

to meet that disagreement. To say that an attempt should not be made by the representatives of the country even to find a basis for agreement seems entirely unjustified. As for the British Government they have succeeded in creating by their own misguided policy so many knots and tangles in India that they have themselves got tied up in all of them. It is not for me to suggest how they should untie themselves.

Q: Do you think that the minorities should be given separate electorates or joint electorates in the Constituent Assembly?

JN: Every minority which has a separate electorate at present and desires to have it should have it.

Q: How far has the country gained from the satyagraha movement?

JN: It is very difficult to weigh moral issues. The fundamental thing behind the satyagraha movement during these twenty-two years has been the strengthening of the Indian people. I think it has succeeded in an ample measure not only in so far as Congressmen are concerned, but even those who may not be within the Congress. In a sense India has gained tremendously by it. Further, it has put forward before the world a method of peaceful struggle which, though it may fall into errors owing to human frailty, is undoubtedly a great evolution in the world of thought as well as action. In the present instance, I feel that the satyagraha movement has enabled us to maintain the self-respect and dignity of India, to prevent the demoralisation which a passive submission to foreign authority brings in, and to impress the world not only with the Indian demand for freedom but also with the value of the peaceful technique of struggle while inhuman war goes on in a great part of the world.

4. India's Unchanged Attitude to War[1]

After over thirteen months spent in the solitude and isolation of prison it is not easy to adjust oneself to the activities of the changing world. Individual opinions may be expressed, but they will lack the reality which

1. Statement to *Daily Herald*, Lucknow, 9 December 1941. Printed in *National Herald*, 12 December 1941. The *Daily Herald* published only extracts in its issue of 15 December 1941. Here we are giving the *National Herald* version.

The entry of Japan into the war has now made it world-wide, and it approaches India's borders. That is of vast interest to us, but it will not make us panicky. Our sympathies must inevitably be with the non-fascist nations. And such help as we can give them, consistently with our own principles, would flow to them, if we functioned as a free people. Only freedom can tone down the enormous antagonism that British policy in India has created.

Whether it is India or the world or the war, no petty hesitant half-measures are of any avail. This was so in September 1939, when the Congress issued its declaration on the war, by which it has stood throughout. This is much more so now, and the history of the past two years bears witness to it. People who think in terms of preserving the old order, or presuming to tell us in India that they are the best judges of what we should have, are not going to solve anything. They are dangerous relics of a past, which must be swept away if the ground is to be cleared for real victory and freedom. And of that the greatest test is India now, in the present, and not after the war.

5. Cable to V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
11 December 1941

Your cable.[2] I have sent a message to *Daily Herald*,[3] sending another [illegible] message to *News Chronicle*[4] via Bombay. Reynolds requests mes- [illegible] but no press authority. Only the Working Committee is entitled [illegible] an authoritative exposition of policy. Prisoners' release makes [illegible] reference to Indo-British relations, but desire express solidarity with [illegible]

3. About

fascist nations. On the British side, they saw a combination of imperialist and democratic forces, with the former completely controlling Indian policy. In spite of their evident sympathy with the anti-fascist forces and nations, they could not submit to conditions which meant national humiliation and an acceptance of their subject condition. Indeed, their very anti-fascist outlook made them rebel against the fascist and authoritarian nature of the Government of India. The spread of the war to the Soviet Union widened and intensified their sympathy for the progressive forces, but did not affect their reaction to the British Government's policy in India, for that was based on other causes. No self-respecting people or nation could tolerate a surrender on this issue, whatever the consequences.

Many of us were distressed that at this supreme moment in the world's history India was not playing a more active and effective part. We shared the agony of the world. Yet we felt that even so we were playing a not unworthy part by drawing attention to certain essential aspects of freedom without which a military victory would be valueless and would lead to even greater tragedies. It was essential to recognise that the entire world must be based on freedom and the cooperation of free peoples in a world order, that the economic order must be changed to prevent exploitation and to promote the fullest use of the world's resources for human betterment, that there must be full disarmament of all nations and an end of armed warfare between them. Hitler's victory would be a greater disaster, but it would also be a disaster if others who were victors established a hegemony over the world, supported armed might, which would develop into another type of fascist authoritarianism. The only alternatives were freedom and disarmament all round, and continuing warfare and destruction.

Mahatma Gandhi is a full believer in nonviolence. Most of us are not pacifists, but this war itself has convinced us of the futility of armed states trying to destroy each other as well as civilisation periodically by war. The system which gives rise to this must go. This war will run its appointed course, but it must be made clear that this system must be ended. Personally I agree with Mr. H.G. Wells' proposal that there should be an international air force and no national armies.[5] But this must be really international, and not controlled by a few great powers. We want no great power, greater in armed might, but free nations.

5. H.G. Wells, in an article reprinted in *The Bombay Chronicle* of 13 July 1941, stated that "this war has revolutionised all our ideas of war on land, at sea, in the air....the objective of all rational men throughout the world, so far as I can work it out, should be ...that we bring out of this war a world federal control of the air that shall make another *blitzkrieg* impossible for ever more."

contact with people and a living situation gives them. I am seeking to regain these contacts and the Congress Working Committee will no doubt give expression to its views very soon.

My first impression is of the hardening in the situation in India. The repeated declarations on behalf of the British Government in regard to India and the policy that has been pursued have antagonised almost every section of Indian opinion and made people here believe that nothing can be expected from this Government. The attempts to play off different groups against each other and to promote every disruptionist activity, the support of reactionary elements, the reversion to conditions of fifty years ago and the openly offensive and authoritarian attitude of the permanent officials of the Indian Civil Service have made conditions far worse than they have ever been within my knowledge. Bitterness has been added by the ill-treatment of political prisoners[2] and by the detention in concentration camps of large numbers without charge or trial.[3]

This is the national background, and the release from prison of a number of Congressmen does not make any essential difference. Even now there are thousands in prisons and concentration camps. But even if all these were released the real problem will remain, made much harder of amicable solution by the events of the past two years. There was a time, soon after the war began, when a possibility arose of solving the problem.[4] But that tide in the affairs of men was allowed to pass and everything was said and done to anger and humiliate the proud nationalism of India, which is by far the strongest force which moves our people. That nationalism is not the aggressive nationalism of Europe but the peaceful nationalism of a people demanding their own independence within a larger world order of free nations.

At the same time, the people of India had long sympathised and expressed their solidarity with the progressive forces in the world, in China, Europe, America and elsewhere. That sympathy continued and they viewed with anxiety the prospect of these forces being crushed by the

2. Complaints were received that prisoners who were allowed charkhas were not allowed slivers although spinning was a recognized jail industry. The 'C' class food continued to be bad. Lathi charges took place frequently inside the jails. Although political detenus at the start received allowances of Rs. 10 and Rs. 5, almost all of them were deprived of such allowances shortly afterwards. They were divided into 2 classes; the 'A' class detenus received rations worth Re. 0-4-3 each, while those in the 'C' class were given Re. 0-1-4 each. When representations failed to lead to any improvement there were often hunger strikes.
3. About 300 political prisoners in Delhi, Ajmer and Deoli jails were detained under the Defence of India Act and their cases were never investigated. They were even denied the treatment given to political prisoners.
4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 122-138.

peoples of China and Soviet Union in their magnificent struggle for freedom. Please convey my greetings and good wishes to Winant,[5] Maisky,[6] Wellington Koo.[7]

Jawaharlal Nehru

5. John Gilbert Winant (1889-1947); Chairman of United States Social Security Board, 1935-37; Director, International Labour Organisation, 1937-41; United States ambassador to Great Britain, 1941-46.
6. Ivan Mikhailovich Maisky (1884-1975); Soviet diplomatist; ambassador to Great Britain, 1932-43; Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1943-46; author of *Before the Storm* (1944), *Who Helped Hitler, Reminiscences* (1962), *Memoirs of a Soviet Ambassador* (1964), *Bernard Shaw and the Others, Reminiscences* (1967).
7. (b. 1888); Chinese diplomatist; served both the Peking Government, 1922-28, and the Kuomintang Government after 1928; delegate to Paris Peace Conference, 1919-21; Foreign Minister, 1922-24, 1926-27, 1931; ambassador to France, 1936-41, to Great Britain, 1941-46 and to United States, 1946-56; Judge of International Court of Justice, 1957-67.

6. The Meaningless Release of Prisoners[1]

I am grateful for the friendly message of the *News Chronicle*,[2] and I appreciate the warm sympathy for India's cause on the part of many friends in England. In these difficult days when passions are aroused obscuring the mind and when the relations between the Indian people and the British Government are strained to the utmost, the companionship of even some minds in different countries is of importance and helps to prevent narrowmindedness. But it must be remembered that this is of little avail if the whole background is one of hostility. Nothing is more obvious in India today than the deep and widespread hostility

1. Statement to *News Chronicle* (London), Allahabad, 11 December 1941. Printed in *National Herald*, 21 December 1941. Cabled to *News Chronicle* from Bombay on 16 December 1941, but only extracts were published in its issue of 17 December 1941. Here we are giving the *National Herald* version.
2. In its editorial of 4 December 1941, the *News Chronicle* welcomed the release of Jawaharlal and other civil disobedience prisoners. It stated that their imprisonment at the "time when we should have been doing our best to smooth the path of cooperation was an act of stupidity." It hoped that "this belated admission of error would be followed by a change of heart in the British Government over the Indian question on the whole."

The entry of Japan into the war has now made it world-wide, and it approaches India's borders. That is of vast interest to us, but it will not make us panicky. Our sympathies must inevitably be with the non-fascist nations. And such help as we can give them, consistently with our own principles, would flow to them, if we functioned as a free people. Only freedom can tone down the enormous antagonism that British policy in India has created.

Whether it is India or the world or the war, no petty hesitant half-measures are of any avail. This was so in September 1939, when the Congress issued its declaration on the war, by which it has stood throughout. This is much more so now, and the history of the past two years bears witness to it. People who think in terms of preserving the old order, or presuming to tell us in India that they are the best judges of what we should have, are not going to solve anything. They are dangerous relics of a past, which must be swept away if the ground is to be cleared for real victory and freedom. And of that the greatest test is India now, in the present, and not after the war.

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1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. He requested Jawaharlal for a message to *Daily Herald* and forwarded good wishes from J.G. Winant.
3. See preceding item.
4. See succeeding item.

human race in Asia; she is not a colony or offshoot of another nation growing to nationhood. She wants to live in peace and friendship with all nations in the world, but she is inevitably drawn to her neighbours with whom she has had thousands of years of cultural contact, more especially to China and Burma in the East and Iran and other countries of Western Asia.

Therefore, the first essential is the recognition of Indian independence and the consignment to the dustbin of the infamous August declaration[5] and all other similar declarations of the British Government. Then only can we get over the dismal and crushing heritage of our past relations and join hands in friendship.

I realise that in the vast elemental conflicts that are raging national issues must not absorb our attention and we must view the picture as a whole. Out of this war all manner of things arise, whether we like them or not, and all we can do is to try our utmost to further the things we want to have. It is not enough to say that the war has to be won; we must win the objectives of the war, and for this purpose the objectives must be clearly stated and acted upon in the present in so far as possible. That has been the Congress position throughout and it remains so today. Some of us as individuals may wish to go further in aligning ourselves with the larger causes, but our efforts will remain ineffective unless the whole background changes in India and popular hostility is removed by vital changes. Even these individuals must oppose all co-operation with a government which treats their people and country with arrogant imperialism which is indistinguishable from fascist authoritarianism. It must be realised that mere release from prison of some people means nothing at all. By itself it is a challenge which has to be accepted.

This war has convinced me of the utter folly and criminality of armed conflict and the method of violence in international affairs. I am no pacifist, but I believe that complete disarmament of all nations must be one of the declared objectives of the war. I realise that the war must go on, whether we like it or not, and it is not possible for anyone to take

5. On 8 August 1940, the Viceroy, in reply to the Poona Offer of the Congress asking for transitional National Government during the war, stated that "a moment when the Commonwealth is engaged in a struggle for existence is not one in which fundamental constitutional issues can be decisively resolved." He accepted that the Indians should share the responsibility during the war and proposed expansion of the Governor General's Executive Council and setting up of a War Advisory Council. With regard to the position of minorities in any constitutional revision, he reiterated that the British would not accept "any system of Government where authority is directly denied to large and powerful elements in India's national life."

among all sections of the people to the system that the British Government has represented here. That hostility was an inevitable consequence of past and present history but the policy and utterances of the British Government during the last two years of war have intensified it. For the people generally that is the governing factor and wider considerations, which may move individuals, become secondary.

It is true that we in India have great differences amongst us, but have also a great deal in common which is basically more important and wise statesmanship should have emphasised and encouraged those common bonds. Instead of this the British Government has become the greatest disruptive factor in India in addition to being completely authoritarian, alien and oppressive. The only possible response to that is noncooperation with that Government, for nationalism is by far the strongest urge of the Indian people. Even if individuals for wider reasons desire a variation of that policy, they cannot overcome the people's deep-rooted hostility and distrust of the British Government and the governmental structure in India which can only lessen by a complete change of scene and a pleasant psychological shock accompanied by the conviction that the old order has completely gone, never to come back again. Not even the most far-reaching promises of what will happen when the war ends will bring this conviction for there is no belief left in words. It is the present that counts. The Atlantic Charter[3] if applied to India would have made no difference but the deliberate non-application of it to India was significant and made it clear as the midday sun what British policy stands for.

Only the independence of India has any real meaning for us, though we believe that the day of a large number of separate national entities is past and there must be world cooperation among free nations based on certain fundamental principles. For my part, I would welcome these principles as outlined in H.G. Wells' declaration of the Rights of Man[4] with certain additions. Indians will never accept any position in an Empire by whatever name it is called. India is a great nation and a mother country which has influenced in the past vast sections of the

3. The Atlantic Charter, issued in August 1941 by Franklin Roosevelt and Churchill as a statement of their war policy, declared among other things that "we respect the right of our people to choose the form of Government under which they will live; and we wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them." But Churchill hastened to announce on 9 September 1941 in the House of Commons that the Atlantic Charter had no application to India though, in his opinion, it was in full accord with British policy in India, as embodied in the August Offer.

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 116-117.

human race in Asia; she is not a colony or offshoot of another nation growing to nationhood. She wants to live in peace and friendship with all nations in the world, but she is inevitably drawn to her neighbours with whom she has had thousands of years of cultural contact, more especially to China and Burma in the East and Iran and other countries of Western Asia.

Therefore, the first essential is the recognition of Indian independence and the consignment to the dustbin of the infamous August declaration[5] and all other similar declarations of the British Government. Then only can we get over the dismal and crushing heritage of our past relations and join hands in friendship.

I realise that in the vast elemental conflicts that are raging national issues must not absorb our attention and we must view the picture as a whole. Out of this war all manner of things arise, whether we like them or not, and all we can do is to try our utmost to further the things we want to have. It is not enough to say that the war has to be won; we must win the objectives of the war, and for this purpose the objectives must be clearly stated and acted upon in the present in so far as possible. That has been the Congress position throughout and it remains so today. Some of us as individuals may wish to go further in aligning ourselves with the larger causes, but our efforts will remain ineffective unless the whole background changes in India and popular hostility is removed by vital changes. Even these individuals must oppose all co-operation with a government which treats their people and country with arrogant imperialism which is indistinguishable from fascist authoritarianism. It must be realised that mere release from prison of some people means nothing at all. By itself it is a challenge which has to be accepted.

This war has convinced me of the utter folly and criminality of armed conflict and the method of violence in international affairs. I am no pacifist, but I believe that complete disarmament of all nations must be one of the declared objectives of the war. I realise that the war must go on, whether we like it or not, and it is not possible for anyone to take

5. On 8 August 1940, the Viceroy, in reply to the Poona Offer of the Congress asking for transitional National Government during the war, stated that "a moment when the Commonwealth is engaged in a struggle for existence is not one in which fundamental constitutional issues can be decisively resolved." He accepted that the Indians should share the responsibility during the war and proposed expansion of the Governor General's Executive Council and setting up of a War Advisory Council. With regard to the position of minorities in any constitutional revision, he reiterated that the British would not accept "any system of Government where authority is directly denied to large and powerful elements in India's national life."

up a negative attitude to it. Given the background I have indicated above, it follows that all possible support has to be given. Without that background and those steps, effective help is not possible. More particularly, I should like to express our solidarity with the peoples of China and the Soviet Union who represent many ideals that we value and who have given a magnificent demonstration of their invincible courage and spirit of sacrifice. For my part, I should like help to flow to them.

Recent developments in the war situation are of intense interest to India and the political and psychological background is ever changing. Realisation of this cannot, however, reach the masses unless the basic fact of the Indo-British relationship is converted into recognition of Indian independence and cooperation between free nations.

7. To Abdul Latif[1]

Allahabad
December 12, 1941

My dear Latif,

Thank you for your letter[2] of good wishes. It is comforting and encouraging to have the affection of friends like you. We are living through very difficult times and the whole world is in an uproar. There is no question of coalition ministry[3] or of any ministry as far as I can see.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter dated 8 December 1941, Latif, referring to Jawaharlal's statement of 5 December 1941 (see *ante*, item 1), said that "each and every sentence of your statement breathes a great affection and love for the country which is only to be felt and not exposed."
3. Latif feared that in an event of a coalition ministry between the Congress and the Muslim League, it would lead to "the slaughter of Congress." The reference was to Muslim League, Forward Bloc and the Nationalist Congress joining a coalition ministry headed by Fazlul Huq in Bengal.

8. To Sampurnanand[1]

Allahabad
14-12-41

My dear Sampurnanand,

Thank you for your letter.[2] I quite understand and appreciate your views. The points you have urged have been in my mind throughout this past year and more and I can say that I am not in disagreement with anything you have said taken by itself. But my emphasis would be different and this makes a difference to the general approach. There are some governing factors which seem to me to be highly important. The first is our reaction to the British attitude to India. This attitude makes it almost impossible for us to do anything but offer resolute opposition. That opposition must be based on a disciplined Congress and on Gandhiji's support and leadership. Otherwise we become ineffective and weak and lost in a crowd of voices speaking different languages. More particularly our approach or reaction to the British and British policy must be simple, straight, thorough and united as far as is possible.

Then again I am worried at the intrusion into our discussions of the debate on nonviolence. Most of us have certain definite opinions on this subject and they are likely to change easily at this stage. Yet we have found unity in action more or less. I do not want to make this issue the major one in the Indian mind, thus relegating the other issues to the background. It may be that we may have to decide this issue in relation to defence in the future. But to introduce it now is to create confusion and major splits in the Congress in public mind.

With a great deal that Rajagopalachari says in his convocation address[3] I agree and yet I entirely disagree with his whole approach to the

1. Sampurnanand Papers, National Archives of India.
2. In his letter of 14 December 1941, he suggested that freedom, not freedom of speech, should be the declared goal of the satyagraha movement, and more scope should be allowed to individual initiative. He desired that the leaders should make people rise above mere anti-British feeling.
3. In his convocation address at Lucknow University on 13 December 1941, he pointed out that Mahatma Gandhi stood for opposition to all war because of the application of nonviolence. "But some of us feel that our struggle cannot simultaneously bear the weight of two such major issues, the issue of British control over India and the demand for its total removal, and the issue of non-participation in war, total and irrespective of equity or politics of alliance to secure just ends...India should cooperate, therefore, with the British in the war to facilitate the transfer of power...Nonviolence does not end with deliverance from foreign political control but lies in fighting against violence in every department of social and national activity after attaining self-government."

question. Behind it lies not a theoretical problem but a definite and dangerous policy of lining up with British policy almost as it is. Even from the narrowest viewpoint of national self-interest this seems to me to be a dangerous policy.

You will remember that for the first eight months of the war the British Labour Party refused to join the British Government because they would not cooperate with Chamberlain and Co.[4] This in spite of a lack of major difference and in spite of the immediate danger of war & invasion. It was only after Chamberlain went that they joined. Our case is infinitely stronger and I am convinced that we cannot associate ourselves with the British so long as they control Indian policy.

I think that the situation will develop rapidly and all we can do at present is to keep wideawake and to hold together, avoid discussions in public which confuse and weaken, and present an unshakable front to the British, while at the same time keeping in line with international events in so far as we can.

This is brief and not very clear. But it must suffice for the moment.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. The Labour Party did not join Neville Chamberlain's War Cabinet, formed after the declaration of war against Germany on 3 September 1939, and waited till Churchill took over as prime minister in May 1940.

9. The Priority of Independence[1]

After a long time I am here again addressing you at this Purushottam Das Park. I have said "after a long time" for indeed a period of about fourteen months has elapsed. But time is, nowadays, a bad measure of the progress of the world, for what really counts is not the temporal gap but the progress which has been made and the eventful happenings that have taken place. If many big events come to pass within a short space

1. Speech at Purushottam Das Park, Allahabad, 14 December 1941. From *National Herald*, 17 December 1941 and also from Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

of time the period should be regarded as a long one. On the other hand if nothing eventful happens during a long period of time it is negligible. What is happening in the world today and what we see around us, is changing the world so swiftly that our minds can hardly keep pace with the changes and grasp them. So I am justified in saying that a long time has elapsed. During these fourteen months many important events have taken place in India in connection with our freedom struggle and the war. I am not sure whether you have fully grasped their implications for they are rather intricate. We are simply watching the events without explaining to the people what is going on in the world. People no doubt read the news in papers and hear them on the radio, discuss them among themselves but can see nothing with their eyes. It is one thing to look at the chessmen and watch their game, but quite a different thing to understand and appreciate the play.

The war has reached the borders of India. Whether it is near or far off, it must have, and it is in fact having, its repercussions on India. I do not wish that the war should spread to India and that her cities be bombed. I would be grieved if enemy planes drop bombs on Indian cities. But from one point of view, I would like it because it will rouse up this old country from its obvious slumber and make it think of the world events. Anyway, it is not in our hands and is a thing of the future.

Our country is facing grave issues and it is the duty of each one of us to consult our comrades, co-workers and institutions and unitedly to follow a course of action which is justified for India. If we lack teamwork, there will be sectional party factions which is reprehensible. The first lesson we have to learn and translate into action is, that we must work unitedly and firmly. Even if we mark time there should be absolute harmony and resoluteness in our ranks.

We can of course retrace a false step but if we lose the power of marching, all is lost. It is, therefore, necessary for us today to ponder over these problems from all points of view and to arrive at a definite decision collectively, even though some individuals might not entirely agree with the final decision of the majority. For this very reason I should have kept mum and spoken only after due consultations, but I have been a sinner in this respect. Only seven or eight days back I was released from jail and during this interval you have seen my several speeches in the press. Notwithstanding my earnest desire to hold my tongue, I find that it becomes very difficult for me to restrain myself when I meet my friends and the public. It is impossible to reply to their questions by silence and something has to be said. I have, therefore, said something although I have still refrained from saying a lot and have kept back the thousands of ideas which are crowding my mind.

Before addressing you I had the occasion of meeting and holding consultations with many leaders at Lucknow and I was much benefited by it. Jail life affords ample opportunities for cool thinking. There we get an opportunity to think over many things and this we cannot do when we are out of jail. But in a way we are cut off from the world and however much we might read newspapers and think deeply over a problem, we can never keep abreast with the times when we are out of touch with the public. Therefore, it is advisable for a man who has just been released from jail, after a long spell, to acquaint himself with the march of events and to study his environment with a view to finding out what is happening and what can be done. I have been trying to do this for the last seven or eight days since I came out of jail, and I shall continue the effort. After a few days I shall go to Bombay and then to Bardoli where the Working Committee is going to meet. Important decisions will be taken there.

I want to remind you of a few things which form the main theme of discussions in and out of jail and among Congress leaders and public alike. It appears that different men hold different views and this is by no means surprising. India is faced with a number of problems today but the primary issue before her is that of her freedom. If anybody loses sight of it, he is a worthless man. It is with this larger issue of national freedom that the problems of India's poverty, unemployment and illiteracy are linked up.

It is a settled fact that in the present-day world we cannot separate the problems of one particular country from the rest of the world. If we think that we are concerned only with the freedom of India and have nothing to do with the world, we are labouring under a delusion. What happens in one country today, must have its inevitable effect on other countries. While the thought of India's independence should be uppermost in the mind of every Indian, you cannot remain safe in your country if the world is engulfed in a conflagration. You cannot ignore the world and think only of India's safety. Neither should you be swayed by communal sentiments whether you are Hindu or Muslim. If you are a Hindu and think only of Hindu interests or if Muslims think in terms of their interests only, then such sectional interests are reprehensible. A number of our countrymen entertain such views and they regard the interests of one community as higher than those of others but they are in the wrong. There should be absolute equality of rights and privileges. This means that the whole world is closely bound together.

The war has now spread to almost every part of the world. It is raging in all the three continents — Europe, Asia, and Africa. If peace is

restored after this war and a treaty is signed, it will relate to all the countries of the world and not to any particular part of the globe. But it is India's independence that we have particularly to keep in view. After all if we Indians do not get independence, we are worthless. We Indians want our freedom, which concerns forty crores of people. This is a serious problem before the world. It is possible that these forty crores of Indians might be drowned but the world has reached such a stage today that if these forty crores of Indians are drowned they will go down with a big portion of the world including the British and their country. Such is the relationship of the world and India today. China is even bigger than India and she has an ancient civilisation. You may rest assured that when a decision affecting the whole world is taken, India and China whose population is forty to fifty crores—about half the total population of the world—cannot be ignored. Therefore, if any person talks of the world without taking notice of India and China, under the delusion that India can be ignored for she is a small country, he understands neither India nor China. So the question of India's independence is a vital issue not only for India but for the whole world. This is the primary issue. All other problems are secondary.

The next question which arises is how to win this freedom. This is not a separate question by itself but is linked up with the first one. I shall explain this to you. It relates to the war and has become much complicated. When the war broke out a little over two years ago the Congress issued a long statement. What was the British reply to it? They attacked our nationalism and the Congress. Satyagraha was, therefore, started and Congressmen courted arrest. Recently I and some other people have been released by the Government but the satyagraha movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi has not yet been suspended and is still continuing.[2] Of course we have been set free and we shall hold consultations and put forward what is finally decided, but the movement will continue unless the Congress decides another course of action. Now the intricate question which arises is that on the one hand we cannot help in the prosecution of the war; we do not want to render any help, nor are we cooperating in the war effort; at the same time we do not want to press those who are voluntarily cooperating in the war effort to desist from rendering help. But the way in which the British Government has been flouting our demands for the last two years and the statements issued by high-placed British officials with regard to India

2. Mahatma Gandhi, in his statement on 7 December 1941, asserted that he would not suspend his anti-war activities, meaning the satyagraha, until the warring powers accepted the nonviolent way.

and the Congress, are still fresh in our minds. What conclusions have you drawn from them? I have drawn several conclusions. The first is that the British Government which rules over us has not changed its attitude towards us in the least.

If the war has brought about any change in the attitude of the British Government it is the increase in its arrogance and misbehaviour towards Indians. Remember, I always refer to the system of government and bear no grudge against any individual. I harbour no ill will against the British public but I shall ever remain hostile to a government like the present British Government which always tries to practise oppression on India and keeps her enslaved. It will always continue its efforts to hold Indians under perpetual domination no matter how many revolutions might take place in the world. It is annoying to read Mr. Amery's statement.[3] I have reiterated here more than once my ideas in that connection. Whatever be the final results the only possible attitude towards such a government today or at any time can be one of rebellion. Mr. Amery's repeated utterances[4] in regard to India are calculated to create the maximum of dissension among Indians by various means. The way in which he talks of India and humiliates Indians is well known to the present-day world. No one can cast aspersions on India and speak against her freedom. We cannot bend our knees and beg for Swaraj. I do not do this and I hope no Indian is so devoid of self-respect as to do so.

The second point is that the war is a big affair and it is not confined to the British people and their Government. It is an international affair and many nations are ranged in opposite camps. The British Government is fighting against Hitler who is in Germany. We have no

3. Amery, in a written reply to a question in the House of Commons on 12 December 1941, said that the release of prisoners in India was unconditional and there was no change involved in the declared policy of the Government regarding the future constitutional advance. He had no doubt that the Governor General would take such steps as might be necessary to intensify India's war effort in the face of "grave developments in the Far East."
4. Amery told the House of Commons on 22 April 1941 that Gandhi's civil disobedience had "proceeded languidly," was "irrational" and that Britain would consider the issue of free India if there were any agreement between the various political parties in India. Further, on 2 August 1941 he doubted if there was any India like Belgium or Holland, "India is much more like Europe than it is like an individual country". On 19 November 1941 he talked about British contribution to India and welcomed Churchill's statement of non-applicability of the Atlantic Charter to India. He repeated the need for goodwill amongst the Indian communities and the necessity for building up war effort on 27 November 1941.

sympathy with him. Nazism is but another form of an oppressive imperialism. I regard these nations as tyrannical which are striving to bring the world under their subjection. You know Germans are a martial race and they are well-versed in the art of warfare. We must admit that they have not betrayed weakness on any battle ground but their weakness consists in their lack of forethought. Do they not know the huge toll of lives that would be exacted by the war? I have deeply thought over these matters and have also read a lot about them. Do you know what opinion Germans hold about Indians? They think themselves to be at the highest rung of the international ladder while the lowest position is allotted to Indians by them. So it is impossible for us to sympathise with them. Indians might be full of emotions of anger against the Government and they might very likely be led to think that their enemy's enemies are their friends, but this is muddled thinking and if we think like this we can do nothing great in our great country. We have to think which country is inimical to us. We are not filled with cowardly fear of the strong and we cannot help our enemy's enemies with a view to seeing our enemy defeated. That would be wrong for us. We have to think over all these points and carve out our destinies. Our friends in this war are the Chinese with whom we are closely related and who have our full sympathies. I think that China will play an important part in the future world. I hope and wish that India and China take a big step unitedly in the reconstruction of the future world. I am glad that the bonds of our relations with the new China are strengthening. China is also involved in the war at this end and we wish her to triumph.

You must have heard about Russia and might have heard adverse reports about its internal affairs. We know that in India, Russia is discussed in and out of Congress circles. I have disliked many things in Russia and have frankly expressed my views about them. Twenty-four or twenty-five years ago a new order was introduced in Russia. They had to face great hardships and to resort to violence but they placed the proletariat on a high pedestal. They committed thousands of mistakes, still they presented a new picture before the world and established the rule of the masses.

So these are the two things you have to bear in mind. The path shown to Indians by the satyagraha movement gave them much encouragement and made them capable and strong. But we cannot introduce in India the Soviet system of government. You might be able to introduce minor changes on the Russian model but you cannot copy Russia. Like India Russia was also illiterate but you can hardly find any

illiterate there today. They have improved the condition of the peasantry enormously. They have developed their industries and hundreds of factories are working there. So you see that they made great strides in advancing their civilization and have presented a new picture before the world. This gave tremendous strength to the masses.

The same problems are cropping up in India also. We generally take too long to do a thing in this country but in Russia big things are done with a lightning speed. It was for this reason that the latent powers of the public were unfolded. When the potential mental energy of forty crores of our countrymen will find a channel, it will flow like a big river and our nation can achieve big results by united efforts. Some of us try to acquire strength but we do not know how to utilize it properly. We have not yet acquired the requisite strength but I assure you it is already there in your hearts in a potential state; only it is struggling for an outlet and we do not know how to unfold the channels. What has taken place in Russia is not the achievement of a single individual. Lakhs of people in Russia have laboured hard to achieve big results. We might disapprove of certain things in Russia, still we Indians have heart-felt sympathies with the Russians in their distress. About six months ago Germany made an unprovoked attack on Russia. A huge offensive was launched during the night without notice. This was an innovation. Formerly an ultimatum preceded an attack but now the practice is to attack a country first and declare hostilities later. Many countries were invaded in the present war but the invasion of Russia was the most surprising one. A fierce attack was launched in which fifty lakhs of troops participated simultaneously over a long front of thousands of miles, and German armies marched ahead. In the annals of world history we do not read of such a big battle being waged anywhere as was waged by Germany against Russia. I do not want that the new order which Russia has evolved should crumble to pieces.

It is this which makes the matter complicated. On the one hand the attitude of the British Government fills us with indignation and our only reaction to such an attitude can be one of opposition and rebellion against their system of government, but on the other hand we are anxious to avoid anything that might inflict any harm on our friends, China and Russia. There are also certain parties in England which sponsor the cause of India's freedom and there are certain countries in the world which are anxious to see India free such as America and others. So the question arises in the hearts of Indians as to what policy should be adopted.

It was in view of this that Mahatmaji launched the satyagraha agitation. It was individual satyagraha but twenty-five or thirty thousand

persons courted arrest in the movement. I am happy and proud to say that our province contributed more than half of the total number of satyagrahis. But we must not take into account their number. Had it been a question of numbers alone, we could have sent lakhs of people from our own province. As you know, Mahatma Gandhi imposed several restrictions and refused permission to many people to offer satyagraha because conditions and pledges had to be fulfilled for it. He used to tear off lists and to strike out the names of prospective satyagrahis who did not fulfil the conditions because he did not wish to embarrass those nations with whom we had sympathy. At the same time he wanted to show to the world the sort of treatment that was meted out to Indians. The people of India constitutionally are opposed to cooperation in this war. Of course, if we are granted independence, we can think of doing something. A slave cannot think of anything. He is quite inert. I think Mahatma Gandhi acted on these considerations. He had to keep up the balance between the two sides. This is my personal view of his actions. It is quite inappropriate for me to say anything about Mahatmaji. However if we ignore the unimportant things and keep the important ones before us, I can say that the principles he laid down, and the manner in which he conducted the movement for two years, will remain immortal in the hearts of Indians. There should not be any misunderstanding about his motives. A good cause should not be sabotaged. Hence his technique was quite complicated. He did it, so that non-Congressmen may not accuse him of inactivity. But we shall keep up the balance of both the scales.

These are the different viewpoints which I have presented to you and every person can have his own opinion. But the fundamental policies which have been pursued in India under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi have done good to India and the world. Our strength has increased by it. But the British Government thinks that it has not benefited us in any way. It may be so. My reading of the British rule in India is that it is devoid of reason and commonsense. As far as their contact with the Indian masses is concerned, they never pay any attention to them. They imagine that they have brought the Indian masses under their thumb, though this is entirely wrong.

We have to prepare ourselves against any eventuality. You should forget that we have to help the British Government in this war, but we should know how to react if India is attacked. We have to prepare ourselves to answer this question. I do not know how to give a clear-cut reply at this stage but I can certainly do so after studying the situation. Had we been independent we would have taken every step to safeguard India. But power is not in our hands. Then why are we

asked to help the British Government? Does it mean that we should obey their orders blindly however worthless these may be? A civic guard has been formed in Allahabad and much rot is talked. Can the British Government save India by these methods? If they proceed in this manner in their own country, they too would lose their country. It is impossible for us to follow them like courtiers. If we are to follow like that, why should we follow worthless persons?

What should we do under such circumstances? This is a knotty problem. I want you to be clear in your minds about this point. You know that the battle for freedom in our country has been going on for the last twenty or twenty-two years under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi on the principle of nonviolence. The Congress accepted this as its principle for our freedom struggle. Mahatmaji adheres to it as his creed. It is right for him to do so but for a political institution like the Congress it is difficult to stick to it under all circumstances. Congress accepted the principle but did not think or decide that, in the event of an attack on India, it would not keep an army to defend her, or it would not use police and armies to check dacoities. Mahatmaji wishes that India should have a government without police and armies. This is to be considered.

Today the papers have published a statement of Rajagopalachari regarding this matter and I wish to make certain observations in this connection. A perusal of Rajaji's statement or any other thing should not lead us to think that the issue of nonviolence is no more before the Congress or the country. This is a misunderstanding and we need not be misled by this. We shall not keep armies or put up armed resistance to defend India but we shall take other steps. Thus a question of principle crops up and this makes a vital difference between ourselves and the British. But the British have only to gain by this because they will propagate to the world that we are divided on this issue of nonviolence. They will say that we are not concerned with our defence and that they are carrying on the administration in the way they like. I warn you against this, as these questions are sure to arise and they are being actually raised before you, before me, and before the whole world. But at the present moment this is not the primary question before the Congress and the country. The Congress would give a suitable reply when this question actually arises. As I have already told you, the Congress would not keep any army to defend India. Sometimes, however, it is bad to attempt to do all the good things at one time as its consequences may be bad. The principle of nonviolence appears to be quite good, for no gentleman or lady would like violence. Then there is also the problem of Hindu-Muslim differences which is a sign of backwardness.

Whenever differences exist in a country it can be called a backward nation.

Can we not call the belligerent nations now at war to be backward in view of the destruction and havoc they are doing to themselves without any substantial result? If this war continues like this, the world is sure to perish. Many countries in Europe have perished. Cities have been rendered lifeless. Corpses are lying uncared for.

Allahabad is quiet these days. If somebody loots and stabs somebody in your *mohalla*, you are frightened and you are shocked. You read about it in papers which makes you sad. Similar feelings are created when you read that two lakhs of men have been killed in Russia. Hence this war has become inhuman. There was a time when soldiers used to fight and weaker men and women used to live indoors. But today the combatants and non-combatants both are on the field. If the war continues in this way, the world is doomed. I want that hostilities should cease but this cannot come about at the bidding of myself, Mahatma Gandhi or the Congressmen. If all of us sit idle, no result would come out. We have to think how fearful war is. If this war does not come to an end, there shall be wholesale destruction. I do not like violence on principle, and its use even in domestic issues.

Today there are only a few powers in the world like America, Germany, Russia, Japan and England. Other nations have no real existence. Our neighbouring countries like Iran and Iraq are under British possession and Thailand is under Japan. If we have to keep armies, they should be fully equipped like those of Germany and Russia, otherwise they would be of no use to us. Remember that India is a big country, it has the necessary strength and capacity to become a big and strong power if it gets an opportunity like China. It is not the number of forty crores that counts but the bravery of the people. The Indian armies fighting these days on various fronts are not really Indian for they consist of mercenary soldiers. No doubt the Indian troops have won admiration wherever they have fought and even German generals have praised them. They are not only brave but efficient fighters. They know the technique of the present war. Our comrades would have been equally brave fighters, and, given an opportunity, they would have won the whole world for us. Indians have the necessary stamina and brains, the latter being of vital importance in the present war. We are not weak but we should like the war to end. Our country suffers and so do the others. We will reach nearer towards our goal of freedom, after this war. There cannot be any peace so long as war and atrocities continue in the world. In case other countries keep armies and do anything they like, we too cannot afford to go without them. We shall exert our full strength. Our country shall

strain its every nerve. But you should remember the decision of the A.I.C.C. held at Bombay.[5] It was clearly stated there as to how far we could follow the principle of nonviolence. Today we have to see and study what is going on in the world. I have given you an idea as to how far I am in favour of nonviolence. I have also told you that although I am in favour of nonviolence yet there are many difficulties that have to be faced. Nevertheless it is clear from the statement of Rajagopalachari that people should not forget the goal, whether they talk of violence or nonviolence. The same question of men and administrative difficulties comes before us in another form in connection with the war. We do not know how to dispose of the question of violence and nonviolence. If it comes before us in the long run, what shall we do? We should not sidetrack our goal of freedom before this question.

I do not know what meaning you have attached to the recent release of Congressmen, but I am sure you know that they have not been released because of any love for them in the hearts of the British. They have been released because of pressure from several sides. The greatest pressure was exerted by the very presence of prisoners in the jails. The pictures of accredited leaders of India in jails were before the Indian masses. It was a blot on the British Government. It was not liked by some people of America as well.[6] At the outbreak of war with Japan, an amnesty was ordered. British policy, however, remains unchanged. Mere release of certain prisoners does not mean any change of policy in regard to the freedom movement. Our old policy of resistance and opposition to the British Government shall continue. I do not know how it will be possible. This is to be thought over. We have many things to take into consideration.

What shall we do if India is attacked? For the time being there is no danger to India but of course Burma is in the danger zone. Calcutta

5. The A.I.C.C. resolution of 16 September 1940 rejected a policy which was a denial of India's right to freedom, which suppressed the free expression of public opinion and which would lead to the degradation of her people and their continued enslavement. It requested Mahatma Gandhi to guide the Congress in the action that should be taken. While insisting that the Congress must have the fullest freedom to pursue its policy of nonviolence, it stated that the Congress had no desire to extend nonviolent resistance, should this become necessary, beyond what was required for the preservation of the liberties of the people.
6. For example, seven faculty members of the University of Chicago on 12 June 1941, in a memorandum 'India and the present war', urged the American authorities to mediate in solving the Indian problem, including the release of "prominent political figures". They stated that to a large section of Americans the question of India "is a touchstone with which they test the assertion, that this war is for the defence of democracy and democratic principles".

can be bombed. It would be improper for me to indicate a solution of these problems because it is not a question of our individual opinions or principles. Times are hard. We are perplexed to see the situation of the world. This is not an opportunity for us to mock at any country. We are under the British Government. We may oppose the Government but the English people are beset with trouble. Their men, women and children have lost their lives in thousands. Their cities have been destroyed. The English masses do not wish to rule over India but to save themselves. Similarly we have sympathy with the German masses also. We have heartfelt sympathies with the Russians and the Chinese. We sympathise with their principles also. Hence we should not mock at others. If we realise our condition we are sure to find ourselves fit to be a laughing-stock for others. We have to hang our heads. The primary question for us is to increase our strength and organisation in the whole country. I do not know of any organisation other than the Congress whose network is spread out throughout the country. British rule may continue here or go. Even if it wishes to remain here it cannot. Go it must, it is only a question of time. The question which everyone asks is when is the poverty of this country going to be removed and how can we save ourselves from the different kinds of losses which are inflicted on us?

It is a policy of the present rulers to frighten us by bringing the war nearer to India, so that they may continue here and we might go over to them. But we shall not yield to it at any cost. We have to think and present a united front even if it might be a false step. But if we are overtaken by fright or lethargy, we shall not be able to do anything, when more revolutionary days arrive. Remember that Mahatma Gandhi has emphasised this fact only. He has said that the war is a prolonged one and he will continue with his satyagraha.

So far I have spoken to you of India's struggle. This will continue even after the European war. If we have strength enough we shall achieve the goal. These revolutionary catchwords will not take us far. It is a fight of endurance. Today countries are faced with hard tests. You can take the longest strides. China has been fighting for about four years. Thirty to forty lakhs of people have perished and the country has been ruined. Only a small number of persons courted arrest in this country. The cable which was received from Chungking is known to the world.[7] A large part of Chungking has been destroyed by Japanese bombs. It was stated in the cable that Chungking is not what it was previously, but still the Chinese will remain firm and will not be fright-

7. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 345.

ened. If we have strength enough we shall reach our goal, otherwise if our lungs are defective and we are asthmatic, we cannot reach our goal. These empty slogans will not lead us to freedom.

People go to jail by offering satyagraha. Many persons were arrested under D.I.R. and interned at different places like Deoli. They did not offer any satyagraha nor were they convicted or tried for any offence. Many have been released prematurely like Purnima. Purnima Banerji and Lal Bahadur Shastri have been released today. People courted arrest in hundreds and have suffered considerably in jails. You cannot know it. When we offer satyagraha and go to jails, it does not mean that the public which does not offer satyagraha should take rest, for this will make you idle. If you are not selected as a satyagrahi, the responsibility for keeping the Congress flag high is yours. You have to continue the routine meetings and other activities.

Then this grand welcome to Congressmen who go to and come out of jail is a farce. Those who are ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of their country demand your help and sympathy. Everybody should do his duty here. Do not think it to be merely a duty with selfish motives as it weakens you and the other nations go ahead in the meantime.

I offer my thanks for the welcome you have accorded me today. I appreciate it because I got an opportunity to see familiar faces of Allahabad. It is true that I should attend meetings to see you and renew my old bond of love. Whether I see you or not, I hope that we reside in the hearts of each other. I do not wish that we should rest content with this thought alone but we should accomplish the task which is on our shoulders. The world is changing today, and this is no time to sit idle. We should do more work in these revolutionary times. We should not think that this is to be done by a particular person. It is the work of every Indian, man or woman. One should do as much as one can. If one cannot move a hundred steps, he should at least walk fifty steps. If one cannot do so or if any person gives up his efforts, he proves his worthlessness and is a dead weight for world freedom.

10. To Hajrah Begum[1]

Allahabad
December 15, 1941

My dear Hajrah,[2]
I was happy to receive your letter.[3] You must excuse me for this rather brief and typed reply. The world grows odder and more tragic day by day. That is perhaps all the more reason why we attach greater value to our personal contacts with friends. Your thinking of me and writing to me therefore brought me pleasure.

What will happen is more than I can say. All of us can at best try to see the light and follow it, though often enough this is a business of groping in semi-darkness. Nothing could have been more magnificent than the Soviet's splendid defence. Yet I believe that the old order in the Soviet will undergo considerable modification just as the old order in other countries must inevitably change. I do not think that the basic economic policy of the Soviet will change but I do think that the political approach and orientation will be greatly influenced, as it is being influenced, by Britain and America. That influence will of course be mutual. The old Communist tactic is hardly likely to survive this war.

You are perfectly right in not considering me as a kind of secondary Lenin. Of course I am not.

I hope Zain[4] is doing well. When you write to him send him my love.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1910); social worker and wife of Z.A. Ahmad, C.P.I. leader.
3. Hajrah Begum, in her letter dated 9 December 1941, sent her best wishes on Jawaharlal's release from prison and stated that she had "developed a tremendous sense of humility because of the terrific shock given to Russia. Even Russia which to us seemed invincible is fighting with her back to the wall." This strength of Russians was because of men like Lenin and Stalin and very soon India might also have a Lenin. But not Jawaharlal, "because I do not see you as the leader of the workers. I feel for India it will have to be someone from the real masses who will lead our proletariat."
4. Z.A. Ahmad.

11. Simla and Vichy[1]

You must be reading in the newspapers about the deaths of thousands of people every day in the present war. If it had happened only on one day then there would have been a feeling of grief at such a huge loss. But when it becomes a matter of daily event nobody ever thinks about it or feels about it. In Spain, Manchuria, China and Czechoslovakia greater tragedies have taken place but none cares to visualise whither the world is going.

As I was an eye-witness in Barcelona,[2] Hungary and Prague, my sensibility to European events was sharpened. The picture of Europe that floated before my vision was a Europe stricken with panic and fear and many other weaknesses.

My hope about India became brighter when I compared European conditions with those obtaining in India. I found, to my relief, that we were free from some weaknesses which characterised the Europeans.

The present war can be divided into three well-defined periods—the period before Russia entered the war; the period after Russia's participation; and the period after Japan's attack in the Far East.

Many persons have asserted that due to the entry of the Soviet Union the war has changed its imperialistic character. Slogans and catchwords like the imperialistic war are impediments to real thinking. Let us not use them indiscriminately. There is no doubt that Britain is fighting for its freedom and its Empire. But even when faced with a life and death struggle its imperialistic ways have not changed. Russia's entry into the war has not changed the character of the British Government which is an enemy of Indian freedom.

The phase of war beginning with the attack on Russia has changed the complexion of the war no doubt, but not the outlook and attitude of the British ruling class. It does not see the revolutionary changes going on behind the war. The ruling class in England and France is played out, but the people in Russia have stood the test with courage and strength. The fact that the Soviet stood the German blitz, which called forth the admiration of all, was due to the structure of its state and economic system. In spite of war conditions, England has not been able to

1. Address to students, Allahabad, 15 December 1941. From *The Leader*, 16 December 1941; the *National Herald*, 17 December 1941; and *The Hindustan Times*, 17 December 1941.
2. Jawaharlal witnessed air bombing in Barcelona (Spain) in 1938.

mobilize her war efforts like Russia. So far as the Government of India is concerned, its structure is not only out of date, but what is more surprising, it is living in the nineteenth century.

The Government of India invites comparison with the Vichy Government.[3] It is also afraid of Indians. Vichy prostrated, lying low, always talks of maintaining the French Empire; and Simla, Delhi and London also talk of preserving the British Empire. The mental make-up of Britain's leaders is fascist. There is not much difference between fascism and imperialism.

One of the most remarkable features of the present war is the brave resistance put up by the Reds. The epic defence of the Soviet Union arouses our admiration. The destruction by Russians of the Dneproges dam, which was a product of twenty years labour, is symbolic of the spirit that animates the U.S.S.R. To serve a larger cause they destroyed one of their greatest achievements. In spite of reverses, the morale of the Soviet state is high.

I cannot understand the mentality of those who plead that India should have Dominion Status after the war; it might be two years or five years. The term Dominion Status applies only to those people who regard England as their mother country. Though India has been under British rule for the last 150 years or more she is not an offshoot or outgrowth of England. On the other hand, India is a mother country. Indian culture, Indian philosophy, Indian art have spread in Asia and elsewhere. There has been cultural contact between India and China and India and Greece. That cultural tie has not been broken. It is idle to talk of Dominion Status and the so-called British Commonwealth of Nations. Who knows what would be the state of affairs after the war? There might be a federal union between England and America. England might become a state of America. This idea of Dominion Status is implanted in the minds of those who believe in the permanence of British rule. It is a sheer waste of time to talk of the grant of Dominion Status two years after the war. Those who engage themselves in such discussions are doing a disservice to their country. What we want at the present moment is independence and nothing else. Who knows what will be the fate of Britain or the British Empire two years after the war. It matters little whether Mr. Churchill talks of Atlantic Charter or Indian Ocean charter.

3. As a part of the peace settlement, Germany occupied the northern half of France. The French National Assembly met in unoccupied France and constituted a government under Marshal Petain with its capital at Vichy.

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13. India Can Only Be a Rebel[1]

Question: What are your views on Mr. Amery's speech delivered in London yesterday?[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru: For the past few months that I had been in jail, I have been watching the British Government's policy and the activities of their officials in India and my conviction has been confirmed a thousand-fold that in these circumstances India can only be a rebel against the British Government which have had the insolence and audacity to speak so often through their officials in patronizing terms about moral, spiritual and political values when they themselves have demonstrated to the world that they possess none of these—not even ordinary efficiency either in war or peace.

I am not interested in the repeated performances of Mr. Amery on the public stage repeating the same thing *ad nauseam*. My only answer to him and to the British Government is, in the words of Oliver Cromwell, quoted by Mr. Amery himself in the House of Commons, "We have had enough of you. Get out".[3]

Some people talk of the revival of the Poona Offer[4] or some other thing that is dead and over. I am not a believer in revivalism either in religion or politics. Naturally a politician must take into consideration the changing circumstances in a changing world. But for anyone to think in terms of eighteen months ago after all that has happened, is to exhibit a singular rigidity of mind, and that is fatal during this period of war and revolution.

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 17 December 1941. From *The Hindustan Times*, 18 December 1941.
2. Speaking to the Indian officers in the fighting forces at the Overseas League, Amery spoke of the responsibility of the Indian forces in fighting for the common cause of human freedom, justice and decency. He asserted that "political freedom can only be achieved by unity and maintained by strength. Freedom is a thing which is not conferred as a kind of titular distinction, but is acquired by moral unity which sustains it within and by the power to defend it against dangers from without."
3. Mr. Amery is reported to have said, in the debate in May 1940 in the House of Commons which led to the resignation of Chamberlain, "Depart, I say, and be done with you."
4. In November 1941, S. Satyamurti, then Deputy Leader of the Congress Party in the Central Assembly, pleaded for parliamentary activity by the Congress, and the revival of the Poona Offer.

Besides, in a fast changing world with the fate of things altering with each turn of events, the talk even of a time-limit has no meaning. What we want is independence. That means severance of connection with Britain. Of course, that does not mean a position of isolation for us. What it does mean is that we should form a part of the new order in our own right. On this question of independence of India there can be no compromise either with the British Government or with any group in India.

At this moment there is a need for discipline among students. You should not fritter away your energies over small things such as elections. The time has come when you should all stand united because the map of the world is changing every day. If you keep your eyes shut and only continue shouting slogans you cannot reach your goal.

12. Cable to V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
16-12-41

Your cable.[2] I am just going to Bombay thence Bardoli. Your information about developments here misleading. Extreme bitterness here against British policy in India and attitude obscurantist and reactionary of officials. While fully realising its implications recent international events consider recognition of independence with real transfer of power as essential prerequisites for effective step. Undesirable your interviewing British officials.

Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. In his cable of 15 December 1941, Krishna Menon asked Jawaharlal to take positive initiative in national leadership and government at the time of imminent peril. He desired that Congress should participate in war effort without insisting on legal, constitutional changes. He wanted that India should discharge her historical role alongside Russia and China, and therefore mobilize people and resources against fascism despite government's obscurantism.

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During the last few days that I have been out of prison, I have tried to avoid dealing with specific issues, for authoritative pronouncements on these can come only from the Congress Working Committee, the Congress President or Mahatma Gandhi.

I have dealt with the general question of principles of our policy. Recently, the question of violence and nonviolence has cropped up like King Charles's head. This is a matter which has been frequently discussed in India for years past and everyone knows Mahatma Gandhi's views on it, as well as the general reaction of the Congress. The Congress view on this question was framed concisely at the last meeting of the All India Congress Committee in Bombay when a resolution was passed with which Mahatma Gandhi agreed in so far as it went for Congress purposes. No doubt he personally goes further but as the leader of the Congress he accepted it and adapted himself to it. For my part I accept it completely. But I would like to say that during the past year of war and world-wide disaster I have been drawn even nearer to the ideal of political nonviolence and complete disarmament. I cannot say that this can be applied in toto regardless of circumstances for always, as the All India Congress Committee has said, external factors and internal conditions will have to be considered. But I do think that we should try our utmost in that direction. For me, and I think for the Congress, this issue in the form in which it has now been raised does not arise, though events may bring it into greater prominence at any time. Other issues precede it. They must be considered first or else there will be confusion of thought and issues.

When people talk about any kind of cooperation between India and the British Government[5] they seem to forget two factors. First, the enormous bitterness of the people today is greater than ever against the British Government's policy in India. Anyone who takes the trouble to find out what the people's feeling is has only to speak to the man in the street from Peshawar to Cape Comorin.

During my past twenty-five years of political experience, I have never known feelings so strained and bitter. No politician, whatever his individual view might be, can ignore this background. Secondly, I would like to give an instance, which, though far from being a parallel, is interesting. The British Labour Party, in spite of being completely in line with the war in England, refused to cooperate with the Government there till

5. The Viceroy, speaking at the annual general meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce on 15 December 1941, made an appeal to the people of India to forget their domestic differences and work together for the common object "at this critical moment in the history of mankind"

the Chamberlain Government was pushed out. They were faced with the immediate danger of an invasion, yet they maintained their attitude and Mr. Chamberlain had to go. It is apparent to anyone how our case is infinitely stronger from every point of view and it is absurd for anyone to imagine that we can cooperate with this Government.

It is true, looking at the international situation, that all manner of considerations arise which induce us to give our sympathy to the group of powers fighting against Germany. If I have been in favour of giving help to China all these years, I cannot change my attitude now.

If I am in favour, as I am, of assistance being given to Soviet Russia, I cannot change my mind on that subject because of Soviet Russia's association with Great Britain. Undoubtedly all these create difficulties. There is no problem in this world free from difficulties. But I cannot, under any circumstances, function as a camp-follower and recruiting sergeant of the British Government, and thus support their policy in India and their general policy towards their subject countries.

Some people and some organisations talk about what might happen after the war is over or a year or two later. I am totally unable to understand this attitude. I am concerned only with today and here and now. It will not be Mr. Amery or the British Government who will shape things in the future, but the vast elemental forces that are already rising in the world.

The British Government have not only to face their hundred and fifty years' past in India, and such a past is always in our memory, but even in their recent past they have sown seeds of trouble which will bear their evil fruit. Only by an entirely different policy based on the ending of their Empire and imperialist policy can they avoid the effects of this policy and win mass sympathy of the Eastern people.

> Q: Why do you not advocate mass civil disobedience if you are so convinced of the popular feeling against the British Government?

JN: Mass civil disobedience was and is undesirable from the general point of view. I am in general agreement with the policy adopted by Mahatma Gandhi.

> Q: Do you feel that individual civil disobedience has succeeded in disorganising the Government's efforts in India?

JN: Here it must be remembered that it was never the intention to hinder the British Government's efforts in India and thus help fascist and

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. But even so you and I can discuss it at the Congress Working Committee meeting because Congress is a democratic organisation. Therefore, all should understand what is to be the reply of this. I often see that many people without taking the trouble of understanding what the question is, try to give a reply. This is absurd. We have to see what is the question before the world and to search for a reply ourselves. But then what are these talks about principles and what is that which the world and India need? This is to be kept in view at this time.

The war is raging before our eyes and has almost spread to the whole world and has approached our borders. The eminent British officers tell us: 'War has approached India. War has come upon the threshold of India. Now India has got to be prepared for offering resistance.' Mr. Amery can say so. It is true that war has come near India. War is not a good thing. If war reaches your city of Bombay you will not like it. Whether you like it or dislike it the enemy will not come after consulting you. They will come when they have to come. This is true. The British constantly remind us of this. Everything that is said is calculated to create panic in the public. The officers want to create a fear in the public so that it comes under their control. They believe that by consistently giving threats, they may demand any services in the manner they desire from us, without sharing any responsibility. You understand the work of making people nervous. The British Government want us to bow our heads before them. The British have got aeroplanes, they have got modern armaments. In modern warfare we cannot fight any battle without aeroplanes. We are not equipped to fight the modern war. So people get nervous and go to them. For this reason, they say, this is the time of danger. You help us and we shall protect you. This becomes a challenge to us. This is true. We do not deny it. Our country may be attacked by the enemy. They are in Burma, and it is possible that some parts of Bengal may be approached by the aeroplanes. But whether they come or not, we should get ready, for if we get nervous we cannot do anything, nor can we save ourselves.

Whatever may happen in the world we must face it. At present lakhs of men are fighting, but we are mere spectators. This war has been going on for the last four and a half years, perhaps this is the fifth year. Today our Chinese brethren are fighting against the Japanese. Lakhs of Chinese have died but they have not become nervous. On the contrary, they have resisted the enemy with the utmost bravery. This also increases our courage.

I do not think that any army will come to India. If it comes then we will do what we consider proper. Had our country been free we

Nazi forces. On the contrary if the question relates to whether the movement has affected people's minds in and outside India then the answer is in the affirmative. It has been most successful in that it has recorded the unwillingness of the people of India to submit to the policy adopted by the British Government.

14. The Right to Rebel[1]

It is ten days since my release from jail. They say that within a month they will slowly release all the prisoners. To me the purpose of jail delivery appears to be this, that the British Government feel that they should give up the wrong path which they have been treading and in future take the right path. Then this release will have some meaning. But their attitude is revealed by the speeches, whether they be of the Viceroy or Mr. Amery. After two or four very big sentences, there is some digression and then repetition. In fact, the British Government have done nothing new. Then why have they released us? Mahatmaji has already given a reply to this.[2] But perhaps the British Government have put this question knowingly. They thought that the people who would be out of jails would debate and fight amongst themselves and the Congress would not be able to offer any fierce resistance. Mahatmaji has said, through this jail delivery Government has, in a way, given us a challenge. We have got to set aside minor disputes and do big things.

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it comes to nothing. You know what is happening in India and in the whole world. But I do not know a single person in this country in whose heart there is no resentment against the Government. On all sides today there is resentment in the hearts of the Indians as they have been suppressed. They all know how tall are Mr. Amery's remarks. In our struggle and movement there have been minor disputes. Even in Russia there are disputes, and where do they not occur? The British Government should leave us and our disputes to us. I say frankly that we are now ready to win India's independence; we are ready to release India from slavery. Let them take their decision that they shall not interfere with it. Had this decision been taken just now, it would have been better. But those people who rule over India, do so just as the Nazis do to others. You have been seeing in India what the difference is between fascism and these people. Whatever Germany did, exactly the same thing has happened in India. I admit that there is no Nazism in the British Government. There is democracy to some extent. This is admitted. But what have we to do with it? When they take a particular step they say that all events do not concern India. By saying so they deceive the world.

The question before the Indians today is the question of independence. This question has already become known to the British Government, because when a country is ruled over by another country, then what is the duty of the former? That, until the raj is finished it would continue to rebel.

Those who do not think in these terms are not alive. A community, if it is a living community, cannot tolerate a foreign rule. As far as the method of rebellion is concerned, whether it should be peaceful or otherwise, is a different issue. But if it is a virile community it should rebel. Whenever people become prepared for raising the banner of rebellion in some form or the other they keep the nation alive, if they fail in this, it dies. A person whose heart is alive, comes to the right path. But what can a person do whose heart is dead? He cannot move about. You know that paralysis is a disease. The person suffering from it cannot walk or move about. The same is the case with lifeless nations. The duty of every colonial country is to revolt in some manner or the other, by any method, peaceful or otherwise. If it does not revolt it can be said to be suffering from paralysis. If Mr. Amery says, as he does so often, that there is no question of freedom of India, then does he, Mr. Amery, consider us fools? I do not know what he thinks of us. Let him now be rest assured that the Indians have understood such questions and that they will, under the tri-colour flag, attain Swaraj.

would have decided what we would do. But our hands are tied up. We cannot do anything else except helping the British Government. But we shall do it when we become free or when the Government changes its policy.

Aneyji and Sultan Ahmed have become members of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Perhaps you may be knowing them. Aney's name has remained in my memory. I can say that these people are such simple-minded people that they cannot oppose the Viceroy or the Governor General. They are all for pleasing the Government, but before the Congress these are all small things.

You know what is happening in the war. In modern warfare it is not that soldiers fight while others remain in the shops and carry on their business. Now the war is that of bombs. It is a war in which your women and children are involved even if they do not desire to fight. How bravely the Germans have fought! Their women, children, all of them fight. The whole country is a country of soldiers.

Russia has resisted the German armies with great valour. She has resisted the Germans who attacked with sixty lakhs of persons. Nobody has ever invaded with such a colossal army in the whole of history. It has got to be said that if anybody fought with bravery it was Russia. The general public there fought for its country. Each and every child of that country is in the mainstream.

England rules over us. It is imperialistic. Yet I admire the bravery of the Englishmen. There is no doubt whatsoever that they are fighting for their own freedom but it is impossible that we side with an alien Government which has usurped our freedom. Yes, we should strengthen our *sangathan*, and we should fight for our own country. The question of our freedom is complicated. Our hands are tied down. If the administration had been in our hands, the masses would have fought with their whole strength. We have repeatedly stated that if the British declare India independent we would offer them help. But this did not happen. Instead, Mr. Amery and other officers have been making ambiguous statements. It is a matter of shame. They have made an effort to humiliate us and cause us damage. Today they are asking us to help them in the war effort but to help with closed eyes. But we will not do it. We have learnt the lesson that we have first to make our country completely free.

The question of China, the question of Russia, and many other similar questions are before us. Indians would have helped if the representatives in the Government were of the masses. Suppose, we wish to help China, then we cannot do it. You must have observed that in a war when any system is introduced, people start opposing it beforehand and

it comes to nothing. You know what is happening in India and in the whole world. But I do not know a single person in this country in whose heart there is no resentment against the Government. On all sides today there is resentment in the hearts of the Indians as they have been suppressed. They all know how tall are Mr. Amery's remarks. In our struggle and movement there have been minor disputes. Even in Russia there are disputes, and where do they not occur? The British Government should leave us and our disputes to us. I say frankly that we are now ready to win India's independence; we are ready to release India from slavery. Let them take their decision that they shall not interfere with it. Had this decision been taken just now, it would have been better. But those people who rule over India, do so just as the Nazis do to others. You have been seeing in India what the difference is between fascism and these people. Whatever Germany did, exactly the same thing has happened in India. I admit that there is no Nazism in the British Government. There is democracy to some extent. This is admitted. But what have we to do with it? When they take a particular step they say that all events do not concern India. By saying so they deceive the world.

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We will not be pacified by half-baked promises. We will not sit idle —we will not give up our struggle. In the circumstance in which this war has come, we cannot keep aloof from it. In the present war no country in the world can remain aloof from it. All are concerned with it. We have to consider its effect on us. Accordingly, we have to think about our duties and responsibilities. But in doing so we cannot forget that we have also to get our country emancipated.

Bombay is a city of merchants. It is a commercial city. On account of the war commercial concerns have increased. But whatever the needs of the British for goods, like fighting and other aircraft, it is astonishing that they do not make any effort about getting the same manufactured here.[3] On the contrary the British Government has prevented their production. If there is a need for aircraft, the British should allow their manufacture in India. They are getting them from America at a higher rate, but will not allow their manufacture in India. Nowadays there is a need for ships.[4] They are bought from America. Instead of encouraging ship-building industry in India the Government created every sort of obstacle. If these industries would have started their production then India would have benefited and the British Government too would have got its supplies at cheaper price. Knowing these advantages full well the Government does not give permission for their manufacture. I have heard that the Eastern Group Council has been formed.[5] What worthless things they talk. Let them get prepared for whatever things can be manufactured in India. Let them give impetus to agriculture which is India's special concern. Why should the big factories of Australia produce things which can be manufactured in India? In India there are efficient workers, there are enough scientists; only help is needed from London. But the law is against it. If they give facilities, all these products can be manufactured here. It is not that the people of England can manufacture goods which the people of India cannot manufacture.

3. Walchand Hirachand, a leading industrialist, had offered at the beginning of the War, to set up an aircraft factory without subsidy provided that the Government of India agreed to purchase a fixed number of aircraft produced by the factory. But the Government did not place any order till October 1941.
4. The attitude of the Board of Trade and the Admiralty to the project of a shipyard at Vishakhapatnam worked out by Walchand Hirachand was negative. There was no proposal to give active cooperation to any such venture as part of the war effort.
5. An Eastern Group Council was established in Delhi after the conference on war supplies held there for a month from 25 October 1941. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 188.

On account of the work which the National Planning Committee did, sufficient benefit accrued to Indian industry. But the Government put all sorts of obstructions in our work. The National Planning Committee of India was under the impression that the Government desired to help it. But the Government did not like it. I was its Chairman. The Government wanted that I should not do any work while remaining in jail. The industry of India is being ruined. I am surprised at the sort of treatment which is meted out to India and yet the Government says that we should help it. Yes, it is a question of help. But there is no way for it.

As I told you the Government has challenged us. We have to give a reply to that challenge. What will be the reply? That will be known to you within four or five days. But I understand that if we have to reply to what the British prattle, to this British Government which has shown so much discourtesy towards India, our cooperation cannot be with it.

These are the questions before India. Brothers, you may garland the satyagrahis when they are jailed, and again garland them when they are released. This is a strange thing. I shall tell you about my province, where the number of satyagrahis who went to jail this year was half of those who courted imprisonment from the whole country. Mahatma Gandhi cancelled several lists. Several did not get permission. But what was the effect on the general public? There are several of our brothers who do not take interest in our work. They merely garland those who return from jail and that is all. And after three or four days they ask: 'When will you go to jail? Why is it that you do not go?' They think that going to jail has become a profession with the Congressmen. It has become their profession to go over and over again, and for others to garland them. Lakhs of men have been fighting in the war. Throughout the world so many people are dying, but if you also are not made of such stuff then of what use is your shouting? But if ten to twenty thousand persons from amongst you stand firm, I am pleased. What is to be done is to think about the freedom of India. All of you can do this. For this purpose even if you have to give your life, you should not be afraid of it. Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress have taught us to be fearless.

About two years back the question of satyagraha arose before us, Mahatma Gandhi started it and just now he has written an article in which he says that since satyagraha has been started, he is not going to

stop it as long as he is alive and until he gets what he desires.[6] And during these two years certain young people have been saying that Gandhiji takes minor steps. I want to tell you a story. Ten or twelve years ago there was a Congress worker at Azamgarh.[7] He made a very good arrangement and was determined that people should remain seated without moving at all, even if a snake happened to come out. Once a voice came 'mouse, mouse'. Afterwards I saw that it was a serpent. But they still remained seated there. There was so much discipline that nobody stirred his legs. Well, leave aside the story of the snake. Yes, I was saying that Mahatmaji conducted satyagraha for one year. Some people say that instead of individual satyagraha, mass satyagaha should be resorted to. This is right. But you cannot criticise. I do not know what benefit could accrue from mass satyagraha which would not accrue from individual satyagraha. I was greatly astonished at this criticism of theirs and their attitude towards the movement. Had we resorted to mass satyagraha we could have carried it on for about four or six months. Gandhiji conducted our satyagraha in such a comprehensive manner for two years that he saved India from a big crisis. This was not easy to achieve. I personally have great respect for Mahatmaji. No harsh words emanate from the lips of Mahatmaji howsoever much Mr. Amery may coax. Our freedom fight will continue and he will continue it. If Mr. Amery says "We are tired," then the war does not stop in any way and if he is tired then there is no question of our getting tired, he can get away from India's battlefront. We have of course to start the war. In this, you comrades, have to help us, whatever you can do, you may do. Failing that your coming here to this meeting becomes useless.

6. Mahatma Gandhi, in his statement of 7 December 1941, made it clear that he had "no authority to suspend civil disobedience on extraneous grounds; that is for the Congress to do.... For me personally there is no change. As a man sworn to peace at the critical moment, to suspend my anti-war activity would be to deny myself."
7. The reference is to Maulvi Masud Ali Nadvi.

15. The War in Malaya[1]

Recent developments in Malaya[2] have filled our minds and my thought has travelled back to the visit I paid to that beautiful land four and a

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 20 December 1941. *National Herald*, 21 December 1941.
2. Japanese planes bombed Kedah, Kelantan and Penang in Malaya and the first line of British defence was broken on 16 December 1941. Penang was cut off from the mainland on 19 December 1941.

half years ago and to the many friends I made there. To all these friends and others, to all our countrymen in Malaya, I should like to say that although we are unable to be of much service to them in the present, our deepest sympathies flow out to them in their trials and misfortunes and we earnestly trust that they will face them with resolve, courage and dignity. India cannot and will not forget her children abroad.

16. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Bardoli
December 21, 1941

My dear Mahmud,
Your letter of the 13th has reached me here in Bardoli. I am sorry you are not coming here.

It has surprised me that you should have read anything in my statement[2] which led you to conclude that the idea of complete independence for India is dead. What I said and what I have said for several years is that the isolated independent existence of all nations is dead. There must be sometime in future a world cooperation among nations. It is essential that India should break completely with Britain before it can think in terms of cooperation with other nations.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Syed Mahmud referred to Jawaharlal's remark to the press on 9 December 1941 that 'the idea of isolation of India is dead for ever'. See *ante*, item 3.

17. India's Attitude to the War[1]

I congratulate the people of Gujarat in general and Bardoli taluk in particular for having shown their love and enthusiasm towards the

1. Address at Bardoli, 26 December 1941. From *The Hindustan Times*, 27 December 1941; also from Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

Congress.[2] The country has been fighting for Swaraj for the last twenty years and the people of your taluka have a major share in that fight. The members of the Working Committee who have come from hundreds of miles are today engaged here in discussing the burning problems of the day.

Great events are taking place. The world is in the midst of a great war. India cannot be isolated. She is no doubt fighting for her own independence and she will carry on the struggle till victory is achieved but then she cannot close her eyes to what is happening elsewhere in the world.

To say that the war is being fought beyond the borders of India and as such is no concern of ours is a fatal attitude. Some people ask what would happen to India if Britain is defeated. There are others who say that India will fall victim to Japanese or German aggression.

We are opposed to Britain because we are in bondage. We are equally opposed to fascism and Nazism and we will fight them also to the last. We cannot, however, forget that the independence of our country is our first concern.

I think that after this war a new world order would emerge in which all nations would be free and the flames of this war would consume slavery. No nation in the world has achieved anything without sacrifice and India should be prepared to go through the ordeal. I have no sympathy with Hitler and his associates. Morally they are corrupt and they want to dominate the whole world. But that shall not be. We should combat these forces and express wholehearted sympathy with those nations that have fallen a prey to Nazi and fascist aggression. I have deep sympathy with the British people who are standing against aggression but hate those who stand for upholding imperialism and exploitation of the weaker nations.

2. The Congress Working Committee met at Bardoli from 21 to 30 December 1941.

18. Bardoli Resolution on Political Situation

Confidential Draft for Working Committee on 25 December 1941[1]

Fourteen months have elapsed since the Working Committee held their last meeting[4] and during this period the world has fallen ever deeper into the abyss of war and rushed headlong towards self-destruction. The members of the Committee have met again on their release from prison and given earnest thought to all the national and international developments during this fateful period of human history. The burden of guiding the Congress and the nation at this critical stage when old problems assume a new significance and war approaches the frontiers of India

Confidential Draft (2) for Working Committee on 28 December 1941[2]

Fourteen months have elapsed since the Working Committee held their last meeting and during this period the world has fallen ever deeper into the abyss of war and rushed headlong towards self-destruction. The members of the Committee have met again on their release from prison and given earnest thought to all the national and international developments during this fateful period of human history. The burden of guiding the Congress and the nation at this critical stage when old problems assume a new significance and war approaches the frontiers of India

Resolution on 'Political Situation' passed at Bardoli on 30 December 1941[3]

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1 & 2. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. 3. *National Herald*, 31 December 1941, and *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16 January 1942.
Bardoli Resolution on 'Political Situation' was drafted by Jawaharlal. We present here the first and second drafts submitted by him to the Working Committee and the third draft adopted at Bardoli. The third draft was ratified at the A.I.C.C. session at Wardha on 16 January 1942.
4. The last meeting of the Working Committee had been held at Wardha from 3 to 6 November 1940.

bringing new problems in its train, is a heavy one which the Committee can only shoulder worthily with the full cooperation of the people of India. The time and the hour demand clear thought and vision, disciplined and united action, and a calm adherence to the high principles and objectives for which the Congress has stood for these many past years. The Committee have endeavoured to keep these principles and objectives in view and considered them in the larger context of world conditions and world freedom. The Committee are convinced that full freedom for the people of India is essential even in the present state of world turmoil not only for India's sake but for the sake of the world. The Committee also hold that real peace and freedom can only be established and endured on the basis of world cooperation between free nations and on world-wide disarmament. The freedom of

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India is thus envisaged as a part of the larger freedom for all peoples and nations.

The Committee gave full expression to their attitude towards the War in their statement issued on September 14, 1939,[5] wherein they condemned Nazi and fascist aggression and expressed their willingness to help the cause of freedom and democracy, provided that the objectives of the war were clearly stated and acted upon, in so far as was possible, in the present. If freedom and democracy were those objectives, then they must necessarily include the ending of imperialism as well as fascism and the recognition of the independence of India. Subsequent pronouncements made on behalf of the British Government, their refusal to define the objectives of the war and their reactionary and oppressive policy in India, made it

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5. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 122-138.

clear that this Government were determined to maintain and intensify their imperialist hold and exploitation of the Indian people. That policy was one of deliberate insult to Indian nationalism, of a reversion to unrestrained authoritarianism, and the encouragement of disruptive and reactionary elements. It was further aimed at the destruction of the nationalist movement, and while the Congress, in its desire not to embarrass the British people in their hour of peril had refrained from any form of direct action, the Government carried on war against the nationalist movement by imprisoning large numbers of people who were carrying on their normal activities. Many hundreds of prominent workers were thus imprisoned under the Defence of India Act without any trial. Every offer made by the Congress for an honourable compromise was rejected.

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Government was determined to maintain and intensify its imperialist hold and exploitation of the Indian people. The British policy was one of deliberate insult to Indian nationalism, of a perpetuation of unrestrained authoritarianism, and the encouragement of disruptive and reactionary elements. Not only has every offer made by the Congress for an honourable compromise been rejected, but public opinion voiced by organisations regarded as moderate has also been flouted.

WITH BHULABHAI DESAI, SYED MAHMUD, C. RAJAGOPALACHARI AND ASAF ALI AT A.I.C.C. SESSION, WARDHA, JANUARY 1942

The Congress was therefore compelled, in order to defend the honour of the Indian people and the integrity of the nationalist movement, to request Gandhiji to take the leadership and organise satyagraha at such time and in such form as he considered proper. Mahatma Gandhi, desirous of avoiding embarrassment to his opponent as far as possible, especially during the perils and dangers of war, limited that satyagraha to selected individuals who conformed to certain tests he had laid down. That satyagraha has now proceeded for over a year and about twenty-five thousand Congressmen have suffered imprisonment, while many thousands of others who offered satyagraha in the Frontier Province and elsewhere were not arrested. The Committee desire to express their respectful appreciation of Gandhiji's leadership and of the response of the nation to it, and are of opinion that it has strength-

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ened the people.

Throughout this period the attitude of the British Government has been progressively more hostile to Indian freedom and it has functioned in India as a completely authoritarian Government, insulting with its general policy and its arrogant demeanour the deeply cherished convictions and feelings of the people. Neither the profession of freedom and democracy, nor the perils and catastrophes that come in the wake of war have affected that attitude and policy; and such changes as have taken place have been for the worse and have strengthened the conviction of the Indian people that there can be no peace or cooperation between them and this Government. To submit to this policy is to give up all that the Congress has stood for during the past twenty-two years.

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The recent release of a number of political prisoners has no significance or importance, and the circumstances attending it and official pronouncements made, make it clear that it is not connected with any marked change of policy but is apparently meant to create differences within the Congress. Large numbers of detenus, who are kept in prison under the Defence of India Act without trial, still remain in prison, and recent arrests of prominent persons[6] and their treatment in prison indicate that the old policy is being pursued as before. The growth of Indian industry, in spite of the urgency of war demands, has been checked in many important directions so that British vested interests might continue. This release of political prisoners, therefore, does not lead to a changed situation but is a challenge to the Congress leaving it no alter-

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6. V.D. Savarkar, B.S. Moonje, Shyama Prasad Mookerji and other prominent Hindu Mahasabha leaders were arrested at Bhagalpur on 24 December 1941 and released soon after. Sarat Chandra Bose was arrested on 11 December 1941 and detained till 1945.

native but to continue its present policy.

While there has been no change in Britain's imperialist and authoritarian policy towards India, the Working Committee must nevertheless take into full consideration the new world situation that has arisen by the development of the war into a world conflict and its approach to India. While the Committee have no quarrel with the peoples of any of the warring nations and view with deep dismay their efforts at mutual destruction, they must express their condemnation of the unprovoked and unannounced aggression of Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union. The Committee have not endorsed in the past all the policies pursued by the Soviet Union but they have recognised that the Union stood for certain human, cultural and economic values which are of great importance to the growth and progress of humanity. They have

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watched with great interest the progress of this great experiment in human civilization and they consider that it would be a tragedy if the cataclysm of war involved the destruction of this endeavour and achievement. They have admired the astonishing self-sacrifice and heroic courage of the Soviet people in defence of their freedom and send to them their warm sympathy. The Committee also send their greetings to the Chinese people who, through four and a half years of devastating war and suffering, have never flinched and have set an example of unparalleled heroism.

While the Committee send their sympathy to all nations and peoples struggling for their freedom against armed aggression, the course of the war has brought additional conviction to them of the futility and madness of national wars for the settlement of disputes. Human civilization can no longer exist un-

its approach to India. The sympathies of the Congress must inevitably lie with the peoples who are the subject of aggression and who are fighting for their freedom. The Committee would thus like to advise the nation to align itself with the larger causes that are emerging from the storm of war and to give support to them and help in their success, in conformity with its principles, to the best of its ability. But

its approach to India. The sympathies of the Congress must inevitably lie with the peoples who are the subject of aggression from any quarter and who are fighting for their freedom. But only a free and

less wars and the causes of war are eliminated, and it is essential that even in the storm of war, peoples and governments should recognize this and address themselves to this end. Military triumph alone will not ensure this and may result in the domination of one group of nations over another and consequent wars on an even vaster and more destructive scale than today.

India today, owing to past British policy, is weak and unprepared for waging effective war under modern conditions. Not only have the British Government angered and alienated the Indian people, but they have by their policy and lack of foresight and competence made it difficult for any effective steps to be taken. They have continued to treat the Indian people as a subject race and a hostile people, and in their desire to keep their imperialist hold have pursued policies which are not only shattering their Empire, but are also endangering only a free and independent India can be in a position to do so. The whole background in India is one of deep-rooted hostility and distrust of the British Government and not even the most far-reaching promises can alter this background, nor can a subject India offer voluntary or willing help to an arrogant imperialism which is indistinguishable from fascist authoritarianism.

independent India can be in a position to undertake the defence of the country on a national basis and be of help in the furtherance of the large causes that are emerging from the storm of war. The whole background in India is one of hostility and of distrust of the British Government and not even the most far-reaching promise can alter this background, nor can a subject India offer voluntary or willing help to an arrogant imperialism which is indistinguishable from fascist authoritarianism.

India. The people of India are determined not to submit to foreign dictation or foreign rule and will resist any foreign invader. But under the circumstances they can only do so in their own way and their own methods or such as may be open to them, endeavouring to adhere to their principles and ideals.

The Committee are therefore of opinion that the resolution of the A.I.C.C. passed in Bombay on September 16, 1940 holds today and defines Congress policy still. That policy may be varied in detailed application by the Working Committee or by Mahatma Gandhi, as the changing circumstances may require, but in essentials all Congressmen should act according to it.

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19. Instructions Issued by the Congress Working Committee[1]

Recent developments in the world situation have brought war near to India's frontiers. This may lead to internal dislocation in certain parts of the country and there is a possibility of some cities being subjected to aerial attack. Whatever dangers and difficulties might arise, the real antidote to them is to remain cool and collected and on no account to give way to nervousness and excitement. Congressmen must remain at their posts and continue their service of the people; wherever necessity arises they should yield places of safety to those in greater need and be ready to render aid to those who may require it.

The Congress can help and serve the people in the difficult times ahead only if its organisation is strong and disciplined and Congressmen individually and Congress committees are able to command confidence in their respective localities.

Congress committees and Congressmen should therefore address themselves immediately to the task of strengthening the organisation and reviving and maintaining contacts in villages and towns. Even villages should, as far as possible, revive the message of the Congress and be prepared to face such difficulties as might arise.

The constructive programme adopted by the Congress and explained from time to time by Gandhiji, is of particular importance at this juncture.[2] It is meant not only to bring about unity among various groups, to remove disabilities which keep sections of the community backward and depressed, to promote self-reliance and the cooperative spirit among the people, to increase production and have fairer distribution but also furnish the best opportunity and means of contacts with the people and service to them which are necessary for winning their confidence. The Working Committee, therefore, call upon Congress committees and workers to further this programme intensively and thus exercise a steadying and strengthening influence in times of dislocation and uneasiness.

1. These instructions drafted by Jawaharlal were issued at the Bardoli session on 30 December 1941 and were partly printed in the *National Herald* on 31 December 1941. The full text is available in J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Mahatma Gandhi's *Constructive Programme*, released on 17 June 1941, and published as a booklet in mid-December 1941, called for communal unity, removal of untouchability, prohibition, development of khadi and other village industries, village sanitation, basic education, uplift of women, education in health and hygiene, propagation of *Rashtra-Bhavna* (feeling of nationalism), learning of one's own language and working for economic equality.

During such times there is always a possibility of trouble being created by unsocial elements in the country. To avoid the emergence of such a situation and to meet it when it arises, volunteers should be organized in both the urban and rural areas. Such organizations should be formed on the basis of strict nonviolence and it should always be remembered that the Congress adheres to this principle. These volunteers may co-operate with other organisations working for similar ends. This volunteer organization is meant for rendering service to the people both normally and in the event of possible internal commotion. It should, therefore, avoid conflict with the authorities.

The prices of commodities have already risen and are causing distress among the people and no adequate steps have so far been taken by the authorities to meet this situation. These tendencies are likely to be accentuated in the future, and dislocation of trade and transport, due to stress of war, may lead to scarcity of the necessaries of life as well as of many other things which are of everyday use.

Big-scale industries in other countries have suffered heavily on account of the war and transport of goods has become difficult on account of military requirements. China has largely overcome these difficulties by a widespread development of village industries. India may have to face similar problems, and village and cottage industries afford a solution, desirable in itself and more particularly suited to the needs of the moment. Such industries can escape to a large extent the effects of dislocation of trade and transport.

It is, therefore, necessary that this item of the constructive programme should be widely taken up and worked up with vigour and earnestness so that the countryside may be rendered, as far as possible, self-sufficient in regard to the necessaries of life.

The Committee would especially recommend to the villages the growing of food crops at least to cover the needs of the village and appeal to the grain dealers not to hold up stores for profit but to release them for consumption at fair prices.

In case of emergency, when instructions are issued to the public by the authorities for the preservation of life and property and the maintenance of public order. Congressmen should avoid conflict with the authorities and they should carry out such instructions, unless they are contrary to Congress directions.

*The Committee do not contemplate any invasion of India in the near future, but in the event of any such attempt, Congressmen can on no account submit to it or cooperate with it even if the consequences of such noncooperation be death.**

* This last paragraph in italics was not published in the newspapers.

20. Reply to H. G. Wells[1]

I have read Mr. H.G. Wells' criticism of my statement in the *News Chronicle*[2] with interest. Almost as a child I read his romances and enjoyed them. Later, I read his other books and profited by them. Eminent thinker and historian that he is, sometimes I have a feeling when reading some of his writings that he has gone back to the realms of romance.

Whenever he writes about India, he gives me this impression, for his knowledge of the past and present in India, of Indian history and culture seems to be singularly limited and derived chiefly from travellers' tales or the romantic effusions of some of his own countrymen. He does himself less than justice when he allows his cultured, far-seeing mind to deal with the vital problems affecting hundreds of millions of human beings after the manner of the Blimps and Pukka sahibs, whom he so dislikes. May I assure him that I do not consider him to be the British Empire or a person who has the least control over the British Government or British governing class?[3] Nor do I expect anything from him except an intelligent appreciation of the world about him. That world is a little bigger not only in size but also in intellectual and cultural achievements than England or even Europe.

I am surprised at his saying that I refused to agree to the Sankey Declaration of the Rights of Man.[4] As a matter of fact, I agreed then, but expressed my doubts about the effectiveness of such a declaration, and suggested that certain essential changes would have to take place in the world before such a declaration could have a real value. What surprises me still more is that he should have overlooked my explicit reference to the Sankey Declaration in the very statement to which he was

1. Bardoli, 30 December 1941. *The Hindu*, 31 December 1941.
2. In his letter to the editor of the *News Chronicle* on 23 December 1941, Wells attacked Jawaharlal's call for complete independence for "this wonderful special Indian people", and asked him to "realise that if we are to take a broad view only of peoples then the only sane thing is to combine with those who are attempting, by their advocacy of a common world law, a world federal control of armaments and transport and world federal conservation of national resources to arrest the first rapid drift to chaos in human affairs." For Jawaharlal's statement to the *News Chronicle* see *ante*, item 6.
3. Wells contended that he was "not a member of the British governing class, that my control of the British Government through the elections is insignificant".
4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 116-117.

replying. Therein, I expressed my approval of it again. For many years, I have believed in world cooperation in all the various items he mentions and in additional matters also. I have written and spoken about this. I am perfectly prepared to cooperate with anybody to this end, but my world happens to include India also and my internationalism does not lead me to accept the imperialist *status quo*.

I am not aware of ever having demanded that the administration of India should be handed over to a small minority of political amateurs.[5] I have demanded that the constitution and future destiny of India should be settled by a Constituent Assembly, elected by the people of India on the basis of adult suffrage. I shall be glad if Mr. Wells will tell me what other democratic way there is of settling these questions. As for our being amateurs, possibly he is right. But is he so very satisfied with the experts who control his destinies and ours? Even if we forget past history, recent events have not led us to associate much intelligence or competence with them. The average British expert in India is usually considered to be a monument of ignorance and incompetence.

Powerful cultures overflow to other countries, and there is a continuous intermingling of different cultures. India, in the course of six thousand years, has influenced others and has been influenced by them. Yet there is no other country in the world, barring China, which has had such an amazing continuity of cultural traditions which bind the country from Mohenjo Daro to the present day, there is that unbroken stream of culture and a sense of unity in common traditions and achievements.

Mr. Wells objects to my saying "the people of India."[6] He is welcome to call them by whatever name he likes. But it is a poor tribute to the British Raj to say that after 170 years, it has not been able to weld India together. As a matter of fact, it has tried and still tries, as all empires do, to divide and disrupt. We have to face the consequences of this long endeavour. In any event, the British Raj is disappearing, whether Mr. Wells' countrymen like it or not, and nothing in the world can keep it functioning much longer. It has been a bad dream for us, but after all it is just a page in our long story and we are turning over the page. May I suggest to Mr. Wells to acquaint himself a little more with Indian history and cultural achievements?

5. Wells asserted that Jawaharlal demanded in effect that "the administration of all India should be handed over to a small minority of political amateurs representing, at the most extravagant, not one in 400 Indians and then, then we should see what we should see".
6. According to Wells, there was in India a multiplicity of peoples, languages and social cultures, "and if the string of the bundle, the old British Raj, is cut, the bundle will immediately fall to pieces".

21. Cable to V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Bardoli
31.12.1941

Your cables.[2] You exhibit complete misunderstanding about situation here. The line you suggest is impossible of adoption by the Congress where every group strongly opposed it. Working Committee's resolution[3] indicates no essential change. Gandhi is not leaving Congress[4] but still cooperating plus carrying on his separate programme. Difference merely on theoretical issue of future.[5] Present policy continues same for both. Can only change by independence and by vital changes. Going to Bombay then Allahabad.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Krishna Menon, in his cable of 30 December 1941, hoped that the Congress would rally the people against fascists, proclaim a position as in the days of the Spanish struggle and declare India's solidarity with Russia and China, irrespective of Indo-British relations.
3. See *ante*, item 18.
4. Mahatma Gandhi, in his letter to Maulana Azad on 30 December 1941, requested that he be relieved from the responsibility, laid upon him by the Bombay resolution, of leading the Congress individual satyagraha, as he could not accept the Bardoli resolution. The Working Committee relieved him of the responsibility of leading the Congress individual satyagraha but appreciated his initiative in carrying on the movement on his personal initiative.
5. The Working Committee, which met at Bardoli from 21 to 30 December 1941, was divided on the role of nonviolence. While Jawaharlal, Azad and Rajagopalachari were prepared for conditional support to the war, Rajendra Prasad and Patel insisted on no participation because of nonviolence.

22. Bardoli and Mahatma Gandhi[1]

I am happy to see the progress of the Vyayam Mandal[2] organised by Sardar Prithvi Singh[3] and wish that everyone should be strong enough to defend himself. The body should be developed along with the mind.

1. Address at Malad, Bombay, 2 January 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.
2. Bombay Ahimsak Vyayam Shala (Institute of Physical Culture).
3. Prithvi Singh Azad (b. 1892); joined Ghadar Party in 1919; associated with the publication of *Ghadar*; implicated and sentenced to life imprisonment in the Lahore Conspiracy Case, 1914-15, escaped and surrendered in 1938; member. Hindustan Socialist Republican Army; imprisoned during the Quit India Movement.

Some of the facts about the session of the Congress Working Committee are being distorted by some newspapers. It is not true that there is a split between the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi. The present Congress which is the creation of Mahatma Gandhi cannot afford to be separated from him. I myself have immense faith in him.

India cannot help the British in this war until and unless the question of the freedom of this country is satisfactorily solved. No slave country can help others for the liberation of other countries. Everybody in this country should be able to defend himself and his property against any aggression. For this purpose I am prepared to discard the principle of nonviolence and instead prefer freedom.

Mahatma Gandhi may carry on the satyagraha on his own initiative and not on behalf of the Congress.

23. Congress Unity[1]

We are constantly told that the war has approached the doors of India. What are we to do now? Our British Government and the British papers say that we should help. Nowadays people appear worried over the rise in prices and the increasing difficulty in getting foodstuffs. This problem has always been there and is getting more and more aggravated. While the factory owners prosper, the workers are not getting their due share. There was trouble in Madras recently because of food scarcity.[2] There the people looted shops. Many of our brothers and sisters rejoice when they read in newspapers that the English are being defeated. But at the same time an anxiety is also felt as to what is going to happen.

I have heard that some big rajas and maharajas think that Hitler may win and the British Raj may get somewhat weakened, and so they are trying to occupy some more land and are augmenting their armies. But their army cannot do anything in the warfare of today because modern warfare is of aeroplanes. To recruit strong men and give them guns and revolvers has no meaning.

How should we view this problem? Should we view it as a spectator sees a show? If anybody today regards himself as a spectator, he either

1. Address at Dana Bandar, Bombay, 2 January 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.
2. Shops were looted in Madras on 19 December 1941.

does not understand the conditions of the world or is a full-fledged fool. None of us can escape from what is happening in the world.

Countries after countries are losing their independence. We do not know how long this war will continue. The problem before the world is how to stop the war, and if the war is not stopped, it will lead to the destruction of the world. There is no way to escape. The present war is not like the wars in the past.

You are aware of the big events that have happened, and the big revolutions that have taken place in the world. During this war many things have changed, and many more will change. Your life, and particularly that of the traders will change, for their root is based in gold and silver. Notes and *hoondies* are all made to stand on the foundations of gold and silver. Conditions may change and to become a millionaire and multimillionaire may become difficult. I do not say there will be no rich and poor, they will continue even then. I remember when a meeting of the National Planning Committee was held here, we were thinking as to how, if Swaraj came to India, we would be able to eradicate unemployment and poverty from India. There trade, commerce and industry, all sorts of things were discussed. We also discussed the question as to how fiscal matters might be regulated. I then stressed the need to introduce a new fiscal policy. There were some men of Bombay who were surprised then. But when they met me recently they agreed that the situation now was the same as I mentioned to them earlier.

The war costs the British some 25 or 30 crores of rupees every day.[3] This, if multiplied by 365, will be a big sum. What sort of paper loan is this which India has to subscribe to?[4] It is quite impossible to give this loan. If it were a small loan, we could have paid it up. And even if it is to be got back, how can it be raised? The British spend twenty-five crores every day by taking it from you, that is from India. They get it by levying taxes on the people. This money will come out of your pockets.

3. Sir Kingsley Wood, Chancellor of the Exchequer, told the House of Commons on 16 December 1941 that the British were spending about £11,750,000 a day on war—£9,000,000 on the armed forces and £2,750,000 on miscellaneous war services. The total war expenditure had reached £8,300,000,000 till that date.
4. Long-term defence loans were raised to finance the war effort. The first series of 1946 3% Defence Loan was issued in the first week of June 1940, and was replaced by another series at the end of August. The Second Defence Loan, 1949-52, was opened on 2 February 1941. These two loans totalled Rs. 80 crores. The Viceroy stated that India should aim at raising at least one hundred crores every year by way of loans for war finance.

Unrest is increasing in the world. Very soon the whole world will be affected. A great responsibility will have to be shouldered by us. All these are revolutionary events. A country like France vanished in a few days and became worse than a slave. We too are slaves. The British rules over us. But there are a number of people in our country who refuse to bow their heads. But there is a tragic situation in France. In the past it was a revolutionary country, but now it creeps like an insect. The fault is of the people there. I have not been able to know the causes of this degradation. You have experienced the power of the British who ruled gloriously, oppressively yet gloriously, for one and a half centuries. What has happened to them now? Nobody could have ruled without ability. They possessed ability and power. But what are we witnessing now? A powerful Empire is rapidly crumbling before our eyes. How is a fifty-storeyed building crumbling down so swiftly? Big people are sitting firmly there—the Governor General, the governors, the commissioners and from the Viceroy down to the *patwari*. But the truth is that they have lost the power.

I am not an astrologer. The British may win or lose, but now their Empire cannot go on. But this does not mean that you will get freedom without fighting for it. Whatever we get from the British we will get through our strength. It is not a matter for rejoicing that we get Swaraj out of their weakness and we remain incompetent as before. Throughout the world the British dominated, they ruled the oceans. But nowadays aeroplanes are a powerful weapon and the power of ships has become more or less useless. It is a different matter if any one country becomes the ruler of the world by gaining victory after victory, but in the long run it is impossible for the British to remain so. The empires of the future will be consolidated empires and not empires extending far and wide. Maybe, America's empire may be formed. It is a big country. It is just possible it may be Hitler who might unite some countries and establish an empire. But it cannot be an extensive one. It is necessary that all empires come to an end, and there be a new order. When we see the British Empire crumbling it looks bad, because the falling of a big thing does look bad. The British had a position. The British Government possessed a power. Perhaps it might remain as a second power in the world. Now the British say "Lay down your life in the war." I do not understand what we will gain or lose thereby. As for the gain we do not want that an Empire which rules over us should continue and keep us enslaved. We have to take Swaraj by our strength, not by their weakness. It is an intricate problem.

What I have told relates to the British Empire. Now the ability of the British to rule and to fight has decreased. Since the beginning of

the war, what has been the British attitude towards India? They have not thought about our gain or loss. They say that they are fighting for the freedom of the world. Leave aside the talk of freedom. The British have sustained a huge loss and they will sustain a further loss, because they have behaved selfishly towards India for their own gain. They have done nothing which may show prudence of the Government. So much so that when they act wisely they show so much folly that when the actual moment arrives, an enigma is created by their thoughts and acts, which does not admit of any solution. British policy is involved in all sorts of complications and by untying one knot two are created.

Two years ago when the war began, we issued a long statement in which we mentioned our dislike for Hitler and Nazism. If the British were fighting for democracy then we were ready to help. It was not likely that we could cooperate with the British as slaves. Even if we did try it was not possible to carry the Indian public to their side. They replied, but did not concede what we demanded. Whatever statements were issued proved worthless. The way in which the reply was given, was one of insolence. It roused anger. In addition they said many new things which none can forget. Yes, Swaraj is all right but, they said, Swaraj should be such as to be agreeable to all the communities of India. Thus if four persons out of forty crores say that they do not agree, or if the British traders, seated at Calcutta,[5] who are themselves Englishmen, say that they do not like it, then how can Swaraj be given? What is all this tamasha? They are befooling us. They are taunting us.

Citizens of Bombay, the events which happened during the last eighty or ninety years in my province are not hidden from you. During the rising of 1857, the repression done there is remembered up to this day. This can be forgotten by us because to harbour enmity is not healthy. Somehow we got ready to tread on a new path, but we can move only when there is a new way. But every reply given by the British Government was such as to incite anger. And when it became impossible, the satyagraha was started. Many amongst us went to jail. Some have been

5. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce, which represented the European business community, in its letter to the press dated 8 May 1941, stated, "In our considered view the India policy of His Majesty's Government as propounded by the Viceroy on August 8, 1940, and in subsequent utterances by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State, offers India the most effective means of simultaneously advancing her war effort and her constitutional status within the Empire". The Indian Chamber of Commerce replied on 13 August 1941 that the statement of the Bengal Chamber was "tantamount to supporting the continuance of the present undesirable *status quo*."

released. Some new events happened after our release. America and Japan joined the war. Nevertheless, our main stand is the same. We do not want that Hitler should win. Our sympathy is not with him. If Hitler comes to India, he will not treat India well. The question of giving and taking freedom is not involved. We can take freedom even from him. It cannot be had from anyone in the world for the mere asking for it from someone. Some of our people say that we should not side with the British Government and that Hitler's raj is preferable. It is possible that Hitler's raj may be good and it is also possible that it may be worse. If we want to live like men, we have to face the British Government, we have to think as to how we can get Swaraj, and in case Hitler comes, then how we are to oppose him.

As regards the British Government, they have made us completely unfit for self-protection. They know that if they make us strong then we would turn them out. For this reason they weakened us and made us unfit. Now they say that Indians should help them. Today Indians are not able even to help them in any way; such is the condition we have been reduced to. But whatever the condition may be, howsoever weak we may be, we cannot tolerate that one Sahib should go out and another Sahib should come in, and that we should be his slave. It is possible that we may not be able to oppose him, militarily. On such an occasion, I am sure, there are sufficient numbers of men here who will refuse to bow their heads and obey orders. You know what Hitler has done, and what Japan has done to China. How can you cherish hopes from them? It only means that after being slaves of the British Government we should become slaves again of the new aggressor. We cannot do that, nor shall we do it. It is not an easy question.

There is no country which is not involved in the war and which is not embarrassed. Countries which are out of it are also embarrassed. Take the case of Turkey.[6] For two years she did not decide what to do and what not to do. It is right; why should the people of Turkey destroy their own country and jump into the war? But if the war does come, they are certainly brave men and will fight. Now the question is: Turkey being such a small country, how can mightier forces be faced? What has become of the army of the British today? Their army is certainly not small. But the war has got revolutionised. We require

6. In an effort to maintain neutrality in the Second World War, Turkey sought to befriend both sides. In May 1939 she signed the Anglo-Turkish Declaration of Mutual Assistance followed by the Non-Aggression Pact with France. In October a Tripartite Pact was signed between Britain, France and Turkey, though Turkey failed to secure an alliance with the U.S.S.R. In June 1941 she signed a Non-Aggression Pact with Germany.

peace. Such questions arise before every country. We should understand this and be prepared.

A great English *litterateur* has written that a very foolish and silly general won a war because the enemy was more foolish than he. Yes, he might have won. But no debating society ever won a war. What the writer of the book has written is a different thing. I may place my experience before you or may write a book, and you, in the capacity of spectators, may judge these questions. This is quite absurd. We should strengthen our *sangathan* and solve whatever questions come. After our release from jail, nothing new has taken place in India. The behaviour of the British has not changed, Mr. Amery continues to make undeserving statements. It is not a bad thing to be British. It is possible that after the establishment of democracy in this country capable British people may be employed in services. If they do not obey they will be expelled. But in the existing system even if Indian officers are appointed in place of the British, they will have no contacts with the masses. What does this mean? In the Executive Council there are Indians, but they are the henchmen of the British. The question is: in whose hands is the Government of India? Is it in the hands of the Indian public or somebody else's? There has been no change in the intention of the British Government. So long as they do not change their intention there cannot be any cooperation on our part.

Now we have to consider what arrangement we should make in our own country. You are aware of the questions which came before the Working Committee and the resolutions which were passed. Some people told me that the resolutions were not clear about the action to be taken. It is not very clear because the editors of the newspapers have started making somewhat exaggerated statements. By reading the editorials of the newspapers different meanings are inferred and this creates a wrong impression. For this reason I want to say a few things about the same.

First of all, it is a misconception that the Congress and Gandhiji have parted. People believe that during the discussions in the Congress Working Committee, there were two varied groups. Gandhiji is with us in every way. It is wrong to say that now this comradeship is not there. In the last twenty-five years the Congress has grown by pursuing the path chalked out by him and with his blessings. Mahatmaji is a tremendous force, a power, in our country. Even if we do not agree with him in any matter, how can we give up this great power? It is absurd. I have been working with him for the last twenty-five years, and have learnt a great deal from him and have discussed with him

whenever I did not understand anything. Whatever I could not understand in the course of discussions, I could never accept. Whatever decision has been taken by the Congress, the same has been taken by Mahatmaji. I do not think that I should believe in a thing with eyes closed. I regard such men as brainless who believe in anything with closed eyes. There is no difference at all between the Congress and Gandhiji. Therefore you should act according to what has been pointed out by me or by Bhulabhai Desai.[7] But I do not want you to act like illiterate idlers. We have to make this country strong, so that the people can solve major problems and grasp higher principles. Only then can democratic norms be preserved. I go and speak to the people in an endeavour to make them understand, for it is my duty that in any situation, where I have to take a stand, I should make the people understand by telling the same to them.

In respect of the real task there exists no difference between Gandhiji and the members of the Congress. Both take steps in the right direction, and there is no difference of opinion in regard to the British Government. Mahatmaji is a man of very high ideas and he follows very high principles. He wants clarity on all issues. We cannot shift from the path he has chosen. In the last twenty-two years of India's struggle, I have fully accepted the principle of nonviolence, and my belief in it grew more and more as our struggle advanced. What sort of a thing is this war? Even a mighty country like France suffered defeat. Since then my belief in the principle of ahimsa has become firmer. At first when I studied the principle of nonviolence, I accepted it only for India's struggle, but now I think it useful for all wars. When I think of politics, my first objective is India's freedom. Swaraj has been on the threshold of India for the past fifteen years. What is in store for the world, appears very difficult for a politician to spell out. Therefore if necessary I may even give up the principle of nonviolence. First we should try to tread on the path of this principle. But India cannot become timid because of nonviolence for in our eyes nothing is worse than cowardice. Mahatmaji once said, that people should fight for their rights through nonviolence, but if they failed and lost strength, they should do so with the sword. However, this question is of the future, and not what is to be done at this moment. It is possible that any time this

7. Welcoming Jawaharlal at the same meeting Bhulabhai Desai had said that it was wrong to say, that Mahatma Gandhi had abdicated or that the Working Committee and Mahatma Gandhi had come to a parting of the ways. The aim of the Congress was complete freedom and there could not be any difference with Mahatma Gandhi on this. India could not cooperate with the British as long as they were indifferent to India's demand for freedom.

question may crop up. But at present so far as India and the British Government are concerned, there is no difference between the Congress Working Committee and Gandhiji. Both are of the same view as to what is to be done. There is unanimity of views as to the path that is to be followed. That is why Mahatmaji himself has observed that we cannot say what may happen in the future. It is therefore useless to say anything just now.

What have you to do at this hour? Has satyagraha, which has been going on for so many days, been stopped? For what purpose was it started and for what reason has it been stopped? Fifteen months have passed since the Congress Working Committee adopted the resolution regarding the satyagraha, that Mahatma Gandhi be given the power to lead the Congress and India and to make them follow the right path. Accordingly, Mahatmaji showed us one path and we followed that path for fifteen months. Ever since then, whatever news were available inside the jail and outside after leaving the jail, on the basis of that we considered that we should meet. Whereupon the Working Committee meeting was held. The opinion which Mahatmaji gave, was given after the night.[8] He showed the path of wisdom and sagacity. There were occasions of considerable danger when he led us out of the same and showed us the right path. Gandhiji does not want to stop satyagraha but in view of the existing conditions he would offer it through particular persons and with less numbers.

War is nearing our frontiers. It is possible that it may reach places like the Assam Province. There Gandhiji does not want satyagraha to be carried on.[9] On such occasions satyagraha is futile. Secondly, he wants that at this time the members of the Working Committee and the people from certain provinces should not be asked to offer satyagraha. They should go further and strengthen the *sangathan*. Gandhiji does not want to send such men so that he can have consultations with them on the questions which might arise in the coming months. Nobody can say anything about his opinion as to what day he will fix for the satyagraha. The question that arises is what should be done by

8. Mahatma Gandhi had been opposing the Bardoli resolution as being against the spirit of the Bombay resolution which he interpreted to mean as Congress stand against participation in war because of its commitment to nonviolence. He gave his consent to the Bardoli resolution on 30 December 1941 in his letter to the Congress President, but asked him to relieve him of the responsibility of leading the Congress individual satyagraha.
9. On 19 December 1941, Mahatma Gandhi advised Congressmen from Assam not to offer satyagraha, as the war had approached the borders.

those who are not satyagrahis? Some of them asked the question yesterday, whether they should engage themselves in constructive work. What to do? No one can say anything about tomorrow. But the satyagrahis should devote full time to *sangathan* and those who cannot devote full time, they too should give some time. There are big tasks facing the Congress and India. Let them assist in them, in strengthening the *sangathan* by enrolling members for the Congress. In the event of war there may be hardships caused by the enemy. But the truth is that people get nervous very soon. If we do not make arrangements for that, from right now, then troubles may crop up. In Bombay if water is stopped then life may become difficult. Hence, *sangathan* is very essential.

If bombs fall from aeroplanes how should we extinguish the fire? The attitude of the Congress so far has been not to take on the responsibility of the A.R.P. But if assistance and directions have to be given as to what is to be done at the time of danger, then the instructions of the A.R.P. have to be implemented. Whatever measures the Government may undertake should not be interfered with. In one way we cannot work in conjunction with them. But our own *sangathan* can assist in the A.R.P. work.

If anybody be in trouble, or in distress, then it is your duty to help. Your *sangathan* should be an instrument for achieving freedom. During war time your *sangathan* can resist the enemy also. Through this same *sangathan* we shall be taking over the government in our own hands and for that we have to get prepared as well. Any time the government may change and we may be left wondering—"What is the matter? What has become of the government?" We may be left thinking while some undesirable elements may come and establish themselves here. For such an occasion *sangathan* has got to be strengthened. As long as we have to live, we must live like men. We have to enlist volunteers. The public needs to be advised on problems which may crop up. This work should be done *mohalla*-wise. The main task is to help in the time of emergency.

These are sufficiently important points which I have placed before you. The Provincial Congress Committee and the Bombay Congress Committee should start this work from tomorrow--every day is important, every minute is valuable. In this your help is needed. Some forty thousand persons are sitting here. I want all of you to get prepared. Those who cannot give the whole time let them give one-fourth of their time. In the streets, in the *mohallas*, anywhere they like, they can work during that time. You should certainly be prepared for *sangathan*. In Bombay within two or three days *sangathan* can be organised very easily.

a strike took place there. The action of the Government before the declaration of the strike was brutal. It was aimed at pressurising the labourers. The Government announced that the labourers could not purchase anything from any shop without ration cards when ration cards were in fact not to be issued to the Indian labourers. The other action that they took was that they stopped water. The labourers began to die of thirst. I was astonished to read this. Why did they stop water? They stopped water, and did not concede their demand. They did not give even ration cards and turned out a man from the country but not his wife and child. They were separated. This they resented. They assembled again at different places. When the authorities thought that the jail and police were ineffective, the Australian battalion was called under Australian command. But the officers of the Australian army refused to meddle into the affairs of the labourers for they had come to fight the Japanese. Then the Indian army was called. The Indian soldiers were not aware of the actual situation. Moreover soldiers of an army cannot refuse the orders and so they fired at them. Many labourers were killed, some were injured and about 300 persons were arrested. The ring leaders were sent to Calcutta. They are in Vellore Jail under D.I.R. I have told you the whole story from the beginning to the end based on a Government report. So you know what sort of treatment was meted out to the Indians in Malaya. The Indians were fired at. This is what they got for a demand which was legitimate. Since last month more than half of Malaya is under the control of the Japanese.

It is your responsibility to see that the police do not get a chance of repression and thereby gain control. It would be most unfortunate at this hour. The Congress Committee should help in keeping peace in the city of Bombay by organising the people. The reality is that the number of those who will look after arrangements is small and there is a lot of work. Your help is very necessary. You should all work unitedly.

In China the war has been going on for so many years. China would have been finished if they had not organised themselves. The big cities like Chungking are in ruins. The factories there have been destroyed. This was very easy to do. The Japanese destroyed the Chinese trade in particular to create a market for their own goods. But they proved wrong because the Chinese produced goods in each and every village. They organised cooperative societies. They started producing with their labour without machines. Now even if the enemy bombs it cannot stop production. If people want they can carry their little factories in their armpits. Wherever there is Japanese occupation, there the management remains in the hands of the Chinese. Thus the Chinese strengthened

Bombay is a big city, all sorts of people are here. The labour organisations also can do a lot.

Since the outbreak of the war prices of commodities have shot up. The labourers have been given neither any increase in wages nor any bonus. This question has been sufficiently raised. The Board appointed by the Government met and recommended to the Government that it should accept their demands.[10] I am astonished that the Board is in favour of the labourers and the recommendations of the Board are with the Government but still the demands have not been accepted. Whose fault is this? It is a matter of regret. In this way to create trouble for the labourers' wives and children and to breed ill will is to expose themselves to danger. On such an occasion ill will should be avoided. In this connection I would say that it should be the special work of the local Congress to see that the recommendations of the Board are implemented fully. Those people who create obstacles, whether they are factory-owners or big officers, should be forced to accept the demands. The duty of the residents of Bombay is that as far as possible they should do work for the people and should work unitedly.

I will tell you a true story about the Indians in Malaya,[11] who work in rubber plantations. They were fired at. It is a story of those who are poor. They wanted higher wages, at par with Chinese labourers. There was nothing improper in their demand. All planters agreed that the demand was proper. They reiterated that they would do what the Planters' Association recommended. Everyone said that the demand was just. They agreed to give more pay if all planters did the same. When the Chinese were given increments even at that time increments were not given to the Indian labourers. The Labour Commission appointed by the Government proved most inimical. The result was that

10. The Board of Conciliation, appointed by the Government of India, recommended in February 1940 that a dearness allowance at a flat rate of two annas per day be given while the war lasted to the cotton textile workers. This was to cover variations in the official cost of living index between 105 and 123. In an event of index numbers falling for any period for three consecutive months, an adjustment in the dearness allowance could be made.

11. By an agreement between India and Malaya in 1928, the Indian labourers in Malaya received 50 cents per day as the minimum wage. In 1941 Chinese labourers got one dollar 20 cents a day while the Indian labourers continued to get only 50 cents. The Indian labourers demanded a rise of 20 cents and went on strike in March-April 1941. Despite the intervention by the Central Indian Association and Government officials, the Government took no action. On May 6 1941, after the arrest of Nathan, President of the Klang District Union, there was a widespread strike which was suppressed by the Indian regiments in Malaya. The strike ended on 17 May 1941.

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their *sangathan*. This has been of great help. I think that 30 to 40 thousand such factories have been established and are outside the danger zone. We too can face the war in the same manner. Otherwise it is not possible to face it in the ordinary way. The domestic crafts should increase. It has got to be done if it is not yet done. The resolutions of the Working Committee about all issues must have reached you. In this war anything can happen. But if the Government has mismanaged, let us take the management in our hands and let all of us organise ourselves at all the places. We cannot cooperate with the Government. Those days are gone when our work could be stopped by the help of the police and the military. By augmenting trade we can give help in many ways. And let us help the labourers in their demands, let us help in the field of domestic crafts. Thus we see that by unity we can do all big works. Let us achieve big things and thereby win freedom for this vast country.

24. The Reality in India[1]

Dr. Edward Thompson is a valued friend who has stood up for India's freedom and helped to put our cause before his countrymen. His advice must command consideration. But I must say that the suggestion made in his letter to the *Daily Herald* of London[2] ignores the real situation in India. In India and elsewhere the pace of events during the past two years has made a tremendous difference to people's minds and none of us, even if we so willed, can ignore this solid background of reality. We are not functioning like the legendary ascetics but are trying to come

1. Bombay, 3 January 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 6 January 1942. This was written in reply to Edward Thompson's open letter printed in the *Daily Herald* on 1 January 1942.
2. Edward Thompson had stated that "the war has changed so greatly, that India is not a subject country providing contingents of soldiers but a principal one. If she does not stand fast, it is hard to see how the whole eastern half world can stand fast." While praising the Indian soldiers, he said that only "fascist victory can prevent the Indians emerging from the struggle as a sovereign people." He requested the Congress to change its policy with regard to the war. The British Government had acknowledged India's right to full control of her affairs and the Indian statesmen should take independent action and join the war effort like "brave men in many lands who are giving all they have and not for their own cause alone."

to grips with the reality of today and the coming reality of tomorrow. It is the British Government which lives in the yesterdays that are no more. Not only in India but in regard to every thing else they stick to the old ruts as the world advances and changes leaving them behind. Just as war today requires novel and aggressive tactics in order to be effective, even more so do the other major problems of today and the picture of the peace that we hanker after require novel and aggressive methods and a capacity to take risks. It is not enough to be on the defensive and seek to maintain the old and the out of date for that is already doomed. To stick to it is to catch the infection of decay.

Dr. Thompson advises us to ignore the British Government and go ahead. This sounds very brave but it is not clear what it means in terms of the present. As far as I can see a country cannot go ahead in the way it desires so long as that country is bound hand and foot by an authoritarian government. Every effort that it makes brings it into conflict with the Government. Full freedom is essential for it to function effectively.

It appears that there is a great deal of misapprehension in the London press[3] in regard to the Bardoli resolution and it is imagined that there has been a break with Mahatma Gandhi. There has been and can be no break with him for he represents the mind and heart of our people as no one else can. We may differ from him as we have done in the past in regard to particular matters but we are proud of him and his leadership and the bonds that tie us to him are not going to snap.

3. The *Daily Telegraph* carried the headlines, "Mr. Gandhi Abdicates—Congress Support for Britain", the *Daily Mail* announced, "Mr. Gandhi Split with Indian Congress", the *Evening News* said, "Mr. Gandhi sacked as 'Gesture', India may now join Empire War Effort."

25. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
January 5, 1942

My dear Bapu,

I arrived here last night. The events at Bardoli have naturally made me, as others, think furiously. I do earnestly hope that by the time we

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

meet at Wardha a satisfactory way out will be found, pleasing to you and to others. It is too sad that at this critical juncture there should be anything leading to confusion in the public mind. I hope to reach Wardha on the 11th evening and to present myself at the Ashram the next day.

In drawing your programme for the journey from Wardha to Benares, I should like you to consider the advisability of breaking journey for a few hours at Allahabad, then taking a more convenient train. This might save you a night's discomfort and arrival at Benares at a very inconvenient hour at night. This is not meant to trouble you in any way in Allahabad where few persons need know about it, but solely in the interest of your comfort and convenience. Possibily I might travel with you from Wardha as I intend going to Benares also.

Indu is in Bombay and will probably reach Wardha about the same time as I do.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

26. The Bardoli Resolution[1]

I entirely agree with the resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee at Bardoli. Since the Working Committee passed it at Bardoli a fortnight ago, so much has been said about it that there remains little for me to add. Many persons have interpreted the resolution and raised their objections, which absolutely have no connection with the resolution itself. The resolution was criticized in one of the districts of the United Provinces. The persons who discussed the resolution could not explain why they objected to it. It is the general impression that there were wire-pullings behind the resolution. There is nothing in the resolution with which any member of the A.I.C.C., whatever his views, can disagree.

1. Speech on moving the resolution at the A.I.C.C., Wardha, 15 January 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 16 January 1942, *National Herald*, 16 January 1942, and also from Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India. For the text of the resolution see *ante*, item 18.

Some confusion, however, has arisen from Mahatma Gandhi's letter to the Congress President and the Working Committee's resolution relieving Mahatma Gandhi of the responsibility of leading the satyagraha movement. Recently frequent references have been made to the differences and 'groups' in the Working Committee[2] and with one of the alleged groups my name has also been associated. I may tell you in confidence that there are not three but fifteen groups. Each individual member of the Working Committee forms a group and such differences are necessary for progress. There are differences between me and Rajaji. He has been emphasising other points of the resolution.[3] I am, however, proud to move the resolution which will be seconded by Rajagopalachari.

The British administration has been modelled on the lines of the rule of Hitler. The political prisoners have been released, but this has not changed the spirit or the essence of the British administration. Time has passed when India had to be seen through London's eyes. At this stage the talk of coming to terms with the British Government is out of the question.

The question before me is how my country will be free. The instrument for securing this end are the millions of Indians. The idea that I should go begging at the doors of Englishmen for the freedom of the country does not arise at all. I thought that the eyes of Englishmen would open at least at this hour of great calamity. In our country there is indignation in the heart of every Indian against the British. In U.P. the eyes of every cultivator become red with anger when he thinks of the events which took place in 1857. In 1857 the rivers flowed with blood. I thought that the eyes of Englishmen would open. We see every day how inefficiently they are fighting this war. It is impossible that the problem of India would be solved by Englishmen.

2. Mahatma Gandhi, in his statement of 30 December 1941, had stated that the Working Committee had expressed its readiness to open its door for participation in the war but had not stated the terms on which that door could be opened. He could not participate in any war because of nonviolence. There were three schools of thought in the Working Committee: "A minority party believing in non-participation on the ground of nonviolence pure and simple. The other believing that the Congress should not carry nonviolence to the point of refusing association in the war under any circumstances; and there is the third which has many reasons almost as strong as the decisive reason of nonviolence guiding the minority."

3. Rajagopalachari, at the Madras District Political Conference on 4 January 1942, stated that if the British "entrusted the Indians with the defence of the country and other necessary powers, Congress will not shirk responsibility. This is the gist of the Bardoli resolution." In his view, the Bardoli resolution only sought a categorical promise of independence and a provisional settlement.

The rule of the British is marked by a tendency to lower India and the Congress in the eyes of the public. Britain wants that India should be ruined. A compromise may be possible between Britain and Hitler. It is however impossible that slave India would try to come to a compromise with the British. Whatever calamities may befall India, she will never bow to Britain. Maybe free India might throw her weight on the side of those countries with whom Britain may be in agreement but that does not mean a settlement with Britain. She lost her opportunity of a settlement with India two and a half years ago.

Some people are talking about returning to parliamentary activity.[4] The whole idea is ridiculous. Who knows what will happen in the next six months? In the face of these uncertain conditions our real work lies in the country—the organising of every province, town, village and ward for every eventuality, raising volunteers to preserve order and protect the people. There is plenty of work to do. The constructive programme will keep our hands full preparing the country to be self-sufficient.

4. Satyamurti, presiding over the Madras District Political Conference on 4 January 1942, stated that in these critical and abnormal times, the Congress should capture every position of power and use them so as to enforce the acceptance of the "natural demand" by the Government and intensify the struggle for the freedom of the country.

27. Violence and Nonviolence[1]

It is a wrong tendency to be carried away by slogans and catchwords. So far as I can see, Communists,[2] Socialists,[3] and Gandhiites are equally

1. Speech at the A.I.C.C., Wardha, 16 January 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 17 January 1942.
2. Radhabai Subbarayan moved an amendment on behalf of the Communist Party emphasising the need for the Congress and India to align themselves with the "noble, fine and progressive" forces of the world.
3. On behalf of the Congress Socialist Party, Farid Ansari moved an amendment urging the development in the country of a national authority competent to watch the interests of the people, and asserted that steps should be taken to convene a constituent assembly with a view to creating in the country both the atmosphere and sanction necessary for asserting India's right to play her role in changing the world.

victims to this tendency. Socialism or Communism never meant application of abstract theories based on experiences of Western countries without regard to conditions in India. The suggestion of the Congress Socialists to convene a constituent assembly is, in my opinion, impracticable at this juncture, although I believe that ultimately a constituent assembly alone can decide the fate of India.

I fail to understand the attitude of those who talk of "hundred per cent nonviolence"[4] but tolerate the present economic and social structure based on violence and injustice and hope to build up a new structure by means of bringing about a mental change among the capitalist and propertied classes. I disagree with Babu Rajendra Prasad and his friends who said that they did not want that type of freedom which England and America were having. I, for one, will any day accept that type of freedom, imperfect though it is, and would then try to remedy the defects and build up a new structure of society which will be free from periodical wars and the use of violence.

4. Rajendra Prasad, making a statement on behalf of those Congressmen who believed in nonviolence, stated, "It is politically wrong in our opinion to involve the country in war at this time. We wish that India should not be in this war and on the present occasion also in the least relax its hold on the principles of Ahimsa." He asserted that since the resolution did not call upon taking up arms they would not resign from the Working Committee.

28. Congress and the War[1]

In this town of yours, some big problems were discussed during the last two or three days. I do not know how many persons had the opportunity of listening to the discussions. Many must have read about them in newspapers. I cannot say whether there has been any effect of these discussions on students. We generally fail to bring the thoughts to the common people.

You want Swarajya, but you cannot afford to give up doing your daily work. But politics is a thing which interests you even though you are

1. Address at Gandhi Chowk, Wardha, 18 January 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 19 January 1942, and also from Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

engrossed in your daily activities. Politics is like a war. It dominates every household. No one can keep aloof from it. When one slave country is ruled by another country, there is a fight, because the slave country wants to become free. If that country does not do so, that is, does not want to become free, it is like a corpse. If the leaders give up the idea of attaining freedom, it can be said that the country has become dead. The British rule has been in existence in India for a sufficiently long period to make her millions lifeless. Still there were a sufficient number of people who always fought for freedom and who have kept the country alive. This fight cannot stop until foreign rule ends.

About ten or fifteen days ago, there were rumours that Gandhiji has separated himself from the Congress. This is not true. His views on the present situation are before you. India has changed so much during the last twenty years by Gandhiji's efforts. It is impossible for the Congress to leave Gandhiji.

Students should study politics and current events and be prepared to play their part well in the national struggle and in national reconstruction like the British students who today have left their studies in order to defend their motherland.

Do not run away when villages and towns are being bombed, but help the victims and conduct them to safe places and face any eventuality courageously. Do not get panicky as it weakens our morale as it did in the case of Holland, Belgium and France which surrendered in spite of big armies. Stand at the duty post. Organize volunteer and other organizations. Strengthen the Congress, secure the help of non-Congressmen for meeting the imminent crisis which is approaching owing to the Japanese menace. Increase your strength for fighting the enemy and for winning freedom by peaceful and nonviolent means. You can do work only if you try to do it. A carpenter has to work with instruments which are useful in his craft. A politician has to deal with men. The Students Federation passed a resolution condemning individual satyagraha.[2] This was improper. Instead of indulging in this wild talk, they should themselves have practised satyagraha.

Institutions have to be run on certain principles. There is no need to be nervous. Students have to face the problems of their country. They cannot keep themselves aloof from the satyagraha. A flowing stream carries water which has life-giving properties. If a portion of the stream separates itself from the mainstream it loses its identity.

2. The All India Students Federation, presided over by Hiren Mukerjee on 26 December 1940 at Nagpur, characterized the individual satyagraha as waiting for terms from British imperialism and urged mass struggle.

If we bow to the British we shall become useless. As a result of the noncooperation for twenty years the strength of the country has increased. Britain may be losing the present war. But this does not mean that our actions should please the Germans or the Japanese. Our principle should be not to bow to any nation. Our struggle against the British has taught us that we cannot bow to any power. France had to surrender because the people there had a slavish mentality. We cannot afford to develop that mentality.

We have to face new problems resulting from the war. The prices of foodstuffs are shooting up. Shops were recently looted in the Madras Presidency. Many trains have been stopped. In two or three months it will be impossible to transport goods from one place to another. We have to organise ourselves, and find a way out of these difficulties. There are many people who say that by joining the army, we can serve our people. I myself want everybody to learn how to use a gun. I am however of opinion that to enlist in the British army is to invoke slavery.

29. Mahatma Gandhi and Swaraj[1]

Once more I stand before you to tell you some very important facts about our mother country. I want to tell you very frankly that it is quite difficult for anyone to give a satisfactory answer to the important questions of the present day. All over the world blood is being shed, mighty nations are falling and large armies are marching and bringing ruin on the mankind. It would not be proper on such an occasion for any nation to play the role of a disinterested spectator.

People ask, and rightly too, what should they do? I think I can answer this question very satisfactorily and easily. But if anybody asks me what will happen after a month or two I will not be able to answer that question, and I think no one else shall be able to do so. After six months, or after a longer period, British imperialism may come to an end. If your endeavours and relentlessness are a cause of its downfall you would be justified in your cheers, but if it falls because of its own weakness we shall have no right to cheer, for we would have played no

1. Speech at the 16th session of the Benares Political Conference, 23 January 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

role in its fate. We should therefore see the problems in correct perspective before we take a new step. We have to face the facts whether we like them or not.

If there are many among you who say that they have nothing to do with political affairs except to attend meetings from time to time, look at their leaders and hear their speeches, or if you say that you are too busy with your domestic affairs or in your businesses or professions to pay attention to other things, then you are keeping aloof from what is happening in the world. Do you think that in any country of Europe and Asia where war is going on, as in Russia and China, any businessman can claim not to be concerned with political affairs at all, and say that he has only to run his business? This can never happen. War surrounds him from all sides, bombs fall on his head also, armies march near him, all his business is upset, and he has to thank his stars if his life is spared. This is not the situation in our country as yet but no one can guarantee against its possibility.

Whether this is possible or not, our country has been caught in the vicious circle in which the whole world has already fallen. At this juncture with cool heads and without the least confusion we should decide about our actions. Holding meetings in districts, delivering speeches or passing resolutions will do no good unless we undertake practical work. Holding meetings gives us a chance to assemble and think over certain problems. But we have to find our own way and work accordingly. If in the meetings we only deliver speeches and then go home, the real work that we have to do will remain undone. Our deeds, our meetings and our revolutionary slogans become ineffective and we become so worthless that we lag far behind the other countries of the world.

The present-day world is a free world and every individual, nation, community and country is recognised as being on the same level. Making noise and shouting slogans do not add any weight to the present-day world. Great deeds, enthusiasm and courage give weight to it. I want that in this session which is being held under the presidentship of Balkrishna Sharma we should consider and decide what we have to do at this time.

The All India Congress Committee, after paying due consideration to this question, has placed before the country a few fundamental principles on which everyone should act. Not only Congress workers or satyagrahis who courted imprisonment but even four-anna members of the Congress should act in accordance with them. The people also should know what they have to do because it is they who constitute the country. 40 to 50 lakhs of ordinary members are enrolled in the Congress registers but actually the number of the Congress members is in crores. Apart from the members who are enrolled in the Congress registers there

are men and women who sympathise with the Congress aims or look at the Congress as a great organisation of the country, which is leading them toward freedom and independence. There are also those who are well-wishers of the Congress and acknowledge its services. It is true that any increase in the number of the members of the Congress will add to the strength of this organisation. But at this time our words and messages are meant not only for the Congress members but for all the people of India because the Congress and its members alone are not concerned with them. It is a question of 40 crores of men and women of India. Whatever decisions are taken, each and every individual should act upon them, and should act promptly because nobody knows whether after two, four or six months, you will get an opportunity to act at all. If you waste time and do not avail of this opportunity, you will not be able to rise to the occasion.

As I told you just now, the A.I.C.C. meeting was held at Wardha. It was a big panchayat of the Congress, and, as it generally happens on such occasions, discussions took place. During the Wardha meeting discussions were also going on in the press. Having read these, many of you must have been worried about the controversies in the Congress. What was the difference over which there was a dispute between Mahatma Gandhi and other Congressmen? There were misunderstandings, and rumours were spread which worried everyone. You were in the dark so you were anxious. Why was it so? All of us should pursue one and the same path according to the decision reached after discussion. We must maintain our organisation. We must cooperate with one another in spite of differences in our views. We should abide by the decision of the panchayat which is, in other words, a decision of the masses, and therein lies our strength. If we cannot do this, and if every man pursues his own course and organises fifty or ten or twenty parties, howsoever wise and prudent we may be, our strength will be shattered and our strong organisation will be weakened. If there is a split in the front ranks of the Congress or among its prominent leaders, what will the helpless masses do? Many people misunderstood and thought that Mahatmaji had severed his connection with the Congress. Everyone knows that if that were true we would be handicapped in our work. But all these were the views of the press which were exaggerated and misleading. I warn you not to fall in their trap.

You know that the Congress has gained much strength during the last twenty-two years. It is now only fifty-seven years old. But in the last twenty-two years it has become a powerful organisation and has gained great popularity among the masses, that is, among the cultivators, workers, petty businessmen and other artisans. Its power has also increased.

How and why did it increase? Who has done all this? You are aware of it. There is no need to tell it. It was all done by Mahatma Gandhi. He gave a new garb to the Congress, taught new methods and showed a new way to it. We, the millions of men and women of India, followed him and under his leadership we advanced ahead. Our power also increased and as compared to the past, when our backs were bent and our heads hung low, our backs became straightened, our heads are now held high and we have gained courage. While formerly we were afraid of saying the feelings of our own hearts into our own ears, we can now say them openly and loudly. Why should we not say what is in our minds and hearts? If we want to make our country free why should we not say so loudly and work for the organisation which would create a new world for us and which has already made us take a big step forward in this world? Whatever we have done in this world we have learnt from Mahatma Gandhi. Under the circumstances how can we think of Gandhiji leaving the Congress? All these are idle talks; do not be misguided by them. He has made the Congress, he cannot leave it.

It is right that when intricate problems arise, it becomes our duty, on whom the responsibility rests, to give our considered advice and to find a way out. It is our duty to hold on to our own views and support them vigorously, and to point out the weaknesses of any advice which we consider to be wrong. But the final decision reached by the panchayat must be accepted by all, because till now the power of the masses or that of the Congress or of any other organisation has increased only in this manner. If we follow a path blindly, howsoever great a leader might have shown that path, we cannot make any progress because ultimately weakness creeps in. When people say to me that Mahatmaji is a great leader, he will win Swaraj for us and will do away with all our miseries and troubles, it does not appeal to me in the least. The people who say so, do not tax their brain. Of course, he can do everything all alone. Why should we then exert ourselves? This is quite wrong. All of us have to undertake the journey to Swarajya. Had Mahatmaji undertaken this journey alone, he would have reached the goal long ago. You have to traverse the way on your own legs and unless your legs are strong enough, Mahatmaji cannot carry you there. He himself or some other people, who follow in his footsteps, can reach there. Therefore it is necessary that we and the masses should also understand these problems. Yes, there may be occasions when on certain questions there may be a difference of opinion with Mahatmaji. But the question is that all of us should accept the decision arrived at by the panchayat.

Mahatmaji is a great man; what can I say about him? But I want to tell you particularly about the recent meeting held at Wardha, how it

was conducted and what decisions were arrived at the meeting. When he saw that there was a difference of opinion in the ranks of the Congress, he exerted his full influence in order to make sure that the Congress went united on its way.[2] We gave due consideration to all the points raised and have emerged stronger than before. The resolution was passed by the A.I.C.C. and all of us were united and everyone was ready to follow the same path. Do not be misguided that there was any friction. It is possible there may be a difference of opinion and also discussions, so much so that the issue may have to be put before the people, but there cannot be two opinions on the fundamental principles. Anyone who is in the least connected with the Congress cannot differ on them. This is the first thing that you should understand.

The other thing, at which you must be wondering, is why the satyagraha offered till recently has now been suspended. What does it mean? You know that Mahatmaji had started individual satyagraha movement. Had he allowed mass satyagraha, lakhs of people would have offered satyagraha in our province and it would have stirred the whole province. But after considering all the circumstances, he did not think it advisable and selected only a few individuals for the satyagraha campaign. I myself am of the opinion that, considering the world situation and the situation of our own country and also many of the hard battles that are ahead, and for which we have to be ready, whatever Mahatmaji did then, was in the fitness of things, and we have benefited by it. Had he then asked to launch mass satyagraha movement, I have no doubt that we would have done it with all enthusiasm; but our aim was to preserve our national strength so that we could fight with all our strength in the battles to come. Had we not done so, we would not have maintained our strength and its ultimate result would not have been good. But in this connection other people have also expressed their opinions. I, too, want to express my opinion before you.

Inside and even outside the jail I held the opinion that the nonviolent way in which the "individual satyagraha" was carried on was correct, leaving aside a few points which are debatable. Considering the present and past conditions that satyagraha was right. Why has it been suspended then? Not because there were differences about it among the people but the reason for its suspension was that a more responsible work

2. Mahatma Gandhi, in his speech at the A.I.C.C. on 15 January 1942, recommended that the Bardoli resolution of the Working Committee be accepted by the A.I.C.C., and asserted that despite the fact that "India's participation in any war before the attainment of complete independence is to undo the work of the past twenty years", he wanted the resolution to be passed since it "reflects the Congress mind."

than merely going to jail confronted us. For most of the people it is a hard job to go to jail, but for many others it has become just an ordinary affair. They are always prepared to go to jail. However, to go to jail has no significance in the modern world. Under the instructions of the Congress millions of people, on whose support the Congress stands, are prepared to go to jail. But considering the burden of the present responsibility we should give up such tendencies and begin the task that we have been asked to do. It was this that Mahatma Gandhi thought. Considering the conditions he may again launch individual satyagraha movement, and responsible people, in their provinces, districts, *mandals*, or wherever they may be, should guide the public that seeks guidance from them. They should not at present go to jails for they have to show the right path to the public. Even now Mahatmaji wants to continue anti-war satyagraha.[3] But individual satyagraha movement is not of much importance. For this reason Mahatmaji took this decision at Bardoli.

At present there is panic in certain provinces, like Assam, Bengal, and in the city of Calcutta. In the city of Calcutta people are worried. They are greatly perturbed about the possibility of being bombed from the air. In such a condition if we go and ask them to launch satyagraha against the British Government, it will not carry weight. At this time we have got to support them. If they are worried we have to dispel their worries. In such a state of affairs if 100 or 400 people offer satyagraha nobody will seriously pay any attention to them, because people are expecting an air attack. Even so, the satyagraha movement was not suspended on the ground that people had divided opinions about it. It was suspended because the object was to show to the world that though we are not participating in this war, we have to organise ourselves to face bravely the dangers that lie ahead. Whether the bombs fall, or internal disturbances occur, we should be able to serve the people, protect them, and teach them how to protect themselves. For us these things have become important. They are no longer trifles. It does not matter much if they appear trifles in the resolution. Behind them lies a long history and we have got to implement them even if we have to go to jails. At present we should carry on the Congress work but if we are arrested we shall go to jails with pleasure.

3. Mahatma Gandhi, in his statement of 7 January 1941, stated that civil disobedience in the sense in which it was launched earlier was not likely to be revived on behalf of the Congress till the war had ended. He proposed to restart the *Harijan* and to carry on propaganda against the war. If this right was not conceded he would launch token civil disobedience.

Now what is the situation? Just now a kisan brother called out from the back that prices have gone up and that I alone can check them. Well, prices have increased but I cannot do much to control them. It is beyond my power. The Government of the country alone can do it. But it is futile to look upon the Government of the country which is good for nothing. But we can do something—of course we can. At this time the difficulties of the people are increasing. After two or three months, they will grow further because the movement of goods to big cities from other countries or from other cities and the countryside, is by and by slowing down. Even in the countryside people have become dependent upon outside goods. Not only will the import of foreign goods decrease, but movement of domestic goods will also be stopped, because of the reduction in the number of trains. Restrictions have been imposed upon us even on the occasion of *Magh Mela*.[4] Tickets for Allahabad or for Kashi are not being issued. The reason is that many railway carriages and railway lines have been removed and sent to Iraq and Iran for military use, which has resulted in a shortage here. The number of the remaining trains has also decreased because many of them are engaged in transporting goods and ammunition to the theatres of war.[5] The number of goods and passenger trains is decreasing every day, and perhaps it will further decrease. Consequently the goods coming from other provinces and from foreign countries will also go on decreasing. This has led to trade difficulties. Kisans, too, who are dependent on goods from outside are affected. And so will be the case with those who live in cities. What shall we do when this difficulty arises? Just see what is happening in Andhra and in Madras Presidency where foodshops and grainshops are being looted. What else can hungry people do? What can we say to them? In certain cities the graindealers have hoarded the grain in order to earn greater profit when the prices increase. I wish to remind these dealers that trade of course means making profits. But if at the present time of crisis they choose

4. Under the Defence of India Rules a ban was imposed on railway travel for "the purpose of taking part in the *Kumbh Mela*" from 4 January to 4 February 1942.
5. Sir Andrew Clow, Communications Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, stated on 15 November 1941: "three large workshops have been handed over for war supplies and a considerable amount of the capacity in others was turned over to meeting the demands of the armed forces, over 13,000 men in railway workshops are working on munitions... Railway tracks have been sent overseas or taken to meet defence demands within India...for far-flung lines of defence about 200 locomotives and over 10,000 other vehicles with ancillary equipment have been handed over."

to hoard for speculative profits and leave the masses to face severe miseries they will be doing an unwise and improper act because they may have to part with the grain even without any price. Therefore for their own good and for the good of the masses, they should not hoard any stock, and should go on selling it at reasonable rates. But even this alone will not suffice, I know.

As a matter of fact we should concentrate fully on cottage and village industries. Big industry alone cannot satisfy our needs. Factory goods are transported by railways which are gradually decreasing. Moreover, in times of war, it has been proved that big factories can be destroyed by bombs, and it requires a long time and a heavy expenditure to rebuild them. In China, when big factories were destroyed, the Chinese had to concentrate with great vigour on village and cottage industries not because Mahatma Gandhi had laid down this principle. It was not their principle. But they were forced to adopt it because of the exigencies of the war.

Noise has started again. Please sit down! Just think that disturbance has been caused because of a clash among the Indians themselves. This is our attitude. Can we still hope to become soldiers? We simply indulge in the empty talk that our organisation is gaining strength. A gathering of thirty thousand people constitutes a great force, yet twenty persons can create a disturbance! But if we have got the power to stop them and if we stick to our work they will not have the courage to create any disturbance.

The condition of our educated boys and girls is peculiar. They have cultivated a hobby of securing autographs in small notebooks. Whenever I go to some place for any work a number of autograph books are placed before me, and they shout 'first on my book, please'. I do not have ten or twelve hands so as to sign simultaneously on all the books. I do not mind giving my autograph but people should come at proper time and at leisure. They do not care to see what I am doing, whether I am attending a meeting or talking to some person. At all times books are thrust before my nose or eyes. It is not a question of giving or not giving the autograph, it is the question of our boys and girls learning discipline. Everybody wants his book to be signed first, so as to have a special relation with me and to do him a special favour. This is wrong. If you develop this habit in other matters of your life, you will not be able to work in cooperation, and there will always be indiscipline.

Similarly, you go to a railway booking office to purchase tickets. In other countries people stand in a queue behind one another and get the tickets one by one. In this manner everyone gets his ticket and no one is delayed. But what happens here is that everybody stands at the

window and begins to push others and wants to get in and procure a ticket first, no matter whether the person who came first got it or not. Everyone is anxious to get a ticket for himself only. Thus in fact instead of getting the ticket earlier everyone is delayed. These are not trifles for they count. If an organisation does not possess these qualities, it cannot be a strong one and we cannot achieve anything. If an enemy bomber drops a bomb at this meeting what will you do? Think beforehand. We might be called upon to face it. If a bomb is dropped at the meeting it is possible that it might kill ten or twenty persons, You may get panicky and yourself kill some two to four hundred persons in a stampede. To become panicky shows your weakness and amounts to inviting the enemy to come and put an end to you. You have to learn and educate others that nothing should perturb them under any circumstances. If by chance such a situation does arise you should be prepared to take action. You should not be led away by the heat of the moment for that may be harmful. Especially our volunteers, who are supposed to be present on such occasions, should also understand it well. The crowd cannot be controlled by running up and down. This work cannot be done by shouting under the pretext of management. On such occasions, directions should not be given by words but by signals and if the signals also do not serve the purpose, one should remain quiet.

Thus at present the most important work before us is to strengthen our organisation and extend it to villages in such a manner that whatever may happen, bombs may fall or food or water supplies may be stopped, or thieves or dacoits may come, or there may be dissensions or riots, we should be able to control the situation and put up a strong resistance.

How can the Congress organisation be extended to villages? In every village, in every *mohalla* or part thereof, in every city there should be at least one responsible person who should be in a position to take full charge of ten, twenty or fifty houses and be in touch with them, give them every kind of information and extend help when it is needed. We should organise ourselves in this way. There is no doubt that Congress workers in their villages are responsible for all that happens there. At the time of a local Congress organisational election everyone becomes a worker but on other occasions they do nothing. It is easy to fill up the membership form of the Congress once in a year. They do not feel any difficulty in doing so. But for the rest of the year they are not active. We do not need these idle workers any more. Now only genuine and intelligent workers are required. Today they have to do very responsible work. If they cannot fulfil their responsibilities they should leave. And if they do not leave voluntarily they will be forced to do so. We

cannot afford to have workers who are irresponsible and frivolous. Merely sitting on a big platform and doing nothing will not do any good.

We need committed and active workers in every village and city. They will be responsible for ten or twenty houses. In villages they will be responsible for their respective villages. They will have to send weekly reports about the difficulties of the people. We should enlist active volunteers in hundreds in every village and city who in times of danger should protect not only themselves but the people at large. They will not be sent outside or required to wear uniforms or badges. We will not ask them to do parades. But our only object is that they should be available in villages and cities to render whatever service they can with public cooperation. We want to form such an organisation, and if we succeed in doing so in every district and every village of the Province, we shall be able to face any crisis. Whatever the atrocities, whatever disturbances may take place, whatever else may happen, we can very well stop them through these volunteers.

Through this organisation we have also to propagate the constructive programme of the Congress. You must have heard a great deal about this constructive programme. It is to develop cottage and village industries. But at present you have to look at these questions from the point of view of the war. You have heard what I have just said in this connection. The importance of it has considerably increased. You will not get food and clothes if you do not develop cottage and village industries. These have become a necessity. People in towns may not be able to carry out this work fully, but you should do it as far as possible. You have also to purchase village products so that village industries can develop. As the import of foreign goods is slowly decreasing their substitutes should be manufactured here. Also, you should not get alarmed in any circumstances. Big questions are confronting us and the world. It will be cowardice to escape them. It will produce no result.

I want to place before you one or two points more. One of them is connected with this war. From the very beginning it has been our policy that we are not in favour of Nazism or fascism. Since long before the outbreak of the present war we have been against them. You might be aware that a little before the outbreak of the war I had gone to China to convey a message of sympathy from India to the Government and the people of China and we had also protested against the Japanese aggression in China. We have had a consistent foreign policy for years and we made it clear in the course of a statement at the outbreak of the war. You are all aware of these and I do not want to repeat them. As far as the question of giving help in this war is concerned, we cannot cooperate because we do not want to participate in this war

in the capacity of slaves. We said, give us freedom first and then we will consider the question. But they turned a deaf ear to it. In the end we started satyagraha movement and courted arrest. The British on the other hand want to keep us like slaves and do not want to make any change in our status. In view of this our former decision is further justified.

Now the question is what has led to the decision taken at Bardoli and Wardha? Some people have misunderstood it. I would like to explain that although the satyagraha has been suspended, the reason for its suspension has no connection with the Government. We have not suspended it to please or displease the Government. Its reason is quite different. But our attitude towards the war is the same as per our decision at Bombay. There has been no change in it. In Wardha and Bardoli also our policy remained the same. No one should have any misunderstanding about it. However, it is right to consider what should be our future course of action in view of the fact that the war is coming nearer to India. But as the war is approaching our borders, should we therefore accept slavery of the British, join the army, work for recruitment and collect money from the poor in order to spend it uselessly on fat salaries? This is nonsense. We will not bow our heads before the British rule, we will not cooperate and we will not march along with the British on the frontiers of India or anywhere else.

A big revolution is taking place all over the world, and India too cannot escape from it. We can consider the question of coming to some settlement with the British Government. We are prepared to consider proposals for this. There has never been any restriction in politics to consider any matter. The door of negotiations is always open. It is never closed. I do not want a drastic change in the world or a change of government in Britain. We do not want all this. But as slaves we cannot consider any proposal for compromise. But the position changes if we are to negotiate as a free nation. In free India it would be the public which will decide whether we have to come to a settlement with the British Government or not. But it is impossible to have any settlement with them at present. The Indian public and particularly the Congress can never approve of this. India can never forget the treatment meted out to her and the Congress. The British might well think that by doing so we have acted cunningly. The attempt which has been made to create differences among us, the various obstacles which have been put in our way, might hamper us to some extent. But it is impossible that they would worry us much. We will not climb the mountain that they have raised between themselves and us, they might come to us by crossing it, if they like to do so.

Our policy in connection with the war has not changed. It cannot change because we cannot do anything else but resist the British enslavement. I cannot say what will be the result of this war. Whatever the result may be, we will look to our own organisation and depend on our own courage rather than spread our hands before anybody. If we are organised, we need not fear and if we lack organisation and courage, we will ever remain fallen and slaves of others.

It is being said that Japan and Germany would come. This is what some people say. Their minds are obsessed with slavery. They think of all this but do not think that whosoever is against our freedom we shall fully oppose him. Why should I doubt that we will not be able to face him successfully? I ask you, what you and I would do, if per chance, besides the British, the armies of other countries like Japan or Germany come to India? I tell you and I am confident as to what the Congress would do. We might not be able to put up armed resistance but we will never bow our heads before them and the Congress will resist them in the sense that it will not accept their rule. Also remember that martial law comes along with invading armies. Martial law does not mean that you offer satyagraha and get imprisonment for six months or a year. Martial law means that a man is court-martialled even for disobeying ordinary orders. Order is given to shoot him down. I presume that Congressmen will be prepared even for this. But we will never bow our heads before any foreign army or government. Our struggle is not against any country. Our sympathies are with China and Russia, although we may or may not agree with all their principles. I will be very sorry if Russia or China is defeated.

All these things are there but what course is to be adopted by the whole country and how can we raise our voice for the freedom of the world? But neither can we tread the path of helping the Government in the capacity of slaves nor are we prepared to do so under threats or coercion. This can never be.

In the end I will tell you that the time is gone when the settlement could be made with this party or that. Now India will be free and only then these things will be considered. The only work, at present before us, is that we should very quickly organise ourselves in villages. Many important things have been told to you in this connection and many more will be conveyed to you. You should enlist volunteers and establish their organisations in every village and *mohalla* not only with a view to opposing the Government or offering satyagraha, but to end the disputes in the villages and to face the difficulties of the war. You should carry on the constructive programme. These are the works, which should be done not only by the Congress workers but by every

individual in the country, as everybody can do them. Boys, students all can do them. We are engaged in the preparation of a big task. By accomplishing it we would increase our strength, strengthen our organisation and when the time for doing great work comes, we would find ourselves quite equal to the occasion.

We are in the middle of an ocean and whether we want it or not, we have to go across. Now if we have strength in our arms we can swim across and if we do not have strength in our arms, we will be drowned then and there.

30. To C. Rajagopalachari[1]

Allahabad
January 26, 1942

My dear Rajaji,

I have been reading the reports of your speeches given in the newspapers.[2] Some parts of these have distressed me. You have no doubt every right to express your own opinion. But I do think that the emphasis you give to certain aspects and the general approach is not in keeping with the opinion of the great majority in the A.I.C.C. or even the Working Committee. Consequently many people here are rather upset at some of the reports of your speeches. It is unbecoming for me or any other member of the Working Committee to enter into a public argument with you. Yet even avoiding that, it is inevitable that what we say should not fit in with what you say.

I should like to make it clear that I am not challenging your right to say what you have said. But a continuous approach to the British

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In a statement on 21 January 1942, Rajagopalachari stated that the entry of Japan and Russia into the war had made it morally more easy for the Congress to offer its cooperation, and had also made the transfer of full control and the declaration of India's status more urgently necessary. In a speech on the next day he asserted that people could defend their country effectively only "when patriotism or love of motherland was completely equated with defence. It was only if the deadlock was quickly solved, that we would have efficient defence for this country; otherwise it would be only a question of marking time."

Government, even though this might be subject to the conditions laid down by the Congress, makes people think that behind all our resolutions there is a more definite invitation to the British Government and that something in the nature of a compromise is being worked out. This approach again leads people to the conclusion that some arrangement will be arrived at. They do not therefore worry themselves about the organisational or the constructive programme of the Congress; nor do they think much about developing their own strength to face the crisis ahead. A feeling of doubt and uncertainty fills the minds of people making them incapable of effective action.

You told me that whatever your wishes were in the matter, you see no chance whatever of any compromise between the British Government and Indian nationalism. If that is so, and I agree with you entirely that it is so, then there is no point in emphasizing the desirability of such compromise which can only lead people's minds astray. For my part, I think it is much too late for any real compromise to take place, for the very minimum conditions on our part are far beyond what the British Government might do. I think there can be nothing more dangerous than our being saddled with responsibility without complete power. Complete power is inconceivable in the present and partial power will make our position worse.

Your references to the Muslim League[3] more or less on same terms as the Congress also seem to me to be unhappy. This gives a fillip to the dwindling fortunes of the League and irritates large numbers of Congressmen and others.

I have ventured to write to you frankly because I know you will appreciate frankness on my part. I have also of course only hinted at what I had in my mind but you will understand.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. In his interview to the Associated Press on 2 January 1942, Rajagopalachari claimed that all shades of opinion welcomed the Bardoli resolution. Even the Muslim League was ready to participate in the war effort if it shared power in the Centre and provinces with other parties within the present constitution but "without prejudice to the major political issues involved in the framing of the future constitution. That is their precise constitutional language, that it expresses the same thing as what Congress has asked times without number." The Muslim demand could not therefore be cited as an "excuse for what really waits for solution by British courage and willingness."

31. Resistance to All Aggression[1]

You have assembled here today for a set purpose. We are here to reiterate our Independence pledge which will be placed before you shortly. The Independence Day is being celebrated every year since 1930 and we are observing it today for the thirteenth time. During this period of thirteen years the Congress launched satyagraha agitations against the British Government several times. Many of our comrades were arrested and imprisoned. The Congress was declared an unlawful organisation and meetings were banned. But notwithstanding Government opposition and lathi charges there has not been a single break in the annual celebrations of the Independence Day. This year also it is but proper, rather necessary, to celebrate it. In view of the present-day conditions in the world we must keep our minds clear and our bodies prepared for all eventualities. Who knows a calamity may overtake India, for a new drama is being enacted on the world stage. Although the storm is not sweeping over India at present, conditions are rapidly changing here also and we are fast approaching a world of momentous changes.

It is evident that the great power which has been ruling over us for such a long time is nearing its end not because of our strength but owing to its own weakness. The main problem which faces us today is that of development of our own strength. We have to think how we can defend our country at this juncture. You must have read in the papers that there was a lively discussion over this matter. About two or three weeks ago when Congressmen were released from jails it was discussed what the Congress should do and what it should not do. The Congress Working Committee met at Bardoli and subsequently the All India Congress Committee met at Wardha and took important decisions. Some Indian and foreign papers have sought to create a misunderstanding about those decisions. Such discussions as took place recently among us are by no means unusual on occasions like the present one but there has been no fundamental change in our outlook. It was made clear at Bardoli that the Congress stand which was taken at Bombay still held the field. This was further clarified at Wardha. Some men mistakenly took into their heads that Mahatma Gandhi had dissociated

1. Speech at Purushottam Das Park, Allahabad, 26 January 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

himself from the Congress. But he demonstrated that they were labouring under a delusion. It is, of course, true that there have been differences of opinion at times but the Congress has demonstrated its strength at the present occasion. We can never forget the lesson we have learnt under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, that in spite of all difficulties and even differences of opinion we must keep step with our comrades in troublesome times. If we fail to do this we shall lose our strength and shall not be able to face the Great War which is going on in the world. Phenomenal changes are taking place behind the curtain of the war, big empires are crumbling and a new world is being created before our very eyes. It is difficult to say whether or not that new world will be a blessing for us.

I shall now draw your attention to the point on which the Congress has laid great emphasis and which is linked with the Independence Day. The question is asked whether at Bardoli or Wardha we opened our doors for cooperation with the British Government. The question has been discussed in the press from various viewpoints. Evidently the doors of India have always been kept open. We do not want to close the doors of our heads and hearts. This is true theoretically and its practical application was the Bardoli resolution which was ratified at Wardha. A year and a half ago we declared in unambiguous terms that we cannot cooperate with the British Government under the present circumstances. Their attitude and our experience during these one and a half years as also the day-to-day incidents have vindicated our stand. Their attitude towards India, her people and her freedom did not undergo the slightest change, no matter what calamities befell them. They are beset with a thousand calamities and they are fighting for their country and freedom. It would not be unjustified if we entered into a fair agreement with them, but it is bad to sympathise with them or to show more sympathy to them than they are showing us. We have always sympathised with countries like China and Russia where systems which we like to a great extent have been evolved. But those countries stand at a different footing and we may or may not sympathise with them. But what should be our relations with the British Government?

As far as this question is concerned you should not have the least doubt in your mind with regard to the Congress policy; it is the same as it was one and a half years before. In fact the time has almost passed when the Congress could adopt a sympathetic attitude. If the British Government had shown prudence and foresight, it should have taken a step forward and accepted India's freedom and given us freedom, then we would have sympathised with the British and thrown our weight on their side. But under the existing circumstances it is futile for them to

try to secure our cooperation and help in the prosecution of the war. Indeed they have closed the door to such cooperation. Their policy has precluded the possibility of our helping them in the war even if we wished. Our policy is different. We have neither equipment nor the necessary preparation, we did not voluntarily join the war, but if we are compelled to help in the prosecution of the war, you must bear in mind that the Congress policy has not undergone any change in connection with the war. Indeed we want, as we have often said, that the British Government should leave India giving her complete freedom. Under the present-day conditions, however, it seems ridiculous to think that we shall act at Britain's dictation. British prestige is on the wane and it is meaningless to think that we shall take our cue from Britain.

Now the question is what is the measure of a country's power? Nowadays the power of countries is measured by the number of aeroplanes and tanks they possess and it is futile to deny that these represent their strength. But we in India neither possess these war materials, nor can we manufacture them. What are we to do then? We might at a future date be able to possess them but that is a different question. At present we have no armaments. You know that for the last twenty years we have been trying to develop another kind of power by the help of which we have so far opposed a powerful Government. It is no mean power though it cannot be measured in terms of aeroplanes and tanks. Mahatmaji thought it most suitable in every respect and put it up before the country. Many people welcomed it, for they had no other choice. We have, during the last two decades, seen the strength and weakness of that weapon of nonviolence. It should, perhaps, be wrong to use the word "weakness" because it is due to our own inability to wield it properly that we call it "weak". In spite of our shortcomings, we have in the past years achieved remarkable results and our country and people have shown their mettle. You must be remembering the events that took place in our country during the last one and a half centuries. Such events are likely to weaken any nation. Particularly our masses, the workers and peasants, are very backward and our foremost duty is to educate them and to create in them the power of opposition. I think what has been happening in India during the past twenty years will appreciably influence the future history of the world, and other nations too will follow the same path. Anyway, I do not want to debate on this controversy of violence and nonviolence. What I want to tell you is that the means we have devised for developing strength and the power of opposition in us, is not easy to comprehend. We do not understand how we can resist enemy troops when they attack us. How can we defend ourselves when bombs are showered on us from aeroplanes? But in spite of all this I can assure you that a nation which

is organised and which refuses to bow down its head, can never lose its freedom.

The British Government has been ruling over us for a century and a half and it has firmly established itself here in the course of this long period. From the *patwari* to the Viceroy there is a hierarchy and it is extremely difficult for us to remove it now, as it has been in existence since the time of our great-grandfathers. The other thing which is clinging to our minds is however not hard to be dislodged. The fact that we oppose the British Government does not mean that we shall allow another alien power to venture to come to our country and rule over us. Many chicken-hearted people who have all these days lived in slavery ask us whether the Japanese or Germans will come to replace the British. This is an absurd question. I do not know who will come and who will not come but so far as we are concerned it is our primary duty to oppose anyone who might seek to enslave India. A hero cannot be compelled to bow down his head, of course he can be deprived of his life. Such brave men cannot be found in large numbers in any country but they do exist in a small minority and it is they who change the atmosphere of their country.

Now the question is how we can develop our strength? We must strengthen our organisation and carry its message from one end of the country to another. We must serve the village people and reform their conditions. This work of service should be carried on in urban areas also but particularly in rural areas, for India is primarily an agricultural country. Notwithstanding Britain's hold on India for the last one hundred and fifty years, it is possible that coming events may render the British Government too weak to rule over the whole of India. Even if it succeeds in carrying on its administration in the big cities it may not be able to control the rural areas.

What shall we do them? Of course we cannot be idle spectators of the loot and disorder which might take place. We must maintain such a strong organisation that we may prevent any disorder and render help to the masses. We want to render help in such a way that there may be no occasion for us to fall out with anyone. It is of the utmost importance that we should take up this work with the wholehearted cooperation of the masses, for public cooperation is indispensable for the success of the Congress programme. By cooperation I do not mean that you may attend a meeting or join a procession for a short while; I want you to take up responsible duties. You should be responsible for the maintenance of peace in the locality you live in. If there are ten houses in your neighbourhood, you should shoulder the responsibility of maintaining peace in those ten houses by keeping contact with them. We

should set afoot our preparations for this just now, otherwise we shall be able to do nothing when the occasion arises, say, after six months.

You know that the question of A.R.P. has cropped up everywhere. In several cities, we have noticed that many trenches have been dug. We have not yet considered it essential for ourselves to dig trenches in our houses nor do we intend to do so. We do not expect that aeroplanes will suddenly come to drop bombs at present though it is not an impossibility. I do not think that any foreign army shall come to India except those forces which have been here since long. It is just possible that we may have air raids on Indian cities like Calcutta in Bengal. Like Rangoon, India might also suffer. If it is destined to happen like that, let it happen. We should not be panicky on that account. Many cities in the world have been suffering since long from these raids. We will also suffer and even may lose our lives. If we are nervous, it will add to our difficulties instead of decreasing them. This lesson is very essential during the war.

Those nations which do not lose heart and face their enemies with perseverance and coolmindedness, only they go ahead. The first lesson which I would like to learn today is that of coolmindedness. The second lesson is that of organisation and of feeling its responsibility. I would like the members of the Congress committees, whether they are in villages or in cities, to leave the Congress if they think that their duty is only to attend meetings. I want sincere workers. They need not be of the type of volunteers in uniform we see today. Such things are for peaceful times. We want them for the defence of *mohallas* at this juncture. We want the cooperation of all in this connection and even non-Congressmen are welcome in this effort. But all of them shall have to be under Congress discipline.

You have to bear in your minds one thing more. The transport of goods will become more difficult as the war progresses. Many rails will be dismantled and sent away as the railway is engaged for military purposes, thus making it impossible to bring goods to Allahabad from other places. We shall not be able to get many articles in villages which we see today. Prices shall rise. Even today the prices of essential commodities have increased. I would like to remind you of the Congress resolution so far as the prices of foodstuffs are concerned.[2] We

2. The U.P.P.C.C. resolution of 10 January 1942 stated that "villagers should endeavour to grow food crops to cover the needs of the village and grain dealers should not hold up stocks for profit but should release them for consumption at fair prices." An attempt towards self-sufficiency in food, clothing and other necessaries of life should be made by encouraging village industries and organising cooperatives for the distribution of their products.

have to consider two points in this connection. If the traders of foodstuffs increase the rate in anticipation of profits, they are likely to lose more. You see what is happening in Madras Presidency. It is just possible that they may have to part with their stuff without any payment. Gandhiji has made it clear in today's paper that traders should sell at reasonable rates with minimum of profits.[3] The second point is that four or five villages should cooperate and produce food commodities by joint efforts. You know that villagers produce several crops which are cash crops in the hope of selling them in the markets on high prices. They should now produce only food articles for themselves and the neighbouring towns so that they may not starve if outside supply is withheld on any account.

Cloth too is becoming scarce day by day. We need it more during these days of war. As I have told you about the cottage industries of China, we shall have to do the same thing in India. People of cities can undertake these by individual, joint and cooperative efforts. Farming has become a necessity. It should be on such a large scale that we may become self-sufficient. We can also develop other cottage industries. We may purchase petty articles of necessity from the markets. An exhibition of products manufactured by the Rural Development Association of the U.P. Government is being held these days at the Bund here.[4] Most of the work you see in the exhibition was started during the regime of the Congress government. It has developed all the more on account of the war. There are many other items which we are trying to develop but which we cannot show in exhibitions. Today only ten or twenty thousand people are engaged in these industries, but I would like the number to increase to twenty lakhs. Every person should make it a point to purchase these articles as far as possible.

You have come here for taking a pledge, hence it is more essential for you to wear khadi, ply the charkha, strive for communal unity and the eradication of untouchability. These principles laid down by Gandhiji are being followed by Indians to a great extent but their importance has still to be realised. As the world changes, their importance is coming to light. If we leave even one of them, we become weak. We must discard untouchability. We can increase our wealth by joint effort. Nothing can be done during these days of war except rural development.

3. He wrote in *Harijan* of 25 January 1942, "Dealers should shed their greed and the habit of making as much profit as possible. They must be satisfied with as little as possible. They run the risk of being looted, if they do not gain the credit of being keepers of grain for the sake of the poor".
4. Held on the grounds of the Allahabad Agricultural Association on the occasion of the *Kumbh Mela* from 13-28 January 1942.

Other things cannot be carried on at such a speed, nor can new factories be opened. A factory built with a capital of ten to twenty lakhs may be destroyed by an aeroplane. Hence you should now realize the importance of what Mahatmaji has been saying and you should make a determined effort to follow it. What arrangements are you going to make for yourselves? None can check the march of time. Self-reliant men can carry on their work smoothly if they remain cool-headed. In case we become nervous and perplexed we can do nothing.

Now I am going to read out the pledge of Independence. You will remember that it is to be repeated by all of you. First of all I will read it aloud in full as usual and after that I would like you, or those of you who care, to repeat it. This repetition is not for show; you need not repeat it if you have no inclination to act accordingly. I hope that many of you would do it sincerely. However I do not wish that you should deceive yourself or your neighbours in case you are not prepared to act as instructed therein. First of all I will read it, and then I would request only those who accept it to repeat it.

32. To Bhagwan Singh Gimdi[1]

Allahabad
January 29, 1942

Dear Sardar Sahib,[2]

Over a year ago, before I went to prison on that last occasion, I learnt that efforts were being made by the Education Department of the United Provinces to raise money for the war funds through sport firms.[3] These sport firms were asked to give a special discount of 3% on all purchases made by or on behalf of schools and colleges so that this discount may be handed over to the war funds. This struck me as reprehensible practice as it brought undue pressure on the school and college authorities as well as on the sport firms to contribute to the war fund, whether they wanted to or not. Inevitably this suggestion was in the nature of a directive which had to be followed. I think I said something at the time criticising this action of the educational authorities.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Proprietor of D.J. Love and Co., Sport Manufacturers, Allahabad; well wisher of the Congress.
3. The Inspector of Schools of Allahabad, in his circular of 12 August 1940 to all the heads of the public institutions in Allahabad, had quoted the resolution passed by the Inter School and College Athletic League requesting the sport firms dealing with them to donate 3% of their income to the war fund.

I have now seen some papers which confirm my previous fears and show how this undue pressure has been exercised and school and college authorities have been compelled to purchase their athletic goods from firms agreeing to give this discount in aid of the war fund. Any firm not agreeing to do this is boycotted and victimised. While it is open to any individual or firm to contribute to the war fund, if it so chooses, it is certainly unfair and improper to bring this pressure, which is tantamount to coercion. Your firm, I understand, has expressed its unwillingness to contribute to the war fund in this way and you have adhered to your principle in spite of the great loss involved to your firm. I am sorry for the loss caused to you but at the same time I congratulate you on your adherence to principle and to the national policy. I am sure this knowledge will give you strength.

I think it is the duty of all those who can do so, more especially individuals and private educational institutions and students' organisations, to make a point of patronising your firm and buying their athletic goods from you so as to counter, as far as possible, this victimisation on the part of the educational authorities. This does not mean that they should get inferior value goods from you. Given equal facilities and value, they should undoubtedly prefer dealing with you than with such firms as have succumbed to the pressure of the educational authorities. I hope, therefore, that your firm will receive this patronage from all national-minded individuals. I wish you success in your undertaking.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

33. To Ethelind Higginbottom[1]

Allahabad
January 29, 1942

Dear Mrs. Higginbottom,[2]

I have received your letter of the 28th January.[3] It is true that some students from the Agricultural Institute came to me two days ago and

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Ethelind Higginbottom actively helped her husband Sam Higginbottom in setting up and running the Agricultural Institute at Allahabad from 1913-1945 and introduced Home Science as a subject in 1936.
3. She wrote that her husband "prefers that political issues should not disturb our educational aim" and stated that flag hoisting on Independence Day was done in an undisciplined manner without consulting the principal or the staff.

informed me of certain incidents regarding the putting up of the national flag on Independence Day. There was no occasion for me to give them any advice in the matter as they had acted according to the decision of their own Union, and, in any event, the incident was more or less over.

I quite agree with you that in any educational institution there should be discipline and cooperation between the authorities of that institution and the students. I have often emphasized the need for such discipline and cooperation. In the particular matter to which you refer there seems to me that nothing very extraordinary took place. In most of the educational institutions of Allahabad, including the University Union and Ewing Christian College, the national flag was hoisted on Independence Day in accordance with the usual practice. No objection was taken and in many instances the professors themselves took part in the ceremony. I do not know why any difficulty should have arisen in the Agricultural Institute. It is a well-known fact that hoisting of the national flag takes place specially on Independence Day. So far as the national flag is concerned it does not represent a party or a faction but various groups and political shades of opinion, all of whom look upon it as a symbol of India's freedom. It has come to mean for us what the American flag means to Americans, and any disrespect shown to it is naturally resented. I should like you to imagine what the reaction of American students would be if any disrespect was shown to the American flag. Indeed I have been reading in American newspapers and magazines about a widespread campaign in America centering round the display of the stars and stripes, which rightly has become the symbol of American nationhood.

The Agricultural Institute is, as you say, an American institution. But it is functioning in India and presumably it is meant for the benefit of India and Indian students, otherwise it would have little place here. Any such institution, therefore, must keep in view the deeply cherished sentiments of the people it seeks to serve. I am glad to find that the Ewing Christian College, which is also an American institution, pays due regard to these sentiments and many of the professors there show their goodwill to the students by participating in their activities.

Some students who visited me informed me that Dr. Higginbottom is so bitterly opposed to Indian nationalist policy that he criticises it in strong language even in the midst of his lectures. He is of course free to express his opinions at any time or place but this repeated criticism addressed to students who do not agree with him and cannot enter into a debate with him, can only lead to friction and ill will. I do not know that it is the function of an American institution to run counter to the nationalistic sentiments and urge to freedom of the students.

I am exceedingly busy and am frequently away from Allahabad. I have to shoulder heavy responsibilities and avoid engagements of the nature you suggest. Even otherwise I do not think it would serve any useful purpose for me to address your students. That is a matter between them and the authorities of the Institute. Of course, if Dr. Higginbottom desires to see me, I shall try to find some time for him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

34. The War and the People[1]

After about a year I am speaking again here at Gorakhpur. After my release from jail I started touring the villages and I have come to Gorakhpur also. I did not plan to come here but I received a message from your district about the conditions of the tenants who cultivate sugarcane. Their problem is connected with the important question of the payment of rent and is therefore a difficult one.

Great changes have taken place in this world and are still taking place. The war has spread far and wide and has reached the borders of India. During the individual satyagraha many people courted arrest. Many others also would have gone to jails if Mahatmaji had permitted. He had imposed restrictions and allowed only selected individuals but even so twenty-five thousand persons were imprisoned. How did these events affect you? What are the events which are taking place at the present time?

As you know I was sentenced to four-year imprisonment for touring this city of Gorakhpur and for having delivered two or three speeches in this district.[2] I do not actually remember at this moment what I said in those speeches but I said something against the British Government or something in connection with this war. Before this, I was never sentenced for more than two years. But perhaps the authorities thought that my importance had increased and so I should be awarded imprisonment for a longer term. The District Magistrate[3] sentenced

1. Public speech at D.A.V. High School, Gorakhpur, 31 January 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 485.
3. E.V. Moss, I.C.S., was the District Magistrate of Gorakhpur; after 1947 he served in Pakistan.

me to four years' imprisonment, for which I offered my formal thanks. In reality I did not thank him for awarding me imprisonment for a longer period, but I liked the sentence the very moment it was awarded. It does not at all matter for what term imprisonment is awarded. I do not see any difference in being sentenced for a long term or for a short term, because after my release I can again talk about the same things and can again be sentenced for them. Imprisonment does not matter for there are other things also to be considered. Even at that time I had the doubt whether the British Government would survive in this country for four years. I was not, therefore, particularly affected in any way. I thought that my sentence would have a good effect on my comrades and other people, both in and outside India, and it did, in fact, have a good effect. It is a matter of pity for the person who sentenced me, that in spite of his awarding me imprisonment for four years my convictions have not yet changed. Neither did the sentence have any effect on me nor have the events taken a different course. I have come to Gorakhpur today to inform him that I am prepared to repeat the same words which I uttered at that time, that I am uttering those words even now, and would continue to utter them in future also. It is strange that many people were sentenced for publishing the short statement[4] which I had read out before the District Magistrate and also for reading or even for keeping it in their houses. It is strange that even after my release people were sentenced for keeping that statement. I, who am the person who gave that statement, wrote it and had read it out, am before you. That statement was mild enough but I consider it my duty to say and use even stronger words. Though there are many questions before us, as far as the British Government is concerned it is the duty of every individual in this country to oppose it and revolt against it. This is a straightforward statement. I wish that the District Magistrate notes it down that it is my duty and creed to revolt against the British rule. He should have no difficulty in taking any action against me and sentence me to jail or take any other action which he considers suitable. I also feel greatly relieved after conveying this message to him.

Mahatmaji issued a statement in which he told us that it was the duty of every Indian to revolt against such a Government[5] and he also

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, pp. 485-490.
5. Mahatma Gandhi, on 25 April 1941, stated, "It is the duty of every Indian who knows anything about the distress of the peasantry to rise in rebellion against this autocratic rule. Fortunately for humanity, India's rebellion is a peaceful revolt and, I hope, it will be through exclusively peaceful effort that India will realise her national destiny."

told us in what manner and in what spirit it should be done. There are several questions before us to resolve, but the duty of every Indian is that he should not bow down to this Government. If anyone has any doubt about this, he should say so. For the last two years, or a year and a half, you have seen that in spite of the fact that a great war is raging and the British Government is facing many difficulties, its attitude towards our country continues to be one of arrogance, insolence and impertinence as before.

Leave India out of consideration for a moment. It is a vast country. Take your district alone. I feel surprised at what the British officials here think of themselves. What else can be said about the acts they have done except that the death of this Government is writ large on their very foreheads and that they are digging their own graves. What all of them are doing is before you. At the same time you should tell them that their great imperialism, of which you were frightened, is being liquidated before the eyes of the whole world. It would not perhaps be wrong to say that their imperialism or any other imperialism in this world will not survive any longer. There can be no doubt whatsoever about one thing that whatever may happen in future, it is certain that the British Government will not survive in India.

It is possible that like others you also may be thinking about the question of German or Japanese rule. Those who entertain this idea are perhaps deeply rooted in the notion of slavery. They are incapable of thinking that India can ever be free. At a time when big countries are being subjugated and big imperialistic powers are being exterminated, it would be futile for me to indulge in long and big talks. Nobody can say who will fall or who will survive and what would be their fate. We say that our people have courage, strength and unity and we can face big dangers. I know that so far as the future is concerned anybody can say that the British rule here will not last very long. But we should assure that if a calamity befalls our country and some other foreign power tries to conquer it we shall continue to fight for freedom. We have been fighting with determination to win Swaraj and have repeated the pledge of Independence. Have we done all this only to make ourselves slaves of some other power instead of the British? This is quite impossible and we cannot agree to this. So far as the Congress policy is concerned if any foreign power ever tries to come to India, we shall not bow down our heads to it. We will have to put up a strong resistance.

Today I notice that British imperialism is disappearing from here. Its real power is coming to an end before our very eyes and it would in fact disappear. The question today is not how to resist the British Government but how to organize our country on the eve of the coming

revolution. Such important matters are engaging my attention. The question that India has to decide is, how to administer the country after this imperialism has come to an end? I am therefore not very keen about organised assistance to the British Government or whether or not we should offer satyagraha. But the British Government continues to take steps which makes it necessary for us to resist it and this has to continue. It is not important at the moment to root the British out from here, because they are themselves cutting their own roots with axes. You are aware of the conditions prevailing in this country and the British attitude towards India, the policy pursued by them so far, and the doings of their officials in the course of these two years. In spite of all this we repeatedly offered them, on behalf of the Congress, to come to an amicable settlement and grant independence to India. But they have suppressed our demands. This imperialism is in a dilemma and is reduced to such a state that the British cannot protect their own imperialism.

You know that their Empire was not organised before the outbreak of the war. They are not strong enough to guard it and save it. They say that their Empire is spread out far and wide. They cannot manage to send troops everywhere to save themselves. The fact is that the time for big empires is over. It is possible for a big imperialistic power to flourish but that imperialism shall not be of the type of British imperialism. The first thing is that no power can be so organized and strong in future as the British had been for the last 150 years. They had supremacy over the seas. They had economic strength. But no power has ruled forever nor can the British. Their old power is now on the decline. What monetary resources they had, they have like other countries exhausted them on the war. That type of imperialism therefore cannot function.

If the British win the war it will be because of China and Russia and not because of their own strength. After the war they will not have the strength to stand on their own legs or be able to maintain any position in the world. The world is moving very fast. Either under America or Europe a world order would be established which would include Britain, Russia, China and a free India. This would be a proper order. In these circumstances what should we do at this moment? This is the real question which we should consider.

The first thing is that we should not be distracted and feel worried because worry and distraction are signs of weakness. Whatever strength one has is thus lost. You have seen that big countries like France have fallen before our eyes. You have also seen that countries of Asia—big or small—and Islamic countries like Iran and Iraq have lost their independence. British domination has been established there. The people of

these countries are not in any way free. The question of our independence is no more in the forefront. There is no question of achieving and maintaining it. The first thing is that we should not feel upset and worried in any way in the present circumstances and should as far as possible try to stop our mutual bickerings. Such things are useless. I am amazed at the newspaper reports about the acts of some persons who indulge in old-fashioned communal matters. You are aware of the Muslim League resolution on Pakistan,[6] that India should be split up into Muslim India and Hindu India, for which a propaganda has been going on for the last one year and a half. Nobody thinks what is happening today in the world. There were Islamic states, Iraq and Iran, which were independent but have fallen before our eyes. They were free Islamic countries. People may talk of dividing India into two or three parts and may call one of them as Pakistan. If, what I consider to be impossible, does perchance happen the Muslim League would feel jubilant over it but I wish my eyes and ears were closed when one talked of this. I do not want to see the day when absurd idealism may become possible. No small country can exist in the present-day world. Hitler has destroyed all the small countries of Europe. The small countries of Asia are also gradually being swept out of existence. It means that if these countries are to live in future they must live together.

England, the country of the British people, has been strong only for the last two hundred years. It is now my firm belief that it cannot retain its existence independently. It can only live in union with America and other small nations of Europe. It has no strength now to face any country all by itself. Countries which were once large are now becoming small. Big countries by entering into alliances with each other are forming still greater units which no power on this earth can equal. Even Germany, which is considered to be the strongest power today and possesses the strongest air force in the world, can hardly dare face the whole world if the latter turns against her. Neither Japan nor England nor any other country can stand alone against the whole world.

Under these circumstances it is nothing but foolish on the part of the people who think of dividing India. We shall grow weak if we quarrel among ourselves. Under slavery it does not make any difference whether India is partitioned or not, but in freedom it makes a lot of difference. It is better if it remains united rather than divided into parts. If unfortunately it is partitioned then let it be partitioned but it can in no way bear the yoke of slavery.

6. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 17.

Let us consider first that India, a big country, quite a big country in the world, after getting free from the British, will have to live in union with other countries of the world. It will enter into alliances with them, and it will form a union or a federation in which all the countries will be included. I have been of the opinion for a long time that both India and China can come close to each other. China's civilization is thousands of years old and we have been culturally united from time immemorial. Both of us are destined to live as free nations in this world, and I believe that it would be good not only for both of us but for the world at large. India shall also establish relations with Russia very soon, firstly, because it has a common frontier, and secondly, our country is faced with economic problems. There exists a great difference between us and the Russian people no doubt but despite this difference there are many common things between us. We can learn many things from them and they too can learn a lot from us. In Asia India will come in closer contact with Russia and China. This union does not mean that we shall be enemies of the rest of the world. We shall try to maintain friendly relations with other nations of the world, particularly with Britain because we are not fighting against the British people. We are only fighting British imperialism which is ruling our country. It would be better for it if it goes. In that case alone a National Government of this country will be prepared to cooperate in full with the British Government. As I believe, when all nations are free in the world they can form a common federation and then it would be a question of mutual relationships between the countries. But at present Britain is engaged in fighting with other nations. Both the parties are trying to kill and exterminate each other.

This war is strange. Millions of human beings are being slaughtered, thousands of ancient cities have been ruined, country after country is being devastated and God alone knows how long this war will drag on. I think that this war will continue for many years to come. Only two years have passed since it started. I do not see its end soon. After the close of this war the world may witness many great revolutions which will change the old world and create a new one, or lead to bloodshed which will also ultimately lead to the creation of a new world. Whatever happens the question is what have we to do? We are not far from the scene of war. It has reached Burma, the enemy can even bomb Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, thereby killing thousands of our brothers and sisters and destroying our cities like Rangoon where many were killed in air raids. Calcutta can likewise be bombarded. I am not sure of the danger of air raid to your district, Gorakhpur. But at the same time, it is wrong to suppose that it is impossible. If there are air raids

in India only big cities might suffer loss. Villages and rural districts are generally free from such attacks. Only by accident the city of Gorakhpur, being in a rural district, may become a victim of any such attack. But I do not think any large-scale invasion will be launched from either side of India. We cannot tolerate anybody entering into our country, attacking and destroying us.

First thing to consider is that, whatever happens, whether the enemy advances into our country or not, we cannot escape from the effect of war. Though this effect is not being fully realised at present still the effect is there. Prices of commodities are rising every day. The number of railway trains has been reduced. The commodities coming from outside into Gorakhpur have become scarce. British made cloth and that manufactured at Ahmedabad have become very costly. War has completely stopped the import of British made cloth and you may not get the cloth of Ahmedabad mills. Tomorrow the railway will stop transportation of cloth and the cloth dealers will have to close their shops. Even those who have means to purchase cloth will not find it. If it is at all available, it will be at an exorbitant rate. The foodstuffs brought for your consumption in trains will also stop coming and the prices of the same will shoot up. Gorakhpur district does not produce wheat but only grows sugarcane, and if no wheat comes from outside what would happen? You cannot live on sugarcane alone. What you would do I cannot understand. If war comes to India everything that I have told you is possible. To consider all these problems you must call a general meeting and must directly approach the businessmen of the city.

We do not realise that graindealers and shopkeepers are our brothers. You say that these persons hoard the grain in order to sell it in future at higher rates and earn huge profits. Let them do so. They carry on their business with a view to earning profit. They have a right to sell and make profit thereby, but why should they hoard in such a way that the people might be put to trouble? It would be foolish on their part to do so because when there would be no money, no corn, and the people would be in distress due to scarcity of corn, there cannot be a question of profit at that time. On the contrary whatever they might have would perhaps be divided without profits. Therefore it would be much better to sell it at a reasonable profit than to hoard it. The important point is that you should make your own provision according to the needs of all the people. If adequate provision for the rural areas is made, then it would be easy to provide for the cities also. There are two very essential commodities which you require now. One is food and the other clothing. These two are most essential commodities. There are other necessaries also but these two are the most important. You should

yourselves make provision for the supply of food and clothing. If a few villages put together make their own provision for the supply of food and clothing then there shall be no need to get these essentials from outside. *You should produce these things yourselves, and produce them in* such a quantity that you may be able to supply these things to the neighbouring cities also.

Cultivators say that as they get good return from the sugarcane cultivation so they have ceased to cultivate wheat and have begun to grow sugarcane. The result of the mass sugarcane production has been that the market price of the cane has gone down and when this happened people began to raise a hue and cry.[7] Prices are apt to rise and fall and this fluctuation will always be there. You may cultivate anything you like but you must make some provision for food. As soon as food provision is complete in one village other neighbouring villages will also follow suit and make their own provisions. After this comes the question of clothing.

We have long been preaching the cult of khadi and charkha but you paid no heed to it. It had no effect on you. If even during the war you do not try to realize the importance of it you shall be put to a good deal of trouble. You cannot get foreign cloth now and you will not be able to get even khadi from outside. It is wrong to believe that khadi can come from outside. You will be able to have only the cloth produced in your own district. You should encourage weaving among your fellow villagers. You should utilize the cotton that is produced in your surrounding villages. You should supply the weavers and *ansars* who do this work, with hand-spun thread and they will produce cloth for you. There are still millions of weavers in big places like Madras who prepare cloth from the yarn supplied by the mills and not from the yarn spun on the charkha. Now the mill-spun yarn is not available, and because of this their trade has been dislocated. I have received thousands of letters about their starvation. They do not get yarn. They cannot produce cloth. If they were used to the charkha-spun yarn and arrangements for this had been made earlier the present situation would not have arisen.

As regards other commodities you have to make arrangements for them also. There are a number of things which can be produced by cottage and village industries. I am not opposed to mill production. I want a large number of big factories and mills to be started in India. The wealth of India should increase by all possible means. We are

7. The sugarcane growers of the United Provinces were demanding a minimum price of six and a quarter annas per maund of cane, when the price assured for sugar was Rs. 9 as. 12 per maund.

poor because of heavy pressure on land which cannot maintain all of us. If some of us take to other professions, such as working in factories, starting village industries and employing ourselves in khadi production, the pressure on land will decrease to a great extent, the wealth of our country will increase and poverty will be reduced. I am not against factories. On the other hand I want more and more factories to be set up.

Two or three years ago the Congress had set up a committee named National Planning Committee and I was its Chairman.[8] We were considering the economics of big industries and their location. But at the same time we emphasised the expansion of village and cottage industries also. Forty crores of people live in our country. With industrial expansion how many out of these forty crores can be employed in industries? At the most we can employ only two crores of people in these factories. Two crore is a big number. Still you would have thirty-eight crores left. What will these thirty-eight crores of people do? Of course they will do cultivation, but all of them cannot be absorbed in agriculture. In order to get work for them we have to start village and cottage industries in villages as well as in cities. To start with, let a small number of people begin such industries which, when developed, would subsequently absorb crores of people. Even our kisan brothers should be able to devote themselves to other occupations like charkha and other village industries.

China was a backward country but due to the war a lot of progress has been made there. In China war has been going on for the last four and a half years. Charkha was not in vogue in that country. But when the war began they were put to a lot of trouble. They were not able to get cloth. Their enemy, Japan, took possession of their factories. A number of their factories were destroyed by bombs. Due to all this China was in a helpless position. It was suicidal to buy Japanese cloth. They thought that if they purchased from Japan they would be filling their enemy's pockets. They would be aiding Japan at the risk of their own extinction. So they did not do so. Instead, they turned their attention to the development of village and cottage industries. It is only in the last four years that before our very eyes they have developed cottage industries and started cooperative societies to such an extent that today every village in China has its own industry.

During the war even if one desires to start a big factory it would be difficult because of the problem of finance. In order to start a factory you require ten to twenty lakhs of rupees. At times people invest up to

8. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 367-402.

fifty lakhs to set up a factory. If an enemy bomber hits such a factory, fifty lakhs of rupees would be wasted. If the factory comes in the possession of the enemy then he becomes richer by fifty lakhs of rupees. But if you start cottage industries there is little danger of their being destroyed by fire. In the second place you do not have to invest large amounts of money. Lastly, the enemy cannot bomb them because they are scattered all over the country. Even if the enemy takes away a few charkhas you do not lose much. If the enemy attacks a village, as has actually happened in China, the villagers with all the implements of the cottage industries, like the charkha, which is not a heavy machine, can shift to other villages. The Chinese carried on in this way. Cottage industries were started both by the poor folk living in huts as well as by the well-to-do people. Thus whether you live in a village or in a city you should think over what you have to do. The Chinese were forced to resort to cottage industries but we should take them up in order to become self-sufficient and independent of foreign supplies as far as possible.

Take for example the district of Gorakhpur. No one else can do anything for you. You have to produce goods in the land of Gorakhpur itself so that help may be given in time to the surrounding villages and also to the Azamgarh district. The greater the distance the more will be the difficulty, but in this way you will extend help even to Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Build up cottage industries and it would be better if you can start cooperative societies and encourage their products by buying them. All this you have to do, but in order to do this and other works it is essential that we should have a powerful organization. You should remember that during the time of crisis proper administration will not be possible, and law and order too will be difficult to maintain. There are a large number of people in villages and cities who take advantage of such a situation and want to loot and plunder. Let not these people plunder, we should make our own arrangements. We should not expect police protection. It does not matter whether police protects us or not, we should provide for our own safety. There should be no interference with the management of the police but we should make our own arrangements. We should strengthen our organisation so that we may be able to protect ourselves in every eventuality.

How should we protect ourselves and how should we organize ourselves? We have to organise ourselves through the district Congress committees and *mandal* Congress committees. To some extent we are already organised through these committees. But this organisation is yet small and has to be strengthened. There are many brave people in the Congress, but there should be brave persons in every village in order to approach the people. In every village there should be a person

responsible for that village who will not only go to the meetings but also establish contacts with the people of the village and meet them and organise them. At present we are enrolling volunteers not for offering satyagraha or for continuing the struggle with the British Government, but for defending our villages and cities. They do not have to go for drills and parades or go elsewhere from their villages. They live in their villages.

We get perturbed very soon. It should not be so. There is nothing to be alarmed at. You should proceed in this way. Enrol volunteers for your *mohallas*, big or small. In case of an eventuality you should serve the people and defend the *mohallas* against outside attack. We want to organise ourselves and are not anxious about the Congress earning a name. We want to serve the masses. Therefore all should be prepared for this. Whether one is a four-anna member of the Congress or not and whether one is at all a Congressman or not does not matter. The Muslim Leaguers and the Hindu Sabhaites will also perhaps like to work with us, for this is a service which everybody should do. But this work requires labour and honesty and faith in its methods. This work is not for show. *Mohalla* committees and *mandal* committees should be formed in the cities. Those who are not willing to give their time should not be included in these committees. But by making such an organisation we do not want to quarrel with the Government. It is quite another thing, if the Government likes to pick up a quarrel, but from our side there will be no quarrel. We want to strengthen the masses so that we may be in a position to face the war. If you make such an organisation it will serve you in the time of need. There is no doubt that it will be of great help to you. Whatever the situation it has to be faced. If panic spreads, you and the Congressmen in general and our organisation should all deal with it unitedly. Remember the message that our organisation will be ours and our principles will be maintained. We will carry on our work peacefully. We will not allow our volunteers to indulge in quarrels and we shall maintain discipline.

I am not aware of what is happening in your district or in your city, but in big cities there are A.R.P. organisations. On making an enquiry in Deoria, it was found that there were orders for making underground shelters in connection with the A.R.P. work, so that if aircraft should visit Deoria, people may get into those trenches. This is a strange thing which appears to be useless to me. A useless thing to which we should not pay any attention. Let an aircraft come. When time comes, we will distribute pamphlets on behalf of the Congress explaining what should be done on such occasions. Much useless material is being published on behalf of the Government in connexion with the A.R.P. work.

It is said that pamphlets distributed in Allahabad advise people to sleep under their beds immediately on hearing the siren. It is something which makes one laugh as it can never be of any advantage.

I do not know much about A.R.P. The officers know something more than I. Before the outbreak of this war at least twice I had been in two big cities which were being bombed by aircraft. I saw it myself. In Spain, Barcelona is a big city. Bombs were regularly dropped on it. I stayed there for five days. Every day in the night bombs were dropped and houses damaged. From this I acquired some experience. Then I went to China. There I saw it for twelve days. Thus to some extent I have seen air raids. These people who come from Europe giving us advice, do not know anything nor have they seen air raids. Whether it be the Collector or the tahsildar, he cannot visualise the real picture. So they indulge in useless talks. In Deoria trenches have been dug which can accommodate three thousand people and which are 4½ ft. long and 2½ ft. wide. When an aircraft arrives they are supposed to sleep there or do whatever they like. If there is bombing those trenches will easily turn into graves. This is the position and I can say that what is being done by Government officials is quite useless. Some of the steps being taken by the Government are correct while others are worthless, but the way in which they function is quite wrong. We are not cooperating with the A.R.P. work in any way. We want people to get the correct and complete information. If complete information is available there will be less alarm.

of opinion arose between Mahatma Gandhi and the Working Committee and they have now come to the parting of the ways. Many such things are being talked about. These are baseless talks. How can there be friction between Mahatmaji and the Congress Committee? The present Congress should be considered as Mahatmaji's child. When big problems come forth every one has to give his opinion on them. After taking the opinion of all, a final decision is taken on that basis. If the opinion of all these people has no effect, it is no panchayat. Sometimes it so happens that on a particular question Mahatma Gandhi has one opinion and the panchayat has another. But whatever decision the panchayat takes all the people act unitedly according to it. There cannot be any friction between Gandhiji and the Congress. After the Bardoli session a big panchayat meeting of the All India Congress Committee was held at Wardha and it was decided by Gandhiji and others that we should not cooperate with the Government in this war. Had our country been free the people would have found a way and done something.

What can we do today? That we should get men recruited for the armies of the British Government is a worthless task. Our old policy with regard to the war still holds good for which we even went to jails. But there has been one development. The satyagraha that was launched has now been withdrawn. Why? Not because there is a difference of opinion amongst us or there is something else but because Mahatma Gandhi thought that some more far-reaching problems had arisen than the individual satyagraha. For instance bombs can fall over the city of Calcutta. Japanese aircraft can bomb that city. If at such a time we go to Calcutta and ask the residents to offer satyagraha it would be futile. The people there are disturbed today. Six to seven lakhs of people have evacuated Calcutta. Should they protect themselves or go to jails by regularly offering satyagraha? However, if the Government sends us to jails we shall go. For instance, I have delivered a speech and if your District Magistrate files a suit against me, I shall go to jail. It does not matter at all if I am arrested while doing Congress work. I shall go to jail. But now it is no time for offering satyagraha and getting arrested because today we have got to do much more important work. It is my duty to face the difficulties I am confronted with. Suppose tomorrow bombs are dropped over Calcutta or over Allahabad, so I should prepare the people for that eventuality. If I go to jail I shall not be able to do the service that I am capable of. Therefore as more important tasks have to be undertaken, Mahatmaji decided not to carry on the satyagraha in the old manner. But, remember that at the pace at which the world is changing one cannot say what will happen after six months. After six months the British Government may not remain in India.

After six months which people and which cities will survive cannot be said. At this juncture we can do one thing. We should become fearless. You should remove fear from your hearts altogether and serve the people, protect them and carry on the revolution. We can serve the people in this manner. If we cannot do this all our slogans and other acts are useless.

Now I shall say a few words in regard to the welcome address presented to me by the students. I am glad to meet the students because they have enthusiasm and their minds are clear. After all when they grow up they will have to shoulder the burden of the country. The future of the country depends on the students of today.

My attention has been drawn towards the factional quarrels that exist among the students here. Perhaps the reasons behind these quarrels are not of a serious nature, but the manner in which they are being carried on and the personal attacks that have been made are not healthy. You are aware that I am of the opinion that students should take interest in political matters and in a general manner about India too. They should also devote themselves to studies because if they leave their studies their knowledge will not increase and they will not be able to solve the future problems of India. They may leave their studies for offering satyagraha only when it is understood that by doing so they are participating in the big problems facing the country and then they should bring forward new programmes for action. If our students can take such decisions it is admirable. If they are so capable they should leave colleges and universities and take the reins of the country in their hands. Students should meet together, hold meetings, express their opinions on particular questions. They should not mind whether their opinions are against me or in my favour because they have a full right to express their opinions and they should in fact hold debates. But when they start considering it their duty to declare that the Congress policy is a blunder, it does not befit them. Some of the students follow a policy which is altogether against the national policy of the Congress. They have every right to do so but the manner in which all this is done can have no effect on the masses. It should not be forgotten that one gains experience by taking lessons. If after understanding the present-day events and gaining experience, they consider that their bones are strong enough only then they should participate in politics but not join or form political parties. There are already sufficient numbers of political parties and if students also form numerous factions they cannot make any progress. The formation of political factions has ruined the students' movement here. I tell you that the students' movement does not even have those special characteristics which should always be there in a

students' movement and therefore you have to preserve whatever strength you possess. Today's events that are happening are not outside the sphere of the students' movement. There are at present some people who characterise our national policy as harmful and are weakening the students' movement. This is not proper. I shall help you as far as possible but you have to reduce your differences. You have to march cautiously and maintain your strength.

You know that I will be returning to Allahabad after visiting Gorakhpur. It is just possible now I may not be able to meet you for a long time. I was on tour, so I could meet you. Kisans, you should not be worried. Even if I do not come to you, you should, and I hope you will, remember what I have told you today and prepare yourselves on those lines. Do not get alarmed and worried. You may have to face many calamities. There may be Hindu-Muslim riots, Government may resort to oppression, or some other happenings may occur in the country. But you should act in such a manner that at the time of emergency you may be able to do good to your district, your city and your country.

35. Cable to V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
February 2, 1942

Your cables received. I appreciate your attitude.[2] Congress policy is clearly defined and Bardoli resolution has subsequently been confirmed. This must not be extended despite interested interpretations. British Government's policy makes cooperation impossible and independent action under circumstances ineffective. Too late now for us to meet developing situation except through our policy which strengthens and organises people. Congress expressed full sympathy with China and Russia.[3] But unable go further under present circumstances. Azad advises us against formal association with committees abroad but you have my and

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his cable of 22 January 1942, Krishna Menon wanted clarity and firmness in Jawaharlal's statements.
3. The Working Committee resolution passed at Bardoli on 30 December 1941 expressed full sympathy for the Soviet Union and China.

Vijayalakshmi's good wishes for Indo-Soviet Committee.[4] I am inaugurating Friends of Soviet Conference at Lucknow on fifteenth February.[5]

Nehru

4. The Indian Committee for Aid to the Soviet Union was formed in London, with Jawaharlal and Vijayalakshmi Pandit as Patrons and Krishna Menon as Chairman. Islammul Haq and Surat Ali were Secretaries.
5. Postponed till 22 February 1942. For Jawaharlal's speech see *post*, item 43.

36. U.P.P.C.C. Council's Instructions to Congressmen[1]

The Council of the U.P.P.C.C. invite the attention of Congressmen in general and Congress committees in particular to the programme of work adopted by the A.I.C.C. at its recent meeting at Wardha. This programme has to be considered against the background of a developing situation which is everyday bringing the war nearer to India's frontiers and when the economic and other consequences of the war are already being acutely felt by the people of India. As such this programme must have precedence over all other claims on the time and energies of Congressmen. Even before the meeting of the A.I.C.C. the Council had drawn up an outline of work for Congress committees in the Province. The Council note with satisfaction that several committees have already taken steps in this direction. They feel that it is necessary now to give more detailed instructions with a view to coordinate effort and give uniformity to the work to be done. These instructions, however, are not meant to circumscribe local initiative which must, to some extent, be guided by local circumstances.

The work which has to be taken in hand immediately may be divided into three main sections: (a) maintenance of the public peace, (b) relief of economic distress, and (c) service in emergency. The nature of the work and the type of organization behind it will necessarily differ somewhat as between urban and rural areas, but the governing principles and the objectives must be the same in both areas. In any event, and more particularly in regard to economic matters, there must be coordination between town and village and an attempt to establish an equilibrium between them.

1. Issued at Allahabad on 5 February 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. This was drafted by Jawaharlal

Maintenance of the public peace irrespective of army measures that the Government may adopt for the purpose—the Congress must shoulder the responsibility for maintaining the public peace and of doing its utmost in this behalf both in urban and rural areas. A chain of men or women, in charge of this work in their respective areas, and responsible to the Congress organization, but not necessarily Congressmen, should be built up from the village and the part of a *mohalla* right up to the district. It may not be possible to get suitable persons at the start in every village and every *mohalla*. A beginning should at once be made with larger areas and those in charge of these units should be asked to make the necessary appointments for the smaller units under their jurisdiction. The duties of such persons will consist mainly of establishing and maintaining contacts with the people in their locality seeking their cooperation in the protection of that area and the maintenance of peace, the collection of necessary statistics from that area, and the propagation of such instructions or information as may be received from the district headquarters.

Scarcity of food and other articles of daily use, high prices, growth of unemployment, and difficulties in transport, are already causing economic distress among large numbers of people, and their distress is likely to increase in the near future and become a formidable problem. This work is thus a very important part of our programme. It has so far been entirely neglected by the Government. The problem can only be tackled with a measure of success by the widespread growth of cottage and small-scale industries and by aiming, as far as possible, at self-sufficiency in each area in regard to food and clothing and other necessaries. In particular, a village, or a group of villages, should grow at least enough of foodgrains and produce enough of khadi for its own purposes.

The problem of scarcity of foodgrains, especially in cities, should be tackled, in so far as possible, immediately in cooperation with the grain dealers and other like merchants and propaganda must be carried on against hoarding and profiteering, so as to ensure the supply of grain to the public at reasonable rates.

Congressmen should invite the cooperation of all sections, notably the propertied classes, in the organization of relief, and an attempt should be made to provide suitable alternative occupation to those thrown out of work. Hand-spinning and hand-weaving have a primary importance in this connection. Besides giving economic relief to large numbers, they will help to ease the situation caused by the scarcity and rising price of cloth. Attempts should also be made to introduce new cottage industries and handicrafts and to produce substitutes for such manufactured

goods as the market cannot easily supply now. This is essentially a field where local initiative has the fullest scope.

This Province has very little to fear from air raids and, in any event, the possible danger is confined to a few urban localities. In the event of an emergency arising, some simple rules and methods understood by the people will be of far greater value than elaborate and expensive arrangements on paper which can seldom be translated into practice and which create panic where no panic is at all necessary or desirable. The U.P.P.C.C. will issue at an early date a pamphlet giving simple directions in regard to air precautions. Congress workers and organizers, and more especially those in charge of *mohallas*, should render all possible service in case of emergency and in the cities where this can be arranged, should receive training in first aid, nursing, fire-fighting etc. Such training is useful in itself and adds considerably to the efficiency of the worker. These workers, it should be noted, need not necessarily be Congressmen but they should work under the Congress discipline. Congressmen will avoid conflict with the authorities.

In all these activities envisaged for Congressmen, they can only render effective service to the people with the full cooperation of the people. They will therefore seek this cooperation from all sections of the population irrespective of religion, class or political opinion, and should also be prepared to cooperate in these tasks with other organizations working in this behalf.

The work outlined above requires careful planning and constant attention. In particular, it requires an organization, widespread, responsible and flexible, and in touch with the mass of the people. The principle of making each worker definitely responsible for the particular work entrusted to him should be followed, and he should be required to report at fixed intervals to his superior authority.

In cities each ward or *mohalla* should be divided into convenient parts consisting of approximately fifty to a hundred houses, and each such part should be put in responsible charge of a worker. In rural areas, each village or group of villages should also be put in charge of a worker.

The district Congress committee should appoint an individual in charge of all this work in the district and he should seek his own associates and colleagues who will be responsible to him and through him to the district committee. The committee may appoint, if it so chooses, separate individuals in charge of separate departments of activity and these persons should then function as a small committee in order to coordinate their activities. In districts where there are city Congress committees, the district Congress committee and the city Congress committee may nominate separately the organisers of their respective

areas; or, if it is prepared, the two may meet together to elect one person in charge of the whole area. The district Congress committee as well as the city Congress committee, where such exists, will exercise general supervision over the work in their districts or cities. If the D.C.C. so chooses, it may appoint a small committee to do this supervision on its behalf. Fortnightly reports should be submitted by all persons in charge of any area or any particular work. This work of organization should be completed as rapidly as possible.

The first work that should be undertaken by the persons in charge of each area will be to collect statistics from that city or village area. These statistics should consist of:

1. Number of men, women and children.
2. Cottage, small-scale industries and handicrafts.
3. The food situation.
4. The number of spinners and weavers.
5. The number of unemployed and those likely to become unemployed in the near future owing to the consequences of the war and the cessation of their normal businesses.
6. Doctors, nurses, dispensaries &c. in the area.
7. In cities — open spaces in the area.
8. Available accommodation both in towns and villages for refugees and evacuees.
9. Possible alternative means of transport in case the present means fail.
10. In villages the extent of food crops raised and their sufficiency or otherwise for the local population. The possibility of substituting the present crops for foodgrains.
11. Number of wells available.

Each small area, village or part of a city, should raise people from that area for service and protection against unsocial elements in times of emergency. Such workers will serve only in their respective localities and may consist of other than Congressmen. They will undertake to serve all people equally without regard to religion or sect, to observe discipline and to adhere to peaceful methods. They will not be drilled and need not have uniforms, but simple distinguishing badges may be supplied to them. They may be required, if necessity arises, for watch and ward duty in their own areas.

All organizers and workers should see to it that there is no panic or uneasiness in their areas and the population develops self-reliance and the capacity for self-help in times of need. Communal unity must

always be emphasized and encouraged. Continuous propaganda should be carried on in favour of cottage and small-scale industries and the consumption of their products. In cities as in villages, special centres of spinning may be organized. The state of the grain market should be continually kept under observation and contact maintained with the grain dealers. In rural areas the ideal of self-sufficiency in food and clothing must be stressed and worked for.

A special effort should be made to approach the women of each locality with a view to organize them and train them for service when possible. In cities, first aid and nursing training should be given to them.

37. Workers and the War[1]

After several years I am participating today in the meeting of the Trade Union Congress. Thirteen years ago I got a chance to become the President of the Congress.[2] I regret that during these thirteen years I was not much in touch with the work of the Congress. I had contacts with the peasantry, workers and the general public, but I remained quite aloof from the work of the Trade Union Congress in particular. The main reason for this was that during this period of thirteen years, I remained in jail for five years and for some years outside India. During this and the remaining period, I was busy in other works. The condition of the Trade Union Congress was such that on account of party factions and internal disputes I was wondering what useful purpose I could serve by joining it. It was for this reason also that I did not participate in its activities. I am, therefore, glad today that I have again been able to participate in the meeting of this Congress. I am glad to learn, as the President has just now observed, that the various differences which arose in this Congress have been removed, and the various groups have sunk their differences and have gathered together here. They have come here after a reconciliation. But it is feared that fissures are opening

1. Inaugural speech at the 19th session of the A.I.T.U.C., Kanpur, 8 February 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.
2. Jawaharlal was President of the All India Trade Union Congress in 1929. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 27-80.

out again on account of the controversy about India's attitude towards the war.[3]

I am participating in your meeting after years and have today come to Cawnpore after a year and a half. I am greatly worried. I wonder what I should say to the Trade Union Congress at the present juncture because you and I are bound by a common tie. I have such ties with the people of Cawnpore, with its brave workers, with the *mazdoor* party and with everybody else that I do not know what I should tell you on this occasion. This is a long tale. There are so many points to be dealt with. I do not know on what point I should speak to you. I also wonder whether I would again get an opportunity of attending the Trade Union Congress and I also do not know when the Trade Union Congress will meet again. It is a strange world. The political situation keeps changing.

No one can say whether we will do the same thing tomorrow what we are doing today, and whether the Trade Union Congress will continue to enjoy its present national status. The world is changing fast. The session of your Congress was going to be held in Calcutta. But emergency was promulgated there.[4] Apart from emergency a number of other laws have been promulgated by the Governor there. Hence your Congress could not hold its session there and had to be postponed. It was decided to hold it here. No one can say when emergency will be promulgated in Cawnpore or in the whole province. It is not impossible that it may be enforced in the whole of India. Even martial law might be imposed. It is not a mere conjecture. All these developments are possible. I, therefore, wonder when its session would be held in future and whether I would get an opportunity to participate in it.

These thoughts are passing through my mind. What a strange world it is! As I was listening to the speech of Dr. Pillai,[5] I was also thinking

3. The President of the A.I.T.U.C., V.R. Kalappa, attacked the formation of a rival organisation "under the guise of anti-fascist front, so soon after unity was achieved after ten years of hard struggle." In November 1941, M.N. Roy, Jamnadas Mehta, M.A. Khan and others planned to form an Indian Federation of Labour. Kalappa therefore insisted that "in order to avoid future splits unity should be based on some sound democratic principles so that all principal questions as well as questions of strikes and affiliation with any foreign organisation be decided by three-fourths majority."
4. On 24 December 1941, by a Government notification, a state of emergency was declared in Calcutta.
5. P.P. Pillai (1894-1977); Indian representative in the International Labour Organisation, 1929-47; permanent representative of India in the United Nations, 1947-49; Ambassador to Japan, 1949; his works include *India and the I.L.O.* and *Labour in South-East Asia.*

over it. Some of his observations[6] were reasonable but some of them were in my opinion not reasonable. He has placed only one side of the picture before you. I have no complaint against him. But what picture is there before you? What I see is that rivers of blood are flowing, great empires are collapsing, a tempest is raging, lakhs of people are dying, countries are falling, and calamities are visiting the people. Now this bloodshed has come close to your country. I cannot shut my eyes to it. I try to understand it. Is there peace, progress, reputation and honour in this world? Everything has ended here. Why should we shoulder the burden of others? We are not the custodians of the world. We are only the custodians of this country. How long are we to bear the burden of others? We have to take care of our own country. Others may go to hell or heaven, let us talk of our own world. When all others are becoming free why should we remain slaves? When we think over any matter, we have to think about the whole world. We have to think about our duties, our sufferings, our subjection, and matters relating to our freedom. Some of our brethren raise slogans these days. It is good to raise slogans. But there is a time for doing so. Why should such slogans be raised as have not been approved by the Congress and the general public? Raising of slogans in the name of the general public does not mean that the people of the country are weak. Do they want the public to adopt their slogans by resorting to force and goondaism? I do not think that the city of Cawnpore is a believer in the cult of the lathi, but it is possible that some people may drag the country backwards by raising wrong slogans. The only slogan of the workers of the world is: "Workers of the world unite."

Think, what the workers of the world are doing today? They are cutting each other's throats. They are attacking each other. The peasants of the world are in fact workers who are fighting among themselves, and cutting each other's throats. It is the workers who are producing armaments in factories and are thereby bringing about the destruction of each other. Put this side of the picture before you. Such a slogan,

6. In his speech he emphasized that the impact of war and an objective view of its developments in Malaya and Burma compelled Indian labour to take full stock of the situation afresh and to define the principles and the ultimate objective for which it stood. Indian labour, at this critical time, had to play an important role in achieving victory for democracy.

that this is the "people's war"[7] is not likely to take you towards freedom. These people have no right to deceive the world by raising such slogans. The world is not prepared to believe in such slogans. The condition of the world is very complicated and abnormal.

It is the workers and peasants of the world who, by arming themselves with guns and producing aeroplanes, are destroying each other's countries. This is the condition of the world today. There are the workers of Germany, workers of England, workers of other countries and workers of our country. The war is raging. Today the British Government is ruling over us. In India factories are running. But workers forget that their country is on the verge of destruction, is uneasy, wants freedom and is in a state of bondage. It would be no wonder when the time comes it may take a bold step for freedom, and for bringing about revolution. The people of those countries, where the governments are in the hands of workers and peasants, fight for their fatherlands. When we sympathise with other countries and their freedom, how can we forget the freedom of our own country? We should first of all think of our own country. Being in a state of bondage we should put the question of the freedom of our country in the forefront. There is not the slightest hope of better conditions for workers and peasants during the present regime. If Dr. Pillai ponders over this coolly, this point will become quite clear to him. We should form an opinion after considering the conditions of other countries also. The condition of the world is changing very rapidly. We can think of the freedom of other countries only when we are ourselves free. Now there is not much time to think over. There are many obstacles in our way. But our country will achieve its freedom by overcoming these obstacles. Now, such a time has come that it is difficult for anyone to say what is going to happen in future. We have expressed our sympathy with Russia and Spain but not with fascism and Nazism. But this does not mean that we should put an end to our struggle for freedom and start helping the British Government. It is impossible that we should bow our heads before this British Government. Now the position is that the British regime is coming to an end. It is not competent enough to grant us freedom. We have to achieve freedom ourselves.

7. After the Soviet Union's entry into the war on 21 June 1941, on 15 December 1941, the Politbureau of the Communist Party of India embraced the "people's war" policy: "We are a practical party, and in a new situation it is our task not only to evolve a new form of struggle for it, but also to advance new slogans appropriate to the new stage, suiting the new form of our national movement. The keystone of our party, which guides all our practical political activity, is, 'Make the Indian people play a people's role in the 'people's war.'"

But I am sure the peasants and workers of India will win freedom. Except for a few persons no one wants to give help in the war. If I say at this time that the British Government should be given help in the war then no one would listen to me. As you love me and respect me, you will listen to me but will not act upon what I say because this is against human sentiment. I will not venture to utter such a thing. As long as the country does not get freedom, it is futile to think of giving any help. You know in what position the British Government is placed today. The war is going on for two years and a half. Fierce battles are being fought. You have seen that so far it has not achieved anything meritorious. This British nation did not prove itself a pastmaster in the art of war as is given out. The country of Malaya has fallen victim to the war. The British may or may not have won any battle but in Malaya they have indeed won one battle which is known by the name of the Battle of Kalanga.[8]

What kind of battle that was, I will tell you. Indian labourers were working there in the tea-gardens. They went on a strike. These labourers wanted that they should be given the same wages as were given to the Chinese labourers. Small planters considered the demand of the Indians reasonable but big planters rejected their demand. All the planters decided that no one should raise wages separately. On this point the labourers struck work. To these labourers the supply of water was stopped. Water could not be had from anywhere else. They began to die of thirst. A majority of them were from Madras. They could not even buy rice from the shops. It was not permitted. They had no coupons to buy rice. They were in distress. But they continued the hartal. Military was requisitioned. The soldiers were Indians and the officers Englishmen. The Australian troops came first but their officers said they had not come there to settle domestic disputes and they refused to obey. Indian troops were then requisitioned. The officers were Englishmen. They said to Indian soldiers, "The labourers are rioting, open fire on them." Fire was opened on the labourers at Kalanga and a large number of them were killed. This is called the Battle of Kalanga. This battle the English have surely won.

I ask Dr. Pillai what the International Labour Organisation has done for the labourers. My blood boils and I am filled with rage that the British made our forces open fire on the labourers. This has become our practice that in the name of democracy we open fire upon others and make them slaves like ourselves. Could our National Government tolerate such a thing? I am fed up with the talk of democracy.

8. See *ante*, p. 70.

How long am I to hear it? It is no longer necessary to hear it. Every day some speech is broadcast from Delhi and also by the B.B.C. from London. How long is one to hear these speeches when we are seeing before our very eyes that the edifice of imperialism is falling and is being uprooted? The situation is that in Asia, British imperialism today exists only because of China, and in Europe it is safe because of Russia. Because of China and Russia it is alive in the world though its strength is decreasing every day. It has no power to revive itself, and in India the English bureaucracy has the same pride, the same snobbery, the same bombast, the same enjoyment and merry-making as before as if there were no war in progress. This then is the condition of the officers in our country. They forget that a bloody war is raging outside this country. We have every sympathy with Russia in the war which it is waging. But it is impossible for us to give up the fight for freedom which the Congress has started. So long as we are not free, India will not be in a position to render any help whatsoever and there is no reason why the Congress should change its attitude as long as there is no change in the policy of the British Government. People argue that I have been inconsistent and have changed my attitude by not giving help to China and Russia. This appears to be an absurd allegation because Russia and China are not fighting for the freedom of others. They are fighting for their own freedom, honour and safety. So long as India does not attain freedom, to help Russia in this war is to strengthen the chain of our own slavery. You may very well say that we should help the British because Britain, China and Russia are united and so this war is ours. But what we have learnt so far, we cannot forget. Whosoever attacks us, we will face him. United we should face him who oppresses us. We have learnt to fight and to face and until we achieve freedom we will continue to do so. Let the British go to hell!

If even Germany or Japan comes, united we shall face them also. We have no grudge against Germany. But we dislike her ways and her dictatorship. I feel very much offended if anyone advises that we should help the British because the conditions would worsen if Japan or Germany come here. Has it become our lot to remain slaves of someone or the other—slaves of Japan and Germany if not of the British? I may tell such people that we shall not remain slaves of anyone. The British rule for their own selfish ends. Great capitalists are earning lakhs of rupees but our peasants and workers are starving. This is the condition of our country. My blood boils when I hear someone say 'Let the enemy come, we shall bow before him; let him rule over us.' We are fighting for freedom for the last twenty or forty years, and we cannot tolerate anyone else coming and ruling over us. I cannot say what will

happen. A country which fights for freedom cannot tolerate foreign domination. We shall all face the enemy in the same way as we are fighting the British Government today. The people should organise themselves in accordance with the orders of the Congress and snatch freedom from this British Government whose roots have already given way. The Englishmen who are in India are still posing like *tanashah*. They are worthless and they do not know how to rule.

In the name of great principles like democracy and patriotism we are asked to help in this war. Appeals are made to the public. If those worthy people, who make such appeals, think with a balanced mind it will be clear to them that these principles are inapplicable when crores of people are hungry and marked, and are dying of starvation.

Is our country free today? When our country is not free and the machinery of the Government is not run with our consent, the question of help in the war does not arise at all. All factories and industrial concerns in India are producing war material. In your city of Cawnpore orders worth crores of rupees are being placed and these workers are manufacturing material only to kill the workers of other countries. It is only the workers and the peasants who are helping in the bloodshed. It is the peasants who are in the armies and are cutting one another's throats. In spite of this war, the Government never endeavoured to give a fillip to the Indian industry. I have been the President of the National Planning Committee. It has always been the desire of the Government that this Committee should not work. When I was in jail the papers that were received in regard to this Committee were not delivered to me. In the present war there is a great need for aeroplanes and lorries. They could have been manufactured in India. Ships could also have been built here but the British Government did not want these things to be manufactured in India because this would have meant a great loss to the British capitalists. Indians were ready to invest money and manufacture all these things but the Government did not permit them to do so. The Government formed an Eastern Group Supply Council with the object of exporting raw material from India to Australia for the manufacture of such things as should have been manufactured here. Do you see that in this way all the profit is being earned by Australia? South Africa also shares it as new factories are set up there as well. This Council met at Delhi. British officers also participated in it. They were quite inefficient and incompetent. They should be sent to the front to die. Those who dream of residing at Simla and Delhi for six months are not fit to rule. Their power is coming to an end and mighty nations are falling. No one knows what will happen tomorrow. My heart is filled with grief.

Now the question is, what is the British Government going to do at this juncture? It is absurd to think that it would grant us Swaraj. It has no power now to grant it. Now the question is how can we achieve it? You can achieve it when you have power to do so. We should organise ourselves in order to achieve freedom. Eevry district should be organised. We should improve our conditions and put a stop to party factions. Propaganda should be carried on in every village and in every *mohalla* so that we may be able to advance resolutely. If Indians have strength in them, freedom can be achieved in no time. We should sink our differences.

The citizens of Cawnpore are brave. Here one thousand five hundred persons were arrested for offering satyagraha and an equal number of persons offered themselves for arrest but the police did not arrest them. The citizens of Cawnpore are well known for their bravery since 1857, but it is unfortunate that people of your city and district quarrel among themselves. To quarrel among ourselves is not bravery. It is a sign of weakness. Now is the time of trial. Do not weaken yourselves by quarrelling among yourselves.

I do not think that aeroplanes will visit our Province and drop bombs. And if it does happen we shall have to face it. If cities like Cawnpore and Allahabad are bombed, the A.R.P. arrangements that are being made will prove useless. Besides, whatever the Government is doing is devoid of common sense and is worthless. It cannot protect us. All this is a mere show on the part of the Government and nothing else. I have just come from Gorakhpur. Arrangements for the protection of the people are being made there. Trenches are being dug in order that the people of Gorakhpur may take shelter in them. What protection can these trenches afford? The Government only knows to do worthless things. We do not want to stand in its way. It may do as it pleases. India's defence can never be properly organised unless it is entrusted to the people. You should not be panic-stricken during the raid.

Time is very short. You should make your arrangements. It is quite possible that trains may be stopped. Such things can happen. You should organise yourselves in cooperation with the Congress. You should forget your disputes. If you go on quarrelling among yourselves, how will you protect yourselves? It is useless to expect anything from the British Government, because it cannot defend even itself. It only knows how to fire on an unarmed people, just as in Malaya. Had there been our government, it would never have tolerated such an incident.

Before concluding I want to say that the Trade Union Congress should sink its differences and the two groups should work together; I am not suggesting that the decision of the Trade Union Congress should be such

WITH MADAME CHIANG KAI-SHEK, FEBRUARY 1942

ARRIVING AT A PUBLIC MEETING, DELHI, FEBRUARY 1942

as may be against the voice of the Congress and the country. Your President has stated that you have a right to take part in politics. You should seriously ponder over it. But the country is faced with a situation in which it is necessary for the people to have a policy which should not weaken the country. I hope there will be unity in the country. We should forget all our differences. There are, here in India, trade unions, kisan sabhas and various other organisations. All these should have a common policy. They should talk of nothing else but their motherland. If anyone comes forward with a new idea which is against the views of the public such an idea would be dangerous for the country.

38. A World Federation of Nations[1]

We are living in the midst of a great war and we are very conscious of this. The war is big, and yet it is only a part of the tremendous revolution that is going on around us. Great nations have gone down and empires have cracked up before our eyes. But even greater changes in the whole structure of the world are likely to come. No one can say what changes are going to take place. But every intelligent person must realise that the whole world is in a process of dissolution, and will give place to something new. To think in terms of the old world which is disappearing, and to imagine that the future will be after the pattern of the past, is to lose touch with the reality and to perish with the past.

During times of war, our passions are aroused. We are excited, we are horrified, we are duped by the propaganda, campaign of hatred and mutual condemnation that surround us. It becomes difficult to understand what is happening and still more difficult to appreciate the causes of the events. We think in terms of nations and national leaders like Churchill, Roosevelt, Hitler, Stalin and Chiang Kai-shek. These leaders are playing an important part and yet they may be just puppets of destiny moved about hither and thither by the elemental forces that have been let loose. There will be no rest for these forces or for the world until a new equilibrium has been attained.

1. Speech at Progressive Club, Allahabad, 9 February 1942. From *National Herald*, 10 February 1942.

Why did the war come? Because the world lacked equilibrium and huge unresolved problems confronted it. No country and no political and economic structure which cannot solve the major problems of today can survive. Western civilisation has arrived at a stage when it cannot solve its problems without changing itself. It did not change itself by its own free will and now it is going to be changed through the storm of war.

We have often been told of our failings in India and they are many indeed. Above all we are not efficient. If efficiency is a true test of civilisation or if a successful war by modern means is a test, then it would appear that Hitler and the Japanese would survive these tests and Western nations would deteriorate. Efficiency and like virtues are equally important and if a country lacks them, it fails ultimately to find stability. During the last two hundred years, the imposing structure of Western industrial civilisation rose before our eyes. It had to its credit magnificent achievements and it dominated the world, yet after a brief span of some years it started cracking up. Those achievements will no doubt survive but that structure will have to undergo a vital change, if it is to survive.

And looking back over the long period of history I am amazed at the inner strength that India and China have shown through repeated trials and crises. They have managed to keep up that cultural inheritance which has been their hallmark. China impresses me tremendously, so also India, when I consider these past five or six thousand years since Mohenjo Daro. It is undoubted that innumerable weaknesses and failings have gathered around us, yet something of the old strength continues. I feel that this type of strength has been somehow lacking in Europe for the last two hundred years. And the peoples of Europe and America, proud of their achievements, became conceited and pompous and overbearing, not realising that while they had much to teach, they had much to learn also, that while they had built mighty structures, they had missed often enough the inner core of things.

Today death and destruction go on a large scale and people talk of victory over this country or that. If we are wise enough we should try to understand the deeper causes of events, try to find out where we really lack which makes us fall to pieces, and try to picture the new world as to what it shall be and fight for this. Battles and wars may be won largely by the army but a vast revolution is not going to be so simply disposed of. It has to be won by a true psychological understanding of events and by the courage to face them.

I am concerned with the fate of the world because I cannot isolate my country from the rest and yet inevitably India counts for me much as

nothing else can. But that India itself counts as a part of that larger world. Whatever happens to my country and my people affects me powerfully. On no account am I going to submit to a humiliation of India whatever the consequences. It is a small matter after all if individuals perish provided the spirit and the soul of a nation survive.

Professors and others know more than I do about the many problems that we have in India—political, economic, social and others. Yet behind all these problems there is a psychological problem and during all these twenty years and more we have been at grips with this psychological problem—how to save the spirit and soul of India and how to remove the fear complex from our people? Unless this is done all else is immaterial. I think we have succeeded in a large measure though much remains to be done. I judge everything, and all political activity, from this psychological viewpoint—what reaction will it have on people's courage?

So far as the British Empire is concerned, there is no doubt that it is over. As an Empire it already seems to belong to history. The group of nations with which Britain is assisted might win the war, but the British Empire will not survive this war. As far as I am concerned the conception of empire and the very mention of the word irritate me. The sooner the empires end, the better. Today, strangely enough, the main props of Britain, without whom the British Empire would have collapsed completely, are America, Russia and China. America for the time being is far away and can only give supplies. It is mostly Russia and China that are keeping up the British structure in Europe and Asia.

I feel sure that in the future India, China and Russia will be drawn closer to one another for they have so much in common. But their drawing closer would not be against any other group or groups of nations. For my part I want a world federation of nations. America is a young country full of youth and vitality and must inevitably go ahead, though many fundamental changes will have to take place there. The future will probably see Asia and America in the forefront and not Europe as during the past few generations.

39. Power Must be in National Hands[1]

Question: It has been suggested in some quarters that Marshal Chiang Kai-shek's visit[2] to India and his talks with Indian leaders might lead to a better appreciation of the need for the Government and political parties to pull together for the maximum war effort.[3] What is your comment on this question?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I decline to make a statement on the Generalissimo's visit at this stage but the inferences that some quarters are drawing from the visit as regards its influence on the internal situation are entirely unjustified.

Q: *How far in your opinion do the proposals embodied in Sir* T.B. Sapru's cable to Mr. Churchill[4] provide a practical solution of the present situation in India?

JN: There is no solution of the Indian problem except full transferance of power to national hands responsible to the people. It is obvious that power cannot be shared by two elements pulling in different directions. Presumably that is what the Government of India thinks and

1. Interview to *The Statesman*, New Delhi, 13 February 1942. From *The Statesman*, 14 February 1942.
2. Chiang Kai-shek accompanied by Madame Chiang visited India from 9 to 21 February 1942. See *post*, section 5.
3. The *Times*, in an editorial on 11 February 1942, hoped that General Chiang "will no doubt make the acquaintance of leaders of Indian opinion and will be able to impress them with his own conviction that the fate of all southern and eastern Asia, including India, lay upon the outcome of the struggle." *The Tribune*, in an editorial on 12 February 1942, wrote, "there is every reason to hope that the Chinese General's visit to India, though naturally it has not and cannot possibly have any direct political bearings, will have a vitally important political consequence in expediting a solution of the impasse in India. Should this hope be realised its immediate effect would be a material intensification of the war-effort in India, exactly the thing that is needed for a speedy Allied victory in the eastern war."
4. Thirteen prominent non-party and Liberal leaders, including Sapru, sent an appeal to Churchill in Washington on 4 January 1942, urging him to declare that India would no longer be treated as a dependency, and that henceforth her constitutional position and powers would be identical with those of other units of the British Commonwealth. Churchill responded to the appeal on 20 January 1942 and promised a statement and discussion of the Indian problem in the House of Commons.

perhaps that is why it wants to keep all power to itself. Sharing power would bring incompatible elements together which is undesirable at any time and more so at a moment of crisis.

Q: Since you maintain that power must be in national hands, what difference will such a transferance make on the war effort?

JN: It is patent that a free National Government would be intensely interested in the rapid development of Indian industry. In fact the whole future of India is bound up with this problem, as also the present crisis. India has enormous resources, she has scientific ability and the setting up of a National Government would make a vast difference to our production immediately as well as after the war is over. Then, again, the whole economic situation in India requires immediate handling of the problem in order to avoid the growing confusion as we are gradually approaching a situation when scarcity of food will add greatly to the discontent. No foreign government, even if it were competent, could face this successfully, much less the present Government. Only a National Government can do so. This is why the Congress has adopted a programme for dealing with the situation so far as it can.

40. The World Revolution[1]

The present international situation is a very important matter for us, for it involves India's reaction to it and India's attitude in regard to it. The situation is not merely of war but much bigger than a war. We usually think in military terms, but it is not the biggest and the most effective army that wins the war. That is an extremely limited view which can mislead us.

We are passing through a big revolution. The biggest the world has ever seen. Other revolutions in the past, however big, had affected only certain parts of the world. This one is going to affect the whole world, which has become inter-related. The only way to understand the causes of this war is to look into the fundamental economic and political contradictions of the present-day society.

Since the last Great War about 120 international conferences have been held to solve the world's problems. But none of them succeeded

1. Speech at the office of the Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee, 21 February 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 22 February 1942.

in solving any of the problems although many of the big statesmen of the world who met realised that failure to solve these problems would invite disaster. This failure was because the solutions suggested were beyond the purview of the existing political and economic structures of the various countries. Ultimately this war came. Some people say that this war is due to the ambitious designs of Hitler and Mussolini. But this is not true. This war was brought about by certain serious contradictions in the modern society. Unless these contradictions were removed the conditions that caused the war would continue. This war might be stopped without these contradictions being solved. But that will not be the end of the war but only an armistice. The problem of war cannot be solved in a military way. The war will not end before another two or three years. It is not easy to defeat Japan and Germany. Nor is it easy to defeat America and Russia. Germany is certainly aiming at a big offensive in the spring, but Russia has not only shown a great spirit of resistance and fighting qualities, but she has the advantage of a stable economic and political structure which very few states are capable of maintaining under the present circumstances. Even if a second German offensive succeeds, I am confident Russia will not be down and out and surrender.

I am sure a new economic and political order will emerge out of this war. The British Empire, as we know it, is passing. There may be a union between England and America on economic and political basis. But the British Government is reactionary. Mr. Churchill is a brilliant leader but he has a Victorian mind. In military matters he may bring himself to think on modern lines, but he has been a deadweight in the sense of real psychological leadership. By brilliant speech he can give a moral tone but unless one has a big conception of the post-war reconstruction, he cannot be a real leader.

I do not know what Hitler stands for. But this much can be said to his credit that he represents something against the defunct order and therefore he could give to the people he led a psychological strength apart from the military strength. Hitler seems to be an agent of destiny to the extent that the days of small nations are now past, in spite of Mr. Jinnah's desire for Pakistan. Even a wrong motive can lead to certain necessary results. The Soviet Union is trying to solve its problems in a more thorough, scientific, and basic way. Hitler, in the way he dealt with unemployment, which England and America failed to solve, represented some elements of a progressive order. But I dislike all that Hitler stands for with his hideous gospel. Hitler is trying to solve problems in a wrong way and not in a right and permanent way. I will resist Hitler and Japan with all my might. But the British Government is still hugging to the old methods and old ways.

The present war may lead to a stalemate and there might arise revolutions out of this stalemate. Then what are we going to do? From the very beginning the Congress has been pursuing a national as well as an international policy. It has been following them consistently. Now certain confusions have arisen, because Stalin has called upon us to adopt a certain international policy.[2] If we adopt a policy because Stalin has asked us to adopt it, it would be a wrong policy, a wrong method of approach. If I have learnt anything about socialism and Communism it is this that we cannot introduce certain rules and principles only because these are followed by one country. The dominating factor is that Soviet Russia must be saved. But how to save it? Nevertheless, it is dangerous to combine any national policy with another. Even today Soviet policy is far more nationalistic than it is Communistic. If you listen to Moscow broadcasts, you will get abundant proof of this. They have adapted their policy to their national circumstances. Our heart is with China and Russia, but ultimately we have to act in the national context. If we lose sight of it, we are lost.

With war advancing towards our borders, a great responsibility might come to us. It might come any day and any moment, then it would be too late to raise an army for effective defence. If the war has proved anything it is that ineffective resistance is the greatest folly. The pitiable condition of France and some other small countries abundantly proves this. Spending money on ineffective defence is a waste of money. From the practical point of view what we can do is not to surrender. We do not know what exactly we would do. There are hundreds of possibilities. We might have to undertake satyagraha which might lead to shooting. That will sow the seeds of resistance. You know that no regime can survive the right form of resistance. Certainly we are not going to be the tools of the British. We must raise the tone of the people by psychological and organisational means.

During the Bengal Provincial Congress meeting, there were talks about the establishment of a parallel government. This is indulging in tall talk and getting lost in words. A parallel government cannot be brought about by a resolution. The Congress workers should organise volunteer corps for the relief of the refugees and they may also take the

2. The official journal of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, *Bolshevik*, in its issue of September 1941, carried an article by I. Lemin, which called upon democratic peoples to side with the Allies against fascism and Hitler. R. Palme Dutt, of the British Communist Party, in the September issue of the *Labour Monthly*, told the Indian Communists that their support to the war should be unconditional, and asked them not to insist on their achievement of independence.

A.R.P. training. They must move about and ask the people not to get panicky. Freedom from panic is most important in air raids. Shelters or other measures cannot compare with it. People who remain cool and calm during air raids suffer the least.

Question: What is your reaction to the Communist Party's call of a 'people's war'?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The bane of Communism and socialism has been that socialists and Communists spend most of their energies in fighting each other instead of fighting the common enemy.

41. Students and the War[1]

We are living in a world of uncertainty. None of us knows what tomorrow will bring to us. It is an exciting world, and an interesting world, a fascinating world, provided of course we do not get frightened. We can witness the interesting and fascinating changes that occur, provided we have in us something of the gambling spirit of life and are not afraid of what happens. We are fairly good at the human game of life and death, we can see the interesting transformations the world is undergoing today and play our part. After all, we all have to play the game of life and death. We indulge in so many activities which we call revolutionary activities in life and shout various slogans. But somehow the time has passed for such activities. More important tasks call each one of us to respond. We do not know how many of us have strength enough to respond, neither you can say nor I, because we do not know how we will function in crises. But it is known to us that sufficient strength is required. It is, therefore, necessary that we should prepare ourselves. People are frightened when the unexpected happens but if the expected happens the shock is not so great. Therefore, prepare yourselves and also help others to prepare themselves.

Obviously a large number of students can play enormous part in great cities like Calcutta in controlling the situation, in preventing panic and excitement. What creates havoc in emergency is fear and panic. Nothing is so dangerous as people getting seized with fear and becoming panicky. Therefore, I beg of you, shout slogans if you like, but still

1. Address at Calcutta University, 21 February 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 22 February 1942.

do not attach importance to these slogans, look at the facts as they are. We are accustomed to shouting slogans on Indian soil. But if war comes to Indian soil shouting of slogans would be of no help. You will have to face the situation in a real way and not in an imaginary way. I do not care so much about the policy which this party or that party might adopt. Help the party you want to, if you can. But far greater things are happening in the world today and if you isolate yourselves from the mainstream of internationalism, you will do so at your peril. I do not know what changes will have taken place when I meet you next. Sweeping changes are taking place in the world today. We do not know who amongst us will survive. Whatever happens let us play our great part as men and women. If we can do that, I am sure all will be well.

I refuse to speak in English. Take it as you like, but I am going to speak in Hindi and in no other language. I would have been glad if I could have addressed you in Bengali. I am sorry, it hurts me, that in an Indian function like this the proceedings should be conducted in a language of the foreigner.

Do you realise that the present-day world is undergoing tremendous changes? I purposely and deliberately started my speech in Hindi just to see its reaction upon you. You people talk about revolution and yet you conduct your proceedings in a language which is not yours. This is really detestable.

Even slogans you shout are in English. "Workers of the world unite", or "this is a people's war." Did you ever care to know whether your slogans were understood by the people? These slogans have some historical background and they have grown out of certain traditions of the working class. When you shout a slogan before the working class, it at once brings to their mind some impression of how the slogan was evolved. But if you go to a village in India and shout the same slogan it will carry no meaning to the villagers. They will repeat it merely as a catchphrase without understanding the meaning of it. The reason is that you are putting a slogan before them, firstly, in a language which they do not understand and, secondly, relating to a condition which is unreal to them.

What is required is that a speaker must be understood by the audience. Unfortunately for me, my education had not much to do with our language. That is a difficulty which I have felt while speaking to my countrymen. I have worked hard and have been successful in overcoming that difficulty to a great extent. I want to be understood. I know it is desirable that I should speak in Bengali in Bengal, in order to be understood and not to show off.

For some days past we have had two very eminent personalities in Calcutta, Marshal Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang Kai-shek. The Generalissimo is already a historic figure. He is a man of history. He controls not only the Chinese army but he is the head of the Government in China. He has a remarkable knowledge of foreign affairs. But he does not know a single European language or even a word of it. This is a thing worth remembering. Here is a man who is fighting a great war, fighting in such a way that he has astonished the whole world. When I was in China about two and a half years ago I happened to be invited to the British Embassy. I noticed that the cards on the table were written in the Chinese language. Such is the influence which the head of that country exercises over everyone who lives in that country. The language in which he speaks has become the language of the country for all practical purposes. If that could happen in China why should not we in India be able to do that? That is a lesson which is worth remembering.

42. No Compromise with Britain[1]

The inclusion even of progressive elements in the British Cabinet[2] would not bring about any change in the present British policy with regard to India. Some new persons have come to power, new persons who are supposed to be more independent-minded than the former men, and who have expressed a good deal of sympathy for India's freedom.[3] I do not believe that the Cabinet would be willing to accede to India's demands and hence there is no question of any compromise between the Congress and the British Government.

1. Speech at Muhammad Ali Park, Calcutta, 21 February 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 22 February 1942, and also from *The Hindustan Times*, 23 February 1942.
2. On 20 February 1942, Churchill appointed Stafford Cripps to his War Cabinet; Attlee became the Dominions Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister and Lord Beaverbrook retired from the War Cabinet.
3. On 8 February 1942, Cripps told Reuter, "In my view, the promise of Dominion Status to India should be made perfectly clear in terms Lord Balfour used in 1926, that is, that a Dominion would have the right to remain in or outside the British Commonwealth of Nations. That means the right of independence. If this right is promised after the war, then I believe that the present difficulties can be settled on that basis, and no doubt during the war India would be prepared to cooperate in the war effort, but such cooperation, I believe, is dependent on promise in clear and distinct terms."

The war is bound to bring tremendous changes in the present order. The new order may not be to your liking. Should you desire to have it according to your ideals and aspirations, you should strive for it and play your part. India, being a part of the world, cannot escape the effects of the war even if she is not invaded. The problem before you is not what you are going to do in case India is invaded. The onus of responsibility in this respect lies on the Government, but you know what kind of Government you have. Then the question is what should the people do. The statement issued by the Congress at the beginning of the war initiating its policy in this connection is in the right direction. Its first and foremost aim is the independence of India. The Congress has been expressing its opinion on the international affairs in a forceful manner for the last twelve years, and the importance of its opinion in international spheres has increased.

The war has now come near to your frontiers. The problem is whether you should strengthen the hands of your rulers in this war. The old attitude of the British Government towards India's demands still continues. That is regrettable no doubt. You must not look to any outsider for help. You must rely absolutely on your own inherent strength to achieve your independence. The pages of Indian history bear testimony to the fact how the lure of outside help has brought about India's slavery. The story of the imperialist venture of Japan and Germany is not unknown to you. Indians must stick to their own ideals even if they are difficult of achievement. But whatever happens, India will not bow down her head before any invader.

The Indian National Congress has repeatedly declared that if power is transferred to the people of this country, they will be responsible for their own defence but the British politicians are still repeating their blunders. If they had listened to the Congress two and a half years ago, the situation would have been different. We are prepared to take the responsibility even now. We may not be able to do things which we could have done before. But if that responsibility is given, we will not shirk it.

There is the immediate danger with the Japanese very near our borders. The A.R.P. work cannot be successfully carried out without the active cooperation of the public. Even in Britain the authorities have to work on popular lines before they can achieve any remarkable success. The problem is more complex in this country where there is no sympathy between the rulers and the people.

A great responsibility in this respect lies also on the people themselves. Congressmen should take up the work of service and of educating the public about certain fundamental methods of protection in case

of air raids. People should not get panicky; this will only increase their troubles.

43. Russia, China and the War[1]

I must apologise for not coming on time. I have come here direct from the station. The work which I had to do in this Conference[2] has in fact already been done efficiently and it would not be proper for me to speak now when Shrimati Sarojini Naidu has already spoken.[3] I want to lay before you some views in connection with this Conference. In fact, the organisers of this Conference have clearly explained its objectives. There are people of different views on this platform, as well as amongst you, but all of us have assembled here with a particular sympathy in our hearts. I have had sympathy with Soviet Russia for a long time. Certain things happened there which were not liked by many people but there is no reason why we should accept everything happening there blindly. Twenty-four or twenty-five years ago, when the revolution took place there, we being in bondage were naturally affected by it. The same problems of illiteracy and poverty which Russia faced are before us. Most countries today are facing the same problems though there may be slight variations. However the problems which are there in a small country like England are not there in India. We can learn something from England but our problems differ. For instance, there are great rivers here. On the one hand there are floods and on the other there is drought. Yet, we have failed to make use of the big rivers by not harnessing them for hydroelectricity and irrigation. But

1. Address at the Friends of the Soviet Conference, Lucknow, 22 February 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.
2. Jawaharlal was to inaugurate the Conference.
3. Sarojini Naidu in her presidential address paid tribute to the heroic resistance of the Russian people for their defence and deplored the attitude of imperialist nations which regarded Russia as an uncivilized nation under the iron curtain. The present war had changed the complexion and the understanding of the Soviet Union. Indians had to decide whether to become lackeys of the dying imperialist nation or to become the ancestors of tomorrow's great nation. She also paid tribute to the Chinese people.

such problems do not arise in England. There are no big rivers there; and if you look at the river on the banks of which I lived in Cambridge for three years, you will see that it is even smaller than many nullahs of Lucknow.

Russia is the biggest country in Europe, and China in Asia. So the revolution in Russia attracted our attention towards it. In Russia, as in India, there are a large number of diverse communities which differ with each other in every respect except that before the revolution they were all slaves. We can learn a lot from the manner in which the Russian Revolution solved this question. In Tazikistan, Samarkand, Bokhara and other places, only five per cent of the people were literate. But within a period of five years progress was made in all directions—education, medical health and industry. Progress cannot be made by people coming from outside, receiving fat salaries, and by opening new departments, but by a revolutionary spirit. The people of Tazikistan who were most backward in the Soviet Union have made remarkable progress.

Then war came. A formidable attack was launched by Germany on Russia. Germany concentrated her full force against Russia. There is no instance in history where any country invaded another country with such a huge force. The attack was made during the night without any warning. Russians resisted the attack. They were defeated several times. They had to fall back on many occasions. In spite of all adversities they have put up a splendid resistance which is unique in history. Uptil now no other country has been able to resist a formidable enemy for so long. Any other country subjected to such a huge attack, and defeated in so many battles, would have surrendered. But the Russians who were forced to retreat 500 miles are now advancing forward. They have extraordinary strength. They draw their strength from their socio-economic and political structure. The Russians have faced the crisis with determination and their economic structure has withstood all this calamity. All this shows that the economic structure which they have built has been instrumental in strengthening their country, raising their morale, improving their health and education and developing their industries. It is a wonderful achievement. By reading books on Russia you can know what steps they took to bring about this kind of advancement. You can take lessons from them and can learn the way in which they were able to make such a great progress and strengthen themselves.

China is also fighting a war against Japan. I came across a Chinese cook, who kept a note book in his pocket, in which he noted down the names of different countries and the number of days for which they were able to stand the attack. The names were of France, Holland,

Czechoslovakia etc. While France fell in three weeks' time, China has been fighting a strong country like Japan for four and a half years, bravely resisting their onslaughts.

When does such a thing happen? It happens only when people are free. It cannot happen in India because the people here have no hand in administration. Whatever strength we have, it cannot find an outlet. A slave country has her hands and feet tied. She cannot make progress. In the last twenty years we have succeeded in loosening our chains and have removed fear from our hearts by a novel method of nonviolence. Because of noncooperation and the civil disobedience movements we did make progress, but the progress was limited because we did not break the political and economic structure, although we advanced intellectually.

Today Russia and China have set an example of bravery and courage. We should take this lesson from them that the fight for real freedom should be infused with a spirit of courage and bravery. The questions which confront us today can be resolved if the nation becomes free and its path becomes clear. We will always be faced with new questions because the world is never free from questions, but we know one thing that the world in which we are living is coming to an end and so is the political and economic system. I hesitate to say as to what would be the next scene after the curtain has been raised, but I can say this much, that the world cannot ignore the new forces like powerful Russia. However, it is difficult to say what will happen in future.

This war has spread in the whole world but if you regard it only as a military warfare you are mistaken. If you have not understood the revolutionary forces behind this war you have not grasped the real meaning. Any nation which ignores these new forces may win the war by a powerful military force but it cannot stop another war taking place. You have to understand the revolutionary background of this war. A great change is taking place in the world today. Probably a more revolutionary period than the present one cannot be found in history.

The world has become interdependent. Countries in future can survive by mutual agreement. Just now Mrs. Naidu spoke of our respected Chinese guests who came here. Their visit has succeeded in strengthening the political relationship between China and India. I am sure that in the coming years the three countries, India, China and Russia, are going to be united in a common bond. These three countries adjoin each other and all the three are big countries. Although they are ideologically different from each other, yet they are facing the same problems. The ties between China and India are several thousand years old.

In a statement published in the papers today, Chiang Kai-shek has said, the relationship existing between India and ourselves is several thousand years old, our common boundary is 2,500 miles long, but a major war has never been fought between these two countries for the last thousand years.[4] This is a fact worthy of our consideration. The reason seems to be that these two countries always wanted peace and wanted to preserve their respective cultures. Now we see that this bond is again becoming strong and I visualise that China, Russia and India will shortly become closely interconnected. Now I declare this Conference open, although it had started quite some time ago. I request all of you to continue it.

4. In his message to the Indian people, Chiang Kai-shek stated that both India and China had identical interests—to fight fascist countries and secure real peace for the whole world. The struggle today "is one between freedom and slavery, between light and darkness, between good and evil, between resistance and aggression." To avoid misery and to see that civilization did not suffer, the anti-fascist front should be strengthened. He called upon Britain to give real political power to the Indians so that they might secure the required spiritual and material strength to fight the war.

44. The War Situation[1]

No individual is responsible for bringing about this war, which is in fact a revolution through which the world is passing today. Hitler and Mussolini are the apparent instruments of creating it, but, in fact, the real causes are the various circumstances and problems which are the outcome of the so-called peace arrived at after the last war. The world ever since then remained in virtual disorder because these problems remained unsolved despite many an international conference held for the purpose.

One of these problems was that of unemployment and even in America there were one crore and thirty thousand youths who had no work. There was something definitely wrong in the entire structure and the unrest in the population went on developing till it took the form of war.

Such wars will continue to take place until the vital problems—economic, political and others—which have surrounded the peoples of the

1. Address to students at Dar-ul-Uloom, Lucknow, 24 February 1942. From *National Herald*, 25 February 1942.

various countries are solved. There may be a peace after the present war, but there may be another war after a few years. All nations are aware of this bitter fact but their failure to bring about a solution despite their conferences is due to the fact that none of them is willing to accept a change in the established system of its Government.

There cannot be a permanent peace unless all nations unite together and arrive at a decision, agreeable to all, for a world federation. If this is not done each nation will go on trying to compete with another and the result will be another conflict. Britain was once so advanced in industry that London used to be called the workshop of the world. But other countries could not tolerate it. They also made improvements in their industry and thus threatened the supremacy of the British Government. The mastery of the world trade is now in American hands. The British Government is now finding it difficult to defend its position.

No one expected so many British setbacks in the war. The reading of the present international situation makes one fact clear that the question of British rule in India is now out of place. Its hold on India does not seem to continue for long. But much depends on the results of the German spring offensive against Russia. Russia is too vast a land to be conquered completely and a defeat of the Russians cannot be predicted. On the other hand, in Asia, the Chinese are the only people who can check the Japanese. The Germans can be defeated only by the Russians and the Japanese by the Chinese.

None can say how long the present war will continue. But the destruction of the present form of the world is a certainty and great changes are bound to result therefrom. The new order will wipe out the economic problems, and the disparity between the rich and the poor will be eliminated.

The war has approached the Indian borders and we are bound to feel the horror of its coming but we are helpless in doing anything. We have been too crippled by the British Government to move ourselves. However, we have to do something; we have life in us and we will not allow the country to be run down by any invaders. If Indians want to get rid of the British Government, they will also not tolerate the yoke of any other foreign power. Other foreign nations, through their radios, are tempting Indians with big promises but we are not to be bluffed again. Indians do not require the help of any foreign power to get independence. Despite all our indifference to the war we cannot escape the disasters of the war. We have also to make sacrifices and face the situation, whatever it may be, courageously and boldly. Our hands are tied and we are not in power so as to do what we want, but we should have that will and determination in us which can take us successfully through

all situations that may confront us on our path to the freedom of our country. The youths of today are the leaders of tomorrow and they must prepare themselves for all eventualities.

45. Greetings to the Detenus[1]

The old world totters and mighty changes are taking place before our eyes. Yet, many an old tradition of the British Government continues in India and among these is to keep detenus in prison and give them such treatment as to compel them often enough to hunger-strike. But, we may not forget our comrades and so I join in sending my greetings to them.

1. Lucknow, 24 February 1942. Message given to a rally organised on 25 February 1942 at Lucknow to protest against the Government action in not releasing the detenu prisoners. *National Herald*, 25 February 1942.

46. On Evacuees from Burma[1]

Yesterday I visited the Lucknow railway station in the company of Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and Mr. Newal Kishore Halvasia to meet the evacuees from Burma and elsewhere, who are passing through Lucknow on their way to the north. I was surprised to find that the railway authorities, more especially of the B.N.W.R.[2] and the R.K.R.,[3] were paying little attention to these people.

It appears that for a long time past crowds of people, coming from Burma via Assam, have been reaching Lucknow, changing trains here, and then proceeding to Delhi or elsewhere. These people were treated with scant courtesy by the railway staff and indeed very serious complaints were made about their behaviour. Accidentally, some friends

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 24 February 1942. *National Herald*, 26 February 1942.
2. Bengal and North Western Railway.

noticed this ill-treatment and tried to arrange help through the volunteers of the Agarwal Sabha. These volunteers were not allowed to function at first but ultimately a few were given passes and for the last three or four weeks, they have rendered valuable service to the evacuees by seeing that they are not imposed upon by others, by arranging for their accommodation as far as possible, and by giving them light refreshments.

Every day, from 70 to over 100 evacuees passed through Lucknow and spent many hours at the station. Owing to the efforts of the Agarwal Sabha and their volunteers, something has been achieved. But much more could be done if the railway authorities did not come in the way. I was told that the East Indian Railway authorities were, to some extent, helpful. But this could not be said for the authorities of the B.N.W.R. and R.K.R. No question of expense was involved in this but just common courtesy and good sense. But even these were lacking often enough.

I would urge upon the railway authorities, both in their interest and in the interest of the evacuees and the public, to cooperate in this matter with the volunteers who have offered their services for this selfless work. This will ease the situation and bring a small measure of comfort to the unhappy persons, who have had to leave their homes and often nearly all their belongings and are now travelling to almost unknown places.

A sufficient number of passes should be given to the volunteers who are working at the platform and receiving the evacuees. A part of the third class waiting enclosure might be set apart for these evacuees so that they could be dealt with easily. A bogey is now usually provided for them from Lucknow but sometimes difficulties are raised about it. The railway rules may be interpreted leniently for these evacuees. It would be desirable also if the bogeys are placed on the siding at least one hour before the departure of the train. If there are more than one hundred passengers, another bogey should be attached. As it is, the trains are very crowded and it is hardly possible to find room in them unless additional bogeys are attached.

There are many other small things that could be done which involve no expense and yet which would help these people.

It would be desirable, if the evacuees committee here got into touch with similar committees in Delhi and in Assam and elsewhere so that all their efforts might be coordinated.

47. To Mirza Rashid Ali Baig[1]

Allahabad
February 27, 1942

Dear Rashid Ali,[2]

Two or three days ago Mrs. Sarojini Naidu gave me in Lucknow copies of two letters of yours to her regarding A.R.P. work. I have read these letters but I must confess that I am entirely vague as to what is intended and how it is to be done.

You suggest the formation in Bombay of a civic defence league of which membership will be open to all including the A.R.P. members. This organisation, you say, will be purely non-official and be concerned only with the safeguarding of the citizens of Bombay city.

It seems to me clear that a great city must take measures for the protection of its residents against possible calamity and people should cooperate in such measures if they are reasonable. The best organization for this purpose is that controlled by the Corporation of that city. No other organisation can easily take its place. The experience in England has been that so long as A.R.P. measures were centrally controlled, they were failures, although the Government of England is supposed to be a popular Government. They had to hand over charge to a very large extent to the Municipalities and the Corporations and only then were effective steps taken. If an air raid takes place, the dangers are (among others):

1. Panic.
2. The bursting of gas mains or water supply.
3. The dislocation of Municipal services for drainage etc.
4. Loss of life and casualties which have to be looked after.

It seems to me that the most important item of these deals completely with the Municipal services and no one else can look after them or repair them except the officers of the Corporation. It becomes essential therefore for the Corporation to be in charge of these operations. No A.R.P. authorities can do anything in the matter.

I have gone into this matter somewhat and seen various pamphlets issued by the A.R.P. people. These pamphlets as well as the work they have done so far seem to me to be entirely besides the mark. Of course

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (1905-1978); Sheriff [illegible] 1947, [illegible] Foreign Service from 1946 to 1964.

there are useful hints in them and suggestions which should be followed. But there is a great deal of confusing and useless matter and some things which are probably not desirable at all. For my part I do not think the digging of public trenches is much good. The experience of Rangoon shows that they were worse than useless. But I cannot go into details here.

The main function of any organisation of citizens should be to prevent any panic, to explain some simple rules to be followed in case of emergency, for instance to take cover, and to make arrangements for the proper treatment of those who might be injured. Most of the other functions should be the business of the Corporation.

The whole conception of A.R.P. in India is all wrong and out of date and instead of providing much protection in case of emergency, creates the very feeling of panic that should be avoided. The blackouts in Bombay are perfectly ridiculous. Chungking was daily bombed for months and years and yet there was no continuous blackout for a night there. So also in Barcelona. Only when the alert was sounded was there a blackout. Blackouts are extremely depressing to the population, create panic, lead to road casualties and encourage goondaism and disorder. Experimental blackouts are all that are necessary.

Apart from political considerations, I would not like to be tied up with the official A.R.P. machinery which seems to me inefficient and completely out of touch with public sentiment. It failed in Rangoon. But for my part I have no objection to meeting any officials and discussing the matter with them, asking for their suggestions and giving mine to them. There are many things in which we can adopt a common line and help each other.

As for your suggested civic defence league, I do not quite know how it will shape itself. The duplication of organizations is not always helpful and the league is hardly likely to be a mass organization. Possibly a committee might serve the purpose of coordinating the activities in so far as it is possible. I understand that the Bombay Congress has also taken some steps in the matter. But what they are, I do not quite know. The real problem is a much more intricate one than just A.R.P. Situations will arise even apart from air raids which require to be dealt with to avoid panic, public disorders, food scarcity etc. All this requires careful consideration and it is difficult to deal with the matter in the course of a letter.

Your letter to Mrs. Naidu is almost a month old. I do not know what steps have been taken since then.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

48. To Bhulabhai Desai[1]

Allahabad
February 28, 1942

My dear Bhulabhai,
I enclose a copy of a letter[2] I am sending to Rashid Ali Baig. This letter will speak for itself.

I do not know what the Bombay P.C.C. are doing in this matter, or generally in regard to controlling the situation that is arising. I read somewhere about the formation of the People's Volunteer Brigade[3] under Congress auspices in Bombay. What this is and what it does I do not know. We have tried to work here on different lines and indeed have not enrolled any volunteers as such or created any volunteer brigade. We thought working from the top was not good enough. We wanted to encourage people in every small locality to help themselves in any simple self-defence organisations for each small locality, consisting of people living there and therefore most vitally interested. They can help in allaying panic, in giving a feeling of confidence and self-reliance, in helping to deal with the food situation, in giving protection if necessary and as far as possible to their neighbours, and of course in serving them when an emergency arises. We wish to avoid conflict with the Government in this as well as in the A.R.P. work and we have sought the cooperation of all the people who live in each locality regardless of their being Congressmen or not. Personally I think that this working from below will be of more help than organisation from the top, though inevitably the top has to function.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See the preceding item.
3. At a meeting held in Bombay on 26 February 1942, it was decided to form a People's Volunteer Brigade to give protection to the citizens and serve them in times of emergency.

49. To Jagannath[1]

Allahabad
March 6, 1942

My dear Jagannath,[2]
Thank you for your letter.[3] I am afraid I cannot discuss all these matters in detail. Why should you imagine that the Congress is expecting any unworthy compromise with the British Government? I am not aware of any such thing likely to take place. Ultimately we have to think of Indian freedom and everything else is secondary. But we cannot isolate India from the rest of the world and I do think it is important that we give our moral sympathy completely to China and Russia. Their defeat will be a tragedy both from the larger point of view and from the point of view of the future of Indian freedom. We have become too obsessed with our hatred of British imperialism not to see this larger aspect. Britain is already a second class power and the British Empire cannot survive. It would be dangerous for us to allow things to happen which lead to other empires being formed. It is even more dangerous for the Indian people to think in terms of saving themselves by submission to anybody.

I do not agree with much that Rajagopalachari has been saying.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Active member of the Servants of the People Society, Lahore; later joined Delhi Cloth Mills as Labour Welfare Officer.
3. In his letter of 1 March 1942, Jagannath feared that there might be a compromise with the British. He believed that saving India would mean saving British imperialism, or helping China or Russia would weaken the Congress attitude towards the British. If the Japanese came it would be only a change of masters, and if India helped Britain it would provide moral justification to Japan and Germany to play with the lives of the Indian population. India therefore should not be a party to any compromise.

50. To Irene R. Ray[1]

Allahabad
March 6, 1942

Dear Mrs. Ray,[2]

Your letter[3] reached me in Calcutta as well as on my return to Allahabad. I am sorry I could not meet you in Calcutta.

I quite realise the nature of the perils that threaten us and the desirability of doing all we can to face them. In so far as I can do it, I am trying to turn people's attention that way. As you say, much depends on the psychological background. I discussed this matter with our friends and colleagues in Calcutta and here in my own Province we are facing it a little more concretely. As the situation is developing much will depend on local and provincial initiative and effort. I agree that in the matter of dealing with air raids etc. political considerations become irrelevant and we must all cooperate to give relief. In practice difficulties arise. For instance most of the civic services are controlled by the Municipal organisations and any other agency, including the A.R.P. agency, cannot effectively run them.

I understand that some committee has been formed in Calcutta with Dr. B.C. Roy as President. Could you discuss with him?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Wife of Dr. P.N. Ray, an associate of Dr. B.C. Roy in Calcutta.
3. In her letter of 16 February 1942, she spoke of the need for the psychological background for any large-scale movement for the nation's war-time service. This had nothing to do with politics. There was also the need to develop an effective organisation for the relief of victims in case of air raids.

51. To Anath Gopal Sen[1]

Allahabad
March 6, 1942

Dear Mr. Sen,[2]
I have your letter.[3] Thank you for warning me but after all I can only function as I see the light. I can hardly discuss myself in a letter. Nor is it easy to discuss the larger questions in a few lines. It is always difficult to separate the good from the bad because there are infinite shades of grey in between. There is no nation in the world, including India, which is devoid of evil. One has often to choose the lesser evil and to see which step is ultimately in the right direction. You may be right in thinking that I am not realist enough. And yet my own experience of so-called realists is that they cannot see the wood for the trees and therefore lose themselves in a maze of purely opportunist tactics.

I think it is absurd to say that China or Russia are helpless instruments or agents of British imperialism. Were they such agents before the Pacific War broke out and when their policy was often opposed by Britain? Or did the change suddenly come the moment Japan declared war against Britain and America? The fact is that each nation looks after its own interests and seeks help where it can to defend them.

For the last dozen years or more many of us have followed a consistent policy not only in regard to British imperialism but in regard to the growth of fascism and Nazism. Latterly some people, afraid of a Japanese victory, or expecting it, wanted to tone down that policy in so far as Japan or Germany are concerned. That may be realism, though I do not think so. But it is certainly due to a fear complex and I do not want to encourage any such tendencies in the Indian people.

So far as I am concerned, I do not want the Indian people to submit, whatever the consequences, to either British imperialism or any other imperialism, which tries to come here. Daily threats are held out through broadcasts from Tokyo and Berlin to those Indians who may oppose them. Whatever the Indians may or may not have learnt, I hope they have learnt at least not to give way to threats.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. He was at this time a lecturer in the Commerce Department of the University of Calcutta.
3. In his letter of 21 February 1942, Sen requested Jawaharlal to "know the occasional fears and misgivings which your certain mental poise and attitude and impulsive and impetuous action give rise to in the minds of many of your admirers and favourers". Jawaharlal, he warned, would lose his balance by his anti-fascist and pro-British atti[illegible]

Britain today is already a second class power and cannot count for much in the future, whatever that may be. That of course does not mean that we should not oppose British imperialism or aggression. But that should not mean that we submit to any other aggression.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

52. To Gopinath Bardoloi[1]

Allahabad
March 6, 1942

My dear Bardoloi,
Forgive me for the great delay in answering your letter of February 13th.[2] It was not possible of course for Marshal Chiang Kai-shek to visit Assam, though it would have been a good thing if you had met him. But his programme was not of our making and I could do little in regard to it. Anyway he could hardly be expected to discuss actual military tactics with any of us.

I quite realise the situation in Assam and a possibility of invasion and its consequence. None of us can possibly forget this. Because after all we shall ourselves be affected tremendously by what happens in Assam. The Working Committee is meeting soon in Wardha and I have no doubt that they will give every thought to these matters.

Apart from our wider policy, the fundamental thing that we have to do is to develop local self-sufficiency and self-defence from disorderly elements. This in itself helps in keeping up morale, though I realise that in Assam, owing to many outside elements, the problem is more difficult. Anyway it does not help at all in losing nerve and we shall have to face whatever comes with a stout heart.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter he informed Jawaharlal about his telegram inviting Chiang Kai-shek to visit Assam. He argued that the British were constructing roads connecting Manipur to Burma which would provoke the Japanese to attack Assam, which otherwise afforded to them no attraction. He asserted the need to prepare the Province against invasion, on lines different from nonviolent directives. He was afraid that the semi-starved plantation workers and peasantry might join the Japanese like sheep.

53. Solution Only on Basis of Freedom [1]

Question: What are your comments about the new proposals to be announced in Parliament by the British Prime Minister in a day or two, about which there has been so much speculation in the British press?[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Indian problem can be approached only on the basis of Indian freedom. Nothing else will make a vital difference or move our millions to effective action. Until they realise that they have achieved freedom and are fighting to defend and preserve it, all else is unimportant.

The independence of India has to be recognised without any reservations, as well as the right of the Indian people to frame their own constitution without outside interference.

Q: What in your opinion should be the immediate steps?

JN: In the immediate present a provisional National Government should be formed, responsible to the Indian people and not to the Viceroy or the British Government.

Q: What about the question of minorities?

JN: The present question of minorities does not really arise in the present crisis and in any event all reasonable and possible protection should be given to them. When the Constituent Assembly meets later, it would be open to their representatives to make any proposals. There will either be agreement, or the matter may be referred to an international tribunal. Or, ultimately the problem will be solved by conflict. The risk has to be taken, for there is no other way.

The Indian princes may, for the present, be left out of consideration and not interfered with, but it is clear that they cannot continue as they are and Indian freedom will affect their position vitally.

1. Interview to the Associated Press of America, 8 March 1942. *Sind Observer*, 10 March 1942.
2. A Cabinet committee under the Deputy Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, had completed its examination of the new proposals and Amery had met the King.

All this involves great changes and risks. It means the ending of a long-established Empire, but that Empire cannot possibly continue and the sooner this is realised the better.

Risks have to be taken. War itself is full of risks. But a friendly settlement will make a vast difference to all concerned and release tremendous forces on the side of freedom and democracy. India's sympathies are there already; the vital urge to defend a cause will then come.

Q: What is your comment on Chiang Kai-shek's visit?

JN: The Generalissimo was great and far-seeing enough to break through diplomatic precedents during his recent visit to India and seek to go down to the fundamentals. That visit was a historic one, presaging new alignments in Asia which will affect the whole world.

Q: Will the international alignments change after the war?

JN: This war is obviously something much more than a war; it is a vast revolution ending an epoch of history and ushering in an order which will be entirely different. It is in this context that the problem of India and Asia must be considered.

Western nations must realise that it is no longer possible to think in terms of empire and domination or holding on to special privileges or racial discrimination.

54. The Importance of Public Morale[1]

not of much avail. The proper way is to teach people things in a simple manner and make them self-reliant. It is no use making them lose their way in a forest of rules and regulations.

I do not want that anybody should interfere in the A.R.P. work, but it is too wooden and too official to be of much use.

55. Civil Defence and Self-Sufficiency[1]

From time to time I have been speaking to you from this platform on the happenings of the world. Today there would be very few individuals either in Allahabad or in the countryside who are not aware of the affairs of the world and their effect on India.

At this time the question before us is, what should we do? And I want to say something to you about it. Before telling it I want to speak to you about a prominent personality of our country who expired a few days back. Today Seth Jamnalal Bajaj Day is being observed.[2] In this connection mass-spinning has been organised at different places. Jamnalalji did valuable work in the field of politics and economics, and for Harijans and the Indian states. He took a keen interest in the uplift of women. But his main interests were spinning and khadi work. He was a good, respected old friend of ours. His demise has meant a severe blow to us, as he parted at such a critical time.

During the last twenty years big changes have taken place in India because we created an organized strength. We created an atmosphere. There may be only two to four lakhs of people whose names are registered in the Congress but the eyes of crores of Indians are looking at the Congress and that is why we took the country by storm. Whatever we may do at the present time, our organised strength is behind us. The strength that the Congress possesses is its power of organization and this is of a particular type. I wish to draw your attention towards another type of organised power which we ought to develop at the present juncture. There are many things that we could have done at the present

1. Speech at Mohammad Ali Park, Allahabad, 11 March 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41. National Archives of India.
2. Jamnalal Bajaj died on 11 February 1942.

moment if the reins of the Government of India had been in the hands of the public. I do not say that we would have removed all the hardships but at least we could have tried to solve the problems of the day and resisted the enemy in the event of an attack. But unfortunately even today we are being ruled by an ignorant British Government which was ignorant even earlier but has now become most worthless and stupid. It tells us every day that danger to our country is approaching nearer and nearer, and that our country is going to be invaded; as if we are not aware of these and are not distressed on account of them.

Who is responsible for the present state? After all, this is not our fault. This is the fault of the Government which is in power here. A foreign Government may rule efficiently but can it solve the big questions of the country or protect it from an external aggression? If a Government is incapable of defending the country it has no right to rule.

Do not clap for this is no occasion for it. We are in a dilemma. The path which we want to follow or the works which we want to do, we are not able to do. We cannot do so because they are the matters of administration. Suppose, we wanted to have an army to protect our country, then we would have asked every man and woman for this. We cannot protect our country only with a selected army of two, four, ten or twenty thousand people. We would have asked every individual of India, who could stand on his legs, to come forward for his country's protection. But the British Government is afraid of this, lest it increases the strength of Indians. It would not agree with our doing so. Today it is not the Government which fights a war but the people of a country fight for the sake of their freedom. The example of China is before us. The helpless Chinese are as poor as the Indians. They have neither weapons nor money. Still the most valuable cause before them is their freedom. They were attacked by the Japanese. What have Japanese forces done, within the last two and a half months, against the British Empire and America? If you look at Britain and America, which are big military countries, you will find they have got command over the seas, ships, weapons, aeroplanes and money. Yet they were driven back by the Japanese and the Germans. But these Chinese, who have got neither money nor war material, fought the Japanese not only for a year but have been fighting for the last four years. The most valuable cause they have is their freedom, for which they are fighting. Innumerable men and women fought and were killed but they checked the advance of the Japanese troops.

Even the British Empire is fighting although its position is very weak today. The British people are fighting in their own country for their freedom. When they were subjected to violent German aerial attacks they faced them bravely.

What is the Indian army today? The Indian army is a brave army consisting of the Jats, the Sikhs, the Rajputs, the Pathans, the Hindus, the Muslims and the Gurkhas. They all fight bravely. But whose orders do they carry out? This is a well-known fact. They are our brethren and they wish India's good. But after all the Indian army is not a national army. It is an army of the British Government. It is not a 'people's army' because the Government which gives them orders is not theirs.

The whole country is in distress. Everywhere you hear only this report that the Japanese army is numerically superior and it has more aeroplanes, arms and ammunition. But war is not won by raising a hue and cry. To fight a war you do need military preparations but what can the Indians do in this connection? For this purpose already there are military officers present in cities like Madras, Bombay, Delhi and Lucknow. They think that as the danger would approach India we would go to them and ask for their protection. It would be awkward for and unbecoming of us to bow down before the British Government. Whatever may happen, and let Indians and the independence of India go to hell, we will never bow down before the British or the Japanese. We will face the danger with courage and if called upon we will die. We will not disgrace ourselves, but face all dangers. We cannot leave India and go to Britain. Will you leave Allahabad and settle down in Sirsa and Handia? We will face the enemy wherever we may be. But today our hands and feet are badly tied up.

A new organisation called the A.R.P. has been formed in Allahabad. Let us hope that with the help of this organisation we will be able to protect the lives of our children and womenfolk. We should do so and protect ourselves against aerial attacks, thieves and robbers. This is our duty. The instructions to be issued in this regard from time to time should be carefully framed. This A.R.P. work, whether in Allahabad or anywhere else, can be effectively organised if it is managed by the public. About eighty thousand rupees have been spent on A.R.P. work in Allahabad. It was all spent on equipment and emoluments. Many thousand whistles, bells, charpoys have been bought. Civil defence management cannot be done by asking people to hide under charpoys. However the real question is, whose management and what sort of management would it be, and what work will the authorities of Allahabad do? I consider the A.R.P. methods and also the methods of the Government as worthless, because they are not being organised intelligently. Therefore, I cannot cooperate with these Government methods, and for this reason the Congress is not cooperating with the A.R.P. But if a fire breaks out in your house, it becomes your duty to extinguish it. Similarly it is your and our duty to give our full help

in the A.R.P. work, because fire has got to be extinguished and the public kept under control. We are not taking any regular part in the A.R.P. work. We are not becoming A.R.P. wardens, but I advise you to follow the instructions issued on behalf of the A.R.P. Suppose you are asked to put out lights, you should act accordingly. Suppose you are asked to leave the road you should do so immediately. Suppose you are warned and a signal is given to clear out from the road and enter a house, you should do it at once and take shelter in some house because in case of an air raid the persons on the road are likely to be killed. Those inside the houses can be saved.

I cannot say if Allahabad will be bombed or not, but we should be prepared for it. We should not get alarmed or panicky at the thought of being bombed because it will serve no purpose. You will not be able to save yourself, for rowdyism will cause greater harm than bombing. People think that if aeroplanes come here, the whole city will be ruined forthwith. This is quite wrong. In some cities, as in China, there have been bombing daily for months. I can say by my experience, as I have seen bombings in China and Europe, that despite daily bombings the business of those cities did not stop. When aeroplanes approached, people used to take shelter in houses, and when the aeroplanes left they again came out and resumed their businesses.

The city should be divided into small areas or units so that we are able to shoulder our responsibilities. A unit should consist of twenty or twenty-five houses and it should make its own arrangements. We should be prepared for the defence of our country and be ready for any eventuality. If any aeroplane comes, we should defend our area and render the required service. If the city is divided into small areas and the residents take the management in their own hands, any situation can be handled well. Do not hope that an army will save you from riots. During blackouts many incidents may take place and therefore it will become necessary to be on our guard. It is therefore necessary that each unit should manage ten to twenty houses. This requires cooperation. Today we have to do this work irrespective of party affiliations. You will also get instructions from the Congress from time to time. If at the time of danger we send any news, it should be possible to circulate it to every house of the city within two hours. It should not be done by beating drums, but by our selected volunteers in every *mohalla*. With such an organisation the country becomes strong enough to manage itself and defend itself from air raids. We are not forming this organisation to use it against the police or the British Government, but for protecting our people against any future eventualities.

Another important question before you is that of foodgrains. The solution is difficult. We get our grains from villages transported

two.[5] Since he became Premier two years ago, he has been keeping quite silent. I, therefore, do not know what his statement will be and therefore I cannot give any opinion on it. Also my opinion is no opinion. Only the President of the Working Committee or Mahatma Gandhi can give an opinion on it. Any statement from Mr. Churchill in my opinion will not in any way lessen our present danger. Japanese or German forces are not going to come to terms by that nor are they going to withdraw. The main question which is before us has nothing to do with Mr. Churchill or the Congress. The question is whether the reins of India should be in the hands of Indians or in the hands of Englishmen. No doubt, they should be in the hands of those representatives who are elected by the people of India. Unless these changes are made, everything else is useless.

Once more I shall say, that the question which is before us today has nothing to do with Mr. Churchill or the Congress because now the war has approached our gates. You have heard that the Japanese have occupied Rangoon.[6] Half of Burma has been occupied.[7] In Burma there are not only British armies but also Chinese troops. They have shown great valour during the last four or five years. But what can they do? Now this war has come to the very gates of India. It is quite probable that within a few months the Japanese may attack India. Some big cities of India may be subjected to air raids. Calcutta may be bombed by the Japanese. You will then become nervous that these Japanese have come up to Calcutta. The people may flee from Calcutta and come here, and narrate stories as the evacuees from Rangoon had told you. You should not become nervous and should not keep your minds occupied with such thoughts. It is possible that bombs may be dropped over Calcutta, and you may be told such stories as may be correct. Even so, on hearing these you should not get nervous. You should rather make your organisation strong. You all should take active interest in it. Unlike the A.R.P. organisation we do not have money nor do we want to spend much. If the people of each *mohalla* do their work it will not cost much. But you should collect contributions as we need money to print handbills and do other organisational work.

5. On 11 March 1942, Churchill announced in the House of Commons the War Cabinet proposal to send Cripps to India with a declaration and for consultations with the Indian leaders for a just and final solution to the Indian problem.
6. Rangoon was occupied by the Japanese on 7 March 1942.
7. By 24 February 1942, the Japanese had forced the defenders in Burma to flee across the Sittang River, and had captured Moulmein and Pegu.

What is Japan going to do? What is Churchill going to do? If we are prepared we can face them. If we remain engrossed in our mutual differences they will destroy us. Eight difficult months are still ahead of us and it is possible that this period might be reduced to six months. I do not want to paint any rosy picture. We have to face many difficulties and hardships. It is just possible that much blood may be shed in India. A number of our people may die. How can we be saved when there is bloodshed throughout the whole world? It may probably be a test for us, because we want to become a strong nation. But so far we have learnt only one thing and that is litigation and lodging reports with the police or hurling abuses like *Bhatiyaras*. We should take a lesson from China, an old country which has been rejuvenated by joining the war. It is very probable that our old country may also get rejuvenated by getting into this war. It is possible that the war may continue and the British nation may be wiped out and even then the war may continue. We have to make our own arrangements. If war comes here we have to be prepared for it. If aeroplanes come, we have to face them and that too with bravery. We have not to bow down before anybody. When we have not bowed down before the British Empire, why should we bow down before others? To think that Japan will give us freedom or secure freedom for us is just to deceive ourselves. It is a great folly to cherish such hopes. We have seen it in our history that foreigners have never done us any good. The British people came to India and made us fight among ourselves. We did not get any benefit from them. We admit that the Japanese are Asiatics but theirs is a Big and Bloody empire. They have established their empire in China and Korea. Only fools can think they will grant independence to the Indians if they come to India. We have therefore to take any foreign nation, whether it is European or Asiatic, as our enemy if it attacks us with a view to ruling over us. We have to oppose it in every possible manner.

56. Japanese Pledge for Freedom[1]

It is a dangerous tendency to think that we would like the Japanese to invade India as that at least would bring about a change of masters. It

1. Address at Katra (Bihar), 12 March 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 17 March, 1942.

is the mentality of a slave. India will never tolerate any power which would like to dominate and exploit its people. It is certain that we will not bow our heads before anybody whatever be the consequence. During the last several years the Congress has faced a mighty and arrogant imperialism effectively and courageously. Even though it may not be possible for India to face effectively any big military power it has its own way of facing an enemy.

It is amazing to see aggressors pledging freedom to those countries which are dominated by other countries.[2] But they do not give freedom to the countries which they themselves dominate and exploit. All these promises are queer and are given due to selfish motives. Indians cannot be duped by such pledges. India will fight its own battle and win its freedom.

I am genuinely pained to hear of the fall of that great country France which several times raised the flag of revolution. But this time it was a most ignoble surrender which indicated the defeat of the spirit. In India there shall be no such surrender. It does not matter if a country loses its battle, but it is very unfortunate if it loses its real spirit.

Women should realise their responsibility at this critical hour. The days are over when men were needed in India to guard them. Women should not feel helpless and be dependent all the time. It is their duty to work shoulder to shoulder with men and take up the work that is suitable to them.

The time has come for students when they can play their part effectively. It is their duty to help the people. If they undertake this duty they will be able to do it effectively and efficiently. There is no time for anyone to sit idle, and everyone has to do his duty according to his best capacity. Those who lose nerve at the time of a crisis can hardly do anything for the cause we espouse but will rather hurt it grievously. Take courage in your hands. Face the situation bravely. Organize every work effectively and do not discontinue your normal work, this is my advice to you.

2. The Japanese announced their intention to establish a "New Order" in Asia and this figured in the Tripartite Pact between Japan, Italy and Germany concluded on 9 September 1940. In December 1940, the Japanese announced their "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" policy. On 16 February 1942, General Hedeki Tojo, the Prime Minister of Japan, appealed to Indians to get rid of the ruthless despotism of Britain: "Japan expects that India will restore its proper status as India for the Indians."

57. The Problem of Food Supplies[1]

While the shaping of the larger national policies in this time of crisis fills the minds of those engaged in public affairs and the columns of newspapers, vast numbers of people are excited today about an immediate problem—that of food supplies. That problem is vitally important in itself, it is equally important for other reasons, as on its solution depends to a great extent the maintenance of an orderly administration and the absence of panic.

The Congress constructive policy today may be summed up in a few words: the organisation and maintenance of self-sufficiency and self-protection. This is essential from every point of view, whatever decisions might be taken on other issues. This is in effect not a political question on which people differ, but rather a basic need for all of us. It is for this reason that the Congress has sought to carry on this work on non-partisan lines and has invited the cooperation of all groups and individuals.

The economic crisis will inevitably deepen as the war goes on and it is essential that a planned and carefully thought-out approach be made to the problem of food supply. This requires state action as well as widespread public effort. In present circumstances, it is not easy to envisage cooperation between the state and the public or any reasoned and planned approach. Nevertheless, it is necessary for us to bear in mind what should be done and to do it to the best of our ability. We cannot just wait for events to happen.

A few days ago an important statement on the organisation of food supplies was published in the press on behalf of the Provincial Congress Committee.[2] This was prepared by an expert sub-committee and I would like to draw special attention to its recommendations. To a large extent I am repeating these in this note.

So far as the U.P. is concerned, the Province can meet the normal demand out of the annual normal product of all foodstuffs. In regard to some cereals for example, rice, we may not produce enough but it is possible to make up this deficiency by the use of other foodgrains.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 14 March 1942. *National Herald*, 16 March 1942.
2. The Report was published in the *National Herald* on 10 March 1942.

But this adjustment is only possible if there is planning and it is important that steps be taken soon before harvesting operations begin. Once the crop has been harvested and sold to middlemen, the situation might well get out of control. Planning, licensing of dealers, fixation of prices and inspection would be necessary.

The most important thing to be borne in mind is that the basis of purchase from the villages should be only the surplus produce, after leaving a sufficient quantity for consumption during the year and the seed requirements for the next harvest. Secondly, the prices of this surplus should be guaranteed and fixed on a wholesale basis as well as for retail purposes. Thus the state should fix the purchase price of grain in the villages and the price for the sale to consumers in urban areas. In recent years only the retail prices have been fixed and middlemen have profited thereby. Thirdly, prices should be fixed not for a few weeks at a time but six months or so, till the next harvest. This would introduce a measure of certainty, prevent the manipulation of the market by middlemen and dealings in future.

War, of course, upsets everything. Ever since it began, the prices of foodgrains have fluctuated violently though the crop yield has been fairly normal. Export of foodstuffs outside India, large government purchases for military requirements, speculative activities of middlemen, hoarding of supplies and creation of artificial scarcity of foodstuffs—all these led to these fluctuations. The cultivators did not profit by them for they had sold the grain to the middlemen at the usually low harvest prices.

An increasing difficulty is the dislocation of transport which cuts off regular supplies from some of the markets and because of which cities are the chief sufferers. We cannot expect any improvement in transport and probably there will be progressive deterioration in this. We shall thus be thrown back on self-sufficiency. It is possible that the problem of food in this Province may be aggravated in the near future by an influx of evacuees. Storm and hail have already done much damage in some parts of the Province.

To get over the difficulty of transport an attempt should be made at a regional division of the Province into units, self-sufficient in food production. Within these regions it should be easily possible to arrange for distribution, and export outside the region should not be encouraged except for special reasons. Transport within the region could be made on country carts or camels.

Every encouragement should be given to the formation of Municipal, public or consumers' cooperatives. They should be preferred to professional middlemen in the distribution of available grain supplies, and should also be given financial assistance wherever necessary and desirable.

Behind all this it is essential to have a drive for increased production of food crops. This must be done even at the cost of commercial crops. Cash and supplementary crops should be raised as also more vegetables and fruits. Seasonal fruits and vegetables like melons, water-melons, plantains, potatoes, sweet-potatoes, carrots, turnips, tomatoes, etc., would be very helpful in supplementing the staple cereals. People living in bungalows in towns and cities should utilize their spare land for the purpose. But, above all, groups of villages should form themselves into self-sufficient units and increase their food crop production. They must retain the minimum necessary for their own consumption before disposing of their produce.

All Congressmen and Congress committees must address themselves to this urgent task and carry on intensive propaganda in this behalf. But this is not a matter for Congressmen only but for all of us and the cooperation of every one should be invited.

Further, wide publicity should be given to the guaranteed price of foodstuffs. A census of bullockcarts should be taken, which can be used for purposes of transport.

The slogan of self-sufficiency in regard to food, as also of cloth and other necessaries, should be carried to every corner of the Province.

Our programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection has already made good progress in some parts of the Province. It must be pushed with all vigour for that is the programme of the day and everything depends on the success we achieve in it.

Self-protection involves the division of cities and rural areas into very small units, of not more than fifty houses each. The residents of these houses undertake to cooperate together for the protection of their particular area. This is not the business of just a few volunteers but of every able-bodied man and woman. No one is asked to function outside that area. As a distinguishing mark for those who are doing this essential social work a small red and green rectangular badge to be worn on the left side of the chest has been devised. This will be available within a few days at all *Khadi Bhandars* and possibly elsewhere. I hope all our workers will obtain this and wear it, not at a particular time, but all the time. This is not meant for Congressmen only but all those who are cooperating in this great task. Hence a non-committal badge has been devised. Congressmen may wear, in addition to the above, a tricolour arm band which also will be available at *Khadi Bhandars*.

58. Racial Discrimination in Evacuation[1]

During the past few weeks many of us have had occasion to meet a large number of refugees and evacuees from Malaya and Burma and strange and disturbing news has reached us.[2] Suffering and dislocation are inevitable in the wake of war and we have avoided giving currency to these stories. But there is one aspect of them which has hurt and angered and which is likely to have far-reaching consequences, little dreamt of by those in authority today. This is the racial discrimination that has been and is so evident and the astounding difference in the treatment given to Europeans and Indians. I am aware that this racial discrimination both in regard to evacuation and reception has been denied on behalf of the Government of India.[3] But the statement and denials of the Government functioning in India have little value and few people give credence to them.

The Government has lost competence in everything and even the words used by their officials ring false. In this particular matter, it is amazing effrontery to say that there has been no racial discrimination when numerous instances of this are known to us and every day brings further stories of sorrow which authenticate the charge. We know what horror has pursued the refugees from Burma on the Akyab route to India as well as on the road via Manipur. We know what happened to Indians in Burma, Penang and Singapore. We know what is happening today in various parts of India where these evacuees are being accommodated, how every effort is being made on behalf of the Government to find luxury quarters for Europeans and hardly anyone, except some private agencies, cares for Indian families who are adrift. Recently Mr. Rajahali Jumabhoy, President of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Singapore, made certain sensational disclosures about the Singapore evacuation.[4]

I have not seen any attempt at an answer to these allegations which were based on personal first-hand experience. This whole question of racial discrimination in evacuation and in the subsequent treatment of evacuees is a public scandal of the first magnitude, and those responsible for it, from the Indians Overseas Member[5] down to the local officials, have to make answer for it. Certainly the Indian people are not going to tolerate it, war or no war, for this is a matter which affects their self-honour.

5. M.S. Aney.

59. India's Day of Reckoning[1]

I welcome the opportunity of writing in the columns of *Fortune* on the vital problems that confront India. These problems are no longer our concern only; they are of world concern, affecting the entire international situation today. More so will they affect the shaping of future events.

Whether we consider them from the point of view of the terrible world conflict that is going on, or in terms of the political, economic, and commercial consequences of this war, the future of 400 million human beings is of essential importance. These millions are no longer passive agents of others submitting with resignation to the decrees of fate. They are active, dynamic, and hungering to shoulder the burden of their own destiny and to shape it according to their own wishes.

The Indian struggle for freedom and democracy has evoked a generous response from many an American, but the crisis that faces us all is too urgent for us merely to trade in sympathy or feel benevolent towards each other. We have to consider our major problems objectively and almost impersonally and endeavour to solve them, or else these problems will certainly overwhelm us, as indeed they threaten to do. That has been the lesson of history and we forget it at our peril. It is, therefore, not merely from a humanitarian point of view, though humanitarianism

1. Article written by Jawaharlal in March 1942 on request from the editor of *Fortune* (Chicago), and cabled in full from Bombay. It was printed in its issue of March 1942.

itself is good, but rather in the objective spirit of science that we should approach our problems.

The next hundred years, it has been said, are going to be the century of America. America is undoubtedly going to play a very important role in the years and generations to come. It is young and vital and full of the spirit of growth. The small and stuffy countries of Europe, with their eternal conflicts and wars, can no longer control the world. Europe has a fine record of achievement of which it may well be proud. That achievement will endure and possibly find greater scope for development when its accompaniment of domination over others is ended.

If the next century is going to be the century of America, it is also going to be the century of Asia, a rejuvenated Asia deriving strength from its ancient culture and yet vital with the youthful spirit of modern science.

Most of us are too apt to think of Asia as backward and decadent because for nearly two hundred years it has been dominated by Europe and has suffered all the ills, material and spiritual, which subjection inevitably brings in its train. We forget the long past of Asia when politically, economically and culturally it played a dominant role. In this long perspective the past two hundred years are just a brief period that is ending, and Asia will surely emerge with new strength and vitality as it has done so often in the past.

One of the amazing phenomena of history is the way India and China have repeatedly revived after periods of decay, and how both of them have preserved the continuity of their cultural traditions through thousands of years. They have obviously had tremendous reserves of strength to draw upon. India was old when the civilization of Greece flowered so brilliantly. Between the two there was intimate contact and much in common, and India is said to have influenced Greece far more than Greece did to India. That Grecian civilization, for all its brilliance, passed away soon, leaving a great heritage, but India carried on and her culture flowered again and again. India, like China, had more staying power.

Asia is no suppliant for the favours of others, but claims perfect equality in everything and is confident of holding her own in the modern world in comradeship with others.

The recent visit of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang to India was not only of historic significance but has given us a glimpse of the future when India and China will cooperate for their own and the world's good. The Generalissimo pointed out a remarkable fact: that India and China, with a common land frontier of 3,000 kilometres, had lived at peace with each other for a thousand years, neither country playing the role of aggressor, but both having intimate cultural and

commercial contacts throughout these ages. That in itself shows the peaceful character of these two great civilizations.

Keeping this background in mind, it will be evident how unreal and fantastic is the conception of India as a kind of colonial appendage or offshoot of Britain, growing slowly to nationhood and freedom as the British dominions have done. India is a mother country, which has influenced in the past, vast sections of the human race in Asia. She still retains that storehouse of cultural vitality that has given her strength in the past, and at the same time has the natural resources, the scientific, technical, industrial and financial capacity to make her a great nation in the modern sense of the world. But she cannot grow because of the shackles that tie her down, nor can she play her part, as she should, in the war crisis today. That part can be a great one not only because of the manpower at India's disposal but because, given a chance, she can rapidly become a great industrial nation.

The World War is obviously part of a great revolution taking place throughout the world. To consider it in only military terms is to miss the real significance of what is happening. Causes lie deep, and it would be foolish to imagine that all our present troubles are due to the vanity and insatiable ambition of certain individuals or peoples. Those individuals or peoples represent evil tendencies. But they also represent the urge for change from an order that has lost stability and equilibrium and that is heartily disliked by vast numbers of people. Part of the aggressors' strength is certainly due to their challenge to this old system.

To oppose these inevitable changes and seek to perpetuate the old, or even to be passive about them, is to surrender on a revolutionary plane to the aggressor countries. Intelligent people know these aggressors are out to impose tyranny far worse than any that has existed, and therefore they should be opposed. To submit to them is to invite degradation of the worst type, a spiritual collapse far worse than even military defeat. We see what has happened in Vichy—France. We know what has happened in Central Europe and in Northern China. And yet that fear of a possible worse fate is not enough, and certainly it does not affect the masses of population who are thoroughly dissatisfied with their present lot. They want some positive deliverance to shake them out of their passivity, some cause that immediately affects them to fight for. A proud people do not accept present degradation and misery for fear that something worse may take its place.

Thus the urgent need is to give a moral and revolutionary lead to the world, to convince it that the old order has gone and a new one really based on freedom and democracy has taken its place. No promises for the future are good enough, no half-measures will help, it is the present that counts, for it is in the present that the war is going to be lost or

won, and it is out of this present that the future will take shape.

President Roosevelt has spoken eloquently about this future and about the four freedoms,[2] and his words have found a echo in millions of hearts. But the words are vague, and do not satisfy, and no action follows those words. The Atlantic Charter is again a pious and nebulous expression of hope, which stimulates nobody, and even this, Mr. Churchill tells us, does not apply to India.

If this urgent necessity for giving a moral and revolutionary lead were recognised and acted upon, then the aggressor nations would be forced to drop the cloak that hides many of their evil designs, and new forces of vast dimensions would rise up to check them. Even the peoples of Europe now under Nazi domination would be affected. But the greatest effect would be produced in Asia and Africa. And that may well be the turning point of the war. Only freedom and the conviction that they are fighting for their own freedom can make people fight as the Chinese and Russians have fought.

We have the long and painful heritage of European domination in Asia. Britain may believe or proclaim that she had done good to India and other Asiatic countries, but the Indians and other Asiatics think otherwise, and it is after all what we believe that matters now. It is a terribly difficult business to wipe out this past of bitterness and conflict, yet it can be done if there is a complete break from it, and the present is made entirely different. Only thus can those psychological conditions be produced that lead to cooperation in a common endeavour and release mass effort.

It was in this hope that the National Congress issued a long statement in September 1940, defining its policy in regard to the European war and inviting the British Government to declare its war aims in regard to imperialism and democracy, and, in particular, to state how these were to be given effect in the present.

For many years past the Congress had condemned fascist and Nazi doctrines and the aggressions of the Japanese, Italian and German Governments. It condemned them afresh and offered its cooperation in the struggle for freedom and democracy.

But it is stated: "If the war is to defend the *status quo* of imperialist possessions and colonies, of vested interests and privilege, then India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it.

2. The four freedoms laid down by Roosevelt on 6 January 1942 were, freedom of speech and worship, and freedom from want and fear. These were stated to be as the goals of the United States.

The Committee is convinced that the interests of Indian democracy do not conflict with the interests of British democracy or world democracy. But there is an inherent and ineradicable conflict between democracy for India, or elsewhere, and imperialism and fascism. If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own possessions and establish full democracy in India, and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination to frame their own constitution through a constituent assembly without external interference and must guide their own policy. A free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic cooperation."

That offer was made two and a half years ago and it has been repeated in various forms subsequently. It was rejected and rejected in a way that angered India. The British Government has made it clear beyond a doubt that it clings to the past; and present and future, in so far as Britain can help it, will resemble that past. It is not worthwhile to dwell on the tragic history of these two and a half years that have added to our problems and the complexity of the situation. Events have followed each other in furious succession all over the world and, in recent months, parts of the British Empire have passed out of England's control. And yet, in spite of all this, the old outlook and methods continue and England's statesmen talk the patronizing language of the nineteenth century to us. We are intensely interested in the defence of India from external aggression but the only way we could do anything effective about it is through mass enthusiasm and mass effort under popular control.

We cannot develop our heavy industries, even though war-time requirements shout for such developments, because British interests disapprove and fear that Indian industry might compete with them after the war. For years past Indian industrialists have tried to develop an automobile industry, aeroplane manufacture and shipbuilding—the very industries most required in war-time. The way these have been successfully obstructed is an astonishing story. I have been particularly interested in industrial problems in my capacity as Chairman of the National Planning Committee. This Committee gathered around it some of the ablest talent in India—industrial, financial, technical, economic, scientific—and tackled the whole complex and vast problem of planned and scientific development and coordination of industry, agriculture, and social services. The labours of this Committee and its numerous sub-committees would have been particularly valuable in war-time. Not only was this not taken advantage of but its work was hindered and obstructed by the Government.

Two and a half years ago we had hoped to be able to play an effective

role in the world drama. Our sympathies were all on one side, our interests coincided with these. Our principal problem is after all not the Hindu-Muslim problem, but the planned growth of industry, greater production, juster distribution, higher standards, and thus gradual elimination of the appalling poverty that crushes our people. It was possible to deal with this as part of the war effort and coordinate the two, thus making India far stronger, both materially and psychologically, to resist aggression. But it could only have been done with the driving power that freedom gives. It is not very helpful to think of these wasted years, now that immediate peril confronts us and we have to meet this peril differently now, for in no event do we propose to submit to aggression.

It is said that any transfer of power during war time involves risks. So it does. To abstain from action or change probably involves far greater risks. The aggressor nations have repeatedly shown that they have the courage to gamble with fate, and the gamble has often come off. We must take risks. One thing is certain that the present state of affairs in India is deplorable. It lacks not only popular support but also efficiency. The people who control affairs in India from Whitehall or Delhi are incapable even of understanding what is happening, much less of dealing with it.

We are told that the independence of Syria is recognised,[3] that Korea is going to be a free country.[4] But India, the classic land of modern imperialist control, must continue under British tutelage. Meanwhile daily broadcasts from Tokyo, Bangkok, Rome, and Berlin, in Hindustani announce that the Axis countries want India to be independent. Intelligent people know how false this is and are not taken in. But many who listen to this, contrast it with what the British Government says and does in India. We have seen the effect of this propaganda in Malaya and Burma. India is far more advanced politically and can, therefore, resist it more successfully. She is especially attracted to China and has admired the magnificent resistance of the Russian people. She feels friendly towards the democratic ideals of America. But with all that she feels helpless and frustrated and bitter against those who have put her in her present position.

3. On 28 September 1941, the independence and sovereignty of the Syrian Republic was promised. Syria was to be an ally of Free-France and the Allies. Independence was granted to Syria by the British on 28 October 1941.
4. On 1 March 1942, the Korean Independence Army in Chungking thanked Roosevelt for his initiative for Korean independence and promised help to the Allies and the Chinese against the Japanese. The Cairo Conference in 1943 recognised the independence of Korea.

Some of the problems are of our own making; some of British creation. But whoever may be responsible for them, we have to solve them. One of these problems, so often talked about, is the Hindu-Muslim problem. It is often forgotten that Muslims like Hindus also demand independence for India. Some of them (but only some) talk in terms of a separate state in the north-west of India. They have never defined what they mean and few people take their demand seriously, especially in these days when small states have ceased to count and must inevitably be parts of a larger federation. The Hindu-Muslim problem will be solved in terms of federation but it will be solved only when British interference with our affairs ceases. So long as there is a third party to intervene and encourage intransigent elements of either group, there will be no solution. A free India will face the problem in an entirely different setting and will, I have no doubt, solve it.

What do we want? A free, democratic, federal India willing to be associated with other countries in larger federations. In particular, India would like to have close contacts with China and Soviet Russia, both her neighbours, and America. Every conceivable protection, guarantee and help should be given to our minority groups and those that are culturally or economically backward.

What should be done now? It is not an easy question for what may be possible today becomes difficult tomorrow. But this war is not going to end soon, and what happens in India is bound to make a great difference. The grand strategy of war requires an understanding of the urges that move people to action and sacrifice for a cause. It requires sacrifice not only of lives of brave men but of factual prejudices, of inherited conceptions of political or economic domination and exploitation of others, of vested interests, of small groups that hinder the growth and development of others. It requires conception and translation into action, in so far as possible, of the new order based on the political and economic freedom of all countries, of world cooperation of free peoples, of revolutionary leadership along these lines, and of capacity to dare and face risks. What vested interests are we going to protect for years to come when the interests of humanity itself are at stake today? Where are the vested interests of Hong Kong and Singapore?

It is essential that whatever is to be done is done now. For it is the present that counts. What will happen after the war nobody knows, and to postpone anything till then is to admit bankruptcy and invite disaster.

I would suggest that the leaders of America and Britain declare: First, that every country is entitled to full freedom and to shape its own destiny, subject only to certain international requirements and their adjustment by international cooperation. Second, that this applies fully

to countries at present within the British Empire, and that India's independence is recognized as well as her right to frame her own constitution through an assembly of her elected representatives, who will also consider her future relations with Britain and other countries. Third, that all races and peoples must be treated as equal and allowed equal opportunities of growth and development. Individuals and races may and do differ, and some are culturally or intellectually more mature than others. But the door of advancement must be open to all; indeed those that are immature should receive help and encouragement. Nothing has alienated people more from the Nazis than their racial theories and the brutal application of these theories. But a similar doctrine and its application are in constant evidence in subject countries.

Such a declaration clearly means the ending of imperialism everywhere with all its dominating position and special privileges. That will be a greater blow to Nazism and fascism than any military triumph, for Nazism and fascism are an intensification of the principle of imperialism. The issue of freedom will then be clear before the world and no subterfuge or equivocation will be possible.

But the declaration, however good, is not enough, for no one believes in promises or is prepared to wait for the hereafter. Its translation into present immediate practice will be the acid test. A full changeover may not be immediately possible, yet much can be done now. In India a changeover can take place without delay and without any complicated legal enactments. The British Parliament may pass laws in regard to it or it may not. We are not particularly interested, as we want to make our own laws in the future. A provisional National Government could be formed and all real power transferred to it. This may be done even within the present structure, but it must be clearly understood that this structure will then be an unimportant covering for something that is entirely different. This National Government will not be responsible to the British Government or the Viceroy but to the people, though of course it will seek to cooperate with the British Government and its agents. When opportunity offers in the future, further changes may take place through a constituent assembly. Meanwhile it may be possible to widen the basis of the present Central Assembly to which the provisional National Government will be responsible.

If this is done in the Central Government, it would not be at all difficult to make popular governments function in the provinces where no special changes are necessary and the apparatus for them exists already.

All this is possible without upsetting too suddenly the outer framework. But it involves a tremendous and vital change, and that is just what is needed from the point of view of striking popular imagination and gaining popular support. Only a real changeover and realization

that the old system is dead past revival, that freedom has come, will galvanize the people into action. That freedom will come at a moment of dire peril and it will be terribly difficult for anyone to shoulder this tremendous responsibility. But whatever the dangers, they have to be faced and responsibility has to be shouldered.

The change suggested would give India the status of an independent nation, but a peaceful changeover presumes mutual arrangements being made between representatives of India and Great Britain for governing their future relations. I do not think that the conception of wholly sovereign independent nations is compatible with world peace or progress. But we do not want international cooperation to be just a variation of the imperial theme with some dominant nations controlling international and national policies. The old idea of Dominion Status is unlikely to remain anywhere and it is peculiarly inapplicable to India. But India will welcome association with Britain and other countries, on an equal basis, as soon as all taint of imperialism is removed.

In immediate practice, after the independence of India is recognized, many old contacts will continue. The administrative machinery will largely remain, apart from individual cases, but it will be subject to such changes as will make it fit in with new conditions. The Indian army must necessarily become a national army and cease to be looked upon as a mercenary army. And future British military establishment would depend on many present and changing factors, chiefly the development of the war. It cannot continue as an alien army of occupation, as it has done in the past, but as an Allied army its position would be different.

It is clear that if the changes suggested were made, India would line up completely with the countries fighting aggression. It is difficult, however, to prophesy what steps would be most effective at this particular juncture. If the military defence of India now being carried on beyond her frontiers proves ineffective, a new and difficult military situation arises that may require other measures. Mahatma Gandhi, in common with others, has declared that we must resist aggression and not submit to any invader; but his methods of resistance, as is well known, are different. These peaceful methods seem odd in this world of brutal warfare. Yet, in certain circumstances, they may be the only alternative left to us. The main thing is that we must not submit to aggression.

One thing is certain: whatever the outcome of this war, India is going to resist every attempt at domination, and a peace that has not solved the problem of India will not be long purchase. Primarily this is Britain's responsibility, but its consequences are worldwide and affect this war. No country can, therefore, ignore India's present and her future, least of

WITH MAHATMA GANDHI AT RAMRAJATALA STATION TO RECEIVE MADAME CHIANG KAI-SHEK, FEBRUARY 1942

WITH MAHATMA GANDHI, CHIANG KAI-SHEK, MADAME CHIANG AND OTHERS, FEBRUARY 1942

all America on whom rests a vast burden of responsibility, and towards whom so many millions look for right leadership at this crisis in world history.

60. The Condition of Refugees[1]

Ever since I issued a statement about the problem of evacuees and refugees from Burma and Malaya, I have been overwhelmed by further particulars.[2]

Many of these reports contain ghastly stories of miseries of Indian evacuees and racial discrimination. The spokesman of the Government of India having repeatedly denied racial discrimination, subsequently admitted such discrimination.[3] What they have done since their last statement, I do not know. But there is a ceaseless stream of hundreds of people arriving daily in various centres complaining bitterly, both of racial discrimination and of utter lack of suitable evacuation arrangements. In most places, such arrangements as exist are made available to Europeans only. And Indians, rich or poor, have to shift for themselves, many dying on the way. I am told that thousands of Indians are herded together in various places *en route* from Burma to India without sufficient protection from continuous looting that has been going on ever since the exodus started. There is also a possibility of the spread

1. Statement to the press, New Delhi, 4 April 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 5 April 1942
2. It was reported in the Indian press on 25 March 1942 that Hutchings, the agent of the Government of India in Burma, used force against Indians desiring to leave Rangoon and that, before Rangoon was evacuated, the city was handed over to the military. Lunatics and prisoners set free from jails looted and raped Indian evacuees.
3. A Government press note dated 20 March 1942, in reply to Jawaharlal's statement of 18 March 1942, stated that the "Government have never stated that discrimination had not taken place...in regard to these incidents, Government have stated that they cannot condone discrimination in any form, and that, when it apparently occurs, a full enquiry should be held." Further it asserted that the Government was not giving special luxurious accommodation to Europeans. In another press note on 29 March 1942, the Government denied any discrimination and justified the closing of the shorter land route to Indians because of lack of sanitation, paucity of water and the availability of beef alone on the route.

of epidemics. Often enough special trains have been provided for European evacuees and refugees, while nothing was done for Indians.

All those people who ultimately escape to India are full of the stories of ill-treatment and racial discrimination. It can well be imagined how this kind of treatment affects the morale of the people generally, and the reactions thereon of the present Government of India.

In regard to accommodation given to refugees and evacuees in the various towns in India the Government stated that this was in the hands of local committees. This may be true, but the local committees are in the hands of district officials and their subordinates. In most places they have displayed sheer incompetence in dealing with the problem. Their partiality to European evacuees is unmistakable.

It is stated that large-scale plans for evacuees in certain large cities have already been made, and many houses and bungalows have been commandeered for them. Presumably Indians will again be left in the lurch. It must be realised that this kind of thing is going to create dissatisfaction and bitterness in the country. Every trace of racial discrimination must go or Government will have to face a situation which it will not like. For my part I am against all evacuation except in special cases and under very special circumstances. I do not like people running away from danger. I hope that our people will face whatever comes with a brave heart and render service to one another leaving it to the soft-bred and high-salaried favourites of the Government to run away to safety if they want. Our slogan is not going to be 'safety first'.

2

THE CRIPPS MISSION

1. To Stafford Cripps[1]

Wardha
20-3-42

Sir,

During your stay in India[2] you will presumably consider the problem of the Indian states, and it has already been announced in the public press that representatives of the Narendra Mandal (the Chamber of Princes) will interview you and place their viewpoint before you.[3] You will appreciate that this viewpoint is likely to be very different from and even entirely at variance with the viewpoint of the people living in these states.

Conditions vary greatly in these states. Some of them are extensive and well populated with considerable revenues, others are almost microscopic in size, population and revenues. Some again are relatively more advanced educationally and industrially, but the great majority of them are exceedingly backward in every respect. With hardly any exception, they are subjected to autocratic and personal rule, limited only by the intervention and more or less strict control of the Political Department of the Government of India. The people of the states have little or no voice in the governments, and civil liberty is often totally non-existent. For many years past agitation has been carried on in a large number of states for responsible government and civil liberty, and this has frequently led to tragic incidents and cruel repression, in which the Government of India or their agents have taken part.

Though conditions differ in these states, the common objective of the people in all of them is full responsible government. In the larger

1. A.I.C.C. Papers, File No. 41, 1942, N.M.M.L.
2. Winston Churchill informed the House of Commons on 11 March 1942, that the War Cabinet had unitedly agreed upon conclusions for "the present and future action in India" which they considered "a just and final solution," and that the Lord Privy Seal, Sir Stafford Cripps, would go to India to secure the assent of the Indian leaders to these proposals. Cripps arrived in India on 23 March 1942 and went back to London on 11 April 1942. He gave copies of his draft proposals to the Indian leaders on 25 March 1942, and made them public at a press conference on 29 March 1942.
3. Cripps had an interview with the Jam Saheb of Nawanagar and the Maharaja of Bikaner on 26 March and with a delegation of the Chamber of Princes on 28 March 1942. Cripps was asked about the relationship between the states, the proposed Indian Union and the British Government. He assured them that the relationship would depend upon the type of treaties they had with the Crown. The major states would be free to decide upon accession, and others would have to adjust their position and requirements with the new Union.

states this responsible government may function under the aegis of the ruler who will be then a strictly constitutional head acting through his ministers who will be responsible to the assemblies elected by the people. Most of the smaller states are far too small to exist as independent units and must therefore be absorbed in larger units, preferably the provinces.

The demand of the people in the states is for a democratic form of government with exactly the same democratic liberties as exist, or should exist, in the rest of India. They look forward to a free, united and democratic India of which these states, if large enough, are constituent units, or are parts of constituent units.

The people of the states refuse to be bound by the provisions of antiquated treaties in the making of which they had no part. These treaties were made by representatives or military commanders of the East India Company with individual rulers or others in armed possession of various areas at the time, without any reference to or consideration of the people living in these areas. At the most they represented a military and political adjustment of conditions as they existed a century and a quarter ago. These conditions have long ceased to exist in India as elsewhere, and it is manifestly absurd to attach any importance to the treaties which have petrified those conditions for so long, to the great detriment of the people.

It has been repeatedly stated by those in authority that any future order must be based on democratic freedom. That democratic freedom must necessarily apply to the Indian states. Far-seeing statesmen have also emphasized the necessity of planning for industrial and social progress. Any planning in India would be impossible if the Indian states were left out of it and remained, as they are, relics and enclaves of a completely out-of-date, autocratic and semi-feudal world. In the interests therefore not only of the people of the states, but also of Indian freedom and world freedom and planning, it is essential that the Indian states system should be liquidated and be replaced by free and democratic units of a free India.

I have endeavoured to place before you briefly the viewpoint of the people of the states as represented by the All India States People's Conference, of which I have the honour to be President. The particular point I wish to make at this stage is that it would be wrong to regard the princes as representatives of the people in their states, and that the representatives of the people of the states should have an effective voice in the disposal of their own destiny.

In case you desire to have any further information on this subject, I would request you to communicate with the General Secretary, All India

States People's Conference, Wardha, C.P. Should you wish to meet a representative of our Conference in order to discuss these problems, our Vice-President, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, has kindly agreed, at my request, to place himself at your disposal.[4] Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya's address is Masulipatam, South India.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru
President, All India States People's Conference

4. Cripps met Sitaramayya on 31 March 1942 and rejected his contention that the proposals had omitted any consideration of the states people. He refused to consider the suggestion that the British Government ask the rulers to introduce representative government. He claimed that Mahatma Gandhi agreed with him that states could not be forced into an Indian Union but he (Cripps) agreed that smaller states should be told to join the Indian Union as a prelude to the introduction of a new constitution.

2. Cripps' Report of His Interview with Jawaharlal and Maulana Azad[1]

I had about two hours with these two and started by giving them the new altered draft in its final form[2] and then explained to Nehru the

1. Held at New Delhi on 29 March 1942. Printed in *The Transfer of Power 1942–7*, (London, 1970), Volume 1, pp. 530–531.
2. His Majesty's Government's draft declaration stated that its object was the creation of a new Indian Union with Dominion Status. The constitution-making body was to have elected members from the re-elected lower Provincial Assemblies and representatives appointed by the Indian rulers. Any province, if it so decided, could refuse to join the new Union and formulate its own constitution, thereby enjoying the same status as the new Union. The treaty signed between His Majesty's Government and the constitution-making body was to provide safeguards for the protection of the minorities. As for defence, paragraph (e) stated, "During the critical period which now faces India and until the new constitution can be framed His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world war effort, but the task of organising to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the cooperation of the peoples of India. His Majesty's Government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India."

general picture which I had given to Maulana Azad the last time I saw him.[3] The four points that were raised were, first, the use of the word "Dominion". I pointed out that this was not a question of substance but of phraseology and I gave the reasons why it had been put in, in order to stop objections by the House of Commons or the other Dominions. I think they attached psychological importance to this but it was in no sense a major point.

They then went on to the question of the Indian states and the representation by the states peoples. I repeated the arguments I had used to Mr. Gandhi[4] and to Maulana Azad on a former occasion and said that if they wanted these states to come in, as apparently they did, this was the only way of inducing them.

They then passed to the non-accession point. I explained the method of deciding this in those cases where there was a 40% or more minority of the accession vote in the legislatures, that it would be referred to a plebiscite of the total adult male population. This method they seemed to accept. On the major point we had a long argument as to what the effect of the grant of the act was likely to be, and I pointed out that Nehru and other Congress leaders had said they were prepared to envisage the possibility of Pakistan and that was all the scheme was doing. They then said that they thought a scheme by which the Muslim provinces could secede after five to ten years was one that might be acceptable, and I replied that this would be a far more disruptive method of deciding the matter than doing it in the making of the constitution, and finally the argument was reduced to which was the better

3. In their interview on 28 March 1942, Cripps had clarified that it was not possible to transfer defence to an Indian Member and if the scheme failed on the issue of defence, the Congress would lose the sympathy of its British friends. On 25 March 1942, Azad had told Cripps that Congress wanted at least the appearance and name of an Indian defence minister, and thought that this would appeal to the Indian people and help in defence mobilisation efforts.

4. In their interview on 27 March 1942, Mahatma Gandhi had told Cripps that Congress might not accept the proposals because of the paragraphs dealing with the Indian states, accession or non-accession of princes, and retention of defence control in British hands. Cripps argued that any reform in the states' administrations should be preceded by an independent British India which by its influence and economic power would inevitably set up a movement for democratisation in the states; he was certain that the British administration would encourage the states towards democratisation so that they might be able to associate themselves with British India. Mahatma Gandhi agreed with Cripps that states should not be forcibly integrated but doubted that British Paramountcy would encourage a democratic movement.

method of allowing for some form of non-accession or secession, which I pointed out was essential in order to get the Muslims to agree.

We then went to the final point as regards Defence. The altered text[5] seemed somewhat to improve the position but we went through all the same arguments again and I think I convinced them of the non-practicability of an Indian Defence Minister in the usual sense of the word.

The general attitude of Nehru, who was tired and not well, was mild and conciliatory and he left me in complete doubt as to whether Congress was more or less decided not to accept it and that it was not worth arguing or pressing for any alteration or whether he was not inclined to press his particular objections in view of the general character of the scheme and its grant of free self-government in India.

5. For the altered text of the declaration see *ante*, f.n. 2. Before amendment Paragraph (e) of the draft declaration had read: "while during the critical period which now faces India, and until the new Constitution can be formed, His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the full responsibility for the defence of India, they desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India." This was amended on the recommendation of Cripps and approved by the War Cabinet on 29 March 1942.

3. Cripps' Report of His Interview with Jawaharlal[1]

Nehru came and had dinner with me and afterwards we talked for over two hours. I have never known him more serious and more worried about the Indian situation, and he was very fully conscious of the acute dangers that would arise if the Indian leaders were not to participate at the present time in the rallying of India to her own defence, but he stressed the very dangerous state of opinion arising from a multitude of causes all of which had exacerbated Indian opinion against the British.

1. Held at New Delhi on 30 March 1942. Printed in *The Transfer of Power 1942–7*, (London, 1970), Volume 1, pp. 557-558.

The principal of these were, one, the treatment of Indian refugees coming from the eastern seaboard to the central districts in comparison to the treatment of the European refugees. Secondly, the growing unemployment in certain industries such as the weavers at Benares, where there was no alternative occupation either to maintain the population or to keep it quiet and orderly. Thirdly, the difficulties as to food distribution and shortage of wheat associated with rumours that we had sent Indian wheat to Persia. Fourthly, the growing disbelief in the capacity of Great Britain, to make any defence effective in the light of the happenings in Malaya and Singapore, with the consequent lack of respect for police and others in India whose power had in the past depended largely upon the uniform that they wore. Fifthly, the tendency for a reversion to sympathy for Japan which had been demonstrated widely during the Russo-Japanese war on the ground of fellow Asiatic nations, though this was moderated by the pro-Chinese feeling in India. He was afraid that these various factors would make for a general breakdown of administration and internal trouble on too large a scale to be held by British forces at the same time as they were holding the Japanese back.

He then told me of the difficulties in the Congress Working Committee and conveyed to me the impression that they would not accept the proposals, largely, I think, though he did not say so precisely, due to the influence of Gandhi. I gathered that he was doing his utmost to gain support for acceptance but felt that he was fighting a losing battle. We discussed shortly again the various points of difficulty but my general impression was that it was not so much the actual point of difficulty as the nonviolence outlook of Gandhi and his supporters on that line, which obviously is opposed to the idea of mobilising effectively the armed defence of India; and I feel fairly certain it is this aspect pointing to the undesirability of Congress leaders associating themselves in any way with the war effort which will be the decisive factor in the situation rather than any particular provision of the scheme itself. I naturally stressed to him again the hopelessness of the situation if nothing was now done and that the Congress and other nationalistic movements would lose all the support of sympathisers in other countries, anyway for the immediate present.

4. To Stafford Cripps[1]

New Delhi
April 1, 1942

Dear Sir Stafford,
I have your letter of today's date,[2] for which I thank you.

If you so desire it, I shall gladly meet the Commander-in-Chief and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru will, I hope, be able to accompany me.

My Committee have already arrived at a decision[3] in regard to the proposals communicated by you to us. It was my intention to send this to you this evening, or possibly to take it over in person, in case you wished to discuss any point contained in it. This decision naturally covers other points also apart from defence. I hope to send it to you sometime today. If you wish to meet me again in regard to this I shall gladly meet you.

In your letter you refer to the 'Hindu Press.' I do not know what exactly you mean by this.[4]

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

1. A.I.C.C. Papers, File No. 26, 1942, N.M.M.L. This letter written by Maulana Azad to Cripps was drafted by Jawaharlal.
2. Cripps in his letter invited Azad and Jawaharlal to meet the Commander-in-Chief, in order that "he may explain fully to you the technical difficulties of the situation and in order that you may make to him any suggestions you wish as to the division of responsibilities in this sphere of government." This was in regard to the question of defence.
3. See the following item.
4. Cripps wrote that he understood from "the Hindu Press that difficulties are still in the mind of Congress as to the question of the responsibility for the defence of India." He clarified in his letter of the same date later that he was referring to *The Hindustan Times.* This part of the letter was not included, on Cripps' request, in the British White Paper on Cripps Mission.

5. Resolution of the Congress Working Committee[1]

New Delhi
April 2, 1942

The Working Committee have given their full and earnest consideration to the proposals made by the British War Cabinet in regard to India and the elucidation thereof by Sir Stafford Cripps.[2]

These proposals, which have been made at the very last hour because of the compulsion of events, have to be considered not only in relation to India's demand for independence, but more especially in the present grave war crisis, with a view to meeting effectively the perils and dangers that confront India and envelop the world.

The Congress has repeatedly stated, ever since the commencement of the war in September 1939, that the people of India would line themselves with the progressive forces of the world and assume full responsibility to face the new problems and shoulder the new burdens that had arisen, and it asked for the necessary conditions to enable them to do so to be created.

An essential condition was the freedom of India, for only the realisation of present freedom could light the flame which would illumine millions of hearts and move them to action.

1. Jawaharlal drafted this resolution of the Working Committee which was handed over to Cripps on 2 April 1942. It was released to the press on 11 April 1942. Jawaharlal's draft is available in J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. In his press conference on 29 March 1942 and radio broadcast a day later, Cripps clarified that the status envisaged for the new Indian Union included the right of secession, by a plebiscite if necessary; that if different communities did not agree to a common constitution, "nobody in the world can stop them." The Constituent Assembly would be completely free to decide whether or not the new Indian Union would remain in the Commonwealth and it could, if it wished, start with a declaration of independence during the interim period. The responsibility for defence of India must remain with the British Government, and "it would be dishonest to say that an Indian Defence Minister would be responsible for the defence of India." He further clarified that while it was up to the Governor General to decide on the formation of the Government during the interim period "the intention of the document as far as possible, subject to the reservation of defence, is to put power in the hands of Indian leaders." While this Executive Council would have to function under the existing constitution, the Section in the Act of 1919 insisting on three service members of ten years standing being in the Council could be repealed. Conventions could be changed or new ones adopted. Cripps specifically stated that the Council could become a Cabinet. He also emphasized that the "scheme goes through as a whole or is rejected as a whole."

At the last meeting of the All India Congress Committee, after the commencement of the war in the Pacific, it was stated that: 'Only a free and independent India can be in a position to undertake the defence of the country on a national basis and be of help in the furtherance of the larger causes that are emerging from the storm of war.'

The British War Cabinet's new proposals relate principally to the future upon the cessation of hostilities.

The Committee, while recognising that self-determination for the people of India is accepted in principle in that uncertain future, regret that this is fettered and circumscribed and certain provisions have been introduced which gravely imperil the development of a free and united nation and the establishment of a democratic state.

Even the constitution-making body is so constituted that the people's right to self-determination is vitiated by the introduction of non-representative elements.

The people of India have as a whole clearly demanded full independence and the Congress has repeatedly declared that no other status except that of independence for the whole of India could be agreed to or could meet the essential requirements of the present situation.

The Committee recognise that future independence may be implicit in the proposals, but the accompanying provisions and restrictions are such that real freedom may well become an illusion. The complete ignoring of the ninety millions of the people of the Indian states and their treatment as commodities at the disposal of their rulers is a negation of both democracy and self-determination.

While the representation of an Indian state in the constitution-making body is fixed on a population basis, the people of the state have no voice in choosing those representatives, nor are they to be consulted at any stage, while decisions vitally affecting them are being taken.

Such states may in many ways become barriers to the growth of Indian freedom, enclaves where foreign authority still prevails and where the possibility of maintaining foreign armed forces has been stated to be a likely contingency, and a perpetual menace to the freedom of the people of the states as well as of the rest of India.

The acceptance beforehand of the novel principle of non-accession for a province is also a severe blow to the conception of Indian unity and an apple of discord likely to generate growing trouble in the provinces, and which may well lead to further difficulties in the way of the Indian states merging themselves in the Indian Union.

The Congress has been wedded to Indian freedom and unity and any break in that unity, especially in the modern world when people's minds

inevitably think in terms of ever larger federations, would be injurious to all concerned and exceedingly painful to contemplate.

Nevertheless the Committee cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will. While recognising this principle, the Committee feel that every effort should be made to create conditions which would help the different units in developing a common and cooperative national life. The acceptance of the principle inevitably involves that no changes should be made which result in fresh problems being created and compulsion being exercised on other substantial groups within that area. Each territorial unit should have the fullest possible autonomy within the Union, consistently with a strong national state.

The proposal now made on the part of the British War Cabinet encourages and will lead to attempts at separation at the very inception of a Union and thus create friction just when the utmost cooperation and goodwill are most needed. This proposal has been presumably made to meet a communal demand, but it will have other consequences also and lead politically reactionary and obscurantist groups among different communities to create trouble and divert public attention from the vital issues before the country.

Any proposal concerning the future of India must demand attention and scrutiny, but in today's grave crisis, it is the present that counts, and even proposals for the future are important in so far as they affect the present.

The Committee have necessarily attached the greatest importance to this aspect of the question, and on this ultimately depends what advice they should give to those who look to them for guidance.

For this the present British War Cabinet's proposals are vague and altogether incomplete, and there would appear to be no vital changes in the present structure contemplated.

It has been made clear that the defence of India will in any event remain under British control. At any time defence is a vital subject; during war-time it is all important and covers almost every sphere of life and administration; to take away defence from this sphere of responsibility at this stage is to reduce that responsibility to a farce and a nullity, and to make it perfectly clear that India is not going to be free in any way and her government is not going to function as a free and independent government during the pendency of the war.

The Committee would repeat that an essential and fundamental prerequisite for the assumption of responsibility by the Indian people in the present, is their realisation as a fact that they are free and are in charge of maintaining and defending their freedom. What is most wanted

is the enthusiastic response of the people which cannot be evoked without the fullest trust in them and the devolution of responsibility on them in the matter of defence. It is only thus that even at this grave eleventh hour it may be possible to galvanise the people of India to rise to the height of the occasion.

It is manifest that the present Government of India, as well as its provincial agencies, are lacking in competence, and are incapable of shouldering the burden of India's defence. It is only the people of India, through their popular representatives, who may shoulder this burden worthily. But that can only be done by present freedom, and full responsibility being cast upon them.

The Committee, therefore, are unable to accept the proposals put forward on behalf of the British War Cabinet.

6. Cripps' Report of His Interview with Jawaharlal and Maulana Azad[1]

They brought the reply of Congress with them and gave it to me to read.[2] I asked them whether this meant that they decisively turned the draft document down, and they said it was the considered opinion of the Congress Working Committee but that if any change were made they would naturally reconsider their attitude to the new document.

We went through the three first points. Upon the first argument they stated that it was difficult for them to accept a document which did not speak clearly of independence in view of their long propaganda on this point.

As regards the Indian states, Nehru particularly stressed the fact that Congress had always insisted as a fundamental matter that regard must be had to the peoples of the states and not to the rulers, and that again it was very difficult for them to accept document which went against this principle completely.

So far as the non-accession point was concerned, they admitted, as their document does, that the principle of self-determination must be

1. Held at New Delhi on 2 April 1942. Printed in *The Transfer of Power 1942–7*, (London, 1970), Volume I, p. 609.
2. See the preceding item.

allowed to the Muslims in some way, but said that the very definite statement in the draft document had prejudiced any more favourable solution of the problem and had made it difficult for any agreement between them and the Muslim League upon this matter; that they feared the partition of India and definitely thought that this encouraged it, and that the principle of a united India was one for which they were prepared to go to almost any length.

So far as the Defence question was concerned I did not discuss this further but we arranged that they would come and see the Commander-in-Chief as soon as an appointment could be made.

7. To Stafford Cripps[1]

Thanks for your letter of today's date.[2] From our talk yesterday I had gathered the impression that we were likely to meet the Commander-in-Chief sometime today and we had arranged our programme accordingly, but as this is not convenient to him we shall meet him tomorrow at 6 p.m. as suggested and reach your house at 5.50 p.m. I do not think it is necessary for me to send a note about organisational details. We are interested as you know in the political aspect of the problem, the full popular control of defence as well as all other departments of administration. We consider such control essential before responsibility can be undertaken. Our views on this subject and others are embodied in the resolution I gave you yesterday and it is with that background that we should like to consider the subject of defence. Problems of higher strategy may well be controlled by inter-Allied Cabinets or Councils, but the effectual control of the defence of India should rest with the Indian National Government.

1. This letter dated New Delhi, 3 April 1942 from Maulana Azad to Stafford Cripps was drafted by Jawaharlal. Printed in *The Transfer of Power 1942–7*, (London, 1970), Volume I, p. 640.
2. Cripps informed Azad and Jawaharlal that they could meet the Commander-in-Chief on 4 April and stated that if they desired to raise any specific points of detail about organisation, "I should be very much obliged if you could let me have a note of them tonight or first thing in the morning so that Commander-in-Chief can consider them before the meeting."

8. Reply to American Press Comments[1]

I have read with interest the comments in the American press on the proposals of the British Cabinet brought here by Sir Stafford Cripps.[2] These comments are obviously influenced by the urgency of events, and we appreciate that urgency ourselves. Indeed, for us, it is even more urgent than for the U.S.A. But behind these comments there is not enough appreciation of the situation in India or of the public reaction to events. It is difficult for me to deal with this matter fully at this stage as the Working Committee has decided not to release its resolution yet. We do not wish to take any step in this respect which might come in the way of Sir Stafford Cripps. Our decision, when released, will explain conclusively our viewpoints which, I believe, are shared by vast numbers of our people. The time for further elucidation will come then. I trust our friends in India and abroad will wait for its publication, whenever it may come.

The future is undoubtedly important and we may accept a proposal for that future provided it is not opposed to our interests and principles. But ultimately it is the present, with all its urgency and possibility of far-reaching consequences, that counts. The feasibility of any proposal has primarily to be judged by its application to the present as to whether it can light a fire in the people's hearts to enable them to meet the heavy trials of today and tomorrow.

1. Interview to the press, New Delhi, 4 April 1942. From *National Herald*, 6 April 1942.
2. Several important American papers, including the *Washington Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor* and the *New York Post*, suggested that the United States might act as a mediator or guarantor of the British promises. *The Oregon Journal* feared that if the Cripps proposals which constituted a genuine plan for independence were rejected it would jeopardise India's chances for independence. The *New York Herald*, in a leader entitled 'India Talks, Japan Acts', emphasized that the proposals, unlike the earlier promises, had the support of the people of Britain and India, and that while the Indian press complained that the American press had failed to understand the nuances of the problem, "Americans understand the essentials of the problem because they know what is freedom." There could be no freedom unless the enemies of freedom were destroyed forever. The *New York Times*, on 31 March 1942, asserted that if the proposals were refused, Indians would lose America's comradeship.

9. Interview with Louis Arthur Johnson[1]

2. ***[2] After explaining that Nehru had sought the interview, Colonel Johnson[3] said that he had suspected that Nehru believed that he, Colonel Johnson, had brought a letter from the President but there was no question of any such letter. Colonel Johnson asked me to pass on to His Excellency[4] the main lines of his conversation with Nehru which were broadly as follows:

3. He gathered that Congress had decided not to break on the non-accession issue, partly he understood because they believed that economic factors would make non-accession impossible (Nehru may have been thinking of the 60 per cent formula[5] which has in effect barred non-accession by the Punjab and Bengal, and of the Central subsidy to the N.W.F.P., which will of course be a strong influence against non-accession by that Province). Nehru had then gone on to speak of hitching India's wagon to America's Star and not Britain's. Colonel Johnson then told him that it was the President's determination and the determination of the American people to support Great Britain to the end of the war, to the utmost and to preserve the integrity of the British Empire and that there must be no doubt in anybody's mind in India that America would see the war through. If America was convinced that Congress was solidly supporting the war effort, the sympathy she had previously had for Congress would continue; if, on the other hand, it appeared that Congress was saving face, or hedging or taking action to slow down the conclusion of the war, it was not too much to say that America would hate Congress. Colonel Johnson added, in response to an interjection of Nehru's, that America would have the leading place at the peace table, that her attitude towards India at that table would be determined by the wholeheartedness or otherwise of the Indian war effort. If he himself were associated with the Peace Conference he

1. We are giving here extracts from an account prepared by O.K. Caroe, Secretary, External Department, Government of India, since 1939, of his talks on 6 April 1942 with Johnson about the latter's interview with Jawaharlal held at New Delhi on 5 April 1942. Printed in *The Transfer of Power 1942–7*, (London, 1970), Volume I, pp. 665-666.
2. Omission in the source.
3. (1892-1956); Personal Representative of President Roosevelt to India from March-June 1942; became a personal friend of Jawaharlal; Secretary of Defence, 1949-50, in the Truman administration.
4. Lord Linlithgow.
5. See *ante*, p. 184.

would do his best to see that an India which had wholeheartedly backed the war effort obtained America's fullest support in attaining her ambitions. But the matter would be far otherwise, if at that time the American people felt that American blood had been spilt unnecessarily and the war prolonged by shilly-shallying. Nehru then spoke of his belief that India, particularly rural India, would not create a refugee problem, the villagers were rooted where they stood and would not move. He also enlarged on his belief that Indians, particularly villagers, would make fine guerillas (at this point I interjected doubts regarding the capacity of the Bengal villager for guerilla warfare and Colonel Johnson said even Nehru himself was anxious whether Bengal would stand fast against an invader).

4. Nehru had then gone on to speak of the issue regarding control of Defence, and he said that although Congress would not break on the non-accession issue, they must break if they were not satisfied on this. Colonel Johnson added that Nehru and other Congress leaders, he gathered, did not like the present Commander-in-Chief,[6] though they expressed admiration for his predecessor.[7] They were determined, he thought, to get a Defence Minister, but Nehru, when asked, had said that this would in no way involve interference with control of operations or in the field. The supply issue was not touched on....

6. Sir Archibald Percival Wavell.
7. Sir Alan Fleming Hartley.

10. To A. E. Foot[1]

New Delhi
April 5, 1942

My dear Foot,
Your letter of the 3rd April.[2] It is a little difficult for me to deal with this matter as we have promised not to give publicity to our resolution yet. We have tried and we are trying to explore every possible avenue of a suitable settlement.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter Foot argued that if Jawaharlal was thinking of turning down the proposals because, with regard to defence, the proposals were inadequate, this was understandable, but should be specifically stated.

I might mention however that the three points you have raised are based on misapprehensions.

(i) It is obvious that the average Indian has no faith in British promises.[3] That is natural enough. But this does not affect in any way our consideration of the present problem. The future is so uncertain that any promises made in regard to it has no great value. For my part I have no doubt about the *bona fides* of Cripps and also that a large number of Englishmen desire Indian freedom, though rather vaguely. But this is something more than a question of individual *bona fides*. National policies are determined by various forces at play and no individual can really guarantee them in advance. I should like much to happen in India but I am totally unable to guarantee it, because I do not know how far I can have my way then. However all this is beside the point and does not affect the present situation in the least.

(ii) It is true that the proposals encourage the spirit of disruption in India.[4] As such they are harmful. In theory one cannot and one does not want to compel large groups of people to act against their will. In practice one tries to discourage such ideas and create conditions which lead to unity. For the first time official recognition is being given to the possibility of India being split up. This is bad and will lead to evil consequences, not only in the communal sphere, but also among politically reactionary groups. However, even these proposals need not be a bar to present agreement. It is the present that counts.

(iii) What Indian big business wants[5] is not what I or my colleagues want, and their attitude has little if any influence on our decisions. So far as we are concerned, we are completely committed, whatever the future might be, regarding a settlement with Britain, to opposition to Japanese aggression and invasion in India. We will not submit to this whatever the consequences. This is the attitude I have taken up in public wherever I have spoken, and that is the attitude that the Congress as a whole is taking up. There are no doubt individuals or groups

3. Foot had stated that suspicion of Indian public opinion about British promises and imputing of motives, even to an enemy, without being certain, contravened the fundamental principles of decent human behaviour.
4. Arguing against the charge that the proposals would split India, Foot said that the Congress should be prepared to put to test its belief that Pakistan was not wanted by the majority of the provinces concerned.
5. Foot believed that Indian big business definitely did not want to displease the Japanese, as they would like to continue in their strong position in the Japanese new order. He hoped Jawaharlal and those of his way of thinking would not wish to be identified with them.

who think otherwise. But we are going to face them and oppose them.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To Louis Arthur Johnson[1]

New Delhi
April 8, 1942

Dear Colonel Johnson,
We have given careful thought to the suggestions you have made.[2] May I say that we appreciate greatly the friendly interest you are taking in the attempt to solve, at least for the present, the problems that face us.

As I told you yesterday, the new proposals made by Sir Stafford Cripps on behalf of the British War Cabinet, were entirely unsatisfactory.[3] Both the approach and the allocation of subjects were, in our

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. A defence formula was communicated by Johnson: "(a) The Defence Department shall be placed in charge of a representative Indian member, with the exception of functions to be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief as War Member of the Executive Council. (b) A War Department will be constituted which will take over such functions of the Defence Department as are not retained by the Defence Member. A list of all the retained functions has been agreed, to which will be added further important responsibilities including the matter now dealt with by the Defence Coordination Department and other vital matters related to the defence of India."
3. In his letter of 7 April 1942 to Azad, Cripps proposed a defence formula, after taking into account the Congress Working Committee's objections and in consultation with the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief. Accordingly, the Commander-in-Chief was to retain his seat in the Viceroy's Executive Council as a War Member, and also retain his control and command of the army activities in India, subject only to the control of His Majesty's Government and the War Cabinet. An Indian representative with full powers over defence would be represented on the War Cabinet and the Pacific Council, and an Indian on the Viceroy's Executive Council would take over sections of the Defence Department which organisationally could be separated from that of Commander-in-Chief. These included public relations; demobilisation and post-war reconstruction; petroleum supply; representation on Eastern Group Supply Council; welfare of troops and their dependents; canteens; non-technical educational institutions; stationery and printing; and arrangements for foreign missions, representatives and offices. The Indian member would also take over the functions of the Defence Coordination Department then under the Viceroy, and other important functions related to defence. These included denial policy; evacuation from threatened areas; signals coordination; and economic warfare.

opinion, wrong, and there was no real transfer of responsibility for Defence to representative Indians in the National Government. Such transfer is essential for the successful defence of the country, for on it depends the full mobilization of the war-potential of the country.

The approach you have made in the draft you gave me this morning seems to us a more healthy one. With some alterations that we suggest, it might be made the basis of further discussions. But, it must be remembered, that a very great deal depends on the allocation of subjects between the Defence Department and the War Department, and until this is done, it is not possible to give a final opinion.

Leaving aside this subject of allocation for the present, we would suggest that the formula which is to form the basis of discussion should be as follows:

(a) The Defence Department shall be placed in the charge of a representative Indian member, but certain functions relating to the conduct of the war will be exercised, for the duration of the war, by the Commander-in-Chief, who will be in control of the war activities of the armed forces in India, and who will be an extraordinary member of the National Cabinet for that purpose.

(b) A War Department will be constituted under the Commander-in-Chief. This Department will take over such functions as are to be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief. A list of such functions has been prepared and is attached.

(c) The Defence Member shall be in charge of all other matters relating to Defence, including those now dealt with by the Defence Coordination Department.

You will notice that this does not differ materially from your formula. The general approach is that the National Government is responsible for the entire government of the country including its defence. But, in view of the war and the obvious necessity of allowing full scope for operations to the Commander-in-Chief, functions relating to the conduct of the war are delegated to him and are to be exercised by him for the direction of the war. He will, in effect, have full control of these operations and of the war activities of the armed forces in India.

It is presumed of course that there will be full cooperation between the Defence Department and the War Department. The National Government will inevitably strain every nerve towards the successful defence of the country and will give all possible help to the Commander-in-Chief in this behalf.

Sir Stafford Cripps has already stated that a representative Indian will be a member of the War Cabinet in London, and that membership of the Pacific Council would likewise be offered to a representative Indian.

There are many other important matters which have to be considered, but I do not wish to trouble you with them at this stage. I should like to refer to them, however, in order to prevent any misapprehension later on. In the draft declaration proposed to be made by the British Government there is much with which we do not agree. The preamble commits us to Dominion Status, though there is a possibility of our voting ourselves out later on. Clauses C and D relate, *inter alia*, to the right of a province not to join the Union and to the nomination by the rulers of states' representatives to the constitution-making body. We think these provisions are bad and likely to have dangerous consequences.

We have indicated our views in regard to them in the resolution, a copy of which I have already sent you. All these provisions are for the future and they need not come in the way of a present arrangement. As controversial matter, they might be left out of any proposed declaration at this stage. It will be open to any group or party to adhere to its own opinions in regard to them and yet cooperate in a settlement for present action. We hope that it may be possible for us to arrive at a satisfactory settlement about them at a future date.

One other matter to which we attach importance might be mentioned, though it does not arise out of the present talks. We presume that the independent status of India will be recognized by the United Nations. Whenever this is done, it will greatly help our common cause and strengthen our bonds with each other.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. Reply to American Press Comments[1]

I have refrained from saying much about the American press comments[2] on the present Indian situation. It is always difficult to judge from selected extracts through an agency which is far from impartial what American public opinion might be thinking or saying. I have looked to America with considerable admiration and goodwill. I wish her success in her present great endeavour. Nevertheless I must say that many of the American press comments have amazed me and I can only understand them on the basis of American ignorance of conditions in India. We have had long homilies and patronising advice as to what is good for us and what is not. There has been sometimes an element of threat in case we do not accept that advice. The advice of friends is always welcome and worthy of consideration. But we are not used to patronage from any country or people and we do not shape our policy on the basis of superior homilies or threats. In this world situation fraught with peril it is right that we should consult each other and find a way out to the common advantage of a common cause. But I want to make it clear that we have issued no appeals to anybody or asked for anyone's intervention. For my part I admire President Roosevelt and consider that he has been shouldering a very great burden worthily. I think he will inevitably play a great part in the future. But we have not asked for his intervention in our problems for we realise that the burden is ours and we must shoulder it. We have shouldered it against the might of a great Empire during these last twenty-two years and we have not bowed down to superior might in spite of pains and

1. Statement to the press, 9 April 1942. *National Herald*, 10 April 1942.
2. Commenting on the report that Jawaharlal had appealed to Johnson for Roosevelt's aid in considering the British proposals, the *New York Herald Tribune* on 8 April 1942 observed that it was fantastic to suppose the United States forcing Britain into decisions which Britain "believed unwise or accept the responsibility for imposing problems of India. The notion that the United States could do so tends to stultify position which Nationalist leaders themselves have claimed that India should be free to work out her own destiny without artificial hindrances or restrictions by the British. That opportunity Britain seemed categorically to promise in her latest offer, but now the objection to it is that various Indian leaders are now not asking for greater freedom to meet their own problems. Instead they seem to be insisting that the problems should be foreclosed in their favour." *The New York Times* was also sceptical of what Roosevelt could do to smooth the relations between India and Britain but added that a compromise should be reached in the interest of Indian freedom and the United Nations.

penalties. We propose to stand erect in future also, whatever happens. We realise that the achievement of freedom for India, which we have desired so passionately and worked for during these long years, is our business. If we are strong enough to achieve it we shall do so. If not we shall fail. We rely ultimately on ourselves only and on no others, though the cooperation of others in a worthy task is always welcome.

Colonel Louis Johnson has taken a friendly interest in our problem of today and we are grateful to him for it. But it will be unfair to him and unfair to us to imagine that the burden of any decision or of intervention is cast upon him.

We have had sufficient experience of British statesmanship in India and elsewhere. Whatever the war may have done, there has been little difference in the tone or voice of the most eminent of the British leaders. Lord Halifax, whom we know well in India, still continues to sermonise us as of old and to tell us how insignificant we are in this great land of India.[3] Perhaps so. Then why trouble about us or come to us with proposals? Lord Halifax is pleased with what his people have done here. Let him live in his complaisant world and leave us to our resources and sorrows. But whatever happens we will not give up our objective of independence and complete freedom for India. Our allegiance is to the Indian people and to no one else and in their service and for India's freedom we shall labour and if necessary die.

3. In his speech at New York Town Hall on 7 April 1942, Halifax observed that the Indian National Congress was not cooperating with the British in the war effort despite the social, economic and political advancement of India under British rule. He contended that the Congress did not represent the interests of the Muslims and of a section of the Hindus. Even the Princely states did not fit in the scheme of the Congress. He reiterated that, in order "to assume the rights and duties of full manhood among nations," and at a time of grave crisis, the Congress, the Muslim League, the Princes and the depressed classes should forge a unity and come to a broad agreement, keeping in view the interests of all the minorities.

13. To Louis Arthur Johnson[1]

New Delhi
9.4.42

to the changes suggested by Sir Stafford Cripps in the Defence formula.[2] It is felt by my colleagues that some of these changes do not improve the former draft.

There is one matter however on which I should like to have more light. It is difficult for me to grasp the full significance of the functions suggested for the War Department. The phrase used is: "The governmental relations of G.H.Q., N.H.Q. and A.H.Q." and then some further details are given in comprehensive terms. Could it be possible to give illustrative lists of departments under the War Department and the Defence Department respectively? These need not be exhaustive.

I might mention that, in any event, I do not see any reason for the inclusion in the War Department list of clause (4). I should have thought that it was the natural function of the Defence Department to act as liaison between G.H.Q. etc. and Provincial Governments etc.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. On 8 April 1942, Cripps, Johnson and Jawaharlal had a meeting at which Cripps amended the Working Committee's defence formula and showed it to Jawaharlal for suggestions. According to this formula an Indian was to be appointed in charge of Defence, but he was to delegate powers to the Commander-in-Chief as the War Member of the Executive Council who was to control the war operations and the armed forces and also be responsible to the General Head Quarters, the Naval Head Quarters and the Air Head Quarters. The Defence Member was to be in charge of all other matters in the Defence Department as well as the Defence Coordination Department; and Clause(4) stated that in the event of any new functions arising in future and in case of any dispute regarding the allocation of those functions it was to be decided by His Majesty's Government. The Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief objected strongly to the War Cabinet that they had not been consulted.

14. To Stafford Cripps[1]

New Delhi
April 10, 1942

Dear Sir Stafford,
On April 2nd I sent you the resolution of the Working Committee of

1. This letter from Azad to Cripps was drafted by Jawaharlal. Printed in *The Transfer of Power*, 1942–7, (London, 1970), Volume 1, pp. 726-730. Also available in J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. This letter was released to the press on 11 April 1942.

the Congress[2] containing their views of the tentative proposals put forward by you on behalf of the British Government.[3] In this resolution we expressed our dissent from several important and far-reaching proposals for the future. Further consideration of these proposals has only strengthened us in our conviction in regard to them and we should like to repeat that we cannot accept them as suggested. The Working Committee's resolution gives expression to our conclusions relating to them, which we reached after the most earnest consideration.

That resolution however emphasized the gravity of the present situation and stated that the ultimate decision that we might take would be governed by the changes made in the present. The overriding problem before all of us, and more especially before all Indians, is the defence of the country from aggression and invasion. The future, important as it is, will depend on what happens in the next few months and years. We were therefore prepared to do without any assurances for this uncertain future, hoping that through our sacrifices in the defence of our country we would lay the solid and enduring foundations for a free and independent India. We concentrated therefore on the present.

Your original proposals in regard to the present, as contained in Clause (e)[4] of the proposed Declaration, were vague and incomplete, except insofar as it was made clear that His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the full responsibility for the defence of India. These proposals in effect asked for participation in the tasks of today with a view to ensure the future freedom of India. Freedom was for an uncertain future, not for the present; and no indication was given in Clause (e) of what arrangements or governmental and other changes would be made in the present. When this vagueness was pointed out, you said that this was deliberate so as to give you freedom to determine these changes in consultation with others. In our talks you gave us to understand that you envisaged a National Government which would deal with all matters except Defence.

Defence at any time, and more particularly in war time, is of essential importance; and without it a National Government functions in a very limited field. Apart from this consideration, it was obvious that the whole purpose of your proposals and our talks centred round the urgency of the problems created by the threat of the invasion of India. The chief functions of a National Government must necessarily be to organize defence, both intensively and on the widest popular basis, and to create

2. See *ante*, pp. 188-191.
3. See *ante*, p. 183.
4. See *ante*, pp. 183 and 185.

important changes. The rest can be left to future arrangements and adjustments. I might remind you that the British Prime Minister actually proposed a Union of France and England on the eve of the fall of France.[5] No greater or more fundamental change could be imagined and this was suggested at a period of grave crisis and peril. War accelerates change. It does not fit in with static conceptions.

The formula for Defence that you sent us was considered by us together with its annexure[6] which gave a list of subjects or departments which were to be transferred to the Defence Department. This list was a revealing one as it proved that the Defence Minister would deal with relatively unimportant matters. We were unable to accept this and we informed you accordingly.

Subsequently a new formula for Defence was suggested to us but without any list of subjects.[7] This formula seemed to us to be based on a more healthy approach and we suggested certain changes pointing out that our ultimate decision would necessarily depend on the allocation of subjects. A revised formula was then sent back to us together with an indication of the functions of the War Department.[8] This was so widely and comprehensively framed that it was difficult for us to know what the actual allocation of subjects and departments as between the Defence Department and the War Department would be. A request was made on our behalf that illustrative lists of these subjects might be supplied to enable us to consider the matter. No such lists were supplied to us.

In the interview we had with you yesterday we discussed the new formula and expressed our viewpoint in regard to it. I need not repeat what I said then. The wording of the formula is after all a minor matter and we would not allow that to come in our way unless some important principle is at stake. But behind that wording lay certain ideas and we were surprised to find that during the past few days we had been proceeding on wrong assumptions.

When we asked you for illustrative lists of subjects for the two departments you referred us to the old list for the Defence Department which you had previously sent us and which we had been unable to accept. You added that certain residuary subjects might be added to this but in effect there was not likely to be any such subject as the allocation was complete. Thus you said that substantially there was no

change between the old list and any new one that might be prepared. If this was so and we were to go back ultimately to the place we started from then what was the purpose of our searching for new formulae, a new set of words meaning the same thing made no difference.

In the course of our talks many other matters were also cleared up. Unfortunately to our disadvantage you had referred both privately and in the course of public statements to a National Government and a Cabinet consisting of Ministers.[9] These words have a certain significance and we had imagined that the new government would function with full powers as a Cabinet with the Viceroy acting as a constitutional head; but the new picture that you placed before us was really not very different from the old, the difference being one of degree and not of kind. The new government could neither be called, except vaguely and inaccurately, nor could it function as a National Government. It would just be the Viceroy and his Executive Council with the Viceroy having all his old powers. We did not ask for any legal changes but we did ask for definite assurances and conventions which would indicate that the new government would function as a free government, the members of which act as members of a Cabinet in a constitutional government. In regard to the conduct of the war and connected activities the Commander-in-Chief would have freedom and he would also act as War Minister. We were informed that nothing could be said at this stage even vaguely and generally about the conventions that should govern the new government and the Viceroy. This was a matter in the Viceroy's sole discretion and at a later stage it could be discussed directly with the Viceroy. Ultimately there was always the possibility of the members of the Executive Council resigning or threatening to resign if they disagreed with the Viceroy. That sanction or remedy is of course always open but it is curious that we should base our approach to a new

9. Cripps, at his press conference on 29 March 1942, had stated that the intention of the British Government was to put power in the hands of Indians, except for defence; also that new conventions could govern the deliberations of the new Executive Council which could approximate to a cabinet. In his letter to Azad on 7 April 1942, Cripps said that although the Constitution could not be changed, His Majesty's Government "were anxious to give representative Indians the maximum possible participation in the Government during that period". He also said that the civil departments would be administered "by representative members in the new National Government." Azad was given the same impression by Cripps in their interview on 25 March 1942. Linlithgow, later in his letter to Amery on 11 April 1942, confirmed that "Cripps had talked freely of a 'National Government' presided over by a Viceroy who would stand in much the same relation to it as the King does at home."

government on the probability of conflict and resignation at the very outset.

The picture therefore placed before us is not essentially different from the old one. The whole object which we and I believe you have in view, that is to create a new psychological approach to the people to make them feel that their own National Government had come, that they were defending their newly won freedom, would be completely frustrated when they saw this old picture again with even the old label on. The continuation of the India Office which has been a symbol of evil to us would confirm this picture. It has almost been taken for granted for some time past that the India Office would soon disappear, as it was an anachronism, but now we are told that even this undesirable relic of a past age is going to continue.

The picture of the government which was so like the old in all essential features is such that we cannot fit into it. Normally we would have had little difficulty in disposing of this matter for it is so far removed from all that we have striven for, but in the circumstances of today we were prepared to give full consideration to every proposal which might lead to an effective organization of the defence of India. The peril that faces India affects us more than it can possibly affect any foreigner and we are anxious and eager to do our utmost to face it and overcome it. But we cannot undertake responsibilities when we are not given the freedom and power to shoulder them effectively and when an old environment continues which hampers the national effort.

While we cannot accept the proposals you have made, we want to inform you that we are yet prepared to assume responsibility provided a truly National Government is formed. We are prepared to put aside for the present all questions about the future, though as we have indicated we hold definite views about it. But in the present the National Government must be a Cabinet Government with full power, and must not merely be a continuation of the Viceroy's Executive Council. In regard to Defence we have already stated what in our opinion the position should be. At present we feel that such an arrangement is the very minimum that is essential for the functioning of a National Government and for making the popular appeal which is urgently needed.

We would point out to you that the suggestions we have put forward are not ours only but may be considered to be the unanimous demand of the Indian people. On these matters there is no difference of opinion among various groups and parties and the difference is as between the Indian people as a whole and the British Government. Such differences as exist in India relate to constitutional changes in the future. We are agreeable to the postponement of this issue so that the largest

WITH STUDENTS AT VISVABHARATI, FEBRUARY 1942

AT INDIRA'S MARRIAGE, 26 MARCH 1942

16. To Stafford Cripps[1]

New Delhi
April 11, 1942

Dear Sir Stafford,
I have just received your letter of April 10th and I must confess that my colleagues and I were considerably surprised to read it. I am sending you this reply immediately and can only deal briefly here with some of the points you have raised.

The points covered by our original resolution are important and represent my Committee's well-considered views on the British proposals as a whole.[2] But we pointed out to you that so far as the proposals relate to the future they might be set aside, as we were anxious to assume responsibility for India's government and defence in this hour of danger. This responsibility could only be undertaken, however, if it was real responsibility and power.

As regards the division of functions between the Defence Minister and the War Minister you did not give illustrative lists, as requested by us, and referred us to the previous list of the Defence Minister's functions, which, as you know, we had been wholly unable to accept.[3] In your letter under reply you mention certain subjects, directly or indirectly related to the war, which will be administered by other departments. So far as the Defence Minister is concerned, it is clear that his functions will be limited by the first list that you sent.

No one has suggested any restrictions on the normal powers of the Commander-in-Chief.[4] Indeed we went beyond this and were prepared to agree to further powers being given to him as War Minister. But it is clear that the British Government's conception and ours in regard to defence differ greatly. For us it means giving it a national character

1. The letter from Azad to Cripps was drafted by Jawaharlal. A.I.C.C. Papers, File No. 26, 1942, N.M.M.L. Also printed in *The Transfer of Power, 1942–7*, (London, 1970), Volume I, pp. 743-745. Released to the press on 11 April 1942.
2. Cripps had written that he would not deal with the points in the Working Committee resolution "as they were clearly not the reason for your decision".
3. This point was discussed at length in Azad's letter of 10th. See *ante*, item 14.
4. Cripps had said that "Nothing further could have been done by way of giving responsibility for Defence services to representative Indian members without jeopardising the immediate defence of India under the Commander-in-Chief. This defence is, as you know, a paramount duty and responsibility of His Majesty's Government, while unity of Command is essential in the interests of the Allied help to India."

and calling upon every man and woman in India to participate in it. It means trusting our own people and seeking their full cooperation in this great effort. The British Government's view seems to be based on an utter lack of confidence in the Indian people and in withholding real power from them. You refer to the paramount duty and responsibility of His Majesty's Government in regard to defence. That duty and responsibility cannot be discharged effectively unless the Indian people are made to have and feel their responsibility, and the recent past stands witness to this. The Government of India do not seem to realise that the war can only be fought on a popular basis.

Your statement that we have for the first time after three weeks suggested a change in the constitution is hardly correct. In the course of our talks reference was made to it, but it is true that we did not lay stress on it as we did not want to introduce new issues. But when you stated explicitly in your letter that we had agreed that no constitutional changes could be made during the war, we had to deny this and correct your impression.

It is the last part of your letter that has especially surprised and pained us.[5] It seems that there has been a progressive deterioration in the British Government's attitude as our negotiations proceeded. What we were told in our very first talk with you is now denied or explained away. You told me then that there would be a National Government which would function as a Cabinet and that the position of the Viceroy would be analogous to that of the King in England *vis-a-vis* his Cabinet. In regard to the India Office, you told me, that you were surprised that no one had so far mentioned this important matter, and that the practical course was to have this attached or incorporated with the Dominions' office.

The whole of this picture which you sketched before us has now been completely shattered by what you told us during our last interview.

You have put forward an argument in your letter which at no time during our talks was mentioned by you. You refer to the 'absolute

5. Arguing against the Congress suggestion that a truly National Government be formed like a "cabinet Government with full powers," Cripps said that "without constitutional changes of a most complicated character and on a very large scale this would not be possible." If such a system were introduced by convention, the nominated members would be responsible to themselves alone which "would in fact constitute an absolute dictatorship of the majority." This, he argued, would not be acceptable to the minorities and therefore would be inconsistent with the pledges of His Majesty's Government. "In a country such as India where communal divisions are still so deep, an irresponsible majority Government of this kind is not possible."

dictatorship of the majority.' It is astonishing that such a statement should be made in this connection and at this stage. This difficulty is inherent in any scheme of a mixed cabinet formed to meet an emergency, but there are many ways in which it can be provided for. Had you raised this question we would have discussed it and found a satisfactory solution. The whole approach to this question has been that a mixed cabinet should be formed and should cooperate together. We accepted this. We are not interested in the Congress as such gaining power, but we are interested in the Indian people as a whole having freedom and power. How the Cabinet should be formed and should function was a question which might have been considered after the main question was decided; that is, the extent of power which the British Government would give up to the Indian people. Because of this we never discussed it with you or even referred to it. Nevertheless you have raised this matter for the first time, in what is presumably your last letter to us, and tried most unjustifiably to sidetrack the real issue between us.

You will remember that in my very first talk with you, I pointed out that the communal or like questions did not arise at this stage. As soon as the British Government made up its mind to transfer real power and responsibility, the other questions could be tackled successfully by those concerned. You gave me the impression that you agreed with this approach.

We are convinced that if the British Government did not pursue a policy of encouraging disruption, all of us, to whatever party or group we belonged, would be able to come together and find a common line of action. But, unhappily, even in this grave hour of peril, the British Government is unable to give up its wrecking policy. We are driven to the conclusion that it attaches more importance to holding on to its rule in India, as long as it can, and promoting discord and disruption here with that end in view, than to an effective defence of India against the aggression and invasion that overhang it. To us, and to all Indians, the dominant consideration is the defence and safety of India, and it is by that test that we judge.

You mention that you propose to publish your letters to me. I presume that you have no objection now to our publishing our original resolution, your letters to us, and our letters to you.[6]

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

6. The correspondence as well as the Congress Working Committee resolution were released to the press on 11 April 1942.

17. To Franklin D. Roosevelt[1]

New Delhi
April 12, 1942

Dear Mr. President,

I am venturing to write to you as I know that you are deeply interested in the Indian situation today and its reactions on the war. The failure of Sir Stafford Cripps's mission to bring about a settlement between the British Government and the Indian people must have distressed you, as it has distressed us. As you know we have struggled for long years for the independence of India, but the peril of today made us desire above everything else that an opportunity should be given to us to organize a real national and popular resistance to the aggressor and invader. We were convinced that the right way to do this would have been to give freedom and independence to our people and ask them to defend it. That would have lighted a spark in millions of hearts, which would have developed into a blazing fire of resistance which no aggressor could have faced successfully.

If that was not to be as we wished it and considered necessary for the purposes of the war, the least that we considered essential was the formation of a truly National Government today with power and responsibility to organize resistance on a popular basis. Unfortunately even that was not considered feasible or desirable by the British Government. I do not wish to trouble you with the details of what took place during the negotiations that have unfortunately failed for the present. You have no doubt been kept informed about them by your representatives here. I only wish to say how anxious and eager we were, and still are, to do our utmost for the defence of India and to associate ourselves with the larger causes of freedom and democracy. To us it is a tragedy that we cannot do so in the way and in the measure we would like to. We would have liked to stake everything in the defence of our country, to fight with all the strength and vitality that we possess, to count no cost and no sacrifice as too great for repelling the invader and securing freedom and independence for our country.

Our present resources may be limited, for the industrialization of our country has been hindered by the policy pursued in the past by the British Government in India. We are a disarmed people. But our war potential is very great, our manpower vast and our great spaces, as in

1. *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 479-480.

China, would have helped us. Our production can be speeded up greatly with the cooperation of capital and labour. But all this war potential can only be utilised fully when the government of the country is intimately associated with and representative of the people. A government divorced from the people cannot get a popular response which is so essential; much less can a foreign government, which is inevitably disliked and distrusted, do so.

Danger and peril envelop us and the immediate future is darkened by the shadows of possible invasion and the horrors that would follow, as they have followed Japanese aggression in China. The failure of Sir Stafford Cripps's mission has added to the difficulties of the situation and reacted unfavourably on our people. But whatever the difficulties we shall face them with all our courage and will to resist. Though the way of our choice may be closed to us, and we are unable to associate ourselves with the activities of the British authorities in India, still we shall do our utmost not to submit to Japanese or any other aggression and invasion. We, who have struggled for so long for freedom and against an old aggression, would prefer to perish rather than submit to a new invader.

Our sympathies, as we have so often declared, are with the forces fighting against fascism and for democracy and freedom. With freedom in our own country, those sympathies could have been translated into dynamic action.

To your great country, of which you are the honoured head, we send greetings and good wishes for success. And to you, Mr. President, on whom so many all over the world look for leadership in the cause of freedom, we would add our assurances of our high regard and esteem.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. The Congress and the Cripps Offer[1]

Question: Why did the Congress take a fortnight to reject the Cripps proposals? To what extent were you ready for participating

1. Interview to the press, New Delhi, 12 April 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 13 April 1942; from *The Hindu*, 13 April 1942; and from the *Congress Bulletin* No. 2, 1942.

in the war effort? Was it only a question of the powers of the Commander-in-Chief or was your conception of defence different from that of Cripps? Is it not true as Sir Stafford Cripps said in his broadcast yesterday that "parties and individuals vied with one another in a competition to discover the greatest number of defects", and as a result they forgot the vital part of the document—"full and free self-government for India"?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is true that we took a fortnight or more in these discussions. That surely indicates our extreme desire not to break, but to come to some kind of settlement, which is honourable.

Today the dominant factor is the imminent peril to India and I want you to appreciate what I say. We agreed to things which during the last twenty-two years we would never have dreamt of agreeing to or even coming near to them. In these twenty-two years we have stood for some objective. Not only the Congress but vast numbers of people outside the formal folds of the Congress, and all the communal organisations, have demanded independence.

For the first time in these twenty-two years, I swallowed many a bitter pill when I said I was prepared to agree to many things so as somehow to come to an agreement.

At no time it was suggested by the Congress that the normal powers of the Commander-in-Chief for carrying on the war in an effective way should be interfered with. But in addition to his powers as Commander-in-Chief, he is at present having other powers which are really those of a Defence Minister. The removal of Defence from the responsibilities of the new government made the position of the Defence Minister absurd and ridiculous.

I did want to throw all my sympathy and all the energy I possess into the organisation of the defence of India. According to my conception of the defence of India, I wanted hundreds of millions of Indians in the army. It was not a conception of just an army functioning, but of every man and woman doing something for the war, of making it a 'popular war' and of our carrying on defence even if trained armies in the field failed.

The military way is to fight as long as you can and when you feel you have lost the battle, to surrender. The conception of popular resistance is no surrender, whether the soldiers die or live. That is the conception that China has given us, and the same conception is largely seen in Russia. And that is the conception we want in India.

Our conception was one of developing a citizen army or militia. To the last moment it was not clear whether, even if we agreed to join the

government, we could develop a citizen army. What we were ultimately told was that the matter would lie within the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief and that he would not come in the way, that is, in certain circumstances the Commander-in-Chief would agree. If he did not agree, we had always the option to resign, we were told. That is not the way to bring about any arrangement or settlement.

Our whole approach was one of lighting a spark in the minds of the hundreds of millions of Indians. It was not an easy responsibility for anyone to undertake. Nevertheless we felt that circumstances demanded it and whatever our grievances with the British Government, whatever the past history of our relations, we could not allow that to come in the way of what we considered our duty to our country at present. The only thing that troubled us all the time was: Can we discharge that duty well? Can we make India hum as an organised unit of resistance making the people feel that this is their war? And for Sir Stafford to say that we are bargaining and using the language of the market-place or of a pettyfogging lawyer,[2] shows that Sir Stafford, I regret to say, considers, as most British statesmen consider, the whole question from the standpoint that they alone are right and those who are against them are not only in the wrong but damnably wrong — a standpoint which in this wide world is peculiar only to England and which is an indication of a singularly complaisant attitude.

Q: If, as you say, you were not bargaining with Cripps, then why did it take so long to reject the proposals?

JN: But for our great desire to reach a settlement, the talks would have broken down at an earlier stage.

At first, a certain formula was given by Sir Stafford according to which the Commander-in-Chief was to be the War Minister, and the Defence Minister was to be entrusted with certain functions. Attached to the formula was a list — practically exhaustive — of the functions to be entrusted to the Defence Minister. They were — propaganda, canteens, petroleum, amenities, stationery and subjects of that kind. These subjects were such that they would have made the Defence Minister's position ridiculous in the eyes of the public. Therefore it was not accepted by the Congress Working Committee. Then came a new formula at

2. Cripps said in his broadcast that the Congress was bargaining and that "this critical and unconstructive attitude, natural enough in the law courts or in the market-place, is not the best way of arriving at a compromise, but compromise there must be if a strong and free India is to come into being."

the instance of a third party, but presumably with Sir Stafford's approval, with no list of subjects attached.[3]

In the Working Committee's opinion, this afforded a basis for arriving at an agreed formula for Defence, but the real important point was —what subjects will be transferred to the Defence Minister? Sir Stafford did not reply to a letter of ours asking for a list of these subjects. At no stage did we receive that list. At this point, the Working Committee decided that carrying on correspondence was taking up too much time and that the time had come when the matter should be settled by a personal interview. It was at that stage that Maulana Azad and myself had our last interview with Sir Stafford Cripps.[4]

If you had asked me before that interview what exactly the position was, it would have been difficult for me to answer, but I would have said there was seventy-five per cent chance of an agreement coming.

In that interview we discussed the last Defence formula and other matters. And were really astonished that all the premises and assumptions, which we had in our mind for ten days and which we had been arguing, had no foundation at all. When we pressed Sir Stafford to give a list of subjects, he referred us to the Army Manual. He went into a long disquisition as to how the Indian Army became what it was today. He made it clear this was not an Indian Army at all but an outgrowth and an offshoot of the British Army, entirely controlled by the Imperial Staff in England, whose agent was the Commander-in-Chief. I tried to point out to him that whatever their present conception, it was quite essential, so far as the Indian Army was concerned, that it must be looked upon by the Indian people as a National Army. Sir Stafford's attitude was, however, rigid, and in the end he said that a list of subjects was already given with his original formula.

Sir Stafford even refused to follow the Australian model[5] saying that Mr. Curtin[6] in Australia had greater powers than Mr. Churchill in England. As regards the citizen army, Sir Stafford said that the matter would be within the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief, and he

3. See *ante*, p. 197.
4. The reference is to the interview held on 9 April 1942 in the evening.
5. The Australian War Cabinet consisted of the Prime Minister and the Ministers of Army and Navy, and for Supply. The Prime Minister, who was the Chairman of the War Cabinet, was also the Minister of Defence Coordination, and all major administrative decisions affecting the Army, Navy and Air Force were taken by him.
6. John Curtin (1885-1945); Member, House of Representatives of Australia, 1928-31, and 1934-45; Leader of the Opposition, 1935-41; Prime Minister of Australia, 1941-45.

hoped the Commander-in-Chief would probably agree. If he did not agree, it was open to the Minister to resign. As I said before, this was not the way to bring about a settlement.

That is not the way to fight a war — the lackadaisical way of the Viceroy's House and the Government of India. If there is a National Government, everybody will have to work or get out. It is not an evening dress war. It is work, work, work. Those who sit to dinner in evening dress at 8.15 are not going to win this war.

Q: How would you raise a citizen army without the necessary equipment?

JN: Well, I can cite the examples of China and Spain. The former is now self-sufficient so far as small arms are concerned. In India, with a National Government, we could have doubled or trebled the production of our factories. We could have sacrificed luxuries and turned those factories producing non-essential goods into factories for small arms. The whole conception of a citizen army is a practical conception, a psychological conception, an essential conception.

Recently, a person who had become a German prisoner and had managed to escape told me and others what the Germans thought of the Indian troops, how much they had been impressed by their courage and efficiency in action. The Germans said, "It is a magnificent army. What could we not do, if we had such people to draw upon? If they fight like this in a mercenary capacity, how much better they would fight if they thought they were fighting for their own freedom!" It is really a question of psychological approach.

Q: Was there any understanding about the formation of a National Government when the talks began?

JN: From the beginning, the impression which Sir Stafford had given was that the new Government would be a National Government. Sir Stafford had himself used the words "National Cabinet." He had also said that the position of the Viceroy would be analogous to that of the King, in other words, a constitutional head. The language used by Sir Stafford had led us to assume that everything was being transferred except Defence and that the Viceroy would not interfere with the decision of the Cabinet though he might have special powers such as in connection with the states or some major issues. So the question of the new government's powers was not even discussed. At the last interview on Thursday night, however, the picture which Stafford gave showed that the

premises and assumptions on which we had been arguing had no real foundation. Sir Stafford began to talk of the Viceroy's "Executive Council" and not a "National Government". Names do make a difference. If we go round the country, talking about the Viceroy's Executive Council, what would the people think? We agreed to the legal phraseology, but contrary to our old assumptions, Sir Stafford made it perfectly clear that there would be no essential change, legal or even by way of any conventions to begin with, between the position of the Viceroy's Council today and the position of the Viceroy's Council tomorrow when it came into existence.

Q: What do you think was the reason for the change in Sir Stafford's attitude?

JN: Sir Stafford might have used words and phrases in a sense different from ours, or he might have been pulled up by his 'Senior partners' in England.[7] It was obvious that there had been some trouble between him and others, and not between him and us.[8]

We went on agreeing to proposals after proposals because of the immediate pressure of events. We even conceded that it might continue to be called the Viceroy's Executive Council and not a Cabinet, but we wanted to know the conventions that must govern the Council. Sir Stafford said he was totally unable to say anything on the subject, because it lay at the discretion of the Viceroy, and that it was for us Indians to go to the Viceroy later on and discuss the matter with him. Sir Stafford was sure that the Viceroy would take a reasonable view of it.

For the present, the whole thing boils down to this, that we agree to join the Viceroy's Council practically unconditionally, except for a very

7. The Viceroy had reacted sharply to Cripps's talking to the Indian leaders about the 'Cabinet' and the powers of the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief in the new Executive Council. The War Cabinet, on 6 April 1942, cautioned Cripps about the powers of the Viceroy-in-Council, and on 9 April 1942, asked him what he meant by his references to a National Government or the Indianisation of the new Executive Council. Cripps cabled on 10 April 1942 that he was ready to hand over the responsibility of negotiations if he was not trusted by his colleagues.
8. On 11 April 1942, Louis Johnson wrote to Franklin Roosevelt, "To my amazement when a satisfactory solution seemed certain, with unimportant concessions, Cripps with embarrassment told me that he could not change the original draft declaration without Churchill's approval and that Churchill had cabled him that he would give no approval unless Wavell and the Viceroy separately sent their own code cables unqualifiedly endorsing any change Cripps wanted. I never lost confidence until then. London wanted a Congress refusal. Why?"

vague picture of what would happen in the future. The picture he put forward to us was really the August Offer, repeated with minor changes. When I mentioned this to him he was very hurt.

Q: Sir Stafford Cripps, in his letter to Maulana Azad, dated 10 April 1942, charged that the Congress had, for the first time, asked for big changes immediately in the constitution. What have you to say to this?

JN: The reference in Azad's letter was intended only to remove a misunderstanding. In one of his letters Sir Stafford had said that the Congress had agreed that there should be no constitutional changes in the interim period. As this was not correct, the President explained the Congress stand. The Congress had merely said that it did not want to enter into an argument now on these constitutional questions, but it made no commitment of the kind that we agreed not to ask for any immediate constitutional changes. Our position was this, 'while we are not agreeing, we are not pressing this.' It is not an issue at present; Sir Stafford was not, therefore, correct in saying that a major issue had been raised.

You are all aware of the offer made by Mr. Churchill, at a critical time in the war, to France for a union with England. I only suggested that Parliament should pass a small bill of six sections giving independent status to India and agreeing to the principle of self-determination, and that other details, communal and other, could be left out for settlement later. If that had been done, the whole approach to the question would have become different — as between England and India and also between the communities. The Congress point of view was this that they were prepared to have a National Government for war purposes, but as regards the future government, they were prepared to leave for future consideration the question of detailed and precise proposals for the future government. However, the present proposals would have also to be considered from the viewpoint of the future. If the independence of India was not accepted in principle, it would have a very bad psychological effect on the people.

Q: Sir Stafford refers in his last letter of 10 April to the 'tyrannical rule of a majority' if the Congress demands had been accepted. What have you to say about this?

JN: I want to make it perfectly clear that throughout our talks and correspondence, except for the last two letters, there was no reference at

all at any stage in the slightest degree to the question of a majority rule much as we disliked it.

We accepted the idea of a composite Cabinet formed from different groups representing different ideologies in the country, some coming among others from the Muslim League, some from the Hindu Mahasabha and some from the Sikhs. We accepted that, although it was a thing which would have made the functioning of the National Government very difficult. At no stage did we discuss the number of the members from the different groups. We did not discuss it because we, speaking on behalf of the Congress, never laid stress on the Congress having this or that. We wanted no power for the Congress. We always talked in terms of what the National Government would have, whoever might be there and whatever their numbers. We talked of it as a group and what power that group should have. The communal issue in any form was never discussed except that Sir Stafford Cripps often repeated one formula, that he was only concerned with agreement between three groups in India, the British Government, the Congress and the Muslim League. He did not care whether others agreed or not, but if any of these three did not agree the scheme fell through.

For the first time this question was definitely emphasised by Sir Stafford Cripps in his letter dated April 10 in which he used the phrase 'tyrannical rule of the majority'. For an eminent lawyer and constitutionalist like Sir Stafford to use such a phrase in this manner is extraordinary. We were thinking in terms really not even of a legislature but of a Cabinet consisting of fifteen persons. What would be the proportions of the different groups in that Cabinet we never discussed. What was the harm even if there was the so-called Congress majority in it, though the Congress was not thinking on these lines. But Sir Stafford's mind was continually functioning, balancing the different communal groups. Suppose, then, in a Cabinet of fifteen there was a Congress majority of eight or nine. It was of no use because new Cabinets cannot function and do not function, especially in war time, on the basis of majority. There must be a certain homogeneity or common outlook; otherwise the Cabinet may break up. Sir Stafford had been continuously reminding us of the ultimate sanction of resignation. If we had that ultimate sanction, so also every group in that Cabinet had that ultimate sanction. So the talk of the tyranny of the majority is amazing and fantastic nonsense.

In one of his letters, Sir Stafford, while dealing with a point, mentioned that he had seen something or the other in the 'Hindu press'. When further questioned, he said he meant *The Hindustan Times*. That in

itself shows how he was continually thinking in regard to every matter in terms of Hindu and Muslim, which even Mr. Jinnah does not do.

Q: Do you think Mr. Jinnah and Dr. Savarkar would have supported the Congress proposals?

JN: I cannot conceive of Mr. Jinnah or Dr. Savarkar really disagreeing with anything that the Congress had said to Sir Stafford Cripps in regard to the proposals for the immediate present.[9]

Q: Despite all the efforts of the Congress and yours, the talks failed. Still, do you wholeheartedly support the Congress position?

JN: It was my greatest desire to find a way out and make India function effectively for defence and make the war a popular effort. So great was my desire that some things I have stood for during the last quarter of a century, and which I could never have imagined for a moment I would give up, I now agreed to give them up. I am convinced personally that it is impossible for us to agree to the proposals as they eventually emerged from the British Government's mind. I am in complete and wholehearted agreement with the Congress resolution and the letters of the Congress President.

Q: Since the British are completely involved in this international war, is it not unreasonable for the Indian leaders not to come to some compromise with the British? After all India is not the crux of the war.

JN: Today India is the crux of the war. The only other really important theatre is the Russian theatre. These are the two important theatres of war, very little else counts for the present. Much will, of course, depend in the next two or three months on the Russo-German war, a great deal will depend in India on what happens as between Germany and Russia. But apart from that India is going to be for the next three

9. Savarkar, in reply to Stafford Cripps's telegram of 9 April 1942, [illegible] National Government is to be formed for the period of the War [illegible] on the War effectively in the defence of India, then the Hindu [illegible] have no hesitation in joining such a National Government," [illegible] not bind the Hindu Mahasabha to accept the other provisions [illegible] tion. Jinnah told Cripps on 25 March 1942 that the Muslim [illegible] join the National Government provided the Viceroy would [illegible] as a Cabinet.

or four months the crux of the war. It will make a difference to the length of the war and the intensity of the war. Because of that every country in the world realises the importance of India except, of course, the big people in New Delhi and Whitehall — they are slow of understanding and comprehension — and therefore you have these frantic radio appeals from Germany and Japan.

Every party knows that India can function effectively only if the Indian people function effectively. It does not matter how hard a few brass-hats work. If today a National Government in India said, "We are going to arm the Indian people, we may not have the best of the modern arms, aeroplanes, tanks, but we are going to arm them with such guns as we can have", think how the world situation will change, what reactions it will have in Germany and Japan and also in the Allied countries!

Q: Would the breakdown of the talks in New Delhi make a difference to the Congress attitude of non-embarrassment of the British?

JN: Naturally, the public reaction in India to the breakdown will be one of irritation against the British Government; nevertheless the issues before the country are so grave that no responsible person can talk lightly about them or just consider them in terms of bitter reactions to events. We cannot afford to be bitter because bitterness clouds the mind and affects the judgment at a moment of grave crisis.

The fundamental factor is not what the British Government does to us or what we do to it although that is very important; the fundamental factor is the peril to India and what we are going to do about it. Therefore, certainly, in spite of all that has happened, we are not going to embarrass the British war effort in India or the effort of our American friends, who may come here. We want production to go on full speed ahead. We want the people to hold to their jobs and not run away from them. We cannot participate in Britain's war effort, and therefore the problem before us is that without participating in that war effort and without embarrassing it, how to organise our own war effort on our own basis of a free and independent India. I hope the A.I.C.C., at its meeting in a fortnight's time, will consider this problem and tell us what to do about it.

Q: How do you think India can defend itself?

JN: Only the state can defend a country. We are not in the state. We cannot raise a citizen army. Nevertheless, since this crisis came

before us, we have started an intensified programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection. It is an attempt to organise rural areas as well as urban areas as far as possible, possibly more in respect of food and cloth, because transport is failing us. We started this programme so that we could build up regional self-sufficient units, which could carry on, even though rail and motor transport failed.

Naturally these units cannot resist an invading army. But they form the background of any resistance that the state or we might organise. They can help by preventing disorder, increasing production and preventing panic from spreading, and in future, they might become the reservoir from which more efficient units of resistance might be drawn and trained. If we were in the Government, we could have immediately approached the problem in that way. But today if we make an attempt in that direction, we would meet, not with Japanese but British resistance. If the Government of India is wise enough, it should not come in our way in developing this movement. It is not a movement to break laws. It is a movement which indirectly helps the war effort.

I cannot tolerate the idea that I should sit idle, or the people should sit idle in their houses, while the battle for India is being fought between foreign armies, and the Japanese are invading the country. How we can function depends on changing circumstances. In the actual area of invasion we might function in one way and in another area in a different way. But the background will be the same, that is, we are not going to surrender to the invader. Just as we have not given in to the British during the last twenty-two years, in the same way we are certainly not going to give in to a foreign invader. I want to fight this idea that we must remain passive, that we cannot do anything against the Japanese invader, that the one is really as good or as bad as the other. I cannot tolerate these conceptions. I am not going to give in to Britain if it wants to exploit or rule over India. Much less do I want the Indian people to give in or be passive to the Japanese. I want them to resist the Japanese to the uttermost, resist them in the Congress way, which is open to us, and which can be applied by a large population, that is, not giving supplies and embarrassing them in every way that a widely spread population can. Remember that an invading army after all operates in a limited area. On its right and left flanks it comes into touch with the local population. Over wide areas no army is present.

It is our duty and the Congressmen's duty and the duty of all other persons to carry out this programme of self-protection and self-sufficiency to the utmost. May be we have to take up guerilla warfare. I don't know what the Congress will decide. But it is this foundation,

and this organisation that we are building up, that will ultimately help us to meet the present situation. My general advice is: Do not submit or surrender, do not give supplies, noncooperate with the aggressor, embarrass him in every way. Fighting will be done by the armed forces.

There is a difference in the approach to the resistance we have been offering to the British in India and our approach to the resistance to a new invader. We submit to neither, of course; but as you know, for the last two and a half years we have expressed our sympathy with certain larger causes; we have expressed our intense antipathy to fascism and Nazism, to what the Japanese have done in China and Manchuria. And so far as our foreign outlook is concerned, during the last many years we have followed a definite line that influences us immediately in regard to our attitude to this war. Before the war we criticised the policy of appeasement in Munich. That outlook governs us today also. I do feel definitely that it would be a tragedy for the world if Germany and Japan won this war and dominated the world. I don't want that to happen. I would have liked to play my part in this world drama more effectively. That was why I went to the utmost limit to come to terms with the British Government.

Our policy as laid down by Mahatma Gandhi and others was not one of causing embarrassment except psychological embarrassment. If our approach had not been one of sympathy, our attitude would have been one of direct embarrassment and we could have broken the whole war effort in India, both in regard to production and in regard to the army proper. We did not do that because of wider sympathy for the larger cause; while we wanted to dissociate ourselves from the activities of the British Government, we did not want to embarrass them.

In regard to the Japanese invasion, we are out to embarrass them to the utmost because there is a difference between a new invasion and an old invasion. But there is another difference also. So far as I am concerned, in spite of the language of high authority it uses, the British invasion is a played out affair and the new invasion may not be so. But ultimately our attitude is governed by our ideological sympathy with certain causes. It is a hateful notion that after five years of war China should be defeated. It is a hateful notion that Russia, which represents certain human values which mean a great deal to human civilisation, should be defeated.

But ultimately, naturally, I have to judge every question from the Indian viewpoint. If India perishes I must say — selfishly, if you like to call it — it does not do me any good if other nations survive.

Q: Do you not think that Indians are more anti-British in their sentiment compared to their anti-Japanese feelings?

JN: So far as I know India, and I know it tolerably well, the major sentiment in India naturally is one of hostility to the British in India. You cannot root out 150 years of past history and all that happened in those years. It has sunk deep down into the Indian mind. Suppose we had come to an agreement and had to convert or change that sentiment suddenly, we could have done it if we could have given a sensation of freedom to the people of India.

The fundamental factor today is distrust or dislike of the British Government. It is not pro-Japanese sentiment. It is anti-British sentiment that may occasionally lead individuals to express pro-Japanese views. But this is short-sightedness. It is a slave's sentiment and a slave's way of thinking that to get rid of one person who is dominating us we can expect another person to help us and in turn not dominate us later. A lover of freedom ought not to think that way.

It distresses me that any Indian should talk of the Japanese liberating India. The whole past history of Japan has been one of dominating others. Japan comes here either for imperialist reasons straightway or to fight with the British Government. Anyhow, whatever the reason, if it comes here, it will not come here to liberate.

Q: If an army comes here under the leadership of Subhas, what should be our reaction to it?

JN: I do not, frankly speaking, doubt the *bona fides* of Mr. Bose.[10] I think he has come to a certain conclusion, which I think is wrong, but nevertheless a conclusion which he thinks is for the good of India. We parted company with him many years ago. Since then we have drifted further apart and today we are very far from each other. It is not good enough for me, because of my past friendship and because I do not challenge his motives, to say anything against him. But I do realise that the way he has chosen is utterly wrong, a way which I not only cannot

10. Subhas Bose escaped from India on 16/17 January 1941 and reached Berlin in April 1941. He set up a Free India Centre and *Azad Hind* Radio in Berlin in November 1941. He also organised a para-military force, the Indian Legion, in January 1942. In February, March and April 1942, Bose in his broadcasts called upon the Indian people to fight the British, and said the enemies of Britain were the allies of Indian freedom. He welcomed the Japanese statement of 'India for Indians'. Simultaneously in South East Asia, under the patronage of Japan, Indian Independence Leagues were formed by Pritam Singh and Amar Singh. Mohan Singh formed the Indian National Army or the *Azad Hind Fauj*. The Indian Independence Conference, under the leadership of Rash Behari Bose, at Tokyo, in March 1942, invited Subhas Bose to be their leader.

accept but must oppose, if it takes shape. Because any force that may come from outside, will really come as a dummy force under Japanese control. It is a bad thing psychologically for the Indian masses to think in terms of being liberated by an outside agency.

I think it is the job and duty of every Indian to be in India today, to face the dangers and risks, whatever might happen in India.

A suggestion was made to me by Colonel Johnson that he would be glad if I could go to America on a brief visit. But I decided not to go at a time of national peril like the present one.

Q: What are the possible intentions of Subhas Bose vis-a-vis the Axis Powers?

JN: I do not know his intentions. One thing seems to me obvious. How Mr. Bose will function I cannot say, but presuming the authenticity of the broadcasts, it seems he has taken up a certain position of friendship and alliance with the Axis Powers and from that certain consequences naturally follow. I think it is justifiable, on the basis of those broadcasts, which presumably are his, to come to the conclusion that he has allied himself with the Axis Powers, on what conditions and terms I cannot say.

Q: How can the United Nations help India now?

JN: The best thing they can do is to acknowledge India as an independent nation. I am prepared to welcome help and assistance from any nation or nations, if they are prepared to recognise India as an independent nation. That is all that I desire. I am quite convinced that America will like real popular war effort in India.

Q: Do you agree with Mahatma Gandhi on the question of scorched earth policy.[11]

JN: I don't agree with Mahatmaji. Although I have given this

11. Mahatma Gandhi, in his article on scorched earth policy in *Harijan* of 22 March 1942, wrote, "Can we contemplate with equanimity or feel glow of bravery and sacrifice at prospect of India's earth being scorched and everything destroyed in order that enemy's march may be hampered? I see neither bravery nor sacrifice in destroying life or property for offence or defence." Because he refused to regard anyone as an enemy he wanted the people to leave their homesteads and crops without destroying them. Military requirements, he thought, should not supersede national or humanitarian considerations.

straight answer, it is not a complete answer. I have no doubt that if I were in the National Government, I would have burnt and destroyed everything that could help the enemy, not caring whose private property it was; but I am afraid if the British Government as constituted today follows this policy, it would follow it in a wrong and perverted way, thinking partly of hampering India a great deal. Therefore, I am not prepared to trust to their scorched earth policy.

There are many ways of getting over the loss consequent on the adoption of a scorched earth policy, like the insurance scheme in Britain. There should be a Government guarantee, may be America might come into the picture, that every help will be given to rebuild the destroyed industries and that they will be given the same shape as before if not better.

19. To Louis Johnson[1]

New Delhi
April 13, 1942

My dear Colonel Johnson,
At the last moment I decided not to go away yesterday and postponed my departure for a day. I am now leaving this evening for Allahabad.

As suggested by you I have written a letter to President Roosevelt and am sending this to you.[2] I trust you approve of what I have written.

Thanking you again and with all good wishes,

Very sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, item 17.

20. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

New Delhi
13.4.42

Congress decisions about Cripps proposals are contained in the long

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

resolution[2] and letters. Resolution was passed on April second expressing disagreement about future Dominion Status, claiming independence, also condemning possible division of India, though accepting principle of non-compulsion of territorial areas against their declared will, but subject to various conditions; strongly condemning rulers nominating representatives of states in constituent assembly, and thus ignoring entire population. Rulers influencing the making of constitution, yet having an option to stay out. Whole conception leading to break-up of India, with British forces guarding states, interfering with freedom of Union, and encouraging disruptive tendencies. Proposals for present were vague, with reservation for Defence which made power illusory, prevented development of popular mass defence which is essential. Congress however emphasized in view of great crisis that it was prepared to set aside all proposals for future, provided responsible National Government with Defence was formed now, leaving control of armed forces with Commander-in-Chief. Cripps made clear at early stages that he envisaged National Cabinet with Viceroy as constitutional head like King, subject to reservation on Defence. Discussion therefore centred round Defence. Cripps suggested division between popular Defence Minister and War Minister who was to be the Commander-in-Chief. Defence Minister's proposed functions were trivial and unacceptable to Congress. Further formulas for Defence were discussed. Ultimately Cripps stated that no substantial change was possible, also stated no National Cabinet with joint responsibility was possible, nor could assurances be given about use of Viceroy's powers with regard to intervention and veto. This was entirely at Viceroy's discretion; may later be discussed with him. Viceroy also functioning as prime minister. Thus no major change, only addition of popular representatives to Executive Council; legal position unaltered and no assurance even about conventions. Practically repeating August Offer with minor variations. This entirely different picture from what Cripps originally suggested; impossible to call this National Government or evoke enthusiasm in people. At no stage during talks was any communal or minority difficulty as Congress claiming power responsibility for National Government as a whole, and question about formation of government deferred. Last letter of Cripps surprisingly stated no possibility of National Cabinet with joint responsibility as this means tyrannical majority rule. This plea at last stage after the breakdown of talks without previous discussion, reference was most unfair and unjustified. Objection inapplicable to cabinet and in any case did not arise then. Ever since Cripps emphasising communal issue in old Amery manner and endeavouring divert attention from real issues,

2. See *ante*, pp. 188-191.

also stressing constitutional issues which not discussed. His whole approach has been wrong and vitiated by communal outlook. Congress went uttermost limit giving up previous objectives in negotiation. Crux of matter was for organisation of national Defence on popular mass basis but this is only possible by free National Government. Increasing bitterness here and in future impossible to accept anything short complete national freedom. United Nations should acknowledge independence of India. Meanwhile we are urging people to oppose aggressor invader, no submission on any account, but individual resistance is of little avail. All India Congress Committee is meeting at Allahabad on twenty-eighth.

Nehru

21. To Tai Chi-tao[1]

New Delhi
April 13, 1942

My dear Dr. Tai,

I am exceedingly grateful to you for the precious gifts that you have sent me through Mr. Shen.[2] I value the inscriptions that you have written and I value very especially the small book which was your own personal copy of some of Dr. Sun Yat Sen's writings.

When the Generalissimo came to India your messages of goodwill were conveyed to me and I appreciated them very greatly. I must ask you to forgive me for not having written to you previously to thank you for these messages. Ever since I have come out of prison, I have wanted to write to you, but the rush of events and heavy responsibilities have prevented me from doing so and I crave your forgiveness for this. It was a sorrow for me that when you came to India I was unable to see you. I do not know when I may have the chance to do so again. But in these dark days, when danger and peril surround all of us, it gives me strength to think of your friendship and your goodwill.

I am distressed to learn that you have been unwell. I trust this was a passing indisposition and that you have recovered.

You must know that our negotiations with the British Government have failed again. We tried our utmost to come to terms with them, even giving up many of our cherished objectives for the moment, for the dominating factor in the situation was the danger of invasion of

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Chinese Commissioner in India at this time.

India. We wanted to play a full part in meeting every aggressor and invader and we wanted to mobilise the whole nation for this purpose. But this could only be done by a free National Government. The British Government would not agree to this and wanted to continue the present structure and just give us a few high places in the Viceroy's Council. That was an impossible position for us, for we want no high jobs but the opportunity to serve and defend our country to the utmost and at the same time to play a worthy part as an ally of China and other countries. We could only have a popular mass effort if the people realised that their country was free and had a free National Government. Only a free people can fight for freedom.

I am deeply distressed at the turn events have taken and naturally there is great bitterness among our people. Nevertheless we shall endeavour to pursue the policy of resisting every invader and aggressor, though in the circumstances our hands and feet are tied by British authority.

The next few months are full of peril for India and China, yet I have faith in both these countries and in their future. In that faith I shall work and do what I can, dreaming of the future when a free China and a free India are closely tied together by bonds that cannot break, and work together for their own good and the world's good.

I send you, dear Dr. Tai, my best wishes and cordial regards.

Very sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

22. Rejoinder to Stafford Cripps[1]

Sir Stafford Cripps's statement made in Karachi about Congress leaders going to Colonel Louis Johnson and his acting as mediator is not correct and is liable to be misunderstood. Sir Stafford has not been fair either to Colonel Johnson or to the Congress leaders. There was never any question, as I have stated previously, of our asking for mediation or arbitration from anyone and President Roosevelt's name has been needlessly dragged into this matter.[2] We dealt with Sir Stafford alone though

1. Statement to the press, New Delhi, 13 April 1942. *National Herald*, 14 April 1942.
2. In his press interview on 12 April 1942 at Karachi, Cripps said that the role played by Colonel Johnson was entirely unofficial and in his individual capacity, and reiterated that it was the Congress which first approached Colonel Johnson for help and that President Roosevelt had no part in it.

others were naturally interested in the developments that were taking place. Colonel Johnson did not interfere in any way, though of course he expressed his desire that a satisfactory settlement should be reached. We are grateful to Colonel Johnson for his friendly approach to our problems though in the nature of things he could not interfere in what was taking place.

Sir Stafford has told us that the British Government is not going to take any further initiative to solve the Indian problem.[3] We expect no initiative from them as they have managed to get completely stuck in the ruts of their own making. We do not rely on the British Government for anything except to obstruct political and economic advance in India. The initiative lies with others who do not live in the ruts. The dominating factor of the situation is the fact that India can only be defended effectively as a free country by the people themselves acting through their national government. I notice that parts of what I have said, torn from their context, have been given publicity by some sections of the press and by the radio. This is not fair. I think it is every Indian's duty to refuse submission to every aggression, old and new, and to resist it. We cannot and must not submit for that way lies a surrender of the soul and spirit of the nation. But it must be realised that effective resistance is not an individual matter and no one can deliver the goods except a free national government with power and responsibility, which can enthuse and organize the masses. This patent fact cannot be ignored and this is the crux of the question in India.

3. When asked whether the British Government would reopen the settlement question if Indians could arrive at an agreed solution, Cripps had replied that the British Government were always prepared to consider any agreed solution if that was put to them, but made it clear that the initiative should come from the Indians themselves.

23. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
15-4-42

Sent you express cable from Delhi thirteenth April—466 words.[2] Foreign

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, pp. 227-229.

press comments[3] indicate misunderstanding of situation presuming Cripps's visit strengthened feeling of resistance against aggression in spite failure of negotiations. This entirely mistaken. Whole approach of British Government even at this hour of peril was wrong and misguided by refusing the transfer of real power and emphasizing unnecessarily communal question, which shocked Indian opinion generally including moderates even who were unprepared to accept it. Cripps's later attitude anti-Congress, communal and reactionary produced extreme bitterness. Congress decision welcomed almost universally, the only criticism being that Congress lowered its demands. Certain that no further approach from Congress to British Government. This reaction inevitably affecting our programme of resistance against aggression which is only effective under full National Government. Would like you make position clear to friends and others.

Nehru

3. For example, the *Star* wrote, on 12 April 1942, that the rejection by the Congress of the British Government's proposals came neither as a shock nor disaster. Jawaharlal's speech of 7 April 1942 (see *post*, section 3, item 1.) was cited by it as a proof that the failure of the mission had not weakened the feeling of resistance against the Japanese. It appreciated Jawaharlal's role in the negotiations: "he has displayed prudence and restraint in comment.... He played the part of a statesman."

24. Cable to Anita Blaine[1]

Allahabad
15.4.42

I am grateful for your message and appreciate your sentiments.[2] Our fundamental position is that only free country can fight for freedom. Hence our demand for the recognition of Indian independence. If that is recognised other matters are easily adjustable by arbitration.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
Anita Blaine (1866-1945); American philanthropist; founder, School of Education, University of Chicago.
2. In her cable of 1 April 1942, she reproduced a message she had sent to Americans and Englishmen, for worldwide mobilisation of public opinion, to make an appeal to Roosevelt to arbitrate between Great Britain and India. This was necessary for all who were involved in the fight for freedom and could not be a concern of India and Britain alone.

25. Freedom First[1]

Among the many astonishing things that Sir Stafford Cripps said in the statements made by him on the eve of his departure was this: that the Congress wanted everything or nothing, and now they have nothing.[2] Only the last part of this sentence is true and it has been true all these years. But if Sir Stafford imagines that what we suggested to him was all that we have wanted or want today, he was grievously mistaken. For, we have wanted and suffered for complete independence in the present and the elimination of every foreign control in the political, economic and every other domain. We have wanted to live our lives in our own way without interference from any outsider. And, though we cannot unwrite the history of the past century and a half, the painful memory of which will persist, yet we want to remove everything, in so far as we can, that might keep the memory of our subjection fresh. We want to get rid of this world of Excellencies and Highnesses and the pomp and pageantry and wasteful extravagance and incompetence of our British rulers. We want to say to them, as I have said before, in the words of a great Englishman: 'You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing. Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go'.

We want much. Our appetite for freedom is insatiable. We are hungry for it, and our throats are parched with thirst. It was not what we wanted that we told Sir Stafford Cripps, but something that we considered essential and irreducible if we were to shoulder effectively the burden of today and defend this dear country of ours to the uttermost. Without this we would remain ineffective and be mere camp-followers of those who are in control today, and who have exhibited so often their utter incapacity for the task.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 15 April 1942. *National Herald*, 16 April 1942.
2. Cripps was reported to have said this at a press conference on 12 April 1942 at Karachi. Later, at a press conference on 22 April 1942 at London, Cripps denied it and said, "I did not say that at Karachi.... It was shorthand report of a long statement". He elucidated: "what would be correct would be to say that they wanted complete power immediately for representative Indians and if they could not get that complete power for representative Indians then they were not prepared to participate in the Government of India at the present stage".

It surprises me how far we went in our desire for a settlement. Many of the colleagues and even the man-in-the-street came and told me that we went too far and gave up many a precious thing that we had so long clung to. Yet, we did so deliberately, for we almost forgot everything for the moment except the peril to India and our immediate duty to defend our motherland. But, we could only defend her shoulder to shoulder with our own people, with millions of hearts stirred to action, with millions of stout arms raised in her defence, with millions, it may be, of our dead offered at the altar of her freedom. We could not defend her from the mountaintops or from Viceregal residences.

The war is upon us. It is America's war, they say, for it is America that is pouring her vast resources and her treasure into this war and helping all her allies. Britain plays a minor part in it. But though America pours out her gold and sends her Flying Fortresses to the four corners of the world, we in India shall have to pay a far heavier price soon. And our price is going to be blood and tears, not of a few only but of vast numbers of people. Already we have had a foretaste of it in Malaya and Burma. But our time in India itself is coming and it was because of this that we went to the uttermost limits of concession in our talks with Sir Stafford Cripps. For, we were anxious to face this peril with the organised power of the state and our masses functioning together. That is not to be now and we function separately. From our side, there are going to be no approaches to the British Government, for we know now that whoever comes from them speaks in the same accent as of old and treats us in the same way.

So blood and tears are going to be our lot whether we like them or not. Let us not be afraid, let us not lose our anchor, let us not run away from our post of duty. But rather let us accept them willingly as men and women who go out to meet their hearts' desire. The turn of fate's wheel has brought this new ordeal to us, the last ordeal that can face a nation. Whether we remain up or go down, we shall do it bravely and with dignity, thinking ever of the honour of that great and beloved land that has given us birth and sustenance. For each one of us, man or woman, old or young, is a little bit of India and something of her old time story clings about us. Each one of us has her precious honour in our keeping, each one of us may do something to add to that glorious heritage. What we have, what we are, we owe to her; can we ever repay that debt even if we give our lives for her sake? Our blood and tears will flow; it may be that the parched soil of India needs them so that the fine flower of freedom may grow again and its fragrance envelop the land. We shall pay the price and it will be well with us if we remain true to our faith and do not falter.

26. British Distrust of Indians[1]

Sir Stafford Cripps's visit and failure have worsened the situation and created an impression that even in the hour of imminent peril, Britain is not prepared to part with power in India and rely on her people. While the future was important, the present situation dominated the talks. Congress was unable to agree to the proposals indicated by Sir Stafford regarding the future but still was prepared to accept responsibility for Defence in cooperation with others. The essential background for this was to make it a people's defence by mobilising millions, trusting them, making them feel that India was free and that they were fighting for freedom. The British outlook was entirely different. It was distrustful and afraid of the Indian people and opposed to the growth of a citizen army and of handing over essential power to the people's representatives. The lessons of Malaya and Burma were entirely lost and some inefficient, reactionary governmental machinery was functioning isolated from the people.

Efficient defence is only possible by the closest cooperation between the state apparatus and the masses, which can take place only if the state is under popular control. Hence our desire for a real National popular Government controlling Defence but leaving full authority to the Commander-in-Chief for all war purposes.

At present, the relations with Britain are strained to the uttermost and there is a general feeling that Congress has been repeatedly insulted by British statesmen. No further approach is going to be made by Congress to the British Government. Nevertheless, the Congress has declared its inflexible opposition to all new aggression or invasion and will oppose in its own way Japanese or other aggressors. But, it is inevitable that popular opposition divorced from the state's war effort will be ineffective. Widespread anti-British feeling hinders mass effort. Future steps are dependent on circumstances and opportunities but the Congress is trying its utmost in spite of difficulties to organise self-sufficient units in towns and rural areas for self-protection and is creating a background for resistance and noncooperation with the aggressor and no surrender.

1. Interview to a representative of the *Daily Herald*, Bombay, 20 April 1942. *The Hindu*, 21 April 1942.

It surprises me how far we went in our desire for a settlement. Many of the colleagues and even the man-in-the-street came and told me that we went too far and gave up many a precious thing that we had so long clung to. Yet, we did so deliberately, for we almost forgot everything for the moment except the peril to India and our immediate duty to defend our motherland. But, we could only defend her shoulder to shoulder with our own people, with millions of hearts stirred to action, with millions of stout arms raised in her defence, with millions, it may be, of our dead offered at the altar of her freedom. We could not defend her from the mountaintops or from Viceregal residences.

The war is upon us. It is America's war, they say, for it is America that is pouring her vast resources and her treasure into this war and helping all her allies. Britain plays a minor part in it. But though America pours out her gold and sends her Flying Fortresses to the four corners of the world, we in India shall have to pay a far heavier price soon. And our price is going to be blood and tears, not of a few only but of vast numbers of people. Already we have had a foretaste of it in Malaya and Burma. But our time in India itself is coming and it was because of this that we went to the uttermost limits of concession in our talks with Sir Stafford Cripps. For, we were anxious to face this peril with the organised power of the state and our masses functioning together. That is not to be now and we function separately. From our side, there are going to be no approaches to the British Government, for we know now that whoever comes from them speaks in the same accent as of old and treats us in the same way.

So blood and tears are going to be our lot whether we like them or not. Let us not be afraid, let us not lose our anchor, let us not run away from our post of duty. But rather let us accept them willingly as men and women who go out to meet their hearts' desire. The turn of fate's wheel has brought this new ordeal to us, the last ordeal that can face a nation. Whether we remain up or go down, we shall do it bravely and with dignity, thinking ever of the honour of that great and beloved land that has given us birth and sustenance. For each one of us, man or woman, old or young, is a little bit of India and something of her old time story clings about us. Each one of us has her precious honour in our keeping, each one of us may do something to add to that glorious heritage. What we have, what we are, we owe to her; can we ever repay that debt even if we give our lives for her sake? Our blood and tears will flow; it may be that the parched soil of India needs them so that the fine flower of freedom may grow again and its fragrance envelop the land. We shall pay the price and it will be well with us if we remain true to our faith and do not falter.

28. The Mission and the War[1]

Let us be realist. Do not forget the past of India, which is helpful to us. India, like China, has an enormous capacity for survival. We must survive and be prepared to face all situations and with brave hearts we must face whatever happens. Individual loss does not matter in a fight for a nation's freedom. I do not like to enter into any argument regarding Sir Stafford Cripps's visit and its consequences. I am fairly competent to judge the effects of his mission in India. Sir Stafford is mistaken in his impression that the negotiations have improved the situation in India. How short-sighted the British Government has been and how all prospects of friendship have been lost! I know the English people fairly well. I painfully say that it is a natural habit of the English people to feel that God has given them the right to give paternal treatment to others. Sir Stafford Cripps thought they were arbitrators in India. In fact, Sir Stafford knew nothing about India.

India is our country and we cannot run away from it. We have to face the present danger. The position of India is very critical. I am not a pessimist. I am not prepared to see India as a passive spectator. To submit to anybody is an awful act. If I would have been in charge of Defence, I would have armed the whole nation and I would not have hesitated to take up the responsibility even at this late hour. I appeal to you to consider seriously over the present situation as difficult and critical times are ahead of us all. Indians should not be afraid of bombs. Take a lesson from the continuous bombing of Chungking for the last four years and the heroic resistance put up by the Chinese. I earnestly appeal to you to organise yourselves to carry on the *sangathan* work. *Shanti sena* should be organised in every village for the preservation of internal peace and order. In this connection I specially appeal to the students to go to villages during holidays and work in accordance with the Congress scheme. There is every likelihood of shortage of foodstuffs and hence the need for extensive cultivation of food crops. The usefulness and importance of cottage industries as propagated by Mahatmaji increase in view of the fact that big industries might become extinct and no cloth might be available from mills. People must spin and wear khadi or else they will have to remain naked. When the Japanese planes are hovering over our heads, we cannot sit tight or be sightseers. We cannot afford to see the tamasha. We must get prepared. When the

1. Speech at a public meeting in Gauhati, 24 April 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 27 April 1942.

27. To Tuan-Sheng Chien[1]

My dear Dr. Chien,[2]

Thank you for your letter of the 18th April.[3] I remember well our meeting two and a half years ago at Kunming at the Hotel du lac.

Your comment on Sir Stafford Cripps's visit and his proposals, as contained in your letter to Laski,[4] shows a great deal of understanding of recent events in India. Cripps's visit here has been a complete failure and really has worsened the situation much. I must confess to being surprised at the tone and the attitude adopted by Stafford Cripps. His whole approach was wrong.

It is difficult to discuss a complicated situation in the course of a letter, especially when the situation changes from day to day. The question now, even more than before, is not one of finding some formula satisfactory to the two parties concerned, but of real and full transfer of power. It is patent that the present British Government is not going to do this. It is also patent that unless this is done the Indian Congress is going to keep far away from it. Meanwhile as the situation changes rapidly, much may happen. We are trying to follow a programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection, quite apart from the governmental programme and activity. In the military sense that is of course ineffective, but it has a great deal in it which will go to strengthen the people and help them to deal with the aggressor.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. This letter is undated in the source.
2. (b. 1900); political scientist; associated with the National Peking University, 1938-49; Vice-Chairman, Peking Municipal Committee, 1949-58; Editor, *China Reconstructs*, 1952-58; President, Peking College of Political Science and Law, 1952-58; Member, C.P.P.C.C., 1949-61; was declared a Rightist in 1961; author of *History of Political Institutions Under the Republic* and *The Government and Politics of China*.
3. In his letter Chien expressed distress over the breakdown of negotiations between Stafford Cripps and the Indian leaders and hoped that the Indian people would help in the work of civil defence.
4. Chien wrote to Harold Laski that the British proposals were most unfair to the Congress and to Stafford Cripps, alike. To the former because it would prevent them from achieving a united, free India. To the latter because it would put obstacles to his career which was so intimately bound with the future of Britain.

Government. He refused to accept any such thing. So far as we are concerned, our course is perfectly clear. We shall submit neither to British imperialism nor to Japanese aggression. We may have to face disaster but we shall keep our self-respect and honour intact. Out of that very disaster a free and independent India will arise.

> Q: What do you think about the resolution adopted at a meeting of the Madras Congress Legislature Party?[3]

JN: The resolution adopted at the meeting of the Madras Congress Legislature Party greatly surprised me. I am surprised not only at its contents but at the fact that Mr. Rajagopalachari, a member of the Congress Working Committee, had sponsored it. At any time this would have been undesirable, but on the eve of the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. meetings such action was extraordinary.

It is not usual for members of the Working Committee to criticise each other in public statements and therefore I do not wish to say more than this at this stage that I entirely disagree with the approach adopted in the resolution of the Madras Congress Legislature Party.

> Q: What is your impression from your tour of Assam about the relief work being done for the refugees?

JN: The real problem is not so much on the Indian side as on the Burma side, and I think Indian doctors and relief workers should go both to the Burma end of the Manipur Road and to the point from where the evacuees come to India. At both these places relief workers and doctors should go because arrangements there are far from satisfactory and people are greatly harassed.

I think two things are necessary; doctors and the human element. These evacuees want some sympathy.

The question of food supply is of paramount importance. In an emergency when a large number of people have to be shifted from one place to another food is the basis of order. If there is no food it will lead to looting and enormous suffering. There must be some arrangement for this. But there was nothing in Burma.

3. The resolution, sponsored by Rajagopalachari and passed on 23 April 1942 stated, "The general feeling of this part of the country is the need at this critical juncture for popular government. This province is doing its utmost to secure the requisite conditions for the people to play their part. This party is of the opinion that to facilitate such a popular government the Muslim League should be invited to participate."

people and the army combine in resisting the aggressor, it will be real war effort.

29. On Cripps's Press Conference[1]

Question: What is your reaction to Sir Stafford Cripps's press conference at London on 22 April 1942?[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru: A brief report of what Sir Stafford Cripps said at a press conference in London makes it quite clear to us that those in authority in England live in a world of their own, which has nothing to do with the reality in India. Into this imaginary world we who are realists refuse to enter. Sir Stafford Cripps, by what he said here and in London on behalf of the War Cabinet, has made it perfectly clear to us that we can never have any compromise with the British Government till it undergoes a complete change in its thinking and approach with regard to India. There is going to be no approach to Britain on our part. We shall face the consequences whatever they might be. For, on no account are we going to give up Indian freedom, Indian independence and Indian unity. We are not going to act as Viceroy's secretaries and advisers or in any other subordinate capacity. We shall only function as members of a free National Government with real powers.

Sir Stafford goes on laying emphasis on this that constitutional changes were impossible and that all political leaders realised this difficulty during war time. This is an amazing perversion of facts so far as the Congress is concerned. We think that everything is possible for those who want to act. But no doubt the people who are tied up with nineteenth century thought find it difficult to act. As a matter of fact we told Sir Stafford that even if legal changes were not made, conventions could be accepted and assurances given that there would be no interference by the Viceroy and others in the working of the National

1. Interview to the press, Calcutta, 25 April 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 26 April 1942, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26 April 1942.
2. Cripps asserted that on the question of defence, the negotiations had had good results as was evident from the anti-Japanese statements of Jawaharlal and certain Muslim and Sikh leaders. He argued that, although Indian leaders were not taking any responsibility in the Government of India in the transitional stage, they would assist in an unofficial capacity in maximising the defence efforts in India. "The picture, therefore, is not a gloomy picture .... it is an encouraging picture, although not as encouraging as it might have been, but much more encouraging than it would have been if nothing had been done."

Government. He refused to accept any such thing. So far as we are concerned, our course is perfectly clear. We shall submit neither to British imperialism nor to Japanese aggression. We may have to face disaster but we shall keep our self-respect and honour intact. Out of that very disaster a free and independent India will arise.

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I think two things are necessary; doctors and the human element. These evacuees want some sympathy.

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3. The resolution, sponsored by Rajagopalachari and passed on 23 April 1942 stated, "The general feeling of this part of the country is the need at this critical juncture for popular government. This province is doing its utmost to secure the requisite conditions for the people to play their part. This party is of the opinion that to facilitate such a popular government the Muslim League should be invited to participate."

What should be done is really for the experts' committees to consider in the light of the experience gained in Rangoon. The experts' committees should work out a scheme. They should seek cooperation of voluntary organizations and this will give them a popular backing.

Q: Does this mean that people should cooperate with the Government sponsored experts' committees?

JN: In a matter of this kind the only authority that can work is the state. It is very difficult for private organizations to organise this sort of work because rules and regulations will come in the way. But if the state does not function then private organizations should do all they can.

Q: What have you to say about those who have been evacuated from the districts of Bengal? They get food but what about employment?

JN: I do not think mere supply of food to these evacuated people in Bengal would do. An expert committee should deal with problems arising out of evacuation. Whenever there is a military necessity for the evacuation of a particular area a plan should be thought out previously, unless of course events force hands, and some alternative places should be provided to the people and compensation paid. But mere compensation would not do. Unless you provide them with some definite jobs or occupations I imagine the problem would remain insoluble. Government should provide for the occupation of the evacuees so that they may work and produce something. From any point of view irritating the civil population and making it discontented is bad. Suitable arrangements should be made so that people evacuated may feel that necessary arrangements have been made for them.

30. To Evelyn Wood[1]

Allahabad
May 1, 1942

My dear Evelyn,
I have your three letters.[2] I am acknowledging them briefly as I am full

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letters of 13, 15 and 28 April 1942, he requested Jawaharlal to join hands with the Information and Broadcasting Ministry and help them in the National War Front Campaign and particularly wanted him to be involved actively.

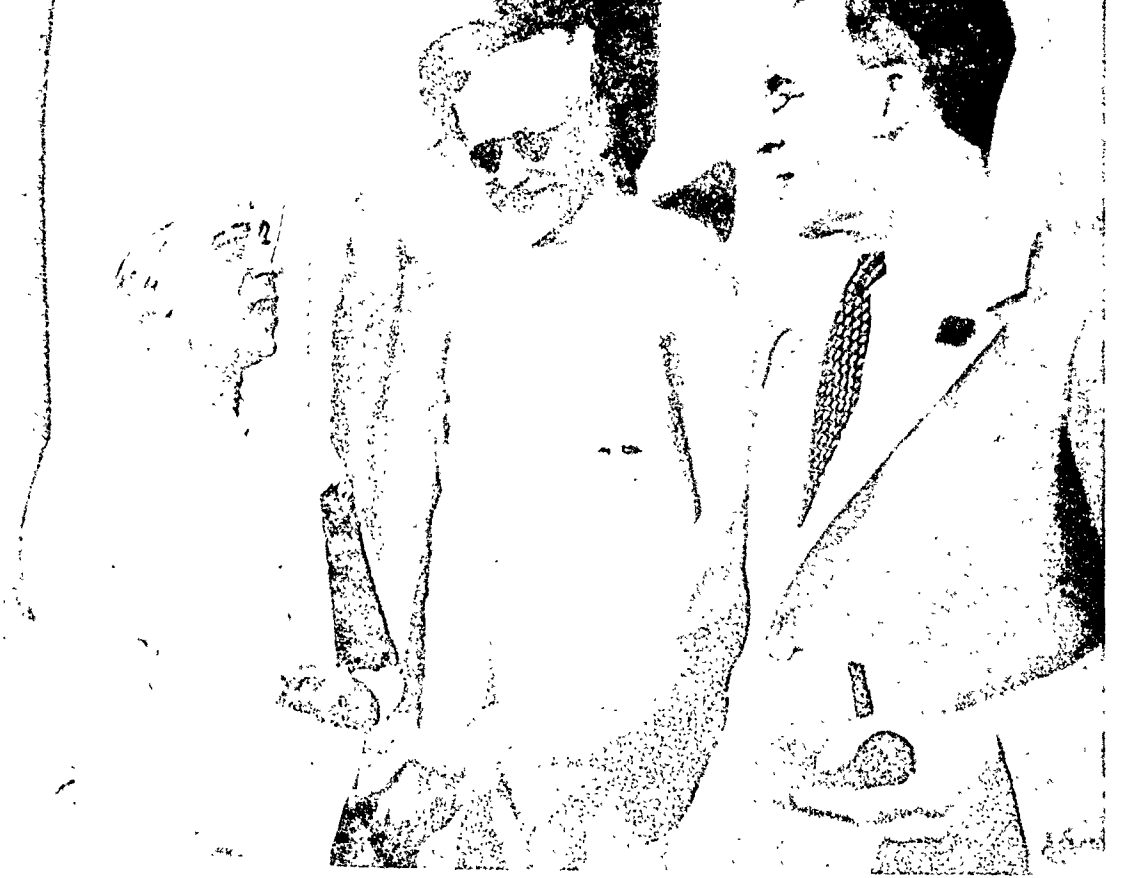

WITH SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS AND MAULANA AZAD, NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH 1942

of work at present. Possibly Denys Scott[3] has told you of our conversation. I do not think you quite appreciate my position or the position of the Congress. We cannot possibly participate in any propaganda on behalf of the Government. I am distressed at my name and my picture being used in Government publicity. The situation is far more serious than our complaisant friends Stafford Cripps and Company realise. Cripps has effectively succeeded in creating a tremendous revulsion of feeling against the British Government and all its works in India.

He chooses to live in a paradise of his own creation and honourable members of Parliament indulge in the most foolish of platitudes. You may have some idea of how things are fashioning by reading the proceedings of the A.I.C.C.[4] Even that will only give you a faint idea.

I have no programme and do not know where I will be on any particular day. There is no chance of my going to Bombay for some time at least.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. An employee of J. Walter Thompson Company (Eastern) Limited.
4. The A.I.C.C. met at Allahabad on 1-2 May 1942. See *post*, section 3, items 18-22.

31. To Evelyn Wood[1]

Allahabad
June 5, 1942

My dear Evelyn,

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of the 5th May.[2] As a matter of fact I got it only a few days back as I was away at Kulu and elsewhere.

Your analysis of the situation is fairly correct and on the whole I agree with it.[3] Cripps surprised me greatly. I have liked Cripps as a

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter Wood had analysed the Indian political situation and enclosed a memorandum on national propaganda.
3. While commenting on the Indian political situation, he deplored the behaviour of Stafford Cripps and wanted the Congress to be more magnanimous and try to inculcate among the Indian people the feeling of self-sacrifice.

man, though I must confess that I have considered him a somewhat muddleheaded politician. But on this occasion I was surprised at his woodenness and insensitiveness, in spite of his public smiles. He was all the time the formal representative of the War Cabinet, in fact he was the War Cabinet speaking to us with a take it or leave it attitude. Always he seemed to impress upon us that he knew the Indian problem in and out and he had found the only solution for it. Anyone who did not agree with it was, to say the least of it, utterly misguided.

Indeed I made it perfectly plain to him that there were limits beyond which I could not carry the Congress and there were limits beyond which the Congress could not carry the people. But he thought that all this was totally beside the point.

I agree with you that our publicity is rotten.[4] As a matter of fact it does not exist in any organized or deliberate sense.

Possibly I might be going to Bombay, though I am not sure. I am going to Wardha tomorrow for a few days. If I go to Bombay I shall see you there. But surely you realise that the difficulty in our way is not merely one of organising a campaign of publicity. It is more deep-rooted.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Wood regretted that while persons like Rajagopalachari got publicity, the official Congress did not get any publicity.

32. Independence and Independence Alone[1]

Question: How do you react to Sir Stafford Cripps's interview to the United Press in London, that "We are not going to walk out of India right in the middle of the War, although we do not wish to remain there for any imperialist reasons."

Jawaharlal Nehru: I can quite believe that the British Government has no present intention of walking out of India in the middle of the war or after this. But much has happened in this war which the British

1. Interview to the United Press, Bombay, 16 June 1942. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 17 June 1942.

Government did not intend and did not like and much is going to happen in India and elsewhere in spite of the wishes of the British Government.

I do not wish to continue the argument on what took place during our conversations with Sir Stafford Cripps. This has been sufficiently debated in public and every aspect put before it. The Cripps proposals have gone into the limbo of things, done with and forgotten. They have no reality now.

Only one thing I should like to say, that is, that Sir Stafford's statement to the effect that the Working Committee had apparently accepted the proposals and it was only after further consultations with Mahatma Gandhi that they were turned down, is entirely incorrect. It is true that newspapers were making guesses and sometimes stating that the Working Committee was likely to accept the proposals, but Sir Stafford ought to know that these newspaper stories had no basis. After Gandhiji left Delhi there was no consultation with him of any kind and it is entirely wrong to imagine that the rejection was due to his pressure.

Sir Stafford appears to hint that our rejection was due largely to Gandhiji's adherence to nonviolence. This is also wholly incorrect. No question of violence and nonviolence arose in our talks or in our consideration of this subject. We rejected the proposals purely on political grounds and we rejected them unanimously because they did not transfer real power to the Indian people. It was only a travesty of power that was offered, and India, which has stood these long years for complete independence, could not accept these humiliating proposals. Let me say again that the question has to be considered on political grounds and on no other. It is on the basis of independence and independence alone that we can consider the question of India.

3

INDIA AND THE WAR II

April 1942—June 1942

1. Freedom from Aggression[1]

There is a lot in my mind about the talks we are having with Sir Stafford, but it would be premature to say anything about it till the resolution of the Congress Working Committee is published. India's problem has suddenly become a world problem. So far, our approach to the question was fundamentally on the basis that pressure should be brought on the British Government to part with power and that the British Government and the people of India are the two principal parties in the dispute.

Although it is not customary for the head of one state to interfere in the internal affairs of another state, yet Chiang Kai-shek, the head of the Chinese state, who recently toured India, expressed himself in unmistakable terms on the question of India's freedom. The envoy of the United States of America in New Delhi is also taking interest in the matter. There is no representative of Soviet Russia in New Delhi, although Russia is Britain's ally, and Russia alone has done actual, real fighting in this war. We know the views of the representatives of the Government of India who do not seem to have realised yet that a war is going on in the world.

The Government of India did not allow any Russians to come here. Whereas the whole world has changed on account of the terrific events taking place every day, the Government of India remains unchanged. The Government of India is incapable of defending this country and our misfortune is that it is not allowing Indians to defend it. Whereas America has freely expressed its sympathy for India's freedom, Russia has no means of expressing it. Germany and Japan are also deeply interested in the Indian questions as is evidenced by their daily broadcasts in Hindustani. They are warning Indians against a settlement with Britain. The solution of India's problem will affect the whole world. The problem is complicated and the old slogans will not do. We have to consider so many factors. We are not so much concerned with what Russia, America and Britain want. Our attitude should be determined solely by the consideration of what is best in the interest of India's freedom. It is correct we want freedom for the world, but that would be meaningless for us unless it meant freedom for India also.

We have never hidden our sympathy with the democracies. We have always condemned aggressions, old and new. Our attitude in the matter

1. Speech at Queen's Garden, Delhi, 7 April 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 8 April 1942.

throughout has been consistent. We have raised our voice against Hitler's Germany, since it embarked on the policy of conquest. We are equally opposed to the system that enslaves India. We cannot help the democracies as long as we are not free from the shackles of foreign domination. British imperialism, despite its ramifications, is considerably weakened. It is no longer a first-class power, and whatever may happen, British imperialism can never survive the war.

Declarations regarding the constitutional status of India have very little value for the future which is so very uncertain. Their value is only for the present.

Our sympathy with Russia and China is real and genuine. It is distressing to think of a world in which Russia and China would have no place. China is a big country of Asia, which has been attacked by Japan. The Chinese have been fighting bravely for their freedom and in fact during the last four years their battle of freedom has cost them about four million lives, which shows what sacrifices they have made for their cause.

The fall of Russia will be a major calamity for the world. It would be utterly foolish if anyone were to desire a Russian defeat simply because Britain was on Russia's side. I have no doubt that Russia, China and America will play a leading part in the reconstruction of the post-war world.

The bombing of Indian coastal cities should not frighten you. You should not be content with playing the role of mere spectators when big and mighty events are taking place. We cannot reconcile ourselves to foreign domination. We cannot be mere spectators of the game of the Japanese troops fighting the British, Chinese and American troops on our sacred soil. Some people say "Jawaharlal is a fool. He is unnecessarily antagonising the Japanese and the Germans. The Japanese will wreak vengeance on him when they come to this country. It is wiser for him to keep silent, if he cannot actually speak well of the Japanese." I want to tell those people who give me this advice that Jawaharlal is not the man who will keep quiet when he ought to speak. On the other hand, I can only reject such advice, which is essentially based on fear, with contempt.

I have no enmity with Japan or the Japanese people, who have done many good things for their country. I had sympathy with them till they made an unprovoked attack on China. They are not coming to this country at my invitation. I think it is my duty to oppose and fight them. I am not prepared to accept the idea that I should be a spectator to all this and do nothing.

I am not prepared to put faith in the slogan that the Japanese are coming to India to liberate us. The past history of India goes against the claim. Nobody has ever come to this country to liberate. Whether we come to a settlement with the British Government or not, we will fight any army that invades India. We must have stout hearts. It is a question of the country's honour. It is more dignified from the point of view of national self-respect that our country goes down fighting with its soul intact and a hope of its rising again than that it resigns to its fate and loses its soul.

Though our talks with Sir Stafford have failed it does not mean that we will not come to a settlement later. India is now facing a trial. We must organise ourselves for every contingency. Nobody should run away in panic. It would be a great misfortune if we fell victim to any aggression without a fight.

Mighty empires have fallen in recent months. It will not be strange if India shares the same fate, but we will have the satisfaction of fighting for our cherished ideal and will have firmly laid the foundation of India's freedom.

2. To Chu Chia-hua[1]

New Delhi
April 13, 1942

Dear Dr. Chu,

I must apologise to you for not having thanked you previously for your letter dated 29th January which you sent me.[2] That letter came at the time of the Generalissimo's visit to India. Ever since then we have been overwhelmed with our problems.

Recently, as you must know, we have been engaged in negotiations with the British Government acting through Sir Stafford Cripps.[3] Those negotiations have unfortunately failed. We tried our utmost but the attitude of the British Government was rigid and unyielding.

We realise perfectly well that India today is becoming the crux of the war situation in the East. We want to do our utmost in this matter, but that utmost can only be done by a free national government and not by a foreign government which is distrusted and disliked. This foreign government has rendered us almost helpless in the matter and, even in

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Letter not available.
3. See *ante*, section 2.

this grave crisis of war, is unable to change its old ways. That is the tragedy of the situation. Nevertheless we shall do what we can and in any event we are not going to submit to any invader. I agree with you that whatever happens in between, and many very bad things will happen, in the end there will be a defeat of aggressor nations.

We are following with anxious interest the fortunes of war in Burma as well as in the Bay of Bengal. They affect us intimately just as they affect China. Chinese troops in Burma have fought well, but it seems to me that all British arrangements for defence have been feeble in the extreme. Anyhow we shall face whatever happens with a stout heart and with faith in the future.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To Peter Johnson[1]

New Delhi
April 13, 1942

Dear Sir,[2]

With reference to your letter of today's date asking me if I have any objection to the quotation of certain passages from my statement[3] for the purposes of the National War Front publicity, I have to say that I have every objection. My statement has nothing to do with the so-called National War Front which I do not consider to be national at all. I think it is a misuse of terms for the Viceroy or any other foreign authority in India to talk of national front. I have nothing to do with the efforts made by foreign authority in India and I address myself to the Indian people only and advise them to take action apart from any official effort.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Advertising consultant to the Government of India.
3. Speech delivered at New Delhi on 7 April 1942. See *ante*, pp. 247-249.

4. To Ganga Singh[1]

Allahabad
April 15, 1942

My dear Ganga Singhji,[2]
I have received your letter.[3] I need not tell you how distressed all of us have been by the news from Burma and more especially the news of the Indian refugees from Burma. I met Dadachanji[4] in Delhi and many other people. Rashid[5] came to see me today here. We live in difficult times and I suppose that we shall see in India, on a bigger scale, what you have seen in Burma. All one can say is that we shall try to face it and not forget our duty to India.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Resident of Rangoon; Member, House of Representatives, Burma, 1939; evacuee in India in 1942.
3. In his undated letter, he narrated how he and his family left for India and lost their property after the fall of Rangoon. He appealed to Jawaharlal to save India, since war led to extreme suffering for people.
4. B.K. Dadachanji (1877-1974); advocate, Rangoon High Court, till 1963; member of the Burmese Provincial Congress Committee and its delegate at the A.I.C.C., 1934-37; came to India in 1942 after the fall of Rangoon; founder of the Burmese Indian Rehabilitation Society, Rangoon; author of *War is Sin*.
5. M.A. Rashid, an Indian settled in Burma, returned to India in 1942 following Japanese occupation; was employed as Regional Labour Commissioner, Bombay. Returned after the war to Burma; founded All Burma Indian Congress, 1946; Labour Minister in Aung San's cabinet.

5. Non-belligerency and Not Neutrality[1]

Although India is a subject country, she had declared, long before this war, that her sympathies lay with what Russia and China stood for. The Congress definitely considered the forces represented by Hitler and

1. Address to Congress workers, Calcutta, 18 April 1942. From *National Herald*, 19 April 1942.

Japan as dark forces, which if victorious would lead to a permanent slavery of India.

The Indian situation must be reviewed along with the international situation. The attitude of the Congress in this war is one of non-belligerency and not exactly of neutrality. I am sure that mass opposition can be organised by the state. I cannot possibly say what exact steps are to be taken by the people on the approach of an invading army. It is not a noble outlook to welcome an aggressor and I warn Congressmen and the people against the deceptive language of the aggressors and conquerors.

We must try to embarrass the enemy in every possible way. I have not come to Bengal with any definite programme. When India is being attacked by the enemy and when Britain as well as America are taking part in the war, I feel disturbed at the idea that I cannot do anything for my own country. I feel that I must go to friends and co-workers and the people at this critical time.

6. Cable to I. Badoo[1]

Calcutta
19/4/42

Received your cable.[2] I appreciate your difficulties. I suggest your giving coöperation consistently with your and India's dignity. Cooperation as slaves impossible. We must stand for full racial, political equality and freedom. India has frequently declared antipathy towards fascism and supports the cause of freedom and democracy.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
Badoo was a member of the Non-European United Front, Cape Town, South Africa, which was demanding arms for non-European soldiers and equal pay, promotions, pensions and military allowances for them, and withdrawal of the law placing non-European soldiers under European privates.
2. In his cable of 15 April 1942, Badoo asked for advice from Jawaharlal as to what the South African non-Europeans who wanted to cooperate with the progressives against fascism should do, when the Union Government was presumably thinking of discrimination against them.

7. No Toleration of Any Aggression[1]

Never in her long history has India been menaced with a deadlier peril than what confronts her today. The nation is called upon to face great calamities. Throughout Europe and Asia men have been perishing by millions. The old order is crumbling down, but in the midst of this catastrophe there is the hope, that with the birth of a new order the people of India will achieve freedom which will enable them to carry out all their cherished programmes. No one knows when the war will terminate. But one thing is certain, there can be no staging back of the old order of things.

Several years ago the Congress adopted a resolution expressing sympathy with China and Spain in their fight against the aggressors.[2] Lately, Russia has shown what a severe struggle a freedom-loving nation can put forth for the defence of its fatherland. England, after the fall of France, and in the face of imminent invasion by Hitler, has shown courage and patriotism worthy of emulation. England professes sympathy for the cause of freedom and democracy. But sympathy for a cause is not by itself enough. The test of that sympathy lies in the establishment of identity of interests.

With the approach of war to the very gates of India the situation has naturally undergone a change. Congress had previously been in favour of complete independence. Now with the changed situation, the people of India want to defend the country against any Japanese invasion. But, unfortunately, the administration is run by a foreign Government which is incompetent and at the same time distrustful of the people, the people who even extended their hands of friendship. Unarmed as they are, Indians cannot, without any help of the state, resist the onrush of the enemy.

As for the Delhi negotiations, the Congress was prepared to waive for the time being many of its fundamental demands in order to arrive at a settlement with the Government. What was uppermost in the minds of the Congress representatives during the negotiations was how to defend the country adequately against the imminent peril.

Indians, as the situation has developed, have been placed in a quandary.

1. Address to Congress workers at the Howrah District Congress Committee office, 19 April 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 21 April 1942.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 702-726.

What course are they to follow? They want to cooperate with the British but the latter do not trust them. If our countrymen take up any programme of their own accord the rulers will stand in the way. So far as the question of waging guerilla warfare is concerned, it can be carried on only in coordination with a regular army. Moreover, a lot of training is necessary for the successful conduct of such a campaign.

But should Indians sit with folded hands and remain inactive if the rulers do not provide them with an opportunity to take part in the defence of the country? The most important thing you should remember is that you must not, on any account, tolerate aggression from any quarter. True, we cannot hope to resist tanks with swords and primitive weapons, but we can in many ways embarrass the invader. An invading army, however big it might be, cannot overrun the entire country at the first onset. At the most, it can occupy a few important towns, but the courageous can deny them rations, cut off supplies and create obstacles in numerous ways.

Congressmen should inculcate in the people the programme laid down by the Congress, in the matter of self-sufficiency and self-protection. We have already begun the work in the United Provinces but there might be certain difficulties in carrying out such work in certain parts of Bengal which have been declared military areas. Villagers must form groups of five to ten villages, which should produce their essential requirements, namely, food and clothing. These village units will not rely on motor or railway transport. As for self-protection, forty to fifty families can combine to form a unit to protect themselves against lawlessness in the event of an emergency. The towns too should be divided for the purpose, into wards or *mohallas* as it has been done in Allahabad. This programme, if carried out successfully, will give them self-confidence. Moreover, if the administration at any time breaks down, especially in the countryside, the people themselves will have the opportunity to take up the responsibility of running the government.

I was very much pained to learn that with the entry of Japan into Burma, lakhs of people have in panic evacuated the city of Calcutta. They should have borne in mind the fact that bombs can cause injury only to a fraction of the population. It is, therefore, foolish to leave the city *en masse*. Almost every other people in the world including the Chinese, British and Russians are taking it manfully. The people of Chungking, who have been enduring air attacks for the last four or five years, deserve special praise. Here city-dwellers are migrating to villages but do not realise that even there immense problems of sanitation, food and medical aid can crop up. People should stick to their jobs and protect their hearths and homes, their wives and children.

Question: Do you see any reason for the inability of the Congress to cooperate with the Forward Bloc?[3]

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Forward Bloc has been set up as an anti-Congress organisation. I do not question the sincerity of its motive but there is no doubt that the principles and programme of the Forward Bloc are opposed to those of the Congress. The members of the Forward Bloc are following a different path and no question of cooperation between them and the Congress can arise. If one feels that the Congress has given a correct lead to the country he should follow it in every way.

3. The Forward Bloc stood for the utilisation of the international crisis for embarrassing Britain to the advantage of India's struggle for freedom. They were even prepared to join hands with the Axis Powers against Britain and were not attracted either to the nonviolence of Mahatma Gandhi or to the anti-Axis policy of Jawaharlal.

8. India's Survival[1]

I do not know whether I can say much about this question of evacuation—evacuation not only from Burma and Malaya but also from various places in Bengal.[2] It astonished me to see how very incompetent and inefficient, though these words do not express my thinking adequately, the Government machinery was. I should say there is complete lack of intelligence in the handling of this problem of evacuation of the people from Burma and Malaya, and in the treatment of these refugees. The Burman Government collapsed like a house of cards.

How a government can collapse so quickly is really difficult to imagine. But it collapsed. All the civil servants and all the high officials ran away to save themselves and left the people, whom they were supposed to serve, to their own resources. It is a disgraceful story; it is a story of which any people should be thoroughly ashamed. If they presumed to govern, the least they should have done was to go down with the ship that sank. Their behaviour was disgraceful.

1. Address to the Indian Journalists Association, Calcutta, 19 April 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 21 April 1942.
2. Under the Defence of India Rules, the Government evacuated about 150,000 people between 1 to 24 April 1942 from Noakhali, Chittagong, Jessore, Diamond Harbour, Behala, Khulna and other places in Bengal. In most cases, the Government made no arrangements for their evacuation nor paid the cost of removal. There were also reports of police excesses.

Their prestige has been affected, but while their prestige has been affected, our lives have been affected, and thousands lie dead on the road from Burma to India and perhaps thousands are still dying. While it is a matter of prestige for them, it is a question of shedding of blood for thousands of Indians, maybe poor Indians, but nevertheless they are Indians, and we do not think of them as a class apart. These people had to travel by what has come to be known as the Black Road, while the rulers themselves have travelled by a safer road which has come to be known as the White Road.[3]

Leaving aside the question of humanity and looking at it from the point of view of expediency, what a foolish manner it was of doing something to irritate a large number of people. Instead of winning them over to their side the officials made the evacuees agents of propaganda against them all over India. It was an astoundingly foolish act.

I cannot measure that folly. The British Government has put up posters all over about the National War Front, the nation being represented by the Viceroy in his person, just as in olden days Louis XIV represented the state in himself. The Indian nation is represented by the Viceroy and the Viceroy talks about the National War Front. You and I may consider it an amazing effrontery but talk on these lines I cannot tolerate. They talk of the National War Front when thousands and thousands of our people are bunched somewhere near Akyab and in Mandalay without any help.

It is an amazing thing. It hurts me, it pains me, because I want the Indian people to prepare themselves, to organize themselves, for the defence of India. Because India is our own country, I cannot tolerate the idea of an invader coming to our country, nor am I going to sit in my house should that contingency arise. I do not know what we are going to do if unfortunately there is an attack by an invader, but I am not going to sit in my house. I do not know what I will do because in these circumstances people's functions are being guided by emotions and not by logical processes. It distresses me because I want the Indian people to think in terms of the defence of their country so that any invader of India, though he might talk of liberating India—every invader has talked in that fashion and every invader has bamboozled India—must be opposed. I am not prepared to tolerate any aggressor or invader. What I

3. The refugees from Burma were sharply discriminated against in the land routes to India. The Black Road, from Tamu to Waksu, was meant for Indians, and the White Road, from Tamu to Pallel, which was shorter and had all the amenities, was meant for Europeans. Indian evacuees at Waksu and Tamu were also not treated well.

will do, how I will function, is entirely a different matter, a terribly difficult matter.

This problem of evacuation of people from Burma would have been solved, and at any rate the situation would have been eased, if the money spent on a dozen bombs and aeroplanes had been utilised to organise relief. One may give some explanation for not doing this but one cannot make any excuse for racial discrimination and allowing people to die. I do not expect any relief in this direction as a result of the belated visit of the Hon'ble Mr. Aney to Manipur and other places.[4] The same problem is still there to be faced by them. Fifty or sixty thousand evacuees are bunched at Akyab and almost an equal number at Mandalay towards which the Japanese are proceeding. Nobody is allowed to come through the Manipur Road because that is a military area. Again there is the same utter lack of intelligence.

In several places in Bengal orders have been issued for immediate evacuation. It is obvious that in an area threatened with invasion military authorities must take some steps to face that invasion. Nobody challenges that right of theirs. But there are two difficulties that come in the way. One is that the military has a singularly limited mind. It does not think of anything except of a certain military necessity. It does not take into account the human factor. The mind of the Government in India, the mind of the civil services in India, is almost typical of the military mind. It functions in the same limited military way.

The second is that a foreign Government, however well-intentioned, cannot even understand the difficulties of the local inhabitants much less deal with them. It is totally absurd for a person to come from outside and issue orders, asking you to go away within twenty-four hours from places where you have lived for generations. The problem would be a simple one, if that officer thought, while issuing the order, in terms of his own family. I can understand that in extreme cases something like this has got to be done. But in these places there is no necessity for evacuation within twenty-four hours and if there is that necessity they ought to have thought over it before. They erred in not doing so. With regard to compensation something has been agreed upon, and the twenty-four hours' period has also been extended to a week. This shows that the officers have a knack of irritating the people.

4. On his return from Assam, Aney said on 23 April 1942 that there was no longer any discrimination against Indians. "There is no road now confined to Europeans as such, nor is there any camp confined to exclusive use of Europeans and Anglo-Indians."

I cannot give you any particular advice in regard to this matter. If I am asked to go out at a moment's notice my reaction would be not to go out, whatever the consequences. If I feel it is a reasonable order then I will try to go out, otherwise I will not go and shall tell them to go and do what they like. I cannot speak of others. There may however be extreme cases of military necessity.

I am aware of the press censorship in Bengal. It is exceedingly foolish of the Government and the members of the civil service to keep you off from exercising your function of criticising their mistakes, some very fatal mistakes. These are the very things that require publicity. I do not know how far such publicity would help the Japanese but surely there are ways of dealing with a matter without giving any useful information to the enemy. But the Government has simply suppressed and bottled up people's feelings. Ultimately it comes to this: it affects not only thousands but millions of persons, who on hearing all sorts of stories get irritated.

Why have I come here to Bengal? I have come here to meet you and speak to you about these matters, but certainly I cannot give you the best advice. I have not come here with the idea that by my visit to Manipur, I would be able to solve the evacuation problem. But my visit shall draw a little more attention to this problem. What I have said about evacuation, has been published in other parts of India, but not in Bengal, where apparently the Government functions more intensely than in other parts.

I came to Calcutta on my way to Manipur and Assam for a very simple reason that I am a restless soul and I find it very difficult to sit down anywhere. My mind is perturbed and agitated at our helplessness. I want to make this country hum with activity, to create a tremendous unity of resistance to anybody who dares come to our fair land. An army may surrender but a people who are determined do not surrender whatever happens. I want to convert India into an armed camp of people who would not surrender, whatever might happen to the army. That is a kind of thing which the military do not understand. They know how to fight but they surrender against heavy odds. But when people fight they cannot surrender, they cannot have other fronts, they cannot go away from their own hearths and homes, but they have got to live and die there. Are you ready to go to Iran or Baluchistan? No. We have to live and die here whatever happens and thus the whole outlook of defence becomes different.

It is a war to the death, to the end, without any surrender. This is what I want to do. But I cannot do it. That is why I fret and fume and I roam about.

I have been asked to give advice as to what the people in Bengal should do in the matter of their defence. It is very difficult to lay down any positive line of action, but it seems to me obvious that on no account must we submit or surrender to any aggressor or invader. Therefore, it follows that we must train the people to develop an attitude of no surrender and no submission. You must bear in mind that any foreign army that comes, in whatever guise and with whatever professions, will after all be a foreign army which will try to make a home for itself in India. If once aggressors establish themselves in this country it would be very difficult to deal with them or dislodge them in future. It is also undesirable psychologically to think in terms of a foreign army giving the freedom. It is a weak nation's way of thinking that a foreign army will make it free. It is a slave's way of thinking that an invading army will liberate his country. Positively what can we do for the defence of the country? On the one hand we have deliberately divorced ourselves from the state apparatus. We cannot join it for many reasons, so we have to keep apart from it. But while keeping apart, what can we positively do for the defence of the country? In fact so far as the military areas of operations are concerned, we cannot do anything, and it is only the military which can operate there. But areas of active military operations are after all limited in a huge country like India.

It is easy to overwhelm small countries like Belgium but India like China is a country of vast hinterland, and in those vast spaces outside the immediate areas of armed conflict, much can be done by the people through noncooperation. I cannot enter into details because it is the Congress which will lay down the policy. This policy has to be shaped according to the exigencies of circumstances. One policy might be good in a particular area and a different policy might have to be pursued in another distant part of the country.

Some misapprehensions have been caused in the public mind by my use of the expression 'guerilla warfare' in my speech at the press conference at Delhi.[5] We cannot think loosely of guerilla warfare. What I said then was that a national government only can organise guerilla warfare. It becomes an entirely different problem to think in terms of an organisation completely separate from the state. In fact, having no

5. Mahatma Gandhi, in his letter to Jawaharlal on 15 April 1942 referred to the latter's press conference, and wrote: "I see no good in entering into a guerilla warfare when the American and Chinese forces enter India." In his article in *Harijan* of 26 April 1942, Mahatma Gandhi dealt with Jawaharlal's fancy for guerilla warfare which he said would be a nine-day wonder. "It will make no effect. It is foreign to the Indian soil." For Jawaharlal's press conference see *ante*, pp. 223-224.

common ground with the state, I do not see how guerilla warfare can be organised by us under the present circumstances. Besides, guerilla warfare is not a thing that can be immediately organised. It requires training, equipment and the like, and it requires coordination between the armed forces of the state and the people, just as it has been possible in Russia and China. So to think in terms of guerilla warfare in India under the present circumstances is to think in terms of unreality.

The real background for resistance ultimately depends on that the people must develop a spirit of no submission and no surrender. We must try to organise our village and town units and make them self-sufficient and capable of self-protection and that is the present Congress programme. Whatever policy we might pursue, aggressive noncooperation or passive resistance, these units will help us in preventing panic, controlling the situation and providing security against any lack of food or other essential commodities. This programme will bring to the people a spirit of self-reliance. And if this programme is really worked out, it will provide a tremendous basis for any action we decide to undertake, whatever policy the Government might adopt.

In Bengal, it is very difficult for us in the existing circumstances to work out this programme because the province is more or less a military area. Bengal's difficulties are therefore far greater than the difficulties of other provinces. Nevertheless, I suggest that the programme should be intensively worked in this province.

In India it is absurd to call this war a 'people's war' and it would be equally absurd to call it an 'imperialistic war.' It is a war ultimately for the survival of each country involved in it. All the countries are fighting for their survival. The only exception perhaps is the United States of America. So to stick a label on this war and decide on a different course of action is absurd.

Personally, I was motivated by my antipathy to Nazi Germany, Japan and fascists, and sympathy for Russia and China. But after all, in the ultimate analysis, I am motivated by a strong sense of survival for India. This is the only test for me. The people of India can only function from the narrow point of view of self-preservation and self-survival whatever might be my personal opinion about the larger issues.

We may noncooperate with the British, but today the question of noncooperation with the British in a sense does not arise, because noncooperation with the British today inevitably means an invitation to Japan to come to India. It also means enormous help to Japan. The Congress could have obstructed the war efforts in India if it wanted to. But the Congress deliberately did not do so. To do that when the invasion threatens us would only help the invaders.

Today we have to face naked realities. Old slogans are of no avail in the present circumstances. In this changing situation, we have to change our attitude and policy fundamentally, keeping the freedom, defence and security of India always before us. I cannot give you any detailed advice as to the course of action you should follow. But it would be utterly wrong for us to allow any mentality of subservience or surrender to an invader to grow in us. I would like the Indian people, even the employees of the Government, to do all they can to defend the country. But the fact stares us in the face that unless the state and the people's organisations merge together, the people by themselves cannot do much. In fact, the state organisation will intervene if we attempt to organise the defence ourselves. Therefore, in the present circumstances, it is not a practical proposition, but it might become a practical proposition with the changing fortunes of the war. Therefore, we should try to organise the people through programmes of self-sufficiency and self-protection in order to deal with any changing situation and even to face the situation if the whole burden falls upon us in our local area.

9. No Surrender to the Aggressor[1]

The grave situation in Burma has brought the danger nearer to Assam. But you should not give way to panic. Whatever may be our fate we will not yield to any aggression. As we have not yielded to the British for so long, similarly we will not surrender to the Japanese or the Germans. It was quite natural for the Indians in Burma to return to their homeland under the present circumstances created by the war in that country. But where would we go leaving our homes if that situation came to this country?

You should stay where you are in order to face and fight any possible aggression. The Indians in Burma complained of atrocities by traitors, but they should have collectively resisted those atrocities rather than yielding to them individually.

I do not rule out the possibility of aerial attacks on Indian towns, but sufficient precautions can be taken to minimise the adverse effects of such incidents.

1. Address at the Indian Evacuees Camp, Dibrugarh, 23 April 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 25 April 1942.

We should all be ready for such a time when it may become necessary for every Indian to sacrifice himself for his motherland, and I am sure if that opportunity comes, Indians will not be lacking in the spirit to fight for victory.

10. Defence by One's Own Strength[1]

The presence of the Japanese army in Burma brings the war to Assam's threshold. But people should not lose heart. Japanese assurance to liberate India is false, unreliable and preposterous. India must depend on her own strength. A successful modern warfare requires close co-operation between the government and the people. Guerilla warfare as a part of the general war can be fought only by a free India. The policy of noncooperation has to be modified according to the place and time. The only method of resisting the aggressor is to organise Shanti Sena,[2] and by planning regional self-sufficiency. Do not run away.

The Congress hates aggression by Japan or Germany. The Congress wanted power to fight invaders but the Government refused to part with power. The result was that Stafford Cripps's mission failed. It is humiliating to sit idle when India is being invaded. Hard times are ahead. All should put their shoulders to the wheel—men, women and students. To talk of the War as a people's war is meaningless. The Congress wanted to make it a people's war but the British Government refused.

Assam's position is peculiar. The hill tribes should be treated kindly and the villages should be organised for self-defence and communal harmony should be maintained.

1. Address at Jorhat, 23 April 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 25 April 1942.
2. Peace Brigade.

11. Fight Hitler and Japan to the End[1]

Hitler and Japan must go to hell. I shall fight them to the end and this is my policy. I shall also fight Mr. Subhas Bose and his party along

1. Interview to the press, Gauhati, 24 April 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26 April 1942.

with Japan if he comes to India. Mr. Bose acted very wrongly though in good faith. Hitler and Japan represent the reactionary forces and their victory means victory of the reactionary forces in the world.

If a Japanese army invades Assam the attitude of the people should be one of "no surrender and no submission." The people should put obstacles and difficulties in the way of the aggressor. The Japanese gave independence to none and nobody gives it to others. God helps those who help themselves and we shall get independence when we will.

If a National Government functions then and then only guerilla warfare is possible. Guerilla warfare requires much training, equipment and coordination of the armed forces of the state. An invading army cannot overrun the entire country.

12. On His Assam Tour[1]

For four days and three nights, I toured up and down the valley of the Brahmaputra and visited many places in both the lower and upper Assam.[2] The tour was all too brief. Yet, with a maximum of rapid movement (in spite of petrol difficulties and minor motor mishaps) and a minimum of sleep, I covered a great deal of ground. During my eighty-four hours' stay, I travelled about 800 miles and visited Gauhati, Naogaon, Golaghai, Dimapur, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Tezpur, and Boko, and stopped for a brief while at many other places. I also saw the evacuee arrangements at Parbatipur and Pandu.

My object was two-fold: to meet my Congress colleagues and fellow-workers, to confer with them about the work to be done, to renew contacts with the pleasant and agreeable people of Assam, and to understand the situation in the province. Secondly, to meet evacuees from Burma, to find out what was being done for them and what more could be done.

I was happy to be back in Assam with its noble river and its fascinating forests and lovely scenery, and, above all, its sturdy people, who always impress me as those who have strength and do not easily falter. I am attracted also to the tribal folk and wish that I could be of greater service to them. As I travelled, my mind went frequently to that brave young woman Gaidilieu, styled the Rani, who has lain in jail now for twelve

1. Statement to the press, Calcutta, 25 April 1942. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 26 April 1942.
2. Jawaharlal visited Assam from 21 to 24 April 1942.

long years, and still lies there.[3] In prison, cabined and confined, she has grown from girlhood to womanhood, an emblem of her own simple people.

Assam has always impressed me with its great potential strength and resources, undeveloped so far by man, or rather by those who wield authority. It is a wealthy land with its minerals and forests and untilled areas; only the people are poor.

I was glad to see the spirit and enthusiasm of the people, the fire in the eyes of the boys and girls, which not all the threats and perils that encompass them had dimmed. A grand rally of the Shanti Sena at Boko was a sight I shall not forget for a long time. The Congress programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection was being carried out with a fair measure of success.

I met many hundreds of evacuees from Burma, coming both by the Manipur Road and by air, and had a glimpse of the arrangements made for them. My visits were too short for detailed inquiry or observation, and always I had a feeling that the visit itself had produced an abnormal atmosphere. Whether in Assam, or *en route* to the main camps, or in the Calcutta evacuee camps, there was some desire to show off. Still I formed a fair picture of what was happening.

I do not propose to go into any details here as I do not think I am competent to do so without further inquiry. Also, I presume, that Pandit Hridayanath Kunzru who recently went to Imphal with Mr. Aney, and who had greater opportunities of observation, will give the public his impressions of what he saw.[4] His recommendations will no doubt be valuable. I could not go as far as Imphal, as this required special permits, which I did not possess. I could only visit Dimapur on Manipur Road, the base camp of the evacuees who come that way. Among the large number of evacuees I met, whether they came by road or air, there were two dominant feelings: a feeling of relief that they were at last out of the hell they had been living in for some months past, and a feeling of great resentment at the racial discrimination, especially on the Burma side of the road. They had suffered much, had lost almost everything they possessed, had been ill-treated by petty officialdom, and yet one and all experienced a feeling of enormous relief at being back in India. There were people there whose original homes were in all parts of India—

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 501-502.
4. Kunzru and A.M. Dam, members of the Central Standing Evacuation Committee, on 27 April 1942 stated that Indian refugees were beaten by police and evacuation officials, were humiliated and made to feel that they belonged to an inferior race. They recommended that all camps be taken over by the Government and administered efficiently.

Bengal, Orissa, Madras, Bombay, Bihar, Gujarat, United Provinces, Rajputana, Punjab, Baluchistan, etc.,—and yet on their return to Indian soil, they all felt that they had come back to the homeland. It was a significant demonstration of the unity of India.

One does not expect comforts and conveniences in war time, especially when an invading army is advancing. But the civil population does expect a measure of protection from the Government that is functioning and, in times of crises especially, fair treatment and no discrimination. One of the astonishing things that happened in Burma was the collapse of the Governmental apparatus. The manner of the evacuation of Rangoon and South Burma was discreditable. Local officials functioned in some places and they seldom functioned well. Indians in distress seemed to have no friends outside their own ranks; neither the local officials nor the Burmans looked upon them with friendly eyes. Everybody suffered because of the inefficiency of the arrangements but the Indians suffered most. It is amazing that it should have taken two or three months for some order to emerge out of all this.

Latterly, I think, there has been improvement in the arrangements along the evacuee routes. This is especially so on the Indian side. though even there much remains to be done. On the Burma side, conditions are still bad. The main route so far has been through Manipur and nearly one thousand people are coming through this daily. Along this route, as is well known, there was the scandal of the 'White Road' and the 'Black Road'. The 'White Road' is probably a misnomer as many people whose complexions were very dark indeed were permitted to go along it, provided they had trousers on—those insignia of European civilisation. One instance was brought to my notice when a gentleman in trousers was allowed to travel by bus, but when his wife appeared in a sari, he got into difficulties. Recently Indians, even in dhotis and pyjamas or saris, have been allowed to travel along the 'White Road', but there are still certain restrictions limiting their numbers.

The air route from Myitkyina to Dibrugarh is now being used extensively for evacuation. Few Indians were brought over this way and those few who came had to pay heavily, while others were transported free or almost free. Now, many more Indians are brought over and a certain latitude in payment allowed, according to the evacuees' financial condition. Some are flown over free. On the day I visited Dibrugarh nearly 600 evacuees arrived there from Myitkyina. Of these about 300 were Indians, the rest mostly Anglo-Burmans.

On the Indian side of the route, there were complaints of misbehaviour of petty officials and police and sometimes extortion. Medical arrangements are still poor, though some doctors have been sent, but

without adequate equipment or supplies. Nevertheless, there has been recently considerable improvement on the Indian side. It is the Burma side that appears to need complete overhauling. From all reports that we had, conditions are highly unsatisfactory there. No efforts are made to collect Indians in proper camps and they drift in from all sides and have to shift for themselves. Sometimes they have to stay at the route head for many days before they can get permission to go through. This applies to both the land route and the air route. In Myitkyina, we were told that the camp houses were more or less reserved for Europeans, and Indians had to live under the trees or make some other arrangements. In India, large numbers of relief workers and societies help to lighten the burden of these unhappy refugees. Not so in Burma, where both officials and people favour non-Indians in every way.

I was told that a large sum is paid by the government to a number of European planters and their assistants for helping the evacuees. Apart from the fact that European planters are unsuited for looking after Indian evacuees, it seems odd that public money should be spent in this way, when there is no lack of voluntary help available. The various voluntary relief agencies and individuals have been doing splendid work on the Indian side. My one complaint against them is that I got an impression, sometimes, of the rich feeding the poor and thus acquiring merit in this world and the hereafter. This approach is too patronising to be good.

The scope of this voluntary work could easily be increased, given opportunities by the government. It seems to me especially necessary for relief organisations to be allowed to go all along the Manipur Road right up to the Burma base camp. Why government should object to this, I do not know. It will lighten their burden, increase efficiency, and bring a human element into the work, which is lacking where only officials function. In Dibrugarh, there should be one or more women workers to look after the women evacuees.

At Myitkyina there should also be some Indian representatives to look after the interests of Indians. Presumably, the military are in control in North Burma and they must want all evacuees to be removed as rapidly as possible. In this task they would receive the full cooperation of our workers. Officials have not covered themselves with glory in this work of evacuation. They have shown inefficiency and partiality and the sooner they realise that others can function better, the nearer shall we be to a solution of this problem.

The problem is not solved by merely bringing the evacuees to India. An effort has to be made to provide work for them. A businessman told me that he was prepared to provide for five to ten thousand either in

his sugarcane plantations or in factories. But the Assam Government did not encourage him or his scheme.

I understand that some effort is being made by provincial governments to provide for Europeans and Anglo-Burmans in India. Members of the Burma Civil Service are, of course, immediately absorbed into the Indian Civil Service. They find their level there. As for the humbler folk, I have no objection to India extending her hospitality to all who are in distress. But it is absurd and intolerable that our own people should be ignored in the process.

An incident, which brings out the way officialdom functions in Assam, was brought to my notice by a friend. Some weeks ago, about 700 tea garden labourers were impressed for work on the Manipur Road and were being taken to Dimapur. They reached Pandu and remained there for two or three days waiting for the train to carry them. There were no arrangements for their food or shelter. No one had given thought to this matter.

I have not touched here on the many problems of Assam. One problem of recent growth cannot, however, be ignored. This is the food scarcity due chiefly to disorganisation of transport. This must be attended to.

13. Embarrass the Aggressor[1]

Question: What is your message to the people of Assam after the conclusion of your tour here?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Not to falter whatever happens, but to stand for Indian independence and not to submit to any aggressor, old or new.

Q: What is your advice to the people for self-protection and self-sufficiency?

JN: They should organise themselves for these, so that they can face all developments with confidence.

Q. In the event of an air raid how will they keep up their spirits and maintain discipline?

JN: If they observe simple rules and take ordinary precautions there is no reason why they should become panicky. One gets used to air

1. Interview to *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Calcutta, 25 April 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 27 April 1942.

raids very soon. They are bad but not so bad as people think them to be.

Q: How will they fight the Japanese aggressors?

JN: That is a matter for the A.I.C.C. to determine and must depend on events and circumstances. Generally speaking they should non-cooperate with the invader and embarrass every aggressor.

Q: What impression have you gathered from the talks you had with the evacuees at the Manipur Road station?

JN: Conditions have improved somewhat on the Indian side of the road but they are still bad on the Burma side. Even on the Indian side more can be done.

Q: The Commander-in-Chief in his recent broadcast speech said: "They (Japanese) may raid India. They may even seek to occupy a portion temporarily, but so long as India remains true to herself she can never be conquered."[2] How do you react to this statement?

JN: My conception of remaining true to myself is necessarily different from that of the Commander-in-Chief, our fundamental loyalties are different, possibly, our ideals in life are also different. To remain true to myself I must remain true to India and Indian freedom. Our paths are not the same though occassionally they may be parallel for a short while. For my part I cannot submit to any Japanese aggressor just as I have not submitted and cannot submit to the old British aggressor in India.

2. The broadcast was made on 21 April 1942.

14. Congress Resolution on Evacuation Orders[1]

The attention of the All India Congress Committee has been drawn to various orders passed by Government or the military authority for the evacuation of certain areas in some parts of the country. Such evacuation is often necessary in times of war for reasons of military necessity

1. This resolution, drafted by Jawaharlal on 27 April 1942, was passed by the Working Committee on 28 April and endorsed by the A.I.C.C. on 30 April at Allahabad. Only the first paragraph was printed in *The Bombay Chronicle* on 29 April 1942 as the second paragraph was banned under the Defence of India Rules. The full text is available in J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

or the safety of the population in a particular area. But it is a recognised practice that no such orders should be passed, except in cases of sudden and extreme urgency, without giving reasonable and sufficient time to the people concerned to make other arrangements and, in any event, without every facility of transport and adequate compensation. It appears that no such facilities have been provided and in many cases no compensation, or totally inadequate compensation, has been given. Some orders have demanded evacuation from an area within twenty-four hours, thus making it impossible for families to do anything but to walk out, camp under the trees, become destitute and starve. No government, worthy of the name, should allow this to happen, and even from the military point of view such happenings are highly undesirable as they lead to widespread resentment among the people. This callous treatment of large numbers of people, as if they were a hostile population, will inevitably make them hostile.

The Committee has also noted with dismay that frequent and well authenticated reports have been received of the molestation of women by soldiers in railway trains and evacuated and other lands. These have already led to disastrous consequences in some places and there is a growing and widespread feeling of deep resentment, especially at the inability of any authority to take effective measures to prevent these happenings or to punish the culprits. The civil authority appears to be powerless and the military authority disinclined to intervene. In view of the increase of soldiers all over the country and the railway trains being full of them, a sense of fear and alarm has spread over the land. The Committee trusts that immediate steps will be taken to check and put an end to this molestation before further disastrous consequences follow and civil order gives way to disorder and anarchy.

15. The Lessons of Rangoon and Lower Burma[1]

The Committee has noted the recent extraordinary happenings in Lower Burma and notably in the city of Rangoon, when, although actual military operations were still some distance away, the whole civil administration

1. This resolution, drafted by Jawaharlal, was passed by the Working Committee on 28 April 1942 and was endorsed by the A.I.C.C. on 29 April at Allahabad. Its publication was banned under the Defence of India Rules. The resolution is available in J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

suddenly collapsed and those in charge of it sought their own safety and abandoned their posts just when their presence was most needed. Private motor cars were commandeered for the evacuation of high officials and Europeans, leaving their owners stranded and unprovided for. The police force was discharged or withdrawn to other places, habitual and other criminals were released from prisons, and the lunatics allowed to go out of their asylum. The city of Rangoon was thus left not only without any civil administration but at the mercy of lunatics, hardened criminals, and other anti-social elements. Even previously at the time of the air raids, it had been evident that the A.R.P. organisation did not function and no thought had been given to the problem of organised evacuation, food supply or shelter. A situation was thus created which involved the citizens of Rangoon in utmost misery and desolation, and which was discreditable in the extreme to the government and its high officials.

As war approaches India, the lessons of Rangoon and Lower Burma are full of meaning for this country, for the same type of officials wield authority here and the recent astonishing exhibition of panic and incompetence in Madras[2] demonstrates the dangers arising from inefficient and irresponsible officials who have in addition no contacts with the people of the country. Recent orders passed and circulars issued on behalf of the various provincial governments indicate that they are obsessed with making provision for the safety of the higher civil officials and their removal from places of immediate danger. Little thought appears to have been given to the drawing up of well-prepared schemes for possible evacuation of a particular area and the arrangement of transport, housing and food supply in a time of emergency. It is the misfortune of India at this crisis in her history not only to have a foreign government, but a government which is incompetent and incapable of organising her defence properly or of providing for the safety and essential needs of her people.

As no reliance can be placed on the central or provincial governments functioning in India now to act effectively and intelligently in times of emergency, it becomes the especial duty of the people to rely upon and organise themselves for this purpose. The Congress programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection is the essential foundation for self-reliance and the avoidance as far as possible of many of the evils that follow in the train of war. On this programme, therefore, the people must concentrate themselves. In the larger cities where special problems

2. On 6 April 1942, Kakinada and Vishakhapatnam were bombed. The local government immediately gave orders for evacuation. Government offices were shifted to various places. The ports of Madras and Vishakhapatnam were closed. Also see the following item.

arise, schemes should be worked out with the help of experts in regard to food supply and the other measures that may be necessary in time of emergency. In particular all panic should be avoided even though those in authority give way to it.

16. Evacuees and Refugees from Malaya and Burma[1]

The All India Congress Committee has noted with indignation the arrangements made for, and the treatment accorded to evacuees and refugees from Malaya and Burma to India. The officials, whose business and duty it was to protect the lives and interests of the people in their respective areas, utterly failed to discharge that responsibility and, running away from their post of duty, sought safety for themselves, leaving the vast majority of the people wholly uncared and unprovided for. Such arrangements for evacuation as were made were meant principally for the European population and at every step racial discrimination was in evidence. Because of this and also because of the utter incompetence, callousness and selfishness of those in authority, vast numbers of Indians in Malaya and Burma have not only lost all they possessed but have also undergone unimaginable sufferings, many dying on the way from lack of the necessaries of life, from disease, or from attacks from anti-social elements.

Racial discrimination was shown at the base camps in Burma where special arrangements were made for Europeans and Anglo-Burmans while Indians were left almost uncared for; in the according of special facilities for transport and travel to the Europeans and Eurasians; and in the general treatment given to Indians and non-Indians along the routes and at the various camps. In particular, this was in evidence in the scandal of a safer and more convenient route being practically reserved for non-Indians, while Indians were forced to travel by a longer, more difficult and more dangerous route.

The Committee is aware that recently some alterations have been made in these arrangements and that Indians are now being brought over by air from Myitkyina, and can also avail themselves of the safer

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal for the Working Committee, meeting held on 27 April 1942 at Allahabad and passed by it on 28 April 1942 and by the A.I.C.C. on 30 April 1942. *National Herald*, 29 April 1942. Also available in J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

land route in limited numbers. The treatment of the evacuees and refugees on the Indian side of the border though somewhat better now is still far from satisfactory. But from all reports the conditions at the base camps for evacuees in Burma are highly unsatisfactory and the worst sufferers there are Indians. The Committee calls upon the Government of India to make all necessary arrangements for the speedy evacuation from the unoccupied zone in Burma of all Indians who wish to be so evacuated. Suitable Indians, official and non-official, should be appointed to supervise and look after the comforts of Indians in the base and other evacuation camps and on all routes used by evacuees. The Committee trusts that non-official relief agencies will be permitted to send workers and doctors all along the Manipur route from Dimapur to Tamu and beyond to the base camp on the Burma side, as well as to Myitkyina, which is the air base for refugees.

The problem of the evacuees and refugees from Burma is not solved by merely bringing them to India. Every effort should be made to find suitable work for them in existing establishments or on the land, or regular semi-permanent camps should be started where productive work for wages is organised.

The Committee expresses its appreciation of the fine service rendered to the evacuees by various non-official relief organisations and by their voluntary workers. The Committee calls upon the Indian public to extend all possible help to the evacuees, and particularly all employers to provide employment for as many of them as possible. The Committee also extends its warm welcome to all those Indians who have returned to the homeland in these distressing circumstances and assures them of its deep sympathy and anxious interest in their cause.

17. The Banned Resolutions[1]

You must be all aware of the action taken by the Government of India in regard to the three resolutions[2] passed yesterday by the Working Committee. Within a few hours of the resolutions being passed, the Government issued a Gazette Extraordinary banning publication in any

1. Speech at the open session of the A.I.C.C., Allahabad, 29 April 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1942. File No. 4/1/42, National Archives of India.
2. See the preceding three items.

newspaper of a part of the first resolution and the whole of the second resolution. It is for the first time that the publication of the Working Committee's resolutions has been banned. I will read these out to you and our proceedings will continue here in spite of these orders. I do not know how far it is against the new rules and regulations. You must have received these resolutions in Hindi, Urdu and English. First I will read out to you the English version.[3]

There is nothing particular in these resolutions, the perusal of which should have offended our high officials on the ground that they embarrass them. If any truth based on a principle is pointed out to them, they do not relish it. If you carefully read these resolutions, the whole picture is drawn before you. I feel ashamed at what happened in Rangoon and Malaya. You must have read them in newspapers. These reports are correct. You know what was done and how the Englishmen were saved. How Indians, whether rich or poor, were discriminated and subjected to tyranny. We read only in history the fate of a civic population when an administration collapses. We are now a witness to what happened in Burma.

The Congress has been struggling against British imperialism since long before most of us were born. We have been fighting for long against this rock standing in front of us and harassing us, and now that rock has crumbled so quickly in Malaya and Burma. I wonder whether we have been fighting against the same rock. It has become difficult for me to describe this imperialism, which lacks in grandeur. I have therefore stopped uttering the name of British imperialism.

This is a picture of the weak Empire. But an imperialism becomes automatically weak when confronted with a crisis, howsoever strong its framework may be. It falls like the leaves on the advent of autumn. The happenings in Burma and Malaya have convinced me that if war reaches here, India too will meet with the same fate. The experience of the British Empire shows its weakness and lack of commonsense, both inside and outside India.

British administration not only opposes us but also commits numerous mistakes. It cannot tolerate its criticism, and therefore suppresses the news. The British get very upset about our knowledge of the facts of the situation. How inefficient they have become! They have become physically and mentally weak, and have lost their capacity to rule. It is because of this weakness of the British administration that we think of the possibility of the British administration succumbing to a crisis like in Burma. Russians, Americans and the Chinese

[3] Resolutions not reproduced here.

cannot possibly come to its rescue. This makes us anxious as to what preparations we should make to meet the situation in an event of attack.

Are you aware of what happened recently in Madras? What did our high officials do when they were faced with the danger? This story has not been published in the newspapers. One day a 'reliable' spy reported to the officials in Madras that he had received the news that the Japanese were very near to the shores of Madras, and were just twenty or twenty-five miles away. The officials reacted promptly. The Governor was told to leave Madras, and the High Court was to be transferred to a safer place; and aerodrome, docks and factories were to be closed. The High Court was closed for a month. They even started destroying the port and stopped only when they realised that the news was false.

Now just think what wisdom is there in this? What is this? Is this the imperialism against which we are fighting? Can it defend us? British imperialism has ceased to be a strong force. It has now become a small power, although it is continuing as a matter of routine. But its continuance in future is impossible. Can these British remain in India by themselves or with the cooperation of America? You must understand this in order to plan a suitable action against them. It is a misfortune that while this is the right time for us to break ourselves away from the bondage, there are circumstances which keep us in suspense. The question is that of Japan.

At this moment, we have therefore to defend ourselves. It is not the question whether the British should do anything or not. If we are attacked and we are weak in offering resistance it will only help the enemy to advance further. Unfortunately, therefore, we have to put up with this maladministration. I am not casting aspersions on all the officials, but I am told by Asaf Ali, that the A.R.P. Wardens in Delhi are worse than thieves and dacoits. What are we to do in such circumstances?

It is clear that we cannot rely on them. Whatever we can do we should do, on the basis of the strength of our organisation. This organisation in Allahabad city has been making remarkable progress for some time past. But even half or one-fourth of what ought to have been done, has not been done. The time is passing away. What has happened to Burma, can happen to cities of India also. If we do not prepare ourselves, we will have to face the consequences. Why should we then not make all the preparations we can? Let us do what we can do. We cannot face big armies but we can do something at least. We can at least shoulder responsibility at the time of a crisis if we are well organised. We can keep anti-social elements under control. The British Government cannot save us. Its power will vanish as in Rangoon, which would

mean collapse of civil administration and police arrangements. If we are well organised we can save the public, otherwise there will be anarchy and whosoever has a lathi will make use of it against the weak.

You should implement seriously the Congress programme. Do not think that this programme is old and useless. It includes the programme of plying charkhas, which can be plied even during the war. Factories can be occupied by enemies, but domestic industry can continue production. This has been done effectively in China. If we are self-sufficient and economically independent, we can continue functioning even if the administration collapses. We should therefore organise ourselves and be ready for any eventuality rather than rely on the official administration. The officers instead of being responsible are the first to run away. Remember that the captain of a ship looks for the safety of the passengers first and in times of crises is the last to leave the ship. But the captains of the ship of India are like those of Burma and Malaya. Let them be what they are, let them run away, it would be better if they run thousands of miles away.

Then what should I and you do? What is our new policy? Resolutions will be moved in regard to this. You should consider them. Consider these questions. Do you stand to gain anything? Have you any policy? Have you any foundation? All these should be answered.

If your policy is not what I have stated, nothing can be done. If your policy is that of self-sufficiency and self-protection, then even a weak resolution will carry you far ahead. Today Allahabad is hotter than any other place. Before the summer is over and the rainy season sets in the situation in India will undergo a change. The world situation will change but War will not be over. There will certainly be serious events in this country. The methods of war will undergo a change, not here but round the world. We are today meeting here at this A.I.C.C. session. Only God knows whether we shall meet each other in the next session. We should not therefore forget that we have ahead before us the crucial four or five months. The time for making preparations is short. We are faced with such dangers that our debates assume a different form. The danger is at our door. In any case, we should make full preparations. Under these circumstances, I do not expect British officials to do anything. I, therefore, move these resolutions before you, not because they contain condemnation and reproach but in view of our experience of the incidents at Madras, to be prepared and not do such shameful acts as to allow the world to regard us as weak.

18. A.I.C.C. War Resolution

I

Mahatma Gandhi's draft for Working Committee, Allahabad, 27 April 1942[1]

Whereas the British Cabinet's proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps have shown up British imperialism in its nakedness as never before, the A.I.C.C. has come to the following conclusions:

The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that Britain is incapable of defending India. It is natural that whatever she does is for her own defence. There is an eternal conflict between Indian and British interests. It follows that their notions of defence would also differ. The British Government has no trust in India's political parties. The Indian Army has been maintained up till now mainly to hold India in subjugation. It has been completely segregated from the general population who can in no sense regard it as their own. The policy of mistrust still continues and is the reason why national defence is not entrusted to India's elected representatives.

Japan's quarrel is not with India. She is warring against the British Empire. India's participation in the War has not been with the

II

Draft revised by Rajendra Prasad for Working Committee, Allahabad, 27 April 1942[2]

Whereas the British War Cabinet's proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps have shown up British imperialism in its nakedness as never before, the A.I.C.C. has come to the following conclusions:

It is natural that whatever she does is for her own defence. There is an eternal conflict between Indian and British interests. It follows that their notions of defence would also differ. The British Government has no trust in India's political parties. The Indian Army has been maintained up till now mainly to hold India in subjugation. It has been completely segregated from the general population who can in no sense regard it as their own. This policy of distrust still continues and is the reason why national defence is not entrusted to India's elected representatives, and India rendered incapable of defending herself.

India's participation in the War has not been with the consent of the representatives of the Indian people. It was purely a British act. If India were free she would wish

1, 2 and 3. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. 4. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 2 May 1942. We give above three drafts presented to the Working Committee and the final draft as passed by the A.I.C.C. The first draft, prepared by Mahatma Gandhi, was sent to Allahabad through Mirabehn. For discussions on the three drafts see *post*, item 20.

III

Confidential draft by Jawaharlal for Working Committee, Allahabad, 1 May 1942[3]

In view of the imminent peril of invasion that confronts India, and the attitude of the British Government, as shown again in the recent proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps, the All India Congress Committee has to declare afresh India's policy and to advise the people in regard to the action to be undertaken in the emergencies that may arise in the immediate future.

The proposals of the British Government and their subsequent elucidation by Sir Stafford Cripps have led to greater bitterness and distrust of that Government and the spirit of noncooperation with Britain has grown. They have demonstrated that even in this hour of danger, not only to India but to the cause of the United Nations, the British Government functions as an imperialist government and refuses to recognise the independence of India or to part with any real power.

India's participation in the War was a purely British act imposed upon the Indians without the consent of their representatives. If India

IV

Final resolution drafted by Jawaharlal and passed by the All India Congress Committee on 1 May 1942[4]

In view of imminent peril of invasion that confronts India, and the attitude of the British Government, as shown again in the recent proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps, the All India Congress Committee has to declare afresh India's policy and to advise the people in regard to the action to be undertaken in the emergencies that may arise in the immediate future. The proposals of the British Government and their subsequent elucidation by Sir Stafford Cripps have led to great bitterness and distrust of that Government and the spirit of noncooperation with Britain has grown. They have demonstrated that even in this hour of danger, not only to India but to the cause of the United Nations, the British Government functions as an imperialist government and refuses to recognise the independence of India or to part with any real power. India's participation in the War was a purely British act imposed upon the Indian people without the consent of their representatives. While India has no quarrel with the

I

consent of the representatives of the Indian people. It was purely a British act. If India were freed her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan. The Congress is of opinion that if the British withdrew from India, India would be able to defend herself in the event of Japanese or any aggressor attacking India.

The A.I.C.C. is therefore of opinion that the British should withdraw from India. The plea that they should remain in India for protecting the Indian Princes is wholly untenable. It is additional proof of their determination to maintain their hold over India. The Princes need have no fear from unarmed India.

The question of majority and minority is a creation of the British Government and would disappear on their withdrawal.

For all these reasons the Committee appeals to Britain, for the sake of her own safety, for the sake of India's safety and for the cause of world peace, to let go her hold on India even if she does not give up all Asiatic and African possessions.

The Committee desires to assure the Japanese Government and people that India bears no enmity either towards Japan or towards any other nation. India only desires freedom from all alien domination. But in this fight for freedom the Committee is of opinion that India while welcoming universal sympathy

II

to keep out of the War, her sympathies with victims of aggression notwithstanding. India would know also how to defend herself in the event of Japanese or any aggressor attacking India.

The plea that the British should remain in India for protecting the Indian Princes is wholly untenable. It is additional proof of their determination to maintain their hold over India. The Princes need have no fear from unarmed India.

The question of majority and minority is a creation of the British Government and would solve itself on their withdrawal.

For all these reasons the Committee appeals to Britain, for the sake of India's safety and for cause of world peace, to let go her hold on India even if she does not give up all Asiatic and African possessions.

India bears no enmity towards any foreign nation. India only desires freedom from all alien domination. In her fight for freedom the Committee is of opinion that India while welcoming universal sympathy does not stand in need of foreign military aid. Her past

III

were free she would have determined her own policy and might have kept out of the War, though her sympathies would, in any event, have been with the victims of aggression. If, however, circumstances had led her to join the War, she would have done so as a free people fighting for freedom, and her defence would have been organised on a popular basis with a national army under national control and leadership, and with intimate contacts with the people. A free India would know how to defend herself in the event of any aggressor attacking her. The present Indian army is in fact an offshoot of the British army and has been maintained till now mainly to hold India in subjection. It has been completely segregated from the general population, who can in no sense regard it as their own.

IV

people of any country she has repeatedly declared her antipathy to Nazism and fascism as to imperialism. If India were free she would have determined her own policy and might have kept out of the War, though her sympathies would, in any event, have been with the victims of aggression. If, however, circumstances had led her to join the War, she would have done so as a free country fighting for freedom, and her defence would have been organised on a popular basis with a national army under national control and leadership, and with intimate contacts with the people. A free India would know how to defend herself in the event of any aggressor attacking her. The present Indian army is in fact an offshoot of the British army and has been maintained till now mainly to hold India in subjection. It has been completely segregated from the general population, who can in no sense regard it as their own.

I

does not stand in need of foreign military aid. India will attain her freedom through her nonviolent strength and will retain it likewise. Therefore the Committee hopes that Japan will not have any designs on India. But if Japan attacks India and Britain makes no response to its appeal the Committee would expect all those who look to Congress for guidance to offer complete nonviolent noncooperation to the Japanese forces and not render any assistance to them. It is no part of the duty of those who are attacked to render any assistance to the attacker. It is their duty to offer complete noncooperation.

It is not difficult to understand the simple principle of nonviolent noncooperation:

1. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor or obey any of his orders.
2. We may not look to him for any favours nor fall to his bribes. But we may not bear him any malice nor wish him ill.
3. If he wishes to take possession of our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist him.
4. If he is attacked by disease or is dying of thirst and seeks our aid we may not refuse it.

II

experience teaches her that it is harmful to India's interests and dangerous to the cause of India's freedom to introduce foreign soldiers in India.[5] She therefore hopes that the British Government as also other foreign nations will remove their legions and henceforth stop their further introduction. They know fully well that there is inexhaustible manpower in India which remains untapped on account of the policy of distrust of the Indian people by the British Government. India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. India having no quarrel with Japan or any other nation, the Committee hopes that Japan will not have any designs on India. But if in spite of this Japan attacks India and Britain makes no response to her appeal the Committee would expect all those who look to Congress for guidance to offer complete nonviolent noncooperation to the Japanese forces and not render any assistance to them.

We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders.

We may not look to him for any favours nor fall to his bribes. But we may not bear him any malice nor wish him ill.

5. It was announced officially in April 1942 that American armies had arrived in India to assist the British war effort. Mahatma Gandhi wrote on 26 April 1942, "We know what American aid means. It amounts in the end to American influence, if not American rule, added to British. It is a tremendous price to pay for the possible success of Allied arms."

III

The essential difference between the imperialist and the popular conceptions of defence is demonstrated by the fact that while foreign armies are invited to India for that defence, the vast manpower of India herself is not utilised for the purpose. India's past experience teaches her that it is harmful to India's interest and dangerous to the cause of India's freedom to introduce foreign soldiers in India. It is significant and extraordinary that India's inexhaustible manpower should remain untapped, while India develops into a battleground between foreign armies fighting on her soil or on her frontiers, and her defence is not supposed to be a subject fit for popular control. India resents this treatment of her people as chattels to be disposed of by foreign authority.

IV

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I

5. In such places where the British and Japanese forces are fighting our noncooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. At present our noncooperation with the British Government is limited. Were we to offer them complete noncooperation when they are actually fighting it would be tantamount to placing our country deliberately in Japanese hands. Therefore not to put any obstacle in the way of the British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our noncooperation with the Japanese. Neither may we assist the British in any active manner. If we can judge from their recent attitude, the British Government do not need help from us beyond our non-interference. They desire our help only as slaves, a position we can never accept.

It is necessary for the Committee to make a clear declaration in regard to the scorched earth policy. If, in spite of our nonviolent resistance, any part of the country falls into Japanese hands we may not destroy our crops, water-supply, &c., if only because it will be our endeavour to regain them. The destruction of war material is another matter and may under certain circumstances be a military necessity. But it can never be the Congress policy to destroy what belongs to or is of use to the masses.

Whilst noncooperation against the Japanese forces will necessarily

II

If he wishes to take possession of our homes and our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist him.

If he is attacked by disease or is dying of thirst and seeks our aid we may not refuse it.

In places where the British and Japanese forces are fighting our noncooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. Not to put any obstacles in the way of the British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our noncooperation with the Japanese. Neither may we assist the British in any active manner. Judging from their attitude, the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference. They desire our help as slaves, a position we can never accept.

If, in spite of our nonviolent resistance, any part of the country falls into Japanese hands we may not destroy our crops, water-supply, &c., if only because it will be our endeavour to regain them. The destruction of war material is another matter and may under certain circumstances be a military necessity. But it can never be the Congress policy to destroy what belongs to or is of use to the masses.

Direct noncooperation against the Japanese forces will necessarily be limited. Its complete and lasting

III

The A.I.C.C. is convinced that India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. The present crisis, as well as the recent experience of the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, make it impossible for the Congress to consider any schemes or proposals which retain, even in a partial measure, British control and authority in India. Not only the interests of India but also Britain's safety, and world peace and freedom demand that Britain must abandon her hold on India. It is on the basis of independence alone that India can deal with Britain or the United Nations.

While India has no quarrel with the people of any country, she has repeatedly declared her antipathy to fascism and Nazism as to imperialism. The Committee repudiates the idea that freedom can come to India through interference or invasion of any foreign nation, whatever the professions of that nation might be. In case an invasion takes place, it must be resisted. Such resistance can only take form of nonviolent noncooperation as the British Government has prevented the organisation of national defence by the people in any other way. The Committee would therefore expect the people of India to offer complete nonviolent noncooperation to the invading forces and not to render any assistance to them.

IV

The A.I.C.C. is convinced that India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. The present crisis, as well as the experience of the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, make it impossible for the Congress to consider any schemes or proposals which retain, even in a partial measure, the British control and authority in India. Not only the interests of India but also Britain's safety, and world peace and freedom demand that Britain must abandon her hold on India. It is on the basis of independence alone that India can deal with Britain or other nations.

The Committee repudiates the idea that freedom can come to India through interference or invasion by any foreign nation, whatever the professions of that nation may be. In case an invasion takes place, it must be resisted. Such resistance can only take the form of nonviolent noncooperation as the British Government has prevented the organisation of national defence by the people in any other way. The Committee would therefore expect the people of India to offer complete nonviolent noncooperation to the invading forces and not to render any assistance to them. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders. We may not look to him for favours nor fall to his bribes. If he wishes to take possession of

I

be limited to a comparatively small number and must succeed if it is complete and genuine, the true building up of Swaraj consists in the millions of India wholeheartedly working the constructive programme. Without it the whole nation cannot rise from its age-long torpor. Whether the British remain or not it is our duty always to wipe out unemployment, to bridge the gulf between rich and poor, to banish communal strife, to exorcise the demon of untouchability, to reform dacoits and save the people from them. If crores of people do not take a living interest in this national building work, freedom must remain a dream and unattainable by either nonviolence or violence.

The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that it is harmful to India's interests and dangerous to the cause of India's freedom to introduce foreign soldiers in India. It therefore appeals to the British Government to remove these foreign legions and henceforth to stop further introduction. It is a crying shame to bring foreign troops in spite of India's inexhaustible manpower and is a proof of the immorality that British imperialism is.

II

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III

The success of such a policy of noncooperation and nonviolent resistance to the invader will largely depend on the intensive working out of the Congress constructive programme, and more especially the programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection in all parts of the country.

IV

our homes and our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist them. In places wherein the British and the invading forces are fighting our noncooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. Not to put any obstacle in the way of British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our noncooperation with the invader. Judging from their attitude the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference. The success of such a policy of noncooperation and nonviolent resistance to the invader will largely depend on the intensive working out of the Congress constructive programme and more especially the programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection in all parts of the country.

19. Evacuees from Burma[1]

I have received the following telegram from Shri Arun Kumar Chanda[2] of Silchar:

"Information received today that evacuees are being moved through Silchar and Cachar across extremely difficult hills rendered almost impossible owing to heavy monsoon rains. Mister Aney assured that this route would be used as the last resort. Kindly intervene."

This piece of news is distressing as this means even greater suffering for our countrymen who are coming away from Burma. I trust that the evacuees will be brought over by other routes, where non-official workers are given full scope to help the evacuees.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 30 April 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. Not printed in newspapers.
2. (1899-1947); founder-principal of Guru Charan College, Silchar, 1935; President, Silchar District Congress Committee, 1937-47; imprisoned during the Quit India movement, 1942-45.

20. Discussions of the Working Committee on War Resolution[1]

Jawaharlalji: Gandhiji's draft[2] is an approach which needs careful consideration. Independence means, among other things, the withdrawal of British troops. It is proper; but has it any meaning our demanding withdrawal. Nor can they reasonably do it even if they recognise independence. Withdrawal of troops and the whole apparatus of civil administration will create a vacuum which cannot be filled up immediately.

If we said to Japan that her fight was with British imperialism and not us she would say "we are glad the British army is withdrawn; we recognise your independence. But we want certain facilities now. We shall defend you against aggression. We want aerodromes, freedom to pass our troops through your country. This is necessary in self-defence." They might seize strategic points and proceed to Iraq, &c. The masses

1. Extracts from the minutes of the proceedings of the Congress Working Committee from 27 April to 1 May 1942. Printed in *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, (London, 1971), Volume II, pp. 158-164. This note was seized by the police after their raid on the A.I.C.C. office at Allahabad on 26 May 1942. It was released to the press on 4 August 1942.
2. See *ante*, item 18, draft I.

won't be touched if only the strategic points are captured. Japan is an imperialist country. Conquest of India is in their plan. If Bapu's approach is accepted we become passive partners of the Axis powers. This approach is contrary to the Congress policy for the last two years and a half. The Allied countries will have a feeling that we are their enemies.

Kripalaniji: The draft was a declaration of their stand. England and America might put what interpretation they liked but they (the Congress) had no designs against them.

Maulana Sahib: What is our position? Shall we tell the British Government to go and allow the Japanese and Germans to come or do we want the British Government to stay and stem the new aggression?

Pantji: I want the right of self-government and we shall exercise it as we like. If the British troops and the rest must withdraw let them do so by all means and we shall shift for ourselves.

Jawaharlalji: A draft like this weakens their (the British Government's) position. They will treat India as an enemy country and reduce it to dust and ashes. They will do here what they did in Rangoon.

Vallabhbhai Patel: The draft says to the British "you have proved your utter incompetence. You cannot defend India. We cannot defend it either because you won't let us to do. But if you withdraw there is a chance for us."

Asaf Ali: The draft asks us to accept nonviolence for all time.

Achyut Patwardhan: It was put to Gandhiji. He said that the Congress can take the stand that under existing circumstances nonviolence was the best policy.

Jawaharlal Nehru: The whole background of the draft is one which will inevitably make the world think that we are passively lining up with the Axis powers. The British are asked to withdraw. After the withdrawal we are to negotiate with Japan and possibly come to some terms with her. These terms may include a large measure of civil control by us, a certain measure of military control by them, passage of armies through India, &c.

Kripalaniji: Why should it mean passage of armies through India &c. Just as we call upon the British and the Americans to withdraw their armies so also we ask others to keep out of our frontiers. If they do not, we fight.

Jawaharlal Nehru: Whether you will like it or not, the exigencies of the war situation will compel them to make India a battle ground. In sheer self-defence they cannot afford to keep out. They will walk through the country. You can't stop it by nonviolent noncooperation. Most of the population will not be affected by the march. Individuals may resist in a symbolic way. The Japanese armies will go to Iraq, Persia, &c., throttle China and make the Russian situation more difficult.

The British will refuse our demand for military reasons apart from others. They can't allow India to be used by Japan against them. Our reaction in the event of refusal will be a passive, theoretical lining up with Axis powers. Japan may have an excuse for attack. We get involved in a hopeless logical quandary. We get hostility from every other element outside the Axis powers. Japan will occupy strategic points. We get no chance to offer mass C.D. Our policy of sympathy with one group is completely changed.

So far as the main action is concerned there is no difficulty about Bapu's draft. But the whole thought and background of the draft is one of favouring Japan. It may not be conscious. Three factors influence our decisions in the present emergency. (i) Indian freedom, (ii) sympathy for certain larger causes, (iii) probable outcome of the War—who is going to win? It is Gandhiji's feeling that Japan and Germany will win. This feeling unconsciously governs his decision. The approach in the draft is different from mine.

Achyut Patwardhan: I agree with Jawaharlalji's background but there are certain difficulties. The British Government is behaving in a suicidal manner. If we do not take decisions Jawaharlalji's attitude will lead to abject and unconditional cooperation with British machinery which must collapse. If the battle of India is to be fought by Wavell, we shall do ourselves discredit if we attach ourselves to him. We talk of allying ourselves with the Allied nations. I doubt if America is a progressive force. The existence of the American army in India is not a fact which improves our situation. I was opposed to the Poona offer but not to talks with Cripps. Jawaharlalji's statements after the negotiations broke down distressed me. The trend of thought it disclosed lands us in a position which obliges us to offer unconditional cooperation to the British. Our cooperation with the British is an invitation to Japan.

Rajendra Babu: We cannot produce the proper atmosphere unless we adopt Bapu's draft. The Government has closed the door on armed resistance. We have only unarmed resistance to offer. We have therefore to strengthen Bapu's hands.

Govind Ballabh Pant. There is no difference of opinion so far as nonviolence is concerned. There may be two opinions as to its effectiveness. Nonviolent noncooperation is not meant to be a demonstration. It is designed to prevent invasion or resist occupation, what will be our attitude to armed resistance? Shall we assist it or at least do nothing to hamper it?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It retains the approach in Bapu's original draft.[3] The approach is a variation from the attitude we have taken up about the Allies. At least I have committed myself to that sympathy 100 per cent. It would be dishonourable for me to resign from that position. There is no reason why that choice should arise. But it has arisen somewhat in this approach. The portion of the draft about resistance has some substance. The portion about minorities, princes, is unrealistic. We go on thinking in terms of what was and not what is and that is a dangerous thing in a rapidly changing situation. There is no difference among us about (i) our reactions to government, (ii) our total inability to cooperate with the government. Our programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection helps the government but that cannot be helped, (iii) we do not embarrass the British war-effort because that in itself would mean aid to the invader. We agree on these points but we have different ways of getting at them. It is true that since my approach is different my emphasis too would be different.

Pantji: One test to apply to the draft is: whether it is consistent with our previous resolutions. The language about the condemnation of Cripps proposals is highly exaggerated. If the proposals were so bad why did we spend so much time over them? My attitude today is: we must do our utmost to defend the country and swallow many things. If I can't cooperate with the British it is because it is not consistent with our dignity. But the approach in the draft makes every soldier I see my enemy.

Asaf Ali: The draft will(not?) make any effective appeal to the Axis powers. Telling the British to withdraw will do nobody any good.

Bhulabhai Desai: No resolution is called for. We passed at Wardha (one?) which expressed our definite position. The resolution is made in an unreal way. It is inconsistent with our previous stand. We have said that if offered an opportunity we shall side with the Allies.

3. The reference is to the modified draft of Rajendra Prasad. See *ante*, item 18, draft II.

Rajaji: I do not think the changed draft is different from the original. We appeal to Britain and Japan. The appeal to Britain will fail but certain tangible results will follow. The entire policy of the Congress will be reinterpreted and the new interpretation will go terribly against us. Japan will say "excellent".

I do not agree that if Britain goes away India will have some scope for organising itself even if Japan should make some headway. Japan will fill the vacuum created by the British withdrawal. Our reaction to evils of Britain should not make us lose our sense of perspective. It is no use getting upset on small matters. Do not run into the arms of Japan, which is what the resolution comes to.

Dr. Pattabhi: It is a comprehensive and appropriate draft. A time has come when we must realise ourselves. After the rejection of Cripps proposals we must reconsider our attitude and restate our position. We have varied our position from time to time during the time the War has been on. Poona was a variation from the old position. Bombay was a variation from Poona. Bombay was followed by C.D. and C.D. by Cripps.

Sarojini Naidu: The changed draft is much better than the original. There is however a great deal of unnecessary matter in the resolution. The appeal is a rhetorical gesture. It is however good as an expression of our extreme disgust and dislike and hatred of the British Government.

The appeal to Japan is a useless gesture. India is a part of the map they have drawn.

I agree with the nonviolent noncooperation part of the resolution. It can be recast keeping the substance of the original.

The draft is a narrowing of sympathies not consistent with the position we have taken up.

I do not like foreign soldiers. The portion dealing with them is good.

Bishwanath Das[4]: I see two conflicting views in the Committee. This division of opinion is fatal at this juncture. I generally agree with the draft. The Cripps proposals if accepted would have kept us in permanent bondage. The appeal to Britain to withdraw is very proper. We can tell them that neither will they defend us nor allow us to defend ourselves.

4. (b. 1889); a leading Congressman from Orissa; Chief Minister of Orissa, 1937-39; member, Constituent Assembly, 1947-51; Governor of U.P., 1962-67; Chief Minister of Orissa, 1971-72.

The protest against the introduction of American soldiers in the country is also proper. They have brought in troops from Dominions and other foreign nations. This is highly objectionable and dangerous.

Bardoloi: One portion of the draft is operative and another ideological. If we lay emphasis on the operative portion the differences will be greatly minimised. For joint action I should be prepared to delete the portion which deals with the ideological background. We are already in the danger zone. This is no time for ideological discussions. Let us concentrate on the present action which cannot be anything else than nonviolent noncooperation.

Satyamurti: The changed draft is an improvement. I do not agree with the objection to the entry of foreign soldiers. India may defend herself even with the aid of foreign soldiers. I think we must make an approach to the Muslim League.

Achyut Patwardhan: I am in general agreement with the draft. The open-door policy is at an end. The resolution emphasises a factor which has been emphasised by every intelligent man, i.e., the war is lost unless the people are in it. The War is an imperialist war. Our policy can be that we take no sides. The world is in the grip of fear complex. I would reconsider the position if the Allies could defeat the Axis. But I see clearly that Britain is going towards the deep. We want to create neutrality. Do not look to Japan or Britain.

Jairamdasji: The criticism that the draft is pro-Japanese is wrong. Opposition to the Japanese invasion is there in the draft.

The mention of foreign armies in the draft is very appropriate. The Indian history bears ample testimony of the highly undesirable consequences which foreign armies have led to. The draft creates an atmosphere of neutrality. The attempt is worth making.

Vallabhbhai Patel: I see that there are two distinct opinions in the Committee. We have ever since the outbreak of War tried to pull together. But it may not be possible on this occasion. Gandhiji has taken a definite stand. If his background is unsuitable to some members of the Committee there is the other background which is unsuitable to us. The first four or five paragraphs of the draft is a reply to the Cripps mission. Cripps is a clever fellow. He has gone about saying that his mission has not been a failure. The draft is a perfect reply to his propaganda.

I am not in favour of making any approach to Jinnah. We have made repeated attempts and courted many insults. The Congress

today is reeling under two blows, one Cripps's and the other Rajaji's resolutions[5] have done us enormous harm.

I have placed myself in the hands of Gandhiji. I feel that he is instinctively right, the lead he gives in all critical situations.

In Bombay, at the time of the A.I.C.C. meeting, there was a difference in approach but the door to negotiation was closed. In Bardoli it was made clear that the door was still open and our sympathies were with the Allies. It is time the door is finally closed after the repeated insults heaped upon us. I agree with the draft before us. If there is any pro-fascist hint in the draft let it be removed.

Acharya Narendra Dev: I do not agree with the view that war is one and indivisible. The aims of Russia and China are not identical with those of Britain and America. If it is one we should join the War and side with Britain. Our position has not been that we want power because without it we cannot kindle the national spirit, our position has been that if the War was a people's war and there was proof of it in action we are willing to throw in our weight on the side of democracies.

It is necessary to counteract the mischievous propaganda of Cripps. Cripps has been saying that internal differences have prevented a settlement. Rajaji has strengthened his hands. Japanese threat has also influenced our attitude to Britain. It has led us to even modify Poona. We have to make it clear that Japanese threat has not unnerved us. We can tell the British to go, leaving us to our fate.

Whatever unreality there is in Indian policies is due to the British rule. Let it go and the unreality will disappear.

I am not interested in defeating Hitlerite Germany, I am more interested in war aims and peace aims.

Maulana Sahib: The discussion has been useful. But it is not clear to me, the differences that divide the two groups.

Cripps was a great hope. He came here with the reputation of a radical. But he proved a great disappointment. He made things worse. Cripps in his statements after the failure of negotiations has emphasised two points: (i) his mission has proved the sincerity of the intentions of the British Government towards India, (ii) the anti-Japanese front is the outcome of his mission.

All this is false propaganda. Great Britain has made it impossible for us to defend our country. But we have something to do about the Japanese aggression.

5. See *ante*, p. 239.

It is my firm belief that nationalism is the only religion for a subject nation. If I feel that Japan was better than Britain and her invasion was for the good of India I would have said so in public. But it is not so. Gandhiji's prescription is the only alternative though I doubt its effectiveness.[6]

6. Rajendra Prasad's draft was passed at the morning sitting of the Working Committee on 1 May 1942. But at the afternoon sitting on Maulana Azad's request the supporters of Rajendra Prasad's draft accepted Jawaharlal's draft.

21. On Amendments of the War Resolution[1]

I would like you to refer to an amendment moved by Dr. Choithram Gidwani.[2] But I would suggest that the mover's intention could be better expressed by the addition of a separate sentence at the end of the sixth paragraph to read: "They desire our help only as slaves—a position we can never accept." The mover and the seconder of the resolution have agreed to the addition of this sentence.

Perhaps the wording of the resolution can be improved.[3] But what matters is the principle behind the resolution. There is no use indulging in catchwords and catch-phrases like fascism, Communism and imperialism. Mere catch-phrases would solve no problems. We have to bear in mind the awful aspect of the world picture. We have to consider the picture as a whole. People sometimes may imagine that I wander away in international matters a little too much, but we have to consider the picture in its entirety. If I wander, it is because the affairs of other nations are too much bound with our own. It is not a simple question of India *versus* England. We have, in fact, to decide our course and lay down a foreign policy for ourselves. There is no sense in blinding ourselves with our differences with Britain. We should

1. Speech at the A.I.C.C. session, Allahabad, 1 May 1942. From *National Herald*, 3 May 1942.
2. Choithram Gidwani suggested that the words "beyond our non-interference" at the end of the last paragraph be substituted by "except as slaves".
3. Many amendments were suggested. For example, Uday Shankar wanted removal of the word 'nonviolence' wherever it occurred in the last paragraph; Swami Krishnanand's amendment sought noncooperation with all activities of the British Government; K.M. Ashraf moved an amendment suggesting replacement of the words "and might have kept out of the war" by "she would join with the people of China, U.S.S.R., America and Britain to fight the menace of fascism."

not just for that matter like to antagonize the rest of the world. We want one side to win and Britain happens to be on that side. We also feel that the victory of the other side would prove disastrous, so we have to strike a course between these two sentiments. On the one side is our differences with Britain. On the other side some of us have the fear of the Japanese and of the consequences of an Axis victory. To think indifferently that the new aggressors might prove better for us or at least not worse would be wrong. Our aim should be to face all aggression. Passivity would be dangerous. A Russian defeat would be a great disaster not only for India, but for everybody.

22. On Rajagopalachari's Resolution[1]

I oppose Rajaji's resolution[2] for many reasons, but chiefly because it is not intended to bring about any settlement but the whole aim is that some kind of provisional administration should be set up. I detest this objective. I do not think that Mr. Jagat Narain Lal's resolution[3] is contrary to the Working Committee's resolution, but I want to make it perfectly clear that in no way do I want to change the position as clarified by the Working Committee. This position has been one of the Congress going out of its way and promising every conceivable safeguard which, since the dawn of history, any country has dreamt of giving to sections of its people.

The whole idea of Pakistan must hurt anyone who has grown up and worked in India. It is becoming intolerable. I doubt if any reasonable or sensible person thought of Pakistan as a reasonable and sensible proposal, unless that person was also at the same time opposed to the whole idea of Indian independence. I have heard it said that a Muslim League spokesman had made it clear to Sir Stafford Cripps during the recent negotiations that there should be no National Government and that it should not have full powers till some demands of the Muslims were recognised. This is a position which is totally intolerable. With

1. Speech at the A.I.C.C. session, Allahabad, 2 May 1942. From *The Hindu*, 3 May 1942.
2. Rajagopalachari's resolution recommended that Congress should acknowledge the Muslim League's claim for separation and on this basis invite the League for consultations aimed at securing the installation of a National Government to meet the emergency.
3. Jagat Narain Lal's resolution opposed any proposal to disintegrate India.

people who put forward such proposals, I can have no compromise. But I want the British Government to assist me in opposing the idea of Pakistan. So far as I am concerned, I would be damned forever. The Muslim League does not represent a great majority of the Indian Muslims but it does represent a section of them and I have tried my level best to win that body over, but what is the use of doing anything to ally myself with the people who are always putting forward petty demands. I stand on the platform of Indian independence.

23. To R. Jumabhoy[1]

Allahabad
May 5, 1942

Dear Mr. Jumabhoy,

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letters. As you know, we have been following closely the fate of the evacuees from Burma and Malaya[2] and recently the A.I.C.C. passed a resolution on the subject.[3] I did not wish to trouble you to come here at the time as the data in our possession was sufficient and more than sufficient.

I learnt some time ago that a non-official committee consisting of people from Burma and Malaya was being formed in New Delhi to deal with the evacuees' problems.[4] I do not know how far this matter has proceeded. I think it is a good move and may be of considerable help.

Please do not hesitate to write to me if I can be of any service to you.

I am going out of Allahabad to various places tonight and shall be away for a fortnight.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. It was reported on 4 May 1942 that about 2,50,000 refugees had come to India from Burma.
3. See *ante*, item 16.
4. S. Satyamurti, President of the Indian Overseas Central Association, met Aney on 4 May 1942 and discussed matters relating to the formation of a non-official central committee to deal with questions concerning Indian evacuees from Burma, Malaya and other countries.

24. To Mulkraj[1]

Allahabad
May 5, 1942

Dear Mulkrajji,[2]

I have your letter of the 25th April. I have also had a letter on this subject from Mahatma Gandhi.[3]

I think that there should be no objection to the Jallianwala Bagh being used for purposes which are of help to the public. Therefore the proposal of the Deputy Commissioner to make a tank in a corner of the park may be accepted. The cost of making the tank and its upkeep will naturally be borne by the government.

As for other air-raid precautions, we should help in these also in so far as possible. There is no objection to proper trenches or dugouts being made. I might point out, however, that expert opinion is entirely opposed now to the ordinary slit trenches that have been dug in certain cities. Experience in Rangoon and elsewhere has shown that these trenches sometimes become death-traps. People get suffocated in them owing to over-crowding and then run out and are machinegunned. It would be much better for regular shelters to be made which are wide enough for convenient movement and are a sufficient protection against everything except direct hits from big bombs. There is also the danger of open trenches being filled with water during the rains and thus becoming homes for the malaria mosquito. Further, these trenches may be used by the public as latrines. It will be difficult to clean them or keep them in proper order.

All these are objections to the form of trenches to be dug. You may inform the Deputy Commissioner of these objections and tell him that in Calcutta and elsewhere other methods are being adopted. So far as we are concerned, we are perfectly prepared to allow the Jallianwala Bagh to be used for the provision of shelters during air raids. There is no objection on our part to such a use. It is understood that the cost of erection of any shelter or anything else will be borne by the government.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. Papers, File No. G-37/1937, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary of the Jallianwala Bagh Memorial Trust, Amritsar.
3. With his letter addressed to Mahatma Gandhi, Mulkraj had forwarded two letters received from the Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar, seeking permission to construct a water storage tank in a corner of the Jallianwala Bagh for use during air raids to extinguish fire. On 29 April 1942, Mahatma Gandhi, while forwarding the correspondence to Jawaharlal, had asked him to reply on his behalf after consulting Malaviyaji and desired that permission be granted.

25. To Florence Wedgwood[1]

Allahabad
May 5, 1942

My dear Lady Wedgwood,[2]
It was very good of you to send me your letter dated the 11th January[3] which I appreciated greatly. It is a little difficult to write when one does not know how and when a letter might travel. But I am writing these few lines in the hope that they might reach you some time or other.

As I write, conditions have worsened in every way and, to my sorrow, the feeling against Britain is greater here than ever. Sir Stafford Cripps's visit has led to this, though I have no doubt that he had no such intention. At any moment, India may have experience of all the horrors of a modern war. We realise all this and the future is dark. With the example of Burma and Malaya before them, it amazes me how the British Government can think so complacently about conditions in India and talk in the language of long ago. They do not realise that it is quite impossible to impose anything upon India in her present mood, nor do they realise that their continual encouragement of separatist tendencies angers the vast majority of the people, without giving them the goodwill of even a minority. I suppose that all of us will have to face, as best we may, the consequences of past actions. They pursue us and we cannot shed this burden of the past, especially when it is carried on to the present.

You are perfectly right in saying that a great deal of the British attitude is due to a deep-seated conviction of complacent superiority and also to a feeling of possessing India. It is this which Indians cannot tolerate.

Whatever the future may hold for us, it is good to have friends who do not allow themselves to be carried away by the sentiment of the moment and who try to stick to certain principles.

With my regards and good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Wife of 1st Baron, J.C. Wedgwood.
3. In her letter of 11 January 1942, she endorsed Jawaharlal's attitude towards the British Government and wished that the Congress would stand firm and refuse cooperation till India attained independence.

26. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

New Delhi
May 8, 1942

My dear Maulana,

As I was on the point of leaving Lucknow last evening your two letters[2] reached me. I had no time then to consult many of my colleagues. I had a talk, however, with Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and one or two others. *En route* to Delhi I met Paliwal, our provincial President.

We are all agreeable to help you as far as we can in the matter of making arrangements for evacuee children from Calcutta. It was not possible to form a committee immediately for the purpose because our members had dispersed. But this can be done a little later. Meanwhile I have asked Rafi Ahmed to deal with this matter in cooperation with our provincial office and with Sucheta Kripalani and others.

This work will largely be women's work. We have just appointed a women's sub-committee of the P.C.C. and we can ask them to help fully in the matter. I am writing to Sucheta about it. In order, however, to avoid duplication, I would suggest your sending directions to Rafi Ahmed directly for the present.

Many questions arise and before any arrangements are made definite particulars should be obtained about the children concerned — their number, their ages, sex, kind of living they have been accustomed to, etc. etc. It is possible to spread out a number of them in existing families, chiefly Bengali, or we can keep most of them in large hostels, or both these methods can be adopted. Perhaps it will be better if you send for Rafi Ahmed and Sucheta to Calcutta so that they can discuss the matter with you and at the same time see for themselves what has to be done.

As arranged, I am leaving tomorrow night for Lahore.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Letters not available.

27. Tribute to the Soviet Union[1]

I am glad to learn that a conference under the auspices of the Friends of the Soviet Union is being held at Jalesarganj in the Pratapgarh district under the presidency of my friend and colleague Rafi Ahmed Kidwai.[2] Such conferences are desirable as they draw the attention of our people to some of the magnificent achievements of the Soviet Union.

People may differ on many matters, political or economic; but few can withhold admiration from the Soviet Union for its human and cultural achievements. It would be a tragedy if their achievements ended in the storm of War. Therefore, it is right that people holding different opinions on other subjects should meet together on a common platform to pay tribute to the Soviet Union for the great human advances it has made. I wish success to the conference.

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 8 May 1942. *National Herald*, 9 May 1942.
2. Held on 16-17 May 1942.

28. Communists and Congressmen[1]

Question: What is your attitude towards those Communists who on their release from jail have started a campaign for active support to the war effort?[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru: I think some Congressmen are too critical of each other. I want Congressmen not to mind what the Communists do. This is not the time for discussions; the need of the hour is unity. I want Congressmen to strengthen their organisation. Those who are anxious to oppose the Communists may do so, but nothing should be done which may affect the strength of the Congress.

1. Interview at Amritsar railway station, 10 May 1942. From *The Hindu*, 12 May 1942 and *The Tribune*, 11 May 1942.
2. In a statement on 9 May 1942, the Communists released from Campbellpur Jail called upon the Indian people to join hands in the war efforts of the government to defeat the fascist invaders.

Q: What are your views in regard to Mian Iftikharuddin's views about Pakistan?[3] Can he advocate his views as President of the provincial Congress committee?

JN: Everyone has freedom to express his views in any manner he likes, but if anyone propagates such views, he is not correct. The provincial Congress is competent to take notice of such views if such views have been expressed in his capacity as President of the Congress.

Q: Is this War, a people's war or an imperialist war?

JN: It is neither a people's war nor an imperialist war. In one respect it is people's war for Russia, China and England. For the Indians it is not a war of the people.

Q: What is being done to release the remaining detenus?

JN: We have urged the Punjab Government a number of times to realise their responsibility in this matter.

3. On 9 May 1942, Iftikharuddin stated that while he stood for freedom and unity he had supported Rajagopalachari's resolution on Pakistan at the A.I.C.C. session as no community could be forced to remain in the Union of India against its wishes, although secession would not be in the interests of the Muslims. Unity by nonviolent means was possible only if the right of secession was recognised.

29. To Louis Arthur Johnson[1]

Lahore
11th May 1942

Dear Colonel Johnson,
I find that I shall probably not be able to reach you in time if I write from Kulu where I am going. Therefore I have written out something here. It has been written in great haste and yet it is very long. It is not the kind of thing you wanted but I felt that my suggesting some

1 J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

formula would be of little use, especially without consulting my colleagues.[2] I wanted to put the background before you in so far as I could. I am afraid I have done a bad job of it.

I do hope you are much better now and have left the hospital.

I am going to the mountains early tomorrow by automobile. It will take me a day and a half to get there.

The messenger who is taking this letter will return from Delhi the same night and follow me to my mountain retreat. So if you care to send anything through him, that would reach me safely.

All good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Louis Johnson had urged the State Department on 28 April that a joint statement of the Pacific war aims be issued by the United States, Britain and China. Further he cabled a draft declaration on 4 May 1942 urging that the British Government issue it. In this draft he had suggested that the Viceroy's Executive Council be converted into a National Government with representatives drawn from the Congress and the Muslim League. Both the communications were sent to Jawaharlal when the A.I.C.C. met at Allahabad, and Jawaharlal promised to send a note. Johnson's suggestion later was turned down by the State Department and the draft was not forwarded to London. For Jawaharlal's note see the following item.

30. Note on the Indian Background[1]

It is exceedingly difficult to find a formula today which will satisfy Indian nationalism on the one hand and keep the British imperialist structure in India more or less intact. Between the two there is ineradicable and permanent conflict, not only due to historical causes and past events, but to present conditions and day-to-day happenings. The two cannot exist together or cooperate with each other, for each dislikes and distrusts the other and is afraid of it. So far the British structure has been completely dominant, checked only by a fear of going too far in suppressing the nationalist movement, which is strong enough to give an infinity of trouble which would undoubtedly affect the Indian army also.

1. Confidential note for Louis Johnson, Lahore, 11 May 1942. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

The failure of the Cripps mission has undoubtedly made the position much worse and any compromise harder. Apparently we came near at one time to a working arrangement for the present, but in reality the gulf was very far from being bridged, and this became apparent as soon as basic matters, involving real transfer of power, were discussed. In the recent history of India, there has not been such a combination of fiercely anti-Indian freedom elements in the British Government as we have had during the past two years and still have today. Churchill and Amery and Linlithgow and the leading members of the Government of India are hopelessly reactionary so far as Indian opinion is concerned. Churchill deals with a much wider sphere and holds his present position because of a variety of reasons. But Amery and the others represent directly the British Government's Indian policy and this has been, during the past two and a half years especially, quite amazingly offensive to Indian sentiment and hostile to everything that Indian nationalism stands for. It has deliberately created or aggravated problems in India which make any solution next to impossible, unless the whole basic structure and approach are changed. There may be and are conflicts of opinion in India among ourselves, but there is general unanimity that the present British Government and its high officials are an intolerable imposition which are, consciously or unconsciously, leading India to ruin. Every disruptionist and reactionary element has been encouraged and assurances given to it, which are now held up as barriers to Indian freedom, and we are told that no change can take place except in the framework of those assurances and of the present structure. The course of the War, especially in Malaya and Burma, and happenings in India, have convinced Indians of all shades of opinion, including those in Government service, that the present governmental structure is wholly incompetent to deal with any crisis, much less the overwhelming crisis that confronts us today. Corruption and racial discrimination are rampant even in high government circles. The three hundred thousand evacuees and refugees from Malaya and Burma to India are full of bitterness against the government on account of the ill-treatment they have received at its hands. War involves suffering and privation, but the Indian masses have patiently endured these even in peace time for generations past. It was not suffering and misery that angered them but the callous and discriminatory treatment accorded to them.

The conviction has thus grown and is widespread today that the British Government and its agents in India are so full of hatred for the idea of Indian freedom, that they would rather risk losing the War, and consequently their Empire, rather than part willingly with power in India in favour of representative Indians. This seems a foolish and absurd

assumption and yet it has reasons behind it. Even basic war industries have been prevented from growing in India for fear, openly stated, that they might come in the way of British industrial interests after the War. Amery, it is well remembered in India, was an ardent advocate of Japanese aggression in Manchuria, saying frankly that if they condemned Japan they would have to condemn the British record in India.[2] A very prominent member of the Government of India stated publicly that he preferred Nazis and fascists to Indians whom he had put in concentration camps for their opposition to British policy in India.[3] And this during this War when Britain was fighting Germany and Italy.

This attitude of mind exhibits an astonishing complacency and a total blindness to facts and reality and the interests of the War, also an unreasoning hatred of Indian freedom and those who stand for it.

It is not surprising that this attitude should produce powerful reactions among the Indian people, especially with the background of hostility and conflict which has always been there. Sir Stafford Cripps's visit and his failure, demonstrated still further that individuals, however well-intentioned, do not count if they are compelled to function within the framework of an antiquated imperialist machine. A sense of hopelessness and frustration has grown and the feeling that nothing can be expected from Britain's Government, unless that government itself undergoes a basic sea-change. National pride and self-respect have demanded that no further approaches be made to the British Government, for each such attempt has led to further humiliation and insult. The future is dark with perils but no peril can justify spiritual degradation and submission, and a willing acceptance of the position of a slave.

This may or may not be a realistic attitude, but it must be realised that this is the attitude of the Indian people as a whole. This is not confined to members of the National Congress; it includes members of the Muslim League and other organizations, Indians in government service, and the mass of people who are normally non-political. To ignore this fundamental background is lack of realism.

The strongest sentiment in India is inevitably nationalism and the desire for freedom and this is felt by people differing among themselves on other matters. One of its manifestations is anti-British feeling—not affecting individuals but the system. Gradually, however, as the nationalist movement has grown in power and has widened its outlook, it has developed an international approach to Indian and world problems.

During the last ten years or more it has condemned repeatedl fascist and Nazi aggressions. It was strongly opposed to Japanese aggression in Manchuria and later in other parts of China, to the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, to fascism in Spain, to Munich, etc. Popular sentiment was thus trained by tens of thousands of meetings to become anti-fascist, anti-Nazi, and anti-Japanese so far as China was concerned. With China there was deep sympathy.

But all this internationalism was to some extent superficial, the basic sentiment being nationalism. So long as the two did not come into conflict with each other, there was no difficulty. But if there appeared to be a conflict, nationalism came out on top and a feeling of isolationism became dominant.

Nevertheless when the European war started in September 1939, internationalism was strong enough to colour our vision and we were anxious and eager to play our part on the international stage. This part could, however, only be played by a free India which had got rid of its complexes due to alien domination, and could then cooperate with Britain and other nations. In our innocence we thought that the terrific impact of World War would shake the British Government out of its ruts and enable it to view the Indian problem in an entirely new perspective. The War itself and the desirability of winning to its side the millions of India, and powerfully influencing Asiatic and world opinion, led to this inevitable conclusion. But to our dismay and surprise there was no change at all in the British Government's attitude and, if there was a change, it was for the worse. We made several approaches subsequently, on each occasion to suffer a rebuff. Meanwhile, the government's policy became progressively one of disruption in India and of the suppression of nationalist and progressive opinion. The gulf widened, and internationalism receded into the background. Nationalism and isolationism dominated public opinion. Nevertheless our sympathy for certain causes represented by the Allied nations prevented us from deliberately embarrassing in any way the war effort of the government. We could not cooperate with it or associate ourselves with it, as the only cooperation left open to us was that of slaves and underlings, but still we went out of our way to avoid embarrassment, although public opinion became increasingly bitter. It was not difficult for us, if we so chose, to cause the utmost embarrassment, and indeed to upset the War effort completely both in the army proper and in production. We discouraged strikes in factories. This attempt at wholesale embarrassment would have involved the Indian people also in great misery but they would have faced that, if the check of our international sympathies had not operated.

WITH NICHOLAS ROERICH, KULU, MAY 1942

So the balance between nationalism and internationalism has varied during these years. The Pacific war with its threat to India forced us to think in new terms of self-defence against an invader, and we made every effort to find a way out of the deadlock, so that we could organize a people's defence. That failed and the result has been a swing back to intense nationalism and added bitterness against British authority in India.

This result is evidenced to some extent by the resolutions of the All India Congress Committee recently passed in Allahabad.

The main resolution deals with two points: our complete inability to cooperate with Britain because we are unable to cooperate with any country as slaves and subject people. The other point deals with nonviolent resistance to an invader. This latter point has led to the criticism that we are practically inviting the Japanese or, at any rate, throwing up the sponge.[4] This is based on an entire misapprehension. The Congress is not addressing the armed forces but the common people. So far as the armed forces are concerned, they are to carry on the War as best as they can. There will be no hindrance placed in their way, no embarrassment of any kind. Even if we wanted to, we could not help them in any other way, except by recruiting and similar propaganda, so long as the whole conception of the war was not made a popular one. Having failed in achieving this change, which could only come through a popular National Government, we cannot offer any effective direct help to the armed forces. Possibly an attempt to do so would produce conflict with the governmental apparatus, as the people are not at all trusted by it. So the army, air force, etc., continue their armed resistance in their own way. Production also is not interfered with; in fact it is encouraged.

Then we address the people, who are totally unarmed and unused to arms. We cannot arm them if we wanted to and every attempt to do so would mean conflict with the government. Even guerilla activity is out of the question for them unless they have arms, have been trained, and are organized by a National Government. No people anywhere could do much in these circumstances, except possibly sporadic outbursts.

It is here that nonviolent resistance comes in, for the Indian people have been practising this with considerable success for over twenty years.

4. Rajagopalachari had stated in his press conference on 4 May 1942 that the Congress plan of nonviolent noncooperation against the Japanese in the occupied areas or elsewhere, under all conditions, would be futile. He pleaded for the formation of a National Government and a National Army in collaboration with the British.

It is true that such resistance can hardly make any difference to an invading army in the course of its march. But even there it would create a psychological feeling of resistance. In other areas, outside the line of march, it would help in refusal of supplies and other help and in embarrassing in numerous ways. Should even a small number of prominent Indians be shot down by the invader for their noncooperation and refusal to submit, this would enormously strengthen the desire to resist at all costs and not to submit.

Thus to imagine that our appeal to the Indian people to offer nonviolent resistance is almost an invitation to the Japanese to come to India is absurd. The only alternative in present circumstances, was to remain passive and submit, and on no account could we agree to this.

It is well known that Gandhi stands for nonviolence in all circumstances. But repeatedly the National Congress has declared that it cannot accept this or commit itself to it in case of danger from external invasion or internal disorder. Whenever this matter has been discussed with British representatives, and recently with Stafford Cripps, it was taken for granted that the National Congress would undertake and advise armed defence. But this could only be done by the state or by a merger between the state and the people. The people themselves cannot do so. We have therefore advised them, even so, to offer resistance but in the only way they can. This fits in also with past Congress policy and has the great advantage of carrying the whole national organization with it. To have a split on a theoretical issue without practical significance would have ended all possibility of popular resistance of any kind.

Every question has to be viewed today in its relation to the World War. The problem of India becomes highly important in this connection because events in India may well have a powerful influence on the War. Possibly no change now can make a vital military difference during the coming critical months. A psychological difference is, however, always possible and important. In any event, the War is likely to last some time and what happens in India will inevitably make itself increasingly felt—in India of course, but also in every Asiatic country as well as elsewhere. The fact that Indian freedom and independence are recognized by the United Nations, and giving effect to it in the present, to the largest extent possible consistently with the war situation, would send an electric shock throughout Asia. Even the countries occupied by the Japanese, like Burma, would feel it. Afghanistan, which may well be a danger point, Iran and Iraq would certainly be influenced by this in favour of the United Nations. These Muslim countries, it is well known, are at present friendly in a passive sense, to the Axis powers, whatever some of their officials might say. Indeed it is amazing how

terribly unpopular Britain is throughout Asia and it has come to this that to be associated with Britain is itself to court unpopularity and suspicion. There is no way to break this vicious circle except in India, and by brave and far-reaching action in India.

Ever since this World War began, there has been continuous, consistent, and very ably directed radio propaganda from Berlin, Rome, Tokyo, Bangkok, etc., directed to the Indian people in their languages. The whole history of British rule during the past 150 years is reviewed again and again and all its enormities exposed, and at the same time independence is promised to the Indian people. Intelligent people are not taken in by this but the average man or woman is inevitably influenced and he contrasts with it the British refusal to acknowledge Indian independence and their persistence in carrying completely authoritarian and autocratic rule. He is not so naive as to imagine that the Japanese will bring independence, but he is so angry with the British Government that he does feel that no possible change will worsen his condition. That may be a foolish attitude but British authorities have done everything by their policy and methods to encourage it. It is a dangerous attitude leading to passivity and has to be and is being combated. The call to resist the Japanese invader, even though nonviolently, is an attempt to produce a mental change leading to resistance. But it is no easy matter to bring this about with the government continuing to function as it does.

There is not very much active pro-Japanese sentiment in the country but the widespread anti-British sentiment often leads to pro-Japanese sympathies vis-a-vis Britain. Thus when thinking of China and Japan, sympathy will be with China. There will also be sympathy and admiration for Russia, which does not mean admiration for everything that has happened there. There is also usually a vague friendliness for America's democratic ideals, together with fear that America, with all her vast resources, may either dominate India herself, economically if not politically, or in cooperation with Britain. But when Britain and Japan are considered by themselves, large numbers of people view with satisfaction any reverse suffered by Britain.

armies march to and fro and fight each other and thus decide the fate of India, while they have almost to play the role of spectators. Hence a certain suspicion of these foreign armies, whoever they might be, and a resentment that they should come to India without any reference to the Indian people. A National Government might well have invited its allies to send war material, or armies, to assist it. But everything that is done through the British Government is suspect.

Even in regard to production and industrial growth, there has been in the past a great deal of suspicion of American motives,[5] but this has been partly removed by authoritative statements made on the part of the American Delegation in India.[6] Past memories pursue us: how India was treated after the last War. All the benefits derived by England through special agreements with the U.S.A., and by non-payment of her debts, were kept by her or by the Dominions. India did not share and she had to pay the uttermost farthing. Her currency policy was twisted to England's advantage; her gold and silver drained away. It would be well if the future was made quite clear, in so far as America is concerned, that India would be treated fairly in every arrangement. The Lease and Lend provisions[7] might also be specifically explained, so that it might be known what burdens will fall on India in the future.[8] Also India must not be made to suffer in any way by the intervention of the City of London in her dealings with the U.S.A.

5. The news about the American Technical Mission in India was received with caution by Indian industrialists. G.D. Birla told columnist Raymond Clapper on 2 April 1942, that the American mission had "Imperialist designs." G.L. Mehta, President of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, talked of the need for independent economic development rather than relying on foreign aid.
6. Henry F. Grady, Chairman of the American Technical Mission, assured the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 8 May 1942, that the sole object of the mission was to see how best India could increase her war production, and that American capitalists had no intention of utilising the opportunity for establishing themselves in India.
7. The Lend-Lease Act of March 1941 provided for the lending, lease, transfer, or exchange of defence articles to countries whose security the President deemed necessary for the defence and security of the United States. This changed the nature of American neutrality in the Second World War.
8. In his statement on 11 May 1942, Henry F. Grady clarified that the operation of the Lend-Lease arrangement did not mean an arrangement for reducing the tariff barrier for American goods in the future, or establishment of free international trade. What the United States sought to do was to liberalise commercial policy after the War. He also argued that India should not follow, after the War, the system of protection, which would be detrimental to her growth.

There are two important questions which we have to face: the minorities question and that of Dominion Status *versus* independence.

The minorities question has become a bogey which is always brought out as an insuperable barrier to Indian freedom. So far as the Muslims are concerned, it is hardly a question of being in a minority for they number nearly 90 millions and are largely concentrated in certain areas where they are in a majority. It is inconceivable that such large numbers can be oppressed in any way. This question took its present shape when over 30 years ago the British Government started separate religious electorates deliberately to prevent the growth of sound nationalism and political and economic parties. These separate electorates have poisoned Indian politics. And now the British Government is encouraging the idea of separating India into two or more parts. From an economic point of view this idea is fantastic but it serves its purpose by diverting attention from Indian independence.

The nationalist position in regard to minorities is this:

1. India will be a federation.
2. Each province or such territorial unit of the federation should have a great deal of autonomy, subject only to certain essential all-India subjects which will be dealt with by the Federal authority. This is opposed to modern conceptions but we are prepared to give the fullest freedom to each unit so that it may not have any grievance and may develop according to its way of thinking, and only subject to certain larger policies.
3. Every conceivable protection and safeguard for a minority—religious, cultural, linguistic or any other—should be incorporated in the consitution and, where necessary, made into a fundamental law of the constitution.
4. When a constituent assembly drafts the constitution for India, questions relating to minority rights should not be decided by majority votes but by agreement; where such agreement is not obtained, the matter should be referred to impartial international arbitration. We would abide by this.
5. In effect, every protection should be given to the minorities, subject only to maintaining the unity of India and democracy.
6. While we are entirely opposed to the break-up of India and will try to prevent it, we recognise that in the last resort we cannot compel a territorial unit to remain in the Union against its declared and established will. This would, however, depend on geographical and other factors also.

There is no doubt whatsoever that it is possible to arrive at a full settlement with every minority, including the Muslims, on some such

terms, provided the British Government did not intervene and encourage separatism. If the British were not there, the agreement would come. One of our grievances against the Cripps proposals was that they went a step further in dividing up India and thus again came in the way of a mutual agreement.

About Dominion Status there is strong feeling in India and the very words irritate. The Empire has meant no good to us; it represents evil to us and we do not want to be in it in any shape. Our people are ill-treated and made to live as helots in many parts of it. So India has completely rebelled against any conception of Dominion Status. But we have always made it clear that this does not mean an isolated existence. We would like to be members of a larger federation and to cooperate fully with other nations, including England. That cooperation is only possible when we are perfectly free, not otherwise, for the old complexes will pursue us in any other capacity. Probably the British Commonwealth, as it exists today, will undergo a complete change after or even during this War. Anyway it will not help it or strengthen it, to have discontented India attached to it. Probably nothing has weakened England (and France) so much in this War as their colonial Empires. Instead of being sources of strength, they have become burdens, draining their energy. They have been living emblems of their imperialisms, making people all over the world doubt their professions, and giving the enemy powers every opportunity of doing propaganda against them. This very weapon could have been turned completely against the enemy by a declaration of freedom for these dependencies.

If this War had not come there is no doubt that a big upheaval against British rule would have taken place. There is also little doubt that if at the end of this War, conditions remain more or less the same in India (which they are not likely to do) there is bound to be a revolt on a big scale, peaceful or otherwise.

Nothing but a frank recognition of India's full freedom and independence can stop or reverse these processes. Such a recognition need not rule out Dominion Status but it should be for India to decide. Meanwhile, of course, the full application of that independence would be governed by war exigencies. Anyway the use of the words 'Dominion Status' evokes no response in the Indian mind; quite the reverse. This fact should be recognised.

In the above lengthy note an attempt is made to clarify the background in India. It is a complex background and various forces pull in different directions. No one can guarantee what the resultant pull will be, but it may be said with some assurance that certain results will follow if certain steps are taken. The National Congress is a democratic body,

and in spite of the dominating position of some of its leaders, it ultimately represents the bulk of opinion in India. This cannot be switched on and off at will by any individual, though it may be gradually directed in a particular way. Any person who ignores this will inevitably become ineffective. He cannot deliver the goods.

Owing to the menace of Japanese invasion, representatives of the Congress went a long way in order to come to terms with Stafford Cripps. That failure has put the clock back and it is very difficult now to get back to that position. Suspicion has grown. It is therefore not a question merely of a formula to cover defence or the form of a National Government. Such formula will be helpful but only if the reality of power is transferred and a background of freedom is created. Any attempts at compromise which fail will make matters worse.

It would probably be better not to make such an attempt to begin with, but rather to make a simple but far-reaching declaration that Britain (or the United Nations) recognize the right of India to independence and full self-determination, and leaving the working out of these in the present, so that a National Government might be formed, to mutual discussions among the parties concerned. Such a declaration need not go against any minority claims and certainly it would have to be translated, to the extent possible, into action with the all important question of the Defence of India and the War in the foreground. But those minority claims will have to be considered in the light of future independence.

To recognize India's right to independence is not in any way to rule out its joining a federation or even the British Commonwealth. It is not to place it in a superior position to that of the British Dominions, who are supposed to have that right, even though they may not exercise it. That recognition coming, *inter alia,* from the British Dominions themselves, would enhance the Dominions' prestige, not lower it.

The right being recognised, it cannot lead to a sudden and overnight change in the whole administration. Careful thought will have to be given to what should be done in the present, so as, on the one hand, to form a real National Government and give the people a sensation of freedom and a desire to defend it, and, on the other hand, not to upset any present arrangement and thus injuriously affect the conduct of the War. Indeed the objective must be to defend India to the uttermost and to direct all the national energy in this direction—towards the armed forces, both trained armies and citizen armies, and production and industrial growth.

Possibly the time is not ripe for such a declaration and for these changes, or, at any rate, people's minds are not ready for them. And

yet the sands of time run out. There can be little doubt that the ultimate solution of the Indian problem can only be on this basis, and on no other, subject to the consequences of this War. With such a declaration those elements in India which may be termed pro-Japanese will not count, nor those who wish to remain passive.

The next few weeks may witness major happenings in India which will produce their reactions on people's minds both in India, England and elsewhere. The situation may change. It may become easier to approach this problem then; or possibly more difficult. In any event there are very many people in India who are committed to oppose and resist the Japanese, whatever the consequences.

31. Distorted War Propaganda[1]

Kulu
15.5.1942

Sir,

For some time past some friends, especially in Bombay, have been drawing my attention to the way official agencies have been using my name, and extracts from my speeches or statements, for war propaganda. I have not so far seen most of these efforts at publicity but I have heard enough to realise what they are like. I must say that I think this method of exploiting me for a cause with which I have completely dissociated myself is singularly unfair. Most people know, or should know, that both as a Congressman and in my personal capacity I am entirely opposed to any cooperation with the present government agencies in India in any war work. It was my earnest desire that at this moment of grave crisis for our country the burden of responsibility both for defence and the civil government of the country should be undertaken by Indian representatives of the people. That was the only way consistent with national honour and with an effective handling of the situation. Only a real people's government with national backing can function effectively in modern war. Certainly a foreign government cannot do so, and the British Government in India has demonstrated that it is totally incapable of shouldering that burden. Nevertheless, the British Government refused to part with this responsibility or to hand over power to Indian people and is carrying on in its own incompetent way.

1. Letter to editors of newspapers. *National Herald*, 20 May 1942.

In these circumstances we cannot possibly associate ourselves with the government activities. Having made this clear, I have appealed to my people to rely upon themselves and not to submit to any aggression, old or new. My words, torn from this context, have however been used to advertise and appeal for aid for the very war effort with which I had, in common with other Congressmen, dissociated myself. All of us, who dabble in public affairs, have frequently to suffer from distortion or misreporting. We have to put up with it. But this, surely, is a novel way of exploiting an individual.

If real publicity of my views is desired, I would suggest that the recent resolutions of the A.I.C.C. (some of which were banned)[2] should be broadcast. An even more pointed way of doing this is to repeat, whenever and wherever possible, my conviction that the root trouble in India is the British domination of our country. This must go, war or no war, and then a real beginning will be made towards the solution of our problems.

Yours etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. See *ante*, pp. 268-271.

32. Evelyn Wrench's Report of His Talk with Jawaharlal[1]

A conversation with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on any subject is a stimulating experience, for the Congress leader has an alert and incisive mind. There was a humorous twinkle in the Pandit's eye when I apologised for wearing an old Etonian tie, which I certainly would not have donned in the morning had I known I was to meet so distinguished a Harrovian that day. For the first few minutes the conversation hung fire a little, for Mr. Nehru at that moment had a good deal to distract his thoughts; but once we embarked on a consideration of the future world organisation, he became engrossed in the theme.

"The War", he said at once, "has put an end to the old style of questions we used to ask one another. When peace comes there will be an

1. Printed in *The Spectator* (London), 15 May 1942. Evelyn Wrench, (1882-1966); Chairman of *The Spectator* since 1925 and its Editor, 1925-32; American Relations Officer to Government of India, 1942-44; his works include *Uphill* (1934); *I Loved Germany* (1940), *Immortal Years* (1945), *Transatlantic London* (1949), *Geoffrey Dawson and Our Times* (1955).

entirely new situation, with a new set of problems. In the pre-war world the democracy practised by Great Britain, France and the United States of America produced a great measure of political freedom, but it came to a standstill in the process of its evolution. It failed to solve the problems of the security of the individual and was entirely baffled by the problem of unemployment; political democracy was not enough to solve these problems. The real question is how to have individual freedom and security. The solution is the extension of political democracy to economic democracy. Of late years it has been popular to say that it is only fascist countries that can take quick decisions, but slow decisions are not necessarily inherent in the democratic system. There is no doubt that the economic and social structure of countries like Great Britain is out of date. I most emphatically believe in the socialistic form of democracy."

Mr. Nehru foresees only one outcome of the War—he thinks some form of international cooperation on the basis of political and economic freedom, both of nations and of individuals, is inevitable. He did admit, however, that there might be, in the immediate post-war years, and especially during the armistice, a period in which the balance of power would be the main controlling factor. He agreed that the conception of the League of Nations was sound, but maintained that what was wrong was the manner in which it was carried out. Before an international body can become a real force, all the factors leading to war must be tackled, such as the private manufacture of armaments; there must be no more domination of one country by another and all nations must have access to raw materials.

I suggested that the English-speaking world provided the nucleus round which a real concert of powers must be built; the Pandit replied: "Big changes will assuredly take place in all countries; I can imagine no effective combination of powers which excludes Russia, India and China." He does not regard the British Commonwealth as a lasting institution. I referred to Smuts' statement[2] that the evolution of the British Commonwealth was the political miracle of the twentieth century, because it reconciled local independence and cooperation. Mr. Nehru does not subscribe to these sentiments, for he thinks that, apart from Great Britain, only nations with comparatively small populations have been linked together by it; not a single nation with a population of over 100,000,000

2. He had stated: "I look upon this Empire and Commonwealth as the best missionary enterprise that has been launched for a thousand years. This is a mission to mankind of goodwill, good government, and human cooperation, a mission of freedom and human helpfulness in the perils that beset our human lot."

has been a member; that would be a true test. He was quite definite. "I do not think", he repeated, "that the British Commonwealth will survive the War. The only important group of nations which will have a fundamental influence on world affairs will be a combination of Russia, China and India, controlling nearly two-thirds of mankind, possessing contiguous territories, and each with the same kind of stupendous agrarian problems. India's relations with China and Russia must, in the nature of things, be most intimate." I suggested that he was taking a good deal for granted, when one considers the disunity of India, in so readily assuming that it would be possible to mould into a workable federation the three nations with the largest populations, India, Russia, and China, with all their diverse elements. Presumably it is his ready optimism that waves aside the obstacles in the path of forging Indian unity. Mr. Nehru says most emphatically: "I think India is bound to become one unit."

I asked him whether he thought that Christianity had much of a future in India. He replied in the negative, and he somewhat surprised me by saying that he did not think it had ever played an important part in India, as it had been so largely identified with the British Raj, and the people of India had been obliged to make a financial contribution to the upkeep of the established Church. He said that the story of Christianity in China was another matter; there, undoubtedly, it had had a great influence, as the result of both American and British missionaries, not identified with a dominant foreign power.

He said that he did not think that organised religion had a large part to play politically in the future; religion would be an intimate matter for the individual soul, and will not be exploited for political purposes. Each country must be left to its own spiritual outlook, and its own conception of life. He said: "Religion will affect political and economic life less and less, it will only affect personal life."

He summed up his views in this sentence: "I do not think that Christianity will make much progress in Asia. Certainly in India it has played no part in the national awakening; the Anglican Church is regarded as part of the governmental machine."

Once again we returned to the problem of Indian unity, which is very much in Nehru's mind. Provided nothing is done to invalidate India's political and economic democracy, and India's unity, he would give every conceivable safeguard to minorities that the wit of man can devise. In the event of any section of India still persisting in desiring to remain outside the Indian union, he would be prepared to abide by the decision of any impartial outside arbitrator, such as the Hague Court. He refused to believe in a fundamental difference between Hindu and Muslim,

who, he claims, are 98 per cent of the same stock, and he even drew my attention to the fact that Mr. Jinnah's grandfather was a Hindu. I pointed out that in many countries, including Ireland, it was a spiritual view, not racial stock, that divided people but he made no comment.

I asked him if he thought Great Britain had any special part to play in the new India. He said: "All nations have a part to play." Turning to the past, I asked him if he thought that India owed much to Great Britain. He said that undoubtedly she owed much to British political thought in the nineteenth century, just as she also owed much to the French Revolution in the eighteenth century and the Russian Revolution in the twentieth century. Great Britain's chief contributions to India, in his view, were English literature and English thought. Finally, I asked him what was the future of the English language in India. He replied: "India is bound to retain English as her second language for two good reasons, because English has become the chief world language, and because so many Indians speak it already." It is, in fact, India's sole common medium.

33. Writers and the War[1]

I send my greetings and good wishes to the Third Conference of the Indian Progressive Writers' Association. Seldom, if ever, was it more necessary for people to think correctly and understand world conditions as well as the different forces struggling for mastery, as it is today. Effective action cannot come out of a vacuum; it must grow out of clear thinking. Unless that clear thinking is there to govern our actions, all our energy and enthusiasm may well run waste. It is obvious that it must be the especial duty of the thinkers and writers of today to give a lead to others in regard to clear thinking.

Nothing surprises me so much as the lack of even an attempt to think clearly in the world today. Of course many individuals make this attempt and meet with some success but those in authority in most countries seem to be singularly unaware of the vast changes that are taking place and that are bound to take place. They talk vaguely in terms of a new order but they act as if all they desired was a slight reorientation

1. Kulu, 16 May 1942. *The Hindu*, 22 May 1942. This message was sent to the Third Conference of the Indian Progressive Writers' Association held in New Delhi on 19-20 May 1942.

of the old order which has been found wanting and which is dying before our eyes.

We are told that the first thing to be done is to win the War; all else will follow it. True, the progressive forces of the world must triumph in the War. But there is no greater folly than to think of this War as a purely military spectacle, although the military aspect is necessarily important.

Fascism is bad; no argument is needed to prove that it is the enemy of human freedom and progress. Imperialism is bad, as all of us know, not merely in theory but in practice. We want to be rid of both. Yet I feel that we are far too apt to forget that the mighty phenomena that we are seeing today all over the world are too big to be confined in a few words and phrases. We are apt to miss their significance if we make our minds prisoners of these phrases or slogans, correct as they might be in their limited spheres. Elemental things are happening and human earthquakes are taking place bringing an old world to ruin. Vast destruction is a painful thing to contemplate, and yet out of its womb the building up of something worthwhile might well take place. It should be the function of writers to endeavour to view this picture as a whole, not to lose themselves in the passions and prejudices of the moment, to see the objective shining clearly in front of them, and to try to harness action for the achievement of this goal.

This War has demonstrated afresh that in every country nationalism is still the most powerful urge. This fact can never be forgotten and it can only be ignored at our peril. But to those who think clearly, nationalism by itself is a narrow creed and leads to no solution. It must be tagged on to internationalism and to a correct appreciation of world happenings. But that internationalism will fail of its purpose unless it is rooted deeply in that irrepressible urge of the people in every country, that is called nationalism. In a subject country like India this importance of nationalism and the hunger for freedom is even more important. It is for writers to balance these two urges, that of nationalism and that of internationalism, and thus to evolve a resultant force which derives strength from the nationalist sentiments of the people and is in harmony with the international objectives of today.

India stands today on the edge of a sharp sword; on the one side is an imperialism which she detests and which she will on no account tolerate, on the other side is an advancing fascism full of peril to her and to the world. It is a difficult position, but it is clear that she cannot and must not submit in thought or action to this fascist invasion. Ultimately she must rely on her own strength, for there is no hope for those who rely on others.

34. To Yashwant Rao Holkar[1]

Kulu
May 19, 1942

Dear Sir,[2]

Thank you for your letter of the 12th May.[3] I appreciate what you have written to me and I need not tell you that I have given the most careful and anxious thought to these matters. They affect me intensely for all my life has been bound up with these questions and I cannot separate myself from them even though I wanted to do so.

The proposal that I should accompany Colonel Johnson to the U.S.A. drops automatically as, I understand, he has already left for America. So the radio stated this morning. I was expecting a telegram from him to inform me when he was going but no such intimation came.

I do not think it is quite correct to say that Colonel Johnson definitely invited me to accompany him. At one time during our Delhi conversations, when Cripps was here, he mentioned casually that he would like me to go to Washington and see President Roosevelt and that he could arrange a fast plane to carry me in four or five days. But he added that he himself did not think it would be easy for me to go just then. When I saw him again, on my way to Kulu, he said again that, much as he would like me to go to America some time or other, he felt that I should not leave India at this stage of continuing crisis. It was obvious that, quite apart from my feelings in the matter, he was of opinion that a visit for me now would serve little purpose.

I am myself quite clear that my leaving India now would be harmful to our cause in India and would yield little result elsewhere. Colonel Johnson at least understands the situation here in so far as I can make him understand it. I can do no better. It is desirable that he should place it before Roosevelt rather than I.

But the real problem has to be faced in India during the next three months especially. I know the situation here well and I am one of the very few persons who can influence it to some extent provided I remain here. My absence at the critical juncture would remove that influence

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Yashwant Rao Holkar (1908-1961); Ruler of Indore.
3. In his letter Holkar wrote that India's cause could be best served by its case being put directly before countries such as the United States and the Soviet Union. He proposed that Jawaharlal should visit the United States to put India's case in its proper perspective before the American Government and people.

almost completely and events would occur which cannot subsequently be ignored or reversed. Most of us are apt to attach too much importance to certain groups at the top. They count of course but the real thing that dominates the situation is the mass opinion of the middle elements. It is this that finally governs policy—apart from circumstances. This opinion is fiercely anti-British today, and I do not blame it at all for it. Indeed I am largely in agreement with it, with this difference that I can view the longer international picture also. Any attempt to ignore this opinion or go counter to it will lead inevitably to its becoming increasingly pro-Japanese. That must be countered for that would be a very harmful and unfortunate development.

Every policy, therefore, must bear in mind that an attempt to cooperate with the British Government, under present circumstances, will not only fail but will also bring a reaction to the other extreme. The only right policy for us is to maintain our general international policy which is anti-Axis and friendly to the other group, and at the same time to develop the sentiment of resistance to any aggressor, Japanese or other. Also to maintain our noncooperative attitude to the British Government so long as a complete change does not take place in India. This is difficult but then every problem is difficult today.

The crisis is upon us and it is really very difficult anyhow to do anything new on a big scale during the next few weeks or months. The kind of defence that is being offered today is enough and nobody, including the British, has any faith in it. And yet there is no immediate alternative to it left. For us to merge ourselves with the British effort is not to help it but to make ourselves totally ineffective for any future step. Also this gives a certain moral prestige to a rotten and tottering machine and possibly lengthens its life slightly. I am convinced that the British Government, especially in India, is wholly incompetent and can only meet with disaster. The turn of the tide will come only when this government is radically changed; in effect when it hands over power —almost, one is inclined to believe that the Gods have determined to destroy this British structure for all its sins.

To separate our sentiments vis-a-vis the British from those for Russia, China and the U.S.A. is a problem. It has to be done. Generally speaking the U.S.A. is looked upon with some suspicion as being too closely allied to Britain and interested in maintaining their Empire. Still there is some understanding of the democratic forces in the U.S.A. and this can be encouraged. It is easier to emphasize the role of Russia and China.

You will find, I think, some big developments taking place in India in the near future. I cannot indicate these at present as they have not taken shape so far. But it is obvious that we cannot remain passive

spectators. It is also undesirable for India to appear as a suppliant even before the U.S.A. Our only hope is to develop a feeling of self-reliance in the people and to make others realise also that we cannot be made pawns by them.

It is not a question of Congress die-hards coming in the way of a settlement. It is the British Government that are the die-hards; but die it will have to, if Britain is to come out of the morass of her own making. As for our die-hards, I think it is time all of us were die-hards and people everywhere realised this. That will make them think of India more in terms of respect and reality. Over vital questions there are differences of opinion and some times splits. But it would be excessively unfortunate if the Congress splits up now for it is the only organization which can hold India more or less together in the difficult days ahead.

We are going to have a hard time, a very hard time. But I feel sure in my bones that we shall survive and prosper in the end. So I do not despair.

We are going down from Naggar tomorrow after a week's delightful stay with the Roerichs who are perfect hosts. I shall reach Allahabad within a week, after brief halts at Lahore and Delhi.

With all good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

35. The Dangerous Idea of Pakistan[1]

I regret that the lesson which we had learnt during the last twenty years of discussing matters among ourselves and then arriving at certain decisions to be implemented by all concerned, and acting together as one man, is being forgotten even by the topmost Congressmen. I have no quarrel with those who want to stand for certain principles but it is as well a good principle to express one's opinion on a matter, participate in discussions with others and after a decision is taken to stand by it and act unitedly. One reason why the Congress in the Punjab is weak is that

1. Speech at a public meeting at Lahore, 21 May 1942. From *The Tribune*, 22 May 1942.

even though the province had some of the bravest men, their fault was that they never learnt to act unitedly even after decisions had been taken.

Very recently another event has happened in the Congress. Mr. Rajagopalachari has drifted away from the Congress.[2] From what he has been saying in his public utterances recently, I cannot say whether Rajaji would even remain in the Congress.[3]

Rajaji possesses a very keen intellect but that intellect is of no use when he wants to cripple the weapon which the country has forged to achieve India's freedom as a result of twenty-two years of hard work and innumerable sacrifices.[4]

It pains me to enter into a controversy with an erstwhile colleague but I am doing so because it pains me even more to see Rajagopalachari pursuing the path which he is now treading. That path is not only wrong but positively dangerous to the country and by following that path Rajaji is making the achievement of that object difficult for which he himself is working. In fact, Rajaji has acted in this manner in his anxiety to form a national government in Madras. Now a national government in a province, especially in the province of Madras, cannot be formed without first admitting before the Governor and the Governor-General that it was a folly to have come out of office. In these days of war, however, any government in any province, and particularly in Madras, will not be able to do anything beyond perhaps getting some drinking water served to the thirsty or giving to the hungry a loaf of bread to eat. During these days in any danger zone not the national government but the military shall rule.

Rajaji has acted most irresponsibly by getting a resolution passed by a provincial legislature party at a time when only a few days after a meeting of the Working Committee was to be held, and he has thus been responsible for dividing the Congress into two camps. My only satisfaction is that Rajaji has not succeeded, and no section of the Congress is with him. Rajaji has chosen a very wrong time for his move and

2. Rajagopalachari, on 4 May 1942, stated that the Congress Working Committee's new resolution did not meet the new requirements of the time. On 15 May 1942, he pleaded for a Congress-Muslim League settlement and reiterated that the Muslims' right of self-determination must be conceded just as members of a joint family concede the right of division to every member. He further elaborated on this issue on 18-19 May 1942.
3. Rajagopalachari had resigned from the Congress Working Committee on 30 April 1942.
4. Rajagopalachari replied to this charge on 23 May 1942: "This is quite true, but is it not all the more a tragedy that, in this supreme crisis, the Congress must watch things like a spectator?"

his action has added to the difficulties which are not a few already. There are a few persons who are now issuing statements in support of Mr. Rajagopalachari. It is surprising that being in the Congress they are trying to explain their position individually as if they cannot remain without opening their hearts. The statement issued by the President of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee is a case in point.

I and those who are with me stand by the Delhi resolution of the Congress Working Committee.[5] The very idea of dividing India is revolting to my conception of India. I have no hesitation in saying that those who talk of Pakistan these days are befooling the people. The picture of India which I had drawn in my mind received a rude shock at the very idea of the division of the country.[6] Being a socialist, I think that in the present age no one can afford to live separately, and for the betterment of all, all the countries must act unitedly. Instead of accepting the plea for the division of India I have been looking forward to the day when we shall have a federation of Iran, Afghanistan, India and China. It has shocked me to see people asking for the division of India herself and so far as that is concerned, I will oppose it with all my strength. I want to make it clear that according to the Delhi resolution no one can be forced to remain in any form of government, though, again, it is a different matter by what method it is to be ascertained whether or not a particular section wants to remain with the whole. But surely the majority of say 51 per cent cannot decide the fate of the remaining 49 per cent in this particular matter. While we cannot agree to the division of India there is a clear difference between forcing one part or more to remain with the whole and agreeing to let that part or more move away. We cannot agree to any such division. But if events take an unexpected turn and circumstances arise over which we have no control we may be helpless and unable to prevent any part cutting away from the whole.

I find that young men here are raising slogans. Remember, that the days of raising slogans have passed away. At a time when two armies are fighting with each other, slogans will never serve any purpose. I, therefore, ask you to change this mentality. There is no need to scoff

5. See *ante*, pp. 188-191.
6. Replying to this charge Rajagopalachari stated on 23 May 1942 that if the majority of the people in a particular territorial unit wanted separation it "can never be withheld from them by a free India." He asserted that both Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal had agreed to this principle earlier and added that his proposal "did not mean the surrender of our plea for unity.... The only thing involved in my proposal was the removal of the possibility of overruling the wishes of the people in any area against their expressed will."

at the "successful" retreats of the British forces from some places.[7] It is not in good taste to ridicule others while you are not doing anything yourself and when the others are in any case fighting for their own Empire. No one can say how we will act if and when similar opportunity arises.

In the given present political situation, we can visualise great upheavals during the next six months and I want the people to be prepared to meet the situation as it might arise. Already, as you know, some of the Indian towns have been attacked by the enemy aircraft. If we do not learn to face the situation we may be perplexed when an emergency arises.

To get freedom from the British has become easier because British imperialism cannot survive the present War. British imperialism is vanishing before our eyes. But that does not mean that if we succeed against British imperialism we shall have nothing else to fear. We will have to fight other imperialisms and defend ourselves against aggression from any quarter. It pains me to see a handful of powers treating us as a commodity and deciding amongst themselves as to who should possess that commodity.

You should remember that *inqilab* is coming and we should be prepared to welcome it despite the fact that it is bound to upset the present order of things. I am amused at the talk of establishment of Pakistan these days for I think that events are taking place with such rapidity that no one can say whether those who raise the cry of Pakistan or those who are against it will survive. The next six months or a little more shall witness such upheavals that the face of the whole world will be changed. The war which is now being fought between Germany and Russia and the war that may be fought in India will have decisive results. In the eventful days to come, it would be only the Congress which would be able to lead the country, but might be that even the Congress might fail to render useful service to the people. I, therefore, ask you not to do anything that would in any way weaken the Congress. The Muslim League cannot do anything. The League has no constructive programme. The Muslim League, even though there are some brave men in that organisation, is out to pursue only a negative policy as opposed to that of the Congress.

7. Rajagopalachari commented on 23 May 1942, "Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru warns the audience against slogans and foolish jubilation over the successes of the enemy, but of what avail are such negative appeals? How I wish he could discover some way actively to wrest power to organise the defence of the country, which alone can save us from indifference and prevent the freedom of India from being stabbed before it is born."

There are some who are in the habit of looking to Whitehall and weighing the words uttered by Mr. Amery or Mr. Churchill. Such people should remember that the question of India's freedom no longer rests with Mr. Amery or Mr. Churchill. It has gone out of their hands. It will be decided by the world events which are taking place. Amerys and Churchills can undoubtedly create difficulties. They can even raise imaginary barriers and disturb the peace, like a few men disturbing a big gathering, if it suits them.

During the Cripps-Congress negotiations, I accepted some impossible things but I and those who were with me, found out very soon that those in power in Britain still possessed the mind and mentality of the Victorian period and I came to a definite conclusion that it was impossible to arrive at any settlement with the British rulers. My sympathies are with the Allies, especially because of China, to which country I took a goodwill message, assuring it of India's full support in its struggle against Japanese aggression. So I am pained to take up the attitude of not helping Britain in this War—under the present circumstances especially when China is in difficulty. I want to help China, but my country and myself are not in a position to help it. All doors have been banged shut against India by the British die-hards and if any is left open it is a door through which no one with any self-respect would like to enter. The British Government wants from us recruits and money. But we do not know how to give that help. The government is getting recruits, and money is also being collected from our poor country. But one thing has been proved beyond doubt that the British method of dealing with India is worthless. Even in the matter of war, the policy and methods are those of the nineteenth century. If we had been given an opportunity we would have made India a citadel and prepared every man to be a soldier to defend his country against any aggressor. Those living in palatial buildings in New Delhi and enjoying their tea at 4.15 every evening and dinner at 8.15 every night can never create that enthusiasm among the people even if they are competent, which in fact they are not.

You should learn to keep up your courage and have brave hearts to face any situation. You should develop self-sufficiency and self-protection. Both these things, which form the keynote of the Congress constructive programme, are meant for the people of all communities. People should learn to act unitedly and stand by each other in time of any emergency and protect the life and property of their neighbours, irrespective of any distinctions.

Tired with the long and unending negotiations which we had in Delhi and worried with the events that have taken place in India, I ran to the

majestic Himalayas and there, as usual, gathered strength and inspiration from those snow-clad high and lovely peaks. I have come back refreshed and with greater vigour. I do not know whether or not world events would give me another opportunity to meet the brave Punjabis. But, in conclusion, I want to assure you that though not a religious person, a faith has grown in me that in the upheaval which is to come during the next few months India will become free.

36. Unsolved Indian Problems[1]

Question: Why has the Congress not taken any action against Mr. Rajagopalachari, who, as you yourself put it, is treading a wrong and dangerous path?[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is for the Congress President to say when and what action should be taken against Mr. Rajagopalachari. I, however, think that the Working Committee will wait and watch further developments.

Q: Do you think that a third party can bring about a settlement among the different religious communities in India?

JN: The Congress would be glad and willing to act as an umpire between the various communities for settling their differences. But such a settlement is an impossibility as long as one communal group looks up to the third party in India.

If the political objective of all the communities becomes the same, and all of them decide to make a joint effort to liberate India, keeping to themselves the right to press their demands after India becomes free, I am sure that a solution of the communal problem will be much easier than many people imagine. But if there is no unanimity on the political objective, and in spite of the loud claims made by them one communal group or the other looks upon the third party for achieving its objective, there is no way out. I am sure that it is quite likely that even in the process of achieving our independence some solution of the communal

1. Interview to the press, Lahore, 22 May 1942. From *The Tribune*, 23 May 1942.
2. See *ante*, pp. 321-323.

problem might be found, but if some people insist on certain conditions as a prerequisite for a settlement of the communal problem, it can only mean that they do not want independence, and that their claim for independence is nothing but a mere excuse because people will not hear them if they do not make such a claim. I have no objection to the League sticking to its demand and the Hindu Mahasabha to its own, but if they all agree to work together, first to liberate India, the solution of the communal problem will certainly become easier. In case, they insist on the acceptance of their demands first, it would only show that they believe that the British rule will remain forever and that they will grow under its protection. Every problem in the world has a solution, and I am convinced that the communal problem of India is also worthy of solution. Maybe, the solution would be found as a result of working together or as a result of a fight between the communities, or, as it happens sometimes, out of the fear of a conflict. But all this is possible when the expectation connected with the third party is given up.

As long as the third party remains, a settlement will be impossible. On several occasions we thought that we were within reach of a settlement, but the third party stepped in and something happened and our whole plan was upset. I must remind you that world events will shape our problems also.

Q: Have you ever discussed the ways and means for a settlement of the communal problem with Jinnah or Savarkar?

JN: I have never put myself in contact with Mr. Savarkar, or any Sikh leader or a Muslim League leader for the purpose of evolving a formula for the settlement of the communal problem, but I have talked with various League, Hindu Sabha and Sikh leaders about the problem informally. I found the leaders powerless. So far as the Congress is concerned, it made many attempts. Only recently the Congress President made an offer to have the communal question discussed between representatives of the Congress and the League.[3] That offer still stands. No formal invitation has been extended to the League to enter into any negotiations because I feel that in such negotiations considerations of prestige play a prominent part and no real work is done.

3. Maulana Azad, speaking against Rajagopalachari's resolution on 'Pakistan' at the A.I.C.C. on 2 May 1942, stated that he was in favour of unity between the Congress and the League. He said, "I am prepared to call the Working Committee and ask them to nominate five representatives to meet the representatives of the Muslim League in order to come to a settlement. The attempt would be worth making even if it does not succeed."

Q: Why not give Rajagopalachari's formula a chance?

JN: I am not prepared even to give a trial to the solution suggested by Mr. Rajagopalachari. I think that it is no solution and it is bound to create more difficulties.

I am personally in favour of giving autonomy to the provinces, as has been done in Russia. I want that there should be autonomous cultural units so that they can develop independently. But at the same time the Centre must remain strong. That is essential for all-India economic policies, for instance, for economic planning. In that case the rich and poor provinces both will pull together. In the absence of a strong Central Government many rich provinces shall flourish at the expense of the others. The economic welfare of all the provinces alike demands that the Centre should be a strong entity enjoying at the same time all residuary powers.

India is a very powerful country potentially, in spite of her poverty, and has a great future. The country is potentially powerful because of her vast resources and the capacity to develop industrially. Our populace can provide skilled workmen, and with our resources and capacity to develop, India can compete very favourably with America, Russia and China. Such a country, if divided, will be ruined and her potentiality will be of no avail. My stand has been that complete autonomous units should be created and in their relationship to the Centre no decisions should be imposed by a majority but only by common consent, failing which matters might be decided by an international board on India. India has been a country of cultural unity. We have never been isolationists. The doors of India were open to all, even before the Mussalmans came to India. Whoever came here created a new synthesis. Indian culture is an amalgam of various forces. It was for the first time when the British came to India that the formation of that cultural synthesis stopped because the roots of their culture were elsewhere. There are few countries in the world where the ideal of unity has been realised as it has been in India. Maybe there is a difference between a Madrasi and a Pathan, but to the outside world both of them are Indians and I want that the tie of relationship should be further strengthened.

Q: Do you still believe in the formation of guerilla bands?

JN: Guerilla bands can only supplement the work of armies. It is for the state to defend a country and guerilla bands can help the state. Now that the formation of a National Government in India is practically out of the question for the time being, the question of the formation

of guerilla bands does not arise. However, given proper training guerillas can do a lot in many ways to defend India.

Q: How will the Congress fight the aggressors nonviolently?

JN: The Congress has never accepted the position that, while dealing with external attacks or internal disorders, the Congress would act nonviolently, though that policy is neither fantastic nor dishonest. The Congress ministries had to use force to put down internal disorder. But only a state can fight an aggressor from outside, people can only help. I, however, want that people should not sit idle. They should offer at least mental opposition to the Japanese.

Q: While Congress has always advocated a negative policy with regard to industrialisation, you have been advocating the cause of heavy industry. In doing so, how do you reconcile both positions, especially being a leader of the Congress?

JN: I refuse to accept the contention that the Congress has followed a negative policy regarding industrialisation. It is true that the official policy of the Congress has been to encourage cottage industry, but I maintain that the policy of boycott of foreign goods has actually resulted in popularising the Indian mill cloth, as Lancashire goods have been completely stopped. Even Gandhiji has recently suggested the use of electricity. Gandhiji does not want to help those big industries which come into conflict with cottage industries. You are also aware of the work done by the National Planning Committee.

The Planning Committee had planned out certain big industries but I regret to say that the government opposed the plans and we are not able to foster any big industry. Impediments were put in the way of establishing motor industry, shipping industry and it is well known what difficulties Mr. Walchand Hirachand had to face after he had undertaken an obligation, involving crores of rupees, for building airships.

I am sure that the British Government is feeling sorry today for not allowing any big industry to grow in India. India today seems to have become the main centre of the war activity. Previously, the British were not prepared to give even a gun to an Indian. There is a difference between British and American approaches to the Indian problem and between British and American economy. America is not interested in creating vested interests in India. America's greatest concern is to win the War. America does not want to exploit India in any manner. At one stage Americans were willing to lend technicians to India at a

nominal charge to enable her to start big industries. While Britain wants India to remain an agricultural country, America wants her to grow industrially so that the purchasing power of India may increase.

Q: Why do you not visit the United States and counteract the wrong impression created there by the failure of the Cripps Mission?

JN: My visit to America would serve no useful purpose. I do not want to be away from my country at such a critical time.

I always feel and think that it is below the dignity of our country to do any propaganda in other countries. Wherever I have gone I have made it clear that India has resolved to settle her own problem. India does not want to ask for anyone's support. I never tried to excite the compassion of outsiders for India. I never begged for any support and that attitude has raised India in the estimation of the people of other countries.

In foreign countries my only object has been to place the question of India's freedom before them and tell them how greatly and closely it is related to the solution of their own problems and I have succeeded in doing so. Another test by which I judge matters is by their effect on the masses. I do not want to go to America lest my countrymen should begin to look towards America for all help even though I would welcome any help which America might give independently.

Q: In the present situation what are your views with regard to defence?

JN: Defence of India is the work of the state, and in independent countries, defence is the work of the state plus the people. At present we do not want to take any step in India which might result in creating a semi-martial law situation here, for that will be tantamount to an invitation to the Japanese to come to India. That is why I do not want to embarrass the government at present in any manner. The present War is a small part of a large revolution determined by tremendous factors. There is a unique spirit in Russia, but none in Britain, according to a correspondent. That is so because the Russians are fighting for a great and new ideal while the British are fighting for something which is dwindling away. London has been the biggest *bania* shop and Britain has built up big industries; financially they are *sahukars*. But now after the last War new powers have come up and it is difficult for Britain to keep intact its far-flung Empire. I have no doubt that India will be free, anyway, as a result of this War.

Q: What are your views about the policy of the Communists?

JN: The Communists have a knack of being carried away, pursuing a wrong policy and making their friends their opponents. I do not like the Communist way of doing propaganda either.

Q: Can anyone holding an office in the Congress attack its policy?

JN: I have no doubt that no one holding any elective office in the Congress can go about preaching against Congress policy.

Q: What are your views about the detenus?

JN: We all resent their unjustified detention, but we do not want to request the government to release them because we consider such requests below our own dignity and that of the detenus themselves.

37. Congress Foreign Policy[1]

I am rather diffident in supporting the resolution.[2] It does not make clear where it is leading us to, and what it would actually require us to do when it comes to action. No resolution, howsoever accurately it might have been drafted, gives the complete picture of a mind. Many complexities, many implications, many difficulties in its actual operation could lie hidden behind the wording of a resolution. But Mr. Sharma's amendment is not comprehensible to me at all.[3] Its author seems to me

1. Speech at the U.P.P.C.C. meeting, Lucknow, 31 May 1942. From *National Herald*, 1 June 1942.
2. The resolution moved by Purushottam Das Tandon welcomed the resolution of the A.I.C.C. passed at Allahabad (see *ante*, pp. 276-285). It also called upon the Congress Working Committee to give serious and early consideration to the question and methods of wresting power for the people of India from the unwilling hands of British imperialism.
3. Balkrishna Sharma's amendment demanded withdrawal of foreign armies and complete transfer of power so that the nation was able to contribute fully to world peace and freedom. In an event of British refusal, it called upon the people of the province to be ready to wrest power to establish an independent National Government. In an event of Japanese attack, it called upon the people to resist the invader through noncooperation.

to belong to the class of "resolvers", which is a nickname given to those who love high-sounding words for their own sake. His amendment is a sea of words and my own feeble mind cannot grapple with it.

Mr. Sharma's amendment either wants something more or something less to be done than what the A.I.C.C. resolution requires. If it seeks to do more, it is on the face of it absurd that only three weeks after the resolution of the A.I.C.C. Mr. Sharma should proceed to lay down a programme for the whole of India.

Mr. Sharma's criticism of the declaration of solidarity with the progressive forces, raises a fundamental question. It is for us to think if we would like to reverse the foreign policy of the Congress which has been followed during the last ten years. That policy had been laid down by the Congress itself at its annual sessions, and I doubt if even the A.I.C.C. is competent to reverse it. This, however, is a technical objection.

Mr. Sharma's amendment implies that the Congress policy has been framed at the expense of Indian freedom; because of our concern for other countries we have done harm to India.

This is an unfair inference to draw. We had declared our sympathy for Abyssinia and Palestine and Spain and China not out of mere sentimentalism but because of the realisation that such an attitude furthers the cause of Indian freedom. Mr. Sharma's complaint implicates me too, because I have been prominently associated with the formulation of the foreign policy of the Congress and have been India's unofficial ambassador abroad. But I can assert with confidence that that policy increased India's power and dignity, and is adding to them even now.

The question is asked why we should unnecessarily annoy Germany or Japan. For that matter why should we annoy Britain at all? In this way we can sit at home and make ourselves comfortable and dispense with the need of jail-going and other sufferings. But the Congress during the last ten years has made it its creed to annoy those who are cruel and who oppress other people. It has refused to think in that cowardly way of hesitating to annoy this power or that. It is our duty to support nations which have fallen victims to the very thing we have been fighting against. Had not Mr. Amery speaking in the British Parliament on Japanese aggression in Manchuria said that any condemnation of Japan implied an indictment of their entire policy towards India? Similarly our failure to express sympathy for the victims of aggression would damage the very cause we are fighting for.

Some people think that by isolating ourselves and becoming indifferent to the fates of other nations, India would be able to save her skin. But I warn you that thus isolated we would be like frogs in a well. Our

country would be dwarfed. Sympathy with the progressive forces would enhance our dignity. In Italy, while ambassadors of all nations had been fawning on me, I had refused to see Mussolini because I thought it would lower the dignity of the Congress. For the sake of that dignity again I had refused to see Nazi leaders in Germany.

I am astonished to hear that our foreign policy has adversely affected us. It seems that the hearts of its critics tremble with the fear that if Germany or Japan comes they would be beaten up. I have no such fear. I know that out of this War only four countries—China, Russia, America and India—are going to emerge most powerful. Why should I be afraid when I know that my country is going to be a greater country than Britain or Japan?

France's humiliating slavery and the way it was trembling at the feet of the conqueror filled me with shame. But its collapse convinced me that its own imperialism was the cause of its defeat.

I *think the method of resistance and the capture of power suggested* by Mr. Sharma is absurd and meaningless. We are asked not to come between the invader and Britain's military arrangements, and evaporate at the time our locality is turned into a battlefield, but reappear and establish civil administration which would then proceed to boycott the military administration of the locality set up by the invader. Does this mean that the coming of the invader would facilitate our occupation and setting up of a civil administration? This is an astounding suggestion, and I do not know whether Mr. Sharma thought of it in his waking moments or in his dreams.

The whole idea is fantastic and absurd and I am thoroughly sick of the way people get lost in the mire of words. It is also ridiculous to say that there are five lakhs of American soldiers in India. I would be surprised if even a tenth part of the number are in the country. The figure, however, is an instance of how in our panic-stricken state we form our opinions on the basis of rumours.

I warn the Committee that the remaining months of 1942 would be critical. Whatever may be the organisational strength of the Congress, its potential strength is very great, because all sections of the public are looking to it for a lead in the critical times ahead. It is for us to do our duty. The time for argument is past. We have to act now. Personally I am so sick of slavery that I am even prepared to take the risk of anarchy.

38. Prepare to Face the Challenge[1]

I apologise for coming late to this meeting. I was busy in the U.P.P.C.C. meeting held at the Ganga Prasad Memorial Hall, where representatives from every district of the province had come, and we had many complicated problems before us for discussion.

We are living through difficult days. You all know that. But in spite of your knowing it I am not aware how many of you know about the India of today or the world of today. Perhaps in a few days, weeks, or a few months, we may be able to understand the world of today better than what we know today. Where do we stand? We in India seem to stand in the midst of a river where neither do our feet touch its bed nor can we rise above its level, and we are surrounded by crocodiles with their mouths open. As Mr. Sampurnanand has just told you we have been taught during all these 150 years to defend neither ourselves nor our country. What has been its result? We have become helpless. Countries build up their empires in order to increase their wealth. Britain obtained sufficient wealth from India. India became poor and the British very rich, but that system is now coming to an end. Empires today are no longer a source of strength but a burden and difficult to hold on. You see that not only the British but all those who had big empires are being crushed under the weight of their empires. Their power is declining and they are gradually becoming weaker and weaker. You have seen that a big empire of the world, the French Empire, which two years ago was the second biggest empire after the British Empire, became slave after a fight lasting two or three weeks only. The French became slaves, and that too with great humiliation. They are slaves even today.

Another empire was the Dutch Empire, i.e. of Holland. Holland also crashed. She was struck off the list of free countries. Thus two empires fell, and the other two empires—the German and the Japanese—rose to power instead.

Look at the British Empire. During the last few months wherever the British were attacked in Asia—in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaya or Burma—they could not protect themselves. These countries were

1. Speech at a public meeting in Lucknow, 31 May 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1942, File No. 4/1/42, National Archives of India; also from *The Hindustan Times*, 2 June 1942.

occupied by the Japanese.[2] This is a strange phenomenon and worthy of your consideration. Why did all these big colonial countries with whose colours the map of the world is marked all over, remain weak or fail to protect themselves? There can be many reasons for this. But the real cause is that while imperial powers were forcibly governing their colonies, the people in the colonies rose to fight for their freedom and those powers resorted to suppression. In the second place, in order to protect an empire it is necessary to keep a strong army. Take the case of Britain. Its Empire extended all over the world. London became the metropolis of the world. Wealthy people of the world used to go to London. The biggest factories of the world were set up in London and in its vicinity. In this way the British used to draw wealth from all parts of the world and lived in great pomp. But it became difficult for them to protect their large Empire physically. In order to protect the Empire it was necessary to have control over the seas. In the present world, it is impossible for any one country to control the seas of the world in the same way as the British had done in the 19th century. Further, the development of aeroplanes as a force made it impossible for any country to govern the world. An empire formed on British lines cannot protect itself. Whatever may be the result of this War, Britain cannot retain her extensive Empire in its present form. And it is just impossible that there can be empires of a different type than the British one.

We cannot gain freedom because of the weakness of the British, but their weakness can prove helpful in our becoming free. The British who ruled the world with such a glory, have now been reduced to a second or third rate power in the world. You can see their status in Burma. The root cause of this is that they want to retain their Empire in the form of an Empire. Free India would have willingly desired to become a party to the present War and fought against their enemy. We might not have been able to do much but we have seen that even the unarmed people of China have been able to put up a strong fight. This has been possible because the Chinese people are behind the national cause. A shopkeeper thinks it his duty to protect his shop, a farmer his field. If this War had been our national war, every man in this country would have joined it. I told this to Cripps when he came to Delhi. I told him, when he was returning, that if a National Government had been formed, as a duty we would have to protect our country against any invasion. We cannot become a slave of another country, when we ourselves have been fighting for our freedom against the British. We would have used both the modern arms and the old methods to resist the invasion. It

2. Wavell announced on 28 May 1942: "The Burma campaign is over for the time being. But some day, I hope, we will fight it again the other way round."

would have been necessary for every one to work properly. It was our misfortune that this settlement could not be achieved. You are a witness to its consequences.

During the last few months you have seen British military operations outside India, in Burma and Malaya. We do not know what will happen in India. Let us not talk of the military action because the responsibility of defence falls on those who rule our country. These rulers belong to the I.C.S. class.

Similar I.C.S. officers were in Burma and we all know what they did there. The administration of the government collapsed so soon that we were very much surprised and began to wonder whether there ever existed such officers. Before the entry of the Japanese army in Rangoon, the local officers fled away. After this the police force was disbanded. Before they left the city, they released all the convicts. The government released even the most dangerous criminals and at the same time all the lunatics were also freed from the lunatic asylum. Those lunatics began to set fire to certain places and this caused a great panic in the city. But political prisoners were not released. Even Dr. Ba Maw, who was the first Burmese Prime Minister but interned under the D.I.R., was not released. He was released much later. This is how their mind works. What type of government was there in Rangoon and Burma which disappeared so quickly? It is the duty of a government to remain at its place till the end. In Malaya also such things happened as in Rangoon.

The second point is the way in which people were evacuated. The treatment meted out to the evacuees was quite partial. Every sort of convenience was provided for the evacuation of the Anglo-Burmese but no arrangement was made at all for any Indian, rich or poor. There are about thirty-three lakh refugees to narrate this story. All this shows first, the uselessness and utter rottenness of the government, and, secondly their utter foolishness. Granted that they had no sympathy for Indians but they could have atleast acted wisely. The Chinese who were there were also treated badly. Will this not arouse the anger of the people? If such things happened there, they can happen in India also, as there is no difference between the governments of Burma and India. The government officers here are also of the same type. They are very quick in taking certain actions. They threaten the press. You might have recently heard that the security money of the *National Herald* has been confiscated.[3]

3. On 26 May 1942, the U.P. Government forfeited two securities of Rs. 3,000 each deposited by the publisher and printer of the *National Herald* for printing certain leading articles on *War and the Congress*, and demanded two fresh securities of Rs. 6,000 each from them.

Today they are suppressing in different ways but they do not know the power of resistance which is building up. Seeing the conditions in Delhi even the American officials here remarked that the high officials of this place did not seem to know whether war was raging or not. Knowing means feeling, and acting accordingly. The fact is that they do feel it intensely, but their minds are entangled in knots from which they cannot unravel themselves. There is no way of unravelling these knots, unless India is declared free and armed with guns.

If India is armed with guns it will not do the British any harm. To-day it is a war of aeroplanes and tanks. Fortresses of steel roll into action. You may or may not do them any harm with your guns but their bullets are quite effective against you. Under these circumstances, they should arm India. The world is undergoing a revolutionary change; still the minds of the English officers have not emerged from the 19th century. The conditions prevailing in Burma and Malaya show that the 19th century British mind cannot adjust itself to the needs of the 20th century. This is the cause of their downfall. The 19th century mind can neither fight a battle nor solve any problem of the 20th century.

At the U.P.P.C.C. meeting a resolution was discussed and ultimately passed.[4] During the discussions I was thinking whether to accept the resolution or not. What have we to do at this hour, as time is marching on with such a speed that there is no room for resolutions? We should take whatever practical steps we can in this connection. This question always keeps revolving in my mind. I am constantly worried about this matter. But why should I trouble you with that problem? However, the resolution that was moved and passed was a short one.

The All India Congress Committee met recently at Allahabad. Have you read its resolutions or not? One of these resolutions was published in the papers in full, while two or three of them were not published in the papers under the orders of the government.[5] The resolutions were passed by the Working Committee at Allahabad at 11 or 12 o'clock, and at 2 or 3 o'clock, a Gazette was published at Simla banning the publication of the resolutions. You will see that the government displays sufficient promptness in certain matters, because it understands all these matters well.

One of the resolutions banned by them referred to the conditions in Rangoon and Malaya and warned the people to be prepared, for such things might happen here too. We should therefore be prepared so as not to run away from our places if the British Government withdraws,

4. See *ante*, p. 330.
5. See *ante*, pp. 268-271.

and also if the events march fast we should be prepared to take over the government. This can be done only if we have sufficient strength, for the time for passing resolutions has passed. One who has power can march forward. As for power, it is measured today by the possession of huge and monstrous arms, which, of course we do not possess. But in the end even the real strength of guns and arms is determined by the display of the qualities of human courage, bravery and sacrifice. If any nation possesses these virtues, it can take up arms also if occasion arises for it. And only then, if certain brave acts are required to be performed, we can perform them with bravery. So, that was one resolution.

The second resolution was about the treatment meted out to the evacuees and refugees from Burma who have crossed over to India. In the resolutions that were passed in this connection at our Committee's meeting we emphasized one point, though we could have laid emphasis on many other points as well, that the time had come, and there was no escape from the situation, when it was not possible to solve any problem relating to India without her becoming independent. There can be no arrangements for the protection of the country unless India is independent. We have been demanding independence for a long time but we have now arrived at the conclusion that without it none of our problems can be solved, we cannot even defend ourselves. It may appear to be an ordinary matter but the fact is that to arrive at this conclusion is certainly a sufficiently important thing by itself.

The other matter is that the present-day British imperialism is suppressing us and this has been the greatest hindrance in the reshaping of the new world order. But at the same time British imperialism is an ally of Russia and China to whom we want to give aid. The fact, however, is that British imperialism has been proving harmful to everybody. Let alone India, it is proving harmful to other countries as well. Being an imperialism it has rendered India helpless and destitute as it has done with Burma and Malaya. If we look at it from another angle we will realise that it was essential that India should have gained freedom, so that she could have marched gloriously and done what she was entitled to do today. This was the point specially emphasized in our resolution. I want that all of you should try to realise its importance.

When I reached here some slogans of 'Long Live...and Down with ...'were being raised. Those who want to give vent to their sentiments may do so. But the truth is that slogans have no meaning today. You must realise that the revolution which is coming will end all these problems. We should make arrangements for our defence and do whatever we can for this and should follow the programme placed by the Congress before the country. This is not tall talk. When some bigger

and stronger countries have been enslaved today, how can we indulge in tall talk while holding meetings in our committees? At present, the Congress has chalked out a programme. Some say it is an old programme, and if not that, then, it is the same old programme in a new shape. But they do not realise that though its many points are old, the point which it emphasizes most is different. It tells us how to prepare ourselves for facing the War in its present form.

It is impossible for us to help the British Government while we are slaves. We have to do something concrete at this time. We cannot remain mere spectators. The programme which the Congress has placed before the country appears to be plain and simple. It calls upon the people to organise themselves and be determined to do their duty in the face of heavy odds. If you are organised, you rest assured that you can face the greatest possible dangers. You can face the British Government. When the British Government begins to withdraw, you should be able to carry on the administration of this district or province. Commodities cannot be imported from outside during the war period. In a few days you will not get cloth from Ahmedabad or Bombay, because you cannot transport goods by railways. You will get only what you can produce in your villages. If you cannot produce you will have to suffer in future. In case, food is not available, looting will take place. Outsiders will loot. No country becomes strong in this way. As this domestic affair has become urgent and as there is no other arrangement for gaining strength during this period of war, you should make adequate arrangements for food.

Further you have to enlist volunteers for the defence of your *mohallas* and houses. Residents of a *mohalla* should take the responsibility of their defence upon themselves and for this purpose organise a strong volunteer corps. I am not dealing with any political problem. It does not mean that we are going to take out a procession to demonstrate the influence of the Congress. I do not know what is being done in Lucknow in this respect. But I wish you to realise that these are not mere tamashas. If you are not vigilant at this time, we may have to bear its evil consequences. I think the next few months may see sweeping events in India and we have to prepare ourselves to face them. You have not much time at your dispocal. Whatever time you have got you have to take advantage of it and get prepared. I do not like that you and I may run away to some other place. To which place will you go? You have to live in India. A long time has since passed. Either we stand alive together or lie down dead.

39. To J.J. Singh[1]

Allahabad
June 4, 1942

Dear Mr. Singh,[2]
I am in receipt of your letter of April 10th. I received also the two cablegrams which you sent one of which was a joint one with Frances Gunther. These cablegrams and letters were delayed in transit, but they reached me in the end.

I must apologise to you for the delay in acknowledging those cables. I have been away from headquarters for long periods and completely engrossed in various activities.

First of all, I want to tell you that there is no chance of my leaving India or going to America in the near future. I should like to go to America for many reasons and I realise that America is likely to have a big say in the future. But I am quite certain that my work lies in India at present and it would be harmful to our cause if I left this country.

Thank you for sending me some newspaper cuttings. They are interesting. Raymond Clapper[3] just passed through India and probably has not the faintest notion of what India was or is.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1897-1976); founder and first President of the Indian Chamber of Commerce of America 1938; President of the India League of America 1939-59.
3. (1892-1944); American correspondent with the United Press Association, 1916-33; political commentator since 1936; his works include *Racketeering in Washington*.

40. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
5.6.1942

Your cable.[2] Understand your anxiety. Owing to Cripps's attitude, subsequent repression, continuing arrests, forfeiture of *Herald* security

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his cable of 31 May, Krishna Menon had expressed deep concern over political developments in China.

and especially exceedingly bad differential treatment of Indian evacuees from Burma, there is an intensely bitter feeling all over the country against the British Government overriding other considerations. Impossible for Congress to go against almost unanimous public opinion. Factional attitudes now ineffective and harmful. Rajagopalachari's move injurious, producing strong reactions. Considerable sympathy for China and Russia but cannot override independence demand which is considered the only solution and effective way of helping China. Congress foreign policy of anti-fascist attitude and resistance against aggressor continues. Impossible to cooperate with the British Government under existing circumstances. Still no embarrassment to military efforts. Self-defence and self-sufficiency being organized independently. No attempt to create conflict but government's continuing repression may produce grave situation. Going Wardha for discussions.

Nehru

41. To B.C Roy[1]

Wardha
June 13, 1942

My dear Bidhan,
Maulana has told me something about the medical missions sent to Assam and of the good work they have been doing. It seems to me that this work will have to be continued, possibly in a bigger scale, for some time to come. It is not short-range work or confined to the people coming from Burma. Therefore a wider foundation for it might be laid, both financially and otherwise. I am quite sure that large sums of money can be obtained for it if people really know all about it. Few things have irritated our people so much as the differential treatment given to Burma evacuees. For this work, therefore, money will be forthcoming.

I receive odd applications from young doctors or others who want to give their services for this work either free or for a small allowance. I do not know what to do with these. Sometimes I have asked them to address you directly. I think it would be a good thing if you could get some doctors, compounders, volunteers, etc. from other parts of the country also in order to give an all-India basis for this work. This would

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

also interest other parts of India and lead to further donations. I am sure we can get fine and earnest young men on very small allowances. Possibly they may have to face some danger later on and so this fact has also to be borne in mind and the right type of persons selected. If at any time you stood in need of volunteers, I could send you any number from the U.P. But it is obviously better for local volunteers to be used as far as possible.

May I suggest that you might keep a list of selected candidates for the medical mission so that you could call upon them as soon as necessity arose. A notice giving details of the types of persons wanted and other particulars might be sent to the newspapers of various provinces. People might be asked to apply to different provincial centres where they could be interviewed by someone appointed by you, or, if you like, some official of the local Medical Council. Thus you could have such centres in Bombay, Nagpur, Lucknow, Delhi and Lahore. Those who are provisionally selected could be placed on the approved list. They need not be sent for immediately but only when occasion arises.

I suggest also that except in special cases, where you think it necessary, the scale of allowances should not be high. If a high scale is laid down to begin with, you will have to keep up to it even when it is not considered necessary and feasible. I do not know what your present scale is. But I am merely suggesting this for your consideration, as I am sure you can get good people on moderate allowances.

I am enclosing an application in Hindi which came to me some time back. In case you cannot read this, I give the name and some particulars below. The applicant is Dr. G.I.D. Upadhyaya, Clinical Assistant, Bhowali Sanatorium, Distt. Naini Tal, U.P. He passed the L.S.M.F. (whatever that might be) from Agra in 1933 and has worked in various small hospitals.

I expect to be back in Allahabad within a week.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

42. India and the War[1]

It is after four months that I have come to Bombay again. Many important events have taken place in India and abroad during this

1. Speech at a public meeting, Bombay, 18 June 1942. From Maharashtra Government Records, File No. 3590/II/VI-5; also from *The Hindu*, 20 June 1942.

period. The leaders in India remained puzzled in the past few months as the war reached the borders of India, after the fall of Malaya, Singapore and Burma. A guest from China visited India and was warmly received by our people. We had discussions with him with regard to the existing situation in China, India and the world in order to establish close relations between both the countries in future. Then Sir Stafford Cripps arrived in India, and we have been still discussing his visit even two months after he left. With the Japanese occupation of Burma, Malaya and Singapore, Indian residents arrived in India as evacuees and they had to suffer many hardships including the discriminatory racial treatment of the officials. The Congress and other organisations made arrangements to provide facilities to the Indian evacuees but the government ignored them. This attitude pained the Indians.

The object of my visit to Bombay is to meet my co-workers in Bombay and particularly to inspect the work of the People's Volunteers Brigade, with which I am acquainted only through the papers. We should prepare ourselves for the defence of our country. We would have joined hands with other countries in this War but we will never seek charity from them. The Congress President Maulana Azad and myself recently had a talk with Mahatma Gandhi at Wardha about the present conditions existing in our country.[2] The Working Committee will meet after a fortnight to decide on the next step. It is quite improper to say anything as to what the Working Committee would decide. Whatever might be the decision of the Working Committee, it is up to the people of India to carry out that policy. India is caught between two mighty storms. On the one side, there is the danger of war, and on the other, the British domination.

It is easy to shout slogans, but difficult to do real work. Slogans are no reply to the problems confronting the country. It is time for us to think about the next step and to act accordingly. As far as the British are concerned, we have decided to drive them out. That is what any other slave nation would always do against foreign domination. If anybody hesitates in doing so it means that he accepts slavery. We have been struggling against British imperialism for the last so many years, but the situation has changed due to the outbreak of the War. The Congress had always showed its antipathy towards the imperialisms of Germany and Japan. We declared our policy against imperialism, fascism and Nazism. The Congress after the outbreak of the War stood for cooperation with the British Government, as a free nation, in the prosecution of the War. But the government chose to insult us instead. The

2. They met from 8 June to 12 June 1942. See *post*, p. 359.

Congress therefore started the satyagraha campaign but in a way so as not to embarrass the government. The British Government at that critical juncture tried to weaken our strength and the movement by encouraging our internal differences.

Some gentlemen here are saying that this is a 'people's war.' Those who are shouting slogans have only crammed these words and they do not know their real meaning. I would like to ask them in this *maidan* whether they are prepared to fight a people's war. It is useless to shout such slogans as crores of Indians have already declared that they will not cooperate in the present War. I ask them how is it a people's war? They should not think that they can change the character of this War by merely shouting. It is no use wishing as that wish would not change into a fact.

We do not wish to take a step which may help the enemy. People will not tolerate destruction of China and India under Japanese control. If I get an opportunity to resist the Japanese aggression, I will resist it even with swords and guns. I beg pardon of my elders for giving such a frank opinion. Swords and guns can be used only by the state and by the people of free countries. Slave nations can simply shout slogans and make noise, that is why we have failed to accomplish our duty to defend. The British Government knows the weakness of Indians and has therefore adopted foolish methods. We Indians will not hinder Britain's attempt to defend India, but the recent experiences of the British Government in Malaya and Singapore have exposed the weak framework of the mighty Empire and the reasons of its slow downfall. Not only are their brains showing weakness but also the failure of their policy in India and other countries has become quite obvious. I never saw such acts of foolishness committed by the British as during the last few years. In my experience of twenty-five years in the political field, I never came across such a great anger on the part of the Indian masses towards the British as is seen nowadays. The present circumstances and the repressive policy of the British are the root causes for such a grim state of affairs. The majority of the British spokesmen whenever they speak on the Indian problem use abusive language to cause harm to the dignity of the Congress. Whenever any government and its representatives feel that they are losing power they adopt such methods as are being used by the British. Indians cannot be mere spectators to this War and allow Japan to come and rule over India in place of Indians themselves enjoying their freedom. When a great revolution is taking place all over the world and the world is changing, the people of India will also see before their own eyes a great revolution in their own country within a few months or a year.

Today, the war between Russia and Germany is going on. Lakhs of people are dying. India cannot be an exception to the sufferings of the horrors of the War. There can even be bloodshed throughout the country. Though I am against bloodshed, still I would like to see such horrible scenes in the country as may arouse the inner feelings of the masses.

My feelings towards Russia and China are well known. I believe these two nations will play a great part in shaping the future world order. If unfortunately these nations are defeated, it would be disastrous for the entire world. The recent pacts between Russia and Britain, and Russia and America[3] have been for their own interests, but I would not like to object to those pacts in any way. Also, I would not like to see the defeat of Russia. The position of India is not considered whenever such negotiations are carried on or any treaties made. This is simply ignoring the Indian nation and I cannot tolerate such a thing.

The presence of American military personnel in India explains to some extent the importance of India in this War. Today, India occupies strategically a vital place and if India falls, China will also fall, and Russian resistance may also be adversely affected. It would be an intolerable situation if Japan wins and dominates Asia. Therefore, while it is our duty to make India free we should not do anything to hinder the prosecution of the War.

I condemn the action of the government in the United Provinces of arresting some Congress leaders and thereby putting a hindrance to civil defence work.[4] People of that province cannot tolerate such an action. They will also not yield to the British Government.

I am pleased to see the work done by the Bombay Brigade. I think that the A.R.P. is not of much utility to the people. I wish to emphasize the need for unity for the defence of India. I am astonished to see some people trying to break the unity of the Indian people by demanding Pakistan and such other things. In spite of an unarmed India, the people of this land can defend their country more effectively by non-cooperation than the British Government can do with its weapons. It is impossible for the enemy to occupy such a vast tract of land against the will of the natives. We should not be discouraged by hardships but

3. On 11 June 1942, the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of Military Alliance and Post-War Collaboration, for the duration of the War, and for twenty years, in an event of Axis attack, was signed. A Master Lease-Lend Agreement was also signed between the United States and the Soviet Union for safeguarding peace and security after the War.
4. On 12 May 1942, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai was arrested, and on 6 June 1942, S.K.D. Paliwal and Mahavir Tyagi were arrested under the Defence of India Rules.

should face the enemy keeping before us the bold example of China, and then only the flower of freedom will emerge out of that great sacrifice.

43. To John B. Grant[1]

Allahabad
June 23, 1942

Dear Dr. Grant,[2]
On return to Allahabad yesterday I received your letter of the 9th June. During my visits to Lahore and Bombay recently, I had occasion to discuss this matter with people interested in Blood Banks in those cities. I have no doubt that it is desirable to have such Blood Banks, especially to provide for the emergencies that are likely to arise. I should like Indians to contribute their quota to these banks wherever it is possible to do so without any injury to themselves. I understand that full precautions are taken to avoid any such injury and blood is only extracted after medical examination of the persons concerned.

The difficulty in this, as in many other kinds of works, is certainly political. That is, anything connected with the British Government is looked upon with suspicion by our people. This suspicion is not surprising in view of our past experience. Nevertheless if this business of collecting blood for Blood Banks is carried on in cooperation with local Medical Councils and people are made to realise that it is for their own good, then I am sure much of this prejudice will disappear. I understand from your letter that you have already received the cooperation of many eminent Indians. I am sure that if the right approach is made to the public many more will donate their blood for this humanitarian object. It would be a pity if political or other considerations came in the way of this kind of work. I hope you will get the cooperation of Indian doctors and the various hospitals in Calcutta. If this is done any suspicion based on political grounds will largely disappear. For my part I would gladly give my own blood for this purpose and I know that

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1890-1962); specialist in preventive medicine and medical care; associated with the international health programmes of the Rockefeller Foundation; served in China, 1921-39; Director, All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Calcutta, 1939-45; later associated with health projects in South East Asia, Canada, Australia, South Africa and Puerto Rico.

this would do me no harm. I hope therefore that a sufficient number of people will come forward to donate their blood.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

44. Another Casualty[1]

Truth, they say, is the first casualty in war. There are many other casualties, apart from the human beings who kill each other and die in their millions. Some casualties are unavoidable, others may be avoided, yet others are totally unnecessary.

I do not know in which category education will fall. In Spain, right in the midst of the civil war, I saw the Republic Government building new schools and pushing forward its educational programme with all speed. In China, also, after years of horrible war, I noticed an enthusiasm for education and every effort to further it.

Not so in India. Here education is apparently considered a luxury in war time by the military or civil authorities. Already many schools have been closed and probably many more will suffer the same fate. In the Central Provinces I found that the only teachers' training college and a number of normal schools had been closed. In my own city of Allahabad some of our biggest schools have had to close down and their buildings have been taken possession of by the military. The C.A.V. High School had seven hundred and fifty pupils. An order came for immediate evacuation. After much persuasion a day's reprieve was granted, possibly because the next was a Sunday. The Vidya Mandir High School consisting of four hundred students was served with a similar order. When it was pointed out that it was not possible to leave the building within a few hours, I am told that the furniture and belongings of the school were forcibly taken out and deposited in the open.

The Kayastha Pathshala School, the Majidia School and the Anglo-Bengali Intermediate College have also been taken over and occupied, presumably by the military.

1. Article printed in the *National Herald*, 5 July 1942.

I cannot judge of the urgent military necessity which led to these extraordinary happenings. But I cannot conceive of anything which can justify this indecent behaviour. If schools have to be evacuated let this be done properly and decently and full arrangements be made for their continuance elsewhere. Only a very stupid soldier acts in this way.

Another significant fact is that only Indian schools, and in Allahabad, only private schools have been evacuated in this way. There seems to be some law of fate that almost every activity of the present government in India should be wrong, unjust and partial.

It is rumoured that the Allahabad University is also going to get notice to quit and that it might have to move to Hardwar.

My mind goes back to China where bright-faced boys and girls continued their studies though Japanese bombs came down from the skies almost every day; where universities functioned in spite of every difficulty; where it was universally felt that whatever was sacrificed to war, education must be preserved and expanded. For, on education depended the growing generation, and on that growing generation depended the future of the country.

4

QUIT INDIA

1. J.L. Berry's Report of Interview with Jawaharlal[1]

I informed Nehru that I was very much disturbed by a report received by me from what I considered an unimpeachable source to the effect that Gandhi was planning to launch mass civil disobedience in the near future.[2] I pointed out that my government would naturally be intensely interested in knowing his reaction to such a programme. He replied that he had been away at an isolated place and consequently out of touch with developments for several days. He accordingly found it very difficult to give me his reaction without first having an opportunity of "ascertaining Mr. Gandhi's present position". This was precisely the non-committal type of reply that I had anticipated and I proceeded to give him details of the form which Gandhi's programme would take, as reported to me, in order to give him another opportunity of stating his reaction. He was not to be drawn, however, and replied that while he had, of course, heard various rumours he had not before been supplied with such details. I explained my own views of the very serious consequences that might be expected of a mass civil disobedience programme and suggested that perhaps I was exaggerating the seriousness of such a movement. He answered in a flash that "No, the result of such a programme might be very serious indeed". He stated that he had proposed to go to Allahabad Sunday night but that on the basis of our interview he would now proceed to Wardha. He promised that, after learning Gandhi's position, he would, if at all possible, let me have a preliminary statement of his own position.

1. Held at New Delhi on 24 May 1942. Printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers 1942*, Volume 1, (Washington, 1960), pp. 664-665.
   James Lampton Berry (b. 1908); Secretary to the Personal Representative of the U.S. President in India, 1942-44.
2. In his writings in May 1942, Mahatma Gandhi called upon the British to immediately withdraw from India. When asked on 17 May 1942 whether he had any mature plans for launching a big offensive, he replied that some ideas were floating in his brain, but he had to wait for the whole of India to join him. Berry was informed that Mahatma Gandhi was in touch with Patel, Rajendra Prasad and others, who were touring the provinces to ascertain the measure of support for mass civil disobedience.

2. To Louis Arthur Johnson[1]

New Delhi
25/5/1942

On my return after ten days absence in the mountains, I find considerable deterioration in the situation and events seem to be marching towards internal crisis. The Government of India's attitude and policies as well as London pronouncements on India exceedingly irritating to Indians. Gandhi's recent writings[2] betray great bitterness and do something to put an end to the intolerable situation in which Indians are treated contemptuously as pawns. He feels unable to remain passive spectator and demands British withdrawal from India. In effect this means recognition of Indian independence. While Congress demand is same, it is uncertain what attitude Congress will take up in regard to any new action suggested by Gandhi. But Gandhi by himself can powerfully affect mass opinion and any step he may take will have far-reaching consequences, though it may be limited in scope and area to begin with. For him at this age, it is his final struggle for Indian freedom and he is bent on carrying it to the end. While declaring his desire to resist Japanese aggression in India, he emphasized that present government in India is not only a continuing insult to Indians but is also incapable of defending India effectively and every risk should be taken to end it. While there is widespread sympathy with this nationalist approach there is also among many an apprehension that this may have adverse reactions on international and war situations. No clear programme outlined so far or decisions taken, but Gandhi appears resolved to persevere. Congress executive will meet soon to consider situation. I am much perturbed at some of these developments and am proceeding immediately to Wardha to see Gandhi for personal talks to clarify situation.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. This note was sent to Berry who forwarded it to Johnson who at this time was in America. Printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers* 1942, Volume 1, (Washington, 1960), p. 665. Also available in J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He wrote in the *Harijan* of 3 May 1942, that the time had come, during the War and not after it, for the British and Indians to be reconciled to complete separation from each other. He stated on 11 May 1942, "I ask you a bloodless end of an unnatural domination and for a new era, even though there may be protests and wailings from some of us." On 16 May 1942, he stated that he had no moral sympathy left for the British. On 17 May 1942, he told the press that the British should immediately withdraw from India, even if it led to anarchy, and that his teachings of nonviolence should not go in vain. He also called upon Indians to resist any attempted implementation of the scorched earth policy.

3. Independence the Only Basis[1]

I am surprised to read vague reports about my proceeding to America in the near future.[2] I know nothing about this beyond what I previously stated. Much as I would like to go there, I feel that my job at present is in India and I would not like to leave it. We live in continually changing times and new problems arise which sometimes require new solutions. None can prophesy about the distant future. But the problem of India must essentially be solved in India; for in the world constituted as it is today no problem can be isolated from other problems and opinions. The opinions of other countries count in any larger reorientation of the world. All I can say is that for the present, as far as I can see, there is no question of my leaving India.

The policy of the British Government and recently the Cripps negotiations have shown the futility of discussing anything on any basis other than complete handing over of power to India's representatives. It is on the basis of the recognition of India's independence that any fruitful talks can take place. No other basis counts today. Those who agree with this basis in India or outside can easily come to terms. But if any group in India does not act on that basis and continually looks for favours from the British Government there is no common ground with it.

Accepting that basis of independence and non-intervention by any outside party, there should be no difficulty in solving both the communal problem and other problems. Even from the point of view of utilising India's resources to the best advantage for the defence of the country as well as for helping the common cause, a free India can do so in alliance with others much more effectively than a resentful subject India. But that means our being treated and our treating other countries as allies and not being treated in a subordinate capacity. In particular I would like India to do all it can to be of help to China in her present grave distress. But present circumstances are such that we cannot do much. We are helpless in the matter. A free India allied to China and other countries in that group could do infinitely more and the mere fact of Indian freedom would revolutionise the mental atmosphere of the world. This War is infinitely more than a military spectacle. Moral and psychological urges count in every war, much more so in this War which can only be

1. Interview to the press, Wardha, 28 May 1942. *The Hindu*, 29 May 1942.
2. On 25 May 1942, the National Broadcasting Corporation announced from New York, that Jawaharlal was proceeding to Washington as Franklin Roosevelt was anxious to discuss with him India's defence and war production.

conducted with success if it is based on the goodwill and enthusiasm of the masses in every country. If India is important in this War, as she undoubtedly is at present, the goodwill of her people is equally important. Hence the paramount necessity of Indian independence not merely for India's sake but for the sake of the larger good and freedom of the world.

4. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Lucknow
May 30, 1942

My dear Maulana,
I arrived here last night. I ought to have reached in the morning but, as usual, the Grand Trunk Express was five hours late and I missed my connection at Jhansi, where I had to spend another eight or nine hours. Thus I missed an important day's sitting of our Provincial Council. Railway travelling is becoming increasingly difficult, especially when there is a change. Almost invariably one misses the connection. From Allahabad to Wardha is now a much more difficult journey than it was. There is only one partly suitable train and this lands one in Nagpur where one must stop for some hours.

Apart from other problems, I have to face the question of forfeiture of the security from the *National Herald*. We have filed another declaration today but no order has been passed upon it. This will probably be done on Monday. I am, therefore, staying on here till the night of Monday, June 1st, and shall reach Allahabad on June 2nd morning.

I shall then be away from Allahabad for nearly a month. I have much to do there and many matters to attend to, but I shall keep myself ready to go to Wardha whenever you want me to do so. I should, however, like to have at least two clear days in Allahabad and, if possible, three. I hope you will send me directions as to when I should reach Wardha. My journey there will be a longer one than yours.

I spent just one day with Gandhiji. I am glad I went because I got to know a little of what he was thinking. During my stay at Kulu I was almost cut off from newspapers and outside news. On coming back I was confronted by many new developments and I found myself rather at sea. The visit to Gandhiji and now the meeting of our Provincial

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Congress Committee, have helped me to understand the present situation. I told Gandhiji that I had come to listen to him and not to talk much, as I wanted to have time to think over what he said.

I understand here that the scheme for making provision for evacuee children from Calcutta has fallen through or at any rate has made no progress. So we are not taking any further steps in the matter.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
1.6.42

Sorry not answered your previous cables. Have been travelling about. Your presence in India welcome and would like you return if feasible. But difficult for me judge possibilities work in England now. Situation here complex but clear that no settlement possible except on the basis of independence.

Nehru

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

6. To J.L. Berry[1]

Allahabad
3 June 1942

I have visited Mr. Gandhi and discussed the situation with him and have also had occasion to judge public feeling at an important meeting of the Congressmen of our province (the United Provinces) which is a large province in India. I propose to return to Gandhi soon for fuller conversations.

1. This message was sent to Berry who forwarded it to Johnson. Printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers 1942*, Volume 1, (Washington, 1960), pp. 668-669. Also available in J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Gandhi has no desire to precipitate matters or to embarrass the present war effort. He is also firm in his decision that Japanese aggression in India must be resisted. He warmly repudiated the suggestion that his recent writings encouraged the Japanese. But he was definite that recognition of India's independence is essential now from every point of view including that of defence and no problem can be solved except on that basis. Every attempt to postpone this worsens the situation and every possible risk involved in independence is preferable and safer than certain deterioration otherwise. Present defence is artificial and isolated from the people and British policy is antagonising every group including Indian officers and army. Only on the basis of independence can reality and firmness be introduced in defence and other matters, otherwise there is likelihood of cracking up as in Burma. Gandhi is prepared that India should treat this matter on equal basis as an ally of Britain and others but not as subordinate in any shape. No arrangement is possible on the basis of India's subordination or subjection.

Gandhi is also agitated both at the growing repressive policy of the government and continuing differential treatment of Indian evacuees from Burma and in India. Official policy is greatly resented all over the country and adding to the bitterness. My closest colleague[2] in my province, a well-known anti-fascist, was recently interned without trial and my request for jail interviews with him was rejected. Newspapers are being suppressed. Large population in rural areas was suddenly ordered to leave homes without adequate notice or compensation or provision for transport, housing or land. Gandhi feels that where patently unreasonable and unjust orders are passed they may have to be disobeyed by the people concerned.

In both these matters public opinion is strongly with Gandhi and Congress supports him. Rajagopalachari is likely to make no difference except to stiffen the Congress attitude which is one of extreme resentment against the British policy. Future developments are uncertain but continuing governmental repression may lead to relatively small local conflicts. Gandhi does not intend starting any big movement unless he is forced to do so by the British policy. He feels he cannot remain passive spectator of what is happening and any risks are preferable to submission to repression of the people and consequent spiritual degradation. While both Gandhi and Congress declared inability to associate themselves with British war effort in present circumstances, there is no intention of impending military operation in any way. But popular feeling against the

2. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai.

British Government and policy undoubtedly isolates that effort. Congress advice to the civil population, which is unarmed and untrained, is to noncooperate with the aggressor in every way and obstruct him. No other method of resistance is open to them. This does not refer to the military defence which will continue.

Gandhi is anxious to help China but says the British Government and policy stand in the way of effective help being given by the Indian people. With freedom India will do her utmost to help. Gandhi is also anxious that American opinion should not misunderstand him. He has emphasized Indian independence as this is the only way both for India and for the progressive nations to utilise India's great resources in the cause of world freedom. But he cannot submit to treatment of India as a chattel by others. This treatment demonstrates that Britain is determined to obstruct Indian and Asiatic freedom. The larger cause demands completely new outlook towards Asiatic nations and as evidence of this recognition of India's independence.

My greetings and good wishes to Colonel Johnson. I hope he is rapidly recovering from his illness.

Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Allahabad
June 5, 1942

My dear Maulana,
Ever since my return to Allahabad I have been anxiously waiting for news from you. I have sent you three telegrams but so far there has been no reply. I do hope you are well.

Ordinarily it would not have mattered much if I stayed here a few days more or not. I have plenty of work to do here. But I feel a little oppressed at the fact that big things are happening and we are passively looking on. I know that we cannot do much but even so this inactive condition is bound to injure the Congress. What we should do is another matter.

Inevitably this depends on full and frank talks with Gandhiji. He has taken up a certain attitude, with part of which I agree and part of which I do not. Or rather it would be more correct to say that I do not agree

1. J.N. Correspondence. N.M.M.L

with his approach though generally speaking I agree with the actual work to be done. That of course is an old argument between us. But in the present circumstances it has ceased to be academic and is likely to affect all our work. Therefore it is essential, as you yourself suggested, to have these talks with Gandhiji and not allow matters to drift any further. My brief talk with him last week, short as it was, had I think some good effect.

When I came away from Wardha, it was understood that I should be back by about the 4th June. It was presumed then that you would be going there about that time or earlier. Accordingly I promised to return by that date and I made an engagement with an American friend[2] to meet me there. This American is already there waiting for me.

I feel that I should now go to Wardha as soon as possible in order not to upset arrangements any more. Even if I get there a day or two before you, I shall of course wait for you and remain there as long as you wish.

Last evening I sent you another express telegram. I am waiting for your reply. Unless I hear to the contrary from you, I should like to go to Wardha tomorrow morning reaching there on the 7th afternoon.

I am anxious about your health. I hope you have got over the feeling of giddiness that you sometimes had. Travelling in this weather is a trial but there is no help for it. Your journey to Wardha direct from Calcutta will at least be no-change one and more comfortable than mine is likely to be *via* Itarsi where I shall have to spend many hours.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Louis Fischer (1896-1970); American author and journalist; his works include *The Soviets in World Affairs, The Life of Mahatma Gandhi, The Life and Death of Stalin, Men and Politics, A Week with Gandhi, The Great Challenge* and *Russia Revisited.*

8. The British Must Leave India[1]

I am in entire agreement with Mahatma Gandhi and fully endorse his demand for the immediate and orderly withdrawal of the British Government from India. I am sadly disappointed at the performance of the

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 10 June 1942. From *The Hindu*, 11 June 1942.

British Government in India. I am sadly disappointed at the performance of the British Parliament and the repressive policy launched by the government of my home province.

Fascists and Axis partners are our enemies. But our fight against the British Government will continue till India is freed. But if, in the meantime, the Japanese aggressor invades India we will resist the invasion, too, but we cannot compromise, on any ground, our quarrel with the British Government who have been denying India freedom. Americans are our friends but we would not like an American army to land in India and overrun this country. So far as the prospects of a mass movement of Gandhiji's contemplation[2] are concerned, you can see the results within two months.

2. On 31 May 1942, Mahatma Gandhi stated: "I have waited and waited, until the country should develop the nonviolent strength necessary to throw off the foreign yoke. But my attitude now has undergone a change. I feel that I cannot afford to wait. If I continue to wait, I might have to wait till doomsday. For the preparation that I have prayed for and worked for may never come, and in the meantime I may be enveloped and overwhelmed by the flaws that threaten all of us. That is why I have decided that even at certain risks, which are obviously involved, I must ask the people to resist slavery." Explaining the form his impending civil disobedience movement would take, Mahatma Gandhi told Louis Fischer, in the first week of June 1942, that the peasants would stop paying taxes, and would make salt despite prohibition, and then the next step would be to seize the land.

9. Note on Conversations with Mahatma Gandhi[1]

After conversations with Bapu from June 8th to 12th 1942, Bapu's views appear to be as follows:

1. The time has come for us to emphasize and concentrate on complete independence and the total withdrawal of the British power from India. This has become essential from every point of view and there is no solution of any of India's major problems (such as the communal problem) till such withdrawal. Even from the point of view of the War, the defence of India, help to China, or the advancement of the Allied cause, this is necessary. Not to do so is to allow the situation to deteriorate progressively and rapidly, and go downhill to disaster.

1. This confidential note was written by Jawaharlal at Wardha on 12-14 June 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. The demand for the withdrawal of British rule from India means in effect the acknowledgement of India's independence and then consultations on this basis between representatives of India and England for the transfer of power and for a mutual adjustment of relations between the two countries, especially in view of the War that is going on.

3. The demand does not mean the withdrawal of Britishers as such or even the British army, which in view of the War may be treated as an allied army engaged in the common defence of India. But it does mean full transfer of political power to Indian representatives, and a treaty or arrangement for the joint defence of India. This would apply equally to American forces in India which may be treated as an allied army also.

4. The demand for independence and transfer of political power must be acceded to independently of any arrangements being made in India for the governance of the country after the British withdrawal. It is hoped that satisfactory arrangements for the establishment of a National Government, agreeable to the major groups and parties, will be made. It is expected that, in any event, as soon as the independence of India is accepted and announced, an agreement between the major groups will become highly likely. But even if unfortunately this does not take place immediately, the British Government, on their part, must agree to Indian independence. Such risks of chaos and anarchy as may appear possible are preferable to the existing state of affairs.

5. Thus, in any event, and whatever the possible consequences, the British Government should recognise the independence of India and announce their intention to hand over political power.

6. From the points of view of the War, the defence of India and help to China, the present state of affairs is highly unsatisfactory and it is exceedingly doubtful if any effective action in this behalf can be taken by the British Government and its allies so long as India is treated as a subject country. The risks of maintaining the *status quo* are very great—much greater than those involved in any change. India is sullen and angry and is a deadweight round the Allies; her defence is impeded; and the help that might be sent to China is far less than a free India could and would give. The mere fact of Indian independence would make a vast difference all over the world and give a moral weight to the Allied cause. It would electrify not only the Indian people but people everywhere. But even apart from the moral benefit, the practical gain would be great. India could then defend herself better, give far more aid to China, and help the Allied cause more effectively.

7. The people of India should have, and have, every sympathy for China's freedom. China's subjection to Japanese imperialism would be a great tragedy in itself and would also add to the dangers of India. Therefore, it is desirable and necessary for India to help China to the best of her ability. At present India cannot do so. A free India will do so effectively and can make it impossible for Japanese imperialism to crush China.

8. We cannot on any account entertain the idea of doing anything to facilitate the Japanese invasion of India or Japanese aggression in China. Such invasion must be resisted by Indians. At present owing to British rule and the methods practised by it, there is intense and widespread resentment all over India and, as a consequence, a certain feeling of satisfaction at British defeats and Japanese victories. This is leading to a state of passive acceptance of a Japanese invasion when it comes. It saps the people's will and power to resist such an invasion when it comes. This is dangerous and harmful to India, develops a servile and submissive state of mind, and makes her an easy prey to an invader. To change this mentality and make it vital and resentful of any invasion or of submission, it is essential for Indians to have and secure independence, which they must defend.

9. The transfer of political power will involve an upsetting of the existing structure. This should however be done so as not to give any advantage to the Japanese or any other aggressor. Thus it should be agreed that the existing military dispositions of armed forces should continue and the British or American allies of India should be entitled to use India as a base for their operations for the defence of India, for help to China and for objectives connected with these.

10. The British and American forces will also be entitled to take advantage of the productive capacity of India.

11. The Indian National Government will treat the British and American forces as allies and will cooperate with them in the defence of India and help to China and connected purposes. Gandhiji in his personal capacity cannot countenance the use of armed forces by India as this is opposed to his principles, and he would like India (and the rest of the world) to adopt the methods of nonviolence. But he recognises that in existing circumstances an Indian national government is not going to take this view and will use armed forces for India's defence. He is prepared also to countenance, after the declaration of Indian independence, the presence of British and American forces in India as allies cooperating in a common endeavour.

12. In the event (which is not only likely but almost certain) of Britain not agreeing to Indian independence, the *status quo* cannot

be tolerated and something must be done to change it. That is some kind of a direct action movement should be started. But before this is done the public mind must be well prepared for it, and in initiating or carrying on that movement every care should be taken that it does not directly or indirectly aid the Japanese or any other invader of India. Apart from this, the movement should be envisaged as a mass movement and there should be as few restrictions as possible on the people who wish to join it. Nor should any untoward incidents lead to its suspension or withdrawal. The movement must aim at independence and be carried on till this is achieved.

13. As the situation changes from day to day, it is difficult to say definitely beforehand what should be done some weeks or months later. The actual decision for any major step must be based on the actual position then—national and international.

14. Quite apart from a major step, some kind of local resistance or opposition may become necessary in the case of sudden and improper evacuation orders or other orders which harass the people. Whenever this is necessary it should be done. It is possible that out of these minor conflicts, a major conflict might take shape.

1. Full independence must be recognised.
2. As soon as this is done representatives of India and England (and when necessary other United Nations) to meet to discuss actual conditions of transfer of power to National Government.
3. National Government associates itself as an ally of the United Nations and cooperates with them in the defence of India, help to China, etc.
4. British or American armed forces in India to be treated as allied forces.
5. India's industrial capacity to be increased in every way.

10. To James Lampton Berry[1]

Wardha
June 14, 1942

Dear Mr. Berry,

Mahatma Gandhi has addressed a letter to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.[2] In this letter he explains his present policy in regard to India,

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See the succeeding item.

China and Japanese aggression. In view of certain misapprehensions that have arisen, this letter, with the elucidation it contains, has a certain importance. Probably it will be sent by cable to Generalissimo Chiang.

As I feel that Colonel Louis Johnson would be interested in the contents of this letter, I am sending you a copy of it, so that you may communicate it to him. Mr. Gandhi intends publishing the letter in the next issue of his weekly journal, *Harijan*, which will come out on the 21st June.[3]

The letter gives expression to Mr. Gandhi's personal views but there is little doubt that he represents, in his basic approach, the vast majority of the country. Certain differences have arisen in the past between him and some members of the Congress as to the application of the principle and technique of nonviolence to external defence and civil disorder. In his letter Mr. Gandhi has recognised that the government of free India will, in the existing circumstances, necessarily have recourse to armed defence against aggression. He has further stated, even in his personal capacity, that he would agree to the presence of foreign armed forces belonging to the Allies in India, and the use of India by these forces as a base for military operations against the aggressor countries. But all this depends on India being free and independent and entering into treaty relations with the Allied nations. Indeed the crux of the matter is the independence of India.

The Congress has yet to consider Gandhi's proposals formally. But the latest decisions of the Congress are clear enough and approximate very closely to Mr. Gandhi's present position. In effect they amount to this: the immediate recognition of and giving effect to Indian independence and then an alliance with the Allied powers for the defence of India and for other common purposes. In other words, a free India will throw her full weight in resisting Japanese or other aggression, in helping China to the best of her ability, and in furthering the common cause. She would do her utmost to increase her production and her capacity for defence.

Mr. Gandhi has further stated that in whatever action he might be compelled to advise or undertake, the governing factor will be the consideration that it should not injure China or encourage Japanese aggression in India or China.

It has been my earnest desire that India should cooperate to the fullest extent with China and America. Asia, or any other large part of the world, dominated by fascism or Nazism is an intolerable thought to me,

3. On the request of Chiang Kai-shek the letter was not published in the *Harijan*.

and I should like India to do her utmost to combat this. But the blindness and obstinacy of the British Government have created a situation of extreme gravity in India and I do not see wisdom dawning upon them in the near future. It would appear that they are determined to bring about a conflict with the Congress and nationalist elements in India. Already many of my closest colleagues have been arrested and this process is continuing. It is possible that I might be arrested. It is possible also that Congress might be temporarily crushed by severe repression. But the Indian people are not going to be coerced, much less won over, by these methods, and the price to be paid by all concerned will be a heavy one. I have endeavoured with all my strength to avoid this conflict and this price. But the future appears to be dark.

I am going to Bombay tomorrow and I shall spend four days there. I expect to reach Allahabad on the 20th night.

Dr. K.B. Menon, who is taking this letter, has instructions to bring any reply which you may desire to send, to me to Bombay.

I think I have already told you that you can get into touch with me at any time through Mr. Raghunandan Saran, whom, I believe, you have met. His home address is 2 A, Metcalfe Road, Delhi, and his office address is C/o Pyare Lal & Sons, Motor Engineers, Connaught Circus, New Delhi.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. Mahatma Gandhi's Letter to Chiang Kai-shek[1]

Sevagram
June 14, 1942

Dear Generalissimo,

I can never forget the 5 hours' close contact I had with you and your noble wife in Calcutta. I had always felt drawn towards you in your fight for freedom, and that contact and our conversation brought China and her problems still nearer to me. Long ago, between 1905 and 1913, when I was in South Africa, I was in constant touch with the small Chinese colony in Johannesburg. I knew them first as clients and then as comrades in the Indian passive resistance struggle in South Africa. I

1. This letter was drafted by Jawaharlal. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Also printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers 1942*, Volume 1, (Washington, 1960), pp. 674-676.

came in touch with them in Mauritius also. I learnt then to admire their thrift, industry, resourcefulness and internal unity. Later in India I had a very fine Chinese friend living with me for a few years and we all learnt to like him.[2]

I have thus felt greatly attracted towards your great country and, in common with my countrymen, our sympathy has gone out to you in your terrible struggle. Our mutual friend Jawaharlal Nehru, whose love of China is only excelled if at all by his love of his own country, has kept us in intimate touch with the developments of the Chinese struggle.

Because of this feeling I have towards China and my earnest desire that our two great countries should come closer to one another and co-operate to their mutual advantage, I am anxious to explain to you that my appeal to the British power to withdraw from India is not meant in any shape or form to weaken India's defence against the Japanese or embarrass you in your struggle. India must not submit to any aggressor or invader and must resist him. I would not be guilty of purchasing the freedom of my country at the cost of your country's freedom. That problem does not arise before me as I am clear that India cannot gain her freedom in this way, and a Japanese domination of either India or China would be equally injurious to the other country and to world peace. That domination must therefore be prevented and I should like India to play her natural and rightful part in this.

I feel India cannot do so while she is in bondage. India has been a helpless witness of the withdrawals from Malaya, Singapore and Burma. We must learn the lesson from these tragic events and prevent by all means at our disposal a repetition of what befell these unfortunate countries. But unless we are free, we can do nothing to prevent it, and the same process might well occur again, crippling India and China disastrously. I do not want a repetition of this tragic tale of woe.

Our proffered help has repeatedly been rejected by the British Government and the recent failure of the Cripps mission has left a deep wound which is still running. Out of that anguish has come the cry for immediate withdrawal of British power so that India can look after herself and help China to the best of her ability.

I have told you of my faith in nonviolence[3] and of my belief in the effectiveness of this method if the whole nation could turn to it. That

2. He was a poet and Mahatma Gandhi had given him the name Shanti.
3. Madame Chiang in her letter to Jawaharlal on 22 June 1942 stated: "I know how hard you must have worked on Gandhiji to make him commit himself to the extent he has written, for if you remember, when we saw him at Calcutta his whole attitude towards possible Japanese invasion was that of nonviolence and noncooperation."

faith in it is as firm as ever. But I realise that India today as a whole has not that faith and belief, and the government in free India would be formed by the various elements composing the nation.

Today the whole of India is impotent and feels frustrated (the Indian Army consists largely of people who have joined up because of economic pressure). They have no feeling of a cause to fight for, and in no sense are they a national army. Those of us who would fight for a cause, for India and China, with armed forces or with nonviolence, cannot, under the foreign heel, function as they want to. And yet our people know for certain that free India can play even a decisive part not only on her own behalf, but also on behalf of China and world peace. Many, like me, feel that it is not proper or manly to remain in this helpless state and allow events to overwhelm us when a way to effective action can be opened to us. They feel, therefore, that every possible effort should be made to ensure independence and that freedom of action which is so urgently needed. This is the origin of my appeal to the British power to end immediately the unnatural connection between Britain and India.

Unless we make that effort there is grave danger of public feeling in India going into wrong and harmful channels. There is every likelihood of subterranean sympathy for Japan growing simply in order to weaken and oust British authority in India. This feeling may take the place of robust confidence in our ability never to look to outsiders for help in winning our freedom. We have to learn self-reliance and develop the strength to work out for our own salvation. This is only possible if we make a determined effort to free ourselves from bondage. That freedom has become a present necessity to enable us to take our due place among the free nations of the world.

To make it perfectly clear that we want to prevent in every way Japanese aggression, I would personally agree, and I am sure that government of free India would agree, that the Allied powers might, under treaty with us, keep their armed forces in India and use the country as a base for operations against the threatened Japanese attack.

I need hardly give you my assurance that, as the author of the new move in India, I shall take no hasty action. And whatever action I may recommend will be governed by the consideration that it should not injure China, or encourage Japanese aggression in India or China. I am trying to enlist world opinion in favour of a proposition which to me appears self-proved and which must lead to the strengthening of India's and China's defence. I am also educating public opinion in India and conferring with my colleagues. Needless to say any movement against the British Government with which I may be connected

will be essentially nonviolent. I am straining every nerve to avoid a conflict with British authority. But if in the vindication of the freedom which has become an immediate desideratum, this becomes inevitable, I shall not hesitate to run any risk however great.

Very soon you will have completed 5 years of war against Japanese aggression and invasion and all the sorrow and misery that these have brought to China. My heart goes out to the people of China in deep sympathy and in admiration for their heroic struggle and endless sacrifices in the cause of their country's freedom and integrity against tremendous odds. I am convinced that this heroism and sacrifice cannot be in vain; they must bear fruit. To you, to Madame Chiang and to the great people of China, I send my earnest and sincere wishes for your success. I look forward to the day when a free India and a free China will cooperate together in friendship and brotherhood for their own good and for the good of Asia and the world.

In anticipation of your permission, I am taking the liberty of publishing this letter in *Harijan*.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

12. The Passion that Moves Gandhi[1]

Question: Would you throw some light on Gandhiji's contemplated civil disobedience movement?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It would be improper for me to state what the Congress would do under the present circumstances. It is for the Congress Working Committee to take any decision about the contemplated mass movement and it is for the Congress President to indicate such decisions.

Q: We would appreciate your throwing some light on your talks with Mahatma Gandhi?

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 16 June 1942. From *The Hindu*, 18 June 1942.

JN: Since the Cripps negotiations, I had not seen Gandhiji and as much has happened since then, on my return from Kulu I hurried to Wardha and spent a few hours with him. That was not enough, and so I went again to him in company with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and we had long talks with him. We naturally discussed various aspects of the situation as it faced us, and I hope we understood each other in a large measure. I was myself greatly gratified to find how near we were to each other, as we have been in the past, in spite of different approaches and occasional differences of opinion. In a complex situation, it is inevitable that there should be different approaches and varying emphases, but it is the fundamentals that matter. As I talked to Mahatma Gandhi and tried to follow his argument, I saw a passion in his eyes and also heard it in his words; and I knew that that passion was the passion of India—the passion that is moving vast numbers of Indians today. In a much smaller measure, I too have experienced that passion and I know what it means. Before that mighty urge of the people petty arguments and controversies become small and without much meaning. This is the fundamental aspect of the Indian problem today, and if we lose sight of it and become involved in the smaller aspects of the question, over which we may or may not differ, then we err grievously. What the future will bring to us or to the world, I do not know. But I do know that the situation in India is becoming intolerable to many who feel that they cannot carry on as impassive spectators of the deeds of others.

When Mahatma Gandhi says to the British 'Withdraw', he says something which every self-respecting Indian feels. I have ventured to say that previously in a cruder language when I said "get out".[2] What does this mean? It does not mean, of course, that Englishmen as individuals should pack up and go. It means transfer of political power completely, or a decision on the part of the British to do so without raising any arguments about what we are supposed to do about it. Naturally, if such things are done amicably, every care is taken to prevent any catastrophe or anything that might injuriously affect the defence of India; but the essential thing is that the British Government must accept the independence of India in its entirety. Only then, I think, can we consider other problems in a suitable atmosphere and against a proper background.

One thing is certain. There is going to be no peace between us and England except on that basis. I realise that the British Government as constituted today, is not likely to act in the desired direction in the near

2. See *ante*, p. 33.

future. That is a misfortune for us, for England, and for the cause England claims to be fighting for. But that is going to make no difference to us now and whatever the consequences or risks, we shall carry on in our own way.

Most people know that I have long been an opponent of fascism and Nazism. I am convinced today, more than ever, that these doctrines are a menace to the freedom and peace of the world, whether they are introduced from abroad or are of indigenous growth. I have repeatedly warned my countrymen against them, and I have tried to prevent any development which might even indirectly help those nations which subscribe to those doctrines. In particular, my heart has gone out to the people of China, to whom I pledged my word, and in a sense the word of India, years ago. I am not going to be false to that pledge and I shall do everything in my power to honour it. But the conviction has grown in me that for India to help China in her present need, it is essential for India to be free. We have done precious little in the past to help her and we can do precious little in the future if we remain as we are. Therefore, both from the national as well as from the international point of view, the question of Indian independence in the present becomes of paramount importance.

Recently, Mahatma Gandhi has, in his desire not to come in the way of the defence of India from aggression, said something which is extraordinary, coming from him. He has agreed to the presence of foreign troops in India[3] to fight the aggressor, provided they are here as allies of a free country under treaty with India. That itself shows his extreme desire to bring the national and international aspects of the problem together, and thus to avoid any conflict between them. It also shows his extreme desire not to do anything which might injure the cause of China.

Q: Would you like to comment on the Anglo-Soviet agreement?[4]

JN: The Anglo-Soviet alliance may be good for Britain and for the Soviet Union, and it might possibly be good to other governments or countries. But, as an Indian and as an Asiatic, I cannot view the agreement between other powers without a measure of apprehension. Where does Asia come in? Where does India come in, or even China come in? One thing

3. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Harijan* of 14 June 1942, "Britain and America, and other countries too, can keep their armies here and use Indian territory as a base for military operations."
4. See *ante*, p. 344.

into the War. The position today is that we cannot wipe out the events of the last two or three years. The question of India remaining neutral hardly arises. India's armies are on so many fronts, and I do not see how a free India can remain neutral. Nationalist India or the Congress has not been neutral in its attitude to the War. It has had its sympathies with a certain cause and with certain countries like China.

Q: The government has commandeered the premises of an educational institution in the Central Provinces for war purposes. What are your views about it?

JN: I recognise that military necessity might require evacuation and taking over of buildings, but the government should see that proper facilities are afforded to those affected by such orders. In China and in Spain education was not only not neglected but pushed forward in spite of wars raging there. This was because the national government there could sacrifice everything but not the welfare of the future generations. I agree with the suggestion that spacious buildings like the Viceregal lodge could very well be used for such purposes. This is not a serious matter but just shows the difference between a national government and a foreign government.

Q: What do you have to say about Rajagopalachari's stand?

JN: Rajaji's activities have been singularly misguided from the country's point of view, from mine and equally from Rajaji's. After all he has adopted this attitude in order to gain certain results that he desires. But he has probably succeeded in making the problem more difficult.

Q: Rajagopalachari has suggested that you and Jinnah should meet for a solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem.[5] What have you to say to this?

JN: So far as I am concerned, and I believe so far as any Congressman is concerned, we would willingly meet Mr. Jinnah if that serves the cause we have at heart.

5. Rajagopalachari suggested this in his speech at Madurai on 15 June 1942: "Incitement of organisational wrath against me is not action. It is not an alternative programme. I do not care what happens to me. It is enough if Pandit Jawaharlal and Mr. Jinnah bestir themselves and achieve the one thing that is now needed in this crisis and which will save the country and lead the nation to the shore of stable honour and freedom."

But obviously such a meeting can only be profitable, if there is some common subject to discuss on which there is a measure of basic agreement, even though there might be a great deal of disagreement otherwise. For instance, there is no particular point in our discussing Pakistan, because we have no common ground on that issue. But it would be very much to the point if we discussed the means of achieving independence for India or, to put it more definitely, eliminating foreign authority from India, leaving ourselves free to determine problems without foreign interference. If that could be the common basis, Mr. Jinnah could certainly continue to hold his opinion with regard to Pakistan while I could continue to hold my opinion in opposition to it, that is, we joined together on a fundamental issue, leaving the conflict on another issue unsolved for the moment. It is possible that in this way cooperation on a common issue might lead to a solution of other issues also or if not then we face those other issues as between ourselves later on. Or else, as the Congress President has suggested, the representatives of the Congress and the League might meet and consider the various possibilities of having a common front. That suggestion itself, he said in reply to a question, was an initiative. Unfortunately in various public speeches of the leaders of the Muslim League, it has been rejected.[6] The whole point is that there should be a common ground on the basic issue of Indian independence. That is the withdrawal of the foreign power from India. With this, the other problems are simplified tremendously. That was why I ventured to say at Delhi, after the Cripps negotiations were over, that I could not conceive of Mr. Jinnah or Mr. Savarkar being opposed to the attitude the Congress had taken up regarding the Cripps proposals. Because all that we said was that political power should be transferred from the British to Indian hands. The other question as to how that political power should be controlled and administered in India might certainly raise communal and other issues. But we never reached that point and therefore no communal issue was raised before Sir Stafford Cripps.

6. Jinnah, Khaliquzzaman and Muhammad Ismail Khan, in their speeches at Bombay on 27 May 1942, stated that there could be no agreement between the Congress and the League until the League's demand of Pakistan was accepted by the Congress. Khaliquzzaman said in Ahmedabad on 31 May 1942: "Even now if the Congress accepted Pakistan, as Mr. Rajagopalachari was prepared to do, the relations between the two communities might be restored, or else the path of India would be full of troubles and miseries."

13. To Mohammad Yunus[1]

Allahabad
June 22, 1942

My dear Yunus,
I sent you a letter today.[2] Soon after I received your second letter. In my previous letter I have given some suggestions as to what Badshah Khan might say in a kind of a preface to your book.

I am glad to learn that the hubbub over Marium's[3] marriage is dying down, in spite of the efforts of the interested parties. In such matters, it seems to me, that the only right course is to stick to the correct position.

I think that the next two weeks will probably bring far-reaching developments in India, both in the war situation and in the domestic situation. I hope Badshah Khan realises this. We have to keep ready for all these developments.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *post*, section 12, item 7.
3. Daughter of Dr. Khan Sahib. She married a Christian.

14. To James Lampton Berry[1]

Allahabad
June 23, 1942

Dear Mr. Berry,
Thank you for your letter of June 20th conveying Colonel Johnson's

1. *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 492-493.

message[2] which I welcomed. I have also read Mr. Welles's[3] speech[4] with interest. I am very glad to learn that Colonel Johnson is well on his way to health and I hope he will be fit and well soon. I hope you will convey my warm regards to him and tell him that I think of him often.

I can quite understand that some of Mr. Gandhi's recent statements have been misunderstood in the United States. Perhaps his later statements have helped to clear up this misunderstanding. One thing is certain: Mr. Gandhi wants to do everything in his power to prevent a Japanese invasion and occupation of India. He wants to rouse up the people of the country to resist and not to submit. He has been oppressed by the fact that British policy in India is producing just the opposite results and antagonising the people so much that they are developing a mood which prefers any change, however bad, to the existing state of affairs. This is a dangerous and harmful tendency which he wishes to combat.

After Malaya and Burma there is a widespread belief in India that so far as the British Government in India is concerned there is no serious intention, or capacity, to resist Japanese invasion, especially in Bengal. Confidential circulars issued by the authorities in Bengal to their officers dealt fully with the methods of evacuation and how superior officers should get away leaving their subordinates in charge. These subordinates were actually told to carry on their normal work under the orders of the enemy, as this was apparently in accordance with international law. Such instructions do not encourage resistance. They are essentially defeatist. The way the Madras Government behaved about two

2. Johnson's message read: "I have the greatest sympathy for you in your position. I want you to know that I have in no way changed my personal opinion and I shall act in accordance therewith on my return to Washington. I am very happy over the speeches that you have made advocating continued opposition to Japanese aggression. I think you should know that Mr. Gandhi's statements are being misunderstood in the United States and are being construed as opposing our aims. I hope you have seen Mr. Welles's recent speech. In case you have not, you can obtain a copy from Berry. My warmest regards."
3. Summer Welles (1892-1961); American Ambassador to Cuba, 1933; Assistant Secretary of State, 1933-37; Under Secretary of State, 1937-43.
4. In his Post War Plan Memorial Day speech on 30 May 1942, Welles declared: "If this War is in fact a War for the liberation of peoples, it must assure the sovereign equality of people throughout the world... Our victory must bring in its train the liberation of all peoples. Discrimination between people because of their race, creed or colour must be abolished. The age of imperialism is ended. The rights of the people must be recognised... The principles of the Atlantic Charter must be guaranteed to the world as a whole—in all oceans, in all countries."

months ago was also extraordinary.[5] At the rumour of a possible invasion (which turned out later to be untrue) they fled.

Even if the intention is to offer determined resistance at a later stage, the mere fact that Bengal has fallen will have far-reaching repercussions all over India. It is quite likely that in many rural areas, far from any troop concentrations, civil administration may gradually fade away. This again will inevitably affect the military situation and weaken it.

How far American planes and other kinds of help have altered the situation I do not know. But essentially the situation cannot be very different from what it was two months ago. No Indian can view this prospect with equanimity. It means Japanese occupation of important parts of the country and growing chaos in many other parts. And yet we feel that this can be checked. In a purely military sense we cannot do much in the near future and operation must depend on the Allied forces in India. But the acknowledgment of India's independence and the establishment of a national government here will electrify the atmosphere and make all the difference in the world. Even if unfortunately the Japanese occupy certain parts of the country, the rest does not crack up but carries on aggressively as in China. A spirit of passive resignation gives place to active opposition and resistance.

Indian independence therefore becomes of paramount importance today for purposes of Indian defence in cooperation with the Allied forces, as well as for helping China. It is only in this context of today's problem that it has to be considered.

For those of us who have to shoulder a measure of responsibility, it is not enough to function as individuals, although that has also to be done. We must get others to act and generally to influence public opinion in the right direction. I have been endeavouring to do this. On no account do I want India to be submissive to any aggression. I want active and continuous resistance to it. But if that is to be at all effective, then the British Government in India must give place to a free national government. This will not interfere with the military dispositions or arrangements for defence.

In my last letter to you I mentioned that Mr. Gandhi's letter to the Generalissimo, would be published in the *Harijan* on June 21st. Almost at the last moment a message was received by us that the Generalissimo would like the publication to be postponed. We just managed to do this but it involved the destruction of ten thousand copies.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. See *ante*, p. 274.

15. Message to the Aligarh District Conference[1]

I am sorry I cannot attend this conference. It is difficult for me to attend district conferences now because of my preoccupation with other important work. It is good, however, for such conferences to be held even in these days of crisis.

But a conference would serve little purpose if we thought of it in terms of past years. Conditions have changed completely and we stand in the midst of war and on the verge of great changes. For us now it is not just a question of expressing our opinion about various matters or making demands. We have today to keep vigilant and be ready for instant action lest events overwhelm us.

We discuss amongst ourselves matters of high policy. But whatever our policy might be, the work we have to do remains the same. Every policy demands strength and organized effort behind it. Without it the policy fails. With it even a partially wrong policy may well lead to some results.

It is essential therefore for all our workers, all Congressmen and all the people of our province to realise the paramount importance of this work in hand, so that we might get our house in order and be ready for all emergencies. To remain passive spectators is to injure our cause and humiliate ourselves. That way leads to servility and subjection to whatever power or powers may triumph in this War. We have long continued our struggle for freedom and independence against the British power in India. We cannot submit to it or accept the status of a subject nation.

But we have also to remember that on no account and whatever the future may bring, we cannot submit to a new invader, Japanese or German or any other. It is a difficult task for us to keep up our flag of freedom against all who deny it and refuse to recognise it. But however difficult, we have to do it and pay the cost, whatever it might be. The alternative is a continuation of our slavery.

If we had been a free and independent country today, we would have faced all the perils that might encompass us with good heart and with the strength which comes from the union of a free people with their own government. I am sure that in spite of our present condition, disarmed and untrained as we are for defence, we would have given good

1. Allahabad, 22 June 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. The eleventh session of the Aligarh District Conference was held on 26 and 27 June.

account of ourselves and preserved the freedom of our country. Unfortunately that freedom has been denied to us and because of that denial the situation, not only for us but for those with whom we have sympathy, like China and Russia, as well as their allies, has grown more critical. Even at this last hour the real solution is the recognition of Indian independence. Without it the Indian people cannot function and their great strength is tied up and lies unused.

But whatever the British Government may or may not do, we cannot remain passive. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance for us to organise ourselves and to carry out the programme of self-protection and self-sufficiency in every part of our province. We have to enroll volunteers also for this purpose. This is not a party programme but a national programme in which we must cooperate with all our countrymen who feel like us and desire to maintain the freedom and dignity of India and to protect our people, as far as we can, from the dangers inherent in the situation. I hope, therefore, that the Aligarh District Conference will pay particular attention to this organisation for self-sufficiency and self-protection and will also have stout groups of volunteers all over the district. Aligarh has been one of our good districts in this province and the peasantry of Aligarh especially has a fine record in the national struggle. I hope they will live up to that record in the days to come.

Every Congressman must realise that Congress discipline has to be maintained. Those who do not agree with the fundamental Congress policy must function outside the Congress. It is not right or proper for them to misuse the Congress name or the Congress platform for purposes which are opposed to Congress policy. Our Congress organisation in the United Provinces has been attacked and is being daily harassed by the government of this province. Our President and our Secretary and important colleagues are in prison. A greater responsibility therefore devolves upon us.

There is far too much softness and waiting for events among our people. This is not the way a brave nation behaves. This is not the way a people hankering for freedom behave. We must be up and doing and we must be perfectly clear that we will submit to no alien authority and no invader, however soft-speaking he might be. There is going to be no peace in this country till India is independent.

As I write this message, my mind goes to the magnificent resistance of the Chinese people and of the Russian people against aggression and invasion. It is five years since the Sino-Japanese War began and during all this long period of intense suffering and sacrifice, the Chinese people have not flinched. Today is the anniversary of the German attack on Russia. For a year now the Russian people have fought with amazing

heroism in defence of their country. Let us take heart from these examples of heroic courage and endurance, and let us not grow panicky or excited because war comes to India. If we keep cool, well-organised and self-reliant, we shall face every contingency with confidence. Our programme of self-protection and self-sufficiency, if carried out, will give us that self-reliance.

I hope that the Aligarh District Conference will give this lead not only to the people of the district but to the people of our province. We have great problems to face, the problems of poverty and unemployment, the agrarian problem. All these have to be faced and solved. But today everything must take a second place before this major problem of preserving ourselves and not falling a prey to further subjection or internal chaos.

16. Mahatma Gandhi's Letter to President Roosevelt[1]

Sevagram
1 July, 1942

Dear Friend,

I twice missed coming to your great country. I have the privilege of having numerous friends there both known and unknown to me. Many of my countrymen have received and are still receiving higher education in America. I know too that several have taken shelter there. I have profited greatly by the writings of Thoreau[2] and Emerson.[3] I say this to tell you how much I am connected with your country. Of Great Britain I need say nothing beyond mentioning that in spite of my intense dislike of British rule, I have numerous personal friends in England whom I love as dearly as my own people. I had my legal education there. I have therefore nothing but good wishes for your country and Great Britain. You will therefore accept my word that my present proposal, that the British should unreservedly and without reference to the wishes of the people of India immediately withdraw their rule, is prompted by the friendliest intention. I would like to turn into goodwill

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. Printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers 1942*, Volume 1, (Washington, 1960), pp. 677-678.
2. Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862); American philosopher; his works include *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849) and *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (1854).
3. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882); American essayist and poet; his works include *Essays* (1841-44), *Society and Solitude* (1870), *Letters and Social Aims* (1876), *National History of the Intellect* (1893).

the ill will which, whatever may be said to the contrary, exists in India towards Great Britain and thus enable the millions of India to play their part in the present War.

My personal position is clear. I hate all war. If, therefore, I could persuade my countrymen, they would make a most effective and decisive contribution in favour of an honourable peace. But I know that all of us have not a living faith in nonviolence. Under foreign rule however we can make no effective contribution of any kind in this War, except as helots.

The policy of the Indian National Congress, largely guided by me, has been one of non-embarrassment to Britain, consistently with the honourable working of the Congress, admittedly the largest political organisation, of the longest standing in India. The British policy as exposed by the Cripps mission and rejected by almost all parties has opened our eyes and has driven me to the proposal I have made. I hold that the full acceptance of my proposal and that alone can put the Allied cause on an unassailable basis. I venture to think that the Allied declaration that the Allies are fighting to make the world safe for freedom of the individual and for democracy sounds hollow, so long as India and, for that matter, Africa are exploited by Great Britain, and America has the Negro problem in her own home. But in order to avoid all complications, in my proposal I have confined myself only to India. If India becomes free, the rest must follow, if it does not happen simultaneously.

In order to make my proposal fool-proof I have suggested that, if the Allies think it necessary, they may keep their troops, at their own expense in India, not for keeping internal order but for preventing Japanese aggression and defending China. So far as India is concerned, she must become free even as America and Great Britain are. The Allied troops will remain in India during the war under treaty with the free India government that may be formed by the people of India without any outside interference, direct or indirect.

It is on behalf of this proposal that I write this to enlist your active sympathy.

I hope that it would commend itself to you.

Mr. Louis Fischer is carrying this letter to you.

If there is any obscurity in my letter, you have but to send me word and I shall try to clear it.

I hope finally that you will not resent this letter as an intrusion but take it as an approach from a friend and well-wisher of the Allies.

Yours sincerely,
M.K. Gandhi

17. A Vote of No-Confidence[1]

Some members of the British Parliament have given notice of a motion of no-confidence[2] in the central direction of the War. That means the British War Cabinet; that means Mr. Winston Churchill. This motion may be talked out, or ultimately withdrawn, or defeated overwhelmingly. Mr. Churchill is still strong enough in Parliament to meet these assaults. Probably he is strong enough though not so strong, in the country also. Nevertheless it is clear that there is a mounting tide of dissatisfaction against those in high authority in England. Mr. Churchill came in as a positive and inevitable choice; he remains as Prime Minister for negative reasons. Who else can take his place? For the Englishman the answer is not easy and he looks round in vain. The vital test of war has shown up the utter poverty and mediocrity of British leadership. Peace-time reputations have been progressively deflated and no new star has yet arisen on the horizon. And so Mr. Churchill will continue yet for a while with the negative goodwill of the British people. But behind that almost unwilling consent, there is a deep suspicion that much is wrong.

In Britain the people can, in the final analysis, choose their leaders and their captains, though that choice is often forced by circumstances upon them, and they choose unwillingly. What would be the fate of a motion of no-confidence in the British Government in India, if such could be put to the Indian people? In other than official ways, the question has always been there and so has the answer. But it is interesting to speculate what the formal answer might be.

We know what the Congress answer would be; we know also what the Muslim League's answer would be, in spite of its reactionary leadership which is always looking up to the British Government for some additional support. We know indeed what the answer of every well-known organisation in India would be. But organisations apart, everyone knows, that the hundreds of millions of India would troop up and vote against the British Government and its representatives in India. Pack

1. Article written by Jawaharlal on 30 June 1942. *National Herald*, 3 July 1942.
2. The long succession of British defeats, culminating in the fall of Tobruk on 21 June 1942, led to a motion of censure in the House of Commons moved by Sir John Wardlaw-Milne and seconded by Admiral Sir Roger Keyes. It expressed "no confidence in the central direction of the war." The debate was fixed for 21st July.

up and go and leave us to ourselves, we have had enough of you, would be the thundering cry from those hundreds of millions of throats or, as Maulana Mohamed Ali used to say, do not pack up but go. There would be the mightiest vote in history, a whole people voting on one side, and hardly a soul on the other. Even those who cling to the British Government in India, through fear or favour, will line up with those who want to get rid of it. For everyone knows what they have in their hearts and the measure of their attachment to British rule.

It is natural and inevitable for Indians to wish to get rid of the British Government in India. But it is surprising to find how every Indian bitterly dislikes this government. And not in India only but in all countries of Asia, this dislike is widespread and intense. That is the final judgment on British imperialism and we need not go to history to seek an answer. The present shouts out that answer and behind that answer there is a warning and a prophesy. For this is the nemesis of empire. Humpty Dumpty has fallen and not all the King's men, nor all the King's horses, will set him up again.

And yet Mr. Churchill and his colleagues talk still of Empire and, what is worse, behave in the old imperialist way. And when disasters come they seek superficial explanations and find trivial remedies. The real explanation is Empire, the real remedy is the complete liquidation of that Empire. Not through Empire will they gain the ear or heart of Asia, and Asia counts and will count. The voice of Asia, so long silent, is loud and insistent, and it is India's privilege today to speak not on her own behalf only but for Asia as a whole, as well as for all the subject peoples of the world.

Victory today is not just a matter of military tactics or high strategy. It is inescapably connected with what happens to the millions of Asia for they may well play the deciding role. It is connected with moral issues, economic issues and political issues. It is connected with what happens to India and in India.

What a government we have in this unhappy land! It is a foreign government and we would object to it in any event even if it was an efficient one. But it has not a single merit left, except a passionate desire to hold on to its privileged position, if that be counted a merit. There is no mind left in it, no capacity for intelligent and effective action, no competence, no will to achieve or to win through. It distrusts everybody in India and it even distrusts itself. Inevitably it reminds us of the last days of the Manchus in China.

We must deplore the growth of the spirit of hatred in India for out of hatred alone no great work is done. Hatred may be a driving force

perative commonwealth of man

that we look forward to will not come out of the morass of hatred And yet hatred and ill will must inevitably emerge from the barbarous relationships that an empire establishes and promotes. We want a civilised relationship between man and man and nation and nation.

So Empire must go, not only because it is evil but because it is a hindrance to victory of the progressive forces in the world. That is why the cry of 'Quit India' becomes a vital, urgent and essential cry for victory. Only when this is done will there be a real will to win among the Indian people as well as among the people of England and other Allied countries. Only then will all strength and energy seize the people of India and be translated into effective action.

18. Time to Wrest Independence[1]

We do not want the Germans or the Japanese to come to India. We will fight them with or without arms. Like the British the Japanese also broadcast sweet words promising freedom to India, but the truth is that none of them wants to give independence to India unless compelled to do so. The situation is worsening every day. The Germans have entered Egypt[2] and the Japanese have reached the borders of India. I regret that the British have themselves been inviting trouble. Unless they make up their mind to free India and other enslaved countries of the world there would be no end to their troubles.

Mahatma Gandhi is about to launch a satyagraha movement or is contemplating some other move to wrest independence, and you should keep yourself in readiness. None can foretell what would happen after the War. My view is that we cannot protect the country while we remain in bondage. This is why Mahatma Gandhi wants the British Government to withdraw and leave the defence of the country in the hands of Indians. We have waited for long and we could have waited for a year or two more, but owing to the war we can wait no longer. We cannot see India changing masters from time to time. It can spell disaster for her. Therefore, it becomes imperative for us to free India

1. Speech at a public meeting, Gorakhpur, 3 July 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 4 July 1942.
2. On 27 June 1942 the Axis powers crossed the frontiers of Egypt.

and then fight the Japanese or any other invader with arms or without arms.

I believe that it will not be easy for the Japanese to conquer India. China is a big country and the Chinese have been fighting the Japanese for the last five years. They have sacrificed at least fifty to sixty lakhs of persons, and have not yielded so far. If we were independent we could also resist any enemy. It is difficult to prophesy what is in store for us, but the world is passing through critical times and we can only protect ourselves by discarding fear and organizing the country. I appeal for unity among the various communities and organizations to protect the country and achieve freedom.

19. Need for Large Sacrifices[1]

Unfortunately Mr. Jinnah's whole attention is given to the British Government.[2] He wants the British Government to do everything for him. The same attitude is being adopted by the Hindu Mahasabha.[3] For the sake of our own freedom and for the good of the world we should decide what we should do now. In a world where revolutionary changes are taking place, Indians cannot remain aloof. I want India to rise from its slumber even if ten to fifteen lakhs of people have to die. We must be ready for big sacrifices.

2. In a press statement issued on 22 June 1942, Jinnah said: "So now we are presented with a new formula and that formula is 'Quit India'. I am told that there is going to be a big move. This threat and intimidation is intended to coerce a distressed and shaken Britain to accede to Mr. Gandhi's demand. I can only say that Britain will be making the greatest blunder if they surrender to the Congress in any manner which would be detrimental to the interests of Muslim India .... Nothing is going to move us from the set purpose of achieving our goal to Pakistan."
3. The Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha stated on 16 June 1942: "To talk of nonviolent noncooperation in organising resistance to the invader is to live in a fool's paradise.... The Hindu Mahasabha will rather perish than submit to foreign rule or to a new invader but would not indulge in beautiful talk." On 5 July 1942, Savarkar, commenting on the expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council, stated that "the British must offer voluntarily so completely a political freedom and power to India as to render it impossible for any enemy of Britain to offer anything more alluring to lead India astray."

20. Develop the Spirit of Resistance[1]

Whatever we do, our desire and intention are clear that we do not wish to injure the cause of China or the defence of India. It is obvious that any step we may take against the British Government may be full of perils, but on the other hand not taking any step is still more perilous. We have to choose the lesser danger. It has become highly important to raise the spirit of resistance so as ultimately to resist the Japanese. By passively submitting to conditions in India today that spirit of resistance will be lost. The problem before the Congress is to take such steps as to increase the people's spirit of resistance and in such a way as to

1. Interview to the press, Wardha, 8 July 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 10 July 1942.

avoid, in so far as we can, creating a situation which might temporarily help the Japanese or any foreign invader and come in China's way. This may not be completely possible for the time being because the step we take might involve non-submission to the British authority, thus further complications. But in whatever we do, our desire and intention are clear, that we do not wish to injure the cause of China or the defence of India. The Congress position has very much changed since Sir Stafford Cripps's departure.

The fundamental way to look at Mahatma Gandhi's intention to launch a new movement is how ultimately to increase the strength of the Indian public to meet an invasion. If I am convinced that I might weaken India thereby, I will not take that step.

Events like the Malaya and Burma campaigns are shaping in such a manner that Indian people are becoming more and more passive and sullenly submissive. My fear is that if events are allowed to take their course Indians will get prepared to submit to Japanese invasion. The feeling of submission to Britain leads to the feeling of submission to Japan. I want non-submission and development of resistance to the invader.

The programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection initiated by the Congress aims at giving the Indian people a proper background to develop the spirit of resistance.

21. Congress Working Committee Resolution on British Withdrawal From India

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Mahatma Gandhi's Confidential Draft for the Working Committee, Wardha, 9 July 1942[1]

Events happening from day to day and the experience that the people of India are passing through confirm the opinion of the Congressmen that British rule must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination, even at its best, is an evil in itself, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in affecting the fortunes of the War that is desolating men and their possessions; that is to say not merely in the interests of India, but for the safety of the world and for the destruction of Nazism, fascism and whatever other 'ism' Japan stands for. Ever since the outbreak of the War the Congress has studiedly pursued the policy of non-embarrassment. Even at the risk of making its satyagraha ineffective it deliberately gave it a symbolic character, in the hope that this policy of non-embarrassment carried to its extreme limit would be duly appreciated, and that enough real power would be transferred to the popular representatives so as to

II

Jawaharlal's Confidential Draft fo the Working Committee, Wardha 10 July 1942[2]

Events happening from day to day and the experience that the people of India are passing through confirm the opinion of Congressmen that British rule in India must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination, even at its best, is an evil in itself and a continuing injury to the subject people, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and in affecting the fortunes of the War that is desolating humanity. The freedom of India is thus necessary not only in the interests of India but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, fascism, militarism and other forms of imperialism, and the aggression of one nation over another.

Ever since the outbreak of the World War the Congress has studiedly pursued the policy of non-embarassment. Even at the risk of making its satyagraha ineffective, it deliberately gave it a symbolic character, in the hope that this policy

1. 2. 3 & 4. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. The July resolution on British withdrawal from India was the work of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal. We present here the first draft submitted to the Working Committee, and all the later versions showing the changes after discussions in the Working Committee. For the final resolution passed on 14 July 1942 see the following item.

III

Corrected Confidential Draft, Wardha, 11 July 1942[3]

Events happening from day to day and the experience that the people of India are passing through confirm the opinion of Congressmen that British rule in India must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination, even at its best, is an evil in itself, and a continuing injury to the subject people, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and in affecting the fortunes of the War that is desolating humanity. The freedom of India is thus necessary not only in the interest of India but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, fascism, militarism and other forms of imperialism, and the aggression of one nation over another.

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IV

Revised Confidential Draft, Wardha, 13 July 1942[4]

Events happening from day to day and the experience that the people of India are passing through, confirm the opinion of Congressmen that British rule in India must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination, even at its best, is an evil in itself and a continuing injury to the subject people, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and in affecting the fortunes of the War that is desolating humanity. The freedom of India is thus necessary not only in the interest of India but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, fascism, militarism and other forms of imperialism and the aggression of one nation over another.

Even since the outbreak of the World War, the Congress has studiedly pursued a policy of non-embarrassment. Even at the risk of making its satyagraha ineffective, it deliberately gave it a symbolic character, in the hope that this

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enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realisation of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It had also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's stranglehold on India. These hopes have however been dashed to pieces. The abortive Cripps proposals showed in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British attitude towards India and that the British hold on India was in no way to be relaxed. It has also been observed that the ill will against the British is rapidly increasing and people openly wish success to the Japanese arms. The Congress would like to avoid the experience of Singapore, Malaya and Burma and turn ill will into goodwill and make India a willing partner in their trials and troubles. This is possible only if India feels the glow of freedom from foreign domination.

II

of non-embarrassment, carried to its extreme limit, would be duly appreciated, and that enough real power would be transferred to popular representatives so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realisation of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It had also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's stranglehold on India. These hopes have, however, been dashed to pieces. The abortive Cripps proposals showed in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British Government's attitude towards India and that the British hold on India was in no way relaxed. This has resulted in a rapid and widespread increase of ill will against the British and a growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms. The Working Committee view this development with great apprehension as this, unless checked, will inevitably lead to a passive acceptance of aggression. Passive and sullen submission to foreign domination today may lead to an equally passive submission to foreign invasion and to the weakening of the spirit of resistance and non-submission among the people. The Congress is anxious to avoid the experience of Singapore, Malaya and Burma and desires to build up this resistance to any aggression on or India by the Japanese

III

that this policy of non-embarrassment, carried to its extreme limit, would be duly appreciated, and that enough real power would be transferred to popular representatives so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realisation of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It had also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's stranglehold on India.

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IV

policy of non-embarrassment, carried to its logical extreme, would be duly appreciated, and that real power would be transferred to popular representatives, so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realisation of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It had also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's stranglehold on India.

These hopes have, however, been dashed to pieces. The abortive Cripps proposals showed in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British Government's attitude towards India and that the British hold on India was in no way to be relaxed. In the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, Congress representatives tried their utmost to achieve a minimum consistent with the national demand, but to no avail. This frustration has resulted in a rapid and widespread increase of ill will against Britain and a growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms. The Working Committee view this development with grave apprehension as this, unless checked, will inevitably lead to a passive acceptance of aggression. The Committee hold that all aggression must be resisted, for any submission to it must mean the degradation of the Indian people and the continuation of their subjection. The Congress is anxious to avoid the

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The Congress is convinced that the only cure for this intolerable state of affairs is that the British rule in India should end forthwith. The Congress representatives tried their utmost to come to a settlement. But this has been made impossible by reason of the presence of the foreign power whose history has been to follow relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after withdrawal of the British power can the wise men and women of the country put their heads together and evolve a scheme whereby a constituent assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the government of India. When the British power is withdrawn the present unreality will give place to reality and the prince and the peasant will stand on a par, the present political parties formed chiefly with

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or any other foreign power. Sub mission to or passive acceptance o such aggression would mean th degradation of the Indian peopl and the continuation of their sul jection possibly for a long perio The Congress is eager to chang the present ill will against Britai into goodwill and make India willing partner in a joint enterpri of securing freedom for the n tions of the world and in the tria and tribulations of the struggl This is only possible if India fee the glow of freedom from forei domination.

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invasion of India by the Japanese or any other foreign power.

The Congress would change the present ill will against Britain into goodwill and make India a willing partner in their trials and tribulations. This is only possible, if India feels the glow of freedom from foreign domination.

The Congress representatives have tried their utmost to bring about a solution of the communal tangle. But this has been made impossible by the presence of the foreign power whose history has been to follow relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after the withdrawal of the British power can the present unreality give place to reality and the people of India, belonging to all groups and parties, face India's problems and solve them on a mutually agreed basis. The present political parties, formed chiefly with the view to attract the attention of and influence the British power, will then probably cease to function. For the

IV

experience of Singapore, Malaya and Burma and desires to build up resistance to any aggression on or invasion of India by the Japanese or any other foreign power.

The Congress would change the present ill will against Britain into goodwill and make India a willing partner in a joint enterprise of securing freedom for the nations and peoples of the world and in the trials and tribulations which accompany it. This is only possible if India feels the glow of freedom.

The Congress representatives have tried their utmost to bring about a solution of the communal tangle. But this has been made impossible by the presence of the foreign power whose long record has been to follow relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after the ending of foreign domination and intervention, can the present unreality give place to reality, and the people of India, belonging to all groups and parties. face India's problems and solve them on a mutually agreed basis. The present political parties, formed chiefly with a view to attract the attention of and influence the British power, will then probably

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an eye to the attention of the British power will probably be dissolved. For the first time in India's history realisation will come home that princes, jagirdars, zamindars, propertied and monied classes derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields or factories to whom alone all power and authority must belong. In making the proposal for withdrawal the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied powers in their prosecution

will come home that princes, jagirdars, zamindars and propertied and monied classes derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom alone all power and authority must belong. With the recognition of India's independence responsible and representative men and women of the country will come together to form a provisional government, representative of all important sections of the people of India, and later to evolve a scheme whereby a constituent assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. The first step will have to be a conference between the representatives of free India and the representatives of Great Britain to arrange for the immediate transfer of power and the adjustment of mutual relations, and in particular, for arrangements to be made for the effective defence of India and prevention of any aggression.

In making the proposal for the ending of British rule in India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied powers in their prosecution of the War, or in any way to encourage aggression on India or China by the Japanese or any other power associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress

III

first time in India's history, realization will come home that princes, jagirdars, zamindars, and propertied and monied classes derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom alone all power and authority must belong. After the withdrawal, responsible and wise men and women of the country are likely to come together and form a provisional government representative of all important sections of the people of India, whose principal function will be to evolve a scheme whereby a constituent assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the government of India acceptable to all sections of the people.

In making the proposal for the withdrawal of British rule in India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied powers in their prosecution of the War, or in any

IV

cease to function. For the first time in India's history, realization will come home that princes, jagirdars, zamindars, and propertied and monied classes derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom all power and authority must belong. On the withdrawal of British rule in India, responsible and representative men and women of the country will come together to form a provisional government, representative of all important sections of the people of India which will later evolve a scheme whereby a constituent assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the government of India acceptable to all section of the people. Representatives of free India and representatives of Great Britain will confer together for the adjustment of future relations and for the cooperation of the two countries as allies in the common task of meeting aggression. It is the Congress wish to enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

In making the proposal for the withdrawal of British rule from India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied powers in their prosecution of the War, or in any

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of the War. The proposed withdrawal therefore should not in any way be interpreted as an invitation to Japan or the other members of the Axis to attack India and thus immediately to suffocate China. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the Allied powers. Therefore the Congress would be reconciled, if the Allies regard it to be necessary to the presence, at their own expense, of their troops in India in order to ward off Japanese or other aggression and to protect and help China.

The proposal of withdrawal was never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India, certainly not of those who would make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with the others.

If the withdrawal takes place with goodwill, it is highly likely that there would be little difficulty in establishing a stable provisional government in India. The Congress however is not unmindful of the possibility of a temporary breakdown of the ordered machinery of government. Anarchy may set in and instead of different parties coming together for the common good they may compete with one another in establishing their own authori- It is a risk which has got to in any country in order to

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intend to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the Allied powers. It is the Congress will to help in resistance to all aggression and to enable India to do so effectively and with the people's will and united strength behind it. The Congress is therefore agreeable to and is convinced that free India will permit the stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression, and to protect and help China.

The proposal of withdrawal of the British power from India never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India, and certainly not of those who would make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with the others. Withdrawal means the handing over of political control in its entirety to the representatives of the people. If such withdrawal takes place with goodwill, it would result in establishing a stable provisional government in India, and in cooperation between this government and the Allied powers in the common tasks of resisting aggression, defending India, and helping China. If there are any risks involved in such a course, they have to be faced in order to save the country and the larger cause of freedom the world over from far greater peril. Nevertheless,

III

way to encourage aggression on India or increase pressure on China by the Japanese or any other power associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the Allied powers. The Congress will therefore be reconciled, if the Allies regard it to be necessary, to the presence at their own expense of their troops in India in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression, and to protect and help China.

The proposal of withdrawal of the British power from India was never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India, and certainly not of those who would make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with the others. If such withdrawal takes place with goodwill, it would result in establishing a stable provisional government in India.

The Congress however is not unmindful of the possibility of a temporary breakdown of the ordered machinery of government. Anarchy may set in and instead of different parties coming together for the common good they may compete with one another in establishing their own authority. It is a risk which has got to be run in any country in order to achieve freedom.

Though therefore the Congress is impatient to achieve the national

IV

way to encourage aggression on India or increase pressure on China by the Japanese or any other power associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the Allied powers. The Congress is therefore agreeable to the stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression and to protect and help China.

The proposal of withdrawal of the British power from India was never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India, and certainly not those who would make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with the others. If such withdrawal takes place with goodwill, it would result in establishing a stable provisional government in India and cooperation between this government and the United Nations in resisting aggression and helping China.

The Congress realises that there may be risks involved in such a course. Such risks have to be faced by any country in order to achieve freedom and more especially at the present critical juncture, in order to save the country and the larger cause of freedom the world over from far greater risks and perils.

While, therefore, the Congress is impatient to achieve the national purpose, it wishes to take no hasty

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achieve freedom. The Congress therefore wishes to take no hasty step but would seek the help of the Allies in securing British acceptance of its demand.

Should however the appeal fail, the Congress will be reluctantly compelled to utilise all the nonviolent strength it might have gathered since 1920 when it adopted nonviolence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights and liberty. The struggle this time would have to resolve itself into a mass movement on the widest scale possible involving voluntary strikes, voluntary noncooperation on the part of all those who are in government employ or in departments connected with government in any shape or form and it may involve also non-payment of land revenue and taxes.

For the regulation and quick development of the mass movement the Working Committee authorise Gandhiji to take charge of it and regulate it in the manner he may think advisable. In order that adequate time may be given to the Allied powers to consider and respond to the Congress appeal, as also to educate public opinion and to let the A.I.C.C. share the responsibility with the Working Committee for the tremendous step contemplated, the Committee fixes ——for the meeting of the A.I.C.C. until which time the resolution should remain suspended.

II

the Congress wishes to take no hasty step and would like to avoid, in so far as possible, any course of action that might embarrass the United Nations.

Should however this appeal fail, the Congress cannot view without the gravest apprehension the continuation of the present state of affairs, involving a progressive deterioration in the situation and weakening of India's will and power to resist aggression. The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilise all the nonviolent strength it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted nonviolence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights and liberty. Such a widespread struggle would inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji. As the issues raised are of the most vital and far-reaching importance to the people of India as well as to the peoples of the United Nations, the Working Committee refers them to the All India Congress Committee for final decision. For this purpose the A.I.C.C. will meet at.....on....

III

purpose, the Congress wishes to take no hasty step and would like to avoid, in so far as is possible, any course of action that might unnecessarily embarrass the United Nations. The Congress would plead with the British power to accept the very reasonable and just proposal herein made.

Should however this appeal fail, the Congress cannot view without gravest apprehension the continuation of the present state of affairs, involving a progressive deterioration in the situation and weakening of India's will and power to resist aggression. The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilise all the nonviolent strength it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted nonviolence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights and liberty. Such a widespread struggle would inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji. As the issues raised are of the most vital and far-reaching importance to the people of India as well as to the peoples of the United Nations, the Working Committee refers them to the All India Congress Committee for final decision. For this purpose the A.I.C.C. will meet at Wardha on 28th inst.

IV

step and would like to avoid, in so far as is possible, any course of action that might embarrass the United Nations. The Congress would plead with the British power to accept the very reasonable and just proposal herein made, not only in the interest of India but also that of Britain and of the cause of freedom to which the United Nations proclaim their adherence.

Should however this appeal fail, the Congress cannot view without the gravest apprehension the continuation of the present state of affairs, involving a progressive deterioration in the situation and weakening of India's will and power to resist aggression. The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilise all the nonviolent strength it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted nonviolence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights and liberty. Such a widespread struggle would inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji. As the issues raised are of the most vital and far-reaching importance to the people of India as well as to the peoples of the United Nations, the Working Committee refers them to the All India Congress Committee for final decision. For this purpose the A.I.C.C. will meet at Wardha on 28th inst.

22. Resolution of Congress Working Committee Passed on 14 July 1942[1]

Events happening from day to day, and the experience that the people of India are passing through, confirm the opinion of Congressmen that British rule in India must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination, even at its best, is an evil in itself and a continuing injury to the subject people, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and in affecting the fortunes of the War that is desolating humanity. The freedom of India is thus necessary not only in the interest of India but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, fascism, militarism and other forms of imperialism, and the aggression of one nation over another.

Ever since the outbreak of the World War, the Congress has studiedly pursued a policy of non-embarrassment. Even at the risk of making its satyagraha ineffective, it deliberately gave it a symbolic character, in the hope that this policy of non-embarrassment, carried to its logical extreme, would be duly appreciated, and that real power would be transferred to popular representatives, so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realisation of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It had also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's stranglehold on India.

These hopes have, however, been dashed to pieces. The abortive Cripps proposals showed in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British Government's attitude towards India and that the British hold on India was in no way to be relaxed. In the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, Congress representatives tried their utmost to achieve a minimum, consistent with the national demand, but to no avail. This frustration has resulted in a rapid and widespread increase of ill will against Britain and a growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms. The Working Committee view this development with grave apprehension as this, unless checked, will inevitably lead to a passive acceptance of aggression. The Committee hold that all aggression must be resisted, for any submission to it must mean the degradation of the Indian people and the continuation of their subjection. The Congress is anxious to avoid the experience of Malaya, Singapore and Burma and desires to build up resistance to any aggression on or invasion of India by the Japanese or any foreign power.

1. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 15 July 1942.

The Congress would change the present ill will against Britain into goodwill and make India a willing partner in a joint enterprise of securing freedom of the nations and peoples of the world and in the trials and tribulations which accompany it. This is only possible if India feels the glow of freedom.

The Congress representatives have tried their utmost to bring about a solution of the communal tangle. But this has been made impossible by the presence of the foreign power whose long record has been to pursue relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after the ending of foreign domination and intervention, can the present unreality give place to reality, and the people of India, belonging to all groups and parties, face India's problems and solve them on a mutually agreed basis. The present political parties, formed chiefly with a view to attract the attention of and influence the British power, will then probably cease to function. For the first time in India's history, realization will come home that princes, jagirdars, zamindars, and propertied and monied classes derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially power and authority must belong. On the withdrawal of British rule in India, responsible men and women of the country will come together to form a provisional government, representative of all important sections of the people of India, which will later evolve a scheme whereby a constituent assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. Representatives of free India and representatives of Great Britain will confer together for the adjustment of future relations and for the cooperation of the two countries as allies in the common task of meeting aggression. It is the earnest desire of the Congress to enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

In making the proposal for the withdrawal of British rule from India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied powers in their prosecution of the War, or in any way to encourage aggression on India or increase pressure on China by the Japanese or any other power associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the Allied powers. The Congress is therefore agreeable to the stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India, should they so desire, in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression, and to protect and help China.

The proposal of withdrawal of the British power from India was never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India, certainly not of those who would make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with the others. If such withdrawal takes place

with goodwill, it would result in establishing a stable provisional government in India and cooperation between this government and the United Nations in resisting aggression and helping China.

The Congress realises that there may be risks involved in such a course. Such risks, however, have to be faced by any country in order to achieve freedom and, more especially at the present critical juncture, in order to save the country and the larger cause of freedom the world over from far greater risks and perils.

While, therefore, the Congress is impatient to achieve the national purpose, it wishes to take no hasty step and would like to avoid, in so far as is possible, any course of action that might embarrass the United Nations. The Congress would plead with the British power to accept the very reasonable and just proposal herein made, not only in the interest of India but also that of Britain and of the cause of freedom to which the United Nations proclaim their adherence.

Should however this appeal fail, the Congress cannot view without the gravest apprehension the continuation of the present state of affairs, involving a progressive deterioration in the situation and weakening of India's will and power to resist aggression. The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilise all the nonviolent strength it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted nonviolence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights and liberty. Such a widespread struggle would inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji. As the issues raised are of the most vital and far-reaching importance to the people of India as well as to the peoples of the United Nations, the Working Committee refer them to the All India Congress Committee for final decision. For this purpose the A.I.C.C. will meet in Bombay on the 7th of August 1942.

23. Demand for British Withdrawal[1]

Question: How do you view the difficulties of the interregnum period and the problem of bringing the various parties together for forming a provisional government?

1. Interview to the press, New Delhi, 16 July 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 17 July 1942.

Jawaharlal Nehru: If the British Government are brave enough to make the declaration, all these difficulties can be overcome. I want the burden of finding a solution to fall on the Indian people without intervention. If there is no third party to give or take away, the pressure of events would make them come to terms very rapidly.

Q: Why do you want the British to withdraw immediately when earlier you were ready even to accept Cripps's draft declaration?

JN: The demand for immediate withdrawal of British rule from India is made because only when India is free would the spirit of resistance to aggression be infused into the people. There are risks in a sudden withdrawal of the existing governmental apparatus, particularly if this withdrawal takes place in a spirit of ill will instead of goodwill; but these risks are better than the risks that India faces at present.

I am thinking in terms of meeting the present situation. In the present circumstances the people are not prepared to meet the situation in the way I want them to meet it. I do not think the Government of India has the capacity to meet it. The essential thing is to do something which will make India completely different from Burma.

During the last three or four months, we have been fighting a definite pro-Japanese feeling in the country, which is not pro-Japanese essentially but so anti-British that it leans over to the Japanese side. We do not wish India to lapse into a feeling of passivity. There is the obvious danger of any civil disobedience movement indirectly impeding war effort and thereby helping Japanese aggression. We want to avoid that danger as far as we can. But allowing things to remain as they are is a worse danger.

Q: Would a guarantee of Indian independence after the War by the United States and the United Nations satisfy the Congress?

JN: It is not so much a question of what is going to happen after the War. My concern is with the present situation, and the fear of unpleasant and indeed disastrous consequences taking place if we, the British Government and everybody, go on as at present. Your question presumes that possibly we are taking advantage of a particular situation to gain particular ends which may be postponed till after the War. I am not interested at the present moment in what America is going to do after the War. If the United Nations declare very clearly their policies in regard to the Asiatic countries and Africa, it would make a huge difference; but that declaration should not be a declaration as to

what is going to happen after the War. It must be followed up today. That has been our policy from the beginning.

The whole conception of the war as it has been carried on by the Allied powers is wrong, fundamentally wrong. It is a conception of trying to maintain the *status quo*, to maintain the balance as it was before the War, because Hitler might make things worse in the future. The War is not being envisaged as a war of world liberation. There has been no mention throughout about colonial emancipation. Vague phrases have come from America certainly, but not even vague phrases from England. A promise from the United States would certainly be useful but the whole point is how to function in an effective way to avert aggression.

Q: What would be the position after the British withdrawal?

JN: After the withdrawal of British rule the British and Allied Army can stay back. From the military point of view, there is no major change, but the background would certainly change. There is no doubt that, given a stable government, production in India would be far more than at present. Industrialists themselves had told the Grady Mission that production could be increased several times.[2] The whole urge to increase production which comes from the fact that the producers are doing something for their own country makes an enormous difference. A national government can produce a large force of Home Guards and citizen armies, not only to serve as a reservoir for the actual fighting forces but to release those forces from all manner of other duties in India.

Q: Has the Congress any scheme for the setting up of a machinery to take the place of the British Government?

JN: Suppose the British Government came to a conclusion that from the point of view of larger self-interest it was desirable to accede to the Congress demand then they should declare so. Thereby they would create an atmosphere in which all these functions can be organised. It depends on whether the thing is done with goodwill or ill will. If it is

2. The American Technical Mission headed by Dr. Henry F. Grady spent about five weeks in India during April-May 1942 investigating India's war production, and sent to Washington about 35 specific recommendations. The report submitted on 9 June 1942 gave a very optimistic picture of the possibility of developing Indian war production to the point where India could become largely self-sufficient within a year with respect to many of her war needs.

done with goodwill there will be no interregnum period in which the country would be without a government. There is in my view no great difficulty as to the provisional government to whom power is to be handed over. I want the burden of finding a solution to fall on the Indian people without any intervention. The only kind of provisional government would be a composite one representing the major parties in India to their satisfaction, namely, the Congress, the Muslim League and other important groups. Any person who is responsible for making that government will have to satisfy these groups. Otherwise he shall face great difficulties at a time when the greatest measure of agreement would be essential. I am sure we will succeed not because of inherent capacity in us but because of the pressure of events. If a real declaration is made, exchange of power and control can take place in a friendly way.

I agree with the suggestion that immediately following the declaration of withdrawal asked for by the Congress, representatives of various parties should meet together and agree upon a provisional government. I am not thinking in terms of the Viceroy sitting in the Viceroy's House and inviting representatives of parties to come together and these representatives responding to that invitation. I am interested in developing all over India a spirit of resistance to Japan. I want that spirit to be strong enough to withstand the shock of two or three military defeats. The appeal for nonviolent resistance has been addressed to the civil population. It is not addressed to the army, which of course would continue to act as all armed forces in the world act in resisting aggression. This War, big as it is, is only a part of a much bigger revolution behind it, economic, racial, colonial and otherwise, which brought it about and would go on even after this War was over. There is some realization of this by President Roosevelt but there is none in Mr. Churchill's mind.

Q: Is there anything to indicate that the Cripps negotiations broke down because it had been indicated to Sir Stafford that the Congress was in favour of peace with Japan?

JN: Early in April it appeared to many of us that there might be a Japanese invasion any day and we were so anxious to face that as a national government that we lowered our demand greatly. Even that was not acceptable. Two results followed from that. One, a greater conviction that it was quite impossible to carry on the government or do anything in cooperation with the British Government, and that we think differently, want to function differently, and distrust each other. Secondly, there was a very big reaction of relief that the negotiations did not

succeed on the basis offered. The people felt that the terms we were on the point of agreeing to were not good enough, and that we had been put in a quandary. It was an honest and healthy reaction; it was not the reaction of extremists like me, but of moderates. It is fantastic to talk about peace with Japan. Sir Stafford himself had stated that the negotiations failed because of nonviolence.[3] As a matter of fact, nonviolence was hardly mentioned. If it was mentioned it was mentioned only negatively. What I said to Sir Stafford was that one of the first steps that a national government ought to take in my opinion was to raise a huge citizen army of tens of millions. We talked only in terms of armed defence of the country in cooperation with the Allies. That was the whole basis of discussion. The statement about nonviolence and the report about peace with Japan are equally baseless.

> Q: Is there any resentment against the American forces in India on the ground that these forces assist the British Government in India?

JN: There is no resentment against the American forces in India. There undoubtedly is resentment against foreign troops being allowed to fight on India's soil while India is not allowed to function as a free unit, but there is singularly little resentment against Americans themselves. I have never heard of any.

3. See *ante*, pp. 242-243.

24. J.L. Berry's Report of Interview with Jawaharlal[1]

16 July 1942

The only guests beside myself were the Chinese Commissioner and the Chinese Minister Designate to Panama. This was not the most satisfactory setting for developing the points I wished to raise with Nehru and the disinclination of the Chinese Commissioner, who despite the good contact of his office appears to know practically nothing about the political situation here, to discuss anything except the difference between

1. Held at New Delhi on 16-17 July 1942. Printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers 1942*, Volume 1, (Washington, 1960), pp. 685-689.

Buddhism and Hinduism did nothing to help matters. Nehru was obviously in a mood to discuss the resolution and my first question was whether the resolution ruled out negotiations based on a formula providing for something less than absolute independence now. He replied that there could be no further negotiations to arrange deals of transfer of complete power to Indian hands now. I inquired whether acceptance by British of Congress demands put forward during Cripps's Mission would prove acceptable as an interim arrangement. His reply was an unqualified 'no'. He explained that during Cripps's negotiations invasion by Japanese appeared imminent and Congress lowered its demands in order to meet danger with a National Government; that at best the Congress formula provided only a makeshift arrangement involving a divided responsibility which was never successful. I then inquired whether he considered the danger of invasion any less now than in April to which he replied 'probably not but the restlessness and anti-British feeling of Indian people is immeasurably greater'.

He went on to say that two results followed from failure of Cripps's mission: (1) A great conviction that it is quite impossible to carry on government in cooperation with the British Government, and (2) there was a very big reaction of relief that the negotiations did not succeed on the basis offered as the people felt that the terms which the Congress had proposed were not good enough. He declared that even if Cripps had agreed to the Congress demands, it would have been extremely difficult for it to have delivered the goods under such a scheme; to do so now would be 'quite impossible'. He concluded this part of the discussion by saying that British acceptance of Congress demands made to Cripps coupled with absolute promise of independence on cessation of hostilities and unqualified by any mention of Pakistan would likewise be unsatisfactory at this stage. The Indian people he said are now intensely anti-British and cannot trust any promise of the British Government. The underwriting of such a British promise by United Nations or by President Roosevelt might do some good in helping to reassure Indian people but 'it is not enough'. I returned again and again during the discussion to the possibility of compromise on a formula such as that mentioned above in an attempt to find some loophole or hint in his replies that such a possibility exists. I found none. For one now to believe that a compromise is possible on any formula short of the Wardha resolution, he must also subscribe to one of the two following possibilities: (a) Nehru was lying to me last night. I dismiss this possibility because if a compromise is possible Nehru would hope to obtain assistance from United States in bringing it about to advantage of Indian people. For him categorically to deny possibility of such a compromise,

knowing full well that we would communicate such denials to Washington and thus possibly rule out American assistance, seems to me untenable; or (b) he was unwilling to talk to me in presence of others as frankly as he otherwise might have done. I propose to put this possibility to test tomorrow morning when Nehru returns to Delhi. I expect to see him privately and, remote as I now think the chances are, I shall not be wholly convinced that the Congress has shut its doors to compromise until Nehru persists in his intransigent attitude if in private.

Having disposed of question of compromise, I then asked Nehru what chance he thought there was for British acceptance of Congress demand. He replied 'very little at present but perhaps later they will recognize desirability of it'. I interpret that to mean that, Japanese infiltration into eastern sections of India, followed by breakdown of civil administration, passive acceptance of and even cooperation with Japanese by Indian population in those areas, may convince British that Congress demand must be met in order to imbue civilian population with spirit of resistance and prevent spread of pro-Japanese feeling, thus avoiding Burma experience. I inquired why, if he did not expect Congress demand to be met, he felt it necessary, while repeatedly professing in resolution disinclination to interfere with war effort, to launch a movement which must inevitably hinder that effort. He said that he had been watching the growth of a spirit of passivity and bitter anti-British feeling among Indian people for several months; that he was firmly convinced this spirit likely to develop rapidly into pro-Japanese feeling, not from any love of Japanese but because of intense hatred to British; that he as a patriot refused to stand idly by and watch this development without making an effort, remote though its chances of success were, to supply the only antidote (Indian freedom); and that nothing could be more repugnant to him than to see his country become another Burma. He added that any interference with war effort would be as brief as movement itself would be short, thus implying that he expects government to jail important Congress leaders and ban Congress organization.

Nehru declared that under Wardha resolution Viceroy would be expected to depart immediately. I asked who would assume British obligations to Indian states. He replied that government of free India would undertake these obligations, thus subscribing to a unilateral theory of transference of treaty rights and duties quite unknown, so far as I am aware, to international practice. He added that while the states would be invited to accede to the government of free India, no immediate attempt would be made to force them to do so. He claimed that the fire of freedom which would spread through India would so imbue peoples of most Indian states with like feeling that their rulers would be

forced to come into the union. He explained that resolution does not contemplate immediate removal of all British officials but would at first only involve removal of a comparatively few 'useless individuals' at the top. The remainder would be permitted to remain, if they so desired, until arrangements could be made, by process of negotiation with British, for their disposition. They could not, however, expect to receive 'the fat salaries' to which they have been accustomed at the expense of the Indian people. The Governors of the provinces would, like the Viceroy, have to go at once as there would be no place for them in free India. The slow removal of lower British officials would avoid the confusion and delay to war effort which might otherwise be caused by complete independence now.

I inquired whether Nehru was absolutely convinced that Jinnah and Congress could come to terms immediately upon withdrawal of British power. His answer was a categorical affirmative. He repeated the well-known argument that there can be no settlement between League and Congress as long as British are here to keep them apart and outbid either party. He claimed that once full responsibility is entrusted to Indian leaders, with no third party from whom they may expect bargains, they will reach an honourable settlement at once. Nehru stated that Congress and League were on verge of a settlement just prior to visit of Cripps. But Cripps's proposal showed that British were prepared to grant Pakistan so that, from Jinnah's point of view, further negotiation with Congress was without purpose.

While supplying answers to many questions, the interview, due to lack of time and the necessity of covering such a wide field, left others untouched. In addition, some of the replies could not be pursued for the purpose of developing their full implications. I hope to fill in at least some of these gaps when I see Nehru again tomorrow morning.

17 July 1942

I saw Nehru this morning for just over one hour. The main purpose of this interview was to ascertain, if I could, that there was really no basis of negotiation with the British Government under the Wardha resolution. After answering series of questions Nehru finally stated that negotiations could be opened along the following lines. Let the British Government make a declaration acknowledging the independence of India here and now and requesting all the various parties in India to get

together and form a provisional government. This provisional government would for practical reasons involve only the immediate displacement of high British officials at the top. The provisional government after its formation would then negotiate with the British Government in the best of goodwill as to how together they could best organise and promote the war effort to the greatest possible extent. Nehru emphasized that the proposed declaration should be brief and in general terms suggested above in order that the chances of its success should not be jeopardized by details at the very beginning. He added that the declaration should not concern itself with communal questions as these by their very nature must of necessity be settled by the Indian leaders themselves. I enquired whether he thought such a declaration would be acceptable to Jinnah. He replied that Jinnah's interests were fully protected in the proposed declaration in as much as if the Indian leaders themselves failed to form a provisional government to take over from the British that would be an end of the matter. Accordingly if Jinnah were not satisfied he could decline to join such a government and the British would then be fully justified in saying that the Indian leaders themselves could not agree on a government to displace the present one. Nehru informed me in the most earnest and categorical manner imaginable that the Congress could come to terms with Jinnah within two days after the promulgation of the declaration mentioned above provided the British Government kept hands off.

It went without saying, Nehru said, that the United Nations would receive the very fullest cooperation from the provisional government and that the Commander-in-Chief would be left full discretion as to military strategy and dispositions. The Commander-in-Chief, according to Nehru, would be surprised at the complete support he would receive. From my two recent interviews with Nehru it would appear, if he is to be believed, that the foregoing is the minimum formula under which a settlement with the Congress can be effected and civil disobedience movement thwarted.

I reopened the question of the anticipated briefness of the movement and learned that I was wrong in my inference that Nehru foresaw a brief movement because of his expectation that the Congress leaders be jailed immediately. He said that the movement would go on, no matter how many leaders were placed under arrest. He pointed out that it would only take a short time to tell whether the movement was meeting with success. If events showed that it was not attracting sufficient popular support it would of course be abandoned; if it attracted mass support but did not accomplish its purpose, it would likewise be abandoned. He added that in case of Japanese invasion of India or

immediate threat of invasion before or during movement it would of course be necessary for the Congress to reconsider its position. He considers the movement has a fair chance of success.

I then questioned him as to the form the movement would take. He said that he could not say as this was entirely up to Gandhi and that the movement might and probably would take different forms as it progressed depending upon developments and British repressive measures. He pointed out, however, that since the movement would be based upon non-recognition of British authority in India it would probably take the form of ignoring all British laws and orders.

He confirmed that Gandhi, after meeting of All India Congress Committee, would probably follow his practice of forwarding resolution to Viceroy for submission to London. It was also quite likely he said that further time would be consumed by waiting for provincial Congress committees to confirm action of All India Congress Committee.

25. Call for Free India[1]

Many times you have assembled here and I too have had many opportunities of addressing you here. But today I am faced with a difficulty. You must be acquainted with the latest statements of Mahatmaji.[2] The events of today, taking place in the world and in India, are really very important. You must have heard of them and read about them in the newspapers and you know where you stand. We in India are passing through a stormy period. I do not know, and nobody can know, its

1. Speech in Delhi, 18 July 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 19 July 1942, and also from Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1942, File No. 4/1/42, National Archives of India.
2. In the *Harijan* of 12 July 1942, Mahatma Gandhi called upon the Muslims, including those who believed in Pakistan, to join his movement to displace the British power. He denied that he was a modern Nero and said, "I am lighting my own funeral pyre to end the agony." On 14 July 1942, he asserted that the British should immediately declare India free, and that he wanted independence not on paper but in action. He called his movement an "open rebellion", a mass movement on the widest scale and of nonviolent character which should be "as short and swift as possible."

consequences. A gigantic war is going on which is approaching India day by day. The problems which have become difficult are those which concern us primarily and which are our national problems. These problems we can face only when we make ourselves strong.

You are aware of the resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee at Wardha.[3] You must have also read the articles written earlier by Mahatma Gandhi in the *Harijan* and realised which way the wind is blowing. The resolution passed by the Working Committee is not decisive, but evidently it is a vital decision. The final decision will be taken by the All India Congress Committee which will meet in a week or two at Bombay.

What is going to happen afterwards, I cannot say. Everything depends on the decision to be taken by the A.I.C.C. Whatever be this decision, we can only guess that it would be important and final.

At Wardha, we carefully measured the pros and cons of the question as the issues involved affected millions of people in this country.

The Indian National Congress owes its strength to the fact that, despite its shortcomings, it has always represented the spirit of rebellion in India against foreign domination.

The character of war has radically changed, and the fate of India can no longer be decided as in the past by a single defeat at Panipat. Wars can only be carried on in the modern world with the sanction of the people. We want to create a spirit in India which will make people fight for every inch of ground and not be dismayed by a single military defeat. You are all aware of the glorious fight which the people of China are carrying on for the last five years. I deprecate the policy of inaction which will bring about our spiritual degradation. To surrender without a fight kills a country's soul.

The Congress has always strived to solve the problem of communal question but the British Government obstructed its solution in their own interest. Sir Stafford Cripps also tried to introduce an apple of discord.

I am confident that there will be no great difficulty in establishing a government representing Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and other communities.

As regards the coming struggle it is no longer a question of going to jail. Nobody will deliberately go to jail. It will be a terrible ordeal for the Congress this time. It may perish in the struggle but a free India will emerge out of its ashes. I am not dismayed at such a prospect.

Many people are saying that Congress leaders are only working for themselves or for their party and are trying to establish their dictatorship over the people of India and it is alleged that the Congress is a

3. See *ante*, pp. 386-397.

communal organisation.[4] Such a thing, to my mind, is unthinkable in the present world. The Congress believes in the willing cooperation of all sections of the people.

It is difficult to predict the future. War may come to India but our struggle cannot end till India is free. Whatever is in my mind is also in yours. The present War will not lead the countries to real freedom. I do not wish victory for Japan or Hitler lest the world should be enslaved. I am however surprised at the British attitude which is so boastful of her love for freedom. There is no change in her attitude despite her defeats in the battlefields. After the Working Committee resolution it has again started threatening and advising us.[5] I am fed up with their sick advice from Whitehall and the threats and intimidations against us. Our only reply to their threats is to oppose them.

People are clamouring for action since long. Hitler devastated the countries conquered by him and their plight has become all the more miserable after the German occupation. After two hundred years of sufferings and hardships it is not proper to postpone the struggle for freedom whatever be the circumstances. This people tend to forget. Also, the struggle for India's freedom is a fight for the freedom of the world.

I see two things. First, the attitude of the British Government within its Empire. Secondly, its refusal to grant Dominion Status to Burma even after the War. Within a few months Burma had changed hands and had been snatched away from the British. The Governor of Burma talks funny things[6] without being ashamed of them at all. The behaviour of the British Government and its officers in Burma was scarcely

4. On 14 July 1942, Jinnah stated that the Congress by rejecting Rajagopalachari's resolution on Pakistan "declared itself definitely and emphatically for *Akhand Hindustan*. What remains of the difference between the Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress?" Mahatma Gandhi's call for civil disobedience was to establish a Hindu Raj, a Congress Raj, by embarrassing the British at the time of crisis. Earlier, on 19 June 1942, he had charged the Congress with bad faith in putting forward claims to represent Muslim interests as well as those of Hindus.
5. The Viceroy's Executive Council on 15 July 1942 stated that the Congress demand ignored the interests and demands of the Muslims and was unreasonable at a time of war crisis. It threatened action against those attempting to break law and order or interfere with the war effort. The British Government clarified on 17 July 1942 that there could be no change in their policy towards India, and asserted that the Working Committee's resolution was only a call to chaos and invitation to the Japanese.
6. Sir Reginald Hugh Dorman-Smith (b. 1899), who was appointed Governor of Burma in 1941, declared that there was no considerable disloyalty among the Burmans. The Japanese were unable to get a single Burman of any prestige to join their side and there was not a single Burman quisling.

creditable. The British officers of Burma are now being appointed as high officials in Delhi. They had given ample proof of their ability in Burma and now opportunities are being afforded to them to show their worth in India. Is it not strange? Leave aside the question of sympathy with India. Had they only exercised a little commonsense and prudence, the situation would have been entirely different. But they are so conservative that they have not changed their mentality in spite of a change the world over. They are aware of what happened in Malaya and Burma, and they must be imagining what would happen if their rule in India also came to an end. But apparently they do not seem to be disturbed. They tread the same old beaten track, but we can no longer allow our country to be on the path of destruction as witnessed in Burma and Malaya. Mahatma Gandhi has written a number of strongly worded articles within the last two months, and has asked the British to quit India at once. It is a bitter pill for them to swallow. But Mahatma Gandhi agreed to let the British and American armies remain on the Indian frontiers to fight the Japanese on the condition that India is declared independent and armies fight on behalf of a free India against the enemy.

Mahatma Gandhi whose mission of life is to free India has now reached the age of seventy-three. He has fought several times the fight of freedom. He is old now although full of courage. He wants to fulfil the mission of his life.[7]

We want to check the dangerous turn which the anti-British feeling in India is taking. In the opinion of Gandhiji the only method to do it is to create a spirit of non-submission against foreign domination of Britain or Japan. We do not want to go from the frying pan into the fire.

There has been some criticism of the Working Committee's resolution in the American press but we will strain every nerve to explain our resolution and its implications. It is my strong belief that the stand which the Congress has taken is in the interest of the Allies. I have every hope that those friends of ours who feel bewildered at our resolution will before long correctly appreciate our position and sympathize with us. I do not want to condemn such misinformed critics.

India is now determined to take a dip in this worldwide storm. In a few weeks we will have a mass movement. This will be our final struggle and we must be prepared to face the worst.

7. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Harijan* of 19 July 1942: "I am struggling to give myself rest. But sometimes duty, may be passion or infatuation, forbids it. But the relevant fact is that so long as the reason is unimpaired, physical illness is no bar to the conduct of nonviolent struggle."

26. Plunge into the Tempestuous Wave[1]

The only course open to the country is to fight British imperialism in order to increase India's resisting power to fight any fascist aggression. Indians, so long as they are under the British Government, cannot fight an aggressor. Therefore, the only course for them is to attain independence and in attaining it they should develop their resisting power so that they might fight the Japanese and German aggressors to one man and keep their independence intact. The people should plunge into the tempestuous wave of fight and better get drowned than be inactive.

After the British withdrawal, a national government on the basis of agreement between different parties would be established which would carry on the War in alliance, if they so wished, with the English and the Americans. If India is made independent, there would arise tremendous forces which would change the whole face of the War in favour of the Allies.

The Congress has always stood for freedom and democracy and in consonance with this policy it has full sympathy with democratic Spain, China and other wronged countries and people.

England gave a long rope to Germany and Japan by yielding to the German and Japanese dictators, hoping that the Germans might work against the possibility of Russia becoming too strong, and that Japan would work against America's becoming too predominant. The Congress has all through been protesting against the British policy of saying good-bye to all their professions. Now the British are reaping the fruit of their own sowing.

Had English statesmen acted wisely at the proper time, many misfortunes would have been easily avoided. Had they agreed to the Congress demands, there would have been a great enthusiasm and the country would have played a splendid part in the prosecution of the War.

The country is in a difficult situation. We do not want the Japanese, and we would fight and defeat them. But we are helpless as we cannot fight as chattels under the present bureaucratic government and also because of the difference in methods. Without a truly national government it is impossible to create the right sort of enthusiasm necessary in a war.

1. Speech at Meerut, 19 July 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 20 July 1942.

27. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
21-7-1942

Just returned and received your Wardha and Allahabad cables today. Working Committee decision means recognition of complete independence for India and their consequential negotiations for transfer of power to provisional government and effective carrying on war as allies to resist aggression and help China and Russia. Confident formation of composite provisional government with principal parties commanding widest national support, provided there is no British interference. Congress is anxious to do its utmost against Japanese aggression to help China. Owing to British policy, public sentiment dangerously flowing in contrary direction. Only way to check this is to convert this to present independence leading to alliance for common cause, turning all our national energy towards defence of free India. British and American armies are remaining in India as allies. No other way possible. In case of British refusal to acknowledge Indian independence intense movement on widest scale seems inevitable.

Proposed delegation[2] to Russia has my full approval but I am personally unable leave country now. Repeated requests to Government of India for facilities of delegation remain unanswered. Possibly developing situation nationally, internationally may create further difficulties. Would welcome your joining delegation. Gandhiji quite well though weak.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. The U.P. Committee of the Friends of the Soviet Union, at a meeting in Allahabad on 4 May 1942, had decided to send a goodwill mission to the Soviet Union. Krishna Menon, in his two cables of 13 July 1942, had asked Jawaharlal whether the proposed delegation had his approval and whether he (Menon) should make arrangement for his (Jawaharlal's) visit as a member of the delegation.

28. Cable to V K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
23-7-1942

Your cable eighteenth.[2] Sent you message 170 words twentyfirst. Appreciate fully the extreme gravity situation of Russia and China and necessity for second front. Earnestly desire to give every help but the very gravity of the situation demands complete reversal of policy in India to enable us to give people's enthusiastic support which is impossible under present conditions. Otherwise progressive deterioration and desperation. I am convinced with acknowledgement of independence of India now, avenue then can be opened for negotiations of mutual arrangements and transfer of power and defence and active resistance on widest scale. Present demand essentially based on desire to offer effective resistance to Japan to prevent repetition of Burma tragedy and help China and Russia in this grave crisis. No doubt about free India's role in War. Allowing matters to drift is dangerous from every viewpoint. British policy statements have infuriated people and has closed doors of giving effective help. Submission to it means despairing submission to others also. Still possible to change this completely by bold step in larger interest of world freedom. Following closely world developments. Would like you to appreciate Indian conditions ignoring which is disastrous.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. In his cable of 18 July 1942, Krishna Menon expressed deep concern over the "gravest" situation since the outbreak of the War, called upon Jawaharlal to stand firm as an anti-fascist champion and declared that any direct action against the British would weaken the front against the Axis and endanger India and her friends.

29. Instructions to Congress Workers[1]

1. Congressmen should be made to realise that the proposed movement is likely to be of a far intenser and more widespread character than any of the previous civil disobedience movements. Gandhiji has made this clear and he envisages it as something relatively short but very intense. No such intense movement can be carried on at the same high pitch

1. Confidential note prepared by Jawaharlal as President of the U.P.P.C.C., Allahabad, 24 July 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

for very long. Hence the first two or three months are the most important.

2. It should be equally realised that the reaction on the part of the government will also be far more intense and brutal than in the past. Everything that we have known in 1930-1932 will be repeated and much more. So we must be mentally and otherwise prepared for this, in so far as we can be.

3. The movement may be precipitated by government action, mass arrests, etc. Therefore we have not a day to lose and must keep in readiness for whatever may happen and not be taken aback by it.

4. In order to bring out the different character of the new movement, Gandhiji has stated that it is not his purpose to fill the jails. Jail-going has become too common and stale. Of course, government may arrest our people in large numbers and put them in prison. But formal satyagraha for jail will not be our method.

5. All this indicates that the conflict will be severe. The range of it is likely to extend to all sections of the people. There will be no limitations or restrictions and all will be invited to join in their different capacities. The exact form this may take will be determined by Gandhiji later, and will also necessarily depend on government action against Congress. But it has already been made clear by Gandhiji that he contemplates non-payment of taxes, hartals and strikes, (resignations from government service), salt manufacture, refusal to obey government orders &c &c.

6. We must await instructions from him and the A.I.C.C. before taking any step. There must be discipline in our ranks and we must not precipitate matters. But, at the same time, we must prepare our workers immediately for the times to come. All the initial steps, organisational and other, should be taken and completed *before* the A.I.C.C. meets in Bombay.

7. In the nature of things, it will be difficult to have much, if any, central control, all India or provincial. Instructions will of course be issued from time to time. But essentially work will have to be decentralised and carried on through local initiative. Within the broad limits of the instructions issued at the beginning by the Working Committee, the A.I.C.C. and Gandhiji, each local centre and every individual must continue to function, even though further instructions do not reach it or him. But always it must be remembered that nonviolence has to be the basic feature of all activities.

8. With this general picture in mind and with the full realisation that the movement is not going to be just a jail-filling one but will demand the highest sacrifice and courage, we must proceed to tone up our workers

and organisations, so that we may be able to respond effectively to the call whenever it comes. Realising also that the time is very short and the call may come unawares or be precipitated by government action.

9. The meetings to be held all over the U.P. on August 1st are not part of the satyagraha movement and should not be treated as such. They are meant to awaken the popular mind to the critical position today and to prepare it for the proposed movement. It is not desirable to invite conflict on that day or unnecessary arrests. If any such meeting is prohibited, there should be no disobedience of the order, but private meetings should be organised to pass the resolution which has been recommended. It is further suggested that processions be not taken out that day. Speeches almost inevitably leading to arrest should be avoided and there should not be too many speeches.

10. Congress offices and committees should forthwith make their internal arrangements for the future. The *sanchalak* will be chiefly responsible. Where there are separate city and district *sanchalaks*, they should confer together in order to evolve a joint plan of action.

11. Proper arrangements should be made in each district for the maintenance of communications both within the district and with such provincial centres as may be functioning and the broadcasting of news. *Sanchalaks* are authorised to raise funds for their work.

12. All local disputes must forthwith be ended. Complaints over petty matters should not be sent to the P.C.C. Even those against whom disciplinary action has been taken are free to join the movement.

13. It is likely that the first step in the movement proper will be an all-India hartal, something of the nature of the famous hartal of April 6, 1919. This will be fixed either by the A.I.C.C. or by Gandhiji. Every effort must be made to make this hartal a success in bazaars, rural areas, towns, factories, etc. This must be done despite official opposition. It is important that this hartal be made a success.

14. In view of suppression of news by the censors or government officials, and difficulties in sending communications, workers should remain wide awake to find out what is happening. In particular, they should read *Harijan* to understand the nature of the movement, and they should act in accordance with the directions that reach them.

15. In the course of the movement there should not be any destruction of property, such as trees, etc. (which were cut down previously as part of forest satyagraha[2]).

2. The forest satyagraha was inaugurated on 10 July 1930 at Pusad near Yeotmal when M.S. Aney with some volunteers tried to cut wood in the reserved forests. It soon spread throughout the then Central Provinces and Berar region where many persons defied the forest laws and courted arrest.

16. Fines should not be paid and no facilities should be given to the police to realise them by attacking property, etc.
17. In districts there should be several centres of activity. Usually it will be found convenient to have centres in each tahsil area.
18. All workers must realise that our movement can only be carried on on the basis of self-sufficiency in each area. There must be no dependence on other areas, though every effort should be made to maintain contacts with them. In the ultimate analysis every worker may have to be a self-sufficient entity carrying on the programme to the best of his ability.
19. While jail-going is not going to be our main programme, on no account must arrest or jail be avoided. Such avoidance has a very bad effect on mass psychology. We must always face the opponent, not run away.
20. The time factor must always be borne in mind and the urgent demands of the situation. The P.C.C. office is taking immediate organisational and other steps to help and maintain contacts with districts and local areas. Local workers must do likewise so that everything should be in readiness before the A.I.C.C. meets.

30. Freedom Will Create Enthusiasm[1]

We do not want to be passive spectators of disaster in India or China. The War concerns us more intimately than it can concern anyone else. Therefore, it becomes essential to create conditions here now which can change the character of the War, specially in India, and give a tremendous additional strength to the Allied cause. That can only be done by a complete change in India by recognizing and giving effect to independence and then by cooperation as allies between India and the United Nations in the fight against aggression. It is perfectly clear that a free India will defend itself by armed forces and in every other way possible. But all this is dependent upon freedom in the present and the vital enthusiasm that it would create among the masses.

1. Interview to the press, Allahabad, 26 July 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 28 July 1942.

resolution. Most of these criticisms come from people who have developed a habit of criticising us. British[3] and American criticisms[4] have proceeded either on a complete misunderstanding of that resolution or on a desire to pervert it. The resolution is clear enough and if people refuse to understand it for what it is, this simply shows that they do not want to understand. It is sad that at this extreme crisis responsible people should shut their eyes to hard facts and should deliberately ignore reality. That reality will not cease to be because of this attitude.

Sir Stafford Cripps's recent broadcast to America[5] has, however, compelled me to say a few words. This broadcast is so full of misrepresentations of the Congress attitude that I am amazed at it. Like a clever lawyer Sir Stafford has picked out phrases from Mahatma Gandhi's statements without reference to their context and tried to prove the British imperialist case. This is no time for lawyer's quibbling and no statesman who shoulders responsibility can afford to do this. Sir Stafford says that American and British policy is to defend India, but Mr. Gandhi and the Congress have other views. If there is one consideration which has been paramount before the Congress leaders it is that of the defence of India. We have long struggled for independence but we might well have postponed that issue for yet a while. But we could not postpone the issue of Indian defence. It was our conviction that effective defence of India could only be undertaken by a free India that made us insist on the ending of British rule today. We have seen enough of the capacity of the British Government both for defence as well as for protection and civil government in India to realise that this is a broken reed to rely upon. We dare not imperil our safety, our defence, our present and future, by reliance upon this broken reed. Therefore it has become incumbent to replace this by a government of free India relying upon the goodwill and stout arms of our men to

3. Maurice Webb in the *Daily Herald* testified that British authorities were not impressed by the new challenge. *Time and Tide* wrote that against the background of world events the Congress proceedings "seem like acting sleep-walkers in some unreal dream." The *New Statesman* called it petty politics and expressed inability to analyse the meaning of the resolution.
4. The *Baltimore Sun* feared that mass movement would encourage the Nazis and the Japanese. The *Washington Post* could not make much sense out of Mahatma Gandhi's stand; *The New York Times* appreciated Mahatma Gandhi's preachings and teachings but attacked his present stand as inviting more harm to his people "than Chenghiz Khan."
5. On 26 July 1942, he stated, "we cannot allow the actions of a visionary, however distinguished in his fight for freedom in the past, to thwart the United Nations' drive for victory in the East."

defend India, to help China and Russia and the larger world cause of freedom.

Sir Stafford talks lightly of anarchy and chaos. He should know that anarchy and chaos are likely to be the consequences of the policy that he and his government are pursuing. The right way to prevent their development is for British rule to cease to be and for a provisional government of free India representing the major groups and parties in the country to take its place. The right way to do this is for Great Britain not to talk to us in offensive and patronising language, but to approach us in all humility with repentance for all the evils she has done to India and is still doing to her. Sir Stafford talks about War and about danger to India. We are more concerned with that danger than he can be, for we shall suffer most by it. If War comes to India it will be the people of India who will fight and die in defence of their land and their homes. It will be the people of India also, when they are in a position to do so, who will pour out their help to China and the right cause, far more than England has done in spite of her recent professions.

The situation between England and India is bad enough in all conscience. And yet Sir Stafford must need go out of his way to make it far worse and must constitute himself as the new champion of the Muslims and the depressed classes and others. I know my Muslim countrymen a little better than Sir Stafford does and I know that what he says about them is a calumny for vast numbers of them are devoted to the cause of India's independence.

Sir Stafford has also on various occasions brought out nonviolence as an insuperable barrier to prevent freedom in India. If there has been anything clearly and definitely stated on our behalf, it is this: that free India will defend the country in every way, through armed forces and by all means. The question of nonviolence in this connection has not arisen. Indeed the question of any adverse effect on the War cannot arise because the whole object is to make India stronger for defence. It is absurd then to talk about weakening India's defence. The simple issue is the complete recognition of India's independence now, and then immediately steps to be taken to give effect to it, and to take concrete measures for the more effective defence of India in cooperation with our allies.

It is sad beyond measure that a man like Sir Stafford Cripps should allow himself to become the Devil's advocate. He has thus injured Indo-British relations more than any other Englishman could have done.

It is not in this way that India is going to be won. The only possible result of this attitude is to drive the people of India to desperate

*measures so that thereby at least they might save their souls and their country from degradation.**

* This paragraph was not printed in the newspapers.

32. To Sampurnanand[1]

Allahabad
28.7.42

My dear Sampurnanand,
I have done you the favour of reading your letter[2] and I am now doing you the greater favour of replying to it. The reply is going to be brief because it is not easy to consider the questions you have raised without writing at great length.

Every aspect of the question that you have mentioned has troubled me and made me think furiously during the past two months or to be more exact nine weeks. I have been worried and distracted beyond measure. Yet gradually I have come to the conclusion that there is no other way out. I am convinced that passivity is fatal now. Our soldiers will largely surrender to the Japanese, our people will submit to them. There is only one chance of changing this and that is by some action now. The risk is there. I hate anarchy and chaos but somehow in my bones I feel some terrible shake-up is necessary for our country. Otherwise we shall get more and more entangled in communal and other problems, people will get thoroughly disillusioned and will merely drift to disaster. How we should do this and what steps we should take is another matter. If there was a real approach from U.S.A. and China we should certainly consider it. But so far there is none. Meanwhile Cripps talks poisonously. What is one to do with this crowd?

Do come to Bombay. It is no good for any of us to sulk or keep away. We must help each other as we will have to face the consequences. So you must come. I should like to meet you there before the A.I.C.C. Come early. My address there: Sakina Mansion, Carmichael Road, Bombay.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Sampurnanand Papers, National Archives of India.
2. In his letter of 27 July, Sampurnanand had doubted the wisdom of launching a movement. He had accused the leadership of mishandling matters and thought that a movement at this juncture would make the situation worse confounded.

33. The Demand to 'Quit India'[1]

A distinction should be drawn between the aggressive nationalism of independent countries like Germany or Italy and the nationalism of a subject country like India. The positive side of the latter nationalism would be demand for independence and the negative side would be displacing the ruling power. Many people express surprise at the 'Quit India' or withdrawal demand, but the inevitable consequence of the demand for independence is withdrawal of the British Government.

We do not wish to take advantage of the perils of Britain, Russia and China nor do we want the Axis powers to win. We mean to stop the Japanese and help China and the wider cause of democracy and freedom, but the nature of the danger is such now, not only for us but also for China which needs our help, that we want to meet it by converting the War into a people's war, as China has done. The preparation of the Government of India is entirely inadequate. We want to build up the national will to resistance.

We want to tackle the present situation ourselves even if we have to take risks in doing so. We want to save ourselves from the immediate peril and not take advantage of the situation in order to gain our independence. But if we remain passive, we allow the popular will against the British Government to be broken and that will break the popular will to resistance. We want to gamble with fate—if one chooses to call it so—and we will do it bravely.

The movement is not going to be a long-drawn-out affair, but it would be short and swift. I do not know exactly because this depends on psychological factors. Ours is not an armed force. Our struggle depends upon the psychological reactions of the millions of Indians.

Question: What will be the step that Congress would take after the A.I.C.C. meets to launch the movement?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The movement can begin by what we do and can be accelerated by what the government does. Gandhiji in his *Harijan*

1. Address to the Allahabad Journalists Association, Allahabad, 31 July 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 1 August 1942; also from *The Hindu*, 2 August 1942.

has indicated the steps[2] and the first step may be within a fortnight after the A.I.C.C. meeting. That might be a preparatory step, unless the government took such action as might accelerate it.

Q: What are your views regarding Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's proposal for a round table conference?[3]

JN: Without the recognition of our basic standpoint of immediate declaration of independence any round table conference, as suggested by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, would not be acceptable to us because that would be going back to the old method which had proved a complete failure and every time a trap. The whole conception of having to sit at the feet of power is repugnant to us.

Q: Will the intervention of America or China in the present situation be acceptable to the Congress?

JN: American or Chinese intervention would be acceptable in the present situation, but only on the basis of the main question of our independence and as allies and friends.

Q: What value do you attach to the declared dissatisfaction of the Muslim League,[4] the Hindu Mahasabha[5] and the depressed classes[6] to the present stand of the Congress?

2. In the 26 July 1942 issue of the *Harijan*, Mahatma Gandhi explained the plan of action. The movement would be nonviolent "but I would not hesitate to go to extreme limits, if I find that no impression is produced on the British Government or the Allied powers." It would be his "biggest movement" and would be launched one week after the A.I.C.C. session. He was ready to meet the Viceroy but cautioned that even if he was arrested the movement would continue.
3. On 26 July 1942, Sapru proposed a round table conference to discuss how best to remove the prevailing tension and to arrive at some settlement for the war period, leaving the larger question of a permanent constitution for the times of peace.
4. Jinnah called upon the Muslims on 24 July 1942 not to be a party to the Congress call for Quit India and described the Congress stand as dangerous.
5. On 18 July 1942, Savarkar criticised the tactics and policies of the Congress and said they were unacceptable to both Hindus and Muslims. On 2 August 1942, he clarified that the Hindu Mahasabha would support 'Quit India' if the Congress made a statement for India's indivisibility and integrity. In the absence of such a statement, he could not lend support to the movement.
6. Ambedkar stated on 27 July 1942 that Mahatma Gandhi's move to launch a mass movement was both irresponsible and insane. "It seems to me that Mr. Gandhi is merely trying to retrieve the prestige which he and the Congress have lost since the War started... This move may be the best way to serve the best interests of the Congress party. But it certainly is not the way to serve the country... Duty requires that those who do not believe in his movement must take steps to prevent it from taking place."

34. Struggle—Eternal Struggle[1]

Struggle—eternal struggle; that is my reply to Mr. Amery[2] and Sir Stafford Cripps.[3] The people of America and Britain are preaching unity to us, when in Europe they have not been able to settle their differences resulting in tens of thousands being slaughtered. India's national self-respect cannot be a matter of bargaining. I am galled with sorrow and anger to note that I for years wanted some settlement because I felt that Britain was in trouble but the British did not reciprocate. They have had their suffering and sorrow. I wanted my country to move forward in step with them as a free country. But what is one to make of such statements of Amery and Cripps?

My mind is quite clear that our decision is correct. I can say this with all the authority and dignity of a member of the Working Committee. My mind is at rest. I can clearly see the path before us. We can tread it fearlessly and bravely. It would be like plunging in a storm in the ocean. I will do it with confidence and I invite you to do it. The world is in a state of turmoil. The storm is approaching us and if we try to escape it, it will follow us and get at us.

I want to make it clear that there is no intention to help Japan or to injure China. If we succeed, that will release tremendous spiritual forces for the cause of freedom and democracy and will greatly increase the resistance against the Japanese and the Germans. If, on the other hand, we fail, Britain will be left to fight against Japan as best as she can.

The final decision lies with the All India Congress Committee. Probably, the A.I.C.C. would not go against the decision of the Working Committee because it is a correct decision. Any other body bigger than the A.I.C.C. of Congressmen or others would have come to the same conclusion. What the first step will be I do not know.

Students should also join the struggle. How they can do it, would depend upon circumstances. India's independence is a fundamental issue with us.

1. Speech at Allahabad on Tilak Day, 1 August 1942. From *The Hindu*, 3 August 1942; and *The Bombay Chronicle*, 4 August 1942.
2. Amery told the House of Commons on 30 July 1942, that "the British Government, while reiterating their resolve to give the fullest opportunity for the attainment by India of complete self-government, cannot but solemnly warn all those who stand and believe in the policy adumbrated by the Congress Working Committee, that the Government of India will not flinch from their duty to take every possible step to meet the situation."
3. See *ante*, p. 420.

Gandhiji's 'Quit India' slogan correctly represents our thoughts and sentiments. Passivity on our part at this moment and hour of peril would be suicidal. It will break down all our will to resistance. It will destroy and emasculate us. Our step is not merely for the love of independence but to protect ourselves, to strengthen our will to resistance, to give a fresh orientation to the War, to fight and to help China and Russia; it is an immediate and pressing necessity with us.

We will fight against Japan in every possible way, with nonviolence and with arms. By making it a people's war. By raising a people's army. By increasing production and industrialisation. By making it our primary consuming passion. By fighting like Russia and China. No price would be too big to pay to achieve our success against the aggressor.

I hope goodwill will come out of this struggle, and even if we perish, on our ashes will the foundation of freedom be laid.

35. Suppressio Veri, Suggestio Falsi[1]

I have just seen for the first time the government's communique issuing certain documents obtained during a police raid from A.I.C.C. office.[2] It is astonishing to what a pass the Government of India has been reduced to when it has to adopt these discreditable and dishonourable tactics. Normally such tactics require no answer. But as there is likely to be misapprehension, I wish to clear up some matters.

It is not our custom to keep detailed minutes of Working Committee's meetings. Only final decisions are recorded. On this occasion the Assistant Secretary took brief notes unofficially apparently for his own record. These notes are very brief and disjointed and represent several days' prolonged debates during which I must have spoken on various occasions for two or three hours. Only a few sentences were taken down

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 5 August 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 5 August 1942.
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and torn from their context. They often give a wrong impression. None of us had a chance of seeing these notes or revising them. The record is very unsatisfactory and incomplete and hence often incorrect.

In our discussions Mahatma Gandhi was not present. We had to consider every aspect of the question fully and to weigh the implications of words and phrases in the draft resolutions. If Gandhiji had been there, much of this discussion might have been avoided as he could have explained to us his attitude more fully.

Thus when the question of British withdrawal from India was considered, I pointed out that if the armed forces were suddenly withdrawn, the Japanese might well advance and invade the country without hindrance. This obvious difficulty was removed when Gandhiji later explained that British and other armed forces might remain to prevent aggression.

In regard to the statement that Gandhiji expected an Axis victory, an important qualification has been omitted. What he has repeatedly said and what I have referred to is his belief that unless Britain changes her whole policy in regard to India and her colonial possessions, she is heading for disaster. He has further stated that if a suitable change in this policy was made and the War really became one for freedom for all peoples, then victory would assuredly come to the United Nations.

The references to negotiations with Japan are also incorrect and entirely torn from their context. Gandhiji always sends notice to his adversary before coming into conflict. He would thus have called upon Japan not only to keep away from India, but to withdraw from China, etc. In any event, he was determined to resist every aggressor in India and he advised our people to do so even to the point of death. They were never to submit.

It is absurd to say that any of us envisaged any arrangement with Japan giving her right of passage, etc. What I said was that Japan would want this, but we could never agree. Our whole policy has all along been based on uttermost resistance to aggression.

36. A Struggle for Survival[1]

We have been demanding freedom for many years past, and it is our birthright. If it were only that, we could afford to wait for a few months,

1. Speech at Parel, Bombay, 5 August 1942. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 6 August 1942, and *The Hindustan Times*, 6 August 1942.

perhaps years, or more. But today, India is in imminent danger of aggression and this danger cannot be faced without full freedom.

People talk of giving us a promissory note and guarantee of future freedom. But it is not a question of freedom at all, but of our very existence. This is not a struggle for Swaraj for its own sake, but for the sake of preparing for a greater struggle for survival.

The forthcoming meeting of the A.I.C.C. is going to be the most momentous and important session during the last quarter of a century. The Working Committee has taken a decision that this country should no longer live in slavery and that a struggle for freedom should be launched. It is a question of life and death not only for the Congress but for the entire country and it would deeply affect the fortunes of the Allies as well as the Axis powers. The step the Congress will take or has decided to take will change the whole course of the history of India. It is indeed a very grave responsibility that the Congress has undertaken and I have no doubt of the response of the people of India to the call of the Congress.

It is not mere patriotic impulse that has forced the issue. It is a very delicate and far-reaching decision that the Congress has taken, and I and other members of the Working Committee spent many a sleepless night in thinking over the issue and weighing the pros and cons of the step. When fifteen intelligent persons meet there are bound to be as many different opinions. They will have to understand each other's views, and out of the welter of opinions will evolve one common policy. Needless to say the decision has been arrived at after the most careful and mature thinking. The resolution has also been released to the press so as to enable everybody concerned to give due consideration to it.

You are aware of the Government of India's communique. We were told that the government had been preparing a bombshell for us. The bombshell turned out to be nothing more than the publication of some papers 'stolen' from the Congress office.

It appears that the object of the government was to discredit and defame the Congress in America and other countries of the world. Maybe, they might succeed in that purpose, but did the government think for one moment what the reaction in India would be? The reaction would be just the opposite of what the government wanted. Anyway the Congress has more momentous issues to decide than the Government of India's propaganda.

The situation with which the Congress is confronted today is not one between Britain and India alone. If it were a case for the national freedom of India alone I would have waited. But it is not so. India's demand is linked up with the freedom of the entire human race. My

colleagues on the Working Committee and myself are worried because as a consequence of our step China and Russia will be injured. I have visited those countries, and I have many friends there. I know the cause for which they are fighting and sacrificing a great deal. The Congress is anxious to avoid doing anything which might strengthen the Axis powers because I am convinced that an Axis victory would mean the continuation of slavery in the world. But that does not mean that I am prepared to tolerate slavery of India or any other imperialism.

The concern of the Congress for the democracies of the world led us to go to incredible lengths to arrive at a settlement with Cripps. Japan was sitting at India's frontier. France had fallen and the rest of the democracies were in peril. The cumulative effect on us was that we undertook to do things which normally we would not. We became anxious to help the Allies as the Communists are now anxious to help. I am happy that the negotiations failed and we were not caught in that snare. It was fortunate that the Working Committee did not lower itself so much. If Britain had made an honest gesture for the liquidation of imperialism then the whole face of the present situation would have changed. The Congress is not prepared to work within a circumscribed limit and operate only within a ring.

The way in which the British administration is being conducted especially for the last three years has led us to disaster. If it continues in the same way, far from achieving an early victory we will court more and more misfortune.

There is no instance in history when an empire of the magnitude of the British Empire had crumbled at the first touch as in Burma and other places. Civil administration in these places failed even before the military defeat. But unfortunately the reverses and sufferings have not taught them anything.

I would rather have my arms cut off than do anything which would harm China. I am prepared to lay down my life for the freedom of China as much as for the freedom of India. But what can I do? Do you think we can do anything to help China situated as we are? I am equally determined not to allow myself to be kicked about by two imperialist powers, Britain and Japan. My greatest desire is that we should fight this War in such a way that the whole world be free. I do not desire that we should somehow secure our freedom only and preserve it. I want India to be free so that she can play her great part in advancing the cause of peace and prosperity throughout the world. We have now very rightly decided that it is much better to fight with valour and go down rather than keep quiet.

Everything pointed to only one remedy that India should be freed immediately so that she could face the aggressors whoever they might be. We have been striving for freedom for a number of years, and if it had been a question of our freedom alone I would have chosen to wait for months, perhaps years. But the issue today is different. We cannot fight, as we have been asked to do, for a freedom which we do not enjoy. The enthusiasm of the people cannot be whipped up to defend something of which they have no knowledge. Let me emphasize that this is not going to be a struggle for Swaraj for its own sake but a struggle for the sake of facing an imminent danger and for our survival, and if we keep quiet now, the ineptitude of the government will embroil us in a hopeless mess and cause great misfortune to China and Russia.

Some people have expressed surprise on my being a party to the Wardha resolution. There is nothing to be surprised about it. I wish to repudiate that I am not in favour of the "Quit India" movement. I am not only wholly in favour of it but have been actually advocating it for a number of years now. My only concern was in regard to the Allied forces in India as their withdrawal would have meant the opening of the doors to Japan. Mahatma Gandhi has accepted this view. All of us should extend complete support to Mahatma Gandhi in his new move. Gandhiji is not imposing restrictions of any kind this time. It is an invitation not only to Congressmen, but to all the men and women of India, and it is hoped that the response would soon lead us to freedom and victory.

37. Free India As An Ally[1]

When we talk of free India becoming an ally of the United Nations, obviously we mean that we should be partners with them in this War. Indeed, the last meeting of the Working Committee at Wardha adopted a resolution which definitely stated that the Congress proposal for British withdrawal from India was not meant to embarrass Britain or the other Allied powers in their prosecution of the War or in any way to encourage aggression against India or to increase the pressure against China by Japan or other Axis powers. There can be no question, then, of a separate peace or arrangement by anyone in the country, leaving the Allies in the lurch.

1. Interview to the *Manchester Guardian*, Bombay, 5 August 1942. From *The Hindu*, 7 August 1942.

A free India means that Britain should completely shed her imperialism. The United Nations should also stand for ending colonial domination. Free India must work heart and soul with the United Nations to defeat all the aggressors, and bring triumph to the cause of freedom as represented by the United Nations. In view of this it would be an act of betrayal to leave the cause and part company with the United Nations by making separate and opportunist arrangements with any country. India, of course, is anxious to see complete freedom in all Asiatic countries including Burma, Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, Iran and Iraq. Japan must be compelled to vacate such countries as she has occupied, but this must not lead to other colonial powers taking possession of them.

38. Stray Notes—August 1942[1]

Indonesia—Korea—Ceylon—Nepal

Zero hour of the world

Emotional reactions—debasement of moral standards.
Demoralisation—falsehood.
Danger of being swept away by passion.
Go to the people—find out what they feel or say. Not playing politics

What politics have we played at? =This not the Congress way for 22 years. Many of us would not be on this stage if the game was just a political one—Circumstances have forced us.

Spending our lives in prison=Not the action of the moment but due to deep-seated conviction and urges before which all else is secondary and immaterial. Something more than politics.

1. Notes made by Jawaharlal during the Congress Working Committee meeting on 5 August 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

IN ALIGARH, JUNE 1942

Hope when War came—Dashed and broken—and a campaign of misrepresentation and breaking national movement—Congress. . .[2] Britain.

Frustration and desparation and a firm anti-British sentiment—

Lesson of France—Burma &c.

Evacuees.

& how! Government of India—incompetence—corruption &c defeated —lack of will to resist except demand for freedom.

Publication of papers.

मेरे कानों में हिन्दुस्तान की आवाज़ गूंजी—

दिलों के तूफान

आर्ज़ू—तमन्ना थी—अब भी वही ही लेकिन
सबसे बड़ी यह के यह सिलसिला ख़तम हो—चाहे
हम ख़तम हों[3]

Past failure—How to remedy? Not by carrying on in the old way—

We do not wish to have dominion over others—but we cannot tolerate dominion over us.

2. One word is illegible.
3. Echoed in my ears the voice of India—The storms raging in people's hearts! A yearning, an aspiration was there. And it is there, there still. But the most important of all—This chain must break, even if we break!
[Note:—Literal translation from Hindi. This does not appear to be a quotation but Jawaharlal's own thought in semi-verse style.]

World federation—(Nepal &c)
Muslim League.

Immediate peril to India—how to meet it.

Resistance to Japan or Germany—No submission whatever happens. Real danger to us *now*—later to Britain.

Throwing our bread upon the waters.

Quit India—

ज़िच होना[4]

Independence—

40 crores

I do charge the British Government with bitter hostility to the people of India, with deliberate falsity and perversion, with every attempt to disrupt India—with enmity to the Congress.
Sowing bitter seeds of hatred and now the harvest approaches.
Every fibre of my body rebels against the British Government.

British Labour Party -

Change in me
Rajaji

Tagore Centenary [*sic*]. His last message—
Crisis in Civ[ilization][5].

4. Stalemate.
5. Tagore's last message was read out in Santiniketan on 14 April 1941 and later printed as a booklet entitled *Sabhyatar Sankat* (*Crisis in Civilization*).

Our cup is full.
Give my life for China—Russia
Prayer to the spirit of India

If our proposals accepted no chaos—no disruption &c. Cripps—No Viceroy &c!
Only on refusal possibility of chaos.
If—Out of chaos—dancing stars of freedom

Maulana

Acid test—Does our proposal help or injure cause War?—against aggression.

39. Quit India Resolution

I

Draft for Working Committee, Bombay, 5 August 1942[1]

The All India Congress Committee has given the most careful consideration to the reference made to it by the Working Committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942, and to subsequent events, including the development of the war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesmen of the British Government and the comments and criticisms in India and abroad. The Committee approves of and endorses that resolution and is of opinion that events subsequent to it have given it further justification, and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom.

The Committee has viewed with dismay the deterioration of the

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Second Draft for Working Committee,[2] *Bombay, 5 August 1942*

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Congress Working Committee Resolution passed at Bombay on 5 August 1942[3]

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All India Congress Committee Resolution passed at Bombay on 8 August 1942[4]

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all her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against Nazism, fascism and imperialism. This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the War, but will bring all subject and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations, and give these nations, whose ally India would be, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British imperialism and the taint of that imperialism will affect the fortunes of all the United Nations.

The peril of today, therefore, necessitates the independence of India and the ending of British domination. No future promises or guarantees can affect the present situation or meet that peril. They cannot produce the needed psychological effect on the mind of the masses. Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the War.

The A.I.C.C. therefore repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power from India. On the declaration of India's independence, a provisional government will be formed and free India will become an ally of the United Nations. This provisional government must be a composite one representative of all

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this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a World Federation of free nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a World Federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a World Federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries; national armies, navies, air forces would no longer be necessary, and a world federal defence force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

An independent India would gladly join such a World Federation and cooperate on an equal basis with other nations in the solution of national and international problems.

Such a Federation should be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the War, however, the Federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the War,

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The freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to this freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign domination. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, Iran and Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now must not subsequently be placed under the rule or control of any other colonial power. While the A.I.C.C. must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a World Federation of free nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a World Federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a World Federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries; national armies, navies and air forces would no longer be necessary, and a world federal defence force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

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on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

The Committee regretfully realises, however, that despite the tragic and overwhelming lessons of the War and the perils that overhang the world, the governments of few countries are yet prepared to take this inevitable step towards World Federation.

The reactions of the British Government and the interested or misguided criticisms of the foreign press also make it clear that even the obvious demand for India's independence is resisted, though this has been made essentially to meet the present peril and to enable India to defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need. The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China or Russia, whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows both to India and these nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading to India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression, but is no answer to that growing peril and is no service to the peoples of the United Nations.

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appeals to the United Nations*** to join together in such a Federation without waiting for the*** war. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect***, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

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*** Torn in the original source.

III

An independent India would gladly join such a World Federation and cooperate on an equal basis with other nations in the solution of international problems.

Such a Federation should be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the War, however, the Federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the War, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

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federal defence force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

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The A.I.C.C. would yet again, at this last moment, in the interest of world freedom, renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian government which dominates over it and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity. The Committee resolves, therefore, to sanction for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on nonviolent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilise all the nonviolent strength it has gathered during the last twenty-two years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the

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Committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

The Committee appeals to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance, and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji, and carry out his instructions as disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom. They must remember that nonviolence is the basis of this movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress committee can function. When this happens, every man and woman, who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four comers of the general instructions[5] issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India.

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5. On 9 August 1942, the Congress, giving a call for a successful fight for freedom, issued the following instructions: To observe hartal on the day leaders are arrested; volunteers to visit towns and villages explaining the Congress message; processions and meetings to be organised despite bans; *vakils* and *mukhtars* to leave their jobs and policemen, government and railway servants to resign from their services and join the struggle; students to leave their schools and colleges; people not to pay *chaukidari* or Union taxes; National Flags to be hoisted on all buildings; nothing to be done secretly but after making it known by a declaration; and to conduct the whole struggle nonviolently.

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inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on nonviolent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilise all the nonviolent strength it has gathered during the last twenty-two years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the Committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

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40. On 'Quit India' Resolution[1]

The conception of the resolution is not narrow nationalism, but it has an international background. The arguments for the resolution have already been sufficiently put before the public. I am sure the *bona fides* of the resolution have been fully understood by all friends. The resolution is in no sense a challenge to anyone. If the British Government accept the proposal it would change the positions both internal and international, for the better from every point of view. The position of China would be improved. I am convinced that whatever change might come about in India, it must be for the better. The A.I.C.C. knows that Mahatma Gandhi has agreed that the British and other foreign armed forces stationed in India may continue. This has been agreed to in order not to allow the Japanese to come in.

I am surprised how intelligent people in England and America could have misunderstood the Congress stand unless, of course, they deliberately chose to misunderstand it.[2] I have regretfully come to the conclusion that to some extent other governments are also following the British line of thought towards India. Today, the British Government is opposed to the Indian national movement for freedom. I am convinced that the British Government can never really think in terms of advancing the cause of the freedom of India unless, of course, the entire character of the present British Government is changed. I am not personally concerned with such a change, but I stand for dissociating myself with that government and that country. It is not for me to advise the British people what government they should have.

There is a great deal of criticism in America, too, about what India wants. We are accused, by some newspapers, that we are blackmailing.[3] It is a curious charge for a people to make who themselves had

1. Speech at the A.I.C.C. meeting, Bombay, 7 August 1942. From *The Hindu*, 9 August 1942. The resolution was moved by Jawaharlal the same day. For the text of the resolution as passed by the A.I.C.C. on 8 August 1942 see the preceding item.
2. For example, Harold Laski stated on 13 July 1942 that the Indians should raise an army to fight the Japanese and that there was no reason why they would not attain independence after the War. Also, that Gandhi's attitude was harmful not only to the Indian cause but everywhere.
3. *The Washington Post* of 4 August 1942 stated that Gandhi was "continuing consistently to play the game of a political blackmailer." *The New York Times* and the *Sun* (New York), also attacked the Congress stand as being unreasonable at a time of war crisis and hoped that good sense would prevail.

for generations carried on a struggle for freedom. If for demanding freedom we are called blackmailers then surely our understanding of the English language has been wrong. Whatever may happen in Whitehall, it is not going to stop us from working for our independence. We live for it and will die for it. I do not want to say anything at the present moment which might add to the feeling of bitterness that exists everywhere. I know that this War has produced great emotional reactions in people's minds which is one of the worst effects of the War and which makes it very difficult for the people to think straight and not to think in terms of violent hatred.

Nobody in Whitehall can think straight, I suppose. There is falsity everywhere. You listen to the radios, London, Berlin or Tokyo. One does not know what is the truth. I am prepared to make many allowances for the emotional background in England and America. I do not really mind if people there get angry. But I feel sorry for the people in England and America who have a perverted way of looking at the Indian question. They are so wrong that they will certainly land themselves in difficulty. After all, just think what would have been the course of history, particularly that of Britain, if she had taken right steps with regard to India in the last two years. If Britain had acted rightly, the entire history of the War would have been different. But in spite of perils and disasters, England has stuck to her imperialism and Empire.[4] The fact is patent to me that the British Government and, for certain, the Government of India think the Indian National Congress to be their enemy number one. If the Government of India is going to treat the people of India like this, then we also know how to behave with them. We have seen in the last few months an unparalleled example of inefficiency and incompetency of this government. The whole system is a rotten one. I do not want to associate myself with the creaking, shaking machinery that the Government of India is. As for the so-called National War Front, there is neither the nation, nor the war, nor any front in it. All that this front is now doing is opposing the Congress. I certainly do not mind that. The whole Government of India is built that way. The only occasion when it does function effectively and efficiently is when overnight it starts rounding up large numbers of people. One of these days some such efficient functioning will reappear against Congressmen!

4. Cripps stated on 5-August 1942, "we make no threats but we must assert unequivocally our duty to India, to the great minorities and the United Nations to preserve law and order until hostilities cease and we can then give as we have presumed the fullest opportunity for the attainment of self-government by the Indian people."

It is a curious tangle that we are in. It is not going to be resolved by shouting or by the approaches of the British Government. May I, with all respect, suggest to the great people of America that they have all gone wrong in regard to India, China and the whole of Asia. Americans have looked upon India as an appendage to Britain, and Asia as the dependent of Europe and America. Some of them have thought in terms of benevolence towards these countries, but always with a taint of racial superiority. They have always considered themselves, because of their inventions during this machine age, to be infinitely better than us and also that we are a benighted backward people. But the people of Asia do not propose to be treated in that manner any longer. Asia is the mother continent of the world, and India and China constitute the real mother countries of the world. What is the good of such people, who, simply because they have some very great material achievements to their credit, have forgotten or are not learning the very essence and art of living? They have built and are building better motor cars. This is a machine age. We will also learn to build machines—better machines. Americans have forgotten the magnificent achievements of China and India. It is China and India, with the experience of ages, who have learned the art of living decently even without the material achievements considered necessary for such living.

I hate poverty. My grievance against the British is that they have made Indians miserable, poverty-stricken wrecks of humanity. We are now taking a step from which there will be no going back. If there is goodwill on the other side, then everything would be all right and the whole course of the War and the future of the world would be changed. The change would be not merely emotional but in the material sense also. But that is not to be. There might be some difficulty. It is my conviction that this resolution is the only way, the effective way, in which we can help China and Russia and I know how terrible the situation is there. Britain and America must change their whole conception of the War. It is no good looking at Asia as a side-show. Asia is the centre of the War and it is Asia that is going to determine the final result of the War. Therefore, I want to prepare today, even at some risk and peril, so that the final result of the War should be the right kind of result. We must go forward even though it involves certain perils. I should like my friends, who do not agree with this resolution or who do not try to understand it, to respect our *bona fides*. People should realise that if there is any trouble in India, it is we who would suffer. If there is internal trouble or an external invasion by Japan, it is we who would suffer. England might be distantly affected but we will have to die immediately. The problem of meeting aggression

concerns us deeply. How can I, after seeing the incompetence of the government, trust them? Their whole attitude is one of retreat. We, however, want to be valiant fighters. It is not a narrow nationalist resolution. I am proud of Indian nationalism because it is broadbased and has an international background.

The movement contemplated is not for merely achieving national ends but for achieving world freedom. The Congress is plunging into a stormy ocean and it would emerge either with a free India or go down. Unlike in the past, it is not going to be a movement for a few days, to be suspended and talked over. It is going to be a fight to the finish. The Congress has now burnt its boats and is about to embark on a desperate campaign. I can never persuade myself to work with a government which has neither vision nor intelligence. Nor would I remain a passive spectator of the great happenings that are taking place in the world. It appears to me, perhaps, I would live in eternal opposition to the Axis powers. I repudiate the suggestion that the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi are bargaining and haggling. In moments of excitement people are prone to say certain things, but this should not be dubbed as bargaining. How, by granting India's independence, would the war efforts of the United Nations be hampered or how would chaos and anarchy follow in India? The resolution does not give out even one-tenth of the real feelings of the Indians towards the British Government.

41. Offer of Cooperation[1]

The debate on this resolution is over and I have also had my say. There are just a few points which I have partly said and partly not said—which I would like to say in English for the benefit of my friends who may not have followed me.

What is the resolution? You have seen and read it. It is not a threat. It is an invitation. It is an explanation. It is an offer of cooperation. It is all that. It is not a threat but still behind it there is the obvious warning that certain consequences will follow if certain events do not happen. It is an offer of cooperation but of a free India with other free peoples. There is going to be no cooperation on any

1. Speech at the A.I.C.C. meeting, Bombay, 8 August 1942. From File No. 3590/H/VI-6, Police Commissioner's Office, Maharashtra Government Records, and also from *The Hindu*, 10 August 1942.

other terms. On any other terms this resolution can only promise conflict and struggle. Let that be clear. Some of our friends abroad may think that we are acting unwisely. I do not blame them. They move in their own environment. I want them to realise what we are saying. We are in dead earnest about the course we are going to adopt. Let there be no doubt about it. You may occasionally cheer and clap but the fact is that we are on the brink of a precipice and we are in deac earnest about it. I think this resolution of ours is not only a resolution of the All India Congress Committee but it does represent—as on many other occasions our resolutions have represented—the voice of India. I would even go a step further and say that it represents the voice of the entire oppressed humanity. If, by a miracle, Britain had accepted this resolution and acted according to its demands you would have seen such a wonderful change, not only in India but all over the world. It would have changed the whole nature of the War. It would have given it a real revolutionary background which it does not bear today.

Now, remember that the essential thing about this War is that it is something infinitely more than a war; it is a World War. That is big enough; but it is bigger than that: it is a part of, and prelude to, and precursor of a vast revolution that is enveloping the whole world. This War may end or it may be carried on for some time, but no peace will be established, no equilibrium attained until this revolution runs its appointed course. Our misfortune has been that the leaders in the West did not realize the revolutionary significance of this War, or if they realized, they did not act accordingly. They are still carrying on in the same old way and think only in terms of more tanks and more aeroplanes. Probably in their position I would have done the same thing. They are not thinking of the vast surge of the elemental emotion of humanity. Unless they do this, they can never attain success. I hope they will learn, but, sometimes, I fear, that they will learn it too late.

Mr. Churchill and other Englishmen have not got over thinking in terms of the Anglo-Saxon race. In a recent speech Mr. Churchill visualised the day when the Anglo-Saxon race would march through the world in dignity and majesty.[2] This is not a pleasant picture to contemplate and it is a thing not going to be tolerated by Asia at any rate. Let that be clear. There is too much talk of majesty and dignity

2. Addressing the joint session of the American Congress on 26 December 1941, Churchill said: "The British and American peoples will, for their own safety and for the good of all, walk together side by side in majesty, in justice and in peace."

of the Anglo-Saxon race or the German race or the Italian race. There are other races also in the world and we have had enough of such talks. This racial superiority can no more be tolerated. We are going to cooperate with the British when we think it right to do so and when there is a right cause; but we are not going to act with them if we think that the cause is not right. At the present time, the Allied cause is only negatively right in the sense that Germany and Japan are worse. But Indian freedom would change the whole nature of the War and make it right positively. Even the people of Nazi Germany and those who are helping the Germans would feel the impact of the change. It would be a turning point of the War. But they simply talk about their own problems which have no significance for us and ask us not to do this and that and go on in their own ruts. The people in England, America and elsewhere are looking at every question from the narrow standpoint of a soldier. And it does not matter to them how other people view the Indian question. India says something which we believe—and I honestly believe—is not only in the interest of India but enormously in the interest of the Allied cause provided they accept it. They talk about blackmailing and threaten us. I can only tell them that we will not be deterred from our course by any amount of threats. On the other hand the Westerners ought to realise that at this stage threats could only make the position infinitely worse and more difficult for them. We have decided to take this course on which there is no going back. I repeat again: we shall try to remain calm. We have got big tasks ahead—a big task for our country, and a big task for the world. Whether we function as Indian National Congress or not, time may come when each individual will represent the Indian National Congress and work on his own. We must not in the excitement of the movement forget our high aims and objectives—high aims for India whose freedom we consider precious, and high aims and objectives with regard to the whole world. We are nationalists and we are proud of this fact. But we should not settle down to a narrow nationalism. We should always remember that we have to develop a right type of internationalism, but not pseudo-internationalism of the present-day world or of the League of Nations.

I beg everybody to consider this resolution in this spirit. Whether there are internal perils or external perils, after all, if the Japanese reach this country, you and I will suffer and not the people in London and Washington. You and I will have to die, face the situation, may have to face untold miseries and sufferings—we will have to face all that. People talk to us from Washingto[illegible] York and various other places. You know what Japan is. We know what subjection is and we know

it better than Americans and Englishmen. We have had it for about two hundred years. We have come to the decision that it is better to throw off the fetters into the fire and come out as a free nation than be reduced to ashes.

We are prepared to pay any price for unity except the price of independence. What obstructions have not been placed in our path which have had no relation to the real issue? I can talk and negotiate with anybody who recognises the need for democratic freedom for India, but I cannot negotiate with anyone who refuses to recognise the fundamental issue—the freedom of India. I was told during the Cripps negotiations that a certain leader insisted on behalf of Muslims that the Viceroy's power of veto should not be removed or in any way qualified. If any section wants that the British Viceroy should exercise his veto power against the decisions of his Indian cabinet, it means clearly that that section is against the freedom of India. I do not want to injure anyone's feelings especially at a time when we are about to launch a great struggle for freedom. I tried, for one whole year, to find out what the League wanted, but I was unable to understand what they wanted.[3]

I have not been able to find a parallel to such a situation in the history of the world. I have not come across anywhere else such a situation except in the land of Hitler. The Sudeten crisis bears similarity to the situation here. For purposes of negotiations we were not allowed to select our own representatives. We are told that we cannot send Muslims to represent the Congress. This is an insult to our great organization and to our revered President. We were prepared to stake everything consistent with our dignity and self-respect for finding a satisfactory settlement. Whenever we knocked at the doors we found them bolted, and we knocked ourselves against a wall. Are we beggars to be treated like this? Are we going to be so dishonourable as to sacrifice the mansion of Indian freedom which we want to build? Are we going to be kicked about by men who have made no sacrifice for the freedom of India and who can never think in terms of freedom at all?

3. On 7 August 1942, Jinnah stated that the "fantastic" Congress demand for the immediate establishment of a national government could not be accepted by the Muslims, as it would mean the ruling out of their demand for Pakistan, and imply their submission "to a Hindu Raj as a national sub-group." No intelligent man could believe in the sincerity of the statement by individual Congress leaders that the Government of India might be handed over to the Muslim League, but if this were done he was sure that non-Muslims would be treated well.

Our conscience is clear. We have done everything that is humanly possible for arriving at a settlement. The Muslim masses are not reactionary. We have made strenuous and sincere attempts to resolve the communal issue, but all our attempts have either been sabotaged or frustrated. The chief difficulty is that the problem is more political than communal.

5

INDIA AND CHINA

1. Cable to Madame Chiang Kai-shek[1]

Allahabad
15-12-41

Greetings and regards to you and Generalissimo and all good wishes for China's cause which is equally ours.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. To S. K. Datta[1]

Bardoli
December 24, 1941

My dear Dr. Datta,
It is a pleasure to have a few lines from you after this long interval.[2] It is true that my mind is very much occupied with the changes that are taking place and it seems to me that few people realise the big nature of these changes. Most of us find it difficult to get out of the mental ruts in which we have got caught.

During my stay in prison I received a letter from Chiang Kai-shek and three letters from Madame Chiang.[3] They were very friendly letters indeed and I appreciated them greatly. More and more I think of India and China pulling together in future.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 17 December 1941, he welcomed Jawaharlal's release from prison and enquired about his correspondence with friends at Chungking.
3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, pp. 516, 519-520.

3. Cable to Madame Chiang Kai-shek[1]

Allahabad
20 January, 1942

Just received your message[2] on return home. I am grateful for kind enquiry and highly value friendship of Generalissimo and yourself and think often of you both and of your fine leadership in the great and common cause. I am quite well. Greetings and good wishes.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In her telegram of 12 January 1942, she sent her good wishes to Jawaharlal.

4. Goodwill Message to China[1]

India and China—how thousands of pictures of past ages crowd into our minds when we think of them and their contacts and cultures. Each has played a great part in that past. Each has to play a greater part in the future. And both have to cooperate together for their own and the world's good. All good wishes to China.

1. Bombay, 5 February 1942. Message to Indo-China Goodwill Number of the *Blitz*, issued on 7 February 1942.

5. On the Visit of Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek[1]

Question : Would you like to comment on your meeting with Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek?

Jawaharlal Nehru : I was very happy to meet Marshal Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang Kai-shek. I hope to meet the Marshal again today and have a further talk.

1. Interview to the press, New Delhi, 10 February 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 11 February 1942. This interview took place soon after Jawaharlal met Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek on 10 February 1942.

Q: Did you discuss the Indian problem with the Marshal?

JN: Certainly, we discussed India. After all I am India. In fact, we discussed many things including India and China.

Q: Had the Marshal anything to say about Congress policy towards the war effort?

JN: You do not expect the Marshal to advise us about Congress policies and what we should do.

Q: What is the Congress policy today with regard to China?

JN: The Congress policy is this: if we could help the Chinese in their war of independence against Japan by keeping open the Burma Road, we would certainly do it. But as matters stand now, we cannot do much. The Congress attitude to the Chinese struggle for independence remains unchanged. We had sent money and a medical mission to China[2] as a token of our sympathy and we are prepared to do the same. Beyond that we cannot go.

Q: What do you think about China's capacity to resist?

JN: Although Chinese difficulties are increasing, I have every hope that Chinese resistance will also increase. I agree with the remark of a Chinese staff officer—"China will be completely free in six months."

Q: Will the Marshal meet Mahatma Gandhi?

JN: Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek have expressed their desire to see Mahatma Gandhi. But there is no question of Mahatma Gandhi coming to Delhi. I do not know exactly where they would meet. It may be Allahabad or somewhere in between Delhi and Calcutta.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 641.

6. Tribute to Chiang Kai-shek[1]

I have come to Delhi after a long interval not for Congress or political work but to meet Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek. I must

1. Speech at Gandhi Grounds, Delhi, 11 February 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 12 February 1942, and also from Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

say Delhi is honoured by their visit. The Generalissimo has made a tremendous mark on the history of our times, which none can deny. During my visit to China, two and a half years ago, I had the honour of meeting the Generalissimo and his wife. The Generalissimo's personality made a deep impact on my thoughts and actions. He is not only a great general but a great leader who has successfully unified China and made his people stand firm as a rock against Japanese aggression. He is not only a great Chinese but a great Asiatic and a world figure. He is one of the topmost leaders of the world.

Madame Chiang Kai-shek is full of vitality and charm. She is a star of hope for the Chinese people who can never forget the inspiration they receive from her personality. We are sorry that our welcome to our Chinese guests cannot be more than just expressing our sentiments in our feeble words. Due to certain difficulties we have not been able to arrange a public reception.

The visit of Marshal Chiang Kai-shek has brought nearer to each other the two great nations of the world whose populations, put together, constitute about one half of the world. The Chinese have faced great trials and their struggle has great lessons for us in India. One lesson we can learn from them is, never to falter whatever be the odds against us. I hope that the Chinese leaders' visit to India will create a bond of friendship between the two great countries with two great ancient cultures, which has been one of my cherished dreams for a long time. The Chinese people have deep sympathy for the Indian cause. We will march together not only for the benefit of our own countries but for the whole world. A federation of India, China, Iraq, Iran and other countries, with its object to attain independence, will go a long way in ensuring world peace.

Some people are speculating that there might be a change in the policy of the Congress towards the War because of the visit of the Generalissimo. There is no truth in these rumours. Marshal Chiang Kai-shek has come to India as one of the leaders of Asia and the world. He is very keen to understand the Indian question. We are trying our best to make him understand our position and we ourselves want to understand and appreciate his position. We did discuss the Indian problem. The Marshal is here in India for a few days. The relationship of China and India is centuries old. It is absurd to suggest that the Marshal has come to India to interfere in our affairs.

Whatever decisions are taken in this country they are not taken hurriedly. They are the result of our experience and mature deliberations. The Working Committee has a heavy responsibility because it represents the fates of the millions of Indians. The decision taken by it

stands today. There may be difficulties in arriving at a decision. This War has engaged the whole world and no one can escape the impending revolution. We may not be able to predict what will happen tomorrow but we cannot escape the revolution.

The old world is crumbling before our eyes. Its revival is an impossibility. It is possible that our lot may become worse at least for some time in the new world as the path of revolution is a path of turmoil. There is the example of China before us. After wading through the river of blood for full five years, China has created a new world for itself. Its ancient cities were destroyed. China had to pay a heavy cost, the thought of which will make many of us shudder. But we will also have to pay the same price. Slogans will not create *inquilab* for us. Revolution will and must come. The old order has to perish for the new one to be created. We should not get panicky over it.

Our policy and line of action are the same as before. The Bardoli resolution merely reiterated our old policy. And there is no difference of opinion between Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress as newspapers make it out to be. The Congress has created a sense of discipline and intellectual integrity which has taught us to exercise our free judgement properly rather than follow the leader blindly. It is a question of millions of Indians reaching a goal and not merely of a few people achieving something for themselves. There is no reason to be surprised over the differences in the Working Committee. What is more essential is acting unitedly, and that unity in action we have been able to demonstrate. The Working Committee's decision was unanimously supported by the A.I.C.C. Those who opposed it earlier also accepted the operative part of the resolution.

We want freedom for our country and we shall not bow to any power. We want neither the Japanese nor the Germans to come, nor the British to stay. If the British had entrusted the administration of the country to the elected representatives of the people we perhaps would have prepared ourselves to meet the impending aggression. But the shortsighted policy of the British has only made us helpless.

We should be ready to face any situation without caring for the odds against us. When the time comes we should be ready to accept the responsibility for the government of the country. In order to develop the country many steps have to be undertaken. But we are aware of the negative attitude of the British Government towards industrialisation. Their policy today is not only devoid of any imagination but is also suicidal from the government's point of view.

We have also to face the danger of aerial bombing. People should not be nervous. The A.R.P. measures of the government are inadequate

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and most of the officials have never experienced any bombing, though our Chinese friends experience bombing regularly. I am not against A.R.P. measures of the government but I want to emphasise that you should supplement these measures by other suitable devices and organise yourselves efficiently.

The War may lead to economic hardships. We should learn from the Chinese how to develop self-sufficiency in food, clothing and other necessities of life. The War is approaching fast but you should not get nervous. Instead, you should organise yourselves in order to perform your duties efficiently.

I am grieved to inform you of the sudden death of our oldest worker Jamnalal Bajaj. I was stunned and refused to believe the news till it was confirmed by a telegram. His death is a rude shock to all of us and it is proper that we should pass a condolence resolution.

7. To Chiang Kai-shek[1]

Delhi
February 13, 1942

I have received the following telegraphic message from Mahatma Gandhi from Wardha for you and I have been asked by him to convey it to you:

> It has caused me greatest grief to learn that you and your partner cannot visit Sevagram[2] where my wife and the little settlement were looking forward to receiving you whilst you were on Indian soil but I understand from Pandit Nehru that it could not be. I must be satisfied with being in spirit with you. All my good wishes for yourselves and your country follow you.

Mahatma Gandhi has also sent a letter for you by a special messenger[3] from Wardha. I enclose this letter.

It has been a high privilege for me to meet you again and to have the advantage of discussing with you various matters of importan relating to our respective countries. Your visit and Madame Chiang

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Chiang Kai-shek had to cancel his visit to Wardha because the British authorities were against it.
3. Ram Manohar Lohia.

to India has been a very great event for all of us, an event which may well have historic consequences. Our regret has been that we could not take full advantage of that visit, both in offering you on behalf of our National Congress organisation and our people that welcome which filled our minds and hearts, and also to enable you to see, as far as was possible within a few days, the real India.

But unfortunately circumstances have been too strong for us. It is a matter of still deeper sorrow to me that it has not been possible for our leader, Mahatma Gandhi, to meet you. No one could have explained to you our present position in India better than he could have done, and your association with him bringing knowledge and friendship between two great men of Asia and the world would have been of far-reaching consequence to our respective countries.

May I thank you for all the friendship and courtesy that you have been good enough to show to us in such abundant measure. I cannot tell you how much we treasure your friendship and that of Madame.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. India's Aid to China[1]

Question: What were the reasons which compelled Mahatma Gandhi to refuse a meeting with Marshal Chiang Kai-shek?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is entirely untrue that Mahatma Gandhi refused to see the Marshal. I had a telephone conversation with Mahatma Gandhi and he told me that he had sent a telegram to the Generalissimo which he must have received after his return from Peshawar. In that telegram Mahatma Gandhi expressed his deep regret at not being able to see the Marshal during his visit. The Mahatma said that he and Kasturba had hoped to welcome him and the Madame in their little settlement at Sevagram, so that they might see its working and observe the real background of their work. If that was not possible, Gandhiji was prepared to go to any place on Indian soil to meet the Marshal and the Madame. However, because of circumstances beyond his control he was sorry that he would have to forego this opportunity.

1. Interview to the press, New Delhi, 15 February 1942. From *The Hindustan Times* and *National Herald*, 16 February 1942.

He had sent the visitors his very best wishes for China and his Chinese friends. Mahatma Gandhi is also sending a letter to the Marshal.

Keen as the Marshal was on meeting Mahatma Gandhi, the Marshal also felt that he should not ask Mahatma Gandhi to come to see him as per Chinese custom. In a sense, the Marshal is a guest here, and Mahatma Gandhi is to that extent his host as all Indians are. According to the Chinese custom, it is for the guest to go to the host and not for the host to go to the guest. The Mahatma is also the older of the two and it is not right for the younger man to ask the elder to come and see him. Taking everything into consideration, therefore, the Marshal decided it would not be proper for him to ask the Mahatma to go anywhere at all to meet him.

To my knowledge, no official invitation was extended to Mahatma Gandhi, and no such invitation had in fact been sent to me.

Q: There are reports that the Viceroy sent invitations to meet the Marshal, to Mr. Jinnah[2] and many princes but not to others like Mahatma Gandhi or you. Do you want to comment?

JN: The explanation probably is that as it was clear that the Marshal would like to see the people from one camp, the official side felt that he should see people from other camps.

Q: What is the Congress policy with regard to China?

JN: It is the same as before—one of complete sympathy and support. As regards actual help, the Congress can only make a gesture of aid, as it had done when a medical unit was sent out some time ago. More, the Congress, as it is constituted, cannot do.

People in India can function for any such cause only through an Indian agency and under Indian control. The present ways open to them do not allow their collaborating with the Chinese but only with the British people in India, and thereby they can indirectly and distantly collaborate with the Chinese. There can be no direct collaboration.

Indian sympathy for China took shape long before the recent war situation developed. That was partly due to the enlightened foreign policy of the Congress which applied to all countries. India certainly felt particularly attracted towards China owing to past connections and

2. On 10 February 1942, the Viceroy sent an invitation to Jinnah to meet Chiang Kai-shek.

contacts and, maybe, a certain similarity of psychological outlooks. So far as China is concerned, a very big change took place there owing to the Sino-Japanese War when the Chinese people were driven inwards into their hinterland, as a result of which they ceased to think so much as before of their big ports, through which they had had contacts with the outer world. They were forced to think more and more of their western doors and windows and of India.

The Chinese people have been feeling more friendly towards India not only for the immediate purposes of the war but for the future generally.

The Congress reply to the Chinese appeal is, 'We shall very gladly help you but our hands are tied'.

Q: Has this view been conveyed to the Marshal and will the Marshal do anything to untie our hands?

JN: It is natural for him to hope that the deadlock would be removed. What he will convey to the British Government is more than I can say. He is the head of a state and it is difficult for him to interfere in the affairs of another state.

There is a general sympathy in China for the cause of Indian freedom. The Marshal himself had expressed his sympathy when he met me at Chungking. The Chinese authorities had in fact requested him to put them in touch with Indian industrialists for supplies and suggested that a group of industrialists should go to China. For this purpose, I called a conference of industrialists in Bombay, but owing to war-time demands in the country, they were not in a position to do much for meeting outside requirements.

Q: Do you not think that in the present War, Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolence is a passive answer for defence?

JN: The distinction between the European conception of pacifism and Mahatma Gandhi's idea is, that while the former is a negative, passive thing, Mahatma Gandhi's conception is an active, dynamic thing. Under no circumstances are we going to submit or surrender to any foreign aggression, Japanese or German. Mahatma Gandhi would like to meet aggression in his own way, but would certainly meet it, not submit to it. That is the point. Others would meet it in the more normal way, as at present people meet aggressions. That is a question which, when it arises, the Congress will have to decide. How to meet aggression or help in the War involves several issues. In so far a

actual military resistance is concerned Mahatma Gandhi prefers his own method. I cannot say what, under particular circumstances, he would advise. He is in spite of his adherence to principles adaptable and he allows others, too, to adapt themselves to particular circumstances. For instance, it is possible a position may arise in India when effective military resistance which presumably will take place beyond her frontiers proves ineffective; the question would arise what should be done inside her frontiers. In the military sense, it is a difficult position and it may be that, from a purely practical consideration apart from pacifism, Mahatma Gandhi's method is considered the best alternative. That is a possibility, because under no circumstances are we prepared to accept the fate of France.

Q: In an event of Japanese aggression, what would be the reaction of the Congress to the British war efforts? Will it be one of non-embarrassment?

JN: In the complex situation created by the present War, our sympathy naturally went to a certain cause and a certain group. That was one reason for our attitude of non-embarrassment in our dealings with the British, but no such question can arise in the case of Japanese aggression. We will have to create a spirit of resistance and noncooperation —resistance in the first instance by individuals without caring for consequences, which will raise the tone of the people and create conditions making the position of the invader fairly difficult. The fact is that other countries have not thought of resistance in that way, but the people of India, having been trained in that way, can adopt it, as there is no other satisfactory way.

Q: In what respects can a National Government help the people in fighting aggression as compared with the present government?

JN: The present structure of the government is totally incapable of really conducting any big thing, especially a war, effectively or suitably.

It is quite impossible for the present government to create the psychology, the morale, the mass enthusiasm necessary for a total war, for a mass war effort, or for industrial production. Rather it is the reverse. The present government creates a kind of passive mass opposition. The first essential factor to create mass enthusiasm is to get rid of that feeling of hostility which is a legacy of generations, more especially of recent years.

I cannot conceive of any other government being so incompetent. The present government's extraordinary lack of competence can be deduced from the attitude of noncooperation adopted by them in the matter of the development of such industries as automobile, aeroplane and shipbuilding. It is patent throughout that even in this severe trial of war, they are thinking of not developing any industry which may conflict with British industry now or after the War.

When I was in prison all papers relating to the National Planning Committee, of which I am the President, were prevented from reaching me. I got all other papers but not these. There were plenty of reports from different sub-committees of the National Planning Committee, which I could have dealt with in prison but none was permitted to reach me. No wonder, not only Congressmen but even those people, who have nothing to do with the Congress, and scientists, who could be engaged in helping in the research work essential for war purposes, are fed up.

Furthermore, the government is creating new vested interests, chiefly foreign. It was bad enough to have had to deal with the old vested interests. The least one could expect was that it would not create new ones. For instance, the handing over to a big Calcutta firm of the sulphur deposits recently discovered in Baluchistan. Even if it were an Indian firm I would object, because it is for the state to control such national resources.

Q: Will the closing of the Burma Road cripple Chinese resistance?

JN: The closing of the Burma Road will not cripple Chinese resistance. Even apart from a new road being made to link China with Assam, China has developed her own war production. This development is a most fascinating thing, particularly the development of the Chinese industrial cooperatives. These cooperatives have not only been organised for war purposes but are laying the foundation of a real people's democracy in China which is in tune with the Chinese genius.

Q: How are these cooperatives working in China?

JN: A request was made to me when I was in Chungking for old used motor tyres from India. Further inquiries showed that these were intended for handcarts to be pushed with essential supplies over 700 miles of road. At first sight it would not strike as a quick or efficient method of transport, but the plan really was that people from each

village along the road would push the carts ten miles and then come back to their village. With China's enormous manpower, this immediately became an amazingly efficient and simple method which is analogous to the khadi programme of the Congress.

One of the programmes of the Congress to meet the war contingencies is to make groups of villages self-sufficient in regard to the necessaries of life, by encouraging food crops as against commercial crops.

9. Imperialism and China[1]

I have come to Calcutta after a long time; last time I came here it was on my way to Chungking. My present visit is not a usual one to meet friends and comrades but to be with Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek who have come to Calcutta. I wanted to be of any service to them as long as they were on Indian soil.

Unfortunately, their visit to India has taken place in such circumstances that we have not even been able to arrange for a public reception. Many of us had been looking forward to their visit, which is a great honour to us, but many of you may not be able to see them from a distance. We wanted to honour them and through them China, which they have magnificently led. Nevertheless their visit has been a great honour to us and has been a historic visit, for it marks a new epoch in the relations between India and China.

For long, I have dreamt of India and China marching together in the present and in the future. I went to Chungking with that hope. There I found that the Chinese leaders were also very keen to develop relations between India and China. I rejoiced and I was happy because I saw the future, the future in which India and China would march ahead hand in hand. I am convinced that there can be no peace or solution of the world's problems unless the problems of India and China are resolved. I think this for many reasons, but primarily because India and China together comprise nearly one half of the total population of the world. It is absurd to imagine that the world's problems, political or economic, can be solved without solving the problems of India and China. The fight China is putting up is a part of the great fight that is going on in the world for democracy and freedom.

1. Speech at Shraddhanand Park, Calcutta, 20 February 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 22 February 1942, and also from Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

When Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek came here, I was very happy despite the fact that we were not able to give them a public reception. I am happy that they came and met some of our leaders, met some of our people and had a glimpse of India.

The Generalissimo is a very remarkable man. He has proved himself to be a successful leader of the people and a successful general and captain in war. He is one of the very few leaders who stand out prominently in the world today. Today if you visit China you will find that every Chinese citizen accepts the greatness of Marshal Chiang Kai-shek. It is by accepting the greatness of his leadership that the unity of China has been brought about. They now look up to him for leading them to victory and building up a new China.

Madame Chiang Kai-shek, who is his consort, is not only his partner in his life's journey but has been a fellow-warrior with him, standing side by side with him in China's battle for freedom. She has inspired the women of China, the youth and men of China, and has become a symbol of China's invincibility and her magnificent spirit of resistance. It has been an honour to have them here in your city. Those who have been fortunate to meet them can never forget them or their cause. They will always inspire the two great nations not only in the present but also in the future to improve the relations between India and China.

The fundamental need for Indians today is to get rid of the complexes of uncertainty and fear. Many enthusiastic young men are shouting slogans. I myself shouted slogans in the past and will shout in the future. But these slogans are superficial today and cannot play any important part. Today the only appropriate slogan is a bomb explosion, the sound of which drowns all other slogans. How will you meet that slogan—that is the problem. If you think that you will be able to face the great happenings by shouting slogans, then I am afraid the work cannot be accomplished.

Look at the world. What is it like? What is happening? Great empires are crumbling before our eyes, huge governmental structures are falling. No one knows when this War will end and what will be its outcome. We cannot escape that, no one is going to escape from it. What can we do under these circumstances? Are we brave and united enough to face all the consequences of this terrible catastrophe?

Some people think that because Japan and Germany are against Britain, they deserve our sympathy. We have always said that we will always oppose British imperialism or any other imperialism and fascism and Nazism. Therefore do not err by asking an outsider to help you in fighting the enemy. Therein lies the danger, therein lies the peril,

and if anyone of us thinks that way he can only be said to be suffering from slavish mentality. We shall not bow to any outsider or seek his help. We shall face all our problems ourselves as men.

My dear friends, a long time ago we decided to free our country. We have embarked on a ship in which we have travelled through the perilous seas for many years. We have to travel through stormier seas in the future. It is possible that many of us will suffer, and we may even perish and sink. But whatever dangers may come we shall face them as men. Let us be brave at heart, let us take courage from the examples of our Chinese brothers and sisters and face any aggression and any aggressor who dares to think of subjecting India. Let us build up strength, forget petty differences, and work for the Congress programme. We have to face the future and we shall face it whatever the consequences might be.

10. Visit of Chinese Leaders to India[1]

The visit of Generalissimo Ghiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang to India has created a deep impression on the Indian people who have regretted that opportunities of giving them a popular welcome were not available. In recent years India has turned more towards China and thought of ancient contacts and cultural and commercial relations between the two countries through thousands of years. The Generalissimo pointed out the remarkable fact that throughout this long period there was absence of aggression on either side inspite of a common land frontier of three thousand kilometres. Ever since Japanese aggression began in Manchuria, India condemned it and expressed warm sympathy with China.

The Sino-Japanese War resulted in opening land routes between India, Burma and China. Apart from material advantages of these routes they have had powerful psychological effect on both countries. China, cut off from her eastern and southern parts, looked west towards Asia and more especially towards India. When I visited China two and a half years ago I was met everywhere with the desire for closer contacts with India.

1. Statement to the *News Chronicle* (London), Allahabad, 28 February 1942. Only some extracts of this statement were printed in the *News Chronicle* of 4 March 1942. We are giving the full statement from the J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek came to us as a living symbol of the magnificent resistance of China against Japan. He came also as a symbol of not only past friendship but of present and future comradeship. It seems almost as if destiny itself were bringing India and China together again and I can hardly conceive of a future in which these two great and ancient countries, so unlike and yet so fundamentally like each other, will not cooperate for their mutual and the world's good. Many people in India think in terms of a larger federation of which China and India will be members.

Our full sympathies are with the Chinese people and we would welcome all help to flow to them. Our admiration for their heroic resistance is however tempered with regret at our present inability to be of much service to them. Perhaps if we had had a chance and had to defend our freedom we could also have galvanized our people as Chinese have done. But there must be deliverance and present freedom to defend if masses are to be moved. Intellectual arguments or fear of worse consequences do not affect people who are weary of their present lot and passionately resent it. We have seen what has happened in Malaya and parts of Burma. Indian people are politically more advanced and cannot therefore be affected so much by interested propaganda from Axis countries which flows daily in the Hindustani broadcasts from Tokyo, Bangkok, Berlin and Rome. We know we have to resist all aggressors by best means and methods at our disposal and cannot submit to any domination.

This War is likely to be a long one and what happens in India will make vital difference to it as well as to the future that will emerge out of it. In that future free India and free China will pull together and no world arrangement which fails to settle their problems is going to endure. Asia is going to play a big part in the years to come.

11. China Brought Nearer[1]

The sudden developments in the war situation have brought China nearer to us and many who had not given a thought to India's external relations are now forced by circumstances to think of them. War inevitably fills our minds and will do so as it shakes and breaks up the

1. Message to *The Hindu* on the occasion of China Day, New Delhi, 6 March 1942. *The Hindu*, 7 March 1942.

world we knew. But India and China will survive, as they have survived so much in the past, and the question of their relations to each other will be with us. That question has already been answered. For destiny itself seems intent on throwing them together. During the last decade almost unconsciously we have been drawn towards each other and now the visit of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang has quickened the process.

This visit came strangely and unexpectedly, but the new bonds between China and India will remain. The Generalissimo expressed repeatedly his wish that cultural and other contacts between the two countries should be developed. There are many ways of doing so even during the crisis of war. One of the ways he suggested was the exchange of professors and scholars between Indian and Chinese universities and I would recommend this especially to our universities and I shall gladly help in putting them in touch with responsible authorities in China.

Let us face the reality of today—the reality of war, of death and destruction and possible invasion. We cannot and must not get away from reality. Whatever happens, let us face it as men.

But behind and ahead of that reality of today lie the realities of yesterday and tomorrow. Both China and India have experience of long yesterdays of our past history and in our subconscious selves we carry the memories of hundreds of generations with all that they have to teach, of joy and sorrow, of strength and weakness, of wisdom and folly. Our waters run deep. We are not froth and foam on the surface, which vanish when strong winds blow. So we shall pass from the ever-changing reality of today to the reality of tomorrow, when we shall hold our own again, not subject to the whims of others. In that reality to come, India and China will hold together.

Meanwhile let us be calm in the midst of storm. Let us hold to our purpose and not bow our heads before insolent might, in whatever guise it may come, old or new. Let us acquit ourselves like men.

12. India-China Friendship[1]

Many years ago I thought and dreamt of China and India coming closer to one another, meeting again after a long separation and cooperating

1. Broadcast on China Day, New Delhi, 7 March 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 8 March 1942.

to their mutual advantage. When fate and circumstance sent me to China two and a half years ago, that dream became more vivid and my mind was filled with the days of long ago when pilgrims and travellers crossed the oceans and mountains between China and India in search of the rich cultural inheritance which each country possessed. I saw myself in the long line of those pilgrims journeying to the haven of my desire. The recent visit of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang seemed to bring that dream very near to realization. We had in our midst the very symbols of China and they came to us bringing goodwill for India and her people, and their ardent desire for closer bonds with our country. They brought China very near to us and their presence itself was an inspiration. Rocklike they had stood in the midst of peril and disaster and never flinched, and out of misfortune itself they had plucked the fine flower of youth and hope and strength. The Generalissimo was the symbol of China's freedom and unity and the determination which never wavers; the radiant lady who came with him and who was his partner in life's journey showed us how graciously womanhood can face even the storm of war when the cause of freedom beckons. Together with millions of their countrymen and countrywomen they had played the game of life and death and thrown themselves in that brave adventure which had transformed China and astonished the world.

And so the dream came very near to me and took shape, and I saw the future filled with hope because China and India were friends and comrades in the great adventure of man. The countries of Europe were small and stuffy, the history of Europe, in spite of its brilliant periods, was a mere episode in man's story. But India and China looked back to thousands of years and, drawing strength from their rich heritage, had survived the shocks and catastrophies that might otherwise have overwhelmed them. They will survive the perils and dangers of today also and, I have no doubt, will forge new bonds which will keep them linked together in friendship and comradeship. May good fortune attend China in the present and in the future and the victory she has richly deserved be hers in full measure.

13. We Shall Keep Faith[1]

To the Chinese people I repeat that we shall keep faith with them whatever happens. We shall do so not only because China's freedom is very precious to us but also because with it is intertwined the freedom of India. With China unfree, our own freedom will be endangered and worth little purchase. Whatever we do now, constrained by circumstance, is aimed at the achievement of India's independence so that we may fight with all our strength and will against the aggressor in India and China. Free India can do so effectively; not so subject India with all her great strength chained up. So in this time of danger and peril we renew our faith in China. We believe that this great War is a mighty revolution which will only succeed on the basis of freedom for all peoples. Without Indian freedom now, it will fail of its purpose and lead us all into blind and dangerous alleys. This is the reason why India's freedom becomes an urgent and immediate necessity and cannot be postponed to the hereafter. The very peril that surrounds us all calls for it.

To the people of China and their great leaders, Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek, I send greetings and pay homage to the heroism which has shone like a bright star during the past five years of war and infinite suffering.

1. Message to the people of China, Bombay, 8 August 1942, *The Free Press Journal*, 25 October 1942.

6

THE CONGRESS

1. To Mrs. B.L. Rallia Ram[1]

Allahabad
December 12, 1941

Dear Mrs. Rallia Ram,

Thank you for your letter and your good wishes. I am afraid there is no chance of my going to the Punjab. I have other and more important work to do. I am not likely to achieve any wonderful result by paying a brief visit to the Punjab. It is unfortunate to have party differences[2] but such things happen elsewhere and we need not be frightened too much by them.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In October-November 1941, a section of the Punjab Congressmen led by Shri Ram Sharma and Gopi Chand Bhargava considered the need for the Congress to enter the assemblies.

2. To Sri Prakasa[1]

Allahabad
January 5, 1942

My dear Prakasa,

I hope you are coming here on the 8th for our Council meeting.[2] It is important that we should discuss the new situation that has arisen before we go to the A.I.C.C. There are many elements of confusion, and I might be able to throw some light on the Bardoli proceedings. We ought to be prepared for possible developments as otherwise they will come as a surprise.

You must have seen that Gandhiji has agreed to spend an extra day in Benares and will meet a number of Congress workers from the province there on the 22nd. I suppose the Benares Congress Committee is making arrangements for this. As to who should be invited to this meeting, we shall consider on the 8th.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. The Executive Council of the U.P.P.C.C. met at Allahabad on 8–9 January 1942.

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It is possible that I might accompany Gandhiji from Wardha to Benares after the A.I.C.C. Probably we shall reach Benares on the morning of the 21st. May I stay with you then? You are likely to be full up. It is just possible, though I am not sure at all, that Indira might accompany me.

I have asked Narendra Deva to attend our Council meeting on the 8th if at all he is well enough to come.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To Narendra Deva[1]

Allahabad
January 5, 1942

My dear Narendra Deva,

Your letter reached me today. I shall not say anything about the Bardoli resolution because that is too big a subject to discuss. I was hoping to meet you here to have a talk on this and cognate matters. The Council meeting that is being held here on the 8th was hardly necessary from the point of view of passing resolutions. But it will serve a very useful purpose as those of us who attend will have a chance of discussing amongst ourselves a very complex situation. I could place before others some facts which perhaps they do not know; also some possible developments which might take place at the A.I.C.C. meeting. It is helpful to be prepared mentally as otherwise a new turn gives one a shock.

If you can possibly come here on the 8th, it would be a good thing. Meherally is under arrest,[2] though it is possible that he might be escorted to the Frontier and let off. In any event, Meherally could come here with you.

I should personally like very much to have you at Wardha for the A.I.C.C. meeting. You could have gone from there to Ahmednagar. It is hardly worthwhile for you to stay in the U.P. just because Gandhiji

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Yusuf Meherally, General Secretary of the All India Congress Socialist Party, was arrested on 3 January 1942 at Lahore and was put under judicial custody till 10 January 1942.

is coming here for a day or two. You will see much more of him in Wardha and after all decisions will be taken there. In Benares he will be busy with the University Silver Jubilee on the 21st. On the 22nd he has promised to address a number of Congress workers. This will probably be a crowd of two hundred or so, when any kind of talk is almost impossible.

I think it is best for you to go to Ahmednagar but perhaps later it will be worthwhile going to the Frontier, though there is that difficulty of the externment order from the Punjab. The Frontier climate is really delightful except in the summer. It is not so very cold, and anyway it will not be cold in March or April.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Allahabad
January 24, 1942

My dear Maulana,
I returned from Benares today and received your letter.[2] I note that you intend coming here on the 2nd or 3rd February. It is not clear how long you intend staying here. I should like you of course to meet as many of our provincial workers as possible. There is however one difficulty. A large number of them were made to come to Benares two days ago to meet Gandhiji. Some of them will be coming in the second week of February. In between they have been asked to start work immediately in their districts. It will thus be a little difficult for most of them to undertake a long journey again. Many cannot afford this, especially those living in the northern and western parts of the province who have to come a very long way. Meetings of district Congress committees are being held in various districts and an attempt is being made to give a new impetus to our work.

I am therefore not very sanguine of many people being able to come here at short notice. Perhaps some people from the nearby towns like

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Azad, in his letter of 22 January 1942, requested that a meeting of the provincial committee workers be arranged on 3-4 February 1942.

Lucknow, Cawnpore and Benares might be able to come. I am informing them and suggesting that they might come on the 3rd afternoon.

For my part I had intended remaining here for the next ten days or so. But I may have to go to an important gathering in Gorakhpur district of peasant cane-growers on the 31st of this month. On the 7th I shall go to Cawnpore for two or three days. Meanwhile I shall probably visit certain rural areas in the Allahabad district.

I should particularly like to know if you would be agreeable to addressing a public meeting in Allahabad during your visit here. We would greatly appreciate this and I am sure it would do a lot of good. Please send me a telegram to say if you are willing.

Kripalani is not here. He has gone to Fyzabad district but he will come back within a few days.

Khan Bahadur Allahbux,[3] the Sind Premier, arrived here today and is returning to Karachi tomorrow morning. We had a talk about his constitutional difficulties with the Governor[4] and it seems to me that from every point of view he ought to take up a strong line. Even from a narrow constitutional interpretation he appears to be completely justified. The larger viewpoint points to the same conclusion. He consulted Kailash Nath Katju and Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru also. Both agreed that he was completely right and should not yield to the Governor. He hopes to meet you when you go north.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. (1900–1943); represented Sind in the Bombay Legislative Council from 1926 to 1936; formed the Ittehad Party to fight the elections to the Sind Legislative Assembly in 1937; Chief Minister of Sind, 1938–39 and again from 1941 till his dismissal in September 1942 for having challenged the arbitrary exercise of the Governor's powers; presided over the All India Independent Muslims Conference in Delhi in April 1940; was assassinated on 14 May 1943 by a Muslim fanatic.

4. The Governor, Sir Hugh Dow, used his special powers under the 1935 Act to reject the name of an Indian, suggested by the Sind Government, for the post of revenue officer for the Lloyd barrage and instead appointed an Englishman. In December 1941, Allahbux told the Assembly that the Governor's action was not only unconstitutional but also racial. He decided to lodge complaints with the Viceroy and the Secretary of State, but in fact no representation was made.

5. Concentrate on Major Issues[1]

In view of the critical situation that has arisen and that threatens to grow and envelop the country, it is incumbent on all Congressmen to concentrate on the Congress programme and for each member of a Congress elective committee to make himself responsible for daily work in furtherance of the programme. If any member is unable to undertake this responsibility, he is advised to resign from his office or place on the committee, and someone else who is prepared to undertake that work should take his place.

Further it is essential that all responsible Congressmen should function in the furtherance of the present programme through the Congress and from the Congress platform and not through other organizations as any functioning through such other organizations creates confusion in the public mind and leads to a diversion and wastage of energy and occasionally to conflicting interpretations of Congress policy. In particular this policy should be followed in regard to the kisans who form the backbone of the Congress organization in the province, and whose interests must be considered as paramount by the Congress.

The present situation demands concentration on the major issues confronting the country and an avoidance of all minor and sectional matters. It is on those major issues, therefore, that Congressmen should concentrate and their basic task should be to work for the Congress and through the Congress, so that the Congress organization may grow even more capable of facing, on behalf of the nation, the urgent and vital problems that rise from day to day.

1. U.P.P.C.C. Council resolution drafted by Jawaharlal, Allahabad, 4 February 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

6. Congressmen and Other Organisations[1]

The Council have noted that certain organizations, which claim to consist of Congressmen, and some other organizations which contain Congressmen among their members, have adopted and are pursuing policies which are diametrically opposed to the Congress policy and programme. The Council wish to make it clear that no such rejection of and attack

1. U.P.P.C.C. Council resolution drafted by Jawaharlal, Allahabad, 4 February 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

on the fundamental Congress policy can be permitted from within the Congress by persons who are members of the Congress. Such an adoption of a line of policy or activity opposed to the Congress policy is not only subversive of all discipline and undermines the Congress organization, but it is highly injurious to the nation. Those who desire to further a policy or programme opposed to that of the Congress are at liberty to do so from outside the ranks of the Congress but they cannot be permitted to remain Congress members and at the same time to discredit the organization and undermine its policy. Disciplinary action will have to be taken against all such persons. In the present state of growing crisis and peril, it is essential for the Congress to function as a well-knit organization working with single-minded devotion in the furtherance of its programme for the service of the nation. The president is requested to bring to the notice of the Council without avoidable delay the names of members of the Congress who act contrary to the Congress policy in terms of the previous resolutions, and in cases which he considers serious he is authorised to take immediate action by the suspension of the person concerned pending the Council's decision.[2]

2. S.K.D. Paliwal, Sampurnanand and Sri Prakasa were appointed to a committee to receive complaints against Congressmen.

7. To Choithram P. Gidwani[1]

Allahabad
February 7, 1942

My dear Choithram,

Your letter.[2] I saw Allahbux when he came here. I was clearly of opinion that he could not possibly submit to the Governor and I told him so. It seemed to me that even constitutionally speaking the Governor was wrong, Allahbux right. Apart from the constitutional aspect, it was even more clear that Allahbux could not submit. Allahbux agreed with me completely and, I understand, that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's advice on the constitutional issue was the same as mine and he fully supported the stand that Allahbux had taken up so far.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 31 January 1942, Gidwani wanted to know Tej Bahadur Sapru's opinion about the Sind constitutional issue.

Allahbux is now meeting the Maulana in Delhi and I have little doubt that he will stick to his position whatever the consequences. This of course will be welcome to you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. Dirty Politics in Orissa[1]

Though grave happenings are taking place in India and near India and the future is full of uncertainty and peril, what has taken place in Orissa recently[2] fills one with surprise and disgust. There is a certain elementary decency which people observe even towards their opponents in public life in politics. But some people who apparently call themselves Ministers in Orissa today have demonstrated that they do not possess even this elementary decency. Some of them broke their pledges solemnly given. And then, afraid of being defeated in the provincial assembly, they started arresting those members who might vote against them. Compelled to have elections, they started arresting those who might work against them in the election campaign.

Well-known leaders of the province like Shri Harekrushna Mahtab and others were thus arrested. Shri Govind Pradhan,[3] M.L.A., was also arrested. The simplest course for these people who call themselves Ministers apparently is to arrest the entire opposition in the assembly. Then they can be assured of a majority. They have good precedence for this both in Czarist Russia and Nazi Germany. But it is time they understood that this kind of thing is not going to be tolerated in this country and anyone who indulges in it will have to pay heavily. It is beyond endurance that such tactics should be indulged in by anybody, more especially those who call themselves Indians and degrade the name of our country.

1. Message for bye-election for Orissa Assembly, Allahabad, 27 February 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 5 March 1942.
2. Some non-Congress members and a dissident group of Congressmen in the Orissa Assembly, headed by Godavaris Misra, formed a coalition ministry on 25 November 1941. And before the budget session, on 12 February 1942, some prominent Congressmen including Nabakrushna Chaudhuri and Mohan Das were arrested to avoid a no-confidence vote.
3. (b. 1907); prominent Congress worker of Orissa till 1943 when he joined the Communist Party of India; member, Orissa Legislative Assembly, 1937–42, 1952–57, 1957–61.

In the bye-election that is taking place Shri Uma Charan Patn has been set up as the Congress candidate.[5] I send him my g wishes and I hope that the people of his constituency will vote him and support him in every way and not allow themselves to be t nnised over by a group of people who have already discredited th selves utterly in the eyes of all decent people.

4. (1902–1961); prominent Congressman of Orissa; member, Orissa Legisl Assembly, 1942–45, 1946–51; member, Lok Sabha, 1952–57, 1957–61; his w include *Volunteer Organisations in India* and *The Chilka Scheme.*
5. On 17 March 1942, Patnaik defeated Tikayat Saheb of Kanika who had support of the ministerial party.

9. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Allahab
March 4, 19

My dear Maulana,
Two or three days ago I sent you a letter. This was sent to Wardl copy to Calcutta. I do not know if it has reached you, nor do I kn where you are.

The more I think of it the more worried I am at our not having meeting of the Working Committee for such a long time. All mann of new and complex problems are arising and we remain passive and c not give much corporate thought to them. We await somethin affecting us to happen. This seems a weak attitude. It is true tha nothing has happened to affect our fundamental position or to mak us think of varying it in any way. But quite apart from this, we shoul give thought to the ever-changing scene and think also of the future a it seems to unfold itself.

If I had known in time that you were going to Wardha, I would have attempted to go there myself. Not being sure I could not do this. Also because I thought that in any event we would have to go there soon. It seems to me very important that we should have full discussions with Gandhiji and our other colleagues at frequent intervals, or else there will be a tendency to interpret events in different ways and to pull in separate directions.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

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Allahabad
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My dear Maulana,
I have your letter of the 3rd March about the women's branch of the A.I.C.C. office.[2] I am not sending you a telegram as it is difficult to say much in a few words.

Your idea of having an advisory committee is good, but a committee spread out all over India can seldom meet. Still it may occasionally meet to consider the problem as a whole. As for the appointment of such a committee, much depends on one's approach to the problem. That is, should there be more or less provincial representation or at any rate representatives from the principal parts of India? Though theoretically this will look well, again it will be difficult for them to meet.

One possible way of dealing with this matter is to have zonal representatives who taken together form an advisory committee. In appointing zonal representatives, to some extent local or provincial people will have to be consulted, though this need not be always necessary.

Anyway a committee such as you suggest might be an improvement and would be helpful to Mrs. Kripalani. The names you have suggested are good. It is possible to suggest a few more names but it is difficult to pick and choose. Would not the presence of Sarojini Naidu on such a committee be desirable? Of course as a member of the Working Committee she need not join any such advisory committee and whenever necessary she can always be invited to the advisory committee meetings.

My own conception of the women's branch of the A.I.C.C. is that it should collect all material relating to women's activities in India, it should keep in touch with all women's organisations in India, it should particularly keep in touch with such women's work as is being done by Congresswomen and through Congress organisations, it should send such suggestions as may be desirable for the coordination of these various activities, and it should issue special directions to provincial Congress committees in this behalf. It cannot undertake direct work of organisation, etc.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. A[illegible] formed Jawaharlal that in order to develop enthusiasm in the working I.C.C. women's branch, he had appointed an advisory body which Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Mridula Sarabhai, and Sucheta Kripalani.

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1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Azad informed Jawaharlal that in order to develop enthusiasm in the working of the A.I.C.C. women's branch, he had appointed an advisory body which included Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Mridula Sarabhai, and Sucheta Kripalani.

Again in the present crisis attention should not be given to long distant programmes but rather to the immediate need. Women should address themselves to the local programmes of self-defence and self-sufficiency as outlined by the Congress. Their work will be chiefly confined to women. It is very important that this approach be made to women as public morale depends greatly on how women feel and act. If they are given some work in their own local areas, they are less likely to give way to a feeling of helplessness and they will feel that they are parts of a larger cooperative enterprise. Immediate problems are arising in some places of molestation of women. This kind of thing is likely to increase as conditions deteriorate. To face this problem women can be of great help, for it is essentially a psychological problem. My own little experience has been that women are anxious to know what they can do at present and any lead given to them will yield results. I am all against treating women as helpless human beings who cannot look after themselves and who must run away from the danger zone. At any time this is bad policy and makes them even more helpless than they are. In present circumstances it is completely pointless as you cannot limit the danger zone. Any and every place may become the danger zone and even the privacy of a house will not be outside this zone. So the only way to tackle the problem is to make women realise that they have to and can face it and to prepare them mentally and otherwise for this.

My sister, Vijayalakshmi, is going to Delhi this evening and she will discuss this matter with Aruna Asaf Ali.[3] I am also sending a copy of this letter to Mrs. Kripalani.

As you know, my sister is the President for this year of the All India Women's Conference and thus she as well as many other Congresswomen are functioning also through the Women's Conference. In some provinces, notably Gujarat, Congresswomen are controlling the Women's Conference. It is desirable that every cooperation should be given whenever possible to the Women's Conference in doing the work which we think should be done. This may not be possible in all parts of India. Generally speaking a duplication of organisations will lead to waste of efforts and energy.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. (b. 1909); married Asaf Ali; underground worker in the Quit India movement; President, Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee, 1947–48; Mayor of Delhi, 1958–60; winner of Lenin Peace Prize; founder-Chairman of the daily *Patriot*.

11. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Wardha
March 17, 1942

My dear Mahmud,
Your letters dated 11th and 12th have reached me here. I am sorry you are not coming here for the Working Committee because it is important that we must all discuss current problems and difficulties. It is no good writing letters and complaining about the situation. You are needlessly excited about various matters. There is difficulty about food in many places, especially in Allahabad, but we do not get excited. As a matter of fact Congress people are doing very good work in our province and we hope to do more.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

12. Defence of Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

Wardha
19/3/42

Sir,
In your leading article appearing in *The Statesman* of the 15th March you have made a very grave allegation. You state that "intimate friends of Mr. Gandhi and members of the Working Committee of Congress have told us that they had evidence that Mr. Subhas Bose received funds from the enemy when he was in this country."

We have had our differences with Mr. Subhas Bose and for many years he has not been in the Congress and has in fact opposed it. But the charge made in your editorial is so extraordinary that I am unable to believe it. I have consulted all my colleagues of the Working Committee who are here at present and they have also expressed their astonishment at this surprising allegation. Whatever our differences with

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Statesman*, drafted by Jawaharlal. A.I.C.C. Papers. File No. G-7/1939, N.M.M.L. This letter was not printed in *The Statesman*.

Mr. Subhas Bose in the past or in the present, we cannot imagine that the charges, allegations you make can be true. In fairness to all concerned will you please let me know the basis of your allegation?

Yours,
General Secretary
A.I.C.C.

13. On Election of Delegates to the U.P.P.C.C.[1]

As a member of the Council it is not proper for me to speak on the resolution but the turn the discussion has taken compels me to speak.[2]

I myself am responsible for the resolution in the Council. I am in favour of periodic re-elections from top to bottom. It gives life to a democratic organisation, and prevents it from getting stagnant. I had pressed for it not only in the U.P. Congress but also in the Working Committee and the All India Congress Committee.

Practical difficulties about the election of delegates had been suggested to me in justification of not holding the elections for the district and town committees.[3] But I see no reason why the higher committees should not be re-elected. If minor constitutional difficulties stand in the way, they should be set aside. We are living in extraordinary times which call for extraordinary methods.

In pressing my point of view before the Council, my mind is solely influenced by the consideration that already two and a half years have elapsed since the present Council was elected. How the proposal affected the Communists or any other group, I am unable to understand.

But I find that the debate has taken the turn of the usual Communist Party and Socialist Party controversies about which we read so

1. Speech at the U.P.P.C.C. meeting, Lucknow, 30 May 1942. From *National Herald*, 1 June 1942.
2. The resolution accepting the resignations of the office-bearers was passed, and the President was requested to nominate a new Council, ensuring that new members be those who had full faith in the official policy of the Congress.
3. The U.P.P.C.C. President had expressed several difficulties arising from the new situation in holding the elections, but had suggested that the office-bearers could resign and seek re-election.

WITH MAHATMA GANDHI AT MEETING OF WORKING COMMITTEE, BOMBAY, 5 AUGUST 1942

AT A.I.C.C. SESSION, BOMBAY, 7 AUGUST 1942

much in the papers. Luckily I am not interested in such disputes. I am disgusted with their obsessions with these, their slogan-mongering, their hurling at each other of the quotations from Lenin and Marx. If that be Marxism, I am thoroughly sick of it.

I myself had studied Marxism, but I had not been affected by it in that manner. The most important thing I have learnt from Marx is that one should not treat Marxist books as shastras but use one's own mind.

Through slogans like "people's war" and "imperialist war" it is being sought to label a complex thing as an elementary thing. My own mind is a complex mind and rebels against such an over-simplification. There could be nothing more absurd than saying that the present war is a people's war for India. It is something different to express the wish that the present war should be turned into a people's war for India but to call it a people's war now is a lie.

Similarly I warn the imperialist war school against becoming prisoners of a phrase. The present war is too complex a thing to be clinched in a phrase. The day of Europe in spite of Hitler's victories is over. Europe is committing suicide in the present war. The future belongs to America, Russia and China.

In the present conflict which envelops the whole world, India's freedom is naturally our first consideration. However much I might sympathise with Russia, my picture of world freedom is incomplete without India's freedom. If China is broken by Japan, India would be strangled. My own sympathies are with China and I have been the bearer of many messages of solidarity and support to the Chinese people. I do not want to be a traitor to China. That would be below India's dignity. But at the same time I cannot sacrifice India's freedom to the freedom of any other country.

The re-election is a matter of routine. The resolution does not have implications of confidence or non-confidence in the Council. I am in favour of a more homogenous Council. Such people, as do not agree entirely with the Congress policy, should not be there. I myself sometimes feel that I can be of greater service outside the Council. My own mind works differently from that of many members of the Council and yet I have to draft resolutions for it. This should not be construed that I intend to resign from the Council. I think the proposal to keep some members and drop others is absurd. I regret that my recent preoccupations in connection with the visit of Marshal Chiang Kai-shek and Sir Stafford Cripps, had prevented me from devoting as much time to Congress work in the province as I wanted.

14. Gorakhpur[1]

The Council of the Provincial Congress Committee passed a resolution[2] a few days ago about Gorakhpur and much that takes place in that notorious district. Unfortunately the press censor, not liking too much of the truth, sat upon this resolution and prevented its full publication. Now comes the news that Shri Rawat,[3] the new secretary of the P.C.C., has been arrested there immediately after the speech he delivered.[4]

The Gorakhpur authorities obviously do not allow the grass to grow under their feet. They take no risks and they pounce on anybody they dislike as soon as they see him. The representatives of the "Land of Hope and Glory and the Mother of the Free" in Gorakhpur know their job and do it thoroughly. What does it matter if large numbers of tenants suffer and Congressmen are arrested? They are doing their little bit in the war for freedom and democracy. Possibly it has not struck them that this may have an adverse effect on that war for freedom and democracy. Possibly they have not thought out the consequences of their enthusiasm for the "Land of Hope and Glory." Gorakhpur has become a symbol to many of us of all that is worst in British rule in India and by that symbol that rule is going to be judged, condemned and put an end to.

And a time will come when a big broomstick will be required to clear this unhappy land of all relics of imperialist domination and oppression. We shall not have to wait too long for that time.

1. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 6 June 1942.
2. The resolution of 1 June 1942 on 'Repression' stated that "in Gorakhpur the conduct of the authorities is such as to be beyond endurance; tickets for police *dangals* are forcibly sold to poor and unsophisticated peasants; the police and deputy collector seem to be privileged to act autocratically; no care is taken of the difficulties of people; the city magistrate of Gorakhpur has used improper threats to stop the holding of the Chauri Chaura conference; all sorts of complaints are coming to the provincial office regarding war efforts."
3. Jagan Prasad Rawat (b. 1904); Parliamentary Secretary in U.P., 1946, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, 1952, Minister for Public Works, 1963, and Minister for Panchayati Raj and Local Self-government, 1970.
4. Was arrested on 2 June 1942.

15. To Anumela Rama Govind Sarma[1]

Wardha
June 11, 1942

Dear friend,[2]
I have your letter. I am glad to learn that you are constructing a Congress Bhavan with materials and labour from the villages. This self-help and reliance is very commendable and I wish you all success in your endeavour. I hope that this plan will be a symbol of the ideals of freedom which we cherish and will be open to all without any distinction or question of status.

This letter is not meant to be inscribed on your building. But if you want such an inscription, I suggest this:

This is the house of freedom where all may come.
We labour here for a free India and for the
freedom and equality of all her children.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Joint Secretary, at this time, of the West Krishna District Congress Committee, Madras.

16. Campaign Against Abdul Ghaffar Khan[1]

News from the Frontier Province is scarce except such news as comes through official sources. This official or semi-official news is often tainted and contains many wrong allegations. Whenever I have gone to the Frontier I have had experience of the difficulty of sending out proper news through the normal agencies or otherwise. It appears that restrictions on such news being sent out are stricter in the Frontier Province than elsewhere. In India the result is that people in the rest of India know little of what is happening in this highly important part of India. It is important in many ways and specially so in regard to the new situation that is developing.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 2 July 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 3 July 1942.

Few people know of the quiet and great work that Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan has been carrying on during the last six months.[2] He does not believe in ostentation but he has gone to villages seeing his people, organizing them and encouraging them in every way. During the last six weeks or more, a very virulent campaign has been carried on against Badshah Khan and his brother Dr. Khan Sahib, as well as generally against the Congress and the Khudai Khidmatgars in the Frontier.[3] Not finding political reasons for attacking them, domestic and private matters were exploited for this purpose and all manner of false statements circulated. The Frontier Provincial Congress Committee issued a *communique* to the press dealing with this matter, but it appears that no publicity was given to it. I am giving this *communique* below as issued by the Frontier P.C.C.

> We warn the public against the propaganda that is being carried on against Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan—the undisputed leader of the Pathans—and the Khudai Khidmatgar movement in certain sections of the press. It has been hinted that Khudai Khidmatgars have resigned in large numbers, acute differences have arisen and party politics is raising its ugly head.
>
> Not a single Khudai Khidmatgar has so far resigned. The Khudai Khidmatgars are united like one man under the leadership of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and all talk of parties among them is baseless. The differences, etc., exist only in the imagination of a few interested people who yearn for offices and think that by encouraging such talk they can gain their end. The government is presumably at the back of all such propaganda. But such people have no following. Every true nationalist in the Frontier realizes that we can have nothing to do with the British Government in India much less with offices. Whatever attraction the parliamentary programme may have elsewhere in India it has certainly no place in Frontier politics.

2. He worked for the implementation of the constructive programme of the Congress and established *Markaz-e-Khudai Khidmatgar* (Main Centre of the Khudai Khidmatgars) on the bank of the River Sardaryab. He also advocated complete independence from the British and civil disobedience if called upon by Mahatma Gandhi.
3. The marriage of Khan Sahib's daughter to a Christian, Jaswant Singh led to communal criticism of the Khan brothers by *Maulvis* in mosques, who also gave anti-Congress speeches. The campaign was further patronised by the Frontier authorities. Rumours were also afloat about differences of opinion in the Frontier Congress and resignations of the Khudai Khidmatgars.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's peaceful and constructive humanitarian work amongst villagers to make them self-sufficient in matters of food and cloth and for the maintenance of internal security has further endeared him especially to the poor people. He hopes to carry his message of peace and goodwill to the neighbouring tribal people also. He has been devoting all his energies to create a nonviolent and peaceful army for the service of the people during the coming critical times ahead. What the government has failed to achieve at the cost of millions of rupees he is trying to do purely through voluntary help. He deserves the sympathy and cooperation of every man and woman and child in the Frontier in this noble work. We hope that the Frontier masses will respond to his call and the press and journalists of India, who have the true interests of the nation at heart, will take up an impartial view of his work.

17. On Assumption of U.P. Congress Presidentship[1]

Owing to the arrest of the President of the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee,[2] I have been charged by the Provincial Congress Executive to act on his behalf. I have undertaken this burden of responsibility with some hesitation as I have already much work to do. But I could not say 'no' when a large number of our colleagues in our small Executive Council had already been arrested and sentenced or detained in prison. Seven of these have already gone in this way including our President and a Secretary and one of the most respected of our members and colleagues, till lately our Vice-President, Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, Deoband.[3] Maulana Hussain Ahmad's arrest came as a special surprise, for his main activities are those of the head of the famous educational institution. But nothing really can surprise us in the United Provinces. Because of all

1. Statement to the press, Wardha, 9 July 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 10 July 1942.
2. See *ante*, p. 344.
3. He was arrested on 25 June 1942 at Saharanpur.

this and more that is likely to happen, the presidentship of the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee is a difficult office. But I know my colleagues and thousands of Congress workers in the United Provinces and relying upon them I have assumed the burden. To them I make an appeal in these days of deep and enveloping crisis to hold together, be disciplined and be prepared for all sacrifices in the great cause we have at heart.

18. To P. Subbarayan[1]

Wardha
July 10, 1942

My dear Subbarayan,
Thank you for your letter of July 7th which has just reached me.

I appreciate what you say in it. I entirely disagree with Rajaji's present policy but that does not mean that I do not respect him. I shall be sorry if any disrespect is shown to him. I heard today that he has resigned from the Assembly as well as from the Congress,[2] whatever this might mean. I suppose anyhow there is no room now for any kind of action.

I should have liked to see Mohan[3] but I do not know when we are likely to meet. Indira and Feroze are in Kashmir.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On 9 July 1942, he resigned from the Madras Assembly and the Congress after he was served with a show cause notice by the President of the Tamil Nadu Provincial Congress Committee on 5 July 1942, as to why no action should be taken against him for propagating a Congress-League settlement, installation of a National Government at the all-India level and popular governments in the provinces, and cooperation between the state and the people in defending India against the Axis powers.
3. Surendra Mohan Kumaramangalam (1916–1973); son of P. Subbarayan; member of the Communist Party of India; convicted in the Madras Conspiracy Case, 1941 but released unconditionally in June 1942; Advocate General of Tamil Nadu, 1966–67; Chairman, Indian Airlines, 1969–71; Union Minister of Steel and Mines from 1971 till his death in an air crash.

19. To S. K. Patil[1]

Allahabad
27-7-1942

My dear Patil,[2]

Received your letter of the 24th July. I expect to reach Bombay by the Mail on the 3rd morning. Possibly Maulana Sahib may also be coming by that train. He intends doing so, but is not sure on account of his health.

I enclose a letter from Maharajkumar Sir Vijaya Anand. I understand that you are issuing tickets for visitors for the A.I.C.C. Please reserve a good ticket for him and inform him of it directly. He will of course pay the normal price of the ticket, but you should not ask a fancy price for it. Fancy price should be reserved for your rich friends in Bombay.

I have nothing in particular to suggest about the arrangements for the A.I.C.C. There is one matter, however, to which I might draw your attention. The usual arrangements for singing national songs are almost invariably bad. I wish you would look into this matter and get some really good singers for three songs: *Vandemataram*, Tagore's *Jana Gana Mana* and Iqbal's *Hindostan Hamara*. I think these are the only songs that should be permitted. Please do not get that very expert gentleman who sang at Ramgarh and elsewhere. Classical styles of singing are totally inappropriate at large public functions. The singing should be simple and forceful. Please also avoid the introduction of all manner of musical instruments on the dais. We cannot convert the A.I.C.C. into a concert party. I would prefer no musical accompaniment at all.

For my part, I do not like the Maharashtrian way of singing *Vandemataram*. It is too theatrical and has a certain musical comedy touch. I prefer the Bengali way. Usually trained school girls are the best singers.

Please take particular care to get a good singer for Iqbal's *Hindostan Hamara*. You should have just one song a day. *Vandemataram* to

1. File No. 3590/H/II-2, Police Commissioner's Office, Maharashtra Government Records, Bombay.
2. (b. 1900); imprisoned number of times from 1930-45; member, Bombay Legislative Assembly, 1937-46; Mayor, Bombay, 1949-52; member, Lok Sabha, 1952-67, 1969-70; Union Minister for Irrigation and Power, 1957, Transport and Communications, 1958-59, Food and Agriculture, 1959-63 and Minister for Railways, 1964-67.

begin with and when the A.I.C.C. finally ends. On the second day's session, Iqbal's *Hindostan Hamara* at the beginning and on the third day Tagore's *Jana Gana Mana* at the beginning.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. Communists and the Congress[1]

The question has been raised repeatedly as to the position of Communists and others, who disagree with the present basic policy of the Congress, continuing to remain in elective Congress committees. The basic policy of the Congress is dissociation with the war effort of the British Government. The Communist Party has openly proclaimed its help and support of this war effort and has criticized Congress policy in this matter. Many Communists have been discharged from jail apparently on the assurance that they will help in every way the British war effort. Obviously there is a basic and fundamental difference between this attitude and policy and the Congress policy. This difference which has so far been largely a theoretical one is now one of day-to-day work. This is bound to create difficulties and possibly conflicts.

In any event a clear direction has to be given to Congressmen and Congress committees on this subject to avoid confusion and waste of energy. This becomes even more imperative because of impending developments.

Communists and the Communist Party are perfectly entitled in their individual and group capacities to adopt any policy they like, whether one agrees with them or not. We are only concerned with them as Congressmen and more particularly, with them as members of Congress Executive Committees. It is manifestly wrong and absurd for anyone to be a member of an executive when he is opposed to the basic policy of that executive.

Most of our district and local Congress committees have no Communist members and have thus no such problem to face. A few committees have possibly some Communist members.

1. Press statement issued as officiating President, U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, Allahabad, 1 August 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 3 August 1942.

As the A.I.C.C. is meeting soon to adopt finally the policy which the Congress will pursue in the immediate future, it is not my desire to lay down any rule at this stage which will automatically exclude Communists. So far our policy has been to take action against individual Congressmen who clearly and deliberately offend against the basic Congress policy. It must be definitely understood, however, that whatever the final decision of the A.I.C.C. may be, it must be given effect to by all Congressmen, and no Congressman can carry on propaganda or agitation against it. In particular, any Congressman, who is a member of any Congress executive, cannot do so. In the event of his doing so, he will automatically cease to be a member of that executive.

Even meanwhile it is desirable that those Congressmen who disagree basically from the present Congress policy should not continue to remain in any executive of the Congress. To remain there is not fair either to the Congress or to themselves. In no event can they be *sanchalaks* of any committee, district, city, town, tahsil or *mandal*.

What I have written applies to all those who are opposed to Congress policy, whether they are members of the Communist Party, the Forward Bloc or any other group, or disagree fundamentally in their individual capacities.

It is not my desire, at this time of peril for all of us, to create further rifts and divisions in our ranks. But the very peril demands clarity of thought and action. A body of action, like the Congress, cannot allow disruptive elements to remain in its executives when united action is called for.

It should always be remembered that the Congress policy is one of organized nonviolence.

Pandit Keshav Deo Malaviya is issuing instructions to the Congress committees that no Communist or Forward Blocist or any other who does not fully agree with the Congress policy and the programme can act as a *sanchalak* in his or her district.

7

THE COMMUNAL ISSUE

1. To Ranjit M. Chetsingh[1]

Allahabad
December 12, 1941

Dear Mr. Chetsingh,[2]
Thank you for your letter of the 6th.[3] The communal problem is obviously one of those problems which fill our minds and each one of us has given it a deep and continuous attention. Naturally we should always try to arrest wrong tendencies. And yet many of the things we dislike are symptoms only and the real disease lies deeper. I am inclined to think with Gandhiji that the time is not yet for a unity conference.[4] For my part I do not attach much importance to the method of working through unity conferences. The question is essentially a political one, other matters are subsidiary. I think that in spite of the wrong tendencies that you refer to, forces are at work which are likely to solve the basic problem. In dealing with such matters, as often in war itself, an indirect or flank attack is more successful than a direct or frontal attack.

I am not going to Wardha but I shall be going to Bombay soon, probably with the Maulana. I would of course be happy to meet you but the Maulana wants to reserve all our time during the journey for talks between ourselves.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Associated with the All India Council of Indian Christians, and with the Rasulia Settlement and Jamai Village Ashram at Hoshangabad.
3. In his letter he drew Jawaharlal's attention to the activities of sectional organisations aimed at emphasising and perpetuating all the diverse features in the common Indian heritage and wanted that something be done to arrest these tendencies.
4. Mahatma Gandhi, in his letter to Chetsingh on 23 November 1941, stated that while he was in full agreement that a settlement of the Hindu-Muslim problem was highly desirable and essential, he did not think that the time was ripe for a unity conference.

2. To Muhammad Abdus Sattar Kheiri[1]

Allahabad
January 8, 1942

My dear Professor,[2]

I was happy to receive your letter.[3] I look back to our meeting in Dehra Dun jail with pleasure and I am sure that I have profited by it. As you know, we hardly ever touched on any political subject as such. It has always seemed more important to me that each one of us should get to know the real background of the other person and thus develop sympathy and understanding. You helped me to do this and I am grateful to you.

The problem of India, as all problems in the world today, is extraordinarily complex and one has to deal with hundreds of varying and sometimes conflicting factors. Yet I think that throughout our difficulties we are moving towards our goal. That goal can only consist of cooperation and harmony between Hindus and Muslims and others in free India. Rest assured that we shall all work for that and rest assured that it will be achieved, though many things may happen in between that distress us. Sometimes a premature step does not bring good results. Sometimes it is better to be silent on a particular question. But even then the mind is full of it.

I hope you are keeping well in jail. Ranjit Pandit and I send you our good wishes.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1891–1945); Professor of German and French at Aligarh Muslim University; active in the Khaksar movement.
3. In his letter of 21 December 1941, he urged the need for settling the communal problem and expressed the wish that the Congress Working Committee at Bardoli would give top priority to the question of understanding between Hindus and Muslims.

3. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Allahabad
February 2, 1942

My dear Mahmud,
I have your letter of the 25th January. I have read through your little book on the Hindu-Muslim problem.[2] It is well written and good. There are some parts and inferences in it with which I do not wholly agree, but on the whole I think it is an able presentation of the case from your point of view. I would of course have written somewhat differently in the sense that I would have emphasized certain aspects which are hardly touched upon by you. Your survey ignores some more or less recent developments and especially certain world aspects which affect India. Essentially, I think, the attitude of Jinnah and the Muslim League is governed by the desire to prevent radical changes or the democratisation of India not because of a Hindu majority but because the radical elements will put an end to semi-feudal privileges, etc. You hint at this in your letter. The whole conception of the Constituent Assembly is to bring out mass elements and urges which will not view the communal problem or other problems from the middle-class point of view which has landed us into this impasse. Personally I see no solution of the problem, however hard we may try, so long as the third party (the British) is not eliminated. We shall inevitably come near a solution when we are forced to agree by circumstances, the alternative being conflict on a big scale. That can only happen when it is clear that neither party can seek the help of the British or any other alien authority.

The correct course for both Congress and the Muslim League (as well as others) would have been to agree to one thing only retaining, if necessary, all their other differences, including if you like Pakistan.

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter Mahmud wrote that the book in which he had suggested Congress-League *rapprochement*, was written a year before; this was not possible now because it was clear that "Jinnah wants to retain British rule in India". But still he wanted to retain that portion because he intended to work among the Muslims for a *rapprochement*. The Muslims, he argued, did not agree with Jinnah that the Congress should be treated as a Hindu body. "The impossibility of this partition should be brought before them and then it should be proved before them that it is not the Congress but Jinnah who does not want the *rapprochement*". The book also contained a chapter criticising the appearance of caste factionalism in the Bihar Congress ministry of 1937–38. On the advice of Mahatma Gandhi certain passages were deleted from the book.

That one thing is to join forces against all alien authority and intervention. Once this alien authority is excluded we fall back upon ourselves and either agree or fight. In all likelihood we then agree for the prospect of a real struggle will not be a pleasant one for anybody.

Jinnah puts the cart before the horse. He says no political progress till his conditions are accepted. Under present circumstances that means a veto to progress. The right course would be to say: I stick to Pakistan and every thing else that goes with it and I shall never be satisfied with less, but I am perfectly willing to join hands with others to push out the alien authority. After that I shall fight for my rights if necessary. It is clear that he wants present conditions to continue and his position thus becomes indefensible.

Fortunately the world is changing and our hardest problems are in a sense solving themselves through the clash of events. While the cultural approach is right and desirable, it takes time and events today rush past us and bring big changes before very long.

I do not know how far it is right for you, as a member of the Congress Working Committee, to suggest a *rapprochement* with Jinnah and the League on the lines you mention. This will no doubt create confusion and misunderstanding. Would it not be better for you to consult Maulana Azad? He is coming here tomorrow and will stay for three days or so. If you like I can give him your typescript.

I am making some suggestions below about relatively minor matters:

1. In the dedication there is an odd collection of names but it is for you to decide who is to be included.
2. Page 2, lines 23-24 from top. To say that the Hindu money-lending class dominated nationalist politics appears to me to be entirely wrong. Even if Gandhiji is thought of as a bania, surely he is not in politics as a representative of the money-lending class and even his forebears did not indulge in this profession. I do not see the money-lending class having any real influence on our politics.[3]
3. Page 4, line 9 from bottom—'render' seems to be the wrong word.
4. Page 22, top line—Was not dancing expressly prohibited by Muslim tradition and custom?
5. Page 24, second paragraph—It would be probably more correct to say that the political, economic and social structure of India was in process of active disruption when the British came. Their easy

3. Clarifying this point in his reply of 5 February 1942, Mahmud stated that he did not mean Mahatma Gandhi but the provincial leaders of the Congress. Most of the M.L.As. were money-lenders or were related to them. The request of Mahatma Gandhi to lower the interest rates had no effect at all.

success was due to this fact and later they encouraged this process in many ways.

6. Page 33, line 8 from top—The Theosophical Society was not a Hindu reform movement. It was started outside India by a Russian and an American.[4] Later, it is true, it had a strong influence of a revivalist character on Hindus.
7. Page 60, lines 9, 10 from bottom—So far as I know Gandhiji was not a signatory to any request to Ramsay MacDonald.[5]
8. Page 68, lines 8, 9 from bottom—These figures are, I think, wholly incorrect.
9. Page 69, bottom and page 70, top. I do not know what you mean by saying that no plan of economic development, etc. was considered. Possibly some minor plans were not adopted. What they were I do not know. But the whole conception of the National Planning Committee as well as of the development of village industries, were from different approaches meant to tackle the problem of poverty and unemployment. Your statement ignores the extraordinary complexity of this problem and the impossibility of tackling it successfully within the present structure.
10. Page 76, third para—It is odd to say that the Muslims prepared the country to face the 20th century. As a governing power they ceased to exist in India in the 18th century, and even then both Muslims and Hindus were behind the times and so collapsed. Certain cultural accomplishments have nothing to do with the 20th century, which is represented by the spirit of science and industrial growth. We are nearly all—Hindus and Muslims—today somewhere in the 18th or early 19th century. Some are in the 15th or 16th century or even earlier. The Muslim League's attitude can only be understood in terms of the Middle Ages.

These are some odd suggestions for you to consider. I have not mentioned typing errors which sometimes occur.

4. The Theosophical Society was founded by Madame Blavatsky and Col. H.S. Olcott in the United States in 1875. They later came to India and established their headquarters at Madras. The Society became a great force in Indian life and politics after its protagonist Annie Besant came and settled in India in 1893.
5. During the Second Round Table Conference in 1931, which was attended by Mahatma Gandhi, certain Indian politicians had requested Ramsay MacDonald, the then British Prime Minister, to intervene and give a decision for the solution of the communal problem, since the parties involved could not agree among themselves. And when the decision was announced on 17 August 1932, Mahatma Gandhi protested against it by undertaking a fast unto death.

It is difficult to advise about publication. Any way dc much money out of it. It is not easy to get books pu: owing to scarcity of paper and uncertainty due to war condi only thing to do is to get a publisher to issue it on a royalty on the published price of each copy sold. Royalties thus depe on sale. Kitabistan is in some ways very unreliable but on they are to be preferred to others.

Yours affec:

4. To Syed Mahmud[1]

Allai
7.2.

My dear Mahmud,
I have received your letter[2] and Mirza Ismail's foreword.[3] I have discussed the matter with Maulana. Maulana was of opinion t: what you have written about the Congress ministries and even mc so what you have suggested for the future is hardly in keeping wi facts or with future possibilities. This would have been so anyhov but for a member of the Congress Working Committee to write in thi way is both extraordinary and harmful. Sir Mirza Ismail's foreworc crystallizes your suggestions about the future and puts forword proposals which are certainly not the Congress proposals and which many of us are entirely opposed to.

This is Maulana's opinion and I wholly agree with him. I think you have been less than just to the Congress ministries in your survey and have emphasized certain aspects. But a difference of opinion of this kind need not come in the way of your publishing your book. What is more important is that you are a member of the Working Committee and were yourself a minister. Anything that you may say will inevitably be considered as representing the Working Committee however much you might dissociate yourself.

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 5 February 1942, Syed Mahmud wrote that the caste system among the Hindus had a firm hold on the mind and worked in full vigour during the time of the Congress ministries.
3. Foreword to Syed Mahmud's book on Hindu-Muslim relations.

I am conveying to you Maulana's message. You are entirely wrong if you think that I do not attach importance to the Hindu-Muslim problem. Whatever my other failings might be, I am not stupid and I know the vital importance of this question. But my ways of dealing with it are different. I am tired of this pottering about and trying to please reactionaries and fools or those who belong to the upper strata. I want to treat the whole political and economic structure and build anew. There is going to be no going back, so far as I am concerned, to the old order in India whatever happens. It is absurd therefore for anyone to talk of ministries, composite or otherwise.

The date of Indu's wedding has not been fixed so far. Probably it will be in the last 10 days of March. It will take place in Allahabad.

About the publication of your book, I am not a good go-between for Kitabistan as I have not been on very cordial terms with them.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

5. To Allama Mashriqi Inayatullah Khan[1]

Allahabad
June 12, 1942

Dear Mr. Inayatullah Khan,

Thank you for your telegram which I have received today.[2] I do not quite understand it. As you know we shall gladly do everything in our power to bring about a friendly settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League, as well as other organisations. The obvious way to bring this about is for representatives to discuss the matter. That is why the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, suggested some time ago that such representatives might be appointed on behalf of the Congress and the League. The number of the representatives is immaterial, though probably it will be better if there were several on each side. Before the Congress can take definite steps in the matter, it should know whether the Muslim League is agreeable to the suggestion made. From certain speeches made by the Muslim

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his telegram of 10 June 1942, he asked Jawaharlal to name one Congress representative immediately as Jinnah in all probability would agree to a single representative.

League leaders, it would appear that they are not agreeable. Your telegram is vague and it is difficult for any step to be taken till we have more definite and direct knowledge of the Muslim League attitude.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. To Allama Mashriqi Inayatullah Khan[1]

Allahabad
June 23, 1942

Dear Mr. Inayatullah Khan,
I have received your telegram in which you say that Mr. Jinnah desires the withdrawal of the Allahabad resolution before he can negotiate. Presumably this refers to the recent resolution of the All India Congress Committee relating to the unity of India.[2] That resolution merely confirmed the position for which the Congress has stood for 57 years now. Anyway nobody can withdraw it except the All India Congress Committee. Personally I would be against any change in that resolution as I think the Congress position relating to the unity of India is sound. Mr. Jinnah's suggestion that this resolution should be withdrawn is on a par with a suggestion I might make that the Muslim League resolution about Pakistan should be withdrawn. Such suggestions do not help either way. If people are prepared to talk over matters, they do not put forward conditions which in themselves are tantamount to decisions. The suggestion I made in Bombay and elsewhere was that people holding different views on this subject should, while adhering to their views, agree to cooperate on the basis of achieving the independence of India and the transfer of full political power to the representatives of the Indian people. Further they can cooperate then in the defence of a free India. After that they can consider the other questions that divide them and come to an understanding. This course of action does not commit anyone or compel him to give up his own particular point of view.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, pp. 276–285.

7. To Allama Mashriqi Inayatullah Khan[1]

Wardha
July 8, 1942

Dear Mr. Inayatullah Khan,
I have your telegram. I think I have already made our position clear to you. The Congress ever since its inception has been based on the national unity of India. Without that idea of unity, the Congress fails of its purpose and might as well be wound up. The resolution passed by the All India Congress Committee in Allahabad in effect stated that the Congress should not agree to the break-up of that unity. This resolution may or may not have been necessary, but in effect it merely confirmed the old Congress position. To annul that resolution is to state to the world that the Congress is prepared to consider the division of India into two parts. That would be against the fundamental Congress position.

Apart from this, however, the Congress has stated that while it stands by the unity of India and considers any division fatal for all concerned, still it cannot think in terms of compelling any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against its declared emphatic will.

I have already told you that constitutionally speaking it is beyond our power to upset a resolution passed by the A.I.C.C. Only the A.I.C.C. or the full Congress can do that.

I think the position is quite clear. What I suggested to you previously was that the Congress and the Muslim League, as well as others, need not give up their particular positions or objectives but may still cooperate together for the independence and defence of India. What they must all decide is that they will not look up to the British Government for help in furthering their particular claims, as this is derogatory to the dignity of any Indian or any group in India. It is for us to settle these matters among ourselves without invoking foreign authority.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

8. Can Indians Get Together?[1]

"Can Indians get together?" It is an odd title yet a significant one, for it tells us much in four words. It gives us an intimate and revealing glimpse into the minds of those who framed it. It reveals to us the premises and assumptions on which they base their consideration of the Indian problem. It displays that patronizing superiority of outlook which we have come to associate with Westerners when they deal with Eastern nations. It has something of the white man's burden about it. Because of all this I was disinclined to write on the subject, for there is little room for argument or reasoning when premises differ. Our minds function in set grooves, and if even the impact of a World War with its attendant revolutionary changes does not pull them out from those deep hollows, how much can we expect from an appeal to reason?

This War is a stupendous military spectacle, and all over the world armies, navies and air forces clash with each other and seek to gain the mastery....[2] These mighty conflicts already have changed the shape of the world and will undoubtedly still further change the shape of things to come. And yet greater changes are happening in the minds of men, possibly none so great as those invisible things that are affecting Asia and gradually but surely putting an end to the relations between Asia and Europe that subsisted for 200 years. However this War may develop, whatever the end may be, no matter what the peace is going to be, it is certain that the Western world can no longer dominate over Asia. If this is not realized and if the attempt is made to continue the old relationship in any form, this means the end of peace and another disastrous conflict.

Yet this is not realized by those who shape the policies of Western nations, least of all by Britain. The France of Vichy, grovelling before Germany, still talks of the French Empire,[3] the Netherlands, having lost already many of her vast possessions, still speaks the offensive

1. Article written by Jawaharlal. Printed in *The New York Times Magazine*, 19 July 1942.
2. As in the source.
3. On 17 February 1941, an Imperial Committee was formed by the Vichy Government whose purpose was "to make known to all Frenchmen the grandeur of the Empire." In 1942 the Vichy Government from time to time claimed its Empire. In March 1942, it assured the Americans that the fate of Madagascar would not be the same as that of Indo-China.

language of Empire[4] and endeavours to cling to what is left. The nineteenth century is dead and gone but the minds of Britain's rulers still think in terms of that past. That way lies no hope for the war or for the peace that must inevitably come some time or the other. Unless London and Washington begin to think in terms of today and of free and equal Asia they will never reach a solution of the problems that confront them.

That solution lies in accepting the fact of full and equal freedom for all the countries of Asia, of giving up the doctrine of racial superiority, which is no monopoly of the Nazis and which we in India have known in its most intense form for many generations. It lies in the recognition of Indian independence, which will not only release the suppressed and pent-up energies of a great nation but will be symbolic of a new freedom all over the world.

What a mess the nations of Europe made of this world with their perpetual conflicts, their eternal hates, their grabbing violence and cut-throat opportunism, with the misery they brought to their colonial territories, with two world wars in the course of a single generation!

Not being able to look after their own houses, they presume to dominate over others and pose as their mentors. But no one values them at their achievements in science, literature or the application of science. Behind all this there is a lack of something which brings their achievements periodically to nought. Asia has looked at this changing scene with the strength of ages behind her, and the past 200 years, with all their suffering and mortification, are but a brief interlude in her long history.

That interlude is over. A new chapter must begin. Asia is learning rapidly what the West has to teach of science and its applications and is trying to harmonize them with her old-time genius. She has little to learn, much to teach about the philosophy of life and the art of living.

Can the Indians get together? Yes, certainly, if impediments in their way created by foreign authority are removed, if they can face their problems without external interference. Every problem finally will be solved either by peaceful means or by conflict, though this may give rise to new problems. Independent India will solve her problems or cease to be. The past history of India shows us how she has successfully tackled her problems and out of every conflict of opposing forces has produced a new synthesis. Synthesis is a dominant trait of India's civilization and history.

4. The exiled Netherlands Government in London appointed, on 21 May 1942, Dr. H.J. Van Hook as Minister of Colonies.

Except for China, there is no great country in the world which has shown such powerful unity throughout the ages as India. That unity took political shape only recently as it could not be stabilized until relatively recent developments in transport and communications made this easy. If these developments had not taken place it is possible that the United States of America might not have been a single nation.

Britain's rule over India led to political unity and also was a means to bring the industrial revolution to India. Development of that revolution was, however, hindered by the British, who encouraged feudal elements and prevented industrial growth. The continuing process of synthesis also was stopped by this rule and disruptive forces were encouraged.

For the first time in India's history, here was the rule of a foreign people who had their political, financial, industrial and cultural roots elsewhere and who could only remain as foreigners exploiting the country for their own advantage. There could be no synthesis with them, and perpetual conflict was inevitable. Yet out of this very conflict rose the powerful all-India nationalist movement, which became and is the symbol of political unity.

Independence, democracy and unity were the pillars of this movement. In accordance with old Indian traditions toleration, fullest protection and autonomy were promised to all minorities, subject only to the essential unity of the country and to the democratic basis of its constitution. Independence meant severance from the British Empire, but in the new world it was realized that isolated national existence was not possible or desirable. So India was prepared to join any international federation on an equal basis. But that could come only after recognition of her independence and through her free will. There could be no compulsion. In particular, India wanted to associate herself closely with China.

There is now a demand on the part of some Muslims, represented by the Muslim League, for partition of India, and it must be remembered that this demand is a very recent one, hardly four years old. It must also be remembered that there is a large section of Muslims in India who oppose it. Few people take it seriously, as it has no political or economic background. Americans who fought the Civil War to keep their Union together can appreciate how a proposal to divide the country is resented by vast numbers of the Indian people.

Thirty years ago the British Government introduced the principle of separate religious electorates in India, a fatal thing which has come in the way of development of political parties. Now they have tried to introduce the idea of partitioning India, not only into two but possibly

many separate parts. This was one of the reasons which led to bitter resentment of the Cripps proposals. The All India Congress could not agree to this, yet it went far and said if any territorial unit clearly declared its desire to break away, the Congress could not think in terms of compelling it to stay in the Union.

So far as minorities are concerned, it is accepted and common ground that they should be given fullest constitutional protection, religious, cultural, linguistic and in every other way. Backward minorities or classes should in addition be given special educational and other privileges to bring them rapidly to the general level.

The real problem so often referred to is that of the Muslims. They are hardly a minority, as they number about 90,000,000, and it is difficult to see how even a majority can oppress them. As it happens, they are largely concentrated in particular provinces. It is proposed to give full provincial autonomy to every province, reserving only certain all-India subjects for the central government, and this will give every opportunity for self-development in each cultural area. Indeed, there may even be smaller autonomous cultural areas within the province.

It is possible to devise many ways to give satisfaction to every conceivable minority claim. The Congress has said this must be done by agreement, not by a majority vote. If agreement is not possible on any point, then impartial arbitration should be accepted. Finally, if any territorial unit insists on breaking away after the experience of working in the Union, there is going to be no compulsion to force it to stay, provided such severance is geographically possible.

It must be remembered that the problem of Indian minorities is entirely different from nationalities with entirely different racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This is not so in India where, except for a small handful of persons, there is no difference between Hindu and Muslim in race, culture or language. The vast majority of Muslims belong to the same stock as the Hindus and were converted to Islam.

Few problems in the world today are basically so simple of solution as the Indian minority problem. For various reasons it is important today and comes in the way of progress, yet it is essentially a superficial problem without deep roots. The real problems of India are economic, the poverty and low standards. As soon as these are tackled aggressively, as they should be, and modern industry grows, bringing higher standards in its train, the minority problem fades away. It has been a product of unemployment of the middle classes who had few avenues of work open to them and looked for employment to the state. As state jobs were limited, demand rose for reservation of these for particular communities.

Every attempt to solve the problem thus far has failed because there was always a third party—the British Government. If that government fades away, the whole background of this problem changes when Indians have to look to themselves. Compulsion of events forces them to face reality and to come to agreement. The only alternative is conflict, which everyone is anxious to avoid, over a relatively trivial issue. But even if there is conflict, that is preferable to the present stalemate, and it will produce a solution.

The All India Congress proposal has been that this and other problems should be considered and finally decided by a constituent assembly elected by adult franchise. The widest franchise is considered necessary, for the consideration of these questions should rest on those vast numbers of people who are far more interested in economic problems and who do not look for state employment.

Such economic problems cut across religious boundaries and are common to Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Buddhist. If such an assembly could not come to an agreement on any particular minority matters they could be referred to international arbitration. We are perfectly prepared to abide by the decision of such an international tribunal in such matters. But the question of arbitration does not arise over the question of independence. That and the allied questions of self-determination must be recognized and accepted before there is a possibility of arbitration over minor matters. On independence we cannot compromise.

Can the Indians get together? I have no doubt that they can and they will. Even today there is an amazing unity of outlook among them and whatever their internal differences might be they stand for independence. The real obstacle in the way of real unity and progress is foreign domination. From every point of view it has become an urgent and immediate necessity that Britain should relinquish her hold in India and recognize Indian independence. There is no other way and it is certain, whether Britain likes it or not, that India must be given complete independence.

The approach of war to India has made this an even more vital question. Independent India would treat America and Britain as allies in a common enterprise to release her vast energy and resources against every aggressor who invaded her territory. But Indians can no longer function as slaves and underlings in their own country or outside or tolerate being treated as chattels by dominant foreign authority. Submission to this is for them the worst kind of spiritual degradation.

The East will put up with it no longer. Asia will come back to her own through whatever travail and suffering fate may have in store for

her. China has poured out her heart's blood in defence of her freedom. India would do likewise if the opportunity came to her to fight for her freedom. She seeks no dominion over others, but she will put up with no dominion over herself. Only independence will release her from long bondage and allow her to play her part fittingly in the terrible drama of the world today.

9. To K. G. Gagai[1]

Allahabad
July 27, 1942

Dear friend,[2]
I have received your postcard of the 23rd.[3] I have also received other letters on the same subject. It is not true that I have paid no attention to these communications. I have in fact sent several letters to Allama Mashriqi telling him how anxious and eager we are to come to some settlement in India with the Muslim League and other organisations. But a settlement cannot be made by one party. We have gone very far indeed in our attempts but the response we have received from the Muslim League leaders has made any settlement at present impossible. We cannot give up the very basis of our existence as a nationalist organization, believing in the freedom and unity of India. Short of that we are prepared to go to any length. I have written to Allama Mashriqi repeatedly on this subject.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Resident of Junagadh.
3. In his letter he accused Jawaharlal of paying no heed to the Khaksar leader's appeal for a settlement between the Congress and the League.

10. To Amaranatha Jha[1]

Allahabad
28/7/1942

My dear Amaranatha,[2]

You have put me a difficult question.[3] Not so difficult so far as I am concerned but difficult for me to think or act in your terms. I think this flag question has been bungled by both the University authorities and the Union. You are right in placing some of the blame at least on the Union people for their delaying tactics. A clear decision taken at an early stage would have helped matters greatly.

Sometimes, though infrequently, students have come to me for advice and I have had talks with them. But on the whole I have had little to do with developments and have often not known about them.

I understand that there has been a definite understanding and assurance that the national flag can be put up on the University buildings on certain days in the year. But these days were not definitely fixed up or specified, although the principal anniversaries are well known.

I was deeply grieved to learn, when I was in Delhi, that you had given permission for the Muslim League flag to be put up on the Senate House. This seemed to me a definitely wrong thing. I could

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1897–1955); son of Ganganatha Jha; Vice-Chancellor, Allahabad University, 1938–1947, and Banaras Hindu University, 1948; Chairman, Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission, 1947–1953; and of Bihar Public Service Commission, 1953–1955.
3. Some Muslim students took exception to the hoisting of the tricolour flag in the absence of a national flag by the Students Union and requested the Vice-Chancellor either to allow the Muslim League flag also to be hoisted or stop the Students Union from hoisting the tricolour flag. The Vice-Chancellor requested the Students Union for an explanation, in the absence of which in April 1942, he allowed the Muslim League flag to be hoisted. This was resented by the Students Union, which decided to organise resistance against this. Since some Muslim League leaders were invited to attend the flag hoisting which was against the agreement with the Vice-Chancellor that outsiders would not be called, permission to hold the meeting was withheld and the police was called in. Thereafter only the college flag was allowed to be hoisted.

have understood, though I might have disagreed with it, your asking students not to put up any flag. But a communal flag, which openly and brazenly represents a small communal group only, can never be tolerated on a University building. A class flag, such as the red flag, ought also not to be allowed, but even the red flag is better than a communal flag. When that communal flag has come to represent antipathy to the whole conception of India and Hindustan, it is still more objectionable.

Considering the matter objectively, as far as I can, and apart from the passions involved, I would have officially on behalf of the University given every facility to the students to put up any flag they chose, provided it was not a communal or class flag. Personally, if I had been the Vice-Chancellor, I would have tried to get the University Executive Council to adopt the national flag. But even if it that was not done officially, for all practical purposes this flag would have been used.

But obviously this question cannot be considered objectively now as too much passion is involved. It is perfectly clear that the Muslim League flag cannot be put up as this is bound to lead to trouble with 80% or more of the students. So both on theoretical and practical grounds every communal flag must be ruled out. On this there should be no weakening.

As for the national flag, I think your old understanding that it can be put up on certain days might well remain, subject to this, that if untoward consequences are apprehended on a particular occasion, the Vice-Chancellor may ask the students or the Union not to put it up on that occasion. This is rather a feeble sort of thing to say and it might even be an invitation to trouble and the creation of those very untoward consequences. But looking at it from your point of view I do not see any other way out. To say now that no flag should be put up on any occasion will itself give rise to trouble.

There is another aspect of the matter. Possibly there will be no occasion to put up the national flag in the near future. Before such an occasion arises, much may have happened in the country upsetting our normal routine. This flag issue may well be absorbed in wider issues and lose its importance. These other issues might well give us headaches, but there will be no need for worrying over the flag.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To Abdul Latif[1]

Bombay
August 6, 1942

Dear Mr. Abdul Latif,

I have your letter of today's date.[2] You have informed me that you have written a similar letter to the Congress President and you have been good enough to tell me of his reply. It is hardly necessary for me to add anything to Maulana Azad's reply which is fully authoritative. I need only say, if I may venture to do so, that I wholly agree with it.

The Congress position in regard to the proposal to divide up India into two or more parts is that any such division will be exceedingly harmful to both parts as well as to India as a whole. I am personally convinced that probably our Muslim friends in the north west of India will suffer most from such a division. India, as it is, contains nearly all the important elements and resources that can make her a strong and more or less self-sufficient nation. To cut her up will be, from the economic point of view as well as others, a fatal thing breaking up that natural economic unity and weakening each part. The north will suffer most from this because it is industrially not so advanced, nor does it contain some of the essential raw materials that are so necessary for a modern nation. There are many other arguments against division but I need not go into them as you are well aware of them yourself. There are of course also the sentimental, historical and psychological arguments which, as you know, affect the people powerfully. It is for all these reasons that there is a very strong feeling amongst us and, we believe, amongst vast numbers of people in India against any division of India. All these arguments are reinforced by recent world history and in fact by the course of the war itself. This

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter Latif stated that the Congress Working Committee in rejecting the Cripps proposal, in its resolution, had accepted in principle not to compel any territory to remain in India against its will. The A.I.C.C. while endorsing this resolution in May 1942, had accepted Jagat Narain Lal's proposal rejecting Rajagopalachari's resolution accepting Pakistan in principle. Latif asked Jawaharlal which interpretation was correct. He further asked whether the representatives appointed by the Muslim League for talks with the Congress would be allowed to discuss "any proposals they might put forward for a permanent settlement of the communal problem."

has shown that small nations have no future before them except as hangers-on of larger nations. We do not want India, or any part of India, to be such a hanger-on, or a kind of semi-colonial dependency, political or economic, of any other nation. In fact the tendency in the world is for larger federations to come into existence. Personally I am convinced that the ultimate solution will lie in a world federation and I am happy that a lead towards this has been given in the resolution that is going to be placed before the All India Congress Committee tomorrow.[3] Such a world federation will help in the solution of many vital problems and, among others, even the problem of national or other minorities will take a different shape.

In the resolution referred to above you will also find the Congress position in regard to a federation clearly defined. It is stated that India should have a federal government with the largest possible autonomy for the federating units, and further that residuary powers should vest in these federating units. 'Personally I must confess to you that I am not enamoured of this as I think the modern tendency is against it and rightly so. It is essential today to have a planned economy for the nation, and for this as well as for defence, etc. a strong central government is necessary. Nevertheless we have agreed to this to meet the wishes of many of our friends who consider it important. I might add that this is no new decision of the Congress as a similar decision was arrived at eleven years ago.

Thus, generally speaking, the Congress stands firmly for the unity of India and a federation with a greater autonomy for the units. For this objective it works. Nevertheless at Delhi it made it perfectly clear that if any territorial unit was emphatically and clearly of the opinion that it should break with the Indian Union, it should not be compelled to act contrary to its wishes. Naturally this would not be welcomed by us and it would inevitably depend on certain geographical and other factors. That decision of the Congress Working Committee stands and nothing has been said or done to modify or vary it in any way. When Babu Jagat Narain Lal's resolution came at the A.I.C.C. meeting in Allahabad, this was made perfectly clear by the Congress President, by me and by others. The wording of that resolution expresses the general wish and policy of the Congress which has been the basis of our constitution and working ever since the Congress came into existence. There is nothing really new in it. This resolution does not in any way override the Delhi Working Committee's resolution. This is perfectly clear and beyond doubt.

3. See *ante*, pp. 436–453.

Of course if representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League meet together they are free to discuss any matter and to refer such matters as they choose to their parent bodies for decision.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8

THE INDIAN STATES

1. Message to the Indore Rajya Praja Mandal Conference[1]

I send my good wishes to the conference that is being held in Indore under the auspices of the Praja Mandal.[2] The question of the Indian states is today more than ever a part of the larger question of India. Indeed the problem of India itself is a part of the larger problem of the world. But whatever may happen in the international field, it is absolutely clear that the fate of the states is bound up with the rest of India. In these stirring and revolutionary times everyone who is connected with the states, whether he is the ruler or the minister or the average man in the street, or shop or field or factory, must think in terms of the bigger issues that confront us.

We may not of course forget our day-to-day problems in each state, for they affect the life of the people and a satisfactory solution of them leads often to the solution of the larger problem. Nevertheless it is the larger problem of the whole Indian states system that is before us and that must be borne in mind. We have seen in the past two years proud empires being battered and defeated in war, we see today other empires being shaken up and possibly on the verge of dissolution. It is absurd, under these circumstances, to talk the petty language of petty reforms which still finds favour in the Indian states, as it does in the minds of the British authorities in the rest of India. The time for that is long past and those events outpaced them, and the reins of authority automatically drop from their hands.

Therefore it is necessary for all people concerned to take heed, to look into this changing present, to envisage the coming future, and to seek to adapt themselves to it as rapidly and as completely as possible.

It is well known that in the states as in the rest of India the British Governmental apparatus comes in the way. But that apparatus is already in the process of dissolution and we shall have to look to ourselves and rely on our own united wisdom and strength. Ultimately the good of the people depends on the strength and self-reliance of those people and not on benefits conferred upon them by authority.

I trust that the people of Indore state, as well as the people of all states, will take this larger view and grow in organisation, self-reliance

1. Bardoli, 30 December 1941. Only extracts were printed in the newspapers on 15 February 1942. We are giving here the full text from the J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Held at Malidpur on 13 February

and strength. I hope that they will avoid entanglement in petty questions and seek that larger good of all. I hope also that the authorities of the state will align themselves with this larger good and help in the development of strength and self-reliance among the people.

To the workers of the Praja Mandal I should like to say that if they seek to serve the people, they must develop the qualities of true servants of the public. They must be true and brave and self-reliant, not seeking personal preferment or advantage, not mixing themselves in party strife and petty squabbles, but always endeavouring to secure the goodwill of the people through disinterested service.

I send my good wishes again to the conference and through it to the people of Indore.

2. To Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah[1]

Allahabad
January 7, 1942

My dear Sheikh Abdullah,

I received your letter at Bardoli. But I have unfortunately misplaced it.

I was deeply grieved to learn of your brother's death. Of course you could not come to Bardoli for the Standing Committee meeting. I did not expect you to undertake this long journey at this time of the year, more especially after your bereavement.

I should of course like to meet you as there are so many things to discuss both in regard to Kashmir and larger questions relating to India.

Everything seems to be in a state of flux. The question of the states, important as it is, recedes somewhat in the background before the larger question of the whole of India. That larger question itself is governed by world developments. I suppose ultimately we all sink or swim together. More and more I feel that we must not allow ourselves to lose sight of the really big questions and get entangled in smaller issues. The future is uncertain, but it is quite certain that we shall have to play our part in shaping that future. The real question before us therefore is that we should be ready and prepared to play that part.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

The Standing Committee meeting discussed chiefly various administrative matters and internal difficulties that had arisen. No final decision has yet been taken.

With all good wishes to you and other friends in Kashmir.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To The Law Member, Bhopal[1]

Bombay
January 27, 1942

Dear Sir,

I have received your D.O. No. 10622 dated the 17th January.[2] I have learnt with surprise and regret that the Government of Bhopal were unable to permit an interview with Mr. Shakir Ali Khan[3] and others at present confined in the Bhopal Jail. My request was a very simple one and had nothing to do with political conversations during the interview. It was a request which is often made in regard to prisoners and which, so far as I am concerned, has never been refused to me anywhere, whether it related to a political prisoner or to a non-political prisoner. I can only conclude that the Government of Bhopal is run on lines which are peculiar to itself and which have little in common with other administrations. A jail interview for the purpose of inquiring about the personal health and condition of a prisoner is the most ordinary of courtesies. Perhaps you are unaware of the fact that in many countries jail rules permit almost an unlimited number of interviews because it is considered essential that the prisoner should make as many human contacts as possible with the outside world.

I was aware of the fact that Mr. Shakir Ali Khan had been tried and convicted by a court of law. I am also aware of the fact that I have been convicted many times of so-called non-political offences and that it is a common practice for political workers to be so convicted. Mr. Shakir Ali Khan has been a political worker for sometime and has come

1. A.I.S.P.C. Papers, File No. 4, Bhopal State, N.M.M.L.
2. Jawaharlal was informed that he could not interview Shakir Ali Khan because the latter was not a political prisoner but an ordinary convict.
3. (1904–1978); freedom fighter and journalist; active worker of the Communist Party of India; member, Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly, 1957–77.

into contact with me in that capacity. I am naturally interested in him as well as his work.

It is, however, immaterial whether you consider him a political prisoner or a non-political prisoner. In either event, I take it, that he has certain human rights which even prison should not deprive him of.

I am thankful to you for Colonel Rahman's report.[4] From this report it appears that Mr. Shakir Ali Khan has been very ill for a considerable period, having suffered from malaria and typhoid continuously and having lost a good deal of weight. No doubt this is natural, as Colonel Rahman observes. It would equally be natural for a prisoner to die after severe illness, yet this would not be a satisfying explanation to those interested in him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. S.A. Rahman, Chief Medical Officer and Secretary to the Government of Bhopal in the Medical Department.

4. Individual Satyagraha in Benares State[1]

During my visit to Benares I met workers of the Benares State Congress and they told me of the happenings in the state during the past year or more when I was in prison. Before I went to prison I had followed the developments in the state and noticed with regret the progressively reactionary character of the administration especially after the death of the late Maharaja.[2] It appears that this deterioration continued and even the assurances given by the state authorities were not honoured and therefore the State Congress started individual satyagraha.[3] This satyagraha has now continued for over eight months and is still continuing.

I do not wish to deal in this statement with the many questions that have arisen. They demonstrated not only the essential evils of the states system but the additional evils of the Political Department of the

1. Message to the Benares State Congress Committee which met on 31 January 1942. *National Herald*, 4 February 1942.
2. Maharaja Sir Aditya Narain Singh (1874–1939).
3. It was started in May 1941.

Government of India controlling these states directly through its own officers. Bad as all this is, it will no doubt be swept away in the big changes that must inevitably come soon. For the present we must not concern ourselves too much with the smaller issues and must think and act in terms of the larger issues.

I therefore recommend to the State Congress to discontinue the individual satyagraha that they have been carrying on. This is especially desirable as Mahatma Gandhi has for the present discontinued satyagraha in India. All workers must concentrate on the important work ahead—organisational and the constructive programme. By doing this they will prepare themselves for the greater tasks ahead and will strengthen their own people.

5. A Note on Rewa[1]

No responsible person can consider any question in a kind of vacuum as if it was an isolated affair. A students' debating society might give its opinion theoretically in this way because it is not concerned either with the carrying out of any programme or with the various consequences and reactions that flow from it. Therefore the Rewa affair[2] cannot be considered independently but only in relation to the general policy of the Congress, its present programme, and the national and international situation. Nothing should be done there which is against Congress principles or which comes in the way of our wider programme.

We know that the Political Department is chiefly concerned with the political aspects of the states and their subservience to the Government of India. Bad government, oppression of the people and immorality of the rulers do not worry the Political Department greatly. There are numerous examples of rulers who are thoroughly bad, incompetent and corrupt and who are still supported by the Political Department. But if a ruler is likely to be at all independent-minded and not amenable

1. Allahabad, 6 March 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Maharaja Sir Gulab Singhju Dev Bahadur (1903–1946); who became Ruler of Rewa State in 1922, was suspended by the British Government in February 1942 and this led to considerable excitement and agitation in the state. He was charged with involvement in certain criminal offences which were of such a grave nature that the government decided to refer the case to a Commission of Enquiry. But the Maharaja refused to acquiesce in any such independent enquiry.

to the Political Department's discipline, then he gets into trouble. Thus the motives and activities of the Political Department are always suspect.

At the same time rulers, except some very rare examples, can claim little sympathy. There may be shades of gray as between them, but generally speaking they have been, and are, autocratic, oppressive, wasteful, corrupt and leading very undesirable personal lives. Apart from this personal aspect, the whole Indian states system is thoroughly bad and we are wholly committed to a complete change of it. Our policy has been, in regard to the larger states, that there should be full responsible government and the ruler may remain as a constitutional head.

It thus becomes very difficult for us to support the personal cause of a ruler, unless there are very exceptional circumstances which have resulted in joining that personal cause with the larger national or people's cause. Even then one has to be careful not to do anything which directly or indirectly supports the states system and encourages a mentality among the people of accepting a feudal order. The whole objective of our past work and propaganda has been to develop a mentality among the people in favour of freedom and self-rule, and against subservience to ruling chiefs or British officers. We cannot and should not do any thing which might militate against this, or otherwise a small present gain may have to be set off by a more fundamental loss.

Above all we must remember that we are face to face today with vital and far-reaching problems, the solution of which will affect our country and the world. The Rewa affair is very unimportant in relation to these and we must not exaggerate it or lose our sense of perspective. Whatever attitude we may adopt in regard to it must be within the larger context and in conformity with the national policy.

The Congress cannot allow itself to become the tool of either the Political Department or of the Maharaja and his supporters. If it does either, it loses its commanding position and becomes a faction in a relatively minor dispute. Leading Congressmen must therefore keep apart from these factions and give a correct lead.

I can give no opinion about the good or bad qualities of the Maharaja. Possibly he is a little better than many of his brother princes, but that is not saying much. Possibly he has been less oppressive than some other rulers. But obviously he has not been a paragon of virtue as a man or a ruler and, either because of his own inclinations or because of pressure from the Political Department, has tried to crush the Congress and popular movements in the state. Latterly, I believe, he has functioned in a somewhat better way.

When a demand is made for an inquiry into grave charges, it is difficult and unwise to refuse it or to condemn it. It was unwise for

the Maharaja to refuse it. Obviously the Congress cannot say that there should be no inquiry. All it can say is that such an inquiry must be thoroughly impartial and just.

For the Congress the right position is to point out what it stands for in regard to the states, that is, responsible government; that it has sought to change the present autocratic powers of the ruler in favour of popular rule; that at the same time it is aware that many of the evils of the states system are due to the policy of the Political Department; that to change the autocracy of the ruler for the bureaucracy of the Political Department is to jump from the frying pan into the fire; that the real question at issue should be the introduction of popular rule and responsible government; that any action taken by the Political Department is suspect; that it neither wants the administration to be run by the Political Department or its nominees nor a reversion to the Maharaja's autocratic rule; that is so far as any serious charges are made against the Maharaja an impartial inquiry may be made but the popular element should be represented on it; that the real work for the people is to organize themselves for self-sufficiency and self-defence against unsocial elements according to the directions of the Congress. The last named is the essential work for today; all else is secondary.

It should be remembered that it will be unwise for the Congress or for noted Congressmen to create an impression in the mind of the people that they are just members of the Maharaja's party anxious to get him back as he was. It will also be unwise for them to give the impression that they are backing or supporting the Political Department. The Congress is above both and stands for the people. It should express its opinion on the issues raised and then concentrate its activity on the constructive side of our work.

6. The Indian States and the Treaties[1]

No treaty can be recognized which goes against human rights. The question of the states cannot be treated as a secondary matter which

1. Speech at the Kerala Club, New Delhi, 6 April 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 7 A

can be put aside for the present simply because the British Government had entered into treaties years ago. How can there be any satisfactory solution of the Indian problem if a large chunk of India—the states—is not considered? During the last 150 years there have been big revolutions—all manner of upheavals—changing the face of Europe. Here in India, owing to the artificial situation created by the British power, conditions have remained practically the same in the states. Anyone who says that nothing can be done because of treaties entered into 150 years ago is a lunatic, a knave or a fool.

This War is going to change the face of things completely. Political and economic conditions existing today cannot continue, for new adjustments will have to be made. I cannot say how, but no power on earth can stop it. In Europe, several treaties had been torn up. It is amazing effrontery to suggest that things which had ceased to exist in other countries should continue here. And, then, there is the human aspect—no treaty can be recognized which goes against human rights.

The Indian states' problem is the essence of the whole problem in India. What happens to the Indian states—that I regard as the ultimate test. If one wants the real picture of a city, it is not enough to look at the palaces alone—one has to see the slums also and also the conditions there. If, in considering the Indian problem, we leave the states it will not be a complete picture.

Travancore is an advanced state. But the fundamental test is the measure of political and economic power which the people possess. The progress of the states depends on the people becoming self-reliant, upon their having power and knowing how to use it. This is the test—not mere efficiency of the administration.

This is a strange land. Many strange things happen in this country. In this strange mixture of the odd and peculiar, nothing is so odd and peculiar as those who constitute the Government of India. They do not seem to realise that there is a war on. Intellectually they may be aware of it, but they have not shown themselves emotionally aware—by the way they deal with problems, even war problems. It is a matter for the psychoanalyst—the inefficiency of the Government of India. Why do they not realize their duty even when danger is facing them? This may involve them in difficulties. Instead of finding solutions for old problems, they are faced with new problems. But these difficulties, after all, may help to purge them, to purify and strengthen them. They have to pay the price for the future.

I am not going to submit to any conception which destroys the unity of India. It is not a matter for new logic—this emotional conception of India is something which we have to fight for. See the presence in

the gathering of Dr. Khan Sahib from the Khyber Pass, of Mr. Thanu Pillai[2] from Cape Comorin, of myself who came of Kashmir stock. This illustrates the essential unity of India—from the northern vastness to the southern seas.

Each particular state must bear its own burden—though they can expect sympathy. They must be prepared to face these problems and not wait for others.

2. Pattom Thanu Pillai, Chief Minister of Travancore, 1948; Chief Minister of Travancore-Cochin, 1954; Chief Minister of Kerala, 1960-62; Governor of Punjab, 1962-64; Governor of Andhra Pradesh, 1964-68; died 1970.

7. Jodhpur[1]

While mighty armies march to and fro, and the fates of empires hang in the balance, significant happenings are taking place in the heart of Rajputana. In Jodhpur, the government of the state has launched a mighty offensive against the Lok Parishad. Jodhpur is of course an Indian state but lest anyone should imagine that Indians govern an Indian state, it should be stated that the Prime Minister is a Britisher, Sir Donald Field,[2] and he is supported by numerous other Britishers in the state service. The representatives of British democracy and lovers of freedom control this Indian state and its activities.

In 1938, the Marwar Lok Parishad was started and this immediately became the head of a popular movement for the redress of all manner of feudal cesses and impositions. The Lok Parishad, of course, stood for responsible government but, in effect, it concentrated on protecting the people from the many exactions made upon them, some of which had actually been declared illegal by the courts. It came into conflict with the feudal regime and the Parishad was declared illegal and many of its members were sent to prison. In spite of intensive repression, the Parishad carried on and there was some compromise with the state government. During the municipal elections that followed the Parishad gained a clear majority.

Again, the Parishad has come into conflict with the state authorities because of its attempt to save the people from forced exactions by the jagirdars and others. Every attempt to get these exactions stopped by

1. Editorial in *National Herald*, 6 June 1942.
2. Sir Donald Mayle Field (1881–1956); Chief Minister of Jodhpur, 1935–46.

the state had failed and the Maharaja[3] would not even grant an interview to the leader of the Parishad to discuss these matters. Again, Shri Jainarain Vyas and many of his colleagues are in prison and the state officials are carrying on the war for democracy with full vigour against the people of the state.

These incidents, small as they are, reveal the nature of the British Government in India and how it functions through the states, resisting all attempts at reform and preserving their feudal structure. It is extraordinary that even the decisions of the courts declaring the various cesses illegal are not given effect to. This is an extraordinary state of affairs and our sympathy must go to those unhappy people who have to put up with this kind of British-supported feudal regime. Our demand for complete independence is the only possible demand, for there is no other way to put an end to these monstrous happenings in India.

3. Sir Umaid Singhji Sahib Bahadur (1903–1947); became ruler in 1918.

8. To Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah[1]

Allahabad
July 29, 1942

My dear Sheikh Sahab,

Thank you for your letter of the 22nd July. I am sorry you will not be able to come to Bombay for our Standing Committee meeting.[2] I quite realise that the situation in Kashmir itself must demand your presence. But the all-India situation and the world situation is of a very critical character. You must have no doubt followed this. It seems inevitable that both in regard to India and the world far-reaching developments will take place. This will of course affect Kashmir also.

I have read with interest the resolutions of the Kashmir National Conference.

Indira and Feroze have been telling me all about their experience in Kashmir and of all your help and kindness to them. They fully enjoyed this. Of course they only saw a small part of Kashmir. One cannot

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. The Standing Committee of the All India States People's Conference was to meet at Bombay on 7–8 August 1942.

exhaust Kashmir even after many visits. I hope they will go there again and I hope next time I may be with them.

With all good wishes to you and to our other friends.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. The States People and the 'Quit India' Resolution[1]

The Standing Committee of the All India States People's Conference meeting at a time of peril from outside and threatened upheaval within the country, has given the most earnest consideration to the problems facing it and the nation. It is manifest that the fate of the states is indissolubly linked with the fate of India and the peril of India is equally the peril of the states. So also must an upheaval in India affect the states. This companionship in peril must lead to an even richer companionship in the days of peaceful progress to come. Danger and peril have thus demonstrated afresh the unity of India and the comradeship of the people of the states with their brethren in the rest of India.

The Committee is convinced that in this hour of grave crisis for the motherland and the world the people of the states must stand shoulder to shoulder with the rest of India and face together the trials and tribulations of the struggle for freedom. It appeals, therefore, to the people of the states to line up with those who stand for the freedom of India; and likewise it makes appeal to the rulers of the states to discard ancient and discarded notions of autocracy and, recognising the people's right to govern themselves, become the real leaders of a free people. The time has come, and there is no denying it, when India must be a free and independent country, and the states should have full responsible government.

The Committee respectfully welcomes the lead given to the country by All India Congress Committee and calls upon the people of the states to carry out the directions issued by Mahatma Gandhi in so far as they are applicable to them.

The Committee expects all Praja Mandals to activise themselves, strengthen their organisation, and work for the programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection; and thus to prepare for the harder task ahead.

1. Resolution of the All India States People's Conference drafted by Jawaharlal, Bombay, 8 August 1942. J.N. Papers. N.M.M.L.

9

INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE

1. Cottage and Large-Scale Industries[1]

I am afraid of Guptaji,[2] who is always after me for one thing or the other. I was on my way to Allahabad, after being released from jail, and broke my journey here at Lucknow for a few hours. Guptaji forced me to pay a visit to the exhibition, and I was in a fix. It is not that I am nervous or afraid of delivering speeches, but I did not wish to speak all of a sudden, after such a long interval. My friends and colleagues are here at Lucknow and I wanted to use this opportunity to meet them and exchange views with them before making a speech.

I have been asked to speak on cottage industry. Cottage industry is an important problem but there are problems more important than cottage industry. These problems are affecting the whole world and if we are not prepared to face them they will crush us.

I am not a war-monger nor do I wish that this savage War should come to this country and its cities, but I sincerely tell you that I shall not be aggrieved if a few bombs are dropped on the Indian cities. This will open your eyes and you will then understand the issues facing the country.

Nowhere in the world are people more industrious than in China. A little over two years ago when I went to China, I saw the courage and resolution of the people there who were ready to lay down their lives for the sake of their country. Since then they have risen in my estimation. War has been going on in China for about five years. Calamities have been befalling them and their houses have been ruined but they are still fighting bravely. But at the same time they are building up a new China.

Their schools, colleges and universities are no more in existence but they have not given up education. Instead, the war has given the Chinese Government an impetus and a new vision to spread education into the remotest corners of their country. They have moved their educational centres to the interior. They quickly constructed mud huts and fitted them with whatever equipment they could get. This has, incidentally, galvanised them into action in the realm of education.

1. Speech at the All India Khadi and Industrial Exhibition, Lucknow, 7 December 1941. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India; and also from *National Herald*, 8 December 1941.
2. C.B.

Thus instead of any setback to education the war has given encouragement to education. In this connection we should not forget the educational efforts of the Republican Government of Spain also during the war.

The Japanese war machine has destroyed Chinese cities, their factories, their buildings, their machinery and their economy. The Japanese blockade is complete. If the Chinese had not revived their cottage industries to fight the import of Japanese manufactures in Chinese villages, China would have been defeated. The revival of cottage industries has saved the Chinese people from the economic slavery of Japan. And this they have done admirably.

When I visited China, there were about 30,000 Chinese industrial cooperatives. There every village has a cooperative society of its own. So intensive and well-organised is the cooperative movement, that even in the Japanese occupied territories, cooperative societies continue to function. In fact, these cooperatives have given a democratic basis to the Chinese economy. In every village democracy is being evolved. Such is the effect of the Japanese bombs on China. Indians should take a lesson from China.

Cottage industries have their own importance in the economic life of a country, and they are rather indispensable in India. The poverty of India cannot be removed without reviving the cottage industries. I remember a talk I had with an agent of Ford's who had supplied a large number of tractors to Russia. The agent said that while Russia could make use of so many tractors, there was hardly any space for even one tractor to stand in some parts of Bengal. India is so thickly populated.

I am in favour of large-scale industry and I am convinced that India can solve her problems of production, distribution and unemployment with the help of big industries. We have very limited capital at our disposal, and it should not be spent in manufacturing articles which can easily be produced in the villages. People fear that owing to unequal distribution of wealth, big machines and large-scale industrialisation would lead to unemployment and other troubles. Such a situation arises only when distribution is not equitable. Therefore we have to ensure that wealth is not accumulated in the hands of a few but is distributed equitably.

We have to bear in mind that our large-scale industries do not ruin our cottage industries, because the problems of poverty and unemployment can be solved only by developing cottage industries. We should produce everything needed in India ourselves.

as in cultural, educational and medical relief work in the villages. One of its chief centres of organised village work is at Ranewa in the Fyzabad district. The Gandhi Ashram's activities are spread out in three thousand villages of our forty-eight districts. About 35,800 persons are working for the Ashram or drawing wages from the Ashram's activities. A sum of Rs. 4,32,650 is distributed by it as wages every year.

This progress is encouraging but considering the vast extent of this great province, the work of the Ashram so far has been very little. We want its work to spread out to scores of thousands of our villages and to hundreds of thousands of village workers. The Ashram has the necessary training and experience for this as well as the human material. All it lacks is money. All the money it possesses is invested in productive activities. In order to enlarge these activities which can easily be done, more funds are urgently needed. The larger the money at the disposal of the Ashram, the wider and more far-reaching its scope of beneficent and productive activities.

So we appeal to the public of this province for additional funds for the Gandhi Ashram. So far the Ashram has not made a public appeal for financial assistance. But the time has come for this and Mahatma Gandhi, under whose guidance and beneficent care the Ashram has worked, has advised us to look to our own province for funds. He has blessed our undertaking and wished us every success.

The Ashram is a registered organisation of which the signatories to this appeal are the trustees. It is authorised to raise funds.

We appeal to all Congressmen in the province to help us in raising funds, and the larger the funds the further our work will go. But our appeal is not confined to Congressmen. It extends to all the people of the province who have the welfare of our province and its five crores of people at heart.

3. The Government and the Automobile Industry[1]

Larger issues before us in India overshadow many other important matters. Nevertheless, these other matters must not be ignored and indeed they throw light on larger issues also. The attitude of the British Government towards the Indian industry, even during these vital years,

1. Statement issued by Jawaharlal as Chairman, National Planning Committee, Bombay, 6 January 1942. *National Herald*, 7 January 1942.

has been most astonishing. There is a lot of talk of the development of war industries and others, but when one compares the development in India with the development in other countries, it becomes obvious how little has been done in India. Even the vital needs of the War are not enough to overcome the hostility of British interests towards Indian industrial development.

The Eastern Group Conference still apparently thinks in terms of India chiefly supplying raw material and agricultural products and big industries being concentrated in other countries. Probably the most remarkable instance of the Government of India's attitude is automobile industry.[2] The reasons advanced are the most puerile imaginable. For years past, efforts had been made by the Indian industrialists to start a motor industry in India. At last everything was settled, contracts were made, capital was forthcoming and all that was necessary was government's consent. One would have thought that under the stress of war requirements, any government would have welcomed the development. Not so the British Government in India. It is stated they were influenced by vested interests of American motor-car industry who did not want India to develop her own automobile industry.

Now it appears that the American authorities are starting some kind of motor plant somewhere in Sind.[3] Objections previously raised as to the diversion of labour, etc., become now still more absurd. The whole thing is a fantastic illustration of the hold of foreign vested interests and their incompetence, from a larger point of view, not only of India but even of the British requirements. Another significant feature is the growth of American vested interests in India. In spite of all these perils and disasters of war, the British policy is still clinging to its old methods of cooperation. The only answer can be that before we think of cooperation, they will have to think of 'Pack up and go.'

2. Walchand Hirachand wanted to start an automobile industry in Bombay in 1940, and entered into a contract with the Chrysler corporation of Detroit, U.S.A., on royalty basis without insisting upon the investment of American capital. He wanted the government to buy trucks for war purposes from his company. The government refused to support an industry which was fully dependent on government support. On 18 December 1941, in the House of Commons, Amery stated that despite the increased demand for automobiles, and India becoming the centre for war needs for Russia and the Middle East, the government could not support an automobile industry in India as it would divert the labour and machinery more needed for India's war effort.
3. The U.S. Government was allowed to assemble automobiles at Karachi, to be supplied to Russia and the Middle East.

4. Price of Sugar-cane in the United Provinces[1]

The Council of the U.P. Congress Committee have passed what I consider, a very moderate and reasonable resolution about the sugar situation and the demands of the cane-growers.[2] In the existing circumstances I think that even a higher price than that suggested is justified. I think this matter affecting as it does vast numbers of people is of importance even in these days of ever-developing war crisis. The cane-growers deserve sympathy and help from the public quite apart from political considerations. The government of the day has not shown much intelligence or competence in dealing with the situation and their representatives in the Gorakhpur district have certainly not covered themselves with glory of public activity. I am told that the cane-growers' agitation for better prices does not meet with favour with these representatives and it is possible that after their usual manner they might try to suppress it. That will of course be highly improper and will make the situation worse. I hope narrow politics will not be imported into this essentially economic question. Not only Congressmen but others should support the cane-growers in their demand and make it clear that governmental interference against them will be resented.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 12 January 1942. *National Herald*, 13 January 1942.
2. The U.P.P.C.C. Council, in its resolution passed on 12 January 1942, sympathised with the cane-growers' demand for higher prices of cane and recommended a rise from five annas per maund to six annas and nine pies per maund. Further it proposed that payment be made at the market price, and taking into account the system of deferred payment, the price offered should be eight annas per maund. It also called upon the provincial committees of cane-growers to form a council at the provincial level.

5. Message to the U.P. Cane-Growers Conference[1]

I commend the proposal to form a provincial cane-growers' organisation in the United Provinces.[2] Cane-growing peasants of the province form

1. Meerut, 27 January 1942. *National Herald*, 28 January 1942.
2. The conference was held at Meerut on 31 January-1 February 1942.

an important element of our population and have special problems to face. During the past five years they have had periods when they obtained fairly good prices and periods when they were brought to the verge of ruin. It is essential that they should organise themselves to protect their interests.

Some organisations have grown up in local areas and these have often done good work, but it is necessary now to coordinate the activities of the local unions through some provincial organisation. What exact form such an organisation shall take, I cannot say. This is a matter for consultation among those concerned. It might well be a kind of federation of local unions, which would leave the initiative for work to the local unions and lay down the general policy. I hope the provincial cane-growers' organisation will be set up now.

6. The Kisans and the War[1]

I have come here again to your district after a year and a half. Last time when I visited Padrauna I attended a large meeting of the kisans. From here I proceeded to meet Mahatma Gandhi, after visiting one or two other districts. When I was returning from Wardha and going home, on the way I was arrested. I was prosecuted for the speech I had delivered to the kisans of Gorakhpur. I was awarded four years imprisonment, though I stayed in jail only for thirteen months. Since my release from jail, I have been visiting several places. Our Congress, which is our panchayat, also met at Bardoli and Wardha, the place where Gandhiji resides. The meeting was held to consider the situation in the country. Your problems were also discussed. Thereafter I returned to Allahabad. From there I went to Lucknow to attend the Council meeting and I am coming from there straight to your district.

After my arrest last time, during the satyagraha movement, many brothers from this district were also arrested for taking part in the movement and for fighting for the cause of the kisans. Some of them have been released because Britain is involved in a calamity. I was arrested for inciting the public not to cooperate with Britain in this War. My views remain unchanged even after my imprisonment and I shall repeat them. Those who think that my views have changed are

1. Speech at the inauguration of the Eastern Districts Cane-Growers Conference, Rankola, Gorakhpur district. 31 January 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

mistaken. I shall repeat what I said earlier, and the reporter may send my speech in full to the district authorities recommending my arrest, if he likes. I will be extremely glad. But if they think that by doing so they would succeed in putting a halt to our movement for Swaraj they are mistaken. Five or six days ago people took a pledge that so long as they did not achieve full independence, they would not sit idle in self-complacency. We have not yet attained that objective of ours. Our movement shall continue whether any British officer is pleased or annoyed. It shall continue in spite of the World War. Forty crore people have pledged to carry on the movement. The survival of the poor peasants and common people is dependent on its success. So long as poverty exists, no government, British or any other, can do any justice to the people or govern efficiently. We have to accomplish a great task—establishment of self-government and eradication of poverty. But it cannot be accomplished by one man.

I have come here with a special purpose. I have many things to talk about—about the war between Britain and Germany and its effect on us. But do not worry about it. All should live peacefully. The purpose of my visit today is to discuss with you the problems of the cultivation of cane.

For several years, the cultivators have been demanding a fair price for their cane. This problem is being faced, in particular, in Gorakhpur, Basti and the neighbouring districts where cane cultivation is predominant. The question before us is, how should the cultivators organise themselves to get better prices for their cane? For this we are holding this meeting here and a meeting was also organised in Meerut. After I speak to you, resolutions will be moved, which you should pass after fully understanding them.

Cane-cultivation has grown considerably in the last ten years, as a result of which the prices of cane have decreased. You wander with your cart full of cane from door to door, still cane is sold at four annas a maund. The provincial government should enact a law to protect the minimum price of the cane for the cultivator. The rise in the price of sugar should benefit the cultivator also. It was only because of the rise in sugar prices that the cultivators were attracted to shift to sugarcane cultivation. But in doing so many laws and rules have been infringed, though many of them have been repealed.

This year the government has fixed the price of cane at five annas per maund. This price is very low and unreasonable. If we are to find out the price at which sugar is being sold now we will come to know whether the price offered for the cane is a fair price. Are the cultivators gaining by the rise in the price of sugar? The price now offered

for cane is six annas per maund. The price of sugar has also gone up. So has the production cost. But what is the actual increase in the production cost? If the accounts of the sugar mills are checked, it will be found that in actual fact there has not been much rise in the production cost. Neither the labourers nor the cultivators have gained anything. Only the mill-owners have gained, who run factories only for their own benefit. If factories did not make any profit, they would be closed. But factories are open and working, yet labourers are starving. Mill-owners are getting richer, and that is why they go on setting up new factories.

Our provincial Congress has recently in a resolution criticised the government policy of fixing low prices for the cane, which is improper and unjust.

The current year's situation demands a minimum price of eight annas per maund. The rise in the sugar-price should be shared by the cultivator also. But now payments are not made at the end, and the cultivator does not benefit. The prices have been increased from five annas to six annas per maund as a result of public agitation. The sugar, which is going to be exported, will earn great profits which should be shared by the cultivator also.

A statement was issued recently on behalf of the mill-owners that they were themselves in distress and were suffering losses. Their statement contains many inexplicit arguments. We cannot rely on them. They should show us their accounts, if they want us to believe them.

You should organise yourselves peacefully. If your organisation becomes stronger, all your demands will be fulfilled. But you should not be perturbed or be afraid. You cannot achieve anything if you are afraid. It is only because of your meeting together for a month that the prices have been increased from five to six annas per maund. The government can be further pressurized to increase the price, but it is possible only if you are strong, and so is your movement.

You should continue holding your meetings. You have to strengthen the Congress through them. The cultivators in all districts should come together and make one panchayat. You should invite members from Basti, Meerut and other districts. It is only by unity that your organisation will gain strength. The resolution you pass should cover the whole province.

Your brother workers are working in factories. You should have their interest also in your mind, because their cause is aligned to your cause. The war is going on these days and the prices of commodities have risen. The demands of all the people should be fulfilled. I have heard that the condition of workers in sugar factories is very bad, and their

demands are also not met. They have not yet received their dearness allowance. Their demands may be different from that of the cultivators but the cause is the same.

Three years ago there was a strike in the sugar factories in your district. Our brother Shibban Lal Saksena worked quite a lot in this connection. There was a compromise and the dismissed workers were re-employed, and the strike was called off. The labourers later complained that the mill-owners had gone back on their promises, and their demands were not met. I also told you last time at Padrauna, that this attitude was unbecoming of mill-owners. Making promises and not fulfilling them is a great injustice. Shibban Lal Saksena was in Gorakhpur jail with me. There were some cultivators also there. I was kept separate from them. Shibban Lal Saksena had resorted to hunger-strike for the reinstatement of the dismissed officials. But this demand has yet to be fulfilled. You should support the mill workers in their demands, for only when you support them, they will in turn support you. It is the duty of both of you to support each other.

What is happening in the world today? I shall tell you something about it. The war is in progress. Several great countries have been ruined. It has now reached near the gates of our country. China and Russia are inolved in this war. We sympathise with the Russians because they have a people's government. But we can only sympathise with them, we cannot help them. Our first duty is to sympathise with the cause of the proletariat of our country and then with those of others. We want Swaraj in the whole world, and it is the people who should be benefited by it. We harbour no ill will against anybody. We do not want to rule over other countries. We want Panchayati Raj in our country. Our struggle shall continue till we get Swaraj. Our sympathies are on the side of freedom, yet how can we fight for those who deny us Swaraj?

A year and a half ago a satyagraha was started and many people were arrested but the attitude of the British Government did not change. Instead, its attitude became worse. The conditions in your district are far from satisfactory. When I was in jail here, I got acquainted with your problems by reading local newspapers. This only shows how incompetent and foolish the British officials have become. They do not know how to take action. By arresting a few people they think that a movement can be arrested. I was sentenced for four years. Previously I was never sentenced for more than two years. Possibly, I have become a great man and that is why they decided to award a longer imprisonment. I do not care whether they sentence me for four or forty years. In a way it was good that I was awarded four years' imprisonment. It

had a good effect on our people, and even those outside India came to know the truth. They realised the repressive nature of the policy of the British Government towards the Indians, of awarding four years' imprisonment for delivering a speech. The British officials and the government have lost their capacity to act with wisdom. They act foolishly, and take wrong steps. One is bewildered on seeing such officials committing blunders.

We do not want Germany to win. Our sympathy is not with it. We want the British and the Allies to be free. But we cannot cooperate with the British Government as goats and sheep. Shall we then sit idle? Calcutta may be bombed. Bombs may not fall in your district, yet preparations at a large scale are being made here. We are asked to dig trenches near our houses. This talk in itself is useless. What can one do by getting into a hole like a rat?

Prices are shooting up. The number of trains has decreased and goods therefore cannot be transported. People were discouraged even from attending the *Kumbh Mela*. Since you cannot depend on commodities coming from outside, you should make your own arrangements for food, water and clothing. You should cultivate wheat, you cannot eat sugar-cane. Cloth also may not be available from outside. You have to make arrangements for this. Take up charkha and do spinning. Be self-sufficient.

War is the topic of the day. Do not get frightened or panicky. Aeroplanes may destroy your cloth and sugar mills at Gorakhpur, Bombay and Calcutta. But if you organise self-sufficient units you will be able to carry on your daily life. You have to be self-sufficient or else you will have to remain naked and starve. As long as factories can be run, you should help in their running, but at the same time prepare yourselves for any eventuality.

Do not get panicky. People in Calcutta may get panicky but you need not. What big palaces do you possess which will fall? People in villages have less to fear from bombing. Also, they live scattered and are not concentrated at one place. Even if you suffer some loss, you should not get worried.

All villages should form organisations. Congress work should be carried out in each village. Villages should inform their district committees of their problems. There should be volunteers in all the villages. They may not wear uniforms. They should stop rumours from spreading and should be ready to help all in times of need.

We should be united in our endeavour and avoid quarrels. There should be communal unity. The problem today is not only for Hindus but also for Muslims. It concerns all of us. We have to strengthen

our organisation. We do not possess arms and guns to stop the invader, but by noncooperation and nonviolence we can make it impossible for him to settle down here.

British imperialism is ending. Its last days have come. Yet, I sympathise with the Englishmen. They are in trouble these days and are being subjected to great calamities.

A revolution is spreading in the whole world. You shout *inquilab zindabad* without understanding its meaning. Revolution means complete change. The British rule is nearing its end before our eyes. But our work does not end with the liquidation of the British Empire. We do not want some old raja-maharaja to rule over us again. Nor do we want any other foreign rule. We want people's government to be established. I want you to remain calm, organise yourselves and be strong enough to stop the enemy. The question before you is not only this, whether you will receive eight annas or not. In the present circumstances it cannot be said where will be the payer and the payee.

I have talked a lot. Kamalapatiji[2] will tell you about other matters. This meeting will continue tomorrow. You should understand all the problems and weigh them carefully. Read all the handbills issued by the Gorakhpur Congress Committee, because it will help you in your work and organisation. You cannot sit idle. Organise yourselves. I hope the next time I visit you, by that time, we will attain Swaraj.

2. Kamalapati Tripathi (b. 1905); politician and journalist, editor of the daily *Aj*, 1932-46; editor, *Sansar*, 1946-52; Chancellor, Kashi Vidyapith since 1959; member, Constituent Assembly, 1947-50; Minister for Irrigation and Information, Home, Education in U.P., 1957-60, and for Finance, 1954-64; Chief Minister, U.P. 1971-73; Union Minister for Shipping and Transport, 1973-75; Union Minister for Railways, 1975-77; Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha since March, 1977.

7. The Task of Engineers[1]

The world is in the grip of war and vast revolutionary changes hover in the air. No one can say with assurance what the future will unfold. Yet one thing is certain. We have to build the structure of our state and our society anew, and we have to build this on scientific, planned lines if it is to endure. The approach of science is essential as well as

1. Message for the Banaras Hindu University Engineering College Souvenir Volume, Gorakhpur, 31 January 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

specialist and technical knowledge. Engineers will inevitably have to play a very important part in this building up. We have seen how vast numbers of engineers have helped in the construction of the new state in Soviet Russia. Thus we in India have to look to our future engineers to fulfil a vital part of our national programme. I send my good wishes to the Engineering College of the Banaras Hindu University and to those who after completing their course there are going out into the wider field of activity. I trust that they have not considered their studies merely as a preparation for a gainful profession but rather as an avenue of national service. If they keep this ideal of national service before them and the building up of a new India out of the debris that surrounds us today, their education has been worth while. We have enormous problems before us and crises and possibly much suffering. If we keep our ideal in view and pursue it unflinchingly, we shall succeed. Let us, therefore, hold fast to our anchor and be ready for all the trials that may come.

8. Rejoinder on the Automobile Industry[1]

The Commerce Department of the Government of India have issued a *communique*[2] in answer to an interview I gave some weeks ago. Various interesting facts are given in this answer which have little bearing on what I said. No one said or thought that the Eastern Group Supply Council purchased raw materials from India. The criticism made was that this Council was far more interested in developing big industries in Australia and elsewhere than in India. As for the motor-car industry I do not know what the government's laboured explanation means or explains. For my part I do not object to any steps being taken to send material from or *via* India to Russia or the Middle East. My point was that even the setting up of a new American assembly plant in Sind for motor-cars knocked the bottom out of many of the arguments advanced against the development of an Indian motor-car industry. Is it doubted or challenged that any government in India

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 3 February 1942. *The Hindu*, 4 February 1942.
2. The *communique* issued on 30 January 1942 stated that the Eastern Group Supply Council did not purchase raw materials from India or arrange their supply from India, and the consent of the Government of India for the establishment of an automobile industry was not required. It also denied that any commercial automobile plant was being set up in Sind.

pretending to protect and advance national interests would have long ago encouraged and helped in setting up this industry? The arguments advanced against it have been repeatedly shown to be completely without foundation. Recent developments in the war situation go to show how, even from the point of view of war requirements, it was necessary to develop such industries in India and not to rely on other countries. What vested interests and prejudices come in the way I cannot say but it is clear that extraneous considerations have overridden not only the good of India but even the long-range demands of the War. My information was that certain important automobile interests in America disapproved of the development of an Indian automobile industry. It is true that the Indian contract was made with an American firm but there is such a thing as rivalry between different American concerns dealing in automobiles. In any event, whoever was responsible, some interests have come in our way and have been backed by the Government of India.

9. The Kisan Sabhas and the Congress[1]

The last meeting of the Council of the U.P.P.C.C. passed a resolution in regard to the activities of the Kisan Sabhas and other organizations in the province.[2] I am told that this resolution has led to some misapprehension. The main purpose of the resolution was to draw the pointed attention of Congressmen in the province to the dominant and major issue before the country and to call upon them to devote themselves to the activities suggested by the Council. In a crisis minor issues must take second place and there must be concentration of effort.

It was not suggested by the Council that the Kisan Sabhas should be wound up. They fulfil an essential function, just as trade unions of industrial workers, and occasions may arise when they have to voice the economic demands of the kisans. There is this difference however: Congress committees in the districts and rural areas also function primarily as kisan sabhas and voice kisan demands. Wherever possible, this should be done through the Congress committee.

1. 24 February 1942. *National Herald*, 25 February 1942.
2. In the resolution passed on 4 February 1942, it was stated that in order to avoid diversion and wastage of energy, and conflicting interpretations of Congress policy, all responsible Congressmen should function through the Congress platform and not through other organisations. In particular, this policy should be followed in regard to the kisans who formed the backbone of the Congress organisation in the province and whose interest must be considered paramount by the Congress.

But the crux of the matter is that under present circumstances when the country is face to face with grave dangers, the usual economic demands become relatively unimportant for the time being. The real question is how to face this situation. The Congress has suggested that we must organise self-protection, self-sufficiency in regard to food and clothing and other necessaries, and take other steps which I need not refer to here. To forget these primary issues is to lose oneself in unreality. We must remember that we are already in the midst of a mighty revolution and the old methods of work no longer apply. The real test is: how far have Congressmen in any district succeeded in carrying out the detailed directions of the Council in regard to organization, etc. If they have succeeded in this then they have served the cause of the kisans well. If not, then all their conferences and demonstrations are wasted effort, and perhaps even worse, for they divert attention from the main issue. We have little time left to talk or pass resolutions; we have to work and work hard and continuously if we are not going to be overwhelmed by events. Every Congressman must realise this fully.

It appears that the Kisan Sabha has split up into two factions.[3] This is a strange time to choose for ideological or other conflicts and those who bring about these splits surely do not serve the cause of the kisans whatever else they might do. One of these factions has declared itself entirely against the present policy of the Congress in regard to the War and is endeavouring to carry on propaganda in this behalf. It is of course open to them to do so. But it is not open to any Congressman to associate himself with any organization, kisan or student or any other, which openly and deliberately flouts vital decisions of the Congress and runs down the Congress. Every individual must decide for himself whether he wants to remain in the Congress and function through it or whether he wants to function through an organization opposed to the Congress. He cannot have it both ways. At any time this would be undesirable. At a time of grave crisis, it is intolerable.

That part of the Kisan Sabha which is in agreement with and supports the general policy of the Congress has no such difficulty to face. But, even so, it must not fritter away national energy by organizing conferences and demonstrations unless there is an urgent call for this on some important issue affecting the kisans, as, for instance, the sugar

3. The All India Kisan Sabha, dominated by the Communist group, at Nagpur, on 13 February 1942, passed a resolution urging upon the kisans to align themselves on the side of the Allied powers in "waging a relentless war for the final extermination of fascism." The U.P. Congressmen in the organisation opposed

situation and the plight of the cane-growers. Ordinarily no kisan conferences should be held and Congressmen should function in the name of and in the platform of the Congress. Those that have already been announced and for which arrangements have been made may, however, be held.

The real point to remember is that the kind of work demanded from Congressmen today is the hard and solid work outlined by the Council in their instructions.[4] To have conferences is to escape from the real work and to engage oneself in trivial and flashy activity which has little relation to present-day facts. To invite people from other districts to them is to waste the precious time of good workers.

I do not say that conferences should not be held. Sometimes they are useful, more especially when they are workers' conferences. But whenever they are held, they must be under Congress auspices and to consider the actual work to be done—not to pass high-sounding resolutions about other matters.

This is a time of testing for all of us. Let us prove worthy, for only thus can we render true service to our people.

May I add that I am totally unable, for the reasons given above, to accept any invitations to attend conferences. I may, when the opportunity comes to me, visit certain districts. But these visits will have nothing to do with conferences.

4. See *ante*, p. 97.

10. Kisans Should Follow the Congress[1]

The Kisan Sabhas have performed a useful purpose in the past and will no doubt serve the kisans in the future also but at the present moment the wider issues before the country overshadow all else and even the smaller demands of the kisans have to take a second place in order to meet the present situation. The only correct way to function is through our national organisation, the Congress. The Kisan Sabhas should

1. Speech at the Provincial Kisan Conference, Pratapganj, District Jaunpur, 28 February 1942. From *National Herald*, 5 March 1942.

continue to protect kisans' interests but the main approach should be through the Congress platform.

I have heard that the Kisan Sabha has been split up into two parties, and one of these has repudiated the Congress policy in regard to the War and is criticizing the Congress. With this organisation I have nothing in common and all such organisations, whether of the kisans or of the students, as are opposing the Congress in regard to vital matters of policy will have to be opposed by the Congress. On this issue there can be no compromise.

I would like to remind those present here that this is no time for a separate platform and voicing petty grievances or passing long, critical resolutions as you have been doing in the past. You should give up all petty bickerings, and party rivalries and cooperate in the common task.

You must realise that a great revolution is taking place all over the world. War is raging not far from India. It might come to India itself but there is no reason for people to get panicky and excited, but you should be ready to organise yourselves to face any consequences. The fight for Swaraj must continue in some form or the other. But that does not mean that we are going to submit to any other aggressor or invader. You should carry on your struggle against every country that seeks to dominate India for its own objective.

11. The New World Order[1]

The new order must be based on a recognition of political and economic freedom of all nations subject only to world adjustments mutually agreed upon for the common good. Every form of domination or exploitation by one people of another must be eliminated.

Full racial equality should be recognised. International and national planning of production, transport, distribution, raising of material and cultural world standards especially of economically backward nations are necessary. Production must be for consumption, not for profit. Private monopolies and special privileges should be ended.

1. Message to the Progressive Group, Bombay, on the occasion of a lecture on "Jawaharlal Nehru's conception of a New World Order" organised by the Group on 10 March 1942. *Free Press Journal*, 12 March 1942.

12. To the Editor, "Hindusthan Standard"[1]

Sir,

In your issue of the 29th May you have commented in your leading article on a certain statement I am reported to have made in Lahore.[2] Your comment is perfectly justified but the report of my address in Lahore was a remarkable collection of errors and misstatements.[3] I referred there to an attempt by Mr. Walchand Hirachand to start an aeroplane factory in India and not to ship-building. Of course he is also interested in ship-building. The facts about this incident as given are incorrect, although the moral you draw is correct.

It is also incorrect to say that the National Planning Committee had made any plans for starting certain big industries which government opposed. The National Planning Committee was engaged in drawing up a plan and scheme for the development of industry and agriculture, etc. in India. It was not the function of the National Planning Committee to start industries as such. It considered, among other things, the well-known proposal to start an automobile industry in India which it favoured.

The three big industries which might well have been started in India but for government opposition are: ship-building, automobile and aeroplane manufacture. Something in a small way has been done in recent months in regard to ship-building and aeroplanes. But this is just a tiny fraction of what could have been done. As for automobiles, so far as I know, government opposition continues.

Yours etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Lucknow, 31 May 1942. *The Hindusthan Standard*, 3 June 1942.
2. The reference is to Jawaharlal's press conference on 22 May 1942. See *ante*, pp. 325–330.
3. The report quoted Jawaharlal as saying that the Government of India worked to the detriment of Indian industrial interests as was evident from the treatment meted out to Walchand Hirachand who wanted to start a ship-building industry. The Commerce Member of the Government of India had told Walchand Hirachand not to concern himself about the ship-building industry in India when they could get ships from the U.S.A.

13. British Economic Policy In India[1]

Much has been said of the New Delhi which is to come into effect after the War. Peace aims and war aims remain undefined. In the political world we know what is happening. What is taking place in the economic sphere also is worth studying, as it appears to be a pointer to what is being contemplated to be brought about after the War. One aspect of the post-war world has not been lost sight of by British interests—this is the retention of their foreign markets, especially Indian markets for British goods. The Eastern Group Supply Council, it is well known, took special care not to encourage any industry in India which might come into conflict with British industry after the War. The Government of India, even ignoring the necessities of war, have discouraged the growth of basic Indian industries. The policy appears to be, as a whole, to retain India as an agricultural country producing raw materials.

Much light is thrown on this by Sir Homi Mody in his answers to correspondents when discussing the Grady Report.[2] He repeated the old libel that India was not suited for industrial development on a big scale. This is a surprising statement from an Indian industrialist, but everyone loses his identity in the India Government and becomes an automaton.

I think every person who has studied the question must be convinced that India does not lack anything for rapid industrial development and further that only such development can solve India's problems and raise the standard of living. It is difficult to judge the Grady Report without seeing it in full, but certain hints in it seem to emphasise that the production of raw materials would be the special function of India. Also, we should rather concentrate on repair shops and not on big production plants. With this, I am sure, Indians will not agree. We are not going to accept a colonial agricultural position.

1. Interview to the foreign press, Bombay, 24 June 1942. *The Hindu*, 26 June 1942.
2. On 4 June 1942, Homi Mody welcomed the recommendations of the Grady Mission for substantial increase in the Indian army but he did not agree with their recommendation for the reorganisation of the Government of India for war effort. He also stated that the wholesale rationalisation and regimentation [illegible] prohibiting manufacture of certain goods or the gov[illegible] of industry to suit the [illegible] practicab[illegible]

British policy appears in a lurid light, specially when we consider the operations of the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation in India, which is being patronised and helped by the British Government. This Corporation apparently enjoys a monopoly in the trade in certain commodities. It gets high priorities through the Supply Department and thus controls the export trade from India. Incidentally it makes heavy profit. Thus the control price of sugar in India is round about Rs. 12 per Bengal maund, but the U.K.C.C., which enjoys a monopoly in sugar, buys the Indian sugar and sells it in Iran at Rs. 37 per Bengal maund. This monopoly in trade applies to many other commodities like wheat, oilseeds, oils, lorry tyres, etc. It appears that Indian firms are compelled to deal through this Corporation.[3] Now this is not only a grave scandal, but a menace to India's export trade now and hereafter. It is important that public attention should be drawn to this, because it is significant by itself and is an indication of the kind of post-war world that Britain is aiming at. We can have no truck with this.

The recent Anglo-American Trade Agreement[4] contains many fine phrases, but looking at it from the point of view of India, danger lurks in it. Again there is a tendency to divide the world into an industrial and manufacturing group on the one side and a group of primary raw material producers on the other. Presumably India is in the latter group. Secondly, it appears the U.S.A. seeks concessions from England at the expense of other countries. We know from past experience that India has often to pay and bear the burden whenever it is of advantage to Britain. Public opinion must be alive to all these dangers and it must be made clear that on no account is India going to accept the kind of treatment she got after the last War. How the Lend-Lease provisions are to be applied to India, now, must be clarified and we must know exactly where we stand in regard to it.

3. The Vice-president of the All India Manufacturers Organization complained on 21 June 1942 that the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation was interfering with the legitimate rights of the Indian commercial community.
4. The Agreement, signed in February 1942, stated that the terms and conditions of the repayment of the Lend-Lease supplies "shall be such as not to be a burden on the commerce between the two countries, but to promote mutually advantageous economic relations between them." Further it aimed at "eliminating discrimination in world trade by reducing tariffs and other trade barriers."

14. India's Backwardness[1]

It was about two and a half years ago that I last came to Aligarh and since then events have been moving with electric rapidity. Kaleidoscopic changes have enveloped the whole world and nobody can say with any degree of exactitude what the shape of things to come would be. The Congress, and along with it I myself, had criticized the British Government very bitterly as the first step towards our campaign for the freedom of India; that criticism was primarily meant to serve as an eyeopener for the Indian masses. That stage—the stage of theory, meetings, speeches and slogans—is naturally now over and the Congress, as a result mainly of the problems arising out of the world conflagration, has come to grips with the grim realities of the situation. Our tours and visits have, therefore, been greatly curtailed and the Congress for the past two or three years has been racking its brains and labouring at the very essential question of examining the burning topics of the day affecting the villager, the educated unemployed and the kisan. Unemployment, food, wealth, production and distribution and the removal of real poverty of the Indian people have been engaging the attention of the Congress and a number of sub-committees consisting of specialists in their respective spheres of inquiry have been labouring in order to find out the extent and possibilities of remedying the evils and establishing ways and means whereby our country in spite of its poverty and foreign domination may be able to stand on its own legs economically and industrially. The National Planning Committee has arrived at some conclusion already but the problems cropping up in dealing with points affecting the material well-being of nearly 400 millions of souls inhabiting such a vast subcontinent, are too puzzling to be solved expeditiously.

India grows enough of food but it is the lack of foresight and mishandling of situations by our rulers which is responsible for the present camouflage of the food problem of the masses and the shortage of grain all over the country. The British system of government is too old and antediluvian; it has outlived its usefulness and no good can come out of its continuance. Russia has evolved during the last twenty years an economic and industrial scheme whereby the whole country has been rejuvenated and her production of food, machinery, necessities of life

1. Speech at the Lyall Library, Aligarh, 26 June 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 30. June 1942.

and war material has made giant strides. Americans, who have recently visited India, have wondered at the state of affairs prevailing in such a vast agricultural country whose inhabitants have been kept so miserably underfed where unemployment stares in the face, where incomes are so paltry that an educated young man can be had as a clerk on Rs. 40 per month. Take the recent case of an applicant in the American Government offices at New Delhi who offered himself at Rs. 75 and was asked if it was a weekly salary he demanded. This question was put to him because in those countries salaries are calculated on a weekly basis.

The horrible lack of production in the field of manufactures is deplorable. Whenever any proposals or schemes for manufacturing motor-cars, ships or aeroplanes in this country are put forward, the British Government turn them down with some excuse or other and thus India has been industrially kept a stunt. This industrial starvation has not only resulted in the depressing condition and growing state of poverty in India but has also proved a huge error in so far as the present need for arms and armaments, industrial output of military necessities and modern means of transport are concerned. If our government had foreseen the wisdom of establishing these basic industries in India, she would have a valuable arsenal for the military needs of the Allied nations and stood shoulder to shoulder with them in resisting and wiping out Hitlerism and sweeping the Pacific clear of the Japanese menace. British policy in India, during the last 150 years, has been one of cold inattention and ruthless disregard to propagation of industrial production. India's thirst for expansion of her output may be undertaken on the lines of China where cottage industries were revived which besides being considerably immune from the effects of aerial bombing provided bread to the villager and were spread over the whole country. This was a fitting reply to imperialist and industrial Japan given by a less industrial and poverty-stricken China who has been remarkably resisting wanton onslaughts on her freedom continually for the last five years.

The heroism and bold stand taken by China against the Japanese hordes despite her comparatively smaller provision of modern weapons of warfare speak volumes of the valour of her hitherto untrained armies. Freedom is dear to the Chinese more than their life and the spirit of sacrifice that they have shown has won for them the sympathy and admiration of all democratic nations. The fire of patriotism and zeal for the integrity of their country that has been illustrated by them will serve as a beacon light to all subject races and downtrodden countries at the time of the reconstruction of the world which is sure to follow this colossal War.

The brave resistance put up by Russia against Hitler's armies—armies of 50 lakhs of Nazi soldiers were hurled into the Soviet lands like swarms of locusts—bears testimony to the Russian will and determination to save their country by dint of sacrifice hitherto unknown in the annals of modern nations. The self-destruction of the famous Dnieper Dam, built with the unparalleled sacrifice of the teeming millions of Soviet Russia, was an act of great sacrifice and courage. That dam was a monument of which any country could be justly proud. It was the highest example of engineering skill and a product of billions of pounds which provided electric energy to the whole of Southern Russia for building and maintaining her vast industrial factories and agricultural plants.

India, on the contrary, is nowhere in the scale of power-producing units. An American official visiting India said that electrical energy for driving industrial machinery in India was less than 1/10 of what New York alone consumed.

What hope can there be for the establishment of industries in a country like India, so miserably a "back-bencher" and a mere spectator in the race for superiority of might and struggle for existence?

I ardently wish for a federation of the three ancient countries of India, China and Russia, and an alliance of the Asiatic countries for preserving the freedom, peace and harmony of countries east of the Suez.

A programme of cooperative groups in all the towns, villages and *mohallas* should be drawn. These alone will serve as a millennium in warding off the present danger threatening us. Cooperative groups will go a long way in arranging solutions of the food problem of the masses and in protecting their hearths and homes.

Owing to emergency conditions likely to prevail in the country, the government has requisitioned school-buildings in various provinces for lodging the armies or for A.R.P. work. But are the Viceregal houses and bungalows occupied by big officials not being utilized for the purpose?

Aligarh's deficiency in foodgrains and the inconvenience caused to the general public owing to the control of prices are due to the lack of foresight and proper management by the district authorities who are admittedly responsible for the comfort and well-being of the citizens.

15. China Rebuilds For Democracy[1]

In the late summer of 1938, when the fate of Czechoslovakia hung in the balance, I met, at the house of an English friend in London, some people who had recently come from China. They were both Chinese and English, and they told us of the early beginnings of a village cooperative movement to produce goods which China lacked so much and to prevent an influx of Japanese commodities. It was a brave idea, but it was still in its infancy and one could hardly imagine then that it would grow and grow till it made a vital difference to events in China. I was interested in it.

Later, when I was back in India, small pamphlets and folders came to me from time to time from Hong Kong and Chungking telling me of the rapid growth of the Chinese industrial cooperatives. My interest in them grew, not only because of China, but because of our own village industry movement in India. When I went to China in August 1939, I was eager to find out more about the C.I.C. and to visit, if possible, some of their centres of activity. Some more information I gathered in Chungking, but my visit was suddenly cut short by the war in Europe and I hurried back home.

Pamphlets and sometimes articles, chiefly in American magazines, gave further information and as I read these my excitement grew. I referred to 'Indusco' in my speeches and in articles in the newspapers, and many letters came to me asking for further details. I suggested that some of our village industry experts should go to China to study the Chinese cooperatives on the spot, and some C.I.C. experts should be invited to pay a visit to India. But war developments brought new complications in India and all our attention was diverted to these.[2]

I went to prison. In the summer of 1940 a copy of Edgar Snow's new book *Scorched Earth* (named in its original edition in America *The Battle for Asia*) reached me in Dehra Dun Jail. I read it with intense interest but no part of it held me so much as the chapters dealing with the Chinese industrial cooperatives.

Two or three months went by and then a packet brought me a gift from Madame Sun Yat-sen from Hong Kong. To be remembered by her in prison was joy enough for me, but when I opened the packet I

1. Allahabad, 2 July 1942. Foreword to Nym Wales's *China Builds for Democracy* (Allahabad, 1942). Reprinted in *Asia and the Americas* (New York), January 1943.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 552–62.

felt an additional excitement. It contained Nym Wales's *China Builds for Democracy*. Here at last, I thought, was the very book I wanted, which would tell me everything about this fascinating experiment which had already achieved so much and which held so much promise for the future.

When I came out of prison in December last I spoke about this book to many friends and every one wanted to borrow it from me. I am not usually ungenerous with my books but I was loth to part with this particular one because it was a valued gift. But the pressure was too great and it went from hand to hand. Two months ago another copy came to me. This was the American edition of the same book sent by Nym Wales. This also was snatched by others and it has not come back to me yet.

It is obvious that there is a particular demand for this book in India for in many ways we have to face the same problems as in China. One of the problems that India has thought of for many years has been the relation of big industry with village industries. Is there an inherent conflict between them and must one of them survive at the expense of the other? Is there no way of coordinating the two? I am glad therefore that this book is being published in India and I hope it will have many readers. For the experience of China is of inestimable value to us and I am sure we can learn much from it.

I have long held that the industrialization of India is essential in order to increase rapidly our production and our national wealth and thus to raise our standards of living. I do not think that we can solve our poverty problem without industrialization and growth of big industry. I do not think that any non-industrialized country can be economically independent.

And yet I have worked for the spread and growth of village industries, not merely as a matter of political discipline but because I believed in them. Many of my friends have not appreciated this dual urge of mine, and have charged me with a lack of faith in this or that, and with attempting to reconcile the irreconcilable. They have not convinced me and I still hold that in India we must push both big industry and village industries and coordinate the two. I recognise that this cannot be easily done under the present capitalist system. Change that system then. Indeed it is bound to go under the stress of this War and its after-effects, and give place to a planned economy.

Gandhiji has, I think, done a great service to India by his emphasis on village industry. Before he did this, we were all, or nearly all, thinking in a lop-sided way and ignoring not only the human aspect of the question, but the peculiar conditions prevailing in India. India, like

China, has enormous man-power, vast unemployment and under-employment. It is no good comparing it with the tight little countries of Europe which gradually became industrialized with small and growing populations. Any scheme which involves the wastage of our labour power, or which throws people out of employment is bad. From the purely economic point of view, even apart from the human aspect, it may be more profitable to use more labour power and less specialised machinery. It is better to find employment for large numbers of people at a low income level than to keep most of them unemployed. It is possible also that the total wealth produced by a large number of cottage industries might be greater than that of some factories producing the same kind of goods.

The objective aimed at should be maximum production, equitable distribution, and no unemployment. With India's vast population this cannot be achieved by having big industry only, or cottage industry only. The former will certainly result in much greater production of some commodities but the unemployment problem will remain more or less as it is, and it will be difficult to have equitable distribution. It is also likely that our total production will be far below our potential because of the wastage of labour power. With cottage industries only there will be more equitable distribution but the total production will remain at a low level and hence standards will not rise. In the present state of India of course even widespread cottage industry can raise standards considerably above the existing level. Nevertheless they will remain low. There are other factors also which make it almost impossible for any country to depend entirely on cottage industry. No modern nation can exist without certain essential articles which can only be produced by big industry. Not to produce these is to rely on imports from abroad and thus to be subservient to the economy of foreign countries. It means economic bondage and probably also political subjection.

Therefore, it seems essential to have both big industries and cottage industries in India and to plan them in such a way as to avoid conflict. Big industry must be encouraged and developed as rapidly as possible, but the type of industry thus encouraged should be chosen with care. It should be heavy and basic industry which is the foundation of a nation's economic strength and on which other industries can gradually be built up. The development of electric power is the prerequisite for industrial growth. Machine-making, ship-building, chemicals, locomotives, automobiles, etc. should follow. All these, and others like them, are wealth-producing and work-producing industries which do not create unemployment elsewhere. Lighter industries should not be encouraged to begin with, partly because the capital at our disposal is limited and

required for heavy industry, partly because they are likely to come into conflict with cottage industries and thus create unemployment.

Unfortunately industrial growth in this country has largely been confined to the lighter industries. The few attempts that our industrialists made to develop heavy industry were effectively scotched by the British Government. British industrialists, thinking of the brave new world to come, were more anxious to preserve their economic stranglehold in post-war India than to think of winning the War by allowing basic industries to develop in India.

This ordered development of industry in India and coordination between large-scale, medium, and cottage industries, can only be achieved by national planning. There can be no effective planning without political and economic freedom. Nor can there be any planning without a great deal of state control. The basic industries and public utilities and transport services should in any event be owned or fully controlled by the state. The measure of control over others might be less. But it is desirable that any big industry which might come into conflict with a cottage industry encouraged by the state, should be fully controlled by the state. This will avoid conflict and make coordination easy.

The use of electric power has made an enormous difference to industry and it is now possible to decentralise even big industries. This works greatly in favour of small and cottage industries.

All these considerations apply to normal times. War conditions have, however, enormously enhanced the value of small and cottage industries, and it is here especially that the example of China is of great importance to us. It seems to be ideally suited to war conditions and for resistance to an invader. What has amazed me is the extraordinary production ratio of these industrial cooperatives. The monthly production value is stated to be two times greater than capital investment. This may be due to war factors; nevertheless it is astounding.

The democratic basis of these cooperatives, and their development on this basis in this warring world, is full of interest and significance. On this basis political democracy may survive; it is doubtful if it can do so on any other basis.

Neither India nor China is now going to have a normal capitalist industrial development. Yet go ahead industrially we must, or we perish. We shall have to find our own way, to seek our own equilibrium. Possibly the future will lead us and others to a cooperative commonwealth. Possibly the whole world, if it is to rise above its present brute level of periodic wars and human slaughter, will have to organise itself in some such way.

16. To K.T. Shah[1]

Allahabad
July 21, 1942

My dear Shah,
I have received both copies of your letter dated July 14th.[2] Both of them reached me today on my return here.

I quite agree with you in what you say about the dangerous implications of what is happening. I think that every effort should be made to expose the tactics of government and to keep the public informed of them. Some criticisms have appeared in the press but they are hardly enough. Possibly I might say some thing on this subject a little later.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter, Shah drew Jawaharlal's attention to Ramaswamy Mudaliar's distorted statement on automobile industry with definite misstatements of facts. He wanted a public contradiction. He also recalled how Tatas' had signed a contract in steel with a foreign company, which was, in fact a foreign company with India only in brackets. He wanted all this to be exposed immediately.

1. To R. Dalmia[1]

Bardoli
December 21, 1941

Dear Mr. Dalmia,[2]

Your letter of the 15th December has been forwarded to me here. I have read it with regret. I had of course discussed the matter repeatedly with my colleague Shri Mohanlal Saksena as well as with other colleagues before I ventured to write to you. Shri Mohanlal Saksena's account of what happened is somewhat different from yours, and I believe that his point of view has been placed before you on previous occasions. Even apart from this discrepancy it seems to me odd that you, as a businessman, could have expected Shri Mohanlal Saksena to give you an assurance which was not in his power to give. All of us who are connected with the company owning the *National Herald* are bound by our own rules and articles as well as by the provisions of the law relating to companies. No one can give an assurance which is likely to be in contravention of all these articles or the law. So far as I am concerned, I have no desire whatever to press any one to give money for the *National Herald* if he is unwilling to do so. We have been fortunate in receiving assistance repeatedly from friends and sympathisers on whom we had no legal or moral claim of any kind. In regard to the shares issued to your friends on your behalf, we have no alternative but to treat them as shares with all the obligations and liabilities that attach to such shares. If I had realised that you were an unwilling party to this bargain, I would certainly not have pressed you for any payment whatever or asked you or accepted any money you sent. In future I do not propose to trouble you in regard to any matter involving a money payment or donation. It is not my habit to beg for money from anyone or to be beholden to anyone because of a payment of any money. There are other things in my life which I consider more important than money.

I regret that this difference of opinion should have arisen between us over an insignificant sum. You have stated that you consider this a matter of principle. I have also tried to follow certain principles in life and I shall continue in my endeavour to adhere to them. Money has seldom made a difference to my activities and it is not likely to do

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Ram Krishna Dalmia (1893–1978); industrialist and founder of the Dalmia-Jain group of industries.

so in future. What is far more important is the behaviour of individuals, for it is by this that they are judged.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To K. Rama Rao[1]

Allahabad
January 5, 1942

My dear Rama Rao,
I have received your letter of January 3rd together with its four notes dealing with the editorial department of the *Herald*.[2] I have read these notes carefully.

When I was in Lucknow last, I told you that I intended returning and spending two or three days in Lucknow, especially on *Herald* business. It was my intention to interview each member of the editorial staff separately and to form my own opinion and then to discuss the matter with you. I find now that it is difficult for me to find the time to visit Lucknow for this purpose. I have only five days before I go to Wardha. I am leaving Allahabad on the 10th evening for Wardha. My mind is too full of other things for me to be able to visit Lucknow and devote time to the *Herald*. I must therefore postpone this till I return from Wardha, which means the last week of this month.

The notes you have sent me are helpful and give me some background of the present position. I shall try to send you some articles before I go to Wardha. Possibly I might send one with this letter if I have the time to write it.

The situation, especially the internal position in the Congress, is a difficult one and it is not easy to say what developments might take place at Wardha.[3] But the right policy to pursue anyhow is not to emphasize any differences between Gandhiji and the Congress and rather to emphasize the underlying unity. Further to lay stress on the fact that the difference so far revealed does not relate to present action but to a possible future contingency which might not arise. The present course is clear and it is up to all Congressmen to concentrate on

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. The notes related to the editorial staff's bio-data, the work assigned to them and the salaries drawn by them.
3. See *ante*, pp. 74–77.

the work ahead instead of losing themselves in theoretical arguments about an uncertain future. No individual, much less an organisation, can definitely commit itself in regard to an indeterminate future, more especially during the changing times. We can adhere to certain principles and objectives. It is clear, as the Working Committee resolution says, that there is no change in our position or policy in regard to the British Government. It is equally clear that we must organise and strengthen the people to meet any possible development. Whatever variation in policy might take place, and this cannot be as far as we can see any major change, this background of work must continue.

Some such lines should be adopted and, whatever happens at Wardha, it should be adhered to. Further stress should be laid on the fact that it is a little absurd to talk of splits between Gandhiji and others or of Gandhiji leaving the Congress. The Congress and he are too much bound together for any such development to take place even though there might be occasional differences of opinion.

T.N. Singh has written to me about Krishna Menon's cable in which he suggests that the money owing to him should be written off and no further payments of this kind should be budgeted for. Also that he might continue to send us cables of a maximum weekly wordage of twelve hundred words.

Of course now the old account of Krishna Menon should be written off. As regards his cables, I think, as I told you before, that these should be allowed to continue. Many of these cables are not in a form to be published. Of that you should be the judge and you should publish only such parts as may be considered necessary. But it is important that the cables should come and should be communicated in full to me, for they convey information which might be useful. It is difficult to suggest the maximum wordage. I do not quite know what the exact rates for press cables between England and India are, but they are at present lower than they had been.

I suggest that you might cable to him to the effect that you appreciate his suggestion about writing off past dues. Further that he should continue sending cables whenever imperative to do so using minimum number of words necessary, maximum generally not exceeding a thousand words weekly.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To K. Rama Rao[1]

New Delhi
April 2, 1942

Dear Rama Rao,
I have not seen the *Herald* for several days but I have read in other papers extract from the *Herald's* comment on the Cripps's proposals. It appears that the leading article in the *Herald* dealing with the subject had the heading: "Put it in you pipe and smoke it, Cripps."[2]

I was astounded to see this. Of course I could not imagine any newspaper which has claims to dignity and responsibility using such language in its editorial. I presume this was meant to be funny and smart. It was neither. It was highly undignified and verging on vulgarity. This kind of thing brings down the reputation of our paper. I have been greatly put out by it. I do not want the *Herald* to behave at any time in a manner lacking in dignity.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Printed in *National Herald*, 30 March 1942.

4. To Rafi Ahmed Kidwai[1]

Allahabad
April 17, 1942

My dear Rafi,
I enclose copy of a letter I am sending to Rama Rao.[2] I do not yet know all the facts and I am thus unable to express an opinion. Even if I had all the facts before me I would hesitate to say anything because the matter is for you to decide and not for me or the board of directors. I hope that you will deal with it suitably as you will know how to.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 17 April Jawaharlal had expressed his indignation over Chalapathi Rau's resignation who had resigned in protest against the interference in the editorial work by one of the directors. While commenting on the director-editor relationship, Jawaharlal expressed the hope that the issue would be settled after a heart to heart talk between the persons concerned.

But today I have to take up my pen again, for certain events affecting the *Herald* have taken place, and I owe it to our many friends and comrades that I should take them into our confidence.

About two years or more ago the directors considered the possibility of a demand for security being made on the *Herald*. We were not quite decided then as to what we should do. We wanted to continue the *Herald* as long as we possibly could, and yet the idea of furnishing securities to the government went against the grain. I was myself opposed to any submission in this respect by giving securities. When securities were actually demanded, I was in prison and my colleagues, who were out, decided to give them. I was a little doubtful of this decision and yet I felt that the responsibility was theirs and I must accept it. The public of this province generously came to our rescue and the securities were deposited.

Now that these securities have been forfeited and fresh securities are bound to be demanded (I do not know, as I write, what, the new impositions are) the question had to be considered afresh.[2] Fortunately for us, many leading Congressmen came to Lucknow for the meeting of the provincial Congress committee and the directors took counsel with them. They were unanimously of opinion that the *Herald* should be continued, if this was at all possible. We have willingly bowed to their will and decided to furnish additional securities, well knowing the risks that lie in our future path. We have done so also because we have faith in our people and know that they will come to our help in this hour of need.

In doing so, it is not our intention to swerve from the path that we have chosen. Those of us who sponsored the *Herald* four years ago did not do so light-heartedly, nor was it for us a commercial venture. We wanted to serve in this way the cause of India's freedom and, if at any time the *Herald* forgets this or weakens in its resolve, then indeed it dies, though it may continue as a newssheet still. We have no intention of dying in this way. Physical deaths may come to the *Herald*, but, if we can help it, there is going to be no spiritual decay or extinction.

It is easy to criticise the *Herald* and we, who have been connected with it since it began, know well its shortcomings. Very few of our dreams materialise as we would like them to do, very few of our hopes take shape. Yet the *Herald*, we believe, has carried something of those dreams and hopes, and has, in spite of many failings, been a stout soldier in India's cause. Because of this belief, we forget the heartaches

2. See *ante*, p. 335.

that it has so often given us, because of this we go on dreaming of its future.

The *Herald* is associated with us, with me, and many people imagine that it gives expression to my views. As a matter of fact I have not always agreed with it and, living and working as I do, I can hardly keep in touch with it. Yet I know it has been, on the whole, a faithful interpreter of Congress policy and has sought to serve our people during a fateful period of our history. During these critical days it is no easy matter for an editor to shape his way, to be true to his cause and yet to avoid unnecessary risks. In any event he must be true whatever the risk. On behalf of the directors and myself, I should like to express our appreciation of the work of our editor and his staff, and to say that we assume full responsibility for the political line which they took up and which has brought fresh trouble to the *Herald*. I should also like to express our gratitude to those journalists and others, who though differing from us, have condemned the action of the U.P. Government.

The government, I fear, does not like us or our works. Rumour has long whispered in our ears that it is bent on killing the *Herald*. I must confess that we do not like this government and it is one of our chief functions to create conditions in the public mind and elsewhere which will end for ever such governments in India. For today they are intolerable imposition anywhere and especially in India. So there must be conflict between us and the government of the day. Whether it suppresses us or not we do not know. But we do know that we shall survive, and we also know that the moving finger has written the fate that must soon overwhelm the authoritarian and alien regime in India. Even today, in spite of its pomp and circumstance, of its oppressive authority, of its arrests and detentions, of its securities demanded and forfeited, of its arrogance and conceit, it fades away into the shadow of the things that have been. Nemesis overtakes it. Frightened of ghosts and phantoms, it fails to see the reality that faces it and itself becomes increasingly ghostlike. Wit and wisdom left it long ago, competence and efficiency have passed it by. The cause of empire is dragging it to its inevitable end.

We shall survive, and this Empire and this government will go. But there will be much to do for us and for the *Herald* in the months and years to come. And so we make appeal to our friends and comrades, wherever they may be, to come to our help immediately and send us big sums and small, so that they and we might tide over this new difficulty.

6. The Shape of Things to Come[1]

We live in extraordinary times of crisis and tension when everyday brings a surfeit of news good and bad, usually bad. All sense of continuity has gone from our lives and we sit on the edge of the volcano of change. What that change is going to be, few even among the prophets can say. Inevitably our attention is absorbed in the tragic drama of the moment and in the pressing problems that surround us and threaten to overwhelm us.

Nevertheless it is not enough for us to lose ourselves in the present and not to think of the future. That future, after all, will take its shape out of this present. It may be that this future is beyond our control, for vast elemental forces are at work and human beings, however big they may appear to be in the contemporary scene, are but playthings in the hands of those elemental forces which are shaping the world. Still it is obvious that that future will be shaped by human beings for human beings. It becomes important therefore that, whatever the burdens we may have to carry in the present, we may not forget that future. If we are to play a worthy and an effective part in that future, we have to prepare our minds from today. Any such preparation will of necessity be incomplete and liable to change, so that we may fit in with a changing environment. There must be very few indeed the world over who can doubt that we are seeing today the end of the world, politically, economically and socially speaking, as we have known it. An English author, Gerald Heard,[2] has divided up world history into two periods: from the earliest times to 1939, and 1939 onwards. We are not sure of the exact date of division that he has given, but so far as we remember it was 1939. This division was meant to bring out dramatically the fact that an epoch has closed and we are struggling on the threshold of a new epoch.

It is difficult for most of us who live at this crisis of world history to appreciate the full significance of events as they happen all around us. We think too much in terms of a dead past, just as the British Government is blind enough to continue to think in terms of a dying empire. And because we think so, we cannot solve our problems nor open the

1. Wardha, 6 July 1942. Unsigned editorial written for *National Herald*. We are giving here the version available in J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (1889–1971); his works include *The Social Substance of Religion*, *The Emergence of Man*, *The Source of Civilization*, *Is God Evident?*, *The Human Venture*, *The Five Ages of Man*, and *These Hurrying Years*.

door of the future. It is not the old and rusty key of the past that we have known that will open this lock. So we argue and talk about things which have little meaning in terms of the future—Pakistan, Dominion Status, Indian states, and so on and so forth. The most revolutionary-minded among our people behave as if revolution consisted of big slogans, or possibly violence. They have become, in spite of their phrases and slogans and the old type activities, the true conservatives of the present age, who refuse to change though the world about them changes. It is extraordinary how slow the human mind is to adapt itself to changing conditions. These objective conditions are always far ahead of the human mind, except in the case of a few choice spirits who can see with clear vision into the present and into the future.

For a supreme example of this lag of the human mind we must go today to the British Government. There is nothing so amazing as the way this government and the people who support it continue to function in terms of some generations ago. Their agents in the Government of India even excel their superiors, living in turmoil and yet almost unaware of the tumult of life, they talk of Empire when that Empire has tottered all about them. It is only when the full realisation of this fact comes to the British Government that they will make themselves fit to carry on this War as it should be carried on. Till then they will remain in a morass, helplessly trying to extricate themselves from the reality of the present which they have so far refused to understand.

But it is not good enough for us to criticise others. We must look deep into ourselves. We live in many ways in a world of unreality and spend our time and energy over trifling happenings, forgetting the reality behind it all. That reality is the future that is slowly and inevitably taking shape in the present. That shape is vague and amorphous and appears to be ever changing. Nevertheless it is taking shape and it may be possible for us to control to some extent that development. In any event a vital and living nation cannot allow itself to be a passive plaything of fate. Therefore, while we are engaged in the present, we must also think of the future, what it is likely to be, what we would like it to be, what we must try to make it.

With this object in view we have invited an eminent publicist and economist[3] to write a series of articles for the *National Herald*. The writer, though well known, has preferred to write under a *nom de plume*,[4] because he wants people to consider what he has written on its own merits. We hope to publish these articles twice a week in the *Herald*

3. K.T. Shah.
4. These articles were, however, not printed in the *National Herald*.

and we invite the special attention of our readers to them. We would further invite our readers to send us their criticisms and their own ideas on the subject dealt with in these articles.

We hope thus to turn public attention, to some extent at least, even in the present with its inexorable demands on us, to the vital issues before this country and the world.

11

CIVIL LIBERTIES

1. Detention Without Trial[1]

Mighty events shake the world and their repercussions reach India. But whatever may happen to the world or to India our old problems pursue us and those in authority in India continue to function in their own limited and perverted ways. One of these problems which is a source of continued irritation to the public is that of the detention without trial of a large number of individuals. In many instances it is difficult even to guess the reason for such detention. In other cases the apparent cause has ceased to exist and the reason for detention no longer applies. But however all this might be our young men continue to remain in prison. Possibly civil liberties have to be limited to some extent in war time, but any limitations by a foreign government can never be accepted, for its outlook is foreign and its motives always suspect. Even apart from this, there are larger considerations which should have gone to demonstrate the unwisdom of this policy of keeping large numbers of young men indefinitely in prison. The ostensible purpose for doing so is itself defeated by this act.

I welcome the conference that the Punjab Civil Liberties Union has organised[2] to draw particular attention to the subject. In the Punjab, even more than in the rest of India, strange things happen and we have seen or read about some of these very strange happenings even in recent days. I think it is essential for us to keep these detenus and political prisoners in mind and to demand their release or, at any rate, the trial of the detenus in courts of law. Many of them have already spent years in prison and we have been helpless spectators of their long continued incarceration. I trust that the day is not distant when they will emerge from prison and see the end of that system which has sought for these long years to suppress them in every way.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 5 March 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 9 March 1942.
2. The All India Civil Liberties Conference called by the Punjab Civil Liberties Union was held on 8 March 1942 under the presidentship of N.M. Joshi. The conference in its resolution demanded immediate release of all prisoners detained on account of their political views without trial.

2. The Suspension of Newspapers[1]

The order of the Bengal Government prohibiting the publication of the *Yugantar*[2] and the suspension of other newspapers by the respective provincial governments[3] seem to me monstrous and even from the military point of view undesirable.

I should personally imagine that these orders will greatly help the Japanese Government and give them more information about the state of affairs in India than any petty item that might have appeared in the press. I do not know about the military significance of any particular news item published so far but as far as I know Calcutta papers have toed the line of the Press Censor.

I am sure that names of certain places are omitted by the Calcutta press but even if they had been mentioned, you could call it at the most an error.

The position in India has become increasingly grave because of the British Government functioning on two fronts—against the Axis powers and to some extent against the Indian people. If this is the idea of the Viceroy's National War Front—it is not our notion—and this sort of dealing with the press and individuals continues, I do not know what is going to happen. I can say with certainty that a campaign is being carried on by the government against the Indian people. This is a curious way of raising popular enthusiasm for the War. Obviously the mentality of the government differs greatly with our mentality and it is not surprising that even a person like Sir Stafford Cripps should be so far removed from us in ideas. It is a [illegible] hat this should be so, for world events and coming perils sh[illegible] ve been enough to teach them many a lesson but [illegible] the learning stage.

3. The Punjab Order on the Pratap[1]

Two and a half weeks ago, as I was returning from my Assam tour, I learned of the suppression by various provincial governments of three well-known newspapers: the *Yugantar* of Calcutta, *The Bombay Sentinel* and the *Pratap* of Lahore. Soon after, the order against the *Yugantar* was withdrawn, and I understand that the *Sentinel* is also coming out now. But the order against the *Pratap* continues.

During my present visit to Lahore I have had occasion to see this order against the *Pratap*. This is a remarkable document for anyone who knows anything about the working of newspapers. It enjoins pre-censorship of every matter, including headlines, connected with the War, the international situation, internal security or civil defence measures in India or any other matter relating to the measures for the prosecution of the War taken by the government. The censorship is to take place during office hours on working days only by the Special Press Adviser.

This is a very remarkable order and only the clogged and panicky brain of the Punjab Government could have devised it. It is obvious to even a tyro in journalism that no daily newspaper can possibly be published under these conditions and restrictions. Further, no intelligent reader wants to read what the Special Press Adviser wishes to impose upon him. It is added that no reference of any kind must be made in the paper that any news, article, photograph or drawing will be or has been submitted for examination to the Special Press Adviser or has been withheld or in any way curtailed, altered or modified by him. Evidently, the Press Adviser is a shy and retiring individual and wants to hide his shining light under a bushel. He wants all the credit for his work to go to the editor.

The editor and publisher have very rightly refused to issue the paper subject to the conditions. There was no other honourable and sensible course open to them. To accept such conditions is to dishonour the profession of journalism and befool and betray the public.

We have got bored and tired with the incompetence in every respect of our provincial and Central Governments. It is trying to be ruled by persons who do not even possess a minimum of intelligence and efficiency. And yet the monstrosity of this order amazes one. I am told that the Standing Committee of the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference, that very sedate and respectable body, sent a journalist to

1. Statement to the press, Lahore, 12 May 1942. *The Hindu*, 14 May 1942.

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1. Interview to the press, Calcutta, 25 April 1942. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26 April 1942.
2. On 21 April 1942, the Government of Bengal, under the Defence of India Rules, directed the *Yugantar*, a Bengali daily of Calcutta, to suspend further publication.
3. On 22 April 1942, the Bombay Gov[illegible] ordered suspension of the publication of *The Bombay Sentinel* for [illegible] nd on the same day the Punjab Government served an order on th[illegible] Urdu daily, to submit to the Special Press Adviser, for scrutin[illegible] all matter, including headlines.

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1. Statement to the press, Lahore, 12 May 1942. *The Hindu*, 14 May 1942.

the Punjab Government asking for a withdrawal of the order. They met with a refusal and a demand that the *Pratap* should support government policy.

It does not, I suppose, strike the Punjab Government that they have thus insulted not only the entire press in India but also the public. Do they expect newspapers to be a gramophone for the public performances of the Press Adviser, or apologists for all the incompetence and inefficiency which have become the hall-mark of our provincial and Central Governments? This is an intolerable situation.

4. Reply to Sikandar Hayat Khan[1]

I owe it to the Punjab Premier and to myself to issue a rejoinder to the remarks he has made in answer to my statement about the *Pratap* case.[2] The Premier has stated that what I have said, bristles with misstatements of the fact, and further that it is a malicious untruth to say that he (the Premier) suggested to the emissary of the press committee that the *Pratap* should support the policy of the Punjab Government.

It would have been more helpful if the Premier had pointed out exactly what the misstatements were. He has not attempted to do so except in regard to the suggestion made to the emissary of the press committee. The principal fact I was concerned with was the order served on the *Pratap*. This is, I believe, public property and each person can judge for himself whether my criticism was justified or not. The Central Committee of the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference, which consists of both Indian and English editors, unanimously condemned this order.[3] *The Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore which cannot be charged with any bias for Indian nationalism or freedom calls it obnoxious. I shall be glad to know from the Premier if he thinks that it is possible to issue any daily newspaper in the terms of his government's order.

1. Statement to the press, Manali-Kulu, 17 May 1942. *The Tribune*, 19 May 1942.
2. On 13 May 1942, Sikandar Hayat Khan had issued a rejoinder to Jawaharlal's statement.
3. The Standing Committee of the All India Newspapers Editors' Conference condemned the order at its meeting held on 6-8 May 1942 as provocative and added "that such disproportionate and drastic action can only result in the alienation of the sympathy and goodwill of the press."

I shall further be grateful to him if he will enlighten me about the misstatements which according to him abound in my previous statement. The Premier has specifically denied having asked for an assurance that the *Pratap* should support the policy of the government. I am glad to have his denial but unfortunately others besides me were labouring under the same delusion.

I received my first information on this subject in Delhi and this was derived from a telegram received from Lahore by the President[4] of the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference after the interview with the Premier. When I came to Lahore this was confirmed in the course of a letter conveying the result of the interview with the Premier. An eminent English editor wrote to the publisher of the *Pratap* as follows: 'He, the Premier, declared himself willing to rescind the order against the *Pratap* only on an assurance from the *Pratap* undertaking to fall in line with the Punjab Government and public opinion in the province regarding the war.' My own necessarily limited knowledge of a foreign language prevented me from appreciating the essential difference between supporting the government policy and falling in line with the Punjab Government but I should have hoped that in any event this linguistic difference did not proceed from malice.

The Premier has reminded me of my failings and of how unworthy I am to be the son of my father. I appreciate his gentle admonishing realising fully as I do that I err frequently and in many ways but I have the satisfaction at least to be conceited and arrogant in a right cause. Inefficiency and incompetence in high places irritate me and it is notorious that New Delhi has become their chosen abode. The Punjab Government walks more and more in the long shadow of the Imperial Capital. In my previous statement I made no reference to the Punjab Premier or to any other individual. I referred to that impersonal thing known as government. I did not even know what part the Premier had played in this matter nor did I accuse him personally of anything. If the Premier wishes to assume full responsibility for the order on the *Pratap* and subsequent occurrences connected with it, I have no desire to deprive him of that honour.

4. Kasturi Srinivasan (1887-1959); Editor, *The Hindu*, 1934-59; President, All India Newspaper Editors' Conference, 1940-44.

5. Continuance of the Order on the Pratap[1]

On my return to Lahore today I have seen the second statement issued by the Punjab Premier about the *Pratap* case.[2] Perhaps it is more correct to say that the statement is about me, as, unfortunately, I figure more in this connection than the *Pratap*. I have no desire to discuss so personal a matter, as the subject is a distasteful one to me, and, in any event, I can hardly look upon myself objectively. For all the good advice that the Premier has, quite unsolicited, given to me I am duly grateful and I hope that I shall profit by it. It will be my misfortune if I cannot live up to the high standard that is required of those who may have to deal, directly or indirectly, with the Punjab Government's activities.

But it does not really matter what I am, for individuals should not count in a discussion of a public issue. Even the *Pratap*, as such, has only secondary importance. The real issue was and is how a government should treat the press. Was the order passed on the *Pratap* a proper order, and is its continuance justified?

The Premier stated previously that my first statement bristled with misstatements, and, in particular, one remark was a malicious falsehood. I have carefully considered his list of such misstatements and falsehoods. As far as I can make out, there are two mentioned by him. The first is my statement that the request made on behalf of the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference was rejected by him. This, the Premier says, is incorrect because he sent a long telegram[3] to Mr. K. Srinivasan. May I inquire whether it is not a fact that the request was refused, and the refusal persists even now? The sending of a telegram or any negotiations that might have taken place in between do not make the slightest difference to the final fact of refusal. The fact that the order against the *Pratap* still continues is itself final evidence of that refusal. I must

1. Statement to the press, Lahore, 21 May 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 22 May 1942.
2. In a press statement issued on 20 May 1942, Sikandar Hayat Khan asserted that Jawaharlal was misinformed by interested and biased partisans.
3. In his telegram Sikandar Hayat Khan explained the position of the Punjab Government and held that his government was forced to take that step and that every reasonable effort would be made to mitigate the rigour of pre-censorship.

confess that I have failed to discover anything even remotely resembling a misstatement in what I said. It is true that I did not refer to certain correspondence or negotiations. They made no difference to my final conclusion.

The second misstatement, which is also in addition said to be a malicious falsehood, is my remark that the government demanded of the *Pratap* that it should support the government's policy. What the government actually did was to ask the *Pratap* to fall in line with the government's policy in regard to the War. I appreciate the difference, but I am amazed that the Premier should not realise that policy in regard to the War covers almost every conceivable thing that is important today. In war time there is no essential difference left between a government's general policy and its policy in regard to the War. The latter governs, or should govern, if a war is properly conducted, everything. Certainly, I was not thinking of the price of potatoes or any such matters when I wrote my first statement. I was thinking definitely of war policy and all its far-reaching consequences. It covers a multitude of errors and absurdities; it is the parent of the Defence of India Act and its ugly progeny the Defence of India Rules; it leads to internments without trial; to enforced war contributions; to exorbitant salaries and allowances to officials; and to a hundred and one other unsavoury consequences.

If this is a malicious falsehood and this is the list of misstatements which are said to have abounded in my statements, it is obvious that the Premier's standards of public criticism and his choice of language are very different from mine.

But the real question still remains. Was the order on the *Pratap* justified? I repeat that it was a fantastic order, impossible to obey. This has nothing to do with what the Premier thinks of the *Pratap*. Every journalist and, I venture to say, every reasonable and responsible person considers the order and its continuation obnoxious. Why not deal with this matter directly instead of dealing with personalities?

6. To Shaukat Usmani[1]

Allahabad
June 12, 1942

Dear Shaukat Usmani,[2]
I received your letter[3] some time ago. Since then of course much has happened and I believe some detenus have been discharged because of their sympathy with the Russian cause. If that rule is applied, there is no reason why you should not be discharged. I do not know what you have done in the matter. If you so wish it, you can write to government direct on the subject. I do not think the question of parole arises, though perhaps you know better. I am sorry I cannot help you, but you will realise that as I am in conflict with the government, my advice to them is of little value. In any event I hope that you will keep a stout heart. World conditions are changing rapidly and no one knows what will happen.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (1901-1978); member of the Communist Party; one of the main accused in the Kanpur and Meerut Communist Conspiracy Cases; author of several books in Urdu and English, including *Peshwar to Moscow* and *Historic Trips of a Revolutionary*.
3. In his circular letter addressed to some top leaders of India, Usmani informed them of his notice to the British Government that he would undertake a fast if he was not allowed on parole to go and fight for the Soviet Union.

7. Internments and Externments[1]

We have long been used to internments and externments. But now we have a new version of them, far-reaching enough in its consequences. I am told that every person holding a motor driving license has been served with an order to hold himself in readiness to serve as a driver for the military or civil authorities. Further that he must not go out of his particular area without special permission. This order has been served on professional drivers as well as on owner drivers.

I am not personally affected by it as I have not possessed a motor-car for the last ten years or so, when my car was seized by the police. Nor

1. Article written by Jawaharlal for *National Herald* on 30 June 1942.

have I renewed since then my licence for driving. But many of my friends are affected and so are large numbers of others.

This is conscription as well as a kind of internment. It is hardly possible for business or professional people to submit to it without grave dislocation of their work. During war this has to be endured in many ways, and certainly no car owner or driver can refuse his service to save human life or relieve suffering. But we know too well how cars and their drivers were commandeered in Rangoon and elsewhere and for what purposes these cars were used. Even in this, racial discrimination was rampant, and a selfishness on the part of those in authority which astonishes. That kind of a thing is not going to be endured or tolerated in India, except by some faint-hearts who are capable of tolerating everything except courage and self-respect.

The whole position in India is topsy-turvy and hence everything that the present government does is suspect and is likely to lead to bad results. A national government of a free country must of necessity pay attention to the needs of the people and carry them with it. There is no such compulsion on a foreign government and it seldom thinks that the human beings affected by its orders can also suffer.

It is clear that, conscription or no conscription, no Congressman can carry out any directions which offended against the Congress policy of dissociation with the war effort.

If some people are being interned in this way, far greater numbers have been, and are being, externed. Perhaps military necessity may justify the acquisition of certain villages or rural areas, but no such necessity can justify the sudden dispossession of people from their lands and huts without ample notice, full compensation, transport arrangements and provision of new houses and land. In cities old residents are being made to leave their houses at short notice. It is odd that military necessity always points to the dispossession of an Indian from his house. I have not yet heard of any of our higher European officials having to do so, although their houses are usually bigger and more roomy.

In New Delhi there is a scarcity of housing accommodation. The Americans, the Chinese and others require houses for their offices and staffs. The obvious thing to do was to put the Viceroy's House to some useful purpose, as also the large houses of the higher officials, who could move into smaller houses. That applies to government houses everywhere and especially in Lucknow and Allahabad. These spacious buildings will have to be put to better use in the near future in independent India. So it is as well to get used to this now.

12

GENERAL

1. To Mian Iftikharuddin[1]

Bombay
December 18, 1941

My dear Ifti,
I have your letter of the 16th December.[2] I have just returned after addressing two enormous mass meetings totalling an audience of a lakh and a quarter, and I am a little tired. But I am sending you this reply. For if I do not do so now I may have less time in future.

1. I am aware of the Friends of the Soviet Union in Calcutta. After my release from prison an effort was made in Allahabad to start such an organisation and a similar effort is being made in Benares, Lucknow, etc., chiefly University centres in the U.P. The idea was to issue a manifesto from each of these places and then to develop an organisation out of the signatories. It seemed to me and to most others that the whole object of these manifestoes and organizations would be frustrated if they were largely confined to those who may be considered as confirmed and well-known friends of the Soviet Union. The point was to get the average intellectual, professional, professor, etc. When the Allahabad manifesto appears,[3] my name will of course be in it. But such importance as that manifesto will have will consist of other names, and it seems to me far better for these other people to be in the forefront of these organizations.

Personally I rather doubt if it is desirable at present to have any all India organisation. The All India Committee you refer to is so in name only and any attempt to impose itself on people elsewhere is not likely to meet with success. I think it is far better to encourage the formation of local groups and then connect them rather loosely. Later these groups may elect an All India Committee. To start from the top is a wrong way and an artificial way and will come in the way of a natural

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter he requested Jawaharlal to become the chairman of the All India Committee of the Friends of the Soviet Union, proposed to be formed as per the resolution of the Friends of the Soviet Union, Calcutta. He asked Jawaharlal for the convenient dates and place for a meeting to elect him formally as chairman. Further, he requested Jawaharlal to attend the Patna session of All India Students Federation and help in uniting the two student factions.
3. The manifesto, adopted by, U.P. Provincial Committee of the Friends of the Soviet Union, issued on 26 December 1941, admired the heroic resistance of the Soviet people against the German aggression and recalled their progress and their achievements in the spheres of peace, women upliftment, health, culture and development of nationalities.

you will notice, an odd kind of message and if you care to use it at your conference, you can do so.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Message to the All India Students Conference[1]

I understand that an All India Students Conference is going to be held at Patna soon and that this will be presided over by my friend Yusuf Meherally. I have been asked to give a message of good wishes for this conference. Students of course have my good wishes always. And yet I have hesitated to give this message as some news reached me, through the newspapers, in prison about squabbles and schisms in the student world. I did not try to follow what happened as such disputes did not interest me. But I gathered enough to be distressed. It seemed to me bad enough that students in India even in ordinary times should be behaving as political parties have been behaving. But it was infinitely worse that at a time of national and world crisis relatively trivial matters should create splits and rouse passions. It is always a test of a nation, a group and an individual, as to what it or he considers the first essentials. If secondary matters are given the first place, that nation, group or individual becomes secondary and counts for little. For students it is obvious that the bonds that should link them and the general national approach that should bind them together, are such that there can be hardly two opinions in regard to them. On it there could easily be unity and effective work, giving freedom for individual expression of opinion on other matters. If students forget their own job and consider themselves as the final judges of the nation's activities and split on that issue, they are perfectly welcome to do so, but they are not likely to advance their own interest or the national interest in this way. In this world of prejudices and horrors, none of us can afford to make catchphrases and slogans take the place of reasons and consecutive thoughts. Slogans are useful and desirable but they are dangerous companions for those who wish to use their minds and their intellects.

1. Bombay, 20 December 1941. *National Herald*, 28 December 1941.

growth. In this view the question does not arise of my being the chairman of an All India Committee. In any event I do feel that the chairman should be one who is not an aggressive politician. We can of course associate ourselves with the committee.

2. As for the Students Federation, I am a little fed up with their quarrels and schisms. I have just been asked to give a message for the conference which is going to be presided over by Meherally.[4] Possibly I might give a message but this is likely to consist of criticisms. Frankly speaking I am not interested in the new attitude of the students which chiefly consists in talking tall, criticising the Congress, discussing fine points of ideology, and doing nothing. This of course is not a new development and I have watched something like this for the last two or three years. One must of course attach importance to students but I refuse to attach importance to people who do nothing and talk tall, whether they are students or others. I suppose the student world is going through some kind of inner crisis which will pain them a lot and out of which they will learn something. I should of course like you and Meherally to try to put an end to this schism. If you succeed, well and good. I do not think it is right or desirable for me to interfere. Partly I have no time for this kind of thing, partly I have no mood for it. They must gain my respect a little before they expect my time. Our students seem to me to be quite singularly rigid in mind and repeating set formulas and slogans without troubling to use their brains. Most of these formulas and slogans are dead and done with and have no application today. I suppose sometime or other they will realise this. It will be time enough then for me to try to help them. If anyone wants to see me in Allahabad, I shall gladly meet him. But it is neither good for me nor for them that I should go to Patna or anywhere else especially to smooth their ruffled hair and repeat platitudes.

You were of course quite right in writing about these matters to me because they are important. I hope, however, that you appreciate my viewpoint.

I am enclosing a copy of the message I am giving to the All India Students Conference to be presided over by Meherally.[5] This is, as

4. The seventh session of the All India Students Conference was held at Patna by two rival groups separately. One group held its conference on 27-28 December 1941, presided over by Yusuf Meherally. The other group held its conference on 29-30 December 1941, presided over by Mian Iftikharuddin. It was alleged that the first group was under the inspiration of the Congress Socialist Party.

5. See the succeeding item.

could he be dead, I thought, when only a few days ago I had met him and found him full of life and vitality and of the many problems of public affairs that filled his mind and to which he had dedicated his life. Yet I could not continue in my unbelief, for confirmation of the news came from many sources. I was shocked beyond measure at the sudden blow and it was with difficulty that I addressed that great audience which had assembled to hear me.[2] While I spoke of other things my mind was often far away in Wardha which had so long been inseparably associated with Jamnalalji. For twenty-two years I had been closely associated with him in public affairs, in friendship and even in domestic affairs. In the Working Committee he was probably a member with the longest term of years of service. In many matters, both public and private, I turned to him for advice and guidance and it is difficult for me to realise that I can no longer avail myself of that dear friend's counsel. We have many politicians and men of note with fine records of service and public work. And yet Jamnalal Bajaj was unique amongst them and there is no other who can fit into his place. To lose him at this hour of grave crisis and peril is a hard blow difficult to bear.

2 See *ante*, pp. 467-470.

4. Foreword to "Larkharati Duniya"[1]

The essays and writings included in this book were written by me during the last three, four years. In this fast changing world they have become outdated, but even so they might perhaps be able to help in understanding the problems of today. This book had come out last year when I was in jail. Generally people took it kindly and all the copies that were printed were exhausted. Hence it became necessary to get it printed again.

The essays included in it may be old or new, but the title of the book "Larkharati Duniya" is very appropriate and proper. Today we are living in a strange world whose old foundations have all got weakened and new foundations are not being laid. Some time or other they will be laid but it will be a different world as the present world is witnessing its last days. Many big empires fell before our eyes and are still falling. Every day the picture is changing. But the question is

1. Original in Hindi. Allahabad, 8 March 1942. *Larkharati Duniya* (Uncertain World), New Delhi, 1964.

I do not know about the merits or demerits of the students' organisations that exist today and am quite unable to express my opinion on them. But I am well acquainted with the background and so I can presume to form an opinion based on general principles.

I am told that there is another students' organisation called the All India Students Federation and that this organisation is also holding some kind of a conference soon in Patna. Mian Iftikharuddin, a friend and a colleague, is, I understand, expected to preside over this conference. Thus both the prospective presidents of the two students' conferences are comrades of mine whom I respect. It seems odd to me that two such friends and comrades should be associated with rival organisations. It seems to me that it should be their first job, as well as that of the students, to put an end to this unseemly state of affairs. Possibly they may find it difficult today under the existing conditions. Possibly also it is better for the student world to learn through its own experience. Till they have so learnt, I am afraid they cannot expect much sympathy or help from outsiders who otherwise wish them well and would gladly cooperate with them.

I have ventured to express my opinion frankly to the students for there is little point in my repeating unmeaning platitudes. I am sure they will appreciate my frankness even though they may not agree with all what I have said. We dare not delude ourselves in these critical times by adopting any course or line of thought that evades the real issues.

Again I repeat that I wish well to the students, for after all the burden of the future rests with them. What they do today is of relatively little importance, except in so far as it prepares them and lays the foundation for future work. For them tomorrow is more important than today. If they wish to make tomorrow theirs, they will have to develop the methods of work and qualities which will bring them this heritage, or else others will pass them by, while they are in hue and dispute, and take the leadership of tomorrow.

3. Jamnalal Bajaj[1]

As I mounted the dais of the public meeting held yesterday I heard the news of Jamnalalji's death. I refused absolutely to believe it. How

1. Statement to the press, New Delhi, 12 February 1942. *National Herald*, 13 February 1942.

gatherings have been remarkable for the variety of people who attended them, people of differing faiths or people of no particular religious persuasion, all gathered together to pay their homage to a great personality and to a great act of faith and self-sacrifice. Our differences were forgotten, our arguments were hushed, and we could all join together in friendship and comradeship, for a great man and a great act makes the whole world kin, and even the distant memory inspires.

I welcome therefore this celebration in Lucknow and I would have liked to join it. But as that cannot be I have to content myself by sending my good wishes.

Today, when we stand in the midst of mighty happenings and on the threshold of vast changes, it is well that we take heed from the signposts of history and draw strength from the great deeds of the past. For we shall require all our strength and courage and wisdom, and the capacity for rising above the petty arguments and dissensions of the moment, to the higher plane of united and brave action and sacrifice for the common good. May the example of Imam Husain inspire us to this end, and may it become not a memory of a great sorrow but rather of a great triumph, the triumph of the human spirit against overwhelming odds.

6. To Victor Hugo Sword[1]

Allahabad
April 27, 1942

Dear Mr. Sword,[2]

I am sorry I have been unable to answer your letter of the 24th April earlier.[3] As I told you in the course of our conversation, I see no reason why you should not accept a position which will help you in interpreting, in so far as you can, India to the many American representative men who have come or are coming to this country. It is unfortunate that there should be so much ignorance and misunderstanding of India in America. Any step taken to remove it is welcome. For my part I should like a greater appreciation and understanding of each other between India and America. We are very different in many ways

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. An American employed in India.
3. In his letter Sword sought Jawaharlal's advice whether he should join the American Technical Mission as a liaison officer.

whether we are also participating in this drama or are mere spectators. Now there is no room for spectators anywhere and those who want to escape they too cannot go anywhere. Where to escape and for what? Our work lies here and now.

One wonders how England and France cut up their own roots. In China and Spain and by the Munich Pact they discredited themselves and also became weak. At that time also what we used to say on behalf of the Congress with regard to these international problems have proved true and now England repents having committed those mistakes. Old mistakes are sometimes realised, still fresh mistakes are committed. One cannot get rid of them unless one's mind undergoes a change.

India is an example of these old and new mistakes. The British Empire is coming to an end here—it is bound to end—but even while coming to an end it is leaving behind numerous ills for us. So many troubles are surrounding us, so many difficult problems are confronting us. But in this tottering world all this is bound to happen. Then why should we complain? We raised the slogans of revolution and *inquilab*—that revolution has come to us now. Certain aspects of this revolution are good, some are bad, and some fearful, as it always happens with a revolution. How should we welcome it? By courage, bravery and unity and by forgetting our petty quarrels and controversies let us increase our stature and become big men, and then take up the big issues and solve them.

5. Message on Imam Husain Day[1]

I am very sorry I am unable to join in the commemoration[2] to be held in Lucknow of the thirteenth centenary of the martyrdom of Imam Husain[3] On the very day fixed for this I have to go to Wardha for the Congress Working Committee.

During the last few months many impressive gatherings have been held in various cities of India to celebrate this famous centenary. These

1. Allahabad, 9 March 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. It was held at Lucknow on 14 March 1942.
3. The martyrdom of Imam Husain, who died fighting in the battle of Karbala, fought in 680 A.D. against the forces of Yazid, is celebrated every year during the first ten days of Muharram.

gatherings have been remarkable for the variety of people who attended them, people of differing faiths or people of no particular religious persuasion, all gathered together to pay their homage to a great personality and to a great act of faith and self-sacrifice. Our differences were forgotten, our arguments were hushed, and we could all join together in friendship and comradeship, for a great man and a great act makes the whole world kin, and even the distant memory inspires.

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1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. An American employed in India.
3. In his letter Sword sought Jawaharlal's advice whether he should join the American Technical Mission as a liaison officer.

Mohammad Yunus. He told me that he was writing a book about the Frontier and the people who lived there. He wanted me to see his manuscript when it was finished. Ever since my release from prison in December last I have had to shoulder heavy responsibilities and face difficult problems. But I found time to glance through the greater part of this manuscript.

As I read it, the long panorama of this land of story and legend and brave and reckless deeds came before me, and vivid pictures filled my mind. For who can forget the past of this borderland of ours, or the present which is so full of significance for India?

Yunus has written with the exuberance of youth, with pride in his heritage, and above all with an abounding love for his people. He has used harsh words occasionally and his judgments of the past and the present may be over-weighted and liable to criticism. I do not hold with all of them, but I think it is right that he should give expression to his own deeply-felt convictions in his own words, for he shares those convictions with the vast majority of the people of the Frontier. For us, living in other parts of India, it is important that we should know more about these people, how they feel and think and act, and the future they look forward to. For various reasons, and chiefly because of British policy, the Frontier Province, and even more the tribal areas, were long isolated from the rest of India and were supposed to be lands of mystery and violent deeds. A mental barrier, based on ignorance and fear, was deliberately built up by our foreign rulers, and a policy was pursued which not only resulted in continuous harassment of the tribal people and in vast expenditure of Indian money and resources, but, what was worse, is breeding ill will all round. That policy continues still; yet the barrier has already been pierced.

That barrier was shaken by the winds that blew all over India waking the masses from their long slumber and lethargy. The national movement spread from the wide plains to the mountain valleys and reached the narrow defiles of the Khyber Pass. That barrier was pierced ultimately by that remarkable man, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, whom his own people and we delight to call Badshah Khan and *Fakhr-e-Afghan*.[2]

When the history of the present day comes to be written only very few of those who occupy public attention now will perhaps find mention in it. But among those very few there will be the outstanding and commanding figure of Badshah Khan. Straight and simple, faithful and true, with a finely chiselled face that compels attention,

2. Pride of the Afghans.

and a character built up in the fire of long suffering and painful ordeal, full of the hardness of the man of faith believing in his mission, and yet soft with the gentleness of one who loves his kind exceedingly. Watch him among his own people as they gather round him and look up to him with affection and admiration. He speaks to them in his well-loved Pushtoo, and though he may chide them often enough for their failings, his voice is soft and gentle and full of tenderness. Watch him again with little children with his eyes sparkling as he plays with them and his hard face resolving into frequent laughter.

This borderland of India may well serve in many ways as an epitome of India's past history. Here was the meeting place in the days of old for the three great cultures of Asia—the Indian, the Chinese and the Iranian. Here Greece met India in cultural fellowship and philosophical *camaraderie*. To its great university of Taxila came seekers after knowledge from many lands. Through that forbidding and yet inviting portal of India, the Khyber Pass, came many peoples and many races, bringing their distinctive contribution to India and yet ultimately merging themselves into the sea of Indian humanity. Centre of Indian culture for long centuries, this borderland country was so well-known throughout India that when brave expeditions went out from south India to colonise the islands and archipelagoes of the Eastern seas that envelop Malaysia, they took many a place name with them from the valley of the Kabul river.

But that is the history of long ago. I think of it again because this land is likely soon to become the meeting place of mighty countries and great movements. Its days of isolation are past and, though it is still industrially and educationally backward, a new life throbs through it, and all round it people are awake and astir. To the south there are of course their own countrymen of India; to the west, Afghanistan and Iran; to the north the Soviet Union with the beginnings of a new civilization; and to the north-east China. Out of the storm and stress of the present, the future already peeps out, a future when India will be closely associated with China, the Soviet Union and the countries of Western Asia. Our Frontier Province will again be their meeting ground and thus history will repeat itself but, as always, in a different way and on a different plane.

The problems that have afflicted the Frontier ever since British rule came to India already seem to be fading out. The forward policy of the British Government, which has brought so much misery to the tribal areas and which has prevented peaceful relations from developing, will hardly survive this Second World War. It has always seemed to me that a wise government, representative of and in touch with the people,

WITH MAHATMA GANDHI AND J.B. KRIPALANI AT A.I.C.C. SESSION, BOMBAY, 8 AUGUST 1942

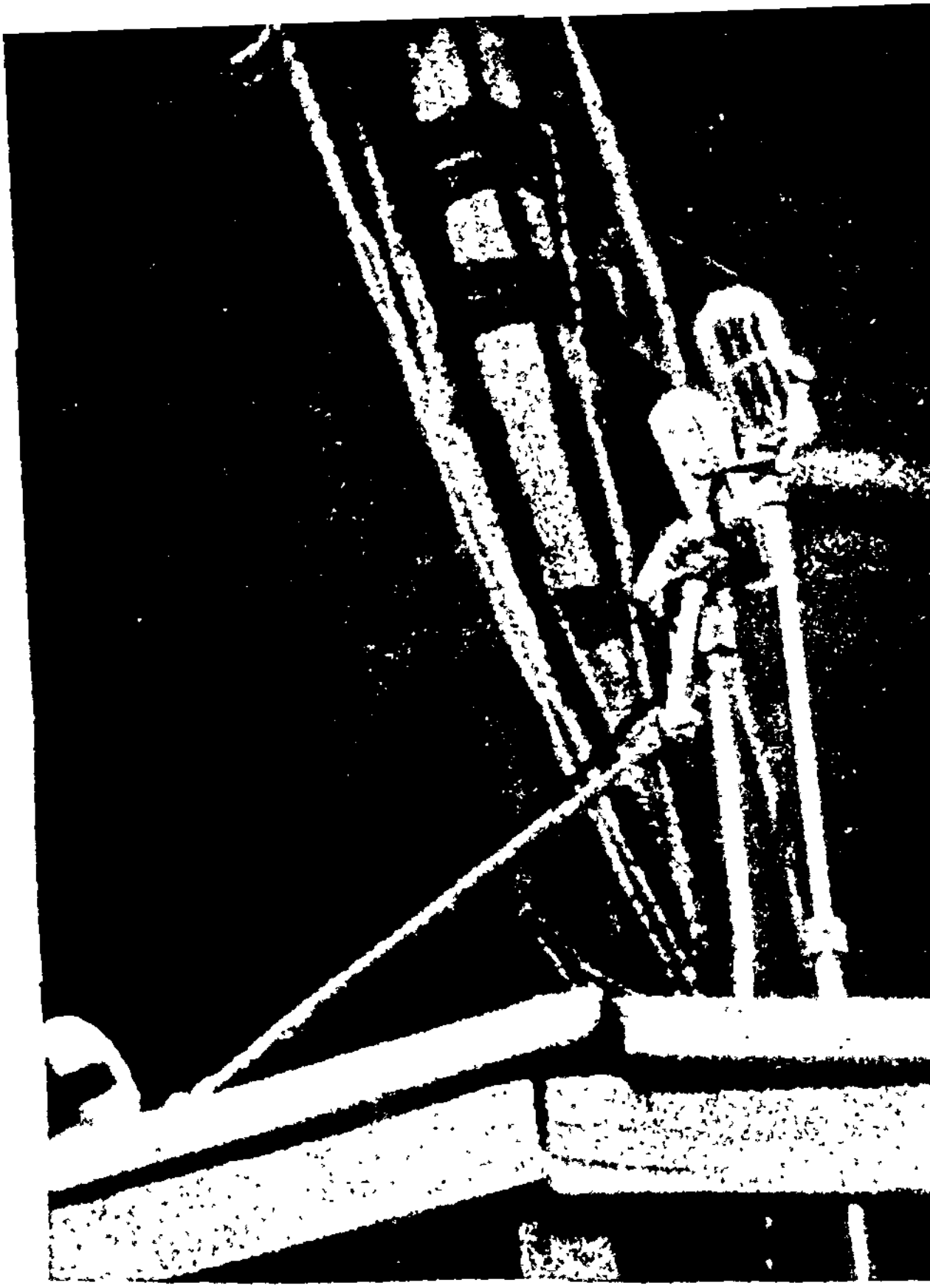

AT A.I.C.C. SESSION, BOMBAY, 8 AUGUST 1942

could have easily made friends with these tribes and solved their problems. Sometimes I have thought that it was the British Government's deliberate policy to keep the Frontier in a state of ferment. However that may be, all these policies of the past will go into oblivion and a new chapter will begin. The old world dies, yielding place to the new, though what that new world is going to be is yet uncertain. Meanwhile for us in India, wherever we may live, in the Frontier or elsewhere, there is travail and heavy sorrow, and sometimes that darkness of the spirit which is more difficult to endure than physical pain.

I have written about Abdul Ghaffar Khan. There is nothing so surprising about our Frontier Province than the conversion of a warlike people to the doctrine of nonviolence. That conversion is, of course, far from complete and the Pathan does not worry himself about philosophical or metaphysical speculations. But it is patent that in action he has been remarkably nonviolent. The man who has loved his gun better than his child or brother, who has valued life cheaply and cared nought for death, who has avenged the slightest insult with the thrust of a dagger, suddenly became the bravest and most enduring of India's nonviolent soldiers. That was due undoubtedly to the influence of one man—Abdnl Ghaffar Khan—whose word was almost law to his people, for they loved him and trusted him. The remarkable thing is that Badshah Khan, typical Pathan that he is, should have taken to nonviolence so earnestly and so thoroughly. He influenced thereby not only his own province but other parts of India also.

The future is dark with uncertainty all over the world. At India's threshold stand new invaders and the Empire that has so long dominated over us fades away. Curiously enough the Frontier Province, through which danger came in the past, is at present perhaps the farthest removed from risk of invasion, and the eastern borderland and the entire sea coast of India is the new frontier that is open to invasion. That in itself is significant of the way events are changing the face of things.

We are face to face with perils and dangers and no man can tell what the outcome will be. But in this perilous hour it is good to think of our comrades of the Frontier, brave men and true, who have marched with us so often through the valley of the shadow.

8. To Jagannath[1]

Wardha
June 10, 1942

My dear Jagannath,
I have your letter.[2] I am interested to know that, having completed 20 years of membership of the Servants of the People Society, you have now taken up other work. I am glad that you are doing labour welfare work now and I wish you success in it. This is a great field for useful work and I am sure you can do much. But the essential thing about labour, just as about the people in the country, is to make themselves self-reliant and not dependent on favours from others. This is the reason why all labour movements look with some suspicion on welfare work on behalf of the employers, and concentrate on developing strength and self-reliance through trade unions. Welfare work on behalf of the employers is of course good in itself, but it is often made an excuse and a means for discouraging workers' organisation. The kind of welfare work that the Ahmedabad Trade Union had done for its members is good as this is done by the workers themselves.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 6 June 1942, Jagannath informed Jawaharlal that he had taken up the post of labour welfare officer at the Delhi Cloth Mills.

9. Abul Kalam Azad[1]

It is always difficult to write about a person one has come to know well. It is still more difficult when that person is a political colleague with whom one has shared the burdens and responsibilities of public work. And so I do not find it easy to write anything about Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

It was about 22 years ago when I first met the Maulana. Of course I had heard about him previously, of his great learning, of his integrity

1. Allahabad, 24 June 1942. Article written in *Aspects of Abul Kalam Azad*, Abdullah Butt (Ed.), (Lahore, 1942), pp. 31-43.

in the national cause, and of his internment during the last World War. So I was eager to see him. He was fairly young in years. And yet he had somehow the impress of maturity about him. Inevitably he took his place among the elders of the Congress, though he was much younger in years. I had occasion to see him and watch him from some distance, for at that time I was not intimately associated with the inner counsels of the Congress. In later years, I saw a great deal of him at work in the Working Committee of the Congress, and especially during the last dozen years I have been closely associated with him. Except for our long periods in prison and except for my absence from India, I have been in continuous touch with him in our day-to-day work in the Congress, as well as in the taking of weighty decisions. In Congress history, and therefore in recent Indian history, few people perhaps know what a great part he has played in shaping decisions. Whether as the President or as a member of the Working Committee, his opinion has carried very great weight with all the other members. This was so because more and more we came to recognise the ripe wisdom which lay behind those opinions.

The Maulana is an unusual type of politician. He lacks the usual temperament of a successful politician who becomes tough and insensitive and capable of giving and receiving hard blows. He is the very opposite of this. He is exceedingly sensitive and retiring. A fine and moving orator, he yet dislikes the rough and tumble of the crowd and it is no easy matter to get him to address public meetings. He is essentially the scholar whom circumstances have forced into a life of action.

He reminds me often of the French encyclopaedists who preceded the great French Revolution. His knowledge of past history is vast and all this is arranged in a well ordered way in his mind. One is continually astonished at odd bits of knowledge that come out of him most unawares. His mind is logical and precise and one would think that it had been trained in the old schools of formal logic and philosophy. His general outlook is rational. And yet with all this there is a human background which softens the weight of learning and shows itself in a rich, though sometimes dry, humour.

Probably if he had not been so retiring by nature he would have played an even greater part in the public life of our country, because he has it in him to move millions by his voice and his pen. We have heard that voice much too seldom in public, and unfortunately for many years his pen has not functioned as of old.

I have always regretted this neglect of the pen on his part. For the language he writes is full of winged words. Indeed it was through the pen that he became known, while he was yet in his teens, not only in

India but in the Arabic countries of Western Asia and Egypt. Even now a traveller in those Arabic-speaking lands is asked about Abul Kalam Azad. If he had carried on his crusade of the pen, what tremendous service he could have rendered to the cause of clear thinking and, therefore, right action, amongst our people.

Circumstances, however, forced him to shoulder other burdens and responsibilities. History will tell of how he did so. But we, who have had the privilege of close comradeship with him, need not await the verdict of history. He has been a tower of strength to us and to the country and whether one agreed with him or not, we always knew that his opinion mattered and could never be lightly brushed aside. For behind that opinion lay a keen and well-trained mind, knowledge of the past and of the present, and a ripe wisdom which is given to few.

The younger generation can learn much from this great Indian. He has found no difficulty in being a most learned of Muslim divines and at the same time an exponent and an emblem of India's unity. Lesser men have sometimes found conflict in the rich variety of Indian life. But he has been big enough not only to see the essential unity behind all that diversity but also to realise that only in this unity can there be hope for India as a whole and for those great and varied currents of national life which course through her veins.

10. Asia and America[1]

It was a year ago or more, when I was in Dehra Dun Jail, that letter came to me from the editor of *Asia*, suggesting that I might become a contributing editor of *Asia*. I felt pleased and honoured at the proposal, for I was asked to join a noble company consisting of Pearl Buck, Lin Yutang and others who had distinguished themselves in the larger world which knows no frontier. Yet it was an odd request to a person in prison who had been sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment of which three and a half years were yet to be endured. And if, by any chance, I came out before my time was up, it was highly likely that I would be entangled in a mesh of public activities which left me no time for writing.

1. A message to *Asia*, a journal published in the United States, written presumably in June 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

So I wrote back to the editor and begged to be excused. But he was insistent and would not accept my refusal. A companion of mine in prison constituted himself as *Asia's* advocate and pressed me to agree. I wavered. I thought of how Asia and America were separated from each other, not only by a few thousand miles of ocean, but by traditions and mental processes which had their roots in a dim and distant past. How essential it was for them to understand each other and draw nearer to each other, more especially today when the world was in a crucible of change. Not to understand each other was to invite tragedy and disaster. To help even a little in this great work was worthwhile, and perhaps I could help. For I was a child of Asia, with her tradition in my blood, and with pride in her past and faith in her future, and I was foster-child of the Western world, knowing it fairly well and appreciating its great achievements. So I agreed, but with many a qualification.

These six months that I have been out of prison I have had to shoulder many a heavy burden and responsibility and my mind has been troubled and ill at ease. How to find a way out of this tangle, what advice to give to my own people, when every line of activity is full of risk and peril. I have not been afraid of risk and peril; they can be faced with assurance when the objective is clear. Life today hovers on the edge of death and we have to get accustomed to both. But if the future is not clear, the future we work for and possibly die for, then doubt and frustration fill the mind.

Copies of *Asia* magazine sometimes reached me and brought a breath of fresh air. I realised how, in its own way, this magazine was working for what I had in my own mind—the mutual understanding of Asia and America. I wished that its message could reach large numbers of people in both these continents.

Europe and America are obvious enough and their accomplishments and achievements stand out, as also their failings. But Asia is not obvious, especially to the Western mind, which seems to imagine that it has a monopoly of modern wisdom.

11. To D. N. Wadia[1]

Wardha
July 8, 1942

Dear Prof. Wadia,[2]

Dr. K.L. Motwani[3] has sent me several letters and has also seen me about certain suggestions of his. As he has been in correspondence with you also on the subject, you must know all about this. His chief proposal is that a National Academy of Social Sciences be established in India and various existing organisations might cooperate with this Academy.

Prima facie the proposal appeals to me greatly. I am convinced that a study of sociology as well as of all the other social sciences should be encouraged and coordinated in India. At the same time I am not clear as to how best this can be done. There is no point in starting a new organisation unless it is going to be a living one. There are already far too many half-dead organisations functioning spasmodically in India. I am not sure in my own mind if the people who run these organisations have the enthusiasm and vitality which are essential for such a task. If the same people are asked to undertake another job, not much can be expected of them.

I was wondering, however, if some kind of spade work might not be done in investigating the possibilities of this proposal. Dr. Motwani has written to all manner of folks in India and got agreeable replies from most of them.[4] But this kind of pious sentiment does not help much. Nor do I think it would help much for a kind of conference to consider it. The only way to deal with it is for a small experts committee to consider the pros and cons as well as the ways and means, and to report. A decision can then be made.

I do not know if such a procedure is possible. I am suggesting it for your consideration.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Darashaw Nosherwan Wadia (1883-1969); Fellow of the Royal Socity; worked in the Geological Survey of India; Mineral Adviser to the Ceylon Government, 1939-45; later Director of the Indian Bureau of Mines, and Geological Adviser to the Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India.
3. Kewal L. Motwani (b. 1899); sociologist and educationist; author of *Manu: A Study in Hindu Social Thought*, *Sociology—A Brief Outline*, *Science and Indian National Reconstruction*, and *Science and Society in India*.
4. Motwani had written to Jawaharlal that the Inter-University Board of India had accepted his suggestion of including sociology in the university curriculum.

Whatever the difficulties might be in the way of giving effect to such a proposal in normal times, they are greater during these days of intense crisis when the future in regard to everything is entirely uncertain. Still if an idea is good it might be developed even though immediate effect cannot be given to it.

I am here in Wardha for another five days or so and then I shall go back to Allahabad.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. Lifting of Ban on the Communist Party[1]

Q: What is your reaction to the decision of the Government of India to lift the ban on the Communist Party of India.[2]

JN: I am glad that the ban on the Communist Party has been lifted because I disapprove of all such bans but there is too much of a quid pro quo and a bargain about this matter. I do not, of course, agree with the present policy of the Communist Party. But I think it has been the height of absurdity and impropriety for the ban on the Communist Party to have continued for so many years in India. It is not by attempts at forcible suppression that the flow of ideas can be stopped, and the government ought to have realized this by this time. But the Government of India is not capable of realizing anything, new or old, outside its old ruts.

1. Interview to the press, Allahabad, 24 July 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 26 July 1942.
2. The Communist Party was banned in July 1934. The ban was lifted on 26 July 1942.

13. To Richard J. Walsh[1]

Allahabad
July 25, 1942

Dear Mr. Walsh,[2]

I have been so occupied with other matters that I do not quite remember when I wrote to you last and what I wrote then. You will forgive me, I hope, for the delay in answering your letters.

Edgar Snow suddenly turned up here and gave me your letter. He then disappeared and later we found that he had been to China. I met him again some days ago at Wardha and I hope to meet him in Bombay next week.

I want to tell you and Pearl Buck that I am very greatly interested in the Chinese cooperative movement and I should like very much to have something like it in India. It is not easy to start cooperatives here on that basis because of government rules and regulations governing cooperative societies. Nevertheless the idea is spreading. I made an attempt to get Rewi Ally[3] to pay us a visit to India, but this could not be arranged at the other end. Just at present we are tied up in many knots. As soon as an opportunity offers we shall try to develop these cooperatives in India. Edgar Snow has arranged for the publication in India of Nym Wales's book on Chinese cooperatives. I have contributed a foreword to it[4] and Snow might possibly send you a copy of it.

I have been getting the recent numbers of *Asia* and I have liked them very much. There have been some really good articles in them. I wish more people in India could profit by them. Perhaps, but I am not sure, I might send you an article before long.

I wonder if *Glimpses of World History* has come out or not. I sent you a cable some time ago agreeing to your suggestion that the subtitle be changed.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1887–1960); husband of Pearl Buck; editor, Collier's Weekly, 1922–24; President, John Day Company, from 1926; editor, *Asia* magazine, 1933–46; his works include *Kid*, *The Making of Buffalo Bill* and *The Adventures of Marco Polo*.
3. (b. 1899); New Zealand industrial organiser in China, Chief Factory Inspector of the Shanghai Municipal Council, 1932–37; after Shanghai fell to the Japanese, he organised a chain of industrial cooperatives for the Chinese National Government throughout China.
4. See *ante*, pp. 568–571.

You wrote to me some time back and asked me if I had written anything in prison. I said in my reply that I had written something but this was unfinished. It has just struck me that even this unfinished material might be of some service to you. The book that I was writing was supposed to be a continuation of my *Autobiography*.[5] But, as usual, it dealt with all manner of other subjects. There are some chapters dealing with India as a whole which might be of interest to *Asia*'s readers.

I am, therefore, sending this manuscript to you separately by post. I do not know when it will reach or whether it will reach you at all. If there is any other way of sending it, I shall take advantage of it. When you get this, you can use it in any way you like for *Asia*.

With all good wishes to you,

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, pp. 753–802.

14. Rabindranath Tagore[1]

I had hoped to be present at the Tagore anniversary meeting today but the fates have willed it otherwise. The Congress Working Committee is meeting this morning and I may not absent myself from it. I am sending these lines, however, to associate myself with the object of the meeting.

It is just a year ago that I heard in Dehra Dun Jail of Gurudev's death. Suddenly I felt very lonely for his mere presence in distant Santiniketan was an abiding comfort and an inspiration. The warmth of his genius surrounded me, as it did so many others, and produced in me a sense of companionship. To be deprived of this was loneliness and desolation.

And yet the sorrow, intense as it was, soon gave place to pride and triumph. It was well with India if she could produce, even in her present subject and lowly state, such a magnificent person. He was a great poet, a great artist, a great patriot, but he was above all a man

1. Message on the Tagore Anniversary, Bombay, 7 August 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

of giant stature in a world of pigmies. That India should have produced him and another mighty personality, Gandhi, in the course of one generation filled me with wonder and the glow of pride in my country. It was well with India, I thought, for the springs of her youth had not dried up and her vital energy still flowed out to enrich the world. From what vast store did this come, and what was her strange secret which enabled her to renew her youth from age to age?

Tagore and Gandhi, each in his different way, was a symbol of India, steeped in her ancient culture and drawing strength and sustenance from her. How typical they were of India, and yet how utterly different from each other! Possibly no other country could have produced them, and they had their roots deep down in the Indian soil and their minds roamed over the many thousands of years that have gone to make India what she is. And yet they were men of the present day, intensely alive to the day's problems. Both of them, in their respective and wholly different ways, represented that wonderful continuity of India's cultural tradition which has known no break though disaster has so often laid her low.

Typical of India as Tagore was, yet he was typical also of the wide world today, as well as of the world of tomorrow. He showed us how India might be intensely national and yet, at the same time, international with her thought and sympathy embracing the world. In the midst of our national struggle, he created that symbol of internationalism that is Visva Bharati.

Standing on the edge of a precipice, as we all do today, my mind goes back to that great and magnificent message which Gurudev gave to his country and the world on his eightieth birthday. That was his last will and testament. Out of the store of his rich mind and experience, he gave that final message. In line with the ancient sages and great men of India, he spoke to us of our country's sorrow, at the crisis that had overtaken civilization in the Western world. As I read that message in prison it seemed to me that I heard the voice of India herself whispering in my ears. Today that message comes back to me and that lesson is imprinted in my mind. It were well if all of us, in Asia or Europe or America, paid heed to it for we are being swept away by the passions of the moment, and war, that great falsifier, is perverting and degrading our minds.

With reverence and pride in him and in India, I pay my homage to Gurudev.

13

PERSONAL

1. To Mrs. Nellie Sen Gupta[1]

Allahabad
December 12, 1941

Dear Nellie,
Thank you for your little note.[2] I was on the point of coming to Calcutta to see the Maulana but now that he is coming this way I am not going. I hope however, sometimes or other, to visit Calcutta and see old friends there. Yes, I quite agree with you about the detenus. I think the treatment accorded to them has been scandalous.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In her letter of 5 December 1941, she welcomed Jawaharlal's release and hoped that the government would give a thought to the detenus and make a decent gesture by releasing them.

2. To C. Vijayaraghavachari[1]

Allahabad
December 12, 1941

My dear Mr. Vijayaraghavachari,
It was a great pleasure to me to receive your letter and to recognise your handwriting.[2] I hope that you will soon get fit again.

The world is in a queer state and each one of us has a heavy burden. All we can do is to work our hardest for the causes which are worth while, both from the point of view of India and the world.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

In Railway Train
16.12.41

Bebec dear—Life is a difficult business and the dull routine of jail sometimes seems simpler and preferable. I am on my way to Bombay and Bardoli and already I have a feeling of suffocation and distress, for we are going to have a hard time there, and whatever happens, it is hardly likely to be too pleasant and agreeable to any of us.

Your mother wrote to me. Perhaps I shall see her soon. The thought of Eva's suffering and courage haunted me. Will you give her my love and greetings?

Indu is accompanying me. We shall be three days in Bombay and then Bardoli. Possibly I may come back to Bombay.

Love,

Jawahar

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

4. To Ghanshyam Das Birla[1]

Allahabad
January 8, 1942

My dear Ghanshyam Dasji,

When in Allahabad I do not go out of my house very much but sometimes I have to go out. New difficulties are arising owing to the lack of petrol. Personally I do not possess a car but my brother-in-law, Ranjit Pandit, has one and I have the use of it. Even that is becoming difficult now because of the petrol situation. I, therefore, propose to revert to my old habit of using a bicycle. I do not want, as far as possible, to buy a foreign cycle. I had hoped to be able to get the New Hind Cycle but it does not appear to be available in the market. Could you kindly let me know where I can get it?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

5. On Indira's Choice[1]

A report has appeared in the press about the engagement of my daughter Indira with Feroze Gandhi. As inquiries have been addressed to me on the subject, I should like to confirm this report. A marriage is a personal and domestic matter, affecting chiefly the two parties concerned and partly their families. Yet I recognize that in view of my association with public affairs, I should take my many friends and colleagues and the public generally into my confidence. I have long held the view that though parents may and should advise in the matter, the choice and ultimate decision must lie with the two parties concerned. That decision, if arrived at after mature deliberation, must be given effect to, and it is no business of parents or others to come in the way. When I was assured that Indira and Feroze wanted to marry one another I accepted willingly their decision and told them that it had my blessing. Mahatma Gandhi, whose opinion I value not only in public affairs but in private matters also, gave his blessing to the proposal. The members of my family as well as the members of my wife's family also gave their willing consent. Feroze Gandhi is a young Parsi who has been a friend and colleague of ours for many years and I expect him to serve our country and our cause efficiently and well. But on whomsoever my daughter's choice would have fallen, I would have accepted it or been false to the principles I have held. I hope and trust that this marriage will be a true comradeship in life and in the larger causes that we hold dear.

Mahatma Gandhi expressed a wish that the marriage might take place in Sevagram so that he might find it convenient to be present at it and bless the union personally. We appreciated and were grateful for his suggestion but the members of my family felt that the ceremony should take place in our home. The marriage will take place in about a month's time at Allahabad. At any time I am not in favour of the pomp and circumstance that so often accompany marriages in our country. In present circumstances, when national and international crises envelop us, this would be particularly inappropriate.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 26 February 1942. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 28 February 1942.

6. To K. Govinda Rao[1]

Allahabad
March 1, 1942

Dear friend,
I have your letter of the 19th.[2] It is very difficult for me to advise you because in such matters one must decide for oneself. If you yourself felt strongly on the political ground either way, you should act according to your own feelings. If, however, you feel attracted towards the service you mention, I would not come in your way. Ordinarily speaking I would like our young men to be air-minded and to get experience of service in an air force. There are risks involved but that is the least part of the matter. We are placed in a particularly peculiar position. When we cannot do many things we want to in our own way and in order to do them we have to line up with others. In this matter I think that after full consideration of what your parents say, you should decide for yourself.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He wanted advice from Jawaharlal whether he should join the Royal Air Force on moral and political grounds despite his family's objection.

7. To P.A. Narielwala[1]

Allahabad
9.3.42

My dear Pan,
I have been thinking of writing to you for a long time and at last I have sat down to it. The burdens of high polity &c. and though I must confess in a whisper that they do not crush me and I keep cheerful in spite of them. News from Bombay tells us that people there are excited. Why? Of course a noble excitement and generous enthusiasm are all to the good, but why all this nervousness and sneaking away? I think the best rule to follow is *j'y suis, j'y reste.*[2] I propose to follow it.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Here I am, here I stay.

Thank you for *Life*—But you need not trouble to send it in future. We are getting it direct now.

You know that Indu's wedding is coming off on March 26th. We shall expect you of course. You will get an odd kind of invitation card addressed in Hindi and Urdu to *Pyare Bhai*[3]—the new proud of Hindustani.

I am going to Wardha on the 14th and expect to be away for 6 or 7 days.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

3. Dear brother.

8. To P.A. Narielwala[1]

Allahabad
13.3.42

My dear Pan,

Betty and the children reached here three hours late, which is not surprising as they started from Bombay two hours late. Stories from Bombay amuse and distress me. Why all this urge to run away? It is highly unbecoming and indeed foolish. Probably Bombay is a much safer place than many other places.

Betty tells me that there is a chance of Jehangir and Thelly coming here for Indu's wedding—also that he is not quite sure whether he is really expected to come. Of course I would like them to come. They need not worry about arrangements for their stay. We shall of course be crowded but that does not matter and we shall treat them as members of the family and put ourselves out for them. They will not mind I am sure. I do hope they will come.

As for you, you will share my room with me, as you have done before.

I am off tomorrow to Wardha. Returning probably on the 21st.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

9. To Lachhmi Dhar Shastri[1]

Wardha
March 16, 1942

My dear Lachhmi Dharji,[2]
I arrived here yesterday and I have consulted Mahatma Gandhi about the ceremony to be performed. Mahatmaji is of opinion that in the present instance in particular, as far as possible, normal procedure should be followed, minus unnecessary ceremonies. You know that for various reasons many people are objecting to this marriage. I have received a large number of letters on this subject and so has Gandhiji. This of course does not make any difference to our decision. But it does make it desirable to adhere to the normal procedure as far as possible and to avoid introducing special verses of a political character. These verses are of course not new and they are all from the old Vedic ceremony. Nevertheless some of these are not normally used during the marriage ceremony, and for us to use them at my daughter's wedding would make that ceremony slightly more unusual still. I am entirely with you that we should try to encourage the use of verses which proclaim national ideals, but perhaps it is desirable not to mix up two things at this stage. The marriage itself is in the nature of a reform and it is disapproved of by many conservatives. That is a big step and for the moment we should be content with that and not confuse the issue by bringing in a somewhat abnormal procedure in the ceremony.

I have given careful thought to this matter and I feel that Gandhiji is right. I think you will also appreciate this viewpoint.

Gandhiji also thought that we should not do anything during this ceremony which might indicate that we are out to vary the ceremony itself, except in so far as unnecessary parts may be eliminated. He was not in favour of publishing a pamphlet of the ceremony as this would indicate a desire to do propaganda in this behalf. The marriage itself is a great propaganda which is bound to affect large numbers of people. For the moment we should be content with that.

Gandhiji gave me a little pamphlet on the *Vivah Vidhi*[3] which he had with him. There is of course nothing new in this but still I am

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (1891–1953); scholar of Sanskrit and of ancient Indian culture; lecturer at St. Stephen's College, Delhi, 1916–53; his works include *The Birth Place of Kalidasa, The Home of Aryas, The Aryan Sacraments, Bhajanawali, Parvati-Siksha, Mrityu Shok ki Shanti.*
3. *Marriage Procedure.*

enclosing it. Some parts of it, especially right at the beginning, are unnecessary.

I would beg of you to consider this matter afresh from the point of what Gandhiji has said and to draw up a note on the ceremony accordingly. This should include the essentials only and leave out unnecessary parts. As you wrote to me, I expect the ceremony to be performed in Sanskrit and Hindi.

The whole point of the ceremony is that a marriage is taking place between a Hindu and a non-Hindu. It so happens that a Zoroastrian is fairly intimately connected with some of the Vedic ceremonies because of a common origin. Nevertheless the fact remains that the marriage is between a Hindu and a non-Hindu and each party, from the point of view of religion, remains where he or she was before the ceremony. What the legal consequences of such a ceremony are is another matter in which I need not go into here. But the point is that the ceremony should be such as to apply fittingly to a Hindu and non-Hindu alike. This in itself would be setting an example which might ultimately effect reform and even legislation.

You were good enough to write to me that you would reach Allahabad on the 25th. If it is at all possible for you to come a day earlier, that is on the 24th, this would give us a little more time to settle up matters. I hope to be back in Allahabad by the 21st.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. To P.A. Narielwala[1]

Wardha
17.3.42

My dear Pan,

Thank you for your letter which I have just got. Do not worry about yourself on where you will put up in Allahabad. You are in no trouble and you will simply share my room.

I have written to Jehangir. I would really like him and Thelly to come.

I agree with you about 'open town'. The idea of declaring a number of towns open is absurd. We might as well declare the country open.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Of course under special circumstances a particular town may be declared open.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

11. Public Acknowledgement of Congratulations[1]

My daughter Indira and I desire to express our deep gratitude for the many messages of congratulations and good wishes that we have received during the last few days on the occasion of her marriage. A thousand telegrams have come and innumerable other messages from friends as well as those who honour us with their goodwill even though we do not know them personally. I am afraid it is not possible for me even to acknowledge these messages separately. That is made still more difficult by the demands made upon my time by political developments. As it happens also, I have not been keeping physically fit during these days so I must crave forgiveness of our friends and well-wishers and beg them to accept these thanks publicly conveyed. Their messages have heartened us and I am sure that this tremendous volume of goodwill will encourage and strengthen Indira and Feroze in that oldest of all yet ever new adventure of marriage which they have undertaken together.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 28 March 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 31 March 1942.

12. To Stafford Cripps[1]

New Delhi
April 7, 1942

My dear Stafford,

I have just received your note and I appreciate all you say in it as well as the urgency of the problem. I have been full of this problem all

1. British Cabinet Papers, CAB 127/73, Public Record Office, London. This hand-written letter was sent in reply to Cripps's personal appeal to Jawaharlal to save the Cripps mission. For Cripps's letter, see *A Bunch of Old Letters* (Bombay, 1960); p. 478.

these days and overburdened with all its implications. I have not given up hope that some light may come to us yet if not today or tomorrow then soon after. But I am convinced that it is beyond my power, even if I so wished, to get any considerable number of peoples to agree to the present offer. That is a tragedy for all of us. Yet the tragedy need not be anything final. You speak too much in terms of finality.

Whatever qualities and capacity I may possess will be devoted to meeting the situation that has arisen and in resisting such wrong tendencies as are taking shape in the country.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

13. To Indira Gandhi[1]

New Delhi
7.4.1942

Darling,
I have had no news from you, except for your telegram since I came here. I hope you are well and the growing heat of Allahabad does not trouble you too much. I expected to get away from here by tomorrow night but now I am not certain. We tussle daily with problems and they take new turns and put on new shapes. And so we go on from day to day and meanwhile War has reached India. Possibly I might get away from here by the 9th or 10th but I am not at all sure of what will happen. I am a little worried about you. Why should you hang up or postpone your programme because of me?

Madame Chiang wrote to me that she wanted to send you as a wedding gift something she had valued in her girlhood. I do not know what this is but she was trying to get it from some odd place.

The other day I met Shuaib Qureshi here and he expressed his sorrow at not having been invited to your marriage. I am sorry I missed him out. I remember his sending a telegram of congratulations. I would

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

like you to write to him and thank him for his good wishes. His address is: The Hon'ble Mr. Shuaib Qureshi, Minister, Bhopal, C.I. And now to work.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

You might also write a few lines to Sir Stafford Cripps to thank him for the good wishes he sent you through me. You will remember the letters he wrote. His address is: 3, Queen Victoria Road, New Delhi.

14. To G.P. Hutheesing[1]

Allahabad
April 17, 1942

My dear Raja,

I received two letters from you in Delhi. Of course I would love to have you here working with me and whenever you feel like it you can come over. You have to judge yourself whether your work in Bombay at present is not more important. Obviously it has some importance and you are engaged in a useful job.

My own work is of such an odd character that it is very difficult for me to define it. It involves a fair amount of touring. I feel restless and my mind is continually searching for something to do. In these changing circumstances, I do not know what I might do a week or a fortnight later.

I am going today to Calcutta and from there to Assam on a short visit. The visit is going to be much too short as I have to be back by the 26th for the Working Committee meeting. Nevertheless I have decided to go because of that feeling of restlessness.

If you at all feel inclined to be here for the A.I.C.C. meeting come over for it.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

15. To Indira Gandhi[1]

New Delhi
5/6-5-42

Indu Darling,
I have not written to you since I came here. Only a telegram to which you sent a reply. There has been heavy and exhausting work and complete uncertainty about my stay or the future. I stay on from day to day. As I see it now I am likely to be here till Wednesday night or possibly Tuesday night.

On my return to Allahabad I doubt if I can stay there for more than a couple of days for events in Bengal call me. I might even go to Assam.

I am worried about your staying on in Allahabad and delaying your departure for Kashmir. It depends of course on how you feel but it is best not to take risks.

Events are marching fast and are likely to overwhelm us within a few weeks. I must be in the thick of them for that is my job. But there is no reason why you should upset your holiday.

Raja is going to Bombay this morning (6th).

Love,

Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

16. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
5.5.42

Bebee dear,
So you have gone to the far south and I am off to the north and to the mountains. It is rather absurd to talk of going to the Himalayas for five days but the very idea makes a difference. I am sure I shall return freshened up, though possibly more cantankerous. We must, I suppose, go through these conflicts and try to swim across the raging torrents, though many may be sucked in by the whirlpools. I am going

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

to Kulu but I have a presentiment that even my brief stay there will be interrupted by new happenings.

Do not worry about me. I shall survive, not that it matters much either way. Gradually life is resolving itself into simpler, though broader, issues. These inevitably put an end to the period of eternal argument and interminable debate.

Look after yourself both for your own sake and for others' sake. And do not imagine that we are so far away or unlikely to meet for a long time. India is big but it grows smaller in a sense and throws us together again. I am returning the pictures.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

17. To Louis Fischer[1]

Wardha
May 27, 1942

My dear Fischer,

On my arrival here last evening I went to see Gandhiji and I spoke to him about you. He would be glad to meet you, and almost any day will suit him provided he gets sufficient notice. I suggest that you write to his secretary, Mahadeva Desai, Sevagram, Wardha (C.P.), and tell him when you wish to come here. You might await his reply before coming.

I think it will be worth while for you to stay here for two or three days, not only to talk to Gandhiji at odd times but also to see his environment. You can stay at Wardha, which is a small town, and go daily to Sevagram, a village about five miles away. Or you can stay at Sevagram itself as Gandhiji's guest. The latter will be preferable and you will have greater opportunities of meeting him and seeing his surroundings. You will have to do without some of the so-called modern comforts and live more or less in simple Indian style. But you will not mind this. You will have to learn how to take a bath without a tub. In any event you will have to put up with the heat which one cannot escape at this time of the year. Wardha and Sevagram are hotter than Delhi but the heat is a dry one.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I am going to Lucknow from here tomorrow morning and I expect to remain in Lucknow till the 31st night. Then for two or three days in Allahabad. Probably I shall return to Wardha about the 4th of June or so, though I am not sure of the date yet, as this depends on the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who will be coming with me. It might be desirable for you to be here when I am also here. This will have one disadvantage for you as much of Gandhiji's time will be taken up by us. On the other hand you can meet Maulana Abul Kalam Azad also.

Please write and let me know when you get this letter and what you intend doing. My address in Lucknow will be: 19, Station Road, Lucknow. After that Allahabad.

You will be interested to know that I found a copy of your new book, which you gave me, at Sevagram. Gandhiji's Secretary, Mahadeva Desai, had read it and another person, whom I should like you to meet, was in the middle of it. This person is Acharya Narendra Deva. (Acharya Means a Professor or something like it.) Narendra Deva is one of the leading Congress Socialists in India. Barring one person, Jaya Prakash Narayan, who is in prison at present, he is an intellectual, somewhat academical, and a very good speaker in Hindustani. Otherwise he has a reputation of being a straight and fine man. He has long been suffering from asthma and is at present having some kind of a nature treatment here. He does not live here usually and belongs to my province.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. To Indira Gandhi[1]

Wardha
27.5.1942

Darling Indu,
I came here direct from Delhi. I felt that I must see Bapu as soon as possible even though for a short while. I am only here for a day and am going direct to Lucknow tomorrow morning. I shall be in Lucknow from the 29th to the 31st night and then in Allahabad for two or three days. After that I return to Wardha, probably with the Maulana, and

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

stay here for a few days. From Delhi I sent my heavy luggage direct to Allahabad.

The journey was hot and the change from Kulu marked. I feel quite fit. Last evening I weighed myself here and found that I was 5 lbs. less than I was at Naggar. Partly this was due to absence of clothes.

In Delhi I met Louis Fischer (the man who was in Russia for many years as *Nation* correspondent). I shall probably see more of him.

At Delhi also I learnt of Ballo's return from a somewhat odd source. A certain Colonel or Captain Schuiter rolled up at Rajan's place on a motor bicycle and informed me that he had flown over with my nephew. He added that Lady Willingdon had sent me her love! Also that he was a Harrow man. He was a tall, Haw Haw type of a person.

I hope you had a good journey and are comfortably housed in Srinagar. Do not hurry back to the plains. It is better to get the full benefit of the change. On your way back, if it is possible, you might visit the Frontier Province and spend a day or two with Dr. Khan Sahib in Peshawar. You should of course see Abdul Ghaffar Khan also but I am more anxious about Khan Sahib. As you know, he has had a difficult time recently and has been surrounded by hostility.[2] Every manifestation of friendship and affection will be good for him.

Give my love to Ballo and remember me to Sheikh Abdullah.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

2. See *ante*, p. 500.

19. Cable to Frances Gunther[1]

4-6-42

Thank you for cables. Sorry for delay in answering them. Afraid unable to visit America now as present emergency demands my presence here. All good wishes. Love.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

20. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Sevagram
9.6.42

Bebee dear,
Your letter reached me here today. I have been in Sevagram two days and Maulana is due tonight. I expect to remain here another three or four days and then go to Bombay for a brief visit. Things are warming up in my province and many of my colleagues are in prison. I do not know what fate awaits me there. Anyway fate is performing strange tricks for all of us and they are likely to be stranger still in the future. It serves little purpose to be angry with it. I have had a very difficult time and have gone through much mental travail.

My thoughts, need I tell you, are with you and I am terribly worried about your ill health. You will do of course whatever you think is right. You know best. But please do keep me informed of your health.

I have given a brief note of introduction for your mother to Louis Fischer, the well-known American journalist who was in Russia for a dozen years. He is quite an interesting man. He has spent a week at Sevagram. He intends going to Hyderabad tomorrow. His latest book is *Men and Politics*, a kind of autobiography.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

I write to you briefly, for long years ago I gave up writing the kind of letters I would normally have written. It is no fun to know that all one's private and personal letters are read by a battery of censors. I reacted accordingly twenty years ago and I doubt if I have written a single letter to anyone during this period without the shadow of the censor haunting my mind.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

22. To Indira Gandhi[1]

Wardha
13-6-42

Darling Indu,

I am still here. Two of your letters have reached me here from Srinagar and they have made me a little hungry for the sight of that Valley and the mountains that surround it. But I take vicarious delight in your being there and thinking of you, think also of Kashmir. Vividly the scenes stand up before my eyes.

Here it has been very hot but the wind has now changed and the monsoon rains are near. In Bombay they have already started and they should reach Wardha soon. I do not yet know how long I shall stay here—possibly another two or three days. It is slow work with the Maulana and Bapu for they have special times which do not easily fit in and the heat prevents a journey to Sevagram in the middle of the day.

I am a little anxious about your excursions. You will be forgetful and tire yourself out and that will be no good. There is a reference in your letter to Sonamarg. Of course you must go there. It is a dream of a place. But I wondered if you intended going there from Liddarwat direct. That is a perilous journey though a short one. I have an idea that this passage over the mountains is called by an expressive name in Kashmir meaning 'Ladder to Hell' or Heaven.

If you go with Sheikh Sahab anywhere, one thing is certain. You will be over-fed.

The War goes on and India is in ferment and all manner of odd things happen, but the mountains and valleys remain. So you might as well take your fill of these mountains and valleys while you may.

Puphi (Nan) has been rather ill in Bombay. She has hurried back to Khali.

Love,

Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

23. Telegram to Indira Gandhi[1]

Wardha
11 July 1942

Your letter from Mohanmarg. Don't hurry back. Live in beauty while you may please. Try visit Frontier Province on return meeting Mamu and Doctor Khan Sahib.

Love,

Papu

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

24. To Duncan Greenlees[1]

Allahabad
July 27, 1942

My dear Greenlees,

I have your letter.[2] I am very sorry to learn of your difficulties and sorrier still that a man of your capacity should not be in a position to do good work. I would like very much to help you and to try to fit you in a suitable place. For the present I do not quite know what I can do. I shall enquire from some friends and write to you again.

There is one great difficulty, however, you know that we are on the verge of upsets and big happenings. It is difficult just at this time to make any suitable arrangement. Even if any arrangement is made, it has to be temporary.

Have you any journalistic experience, that is, have you done any work on the staff of a newspaper? If so, what work have you done? Journalism is of course something much more than occasional writing of essays.

What are your special subjects? I want to know this from the point of view of teaching work in the Vidyapith or elsewhere.

Also please let me know what your minimum expectations would be, to begin with, at any rate? I want this for my personal information only.

I am going away to Bombay on the 2nd August and my address there will be: Sakina Mansion, Carmichael Road, Bombay.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
3. He stated that Sri Bala Gurukul School, Madras, which he founded had been closed down because of the War and that he would like to take up some job as a journalist. He wanted financial help from Indian friends as he did not want to quit India and go back to England.

APPENDIX

1. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
16-2-29

Dear Bebee,
Forgive me for not thanking you for the two books you sent me. I enjoyed them, specially *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*.[2] I have managed to get another volume by Thornton Wilder[3] called *The Angel That Troubled the Waters*.[4] If you have not read it I shall send it to you. It contains some of his earlier efforts—short two page dialogues which are sometimes rather immature and sometimes beautiful.

I have been to Delhi and Lahore and today I am going to Delhi again. In Lahore Papi and I failed to meet in spite of our best efforts. When I went to see her she was out, and when she came to my place I was out. I had a distant glimpse of her at a meeting I addressed and which she honoured by her distinguished presence.

I have never met Iqbal. He has always been one of the many problems I could not solve. How can a real poet be so extraordinarily communal and narrow-minded and earthly? And yet he happens to be both. Very probably this contradiction is largely due to his clothes which you loathe. I am entirely with you about the proposed legislation to regulate the sartorial and other appearance of a poet. It will be difficult to get it through for I have come to the conclusion that people object to changing their clothes and tufts and beards and other such like excrescences and markings far more than they object to a change in political or economic conditions. They say that politics have passed away and have given place to economics. We have the economic interpretation of history, and the importance of psychology and psychoanalysis in education and the formation of a people's character. Why not a sartorial interpretation of history? There is no doubt that clothes have a powerful influence on the mind. How great must have been their influence in history. So I am all for drastic legislation on the subject. Poets must look and act as poets. I am sure this would do Iqbal a lot of good. We might even wean him from the

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Published in 1927; won the Pulitzer Prize for 1928.
3. (1897–1975); author and dramatist; his works include *The Cabala* (1926); *The Woman of Andros* (1930); *The Merchant of Yonkers* (1939); *The Ides of March* (1948); *The Matchmaker* (1954).
4. A volume culled from Thornton's earliest works; a series of tiny plays, published in 1928.

baneful influence of dogmatic religion which must do infinite harm to his poetry.

The family is flourishing. Indeed I am a little surprised at its good health. Both Kamala and Betty have not misbehaved since we came from Calcutta. I hope the bit of the family in Hyderabad is doing equally well.

Love.

Yours,
Jawahar

2. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
10-7-29

My dear Bebee,

Thank you for your telegram. So at last the great ambassador is returning after her triumphal tour![2] I am very glad she is coming back and you must be vastly excited. Perhaps you know that the All India Congress Committee is meeting in Allahabad on the 26th July. It is an important meeting and we would very much like to have your mother here. But it is a little hard to make her rush up north just when she is looking forward to some rest at home with you. Perhaps you are going to Bombay and if so perhaps both of you could come here together if the journey is not too much. It would be delightful if you could manage it. There will be a crowd here but we could squeeze your little self in somewhere. The crowd will go away after a day or two but you two could stay on in a little more comfort. Gandhiji will be coming.

For many months I have been thinking of writing to you. I have carried your last letter to me in my journeyings, a reminder of you and of the answer I had to send. I have toyed with the idea of this answer. It was pleasant to think of you and I did not wish to hurry—all this by way of excuse!

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Sarojini Naidu went on a six-month tour to the United States, England, Italy, France, Germany, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. She returned to India on 22 July 1929. She had undertaken the tour at the invitation of some Universities and other public bodies in America, and also to counter the impression, about India, created by Miss Mayo's book *Mother India*.

I hope you are well and have not had any further trouble with your frail body. The gods have given me such an aggressively and even coarsely healthy body that it is not easy for me to realize physical suffering in others. And yet I have seen enough of it in others.

Betty is quite well now after her operation. Kamala has her ups and downs. She went to Calcutta bent on having herself cut open. She swore she would not come back without being operated upon. But the doctors just to spite her, I suppose, refused to operate. I am sure now that she was right and they were wrong. Soon after returning to Allahabad she had a violent attack of pain again and when I wrote to the wise ones in Calcutta they said that perhaps it would be better to operate for appendicitis. If they had been a little wiser to begin with all of us would have been saved a lot of trouble. So perhaps we may make a pilgrimage to Russa Road again. But not this month. Bidhan is likely to come here for the A.I.C.C. meeting. We shall settle then.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

3. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
23.7.29

My dear Bebee,

It is so sad, your not coming. But of course you cannot have Harin[2] and Papi, specially the latter. She requires so much looking after. In spite of Oxford I am afraid she still lives in the mid-Victorian age. I suppose she will resent this statement but as she grows younger with the passing of years she will realise the truth of it. What does she mean by slandering me by calling me 'very old'? I hurl the allegation back but I shall not say that I scorn the alleger. I have no intention of getting even moderately old. I hope to carry on with some vigour, till, like the one horse shay, I fall to pieces. But sometimes, I must confess, the long shadow of this old old country falls on me, and it

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, (b. 1898): poet, artist, singer and film actor; his works include *Virgins and Vineyards: Life and Myself, The Feast of Youth, Masks and Farewells* and *Bubbles and Eggs*.

chills. And then I feel like a wanderer in strange places, old and tired and unable to find my way out to the sunlight.

And so the 'motherling' has returned in a blaze of glory. We are all excitement to meet her and be cheered by the blast of fresh air she will bring with her. I wonder if she has gone to you. I do hope she is coming here.

The A.I.C.C. meeting is going to be exciting enough. The Bengal contingent is coming in full strength—solid as a block. Our U.P. friends think and act differently. We are too superior to believe in discipline and each one of us has his own patent remedy for Swaraj.

Give my love to Papi and tell her not to be angry with me—and keep a lot for yourself.

Yours,
Jawahar

4. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Mussoorie
Oct. 24th, 1929

Dear little Bebee,

A message from you is always welcome—congratulations doubly so. I would gladly fulfill your prophecy, but destiny is a hard and dangerous thing and a difficult companion. Are you not previous with your congratulations? I pleaded with Gandhiji not to thrust me into the Congress Presidentship. I told him that this was the surest way of crushing me and suppressing all the joy of a free lance that gave me some effectiveness in my work. But he is terribly obstinate. To the last I was almost sure that he would change his mind. But he did not and I cannot remember having passed a worse half hour than the one which preceded my election.

I have not been happy about it, nor are you in spite of your momentary enthusiasm. I have tried to think of other things and to forget the election. I have largely succeeded, and when I have thought of it at all, it has been impersonally, as something apart from me.

I feel more at peace now. A week at Mussoorie has done me good and the mountains and snowy peaks have cooled the fever of my brain. What the future will bring I do not know. I hardly care. But the

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

thought of those "thousands of young men" who expect great things of me is overwhelming. And I on the threshold of forty! It is really too dreadful to contemplate.

But enough of me. I am tough in body and mind, too much of the earth to suffer much or mind what happens. Last year's beating that I got from the police convinced me of this. I am worried about you. You must not be ill. Do not bother to come to Lahore. It will not be worth it. But get well and with your radiant smile give us the courage that we lack. Come to Allahabad and I promise that you will have rest and will get back your strength. Your mother told us when she came to Allahabad in August or thereabouts that she would bring you in September. But you did not come and it was a sore disappointment. You were not well then. But you will get better soon and as soon as you are well enough come over. It will be a sad Congress if you are far away in Hyderabad.

I have a grievance against your mother. At her instance—indeed I would not have done it otherwise—I lent the *Bridge of San Luis Rey*, which you sent me, to Amaranatha Jha. As I did not get it back for a long time I wrote to him. And now he tells me that he returned it long ago. Where it is I do not know. I shall look for it again but I am greatly distressed about it.

The Mahatma is here, amazingly full of life and energy. He takes tremendous walks and leaves most of his companions panting behind. We go down tomorrow—he to continue his tour and I to Allahabad.

Write to me. It is a delight to hear from you.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

5. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Moving Train
23.3.1930

Dear Bebee,

I have just realised for the nth time how utterly unfit I am to undertake any job. I was supposed to give you your address-book and an ear pendant or some such thing which you had left in Allahabad. I had

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

chills. And then I feel like a wanderer in strange places, old and tired and unable to find my way out to the sunlight.

And so the 'motherling' has returned in a blaze of glory. We are all excitement to meet her and be cheered by the blast of fresh air she will bring with her. I wonder if she has gone to you. I do hope she is coming here.

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1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

put them for safety's sake in my pocket-book. And there they are still perfectly safe! Well, if I do not forget again I shall send them from Allahabad to Bombay.

The little man was going strong yesterday. Trudging away, staff in hand, like Peter the Hermit, to the promised land where salt can be had for the picking up. I suppose I have seen the last of him for many a day and it is as well that the last picture of him that I carry should be this. Ever on the march with brief rest, in search for something which eludes our grasp. It is symbolical enough of him and of all of us.

And when shall I see you again, little woman? For though I do not understand women, in the abstract or the concrete, having had little training therefor, I like and am attached to some of the fine examples of this species I have had the good fortune to come across. And it was a delight to have you in Allahabad during two brief months, although, alas, I was often away. The world is wide and the future may have big things in store for all of us, but I shall remember your pleasant companionship and take heart from your splendid courage. And when trouble looms ahead and one's patience is sorely tried, that memory will remain to soothe and cheer and hearten and put even the redoubtable plum pudding in the shade!

Keep well and smiling—Love,

Yours,
Jawahar.

6. To Kamala Nehru[1]

Central Prison
Naim
July 8th, 1930

Kamala dear,

I am writing to you after many months. My letters to father and one to Nan from jail were really meant for everyone at home. So long as father was out of jail I wrote to him but now that he has joined me I shall write to you or perhaps occasionally to someone else.

Nan's letter to father came this morning. It is short and there is not much in the way of news in it. She excuses herself by saying that most of what she might write would not be allowed to reach us. And

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L.

so she gives us little or no information of Ranjit and our many friends, and of happenings in Allahabad and elsewhere. I wish she and Betty and you would not constitute yourselves the censors of what should enter jail and what should not. That is the job of the jail officers. Let them do it. You can write just what you think would interest us, and there are so many things that are happening that would interest us. We are now getting the *Pioneer* daily in addition to the weekly *Bharat*, so that some important news manages to reach us through them. But I often wonder if in all the wide world there is a more inane and ill-run daily than the *Pioneer* or a more futile weekly than the *Bharat*. The *Pioneer*, since Wilson left it, has become as dull and inefficient...[2] Nothing but the absence of news in jail induces me to read the wretched rag!

I hope mother has recovered from the chill she got in the women's procession, which by the way, might have been described more fully than Nan has done in her letter. It was a brave but risky thing for her and for you to march in the rain for hours. I feel proud of all of you doing so much but remember that your work and your efficiency depends on your health. You must keep fit.

Father has been poorly since last night. This afternoon he had some slight shivering and a rise of temperature to 100°F. Probably it is just a touch of malaria which will pass off soon. But he is very poorly in health all round and requires the most careful watching and nursing. Blood pressure—asthma—eczema—eye trouble—malaria—&c. &c. at this age are not pleasant companions and the cells of Naini jail do not add to his comfort or health. All of us—Mahmud, Narmada Prasad and I—try to serve him to the best of our ability so as to lessen his discomforts but after all we can do little. We are terribly crowded. We might have changed to another barrack with more cell room but on the whole I preferred our present habitation in spite of its over-crowding. Some arrangements are being made to lessen this over-crowding by giving us a specially made bathroom and lavatory. This will relieve the congestion slightly but it will have its own disadvantages as it would mean father having to walk in the open some little distance before he can go to either of these two places. Meanwhile father is sharing my old cell and bathroom. Our bathroom, you will be amused to learn, is used for all manner of purposes. It is the lavatory, bathroom, luggageroom and pantry. All our fruit and food material is kept there. And it is about 10 or 11 ft square! Imagine father living in these conditions! I am very glad however that he is here so that we can be of some

2. Censored by the jail authorities.

service to him. By himself or with strangers he would have been terribly uncomfortable.

Ever since father and Mahmud have come here[3] my reading and spinning have almost stopped. My Muller's exercises and standing on the head have also gone—there is no room for anything—and most of my day is taken up in cleaning and scrubbing the cells and our cutlery and crockery and in generally looking after father's things. The first four days were naturally rather novel and it has taken a little time to settle down. Gradually I hope I shall find time for reading and spinning. But in no case am I likely to spin or read as much as I did previously. You need not trouble to send me any more *punis*—I think I have enough to last me for this present term of imprisonment. Next time, when I have to come back we shall make further arrangements!

I have been very pleased at my reduction in weight. I have gone down 12 lbs since I came here and I feel much fitter. I am afraid however that now with less exercise and all the abundant food that you are sending, I shall grow fat again. This is a terrible thought! The one saving thing is that I am keeping up my running.

Please send us a clinical thermometer—also an ordinary salt cellar—not the crystal ones in the dining room. Some quinine has been sent to us today but this is sugar-coated and father does not like this. Please therefore send Quinine Bihydrochlor plain—uncoated. Please also send Mahmud's fountain pen which he left in the office in Swaraj Bhawan.

Mahmud has had no news of his wife. I am surprised to learn that you did not telegraph to her of his arrest. He half expected an interview with her last Sunday but no one came. She can now come any day that suits her. You had better see her when she comes to Allahabad and explain to her. You might even accompany her to the prison and stay outside while she interviews Mahmud. Tell her that *purdah* arrangements will be made. Also that three persons can interview at one time, besides minor children. When she comes some previous notice had better be sent to Mahmud by telephone or otherwise.

July 9th

I could not finish this letter last evening and am continuing it today. Father is better this morning. He has no fever and by tomorrow ought to be in normal condition.

We are returning the joist fan today. Its recurrent noise and oily smell does not suit father. Fortunately it has been fairly cool lately. In the day-time we have a man to pull the punkha.

3. They were brought to Naini jail on 30 June 1930.

Father would like to refer to the last bill of his fees and costs in the Darbhangha Case, a cheque for which I believe he gave you. Get this from Upadhyaya or wherever it is and send it here or bring it with you at the time of your interview. Also bring father's Imperial Bank Cheque-book and pass-book. The latter should be written up to date by the bank.

Please remember to pay the current municipal and Electric Supply Co's bills. The Swaraj Bhawan electric & municipal bills should be made over to Raja Rao for payment.

I find from Nan's letter that Indu does not like the idea of learning Sanskrit as it is a 'dead language'. She wants to learn Urdu. Certainly she should learn Urdu. We ought all to know it. But I should very much like her to learn Sanskrit in spite of its being 'dead'. In order to know living languages well one must know some of the dead languages, for all living languages have their roots in dead languages; otherwise our knowledge will be superficial only and there is danger of our becoming superficial also. Of the dead languages obviously Sanskrit is the most suited for us. All our past history, literature, life and thought are embedded in it and no one can really understand Indian culture or what India was without knowing Sanskrit. Besides, it is a beautiful language, stately and melodious, with a magnificent literature. It is a matter for great regret for me that I do not know much of it. I am sure Indu when she grows up will regret not knowing it. Therefore it is advisable for her to begin as early as possible. The later one begins the more difficult it is. But of course I do not want Indu to learn anything against her will. Let her read this and decide for herself. If she decided in favour of Sanskrit try to get some one other than an old style Pandit to teach her. Perhaps the Hindi teacher can take up Sanskrit also.

I understand that Tara Chand is supplying some one to teach Indu the general subjects. This is for the time being satisfactory but it cannot do as a permanent arrangement. I think you should try to get a really competent woman who can help in starting a school. As I wrote to father some time ago it would be worth while to get some one from the United States or Switzerland. Write to Dhan Gopal to find out. Such a woman should teach Indu and perhaps one or two others for two or three months while arrangements are made to open a school. But this will take time. Meanwhile you might be able to get a trained woman teacher from the Bombay side. Why not write to Miss Powaiya or some other Bombay friends. I understand that Powaiya has a younger sister who is competent. If you can get a really good woman ask her to come for three months on probation (first of all of

course she must be interviewed by you or by some friend in Bombay). During these three months she can stay with you and teach Indu various subjects probably including Sanskrit. You***[4]

4. Letter incomplete.

7. To Kamala Nehru[1]

Central Prison
Naini
23.7.30

Kamala,

I am writing under considerable difficulties, but today is the appointed day and I must not miss it. Your letter and Betty's to father came this morning. Last week I had your letter with Indu's note. I am sitting at present in a *choldari* with the blazing sun outside and as I melt away and gradually dissolve I wonder if Naini jail is not trying to create a record in heat! And I am reminded of a story of a resident of Arizona in the United States who for his sins was condemned to go to Hell. Having arrived there he started shivering and complained of the cold and wanted a rug! If Arizona was hotter than fires of hell our *choldari* in Naini prison cannot be a bad second to it!

Mahmud and I spend most of our day in this *choldari*, and often the night when it rains. Father rests in my old cell and I have deserted my bathroom-pantry for this *choldari*. The latter is hotter but at least it is more open. But I must not grumble or complain of the heat or other happenings. The heat after all is a small matter but it is far more difficult to suffer folly and there is always enough of this at hand. But I always live in hopes of improving my temper so that I might be able to put up with the folly of others, and jail, which contains a vast deal of this, will no doubt do me good.

Father has not been well for the last two days. He took his injection day before yesterday and since then he has been upset. This was not due so much to his injection as to other troubles—indigestion &c. He fasted for two days and was thoroughly uncomfortable night and day. What little we could do we did but a barrack in jail is not an ideal health resort or hotel *de-luxe*. The heat makes matters worse. We have a punkha coolie for father for part of the day—I wonder what has

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L.

happened to the Kyko fan which was coming from Calcutta or Bombay. I wish it was here. In the mornings and evenings and at night when there are no punkha arrangements here, it would be very useful. After two days' fast father felt a little better this morning and his temperature was normal or near it. At noon today he took a little dal and rice. I hope he will be well again soon. It is obvious however that he has no reserves of health and every little thing upsets him and makes him unwell.

He wants to have his homoeopathic box here—also his three small homoeopathic books—Boericke's *Meteria Medica*. 2. Nash's *Regional Leaders* and 3. Clarke's *Prescriber*. You will find these books in his study—Hari knows them. Also he wants a clip for a rubber tube—Hari has got it.

Because of his ill health father could not take the mangoes or other eatables which you have been sending recently. Please do not send so many things. Do not send any vegetables at all. Send pan and fruit about twice a week and other things when asked for. For the present the following articles are required:

1. Torc.
2. Ovaltine (tin you sent was bad and was returned—I hope you sent it back to the shop).
3. Charcoal.
4. *adrak*. अदरक
5. A Swadeshi comb for myself.
6. A thermometer (clinical). Ask Rabin to get a good one which can be read easily and whose markings do not disappear. We have two thermometers but the lines in both have partially disappeared and it is difficult to read them.
7. The *Pioneer* of the 10th and 11th July which contains the Viceroy's speech[2] or any other paper containing it.
8. K.T. Shah's "Gandhi's Eleven Points" a small book which Prof. Shah presented to father in Bombay recently. It must be in his Bombay papers.
9. Winston Churchill's *World Crisis*—2 or 3 volumes[3]—in the big North book case on the right.
10. My khadi *puttees* for Mahmud.

2. This refers to the speech made by Lord Irwin on 9 July 1930 justifying the suppression of the civil disobedience movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi; and making an appeal for the Round Table Conference to decide upon the constitution for the "progressive attainment of Dominion Status."
3. Published in six volumes between 1923 and 1931.

11. The *Living* Age for last three months or so.
12. A Hindi Primer for Mahmud.
13. Some Urdu book for me!

A goodly list! I shall probably add to it before I have done—Don't bother about anything you cannot easily get. You are so very busy that I hesitate to take any of your time. The *Pioneer*—stupid paper—says little enough about the boycott week activities but I have no doubt that your labours are bearing good fruit and I wish indeed that I could see the great display of national flags in the city.

Your birthday came as a surprise. The *Samvat* date always does so. I remembered well enough the first of August but no previous intimation was given of the 21st of July. However the *baz bhatta* and *khir* &c. arrived just in time and we had a mighty feed! Almost as a birthday present I find you have got the membership of the W.C. It is a high honour and a great responsibility and I feel sure you will shoulder the burden well. I find from the *Pioneer* that there is a meeting in Bombay on July 30th. I presume you will attend it. You ought to do so.

Today I returned some old *newar*. This has been taken off one of the beds you sent and replaced by new *newar*. The old stuff can be given to a servant who has need of it. It is in bad condition.

I was very sorry to read about Shaukat Ali's antics. Poor man—he has quite gone to pieces and deserves to be pitied. Unfortunately he does some harm still.

The great day for us in jail is coming soon—Interview day! Next Saturday I hope to see you all, and in my excitement I shall get up earlier and try to shave closer and put on my cleanest *kurta* and dhoti for the wonder of a visit from you all. And the minutes will go rapidly and the visit will be over too soon and I shall return to my barrack to look forward to next interview day. Where you will be then, or my other interviewers, I do not know and do not much care, for wherever you may be I am sure you will be working for the cause and carrying the good flag forward. I am afraid, and yet I glory to think of it, that our life is going to be a chequered one for many a year and the joy of good work done will have to take the place of many wants. Do not imagine that this is a short episode in our lives—a pleasant holiday ending with the long summer day. Many a summer and winter will come and go before peace will come to us. It is a long journey and and as we proceed we shall have to discard much of the unnecessary baggage that clings to us. To travel fast one has to travel light.

Bets—the above is meant for you also. Sitting here, I dream of snowy Montana and the high peaks and the beautiful cold winds. I also think of the *chauffage centrale*[4] which is supposed to be such an attraction in the houses and for which you pay heavily. I wish they would take some of the unnecessary *chauffage* from here!

Send my love to Bibi (Padmaja) and tell her that I am still waiting for A. E's[5] *Candle of Vision*—How is she now? Now that womenfolk are going to prison she must get fit and strong and be ready for an (ar) rest cure. The pun is not mine. It is the great poet's—Tagore.

If you write to Helen tell her that I finished with Gibbon[6] long ago and I am fully occupied with another empire now. We are all busy writing the history of this in a more effective way than with pen and ink. To act history is far more exciting than to write it or read it. Meanwhile like a good prisoner I spent much of my time in spinning and weaving. And latterly this has given place largely to sweeping, scrubbing and similar accomplishments.

Take care of yourself—little soldier boy—we have many a great fight ahead and no lack of high enterprise. India is today the land of adventure. Pity the dull and sober whose vision is as limited as their intellect and physical courage. But to the brave gallant adventure beckons and the flag calls.

Indu dear, congratulations to the little monkey on her success in enrolling fellow *Vanars* in the *Vanar Sena*. I am glad you have changed your emblem. I hope the *Vanars* will manage their own affairs and will not rely upon their elders too much.

Dadu suggested to you that you should run everyday. This is good. I wish you would do so in the morning. Also try to stand on your head. Nothing like it!

Kamala

Hope mother is well—Try to prevent her from tiring herself too much. Give my love to her and tell her to look after herself and not to worry about us.

4. Central heating.
5. George William Russell (1867–1935); Irish poet and dramatist.
6. Edward Gibbon (1737–1794); British historian, author of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

Give my love to Uma Bhabi and Chand and Tara and Rita, also to your mother.

Love,

Your loving,
Jawahar

Mahmud sends his *salaams* and wishes you many happy returns of your birthday. He says he is very keen on seeing Indu's *Vanars*.

8. To Kamala Nehru[1]

Central Prison
Naini
2nd Sept. 1930

Kamala dear,

The time is not very far off now when I complete my present term of imprisonment and am due to be discharged. I am by no means sure that I will be discharged even then, however, that is a matter about which one need not worry. But whenever I may be discharged I am beginning to feel very doubtful about the kind of home-coming I am likely to have. It seems highly likely that all of you will land yourselves in jail and leave a deserted house to welcome me. It will be a bit of a disappointment for me but I cannot say that I shall be unhappy about it. Bapu indeed will be delighted. I can imagine him rejoicing at the arrests of Hansa Mehta and Mrs. Ambalal.[2]

My discharge however is yet nearly six weeks' hence. I wonder sometimes if you and Nan and Betty will remain out even till my next interview. Do not hurry off. Let us meet once again at least.

Strange, what changes a few months have brought in our old country, and the Working Committee of which you are now the oldest member—oldest not in age but in priority of appointment. You seem to be developing into a dangerous rival for me! I wish you would try to rival me in my health and physique also.

Father's health, or rather ill health is a matter for anxiety. Not that there is anything happening immediately which need cause anxiety. But his present troubles taken with his age are serious enough. He has

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. They were arrested on 30 August 1930.

not yet got rid of the streak of blood in his sputum. Sometimes it is absent, but as soon as we are beginning to congratulate ourselves, it reappears again. He is very far from looking or feeling bright. Indeed sometimes he feels quite tired out and hardly has any wish to move about or do anything. Rabin comes here twice a week to give an injection.

Sometimes, through roundabout ways—other peoples' interviews or letters—I learn that all kind of rumours are afloat in Allahabad as to what I am supposed to have said regarding work outside. The Superintendent told me the other day that I am supposed to have instigated picketing at the university. You know that my opinion is that a person in jail is unable to form a correct opinion of the position outside and hence cannot give any worthwhile direction. Of course if I learn anything my immediate reaction may be to criticise it. But that is sheer force of habit. You must realise and so must others that a prisoner's views are not worth having, and must shift for yourselves. I say this not because of any innate modesty on my part—as you know I am singularly lacking in it and am aggressive enough outside. But at present I am not on the active list and hence my desire not to be misunderstood —because of unauthorised rumours. So far as you and Nan and Betty and others who see me are concerned there is no chance of my being misunderstood. But I write this for others who do not interview me.

I hope you saw to it that Rs. 100 were sent on behalf of father to the Superintendent, Yervada Prison for Wheeler.

Tell Nan that I am very glad she is interesting herself in courses of first-aid and nursing &c. This is very good and Ranjit with his experience ought to help tremendously. It would be a good thing if Ranjit was put in charge of all the hospital arrangements. It is no good you or a few others trying to shoulder all the burden. Try to decentralise. If Ranjit is willing, discuss the matter with him and Uma Bhabi.

When I think of all the hard work and worry that all of you outside have to face I feel thoroughly ashamed. Prison life is indeed an indulgence nowadays. A little ashamed as I am, I am also very proud that all those who are dear to me are giving of their best in this great struggle. Nothing has pleased Bapu so much as the part the women of India are taking. He feels, and so do all of us, that the future of India is safe in their keeping.

Mother and Betty must be wandering about somewhere. Everybody seems to be developing into an orator! Even your mother, I am very glad to learn, is touring about and speaking at meetings. Send my love to her.

I hope Indu is carrying on her lessons regularly. She is, and I am glad of it, a high-spirited girl. I would rather have an ounce of spirit in her than a pound of tame learning. But learning and mind training is also necessary and so I do hope that she will pay attention to these. I am writing a few lines for her.

I am also writing a few lines for Padmaja. Send them to her. The books she has sent should also be returned to her as soon as you get them back from me. Do not return the books which she has presented to me. You will see inscriptions to this effect on the front page. If you write to Bul and Nargis send my love to them.

I am trying hard to stand on my head but I have not succeeded yet. Please send me the first two numbers of *Yoga Mimamsa* Magazine. I think these give the necessary information on the subject. You will find them in the library in the East book case, near big one.

Send us three small towels and three dusters.

Look after yourself well for you have to do a great deal of work yet. What can a person who is ill do? Feed up and rest enough and you are welcome to work as hard as you like. I am looking forward greatly to our interview next Saturday. If Uma Bhabi is free, bring her along.

Love to everybody.

Mahmud's *Salaams* to all.

Yours,
Jawahar

9. To Kamala Nehru[1]

Naini
10.9.30

Dear Kamala,

Received your letter just now. Papa must have given you all the news about here. I have nothing particular to write about. Outside, you are all working very hard—I congratulate you—what scope is there for me to say anything? You must not worry about the fact that I do not get to know everything. I too have plenty of experience about activities and can understand a thing without being told about it. In big tasks each individual is tested, not only for how much he can do himself but also

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

for how much he can get out of others. One must remember this, and then, there are always ups and downs in any work.

So, you have concluded that I will not come out? What a conclusion you have arrived at! I do fully intend to come out.

Mahmud's interview is on next Sunday i.e. the 14th. He has no hopes of his wife or sisters coming this time. You could find out. If you like, you, Khawaja and some one else can come and meet Mahmud, but after waiting for the train from Chapra. His son is better but still very weak.

I had asked for some books in my previous letter. I got some of them. Send the remaining ones if you can find them, don't bother much about it. Bring Uma Bhabi at the interview.

Look after yourself,

Love,

Jawahar

Indu darling,[2]

I do not know if you are going with Dadu tomorrow or not. You will decide of conrse. You are grown up enough to make up your mind for yourself. Do not bother about my interview. If you would like to spend some time in Mussoorie, you should certainly go there. We can have our interview on your return. Do just what you think right.

Give the letter on the other side to Mnmmie and remember you have to look after her and after yourself.

Love, from Papu
10/9

2. This letter is written in English.

10. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Central Prison
Naini
October 22nd, 1930

Bebee dear, Will I be in Bombay in mid-November? I guess not. I have a previous engagement in Barrack No. 6 of the Naini Central

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Prison and I fear this will keep me busy for some little time. But do not worry. Time passes quickly—too fast indeed as each November with its birthday anniversary painfully reminds me. Whenever I have come to jail I have formed resolutions to do a great number of things, but time has flown and much has remained undone and I have not grown as wise as I intended to. Last time I started off finely with hard reading and hard spinning and weaving and hard running. I even read through Spengler's[2] *Decline of the West*[3] and that was a feat. Slowly however I slackened off and began to spend time in such useless ways as watching the clouds sail by and the deep blue sky—how blue it looks through a gap in the clouds during the rains—and the army of parrots who have made their home in the crevices of the big wall that surrounds us and frowns upon us. They drove their predecessors the *mainas*, ruthlessly away and usurped their homes. And I watched the long processions of the ants—we have a few million of them—and marvelled at their organisation and their industry. Above all I looked at the long shadows cast on our guardian wall in the evenings. It is a circular wall, quite near us and wherever we may sit or stand in the evenings, if there is a light near by, strange and fantastic shadows appear on it—sometimes clear cut, sometimes vague and enormous like the inhabitants of Brobdingnag. And I live for a while in shadowland with the shadows of the past and of the future as companions. And the shadows of the future are good and pleasant to look upon.

And so time passes and all too soon the big gates of the prison open out and we into the outer world—for how long? Do not worry. I am really nearer to my friends when I am in prison than when I am outside. Outside I am wrapped up in the activity of the moment, forgetful of many things in my desire to achieve; here I have no such occupation, and even when I spin, I dream and think of friends and of all the fine things we are going to do in this old sleepy country of ours which has at last woken up a little. I wonder at my good fortune. Do not waste sympathy on me but congratulate me.

You do not say how you are. Keep well for the great day which is coming.

As an under-trial I have a measure of freedom in writing letters. After a day or two when I revert to the status of a convict this freedom will be very limited. Even so, if occasionally you send a few lines for

2. Oswald Spengler (1880–1930); German writer on philosophy of history.
3. Published in two volumes between 1918–1922, translated into English from German in which Spengler predicted the eclipse of the western civilisation.

me to Kamala she may be able to send them on with her letter. They will be very welcome.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

11. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
10.4.31

Bebee dear,

How are you and when will I have the chance of meeting you? I think of you so often but you are so far away. I have heard wonderful stories of all you have done. I have received your letters and have wanted to write to you. But somehow I have not done so. The strain of the last two months has been terrific and I am so involved in life's tangles that escape seems almost impossible. I feel in the grip of a relentless octopus and I am so weary. I have decided to take a month off. Perhaps I might go to Ceylon—the further away the better. There appears to be no peace in India. But nothing is certain and I am dragged hither and thither whether I will it or not. I shall go to Bombay on the 16th and intend spending five or six days there. If I can manage it I shall go to Ceylon from there. When I have a little more peace I shall write to you. Meanwhile look after yourself. Old India will carry on without us for a while.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

12. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Kashi
29.6.31

Bebee,

This is hardly going to be a proper letter. But I do wish to send you

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

a few lines now to thank you for what you wrote to me. I am here in Banaras for a day, and in the stately mansion of Shiva Prasad Gupta everyone sleeps in the middle of the day. I am about the only person who is awake.

I am glad you liked the photograph I sent you. It was taken after we had been ten days in Nuwara Eliya—ten days largely in ship and without any immediate responsibility or worry. That makes a difference. No large-bodied and fearsome females are likely to help, but perhaps a charming person might make this difference for a while. After all that is not my usual self. It might be my better self but we have become strangers to each other and sometimes we look into each other's eyes without the light of recognition. It is a long time now since I wedded myself to a jealous phantom and I have been a bondsman ever since with the mark of the serf in my eyes and on my brow. And I doubt if there is a divorce potent enough to separate us, for we have grown together and become almost one. Many an old friend and acquaintances has dropped off and the old ways have ceased to attract and like a slave I am driven hither and thither. Sometimes, a little wistfully, I think of other things, of the might have beens and the might bes, but immediately I am caught in the turn of the wheel and the big machine carries me on to I know not where.

I had indeed a strange home-coming. That night I was troubled, not because I had seen blood, for I am used enough to it. But it struck me that the fates were pursuing me with blood. In Colombo, just before I left, I had a bloody experience. In Bombay, a young boy was stabbed to death almost immediately after I had finished speaking at a public meeting, and lastly at Allahabad station. The boy who was stabbed here had such a sweet and charming face. He was about 14 and had come some distance to see me. He had a deep gash in the ribs and was covered with blood and yet he smiled and seemed to be glad that he had thus got a chance of seeing more of me. He has recovered now, but at the time the sight affected me and I wondered if I was going to be the cause of blood and suffering to others.

I feel a little better now. The last few days I have been wandering about the villages of some of our districts. Everywhere there were large crowds of kisans full of tales of woe. Both the government and the zamindars are out to crush them and to break their fine spirit. The agrarian situation here is as near a crisis as it can well be and there seems no real way out except our upsetting of the existing order. Crowds of kisans come to Anand Bhawan and I can offer them little consolation or help. And yet we are supposed to be at peace with government!

I must get you to teach me how to move serenely and unafraid through the misery and sorrow of this world. One forgets one's personal sorrow in the larger one, but there is no escaping this and it leaves its imprint on the face and the mind.

I am going to Bombay for the meeting of the Working Committee on the 7th.

I sent you two copies of my photograph. One was for Papi. I hope you gave it to her with my love.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

13. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
18.8.1931

You have not written to me for a long time, Bebee dear, and I have rather missed your beautiful but illegible handwriting. Some news of you I had in Bombay and I even heard that there was some chance of your coming there. But there was no such luck.

A little while ago I sent you copies of some letters I wrote to Indu from jail. Did you receive them? They are incomplete and much too personal for publication.

We are again polishing up our buttons and tightening up our belts, or whatever the equivalent of these operations may be in khadi. And a measure of excitement is again coming into our dull and prosaic lives. What a blessing is the British Government? What would we do without it?

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

I have done there a dream that passes on waking. I seem to find my level here with extraordinary ease. The very walls are friendly. And last night as I looked up at the moon and the stars, I felt as if I was surrounded by a host of friends, looking down at me kindly but somewhat quizzically and perhaps with a touch of complaint in their eyes. Had I not forgotten them and ignored them for many months? But there was no malice in their looks and they know how to wait.

I shall not write to you now for many a long day. And so I take this opportunity of sending you a few lines as an under-trial. An under-trial has a certain measure of freedom in this respect.

Your letter came. I was sorry to find how you had worried over my crude attempts to look after you. You must know by this time that it is a habit of mine to interfere with others and to imagine that it is my job to look after them. I am quite sure that you are strong enough to cheat the gods even for what can they do, before your charming smile?

I am afraid the task you have suggested for me in prison is beyond me. Father seems to be too near me always for me to think of writing about him. It would be difficult for me to share with another the memories and intimacies which I treasure.

We shall meet again, when perhaps we are nearer to remoulding this little world of India according to our hearts' desire.

Love,

Jawahar

16. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Naini Prison
January 12, 1932

Dear Bebee,

What delightful books you have sent me! Last year—or rather the year before—when I was living in this delectable spot, I sent for Sven Hedin's *Trans-Himalaya*[2] and other books of travel. In particular, I had the pictures of the Alps and of Mont Blanc. It was the height of summer then, and the sight of glaciers and snow-covered peaks was wonderfully cooling. Gazing at them I grew serene and the fever in the brain

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Reference is to the book *Mount Everest*, published in 1922.

14. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
24.10.31

Bebee dear,
I have not written to you for a long time and you have not remembered me for many months. Of course the fault is mine and I plead guilty and prostrate myself and approach you, after the manner of mahatmas, on bended knees. But I have been suddenly stimulated into writing to you, even at the cost of stealing some of my office time, by the rare news that you have sent Betty. So you are free from pain and having a real good time. How splendid. Keep good and do not sin again.

I wonder when I shall see you again. I wish I could have a glimpse of you before I return to my barrack in Naini jail. If you could only come here for a while—but I dare not suggest it lest the charm of your newly gained health should break.

This period of 'truce' has been one of the most painful episodes in my life, and one of the most trying so far as physical work is concerned. Fortunately the end is near. Or is it the beginning?

Do write.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

15. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Central Prison
Naini
27th Dec. 1931

Bebee dear,
I am back again to my old haunts and everywhere there are old friends to welcome me. Just eleven months I was away, to a day, and it seems but yesterday that I went. The outside world seems far away and what

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

I have done there a dream that passes on waking. I seem to find my level here with extraordinary ease. The very walls are friendly. And last night as I looked up at the moon and the stars, I felt as if I was surrounded by a host of friends, looking down at me kindly but somewhat quizzically and perhaps with a touch of complaint in their eyes. Had I not forgotten them and ignored them for many months? But there was no malice in their looks and they know how to wait.

I shall not write to you now for many a long day. And so I take this opportunity of sending you a few lines as an under-trial. An under-trial has a certain measure of freedom in this respect.

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I am afraid the task you have suggested for me in prison is beyond me. Father seems to be too near me always for me to think of writing about him. It would be difficult for me to share with another the memories and intimacies which I treasure.

We shall meet again, when perhaps we are nearer to remoulding this little world of India according to our hearts' desire.

Love,

Jawahar

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January 12, 1932

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What delightful books you have sent me! Last year—or rather the year before—when I was living in this delectable spot, I sent for Sven Hedin's *Trans-Himalaya*[2] and other books of travel. In particular, I had the pictures of the Alps and of Mont Blanc. It was the height of summer then, and the sight of glaciers and snow-covered peaks was wonderfully cooling. Gazing at them I grew serene and the fever in the brain

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Reference is to the book *Mount Everest*, published in 1922.

subsided and I seemed to be lost in mighty distances. So you have guessed aright in sending me Nicholas Roerich and Sven Hedin. Shall I return them to you when I have read them and when my other companions, who feel attracted to them have also journeyed across the Gobi and trekked over the Himalayan passes?

And thus cut off from our immediate surroundings, we seem to inherit the mountains and the deserts and the wide wide world comes to us for the asking, and we realise, in the words of a favourite author of yours, how wonderful is the texture of life and how strangely life's richest gift flowers from frustration and cruelty and separation.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

17. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Dehra Dun Jail
January 10, 1933

Bebee dear,

You seem to be bent on spoiling me completely. All the books that I have coveted, and those that I have wanted to read, and those that I might have desired if I knew about them—all these come to me in endless succession from Poona. My appetite for books is big enough, but the capacity to digest them is limited. Sometimes I read a good deal; at other times the mood changes and I read little.

Who is this Frieda Das[2] whose books you have sent me? I have an idea that she is a Polish-German-Jewish-Swiss-American woman whom we used to meet in Geneva. She came to visit us in Allahabad also once and I believe you were in Anand Bhawan then. The facts about her seem to fit in, and yet I can hardly believe that she could write so well and make such delightful drawings. My recollection of her is not a flattering one. I remember her as a gushing and overpowering woman whose visits rather frightened me. Only a few days before I received her book of animal stories, which you sent, I had ordered this from a

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Frieda Mathilde Hauswirth (Mrs. Sarangadhar Das); her works include *Leap-Home and Gentlebrawn* (1932) and *Into the Sun* (1933).

bookseller. I had sent for it for Indu. Probably in course of time this copy also will arrive.

I am not anxious and I am not worrying about your health. I have given up the habit of worrying about anything. What is the good of being in gaol if one worries? That should be the occupation of those who are not so fortunate. But I do feel that you have no business to have all manner of pains and your job in life is to be "vividly radiantly well and happy" and not merely smile through every kind of pain and torture, as you have an extraordinary way of doing. I would put myself up as a worthy example to be followed but then I have no pains or other bodily ailments, and in spite of this my temper, I grieve to say is not of the sweetest at all times. None the less I keep fairly cheerful, not merely passively but actively and aggressively.

Day after tomorrow I am having an interview with Nan and Betty and Indu. This is my first interview after seven months and I am extraordinarily excited about it. During these long months I had turned my mind away from interviews. I had put them away from me and, having done so, I seldom thought about them. Sometimes I felt a dull want of something, an empty feeling hard to analyse. But an active wish to see people was kept down. The moment however I decided to take interviews, I seemed to have opened out a new chamber of my mind, which had been locked up for so long, and ever since I have been full of the idea and eagerly looking forward to them. The long peace of mind—or was it merely ennui?—has been broken. How superficial our efforts are to train and control our desires! And now I shall want to meet so many friends.

What do I do? All manner of things as the spirit moves me. I am not the slave of some particular work as I am outside. Here I am lord of my time and can work or rest as I choose with no prickings of conscience. Jail, like Bernard Shaw's hell, is in a way the idle man's paradise. There is no feeling of responsibility, no singing of hymns in the heavenly chorus at stated intervals. And yet I am not exactly lazy, for laziness is own brother to dullness and ennui, and in jail regular and slightly tiring work is the best antidote for this. And so I read and write and take exercise and wash clothes and occasionally try my hand at cooking—but nobody appreciates my cooking. And for long hours I am silent, and I watch various animals, big and small, that come within the orbit of my vision, and I play about with a kitten, and generally behave like a five year old. As the old year passed away we had a new excitement—a distant one but none the less pleasing. Fresh snow-covered Mussoorie and all the neighbouring hill sides and the sight

of it cheered me up vastly. The damp cold that followed in its train was not so pleasant but then one can't have everything.

I sent you a packet of books long ago to your old address on Sassoon Road. I hope you received it. They were all your books except one—a *Heavenly Discourse*.[3] Later I returned to you Morgan's[4] *Fountain*[5] and a few days ago I sent a book by Max Nomad.[6] I have returned a large number of your books to Anand Bhawan. Perhaps Nan might take them to Poona. It is no good wasting them in Allahabad. They are likely to get lost there. I have still a good dozen or more of your books.

Dehra Dun is not so far off after all from Poona and, who knows, perhaps we might meet before so very long. Indeed we will. But there must be no more accidents and you must get into the pink of condition before you can legitimately expect that privilege.

Give my love to your mother.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

3. Published in 1927, its author was Charles Erskine Wood (1852–1944); an American writer.
4. Charles Morgan (b. 1894); English novelist and dramatist; his works include *The Gunroom* (1919); *Portrait in a Mirror* (1929); *The Fountain* (1932); *The Judges' Story* (1947); and *The Burning Glass* (1954).
5. It received the Hawthornden Prize for 1933.
6. Expatriate Austrian political writer; his works include *Dreamers, Dynamitters and Demagogues; Revels and Renegades; Apostles of Revolution, Political Heretics*, and *A Skeptics' Political Dictionary and Handbook for the Disenchanted*; died 1973.

18. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Dehra Dun Jail
February 7, 1933

Bebee dear, Your letter has not brought good news about youreslf. Yes the road winds uphill—most roads worth marching on go up and up and it is often weary work climbing them. But you have the knack of doing it, and to others you have been a wonderful example. So do

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

not mind what the doctors tell you—you have not paid much attention in the past to their dismal prophecies, and have usually confounded them.

I am glad the two or three books I sent you interested you. The books I usually get are varied enough but on the whole they are of the 'heavy' kind. I have to concentrate mightily to follow the argument in some of them and slowly I make progress at the rate of about ten pages an hour. I try to keep myself away from too much light reading at a stretch. I find that this tires one more in the real sense of the word, and there is a feeling of ennui at the end of it. Innumerable pictures pass through the mind leaving no permanent impression like the movies. Heavy intellectual effort on the other hand gives a healthy feeling of fatigue and then it is a delight to relax with a light book. So I have tried to control my reading in jail, otherwise I would have gone through any number of books. For many months I toiled at German, not with remarkable success I am afraid. Ultimately I got fed up with it and gave it up, but I may go back to it later. Learning languages is not my strong point.

The books you have sent me have all been of the delightful and light variety. They have lured me repeatedly from the path of duty and made demands on the time allotted to economics and the like. After a day or two's relapse I have pulled myself up. The result is that I have large numbers of books which await reading. I can't keep up with your gifts, especially when they are added to the books I get from other sources. Please therefore let me catch up before you send me any more books. I have enough to carry me for another three months or so.

The books you have sent me lately are all quite new and I don't suppose you read them before sending them. May I send them back to you after reading them? Shaw's little book and *Golden Home* and the Russian stories and the Spanish lot, etc. Your mother will surely like to read them. Afterwards you can keep the books with you till I come to visit you and take them away! I can't accumulate books here. They have to be sent to Anand Bhawan or to you. Drop me a post card to say what you would like me to do.

I have been getting some foreign periodicals—*Manchester Guardian Weekly, New Statesman,* the *New York Nation* & *New Republic.* I used to get some others also like *Punch* but I have dropped them now. I was wondering if your mother would care to see them second-hand—or Mahadeva. If so they could easily be sent on every week. I send them on to Ranjit and I could send a word to him to send them on to any address you may mention. Perhaps it would be better if you asked Nan to write to Ranjit about them direct. I find these foreign papers

of it cheered me up vastly. The damp cold that followed in its train was not so pleasant but then one can't have everything.

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1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

I am summoned now for more discussions and must go.
Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

21. To Kamala Nehru[1]

Almora Jail
26 May 1935

Dear Kamman,
Day before yesterday, I received Indu's telegram sent from Bombay. Today I received your letter and hers. I am writing to you today itself and will send this by air mail. This may also reach Europe by the time you do, but I cannot say when you will get this, because this letter will go to Geneva and you will perhaps go to Vienna first. Madan had told me at Bhowali to send letters c/o American Express, Geneva. He did not write anything about this from Bombay, but Indu has sent the address of Thomas Cook, Geneva, and so I am sending this to Thomas Cook only and shall do so in future also. But I am having some misgivings. If Madan does not pay proper attention to this, there will be a lot of confusion about the letters. To many—like Kakkar and others, and Betty in Bhowali and probably to Amma—he has given the American Express address. This is a slackness of arrangements. It would be better if he gave the new address to everyone, and collected letters from Thomas Cook, wherever he might be. Let him make enquiries at the American Express also.

I had made many arrangements at Bhowali regarding your departure and Jal and Piloo helped a lot at Bombay. If these had not been done, there would have been a lot of trouble, and perhaps it would have been difficult for you to go at this time. You will not be getting this help in future and it is likely you may be a little inconvenienced. I am satisfied that Madan has gone with you, but Madan has not much experience in making domestic arrangements as he has mostly lived alone, and all his household affairs are looked after, as you know, by Suraj Bali. In these circumstances, he will often forget things—take more things

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

than necessary, and be troubled because of that—expenses will also be more—anyway, that does not matter—that is how experience is gained. If Nanu were with you in Vienna, you would have not only got help, but you could have brought down expenses, etc., with his advice. Therefore, I was particularly keen that you should call for Nanu. Madan is absolutely unfamiliar with these countries. *Chacha* (Jagat Narayanji) is going with you—he is a very good man and will surely try to help you. But what can the poor fellow know about the conditions in Europe?

Because of these reasons, I thought the sooner you reached Switzerland, the better. There will be a lot of trouble in wandering here and there and if you get stuck up in some other country, then you will have to undergo still more trouble. Obviously, I cannot advise you from here—this can be settled only on the advice of the doctors there. But I do wish that, if possible, you should go to Switzerland, after consultations in Vienna.

You have gone to Europe for your treatment. If you were not unwell, then obviously you would not have gone now. But I have liked your going for other reasons also. I am also a doctor of sorts of men and probably know a few essential things better than ordinary doctors. Very rarely does the cause of sickness lie merely in the body; the mind and thoughts have very much to do with it. The doctors here realise this very little—they get involved in outward symptoms alone. The treatment of the mind and thoughts depends on faith, not on medicine. Therefore I often become helpless.

In Europe you will be free from the troubles and anxieties you have here—it is also good that you will be away from me. If I were with you, I could definitely help you in lots of ways—at least, all the arrangements would have been made properly. Arrangements would have been made in other places also like the excellent arrangements made by friends in Bombay—but all this would have done no good ultimately. It is not good to be dependent on others and it becomes a habit, and when one does not get help, he complains. Man's self-development is made possible only by his own efforts. Too much care of a sick person also retards his progress.

Therefore, I wish when your health improves, you would take over all the arrangements in your own hands. Do not worry that you might make mistakes. If you make mistakes, you will learn from them. It is not proper that the entire burden should be put on Madan or on someone else. Madan will have other work also to do. We cannot tie him down for a very long time. But apart from this, I want you to develop attitudes and habits of independence. You will see how

much your strength and confidence increase by this. And so it is good that I am not with you and cannot impose my ideas on you. You have been familiar with my life for many years—at what plane of thoughts I live mostly—what I do—what are my defects and weaknesses —what few virtues I have. Then why depend on me? It is also not certain when I shall stay with you and when not. My thoughts and emotions may lead me anywhere. I am a traveller, limping along in the dark night. Why should I drag others into this darkness, however near or beloved they may be; why should they suffer the travails of the journey? I have no right to do so. But because I am a man of strong will, I do influence those near me—sometimes this is good and sometimes not. After great thought, I have evolved a philosophy of my life —I try to act up to it. This has relevance not just to politics but to every aspect of life. But this does not mean that others should also travel along the same path, whether they accept this philosophy or not. Every individual has to find his own way and walk along it. If two persons get together, then it becomes a very happy journey for them. But getting together depends on the mind and thoughts.

Therefore, I wish that you and Indu consider yourselves absolutely independent and do whatever you think proper. Let Indu manage all her affairs herself and you also do the same when you are a little better. I am hopeful that you will soon improve and regain health in Europe. It will certainly take some time to be completely cured—there is no need to worry about this.

Why worry for my sake? My body and mind both are robust; then what else can worry a man? And you know that I always take enough care of myself because I think it necessary for my work. So you rest assured from my side.

Madan wrote to me from Bombay that he has taken travellers' cheques for £ 125, cash £ 25 and a cheque for £ 180. I had made arrangements for a higher amount of cheque—I do not know why he has taken less. It would be better if he opened an account with Thomas Cook, Geneva. We have already had dealings with them and it will also be easy to send money from India.

You have written that there is very little money left in your account—so I got sent Rs. 100/-. I do not understand which account you had referred to.

I came to know about the hospital. You have made right arrangements—they will continue.

Betty and Raja came to meet me this morning. They might come and see me again after two weeks before returning to Bombay. Didda is not keeping well these days.

I came to know from Indu's letter that Feroze travelled with you from Allahabad to Bombay. I hope you must have talked to Bapu or someone else regarding him and his problems must have been resolved.

Till now I have been living in a small tent. It is quite hot during the day-time but evenings and nights are very pleasant. I had not been able to see moonlit nights properly for a long time. Nowadays, I see them and see the stars also a lot. It has not rained here for a long time.

You will certainly read the letter I wrote to Indu—there is no need to repeat its contents here.

It is midnight—the stars are shining brightly—there is absolute silence. Your ship, too, silently cutting across the sea must now be proceeding towards Aden.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

22. To Kamala Nehru[1]

Almora Jail
7 June 1935

Dear Kamman,

The telegram intimating your arrival at Vienna reached me day before yesterday. I was rather surprised to know about your reaching there so soon. I was under the impression that it would take a day or two more. Perhaps ships travel faster now—three weeks back I took leave of you at Bhowali—in these three weeks how far you have reached!—whereas I stay firmly rooted to my ground like a tree.

Telegrams about your journey were very brief—they did not convey much news—perhaps in three or four days I may get letters posted by you and Indu at Aden and may come to know all the details. I had been hoping that you would have started moving about a little on board

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

the ship. After your consultations with the doctors at Vienna, I must get a telegram so that I may know what they have advised. It is my wish that they also advise against an immediate operation and ask you to take rest at Switzerland.

I do not know whether before your departure you made any arrangements to get newspapers from here. There must be some means or the other of getting news from India. The trouble is that newspapers here are quite useless and there are no suitable weeklies. If you like, you can send for *The Bombay Chronicle*—Upadhyaya will make arrangements for that. For the present, I am sending word to Upadhyaya to send *The Modern Review*, *Vishal Bharat* and *The Hindu Illustrated Weekly* of Madras to you—these will come to you care of Thomas Cook, Geneva. You will not get much news in them, none the less some connection with India will be maintained.

You must have heard that there was a terrible earthquake a week ago in Quetta and Baluchistan—it was more violent and destructive than the last year's earthquake in Bihar and, because it came at night, the loss was much more. It is said that more than 50,000 people got buried and killed—the number goes on increasing daily and it is possible that it may reach 70,000. Quetta town has been completely ruined and devastated, so also many small towns and villages.

The heart trembles after a terrible occurrence like this and petty troubles and sorrows of the world seem insignificant. For some days, the heat has been beyond limits in the whole country—much more than normal—Allahabad, Lucknow, etc. are burning with heat—so much so that even here in Almora, it is unbearable. Many people in the cities and villages on the plains have died because of this heat. The strange thing is that at this very time it suddenly became a bit cold in Quetta (even otherwise the weather there is pleasant) and people sleeping outside again moved inside and there they got trapped and buried.

Apart from the newspapers I get here, I have received no news either of home or of the outside world. I have had no interviews since I wrote to you last, and letters have already stopped coming here. I do not know how or where others are. I shall come to know something when Betty and Raja come for an interview day after tomorrow. They may return to Bombay soon. Ranjit and Nan have probably not yet arrived at Bhowali.

What else shall I write to you? Nothing happens in my prison life which is worth describing or which will interest anyone—the daily routine has become monotonous—reading, writing, strolling, digging here and there with a small spade—eating and sleeping. This is how the days pass. I am keeping well.

If by chance you go to Germany—which I do not wish—then do not take my book *Glimpses* with you—it has no praise for the Nazis, and because of that, it is likely you might be landed in trouble.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

I sent my last letter care of Thos. Cook, Geneva—but as a matter of precaution had sent a few lines direct to Vienna also—that too care of Thomas Cook, Vienna—it is possible that no one even asked for this letter at Vienna. If you have not received that letter, you may write to Cook at Vienna and send for it.

I am enclosing a letter for Indu.

23. To Kamala Nehru[1]

Almora Jail
21 June, 1935

Dear Kamman,

Received your letter and Indu's posted at Suez—then the telegram from Berlin that the operation had been performed—and yesterday, Indu's letter from Vienna. The operation is over—it is good that you got rid of this trouble. I was not aware that it was to be performed so soon, and I had also written to you not to hurry regarding this matter. So I was somewhat surprised when the telegram came—there was some anxiety as well as some assurance. I do not know exactly what has been done—Madan's telegrams are all too brief. But after knowing that, in the opinion of Dr. Neumann of Vienna, you can leave Berlin 15 days after the operation, I felt that there was hope of your regaining strength soon. You might probably receive this letter in Berlin itself, yet I will send this to Geneva, as usual.

Probably, Professor Neumann of Vienna has asked you to go to Leysin from Berlin. That was my view too, also Kakkar's, and I had stressed this point a lot. I had recommended French Switzerland, and that meant Leysin or Montana. Leysin is at a lower height and is a new place and somehow I liked that more, thinking that it might please you more, instead of going back again to Stephani. Formerly I also

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L. *Original in Hindi.*

thought that at Leysin treatment was done for children and for bone T.B. only and no other special treatment was done. I asked Kakkar also, and he explained to me in Madan's presence that Leysin consisted of two parts, and in each part there were many sanatoria. In one part, Dr. Rollier's[2] treatment of bone T.B. was carried on with solar rays, etc. The sanatoria in the other part undertook routine treatment just as in Montana, etc. Because Rollier had been publicised so much in the newspapers, people often thought that he was the only doctor there. Kakkar told us all this, and only last year he had seen it all for himself. Still, Madan forgot this, and, on the basis of someone's talk on board the ship, you all decided that he was not aware of the new situation.

I remember that Kakkar praised some doctor in Leysin a lot—I do not remember his name—first his skill, and secondly his nobility and affability—said he met you just like an Indian friend and took a lot of interest in India. Still, it need not be assumed that this is some special praise—I remembered this because Leysin was mentioned often—a letter was also given to Madan for that doctor.

Where you will go from Berlin—to Leysin or elsewhere—can only be settled by you all there—especially Madan—how can I interfere from here?—I hope you will soon reach somewhere to convalesce and the business of travelling will come to an end. Progress will be faster then.

I may not receive letters from you for some time—for some days after the operation, you will neither be able to write nor will you be given the permission to do so—still, I will get all the news from Indu. She writes good letters and I get satisfaction from reading them. Indu's not going to Cairo from Suez was proper, but staying quite aloof from others on board the ship was not quite right. Whenever she gets the chance (the paper is exhausted, so am writing on the paper of a different quality) she should meet and mix with others. She has developed this trait of aloofness partly because of living away from home, specially during the last year, though not much. I do not approve of this peculiarly Indian trait though *Chacha* must be certainly liking it. Probably, she will get over this hesitation soon in Europe.

For the present, Indu will stay with you, till you get settled in a sanatorium. If she finds time during this period she may go and meet Mlle. Hemmerlin for a day. Bex is quite near to Leysin. Do not be in a hurry to send Indu away from you. Nothing will happen in ten or fifteen days and you will be troubled also, besides suffering from loneliness, by her going away. I do hope you will improve quickly now after the operation.

2. (1874–1954); a Swiss physician.

I came to know of Madan's new shirts and pyjamas from Psyche—I wish I were also fortunate enough to take so much interest in these matters. This is really a great thing.

Upadhyaya had come to Bhowali from Bombay quite early—probably with the children from Allahabad. It was the intention of Ranjit and Nan also to come up soon—at that time, there was excessive heat in Allahabad—for some days, Allahabad became the hottest place in India. Ranjit had a heat-stroke and his condition was bad for some days—the temperature was between 104° and 105°, then little by little, it came down. Because of this, Ranjit and Nan got stuck up at Allahabad—then one evening Nan's car overturned and she was thrown out—by chance, she was not hurt much. I still do not know what exactly happened, because I have not met anyone since then, and letters do not come from there at all. I read about this in the newspaper. Ranjit and Nan have now come to Bhowali and I have an interview with them day after tomorrow. I met them last two months ago here. Betty and Raja might have returned to Bombay. Betty's son was not keeping well and so she was worried and kept remembering Purandare in Bombay.

I have explained fully to Upadhyaya that he should send all the news to Amma immediately. Therefore you rest assured.

Why have you started worrying about my health—or continued to do so? The first sign of good health is that one gives no thought to it, and without paying any attention to it, goes on doing his work. My thoughts never turn towards it, and you can understand from this that I have no ailment. I have written to Indu—you will read it—that she should forget about increasing her weight—becoming fat—what to eat, what not to eat—in short, forget about her body as far as possible. It is not for the youth to be too conscious about their health. True, there are certain fundamental principles of good health, and everyone must follow them. There are some rules and those should be remembered—apart from this one should remain engaged in one's mental and physical pursuits and should not even mention illness till one is compelled to do so. I have not been constrained to do so in any way, then why should I talk about it?

It is not even a month since you left Bombay but it seems a long period. It is five weeks since we met. Formerly, I used to count the days when I would be going to Bhowali, now that situation is not there —from where should I start counting the days and till when? It is more than 300 days since my second arrest last year, when, leaving you sick, I was taken to Naini. It is almost eight months since I came to Almora. Time passes on, and some day or the other, I will certainly meet you somewhere.

Two, three days back, there was a great deal of activity here—the I.G. (who is Major Salamatullah) was to come here on his annual inspection. He came and went back, and again somehow peace and quiet have returned to the jail. He was asking me about sending me elsewhere from Almora. He did not say anything in particular but it is possible that next month or later I may be transferred somewhere. If this happens, I will ask Nan to inform you immediately by telegram so that you and Indu can send letters to the new address. Otherwise, the letters will go from place to place and reach me after a long time.

The letter I have written to Indu is for both, you and her. I had complained in it that it had not rained here so far. Just after my writing that, it rained well here. Probably there will be no shortage of water now because monsoon rains are also approaching near.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

24. To Kamala Nehru[1]

Almora Jail
5-7-35

Dear Kamman,

This time, I have received no letter either from you or from Indu, for two weeks. I had no hopes of receiving a letter from you after the operation. But I thought I might get Indu's. I have received two letters from Madan through which I got all the news. He has written everything about your operation and I feel happy and assured by its success. Now you will benefit fully by A.P. and you should be able to move about soon.

Regarding Indu, first I got the news that she was going to be operated upon for appendicitis—then that it was not so. In this matter, we will have to act upon the doctors' advice. I cannot give any suggestions regarding this. My view is that Indu will benefit greatly from living in the Swiss climate and getting busy with her studies there. Medication alone does not do much good. Anyway, you and Indu and Madan take a suitable decision regarding this.

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

It is your birthday on 25th July (*Shravan Badi* 10) and by the English calendar it is on 1st August. I have sent you a small book—the book is somewhat useless—there is nothing special about it, but I had nothing else to send from here. It is a novel by Premchand—*Gaban*. Premchand is considered the best novelist in Hindi. And there is some truth also in this, but, compared to European and American writers, he very much lags behind. This very book's ending is too bad.

I have enclosed three small pictures also with this book—two of Anand Bhawan and one of Swaraj Bhawan. Some individual went to see them —he took these photos and sent them to me. Give them to Indu.

At my last interview, Ranjit and Nan came, and also Hari. All the children were more or less ill and stayed back at Bhowali. Ranjit must have gone to Khali from here—he was to stay there alone for one month. Nan returned to Bhowali.

There was one more interview—Jamnalalji came and with him Sushila (the girl who stays with him and is studying medicine) and Kailash Nath Katju. They were trekking on the hills. Jamnalalji must have now returned to Wardha.

I have never been to Badenweiler where you are at present, but I have been to places near about. These places would probably be very beautiful and nearby is Black Forest, where you and Betty have been once, with me. You get a little better and start moving about a little, then there are lots of places nearby worth seeing.

Regarding your treatment and stay there, we must act on the advice of Dr. Unverricht of Berlin. Since he has operated upon you, you have to remain under his supervision for some days and take his advice later also. So your going to Badenweiler was proper. The weather would be very pleasant there now and shall be so throughout the summer. It may not be a suitable place in winter. At that time, it would be much better to go to some mountain resort where it snows a lot.

The rains have started here—even in Allahabad it has rained a lot—many roads have been washed away or have sunk.

I am keeping good health.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

25. To Kamala Nehru[1]

Almora Jail
19 July 1935

Dear Kamman,

I came to know from Madan's telegrams that you did not receive any letter from me for a long time. I was astonished to know this. I was confident that you and Indu would be getting my letters every alternate week. You know that in the matter of letter-writing, I never fail. I write at the appointed time and never postpone it for any reason, whether I receive letters from outside or not. In jail, only writing letters is in my control, not despatching them. But as far as I know, my letters are sent off from here quickly. I write on every alternate Friday, and send it to the jail office on Saturday mornings. The same day it is passed and sent to the post office. Probably my letters would have been despatched from here—there must have been some confusion in Thos. Cook's office there. It is also possible that Cook may have sent them on to Vienna or Berlin. You should enquire from there. Anyway, you read what I have written to Indu about this matter and inform Madan so that he can make enquiries. I sent last week's letter to Berlin c/o American Express. I do not know why you have not received even that letter as yet. Now, I will send letters direct to your Badenweiler address. If that address is changed, then make some arrangements for the letters. It is painful that even one letter which I may send every two weeks may not reach you. And, I do not write to anyone else here!

I have some hope that you may perhaps get the letters which have gone astray. In any case, I cannot repeat what I wrote then and probably there was also nothing very important in them. What I wrote to Madan about your treatment is briefly this, that we should act on Unverricht's advice. As he has operated upon you it is better that his advice is followed—and he is an able man. In these circumstances, it seems proper that you spend the whole of the summer in Badenweiler. Later on, we shall see. The Swiss mountains are good in winter. I have not received any significant news of you from Badenweiler. I hope you are improving there a lot because the fever has come down and you have started moving about a little. It is very good that on Nanu's recommendation you have engaged a girl to stay with you. This will do good to you and Indu both.

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

Ask Madan to send me medical reports about you from time to time so that I may know exactly what is your condition. Kakkar's complaint was that he did not write anything to him. I got sent copies of the letter Madan wrote to me regarding your operation to Kakkar and Bidhan.

I have written a lot to Indu about her studies—you will certainly read it. I am worried about her weakness as too much burden of studies may injure her health. I will get a letter written to Mlle. Hemmerlin about all this so that she can give the proper advice. Whatever suggestions she gives only that should be followed.

I had written to you that a month back Jamnalalji had come to meet me here. I was surprised to read in the newspaper later that he had given an interview in which he said that my weight had gone down by 14 lbs. This was true but there was nothing new because I had lost weight last year especially at Calcutta. Here, I have been keeping well. Incidentally, my weight increased quite a bit last month. It has increased by 4 lbs. in the last four weeks. It is possible it may increase further; probably this is due to the change of climate.

This was anyway a small matter. But the other thing that he said was strange. He said that since Kamalaji had been operated upon successfully, Jawaharlal did not intend going to Europe on release. I am perplexed how he got such an impression because neither did I say nor could I have said so. I had come to know by telegram about the operation only two or three days earlier but I did not know the details. What I said then was that I had wanted to be there at the time of the operation, but as the operation was already over that question did not arise now. How can I decide now what will happen after seven or eight months and what I shall do then? It will depend on so many things which are not completely under my control. But my intention is to come and meet you and Indu at the earliest opportunity.

I received a short letter from Dhan Gopal—he has asked for your address. I will send the address—but the question is, what is your permanent address? You are not going to stay in Baden for long. Therefore, ask Madan to decide upon a permanent address which can be given to everyone. If the address keeps changing daily, everyone cannot be kept informed.

I am sending you a small book by Rahul Sankrityayan. There is nothing of importance in the book—some portions are good, some weak—but still it is worth reading. Its importance lies in its author and in the fact that it has been written in Lhasa (Tibet). Rahulji hails from Bihar and became a Buddhist monk a few years back. He is very able and dignified. He knows Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan and many

Central Asian languages very well. He has travelled all over Europe and has spent many years in Tibet. I met him last year when I went to Bihar after the earthquake and had travelled a little with him. Thereafter, I was imprisoned. Some days later I learned somewhat longingly that he had again gone to Tibet. Later, on his return, he came to Allahabad and met Ranjit. Ranjit had suggested the name Rahul for Betty's son after him only.

I will have an interview with Ranjit and Nan after four days—They are now in Khali and after meeting me they will go to Bhowali and then all of them will return to Allahabad. Thus, these repeated visits to Bhowali will come to an end. While I was writing this letter to you today, they sent *puris*, vegetables, *halwa*, etc., from Khali which is about nine or ten miles from here.

Alongwith Indu's last letter, I received a few lines from you also, which you had written before the operation. You had referred in it to my earlier letter in which I had mentioned about my being a solitary traveller. You probably did not understand me properly, and it is also not easy to understand. It is true that I am not very happy. In fact, to be happy in this world is not easy for anyone who is even in the least sensitive, and who looks out of his narrow circle and tries to understand the present world. At the most, he develops in himself an attitude of tolerance and keeping his goal in view, works for it. Only thus can he get satisfaction or happiness, whatever you may call it, but this happiness is not an ordinary worldly happiness. The people who undertake big tasks have to carry heavy burdens. These burdens of mine have gone on increasing—I was not, nor am, bothered much about them, but certainly there has been a change in this during the last two, three years and particularly during the last six months. I have started feeling my loneliness more acutely. That loneliness is of the mind and soul. I know it is my good fortune that a large number of people love me and give me company. But still there is a wide gulf between them and me. Remember that the greatest loneliness is felt amidst a crowd—not in a forest—in a crowd which can neither know nor understand. There is communion of mind and spirit between the people when they can understand each other. Zeal and courage are good things no doubt, but if right thinking is not there, they cannot take you far. Hindus and Muslims who break each other's heads and kill and murder in the name of religion—do they lack in zeal or courage? No knot can be untied by mere zeal and no intricate problem can be solved for the present-day world is full of such knotty problems.

What do we aim at after all? We talk vaguely about freedom and so no two persons can derive the same meaning. Freedom for what and

for what purpose? Freedom is not the end. It is the means for achieving another end—what is that?

I plunged deeply into politics and obviously became a politician. Yet, my attention was always drawn towards other problems which are the real problems of this world like the human relationships, national relations, the relationship between man and man, and between man and woman, or the attitude of adults towards children. Taking together all these relationships, what should be the relationship among the people within a nation? How can there be maximum mutual cooperation, and ultimately, what should be the relationship between nations? These questions are bigger than mere politics. Intelligent people of the world think about these questions, discuss them and try to resolve them. But of what concern are these questions to our country? We are all spiritually enlightened people and want to have direct personal contact with God. Why should we have any concern with men? People here have nothing to do with learning, nor with thinking or understanding. Whatever pictures have been formed in the minds during their childhood stick there till the end. There is not even a desire to understand. They are confident that they know everything and consider those who do not agree with them as obstinate or selfish.

I consider all these things most stupid. Maybe it is my mistake because from the beginning I received a different type of education. Ten or twelve years that I spent in the school or college were not of much importance. I got real education later by myself and therefore whatever I am is a result of my own efforts. Man is a mass of ideas. Some people do not outgrow the ideas, formed during their childhood, whatever their age. For more than twenty years, how many battles I have fought and still continue to fight in my mind. The real battlefield is in every person's body and mind and decisions are made there only. Only their shadow falls outside. After these long years of inner turmoil, struggle and deep reflection, I gradully reached certain conclusions. But as I went on untying the knots of my mind, I felt that I was getting further and further away from others. Many of their ideas began to appear to me as absolutely wrong and harmful. The gulf between them and me went on widening. What they considered intelligent I thought it to be stupid. And so two ideas took their roots in my mind: first, what is called the religious way is absolutely dangerous for it increases selfishness and suppresses the real matters of spirit. And secondly, there is only one remedy both for the individual and the country, and that is the right education. It is fundamental education which teaches one to think, understand and discriminate. Without this there can be no real progress.

After looking all around me and then at myself, I felt my loneliness more. The real journey is not of the body but of the mind and thoughts. One who is not mentally and spiritually one's companion is a stranger. There are lots of fellow-travellers even in trains, but they are strangers. But sometimes you come across a stranger who immediately finds a place in your heart and mind. Sometimes I receive letters from strangers which contain some lines that straightaway appeal to my heart. But I rather receive these rarely. Very often nobody understands this or even tries to understand it. And when one does not understand another person there is a lack of trust and one fears him and attempts are made to keep oneself away from him or to hide things from him. Where there is no trust, it is difficult for love to sustain.

When I have been observing such things around me then how can they increase my happiness or remove my loneliness? It becomes even difficult for me to act upon the principles I have set for my life. During Papa's lifetime my burden was light and I had no worries about domestic matters. I relied on him for everything. Despite the fact that there was a wide difference in our views, we understood each other a lot and there was no need for us to talk much in order to know what either of us desired. His death removed this great support of mine and one person who understood me somewhat by his love and intellect was no more. Then I felt my loneliness more and also the burden of the household. The burden was not much but some anxiety was there. This anxiety went on increasing because some difficulties came in the way of my following those principles which I wanted to follow.

All these things went on affecting me. After seeing the attitude of my colleagues, I started feeling day by day that I will have to travel alone on my journey. This fact has been emerging more clearly before me for the last six months. It is apparent that this does not mean that I have no companions, no friends to love me or help me when I am tired and exhausted. But there are very few who share with me my thoughts and principles of life.

You have written that in Vienna some women who were members of some organisation whose task it was to advise women came to meet you. I do not know which organisation this is—there are hundreds of such organisations in Europe. You will not be able to attend any conference till September. You should not act in haste in such matters. You should not undertake any such work throughout this year. Remember one more thing. In such matters you have to proceed very cautiously and after a lot of thinking. You are not conversant with the strange conditions that prevail in Europe and taking a wrong step can do

more harm than good. In my opinion you should not participate in any conference or general meeting without Nanu's or Mlle. Rolland's[2] advice. It is not so essential to attend conferences—nothing is taught or learnt there. It is more important that you try to understand those problems which are troubling Europe and the entire world. And remember that nothing significant can be understood quickly or without effort. One has to search a lot and undertake much trouble in order to know those things which are really worth knowing. And the more a man goes ahead, the longer the road appears to be. The process of learning and understanding can continue throughout one's life, and should continue. The essential thing is to develop in oneself a thirst for learning and understanding which may always prod us on. One who has this thirst learns everywhere and in all conditions. One who does not have this can learn only with difficulty. The desire to do something remarkable often comes in the way of learning and understanding. Only learning before doing can enable one to walk along the right path.

This letter has become quite long and you will get tired of reading it.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

2. Madeleine Rolland, the sister of Romain Rolland.

28. To Kamala Nehru[1]

District Jail
Almora
Aug. 2, 1935

Letter No. 6

Dear Kamman,

I have indicated above the number of this letter. This is the sixth letter since you left. I will give such numbers on every letter. Thus you will know easily if any letter is missing in between. So far you have received my first and fourth letters—possibly the fifth one also you must

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

have got by now. The second and the third have gone astray. They may reach you later after wandering about in Vienna or Berlin.

I sent you a brief telegram day before yesterday for your birthday which was yesterday. Hope you received it.

I came to know a little about your condition from Indu's letter. She had not written very clearly and so I did not understand it properly. Madan has not written for some days. Possibly the A.P. treatment is being continued and will continue—occasionally, the fluid, etc., will increase or decrease. You must be getting tired of all these at times—you must be getting impatient too. This is bound to happen and there is nothing strange about it. But there is nothing to worry about it—a lasting cure takes time and by hurrying it takes more time rather than less. Therefore, you need not worry about this. Start walking about a little this summer and then your strength will increase greatly during the winter when it snows. You should be all right by the time I come! But that is still a long way off.

August has come again—I am reminded of the last August when all of a sudden, I was sent from Dehra Dun to Allahabad and released there for a few days. I had mentioned a hundred days at that time—how many hundreds are past now! At present, there is no mention at all about my transfer, and what mention could there be? When I have to be sent away, I will be sent without prior intimation. By chance, in the same month of August, I have been transferred for the second time in two years from one jail to another—from Dehra to Naini. These days it is raining heavily here. It has been raining continuously for four days—I feel somewhat tired of it—well, it will clear up in a day or two.

I read in the newspaper today that Didda, Nan and Ranjit reached Allahabad three or four days back. Now, there is no one nearby to meet me. But I have heard that Bul is coming to Kumaon to visit this side. I do not know what she will do by visiting these places in this weather, though the weather is not bad and personally I like moving about in the rains. If she comes this side, I may have an interview with her.

I wrote to you last week that I was sending you a small book by Rahul Sankrityayan. There was some delay in sending it as I received another book by Premchand—*Karmabhoomi*—and I thought I would send that too to you, after reading it. The parcel has been sent now. There is a small book of maps also in it for Indu. Premchand's book, as usual, is good and bad both. Some portions are so unreal and worthless that they make one laugh. Still, he is considered one of the best writers in Hindi, and you will be interested in reading it.

Earlier, I had made arrangements for one or two newspapers to be sent to you. I wonder whether they reach you or not. I had also written to you that, if you wanted, you could get *The Bombay Chronicle* also by writing to Upadhyaya. Probably, you did not receive that letter of mine. I came to know from Indu's letter that you people do not get proper newspapers to read there. You are already deprived of the news of India and get very little news of other places too. Another problem is that very few foreign newspapers are allowed to enter Germany these days. Anyway, I have now instructed Upadhyaya to make arrangements for many Indian and British newspapers. They will all come directly to you at Badenweiler. I have written their names in my letter to Indu. You write or get it written to me which papers you receive. I have doubts regarding one or two, whether they will be allowed there or not. All these newspapers, etc., will go by ordinary mail, not by air mail. Therefore, you will start getting them some days after you receive this letter.

Remember one thing—I have written to Indu and am writing to you also—that you should inform the newspaper agents whenever your address changes. For Indian newspapers, you should write to Upadhyaya, and for others, directly to England. You will have to be very careful regarding the address. Remember that I will now be writing only to Badenweiler till I get a new address.

You will now get many weeklies and monthlies, etc. As such, it is no use sending for a daily newspaper like *The Bombay Chronicle* from here. It would also be difficult to read a whole sheaf of papers.

If by chance Indu leaves you and goes away somewhere—as she intends to—then who will give me news of you? If you can write, well and good, otherwise tell Madan that he should write. Whatever letters Indu writes to me, she should send them on to you.

In the few lines you wrote to me from Berlin, you had expressed the hope that you might visit Geneva, etc., by September, and that you might probably attend some conference. It is obvious that this is not possible, and you should give up all thoughts of hurrying things like this. Of course, the sickness is the reason, and therefore the first thing is that you have to get all right. Besides this, one more thing has to be kept in mind. The desire to do something is good, but not the tendency to learn something hurriedly and start doing it. One always thinks of doing something but not of understanding it. Thus one cannot concentrate on it. Full attention should be paid to understand a thing, and then one will certainly act at the proper time. And for understanding and learning a thing, it is not necessary to go or wander anywhere. If a person makes his mind receptive, he can learn anywhere.

A child's mind is most receptive and so he learns most quickly. As he grows, the flexibility and receptiveness of his mind decrease, and so it becomes more difficult for him to learn. That is why it is said that every individual's personality is made in his childhood. It becomes difficult to change him later. Some people—they are few—remain somewhat like students throughout their lives and keep their minds open. I think this capability is present in me to some extent.

Therefore, the important thing is that instead of making vague attempts to learn something, one should keep one's mind fully receptive and keep its windows open. If this is there then there is no need of other efforts. The eyes see by themselves, the ears hear and the mind absorbs. It is obvious that in your present state of health, no doctor will give you permission to study, nor is it necessary. You just keep an open mind and with ease try to understand Europe, whatever aspect of it comes before you. It is a very complex thing, but still we can imbibe certain things of it easily. Talk to the girl—Mrs. Geissler—who stays with you—gradually develop the subjects of the talk—take interest in diverse subjects—and put questions to her. If you get the chance to meet other people, then talk similarly to them also. You can understand Europe far better in this manner than by merely reading books or attending conferences occasionally. No knowledge comes by itself—everything has to be learnt—even sweeping. Man learns very little at school and college. Only the mind is somewhat trained and disciplined there. We can learn only from our own lives and from the hundreds of people whom we meet, provided we make friends with the life and meet it with open arms and mind. If we close our mind tightly beforehand and do not let the light outside enter it, then how will its darkness be removed?

Therefore, do not worry at all that you are unable to get up and run about and learn some special things. Many people think that a man learns specially during sickness because, first, he has time and is at ease, and secondly, the mind is more receptive at this time.

I have written lots of other things, good and bad, in my letter to Indu. They are meant for you also—what is the use of repeating them.

I am enclosing letters for Indu and Madan.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

27. V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Badenweiler
15.11.35

My dear Menon,

On my arrival here I discovered that my wife had had a setback and was again running a high temperature. Almost for the whole period of my absence she had kept remarkably well. But this was evidently too good to last and two days before our return her condition deteriorated. Nothing very serious has happened so far and perhaps we must expect these ups and downs. Nevertheless this kind of thing is depressing both for her and for us. And it delays the transfer to Switzerland. Today there was an aspiration and irrigation and very probably her temperature will fall tomorrow and she will keep tolerably well for a week or so. I suppose there is nothing to be done except to carry on in the way and wait.

My visit to England tired and exhausted me for the time being but I have recovered after two nights' rest. At the same time I found it rather stimulating also. It was my first experience of activity of a sort after two years of seclusion and I always find this exhilarating. I met many people who interested me—and, alas, many more who did not. I am not in the habit of hurling complimentary epithets at people, but you will understand me when I tell you that it was a delight for me to come in personal touch with you. I would have been very much at sea without you to turn to in London and I am very grateful to you for all the trouble you took over me inspite of your ill health. Do get well soon.

Your wonderful grapes have been greatly appreciated here and my wife took to them immediately. She wants me to thank you for them.

I found a great pile of letters awaiting me here and I am vainly trying to deal with them. It is a trial to carry on without any secretarial or other assistance. It is not even possible to get a typist in Badenweiler. Indeed this place is gradually curling itself up to go to sleep for the winter. The few shops are being boarded up and the streets are deserted. Cheerful prospect in store for us!

Letters from India tell a woeful tale and ask me when I shall return, as if I would make much difference. But the call from India grows

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

and I feel it in my bones and some day or other it will be too strong to resist.

Again I must repeat—get well soon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

The election results must have come out nearly 24 hours ago, but here in this sleepy corner of the world we do not know them yet. Of the articles I left with you I understand that two—"The Solidarity of Islam" and "The Aga Khan"—have appeared in the November number of *The Modern Review*.[2]

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 468–474.

28. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Badenweiler
23–12–1935

Bebee my dear,

It is long since I have written to you. Your letter came about three weeks ago and it hovered in my mind day-after-day and yet I did not write. Why I do not quite know, except that I wanted to sit down with it with some peace of mind and that peace of mind was absent. I went to Paris also for a while and then busied myself into a revision of my new book—a heavy task which I did not like. All my days were spent with Kamala and then till very late at night I sat with my manuscript and read what I had written in the long solitudes of prison.

But this morning, very early, as the dawn was creeping over the snow-covered hill-sides and I was trudging along heavily in the snow, I thought of you again and the desire to write to you became strong. Now I sit in a room adjoining Kamala's while she sleeps or lies in a semi-conscious condition. Outside it is snowing again and a haze covers the landscape; it is very beautiful and peaceful, but the peace is more of death than of life, and only a few birds, hopping about in the snow, bring life and activity to the scene.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

You may know perhaps the fate of Kamala before this reaches you, or she may still hover on the edge of life. But it seems hardly conceivable that she will return from the brink of the precipice. She has gone too far. Her face is beautiful still and her eyes look sorrowfully and beckon, but her body is terribly thin and emaciated. But the face also, with all its child-like innocence and beauty, has lost the vital look which it so bravely carried throughout these long struggles. Perhaps it is as well that the struggle is ending, one wearies of an unceasing conflict with nature and its innumerable weapons, a conflict without peace or harbourage. Nature is still all-powerful.

I am sorry to learn that circumstances have led you away from Hyderabad and that the 'Golden Threshold' is no longer your home. Home has begun to have a curious sound for me. Where is a home for any of us, for you, for me? We may find a shelter and even affection with people who care for us, if we are fortunate. But we wander still, in spirit and mind, if not in body, nomads with no fixed abode, exiles everywhere. But one lesson you have helped to teach me, all unconsciously, and that is how to smile when the heart is heavy and the body bent. Your radiant smile has never left you, whatever happened, and I feel sure that it never will. In the dry deserts of life it is something to have these oases.

Indu is here. She came only a short while ago from her Swiss School for her Christmas vacation. For a year or a little less she will remain in Switzerland. After that I am not sure. She may later on go to Oxford, she may go to Paris, or she may try to fit in both, one after the other.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

29. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Lausanne
16.2.1936

Bebee dear,

Your very enthusiastic letter. Why this overflowing enthusiasm? I am afraid I did not grow at all excited when I heard that I had been

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

elected President.[2] The news came to me first by telephone from Reuter's office and I don't think I was affected by it to any marked extent. I was busy and occupied with an interesting conversation which filled my mind much more. But then I am a very prosaic individual and you are a poet.

Anyway, what do you expect me to do as President? What wonders are likely to happen? Do not expect much if you would not be disappointed. Miracles do not happen, except sometimes in our heart, and the world of politics does not encourage wholesomeness or idealism.

Kamala has been doing well since she came here. I hardly dare be sanguine after so many relapses and setbacks, and yet it does seem that she is definitely a little better.

I shall soon be in India and more and more Europe seems to fade away in my mind. And yet the two are inextricably mixed up and I cannot think of one apart from the other.

I sail by the K.L.M. plane from Marseilles on February 29th, leap year's day, another symbol or portent for you! On the 4th March morning at 8 a.m. I am due to reach Allahabad if the Mediterranean or the deserts of Western Asia do not swallow me. I do not know what I shall do after that or how long I shall stay at home. Probably I shall remain there for five days or so and then go to Bapu. I am, or shall be, largely in the hands of Rajendra Babu and Bapu during these early days. Come and meet me if you can. It will be a great joy to see you again.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

2. Reference is to Jawaharlal's election as President of the Indian National Congress. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 87.

GLOSSARY

Adrak	ginger
Baz bhatta	a Kashmiri preparation of fried rice and vegetables
Dangal	a wrestling-match
Halwa	a sweetmeat made of flour, sugar and ghee
Puri	unleavened fried bread
Sanchalak	secretary
Tanashah	a dictator

INDEX

(Biographical footnotes are italicized)

Abdullah, S.M., 532, 540, 634, 637
Abd-ul-llah, 4 fn
Abyssinia—*see* Ethiopia
Aden, 675
Adventures of Marco Polo (Richard J. Walsh), 616 fn
A.E.—*see* Russell, George William
Afghanistan, 306, 322, 608
Agarwal Sabha, 146
Agra, 341
Agricultural Institute (Naini), 100–102
Ahmad, Z.A., 29 & fn
Ahmed, Sultan, 5 fn, 38
Ahmedabad, 108, 338, 372 fn
Ahmedabad Trade Union, 610
Ahmednagar, 486–487
A.H. Wheeler & Co. Ltd., 655
Aj, 556 fn
Ajmer, 8 fn
Akyab, 167, 256–257
Aligarh, 377, 565, 567
Aligarh District Conference, 377–378
Aligarh Muslim University, 510 fn
Ali, Maulana Mohamed, 381
———, Rashid, 4 fn
———, Shaukat, 652
———, Surat, 117 fn
Allahabad, 24–25, 28, 60, 74, 85, 97, 99 fn, 101–102, 113–114, 116, 128, 151, 156, 158–160, 227, 229, 241 fn, 274–275, 276 fn, 295, 301 fn, 305, 320, 330 fn, 336, 341, 345–347, 351, 354, 357, 364, 414 & fn, 467, 485 fn, 488, 495, 515, 527, 545, 551, 576, 595, 599–600, 615, 622–623, 627, 629, 631, 633–634, 636, 642–643, 645–648, 655, 660, 664, 666, 669, 675–676, 679, 681, 684, 688
Allahabad Agricultural Association, 98 fn
Allahabad resolution of Congress, 516–517
Allahabad University, 347, 524 & fn–525
Allahabad University Students' Union, 524 & fn
Allahbux, Khan Bahadur, 488 & *fn*, 490–491
All Burma Indian Congress, 251 fn
Allied powers, 135 fn, 173 fn, 176, 209 fn, 222, 280 fn, 287–289, 291–292, 304, 324, 359–360, 363, 366. 375, 379, 392–396, 399, 402, 404, 412–413, 418–419, 424 fn, 429–431, 438, 442–443, 459, 555, 559 fn, 566
All in All (M. Chalapathi Rau), 579 fn
All India Civil Liberties Conference, 587 fn
All India Committee of the Friends of the Soviet Union, 599–600
All India Congress Committee, 5, 34, 55, 74, 80–81, 83 & fn, 91, 93, 114, 117, 189, 222, 229, 239, 241 & fn, 251 fn, 268–269, 271–272, 275–278, 280, 282–284, 292, 295, 300 fn, 301 fn, 305, 313, 326 fn, 330 fn–331, 336, 396–397, 400, 409–410, 416–418, 422–424 & fn, 426–427 & fn, 429, 436–437, 440–442, 444–454, 458, 469, 485–486, 493 & fn, 496, 503–505. 517, 521–522, 526 fn–527, 541, 630, 642–644
All India Council of Indian Christians, 509 fn
All India Forward Bloc—*see* Forward Bloc
All India Independent Muslims Conference, 488 fn
All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health (Calcutta), 345 fn

All India Kisan Sabha, 559 fn
All India Manufacturers Organisation, 564 fn
All India Muslim League—*see* Muslim League
All India Newspaper Editors' Conference, 589–592
All India States People's Conference, 182–183, 540 fn–541
All India Students Conference, 600–601
All India Students Federation, 78 & fn, 599 fn, 602
All India Trade Union Congress, 121–122 & fn
All India Women's Conference, 494
Almora, 676, 679–680
Ally, Rewi, 616 & *fn*
Amarnath, 636
Ambalal, Mrs., 654
Ambedkar, B.R., 419 fn, 424 fn
America—*see* United States of America
American Civil War, 520
American Express, 672, 682
American Technical Mission, 308 fn, 402 & fn, 563 fn, 605 fn
Amery, L.S., 20 & fn, 33 & fn, 35–39, 42, 64 fn, 66, 154 fn, 206 fn, 228, 302–303, 324, 331, 426 & fn, 488 fn, 549 fn
Amritsar, 296 fn
Anand Bhawan, 660, 664, 666–667, 669, 681
Andaman Islands, 208 fn
Andhra, 85, 539 fn
Aney, M.S., 5 fn, 38, 168 & fn, 257 & fn, 264, 286, 295 fn, 417 fn
Angel That Troubled the Waters (Thornton Wilder), 641
Anglo-American Trade Agreement, 564 & fn
Anglo-Bengali Intermediate College (Allahabad), 346
Anglo-Soviet Treaty of Military Alliance and Post-War Collaboration, 344, fn, 369
Anglo-Turkish Declaration of Mutual Assistance, 65 fn
Ansari, Farid, 76 fn
———, M.A., 668–670
Apostles of Revolution (Max Nomad), *666 fn*
Arizona, 650
A.R.P. (air-raid precautions), 5 & fn, 69, 97, 112–113, 128, 136, 139, 147–149, 151, 155–156, 158–161, 270, 274, 344, 469–470, 567
Aryan Sacraments (Lachhmi Dhar Shastri), 626 fn
Asaf Ali, 274, 287, 289
———, Aruna, 494 & *fn*
Ashraf, K.M., 293 fn
Asia, 612–613, 616–617
Assam, 68 & fn, 84, 145–146, 153 & fn, 239, 257 fn–258, 261–264, 267, 340, 475, 589, 630–631
Associated Chambers of Commerce, 34 fn
Associated Press, 92 fn
Atal, Madan, 672–674, 677–680, 682–683, 688–690
Atlantic Charter, 12 & fn, 20 fn, 31, 171, 374 fn
Attlee, C.R., 138 fn, 154 fn
August Offer, 12 fn, 219, 228
Aung San, 251 fn
Australia, 40, 127, 216 & fn, 345 fn, 557
Autobiography (Jawaharlal Nehru), 617
Axis powers, 173, 226, 255 fn, 287–289, 291, 294, 306, 344 fn, 359, 370, 382 fn, 392, 394–395, 399, 415 fn, 423, 428–431, 444, 446–447, 457, 479, 502 fn, 588
Azad, Abul Kalam, 34, 37, 60 fn, 75, 116, 184 & fn, 187 fn, 192 fn, 197 fn, 206 fn, 209 fn, 216, 219, 221, 287, 292, 293 fn, 298, 326 & fn, 340, 342, 354, 357, 367–368, 372, 435, 460, 487 & fn, 491–493 & fn, 503, 509, 512, 514–515, 526–527, 610–612, 621, 633, 635–637 (for his letters drafted by Jawaharlal *see* 187, 192, 202–208, 209–211)
Azad Hind Fauj, 225 fn
Azad Hind Radio, 225 fn
Azad, Prithvi Singh, 60 & *fn*
Azamgarh, 42, 111

Badenweiler, 681–683, 689, 691
Badoo, I., 252 fn
Badshah Khan—*see* Khan, Abdul Ghaffar
Baig, Mirza Rashid Ali, 147 & *fn*, 149
Bajaj, Jamnalal, 156 & fn, 470, 602–603, 681, 683
Balfour, Arthur James, Ist earl, 138 fn
Bali, Suraj, 672
Baltimore Sun, 420 fn
Baluchistan, 258, 265, 475, 676
Ba Maw, 335
Banaras (Benares)—*see* Varanasi
Banaras Hindu University, 524 fn, 557
Banerji, Purnima, 28
Bangkok, 173, 307, 479
Barcelona, 30 & fn, 113, 148
Bardoli, 18, 32, 43, 44 fn, 60 fn, 73–74, 75 fn, 84, 89, 93–94, 113–114, 116 fn, 292, 485, 510 fn, 532, 551, 622
Bardoli resolution of Congress, 60 fn, 68 fn, 73, 75 fn, 83 fn, 92 fn, 94, 116, 469, 486
Bardoloi, Gopinath, 153, 291
Basti, 552–553
Basu, R.N., 160 & fn
Batavia, 167 fn
Battle for Asia (Edgar Snow), 568
Battle of Kalanga, 125
Bay of Bengal, 208 fn, 250
Beaverbrook, 1st baron (William Maxwell Aitken), 138 fn
Before the Storm (I.M. Maisky), 11 fn
Behala (W. Bengal), 255 fn
Belgium, 20 fn, 78, 259
Benares Congress Committee, 485
Benares, Maharaja of, 534 & *fn*
Benares State Congress, 534–535
Bengal, 14 fn, 37, 84, 97, 137, 194–195, 240, 252, 254–255 & fn, 257–260, 265, 374–375, 546, 564, 588 & fn, 631, 644
Bengal and North Western Railway, 145–146
Bengal Chamber of Commerce, 64 fn
Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, 135
Berar, 417 fn
Berlin, 152, 173, 225 fn, 307, 455, 479, 677–678, 682, 688–689
Bernard Shaw and the Others, Reminiscences (I.M. Maisky), 11 fn
Berry, James Lampton, 351 *fn*, 362, 373, 374 fn
Besant, Annie, 513 fn
Bex, 678
Bhagalpur, 51 fn
Bhajanawali (Lachhmi Dhar Shastri), 626 fn
Bharat, 647
Bhargava, Gopi Chand, 485 fn
Bhopal, 533–534 fn, 630
Bhopal Jail, 533
Bhowali, 672, 675–676, 679, 681, 684
Bhowali Sanatorium, 341
Bihar, 265, 511 fn, 676, 683–684
Bihar Public Service Commission, 524 fn
Bikaner, Maharaja of, 181 fn
Birla, G.D., 308 fn, 622
Birth Place of Kalidasa (Lachhmi Dhar Shastri), 626 fn
Black Forest, 681
Black Road, 256 & fn, 265
Blaine, Anita, 232 *fn*
Blavatsky, Madame, 513 fn
Board of Conciliation, 70 & fn
Boericke, 651
Bokhara, 141
Boko, 263–264
Bolshevik, 135 fn
Bombay, 10, 18, 32, 34, 37, 40, 51, 55, 60, 62, 64, 69–71, 74, 89, 93, 107, 111, 147–149 & fn, 158, 241–242, 251 fn, 265, 290, 292, 312, 338, 341–342, 345, 364, 372 fn, 400, 410, 416, 422, 473, 503 & fn, 509, 516, 540 & fn, 549 fn, 555, 588 fn, 616, 622, 624–625, 630–631, 635–638, 642, 646, 649–651, 657, 659–661, 671–672, 674–676, 679
Bombay Ahimsak Vyayam Shala, 60 fn
Bombay Brigade, 344
Bombay Chronicle, 9 fn, 676, 689
Bombay Legislative Assembly, 503 fn
Bombay Legislative Council, 488 fn
Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, 69, 148–149
Bombay resolution of Congress, 26 & fn, 68 fn
Bombay Sentinel, 588 fn–589

Bose, Rash Behari, 225 fn
———, Sarat Chandra, 51 fn
———, Subhas Chandra, 225–226, 262–263, 495–496
Bozman, L.S., 167 fn
Brahmaputra Valley, 263
Bridge of San Luis Rey (Thornton Wilder), *641 & fn, 645*
British Broadcasting Corporation, 126
British Commonwealth, 31, 132 fn, 138 fn, 183 fn, 185 fn, 188 fn, 310–311, 314–315
British Communist Party, 135 fn
Bubbles and Eggs (Harindranath Chattopadhyaya), 643 fn
Buck, Pearl, 612, 616 & fn
Burma, 13, 26, 37, 107, 123 fn, 145, 153 fn, 161 & fn, 167, 173, 177 & fn, 234–235, 239, 250–251 & fn, 254–257, 261–266, 268–275, 286, 295 & fn, 297, 302, 306, 333–337, 340, 342, 356, 365, 374, 383, 385, 388–389, 391, 398, 401, 406, 411–412, 415, 419, 430, 432–433, 445, 478–479
Burma Campaign, 334 fn
Burma Civil Service, 267
Burma Road, 467, 475
Burmese Indian Rehabilitation Society, 251 fn
Burmese Provincial Congress Committee, 251 fn
Burning Glass (Charles Morgan), *666 fn*

Cabala (Thornton Wilder), 641 fn
Cachar, 286
Cairo, 678
Cairo Conference, 173 fn
Calcutta, 26, 64, 71, 84, 97, 107, 111, 114, 122 & fn, 136, 138, 151 & fn, 161, 254, 258, 264, 296, 298, 345, 355, 358, 364, 365 fn, 467, 475–476, 492, 555, 579, 588–589, 621, 630, 642–643, 651, 683
Calcutta University, 152 fn
Cambridge, 141
Campbellpur Jail, *299 fn*
Canada, 345 fn
Candle of Vision (George William Russell), 653
Cape Comorin—*see* Kanyakumari
Cape Town, 252 fn
Captain, Goshiben (Psyche), 679
———, Nargis, 656
C.A.V. High School (Allahabad), 346
Cawnpore—*see* Kanpur
Central Indian Association (Malaya), *70 fn*
Central Legislative Assembly, 6, 33 fn, 175
Central Provinces, 346, 371, 417 fn
Central Standing Evacuation Committee, 264 fn
Ceylon—*see* Sri Lanka
Chamberlain, Neville, 16 & fn, 33 fn, 35
Chamber of Princes, 181 & fn
Chanda, Arun Kumar, 286 & *fn*
Chapra, 657
Chattopadhyaya, Harindranath, *643 & fn*
Chaudhuri, Nabakrushna, 491 fn
Chauri Chaura Conference, 498 fn
Chenghiz Khan, 420 fn
Chetsingh, Ranjit M., 509 & fn
Chiang Kai-shek, 129, 132 & fn, 138, 143 & fn, 153 & fn, 155, 169, 229, 247, 249, 362–364, 375, 465–468, 470 fn–473, 476–482, 497
———, Madame, 132 fn, 138, 169, 365 fn, 367, 465–468, 470–471, 476–478, 480–482, 629
Chicago University, 26 fn, 232 fn
Chilka Scheme (Uma Charan Patnaik), 492 fn
China, 1–3, 8, 11, 13–14, 19, 21–22, 25, 27, 30–31, 32 fn, 35, 38, 57, 59, 60 fn, 65, 71, 80, 86, 88, 90, 94, 98, 105, 107, 110–111, 113, 116 & fn, 126, 130–131, 135, 138, 141–143 & fn, 150 & fn, 152, 157, 159, 162, 169–170, 173–174, 213–214, 217, 224, 230, 237, 248, 250–251, 253, 259–260, 275, 288, 292, 293 fn, 300, 301 fn, 304, 307, 314–315, 319, 322, 324, 327, 331–332, 334, 337, 339 fn–340, 342–347, 353, 357, 359–367, 369, 371, 375, 377, 379, 381, 383–385, 392, 394–395, 399–400, 410, 413–415, 418–419, 421–424, 426–428, 430–431, 435, 446–447, 449,

454, 456, 465–469, 472–473, 475–482, 497, 520, 523, 545–547, 554, 566–571, 604, 608, 616 & fn
China Builds for Democracy (Nym Wales), 569
China Reconstructs, 236 fn
Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, 236 fn
Chittagong, 255 fn
Christian Science Monitor, 193 fn
Chrysler Corporation (Detroit), 549 fn
Chu Chia-hua, 249
Chungking, 27, 71, 148, 173 fn, 237, 254, 465 fn, 473, 475–476
Churchill, Sir Winston, 12 fn, 16 fn, 20 fn, 31, 129, 132 & fn, 134, 138 fn, 160–162, 171, 181 fn, 216, 218 fn–219, 302, 324, 380–381, 403, 458 & fn, 651
Civil and Military Gazette (Lahore), 590
Clapper, Raymond, 308 fn, 339 & *fn*
Clarke, 651
Clow, Sir Andrew, 85 fn
Cocanada—*see* Kakinada
Collier's Weekly, 616 fn
Colombo, 208 fn, 660
Communist Party of India, 29 fn, 76 fn, 124 fn, 136, 419 fn, 491 fn, 496, 502 fn, 504–505, 533 fn, 594 fn, 294 & fn, 297 fn, 299, 301 fn, 303, 305–306, 310–311, 313, 320–326 & fn, 328, 330–332, 335 fn, 337–338, 340, 342–344, 352, 356–357, 363–364, 367, 370–372 & fn, 377, 379–380, 384–403, 405–414, 416–417, 419–420 & fn, 423–425, 427 fn, 429–434, 442–443, 450–455, 457, 459–460 & fn, 467–469, 471–476, 478, 485 & fn, 487, 489–490, 491 fn–495, 496 fn–497, 500 & fn, 502 & fn, 504–505, 511 & fn, 512 fn, 514–517, 521, 523 fn, 526–528, 535–537, 551, 553, 555, 558–561, 565, 576–577, 580–581, 595, 600, 604, 611, 644–645, 694 fn
————, Allahabad resolution of, 516–517
————, Bardoli resolution of, 60 fn, 68 fn, 73, 75 fn, 83 fn, 92 fn, 94, 116
————, Bombay resolution of, 26 & fn, 60 fn, 68 fn
————, Quit India resolution of, 527
Congress ministries, 328, 514 & fn
Congress Socialist Party, 76 fn–77, 486 fn, 496, 600 fn
Congress Working Committee, 8, 10, 18, 34, 36–37, 44–47, 49, 52–53, 55–57, 60–61, 66, 67 fn–68, 72, 74–75 & fn, 77 fn, 83 fn, 91, 93, 113–114, 116 fn, 153, 161, 186–191, 193, 197 fn, 201–204, 209 & fn, 211 fn, 215–216, 239, 243, 247, 272–273, 276 fn, 290–291, 293 fn–294, 321–322, 325, 326 fn, 330 fn, 336–337, 342, 367, 388–389, 396–398, 400, 410–411 & fn, 414, 416, 419 & fn, 426–427 & fn, 429–431, 436–437, 448–449, 468–469, 492–493, 495–496, 510 fn, 512, 514, 526 fn–527, 577, 579, 603–604, 611, 617, 630, 652, 654, 661
Constituent Assembly, 6–7, 59, 154, 188 fn, 290 fn, 511, 556 fn
Constructive Programme (Mahatma Gandhi), 56 fn
Cripps mission, 187 fn, 291, 302, 329, 365, 379, 405
Cripps negotiations, 353, 368, 372, 403

Cripps proposals, 193 fn, 213, 227, 243, 289–290, 310, 372, 383, 388–389, 398, 407, 521, 526 fn
Cripps, Sir Stafford, 138 fn, 161 fn, 181 fn, 183 fn, 184 fn, 185 fn, 187–188 & fn, 192 fn–193, 196–197 & fn, 199, 202 & fn, 206 fn, 208–209 & fn, 210 fn, 212–221 & fn, 228, 230–238 & fn, 241–243, 247, 249, 262, 276–277, 283, 288, 290–292, 294, 297, 303, 306, 311, 318, 324, 334, 339, 342, 372, 385, 389, 398, 401, 403–405, 407, 410, 420–422, 426, 430, 435, 455 fn, 460, 497, 578, 588, 628, 630
Crisis in Civilization — see *Sabhyatar Sankat*
Cromwell, Oliver, 33
Cuba, 374 fn
Curtin, John, 216 & *fn*
Czechoslovakia, 30, 142, 568, 642 fn

Dadachanji, B.K., 251 & *fn*
Daily Herald, 10 & fn, 72, 419 & fn, 420 fn
Daily Mail, 73 fn
Daily Telegraph, 73 fn
Dalmia, Ram Krishna, 575 & *fn*
Dam, A.M., 264 fn
Darbhanga Case, 649
Das, Bishwanath, 290 & *fn*
———, Frieda (Mrs. Sarangadhar Das) — *see* Hauswirth, Frieda Mathllde
———, Mohan, 491 fn
Datta, S.K., 465
Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (Edward Gibbon), 653 fn
Decline of the West (Oswald Spengler), 658 & fn
Defence Loan, 62 fn
Defence of India Act, 8 fn, 48, 51, 593
Defence of India Rules, 28, 71, 85 fn, 255 fn, 335, 344 fn, 588 fn, 593
Dehra Dun, 666, 668, 688
Dehra Dun Jail, 510, 568, 606, 612, 617
Delhi, 8 fn, 31, 40 fn, 126–127, 145–146, 158, 173, 208 fn, 231, 243, 251, 253, 259, 274, 298, 301, 318, 320, 322, 324, 334, 336, 341, 364, 372, 406, 412, 467–468, 488 fn, 491, 494 & fn, 524, 527, 591, 630, 632–634, 641—*see also* New Delhi
Delhi Cloth Mills, 150 fn, 610 fn
Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee, 494 fn
Deoli, 8 fn, 28
Deoria, 112–113
Desai, Bhulabhai, 67 & fn, 149, 289
———, Mahadeva, 632–633, 667–668
Diamond Harbour, 255 fn
Dibrugarh, 263, 265–266
Dimapur, 263–264, 267, 272
D.J. Love and Co. (Allahabad), 99 fn
Dneproges Dam (U.S.S.R.), 1 fn, 31
Dnieper Dam (U.S.S.R.), 567
Dnieper River (U.S.S.R.), 1 fn
Dominion Status, 31, 138 fn, 176, 183 fn, 199, 228, 309–310, 411, 583, 651 fn
Dorman-Smith, Sir Reginald Hugh, 411 & *fn*
Doulatram, Jairamdas, 291
Dow, Sir Hugh, 488 & fn, 490
Dreamers, Dynamiters and Demagogues (Max Nomad), 666 fn
Dutch East Indies, 432, 445
Dutt, R. Palme, 135 fn

Eastern Group Supply Council, 40 & fn, 127, 197 fn, 549, 557 & fn, 563
East India Company, 182
East Indian Railway, 146
Egypt, 382 & fn, 612
Emergence of Man (Gerald Heard), 582 fn
Emerson, R.W., 378 & *fn*
England, 2–3, 11 & fn, 20 fn, 22, 25, 29–32, 34–35, 38, 43–44, 52, 58, 65 fn, 73 fn, 76–77, 79, 89, 95–96, 105–107, 124, 131, 134, 139–141, 143 fn–144, 147, 150 & fn, 152–153, 157–158, 163 fn, 170–172, 174–176, 186, 193 fn–194, 196, 200 fn, 205, 210, 216, 218–219, 222–223, 225 fn, 227, 232 fn, 234–235, 236 fn, 238, 247–248, 252–253, 255 fn, 276–

278, 280, 283, 287, 290–294, 297, 300, 301 fn, 303–305, 307–308, 310–312, 314, 316, 319–320, 324, 329, 331–334, 343–344, 355–357, 360–362, 368–370, 378–380, 382–383, 384 fn–385, 388–393, 397–400, 402, 412–413, 421, 423, 425–426, 428–433, 438–439, 442, 448–449, 454–456, 458–459, 477, 518–520, 522, 551–552, 564, 577, 604, 638 fn, 642 fn, 668, 689, 691
Essays (R.W. Emerson), 378 fn
Ethiopia, 304, 331
Eva, 622
Evening News, 73 fn
Ewing Christian College (Allahabad), 101

Fauconnier, Henri, 669 & *fn*
Feast of Youth (Harindranath Chattopadhyaya), 643 fn
Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, 308 fn
Feisal II, 4 fn
Field, Sir Donald Mayle, 539 & *fn*
Fischer, Louis, 358 & *fn*, 359 fn, 379, 632, 634–635
Five Ages of Man (Gerald Heard), 582 fn
Foot, A.E., 195 & fn, 196 fn
Ford Motor Company, 546
Fortune (Chicago), 168
Forward Bloc, 14 fn, 255 & fn, 505
Fountain (Charles Morgan), 666 & fn
Four freedoms (Franklin D. Roosevelt),
Friends of Soviet Conference, 117, 140 & fn, 143, 299
Friends of the Soviet Union (Calcutta), 599 & fn
Friends of the Soviet Union (U.P. Provincial Committee), 599 fn
Fyzabad, 488, 548

Gaban, (Premchand), 681
Gagai, K.G., 523 & fn
Gaidilieu, Rani, 263
Gandhi and Nehru (M. Chalapathi Rau), 579 fn
Gandhi Ashram (Meerut), 547–548
Gandhi, Feroze, 540, 623, 628, 636, 675
———, Indira, 540, 628–629, 631, 633, 636–637 *see also* Nehru, Indira
———, Kasturba, 471
———, Mahatma, 2 & fn, 4, 9, 15 & fn, 19 & fn, 20 fn, 22–25, 26 fn–27, 34–36 & fn, 41–42 & fn, 49, 55–56 & fn, 60–61, 66–68 & fn, 73 & fn, 75 & fn, 78, 81–84 & fn, 86, 93–95, 98–99, 102–103 & fn, 113–114, 161, 176, 183 fn–184 & fn, 186, 224, 226 & fn, 237, 243, 255 fn, 259 fn, 276 fn, 280 fn, 286–289, 291–293, 296 & fn, 306, 322 fn, 328, 342, 351–352 & fn, 354–359 & fn, 361–363, 365 fn, 367–370, 374–375, 382, 384 fn–385, 396–397, 400, 409–410, 411 fn–412 & fn, 414–417, 420 & fn, 423, 424 fn, 427–428, 431, 448, 450–451, 454 & fn, 457, 467, 469–474, 485–487, 492, 495, 500 fn, 509 & fn, 511 fn–513 & fn, 535, 541, 548, 551, 569, 576–577, 618, 623, 626–627, 632–633, 637, 642, 644–646, 651 fn, 654–655, 675, 694 (for Congress resolutions drafted by him *see* 276, 278, 280, 282, 284, 286, 388, 390, 392, 394, 396, and for his letters drafted by Jawaharlal—*see* 364–367, 378–379)
Gandhi's Eleven Points (K.T. Shah), 651
Ganga Prasad Memorial Hall (Lucknow), 333
Gauhati, 263, 579

Geissler, Louise, 690
Geneva, 664, 669, 672, 689
Geoffrey Dawson and Our Times (Evelyn Wrench), 313 fn
Geological Survey of India, 614 fn
George VI (of England), 154 fn
Germany, 1 fn, 16 fn, 20, 22, 25, 31 fn. 35, 39, 52, 65 fn, 90, 106, 124, 126. 134, 139, 141, 150 fn, 152, 163 fn, 221–222, 224, 247–248, 260, 262, 288. 292, 303, 323, 331–332, 342, 344, 413, 423, 434, 459, 477, 491, 518, 552, 555, 642 fn, 677, 689
Ghadar, 60 fn
Ghadar Party, 60 fn
Ghazi, 4 fn
Gibbon, Edward, 653 & *fn*
Gidwani, Choithram, 293 & fn, 490 & fn
Gimdi, Bhagwan Singh, 99 & fn
Glimpses of World History (Jawaharlal Nehru), 616, 677
Gobi, 664
Golaghai, 263
Golden Home, 667
Golden Threshold (Hyderabad), 671, 693
Gorakhpur, 102–103, 107–108, 111, 116, 128, 488, 498 & fn, 550–552, 555
Gorakhpur Congress Committee, 556
Gorakhpur Jail, 554
Government and Politics of China (Tuan-Sheng Chien), 236 fn
Government of India Act of 1935, 488 fn
Grady, Henry F., 308 fn, 402 fn
Grady Mission—*see* American Technical Mission
Grady Report, 563
Grant, John B., 345 & *fn*
Great Challenge (Louis Fischer), 358 fn
Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, 163 fn
Greece, 31, 169, 608
Greenlees, Duncan, 638 & fn
Gujarat, 43, 265, 494
Gulab Singhju Dev Bahadur, Maharaja, Sir, 535 *fn*
Gunroom (Charles Morgan), 666 fn
Gunther, Frances, 339
Gupta, C.B., 545 & fn
———, Shiva Prasad, 660
Guru Charan College (Silchar), 286 fn
Guruvayur, 668

Hague Court, 315
Hajrah Begum, 29 & *fn*
Halifax, 1st earl (Lord Irwin), 201 & fn, 651 & fn
Halvasia, Newal Kishore, 145
Handia, 158
Haq, Islamul, 117 fn
Hardwar, 347
Hari, 651, 681
Harijan, 84 fn, 98 fn, 226 fn, 259 fn. 352 fn, 363 & fn, 367, 369 fn, 375, 409 fn–410, 412 fn, 417, 423, 424 fn
Harrow, 634
Hartley, Sir Alan Fleming, 195 & fn
Hauswirth, Frieda Mathilde (Mrs. Sarangadhar Das), 664 & fn
Hawthornden Prize, 666 fn
Heard, Gerald, 582 & *fn*
Heavenly Discourse (Charles Erskine Wood), 666
Hedin, Sven, 663–664
Helen, 653
Hemmerlin, Mlle., 678, 683
Higginbottom, Ethelind, 100 & fn
———, Sam, 100 fn–102
Himalayas, 325, 631
Hindu, 419 fn, 591 fn
Hindu Illustrated Weekly, 676
Hindu Mahasabha, 51 fn, 220, 221 fn. 326, 384 & fn, 411 fn, 424 & fn
Hindustan Socialist Republican Army, 60 fn
Hindustan Times, 187 fn, 220, 579 fn
Hindusthan Standard, 419 fn
Hirachand, Walchand, 40 fn, 328, 549 fn, 562 & fn
Historic Trips of a Revolutionary (Shaukat Usmani), 594 fn
History of Political Institutions Under the Republic (Tuan-Sheng Chien), 236 fn
Hitler, Adolf, 3, 9, 20, 44, 61, 63–65, 75–76, 106, 129–130, 134, 135 fn, 143, 248, 251, 253, 262–263, 402, 411, 460, 567

Holkar, Yashwant Rao, 318 & *fn*
Holland, 20 fn, 78, 141, 333, 518, 519 fn
Home of Aryas (Lachhmi Dhar Shastri), 626 fn
Hong Kong, 174, 333, 568
Hotel du lac (Kunming), 236
House of Commons (Britain), 12 fn, 20 fn, 33 & fn, 62 fn, 132 fn, 161 fn, 181 fn, 184, 303 fn, 380 fn, 426 fn, 549 fn
House of Representatives (Australia), 216 fn
House of Representatives (Burma), 251 fn
Human Venture (Gerald Heard), 582 fn
Hungary, 30, 642 fn
Huq, Fazlul, 14 fn
Husain, Imam, 604–605
Hutchings, Robert Howell, 177 fn
Hutheesing, G.P., 630–631, 674, 676, 679
———, Krishna, 625, 642–643, 647, 650, 653–655, 662, 665, 669, 672, 674, 676, 679, 681, 684
Hyderabad, 635, 642, 645, 671, 693

Ides of March (Thornton Wilder), 641 fn
Iftikharuddin, Mian, 300 & fn, 599 & fn, 600 fn, 602
I loved Germany (Evelyn Wrench), 313 fn
Immortal Years (Evelyn Wrench), 313 fn
Imperial Bank, 649
Imphal, 264
India and the I.L.O. (P.P. Pillai), 122 fn
India League of America, 339 fn
Indian Airlines, 502 fn
Indian Bureau of Mines, 614 fn
Indian Chamber of Commerce, 64 fn
Indian Chamber of Commerce of America, 339 fn
Indian Chamber of Commerce (Singapore), 167
Indian Civil Service, 8, 267, 335
Indian Committee for Aid to the Soviet Union, 117 & fn
Indian Express, 419 fn
Indian Federation of Labour, 122 fn
Indian Federation of Working Journalists, 579 fn
Indian Independence Conference, 225 fn
Indian Independence Leagues, 225 fn
Indian Legion, 225 fn
Indian Legislative Assembly, 579 fn
Indian National Army—*see* Azad Hind Fauj
Indian Overseas Central Association, 295 fn
Indian Progressive Writers' Association, 316
India Office, 207, 210
Indo-China, 445, 518 fn
Indonesia, 432
Indore, 318 fn, 531–532
Indore Rajya Praja Mandal, 531–532
International Court of Justice, 11 fn
International Labour Organisation, 11 fn, 122 fn, 125
Into the Sun (Frieda Mathilde Hauswirth), 664 fn
Iqbal, Sir Mohammad, 503–504, 641
Iran, 4 & fn, 13, 25, 85, 105–106, 186, 258, 288, 306, 322, 432, 445, 468, 564, 608
Iraq, 4 & fn, 25, 85, 105–106, 286, 288, 306, 432, 445, 468
Ireland, 316, 668
Irwin, Lord (Halifax, 1st earl), 201 & fn, 651 & fn
Is God Evident? (Gerald Heard), 582 fn
Ismail, Mirza, 514
Italy, 163 fn, 303, 332, 423, 642 fn
Itarsi, 358
Ittehad Party, 488 fn

Jagannath, 150 & fn, 610 & fn
Jalesarganj, 299
Jallianwala Bagh, 296 & fn
Jallianwala Bagh Memorial Trust, 296 fn
Jamai Village Ashram (Hoshangabad), 509 fn
Japan, 2 fn, 10, 25–26, 30, 65, 90, 91 fn, 106, 110, 122 fn, 126, 134, 139, 141–142, 150 fn, 152, 162, 163 fn, 186, 193 fn, 222, 224, 225 & fn, 247–248, 252, 254, 260, 262–263, 274, 276, 278, 280, 286–288, 290–291,

293, 307, 331–332, 342–344, 366, 370, 385–386, 394, 403–404, 411–413, 415, 426–428, 430–432, 434, 456, 459, 467, 477, 479, 497, 546–547, 566
Jawaharlal Nehru (M. Chalapathi Rau), 579 fn
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 579 fn
Jehangir, Cowasji, 419 fn
Jessore, 255 fn
Jha, Amaranatha, 524 & *fn*, 645
———, Ganganatha, 524 fn
Jhansi, 354
Jinnah, M.A., 6 fn, 134, 221 & fn, 291, 316, 326, 371–372 & fn, 384 & fn, 407–408, 411 fn, 419 fn, 424 fn, 460 fn, 472 & fn, 511–512, 515–516
Jodhpur, 539 & fn
———, Maharaja of, 540 & *fn*
Johannesburg, 364
John Day Company, 616 fn
Johnson, Louis Arthur, 194 & *fn*, 195, 197 & fn, 200 fn–201, 202 fn, 218 fn, 226–227, 230–231, 300, 301 fn, 318, 357, 363, 373–374 & fn
———, Peter, 250 & fn
Jorhat, 263
Joshi, N.M., 587 fn
Judges' Story (Charles Morgan), 666 fn
Jumabhoy, Rajahali, 167 & fn, 295
Junagadh, 523 fn
J. Walter Thompson Company (Eastern) Limited, 241 fn

Kabul river, 608
Kakinada, 208 fn, 270 fn
Kakkar, Kamta Prasad, 672, 677–678, 683
Kalanga, 125
Kalappa, V.R., 122 fn
Kanika, Tikayat Saheb of, 492 fn
Kanpur, 122–123, 127–128, 488
Kanpur and Meerut Communist Conspiracy Cases, 594 fn
Kanyakumari, 34, 539
Karachi, 230 & fn, 233 fn, 488, 549 fn
Karmabhoomi (Premchand), 688
Kashi—*see* Varanasi
Kashi Vidyapith, 556 fn
Kashmir, 532–533, 539–541, 631, 636–637
Kashmir National Conference, 540
Katju, K.N., 488, 681
Kaul, Rajpati, 655, 672, 679
Kayastha Pathshala School (Allahabad), 346
Kedah, 42 fn
Kelantan, 42 fn
Kerala, 539 fn
Kew Gardens (England), 160
Keyes, Sir Roger, 380 fn
Khaksar movement, 510 fn
Khali, 637, 681, 684
Khaliquzzaman, Chaudhuri, 372 fn
Khan, Abdul Ghaffar, 373, 500–501, 607, 609, 634
———, Allama Mashriqi Inayatullah, 515–517, 523 & fn
———, Badshah—*see* Khan, Abdul Ghaffar
———, M.A., 122 fn
———, Muhammad Ismail, 372 fn
Khan Sahib, 373 fn, 500 & fn, 539, 634, 638
Khan, Shakir Ali, 533 & *fn*, 534
———, Sikandar Hayat, 590–593
Khawaja, 657
Kheiri, Muhammad Abdus Sattar, 510 & *fn*
Khudai Khidmatgars, 500 & fn
Khulna, 255 fn
Khyber Pass, 539, 607–608
Kid (Richard J. Walsh), 616 fn
Kidwai, Rafi Ahmed, 145, 298–299, 344 fn, 356 & fn, 578
Kitabistan, 514–515
Klang District Union, 70 fn
Kolahai, 636
Koo, Wellington, 11 & *fn*
Korea, 162, 173 & fn, 432
Korean Independence Army, 173 fn
Kripalani, J.B., 287, 488
———, Sucheta, 298, 493–494
Krishnanand, Swami, 293 fn
Kulu, 241, 300, 318, 354, 368, 632, 634, 636
Kumaon, 688
Kumaramangalam, Surendra Mohan, 502 & *fn*

Kumbh Mela, 85 & fn, 98 fn, 555
Kunming, 236
Kunzru, Hirdayanath, 264 & fn
Kuomintang, 11 fn
Kyoko fan, 651

Labour Commission (Malaya), 70
Labour in South-East Asia (P.P. Pillai), 122 fn
Labour Monthly, 135 fn
Labour Party (British), 16 & fn, 34, 419, 434
Lahore, 150 fn, 298, 320, 341, 345, 486 fn, 562, 591–592, 641, 645
Lahore Conspiracy Case, 60 fn
Lal, Jagat Narain, 294 & fn, 526 fn–527
Lancashire, 328
Larkharati Duniya (Jawaharlal Nehru). 603
Laski, Harold, 236 & fn, 454 fn
Latif, Abdul, 14 & fn, 526 & fn
League of Nations, 314, 459
Leap-Home and Gentlebrawn (Frieda Mathllde Hauswirth), 664 fn
Lemin, I., 135 fn
Lend-Lease Act, 308 & fn
Lenin Peace Prize, 494 fn
Lenin, V.I., 29 & fn, 497
Letters and Social Aims (R.W. Emerson), 378 fn
Leysin, 677–678
Lhasa, 683
Liddarwat, 637
Life, 625
Life and Death of Stalin (Louis Fischer), 358 fn
Life and Myself (Harindranath Chattopadhyaya), 643 fn
Life of Mahatma Gandhi (Louis Fischer), 358 fn
Linlithgow, 2nd marquis, 13 fn, 20 fn, 34 fn, 36, 62 fn, 64 fn, 194 & fn, 197 fn, 202 fn, 206 fn, 218 fn, 256, 302, 409, 424 fn, 472 & fn, 488 fn
Lin Yutang, 612
Living Age, 652
Lloyd Barrage, 488 fn
Lohia, Ram Manohar, 470 fn
Lok Sabha, 492 fn, 503 fn
London, 31, 33, 40, 72–73, 75, 117 fn, 126, 144, 181 fn, 199, 204, 218 fn, 233 fn, 238, 301 fn, 308, 329, 334, 352, 409, 455, 459, 519 & fn, 568
Louis XIV, 256
Lucknow, 18, 117, 141, 145–147, 158, 298, 338, 341, 488, 545, 551, 576, 580, 595, 599, 604 fn–605, 633, 676
Lucknow University, 15 fn

MacDonald, Ramsay, 513 & fn
Madagascar, 518 fn
Madani, Maulana Hussain Ahmad, 501
Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly, 533 fn
Madras, 61 & fn, 79, 85, 98, 107, 109, 111, 125, 158, 239 fn, 265, 270 & fn, 274–275, 321, 374, 513 fn
Madras Congress Legislature Party, 239 & fn
Madras Conspiracy Case, 502 fn
Madras District Political Conference, 75 fn, 76 fn
Madras Legislative Assembly, 502 & fn
Madras Mail, 419 fn
Madurai, 371 fn
Magh Mela—see *Kumbh Mela*
Mahmud, Syed, 43 & fn, 495, 511 & fn, 512 fn, 514 & fn, 647–648, 650–652, 654, 656–657
Mahtab, Harekrushna, 491
Maisky, I.M., 11 & *fn*
Majidia School (Allahabad), 346
Making of Buffalo Bill (Richard J. Walsh), 616 fn
Malaisie—see *Soul of Malaya*
Malaviya, K.D., 505
———, Madan Mohan, 296 fn
Malaya, 2 fn, 42–43, 70–71, 123 fn, 125, 128, 167, 173, 177, 186, 234–235, 255, 271, 273, 275, 295 & fn, 297, 302, 333, 335–337, 342–343, 365, 374, 383, 385, 388–389, 391, 398, 412, 432, 445, 479
Malaysia, 608
Malidpur, 531 fn
Manchester Guardian Weekly, 667
Manchuria, 30, 224, 303–304, 331, 478
Manchus, 381

Mandalay, 256–257
Manipur, 153 fn, 167, 257–258, 265, 272
Manipur Road, 239, 257, 264, 266–267
Manipur Road Station, 268
Manu : A Study in Hindu Social Thought (Kewal L. Motwani), 614 fn
Marium, 373 & fn, 500 fn
Markaz-e-Khudai Khidmatgars, 500 fn
Marseilles, 694
Marwar Lok Parishad, 539–540
Marx, Karl, 497
Masks and Farewells (Harindranath Chattopadhyaya), 643 fn
Master Lease-Lend Agreement, 344 fn
Masulipatam, 183
Matchmaker (Thornton Wilder), 641 fn
Mauritius, 365
Maxwell, Reginald, 303 fn
Mayo, Miss, 642 fn
Mediterranean Sea, 694
Meerut, 550 fn, 552-553
Meherally, Yusuf, 486 & fn, 600–601
Mehta, G.L., 308 fn
———, Hansa, 654
———, Jamnadas, 122 fn
Memoirs of a Soviet Ambassador (I.M. Maisky), 11 fn
Men and Politics (Louis Fischer), 358 fn, 635
Menon, K.B., 364
———, V.K. Krishna, 32 fn, 60 fn, 116 fn, 117 fn, 339 fn, 414 fn, 415 fn, 577, 691
Merchant of Yonkers (Thornton Wilder), 641 fn
Materia Medica (Boerieke), 651
Mirabehn, 276 fn
Misra, Godavaris, 491 fn
Modern Review, 676, 692
Mody, Sir Homi, 563 & fn
Mohammad Ali Park (Allahabad), 160
Mohanmarg, 638
Mohenjo Daro, 59, 130
Montana, 653, 677–678
Mont Blanc, 663
Mookerji, S.P., 51 fn
Moonje, B.S., 51 fn
Morgan, Charles, 666 & *fn*
Moscow, 1 fn, 135
Moss, E.V., 102 & fn
Mother India (Miss Mayo), 642 fn
Motwani, Kewal L., 614 & *fn*
Moulmein, 161 fn
Mount Everest (Sven Hedin), 663 fn
Mrityu Shok ki Shanti (Lachhmi Dl Shastri), 626 fn
Mudaliar, A. Ramaswamy, 572 fn
Muharram, 604 fn
Mukerjee, Hiren, 78 fn
Mukherji, Dhan Gopal, 649, 683
Mulkraj, 296 & fn
Mulla, Jagat Narain, 673, 678
Muller's exercises, 648
Munich, 224, 304
Munich Pact, 604
Muslim League, 6 & fn, 14 fn, 92 & fn, 106, 192, 201 fn, 220, 221 fn, 239 fn, 291, 294-295, 301 fn, 303, 321 fn, 323, 326 & fn, 372 & fn, 380, 403, 407, 424–425, 434, 460 & fn, 502 fn, 511–513, 515–517, 520, 523–525, 526 fn, 528
Mussolini, Benito, 134, 143, 332
Mussoorie, 644, 657, 665, 668
Myitkyina, 265–266, 271–272

Nadvi, Maulvi Masud Ali, 42 fn
Naggar, 320, 634
Nagpur, 78 fn, 341, 354, 559 fn
Naidu, Leilamani (Papi), 641, 643–644, 661, 668
———, Padmaja, 622, 631, 635, 641–645, 653, 656–657, 659, 661–664, 669, 671, 692–693
———, Sarojini, 140 & fn, 142, 147–148, 290, 493, 642 & fn, 644–645, 671
Naini, 668, 679, 688
Naini Jail, 647, 648 fn, 650, 657, 662
Nambiar, A.C.N., 673, 682, 687
Naogaon, 263
Naoroji, Jal, 672
———, Khorshed (Bul), 656, 688
Narayan, Jayaprakash, 633
Narendra Deva, Acharya, 292, 486, 633
Narendra Mandal—*see* Chamber of Princes

Narielwala, P.A., 624–625, 627
Nash, 651
Nathan, 70 fn
Nation, 634
National Broadcasting Corporation (New York), 353 fn
National Herald, 164 fn, 335 & fn, 339, 354, 419 fn, 575–576, 578–581, 583 & fn
National History of the Intellect (R.W. Emerson), 378 fn
Nationalist Congress, 14 fn
National Liberal Federation, 419 fn
National Peking University, 236 fn
National Planning Committee, 41, 62, 110, 127, 172, 328, 475, 513, 562, 565
National War Front, 240 fn, 250, 256, 455, 588
Nawanagar, Jam Saheb of, 181 fn
Nehru, B.K. (Ballo), 634
———, Indira, 74, 486, 515, 622–623, 625, 650, 653–654, 656–657, 661, 665, 669, 672, 674–675, 677–684, 688–690, 693—*see also* Gandhi, Indira
———, Jawaharlal, 1 fn, 10 fn, 11 fn, 14 fn, 29 fn, 30 fn, 32 fn, 43 fn, 58 fn, 59 fn, 60 fn, 67 fn, 116 fn, 117 fn, 121 fn, 140 fn, 152 fn, 153 fn, 177 fn, 183–185, 187 & fn, 191, 192 fn, 194–195 & fn, 196 fn, 200 fn, 202 fn, 232 fn, 238 fn, 240 fn, 248, 251 fn, 252 fn, 255 fn, 259 fn, 263 fn, 288, 293 fn, 296 fn, 297 fn, 301 fn, 313–315, 318 fn, 322 fn, 323 fn, 351, 353 fn, 365 & fn, 371 fn, 404–408, 414 fn, 415 fn, 427 fn, 433 fn, 465 fn, 466 fn, 470, 493 fn, 509 fn, 515 fn, 523 fn, 526 fn, 533 fn, 562 fn, 572 fn, 578 fn, 590 fn, 592 fn, 599 fn, 605 fn, 610 fn, 614 fn, 621 fn, 624 fn, 683, 694 fn
———, assumes U.P. Congress Presidentship, 501–502; drafts A.I.C.C. War resolution, 277, 279, 281, 283, 285, Congress Working Committee resolutions, on Cripps Mission, 188–191. evacuation orders, Burma situation and evacuees, 268–272, political situation (Bardoli resolution), 45–55, British withdrawal from India, 386, 388, 390, 392, 394, 396; drafts Quit India resolution, 436–453; drafts Mahatma Gandhi's letters to Chiang Kai-shek, 364–367, and to Franklin Roosevelt, 378–379; Maulana Azad's letters to Stafford Cripps, 187, 192, 202–211; inaugurates A.I.T.U.C. session at Kanpur, 121–129; reacts to Edward Thompson's advice, 72–73; replies to H.G. Wells's criticism, 58–59; speaks on Bardoli resolution at Wardha A.I.C.C., 74–76, and on Quit India resolution at Bombay A.I.C.C., 454–457; writes confidential note on the Indian background for Louis Arthur Johnson, 301–312
———, on Abdul Ghaffar Khan, 500, 607–609; on Abul Kalam Azad, 610–612, his meeting U.P. Congress workers, 487; on Adolf Hitler, 134; on advisory committee on women's branch of A.I.C.C., 493; on air raids, 97, 107–108, 159, 267–268, and air-raid precautions, 112–113, 128, 139–140, 147–148, 155–156, 158–160, 296, 469–470, and Congressmen, 5, 69; on Allahabad resolution of A.I.C.C., 293, 305–306; 336–337; on Allied cause and independence of India, 459; on Allied powers, 2, 22, 35, 319, 324, their conception of the war, 402, their policies, 438–439, their future relations with India, 442–443; on All India Trade Union Congress, 121–122, 128–129; on All India Women's Conference, 494; on American and British criticism of India's demand, 454–455; on American attitude towards Asia, China and India, 456; on American press comments on Cripps Mission, 193, 200–201; on Amery, L.S., 20, 33, 39, 42, 66, 302–303, 426; on an attack on India, 26–27, 37–38, 135; on Aney, M.S., 38; on Anglo-American Trade Agreement, 564; on Anglo-Soviet alliance, 344, 369–370; on Asia, 169; and America, 613; on *Asia*

magazine, 613, 616, becoming its contributing editor, 612–613; on Asiatic nations under foreign domination, 445; on Assam, 153, 262–264, 267, tour of, 263–264; on assumption of U.P. Congress presidentship, 501–502; on Atlantic Charter and India, 12, 171; on attitude of Indian people towards Allied and Axis powers, 293–294, 307, 555; on attitude towards British Government and Axis powers, 65, 79, 96, 104, 126–127, 139, 144, 152–153, 158, 162–163, 196–197, 224, 260, 317, 319, 359, 469; on *Autobiography*'s continuation, 617; on autograph-seekers, 86; on automobile industry and government, 549, 557–558; on Axis powers, 44, 262, 477–478, their propaganda, 173, 307, 479; on Bardoli resolution of C.W.C., 66, 74, 93; on becoming Congress President, 644–645, 693–694; on Benares state, 534–535; on Bengal coalition ministry, 14; on Bhopal Government's refusal to interview Shakir Ali Khan, 533–534; on blood banks, 345–346; on bombing of Indian cities, 545; on British administration, 75, 273–274, 430, 565; on British Commonwealth, 310, 314–315; on British economic policy in India, 563–564; on British Empire, 63, 105, 131, 157, 334; on British experts, 59; on British Government, 12, 20, 35, 73, 105, 113, 128, 157, 249–250, 319–320, 343, 358–359, 381, 411, 454, 469, 565, 581, 583, 588, 595, 661, attitude of people towards it, 8, 11–12, 32, 34, 39, 75, 185–186, 225, 303, 319, 339–340, 380–382, 388–389; compromise and settlement with it, 76, 89, 92, 150, 355, cooperation with it, 13–14, 16, 23–24, 34–35, 38, 41, 54, 61, 66, 89–90, 94–95, 124–126, 340, rebellion against it, 20, 39, 103; on British Government and approach of War to India, 37; on British Government and Burma, 411–412; on British Government and India, 7, 33, 39, 50, 65, 96, 104, 172, 211, 231, 242, 297, 302–303, 324, 364; on British Government and resistance to Japanese invasion, 374–375; on British imperialism, 79, 104–105, 126, 248, 273–274, 323, and Asia, 381; on British officials, 126–127, 270, 275, 335–336, 412, 554–555; on British people, 27, 38, 44, 237, 556; on British policy, 47–48, 54, 64, 413, offering opposition to it, 15; on British Raj, 59; on British recognition of independence of India, 310–312, 353, 368–369, 375, 415; on British rule and ruling class, 23, 27, 30, 63, 144, 436–437; on British withdrawal from India, 382–383, 390–395, 397, 399–402, 423; on Burma Government, collapse of, 255–256, 269–270, 273, 335, 430; on Burma Road and China, 475; on Centre and province relations, 327; on the changing world, 136, 465, 603–604; on Chiang Kai-shek, 138, 466, 468, 473, 477, 481, meeting with him, 466–467, his inability to meet Mahatma Gandhi, 467, 471–472; Madame Chiang Kai-shek, 466, 468, 477, 481, and their visit to India, 132, 153, 155, 342, 468, 470–471, 476, 478–481; on China, 21, 27, 90, 141–142, 150, 248, 344, 465, 467, 497, Congress policy towards, 467, 472–473, cooperatives in, 475–476, 546, 568, 571, cottage and village industries in, 71–72, 86, 110–111, 546–547, education in, 347, 545–546, giving help to, 14, 35, 126, 340, 369, 415, 430, 479, 554; on Chinese people, 1, 11, 14, 37, 53, 144, 157, 248, 364–365, 367, 377, 438–439, 545, 566; on Christianity in China, 315, in India, 315; on Civic Defence League, 147–148; on colonial empires of Britain and France, 310; on coming out of jail, 1, 7–8, 18; on commandeering premises of educational institutions for war purposes, 346–347, 371, 567; on communal problem, 18, 325–326, 509–511, 516–517, and British Government, 410; on communism and socialism, 136; on Communist Party of India, 615; on Communists, 330, and Congress, 504–505; on Communists and socialists, 496–497; on

Congress, 2, 27, 81, 87, 156, 310–311, 320, 327, 328, 332, 370, 410–411, 565, 576, and British Government, 48, 64, 139, 151, 222, 236, 342–343, 379, 386–389, 398, and Cripps Mission, 186, 221, 227–229, 233–235, 243, 253, 405, 430, and foreign aggression, 90, 235, 357, 388–391, 398, and the Muslim League, 107, and nonviolence, 24, 34, and the United Nations, 396–397, 400; on Congress and the War, 5, 10, 13, 47, 52–54, 88–90, 135, 139, 171–172, 188–189, 247–248, 251–253, 262; Congress constructive policy, 164; on Congress demand and American or Chinese intervention, 424; on Congress foreign policy, 331–332, 340, 342, 413; on Congress in the Punjab, 320–321; on Congressmen and the Communists, 299; on Congressmen and Congress programme, 489–490; on Congress policy regarding political situation, 6, 55, 116, 577, and Chiang Kai-shek's visit to India, 468; on Congress policy regarding industrialisation, 328; on Congress reaction to the British and British policy 15; on Congress Working Committee, 75, banning of its resolutions, 272–273, its meeting, 492, its decisions, 468–469, various resolutions passed by it, 74, 336–337, 405–407, 410, 412, 41[illegible], 426, 429–430; on a constituent assembly for India, 77; on constitution of India, 442–443, 527; on construction of Congress Bhavan in West Krishna district, 499; on cooperatives, 567, 616; on cottage industries, 546, 571, and large-scale industries, 570; on Cripps Mission, 184–185, 187–199, 202–220, 229–230, 628–629, questions relating to constitutional changes, 204–205, 210, 219, constitution-making body, 189, 199, defence, 185, 187, 190–192, 195, 197–199, 202–206, 209–210, 212–217, Dominion Status, 184, 199, Indian states, 191, National Government, 206–208, 210–211, 217–220, 230, non-accession issue, 184–185, 189–192, 194, 196, 199; on Cripps Mission's effect and failure, 232, 235, 237, 249, 277, 302, 403–405; on crowd control, 87; on *Daily Herald's* attack on Congress, 419; on daughter, 629–631, 634, 636–638, 649–650, 653, 656–657, 674, 678, 680, 683, 693, her marriage, 515, 623, 625, ceremony to be performed, 626–627, messages of congratulations, 628; on declarations about the constitutional status of India, 248; on defence loan, 62; on defence of India, 329, and the Indian people, 208, 213, 222–224, 229, 231, 248–249, 252–254, 256, 258–259, 261–262, 283, 285, 342–345, 427; on democracy, 314; on detention without trial, 587; on detenus, 145, 300, 330, 621; on developing people's spirit of resistance, 384–385, 403, 410, 413; on disarmament, 4–5, 13; on discipline in Congress, 330, 377; on district conferences, 376; on Dominion Status, 31, 176, 310; on Duncan Greenlees's request for a job, 638; on Edward Thompson's suggestions, 72–73; on empires, 333–334; on empires of future, 63; on engineers' task, 556–557; on England, 30–31, 106, 253, 378, 604; on European War, 30; on evacuation from Bengal districts, 240; on evacuation from Calcutta in panic, 254; on evacuation orders by government, 257–258, 268–269, 595; on evacuees, 145–146, 167–168, 177–178, 239–240, 251, 255–257, 264–268, 271–272, 286, 295, 302, 335, 342, and their children, 298, 355; on fascism and Nazism, 369; on federation of America and England, 31; on federation of China, India, Iraq and other countries, 468, 479; on flag-hoisting incident at Allahabad University, 524–525; on food problem, 565; on foreign invasion, 55, 376, 383; on foreign periodicals, 667–668; on foreign rule, rebellion against, 39; on Forward Bloc, 255; on forward policy of British Government, 608–609; on France, 30, 63, 163, 604; on Franklin D. Roosevelt, 171, 200; on freedom, 684–685, American and British types,

magazine, 613, 616, becoming its contributing editor, 612–613; on Asiatic nations under foreign domination, 445; on Assam, 153, 262–264, 267, tour of, 263–264; on assumption of U.P. Congress presidentship, 501–502; on Atlantic Charter and India, 12, 171; on attitude of Indian people towards Allied and Axis powers, 293–294, 307, 555; on attitude towards British Government and Axis powers, 65, 79, 96, 104, 126–127, 139, 144, 152–153, 158, 162–163, 196–197, 224, 260, 317, 319, 359, 469; on *Autobiography*'s continuation, 617; on autograph-seekers, 86; on automobile industry and government, 549, 557–558; on Axis powers, 44, 262, 477–478, their propaganda, 173, 307, 479; on Bardoli resolution of C.W.C., 66, 74, 93; on becoming Congress President, 644–645, 693–694; on Benares state, 534–535; on Bengal coalition ministry, 14; on Bhopal Government's refusal to interview Shakir Ali Khan, 533–534; on blood banks, 345–346; on bombing of Indian cities, 545; on British administration, 75, 273–274, 430, 565; on British Commonwealth, 310, 314–315; on British economic policy in India, 563–564; on British Empire, 63, 105, 131, 157, 334; on British experts, 59; on British Government, 12, 20, 35, 73, 105, 113, 128, 157, 249–250, 319–320, 343, 358–359, 381, 411, 454, 469, 565, 581, 583, 588, 595, 661, attitude of people towards it, 8, 11–12, 32, 34, 39, 75, 185–186, 225, 303, 319, 339–340, 380–382, 388–389; compromise and settlement with it, 76, 89, 92, 150, 355, cooperation with it, 13–14, 16, 23–24, 34–35, 38, 41, 54, 61, 66, 89–90, 94–95, 124–126, 340, rebellion against it, 20, 39, 103; on British Government and approach of War to India, 37; on British Government and Burma, 411–412; on British Government and India, 7, 33, 39, 50, 65, 96, 104, 172, 211, 231, 242, 297, 302–303, 324, 364; on British Government and resistance to Japanese invasion, 374–375; on British imperialism, 79, 104–105, 126, 248, 273–274, 323, and Asia, 381; on British officials, 126–127, 270, 275, 335–336, 412, 554–555; on British people, 27, 38, 44, 237, 556; on British policy, 47–48, 54, 64, 413, offering opposition to it, 15; on British Raj, 59; on British recognition of independence of India, 310–312, 353, 368–369, 375, 415; on British rule and ruling class, 23, 27, 30, 63, 144, 436–437; on British withdrawal from India, 382–383, 390–395, 397, 399–402, 423; on Burma Government, collapse of, 255–256, 269–270, 273, 335, 430; on Burma Road and China, 475; on Centre and province relations, 327; on the changing world, 136, 465, 603–604; on Chiang Kai-shek, 138, 466, 468, 473, 477, 481, meeting with him, 466–467, his inability to meet Mahatma Gandhi, 467, 471–472; Madame Chiang Kai-shek, 466, 468, 477, 481, and their visit to India, 132, 153, 155, 342, 468, 470–471, 476, 478–481; on China, 21, 27, 90, 141–142, 150, 248, 344, 465, 467, 497, Congress policy towards, 467, 472–473, cooperatives in, 475–476, 546, 568, 571, cottage and village industries in, 71–72, 86, 110–111, 546–547, education in, 347, 545–546, giving help to, 14, 35, 126, 340, 369, 415, 430, 479, 554; on Chinese people, 1, 11, 14, 37, 53, 144, 157, 248, 364–365, 367, 377, 438–439, 545, 566; on Christianity in China, 315, in India, 315; on Civic Defence League, 147–148; on colonial empires of Britain and France, 310; on coming out of jail, 1, 7–8, 18; on commandeering premises of educational institutions for war purposes, 346–347, 371, 567; on communal problem, 18, 325–326, 509–511, 516–517, and British Government, 410; on communism and socialism, 136; on Communist Party of India, 615; on Communists, 330, and Congress, 504–505; on Communists and socialists, 496–497; on

Congress, 2, 27, 81, 87, 156, 310–311, 320, 32' 328, 332, 370, 410–411, 565, 576, an. British Government, 48, 64, 139, 15', 222, 236, 342–343, 379, 386–389. 398,and Cripps Mission, 186, 221, 227–229, 233–235, 243, 253, 405, 430, anc foreign aggression, 90, 235, 357, 388–391, 398, and the Muslim League, 107, and nonviolence, 24, 34, and the United Nations, 396–397, 400; on Congress and the War, 5, 10, 13, 47, 52–54, 88–90, 135, 139, 171–172, 188–189, 247–248, 251–253, 262; Congress constructive policy, 164; on Congress demand and American or Chinese intervention, 424; on Congress foreign policy, 331–332, 340, 342, 413; on Congress in the Punjab, 320–321; on Congressmen and the Communists, 299; on Congressmen and Congress programme, 489–490; on Congress policy regarding political situation, 6, 55, 116, 577, and Chiang Kai-shek's visit to India. 468; on Congress policy regarding industrialisation, 328; on Congress reaction to the British and British policy 15; on Congress Working Committee, 75, banning of its resolutions, 272–273, its meeting, 492, its decisions, 468–469, various resolutions passed by it, 74, 336–337, 405–407, 410. 412, 41', 426, 429–430; on a constituent assembly for India, 77; on constitution of India, 442–443, 527; on construction of Congress Bhavan in West Krishna district, 499; on cooperatives, 567, 616; on cottage industries, 546, 571, and large-scale industries, 570; on Cripps Mission, 184–185, 187–199, 202–220, 229–230, 628–629, questions relating to constitutional changes, 204–205, 210, 219, constitution-making body, 189, 199, defence, 185, 187, 190–192, 195, 197–199, 202–206, 209–210, 212–217, Dominion Status, 184, 199, Indian states, 191, National Government, 206–208, 210–211, 217–220, 230, non-accession issue, 184–185, 189–192, 194, 196, 199; on Cripps Mission's effect and failure, 232, 235, 237, 249, 277, 302, 403–405; on crowd control, 87; on *Daily Herald's* attack on Congress, 419; on daughter, 629–631, 634, 636–638, 649–650, 653, 656–657, 674, 678, 680, 683, 693, her marriage, 515, 623, 625, ceremony to be performed, 626–627, messages of congratulations, 628; on declarations about the constitutional status of India, 248; on defence loan, 62; on defence of India, 329, and the Indian people, 208, 213, 222–224, 229, 231, 248–249, 252–254, 256, 258–259, 261–262, 283, 285, 342–345, 427; on democracy, 314; on detention without trial, 587; on detenus, 145, 300, 330, 621; on developing people's spirit of resistance, 384–385, 403, 410, 413; on disarmament, 4–5, 13; on discipline in Congress, 330; 377; on district conferences, 376; on Dominion Status, 31, 176, 310; on Duncan Greenlees's request for a job, 638; on Edward Thompson's suggestions, 72–73; on empires, 333–334; on empires of future, 63; on engineers' task, 556–557; on England, 30–31, 106, 253, 378, 604; on European War, 30; on evacuation from Bengal districts, 240; on evacuation from Calcutta in panic, 254; on evacuation orders by government, 257–258, 268–269, 595; on evacuees, 145–146, 167–168, 177–178, 239–240, 251, 255–257, 264–268, 271–272, 286, 295, 302, 335, 342, and their children, 298, 355; on fascism and Nazism, 369; on federation of America and England, 31; on federation of China, India, Iraq and other countries, 468, 479; on flag-hoisting incident at Allahabad University, 524–525; on food problem, 565; on foreign invasion, 55, 376, 383; on foreign periodicals, 667–668; on foreign rule, rebellion against, 39; on Forward Bloc, 255; on forward policy of British Government, 608–609; on France, 30, 63, 163, 604; on Franklin D. Roosevelt, 171, 200; on freedom, 684–685, American and British types,

77; on free India and United Nations, 431–432; on Frieda Das, 664; on the Friends of the Soviet Union, 599–600; on *Frontier Speaks*, 606–607; on future, 582-583, future world organisation, 131, 313–315; on Gaidilieu, Rani, 263–264; on Gandhi Ashram of Meerut, 547–548; on German people, 27; on Germany, 20–21; on getting Swaraj, 63; on getting outside news in jail, 646–647; on Gorakhpur, 498; on government in free India, 366; on Government of India, 31, 247, 383, 455, 474–475, 538, its *communique* on the notes of the proceedings of C.W.C. meeting at Allahabad, 427–429; on government's order regarding driving licence holders, 594–595; on G.P. Hutheesing, 630; on guarantee of Indian independence after the War, 401–402, 419; on guerilla warfare, 259–260, 263, 327–328; on Halifax, first earl, 201; on health, 60, 679, 673; on heavy industries, 172, 328, 562; on H.G. Wells, 58; on himself, 17, 29, 613, 643–645, 648, 650, 654, 657, 659–660, 663, 665, 669–671, 673–674, 679, 684–686; on Hindu Mahasabha, 384, its criticism of Congress demand, 425; on Hindu-Muslim problem, 174, 515; on his activities in jail, 648, 653, 658, 665, 668, 676; on his arrest, trial and imprisonment for delivering speeches in Gorakhpur, 102–103, 551–552, 554–555; on history, sartorial interpretation of, 641; on his work, 630; on hoarding of foodgrains and looting of grain shops, 85–86, on holding conferences, 560; on Iftikharuddin's views about Pakistan, 300; on Imam Husain Day, 604–605; on inclusion of some independent-minded people in the British Cabinet, 138; on independence for India, 3–4, 10, 12–13, 32, 43, 75, 142, 232, 283, 324–325, 353–354, 376–377, 382–383, 386–387, 398, 418, 428–429, 438–441, 482, 497, 522–523, and the world, 18–19, 46–47; on independent India and the War, 370–371; on India, 130–131, 169–170, 606, approach of War to, 17, 61–62, 107–108, 161, and programme of self-protection and self-sufficiency, 56–57, 72, 76, 78, 85–88, 90–91, 96–98, 108–113, 135–136, 149, 159–161, 166, 236–237, 254, 260, 267, 270–271, 274–275, 324, 337–338, 376–378, 385, 470, 476, 555, constructive programme, 56, 76, 88, 90, development of village and cottage industries, 57, 72, 86, 98, 109–111, 237, division of cities and rural areas into small units and cooperation among residents for protection work, 166, 254, formation of cooperatives, 160, growing of foodcrops, 57, 98, 108–109, 160, 237, 254, 476, khadi production, 109, 237, organisation of *Shanti sena*, 237, organisation of volunteers in rural and urban areas, 57, 76, 78, 90–91, 112, 135–136, 149, 159, 555, selling of grains at fair prices without hoarding, 57, 85–86, 97, 108, 160, strengthening and extension of Congress organisation in villages and towns, 56, 78, 87–88, 96–97, 111–113, 161; on India and America, 194, 308, 328–329, 605–606; on India and Asiatic countries, 432; on India and Britain, 107, 140, 316, 333; on India and British Empire, 12–13; on India and China, 21, 107, 143, 169–170, 230, 465–466, 476, 478–482, and Russia, 131, 142, 567; on India and China and the West, 130; on India and the East and West Asian countries, 13; on India and Europe, 694; on India and Russia, 107, 140–141; on India and the War, 3, 5, 9, 123, 127, 172–173, 277, 279, 334–335; on Indian army, 25, 158, 176, 279, 366; on Indian culture, 59; on Indian labourers in Malaya, 70–71, 125; on Indian nationalism, 8, and British imperialist structure, 301; on Indian people and the anti-fascist forces, 8–9; on Indian princes, 154, 536; on Indian situation, 373, 604; on Indian states, 181–182, 531–532, 537–539, 541; on Indian unity, 315–316, 327, 519–520, 522, 538–539;

on Indian villagers and the War, 195; on India's poverty, 109–110; on India's problem, 131, 154–155, and the attitude of Western world to it, 518, on India's problem and the world, 168, 176–177, 247; on India's struggle for freedom, 19, 27–28, 40–42, 44, 78, 128, 377, 411, 478, 552; on individual satyagraha, 35–36, 42, 68, 83–84, 89, 102, 114; on industrialisation of India, 566, 569–571; on industry in India and British Government, 40–41, 127, 172, 328, 475, 548–549, 566, 572; on international air force, 9; on international situation, 133; on introduction of foreign armies in India, 281, 307–308, 359; on involving masses in fight against aggressors, 170–171; on Iqbal, Sir Mohammad, 641–642; on jail-going, 658, 662–663; on jail interviews, 652, 665; on jail life, 18, 622, 670; on Jamnalal Bajaj, his death, 156, 470, 602–603, his press interview, 683; on Japan, 248, her attack on Malaya, 42–43, her entry into war, 10, her possible invasion of India, 225, 249, 263, 268, 312, 328, 474; on Jinnah, 384, 512, his suggestions for withdrawal of Allahabad resolution, 516–517, meeting him for solution of Hindu-Muslim problem, 371–372; on Jodhpur state, 539–540; on jubilation over Axis success, 322–323; on Kamala Nehru, 643, 647, 652, 654, 656, 672–678, 680–682, 686–691, 693–694; on Kashmir, 540–541; on keeping armies, 25–26; on kisans, 116, 660; on kisan sabhas, 558–561; on Krishna Menon, V.K., 355, 691, payments to him for his cables, 577; on labourers' demands, 70; on labour welfare, 610; on lack of queue habit among Indians, 86–87; on language question, 137–138, 316; on large-scale industry, 546; on *Larkharati Duniya*, 603; on learning and understanding, 687, 689–690; on learning German, 667; on legislation to regulate sartorial and other appearance of a poet, 641; on Leilamani Naidu, 641, 643; on letter writing, 635, 682; on letters written to daughter, 661; on lighter industries, 570–571; on Linlithgow's invitation to Jinnah and others to meet Chiang Kai-shek, 472; on Louis Arthur Johnson's role, 201, 230–231; on Louis Fischer's proposed meeting with Mahatma Gandhi, 632–633; on Madras Congress Legislature Party's resolution, 239; on Mahatma Gandhi, 2, 4, 22–24, 27, 34, 36, 41–42, 49, 61, 66–68, 82–84, 103–104, 243, 328, 354–355, 357–358, 368–369, 374, 409, 412, 423–424, 428, 431, 448, 450–451, 471–474, 485–487, 569, 623, 626, 645–646, 655, his advice to Assam Congressmen, 68, his constructive programme, 56, 98–99, his contemplated mass movement, 351–352, 367, 382–383, 385, his differences with the Congress Working Committee, 60–61, 67–68, 73–74, 78, 81–82, 93–94, 113–114, 469, 576–577, his draft war resolution, 286–289, his 'Quit India' slogan, 427, his views in regard to India, China and Japanese aggression, 356–357, 359–363; on Marxism, 497; on mass civil disobedience, 35; on medical missions, 340–341; on minorities' status in Constituent Assembly, 7; on minority question, 154, 309–310, 521–522; on misery and sorrow, 661; on molestation of women by soldiers, 269; on Motilal Nehru, 647–651, 654–655, 668, 686, writing about him, 663; on motion of censure in the British Parliament, 380; on Muslim League, 6–7, 323, 425, settlement with it, 460–461, 515–516, 523; on Narendra Deva, 633; on national flag, 101; on national government, 413; on *National Herald*, 578, 580–581, Chalapathi Rau's resignation from it, 578–579, demand and forfeiture of its security, 354, 580, its editorial department, 576, on R.K. Dalmia's monetary contribution to it, 575; on nationalism and internationalism 303–305, 317; on National Planning

Committee, 562, and British Government, 40; on National War Fund, 256, 455; on new world order, 9, 561; on non-European cooperation in war effort in South Africa, 252; on nonviolence, 4, 15, 26, 34, 67, 77, 95, 365–366; on nonviolence and aggression, 61; on nonviolence and defence of India, 24, 176, 328; on North West Frontier Province, 499, 607–609; on old and new world order, 469; on 'open town', 627–628; on Orissa, bye-election in, 492, politics in, 491; on Padmaja Naidu, 635, 642–643, 645–646, 653, 662, 665–667, 693; on Pakistan proposal, 294–295, 323; on parallel government, 135; on parliamentary activity, 6; on partitioning India, 106, 322, 520–521, 526–527; on party differences, 485; on Pathans, 609; on people's war and imperialist war, 260, 300, 343, 497; on *Pioneer*, 647; on planning, 571; on pledge of independence, 99; on Political Department, 535–536; on politics, 77–78; on Poona Offer, 33; on post-war world, 248; on Premchand, 681; on press censorship in Bengal, 258; on problem of food supplies, 164–166; on programme of work for Congressmen in U.P., 117–121; on proposal for British withdrawal from India, 378–379, and China's struggle, 365–366; on proposal for establishing a National Academy of Social Sciences, 614–615; on provincial governments' orders on newspapers, 588–593; on provisional national government, 154, 175–176, 401–403, 440–443; on Punjab Government's Order on the *Pratap*, 589–593; on Quetta and Baluchistan earthquake, 676; on Quit India movement, 366–367, 396–397, 400, 406, 408–410, 415–418, 422–424, 431, 448–453, 457, 459, and students, 426; on Quit India resolution, 454, 456–460; on Rabindranath Tagore, 617–618, his message to the world, 618, and Mahatma Gandhi, 618; on racial equality, 175; on Rahul Sankrityayan, 683–684; on railway travelling, 354; on Rajagopalachari, C., 321–322, 325, 327, 356, 371, 502, his resolution at Allahabad A.I.C.C., 294–295, his speeches, 15–16, 91–92; on reading books, 664, 667; on reading books of travel in jail, 663–664; on Reginald Maxwell, 303; on release of political prisoners, 2, 8, 10, 26, 36–37, 51; on religion, 315; on religious way, 685; on revolution, 556; on Rewa affair, 535–537; on right education, 685; on rumours about comments made by him in jail regarding work outside, 655; on Russia, 1, 11, 21–22, 29–31, 38, 52–53, 90, 141, 144, 150, 248, 253, 299, 344, 377–378, 438–439, 565–567, goodwill mission to, 414, helping her, 14, 35, 126, 415, 554; on Russian appeal to side with the Allies, 135; on Russo-American and Russo-British pacts, 344; on *sangathan*, 69; on Sankey Declaration, 58–59; on Sanskrit, 649; on Sarojini Naidu, 642, 644; on satyagraha and satyagrahis, 7, 42, 69, 83–84, 89, 102, 114; on scorched earth policy, 226–227; on self-dependence, 673; on Shaukat Ali, 652; on Shaukat Usmani's detention, 594; on *shirshasana*, 656; on shouting of slogans, 477; on Sind constitutional issue, 488, 490–491; on singing of national songs at Bombay A.I.C.C., 503–504; on Siva's picture, 671; on socialism, 77; on Soviet system of government, 21; on stabbing of a boy at Allahabad station, 660; on Stafford Cripps, 215, 218, 236–237, 241–242, 297, 303, 426, 558, his broadcast to America, 420–422, his press conference, 230–231, 238–239; on state control and ownership, 571; on students, 2, 32, 78, 115–116, 601–602, and war, 136–137, 163; on Students Federation, 600, and All India Students Federation, 602; on Subhas Chandra Bose, 225–226, 262–263, 495–496; on sugar-cane growers, 550–553; on sugar-mill workers, 553–

554; on suggestions for a declaration by British and U.S. leaders for a new world order, 174–175; on Sultan Ahmed, 38; on supporters of total nonviolence, 77; on Syed Mahmud's book on the Hindu-Muslim problem, 511–515, his wife's interview with him in jail, 648, 657; on Tej Bahadur Sapru's proposal for a round table conference, 424; on time as measure of world progress, 16–17; on transfer of power to national government, 132–133, 173; on Turkey, 65; on Uday Shankar's dance, 671; on uncongenial company and absence of company, 670; on understanding significance of world events, 17, 316–317; on United Nations and India, 226, 229, 306; on United Nations and demand for India's independence, 446–449; on U.P., 635–636; on U.P. Congress, 495–497; on U.P. Government's arrest of Congress leaders, 344; on U.P.P.C.C. executive council meeting, 485–486; on U.P.P.C.C. resolution, 330, 336, and Balkrishna Sharma's amendment, 330–332; on United States of America, 131, 169, 378, her forces in India, 404; on unity, 17; on use of his pictures and speeches in government publicity, 241, 250, 312–313; on *Vandemataram's* style of singing, 503; on Viceroy's Executive Council's Indianisation, 6, 66; on Viceroy's and other government officials' houses, 595; on Vijayalakshmi Pandit, 655; on village industries, 547, 569–570; on visiting Kulu, 631–632, Sri Lanka, 659, U.S.A., 226, 318–319, 329, 339, 353, 634; on his visit to China, 481, England, 691; on the war, 9, 20, 25, 30, 38, 62, 107, 134, 142, 155, 329, 403, 458, 477, 518, its causes, 129–130, 133–134, 143–144, 170, its outcome, 44, 62, 105, 107, 129, 134, 144, 253, 314, requirements for its strategy, 174; on the war and constructive programme, 56, on the war and curtailment of rail services, 85; on the war and duties of the people of India, 79–81, 105–106; on the war and importance of India, 221–222; on war fund, 99–100; on war in Bay of Bengal, 250, Burma, 250, Far East, 2; on Wardha resolution of C.W.C., 406–407, 410, 414, 426, 429–430; on warring groups, 3, 25; on wars, 53–54; on wartime relief, 151; on Wavell's speech on possible Japanese raid, 268; on Western nations' policies, 518–519; on Winston Churchill, 134, 302, 380, 458–459, his proposed statement on India, 160–161; on women, 646, and the war, 163, 494; on women's branch of the A.I.C.C., 493–494; on workers and the war, 123–124, 127; on workers organisations' policy, 129; on working for the causes of India and the world, 621; on world federation of free nations, 107, 144, 174, 444–447; on world problems and Indian people, 685; on writers and the war, 317; on young people joining air force, 624; on zeal and courage, 684

———, Kamala, 642–643, 646, 650, 653–654, 656–657, 659, 672, 675, 677, 680, 682–683, 687, 691–694

———, Motilal, 646–651, 653–654, 656–657, 663, 668, 686

———, Rajan, 634

———, Swarup Rani, 647, 653, 655, 674, 688

———, Uma, 654–657

Nepal, 432, 434

Nero, 409 fn

Netherlands—*see* Holland

Neumann, Dr., 677

New Delhi, 222, 247, 250 fn, 295, 324, 563, 566, 591, 595, 630—*see also* Delhi

New Republic, 667

News Chronicle, 10–11 & fn, 58 & fn

New Statesman, 420 fn, 667

New York, 353 fn, 459, 567

New York Herald, 193 fn

New York Herald Tribune, 200 fn

New York Nation, 667

New York Post, 193 fn

New York Times, 193 fn, 200 fn, 420 fn, 454 fn
New York Town Hall, 201 fn
New Zealand, 616 fn
Noakhali, 255 fn
Nomad, Max, 666 & *fn*
Non-Aggression Pact (Turkey and France), 65 fn
Non-Aggression Pact (Turkey and Germany), 65 fn
Non-European United Front (South Africa), 252 fn
Noon, Feroze Khan, 419 fn
North West Frontier Province, 49, 194, 486–487, 499–501, 607–609, 634, 638
North West Frontier Provincial Congress Committee, 500
Nuri-al-Sa'id, 4 fn
Nuwara Eliya, 660

Olcott, H.S., 513 fn
Oregon Journal, 193 fn
Orissa, 265, 290 fn, 491 & fn, 492 fn
Orissa Legislative Assembly, 491 & fn, 492 fn
Overseas League (London), 33 fn
Oxford, 643, 693

Pacific Council, 197 fn, 199
Pacific Ocean, 566
Pacific War, 152, 189, 301 fn, 305
Padrauna, 551, 554
Pahalgam, 636
Pakistan, 102 fn, 106, 134, 184, 196 fn, 294–295, 300 & fn, 322–323, 326 fn, 344, 372 & fn, 384 fn, 405, 407, 409 fn, 411 fn, 460 fn, 511–512, 526 fn, 583
Pakistan resolution of Muslim League, 516
Palambang, 167 fn
Palestine, 331
Palwal, S.K.D., 298, 344 fn, 490 fn
Pallel, 167 fn, 256 fn
Pamna, 404
Pandit, Chandralekha, 654
———, Nayantara, 654
———, Ranjit, 510, 622, 647, 655, 667, 676, 679, 681, 684, 688
———, Rita, 654
———, Vijayalakshmi, 117 & fn, 493 fn–494, 637, 646–647, 649, 654–655, 665–667, 669, 676, 679–681, 684, 688
Pandu, 263, 267
Panipat, 410
Pant, G.B., 287, 289, 636
Parbatipur, 263
Paris, 692–693
Paris Peace Conference, 11 fn
Parvati Siksha (Lachhmi Dhar Shastri), 626 fn
Patel, Vallabhbhai, 60 fn, 287, 291, 351 fn
Patil, S.K., 503 & *fn*
Patna, 599 fn–602
Patnaik, Uma Charan, 492 & *fn*
Patriot, 494 fn
Patwardhan, Achyut, 287–288, 291
Pearl Harbour, 2 fn
Pegu, 161 fn
Peking (now Beijeing), 11 fn
Peking College of Political Science and Law, 236 fn
Peking Municipal Committee, 236 fn
Penang, 42 fn, 167
People's Volunteer Brigade (Bombay), 149 & fn, 342
Persia—*see* Iran
Peshawar, 34, 471, 634
Peshawar to Moscow (Shaukat Usmani), 594 fn
Petain, Marshal, 31 fn
Pillai, Pattom Thanu, 539 & *fn*
———, P.P., 122 & *fn*, 124–125
Pioneer, 419 fn, 647, 651–652
Planters' Association (Malaya), 70
Political Heretics (Max Nomad), 666 fn
Poona—*see* Pune
Poona Offer, 13 fn, 33 & fn, 288
Portrait in a Mirror (Charles Morgan), 666 fn
Powaiya, Miss, 649
Pradhan, Govind, 491 & *fn*
Prague, 30

Prasad, Narmada, 647
———, Rajendra, 60 fn, 77 & fn, 288, 289 fn, 293 fn, 351 fn, 694
Pratap, 588 fn–593
Pratapgarh, 299
Premchand, 681, 688
Prescriber (Clarke), 651
Press in India, (M. Chalapathi Rau), 579 fn
Prome, 208 fn
Puerto Rico, 345 fn
Pulitzer Prize, 641 fn
Punch, 667
Pune, 290, 292, 664, 666, 668, 671
Punjab, 194, 265, 300, 320, 485 & fn, 487, 539 fn, 587, 588 fn–592 & fn
Punjab Civil Liberties Union, 587 & fn
Punjab Provincial Congress Committee. 322
Purandare, N.A., 679
Purushottam Das Park (Allahabad), 16
Pusad, 417 fn
Pyare Lal & Sons (New Delhi), 364

Quetta, 676
Quit India movement, 60 fn, 286 fn, 431, 494 fn
Quit India resolution of Congress, 527
Qureshi, Shuaib, 629–630

Rangoon, 97, 107, 148, 155, 161 & fn, 177 fn, 240, 251 fn, 265, 269–270, 273–274, 287, 296, 335–336, 595
Rangoon High Court, 251 fn
Rao, K. Govinda, 624 & fn
———, K. Rama, 576, 578
———, Raja, 649
Rashid, M.A., 251 & fn
Rasulia Settlement (Hoshangabad), 509 fn
Rau, M. Chalapathi, 578 fn, 579 & *fn*
Rawat, Jagan Prasad, 498 & *fn*
Ray, Irene R., 151 & fn
———, P.N., 151 fn
Reader's Digest, 636
Regional Leaders (Nash), 651
Reuter, 138 fn, 694
Revels and Renegades (Max Nomad), 666 fn
Rewa affair, 535–536
Rewa, Maharaja of, 535 *fn*–537
Reynolds, Reginald, 10
Reza, Muhammad, 4 fn
Rockefeller Foundation, 345 fn
Roerich, Nicholas, 320, 664
Rohilkhand Kumaon Railway, 145–146
Rolland, Madeleine, 687 & fn
———, Romain, 687 fn
Rollier, Dr., 678 & *fn*
Rome, 173, 307, 479
Roosevelt, F.D., 12 fn, 129, 171 & fn, 173 fn, 194 & fn, 200 & fn, 212–213, 218 fn, 227, 230 & fn, 232 fn, 318, 351 fn, 353 fn, 378, 403, 405

150 & fn, 152, 174, 214, 221, 224, 247–248, 251, 253, 260, 292, 293 fn, 299–300, 307, 314–315, 318 fn–319, 323, 327, 329, 332, 337, 340, 344 & fn, 369, 377, 413–415, 419, 421, 423, 427, 430–431, 435, 446–447, 449, 456, 491, 497, 546, 549 fn, 554, 557, 565, 567, 594 fn, 599, 608, 634–635
Russo-Japanese War, 186

Sabhyatar Sankat (Rabindranath Tagore), 434 fn
Saharanpur, 501 fn
St. Stephen's College (Delhi), 626 fn
Sakina Mansion (Bombay), 422, 638
Saksena, Mohanlal, 575
———, Shibban Lal, 554
Salamatullah, 680
Samarkand, 141
Sampurnanand, 15, 333, 422 & fn, 490 fn
Sankey Declaration of the Rights of Man, 58
Sankrityayan, Rahul, 683, 688
Sansar, 556 fn
Santiniketan, 434 fn, 617
Sapru, Sir T.B., 132 & fn, 424 & fn, 488, 490 & fn
Sarabhai, Mridula, 493 fn
Saran, Raghunandan, 364
Sardaryab River, 500 fn
Sarma, Anumela Rama Covind, 499 & fn
Satyamurti, S., 33 fn, 76 fn, 291, 295 fn
Savarkar, V.D., 51 fn, 221 & fn, 326, 372, 384 fn, 424 fn
Schuiter, Captain, 634
Science and Indian National Reconstruction (Kewal L. Motwani), 614 fn
Science and Society in India (Kewal L. Motwani), 614 fn
Scorched Earth (Edgar Snow), 568
Scotland, 668
Scott, Denys, 241 & fn
Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, 579 fn
Sen, Anath Gopal, 152 & fn
Sen Gupta, Nellie, 621 & fn
Servants of the People Society, 150 fn, 610
Setalvad, Chimanlal, 419 fn
Sevagram, 470–471, 623, 632–633, 635, 637
Shah, K.T., 572 & fn, 583 & fn, 651
———, Reza, 4 fn
Shanghai, 616 fn
Shanghai Municipal Council, 616 fn
Shanti, 365 & fn
Sharma, Balkrishna, 80, 330–332
Sharma, Shri Ram, 485 fn
Shastri, Lachhmi Dhar, 626 & *fn*
———, Lal Bahadur, 28
Shaw, Bernard, 665
Sheshnag Lake, 636 & fn
Shih-hua Shen, 229 & fn
Silchar, 286 & fn
Silchar District Congress Committee, 286 fn
Simla, 31, 127, 336
Sind, 488 & fn, 490 fn, 549, 557 & fn
Sind Legislative Assembly, 488 fn
Singapore, 2 fn, 167, 174, 186, 333, 342–343, 365, 388–389, 391, 398, 669 fn
Singh, Maharaja Sir Aditya Narain, 534 & *fn*
———, Amar, 225 fn
———, Jaswant, 500 fn
———, J.J., 339 & *fn*
———, Mohan, 225 fn
———, Pritam, 225 fn
———, Sant, 579 & fn
———, Sardar Ganga, 251 & fn
———, T.N., 577
Sino-Japanese War, 377, 473, 478
Sirsa, 158
Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, 183 & *fn*, 290
Sittang River, 161 fn
Skeptic's Political Dictionary and Handbook for the Disenchanted (Max Nomad), 666 fn
Smuts, J.C., 314 & fn
Snow, Edgar, 568, 616
Socialists (India), 76, 633
Social Substance of Religion (Gerald Heard), 582 fn
Society and Solitude (R.W. Emerson), 378 fn
Sociology—A Brief Outline (Kewal L. Motwani), 614 fn

Sonamarg, 637
Soul of Malaya (Henri Fauconnier), 669 & fn
Source of Civilization (Gerald Heard), 582 fn
South Africa, 127, 252 fn, 345 fn, 364
Soviets in World Affairs (Louis Fischer), 358 fn
Soviet Union—*see* Russia, Soviet
Spain, 30, 124, 217, 253, 304, 331, 346, 371, 413, 546, 604
Spectator, 313 fn
Spengler, Oswald, 658 & *fn*
Sri Bala Gurukul School (Madras), 638
Sri Lanka, 432, 614 fn, 659
Srinagar, 634, 636–637
Srinivasan, Kasturi, 591 & *fn*, 592
Sri Prakasa, 485, 490 fn
Stalin, Josef, 29 fn, 129, 135
Star, 232 fn
Statesman, 495
Stephani, 677
Students Federation, 600
Subbarayan, P., 502 & fn
———, Radhabai, 76 fn
Sudeten Crisis, 460
Suez, 567, 677–678
Sun (New York), 454 fn
Sun Yat-sen, 229
———, Madame, 568
Sushila, 681
Swaraj Bhawan, 648–649, 681
Switzerland, 649, 673, 676–677, 691, 693
Sword, Victor Hugo, 605 & fn
Syria, 173 & fn

———, Thelma, 625, 627
Tata's, 572 fn
Taxila, 608
Tazikistan, 141
Tezpur, 263
Thailand, 2 fn, 4, 25
Theosophical Society, 513 & fn
These Hurrying Years (Gerald Heard), 582 fn
Thomas Cook (Geneva), 672, 674, 676–677, 682
Thompson, Edward, 72–73
Thoreau, H.D., 378 & *fn*
Tibet, 684
Tikayat Saheb of Kanika, 492 fn
Time and Tide, 420 fn
Times, 132 fn
Times of India, 419 fn
Tobruk, 380 fn
Tojo, Hedeki, 163 fn
Tokyo, 152, 173, 225 fn, 307, 455, 479
Transatlantic London (Evelyn Wrench), 313 fn
Travancore, 538, 539 fn
Travancore-Cochin, 539 fn
Tribune, 132 fn
Trincomalee, 208 fn
Tripartite Pact (Britain, France and Turkey), 65 fn
Tripartite Pact (Germany, Italy and Japan), 163 fn
Tripathi, Kamalapati, 556 & *fn*
Truman, Harry S., 194 fn
Tuan-Sheng Chien, 236 & *fn*
Turkey, 65 & fn
Tyagi, Mahavir, 344 fn

Tagore, Rabindranath, 434 fn, 503–504, 617–618, 653, 668
Tai Chi-tao, 229–230
Tallital (Naini Tal), 636
Tamil Nadu, 502 fn
Tamil Nadu Provincial Congress Committee, 502 fn
Tamu, 167 fn, 256 fn, 272
Tandon, P.D., 330 fn
Tanngu, 208 fn
Tara Chand, 649
Tata, Jehangir, 625, 627

Uday Shankar, 293 fn
Uday Shankar (dancer), 671
Umaid Singhji, Sir, 540 & *fn*
United Kingdom Commercial Corporation, 564 & fn
United Nations, 122 fn, 183 fn, 185 fn, 199, 200 fn, 226, 229, 277, 283, 306, 311, 362, 395–397, 400–401, 405, 408, 418, 419 fn, 420 fn, 428, 431–432, 436–441, 444, 446–449, 455 fn, 457
United Press (London), 242

United Press Association, 339 fn
United Provinces, 1, 23, 41, 64, 74–75, 83, 88, 99, 109 fn, 117, 119, 128, 151, 164–166, 254, 265, 290 fn, 335 fn, 341, 344, 355, 377, 417, 486, 496, 498 fn, 501–502, 550, 559 fn, 581, 599, 644—*see also* Uttar Pradesh
U.P. Committee of the Friends of the Soviet Union, 414 fn
U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, 97 fn, 117, 119, 164, 298, 332–333, 336, 354, 417–418, 485 fn, 496 fn, 498, 501–502, 550, 553
U.P.P.C.C. Executive Council, 496–498, 501, 550 fn
United States of America, 2–3, 11 fn, 22, 25–26, 29, 31, 40, 63, 65, 77, 101, 105–106, 131, 134, 143, 152, 157, 169, 171 fn, 173–174, 177, 193–195, 200 & fn, 226–227, 234, 247–248, 252, 260, 274, 287–288, 292, 293 fn, 301 fn, 307–308 & fn, 314, 318–320, 327–329, 332, 339, 344 & fn, 353, 363, 369 fn, 374 & fn, 378–379, 401–402, 405, 413, 420, 422, 424, 426, 429, 454–456, 459, 497, 513 fn, 520, 522, 549 fn, 558, 562 fn, 564, 568, 605–606, 613, 634, 642 fn, 649
U.S. Congress, 458 fn
U.S. Social Security Board, 11 fn
Unverricht, Dr., 681–682
Upadhyaya, G.I.D., 341
———, S.D., 649, 676, 679, 689
Uphill (Evelyn Wrench), 313 fn
Usmani, Shaukat, 594 & *fn*
Uttar Pradesh, 556 fn—*see also* United Provinces
Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission, 524 fn

Van Hook, H.J., 519 fn
Varanasi, 74, 85, 186, 485–488, 534, 599, 660
Vellore Jail, 71
Vesugar, Piloo, 672
Viceroy's Executive Council, 5–6, 13 fn, 38, 66, 85 fn, 188 fn, 197 fn, 202 fn, 206–207, 218 & fn, 221 fn, 228, 230, 301 fn, 384 fn, 411 fn
Vichy, 31 & fn, 170, 518 & fn
Vidya Mandir High School (Allahabad), 346
Vienna, 672–673, 675–677, 682, 686, 688
Vijaya Anand, Maharajkumar Sir, 503
Vijayaraghavachari, C., 621 & fn
Virgins and Vineyards (Harindranath Chattopadhyaya), 643 fn
Vishakhapatnam (Vizagapatam), 40 fn, 208 fn, 270 fn
Vishal Bharat, 676
Visva Bharati, 618
Volunteer Organisations in India (Uma Charan Patnaik), 492 fn
Vyas, Jainarain, 540

Wadia, D.N., 614 & *fn*
Waksu, 256 fn
Walden, Or Life in the Woods (H.D. Thoreau), 378 fn
Wales, Nym, 569, 616
Walsh, Richard, J., 616 & *fn*
War Advisory Council, 13 fn
Wardha, 45 fn, 74, 81–82, 89, 93–94, 114, 117, 153, 183, 242, 289, 340, 342, 351–352, 354, 358, 368, 397, 410, 414, 431, 470 & fn, 486–487, 492, 509, 551, 576–577, 603–604, 615–616, 625, 632–633, 637, 681
Wardha resolution of Congress, 405–407, 412, 431
Wardlaw-Milne, Sir John, 380 fn
War is Sin (B.K. Dadachanji), 251 fn
Washington, 132 fn, 318, 353 fn, 374 fn, 402 fn, 406, 459, 519
Washington Post, 193 fn, 420 fn, 454 fn
Wavell, Sir Archibald Percival (Later Ist earl), 187 & fn, 192 & fn, 195 & fn, 197 fn, 202 fn, 218 fn, 268, 288, 334 fn
Webb, Maurice, 420 fn
Wedgwood, J.C., Ist baron, 297 fn
———, Florence, 297
Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers (H.D. Thoreau), 378 fn
Week with Gandhi (Louis Fischer), 358 fn

Welles, Summer, 374 & *fn*
Wells, H.G., 9 & fn, 12, 58–59 & fn
West Krishna District Congress Committee, 499 fn
West Punjab, 579 fn
Whitehall, 324, 411, 455
White Road, 256 & fn, 265
Who Helped Hitler, Reminiscences (I.M. Maisky), 11 fn
Wilder, Thornton, 641 & *fn*
Willingdon, Lady, 634
Wilson, 647
Winant, J.G., 10 fn, 11 & *fn*
Woman of Andros (Thornton Wilder), 641 fn
Wood, Sir Kingsley, 62 fn
Woodstock, 668
World Crisis (Winston Churchill), 651
Wrench, Evelyn, 313 *fn*

Yazid, 604 fn
Yeotmal, 417 fn
Yervada Prison, 655
Yoga Mimamsa, 656
Yugantar, 588–589
Yunus, Mohammad, 373, 607

thus had a vicarious revenge. The terror she caused to the sparrows has come to her.

I have just received a packet of foreign papers coming *via* Anand Bhawan, presumably sent by you: *Foreign Affairs Quarterly*, *Amerasia*, *Free World*, 2. *Time*, *Nation*. (Sometimes I get double copies of the same issue of *Time*.) Also Khalil Gibran's[479] little book *The Prophet*[480] sent by someone from America.

Love

Your loving
Papu

April 3. Monday

I have at last finished my allotted length of yarn—35000 yards—and so an end of spinning for some considerable time at least—Indu has sent me my old D.D.J. yarn—the remains of it. Today I have sent all my yarns to Indu to Matheran, together with various other things. My yarn spun here is 33 count—It is enough for a sari.

Indu has also sent some decent spoons & forks & knives & *katoras* &c. It was pleasant to use them.

April 5. Wednesday

It appears fairly certain now that Bapu will be sent here. Bhandari, the I.G., came round today to have a look at the unoccupied rooms. Also there are whispers.

479. Khalil Gibran (1883-1931); Syrian-American mystic, poet and artist.
480. Consisting of 28 prose poems by the "Prophet", who calls himself the "Prophet of God, in quest of the uttermost."

April 8, 1944

Darling Indu,
I have your letter of the 28th March from Matheran, written soon after you arrived there. I am glad your first impressions of the place were favourable. I hope with further acquaintance you will continue to like the place. Even though the days are warm, the cool nights and the trees and birds must make a difference. Raja also I hope will improve in those quiet sylvan surroundings.

A few days ago, on April 2nd, was *Ram Naumi*, the second anniversary of your marriage. Did you remember it? I thought of you and Feroze and of all the odd things that had happened since.

I think I wrote to you that I have received most of the things you sent me in the big parcel—the yarn, cutlery, *pashmina* shawl. Books take their time as they necessitate apparently a closer scrutiny. But the various books you have sent with this lot have not come yet.

I am glad to say that Fraser's book—*The Mountain Way*—has at last managed to reach me. Also the first copy of Guehenna's *Journal d'un homme de 40 ans*. I think I am going to like *The Mountain Way*. I should like you to write an acknowledgement to Fraser and to tell him how much I appreciate his gift. His address is: Rev. A. G. Fraser, Dial House, Chipstead, Surrey, England. He is the Fraser who used to be the principal of the Achimota College in the Gold Coast, West Africa. I met him in 1935 or 1936 and ever since then he sends me from time to time a book, usually of travel or arctic exploration or about the mountains.

Last week I wrote to you that I would not send you just yet my yarn as this might be a needless burden to you in Matheran. As is not unusual with me, I changed my mind soon after and packed up this yarn, together with other things, and sent them off. Having decided on doing something, the idea becomes a slight obsession with me and the sooner I do it, the better I feel.

So I have sent you to Matheran my yarn as well as your old cardigan and the new *pashmina* shawl. I found I had no use for this shawl here at this time of the year and I was afraid it might get spoilt by being kept in a box through the summer months. I was going to open it out and see it in a spread-out condition; but it was all stitched up & folded and I felt that removing these stitches could probably mess it up. So I left it as it was. Keep it and use it for yourself. It improves with use.

The two shells, which you want me to use as paper-weights, have also come. You seem to be almost as frivolous as I am. I doubt if anyone possessing the practical commonsense, which is considered such a virtue, and which weighs and measures everything, would have thought of sending anything so unnecessary. But then everything cannot be weighed and measured and many things escape the balance of practicality. I like the shells and they make a brave show. So far I have been using odd-shaped coloured stones, which I picked up here, as paper-weights. I wrote to you last year, did I not?, that there were all manner of fancy coloured stones here, small ones mostly. We picked up quite a number of them and I have a respectable collection, which does not include diamonds, rubies, emeralds and the like, but which is nonetheless attractive.

I have also returned to you those of the brown serviettes which have been pushed, together with the cardigan & shawl, into an old cushion cover. Also old periodicals.

The yarn that has been sent is in two bundles. The larger bundle contains the yarn I have spun here—70 hanks of 500 yards each, that is, total 35000 yards. Count 33 (Weight 1¼). This is quite enough for a sari. The smaller bundle contains 16 hanks of my old yarn=8000 yards. This is somewhat coarser and the average count is 26½. I think it is better not to mix up the two as they are not of the same count or fineness.

I have kept the other yarn you sent me and shall try to get something made out of it here.

I was greatly interested to learn that Raja had rescued the old stone *murti* from the peepul tree. My mind went back to my early boyhood when this image was first dug out from somewhere in the grounds of Anand Bhawan. It must have been in 1900 or 1901. There was plenty of digging taking place all over the grounds, levelling them, making terraces, etc. I remember how excited I was when this image appeared. It was decided to place it in the fork of the old peepul and then I used to visit it daily. Later I went to England and forgot all about it. I do not remember seeing it again. And then it got covered and buried in a mixture of earth and dried peepul leaves till Raja rescued it from oblivion. And now it occupies a place of honour in his verandah. The story is almost symbolical of life and death and resurrection —the ceaseless round of nature and of life.

Will you tell Betty that instead of giving that very unfortunate picture of the Brussels Conference in her book if she had given another, it would have been more suitable. That other was a snapshot of a group containing six or seven persons, including Ernst Toller, Willie

Munzenburg, Betty & me. There were two or three others but I am not sure who they were. I had this picture but lost it. Then I saw it reproduced in one of Toller's later books which he sent me. That book too seems to have disappeared from our library. It might have been *I was a German* though I think it was another one but equally small. Toller's books ought to be traceable in Bombay and the picture will *interest Betty*.

The mention of Willie Munzenburg's name reminds me of his tragic end. He managed to escape from Germany by the very skin of his teeth within a few days of Hitler's advent to power in 1933. He was considered a particular *bete noire* by the Nazis and there was a regular hunt for him. He came to Paris and lived there among tho German emigres for a couple of years, probably organizing anti-Hitler activities. It was a precarious life for the French Government of those days did not like this kind of thing. When I was in Paris in January 1936 I was having tea in a cafe, when to my great surprise, Munzenburg suddenly walked up to me. He had that secretive haunted look so peculiar to those who live more or less in hiding and are engaged in secret work. I saw him again in the same cafe—he would not come to my hotel. Some months later I heard that he had actually been kidnapped by the Nazis and taken across the border to Germany *and shot or otherwise* killed.

How many of these dramas and tragedies have taken place, and take place from day to day, under the seemingly unruffled *surface of life*. Like the ocean which seems so calm and peaceful and innocent, and then it opens its cavernous mouth and swallows up a ship, and again *resumes its untroubled and innocent air*.

Here is a well-known couplet by an unknown author:

قسمت تو دیکھیے کہ کہاں ٹوٹی ہے کمند
دو چار ہاتھ جبکہ لب بام رہ گیا

क़िस्मत तो देखिये के कहां टूटी है कमंद ।
दो चार हाथ जब के लबे बाम रह गया ॥[481]

कमंद=rope-ladder; लब=lip; बाम=roof or कोठा.

481. Qaim Chandpuri: Look, what luck I have:
The scaling ladder has given way
When (her) house-top is left to reach
By an arm's length or so!

The idea is of a lover going to his beloved by means of a rope-ladder. Love

Your loving
Papu

I have just received your letter of April 3rd. The incense sticks have also come. I shall write about *Glimpses* etc., next week. Let me know definitely about your address for letters.

11.4.44.

Darling Betty,
You asked me about the possible educational arrangements for Harsha and Ajit and I told you something about the Doon School. After writing that I felt all the more how difficult it is to advise on the subject of children's education. So much depends on the child, so much on the objectives that the parents may have in view. I do not mean a difficult objective, like a profession or a job in life, but rather the general approach to life, the philosophy of life, if you like to call it so. Most of us, I suppose, are hardly conscious of having such a definite philosophy and would find it hard enough to describe it. Yet, consciously or unconsciously, we hold to a certain framework and function within it, and sometimes we rebel, but even so our little rebellion is within that general framework. Normally each individual's attitude to life is that of his social group or the more intimate circle in which he or she moves. That lays down the standard to be aimed at with minor varieties. When there is revolutionary change in the air, we are affected by it, we talk of it, and yet that talk has little reality behind it, and we find it difficult to pull ourselves out of accustomed ways of life and thought. Sometimes we are compelled to do so by circumstance and we submit, as we must, but unwillingly and rather ungraciously. We become then the slaves of circumstance rather than its masters or even its equals. To a large extent we are all such slaves of happenings which are beyond our individual control. Yet there is a difference.

Every parent wants his or her child to have all the virtues, all the good fortune. But we can seldom, if ever, have all of everything. We have to choose or to emphasize some aspects rather than others. There are what are loosely called the masculine virtues and those that are termed the feminine virtues. Both good and desirable and yet just slightly inconsistent with each other. In India, the feminine virtues seem to be more obvious today at any rate, though of course the masculine virtues are present also. Our outlook seems to favour the former.

Then again much depends on the period we are living in. In a more or less static period, certain virtues and accomplishments are more useful. In a rapidly changing period, other virtues and capacities assume importance. But whatever the period, self-reliance, fitness of body and keenness of mind and a harmony between the two, and a certain basic sense of values are always desirable. If this foundation is provided to the growing child much has already been done.

I hope Raja profited by his brief stay in Matheran. Distressing as asthma is, fortunately one recovers quickly from an attack if conditions are favourable.

I was happy to read what Dr. Lin had written about your book. His tribute is certainly worth having. I hope Walsh agrees to publish your book.

Love to you and Raja and the children.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

I was glad to learn from Indu that Raja has rescued the old stone image from the peepul tree in Anand Bhawan and brought it to Bombay.

April 12—Wednesday

Letters from Nan (Bombay) & Indu (Matheran).

Nan's letter astonished me. It appears that Pratap does not want Nan to inherit even the personal assets left by Ranjit—the argument being that all these came out of ancestral money. I was both irritated and amused. How money *darkens the mind.*

April 15, 1944

Darling Indu,

The last week has brought quite an unusual number of letters from you. I mentioned one in a footnote to my last letter. This was dated 3rd April. This was followed by a previous letter of yours dated 31st March, and then came two more, dated 6th and 9th April. Quite a feast.

The packet of books you sent long ago, containing a number of French ones, has not yet come, though there is a rumour that it is on the way. It seems to me that French is not a language with which the Bombay Secretariat is conversant, and hence the delay in passing these books.

Your letters have produced a slight confusion in my mind about your programme—Matheran, Juhu, Mahabaleshwar seem all mixed up together. How long you stay at Matheran, where you go from there—is all vague and uncertain. You write that Raja and Betty, tired of the seclusion and quiet of Matheran, were thinking of going back to Bombay. Presumably you stayed on. Not that it matters much whether I know your exact programme or not, except that I want to address my letters correctly. I do not want them to go astray.

Ahmadnagar is climatically not at all a bad place. Probably it is a cross between Poona and Matheran, though there is a lack of trees and foliage here, at any rate where we are kept. It is not as cold as I would like it to be in winter. The summer is not very hot and the rains are Poona-like, gentle showers as a rule. It is very dry and some people have trouble with their skin because of this dryness.

I am concerned to know that Madan has lost so much weight and has taken to fainting. I do not think you mentioned this fact previously. Send my love to him if & when you write.

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* has started coming directly to me now. I suppose *The Hindu* will follow soon.

A copy of the *Reader's Digest* (for October 1943) has reached me. Some months back two other numbers came and curiously they had been addressed to me from America C/o the Govt. of Bombay.

Two days ago I received a set of rather lovely picture cards—hand-painted they seem to be—of Californian scenes. I do not know who sent them and whether they came through you. I have previously received a book and a magazine sent by someone in Los Angeles, California. Perhaps the same person sent these also. I do not know who he or she is. If there were any covering letters, they must have been kept back by the Bombay Secretariat.

Did you receive Wendell Willkie's *One World* which I sent you more than six weeks ago?

The extraordinary weather in Allahabad and in various other parts of the U.P. appears to have done a great deal of damage to the crops and wheat is 2 seers to the rupee. How the unhappy poor manage to carry on under these conditions I am wholly unable to make out.

About my publications:

1. Marathi translation of *Glimpses*: As I appear to have already

given permission for this to the Ratnakar Publications, Sangli, you have done well to write to them to find out what has happened. It is nearly three years now since permission was given and if the translation has not already come out, my permission lapses. I would prefer the Sulabha Rashtriya Granthmala of Poona to take it up. The book is a big one and requires some financial resources. Also it is better to deal with one publisher in one language. But find out so that there may be no overlapping & consequent confusion. And in case this new permission is given to the Poona people, the Ratnakar Publications should be clearly informed of it.

2. Assamese translation of *Letters*: If you find that the person who took permission in May 1939 has not issued the translation yet, he must be informed that the permission has lapsed, and is being given to another person. In giving permission for *Letters* it should always be mentioned that I reserve the right to present the copyright for that language to any university or Provincial Education Department, should they ask for it. If the latter book is prescribed for schools I want to make no money out of it and should like the children to have it at a rock-bottom price. But of course if private publishers bring them out there is no reason why I should not charge royalty which should be 10% of the published price of books actually sold.

3. This reminds me that six or seven years ago I transferred my copyright in the Urdu & Hindi translations of the *Letters* to the U.P. Govt.'s Educational Department. These books have since been widely used in the U.P. schools. The Department, at my instance, priced them low. I think the price was four annas or so. Even so the then Director of Public Instruction, U.P., said there might be a profit. I suggested to him that this money might be given as scholarships to poor students and he agreed. (I think I also suggested that these might be called the 'Kamala Scholarships' but I am not sure.) You will find a note about this in the book. I do not know what has happened since then. It might be worthwhile to write to the Director of Public Instruction, U.P., to inquire if any scholarships were actually given.

4. I gave the copyright for the Bengali translation of *Letters* to Santiniketan. They might be asked what they did with it. Have they brought out an edition?

5. Request from U. Srinivaskini, Mulki, S. Kanara, for including 1st chapter of *Letters* in a book of selections. I have often given such permission and so this may also be given. Usually there is a token payment of a small sum. I do not want to make this a condition but you might suggest that a token payment might be made by him

to the Kasturba Memorial Fund. No reference in this or any other like matter is necessary to the A.L.J. Press.

6. M. Krishna Pillai, Jagathy, Trivandrum. He does not appear at all satisfactory. Besides I can't give permission to anyone to mangle my book and leave out parts.

That is the lot I think.

When you are in Bombay, you might buy some cutlery &c. to replenish our stock, provided these are available.

It was rather foolish of me to write at length offering my advice about Harsha's & Ajit's education. But I have an inveterate habit of giving advice. I wish I could cure myself of it. My own conceptions of men and things are not the usual ones and so my advice seldom fits in.

In your childhood I suppose you were a little more self-reliant than children of your age in India. The credit for that should at least partly go to your parents. I remember when you started going to the Ecole International in Geneva. You were about 8½ years old then. I accompanied you to school, came back, went again to fetch you for lunch, again took you to school, came back, & finally went at four to bring you back. I seemed to spend the whole day in moving backwards & forwards between our pension and your school. After a few days I decided to let you go by yourself. It was a slightly tricky journey as it involved a change of trams. I spoke to the tram conductor, who had come to recognize you and who promised to look after you. I do not think Mummy was overpleased at this arrangement. However it worked. The tram journey was really more complicated than a railway journey. Later we moved to our flat in the Boulevard des Tranches. From there you used to walk to your school, which was about a quarter of a mile away.

I do not think you travelled all by yourself from Bex to Paris. As far as I can remember, I went to Bex from Berlin direct to fetch you, leaving Mummy & *chhoti Puphi* in Berlin. They travelled by themselves subsequently to Paris. *Dadu* had gone previously. But I am rather vague about all this. Anyway you did travel by yourself by train in Switzerland.

I feel snubbed, I withdraw. I shall not in future display my 'generosity' towards you, or mention such things as accounts or money. I shall accustom myself to think of you as the strong and self-reliant one, fully capable of looking after yourself in any circumstances. And so on and so forth.

But really I did not doubt that and I would hate to think of you as anything but self-reliant. My suggestion that you might draw upon

my account was not a reflection on your capacity. This was not a new suggestion. I think I have made it several times and I made it clear previous to my arrest. We live in abnormal times and we must adapt ourselves to them as best we may. I had no particular compunction in drawing upon my father's account when I particularly needed money. Is it because you have got married that you have risen or changed in status? Of course, there is a change in your life in many ways but I have failed to sense any change in my relation to you.

But seriously, I do not mind what you have written. I rather like it and it amuses me also. My views on money are odd and I am continually surprised at the importance people attach to money. You will remember that about 7 years ago Princess Aristarchi suddenly asked me for a loan of £300. I hardly knew her, except that she had been rather decent to Mummy. As it happened I had just then received just this sum as royalty on my *Autobiography* (296 in the pound from the liquidation of John Lane.) The money was there and I sent it immediately. Of course it has never come back although I could welcome this tidy little sum. I am soft in the head I suppose. I shall continue to spend in this way and it is far more likely that I might seek your help than that you should need mine. But whenever you need money, do not be stupid—Draw upon my account.

This is my letter No. 57.

Love

Your loving
Papu

A bundle of foreign papers has just come.

April 22, 1944

Darling Indu,
I have your letter of April 13th. Probably you are in Mahabaleshwar now but this letter is being sent to Sakina Mansion. Mahabaleshwar ought to be much cooler than Matheran. Here the temperature has gone up to 107° F and I realized that my comparison of Ahmadnagar with Poona was not quite correct.

All the books you sent, including the French ones, have now arrived, except one: *Warning to the West.*[482] I suppose this is by Shridharani. Probably it has been kept back as not suitable for my morals.

I wonder if you can find at a chemist's a tube of Dr. Bengue's Balsam. Probably you will not find it at Mahabaleshwar—But I know that there are 3 or 4 tubes of it in my bathroom in Anand Bhawan—on the shelves. Svetoslav Roerich sent me a number of tubes for my arms. Since then I have sometimes used one of them. It is now exhausted as others use it also. You might write to Feroze to get hold of these and send me two tubes. I do not know where Feroze is but I suppose he visits Allahabad frequently. There is no hurry about it. The Balsam is more needed by others than by me. It is a useful thing to keep.

We had an odd experience two days ago. Some eggs come for us every morning and are put away in a tin box. About midday the top of this box was pushed out and it was discovered that a tiny chick had emerged from one of the eggs! It has survived and is growing.

That again brings us another problem—Life is a pretty complicated affair. The chick requires constant attention and protection from the cat Chando Bibi and her kitten which has grown frolic-some. I think we shall have to send the chick away. The kitten is still nameless—Can you suggest a name? Or better still ask Bebee who is the great authority on cats. The name should not be a royal or aristocratic one for our poor kitten belongs to the proletariat. It is a male kitten.

The cat Chando is evidently confused and distressed by the variety of languages in which she is addressed. Maulana finds it most convenient to speak to her in Persian. Marathi of course is usual and being an Ahmadnagar cat we have presumed that she understands the elements of Marathi.

I find from the papers that the Soviet Union News of Delhi has issued a Russian primer called: *Russian Primer with a Dictionary of About 1200 Words* (all this is the title! Evidently a Russian compilation) by Vladimir Shibayev (Rs. 3/2/-). I should like to have a copy of this if you can manage to get it. Do not imagine that I am going to begin learning Russian. Nothing of the kind. But I understand that the book contains a comparison of Russian with Sanskrit, giving many common root words &c. This interests me.

482. The author, Krishnalal Shridharani, contends that the second World War may deteriorate into "a titanic inter-continental struggle between East and West or in a global racial conflict between Whites and non-Whites." To avert this he calls for a change in western thinking on eastern problems.

Yesterday, as a particular favour I suppose, I was given a brief note addressed to me by Bijju *chacha*. But only after due enquiry about our relationship. The note contained the information that Ballo was being married at Delhi on May 1st. He asked me, if it was possible, to send my blessings by telegram. This would not only be greatly appreciated but be of 'great spiritual value'. I do not know what spiritual value my good wishes might possess but certainly Ballo and his bride will have them in good measure. I do not propose to attempt to send a telegram as this cannot be done from here. At the most the 'telegram' is sent by post to the Bombay Secretariat and then, if it is passed and the stars and omens are favourable, and there is no obvious reason or rule why it should not be kept back, it might be forwarded by telegram. This is far too complicated and doubtful a process. But on receipt of this letter you might send a telegram to Ballo to Delhi, conveying my love and blessing to him and his bride.

Also write a letter to Bijju *chacha*. Tell him I am happy to know of Ballo's marriage. Indeed I sent my good wishes, you will remember, some months ago when I thought that the wedding would come off in February. It is many years since I saw Ballo—five and a half to be accurate. That was when he came to our flat in St. James' Street in London in 1938. He was big and well-built then. I am told that he has grown since then and is a fine specimen of a young man now. I heard of his return from England in an odd way. On my way to Kulu two years ago I spent a couple of days in Delhi, staying with Ratan and Rajan. One morning, without previous notice, a motor bicycle rolled in and a very youthful and tall English officer tramped in and inquired for me. He was shown in and in a typical haw-haw manner he informed me that he had just flown over from England, that he was a product of Harrow, and that he had been commissioned by Lady Willingdon to convey her love to me! This tender and thoughtful message came as a surprise. Further he told me that a young relative of mine had been his companion during the air journey. From his description I gathered that this was Ballo.

Tell Bijju *chacha* also that I am continuing my *asans*, though sometimes I leave off either because the mood does not fit in or, more usually, because some slight sprain or something similar gives a backache—nothing much but enough to stop the *asans* for some days.

Inform him also that Asaf Ali sends his love and good wishes to Ballo.

I am sending you—to Sakina Mansion—a packet of old foreign periodicals. I liked the tiny services edition of *Time* that you sent me. How enterprising the Americans are, but then their resources are

prodigious. It is much easier to be enterprising, adventurous and frolic-some with the assurance of these resources.

The American cartoon that Fraser sent has also come. It is good.

I am afraid Indian publishers are very unbusinesslike, to put it mildly. If you like you can write to the publishers of translations of my books in India asking them for a report of what has been done so far, royalties &c. Just inquire. More you cannot do, nor is there any need to consult anybody. For aught I know some of these translators or publishers might also be in prison. Many of these translations circulate in fairly small areas and do not yield much in the way of royalties. The best sellers are the Hindi editions, published by the Sasta Sahitya Mandal of Delhi (and I must say that they have been fairly regular in their accounts & payments). You might write to them.

The Tamil edition of my *Autobiography*, to my misfortune, was handled by a person, once a reputable publisher, who developed into a strange mixture of a knave and a lunatic, and in addition became a bankrupt! It is no good writing to him.

The Gujrati edition of my *Auto*, issued by the Navajivan Press, does not owe me any royalties as they do business on a curious non-profit-making basis. I disapprove of this but still I agreed to it. Mahadeva Desai was the translator and he did his job well. You need not write to these people either.

The Bengali and Marathi translations of the *Autobiography* have produced some royalties which have been sent to me from time to time—nothing much. It is possible that I have forgotten to make some entries in my book.

The Urdu edition of the *Auto* was issued by the Jamia Millia of Delhi—a very honest, capable, hardworking lot of men but totally unversed in any business. I donated the royalties of the first edition to the Jamia. I do not know whether they have issued a second edition or not. It is called *Meri Kahani*.

I should like you to find out from the Jamia Millia about the Urdu *Glimpses of World History*. I know they issued one book containing about a quarter or a third of *Glimpses*. Have they followed this up by issuing further parts?

There is one other inquiry which is worth making. Some years ago I gave permission to a firm in Tel Aviv (Palestine) to issue a Hebrew translation of the *Auto*. (You will find this mentioned in my notebook.)

I wonder if they took advantage of this. Probably not, as war developments might have come in the way.

Love

Your loving
Papu

I have just had a letter from Chand & Tara from Wellesley dated 29th January.

Chand mentions a book about which I had previously read. Get it when you can. This is Agnes Smedley's[483] *The Battle Hymn of China.*[484]

Chand says she & Tara saw a movie in Chicago which had been taken at the conference in Paris in July 1938. You and I were in it and Krishna Menon, Ellen Wilkinson & Louis Fischer.

Have you heard from Krishna Menon?

P

April 23 Sunday—

On April 13th—*Vaisakhi* & Jallianwala Day—I began writing the proposed book—*The Discovery of India.* For 8 or 9 days I was absorbed in it. The first chapter dealing with various general questions—beliefs &c.—was hard writing and yet it came out in a spurt. I have finished 2 chapters—59 pages of foolscap manuscript. The old Dehra Dun MSS. helped and I took out some paragraphs from it. All this has been a kind of preliminary to the introduction of the main theme—which is difficult. So for the last two days I have rested.

x x x x

No further news of Bapu's coming here. It seems to grow doubtful.

x x x x

483. Agnes Smedley (d 1950); *alias* Alice Bird *alias* Mrs. Petrokos, daughter of a US worker, married for a time to Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, was associated with Indian revolutionaries in Berlin, later a sympathiser with the Chinese Communist movement, her works include, *India and the Next War* and *Chinese Destinies.*

484 In this book Agnes Smedley portrays her personal experiences in China, where she worked as a volunteer Red Cross worker for 13 years from 1928

Some days ago Pantji again raised the question of our taking some action in regard to the Japanese invasion of Assam—the action suggested being a brief message for the people sent to & through the Viceroy. I was agreeable but doubtful of the reaction of Vallabhbhai & some others. Maulana, I thought, would approve of the proposal. It was better therefore to tackle Vallabhbhai first. So I suggested to Pantji to have a talk with Vallabhbhai. He had such a talk—so did I later. As I expected Vallabhbhai did not take kindly to it. Yet he did not find it very easy to resist it.

Just about then Maulana, not knowing about these talks, spoke to me and said that something should be done. What he suggested had some resemblance to his November proposal.[485] I did not like it. To my surprise he did not approve of Pantji's proposal. Pant also had a talk with him—As neither Maulana nor Vallabhbhai approved, the proposal was dropped, for the time being at least.

Mahmud then spoke to me & yesterday he went to Maulana. Later Maulana reverted to the subject in his conversation with me and seemed partly reconciled to our old proposal—though his dislike for it continued. There the matter stands now. Perhaps there may be some developments.

x x x x

April 25, Tuesday

Soon after writing my last note I found out that there was again talk of Bapu and party coming here. Nothing definite said but rooms being inspected again & again by military officers and Sendak suddenly summoned to Bombay.

Most of my companions are certain that he is being sent here soon—probably within a week or ten days—I suppose it is likely but I do not want to feel sure till there is more positive evidence.

I shall be glad if Bapu comes here—for many reasons. For an entirely minor and trivial reason I am a little disturbed! Since I have begun my writing business I have been more & more absorbed in it and I would not like it to be stopped by any happening. The possibility of Bapu coming has made me work all the harder—about 5 hours a day. I am making good progress, with the help of my previous notes &c.

485. See *ante*, p. 276.

Today I finished 92 pages but this includes chunks from the old D.D.J. MSS. The rate of progress will slow down later.

Still, with luck, I ought to reach the end of my writing by the end of July. *I hope I shall be able to finish it here for once I go out,* there will be no peace or chance for writing.

The book ought not to be bad, and it should serve a useful purpose. I wish, however, that I had begun it earlier and written at leisure. Now somehow I have got a feeling that I must hurry. Why I have that feeling—I *do not know.*

x x x x

Poor Shiva Prasad Gupta is dead—died yesterday morning at Benares. Not surprising for he has so long been at death's door. Still it is very sad for old friends to drop out. What a lovable person he was—intensely good and straight in his way, which was often a foolish way.

x x x x

I had letters from Chand & Tara from Wellesley two or three days ago—I shall write to them tomorrow.

April 29, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of April 18/20 from Bombay. The explosion[486] in Bombay was indeed a terrible affair and a vivid reminder of the kind of thing that happens suddenly and upsets thousands of lives. That gives some faint idea of happenings elsewhere when this sort of thing is done deliberately and on a vast scale.

I am surprised to learn that you have not so far received Salim Ali's *Book on Indian Birds.* I sent this on March 24th to Sakina Mansion. It was sent by itself and I took particular care to put it in a cardboard book cover which had come to me with some book from America. You might inquire about it from the Bombay Secretariat. Then, later, on April 1st I sent a packet of books to you to Rugby Hotel, Matheran. This contained Tod's *Rajasthan,* 3 volumes & some other books, a list of which I gave in a previous letter.

486 On 14 April 1944, fire broke out in a ship in the Bombay harbour and caused two explosions in which 500 people were killed and 2000 injured.

I have not received *A Week with Gandhi*.[487] Nor have I received *Warning to the West*. Apart from these two books I have received all the books you have so far mentioned, except the last packet, containing *Loom of Language*,[488] *Mother Russia*[489] &c, which you were going to send. I think you might ask the Bombay Secretariat people to return to you any books meant for me which are held back for any reason.

For the present I am crowded with books and I am not reading any. A fortnight ago I started writing and since then this has filled my mind and my time. Even when I am not actually writing I am thinking about it—it becomes an obsession. So no reading till I work off this obsession. Probably in another few weeks I shall get tired of writing and go back to reading for a while. Meanwhile, my reading is confined to foreign magazines &c., which you sent. Even these have piled up. Yesterday I received a fat packet containing *Foreign Affairs Quarterly, Asia, Pacific Affairs, Reader's Digest* and a large number of other reviews & magazines.

Books take a lot of looking after. I did not realize previously that cockroaches and crickets were so fond of them. They crowd into my little bookcase and feed fast. In spite of periodical cleanings I cannot keep pace with them. This morning I discovered that the leather binding of a new book I had received direct from America less than a month ago was partly eaten up. I have spent the greater part of the morning in chasing these cockroaches. I dislike them greatly. One large beast managed to hide itself inside the *newar* of my bed, and so the *newar* had to be opened out to get at him.

I have noted what you have said about the supply of fruit. It will be welcome. I do not think we are likely to make special demands.

As for the Marathi translation of *Glimpses* I am sorry for Shah's[490] troubles but it is clear that he has not got the resources to undertake and carry through such a work. It is a big book and requires both

487. The book contains an account of Louis Fischer's informal talks with Mahatma Gandhi at Sevagram in June 1942 and a chapter on the working of his mind. The author defends Mahatma Gandhi from the charge of being pro-Japanese and points out that as between independence and nonviolence, the former takes precedence in his thoughts.

488. Written by the eminent philologist Frederick Bodmer and edited by Lancelot Hogben, the author of *Mathematics for the Million*, it is a study of the origin, the growth and the use of communication between peoples.

489. By Maurice Hindus; the author was an American who for two decades had been visiting Soviet Russia and writing sympathetically about what he had seen. In this book he interprets Russia at war by portraying selected people and places.

490. Ratanlal D. Shah, printer and publisher, Ratnakar Press, Sangli.

capital and contacts with booksellers &c. It was absurd of him to issue 250 copies for sale, as he says he did. The book must be printed in a largish edition and advertised. Besides I think it is wrong for the translator to do his own publishing. Evidently the Ratnakar Publications in Sangli are doing business on a very small scale.

I do not remember receiving any letter or books from Shah in August 1941 or later. They may well have come for ought I know for I was in Dehra Jail then. But such letters were usually forwarded to me there. It seems clear that I was rather doubtful of Shah's capacity to undertake the work and hence my insistence on his bringing it out within a few months, as he promised to do. Even now he cannot use his press and says that he is negotiating with a Kolhapur firm. All this is very unsatisfactory and I am sure he cannot possibly do justice to the book.

Strictly speaking, such agreement as there might have been has long been washed out and there is no bar to my making another agreement with a different firm. I am concerned with a wide sale of the book, not with profits. This cannot be expected from Shah & the Ratnakar people. Therefore it is desirable to fix up with the Poona people who brought out my *Autobiography*.

I am sorry for Shah for he has had his own troubles. But allowing him to carry on with the book in sheer sympathy will do him little good and no good at all to the book. He simply can't manage it. I suppose he owes me some small sum for the books actually sold so far. This can be written off.

So I suggest that you try to get out of the Shah muddle and fix up with the Poona people. Tell the latter how matters stand. They can go ahead with the publication and there must be a time-limit. Shah must cancel his arrangements with the Kolhapur press. If the Poona people can take advantage in any way of what Shah has already done and pay him some relatively small sum for it, it would be fair. For instance, they can take his translation & compare it with their own, or in any other way. But this is not a thing which can be insisted upon.

Tell the Poona people that for purposes of translation the new edition issued in England (or U.S.A.) must be used, not the old inaccurate 2-volume edition issued by Kitabistan. They can use Horrabin's maps. For these maps I had told them, or sent a message, that they would have to pay a royalty to Horrabin, or rather a small lump sum. For the present this need not be considered and instead of this payment, it would be better for them to pay something to Shah. This payment is not to be considered as legally done but rather because of the loss suffered by Shah owing to untoward happenings.

I have indicated to you how you might proceed in the matter. These are just suggestions and you can adjust your action as you consider proper.

I read a curious news item in *The Leader* the other day. A girl aged 18 was appearing in some examination in Gorakhpur. Right in the middle of the examination, while she was answering her papers in the exam. hall, she felt labour pains. She carried on with her papers, then went home, gave birth to a baby, and returned the next day to the examination room for further papers!

I am getting the *Patrika* & *The Hindu* regularly, the former from Allahabad. In addition I am still getting the Calcutta edition of the *Patrika via* the Bombay Secretariat. This latter is wholly unnecessary and a waste of money & energy. Please write to the Calcutta Manager of the *Patrika* that while I appreciate his sending the paper, he need not continue sending it as I am getting the Allahabad edition direct.

I hope you are prospering at Mahabaleshwar. It is pretty hot here and from the papers it appears that Allahabad has got over its cool spell and has reverted to its normal heat.

Love

Your loving
Papu

May 5, Friday

Bapu has been ill with malaria for some days. The fever has gone but weakness continues—low blood pressure &c. Even Govt. communique says there is cause for anxiety. Bidhan has seen him.

For the first few days I did not attach much importance to the news of his having malarial fever—He has still abundant vitality. But then worse news. And he is 75½. The past two years—what he must have gone through with all the burdens he carries! Mahadeva's death—Ba's death—but above all the condition of India.

The Times of India suggests his release on medical grounds. That shows his condition must be pretty bad—also that Govt. is considering this release.

x x x x

A tragedy occurred tonight. Chando the cat made a dash at some food—the cook waved an iron hatchet or something he had in his

hand and inadvertently hit Chando on the head. There was no regular cut but the head was bashed in one place and concussion of the brain took place. The poor thing was in a state of semi-coma. We washed the wound &c.—She may survive but the chances are very slight. This has depressed us all greatly. The most unhappy person is the cook who hit her.

May 6, Saturday

News that Gandhiji released unconditionally owing to growing weakness came by radio this morning and the Supt. communicated it to us.[491] His condition must be pretty bad. Still release may do him good and just pull him through.

Anyway—a period ends—this long course which has lasted nearly two years. New developments whatever happens.

x x x x

Chando still alive—just carrying on—

May 6, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of April 26 from Mahabaleshwar. I hope the cooler weather there will suit you and keep you fit. It is getting hot and close here. Another month of this before the rains come. How long do you propose to remain at Mahabaleshwar? I suppose you will go down when the monsoon starts in earnest. I want to return some books to you—Shall I send them to Bombay or Mahabaleshwar?

I have received the following books from you:

1 *Story of Confucius:* Carl Crow
2 Edith Sitwell: *A Poet's Notebook*
3 *Poetry in Wartime:* Edited by Tambimuttu
4 *The Loom of Language:* F. Bodmer

491 On 5 May 1944, the Government announced that "in view of the medical reports on Mr Gandhi's health, the Government of India have decided to release him unconditionally" and that "the decision taken solely on medical grounds" would be effective from 6 May.

5 Tagore: *Poems*
6 Reginald Reynolds: *Cleanliness & Godliness*
7 *A Book of Russian Verse*—Ed. by C.M. Bowra
8 Maurice Hindus: *Mother Russia*
9 Ilya Ehrenburg: *Russia at War*
10 Edward Thompson: *The Making of the Indian Princes*
11 *Sophocles' King Oedipus* by W.B. Yeats

Thus I have received all the books you have sent me in the last two lots except one, namely, Kate Mitchell's *India*.[492] Presumably this book as well as, Shridharani's *Warning to the West* & Fischer's *A Week with Gandhi* have been kept back by the censor. Please get them back from him and keep them.

It would be a pity if any of our books got lost in this way. So it is desirable to keep track of them. In my letters I mention all the books I receive and all those I send back and I keep a full record of all this with me for reference.

I hope you have managed to trace Salim Ali's *Book on Indian Birds* sent by me, all by itself, on March 24, to Bombay. Wendell Willkie's *One World* was sent on February 26 to Allahabad together with 4 copies of *Life* and one or two other foreign periodicals.

I have also received, presumably from *Puphi* (Nan), Ranjit's translation of the *Mudrarakshasa* & 2 books by Nilima.[493]

Among the books you have sent me is Thompson's *Making of the Indian Princes*. As a matter of fact I had already received this book from Thompson himself last December. He sent this & two other of his books through the Viceroy or the Govt. of India. I wrote to you about this at the time and asked you to acknowledge them & thank Thompson for them. So the purchase of another copy was unnecessary, (and it costs Rs. 17/8!), but not quite unnecessary as I have made a present of it to Maulana, who is greatly interested in the subject.

Another book sent by you that I already had is Maurice Hindus' *Mother Russia*. Some one had sent it to me from Allahabad—some bookseller I think. I shall return the extra copy to you with my next lot of books.

I am now very well provided with books—enough to last me many months even if I gave much time to them. But as a matter of fact, as I wrote to you, I am more concerned with writing now.

492. *India—an American View* by Kate L. Mitchell. The author sees India against the needs of the Allies and presents Indian politics in terms of a struggle of contending forces for power. She condemns Mahatma Gandhi's policies as political manoeuvres and stresses the importance of the left forces in India.
493. Nilima Devi (b. 1903); writer and publisher.

I have already written to you fully about the Marathi translation of *Glimpses*. The Ratnakar, Sangli, arrangement must be definitely ended and the Poona people given authority. I made some rather vague suggestions for giving compensation to the Ratnakar people *ex gratia* but I do not quite see how these can be worked out. None of them should be made a condition and it is better not to give hopes to the Ratnakar people, except in so far as any royalties to me may be due. These latter can be written off.

I understand that the Poona people are revising their Marathi translation and they suggest a rather big price for their publication as the cost is going to be heavy. This is true but a big price is bad business and limits the market greatly. I am interested in a large number of people reading the book. It would be better to issue the book in parts —say four—and price them relatively low. This will also speed up publication.

2. As for the inclusion of the 1st chapter of *Letters* in a selection, I have no objection. This kind of thing has been frequently done. It means only 3 or 4 pages and one cannot change much. Still a token payment should be made—I had suggested that some such payment might be made to the Kasturba Memorial Fund.

3. Chitnis[494] of Kolhapur should be asked to give a list of the 'articles & utterances' he wants to publish. If I am satisfied that this will be competently done by a reliable firm of publishers, I shall have no objection. This kind of thing does not overlap with regular books. Royalty 10% on actual sales.

There was a tragedy here last evening of which the victim was our cat Chando. Evidently she was attracted by some food and the cook waved an iron instrument which he had in his hand. Almost inadvertently he hit her full on the head, producing concussion of the brain. The poor thing collapsed and has remained since in a state of semi-coma. We are giving her every attention and there is just a chance that she may survive. But not much. This unfortunate occurrence has depressed all of us as we had got used to Chando and were fond of her. Even those who disliked cats were sorry, and sorriest of all was the man who had hit her.

Letters addressed to us are now handed to us without envelopes and covers—a graceless and crude procedure. If economy is intended why not send them in their original envelopes? A letter without an envelope is like a person without clothes. In private, yes. But this public undressing and nakedness and the flaunting of it before everybody is a

494 S L Chitnis translated into Marathi the *Glimpses of World History*.

little painful. There is also a greater chance of the letters getting mixed up or going astray. It is safer always to write the names of the sender and the addressee on the letter itself.

Do you ever hear from Krishna Menon?

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 60.

May 13, 1944

Darling Indu,

I do not quite know where to write to you for your last brief letter of May 7th informed me that you were going to Poona to see Bapu. Yet, I suppose, you must have gone back to Mahabaleshwar, and so my letter goes there. You have an advantage over me. You know always where to address your letters to me. I am not one of those flighty, unstable restless individuals who move about frequently. I am a fixture—in Ahmadnagar Fort!

Bapu's release and his illness have naturally upset the still and rather stagnant waters of Indian life and there is a stir and an excitement and a going to and fro. Yet I wish our people would restrain their desire for *darshan* &c. We are a terribly inconsiderate people where illness is concerned—or rather 'inconsiderate' is not the right word. We overwhelm the person who is ill with too much consideration. I think one of Bapu's chief troubles has been this and he is seldom allowed privacy or rest. Crowds gather and gape and gaze at him imagining that they are not interfering in any way. The worst offenders are those whom he encourages himself by his affection and personal interest. He has built up such a vast family and given a bit of himself to so many that each one of them considers it a right and duty to hover round him.

Normally I would not worry about his health for he has considerable powers of recuperation. But it is his age that troubles me. He is nearly 75, a good age for India, an age which I certainly do not expect to reach. For some years past I have noticed the obvious effects of advancing age on his physical frame. What the last twenty-one months have done to him I do not know, but I can make a guess. I hope, therefore, that he will be strong enough to take absolute rest till he is fully recovered and that others will help him to do so.

If you see *Puphi* (Nan) tell her that I sent her a letter to Allahabad a week ago. But she must have missed it as she went off to Poona. I hope it reaches her. Also tell her that I have received the copies of Chand's & Tara's letters to her, which she sent me.

The fruit arrangement which you and Mridula made is working satisfactorily and almost for the first time, since we came here, we are having some decent fruit.

I wrote to you last week about our cat Chando. For three days we watched her. That she survived at all was surprising and satisfactory but she continued in a state of half-coma, taking no food. Then she was sent to a local veterinary hospital. She is still there but we have been told that she is recovering and there is no danger now— Which is good.

After some very hot days we have had a fall in temperature due to occasional drizzles.

Chand, in one of her letters to her mother, suggests that it would be desirable to have a new and abridged edition of my *Auto* published in America. There is something in this. The best person to judge of it is Walsh, my publisher. If he feels that something of this kind is desirable and worthwhile I shall have no objection. Normally I would not agree to leave this in anyone's hands but I trust Walsh's judgment and am prepared to leave the matter to him entirely. He can do what he thinks right. You might inform him of this.

This is my letter No. 61.

Love

Your loving
Papu

13.5.44

Darling Betty,

It is just a month since I wrote to you and six weeks since I had a letter from you. But some news of you has come to me through Indu.

You must have had your hands full. The fire in Bombay was enough to shake everyone up there and to demand his or her service in relief work. The relief work, I suppose, will continue for a considerable time.

Now Bapu's release has inevitably produced a new stir and excitement, especially for those in Bombay. I hope he will be left in peace for some time to enable him to have rest and recover.

I saw in some newspapers that your book is going to be published in America. Has this been fixed up?

How is Raja? I hope Matheran did him good.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

May 15 Monday.

Chando died last night in the veterinary hospital. She was sent there on the 7th evening and we were informed that she was progressing. Indeed it was settled that she would be discharged from the hospital on Sunday—yesterday—and could come back to us. Instead she died. It is rather sad and some of us miss her.

May 20, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have received two letters from you—one dated 8th May from Poona and the other dated 14th May from Mahabaleshwar.

You suggest that I might return the books to you to Mahabaleshwar. This will mean needless trouble to you as you will have to cart them about from place to place. So for the present I am not sending them. except for 3 copies of *Life*. I think I shall send the books later to your Bombay address.

I do not quite see how you can stay in Juhu after June 8th. The monsoon is certain to begin by that date and Juhu is not a suitable place during the monsoon.

Do not trouble about the *Russian Primer*. I have seen a copy of it and that is all I wanted to do.

Wendell Willkie's *One World* was sent to you to Allahabad on Feb. 26th together with some copies of *Life*. The size and shape of the book is rather like *Life*, only somewhat smaller. So it is just possible. to overlook it or for it to get mixed up with the periodicals.

Fruit is coming here regularly. Some good honey will be welcome. Mahabaleshwar honey is well-known. Psyche sent me several bottles of

it—triple-strained it was called—last year. I think I wrote to you that one of these bottles broke *en route* and made a terrible mess.

I am sorry to tell you that Chand Bibi died on Sunday last. We were expecting her back from the veterinary hospital that very day as we had been told that she was doing well. She was not sent and next day we were told that she was dead.

About Khaliq I quite understand that he is not particularly useful just at present and has little work to do. Nevertheless I dislike intensely parting from him. Personally I do not understand how people manage to exist on these small salaries in these days of terribly high prices. Khaliq has been with us for 25 years or so, with a little gap in between. He came as a young boy and has grown up in our service. I cannot consider his case or that of any other servant merely from the point of view of our needing him or not at present or just as a cold-blooded business proposition. We owe a certain duty to those who have so long served us faithfully. Besides we may need him later or someone in his place, and a newcomer is seldom satisfactory. It takes time to get used to him. Wages, especially the wages of more or less skilled workers, have gone up greatly because of the war and partly because of the high rates introduced by Americans in India. We cannot keep up with these American standards but we cannot help being influenced by them. I understand Ladli Bhai's point of view but it is too out of date to fit in with modern conditions. It is quite likely that if Khaliq's salary is increased, others, especially Tulsi, will want more. I do not think we need be frightened of this. After all we have not got too many servants. It is better to have a few well paid ones than a crowd.

I think therefore that Khaliq's pay should certainly be increased by 3/- a month. That will make it 30/- pay plus 2/- allowance, making 32/- in all. He has got a wife and daughter and possibly others to look after. After all, we spend a few rupees constantly on odd purchases—a book &c.—without a second's hesitation. And yet this small sum might make a great deal of difference to a family. I am interested in Khaliq's daughter and I think I once wrote to you to give some help to her or for her occasionally—I hope her education has been continued. Normally, our servants get tips etc., old and new clothes, from time to time. But when the house is seldom used and no guests come, or come rarely, these tips cease.

Apart from the increase of Rs. 3/- in Khaliq's salary, I think you might tell him that I should like to help his daughter's education &c. and, if need arises, he can ask you or Feroze for such help. Feroze,

when he is in Allahabad, can give Khaliq Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 as a small lump sum for this purpose on my behalf.

Could you send me a full list of Anand Bhawan servants with their salaries and allowances? I want to go over this and know exactly how matters stand.

Is Upadhyaya still in prison? Quite a number of people have been discharged in the U.P. and yet Upadhyaya, of all persons, still apparently continues.

Have you any news of Madan Bhai? Did Feroze succeed in getting an interview with him?

You must know of the complications that *Puphi* (Nan) is having to face—legal and testamentary. These have evidently upset her a lot and she is greatly worried. I can understand that for such troubles are not only irritating in themselves but the possible consequences affect our future lives. No one views with equanimity the idea of changing the course of his or her life. This present affair is an eloquent commentary on the state not only of our laws but, what is more important, the state of people's minds here. The difference between a son and a daughter, not to mention the wife, is tremendous. If Ranjit had a son, this son would have inherited a very considerable property running into several lakhs. Daughters are cut out completely from the joint fund, and even as regards the much smaller sum, which was treated more or less as separate property by Ranjit, there is now a dispute. If Pratap Pandit's view is correct and is upheld then the daughters get 300/- each per annum and the widow Rs. 500/- per annum, that is Rs. 25/- per month & about 42/- per month. For the rest they are supposed to depend on Pratap's charity, which is not exactly resplendent.

Just because Ranjit was careless about making a will, full advantage is sought to be taken of a strict interpretation of the law—a pound of flesh business. What exactly the law is in this particular case I am not competent to judge.

So I can understand that Nan is worried. There is the question of supplying Chand & Tara with funds for carrying on their education. And so many other things. Nevertheless I do not think it is worthwhile worrying. For my part I do not propose to spend a single sleepless night over this matter. I am annoyed at Pratap's attitude but it is a passing irritation. Curiously enough there is also a tinge of amusement about it when I think of human nature as it is. Also a certain exhilaration in having to meet a new situation.

Fortunately for us, we are none of us helpless and incompetent individuals. We can each one of us look after ourselves as well as others. We can earn money whenever necessary as well as spend it. So I fail

to see anything tragic about it all. It just involves some waste of time, some adjustment of our lives, and for the rest it does not count.

It is obvious that I cannot tolerate any interruption in Chand's, Tara's or Rita's education because of monetary difficulties. So long as I have any money this is not going to happen. And I do not think I shall ever lack money for what I consider essential needs. I have enough disrespect for money for it never to desert me wholly. I have known in the past and I know now how to adjust myself to changing circumstances *without allowing them to make much difference to the course of* my life.

Anyway, in view of possible developments, I want to find out exactly how I stand financially. I hardly know. Will you therefore please ask Kamalnayan or the Bachhraj people to send me (through you) a full statement of my account, investments &c. with them?

You mention a lake in Mahabaleshwar—I did not know of this. Is it a big lake?

Love

Your loving
Papu

I have now received Louis Fischer's *A Week with Gandhi*. Also Ahmad Abbas's *Tomorrow is Ours*[495] and *Tomorrow 2*[496]—This last-named sent by the publishers—Padma.

P

May 27, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of May 19th—your 63rd.

The newspapers tell us that Mahabaleshwar has run short of food and army lorries had to be requisitioned to rush foodstuffs there. I hope you were not starved. That is not likely to happen for Mahabaleshwar

495 A novel set in the context of the national movement. A marriage breaks up because of the conflicts it creates between a modern youth and the old conservative outlook.

496. *Tomorrow*, edited by Raja Rao and Ahmed Ali, was a compilation of short stories, poems and essays by writers of different languages.

is not just any place in India but a spot where the elect go and their needs are always catered for.

It has been hot here and amazingly dry. I suppose the rains will begin soon and even before the regular monsoon starts, the winds change and are cooler. It is really surprising how dry this place can get. I thought that Allahabad and the north were dry enough with the hot *loo* blowing. But apparently there is something in the air here which beats Allahabad in this respect. This dryness affects the skin and produces an uncomfortable feeling. I did not know what this was due to. Others also complained and they said it was dryness. They took to oil massage but I dislike messing about with oil. So now I sleep with a pot of vaseline next to me and if I feel 'dried up' in the course of the night I apply some of the stuff on my arms and legs. This gives relief. I suppose the rains will end this dryness of the air.

I do not think I ever met Dr. Bhandari's girls though he spoke to me about them and showed me their photographs. He was very fond of them.

I have received a number of books from Karaka[497]—his own productions mostly. One of them is a play—*Colour Bar* by two Oxford men —Presumably one of them being Karaka himself. It is not a very bright play.

I have been reading little lately and all the good books you have sent me repose in the bookshelf, which is over-full now. For the last six weeks I have spent a good deal of time in writing. I am beginning to tire of this and perhaps one of these days I shall put my pen and paper away and seek relief in reading. I am not very satisfied with what I have written. Yet, even though it may not be up to much it is a useful discipline for the mind. It forces one to think precisely and to express oneself clearly. Indeed there is sometimes an element of surprise in seeing one's thought put on an attire of words and phrases and appear in black and white. Normally one thinks vaguely and the thought is all rounded up with no sharp ends; it fades off with wishes and odd fits of knowledge. In the old days education both in India and in Europe included a study of logic so that the student may know how to think and reason clearly. In Europe this was Aristotle's logic; India had and has her own system of *Nyaya* न्याय, which is still taught in the Sanskrit schools and colleges. Both these are out-of-date and far too formal in their approach. They tend to make the mind scholastic and rather rigid, and yet they served a useful purpose and did

497. D.F. Karaka (1911-1974); founder-editor of the *Current* and author of several books.

give a training to the mind. It is surprising how untrained most people's minds are now, even the minds of otherwise well-educated people. We cannot go back to Aristotle or न्याय but the modern substitute is a scientific training, and especially practical work in science.

I remember, in my school days, there used to be a great argument in England, as elsewhere, of the relative value and importance of a classical and a scientific training. People used to grow quite excited and heated over it, each party or group emphasizing the value of its own wares. I suppose science has now won all along the line and the classics are just tolerated. That is right in a way and it was inevitable. We simply can't do without science and the old rigid methods of classical education isolated a person from the world of today. And yet science by itself is pretty dry and the scientist is not always the most lovable of men. He lacks something, the poise and calm outlook on life which the classics often gave. Compare H.G. Wells with Gilbert Murray. Well, I suppose, we must combine the two somehow.

I had a letter from Betty the other day. There is a background of mental unrest and worry about it as there usually is about her letters, unless something has happened to cheer her up, and then, for a while, she is full of exuberance. Very foolishly I try to dole out good advice to her, as if this makes the slightest difference. Probably it just irritates. And yet I cannot quite get out of my school-masterish habit. Each person has to find his or her own way out of the problems that beset one. No one else can really help much and probably the most one can do is to understand and sympathise and be silent. Usually the troublesome things are the little things of life—somehow we brace ourselves up when a big thing turns up. My own way out for present worry over some small matter is to switch off my mind from it and think of some big thing. That restores balance and perspective. That is why, it is said, that a major disaster, like a war, does one good service. It pulls people out of their ruts and makes them forget for a while their innumerable petty worries. The major trouble swallows up the smaller ones.

I have come to think that city life, agreeable as it is, somehow does not fulfil the demands of human nature. I like city life and would hate to be buried in a village. But unrelieved city life cut off from nature and the land does seem to produce a disjointed temperament, a lack of mental poise. Anyway it would have that effect on me. I must have both—the city and nature. However for the present I have Ahmadnagar Fort, which is neither!

We have been here now for 21 months and 3 weeks. That reminds me that this is already my longest term. Previously no single term has

exceeded 21 months—the sentence was usually two years but with remissions &c., this worked out at about 21 months or a little less. It is true that more than once two terms have often followed one another with only a brief gap in between—but there was a gap, and even a few days makes a difference. And then, previously, there used to be interviews and some kind of personal touch was kept up. Not so this time. So far as you are concerned I did not see you for nearly two years m 1939-41. But that was not because I was in prison—You were in London—Leysin &c. while I was in India, mostly out of prison, partly in Dehra Dun Jail.

How people must have changed, I often think, during these past 21 months or more. How you must have changed. When we meet, as I suppose we will some time or other, I shall be feeling about with the tentacles of my mind, trying to find what is new, what is old in you. So also with others. When we meet people frequently we do not notice the change for we are continually adapting ourselves to it. But after a long interval changes are more apparent. Children grow up amazingly and are hardly recognizable; boys and girls become men and women.

It is not merely the lapse of time that counts; it is what we have lived through that makes a difference. Recent years have been very abnormal and each one of us has a particular stock of experience and a store of feelings and impressions, each one of which has made some little difference—And so strangers creep in where friends used to be.

I am very glad that Raja is definitely out. Not that it made much difference whether he was in or out but this middle stage is upsetting, especially for a nervous person like Raja. He can now devote himself to improving his health, and that, from all accounts, requires a great deal of attention. I understand that the children—Harsha and Ajit—are going to Gwalior after all.

Have you given my yarn to Psyche to get it woven?

Betty wrote to me that old Mrs. Gazdar[498] of Allahabad died recently after a long illness. The news made me think how cut off we get from people we do not meet. I had not met her for a long time—did she come to your wedding?—and I had vaguely come to the conclusion that she had died. She was a good, kindly sort and I am sorry.

498. Wife of Nadir Guzdar, proprietor of the Raja Ram Motilal Guzdar & Co. in Allahabad and a close friend of the Nehru family.

Will you write a few lines to Nadir conveying my condolences? G. D. Birla has sent me a book written partly by him—It is in Hindi रुपये की कहानी.'[499]

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my 63rd letter to you.

June 3, 1944

Darling Indu,
I have received your letter of May 26—the 64th.

I am glad you have decided to go to Poona instead of Bombay from Mahabaleshwar. I suppose my next letter should be sent to Poona but I shall await your instructions in this matter. In Poona you will be comfortable enough either with Nuri or Sir Govind Madgaonkar (I am not sure if I have spelt his name correctly). Perhaps you will feel easier with Nuri because you know her well. Madgaonkar's house is a well-appointed one and he is a methodical person. Sarojini, who stayed with him, told me that the radio was functioning most of the time. Madgaonkar is a very decent person though a bit censorious of others. I suppose that comes with age, especially when one lives a retired life and has nothing definite to do. Doesn't he talk a little like the 'Poonah' kind of Britisher? I do not remember having met his daughter Usha.

Jivraj's release is comforting and now you can have the satisfaction of knowing that he is at hand and can be consulted when necessary. He is a very competent and sound doctor.

I suppose it is right and inevitable that you should read books on babies and children. And yet there is always a possibility of overdoing this kind of thing—or rather of being so overburdened with advice that one's natural commonsense hardly functions and one lives on edge, trying always to remember what to do next according to the directions. I remember Betty & Raja mugging up such books together and referring to them for advice at every time. This very attitude of doubt and

499 *Story of Money*; it is a survey of the Government of India's currency policy; Parasnath was the co-author.

hesitation with a tinge of excitement somehow affects the child sometimes in the wrong way, for children, like animals, are peculiarly susceptible to psychological states. The books you have been reading and which you mention are good in their own way and give a lot of sound advice. But it is as well to remember that many experts do not wholly agree with them and in fact there has been a tendency to turn away from this method of treating children. Probably it is a good method for the 'difficult' and 'problem' child, but many children are not, to begin with, problem children at all and in their case this treatment may not be wholly suitable. It may result in a normal child developing problem traits. There is a well-known school at Dartington Hall in Devon or Cornwell run on these lines and I heard rather curious stories about the children there. One father was quite worried about his son there, a lad of ten or so.

Problem and such like children have, I suppose, always existed but undoubtedly they are peculiarly common in our present age, especially in Europe and America. They are the products of this age of transition where everything is changing so rapidly that it is difficult to have any standards of values to judge by. Also the small families which are so usual today—one child or two—result in problem children. A larger family, several children, has disadvantages but from the child's point of view it is usually better and he has a more normal life with companions growing up with him. To some extent, but not wholly (except perhaps in a socialist country like Russia), school and a communal life can take the place of family life.

A child has to be treated as an individual and given every opportunity to grow as an individual. But it is at least equally important to treat him as a social being who can live at peace and cooperation with others. That makes one think of the kind of society he will have to live in—a difficult business today when society itself is changing. In any event the cooperative habits and traits have to be developed or else he will find it difficult to fit in anywhere. Usually single children, who have been looked after a great deal, have a hard time when they go out into the world and have to fend for themselves. Bertrand Russell says somewhere that parents are wholly unsuited to bring up their children; they are too intensely interested in them to take a dispassionate view or to treat them normally.

You say you want the child to be happy—of course. But then what is happiness? There is the solid content of a fairly prosperous peasant; there are higher grades of intellectual and emotional happiness. There is the happiness of the person who is drunk or who is under the influence of some drug. I suppose, if you analyse your mind, you will

find that happiness is more often negative than positive—an absence of pain & suffering. And yet how is one to be happy if he knows and sees another in pain? A sensitive person will suffer continually on behalf of others. An insensitive person may escape that but at the cost of much that is fine in life. Long ago (probably 140 years ago) Leopardi the Italian poet wrote to his sister on the occasion of her marriage: "Thou shall have children, either cowards or unhappy; choose thou the latter." That is perhaps an extreme view but there is some truth in it.

Ultimately we cannot be really happy till the whole world is happy and that is a large order. Mere avoidance of unhappiness, not easily possible, may itself result in isolation and boredom and a malaise which is worse than definite unhappiness. We are so organically connected with others & with the world that we cannot both live a full life and yet avoid the world's ills. Escapism does not pay in the long run, quite apart from its moral worth.

What then is one to do? That is a big question which has been asked almost since human beings began to think. It seems to me that the only thing to aim at is the power or capacity to extract happiness, or perhaps it is better to call it peace and calm, out of unhappiness itself. Not to escape from anything but to face it and yet be above it in a way; not to be overcome by it and to retain in spite of everything a sense of life and its larger purposes, a feeling of life fulfilment. How to do that is a difficult enough job and each person has to learn for himself and it seems that only life, with all its waywardness and shock, can teach. The most we can do is to prepare the background for it.

Read your books by all means but do not attach too much importance to everything they contain. A story of Li-Po the great Chinese poet comes to my mind. A young man, desiring to become a poet, went to Li-Po and asked him how he was to train himself for the purpose, 'Master, how can I become a poet.' Li-Po said: 'Read all the rules and books and then forget them and observing nature put your feeling in words' You mention Ethel Mannin's book.[500] She is a likable person and I am sure what she says has sense in it. But it struck me suddenly,—has she any children? I do not know but somehow I doubt it.

There is a passage in one of Gilbert Murray's books which might interest you—He says that we must be "careful always to seek for truth and not for our own emotional satisfaction, careful not to neglect the

500 *Confessions and Impressions*

real needs of men and women through basing our life on dreams; and remembering above all to walk gently in a world when the lights are dim and the very stars wander."

Madgaonkar's dissatisfaction with people who do not make their wills is understandable. Partly he is justified in so far as I am concerned, but only partly. It is true that I have so far not made any formal will but I have not been wholly neglectful of the future. My father—*Dadu*—did not leave a will. Yet I know that in the course of his life he made his will more than once. I suppose he tore them all up and deliberately decided not to have a will. But at the same time he made such careful arrangements that nothing untoward should happen, for he realized that my money sense was weak and I was far too engrossed in other matters. Even apart from a will, I was his natural and only heir, under Hindu law. The arrangements he made were so good that they saved me a deal of trouble and if I have carried on in a carefree manner for all these years since he died, it is largely due to his foresight and care.

So far as I am concerned I have not been wholly neglectful. Knowing that my life might be considered mortgaged in a sense I have tried to fix things in a way so that my presence or absence would make no difference. It was because of these arrangements that there was no financial worry at the time of Mummy's last illness in Europe, or your stay in Switzerland, Oxford &c. Even if I had popped off suddenly at any time, those arrangements would have stood. I cannot bring myself to kowtow to money but I am not lacking in method even in my monetary dealings, though from a normal point of view I might be wasteful and live beyond my means. But the idea of hoarding up, or holding tight to money and living on interest &c. irritates me, and the whole conception of passing on ancestral funds by inheritance from generation to generation does not particularly appeal to me. Besides there is not much to pass on and quite possibly there will be nothing left! Apart from this house—Anand Bhawan—almost everything I possess is with Bachhraj. They have been good caretakers of it and poor Jamnalalji showered good advice on me which I seldom acted up to. To Bachhraj I have given definite instructions that in case anything happens to me you are my sole heir and will be entitled to take possession of all my funds & securities with them. Even without my saying so legally you are my heir. Although these arrangements are solid enough and not likely to crack, it struck me last year, here in Ahmadnagar Fort, that I ought to make a will. Of course I could not do so here. But I prepared a draft so that whenever I might have the chance I might execute a formal will. The operative part of it was brief enough but there was, inevitably,

much else. That draft is out of date now but it will help to remind me what I have to do.

Money and inheritance &c. do not worry me. But I do not want to leave a mess behind when I die. I do not want others to have to take the trouble to clear up a mess of my making.

1 Regarding Chitnis who wants to publish a Marathi translation of some of my essays and articles, I have seen the list and I have no objection to his doing so. I do not examine credentials closely in regard to these odd articles. So he can go ahead. But his publishers must confirm the agreement in writing. Agreements are with publishers, not with translators.

2 The Mathrubhumi Press of Calicut can of course bring out a second edition of the Malayalam edition of the *Autobiography* on the same terms as previously. They can also bring out a Malayalam edition of *Glimpses* on these terms, but I hope they will see to it that the book is properly translated. Also there must be a time limit, so that the publications may not be indefinitely delayed.

3 Assamese edition of *Letters*. I cannot give permission to a new person unless I am sure that the old party (Wide India Co.) has not functioned so far. Better send a registered letter to the latter to find out. Also if you like you can refer to Gopinath Bardoloi (the ex-Premier of Assam), Gauhati, Assam. You can ask him about both parties, and whether an Assamese edition has come out or not. Also his advice can be taken about the translation &c.

I have collected quite a large number of old foreign papers. I think I shall send them to you when you are in Poona. What do you do with them?

When you make any fresh arrangements about the publication of my books, please make entries in the notebook reserved for this purpose—Also any other relevant matter—your writing and not receiving reply &c. This will facilitate matters for future reference.

Love

Your loving
Papa

This is my letter No. 64.

June 6, Tuesday

A month today since Bapu was released. A month of some anxiety and a good deal of expectation. The anxiety is much less for he has slowly improved in health. And yet the pace is very slow and the doctors are not satisfied. He does not take kindly to medicine and wants to stick to his nature treatment. Probably he knows his body and its working best. He will improve gradually but, having regard to his age, he will not regain his old vigour and vitality. Yet whatever his age and his state of health, inevitably he has to carry the burden of India. No one can relieve him, no one can take his place. He gets tired very easily and probably cannot stand much argument. There is no way out of this difficulty.

The eager expectations have now toned down, at least in the sense that something new will happen soon. The one clear statement[501] he has made—that he cannot withdraw the August Resolution: it is the breath of life to him—has cheered up many and depressed many others outside. I expected something of the kind from him and felt pleased. There appears to be no room for any half-way position—

So, although we expect changes to take place, for Bapu's very presence outside is a continual challenge to the *status quo*, we are more settled in mind. For my part, I have kept myself busy with writing work and the weeks have gone by all too quickly. I began writing on April 13th and since then I have written something almost daily. Day before yesterday I finished a long chapter and came to the end of a period. So I decided to take a few days off—I have written so far 374 pages of manuscript. That is, I imagine, a little more than half of what I intend writing. I have reached the eve of the Moslem invasion of India. The book should be about 650-700 pages (MSS.), but it is difficult to say.

Now that I feel that we are likely to stay on here for some months, the sense of hurry has gone— Another two months should see me nearing the end—

501. In a letter to M.R. Jayakar dated 20 May, which was published on 1 June 1944, Mahatma Gandhi had stated that "as things stand there is no question of my withdrawing the August Resolution."

6.6.44

Darling Betty,
I received your letter of the 19th May some little time ago. I was very glad to learn of Raja's discharge. It really does not matter very much whether one is in jail or outside provided one can adapt oneself to the environment. But when one is ill it does make a difference and there is a lack of facilities for treatment and an uncertainty which leads to mental depression and worrying. This uncertainty does not lessen even when one is released for a short fixed period and has to go back to jail. Instead in some ways this cat and mouse business is more irritating and it becomes difficult to settle down for treatment or anything else. So I am greatly relieved to know that Raja is definitely out now and can look after himself properly. Naturally the first thing to do is to have a complete overhaul and know exactly how matters stand.

I think you have decided wisely about Harsha and Ajit going to the Gwalior School. Children always profit from living in company with others of their age in an impersonal atmosphere. Home life is necessary but too strong a dose of it is not always good. School and home, between the two, establish a kind of balance, and home becomes more desirable when it is not always there. School helps in developing self-reliance and the habit of cooperation, which are so essential for every growing child, and indeed for a grown-up person also.

Give my love to Raja and the children. How they—the children—must have grown.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

June 10, 1944

Darling Indu,
Your letter of June 2nd reached me yesterday. It was your No. 65. I do not quite know where to write to you for you say that you are likely to leave Mahabaleshwar by the 10th, that is today. In any event you ought to be in Poona by the time this letter gets through. But I do not know the address of Nuri's house in Poona, or rather I have

forgotten it for I used to know it and have also visited it. I am therefore sending this letter to Mahabaleshwar hoping that Treacher & Co. will forward it on.

Do not trouble to send olive oil. I have a little which I use for massage when I have a slight sprain. I can easily get more if necessary. Just at present there is no need to combat dryness for the rains have begun here and we have had a heavy downpour.

You mention Anand—Where is he now? Still on the executive side, or has he been sent to the front somewhere?

To remain absolutely silent मौन for a period must be good, both for the nerves and as a conserver of energy. What an amount of energy we waste by talk. I have never deliberately observed silence in this way. But circumstances have helped me or, if you like, compelled me. I have spent so many months, on previous occasions, in something like solitary confinement, though it was not technically so. All the talking I did was with the prisoners who cooked my food etc., or with the jailor who came round for a couple of minutes in the morning. So for months at a time my talking was reduced to a minimum and I got so unused to it that when interview day came I was a little exhausted. Here in Ahmadnagar I have of course to do much more talking for there are many of us together meeting each other continually. And yet this is less than normal. Occasionally I have talked more than usual and felt tired because of it and even developed a very slight sore throat. It is surprising how soon we get out of our normal habits, or if you prefer, develop new habits. Lack of exercise or use of any organ makes it slacken off and weaken. But I have no doubt that occasional silences are good for the nervous system and do conserve energy.

Yes, you need not send any more books just yet, unless you come across some very special one. I want another six weeks relief from books, more or less. But there is one little book which you might get if you see it anywhere. This is a new Penguin—Hogben's *Interglossa*,[502] or some such name. It deals with a new artificial language. Also it might be worthwhile to buy any new books that appear good, and to keep them.

Do you remember?—you wrote to Krishna Menon for one or two books I had mentioned. Have you not heard from him at all?

502. In this book, Hogben had producer a detailed blueprint of yet another international language.

Who is Tambimuttu? Do you know him? The man who has prepared an anthology of war verse, which you sent me.[503] I have seen occasional reviews by him in the English periodicals and he appears to have broadcasted also—B.B.C.—on literary topics. Probably he has married some English girl as he refers to his wife who seems to help him in his literary work.

I note what you say about Jamia's reply. It is odd that they cannot get paper when plenty of new books are coming out. They are not very enterprising. I suppose there is no help for it and we must leave them to function in their own slow way.

I think you are right about the Marathi edition of *Glimpses*. It is best to be cautious and not to take any step which might cause trouble. Besides you have taken a High Court Judge's opinion and there is nothing more to be said about it. Apart from the legal side, I am anxious that Shah should not nurse a grievance. He has suffered a good deal and I do not wish to add to his troubles. But what is one to do if a man is not in a position to do a job well? Even according to him he has to rely now on some other small press—Besides he and his new press will probably find it difficult to get paper, which a more up-to-date press might manage to procure. The money involved is really a small sum and I am not interested in it—I am only anxious to get the book out. I think it might be pointed out to Shah that the arrangements he has suggested appear wholly unsatisfactory. Anyway you had better proceed as you think best and avoid entanglements.

If, ultimately, the Poona people are given permission to bring out the Marathi *Glimpses* the terms will be the same as for the *Autobiography* —10% royalty on price of books sold. About the timelimit, two months is too short a period. No publisher can give this promise even normally, much less in wartime. Probably a six-month period is nearer the mark. But the right way to proceed is to ask the publisher to suggest his own timelimit and if this is at all reasonable, to accept it. The book is a big one. It may have to come out in parts.

All monies for royalties should go to Bachhraj. But please note then in the record.

We are getting fruit two or three times a week, which is ample. Mangoes have come, also quite good figs; other kinds of fruit also sometimes.

503. *Poetry in Wartime* (1942), a collection of poems written since the beginning of the war and published in *Poetry*, the editor of which was M J. Tambimuttu, a Sinhalese poet settled in London.

As you intend going to Bombay about the end of the month to consult Purandare I suppose you will remain there afterwards. Have you fixed up your abode there? If Juhu is approved, I presume you will have no difficulty in getting a shack for most people leave when the rains begin. My next letter to you will be sent to Poona— By that time, I hope, the address will have reached me. The one after that may have to go to Bombay or Juhu. Let me know the address there.

The newspapers say that Bapu will be going to Poona soon. You will meet him there.

This is my letter No. 65.

Love

Your loving
Papu

Have you any news of Amma? I suppose she is in Lahore now —How is she and what is her address?

June 17—Saturday

The days pass by—I keep busy writing mostly, although sometimes I feel very dissatisfied with what I have written. Dissatisfied not only with the manner and content of my writing, but with the thought of the past. Curious how I am interested when I am writing about a period which appeals to me, which adds to my national and racial conceit, and bored when I have to deal with more unfortunate periods. I have reached the end of the Moghul period and now I suppose I shall be still more irritated for I shall soon be dealing with the last phase—the British period.

Is it worthwhile, I wonder, writing all this stale stuff? I thought perhaps I might be able to put some life into it but now I doubt it. Some passages here and there may be good; as a rule it is heavy going. It is difficult to judge of one's own writing. Anyway it has been very helpful to my thinking. More definite pictures emerge in my own mind and, writing about the past, somehow I get rid of the burden of the past.

There is no fear now that I might be unable to finish what I am writing by an early release from internment. Unless, of course, I grow weary and give it up myself, which is not impossible. In another month I shall finish with the past—and then the present and the future. Shall I deal with them? I do not know—I am not sure—

x x x x

Bapu has come to Poona. By the end of this month or early in July he might come out with some statement—some step. From all appearances no marked change in the present position will take place. Churchill and India's freedom are two incompatibles, and Churchill and his lot count both in England and India, unfortunately. His conservative, British Empire attitude is evident in all he does. He has been a brilliant war leader for Britain but what a lot of trouble he is storing up for England, Europe & the world by his incapacity to get out of his nineteenth century mentality. His praise of France, fulsome and entirely uncalled for, was significant.[504]

x x x x

Some nights ago I shouted and moaned more than usual, disturbing my neighbours. I am told that I make ghastly noises. Horrid and extraordinary nightmares oppress me but they fade away on awakening. My waking hours have not been bad, except for occasional depression, a malaise, a nostalgic feeling for all that is unattainable. And yet at night I go off the deep end into some unknown, fantastic and rather horrible land. What is this that troubles me? What possesses my unconscious self? Is it just the consequence of the events I have known during the last quarter of a century or more? Or is it some childhood memory or shock which I cannot recall? I do not remember anything that affected me so strongly in childhood. Of course I think, without deliberate intent, of my past and of the many things that might have been otherwise. But all this does not explain these nightmares and my shouting in sleep.

It is an old habit, this shouting and groaning in sleep. Kamala used to tell me about it. In prison I used to do it sometimes. I remember how, during the Cripps negotiations, one night I was more than usually noisy and Rajan dashed into my room to find out what ailed me.

There is an old childhood dream which I remember. It came to me repeatedly with variations. Some horrid creature was pursuing me, something that I could not clearly see or visualise, and I ran my fastest away

504. On 25 May 1944, Churchill said in the House of Commons that "we have all rejoiced at the brilliant and skilful fighting of the French Moroccan and Algerian divisions in the heart shaking battles... The French Committee of National Liberation has the credit of having prepared these troops .. they also govern a vast empire, all of whose strategic points are freely placed at the disposal of the United Nations"

from it. I ran and ran but always it was close behind me. Ultimately I entered a building and mounted a high tower. There near the top I locked myself from the inside in a room. But there was a high window or a skylight and to my exceeding horror I saw a huge hand come through this window and stretch itself out towards me. It was only a hand with an arm attached, nothing more. There was no escape possible for me from that room. The hand approached, came nearer and nearer, and then I awoke in a cold sweat, shivering with fright and horror.

x x x x

For the past few years or so the nightmares have usually something to do with a feeling of oppression, of being unable to do what I want to do. I want to move and my limbs do not obey me. I want to shout and warn someone and my throat is parched and dry and no voice comes out of it, or just a hoarse grunt.

x x x x

What is all this due to? What old suppressions? Is it sex—Partly perhaps, though I do not think this is the primary cause. Is it the feeling of helplessness and oppression due to political causes? Perhaps.

x x x x

Two or three days ago I received from Indu a copy of Eve Curie's[505] new book: *Journey among Warriors*. Inevitably and egoistically I turned to the chapter in which she describes her brief visit to Anand Bhawan. I read it through and her references to me pleased me and fed my vanity.[506] That evening I felt more cheerful and light-hearted than usual. How little things make a difference in the dull routine of jail!

x x x x

505. (b. 1904); daughter of Marie Curie; she visited the war fronts in Africa, the Near East, Russia, Iran, China and India and wrote *Journey among Warriors* (1943).

506. "Nehru the patriot was fighting for the liberation of his country; Nehru the socialist was fighting for its modernisation. In fact he was not the champion of one single cause but a chain of causes that he visualised as closely intertwined. One was the emancipation of India. Another was anti-imperialism. A third one was anti-fascism. Last but not the least cause was anti-capitalism and the establishment of a world economy based on Marxian principles."

What is going to happen to India—to the world—to me? Where do we go in this devil dance of ours? Has all this no meaning, or is there some meaning which we cannot grasp? Some lines of Osbert Sitwell,[507] which I have read recently, stick in my mind:

Love of my life, my heart,
Where are we going?
Into what hooded dark
Is the wind blowing?
"Oh, how our footfalls die,
Alone, along the darkness burning!
Can we not turn and fly?"
"No. Time has no turning."

June 17, 1944

Darling Indu,
I have your letter of June 5—No. 66. Last evening I had a letter from Amma from Lahore. It took nearly three and a half weeks to reach me. Hindi letters are greatly delayed. Amma says that she intends sending either Rup or Bappi to Bombay at the time of your expected confinement. She is herself much too ill to travel. She asks me what I think of this suggestion. I have no particular views on the subject. It all depends on how you feel about it. If you would like to have either Rup or Bappi near you at the time tell Amma so. If you do not think it is necessary for either of them to take the trouble to come —for it is no pleasure to travel nowadays—then you might suggest this to Amma. But if you feel that Amma is really anxious to send someone I think it might be better to let her have her way. I suppose you know Chand's address—anyway I am giving it: Bharat Mansions, Flat No. 3C, Lahore.

Amma says that news has reached her of my ill-health. Tell her that this is incorrect. I have had no physical and bodily trouble and am keeping fit.

Amma also mentions that Kailas and Sheila with their two babes, Gautam and Dipa, might sail for India some time this month if they get passages. That is a big 'if' and I doubt very much if they will succeed in this for some time to come. The invasion of France has probably upset these passenger services.

507. (1892-1969), English novelist and author

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Amma also mentions that Kailas and Sheila with their two babes, Gautam and Dipa, might sail for India some time this month if they get passages. That is a big 'if' and I doubt very much if they will succeed in this for some time to come. The invasion of France has probably upset these passenger services.

507. (1892 1969), English novelist and author.

This invasion is taking place right on the spot where you and I with Mr. Shah[508] spent some days in July 1938. We were staying near Trouville—What was the name of the place? I cannot remember it.

I wrote to you—was it last week?—of the long silences in jail life. Here I have taken on a new job which interferes with the silence and gives some work to the throat. I read out the newspapers daily to Mahmud. His eyes give him a lot of trouble and newspaper reading is particularly painful and tiring for him. As a matter of fact one of his eyes does not function at all—So I decided, many months ago, to give him this relief and let him read books only which are easier for the eyes, unless the type is too small. I do not take kindly to newspapers, though I cannot easily do without them. I want naturally to know what is happening, and yet I resent giving time to reading odd bits of news which I am likely to forget a day or two later. Reading to Mahmud, I have to read not only what interests me but what I think might interest him. So this becomes a longish process and if, by any chance, Churchill has been delivering one of his long rhetorical speeches, I am quite exhausted by the time I have done with it and my throat is slightly hoarse. Anyway this is good practice for the throat or else it might grow rusty from little use.

Mahmud and I share one room. It is a big room but sometimes I think of Virginia Woolf's book: *A Room Of One's Own*[509] and of the advantages of having a room to oneself.

I note what you say about my Hindi publications issued by the Sasta Sahitya Mandal. As for Visva-Bharati and the Bengali edition of the *Letters*, I have read with some wonder and amusement the long extract from their letter which you give. Why is it that we in India are so excessively slow in doing anything? We allow matters to drift, expecting that in course of time something will happen, some solution of our difficulty will automatically appear and we shall be saved the trouble of thinking and acting. Is it that our blood-stream runs slowly in our veins and arteries? I wonder. There is something of course in not wasting energy needlessly and there is enormous waste of this kind in the world today. What a lot of purposeless rushing about there is, a-going backwards and forwards and ultimately remaining where you were.

508. Probably Popatlal Shah, a businessman in Paris.
509. It discusses fiction and stresses the importance of seeing human beings in their relation to each other and in relation to reality. It also advocates women's rights and protests against the discrimination women face.

That is action divorced from thought. But thought divorced from action is equally futile.

These and other reflections occurred to me when I read the Visva-Bharati message. I am not particularly interested in what they do about my little book. I have given them the Bengali copyright free and they have no royalties to pay. It was really a biggish gift for this book has made pots of money for other publishers—not our Bengali friend Das Gupta who sits tight on the few hundred copies he has got and does nothing about them. Several hundred thousand copies of the book have been disposed of in the U.P. & elsewhere. The English original edition was prescribed some years ago by the Calcutta University for the matriculation or some such examination.

Realising that Das Gupta was totally incapable of dealing with the book, either to his own advantage or anyone else's, I gave the Bengali copyright to Visva-Bharati. I made it clear to Krishna Kripalani that they could go ahead with it immediately, if they so chose, without waiting for Das Gupta to dispose of his remaining stock of a few hundred copies. I made this clear to Das Gupta also but I told him that he could continue to sell his own copies so long as they remained with him. He could bring out no new edition. Any person with the least intelligence or energy could have disposed of them to the booksellers within a few days at a reasonable discount. But no; Das Gupta waits for some sign from the heavens, and Visva-Bharati waits for some sign from Das Gupta. So there we are! As the heavens are not interested in making such signs we are likely to wait on and on.

Well, it really does not matter so far as I am concerned for Visva-Bharati have full authority to do what they like. What bores and irritates me is this slackness and passivity and incapacity to get a move on. Is this due to what is called the artistic temperament?

You can tell Visva-Bharati that there is no question of my approving now of their publication. I approved & gave permission long ago. They can suit their convenience. They might inform Das Gupta and suggest to him—for he appears to be a helpless person in this matter—that it might be worthwhile for him to dispose of his entire stock at a suitable discount to a Calcutta bookseller. He (Das Gupta) need not pay me any royalty on this. This will bring cash immediately to him and rid him of the burden. After Visva Bharati have brought out their edition, he will find it almost impossible to sell his higher-priced book. But what Das Gupta does or does not do should not affect Visva-Bharati's action.

Give my love to Nuri and Psyche if she is there—A bottle of honey has reached me—probably the one you sent through Betty—I sent you

personal difficulties might thus arise if Anna had to deal with Ladli Bhai. You should therefore draw upon my account with Bachhraj yourself either monthly or at longer intervals, as you choose, and make payments out of it. It will probably be better for you to draw out a lump sum—say Rs. 500/- at a time and when this is spent to draw out another similar sum. Out of this you can pay Anna and the ayah and meet other expenses of the confinement &c. You have also to spend money on books and other articles sent to me.

I have been sending Betty occasional cheques to meet expenses on my behalf.

About servants' salaries. Khaliq is right when he says that the military are paying much bigger salaries to motor drivers. But I am afraid I cannot compete with the Government of India in this matter. As a matter of fact we do not require a chauffeur at all at present. It is only because Khaliq is an old servant, for whose welfare I consider myself partly responsible, that I keep him on. I do not think it is right to push out old servants simply because we happen to have no present use for them. At the same time I do not want to come in the way of Khaliq's advancement. I shall be glad if he gets on in life. So if he can get better employment elsewhere, I have no objection at all to his taking it. He can always come back to me when he wants to or has no other work. Therefore you can explain this to him and tell him that I am afraid I cannot manage a higher salary for him than 32/- a month at present. He will get this as long as he is with us. He can try to better it elsewhere if he can. I notice that in Ladli Bhai's list he is paid 27/-. This should be increased anyhow to 32/- as I said before. If he chooses to work elsewhere, then of course this stops.

I mentioned Khaliq's daughter to you in a previous letter and suggested that something might be paid for her education occasionally—I think this might be made a regular payment of Rs. 10/- a month. This has nothing to do with Khaliq's remaining with us or not. The amount should be paid even if Khaliq seeks service elsewhere. Indirectly it will be of help to Khaliq's family but it should be clearly stated that it is meant for the girl's education. I do not want this payment of Rs. 10/- a month to be made through Ladli Bhai as this will introduce an element of confusion in his servants' list. I should like you or Feroze to take charge of it and pay Khaliq directly every month or at less frequent intervals. So much for Khaliq & his daughter—I hope I have made myself clear.

As for the rest of the list I have nothing special to say except this that in view of the rise in prices and heavier cost of living whenever it is considered necessary some increments should be made—This requires

no reference to me. I do not want our servants to live in perpetual want or to run up big accounts at the *banias* which they cannot pay off. Nor should we wait for demands from them. The addition of small sums to their salaries or allowances does not make much difference to me but it makes a lot of difference to their lives. Generally speaking, the war has not resulted in any marked increase in wages of unskilled labour, except in some big cities or where war work is being carried on. It has indeed added to the unemployment of casual labour as well as of some classes of domestic servants. Many middle class families who used to keep a number of servants cannot keep them now or have to reduce their number. Hence the market rate of unskilled domestic servants has not risen although prices have gone up tremendously. This puts them in a terrible fix and the alternative to inadequate wages is unemployment. Hence some attention should be paid to prevailing conditions, prices &c. and suitable increments made whenever considered necessary.

Tulsi is not an unskilled worker. He could I suppose command a higher salary elsewhere if he tried for it. It would not be an easy matter for us to get as good a cook at his present salary. I notice that he is not getting any dearness allowance. If, therefore, the question of an increment for him arises, I think it should be favourably considered either in the shape of salary or dearness allowance.

I have not made any specific proposals as it is difficult to do so from here without knowing more about actual conditions. Any change naturally affects other people also. I should therefore like you to put my viewpoint to Ladli Bhai in regard to these monthly salaries and leave it to him to give effect to it whenever he thinks it desirable—No reference to me is necessary for such increments.

About pensions. I am glad Bhola is getting 20/-. If, because of illness, he wants some extra help, you should always give it. But this has nothing to do with his monthly allowance and need not be referred to Ladli Bhai. It will be occasional help.

Abul Hasan is another very old servant—engaged long before I was born—He must be pretty old now. I think his pension should be increased from Rs. 10/- to Rs. 15/-. He has only a few years to live and I should like to give him some comfort in his old age. He has a patch of land also from which he earns something.

Some of the pensioners, it appears, get trivial and rather absurd sums, for instance the old *Bhishti*, Jumna, Behari's mother and Asghar Ali's wife or widow. They are all old and feeble and incapable of work—They should be given something more: thus the *Bhishti*+3=8/-; Jumna +2=9/-; Behari's mother+3=6/-; Ashgar Ali's wife+3=7/-.

These increments in pensions (Abul Hasan's and others) should be included in Ladli Bhai's list.

Wahid's son, I notice, gets Rs. 10/- a month. This was fixed more than ten years ago for his educational expenses. He ought to be earning money now. But the family was a large one and possibly still requires help. Anyway some inquiry might be made. Ask Feroze to inquire from Muzaffar Husain of Allahabad. Muzaffar knows the family well.

I was very glad to learn from your letter that *Puphi's* testamentary affairs have been settled out of court. *Puphi* has so far not written to me about this.

The honey you sent is very good. The best I have had here.

I think I wrote to you that I have received Eve Curie's *Journey among Warriors*. Also Kate Mitchell's *India*. Yesterday I got some books sent by Betty: *The Trial of Mussolini*[513] by Cassius; Tendulkar's *Thirty Months in Russia*[514] in Hindi & Marathi, and L.C. Jain's *Indian Economy during the War*.[515]

You might note down the following books which are worth getting:

1) Leland Stowe's: *They Shall Not Sleep*.
2) Agnes Smedley's latest book about China: *The Battle Hymn of China*.
3) H.J. Laski: *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*.
4) Khwaja Ahmad Abbas: *And One Did Not Come Back*. (Bombay) (About our medical mission to China)

It is quite likely that Abbas will send me his new book. He usually sends them.

I am glad Bapu is progressing. I quite agree with Jivraj and Gilder about the nature cure place. Quite apart from the virtues of nature cure, I could never go to a place which is called a 'Healthatorium'. I visited the place once and was not impressed.

I wrote to *Nani* a few days ago to Lahore.

Love

Your loving
Papu

513. An imaginary trial of Mussolini by a British court and jury. He was found guilty of being an enemy of the human race and a chief criminal responsible for the war.
514. It deals with the social and economic transformation of Russia and describes scenes of Soviet life as observed by the author in 1937.
515. The text of the author's six lectures delivered at the University of Patna in 1942.

June 26, Monday

My blood pressure today 125 Systolic; 83 Diastolic; 42 Pulse pressure.

July 1. 1944

Darling Indu,
I have your letters dated 21st and 22nd June—Nos. 69 & 70. It is extraordinary how casual people are. Jivraj is a methodical and careful person who can be relied upon to do a job he has undertaken. And yet even he seems to have suffered from a lapse. As for Purandare I hardly expected any kind of smartness from him. He is good at his work but his looks and ways of dealing with his patients give little comfort. I hope that you have fixed up everything during your visit to Bombay. I do not know Shirodkar[516] — never heard of him. That of course is not against him for my knowledge and experience of the world of doctors and surgeons is strictly limited. Obviously in a city like Bombay there must be many competent gynaecologists. Purandare is good and experienced but he is not the only one. The main thing to do is to fix up *definitely with someone and have the assurance that you can refer* to him whenever necessary.

It certainly will not be right for you to return to Allahabad for the confinement. Not that I think badly of the facilities available in Allahabad. But obviously Bombay offers many additional facilities and it is safer to be near these. You have already spent some months round about there and it is worthwhile continuing for another two months or so. There is really nothing to worry about. Your present health is excellent and this is the basic factor. For the rest one should take every precaution during these months and not worry. It is Purandare's casualness that must be irritating. If something definite is fixed up then you simply carry on normally and almost forget about doctors. During the seventh month some extra care is usually called for. Do not worry about the extra expense. Often that saves trouble and expense later.

I was amused to learn that Raja had entrusted himself to Bapu's care and treatment. I am not particularly enamoured of his methods of treatment and yet there is much in them especially for an asthmatic case like Raja's. I am firmly convinced that one's health depends on

516. Dr. V.N. Shirodkar (1899 1971); a well known obstetrician and gynaecologist of Bombay; Professor of the Grant Medical College, Bombay, 1935-55.

one's way of living, food, exercise, mental occupations &c. far more than on medicine, though medicine is certainly useful occasionally. Bombay flat life is far removed from any natural life—it is cut off from nature, fresh air and exercise—& there is a tendency to lounge about. But then, as you say, Raja is so used to this existence in a Bombay flat that he feels bored elsewhere. The change ought to do him good if he can stand it.

I should like to have news of Rafi Ahmad[517] and Raghunandan Saran. Both have been ill for a long time. Could you ask Feroze to find out?

Mahmud's son, Said, has been unwell for some time and some lung trouble is suspected. He has recently gone to Bhowali though whether he will stay there or not for any length of time I do not know. I can understand Hamida not answering your letter for she must feel shy about writing in English. As a matter of fact she can write rather broken and incorrect English. Said has been eager to get *Hogben's* book—*Mathematics for the Million*—and ever since he has heard that I am having it sent to him, he has repeatedly enquired about it. I am therefore surprised at his not answering your letter. Perhaps there was some delay in the letter reaching him. I think you might send the book to him to the Chapra address, that is if it is convenient for you. If the book is lying about somewhere in Allahabad and you cannot easily reach it, then do not trouble yourself over it. Better give a full address: Said-ur-Rahman, Dr. Syed Mahmud's house, Haque Manzil, Chapra, B.N.W. Ry.—Bihar.

It will be a good thing if you can get that very wonderful nurse and midwife whom Aryanayakam[518] recommends. He is a fairly good judge.

I have glanced through Eve Curie's book—read about 50 pages at the beginning and the chapter about her visit to Anand Bhawan. I rather liked it and am going to carry on with it. It is of course just good reporting but that reporting is done well. She writes smoothly and has the knack of observing little things which help to make a picture vivid. Being a reporter's account the book is likely to date. Perhaps I like the book because I rather liked her and then she has so many nice things to say about me! The personal touch counts.

I am surprised at your asking me how I get my foreign periodicals. I was under the impression that they were all sent to Anand Bhawan

517. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai was arrested on 12 May 1942 under the D.I.R. and had since been kept in the Bareilly Central Prison.

518. E.W. Aryanayakam, of Sri Lanka, was secretary to Rabindranath Tagore for some time and later an associate of Mahatma Gandhi; worked in the Hindustani Talimi Sangh at Wardha; died in 1968.

and then forwarded, *via* the Bombay Secretariat, to me. I cannot tell how they come as they reach me without their covers. Once a *Reader's Digest* arrived with a cover and I was a little surprised to notice that it was addressed to me C/o Home Department, Government of Bombay. I wondered how the *Reader's Digest* people got hold of this address. Probably, I thought, Walsh had given it. Walsh has fixed up with all these American periodicals on my behalf. That is convenient for me as he can pay the subscriptions out of my royalties, if he has any. It is possible that he has given the Bombay Govt.'s address to all of them. I am getting quite a number, though many numbers are missing, and I do not get them in proper order. I have been getting *Life, Time, Foreign Affairs, Pacific Affairs, Asia* (odd numbers), *Reader's Digest, Nation, New Republic, Amerasia.* There are also other odd papers which come to me without my having subscribed to them—such as *The Jewish Frontier.* I have never read so many American periodicals more or less regularly before, because I could not afford the time.

Does Feroze get *Fortune* and do you get another copy of *Asia?*

The three books you mention—one sent by Pan for me—might be forwarded to me.

I have been reading in the English papers references to the books of L. H. Myers[519] who died recently. Two of his books are especially commended. These are novels dealing with Akbar's time in India. That is an interesting period and I should like to read these books. Probably you will not be able to get them—they were published originally round about 1940 & 1941. However I am giving these names for you to note them:

L. H. Myers	:	*The Root and the Flower*
—Do—	:	*The Pool of Vishnu*

Bombay has no doubt larger and better bookshops than other places but Poona has a place—The International Book Depot, or some such name—which often keeps books not available elsewhere.

I think you are right in not encouraging Rupa or Bappi to come for your confinement. That would mean trouble for them and no advantage to you.

519. (1881-1944); a philosophical novelist. *The Root and the Flower* deals with the corruption of the worldly and the false intellectual and *The Pool of Vishnu* contends that in every man there is a will to spiritual life and a touch of honesty in his motives.

We have had some rain again after a long gap.
Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 68.

4.7.1944[520]

Darling Betty,
Indu writes to me that Raja and you are taking the children to the Gwalior School and will probably go to Delhi from there. I don't exactly know where you are going and perhaps this letter will miss you. I think you have decided wisely about the children. Both for their health and mental development the companionship of other children, the discipline of school life, and plenty of open air and games will be good, I wish I could see Harsha and Ajit now. They must have grown and changed so much during the last two years. Give them my love and tell them that when I come back I am looking forward to seeing them bright and healthy and strong.

I was amused to learn that Raja has put himself under Bapu's treatment or rather his general direction about the nature-cure method. That was a brave step to take but it was a wise one for Raja. I am not exactly a faddist about nature-cure and I certainly do not advise many of those who carry these methods to extreme limits. But I do believe in allowing natural methods full play and putting one's body in tune with nature, in so far as this can be done in present circumstances. Our lives tend to grow more and more artificial and many of our ailments are due to our manner of living. Obviously we cannot go back to the jungle or the field but we can try to make some adjustments which help in restoring our bodily equilibrium. I imagine a course of nature-cure treatment will do good to Raja. It will be boring but it should not be difficult for Raja to stick to it for some weeks. Asthma ought to be peculiarly susceptible to this treatment.

I have received a number of books, some from you and some from Indu. I can't make out which ones were sent by you and which came

520. File No: 3590/H/II-2, Maharashtra Government Records; Police Commissioner's Office.

from Indu, as they all reach me in a mixed bundle. *Probably the following* came from you:—

Eve Curie : *Journey among Warriors*
Kate Mitchell : *India*
The Trial of Mussolini by Cassius
Tendulkar's book on Russia in Marathi and Hindi
L. C. Jain—*Indian Economy during the War*

Thank you for sending them—I have not been reading much lately, that is books. Foreign periodicals come in large numbers now and they take up a good deal of time. Also I have been doing some writing work. 50 books have accumulated. I shall go back to them soon.

Are you going to Delhi? You will meet many of our friends there. Give them my love.

I am anxious to know how Raghunandan Saran is getting on. He has been ill for some years now and this business of having a weak heart or whatever it is, is very loathsome and persistent. I do not know where Nandan is but I suppose he is in Delhi.

June was a dry month here, more or less. There has been some rain during the last few days.

Love to you and Raja. I hope you are keeping well.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

July 5. Wednesday

We have now read most of the correspondence that passed between Bapu and the Govt. Not quite all yet as the newspapers have not given everything. A full cyclostyled record has reached Vallabhbhai but I have not read it so far. My first impressions confirmed. Generally a feeling of satisfaction but mixed with occasional irritation—Why should it be necessary to have to explain what he said and wrote previously—and at such great length? Because of nonviolence and the metaphysical aspects of satyagraha, a certain almost theological element of casuistry creeps in sometimes.

But this approach apart, Bapu has done a good job and he had laboured hard at it. He has cleared many cobwebs and explained his own thinking and action. In that thinking there is that inevitable tug-of-war between moral considerations and practical problems, and occasionally there is a contradiction which cannot be resolved, at least by me.

But such contradictions are, I suppose, inherent in life's problems. What appears odd to us is his manner of approach.

Suppose he had been as explicit in 1942 as he is now—what a lot of difference this might have made! Not that he has said anything new. Much of all this he had told us previously but the public did not know it. It is after all a question of emphasis.

By this correspondence and his last letter[521] to Wavell, he has made it very clear how anxious he is to have a settlement, and yet he has stuck to his fundamentals. Wavell's refusal to meet him is now so obviously wrong from any point of view except the imperialist one of crushing Congress, that reactions in India & abroad are bound to be against it.

The position is that the Congress has been cleared of many false charges and the basic conflict between nationalism & imperialism has been brought to the surface. That cannot be resolved just yet and practical solutions are hardly possible now.

We carry on in our respective prisons and detention camps. Probably the next three weeks will clear up the situation even more and Bapu may be back in prison—Yet somehow I cannot see this kind of thing continuing for long.

Yesterday my weight was 130 lbs. I have been going up slowly—Incidentally yesterday's weighment was the hundredth since we came here—.

I am carrying on with my writing work. Have reached the Mutiny period—p. 558 of the MSS. I fear this is growing longer than it should. I wanted it to be more concise. It seems that I shall reach p. 750 or so before I end it here—and then I might add to it on discharge.

July 8, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have had no letter from you since I wrote last, but that was almost expected as you had gone to Bombay. I hope everything was fixed up satisfactorily there.

521. Dated 9 April 1943, it stated: "... in dealing with Congressmen and others, the Government have combined the prosecutor, judge and jailor in the same person and this made proper defence impossible on the part of the accused... India today is one vast prison containing four hundred million souls. You are its sole custodian. The Government prisons are prisons within this prison. Unless there is a change of heart, view, and policy on the part of the Government I am quite content to remain your prisoner."

Tomorrow is a kind of special day for us here. We complete one hundred weeks—700 days—and incidentally twenty three months. It so happens that is Sunday also, the day we arrived here. These round figures somehow fix special and red-letter days, although they have no particular importance, for every day is more or less alike.

We have a little rain occasionally, not much, but enough to keep us cool. There has been a lack of rain this season. I hope this does not apply to other parts of the country, for bad crops would mean a terrible addition to starvation and misery.

There are some books which I want to return but they are not likely to interest you—for instance Mullick's book on philosophy. Instead of sending them to you it would be better if they were sent direct to Anand Bhawan. Who shall I address them to? Feroze or Ladli Bhai?

Puphi has sent me photographs of Chand and Tara and Betty has sent pictures of Harsha and Ajit. They are all good.

This letter is a brief one for a change, and for this relief you will no doubt feel grateful It is my No. 69.

Love

From your loving
Papu

July 14. Friday

All manner of dramatic developments have taken place. Gandhiji of course being at the back of them. First came the Rajaji-Jinnah correspondence[522]—a stunner, and then Bapu's long statement to the *News Chronicle* correspondent.[523]

What have been the reactions of all this on me and on others here? They vary; Maulana has been feeling depressed and annoyed, others

522. In this correspondence published on 10 July 1944, Rajagopalachari put forward a formula that if the Muslim League endorsed the demand for independence and cooperated with the Congress in forming a provisional government during the war, the Congress would agree to a future plan according to which the Muslim majority areas could be demarcated through a plebiscite.

523. On 9 July 1944, Mahatma Gandhi said that he had "no intention of offering civil disobedience today," because that would "embarrass the British Government"; he would be satisfied with a national government in full control of the civil administration "and was interested in seeing the Viceroy with a view to help and not hinder Allied war efforts."

also, or some of them, are put out to some extent, though not much. Some are in the habit of accepting everything that Bapu says or does.

As for me, I liked the bold way in which Bapu has approached both these problems. I dislike his indirect manner; I dislike also some of the details suggested and agreed to by him. On the whole, however, I have not felt any depression as I usually do when things go wrong. Perhaps it is just relief at something having been done to break up the impasse which tied us all up.

Analysing both the proposals on the merits there is nothing basic that I find myself in disagreement with, though I do wish much had been put differently. Anyway, I have been singularly little stirred by these developments. Somehow everything seems small in comparison with the big things to come.

An inevitable thought was : Does this mean an early release for us? This perturbed me. I do not want to go out with my book unfinished. I want another month, preferably six weeks. I am almost sure we shall be here for much longer than this—But still one never knows and so I am giving more time to writing—I have been just three months and a day over it—have written 648 manuscript pages. I am likely to write another 150 pages.

x x x x

Today we all received a fresh order from Govt. confirming our detention. This because six months since the last order ended today, or was it yesterday?

July 15, 1944

Darling Indu,

Yesterday I received your letter No. 71 of the 9th July from Bombay. I hope this letter of mine will reach you in Poona before you leave for Bombay again on the 19th.

Yes, I had news of you from the *Puphis*. I am glad you have fixed up with Shirodkar. As a matter of fact I had come to the conclusion some time ago that Purandare was not satisfactory—not because of the lack of competence for he knows his job, but because of his sloppiness and casualness. I dislike this kind of thing greatly. Perhaps also he is too old to be smart. I did not write this to you as I did not want to interfere with arrangements already made. Now that you have made

new arrangements with Shirodkar I feel much more at ease. It is not clear from your letter whether you propose to return to Poona after each visit to Shirodkar.

I wrote to *Puphi* (the elder one) day before yesterday and, would you believe it?, I dated my letter 20th July instead of the 13th. And this after consulting the calendar! I remembered that it was Thursday and just skipped a week. This shows how one loses the sense of time in prison. A mistake of a day is frequent enough and normal, but a whole week is very unusual. It can only mean either absorption in work or an approach to dotage.

Another instance. I apply oil rarely to my head—usually about once a fortnight. The other day, in an attempt to do so, I put on a fair quantity of undiluted Dettol to the head! It was only after a little while that I discovered something was wrong. Again, later I reversed the process and put some oil in a tumbler of water for the purpose of gargling! Pretty bad, isn't it? Though not quite as bad as it looks for I keep the two in very small unlabelled phials and a mistake is possible. Still I was put out by this succession of lapses. I remembered reading in an American magazine recently about a chaplain who began to forget little things he had to do. He could not remember the number of the prescribed hymn in chapel; he forgot some engagements. Thinking that he might be suffering from overstrain, he consulted his doctor. There was apparently nothing wrong. However the investigation proceeded, various X-ray photographs were taken, and a faint shadow or some other indication was noticed in the region of the brain. It was decided to operate and the beginnings of a small tumour were removed. He recovered rapidly and got back his memory; there were no further lapses.

All this does not mean that I am suffering from a softening of the brain or any other ailment. I think my mind and brain are in very good condition, and as for my body it is as fit as it has ever been. I continue my exercises & especially the *asans* and breathing ones. I am convinced that, short of accidents and deep mental shock, physical health can be maintained by anyone who cares to do so and has some sense and knowledge of the body.

Some days ago I received three bottles of Mahabaleshwar honey either from you or from Betty. It looks good and is rather swanky as each bottle bears the name of a different flower—rose, *akara*, *pangla*. What is the *akara* and the *pangla*? I do not know them. But I had a shock when I noticed the price marked on one of the bottles. This is Rs. 7/4 and the bottle is a small one, not containing more than 1¼ lb. It is scandalous paying so much for honey, especially in these days. Please do

not send any more at this or like price. Tell Betty also. Anyway this honey will last us a long time as we use it with all due care and reverence.

I am sorry Raja had a relapse. This combination of asthma and other ailments is very troublesome. A course of treatment that may do good to one of them, may at the same time be injurious to the other. The only thing to do is build up bodily resistance. Even that is made difficult by repeated attacks of asthma.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 70.

July 22, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter No. 72 dated 15th July from Poona. I suppose you have paid your second visit to Shirodkar in Bombay and returned to Poona—Hence this letter goes to Poona—I intend sending you a few books on Monday next. Among these there will be two or three of Betty's which you can return to her. They bear her name.

The six new books that you have sent have not yet reached me—I suppose they will come in the ordinary course. Meanwhile, a bundle of Communist literature has been sent to me by Puran Chand Joshi. There are two or three books and a large number of pamphlets—some published in Moscow, some in Bombay. They deal mostly with the war in Russia. Will you convey my thanks to Joshi if you can get in touch with him. Altogether I have received 21 books and pamphlets from him.

Mention of books reminds me that August 18th is *bari Puphi's* birthday. I should like you to choose a number of good books as a birthday gift to her on my behalf. Of course if you can choose a more suitable present for her, do so by all means. My mind runs to books only.

I like de la Mare's poem which you have sent me. Amazingly musical he is and imaginative, living on the borderland of fact and fantasy, with a secret nostalgic longing for some elusive feeling or emotion. I like him not only because of his good writing but also because he

evokes sympathetic responses in me. I feel in tune with him and his mood—and that, I suppose, is as good a test as any of successful writing. His lines linger in the memory and often take one out of the present into a world of imaginative existence.

I know Barbara Hartland quite well—that is to say I have seen her many times during the past seven or eight years. She used to work in the Friends' Hospital in Itarsi and whenever I passed through Itarsi, and that was pretty often, she was almost always at the station to meet me. I did not send her any previous intimation of my passing through, but she managed to find out about it. When going to Wardha we had to change at Itarsi and spend some hours there. Someone from the station usually went and informed the Friends' Hospital people and Barbara and sometimes others also trouped up at the station. On several occasions I went and had a bath and a meal at their house. She is a very earnest, enthusiastic kind of person, as Quakers often are, and a hard worker I think you have decided rightly in not asking her to leave her present work. To run a children's home in Bengal is just the kind of work she will do well and it would be a pity to draw her away

I suppose you saw the eclipse of the sun last Thursday. It was a bad day, cloudy and with an occasional drizzle of rain. But we managed to have many glimpses of the crescent sun looking like a two-day-old moon. At least 90% or possibly even 95% of the sun's disc was covered at the height of the eclipse. Because of the clouds there was no sudden darkening as usually occurs during such eclipses, leading to much consternation among the birds. I remember almost a total eclipse which I saw when I was a small boy—probably 11 or 12 years old. The total eclipse took place some distance away from Allahabad, at Buxar in Behar, and many scientists and astronomers went there from all parts of the world. Such a total eclipse lasts only a second or two but that fraction of time is rather unique, for the whole disc of the sun is covered and some kind of rays and emanations emerge from the edges. Einstein's theory of the curvature of light rays, mathematically arrived at, was confirmed by observation and photographs of a total eclipse of the sun. This took place in Java I think. Sometimes, it so happens, that all the big astronomers foregather at the appointed place, ready with their instruments and special cameras, all tensely waiting for that mystic second, and then a cloud floats by and covers the sun and the moon and makes observation impossible. Rather like those tensely expected moments in life when we hope for so much, and then the moment comes and passes and life has eluded us again. The gods laugh making fun of the petty hopes and ambitions of poor mortals.

I presume now with the development of aircraft and helicopters, it should be possible to overcome this disability of clouds screening the sun at the right moment.

One rather odd and unexpected thing we saw during the eclipse. This was a huge, faintly rainbow-like halo round the sun, making a perfect circle. I suppose this effect was due to the rain-laden clouds.

The Chinese tea you have sent will be welcome. It is a pleasant change and a diversion for us with its golden colour and soothing aroma and faint but delightful taste. Over a year ago *bari Puphi* sent me a large packet which had come from China. We used it sparingly, once a week on a specially appointed day, after dinner and made it last nearly a year. It brought us memories of other places and other days.

I am glad Bul is out and is looking well and as smart as ever. Give her my love. Why has Mridu not profited by her stay in Kashmir? I think she worries too much.

Our garden has been neglected for many months; chiefly my fault as my mind turned to other things. We have now put in a number of seedlings suitable for the rainy season. Probably by the end of August they will flower.

Love

Your loving
Papu

I am returning the dividend warrant for Rs. 40/- after endorsement. You can send this on to Bachhraj.

This is my letter No. 71.

P

26.7.1944

Darling Betty,

I have had two letters from you since I wrote last. They are dated 3rd and 14th July, the latter from New Delhi. Meanwhile, Raja and you have been to Gwalior and put the boys at school there. The first few days after you left them must have been hard for you and them. And yet, if the school is of the right sort, they will soon adapt themselves to their new surroundings and get used to a wider cooperative life than they could have in the pleasanter but more restricted life of home.

Children adapt themselves easily, it is only grown-ups who find some difficulty in doing so. For a sensitive boy like Harsha the change, though harder to begin with, is perhaps more beneficial. For otherwise the real change from homelife, which comes inevitably at a later stage, is more difficult to bear. So many of our children, used to homelife only, become rather unfitted for the rough and tumble of the world and have to suffer for this. Education must provide a gradual transition to wider spheres of activity and new experiences. Intellectual training, important enough, cannot take the place of this growth through personal experience of others. There is another advantage. Home then becomes a place to look forward to, a sanctum where one can retire from time to time, and not merely a normal background which one takes for granted. The alternation of home and school helps to create a balance, one setting off the other.

I was happy to get the brief letters from Harsha and Ajit. I would write to them myself but each such letter counts and we may write only two a week. So, for the present, I am not writing but I may do so later. Tell them that I liked their letters and am pleased that they are at the Gwalior School. Tell them also that I went to school far away from home, so far that I could not even come back home during my holidays. I met many new people in school, made friends and learnt to look after myself. I became healthy and strong of body and that is why I keep well now. They must also become strong and healthy and know how to look after themselves and others. It is nearly two years since I have seen them and when we meet next they will have to tell me about their school life, what they do there, what games they play, what friends they have made. And then I shall tell them of my school days.

Harsha's and Ajit's photographs reached me some time ago. They are good and each brings out the nature of the boy. Harsha is pensive, introspective; Ajit a bit of an extrovert, as boys should be, and full of self-confidence.

Now that the boys have gone to school, what have you done with Agnes?[524]

Harsha, in his letter, says that in December "we might go to Agra or Kashmir"! Is this just a slip of the pen or have you actually thought of going to Kashmir in winter? It is lovely there always and I like winter and snow. But I cannot imagine Raja enjoying himself in a temperature below zero.

524. A nurse.

Indu, I suppose, is in Bombay now and staying on there. My last letter to her was addressed to Poona. A parcel of books, containing some of yours and Raja's, was sent to her care of you.

I was glad to have news of Badshah Khan, Khan Sahib and Yunus. Send my love to Yunus when you write to him.

Love to you and Raja.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

July 29, 1944

Darling Indu,

My last letter was sent to the Poona address. After I had despatched it I got yours of the 19th July — No. 73 — in which you say that you intended staying on in Bombay.

I have received the following books from you:

1 *Mathematical Recreations* by M. Kraitchik
2 Hogben : *Interglossa*
3 Nym Wales : *New China*
4 Osbert Lancaster : *More Pocket Cartoons*
5 *Beatrice the Ballerina*
6 *New Kashmir*
7 *Correspondence with Mr. Gandhi* (Govt. publication)

and I have sent you to Bombay:

1 Carl Crow : *The Story of Confucius*
2 Croce : *History as the Story of Liberty*
3 Mullick : *The Real & the Negative*
4 –Do– : *The Individual & the Group*
5 Thompson : *The Making of the Indian Princes*
6 Burchett : *Wingate's Phantom Army*
7 Koestler : *Arrival & Departure*
8 Brock : *The Mountains Wait*
9 Ilya Ehrenburg : *Russia at War*
10 Karaka : *Chungking Diary*
11 –Do– : *We Never Die*
12 *Colour Bar*
13 Beverly Nichols : *The Living & the Dead*
14 Mead & Chattopadhyaya : *The Upanishads*

15 Gibran : *The Prophet*
16 Agarwala : *Hindu-Muslim Riots*
17 Tendulkar : रस मे ३० महीने. In Hindi
18 *Merchant Seamen and the War*: I.L.O.

And *I.L.O. Review—Visva Bharati* & other periodicals &c. A separate bundle of periodicals has also been sent. The following further books &c. are now being sent :

19 Louis Fischer : *A Week with Gandhi*
20 Eve Curie : *Journey among Warriors*
21 *Beatrice the Ballerina*
22 Lancaster : *More Pocket Cartoons*
23 Kate Mitchell : India
24 *Mudra-Rakshasa*

And *Hindusthan Quarterly* & *Visva-Bharati.*

I liked the two books of cartoons. Several of these books are Betty's —Please return them to her.

Eve Curie's book was not so good as I expected it to be. It is diffused and too much of day-to-day reporting. But it makes interesting reading, especially the part dealing with Russia. *Wingate's Phantom Army* has a brief reference towards the end to Moti Kathju. He died just when they were on the point of reaching India on their way back.

I decided, not without an effort, to read Karaka's books. How astonishingly silly he is. His ideas about most things are peculiar but his knowledge of Indian conditions is fantastic. He means well I suppose and so I am prepared to take an indulgent view, but why write when there is such awful emptiness in the mind and ignorance of subject? Probably he would be in his element if he wrote about Bombay racing or nightclubs.

If you want to give an average person a headache commend to him Benedetto Croce's book. It is full of learning and thought and makes the reader think also. But what a jumble of semi metaphysical speculations and ideas about history—after condemning metaphysics and the like. I am glad I read it but it was no easy journey.

You are right about our changing views of age. These really derive from an important psychological truth. We are always apt to make ourselves the measure of things— almost all things. As individuals we judge others by our own standards—physical, mental, moral. If we are tall, others appear short and stumpy. If we succeed in life we are likely to consider those who do not as fools or inefficients. Nationally, we are equally apt to consider our country as the standard of measurement and other countries appear odd and foolish. Our religion, our philosophy, our ways of life—everything seems natural and in the

proper order of things because we have been used to them from our childhood. In the old days, when communications were very limited, this exclusiveness was much more marked and there was a strong tendency to consider all foreigners as barbarians because their ways were different. The Chinese, the old Indians, the Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Iranians always referred to foreigners as barbarians, as people living outside the pale of real civilization. Now that process has been reversed and the Europeans and Americans, because of their obvious material progress, are convinced that they are the elect and others are backward races, decadent or rather primitive. Within the European group, each country considers itself the chosen one and the others not so favoured. Travel and contacts with other countries and peoples help a little to get over this narrowness, but not much, for each individual and group has an amazing capacity to live in its own shell, and the barriers of the mind are much harder to get over physical differences. And so we are all apt to spot the mote in the other's eye and ignore the beam in our own.

I was amused to read about the मूर्ति. It will be welcome in Anand Bhawan and can sit on its old perch in the peepal tree for as long as it likes. The tree itself is a very old one and shows definite signs of age, but it will anyway survive all of us.

I had a note two days ago from *Puphi* from Calcutta. The news she gave me about Mehr Taj's engagement shocked me. I had read about this—or was it her marriage?—in some newspaper but I knew nothing about the other party. Vaguely the name was familiar and I thought he might be Yunus's elder brother,[525] one of them. It struck me then that, if so, there must be a considerable difference in age between the two. Also that it was hardly likely that he was still a bachelor; perhaps he was a widower. But all this was guesswork and I knew nothing about it for certain. I did not like it as I felt sure that Mehr Taj would probably not fit in. Anyway it was no business of mine. Now *Puphi* writes that she has heard from some common friend that Mehr Taj's fiance is 55 years old and is already married. Whether he belongs to Yunus's family or not, she does not say. This information, if true, does make matters much worse and I am greatly put out. *Puphi* is much agitated and has written to Ghani and others.

You asked me about our garden. I must tell you about an entirely private affair of my own—a kind of window decoration. This is not a window-box, but a creeper growing out of a bottle. I do not know

525. Yahya Khan who settled in Pakistan after the partition of India.

the name of the creeper. It has green leaves with yellowish white patches. No flowers so far. It grows at the rate of about a foot a month. I have had it now for over six months and it goes right across my window and back again, trained along thin pieces of string. It is a delightful decoration for a window. At first the leaves were small and the growth rather slow. Then I started adding a fertiliser-tablet to the water in the bottle and immediately the leaves doubled in size and developed a richer colour. Three or four-inch-long aerial roots are now coming out. I change the water of the bottle once a week.

Here are the names of two books which you might note down for purchase when they are available:

Indigo[526] by Christine Weston (Collins, London 10/6). This is a novel about India.

The Mirror of the Past[527] by K. Zilliacus (Gollancz 7/6).

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 72.

August 5, 1944 Saturday

Three weeks since I wrote last in this journal. Three weeks of growing perturbation and mental distress. I wrote then that I was not put out at all by various developments and the two proposals Bapu had made, though I disagreed with much that he had said and the manner of saying and doing. Well, I take all that back. I am very much put out, angered and out of temper. The floods of statements, interviews,

526 The book gives an account of how the son of a French indigo planter and his two friends—the son of an Indian barrister and the son of a British army officer—who met in the "innocence and generosity of childhood" and were drawn into different paths of life, moved in increasing misunderstanding at cross purposes. The story brings out the clash of western and eastern ideas in India.

527. *The Mirror of the Past Let it Reflect the Future.* The book seeks to show from the history of the foreign policy of the great powers, especially Britain, from 1900 to 1930, the danger of international anarchy and to stress the need for a world government.

That very expensive honey you sent is not particularly good. The previous consignment, which you yourself extracted from the comb, was far better.

So you did not see the eclipse of the sun. You did not miss much, and yet one likes to see these unusual occurrences and they become landmarks in the dull routine of our lives. I do not believe in most taboos, certainly not in those associated with eclipses, and my own tendency is to break them—But if one feels that way it is best to avoid doing anything which is associated in our minds with ill-luck. Betty, or Chitti as you call her, seems to attach considerable importance to taboos. I should have thought that there was so much misfortune and ill-luck in the world that anything that we might or might not do would make little difference. The world certainly will not be affected, but it is true that we ourselves might be affected by our own beliefs and apprehensions.

I am sorry you are having difficulty in obtaining the most ordinary necessities. It is scandalous that you should have to pay Rs. 35/- for the nipples for a baby's feeding bottle. The black market, I suppose, is a symbol of much that is black and dark and gloomy.

It seems rather absurd to try to control prices in such a way so as to drive those articles from the open market and force a person either to do without them or to pay outrageous prices for them. I see in the newspapers huge long lists of articles with their controlled prices marked opposite their names. I suppose that means that those articles have disappeared and lie somewhere hidden for secret sale. What is the black market? The same persons, I presume, who sell goods in public.

I hope you will remember to send a birthday gift on my behalf to *bari Puphi* for August 18th.

After your confinement if all goes well, as I am sure it will, how long will you have to stay in Bombay? I suppose about three or four weeks. Bombay has horrid weather in October and the sooner you get out of the place the better. Allahabad will be delightful then.

I was glad to have news of Rafi. I am very fond of him and admire him in many ways—

I am at present reading, for the second time, Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. I read it first I think about twenty years ago. It is a mighty book both in size and content. War and Peace—war, one can understand though one may regret it, peace one hopes for and dreams about. But this world and all of us seem to drift into a strange condition which is neither war nor peace—a kind of unreal existence in an unreal world. It reminds me of the story of Trishanku in old Indian mythology. Trishanku having become very powerful wanted to storm the citadel of the gods. The gods, as is their way, got frightened and were unable

to check him. So they went to higher powers and sought their help. The result was that they succeeded in stopping Trishanku but could not wholly defeat him or send him back. So old Trishanku hung between heaven and earth, and there I suppose he is still suspended.

Love

Your loving
Papu

August 12, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter No. 75 of August 2nd.

Since writing to you last week we have celebrated the second anniversary of our arrival here. Two years! A big part of one's life concentrated in one place—the same people, the same surroundings, the same routine.

Gradually one fits into it and all that has happened previously becomes a distant memory, rather unreal, a vague stretch with a number of prominent landmarks. There is a sensation of seeing things in a dream, but which is the dream, the present or the past, one does not quite know. For the present also has a certain dream-like quality, an absence of sharp outlines, something that one cannot fully grasp. This present will also fade away some day and then the other dream will become the reality of the moment. So we live two lives like those who have developed split personalities and jump from one life to another. When the next jump comes for me I shall take sometime to wake up to the new life.

We had the Chinese tea you sent us as part of our celebration. It was different from the previous lot which *Puphi* had sent last year and not so good. That had been chrysanthemum tea and we had got used to its gentle flavour and soothing effect. I suppose this present lot is the usual kind of Chinese tea—You need not send any more of it for the present tin will last sometime.

This is your last month and I suppose you will find it a little trying and your mind will be in a state of expectation. It is curious how the most normal and ordinary processes of life are so full of mystery. So many things happen daily which we take for granted and which are yet very odd when we start thinking about them. Each individual is a mysterious person living in a private universe of his own, different from the world other people live in. Is it ever possible for one person ever

truly to understand another? But few people ever worry themselves about such everyday matters and everyone thinks that his world is the only possible world and all others are deviations due to cussedness, knavery or just simple ignorance—And yet when we come face to face with the beginning of a life or the ending of one, suddenly we find ourselves peering into the dark unknown—How little we really know? Death too for all its effect passes and becomes a memory. But new life is an amazing, fascinating thing, full of the wonder of existence, of change and growth, and so always the process of giving birth to anything vital has been the most tremendous fact of existence in this world, for because of that the world continues in spite of the hateful instincts of man. The pain that sometimes accompanies it becomes trivial in comparison with the supreme satisfaction of creation.

I read in some newspaper that Feroze was going to Bombay and intends staying there for a month or more. I am glad he is there.

If Bappi is coming to Bombay well and good. In a practical sense she can be of no help. But I knew that *Nani* would not be happy unless she came herself or sent someone. So it is as well that Bappi is coming—

I have already written to you the names of the books received by me which you had sent. In referring back to one of your previous letters, I find that one book you sent has not reached me—This is Ahmad Abbas's *And One Did Not Come Back*.[533] Probably it was held up by the censor. I am merely mentioning this to you so that you can get back the book from the Bombay Secretariat.

I have not read the *Mission to Moscow*[534]—But do not trouble to send any more books just yet. I have plenty to carry on with.

I was amused to learn of the banning of the Hebrew translation of the *Auto* in Palestine. Weak nerves evidently are not confined to India.

I have noted the U.P. Govt.'s reply to the inquiry about the surplus money derived from the sale of *Letters* to school students. Rs. 3000 in two years or so means less than 1500/- a year—Probably the amount does not exceed 1000/- a year, or it may be even less. Not much planning is required for this small sum. But these governments move slowly. It is four years now since this arrangement was agreed to and

533. It recounted the story of the five Indian doctors who worked with the Eighth Route Army. The "one who did not come back" was Dr. Dwarkanath Kotnis, who died on 9 December 1942.

534. *Mission to Moscow* by Joseph E. Davies, who was American Ambassador at Moscow (1936-38); it consists of his confidential despatches to Roosevelt and the State Department, supplemented by extracts from diary entries and correspondence both official and personal.

the money has not even been fully realized, much less utilized. Perhaps they had forgotten all about it and your letter came as a reminder. That was why I asked you to write to them. I would prefer substantial help being given to two or three young students rather than very petty sums being distributed among a larger number. However you need take no further steps in the matter.

I hope your search for an ayah will succeed. It will be a nuisance if you cannot find a suitable one—

This is my letter No. 74.

Love to you and Feroze—

Your loving
Papu

I am sending you a bundle of periodicals. *Foreign Affairs, Pacific Affairs—Z Asia, Life* &c.

I have just received your letter of August 7th. Do not worry about rumours—

P

15-8-1944

Darling Bets,

Your letter of the 4th August came a week ago with the two *rakhis*. It is always a delight to get the *rakhi* from you. *Raksha Bandhan* is one of our pleasing festivals which brings not only personal but also historical memories. It is symbolic of so much. Apparently it is not observed to any great extent in Bombay—not nearly as much as in the U.P.

Mahmud was happy to get the *rakhi*. These personal attentions cheer him up tremendously.

I am very glad Raja is feeling much better now.

Send my love to Harsha and Ajit and tell them to write to me all about their school. I read their little articles in the copy of the *Pushpa* you sent me.

I have not read *For Whom the Bell Tolls*,[535] though I have read much about it. I should like to read it. For the present, however, perhaps you had better not send it as I have accumulated a large number of books.

535 A novel about the Spanish Civil War by Ernest Hemingway, (1899 1961).

Indu writes to say that there are all manner of rumours about us. Of course, people will indulge in these usually unintelligent queries about what might happen. The best thing to do is to ignore them completely and carry on as if they did not exist. Otherwise they merely disturb the mind. Love to Raja and you.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

THIRD YEAR

August 16, 1944 Thursday

A week ago we completed two years here. Indu writes that there are all manner of rumours concerning us—that we are going to be released or transferred; that Pantji & I are likely to be sent to Dehra Dun. I suppose some time or other we are likely to be released—Not just yet.

x x x x

Meanwhile, there is a lot of fuss and shouting going on about the coming Gandhi-Jinnah meeting[536] on the 19th or 20th August. My mind is full of apprehension though at the same time I can forget about outside happenings to some extent. But what a situation to face when we go out. What a lot India will have to go through before she finds her feet.

x x x x

I carry on with my writing gradually approaching the end of it. Yet as I approach it, the end recedes—My original estimate of 700 MSS pages was passed long ago and now I have passed 850! However I have reached the last lap and I hope to finish it by the end of this month—

x x x x

Yesterday I had a telegram from Nan from Calcutta to say that Rita had been successfully operated upon for appendicitis.

536. Mahatma Gandhi met Jinnah at Bombay from 9 September 1944 for talks spread out over three weeks.

August 19, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have received your two letters—Nos. 76 and 77—dated 7th and 12th August. You mention rumours about us. These rumours have seldom any basis, and even when there is some justification for them it is slender and people are apt to exaggerate and distort so as to make them fit in with their wishes. The best thing to do is to ignore them completely. Last year you wrote to me some lines by A. Athenison[537] "actual evidence I have none" &c. They contain a good picture of the origin and growth of rumour.

Your account of Mrs. Prasad has led me to think of the wider question of giving relief to the many who must be in desperate need of it. I am very glad Feroze has been devoting himself to this work.[538] It is difficult to tackle such a big problem but the fact that it is big is all the more reason why we should tackle it. I should like to help. Indeed you should have drawn from my account for relief work without any special authority from me. I suggest that you give Feroze Rs. 100/- a month from my account and, whenever you think it necessary, a further lump sum.

I have often thought of Kailas and Sheila and others in England ever since this flying bomb business[539] started. Obviously it is a great menace. I hope Sheila and her children have left London and gone to the country. Probably the war in Europe will not last very long but the concluding months are likely to be full of the most barbarous and inhuman devices to destroy human beings.

I had a telegram from *Puphi* from Calcutta to say that Rita had been successfully operated upon.

537. "Actual evidence I have none
But my aunt's charwoman's sister's son
Heard a maid in Downing Street
Say to a policeman on his beat
That she had a brother who had a friend
Who knew when the war was going to end."

538. Feroze Gandhi was the secretary of the U.P. Political Sufferer's Distress Relief Committee

539. Pilotless jet propelled aircraft with explosive warheads were used by the Germans in the Second World War to bombard England

I have no objection to extracts from my *Autobiography* appearing in the birthday volume[540] which Mridu, Tendulkar and others are preparing for Bapu. It would be desirable to have dots between two separate quotations. As for correcting my English and my punctuation, I am not prepared to say that I am above correction. But Mridu and Tendulkar are hardly the persons to undertake this. Chalapathi Rau—I suppose he is the *Herald* man—is a good choice for editing. I like him both as a person and for his capacity. He is quiet and efficient at his job. If there is an obvious error in my writing, there is no reason why it should not be corrected, provided it is obvious enough and you agree. As a matter of fact if I had the chance to revise my *Autobiography* I would make many alterations in it. I never had the chance to revise it with any care. After my first writing of it, it was typed by Upadhyaya without any revision by me. I took this typescript with me to Badenweiler and rather hurriedly looked through it there. I could not apply my mind to it then and I was in a hurry to be done with it. The book was then published. I never tried to read through the printed book and of course the proofs never came to me. Krishna made himself responsible for its publication, proof correcting &c. So, oddly enough, the book was not revised by me at any stage. There was no occasion for it and I find this business of revising what I have already written very boring. It is a trying job even to read through it all again, though parts of it are sometimes referred to or re-read.

Then came the American edition. This was an abridged version and everything in connection with it was done in New York without reference to me. It was not possible for such reference to take place owing to wartime delays, and so I left it to Walsh and asked him to consult Krishna. Walsh complained that Krishna did not even answer his letters.

This American edition reached me in Dehra Dun Jail and for the first time I read my *Auto* in print right through. I was taken aback by some of the abridgements, which made no sense. There were also many minor changes to suit the American public, especially in the spelling of words. I accepted these minor changes but pointed out to Walsh a number of errors. These corrections were, I believe, carried

540. *Mahatma Gandhi: His Life and Works*, edited by D.G. Tendulkar, M. Chalapathi Rau, Mridula Sarabhai and Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri, contains articles and pictures depicting every phase of Mahatma Gandhi's life. An article in this volume, "The Spirit of India", is an extract from the writings of Jawaharlal, chiefly the *Autobiography*.

out in a subsequent American edition. But the English edition presumably remained unchanged.

It is difficult to make any changes in a printed book for this upsets the arrangement of the plates. The slightest change, for instance the addition of a comma, means changing the plate. A whole page may thus be changed but then care has to be taken not to affect the next page in any way. If a word or sentence is taken out in any page something in its place, occupying the same amount of space, must be given. All this is exceedingly tiresome and I have therefore refrained from *interfering with the present arrangement of the book, although there* are many changes which seemed to me to be desirable.

As for punctuation, it perplexes me frequently. I am sure I make mistakes in it, as well as in grammar generally. Not having paid much attention to grammar, except to a slight extent Latin & French grammar, I am rather at sea with questions relating to it. I have to go by sound and sight. That helps probably in style and I have a sense of words and the hang of a sentence. But minor errors are apt to creep *in. Do you know the story of some eminent English* writer—I think he was Oscar Wilde? He was asked how he had spent the day. He replied that he spent the whole morning in putting in a comma, another afternoon in taking it out again!

Glimpses was first published in India (by Kitabistan) without any revision by me at any stage. I did not even see the typescript made by Upadhyaya and this, as I discovered subsequently, was full of errors. The result was that the printed book was a horror and I could hardly look into it without extreme irritation. The English edition was hurriedly revised by me, chiefly on board ship when I was going to Europe in 1938.

If Mridu, Tendulkar & Co. are going to sit on judgment on people like Sri Prakasa &c. they will have their work cut out for them.

I am glad Bombay is pleasant now.

This is my letter No. 75.

Love

Your loving
Papu

August 20—Sunday

Received a message from Betty today at 1.20 a.m. (by telephone from Bombay Secretariat) : "Indu had baby boy this morning 8 a.m. Both doing well. Send love. Betty."

So I become a grandfather!

August 21, 1944

Darling,

So you have made me a grandfather!

I received the message yesterday in the afternoon. It had apparently come by telephone. I felt very happy that this tension was over and that you had successfully launched into motherhood. Pantji managed somehow to produce some very good and fresh *peras* (पेड़े) at tea-time to celebrate the occasion. I hope it is well with you and the little one. All our friends here send both of you their love and blessings.

All my love,

Your loving
Papu

August 26, 1944

Darling,

Your letter No 78 of the 16th Aug. reached me three days ago. It seems rather ancient history for since it was written you have become a mother and I have attained the dignified status of a grandfather. I am trying to find out how it feels to be a grandfather. Thus far I have experienced no particular change in my constitution but I suppose I shall grow into this new status, though I fear I lack the dignity for it.

I have had excited letters from Betty and *Puphi* and a few lines from Rita. Also a telegram from Amma and Rup. I suppose women are more excitable than men, but I have long had a theory that India as a nation, that is the Indian people as a whole, is rather feminine. That is why I suppose India is so lovable in spite of her many failings. I do not easily get excited but I experienced a deep feeling of contentment when I heard of the arrival of the newcomer. I was happy that

it was all safely over and that you were well. There was also a vague *and comforting sensation of the future gradually* pushing out the past, as it always does. This is usually a mixed feeling for one is usually attached to the past and does not like to break with it. Of course there is never an actual break; it is an unending and continuous flow, link after link in a chain which has no visible beginning and apparently no end. Yet the future always represents hope, though why it should do so has seemed to me one of the oddest traits of human nature, but it does so nevertheless, while the past is a curious mixture. There is always something of the promise of spring about the future. It seems young and growing and full of new life and the next winter seems far off.

The renewal of life from spring to spring, from generation to generation, has an amazing fascination. Therein lies the essence of immortality not only of the species but of that vital precious thing that is life, and, in human mind, of memories and ideas that grow from age to age and link the past with the ever-changing present. So a nation and a people taste of immortality and even a family lives on and on.

I am happy to learn that you had an easy delivery. That shows how essentially healthy you are. You will of course take care of yourself during the next month or so, and then you can live your normal healthy life, not remembering the ailments of the body which have sometimes worried you in the past.

Feroze I suppose reached Bombay just a day or two before your confinement. I am glad he was there in time for it.

You have added to the population of India. That is supposed to be—I doubt the figures but I shall accept them for the moment—four hundred million. Roughly speaking, we might say that the newcomer is the 400,000,00st. That is a formidable number and it will take a lot of living up to.

Betty says in her letter that she had offered prayers to Hanuman and Ganesh. I am glad there is somebody in the family who prays to the gods, for some of us, like me, are utterly lacking in this respect. But why choose these rather inhuman representations of the powers beyond us when there are so many beautiful and lovely creations of *the imagination*? Anyway old Ganesh has a very human twinkle in his elephantine eye and there is something irrepressibly humorous about him, and a merry look and laughter are gifts from the gods.

Betty no doubt will take all necessary steps to have a जन्मपत्र made. That should be done for that is our traditional way to record the exact date and time of birth. The date, according to the *Samvat* calendar, as far as I can make it out, is भाद्रपद शुक्ल पक्ष 2 -सं 2001—or, to put it

differently, the second day of the bright half of the moon in the month of *Bhadon, Samvat* 2001. The Gujratis, I think, have a slightly different reckoning and the month with them starts a fortnight earlier or later—that is according to one view it begins with the dark fortnight of the moon, according to the other, it begins with the bright fortnight. With us in the north it is the former. But this does not make any essential difference, although it is confusing. Betty writes that the time of birth was 8.11 a.m. But which time? The time observed outside now is wartime which is at least an hour ahead of normal time, possibly more. It is thus an artificial time and not the real time according to which noon should be when the sun is highest in the heavens. Here, in Ahmadnagar Fort, we have continued to stick to the old time and have not adopted wartime.

I am returning the four reviews of Betty's book which you sent me. Please return them to her.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This letter is No. 77.

29-8-1944[541]

Darling Bets,

Your message about the birth of the little one reached me the same afternoon and your letter giving fuller details came on the 24th. I did not write to you last week as I sent both my week's letters to Indu.

I was happy to get the news—not so excited as you must have been, for excitement is less in my line. I was particularly pleased to learn of the easy delivery Indu had. That is a very hopeful sign of good health. I hope that she and the baby have kept up to the mark during the days following the confinement. I suppose they will have to remain in Bombay for another month. It is comforting that this job has been done efficiently and well.

In my letters to Indu I suggested to her to ask you to get a proper *Janmapatra* जन्मपत्र made by a competent person. Such permanent

541. File No: 3590/H/II-2 Maharashtra Government Records; Police Commissioner's Office.

records of the date and time of birth are desirable. As for the time, I suppose the proper solar time should be mentioned and not the artificial time which is being used outside now. Wartime is at least an hour ahead of normal time.

The birth of a new member of the family always makes one feel reminiscent and remember one's own childhood days and other births. I missed your birth for I was in England then, but when Nan came and Indu, I was very much there and I have vivid recollections of the events. And then the growth of the little ones, their childhood, girlhood and womanhood. It is an unending panorama of human life with its sweetness and bitterness, its ups and downs. One would think that with all this age-long experience and personal and racial memories, nothing very novel can be expected. The old cycle repeats itself again and again. And yet whenever a person arrives, it is something absolutely new, like others and still unique in its own way. Nature goes on repeating itself but there is no end to its infinite variety and every spring is a resurrection, every new birth a new beginning. Especially when that new birth is intimately connected with us, it becomes a revival of ourselves and our old hopes centre round it.

In your letter you mentioned that Raja had fever. I hope this was nothing serious.

I am glad the children are getting used to school life. They will enjoy their brief holidays at home in October and you will find how full they are of their school experiences. Thus the child's horizon widens and he grows in experience. The return to school will be somewhat painful but there will be no such break as on the first occasion. School will no longer be an unknown and rather frightening place, but a place that is known and remembered and has many pleasant associations.

It is more than six months since I sent you a cheque. Surely you must have exhausted my last remittance long ago. Indu's confinement must have led to many odd kinds of expenses. I am enclosing a payment order on Bachhraj for Rs. 400/. If you want more, let me know.

Indu wrote to me that a second edition of your book had come out, or was on the point of coming out. I hope you have reached a satisfactory settlement with your publishers. Have you heard from the London and the New York publishers about your book?

Love

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

September 4, 1944

Darling,

Betty has been keeping me informed of developments. Her last letter came three days ago. I am sorry you and the infant both managed to catch a slight cold. I hope it has passed. Such things happen in spite of every care. The only real remedy is to have enough powers of resistance. Unfortunately these powers are limited in the early days. Now that the infant has attained the respectable age of a fortnight he will no doubt act in accordance with the responsibilities of that age. I hope Betty will write to me frequently—as frequently as the rules governing Ahmadnagar Fort permit—and keep me informed. My mind is with you all the time and I think of you and the infant, and the babe growing from day to day. I am glad you have kept nurses. Hold on to them and do not be in a hurry to part with them. Little things count at this stage and it would be folly to save money at the cost of worry. That will interfere with your own return to normal health as well as the baby's. For the babe depends ever so much on the mother. Also without proper nurses, Betty will inevitably have more to do and that will not be right. She is of course a perfect brick and it is a great comfort to me that she is with you. About expenses generally you should not worry. They are not your lookout.

Darling, I understand that you people have been referring to the infant as Rahul. Indeed *Puphi* wrote to me that this name was suggested some months ago and all of you had decided that it was going to be a boy. Well, Rahul is not a bad name—that was my first impression. But some further information I have gathered from Narendra Deva has made me change my mind. Rahul of course was Buddha's son and this tradition and connection are in its favour. But do you know what it means? It means a fetter, something that binds—a बंधन.[542] The story is that when Buddha, or Siddhartha as he then was, was told of the birth of his son, he exclaimed that this was a fresh बंधन or fetter attaching him to the life he was leading and from which he wanted to get away. That word of his—Rahula—caught on and became the name of his son. It has since been seldom used as a name, except rarely by Buddhist monks and the like— So the name is hardly suitable.

Betty says that you have prepared a list of possible names—She was going to send this list to me but apparently could not find it at the

542. *Bandhan.*

time—When it comes I shall let you have my reaction after consulting friends here—Meanwhile, I mentioned the matter to Narendra Deva and the next day he came out with certain historical names from Sanskrit literature. They were unusual and worth considering. But I shall wait for your list and then write more about it.

Vallabhbhai has got some new publications of the Navajivan Press and among these I noticed a Gujrati translation of my *Letters from a Father to his Daughter*. They call it, I think, इन्दु ने पत्र.[543] I am glad the Navajivan people have brought this out—Long ago, without *my knowledge (I was as usual in prison then) the Law Journal Press* gave permission to somebody in Gujrat to bring out a translation. This person brought out a very bad translation and made a lot of money out of it. When later I wrote to him, he was quite offensive about it—So I am glad a decent translation in Gujrati has now appeared.

It is pleasant here now—rather warm in the middle of the day and definitely cool at night. I hope you are having good weather in Bombay.

Feroze, I presume, is with you. He should remain with you and not hurry away—I hope that by the end of this month you can go to Allahabad so that the infant and you can enjoy the delightful cold weather there—

Love to you both,

Your loving
Papu

September 6—Wednesday

It is extraordinary how often I think of Indu and the baby and worry about them. Perhaps I might not have done so if the last bit of news had not been disconcerting. Indu caught a cold and then of course the babe got it. A day or two later they were removed from the nursing home to Betty's flat. This was earlier than was at first intended. Probably the cold hurried their departure.

It is five days since I got Betty's last letter and it seems an age—I imagine all manner of dire developments—else why should she not have

543. *Indu ne Patra.*

written earlier to assure me that all was well? My mind is restless and agitated. How these personal attachments pull at us and upset us when we bear wider misfortunes more stoically.

My writing work is yet not over though I have been giving enough time to it. Now I am at page 988! I am now at the very last spurt. There will be a feeling of relief when I finish it but also perhaps a sense of emptiness. It has filled the past five months for me—

September 8, Friday

Still no letter. I am distressed and my mind is full of foreboding.

x x x x

I finished the book yesterday—998 pages of manuscript. I shall look through some parts during the next few days and consider Pantji's & Narendra Deva's criticisms and then put the lot away and forget about it. Pantji & Narendra Deva are the only persons here who have seen what I have been writing. They have been very helpful.

September 9, Saturday

As I sat down to write to Indu today I received her letter—It was dated August 19, the day before her confinement. But there was a note added dated September 3 and this brought relief. Neither she nor the babe are rid of their cold and fever — Still I feel better—

x x x x

Today Bapu meets Jinnah in Bombay.

September 9, 1944

Darling,

I have spent quite a bad week, though why I should behave in this way I do not quite know. I thought I could control my feelings and emotions better, but I realize how one's mental discipline and hardly-acquired wisdom are swept aside for a while at least by the surge of feeling.

On the 1st of September I got Betty's last letter in which she told me of your cold and fever and the little one's cold. I was a little worried, but not much. I hoped to have further and better news within two or three days. As the days went by and no further news came a growing apprehension seized me and I grew restless in mind. I was thinking of you and the babe most of the time and wondering how both of you were. You would soon get over your cold I hoped, but the little one, a few days old, how would he fare? I remembered the time when you got a bad attack of influenza when you were a few months old—about six. A very vivid picture of you then lying in a cot in Dol Amma's garden room in what is now Swaraj Bhawan came to me. Under instructions from Ranjit Singh (the gallant Major), who was treating you, all the doors were closed and the room was full of some kind of vapour —eucalyptus or some such thing. A long-necked, rather primitive apparatus produced this vapour and its nose was so arranged so as to be near your tiny face. I presume they have better ways of treatment now. Anyway I remembered that scene and all the trouble you were having with your breathing and coughing. I felt so helpless. Fortunately you got over your trouble soon.

For eight days I have had no letter at all from anyone to give me news of you. This was a big gap and I worried and could not make out why this was so. I think this is yet another sign of age. Or is it the usual thing for grandfathers to do? I thought of how I must take the little one in hand and help him to build up a strong and healthy body. A delusion I suffer from—that I know a great deal about the rules of health and that anybody who follows them must of necessity remain healthy. Really it is only another aspect of my general tendency to interfere with other people. You and Feroze will have to hold me in check.

As I was beginning this letter, at last a letter was handed to me in the usual On His Majesty's Service envelope. I peeped in and saw it was from you. It was dated August 19th. Welcome as it was, I felt disappointed. Oh this was your old unfinished letter and contains no later news. But as I read it I found that there was a later addition dated Sept. 3rd. I felt better. But I am not entirely reassured. I do not like this continuing temperature and cold. I have no doubt that both you and the baby will improve rapidly in the Allahabad climate. But not just at present as September is not a good month there. October is just right, not cold but pleasant and slowly cooling off with November. But it would be desirable for you and the babe to get rid of the cold completely before you travel. A long journey might aggravate an existing distemper. Also I think it would be as well, before

you go, to have yourself X-rayed &c.—In this matter, as in others affecting your health and the babe's, you should follow Jivraj's advice. He is cautious and sound and knows your history.

About the names, Betty has not sent me the list. I shall await that list before consulting Narendra Deva again—I shall also ask Maulana—It had struck me also some time ago that an additional Persian name would be desirable.

I was interested to learn about the Hebrew edition of my *Autobiography*. When you feel better, I should like you to write to Mr. Benton,[544] or whatever his name is. Tell him that I was happy to have news of the book. I received none of his letters or his cable. I wrote to him also in March 1942, in addition to my cable, but evidently he did not receive my letter.

Some little time back I wrote to you to arrange for a payment of Rs. 100 monthly to Feroze for his relief work. In addition will you please arrange for a lump payment of Rs. 1000/- to him from my account. I am sure he will put this to good use in giving relief to people standing in need of it. Apart from this Rs. 100/- a month should continue.

I am glad to have news of Madan Bhai and Rafi. I think I told you that the book you sent me dealing with the Chinese Medical Mission — *And One Did not Come Back* — did not reach me —

I am sending you today a bundle of old magazines and periodicals—
Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 79.

I have just received two letters from Betty dated 31st Aug. and 3rd Sept. Also the list of names.

I am enclosing an order on Bachhraj to pay Rs. 1000/- to Betty. This is to cover the expenses so far incurred on hospital charges and nurses. Betty will see to the payment. Do not worry about them.

Papu

544. William Benton (b. 1900); U.S. Senator, 1949-53; met Jawaharlal in March 1937 at Allahabad.

12-9-1944

Darling Betty,
Two of your letters dated 26th and 29th August reached me by September 1st. The other two dated 31/8 and 3/9 came together on September 9th. You wrote regularly enough but there was delay in letters reaching me and I was a little worried at the absence of news for 9 days, especially as the last news I had had was not satisfactory. However, now I have had better news and I hope all is going well.

Love to Raja and you.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

September 16, 1944

Darling Indu,
Your letter of the 9th Sept. and Betty's of the day before have brought good news about the babe. I hope his progress will now be rapid—

I have myself been in the grip of *la grippe*. It has been a nuisance. I think I am on the mend now. I hope a letter does not carry 'flu bugs.

As for the name—the list you sent me contained some attractive names but on the whole it is not inspiring.

In the classical period of Sanskrit the names were usually two in one —that is two words joined together to form one name. Thus Nagarjuna, Kumarajiva, Ajitasena, Gunavarman, Adisena, Amoghavajra, Paramartha, Jivagupta. All these are actual names of famous Indian scholars all of whom, except for the first and greatest of them—Nagarjuna —went to China, Kumarajiva became a famous writer in Chinese. This practice of two words to form one name prevails today also but the words have ceased to have much meaning—thus: Jawahar-lal! I like this two-word formation of a name. It is musical & meaningful. Narendra Deva has suggested the following six names for you to consider:

1 प्रियदर्शी[545] 'One who is of pleasing appearance'
2 कमलशील[546] 'One who partakes of the qualities of a lotus'

545. *Priyadarshi.*
546. *Kamalsheel.*

3	सिद्धार्थ[547]	'One whose desires have been accomplished' Gautama Buddha's home name
4	विजयरत्न[548]	विजय standing for फीरोज़ —victory—and रत्न for Jawahar
5	परमार्थ[549]	'Supreme beatitude'—a famous Indian author in China
6	पद्मविजय[550]	पद्म (lotus) is the symbol of purity and beauty—It also symbolizes India. It is also an epithet of Rama— पद्मा is the name of लक्ष्मी=कमला=इन्दिरा

These are listed more or less in Narendra Deva's order of preference. They are all attractive names but I would limit the choice to प्रियदर्शी, कमलशील, विजयरत्न and पद्मविजय। Of these both Narendra Deva and I like प्रियदर्शी best. It is simple, meaningful and sounds well—It is unusual enough and yet not odd. Narendra Deva, in suggesting this name, did not know that your second name was प्रियदर्शिनी. The fact that it fits in with your name is in its favour. The one serious disadvantage attached to it is that it cannot be shortened easily. प्रिय may do for intimates but one cannot go about the world being addressed as darling by everybody.

Priyadarshi, I might add, was Ashoka's name. It occurs in his inscriptions—Also it is an epithet of one of the former Buddhas.

Maulana (in consultation with Asaf Ali) has suggested an ancient Iranian name also. I think it is a Pahlavi word but it is still used in Persian and sometimes, though rarely, as a name for both boy and girl. It is: विर्जीस برجیس—Birjees—This was the old name of Jupiter, the planet. As Jupiter had a very high place in the ancient world (Jove was king of the gods in Greece), the word came to mean also: "the auspicious one". So now it means both the planet Jupiter and the auspicious one—

विर्जीस will suffer from one advantage or disadvantage—It is likely to be Sanskritized or Hindiized into व्रजेश (व्रज+ईश lord of Braj or Vraj =Krishna).

How do you like the combination: Priyadarshi Birjees—प्रियदर्शी विर्जीस. I do not think it sounds at all bad, though all new combinations are odd to begin with. Anyhow, think over it and consult Feroze and others. Do not forget to consult *Nani* or otherwise she will feel hurt.

547. *Siddhartha.*
548. *Vijayaratna.*
549. *Parmartha.*
550. *Padmavijya.*

There is no immediate hurry and there is no reason why you should accept my primary recommendation unless you yourself agree with it.

I am returning to you a number of small books and pamphlets:

1 Sagittarius: *Targets* — Give this to Chitti
2 Nym Wales: *New China*
3 Guehenus: *Journal d'um Homme de 40 ans*
4 *Tomorrow*: 2 issues
5 *Premchand*
6 Yeats: *Sophocles*: *King Oedipus*
7 Aurobindo Ghose: *Ideal & Progress*
8 —do— : *Thoughts & Glimpses*
9 *War Prose*
10 Arnold's *Light of Asia*
11 Abbas: *Tomorrow is Ours*
12 *New Kashmir*

I am now giving more time to reading and so I hope to return books frequently. You can also send me the two or three books you are holding on for me. Some time back you or Betty asked me if I had read Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. This book has just reached me—sent by Kamala Shankar Pandya of Dohad. So do not duplicate it.

And now I shall retire to nurse & at the same time fight my cold—I am feeling particularly stupid—deaf—weary-eyed—hoarse—sore-throated—heavy-headed, and generally not particularly human—

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 80

September 20 Wednesday Id-ul Fitr

I have had a mild attack of 'flu—Nothing *much but it made me feel bad* for two or three days I am now recovering, most people here have had *something of the kind.*

x x x x

I finished the revision of my MSS today incorporating some of Pantji's suggestions *I had to drive myself to read this again*—or parts of it.

Ever since I finished writing my interest in it largely evaporated and I had no desire to go back to it. I wondered if I had done a worthwhile job or not. It is so difficult for the author to judge. Sometimes I felt that it was pretty good, and then later it would seem very second-rate. Thinking of it now it does not appear too good. Perhaps some parts are not bad, but as a whole? Anyway I am weary of it and it has been finally put away in the trunk.

Perhaps it is my mood that is at fault. I feel rather empty—not exactly depressed but just empty. Not hoping nor fearing—just not feeling anything acutely—Not caring perhaps. My colleagues here are greatly worked up about the Gandhi-Jinnah talks. They discuss them without end. They interest me too but it is almost a distant impersonal interest. Whatever the outcome I doubt if I shall be excited about it. Unless my mood changes.

Fed up—that I suppose describes my state of mind. Fed up with myself, with our people, with India, with the world, with the horror of war, with the worse horror of men's littleness and selfishness, with the Congress, with almost everything. Small incidents reported in the press show up the pettiness of our people and upset me more than major occurrences.

September 23. 1944

Darling,

I have received this morning your letter of Sept. 15th—No. 81. Also a letter from Betty of the same date. The जन्मपत्र has also come. I shall return it to you later.

I am happy to learn that both you and the babe are making good progress. The first month is well over now and the babe should grow now faster and put on weight. You do not say anything about your return to Allahabad and so I presume you are staying on in Bombay for the present. I have some books which I want to return to you. I suppose I had better hold on to them till you are back in Anand Bhawan.

I have already written to you about the names. *Puphi* writes that she has a list of boys' names prepared by Ranjit—chiefly names of the Sun—*Surya*—I have not received the names yet. There is a host of such names in Sanskrit and some are very attractive. I shall forward the list to you, so that you can consider these additional names also.

When you go back to Anand Bhawan, will you arrange to give some small presents to the servants there on my behalf. This is on the

occasion of the arrival of the babe there, but really that is an excuse to enable us to help the servants a little. I suggest that you pay them as follows: Hari 15/-, Bhola 15/-, Abul Hasan 10/-, Khaliq 10/-, Tulsi 10/-, Lachhminia 10/-, Bansi, Binda, Datadin, Ganga, Rama & Raghubir —each 5/- also the pensioners: *Bhishti*, Jumna, Behari's mother and Asghar Ali's wife each 5/-. I have taken these names from Ladli Bhai's list— If there are any more you will of course add their names.

Also give each of Raja and Betty's servants Rs. 10/-. If you feel like giving more to anybody do so.

You will remember that I wrote to you about Khaliq some months back. I made it clear then that we could not increase his pay beyond what I had suggested. Also that I had no objection to Khaliq bettering his prospects elsewhere if he had the chance to do so. So long as he remained with us he would get his present salary, and later if he wanted to come back, I would take him. In addition (and apart from the fact whether he remained with us or not) Rs. 10/- a month was to be given for his daughter's education. I want to be quite fair to Khaliq but I do not want him to sit idly by doing nothing. That is not good for him or for others. You will therefore give him work if he stays on and otherwise deal with him as you think fit.

Did I tell you that I had received the bundle of books sent by P. C. Joshi through you?

Some weeks ago I read in the papers of the death of our old Parsi friend Anupchand Shah[551] I was pained at this news. I liked him greatly. In his own quiet way he was extraordinarily decent. Always when I was in Bombay he came to see me but he was careful not to waste my time. Once he invited us to his house somewhere in Malabar Hills.

I was amused to read your account and Betty's of your visit to Bapu and the conversation that took place between him and Rajaji about women. We are all rather incomplete, lopsided, are we not? It is rare to find an integrated, more or less complete, individual.

Feroze, I suppose, has gone back to Allahabad.

I am sending you today a bundle of foreign periodicals.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 81.

551 A businessman of Bombay

September 27. Wednesday—Vijaya Dashmi

Do I feel better? Perhaps a little—Partly because I have been slowly getting rid of the after-effects of the 'flu. Physical well-being has a powerful effect on the mind, more so in prison than elsewhere, for here there is nothing to divert the mind. I am not quite fit yet and certainly a drowsiness steals over me. I succumb to it and sleep in the daytime. But I am far better than I was a week ago and have less of the tired feeling.

x x x x

Having finished the writing & revising of *The Discovery of India* I feel rather at a loose end. It kept me busy and my mind occupied for over five months and I was often worried at the prospect of my release before I had finished it. That little worry is over and I am prepared for discharge now! Indeed as the question of possible release was in my mind, I prepared for it in a way so that it should not take me unawares—According to old habit, I prepared a note of what I should do prior to and at the time of release—I distributed our flowerseeds, all neatly packed up, to my co-prisoners, as mementoes of A.F. The idea was not so much of release as of transfer to some other prison where these seeds might come in useful.

Then I looked through such papers and figures I had relating to my accounts with Bachhraj to find out where I stood financially. I have had the foggiest of notions about them. I made a note of what the position was, more or less—

Then I looked through the draft of the will I had made a year ago and added a note to it.

I sent some books to Indu—checked and cleaned & listed my remaining books. They are a goodly number—over 150. Even labels for my boxes were prepared & in some cases stuck on!

Finally I had a haircut—So everything that I could think of was done! It amused me to go through this ceremonial although there is no chance of our discharge in the near future.

x x x x

I have been reading odd books—Bodmer's *Loom of Language*—Hogben's *Interglossa*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*—Lamb's *Letters* &c. A sense of restlessness has seized me and even this reading is spasmodic—

In one of Lamb's letters I came across two lines. We have yet the sight of, he says:

> Of sun and moon and star, throughout the year,
> And man and woman.

Yes, we have had sight of sun and moon & star—but hardly of man and not at all of woman. For two years and a month and 18 days we have been here—779 days—and we are a little tired of looking at each other and our jailers. And woman! How strange it is that we have not even had a distant glimpse of a woman during these years. Previously there were interviews in jail—Not so now—

x x x x

I have finished this book which I began two years ago and now I must go on to another if the desire to write seizes me. Today—*Vijaya Dashmi* —is an appropriate day to begin an undertaking—hardly to end one.

Sept. 30. 1944

Darling Indu,

Thus far I have had no letter from you this week. Perhaps today's post may bring one—as it sometimes does. Yesterday I had a brief note from Birju *chacha* from Srinagar congratulating me on my becoming a grandfather. Will you tell him that I have received it? I am not writing to him myself as first cousins are not included in the list of those to whom I may write. Perhaps as a special indulgence I might be allowed to write to him but I see no reason to ask for indulgences. He has been told that Rajaji has suggested the name—'Motilal'—for the babe and he disapproves of this as being opposed to our tradition. Tell him no one intends to give this name. He also expresses the hope that I am continuing my *asans*. Yes, I am doing so to some extent, especially the *sarvangasana* and *shirsasana*.

I notice in the papers a report about my illness. There is no basis for this and I do not know how such reports get about. I had a cold and a touch of 'flu but that kind of thing is not to be called illness. I got over it soon enough and am quite fit. I have no intention of falling ill, and it is my belief that illness comes usually—apart from accidents and untoward occurrences—by some kind of subconscious invitation. Of course no one wants to be ill but one can follow a line which leads to illness or to a receptivity to illness.

Some days ago, I sent you the horoscope, with the request to the authorities here that it might be forwarded by registered post.

Do you remember a visit we paid in 1931 to a French Count in Ceylon? We were motoring from Colombo to the southern tip of the island, along the western palm-fringed coast, and about half-way we visited the strange and attractive residence of this unusual individual. It was a solid house all covered with tropical vegetation, situated on a kind of tiny island just off the coast. At low tide one could walk up to it almost, but when the tide came in, it stood out as a full island. We went in a boat and climbed up a rocky path to the house and found ourselves in a delightful house full of flowers and books. We spent an hour or so with the Count and then had to hurry on to our next engagement. The odd situation of the house and the man who had built it and occupied it lingered in my memory and often I have thought of them in later years. A few days ago I suddenly came across a long extract from a book evidently written by this man about himself and how he managed to settle down in Ceylon. All the old memories revived in me and the desire to read this book if it was available. He was one of those who had gone through the war of 1914-18 and this experience as well as the experience of the early after-war years had a powerful effect on him. He left his old family *chateau* in France and tried to find a refuge as far away from his old world as possible. And that was how he discovered the little island in Ceylon and built himself a house there. His book must be an interesting one. I do not suppose it is possible to get it, especially in India. Probably it had a small circulation when it came out and then disappeared from the book-shops and was remaindered-off, as the publishers say. Still I am mentioning the name for you to note down somewhere. It is: *The Gardens of Taprobane* by the Count de Mauny, (Williams & Norgate, London 1937). Taprobane is an old western name for Ceylon.

In my letter to you dated Sept. 9th I enclosed a payment order in favour of Betty for Rs. 1000/- on Bachhraj. You have acknowledged this letter but do not mention this order—I hope it reached you and you gave it to Betty.

You know the kind of cigarette-holder I use. It has room for a cigarette in the tube itself which acts as a nicotine absorber—my holder, after long use, has cracked. I am continuing to use it but it is not very satisfactory. I do not suppose it is possible to get a new one. But, when you go to Allahabad, you can send me a still older one that I possess. You should find this in one of the drawers of my dressing table. You will recognize it easily by a piece of paper stuck near the

end which holds the cigarette. If I get this, I might be able to fix up a workable holder out of the two brokendown ones.

Did I write to you, or was it to Betty?, more than a year ago asking for a Persian primer or some other elementary books in it? I was told then that they were not available. The desire to learn some Persian has come back to me Having finished some work I have been doing I am, so to say, at a loose end, though of course there are always books to read. But I want some harder mental work than mere reading. Also there is the great advantage of having Maulana to help me with Persian.

The book I should like to have is Otto's *Persian Grammar and Conversation*. You are not likely to get it at any bookshop in India. But there is just a chance of your being able to find a copy which *Pupha* (Ranjit) used to have. Ask *Puphi* for it. She might look through *Puphd's* old books.

If you meet with no success in this quest, then ask the Kitabistan people in Allahabad to get me some elementary books in Persian, preferably Persian-English books. There are, I believe, such books for the military, as also ordinary school books.

Puphi writes that Allahabad is still hot and stuffy, or was ten days ago. I suppose a change in the weather will come soon. October is a good month there.

I am sending you to Bombay another bundle of foreign periodicals.

I hope the babe and you are both flourishing.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 82.

3-10-1944

Darling Betty,
I have received two letters from you since I wrote to you last—dated 8th and 15th September. Two days ago I had a letter from Indu in which she gave me news of Harsha's and Ajit's return for the holidays. She wrote also that she intended going back to Allahabad by the 7th October. By the time this letter reaches you she will probably have

left you. If she is still there tell her that my next letter to her will be sent to Allahabad. Also a parcel of books.

I am glad to learn both from your letter and Indu's that the boys have done well at school and especially that Harsha has put on weight. Ajit fortunately is healthy enough but Harsha has been rather weak and his putting on weight and taking a growing interest in games are excellent signs. They indicate that he stood in need of a change from Bombay life and more companionship of children of his age. I think your sending the boys to school has already been justified. Bombay is no place for growing children to become healthy and strong. The winter months in Gwalior will do them even more good.

Indu writes that you intend going to Allahabad after the boys return to Gwalior. I am glad of this—she does not mention Raja but I hope he will also go there and benefit by the delightful late October weather of Allahabad. It should just suit him. Not too cold yet and yet pleasantly cool. 'Pink winter' as it is called. Though perhaps this begins a little later.

I have read with some amusement the long account you have sent about Mridu's visit to Indu soon after her confinement and your subsequent correspondence. Of course Mridu was a little foolish in barging in just then and ought to have known better. But she meant well no doubt. We can't get rid easily of our old habits and traditions. It is true that sometimes a petty and unintentional step leads to grave consequences. Fortunately that has not been so in the present case. Anyway it is all over now and no one need worry about it, and certainly it should not be allowed to come in the way of your normal relations with Mridu.

I have been noticing a number of references about my 'illness' in the papers. One might almost imagine that I was in the grip of some fell disease, some mysterious illness that required all the wise men of Gotham to confer and advise. All this is rather silly though I appreciate the kindly thoughts of people who are anxious about me. But then anxiety is wasted on me for I am not ill at all. The report, whatever its source, was greatly exaggerated. I had a cold, which is always annoying for some days, and nothing worse. It has passed off. As a matter of fact I am the healthiest of our lot here and it is the others who require care and treatment.

Some time back you wrote that you were sending me the second edition of your book. It has not come yet. I suppose it is out.

The other day, reading some of the old *Letters* of Charles Lamb (the man who wrote the *Essays of Elia* and *Tales from Shakespeare*),

I came across a couple of lines. We have yet the sight of, he said:

> Of sun and moon and stars, throughout the year,
> And man and woman.

Yes, I thought, we have had yet the sight of the sun and the moon and stars, and yesterday was *Sharad Purnima*.[552] In the early dawn, when I wake up, I see Jupiter peeping over the roof of a building. It is still dark then but it is the signal for getting up. In the evening Venus appears as the Evening Star. The night sky is slowly changing over and putting on its winter appearance. We have sight of all these and they never lose their freshness. But of the men we see the range is limited and I fear we grow less and less fresh to each other. And woman? It struck me as an odd and arresting fact that for nearly 26 months—for 785 days to be exact—I had not seen a woman even from a distance. Previously it was not so, for even in prison we had interviews occasionally. And I began to wonder—what are women like? how do they look?—how do they talk and sit and walk?

And then I thought of the changing world—of how it must have changed during these 26 months. Children growing up and some of us, I fear, growing down. Meeting each other after a long interval, shall we recognize each other in the old way? Or will there be a feeling of shyness and strangeness as when we meet those we do not wholly understand? The private worlds each one of us lives in, worlds of fancy and feeling and imagination, have so long lain apart that they are apt to become strangers to each other, separate circles overlapping less than they used to. Partly that happens as we grow older, but the process is accelerated by the abnormal conditions we have been living in

My love to you and Raja and the children.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

October 5, Thursday

My last entry in the journal was on Sept. 27th—*Vijaya Dashmi*—That closed the old book

552 Night of the full moon in October.

On that auspicious day took place the inauspicious ending of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks.[553] What a damp squib after all the shouting and praying and hou-ha! The lengthy correspondence, which I read with a certain impatience, was depressing. Jinnah, as usual, avoiding any positive or constructive suggestion and playing lawyer-like for position and vantage. Bapu, more positive and definite and yet rather vague. Perhaps it was inevitable that the talks should fail. But they should have failed on more definite points. Some definiteness has certainly come but not enough. What a quagmire it all is!

On the whole I was not greatly excited. I was less worried than others here. There have been, while the talks have been going on and afterwards, interminable discussions here. I have taken practically no part in them, nor has Maulana.

I think this must be some unconscious way of protecting myself from continuous irritation. I keep my mind occupied with other matters and the newspapers produce only a temporary ruffling of the surface. Not perhaps a healthy sign. Certainly it would be unhealthy if I behaved in this passive, escapist way outside. But here in confinement perhaps it is not so bad. It saves energy and worry.

Yet the worry is there at the back of the mind. A feeling of having run into a blind lane with no opening and life becoming just existence at a low level of sensation. The war and its consequences prevent a settling down of the mind and bring hope of changes everywhere. That helps.

x x x x

I have been below par, physically. Nothing much but just a feeling of not being fit. Some reference made in the press about my illness[554] —it was just a cold—comments—Nan's telegram of inquiry to the Bombay

553. Mahatma Gandhi, while opposed to partition, proposed a form of self-determination whereby in the Muslim majority provinces both Muslims and Hindus would vote on the issue of separation. Jinnah insisted that the Muslims alone should vote on the question of separation, and that separation should be effected while the British were in India and not after India had become free.

554. A Bombay Government press note said: "Statements have appeared in the press that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had been suffering from influenza. This is not correct. Pandit Nehru had an ordinary cold from which he has recovered and he is now alert and vigorous and in good health; no fever was recorded and no complaint of fever was made."

Govt.—questions[555] in the House of Commons &c.—Rather absurd all this. I suppose this is their way of showing some sympathy, being unable to do anything else.

I have got over the cold but a vague unease fills me. Is it physical or just mental or both? My eyes are giving some trouble and grow watery after a little reading. Perhaps they require stronger spectacles.

x x x x

Nan has managed to get a passport for the U.S. or will get it soon. She and Rita will be leaving soon by air for America. I am glad. Good for her and for others.

Indu and the babe will be leaving Bombay for Allahabad within two or three days. The question of the name for the babe is troubling her and a host of names have been suggested.

x x x x

We celebrated Oct. 2 as Bapu's birthday. There have been a number of celebrations during the past two weeks—*Id-ul-Fitr, Vijaya Dashmi,* Bapu's birthday. Soon there will be *Divali* and about that time we shall complete 800 days here—on the 18th Oct.

x x x x

The Jailer, Balak Ram, took a month's leave from Sept. 4th and has just returned. During his absence Sendak, the Superintendent, shifted from his house to the Jailer's room here to keep watch over us for the 24 hours. A few days ago he told me that he had heard me moaning and making weird noises at night. I sleep in the verandah opposite my room. He sleeps inside his room on the other side separated from us by the open space—about 50 yards width—and a verandah. Yet he heard me! He thought at first that it was Pantji, who had been unwell, but Pantji disillusioned him and told him I was the guilty person.

I was not myself aware that I had been shouting or moaning.

x x x x

555. On 3 October 1944, Amery told the House of Commons: "I made special enquiries and am informed that with the exception of Dr. Ghose, who is suffering from a mild internal complaint, all the members of the Working Committee now detained in Ahmadnagar are well. In particular I am informed that Pandit Nehru is vigorous, alert and fit."

October 7. Saturday

Day before yesterday on Oct. 5th at about 3.30 p.m. Sendak informed Mahmud that Government had ordered his immediate unconditional release. No reasons given. Mahmud said he would leave the next day.

Yesterday there was packing &c. for him and a faint touch of excitement for all of us. At about 2.15 p.m. he left our camp with the Supt. & a D.S.P. intending to visit a friend in the city and then take the train to Bombay. He had a bare hour before the train left. Still within this brief time, we were told later by Sendak, crowds gathered in the city and at the station. Sendak, unaccustomed to these demonstrations, was suitably impressed.

x x x x

Mahmud's release has nothing to do with the release of others here. Perhaps Rajendra Babu may also have been released in Behar—Behar is in a bad way owing to cholera, malaria, typhoid &c. killing thousands.

x x x x

Mahmud spent 788 days here—For over a year, since July 15, 1943—448 days—he and I were in the same room here. I am afraid we got on each other's nerves and I was not as tolerant always as I ought to have been. Some months ago in the course of an argument I lost my temper and upset him. Since then we have avoided discussions and our talks have been strictly practical.

x x x x

And now I am left by myself in this big room. I have had it cleaned today and have rearranged the furniture and my belongings.

Oct. 8. Sunday

News of Wendell Willkie's death came as a shock and I felt very sad. All of us were dejected by it. His book *One World* and his articles and statements had impressed me greatly[556]—Even more so his sticking

556. In his statements made during his six-week tour of the world and after his return to the US on 14 October 1942, he particularly criticised the American Government for its failure to take a possitive stand on India's struggle for freedom.

to his principles at the cost of his nomination for the Presidential election. Whatever he may have been in his earlier days, he had developed into a rare type of statesman and, young as he was, he gave us hope for the future. Why do good men die and the undeserving live on and on?

October 9 1944

Darling Indu,

Your letter No. 82 of the 24th Sept. with baby's pictures reached me a week ago. Babes a few weeks old seem to me to be singularly alike. I suppose they are really not so. The picture I like best is the one in which he is yawning and stretching himself. Probably there is a fair amount of resemblance to you. The forehead seems to be rather like Feroze's.

As you know there has been a change in our little community here—Mahmud has gone and we are only eleven now. He must have given you some news about us, though there is really little in the way of news for we live in an eventless, and therefore newsless, world.

I suppose you have gone to Allahabad. I am sure the change will do you and the baby good. It is good that Mrs. Vakil is accompanying you and will spend a month with you in Anand Bhawan.

As for the names for the babe, I am afraid too continued a search is likely to confuse. You must remember that the field for choice is really unlimited, far more so than in the average European personal name. Sanskrit is very rich in names and in musical words which can be used for names. Lotus has scores of words with fine shades of meanings—I think you have a sufficient field to choose from already and you can add to the list any suggestion that *Puphi* intended making. Choose one finally then without further references.

For the present your choice seems to be राजीव रत्न.[557] I noticed a paragraph in *The Leader* about it, in which reference was made to consultations with me and Narendra Deva. My first impression of राजीव रत्न was not very favourable but on repeating the name several times I began to like it. Narendra Deva also felt the same way. He suggested later a variation with the same meaning but without the alliteration: राजीव मणि.[558] I do not particularly care for this, but I find that with fre-

557. *Rajiva Ratna*
558. *Rajiva Mani.*

quent repetition every name gradually becomes familiar. Of the two I prefer राजीव रत्न. Rajiva is likely to be shortened into Rajji or Rajio.

Priyadarshika is a pretty name for a girl—Perhaps you know that there is a play of this name by Harsha, the king and playwright of the 7th century.

I have sent you a number of books to Allahabad. A list of these is enclosed. Three of them, you will notice, are *Puphi's*. Please give them to her.

This is a brief letter—partly because I can think of nothing else to write—partly as I am engaged in a thorough pre-*Divali* cleaning of my room. For a year and a quarter Mahmud and I shared this room—Now that he has gone I have it all to myself and I have spread out. I am having all my books, papers, clothes etc. aired and cleaned. It is extraordinary how cockroaches and crickets & other insects thrive here and develop large families. I try to eliminate them every few weeks and yet the next time they are as populous than ever. Much worse of course are the खटमलs.

This is my letter No. 83.

Love

Your loving
Papu

October 14. 1944

Indu darling,

I have received your last letter from Bombay—No. 83 dated 3rd October. The next will be from Anand Bhawan where you have returned, with a new member of the family, after many months.

Puphi, I suppose, is in Allahabad now—She appears to be a little worried about my having received or not the letters she has been sending me recently. I had a letter from her yesterday and another this morning. Will you tell her that I have received, during the last six weeks, the following letters from her: dated 9/9 from Calcutta; dated 20/9 from Allahabad together with Chand's & Tara's letters and their picture; dated 25/9 from Allahabad; yesterday a letter from Allahabad dated 4/10; and today one from Sevagram dated 8/10. That is the lot—I think I have received all her letters. During this period I have written to her to Calcutta on 2/9; to Allahabad on 26/9, and again to Allahabad on 5/10. With the last letter I returned Chand's and Tara's

letters. I have answered all her letters except the last two which came yesterday and today — These I shall answer in due course — There is nothing urgent in them.

Puphi writes that everyone in Sevagram referred to the babe as Motilal. This may be the southern custom but it certainly is not our way and I see no reason to adopt it unless there is something obviously attractive about it. I see no attraction. And so with all deference to Bapu and others I think we should not submit to this pressure. Now that you have consulted various people and considered a number of alternative names, you and Feroze should finally fix upon a name.

I hope you have found Anand Bhawan in good condition and in good spirit — for a house, just as a city or a country, has a peculiar atmosphere attaching to it. It varies and has its ups and downs, its periods of smiling content and depression. Children of course make a great difference to a house and garden. Children have lived in Anand Bhawan but, come to think of it, this is the first time a baby has made it its home.

I hope you will see that our old servants are doing well in these hard times and have the necessities of life provided for them. The garden should be looked after. This is just the season for it and Feroze, I am sure, will make it put on its best appearance.

You have written to me that you gave the cheque to Betty and have also noted the little gifts for the servants. One matter I wrote to you about you have not mentioned. I asked you to arrange to pay on my behalf Rs. 1000/- to Feroze for his relief work — Also, in addition to this, he was to be paid Rs. 100/- a month for this work. I hope you have seen to this.

I notice from the papers that Upadhyaya is out. He came out just in time to receive you on your return to Allahabad. I do not know how he is, nor do I know where his wife and children are. Naturally he would like to be with his people for some time Give him facilities for doing so.

We have had heavy rain here — probably the last of the monsoon. The weather is slowly changing though it is still warm enough — As a sign of the change I noticed the wagtail here this morning and yesterday an oriole could be heard. Today I saw also an unusual sight. In a bed containing cosmos flowers there was a cocoon-like thing hanging on to a stalk. We had noticed this some weeks ago and I expected some kind of a moth to emerge from it in due course. Well, it burst this morning and, to our amazement, hundreds of very tiny grasshoppers (or something resembling them) came out of it. I suppose they will

grow now to the usual size. They are called in Hindustani घोड़ा,[559] so I am told, because of the horse-like way they stand with head up.

The bunch of books you sent me from Bombay has not come yet. I am anxious to have the *Persian Grammar* — If you can discover Otto in Anand Bhawan or at 2 Mukerjee Road, that would be excellent.

This is my letter No. 84.

Love

Your loving
Papu

Deepavali,
17.10.44

Darling Betty,

Regarding my health, etc., you ought to know me well enough to realize that I can look after myself and that I attach far more importance to physical well-being than most people. It is not a question of my agreeing with Govt. — I seldom agree with it. But I rely on myself for my physical and mental conditions and not on Govt. agencies to which I attach little importance. Accidents apart, there is no reason why my health should fail me for a long time to come. In jail especially I consider it a point of honour to keep fit and an inexcusable lapse and weakness to fall ill. I do not want to become an invalid in the hands of the Govt. or their representatives. I want to retain as much of my physical and mental freedom as possible. It is enough that I am confined within four walls and cut off from human beings outside. I do not propose to add to that confinement.

I may be kept in prison but nobody is going to take from me my dignity and composure. Whining and complaining are not in my line. Nor are outbursts of strong language good enough. Apart from other reasons, they drain away energy and vitality and I want to preserve my energy.

As a matter of fact I keep not only physically well — and this is more than I can say of others — but am mentally at peace. I do not worry. Why should I? I keep busy with my day's work and sleep well at night. It is totally immaterial to me whether I go out of prison or remain here for some more years. Or perhaps that is not quite correct,

559. *Ghora*—Horse.

for it would make a difference. But I am sure that I can continue in prison for an indefinite period without worrying much about it.

We have seen in the newspapers that interviews are going to be allowed to us. We have received thus far no other intimation of this or the conditions governing them. It is very good of the Government to allow us this privilege after nearly two and a quarter years. But for my part I have no present desire or intention to take advantage of it. I need not go into reasons for this. It is enough that the conditions under which interviews are likely to take place do not fit in with my conception of my dignity or the dignity of my dear ones. So I do not want you or anyone else to take the trouble to come here or to apply for an interview with me. Naturally I should love to see you all but I am not at all sure that a brief jail interview would prove satisfactory to either party.

Day after tomorrow is *Bhaiya Duj* and a fortnight later is your birthday. As I cannot possibly send you a present from here I am enclosing a cheque for Rs. 100/-. Will you get a present and give it to yourself with my love?

I was glad to hear of the healthy appearance of the boys.

Love to you and Raja.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

October 19 — Thursday

The third *Divali* in Ahmadnagar Fort has come and gone. We celebrated it in our usual way with some illumination in a small way. This was rather successful this time. The flagstaff in the centre of our court has begun to resemble the Eiffel Tower of Paris. We have trained creepers along with four cable supports of the flagstaff and these have grown rapidly and produced a resemblance to that Tower. In the centre of this at various heights lights (दीवे) were arranged, and the effect was pleasant and agreeable.

At night we used some coloured candles in our dining room—

x x x x

Yesterday — 18th October — we completed 800 days here. Another landmark — the next century, 900 days, falls on January 26th — Independence Day —

x x x x

Ever since Mahmud went there have been many surprises for us in the papers — what he said and what is more important, what he did not say — He was released unconditionally so the order ran. Was it on grounds of health? This might have been presumed as he is a bundle of diseases — Some mention of this in the papers brought out a prompt denial from Govt. No he was not released on grounds of health; in fact he was not ill, so Govt. proclaimed. The latter positive statement was astonishing even for a Govt. communique. Whatever the reasons for Mahmud's release, no one in his senses can call Mahmud fit and well. He is continually suffering from a number of serious diseases. Probably because these are chronic they are taken for granted by Govt. whose idea of illness is high temperature and being completely bed-ridden. Filaria, heart-trouble, gall-bladder, serious eye-trouble, persistent spitting out of blood, pyorrhoea — are some of his ailments, and additional minor troubles supervene. Almost it might be said that he is broken up physically and even to some extent mentally because of all this. It is true that he had most of these troubles when he was arrested and brought here and they have continued since then. There have been some new ailments also.

Govt.'s statement that Mahmud was not released on grounds of ill-health led people to discuss the real reason for his discharge. Whispers apparently started that he had given some kind of undertaking to Govt. Newspapers referred to them and Mahmud's attitude encouraged these rumours. He remained mum and avoided pressmen. We read about this with amazement for there had been no hint of undertaking so far as we knew. Why does he not deny these insinuations, we wondered?

Then Maulana remembered that Mahmud had told him that he had sent a letter[560] to Govt. about his ill-health and had demanded permission for his own doctors to see him. What else had he written in this letter? No one knew for none had seen that letter. It appeared that not even Sendak the Supt. had seen it as he had given it sealed.

So doubts grew. How excessively foolish Mahmud was and anything might come out of that folly. Foolish people often think they are acting cleverly and in trying to overreach others fall themselves into the pit of their own making.

Mahmud stated that he would make a statement after seeing Bapu as we had asked him to convey a message to him. As a matter of fact we had done no such thing except to send him our greetings. The

560. On 19 August 1944 Syed Mahmud wrote a letter to the Viceroy's Private Secretary, without the knowledge of his prison colleagues, criticising Mahatma Gandhi for the August Resolution and reiterating that he himself had supported the war effort. This led to his release.

real reason for not sending a message through Mahmud was because we did not trust Mahmud's ability in conveying our ideas correctly. Besides no simple message could be sent as the situation was a complicated one and our reactions varied.

Why should Mahmud say that he would issue a statement only after seeing Bapu? What was there to prevent him from denying the charge of undertaking if this was false? It was all very odd and irritating. Evidently there was something behind all this of which we had been unaware.

Mahmud told everybody that he and I shared a room. Inevitably people would think that he would act only after consulting me. Yet I knew nothing and as a matter of fact we had not been on very good terms since April last when we had a rumpus. We continued to carry on normal conversations but during the last six months we discussed nothing serious and deliberately avoided a real talk.

Mahmud went to Wardha — saw Bapu[561] — and then issued a brief statement. He said that he had been maligned &c.— That he had written to Govt. previously (from A F.) and he wanted to publish this letter but he could only do so after he got Govt.'s permission as the letter had been marked 'Private & Confidential'. He had asked for this permission —

So now it appeared for the first time that he had written something to Govt. apart from what he might have said about his ill-health &c. What this was none of us know. Probably he wrote something very foolish.

x x x x

Mahmud's statements about the health & activities of the people here have not been satisfactory. But to add to his own deficiencies the printer's devil produced a remarkable piece of information. It appeared in some newspapers (*Leader, Amrit Bazar Patrika*) that while the older persons played chess and cards occasionally, 'in the evenings some girl inmates take to badminton'! This apparently ought to have been 'some agile inmates' etc.

561 He explained to Mahatma Gandhi the circumstances under which he had written that letter to the Government and admitted that he had been guilty of gross impropriety towards the other members of the Congress Working Committee

But many people will no doubt be taken in and imagine that we have the company of girls! Considering that we have not seen a girl or a woman since the day of our arrest.

x x x x

Two days ago it was announced in the papers that Govt. was permitting interviews to us. Yesterday this information was conveyed to us by the Jailer — All of us have reacted against accepting interviews though for different reasons. Maulana has suffered so much inner hurt that his pride will not permit him to accept any so-called favour — He is for no interviews here or even elsewhere, in case we are transferred. Others simply think that it is far too much trouble to ask our people to travel thousands of miles just for a brief interview. Some hold a middle opinion. Anyway it is clear that no one is going to have any interview in Ahmadnagar Fort. I have written to Betty not to seek an interview.

Nan will be going soon to America and I should have loved to see her before she goes. But that is off also.

We are meeting here today to consider what answer we should send to Govt. The interviews allowed are limited to close relatives — to those with whom we can correspond.

October 21, Saturday

We were all agreed that we should not accept interviews in the existing circumstances. But when it came to giving reasons for this decision there was a difference of opinion. Ultimately we left it to Maulana to write on behalf of all of us to the Suptd. and to write briefly. He sent a brief note[562] yesterday. I suggested some changes and additions in it but he did not agree to them. It was a small matter after all what he wrote.

I have today written to Indu also about our decision not to have interviews. She is back in Allahabad, returning home after many months.

562. Abul Kalam Azad wrote that "the general attitude of the Government towards us during the past twenty six and a half months, and the rigorous isolation to which we have been subjected, even in spite of personal tragedies, are not calculated to incline us to take advantage of the personal facility".

Oct. 21, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have had no news of you since your return to Allahabad. The first few days must have been rather full for you had been away from home for many months.

The books you sent from Bombay have not reached me yet. Perhaps the fact that Laski's and Huxley's books have titles with the word 'Revolution' in them has induced the censors at the Bombay Secretariat to pay particular attention to them. I have received, however, a parcel containing the Travancore cigarette case, the Kashmir pullover, the *pashmina* shawl and two boxes of cigarettes. I wish you had kept the shawl for yourself or the baby. I really have no use for it here.

The sweater or pullover is satisfactory. It is just a bit heavier and not quite so soft as my old one. It is also slightly tight but I suppose it will widen with use. My old pullover is full of holes, as I wrote you once. I suppose these holes could be mended. It might be worthwhile sending it to Kashmir for the purpose — But for the present I shall keep it.

The cigarette case which Chinni has sent me is well-made and attractive. Only there is just a minor defect — it is apparently not meant to contain the average cigarettes — my cigarette cannot be pushed into its separate compartments. I tried a thinner one. This entered with some difficulty but then would not come out again without the help of some kind of pincers! It is curious how artisans who do good work ignore some very obvious aspect of what they are making.

We have had our third *Divali* here, suitably celebrated in our own small way and the next day, Oct. 18th, we completed 800 days here and started on the ninth century. I have got rather into the habit of measuring our stay here by a century of days — a month is too short a time, a year too long The present century will end on a significant day — January 26th — and then we shall enter the millennial centenary.

Ever since Mahmud has left us and gone out we have read with some surprise the statements made by him or about him in the papers. But the biggest of all surprises came when we read an account of our life here which, *inter alia*, said that the older people played chess or cards "and in the evening some girl inmates take to badminton". Girls! Considering that we have not seen anything resembling a girl or a woman ever since we left Bombay 26½ months ago. And yet there it was soberly stated in *The Leader* as well as in the *Patrika* in some agency message. Both the Allahabad papers agreed in this and I

wondered what our friends and others reading this would think of it. Evidently the sub-editors had found nothing odd about it and so it was possible that others might also imagine that a benevolent and benign Govt. had taken some steps to cheer us up by arranging to send some girls to play badminton in the evenings. But no. They did not come from outside, they were the 'girl inmates'. Who were these girl inmates? Where exactly do I come in for I play neither chess nor cards?

A reference to some other newspapers brought some light. Apparently the word 'agile' had been converted into 'girl' in the process of transmission. The editors of *The Leader* and *Patrika* were not clever enough to spot this or even to doubt the accuracy of the message.

We were informed two or three days ago that we would be permitted to have fortnightly interviews in the future under the usual jail rules. You must have seen this piece of news in the newspapers. After 2 years and two months and more we have forgotten all about interviews and only vague memories persist of what people outside our little group are like. For various reasons which I need not go into — some are obvious enough — we have decided not to take advantage of this generous offer and so we propose to take no interviews and to carry on as we are. Need I say how much I would like to see you and others again? But it is better to hold ourselves in patience and wait for the day, distant or otherwise, when we can meet in more normal circumstances. I have written to Betty and informed her of our decision. Will you tell *Puphi* also? She is thinking of going to America and both she and I would have liked to see each other before she goes. But there are so many things that we want to do and yet cannot and sometimes deliberately refrain from doing. That is all part of this game of life and we must accept it with good humour even when it hurts.

We were supposed to have interviews with those to whom we are allowed to write. That means, so far as I am concerned, you and *Puphi* and Betty and Amma. Amma had also better be informed, though I suppose there was hardly any chance of her travelling two thousand miles in her present state of ill-health in order to have a brief interview with me.

So that is that!

I see from the papers that Kailas and Sheila are returning at last with their two babies. I suppose they will travel *via* the Mediterranean. They ought to reach India early in November —

I have sent you back the following books & pamphlets:

1 Shakespeare's Works, Vol. IX
2 Gustav Stolper : *This Age of Fable*

3 *Mahabharata* — abridged
4 *Dayananda and the Indian Problem*
5 Stalin's Report No. 17
6 *Peace Front and People's War*
7 Stalin : *War of Liberation*
8 Earl Browden : *Victory and After*
9 Orel
10 Kharkov
11 Sebastopol
12 *France Fights for Freedom*
13 *A New Germany in Birth*
14 *Spotlight on Yugoslavia*
15 I.L.O. *Man-power Mobilisation for Peace*
Also some periodicals.
Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 85.

October 22, Sunday

What a bloody fool Mahmud has been! For the last few days I have hardly dared to open a newspaper lest some sapient remark of his or something about him should upset me. Gradually the facts are coming out but the picture is still very vague and incomplete. It seems obvious, however, that he wrote to Govt. early in Sept.—the famous sealed letter — in which he said all manner of foolish things — Govt., taking advantage of these assurances and attempts to clear himself, released him as one who repented.

All manner of little incidents of the past months now stand out and assume a new significance. His attempt to send a letter of resignation from the W.C. to the Maulana six months ago — both being in prison and the W.C. an illegal organization! It was as a consequence of this that I flared up then and said many hard things to him resulting in our relations becoming strained. What was the purpose of this step, I had asked him then, except to lay the foundations for some other step? What was this? He gave me no answer. I have no doubt now that he intended informing his son about it through one of his letters and thus indirectly informing Govt. It is evident that he wrote much to his son

with this intention. Some of this was even published and Sendak mentioned then that the officers in his mess referred to it saying that it was evidence of our 'cracking up'.

Bapu's release and the various steps he took possibly led Mahmud to postpone further activities. But when month after month went by and he saw no chance of release, he wrote direct to Govt. — not telling us anything about it.

If all this is not cowardly, sneaky and lying behaviour I do not know what it is. It was open to him to change his opinion, or confess his weakness, but to act behind our backs and imagine that he was being very clever — this is more than I could have expected of any man I call a friend or comrade. One false step leads to another and slippery slope becomes steeper.

What will people outside think? Can anyone possibly conceive that he acted in this manner without reference to Maulana and me? Without, in fact, any mention of it to us? Some may even think that we partly approved of it, but certainly everyone will think that we knew about it.

What must he have told Bapu and others? Lies, lies, lies or what is even worse, an atom of truth with a mass of lies covering it. Not the youngest and most immature of our volunteers could have acted thus.

x x x x

I was reading today Plato—*The Last Days of Socrates — The Apology, Crito* &c.[563] I felt strangely comforted and my anger against Mahmud lessened.

23-10-1944

Darling Nan,[564]

I owe you three letters, that is to say I have received three letters from you since I wrote to you last on Oct. 5th. Your three letters are dated 4th Oct., 8th Oct., (from Sevagram), and 14th Oct. which came last evening. With my last letter I returned Chand's and Tara's letters. The snapshots of the girls reached me some time back. I am keeping them unless you want them. Rita's photograph is also with me.

563. The trial and condemnation of Socrates on charges of heresy and corrupting the minds of the young and Plato's defence of him are conveyed in these books.

564. File No: 3590/H/II-2, Maharashtra Government Records, Police Commissioner's Office.

This continuing search of a name for the babe is becoming rather pointless. We seem to be losing ourselves in a sea of suggestions and there is no end to the attractive names that can be found in our old literature. If this kind of thing goes on much longer we shall have to call the babe the Nameless or the one with innumerable names. I think it is time we pitched our tent somewhere and fixed on a name or names. Otherwise fresh suggestions will continue to pour in. Rajiva Ratna is a good name and the more I repeat it the better it sounds. As Indu and you and Betty like it, why not fix upon it? As for a second name, if Indu approves, Brijees may be chosen.

I am not particularly anxious to see the babe soon I feel rather uncomfortable with tiny babes; they seem so soft and delicate, and I am a little afraid of hurting them with my uncouth ways. After the first six months they become more solid, can sit properly and it is possible to treat them as human beings.

Your excitement about a possible interview with me was premature. When I first heard of interviews being allowed it was all very vague then and no official intimation had reached us—my immediate emotional reaction to it was not to take them. This had little to do with any reasons or with any particular conditions attached to them, though reasons subsequently confirmed that first reaction. I wrote immediately to Betty and asked her to let you know. Why did I react in this way? After all I have taken interviews in prison previously and it is just possible that if interviews had been permitted from the time of our arrest and confinement on this occasion, we might have accepted them and adapted ourselves to them though I must say that I have never liked the idea of jail interviews. Somehow it brings home the idea of enforced confinement and being subjected to others' wills even more than the confinement itself. That idea is a constant irritant. What one might have done more than two years ago I do not know. But after being deprived of even this abnormal and strictly limited human intercourse for nearly two years and a quarter, a period during which much has happened and layer upon layer of thought and passion and painful sensation have accumulated in memory's chambers, it is very different with me. It may be I have hardened; certainly I have changed, as we all change with the passing of years. So it is not a question of any particular condition attached to an interview but a reaction to everything as a whole. I do not fancy being treated like a wild beast in a cage with occasional rope allowed so that I can move a few feet if I behave myself. I dislike being the plaything of others and to have my movements and my emotional life regulated by others. Where force prevents me from acting as I wish, I have to accept it, but I prefer to

retain such freedom of mind and action as I possess. If it has been thought fit and proper to prevent us from seeing even those we care for during these 2¼ years or so, well and good; anyway perforce I had to adapt myself to it. But I see no reason why I should adapt myself to all the new vagaries of those who keep us in prison or to stabilise myself in new positions. It pleases me to reject crumbs of relief, if relief they can be called. Thus I have a sensation of not only being the ruler of my mind but, up to some extent, even my actions.

Perhaps all this is mere emotion or pride. I do not deny it, nor do I think this a failing of which I should rid myself. Anyway, whether it is a virtue or failing, it is part of me and governs my life.

I would love to see you all but I would rather do so in the normal conditions of life and not in the narrow, constrained, prying atmosphere of a jail office. I have so much to see, so much to feel, so much to say — how could I do this in a jail interview? I wondered how I would feel if I saw those I cared for and heard dear and remembered voices again. Normally, outside we would adapt ourselves to each other soon enough, even though we might discover many changes and new aspects and features. But here or in any prison, I would hardly be able to say what I had in mind for I would be overwhelmed with the things I had to say and at the same time trying to find out what the other was like, what would be appropriate and what not so. Would then, I wondered, all that I had to say remain unsaid and I sit dumbly and confused? Probably not for I do not function that way, but there would be a fever of excitement and feverish ways of talking which would cover up and hide what lay in the mind.

Yet do not imagine that I am unhappy for that is not so, and I find many ways and many by-lanes where peace and mental delight are to be found. Necessarily I live often in dreamland, almost forgetting the reality of things here. Not so much an ivory tower business for I am too much connected with life and activity to look at my own pale reflection. Yet it is curious how thin is the line that divides happiness from unhappiness, like that faint line which divides life from death.

You will go to America and be far away for some months. My mind of course will picture you on the other side of the world. And yet for all practical purposes you have been as far away, as unapproachable and unattainable, during these past two years and more. If you lived in Ahmadnagar itself you would still be as far. And yet very near wherever you might be. For this sensation of nearness and farness is of the mind and the feelings. If we do not know each other well, we are strangers however often we may meet; even if we know each other in many ways and yet do not fit into each other, even then we continue

as strangers unable to see and understand each other. Here I have been for this long while living in the enforced intimacy of prison life with others. Some I have grown to know better, others seem further away and far more difficult for me to understand, or perhaps more understanding has revealed greater differences in our outlook on life. Prison has a way of magnifying our traits and suppressed habits of thought and living; sometimes it strengthens our virtues, more often it magnifies our failings and our spirit of intolerance. For over a year Mahmud and I shared a room here. There are not enough rooms for each one to have a separate one and so some of us had to share rooms. At first I had a room to myself. Then we had a fresh shuffle and I decided to share with Mahmud as he was unwell and I thought I might be of some service to him. Our room was a big one but it does make a difference whether one has a room of one's own or not.

How little we know of each other and even a lifetime may fail to give us insight into another. And yet a word, an act, a gesture suddenly enlightens us like a flash of lightning. I had known Mahmud as well as one can usually know another. Yet I was continually discovering how different we were from each other mentally, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually. In spite of our liking for each other there was so little in common. What interested me produced no response in him, what interested him bored me or even irritated me. So it came to this that we had little to talk about apart from the necessities of daily life. For many months we hardly had a conversation. And so he was really further removed from me even though we shared a room, than many persons whom I had not seen for years. He must have told you, if you have met him, of our superficial daily life here, but of the things that count, so far as I am concerned, probably you could tell him far more than he could tell you. For though you may not see me you can understand me from letters, while he and I live far apart in private universes of our own.

It will be a pity if you do not see Malabar. You have never been there so far as I know. Not from the point of view of relief work but of seeing a lovely corner of India which so few of us in the North know. We talk and think of India so much and yet how little we know even her physical appearance, much less her spirit and her memoried past, so full of dreams and many sided activity, of adventures of the mind and body. I am sorry I have not been able to go to Malabar oftener. But I carry with me the memory of the beauty of its backwaters, those tongues of the sea that creep and wind far inland with their wooded banks and green and thickly covered little islands. I remember journeying with Kamala and Indu over their still waters as the

evening deepened to night and the moonlight shimmered over the surface, with the silence broken only by the soft sound of the oars dipping into the waters. Does Indu remember, I wonder? Tell her of these lines:

Un soir, t'en souvient-il? Nous voguions en silence;
On n'entendait au loin, sur l'onde et sous les cieux,
Que le bruit des rameurs qui frappaient en cadence
Tes flots harmonieux.[565]

Will you tell Indu to send me, when she sends another packet, Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina?* She will find it in Anand Bhawan. I want to read it again.

And so all my love to you whether you are in Allahabad or far America.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

October 26, Thursday

So the Mahmud mystery is solved. His (secretly-sent) letter to the Viceroy has been published together with a statement by him & a characteristic note[566] by Gandhiji.

What astonishing stupidity it reveals — lack of the most ordinary intelligence & sense. And servility & whining & suppression of truth and at least two falsehoods — though possibly, in his excited state of mind, he might have imagined much.

I felt humiliated & ashamed that one whom I had considered a friend & a colleague should have behaved thus. And yet in spite of the tragedy of it all, it was so comic, so utterly ridiculous.

Anyway it is over and there is some feeling of relief that we have not been dragged into it.

x x x x

Bapu again contemplating a fast!

565. One evening, do you remember?, we were sailing noiselessly; we only heard far off, on the water and beneath the skies, the sound of rowers rhythmically striking the melodious waves.

566. In a statement Mahatma Gandhi asked Congressmen to read without passion Syed Mahmud's letter to the Government. "For me in spite of his indiscretion, he remains the same dear friend he has been since the Khilafat days."

Oct. 28, 1944

Darling Indu,

I received your letter of the 20th Oct. (No. 84) yesterday after a rather long letterless interval. I realized how fully occupied you must have been with baby and the house after your return home. Baby must of course prove a hand-full and a mind-full. That is the way of babies. He is already nine weeks old and I suppose in another month or two he will begin to behave a little more reasonably.

As for the name, I think you should stick to Rajiva Ratna राजीव रत्न. It is a good name. As a second name you can have Birjees बिर्जीस, if you like it. So that the names would be राजीव रत्न बिर्जीस though normally only the first name will be used. It is desirable, I think, to have a Persian name and the one Maulana suggested sounds well and has a good meaning and old associations.

There is one other suggestion regarding names that I am making though I am not myself sure about its desirability. What about adding 'Nehru' as an additional name? I do not mean that he should have a double-barrelled name — Nehru-Gandhi. That sounds silly and is in fact a little absurd. But just as a separate name which is not used normally but is there. It is really a matter of sentiment. On the other hand, if this is added, the full name becomes long & pompous — राजीव रत्न बिर्जीस नेहरू गांधी. Perhaps it is worthwhile having it thus in a formal kind of way but not for use of course — But do as you & Feroze think fit.

'Nehru' has no meaning and is derived, as family names often are, from some place name. Hence it is not tied up with any particular spelling. In Urdu there is no difficulty because Urdu writing is vague and rather unscientific and can be read in a variety of ways. Thus it is written نہرو. In Hindi, which is more precise, a difficulty arises and the exact sound of the name cannot be reproduced as there is no such sound in the script. That sound is somewhere in between नेहरू and नैहरू[567] — Dadu, who seldom wrote his name in Hindi, used the नैहरू form. I came to the conclusion that नेहरू was a nearer approach and therefore more correct. I have therefore been using this form. You are however cussed enough to write नैहरू. Last evening I had a discussion with Narendra Deva and he agreed that नैहरू was not suitable as it sounds like Naihru, and that नेहरू was better. In Latin script we have got used to Nehru though it is not very correct and

567. Nehru and Naihru

leads foreigners to pronounce it in all manner of ways. But we have to stick to it. I have recently been reading a book by an American scholar in the Persian language. With a scholar's perversity he insists on writing names as he thinks they should be written and not as in fact they are being written now. He even changes people's personal names using diacritical marks to indicate the correct pronunciations. (If you do not know the word 'diacritical' you should look it up in the dictionary. You should know it.) I suppose owing to the insufficiency of the Latin alphabet some such marks are necessary for accurate representations of sounds. But they are rather irritating, especially in names. They cannot be avoided in transliterating Sanskrit or Arabic &c. This American writes Makkah for Mecca, and wants to write al-Qahira for Cairo though his courage fails him. The Maulana's name is written by him as Abū-l Kalām Āzād. My name he insists on writing as Jawāhar Lāl Nāhru, well-knowing of course how I write it. In dealing with Indian names he gets into a difficulty in his index, which is not surprising as most of these names have no fixed family designations. In some despair he exclaims: 'Forms such as Rahim, Sir Abdur and S.A. Lateef must make anyone shudder who has a reverence for either God or grammar.'

As a matter of fact 'Nahrū' is not right. It is just an attempt to transliterate in Latin characters the Urdu نہرو. The nearest approach seems to me to be Neharu. But we need not worry about scholars' ways and perversities. 'Nehrū' is there and will remain there.

So much for names — The books you have sent — or Betty — have not yet come but are expected in a day or two.

I have already written to you that we do not propose to take interviews. I wrote to Betty also and to *Puphi*. Betty had apparently applied for an interview before she got my letter and yesterday I was formally informed that the interview had been allowed. But of course it is not going to take place now as I do not choose to allow it or any other interview.

There appears to be some misunderstanding as to the reason for our not taking interviews. There was even a comment in a Bombay paper suggesting that this might be due to some condition relating to searches of those who came to interview. This is not correct. Jail interviews are always somewhat humiliating, or, at any rate, I have found them so. But apart from the inevitable accompaniments and atmosphere surrounding them, there is, so far as we know, no special conditions attached to them here. There is no question of personal searches. Nevertheless we have decided not to have interviews. The reason? Well, to put it briefly, all that has happened during the past twenty-

six & a half months. If during this long and dreary period the normal human accompaniments of even jail life were not considered suitable for us, in spite of tragedy and other painful happenings, we can do without them now and for the future.

I am enclosing a few seeds of a creeper which has flourished exceedingly here. It came accidentally as a seedling and we pushed it into the ground. It has since spread out to about 40 feet and is a perennial. It gives clusters of small pink flowers. I do not know the name but Asaf Ali says it is called in Hindustani—*Qumquma* कुमकुमा. I am not at all sure that these seeds will yield any results. But try them. They take time.

I wrote to you a week or fortnight ago that the rains had ended. I was premature. They have continued and are still continuing. October is evidently the most rainy month here, after June.

Love

Your loving
Papu

I have just received the books from Bombay as well as the *Persian Grammar* &c. I shall send a list next week.
This is my letter No. 86.

31-10-1944

Darling Betty,
How fortunate you are to feel on your eleventh wedding anniversary fresh and friendly with life. The feeling has grown in me that life for all its vagaries offers us ultimately what we seek from it, or rather what we are capable of receiving from its inexhaustible storehouse. In a sense it mirrors our capacity and our temperaments. If our interests are sufficiently varied we can find in it all the variety we can appreciate and absorb. If we live in a narrow shell, life for us assumes that shape and context. It can be superficial or deep as we choose to see it and sense it; it can be full of adventure or dull and conventional and narrow in scope, fitting in with our own mental horizon. Life ultimately is a series of mental perceptions and sensations; it enters and fills us to the extent we have open windows to our minds and spirits. External factors, which we cannot control, affect it of course greatly, but there is always this possibility of rising above them and not allowing them to suppress us; and indeed of making them the means of giving us further insight and experience of life.

the principal reason apparently being that Govt. wanted to close this camp. This may happen — And yet I rather doubt it. The Supdt. says we would have been transferred but for our decision not to take interviews.

Hardly anyone of us looks forward to a transfer. Living in a jail, as we are bound to do if we are transferred, will be a change for the worse in every way. The only advantage might have been in interviews and as we have rejected these, even that advantage goes. Anyway, it really does not matter much either way, whether we are transferred or not —

x x x x

Mahmud has done one good thing at least. He has released to the press Maulana's letter to Linlithgow sent in February 1943.

x x x x

I have started Persian with the help of Maulana and Otto's *Grammar*. I wonder how long I shall continue. I do not take kindly to languages. Still it will help in various ways —

x x x x

Today is the American presidential election & the anniversary of the Soviet Revolution.

November 11, Saturday

Yesterday there was an unusual occurrence. Sendak, the Supdt., came with a parcel, unopened and sealed, and said he had instructions to deliver it to me without opening it. Further that the censor of the Bombay Secretariat had also not opened it. I opened the parcel in Sendak's presence — There were three books in it and a letter. Two of the books were by Edward Thompson and the third was Wavell's anthology of poetry.[569] Sendak was suitably impressed with Thompson's importance — that books sent by him for me should be treated in this superior way. He did not see the letter, or rather did not know who it was from. I did not tell him.

The letter was from Wavell. He said that Thompson had sent two books for me which he was forwarding — also a message about his illness. Edward had been very ill and was still in a bad way. A big operation yielding no results. Then a special treatment had done him

569. *Other Men's Flowers* (1944).

November 11, 1944

Darling Indu,

November is well on its way and it is pleasant. There is a nip in the air and the sun is losing its ferocity and becoming a mild and soothing companion. New birds appear. What a delightful month it is in India or rather in North India. Allahabad must be having its गुलाबी सर्दी[571] as they call it, that mild cold weather, which is neither really cold nor warm and yet is exhilarating and freshening. Ahmadnagar, though situated in the South, is on some kind of a plateau — its altitude is I think about 2000 ft. — and is therefore cooler than the surrounding country. It is never really cold here as in the North, but it is not so hot either and on the whole it has an agreeable climate. I rather miss the cold of the North. Anyway this is a pleasant and cheerful month here and I react to it accordingly. I hope the little one is enjoying this month and adapting himself to the cooler climate. I am sure this cold weather in Allahabad will do him a lot of good. Some of us were wise enough to be born in November.

I have received two books sent by Edward Thompson — *Burmese Silver* and *100 Poems* — and a message about his ill-health. He has been very ill, had a severe operation in March last for the removal of some kind of a growth, and was supposed to have been cured. But the trouble recurred and was found to be inoperable. The radio-therapists told him that there was no help for it. But then a new technique was tried on him and this treatment, although very painful and weakening, has produced a marked change and he hopes to recover. But it seems as if he was likely to be a permanent invalid. There was some news also about his sons on the battlefronts.

I am very sorry to learn about Thompson's illness. I should like you to write to him and tell him that I have received his two books and am happy to have them. I hope that his recovery to health will continue and that he will be well again.

Could you send me two tubes of Bengue's Balsam (I am not sure about the name). You should find at least 4 tubes in the cupboard in my bathroom. This is good for pains and sometimes my hand gives me trouble. Send me 2 tubes only. This Balsam is often useful and you should keep it by you.

I see that *Puphi* has got her passport and her visa. So now she has only to wait for her passage and this may be fixed up at any time. Tell

571. *Gulabi Sardi.*

her to let me know the address to which letters for her should be sent. I hope she realizes that America will be very cold indeed in December and subsequent months.

This is my letter No. 88.

Love

Your loving
Papu

14-11-1944

Darling Betty,

Your letter of the 6th came yesterday. Also the books. Thank you. Both of them are very welcome and will interest me, especially *Pre-Buddhist India*.[572] It seems to be a scholarly treatment of a period we know little about. I do not fancy the title of Munshi's book[573] but that of course is not a criticism of the book. Yet it indicates a pompous approach to a historical subject which should be dealt with in a lesser key. Munshi has a habit of using ornate and rather flamboyant language which sounds well at times but does not seem to possess too much meaning. I am referring chiefly to some of his reported speeches which have been a source of some amusement to us. Perhaps he controls himself a little more in his written work.

Some ten days ago or more I sent you my Shaeffer fountain pen for repairs. This is my favourite pen and I think I have used it now almost continuously for ten years or so. The nib just suits me. I possess two other pens but they are not suitable and it is something of a trial to use them for any length of time. So I would like the Shaeffer to be repaired and sent back to me, if that can be done. The nib itself is in good condition. It is the pumping apparatus that has gone wrong. For some time past this was not functioning properly. Now it is broken — that is the rod inside has become detached from the end rubber piece or whatever it is. I suppose it can be repaired.

Yesterday I received the dainty box containing 12 handkerchiefs.

572 By Ratilal N Mehta, the book presents a connected idea of ancient Indian life as portrayed in the Jataka stories.

573 *Akhand Hindustan* (1942), a collection of articles and speeches dealing with the unity of India which, in the author's words, "is not only to be felt, but visualised, worked for, if need be, fought for"

Will you thank Bul, Naju[574] and the G.S.S.? Whatever else I may lack here, there is no chance of my being short of handkerchiefs. All my old clothes have gone to pieces, have had to be renewed, and then again have been reduced to tatters. The process of renewal is a constant one. This rapid wearing away and tearing is I suppose partly due to the bad quality of the khadi as well as to the extreme vigour of the dhobi who deals with them. Perhaps also to the presence of fairly large quantities of chlorine in the water. But the handkerchiefs last. I do not trust them to the professional dhobis. They are washed here and they continue to give good service. The stuff is stronger too. So I have an ample supply of them.

I am writing this on my birthday. Why this particular day should have a greater importance than any other I do not know. And yet inevitably one treats it as a landmark in life's journey — a halting place from which one looks back and forward.

Give my love and thanks to all our friends who have remembered me on this occasion and sent me their greetings.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

November 17, Friday

Another birthday has come and gone and I am 55. It was my fifth consecutive birthday in prison.

Sendak brought a cake and our Marwari friend in Ahmadnagar, Ferodia, who sometimes sends fruits, also sent a cake and a big pie — a mixed chicken & vegetable affair with a most appetising smell. So we had a feast and invited Sendak & the Jailer to it.

Pantji as usual arranged for garlands and bouquets. Rukwa, the convict who helps in the pantry, fixed up a kind of छाता[575] of paper with flowers tacked on to it — rather an effective piece of work. He did this entirely of his own accord—

x x x x

574. Naju Dastur, a full-time worker for the promotion of khadi.
575. *Chhata*—Canopy.

Mahtab signalised my birthday by breaking the little finger of his left hand — a fracture — in playing volleyball! He had to be taken to the military hospital the next morning for an X-ray and plastering up.

x x x x

Reading the various messages in the papers on the occasion of my birthday I was greatly moved by some, especially by Edward Thompson's.[576] What an affection he has developed for me! Why, I have often wondered. What has he discovered in me to attract him so much? Do I deserve all this love and faith that so many pour on me?

x x x x

Today's papers bring the news of the death of Edward's son — It is reported that he was shot by the Germans in Bulgaria in June last. He was working with the Bulgarian partisans, a dangerous job for which he had volunteered. Only a week ago I had news of him in Edward's message which Wavell forwarded. He had "apparently disappeared into the blue on some secret mission and is unable to write." He had a more conclusive reason for not writing for he was dead. He died in June and Edward's letter to Wavell was dated Sept. 19th.

How proud Edward was of this son of his — I remember his telling me of his brilliance, his linguistic attainments and his lovable qualities. He was a boy who had just gone to Oxford with a scholarship. Edward added then — all for cannon fodder! He proved right.

The second and younger son is serving in the army in Italy.

What a terrible blow it must be for Edward. My heart goes out to him and I feel very depressed.

I have taken my measurements today — Nov. 17, 1944. Compare them with previous figures on p. 44, 230, & p. 311 of journal (4) A.F. dates 20/12/42, 10/8/43, & 21/11/43 — Blood pressure on p. 330 & at end of this book.

On 17/11/44	Weight	— 127 pounds
	Chest	— 32–35½ (normal) —
		— 36½ expanded
	Waist	— 28–30
	Hips	— 34¾

576 It read "It is very hard to know what to say about my dear friend Jawaharlal. As my message, I send you, Jawaharlal, the assurance given to a Hebrew prophet 'O man greatly beloved, peace be unto thee, be strong; yes, be strong. Go thou the way till the end be, for thou shalt rest in thy lot at the end of the day'."

Thigh	20—(at mark 18)
Calf	$12\frac{1}{4}$
Upperarm	stretched $11\frac{1}{4}$, bent 12
Forearm	$9\frac{3}{4}$
Wrist	$6\frac{3}{8}$
Neck	14

No marked changes since last November.

Nov. 18, 1944

Darling Indu,

It is a little over three weeks since I had a letter from you. I suppose Rajiva keeps you pretty well occupied and the multifarious new duties following motherhood fill the day and tire you. That is inevitable at this stage and so I do not expect you to be very regular in your letter writing. I should, however, like to have news of Rajiva. *Puphi* mentioned in a letter she sent from Lucknow that he had been vaccinated and his arm had swollen up. He must have been unwell and very restless and requiring constant attention. I hope he has got over this completely and is now well and prospering. In another two days he will be three months old. More and more he will resemble a human being. Can he sit up now without support? I should like to have a good picture of him to find out how he is growing and what he looks like now.

I have received two books, apparently under your instructions: *Gandhiji* — the anniversary volume — and Laski's *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*.[577] Have you purchased Laski's book or has it been borrowed from someone? I ask this as I have found some passages in it marked in pencil.

Last week I wrote to you that I had received some books from Edward Thompson and also a message about his illness. There was some brief information about his sons also. The younger one was serving in the army in Italy, the elder one was, it was stated, on

577. Laski's argument in this book was "if we have failed by armistice to lay the foundation of a revolution by consent, we shall pass rapidly to a position where, because men no longer hold the great ends of life in common, they will be unable to agree upon the methods of social change. In that event, the reorganisation of our basic principles will not be capable of accomplishment by peaceful means and the final disposition of force will be determined, not by discussions but by violence".

some secret mission and no letter had come from him for some time. Yesterday I read in the papers of the death in June last of this elder son. He was working then with the partisans in Bulgaria—a dangerous job. There was thus a sufficient reason for his not writing to his father for he had been dead for many months. The news has distressed me greatly though such things must happen in war. He was a very bright boy—his school & college record had been thus far brilliant—and his father was tremendously proud of him. And yet, even in 1938, Thompson was obsessed with the thought of the coming war and used to say that all their bright young men were destined to die in them—just cannon fodder they were. The death must be a great blow to him. The younger son was at school in 1938. He wrote me a letter once from school.

Is it possible to write or cable to France now? If so I should like to have news of Louise Morin and Jean Jacques—also of Nanu. How people disappear from our lives behind the black curtain of war!

Puphi is, I understand, busy with her passages and her priorities. I was astounded to learn from her letter that an air passage from India to New York in an American plane costs $900. If that is the kind of price one has to pay for air travel in the future, then I am afraid there is little chance of my indulging in it, much as I prefer it to other methods of transport.

This is my letter No. 89.

Love

From your loving
Papu

November 25, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of the 14th Nov—No. 85. *I am glad to learn that* Rajiva is progressing and keeping well. *Give the old boy my love.*

A few days ago I wrote to Amma to Lahore. *The very next day I* read in the papers that Kailas had reached Bombay and was proceeding to Allahabad. There was no mention of *Sheila or the children but I* presume they were all together. *They must have changed considerably* during these past five and a half years. *I suppose Kailas is settling* down in Lucknow.

As usual, I received a dozen fine handkerchiefs from Bul and the G.S.S. for my birthday. In acknowledging them to Betty I mentioned that only my handkerchiefs lasted here and the other clothes went to pieces at short intervals and had to be replaced. The dhobi who washes our clothes has a way with him and few things survive his onslaughts. Perhaps this wearing away and tearing are also due to the presence of a good deal of chlorine in the water. Also the khadi I have been getting has been definitely bad. But the handkerchiefs last as I do not trust the dhobi with them and have them washed here. Betty immediately threatened to send me some *kurtas* &c. I do not want these for the simple reason that I do not wear them. About two years ago I took to wearing shorts and shirts with open collars and half-sleeves. I find these much more comfortable and lighter. All my *kurtas* and pyjamas lie in my boxes unused. Once or twice I tried to go back to them but I did not like the change and reverted to the more abbreviated attire. Partly also because the old clothes do not fit me now; they hang and pull. They were not well made to begin with and now I have grown somewhat thinner. The pyjamas (I use buttons on them) stay up with difficulty. I have a good mind to send you back a boxful of these old clothes. It is a nuisance to keep unnecessary articles here and have to air and sun them frequently to get rid of crickets and cockroaches.

I think I shall send a sample pair of my shorts and shirts to Betty so that she can have more made after that pattern.

Puphi and Rita must have sailed for America though I have not seen any mention of this in the papers. Perhaps they are still in Bombay. The cost of travelling — at any rate long distance journeys — seems to have gone up so much that it seems to have become a luxury for the rich. Even when I have the chance to do so, I fear I shall have to restrain and limit my wanderlust. The idea of spending weeks and months on the sea bores me, and air journeys are frightfully expensive. Anyway there are the Himalayas always waiting to receive me.

You wrote to me that you had arranged to pay Feroze 100/- a month from my account for relief work. But you did not say anything about the additional sum of Rs. 1000/- which I asked you to give him for this purpose — Have you fixed this up? Besides this do not hesitate to draw upon my account whenever Feroze thinks it necessary for his work. I am anxious about this.

Here are the names of three books — two of them quite recent — which you might note down. When available, if at all, they might be sent. But do not go out of your way for them. Perhaps I have already mentioned one of them in a previous letter:

Somerset Maugham : *The Razor's Edge*
Gerald Heard : *Man the Master*
Olaf Stapledon : *Sirius*
Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 90.

28-11-1944

Darling Bets,

Thank you — or rather thank Raja — for sending me his Shaeffer pen. This is good, though perhaps just a tiny bit too fine for much writing. But that is a small matter. I am using it now.

Yes, some time or other we shall also go to America and to many other places. But I dislike the idea of spending weeks and weeks on the sea, and it appears that air travelling is frightfully expensive. Anyway I can always go to the Himalayas or even across to Mansarovar!

I am glad to learn of Spark's[578] offspring. They must be lovely. I cannot think of suitable names for them but Anthony and Cleopatra seem rather uncalled for. Surely there is no lack of good Indian names, even though I cannot suggest them. There was a famous pair of lovers in Gujrat (or was it Malwa?) — Baz Bahadur and Rupmati. For love of each other they let their kingdom go to pieces and many popular songs and legends still remind us of them. What about Baz and Rup? I do not particularly fancy the names but as they have just struck me I am suggesting them to you and Raja.

Love to you and Raja and all our friends.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

578. Krishna Hutheesing's retriever.

Dec. 2, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of the 24th Nov. Raja has sent me his Shaeffer fountain pen and so I can write to you a less messy letter than my last one. The pen writes well and smoothly though it is rather small and lady-like. I have got used to thicker varieties, something I can grasp firmly. Betty suggested sending me a gold or silver-tipped new Parker —the only ones available in the market—but I have asked her not to send it. A shining and aggressive top would probably distract my mind when writing. I am adequately provided with pens now to carry on my normal work.

I do not know yet what has happened to *Puphi* and Rita—whether they have sailed and are on the high seas or are still waiting patiently in Bombay for something to happen.

It was rather foolish of Kailas and Sheila to go to Allahabad without informing you beforehand and then to spend the night at the station. I can well understand how they must have changed during these past five years and a half—We have all changed a good bit. For them the conditions were in some respects harder and the environment was quite new, especially in wartime. Is Kailas going to live in the little house in Lucknow which he used to occupy previously? I suppose Amma will stay with him.

I was surprised to learn that Pyare Kathju had started, along with some others, a Hindi daily in Rajputana. That is hardly in line with his special training. Perhaps that is a side show for him and he will also do some other work.

I am glad Rajiva is getting on well. As for his resembling an early picture of Betty's, my own recollection is that these early photographs of Nan, Betty and you were remarkably alike. In fact it was difficult to distinguish them.

I have been looking through the fat commemoration volume—*Gandhiji*. Usually such volumes are just odd collections of tributes, a mixture of good and bad writing, most of it rather poor. I have found this particular volume singularly well edited and intelligently arranged. The pictures are good, so is the general get-up. Even the articles are above the average and bring out various aspects of the man and his work. I think the editors have done a good job of work and deserve to be congratulated. The price of the book, considering everything, seems to me to be too low—It should have been Rs. 50 at least. Later a cheaper edition could have been brought out.

The cigarette holder you have sent has not come yet. It will be helpful—You say that the other one (of the kind I have been using) is broken. If the top part of it, that is mouthpiece end, is not broken then this will come in useful here. I can fit it in my other holder.

Is Anna living with you now and helping to look after Rajiva?

Love

Your loving
Papu

December 5. Tuesday

I have another cold and possibly I handed it on to Maulana also. I am recovering. Maulana has had a worse experience and got a touch of 'flu. He is still in its clutches.

So my Persian lessons have been suspended. I have had over a month of these. Progress not quite as good as I had hoped—still something done.

Another bit of work suspended has been my reading out my manuscript (*Discovery of India*) to Maulana. For nearly three weeks I have been doing this. Previously Asaf Ali read through it and made a vast number of suggestions—some good, some not so good. Maulana's suggestions are fewer and almost always in keeping with the general scheme. Asaf's often were really a criticism of the whole background. Anyway all is mass of suggestions and criticism compels me to revise the stuff. Also many new ideas have struck me independently. This process of revision will therefore be more thorough than previously and is likely to take some time—perhaps a month—So far I have only gone through half the MSS with Maulana.

This thought of going back to this work, of after all not having finished it as I had thought I had done, is slightly disconcerting. I do not want release or transfer or any other development to come with any such work unfinished and hanging over. Outside—when I go out—the past should not pull me.

Well there is no reason why I should worry about this. Release seems as distant as ever. Somehow, nearly a year ago, I suggested to Mahmud that we might be released early in 1945—February or so I said. I had no particular reason for it except that on February 8th we shall have been here just 2½ years That is no reason at all. Yet because I said so

then the approximate date stuck in my mind. I still think it likely that we might be discharged next spring.

x x x x

Nan has reached the U.S. or so I think for she left by air 3 or 4 days ago and it is just a 72-hour journey. Rita has gone by sea under the care of Shiva Rao. I am very glad Nan is there. She will make good. I suppose some news about her will dribble through the cables. She has personality and makes news. I wonder if she will meet Mayling. I suppose she is bound to. But even if she does, she will say little about her. Little can be said. I have thought so often about her and worried. Her strange and distressing stay in America during these terrible months in China is somehow symbolical of China's distress & agony. A tremendously vital person like her to be bottled up in seclusion can only mean a complete nervous breakdown, or a feeling that to remain in China under existing conditions is unbearable or both. As long ago as February 1942 there were marked traces of this nervous tension. She overcame them then and carried on, with a break in the U.S. for two years.

How terribly difficult is the situation in China! Indeed everywhere—Problem, problem, almost insoluble problem everywhere. Perhaps there is no solution in the existing framework anywhere. In Europe as the Allied armies advance trouble breaks out in the liberated countries. Poland[579]—Italy[580]—Belgium[581]—Greece[582]—all on the eve of civil war—Spain[583] probably indulging in it already, conflict about future arrangements (air &c.) between England & U.S.A. An inherent conflict and abundant suspicions between the U.S.S.R.-England & the U.S. France a doubtful factor. And then the major problem of Germany! What a mess! It seems that the only thing men understand and can organize well today is war—the problems of peace are still beyond their comprehension.

579. A Polish Committee of National Liberation had been set up at Lublin m opposition to the Polish government in exile in London.
580. The Communists in Italy had won influence in the struggle against the Germans after the Italian surrender in September 1943. While working to establish a united front government with the socialists they were opposed to the liberals, who tried to revive the republican nationalism of the Mazzini tradition.
581. The resisters of the German occupation of Belgium were bitter about those who had collaborated with the enemy. They were opposed to their own armed forces being merged in the regular army.
582. There was division as to whether the monarchy should be restored after liberation.
583. Popular opposition to the dictatorship of General Franco was mounting, with periodic riots by students and strikes by workers.

Is it so surprising then that we in India find it difficult to solve our problems? Gandhiji issues statements from time to time and often they are good and even inspiring. And yet somehow they lack some basic reality. Then he begins to talk of another fast, and everybody is worked up emotionally. Rajaji goes on talking, talking imagining that he is the only possessor of a clear head. Yet a clear head can function in a very limited environment and be unable to see beyond. Now the Sapru Committee of jurists and wise men has been formed—What a collection of notables of a bygone age to tackle the problems of this revolutionary epoch! I criticize others. But what would I do myself if I was out? I do not know. Certainly I would not and could not remain passive and silent. Nor could I just repeat old slogans and phrases. What then?

x x x x

Certain answers[584] given in the Central Assembly about us here have irritated us and led Maulana to write to the Viceroy. Prafulla Babu's condition is deteriorating and the lack of proper treatment is annoying. Yesterday a minor operation was performed on him here without proper equipment—He ought to be in hospital.

x x x x

Today my weight showed a sudden and rather unexpected drop of over 2 pounds in a week. Sendak rather frightened—came and tapped me all over and then pronounced me sound.

x x x x

Kailas and Sheila have at last returned together with two British-born additions to the family aged 3½ years and 7 months. They have had a hard time during these five war years in London and, Indu writes, that they bear obvious mark of it.

584 On 21 November 1944, the Home Member stated that as the members of the Congress Working Committee had been deprived of interviews with their relatives for so long they did not at all want this facility. He had further said that Prafulla Ghose and Acharya Narendra Deva were under the care of a competent Government doctor and they were not allowed to have doctors and medicines of their own choice.

Dec. 9, 1944

Darling Indu,

Two or three days ago we received a parcel of fruit which, we were told, you had sent, apparently through Mridula. This contained grape fruit, मुज़म्बी[585], oranges and apples. They were all good and have been much appreciated. The grape fruit and the oranges, it was stated, were the produce of Anand Bhawan. I was surprised and pleased to find that you were producing such good fruit. I knew that you had many orange trees but I had no idea that they produced मुज़म्बी. Most people think that this kind of orange cannot be easily grown in North India.

I have had a kind of joint letter from Amma and Bappi. They write about their visit to Anand Bhawan and how they were charmed by Rajiva, who appeared to them to be the image of you, as you were at that age — Bappi was impressed by your ayah, but for some reason or other she was afraid that the ayah might leave you. Why should she leave Rajiva? Pyare, I understand, wants to add business to his journalistic ventures and for this purpose intends going to America. It is curious how America is drawing people like a magnet.

Puphi must have reached New York. And yet there has been no news thus far of her arrival there. This is surprising.

I asked you to send me some pictures of Rajiva. Send me also a good one of yourself. A new one, for I want to know what you look like now. I must keep pace with your changing self. Pictures do not take one far but they help slightly.

Some months ago *Puphi* wrote to me that the Ramakrishna people in Calcutta had given her a huge pot of Coorg honey for me. I asked her not to send it just then. Well, I do not want it sent at all for it is a difficult business to send honey. But I hope the honey is being used. If you have not got it already try to find out where it is and get hold of it. It will do you good.

What has happened to my yarn that I sent you many months ago? I hope something has been made out of it.

It is pleasant and cool here. This is the best time of the year in Ahmadnagar, as it is in Allahabad.

This is my letter No. 92.

Love

Your loving
Papu

585. *Musambi*—Sweet lime.

Dec. 16, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have received two letters from you dated 29th Nov. and 3rd December—Nos. 87 and 88. The latter has just come. Somehow they seem to take longer on the journey than they used to. I suppose they have to pass two barriers, two censorships, one in Allahabad and the other in Bombay.

I have received the cigarette holder you sent me. It is a good one and suits me as I can push some cotton wool in it and this serves as an absorber of the nicotine—So you need not send me another.

As for my clothes I have sent Betty particulars of what I want together with samples—She is having them made.

I am glad our garden is flourishing and looking bright with flowers. Here there has been a marked deterioration chiefly because of my lack of interest in it. What a lot of personal care a garden requires. I have been busy with other work and rather neglected our little garden. I got no fresh seeds and relied on some old ones which failed us at the last moment. Now it is too late to begin as the season is far advanced. Of course there are many odd flowers and plants, some perennials, and they more or less fill the place. When we came here nearly two and a half years ago our yard was just a blank barren area. In the centre of this yard there is a moderate-sized flagstaff supported by four wires. Creepers were trained to go up these wires—the railway creeper which is not attractive but which grows and spreads with amazing rapidity. Soon the whole flagstaff was covered up and for a while it looked remarkably like a miniature Eiffel Tower.

Puphi, I see from the papers, is in New York and is staying at the posh Waldorf Astoria Hotel. It must be very cold there now and she is not too fond of the cold. Hot Springs, where she will go for the Pacific Relations Conference, ought to be warm

Mehr Taj has finally got married, so I read in some newspaper. It struck me then that some present ought to have been sent to her on my behalf. I am sorry I forgot. Still, it is not too late to send it. Will you please choose something that you consider suitable and that she might like? Something say worth Rs. 150/- or Rs. 200/-. The choice is very limited I suppose. If you cannot get anything else you might get Benares saris. Send them with my love and good wishes.

A couple of days ago I was asked in what way Kishan *chacha* was related to me—This inquiry was made presumably because he had sent

a letter to me and the intricate and difficult question of whether the letter should be delivered to me or not had to be decided by competent authority. Did he come within the prescribed list of near relations who were authorised to write? I do not know and I doubt if anybody else knows exactly. Anyway I have not received the letter and I want you to inform Kishan *chacha* of this. During the past two years two brief letters from Birju *chacha* were delivered to me. He and Kishan *chacha* stand exactly in the same relationship to me—first cousins. And yet it appears that first cousins belong to a doubtful category, though brothers-in-law are allowed to write. It is all very odd and peculiar.

A firm of booksellers in Calcutta—Rupa & Co.—with a branch in Allahabad, have sent me books from time to time. They have been good books as a rule and new English publications. Yesterday I received from them Bernard Shaw's new book—*Everybody's Political What's What*.[586] I mention this so that you might not send this book.

Do not trouble yourself about Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*—I have plenty of reading material. I have just received two large bundles of foreign periodicals, presumably sent by you.

I have noted what you say about giving the money to Feroze for relief work. He can keep this sum apart for emergencies if he likes.

It is desirable that Feroze should engage himself in some regular work —what this work should be, it is for him to decide. I hope what he has chosen suits him.

I am glad Rajiva is putting on weight and is otherwise well.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is letter No. 93.

19-12-1944

Darling Betty,

I received your letter of the 2nd Dec.—also the electric shaver and diary for 1945. The shaver is functioning well now. A book has also come presumably sent through you but bearing Rajan's inscriptions—Shaukat

586. This is a volume of Bernard Shaw's thoughts on war, peace, medicine, law, government, science, socialism, capitalism and religion.

Ansari's *Pakistan*.[587] Could you send me some kind of a wall calendar for 1945. It need not be anything fancy. An advertisement sheet will do which, if necessary, I can cut out and hang up. The sense of time becomes rather feeble in the unchanging environment of prison as there are few distinguishing marks to indicate the passing of days. Hence a calendar is useful.

Some one has sent me Bernard Shaw's new book *Everybody's Political What's What*. I mention this so that you might not send it. It is the kind of book you might feel inclined to send me. Also I might mention that I do not want you to send me Beverley Nichols's book *Verdict on India*[588] which I find advertised and which some people are trying to boom up. Ever since I read one of Nichols's books long ago, I have had no desire to read another by him. More especially I do not want to waste my time on his latest effort. It surprises me that some people, who ought to know better, are excited about this kind of stuff. I do not suppose you would have sent it anyhow, but I want to make sure. It appears Thacker's of Bombay have brought out an Indian edition of this as well as some other recent English books. How badly they do their job. You sent me one of the books published by them—*For Whom the Bell Tolls*—and it was full of mistakes and bad type and printing, and at the same time priced very high. Evidently they are out to make money easily. Some time back I got Gunther's *D-Day*[589] —English edition—then I noticed in a paper that Thacker's have brought out an Indian edition full of mistakes. Why do they indulge in this kind of sloppy work? No decent publisher would tolerate such shoddy work.

It is difficult for me to judge of book prices in India now but I have an impression that they are much too high compared to English and even American prices Even your book seems to me to be highly priced. This kind of thing limits circulation.

Narendra Deva has received news that his younger brother[590] is on the verge of death. He had been ill for some time. Probably he is

587 Shaukat Ansari, general secretary of the All India Nationalist Muslims Conference. His book, *Pakistan*, argued that Muslim interests could be protected not through partition of authority and resources but by educational, social and economic progress.

588 In this book, Beverley Nichols denounces Mahatma Gandhi as a "deceiver", the Congress as a "Brahmin" organisation and Hinduism as "debased and discreditable". Jinnah seemed to him the only Indian with a constructive outlook.

589. D Day (1944) by John Gunther is a personal record of his eleven weeks' tour of North Africa and the Near East at the time of war.

590 Dr Yogendra Deva.

dead by this time. This has been a great shock for him and he is considerably upset.

I suppose the children will be coming home for Christmas, looking bright and cheerful, and your flat will be full of their cries and movements. Give my love to them. Are you going away anywhere for the holidays? I seem to remember your mentioning that you intended going South.

The New Year will soon be with us. All my love and good wishes to you and Raja.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

Dec. 23, 1944

Darling Indu,

Yesterday I read in the papers that when Sarojini was passing through Allahabad you went with Rajiva to the station to meet her. Rajiva was described as eight months old. This was of course just double his age, but I wondered if he was big enough looking to delude people. I suppose he is growing fast. For another three months or a little more, Allahabad will be just right for him, but then the warmer weather will not be so suitable. I am not a great believer in children being protected too much from our normal climate. They should get used to it or else they become misfits and physically somewhat unstable. But still I think that it will be better for him to spend his first hot weather in a better & cooler climate. I wonder if you have thought of it. The average hill-station is always a nuisance and expensive, but since the war began, it has become even more unattractive and difficult of access. I think it would be good for both Rajiva and you if you took him to Khali. Except for the fact that it is somewhat out of the way and not easy to reach, everything is in its favour. The climate is delightful and the pine-clad hills are full of health. Personally, from a psychological point of view also, I fancy the mountain air and atmosphere for a growing child. It broadens his vision and gives him new perspectives. Khali will also require very little in the way of special arrangement for you. Only the journey will be a little trying. From the point of view of Khali also it will be good for someone to live there for a while. It is far too much neglected.

If you go to Khali, it would be desirable to ask Sheila and her children to join you there. Their kids may also find their first hot weather a little trying and the change from London in wartime to the open air of the Indian mountains will be very good for them.

It seems a bit odd for me to think and write about the summer when we are still in the early stages of our winter season. All manner of fresh developments may take place in this little world of ours during these coming months and it is not always wise to make plans too far ahead. Yet it is better to accept things as they are and plan for them, rather than to wait for something to happen. Plans can always be changed to fit in with changing circumstances. Very little planning indeed is necessary. All you have to do is to inform the Khali people well in advance so that they can keep the house clean and ready. This will anyway keep them up to the mark. I do not know who is running Khali now. *Puphi* wrote to me that she had asked Krishnaji[591] of Lucknow to look after it in some way or other. Probably this had more to do with the garden produce and the cottage industries that are or were carried on there. You can write to Krishnaji and tell him of your intention to visit Khali in the summer. Upadhyaya should also write to Chandra Singh at Khali—I hope I have got the name right. If you go to Khali you should take Upadhyaya with you. He will be useful there and knows the people in Almora. Also it will do him good.

Sheila has had a hard time during the past five and a half years. I should like her to have some rest and a holiday. She and her children should of course be wholly our guests at Khali and no burden of expense should fall on her. Do not mind the expense of your or her going there. You should draw on my account for it. I suppose about mid-April will be the right time to go there. It is still spring there then and very delightful. On your way to Khali you could break journey at Bareilly for a little rest. Anyway you have to change at Bareilly. Our friends, the Dwarka Prasad family, will be happy to have you in Bareilly. Where Dwarka Prasad is now I do not know—in prison or out. But he has a huge family.

I wrote to you about the letter Kishan *chacha* wrote to me. After the necessary inquiries and proper investigation it was decided that I was not entitled to receive his letter. So I have not seen it and do not know what it contained. He should be informed of this.

How is Madan Bhai getting on? Have you any fresh news of him?

Betty writes to me that she intends going to Allahabad at the end of January and to spend a month there. I am glad.

591 Krishna Narayan, a businessman of Lucknow.

You should get this letter on the eve of the New Year. So again all my love and good wishes to you and Rajiva.

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 94.

Dec. 30, 1944

Darling Indu,

This is my last letter to you written in 1944. What a year it has been all over the world and in India, and what a contrast between the wars and tumults outside and our quiet unchanging life here. Every new year brings the promise of youth and yet it ages soon and the bloom fades off. So we shall enter 1945, inevitably affected by some psychological process of change and with our minds stretching out into the future. How one clings to the future in spite of repeated experience that this future is often enough just a continuation of the stale past.

After a long interval I have returned to you some books. These are:

1 R. Mehta's *Pre-Buddhist India*
2 Munshi's *The Glory that was Gurjardesh* Parts I and III
3 Dr. Sarma: *The Renaissance of Hinduism*
4 *Reshaping Man's Heritage*
5 *Prayers, Praises & Psalms*
6 Masani's *Socialism Reconsidered*

There are many other books that I have to return. I must get rid of my accumulations. I shall send them to you in small batches next month by post.

Some newspapers have come out with a story of the many books I have been reading recently. You must have seen the long list given. As a matter of fact out of that long and varied list I have only received three books, the others you could not obtain for me. The list represents many of the books I have asked for during the last year or more, not the books I received. I wonder how the newspapermen got hold of these titles. Probably Betty keeps a list and someone saw this and made a foolish and incorrect use of it. But it is a trivial matter and does not make any difference.

As you keep a list of books wanted, you might add to it Aldous Huxley's new novel: *Time Must Have a Stop.*[592] Huxley is one of the authors one does not like to miss. I suppose it will be some time before this book appears in India.

Betty has sent me a number of shirts and shorts made according to samples sent by me. She sent them in a small suitcase and I propose to return this to her. I shall send in it some of my old *kurtas* and pyjamas which I do not require. Later, when Betty goes to Allahabad, she can take them along with her. It is difficult to send railway parcels direct to Allahabad.

I have received several bundles of foreign periodicals recently. I suppose they all go to Anand Bhawan first and are then forwarded by you via the Bombay Secretariat.

I have had no letter from you for two weeks. I hope all is well with you and Rajiva.

Love to you and Feroze and the little one.

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 95.

December 31. Sunday

I have been very busy revising for a second time my MSS. of *The Discovery of India.* Having finished reading it out to Maulana I was anxious to have done with this and so I stopped all other work. During the last nine days I stopped my Persian lessons also—took Christmas holidays! I have just succeeded in finishing the job. Maulana's & Asaf's suggestions would not have taken so much time. Most of the changes made were due to fresh ideas. I am thoroughly tired of the job. I was anxious to finish it this year and not to carry it on to the next year. Well, I have just managed it and am putting away the MSS. —not to open it or look at it again, I hope, till I go out and get it typed. Of that no present indication.

x x x x

592. A novel in which Aldous Huxley presents his own plan for world betterment. "World reform must begin in the individual soul and men may enter the Divine Ground of eternity only by a regime of selflessness and contemplation."

My cold has not wholly left me—it clings on slightly—Meanwhile, I have developed a pain in my left shoulder & back—rheumatic, neuralgic or some kind of neuritis. I do not know what it is; but it is a great nuisance. I have had it now for about a week. What worries me even more than this pain is the frequent occurrence of petty troubles and pain. During the last few months I have had some pain or trouble with my calf, my forearm, my hand—also my eyes and teeth need attending to—Age, age, advancing steadily and weakening the whole system, in spite of all my exercises and other efforts!

x x x x

Yesterday Bhulabhai Desai & B. G. Kher came here to interview Vallabhbhai on some legal matter. No one else amongst us met them. This was the first breach from outside into our yard during the last 29 months.

x x x x

Prafulla Ghose is still bed-ridden & badly shaken up. The letters he writes to his sister,[593] (and which appear in the papers), are extraordinarily pessimistic and read badly. I fear he has little stamina for bearing physical pain or facing illness. Maulana has written to the Viceroy about his illness and yet surprisingly nothing has so far come out of it.

x x x x

I have recently learnt with surprise and some dismay that Kripalani writes very detailed letters to Sucheta regularly giving an account of the most trivial matters relating to us. Indeed he has written much that he should never have written. He lacks all sense of proportion and responsibility. Every letter of his is of course read by three or four batches of censors. It is not surprising that the A.I.C.C. office went to pieces under him.

x x x x

No letter from Indu for over two weeks.

2.1.45

Darling Betty,

...I am delighted to learn of Harsha's and Ajit's progress in school. It is a little surprising to learn that Harsha has done better at sports than Ajit. I should have thought it would be the other way. This shows

593. Jamuna Ghose.

how a proper school develops children and brings out their inherent capacities which otherwise may not have sufficient scope. You will appreciate now how wise Raja and you were in sending the boys to school in Gwalior.

Yes, the New Year has begun and this is the first letter I am writing in 1945. It is well to look hopefully to the future and send one's good wishes. And yet it is also desirable not to hope too much or expect more than is likely to happen. It is easier thus to avoid disappointment.

My love and good wishes to you and Raja and the children.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

Jan. 5, 1945

Darling Indu,

Today, probably for the first time since we came here, the temperature registered a sudden fall and reached 38 or possibly lower. Having got rather used to long spells of warm and equable weather this change has a sting in it, or may be my bones are getting older. My hands are quite cold. I am almost regretting having sent back some *kurtas* and pyjamas, though I have enough to carry on with and the cold will not last many days.

I received two letters from you on the 31st Dec.—dated 14/12 and 20/12. Why there should have been this delay in my getting the earlier letter I do not understand, especially as it bears a pencil endorsement—probably made in the Bombay Secretariat—that it was received there on 28/12. It seems to have taken 2 weeks to go from Allahabad to Bombay.

Rajiva's pictures are good. He looks quite human. He is attractive and has got a good humour look. In some of them he resembles you, in one there is a marked resemblance to Feroze. Don't forget to send me a good picture of yourself. The idea of your getting fat amuses me. It will take a long time before your tummy becomes visible.

After all you have written in praise of Rajiva's ayah, I do not think you are wise in risking losing her for an additional 5/- a month. I do not know what you pay her but in any event the comfort and convenience of having a first-rate ayah cannot be measured in terms of an extra five rupees. After all you are not making a permanent endowment. A few extra months or a year at the higher rate will not make much difference so far as money is concerned.

From Betty's letter I learnt that Vidya was getting married soon in Lucknow. Probably it was about this that Kishan *chacha* wrote to me. I am glad Betty is going to attend her wedding and hope that you can manage to do so also. These courtesies count and are appreciated. Both Kishan *chacha* and Shona *chachi* are sensitive about them and Vidya of course should be made to feel that she has all our good wishes. I have asked Betty to take a present for Vidya on my behalf. Please convey to Vidya my love and good wishes.

I am interested to learn that Yunus has got engaged. I suppose he is still in prison — I do not remember the girl — The marriage will no doubt create a rumpus at both ends. What kind of ceremony are they going to have? — a civil marriage? News of yet another mixed marriage, as they are called, comes from Betty. It appears that Raja's brother, Surottambhai, has got engaged to Beryl Shamshere Singh, Amrit Kaur's niece. I do not think I have met Beryl. I am told she is a very nice girl.

I have received the cigarette-holder you sent. It is just right. Do not trouble to send the honey. Eat it up yourself. Honey has gone up in people's estimation, I suppose, ever since sugar was rationed. Is your sugar rationed in Allahabad? We have been getting here an ounce a day per person (or to be accurate 16 oz. for half a month of 15 or 16 days). This does not go very far with some people. For me it is ample as I use it with tea & coffee only — and a pinch in my dal. Is this habit of putting a little sugar in dal a Kashmiri habit or just a Nehru vagary? Other people are amused at it. I take *gur* with my *dalia*. *Gur* is quite good provided it is clean, but then it is not clean and the thought of the many hands through which it has passed rather puts me off. What we usually do here is to heat it and stain it off. This process removes much of the undesirable matter in it.

Peshawar *chappals* are always welcome, especially as one cannot get the right kind anywhere else. But I do not require them here. I brought two with me here. One pair was worn out and discarded. The other is carefully preserved in a practically new condition. I managed to get something like it here and have been using it instead. As a matter of fact all my walking and running is done in canvas shoes and so the *chappals* are used more or less as bedroom slippers. The mortality in canvas shoes has been heavy; I think I must have used about 20 pairs since I came here. They seem to be made of some ersatz stuff which does not last at all. Most of them come from Batas. They ought to be ashamed of the stuff they supply. If Yunus has got a pair of *chappals* made for me, they might be sent to you and you can keep them for me.

I have returned some clothes (5 *kurtas*, 6 pyjamas, 1 dhoti, 1 black *malida* waistcoat, 1 pair stockings, 1 doz. handkerchiefs) to Betty. Also some books: *Gandhiji—Commemoration Volume*; 2 volumes of cyclostyled correspondence between Gandhiji & Govt. &c.; 3 volumes of National Planning Committee's reports. All these I should like to keep for reference.

I have received a letter (No. D.O.G./9549 of Allahabad Dec. 9, 1944) from W.G.P. Wall, Director of Public Instructions, U.P. together with a copy of a scheme he has drawn up, 'Kamala Nehru Scholarship Endowment Trust Fund.' I do not know if this came through you or direct. Anyway I do not propose to write to him directly as this might involve special requests to Govt. Will you, therefore, please write to him and give him my message? Tell him that I have received his letter and scheme and I am grateful to him for all the trouble he has taken in this matter. As for the scheme, he is in the best position to judge and to fit it in with Govt. rules and regulations. So he can go ahead and do what he thinks best. There is, however, one basic *suggestion* which I am making for his consideration, but it should be understood that this is just a suggestion. He can decide as he thinks best under the circumstances. The suggestion is this: *It seems to me that it* might be better to use the income as it comes in rather than to accumulate it and only use the interest. This will yield a much larger sum for use immediately. From his letter it appears that a sum of Rs. 3904/14/- has so far been collected in the course of the last 4 or 5 years. That means an annual income of between Rs. 780 and Rs. 975 —say Rs. 800/-. Whether this is likely to be a regular income or not I do not know. Even if we put it at Rs. 600 per annum, this means Rs. 50 per month. If it is possible to use this sum immediately it could be divided up into scholarships of Rs. 10/- each. Rs. 5/- a month seems rather a small sum to give. If most of the income is being used up as it comes in, then of course there is no chance for a permanent fund to grow up. But immediate results are obtained. As I have said above, he can decide as he thinks best.

Chandrashankar Shukla[594] can publish my old article in reply to Soumyendranath Tagore.[593]

594. (b. 1901); Mahatma Gandhi's Secretary, 1933-34, editor of the Gujarati edition of *Harijan*, 1933-40; his works include 40 books in Gujarati.

593. Chandrashankar Shukla brought out a book of tributes to Mahatma Gandhi entitled *Gandhiji—As we Know him*. He printed in it an article of Jawaharlal, published in 1936, written in reply to attacks on Mahatma Gandhi which Soumyendranath Tagore had published in France. *See Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 75-78.

The National Publishing Co. of Madras can also reproduce the birthday letter.[596] This is really the first one in *Glimpses* and normally the publishers have to be consulted. But in present conditions this might be dispensed with. It will be desirable however for some token payment to be made. I suggested that they pay Rs. 25/- to the Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital.

I think you had better send me *Anna Karenina* in English. Betty has not sent this book in French to me. Anyway there are others who would like to read it in English. There is another book that I would like you send — W. Macneill Dixon's *The Human Situation*. This was with me here a year and a half ago — I sent it to you to Panchgani in July 1943. I find now that Maulana would like to see it. If you can trace it easily, have it sent. Otherwise do not bother.

Could you ask Feroze or someone else to find out from the Professor of Physics, Allahabad University, some names of, more or less, recent books on modern developments in physics, especially the Theory of Relativity and the Quantum Theory. If he can supply the books all the better — They will be returned to him. There is another way also of finding out about these books. You can ask Betty — she will probably be in Allahabad soon — to write to Homi Bhabha[597] at the Bangalore institute of science to get the information.

I am glad you have become joint secretary of the local hospital committee.

I am not surprised to learn that Sheila's children are not keeping well. That is an additional reason why they should have a spell of Khali with you in the summer.

I am enclosing the dividend warrant signed — Send it to the Punjab National Bank for my account.

This is my letter No. 96.

Love

Your loving
Papu

596. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 417-420.
597. Homi Jehangir Bhabha (1909-1966); atomic physicist; Fellow of the Royal Society; Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy; President, International Conference on Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, Geneva, 1955; died in an air accident in Switzerland in January 1966.

January 12 — Friday

The New Year has brought irritation to me — or rather a continuation of the past year's irritation. The pain in my left shoulder continued, sometimes became worse, and extended to the left arm. Nothing very much but just annoying and coming in the way of work and sleep. The nights were bad and I developed a technique of sitting up in bed and reading in the middle of the night. What annoyed me especially was not the pain itself which could be easily borne, but the fact of such a pain. Were all my exercises and efforts to keep fit and in good health just waste of time? Was age tightening its grip on me?

However, the pain is very much less now and does not interfere much with my sleep or most other activities. I sit bare-bodied in the sun. For two or three days it grew cold & the temperature fell to 37° or 38° F.

x x x x

For some time past there has been, amongst some of us, some kind of anticipation & expectation of developments on or before January 14. On that date the last six-monthly notice served on us by Govt. expires. Why anything unusual should happen then I failed to see but Vallabhbhai was confident of something happening — probably a transfer. Of course we have long been expecting a transfer or release of Prafulla Ghose because of his illness. But why should others be affected?

Today brought new notices for all of us except Prafulla Babu. Presumably he is going to be released in a day or two. For the rest we carry on. I would much rather not have a transfer—We are running our thirtieth month — a long period in retrospect. On January 26th — Independence Day — we complete and celebrate 900 days here.

Jan. 12/13, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter written on New Year's Day — No. 91.

I am glad you like the idea of going to Khali. Of course your plans and movements will largely be governed now and for some years to come by that young tyrant Rajiva. It was thought of him chiefly that led me to suggest Khali. I should like him to become acquainted as

early as possible with the Himalayas, have sight of the snow-covered peaks, look down into the deep valleys, and breathe the fragrant and health-giving air of the pine-clad hillsides. The more I think of it, the more I like the idea. Your fear that Khali is perhaps too out of the way and isolated is not really justified. We have got into the habit of thinking of places at some distance from a railway station as out of the way. Khali is for all practical purposes a suburb of Almora and can be reached from there within an hour or less. The motor road now almost touches the Khali estate. You can reach Khali from Allahabad within 36 hours, though it is preferable to proceed in a more leisurely fashion. As for medical facilities, Almora is as well provided as any average Indian city — apart from the big cities like Calcutta, Bombay &c. There is a hospital there, a civil surgeon, an assistant civil surgeon and a number of private practitioners. The doctor I would recommend is Dr. Khazan Chand[598] who is fairly competent and who would no doubt go out of his way to be of service to you. He has a car and can easily run up to Khali whenever wanted or at regular intervals. He is not a children's specialist of course but as a general practitioner he is as good as any in Allahabad.

In these days of rationing you will probably be better off in Khali than in most other places. There will be an abundance of fruit, vegetables, eggs, good milk, and most other necessaries can be obtained in Almora.

The journey to Khali seems troublesome and a little alarming but it is not really so. Indeed it is probably easier and more comfortable now than a long railway journey to the South. Both from the health point of view and that of accessibility, Ooty is not a patch on Khali. In a sense you would be more cut off there than in Khali, certainly further removed from Allahabad. It will also be much more expensive.

The normal method of going to Almora is to go by motor bus or private car. Motor buses run regularly but obviously they are not indicated for Rajiva or you — I do not think there will be the least difficulty in getting a private car. Indeed Pantji says that a letter from him from here can fix this up, though this is not necessary.

I would, however, suggest to you not to go by the motor road but to take to the bridle path instead. This suggestion, no doubt, surprises you for all of us are so used to travelling and even thinking in terms of the automobile. I am all for the automobile as a rule but its virtues are not so overwhelming in the mountains. The last time I went to Almora I decided that on the next occasion I would travel in a more

598. (1897-1977); Chairman of Almora Municipal Board, 1938-45.

leisurely way by the bridle path, either on foot or on horseback. Old memories came back to me and I remembered faintly how I had enjoyed that journey long ago, before the automobile had descended on these mountain roads. I was only 8 or 9 then, and at that age one can enjoy almost everything new. The whole family trekked — and it was a large family — and there used to be a long procession of ponies, dandies, luggage porters &c. That was *Dadu's* way of doing things. From Almora we had gone to the Pindari glacier — again that tremendous procession, with additions for we had to carry some tents also and food for the journey. When the family returned to Allahabad at the end of the summer they left me behind in charge of the headmaster of the local high school — a man named Thomas. I lived with his family for many months.

My next visit to Almora took place a long long time afterwards — It was in 1934 when I was taken to the Almora Jail! During the intervening years I had often been to Naini Tal and even beyond but I never managed to reach Almora. Once I almost got there. I was on my way to it when I got a telegram at Ramkhet that Mummy was very ill and I hurried back. This was I think in 1929 when Mummy and you were at Mussoorie.

But I had occasion to travel by the bridle path from Kathgodam to Ramgarh (on the way to Almora) in 1921 to see *Dadu* who was resting there.

The distance from Kathgodam to Almora by motor road is over 80 miles. By bridle path it is 38 miles with three resting places on the way — Bhim Tal, Ramgarh and Piura — where there are good dak bungalows or rest houses. Each stage is about 10 miles or less and it is pleasant going, shady as a rule, with ups and downs. Starting after a good breakfast one can easily reach the next stage by lunch time and spend the rest of the day there. Or, one can carry lunch and have it *en route* whenever one feels like it. The dak bungalows have cooks.

Some people, unused to this kind of travelling, may be a little frightened at the prospect. As a matter of fact it is very easy going and comfortable — probably far more so than the tedious and crowded railway journeys nowadays. One need not of course travel in the sumptuous and complicated way which *Dadu* favoured. Besides there are many facilities now which were unobtainable in the old days. For instance, all the heavy luggage can be sent on by lorry from Kathgodam to Almora. Only beddings, some clothes and warm things & a few other necessaries need be taken with one. Each stage of the journey is an easy walk but naturally for you and Rajiva and the ayah dandies

would be necessary. If I had to go that way I would walk, keeping a pony for emergencies.

It is usually possible to arrange for dandies and ponies at almost a moment's notice at Kathgodam. But it is safer to fix them up a day or two ahead. It is quite easy to do so by writing or by sending someone (say Upadhyaya) a day before. A line to Pantji's family in Naini Tal (Chandra Dat) would facilitate matters.

This kind of journeying appeals to me but it is quite possible that it may not appeal to others who have less of the savage in them than I have. It depends really on a mental approach — even, you might say, a philosophy of life. Most of our journeys nowadays are looked upon as troublesome but inevitable affairs leading to the desired goal. So we put up with all manner of inconveniences on the way and arrive exhausted at journey's end. The goal and the journey's end are there of course but why not make the journey itself a part of the goal, giving health and pleasure, even apart from the more distant goal? The holiday, if one can call it that, should begin the moment we set off and not when we arrive at the other end. Life becomes fuller this way, the process of living consciously and actively is a continuous one and not a thing of fits and starts. There is also a sense of freedom about it, a lessening of dependence on others, apart from the communion with nature that it gives. All this trouble about petrol rationing vanishes. For Rajiva, who will be about 8 months old by that time and able to sit up and take an intelligent interest in his surroundings, it should be a stimulating experience. He will have to go in a dandy, which is unfortunate. A year or two later he could have done a little walking or riding. I remember carrying about Betty in the front of my saddle in Naini Tal when she was about 10 months old.

Thus the journey from Kathgodam to Khali becomes a delightful excursion with the minimum of worry. From Almora it would be desirable to go by car to Khali. It is only 6 or 7 miles.

In Almora of course there are hosts of people who will be eager to help you in every way. Upadhyaya knows a lot of them. Probably the most useful person is Rudra Dat Bhat,[599] a merchant. Then there is Badri Dat Pande. And of course Gertrude[600] and Boshi Sen.[601] The best time to go up is the middle of April. It will not be

599. (1890-1969); a leading Congressman of Almora.
600. Gertrude Emerson Sen, one of the founder editors of *Asia* in 1917; later its advisory editor from India for 25 years; wife of Basiwar Sen and director of Uday Shankar's Indian Cultural Centre at Almora; author of *Voiceless India.*
601. Basiwar Sen (b. 1887); botanist; well-known for his research in cellular structure of plants; founder director, Vivekananda Laboratory, Almora.

cold then and travelling by bridle path will be pleasant. Later it may become rather warm.

Of course if you prefer going by car, a private one can easily be fixed up. An advantage of Khali over Ooty will be that Feroze will be able to pay you frequent visits.

It is possible that Madan Bhai may be out and available by the time you go up. You should invite him to join you there. His health must be pretty well shattered up and rest at Khali will be good for him.

Have you heard about the Brewsters[602] again? Thinking of Almora, they came to my mind. I have had no news of them for many years.

From the American papers I find that the Ramkrishna Centre of New York has issued a new translation of the Gita by Swami Nikhilananda.[603] This is very highly spoken of. I wonder if it is possible to obtain this from our friends at Belur Math. They ought to have it. You might write and inquire.

I am sending you back some books :

1 Gandhi : *Nonviolence in Peace & War*
2 Smith : *Modern Islam in India*
3 Gunther : *D-Day*
4 Thompson : *Burmese Silver*
5 Sampurnanand : *The Individual & the State*
6 De Silva : *The Four Essential Doctrines of Buddhism*
7 Ajwani : *Introducing India*

Yesterday we received a parcel of guavas which I suppose you had sent. They are excellent and maintain worthily the reputation of Allahabad. Also I received with them a bottle of guava jelly and a tin of guava cheese.

I have received a letter (dated 2/1/45) from the manager of the Allahabad Law Journal Press informing me that the period of the sole agency for the sale of *Letters from a Father to his Daughter*, which was given to the Oxford University Press, expired on 31.12.1944, and the Oxford Univ. Press want the agency renewed till 31.3.1949. Will you please tell the A.L.J. people that before I can send a proper reply or make any suggestions for the future I must have full particulars and information. I have no idea of what the terms of agency were or are. These were fixed up by Kitabistan without any previous reference to me and I was only informed of them later and then only, so far as I remember, partially. It is odd that a reference has now been made to

602 Earl H Brewster and his wife Achsah Barlow, American artists who visited India twice and lived in Almora for some time

603 Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre in New York and co-translator of many Sanskrit classics

me only after the expiry of the period of agency. This should have been done well in advance of it to enable me to consider the matter. Situated as I am, delay in consultation is inevitable. I do not, however, wish that existing arrangements should be upset suddenly because of this delay. The Oxford Univ. Press should be informed that I am waiting for some relevant information before coming to a decision; as soon as I receive this I shall communicate with the A.L.J. Press about future arrangements. Meanwhile, to avoid any confusion or gap period, I am agreeable to the Oxford Univ. Press continuing the old agency on the old terms for another year, that is to the end of December 1945.

The A.L.J. Press to be requested to supply me with the following particulars:

1 Copy of agreement with Oxford Univ. Press.

2 Statement about royalties received by them on my behalf during the past three years. What part of them have been paid over to me or to someone on my behalf?—and to whom? Any balances standing to my credit to be sent to Bachhraj & Co. Ltd., Bombay.

3 Are the A.L.J. Press functioning both as printers & publishers of the book? Have Kitabistan any further interest in it?

4 Is the book being issued in one uniform edition or in different formats—for students & the general public? What is the sale price of the book for both these categories of people?

5 Is the book sold solely through the Oxford Univ. Press? Do the A.L.J. Press not sell it directly to any booksellers?

6 What institutions, so far as is known, have adopted it as a textbook? I understand that the Calcutta Univ. adopted it for the matriculation exam. Has any other university or education dept. also done so—I am referring of course only to the English edition.

7 Is there any continuing general sale of the book, apart from the sale as a prescribed textbook, and is this general sale specially catered for?

8 Any other relevant information might be added.

Further the A.L.J. Press might be asked if they have now any dealings with any of the translations of the book—apart from the Hindi & Urdu ones which they print for the U.P. Education Department. Do they issue any Hindi or Urdu edition for general public sale (apart from students)?

This is my letter No. 97—I am getting on to the century!

Love

Your loving
Papu

Later.

I have just got your letter of Jan. 7th in which you mention the guavas &c., Jinarajadasa[604] & the cold. The guavas I have received, not the two books so far. I have not met Jinarajadasa but I have known of him ever since the days when I joined the Theosophical Society at the age of 12 or 13. He should really have been the President of the Theosophical Society after Mrs. Besant if Arundale[605] had not cut him out.

As for the cold we all seem to have felt that way. The news Pantji has received from Naini Tal is quite exciting—houses snowed up &c.

I have also got today a letter from *Puphi* from New York sent soon after her arrival there. She complains of the cold also and at the same time of the over-heated rooms. But her biggest grouse is the expensiveness of everything. She has not fallen in love with New York and dislikes its skyscrapers.

P

January 20th—Saturday

We are ten here now for Prafulla Ghosh has gone. On the 13th evening Sendak informed Prafulla Babu that he had received instructions to release him first thing on the 15th Jan. It was rather odd but that very night 13th–14th—Prafulla had a relapse and Sendak had to be sent for from his bungalow soon after midnight. He recovered slightly the next day but was still feeble on the 15th. He left that day at 3 p.m. accompanied by the Jailer who went with him to Bombay. Prafulla was released just 100 days after Mahmud.

x x x x

Prafulla was anxious to give vivid details of our physical conditions to the public. Both Maulana & I tried hard to dissuade him from giving any ornate accounts. We succeeded, I think, to some extent. Still he had had some say and I have been described as aging rapidly—true, I suppose, though it is not pleasant to contemplate. The person who really requires competent treatment is Pantji, who has been

604 C. Jinarajadasa (1875-1953); President of the Theosophical Society, 1946-52; author of over 40 books.

605 G. S. Arundale (d. 1945); President of the Theosophical Society, 1934-45.

on the downgrade almost since we came here. His is a hospital case — an operation &c.— but he does not like the idea of being sent to the military hospital here and deliberately minimizes his ailments, which are many and serious. So far as Sendak is concerned he has left him to his own resources more or less. Pantji has a regular battery of medicines in his room and is constantly dosing himself. At night he has some of them, including sleeping pills, next to him. He can walk only with care because of his hernia. His spine pains him — His teeth give him continuous trouble.

x x x x

The pain in my back has almost disappeared, but just a bit of it hangs on in my left arm. I am gradually reverting to my normal routine.

x x x x

The cold spell here was brief and it is already warming up. But in the North it was something unique — the hill stations all snow-bound, houses blocked up with snow — houses collapsed &c. Even Dehra Dun had a good fall of snow.

Surprisingly *Vasanta Panchami* was early this year — day before yesterday on Jan. 18th. Vidya's marriage was to have taken place at Lucknow on *Vasanta Panchami*.

x x x x

Feel rather dull and low in spirits.

Jan. 20, 1945

Indu darling,

Accounts in the newspapers of the snow and cold in the North have exhilarated and excited me. Mussoorie and Simla and Naini Tal all snow-bound — people having to dig their way out of their houses — the roof of Hakman's Hotel collapsing from the weight of the snow — even Dehra Dun becoming all white with snow. Khali must have become one mass of snow and the house must have been half buried in it. I remember how I enjoyed a light snowfall in Almora in 1934-35 and

hoped for more. In Dehra Dun I could only look wistfully at the snow on the neighbouring hills and hope that a favourable wind might bring some snow to my little yard also. Well, I suppose, this brief spell is just and is already a memory. Here after a few days of cold weather, there was a rather sudden and marked change and now it is definitely warmish. I was surprised to discover that *Vasanta Panchami* had arrived — Usually it comes off early in February. I remembered Vidya's marriage and connected it with this day — a favourite one for weddings. I hope the wedding went off well and Vidya is happy about it.

We are ten now for Dr. Prafulla Ghosh has left us, exactly 100 days after Mahmud went. A century of days has become a useful unit for us to note the passing of time. Months are over too soon and a year passes slowly. That reminds me that in another 6 days — on the 26th January — we shall complete 900 days here.

Dr. Ghosh has, I read from the papers, said something about our respective physical conditions and has pointed out that I am getting older. True, none of us grows younger with the passing of time and all our efforts to delude ourselves or others are childish and vain. But I think Prafulla Babu has rather exaggerated, so far as I am concerned. A person's activities or the lack of them depend so much on the passing mood, which indeed is affected by the physical condition, but depends also on many other factors. Generally speaking, I keep very well and I propose to continue doing so. It is difficult to take an objective view of oneself, though I try to do so. Compared to my companions here I am a shining example of good health. Prafulla Babu has mentioned Pantji also. That is more to the point and I have long been concerned about him. These two years and a half have pulled him down in a variety of ways and he is continually suffering from a number of ailments. Being made that way, he tries to make light of them and would like others to ignore them or at any rate not to worry about them. But that is not good enough and I worry about him.

I have sent you the following books :

1 *China Handbook* 1943
2 *Global War*
3 Recent *Judgements in India*
4 *Pantopia*
5 Tendulkar : 30 *Months in Russia*
6 *Grain-Standard Labour Money*
7 Radhakrishnan : *Education, Politics & War*
8 Shah : *Principles of Planning*
9 *Ethics of Buddhism*
10 *Beautiful Valleys of Kashmir*

I have just received the two books which Jinarajadasa gave you: Citrine's *In Russia Now*[606] and George Sava's *Russia Triumphant.* Am I to return these to you when I have finished with them? Or is there a way of my returning them direct to him?

More than a year ago Betty wrote to me that Mrs. Robeson had sent her a letter in which she had mentioned sending me books from time to time. I told Betty that I had received none — Now Chand mentions this again in a letter to me — This is odd for I do not remember ever having received a book from Essie Robeson. When I was in Dehra in 1941 I received packets of newspaper cuttings from her. Indeed I wrote and asked her then for a number of books. I suppose the books she sent were lost in transit or were suppressed by the censors. You have not, by any chance, received any book sent by her?

Betty must be with you — I wonder how she liked the cold. A long stay in Bombay is not a suitable preparation for facing real cold weather. How she and Raja used to shiver in Dehra Dun! Give my love to her, and to Rajiva and Feroze.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 98.

January 22 — Monday

We have all been rather upset by a speech[607] delivered by Sarojini at a press conference in Madras. An excessively foolish speech. Also by Bhulabhai's repeated visits to the Viceroy.[608] Apparently he is hatching some scheme — some proposal for a settlement. Anything coming from Bhulabhai — anything of this type — is suspect —

606. It is a report on conditions in Russia as observed by Sir Walter Citrine, who led the British Trade Union delegation to Moscow in October 1941.
607. On 18 January 1945, Sarojini Naidu described Jinnah as the one incorruptible person in the whole of India. "I may not agree with him; but if there is one who cannot be bought by title, honour or position, it is Mr. Mahomed Ali Jinnah."
608. Bhulabhai Desai, after consulting Mahatma Gandhi and Liaquat Ali Khan, was attempting to arrange a basis on which a coalition government could be formed at the centre. Known as the Desai-Liaquat formula, it envisaged an interim national government in which the Hindus and Muslims would have 40 per cent representation each, and the scheduled castes and other groups 20 per cent representation.

January 27. Saturday

Another Independence Day yesterday — our third here — We observed it as during previous years by meeting in the afternoon at 3 and silently repeating the pledge. Maulana said a few words, so did Vallabhbhai. I was asked by Maulana to say something also but I did not take advantage of his invitation. I had nothing to say.

To read in the papers of all the orders, obstructions & arrangements of Govt., to prevent any celebration of the day is most irritating. Surely if I was out I would not put up with this kind of continuing insult. I would soon get into trouble. And yet how nervous Govt. is after all its repression & oppression.

x x x x

For some days I have been taking sunbaths and as I expected they have done me good. I feel fitter and in better mood. The pain in the back and the left arm has gone — only a slight dull feeling thus occasionally remains. I am continuing massage.

x x x x

Two years ago, and even a year ago, Asaf Ali was in a bad way — physically rather broken up with various ailments and mentally even more so. He has pulled himself up and has been very much better during the past few months. He keeps better health and has been writing rather good Urdu verse. He is a pleasant companion with wider interests than many of us.

x x x x

Pantji has at last agreed to ask for an operation for his hernia. This has been growing worse and he is practically bed-ridden. Apart from this he has numerous other troubles — spine, teeth, insomnia &c. And yet he has patiently borne all these without complaining or even saying much to Sendak. He keeps a cupboard full of medicines and doses himself. It has been obvious that he was deteriorating physically rather fast but his idea of self-respect & dignity kept him from taking any step. 'Carrying on' somehow till better times has been his motto.

At last there was a joint attack on him by Maulana, Vallabhbhai, Narendra Deva and me and we all pressed upon him to demand proper treatment and operation Reluctantly he agreed and spoke to Sendak. A surgeon was called in for consultation and he said, as he was bound to, that an operation was indicated. Further that in view of Pantji's

general condition and his large size, the operation might be rather serious. And so I suppose some kind of a report has been sent to Govt. Such an operation cannot possibly take place here. It must be done in a good hospital in Poona or preferably Bombay. Pant would greatly prefer to have a surgeon of his choice. If the operation is to take place, it is unlikely that Govt. will keep him on as a detenu or prisoner in hospital.

It is a pity that Pant has allowed his condition to deteriorate by his policy of 'carrying on'. He ought to have taken himself in hand and had an operation at least a year ago. The hernia trouble began here. Some of his ways rather irritate me, but he is one of the most likable men I know — a perfect gentleman and straight as an arrow. Indeed his neglect of his health here has been due to his good qualities. I do hope he recovers for we have few men so intelligent and honourable as he is.

x x x x

A virulent outbreak of plague has taken place in Ahmadnagar city — six deaths 24 hours after seizure. Sendak was terribly alarmed and suggested inoculation. Most of us rather hesitated, though I suppose if we were certain of the danger we would immediately agree to inoculation. Personally I have a distaste for it and would like to avoid it. Meanwhile, the situation in the city has improved. After 8 deaths no further cases have been reported.

x x x x

Yesterday — 26th January — we also completed 900 days here in Ahmadnagar Fort!

January 27. 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of the 13th but the enclosure which you mentioned (a cutting from *The Hindusthan Standard* sent by Gaganvehari Mehta)[609] was not there.

I suppose the cold has moderated now — it usually does soon after *Vasanta Panchami.* How the poor must have suffered for lack of warm

609. (1900-1974); President, Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries, 1942-43; Member, Planning Commission, 1950-52; Ambassador to the U.S.A., 1952-58; Chairman, National Shipping Board, 1959-63; publications include *Conscience of a Nation, From Wrong Angles* and *Understanding India.*

things — I am glad you tried to help our servants, especially the women and children. But this help seldom goes far enough. For my part I like this kind of cold spell and immediately it drives me to the sun. Sunbaths can only be taken with comfort and profit if it is cold enough otherwise, or else the sun becomes too hot. A combination of a low temperature and sun's heat is really delightful, or so I find it. It exhilarates me and fills me with a sense of physical well-being. Unfortunately one can only take them with comfort for a few weeks even in Allahabad, and for a lesser period here. In Almora Prison during the winter (when there were no clouds) and during the spring I had a long spell of sun-bathing; and then later in Khali during the spring. Outside, apart from the suitability of the weather, the leisure to indulge in them is usually lacking.

Do not send me any clothes or foodstuffs. I have been able to purchase some warm coverings here. As for clothes, a warm *sherwani* would be welcome occasionally as I dislike being wrapped up in shawls & rugs. But it would be useful here probably for no more than two weeks or so at the most. That period has passed now and it is no more required. We need not therefore think about it till next winter.

I shall send you back some books, including the two belonging to Jinarajadasa, early next week. I think it is better for you to deal with these two books and return them to him. I read them as they had been especially sent to me but I must say that they were not up to much. Sava's *Russia Triumphant* was fairly interesting as a survey of past Russian history, but rather superficial. As for Citrine's *In Russia Now*, it is trivial in the extreme, which is not surprising as Citrine himself is a very pedestrian kind of person. The book is full of details about Citrine's adventures in shaving, having baths (or not having them), in food &c.[610] He tells us of his surprise that his bath towel had not been heated. All this from a Labour leader is odd enough, but with the background of Russia in October 1941, with a fierce war raging and Moscow itself seriously threatened by the invader and every man and woman in Russia strained to the utmost in connection with the war effort, with all this terrible crisis surrounding him when he was in Russia, Citrine is chiefly concerned with his personal comforts. This is truly amazing. I have long disliked the person but this little book of his has made me dislike him even more — a result which Jinarajadasa had probably not foreseen!

610. Citrine mentions the absence of hot water in his Kuibyshev hotel and difficulties in finding running water in three consecutive chapters in his book.

It struck me as curious that Jinarajadasa should send me these particular books. They are not a brilliant choice anyway. Probably he wanted me to know something about Russia. A worthy ambition, but what exactly does he take me for? Obviously as a person who is singularly ignorant of world affairs and especially of Russia. If he thinks so of me, even though I am supposed to have a reputation of possessing some knowledge of these affairs, what does he think of the average intelligent Indian? I fear he has lost touch with Indian currents of thought. This was evident to some extent from some press interviews of his. As a matter of fact developments in Russia are known and appreciated in India probably more than in most countries. I am sorry that Jinarajadasa should move in such a narrow groove of ideas, for he is able and intelligent. But all of us become prisoners of our own set of thoughts and can seldom look out of that framework. I do not want you, of course, to convey these opinions of mine to Jinarajadasa. It was good of him to send me the books and he should be thanked for them.

I have received *Anna Karenina*—2 volumes. I wonder if you can get for me a Persian-English and English-Persian dictionary — not a big tome but a small students' dictionary if this is available. Ask Kitabistan to get it for me.

I have been getting the foreign periodicals you send more regularly now and in larger numbers though even now odd numbers are missing. I keep returning them to you in batches. I hope you get them.

The guavas reached us in good condition and were appreciated.

Rajiva will be six months old in another three weeks. That is a landmark for him. Usually the *anna-prasana* ceremony or the खीरचटाई[611] takes place about then. Are you going to have this soon? So far as I know you have not had a formal naming ceremony so far. Why not combine the two? I hope he is flourishing.

I do not know that Anna was with you, or I had forgotten — If you feel that she is not helpful, there is no particular point in keeping her on. You are the best judge. If you decide to part with her, give her sufficient time to make other arrangements.

You might have seen in the papers that plague has broken out in Ahmadnagar city. We learnt that it was of a peculiarly virulent type, but so far it has only affected a few persons. Possibly it may not spread. We are naturally rather cut off from the city and there is not much chance of infection. Still the question of plague inoculation arose. If I feel that it is necessary I shall take it, but I have a certain instinctive aversion to these inoculations. Indeed this aversion extends even to drugs

611. *Khirchatai*—Formal feeding ceremony of a child.

and I should like to avoid them as far as possible. The idea of filling my body with undesirable concoctions puts me out, and yet sometimes I have to do it. Intellectually I have to appreciate the value of medicine and inoculations, though I do think that this is overdone. On the whole I have had singularly little to do with drugs and medicines. Bernard Shaw, in his latest book, attacks vaccinations and inoculations etc. with passion, and a part of me reacts favourably to his denunciation. But then another part of me—how split up we are into different personalities!—accepts the drugs and the sera & vaccines. So if I come to the conclusion that inoculation against plague is necessary, I shall submit to it. The latest reports are that there have been no further plague cases in the city. So perhaps it may not be necessary to get inoculated.

Give my love to Madan Bhai. I hope he is keeping well.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 99.

Feb. 3, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of the 26th Jan.—also Betty's of that date. I read both your accounts of Vidya's wedding and the people you met there with interest, especially Betty's references to children growing up. How the world is changing while I remain here!

Some of us decided to take the inoculation for plague and so day before yesterday I had an injection. This was only half the dose, the other half will follow a week later. It is better to take it this way, unless the emergency is great. I have had a more or less normal reaction, slight rise in temperature &c. The next injection will bring about another reaction, possibly slightly greater, and I shall not return to my normal existence here for another week or ten days.

Betty writes that the Anand Bhawan garden was looking very attractive, especially the front lawn with its bright winter flowers. What interested me more was her description of you and Rajiva—how lovely and fit you looked and how the babe was flourishing. I suppose the little tyrant not only determines most of your activities but also is the principal factor in the functioning of the household. I think of him and you often and I wonder how motherhood has changed you. Indu,

the mother, is almost a stranger to me and I have to gather scraps of information, as well as occasionally some deeper insight, from words and phrases in your letters. A mother is represented, quite rightly, as an embodiment of love and tenderness and care. With all this goes a protective pugnacity, an offensiveness so far as the care of the child is concerned, something of the relation of the tigress to her cub. Do you feel a bit like the tigress? I can hardly imagine it and yet I suppose there must be that element present in you; indeed we all have some part of the tiger or tigress about us.

Khali seems to be fading off as a prospective resort for you next summer. The chief disadvantage seems to me the lack of suitable companions. A longish stay there, more or less alone, is likely to be dull. If Sheila cannot go, as you write, then I cannot think of others who might be able to join you there—But probably you can raise others from your circle of friends and acquaintances. Apart from the question of companionship, I am sure the place is ideal for a stay both for you and for Rajiva. The journey itself is a very easy and delightful one and need cause no worry, whether you go by bridle path or motor road. We have got so used to railway trains and the like that a reversion to older methods of transport appears odd and uncomfortable. It is not always so, especially in the hills. It is too early to decide and ultimately much will depend on how Rajiva is faring three months hence. Anyway your mother-instinct will guide you aright and you should trust it. One advantage about Khali is that no elaborate and previous arrangements are necessary. The place is there and can be fitted up in a day or two. Whether you go there or not, it would be desirable to inform the people there that you are likely to come. This will keep them up to the mark and the house and garden will be better looked after. Just at present they must be buried in snow.

If one is to trust the newspapers Rajiva is growing so fast that he is likely to catch you up before long. About two months ago or less he was described as eight months old and now he is said to have attained the status of one-year-old.

I have long been worried about the servants' quarters attached to Anand Bhawan. They are disreputable, or at any rate, those on the lower level. The lavatory arrangements are very undesirable, and generally the roofs are in a state of disrepair. I should like some radical improvements to be made but I suppose this will be difficult just at present. Anyway I suggest that you ask Ladli Bhai to have them repaired and renovated in so far as possible, and if necessary to add constructionally to them in a small way. Generally some patchwork repairs are undertaken hurriedly just before the rains. This is not good

enough. If the matter is taken in hand now there will be plenty of time and a good job can be done.

I should have liked to allot small pieces of land in a corner of the garden to some of our older servants for growing vegetables for their own use. This would not only add to their normal food but also be good employment for their children. Even a tiny patch grows good vegetables and quite a quantity — like tomatoes. But I do not see where the land for this to be found. It should be near their quarters. Perhaps something could be done to the patch — the lowland between their quarters and the rise leading to the main house. It is difficult for me to make any definite suggestion without examining the layout. But you and Feroze can consider this & see if anything can be done. Perhaps you are already using this bit of land for vegetables. Anyway it would be desirable to have proper hedges to separate the servants quarters as well as to mark the path leading to the hospital. Feroze, expert gardener as he has proved to be, can make the best use of this patch both for productive and decorative purposes.

Dadu's old law books were badly treated and for many years have been neglected. The old law library was divided up, or rather it disintegrated. I think a considerable number of *American Reports* were sent to the Hindu University. Many books were sold. The rest he gave to Ranjit. I felt sorry later that any books were sold as I hate the idea of any of his old books knocking about from place to place. I was myself guilty of this partly — so far as his medical books were concerned — and I repented soon after. At that time the main incentive was to get rid of everything that seemed unnecessary and thus to lighten our burden. There was not enough room in the new Anand Bhawan for all our books. Well that has been done — Now the only question is what to do with the remains of that law library which are rapidly deteriorating in a godown. I am quite clear that they should not be auctioned or sold in any other way. As a matter of fact they would not fetch any considerable sum of money, as all the best books were previously picked out. But apart from the money question they should not be sold. To give them over to the Hindu University Law Library would be the right thing to do. It is not much of a gift either in quantity or quality but still it may be of some use there. To it might be added the series of *State Trials*, which you will find in our library — eastern side. Books should be kept where they are most appreciated and used.

I am sure *Puphi* will agree to this proposal. Still it is perhaps better to get her direct approval. I have written to her about it and asked her to let you know. Meanwhile, you should get the old books cleaned, arranged and listed. That is some job which should keep Upadhyaya

busy for a while. You mention that the key of the place is with *Puphi*. She could not have taken the key with her — Perhaps it is with Nadir Gazder — If you cannot find the key you might as well have the lock forced open.

Among the books, probably there are a number of non-legal books. These should be separated. There used to be also a large number of copies of the *River of Kings* — the *Rajatarangini* — where are these?

I have already read *Best Stories from Modern Bengal*. *Puphi* sent it to me.

As for Nilima's suggestion that I should get any future book of mine published at her Signet Press, it is much too early for me to think of any publication. When the time comes I shall bear this in mind. I have no doubt that this press can do a good job so far as printing &c. are concerned. But even more important factors are the business ability and experience of publishing behind a concern — I have had a large experience of Indian publishing houses and they are quite remarkably lacking in these qualities. Their unbusiness-like methods have been a constant source of irritation to me. Modern publishing is not so much concerned with producing a limited artistic product but with widespread sales of low-priced and well-produced books. But all this is not meant for Nilima.

Do not trouble yourself about Bengue's Balsam or Thermogene — I wanted some such stuff for Pantji especially. He has managed to get various creams and ointments, including Thermogene, Huxley's Wintogene or Schering's Balsam &c. So far as I am concerned I seldom need these. Sometimes I develop a sprain in the wrist or ankle or a slight pain in the arm.

I wonder if you could send some American periodicals (after I have returned them to you) to Sucheta Kripalani, Central Prison, Lucknow. She is all alone there now and would be cheered up by these magazines &c. Send those you consider suitable for her — You need not send her all but an occasional packet will be welcomed.

Some days ago I sent you the following books :

1 Citrine's *In Russia Now* } Jinarajadasa's
2 George Sava's *Russia Triumphant* }
3 Thoreau : *Walden*
4 Radhakrishnan : *India and China*
5 Childe : *What Happened in History*
6 Horace Alexander — *India since Cripps*
7 Shah : *India's Place in Post-War Reconstruction*
8 *The Call to Badrinath*

Last week we received some dry fruit, *laddus*, *halva* (गाजर का हलवा)[612] &c. I was told later that you had sent it for me. Did you send it?

Betty writes that Shirodkar refused to charge his fees for your confinement. She suggests that some present should be given to him instead on your behalf. You had better arrange this. Personally I prefer to pay fees than to be worried about presents.

About subscriptions to American periodicals, you need not write to any — Anyway, one cannot send money to America from India without all manner of permits. I have written to Chand to ask Walsh to arrange to continue all the periodicals.

Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* which you sent me belongs to Lakshmi and Sushila, Kapil Deva's daughters. What are these girls doing now? Are they in college? I heard some time ago that the Malaviya clan did not approve of them because they had not stuck to all the old practices and customs.

I am enclosing the dividend warrant, duly endorsed.

This letter is No. 100 — I complete the century.

Love

Your loving
Papu

6.2.45

Darling Bets,

I have your letter of January 26th. I was looking forward to it as I expected you to give me some news of the people you had met at Vidya's wedding. I have lost touch with so many of them, not only during the two and a half years of my stay in Ahmadnagar Fort but even previously. When I have met them occasionally in the past there have been two dominant and rather contradictory sensations. The older generation seemed to have remained where it was, more or less unchanged in a changing world, static and moving in the same old groove, only growing older and more wrinkled, like some old picture which is slowly fading off and developing cracks and is covered with film and dust. The growing generation changing rapidly in appearance, as growing children do, and almost unrecognizable, rather attractive, some of the girls particularly so, and apparently full of promise. Yet, somehow as they grow

612. *Gajar ka halva—A sweet made of carrots.*

injection. On the whole mild reaction — slight rise in temperature, pain & swelling &c., except in Maulana's case. He had fairly high fever for a day or so.

Two days ago, on Feb. 8th, we had the second injection. Sendak warned us that the reaction after this would be worse. As a matter of fact it has been even milder.

Feb. 10, 1945

Darling Indu,

Two days ago I — and some others here — took our second injection of the plague stuff. This completes the inoculation. We have been told that the reaction to this would be more marked but as a matter of fact it has been milder than the previous one. In another two or three days' time I expect to be quite normal The inoculation is supposed to be effective — so we are told — for six months only. Rather a short time. Anyway you can rest assured now that those of us who have been inoculated will not get the bubonic plague — whatever other plagues might infect us — for at least six months.

In my last letter I asked you if you had sent me some dried fruit, *halva, laddus* &c.— Since then I have received a letter from Amma from Lahore in which she mentions sending me some eatables — What they are she does not say. I suppose this lot came from her.

The additional books from Jinarajadasa, as well as the other books you mention having sent, have not reached me yet. I think I have already read Nilima's *When the Moon Died.*

You might put down in your list of desirable books, to be obtained when available, the following three:

1	Rosamond Lehmann	:	*The Ballad and the Source*
2	Penderel Moon	:	*Strangers in India*
3	Do Do	:	*The Future of India*

All the three were published in London — the first two last year and the third only recently. This third will certainly not be available here for some time. Perhaps the other two have reached India.

I am not surprised to learn that Madan Bhai looked dazed and aged on his emergence from jail. But I hope he will recover. He looked pretty feeble after his hard life and starvation diet during the Civil War in Spain and later in China. But this has been a new and probably more trying experience for him.

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The cigarette-holder you sent me has come to grief. It fell on a stone floor and cracked up. However I am using its broken-up pieces.

This is my letter No. 101.

Your loving
Papu

February 17, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of Feb. 9th. Now that I know that both you and Rajiva are keeping well, it does not matter much if your letters do not come regularly. So do not trouble about this. Write only when you feel in the mood for it. It is seldom worthwhile to write when there is no particular urge to do so. I write fairly regularly as there are only a limited number of activities here and inevitably one develops a routine.

I have read in the papers the answer which Mudie, the Home Member gave in the Central Assembly about the health of the internees in Ahmadnagar Fort.[613] He said that I had had an attack of lumbago but had recovered from it. We are used to odd and novel statements made on behalf of the Government and try not to be surprised. But it was something of a surprise for me to associate lumbago with myself. I looked up the word in the dictionary for I was not clear about its precise significance — I found that it was a 'rheumatic affection in loins'. Certainly I have not had, recently or at any other time, any such 'affection', and so I conclude that I have never had lumbago. There appears to be something wrong about the sources or channels of the information that reaches Govt. Normally this error is the outcome of a desire to tone down something or make it appear, as far as language can help, to be something other than it is. But there was no particular reason for saying that I had lumbago when I had suffered from no such malady. I imagine that the lapse was due to carelessness or inefficiency somewhere, or mixing me up with another person here who did have lumbago. It is true that I had a slight pain in my left shoulder

613. He had stated on 10 February 1945 that all members of the Congress Working Committee were well, except Govind Ballabh Pant, who might have to be operated on for hernia. Jawaharlal had an attack of lumbago but had recovered and Vallabhbhai Patel, who had for years suffered from a spastic colon, was well.

and round about it for some days. It was not much but it interfered with my sleep and exercises. What annoyed me was that I should have had it at all for any bodily weakness or disability irritates me. I got over it by massage and fomentation and especially sunbaths. I have been completely free from it and have been indulging in my exercises as usual. The plague inoculation came in the way but that too is over with all its after effects.

I have received the books and a pamphlet which Jinarajadasa sent you — They are :

1 Sean O'Faolain : *The Great O'Neill*
2 H. Fortes Anderson : *Borderline Russia*
3 Jinarajadasa . *Economics and Theosophy*

The Human Situation, which you mentioned, was not in this lot.

I might mention that I have also received the two new books from Rupa & Co. who sometimes send me books. These are: Wavell's *Allenby in Egypt* and A. L. Rowse: *The English Spirit.*[614] Wavell's book was in a list of books required that I sent you last year. You can strike it off from it.

I have returned the following books to you:

1 Julian Huxley : *On Living in a Revolution*
2 Shaukat Ansari . *Pakistan*
3 Borodin : *Soviet & Tsarist Siberia*
4 Nym Wales : *New China*
5 Tikhov Semushkin . *Children of the Soviet Arctic*
6 *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*
7 Alexei Tolstoy . *My Country*
8 Dean of Canterbury . *The Socialist Sixth of the World*
9 Do . *Soviet Strength*
10 *Correspondence with Mr. Gandhi* (Government publication)

Semushkin's *Children of the Soviet Arctic* I found rather fascinating reading. It is simply written, but the account of change creeping in, or rather sweeping in, into those remote areas is very interesting. Apart from this, the Arctic and wide stretches of snow and ice have always attracted me.

I have read in the newspapers that Rafi has been transferred to Naini Prison. Why he should have been transferred to a place where special medical attention is not easily available is difficult to understand, more especially at this time of the year with the summer looming ahead. I wonder if you could arrange to send him fresh fruit regularly. What

614. It is a collection of reviews and essays in which Rowse presents a series of portraits of great Englishmen

the jail rules are about this I do not know but you can easily find out if you do not know them already. You can put Upadhyaya in charge of it and either he or Khaliq can carry the parcel, say once a week.

Probably Rafi will appreciate books even more than fruit. Books are apt to get waylaid or lost when sent to prison. I have lost many that way, including a parcel of them sent to Rafi to Bareilly in 1942. But that was not his fault as the books apparently never reached him. There is less danger of loss or disappearance if they are sent and recovered by messengers. Anyway the risk has to be taken for I should like Rafi to have good reading matter — You can pick out such books as you think suitable. A packet of three or four at a time can be sent and recovered when the next packet goes.

Also foreign periodicals, even though they are pretty old. I asked you in my last letter to send some of these to Sucheta Kripalani. Some might be sent to her, but I would like a more regular supply to go to Rafi. *Life* & *Time* and other magazines are likely to interest him.

I suppose Hari airs my old clothes from time to time. There are, I believe, still some of *Dadu's*, Dol Amma's and Mummy's clothes and belongings lying about in boxes and trunks. Ask Hari to look after them properly and air them &c.

Betty must have left Allahabad — I am very glad she spent two or three weeks in Anand Bhawan. I wish Harsha and Ajit had been there also to run about the garden.

Betty writes that when *Nani* and Bappi were in Anand Bhawan they messed about with your old presents, clothes, jewellery &c. and even took some away for disposal or exchange on your behalf. I was rather amused to read this and yet I realised how all this must have upset you — I am sure they meant well and anyway it does not matter much. But what does matter is your reaction to such happenings. Life is full of petty and unimportant events which for the moment loom large, upset our composure and thus unnecessarily hurt us and add to our difficulties. We have to treat them in proper perspective and not allow them to interfere with the path of our choice. *Nani* is a dear and would hate to hurt you in any way and yet it is obvious that her way of looking at things is entirely different from yours or mine, and unconsciously she may do much, imagining that she is doing it for your good, when actually she is rubbing you up all the wrong way. Probably there is far less difference between your outlook and mine than between yours and *Nani's*. Yet even between you and me there is bound to be a difference in approach to many things. We accommodate ourselves to these differences, adjust them from day to day easily enough because over a vast

area there is a common outlook, and because we realize that an appreciation of each other's differences is not only the salt of life but actually helps in bringing about closer understanding. Apart from other factors, age itself is a dividing factor. For age to impose itself on youth—how frequently that happens!— is one of the major misfortunes.

To submit to others against one's own decided inclinations leads to a sense of frustration and unhappiness; to be always on the offensive and coming into conflict with others leads to unhappiness all round. One has to find a middle way which can hardly be defined, but which may be said to be a gentle considerate approach and yet a firm adherence to one's own ways. Stick to what you want to do, and do it, but in doing so be as considerate to others as possible. Do not allow yourself to be pushed about too much by other people's opinions. We cannot be too hard on others but we cannot also be too soft or else we become just a flabby mass.

So if *Nani* wanted you to do something which you did not approve of or want to do, you should have made it perfectly clear to her that this should not be done. It seems absurd to me for you, at her instance, to worry about your old presents &c. or agree to dispose of them—Why should you?

As I have said above, this is a very trivial matter and hardly deserves a moment's thought. But I have doled out to you good advice so that you may apply it, if you approve of it, to other circumstances and other people also. And that includes me! I have a way of throwing out suggestions as they come into my mind. Do not attach too much importance to them. Consider them, certainly and then do what you think best — That would please me far more than the thought that you were just carrying out my wishes and not your own — This would apply at any time, even when I am with you but it applies much more now when I am far away and we cannot discuss any matter. Listen to others but trust your own instinct and your own thought.

I do not know what a normal person is, but whatever normality may be I do not fit in with it, and as I grow older I fit in less and less with it. That of course does not mean that I am very peculiar. But I grow less suited to the normal domestic and social life in India. I enjoy it in bits and with some people I enjoy it more than with others. Nevertheless a distaste for it grows in me and I do not see why I should waste my time in inane activities and in meeting third-rate people. Obviously this background is not a normal one and it is hardly a social one, in a narrow sense of the word. Also I have only a vague sense of money and property and refuse to worry myself about either. I cannot understand why people get excited about them. All this makes me peculiarly

unsuited to advise others, and even you, for there is no reason whatever why you should live, mentally or physically, in the rather confined or isolated world which fills my mind. I am terrified occasionally at the thought that I might be imposing my peculiar ways on you. I want you to be perfectly free and not allow even your love for me to limit that freedom. The bondage of affection can sometimes be a heavy one.

As I was writing this letter I received a packet of books from you.

1 *The Human Situation*
2 Swami Nikhilananda's *Bhagavad Gita*
3 Vivekananda's *Lectures from Colombo to Almora*
4 Do *Letters*
5 Do *Karma Yoga*
6 Nilima's *When the Moon Died*

and some pamphlets, including a reprint of some old speech of mine—Also Thermogene—Thank you—

Betty seems to have decided to go to Kashmir—She suggests that you might accompany her. If you could manage it, it would be excellent. You know that for me there is no place like Kashmir. But you have to take Rajiva into consideration. There is no obvious reason why he should not benefit by a visit to Kashmir, in spite of the long journey. Anyway you will be the best person to decide—Khali just by yourself and Rajiva is not an attractive proposition.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 102.

Feb. 24, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have just received your letter of the 17 Feb.—No. 96. I read something about the Hospital Week in the papers. This collection business is always very troublesome, in India more so than elsewhere for here people expect personal visits. I have an extreme dislike for doing such work. However it has to be done, I suppose, and it helps us to gain an insight into other peoples' minds and habits—not always a pleasant sight to see. We cannot expect much financial help from other parts of India for after all the hospital can only cater for local needs. So it

is as well that the people of Allahabad should feel that it is their responsibility.

I am glad you have decided to go to Kashmir with *Choti Puphi*—Kashmir must always remain first choice for a holiday. Your going there means that a bit of myself also goes and I feel a sense of exhilaration at the prospect. Ramlal's[615] house is good. But do you propose to spend most of your time in Srinagar? Probably Betty would prefer that and anyway Srinagar is pleasant enough and many small excursions can be arranged from there—I don't think a house boat is particularly healthy for a small child, though many children live there. A tent is much better. Perhaps later on you might move to a higher valley for a while. That depends on how Rajiva fares with his teething. Normally I should not worry about any very special arrangements for him.

Is Anna going to stay on with you and will she accompany you to Kashmir? Anyway you had better take Tulsi and Hari.

There are rumours again about our possible transfer to a U.P. prison—I have always attached little importance to these but perhaps there may be some slight basis for them this time as, in any event, Pantji is in need of an operation. An operation of course does not necessitate a transfer to the U.P. It means Pantji's transfer to a good hospital where a good surgeon is available. Some people in the Central Assembly and elsewhere seem to be anxious to get us transferred though why they should feel that way I do not know. For my part a prison is a prison anywhere and minor changes make little difference. It is the prison that counts, not the place where the prison is situated, except to some extent in regard to the climate. The prospect of summer in the U.P. plains is not exactly alluring—that is in a prison. Still it really does not make much difference, and if one day we are told that we are being sent elsewhere, like some commodities who have no choice in the matter, we shall gather up our belongings and march out, in due secrecy, from one enclosure to another. There will be a break in our routine here, a bustling and an unusual activity, and then quiet will again reign here, and elsewhere we shall settle down to another routine.

The only possible advantage of a transfer to one's province is to facilitate interviews. That advantage does not apply to us and I do not propose to take interviews elsewhere. So it makes not the slightest difference whether you are a hundred miles or a thousand miles away from me for in either event the barriers remain.

As for interviews the reasons which actuated us not to take them remain, but, apart from them, there is a personal reason which counts

615 Dewan Ramlal, brother of Dewan Chamanlal.

with me. Jail interviews are seldom satisfactory and often disturbing. There is no normality about them and a sense of tension persists. The conditions under which they are usually held are irritating. Emotionally they are rather upsetting; feelings long restrained and dammed up have a glimpse of a narrow outlet and yet are unable to adapt themselves to it, and the half-hour or so passes rapidly without any adjustment and leaving a hollowness and hunger behind. All this normally in prison even when interviews have been a regular event. We have of course often taken these interviews.

But it is a very different matter to be isolated for two and a half years and then to have this brief, restricted and uncomfortable interview under the grim shadow of jail walls and under the supervision of jail officials. When I meet you again, wherever that may be, I might remain silent for some time, just looking at you and trying to find out what you are now, how you have changed, what private universe you inhabit; or I might break out in unmeaning talk as a reaction from the long silence, a torrent of words trying to cover my own shyness and uneasiness, reaching out and seeking for something which eludes me. Gradually, as we see more of each other, we shall adjust ourselves as we understand each other afresh. But this cannot and will not happen in a jail interview, and though even sight, after the long absence of it, fills a vacuum somewhere, a heartache remains and is accentuated, and the gnawing feeling of emptiness continues. And so I feel that it is better for me to avoid these jail interviews. When I see you, I want to see much of you, quietly, normally and with a feeling of freedom and leisure. Till that is possible, I had rather not meet you.

It is odd to think that for over two and a half years I have not seen women or children. Even the men we have seen have been strictly limited in number and quality — and so our conception of Homo sapiens must undergo some change—It will not be particularly easy to adapt oneself to the wider world after this experience and always there will be a sense of unreality about it or of a double life —

Yet of course we shall adapt ourselves though we may carry that mark on our foreheads and in our eyes. I think I am peculiarly adaptable for I have gradually reduced the mental luggage I have to carry. That is why, I think, I can go off to a distant country at a moment's notice without much inconvenience. Betty, in her last letter, said something of the many arrangements necessary for the proposed visit to Kashmir. I suppose all that is necessary — And yet I would be prepared to go to the Arctic region or to any other far away spot without much mental or other preparation.

I have sent you the following:

1 Katrak	:	*Oriental Treasures*
2 Pandya	:	*The Holy Gita*
3 Nilima	:	*When the Moon Died*
4		*Hungry Bengal*

and *periodicals.*

The pamphlet of the Hindustan Hamara people which you sent me — containing a speech of *mine — has reached me. For a moment I* could not place it. Yet I realized soon enough that it was a speech of mine, though when and where delivered I do not know. Obviously it was an extempore speech and the text has been taken from a newspaper report, and like all such reports it is faulty. I have no objection to the Hindustan *Hamara people issuing it, but they should have sent previous* intimation. What is more important is that they should have stated the occasion, place and date of the speech and the fact that it was taken from a newspaper report. A careful revision by a competent person would have removed some of its obvious errors and redundancies.

Among the books which you are noting down for me, please put down Toynbee's *A Study of History*[616] — I have an idea it is in my room but I am by no means sure. If you cannot find it, then you will have to purchase it. There is no hurry. I have plenty of reading matter with me. Toynbee's book is big — more than one volume I think.

Only three days ago I wrote to Betty not to send me any honey as there was always danger of breakage. Yesterday four big bottles full of *honey were delivered to me — sent by her.* Now that it has come, we shall of course consume it with pleasure.

Once you wrote to me that you proposed to fix up a Chinese room, and an especially Indian room, in Anand Bhawan. Did you give shape to your ideas?

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter *No. 103.*

616. By 1939 Toynbee had published six volumes of *A Study of History*—the first three deal with his claim that civilizations, not nations, are the determining factors in history and that the life of a civilization is the story of its challenges and responses to environmental conditions and the second three with the breakdown and disintegration of civilizations.

March 2. Friday

It seems settled that all of us are going to be transferred to our respective provinces. For some time past there have been rumours of this and references in the newspapers. I discounted them. It was clear, however, that Pantji would go somewhere for his operation. That an operation is necessary for him has been admitted by Govt. Some official answers in the Central Assembly have indicated that others are also likely to be sent.

I am not at all anxious to be sent to another prison, especially on the eve of summer. It will certainly be hotter in the U.P. and living conditions in any U.P. jail will be worse than here. However, it really does not matter much and we shall gradually develop new routines.

How long have we been here? On Jan. 26th we completed 900 days here. So now we have been 934 days (up to today) — a big chunk out of one's life. It has been a curious experience for us all I suppose and whatever the future may bring, we twelve, or ten now, will not be thrown together in this way again.

We have been told nothing definite about our transfer. Sendak's ideas of secrecy are curious and primitive. I imagine that we shall be sent away by the middle of this month.

March 3, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have been sending you lately rather longish letters and I think you need some relief from them. Anyway a short one for a change ought to be welcome — Or, perhaps, the real reason is that my mind today is rather a blank so far as letter writing is concerned. It is not quite a blank of course for there is much that fills its odd corners and leads me to muse and travel leisurely along its corridors. Sometimes these wanderings lead to what appear to be blind alleys, and sometimes there are distant and alluring vistas. So we build up, each one of us, private and individual worlds of our own, touching and overlapping other people's worlds, and yet remaining always our very own, different from the others. And these worlds become a refuge and a shelter, and sometimes also a prison through whose invisible, and yet nonetheless effective, iron bars we peep out at others and the wide world outside us. Those strong bars of the spirit rather isolate us and we feel incapable of crossing over to the

other side, but occasionally they seem to melt away and we become one with others and sense a feeling of communion with nature and the world.

Holi has come and gone, the spring festival, which has already the promise, or is it in India the threat, of the coming summer. It is I think the most delightful of our festivals, or should be such if we had not got so tied up in our minds and activities, not knowing exactly what to do and what not to do, pulled in different directions and constrained by circumstance, doubtful of each other and ourselves and what we stand for. *Holi* is the essence of spontaneity, of exuberant joy and merry-making, of a breaking of bonds that separate and a meeting together of all on an equal and democratic footing. How far it is from what it should be and probably used to be for we lack spontaneity and the spirit of merry-making, and joy is a scarce-known visitor.

Holi was Dol Amma's birthday. Most of these festivals of ours are associated in my mind with some event, some happening in my life. *Vasanta Panchami* was my wedding day; *Raksha-bandhan* and the *Dasehra* bring numerous memories; so also *Divali*.

I have been receiving letters occasionally from *Puphi* from America—They are interesting and fill in somewhat the brief accounts of her activities that appear in the papers—I write to her sometimes but the long delay in receiving letters—the average period for an airmail letter is about five weeks—rather puts me off writing. I am asking her to bring me a gift—a new Parker pen of the latest type—No. '51' I think it is called.

When do you propose to go to Lahore on your way to Kashmir? I suppose you will remain in Allahabad for the whole of this month—

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 104.

March 8—Thursday

Since I wrote last in this journal our impending transfer has filled our minds and interfered with the normal routine of our lives here. So far as we know, no definite instructions have come yet. But several answers to questions in the Central Assembly make it clear that a transfer has been definitely decided and that we are likely to be separated and

sent to our respective provinces. Everyday the papers contain rumours of this transfer—of where we are to be sent. It has been said that Pantji, Kripalani & I, and presumably Narendra Deva also, would be sent to the U.P. The Bareilly jail (District or Central?) has been mentioned for us. Again it has been said that I am likely to be sent to Dehra Dun. Vallabhbhai to be sent to Yeravda or Sabarmati. Shanker Rao to Yeravda. Pattabhi to Vellore, Mahtab to Cuttack or Berhampore, Maulana to Alipur prison and Asaf Ali presumably to Delhi. Pantji's release for his operation has also been hinted at. So we live in a state of indecision about the future but with this conviction that we are all going to be sent away soon. This is taken for granted and though we do not pack or otherwise get ready for the journey, a kind of mental preparation goes on. Also something more than that. A large number of packing cases appeared yesterday meant for our books, for we have collected a considerable number of them.

x x x x

This thought of transfer, of our going different ways, naturally led us to meet together and have some talks about the future. During these two & a half years we have avoided these joint talks about political developments, though there have been occasional talks and discussions between smaller groups. Maulana called us together on the 3rd and referring to the report of the transfer and especially to the impression abroad that we were anxious for such a transfer, suggested that we might write to Govt. and tell them that this impression was wrong. Of course Govt. could send us where they chose and it was not very material to us whether we stayed here or were kept in a different prison. Maulana's suggestion was not approved. Nearly all of us said that on the whole we would prefer to stay on here together to being sent to other jails separately. But everyone (apart from Maulana) felt that we should not write to Govt. on this question. Govt. have a way of exploiting anything that we may write to them—usually phrases torn out of their context. So it was decided that no letter be sent to Govt.

I then suggested that we might consider various future problems so that we might at least know each other's mind before we separated. This was agreed to and we have been meeting every afternoon for two hours, from 2 to 4 p.m., taking up each matter separately. So far we have had five such sittings and they are continuing.

The first question we considered was our attitude to interviews &c. in other jails. Should we continue to refuse interviews? After some discussion it was agreed that we should not have interviews unless

some extraordinary need arose—such as Pantji's operation which necessitated interviews and instructions. Also Narendra Deva's old mother aged 80 was anxious to see him and it would be a grievous blow to her to be told that he would not have an interview with her even though she was on the eve of death. Similar contingencies might arise for others also but, generally speaking, interviews were not to be taken. Each individual would have to judge for himself.

x x x x

We then went on to discuss a matter which is apparently agitating Congress minds outside—the attitude that Congress should take up towards Communists. This had nothing to do with the basic principles of communism or social change but with the political, anti Congress attitude taken up during the past 2½ years or more by the Communist Party in India. How was it possible to have Communists in the Congress, especially in Congress executives, when they were diametrically opposed to Congress policy and attacked Congress? It was obvious that Congressmen outside, most of whom had spent years in prison and had just been released, were bitter against the Communists, and in the ad hoc committees they had formed since their release, they had excluded Communists.

We had a long two-day discussion and the usual arguments were put forth. Shanker Rao, Kripalani and to some extent Pattabhi and Mahtab were for their exclusion in future. Others were opposed to it, or rather wanted to deal with individual cases of lapse and indiscipline and not with the group as such. Also there was the feeling that it was impossible to forecast the future which would be different from the past & the present and no hard & fast attitude could be laid down at present. Apart from national considerations, international factors would also have to be considered.

This led to a consideration of the larger question of other organised groups within the Congress—for instance the Socialists. Did not such groups with their separate mandates weaken Congress in action? No clear decision emerged but the general opinion was that we must not push out any group. We had to widen & strengthen the Congress and not to make it a narrower body.

About the Communists, it was agreed that the action taken by the ad hoc committees of representative Congressmen outside in not admitting Communists was thoroughly justified.[617] These committees were

617 In January February 1945, the organisers of the Punjab Provincial Workers' Conference and Bihar Constructive Workers' Conference did not allow the Communists to participate in their conferences.

formed to carry on the constructive programme of the Congress—the Congress itself being illegal at present—and it would be absurd to include people in them who disagreed with that very programme.

This had nothing to do with the inclusion or exclusion of Communists from the Congress proper later on when the Congress could function normally.

Also it was agreed that later, when the occasion for it arose, disciplinary action could and should be taken against those, Communists & others, who had deliberately gone against Congress policy & attacked Congress during a period of action. This would be an individual matter—As for the larger question of groups, this could only be considered much later and its decision would depend on a number of national & international factors.

x x x x

Our talks continue. We are going to consider the picture of the future as we envisage it—of the Congress, the country, & the world; the communal problem; the Congress constructive programme &c., &c.

x x x x

The probability of transfer led me to look through my manuscript of *The Discovery of India*. Since my last revision in December, some small matters requiring change or addition had occurred to me and I had noted them down. I wanted to be finished with these before I left Ahmadnagar Fort. So I have spent a few hours with this MSS and added a few footnotes &c. Again I have finished with it and put it away—finally so far as I can judge at present, but then one never knows.

x x x x

Two days ago there was a small incident when I spoke rather harshly to Sendak the Supt. The fault was partly Shanker Rao's. My words hurt Sendak greatly. I felt sorry for him and the next morning I told him that I was sorry for having lost my temper and spoken rather roughly to him. He was greatly pleased at this and his face lighted up.

x x x x

Indu writes that poor Rajiva is having trouble with his ears, or rather one ear, and his throat. I have been anxious and waiting for further

news. People tell me here that this kind of thing is not uncommon and is not serious. Still I am worried. The idea of a child's suffering is more distressing than an adult's.

x x x x

As I was writing this I was given a sealed letter from Wavell dt. 1/3 —A brief letter enclosing a letter to him from Edward Thompson dt. Feb. 22. Edward has written a moving account of his son Frank's death in Bulgaria. How proud he is of Frank's abilities and heroism—and very rightly. I feel rather upset and terribly sad—I shall never meet Edward again—he is slowly dying.

I have read Edward's letter again—with tears in my eyes—The story of Frank's death and his courage will haunt me for a long time.

March 9, Friday

I wrote to Edward Thompson today and sent it with a covering letter to Wavell—sealed.

x x x x

Indu's letter came today—Rajiva is better but apparently Indu has not been too well.

x x x x

Last night I had again a nightmare accompanied by shouting but there was a difference from similar occurrences. I shouted or groaned as usual under some compulsion or fright or both. Pantji thereupon started coughing to distract my attention—he always does that. I heard his cough & voice, vaguely realised that he was near and trying to help, also knew that I was in bed—and yet I did not quite wake up and continued to some extent in the grip of that nightmare. The bedding itself seemed to be pressing me at the sides, crushing me almost, and a vague terror continued. So I tried to call out to Pantji asking him to come and help me. My voice must have sounded strained and not at all clear. Pantji made out that I was trying to say something in Hindustani to him. Previously, that is at an earlier stage of the nightmare, I have an idea that I was saying or shouting in English—get away! go away!

When Pantji came over to my bed I woke up slowly. I felt very exhausted as after some struggle. In rather a weak voice I thanked him & apologised for having troubled him.

What is all this business? What frightens me during these nightmares and compels me to shout 'go away'? I have no clear recollections. Immediately on waking up after a nightmare some pictures remain in the mind but they fade away very soon. Only a feeling of pressure & compulsion remains—something that strangles & throttles and crushes the body.

Is this just a reaction to jail? Or to events in India? Or to some inner personal disorder? Certainly it is not a healthy sign and I am beginning to get a little worried.

March 9, 1945[618]

My dear Edward,

Through Lord Wavell's courtesy I have seen your letter to him of February 22 in which you give an account of Frank's death. Again, through his courtesy, I am sending you this letter.[619]

You write with a father's pride and a father's sorrow, and you have reason for both, but many others will share that pride and sorrow. I have thought that if I had a son I would like him to die in some such way before life had stained him and added burdens which are sometimes heavier than death itself. It would be a grievous blow, but somehow a splendid death gives a deeper meaning to life and I am a little weary of the dull and meaningless round of life's normal activities. The story of Frank's heroic death will, as you say, haunt those who hear of it. There is so much to haunt us, so many memories, some vital and brief, others deadening and long-enduring, that we have become a haunted race. To seek some relief from these ghosts of our former selves we try to cultivate a measure of detachment. Sometimes I feel that I grow more detached, perhaps because of my Hindu inheritance, or perhaps it is the temper of the age which values life so cheaply. Death has become so common that it is no unexpected visitor. And yet the pull of life is strong and we continue to plan and build our dream castles for the future.

618. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
619. After his release Jawaharlal learnt from Wavell that he had mislaid this letter. On 12 August 1945 Jawaharlal sent a copy of it to Edward Thompson.

I remember Frank. He was almost a school boy when I saw him last. How these six and a half years must have changed and developed him; we age rapidly in these days. Often I thought of him and Palmer and wondered when I would meet them and what they would be like after their play with life and death. For long periods during my life I have not seen my friends and dear ones, and to fill that vacuum I build up a dream world of my own which is pleasanter in many ways than the factual world that surrounds us. Sometimes, vaguely, I wonder which is the real and which is the unreal—(Hindu inheritance again?). Not being religious, in the ordinary sense of the word, and having no particular views about the hereafter, yet having got used to being cut off from the world for long intervals, death itself seems just a longer interval.

No, I do not think death frightens me much. What terrifies me is the fearful load of hatred and bitterness that we accumulate all over the world and leave as a legacy to those who come after us. And so the old cycle goes on. In this barren desert the oases of friendship and understanding are few but very precious, and more and more I have come to realise how much they mean to me and to others. The books that you sent me have been my companions here and your occasional messages have brought you near to me. Often I have felt that physical companionship is only just one way, and not always the closest, of meeting together. We can overcome the lack of it and understand each other even more sometimes from a distance.[620]

You are ill and I am here and perhaps we may not meet again. And yet I do not know, for I have grown used to the unexpected happening. Whether we meet or not, I shall often think of you with affection and treasure the memory of our friendship. And so, whatever happens, may it be well with you.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal

620 Edward Thompson replied on 11 September 1945: ". . .there is not much of value in these earth-days. But more and more I am sure that memory, and especially friendship, are of worth. I feel that you and I are in close sympathy over all things."

TO LORD WAVELL[621]

Ahmadnagar Fort
9.3.45

Dear Lord Wavell,
Yesterday I received your note of March 1st with Edward Thompson's letter to you dated Feb. 22. I am grateful to you for enabling me to read Thompson's letter and for your offer to forward to him any letter that I might write. I am taking advantage of this offer and enclosing a letter for him. Presuming on your permission, I am keeping Thompson's letter to you.

In November last I received your letter of Oct. 31st 1944 and the three books that you sent—two of Thompson's and your anthology of poetry. As it was your desire, with which I wholly agreed, that your communication should be treated as entirely private, I refrained from writing to you directly then. I saw no way of writing to you and yet preventing others, in the chain through which my letters would have to pass, from knowing of it. I asked therefore the Home Dept. of the Bombay Govt. to inform your Private Secretary that I had received the message and the books and that I appreciated and was grateful for the courtesy.

Other Men's Flowers has brought to me many old favourites and reminded me of others that I had almost forgotten. It has also introduced me to a number of poems that were new to me. The book would have been welcome at any time and at any place, but it has been doubly so here.

Thanking you again,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

March 10, 1945

Darling Indu,
Two letters from you have reached me dated 25/2 and 1/3 — Nos. 97 and 98. The first one with news of Rajiva's ear-trouble rather worried me. I imagine that some infection had affected his throat and this had

621. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

spread to his ear. It is very difficult to prevent these infections for innumerable microbes infest the air. It depends ultimately on the individual's power of resistance. A baby can hardly be expected to have much of this. I gathered from people here that children often have some kind of ear-trouble and, though painful, it is not considered serious. Serious or not, it is very distressing to see a child suffer. I can never forget your face and your plaintive cry when you had your tonsils removed at Juhu when you were five years old.

Your second letter mentions that your temperature is also down. This is the first indication I have had that it was up. I hope this was due to some passing and minor trouble. It is clear anyway that both you and Rajiva have to go away for the hot weather. Kashmir will put you two right.

There seems to be quite a lot of talk about our transfer to other jails though no official intimation has come yet. The papers contain all manner of contradictory reports and Naini, Bareilly and Dehra Dun are mentioned so far as I am concerned. Having some considerable experience of U.P. jails I am not likely to be sent to a jail which has not been previously haunted by my presence and thoughts. So wherever I may be sent I shall soon fit into our accustomed groove. And yet there is always some trouble and jail people have a way of making themselves disagreeable over little things. You mention the trouble you have had at Naini about some things sent there for Rafi—Naini and the larger prisons are usually more disagreeable in such matters. Still I would continue sending books &c. to Rafi. Let the jail people refuse them if they want to do so.

My transfer will make no difference to interviews, that is to say I shall continue not to take them. I think I have already written to you about this. So the transfer, if and when it comes, should make no difference to your programme. All that you will have to do will be to address your letters to me differently. Even about that I do not know what the proper address then will be — direct to the jail or through the Provincial Govt. You can find out after you learn of our transfer.

I am afraid, therefore, that I cannot agree to an interview with Bijju *chachi*, here or elsewhere. There is no point in her writing to Govt. about it. As for her writing a letter to me that is a matter for the Govt. to decide. I propose to make no requests. Perhaps she had better wait till our transfer and then find out.

I have not received so far a fresh batch of books from the C.P. people. It may come later and add to my luggage. A few out of the books they send are good, most are mediocre, and some are no good and are just propaganda sheets or pamphlets. As for their weekly *The*

People's War I am certainly not going to make any request to Govt. Normally I do not do so and more particularly I have no intention of singling this out as an exception.

I have sent you a parcel containing the following books & pamphlets:

1 Davies	:	*Mission to Moscow*	
2 Anderson	:	*Borderline Russia*	Belonging to
3 Jinarajadasa	:	*Economics & Theosophy* (pamphlet)	Jinarajadasa
4 *Bushido*	:		
5 Aronson	:	*Rabindranath through Western Eyes*	
6 Vakil	:	*To Europa*	
7 H. Kabir	:	*Mahatma & other Poems*	
8 Gertrude Murray	:	*Verdict on Beverley Nichols*	
9-10 Agarwal	:	*Gandhian Plan of Economic Development for India*—2 Parts	

11 *Kadambari*
12 *Finland Unmasked*
13 *Vishva-Bharati* &c Krishnamurti

I have still with me one of Jinarajadasa's books—*The Great O'Neill*[622] —I have finished with it but some others are looking through it. I shall return it later and then you can send it back to Jinarajadasa.

I have received an account of Frank's (Edward Thompson's son's) death in Bulgaria. As you must have met Frank, and the story is a moving one and must interest you, I am giving it to you here. The original account is from an eyewitness of the incident.

Frank had a very exceptional gift for languages. He knew the European classics (Greek & Latin) well and a large number of modern European languages. He was 18 or so when the war started. He joined up and served later in Libya, the Sicilian landing &c. Apparently he added to his stock of languages during these war years and learnt or improved his knowledge of Persian, Arabic, Russian, Polish, Czech, modern Greek, Serbo-Croatian and Bulgarian. A very remarkable achievement for a boy who died at the age of 23. He was also, I understand, a poet of some distinction. He was attached to an important intelligence unit of G.H.Q. Cairo and held a very responsible post in it. But he felt ashamed of the easy life of headquarters in Cairo and was deeply stirred by the courage and sufferings of the Yugoslav patriots. So he volunteered for the dangerous work of assisting Bulgarian partisans

622. *The Great O'Neill* by Sean O'Faolain. This is a study of Hugh O'Neill, second Earl of Tyrone (1550-1616), and his times.

and in January 1944 was parachuted into Yugoslavia. His work there was very good and much appreciated. In March his colleague was surprised and killed but Frank just escaped and wandered about for 10 days in the forests and hills. He joined another unit and then, although he had a safer alternative, deliberately courted danger by marching off with a band of Bulgarian patriots. He felt that not to go with them would be unfair and would lead them to think that he was afraid of sharing their risks. There were running battles and he just escaped being killed—a dictionary stopped a bullet. He refused to leave his wounded wireless operator. They were nearly starving when they were rushed and captured on May 31. They were not allowed to sleep & were repeatedly interrogated. He claimed that as a liaison officer, captured in uniform with all his papers in order, he & his colleague were protected by the laws of war. He refused to give away his wireless code or military secrets.

On June 10 he was sent to Lithkovo, a village some 30 miles from Sofia, where 13 of them were tried—five officers (Frank, one American, a Serb and 2 Bulgarians) and 8 others. 57 partisans had already been shot out of hand. Frank sat in the village public hall where the trial was taking place, smoking his pipe. The hall was packed, and it is said that the intention of the authorities was to rouse the crowd to a fury, to lynch them, so that it could be claimed afterwards that their deaths were the result of a spontaneous outburst of public indignation. But the people were on their side. When summoned, Frank, to everyone's amazement, spoke in fluent and correct Bulgarian. He was asked why he, an Englishman, fought against them & entered their country. He replied: "To me this war is something far deeper than a struggle of nation against nation. The biggest thing today is the fight of Fascism against anti-Fascism." "Do you not know that we shoot men who hold those opinions?" "I am ready to die for freedom and I am proud to die with Bulgarian patriots." The crowd burst into weeping and an old woman flung herself forward: "I am only an old woman, it does not matter what you do to me. But you are all wrong. We are not on your side, we are with these brave men." She was struck down to the ground. The judges hastened the trial and finished it in 20 minutes. Major Thompson took command, led his comrades to the place where they had to stand and raised his hand in the clenched-fist salute of the Fatherland Front. It was struck down, but he called to the people: "I give you the Salute of Liberty." At the castle all of them, as they died, died lifting this salute, with the spectators weeping.

Frank, it is said, has already become a Bulgarian national hero. The story of the Thirteen Partisans of Litikovo has become part of Bulga-

rian legend and history and above all the courage of the young English officers' leader (Frank) is admired there. Later, in November, the Bulgarian Govt. gave the partisans of Litikovo a great ceremonious funeral; there were 50000 spectators as the coffins were carried shoulder-high. Bulgaria is raising a memorial over their common grave.

That is the story as it has reached me. It is sad that young men of such promise should be snuffed out almost in boyhood. But heroism for the sake of an ideal is always inspiring and a splendid death surely is better than a long life, without purpose and meaning.

Your visit to Kashmir will mean considerable additional expenses. Draw on my account at Bachhraj's for them.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 105.

10.3.45[623]

Darling Betty,

The air is thick with rumours of our transfer and everyday the papers are full of some new story as to where we are going to be sent. Probably all these stories have little basis, and yet it does seem that some time or other we shall be sent away from here and I shall find myself in another jail — Naini or Lucknow or Bareilly or Dehra Dun or some other prison in the U.P. I shall return to some old haunt of mine for I have a varied acquaintance with the U.P. jails. It really does not matter where I am sent. So far we have received no official intimation and so we continue our old routine more or less and see no reason to change it till definite news of the transfer is conveyed to us. The mind adjusts itself of course to the coming change. It is a long time since we came here and had our horizon limited by the walls that surround us — just 31 months yesterday. New walls do not make much difference, for walls are much the same everywhere.

623. File No. 3590/H/II-2: Maharashtra Government Records, Police Commissioner's Office.

The transfer, when it comes, will not mean that I shall start taking interviews. *I do not propose to do so. Letters, of course,* will have to be sent to a different address — whether to the jail direct or through the Provincial Government concerned, I do not know. You will be able to find out.

I had asked you not to send me any honey. But soon after I received 4 large bottles of it. Of course they were welcome and we are consuming them.

Summer has very definitely established itself here. When do you propose to go to Kashmir? I suppose this depends on the children's holidays. Indu writes to me that she would precede you to Lahore, from where you will go together to Srinagar.

Love to you and Raja.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

March 15, 1945 Wednesday

Today is the beginning of new *Samvat* year 2002 according to the lunar reckoning. Our *Nauroz* will come later.

Our afternoon talks continue and yet there is no indication of our transfer, though there are frequent references to it in the papers. So from day to day we wait for some kind of formal information. Probably we shall be sent away in separate groups, or individuals, on different days, to each province concerned.

Meanwhile, we have our discussions and I think most of us have appreciated them and profited by them, though Maulana hinted yesterday that we might wind them up as his personal work was suffering. So far we have had *12 days of these talks—today will be the 13th.* We have considered the communal question and the future of the Congress. We shall now go on to the constructive & economic programme, & then, if we have time, to the future national & *international shape of* things —

x x x x

Raja Narendra Nath's[624] death three days ago came hardly as a shock, in the normal sense, for he was over 81. Yet it was a break with the

624. (1864-1945); Hindu Mahasabha leader of Punjab and father of Rameshwari Nehru.

past and therefore painful. He was a lovable man, perfectly straight and honourable and rather childlike in some ways — In these days these qualities are precious enough.

x x x x

My blood pressure taken today — systolic 120; diastolic 78 — difference (pulse pressure) — 42, which is healthy.

March 16. Friday

At our afternoon sitting yesterday Maulana spoke for nearly an hour and a half. He dealt with the developments in 1942 after the Cripps affair — Gandhiji's articles & the situation in the country then — culminating in the A.I.C.C. meeting. He praised Bapu for his wise leadership and his many great qualities but on this occasion, he said, Bapu had erred and we should recognise it. As for himself, he had felt this way even then and argued at length. Eventually he had agreed because he could not keep away from a step of this kind once taken — Still he felt now that he should have resisted Bapu's argument still more. Then he referred to subsequent happenings in the country — the position today and future possibilities.

Then he dealt with the communal situation — how he had been pained at the C.R. formula[625] fathered by Gandhiji and how, in his opinion, this had done great harm. For the future, he was clear that we should not approach Jinnah or the Muslim League in any way (unless the League itself changed completely).

Maulana's analysis was clear and clothed in brilliant but rather overrich language — How keen his mind is. I agreed with nearly everything he said and yet not entirely. He has not quite finished yet and will continue today.

x x x x

625. The Rajagopalachari formula contained six points: (1) the Muslim League to endorse the demand for Indian independence and cooperate with the Congress in forming an interim government; (2) at the end of the war, a commission to mark out the boundaries of areas where a plebiscite of all the inhabitants will decide the issue of separation from Hindustan; (3) all parties will be free to organise propaganda before the plebiscite; (4) questions of defence and joint services will be decided by mutual agreement; (5) all transfers of population must be voluntary; and (6) these terms will depend on Britain passing over full responsibility to the Government of India.

Yesterday I sent a note[626] to Sendak about *Pantji*. *I am annoyed &* troubled at the delay in his operation and the general casualness shown *in regard to it*. Today I have written to the Secretary, Home Dept., Bombay Govt., on this subject. In this letter I have referred to another matter also. An A.P. message from Ahmadnagar appeared in the newspapers some days ago, *saying on 'reliable' authority that we had all sent* a representation to the Govt. expressing our reluctance at the proposed transfer to other jails. Further that Kripalani and Pattabhi were in favour of the transfer but had submitted to the majority view. Of course we had sent no such communication, though Maulana had once *mentioned to Sendak that he was not keen on the transfer & would* prefer to remain here.

Obviously Sendak is at least partly responsible for this message of the A.P. The odd thing is that no contradiction has appeared.

March 17, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter No. 99 of March 4th. I can well understand your difficulty in deciding where to address your letters to me. There are so many rumours about our transfer and every day some new story crops up in the newspapers.[627] Yet here we are still in Ahmadnagar Fort. The local correspondent of the Associated Press is responsible for some of *these stories and there are the newspapermen* in New Delhi and elsewhere *who pick up scraps of news and conversations and then give vent* to their imaginations. It is an interesting game *though it must* confuse many people. The latest story is that aeroplanes are kept ready for our transfer and we shall be carried through the air in a day or two. This appeared in yesterday's papers. Also that we are all ready and packed. The fact of the matter is that we know nothing definite and no information *has been supplied to us*. All we know is from the newspapers. I have given no thought to my packing. Why should I till I know definitely? It is rather absurd for me to pack up and upset my day's routine and then wait from day to day for something to happen. Packing really consists of putting my numerous books in boxes. So, in

626. Not available.
627. A news report of 15 March 1945 stated that "all bag and baggage of the Working Committee members, who are detained, has been packed for despatch. It is likely that all the members will be transferred to their respective provinces within a day or two by aeroplanes."

spite of some inevitable mental disturbance, we carry on as before — And I think you had better do so also till you have clear information about a change in our place of habitation.

I wrote to you that I was asking *Puphi* to bring for me, on her return from America, a Parker '51' pen. Somehow I managed to forget writing about this to her. So if and when you are writing to her you might mention this. Also I want her to get for me a Schick Colonel dry electric shaver. I am not sure if she can get either of these in wartime. The style of nib I use is more or less medium fine — that is rather a poor description and individual tastes vary greatly. But that is all I can say about it.

According to the lunar way of reckoning the new *Samvat* year — 2002 — started with the new moon two days ago. Our *Nauroz* usually comes a fortnight or so later. But I am not sure this time as this year an extra month is added for purposes of adjustment to fit in with the solar year. If you know the date for *Nauroz* let me know.

I am glad you have news of Yunus looking well. But I do not approve of his newly acquired beard. I suppose he will be coming out very soon and then the beard will go.

For many months past I have not been receiving any English periodicals — *New Statesman, Time & Tide, Tribune* etc. I wonder if this means that my subscription has expired. The American periodicals come in more or less regularly — Sometimes with a slip attached that the subscription has expired. I wrote to Chand two or three months ago asking her to get Walsh to renew these subscriptions.

Love to you and Rajiva and Feroze.

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 106.

March 19. Monday

There has been a burst-up at our afternoon talks and, as might be expected, I have become involved in it. It is doubtful if these talks will continue. Yesterday was our 16th day of these discussions.

On Friday afternoon Maulana continued and spoke for another hour and a half. He was not so good as on the day before. He spoke too

much like a schoolmaster—or is it the *maulvi's* way? Too much of speaking down to others, or repetition, as if he was addressing a public meeting. A conscious attempt at self-justification and an overemphasis when a hint might have sufficed. All this with a wealth of imagery and wordplay which were rather fascinating in their own way. Much of what he said was perfectly true, and yet he left on me an impression of slight discontent. There had been an element of advocacy in what he said & not so much the calm discrimination of a judge.

As Maulana had dealt at some length on Thursday & Friday with events in 1942, especially from April to August, and explained his own attitude to them, I felt that I should give an explanation of my reactions then. Although in many respects these reactions had been similar to those of the Maulana, yet there was a basic difference, just as there is a fundamental difference in our respective approaches to life and even to political problems. After all, he and I are the products of different worlds and have grown up in wholly different mental climates, at any rate, in our earlier years. Yet we often agree on political & other matters, though possibly we arrive at our results by different routes. He relies on the intellectual process almost completely and has a brilliant intellect, but that process itself is inevitably governed by his early training, environment & experiences. I suppose I am also intellectual, and yet there are vague but powerful urges in me which push me to other regions. I react to the crowd & the mass more, much more, than the Maulana. I am more receptive in this way. And so while the crowd influences me, I influence the crowd also, though I keep apart from it. Maulana remains aloof, rather disdainful, preferring to keep away from the crowd. Partly this is due to a certain shyness & sensitiveness, but partly at least to intellectual arrogance. Pride and self-respect are perhaps more powerful motives in him than in most others, though all of us have them in differing degrees. But long training in the courtesy of the old school keeps him in check and only occasionally a trace of disdain peeps out from his words.

Well, I decided to say something about past events and began my account on Friday—I had only a few minutes then & continued on Saturday.

In the course of my talk I referred to the W.C. & A.I.C.C. meetings in April-May 1942 in Allahabad. I said how much upset I had been by the draft of the resolution sent by Bapu through Miraben. I had considered it wrong and injurious. There was a serious conflict of opinion, long discussions and a threatened break-up of our Committee—However, I said looking towards the Maulana: आपने नाजाएज दबाव

डाला और मामला कुछ संभाल लिया![628] Maulana interrupted and said : یہ نہ کرتا تو کیا کرتا ؟[629] and then I proceeded with my narrative.

Obviously I had used the word नाजाएज़ in a friendly, semi-humorous way, meaning that he had exercised rather too much pressure. I would not have used that word seriously for fear of offending him. Maulana took it in the same spirit but he misunderstood my reference. I was thinking of his repeated appeals to those who wanted Bapu's resolution as it was and who would not countenance any change in it. He thought that I had referred to his pressure on me when I suggested then that I should resign from the W.C. and was reluctant to speak on the resolution (as it emerged from the W.C.) before the A.I.C.C. However, even this difference in interpretation had no importance and neither Maulana nor I attached importance to the incident. I was trying to explain as calmly and objectively as possible the effect on my mind of various incidents, so that I could understand myself and show to others the changes I underwent in the course of those months preceding August 1942.

After I had finished that narrative, I added that though Bapu's approach during those months (as seen in his articles in *Harijan* &c.) was, to my thinking, wrong and confusing, I have no doubt that he was representing the mind of thinking and unthinking India then. This general thought & unconscious reaction was given a direction by his articles and this fact created a new situation full of dynamic possibilities. Indeed the push having been given, no one (except to some extent Bapu himself, and even for him it was difficult) could check it or direct it effectively. In fact I looked upon the scene as the development of powerful elemental forces which were proceeding by their own momentum, as it were, to some inevitable end. Later Bapu himself varied his attitude and approach though holding fast and passionately to the main line of action. In fact this variation of his brought him much nearer my own viewpoint and removed some of the obstacles in my path. Some, not all, for the final difficulty of large-scale action just then remained, with all its far-reaching consequences. When, however, I saw that this was inevitable, that Bapu's mind was fixed and determined, then further argument was not useful. I had to make my choice. There was no difficulty about that choice. It was inconceivable to me to remain aloof from such a movement. Facts as well as all the urges of my own nature were too strong for me. Having so decided, then it followed that whatever action was to be taken must be whole-hearted.

628. By exerting undue pressure you salvaged the situation a little.
629. What else could I have done?

Looking back, I said, I am not very sorry for what I did or for what happened. I do think it could have been done better if the approach had been different, if, in fact, our approach of August had been consistently followed in previous months. But facts are seldom in our control and things took their own course. And in this course, though much harm resulted, much good also is visible. It is difficult to find a just balance — Only the future would show. So much had happened and was happening in the world that was full of sorrow and tragedy that we could not complain or feel dispirited at our own experiences. So I was not worried at all about the past.

After I had finished, Vallabhbhai spoke. His tone was full of suppressed anger, pain and bitterness. He said that he had long suspected that Maulana and others had felt the way they had spoken about events prior to August 1942. Because of this he (or 'they' meaning those who thought with him) had avoided speaking on this subject during these last 2½ years. Now unfortunately the initiative had been taken by Maulana. He wanted to avoid an argument but he wished to say with all emphasis that he did not agree with Maulana's analysis and he was firmly convinced that the attitude and steps taken by Bapu had been correct and inevitable. Any other course would have meant the gradual annihilation of the Congress with all its evil effects on the country.

In particular, he said, he had resented what I had said about the events in Allahabad (W.C. meeting April 1942). (Kripalani interrupted: It is not what Jawaharlal said but what Maulana had interjected that was objectionable.) So Vallabhbhai went on referring to the 'two parties' in the Congress ('which 2 parties', I said, 'to which party do I belong — so far as I know I form a party of one'.) There had always been trouble between them. He resented this attempt to show that he and his colleagues had not only been wrong but also that what they proposed then was dangerous for the country. They had put up with much they did not like, they had swallowed many a bitter pill, and now to be referred to and run down in this way was most objectionable. Further, he added, that because of references to guerilla warfare in a speech[630] in Assam in April 1942, he had sent his resignation from the W.C. to the Maulana.[631]

I was amazed at this outburst — both at the words used and the bitter tone that accompanied them. I had not intended to, nor, to my knowledge, had I used any language that might hurt. I was thinking,

630. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 262-263.
631. It was said that Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Kripalani and Prafulla Ghose wrote to the Congress President offering to resign because for them nonviolence was a creed and even more important than Indian independence.

all the time I was speaking, in terms of self-analysis and trying to give an objective account of happenings. Obviously there had been a conflict of views, as there often is. It was all past now, done with, and a part of history. Why should we get excited over it? My reference to the Allahabad W.C. had been of the briefest and Maulana's interjection very casual, natural, and totally harmless. Yet these inoffensive remarks had upset Vallabhbhai and Kripalani and uncovered some deep feeling of resentment. This glimpse into the depths was very disturbing. I had hoped that all this was over.

I was a little annoyed and yet not much so. It all seemed due to some misunderstanding which could be removed. That could be done, but what about this glimpse into the depths of suspicions and bitterness?

Maulana said he would say a few words the next day (for time was nearly up) to remove misunderstandings.

The next day (that is, yesterday Sunday) Maulana expressed briefly that neither he nor I had said anything meant to hurt and there evidently had been a misunderstanding. He was indeed very sorry that anything he had said should hurt. He explained his interjection which, in fact, referred to me and not to others. Maulana spoke in a very friendly and reasonable way.

Then I spoke — I had previously thought over the matter and realizing its dangerous potentialities had firmly resolved to be brief and sweetly reasonable — to go out of my way to soothe. But things happened differently. In spite of Maulana's explanation and mine and our assurance, the response was wholly lacking, and the bitter tone and some kind of charges and justifications continued. This attitude amazed me still further for, whatever the previous misunderstanding, surely there was no room for further argument after our explanations. Questions and answers became more heated — these were between Vallabhbhai and Kripalani on the one hand and Maulana and me on the other. Maulana kept cool. Not I or Vallabhbhai or Kripalani.

Ultimately I said that it was direct insult to me that my explanation (and Maulana's) should not be accepted in the spirit it was given. Also if every word uttered was liable to be misunderstood and distorted, then it was exceedingly difficult to discuss any subject, and the only course left open to me was to avoid talk with such persons.

Thus the meeting broke up, and I am at present hardly on speaking terms with Vallabhbhai and Kripalani! I suppose this will pass, but the whole background of bitterness and suspicion will not pass so easily.

Our afternoon talks seem to have been effectively ended by this incident. Even if they continue for a day or two, they will be constrained and unreal.

I think I was less wrong than usual in this affair—yet why can I not keep my temper?

x x x x

Last night I shouted again in my sleep—my usual agonized cry. Pattabhi, who sleeps some distance away in the verandah, got out of bed and came to wake me. Was my shouting a result of the disturbed nervous state due to yesterday's incident?

March 20 — Tuesday

Last evening I told Vallabhbhai & Kripalani that I felt sorry for my having lost my temper the day before and I apologised for it. I felt better afterwards.

x x x x

A letter from Nan from New York dt. 8/2. Quite casually she mentions that she proposes to tour in the U.S.A. in March, April, May and then in October, November, December! Which means a much longer stay there than anyone had anticipated.

x x x x

I seem to be losing weight again slowly. Today my weight was just under 126 lbs.

March 21, Wednesday

Yesterday afternoon we met again for our talks and discussed some aspects of the minority problem. The 19th had been a gap day.

Today we are not meeting for this purpose as both Vallabhbhai and Narendra Deva have caught chill & have some temperature.

March 22. Thursday

Last night I shouted in my sleep again and disturbed others. Where will this land me one day — or night?

Vallabhbhai & Narendra Deva are still unwell, though better. There has been almost a kind of epidemic of mild influenza. Sendak, the Jailer, several warders have had it.

March 24, 1945

Indu darling,

So here we are still! And yet the talk of our transfer continues and every other day brings a fresh rumour or surmise. The wheels of Government move very very slowly.

I have your letter — No. 100 — of the 14th March. I am sorry to learn that both you and Rajiva have been unwell. I suppose it is inevitable that Rajiva should suffer occasionally from infantile complaints. And then this changing season brings distempers and derangements in its train. Here quite a number of people have had colds or mild attacks of influenza. I have thus far escaped them.

I see from the papers that after a brief cool spell the temperature in Allahabad has shot up to 103°F. That means an early hot weather and by April probably neither the babe nor you will approve of the weather. When do you intend going to Lahore on your way to Kashmir? As I have already written to you, you should not vary your programme in any way because of rumours of my transfer. That should make no difference.

It is rather silly of you to go on worrying about money matters. Waste should of course always be avoided, more particularly in these days. But otherwise one should carry on one's life without thinking too much of money. It is true that a stage arrives when money scarcity comes in the way of one's normal life. That stage has not come to us yet, so why bother? When the time comes it is not difficult to adapt oneself to changing circumstances, or at any rate it should not be difficult to do so. It is far more a question of the mind than of external circumstances. Worrying about the future in terms of capital invested is foolish and, what is more, is not in keeping with the changing world. Our real capital is not money or goods but our capacity and ability and our mental outlook which can always adjust itself. No one can take these

away. Even from the narrower point of view of material goods and conveniences, we have little to worry for we have the ability to add to them whenever necessary. For my part, the idea of hoarded capital is none too pleasant. It is almost a burden and a nuisance.

Certainly, it should not be necessary for any of us to have to go to a hill station to escape the hot weather. The old Indian idea was that the dry hot weather cleansed our system by making us perspire thoroughly. I think there is something in that, provided we can stand it. But it does reduce our working capacity and enervates, and if we can recharge our internal batteries by a change we should certainly do so. The idea of going up to a hill station regularly is more or less recent, and yet the idea of going to the mountains in summer is a very old one in India. Naturally this was not easy when communications were scarce and limited. And yet it is surprising how many people went as pilgrims or in some other guise. They did not settle down anywhere and preferred wandering, which was probably a much more delightful way of spending the summer in the hills. The cost of such trips then or even now need not be considerable, unless we deliberately follow expensive or wasteful ways. You know how it is possible — or rather was possible in the pre-war days — to go about Europe without spending too much. And yet many tourists, partly from ignorance, partly from a desire to show off, spent a lot. An enjoyable trip anywhere has less to do with money than most people imagine. True, standards and ways of enjoyment differ and, in any event, a certain minimum amount is essential. Babies also make a difference for they are helpless and require especial care — It is folly to take risks with them which ultimately involve us not only in additional trouble but in extra expense.

So please do not be so foolish as to worry yourself about money matters. I have told you to draw upon my account at Bachhraj's and surely I have not got to repeat this on every new occasion.

I am sending you today a bunch of books — They are:

1 Shaw: *Everybody's Political What's What*
2 de Madariaga: *The Heart of Jade*
3 Agnes Smedley: *Battle Hymn of China*
4 Wavell: *Allenby in Egypt*
5 Wasilewska: *The Rainbow*
6 Sarat Chatterji: *The Deliverance*
7 *All Parties Conference Report — 1928*
and a number of the *Adelphi*

There are several good books in this lot which will interest you. Madariaga, which you had sent me, takes one to the Aztec civilization of Yucatan in Mexico at the time of the Spanish conquest. Yucatan

Though we go from here to yet another prison, and life will be much the same for us though in different environments, still it means a big break for us. For 961 days today, two years seven months and eighteen days, we have existed here like some plant or vegetable rooted to the ground. And now we are going to be uprooted, transferred and transplanted in some other barren and stony soil. But there and elsewhere later in life, the memory of these years spent in Ahmadnagar Fort will endure and colour our vision. The days have passed and the months and the years, but each day, each moment, has left its impress, and layer upon layer of these impressions and experiences lie embedded in the recesses of our minds.

It will be a change to go out and see the trees and broad fields and human beings moving about as we travel across India. Everything changes and yet everything continues to be much the same as it was. The change is really within us, each one of us, and the world and nature continue ever young, though generations of living beings are born, grow up and fade away. Yes, it will be a change to go out because we shall see everything with different eyes. And when others see us what changes will they find in us? We cannot say or even know.

Some time, when I have the chance, I should like to see high mountains, snow-covered, with rivers of ice flowing down their sides, and wide spaces and deep ravines. So I would try to adjust my mind and vision to distance and depth again, and breathe the invigorating air that comes from those snowtops. Too long I have lived and moved in a narrow quadrangle and looked at its cheerless and hard walls. Only the sky offered distance and depth and mystery.

Enough of this. You will of course make the necessary adjustments consequent on my transfer. Letters and periodicals to be sent to a new address — (I am sending you today a packet of periodicals — *Life, Time, Asia, Commonsense* &c.) I have been receiving here, addressed to me, two daily papers — *The Hindu* of Madras and the Allahabad *Patrika*. Please ask Upadhyaya to inform them both of my new address.

I have still with me one of Jinarajadasa's books — *The Great O'Neill* by Sean O'Faolain. I am having this returned to him direct to the Theosophical Society, Adyar, Madras. I hope you have returned his other two which I sent you. Inform him that I have sent the *O'Neill* direct to him.

Some time back I asked you to try to get for me a Persian dictionary through Kitabistan. I wonder if this is available. Anyway please ask Upadhyaya to get for me from Ramnarain Lal, bookseller of Katra, Allahabad, his *Students' Practical Hindustani-English Dictionary*. The

10th edition came out in 1940. There should be no difficulty m getting this. Tell Upadhyaya to send it on to me to my new jail address wherever that might be.

Yesterday I received a huge parcel of khadi stuff sent by Mridula—She chose rather an odd time to add to our luggage—There were six full *thans*, three bedsheets, six towels. Obviously they were not meant just for me and I have succeeded in distributing the lot except for 2 *thans* which are still with me. They are good khadi and are bound to come in useful, though I do not require them at present. In these days of cloth scarcity in most parts of India, it seems rather selfish for me to hang on to them. Will you thank Mridu?

I follow the temperature of Allahabad in the weather reports in the papers. It grows warmer with unusual rapidity. You had better fix up your departure for the north and escape before the full heat descends upon you and the little one.

Love

Your loving
Papu

March 28, Wednesday

Last night was bad—restless, disturbed—and I shouted in my sleep. Pattabhi came over & woke me after Pant had failed to do so by his coughs which were meant to attract my attention.

x x x x

March 28 (night)—Railway train—On way to Bareilly—

So we are out of Ahmadnagar Fort at last and going north across India.

The day was spent in packing and moving restlessly about from one room to another. Yet there was not much to talk about or the mind was not in the mood to talk. We carried out our usual routine and in the afternoon I almost forced myself to sleep a little for I had had a bad night and the next one was also likely to be disturbed. It was a brief restless sleep full of dreams and vague fancies as I lay half awake and half asleep.

I insisted on playing our usual game of badminton in the evening—our last one in A.F.—had a bath and an early dinner—and at 7.25 p.m. (8.25 outside time) we left the fort which we had entered so long ago

Long argument between Pantji & Coxhill the D.M. about former's release. The U.P. Govt.'s order confusingly drafted & Coxhill made a mess of it. Pantji very angry. In his own quiet way crushed the wits out of Coxhill and made him feel a nervous wreck—At last Pant was discharged at about 6.30 p.m. and we were marched to our barrack, where Rafi had lived for a long time. Only we two here.

April 3, 1945

Darling Indu,

We are settling down—gradually. The process is slow, requiring not only physical arrangements but mental adjustments. After two years and nearly eight months of Ahmadnagar Fort changes followed rapidly. The mere coming out of the Fort was an event for us, though it was dark and we could not see much. It was the night of the full moon. We had reached Ahmadnagar on August 9th 1942 just when the new moon was beginning its brief life of light and growth, and it was appropriate in a way that our stay there should end with the full moon, though many a moon had waxed and waned in between—was the number of these thirty-three or thirty-four?

It was exciting to have movement by car and train, to see crowds and hear them shout, to watch the morning steal over the fields, recently harvested, to remember the stations as they came one after another. And then Naini, on the threshold of Allahabad, and the old prison I knew so well. The meeting with old friends there with all the excitement that this involved.

And when I came out of the Naini Prison gate, to see you and Feroze standing by—and you looking just as you looked three years ago, a dainty and lovely slip of a girl, apparently unchanged by the passage of years or by motherhood. More friends at Phaphamow, and another journey by train. Again distant horizons and the familiar Oudh landscape. And so to a little station near Bareilly where we were taken off the train and motored (part of the road was villainous) to Bareilly C.P. There we bade goodbye to Pantji. And so here we are.

We are settling down slowly. Conditions here are different for this is a proper, or rather regular, jail with all that this means. And there are swarms of flies and mosquitoes and above all dust. Even as I write the paper I write on gets covered with a layer of dust. But we get used to these minor inconveniences soon enough. It will take a little longer to adjust oneself emotionally, for the three days of our journey from

Ahmadnagar to Bareilly were very full of experiences to which we had become so unused.

It was good to see you even for a brief while. I feel refreshed and vitalized by this outing and the sight of friends' faces and the sound of their voices.

From Naini I sent you one or two odd articles. Arriving here I discovered many more unnecessary things with me and so, rather hurriedly, I sent a suitcase, my box charkha, and a small packing case to Upadhyaya. These contain some odd books, clothes, warm coverings &c. Also an ivory Nataraja which Betty had sent me and which I hope will reach you intact. There are also two boxes full of small stones picked up in our yard at Ahmadnagar Fort. Some of these are rather attractive, though they are valueless, and I was wondering if you could not have a few set properly in the form of a brooch. That would be a souvenir of my stay in Ahmadnagar!

I have still far too many things with me and I have little or no use for them here. Indeed they are a bit of a nuisance for there is no proper place to keep them. In Ahmadnagar there were cupboards and chests of drawers &c. and there was little dust. Here things have to be kept in boxes and even of these I have not enough. So I am thinking of sending you, in the course of a few days, a packing case containing old clothes, books & various oddments. I suppose this can be easily sent as a railway parcel. The clothes I might return are of little use to me here or elsewhere, they are worn out and can be given away.

I am told that, as at Ahmadnagar, I can write two letters a week and receive four. So there need be no change in regard to this. I shall write to you once a week. Letters to me have to be addressed to Bareilly Central Prison.

I do not like the idea of your delaying your departure for Kashmir and waiting for developments. This living in a state of uncertainty is unpleasant. Personally I do not think that anything is going to happen soon enough to upset your programme. I suggest that now you should provisionally fix up your programme so as to meet Betty in Lahore when she gets there. That will be about the 26th, if I remember rightly.

Love to you and to babe.

Your loving
Papu

Bareilly Central Prison—Izatnagar

April 4—

After 2 years & 8 months suddenly a crowd of sensations and impressions. The railway journey, the distant vistas, crowds & shouting, arrival at Naini, meeting Rafi & others—

To meet these vital young men full of beans was a joy. To learn from some of them of what occurred in August-Sept.-Oct. 1942 was to revise our previous impressions and to realize how much bigger the movement was than what we had imagined it to be.

Rafi looked fairly well, though thinner. I was glad to find him so, for I was afraid he might have deteriorated physically much more.

And then as I came out of the Naini Gate there was Indu clad in a *shalwar* & ओढ़नी[638] standing some distance away! Vaguely I had hoped to see her at the station but I refused to allow myself to expect it lest the disappointment be great. I went to her—was with her for a few seconds—and then had to enter the police car.

I saw her again at Phaphamow for some minutes—There were others also—Tandon &c. And then the rail journey.

I could not sleep for a long time for I was too excited after all these extraordinary happenings.

x x x x

The reaction to all this has been slowly creeping upon me here in Bareilly C.P. Or partly it is due to the environment of a regular prison and the high walls that surround our yard. It is frightfully dull here and I have been unable to do any real work. Even physically I feel poor. The arrangements for food &c. are primitive.

April 7, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have received your letter of March 31st—No. 101. You just completed the century while I was in Ahmadnagar Fort. This is my letter No. 110 to you.

638. *Orhani*—A long scarf worn over the *kurta* by women.

Did I look thin and shrunken when you saw me? You and others who see me after a long interval are better judges than I can be. Changes creep in slowly and are hardly noticeable from day to day, and we get used to them. In the aggregate they must amount to a good deal. To be thin is not always a disadvantage. It may even be a change for the better, as I think it is, within limits, in my case. But to present a shrunk-up appearance is not advantageous as age is not by itself a welcome factor. Yet both have to be accepted. I do think, however, that I am pretty fit and healthy. But neither I nor anyone else can write off 2¾ years at a time of life when physically at least one must be on the decline. As for milk &c., which you suggest, I have been taking some regularly for many months. Not too much for I am not used to it.

I had not allowed myself to hope that I would see you on my passage through Allahabad, though somewhere at the back of my mind there was that expectation. It is better not to expect too much from life and take it as it comes. About Rajiva I had definitely not expected to see him, so it was no disappointment. In view of the uncertainty of our meeting and the late hour, when he must have been asleep, it was not worthwhile carting him about from place to place and upsetting him. Of course I would have loved to see him. And yet I am not sure that I would have been glad to have my first glimpse of him when he was upset and possibly grumpy. *Anyway all that is over now and I hope that I shall see him some time or other in a more suitable environment and in the bright light of day. That will be much better than a prison gate at night.*

About Kashmir, you will fix up your programme as you think best. After all you are in a better position to judge than I am. What I do not like is for anyone to hang on to rumour and uncertainty, and it seems to me there is far too much of this rumour business and wishful thinking.

Yes, I would like to go to Kashmir more especially if you are there— to go there as soon as I can, even if I can only stay there for a few days. The combination of you and Kashmir will be just the right tonic for me. I do not think it will make much difference to anything or anybody if I am away for ten days or a fortnight. Yet life is so much like an octopus and its tentacles grip and hold me to activities which may have little essential importance. I sometimes wonder how much of what we do has much basic importance!

I see from the papers that Padma is getting married in about three weeks' time. I should like you to send her some kind of a gift on my [illegible] ing this up, send a cheque for

Rs. 250/-. This should be sent to her direct and not to her parents. Also you will convey to her and her parents my love and good wishes.

Some time back I asked you to get Rs. 500/- transferred from my account with Bachhraj to my account at the Punjab National Bank, Allahabad branch. I wonder if you had this done. If not please take the necessary steps now. While at Ahmadnagar Fort I used to issue cheques on Bachhraj to the Bombay Govt. for cash. That was convenient there, but it will no longer be convenient here. The Punjab National Bank is more suitable here. So I want some money there to draw upon whenever needed.

I have been receiving various newspapers here—All those that I wanted, except *The Leader*. I had not mentioned *The Leader* to you previously as I expected to be able to get it here. Curiously enough a copy of it came here by post addressed to me but then it stopped. You might therefore ask the *Leader* people to send their paper to me—It will keep me informed of local happenings.

You will send your letters direct, addressed to me. The proper address of this jail appears to be: Central Prison, Izatnagar, O. & T. Ry., Bareilly. At least I hope this is correct. The O. & T. Railway rather intrigued me. What was this new name? I have found out now that it stands for Oudh and Tirhut Ry. and it includes the old R.K. Ry. and the B.N.W. Ry. I shall have so much to learn, so much to get used to. I suppose Prayag is still in E.I. Ry.

In the course of next week I hope to send you a packing case containing some books and old clothes and new, which I do not need here.

Will you send me a copy of the pamphlet containing the marriage service which we had prepared at the time of your wedding? There used to be a bundle of these in my dressing room. I want to give it to Narendra Deva.

And that reminds me. My last day in Ahmadnagar Fort was March 28th. I remembered that it was the anniversary of your wedding — the third — was I right about the date? — Three years.

Love to you and Rajiva & Feroze.

Your loving
Papu

I was sorry to learn that Radhe[639] was suffering from typhoid. I like him very much and am rather anxious about him. I hope he is getting better.

639. Radhey Shyam Pathak, a Congress leader of Allahabad.

April 13, 1945 Baisakhi Day

Darling Indu,

Two of your letters, which you had sent to Bombay, have been forwarded to me here. They are dated March 20th/23rd and 26th.

I am glad to know that Rajiva's first tooth is out and that he is keeping well. His efforts to talk are most interesting and they must fascinate you. *Does he not sit up yet? Surely it is time he did so.* It is an extraordinary thing, as old as humanity and yet ever new, how a child develops his consciousness of the outer world. There is all the sense of unending adventure, of continuous inquiry, of a peering into new phenomena, and everything is new, as it must have been for those remote ancestors of ours who came into being at the dawn of human existence. Rapidly, so very rapidly, the child passes through millennia of human history, and subconsciously, or partly even consciously, lives through the history of the race. If we grown-ups could only retain in some measure that spirit of adventure and inquiry and delight at ever-renewed discovery that is a child's heritage, and add to it the knowledge and wisdom that the ages have accumulated for us, how excellent it would be! But unhappily we grow too soon out of that wonder of childhood and yet do not reach mature manhood with all its compensations. Somehow we manage to miss both, and though we grow in years we remain babes and sucklings in mind but without the vitality and the spirit of growth of the child.

Please thank Dr. Krishnan[640] for the books he has sent you — They were originally required for the Maulana but to send them to him now is out of the question. Nor would I like you to send them all here — they are too many and I do not want to burden myself unnecessarily. I am not a fast reader. If I think a book is worthwhile, I like to take my time over it. The following books out of the list, however, are likely to interest me:

1 Ogden : *The A.B.C. of Psychology*
2 Van den Bergh : *The Universe in Space and Time*
3 Darrow : *The Renaissance of Physics*
4 C.T. Chase : *The Frontiers of Science*
5 *Science in Progress*
6 *Thompson : Growth and Form*

If you like, you can send me these, or two or three of them.

640. *K. S Krishnan* (1898-1961); Fellow of the Royal Society; Professor of Physics, Allahabad University, 1942-47, Director, National Physical Laboratory, 1947 61.

I remember W.M. Benton very well. He paid a visit to me in Anand Bhawan some years ago. He first introduced me to *Time* which he arranged to send me for a year or two. He was at the time the head of a big advertising firm in America and was probably also connected with *Time*. It is odd how these business people suddenly develop into heads of universities in America. Probably he looks after the business side of the university — and this is a very big job there.

It is good of him to send me *Fortune* & *Foreign Affairs* — the latter I have been getting already through Walsh, but that does not matter — As for *Fortune*, do you or Feroze not get it? It was included in the list I sent Walsh. Please write to Benton to thank him and tell him I have pleasant recollections of him. It produces a warm feeling in me to know how friends remember me — As for his inquiry — what he can do for me 'to assist me in lessening the ardours of confinement'— that thought itself and the goodwill that prompted it goes a long way to help. For after all this is largely a matter of psychology, a question of the mind and its reactions, of waves of thought, important always and everywhere but more so in confinement. If he will occasionally send me a new book which he thinks might interest me — I have fairly extensive interests—this will be welcome to me not merely for the book's sake but more so for his sake, and will make me think of him and of America. Write to Frances also and send her my love.

No, I have not read Beverley Nichols's book — nor am I particularly anxious to do so.

I have sent you a railway parcel containing clothes and books. This has been booked to Prayag — Probably you will have received the railway receipt for it. If not, inquire at Prayag station. The clothes sent are some old and tattered ones, some new or more or less new. Give away the old ones. You will find in the lot 3 coloured shirts which Betty sent me — These are quite new and unusual. I did not require them and I prefer white ones, in prison especially. A full list of clothes, books &c. has been placed inside the box at the top. A number of old foreign periodicals have also been returned in this box. You can deal with them by sending them on to others, as previously.

Now that I have sent you in this parcel and through Upadhyaya quite a number of articles which I had accumulated, I feel lighter. How things accumulate even in prison! Even now I have far too many clothes and books about me. But I like to be prepared for all contingencies and for the moment I have enough to carry me on through the summer and the rainy season. Of course when winter comes — and it is cold here — I shall require some warm things. But that is still far off and much may happen in between.

It would be a help to me if you could manage to get a suitable cigarette-holder for me. The one you sent has gone to pieces. I have got used to smoking denicotinised cigarettes, that is, making the smoke pass through a pad of cotton wool. This is good for the throat also. Smoking a cigarette by itself gives me a sore throat. So a 'suitable' holder is one which permits the introduction of some cotton wool in the tube somewhere between the mouthpiece and cigarette end. It need not be of any particular kind or especially made for the purpose. Some ordinary holders have some space in between which can be used in this way. Ask Feroze to keep an eye open for this kind of a holder and if he finds it anywhere, to snap it up. If such a thing is not available, then the matter ends there.

Has Upadhyaya returned or is he still with Pantji?

Love

Your loving
Papu

April 14. Saturday

We have been two weeks here and still I feel restless and unsettled. Partly because the new living conditions are not to my liking, partly I suppose it was inevitable that the uprooting from Ahmadnagar Fort and transplanting here should shake up the system. I have wondered how I would have fared if I had had to stay in these surroundings ever since my arrest in August 1942—as indeed most of my friends and colleagues have done. I would have got used to them but the feeling of oppression would have been greater.

I have had a short-lived but severe attack of indigestion. I do not remember having anything like it for many years. I got over it by fasting.

A possible reason for restlessness & uncertainty is the continuous talk about our impending release. The papers are full of it and even an approximate date has been mentioned—April 20th. I think all this is greatly exaggerated and is somewhat premature. Yet I believe that our release cannot long be delayed. There are all manner of factors working in its favour. I would put it at early in May. That, incidentally, would mean our just completing 1000 days of internment this time!

These rumours of our release have upset Indu's programme for going to Kashmir. She is hanging on in Allahabad as long as she can.

Maulana is still in Ahmadnagar Fort! And so are Vallabhbhai and Shanker Rao, much to their annoyance. There appears to have been some hitch about Maulana's transfer to Bengal, though why I cannot imagine for Bengal is a Sec. 93 Province[641] now completely under the Governor Casey.[642] Maulana, I suppose, does not mind. Possibly he even prefers remaining on in Ahmadnagar, though it is annoying to live in a state of uncertainty. But Vallabhbhai must dislike this state of affairs exceedingly for he was really keen on a transfer. The Fort must be rather a lonely place since most of us were sent away. Vallabhbhai & Shanker Rao have to remain there simply because of the Maulana. They have to keep him company. Otherwise Yeravda awaits them.

This delay in Maulana's transfer also leads me to think that the possibility of a near release has something to do with it.

x x x x

Last evening the Deputy Superintendent informed us that President Roosevelt was dead — so the radio had announced. This news came as a great shock. Somehow no one expected him to pass away so soon. We get used to people as part of the scheme of things — and so with Roosevelt. He was only 68 or thereabout — not much of an age.

I was greatly upset and at night I was restless and dreamed of him. I had long wanted to meet him. My mind was full of the far-reaching consequences of his death — in the U.S. as well as in the world. It would make a big difference. But what would this difference be?

Somehow I felt old. I am getting on in years. Roosevelt was only 13 or 14 years older than me. So the old generation passes and no one knows what the new will do.

April 19, Thursday

Maulana has at last left Ahmadnagar Fort for Calcutta, and presumably Vallabhbhai & Shanker Rao have gone to Yeravda.

641. Section 93 of the Act of 1935 enabled the Governor of a Province, if he was "satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the Government of the Province cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Act", to assume, with the concurrence of the Governor-General, all the powers of the Provincial Government. It came into force in Bengal on 31 March 1945.

642. R G. later baron Casey (1890-1976); Australian politician; Governor of Bengal, 1944-46; Minister for External Affairs, 1951-60 and Governor General of Australia, 1965-69.

The newspapers deluded me also with their constant announcements about our impending release. I ought to have been more sensible. I suppose release will come before very long but I do not expect it till June or later. Probably not for another 2 months. I am glad Indu has decided not to wait and is going to Lahore and Kashmir in a day or two.

April 19, 1945

Darling Indu,
I have your letter of April 8th. This was your No. 104 — I am continuing the old numbering. This letter of mine is No. 112.

I am glad you have decided to go soon to Lahore and Kashmir — There was no point in your delaying your departure. Perhaps by the time this letter reaches Allahabad you will have already left. I might have sent this to Lahore to catch you there but on second thoughts I have decided to address it to Anand Bhawan. That appears to be the safest address and it will I hope be forwarded to you wherever you might be. Please let me know your future address for letters — or addresses on given dates, so that I can send my letters to the proper place. I hope you have arranged to have the foreign periodicals sent on to me here regularly. Also where am I to return them and to whose address? That applies to books also. Shall I send these from time to time to Feroze — Anand Bhawan, or Upadhyaya?

I wrote to you from Ahmadnagar Fort and asked you to arrange to send me Ram Narain Lal's Hindustani-English dictionary. I should like to have this and Upadhyaya ought to be able to get it easily — There are two other books, or one book in two volumes (I am not sure) which is somewhere in the library. This is Romain Rolland's book on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. If it is not found in the library, ask Upadhyaya to get it for me. *The Indian edition has been* published by the Ramakrishna Centre near Almora — the Advaita Ashram in Mayavati.

Talking about books, I am rather keen on reading Aldous Huxley's and Somerset Maugham's new novels — Huxley's *Time Must have a Stop* and Maugham's *The Razor's Edge.*[643] I wrote about them to you previously. Perhaps they are not easily available yet. It is just possible

643. It is the story of a young American, who had served as a pilot in the first World War and who found personal tranquility in India.

that you might be able to get them in a Lahore bookshop. I am looking forward to a parcel of books which *Puphi* sent me from New York two or three months ago. But if letters take six weeks by air, parcels must take many months. I do not know where she has addressed it to me — perhaps care of the Bombay Govt.

The packing case I sent you was despatched over a week ago, by passenger train and should have reached you — Yes, steel trunks are useful in prison. I managed to get one in Ahmadnagar and I am trying to get another here. Books and papers have some protection inside them. You need not trouble to send a trunk to me.

I have had a small note from Kishan Bhai informing me of Padma's marriage — I am not writing to him myself as this would come in the way of my other letters. But you will have, I hope, sent the wedding present or cheque on my behalf to Padma with my love and good wishes.

That reminds me that something has to be done about Yunus's marriage which you say is coming off towards the end of this month. I really can't suggest what you should give him as a wedding gift. The choice nowadays is limited. You cannot send him a cheque as in Padma's case. That would not be appreciated. Try to get something in Lahore or later in Srinagar, although that will be after the event. You can spend anything up to Rs. 200/- or 250/- for it. And also of course you will convey to him and his bride my love.

I have not written to Amma (*Nani*) for over three months, and meanwhile, I have received two letters from her. You will apologise to her on my behalf and tell her I am well. After all that is about all I can write to her. I find it hard to fit in extra letters as my usual correspondents — you, *Puphi* and Betty and occasionally Chand or Tara — exhaust the number of letters allowed me. I have been writing fairly regularly, once a fortnight, to *Puphi* in America. As she is far away I felt she ought to have some news of us. But so far she has not received any of my letters. They take a mighty long time to get through the various hurdles on the way.

Soon you will be in Kashmir — What a delightful prospect for you and Rajiva. He ought to flourish there and imbibe not only health and strength but some of the fascinating and mysterious beauty of the place. I shall be with you often in mind and enjoy this charm and beauty through you, vicariously and yet intimately enough.

I am very sorry to learn that Shri Handoo is not well and has developed patches of leucoderma. This is peculiarly distressing and it is surprising that there is no cure for it.

Give my love to *Nani*, Chand, Rup and children in Lahore, and to other friends there.

It is still not too warm here and the nights are definitely cool.

Love

Your loving
Papu

19-4-1945

Darling Betty,

I have not written to you since I came here. It is just three weeks since we left Ahmadnagar Fort, and spending a day in Naini Prison en route, reached here. This uprooting and transplanting business, after having been fixtures for so long in Chand Bibi's old domain, has naturally an unsettling effect. But we gradually settle down again and throw out fresh roots and tendrils. Now we two here — Narendra Deva and I — have got used to our new routine in the new environment of a regular jail, which is not somewhat different from the military barracks of Ahmadnagar. We have developed the capacity to adapt ourselves and that is a useful accomplishment.

I am sending this letter to Bombay but I do not know if it will reach you there for you and Raja must be preparing for your journey north. By the time you reach Kashmir, May will be well advanced. May is a delightful month there, though I do wonder if April with the fresh breath of spring is not better. But April is certainly colder and probably you will prefer May and June. The boys will thoroughly enjoy themselves and I hope they have riding and swimming and a taste of mountain hiking. You must show them a glacier. That is always a red letter day in a child's mind, when he sees this river of ice. My first glacier was the Pindari in the Almora hills and I was about 9 when I visited it with the family. I have still vivid recollections of it.

I see that some of you, deluded by our wishful newspapers, have been expecting our early release. Do not do so. The release will come early or late, when the time is ripe for it. To live in expectation of it, either for those inside prison or outside, is folly. Wherever we are we have to carry on our jobs, and when any change comes we accept it and adapt ourselves to it immediately. So, as I have said, we have learnt the art of adaptation, and that is one of the secrets of life.

I read in some paper that your book will soon be out both in England and America. That is good. I had a copy of your book with me when I was passing through Naini. Rafi wanted to read it and so I left it with him there.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

April 27, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have been wondering where you are likely to be now and where I should send my letters. Your last letter came two weeks ago and you mentioned in it that you intended going to Lahore on or about the 21st April. So I suppose you are there now. Betty wrote that she is going to be in Lahore on the 30th and 1st for Yunus's wedding. Presumably you will also stay on for this although you have not said so in your letters. So I am sending this letter to Lahore C/o Chand, where I suppose you are staying. Chand and family, from the address, live in a flat. Your party will probably rather crowd them up. Not you, for you take little room, but the babe and his companions spread out a lot.

As you travel north to Lahore and Kashmir, I manage to accompany you in my mind and visit these places and see old friends again. I wonder how they look like now and to what extent they have changed. Your journey becomes almost (it is an odd comparison!) like a silent film with one picture succeeding another. Have you any plans about the length of your stay in Kashmir? I suppose not and there is no need to plan far ahead at this stage. Betty apparently intends to return early in July when the boys' holidays end. July, though the rains have begun then, is not a healthy or comfortable month in Allahabad. So you might as well stay on in Kashmir, though Srinagar then is not too pleasant. Is Feroze going to visit Kashmir during your stay there?

You will give my love to Amma and Rup and Chand and tell them all about me—how well I am keeping &c. Chand's and Rup's children must have grown up—Where are they now?

I have had another letter from *Puphi* from America. She is evidently feeling more and more at home there and fitting into a life of continuous travelling about. Her stay is being prolonged for she has entered into a year's lecturing contract with a firm arranging these lecture tours. That has somewhat taken me aback for it means that she will

not be back for another year, or at any rate till early in 1946. In spite of all my past practice in public speaking, the prospect of such a contract and having to speak day after day for months rather terrifies me. I would soon get bored with the audiences, with myself and with what I went on saying and repeating, for repetition there was bound to be. Fortunately I have to put up with no such thing and do not propose to let myself in for it at any future time. I feel I have had enough of public speaking, though no doubt when I have the chance I shall shout again.

From the point of view of Chand, Tara and Rita it is good that *Puphi* is staying on longer. Chand will graduate soon and may get temporary jobs there in newspapers &c. Occasionally I get letters from her. They please me for they show how well she is shaping in mind and spirit. There is something rather fine about Chand. She is straight and frank, sensitive and yet not very self-conscious, determined and inquiring, naturally troubled by many things and events but always trying to find out and get on her feet. Her visit to and training in America have undoubtedly done her good and she ought to make something worthwhile of her life. It is inevitable that she and others in her position, with mixed and conflicting backgrounds, should have to face difficulties in the future. To some extent all of us have to in these days of change and transition. And yet perhaps the conflicting elements are greater between the Indian and American background. The two countries are in many ways as the poles apart. America and Soviet Russia, for all their many differences, are much nearer to one another in spirit. I am convinced that we in India have to develop to a great extent that spirit, not losing our own backgrounds of course. And so it is well that young people should go to America for training, though how they react to it is another matter. There is always that risk when one ventures out of harbour into the open seas. The risk has to be taken and must be taken for we have been anchored for too long and our minds have become clogged and fixed in grooves of thought. It is a continuous source of astonishment to me how mentally and spiritually our people have starved and isolated themselves—and none are so narrow and isolated as some of those who have changed superficially and imagine themselves to be very modern and in tune with the changing world.

The change will come in India—it is obviously coming. It will be rapid enough and yet gradual so far as large numbers of people are concerned. It is a struggle in the spirit and soul of India. Individuals who change more rapidly than their environment have a tendency to get stranded and cut off, and they must suffer for that. Yet they are very necessary.

I have been reading Swami Vivekananda's *Lectures and Letters.* Many of these letters are from America where he lived for over a year and toured about a lot. That was over 50 years ago and yet his letters have a good deal of topical interest. He was a remarkable and fascinating man with enormous energy and a fire and passion which drove him on and eventually consumed him when he was barely forty. He was born about the same time as *Dadu* and Gurudev, and yet he seems now as belonging to a distant past age. It was odd to discover that he had never spoken at a public meeting anywhere, either in Bengali or English, before he appeared at the Congress of Religions in Chicago in 1893. He was totally unknown then and more or less starving and shivering in his inadequate attire—the yellow *sanyasin's* robe. He spoke extempore and created a sensation. That sensation was a continuing one, wherever he went, and he came to be known in the U.S. as the 'Cyclonic Hindu'. Later he travelled over Europe and went as far as Constantinople & Cairo. Halide Edib, the well-known Turkish woman writer, once said that Vivekananda visited her school in Constantinople when she was a little girl. She had forgotten what he had said, but she remembered still how impressed she had been by his presence.

We have been having unusual rains here. That has cooled the air. This reminds me—Are you now liable to colds? I have long had that failing, and though it does not amount to much, it is certainly a nuisance. For the last four months—and that is a long period for me—I have been entirely free from them. There may be many reasons for this, but I have told myself that one of these is a new habit I have developed: to gargle every morning with warm water with a good pinch of common salt dissolved in it, also to sniff this up through each nostril. Rock salt—लाहौरी नमक—is good for this purpose. It is clear and pure and can be ground into powder. It is also stronger than sea salt.

I find that, almost unthinkingly and unawares, I am often giving you grandmotherly advice—I suppose this habit comes from advancing years. After all I am a grandfather.

Love

Your loving
Papu

April 30, Monday

So the great European War is already past history after five years and eight months—an interminable period it has seemed. The end—I suppose it is the end though not officially confirmed yet—came suddenly and dramatically although many indications had pointed to it.

What stark horror Europe has passed through during these years—more especially Poland, Russia and Germany! 'Berlin dies in the ashes of desolation' is a headline today in the newspaper. In this heap of ashes lie the remains of Hitlerism & Nazism—the proud challenge for world dominion.

The story of the past 12 years in Europe since the rise of Hitler—the triumphant advance, the fiendish cruelty, the proud contempt for world opinion, the amazing growth in power, the persistent crushing out of all contrary opinion and especially the Jews, the Saar, Austria, Sudetenland, Munich, Prague & Czecho-Slovakia—the Polish Corridor—and then War! And what a war! Almost a hundred per cent triumph for some years and then complete defeat, extinctions and exterminations, what a story teeming with drama and horror and changing fortunes.

My mind goes back to these years and picture after picture come up before it. And then it stops at the final scene—the terrible present desolation of large parts of Germany. This is the end of all the pomp & glory and proud boasting And yet Nazi Germany has died hard, very hard. It did not lack courage. Which other nation could have survived so long against the overwhelming odds and deepening horror of the past many months? Only Russia, I imagine.

What now?

May 1, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have received your letter of April 24th—No. 105—sent from Allahabad on the eve of your departure for Kashmir. Four days ago I wrote to you to Lahore. I wonder if this letter of mine managed to catch you there. You must be on your way to Srinagar, if you have not already reached there. I read in the papers of your misadventure at Delhi station. This kind of thing is very irritating and I imagine the journey must have been a trying one both for you and Rajiva. Well, I

hope you will soon recover from it in Kashmir. From weather reports I find that Srinagar is still pretty cold.

I am returning the dividend warrant. Please send it to the Punjab National Bank, Allahabad, for credit to my account.

The books & magazines you have sent have not yet arrived. I suppose they will come in a day or two. Do not trouble yourself about the Persian dictionary—Anyway I do not want a Persian-Urdu one. Nor do I want the *Students' Hindi-English Dictionary.*

Romain Rolland's books on Ramakrishna & Vivekananda in the original French will be welcome. I would prefer them to a translation.

I am sending you a few foreign magazines which might interest you and Betty—*Time, Reader's Digest* &c. The others I shall return to Feroze in Allahabad.

So the European war is over or almost over. The end was long expected and yet it came with some dramatic suddenness. War is not over yet and will continue for yet a while in other parts of the world, and even in Europe real peace is still a long way off. Nevertheless a long and terribly bloody and horrible chapter closes. In the years to come we shall gradually think of it as past history, something over and done with, and the passions of the day will fade off to some extent. It is well that the war, or rather this part of it, is over. We have had a super-abundance of horror and cruelty and inhumanity and stark suffering which pass comprehension. Our minds and feelings get numbed and incapable of normal responses. For the present this feeling of horror and numbness remains. Except for China, many parts of Europe have experienced this extremity of war and destruction more than any part of the world, more even than China in several respects. What a shambles eastern and central Europe have become, a vast pit of destruction and ruin and ashes. From Stalingrad and the Caucasus in the east this trail of fire and death stretches right across Germany to Holland and Belgium. Of the great cities of continental Europe how many have been reduced to dust and rubble. Paris and Rome and Prague are still there, externally not greatly altered, and yet I wonder how far the spirit and soul of these cities is the same as before. It cannot be the same again, but it may recover some of the old atmosphere. But Warsaw and Kiev and Stalingrad and Budapest and Dresden and Leningrad and Berlin have ceased to be as they were, and they will have to rise again and anew from their ashes.

Five years and eight months! My mind goes back to the day in Chungking when I first learnt of the German invasion of Poland and the outbreak of the war in Europe. For all its horror, what an extraordinarily dramatic period this has been with its sudden ups and downs,

and uprooting of humanity, and strange turns of fortune! But to go back still further—the last twelve years since Hitler came to power—what astonishing changes and developments, what brilliant successes and down and out failures these have witnessed. To go back still further—the end of the last war and the tortured years that followed. So two dramas of history have been played before our eyes and the story goes on. The war has not actually ended in Europe, it appears, but it must end soon. It cannot go on. And then the war in the East. This may continue for some time to come, but that too will end. And then? Other kinds of conflicts, a piling up of problems and difficulties, realism and idealism, a search for a real peace that is so elusive and difficult to attain.

It is well that you are in Kashmir and can have some peace of mind and body in that enchanting country. Give my love to Birju *chacha* and others and remember me to Sheikh Saheb.

Love to you and the little one.

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 114.

May 5, Saturday

Today we complete 1000 days in prison—this time since August 9, 1942!

x x x x

The war in Europe is still not formally over. It drags on in a way and yet it is in effect over. Germany is reduced to the uttermost depths —Hitler dead[644]—Mussolini shot & killed.[645]

In the East also Japan shrinking. Rangoon partly occupied by British & Americans. It seems unlikely that the Japanese war will last very long as at first imagined.

644. On 1 May 1945, the death of Hitler was announced by the German radio. On 7 May 1945, an unconditional surrender of all German armed forces was signed at General Eisenhower's headquarters at Rheims.

645. On 28 April 1945, Mussolini was executed by Italian partisans in Como town on the Swiss border.

Some days ago the I.C. (Shaikh) came to visit us. He asked me if I played badminton. Who was I to play with? So later on his return to Lucknow he telephoned to say that the other political detenus here A & B Class or some of them can come over to play badminton with me in our enclosure. Some of them have been coming over in the evenings by turns and it is good to see them again after a long while. Among those who have come are: Jiva Ram Palliwal,[646] Ram Saran,[647] Mahabir Tyagi, Damodar Swarup Seth,[648] Rajendra Pal Singh,[649] Lall Singh,[650] Har Sahai & Puran Chand.[651]

May 11, Friday

My weight today 120-121 pounds, nearer 120 lbs. On the 19th April it was 123-lbs. On the 22nd April it was 124-. Thus I have lost 4 lbs since I came here 5½ weeks ago.

My last weight in Ahmadnagar was 126 lbs. Probably a difference between the two machines. The Supt. (Abdul Chaffar) is rather worried over my loss in weight. Wants to feed me up—But how? I feel well.

May 11, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter from Lahore—undated but probably written on May 3. It is your No. 106. I hope you have now settled down in Srinagar after all the long and troublesome journeys. Yes, travelling in India must be pretty bad in these days. These early experiences of Rajiva will not dispose him favourably to it, and at the back of his baby mind he will store up resentment against this moving about and being shaken up and out of his normal comfortable routine. Modern civilization

646. A freedom-fighter of Ferozabad in Agra district.
647. A political leader of Meerut district.
648. (1889-1960); one of the accused in the Banaras and Kakori Conspiracy cases; later a leading Congressman in U.P.
649. (b. 1907); a Congress worker of Meerut; imprisoned several times during the freedom struggle.
650. (b. 1891); a Congressman of Bulandshahr.
651. A political leader of Meerut district; imprisoned for five years in 1943.

aims at and has achieved comfort to an amazing degree. But when it breaks down, it becomes an ugly ramshackle affair, worse than the hard and simple ways that preceded it. Just as you see the astonishing difference between the uptodate houses of today and the slums of today. The mud hut surrounded by the fields, bad and uncomfortable as it is, is better than the city slum. So in travelling also, if we have the wherewithal and opportunity, in luxury airlines or air-conditioned coaches or, on the other hand, in tightly jammed 3rd class carriages where it is difficult to breathe or even move your little toe or finger. The stagecoach and the bullock cart are almost wholly extinct now for purposes of travelling—not quite in parts of India. They were bad enough in retrospect. Yet they were more comfortable than the present-day 3rd class in our Indian railways. Nobody wants to go back to the stagecoach or the bullock cart and anyway that is not possible. But it is pretty rotten to have to put up with something which is even worse and which, in addition, somehow lacks the human touch. It is nauseating to see 3rd class carriages packed with human flesh and blood, all individuality sinking almost in one pulsating and panting mass. Travelling conditions are after all a reflection of life in general in India and what applies to travelling applies in an equal degree to the way the masses live or rather exist.

It was this distaste of travelling in these conditions that had led me some months ago to write to you on the delights of trekking in the mountains. Our city dwellers, unused to this kind of thing, are frightened at the prospect of being far from a railway line or a motor road. Yet the disadvantages of trekking are far less, and the advantages in the mountains are obvious. Of course that does not apply to the plains and it is impossible to walk or ride or drive from Allahabad to Kashmir, unless one has the facilities which the Grand Moghal's imperial train provided in the old days.

So you are in Kashmir now. What does it look like at this season? What flowers are blooming, what fruits hang from the over-burdened branches? I suppose the peach blossoms are over now, so also the rhododendrons. The lotus must be still in bud or even in an earlier stage. It blossoms on the Dal Lake in July, if I remember rightly. Cherries will soon be out and apricots and apples and peaches. I am getting rather mixed up about their respective seasons—they vary somewhat in different parts of the country.

Where is Ramlall's house where you are staying? Is it in Gupkar or thereabouts—I suppose I have spelt this name wrongly. Somewhere between the city proper and the Chashme Shahi? I heard some time ago that the Chashme Shahi had been practically enclosed by the

Maharajah's private gardens and was hardly open to the public. That indeed would be a misfortune. Even in 1940 these private gardens had spread out to the Chashme Shahi building and had cut off a road leading from the lake to the other side. How extraordinary is this desire to wall up and isolate large tracts of nature for one's private pleasure and deprive others from sharing in the abundance provided, which grows no lesser by the sharing. And the Nishat and Shalimar *Baghs*—what do they look like now? Is the Dal Lake much the same as ever or have the fancy boulevards made much difference? What birds chirp and sing in the trees?

I think of all these scenes treasured in memory's chambers, but even more I visualize the higher valleys leading up to the snows and glaciers, with their ice-cold brooks gurgling and rushing down to the vale below where they join the Vitastha.

I suppose, in spite of difficulties in travelling, Kashmir attracts still crowds of visitors, chiefly from the Punjab. Many of our friends may be there now or might come up later. How is Siddhartha doing—Nikku's[652] son? He must be a grown up boy now.

I like going to Lahore, chiefly because there are so many old and young friends there. The city also is developing in a way the air of a great city, though this is still rather superficial. The mixture of old historical tradition and modernity is rather appealing in its contrasts, though they clash frequently enough. Probably what I like is a certain vitality about the place. It is like a growing child, very immature in many ways and yet with an air of sophistication. But of course grown up people, that is grown up in years, who are still very ungrown up and immature in mental outlook, are not always attractive. They may become very tiresome. Gaiety is always to be welcomed. In Lahore however there is an atmosphere of a fake and superficial gaiety which is not so welcome. Yet for all that I like Lahore. Do you know that some of my earliest years, that is before I was ten, were spent in Lahore? Dol Amma was in a sense a Punjabi. She was born there and till her marriage lived there. Often she used to go on long visits to her mother, brother and others, and of course I accompanied her.

What has happened to the lovely pony which was presented to you by a friend—I forget his name—in Lahore in 1942 summer?

I am glad you consulted Dr. Bharucha about baby. I do not know much about such matters—deficiency of calcium &c. Why should there be this deficiency? Can it be made good pretty soon with right feeding etc.? It denotes a certain weakness of the bodily structure and we do

652. Kanwarlal Katju.

not want Rajiva to be weak in any way. He will be 9 months old soon and I suppose he is taking some other food now besides milk, though milk is the best stuff for providing calcium. Have you had his छीरचटाई? And did you ever have a formal name-giving ceremony? How does his weight compare with a normal 9-month-old? The main thing is that he should keep generally healthy & cheerful and he will himself supply any deficiencies.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 115. Should I go on sending letters C/o the Postmaster or to your proper address?

P

May 13, Sunday

Day before yesterday (May 11th) Narendra Deva & I received notices from the Govt. of India & the Bombay Govt. The latter has given up charge or responsibility for us. We are now, formally, the prisoners of the Govt. of India—Some promotion!

May 17, 1945

Darling Indu,

Yesterday I got your letter of the 9th May from Srinagar—your No. 107. You do not tell me what the motor journey was like. Are the so-called super buses comfortable? And how did Rajiva fare during the journey?

Kashmir continues of course much the same as it used to be. Nobody, and not even gross mismanagement on man's part, can take away the beauty of the place. Yet how much more agreeable and desirable it could be made if the mass of human beings there were put on the road to betterment. Every year bigger crowds of visitors go there from other parts of India and this I think is to be welcomed. Many of them are decent people going in search of rest and health and beauty. Still I do not take kindly to the class that flourishes so well in these days—

the high dignitaries extravagantly paid without much reference to their brain capacity, the war contractors and profiteers, and the hordes of others of high and low degree who seem to sprout up in wartime like weeds in a badly kept garden and eat up the soil to the vast detriment of the more legitimate plants and flowers. It is this variety of people who are most in evidence, I suppose, at all the holiday resorts, and especially in Kashmir. That is why I prefer the quieter higher valleys where there is less flaunting of ill-gotten monies. Not that I do not like pleasant and intelligent society—I am no recluse—but the contrasts in India are so marked and painful.

There is no need for you to fix up your programme in Kashmir definitely or to decide on the length of your stay there. Enjoy your holiday and do not bind yourself down to anything. There is no particular point in your returning to the plains when the rains have started. That is not a healthy season. Now that you have gone so far, you might as well stay on there as long as possible. Your last visit in 1942 was, I am afraid, cut short chiefly because of me. This should not happen this time. Srinagar may not be an ideal place to stay in from July onwards. You can then pitch your tent elsewhere. There is no lack of places to choose from.

I am looking forward to Rajiva's new photographs. Even more so I am thinking of the time when he will begin to toddle.

As for colds, do try the salt water method. It is simple and probably more effective than most of the patent medicines. I read an article in an American magazine some time ago in which an eminent doctor who had specialized in studying the origin and treatment of colds said that very little was yet known about these common and widely prevalent ailments. He was dead against the various nostrums offered in the market; in fact he said that they were often harmful. Apart from rest and some dieting, he strongly recommended the saline gargle and sniffing. Normally, when you are well, this need be done only once a day. If, however, you have a cold, it should be done two or three times a day—a fairly strong solution of salt in tepid water. Salt water is good for the teeth also.

It is pretty warm here now, yet not so hot, I imagine, as at Allahabad. The nights are pleasant. It is not the heat I mind so much as the dust when the *loo* blows. Within a month the rains ought to commence—the *chhota barsat* to begin with. So there is not long to wait. It is surprising how rapidly the days and weeks go by. Only occasionally they stick.

What is Nikku doing now? Is he working in Watal's factory?

A few days ago I received a cigarette-holder from Bombay, sent by Rai Amarnath Agrawal.[653] This is satisfactory.

Puphi seems to have been having a rather hectic time in San Francisco. Her stay there must be ending as she was going to Chand's graduation at Wellesley.

This is my letter No. 116.

Love

Your loving
Papu

May 21, Monday

Two days ago the Supt. (Abdul Ghaffar) came and told us that he had received a telephone message from the I.G. saying that in case we wanted to be transferred to a prison in a better climate he would arrange this. Also if we had a preference as to what jail we might be sent to. The fact that I had lost 4 lbs. in weight since coming to Bareilly and the heat was now increasing had evidently worried the authorities.

Narendra Deva and I told him that we would not like to make any suggestion on this matter. It was good of them to suggest a change but any proposal on our behalf was, in a sense, some kind of cooperation in our imprisonment—It almost became a put-up job. So formally we had no answer to give. But informally I told the Suptd. that in spite of the increasing heat we were keeping fairly well and there appeared to be no particular reason why we should be transferred. It was desirable to leave us alone. So far as I was concerned I was keeping fit and the heat did not affect me much except for a general lowering of vitality. Narendra Deva's condition was a more important consideration for we did not want to risk another attack of asthma. He had fortunately been free from any severe attack now for eight months, although he had some breathing difficulty in the mornings. He had kept well since we came to Bareilly and had put on weight. So it seemed unnecessary to make a change.

The Supt. asked me about possible places where we might be sent to Dehra Dun and Almora were the only two likely jails in the U.P. Of

653. (b. 1904); businessman of Allahabad, member, U.P. Legislative Council, 1936-52, and Council of States, 1952-60.

these he was of opinion that Almora was definitely better from a climatic point of view.

I further told the Supt. that as the medical officer in charge he was in the best position to judge about the necessity for a transfer. If our condition deteriorated in the coming weeks, and I did not expect this to happen, then he could consider this question.

Yesterday he came to us again and told us that he had conveyed our answer to the I.G. For the present therefore, according to our wishes, we would remain here, but at any time this was thought desirable, we might be transferred. In case of transfer he asked me who I would like to accompany me (this apparently, apart from Narendra Deva)—some people to play games with me, for Narendra Deva cannot do so. I was asked to choose any either from the political detenus here or in other U.P. jails.

I told him I was wholly unable to pick and choose in this way. I knew that many of my colleagues in various prisons were keeping bad health and required a change. How could I pick out two or three of them? And then presumably I was supposed to pick out the healthier ones who could play badminton &c. and not those who really required a change. In any event I could not ask for a transfer of any other people without consulting them. It may or may not suit them. There the matter rested.

The Supt. is terribly anxious to add to our comfort &c. somehow. He is continually asking me what more he can do—add to our furniture &c. As if furniture makes much difference! He has now ordered *tatties* for our windows.

As a matter of fact I am keeping fairly well—as well as I could be expected to. There is nothing obviously wrong with me. It is true that the process of losing weight has been continuous during the last 2¾ years and I have grown rather thin with various bones sticking out. I have reverted now to my weight in the early twenties or is it earlier still?

May 25, Friday

Changes in England—the break-up of the 'National Govt.'[654]—the coming general election &c. are likely to lead to some minor changes in

654. On 23 May 1945 the British coalition government resigned and Churchill formed a caretaker government. General elections were to be held on 8 July.

India—Wavell still in England[655] but Amery ceases to be Secretary for India—for the moment at least, though he may come back in a day or two in Churchill's 'caretaker' Govt.

x x x x

I took my measurements today—not very accurately in the absence of a tape measure. Compare with page 36 *ante*, dt. 17th Nov. 1944 & previous ones.

Weight (on 11/5) 120 lbs. Chest 31¾—34½—36¼ Waist 26½—29½ Hips 34½ Thigh at mark 17½—18 Calf 12½ Upper arm—bent 11¾, straight 10¾ Forearm 9¾ Neck 13¾.

A slight thinning though not marked—possibly differences due to imperfect measurements.

May 25, 1945

Darling Indu,

The summer advances and brings with it the hot winds and sultry weather. But far at the back of those winds those sea-changes are taking place which precede the monsoon—water being sucked up into the clouds and then to be borne away across the seas to far lands which crack with the heat and pant and thirst. Have you ever crossed the Arabian Sea during or just before the monsoon? I do not think so. Twice I had this experience in the old days of the small P. & O. ships which tossed up and down and from side to side, as if one was sitting on an electric rocking-horse, and it was quite impossible to stand or sit or even lie down without a firm grasp on some immovable fixture. Most people on board collapsed and groaned in their misery but I survived this exhausting ordeal and kept well, and I loved to watch this rolling and pitching and to see the huge waves advance on our ship and shake it up, breaking all over the top-most decks.

So the seasons follow one another and after the bad comes the good and the better. 'O wind if winter comes, can spring be far behind?' But even if there is winter in one place, or hot summer, there is spring elsewhere and cool breezes blow. I do not mind the heat much here

655 In March 1945, Wavell had gone to England for consultation with the British Government on the Indian political issue.

anyway and I am continually surprised at my adaptability to it. Besides this fortunate circumstance which helps me to keep tolerably well, I am not wholly here all the time. For I am often with you, not only in mind but almost it seems to me as if it were a physical transference, and I experience the climate of the Kashmir valley and look out through your window in the attic at the snows and the green hills and lakes and the Vitastha winding slowly on its leisurely and restful journey before it enters the gorges again. So I live a double life, or why double only? For it is a succession of many different and overlapping lives in many places far away from each other.

I received the other day Romain Rolland's Vivekananda and Ramakrishna—two volumes in English. They were sent to me from Ranikhet. I suppose Upadhyaya had gone there and sent them.

Since I have come here to Bareilly Central Prison I have received some odd letters apart from my usual ones. The rules here permit correspondence with others besides the list of near relations which functioned for this purpose at Ahmadnagar Fort. Some of these letters are from strangers or near-strangers. Bul has also written to me and Sri Prakasa but I have not sent any answers to them. During these 2¾ years I have got unused to writing miscellaneous letters even to friends. After a long gap it is not easy to pick up old threads again. Of course if I was out I would do so easily enough but here I cannot develop the mood to throw off letters apart from those which I have got used to writing. And then again there is the limitation of two letters a week (though I can receive four letters a week). Regularly I write these two letters to the small number of my correspondents and then there is no room left for more. Today I am writing, besides this letter to you, to Amma in Lahore.

Some months ago, soon after the liberation of Paris, I suggested to you to try to get news, by letter or cable, of Louise Morin, Jean-Jacques and Nanu and others in France &c. I wonder if you did so—I wish you would write and find out how our friends are and what has happened to them. Apart from our own desire to know about them, a letter from you will cheer them up. These messages across the seas, after long silences and painful experiences, are very pleasing to the recipients. They bring the perfume of friendship and comradeship in this hard and often unfeeling world.

And Edward Thompson also—He is carrying on, I suppose, as best he can in his lingering and painful illness. Despite appearances, he is emotional and very friendly and he would welcome a few lines from you.

One war is over and another is continuing, and Europe is dazed and starving, with many of its cities a mass of rubble, and in England they are going to have a general election and there will be a lot of shouting and ballyhoo and make-believe, and all the old puppet shows will continue and yet change in the process. So we also continue and yet change—

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 117.

May 26—Saturday

Today is the Buddhist New Year's Day—the full moon of the month of *Vaisakh*—the anniversary, according to tradition, of Buddha's birth, buddhahood, & death. The Buddhist era begins with the date of the death—So today the year 2489 begins.

We have so many holidays & festivals in India and yet this day, connected with the greatest of India's sons, is not celebrated except in a very small way—

May 31, 1945

Indu darling,

I have received two letters from you dated 19th and 23rd May—Nos. 108 and 109. The latter of these came this morning.

I love your descriptions of Srinagar and the neighbourhood, of the dawn touching the snowy peaks and gradually creeping down and spreading over the lowlands. Some time ago I read an airman's account of the dawn. He was flying high up and was enveloped in the early morning sunlight, but the earth was still a dark shadow and gradually it emerged from the gloom. So it must feel also if one is on a high mountain top.

I remember the Gupkar area fairly well. In 1940 I spent some days there and much earlier, over a year before you were born, the whole family lived in a large house almost at the foot of Shankaracharya.

Gupkar was not built over then as now and there were few houses. Nor had the Maharajah's palace spread out in all directions enclosing the land round about Chashme Shahi. We went frequently to Chashme Shahi and up Shankaracharya. Janki *chacha*—do you remember him?—He was one of *Dadu's* closest friends—was staying with us and he was a great walker. Every morning, before most of us were up, he had his little constitutional which usually meant going up Shankaracharya by one route and coming down on the other side.

The guest house near Chashme Shahi I remember very well. What a lovely situation. The view from its balcony over the Dal Lake and towards the mountains is hard to beat—In those days in 1916 Swamiji (Swami Sant Deo) used to live there. He was in high favour with the old Maharaja Partap Singh[656] (the uncle of the present one), and a crowd of Punjabis, especially women, was always to be found round about him. Dol Amma and Bibi Amma thought no end of him and we used to go to him frequently and consume the lovely fruits of his garden which he gave us in abundance. I lost sight of the Swami for many years and then, in 1940, on my way back *via* the Jammu route, I met him somewhere half-way in the mountains. I used to like him. He was (and I hope still is) a jolly, cheerful person with plenty of commonsense. I wonder if he is still flourishing. Nikku should know for his family was greatly attached to the old Swami.

Whenever Tej Bahadurji goes up to Srinagar he stays as the Maharaja's guest in the Chashme Shahi guest house. I visited him then in the summer of 1940. It brought back old memories to me and I gazed for long at the magnificent view spread out before me. And now even 1940 is an old memory.

If Bijju *chacha* wants you to shift over to his house, it would be well to agree to his proposal when it is convenient for you to do so. Perhaps so long as Betty and Raja and their children are staying on in Srinagar you had better continue where you are. Bijju *chacha's* house will be quite comfortable for you. You are likely to have much more company there for he likes to have his friends round about him.

There are ever so many places in Kashmir which invited one to trek. Pahalgam, itself a lovely spot, is a fairly good spot. There is a lake, rather high up, but just one day's good trekking, which is worth a visit. A place I liked is on the way to Kolahai, also one day's easy trek from Pahalgam. I forget the name of the place but there were beautiful meadows skirted by pinewoods. There is a fairly decent rest house there with two good rooms. You could easily go there and even take

656. The third Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir who ruled from 1887 to 1927.

Rajiva with you. It is always desirable to have a pony with you when trekking. Pahalgam has that disadvantage you mention—too many visitors go there during the summer months, many of them invalids, and a small place easily gets crowded.

Last Saturday—the 27th—was rather a special day, but very few people in India took notice of it, although we have a vast number of festivals and holidays and a passion for anniversaries. It was the *Vaisakhi Purnima*, the full moon of the month of *Vaisakha*, the last day of that month, leading on to the *Jyestha* or more simply जेठ—Tradition says that Buddha was born on this day, attained enlightenment on the anniversary of that day, and finally died also on the *Vaisakhi Purnima*. The Buddhist era begins from the date of his death, thus this day is the Buddhist New Year's Day and is celebrated as such in the Buddhist countries. I remember the celebrations in Ceylon when we were there in May 1931. Last Saturday began the 2489th year of this era. Historically speaking, Buddha was the biggest person born in India and it is right that we should remember this day.

We are right in the middle of the hot weather here and it is pretty hot—Sometimes, though not frequently, the nights are bad. But then there is one peculiarity of Bareilly, due to its nearness to the hills—suddenly a cool wind comes at night and makes a difference. We have been having very hot and sticky nights. But last night turned cool rather suddenly and some warm covering was required in the early morning. We sleep in the open—It is as hot as ever today.

What an extraordinary story of misadventure and good luck you have written about—the exploits of the Tweedy family. Kishtwar is one of the most out of the way provinces of Kashmir, very seldom visited by tourists or others. In my mind it is connected with an old legend that the women of Kishtwar are very beautiful!

I don't think you need worry at all about Rajiva's health. He is doing well, his weight is good and he keeps cheerful—that in itself is a sign of health. It does not matter if there is slight delay in his sitting up or walking. That will all come in good time—I think you should have a simple ceremony soon now both for the name giving and the खीर चटाई. It should not be delayed much longer. Kashmir is a suitable place for it and there is Birju *chacha* to help you fix it up. He is sure to be interested. So ask him about it.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 118.

June 1. Friday

So June begins and we have nearly completed 34 months of imprisonment—Asaf Ali was released a few days ago owing to illness. He is completely broken down in health and is now in a nursing home.

About a fortnight ago or less I decided to revise my MSS again completely. There were some fresh ideas also which necessitated some additions and more or less minor changes. So I worked at this and finished it two days ago. This was my second full revision. Is it the last?

June 3 Sunday

I was priding myself that for nearly six months I had not had a cold. This morning there were the slight beginnings of one.

x x x x

The Supt. came today and said that it was getting hotter and hotter —which was perfectly true—and that he had come to the conclusion that we should be transferred to a cooler place—Almora. Had we any objection? I told him I had nothing to add to what I had said previously.

Well, so we are going to have another change soon—and just when Wavell is on his way back to India, and over-optimistic people are expecting our early release.

7-6-1945

Darling Betty,

I have your letter of the 18th May, together with the boys' notes. I have got a bit of a cold and am not in a mood to write but I wanted to send a few lines for the kids. Also to thank you for the lovely mangoes which have come from Bombay. There were 4 dozen *alphonsos*. I am glad you are enjoying your visit to Kashmir. I was sure you would.

Below is a joint letter for Harsha and Ajit.

Darlings Harsha and Ajit, It made me happy to get your letters and to learn what you are doing in Kashmir. Riding and walking

and hiking are all very pleasant there. But have you had swims in the Dal Lake? And when you went to Gulmarg, you must have gone up higher still and reached the snowline. There is no end to the games one can play on the snow. You will see plenty of snow and ice at other places also—at Kolahoi, Amarnath and perhaps at Sonemarg.

Yes, it is a long time since I came away and both of you must have grown a lot since then. Still I think I shall recognize you when we meet again. When that will take place I do not know. But whenever we meet both of you will have to tell me so much of your life at school at Gwalior and your adventures in Kashmir. I am glad to learn that you are growing up bright and strong and healthy and enjoy your work and games. Love to you both from your *Mamu*. And love to you also, little sister.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

June 7, 1945

Darling Indu,
Was it last week that I wrote you about my recently acquired freedom from colds? Well, I was a little premature, for, soon after, a tiny wee bit of a cold, hardly noticeable, crept in somewhere within my system, and like the camel nosing itself into the tent, began to spread. An odd moment to choose for we are at the apex of the hot weather. So for some days now I have had a cold, nothing much, but there it is, and a cold is a cold and a bit of a nuisance.

The heat here has revived old memories. For some years I had had no such experience. Ahmadnagar was after all a plateau of nearly 2000 ft. altitude and the hottest day there was mild compared to the northern variety. Besides conditions there were different. There is a certain ferocity about the *loo* in northern India which is comparable to nature's wilder outbursts. It does not last very long for it heralds the monsoon. Here too I suppose the rain will come soon—It is possible, however, that we may be transferred to a cooler jail from here.

Feroze has sent me a parcel of mangoes—*dasehris* grown in Anand Bhawan. There were just 100 of them, all in a raw state. They are being preserved in the right way so that they may ripen. Tell Feroze that I have got this parcel. Along with it came another from Bombay

—*alphonsos* sent on Betty's instructions, 4 dozens of them. On the whole they were in good condition. What a gorgeous thing is the mango—surely the king of fruits.

I enclose a letter which came to me here from Maria Lorenzini, a lady living in San Francisco. Her book of poems—*Seeding Democracy* —also reached me here. I want you to send her a proper appreciative reply. The poems were interesting though rather beyond me occasionally. Most of them were reactions to musical pieces, and as I was ignorant of the music which inspired them, it was not easy for me to react in the same way. But of course you are not going to say all this to her. You will write a proper, nice, agreeable letter to her which should give her a moment's pleasure. It was good of her to send her book to me.

The lady has sent me a cutting containing her picture (I enclose this also). It is a powerful face and I feel like wilting before its pleasant but stern gaze—perhaps this feeling is more due to the Bareilly weather.

One of the advantages of being in jail evidently is that other people have to answer your letters.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my 119th letter.

June 8th Friday

The cold has persisted and has brought some fever in its train which continues. The Supt. has been very attentive and has done his best to treat me. (The Supt.'s name is Dr. Abdul Ghaffar—He is not now in the I.M.S.). I have felt depressed—a natural consequence of the cold &c. on the one side and the terrific heat on the other.

This morning Coxhill the bright D.M. here came to see us & told us that we were going to be transferred to Almora either tomorrow or the day after. Bolam the S.P. will accompany us & he is due back this afternoon from Naini Tal when final arrangements will be fixed up.

So ten weeks of Bareilly C.P. and 34 months of internment—and now Almora.

June 9, Saturday

Well—we did not go today and there is still (5.30 p.m.) no news about tomorrow.

My fever, the little there is, continues and my face appears to have grown thinner—so people say—Yesterday we were weighed—I was 118 lbs.—a weight which takes me right back thirty years or so. That must have been my weight then and since then I suppose there was a gradual but continuous increase—There was no looking back except for short periods in prison. So I gained in the course of these many years about 25 lbs. Now having lost these I go back—But probably under normal health-giving conditions I shall soon recover ten pounds or so.

But the question troubles me—why I have lost this weight, especially here in Bareilly. The heat? May be, but I am not wholly satisfied. Even if that is so it means a considerable lowering down of resistance. So far as personal attention is concerned the Supt. here is continually thinking of some new way to make our life here easier—within the rules of course—He has been given a wide discretion in regard to us and he exercises it freely, often to my embarrassment.

Fortunately Narendra Deva has flourished here and has put on 5 lbs. or so.

Later. A bunch of letters—from Indu, Betty, Yunus & Bul—also two books. Isherwood's[657] translation of the Gita which I have been wanting to see ever since I read about it—and a book by Nan—*Prison Days*[658]—her prison diary—I did not know of the latter book and had no idea it was being published.

We are told that we are leaving tomorrow morning at 5.30—which is really 4.30 a.m. So tomorrow the mountains again and the long familiar road to Almora.

Today we completed 34 months—we begin the new month with Almora.

The Supt. here has done everything he conceivably could, & more, to add to our comfort during the journey—He has behaved almost like a fussy grandmother—Anyway he has been very decent

657 Christopher Isherwood (b. 1904), novelist and playwright, his interest in Indian mysticism allied him with the Vedantic Society in Los Angeles and his later writings include *An Approach to the Vedanta* and *Ramakrishna and His Disciples*

658 This contains an account of the author's life in jail from August 1942 to June 1943.

June 10th Sunday

1945 From Bareilly C.P. to Almora D.J.

An early start. I got up at 4 a.m. (which meant really 3 a.m.)—By six we were off in a comfortable car with Bolam the S.P. as our companion and a young man in the army who was going to Ranikhet. A police lorry followed with a guard and our luggage.

The morning hours were pleasant, though warm. It became cooler after Kathgodam but still it was warm enough to be slightly unpleasant. We reached Almora a little before 2 p.m. and Bolam, handing over charge to the jailer and taking a receipt for us two, departed. I felt very tired and the unpacking & arranging &c. tired me still further—as I had a temperature throughout.

Almora District Jail

June 11—Monday—

Back again to the old place after nearly ten years. It is considerably changed but there are many familiar landmarks—My old stone—the huge thing that I had dug out of the centre of the yard and then, with the help of a dozen or more convicts, made to stand up there is no more—It was broken up & used for building operations.

It is surprisingly warm here yet, for all that, the change from Bareilly is most marked. Probably it represents 20°F of temperature—Here the maximum now is 90° which is bad enough. In Bareilly it used to be 112° or over. Sleeping indoors last night I required no warm covering, or any covering at all.

On the whole it is pleasant here after the fantastic heat and *loo* of Bareilly. A delightful sound, bringing old memories, the rustling of the wind through the deodars—how like it is to the sea slowly advancing & retreating on the beach.

x x x x

I am intrigued by the fever I have been having. I see no reason for it. The heat? Possibly, but I am not sure. Anyhow I am resting a lot. If it does not disappear in two or three days, I shall worry a little.

x x x x

The Supt. here is the Civil Surgeon—Dr. H.H. Khan. The Jailor—a Sharma.

June 12, 1945

Darling Indu,

I am writing to you from a new address—though not so new. I have come back to the old place almost exactly ten years after I left it so suddenly to fly to Europe. It has changed somewhat but many of the old landmarks are still there, well-remembered nooks and corners and tops of trees peeping over the walls. We cannot see the mountains at all as the jail is situated over a ridge and the walls prevent a distant view. In winter and during the rains, I remember, this sometimes produced a strange and rather pleasant sensation of being in the clouds or near them, cut off from the rest of the world.

As I was looking round this old-new environment, faint memories began to stir within me, memories not so much of the material objects surrounding me but of the vague intangible past with all its associations, and gradually more vivid pictures took their place. This train of thought was started by a gentle soothing sound, of which I was hardly consciously aware for some little time but which seemed to envelop me and whisper in my ears. There was a dream quality about this sound, something that distinguished it from the more obvious noises of the waking day. Or perhaps it was rather like that middle state which lies between waking and sleeping when vague ideas float through the mind and pass away leaving no trail behind. It had a slightly hypnotic effect on me, and then I realised that I was listening to the rustle of the breeze through the deodars. There are no deodars within the jail enclosure, but just outside there are a few of them in a clump, and I can just see the tops of two or three of them quivering as a slight wind passes through them. What a lovely sound it is, arising as it were out of nothing and passing off into nothingness, and then rising again with its slow rhythmic motion, emblem of nature's basic harmony. Sometimes it reminded me of the advancing and retreating tides on a distant beach.

After a little gap I got a sheaf of letters, among them three from you. Two of the letters were actually given to me as we were leaving Bareilly and I read them in the car. Rajiva's snaps also came. The old boy looks bright and healthy and energetic. I think you are right in saying that it is not desirable for infants to sit up or walk too soon. This premature growth looks attractive and pleases the fond parents but I

have an idea that one has to pay for it in some way or other in later life. I think a slower and more solid growth, both physical and mental, yields better results. I do not want particularly to hold myself up as an example but I have an idea that my own growth was by no means too fast. In some ways it was perhaps even retarded. Anyway I am still growing!

I wrote to you in my last letter that I had developed a cold. It was not much of a cold but taken with the heat—what a combination!—I felt poorly. There was some loss in weight also in Bareilly. The Superintendent there was anxious to feed me up and produced all manner of things which, during the course of a fairly long life, I had so far managed to avoid—Ovaltine and Horlicks &c. Well, I swallowed them—Horlicks for the first time in my life! There was nothing much the matter with me—What intrigued me was that I could not quite find out what was the matter with me. I was examined and found to be sound in the obvious places. Probably it was just an odd combination of various circumstances—my getting a cold whilst it was so hot and some other minor factors, not important in themselves but helping each other to produce a derangement of the bodily functions. What a delicate thing is the body. It is a matter for continuous surprise to me how this intricate structure functions so satisfactorily in spite of persistent misuse and unfavourable environments. Has it ever struck you as odd how the body maintains a more or less even temperature even when it is far hotter or colder all round it? If there was not some delicate apparatus to maintain this even temperature imagine the result—with the atmosphere temperature at 112° F or more we would all develop terribly high fever and pass out, or when the temperature is below zero, we would freeze to death.

I am sorry you have lost weight. What is your present weight and what has been your maximum? The gradual reduction in my weight at Ahmadnagar and Bareilly has brought my weight back to what it was when I was in my middle twenties—a slim lad who had once coxed a boat. This going back to the past has its advantages in many ways and I am not sure that I would not like to go back. But there is one very serious drawback—there would be no Indu then—she would just be a hope and an aspiration.

It is unusually warm here in Almora but still there is a world of difference between Bareilly and Almora—Measured in Fahrenheit degrees I suppose the difference is about 25°. It is pleasanter here and my old body is approving of the change. It is important of course that the body should approve independently of the mind. The body, though intimately connected with the mind (and indeed the mind is

part of the body), has a way of going its own way despite the advice and the reasoning of the mind. The mind is of course much more highly developed and perhaps because of that its natural functions have been covered up or directed by thoughts and urges. But the body is comparatively more primitive and still reacts more naturally. As somebody said—a mind can and often does lie, a body can hardly do so.

So I expect to be quite fit again within a few days. The mere feel of the mountains has a tonic effect on me. And though you are still far from me, it is pleasant to think that we are both in the Himalayas and, as the crow flies, not so far after all.

I have received *Puphi's* little book: *Prison Days*. It is rather thin. In fact it is hardly a book. What there is of it is well written and is easy reading. This business of keeping a diary in jail is a tricky affair. What must one or can one write? The trivial happenings which fill the days? Yes sometimes for even the apparently trivial has sometimes a deep significance for us. Who do we write for? For ourselves or others? It is very difficult for the average human being to be absolutely frank about himself or others. So even in our personal diaries we tend to be circumspect, thinking of the future when other eyes may read them. And this leads to triviality and artificiality.

Isherwood's translation of the Gita (which Bharati sent) has also reached me. This was welcome as I had been reading reviews of the book in American papers and stories of Isherwood becoming a Hindu mystic. From what I have seen of it, I like the translation.

If Edward Thompson has recovered this is certainly something on the verge of the miraculous. I do not think anyone, and certainly not Edward himself, expected recovery.

I am deeply distressed to learn of Rup's brain troubles. It is horrible to think of her attacking her father.

Tell Yunus that I have received his letter. He wants me to send him word, through you, if I want anything from Peshawar. What am I likely to want here, except good news of him and his bride?

Perhaps you have moved to Bijju *chacha's* house already. Anyway this letter is going to the old address.

We have been here in Almora just two days—We came all the way from Bareilly by car—We started at 6 a.m. (and that meant my getting up at 4 which is really 3) and reached here at about 2 p.m. It was not a very strenuous journey but I felt tired at the end of it, partly because of the heat & partly because I had not been feeling well—Here, for the present, I am resting mostly.

The Anand Bhawan *dasehri* mangoes have been slowly ripening and are quite good. We have brought them along with us here. Here we found fairly good apricots and the tiny variety of pear which is rather delicious. What do you call this kind of baby pear?

This is my letter No. 120 to you. The three letters which I have received from you are dated 2/6, 3/6 and 5/6—Nos. 110 to 112.

Love

Your loving
Papu

June 14 Thursday

I am improving slowly & feeling generally better. A slight temperature still persists but daily it is at a lower level.

x x x x

One rather surprising thing. For the first time during these three years of detention we have had a more or less decent Indian cook—He turns out to be a Congress prisoner from the well-known Salt area of Almora Dist. convicted for activities in 1942 &c. Later he went to Bombay & other places & was eventually arrested in Lahore. His name is Mangal Singh & he appears to be a decent person. He cooks after the Indian fashion well and even knows how to deal with eggs. And this is Almora D.J.!

x x x x

I am told that people come daily to the jail gate expecting my release. On the 12th there was quite a crowd because of a news item emanating from Naini Tal. Yesterday & today also.

I am not anxious to go out just yet—at any rate for a week or two. I want to recuperate a little here before other work calls me. Even if I was suddenly released I would probably stay here for three or four days more—visit Khali &c. The prospect of descending to the plains after this small but persistent indisposition—before the rains—is rather terrifying. However there is no need to worry—nobody is releasing us just yet!

The long expected statement[659] by Wavell must have been issued today or even yesterday. We get our news late here & so we have not seen it yet or heard about it.

Later 10 p.m.

The Jailer came at about 9 p.m. and said he had just heard a part of Wavell's broadcast. He did not seem to have understood the political aspect of it, except that Gandhiji, Jinnah &c. were being invited to meet the Viceroy on the 25th—He was interested in the question of our release. Apparently it was stated that the W.C. members would be released soon or almost immediately.

x x x x

So perhaps we might be discharged tomorrow June 15—after 2 years, 10 months and 6 days or 1041 days. And we are expected to rush about immediately—to Panchgani or Bombay—later perhaps to Delhi—I am greatly put out at this prospect. I did so much want to have at least three weeks to myself—to rest—visit Indu in Kashmir & generally to meet old friends quietly.

June 15, Friday 8 a m

Ten minutes ago we were informed that we were unconditionally released.

659. On 14 June 1945, Wavell, in a broadcast, explaining the proposals of the British Government which reiterated the Cripps offer, proposed the formation of an interim national government consisting of representatives of the main communities and equal proportions of 'Caste Hindus' and Muslims along with the Viceroy and the Commander in Chief. He called a conference of the Indian leaders at Simla to consider the formation of such a government and to choose their nominees for it. He also ordered the release of the members of the Congress Working Committee.

APPENDIX

1. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
30.4.1936

Bebee,
I have just arrived and I am told that both my letter to you and the parcel of books have come back from Bhopal with some inscription—'addressee left' or 'addressee not found'. I have not seen them yet. Tomorrow they will be sent again.

I was happy to see you. I wanted to do so and yet almost wished you would not come. It was cruel to make you journey in this weather and spend the night in a station waiting room I have been thinking how very selfish and self-centred I am.

I enclose the circulars I spoke to you about.

As far as I remember I asked my publishers in London to send you a copy of the *Autobiography* to your Calcutta address. It is doubtful if the book will reach anyone in India, but still you might make sure that if it does come, it might be forwarded to you from Calcutta.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Akola
23.5.36

Bebee,
You will let me know, will you not?, what the doctors decide. And if there is to be an operation, send me a word. A foolish way of troubling you, for what can I do? But we function in foolish ways—even a hardened and tough person like me. Meanwhile, I shall talk and talk

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

till I exhaust myself and others. But physical weariness is preferable to the other variety, and incessant talk and even vain repetitions produce a sensation of action and, at any rate, keep in check the mind's disorders and emptiness.

My love to you, my dear, and keep a stout heart for the ordeals you have to face.

Yours,
Jawahar

3. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
25.5.1936

My dear,
I slept most of the time in the train yesterday. The night before I had hardly slept for I started from Akola in the small hours and had to change at Bhusaval soon after, and in between there were *jais* and crowds making the night unbearable with their interruptions and noises. And so I slept during the day. But during the intervals I read Toller's *Letters From Prison* and I almost lost myself in them and prison seemed to surround me. And yet, strangely enough, you were always hovering about, whether it was Toller's prison or mine. My mind wandered to you and thought of you and how you were faring.

I am going day after tomorrow to Delhi for a day and then to the Punjab for a week. I don't want to go, but life is hard.

Shall I send you Toller's *Letters?* I think I will without waiting for your answer.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

4. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
5.6.36

My dear,

Last night I returned, just for a day. Vaguely I had hoped to hear from you even during my wanderings in the Punjab. It was a foolish notion for you could have hardly caught me there. But I was *anxious* and I thought of you and the want of news preyed upon my mind. Fortunately for me the mind was kept pretty well occupied and so was the tongue and the legs and most parts of the body—*too occupied in*deed, for soon there was a revolt and the body gave notice of a prolonged strike. I capitulated rather ignominiously but wisely. There was nothing much the matter with me—only 'flu and various pains and a villainous throat. I suppressed the lot within two days, though the throat is still misbehaving. It must be taught a lesson. The general strike having collapsed, I can deal more harshly with individual members. So for the next three days I propose to make the throat do some hard work at Unao, and then it may have a chance to rest. Khali is off now, unfortunately, as Ranjit is lying ill at Mussoorie. To Mussoorie I shall therefore go about the 10th for ten days.

The Punjab visit was of the nature of a cyclone. Bombay faded off into suburban respectability before the elemental crowds of the Punjab towns and villages. I go back to the Punjab as soon as I have the chance.

Do not write to me so dismally and hopelessly It is so unlike you. Or write to me as you will but do not feel that way. Defeatism does *not become you. I feel strong today in spite of physical weariness,* and the difficulties that surround me seem to fade and shrink away. Perhaps it is the intoxication of the shouting crowds—half-mad they were and *some of their madness entered* my veins. Be strong with me!

It is very late—I have had a heavy day and the night is far spent. In another four hours I am supposed to be up to go to the station.

And so good night, lotus-born,[2] and may you be sleeping well and dreaming pleasantly.

Yours,
Jawahar

Toller was sent to you long ago.

1. *Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.*
2. Literal meaning of the word 'Padmaja.'

5. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Mussoorie
16.6.36

Bebee, your telegram. Perhaps it is as well. Get rid of this perpetual trouble and pain. I have no great faith in doctors as a whole, but surgery I believe in and I have a definite feeling that this operation will do you good. Out with the appendix therefore and look at life without pain. Your mother will keep us informed, I hope. We are here till the 23rd when we shall all go to Allahabad. I shall be touring in some rural areas for three or four days but every night I shall return to Anand Bhawan. And on the 28th morning I shall go to Wardha. How long I shall stay there I do not know. The capacity for argument is almost unlimited. Perhaps I might run down to Bombay from there for a day to have a glimpse of you.

Ranjit will probably go down with me as this high altitude does not suit him. Later he may go to Bombay. He is slightly better but I think he should consult some specialists and the like in Bombay.

There are no flowers here now, or hardly any, except for some in private gardens. The lovely hank of violets that you saw long long ago is a memory like so much else. But Ranjit tells me that his garden at Khali is one mass of bloom and the fruit trees are laden with peaches and apricots. He had worked hard, hoping to surprise me pleasantly, when I came to visit him, with a bit of Kashmir. He had even grown typical Kashmiri vegetables which are not found elsewhere. And now I am here and he cannot go back, and the monkeys eat the fruits and pull out the flowers.

We live very far from Mussoorie. We are quite a mile away even from Woodstock, on the Tehri Road. I like this. I have some quiet and, so far as I am concerned, Mussoorie does not exist. But Woodstock does and you seem to inhabit it, and sometimes you steal up quietly to pay us a visit—to Snowdon was it? I do not connect you at all with illness then. You deceived me of course as you have frequently done.

How foolish trifles remain in the pigeon-holes of memory! I remember sending some servants to meet you when you first came to Snowdon. They were to show you the way. And so that you might recognize

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

them I wrote to you that they had claret-coloured liveries! And then I gave you a book—do you remember it?—Gilbert Frankau's[2] *One of Us*. My literary taste ran in that direction then.

Surely I was never pink and white pretty. I must protest. I thought I was a sufficiently agreeable youth and, if necessary, I can produce evidence to this effect. But your idea of masculine beauty must have been even then of the strong and silent type, hard-faced, stern and purposeful, or is it soulful? Well, well, I am not silent anyway now, though I was in those days.

When I come to Bombay I shall find you convalescing, dreaming, and getting well, dreaming of the many things you are going to do now that you have got rid of your pains. How delightful it must be to lie still and dream through the long hours and build fairy castles and try to mould this world into something better and more desirable. I have always envied this stage of convalescence, perhaps because I have never really had it, being so aggressively and vulgarly healthy. I want a little more time to dream but instead I have to be thinking of all manner of unlovely people and their doings, and I rush out to smite them with tongue and pen. A fatiguing process resulting chiefly in a bad throat and in indifferent articles. But I seem to be useful to the press at least. What a lot of copy they get out of me.

What a lot of people and groups are after my blood—they will end by making me even more conceited than I am, and that, as you know, is saying a great deal. Liberals, Responsivists, Communalists, Big Business, and of course my own dear colleagues of the Congress, do not love me, I am afraid. It amuses me, irritates at times, pleases me at other times, but my chief grievance is that it all takes up so much time, and I suppose it makes me more hard faced than ever. But behind all that there is something to soften me—the vast and overwhelming crowds that come with affection and hope. It is a strange medley.

Tagore (the Poet of course) has sent me a short but very generous and beautiful appreciation of my *Autobiography*. More conceit!

And so, brave and smiling one, smile away through your operation and continue for long to be a joy to your friends. I am destined to live for a frightfully long time, I am told. An expert astrologer has

2 Gilbert Frankau (1884-1952); English writer; his works include *One of Us* (1912); *The City of Fear* (1917); *Farewell Romance* (1936); *World Without End* (1943); and *Oliver Trenton, K.D.* (1951).

fixed the date of my death even. It is still a quarter of a century hence. And I don't want to be lonelier than ever during this arid waste of years.

All my love,

Jawahar

6. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Mussoorie
17.6.36

My dear, I have been thinking of you so much as I sit here and look at the distant Dun valley and Sivaliks and the great plain beyond. It is a beautiful view fading off in the far distance. But often the clouds creep up and blot out the prospect and assume fantastic shapes, and my thoughts wander far away to Bombay. How are you, I wonder, what are you doing, what thoughts course through your fertile brain?

For two days I have not been out of the house. I have no special urge to go out. I like to sit, my body prefers it after having been knocked about a lot recently. In the Punjab, when they made me travel by car over 250 miles of dusty roads in the course of a day (which included four or five big meetings, some smaller ones, and, worst of all, processions) I swore that I preferred a bullock cart to a motor car. I have not quite recovered psychologically from that feeling. And so I sit, not idly, for numerous files and papers surround me. Usually I go out in the evening as a matter of duty more than pleasure. Last evening it rained and so I made that an excuse, although as a matter of fact I love walking in the rain. Instead I faced bravely my correspondence files, and between Upadhyaya and me we got through 70 or 80 letters. Not bad for an afternoon and evening.

And then of course there are the children. I have hardly had the chance of being with them for many years and they have grown up so much since then. It is almost like making friends afresh. But it did not take much time. Their language is terribly Americanised—their accent, words and phrases. Things are usually swell or slick or yummy (whatever that may be). Lousy is a favourite word. Everybody seems to be 'trading' at Woodstock, that is exchanging sweets or other articles.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Did you develop this terrible commercial instinct when you were here? Or the American accent, which I must confess I do not like, although I like American words.

Half my brief holiday is over today. As soon as I return I shall be up to my neck in work, controversy, argument and conflict. What would happen to me, I wonder, if this atmosphere of tension and conflict left me? Probably I would shrivel up and give up the ghost. I mentioned to you yesterday, I think, that a worthy astrologer of repute had fixed my death somewhere in the early sixties. But I did not tell you that according to him I shall get fed up with the world long before that and turn sannyasi! It is hard to believe it, though a person who is sufficiently fed up is capable of much.

Upadhyaya waits for the post. It is a long way off and he has to make daily pilgrimage of it. So I must cease my aimless writing and leave you in peace.

My love to you,

Yours,
Jawahar

7. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Mussoorie
20.6.36

Bebee,

So you have gone through the ordeal and are all the better for it, I hope. Ordeals do improve one. I was sure you would win through. It is the hefty and outwardly strong that collapse.

But you must not be bothered with letters now. You must rest and dream of the health that will be yours in the days to come.

I shall try to pay you a little visit early next month.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

8. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
16.7.36

My dear,

I have not written to you these many days and I have had little news of you. On my return from Bombay I found your little notes, which you had sent from the clinic, waiting for me. I pondered over the advice you had sent me so emphatically. The immediate occasion for it was past. I had survived it though in the process I suppose I had got a few more grey hairs. It is a tiring business altogether. What will happen in future I don't know. It seems all so topsy-turvy. After all, does it matter? Anyway why should you worry? That is the height of absurdity.

Are you getting stronger and stronger? You may have slight setbacks—such things happen frequently. Do not attach too much importance to them. You have got over the real thing. The smaller obstacles do not matter. I do not know if you will be in Bombay next month when I come there. The idea of Lahore seems silly to me. I am going there but I am not looking forward to it.

I did not follow very closely the German doctor's advice, so far as speaking was concerned. The throat is better but I cough a lot which is a nuisance. But that of course will not interfere with my long speeches. I don't know Sind. I don't feel attracted to it.

It is late at night. After a few hours of sleep I start off for the wilds of Sind. I shall sleep a lot in the train for I have been encroaching on the night for some time past in an attempt to get rid of arrears of work. And as a little gift to my friends I have just sent off an article[2] which will not fill them with joy and enthusiasm.

When will I see you next? Whenever that is I am looking forward to finding you full of health.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. "Congress and Socialism"; see *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 317-325.

9. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Nawabshah, Sind
26.7.36

My dear, how are you and where are you? I have had no news from you and of you. That I hope means that you are doing well and marching to health and fitness.

I am nearing the end of this Sind tour. Another day and a half and I shall be speeding away to the Punjab. I am a little tired but my voice holds and the throat is functioning more or less properly. I have taken some care of it but on the whole I believe that it likes a little shouting from time to time. Returning from Bombay I tried to give it rest as advised by the doctor. The attempt failed after two or three days. Except for a troublesome cough I have no trouble. The Punjab is likely to be a severer trial. As usual they have drawn up a mad programme for me there.

The Sindhi people have their good qualities and I rather like them. But they are a curious mixture of the Muslim feudal classes and the Hindu *bania* class—neither very admirable as classes go. Still they have push and energy and that is something to be thankful for. They seem to be singularly devoid of any artistic sense. And the colour they sport in their striped pyjamas are a trial.

I have been to the hottest parts of Sind—including Jacobabad—and yet curiously I have had good weather. The night at Jacobabad was cool and pleasant. This kind of weather is a rare phenomenon at this time of the year.

Today I had a ride on a camel—my first longish experience of the kind. I liked it, except for the smell of the camel. I think I could manage easily a few hours on camel-back.

Probably I shall reach Bombay on the 18th.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

10. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Madras
9.10.36

Bebee,
Your note. The arrangements for my tour are remarkably vague and inefficient and I cannot know for certain what is going to happen. I have however told the bosses here that I should like to spend a little time with you. Possibly I might be in Pondicherry at about tea-time on the 17th.

I am dead tired. My body is limp because of the struggles to get out of crowds and my hands are swollen on account of too much hand-shaking. The crowds have been astounding and they have often worked themselves up to a state of frenzy. The big voices here, both in the Congress and outside, are suitably impressed. But I am myself impressed. Why does this happen? I can't make out and all my vanity does not help me to understand.

It is 1.30 a.m. now and I shall have to get up soon after 5 to start off by car for the southern tour. So to bed.

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

11. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Tinnevelly
13.10.36

Bebee,
With my grey hair and advancing age I might be forgiven perhaps if I took to the habits of age. But what on earth do you mean by fussing about in this manner. I can put up with much, even female tyranny, but I draw the line at being put to bed at 6 p.m. I shall certainly rebel if you make any such ridiculous attempt.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

I am rather glad this Aurobindo Ashram affair has fizzled out.[2] I can now get a better measure of these long-haired inmates. Though I must say that I am disappointed at not seeing the glamorous lady.[3]

I have reached my southernmost point of this tour and within a few minutes we go north again. We are only 60 miles from Cape Comorin and I had an insane desire to visit the place again. I was even prepared to cut out an odd meeting or two. But reason triumphed in the end. It was not possible to go 120 miles of indifferent road within two hours.

Do not be too sure of seeing me at the appointed hour at the meeting at Pondicherry. It has been impossible for me to stick to a timetable and inevitably as the day advances there is a lag and this goes on increasing. Better come to the meeting after you have learnt of my arrival.

Yours,
Jawahar

2. The French Government had issued orders banning Jawaharlal's meeting Sri Aurobindo during the former's visit to Pondicherry. See also *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 674.
3 Madame Mirra Richard (1878-1973), known as the Mother, was of French origin and settled in Pondicherry Ashram set up by Sri Aurobindo in 1926; became the spiritual head of the Ashram after the death of Sri Aurobindo in 1950, set up an international township called Auroville to serve as a meeting place for the followers of the ideals of Sri Aurobindo

12. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

In Train
20.10.1936

My dear,
The tour is over at last and I am speeding away to the north. I am passing through the exalted territories and even here crowds gather at the stations, including officials. The night will not be as peaceful as I hoped. But probably I shall sleep through the noise.

I forgot my weariness when I saw you and for a while at least I was not the President of the Congress How good it was to forget that fact and to see you radiant and looking well. But when you left me and the train rolled away the presidentship descended upon me, though

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

not wholly for the mind wandered and thought of pleasanter subjects. Satyamurti insisted on my writing a farewell message for the Tamil Nad. I tried hard but the eyes would not remain open and the mind was beyond control. After half an hour's vain effort I succeeded in sleeping. Not for long, however, for at every station there was a noisy crowd. And so to Madras and after a brief stay the train again.

I tried to write the Tamil Nad message[2] but in the middle of a sentence I would doze away. The effort to keep awake became a torture. I managed to write something. It was not very bright.

During these three days there have been 'incidents' of course and I have misbehaved. Yesterday at Guntur there was even a petty scuffle in the crowd at the meeting and, as is my foolish habit, I tried to throw myself from the platform on to the heaving mass. Poor dear old Konda Venkatappayya[3] and some others in their endeavours to protect me clung on to me and I had to handle them rather roughly in order to free myself. The dear old man was frightened at my vehemence and the way I flung about my arms and legs. Nothing need have happened if I had not shown temper at a previous stage when someone made a foolish interruption.

I agree with you. The Telugu women are handsomer than the Tamils. They have fine eyes and more charm.

And so good night,

Yours,
Jawahar

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 530-531.
3. (1886-1949); a leading Congressman of Andhra Pradesh; joined noncooperation movement in 1920 and went to prison several times.

13. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
23.10.36

How are you, my dear? In my crowded life my thoughts go to quiet and restful Pondicherry with the sound of the sea and you listening to it, all alone. From the crowds of the South I have transported myself to the crowds of the North and after a brief two days here I go to

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Benares tomorrow morning—processions, meetings &c. In between there was some rest and sleep in the train. When I arrived here I found the house full of guests and a committee meeting in progress and the verandahs full of hungry looking persons—prospective candidates for the elections. Abdul Ghaffar has been here. We go together to Benares tomorrow.

Did I tell you that during one of my spells of sleepiness in the car Sambamoorty offered his pneumatic thigh to me for a pillow? A generous offer, but it put an end to my sleep.

I am not sure when I shall go to Calcutta. I shall decide in a day or two in Benares.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

14. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

In train
Cuttack to Bhuvaneshwar
10.11.36

Dear eighteen-year-old—why should you be angry at your age? Hold on to it, nineteen comes too soon, and twenty and more. I suppose we might consider you nineteen in another week's time. I am afraid I do not feel paternally inclined towards you, but I am old, immeasurably old, and all the past ages oppress me and fill me. So old am I that often I love the sense of age, and agelessly I look at the passing show. "Very old are we men"[2] and echoes of the songs of Eve's nightingales rise in our hearts. And you are young, so young, though the wisdom of Eve looks through your eyes sometimes.

Foolishly I had hoped to meet you in Calcutta. Instead your letters reached me there.

Bidhan knew nothing of your programme, but said he would write to you to come to Calcutta. Will you go? And afterwards why not come to Allahabad, that very dull and unexciting place. December is your month there. I won't be there to trouble you too much, at any

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. This line occurs in the poem *All that's Past* by Walter de la Mare. See *Selected Works*, Vol 7, p. 8.

rate, for long. Probably I shall return there on December 2nd and stay a few days and then go away and come back for two or three days.

Last night I left Calcutta and to break the long night I stopped at Kharagpur for an hour and addressed the railway workers. And then the train, reaching a wayside station in Orissa at 4.45 a.m. . I have put in 160 miles by car since then and addressed six or seven meetings. Now I am going to Bhuvaneshwar where I hold forth again late at night.

Do not be alarmed. I feel singularly fresh and have been congratulated on my looks. Only a sleepiness creeps over me occasionally and my throat has become rather like the clergyman's, and a hoarse heavy voice emerges from it. It is very unlovely I am afraid and I think rather wistfully when a shy and almost girlish voice was mine. My hands too are limp and I cannot lean on them. Too much handshaking in the South has taken the stiffness out of them. They will recover.

Puri 11/11

This could not be continued last night. I send it as it is—I shall not have any time today.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

15. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

In train to Vizagapatnam
12.11.36

My dear,

Last night I wanted to write to you, partly to show off for I had had a heavy day of 20 hours and I wanted to make an exhibition of my vitality. But not that only, for I thought that writing to you after the mad whirl of the day would soothe me. But I was wiser and decided not to break into the four hours of sleep that yet remained.

My last letter came to a sudden end—We reached Bhuvaneshwar at night and there was the inevitable procession by torchlight. I was too weary to argue and object and so I mounted a small country pony, a sweet little thing, and accompanied by music of a sort and dancing, I rode along the village streets. Flutes and tom-toms were being played

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

and very effective and athletic dancing, which I liked. It was rather like a village wedding procession, and suddenly the absurdity of the whole thing struck me and I laughed aloud. The dancing became more furious, they were bent on pleasing me.

After the meeting, although it was late and dark as pitch, I went to see the old ruined temples which are of great interest to archaeologists, a primitive arch specially. There I saw a beautiful image of Parvati in black granite.

At Puri also I went to the old temple and was taken to the sanctum where I was struck dumb with horror at the ugliness and frightfulness of the image. The whole place made me feel sick and I could hardly restrain myself from expressing my indignation and anger. Why this extreme reaction, I wondered. Was it at the crudeness of the whole thing, or the religious background, or my modernism, whatever that might be, or the Aryan reaction against Dravidian forms? Whatever it was due to, the Lord Jagannath did not find favour in my eyes, as Kali does not. Why should religion appear in such repulsive guise? It is bad enough without it.

I wanted to see the famous erotic sculptures in the temple but I had to hurry and what can one do with a multitude following one about? This crowd business is becoming a curse. Still I saw from some distance two of these sculptures and anything less suggestive I have seldom seen. Compared to the horror of the Jagannath image, it was purity itself.

Have you heard the Oriya women, or any other women, ululate (I believe that is the right word)? A strange eerie noise which sounded to me more like a wailing than anything else, and the way the tongue is made to roll and quiver and shake is quite extraordinary. Everywhere I went to in Orissa this sound greeted me. It is supposed to be very pleasing. I did not like it.

In your letter you expressed concern and horror at my getting wet during my last Andhra tour. Do you know that wetting was quite delightful and it woke up a drowsy person. But it had a more far-reaching result. For a month or more the district had suffered from a drought and in some parts water was even being sold. So the rain was exceedingly welcome and as it synchronised with my visit, my reputation is secure. All over the place I am sure to have brought the rain.

Calcutta after these long years was cordial. The procession was prodigious and excited Bengalis and others shouted and danced with excitement while I adopted the pose of the strong silent man, standing

at the back of the car, statuesque, immobile, almost expressionless. I loved to feel the contrast—how terribly vain I am!—and then the humour of it would make me laugh and suddenly thousands would laugh with me, and later grow more excited still. I am never tired of watching a crowd and playing upon its moods and a strange sense of kinship with it comes over me.

A greater triumph was the settlement we came to.[2] You who accuse me of temper will hardly believe the unbelievable patience and smiling tolerance I showed to all kinds of stupidity. Yet it was not that really worked in my favour. I bought that settlement and the price was the last two years of prison.[3] It was worth it. What the future will bring I do not know but for the present Bengal is in a better frame of mind than it has been for ten years. The provincial groups have joined together and there is cooperation with All India.

I must say that I am myself astonished at the vitality I am showing in spite of my great age. I go on and on and the slight weariness passes soon enough. Almost it was as if some force was pushing me on, not Aurobindo, I am afraid. Like an arrow from the bow I shoot on and I do not know who the holder of the bow was. And the arrow has a bit of flame about it and while it lights others, it consumes itself. But it will last a while still and then one day it will end suddenly. That is the way I should like it to end—a snap and the light goes out. No slow fading out for me I hope. I think I am indifferent as to when this occurs. Life interests me greatly but it has ceased to hold me and so I can venture to play about with it, and when this occurs the burden seems to grow less. How foolishly people talk of sacrifice and suffering—Here I am a bundle of temper, pride and a great deal of carelessness, and I am held up as a model of the virtue of self-sacrifice. I really do not care what happens and yet, curiously enough, when I am doing a job I give all my thought to it, concentrate on it, and thus achieve results which would be denied to better and stronger men. Even the passage through a crowd makes me put all my concentrated thought and strength to it, and thus I succeed. How self-centred I am and I go on talking about myself, but you set me to it. Do not worry about me. I shall carry on for a long time yet—That is my fate, and then I shall snap and go on my last procession.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 554.
3. On 16 February 1934, Jawaharlal was sentenced to two years' simple imprisonment for three speeches delivered by him in Calcutta on 17-18 January 1934. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 227-238.

I shall be on the 18th at Allahabad and shall leave again on the 20th for north U.P.

Yours,
Jawahar

16. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

In train to Raipur
14.11.36

My dear,
How to spend birth anniversaries. Here is a way of doing it. After a brief night at Tuni get up at 4.45 a.m. Congratulations from the household—photograph—leave Tuni soon after six by car. Nakkapali—meeting—local lacquer toys presented. Then on to Penugolanu Agraharam where Brahmin priests recite vedic verses in welcome—meeting, speech, etc. Yellamanchilli—Anakapalle—Chodavaram—Tummalapalli—Reddipalli—Agraharam—Vizianagaram. Meetings and speeches everywhere—addresses and sometimes odd presents. In one place I was informed that a local hall is being named "Jawahar Hall" in honour of the occasion. Short halts by the roadside where crowds waiting, apart from official meetings. Did 100 miles to Vizianagaram where food taken. Off again at 2 p.m. Gajapatinagaram—Salur—Bobbili. Crowds everywhere, meetings, etc.

At Bobbili an interesting incident. As our brief meeting was in progress two bands strike up with drum &c. within fifty yards. Impossible to speak. I get excited, jump down from the platform and rush up to the bands which have purposely performed to interfere with us. A crowd of Bobbili estate officials in evidence accompanied by a horde of ruffians. Two elephants approaching. I tell the bands to shut up and as they delay, I seize a drumstick and throw it away. The hooligans in the crowd with the estate officials surround me and look threatening—display fists. My temper goes up and we swear at each other, fortunately neither party understanding the other. The police appear and beg me to desist as they would deal with the situation. After a while I desist. The police stop the two bands, also prevent the elephants from disturbing our meeting. I return in triumph to the meeting and we

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

carry on. End of meeting—the whole affair lasting about 20 minutes. Motor on to Baljipeth. Road very bad but every village *en route* excited at our approach. Hordes of men and women lining the route. Within five miles of Baljipeth decide that it is too risky to go on as the time for my train approaching. We are told that a hundred thousand people waiting at Baljipeth. An exaggeration and doubt. Still ten or twenty thousand might have been there. Still can't afford to go on—Return *via* Bobbili. As we pass through Bobbili a sheaf of telegrams handed to us—one from Bebee. We go on to Parvatipuram. Meeting near station. Carry on till 8 p.m. when train comes in and meeting is ended and we hurry to station. Take train, wave good-bye to Andhra, and here I am.

A brief outline of a crowded day which included 200 miles by car.

The Andhra people grow upon me. I like their sturdy looking peasants. They are not of the mild and weak variety. The women are often attractive and graceful and have laughing eyes. I was surprised to find women and boys of 7 or 8 going about with long cheroots. Tobacco is grown here and these cheroots cost almost nothing. The leaves are gathered and rolled by each smoker. Black villainous looking cheroots they are.

One little incident rather touching. It had grown dark. A group of villagers were standing so we stopped. A girl lifted up a hurricane lantern to see inside our car. I stood up and saluted. Hurriedly she put down the lantern to return the salute. Our car started and then an old woman who was standing near this girl stretched out her arms and cried out (in Telugu, of course) : "My son, my son, let me see your face again!"

The birthday is not quite over yet. As I was waiting a crowd at a station demanded a 'message', and my tired throat performed again.

Today I sent you a telegram from Vizianagaram. It was a pretty useless message asking when you were leaving Pondicherry. I presume you have received two letters I sent to the Pondicherry address. Probably Bidhan Roy wrote to you to Pondicherry. He took your address from me and said he wanted you to go to Calcutta. Nellie Sen Gupta also took your address—the wrong one of course as it turns out.

What are your plans? Do you go to Calcutta?

Yours,
Jawahar

I hope this letter will improve your geography.

17. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
13.12.36

My dear,
I have just been listening on the Berlin wireless to Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata[2] and it has cooled my brain a little and brightened me up. I needed it. For latterly I have been growing duller and duller, heavy of body, dull of mind, slow of movement. *I do not know if this has been* a reaction to the last few months' intensive activity, or to other and less easily ascertainable causes. I dislike the idea of having to write the presidential address and I go on putting it off. It is going to be a flat thing this year. My mind is flat so how can I produce anything else. I suppose a holiday would do me good. *And yet I wonder.* Anyway there is no chance of it. I thought at one time that after the elections were over I would have a little free time but now we have fixed up another two months of heavy work and this carries us to April.

I think the elections must be responsible partly at least for my malaise, although I am only distantly connected with them. *They coarsen* everybody.

Perhaps I would cheer up and feel livelier if I saw you, but you are in far Hyderabad posing as *the Buddha* and I feel very unlike the Buddha. Because of that vast dissimilarity, I suppose, he draws me. Some time back I read a sonnet[3] addressed to a Buddha statue—*It was* in a review—and some lines in it began to haunt me—

Nay, do not mock me with those carven eyes:
    I too might grow, beneath *that gaze of thine,*
Desireless, immortal, unerringly wise,
    Disdaining human dreams. Lo, by thy shrine
A multitude slow-worshipping still goes
    Unsandalled, bearing perfumed offerings,
While down the *avenues of time* still flows
    The splendid pageant of all timeless things.

Nay, do not mock me with that ecstasy,
    Born of a peace abstracted from life's pain:

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N M M L.
2. Beethoven's sonata for piano and violin The last movement was composed by 1802, and was published in 1805.
3. Written by E H d'Alwis, a Sinhalese Buddhist.

Love and its futile dream shall trouble me
Too briefly—I shall find myself again;
And look on thee unpassioned, mute, alone,
An agelessness invincible in stone.

Desireless, immortal, unerringly wise, disdaining human dreams—how the words gripped my mind, and while I disliked them—I was drawn to them. No, I had no desire to be desireless, immortality seemed an infinity of sorrow and trouble and labour without purpose or end, and the wisdom that never erred rather frightened me; and what would life be without dreams? And yet I gazed at my Buddha picture, fascinated, held by the power of that desirelessness. But I must not weary you. You will come to Faizpur. Will you not? This Congress, I feel certain, is going to be a terribly dull affair. It is overwhelmed by the elections.

Nan is away electioneering in Cawnpore. Ranjit spends the day in some remote villages. I have insisted on having this week here with only a few odd engagements in the neighbourhood. In January I shall spin about from place to place asking people to vote for a curious assortment of people—damnable job this asking for votes. But January is far off. There is December still, and Faizpur and the sight of you then!

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

I have been trying to get that photograph of Tagore's and mine but Calcutta people are so frightfully inefficient.

18. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Chhindwara
Dec. 31st, 1936

Bebee,

Eight meetings—a train journey—and 130 miles by car, that is the record for today. The last 80 miles by car were through a thick forest, a winding road with innumerable turns and twists and ups and downs. It must be a beautiful drive by day but we passed through the forest in the

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

darkness and could only sense the beauty of it. Mostly I was dozing. It was cold.

The Faizpur Congress was a novel experience for me. It was almost a holiday in spite of occasional hard work. I had no feeling of tension and little of worry. How far were you responsible for it, I wonder! Certainly to some extent. But circumstances favoured the mood. Also I feel that I am gradually losing that intensity which I once possessed. Through sheer habit I can work with concentration but my mind is not consumed quite so much as it used to be with a single purpose obsession. Is that due to age or a wider outlook or a growing habit of introspection? I told you of it. It worries me a little.

My mind wanders from the day's work and I begin to think of the time when I shall meet you again. When will it be? Already I look forward to the day when this election business is over and I have a rest from incessant touring. And yet, it is quite possible that I might feel bored if I stayed too long in one place.

You are not irritated with me? I feel that you are not really but a little doubt sometimes creeps into my mind. What curious bits of humanity we are, with a thousand aspects like Krishna! Being, as you know, enormously egotistical, I am always trying to understand and analyse some of these various aspects of myself. I suppose the realisation of this egotism itself tones down the offence. Certain aspects of my nature have inevitably been starved these many years in prison. At the same time others have no doubt developed. And so the starved ones call for food, the others do not deliberately interfere but they create inevitably those bars of the spirit which are solider than iron. And even when I peep through these bars, I can never forget them or myself, howsoever I try to do so. That is my fate. And perhaps it is as well. Even my fits of temper are immediately followed by a tightening of the reins.

How odd we all are. I am getting more and more interested in understanding this oddness of individuals, including myself. But as you wisely and truly informed me, I am an ignoramus where women are concerned.

It is getting on to midnight. The old year is passing and my mind goes back to twelve months ago, New Year's eve. Did I not write to you then?[2] It was a dismal eve for me and the snow that covered the hillsides that I loved so well, reminded me of death, cold death, fair to see but distant, far away, incomprehensible, hateful.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 692-693.

The New Year is coming in. May happiness and good fortune attend you, my dear, and me also (why should I not wish these good things to myself?).

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

19. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
2-1-37

So I must not be weak-minded. And you dare to tell me so when your eyes betray you and your written word gives a different and contrary message. And what are the dear little poems that you send but an invitation to stray from the cold and chilly path along which the strong in mind walk in lonely grandeur? Am I strong-minded? I do not know. But I do know that behind the mask of a pale set face, all manner of desires and fantasies and urges disturb the surface of my mind, sometimes clear and definite, oftener vague and elusive and strange; that the strength I show is not far removed from weakness, as laughter is so near akin to tears; that my courage might well turn to cowardice; that even my pride is often a cloak for an inner humility. You do not believe that, do you? But then I am a stranger to you as you are to me and as all of us are to each other, and the nearer we grow to each other, the more we discover strangeness and unfathomed depths. We only know our acquaintances, for there knowledge is but superficial; we never get to know our friends and those who are dear to us.

To demonstrate my weak-mindedness I sit down to write to you when mountains of papers await my consideration, and I am supposed to rush off an article for a new weekly in London, and a preface for a book which is held up in London because of me. But I knew it would be little use my trying to do other work for my mind would wander and probably you would creep unconsciously into the article and the preface. And so to be rid of you for a while I am writing.

What shall I write to you about Ajanta? It seems almost vulgar and profane to use foolish words of praise which have been so cheapened

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

in the market place. The joy of seeing these pictures of long ago almost becomes a pain, to see beauty of form and beauty of life that are unattainable, unrealisable. What manner of people were they who created this dream world out of a few colours and lines? What was the texture of their lives—how rich it must have been! How can one forget the Bodhisattva even after seeing a picture—and the lovely women of Ajanta. I wish one did forget for they disturb.

During all my recent wanderings one fact has impressed me. The beauty of Indian women, especially in the villages, has surprised me. In spite of all the poverty and squalor, they stand out and one cannot pass them without looking again.

I loved the sight of the envelope that brought your letter. I read it and then a feeling of loneliness took possession of me and I have found it difficult to get rid of it. Weak-mindedness.

A strange thing happened this evening. My mother casually mentioned, but with suppressed rage, that my name was being coupled with that of Devika Rani's[2]! She had never heard of her but somebody told her that a newspaper contained this item of news. I was rather tickled and I thought at first that this was the usual pleasant Indian way of making insinuations. Probably because the incident of her garlanding me had been shown on the screen here recently. Soon I discovered that it was not Devika Rani—A telegram came from an Urdu rag in Lahore: "Our Allahabad correspondent wires you likely marry some socialist girl. Marriage to be performed under Civil Marriage Act. May I release the news?"

I was irritated. Someone came to see me from the city and on enquiry I found that the news was being talked about. A new Hindi paper—less than a week old—had given currency to it in the confident expectation that it would help in its circulation!

I have just received another telegram from Lahore—from The Tribune—asking for confirmation. So probably many newspapers must have received it and some are bound to publish it. Perhaps you may read it even before you get this.

I feel tired and sleepy. My mind is disturbed and I can't do any work tonight. It is as well that I am going off to Behar day after tomorrow morning. For six weeks I shall only have weariness of body to contend

2. (b 1914), film producer and actress, now retired, grand niece of Rabindranath Tagore and wife of the well known producer, Himansu Rai, after his death in 1940 she married the distinguished Russian artist, Svetoslav Roerich.

against and the ceaseless round from early morning to late night will prevent the mind from straying.

My love to you,

Yours,
Jawahar

20. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Meerut District
In running car
22-1-37

My dear, I am reduced to such straits, I have to write in a car racing along. Time has become such a precious commodity that one must seize it where one can. Whether you will be able to read this I do not know. But it can't be much more illegible than your writing is occasionally!

Yesterday I received your letter in Agra and I read it as I was rushing past Fatehabad where Aurangzeb defeated Dara Shikoh. I felt like writing to you last night but I was strong-minded—or was it weak-mindedness? I succumbed to the Taj and went there late at night and tried to forget politics and election in the pale moonlight. But you followed me there and distracted my mind and got rather mixed up with the moonlight and the Taj. I hurried back at midnight to catch a train.

Do not worry about the foolish tears that came to my eyes at Faizpur. Tears are not so rare for me as most people, including you, seem to imagine. You may yet discover me as I might you, but I imagine that the more we discover each other, the more strange depths and unknown regions we shall find. Not in you and me only but in all of us. Human personality has fascinated me and I took to the study of psychology and psycho-analysis because of this fascination. What devils and angels we all are, hopelessly mixed up together. And the knowledge of this fact makes one a little more tolerant, a little humbler (a quality, you will tell me, I sadly lack), and there again you will be wrong as in so many things about me. You have built up an idealized picture of me and you are surprised when it does not fit in with reality. And then you rush to the other extreme and suffer pain and are distressed. I am

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

not that idealized picture and I am not as bad as you might sometimes have thought me. I have enough of the devil in me, and it is that perhaps that drives me on, but the angel is there also to curb it and subdue it.

I told you once that sometimes faintly I felt almost capable of murder. Perhaps that was exaggerated for I can't quite conceive myself doing it whatever the provocation. But that faint subconscious feeling makes me understand the murderer. I have no horror of him as I have of the worm like species of human beings.

And so we swing about from one extreme to another, innumerable personalities tied up together, showing each other at different times and surprising our friends and lovers. Others do not see these changing facets for the mask is on. Be warned therefore and do not be unduly alarmed if you see the devil in me, or even the beast. On the whole I think (conceit) I possess rather less of the beast than most people. But there is enough of the devil. A fortunate chance yoked that devilry to public action which has brought me credit, and yet a little twist and I would have had a mountain of discredit.

What do I know about myself? Little enough. I am, as I suppose others are, a helpless vehicle of strange forces and urges which push us along the road of destiny. Yet I would master that destiny. And in my endeavour to do that, I am unthinkingly hard and cruel to others for they pass from my mind and I forget them utterly for a while. Those I love have to suffer most for they attribute all manner of motives to this sudden forgetfulness. It is not my love that wavers but another overmastering passion or obsession that.....

(I had to stop suddenly as I arrived at my destination. It was a big meeting and I held forth—felt frightfully sleepy—could hardly keep my eyes open even though my lips were moving. Now I am writing on.)

So the earthly paradise fades away and even while I hold the loved one in my arms my mind wanders away and forgets the present and I become a stranger from another land. I return but it is difficult to capture the old mood—the charm is broken and I look on detached, as through iron bars, on two beings, one being myself. I try to be friendly but friendship is a distant affair. Sometimes the mood returns.

And you, stranger, who are you? I do not know, but I know that I like to see you and be near you and hear your voice, and touch you and to look at your radiant smile. Is that not enough for me? Must I go deeper still? Whether I will or not, unknown depths reveal themselves, and sometimes they please and sometimes they trouble.

I do not know if I have written any sense. The car moves along at 50 miles an hour. The road is fairly good and so I have written. My mind lingers on you and I feel refreshed at the thought — But also I long to see you.

Do not play tricks in your bath or elsewhere. Have some consideration at least for the young doctors that have to attend on you. And remember that you have to produce a Buddha.

Jawahar

Roorkee — 12.45 a.m.

I am tired — the day's work is over. It begins afresh at 4.30 a.m. for I have to catch a train at 5. What a life I lead! This evening my thoughts suddenly went to the rest and quiet of a prison cell. Yesterday an Englishman at Agra remarked that if I could exert myself to this extent for a cause which did not appeal to me much (elections) what would I do for something I was keen about.

Here is the latest *bon mot*[2] from Paris? *On ne baldwine*[3] *pas avec l'amour* — a parody of Moliere's title '*On ne badine pas avee l'amour.*'[4]

Love to you my dear

J.

2. Epigram.
3. Pun on the word badine meaning 'jest'; Stanley Baldwin was Prime Minister of England at this time.
4. One does not jest with love.

21. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

In Train
7-2-37

Why have you not written to me, my dear? For days I was thinking of my return to Allahabad and of a letter from you bringing me news of you. But when I came nothing from you awaited me and I looked again and again through the piles of letters. How are you now? The question is a silly one for I do not know how your answer can reach me, at any rate, during the next ten or twelve days when I shall be

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

moving about continuously. I do not even know where I am going except vaguely—Maharashtra and the Karnatak. On the 10th morning I take plane to Cannanore from Bombay.

I am very tired and my body aches and my eyes smart and yet there is no escape from this mad round and you are far far away and I seek solace in vain. But I grow impatient. Elections end like other things and ever your dear self may be visible and approachable some time or other. Meanwhile, I shall think of the Bodhisattva of Ajanta.

Yours,
Jawahar

22. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Kumptu
Karnatak
12-2-37
1 a.m.

My dear, how you fill my mind! When I ought to be thinking of something else your image creeps in unawares through some window and upsets the train of my thought. Bad, is it not? I am getting terribly weak-minded and the desire to see you grows strong. As you are not likely to come my way for some time I might have to journey to Calcutta. How or when I do not quite know. Being a Political Personage, my movements have a certain political significance whatever the intention might be. And so often enough I have to submit to this tyranny of public life. Still I might turn up. For the next week I am touring about Karnatak and Maharashtra. The staff work here is bad, thoroughly bad, and the strain is correspondingly great. I was due to arrive here at 6 p.m. People gathered at 3 p.m. to be in good time to have a look at me. They were in better time than they imagined for I turned up exactly at midnight. The day's programme included my crossing the Ghats this evening—a long journey—but that has had to be postponed to tomorrow. The living arrangements are also peculiar. Last night we stayed in a protected monument, an interesting and picturesque place, but hardly suitable for human habitation.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N M.M L

I met your mother in Bombay for a short while. I was surprised & pleased to find how well she had borne her long journeys during her tour.

I return to Allahabad on the 18th morning to record my vote for the Council (Upper Chamber) election. For the other election (Provincial Assembly), I failed to perform my civic duty being away from Allahabad on the crucial day.

I am frightfully sleepy — and so to bed —

Yours,
Jawahar

23. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
Feb. 19, 1937

My dear, You are right — I should not go to Bengal. I would do no good to anybody and I would get entangled in the web of Bengal intrigues. I would see you of course—a fleeting glimpse—and would regret having to dash away. Nor should you come to Allahabad unless you feel much better. I was selfish in suggesting it. Being myself unused to illness I forget it in others. Your job is to get well and you must choose the best place for that. Come to Delhi if you want to see a big *tamasha*[2] and if you are fitter. I am not somehow looking forward to it. Or perhaps it is just a reaction after continuous strain. But I think it is something more — this crowd of indifferent legislators does not attract me. I saw enough of them in the hatching stage and they were not good to look at, barring a few.

Vasant Panchami has always been a special day for me — it has so many memories and associations. And though spring may come in all its rich glory, it is tinged with sadness. Almost it taunts. I spent the day in a car of course but I remembered it. I was in the Karnatak with its semi-tropical forests and I almost felt inclined to play the truant, rush away from my car and meetings, and lose myself in the

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. The reference is to the All India Convention of Congress Legislators held in Delhi on 19 March 1937. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 59-71.

forest. But discipline prevailed. Not quite though for later in the day I behaved quite abominably, to a greatly respected but very foolish person.

Karnatak tried me hard. As a grand finale of my tour there, it kept me on the move for 24 hours continuously from 7 a.m. the next day! All day and all night we had meetings, huge concourses of people, and I reached Maharashtra just in time to start the next day. Don't be alarmed and don't send me too much good advice as to what I should do and should not do. I have felt remarkably fresh during this tour and my weariness has been a passing one only. Why this should be so is amazing but it is so. A friend who knows me well attended a meeting late in the evening after a heavy day. He came to dole out sympathy expecting to find me in the last stages of collapse. Instead I tired him out by a fairly vigorous speech lasting nearly one hour, and he confessed that I looked as if I had just come from a rest cure. I have felt far more tired in the past after a week's tour than I do now after three months. Whether this vitality is due to Aurobindo's astral messages or you I do not know.

My eyes seem weary and are weary. But they show this far more when I am more or less passive and resting. That weariness has nothing to do with physical effort. It is old, very old, and it creeps into the eyes when the fever of action passes. It is the burden of thought and fantasy and regret and the might have beens. Will I get rid of it if I go to Khah? We are old friends—what would I do without it? Perhaps in the old days, long long ago, when I had a soft girlish face and rather shy ways, I did not have it. But that person died long ago and another took its place, hard and set and ever growing harder. I have escaped cynicism so far and so the hardness has not become unbearable, and, fortunately for me, others have given me a halo which hides much they would not admire. Have you not done so yourself, you silly girl who are apparently so wise? You are a nineteen-year old, and do not forget it, and you have the delightful illusions of that age. And I? A hundred or more. Will I ever know how much you love me? No I shall not, nor will you. Nobody knows, nobody can know, for it is changing, variable stuff, mocking us and eluding us, self-willed and vagrant. How can one know it or measure it? Was it turn of head, touch of hand? Strange this very way love began, I as little understand love's decay. How foolish it is to talk of it even. Where the apple reddens, never pry.

I shall go to Wardha on the 25th and expect to be back on the 1st or 2nd March. On the 6th or 7th I have to be in Lucknow. For the rest I expect to remain in Allahabad till I go to Delhi. The dates for

the A.I.C.C. and the Convention have not been fixed yet finally. Probably the various shows will begin about the 18th.

Indu is likely to be back here in the second week of April.

Yours,
Jawahar

24. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

In running train
Bombay-Calcutta Mail
March 2, 1937

My dear, Yesterday the air was thick with rumours of my arrest and internment or trial. Even Reuters telephoned up from Bombay to Wardha to Jamnalalji to enquire if I was still there. My mind told me that this was highly unlikely at the present juncture, and yet my instincts worked differently and seemed to accept such a happening, and instincts are stronger than the logic of the mind. So I started thinking of all the odd jobs that remained undone, of the many strings that I held in my hand, of the loose threads that had to be tied up. What would happen to all these? And then, rather suddenly, I seemed to drift away from these thoughts and present-day tasks; an unusual detachment came upon me and I became an onlooker on this Indian scene where others were functioning; distantly I saw them and behind them great impersonal forces at work. The walls of the prison house seemed to close in around me and my life and activities were confined by them. What books shall I read, what shall I write? How I had neglected these books during this past year and they looked at me with reproachful eyes from my shelves. I must have poetry for it brings me peace ..... So my thoughts wandered while Jamnalalji and others were talking to me somewhat excitedly. My answers to them were hardly to the point for I had almost forgotten them and my immediate surroundings.

I do not know what will happen, which will prove correct — my mind or my instincts. I do not very much care. I have had a long rope and within a few days it will be just a year since I came back. In any

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

event I shall have to go, whether it is a day or a week or a month or more. So why should I trouble myself?

I do not know when or where I shall meet you again. Probably we shall meet soon at Delhi. But whether we meet or not soon I shall think of you. I am so happy that you are out of the wood and are marching along the straight road to health.

My love to you,

Yours,
Jawahar

25. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Harijan Colony
Delhi
16-3-37

Bebee, Your note induces me to send this letter in reply. Otherwise I would not have dared to write in contravention of my promise, however much I might have wanted to do so. I want to hold to that promise. I do not blame myself and of course there can never be any question of blaming you. It is little good thinking in terms of blame. Things happen despite us. Only I am sorry, dreadfully sorry, that I should have been the cause of pain and sorrow to you. And for that I cannot forgive myself. Life has such a damnable way of playing tricks with us, and those whose happiness counts most for us, we manage to cause the greatest sorrow.

Perhaps I may see you during the next few days. Of course if we meet we shall do so as friends, and if we part we shall still I hope be friends. But the weather is a difficult subject for me to talk about to anyone, least of all to you. Gradually I have shed the social graces, such as I possessed, and I realise painfully that I am not fit company for anyone. This has long been so, as you know, but latterly my nerves are always on edge and it is only with a strong effort that I keep myself together — not always — I am afraid my attempt at friendly conversation may not be a success. Just at present I would not quite trust myself in your company. Once you saw tears in my eyes. I do not want to repeat that experience and cause you pain again. Perhaps in another

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

day or two I might be able to pull myself together. Today it was difficult for me to carry on with the Working Committee meeting for your picture filled my mind and your sad eyes disturbed me and I forgot what was happening around me.

The gods have been good to me — why should I complain? And yet the tricks they play, and in the midst of plenty they starve, and in the middle of a crowd, they make one feel desolatingly lonely.

I have written more than I intended. Forgive me. That is why I do not want to see you or write to you. But whether I write to you or not, you will always have my good wishes. May good fortune and happiness attend you.

Jawahar

It is just a year ago, almost to a day, that I met you in Shankarlal's[2] house in New Delhi on my return from Europe.

A card is being sent to you for the A.I.C.C. and Convention.

2. (1901-1951); a leading industrialist and prominent citizen of Delhi, and a patron of art and music; was president of the Punjab Chamber of Commerce and vice-president of the Delhi Municipal Committee.

26. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
26-3-37

Bebee, I have spent the greater part of the day in sorting and arranging the mountain of letters that have been waiting for me here. They have been neatly and methodically arranged (being a foolish woman, you cannot of course appreciate this kind of thing) in different files A.B. &c. in a descending scale of importance. Having done so, and felt virtuous thereat, for method had triumphed and strong-mindedness prevailed, I felt that answering them might well be left to a future occasion — And so the files have been put away and I sit down to write this least important of my letters. It finds no place in a file and it is not in response to another. If it is a pointless letter you will not mind, for there is too much pointedness about me already to your task and mine. What am I to write to you, I do not quite know, and why should

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

I write if I have nothing pertinent to say? But the desire to write has been strong within me and I have played with it for these last two or three days, and questioned it, and even (horrible thought!) analysed it! The strong and silent man (alas! not so very silent) was at work and he wanted to know what all this potter was about. He knew the answer well enough but he has a role to play, and he cannot forget it even in the privacy of his thought. What an awful companion he is, and how often I have felt like rebelling against his tyranny. But, to be truthful, the poor chap is not so tyrannous after all, and the strength oozes out of him often enough and only an outer shell, hardened by wind and weather, remains to delude the ignorant and the shortsighted. To give in to a temptation is after all the best way of overcoming it and, I am afraid, I am getting less and less used to resisting temptations. Spoilt, you will say of course. Nothing of the kind. But I am in danger of being spoilt and I am in the mood to allow myself to be spoilt.

I have seldom felt quite so unpolitical as I did after return from Delhi. Even the desire to read the daily papers was not strong. After a year's messing about, suddenly I felt as if I had nothing particular or very important to do. Others were shouldering the burden, such as it was, and I was almost out of the picture. That brought relief and detachment but also a measure of ennui. I did not quite know what to do with myself. Of course there were crowds of things to do — letters, visitors, enquiries, business, trunk telephone calls every few minutes — but nothing seemed very important. I was a looker-on.

Tired, you will say. Perhaps. But it is something more than that. I think I am growing and growth at 47 is a curiously disturbing affair. But I am certainly tired mentally and if I was wise I would take your advice and run away. If I do not do so deliberately soon I may have to do it at the wrong moment and forcibly. I think I shall go somewhere in April. If Indu had not been coming I might have gone sooner, but now I suppose I must hold on for another three or four weeks. And then? Few days or a fortnight — I feel in the mood for disappearing for a year.

Fantasies. How can one get rid of the coils that bind, and there is no peace here or elsewhere, only conflict and struggle. I told you that Gerald Heard & Aldous Huxley had decided to leave England & Europe and go to America because Europe was too full of war & the psychology of war. As if they will get peace in America.

It seems that conflict will grow here. All the king's horses and all the king's men cannot stop it, nor the high minded seekers after conversion.

How are you getting on, my dear, and do you grow in strength from day to day? The picture of you fills my mind and I wonder when it will materialise again, and I wonder also if, in spite of all my conceit and seeming hardness, you are not the stronger of the two. Or is it that we are all weaklings, tossed hither and thither by a blind fate?

Did you get the snake charmer? I impressed on Indra[2] to produce one and he promised faithfully to do so. Did he keep his promise?

When will you leave Delhi and where will you go from there? Idle questions, and you need not answer them, for I suppose you do not know yourself.

My love to you, my dear,

Yours,
Jawahar

2. Indra Vidyavachaspati of Delhi.

27. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
28-3-37

How you love me, Bebee! I am astonished at the depth of your affection for me. Not that I doubted it, but still I am touched, moved, impressed and elated at this final testimony. These thoughts come to me when I see the evidence of the enormous labour you have spent on revising my *Glimpses of World History*. I had seen your copious notes and corrections previously, but it is only recently that I have looked at them with a critical eye and realised what you must have gone through in reading or re-reading that enormous pile. Since yesterday I have spent three hours over the wretched thing, these hateful and exhausting hours, and all I have succeeded in doing is to revise indifferently and unsatisfactorily 30 pages. At this rate I should mortgage a few months to this terrible business.

Is there anything more hateful than this revising business? And yet my task is lightened tremendously by what you have done. How carefully you have gone through the book. Surely you deserve part of the royalties, that is if any are forthcoming. For months and months I

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

have avoided this revision partly for lack of time but chiefly because of an aversion for it. But now I must do it for the publisher waits for it and conceit of an author to see his book again in print in a new garb urges me on. It is proposed to issue the book in the Penguin series in 4 volumes — maps and illustrations by Horrabin I like the idea of a really cheap edition although authors don't make much out of these 6d. editions.

Your corrections have drawn my attention to so many of my lapses and errors that you have shaken my confidence in my own writing. I am adopting most of them — not all. Of course your way is the more polished way but sometimes I feel that the polish is at the expense of vividness and a certain simplicity and strength.

Sometimes I think with amused surprise of the way I have developed, almost incidentally and casually, into an author. Having experienced some of the joys and successes of authorship, I am now having my full share of the worries. Just think of it — I have to deal with a score of publishers, including those who are bringing out translations in India. And the complications that are continually arising are damnable. It is a full time job to keep pace with them. Surely an author should not have to put up with this clerkly drudgery. Leaving out the slow and incompetent Indian publishers of translations, I have to deal with John Lane, Allen and Unwin, the Penguin Book Co, the Receiver and Liquidators of John Lane, the purchasers of John Lane's business, and now solicitors! Krishna Menon seems to be bent on dragging me to a law court in the vain hope of realising my lost royalties on the Auto and there is nothing I hate so much as figuring as a litigant in a law court. And against whom? My own publisher. Then there are complicated questions of royalties and the rights of my Indian publishers to be adjusted with those of the Penguin Book Co. What a complex world this is. I like coming to quick decisions and generally I do so, but when others and third parties are concerned I become helpless. Each party wants a little more than his pound of flesh. I have just been writing long air mail letters and I am full of this business and so I have unburdened myself on you.

I am supposed to be a busy politician but this sideline grows and I do not know where it will land me.

What charm have you got that works on me and makes me think of you so much? And the thought of you pleases me greatly and yet it produces a sense of emptiness. You are so far and distant. Are you frightened of me? Or is it that you are frightened of yourself as I am often enough of myself? I wonder. Anyway you are a darling.

Jawahar

Indra writes to me that in spite of every effort he failed to discover a snake charmer.

28. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
April 1st 1937
Hartal Day

My dear one, For two days I have had the unusual experience, for me, of having fever and I have been forced to lie down and keep to bed and yet the fever continues. A few days back I was almost wishing that some touch of bodily ill-health should drive me to bed and rest. My wish found rapid fulfilment and now I am bored and irritated. This is not a fit condition for me to be in to welcome Indu. She must be somewhere in the Grecian Isles and soon enough she will alight at Bamrauli, the airport of Allahabad. If she does not see me there she is bound to think with a shock that I have been arrested. This fear has haunted her and, although she will be enlightened soon enough, I should like to prevent that initial shock. I suppose I shall manage to go to the aerodrome. I am just returning from an outing — I could not keep away. It was the Hartal Day meeting and it seemed a gross submission to the weakness of the physical frame for me to be absent. So I went and spoke for a few minutes — only a few minutes! — and returned immediately — When I went my temperature was nearly 103°F. On my return it was under 102°F. So you see that normality for me is a public meeting and not rest in bed —

What shall I write to you about your letters, my darling? Three of them have come, all enlighteningly dated March 1937. The first one brought about an immediate reaction of 'how dare you'? Why should you grow morbid and self-effacing and so apologetic? And yet that was a foolish reaction. For you had to write it and I had to read it. Even if you had not written it so, I would have sensed that feeling somewhere, for we are too fond of each other not to realise instinctively what ails the other. It is true that I am extraordinarily dense sometimes and my self-centredness comes in the way of my understanding others. But not you — Here something else comes in the way, something which is the opposite of self-centredness. I may not and cannot be objective where you are concerned — You move me too much.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Do you realise that, in spite of my conceit, I feel sometimes in the same way towards you? What gifts do I bring to a laughing eighteen-year old? I grow harder as the days go by and laughter is a rare companion. I am frightened by this and by my loneliness. And yet I have a curious and abiding sense of growth within me and this, I suppose, gives me a flair of youth in spite of my physical appearance.

Of course you are shy of me and I am a little shy of you — Why should I be surprised at something which seems to be inevitable. Are we not mysteries to each other, even though we know each other pretty well?

Nothing that comes from your heart or mind will anger me or irritate me. And so you must not think in terms of words of yours having that effect on me. Am I so very reticent or inclined to understatement? Others do not think so — Nor does the pagan in me think so or behave so. But perhaps it is true that in the matter of personal relations I am a little reticent, till the barriers go, and even then perhaps. But I love you to write to me freely and spontaneously, forgetting what effect it will have on me. It will have the best of effect.

There is one other small matter which perhaps makes me reticent in my letters and that is the certainty that prying eyes see all my letters. I have nothing to hide but there are some things which are not meant for strangers. You write to me that you received my last two letters within a few hours of each other. As a matter of fact they were written with an interval of two days.

I feel a little tired. Not at writing this curious jumble of a letter, for the thought of you vitalizes me. But the outing and the meeting were an effort and I suppose I had better sleep this out. My love to you, *carissima* —

Jawahar

29. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Ekma
6-5-37

And so the train rolled away taking your dear self with it and the station seemed lonely and desolate. The evening was a long one, partly broken

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

into by my carrying out one of your behests. I bought a new pair of *Peshawari chappals*. I do not like them nearly as much as my old ones, but that is the way of persons approaching fifty! We get used to old things, old ways, old persons. I have made one great exception to this in favour of one particular person. Is that not enough and more than enough?

It was good that I had to leave Allahabad the next day. I busied myself with all manner of jobs in the office and at home—pretty useless, come to think of it, but they filled my time and that was something. The journey began badly. At Howrah an enthusiastic youth fell between the train and the platform and had his foot cut off. It was a ghastly sight, and yet in spite of his pain he clung to me, pleased to see me, and wanted to put his head on my feet. I liked his face and this face of his and his foot blurred the sight of Calcutta all day. The next day soon after our ship started a man jumped overboard and the ship had to turn round and go back part of the way to Calcutta to search for him in the Hooghly. We did not find him. They say that he was a Russian suspect—probably a man dealing in cocaine or some other dope—and he had been refused entry into India. So he was being taken back to Rangoon. People who saw him say that he appeared to be doped himself and was in a kind of daze. And that was the end of him.

Apart from these distressing incidents the voyage has been good. I have slept a good deal and fed and indulged in deck games with the officers—there are very few passengers. We have the honour of sitting at the Captain's table and this means that a great deal of time is taken up by him. I have hardly read, though I have written a large number of official and semi-official letters. Deck games, at the instance of the Captain, have absorbed a great deal of time and all my body, and Indu's, are aching by this unwanted exercise. This morning we spent a long time on the bridge with the Captain explaining the mysteries of his craft.

There are few passengers I said. Not so on deck for there is a host of deck passengers sprawling in a narrow, evil-looking space. And yet I am told that this is a light load. I felt almost sick at seeing all these people closely huddled up together in unhealthy and insanitary conditions.

We approach Rangoon. Within a few hours we shall be there. It came to me almost as a shock the other day to realise that I had never been east of Calcutta. All the great eastern world was unknown to me and I had wrapped myself up in India & Europe. A kind of mental adjustment took place within me and Indian politics and even European affairs receded into the background. Subconsciously I became receptive

to the new world that I was entering. Not that Burma is much of a new world but it came to represent the Far East and all it stands for. I think I shall go to Singapore. This East calls me and the nearer I can approach it the better. I am glad I came out of India. No hill station could have given me the psychological relief that foreign countries give.

It is getting on to midnight. Soon after four I have to be up to be ready for a very early landing. My love to you, my darling one.

Yours,
Jawahar

30. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

s.s. Karos
May 22, 1937

Darling, It is so long since I have had news of you. Where are you? How are you? I feel so terribly cut off from almost everything and everybody. Even the newspapers in Burma conspired to this end for they were utterly bad. You will remember asking me to send you cuttings from them about my tour. I did not think this worthwhile. But on second thoughts I have collected, with Indu's help, some such cuttings and one or two bundles will be sent to you by ordinary post from Penang. Rangoon possesses three dailies in English—two Anglo-Indian and one more or less loyalist Indian—and a paper (Indian) which comes out three times a week. I am sending you cuttings chiefly from the two Indian papers as their reports were longer. From the Anglo-Indian papers there are some editorial notes. One from the Rangoon Times you might find interesting, or at any rate it should convince you, if you have any lingering doubts on this subject, about my inherent greatness. Which reminds me that on my last day in Rangoon I delivered, according to my own thinking, a very good address on socialism and the world situation.[2] I wish it was better reported.

What a time we had in Burma rushing about all over the country! Most of this journeying was done by air, by sea planes. They have regular services of these as the numerous waterways make journeys by road or train long and tedious. We covered a good part of Burma but

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See Selected Works, Vol. 9, pp. 652-654.

inevitably it was all a succession of crowds and processions and big functions. Individual contacts could hardly be made with success under these conditions. Yet I made some good contacts. I saw a good deal of the Burmese but I would have liked to see them more. I was always trying to get out of purely Indian surroundings, usually with little success. These Indians (and it is extraordinary how many there are in Burma) grew quite excited over me. I suppose when people live away from their country the sense of their own country grows. Latterly there has been friction between Indians and Burmans and this has disheartened the Indians and given them ever more the sense of alienness. My visit suddenly gave them strength and self-reliance. Because of the glory and greatness that they imagined in me, they felt bigger in stature. Was not this man, almost like unto a god (don't laugh—This is no conceit. I am trying to give expression to their feelings) one of their own kind—very far and above them certainly and yet very near, one of themselves? And if one of them could be so great, why surely they themselves were not so low after all. And so I became a symbol to them of themselves, of what they might be, and in honouring me, they honoured themselves. They, the Indians, grew hysterical over it, not only the workers but the middle class folk. The Burmese welcomed me more sedately but often they were influenced and swept away a little by the Indians' enthusiasm.

What a curious and lovable people are the Burmese. I like them and yet I suppose I would tire of them if I had to stay long. They are not mature enough and one cannot always live with children, delightful as they are. Unfortunately their contacts with Indians have not been happy. They have come across the 'coolie' class, which has a lower standard of life than they have, and they have despised him. They have also come into contact with the money-lending class and they have disliked him and been afraid of him. The Indians in Burma, culturally speaking, are a poor lot. They do not make good ambassadors. Marwaris, Chettiyars, Gujratis, all very estimable people no doubt, but they do not impress, and they are much too busy money making to think of the other aspects of life. The Burman, on the other hand, is full of these other aspects, or at any rate of some of the more superficial of them. He is rather superficial. He looks down somewhat on the Indian and calls him by unsavoury names. But even this has something of an inferiority complex about it.

Indira & I left Rangoon thoroughly exhausted by our labours. I had a cold, bad throat and cough and you might have spotted the dark rings round my eyes. Indu had trouble with her tonsils and ran a slight temperature. We have both improved by three days' rest on board.

I was forgetting to tell you that I have tasted the *durian* fruit. I was thoroughly prepared for its evil smell and determined to taste it in spite of it. I had however expected an agreeable taste. I was thoroughly disappointed and it was as much as I could do not to make a face at it. I desisted after the first spoonful. Indu had even less and decided she had had enough of it. Upadhyaya felt almost sick and could not get over it the whole day. I was told that the *durian* I had tasted was not of the best quality. So I determined to have another try and some days later at Moulmein, which is known for its *durians*, I had another taste of it. This time it was slightly better but I doubt if I shall ever try it again. Indu and Upadhyaya refused to taste it again. So we have another of our illusions shattered.

I visited a monastery in Rangoon and had a talk, through an interpreter, with the abbot. He asked me a curious question—how far was Allahabad from Gaya? He told us that according to the scriptures only those could attain Buddhahood who were born within 300 *yojanas* (which I am told approximate to miles) of Gaya. Apparently he was calculating my chances of attaining Buddhahood! Fortunately for me Allahabad is within the prescribed limit.

Another Buddhist monk made strenuous attempts to convert me to Buddhism and flooded me with essays and long letters. In one of them he congratulated me on my determination to stop manufacturing children (I do not know that I had made any such announcement) and called people who produced children 'murderers', for must not the child grow up and die? A curious outlook on life.

We saw plenty of Chinese people in Burma and visited a Chinese school. I was greatly impressed by the smart children and the way they sang a national Chinese song to the accompaniment of a children's band. They gave me the impression of a virile race determined to make good. How charming Chinese children are.

Burmese parties always seem to have an entertainment thrown in—usually professional dancing and singing, sometimes some kind of juggling or balancing feats. I liked the dancing for a while and then it grew monotonous. The dancers were the very pictures of Burmese dolls and sculptured figures we had seen previously.

We met the daughter of King Thibaw[2]—she had lived the greater part of her life at Ratnagiri in exile and spoke Marathi far better than

2 (1858-1916), last king of Burma, his protection of anti British refugees from India and his resistance to British commercial infiltration led to the Third Burmese War (1885 86) and his deportation to India where he died.

Burmese, also Hindustani. A curious figure, full of her grievances over the jewels &c. which the British took away.

And now to bed. When will I see you next, my dear? I miss you so much.

Love

Yours,
Jawahar

I sent you my programme. This will have to be altered somewhat. We leave Malaya on June 5th—reach Rangoon June 8th—leave immediately for Calcutta stopping *en route* at Akyab and Chittagong. Reach Calcutta probably on June 12th. I want Indu examined there by some doctors, so we might stay in Calcutta for a day or two.

31. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

s.s. Karagola
7-6-37

My dear, Within a few hours, early tomorrow, we shall reach Rangoon. Our month of wandering is over and we are hurrying back. It will take another week before we reach Calcutta for we are going *via* Akyab and Chittagong. From Chittagong, I have recently learnt to my surprise, that we shall have to go by train to Calcutta, reaching there on the 13th evening.

I want news of you but there is none, and when I shall get it I do not know. I feel a little tired after all this travelling about though I am much fitter than I was. Our travelling was done in style—no third class or rickety old Ford cars. Expensive motors or aeroplanes or air-conditioned railway cars. The air-conditioned car presented me with a new cold. For at every station I had to leave it and go out into the hot sun and the change was not pleasant. I sneezed almost every time and by the end of the day was in the grip of a violent cold.

Soon I shall be back to my own level in travelling &c. and this pleasant trip has already become a memory. A memory which has had a marked effect on my mind for it has turned it eastwards more. The Far East has become a vivid patch although I hardly crossed the threshold to it.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Write to me to Allahabad. Do not carry out your threat not to write. My love to you,

Yours,
Jawahar

32. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

30-6-37

My dear one, your letter came three or four days ago and, need I say that it was very welcome? No, I was not at all angry with you, if I may use the ugly word which you have written, for not writing to me for so long. Vaguely I hoped to get a letter from you somewhere during my travels and when I came back the hope grew stronger. And yet at the back of my mind I seemed to feel that you would not write to me soon. I resigned myself to this regretfully, perhaps with a slight feeling of irritation occasionally, but it was nothing much. Why did I feel so, I mean why did I expect you not to write? I do not quite know. Perhaps I am beginning to have a faint understanding of a woman's mind. I am so dull in this respect, so frightfully ignorant, as you, my dear, know so well. But even the dull in mind sometimes have a glimpse as through a glass darkly. And so the realisation came to me that you might find it a little difficult to write to me. I saw the horror in your eyes when you realised how my correspondence was dealt with by others. As a rule your letters reach me unopened, but of course the censors at the post office cannot be denied their peeps into my correspondence. It is irritating to be spied upon, though I have grown used to it and do not very much care. But, apart from this, it is often difficult to write, difficult to put down many things that one might say, as it is difficult to say all that one thinks. I write a large number of letters every day, business letters or semi-personal letters. But the letters I care about often remain unwritten for days. They hang about in my mind and I wait for a particular mood or leisure to write unhurriedly. To write to you sometimes seems so difficult, sometimes so easy. For you are the easiest and yet the most difficult person to write to. I love to think of you and often I yearn for your presence, and then my mind plays about with the idea of writing to you and phrases troupe through

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

my mind and add words and notions and just mere nothings which yet have a significance for me and may have some meaning for you. The letters that I have written to you on the tablet of my mind and not transcribed on paper!

And so I grow slowly, too slowly, in patience and understanding, and though I know nothing, or next to nothing, about women, East or West, the individual human being interests me even as an individual and always there is an attempt to find out what lies behind that mask of his. But I cannot apply that objective method, try as I will, to persons who move me greatly. I would not dare to do so with you for the very attempt would confound me and confuse my mind and trouble me. Your dear smiling eyes would look down upon me with amused affection and a slightly contemptuous tolerance at my stupidity.

So write to me or not as it pleases you. Do not force yourself to write because you feel I demand it. I wait for your letters and the sight of one gives me a thrill, but if they do not come, I shall not wholly fail to understand.

Do not worry about me. I am keeping pretty well in mind and body. I am physically fitter than I was two months ago and mentally refreshed to some extent. But how can I rid myself of the tangle that life is, of the unceasing complications that surround me? As I grow older, the vastness and complexity of these problems, the stupidity and inertness of human material, the purposelessness of life as a whole, the cruelty and hatred of man for man, fill my mind more. They do not suppress me but they do take away a great deal from the fresh and optimistic approach of growth. But I am hardened to this and it does not affect my activity much, or so I think. When I compare myself, hard and weather-beaten, to your dear self, soft and delicate and over-sensitive, I wonder at the difference. It is true that I feel weary at times and lonely often, but that is nothing new. I am not likely to cry out because of all this, I hardly permit myself to think of it much. So do not worry.

Ever since my return I have had to face an accumulation of work and I have worked hard. When evening comes I am tired and my brain is jaded. After a brief respite I start again, always trying to catch up. What a race it is! I have got rid of the arrears more or less but there are so many things that I want to do which hover about in my mind and find no escape. I should have liked to write about Burma & Malaya and other subjects. I doubt if I shall do so.

Thank you for the *Glimpses* — What an enormous lot of trouble you have taken over it. I took the first volume with me but had little time for it. So far I have gone through just under 300 pages.

I shared your surprise when I saw Magnus Hirschfield's book[2]. This was in a Rangoon bookshop and as I opened it the first thing that I saw was my picture. Of course my vanity induced me to buy it.

I am off tomorrow to Wardha. After that I do not quite know what I shall do. I am not fixing up anything. Probably early in August I shall accompany Indu to Calcutta to have her tonsils removed.

Goodbye, my darling

Jawahar

2. *Women—East and West.*

33. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

6-8-37

My dear, My dear, I have been wanting to write to you for so long, yet somehow it does not come off. I feel more distracted and worried than I usually do. The burdens of the President grow heavy and so many additional responsibilities of a novel kind have been thrust upon me that I gasp for breath. It is not just the heaviness of the work, although it is heavy, but the new problems which distract. So I have not written for I did not wish to write unless the mood was better.

But now I write these few lines hurriedly from time stolen in office, to inform you that I have at the last moment almost decided to take Indu to Bombay for her operation. Partly this is your doing, partly the fact that Betty will be there to look after her in case I have to go away. We reach Bombay on Monday morning the 9th August. I imagine the operation will take place on Wednesday. I shall be in Bombay for six or seven days and shall go to Wardha for the Working Committee from there. If Indu is still in Bombay I shall return to take her back to Allahabad.

Indu is likely to sail from Bombay on Sept. 11th.

Thank you for the two books. *The Story of Burma* I nearly bought in Rangoon — I had previously purchased its companion volume. After some thought I decided that the book was too expensive. The other book had already reached me from your friends, the artists, direct.

As for the Ajanta frescoes, if you insist on spoiling me, do so by all means. But I have ascetic moods when I want to get rid of the paraphernalia around me. But then there are pagan moods too. Anyway

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

you are the best judge of a suitable picture. Perhaps I have enough of Bodhisattvas around me and an Ajanta beauty might be presented to my pagan self.

My love to you, darling one.

Jawahar

34. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
Sept. 29, 1937

Bebee — Have you only now realised what a fearful handicap it is to be well brought up? To do what you do not want to do, not to do what you long to do; to hear one's own voice unendingly till one is aweary of it and almost begins to hate it, and yet not to say what one has to say, to repress oneself till one is fit to burst; to meet almost all the dull and uninteresting people of the world and to dream of others who are far away, beyond reach; to look pale and detached when fire rages inside one; to want to kiss soft lips but yet to keep away from them; to yearn to embrace and yet to keep your arms away till they ache. Or, there are so many things which good breeding brings in its train. You know them, you who are so well-bred. But who told you that I had been well brought up? You presume to know me a little and yet mislead yourself. Neither the governess, nor Harrow, nor Cambridge, nor anything else has taught me good breeding and I am a savage at heart caught and made a prisoner in the mesh of circumstance. From my exalted perch I envy others who are freer.

You dare to accuse me of not writing to you! Yet I would have written if I had not been continuously on the move. I returned yesterday, very tired, more so mentally than physically. When I came back from the office and had my solitary tea, I could not do anything and my mind was ill at ease. At last I got hold of Blum's book on marriage and started reading it. But interesting as it was, it could not hold me and I fell asleep and slept till dinner time.

Today I felt a little better. But I am stale, flat, and I carry on just like a machine. I read your letter again this evening and suddenly I felt like writing that long promised article on the 'Rashtrapati,[2] for I

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 520-523.

wanted to find out how much of good or bad breeding there was in him. As I sat at dinner, words and phrases passed through my mind. But breeding, or whatever it is, came in the way, and I wrote instead a note on power alcohol and other ways of utilizing molasses — 15 foolscap pages for the proper education of our Prime Ministers. And then another note on the price of sugarcane. It was 1 a.m. when I finished and the 'Rashtrapati' could not be analysed at that hour. But I had to write to you — have I not been told that letters must be answered the same day?

I expect to be here for about 10 days, except for a brief visit to Lucknow in between. Then I go to the Punjab for 3 days and Peshawar &c. 3 days. A brief stay in Allahabad and later Calcutta for the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. I might go to Assam from Calcutta.

When will I see you, my dear? It is ages and ages since we met And you have become so damned well-bred and yet you dare to accuse me of it.

Love,

Jawahar

Put 'Personal' on the envelope when you write to me. This might save it from the office.

35. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
24-10-37

My dear, I am just passing through Allahabad — soon I have to go to the station. But I cannot go without writing a few lines to you. Your letter of the 17th met me here. It is bad enough to mess up one's own life occasionally but it is terrible to mess up other lives. Yet such is life and we are helpless victims of circumstances. You know well how lacking in understanding and perception I am so far as individuals are concerned, and the nearer the individual is to me the more I fail in this. Your letter has made me realise this more than ever for it has

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

shown how little I realised what was passing in your mind. I wondered greatly at the time at many things. I could not understand them. I suppose I am too self-centred to get the proper perspective. Forgive me. But even forgiveness does not help much. Help me to understand. Need I tell you that I would do anything to prevent sorrow crossing your path and yet, as you see, I become the instrument of causing you great suffering and anguish. You do not think that I do so with deliberate intent? Tell me what to do to avoid hurting you. Shall I stop writing to you and keep away from seeing you? You realise, do you not?, what a slave I am to circumstance. As I said in the article, those who ride a tiger cannot dismount. Perhaps I shall end up inside the tiger. Forgive me, my dear, I am so unhappy at the thought of your unhappiness. If I could erase myself from your memory I would gladly do so, though it would not be pleasant. That might perhaps give you peace of mind. Why not think of me as I am — full of conceit and full of myself, callously unaware of what I do to others. It is not a lovely picture but it is nearer the truth than the imaginary picture in most minds.

My love to you,

Jawahar

36. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
5-11-37

Dear, I am writing to you without your express permission. But then you have not told me not to and a letter of yours awaits reply. Not that I am replying to it. I just feel like writing to you a few lines before I leave Allahabad again. The Assam tour was suddenly postponed for no sufficient reason and I am rather sorry for it. Cawnpore labour troubles grow serious and I was supposed to charm them away. The desire to jump into trouble and the conceit that I might make a difference drew me to them. And so tomorrow I am going there for three days. I shall be pottering about the U.P. for the rest of the month, partly in Allahabad. The first half of December I intend spending in Assam.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

The *Modern Review* article appeared just the day before I left Calcutta. It was interesting to watch people's reactions and I felt like a guilty person. I am not used to this kind of subterfuge and I feel uncomfortable. Bapu was keen on finding out who wrote it. Bidhan was sure it was a manoeuvre to get Subhas in. He said he would know who the author was soon. One wise criticism was that I could not be a dictator because I was too much of a humanist. Is it so? I think it is true, however, that I am not made for dictatorship. Temperamentally I am not fitted for the job. But reading the article again I felt it was rather good and really true, in so far as it went. But partly untrue because it did not go far enough. The mere fact that I wrote it militates against the argument running through it. Do you not think so?

As I was leaving Calcutta I was asked when I was going to Assam. I said next month if I am still alive. It was a casual remark without any meaning but when protest was made, I began to think about it. I was a little surprised to realise how little I cared whether I lived or died. I was almost totally indifferent to life or death. And yet I live intensely enough so far as my activities are concerned.

You need not have written about Syed Hossain[2] as I would have had no objection to meeting him. I had an hour's talk with him.

Love,

Jawahar

2. (1887-1949), editor of *The Independent*, Chairman, Committee for India's Freedom, Washington, taught for many years at the University of Southern California, India's Ambassador to Egypt, 1947-49

37. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
8-11-37

My darling, Your letter, forwarded from Calcutta, reached me today on my return from Cawnpore. How we succeed in hurting each other and in doing or saying the wrong thing—at least I do. Do you not know how I long to see you? And I shall take every opportunity to see you and I shall write to you, so long as you do not tell me not to.

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

But that letter that you wrote to me suddenly made me realise, as I had not realised before, how I had become a terrible nuisance to you and how I was interfering with your life. The account that you gave of the period last year when we met in Bombay and Pondicherry, and how you had avoided me, and yet fate had thrown us together and upset your plans, hit me hard. I felt guilty and unhappy at the sorrow I had caused you and my own lack of perception appalled me. I dared not trust to my own judgement and I put it to you, who are so much wiser than I am in such matters, to tell me what to do. I may not be strong enough to act contrary to my own inclinations and urges, but if issued a mandate I would obey. Hence my letter to you. How many months it is since we met — it seems an age. And always I have been thinking when I shall see you again and hoping that perhaps I might suddenly and unexpectedly find you with a welcome in your eyes. We are frank enough to each other at times, and yet we are curiously reticent and succeed in giving wrong impressions. And then our imaginations build great structures on this frail foundation. When we meet next time — we will meet many times? — let us do away with this imaginary basis and see each other as we are. Is that too difficult? Perhaps it is not easy, but it is worth a trial. Write to me, my dear.

The Bijnor election and the tremendous victory of the Congress has let loose the most violent and unseemly language and behaviour on the part of some of the Muslim Leaguers.[2] In their anger they are saying things which are incredible and are openly inciting to violence and even murder in the name of Islam. Jinnah seems to have gone to pieces and what he said at Bijnor would have been surprising even in Shaukat Ali. Others, like Zafar Ali Khan, behave like dangerous lunatics. But what has pained me most is the recent incident at Aligarh University where the great majority of the students forgot all decency and responded to Zafar Ali's appeal after his own fashion[3] — I am afraid we are in for a lot of trouble.

I came back today from Cawnpore. The trouble there is kept in check. My visit did some good.

My love to you, darling one.

Yours,
Jawahar

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 20 and 191.
3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 196.

38. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
Nov. 18, 1937

My dear, So you are determined to be strong-willed and hard hearted. It is very unlike you, and anyway why should you? Life is difficult and tragic enough, why should we make it harder by adopting tragic roles? I do not want to and I am sure you do not want to. How terribly near you are all the time to me since the Ajanta Princess has come and taken possession of my room. Why is it that I think of you whenever I look at it?

I have come back to Allahabad for two days. First news on arrival: Zohra Ansari has given birth to a baby, Rup's husband Hanhamath Vanchoo (Rup is Mohan Lal Nehru's daughter) died last night, strikes in 3 schools and colleges, great communal tension in the city because a number of goondas have fallen out and are fighting each other for purely personal reasons. And so leaving all my work I have to wander about the city, and then I accompany the funeral procession and walk miles in the hot sun. I am tired and have a headache and all the day's work remains undone. But it is beyond my capacity anyway to tackle it and my sense of responsibility is decreasing It is far pleasanter to write to you.

How old are you now? Twenty? Oh, my dear, how infantile we are even though the years steal over us How I long to see your dear face.

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

39. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Assam-Bengal Rly.
Tinsukhia to Lumding
Dec. 4, 1937

My dear, I have finished my tour of the Valley of the Brahmaputra — eight hectic days — and now I am going to the Surma Valley. I am travelling in pomp and splendour in a first class compartment reserved

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

all for myself. Why so? Because the railway authorities think this is more fitting for a President of the Congress. The Agent of the railway has issued directions that whatever the class of the ticket I hold, I must be accommodated in a first class. (I might mention that this railway has no second class. It has only first, inter and third.) Loving comfort and the soft and pleasant things of life as I do, I succumbed to the temptation. It came rather unexpectedly the first time, as I was getting into a train with an inter class ticket. I was tired and the journey was not a long one. So I rolled myself up on the 1st class berth and fell asleep. Today I had sufficient notice and the journey was a long one. I disliked the idea of being beholden to the railway company and so I have had to buy a first class ticket. What petty excuses we find to avoid the strait and narrow path of virtue!

I have liked this visit and liked Assam. I have gone up and down it pretty thoroughly and yet, curiously enough, I have not visited Shillong, which is supposed to be the jewel of Assam. Going there meant giving up some outlying places and I preferred the latter. Also I wanted to stress the fact that my real business lay with the peasants and workers and tribal folk and not with the big people who live on the mountain top. Subconsciously I was put off by a railway advertisement which described Shillong as the Scotland of the East. I am not frightfully keen on the real Scotland and certainly an imported article does not attract me. Conceit, of course.

But I have mixed in high society also, been invited to the European planters' club, met them at their homes, fed with the bosses of the Assam Oil Co. and tried hard to be pleasant and sociable to European women. The desire to impress and be well thought of by all and sundry, I suppose.

Three days now in the Surma Valley and then a long long journey to Saharanpur where a Muslim by-election demands my presence. It will take another nine days before I reach Allahabad.

How are you, my dear? I famish for news of you and how I long to see you, to hold you and to look into your eyes.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

This first class reserved compartment is not as conducive to rest as it might be. At every wayside station there is a shouting crowd of tea garden employees and others.

40. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Lucknow
2-3-1938

My dear, Your telegram has reached me. How foolish and womanlike and extravagant. Or was it a kind of *prayashchitta* or atonement for having made love to Subhas? Do you expect a tough person like me, overflowing with energy and vitality, more than is becoming at my age, to fade off because of a cold? The length of years that lie before me frighten me at times. I weary at the prospect of them.

You made me promise to write to you. Foolish one, as if a promise was needed, or as if a promise means anything. Would you have me write to you just to keep that promise even though the desire was lacking? And could you prevent me from writing, short of commanding me to do so and my believing in your command, if the desire to write to you moved me? I shall write to you, as I have written in the past, even when you have not replied. For I write, selfish and self centred as I am, to please myself, though in my vanity I imagine that I might be giving you some pleasure also. You will not write to me, you tell me, lest you say something which might hurt. A word of yours has power to hurt, but have you thought of the pain of having no word from you? Have you thought of the loneliness that is my life, of the shell in which I live, encompassed and cut off, and from which I seek escape in activity?

You know me better perhaps than I do myself, yet I have some knowledge of myself also. I know well how true it was when you said that I never give anyone what I receive. It was not perhaps the whole truth but it was certainly the truth. I am too self-centred, too individualistic to give much, the bars of my temperament keep me prisoner. And so I can never enter the gates of the earthly paradise which open only to those who can give unreservedly.

Perhaps that very failing has become a virtue in me in the public sense. For so I can go through life more unattached than I might otherwise be. This sense of unattachment grows within me, though life often beckons to me and I have no wish to say no to it. I touch it and I like its touch, and I think of it and the memory pleases me, yet somehow I remain an outsider. It may be that what capacity I had to give, I gave intensively, not to individuals but in other ways, and I am bankrupt now, or perhaps a debtor mortgaged up to the hilt. I shall never get rid of that burden of debt.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Yesterday fifty thousand kisans marched up to Lucknow. I was tired and resting but I went off to them and spoke to them for a while, and then walked about among them. I think I did manage to forget myself while I was with them. They were a miserable lot with sorrow-laden eyes, many with bent backs, old and decrepit, and I wondered what force had made them drag their wretched bodies through many miles of dusty roads. I returned tired in body but vitalised. Did I draw this vitality from these sinking specimens of humanity?

Please do not worry about me. I really am getting on quite well and I expect to be normal in another two days. I shall be in Lucknow for another day or possibly two. There is no point in my staying here longer. The longer I stay here, the more I delay going to Khali. I want to leave for Khali on the 9th and to stay there nearly a fortnight. If I delay going there my stay will be shortened. I have had myself examined by a doctor here and he has passed me as fit except for the remains of a cold.

Nan has read to me a part of your letter to her relating to Subhas. I think it is disgraceful how you turn people's heads. Do you propose to collect the scalps of Congress Presidents? But no. Be kind to him and loving. Soften him and make him more human. I like him very much and I think that most people judge him harshly because of certain mannerisms and affectations.

Did you ask me to send for you when I wanted you? How penetrating you are. My dear, do you expect me to be sending you daily telegrams? If I gave free play to my desire to see you that would be the inevitable result.

My love to you,

Yours,
Jawahar

The flowers are aflame and send you greetings.

41. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Khali
Almora
25-3-38

My dear, There is no news of you or from you. Of course you warned me. But I shall continue to grouse. My time here is almost up and

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

soon I shall be going down. The two weeks have done me a deal of good and I am feeling very fit and full of vitality. I would have felt better still if news from outside had not come to trouble my peace of mind. There was the Austrian affair.[2] I had hardly reconciled myself to it when news of the communal rioting at Allahabad came and upset me. A colleague was almost fatally stabbed there and the whole affair was very distressing. A few deaths or broken heads do not matter much but the whole background is terribly painful.

Mridula & Bharati have been here a week. Mridula is quite an exceptional girl with enormous capacities for work. She has been wearing herself down by over-work in an atmosphere which does not suit her. She cannot fall in line completely with the Gujarat bosses and friction results. She has benefited greatly by her stay here. Bharati is an interesting girl and her naivete and frankness and preoccupations with personal problems are very refreshing. They are staying on here for three weeks after my departure.

I have at last managed to send a revised copy of Vol. 1 of the *Glimpses to London*. Your corrections were of the greatest help. But one series of corrections which you made I have not adopted. Usually I describe past events in the present tense—You have invariably changed this to the past tense. I think the present is preferable as it makes history more vital for the reader and writer. As a matter of fact whenever I have written about past events I have tried to think of them as the present and imagined myself witnessing them.

I shall be going to Calcutta via Lucknow and Allahabad.

Love

Yours,
Jawahar

2. Germany annexed Austria in March 1938.

42. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
7-4-38

My dear, I returned from Calcutta and found your letter. The accusation in it was entirely unwarranted for I have been keeping you informed of my plans, such as they are. Do you still get your facts from the

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Urdu press? But for once I must be thankful to this press for it has induced you to write to me. I am still thinking in terms of sailing for Europe in mid-June. I shall probably decide finally by the end of this month. Unless some extraordinary development takes place in India or Europe I shall stick to this date. There is a very faint possibility of my going earlier if I am suddenly wanted at the other end. But this is difficult anyhow as passages are not usually available prior to the monsoon.

I am sending these few lines to you in some haste in order to catch you in Hyderabad before you leave. You have given me no address. I am so sorry that the 'Golden Threshold'[2] is changing hands.

I am physically fit and well. But more and more, I feel a misfit in the political scene. I carry on through sheer habit and habit is strong enough to carry me through with a measure of success. But I have lost my self-assurance. I have developed a strong distaste for conferences and public gatherings, not that I dislike them but because I really do not know what to say. Or to be more accurate there is a conflict in my mind between what I want to say and what I ought to say. Do you know the lines[3] of Alfred de Musset on sadness:

J'ai perdu ma force et ma vie,
Et mes amis et ma gaiete,
J'ai perdu jusqu'a la fierte
Qui faisait croire a mon genie.

Quand j'ai connu la Verite,
J'ai cru que e'etait une amie,
Quand je l'ai comprise et sentie,
J'en etais deja degoute.[3]

Sometimes my mood turns that way. And yet not always. But I have become more of an enquirer, a searcher for I know not what. An American publisher wants me to write an essay on my philosophy of life. For financial and other reasons I am attracted by this proposal. But then I wonder—have I any philosophy at all?

2. Name of Sarojini Naidu's house in Hyderabad.
3. I have lost my strength and my life,
And my friends and my gaiety,
I have lost even the pride
That made me believe in my genius.
When I knew Truth,
I thought it was a friend,
When I understood and felt it,
I was already disgusted by it.

I must now go off to some remote corner of the city to address a meeting to promote communal unity. There is still much fear and trouble under the surface. What a bad lot we are.

I shall be in Allahabad throughout April unless I go to Lucknow or somewhere else for a day or two.

Love,

Jawahar

43. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
11-4-38[2]
8 p.m.

My dear, You are unhappy and I feel greatly distressed. I wish I could come to Lucknow but I am completely tied up here. There was a bust-up today again and the position is bad. All day I have been wandering about, being cheered occasionally, cursed at sometimes, and everywhere being overwhelmed with complaints. It will pass as everything in life passes but it is an exhausting and depressing business nonetheless. I propose to go to Lucknow on the 23rd night. I have to be back in the city for an evening round. In haste.

Love

Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. The date 11.8.38 given in the source is evidently a slip for 11.4.38

44. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Gloucester
25.6.38

Bebee dear, I have spent eleven days in Europe—five in Spain, three in Paris, nearly two in London. I am now on a week-end visit with Indu

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

to Sir Stafford Cripps in his country home. We return tomorrow night to London.

These days have been terribly busy days and I have been quite unable to write to anyone in India. Nor have I had any news from India except a letter from Nan. A letter from you also came but this had been originally sent to Bombay and forwarded from there.

The visit to Spain—Barcelona—was full of interest and the most vivid impressions. Every night we woke up to the sound of bombing from the air and anti-aircraft guns in action. We rushed out to our balcony on the sixth floor of the hotel and watched this spectacle of modern civilisation. It was impressive enough if one could forget the tragedy underlying it. We could not see the enemy planes as they flew at a tremendous height, about 20000 ft., but we could hear the noise of their engines. The searchlights played all over the sky and the anti-aircraft guns seemed to hurl coloured lights in the sky. Next morning we enquired about the damage done—casualties, houses smashed to bits &c. Still the city carried on its normal life and crowds filled its streets. The shops functioned, the theatres and cinemas were full, high class musical concerts were being given. A book fair was being held and the streets were full of stalls. It was astounding to see this normality and the calmness and order that prevailed everywhere. Perhaps human beings can get accustomed to almost anything. But probably it was not just *insouciance*, it was also sheer courage and pride for the Spaniard is a proud animal. Anyway it was most impressive. I cannot conceive how a people like this can be crushed ultimately even if they cannot hold out in a military sense.

I met many people—cabinet ministers, military officers, trade union officials, civil servants and the rank & file of the army. I met also Passionaria, the remarkable Spanish woman who has become the idol of the people. She was the most overwhelming woman I have met. Middle-aged, homely-looking, with a large family, she was full of suppressed passion and vitality which simply oozed out of her.

There were privations and food was scarce though the stage of actual starvation had not been reached. There was no milk or butter except for children. We had limited rations even in our hotel. Cigarettes were not to be had and this was perhaps the severest strain on many. An anti-aircraft gun officer told me that he had hardly slept for four days and nights and begged me for a cigarette. The tragedy was that I had none.

We saw a lovely children's home where refugees were kept. There were scores of such homes and children's restaurants where free meals

were provided. Everywhere we found an indomitable will to persevere and not to give in.

I expect to be in England till July 17th and then to go to Paris for a week. After that possibly Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Vienna, and may be Turkey. Returning to Geneva and England. If all goes well I take the return journey to India *via* Russia & Central Asia.

I am afraid I could not enclose in my last letter to you from on board a copy of my note to Kripalani as I said I would.[2] I find that I had no copy left. I sent a copy to Nan. Perhaps you could get one from her.

I must go now to the village trade union committee who are meeting to have a talk with me.

Love

Yours,
Jawahar

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol 9, pp 78

45. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

London
5-7-38

Bebee, It is three weeks now since I landed in Europe—or is it more? It seems ages and I have compressed quite a lot in these days. They have been terribly full. The Spanish experience was exhilarating and depressing. I wanted to write to Indu at length about it while yet it was fresh in my mind. But I have had no time at all and even personal letters remain unwritten. The other letters have a better fate for an efficient secretary—a Somerville girl knowing typing, shorthand and French—deals with them. I am writing these few lines at 2.15 a.m. when I am dog tired.

But I had to write to you, however briefly, for your long letter has just come. I have read it hurriedly, I shall read it again. It is not easy to answer it. Indeed I doubt if I can answer it fully. I am not used to discussing my personal feelings or emotions in letters. Some things might be said perhaps. It is more difficult to write about them. But anyway

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, N M.M L.

I cannot understand what has upset you so much and made imagine all manner of things which are hidden from me. I may not come up to your mark or to your expectations. Nobody does and certainly I know very well how grossly I am over-rated by those who have a partiality for me. Perhaps you have not understood me aright in spite of your deep insight into me. I have human feelings and emotions certainly and they move me, but not for very long, for other and impersonal feelings overwhelm them.

But I cannot write to you more now as it is very late. I shall write later. Meanwhile, do not give free rein to your imagination.

Love

Jawahar

46. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Hotel Ambassador
Prague
11.8.1938

Bebee dear, I have not written to you for an age. Indeed except for the last few days I have hardly written letters since I reached Europe. I have led a hard life since I landed in Genoa and a day full of engagements has ended late at night when I felt too tired to write. Some days in Spain, about 10 days in Paris and four weeks in London were spent thus. And then I forced myself to take a week by the sea-side in France where Indu accompanied me. There was not too much rest there as I was busy writing some reports. Still I slept sufficiently and had sea bathing. I started off from there going east, visited Munich & am now at Prague—with Indu. This business of travelling on the Continent is terrible. Hours and hours are spent in getting tickets & reservations, visas &c. Then packing & unpacking. I find this very trying. In England & France I know my way about more or less, the language is within control and there are many friends to help. Not so elsewhere.

I expect to be here for a week or so—not at Prague but in Czechoslovakia. Then we go to Vienna & Budapest and possibly Istanbul, returning to Switzerland nearly in September. What I shall do after that I do not know yet.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Day after tomorrow we visit the Bata factory. It is far from here and we shall go there by one of Bata's private planes. Then we visit the great Skoda munitions works. But the main object of our visit is to study the Sudeten minority problem.

Nan wrote to me that you had not been well. I hope you have recovered. I do not know where you are but I suppose this letter will reach you via Hyderabad.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

47. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Budapest
1.9.38

Bebee dear, For nearly two weeks I have been here, tied down because of Indu's illness. Nan also got stuck up here. Now that Indu is much better, we are leaving today by air for London. Nan went yesterday as she is stopping for a day in Prague. She will join us there on our way to London.

Central Europe is a seething cauldron, especially Czechoslovakia. As I look at these beautiful cities I wonder how long they will survive. Almost their doom seems to be written in the skies.

I have no idea about my future programme. The proposed visit to Russia seems to be off. Indu's illness will also affect my movements. For the present I go to London and perhaps a week later to Geneva

I hope you are well.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

48. To Pierre Cot[1]

Paris
September 21, 1938

Dear Monsieur Cot,[2]
I have just reached Paris, coming by air from Geneva. The international crisis and the threats of war have distressed me greatly as, no doubt, they are distressing you. But howsoever great our distress might be, we cannot remain passive spectators of the tragedy that is being enacted before our eyes. As a great organisation devoted to peace and collective security, the R.U.P.[3] has a special duty to stand by its principles when they are brutally attacked. Not to do so means almost the extinction of the R.U.P.

I went to Geneva in the hope that a meeting of the International Executive of the R.U.P. would be held then and I would have the opportunity of attending it and discussing the critical problems that face us with our colleagues of the R.U.P. My colleague, Mr. Krishna Menon, had already suggested such a meeting. Unfortunately no such meeting could be held. It is for this reason that I am writing to you, for I fear that if the R.U.P. cannot function when the need for this is greatest, it will never function at all and most of us will cease to take interest in it. During the past three months and a half, that I have been in Europe, no meeting of the Executive has been held and there have been no opportunities for full consultation amongst ourselves.

The present grave crisis involving terrible danger of war forces us to act in accordance with our basic programme and principles. The exact attitude which we should take is not easy of decision and requires the most careful thought. But to take no decision at all is itself a betrayal of our principles.

It is perfectly clear that the proposals of the British and French Governments regarding Czechoslovakia[4]—proposals made without even consulting the country and people most concerned—are a death-blow to the ideals we have proclaimed. They are not proposals to avoid war,

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Pierre Cot (1895-1977); French politician; before the Second World War was a leader of the Radical Socialist Party and helped to organise Leon Blum's Popular Front Regime in 1936; Minister of Aviation, 1933-34 and 1936-37 and Minister of Commerce and Industry in 1938; headed a small leftist progressive party after the Second World War.
3. *Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix* (World Peace Congress).
4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 143.

but to create a situation in which war will always be on the doorstep and gangsterism will reign supreme in Europe. Perhaps there are few examples in history of a greater betrayal of a friendly people and an allied nation. Public immorality, force and threat of force are now acknowledged to be the foundations of national and public policy. This can only lead to the most terrible of disasters.

It seems to me that the R.U.P. must clearly condemn this policy and the Franco-British proposals. It must demand that settlements must not be made under threats of force. It must insist that the Czechoslovakian Government be fully consulted and its agreement obtained. The present position taken up by the Czech Government asking for arbitration under treaty terms is an eminently reasonable one. This attitude involves our condemning the French and British Governments and demanding a change. Further that if there is any aggression in Czechoslovakia, the aggressor nations must be declared as such and treated as such.

May I add also that the banning of public meetings and demonstrations at this juncture is a dangerous and unwarranted interference with civil liberty and democratic procedure. It is not for an outsider to suggest any action, but it is obvious that our activities can be very greatly obstructed by this official banning of meetings, etc.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

49. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

London
20-10-1938

Bebee dear, I have had no news of you, or hardly any news for a long time. And now I am packing up and collecting together all my little bits that have gone to pieces, to return to India. This visit to Europe has not been a vitalizing experience. Apart from the worry due to Indu's & Nan's ill health, events in Europe have shaken me up completely. This continent is going to the Devil with extreme rapidity.

Indu is returning with me. She is fairly well now but she cannot go back to Oxford this winter and so she might as well come to India for a few months. She can return in spring.

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, NMML

We are leaving London on the 24th Oct. After brief halts in Paris & the Riviera we sail from Marseilles on Nov. I reaching Alexandria on the 6th. On the 9th Nov. we sail from Port Said by the P.& O.S.S. *Strathnaver* reaching Bombay on Nov. 17th.

Nan has been ill again but I hope she will recover soon. She is now leaving by air on Nov. 9th & reaching Allahabad on the 13th.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

50. To Stafford Cripps[1]

Khali
Jan. 21, 1939

My dear Cripps,

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter. I have carried it about with me for the last three weeks during my wanderings hoping to find time to write to you at some leisure. It is astonishing how much time one has to spend in travelling in this country. A committee meeting might mean a journey of anything from five hundred to a thousand miles and thus back again.

I have now escaped for a week and have come to the mountains where my daughter has been staying. Your last letter was written in unusual surroundings—from the Court of Justice. My reply is being written in a far more unusual way. I am at present having a sunbath in full view of the Himalayan snows, and some of the highest peaks of the Himalayas look down upon me from a distance of a few miles, as the crow flies.

I have been reading *The Tribune* regularly except when I am in too remote a place for it to reach me. I think it has improved greatly and become very readable. I am glad it is going up in circulation.

The idea of having a pamphlet club attached to the Left Book Club is attractive. I wish we could do something of the kind here but for the present we seem to lack both the business capacity and effective writers. Most of our ardent politicians are no good at business and most of our writers have a tendency to sectarianism which prevents them from getting a wide enough audience. For the present the daily paper with which

1. British Cabinet Papers, CAB 127/57, Public Record Office, London

I am connected is enough (or more than enough!) of a burden on me and it worries me.

The real difficulty however in pushing any series of books and pamphlets lies deeper. What line are we to take up which is sound and yet which carries the mass of nationalist opinion or Congress opinion here? Conflicts and cleavages are developing in our ranks, though they are not so deep yet as to cause a vital split. I do not quite know where I stand myself. Being a member of the Congress Executive at the top I have to keep in line with my colleagues, though I pull them often enough in my own direction. On some matters I disagree with them entirely. Ever since my return to India I have been more or less feeling my way and I cannot yet say how things will develop. There are some disturbing signs but on the whole I have felt better here than I did in Europe.

My effort all along has been to make the politically left elements to pull together. The Congress as a whole is definitely left politically including the old guard. But on the social issue it is not quite so clear although its sympathies are certainly towards the left. The emergence of the social issue endangers its political unity to some extent, and left elements have a way of behaving in a remarkably irresponsible manner which frightens and irritates the mass of Congressmen. There is no vital conflict on a real issue, although there are divergences. The real conflict is a psychological one—distrust and suspicion of each other. Neither side can do without the other. If the left was in charge of the Congress organisation, it could not possibly carry on or do anything effective. (I use the left in the social sense). The Centre group with the old leaders can certainly carry on without the help of the left but their effectiveness will decline. The Right group is small and does not count except when it gets the support of the Centre and Gandhi.

Thus on a political issue it is not difficult to have a strong united front of the Centre & Left. I think it is possible to have such a united opposition on the Federation issue. It might have been possible, if the British Government had gone far enough, to weaken this opposition and perhaps turn down the Centre. But as things are developing it seems much more likely that Federation, if imposed, will be opposed by the Congress as a whole. Personally I still doubt that Federation will be imposed under these circumstances.

The three major questions before us are: 1 The social issue relating to the peasants & workers. Both these groups have become very much alive and under present conditions it is not possible for the Congress or the Congress ministries to meet all their demands. Much has been

done, especially in the United Provinces, but the problems are too deep-seated to be solved by superficial reforms. They require an overhaul of the social structure. The efforts of the Congress ministries to raise the standards of the workers & peasants have already begun to frighten the middle classes. There is much grumbling beneath the surface and complaints that their interests are not looked after. This is not important so far but it is out of this that fascist elements take shape. Fascism as such will not develop in India at this stage. What is more likely to happen is for these middle class elements to try to gain control of various local Congress committees and thus influence the people at the top and Congress policy generally.

The second problem before us is the Hindu-Moslem tension. This is certainly an obstruction in our path. The Muslim League is not organisationally strong. It cannot do anything positive or constructive. But it can be destructive and its entire policy consists of inciting Moslems against the Congress. The most fantastic lies are circulated and full advantage is taken of the civil liberties established by the Congress governments. It is difficult to get at the root of the matter—what the basic objection is. It almost seems that Jinnah and the other leaders of the Muslim League object to democracy itself in India for democracy means the dominance of the majority. They object to the people of the Indian states being enfranchised as this means more Hindus voting. Jinnah is really an impossible person to deal with. He has a certain lawyer's ability and enormous conceit, but otherwise he is extraordinarily ignorant.

There are tendencies in the Muslim League for a left wing to develop and to insist on a positive programme.

The third problem is that of the Indian states. As you know this has developed suddenly and on a wide scale and there is hardly a state which is not affected. This development has, I think, justified the Congress policy towards the states—This was essentially to make the states people organise and rely upon themselves rather than to expect others to carry their burdens. No mass movement could be organised from outside and without an awakening of the masses within the states little could be done. As soon as this was realised the people of the states woke up, and the Congress was inevitably dragged into the fray.

There are at present four aspects of this struggle. In some small states the rulers surrendered almost without any struggle, or were intelligent enough to read the signs of the times and to fall in line with the national movement before any effective pressure could be organised. They are only small states but their example counts. Of these states, Aundh in the Bombay Presidency has set the best example and done

so with grace.[2] The ruler has just inaugurated a new constitution which in effect is a kind of federation of village republics.

Then there are a few states where the struggle has been under the direction of leading Congressmen, as in Rajkot, and where a measure of success has come. Mysore last year partly came to terms under Congress pressure but it has tried to wriggle out of them since. Rajkot was a clear and definite victory but the ruler is misbehaving again and it is possible that the struggle might be resumed. Rajkot was a good instance of how the imperial Govt. interferes both directly & indirectly. When the struggle began the ruler engaged a retired British Officer as his prime minister. Soon after the ruler became frightened and wanted to come to terms with the people. Taxes were not being paid, all business was at a standstill and civil disobedience was going strong. The state treasury was empty and debts were piling up. This was the result of the repressive policy of the British minister. When the ruler wanted to come to terms, the British minister refused to permit him to do so and even threatened to get him deposed by the imperial Govt. The ruler was helpless. He tried to dismiss the minister (whom he had himself appointed a few months earlier) but the minister refused to be dismissed and had the backing of the Agent of the Govt. of India. Ultimately the ruler was forced, by the pressure of the popular upheaval, to come to terms and to dismiss the minister. Even then the minister stuck on! He left ultimately. I am sure that the Agent to the Gov. General is now trying to create fresh trouble in Rajkot.

In the Orissa states there has been open and repeated interference on the part of the Govt. of India. Troops have been sent and firing on the people has been repeatedly resorted to.[3] In one state, as you must know, the British Agent fired at a crowd which therefore killed him. Since then troops from distant parts of India have been concentrated in Orissa and Ranpur (where the murder took place) has become a wilderness, almost every inhabitant of this small & backward state having run away on the approach of troops.

In Jaipur a big conflict is impending which is likely to drag in the Congress as the leader of the Jaipur movement is a very prominent Congressman, Jamnalal Bajaj.[4] The conflict has come because the Jaipur Govt. refused to permit the popular organisation to do famine work

2 See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 412.
3. See *Selected Works*, Vol 9, pp. 410-411.
4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 413.

in the state, although famine is ravaging large areas. The People's Association has been banned, the president of it who is a resident of Jaipur (Jamnalal Bajaj) is forbidden entry into the state and every vestige of civil liberty crushed. The challenge has been accepted by Bajaj and he has given notice that he will enter Jaipur on a certain date early in February. His arrest will start the civil disobedience movement.

Who is doing this in Jaipur? Not the Maharaja who is a youth more interested in taking fresh wives unto himself than in the task of governing. He has just, I believe, married for the third time. He did so in Bombay and when a deputation of Jaipur merchants in Bombay wanted to wait on him to protest against the steps taken by his govt. he replied that he was not interested, or something to that effect. The man in command in Jaipur is an Englishman who is prime minister and he has declared that he will stand no nonsense and will crush with violence every attempt to disobey his orders, howsoever peaceful this disobedience might be.

It is extraordinary how many British officers are in charge of the Indian States as the rulers' ministers. Then there are of course the Residents and the Agents of the Gov. General and behind them all the Political Dept. of the Govt. of India. It is absolutely clear that the real struggle of the people is with the British Govt. of India and hardly with the rulers who count for little.

I have written at too great length already and I must end this letter. But I should like to mention the two major states Hyderabad and Kashmir. In both of these popular movements have developed and in both attempts are being made to crush them on the ground that they are communal movements. As it happens Hyderabad has a Muslim ruler & a Muslim bureaucracy while the population of the state is 85% Hindu. Kashmir has a Hindu ruler and mostly Hindu officials while the population of the state is 85% Muslim.

This struggle in the states is bound to have far-reaching repercussions. It will affect the question of federation and it might put an end to the Congress ministries, if the Congress as a whole gets deeply involved.

I wonder if you have given any further thought to the constitutional aspect of the states question. If so I shall be grateful if you will let me have your views. I am presiding next month over the States' People's Conference.[5]

Apologies for the length of this letter. I have not written to you about other matters which distress me greatly—the Spanish situation

5. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 418-431.

more particularly. What can I write? I suppose that in spite of appearances, Chamberlain is not likely to continue for long

I must apologise to you for not having written yet to Manley[6] in Jamaica. I would have done so from here but unfortunately I left the address in Allahabad. I shall write to him on my return

All good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6 Norman Manley (1893 1969), Chief Minister, 1955 59, and Prime Minister, 1959 62, of Jamaica

51. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Wardha
22.2.39

My dear Krishna,

I enclose a copy of a statement I have issued to the press this evening.[2] Perhaps some truncated form of it might reach you by cable. The statement might surprise you and even distress you But after very full consideration I came to the conclusion that there was no other course left open to me. The statement is a long one and yet inevitably it cannot contain many important matters which have influenced me. Subhas has gone off the rails and has been behaving badly in many ways. His principal supporters are very irresponsible and unreliable people and it is quite impossible for me to join this motley group with whose viewpoints on national and international politics I do not agree. Yet if I happened to join his Committee, all the burden would fall on me. I would be coming in continuous conflict with his policies, such as they are. Apart from principles and policies, Subhas's methods of work are difficult to put up with. He has paralysed the A.I.C.C. office and passes orders over its head in all manner of election matters and local disputes — these orders being flagrantly partial and against our rules or procedure. The Working Committee, which was to have met here,

1 J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2 See *Selected Works*, Vol 9, pp. 485-487.

could not meet because he was unable to attend owing to illness and he directed us not to transact even routine business.

For me this new development has far-reaching significance. I do not propose to join any Working Committee whoever forms it — subject to a crisis overtaking us. It is quite likely that Subhas might not be able to carry on. If so the old guard might slip in. Even so I shall not join the Working Committee. I have had enough of this kind of thing. Anyway the Congress will clear up matters somewhat.

The I.P.C.[3] from London has just cabled to me that the 25th February should be observed as a Spain Day for demonstrations, etc. I am afraid it is far too late to take any steps of this kind now. It takes some time to organise. Besides I do not think such demonstrations would be successful just now.

What about sending food ships to Spain? I suppose this is off for the present. We are cabling some money to the *Comite de l' Enfance* of Paris.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

3. International Peace Campaign.

52. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Lucknow
17.5.39

My dear Krishna,

I have been sending you letters from time to time dealing with various matters that arose. I shall continue to do so, for the mind goes on functioning through sheer habit. So also I shall carry on with my usual activities, though I realise more and more how I am losing in efficiency. But I want to tell you briefly the state of my mind. It is bad. I have lost all pep and feel devitalised, and my interest in life itself seems to be fading away. Don't be alarmed. I can still function fairly effectively and it may be that I shall recover some of my vitality. For the moment however the outlook is not encouraging. Most of the things

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

that I value and for which I have worked seem to be going to pieces, and it is not surprising that I should also disintegrate in the process Nearly all the conceit I possessed in such ample measure has been knocked out of me. I suppose this is a gradual process and many things contribute to it. Events in India, events elsewhere. What has happened in Spain has affected me greatly as a deep personal sorrow. What has happened and is happening in India, being near to me, affects me continuously. The kind of human material that I see about me, the all-pervading pettiness and vulgarity, the mutual suspicion and back-biting and so many other things distress me beyond measure. Everywhere the wrong type of person is pushing himself to the front, everywhere disruptive forces are growing. Perhaps I exaggerate, perhaps all this is inevitable and is not peculiar to India in the present phase of the world.

It is possible that I might not have been affected by all this quite so much if I had retained my own peace of mind. Having lost that in a large measure, the shield that protected me has gone. The heat and my indifferent health make matters worse.

I wrote to you two and a half months ago that I was very ill mentally. I had received a sudden shock which upset me more than almost anything else had ever done. I was afraid of a breakdown but I avoided it and during those days of mental agony I sat down and forced myself to write those articles, *Where Are We?*[2] I adjusted myself gradually and became more normal. But I was too much shaken up and the after-effects continue.

I am sorry to write to you all this and to distress you. I do so to enable you to realise somewhat how I am functioning at present. Partly also to relieve myself. There is hardly anyone here to whom I can speak with frankness about myself here. But please do not worry. It is a phase which will pass perhaps.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

2. The reference is to the eight articles printed in the *National Herald* between 28 February and 6 March 1939. They were later reprinted as a pamphlet, and included in *The Unity of India* (London, 1941), pp. 66-132. *See Selected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 488-520.

53. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
August 15, 1939

My dear Krishna,
I am having some little difficulty about my passage but I suppose something will be fixed up. At the most I shall have to go by Air France from here and not by K.L.M.

I had a long cable from the Chinese Ambassador in London relayed to me by the Consul in Calcutta. In this cable he sent me his good wishes and greetings. It ended up by a curious and unexpected sentence as follows:

> "Winston Churchill requests me send his good wishes for success of your mission"

What is the world coming to?

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

54. To David Gronfell[1]

Allahabad
Sept. 18, 1939

My dear Mr. Grenfell,
I have just received your cable on return to Allahabad. Three days ago I sent a long cable to India League giving a summary of the Congress Executive's statement on the war situation.[2] This must have crossed your cable. This statement must have given you a fair idea of our position. I am now enclosing a full copy of the statement.

You will notice that the statement makes it quite clear that we stand for democracy and freedom and are against fascist and Nazi aggression. We are prepared to cooperate in every way in the building up of a

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 139-140.

new world order. But the whole attitude and policy of the British Government in India in the past, and more specially in the recent past, has been such as to irritate Indian opinion and make it disbelieve vague professions made by the British Government. Repeatedly we have drawn their attention to our attitude in regard to a war. We have been ignored completely and action has been taken affecting India without any reference to us. In the feudal and autocratic Indian states the whole policy of the British Government has been to encourage this autocracy and misrule. Several ordinances have been passed without our consultation and India has been declared a belligerent country. In the present state of Indian opinion this has been a very great irritation. The Working Committee's statement has been worded mildly but it does give expression to some extent to this feeling in India. A strong body of Indian opinion held that in view of the attitude of the British Government the only possible course for us was to refrain from any cooperation. But we have decided not to take any hasty step and to give an opportunity to the British Government to take immediate steps to meet this difficult situation. You will observe that what we have said applies of course to India but the whole problem is viewed in a larger context of world freedom. It is thus of concern to everyone in England or in India who is interested that this War should not be allowed to become an imperialist war.

In the event of the British Government not meeting the Indian demand satisfactorily, the only possible course open to India is to withdraw all cooperation. I would regret that exceedingly. But I cannot advise any other course which is in consonance with Indian dignity as well as the cause of world freedom.

It is important that the British Government should recognise clearly India as a free and independent nation. In giving effect to this declaration certain difficulties will arise, but it is necessary that, in as large a measure as possible, immediate effect should be given to it. I am sure that we shall have the goodwill and support of all liberty-loving people in England in the course we have taken. We have all, whether we live in England or in India, a terribly difficult time to face and the future is likely to grow more and more burdensome. The only right course for all of us is to be clear as to what that future is going to be and to give effect to it in the present. For if the present is ignored the future will take revenge.

Our larger Executive, the All India Congress Committee, is meeting on the 7th October and it is important that the position should be cleared up before then, otherwise steps may be taken which it may be difficult to retrace.

I am sending the following cable to you today:—
Have already cabled a summary of Congress decision. Our policy against fascism and wholly favouring democracy but India must have democracy to defend. Important for British Government recognize India as free nation and give immediate effect to greatest possible extent.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

55. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
Sept. 19, 1939

My dear Krishna,
Your letter of the 9th September has just reached me. I am cabling to you as follows: "Your letter 9th agree generally outlook suggestions."

I find myself in very great agreement with what you have written. I think that you will find that agreement reflected in the Working Committee's statement also, though that statement does not go into as much detail as your letter. I might even go so far as to say that my colleagues in the Working Committee are also looking at the problem more or less from the point of view that you have suggested, though I cannot say how far they would agree with the details. In view of this common outlook, I think you should work on this basis.

Nothing has happened here since the Working Committee's resolution. But I take it that developments will take place before very long. Presumably references are being made at the other end. It will be very unfortunate if the British Government cannot get rid of its old mentality. Time is an important factor. It would also be unfortunate if the British Government hedged and hesitated as this will inevitably lead to all manner of suspicion.

The news from Poland about Russo-German contacts is disturbing and confusing.[2] The first reaction is against the manifest opportunism of Russian foreign politics. Yet one cannot form a definite opinion without fuller knowledge.

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 146.

Here in India a great deal of realisation of the issues at stake is dawning on our people. But the process is slow and on either side, the right and the left, people continue to think and to talk in terms divorced from reality. Generally speaking no attempt has been made on the part of the Government of India to take advantage of the provisions of the new Government of India Act Amending Act.[3] Very drastic ordinances have been passed no doubt, but the discretion of the provincial governments has not been interfered with to any appreciable extent. In the Congress provinces therefore the ordinances are not being enforced in any large measure. Such enforcement as is taking place is chiefly in regard to profiteering. In Bengal and Punjab there has been more application of these ordinance. In Assam the Digboi oilfield has been declared a protected area, thus removing it from the provincial government's orbit. This is obviously being done with a view to conserve oil supplies. However, it is objectionable from the provincial government's point of view. There has been, as you know, a strike in Digboi which has continued for many months. The application of the ordinances to Digboi is hitting the strikers hard. The oil company has misbehaved in many ways during the past few months and the Congress has expressed its sympathy with the strikers and even gone so far as to say that in view of the oil company's attitude the lease should not be renewed. This resolution was passed two or three months back. At the same time the strikers have often taken up a foolish attitude and not taken the advice tendered to them both by us and the provincial government. Their present demand is that they should all be taken back without any victimisation. No other demand is being pressed. But the company refused to accept this.

In Cawnpore, labour troubles are brewing[4] Generally speaking the situation has been quiet except for a strike in one mill, the Victoria Mills. There is talk however of the strike spreading. It is possible that the government might intervene as the present demand of the workers is reasonable. They are prepared to abide by the arbitration of the Government Commissioner. The employer however (Sir J.P. Srivastava)[5] is not agreeable to this as he apparently thinks that he has broken the strike by engaging new hands

It is inevitable that difficult questions should arise from day to day in the working of the provincial governments under existing circumstances.

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol 10, pp 147 and 323
4 See *Selected Works*, Vol 8, p. 394
5 (1889 1954), leading industrialist of Kanpur.

But generally speaking the attitude of the Governors and the Government of India is not to irritate the provincial governments or the Congress organisation. They behaved foolishly enough in pushing through the Government of India Act Amending Bill as well as other legislations and ordinances without any attempt to approach or gain the consent of the Congress or the provincial governments. This inevitably has put up the backs of the Congress and the people generally.

I hope you will keep in touch with me by cable and letter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

56. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Bombay
July 1, 1940

Bebee dear, This is to introduce to you Dwarka Nath Kachru, who has been associated with the office of the States People's Conference at Allahabad for a year. I am sending him to Hyderabad to collect as much material as he can about the state—official papers, administration reports, budgets, historical background, land system, education, political movements &c. It is not his business to interfere in any way with any activity there or to advise anyone. He goes merely to gather facts with the State's Congress people. He is likely to stay in Hyderabad for ten days to a fortnight. He has already studied the subject to some extent—not much.

I hope you are well now. I was distressed to learn that the sun had proved too strong for you.

I am off to Delhi on a fool's errand.

Love,

Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

57. To Sir Akbar Hydari[1]

Allahabad
October 25, 1940

My dear Sir Akbar,

A distinguished member of the Chinese Government, Mr. Tai Chi Tao, is visiting India soon. He is likely to arrive about the end of this month by air in Calcutta and he intends spending a month in India touring in various places. Mr. Tai is a Minister and is the President of the Examination Yuan, which is one of the important departments of the Chinese Executive Government. I understand that it is his intention to visit, among other places, Ellora and Ajanta. He is a well-known Buddhist scholar. His visit is partly due to his desire to see various places in India connected historically and culturally with the Buddhist faith.

I would be very grateful to you if the Hyderabad Government accords to President Tai Chi Tao every facility and help during his visit to Ellora and Ajanta. He is likely to be accompanied by some members of his staff as well as Professor Tan Yun-Shan of the Cheena Bhawan, Visva-Bharati. He does not himself know English but he will have interpreters.

If I may suggest it without impropriety, a letter of invitation on your part might be sent to President Tai Chi Tao or, preferably, to the Chinese Consul-General in Calcutta, Mr. C. C Huang, whose address is the Consulate General of the Republic of China, Calcutta

Of course no such letter need be sent if you think otherwise.

I do not know the exact programme of President Tai Chi Tao's tour As soon as this is decided, the Chinese Consul General can inform you.

With all good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L

58. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

15-12-40

Bebee, I have written long notes of instructions. Please go through them and see that Upadhyaya carries out the directions given

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, N M M L This letter was written from Dehra Dun Jail

There is a letter for Nan which should be given to her.

Please ask Upadhyaya to send me by money order Rs. 25/-. Also to send me another Rs. 25 in the first week of January—by the 10th or so.

Among the books that might be sent to me some time later are some travel books—Peter Fleming's and on Siam & Cambodia & which are at the bottom of the northern shelves in my room. Also Edward Thompson's poems. Also Dewey's books (the American philosopher). They are spread out somewhere. I had specially asked for *I Believe*, a symposium. This has not come.

It was good to see you. Keep growing younger & thus make up for those who grow older.

Love,

Jawahar

GLOSSARY

Alphonsos	variety of mangoes
Apbhransh	corrupted form of a word
Ata	flour
Bagh	garden
Bhadon	sixth month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to August-September
Chota	younger
Darvesh	dervish
Durian	fruit grown in South East Asia
Elachi	cardamom
Gulmohar	a large tree with red flowers
Id-ul-Fitr	Muslim festival on the second day of the new moon after Ramzan, a month during which Muslims fast
Janmapatra	horoscope
Jyestha	third month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to June
Ka'ba	a place of Muslim pilgrimage in Mecca
Laddu	a sweet shaped like a ball
Laung	clove
Maktab	Urdu school
Malida	a variety of woollen cloth made in Kashmir
Mamu	mother's brother
Masi	mother's sister
Math	Hindu monastery
Murti	idol
Mushaira	symposium of Urdu poets
Nani	mother's mother
Nyaya	Hindu system of logic
Pandal	a big tent for temporary use
Pashmina	cloth made of soft fine wool
Pera	a kind of sweetmeat made of milk
Ram Naumi	birthday of Rama
Samosa	a triangular shaped stuffed fried snack
Saqi	one who serves wine
Shalwar	a pair of loose trousers worn by women
Tai	wife of father's elder brother
Yojana	a measure of distance, roughly five to nine miles

INDEX

(Biographical footnotes are italicized)

Abbas, Khwaja Ahmad, 415, 438, 460, 477
Abbottabad, 85, 95
A B.C. *of Psychology* (Charles Kay Ogden), 605
Abdullah, Sheikh Muhammad, 330, 617
Abhayanandji, Swami, 241
Abrahams, Peter, 125
Abul Hasan, 437–438, 479
Abyssinia—*see* Ethiopia
Achimota College (Ghana), 389
Adams, James Truslow, 155 & fn
Adelphi, 589
Adil Shah, Ali, 183 fn
Administrative Reforms Commission, 5 fn
Advaita Ashram (Mayavati), 609
A E—*see* Russell, George William
Aeneid (Virgil), 79
Aeschylus, 79
African campaign, 146, 148
Aga Khan Palace (Pune), 6 fn, 7 fn, 12 fn, 214 fn, 360, 381 fn, 434 fn
Agarwal, Shriman Narayan, 576
Agarwala, Ratish Mohan, 453
Agnes (*nurse*), 451
Agra, 319, 451, 618 *fn*, 666, 668
Agraharam, 659
Agrawal, Rai Amarnath, 623 & *fn*
Ahalya Bai of Indore, 139 & *fn*
Ahmadnagar, 7, 8, 214, 394, 397–398, 502, 512, 514, 524, 548, 550, 581, 598, 601, 631
Ahmadnagar Fort, 1 & *fn*, 4 fn, 7–8, 9 fn, 28, 39, 50, 56, 93, 143, 175, 183 fn, 212, 297, 366–367, 370 fn, 371, 376, 380–382, 410, 417, 422, 426, 468, 470, 480, 487 fn, 493, 495–496, 548, 555–556, 558, 570, 581, 591, 593–594, 598–602, 604, 607–611, 618, 626, 636
Ahmedabad, 12 & fn
Air France, 714
Ajanta, 664–665, 669, 687–688, 693, 719
Ajwani, L H., 305, 508, 541
Akbar, (emperor), 78, 104, 122 fn, 224, 441
Akhand Hindustan (K M Munshi), 513 & fn
Akola, 644
Akyab, 684
A la recherche du temps perdu (Remembrance of Things Past by Marcel Proust), 9 fn, 14
Alaska, 323 fn
Alcestis (Euripides), 31
Alcott, Louisa May, 55 & *fn*
A Leaf in the Storm (Lin Yutang), 77, 79
Alexander, Horace, 137, 554
Alexandra, 706
Algiers, 41 *fn*
Ali, Ahmad, 287, 415 fn
——, Asghar, 437, 479
——, Sadiq, 599 & fn
——, Salim, 359 & *fn*, 364, 373, 383, 403, 408
——, Shaukat, 692
Aligarh Jail, 197
Aligarh Muslim University, 692
Alipur Jail, 68, 100–101, 568
Allahabad, 10–11, 13, 20, 25, 28, 31, 34, 46, 55, 72, 80, 82–83, 86, 91, 94–96, 113–114, 125, 151, 153, 155, 158–159, 163, 167–168, 170, 176–177,

181, 196, 204, 212, 221, 223, 226–230, 235–236, 238, 240–241, 246, 257, 261–262, 265 fn, 267–268, 270, 272, 274–275, 287–288, 296, 299, 307, 316, 320–321, 330, 335, 339–341, 349, 354, 360, 365, 368–370, 373, 380, 383, 386, 394, 398, 406, 408, 496–497, 504, 509, 512, 517, 520, 449, 457–458, 471, 473, 474 fn, 478–479, 482–484, 487, 489–491, 496–497, 504, 509, 512, 517, 520, 524–526, 528–529, 531, 533–534, 536, 538–539, 541, 549, 560, 563, 567, 583, 585–586, 588, 590–592, 594, 596–600, 603, 604 fn, 607, 609, 612, 615–616, 619, 622, 623 fn, 646, 655, 659, 665, 668, 670–671, 678, 680, 683, 685, 687, 689–690, 693–694, 697, 699, 706, 711, 714, 718

Allahabad Khadi Bhandar, 317

Allahabad Law Journal Press, 395, 471, 541–542

Allahabad Medical Association, 265 fn

Allahabad Municipality, 321 & fn

Allahabad resolution of Congress, 91 fn, 276, 278

Allahabad Roerich Centre, 295

Allahabad University, 320 fn, 536, 605 fn

Allah Bakhsh, 133, 142

Allama Mashriqi—*see* Khan, Inayatullah

Allen and Unwin Ltd. (London), 168, 677

Allenby: A Study in Greatness (A.P. Wavell), 185 fn, 304

Allenby in Egypt (A.P. Wavell), 185 fn, 304, 559, 589

Allenby, Lord, 364

Allied powers, 3 fn, 41 fn, 91 fn, 115 fn, 161 fn, 186, 408 fn, 445 fn

All India Congress Committee, 2–3, 6 fn, 58, 91, 108, 147 fn, 194 fn, 215 fn, 457, 532, 580, 583–584, 672, 674, 689, 711, 715

All India Convention of Congress Legislators (Delhi), 670 fn, 672, 674

All India Muslim League—*see* Muslim League

All India Nationalist Muslims Conference, 527 fn.

All India Spinners Association (Srinagar), 316

All India States' People's Conference, 285 fn

All India Trade Union Congress, 216 fn

All India Women's Conference, 200 fn, 241 & fn, 326

All Men Are Brothers (Shui hu Chuan by Shih Nai-an), 22 & fn, 77, 79

All Our Tomorrows (Douglas Reed), 79

All Parties Committee's Report—*see* Nehru Report

All Party Leaders Conference, 70 fn

All Souls College (Oxford), 203

Almora, 142 fn, 529, 538–541 & fn, 544, 611, 630, 634, 636, 638

Almora Jail, 137, 539, 549, 623–624, 632–634, 637–638

Almora Municipal Board, 538 fn

Alsace–Lorraine, 29 fn

Alum, Begam, 328

Alva, Joachim, 180

Amarnath (Kashmir), 631

Ambalal Library, 336

Ambassador Dodd's Diary (William E. Dodd Jr. and Martha Dodd, ed.), 194, 230

Amber Fort, 304

Amerasia, 188, 229, 330, 388, 441

American Leviathan: The Republic in the Machine Age (Charles & Mary Beard), 300 & fn

American Relief India Inc. (U.S.A.), 313 fn

American Reports, 553

America Speaks (Sir Philip Hamilton Gibbs), 230

Amery, L. S., 12 fn, 60, 89 fn, 98 fn, 136, 146, 203, 218, 313 & fn, 456 fn, 487 fn, 625

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 161, 370, 394, 406, 495, 497–498, 596

Anakapalle, 659

Anand Bhawan (Allahabad), 9–10, 12, 15, 21, 24, 28, 31–33, 35 fn, 43, 45–46, 51, 64, 73, 75–76, 80, 82–83, 94, 96–97, 102, 105, 108–109, 126, 142, 144–145, 147, 149, 152–153, 161 fn, 164–165, 181, 188, 221, 236, 240 fn,

246 fn, 253, 261, 265 & fn, 269–270, 272–274, 278, 287–288, 294–295, 301, 310, 317, 333–335, 346–347, 363, 368 fn–369, 371, 380, 386, 388, 390, 393, 398, 414, 422, 430, 440, 445, 454, 478, 489–492, 504, 524, 531, 551–553, 556, 560, 565, 590, 606, 609, 631, 638, 646
Anderson, H. Fortes, 559, 576
Andhra Pradesh, 654 fn, 657, 660
Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, 12, 60
And One Did Not Come Back (K. A. Abbas), 438, 460, 474
Aney, M.S., 29 & fn
Anis, Babar Ali, 163 & *fn*, 164 fn
Anna Karenina (Leo Tolstoy), 504, 508, 526, 536, 550, 555
Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan (James Tod), 344 & fn, 346, 385, 403
Ansari, Shaukat, 526–527 & fn, 559
——, Zohra, 693
Anthology of Modern Verse (Sir A. Methuen), 111
Anushilan Party, 354 fn
Apology (Plato), 500
Approach to Vedanta (Christopher Isherwood), 633 fn
Arabian Sea, 625
Arctic region, 564
Ariel (Andre Maurois), 52
Arnstarchi, F E., 397
Aristotle, 23, 416–417
Arnold, Sir Edwin, 477
Aronson, Alexander, 576
Arrival & Departure (Arthur Koestler), 363, 452
Arthur Road Prison (Bombay), 6 fn, 178
Art of Seeing (Aldous Huxley), 176
Arundale, G S, 543 & *fn*
Aryanayakam, E.W., 440 & fn
Asaf Ali, J, 5, 15, 29, 41, 49, 68–69, 89, 99, 101, 112, 115, 130, 142, 150, 155, 174–175, 179, 187, 261, 291–292, 364, 367, 373, 379, 399, 476, 507, 521, 531, 547, 556, 568, 593, 598, 630
——, Aruna, 6, 49 & fn, 68 & fn, 101, 111
Ashoka, (emperor), 476
Ashvaghosa, 263–264, 282
Asia, 161, 172, 188, 316, 368, 386, 404, 441, 461, 540 fn, 596
Asi, Abdul Bari, 327 & *fn*
Asia & Democracy (Pearl Buck), 323
Assam, 284 fn, 319–320, 382, 402, 423, 585, 689–691, 694, 717
Assam Oil Company (Digboi), 694
Associated Press, 581
Atal, Madan, 172, 181, 327, 394, 414, 474, 529, 541, 551, 557
Athenison, A., 463
Athens, 74 & fn, 159 fn
Atish, Haider Ali, 168 & *fn*, 169 fn, 264 *fn*, 305 & fn, 317, 318 fn
Atlantic Charter, 202 & fn
Atlantic City, 314 fn
Attlee, Clement, 89 *fn*, 98 *fn*
August disturbances, 10 fn, 12 fn, 146
August movement, 11 fn, 12 fn, 25 fn, 87 fn, 134 fn, 216 fn
August Resolution, 2 fn–3, 9 fn, 60–61, 66, 81 fn, 91, 184–185 & fn, 194 & fn, 200, 213, 215 fn, 276, 278, 280, 341 fn, 382, 424 & fn, 434 fn, 494 fn
Aundh, 708
Aurangzeb, 666
Aurobindo Ashram (Pondicherry), 653 & fn
Aurobindo, Sri, 111, 130–131, 265, 385, 477, 653 *fn*, 658, 671
Auroville, 653 fn
Australia, 159, 178, 256, 608 fn
Austria, 615, 697 fn
Autobiography (Benjamin Franklin), 77, 79
Autobiography (Benvenuto Cellini), 79
Autobiography (Jawaharlal Nehru), 168, 266, 359, 397, 400, 405, 411, 423, 427, 460, 464 & fn, 474, 643, 647, 677
Autocrat of the Breakfast Table (O.W. Holmes), 79
A Week with Gandhi (Louis Fischer), 404, 408, 415, 453
Axis powers, 2, 3 fn, 195, 323 fn

Ayodhya, 264
Azad, Abul Kalam, 1, 5–9 & fn, 15, 18, 20, 22, 29, 38–40, 47, 50, 62, 81, 84, 89–92, 99, 101–102, 105–106, 112, 118–119, 122, 128, 131, 133, 138, 140, 145, 150, 184–185, 211-212, 262, 275–280, 290–292, 296–297, 306, 311, 316, 328, 367, 375, 382, 398, 402, 408, 445, 474, 476, 483, 486, 494, 496 & fn, 499–500, 505–506, 510–511, 521, 523, 531-532, 536, 543, 547, 556–557, 568, 579–586, 593, 595, 598, 605, 608
——, Mohamad Hussain, 122 *fn*
Aztec civilization, 589

Babar, 205
Bachhraj & Company (Bombay), 18, 30, 47, 167, 189, 192, 226, 286, 296, 322, 326, 351, 362, 369–370, 415, 422, 427, 435–436, 450, 469, 474, 480, 482, 509, 542, 578, 589, 604
Badakhshan, 260 fn
Badenweiler, 70, 119, 171, 464
Badshah Khan—*see* Khan, Abdul Ghaffar
Bagh-o-Bahar (Mir Amman), 180
Bahadur Shah, 52–54, 211
Bairam Khan, 224
Bajaj, Jamnalal, 285 fn, 422, 672, 709–710
——, Kamalnayan, 285 & *fn*, 415
Balak Ram, 487
Balasundar Amal, 87 & fn
Baldwin, Stanley, 668 & fn
Baljipeth, 660
Ballad and the Source (Rosamond Lehmann), 557
Balrampur Hospital (Lucknow), 189, 303
Bamrauli Airport, 678
Banabhatta, 43 & fn
Banaras Conspiracy Case, 618 fn
Banaras Hindu University, 553
Banerji, Purnima (Nora), 96, 98, 105, 137, 144, 147, 163, 192, 310
Bangalore, 536
Banking & Finance in China (Frank M. Tamagna), 230
Bansi, 479
Barcelona, 237, 700
Bardoli, 457
Bardoloi, Gopinath, 423
Bareilly, 529, 560, 597, 600–601, 629, 632
Bareilly Jail, 119, 125, 440 fn, 568, 575, 578, 594, 598–602, 604, 623, 626, 632–637
Batas, 534, 703
Battle Hymn of China (Agnes Smedley), 401, 438, 508, 589
Baz Bahadur, 519
Beard, Charles, 194 & fn, 300
——, Mary, 194 & fn, 300
Beatrice the Ballerina (Ivan Vassilovitch), 452–453
Beautiful Valleys of Kashmir, 545
Beethoven, Ludwig van, 95, 220, 661 & fn
Beggar my Neighbour (Lionel Fielden), 305
Behari, 437, 479
Belgaum Central Prison, 8 fn
Belgium, 522 & fn, 616
Belur Math, 241, 541
Benares (Banaras)—*see* Varanasi
Benares the Sacred City (E.B. Havell), 300 fn
Bengal, 201 & fn, 213, 226, 228, 234–235 & fn, 241–245, 248, 260–261, 264, 275–276, 283, 284 fn, 306, 311, 313 & fn, 314 fn, 322, 326, 333, 353, 449, 608 & fn, 658, 670, 717
B.N.W. Railway, 168, 604
Ben-Shalom, Avraham, 230
Benton, William, 474 & *fn*, 606
Bentwich, Norman De Mattos, 79
Bergh, George Van den, 605
Berhampur Jail, 344, 568
Berlin, 396, 401 fn, 615–616, 661
Bernal, J.D., 172 & fn
Besant, Annie, 543
Bessie, Alvah, 230
Best of All Possible Worlds (Voltaire), 125, 168
Best Stories of Modern Bengal (translated by Nilima Devi), 554
Betrayal of Freedom (Y.G. Krishna-

murti), 339 *fn*
Between the Acts (Virginia Woolf), 103
Between Two Worlds (Upton Sinclair), 79, 136 fn
Bex, 396
Bhabha, Homi J., 536 & *fn*
Bhagavad Gita (translated by Swami Nikhilananda), 541, 562
Bhandari, M.G., 9–10, 145, 150, 388, 416
Bharatananda, Swami—*see* Friedman, Maurice
Bhargava, Gopi Chand, 200
Bharucha, Pheroze B., 171 & fn, 328, 385, 620
Bhasa, 263 & *fn*
Bhat, Rudra Dat, 540 & *fn*
Bhavabhuti, 105, 263 & fn
Bhim Tal, 539
Bhola, 437, 479
Bhopal, 328, 643
Bhowali, 70, 167, 440
Bhusawal, 644
Bhuvaneshwar, 656
Bibi Amma, 628
Bible, 331, 351
Bible for Today (John F. Stirling, ed.), 305
Bihar, 11, 48 fn, 68, 203 & *fn*, 213, 488, 665
Bihar Constructive Workers' Conference, 569 *fn*
Bijapur, 183 fn
Bijnor, 692
Binda, 479
Bird, Alice—see Smedley, Agnes
Birla, G.D., 336, 353, 419
Bjornson, B., 79
Blacks and Tans, 63 fn
Blum, Leon, 688, 704 fn
Blunt, W.S., 291
Boan *Hill* (*Oxford*), 310
Bobbili, 659–660
Bodhisattva, 665, 669, 688
Bodmer, Frederick, 404 fn, 407, 480
Bolam (*S.P.*), 632, 634
Bombay, 2–3, 4 fn–7 & fn, 9 fn–10, 25, 30–31, 34, 37, 42–44, 46, 54 & fn, 61, 71–73, 75–76, 82–83, 85–86, 94–96, 101–103, 105, 116, 118, 121–122, 126, 145, 157, 159, 167–168, 170–171 & fn, 174–175, 178, 189, 192, 195, 198–199 & fn, 203–205, 208–209, 211–212 & fn, 214 fn–215, 219, 223, 225, 227, 229, 241, 245, 248, 266, 274–275, 288, 293, 297, 299, 304, 310, 316, 322, 329, 331–332, 335–336, 339, 349, 354, 358, 360, 362–363, 365, 367, 370–371, 373, 378 & *fn*, 381 fn, 383–386, 391, 393–394, 396, 399, 402–404, 406–408, 411–412, 419, 428, 431, 435, 439–441, 444, 446, 448, 452–453, 457–458, 460–461, 462 fn, 465–468, 471–472, 478–479 & *fn*, 483–484, 486–488, 490, 492, 497, 506–507, 510–511, 517–518, 520, 525, 531, 533, 538, 543, 546, 548, 574, 581, 598, 604–605, 610–611, 621, 623, 630–631, 638–639, 645–648, 650–651, 669–670, 672, 687, 692, 700, 706, 708, 710
Bombay Chronicle, 9, 80, 132, 161
Bombay Legislative Assembly, 199 *fn*
Book of *Russian Verse* (C.M. Bowra, ed.), 408
Book on Indian Birds (Salim Ali), 364, 383, 403, 408
Book on Nature Cure (Morarji Desai), 5 fn
Borderline Russia (H. Fortes Anderson), 559, 576
Borodin, George, 559
Bose, Subhas Chandra, 691, 695–696, 711–712
Bottomley, Gordon, 302 & *fn*
Bowra, C.M., 408
Bradley, A.C., 19 & fn
Brahmaputra Valley, 693
Brain of India (*Aurobindo Ghose*), 385 & fn
Brazil, 257
Breasted, J.H., 305
Brelvi, S.A., 44
Brewster, Achsah Barlow, 541 & fn
——, Earl H., 541 & fn
British Broadcasting Corporation, 364, 427

Broch, Theodor, 452
Broken Silence (Mirza Ahmad Sohrab), 79
Bromfield, Louis, 103, 111 & *fn*
Brook, Theodor, 298
Browden, Earl, 499
Brussels Conference—*see* International Congress against Imperialism
Buck, Pearl, 22, 55, 64, 230, 247, 298, 323 & fn, 334
Budapest, 616, 702
Buddha, Gautama, 96–97 fn, 137, 282 & fn, 338, 470, 476, 627, 629, 661–662, 668
Buddhacharita (Ashvaghosa), 282
Buddhi Lal, 95, 265 & fn
Bulandshahr, 618 fn
Bulgaria, 41 fn, 515, 517, 571, 576, 578
Bunyan, John, 79
Burchett, W.G., 452
Burma, 3 & fn, 146 & fn, 148, 162, 278, 382, 681–683 & fn, 686
Burmese Silver (Edward Thompson), 512, 541
Burmingham, 137
Bushido by Foreign Writers, 576
Buxar, 449
Byron (Andre Maurois), 52
Byron, George Gordon, 52

Cairo, 123, 506, 576, 614
Calcutta, 39 fn–40, 55, 101, 139 fn, 177, 201–202, 234 fn, 241, 243 & fn, 313 & fn, 349, 354 fn, 358, 370, 406, 433, 454, 462–463, 490, 524, 538, 608, 643, 655–657, 658 fn, 660, 662, 669, 680, 684, 687, 689, 691, 697, 714, 719
——, Congress session at, 456
Calcutta Corporation, 201 & fn
Calcutta University, 320 fn, 433, 542
Calcutta University College of Science, 320
Calicut, 423
Call No Man Happy (Andre Maurois), 334, 385
Call of Badrinath (G.P. Nautiyal), 554
Cambodia, 720
Cambridge, 14, 106, 126 fn, 231, 293, 355, 688
Campion, Sidney R., 334
Canada, 313
Cannanore, 669
Canterbury, Dean of, 559
Cape Comorin—*see* Kanyakumari
Captain, Goshiben (Psyche), 18–19, 29–30, 35, 45, 85, 173–174, 176 & fn, 178, 180, 189, 191–192, 257, 262–263, 265, 268, 270, 272, 299–301, 346, 376, 384, 412, 418, 433, 592
——, Maneckji Sorabji (Mac), 176 & fn
——, Nargis (Noorie), 176, 178 & fn, 183, 419, 425, 433
Carroll, Lewis, 45, 84, 103
Casey, R.G., baron, 608 & *fn*
Cassius, 438, 443
Caucasus, 195 fn, 616
Cawnpore—*see* Kanpur
Cellini, Benvenuto, 79
Central Legislative Assembly, 29 fn, 57, 70 fn, 89, 219 fn, 341, 370 fn, 379, 380 fn–381 & fn, 456 fn, 523, 558, 563, 566–567
Cervantes, Miguel de, 103 fn
Ceylon—*see* Sri Lanka
Chak, Janki Nath, 628
Chakravarti, Amiya, 170
Chalapathi Rau, M., 464 & fn
Chamanlal, Dewan, 200, 563 fn
Chamberlain, Neville, 61, 711
Chand Bibi, 183, 366, 611
Chandra Dat, 540
Chandragupta, 54 fn
Chandra, Ramesh, 197
Chapra, 102, 168, 295, 440
Chase, C.T., 605
Chashme Shahi (Srinagar), 619–620, 628
Chatterji, Sarat Chandra, 589
Chattopadhyaya, Jagadish Chandra, 452
——, Virendranath, 401 fn
Chaudhri, Kumar, 320 & *fn*
Chauri Chaura, 99
Cheena Bhawan (Vishva-Bharati), 719
Chekhov, A., 125

Chenghz Khan, 87, 97
Chengtu, 96
Chiang Kai shek, 31 fn, 37–38, 40 & fn, 66 fn, 87–88, 100, 457
——, Madame, 36, 37 fn, 40, 44, 87–88, 114–115 & fn, 314 fn, 457, 522
Chiang Yee, 125
Chicago, 401, 614
Childe, Vere Gordon, 554
Children of the Soviet Arctic (Tikhov Semushkin), 559
Chimur, 198 & fn
China, 2, 9 fn, 27, 32, 37, 40, 48, 66 fn, 77 fn, 84, 87, 91, 140, 143, 187, 207, 230 fn, 237, 249, 258–259, 263, 270, 300–301, 312, 314 & fn, 323 fn, 372, 377, 401 fn, 430 fn, 438, 450, 475–476, 522, 557, 616, 719
China Builds for Democracy (Nym Wales), 64 & fn, 116
China Handbook (Chinese Ministry of Information), 230, 545
Chinchwad, 7 fn
Chinese Destinies (Agnes Smedley), 401 fn
Chinese Educational Mission, 86, 96
Chinese Medical Mission, 474
Chitnis, S L., 409 & fn, 423
Chittagong, 684
Chittor, 344
Chodavaram, 659
Chopra, Prakash, 161 fn
Chota Nagpur, 295
Christa Seva Sangha, 137 fn
Chungking, 236–237, 249, 616
Chungking Diary (D F. Karaka), 452
Churchill, Sir Winston, 10 & fn, 29 & fn, 87, 186, 311, 323, 429 & fn, 432, 456 fn, 624 fn–625, 714
Citrine, Sir Walter, 546 & fn, 549 & fn, 554
City of Fear (Gilbert Frankau), 647 fn
Civil & Military Gazette, 218
Civil Hospital (Pune), 161
Cleanliness & Godliness (Reginald Reynolds), 305, 408
Clemens, Samuel Langhorne—*see Mark Twain*
Clyde, David, 97 & fn
Cochin, 201 fn
Collected Poems and Plays (Sri Aurobindo), 265–266
Colombo, 367, 482
Colour Bar (Peter Nielsen), 416, 452
Comite de l'Enfance (Paris), 712
Commission to Study Organization of Peace, 125
Committee for India's Freedom (Washington), 691 fn
Common Sense, 287, 596
Communist literature, 448
Communist Party of India, 70 fn, 216 fn, 569, 575, 590
Communists (Indian), 216 & fn, 569–570
Communists (Italian), 522 fn
Como, 617 fn
Complete Greek Drama (W J. Oates and E G. O'Neill, ed.), 79
Complete Works (Lewis Carroll), 103
Confessions and Impressions (Ethel Mannin), 421 & fn
Congress, Indian National, 3 & fn, 4 fn–5 & fn, 7 fn, 10 & fn, 12 fn, 25 fn, 29 fn, 48 & fn, 56–62, 66 fn, 70 fn, 81 fn, 89 fn, 90 fn, 91 fn–92, 98 & fn, 100 & fn, 133–134, 153, 161 fn, 184, 196, 198 fn–200, 202 fn, 213, 215–216, 252 fn, 273, 276–277, 279–280, 282, 284, 291, 324 & fn, 341 fn–342, 344, 379, 380 fn, 382, 434 fn, 444, 445 fn, 456, 478, 527 fn, 569–570, 579, 580 fn, 585, 604 fn, 638, 647, 652–653, 692, 694, 696, 707–710, 712, 716–718
——, session at Calcutta, 456
——, session at Faizpur, 662–663
——, session at Ramgarh, 457
——, session at Tripuri, 456
——, Allahabad resolution of, 91 fn, 276, 278
——, August (Quit India) resolution of, 2 fn–3, 9 fn, 60–61, 66, 81 fn, 91, 184–185 & fn, 194 & fn, 200, 213, 215 fn, 276, 278, 280, 341 fn, 382, 424 & fn, 434 fn, 494 fn
——, *Mysore resolution of* 456
Congress ministries, 285, 707–708, 710
Congress of Religions (Chicago), 614

Congress Parliamentary Party (Organisation), 5 fn
Congress Working Committee, 1–3, 4 fn–6, 56, 58–59, 62, 64 fn, 68 fn, 90 fn, 115, 131, 280, 297, 342, 370 fn, 456–457, 487 fn, 495 fn, 499, 523 fn, 558 fn, 581 fn, 583–586, 639 & fn, 674, 687, 689, 711–712, 714–716
Conscience of a Nation (G.L. Mehta), 548 fn
Conservatives (British), 186
Constantinople—*see* Istanbul
Cooke and Kelvey (New Delhi), 55
Coorg, 524
Cordoba, 23 & fn
Correspondence with Mr. Gandhi, 452, 559
Cot, Pierre, 704 & *fn*
Council of States, 623 fn
Coxhill (District Magistrate), 600, 632
C.R. formula, 580
Cripps Mission, 40 fn
Cripps offer, 284 fn, 341 fn, 639 fn
Cripps, Sir Stafford, 29, 100, 174, 311 & fn, 429, 457, 580, 700, 706
Crito (Plato), 500
Croce, Benedetto, 379 & fn, 386, 452–453
Crow, Carl, 407, 452
Crusades, 104
Curie, Eve, 430 & *fn*, 434, 438, 440, 443, 453
——, Marie, 430 fn
Current, 416 fn
Current History, 128, 132
Cuttack, 568
Czechoslovakia, 615, 701–705
Czernin, Ferdinand, 103

Dacca Central Jail, 354
Dahlberg, Edward, 79
——, G., 79
Daily Chronicle, 91 fn
Dalal, A.R., 336
Dal Lake (Srinagar), 619–620, 628, 631
d'Alvis, E.H., 661 fn
Dandi March, 147 fn, 285 fn
Dara Shikoh, 666
Dard, Mir, 309 & *fn*, 384 & fn
Dark Testament (Peter Abrahams), 125
Darlan, Jean Francois, 41 & *fn*
Darrow, Karl Kelchner, 605
Dartington Hall (England), 420
Das, Bishwanath, 344
——, C.R., 268 fn
——, Swarupa (Buchi), 268 & fn
Das Gupta (publisher), 433
Dastur, Naju, 514 & fn
Datadin, 246, 479
Davies, Joseph E., 460 fn, 508, 576
Dawn of Conscience (J.H. Breasted), 305
Dayanand and the Indian Problem (C. Parameswaran), 499
Day of the Saxon (Homer Lea), 77, 79
D-Day (John Gunther), 527 & fn, 541
Death of the Moth (Virginia Woolf), 245
Deep Furrows (Avraham Ben-Shalom), 230
Defence of India Act, 372–373
Defence of India Rules, 4 & fn, 12 fn, 124 fn, 201, 213, 218 fn, 248, 354, 372–373, 435, 440 fn
Dehra Dun, 15, 21, 68, 82, 122, 231, 239, 301, 385, 544, 546, 568, 648
Dehra Dun Jail, 29, 62, 114, 128, 137, 174, 180, 252, 262, 266, 285, 290, 296, 300, 319, 336, 382, 384, 401–403, 405, 418, 462, 464, 545–546, 575, 578, 623
de la Mare, Walter, 448, 655 fn
De Lamartine, Alphonse, 308 fn
Delhi, 25 fn, 53 fn–54, 64, 133, 138, 147 fn, 174, 193, 196 & fn, 204, 207–208, 211, 221, 225, 234 fn, 237–238 & fn, 288, 309, 341, 373, 381, 399, 442–443, 568, 615, 639, 644, 670–671, 673, 674 fn–676 & fn, 718
Delhi Fort, 213
Delhi Municipal Committee, 674 fn
Deliverance (Sarat Chandra Chatterji), 589
de Mauny, Count, 482
de Musset, Alfred, 698
Deo, Shanker Rao, 1, 7–8, 41, 50, 90, 101, 291–292, 568–570, 593, 598, 608
——, Swami Sant, 628

Desai, Bhulabhai, 81 fn, 350 fn, 532, 546 & fn
——, Mahadeva, 5, 7 fn, 12 & fn, 400, 406
——, Morarji, 5 & fn
De St. Exupery, Antoine, 364 fn
De Silva, Charles Lambert Albert, 541
Destination Chungking (Han Suyin), 236, 257, 334
Dewey, John, 147 & *fn*, 720
Dhar, Avtar, 14 *fn*
Dial House (Surrey), 389
Dictionary of Dates (Joseph Hayden), 116
Diderot, Denis, 22
Digboi, 717
Din-e Ilahi, 104
Discovery of India (Jawaharlal Nehru), 401, 450, 521, 531, 570
Divide and Quit (Penderel Moon), 200 fn
Dodd, Martha, 194 *fn*
——, William Edward, 194 & fn
——, William E. Jr., 194 fn
Dohad, 477
Dominion Status, 590 fn
Donets basin, 195 fn
Don Quixote (Cervantes), 103
Doon School (Dehra Dun), 374–375, 392
Do These Bones Live (Edward Dahlberg), 79
Downfall (Douglas Reed), 307, 339
Dragon's Teeth (Upton Sinclair), 136–137
Dresden, 616
Dublin, 63 fn, 197 *fn*
Dum Dum (John Kendall), 302
Durbar i Akbari (Mohamad Hussain Azad), 122
Dutch Indies, 3 fn

East & West (R. Guenon), 79
Easter Rising (Ireland), 197
East India Company, 138, 181
E.I. Railway, 604
East Pakistan, 235 fn
Ecole International (Geneva), 396
Economic Development of the Netherland Indies (Jan Otto Marius Brock), 230
Economics and Theosophy (C. Jinarajadasa), 559, 576
Eddington, Sir A., 230
Edib, Halide, 614
Education, Politics & War (S Radha Krishnan), 545
Egypt, 691 fn
Ehrenburg, Ilya, 288 & *fn*, 299, 304, 408, 452
Eiffel Tower (Paris), 493, 525
Einstein, A., 449
Eisenhower, Dwight David, 617 *fn*
Ellora, 719
Elwin, Verrier, 137 & *fn*
England, 2–3, 25, 40 fn–41, 47, 59, 63 fn, 68, 81 fn, 137 fn, 168, 181, 186, 189, 195, 210, 239, 259, 275, 283, 301, 305, 311–314, 323 & fn, 356, 363, 374, 379, 389–390, 399, 405, 417, 429, 455 *fn*, 463 & *fn*, 469, 509 & fn, 522, 580 *fn*, 612, 624–625 & fn, 627, 668 *fn*, 675, 701–702, 715
English Spirit (A.L. Rowse), 559
Epic of America (James Truslow Adams), 155
Epstein, Sir Jacob, 79
Escape With Me! (Edith Sitwell), 302
Essays of Elia (Charles Lamb), 484
Essays on the Gita (Aurobindo Ghose), 111, 130
Etah, 205
Ethics of Buddhism (Shundo Tachibana), 545
Ethiopia, 237
Euripides, 19 & fn, 31 *fn*
European Association, 201
Europe Going, Going, Gone! (Ferdinand Czermin), 103
Everybody's Political What's What (Bernard Shaw), 526–527, 589
Everyday Gardening in India (E W Grindal), 336
Everyman's *Library*, 9, 15, 43, 155–156
Experimental Logic (John Dewey), 147 fn

Faizpur, 666
——, Congress session at, 662–663

Fall of Constantinople (John Nill), 79
Fall of Paris (Ilya Ehrenburg), 288 & fn, 299
Farewell Romance (Gilbert Frankau), 647 fn
Fatehabad, 666
Faust (Goethe), 231, 257
Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, 70 fn
Ferodia, 514
Ferozabad, 618 fn
Fielden, Lionel, 305
Fiery Stronghold (Nicholas Konstantin Roerich), 302
Finance Commission, 219 fn
Finland Unmasked (Otto Vilhelm Kuusinen), 576
Fischer, Louis, 161 & fn, 247, 401, 404 fn, 408, 415, 453
Five Dialogues (Plato), 125
Fleming, Peter, 720
Foot, A.E., 374
Foreign Affairs, 188, 388, 404, 441, 461, 606
Forest Research Institute (Dehra Dun), 231
Forster, E.M., 126 & fn
Fortune, 161, 188, 368, 386, 435, 441, 606
For Whom the Bell Tolls (Ernest Hemingway), 461, 477, 527
Fountain (Charles Morgan), 293 fn
Four Essential Doctrines of Buddhism (Charles Lambert Albert De Silva), 541
Four Freedoms, 202
France, 22, 29 fn, 41, 59, 255, 295, 372, 429, 431, 482, 517, 522, 535 fn, 626, 702
France Fights for Freedom, 499
Francklin, W., 138–139
Franco, General Francisco, 522 fn
Frankau, Gilbert, 647 & *fn*
Franklin, Benjamin, 77 & *fn*, 79
Fraser, A.G., 367, 385, 389, 400
Free German Committee (Moscow), 195 & fn
Free World, 388
French Committee of National Liberation, 429 fn
French Encyclopaedists, 22
French Revolution, 210
Friedman, Maurice (Swami Bharatananda), 3 & fn
Friends' Hospital (Itarsi), 449
From Peace Front to People's War, 499
From Wrong Angles (G.L. Mehta), 548 fn
Frontiers of Science (C.T. Chase), 605
Frontier Speaks (Mohammad Yunus), 159 & fn
Future of India (Penderel Moon), 557
Fyzabad, 105, 154, 190, 192
Fyzabad Jail, 190 fn

Gajapatinagaram, 659
Gandhi, Feroze, 4–5, 10 & fn, 16, 20, 26, 54, 73–76, 95–96, 105, 126 fn, 129, 135, 154, 157, 160, 188, 190–194, 204, 208, 212, 222, 228–229, 235–236 & fn, 240, 267, 272, 293, 304–305, 308, 310, 318, 329–332, 336, 350, 358, 362, 364, 367–368, 371, 373, 386, 389, 398, 413–414, 436, 438, 440–441, 445, 460–461, 463 & fn, 467, 471, 473–474, 476, 479, 489, 491, 505, 509, 518, 526, 531, 533, 536, 541, 546, 553, 582, 599–600, 604, 606–607, 609, 612, 616, 631
——, Indira, 4–6, 9–11, 13, 17, 20, 24–26, 29, 34, 42–43, 45–46, 48, 50, 56, 63–64 & fn, 69, 71, 75–76, 80–82, 85–86, 93–94, 97–98, 102, 106, 108, 113–114, 116, 121–122, 124–125, 129–130, 132, 134, 140–142, 144, 146, 149–150, 153–155, 158–159, 162, 165, 167, 170, 174–175, 178–179, 186–187, 191, 198, 203, 208, 212, 219, 223, 225, 228–229, 235–236, 239, 241, 244–245, 249, 252, 255, 257, 260–261, 265, 268–270, 272–274, 285–287, 292, 300, 303, 306–307, 310, 314, 319, 324, 329, 331–333, 335, 337, 339–340, 345, 349, 352, 356, 360–361, 365, 369, 373, 378, 380, 383, 388–389, 393, 397, 403, 407, 410–412, 415, 419, 425, 430–431, 435, 439, 442–444, 446, 448, 452, 456–457, 459, 462–463, 466, 468–472, 475, 478, 480–481, 483,

484, 487, 489–490, 496–497, 501, 503–505, 508, 512, 516–517, 520, 523–525, 528, 530, 532–533, 537, 544, 548, 551, 557–558, 562, 566, 570–571, 574, 579, 581, 588, 592, 594–595, 598–600, 602, 605, 607, 612, 615, 618, 621, 625, 627, 631, 633, 635–636, 639, 672, 675, 680–684, 687, 699, 701–703, 705
——, Kanu Narandas, 342 & *fn*
——, Kasturba, 6 & *fn*, 342, 360, 406
——, Mahatma, 2–3 & fn, 4 fn–7 & fn, 19, 39, 48, 56–58 & *fn*, 61–63, 65, 66 fn–71, 75, 81 & fn, 86, 89 fn–93, 98 fn, 100–101, 107 & *fn*, 115 & fn, 121, 122 fn, 131, 133, 137 fn, 154 & fn, 175, 183–185 & fn, 191, 194, 203, 213–214, 215 fn, 217, 275, 277–280, 282, 285, 297, 324 & fn, 341 fn-342 & fn, 360, 381 & fn, 388, 401–402, 404 fn, 406–407 & fn, 408 fn, 410–411, 424 & fn, 428–429, 434 & fn, 438–439, 440 fn, 442–446, 455–457, 462 & *fn*, 464 & *fn*, 472, 478–479, 486–487, 491, 494–495 & fn, 500, 504 & fn, 523, 527 fn, 535 & *fn*, 541, 546 fn, 580, 583–585, 639, 691, 707
——, Rapva, 516–517, 520–521, 524, 526, 528, 530–531, 533, 537–540, 546, 550–552, 556, 558, 562–563, 570–571, 574–575, 582, 588, 603–605, 610, 615, 618, 621–622, 629, 635
Gandhi and Modern India (Penderel Moon), 200 fn
Gandhian Plan of Economic Development for India, (Shriman Narayan Agarwal), 576
Gandhi Ashram (Meerut), 226, 286
Gandhiji—As we Know him (Chandrashankar Shukla), 535 fn
Gandhiji Commemoration Volume, 520, 535
Gandhi Seva Sena, 176 & *fn*, 514, 518
Ganga, 479
Ganga river, 287
Ganjam, 242 fn
Garden Guide, 111
Gardens of Taprobane (Count de Mauny), 482
Garratt, G.T., 335, 363
Gautama the Enlightened and Other Verses (John Masefield), 302
Gaya, 139 *fn*, 683
Geneva, 237, 396, 701, 703–704
Genoa, 702
German Conversation and Grammar (*Emil Otto*), 119 *fn*
Germany, 119, 194 fn–195, 391, 522, 615–617, 697 *fn*
Gettysburg, 159
Ghaffar, Abdul, 618, 623, 632
Ghalib, Asadullah Khan, 17, 119 & *fn*, 120 & *fn*, 128 & *fn*, 129 *fn*, 139 & *fn*, 140 fn, 147, 148 fn, 152 & fn, 160 & *fn*, 164 & *fn*, 183 & *fn*, 190 & *fn*, 193 & fn, 209–210 & fn, 232–233 & fn, 246 & fn, 250 & *fn*, 254 & fn, 271 & fn, 289 & fn, 321 & fn, 330 & fn
Ghana, 589
Ghani, Abdul, 434
Ghose, Aurobindo—*see Aurobindo, Sri*
——, Jamuna, 532 & fn
——, *Prafulla Chandra*, 1 & *fn*, 19, 50, 89, 101, 214, 291–292, 378, 487 fn, 523 & *fn*, 532, 537, 543, 545, 585 fn
Gibbs, Sir Philip Hamilton, 230
Gibran, Khalil, 298, 302, 334, 388 & *fn*, 453
Gilder, M D D, 438
Gita (translated by Christopher Isherwood), 633, 637
Gladiators (Arthur Koestler), 363
Glimpses of World History (Jawaharlal Nehru), 32–33, 44, 55, 105, 128, 132, 170, 264, 301–302, 320, 359, 392, 394, 400, 404, 409 & fn, 423, 427, 465, 536, 676, 686, 697
Global War (Edgar Ansel Mowrer and Marthe Rajchman), 545
Glory that was Gurjardesh (K.M. Munshi), 530
Gobi, 263
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 257
Golagunj (Allahabad), 162
Gold Coast—see Ghana
Golden Threshold (Hyderabad), 698
Good Wives (Louisa May Alcott), 64 fn
Gorakhpur, 295, 319, 406
Gorakhpur District Congress Committee, 213

Gorakhpur Jail, 325, 382, 384
Government College (Lahore), 122 fn
Government of India Act of 1935, 608 fn
——, Amending Act, 717
——, Amending Bill, 718
Government School of Art (Calcutta), 300 fn
Grain-Standard Labour Money, 545
Grant Medical College (Bombay), 439 fn
Great O'Neill (Sean O'Faolain), 559, 576 & fn, 596
Grecian Isles, 678
Greece, 155, 263, 522
Greek Commonwealth (Sir Alfred Zimmern), 155, 159
Gregory, Lady, 232 fn
Grenfell, David, 714
Grindal, E.W., 336
Growth and Form (Sir D.W. Thompson), 605
Gucherma, 389, 477
Guenon, R., 79
Gujarat, 471, 519, 697
Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee, 6 fn
Gujarat (Punjab), 590
Gulliver's Travels (Jonathan Swift), 79
Gulmarg, 631
Gunther, Frances, 114, 143 & fn, 230, 275, 606
——, John, 527 & fn, 541
Guntur, 654
Gupkar (Srinagar), 619, 627–628
Gupta, Shiva Prasad, 403
Guzder, Nadir, 418 fn–419, 554
——, Mrs. Nadir, 418
Gwalior, 418, 450, 484, 533, 631

Hachett's (London), 256
Hakman's Hotel (Mussoorie), 544
Haldane, C., 79
——, J.B.S., 230
Hali, Altaf Hussain, 173 & *fn*, 222 & fn, 260 & fn, 348 fn
Hallett, M.G., 48 & *fn*
Hamilton's (New Delhi), 55
Handoo, Shrikrishna, 610
Han Suyin, 236, 257, 334
Hari, 14, 46, 160, 222, 240, 253, 286, 301, 370, 479, 560, 563
Harijan, 3 fn, 66 fn, 91, 457, 535 fn, 584
Harrison, Agatha, 168, 198, 203, 221, 245
Harrow, 52, 271, 308, 374, 399, 509, 688
Harsha, 43 fn, 490
Hartland, Barbara, 449
Havell, E.B., 300 & *fn*, 315, 334
Hawaii, 67 fn
Hazaribagh Jail, 252 & fn
Heard, Gerald, 519, 675
Heart of Jade (Salvador de Madariaga), 589
Hemingway, Ernest, 461 *fn*, 477
Heredity & Politics (J.B.S. Haldane), 230
Herring, Robert, 334 fn
Himalayas, 144, 156, 349, 518–519, 538, 637, 706
Hindi Mandir (Allahabad), 222
Hindu, 50, 161, 185 & fn, 203 & fn, 370–371, 394, 406, 596
Hindu Mahasabha, 216–217, 579 fn
Hindu-Muslim Riots (Ratish Mohan Agarwala), 453
Hindus, Maurice, 404 fn, 408
Hindustan Hamara (publishers), 168, 565
Hindustan Times, 248
Hindustani Talimi Sangh (Wardha), 440 fn
Hindusthan Quarterly, 453
Hindusthan Standard, 548
Hirschfield, Magnus, 687
History as the Story of Liberty (Benedetto Croce), 379 & fn, 386, 452
History of Charles XII (Voltaire), 77 & fn, 79
History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU(B), ed.), 559
History of the Reign of Shah Alum (W. Francklin), 138
History of Russia, 302
Hitler, Adolf, 154–155, 391, 615, 617 & fn
Hiuen-tsang, 183 & fn
Hodson, H.V., 203

——, Major, 53 & fn
Hodson's Horse, 53 & fn
Hogben, Lancelot, 22, 79, 128, 257, 368, 404 fn, 426 & fn, 440, 452, 480
Holkar State, 139 fn
Holland, 616
Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 79
Holy Gita (translated by J.J. Pandya), 565
Hong Kong, 67 fn
Hooghly river, 680
Horrabin, J.F., 22, 359, 405, 677
Hossain, Syed, 691 & fn
Hot Springs, 525
House of Commons, 10 fn, 60, 89, 98 fn, 136, 146, 198, 203, 429 fn, 456, 487 & fn
House of Representatives (U.S.A.), 247 fn
Howrah, 680
Hsiang, S.L., 508
Hsi Yu Chi (*Journey to the West* by Wu Ching-en), 183 fn
Huang, C.C., 719
Huckleberry Finn (Mark Twain), 180
Hugo, 316
Human Situation (W. Macneile Dixon), 180, 536, 559, 562
100 Poems (Edward Thompson), 512
Hungry Bengal (T.K. Dutt), 565
Huq, Fazlul, 235
Husain, Munshi Aijaz, 317
——, Muzaffar, 438, 599
——, Syed Akbar, 173 & fn, 264 & fn
Hutheesing, Apt, 5, 17, 33, 142, 356, 365, 374, 392, 396, 418, 425, 442, 445, 451, 461, 483–484, 532, 560, 592, 630
——, G.P., 3–5, 17–18, 35, 42, 55, 65, 82, 105, 113, 123, 142, 150–151, 161–162, 165, 170, 175, 179, 198–199, 229, 248, 255, 257, 268, 273, 288, 299, 307, 318, 326, 328, 331, 336, 340, 356, 364–365, 369–370, 372–375, 378, 389–390, 393–394, 412, 418–419, 425, 439, 442–443, 448, 450–452, 461–462, 469, 475, 479, 484–485, 493, 508, 519–520, 528, 533–534, 546, 579, 592–593, 611, 628
——, Harsha, 5, 17, 33, 142, 198, 356, 365, 374, 392, 396, 418, 425, 442, 445, 451, 461, 483–484, 532, 560, 592, 630
——, Krishna, 4, 9–10, 13–17, 19, 25–26, 28, 30, 33–35 & fn, 42–45, 54, 63, 69, 71–75, 80–83, 85–87, 94–96, 102, 105, 111, 113–114, 117–118, 120–121, 123–124, 126, 129–132, 134, 140, 144, 150–151, 159–161, 163–165, 168, 170, 176, 179–180, 188–189, 192, 198, 205, 208, 211, 223, 225–227, 229, 248, 251–252, 255, 257, 262, 268–269, 272–274, 286, 288–289, 295, 298, 300, 304, 306–307, 310, 316, 318, 326, 328, 331–332, 335–336, 339, 346–347, 349, 351–354, 360, 364–365, 369–371, 373–376, 378, 380, 384, 386, 390–392, 394, 396, 411, 417–419, 425, 433, 436, 438, 442, 445–448, 450, 453, 458, 461, 466–468, 470–471, 473–475, 477–479, 482–483, 491–492, 496, 498, 501, 506–509, 513, 518–520, 525–526, 530–532, 534–536, 540, 546, 551, 555, 560, 562–565, 578, 592, 594, 601, 606, 610–612, 616, 628, 630, 632–633, 687
——, Surottambhai, 534
Huxley, Aldous, 176–177, 531 & fn, 609, 675
——, Julian, 302, 497, 508, 559
Hydari, Sir Akbar, 719
Hyderabad, 63, 280, 661, 698 & fn, 703, 710, 718–719

Ibarruri, Dolores (La Passionaria), 700
I Believe (John Dewey), 720
Ideal & Progress (Aurobindo Ghose), 477
Ideals of Indian Art (E.B. Havell), 300, 334
Iftikharuddin, Mrs Ismet, 193, 288
——, Mian, 193 fn, 200 & fn, 288
Ilahi Baksh, 53
Immortal India (L.H. Ajwani), 305
Imperial Bank (Lahore), 149
Imphal, 382 & fn
Incas, 590
Independent, 253, 691 fn

India—an American View (Kate L. Mitchell), 305, 408 & fn, 438, 443, 453
India and the Awakening East (Eleanor Roosevelt), 275 fn
India and China (S. Radhakrishnan), 554
India and the Next War (Agnes Smedley), 401 fn
India League (London), 714
Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries, 548 fn
Indian Civil Service, 200 & fn, 203, 218
Indian Cultural Centre (Almora), 540 fn
Indian Economy during the War (L.C. Jain), 438, 443
Indian Journal of Social Work, 257
I.N.A. Defence Committee, 200 fn
Indian Philosophy (S. Radhakrishnan), 344 & fn
Indian P.E.N., 328 fn
Indian Science Congress, 19, 22
Indian Sculpture and Painting (E.B. Havell), 300 fn
India Office (London), 41
India since Cripps (Horace Alexander), 554
India's Place in Post-War Reconstruction (K.T. Shah), 554
Indigo (Christine Weston), 455, 508
Individual and the Group (B.K. Mullick), 452
Individual & the State (Sampurnanand), 541
Indo-China, 3 fn
Indonesia, 3
Indore, 139 & fn
Indu ne Patra (Letters from a Father to His Daughter by Jawaharlal Nehru), 471 & fn
In My View (Morarji Desai), 5 fn
In Russia Now (Sir Walter Citrine), 546, 549, 554
Insha, Insha-u-llah Khan, 226 & *fn*, 227 fn
Interglossa (L. Hogben), 426, 452, 480
International Book Depot (Pune), 363, 441
International Conference on Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy (Geneva), 536 fn
International Congress against Imperialism (Brussels), 390
International Labour Organisation, 453, 499
I.L.O. Review, 453
International Peace Campaign (London), 712 & fn
Interviewing Japan (Adrienne Moore), 230
Introducing India (L.H. Ajwani), 508, 541
Iqbal, Sir Mohammed, 156 & fn
Iran, 3 & fn, 160, 182, 205, 260, 377 & fn, 430 fn
Iraq, 3 fn
Ireland, 63 & fn, 197 & fn, 314 & fn
Irish Republican Army, 63 fn
Irish Republican Parliament, 63 fn
Irving, L.G., 385 fn
Isherwood, Christopher, 633 & *fn*, 637
Istanbul, 614, 702
Italy, 41 fn, 232 fn, 247 fn, 515–516, 522 & fn
Itarsi, 449, 594, 598
I.T. College (Lucknow), 233
I was a German (Ernst Toller), 391
Iyengar, Srinivas, 364, 385
Iyer, C.P. Ramaswami, 4 fn, 63–64 & fn
Izatnagar, 602, 604

Jacobabad, 651
Jacques, Jean, 41, 293, 517, 626
Jagannath, Lord, 657
Jahalo, 334
Jail Journey (Jim Phelan), 298, 385
Jain, L.C., 438, 443
Jaipur, 149, 204, 221, 225, 303–304, 307–308, 314, 319, 329, 709–710
——, Maharaja of, 710
Jairaj Behari, 265
Jamaica, 711 & fn
Jamia Millia Islamia (Delhi), 44, 320, 400, 427
Jammu, 628
Jammu & Kashmir, 628 fn
Janaki Amma, V.A., 288 & fn
Janata Party, 5 fn

Jan-e Janan, Mazhar, 224 & *fn*, 225 fn
Japan, 3 & fn, 25 fn, 67 fn, 91 fn, 195, 276, 617
Jataka, 513 fn
Java, 449
Jawaharlal Nehru: The Man and his Ideas (Y.G. Krishnamurti), 339 fn
Jawan Bakht, 53
Jayakar, M.R., 81 fn, 424 fn
Jahangir, 223–224
Jewish Frontier, 441
Jhaveri, Vithalbhai K., 464 fn
Jmarajadasa, C., 543 & *fn*, 546, 549–550, 554, 557, 559, 576, 596
Jinnah, M.A., 39, 43 fn, 68, 92, 122 & fn, 134 fn, 154–155, 195–196, 244, 280, 284, 323–324 & fn, 445, 456–457, 462 & fn, 472, 478, 486 & fn, 527 fn, 546 fn, 580, 639, 692, 708
Johar, 347
John Day & Company (New York), 30, 188
John Lane the Bodley Head Ltd. (London), 168, 307, 397, 677
Johnson, Louis, 247, 358, 509
Joshi, Puran Chand, 448, 479
——, Raghunath Ganesh, 359
Journal d'un homme de quarante ans (Guehenna), 351, 367, 389, 477
Journal to Stella (Jonathan Swift), 79
Journey among Warriors (Eve Curie), 430 & fn, 438, 443, 453
Judge's Story (Charles Morgan), 293 fn
Juhu (Bombay), 394, 412, 428, 575
Jumna river, 162
Jumna (*bhishti*), 437, 479
Jurat, Qalandar Bakhsh, 156 & *fn*, 157 fn

Kabir, H., 576
Kachru, Dwarka Nath, 330, 718
Kadambari (Banabhatta), 43, 112, 119, 128, 576
Kak, Jainath, 265 & *fn*
Kakori Conspiracy Case, 618 fn
Kalani, Hemu, 49 & fn
Kalidasa, 43, 46, 52 fn, 97 fn, 105, 116, 263, 266
Kali (deity), 657
Kalyan, 6
Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital (Allahabad), 165, 168, 286, 536
Kamala Nehru Scholarships, 395, 535
Kanishka, 263 fn
Kanpur, 202, 316, 662, 690–692, 717 & fn
Kant, E., 128
Kanyakumari, 653
Karachi, 197, 214 fn, 324, 593
Karachi Jail, 593
Karaka, D.F., 416 & *fn*, 452–453
Kar Gupta, Sachindranath, 354 & fn
Karma Yoga (Swami Vivekananda), 562
Karmayogin, 385 fn
Karnatak, 669–671
Kashmir, 85, 94, 137, 167–168, 176, 330, 349, 370, 386, 450–451, 497, 562–564, 567, 575, 578–579, 588, 590, 593, 601, 603, 607, 609–612, 615–617, 619–622, 626, 628–631, 639, 646, 710
Kasturba Memorial Fund, 396, 409
Kathgodam, 539–540, 634
Katju, Kanwarlal (Nikku), 620 & fn, 622, 628
——, Moti, 146 & *fn*, 148, 162, 453
——, Naresh, 316
——, Pyarelal, 149 & fn, 307–308, 520, 524
——, Siddhartha, 620
——, Swarup (Bappi), 226, 307–308, 319, 329, 431, 441, 460, 524, 560
Katrak, Jamshed Kavasji, 565
Katzin, Olga—*see* Sagittarius
Kaul, C.B., 95 fn
——, Mrs Chand, 95, 149, 236, 431, 611–612
——, Dipa, 431
——, Gautam, 245–246, 431
——, Kailas Nath, 43, 85, 204, 236, 239, 246, 329, 431, 463, 498, 517, 520, 523
——, Rajpati (Amma), 43, 75, 85, 135, 149, 176, 181, 191, 193, 204–205, 222–223, 226–227, 229, 236, 238–239, 245, 252, 261, 289, 304, 329, 335, 376, 428, 431, 438, 460, 466, 476, 498, 517, 520, 524, 557, 560–561, 610–612, 626
——, Sheila, 43, 85, 236, 239, 245–246,

329, 431, 463, 498, 517, 520, 523, 529, 536, 552
Kaur, Rajkumari Amrit, 199–200 & fn, 202, 203 fn, 534
Kavita Kaumudi (Ram Naresh Tripathi), 221 & fn, 249
Keightley, Bertram, 509
Keith, A.B., 263
Kendall, John, 298, 302
Khaksars, 195–196 & fn
Khali, 142 & fn, 144, 146–147, 153, 167, 264, 274–275, 349, 528–529, 536–538, 540–541, 544, 549, 552, 562, 638, 645–646, 671, 696
Khaliq, 240, 265, 294, 301, 413–414, 436, 479, 560
Khaliqbari (Amir Khusrau), 207
Khaliquzzaman, Choudhry, 133, 134 fn
Khan, Abdul Ghaffar, 16 fn, 159 fn, 452, 655
——, Ajmal, 6
——, H.H., 635
——, Inayatullah (Allama Mashriqi), 196 & fn
——, Liaquat Ali, 546 fn
——, Sikandar Hayat, 42, 43 fn, 200
——, Tahira, 42
——, Yahya, 454 fn
——, Yamin, 380 fn
——, Zafar Ali, 692
Khan Sahib, 215 fn, 217, 452
Kharagpur, 656
Kharkov, 195 fn
Kharkov, 499
Khazan Chand, 538 & *fn*
Kher, B.G., 5–6, 532
Khilafat movement, 504 fn
Khudai Khidmatgar movement, 159 fn
Khusru, Amir, 190 & fn, 205, 207, 223–224, 232–233 & fn, 267 fn
Khusru Bagh (Allahabad), 223
Kidwai, Rafi Ahmad, 163, 440 & fn, 458, 474, 559–560, 575, 594, 599–600, 602, 612
Kiev, 616
Kishan Ganj (Delhi), 196 fn
Kishtwar, 629
Kitabistan (Allahabad), 55, 295, 305, 316, 405, 465, 483, 541–542, 550, 596
K.L.M., 714
Koestler, Arthur, 363, 452
Kolahai, 628, 631
Kolhapur, 405, 409
Kotnis, Dwarkanath, 460 fn
Kraitchik, M., 452
Kreutzer Sonata, 661
Kripalani, J.B., 1, 9, 46, 49, 78, 86, 89–90 & fn, 93, 95, 99, 101, 106–107, 112, 118, 140, 214, 288, 291, 297, 301, 457, 532, 568–569, 581, 585–587, 593–594, 701
——, Krishna, 433
——, Nandita, 112
——, Sucheta, 78, 86, 95, 112, 532, 554, 560
Krishna, Lord, 663
Krishnamurti, Y.G., 339, 576
Krishnan, K.S., 605 & *fn*
Kuala Lumpur, 315
Kuibyshev, 549 fn
Kulkarni, Y.H., 8 & fn
Kulu, 144, 156, 399
Kumarajiva, 475
Kumbakonam, 302
Kunzru, Hirdayanath, 213, 215, 280
Kupton—*see* Iftikharuddin, Mian

Labour Party (British), 48 fn, 311
Lachhminie, 161, 479
Lady of the White House (Eleanor Roosevelt), 275 fn
Lady Precious Stream (S.I. Hsiang), 508
Lahore, 111, 126, 149, 181, 191, 193, 200 fn, 204–205, 221, 223, 226, 229, 252, 288, 428, 431, 438, 517, 557, 567, 579, 588, 590, 592, 601, 609–612, 615, 618, 620, 626, 638, 650, 665
Lahore Conspiracy Case, 599
Lalbhai, K., 592 & fn
Lal, Ramnarain, 596, 609
Lamb, Charles, 480–481, 484
Lancaster, Osbert, 452–453
Lao-tse, 157 & *fn*
Laski, H.J., 288–289, 363, 438, 497, 516 & fn
Last Days of Socrates (Plato), 500
Latif, Abdul, 280

Latur, 196 fn
Lausanne, 70, 340
Leader, 192, 253, 321 & fn, 373, 378, 406, 489, 495, 497–498, 604
Lea, Homer, 77 & *fn*, 79
Lectures and Letters (Swami Vivekananda), 614
Lectures from Colombo to Almora (Swami Vivekananda), 562
Leech, M K., 79
Left Book Club, 706
Lehmann, Rosamond, 557
Leningrad, 195 fn, 616
Leopardi, Giacomo, 421
Le Theatre Indien (*The Indian Theatre* by Sylvain Levi), 43 & *fn*, 76, 189, 263
Letters (Charles Lamb), 480
Letters (Swami Vivekananda), 562
Letters from a Father to His Daughter (Jawaharlal Nehru), 319–320, 395, 409, 423, 432, 460, 471, 541
Letters From Prison (Ernst Toller), 644–645
Let There Be Sculpture (Sir J. Epstein), 79
Levi, Sylvain, 43, 76, 189, 192, 263
——, Madam Sylvain, 189
Lewis, C.S., 237 & *fn*
——, Sinclair, 155
Leysin, 105, 418
Liberals (Indian), 280, 647
Libya, 576
Liddell Hart, B.H., 302
Life, 19, 80, 188–189, 208, 229, 247 fn, 330, 386, 408, 412, 441, 461, 560, 596
Life & Letters, 292, 302, 334
Life & Letters Today (Brazil), 257
Life of Charles Lord Metcalfe (E. Thompson), 309–310
Light of Asia (Sir Edwin Arnold), 477
Lin, Adet, 380 fn
——, Anor, 380 fn
——, Meimei, 380 fn
——, Yutang, 9, 14, 31 & *fn*, 77, 79, 247, 305, 368–369, 380, 386, 393
Lincoln, Abraham, 159
Linlithgow, 2nd marquis, 2 fn, 39, 56, 57 fn, 62, 66 & fn, 67 fn–69, 70 fn, 89 fn, 92, 98 & *fn*, 100 & *fn*, 107 fn, 121, 183–185 & fn, 194, 197 fn, 200, 203, 213, 218, 234, 434 & *fn*, 510
Li Po, 421
Listener, 287
Literature & Authorship in India (Srinivas Iyengar), 364, 385
Litikovo, 577–578
Little Men (Louisa May Alcott), 64 fn
Little Prince (Antoine de St. Exupery), 364
Little Women (Louisa May Alcott), 55 & *fn*, 64
Living and the Dead (Beverley Nichols), 452
Lohia, Ram Manohar, 5 & fn
Lok Sabha, 6 fn, 320 fn
London, 25 fn, 29, 85, 168, 171, 236, 237 fn, 245–246, 249, 252, 256, 399, 418, 427 fn, 463, 469, 509, 522 fn–523, 529, 557, 643, 664, 697, 699–700, 702–703, 706, 712, 714
London University, 246, 255
Loom of Language (Frederick Bodmer), 404, 407, 480
Lorenzini, Maria, 632
Los Angeles, 394, 633 fn
Lublin, 522 fn
Luce, Clare Boothe, 247 & fn, 275
——, Henry, 247 fn
Lucknow, 19, 22, 53–54, 97 fn, 146 fn, 172–174, 238, 259, 329–333, 516–517, 520, 529 & fn, 534, 544, 618, 671, 689, 696–697, 699
Lucknow Jail, 382, 554, 578, 599
Lynndale (Mussoorie), 356
Lyrical Dramas (Aeschylus), 79

MacDonald, Ramsay, 311 & fn
Machhuabazar Bomb Case, 354
Mackenzie Donald A., 180
Macneile Dixon, W., 180, 536
Madariaga, Salvador de, 589
Madgaonkar, Sir Govind, 419, 422
——, Usha, 419
Mad Man (Khalil Gibran), 302
Madras, 11, 60, 218 fn, 242–243, 302, 546, 596, 654
Mahabaleshwar, 45, 385, 394, 397–398,

406–407, 410, 412, 415, 419, 425–426, 434, 447, 592
Mahabharata, 499
Maharashtra, 669, 671
Mahatma & other Poems (H. Kabir), 576
Mahatma Gandhi: His Life and Works (D.G. Tendulkar *et al*, ed.), 464 fn
Mahmud, Habib, 168
——, Hamidah, 168, 288, 295, 440
——, Mrs., 295
——, Qudsia, 295
——, Said-ur-Rahman, 168, 295, 368, 440
——, Sarvar, 168, 288, 295
——, Syed, 1, 5, 14, 18–19, 24, 29, 49, 69, 89, 90, 97, 99, 102, 105, 112, 115, 119, 122, 126–127, 131, 145, 150, 154, 158, 166, 168, 174–175, 177–179, 187, 191, 208, 221, 229–230, 244, 288, 290–292, 295, 299, 307, 324, 331, 335, 356, 368, 402, 432, 440, 461, 488–490, 494–495, 497, 499–500, 503–504 & fn, 510, 521, 543, 545, 598
Mahtab, Harekrushna, 1 & fn, 4 & fn, 29, 50, 89, 154, 291, 515, 556, 568–569, 591, 593, 598
Main Street (Sinclair Lewis), 155
Making of the Indian Princes (Edward Thompson), 302, 308–309, 312, 408, 452
Malabar, 70, 201 fn, 256, 288, 503
Malaviya, K.D., 163, 555
——, Lakshmi, 555
——, Madan Mohan, 238
——, Sushila, 555
Malaya, 3 fn, 67 fn, 684, 686
Malwa, 519
Manchester Guardian, 456 fn
Mandlik, R.M., 199 fn
Manipur, 382 & fn
Mani Puthakasalai (Kumbakonam), 301
Manley, Norman, 711 & *fn*
Manmad, 599
Mannin, Ethel, 421
Man-power Mobilisation for Peace (I.L.O.), 499
Mansarovar, 519
Man the Master (Gerald Heard), 519
Mark Twain, 180 & *fn*
Marseilles, 366, 706
Marv, 260
Masani, M.R., 530
Masefield, John, 302
Mathematical Recreations (M. Kraitchik), 452
Mathematics for the Million (Lancelot Hogben), 22, 128, 257, 368, 404 fn, 440
Matheran, 373, 378, 384–385, 388–389, 393–394, 397, 403, 412
Mathrubhumi Press (Calicut), 423
Maugham, Somerset, 519, 609
Maurois, Andre, 52, 298, 334 & fn, 385
Mayling Soong Scholarship, 187
Mazzini, G., 522 fn
Mead, G.R.S., 452
Mecca, 267, 506
Mediterranean Sea, 498
Meerut, 138, 618 fn
Meghaduta (Kalidasa), 46
Meherally, Yusuf, 5, 299
Mehr Taj, 16, 233 & fn, 321, 454, 525
Mehta, Gaganvehari, 548 & *fn*
——, Jivraj, 419, 435, 438–439, 474
——, Ratilal N., 513 fn, 530
Melos, 74
Men & Supermen of Hindustan (Joachim Alva), 180
Men in Chains (Thomas Ryan), 305
Men of the Burma Road (Chiang Yee), 125
Menon, V.K. Krishna, 168, 172, 176, 189, 198, 221, 246, 401, 410, 426, 464, 677, 704, 711–712, 714, 716
Merchant Seamen and the War (I.L.O.), 453
Meredith, George, 33
Meri Kahani (Jawaharlal Nehru), 400
Methuen, Sir A., 111
Mewar, 344, 346
Mexico, 589
Milton, John, 271, 293, 308, 480
Ming Dynasty, 183 fn
Minister and His Responsibilities (Morarji Desai), 5 fn
Mirabehn, 5, 583
Mir Amman, 180
Mirror of the Past: Let it Reflect the

Future (K. Zilliacus), 455 & *fn*
Mir Taqi Mir, 147 & *fn*, 148 fn, 237–238 & fn, 240 & fn, 267 fn, 348 fn
Mission to Moscow (Joseph E. Davies), 460 & fn, 508, 576
Mississippi, 180 *fn*
Mitchell, Kate L., 305, 408 & fn, 438, 443, 453
Moderates, 213, 215
Modern Indian Culture—A Sociological Study (D.P. Mukerji), 266
Modern Islam in India—A Social Analysis (Wilfrid Cantwell Smith), 266, 541
Modern Plays (Everyman's Library), 155
Modern Review, 691
Mody, Sir Homi, 280
Moliere (J.B. Poquelin), 668
Moment in Peking (Lin Yutang), 31, 77
Momin Khan, 327 & *fn*
Monkey (Wu Ching en), 183
Mookerji, Shyama Prasad, 234 & fn, 244 & fn
Moon, Penderel, 200 & *fn*, 202–203 & *fn*, 557
Moore, Adrienne, 230
Moraes, Frank, 79
Morand, Paul, 351 & *fn*
More Pocket Cartoons (Osbert Lancaster), 452–453
Morgan, Charles, 293 & *fn*, 334
Morin, Louise, 41, 293, 517, 626
Moscow, 195 *fn*, 256, 448, 460 fn, 546 fn, 549
Mother (Pearl Buck), 334
Mother, The—*see* Richard, *Madame Mirra*
Mother Russia (Maurice Hindus), 404, 408
Moulmein, 683
Mountain Way (L.G. Irving), 385, 389
Mountains Wait (Theodor Broch), 452
Mountbatten, Louis (later 1st earl Mountbatten of Burma), 276 & *fn*
Mudie, Sir Robert Francis, 558
Mudrarakshasa (Vishakhadatta), 54, 408, 453
Mukerji, Dhan Gopal, 240
——, D.P., 266
——, Hiren, 266
Mulki, 395
Mullick, B.K., 445, 452
Munich, 615, 702
Munshi, K.M., 215, 513, 530
Munzenburg, Willie, 390–391
Murray, Gertrude, 576
——, Gilbert, 19 & *fn*, 31, 77, 417, 421
Murree, 236
Muslim League, 92, 122, 133–134 & fn, 154 fn, 201, 215–217 & fn, 244, 280, 283–284 & fn, 324, 379, 380 fn, 445 fn, 456 fn, 580 & fn, 708
Mussolini, Benito, 194 & fn, 438 fn, 617 & fn
Mussoorie, 167, 174, 189, 205, 208, 222, 315, 539, 544, 645–646
My Country (Alexei Tolstoy), 559
Myers, L.H., 441 & *fn*
My India, My America (Krishnalal Shridharani), 147, 302
Mysore, 709
Myths of China & Japan (Donald A. Mackenzie), 180

Nabha Jail, 99
Nagarjuna, 475
Naidu, Padmaja, 117, 181, 274, 300, 336, 398, 643–646, 648–653, 655–656, 659–662, 666, 669, 673–674, 676, 678, 681, 684–685, 687–691, 693, 695–697, 699, 701–703, 705, 718–719
——, Sarojini, 5, 7, 300, 341 & fn, 419, 528, 546 & fn, 698 fn
Naini Jail, 24, 34, 70–72, 74–75, 82, 85, 94, 96–97, 102, 105–106, 110–111, 114, 116, 118, 122, 124–125, 132, 142, 144, 146–147, 151, 153, 160, 162, 164–167, 169, 171, 236, 251, 262, 346, 361, 365, 559, 575, 578, 594, 598–602, 611–612
Naini Tal, 315, 355, 539–540, 543–544, 594, 632, 638
Nakkapali, 659
Nambiar, A.C.N., 41, 517, 626
Naoroji, Khorshed (Bul), 30, 450, 514, 518, 633
Narayan, Jayaprakash, 252 & fn
——, Krishna, 529 & fn
Narendra Deva, Acharya, 1 & fn, 49, 56,

84, 89, 112, 119, 128, 131, 154, 187, 190, 192, 249, 268, 291, 470–472, 474–476, 489, 505, 523 fn, 527, 547, 568–569, 587–588, 593, 594–595, 598–599, 604, 611, 621, 623–624, 633
Narendra Nath, Raja, 579 & *fn*, 590
Narielwala, P.A., 17, 35, 45–46, 257, 316, 441
Nation, 19, 188, 388, 441
National Herald, 286, 464, 713 fn
National Physical Laboratory (New Delhi), 605 fn
National Planning Committee, 64, 100, 266 & fn, 302, 535
National Publishing Co. (Madras), 536
National Shipping Board, 548 fn
Nature of the Physical World (Sir A. Eddington), 230
Nausherwan-e-Adil, 377 & fn
Navajivan Press (Ahmedabad), 400, 471
Navjivan Trust, 6 fn
Nayar, Sushila, 6 fn
Nazimuddin, Khwaja, 235 & *fn*, 284 fn
Near East, 430 fn
Nehru, Anand, 426
——, Balwant Kumar (Ballo), 271, 310–311, 333, 341, 345, 399
——, Brij Kumar, 193, 399
——, Brijlal, 481, 526, 590, 617, 628–629, 637
——, Jawaharlal, 7 fn, 25 fn, 40 fn, 44, 54 fn, 64 fn, 67 fn, 82 fn, 90 fn, 97 fn, 115 fn, 128 fn, 143 fn, 146 fn, 149 fn, 326 fn, 339 fn, 368 fn, 430 fn, 464 fn, 474 fn, 486 fn, 487 fn, 515 fn, 535 fn, 558 fn, 572 fn, 585, 653 fn, 658 fn
——, arrested and sent to Ahmadnagar Fort Jail (ninth imprisonment), 3–7; released unconditionally, 639
——,on Abdul Ghaffar, 632–633; on Abdul Rahim Khan Khana, 224; on abnormal happenings, 34, 51; on Ahmadnagar, 394, 397, 512, outbreak of plague in, 548, 550; on Ahmadnagar Fort Jail, arrangements relating to accommodation, food, and sanitation in, 7–8, 118, jail term in, 209, 212, 417–418, 445, 493, 497, 548, 556, 566, 591, transfer from 509–510, 537, 563, 566–568, 575, 578–579, 581–582, 588, 591–596, 611; on Ajanta frescoes, 664–665, 687–688; on Ajit Hutheesing, 451, 630–631; on Akbar, 78; on Aligarh Muslim University, incident at, 692; on Allahabad, communal rioting in, 693, 697, 699; on Allah Bakhsh's assassination, 133, 142; on Allama Mashriqi, 196; on All India Convention of Congress Legislators, 670; on *All Men are Brothers*, 22, 77; on Almora Jail, 634–635, 638, transfer to, 632–633; on American accent and words, 648–649; on Americans, 399–400; on Amery, L.S., 136, 146, 625; on Amir Khusru, 205–207, 223; on Amrita Shergil, 295–296, 299; on Amrit Kaur's treatment in jail and Penderel Moon's protest, 199–200, 202–203; on Anand Bhawan, 33, 44–46, 181, 253, 269–270, 294, 301, 310, 390, 454, 491, 556, 565, servants of, 15, 43, 160–161, 249, 257, 413–414, 436–438, 478–479, 491, 552–553; on Andhra people, 660; on Aney, M.S., 29; on *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, 346–347, 385; on Anupchand Shah, 479; on Arabian Sea, crossing of, 625; on Aristarchi, Princess, loan of money to, 397; on article written by him on himself, 688–689, 691; on *Art of Seeing*, 176–177; on Aruna Asaf Ali, 49; on Asaf Ali, 49, 68–69, 99, 130–131, 150, 155, 175, 179, 261, 291, 547, 630; on Ashvaghosa, 263–264; on *Asia & Democracy*, 323; on Assam Oil Company, strike in, 717; on asthma, 268; on August disturbances, 59–60, 63; on August movement, 11–12, 602, Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee circular relating to, 12, 60, celebration of anniversary of, 214, outcome of, 100–101, 283, repressive activities of Government during, 196–200, 202–203, 213, 218; on August movement and the Communist Party of India, 216; on the August resolution, 2–3, 60–61, proposal for its withdrawal, 276–281, 284, 290–292; on the August resolution and the Mode-

rates, 213; on Aurobindo Ghose (Sri Aurobindo), 111–112, 131; on *Autobiography*, a new abridged edition of, 411, *American edition* of, 464–465, correcting and revising it, 464–465, Hebrew translation of, 400–401, 460, Malayalam translation of, 423, publishing it in India, 168, Rabindranath Tagore's appreciation of, 647, realising lost royalties on, 677; on Axis powers' decline, 195; on babies, 501; on badness of the world, 88; on Balwant Kumar Nehru, 345, 399; on Barbara Hartland, 449, on Bareilly Jail, 600, 602, 607, proposal for transfer from, 623–624, 630, on *Battle Hymn of China*, 508; on Beatrice Webb, 127; on Beethoven's music, 95; on Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, 658; on Benton W M, 606, on Berhampur Jail, lathi charges in, 344; on Bernard Shaw, 105–106, 127; on Bertram Keightley, 509; on Beverley Nichols, 527; on Bharati Sarabhai, 697, her poetry, 223; on Bhulabhai Desai, 532, 546, on the Bible, 351; on birds, 178, 181–182, 250, 364, 373, on birth of a new member of the family, 469, on body and mind, 636–637; on Bombay, fire in, 403, 411, on books, prices in India of, 527, reading of 293, revision of, 179, success of, 170, on Book on Indian Birds, 359; on Brain of India, 385, on Britain's rulers and American leaders, 47–48; on the British, attitude of, 311; on British Government, 116, 216, 716, its policy towards India, 715, noncooperative attitude towards, 48, 67; on British Government and fascist and Japanese aggression, 61; on Buddha, 338, 661–662; on Buddhist New Year's Day, 627, 629, on building up individual mental worlds, 566–567, on Burma, Indians in, 682; on Burmese people, 682; on Byron, 52; on Chalapathi Rau, 464, on Chand Bibi, 183; on Chando Bibi (a cat), 366–367, 371, 375–376, 387–388, 398, 406–407, 409, 411–413, on Chandralekha Pandit, 115, 235, 246–247, 275, 613, her's and Nayantara Pandit's joining college in U.S.A, 114, 117, 121, 123, 135, 141, 150, 159, 175, 178, 187, 230, Krishna Hutheesing's objection to it, 121, 131–132; on changing world, 485; on *chappals* and shoes, 187–188, 534; on Chiang Kai shek, 37, 40, on Madame Chiang Kai shek, 37, 40–41, 522, her statements in America, 115, and *The Times of India's* comments, 115–116, writing to her, 36–37, 40, on children, development of consciousness of outer world in, 605, education of, 392–393, 425, 451, 592, growth of, 635–636, problem children, 420, reading books on them and bringing them up, 419–421; on China, 48, 300–301, her cause and India, 37, on Chinese people, 15, 683; on Chungking air raids, 236–237; on city life, 417, on classical and scientific training, 417; on collection of funds for hospital in Allahabad, 562–563, on common cold, 622; on Communist Party of India, 216, literature published by, 575–576; on conferences and public gatherings, 698; on Congress, 98, classes supporting, 216, conflicts and cleavages in, 707, foreign policy of, 61, its policy of non-embarrassment to the Government, 59, its policy towards peasants and workers, 707–708, and reactions of the middle classes, 708, its policy towards Indian states, 708, policy of Muslim League towards, 708, on Congress and Communists, 569–570, and Federation issue, 707, and minorities, 134, and nonviolence, 58–59, and other organised groups within it, 569; on Congress Working Committee, its statement on war situation, 714–716, members of, 297, on coping with unlikable happenings, 102–103; on Count de Mauny, 482; on C P. Ramaswami Iyer, 63–64, on crowds, 647, 658; on Czechoslovakia, Franco-British proposals regarding, 704–705, on daughter, 11, 14, 16, 20–21, 24, 34, 42, 50,

71–75, 86, 94–98, 102–106, 109–111, 117, 119–120, 122, 125–126, 132, 136–137, 140, 148, 150–151, 153, 155, 163, 165, 167, 170–171, 174–176, 180, 186, 191, 193, 204–205, 208, 219, 221–223, 225, 228, 235, 241, 253, 255, 259, 265, 269, 274, 287–288, 294, 307, 335, 340–341, 349–352, 357–358, 360–362, 367–368, 370, 373, 378, 385, 389–390, 394, 396–397, 407, 418–419, 422, 428, 431, 435–436, 439, 441, 446–447, 458–459, 461, 470–474, 478, 483–484, 487, 489, 505, 509, 524, 528–529, 533, 537–541, 551–552, 560–564, 575, 588–593, 600–603, 609, 612, 615–618, 621–622, 628–629, 636–637, 672, 678, 684, 687, 705, birth of her first son (Rajiva), 466–469, choosing a name for him, 470–471, 474–478, 481, 489–491, 501, 505; on death, 88; on debates in the Bengal Assembly, 244, in the House of Commons and Central Assembly, 89, 98; on Defence of India Act and Rules, getting copies of in jail, 372–373; on D.I.R. cases, 213; on diet, 208; on *Discovery of India*, writing & revising of, 266, 285, 331, 345, 358, 378–379, 401–404, 416, 424, 428, 444, 446, 462, 472, 477–478, 480–481, 521, 531, 570, 630; on Dolores Ibarruri (La Passionaria), 700; on domestic complications, 269; on Doon School, 374; on Edward Thompson, 41, 309–310, 312–313, 510–512, 515, 571, 573, 626, 637, his son's death, 515–517, 572–573, 576–578; on electioneering, 662; on electric razor, 35–36, 42, 54, 74, 192; on empires, 52; on England, changes in, 624–625, 627, friends in, 312, politicians of, 323; on *Epic of America*, 155–156; on *Essays on the Gita*, 130; on Europe, 300, problems in the liberated countries of, 522; on European War, 615–617; on eye exercises, 239; on Faizpur Congress, 662–663; on family system in ancient China & India, 258–259; on famine, 201, 207, 213, 228, 243, in Bengal, 201, 213, 228, 242–243, 245, 264, 283, 313, in Orissa, 213; on famine and the Government, 202, 218–219, 234–235, 243, and the Indian people, 202, and profiteering, 242; on famine relief work, 226, 306–307, 322, 326–327, and foreign countries, 313–314; on fate and individuals, 220–221; on Feroze Gandhi, 191–192, 228, 236, 463, 474, 491, 518, 526; on food-price rise, 202; on France, 41, friends in, 626; on Fraser, A.G., 389; on Free German Committee's formation, 195; on friendship, 373; on future, 27, 467; on future course of action, 281–283; on future developments, 92–93; on *Gandhiji—Commemoration Volume*, 520; on gardening, 20–21, 31, 270–271, 304; on German language, learning of, 119; on Germany, 615; on glacier, 611; on *Glimpses of World History*, 33, 105, 170, 465, publishing Malayalam translation of, 423, Marathi translation of, 359, 394–395, 404–405, 409, 427, Tamil translation of, 301–302, Urdu translation of, 400, 427, review of, 128, 132, revision of, 676–677, 697; on God, 32–33; on going back to the past and living it again, 237; on going out of India, 143; on good breeding, 688; on Government inquiry about money received by him from *Fortune* magazine, 435; on Sir Govind Madgaonkar, 419; on *Greek Commonwealth*, 159; on Greek plays, 77; on Guzdar, Mrs., 418–419; on happiness, 35, 420–421; on Hari, 301; on Harsha Hutheesing, 451, 630–631; on having a pamphlet club attached to Left Book Club, 706–707; on health, 439–440, and mind, 329; on a healthy person, 171; on *Heart of Jade*, 589–590; on Hemu Kalani's execution, 49; on hill stations, going to, 589; on Himalayas, 156; on himself, 14, 16–17, 25, 28, 30, 34, 36–38, 44, 50, 54, 68, 73–74, 78, 88, 90, 99, 106, 109–110, 112, 126–127, 130, 135, 141–142, 157, 166, 174, 182, 186, 212, 217, 220, 228, 241, 274–276, 298, 324,

331, 333, 335, 338, 389, 396, 429–430, 439, 444, 447, 451, 472–473, 478, 480, 487, 492–493, 515–516, 523, 532, 537, 544–545, 547, 558–559, 561–562, 571–573, 580, 583, 587–588, 595, 597, 603, 614, 618, 624–626, 630–634, 636, 638, 645, 647–649, 655–656, 658, 661, 663–664, 666–667, 671, 673, 675, 678–679, 686, 688–691, 695, 698, 701–702, 712–713; on Hindu Mahasabha, 216–217; *on Hindustan Hamara Publications, pamphlet published by*, 565; on his arrest and journey to Ahmadnagar Fort prison, 4–7; on his birthday in jail, 29–30, 289–290, 296, 514–515; on his election to the P.E.N. vice presidentship, 328; on his family tradition, 32; on his message to a Chinese journalist, 37; on his previous *experiences in jail, 99–100; on his* speech at Bombay A.I.C.C. *session*, 3, on *History as the Story of Liberty*, 453; on *Holi*, 567; on honey, 45; on human action and moods, 232; on human relationships, 258–259; on Hutheesing, G.P., 65, 150–151, 161–162, 268, 288, 299, 318, 328, 364–365, 393, 418, 425, 439–440, 442, 448, 484, 592, on Hyderabad state, collection of material *about*, 718, mass movement in, 710, on *Ideals of Indian Art*, 300; on Independence *Day* celebrations, 47, 547; on India, 49, 142, 144, coming of changes in, 613, need for economic and social changes in, 143, review of past political history of, 131, 133; on India and China, 27, 87, on India and U.S.A., 613; on Indian middle classes, 556; on Indian nationalism and British imperialism, 67, 91–92, *on Indian officials*, 218; on Indian people, 106, 466, habit of doing things slowly, 432–433, *and* political leaders, 107; on Indian *philosophy*, 351–352, on Indian political scene, 133, *on* Indian situation, 675, 713, *changes in*, 379–380, on Indian states, mass movements in, 708–710, on Indian women, 665, on India's history, 32; on *Indigo*, 508, on individualism in the West, 259, on industrialists' attitude *to Congress policy*, 215; *on inoculations and medicines*, 548, 550–551, 556–557, 592; on *In Russia Now*, 549, on intelligence, 132; on interest in humanity, 148–149; on intimate personal bonds, 258; on investing his money in Khadi production, 226; on Isherwood's translation of Gita, 637; on jail, coming *out of*, 162, discussions *on national affairs in*, 579–580, 582–587, *effect on mind of long years in*, 171–172, hunger strike in, 8, letters received in, 165–166, writing them from, 626, newspapers in, 35, 192, playing badminton in, 618, possibility of release from, 380, 462–463, 480, 521–522, 607, 609, 611, 638–639, sense of time in, 27, 383–384, spending time in, 15–16, total *period spent in, 319, 382, transfer from one to another*, 136, year ending in, 318, on jail companionship, 1, 20, 23–24, 38, 84, 90; on jail diary writing, 1, 23, 38, 637, on jail garden, 21, 24, 33, 41, 52, 73–74, 111, 149, 151, 181, 236, 271, 336, 450, 454–455, 525; on jail interviews, 248, 255, 493, 496, 498, 501–502, 506–508, 523, 563–564, 568–569, 575; on *Jail Journey*, 298–299, on jail life, 73, 159, 340, 459, 481, 485, 502, *experiencing changes in*, 383, *its effect on body and mind*, 108–109, 130, 182, 342–344, 347–348, 564; on jail rules and restrictions, 8–10, 13, 17, 20, 23, 25–26, 36, 44, 48, 56, 63–65, 72–73, 76, 80–81, 83, 95, 102, 114, 116, 118, 135–136, 140, 163, 198–199, 229, 236, 241, 244–245, 248, 257, 260, 304, 365–366, 409–410, 525–526, 529, 575; on jail timetable, 118–119, 127–128; on Jaipur state, mass movement in, 709–710, on Japan's invasion of India, 39–40, 382, and proposal for writing to the Viceroy, 382, 402; on Japanese War, 617; *on Jayaprakash Narayan*, 252; *on Jinarajadasa, C.*, 543, 550; *on Jinnah, M.A.*, 39, 68, 122, 154–155, 244, 323–324, 456, 708, *knife-attack* on him, 195–196; on *Journey Among*

Warriors, 430, 440, 453; on journey from, Ahmadnagar Fort to Bareilly Jail, 597–600, Allahabad to Rangoon, 680–681, Bareilly Jail to Almora Jail, 634, 637; on judging others by one's own standard, 453–454; on *Kadambari*, 112; on Kailas and Sheila Kaul, 239, 463, 517, 520, 523; on Kamala Nehru, 70; on Kamala Nehru Hospital, 253–254; on Kamala Nehru Scholarship, 535; on Kanpur, labour troubles in, 690, 692, 717; on Karaka, D.F., 453; on Kashmir, 611, 619–621, mass movement in, 710; on Kasturba Gandhi's death, 360; on Khali, 538, 552; on Khaliq, 265, 294, 301, 413–414, 436, 479; on Khusrau, 223; on kisans' march to Lucknow, 696; on Kripalani, J.B., 99, 532, 593, his indictment of Indian people, 106–107; on Krishna Hutheesing, 165, 273–274, 369–370, 417, educational arrangement for her children, 374–375, 392–393, 396, 425, 442, 450–451, 469, 484, 532–533, 592, her book (*With No Regrets*), 340, 351, 353–356, 390–391, 393, 412, 469, 612; on Labour Party (British), 311; on lack of sympathy and understanding, 172; on Lahore, 620; on later Moghals, 52–54; on lathi-charge incident at Pune station, 7; on Leaders Conferences' appeal to Congress and Government, 81; on *Le Theatre Indien*, 189, 263; on letter, its effect on one's mind, 86, writing of, 356–357; on *Letters from a Father to His Daughter*, giving its copyright free to public educational authorities, 320, 395, 460–461, including chapters of it in a book of selections, 395–396, 409, publishing Assamese translation of, 319–320, 395, 423, Bengali translation of, 395, 432–433, Gujarati translation of, 471, renewal of sale agency agreement regarding, 541–542; on *Letters From Prison*, 644; on Lewis Carroll's collected works, 84; on life, 75, 141–142, 507, adventures of, 338–339, difficult periods of, 42, 219–220, facing challenges of, 371–372, immortality of, 467, impact of, 78, normal and ordinary processes of, 459–460; on life and philosophy, 337–338; on Lin Yutang's visit to Allahabad, 368–369, 380, 386; on living in complete uncertainty, 164; on Lord Linlithgow's charges against Congress, 56–61, his reply to the deputation proposing to see him, 98; on Louis Fischer, 161; on Madan Atal, 557; on Madan Mohan Malaviya, 238–239; on Mahatma Gandhi, 6–7, 19, 48, 58, 67–68, 90–93, 100, 107–108, 121, 133, 154, 175, 191, 217, 285, 342, 381, 388, 401–402, 406, 410, 424, 429, 438, 456–457, 479, 504, 523, his correspondence with Government, Lord Linlithgow and Wavell, 66, 434, 443–444, his draft resolution at Allahabad W.C. meeting, 583–585, his fast, 62, 65, 67–71, 75, his release, 407, 411, his talks with Jinnah, 462, 478, 486, his two proposals to the Government, 445–446, 455–457, rumours that he had written to Viceroy about August resolution, 183–186, 194, 203, 213; on Mahtab Harekrushna, 591; on Malabar, 503–504; on *Mathematics for the Million*, 128; on Maulana Azad, 15, 20, 22–23, 38–39, 50, 81–82, 84, 89–90, 99, 101, 105–106, 118, 128, 297, 328, 595, 608, drafting his letter to Lord Linlithgow, 62, heated argument with him, 211–212, his analysis of developments after Cripps Mission, 580, 582–583, his proposal for withdrawal of August resolution, 276–281, 290–292, 296–297, his suggestion for writing to Government regarding transfer from Ahmadnagar Fort, 568, his wife's death, 101–102, 105, 113; on Mehr Taj, her engagement and marriage, 454, 525; on mental depression, 221; on mental passivity, 384; on Mir Taqi Mir, 237–238; on Mohammad Yunus, 85; on Mohanlal Nehru, 317; on money, 397, 588–589; on Moti Katju, 146, 148, 162; on Motilal Nehru, 109–110, 259, 422, his law library, 553–554; on mountains, 596;

on Mridula Sarabhai, 178, 181, 484, 697; on Mudie, Sir R.F., his statement in Central Assembly on internees in Ahmadnagar, 558; on Munshi, K.M., 513; on murderer, 667, on Muslim League, 92, 133–134, 216–217, 244, 283–284, 708, its reaction to Congress victory in Bijnor election, 692; on Mussolini's resignation, 194–195; on Narendra Deva, 187, 291, 527–528, 595, 623; on Raja Narendra Nath's death, 579–580, 590, on Naresh Katju, 316, on national movement, 216, on National Planning Committee's office, 64; on National Week, 98; on nature, 74, and human beings, 104; on nature-cure, 439, 442; on Nayantara Pandit, 32, 51–52, 235, 246–247, 275, on necessity of experience of jail life for judges and jail officials, 110–111, on neck exercises, 239–240; on 'Nehru', spelling of, 505–506, on new books, 15; on new century, 104, on newspaper report about his illness, 481, 484, 486–487; on new standard time, 16, on New Year, 321–322, 530, 533; on New Year's eve (1935), 663, on Nietzsche, 231; on nonviolence and violence, 92, on nonviolent satyagraha, 11; on North West Frontier Province, by-elections in, 217; on observing absolute silence, 426, on old and new generation, 52, 143, 555–556, on *One World*, 322–323, 364, on order of externment on Indira Gandhi and Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, 142, 144–147, 149, 166, on ordinances passed by the Government, 717, on organic connection with nature or life, 231–232, on Orissa states, mass movement in, 709, on *Other Men's Flowers*, 574; on Padmaja Naidu, 117, 181, 643–647, 649–650, 653, 655, 663–664, 666–669, 671, 673–674, 676–679, 685–686, 690–693, 695–696; on Padmavati Nehru's marriage, 603–604, 610, on Pakistan, 244; on Pant, G.B., 297, 382, 402, 543–545, 547–548, 581, 593–594, 598, 600, on Pattabhi Sitaramayya, 12; on Persian, learning of, 316, 483, 510, 521; on pets, 35, on philosophy, 231; on physical exercises, 117; on pictures and moods of a person, 180, on *Plan for the Economic Development of India*, 353, on Plato, 14, on playing about with earth, 21, 24; on political prisoners and the Government, 344; on political sufferers' distress relief, 463; on Prafulla Chandra Ghose, 291–292, 523, 532, 537, his release, 543; on *Pre-Buddhist India*, 513, on pregnancy, 362, 385; on price control, 458; on *Prison Days*, 637; on prisoners, 124; on proof reading, 179; on Proust, 14; on provincial governments, attitude of governors and Government of India towards, 717–718, on public speaking, 613, 643–644; on publishers of his books, 400, 677, on publishing houses in India, 554, on publishing Marathi translation of some of his articles, 423; on Punjab politics, 43, on Dr. Purandare, 439, 446, on Puri temple, 657; on Purnima Banerji (Nora), 144, 192, on Pyarelal Katju, 308, 520, 524; on Radhey Shyam Pathak, 604, on Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, 458, 559–560, 602; on Raghunandan Saran, 443; on rainbow, 233, on rainy season in India, 205, on Rajagopalachari, C., 457, 479, 523, his correspondence with Jinnah, 445, his statements, 81, 284–285, 456; on Rajiva Gandhi, 466–471, 474–478, 481, 489–491, 501, 505, 512, 516–517, 520, 528, 533, 537–538, 540, 550–552, 556, 570–571, 574–575, 588, 603, 605, 610, 618, 620–622, 629, 635, on Rajkot, mass movement in, 709; on Rajputana, 314–315, on *Raksha Bandhan*, 461, on Ranjit Pandit, 174–175, 247, 249, 264, 274–275, 303, 329–331, 646, his death, 332–333, 339–340, on *Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix* and international crisis, 704–705, on reading *Shakuntala* in Sanskrit, 84; on right balance between the extrovert and introvert aspects of nature, 590–591, on Robeson Eslanda, 252, 255–256, 546; on Robeson Paul, 256, on Roosevelt, Franklin, 323, his death,

608; on royalty account in London, 246; on rumours of, his arrest, 672–673, his marrying again, 665; on Russia, 300–301; on Russo-German Non-aggression Pact, 716; on rustle of breeze through the deodars, 635; on Sachindra Chandra Kar Gupta's release and re-arrest, 354; on Samroo Begam, 138–139; on *Samvats* 2000 and 2001, 97, 104, 113, 376, 381; on Sanskrit language and literature, 104–105, 112; on Sapru Committee, 523; on Sarojini Naidu, 341, 546; on Satyamurti's death, 87; on science, 19; on *Science for the Citizen*, 22, 77; on *Seeding Democracy*, 632; on selling of his goods, 192–193; on Sendak, M., 570; on sensitive and insensitive people, 78, 361–362; on Shankar (a convict), 28; on Shelley, 52; on Shelley Wang, 249; on Dr. Shirodkar, 555; on Shiva Prasad Gupta, 403; on Sikandar Hayat Khan, 42; on Sind, 650; on Sindhi people, 651; on snow and cold in the North, 544–545; on solar eclipse, 449–450, 458; on solitary living, 350; on sorrow, 26; on *Soviet Communism: A New Civilization*, 146, 149; on Spain Day, 712; on spinning, 31, 176, 187, 209, 228, 230, 235, 239, 262, 299, 301, 335, 378, 388; on *Stacheldrahtfieber* (barbed wire fever), 124; on Stafford Cripps, 311–312; on stars and constellations, 262–263, 293–294; on Subhas Chandra Bose, 696, not joining the C.W.C. of, 711–712; on Sucheta Kripalani, 554; on Suhrid Sarabhai's death, 26; on summer heat, 94, 631; on sunbath, 549; on Swami Sant Deo, 628; on Swami Vivekananda, 614; on Syed Mahmud, 19, 24, 90, 99, 115, 145, 154, 158, 166, 175, 178–179, 187, 299, 324, 432, 503, 510, his family, 168, 295, 440, his release, 488, 494–495, 499–500, 504, his statements about the inmates of Ahmadnagar Fort Jail, 495–498; on taboos, 458; on Tahira Khan, 42; on Tai Chi-tao, 96–97, his gifts, 86–87, visit to India, 719; on tailoring of his clothes, 95; on Tambimuttu, M.J., 427; on Tamil and Telugu women, 654; on Thacker's (publishers), 527; on theatre of Greece and India, 263; on Thibaw's daughter, 683–684; on thought and order of things in the world, 159; on time 325, passage of, 308–309, idea of time in ancient India, 325–326; on training of mind, 416–417; on travelling, 518–519, 540, 564, in India, 618–619; on *Tree, Fruit and Flower of India*, 137; on trekking in the mountains, 619; on ululation, 657; on understanding others, 502–503, 664, 666; on U.P., damage to the crops in, 394; on United States of America, 300–301, friends in, 312, training of young Indians in, 613; on U.S.A. and Russia, 613; on Upadhyaya, S.D., 491; on Urdu language, 223–224; on Urdu, learning of, 22, 45, 78, 84; on Urdu verses, 240, of Akbar, 264, Amir, 190, 233, 267, Anis, 163–164, anonymous poets, 303, 359, Asi, 327, Atish, 169, 305, 318, Ghalib, 120, 128–129, 139–140, 148, 152, 160, 164, 183, 190, 193–194, 209–211, 233, 246, 250–251, 254, 271, 289, 321, 330, Hali, 173, 222, 260, Insha, 226–227, 348, Iqbal, 156, Jurat, 156–157, Mazhar, 224–225, Mir, 148, 238, 240, 267, 348, Mir Dard, 309, 384, Momin, 327, Qaim Chandpuri, 391–392, Taba Tabai, 120, Wazir Lucknavi, 177–178, Zauq, 303, 317; on Vallabhbhai Patel, 145, 154, 175, 279, 291, 311, 402, his views on events prior to August 1942, 585–586; on Vatsala Samant, 320; on Viceroy's Executive Council's Indian members, 29, 89; on Vidyavati Nehru's marriage, 534, 545; on Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, 81–82, 85, 97–99, 120, 153, 165, 167, 205, 208, 240–241, 273–274, 333, 369, 381, 490–491, her decision to shift from Anand Bhawan, 257–258, 261, 269, 272–274, her visit to U.S.A., 487, 496, 512–513, 517–518, 520, 522, 524–525, 543, 567, 587, 612–613, 623, some domestic matters of, 386–387, 393, 414–415, 438; on

Vikramaditya, 376–377; on Virginia Woolf, 232; on visit to Almora, 538–539, Amber, 304, Assam, 693–694, Burma, 681–684, Calcutta, 657–658, *Europe, 698–703, 705–706,* Karnatak and Maharashtra, 669–671, Kashmir, 627–628, Kulu, 144, 156, London, 171, Orissa, 656–657, Punjab, 645, 648, Sind, 651, south India, 652–654, 657, 659–660, Spain, 700–701; on visiting, Bengal, 670, China, 312, England, 311, foreign countries, 312, Kashmir, 603, places in India, 315, U.S.A., 312; on Walter de la Mare, 448–449; on the War, 101, 130, 186, class of people flourishing during, 621–622, on war and peace, 458; on the War in Europe, 463, on Wavell, A.P., his broadcast about British Government's proposal, 639, his letter to him, 510–511, 574, on Wendell Willkie's death, 488–489, on Willie Munzenburg, 391; on will making, 285–287, *306, 422–423, 480; on Winston Churchill,* 311, 429, his message of good wishes, 714, his speeches, 10, 29, 87, 186, on words, 357, *on worries,* 417; on writing autobiography, 165; on Yunus, Mohammad, 534, 582, 610; on zero, 326
——, Kamala, 69–70, 74, 95 fn, 99–100, 149 *fn,* 168, 174, 180, 226, 240, 245, 273–274, 340, 358, 396–397, 422, 429, 503, 539, 560
——, Krishanlal, 192–193, 525–526, 529, 534, 610
——, Mohanlal, 76, 192, 206, 317, 693
——, Motilal, 109–110, 250, 259, 273, 336, 396, 422, 505, 509, 539, 553, 560, 590, 614, 628
——, Padmavati, 603, 610
——, Rajan, 55, 174 & fn, 180, 399, 429, 526
——, Rameshwari, 200 & fn, *202, 333,* 345, 575, 579 fn, 590
——, R.K., 174 & fn, 399
——, Shivrajvati (Shauna), 534
——, Swarup Rani (Dol Amma), 473, 560, 567, 620, 628
——, Uma, 288
——, Vidyavati, 534, 544–545, 551, 555
Nehru Report, 266, 292, 589–590 & fn
Neogi, Nagendra Nath, 320
Neogy, K.C., 219 & *fn*
Nepal, *252* fn
New Anthology of Modern Poetry (S. Rodman, ed.), 103
New Book Company, 103
New China (Nym Wales), 452, 477, 559
New Delhi, 161 fn, 275, 341, 450, 674
New Germany in Birth, 499
New Kashmir (All Jammu & Kashmir National Conference), 452, 477
New Recessional and Other Poems (E. Thompson), 41 fn, 79, 309
New Republic, 188, 441
New Statesman, 19, 189, 198, 330, 386 fn, 582
News Chronicle, 445
New York, 125, 178, 230, 235, 246–247, 251, 275, 464, 469, 517, 524–525, 543, 587, 610
Nichols, Beverley, 452, 527 & *fn,* 606
Nietzsche, F., 231 & *fn*
Night in Bombay (Louis Bromfield), 111 *fn*
Nikhilananda, Swami, 541, 562
Nilima Devi, 408 & *fn,* 554, 557, 562, 565
Nill, John, 79
Nishat Bagh (Srinagar), 620
Nonesuch Press, 84
Nonviolence in Peace & War (Mahatma Gandhi), 541
N.E.F.A., 137 fn
North West Frontier Province, 194, 204, 215 fn, 217 & fn, 284 fn
Nune, Mohamed Yasseen, 6 & *fn*

O'Faolain, Sean, 559, 576 fn, 596
Ogden, Charles Kay, 605
Oliver Trenton, K.D. (Gilbert Frankau), 647 fn
O'Neill, Eugene, 360 & *fn*
——, Hugh, 576 fn
One of Us (Gilbert Frankau), 647 & fn
One World (Wendell Willkie), 247 fn, 322, 364, 394, 408, 412, 488

On Living in a Revolution (Julian Huxley), 508, 559
Ooty, 370, 538, 541
Orel, 499
Oriental Treasures (J.K. Katrak), 565
Orissa, 201 & fn, 213, 226, 242–243, 326, 344, 656–657, 709
Ornsholt, Anna, 435–436, 521, 550, 563
Other Men's Flowers (A.P. Wavell, ed.), 510 & fn, 574
Otto, Emil, 119 & fn, 316, 483, 492, 510
Oudh, 600
Oudh and Tirhut Railway, 604
Our Family (Lin Adet *et al*), 380 fn
Outcast (Winwood Reade), 230
Outline of History (H.G. Wells), 128
Outlook on Homo Sapiens (H.G. Wells), 74 fn
Out of the People (J.B. Priestley), 79
Oxford, 416, 422, 515, 705
Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, 225–226, 229
Oxford University Press, 541–542

Pacific Affairs, 188, 229, 404, 441, 461
Pacific Relations Conference (Hot Springs), 525
Pacific War, 67
Padma (publishers), 415
Pahalgam, 628–629
Pakistan, 43 fn, 133 fn, 134 fn, 216 fn, 235 fn, 244, 324, 454 fn, 456 fn
Pakistan (Shaukat Ansari), 527 & fn, 559
Palestine, 460
Palliwal, Jiva Ram, 618
Panchgani, 167, 170, 180, 183, 190–192, 203–205, 208, 219, 263, 536, 639
Pande, Badri Dat, 540
——, Lohia, 270
Pandit, Chandralekha, 11–12, 16, 20, 22, 25–26, 54, 73, 75–78, 80, 83, 85, 96–98, 102, 105, 108, 114–117, 121, 123–124, 129–132, 136, 141, 147, 149–150, 159, 175, 178, 187, 229–230, 235, 246–247, 251, 273, 275, 303–304, 334–335, 369, 387, 401, 403, 411, 414–415, 445, 490, 500, 546, 555, 582, 610, 613, 623
——, Gokul, 369
——, Nayantara, 17, 24–25 & fn, 30, 32, 50–51, 54, 73, 80, 85, 114–115, 117, 121, 123–124, 131–132, 135, 141, 147, 149–150, 159, 175, 178, 181, 187, 230, 246–247, 251, 273, 275, 334–335, 369, 387, 401, 403, 411, 414–415, 445, 490, 500, 610, 613
——, Pratap, 85 & fn, 329, 331–332, 369, 386–387, 393, 414
——, Ranjit, 10 & fn, 12, 26, 28–29, 52, 54, 64, 73–76, 85 fn, 114, 116, 142 fn, 173–174, 189, 247, 249–250, 264, 266, 270, 273–275, 278, 285, 294, 302–304, 310, 317, 321, 326, 329–333, 335, 339, 352, 360, 369, 393, 408, 414, 478, 483, 553, 645–646, 662
——, Rita, 14, 17, 32–33, 51, 54, 80, 85, 369, 387, 415, 462–463, 466, 487, 500, 508, 518, 520, 522, 613
——, Saraswati, 332
——, Vasant, 369
——, Vijaya Lakshmi, 10 & fn, 12, 14 fn–16, 20, 25–26, 54, 64 fn, 73, 75–76, 78, 80–83, 85–86, 94–99, 102–103, 105, 111, 113–114, 116–117, 120, 122, 124, 129–130, 132, 135, 142, 144, 146–147, 149, 151, 153, 155, 158, 164–167, 172–175, 180, 189, 205, 208, 222, 231, 233, 235, 240–241 & fn, 250–251, 253, 257, 259, 261–262, 264–266, 269–270, 272–275, 278, 286, 288, 294, 303–304, 306, 321, 326, 328–334, 339–340, 349, 360, 369, 380–381, 386, 393, 408, 411, 414, 438, 445–448, 450, 454, 458–459, 462–463, 466, 469–470, 478, 483, 486–487, 489–491, 496, 498, 500, 506, 508, 512, 516–518, 520, 522, 524–525, 529, 543, 553–554, 567, 582, 587, 590, 610, 612–613, 623, 633, 637, 662, 696, 700–701, 703, 705–706, 720
Pandya, J.J., 565
——, Kamala Shankar, 477
Pant, G.B., 1, 4 & fn, 6, 29, 40–41, 49, 89, 105, 112, 290–291, 297, 299, 367,

382, 402, 462, 466, 472, 477, 487, 511, 514, 538, 540, 543–545, 547–548, 554, 558 fn, 563, 566, 568–569, 571–572, 581, 593–594, 597–600, 607
Pantopia (Frank Harris), 545
Paradise Lost (John Milton), 271, 480
Parasnath, 419 fn
Paris, 136, 189, 368, 391, 396, 401, 432 fn, 616, 626, 668, 699, 701–702, 704, 706, 712
Parvatipuram, 660
Passionaria—*see* Ibarruri, Dolores
Patel, Maniben, 6 & *fn*, 178
——, Vallabhbhai, 1, 5–6, 40–41, 47, 49, 89, 90 & fn, 101, 145, 150, 154, 158, 174–175, 229, 277–279, 290–292, 297, 311, 402, 443, 471, 511, 532, 537, 547, 558 fn, 568, 585–588, 593, 598, 608
Pathak, Radhey Shyam, 604 & *fn*
Patiali, 205
Patna, 316
Patna University, 438 fn
Pearl Harbour, 67 & fn, 255
P.E.N., 328
Penang, 315, 681
Penguin Book Company (Harmondsworth), 677
Penugolanu Agraharam, 659
People's Association (Jaipur), 710
People's War, 576
Pericles, 159
Persia—*see* Iran
Persian Conversation and Grammar (Emil Otto), 316, 334, 483, 492, 507–508, 510
Persian Self-Taught (Hugo), 316
Peru, 590
Peshawar, 55 fn, 204, 534, 637, 689
Petain, Marshal, 41 fn
Peter the Hermit, 104 & *fn*
Petroikos, Mrs—*see* Smedley, Agnes
Phaphamow, 340, 599–600, 602
Phelan, Jim, 298, 385
Philippines, 67 *fn*
Phillips, William, 247 & *fn*
Pilgrim's Progress (John Bunyan), 79
Pillai, M. Krishna, 396
Pindari glacier, 539, 611
Pioneer, 146 fn, 192
Piura, 539
Plan for the Economic Development of India (J.R.D. Tata *et al*), 336 & fn, 353
Planning Commission, 219 fn, 548 fn
Plato, 9, 14, 16 & fn, 22, 77, 79, 125, 231, 312, 351, 500 & fn
Plays & Stories (A. Chekhov), 125
Pocha's (Pune), 74, 111, 147
Poems (Ezra Pound), 302
Poems (Rabindranath Tagore), 408
Poetry, 427 *fn*
Poetry in Wartime (M.J. Tambimuttu, ed.), 407, 427 fn
Poet's Notebook (Edith Sitwell), 305, 407
Poland, 77 fn, 522, 615–616, 716
Polish Committee of National Liberation (Lublin), 522 *fn*
Polish Corridor, 615
Pondicherry, 652–654, 660, 692
Pool of Vishnu (L.H. Myers), 441 & *fn*
Poona—*see* Pune
Port Said, 706
Postgate, R.W., 79
Pound, Ezra, 302
Prague, 237, 615–616, 702–703
Prasad, Dwarka, 529
——, Mrs, 463
——, Narmada, 599
——, Rajendra, 488, 585 fn
Prayag, 604, 606
Prayers, Praises & Psalms (V. Raghavan), 530
Pre Buddhist India (Ratilal N. Mehta), 513, 530
Premchand (Indar Nath Madan), 477
Prescriber, 257, 270
Priestley, J.B., 79
Principles of Economic Planning (K.T. Shah), 64 fn, 545
Prison Days (Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit), 165 & fn, 633, 637
Problems of Men (John Dewey), 147 *fn*
Prophet (Khalil Gibran), 388, 453
Proust, Marcel, 9 & fn, 14, 116
Pulitzer Prize, 136
Pune, 7 & fn, 28, 150, 157, 174, 176, 178–179, 183, 199, 205, 223, 225, 304, 359, 363, 394–395, 397, 405,

409–412, 414, 423, 425, 427–429, 434–435, 441, 446–448, 452, 548
Punjab, 43 & fn, 200, 202, 242, 252 fn, 579 fn, 590, 620, 644–645, 648, 651, 689, 717
Punjab Chamber of Commerce, 674 fn
Punjab National Bank (Allahabad), 304, 509, 536, 604, 616
Punjab Provincial Workers' Conference, 569 fn
Puran Chand, 618
Purandare, N.A., 362 & fn, 373, 385, 428, 435, 439, 446
Puri, 657
Pushpa, 461
Pyarelal, 6 fn, 342

Qaim Chandpuri, 391 fn
Quantum Theory, 536
Quakers, 313, 449
Quest for Certainty (John Dewey), 147 fn
Quit India Movement—*see* August Movement
Quit India resolution—*see* August resolution

Rabindranath through Western Eyes (Alexander Aronson), 576
Race, Reason & Rubbish (G. Dahlberg), 79
Radhakrishnan, S., 344 & fn, 545, 554
Radical Socialist Party (France), 704 fn
Raghubir, 479
Rahim, Abdul, 224 & *fn*
Rai, Himansu, 665 fn
Rainbow (Wanda Wasilewska), 589
Rajagopalachari, C., 81 & fn, 98 fn, 200 fn, 284 & fn, 445 & fn, 456–457, 479, 481, 523, 580 fn
Raja Ram Motilal Guzder & Co. (Allahabad), 418 fn
Rajasthan, 346
Rajatarangini (Kalhana), 64, 554
Rajkot, 709
——, affair, 185, 456
——, Maharaja of, 185 fn
Rajpur, 356
Rajputana, 315, 520
Rajshahi Jail, 112
Rajya Sabha, 6 fn
Rama, 479
Ramakrishna and His Disciples (Christopher Isherwood), 633 fn
Ramakrishna Mission, 326, 524
Ramakrishna Paramahansa, 609, 616, 626
Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre (New York), 541 & fn
Ramgarh (U.P.), 539
Ramgarh, Congress session at, 457
Ramlal, Dewan, 193, 563 & fn, 619
Rangoon, 53, 211, 617, 680–684, 687
Rangoon Times, 681
Ranikhet, 539, 626, 634
Ranpur, 709
Rao, Raja, 287, 415 fn
——, Shiva B., 522
Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix (World Peace Congress), 704–705
Ratnagiri, 683
Ratnakar Press (Sangli), 395, 404 fn–405, 409
Razor's Edge (Somerset Maugham), 519, 609
Reader's Digest, 80, 125, 168, 180, 188, 266, 287, 386, 394, 404, 441, 616
Reade, Winwood, 230
Real and the Negative (B.K. Mullick), 452
Recent Judgements in India, 248 fn, 257, 292, 545
Reconstruction in Philosophy (John Dewey), 147 fn
Red Book (National Planning Committee), 266
Reddipalli, 659
Rede Lecture, 126 fn
Reed, Douglas, 79, 307, 339
Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time (Harold Laski), 363, 438, 516
Reichstag, 195 fn
Religion without Revelation (Julian Huxley), 302
Renaissance of Hinduism (D.S. Sarma), 530
Renaissance of Physics (Karl Kelchner Darrow), 605

Report No. 17 (Joseph Stalin), 499
Republic (Plato), 9, 14, 77, 79
Reshaping Man's Heritage (Julian Huxley *et al*), 508, 530
Reuter, 672
Reveille in Washington (M.K. Leech), 79
Reveille, Thomas, 103
Reynolds, Reginald, 305, 408
Rheims, 617 fn
Richard, Madame Mirra (*The Mother*), 653 & *fn*
Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India (Garratt and Thompson), 335, 363
Rise of American Civilization, (Charles and Mary Beard), 194 & fn, 300
Rtu samhara (Kalidasa), 52 & fn, 266, 274, 285
River of Kings—see *Rajatarangini*
Riviera, 706
R.K. Railway, 604
Robeson, Eslanda Goode, 247, 252, 255–256, 275, 546
——, Paul, 255–256, 275
——, Pauhe, 256
Roench, Devika Rani, 144, 665 & *fn*
——, George, 271
——, Nicholas Konstantin, 302
——, Svetoslav, 144, 271, 398, 665 fn
Roget's Thesaurus, 116
Rolland, Romain, 351, 609, 616, 626
Rome, 616
Room of One's Own (Virginia Woolf), 432
Roosevelt, Eleanor, 275 & *fn*
——, F.D, 40 *fn*, 202 & *fn*, 247 *fn*, 275 fn, 323 & fn, 460 fn, 608
Root and the Flower (L.H. Myers), 441 & fn
Round Table Conference, 99
Rowse, A L., 559 & fn
Royal Asiatic Society, 76, 189
Royal Society, 605 fn
Roy, B C, 349, 406, 655, 660, 691
Rugby Hotel (Matheran), 403
Rukwa (a convict), 514
Rupa & Co. (Calcutta), 526, 559
Rupmati, 519
Russell, Bertrand, 420
——, George William, 336
Russia at War (Ilya Ehrenburg), 304, 408, 452
Russia, Soviet (Soviet Union), 2, 77 fn, 127 fn, 195 & fn, 216, 228, 256, 271, 300–301, 312, 404 fn, 420, 430 *fn*, 438 *fn*, 448, 453, 522, 546 fn, 549–550, 613, 615, 701, 703
Russia Triumphant (George Sava), 546, 549, 554
Russian Fables, 187
Russian Newsreel (C. Haldane), 79
Russian Primer with a Dictionary of About 1200 Words (Vladimir Shibayev), 398, 412
Russian Revolution, 210, 510
Ryan, Thomas, 305

Saar, 615
Sabarmati, 568
Sagittarius, 386 & *fn*, 477
Saha, Meghnad, 320 & *fn*
Sahai, Har, 618
Saharanpur, 694
Said ur Rahman, Syed, 368
Sakina Mansion (Bombay), 386, 397, 399, 403
Salur, 659
Samant, Vatsala, 165, 170, 254, 265, 317, 320, 367
Sambamoorty, B, 655
Sampurnanand, 541
Samroo, 138
——, Begam, 138–139
San Francisco, 623, 632
Sangli, 395, 404 fn–405, 409
Sanskrit Academy (Madras), 97
Sanskrit Drama (A B. Keith), 263
Santiniketan, 40, 320, 395
Sapru, Anand, 317, 326 & fn
——, Sir Tej Bahadur, 81 fn, 326 *fn*, 628
Sapru Committee, 523
Sarabhai, Ambalal, 26 fn, 64
——, Bharati, 140, 223, 239, 245, 336, 637, 697
——, Mridula, 178, 181, 317, 350, 386, 411, 450, 464–465, 484, 524, 593, 597, 697

——, Suhrid, 26 & fn
Saran, Raghunandan, 440, 443
——, Ram, 618
Sardhana, 138
Sarkar, Nalini Ranjan, 280
Sarma, D.S., 530
Sasta Sahitya Mandal (Delhi), 400, 432
Satyamurti, S., 87 & fn, 654
Sava, George, 546, 549, 554
Scanlon, J., 79
School and Society (John Dewey), 147 fn
Science for the Citizen (Lancelot Hogben), 22, 77, 79
Science in Progress (George Alfred Baitsell, ed.), 605
Scindia School (Gwalior), 375, 425, 442, 451, 592
Scotland, 694
Sculpture Inspired by Kalidasa (C. Siwaramamurti), 97, 155
Sebastopol, 499
Seeding Democracy (Maria Lorenzini), 632
Semushkin, Tikhov, 559
Sen, Basiwar, 540 & *fn*
——, Ela, 230
——, Gertrude Emerson, 540 & fn
Sendak, M., 8, 50, 214, 290, 297, 324, 370, 402, 487–488, 494, 500, 510, 514, 523, 543–544, 547–548, 566, 570, 581, 588, 598
Sen Gupta, Nellie, 660
Sepoy Mutiny, 444
Seth, Damodar Swarup, 618 & *fn*
Sethna, Janaki, 288 & fn
Sevagram, 404 fn, 490–491, 500
Shabda Sagar, 239 fn
Shah, Anupchand, 479
——, K.T., 64, 353 & fn, 545, 554
——, Popatlal, 432 & fn
——, Ratanlal D., 404–405, 427
Shah Alam, 309
Shahjahanpur, 599
Shah Jehan, 223
Shaikh (I.G. of Police), 618
Shakespearean Tragedy (A.C. Bradley), 19 & fn
Shakespeare, William, 493
Shakuntala (Kalidasa), 43, 84, 116
Shalimar Bagh (Srinagar), 620
Shamshere Singh, Beryl, 534
Shanghai, 67 fn
Shankar (a convict), 28
Shankaracharya hill (Srinagar), 627–628
Shankarlal, 674 & *fn*
Sharma (?), 233
Sharma (jailor), 635
Shastri, Lal Bahadur, 594, 599
Shaw, George Bernard, 105, 110, 127, 526–527, 551, 589
Shelley, P.B., 52
Shergil, Amrita, 289, 295, 298–299
Shibayev, Vladimir, 398
Shih-hua Shen, 457
Shih Nai-an, 22 fn
Shikarpur, 133 fn
Shillong, 694
Shirodkar, V.N., 439 & *fn*, 446–448, 555
Shivaji Park (Bombay), 5, 6 fn
Shridharani, Krishnalal, 147 & *fn*, 187, 302, 398 & fn, 408
Shukla, Chandrashankar, 535 & fn
Siam, 720
Signet Press (Calcutta), 554
Simla, 315, 544, 639 fn
Simon Commission, 99
Sinclair, Upton, 79, 136 & *fn*
Sind, 49, 133 & fn, 194, 202, 215, 242, 284 fn, 593, 650–651
Singapore, 67 fn, 681
Singh, Chandra, 181, 529
——, Dulip, 200
——, Lall, 618 & *fn*
——, Maharaj, 200
——, Maharaja Partap, 628
——, Mangal, 638
——, Rajendra Pal, 618 & *fn*
——, Ranjit, 473
Sing Sing Prison (New York), 110
Sinn Fein, 63 & fn
Sirius (Olaf Stapledon), 519
Sitaramayya, Pattabhi, 1, 12, 49–50, 89, 174, 568–569, 581, 593, 597–598
Sitwell, Edith, 302, 305, 407
——, Osbert, 431 & *fn*
Sivaliks, 648
Siwaramamurti, C., 97
Skoda Munition Works (Czechoslovakia), 703
Smedley, Agnes, 401 & *fn*, 438, 505, 589

Smith, W. Cantwell, 266, 541
Smolensk, 195 fn
Snowdon, 646
Social Function of Science (J.D. Bernal), 172
Socialism Reconsidered (M.R. Masani), 530
Socialists (Indian), 569
Socialist Sixth of the World (Dean of Canterbury), 559
Socrates, 500 fn
Sofia, 577
Sohrab, Mirza Ahmad, 79
Sonemarg, 631
Soong, Mayling—*see* Chiang Kai shek, Madame
Sophocles' King Oedipus (W.B. Yeats), 408, 477
South Africa, 159
Southern California University, 691 fn
Soviet & Tsarist Siberia (George Borodin), 559
Soviet Communism: A New Civilization (Sydney & Beatrice Webb), 127 fn, 146, 149, 265
Soviet Strength (Dean of Canterbury), 559
Soviet Union News (*Delhi*), 398
Spain, 23, 237, 522, 699–700, 702, 712–713
Spanish Civil War, 461 fn, 557
Sparkenbroke (Charles Morgan), 293, 334
Special Courts Ordinance, 197 fn
Spoil of Europe (Thomas Reveille), 103
Spotlight on Yugoslavia, 499
Sri Lanka, 70, 440 fn, 482, 629
Srinagar, 317, 481, 563, 579, 590, 610, 612, 615–616, 618, 621–622, 627–628
Srinivasini, U., 395
Sri Prakasa, 465, 626
Srivastava, Gopinath, 215
——, Sir J.P., 717 & fn
Stalingrad, 195 fn, 616
Stalin, Joseph, 499
Stapledon, Olaf, 519
State in Theory & Practice (Harold Laski), 288
State Trials, 553
Statesman, 124, 199–200, 243 & fn
States' People's Conference, 710, 718
Steed, W., 79
Stewart, Sir Thomas, 203 & fn
Stinnes, 125
Stolper, Gustav, 498
Stopler, Eustace, 298
Story of Burma, 687
Story of Confucius (Carl Crow), 407, 452
Story of India (Frank Moraes), 79
Story of Money (G.D. Birla and Parasnath), 419 fn
Story of My Life (Morarji Desai), 5 fn
Stowe, Leland, 438
Strangers in India (Penderel Moon), 200 fn, 557
Strategy of Indirect Approach (B.H. Liddell Hart), 302
Strathnaver, s s., 706
Stuart, Muriel, 182 fn
Students' Practical Hindustani—English Dictionary, 596, 609, 616
Study of History (Arnold J. Toynbee), 565 & fn
Subbarayan, P., 215
Sudetenland, 615, 703
Sukkur, 49 fn
Sulabha Rashtriya Granthmala (Pune), 359, 395
Sultanpur, 153
Sundaram, C.R. (Chinni), 4–5, 35, 63–64, 179, 356, 497
Sung Dynasty, 87, 97
Surat, 214 fn
Surma Valley, 693–694
Suvaranakshi, 264
Swami, Purohit, 336, 363
Swann's Way (Marcel Proust), 116
Swaraj Bhawan (Allahabad), 64, 253, 270, 304, 473
Swift, Jonathan, 79
Switzerland, 105, 250, 259, 396, 422, 536 fn, 701–702

Taba Tabai, Haider Ali Nazm, 120 & fn
Tagore, Rabindranath, 408, 440 fn, 614, 647, 662, 665 fn
——, Soumyendranath, 535 & fn
Tagore Town (Allahabad), 95, 126

Tai Chi-tao, 86–87, 96, 719
Taj Mahal (Agra), 666
Takru, Maharaj Bahadur, 326 & fn
Tales from Shakespeare (Charles Lamb), 484
Talking to India (George Orwell, ed.), 364
Talleyrand, 209 & *fn*
Tamagna, Frank M., 230
Tambimuttu, M.J., 407, 427 & fn
Tamil Nad, 654
Tandon, Purushottamdas, 114, 599, 602
Tan Yun-Shan, 719
Taoism, 157 fn
Taraporevala (Bombay), 18, 103
Targets (Sagittarius), 386, 477
Tartary, 260 fn
Tata, J.R.D., 336, 353 & fn
Tata's (firm), 336, 347
Tel Aviv, 400
Tendulkar, D.G., 172, 180, 438, 443, 453, 464–465, 545
Ten Principal Upanishads (W.B. Yeats & Purohit Swami), 336, 363
Thacker's (Bombay), 527
Thakurdas, Purushottamdas, 336, 353
That Bad Man (W. Steed), 79
Thein Pe, M., 230
Theory of Relativity, 536
Theosophical Society (Madras), 509 fn, 543 & fn, 596
They Shall Not Sleep (Leland Stowe), 438
Those Foreigners (R.W. Postgate and V. Aylmer), 79
Thoughts & Glimpses (Aurobindo Ghose), 477
Three Comedies (B. Bjornson), 79
Three Dramas (B. Bjornson), 79
Tibet, 264
Time, 19, 80, 188–189, 247 fn, 287, 322, 388, 399, 441, 560, 596, 606, 616
Time and Tide, 237 fn, 582
Time Must Have a Stop (Aldous Huxley), 531, 609
Times, 456 fn
Times Book Club (London), 189, 246
Times of India, 9, 11–12 & fn, 115, 161, 406
Timur, 52–53
Tisva, 599
Tod, James, 344 & fn, 346–347, 385, 403
To Europa (Raman Vakil), 576
Tokyo, 213
Toller, Ernst, 245, 390–391, 644
Tolstoy, Alexei, 559
——, Leo, 458, 504, 508, 526, 555
Tomorrow, 287, 298, 415 & fn, 477
Tomorrow is Ours (Khwaja Ahmad Abbas), 415, 477
Tom Sawyer (Mark Twain), 180
To the Lighthouse (Virginia Woolf), 232
Towards Angkor (H.G. Quaritch Wales), 305

Vienna, 701–702
View of the Gita (Morarji Desai), 5 fn
Vikramaditya, 376–377
Vilad, 598–599
Virgil, 79
Virginia Woolf (E.M. Forster), 126
Vishakhadatta, 54 fn
Vishva-Bharati, 432–433, 719
Vishva-Bharati, 453, 576
Vitastha, 620, 626
Vivekananda Laboratory (Almora), 540 fn
Vivekananda, Swami, 562, 609, 614, 616, 626
Vizianagaram, 659–660
Voiceless India (Gertrude E. Sen), 540 fn
Voltaire, 77, 79, 125, 168, 261
Vyas, Braj Mohan, 321 & *fn*

Wadhwani, Hemandas, 215 fn
Wadia, Sophia, 328 & *fn*
Wahid, 438
Walden (H.D. Thoreau), 554
Waldorf Astoria Hotel (New York), 525
Wales, H.G. Quaritch, 305
——, Nym, 64, 116, 452, 477, 559
Waley, Arthur, 183 & *fn*
Wall, W.G.P., 535
Walsh, Richard J., 124, 161, 163, 172, 188, 247, 316, 368, 386, 393, 411, 441, 464, 555, 582, 606
Wanderer Between Two Worlds (Norman De Mattos Bentwich), 79
Wang, Shelley, 249
War and Peace (Leo Tolstoy), 458
War of Liberation (Joseph Stalin), 499
War Prose (D.F. Karaka and G.N. Acharya), 477
Wardha, 4 fn, 90 fn, 449, 495, 646, 671–672, 687
Warning to the West (Krishnalal Shridharani), 398, 404, 408
Warsaw, 616
Washington, 195, 275
Wasilewska, Wanda, 589
Watal, Avtar Krishna, 622
Wavell, A.P. 1st earl, 185 & *fn*, 277, 279, 285, 304–305, 311, 341 & fn, 364, 382, 402, 434, 444, 445 fn, 456 fn–457, 494 fn, 504, 510–511, 515, 523, 532, 546, 559, 571–572 & fn, 574, 589, 625 & fn, 630, 639 & fn
Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal (Penderel Moon, ed.), 200 fn
Wazir, Khwaja Mohammed (of Lucknow), 177 & *fn*
Webb, Beatrice, 127 & *fn*, 146, 149, 265–266
——, Sydney, 127 & *fn*, 146, 149, 265–266
Wellesley College (U.S.A.), 114, 117, 230, 275, 303, 335, 401, 403, 623
Well of the People (Bharati Sarabhai), 140 & fn, 223
Wells, H.G., 74 & fn, 79, 128, 304, 317, 417
We Never Die (D.F. Karaka), 452
Wen Tien-hsaing, 87 & fn
Wen Yuan-ning, 27 & fn
West Bengal, 1 fn
Western Ghat, 167
Westminster, 63 fn
Weston, Christine, 455, 508
What Happened in Burma (M. Thein Pe), 230
What Happened in History (Vere Gordon Childe), 554
When the Moon Died (Nilima Devi), 557, 562, 565
Where Are We? (Jawaharlal Nehru), 713
Whitehall, 195
Wide India Co. (Assam), 423
Wilde, Oscar, 465
Wilkinson, Ellen, 401
Willingdon, Lady, 399
Willkie, Wendell, 247 & *fn*, 322–323 & fn, 364, 394, 408, 412, 488
Wingate, Orde, 146 fn
Wingate's Phantom Army (W.G. Burchett), 452–453
Wisdom of China and India (Liu Yutang), 305
With Love and Irony (Lin Yutang), 9, 14, 79
With No Regrets (Krishna Huthee-sing), 35 & fn
Wives of Famous Men (Ela Sen), 230
Women—East and West (Magnus Hirschfield), 687 & fn

Women Writers in Sanskrit, 112
Woodstock (Mussoorie), 646, 648
Woolf, Virginia, 103, 126 & fn, 232 & *fn*, 245, 432
World of Yesterday (Stefan Zweig), 304
World's End (Upton Sinclair), 136 fn
World Without End (Gilbert Frankau), 647 *fn*
Wu Ching-en, 183 & *fn*

Yasovarman (of Kanauj), 263 fn
Yeats, W.B., 232 & fn, 336 fn, 363, 408, 477
Yellamanchilli, 659
Yeravda Jail, 4, 6–8, 76, 105, 175, 178, 568, 593, 598, 608
Yogendra Deva, 527 & fn
You Can't Be too Careful (H.G. Wells), 79, 304, 317
Yucatan, 589
Yu Chenhsh, 31 & *fn*
Yugoslavia, 577
Yunus, Mohammad, 55 & fn, 65, 95, 117, 135, 141, 159, 172, 238, 368, 452, 454, 534, 582, 610, 612, 633, 637

Zauq, Muhammad Ibrahim, 303 & *fn*, 317 & *fn*, 352
Zilliacus, K., 455
Zimmern, Sir Alfred, 45 & *fn*, 155, 159
Zinat Mahal, 53
Zuleikha Begum, 69 & fn, 99, 101, 105, 113
Zutshi, Laddo Ram, 317
——, Ladli Prasad, 15, 42–45, 51–52, 64, 181, 253, 270, 272, 286, 294, 413, 435–438, 445, 479, 552
——, Sham Kumari, 161 & fn, 163
Zweig, Stefan, 304

world is too tragic for us also to be tragic—But there is another side to the world also, which smiles and laughs and is ever playing tricks with us. Even prison walls cannot keep this out wholly.

Nan writes that you were all greatly intrigued when you received two books purporting to come from me—a child's edition of *Don Quixote* and a novel by Louis Bromfield. I thought you would be. It happened this way. Early in November the desire to send you *something* for your birthday caught hold of me. I did not know what to send and how to send it from here. Books were indicated, but how to get them? I happened to have a new catalogue of the New Book Co. or Taraporevalas of Bombay. There were a number of new books mentioned in it. Some of these were by good authors, some others were obscure but something about their names or authorship attracted me—I made a list of about ten books, adding *Don Quixote* for good weight or measure. I felt that *Don Q.* might be interesting reading in prison.[145] Of course I did not mean a child's edition of it. This list was sent subsequently to the Bombay Govt. with the request that they might arrange to purchase and send these books to you on my behalf. Long afterwards I was informed that they could only get two of them and that these had been sent to you. Presumably they were sent to the U.P. Govt. first so that all the formalities and mysteries might be preserved.

Today I am arranging to send you a *few more books. They are:*

1 *A New Anthology of Modern Poetry*
2 Ferdinand Czernin : *Europe Going, Going, Gone!*
3 Virginia Woolf . *Between the Acts*
4 Lewis Carroll · *Complete Works*
5 Thomas Reveille : *The Spoil of Europe*
6 A pocket diary for 1943
7 सौर रोजनामचा or *Hindi diary for Samvat 2000*

For most people following the *Samvat* era, the New Year began four days ago with the new moon But some reformers want to make the months conform to the solar pattern more and they have fixed April 14th as the first day of the year The *Saur Roznamcha* I am sending you begins on April 14th Curiously enough this is *Rama Naumi* day, the anniversary, according to the *Samvat*, of your wedding. Among Kashmiris, of course, *Naoroz* (which is a big day for them) takes place according to the lunar reckoning. It was on April 5th last—How did you observe it? Nan wrote that you there welcomed in the New Year (January 1st) in proper style

145 Cervantes wrote this humorous novel when he was in jail for non payment of debts

The coming of a New Year always affects us, or most of us, as if we were really turning over a new leaf. What then of a new century, and even more so, a new millennium (in the mathematical sense)? You will remember how in the past this has led to great excitement. The end of the first 1000 years after Christ led to Peter the Hermit[146] and widespread hysteria and the Crusades. Most people in Christendom thought that the world was ending. A thousand years after the hegira also made people imagine that the old world was ending and a 'new order' was going to begin. Akbar tried to give a push to this by his *Din-e-Ilahi*[147]—But the world did not change very much.

Now for years past people have dreamed and imagined and prophesied that *Samvat* 2000 was the critical year in human history. Well, there is enough of crisis all over the place to justify that prediction at least! But what will come out of it is more than the stoutest of prophets can say. Always the human mind, consciously or subconsciously, yearns for a change for the better and builds up castles in the air of a better world to come—usually as if by a miracle. But miracles only seem to occur in old books. A New Year! Yet every day is a new beginning for us, every moment, the old world dies and something new takes its place. How many dead selves we have, each one of us, about us, round which cluster innumerable memories! We seem to be continually dying and being continually reborn—Every moment that is past is dead and we who lived it are dead with it; every moment that is yet to come is a mystery and we look with hope towards it.

And so may it be well with you in this new *Samvat* year and the new century and the new millennium, and as the mystery of the future unfolds itself in the brief living present, may it ever bring fulfilment to your being.

Today we have completed eight months, and you just seven months, for we had a month's start of you. And the summer months, long and hot, steal over us, to give place later to the miracle of the rains. So the cycle of nature goes round, heedless apparently of what happens to that insignificant animal man, who presumes so much and yet is so beast-like still. Yet he has something big, something worthwhile in him and perhaps, perhaps.....

I am glad you have been spending some time over Sanskrit and Hindi. Sanskrit is really wonderful—I wish I knew it well. But I am past

146. (1050-1115); French popular preacher who, in 1095, inspired many to go on the first crusade for the reconquest of the Holy Land.
147. The Universal Faith.

learning it now—I am stupid at languages. Yet it is something even to be able to read Kalidas or Bhavabhuti with some understanding.

I have asked Betty to arrange with a fruiterer in Bombay to send you a weekly parcel of fruit—I hope this reaches you in good condition.

Nan writes that Feroze has been transferred to Fyzabad. That is a pity for in Naini you could sometimes see him.

My *Glimpses of World History* came out in an American edition last year. A copy of it managed to reach me here. It is exactly like the English edition, even the cover. It is amusing to learn that many persons, who had previously not cared to read it thinking it a child's book, are now, in prison, reading it and finding out how mistaken they were. Mahmud is so enamoured of it that he wants to read its thousand pages again and again. Pantji is sufficiently impressed, and so, Betty writes, is Raja in Yeravda Prison.

As I was writing this letter news came of the death of Maulana's wife. In a sense we had been partly prepared for bad news. Still hardly anyone here expected this sudden end. She had not been well for some time but only two months ago she was well enough to plan to go to the hills. Some sudden change pulled her down—It is a great shock to all of us, and you can well imagine what it is for the Maulana—I have come to know him very intimately during these months here. I knew well how full of learning he was, how wise in counsel. I have found him to be also a very brave and gallant gentleman, a finished product of the culture that, in these disturbed days, unhappily pertains to few—I am greatly exercised. I wish I could do something for him. But what can I do? I hardly dare go to him.

I am writing separately to Nan. I shall send this letter to Anand Bhawan as her parole has been extended—But it is just possible that she may miss my letter.

You must feel a little lonely since Chand left you. I do not yet know who your other companions are except that Nora is with you. A little dose of more or less solitary living is not bad for one, provided one can adapt oneself to it. In a sense you have had experience of it in sanatoria in Switzerland—But what a comparison I make!—Naini Prison and a Swiss sanatorium at Leysin.

I have been reading Bernard Shaw's plays again. Twice I have read them previously and seen some of them on the stage. And now for the third time I am going through the lot. It is surprising how much there is in them. What a wise man he is, full of the deepest understanding of life, which often he covers with his levity and over smartness. Few writers provoke me to thought so much as he does. I am sorry when I think that I am never likely to meet him. He is 87 years

old now—I once saw him at Cambridge when I was an undergraduate there. Not again.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

April 13—Tuesday

At last a letter from Indu from Naini Prison—after seven months! It was dated 25th March and has thus taken just 20 days to reach me. It was in answer to my first letter dated March 5th. It is a cheerful letter which pleased me greatly, except for one or two glimpses into her life which were distressing—being locked up every night at 7 p.m. and having to spend the long evenings and nights in a hot mosquito-infested barrack by the light of a hurricane lantern.

x x x x

Today was our weighing day. I lost another pound or two and am now 131 pounds—a drop of 12 lbs. since I came here—yet I feel perfectly healthy and fit, only definitely thinner.

Maulana went down about 5 pounds during the week, possibly six. This after having lost 30 pounds previously. It shows how he has felt the strain and afterwards the shock of his wife's death. Outwardly he has remained his calm, composed and dignified self but his face grows thinner and more lined.

x x x x

Last evening, as we sat after dinner, Kripalani burst out and bitterly complained of the Indian people as a whole. Why should they breed so many traitors—now and throughout history? It was a comprehensive indictment with which I do not agree—Or, to put it differently, I think this species is present in every country in large enough numbers. Given the opportunity they pop up. And in India they have had and have splendid opportunities.

Still it is depressing to think that so many of our people are made of this villainous and contemptible stuff. Has our long subjection eaten so deeply into our souls?

There is another aspect to it which should never be forgotten. We blame our tools and that is always likely to mislead and confuse us May we not be to blame? Was our thinking all right? It is so easy to cast blame on others for our own mistakes and failures. As individuals we might be entitled to criticise the behaviour of other individuals. But as political leaders, it is not so easy to escape blame for the faults of others. It was our job to understand that material and make the best use of it. It may be, of course, that the best way to train that material is for us to indulge in individual action If so we must realise this, and realising it, not blame others too much for not coming up to the scratch Anger and disappointment at want of success are understandable and perhaps inevitable. Yet they are not wholly reasonable if we keep our eyes open Perhaps Kripalam, and others who may be affected in that way, expected too much, living in a world of their own, and making their wishes father to their thoughts. The magic approach—always a dangerous one, though sometimes rarely the miracle comes off. We are all susceptible to it in varying degrees. Probably I did not expect as much as Kripalani did, I was not so much blinded by the glare of magic—So my disappointment was proportionately less—But there it was and is

April 14 Wednesday

Ram Naumi today and the first day of *Samvat* 2000 according to the solar reckoning.

The day has brought rumours of another fast by Bapu—probably a fast to death.[148] No reasons are stated, no details are specified. Indeed so far they are rumours only But I have no doubt they are true. It seems inevitable that Bapu, constituted as he is, should rebel against the living death in prison when all manner of foul and false charges are brought against him Only a few days ago I wrote something to this effect in this journal.

Elemental forces are at work for good or ill, and Bapu is a bit of an elemental force himself With all the passion that moved him last year from May to August, which found feeble utterance in his articles

148 There were rumours in April 1943 that Mahatma Gandhi was considering a fast unto death in August; this would be supported by marches to the Viceroy's residence and Government offices

old now—I once saw him at Cambridge when I was an undergraduate there. Not again.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

April 13—Tuesday

At last a letter from Indu from Naini Prison—after seven months! It was dated 25th March and has thus taken just 20 days to reach me. It was in answer to my first letter dated March 5th. It is a cheerful letter which pleased me greatly, except for one or two glimpses into her life which were distressing—being locked up every night at 7 p.m. and having to spend the long evenings and nights in a hot mosquito-infested barrack by the light of a hurricane lantern.

x x x x

Today was our weighing day. I lost another pound or two and am now 131 pounds—a drop of 12 lbs. since I came here—yet I feel perfectly healthy and fit, only definitely thinner.

Maulana went down about 5 pounds during the week, possibly six. This after having lost 30 pounds previously. It shows how he has felt the strain and afterwards the shock of his wife's death. Outwardly he has remained his calm, composed and dignified self but his face grows thinner and more lined.

x x x x

Last evening, as we sat after dinner, Kripalani burst out and bitterly complained of the Indian people as a whole. Why should they breed so many traitors—now and throughout history? It was a comprehensive indictment with which I do not agree—Or, to put it differently, I think this species is present in every country in large enough numbers. Given the opportunity they pop up. And in India they have had and have splendid opportunities.

Still it is depressing to think that so many of our people are made of this villainous and contemptible stuff. Has our long subjection eaten so deeply into our souls?

social life, the long hours alone, the want of the most ordinary amenities we are so used to and take for granted, gives a value and significance to them and we enjoy them all the more when we have the chance. Prison is the true home of that dreadful thing *ennui*, and yet, oddly enough, it teaches us to triumph over it. And so we grow more vital, more aware of the manifold variety of life and even, in a sense, younger in mind. That is, in a sense, a contradiction for the mind grows older too in prison, or at least more mature. But then life is full of such contradictions. Immaturity is not really youth; it is more like childhood.

Being your father, my mind inevitably goes back to a similar period of my own growth. I took a mighty long time in growing—perhaps I am not quite grown up yet! Or, more correctly, I am grown up in part only; the rest of me is still struggling to find out and understand. I was amazingly non-grown up even in my middle twenties and even afterwards the process was slow. Possibly that is why I am still younger in mind and body than almost all my contemporaries. I imagine you are more grown-up now than I was when I was your age. That is easily understandable for you have lived through a far more turbulent period of history than I had done then. My life till then had been quiet and peaceful and almost uneventful—the events were piling up for later days.

It was about the time of your birth, or soon after, that these events started on their mad career. Almost you were a child of a turbulent world. I do not know what memories of these early days you carry about you. But whether you remember them or not, they must have influenced you and subconsciously they must cling to you. You wrote to me once about the old days in Anand Bhawan. But you have no real experience of those old days for the great change came in our lives when you were a babe in arms. It is difficult for the younger generation to picture to themselves that world which vanished, it seems now, so long ago. They have lived all their young lives transitionally, and we have all become travellers and wayfarers marching on and on, sometimes footsore and weary, but without resting place or haven. Yet, for those who can adapt themselves to this continuous journeying, there is no regret and they would not have it otherwise. A return to the dull and uneventful past is unthinkable.

I have few regrets. But one there is that in your childhood and early girlhood I saw so little of you.

Your inside is tough of course, I know that. I want that outside of yours also to grow tough. It is a nuisance otherwise. I am sure that you will succeed in strengthening your body. It requires will and intelligence. Do you know that *Dadu* was considered to be a weakly

and statements, and some expression in his last speech[149] at the A.I.C.C. —can he just submit to indefinite imprisonment? His nature will not permit it, nor his sense of responsibility. But why reason about this? Ultimately it is an urge that cannot be suppressed.

So we wait now again for developments and news with our minds troubled and afire.

April 16, 1943

Darling Indu,
At last a letter from you—It was so exciting to have it after this long waiting for it. It came three days ago, just 20 days after you wrote it. Today, I had a letter from Chand also from Anand Bhawan and she gave me some further news of your life together—and about the baby! This is my letter No. 6.

What shall I write to you, my dear? Of course I can write about a host of things. Reading your letter again I realise what a powerful effect jail has on our mental make-ups. It makes us grow up mentally and gives us a different, and perhaps a truer, perspective on life and the world. Partly because we are thrown on our own mental resources much more than elsewhere, partly because of new experiences, new companions, so different from those we are used to. All of us are apt to live and move in our own little grooves, imagining that one's own particular rut is an epitome of the world. It is curious that jail life, which is a terrible narrowing of the world of experience and sensation, often gives us deeper experiences and sensations. It depends on the individual and his or her capacity to receive and profit by these new experiences and thus to grow in mind. Some do not and cannot profit by them and are even injured mentally and, of course, physically. Others develop a richer life, a deeper understanding, a more human outlook and a poise which gives a tone to their whole existence. For my part, I have no doubt that I have managed to profit by my visits to jail. The very lack of things in jail, the absence of normal family and

149 "You have to stand against the whole world although you have to stand alone. You have to stare the world in the face, although the world may look at you with blood shot eyes. Do not fear. Trust that little thing which resides in the heart. It says 'forsake friends, wife and all, but testify to that for which you have lived, and for which you have to die'."

social life, the long hours alone, the want of the most ordinary amenities we are so used to and take for granted, gives a value and significance to them and we enjoy them all the more when we have the chance. Prison is the true home of that dreadful thing *ennui*, and yet, oddly enough, it teaches us to triumph over it. And so we grow more vital, more aware of the manifold variety of life and even, in a sense, younger in mind. That is, in a sense, a contradiction for the mind grows older too in prison, or at least more mature. But then life is full of such contradictions. Immaturity is not really youth; it is more like childhood.

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Your inside is tough of course, I know that. I want that outside of yours also to grow tough. It is a nuisance otherwise. I am sure that you will succeed in strengthening your body. It requires will and intelligence. Do you know that *Dadu* was considered to be a weakly

infant and the family had a bad record then of disease and early death. Everybody thought that Dadu would follow this bad example. But because of this, even in his early boyhood he made up his mind to be strong physically and he took all the care he could. He succeeded. I was also an ailing infant and child and I did not turn the corner till my boyhood. But I did turn the corner and I have since been an unusual example of good health and vitality. This did not happen of itself. I worked to that end.

So I am sure you will get over your physical weakness and your frail body will grow strong and fit. This will take time and require attention. These summer months in Naini, or wherever you might be put, will be a trial for you, for this will be almost your first experience of a summer in the plains. It is unfortunate that this first experience should be in the unwholesome surroundings of Naini Prison—Yet it does not matter and you may be even the better for the experience.

I remember how frightened I used to be of the sun in summer in the early twenties. But somehow I forgot about it when, during the hottest part of the year, I went wandering (without even a sunhat) through the villages. I returned heavily tanned but fit. I then tried another experiment. I used to have an office in Hewett Road then. I decided not to use a fan and I sat there working through the hottest part of the day—and Hewett Road can be hot. I perspired profusely, in fact I had a regular bath of it. My chief trouble was how to write when I was dripping all over and my hand was wet and clammy. But I kept fit and a feeling of triumph came over me. I realised that I was not a slave to the weather or to a climate. I could bear with extreme heat and cold without any great disturbance of my body or mind or temper.

Now I am not suggesting that you should try to indulge in these pranks. Your case is different and should be treated differently. You know well enough how to take yourself in hand. But a time will surely come when you will be as tough in body as I have been and am.

Having to sleep inside a mosquito-infested barrack in this weather is an imposition which only a peculiar type of mind can evolve. How well I know that experience! Not here, but I have had enough of it previously. Perhaps some change has been made since April began—I hope so. I often think of what Bernard Shaw once wrote—that every judge and magistrate and jail official, should, as a matter of course and training, be made to live for a while as an ordinary prisoner. He must know exactly how it feels to undergo the sentences he imposes. A famous governor of the Sing Sing Prison in New York actually did this and lived for some months as an ordinary convict in his own prison.

He became a great reformer of the prison system! Of course no such person can ever undergo the mental agony and have the sense of utter helplessness which a convict has. But even so the physical experience is worthwhile.

I am glad you retire early for the night. Do not read by the wretched light of a hurricane lantern. When I was in Naini I used to go to bed at 8.30 p m. and get up before four in the morning. About light ing, why do you not use candles? They are much better than the dirty & smoky lanterns.

Presumably you have flit or something like it for the mosquitoes—Keep some lemon grass oil (citronella) also.

You have taken me to task for that book of Louis Bromfield's.[150] So did Nan. I am quite overwhelmed. So I had better confess that I know nothing of the person and, so far as I can remember, have never read a book of his

Do you do any breathing exercises? I hope you do—gently of course without exerting yourself in any way.

'Female Ward' is an absurd and offensive name. Two years ago Aruna, who was there in the Lahore female prison or ward, agitated about this and she succeeded in getting the name changed to "Women's prison".

Our garden is shrinking daily and drying up Still there are a good numbers of flowers still out because of the trouble we take over them They are my 'babies' here and I tend them daily and water them properly. It is surprising how the petunias, hollyhocks, pansies, phloxes have survived A new generation of zinnias is coming out, so also morning glories and tuberose and some kind of a lily. Coleus (the fancy leaves) is also flourishing and caldium is trying to grow. We hope to have a kind of jasmine मोतिया soon. With the coming of the rains, we shall spread out more. Our soil here is also excessively stony and we had to dig hard and deep before we could plant anything We came across sometimes remains of old buildings, and once a bit of a wall with a lovely lotus flower carved on it

I shall ask Betty to arrange to send you Pocha's *Garden Guide* and his small set of garden tools. The book is not up to much? Still it may help

I do not remember having seen Methuen's *Anthology of Modern Verse* I have just been reading Aurobindo Ghose's *Essays on the Gita* What fine English prose he writes and his amazing lucidity. He writes

150 (1896–1956), American novelist and playwright whose works include *Night in Bombay*

quite tolerable verse also with an occasional line of good poetry. His background of Greek, Latin & Sanskrit has been excellent training.

You will be amused to learn that Nandita, who is in Rajshahi Jail, is threatening to become plump. Sucheta writes that she is worried as this will interfere with her dancing.

My arm has given me some trouble since I came here but it is very much better now. Occasionally when I play badminton I have a twinge of pain. Otherwise it functions normally. I thought at first that badminton caused the pain and so I gave it up. This did no good. So I started again. I think what has done it good is the daily carrying of bucketfuls of water for the plants and flowers!

Do you have any badminton or any other game? I suppose there are not too many people with you who can join up in this. Nora is with you—give her my love. Who else is with you?

We are just fixing up with Narendra Deva to read the *Kadambari* with him. This is a big book and I doubt if we shall ever go through it. It is a laborious process. Still it is rather fascinating to read this ancient romance in Sanskrit—probably one of the earliest novel-like books in the world.

I read the other day a review of a book—a collection of writings, chiefly poems, by women in Sanskrit—*Women Writers in Sanskrit*. It is all old stuff of course. Four volumes have already come out and two more are due.

It is surprising what a mass of literature in Sanskrit we possess and how little we know about it. In spite of enormous destruction and loss, and the fact that a large number of manuscripts are buried in religious institutions and have not so far been properly traced, there are at present about 60000 manuscripts, big and small, properly catalogued! Only a small proportion of these have so far been printed. What a lot of work we have to do when we have the chance!

The night is far advanced and it is amazingly quiet and peaceful. Everybody is asleep, excepting me. The new moon of the new *Samvat*, eleven days old, is casting its radiance on everything and seems so unconcerned, as if nothing was the matter with this mad world of unhappy and warring mortals. Yet behind this apparent peace there is trouble all over the world.

Everybody here sends you his love—more especially Pantji, Mahmud, Kripalani and Asaf Ali—The Maulana is bearing up wonderfully but the shock of his wife's death has been a hard one and he shows it.

I have written enough—The censors will probably say much more than enough. So let us give them some peace now and a respite from their heavy toils.

My love to you, darling one—

Your loving
Papu

16-4-43

Betty darling,
I wrote to you just two weeks ago. Since then I have not heard from you. I suppose you went to Allahabad and possibly stayed there longer than you had at first intended. I have had no news. Nan's extension of parole must have led to some change in the children's programme. I suppose they are still in Allahabad.

Indu is keeping well so far. But the summer is upon us.

The death of Maulana's wife has been a great blow to us all and we have lived for some days under the shadow of gloom. He has behaved wonderfully, as he always does, but he cannot hide the changes that have taken place in his face by just outward behaviour. He has grown thin and his face is all lined. I am worried about him. These people who feel deeply and yet do not show their feelings and grief have a way of harming themselves. I wish I could help him or be of some service to him, but there is little outlet for it here.

Since I wrote to you last the new *Samvat* has rolled in—*Naoroz* and all that follows. 2000 is an impressive number and sounds significant. It is likely to be pretty significant in this world of ours. Whatever it may bring of good or ill, all of us must face it with good heart and stout will. I hope you do not worry and keep cheerful.

Send me news of Raja. I hope he is keeping well and busy with reading and other activities.

My love to you.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

April 17 Saturday

Three events happened today which ruffled the composure of my mind.

Last night I wrote a long letter to Indu and also a letter to Betty. I sent them to the office this morning. A couple of hours later I received a letter from Betty from Bombay. She had been to Allahabad and had come back. The girls had not accompanied her as Nan's parole had been extended and so they stayed on with their mother for another ten or twelve days.

I had written to Betty previously to send fruit to Indu—It appears she did so but the jail authorities refused to accept it. Not allowed to detenus. Now this is allowed for medical reasons—presumably the relaxation of the rule is for Indu only.

No newspapers are allowed in Naini. So for the eight months and more Nan, Indu as well as Ranjit, Tandon &c have had no newspapers. And that must apply to all U.P. detenus—perhaps to convicts also. As there are no interviews and no letters there has been complete isolation. The more I thought of this, the angrier I felt.

Possibly Indu & Nan might be transferred to Dehra Dun—to my old barrack!

What surprised me, however, in Betty's letter was the news that Chand & Tara were going to America to join college there. Nan had not mentioned this to me in her letter; nor had Chand who sent me a delightful letter only a few days ago. Possibly matters had not matured till then and Nan did not want to say anything in a letter to a jail just then. Anyway Nan & Ranjit had decided this and on coming out Nan cabled to Wellesley College in America, to Madame Chiang, and Frances Gunther. Wellesley, I suppose, is Mme. Chiang's old college. Whether the others answered or not, I do not know, but Wellesley has cabled back agreeing to take the girls. So now steps are being taken to send them off as early as possible. Not an easy job. Probably only way is by air and that, too, if the American authorities help. And then passports.

I was somewhat taken aback by this development, but I recovered soon and reacted in favour of it. The more I think of it the more I like the idea of Chand & Tara going to the U.S.A. for study. There is, and can be in the near future, no proper atmosphere for study here or for normal growth. I am sure Chand will profit by this visit to the U.S. I am not so sure about Tara, but even in her case I think, everything considered, that it is worthwhile.

What a fine girl Chand is developing into. I like her and have liked her of course but, as she grows, I am beginning to look upon her as a worthwhile person. She is intelligent, balanced, has grit and the right urges. She ought to do something in her future life. I liked her recent letters to me greatly.

Well—this is event No. 1.—Chand & Tara going, or thinking of going, to America.

No. 2.—In the early afternoon today when I went to do Urdu with Mahmud, one or two unthinking questions by me led to some remarks about the political situation. What Mahmud said hurt and angered me suddenly and I flared up, using rather hard language. I proclaimed further that as we differed so radically in regard to basic political questions, and indeed about our whole outlook on life, I shall in future not discuss politics with him. I wonder if I shall succeed in keeping this promise.

I was sorry for my outburst. Nevertheless it is amazing how weak and flabby Mahmud is. (As for Asaf he has completely gone to pieces). A curious irony of fate to put us all together on the Working Committee.

No. 3.—I had hardly recovered from this outburst when I saw the day's paper with a big headline about me—Something that Mme. Chiang had said in America—It was pleasing that she had referred to *India and me.*[151] *But the odd sentences* which came over—disjointed as they were—did not leave a very pleasant impression on me. Her reference to Bapu[152]—Her saying that the only question about India's freedom was the time and extent of it—Time? Extent?—It is unfair to judge her statement from some odd remarks obviously taken out of the context. Still they produce mixed feelings in me—It is clear that she has done her utmost to help our cause and is continuing her efforts. In her position & in America she cannot be very outspoken.

A stupid leader in *The Times of India* on Mme. Chiang's remarks.[153] Trying to be soft & kind to me—I am a good boy and all that, mean

151. On 14 April 1943, Madame Chiang Kai shek demanded that Jawaharlal, "a man of burning conviction and world vision", should be released to throw India's political weight on the side of the United Nations.

152 Madame Chiang had also said that Mahatma Gandhi had no world vision because he was overcome by "his restricted obsession for India's freedom regardless of world conditions"

153 17 April ". we feel strongly, in view of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's zeal for the Allied cause and his talk of guerilla warfare to resist the Japanese, that he was never happy over the civil disobedience resolution We are convinced that he is even less happy about it today.. A time has come in view of Mr Gandhi's obduracy for right wing Congressmen to assert themselves."

well etc., hinting that some Congressmen should form a new party in opposition to the official party &c. A faint suggestion that I might do this job! How deeply do our English friends understand us! I would sooner consign myself and everybody else to hell before I did such a thing or indeed anything which involves a betrayal of my colleagues or a lining up with the British Govt. as it is functioning in India today. I do not think I have ever—during the last quarter of a century—felt quite so bitter against this British Govt. as I do today.

An unusual day.

April 23rd 1943

Darling,

Your second letter, dated 6th April, reached me yesterday. About a page and a quarter of it was blacked out! Presumably this was done in Naini for it has the typical U.P. jail look about it. A varied and extensive experience of these black-outs makes one look at them from an expert's viewpoint. They have these particular and individual features which stand out for recognition. The Bombay Secretariat's black-outs, to which I have been used for these last seven or eight months, are easily distinguishable and characteristic. They are neater and cleaner and sometimes almost artistic. Not so the efforts of the Naini Prison staff, which are just a mess.

I hope the parcel of books I sent you a month and a half ago has reached you by this time. Three days ago I sent you (or rather for you) another parcel, a small one containing:

1 Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* &c. English translation
2 Proust's *Swann's Way*, 2 volumes
3 Nym Wales : *China Builds for Democracy*
4 *Roget's Thesaurus*, 2 vols.
5 A *Dictionary of Dates*.

7 Volumes

This is the 3rd parcel sent to you so far.

The last mentioned two books are reference books. I do not know if they will be any use to you but I have found such books rather fascinating in prison. Anyway Ranjit will like the thesaurus, if he has not got it already. It is helpful in translation work.

I see from the newspapers that *Puphi* has gone back to Naini and joined you there and that the children have gone to Bombay. I am writing to Chand today, so I shall not write to Nan. Perhaps I might

write to her next week. I have an idea that I shall receive a letter from her soon.

I had a letter from Betty in which she told me that Chand & Tara were going to America to join Wellesley College there. Later I read about this in a newspaper. The news was unexpected and my mind was in no way prepared for it, as Nan had not mentioned it in her letter. I suppose when she wrote no final arrangements had been made. Having recovered from the initial surprise, I found myself approving strongly of the step taken. The more I think of it, the more I like it It is easy of course to point out the difficulties and disadvantages of two young girls being sent all the way to America for their education, especially during these troubled times here and elsewhere. Whatever we may do, whichever way we may turn, there is an abundance of these difficulties and objections. But I feel sure that, in the balance, a right decision has been taken. I suppose it is no easy matter for Chand & Tara to get passages to America—Probably the only way to go there is by air. I hope they will get through. I could have given them many letters to friends in the U.S. But that is neither possible, nor is it really necessary. They will not lack for friends who are eager to help them.

The last two or three lines in your letter have upset me somewhat. What is the idea of trying fancy exercises and hurting yourself badly in the process? I must revise my opinion of you—You are not as wise as I took you to be. These sprains and hurts are a terrible nuisance and hang round one for a long time and generally interfere with bodily health and progress Surely you should avoid them. Having myself had some experience of this kind of thing, I avoid any exercise which might even accidentally cause a sprain or strain me too much—So please be careful. Do any exercise you like provided it does not tire at all, is not jerky, causes no strain whatever or any other feeling of discomfort, and makes you feel fresher and livelier at the end of it. Above all do the breathing exercises. Do not do the *shirshasana.*

I was somewhat surprised to learn of the possibility of your receiving a letter from Yunus. I shall convey your message to Betty—that will be two weeks' hence probably. She has just written to say that she has heard again from Yunus and that he is progressing and generally better.

I have had no news of Bebee ever since I came here except a rare reference in the newspaper. You know perhaps that she was arrested and detained in prison some time in September last, but was released after ten days or a fortnight. A few of the books that Betty sent me came from Bebee.

I am surprised and distressed to know that you people are still—in April—locked up in your barracks at night. This is bad enough at any time of the year but during the summer this is a near approach to the nether regions. The U.P. jails had a definite rule that sleeping out was allowed from April 1st onwards. Has that too gone overboard with so much else? We progress—

Betty writes to me that her previous attempts to send you fruit were not successful as this was *defendu-verboten* in Naini—Latterly, however, 'on medical grounds' you are allowed to receive it. I hope you are getting it regularly from Bombay.

You ask me about our food. Now, that is a highly intricate problem of which we have found no very satisfactory solution so far. So far as I am concerned there is no great difficulty for I am content with *dalia*, eggs and bread & butter as a basis for any meal, with some vegetables added sometimes. But we have as many tastes and habits of food as there are people here and the cooking is very mediocre. Occasionally we have some sort of meat. Our usual meals are: coffee, *dalia* and bread & butter in the morning at 7.30; a Maharashtrian variety of rice, dal & vegetables at 11 a.m.; tea, bread &c., & some fruit at 4; and the Maharashtrian variety repeated at 8 p.m.; but some of us simply have eggs & some vegetables. (We keep the old time and not the new war time which is an hour in advance.) Each of us adapts himself to this food with individual variations. Several are invalids requiring special diets. Maulana has found it hardest to adapt himself as he has very special tastes and habits.

We all feed together very punctually. Indeed our punctuality is remarkable. Maulana cannot tolerate the slightest unpunctuality in meals and because of him we have to keep strictly to time, measuring it not only with minutes but almost with seconds. Seven of us have undertaken a general supervision of meals by turns, a week each. This does not mean supervision of cooking but chiefly of the exact hour of the meal and to see that the table is properly laid &c. Occasionally there is some private cooking, if I may call it so. But nobody is very keen on it and so it is gradually dropping out, except on special occasions. Kripalani has a particular knack of producing good cakes with the most insufficient materials.

My own timetable at present (for it has varied with the seasons and otherwise also) is: Up soon after 5 a.m.—some gentle exercises, *asans* &c. for a few minutes—breathing exercises—then about an hour watering the plants—I was forgetting to mention that I do some running also, up and down our yard (about 200 ft.)—I run about a quarter of

a mile. All this loosens my limbs without tiring them at all. Then I shave & bathe and I am ready just in time for the 7.30 breakfast.

From 8 to 11 some solid reading or like work—usually a heavy kind of book. After food from 12 to 1 Urdu with Mahmud—From 1 to 3 newspapers & reading some light book. Sometimes going to sleep in the process. From 3 to 4 listening to Narendra Deva's translation of the *Kadambari*—tea &c. From 4.30 to 5.30 Hindi with Mahmud— Then wandering about our plants & pots, badminton, small talk &c. Bath and dinner— After dinner conversation for a short while with Maulana and others, till he retires. Then I read— To bed at 10.30 or so. And so I sink into forgetfulness or dreams or fitful sleep, occasionally (as has been my habit) shouting in my sleep! The other night Maulana told me that I was shouting: 'I am dreaming'—मैं ख़्वाब देख रहा हूँ !

Everybody else's programme is different except that meals are common functions. Maulana gets up at about 3.30 a.m. and sometimes even sooner—

Your mention of Otto[154] reminded me of the painful and strenuous hours I spent with it just about ten years ago in Bareilly jail. If you have got my copy of it you will see it marked and dated all over the place. I went through it bravely and did every single one of the exercises (I had the key) till I began to think that I had a fair grounding of German. I could read and write with some difficulty. I left it at that, imagining that when I went to Germany I could easily pick up the spoken tongue. But curiously enough I made no progress at all in Badenweiler, and, as you will remember, I was peculiarly dense on the subject of the German language. Partly this was due to my preoccupation with other matters which filled my mind; partly because of the psychological reaction of the anti-Nazi feeling which possessed me.

You suggest that I should write Urdu verses in my letters. I had thought of that but I desisted as I feared that my letters might be delayed if they contained any Urdu or Hindi. Indeed I would have written to you in Hindi sometimes but for this apprehension. I know that Urdu & Hindi letters are delayed, probably because of insufficient arrangements in regard to censoring. Anyway now that you ask for it, I am giving you two simple couplets. Probably they will lead the censors to employ sleuth-hounds to find out the inner meaning that lies behind them— It will not do you much good to get Ghalib.[155] He is very difficult as a rule. I think you had better stick to simple books,

154 Emil Otto, author of *German Conversation and Grammar.*
155 Asadullah Khan Ghalib (1797–1869).

even though they are uninteresting, and get used to writing by copying from the books. Only thus will you impress the images of words in your mind—

Here are two easy verses. The first couplet is by Ghalib and the second by a person rejoicing in the name of Taba Tabai.[156] *Jannat* means heaven or paradise.

ہم کو معلوم ہے جنت کی حقیقت لیکن
دل کے خوش رکھنے کو غالب یہ خیال اچھا ہے (غالب)

The same in Hindi:

हम को मालूम है जन्नत की हक़ीकत लेकिन।
दिल को ख़ुश रखने को ग़ालिब यह ख़याल अच्छा है ॥[157]

اس طرح طے ہم نے کی ہیں منزلیں
گر گئے، گر کر اٹھے، اٹھ کر چلے (نظم طبا طبائی)

In Hindi:

इस तरह तै हम ने की हैं मंज़िलें।
गिर गए—गिर कर उठे—उठ कर चले ॥[158]

Today is Good Friday—I have decided to take a week's holiday from Urdu & Hindi learning & teaching as well as from other laborious work. Not that I work hard. But a change always freshens one.

This is my letter No. 7 to you.

Tell Nan that Betty's account of her to me was not at all a pleasing one. She wrote that Nan was not looking well and had a tired and worn out expression as if she was older. This kind of thing is highly unfitting in a sister of mine. She must get well and keep well—Give her my love—

I suppose I must end this letter, for not to do so would be cruelty to the censor. And yet it is so easy to write on and there is so much to say— But I desist.

Love, *caressima*—

Your loving
Papu

156. Haider Ali Nazm Taba Tabai.
157. Ghalib: The truth about Paradise I do know;
But it's a good idea, Ghalib,
to keep one pleased!
158. Taba Tabai: So have we crossed the way:
Down we fell, we raised ourselves,
Onward we did go!

April 25 — Sunday

It is odd. The very day I send off my weekly letter or letters, I get letters from outside, usually a couple of hours after. I have fixed my writing day now, and invariably write on Friday evening & night, handing over the letters on Saturday morning to the Supdt. In the forenoon I usually get a letter. This has happened five times so far as I can remember.

I wrote a long letter to Indu last Friday & a letter to Chand—These were handed over to the office yesterday morning and within an hour or two I was given two letters—one from Betty and the other from Chand. I wished I had received this second letter before sending off my letter to Chand. I may not be able to write to her again. She is likely to go off to America fairly soon.

Chand's letter impressed and pleased me greatly. It was a fine, balanced and determined letter. I have no doubt at all that it is right for her and Tara to go to the U.S. for study. Chand appears to me very nearly the ideal girl student for this purpose.

What surprises and distresses me a little is Betty's attitude of disapproval. She talks about risks and dangers and all manner of possible consequences, and further says that all the people she has consulted (presumably in Bombay) are equally opposed to this idea of sending the girls to the U.S. for education in war time. I am afraid Betty's friends, in spite of their modernity, are apt to think on old-fashioned lines—There is far too much of 'safety first' about it to my liking. In this world of death and destruction and constant struggle and risk, it is surprising that people still think (and act) in the old terms.

Chand is a treasure and I am sure she will justify herself in the U.S. and after.

x x x x

There is a rumour, reproduced in a Marathi paper, that Bapu intends to go on a fast—probably an indeterminate one or a fast to death—from August 9th, if the situation does not change by then. Aug. 9th is the anniversary of our arrest. There is nothing inherently improbable about this. Apparently he has given long notice to the Viceroy.

April 28—Wednesday

I have sent off today a packet of flower seeds to Indu to the N.C.P., through the Bombay Govt. of course. Nearly all of them grown by us here. For some days past I have been wondering where Indu is likely to be—Repeated hints reach me that she and Nan are going to be sent to another jail in a better climate, probably to Dehra Dun. If so the summer is on us and the sooner they are sent the better.

Last Friday I finished at last the *Durbar-i-Akbari*.[159] I was tired of it. I decided to take a holiday from Urdu as well as from teaching Hindi to Mahmud. So I am having ten days off—Easter holidays! I have liked this change. Next Monday we go back to the old routine.

x x x x

During these days, having more leisure, I have done various odd things which I had neglected for a while. Also read more. Spent more time with Maulana discussing past political events—going back 20 years and then working up to today. This talk has been illuminating and sometimes a little disturbing. Many new factors came to light and I lay awake at night thinking of them—The talks continue.

x x x x

Jinnah's speech at the Muslim League Conference.[160] Blatant, vulgar, offensive, egoistical, vague—in fact it was Jinnah's speech. The papers say that compared to his previous utterances it is milder. Perhaps. The standard he has set for political utterances is low enough. What a man! And what a misfortune for India and for the Muslims that he should have so much influence!

I feel depressed about it. Nothing that the British Govt. could do could depress me so much. There is no way out, so far as I can see, except a real bust-up in India with all its horrid consequences. We cannot build anew on the old foundations.

159. A book on Akbar's rule, written by Mohamad Hussain Azad (d. 1910), who was a professor of Arabic in the Government College, Lahore.
160. Jinnah had said that for Mahatma Gandhi "there is no politics but religion" and all his attempts had been "to turn the whole of India into a Gandhi ashram." For twenty five years Hindu leaders had "systematically paved the way for establishing a Hindu raj".

30-4-43

Darling Betty,
Last week I wrote to Chand and sent the letter care of you. However, I have already given her my opinion about the visit to America.

The first news about Chand and Tara going to America for their studies reached me through your letters. Then I saw a small paragraph in the newspaper, and later Chand wrote to me more fully on the subject. Naturally I was a little surprised to learn of this as it had not occurred to me previously. But my immediate reaction was in its favour and the more I have thought of it, the more I have liked it. Anyway the alternative to joining college in America is to try to carry on with the university here. At any time that is not a particularly attractive proposition; just at present it is less attractive than ever.

As for risk or possible danger involved in the journey, that surely cannot, or should not, be a reason against the proposal. To my mind it is an inducement in favour of it. We have never made 'safety first' our motto and I hope we never will. In this world full of risk and danger we must take our share of them and not shirk them. It would be bad training indeed for the girls to be made to feel that they must avoid risks and dangers at all costs. They are old enough to learn to look after themselves and to face the world with, of course, all the help we can give them. But without that help also, if necessary. We must adjust ourselves to what is happening around us and to what is likely to happen in the future. We cannot, Micawber-like, just go on hoping for something to turn up

So I am quite clear in my mind that it is the right and proper thing for Chand and Tara to go to the U.S. for their studies and the sooner they go the better. They can and should only go by air. The possibility of their being stranded in Cairo or elsewhere does not worry me in the least. Some such adventure would be good for them.

My love to Raja and you.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

May 1st Saturday—May Day!

Wrote to Nan (N.C.P.) & Betty yesterday. I held up the letters till forenoon today half expecting a letter from Indu or Nan. Usually they have come on Saturday mornings. None came—

I have sent instructions to Betty to inform Walsh, my American publisher, to pay my royalties to Chand. I am afraid these royalties will not amount to much. The first flush of the sales is over—Still they may help Chand & Tara a little.

x x x x

An advertisement by the Red Cross in *The Statesman* caught my attention. It was about *Stacheldrahtfieber*—barbed wire fever—a "word coined by the German medical-military authorities to describe an ailment peculiar to many prisoners of war." "It rots the soul of man as thoroughly as cancer destroys his body." "Men accustomed to a free and active life cannot endure long this terrible monotony of a prison camp and the eternal horizon of barbed wire and armed guards." "It requires a strong will power not to succumb to despair & not to lose hope." &c, &c.

Hence a request for donations to send frequently & regularly parcels to prisoners of war in enemy countries. This contact with homeland nips *Stacheldrahtfieber* in the bud. Health of mind & body &c., &c.

x x x x

Immediately I thought of our tens of thousands of people in prison here.[161] But there was this difference: they cannot get parcels or anything from outside. For a large number of them: no interviews, no letters, no books even from outside, no writing materials, no contacts from outside, no newspapers—and prison life, which is more constrained than life in a prison camp with barbed wire. High walls much worse than barbed wire.

It is true that prisoners of war have no home interviews &c., but this is because this is impossible. Here it is easily possible—In every way the lot of the political prisoner infinitely worse.

161. The official estimate for the period till the end of 1942 was: Persons arrested —60,229; persons detained under the Defence of India Rules—18,000.

to take the latter as it suited me. Obviously it would suit you also. Or it may be possible for one of you to take one kind of ration and someone else to take the other. I hope at any rate you have plenty of fresh vegetables.

As for fruit I have arranged for a weekly parcel to be sent to you from Bombay and this will, I hope, continue. There is no point in stopping it for a while.

If you want me to arrange to have sent any message about your Tagore Town house to your sister-in-law I could perhaps manage it through *Choti Puphi*—It is a very complicated and roundabout way of doing things but for the present there is no help for it. Perhaps it is hardly worthwhile worrying about the house and it might well continue as it is. If Mrs Verma[162] is staying there, nothing should be done to inconvenience her, and indeed we should go out of our way to help her. Whenever you go out, and perhaps you may be out long before I emerge, I should like you to stay in Anand Bhawan.

A few days ago I was informed by the Bombay Govt. that a book previously ordered by me, called *Virginia Woolf*,[163] had been forwarded to you. I was surprised. The only time I asked for books to be sent to you was six months back, for your birthday. That was when you got those two odd books which surprised you—I suppose this is a left-over from that order—Presumably the book is Forster's life of Virginia Woolf—It should be good.

What has happened to that fine mare which Nawabzada gave you in Lahore?

You ask me about my arm—I think I have already written to you about it. I tried various massages, ointments—I gave it long rest from any kind of exercises—but the pain continued. Then I decided to deal with it in a different manner—through regulated exercise. I think the carrying of pailfuls of water was especially good for it as this stretched the muscles. Anyway it is far better now than it has been at any time during the last two years or more. It is almost quite well—Only occasionally when I give a somewhat violent twist, does it pain me.

I have had a curious experience in connection with this arm. There is electric current here and Mahmud was given some simple electric

162. The wife of an active Congressman who was a friend of Feroze Gandhi.
163. E.M. Forster's Rede Lecture delivered at Cambridge suggesting that Virginia Woolf was a poet, who wanted to write something as near to a novel as possible.

treatment here for some pain. It was suggested that I might also indulge in this for my arm. Being always agreeable to having new sensations & experiences I readily agreed—not that this electric business was very novel. So a mild current was passed through my arm for a few minutes. No obvious results. Next time, a few days later, a stiffer and a larger dose was proposed. While this was being given, and the force of the current increased, I was asked : Can you bear it? An odd question, or at any rate oddly put. I can bear a good bit in the way of pain and if it is for my good, I saw no reason to object. So I bore it without a whisper. When it was all over and my arm was unwrapped, it was discovered that my skin and some tissues had been burnt up to some extent. It was entirely my fault for quietly submitting to this ordeal without pointing out that something untoward was happening. Anyway it took about three weeks for this burn to heal and I have got a biggish mark on my forearm which I am likely to carry to the end of my days. It is as well to have a permanent souvenir of this place.

A week ago Beatrice Webb[164] died at her country-house where you and I visited her five years ago. Her age was stated to be 85. I thought she was even older. What a magnificent woman she was! Bernard Shaw said about her on her eightieth birthday, or thereabouts, that he was amazed that such a woman "should survive in apparently undiminished vigour after 80 years among fools and savages who will rise to nothing but ecstasies of murder." That compliment or observation could well be passed on to G. B. S. himself for he has managed to survive for an even longer period, and is yet full of vigour and mental alertness. He is 87 now

How well I remember that visit of ours to Sydney & Beatrice Webb. Sydney was definitely the weaker of the two and I would have thought that he would not survive his wife. (I suppose he is still alive—I am not sure.) The walk across country we had with this lady of 80 and the light springy step she had! But what was really amazing was the up-to-dateness and mental altertness she displayed. It was a privilege to meet her and I shall long cherish her memory. You have a visible token of that visit—the book she gave you—

In my last letter I gave you an account of how I spent my day—a regular timetable was outlined. Such timetables seldom last and anyway this one went to pieces very soon after. The Urdu and Hindi lessons were suspended because Mahmud was not well, the reading of

164 (1858–1943), wife of Sydney Webb (1859–1947), both were eminent British socialists, in 1932 they visited Russia and in 1935 they published *Soviet Communism. A New Civilization?* in two volumes.

the *Kadambari* came to a sudden end because Narendra Deva was not well. So my so-called Easter holidays have been unduly prolonged for unfortunate reasons.

However, Maulana carries on with his astonishing punctuality. There is a story about Kant, the German philosopher, that for 20 or 30 years he used to go out punctually at 5 p.m. for his walk and all his neighbours and many others corrected their watches and clocks as soon as they saw him. So, whenever Maulana is to be seen slowly walking in the direction of the place where we feed, one can say definitely that it is 30 seconds to the time fixed for the meal.

A few days ago I read in a newspaper some extracts from a review[165] in the American *Current History* of my book *Glimpses of World History* which has recently appeared in the U.S. The review was very friendly and eulogistic and, as an author, I felt very puffed up. He said that it was a better survey of world history than H. G. Wells' *Outline*. I have not seen any other reviews yet—It was just ten years ago, in Dehra Jail, that I was writing it, and I seldom thought of publication then—Mostly I thought of you—

Hogben's *Mathematics for the Million* is, from all accounts, a very good book. I have been trying to get it myself. If you have got it, read it. I do not remember what I told you about it five years ago or more—Probably I made some inane remark, not knowing the book.

Some time back I sent you flower seeds grown in our little garden here. Use them in the rains, or some of them at least.

Here are two verses by Ghalib:

ہے آدمی بجائے خود ایک محشر خیال
ہم انجمن سمجھتے ہیں خلوت ہی کیوں نہ ہو (غالب)

The same in Hindi—

है आदमी बजाए ख़ुद एक महशरे ख़याल।
हम अंजुमन समझते हैं ख़लवत ही क्यों न हो॥[166]

165. "... the book is considered as a mirror of Nehru's mind and feelings rather than as a history book. Throughout there burns the consuming fire of his devotion to India, and as his story draws to its climax Nehru bursts into a long, impassioned indictment of British imperialist domination .... Yet, here is manifested one of his noblest and most appealing traits, his universal understanding.... He cautions against hating individual Englishmen.... They are part of a system."

166. Ghalib: Man is himself
a tumultuous world of thought;
A company all around me I feel
even if I am all alone!

महशर means a crowd— खलवत is being alone, solitary रोज़-ए-महशर is Judgment Day—presumably because the biggest crowd will be seen there.

ناکردہ گناہوں کی بھی حسرت کی ملے داد
یا رب اگر ان کردہ گناہوں کی سزا ہے (غالب)

The same in Hindi:

नाकर्दा गुनाहों की भी हसरत की मिले दाद।
यारब ! अगर इन कर्दा गुनाहों की सज़ा है ॥[167]

The first couplet tells us that man is not just a simple individual but a crowd of thoughts and ideas Even when he is by himself, he is a kind of meeting or debating society all inside himself! The idea is well put.

The second is famous & often quoted. If we are to be punished for the sins we have committed, at least we should be praised for our yearning for the sins we have not committed.

Have you any news of Feroze?

Your loving
Papu

Later
8/5 I have just received two letters from you together—dated 19th & 25th April. I feel happy to have this feast *Betty writes that* she has sent two khadi saris for you together with some meant for Nan. Khadi is very difficult to get nowadays.

May 9. Sunday

On Friday & Saturday I wrote to Indu & Chand. As I was sending these letters yesterday morning, an unusual mail came for me—3 letters. Two from Indu and one from Betty

These letters and their contents filled my mind all day, and even far into the night. I have seldom spent such a sleepless night. I lay awake

167 Ghalib If punishment there needs must be
for the sins committed,
Some appreciation, O my Lord,
for the sins in thought left undone!

for hours watching the stars and then a bit of a duststorm came. So today I feel sleepy.

There was nothing much in the letters which might be considered at all disturbing. But I suppose the life we lead here, the abnormality of it, the absence of human relations & emotions creates a kind of vacuum in a particular corner of the mind, and then small happenings or hints or records of incidents from outside fill this vacuum for a while. And inevitably one wonders where things are leading to, not only in the international and national spheres but in the narrower circle of relations & family & friends. Their minor reactions, which might otherwise pass unnoticed, assume an importance as they point to the changes taking place inside them by the impact of events and personal experiences. So it is with Indu & Chand, Nan & Betty, and others—But the others are more or less beyond reach at present.

Other people are growing & changing. What of me? Am I changing in mind or body noticeably? It is difficult to judge about oneself. I am very fit in body and I enjoy my little exercises & runs. The mind I suppose is imperceptibly changing its direction—An example—I have been reading Aurobindo Ghose's big book: *Essays on the Gita*. Much of it, the purely metaphysical part, was a little beyond me and did not interest me, except in a faint way—just to understand the argument. Yet, as a whole, the book interested me, perhaps because Aurobindo writes remarkably good & lucid prose. I doubt if I could have aroused this interest in the subject some years back. Am I going metaphysical? I do not think so. Yet there is a desire to go behind the veil of external happenings—a growing feeling that all of us, big & small, all over the world, all this war and conflict, is just puppet show. How little we influence events! We are carried by forces we do not understand and hurled hither and thither. Is there nothing behind all this—no rhyme or reason?

In my very bones I feel that this war, and all its secondary consequences, are all part of a mighty revolution in the biggest sense of the word. There is some reason & objective behind it—And yet, and yet—what an odd way of doing things, what terrible waste & misery, what hatreds, which must inevitably bear fruit in the future. Here in India the iron has gone deep down into the soul of the people.

x x x x

It is fortunate that I am physically well and even mentally fairly healthy. Physical health is enormously important at any time, especially when life is abnormal. Asaf, unwell, has completely gone to pieces.

He is unhappy, troubled, incapable of doing anything, cannot even read consecutively; lies in bed most of the time. Mahmud has again been more unwell, though he is recovering. Narendra Deva has had his longest and most painful asthma fit and is growing more & more shadowy & thin. Some others keep indifferent health.

x x x x

I have been carrying on my talks with the Maulana—an hour and a half daily. We are yet involved in the past, discussing what happened & how it happened—what Bapu did & said, what the W.C. did or wanted to do. This detailed review of past years has been helpful to me in many ways. Maulana's prodigious memory for details and his keen analytical mind makes the past vivid and living. Yet all this does not carry one far.

x x x x

Aurobindo talks of the present, that razor's edge of time & existence which divides the past from the future, and is, and yet, instantaneously is not, as "the pure and virgin moment". I liked the phrase. The virgin moment emerging from the fog of the future in all its purity, coming in contact with us, and immediately becoming the soiled & stale past. Is it we that soil it and violate it? Or is the moment not so virgin after all for it is bound up with all the harlotry of the past?—Determinism! Cause & effect—Karma—

x x x x

Betty is a little angry with me for I have approved of Chand going to America and she has not. She tells me that many people disapprove and she is constantly getting letters & 'phone calls to protest. What? To go out of the country at this critical hour? To go to far America—Escapism—a condemnation of the Indian background & culture &c. Also that young girls should not anyhow be sent away in this manner.

Probably many who so object do little or nothing themselves for that India they claim to love. They carry on with their daily lives & business and their sole service to India at the moment is to hate those whom they consider the enemies of India. Very natural to do so. But not by itself too helpful.

All this wrath at the proposal that Chand and Tara should go to the U.S., must upset the girls and make them a little bitter.

thus had a vicarious revenge. The terror she caused to the sparrows has come to her.

I have just received a packet of foreign papers coming *via* Anand Bhawan, presumably sent by you: *Foreign Affairs Quarterly, Amerasia, Free World, 2. Time, Nation.* (Sometimes I get double copies of the same issue of *Time.*) Also Khalil Gibran's[479] little book *The Prophet*[480] sent by someone from America.

Love

Your loving
Papu

April 3. Monday

I have at last finished my allotted length of yarn—35000 yards—and so an end of spinning for some considerable time at least—Indu has sent me my old D.D.J. yarn—the remains of it. Today I have sent all my yarns to Indu to Matheran, together with various other things. My yarn spun here is 33 count—It is enough for a sari.

Indu has also sent some decent spoons & forks & knives & *katoras* &c. It was pleasant to use them.

April 5. Wednesday

It appears fairly certain now that Bapu will be sent here. Bhandari, the I.G., came round today to have a look at the unoccupied rooms. Also there are whispers.

479. Khalil Gibran (1883-1931); Syrian-American mystic, poet and artist.
480. Consisting of 28 prose poems by the "Prophet", who calls himself the "Prophet of God, in quest of the uttermost."

April 8, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of the 28th March from Matheran, written soon after you arrived there. I am glad your first impressions of the place were favourable. I hope with further acquaintance you will continue to like the place. Even though the days are warm, the cool nights and the trees and birds must make a difference. Raja also I hope will improve in those quiet sylvan surroundings.

A few days ago, on April 2nd, was *Ram Naumi*, the second anniversary of your marriage. Did you remember it? I thought of you and Feroze and of all the odd things that had happened since.

I think I wrote to you that I have received most of the things you sent me in the big parcel—the yarn, cutlery, *pashmina* shawl. Books take their time as they necessitate apparently a closer scrutiny. But the various books you have sent with this lot have not come yet.

I am glad to say that Fraser's book—*The Mountain Way*—has at last managed to reach me. Also the first copy of Guehenna's *Journal d'un homme de 40 ans*. I think I am going to like *The Mountain Way*. I should like you to write an acknowledgement to Fraser and to tell him how much I appreciate his gift. His address is: Rev. A. G. Fraser, Dial House, Chipstead, Surrey, England. He is the Fraser who used to be the principal of the Achimota College in the Gold Coast, West Africa. I met him in 1935 or 1936 and ever since then he sends me from time to time a book, usually of travel or arctic exploration or about the mountains.

Last week I wrote to you that I would not send you just yet my yarn as this might be a needless burden to you in Matheran. As is not unusual with me, I changed my mind soon after and packed up this yarn, together with other things, and sent them off. Having decided on doing something, the idea becomes a slight obsession with me and the sooner I do it, the better I feel.

So I have sent you to Matheran my yarn as well as your old cardigan and the new *pashmina* shawl. I found I had no use for this shawl here at this time of the year and I was afraid it might get spoilt by being kept in a box through the summer months. I was going to open it out and see it in a spread-out condition; but it was all stitched up & folded and I felt that removing these stitches could probably mess it up. So I left it as it was. Keep it and use it for yourself. It improves with use.

The two shells, which you want me to use as paper-weights, have also come. You seem to be almost as frivolous as I am. I doubt if anyone possessing the practical commonsense, which is considered such a virtue, and which weighs and measures everything, would have thought of sending anything so unnecessary. But then everything cannot be weighed and measured and many things escape the balance of practicality. I like the shells and they make a brave show. So far I have been using odd-shaped coloured stones, which I picked up here, as paper-weights. I wrote to you last year, did I not?, that there were all manner of fancy coloured stones here, small ones mostly. We picked up quite a number of them and I have a respectable collection, which does not include diamonds, rubies, emeralds and the like, but which is nonetheless attractive.

I have also returned to you those of the brown serviettes which have been pushed, together with the cardigan & shawl, into an old cushion cover. Also old periodicals.

The yarn that has been sent is in two bundles. The larger bundle contains the yarn I have spun here—70 hanks of 500 yards each, that is, total 35000 yards. Count 33 (Weight 1¼). This is quite enough for a sari. The smaller bundle contains 16 hanks of my old yarn=8000 yards. This is somewhat coarser and the average count is 26½. I think it is better not to mix up the two as they are not of the same count or fineness.

I have kept the other yarn you sent me and shall try to get something made out of it here.

I was greatly interested to learn that Raja had rescued the old stone *murti* from the peepul tree. My mind went back to my early boyhood when this image was first dug out from somewhere in the grounds of Anand Bhawan. It must have been in 1900 or 1901. There was plenty of digging taking place all over the grounds, levelling them, making terraces, etc. I remember how excited I was when this image appeared. It was decided to place it in the fork of the old peepul and then I used to visit it daily. Later I went to England and forgot all about it. I do not remember seeing it again. And then it got covered and buried in a mixture of earth and dried peepul leaves till Raja rescued it from oblivion. And now it occupies a place of honour in his verandah. The story is almost symbolical of life and death and resurrection —the ceaseless round of nature and of life.

Will you tell Betty that instead of giving that very unfortunate picture of the Brussels Conference in her book if she had given another, it would have been more suitable. That other was a snapshot of a group containing six or seven persons, including Ernst Toller, Willie

Munzenburg, Betty & me. There were two or three others but I am not sure who they were. I had this picture but lost it. Then I saw it reproduced in one of Toller's later books which he sent me. That book too seems to have disappeared from our library. It might have been *I was a German* though I think it was another one but equally small. Toller's books ought to be traceable in Bombay and the picture will interest Betty.

The mention of Willie Munzenburg's name reminds me of his tragic end. He managed to escape from Germany by the very skin of his teeth within a few days of Hitler's advent to power in 1933. He was considered a particular *bete noire* by the Nazis and there was a regular hunt for him. He came to Paris and lived there among tho German emigres for a couple of years, probably organizing anti-Hitler activities. It was a precarious life for the French Government of those days did not like this kind of thing. When I was in Paris in January 1936 I was having tea in a cafe, when to my great surprise, Munzenburg suddenly walked up to me. He had that secretive haunted look so peculiar to those who live more or less in hiding and are engaged in secret work. I saw him again in the same cafe—he would not come to my hotel. Some months later I heard that he had actually been kidnapped by the Nazis and taken across the border to Germany and shot or otherwise killed.

How many of these dramas and tragedies have taken place, and take place from day to day, under the seemingly unruffled surface of life. Like the ocean which seems so calm and peaceful and innocent, and then it opens its cavernous mouth and swallows up a ship, and again resumes its untroubled and innocent air.

Here is a well-known couplet by an unknown author:

قسمت تو دیکھیے کہ کہاں ٹوٹی ہے کمند
دو چار ہاتھ جبکہ لب بام رہ گیا

क़िस्मत तो देखिये के कहां टूटी है कमंद ।
दो चार हाथ जब के लबे बाम रह गया ॥[481]

कमंद=rope-ladder; लब=lip; बाम=roof or कोठा.

481. Qaim Chandpuri: Look, what luck I have:
The scaling ladder has given way
When (her) house-top is left to reach
By an arm's length or so!

The idea is of a lover going to his beloved by means of a rope-ladder.
Love

Your loving
Papu

I have just received your letter of April 3rd. The incense sticks have also come. I shall write about *Glimpses* etc., next week. Let me know definitely about your address for letters.

11.4.44.

Darling Betty,
You asked me about the possible educational arrangements for Harsha and Ajit and I told you something about the Doon School. After writing that I felt all the more how difficult it is to advise on the subject of children's education. So much depends on the child, so much on the objectives that the parents may have in view. I do not mean a difficult objective, like a profession or a job in life, but rather the general approach to life, the philosophy of life, if you like to call it so. Most of us, I suppose, are hardly conscious of having such a definite philosophy and would find it hard enough to describe it. Yet, consciously or unconsciously, we hold to a certain framework and function within it, and sometimes we rebel, but even so our little rebellion is within that general framework. Normally each individual's attitude to life is that of his social group or the more intimate circle in which he or she moves. That lays down the standard to be aimed at with minor varieties. When there is revolutionary change in the air, we are affected by it, we talk of it, and yet that talk has little reality behind it, and we find it difficult to pull ourselves out of accustomed ways of life and thought. Sometimes we are compelled to do so by circumstance and we submit, as we must, but unwillingly and rather ungraciously. We become then the slaves of circumstance rather than its masters or even its equals. To a large extent we are all such slaves of happenings which are beyond our individual control. Yet there is a difference.

Every parent wants his or her child to have all the virtues, all the good fortune. But we can seldom, if ever, have all of everything. We have to choose or to emphasize some aspects rather than others. There are what are loosely called the masculine virtues and those that are termed the feminine virtues. Both good and desirable and yet just slightly inconsistent with each other. In India, the feminine virtues seem to be more obvious today at any rate, though of course the masculine virtues are present also. Our outlook seems to favour the former.

Then again much depends on the period we are living in. In a more or less static period, certain virtues and accomplishments are more useful. In a rapidly changing period, other virtues and capacities assume importance. But whatever the period, self-reliance, fitness of body and keenness of mind and a harmony between the two, and a certain basic sense of values are always desirable. If this foundation is provided to the growing child much has already been done.

I hope *Raja profited by his brief stay in Matheran. Distressing as* asthma is, fortunately one recovers quickly from an attack if conditions are favourable.

I was happy to read what Dr. Lin had written about your book. His tribute is certainly worth having. I hope Walsh agrees to publish your book.

Love to you and Raja and the children.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

I was glad to learn from Indu that Raja has rescued the old stone image from the peepul tree in Anand Bhawan and brought it to Bombay.

April 12—Wednesday

Letters from Nan (Bombay) & Indu (Matheran).

Nan's letter astonished me. It appears that Pratap does not want Nan to inherit even the personal assets left by Ranjit—the argument being that all these came out of ancestral money. I was both irritated and amused. How money darkens the mind.

April 15, 1944

Darling Indu,

The last week has brought quite an unusual number of letters from you. I mentioned one in a footnote to my last letter. This was dated 3rd April. This was followed by a previous letter of yours dated 31st March, and then came two more, dated 6th and 9th April. Quite a feast.

The packet of books you sent long ago, containing a number of French ones, has not yet come, though there is a rumour that it is on the way. It seems to me that French is not a language with which the Bombay Secretariat is conversant, and hence the delay in passing these books.

Your letters have produced a slight confusion in my mind about your programme—Matheran, Juhu, Mahabaleshwar seem all mixed up together. How long you stay at Matheran, where you go from there—is all vague and uncertain. You write that Raja and Betty, tired of the seclusion and quiet of Matheran, were thinking of going back to Bombay. Presumably you stayed on. Not that it matters much whether I know your exact programme or not, except that I want to address my letters correctly. I do not want them to go astray.

Ahmadnagar is climatically not at all a bad place. Probably it is a cross between Poona and Matheran, though there is a lack of trees and foliage here, at any rate where we are kept. It is not as cold as I would like it to be in winter. The summer is not very hot and the rains are Poona-like, gentle showers as a rule. It is very dry and some people have trouble with their skin because of this dryness.

I am concerned to know that Madan has lost so much weight and has taken to fainting. I do not think you mentioned this fact previously. Send my love to him if & when you write.

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* has started coming directly to me now. I suppose *The Hindu* will follow soon.

A copy of the *Reader's Digest* (for October 1943) has reached me. Some months back two other numbers came and curiously they had been addressed to me from America C/o the Govt. of Bombay.

Two days ago I received a set of rather lovely picture cards—hand-painted they seem to be—of Californian scenes. I do not know who sent them and whether they came through you. I have previously received a book and a magazine sent by someone in Los Angeles, California. Perhaps the same person sent these also. I do not know who he or she is. If there were any covering letters, they must have been kept back by the Bombay Secretariat.

Did you receive Wendell Willkie's *One World* which I sent you more than six weeks ago?

The extraordinary weather in Allahabad and in various other parts of the U.P. appears to have done a great deal of damage to the crops and wheat is 2 seers to the rupee. How the unhappy poor manage to carry on under these conditions I am wholly unable to make out.

About my publications:

1. Marathi translation of *Glimpses*: As I appear to have already

given permission for this to the Ratnakar Publications, Sangli, you have done well to write to them to find out what has happened. It is nearly three years now since permission was given and if the translation has not already come out, my permission lapses. I would prefer the Sulabha Rashtriya Granthmala of Poona to take it up. The book is a big one and requires some financial resources. Also it is better to deal with one publisher in one language. But find out so that there may be no overlapping & consequent confusion. And in case this new permission is given to the Poona people, the Ratnakar Publications should be clearly informed of it.

2. Assamese translation of *Letters*: If you find that the person who took permission in May 1939 has not issued the translation yet, he must be informed that the permission has lapsed, and is being given to another person. In giving permission for *Letters* it should always be mentioned that I reserve the right to present the copyright for that language to any university or Provincial Education Department, should they ask for it. If the latter book is prescribed for schools I want to make no money out of it and should like the children to have it at a rock-bottom price. But of course if private publishers bring them out there is no reason why I should not charge royalty which should be 10% of the published price of books actually sold.

3. This reminds me that six or seven years ago I transferred my copyright in the Urdu & Hindi translations of the *Letters* to the U.P. Govt.'s Educational Department. These books have since been widely used in the U.P. schools. The Department, at my instance, priced them low. I think the price was four annas or so. Even so the then Director of Public Instruction, U.P., said there might be a profit. I suggested to him that this money might be given as scholarships to poor students and he agreed. (I think I also suggested that these might be called the 'Kamala Scholarships' but I am not sure.) You will find a note about this in the book. I do not know what has happened since then. It might be worthwhile to write to the Director of Public Instruction, U.P., to inquire if any scholarships were actually given.

4. I gave the copyright for the Bengali translation of *Letters* to Santiniketan. They might be asked what they did with it. Have they brought out an edition?

5. Request from U. Srinivaskini, Mulki, S. Kanara, for including 1st chapter of *Letters* in a book of selections. I have often given such permission and so this may also be given. Usually there is a token payment of a small sum. I do not want to make this a condition but you might suggest that a token payment might be made by him

to the Kasturba Memorial Fund. No reference in this or any other like matter is necessary to the A.L.J. Press.

6. M. Krishna Pillai, Jagathy, Trivandrum. He does not appear at all satisfactory. Besides I can't give permission to anyone to mangle my book and leave out parts.

That is the lot I think.

When you are in Bombay, you might buy some cutlery &c. to replenish our stock, provided these are available.

It was rather foolish of me to write at length offering my advice about Harsha's & Ajit's education. But I have an inveterate habit of giving advice. I wish I could cure myself of it. My own conceptions of men and things are not the usual ones and so my advice seldom fits in.

In your childhood I suppose you were a little more self-reliant than children of your age in India. The credit for that should at least partly go to your parents. I remember when you started going to the Ecole International in Geneva. You were about 8½ years old then. I accompanied you to school, came back, went again to fetch you for lunch, again took you to school, came back, & finally went at four to bring you back. I seemed to spend the whole day in moving backwards & forwards between our pension and your school. After a few days I decided to let you go by yourself. It was a slightly tricky journey as it involved a change of trams. I spoke to the tram conductor, who had come to recognize you and who promised to look after you. I do not think Mummy was overpleased at this arrangement. However it worked. The tram journey was really more complicated than a railway journey. Later we moved to our flat in the Boulevard des Tranches. From there you used to walk to your school, which was about a quarter of a mile away.

I do not think you travelled all by yourself from Bex to Paris. As far as I can remember, I went to Bex from Berlin direct to fetch you, leaving Mummy & *chhoti Puphi* in Berlin. They travelled by themselves subsequently to Paris. *Dadu* had gone previously. But I am rather vague about all this. Anyway you did travel by yourself by train in Switzerland.

I feel snubbed, I withdraw. I shall not in future display my 'generosity' towards you, or mention such things as accounts or money. I shall accustom myself to think of you as the strong and self-reliant one, fully capable of looking after yourself in any circumstances. And so on and so forth.

But really I did not doubt that and I would hate to think of you as anything but self-reliant. My suggestion that you might draw upon

my account was not a reflection on your capacity. This was not a new suggestion. I think I have made it several times and I made it clear previous to my arrest. We live in abnormal times and we must adapt ourselves to them as best we may. I had no particular compunction in drawing upon my father's account when I particularly needed money. Is it because you have got married that you have risen or changed in status? Of course, there is a change in your life in many ways but I have failed to sense any change in my relation to you.

But seriously, I do not mind what you have written. I rather like it and it amuses me also. My views on money are odd and I am continually surprised at the importance people attach to money. You will remember that about 7 years ago Princess Aristarchi suddenly asked me for a loan of £300. I hardly knew her, except that she had been rather decent to Mummy. As it happened I had just then received just this sum as royalty on my *Autobiography* (296 in the pound from the liquidation of John Lane.) The money was there and I sent it immediately. Of course it has never come back although I could welcome this tidy little sum. I am soft in the head I suppose. I shall continue to spend in this way and it is far more likely that I might seek your help than that you should need mine. But whenever you need money, do not be stupid—Draw upon my account.

This is my letter No. 57.

Love

Your loving
Papu

A bundle of foreign papers has just come.

April 22, 1944

Darling Indu,
I have your letter of April 13th. Probably you are in Mahabaleshwar now but this letter is being sent to Sakina Mansion. Mahabaleshwar ought to be much cooler than Matheran. Here the temperature has gone up to 107° F and I realized that my comparison of Ahmadnagar with Poona was not quite correct.

All the books you sent, including the French ones, have now arrived, except one: *Warning to the West.*[482] I suppose this is by Shridharani. Probably it has been kept back as not suitable for my morals.

I wonder if you can find at a chemist's a tube of Dr. Bengue's Balsam. Probably you will not find it at Mahabaleshwar—But I know that there are 3 or 4 tubes of it in my bathroom in Anand Bhawan—on the shelves. Svetoslav Roerich sent me a number of tubes for my arms. Since then I have sometimes used one of them. It is now exhausted as others use it also. You might write to Feroze to get hold of these and send me two tubes. I do not know where Feroze is but I suppose he visits Allahabad frequently. There is no hurry about it. The Balsam is more needed by others than by me. It is a useful thing to keep.

We had an odd experience two days ago. Some eggs come for us every morning and are put away in a tin box. About midday the top of this box was pushed out and it was discovered that a tiny chick had emerged from one of the eggs! It has survived and is growing.

That again brings us another problem—Life is a pretty complicated affair. The chick requires constant attention and protection from the cat Chando Bibi and her kitten which has grown frolic-some. I think we shall have to send the chick away. The kitten is still nameless—Can you suggest a name? Or better still ask Bebee who is the great authority on cats. The name should not be a royal or aristocratic one for our poor kitten belongs to the proletariat. It is a male kitten.

The cat Chando is evidently confused and distressed by the variety of languages in which she is addressed. Maulana finds it most convenient to speak to her in Persian. Marathi of course is usual and being an Ahmadnagar cat we have presumed that she understands the elements of Marathi.

I find from the papers that the Soviet Union News of Delhi has issued a Russian primer called: *Russian Primer with a Dictionary of About 1200 Words* (all this is the title! Evidently a Russian compilation) by Vladimir Shibayev (Rs. 3/2/-). I should like to have a copy of this if you can manage to get it. Do not imagine that I am going to begin learning Russian. Nothing of the kind. But I understand that the book contains a comparison of Russian with Sanskrit, giving many common root words &c. This interests me.

482. The author, Krishnalal Shridharani, contends that the second World War may deteriorate into "a titanic inter-continental struggle between East and West or in a global racial conflict between Whites and non-Whites." To avert this he calls for a change in western thinking on eastern problems.

Yesterday, as a particular favour I suppose, I was given a brief note addressed to me by Bijju *chacha*. But only after due enquiry about our relationship. The note contained the information that Ballo was being married at Delhi on May 1st. He asked me, if it was possible, to send my blessings by telegram. This would not only be greatly appreciated but be of 'great spiritual value'. I do not know what spiritual value my good wishes might possess but certainly Ballo and his bride will have them in good measure. I do not propose to attempt to send a telegram as this cannot be done from here. At the most the 'telegram' is sent by post to the Bombay Secretariat and then, if it is passed and the stars and omens are favourable, and there is no obvious reason or rule why it should not be kept back, it might be forwarded by telegram. This is far too complicated and doubtful a process. But on receipt of this letter you might send a telegram to Ballo to Delhi, conveying my love and blessing to him and his bride.

Also write a letter to Bijju *chacha*. Tell him I am happy to know of Ballo's marriage. Indeed I sent my good wishes, you will remember, some months ago when I thought that the wedding would come off in February. It is many years since I saw Ballo—five and a half to be accurate. That was when he came to our flat in St. James' Street in London in 1938. He was big and well-built then. I am told that he has grown since then and is a fine specimen of a young man now. I heard of his return from England in an odd way. On my way to Kulu two years ago I spent a couple of days in Delhi, staying with Ratan and Rajan. One morning, without previous notice, a motor bicycle rolled in and a very youthful and tall English officer tramped in and inquired for me. He was shown in and in a typical haw-haw manner he informed me that he had just flown over from England, that he was a product of Harrow, and that he had been commissioned by Lady Willingdon to convey her love to me! This tender and thoughtful message came as a surprise. Further he told me that a young relative of mine had been his companion during the air journey. From his description I gathered that this was Ballo.

Tell Bijju *chacha* also that I am continuing my *asans*, though sometimes I leave off either because the mood does not fit in or, more usually, because some slight sprain or something similar gives a backache—nothing much but enough to stop the *asans* for some days.

Inform him also that Asaf Ali sends his love and good wishes to Ballo.

I am sending you—to Sakina Mansion—a packet of old foreign periodicals. I liked the tiny services edition of *Time* that you sent me. How enterprising the Americans are, but then their resources are

prodigious. It is much easier to be enterprising, adventurous and frolic-some with the assurance of these resources.

The American cartoon that Fraser sent has also come. It is good.

I am afraid Indian publishers are very unbusinesslike, to put it mildly. If you like you can write to the publishers of translations of my books in India asking them for a report of what has been done so far, royalties &c. Just inquire. More you cannot do, nor is there any need to consult anybody. For aught I know some of these translators or publishers might also be in prison. Many of these translations circulate in fairly small areas and do not yield much in the way of royalties. The best sellers are the Hindi editions, published by the Sasta Sahitya Mandal of Delhi (and I must say that they have been fairly regular in their accounts & payments). You might write to them.

The Tamil edition of my *Autobiography*, to my misfortune, was handled by a person, once a reputable publisher, who developed into a strange mixture of a knave and a lunatic, and in addition became a bankrupt! It is no good writing to him.

The Gujrati edition of my *Auto*, issued by the Navajivan Press, does not owe me any royalties as they do business on a curious non-profit-making basis. I disapprove of this but still I agreed to it. Mahadeva Desai was the translator and he did his job well. You need not write to these people either.

The Bengali and Marathi translations of the *Autobiography* have produced some royalties which have been sent to me from time to time—nothing much. It is possible that I have forgotten to make some entries in my book.

The Urdu edition of the *Auto* was issued by the Jamia Millia of Delhi—a very honest, capable, hardworking lot of men but totally unversed in any business. I donated the royalties of the first edition to the Jamia. I do not know whether they have issued a second edition or not. It is called *Meri Kahani*.

I should like you to find out from the Jamia Millia about the Urdu *Glimpses of World History*. I know they issued one book containing about a quarter or a third of *Glimpses*. Have they followed this up by issuing further parts?

There is one other inquiry which is worth making. Some years ago I gave permission to a firm in Tel Aviv (Palestine) to issue a Hebrew translation of the *Auto*. (You will find this mentioned in my notebook.)

I wonder if they took advantage of this. Probably not, as war developments might have come in the way.

Love

Your loving
Papu

I have just had a letter from Chand & Tara from Wellesley dated 29th January.

Chand mentions a book about which I had previously read. Get it when you can. This is Agnes Smedley's[483] *The Battle Hymn of China.*[484]

Chand says she & Tara saw a movie in Chicago which had been taken at the conference in Paris in July 1938. You and I were in it and Krishna Menon, Ellen Wilkinson & Louis Fischer.

Have you heard from Krishna Menon?

P

April 23 Sunday—

On April 13th—*Vaisakhi* & Jallianwala Day—I began writing the proposed book—*The Discovery of India.* For 8 or 9 days I was absorbed in it. The first chapter dealing with various general questions—beliefs &c.—was hard writing and yet it came out in a spurt. I have finished 2 chapters—59 pages of foolscap manuscript. The old Dehra Dun MSS. helped and I took out some paragraphs from it. All this has been a kind of preliminary to the introduction of the main theme—which is difficult. So for the last two days I have rested.

x x x x

No further news of Bapu's coming here. It seems to grow doubtful.

x x x x

483. Agnes Smedley (d 1950); *alias Alice Bird alias* Mrs. Petroikos, daughter of a US worker, married for a time to Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, was associated with Indian revolutionaries in Berlin, later a sympathiser with the Chinese Communist movement, her works include, *India and the Next War* and *Chinese Destinies.*

484 In this book Agnes Smedley portrays her personal experiences in China, where she worked as a volunteer Red Cross worker for 13 years from 1928

Some days ago Pantji again raised the question of our taking some action in regard to the Japanese invasion of Assam—the action suggested being a brief message for the people sent to & through the Viceroy. I was agreeable but doubtful of the reaction of Vallabhbhai & some others. Maulana, I thought, would approve of the proposal. It was better therefore to tackle Vallabhbhai first. So I suggested to Pantji to have a talk with Vallabhbhai. He had such a talk—so did I later. As I expected Vallabhbhai did not take kindly to it. Yet he did not find it very easy to resist it.

Just about then Maulana, not knowing about these talks, spoke to me and said that something should be done. What he suggested had some resemblance to his November proposal.[485] I did not like it. To my surprise he did not approve of Pantji's proposal. Pant also had a talk with him—As neither Maulana nor Vallabhbhai approved, the proposal was dropped, for the time being at least.

Mahmud then spoke to me & yesterday he went to Maulana. Later Maulana reverted to the subject in his conversation with me and seemed partly reconciled to our old proposal—though his dislike for it continued. There the matter stands now. Perhaps there may be some developments.

x x x x

April 25, Tuesday

Soon after writing my last note I found out that there was again talk of Bapu and party coming here. Nothing definite said but rooms being inspected again & again by military officers and Sendak suddenly summoned to Bombay.

Most of my companions are certain that he is being sent here soon—probably within a week or ten days—I suppose it is likely but I do not want to feel sure till there is more positive evidence.

I shall be glad if Bapu comes here—for many reasons. For an entirely minor and trivial reason I am a little disturbed! Since I have begun my writing business I have been more & more absorbed in it and I would not like it to be stopped by any happening. The possibility of Bapu coming has made me work all the harder—about 5 hours a day. I am making good progress, with the help of my previous notes &c.

485. See *ante*, p. 276.

Today I finished 92 pages but this includes chunks from the old D.D.J. MSS. The rate of progress will slow down later.

Still, with luck, I ought to reach the end of my writing by the end of July. I hope I shall be able to finish it here for once I go out, there will be no peace or chance for writing.

The book ought not to be bad, and it should serve a useful purpose. I wish, however, that I had begun it earlier and written at leisure. Now somehow I have got a feeling that I must hurry. Why I have that feeling—I *do not know.*

x x x x

Poor Shiva Prasad Gupta is dead—died yesterday morning at Benares. Not surprising for he has so long been at death's door. Still it is very sad for old friends to drop out. What a lovable person he was—intensely good and straight in his way, which was often a foolish way.

x x x x

I had letters from Chand & Tara from Wellesley two or three days ago—I shall write to them tomorrow.

April 29, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of April 18/20 from Bombay. The explosion[486] in Bombay was indeed a terrible affair and a vivid reminder of the kind of thing that happens suddenly and upsets thousands of lives. That gives some faint idea of happenings elsewhere when this sort of thing is done deliberately and on a vast scale.

I am surprised to learn that you have not so far received Salim Ali's *Book on Indian Birds.* I sent this on March 24th to Sakina Mansion. It was sent by itself and I took particular care to put it in a cardboard book cover which had come to me with some book from America. You might inquire about it from the Bombay Secretariat. Then, later, on April 1st I sent a packet of books to you to Rugby Hotel, Matheran. This contained Tod's *Rajasthan,* 3 volumes & some other books, a list of which I gave in a previous letter.

486 On 14 April 1944, fire broke out in a ship in the Bombay harbour and caused two explosions in which 500 people were killed and 2000 injured.

I have not received *A Week with Gandhi*.[487] Nor have I received *Warning to the West*. Apart from these two books I have received all the books you have so far mentioned, except the last packet, containing *Loom of Language*,[488] *Mother Russia*[489] &c, which you were going to send. I think you might ask the Bombay Secretariat people to return to you any books meant for me which are held back for any reason.

For the present I am crowded with books and I am not reading any. A fortnight ago I started writing and since then this has filled my mind and my time. Even when I am not actually writing I am thinking about it—it becomes an obsession. So no reading till I work off this obsession. Probably in another few weeks I shall get tired of writing and go back to reading for a while. Meanwhile, my reading is confined to foreign magazines &c., which you sent. Even these have piled up. Yesterday I received a fat packet containing *Foreign Affairs Quarterly*, *Asia*, *Pacific Affairs*, *Reader's Digest* and a large number of other reviews & magazines.

Books take a lot of looking after. I did not realize previously that cockroaches and crickets were so fond of them. They crowd into my little bookcase and feed fast. In spite of periodical cleanings I cannot keep pace with them. This morning I discovered that the leather binding of a new book I had received direct from America less than a month ago was partly eaten up. I have spent the greater part of the morning in chasing these cockroaches. I dislike them greatly. One large beast managed to hide itself inside the *newar* of my bed, and so the *newar* had to be opened out to get at him.

I have noted what you have said about the supply of fruit. It will be welcome. I do not think we are likely to make special demands.

As for the Marathi translation of *Glimpses* I am sorry for Shah's[490] troubles but it is clear that he has not got the resources to undertake and carry through such a work. It is a big book and requires both

487. The book contains an account of Louis Fischer's informal talks with Mahatma Gandhi at Sevagram in June 1942 and a chapter on the working of his mind. The author defends Mahatma Gandhi from the charge of being pro-Japanese and points out that as between independence and nonviolence, the former takes precedence in his thoughts.

488. Written by the eminent philologist Frederick Bodmer and edited by Lancelot Hogben, the author of *Mathematics for the Million*, it is a study of the origin, the growth and the use of communication between peoples.

489. By Maurice Hindus; the author was an American who for two decades had been visiting Soviet Russia and writing sympathetically about what he had seen. In this book he interprets Russia at war by portraying selected people and places.

490. Ratanlal D. Shah, printer and publisher, Ratnakar Press, Sangli.

capital and contacts with booksellers &c. It was absurd of him to issue 250 copies for sale, as he says he did. The book must be printed in a largish edition and advertised. Besides I think it is wrong for the translator to do his own publishing. Evidently the Ratnakar Publications in Sangli are doing business on a very small scale.

I do not remember receiving any letter or books from Shah in August 1941 or later. They may well have come for ought I know for I was in Dehra Jail then. But such letters were usually forwarded to me there. It seems clear that I was rather doubtful of Shah's capacity to undertake the work and hence my insistence on his bringing it out within a few months, as he promised to do. Even now he cannot use his press and says that he is negotiating with a Kolhapur firm. All this is very unsatisfactory and I am sure he cannot possibly do justice to the book.

Strictly speaking, such agreement as there might have been has long been washed out and there is no bar to my making another agreement with a different firm. I am concerned with a wide sale of the book, not with profits. This cannot be expected from Shah & the Ratnakar people. Therefore it is desirable to fix up with the Poona people who brought out my *Autobiography*.

I am sorry for Shah for he has had his own troubles. But allowing him to carry on with the book in sheer sympathy will do him little good and no good at all to the book. He simply can't manage it. I suppose he owes me some small sum for the books actually sold so far. This can be written off.

So I suggest that you try to get out of the Shah muddle and fix up with the Poona people. Tell the latter how matters stand. They can go ahead with the publication and there must be a time-limit. Shah must cancel his arrangements with the Kolhapur press. If the Poona people can take advantage in any way of what Shah has already done and pay him some relatively small sum for it, it would be fair. For instance, they can take his translation & compare it with their own, or in any other way. But this is not a thing which can be insisted upon.

Tell the Poona people that for purposes of translation the new edition issued in England (or U.S.A.) must be used, not the old inaccurate 2-volume edition issued by Kitabistan. They can use Horrabin's maps. For these maps I had told them, or sent a message, that they would have to pay a royalty to Horrabin, or rather a small lump sum. For the present this need not be considered and instead of this payment, it would be better for them to pay something to Shah. This payment is not to be considered as legally done but rather because of the loss suffered by Shah owing to untoward happenings.

I have indicated to you how you might proceed in the matter. These are just suggestions and you can adjust your action as you consider proper.

I read a curious news item in *The Leader* the other day. A girl aged 18 was appearing in some examination in Gorakhpur. Right in the middle of the examination, while she was answering her papers in the exam. hall, she felt labour pains. She carried on with her papers, then went home, gave birth to a baby, and returned the next day to the examination room for further papers!

I am getting the *Patrika* & *The Hindu* regularly, the former from Allahabad. In addition I am still getting the Calcutta edition of the *Patrika via* the Bombay Secretariat. This latter is wholly unnecessary and a waste of money & energy. Please write to the Calcutta Manager of the *Patrika* that while I appreciate his sending the paper, he need not continue sending it as I am getting the Allahabad edition direct.

I hope you are prospering at Mahabaleshwar. It is pretty hot here and from the papers it appears that Allahabad has got over its cool spell and has reverted to its normal heat.

Love

Your loving
Papu

May 5, Friday

Bapu has been ill with malaria for some days. The fever has gone but weakness continues—low blood pressure &c. Even Govt. communique says there is cause for anxiety. Bidhan has seen him.

For the first few days I did not attach much importance to the news of his having malarial fever—He has still abundant vitality. But then worse news. And he is 75½. The past two years—what he must have gone through with all the burdens he carries! Mahadeva's death—Ba's death—but above all the condition of India.

The Times of India suggests his release on medical grounds. That shows his condition must be pretty bad—also that Govt. is considering this release.

x x x x

A tragedy occurred tonight. Chando the cat made a dash at some food—the cook waved an iron hatchet or something he had in his

hand and inadvertently hit Chando on the head. There was no regular cut but the head was bashed in one place and concussion of the brain took place. The poor thing was in a state of semi-coma. We washed the wound &c.—She may survive but the chances are very slight. This has depressed us all greatly. The most unhappy person is the cook who hit her.

May 6, Saturday

News that Gandhiji released unconditionally owing to growing weakness came by radio this morning and the Supt. communicated it to us.[491] His condition must be pretty bad. Still release may do him good and just pull him through.

Anyway—a period ends—this long course which has lasted nearly two years. New developments whatever happens.

x x x x

Chando still alive—just carrying on—

May 6, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of April 26 from Mahabaleshwar. I hope the cooler weather there will suit you and keep you fit. It is getting hot and close here. Another month of this before the rains come. How long do you propose to remain at Mahabaleshwar? I suppose you will go down when the monsoon starts in earnest. I want to return some books to you—Shall I send them to Bombay or Mahabaleshwar?

I have received the following books from you:

1 *Story of Confucius:* Carl Crow
2 Edith Sitwell: *A Poet's Notebook*
3 *Poetry in Wartime:* Edited by Tambimuttu
4 *The Loom of Language:* F. Bodmer

491 On 5 May 1944, the Government announced that "in view of the medical reports on Mr Gandhi's health, the Government of India have decided to release him unconditionally" and that "the decision taken solely on medical grounds" would be effective from 6 May.

5 Tagore: *Poems*
6 Reginald Reynolds: *Cleanliness & Godliness*
7 *A Book of Russian Verse*—Ed. by C.M. Bowra
8 Maurice Hindus: *Mother Russia*
9 Ilya Ehrenburg: *Russia at War*
10 Edward Thompson: *The Making of the Indian Princes*
11 *Sophocles' King Oedipus* by W.B. Yeats

Thus I have received all the books you have sent me in the last two lots except one, namely, Kate Mitchell's *India*.[492] Presumably this book as well as, Shridharani's *Warning to the West* & Fischer's *A Week with Gandhi* have been kept back by the censor. Please get them back from him and keep them.

It would be a pity if any of our books got lost in this way. So it is desirable to keep track of them. In my letters I mention all the books I receive and all those I send back and I keep a full record of all this with me for reference.

I hope you have managed to trace Salim Ali's *Book on Indian Birds* sent by me, all by itself, on March 24, to Bombay. Wendell Willkie's *One World* was sent on February 26 to Allahabad together with 4 copies of *Life* and one or two other foreign periodicals.

I have also received, presumably from *Puphi* (Nan), Ranjit's translation of the *Mudrarakshasa* & 2 books by Nilima.[493]

Among the books you have sent me is Thompson's *Making of the Indian Princes*. As a matter of fact I had already received this book from Thompson himself last December. He sent this & two other of his books through the Viceroy or the Govt. of India. I wrote to you about this at the time and asked you to acknowledge them & thank Thompson for them. So the purchase of another copy was unnecessary, (and it costs Rs. 17/8!), but not quite unnecessary as I have made a present of it to Maulana, who is greatly interested in the subject.

Another book sent by you that I already had is Maurice Hindus' *Mother Russia*. Some one had sent it to me from Allahabad—some bookseller I think. I shall return the extra copy to you with my next lot of books.

I am now very well provided with books—enough to last me many months even if I gave much time to them. But as a matter of fact, as I wrote to you, I am more concerned with writing now.

492. *India—an American View* by Kate L. Mitchell. The author sees India against the needs of the Allies and presents Indian politics in terms of a struggle of contending forces for power. She condemns Mahatma Gandhi's policies as political manoeuvres and stresses the importance of the left forces in India.

493. Nilima Devi (b. 1903); writer and publisher.

I have already written to you fully about the Marathi translation of *Glimpses*. The Ratnakar, Sangli, arrangement must be definitely ended and the Poona people given authority. I made some rather vague suggestions for giving compensation to the Ratnakar people *ex gratia* but I do not quite see how these can be worked out. None of them should be made a condition and it is better not to give hopes to the Ratnakar people, except in so far as any royalties to me may be due. These latter can be written off.

I understand that the Poona people are revising their Marathi translation and they suggest a rather big price for their publication as the cost is going to be heavy. This is true but a big price is bad business and limits the market greatly. I am interested in a large number of people reading the book. It would be better to issue the book in parts —say four—and price them relatively low. This will also speed up publication.

2. As for the inclusion of the 1st chapter of *Letters* in a selection, I have no objection. This kind of thing has been frequently done. It means only 3 or 4 pages and one cannot change much. Still a token payment should be made—I had suggested that some such payment might be made to the Kasturba Memorial Fund.

3. Chitnis[494] of Kolhapur should be asked to give a list of the 'articles & utterances' he wants to publish. If I am satisfied that this will be competently done by a reliable firm of publishers, I shall have no objection. This kind of thing does not overlap with regular books. Royalty 10% on actual sales.

There was a tragedy here last evening of which the victim was our cat Chando. Evidently she was attracted by some food and the cook waved an iron instrument which he had in his hand. Almost inadvertently he hit her full on the head, producing concussion of the brain. The poor thing collapsed and has remained since in a state of semi-coma. We are giving her every attention and there is just a chance that she may survive. But not much. This unfortunate occurrence has depressed all of us as we had got used to Chando and were fond of her. Even those who disliked cats were sorry, and sorriest of all was the man who had hit her.

Letters addressed to us are now handed to us without envelopes and covers—a graceless and crude procedure. If economy is intended why not send them in their original envelopes? A letter without an envelope is like a person without clothes. In private, yes. But this public undressing and nakedness and the flaunting of it before everybody is a

494 S L Chitnis translated into Marathi the *Glimpses of World History*.

little painful. There is also a greater chance of the letters getting mixed up or going astray. It is safer always to write the names of the sender and the addressee on the letter itself.

Do you ever hear from Krishna Menon?

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 60.

May 13, 1944

Darling Indu,

I do not quite know where to write to you for your last brief letter of May 7th informed me that you were going to Poona to see Bapu. Yet, I suppose, you must have gone back to Mahabaleshwar, and so my letter goes there. You have an advantage over me. You know always where to address your letters to me. I am not one of those flighty, unstable restless individuals who move about frequently. I am a fixture—in Ahmadnagar Fort!

Bapu's release and his illness have naturally upset the still and rather stagnant waters of Indian life and there is a stir and an excitement and a going to and fro. Yet I wish our people would restrain their desire for *darshan* &c. We are a terribly inconsiderate people where illness is concerned—or rather 'inconsiderate' is not the right word. We overwhelm the person who is ill with too much consideration. I think one of Bapu's chief troubles has been this and he is seldom allowed privacy or rest. Crowds gather and gape and gaze at him imagining that they are not interfering in any way. The worst offenders are those whom he encourages himself by his affection and personal interest. He has built up such a vast family and given a bit of himself to so many that each one of them considers it a right and duty to hover round him.

Normally I would not worry about his health for he has considerable powers of recuperation. But it is his age that troubles me. He is nearly 75, a good age for India, an age which I certainly do not expect to reach. For some years past I have noticed the obvious effects of advancing age on his physical frame. What the last twenty-one months have done to him I do not know, but I can make a guess. I hope, therefore, that he will be strong enough to take absolute rest till he is fully recovered and that others will help him to do so.

If you see *Puphi* (Nan) tell her that I sent her a letter to Allahabad a week ago. But she must have missed it as she went off to Poona. I hope it reaches her. Also tell her that I have received the copies of Chand's & Tara's letters to her, which she sent me.

The fruit arrangement which you and Mridula made is working satisfactorily and almost for the first time, since we came here, we are having some decent fruit.

I wrote to you last week about our cat Chando. For three days we watched her. That she survived at all was surprising and satisfactory but she continued in a state of half-coma, taking no food. Then she was sent to a local veterinary hospital. She is still there but we have been told that she is recovering and there is no danger now— Which is good.

After some very hot days we have had a fall in temperature due to occasional drizzles.

Chand, in one of her letters to her mother, suggests that it would be desirable to have a new and abridged edition of my *Auto* published in America. There is something in this. The best person to judge of it is Walsh, my publisher. If he feels that something of this kind is desirable and worthwhile I shall have no objection. Normally I would not agree to leave this in anyone's hands but I trust Walsh's judgment and am prepared to leave the matter to him entirely. He can do what he thinks right. You might inform him of this.

This is my letter No. 61.

Love

Your loving
Papu

13.5.44

Darling Betty,

It is just a month since I wrote to you and six weeks since I had a letter from you. But some news of you has come to me through Indu.

You must have had your hands full. The fire in Bombay was enough to shake everyone up there and to demand his or her service in relief work. The relief work, I suppose, will continue for a considerable time.

Now Bapu's release has inevitably produced a new stir and excitement, especially for those in Bombay. I hope he will be left in peace for some time to enable him to have rest and recover.

I saw in some newspapers that your book is going to be published in America. Has this been fixed up?

How is Raja? I hope Matheran did him good.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

May 15 Monday.

Chando died last night in the veterinary hospital. She was sent there on the 7th evening and we were informed that she was progressing. Indeed it was settled that she would be discharged from the hospital on Sunday—yesterday—and could come back to us. Instead she died. It is rather sad and some of us miss her.

May 20, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have received two letters from you—one dated 8th May from Poona and the other dated 14th May from Mahabaleshwar.

You suggest that I might return the books to you to Mahabaleshwar. This will mean needless trouble to you as you will have to cart them about from place to place. So for the present I am not sending them. except for 3 copies of *Life*. I think I shall send the books later to your Bombay address.

I do not quite see how you can stay in Juhu after June 8th. The monsoon is certain to begin by that date and Juhu is not a suitable place during the monsoon.

Do not trouble about the *Russian Primer*. I have seen a copy of it and that is all I wanted to do.

Wendell Willkie's *One World* was sent to you to Allahabad on Feb. 26th together with some copies of *Life*. The size and shape of the book is rather like *Life*, only somewhat smaller. So it is just possible. to overlook it or for it to get mixed up with the periodicals.

Fruit is coming here regularly. Some good honey will be welcome. Mahabaleshwar honey is well-known. Psyche sent me several bottles of

it—triple-strained it was called—last year. I think I wrote to you that one of these bottles broke *en route* and made a terrible mess.

I am sorry to tell you that Chand Bibi died on Sunday last. We were expecting her back from the veterinary hospital that very day as we had been told that she was doing well. She was not sent and next day we were told that she was dead.

About Khaliq I quite understand that he is not particularly useful just at present and has little work to do. Nevertheless I dislike intensely parting from him. Personally I do not understand how people manage to exist on these small salaries in these days of terribly high prices. Khaliq has been with us for 25 years or so, with a little gap in between. He came as a young boy and has grown up in our service. I cannot consider his case or that of any other servant merely from the point of view of our needing him or not at present or just as a cold-blooded business proposition. We owe a certain duty to those who have so long served us faithfully. Besides we may need him later or someone in his place, and a newcomer is seldom satisfactory. It takes time to get used to him. Wages, especially the wages of more or less skilled workers, have gone up greatly because of the war and partly because of the high rates introduced by Americans in India. We cannot keep up with these American standards but we cannot help being influenced by them. I understand Ladli Bhai's point of view but it is too out of date to fit in with modern conditions. It is quite likely that if Khaliq's salary is increased, others, especially Tulsi, will want more. I do not think we need be frightened of this. After all we have not got too many servants. It is better to have a few well paid ones than a crowd.

I think therefore that Khaliq's pay should certainly be increased by 3/- a month. That will make it 30/- pay plus 2/- allowance, making 32/- in all. He has got a wife and daughter and possibly others to look after. After all, we spend a few rupees constantly on odd purchases—a book &c.—without a second's hesitation. And yet this small sum might make a great deal of difference to a family. I am interested in Khaliq's daughter and I think I once wrote to you to give some help to her or for her occasionally—I hope her education has been continued. Normally, our servants get tips etc., old and new clothes, from time to time. But when the house is seldom used and no guests come, or come rarely, these tips cease.

Apart from the increase of Rs. 3/- in Khaliq's salary, I think you might tell him that I should like to help his daughter's education &c. and, if need arises, he can ask you or Feroze for such help. Feroze,

when he is in Allahabad, can give Khaliq Rs. 10 or Rs. 15 as a small lump sum for this purpose on my behalf.

Could you send me a full list of Anand Bhawan servants with their salaries and allowances? I want to go over this and know exactly how matters stand.

Is Upadhyaya still in prison? Quite a number of people have been discharged in the U.P. and yet Upadhyaya, of all persons, still apparently continues.

Have you any news of Madan Bhai? Did Feroze succeed in getting an interview with him?

You must know of the complications that *Puphi* (Nan) is having to face—legal and testamentary. These have evidently upset her a lot and she is greatly worried. I can understand that for such troubles are not only irritating in themselves but the possible consequences affect our future lives. No one views with equanimity the idea of changing the course of his or her life. This present affair is an eloquent commentary on the state not only of our laws but, what is more important, the state of people's minds here. The difference between a son and a daughter, not to mention the wife, is tremendous. If Ranjit had a son, this son would have inherited a very considerable property running into several lakhs. Daughters are cut out completely from the joint fund, and even as regards the much smaller sum, which was treated more or less as separate property by Ranjit, there is now a dispute. If Pratap Pandit's view is correct and is upheld then the daughters get 300/- each per annum and the widow Rs. 500/- per annum, that is Rs. 25/- per month & about 42/- per month. For the rest they are supposed to depend on Pratap's charity, which is not exactly resplendent.

Just because Ranjit was careless about making a will, full advantage is sought to be taken of a strict interpretation of the law—a pound of flesh business. What exactly the law is in this particular case I am not competent to judge.

So I can understand that Nan is worried. There is the question of supplying Chand & Tara with funds for carrying on their education. And so many other things. Nevertheless I do not think it is worthwhile worrying. For my part I do not propose to spend a single sleepless night over this matter. I am annoyed at Pratap's attitude but it is a passing irritation. Curiously enough there is also a tinge of amusement about it when I think of human nature as it is. Also a certain exhilaration in having to meet a new situation.

Fortunately for us, we are none of us helpless and incompetent individuals. We can each one of us look after ourselves as well as others. We can earn money whenever necessary as well as spend it. So I fail

to see anything tragic about it all. It just involves some waste of time, some adjustment of our lives, and for the rest it does not count.

It is obvious that I cannot tolerate any interruption in Chand's, Tara's or Rita's education because of monetary difficulties. So long as I have any money this is not going to happen. And I do not think I shall ever lack money for what I consider essential needs. I have enough disrespect for money for it never to desert me wholly. I have known in the past and I know now how to adjust myself to changing circumstances without allowing them to make much difference to the course of my life.

Anyway, in view of possible developments, I want to find out exactly how I stand financially. I hardly know. Will you therefore please ask Kamalnayan or the Bachhraj people to send me (through you) a full statement of my account, investments &c. with them?

You mention a lake in Mahabaleshwar—I did not know of this. Is it a big lake?

Love

Your loving
Papu

I have now received Louis Fischer's *A Week with Gandhi*. Also Ahmad Abbas's *Tomorrow is Ours*[495] and *Tomorrow 2*[496]—This last-named sent by the publishers—Padma.

P

May 27, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of May 19th—your 63rd.

The newspapers tell us that Mahabaleshwar has run short of food and army lorries had to be requisitioned to rush foodstuffs there. I hope you were not starved. That is not likely to happen for Mahabaleshwar

495 A novel set in the context of the national movement. A marriage breaks up because of the conflicts it creates between a modern youth and the old conservative outlook.

496. *Tomorrow*, edited by Raja Rao and Ahmed Ali, was a compilation of short stories, poems and essays by writers of different languages.

is not just any place in India but a spot where the elect go and their needs are always catered for.

It has been hot here and amazingly dry. I suppose the rains will begin soon and even before the regular monsoon starts, the winds change and are cooler. It is really surprising how dry this place can get. I thought that Allahabad and the north were dry enough with the hot *loo* blowing. But apparently there is something in the air here which beats Allahabad in this respect. This dryness affects the skin and produces an uncomfortable feeling. I did not know what this was due to. Others also complained and they said it was dryness. They took to oil massage but I dislike messing about with oil. So now I sleep with a pot of vaseline next to me and if I feel 'dried up' in the course of the night I apply some of the stuff on my arms and legs. This gives relief. I suppose the rains will end this dryness of the air.

I do not think I ever met Dr. Bhandari's girls though he spoke to me about them and showed me their photographs. He was very fond of them.

I have received a number of books from Karaka[497]—his own productions mostly. One of them is a play—*Colour Bar* by two Oxford men —Presumably one of them being Karaka himself. It is not a very bright play.

I have been reading little lately and all the good books you have sent me repose in the bookshelf, which is over-full now. For the last six weeks I have spent a good deal of time in writing. I am beginning to tire of this and perhaps one of these days I shall put my pen and paper away and seek relief in reading. I am not very satisfied with what I have written. Yet, even though it may not be up to much it is a useful discipline for the mind. It forces one to think precisely and to express oneself clearly. Indeed there is sometimes an element of surprise in seeing one's thought put on an attire of words and phrases and appear in black and white. Normally one thinks vaguely and the thought is all rounded up with no sharp ends; it fades off with wishes and odd fits of knowledge. In the old days education both in India and in Europe included a study of logic so that the student may know how to think and reason clearly. In Europe this was Aristotle's logic; India had and has her own system of *Nyaya* न्याय, which is still taught in the Sanskrit schools and colleges. Both these are out-of-date and far too formal in their approach. They tend to make the mind scholastic and rather rigid, and yet they served a useful purpose and did

497. D.F. Karaka (1911-1974); founder-editor of the *Current* and author of several books.

give a training to the mind. It is surprising how untrained most people's minds are now, even the minds of otherwise well-educated people. We cannot go back to Aristotle or न्याय but the modern substitute is a scientific training, and especially practical work in science.

I remember, in my school days, there used to be a great argument in England, as elsewhere, of the relative value and importance of a classical and a scientific training. People used to grow quite excited and heated over it, each party or group emphasizing the value of its own wares. I suppose science has now won all along the line and the classics are just tolerated. That is right in a way and it was inevitable. We simply can't do without science and the old rigid methods of classical education isolated a person from the world of today. And yet science by itself is pretty dry and the scientist is not always the most lovable of men. He lacks something, the poise and calm outlook on life which the classics often gave. Compare H.G. Wells with Gilbert Murray. Well, I suppose, we must combine the two somehow.

I had a letter from Betty the other day. There is a background of mental unrest and worry about it as there usually is about her letters, unless something has happened to cheer her up, and then, for a while, she is full of exuberance. Very foolishly I try to dole out good advice to her, as if this makes the slightest difference. Probably it just irritates. And yet I cannot quite get out of my school-masterish habit. Each person has to find his or her own way out of the problems that beset one. No one else can really help much and probably the most one can do is to understand and sympathise and be silent. Usually the troublesome things are the little things of life—somehow we brace ourselves up when a big thing turns up. My own way out for present worry over some small matter is to switch off my mind from it and think of some big thing. That restores balance and perspective. That is why, it is said, that a major disaster, like a war, does one good service. It pulls people out of their ruts and makes them forget for a while their innumerable petty worries. The major trouble swallows up the smaller ones.

I have come to think that city life, agreeable as it is, somehow does not fulfil the demands of human nature. I like city life and would hate to be buried in a village. But unrelieved city life cut off from nature and the land does seem to produce a disjointed temperament, a lack of mental poise. Anyway it would have that effect on me. I must have both—the city and nature. However for the present I have Ahmadnagar Fort, which is neither!

We have been here now for 21 months and 3 weeks. That reminds me that this is already my longest term. Previously no single term has

exceeded 21 months—the sentence was usually two years but with remissions &c., this worked out at about 21 months or a little less. It is true that more than once two terms have often followed one another with only a brief gap in between—but there was a gap, and even a few days makes a difference. And then, previously, there used to be interviews and some kind of personal touch was kept up. Not so this time. So far as you are concerned I did not see you for nearly two years m 1939-41. But that was not because I was in prison—You were in London—Leysin &c. while I was in India, mostly out of prison, partly in Dehra Dun Jail.

How people must have changed, I often think, during these past 21 months or more. How you must have changed. When we meet, as I suppose we will some time or other, I shall be feeling about with the tentacles of my mind, trying to find what is new, what is old in you. So also with others. When we meet people frequently we do not notice the change for we are continually adapting ourselves to it. But after a long interval changes are more apparent. Children grow up amazingly and are hardly recognizable; boys and girls become men and women.

It is not merely the lapse of time that counts; it is what we have lived through that makes a difference. Recent years have been very abnormal and each one of us has a particular stock of experience and a store of feelings and impressions, each one of which has made some little difference—And so strangers creep in where friends used to be.

I am very glad that Raja is definitely out. Not that it made much difference whether he was in or out but this middle stage is upsetting, especially for a nervous person like Raja. He can now devote himself to improving his health, and that, from all accounts, requires a great deal of attention. I understand that the children—Harsha and Ajit—are going to Gwalior after all.

Have you given my yarn to Psyche to get it woven?

Betty wrote to me that old Mrs. Gazdar[498] of Allahabad died recently after a long illness. The news made me think how cut off we get from people we do not meet. I had not met her for a long time—did she come to your wedding?—and I had vaguely come to the conclusion that she had died. She was a good, kindly sort and I am sorry.

498. Wife of Nadir Guzdar, proprietor of the Raja Ram Motilal Guzdar & Co. in Allahabad and a close friend of the Nehru family.

Will you write a few lines to Nadir conveying my condolences? G. D. Birla has sent me a book written partly by him—It is in Hindi रुपये की कहानी.'[499]

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my 63rd letter to you.

June 3, 1944

Darling Indu,
I have received your letter of May 26—the 64th.

I am glad you have decided to go to Poona instead of Bombay from Mahabaleshwar. I suppose my next letter should be sent to Poona but I shall await your instructions in this matter. In Poona you will be comfortable enough either with Nuri or Sir Govind Madgaonkar (I am not sure if I have spelt his name correctly). Perhaps you will feel easier with Nuri because you know her well. Madgaonkar's house is a well-appointed one and he is a methodical person. Sarojini, who stayed with him, told me that the radio was functioning most of the time. Madgaonkar is a very decent person though a bit censorious of others. I suppose that comes with age, especially when one lives a retired life and has nothing definite to do. Doesn't he talk a little like the 'Poonah' kind of Britisher? I do not remember having met his daughter Usha.

Jivraj's release is comforting and now you can have the satisfaction of knowing that he is at hand and can be consulted when necessary. He is a very competent and sound doctor.

I suppose it is right and inevitable that you should read books on babies and children. And yet there is always a possibility of overdoing this kind of thing—or rather of being so overburdened with advice that one's natural commonsense hardly functions and one lives on edge, trying always to remember what to do next according to the directions. I remember Betty & Raja mugging up such books together and referring to them for advice at every time. This very attitude of doubt and

499 *Story of Money*; it is a survey of the Government of India's currency policy; Parasnath was the co-author.

hesitation with a tinge of excitement somehow affects the child sometimes in the wrong way, for children, like animals, are peculiarly susceptible to psychological states. The books you have been reading and which you mention are good in their own way and give a lot of sound advice. But it is as well to remember that many experts do not wholly agree with them and in fact there has been a tendency to turn away from this method of treating children. Probably it is a good method for the 'difficult' and 'problem' child, but many children are not, to begin with, problem children at all and in their case this treatment may not be wholly suitable. It may result in a normal child developing problem traits. There is a well-known school at Dartington Hall in Devon or Cornwell run on these lines and I heard rather curious stories about the children there. One father was quite worried about his son there, a lad of ten or so.

Problem and such like children have, I suppose, always existed but undoubtedly they are peculiarly common in our present age, especially in Europe and America. They are the products of this age of transition where everything is changing so rapidly that it is difficult to have any standards of values to judge by. Also the small families which are so usual today—one child or two—result in problem children. A larger family, several children, has disadvantages but from the child's point of view it is usually better and he has a more normal life with companions growing up with him. To some extent, but not wholly (except perhaps in a socialist country like Russia), school and a communal life can take the place of family life.

A child has to be treated as an individual and given every opportunity to grow as an individual. But it is at least equally important to treat him as a social being who can live at peace and cooperation with others. That makes one think of the kind of society he will have to live in—a difficult business today when society itself is changing. In any event the cooperative habits and traits have to be developed or else he will find it difficult to fit in anywhere. Usually single children, who have been looked after a great deal, have a hard time when they go out into the world and have to fend for themselves. Bertrand Russell says somewhere that parents are wholly unsuited to bring up their children; they are too intensely interested in them to take a dispassionate view or to treat them normally.

You say you want the child to be happy—of course. But then what is happiness? There is the solid content of a fairly prosperous peasant; there are higher grades of intellectual and emotional happiness. There is the happiness of the person who is drunk or who is under the influence of some drug. I suppose, if you analyse your mind, you will

find that happiness is more often negative than positive—an absence of pain & suffering. And yet how is one to be happy if he knows and sees another *in pain? A sensitive person* will suffer continually on behalf of others. An insensitive person may escape that but at the cost of much that is fine in life. Long ago (probably 140 years ago) Leopardi the Italian poet wrote to his sister on the occasion of her marriage: "Thou shall have children, either cowards or unhappy; choose thou the latter." That is perhaps an extreme view but there is some truth in it.

Ultimately we cannot be really happy till the whole world is happy and that is a large order. Mere avoidance of unhappiness, not easily possible, may itself result in isolation and boredom and a malaise which is worse than definite unhappiness. We are so organically connected with others & with the world that we cannot both live a full life and yet avoid the world's ills. Escapism does not pay in the long run, quite apart from its moral worth.

What then is one to do? That is a big question which has been asked almost since human beings began to think. It seems to me that the only thing to aim at is the power or capacity to extract happiness, or perhaps it is better to call it peace and calm, out of unhappiness itself. Not to escape from anything but to face it and yet be above it in a way; not to be overcome by it and to retain in spite of everything a sense of life and its larger purposes, a feeling of life fulfilment. How to do that is a difficult enough job and each person has to learn for himself and it seems that only life, with all its waywardness and shock, can teach. The most we can do is to prepare the background for it.

Read your books by all means but do not attach too much importance to everything they contain. A story of Li-Po the great Chinese poet comes to my mind. A young man, desiring to become a poet, went to Li-Po and asked him how he was to train himself for the purpose, 'Master, how can I become a poet.' Li-Po said: 'Read all the rules and books and then forget them and observing nature put your feeling in words' You mention Ethel Mannin's book.[500] She is a likable person and I am sure what she says has sense in it. But it struck me suddenly,—has she any children? I do not know but somehow I doubt it.

There is a passage in one of Gilbert Murray's books which might interest you—He says that we must be "careful always to seek for truth and not for our own emotional satisfaction, careful not to neglect the

500 *Confessions and Impressions*

real needs of men and women through basing our life on dreams; and remembering above all to walk gently in a world when the lights are dim and the very stars wander."

Madgaonkar's dissatisfaction with people who do not make their wills is understandable. Partly he is justified in so far as I am concerned, but only partly. It is true that I have so far not made any formal will but I have not been wholly neglectful of the future. My father—*Dadu*—did not leave a will. Yet I know that in the course of his life he made his will more than once. I suppose he tore them all up and deliberately decided not to have a will. But at the same time he made such careful arrangements that nothing untoward should happen, for he realized that my money sense was weak and I was far too engrossed in other matters. Even apart from a will, I was his natural and only heir, under Hindu law. The arrangements he made were so good that they saved me a deal of trouble and if I have carried on in a carefree manner for all these years since he died, it is largely due to his foresight and care.

So far as I am concerned I have not been wholly neglectful. Knowing that my life might be considered mortgaged in a sense I have tried to fix things in a way so that my presence or absence would make no difference. It was because of these arrangements that there was no financial worry at the time of Mummy's last illness in Europe, or your stay in Switzerland, Oxford &c. Even if I had popped off suddenly at any time, those arrangements would have stood. I cannot bring myself to kowtow to money but I am not lacking in method even in my monetary dealings, though from a normal point of view I might be wasteful and live beyond my means. But the idea of hoarding up, or holding tight to money and living on interest &c. irritates me, and the whole conception of passing on ancestral funds by inheritance from generation to generation does not particularly appeal to me. Besides there is not much to pass on and quite possibly there will be nothing left! Apart from this house—Anand Bhawan—almost everything I possess is with Bachhraj. They have been good caretakers of it and poor Jamnalalji showered good advice on me which I seldom acted up to. To Bachhraj I have given definite instructions that in case anything happens to me you are my sole heir and will be entitled to take possession of all my funds & securities with them. Even without my saying so legally you are my heir. Although these arrangements are solid enough and not likely to crack, it struck me last year, here in Ahmadnagar Fort, that I ought to make a will. Of course I could not do so here. But I prepared a draft so that whenever I might have the chance I might execute a formal will. The operative part of it was brief enough but there was, inevitably,

much else. That draft is out of date now but it will help to remind me what I have to do.

Money and inheritance &c. do not worry me. But I do not want to leave a mess behind when I die. I do not want others to have to take the trouble to clear up a mess of my making.

1 Regarding Chitnis who wants to publish a Marathi translation of some of my essays and articles, I have seen the list and I have no objection to his doing so. I do not examine credentials closely in regard to these odd articles. So he can go ahead. But his publishers must confirm the agreement in writing. Agreements are with publishers, not with translators.

2 The Mathrubhumi Press of Calicut can of course bring out a second edition of the Malayalam edition of the *Autobiography* on the same terms as previously. They can also bring out a Malayalam edition of *Glimpses* on these terms, but I hope they will see to it that the book is properly translated. Also there must be a time limit, so that the publications may not be indefinitely delayed.

3 Assamese edition of *Letters*. I cannot give permission to a new person unless I am sure that the old party (Wide India Co.) has not functioned so far. Better send a registered letter to the latter to find out. Also if you like you can refer to Gopinath Bardoloi (the ex-Premier of Assam), Gauhati, Assam. You can ask him about both parties, and whether an Assamese edition has come out or not. Also his advice can be taken about the translation &c.

I have collected quite a large number of old foreign papers. I think I shall send them to you when you are in Poona. What do you do with them?

When you make any fresh arrangements about the publication of my books, please make entries in the notebook reserved for this purpose—Also any other relevant matter—your writing and not receiving reply &c. This will facilitate matters for future reference.

Love

Your loving
Papa

This is my letter No. 64.

June 6, Tuesday

A month today since Bapu was released. A month of some anxiety and a good deal of expectation. The anxiety is much less for he has slowly improved in health. And yet the pace is very slow and the doctors are not satisfied. He does not take kindly to medicine and wants to stick to his nature treatment. Probably he knows his body and its working best. He will improve gradually but, having regard to his age, he will not regain his old vigour and vitality. Yet whatever his age and his state of health, inevitably he has to carry the burden of India. No one can relieve him, no one can take his place. He gets tired very easily and probably cannot stand much argument. There is no way out of this difficulty.

The eager expectations have now toned down, at least in the sense that something new will happen soon. The one clear statement[501] he has made—that he cannot withdraw the August Resolution: it is the breath of life to him—has cheered up many and depressed many others outside. I expected something of the kind from him and felt pleased. There appears to be no room for any half-way position—

So, although we expect changes to take place, for Bapu's very presence outside is a continual challenge to the *status quo*, we are more settled in mind. For my part, I have kept myself busy with writing work and the weeks have gone by all too quickly. I began writing on April 13th and since then I have written something almost daily. Day before yesterday I finished a long chapter and came to the end of a period. So I decided to take a few days off—I have written so far 374 pages of manuscript. That is, I imagine, a little more than half of what I intend writing. I have reached the eve of the Moslem invasion of India. The book should be about 650-700 pages (MSS.), but it is difficult to say.

Now that I feel that we are likely to stay on here for some months, the sense of hurry has gone— Another two months should see me nearing the end—

501. In a letter to M.R. Jayakar dated 20 May, which was published on 1 June 1944, Mahatma Gandhi had stated that "as things stand there is no question of my withdrawing the August Resolution."

6.6.44

Darling Betty,
I received your letter of the 19th May some little time ago. I was very glad to learn of Raja's discharge. It really does not matter very much whether one is in jail or outside provided one can adapt oneself to the environment. But when one is ill it does make a difference and there is a lack of facilities for treatment and an uncertainty which leads to mental depression and worrying. This uncertainty does not lessen even when one is released for a short fixed period and has to go back to jail. Instead in some ways this cat and mouse business is more irritating and it becomes difficult to settle down for treatment or anything else. So I am greatly relieved to know that Raja is definitely out now and can look after himself properly. Naturally the first thing to do is to have a complete overhaul and know exactly how matters stand.

I think you have decided wisely about Harsha and Ajit going to the Gwalior School. Children always profit from living in company with others of their age in an impersonal atmosphere. Home life is necessary but too strong a dose of it is not always good. School and home, between the two, establish a kind of balance, and home becomes more desirable when it is not always there. School helps in developing self-reliance and the habit of cooperation, which are so essential for every growing child, and indeed for a grown-up person also.

Give my love to Raja and the children. How they—the children—must have grown.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

June 10, 1944

Darling Indu,
Your letter of June 2nd reached me yesterday. It was your No. 65. I do not quite know where to write to you for you say that you are likely to leave Mahabaleshwar by the 10th, that is today. In any event you ought to be in Poona by the time this letter gets through. But I do not know the address of Nuri's house in Poona, or rather I have

forgotten it for I used to know it and have also visited it. I am therefore sending this letter to Mahabaleshwar hoping that Treacher & Co. will forward it on.

Do not trouble to send olive oil. I have a little which I use for massage when I have a slight sprain. I can easily get more if necessary. Just at present there is no need to combat dryness for the rains have begun here and we have had a heavy downpour.

You mention Anand—Where is he now? Still on the executive side, or has he been sent to the front somewhere?

To remain absolutely silent मौन for a period must be good, both for the nerves and as a conserver of energy. What an amount of energy we waste by talk. I have never deliberately observed silence in this way. But circumstances have helped me or, if you like, compelled me. I have spent so many months, on previous occasions, in something like solitary confinement, though it was not technically so. All the talking I did was with the prisoners who cooked my food etc., or with the jailor who came round for a couple of minutes in the morning. So for months at a time my talking was reduced to a minimum and I got so unused to it that when interview day came I was a little exhausted. Here in Ahmadnagar I have of course to do much more talking for there are many of us together meeting each other continually. And yet this is less than normal. Occasionally I have talked more than usual and felt tired because of it and even developed a very slight sore throat. It is surprising how soon we get out of our normal habits, or if you prefer, develop new habits. Lack of exercise or use of any organ makes it slacken off and weaken. But I have no doubt that occasional silences are good for the nervous system and do conserve energy.

Yes, you need not send any more books just yet, unless you come across some very special one. I want another six weeks relief from books, more or less. But there is one little book which you might get if you see it anywhere. This is a new Penguin—Hogben's *Interglossa*,[502] or some such name. It deals with a new artificial language. Also it might be worthwhile to buy any new books that appear good, and to keep them.

Do you remember?—you wrote to Krishna Menon for one or two books I had mentioned. Have you not heard from him at all?

502. In this book, Hogben had producer a detailed blueprint of yet another international language.

Who is Tambimuttu? Do you know him? The man who has prepared an anthology of war verse, which you sent me.[503] I have seen occasional reviews by him in the English periodicals and he appears to have broadcasted also—B.B.C.—on literary topics. Probably he has married some English girl as he refers to his wife who seems to help him in his literary work.

I note what you *say about Jamia's reply. It is odd that they cannot* get paper when plenty of new books are coming out. They are not very enterprising. I suppose there is no help for it and we must leave them to function in their own slow way.

I think you are right about the Marathi edition of *Glimpses*. It is best to be cautious and not to take any step which might cause trouble. Besides you have taken a High Court Judge's opinion and there is nothing more to be said about it. Apart from the legal side, I am anxious that Shah should not nurse a grievance. He has suffered a good deal and I do not wish to add to his troubles. But what is one to do if a man is not in a position to do a job well? Even according to him he has to rely now on some other small press—Besides he and his new press will probably find it difficult to get paper, which a more up-to-date press might manage to procure. The money involved is really a small sum and I am not interested in it—I am only anxious to get the book out. I think it might be pointed out to Shah that the arrangements he has suggested appear wholly unsatisfactory. Anyway you had better proceed as you think best and avoid entanglements.

If, ultimately, the Poona people are given permission to bring out the Marathi *Glimpses* the terms will be the same as for the *Autobiography* —10% royalty on price of books sold. About the timelimit, two months is too short a period. No publisher can give this promise even normally, much less in wartime. Probably a six-month period is nearer the mark. But the right way to proceed is to ask the publisher to suggest his own timelimit and if this is at all reasonable, to accept it. The book is a big one. It may have to come out in parts.

All monies for royalties should go to Bachhraj. But please note then in the record.

We are getting fruit two or three times a week, which is ample. Mangoes have come, also quite good figs; other kinds of fruit also sometimes.

503. *Poetry in Wartime* (1942), a collection of poems written since the beginning of the war and published in *Poetry*, the editor of which was M J. Tambimuttu, a Sinhalese poet settled in London.

As you intend going to Bombay about the end of the month to consult Purandare I suppose you will remain there afterwards. Have you fixed up your abode there? If Juhu is approved, I presume you will have no difficulty in getting a shack for most people leave when the rains begin. My next letter to you will be sent to Poona— By that time, I hope, the address will have reached me. The one after that may have to go to Bombay or Juhu. Let me know the address there.

The newspapers say that Bapu will be going to Poona soon. You will meet him there.

This is my letter No. 65.

Love

Your loving
Papu

Have you any news of Amma? I suppose she is in Lahore now —How is she and what is her address?

June 17—Saturday

The days pass by—I keep busy writing mostly, although sometimes I feel very dissatisfied with what I have written. Dissatisfied not only with the manner and content of my writing, but with the thought of the past. Curious how I am interested when I am writing about a period which appeals to me, which adds to my national and racial conceit, and bored when I have to deal with more unfortunate periods. I have reached the end of the Moghul period and now I suppose I shall be still more irritated for I shall soon be dealing with the last phase—the British period.

Is it worthwhile, I wonder, writing all this stale stuff? I thought perhaps I might be able to put some life into it but now I doubt it. Some passages here and there may be good; as a rule it is heavy going. It is difficult to judge of one's own writing. Anyway it has been very helpful to my thinking. More definite pictures emerge in my own mind and, writing about the past, somehow I get rid of the burden of the past.

There is no fear now that I might be unable to finish what I am writing by an early release from internment. Unless, of course, I grow weary and give it up myself, which is not impossible. In another month I shall finish with the past—and then the present and the future. Shall I deal with them? I do not know—I am not sure—

x x x x

Bapu has come to Poona. By the end of this month or early in July he might come out with some statement—some step. From all appearances no marked change in the present position will take place. Churchill and India's freedom are two incompatibles, and Churchill and his lot count both in England and India, unfortunately. His conservative, British Empire attitude is evident in all he does. He has been a brilliant war leader for Britain but what a lot of trouble he is storing up for England, Europe & the world by his incapacity to get out of his nineteenth century mentality. His praise of France, fulsome and entirely uncalled for, was significant.[504]

x x x x

Some nights ago I shouted and moaned more than usual, disturbing my neighbours. I am told that I make ghastly noises. Horrid and extraordinary nightmares oppress me but they fade away on awakening. My waking hours have not been bad, except for occasional depression, a malaise, a nostalgic feeling for all that is unattainable. And yet at night I go off the deep end into some unknown, fantastic and rather horrible land. What is this that troubles me? What possesses my unconscious self? Is it just the consequence of the events I have known during the last quarter of a century or more? Or is it some childhood memory or shock which I cannot recall? I do not remember anything that affected me so strongly in childhood. Of course I think, without deliberate intent, of my past and of the many things that might have been otherwise. But all this does not explain these nightmares and my shouting in sleep.

It is an old habit, this shouting and groaning in sleep. Kamala used to tell me about it. In prison I used to do it sometimes. I remember how, during the Cripps negotiations, one night I was more than usually noisy and Rajan dashed into my room to find out what ailed me.

There is an old childhood dream which I remember. It came to me repeatedly with variations. Some horrid creature was pursuing me, something that I could not clearly see or visualise, and I ran my fastest away

504. On 25 May 1944, Churchill said in the House of Commons that "we have all rejoiced at the brilliant and skilful fighting of the French Moroccan and Algerian divisions in the heart shaking battles... The French Committee of National Liberation has the credit of having prepared these troops .. they also govern a vast empire, all of whose strategic points are freely placed at the disposal of the United Nations"

from it. I ran and ran but always it was close behind me. Ultimately I entered a building and mounted a high tower. There near the top I locked myself from the inside in a room. But there was a high window or a skylight and to my exceeding horror I saw a huge hand come through this window and stretch itself out towards me. It was only a hand with an arm attached, nothing more. There was no escape possible for me from that room. The hand approached, came nearer and nearer, and then I awoke in a cold sweat, shivering with fright and horror.

x x x x

For the past few years or so the nightmares have usually something to do with a feeling of oppression, of being unable to do what I want to do. I want to move and my limbs do not obey me. I want to shout and warn someone and my throat is parched and dry and no voice comes out of it, or just a hoarse grunt.

x x x x

What is all this due to? What old suppressions? Is it sex—Partly perhaps, though I do not think this is the primary cause. Is it the feeling of helplessness and oppression due to political causes? Perhaps.

x x x x

Two or three days ago I received from Indu a copy of Eve Curie's[505] new book: *Journey among Warriors*. Inevitably and egoistically I turned to the chapter in which she describes her brief visit to Anand Bhawan. I read it through and her references to me pleased me and fed my vanity.[506] That evening I felt more cheerful and light-hearted than usual. How little things make a difference in the dull routine of jail!

x x x x

505. (b. 1904); daughter of Marie Curie; she visited the war fronts in Africa, the Near East, Russia, Iran, China and India and wrote *Journey among Warriors* (1943).

506. "Nehru the patriot was fighting for the liberation of his country; Nehru the socialist was fighting for its modernisation. In fact he was not the champion of one single cause but a chain of causes that he visualised as closely intertwined. One was the emancipation of India. Another was anti-imperialism. A third one was anti-fascism. Last but not the least cause was anti-capitalism and the establishment of a world economy based on Marxian principles."

What is going to happen to India—to the world—to me? Where do we go in this devil dance of ours? Has all this no meaning, or is there some meaning which we cannot grasp? Some lines of Osbert Sitwell,[507] which I have read recently, stick in my mind:

Love of my life, my heart,
Where are we going?
Into what hooded dark
Is the wind blowing?
"Oh, how our footfalls die,
Alone, along the darkness burning!
Can we not turn and fly?"
"No. Time has no turning."

June 17, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of June 5—No. 66. Last evening I had a letter from Amma from Lahore. It took nearly three and a half weeks to reach me. Hindi letters are greatly delayed. Amma says that she intends sending either Rup or Bappi to Bombay at the time of your expected confinement. She is herself much too ill to travel. She asks me what I think of this suggestion. I have no particular views on the subject. It all depends on how you feel about it. If you would like to have either Rup or Bappi near you at the time tell Amma so. If you do not think it is necessary for either of them to take the trouble to come —for it is no pleasure to travel nowadays—then you might suggest this to Amma. But if you feel that Amma is really anxious to send someone I think it might be better to let her have her way. I suppose you know Chand's address—anyway I am giving it: Bharat Mansions, Flat No. 3C, Lahore.

Amma says that news has reached her of my ill-health. Tell her that this is incorrect. I have had no physical and bodily trouble and am keeping fit.

Amma also mentions that Kailas and Sheila with their two babes, Gautam and Dipa, might sail for India some time this month if they get passages. That is a big 'if' and I doubt very much if they will succeed in this for some time to come. The invasion of France has probably upset these passenger services.

507. (1892-1969), English novelist and author

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This invasion is taking place right on the spot where you and I with Mr. Shah[508] spent some days in July 1938. We were staying near Trouville—What was the name of the place? I cannot remember it.

I wrote to you—was it last week?—of the long silences in jail life. Here I have taken on a new job which interferes with the silence and gives some work to the throat. I read out the newspapers daily to Mahmud. His eyes give him a lot of trouble and newspaper reading is particularly painful and tiring for him. As a matter of fact one of his eyes does not function at all—So I decided, many months ago, to give him this relief and let him read books only which are easier for the eyes, unless the type is too small. I do not take kindly to newspapers, though I cannot easily do without them. I want naturally to know what is happening, and yet I resent giving time to reading odd bits of news which I am likely to forget a day or two later. Reading to Mahmud, I have to read not only what interests me but what I think might interest him. So this becomes a longish process and if, by any chance, Churchill has been delivering one of his long rhetorical speeches, I am quite exhausted by the time I have done with it and my throat is slightly hoarse. Anyway this is good practice for the throat or else it might grow rusty from little use.

Mahmud and I share one room. It is a big room but sometimes I think of Virginia Woolf's book: *A Room Of One's Own*[509] and of the advantages of having a room to oneself.

I note what you say about my Hindi publications issued by the Sasta Sahitya Mandal. As for Visva-Bharati and the Bengali edition of the *Letters*, I have read with some wonder and amusement the long extract from their letter which you give. Why is it that we in India are so excessively slow in doing anything? We allow matters to drift, expecting that in course of time something will happen, some solution of our difficulty will automatically appear and we shall be saved the trouble of thinking and acting. Is it that our blood-stream runs slowly in our veins and arteries? I wonder. There is something of course in not wasting energy needlessly and there is enormous waste of this kind in the world today. What a lot of purposeless rushing about there is, a-going backwards and forwards and ultimately remaining where you were.

508. Probably Popatlal Shah, a businessman in Paris.
509. It discusses fiction and stresses the importance of seeing human beings in their relation to each other and in relation to reality. It also advocates women's rights and protests against the discrimination women face.

That is action divorced from thought. But thought divorced from action is equally futile.

These and other reflections occurred to me when I read the Visva-Bharati message. I am not particularly interested in what they do about my little book. I have given them the Bengali copyright free and they have no royalties to pay. It was really a biggish gift for this book has made pots of money for other publishers—not our Bengali friend Das Gupta who sits tight on the few hundred copies he has got and does nothing about them. Several hundred thousand copies of the book have been disposed of in the U.P. & elsewhere. The English original edition was prescribed some years ago by the Calcutta University for the matriculation or some such examination.

Realising that Das Gupta was totally incapable of dealing with the book, either to his own advantage or anyone else's, I gave the Bengali copyright to Visva-Bharati. I made it clear to Krishna Kripalani that they could go ahead with it immediately, if they so chose, without waiting for Das Gupta to dispose of his remaining stock of a few hundred copies. I made this clear to Das Gupta also but I told him that he could continue to sell his own copies so long as they remained with him. He could bring out no new edition. Any person with the least intelligence or energy could have disposed of them to the booksellers within a few days at a reasonable discount. But no; Das Gupta waits for some sign from the heavens, and Visva-Bharati waits for some sign from Das Gupta. So there we are! As the heavens are not interested in making such signs we are likely to wait on and on.

Well, it really does not matter so far as I am concerned for Visva-Bharati have full authority to do what they like. What bores and irritates me is this slackness and passivity and incapacity to get a move on. Is this due to what is called the artistic temperament?

You can tell Visva-Bharati that there is no question of my approving now of their publication. I approved & gave permission long ago. They can suit their convenience. They might inform Das Gupta and suggest to him—for he appears to be a helpless person in this matter—that it might be worthwhile for him to dispose of his entire stock at a suitable discount to a Calcutta bookseller. He (Das Gupta) need not pay me any royalty on this. This will bring cash immediately to him and rid him of the burden. After Visva Bharati have brought out their edition, he will find it almost impossible to sell his higher-priced book. But what Das Gupta does or does not do should not affect Visva-Bharati's action.

Give my love to Nuri and Psyche if she is there—A bottle of honey has reached me—probably the one you sent through Betty—I sent you

personal difficulties might thus arise if Anna had to deal with Ladli Bhai. You should therefore draw upon my account with Bachhraj yourself either monthly or at longer intervals, as you choose, and make payments out of it. It will probably be better for you to draw out a lump sum—say Rs. 500/- at a time and when this is spent to draw out another similar sum. Out of this you can pay Anna and the ayah and meet other expenses of the confinement &c. You have also to spend money on books and other articles sent to me.

I have been sending Betty occasional cheques to meet expenses on my behalf.

About servants' salaries. Khaliq is right when he says that the military are paying much bigger salaries to motor drivers. But I am afraid I cannot compete with the Government of India in this matter. As a matter of fact we do not require a chauffeur at all at present. It is only because Khaliq is an old servant, for whose welfare I consider myself partly responsible, that I keep him on. I do not think it is right to push out old servants simply because we happen to have no present use for them. At the same time I do not want to come in the way of Khaliq's advancement. I shall be glad if he gets on in life. So if he can get better employment elsewhere, I have no objection at all to his taking it. He can always come back to me when he wants to or has no other work. Therefore you can explain this to him and tell him that I am afraid I cannot manage a higher salary for him than 32/- a month at present. He will get this as long as he is with us. He can try to better it elsewhere if he can. I notice that in Ladli Bhai's list he is paid 27/-. This should be increased anyhow to 32/- as I said before. If he chooses to work elsewhere, then of course this stops.

I mentioned Khaliq's daughter to you in a previous letter and suggested that something might be paid for her education occasionally—I think this might be made a regular payment of Rs. 10/- a month. This has nothing to do with Khaliq's remaining with us or not. The amount should be paid even if Khaliq seeks service elsewhere. Indirectly it will be of help to Khaliq's family but it should be clearly stated that it is meant for the girl's education. I do not want this payment of Rs. 10/- a month to be made through Ladli Bhai as this will introduce an element of confusion in his servants' list. I should like you or Feroze to take charge of it and pay Khaliq directly every month or at less frequent intervals. So much for Khaliq & his daughter—I hope I have made myself clear.

As for the rest of the list I have nothing special to say except this that in view of the rise in prices and heavier cost of living whenever it is considered necessary some increments should be made—This requires

no reference to me. I do not want our servants to live in perpetual want or to run up big accounts at the *banias* which they cannot pay off. Nor should we wait for demands from them. The addition of small sums to their salaries or allowances does not make much difference to me but it makes a lot of difference to their lives. Generally speaking, the war has not resulted in any marked increase in wages of unskilled labour, except in some big cities or where war work is being carried on. It has indeed added to the unemployment of casual labour as well as of some classes of domestic servants. Many middle class families who used to keep a number of servants cannot keep them now or have to reduce their number. Hence the market rate of unskilled domestic servants has not risen although prices have gone up tremendously. This puts them in a terrible fix and the alternative to inadequate wages is unemployment. Hence some attention should be paid to prevailing conditions, prices &c. and suitable increments made whenever considered necessary.

Tulsi is not an unskilled worker. He could I suppose command a higher salary elsewhere if he tried for it. It would not be an easy matter for us to get as good a cook at his present salary. I notice that he is not getting any dearness allowance. If, therefore, the question of an increment for him arises, I think it should be favourably considered either in the shape of salary or dearness allowance.

I have not made any specific proposals as it is difficult to do so from here without knowing more about actual conditions. Any change naturally affects other people also. I should therefore like you to put my viewpoint to Ladli Bhai in regard to these monthly salaries and leave it to him to give effect to it whenever he thinks it desirable—No reference to me is necessary for such increments.

About pensions. I am glad Bhola is getting 20/-. If, because of illness, he wants some extra help, you should always give it. But this has nothing to do with his monthly allowance and need not be referred to Ladli Bhai. It will be occasional help.

Abul Hasan is another very old servant—engaged long before I was born—He must be pretty old now. I think his pension should be increased from Rs. 10/- to Rs. 15/-. He has only a few years to live and I should like to give him some comfort in his old age. He has a patch of land also from which he earns something.

Some of the pensioners, it appears, get trivial and rather absurd sums, for instance the old *Bhishti*, Jumna, Behari's mother and Asghar Ali's wife or widow. They are all old and feeble and incapable of work—They should be given something more: thus the *Bhishti*+3=8/-; Jumna +2=9/-; Behari's mother+3=6/-; Ashgar Ali's wife+3=7/-.

These increments in pensions (Abul Hasan's and others) should be included in Ladli Bhai's list.

Wahid's son, I notice, gets Rs. 10/- a month. This was fixed more than ten years ago for his educational expenses. He ought to be earning money now. But the family was a large one and possibly still requires help. Anyway some inquiry might be made. Ask Feroze to inquire from Muzaffar Husain of Allahabad. Muzaffar knows the family well.

I was very glad to learn from your letter that *Puphi's* testamentary affairs have been settled out of court. *Puphi* has so far not written to me about this.

The honey you sent is very good. The best I have had here.

I think I wrote to you that I have received Eve Curie's *Journey among Warriors*. Also Kate Mitchell's *India*. Yesterday I got some books sent by Betty: *The Trial of Mussolini*[513] by Cassius; Tendulkar's *Thirty Months in Russia*[514] in Hindi & Marathi, and L.C. Jain's *Indian Economy during the War*.[515]

You might note down the following books which are worth getting:

1) Leland Stowe's: *They Shall Not Sleep*.
2) Agnes Smedley's latest book about China: *The Battle Hymn of China*.
3) H.J. Laski: *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*.
4) Khwaja Ahmad Abbas: *And One Did Not Come Back*. (Bombay) (About our medical mission to China)

It is quite likely that Abbas will send me his new book. He usually sends them.

I am glad Bapu is progressing. I quite agree with Jivraj and Gilder about the nature cure place. Quite apart from the virtues of nature cure, I could never go to a place which is called a 'Healthatorium'. I visited the place once and was not impressed.

I wrote to *Nani* a few days ago to Lahore.

Love

Your loving
Papu

513. An imaginary trial of Mussolini by a British court and jury. He was found guilty of being an enemy of the human race and a chief criminal responsible for the war.
514. It deals with the social and economic transformation of Russia and describes scenes of Soviet life as observed by the author in 1937.
515. The text of the author's six lectures delivered at the University of Patna in 1942.

June 26, Monday

My blood pressure today 125 Systolic; 83 Diastolic; 42 Pulse pressure.

July 1. 1944

Darling Indu,
I have your letters dated 21st and 22nd June—Nos. 69 & 70. It is extraordinary how casual people are. Jivraj is a methodical and careful person who can be relied upon to do a job he has undertaken. And yet even he seems to have suffered from a lapse. As for Purandare I hardly expected any kind of smartness from him. He is good at his work but his looks and ways of dealing with his patients give little comfort. I hope that you have fixed up everything during your visit to Bombay. I do not know Shirodkar[516] — never heard of him. That of course is not against him for my knowledge and experience of the world of doctors and surgeons is strictly limited. Obviously in a city like Bombay there must be many competent gynaecologists. Purandare is good and experienced but he is not the only one. The main thing to do is to fix up definitely with someone and have the assurance that you can refer to him whenever necessary.

It certainly will not be right for you to return to Allahabad for the confinement. Not that I think badly of the facilities available in Allahabad. But obviously Bombay offers many additional facilities and it is safer to be near these. You have already spent some months round about there and it is worthwhile continuing for another two months or so. There is really nothing to worry about. Your present health is excellent and this is the basic factor. For the rest one should take every precaution during these months and not worry. It is Purandare's casualness that must be irritating. If something definite is fixed up then you simply carry on normally and almost forget about doctors. During the seventh month some extra care is usually called for. Do not worry about the extra expense. Often that saves trouble and expense later.

I was amused to learn that Raja had entrusted himself to Bapu's care and treatment. I am not particularly enamoured of his methods of treatment and yet there is much in them especially for an asthmatic case like Raja's. I am firmly convinced that one's health depends on

516. Dr. V.N. Shirodkar (1899 1971); a well known obstetrician and gynaecologist of Bombay; Professor of the Grant Medical College, Bombay, 1935-55.

one's way of living, food, exercise, mental occupations &c. far more than on medicine, though medicine is certainly useful occasionally. Bombay flat life is far removed from any natural life—it is cut off from nature, fresh air and exercise—& there is a tendency to lounge about. But then, as you say, Raja is so used to this existence in a Bombay flat that he feels bored elsewhere. The change ought to do him good if he can stand it.

I should like to have news of Rafi Ahmad[517] and Raghunandan Saran. Both have been ill for a long time. Could you ask Feroze to find out?

Mahmud's son, Said, has been unwell for some time and some lung trouble is suspected. He has recently gone to Bhowali though whether he will stay there or not for any length of time I do not know. I can understand Hamida not answering your letter for she must feel shy about writing in English. As a matter of fact she can write rather broken and incorrect English. Said has been eager to get Hogben's book—*Mathematics for the Million*—and ever since he has heard that I am having it sent to him, he has repeatedly enquired about it. I am therefore surprised at his not answering your letter. Perhaps there was some delay in the letter reaching him. I think you might send the book to him to the Chapra address, that is if it is convenient for you. If the book is lying about somewhere in Allahabad and you cannot easily reach it, then do not trouble yourself over it. Better give a full address: Said-ur-Rahman, Dr. Syed Mahmud's house, Haque Manzil, Chapra, B.N.W. Ry.—Bihar.

It will be a good thing if you can get that very wonderful nurse and midwife whom Aryanayakam[518] recommends. He is a fairly good judge.

I have glanced through Eve Curie's book—read about 50 pages at the beginning and the chapter about her visit to Anand Bhawan. I rather liked it and am going to carry on with it. It is of course just good reporting but that reporting is done well. She writes smoothly and has the knack of observing little things which help to make a picture vivid. Being a reporter's account the book is likely to date. Perhaps I like the book because I rather liked her and then she has so many nice things to say about me! The personal touch counts.

I am surprised at your asking me how I get my foreign periodicals. I was under the impression that they were all sent to Anand Bhawan

517. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai was arrested on 12 May 1942 under the D.I.R. and had since been kept in the Bareilly Central Prison.

518. E.W. Aryanayakam, of Sri Lanka, was secretary to Rabindranath Tagore for some time and later an associate of Mahatma Gandhi; worked in the Hindustani Talimi Sangh at Wardha; died in 1968.

and then forwarded, *via* the Bombay Secretariat, to me. I cannot tell how they come as they reach me without their covers. Once a *Reader's Digest* arrived with a cover and I was a little surprised to notice that it was addressed to me C/o Home Department, Government of Bombay. I wondered how the *Reader's Digest* people got hold of this address. Probably, I thought, Walsh had given it. Walsh has fixed up with all these American periodicals on my behalf. That is convenient for me as he can pay the subscriptions out of my royalties, if he has any. It is possible that he has given the Bombay Govt.'s address to all of them. I am getting quite a number, though many numbers are missing, and I do not get them in proper order. I have been getting *Life, Time, Foreign Affairs, Pacific Affairs, Asia* (odd numbers), *Reader's Digest, Nation, New Republic, Amerasia.* There are also other odd papers which come to me without my having subscribed to them—such as *The Jewish Frontier.* I have never read so many American periodicals more or less regularly before, because I could not afford the time.

Does Feroze get *Fortune* and do you get another copy of *Asia?*

The three books you mention—one sent by Pan for me—might be forwarded to me.

I have been reading in the English papers references to the books of L. H. Myers[519] who died recently. Two of his books are especially commended. These are novels dealing with Akbar's time in India. That is an interesting period and I should like to read these books. Probably you will not be able to get them—they were published originally round about 1940 & 1941. However I am giving these names for you to note them:

L. H. Myers	:	*The Root and the Flower*
—Do—	:	*The Pool of Vishnu*

Bombay has no doubt larger and better bookshops than other places but Poona has a place—The International Book Depot, or some such name—which often keeps books not available elsewhere.

I think you are right in not encouraging Rupa or Bappi to come for your confinement. That would mean trouble for them and no advantage to you.

519. (1881-1944); a philosophical novelist. *The Root and the Flower* deals with the corruption of the worldly and the false intellectual and *The Pool of Vishnu* contends that in every man there is a will to spiritual life and a touch of honesty in his motives.

We have had some rain again after a long gap.
Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 68.

4.7.1944[520]

Darling Betty,
Indu writes to me that Raja and you are taking the children to the Gwalior School and will probably go to Delhi from there. I don't exactly know where you are going and perhaps this letter will miss you. I think you have decided wisely about the children. Both for their health and mental development the companionship of other children, the discipline of school life, and plenty of open air and games will be good, I wish I could see Harsha and Ajit now. They must have grown and changed so much during the last two years. Give them my love and tell them that when I come back I am looking forward to seeing them bright and healthy and strong.

I was amused to learn that Raja has put himself under Bapu's treatment or rather his general direction about the nature-cure method. That was a brave step to take but it was a wise one for Raja. I am not exactly a faddist about nature-cure and I certainly do not advise many of those who carry these methods to extreme limits. But I do believe in allowing natural methods full play and putting one's body in tune with nature, in so far as this can be done in present circumstances. Our lives tend to grow more and more artificial and many of our ailments are due to our manner of living. Obviously we cannot go back to the jungle or the field but we can try to make some adjustments which help in restoring our bodily equilibrium. I imagine a course of nature-cure treatment will do good to Raja. It will be boring but it should not be difficult for Raja to stick to it for some weeks. Asthma ought to be peculiarly susceptible to this treatment.

I have received a number of books, some from you and some from Indu. I can't make out which ones were sent by you and which came

520. File No: 3590/H/II-2, Maharashtra Government Records; Police Commissioner's Office.

from Indu, as they all reach me in a mixed bundle. Probably the following came from you:—

Eve Curie : *Journey among Warriors*
Kate Mitchell : *India*
The Trial of Mussolini by Cassius
Tendulkar's book on Russia in Marathi and Hindi
L. C. Jain—*Indian Economy during the War*

Thank you for sending them—I have not been reading much lately, that is books. Foreign periodicals come in large numbers now and they take up a good deal of time. Also I have been doing some writing work. 50 books have accumulated. I shall go back to them soon.

Are you going to Delhi? You will meet many of our friends there. Give them my love.

I am anxious to know how Raghunandan Saran is getting on. He has been ill for some years now and this business of having a weak heart or whatever it is, is very loathsome and persistent. I do not know where Nandan is but I suppose he is in Delhi.

June was a dry month here, more or less. There has been some rain during the last few days.

Love to you and Raja. I hope you are keeping well.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

July 5. Wednesday

We have now read most of the correspondence that passed between Bapu and the Govt. Not quite all yet as the newspapers have not given everything. A full cyclostyled record has reached Vallabhbhai but I have not read it so far. My first impressions confirmed. Generally a feeling of satisfaction but mixed with occasional irritation—Why should it be necessary to have to explain what he said and wrote previously—and at such great length? Because of nonviolence and the metaphysical aspects of satyagraha, a certain almost theological element of casuistry creeps in sometimes.

But this approach apart, Bapu has done a good job and he had laboured hard at it. He has cleared many cobwebs and explained his own thinking and action. In that thinking there is that inevitable tug-of-war between moral considerations and practical problems, and occasionally there is a contradiction which cannot be resolved, at least by me.

But such contradictions are, I suppose, inherent in life's problems. What appears odd to us is his manner of approach.

Suppose he had been as explicit in 1942 as he is now—what a lot of difference this might have made! Not that he has said anything new. Much of all this he had told us previously but the public did not know it. It is after all a question of emphasis.

By this correspondence and his last letter[521] to Wavell, he has made it very clear how anxious he is to have a settlement, and yet he has stuck to his fundamentals. Wavell's refusal to meet him is now so obviously wrong from any point of view except the imperialist one of crushing Congress, that reactions in India & abroad are bound to be against it.

The position is that the Congress has been cleared of many false charges and the basic conflict between nationalism & imperialism has been brought to the surface. That cannot be resolved just yet and practical solutions are hardly possible now.

We carry on in our respective prisons and detention camps. Probably the next three weeks will clear up the situation even more and Bapu may be back in prison—Yet somehow I cannot see this kind of thing continuing for long.

Yesterday my weight was 130 lbs. I have been going up slowly—Incidentally yesterday's weighment was the hundredth since we came here—.

I am carrying on with my writing work. Have reached the Mutiny period—p. 558 of the MSS. I fear this is growing longer than it should. I wanted it to be more concise. It seems that I shall reach p. 750 or so before I end it here—and then I might add to it on discharge.

July 8, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have had no letter from you since I wrote last, but that was almost expected as you had gone to Bombay. I hope everything was fixed up satisfactorily there.

521. Dated 9 April 1943, it stated: "... in dealing with Congressmen and others, the Government have combined the prosecutor, judge and jailor in the same person and this made proper defence impossible on the part of the accused... India today is one vast prison containing four hundred million souls. You are its sole custodian. The Government prisons are prisons within this prison. Unless there is a change of heart, view, and policy on the part of the Government I am quite content to remain your prisoner."

Tomorrow is a kind of special day for us here. We complete one hundred weeks—700 days—and incidentally twenty three months. It so happens that is Sunday also, the day we arrived here. These round figures somehow fix special and red-letter days, although they have no particular importance, for every day is more or less alike.

We have a little rain occasionally, not much, but enough to keep us cool. There has been a lack of rain this season. I hope this does not apply to other parts of the country, for bad crops would mean a terrible addition to starvation and misery.

There are some books which I want to return but they are not likely to interest you—for instance Mullick's book on philosophy. Instead of sending them to you it would be better if they were sent direct to Anand Bhawan. Who shall I address them to? Feroze or Ladli Bhai?

Puphi has sent me photographs of Chand and Tara and Betty has sent pictures of Harsha and Ajit. They are all good.

This letter is a brief one for a change, and for this relief you will no doubt feel grateful It is my No. 69.

Love

From your loving
Papu

July 14. Friday

All manner of dramatic developments have taken place. Gandhiji of course being at the back of them. First came the Rajaji-Jinnah correspondence[522]—a stunner, and then Bapu's long statement to the *News Chronicle* correspondent.[523]

What have been the reactions of all this on me and on others here? They vary; Maulana has been feeling depressed and annoyed, others

522. In this correspondence published on 10 July 1944, Rajagopalachari put forward a formula that if the Muslim League endorsed the demand for independence and cooperated with the Congress in forming a provisional government during the war, the Congress would agree to a future plan according to which the Muslim majority areas could be demarcated through a plebiscite.

523. On 9 July 1944, Mahatma Gandhi said that he had "no intention of offering civil disobedience today," because that would "embarrass the British Government"; he would be satisfied with a national government in full control of the civil administration "and was interested in seeing the Viceroy with a view to help and not hinder Allied war efforts."

also, or some of them, are put out to some extent, though not much. Some are in the habit of accepting everything that Bapu says or does.

As for me, I liked the bold way in which Bapu has approached both these problems. I dislike his indirect manner; I dislike also some of the details suggested and agreed to by him. On the whole, however, I have not felt any depression as I usually do when things go wrong. Perhaps it is just relief at something having been done to break up the impasse which tied us all up.

Analysing both the proposals on the merits there is nothing basic that I find myself in disagreement with, though I do wish much had been put differently. Anyway, I have been singularly little stirred by these developments. Somehow everything seems small in comparison with the big things to come.

An inevitable thought was : Does this mean an early release for us? This perturbed me. I do not want to go out with my book unfinished. I want another month, preferably six weeks. I am almost sure we shall be here for much longer than this—But still one never knows and so I am giving more time to writing—I have been just three months and a day over it—have written 648 manuscript pages. I am likely to write another 150 pages.

x x x x

Today we all received a fresh order from Govt. confirming our detention. This because six months since the last order ended today, or was it yesterday?

July 15, 1944

Darling Indu,

Yesterday I received your letter No. 71 of the 9th July from Bombay. I hope this letter of mine will reach you in Poona before you leave for Bombay again on the 19th.

Yes, I had news of you from the *Puphis*. I am glad you have fixed up with Shirodkar. As a matter of fact I had come to the conclusion some time ago that Purandare was not satisfactory—not because of the lack of competence for he knows his job, but because of his sloppiness and casualness. I dislike this kind of thing greatly. Perhaps also he is too old to be smart. I did not write this to you as I did not want to interfere with arrangements already made. Now that you have made

new arrangements with Shirodkar I feel much more at ease. It is not clear from your letter whether you propose to return to Poona after each visit to Shirodkar.

I wrote to *Puphi* (the elder one) day before yesterday and, would you believe it?, I dated my letter 20th July instead of the 13th. And this after consulting the calendar! I remembered that it was Thursday and just skipped a week. This shows how one loses the sense of time in prison. A mistake of a day is frequent enough and normal, but a whole week is very unusual. It can only mean either absorption in work or an approach to dotage.

Another instance. I apply oil rarely to my head—usually about once a fortnight. The other day, in an attempt to do so, I put on a fair quantity of undiluted Dettol to the head! It was only after a little while that I discovered something was wrong. Again, later I reversed the process and put some oil in a tumbler of water for the purpose of gargling! Pretty bad, isn't it? Though not quite as bad as it looks for I keep the two in very small nnlabelled phials and a mistake is possible. Still I was put out by this succession of lapses. I remembered reading in an American magazine recently about a chaplain who began to forget little things he had to do. He could not remember the number of the prescribed hymn in chapel; he forgot some engagements. Thinking that he might be suffering from overstrain, he consulted his doctor. There was apparently nothing wrong. However the investigation proceeded, various X-ray photographs were taken, and a faint shadow or some other indication was noticed in the region of the brain. It was decided to operate and the beginnings of a small tumour were removed. He recovered rapidly and got back his memory; there were no further lapses.

All this does not mean that I am suffering from a softening of the brain or any other ailment. I think my mind and brain are in very good condition, and as for my body it is as fit as it has ever been. I continue my exercises & especially the *asans* and breathing ones. I am convinced that, short of accidents and deep mental shock, physical health can be maintained by anyone who cares to do so and has some sense and knowledge of the body.

Some days ago I received three bottles of Mahabaleshwar honey either from you or from Betty. It looks good and is rather swanky as each bottle bears the name of a different flower—rose, *akara, pangla*. What is the *akara* and the *pangla*? I do not know them. But I had a shock when I noticed the price marked on one of the bottles. This is Rs. 7/4 and the bottle is a small one, not containing more than 1¼ lb. It is scandalous paying so much for honey, especially in these days. Please do

not send any more at this or like price. Tell Betty also. Anyway this honey will last us a long time as we use it with all due care and reverence.

I am sorry Raja had a relapse. This combination of asthma and other ailments is very troublesome. A course of treatment that may do good to one of them, may at the same time be injurious to the other. The only thing to do is build up bodily resistance. Even that is made difficult by repeated attacks of asthma.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 70.

July 22, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter No. 72 dated 15th July from Poona. I suppose you have paid your second visit to Shirodkar in Bombay and returned to Poona—Hence this letter goes to Poona—I intend sending you a few books on Monday next. Among these there will be two or three of Betty's which you can return to her. They bear her name.

The six new books that you have sent have not yet reached me—I suppose they will come in the ordinary course. Meanwhile, a bundle of Communist literature has been sent to me by Puran Chand Joshi. There are two or three books and a large number of pamphlets—some published in Moscow, some in Bombay. They deal mostly with the war in Russia. Will you convey my thanks to Joshi if you can get in touch with him. Altogether I have received 21 books and pamphlets from him.

Mention of books reminds me that August 18th is *bari Puphi's* birthday. I should like you to choose a number of good books as a birthday gift to her on my behalf. Of course if you can choose a more suitable present for her, do so by all means. My mind runs to books only.

I like de la Mare's poem which you have sent me. Amazingly musical he is and imaginative, living on the borderland of fact and fantasy, with a secret nostalgic longing for some elusive feeling or emotion. I like him not only because of his good writing but also because he

evokes sympathetic responses in me. I feel in tune with him and his mood—and that, I suppose, is as good a test as any of successful writing. His lines linger in the memory and often take one out of the present into a world of imaginative existence.

I know Barbara Hartland quite well—that is to say I have seen her many times during the past seven or eight years. She used to work in the Friends' Hospital in Itarsi and whenever I passed through Itarsi, and that was pretty often, she was almost always at the station to meet me. I did not send her any previous intimation of my passing through, but she managed to find out about it. When going to Wardha we had to change at Itarsi and spend some hours there. Someone from the station usually went and informed the Friends' Hospital people and Barbara and sometimes others also trouped up at the station. On several occasions I went and had a bath and a meal at their house. She is a very earnest, enthusiastic kind of person, as Quakers often are, and a hard worker I think you have decided rightly in not asking her to leave her present work. To run a children's home in Bengal is just the kind of work she will do well and it would be a pity to draw her away

I suppose you saw the eclipse of the sun last Thursday. It was a bad day, cloudy and with an occasional drizzle of rain. But we managed to have many glimpses of the crescent sun looking like a two-day-old moon. At least 90% or possibly even 95% of the sun's disc was covered at the height of the eclipse. Because of the clouds there was no sudden darkening as usually occurs during such eclipses, leading to much consternation among the birds. I remember almost a total eclipse which I saw when I was a small boy—probably 11 or 12 years old. The total eclipse took place some distance away from Allahabad, at Buxar in Behar, and many scientists and astronomers went there from all parts of the world. Such a total eclipse lasts only a second or two but that fraction of time is rather unique, for the whole disc of the sun is covered and some kind of rays and emanations emerge from the edges. Einstein's theory of the curvature of light rays, mathematically arrived at, was confirmed by observation and photographs of a total eclipse of the sun. This took place in Java I think. Sometimes, it so happens, that all the big astronomers foregather at the appointed place, ready with their instruments and special cameras, all tensely waiting for that mystic second, and then a cloud floats by and covers the sun and the moon and makes observation impossible. Rather like those tensely expected moments in life when we hope for so much, and then the moment comes and passes and life has eluded us again. The gods laugh making fun of the petty hopes and ambitions of poor mortals.

I presume now with the development of aircraft and helicopters, it should be possible to overcome this disability of clouds screening the sun at the right moment.

One rather odd and unexpected thing we saw during the eclipse. This was a huge, faintly rainbow-like halo round the sun, making a perfect circle. I suppose this effect was due to the rain-laden clouds.

The Chinese tea you have sent will be welcome. It is a pleasant change and a diversion for us with its golden colour and soothing aroma and faint but delightful taste. Over a year ago *bari Puphi* sent me a large packet which had come from China. We used it sparingly, once a week on a specially appointed day, after dinner and made it last nearly a year. It brought us memories of other places and other days.

I am glad Bul is out and is looking well and as smart as ever. Give her my love. Why has Mridu not profited by her stay in Kashmir? I think she worries too much.

Our garden has been neglected for many months; chiefly my fault as my mind turned to other things. We have now put in a number of seedlings suitable for the rainy season. Probably by the end of August they will flower.

Love

Your loving
Papu

I am returning the dividend warrant for Rs. 40/- after endorsement. You can send this on to Bachhraj.

This is my letter No. 71.

P

26.7.1944

Darling Betty,

I have had two letters from you since I wrote last. They are dated 3rd and 14th July, the latter from New Delhi. Meanwhile, Raja and you have been to Gwalior and put the boys at school there. The first few days after you left them must have been hard for you and them. And yet, if the school is of the right sort, they will soon adapt themselves to their new surroundings and get used to a wider cooperative life than they could have in the pleasanter but more restricted life of home.

Children adapt themselves easily, it is only grown-ups who find some difficulty in doing so. For a sensitive boy like Harsha the change, though harder to begin with, is perhaps more beneficial. For otherwise the real change from homelife, which comes inevitably at a later stage, is more difficult to bear. So many of our children, used to homelife only, become rather unfitted for the rough and tumble of the world and have to suffer for this. Education must provide a gradual transition to wider spheres of activity and new experiences. Intellectual training, important enough, cannot take the place of this growth through personal experience of others. There is another advantage. Home then becomes a place to look forward to, a sanctum where one can retire from time to time, and not merely a normal background which one takes for granted. The alternation of home and school helps to create a balance, one setting off the other.

I was happy to get the brief letters from Harsha and Ajit. I would write to them myself but each such letter counts and we may write only two a week. So, for the present, I am not writing but I may do so later. Tell them that I liked their letters and am pleased that they are at the Gwalior School. Tell them also that I went to school far away from home, so far that I could not even come back home during my holidays. I met many new people in school, made friends and learnt to look after myself. I became healthy and strong of body and that is why I keep well now. They must also become strong and healthy and know how to look after themselves and others. It is nearly two years since I have seen them and when we meet next they will have to tell me about their school life, what they do there, what games they play, what friends they have made. And then I shall tell them of my school days.

Harsha's and Ajit's photographs reached me some time ago. They are good and each brings out the nature of the boy. Harsha is pensive, introspective; Ajit a bit of an extrovert, as boys should be, and full of self-confidence.

Now that the boys have gone to school, what have you done with Agnes?[524]

Harsha, in his letter, says that in December "we might go to Agra or Kashmir"! Is this just a slip of the pen or have you actually thought of going to Kashmir in winter? It is lovely there always and I like winter and snow. But I cannot imagine Raja enjoying himself in a temperature below zero.

524. A nurse.

Indu, I suppose, is in Bombay now and staying on there. My last letter to her was addressed to Poona. A parcel of books, containing some of yours and Raja's, was sent to her care of you.

I was glad to have news of Badshah Khan, Khan Sahib and Yunus. Send my love to Yunus when you write to him.

Love to you and Raja.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

July 29, 1944

Darling Indu,

My last letter was sent to the Poona address. After I had despatched it I got yours of the 19th July — No. 73 — in which you say that you intended staying on in Bombay.

I have received the following books from you:

1 *Mathematical Recreations* by M. Kraitchik
2 Hogben : *Interglossa*
3 Nym Wales : *New China*
4 Osbert Lancaster : *More Pocket Cartoons*
5 *Beatrice the Ballerina*
6 *New Kashmir*
7 *Correspondence with Mr. Gandhi* (Govt. publication)

and I have sent you to Bombay:

1 Carl Crow : *The Story of Confucius*
2 Croce : *History as the Story of Liberty*
3 Mullick : *The Real & the Negative*
4 –Do– : *The Individual & the Group*
5 Thompson : *The Making of the Indian Princes*
6 Burchett : *Wingate's Phantom Army*
7 Koestler : *Arrival & Departure*
8 Brock : *The Mountains Wait*
9 Ilya Ehrenburg : *Russia at War*
10 Karaka : *Chungking Diary*
11 –Do– : *We Never Die*
12 *Colour Bar*
13 Beverly Nichols : *The Living & the Dead*
14 Mead & Chattopadhyaya : *The Upanishads*

15 Gibran : *The Prophet*
16 Agarwala : *Hindu-Muslim Riots*
17 Tendulkar : रस मे ३० महीने. In Hindi
18 *Merchant Seamen and the War*: I.L.O.

And I.L.O. Review—*Visva Bharati* & other periodicals &c. A separate bundle of periodicals has also been sent. The following further books &c. are now being sent :

19 Louis Fischer : *A Week with Gandhi*
20 Eve Curie : *Journey among Warriors*
21 *Beatrice the Ballerina*
22 Lancaster : *More Pocket Cartoons*
23 Kate Mitchell : *India*
24 *Mudra-Rakshasa*

And *Hindusthan Quarterly* & *Visva-Bharati*.

I liked the two books of cartoons. Several of these books are Betty's —Please return them to her.

Eve Curie's book was not so good as I expected it to be. It is diffused and too much of day-to-day reporting. But it makes interesting reading, especially the part dealing with Russia. *Wingate's Phantom Army* has a brief reference towards the end to Moti Kathju. He died just when they were on the point of reaching India on their way back.

I decided, not without an effort, to read Karaka's books. How astonishingly silly he is. His ideas about most things are peculiar but his knowledge of Indian conditions is fantastic. He means well I suppose and so I am prepared to take an indulgent view, but why write when there is such awful emptiness in the mind and ignorance of subject? Probably he would be in his element if he wrote about Bombay racing or nightclubs.

If you want to give an average person a headache commend to him Benedetto Croce's book. It is full of learning and thought and makes the reader think also. But what a jumble of semi metaphysical speculations and ideas about history—after condemning metaphysics and the like. I am glad I read it but it was no easy journey.

You are right about our changing views of age. These really derive from an important psychological truth. We are always apt to make ourselves the measure of things— almost all things. As individuals we judge others by our own standards—physical, mental, moral. If we are tall, others appear short and stumpy. If we succeed in life we are likely to consider those who do not as fools or inefficients. Nationally, we are equally apt to consider our country as the standard of measurement and other countries appear odd and foolish. Our religion, our philosophy, our ways of life—everything seems natural and in the

proper order of things because we have been used to them from our childhood. In the old days, when communications were very limited, this exclusiveness was much more marked and there was a strong tendency to consider all foreigners as barbarians because their ways were different. The Chinese, the old Indians, the Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Iranians always referred to foreigners as barbarians, as people living outside the pale of real civilization. Now that process has been reversed and the Europeans and Americans, because of their obvious material progress, are convinced that they are the elect and others are backward races, decadent or rather primitive. Within the European group, each country considers itself the chosen one and the others not so favoured. Travel and contacts with other countries and peoples help a little to get over this narrowness, but not much, for each individual and group has an amazing capacity to live in its own shell, and the barriers of the mind are much harder to get over physical differences. And so we are all apt to spot the mote in the other's eye and ignore the beam in our own.

I was amused to read about the मूर्ति. It will be welcome in Anand Bhawan and can sit on its old perch in the peepal tree for as long as it likes. The tree itself is a very old one and shows definite signs of age, but it will anyway survive all of us.

I had a note two days ago from *Puphi* from Calcutta. The news she gave me about Mehr Taj's engagement shocked me. I had read about this—or was it her marriage?—in some newspaper but I knew nothing about the other party. Vaguely the name was familiar and I thought he might be Yunus's elder brother,[525] one of them. It struck me then that, if so, there must be a considerable difference in age between the two. Also that it was hardly likely that he was still a bachelor; perhaps he was a widower. But all this was guesswork and I knew nothing about it for certain. I did not like it as I felt sure that Mehr Taj would probably not fit in. Anyway it was no business of mine. Now *Puphi* writes that she has heard from some common friend that Mehr Taj's fiance is 55 years old and is already married. Whether he belongs to Yunus's family or not, she does not say. This information, if true, does make matters much worse and I am greatly put out. *Puphi* is much agitated and has written to Ghani and others.

You asked me about our garden. I must tell you about an entirely private affair of my own—a kind of window decoration. This is not a window-box, but a creeper growing out of a bottle. I do not know

525. Yahya Khan who settled in Pakistan after the partition of India.

the name of the creeper. It has green leaves with yellowish white patches. No flowers so far. It grows at the rate of about a foot a month. I have had it now for over six months and it goes right across my window and back again, trained along thin pieces of string. It is a delightful decoration for a window. At first the leaves were small and the growth rather slow. Then I started adding a fertiliser-tablet to the water in the bottle and immediately the leaves doubled in size and developed a richer colour. Three or four-inch-long aerial roots are now coming out. I change the water of the bottle once a week.

Here are the names of two books which you might note down for purchase when they are available:

Indigo[526] by Christine Weston (Collins, London 10/6). This is a novel about India.

The Mirror of the Past[527] by K. Zilliacus (Gollancz 7/6).

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 72.

August 5, 1944 Saturday

Three weeks since I wrote last in this journal. Three weeks of growing perturbation and mental distress. I wrote then that I was not put out at all by various developments and the two proposals Bapu had made, though I disagreed with much that he had said and the manner of saying and doing. Well, I take all that back. I am very much put out, angered and out of temper. The floods of statements, interviews,

526 The book gives an account of how the son of a French indigo planter and his two friends—the son of an Indian barrister and the son of a British army officer—who met in the "innocence and generosity of childhood" and were drawn into different paths of life, moved in increasing misunderstanding at cross purposes. The story brings out the clash of western and eastern ideas in India.

527. *The Mirror of the Past Let it Reflect the Future.* The book seeks to show from the history of the foreign policy of the great powers, especially Britain, from 1900 to 1930, the danger of international anarchy and to stress the need for a world government.

That very expensive honey you sent is not particularly good. The previous consignment, which you yourself extracted from the comb, was far better.

So you did not see the eclipse of the sun. You did not miss much, and yet one likes to see these unusual occurrences and they become landmarks in the dull routine of our lives. I do not believe in most taboos, certainly not in those associated with eclipses, and my own tendency is to break them—But if one feels that way it is best to avoid doing anything which is associated in our minds with ill-luck. Betty, or Chitti as you call her, seems to attach considerable importance to taboos. I should have thought that there was so much misfortune and ill-luck in the world that anything that we might or might not do would make little difference. The world certainly will not be affected, but it is true that we ourselves might be affected by our own beliefs and apprehensions.

I am sorry you are having difficulty in obtaining the most ordinary necessities. It is scandalous that you should have to pay Rs. 35/- for the nipples for a baby's feeding bottle. The black market, I suppose, is a symbol of much that is black and dark and gloomy.

It seems rather absurd to try to control prices in such a way so as to drive those articles from the open market and force a person either to do without them or to pay outrageous prices for them. I see in the newspapers huge long lists of articles with their controlled prices marked opposite their names. I suppose that means that those articles have disappeared and lie somewhere hidden for secret sale. What is the black market? The same persons, I presume, who sell goods in public.

I hope you will remember to send a birthday gift on my behalf to *bari Puphi* for August 18th.

After your confinement if all goes well, as I am sure it will, how long will you have to stay in Bombay? I suppose about three or four weeks. Bombay has horrid weather in October and the sooner you get out of the place the better. Allahabad will be delightful then.

I was glad to have news of Rafi. I am very fond of him and admire him in many ways—

I am at present reading, for the second time, Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. I read it first I think about twenty years ago. It is a mighty book both in size and content. War and Peace—war, one can understand though one may regret it, peace one hopes for and dreams about. But this world and all of us seem to drift into a strange condition which is neither war nor peace—a kind of unreal existence in an unreal world. It reminds me of the story of Trishanku in old Indian mythology. Trishanku having become very powerful wanted to storm the citadel of the gods. The gods, as is their way, got frightened and were unable

to check him. So they went to higher powers and sought their help. The result was that they succeeded in stopping Trishanku but could not wholly defeat him or send him back. So old Trishanku hung between heaven and earth, and there I suppose he is still suspended.

Love

Your loving
Papu

August 12, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter No. 75 of August 2nd.

Since writing to you last week we have celebrated the second anniversary of our arrival here. Two years! A big part of one's life concentrated in one place—the same people, the same surroundings, the same routine.

Gradually one fits into it and all that has happened previously becomes a distant memory, rather unreal, a vague stretch with a number of prominent landmarks. There is a sensation of seeing things in a dream, but which is the dream, the present or the past, one does not quite know. For the present also has a certain dream-like quality, an absence of sharp outlines, something that one cannot fully grasp. This present will also fade away some day and then the other dream will become the reality of the moment. So we live two lives like those who have developed split personalities and jump from one life to another. When the next jump comes for me I shall take sometime to wake up to the new life.

We had the Chinese tea you sent us as part of our celebration. It was different from the previous lot which *Puphi* had sent last year and not so good. That had been chrysanthemum tea and we had got used to its gentle flavour and soothing effect. I suppose this present lot is the usual kind of Chinese tea—You need not send any more of it for the present tin will last sometime.

This is your last month and I suppose you will find it a little trying and your mind will be in a state of expectation. It is curious how the most normal and ordinary processes of life are so full of mystery. So many things happen daily which we take for granted and which are yet very odd when we start thinking about them. Each individual is a mysterious person living in a private universe of his own, different from the world other people live in. Is it ever possible for one person ever

truly to understand another? But few people ever worry themselves about such everyday matters and everyone thinks that his world is the only possible world and all others are deviations due to cussedness, knavery or just simple ignorance—And yet when we come face to face with the beginning of a life or the ending of one, suddenly we find ourselves peering into the dark unknown—How little we really know? Death too for all its effect passes and becomes a memory. But new life is an amazing, fascinating thing, full of the wonder of existence, of change and growth, and so always the process of giving birth to anything vital has been the most tremendous fact of existence in this world, for because of that the world continues in spite of the hateful instincts of man. The pain that sometimes accompanies it becomes trivial in comparison with the supreme satisfaction of creation.

I read in some newspaper that Feroze was going to Bombay and intends staying there for a month or more. I am glad he is there.

If Bappi is coming to Bombay well and good. In a practical sense she can be of no help. But I knew that *Nani* would not be happy unless she came herself or sent someone. So it is as well that Bappi is coming—

I have already written to you the names of the books received by me which you had sent. In referring back to one of your previous letters, I find that one book you sent has not reached me—This is Ahmad Abbas's *And One Did Not Come Back*.[533] Probably it was held up by the censor. I am merely mentioning this to you so that you can get back the book from the Bombay Secretariat.

I have not read the *Mission to Moscow*[534]—But do not trouble to send any more books just yet. I have plenty to carry on with.

I was amused to learn of the banning of the Hebrew translation of the *Auto* in Palestine. Weak nerves evidently are not confined to India.

I have noted the U.P. Govt.'s reply to the inquiry about the surplus money derived from the sale of *Letters* to school students. Rs. 3000 in two years or so means less than 1500/- a year—Probably the amount does not exceed 1000/- a year, or it may be even less. Not much planning is required for this small sum. But these governments move slowly. It is four years now since this arrangement was agreed to and

533. It recounted the story of the five Indian doctors who worked with the Eighth Route Army. The "one who did not come back" was Dr. Dwarkanath Kotnis, who died on 9 December 1942.

534. *Mission to Moscow* by Joseph E. Davies, who was American Ambassador at Moscow (1936-38); it consists of his confidential despatches to Roosevelt and the State Department, supplemented by extracts from diary entries and correspondence both official and personal.

the money has not even been fully realized, much less utilized. Perhaps they had forgotten all about it and your letter came as a reminder. That was why I asked you to write to them. I would prefer substantial help being given to two or three young students rather than very petty sums being distributed among a larger number. However you need take no further steps in the matter.

I hope your search for an ayah will succeed. It will be a nuisance if you cannot find a suitable one—

This is my letter No. 74.

Love to you and Feroze—

Your loving
Papu

I am sending you a bundle of periodicals. *Foreign Affairs, Pacific Affairs—2 Asia, Life* &c.

I have just received your letter of August 7th. Do not worry about rumours—

P

15-8-1944

Darling Bets,

Your letter of the 4th August came a week ago with the two *rakhis*. It is always a delight to get the *rakhi* from you. *Raksha Bandhan* is one of our pleasing festivals which brings not only personal but also historical memories. It is symbolic of so much. Apparently it is not observed to any great extent in Bombay—not nearly as much as in the U.P.

Mahmud was happy to get the *rakhi*. These personal attentions cheer him up tremendously.

I am very glad Raja is feeling much better now.

Send my love to Harsha and Ajit and tell them to write to me all about their school. I read their little articles in the copy of the *Pushpa* you sent me.

I have not read *For Whom the Bell Tolls*,[535] though I have read much about it. I should like to read it. For the present, however, perhaps you had better not send it as I have accumulated a large number of books.

535 A novel about the Spanish Civil War by Ernest Hemingway, (1899 1961).

Indu writes to say that there are all manner of rumours about us. Of course, people will indulge in these usually unintelligent queries about what might happen. The best thing to do is to ignore them completely and carry on as if they did not exist. Otherwise they merely disturb the mind. Love to Raja and you.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

THIRD YEAR

August 16, 1944 Thursday

A week ago we completed two years here. Indu writes that there are all manner of rumours concerning us—that we are going to be released or transferred; that Pantji & I are likely to be sent to Dehra Dun. I suppose some time or other we are likely to be released—Not just yet.

x x x x

Meanwhile, there is a lot of fuss and shouting going on about the coming Gandhi-Jinnah meeting[536] on the 19th or 20th August. My mind is full of apprehension though at the same time I can forget about outside happenings to some extent. But what a situation to face when we go out. What a lot India will have to go through before she finds her feet.

x x x x

I carry on with my writing gradually approaching the end of it. Yet as I approach it, the end recedes—My original estimate of 700 MSS pages was passed long ago and now I have passed 850! However I have reached the last lap and I hope to finish it by the end of this month—

x x x x

Yesterday I had a telegram from Nan from Calcutta to say that Rita had been successfully operated upon for appendicitis.

536. Mahatma Gandhi met Jinnah at Bombay from 9 September 1944 for talks spread out over three weeks.

August 19, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have received your two letters—Nos. 76 and 77—dated 7th and 12th August. You mention rumours about us. These rumours have seldom any basis, and even when there is some justification for them it is slender and people are apt to exaggerate and distort so as to make them fit in with their wishes. The best thing to do is to ignore them completely. Last year you wrote to me some lines by A. Athenison[537] "actual evidence I have none" &c. They contain a good picture of the origin and growth of rumour.

Your account of Mrs. Prasad has led me to think of the wider question of giving relief to the many who must be in desperate need of it. I am very glad Feroze has been devoting himself to this work.[538] It is difficult to tackle such a big problem but the fact that it is big is all the more reason why we should tackle it. I should like to help. Indeed you should have drawn from my account for relief work without any special authority from me. I suggest that you give Feroze Rs. 100/- a month from my account and, whenever you think it necessary, a further lump sum.

I have often thought of Kailas and Sheila and others in England ever since this flying bomb business[539] started. Obviously it is a great menace. I hope Sheila and her children have left London and gone to the country. Probably the war in Europe will not last very long but the concluding months are likely to be full of the most barbarous and inhuman devices to destroy human beings.

I had a telegram from *Puphi* from Calcutta to say that Rita had been successfully operated upon.

537. "Actual evidence I have none
But my aunt's charwoman's sister's son
Heard a maid in Downing Street
Say to a policeman on his beat
That she had a brother who had a friend
Who knew when the war was going to end."

538. Feroze Gandhi was the secretary of the U.P. Political Sufferer's Distress Relief Committee

539. Pilotless jet propelled aircraft with explosive warheads were used by the Germans in the Second World War to bombard England

I have no objection to extracts from my *Autobiography* appearing in the birthday volume[540] which Mridu, Tendulkar and others are preparing for Bapu. It would be desirable to have dots between two separate quotations. As for correcting my English and my punctuation, I am not prepared to say that I am above correction. But Mridu and Tendulkar are hardly the persons to undertake this. Chalapathi Rau—I suppose he is the *Herald* man—is a good choice for editing. I like him both as a person and for his capacity. He is quiet and efficient at his job. If there is an obvious error in my writing, there is no reason why it should not be corrected, provided it is obvious enough and you agree. As a matter of fact if I had the chance to revise my *Autobiography* I would make many alterations in it. I never had the chance to revise it with any care. After my first writing of it, it was typed by Upadhyaya without any revision by me. I took this typescript with me to Badenweiler and rather hurriedly looked through it there. I could not apply my mind to it then and I was in a hurry to be done with it. The book was then published. I never tried to read through the printed book and of course the proofs never came to me. Krishna made himself responsible for its publication, proof correcting &c. So, oddly enough, the book was not revised by me at any stage. There was no occasion for it and I find this business of revising what I have already written very boring. It is a trying job even to read through it all again, though parts of it are sometimes referred to or re-read.

Then came the American edition. This was an abridged version and everything in connection with it was done in New York without reference to me. It was not possible for such reference to take place owing to wartime delays, and so I left it to Walsh and asked him to consult Krishna. Walsh complained that Krishna did not even answer his letters.

This American edition reached me in Dehra Dun Jail and for the first time I read my *Auto* in print right through. I was taken aback by some of the abridgements, which made no sense. There were also many minor changes to suit the American public, especially in the spelling of words. I accepted these minor changes but pointed out to Walsh a number of errors. These corrections were, I believe, carried

540. *Mahatma Gandhi: His Life and Works*, edited by D.G. Tendulkar, M. Chalapathi Rau, Mridula Sarabhai and Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri, contains articles and pictures depicting every phase of Mahatma Gandhi's life. An article in this volume, "The Spirit of India", is an extract from the writings of Jawaharlal, chiefly the *Autobiography*.

out in a subsequent American edition. But the English edition presumably remained unchanged.

It is difficult to make any changes in a printed book for this upsets the arrangement of the plates. The slightest change, for instance the addition of a comma, means changing the plate. A whole page may thus be changed but then care has to be taken not to affect the next page in any way. If a word or sentence is taken out in any page something in its place, occupying the same amount of space, must be given. All this is exceedingly tiresome and I have therefore refrained from interfering with the present arrangement of the book, although there are many changes which seemed to me to be desirable.

As for punctuation, it perplexes me frequently. I am sure I make mistakes in it, as well as in grammar generally. Not having paid much attention to grammar, except to a slight extent Latin & French grammar, I am rather at sea with questions relating to it. *I have to go by sound and sight. That helps probably in style and I have a sense of* words and the hang of a sentence. But minor errors are apt to creep *in. Do you know the story of some eminent English* writer—I think he was Oscar Wilde? He was asked how he had spent the day. He replied that he spent the whole morning in putting in a comma, another afternoon in taking it out again!

Glimpses was first published in India (by Kitabistan) without any revision by me at any stage. I did not even see the typescript made by Upadhyaya and this, as I discovered subsequently, was full of errors. The result was that the printed book was a horror and I could hardly look into it without extreme irritation. The English edition was hurriedly revised by me, chiefly on board ship when I was going to Europe in 1938.

If Mridu, Tendulkar & Co. are going to sit on judgment on people like Sri Prakasa &c. they will have their work cut out for them.

I am glad Bombay is pleasant now.

This is my letter No. 75.

Love

Your loving
Papu

August 20—Sunday

Received a message from Betty today at 1.20 a.m. (by telephone from Bombay Secretariat) : "Indu had baby boy this morning 8 a.m. Both doing well. Send love. Betty."

So I become a grandfather!

August 21, 1944

Darling,

So you have made me a grandfather!

I received the message yesterday in the afternoon. It had apparently come by telephone. I felt very happy that this tension was over and that you had successfully launched into motherhood. Pantji managed somehow to produce some very good and fresh *peras* (पेड़े) at tea-time to celebrate the occasion. I hope it is well with you and the little one. All our friends here send both of you their love and blessings.

All my love,

Your loving
Papu

August 26, 1944

Darling,

Your letter No 78 of the 16th Aug. reached me three days ago. It seems rather ancient history for since it was written you have become a mother and I have attained the dignified status of a grandfather. I am trying to find out how it feels to be a grandfather. Thus far I have experienced no particular change in my constitution but I suppose I shall grow into this new status, though I fear I lack the dignity for it.

I have had excited letters from Betty and *Puphi* and a few lines from Rita. Also a telegram from Amma and Rup. I suppose women are more excitable than men, but I have long had a theory that India as a nation, that is the Indian people as a whole, is rather feminine. That is why I suppose India is so lovable in spite of her many failings. I do not easily get excited but I experienced a deep feeling of contentment when I heard of the arrival of the newcomer. I was happy that

it was all safely over and that you were well. There was also a vague *and comforting sensation of the future gradually* pushing out the past, as it always does. This is usually a mixed feeling for one is usually attached to the past and does not like to break with it. Of course there is never an actual break; it is an unending and continuous flow, link after link in a chain which has no visible beginning and apparently no *end. Yet the* future always represents hope, though why it should do so has seemed to me one of the oddest traits of human nature, but it does so nevertheless, while the past is a curious mixture. There is always something of the promise of spring about the future. It seems young and growing and full of new life and the next winter seems far off.

The renewal of life from spring to spring, from generation to generation, has an amazing fascination. Therein lies the essence of immortality not only of the species but of that vital precious thing that is life, and, in human mind, of memories and ideas that grow from age to age and link the past with the ever-changing present. So a nation and a people taste of immortality and even a family lives on and on.

I am happy to learn that you had an easy delivery. That shows how essentially healthy you are. You will of course take care of yourself during the next month or so, and then you can live your normal healthy life, not remembering the ailments of the body which have sometimes worried you in the past.

Feroze I suppose reached Bombay just a day or two before your confinement. I am glad he was there in time for it.

You have added to the population of India. That is supposed to be—I doubt the figures but I shall accept them for the moment—four hundred million. Roughly speaking, we might say that the newcomer is the 400,000,00st. That is a formidable number and it will take a lot of living up to.

Betty says in her letter that she had offered prayers to Hanuman and Ganesh. I am glad there is somebody in the family who prays to the gods, for some of us, like me, are utterly lacking in this respect. But why choose these rather inhuman representations of the powers beyond us when there are so many beautiful and lovely creations of *the imagination?* Anyway old Ganesh has a very human twinkle in his elephantine eye and there is something irrepressibly humorous about him, and a merry look and laughter are gifts from the gods.

Betty no doubt will take all necessary steps to have a जन्मपत्र made. That should be done for that is our traditional way to record the exact date and time of birth. The date, according to the *Samvat* calendar, as far as I can make it out, is भाद्रपद शुक्ल पक्ष 2 -सं 2001—or, to put it

differently, the second day of the bright half of the moon in the month of *Bhadon, Samvat* 2001. The Gujratis, I think, have a slightly different reckoning and the month with them starts a fortnight earlier or later—that is according to one view it begins with the dark fortnight of the moon, according to the other, it begins with the bright fortnight. With us in the north it is the former. But this does not make any essential difference, although it is confusing. Betty writes that the time of birth was 8.11 a.m. But which time? The time observed outside now is wartime which is at least an hour ahead of normal time, possibly more. It is thus an artificial time and not the real time according to which noon should be when the sun is highest in the heavens. Here, in Ahmadnagar Fort, we have continued to stick to the old time and have not adopted wartime.

I am returning the four reviews of Betty's book which you sent me. Please return them to her.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This letter is No. 77.

29-8-1944[541]

Darling Bets,

Your message about the birth of the little one reached me the same afternoon and your letter giving fuller details came on the 24th. I did not write to you last week as I sent both my week's letters to Indu.

I was happy to get the news—not so excited as you must have been, for excitement is less in my line. I was particularly pleased to learn of the easy delivery Indu had. That is a very hopeful sign of good health. I hope that she and the baby have kept up to the mark during the days following the confinement. I suppose they will have to remain in Bombay for another month. It is comforting that this job has been done efficiently and well.

In my letters to Indu I suggested to her to ask you to get a proper *Janmapatra* जन्मपत्र made by a competent person. Such permanent

541. File No: 3590/H/II-2 Maharashtra Government Records; Police Commissioner's Office.

records of the date and time of birth are desirable. As for the time, I suppose the proper solar time should be mentioned and not the artificial time which is being used outside now. Wartime is at least an hour ahead of normal time.

The birth of a new member of the family always makes one feel reminiscent and remember one's own childhood days and other births. I missed your birth for I was in England then, but when Nan came and Indu, I was very much there and I have vivid recollections of the events. And then the growth of the little ones, their childhood, girlhood and womanhood. It is an unending panorama of human life with its sweetness and bitterness, its ups and downs. One would think that with all this age-long experience and personal and racial memories, nothing very novel can be expected. The old cycle repeats itself again and again. And yet whenever a person arrives, it is something absolutely new, like others and still unique in its own way. Nature goes on repeating itself but there is no end to its infinite variety and every spring is a resurrection, every new birth a new beginning. Especially when that new birth is intimately connected with us, it becomes a revival of ourselves and our old hopes centre round it.

In your letter you mentioned that Raja had fever. I hope this was nothing serious.

I am glad the children are getting used to school life. They will enjoy their brief holidays at home in October and you will find how full they are of their school experiences. Thus the child's horizon widens and he grows in experience. The return to school will be somewhat painful but there will be no such break as on the first occasion. School will no longer be an unknown and rather frightening place, but a place that is known and remembered and has many pleasant associations.

It is more than six months since I sent you a cheque. Surely you must have exhausted my last remittance long ago. Indu's confinement must have led to many odd kinds of expenses. I am enclosing a payment order on Bachhraj for Rs. 400/. If you want more, let me know.

Indu wrote to me that a second edition of your book had come out, or was on the point of coming out. I hope you have reached a satisfactory settlement with your publishers. Have you heard from the London and the New York publishers about your book?

Love

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

September 4, 1944

Darling,

Betty has been keeping me informed of developments. Her last letter came three days ago. I am sorry you and the infant both managed to catch a slight cold. I hope it has passed. Such things happen in spite of every care. The only real remedy is to have enough powers of resistance. Unfortunately these powers are limited in the early days. Now that the infant has attained the respectable age of a fortnight he will no doubt act in accordance with the responsibilities of that age. I hope Betty will write to me frequently—as frequently as the rules governing Ahmadnagar Fort permit—and keep me informed. My mind is with you all the time and I think of you and the infant, and the babe growing from day to day. I am glad you have kept nurses. Hold on to them and do not be in a hurry to part with them. Little things count at this stage and it would be folly to save money at the cost of worry. That will interfere with your own return to normal health as well as the baby's. For the babe depends ever so much on the mother. Also without proper nurses, Betty will inevitably have more to do and that will not be right. She is of course a perfect brick and it is a great comfort to me that she is with you. About expenses generally you should not worry. They are not your lookout.

Darling, I understand that you people have been referring to the infant as Rahul. Indeed *Puphi* wrote to me that this name was suggested some months ago and all of you had decided that it was going to be a boy. Well, Rahul is not a bad name—that was my first impression. But some further information I have gathered from Narendra Deva has made me change my mind. Rahul of course was Buddha's son and this tradition and connection are in its favour. But do you know what it means? It means a fetter, something that binds—a बंधन.[542] The story is that when Buddha, or Siddhartha as he then was, was told of the birth of his son, he exclaimed that this was a fresh बंधन or fetter attaching him to the life he was leading and from which he wanted to get away. That word of his—Rahula—caught on and became the name of his son. It has since been seldom used as a name, except rarely by Buddhist monks and the like— So the name is hardly suitable.

Betty says that you have prepared a list of possible names—She was going to send this list to me but apparently could not find it at the

542. *Bandhan.*

time—When it comes I shall let you have my reaction after consulting friends here—Meanwhile, I mentioned the matter to Narendra Deva and the next day he came out with certain historical names from Sanskrit literature. They were unusual and worth considering. But I shall wait for your list and then write more about it.

Vallabhbhai has got some new publications of the Navajivan Press and among these I noticed a Gujrati translation of my *Letters from a Father to his Daughter*. They call it, I think, इन्दु ने पत्र.[543] I am glad the Navajivan people have brought this out—Long ago, without my knowledge (I was as usual in prison then) the Law Journal Press gave permission to somebody in Gujrat to bring out a translation. This person brought out a very bad translation and made a lot of money out of it. When later I wrote to him, he was quite offensive about it—So I am glad a decent translation in Gujrati has now appeared.

It is pleasant here now—rather warm in the middle of the day and definitely cool at night. I hope you are having good weather in Bombay.

Feroze, I presume, is with you. He should remain with you and not hurry away—I hope that by the end of this month you can go to Allahabad so that the infant and you can enjoy the delightful cold weather there—

Love to you both,

Your loving
Papu

September 6—Wednesday

It is extraordinary how often I think of Indu and the baby and worry about them. Perhaps I might not have done so if the last bit of news had not been disconcerting. Indu caught a cold and then of course the babe got it. A day or two later they were removed from the nursing home to Betty's flat. This was earlier than was at first intended. Probably the cold hurried their departure.

It is five days since I got Betty's last letter and it seems an age—I imagine all manner of dire developments—else why should she not have

543. *Indu ne Patra.*

written earlier to assure me that all was well? My mind is restless and agitated. How these personal attachments pull at us and upset us when we bear wider misfortunes more stoically.

My writing work is yet not over though I have been giving enough time to it. Now I am at page 988! I am now at the very last spurt. There will be a feeling of relief when I finish it but also perhaps a sense of emptiness. It has filled the past five months for me—

September 8, Friday

Still no letter. I am distressed and my mind is full of foreboding.

x x x x

I finished the book yesterday—998 pages of manuscript. I shall look through some parts during the next few days and consider Pantji's & Narendra Deva's criticisms and then put the lot away and forget about it. Pantji & Narendra Deva are the only persons here who have seen what I have been writing. They have been very helpful.

September 9, Saturday

As I sat down to write to Indu today I received her letter—It was dated August 19, the day before her confinement. But there was a note added dated September 3 and this brought relief. Neither she nor the babe are rid of their cold and fever — Still I feel better—

x x x x

Today Bapu meets Jinnah in Bombay.

September 9, 1944

Darling,

I have spent quite a bad week, though why I should behave in this way I do not quite know. I thought I could control my feelings and emotions better, but I realize how one's mental discipline and hardly-acquired wisdom are swept aside for a while at least by the surge of feeling.

On the 1st of September I got Betty's last letter in which she told me of your cold and fever and the little one's cold. I was a little worried, but not much. I hoped to have further and better news within two or three days. As the days went by and no further news came a growing apprehension seized me and I grew restless in mind. I was thinking of you and the babe most of the time and wondering how both of you were. You would soon get over your cold I hoped, but the little one, a few days old, how would he fare? I remembered the time when you got a bad attack of influenza when you were a few months old—about six. A very vivid picture of you then lying in a cot in Dol Amma's garden room in what is now Swaraj Bhawan came to me. Under instructions from Ranjit Singh (the gallant Major), who was treating you, all the doors were closed and the room was full of some kind of vapour —eucalyptus or some such thing. A long-necked, rather primitive apparatus produced this vapour and its nose was so arranged so as to be near your tiny face. I presume they have better ways of treatment now. Anyway I remembered that scene and all the trouble you were having with your breathing and coughing. I felt so helpless. Fortunately you got over your trouble soon.

For eight days I have had no letter at all from anyone to give me news of you. This was a big gap and I worried and could not make out why this was so. I think this is yet another sign of age. Or is it the usual thing for grandfathers to do? I thought of how I must take the little one in hand and help him to build up a strong and healthy body. A delusion I suffer from—that I know a great deal about the rules of health and that anybody who follows them must of necessity remain healthy. Really it is only another aspect of my general tendency to interfere with other people. You and Feroze will have to hold me in check.

As I was beginning this letter, at last a letter was handed to me in the usual On His Majesty's Service envelope. I peeped in and saw it was from you. It was dated August 19th. Welcome as it was, I felt disappointed. Oh this was your old unfinished letter and contains no later news. But as I read it I found that there was a later addition dated Sept. 3rd. I felt better. But I am not entirely reassured. I do not like this continuing temperature and cold. I have no doubt that both you and the baby will improve rapidly in the Allahabad climate. But not just at present as September is not a good month there. October is just right, not cold but pleasant and slowly cooling off with November. But it would be desirable for you and the babe to get rid of the cold completely before you travel. A long journey might aggravate an existing distemper. Also I think it would be as well, before

you go, to have yourself X-rayed &c.—In this matter, as in others affecting your health and the babe's, you should follow Jivraj's advice. He is cautious and sound and knows your history.

About the names, Betty has not sent me the list. I shall await that list before consulting Narendra Deva again—I shall also ask Maulana—It had struck me also some time ago that an additional Persian name would be desirable.

I was interested to learn about the Hebrew edition of my *Autobiography*. When you feel better, I should like you to write to Mr. Benton,[544] or whatever his name is. Tell him that I was happy to have news of the book. I received none of his letters or his cable. I wrote to him also in March 1942, in addition to my cable, but evidently he did not receive my letter.

Some little time back I wrote to you to arrange for a payment of Rs. 100 monthly to Feroze for his relief work. In addition will you please arrange for a lump payment of Rs. 1000/- to him from my account. I am sure he will put this to good use in giving relief to people standing in need of it. Apart from this Rs. 100/- a month should continue.

I am glad to have news of Madan Bhai and Rafi. I think I told you that the book you sent me dealing with the Chinese Medical Mission — *And One Did not Come Back* — did not reach me —

I am sending you today a bundle of old magazines and periodicals—
Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 79.

I have just received two letters from Betty dated 31st Aug. and 3rd Sept. Also the list of names.

I am enclosing an order on Bachhraj to pay Rs. 1000/- to Betty. This is to cover the expenses so far incurred on hospital charges and nurses. Betty will see to the payment. Do not worry about them.

Papu

544. William Benton (b. 1900); U.S. Senator, 1949-53; met Jawaharlal in March 1937 at Allahabad.

12-9-1944

Darling Betty,
Two of your letters dated 26th and 29th August reached me by September 1st. The other two dated 31/8 and 3/9 came together on September 9th. You wrote regularly enough but there was delay in letters reaching me and I was a little worried at the absence of news for 9 days, especially as the last news I had had was not satisfactory. However, now I have had better news and I hope all is going well.

Love to Raja and you.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

September 16, 1944

Darling Indu,
Your letter of the 9th Sept. and Betty's of the day before have brought good news about the babe. I hope his progress will now be rapid—

I have myself been in the grip of *la grippe*. It has been a nuisance. I think I am on the mend now. I hope a letter does not carry 'flu bugs.

As for the name—the list you sent me contained some attractive names but on the whole it is not inspiring.

In the classical period of Sanskrit the names were usually two in one —that is two words joined together to form one name. Thus Nagarjuna, Kumarajiva, Ajitasena, Gunavarman, Adisena, Amoghavajra, Paramartha, Jivagupta. All these are actual names of famous Indian scholars all of whom, except for the first and greatest of them—Nagarjuna —went to China, Kumarajiva became a famous writer in Chinese. This practice of two words to form one name prevails today also but the words have ceased to have much meaning—thus: Jawahar-lal! I like this two-word formation of a name. It is musical & meaningful. Narendra Deva has suggested the following six names for you to consider:

1 प्रियदर्शी[545] 'One who is of pleasing appearance'
2 कमलशील[546] 'One who partakes of the qualities of a lotus'

545. *Priyadarshi.*
546. *Kamalsheel.*

3	सिद्धार्थ[547]	'One whose desires have been accomplished' Gautama Buddha's home name
4	विजयरत्न[548]	विजय standing for फीरोज़ —victory—and रत्न for Jawahar
5	परमार्थ[549]	'Supreme beatitude'—a famous Indian author in China
6	पद्मविजय[550]	पद्म (lotus) is the symbol of purity and beauty—It also symbolizes India. It is also an epithet of Rama— पद्मा is the name of लक्ष्मी=कमला=इन्दिरा

These are listed more or less in Narendra Deva's order of preference. They are all attractive names but I would limit the choice to प्रियदर्शी, कमलशील, विजयरत्न and पद्मविजय। Of these both Narendra Deva and I *like* प्रियदर्शी *best. It is simple, meaningful and sounds well—It is un*usual enough and yet not odd. Narendra Deva, in suggesting this name, did not know that your second name was प्रियदर्शिनी. The fact that it fits in with your name is in its favour. The one serious disadvantage attached to it is that it cannot be shortened easily. प्रिय may do for intimates but one cannot go about the world being addressed as darling by everybody.

Priyadarshi, I might add, was Ashoka's name. It occurs in his inscriptions—Also it is an epithet of one of the former Buddhas.

Maulana (in consultation with Asaf Ali) has suggested an ancient Iranian name also. I think it is a Pahlavi word but it is still used in Persian and sometimes, though rarely, as a name for both boy and girl. It is: विर्जीस برجیس—Birjees—This was the old name of Jupiter, the planet. As Jupiter had a very high place in the ancient world (Jove was king of the gods in Greece), the word came to mean also: "the auspicious one". So now it means both the planet Jupiter and the auspicious one—

विर्जीस will suffer from one advantage or disadvantage—It is likely to be Sanskritized or Hindiized into व्रजेश (व्रज+ईश lord of Braj or Vraj =Krishna).

How do you like the combination: Priyadarshi Birjees—प्रियदर्शी विर्जीस. I do not think it sounds at all bad, though all new combinations are odd to begin with. Anyhow, think over it and consult Feroze and others. Do not forget to consult *Nani* or otherwise she will feel hurt.

547. *Siddhartha.*
548. *Vijayaratna.*
549. *Parmartha.*
550. *Padmavijya.*

There is no immediate hurry and there is no reason why you should accept my primary recommendation unless you yourself agree with it.

I am returning to you a number of small books and pamphlets:

1 Sagittarius: *Targets* — Give this to Chitti
2 Nym Wales: *New China*
3 Guehenus: *Journal d'um Homme de 40 ans*
4 *Tomorrow*: 2 issues
5 *Premchand*
6 Yeats: *Sophocles*: *King Oedipus*
7 Aurobindo Ghose: *Ideal & Progress*
8 —do— : *Thoughts & Glimpses*
9 *War Prose*
10 Arnold's *Light of Asia*
11 Abbas: *Tomorrow is Ours*
12 *New Kashmir*

I am now giving more time to reading and so I hope to return books frequently. You can also send me the two or three books you are holding on for me. Some time back you or Betty asked me if I had read Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. This book has just reached me—sent by Kamala Shankar Pandya of Dohad. So do not duplicate it.

And now I shall retire to nurse & at the same time fight my cold—I am feeling particularly stupid—deaf—weary-eyed—hoarse—sore-throated—heavy-headed, and generally not particularly human—

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 80

September 20 Wednesday Id-ul Fitr

I have had a mild attack of 'flu—Nothing much but it made me feel bad for two or three days I am now recovering, most people here have had something of the kind.

x x x x

I finished the revision of my MSS today incorporating some of Pantji's suggestions I had to drive myself to read this again—or parts of it.

Ever since I finished writing my interest in it largely evaporated and I had no desire to go back to it. I wondered if I had done a worthwhile job or not. It is so difficult for the author to judge. Sometimes I felt that it was pretty good, and then later it would seem very second-rate. Thinking of it now it does not appear too good. Perhaps some parts are not bad, but as a whole? Anyway I am weary of it and it has been finally put away in the trunk.

Perhaps it is my mood that is at fault. I feel rather empty—not exactly depressed but just empty. Not hoping nor fearing—just not feeling anything acutely—Not caring perhaps. My colleagues here are greatly worked up about the Gandhi-Jinnah talks. They discuss them without end. They interest me too but it is almost a distant impersonal interest. Whatever the outcome I doubt if I shall be excited about it. Unless my mood changes.

Fed up—that I suppose describes my state of mind. Fed up with myself, with our people, with India, with the world, with the horror of war, with the worse horror of men's littleness and selfishness, with the Congress, with almost everything. Small incidents reported in the press show up the pettiness of our people and upset me more than major occurrences.

September 23. 1944

Darling,

I have received this morning your letter of Sept. 15th—No. 81. Also a letter from Betty of the same date. The जन्मपत्र has also come. I shall return it to you later.

I am happy to learn that both you and the babe are making good progress. The first month is well over now and the babe should grow now faster and put on weight. You do not say anything about your return to Allahabad and so I presume you are staying on in Bombay for the present. I have some books which I want to return to you. I suppose I had better hold on to them till you are back in Anand Bhawan.

I have already written to you about the names. *Puphi* writes that she has a list of boys' names prepared by Ranjit—chiefly names of the Sun—*Surya*—I have not received the names yet. There is a host of such names in Sanskrit and some are very attractive. I shall forward the list to you, so that you can consider these additional names also.

When you go back to Anand Bhawan, will you arrange to give some small presents to the servants there on my behalf. This is on the

occasion of the arrival of the babe there, but really that is an excuse to enable us to help the servants a little. I suggest that you pay them as follows: Hari 15/-, Bhola 15/-, Abul Hasan 10/-, Khaliq 10/-, Tulsi 10/-, Lachhminia 10/-, Bansi, Binda, Datadin, Ganga, Rama & Raghubir —each 5/- also the pensioners: *Bhishti*, Jumna, Behari's mother and Asghar Ali's wife each 5/-. I have taken these names from Ladli Bhai's list— If there are any more you will of course add their names.

Also give each of Raja and Betty's servants Rs. 10/-. If you feel like giving more to anybody do so.

You will remember that I wrote to you about Khaliq some months back. I made it clear then that we could not increase his pay beyond what I had suggested. Also that I had no objection to Khaliq bettering his prospects elsewhere if he had the chance to do so. So long as he remained with us he would get his present salary, and later if he wanted to come back, I would take him. In addition (and apart from the fact whether he remained with us or not) Rs. 10/- a month was to be given for his daughter's education. I want to be quite fair to Khaliq but I do not want him to sit idly by doing nothing. That is not good for him or for others. You will therefore give him work if he stays on and otherwise deal with him as you think fit.

Did I tell you that I had received the bundle of books sent by P. C. Joshi through you?

Some weeks ago I read in the papers of the death of our old Parsi friend Anupchand Shah[551] I was pained at this news. I liked him greatly. In his own quiet way he was extraordinarily decent. Always when I was in Bombay he came to see me but he was careful not to waste my time. Once he invited us to his house somewhere in Malabar Hills.

I was amused to read your account and Betty's of your visit to Bapu and the conversation that took place between him and Rajaji about women. We are all rather incomplete, lopsided, are we not? It is rare to find an integrated, more or less complete, individual.

Feroze, I suppose, has gone back to Allahabad.

I am sending you today a bundle of foreign periodicals.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 81.

551 A businessman of Bombay

September 27. Wednesday—Vijaya Dashmi

Do I feel better? Perhaps a little—Partly because I have been slowly getting rid of the after-effects of the 'flu. Physical well-being has a powerful effect on the mind, more so in prison than elsewhere, for here there is nothing to divert the mind. I am not quite fit yet and certainly a drowsiness steals over me. I succumb to it and sleep in the daytime. But I am far better than I was a week ago and have less of the tired feeling.

x x x x

Having finished the writing & revising of *The Discovery of India* I feel rather at a loose end. It kept me busy and my mind occupied for over five months and I was often worried at the prospect of my release before I had finished it. That little worry is over and I am prepared for discharge now! Indeed as the question of possible release was in my mind, I prepared for it in a way so that it should not take me unawares—According to old habit, I prepared a note of what I should do prior to and at the time of release—I distributed our flowerseeds, all neatly packed up, to my co-prisoners, as mementoes of A.F. The idea was not so much of release as of transfer to some other prison where these seeds might come in useful.

Then I looked through such papers and figures I had relating to my accounts with Bachhraj to find out where I stood financially. I have had the foggiest of notions about them. I made a note of what the position was, more or less—

Then I looked through the draft of the will I had made a year ago and added a note to it.

I sent some books to Indu—checked and cleaned & listed my remaining books. They are a goodly number—over 150. Even labels for my boxes were prepared & in some cases stuck on!

Finally I had a haircut—So everything that I could think of was done! It amused me to go through this ceremonial although there is no chance of our discharge in the near future.

x x x x

I have been reading odd books—Bodmer's *Loom of Language*—Hogben's *Interglossa*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*—Lamb's *Letters* &c. A sense of restlessness has seized me and even this reading is spasmodic—

In one of Lamb's letters I came across two lines. We have yet the sight of, he says:

> Of sun and moon and star, throughout the year,
> And man and woman.

Yes, we have had sight of sun and moon & star—but hardly of man and not at all of woman. For two years and a month and 18 days we have been here—779 days—and we are a little tired of looking at each other and our jailers. And woman! How strange it is that we have *not even had a distant glimpse of a woman during these years.* Previously there were interviews in jail—Not so now—

x x x x

I have finished this book which I began two years ago and now I must go on to another if the desire to write seizes me. Today—*Vijaya Dashmi* —is an appropriate day *to begin an undertaking*—hardly to end one.

Sept. 30. 1944

Darling Indu,

Thus far I have had no letter from you this week. Perhaps today's post *may bring one—as it sometimes does.* Yesterday I had a brief note from Birju *chacha* from Srinagar congratulating me on my becoming a grandfather. Will you tell him *that I have received it?* I am not writing to him myself as first cousins are not included in the list of those to whom I may write. Perhaps as a special *indulgence* I might be allowed to write to him but I see no reason to ask for indulgences. He has been told that Rajaji has suggested the name—'Motilal'—*for the* babe and he disapproves of this as being opposed to our tradition. Tell him no one intends to give this name. He also expresses the hope that I am continuing my *asans.* Yes, I am doing so to some extent, especially the *sarvangasana* and *shirsasana.*

I notice in the papers a report about *my illness.* There is no basis for this and I do not know how such reports get about. I had a cold and a touch of 'flu but that kind of thing *is not to* be called illness. I got over it soon enough and am quite fit. I have no intention of falling ill, and it is my belief that illness comes usually—*apart from* accidents *and untoward occurrences*—by some kind of subconscious invitation. Of course no one wants to be ill but one can follow a *line which* leads to illness or to a *receptivity* to illness.

Some days ago, I sent you the horoscope, with the request to the authorities here that it might be forwarded by registered post.

Do you remember a visit we paid in 1931 to a French Count in Ceylon? We were motoring from Colombo to the southern tip of the island, along the western palm-fringed coast, and about half-way we visited the strange and attractive residence of this unusual individual. It was a solid house all covered with tropical vegetation, situated on a kind of tiny island just off the coast. At low tide one could walk up to it almost, but when the tide came in, it stood out as a full island. We went in a boat and climbed up a rocky path to the house and found ourselves in a delightful house full of flowers and books. We spent an hour or so with the Count and then had to hurry on to our next engagement. The odd situation of the house and the man who had built it and occupied it lingered in my memory and often I have thought of them in later years. A few days ago I suddenly came across a long extract from a book evidently written by this man about himself and how he managed to settle down in Ceylon. All the old memories revived in me and the desire to read this book if it was available. He was one of those who had gone through the war of 1914-18 and this experience as well as the experience of the early after-war years had a powerful effect on him. He left his old family *chateau* in France and tried to find a refuge as far away from his old world as possible. And that was how he discovered the little island in Ceylon and built himself a house there. His book must be an interesting one. I do not suppose it is possible to get it, especially in India. Probably it had a small circulation when it came out and then disappeared from the book-shops and was remaindered-off, as the publishers say. Still I am mentioning the name for you to note down somewhere. It is: *The Gardens of Taprobane* by the Count de Mauny, (Williams & Norgate, London 1937). Taprobane is an old western name for Ceylon.

In my letter to you dated Sept. 9th I enclosed a payment order in favour of Betty for Rs. 1000/- on Bachhraj. You have acknowledged this letter but do not mention this order—I hope it reached you and you gave it to Betty.

You know the kind of cigarette-holder I use. It has room for a cigarette in the tube itself which acts as a nicotine absorber—my holder, after long use, has cracked. I am continuing to use it but it is not very satisfactory. I do not suppose it is possible to get a new one. But, when you go to Allahabad, you can send me a still older one that I possess. You should find this in one of the drawers of my dressing table. You will recognize it easily by a piece of paper stuck near the

end which holds the cigarette. If I get this, I might be able to fix up a workable holder out of the two brokendown ones.

Did I write to you, or was it to Betty?, more than a year ago asking for a Persian primer or some other elementary books in it? I was told then that they were not available. The desire to learn some Persian has come back to me Having finished some work I have been doing I am, so to say, at a loose end, though of course there are always books to read. But I want some harder mental work than mere reading. Also there is the great advantage of having Maulana to help me with Persian.

The book I should like to have is Otto's *Persian Grammar and Conversation*. You are not likely to get it at any bookshop in India. But there is just a chance of your being able to find a copy which *Pupha* (Ranjit) used to have. Ask *Puphi* for it. She might look through *Pupha's* old books.

If you meet with no success in this quest, then ask the Kitabistan people in Allahabad to get me some elementary books in Persian, preferably Persian-English books. There are, I believe, such books for the military, as also ordinary school books.

Puphi writes that Allahabad is still hot and stuffy, or was ten days ago. I suppose a change in the weather will come soon. October is a good month there.

I am sending you to Bombay another bundle of foreign periodicals.

I hope the babe and you are both flourishing.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 82.

3-10-1944

Darling Betty,

I have received two letters from you since I wrote to you last—dated 8th and 15th September. Two days ago I had a letter from Indu in which she gave me news of Harsha's and Ajit's return for the holidays. She wrote also that she intended going back to Allahabad by the 7th October. By the time this letter reaches you she will probably have

left you. If she is still there tell her that my next letter to her will be sent to Allahabad. Also a parcel of books.

I am glad to learn both from your letter and Indu's that the boys have done well at school and especially that Harsha has put on weight. Ajit fortunately is healthy enough but Harsha has been rather weak and his putting on weight and taking a growing interest in games are excellent signs. They indicate that he stood in need of a change from Bombay life and more companionship of children of his age. I think your sending the boys to school has already been justified. Bombay is no place for growing children to become healthy and strong. The winter months in Gwalior will do them even more good.

Indu writes that you intend going to Allahabad after the boys return to Gwalior. I am glad of this—she does not mention Raja but I hope he will also go there and benefit by the delightful late October weather of Allahabad. It should just suit him. Not too cold yet and yet pleasantly cool. 'Pink winter' as it is called. Though perhaps this begins a little later.

I have read with some amusement the long account you have sent about Mridu's visit to Indu soon after her confinement and your subsequent correspondence. Of course Mridu was a little foolish in barging in just then and ought to have known better. But she meant well no doubt. We can't get rid easily of our old habits and traditions. It is true that sometimes a petty and unintentional step leads to grave consequences. Fortunately that has not been so in the present case. Anyway it is all over now and no one need worry about it, and certainly it should not be allowed to come in the way of your normal relations with Mridu.

I have been noticing a number of references about my 'illness' in the papers. One might almost imagine that I was in the grip of some fell disease, some mysterious illness that required all the wise men of Gotham to confer and advise. All this is rather silly though I appreciate the kindly thoughts of people who are anxious about me. But then anxiety is wasted on me for I am not ill at all. The report, whatever its source, was greatly exaggerated. I had a cold, which is always annoying for some days, and nothing worse. It has passed off. As a matter of fact I am the healthiest of our lot here and it is the others who require care and treatment.

Some time back you wrote that you were sending me the second edition of your book. It has not come yet. I suppose it is out.

The other day, reading some of the old *Letters* of Charles Lamb (the man who wrote the *Essays of Elia* and *Tales from Shakespeare*),

I came across a couple of lines. We have yet the sight of, he said:

> Of sun and moon and stars, throughout the year,
> And man and woman.

Yes, I thought, we have had yet the sight of the sun and the moon and stars, and yesterday was *Sharad Purnima*.[552] In the early dawn, when I wake up, I see Jupiter peeping over the roof of a building. It is still dark then but it is the signal for getting up. In the evening Venus appears as the Evening Star. The night sky is slowly changing over and putting on its winter appearance. We have sight of all these and they never lose their freshness. But of the men we see the range is limited and I fear we grow less and less fresh to each other. And woman? It struck me as an odd and arresting fact that for nearly 26 months—for 785 days to be exact—I had not seen a woman even from a distance. Previously it was not so, for even in prison we had interviews occasionally. And I began to wonder—what are women like? *how do they look?—how do they talk and sit and walk?*

And then I thought of the changing world—of how it must have changed during these 26 months. Children growing up and some of us, I fear, growing down. Meeting each other after a long interval, shall we recognize each other in the old way? Or will there be a feeling of shyness and strangeness as when we meet those we do not wholly understand? The private worlds each one of us lives in, worlds of fancy and feeling and imagination, have so long lain apart that they are apt to become strangers to each other, separate circles overlapping less than they used to. Partly that happens as we grow older, but the process is accelerated by the abnormal conditions we have been living in

My love to you and Raja and the children.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

October 5, Thursday

My last entry in the journal was on Sept. 27th—*Vijaya Dashmi*—That closed the old book

552 Night of the full moon in October.

On that auspicious day took place the inauspicious ending of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks.[553] What a damp squib after all the shouting and praying and hou-ha! The lengthy correspondence, which I read with a certain impatience, was depressing. Jinnah, as usual, avoiding any positive or constructive suggestion and playing lawyer-like for position and vantage. Bapu, more positive and definite and yet rather vague. Perhaps it was inevitable that the talks should fail. But they should have failed on more definite points. Some definiteness has certainly come but not enough. What a quagmire it all is!

On the whole I was not greatly excited. I was less worried than others here. There have been, while the talks have been going on and afterwards, interminable discussions here. I have taken practically no part in them, nor has Maulana.

I think this must be some unconscious way of protecting myself from continuous irritation. I keep my mind occupied with other matters and the newspapers produce only a temporary ruffling of the surface. Not perhaps a healthy sign. Certainly it would be unhealthy if I behaved in this passive, escapist way outside. But here in confinement perhaps it is not so bad. It saves energy and worry.

Yet the worry is there at the back of the mind. A feeling of having run into a blind lane with no opening and life becoming just existence at a low level of sensation. The war and its consequences prevent a settling down of the mind and bring hope of changes everywhere. That helps.

x x x x

I have been below par, physically. Nothing much but just a feeling of not being fit. Some reference made in the press about my illness[554] —it was just a cold—comments—Nan's telegram of inquiry to the Bombay

553. Mahatma Gandhi, while opposed to partition, proposed a form of self-determination whereby in the Muslim majority provinces both Muslims and Hindus would vote on the issue of separation. Jinnah insisted that the Muslims alone should vote on the question of separation, and that separation should be effected while the British were in India and not after India had become free.

554. A Bombay Government press note said: "Statements have appeared in the press that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had been suffering from influenza. This is not correct. Pandit Nehru had an ordinary cold from which he has recovered and he is now alert and vigorous and in good health; no fever was recorded and no complaint of fever was made."

Govt.—questions[555] in the House of Commons &c.—Rather absurd all this. I suppose this is their way of showing some sympathy, being unable to do anything else.

I have got over the cold but a vague unease fills me. Is it physical or just mental or both? My eyes are giving some trouble and grow watery after a little reading. Perhaps they require stronger spectacles.

x x x x

Nan has managed to get a passport for the U.S. or will get it soon. She and Rita will be leaving soon by air for America. I am glad. Good for her and for others.

Indu and the babe will be leaving Bombay for Allahabad within two or three days. The question of the name for the babe is troubling her and a host of names have been suggested.

x x x x

We celebrated Oct. 2 as Bapu's birthday. There have been a number of celebrations during the past two weeks—*Id-ul-Fitr, Vijaya Dashmi,* Bapu's birthday. Soon there will be *Divali* and about that time we shall complete 800 days here—on the 18th Oct.

x x x x

The Jailer, Balak Ram, took a month's leave from Sept. 4th and has just returned. During his absence Sendak, the Superintendent, shifted from his house to the Jailer's room here to keep watch over us for the 24 hours. A few days ago he told me that he had heard me moaning and making weird noises at night. I sleep in the verandah opposite my room. He sleeps inside his room on the other side separated from us by the open space—about 50 yards width—and a verandah. Yet he heard me! He thought at first that it was Pantji, who had been unwell, but Pantji disillusioned him and told him I was the guilty person.

I was not myself aware that I had been shouting or moaning.

x x x x

555. On 3 October 1944, Amery told the House of Commons: "I made special enquiries and am informed that with the exception of Dr. Ghose, who is suffering from a mild internal complaint, all the members of the Working Committee now detained in Ahmadnagar are well. In particular I am informed that Pandit Nehru is vigorous, alert and fit."

October 7. Saturday

Day before yesterday on Oct. 5th at about 3.30 p.m. Sendak informed Mahmud that Government had ordered his immediate unconditional release. No reasons given. Mahmud said he would leave the next day.

Yesterday there was packing &c. for him and a faint touch of excitement for all of us. At about 2.15 p.m. he left our camp with the Supt. & a D.S.P. intending to visit a friend in the city and then take the train to Bombay. He had a bare hour before the train left. Still within this brief time, we were told later by Sendak, crowds gathered in the city and at the station. Sendak, unaccustomed to these demonstrations, was suitably impressed.

x x x x

Mahmud's release has nothing to do with the release of others here. Perhaps Rajendra Babu may also have been released in Behar—Behar is in a bad way owing to cholera, malaria, typhoid &c. killing thousands.

x x x x

Mahmud spent 788 days here—For over a year, since July 15, 1943—448 days—he and I were in the same room here. I am afraid we got on each other's nerves and I was not as tolerant always as I ought to have been. Some months ago in the course of an argument I lost my temper and upset him. Since then we have avoided discussions and our talks have been strictly practical.

x x x x

And now I am left by myself in this big room. I have had it cleaned today and have rearranged the furniture and my belongings.

Oct. 8. Sunday

News of Wendell Willkie's death came as a shock and I felt very sad. All of us were dejected by it. His book *One World* and his articles and statements had impressed me greatly[556]—Even more so his sticking

556. In his statements made during his six-week tour of the world and after his return to the US on 14 October 1942, he particularly criticised the American Government for its failure to take a possitive stand on India's struggle for freedom.

to his principles at the cost of his nomination for the Presidential election. Whatever he may have been in his earlier days, he had developed into a rare type of statesman and, young as he was, he gave us hope for the future. Why do good men die and the undeserving live on and on?

October 9 1944

Darling Indu,

Your letter No. 82 of the 24th Sept. with baby's pictures reached me a week ago. Babes a few weeks old seem to me to be singularly alike. I suppose they are really not so. The picture I like best is the one in which he is yawning and stretching himself. Probably there is a fair amount of resemblance to you. The forehead seems to be rather like Feroze's.

As you know there has been a change in our little community here—Mahmud has gone and we are only eleven now. He must have given you some news about us, though there is really little in the way of news for we live in an eventless, and therefore newsless, world.

I suppose you have gone to Allahabad. I am sure the change will do you and the baby good. It is good that Mrs. Vakil is accompanying you and will spend a month with you in Anand Bhawan.

As for the names for the babe, I am afraid too continued a search is likely to confuse. You must remember that the field for choice is really unlimited, far more so than in the average European personal name. Sanskrit is very rich in names and in musical words which can be used for names. Lotus has scores of words with fine shades of meanings—I think you have a sufficient field to choose from already and you can add to the list any suggestion that *Puphi* intended making. Choose one finally then without further references.

For the present your choice seems to be राजीव रत्न.[557] I noticed a paragraph in *The Leader* about it, in which reference was made to consultations with me and Narendra Deva. My first impression of राजीव रत्न was not very favourable but on repeating the name several times I began to like it. Narendra Deva also felt the same way. He suggested later a variation with the same meaning but without the alliteration: राजीव मणि.[558] I do not particularly care for this, but I find that with fre-

557. *Rajiva Ratna*
558. *Rajiva Mani.*

quent repetition every name gradually becomes familiar. Of the two I prefer राजीव रत्न. Rajiva is likely to be shortened into Rajji or Rajio.

Priyadarshika is a pretty name for a girl—Perhaps you know that there is a play of this name by Harsha, the king and playwright of the 7th century.

I have sent you a number of books to Allahabad. A list of these is enclosed. Three of them, you will notice, are *Puphi's*. Please give them to her.

This is a brief letter—partly because I can think of nothing else to write—partly as I am engaged in a thorough pre-*Divali* cleaning of my room. For a year and a quarter Mahmud and I shared this room—Now that he has gone I have it all to myself and I have spread out. I am having all my books, papers, clothes etc. aired and cleaned. It is extraordinary how cockroaches and crickets & other insects thrive here and develop large families. I try to eliminate them every few weeks and yet the next time they are as populous than ever. Much worse of course are the खटमल्स.

This is my letter No. 83.

Love

Your loving
Papu

October 14. 1944

Indu darling,

I have received your last letter from Bombay—No. 83 dated 3rd October. The next will be from Anand Bhawan where you have returned, with a new member of the family, after many months.

Puphi, I suppose, is in Allahabad now—She appears to be a little worried about my having received or not the letters she has been sending me recently. I had a letter from her yesterday and another this morning. Will you tell her that I have received, during the last six weeks, the following letters from her: dated 9/9 from Calcutta; dated 20/9 from Allahabad together with Chand's & Tara's letters and their picture; dated 25/9 from Allahabad; yesterday a letter from Allahabad dated 4/10; and today one from Sevagram dated 8/10. That is the lot—I think I have received all her letters. During this period I have written to her to Calcutta on 2/9; to Allahabad on 26/9, and again to Allahabad on 5/10. With the last letter I returned Chand's and Tara's

letters. I have answered all her letters except the last two which came yesterday and today — These I shall answer in due course — There is nothing urgent in them.

Puphi writes that everyone in Sevagram referred to the babe as Motilal. This may be the southern custom but it certainly is not our way and I see no reason to adopt it unless there is something obviously attractive about it. I see no attraction. And so with all deference to Bapu and others I think we should not submit to this pressure. Now that you have consulted various people and considered a number of alternative names, you and Feroze should finally fix upon a name.

I hope you have found Anand Bhawan in good condition and in good spirit — for a house, just as a city or a country, has a peculiar atmosphere attaching to it. It varies and has its ups and downs, its periods of smiling content and depression. Children of course make a great difference to a house and garden. Children have lived in Anand Bhawan but, come to think of it, this is the first time a baby has made it its home.

I hope you will see that our old servants are doing well in these hard times and have the necessities of life provided for them. The garden should be looked after. This is just the season for it and Feroze, I am sure, will make it put on its best appearance.

You have written to me that you gave the cheque to Betty and have also noted the little gifts for the servants. One matter I wrote to you about you have not mentioned. I asked you to arrange to pay on my behalf Rs. 1000/- to Feroze for his relief work — Also, in addition to this, he was to be paid Rs. 100/- a month for this work. I hope you have seen to this.

I notice from the papers that Upadhyaya is out. He came out just in time to receive you on your return to Allahabad. I do not know how he is, nor do I know where his wife and children are. Naturally he would like to be with his people for some time Give him facilities for doing so.

We have had heavy rain here — probably the last of the monsoon. The weather is slowly changing though it is still warm enough — As a sign of the change I noticed the wagtail here this morning and yesterday an oriole could be heard. Today I saw also an unusual sight. In a bed containing cosmos flowers there was a cocoon-like thing hanging on to a stalk. We had noticed this some weeks ago and I expected some kind of a moth to emerge from it in due course. Well, it burst this morning and, to our amazement, hundreds of very tiny grasshoppers (or something resembling them) came out of it. I suppose they will

grow now to the usual size. They are called in Hindustani घोड़ा,[559] so I am told, because of the horse-like way they stand with head up.

The bunch of books you sent me from Bombay has not come yet. I am anxious to have the *Persian Grammar* — If you can discover Otto in Anand Bhawan or at 2 Mukerjee Road, that would be excellent.

This is my letter No. 84.

Love

Your loving
Papu

Deepavali,
17.10.44

Darling Betty,

Regarding my health, etc., you ought to know me well enough to realize that I can look after myself and that I attach far more importance to physical well-being than most people. It is not a question of my agreeing with Govt. — I seldom agree with it. But I rely on myself for my physical and mental conditions and not on Govt. agencies to which I attach little importance. Accidents apart, there is no reason why my health should fail me for a long time to come. In jail especially I consider it a point of honour to keep fit and an inexcusable lapse and weakness to fall ill. I do not want to become an invalid in the hands of the Govt. or their representatives. I want to retain as much of my physical and mental freedom as possible. It is enough that I am confined within four walls and cut off from human beings outside. I do not propose to add to that confinement.

I may be kept in prison but nobody is going to take from me my dignity and composure. Whining and complaining are not in my line. Nor are outbursts of strong language good enough. Apart from other reasons, they drain away energy and vitality and I want to preserve my energy.

As a matter of fact I keep not only physically well — and this is more than I can say of others — but am mentally at peace. I do not worry. Why should I? I keep busy with my day's work and sleep well at night. It is totally immaterial to me whether I go out of prison or remain here for some more years. Or perhaps that is not quite correct,

559. *Ghora*—Horse.

for it would make a difference. But I am sure that I can continue in prison for an indefinite period without worrying much about it.

We have seen in the newspapers that interviews are going to be allowed to us. We have received thus far no other intimation of this or the conditions governing them. It is very good of the Government to allow us this privilege after nearly two and a quarter years. But for my part I have no present desire or intention to take advantage of it. I need not go into reasons for this. It is enough that the conditions under which interviews are likely to take place do not fit in with my conception of my dignity or the dignity of my dear ones. So I do not want you or anyone else to take the trouble to come here or to apply for an interview with me. Naturally I should love to see you all but I am not at all sure that a brief jail interview would prove satisfactory to either party.

Day after tomorrow is *Bhaiya Duj* and a fortnight later is your birthday. As I cannot possibly send you a present from here I am enclosing a cheque for Rs. 100/-. Will you get a present and give it to yourself with my love?

I was glad to hear of the healthy appearance of the boys.

Love to you and Raja.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

October 19 — Thursday

The third *Divali* in Ahmadnagar Fort has come and gone. We celebrated it in our usual way with some illumination in a small way. This was rather successful this time. The flagstaff in the centre of our court has begun to resemble the Eiffel Tower of Paris. We have trained creepers along with four cable supports of the flagstaff and these have grown rapidly and produced a resemblance to that Tower. In the centre of this at various heights lights (दीवे) were arranged, and the effect was pleasant and agreeable.

At night we used some coloured candles in our dining room—

x x x x

Yesterday — 18th October — we completed 800 days here. Another landmark — the next century, 900 days, falls on January 26th — Independence Day —

x x x x

Ever since Mahmud went there have been many surprises for us in the papers — what he said and what is more important, what he did not say — He was released unconditionally so the order ran. Was it on grounds of health? This might have been presumed as he is a bundle of diseases — Some mention of this in the papers brought out a prompt denial from Govt. No he was not released on grounds of health; in fact he was not ill, so Govt. proclaimed. The latter positive statement was astonishing even for a Govt. communique. Whatever the reasons for Mahmud's release, no one in his senses can call Mahmud fit and well. He is continually suffering from a number of serious diseases. Probably because these are chronic they are taken for granted by Govt. whose idea of illness is high temperature and being completely bed-ridden. Filaria, heart-trouble, gall-bladder, serious eye-trouble, persistent spitting out of blood, pyorrhoea — are some of his ailments, and additional minor troubles supervene. Almost it might be said that he is broken up physically and even to some extent mentally because of all this. It is true that he had most of these troubles when he was arrested and brought here and they have continued since then. There have been some new ailments also.

Govt.'s statement that Mahmud was not released on grounds of ill-health led people to discuss the real reason for his discharge. Whispers apparently started that he had given some kind of undertaking to Govt. Newspapers referred to them and Mahmud's attitude encouraged these rumours. He remained mum and avoided pressmen. We read about this with amazement for there had been no hint of undertaking so far as we knew. Why does he not deny these insinuations, we wondered?

Then Maulana remembered that Mahmud had told him that he had sent a letter[560] to Govt. about his ill-health and had demanded permission for his own doctors to see him. What else had he written in this letter? No one knew for none had seen that letter. It appeared that not even Sendak the Supt. had seen it as he had given it sealed.

So doubts grew. How excessively foolish Mahmud was and anything might come out of that folly. Foolish people often think they are acting cleverly and in trying to overreach others fall themselves into the pit of their own making.

Mahmud stated that he would make a statement after seeing Bapu as we had asked him to convey a message to him. As a matter of fact we had done no such thing except to send him our greetings. The

560. On 19 August 1944 Syed Mahmud wrote a letter to the Viceroy's Private Secretary, without the knowledge of his prison colleagues, criticising Mahatma Gandhi for the August Resolution and reiterating that he himself had supported the war effort. This led to his release.

real reason for not sending a message through Mahmud was because we did not trust Mahmud's ability in conveying our ideas correctly. Besides no simple message could be sent as the situation was a complicated one and our reactions varied.

Why should Mahmud say that he would issue a statement only after seeing Bapu? What was there to prevent him from denying the charge of undertaking if this was false? It was all very odd and irritating. Evidently there was something behind all this of which we had been unaware.

Mahmud told everybody that he and I shared a room. Inevitably people would think that he would act only after consulting me. Yet I knew nothing and as a matter of fact we had not been on very good terms since April last when we had a rumpus. We continued to carry on normal conversations but during the last six months we discussed nothing serious and deliberately avoided a real talk.

Mahmud went to Wardha — saw Bapu[561] — and then issued a brief statement. He said that he had been maligned &c.— That he had written to Govt. previously (from A F.) and he wanted to publish this letter but he could only do so after he got Govt.'s permission as the letter had been marked 'Private & Confidential'. He had asked for this permission —

So now it appeared for the first time that he had written something to Govt. apart from what he might have said about his ill-health &c. What this was none of us know. Probably he wrote something very foolish.

x x x x

Mahmud's statements about the health & activities of the people here have not been satisfactory. But to add to his own deficiencies the printer's devil produced a remarkable piece of information. It appeared in some newspapers (*Leader, Amrit Bazar Patrika*) that while the older persons played chess and cards occasionally, 'in the evenings some girl inmates take to badminton'! This apparently ought to have been 'some agile inmates' etc.

561 He explained to Mahatma Gandhi the circumstances under which he had written that letter to the Government and admitted that he had been guilty of gross impropriety towards the other members of the Congress Working Committee

But many people will no doubt be taken in and imagine that we have the company of girls! Considering that we have not seen a girl or a woman since the day of our arrest.

x x x x

Two days ago it was announced in the papers that Govt. was permitting interviews to us. Yesterday this information was conveyed to us by the Jailer — All of us have reacted against accepting interviews though for different reasons. Maulana has suffered so much inner hurt that his pride will not permit him to accept any so-called favour — He is for no interviews here or even elsewhere, in case we are transferred. Others simply think that it is far too much trouble to ask our people to travel thousands of miles just for a brief interview. Some hold a middle opinion. Anyway it is clear that no one is going to have any interview in Ahmadnagar Fort. I have written to Betty not to seek an interview.

Nan will be going soon to America and I should have loved to see her before she goes. But that is off also.

We are meeting here today to consider what answer we should send to Govt. The interviews allowed are limited to close relatives — to those with whom we can correspond.

October 21, Saturday

We were all agreed that we should not accept interviews in the existing circumstances. But when it came to giving reasons for this decision there was a difference of opinion. Ultimately we left it to Maulana to write on behalf of all of us to the Suptd. and to write briefly. He sent a brief note[562] yesterday. I suggested some changes and additions in it but he did not agree to them. It was a small matter after all what he wrote.

I have today written to Indu also about our decision not to have interviews. She is back in Allahabad, returning home after many months.

562. Abul Kalam Azad wrote that "the general attitude of the Government towards us during the past twenty six and a half months, and the rigorous isolation to which we have been subjected, even in spite of personal tragedies, are not calculated to incline us to take advantage of the personal facility".

Oct. 21, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have had no news of you since your return to Allahabad. The first few days must have been rather full for you had been away from home for many months.

The books you sent from Bombay have not reached me yet. Perhaps the fact that Laski's and Huxley's books have titles with the word 'Revolution' in them has induced the censors at the Bombay Secretariat to pay particular attention to them. I have received, however, a parcel containing the Travancore cigarette case, the Kashmir pullover, the *pashmina* shawl and two boxes of cigarettes. I wish you had kept the shawl for yourself or the baby. I really have no use for it here.

The sweater or pullover is satisfactory. It is just a bit heavier and not quite so soft as my old one. It is also slightly tight but I suppose it will widen with use. My old pullover is full of holes, as I wrote you once. I suppose these holes could be mended. It might be worthwhile sending it to Kashmir for the purpose — But for the present I shall keep it.

The cigarette case which Chinni has sent me is well-made and attractive. Only there is just a minor defect — it is apparently not meant to contain the average cigarettes — my cigarette cannot be pushed into its separate compartments. I tried a thinner one. This entered with some difficulty but then would not come out again without the help of some kind of pincers! It is curious how artisans who do good work ignore some very obvious aspect of what they are making.

We have had our third *Divali* here, suitably celebrated in our own small way and the next day, Oct. 18th, we completed 800 days here and started on the ninth century. I have got rather into the habit of measuring our stay here by a century of days — a month is too short a time, a year too long The present century will end on a significant day — January 26th — and then we shall enter the millennial centenary.

Ever since Mahmud has left us and gone out we have read with some surprise the statements made by him or about him in the papers. But the biggest of all surprises came when we read an account of our life here which, *inter alia*, said that the older people played chess or cards "and in the evening some girl inmates take to badminton". Girls! Considering that we have not seen anything resembling a girl or a woman ever since we left Bombay 26½ months ago. And yet there it was soberly stated in *The Leader* as well as in the *Patrika* in some agency message. Both the Allahabad papers agreed in this and I

wondered what our friends and others reading this would think of it. Evidently the sub-editors had found nothing odd about it and so it was possible that others might also imagine that a benevolent and benign Govt. had taken some steps to cheer us up by arranging to send some girls to play badminton in the evenings. But no. They did not come from outside, they were the 'girl inmates'. Who were these girl inmates? Where exactly do I come in for I play neither chess nor cards?

A reference to some other newspapers brought some light. Apparently the word 'agile' had been converted into 'girl' in the process of transmission. The editors of *The Leader* and *Patrika* were not clever enough to spot this or even to doubt the accuracy of the message.

We were informed two or three days ago that we would be permitted to have fortnightly interviews in the future under the usual jail rules. You must have seen this piece of news in the newspapers. After 2 years and two months and more we have forgotten all about interviews and only vague memories persist of what people outside our little group are like. For various reasons which I need not go into — some are obvious enough — we have decided not to take advantage of this generous offer and so we propose to take no interviews and to carry on as we are. Need I say how much I would like to see you and others again? But it is better to hold ourselves in patience and wait for the day, distant or otherwise, when we can meet in more normal circumstances. I have written to Betty and informed her of our decision. Will you tell *Puphi* also? She is thinking of going to America and both she and I would have liked to see each other before she goes. But there are so many things that we want to do and yet cannot and sometimes deliberately refrain from doing. That is all part of this game of life and we must accept it with good humour even when it hurts.

We were supposed to have interviews with those to whom we are allowed to write. That means, so far as I am concerned, you and *Puphi* and Betty and Amma. Amma had also better be informed, though I suppose there was hardly any chance of her travelling two thousand miles in her present state of ill-health in order to have a brief interview with me.

So that is that!

I see from the papers that Kailas and Sheila are returning at last with their two babies. I suppose they will travel *via* the Mediterranean. They ought to reach India early in November —

I have sent you back the following books & pamphlets:

1 Shakespeare's Works, Vol. IX
2 Gustav Stolper : *This Age of Fable*

3 *Mahabharata* — abridged
4 *Dayananda and the Indian Problem*
5 Stalin's Report No. 17
6 *Peace Front and People's War*
7 Stalin : *War of Liberation*
8 Earl Browden : *Victory and After*
9 Orel
10 *Kharkov*
11 Sebastopol
12 *France Fights for Freedom*
13 *A New Germany in Birth*
14 *Spotlight on Yugoslavia*
15 *I.L.O. Man-power Mobilisation for Peace*
Also some periodicals.
Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 85.

October 22, Sunday

What a bloody fool Mahmud has been! For the last few days I have hardly dared to open a newspaper lest some sapient remark of his or something about him should upset me. Gradually the facts are coming out but the picture is still very vague and incomplete. It seems obvious, however, that he wrote to Govt. early in Sept.—the famous sealed letter — in which he said all manner of foolish things — Govt., taking advantage of these assurances and attempts to clear himself, released him as one who repented.

All manner of little incidents of the past months now stand out and assume a new significance. His attempt to send a letter of resignation from the W.C. to the Maulana six months ago — both being in prison and the W.C. an illegal organization! It was as a consequence of this that I flared up then and said many hard things to him resulting in our relations becoming strained. What was the purpose of this step, I had asked him then, except to lay the foundations for some other step? What was this? He gave me no answer. I have no doubt now that he intended informing his son about it through one of his letters and thus indirectly informing Govt. It is evident that he wrote much to his son

with this intention. Some of this was even published and Sendak mentioned then that the officers in his mess referred to it saying that it was evidence of our 'cracking up'.

Bapu's release and the various steps he took possibly led Mahmud to postpone further activities. But when month after month went by and he saw no chance of release, he wrote direct to Govt. — not telling us anything about it.

If all this is not cowardly, sneaky and lying behaviour I do not know what it is. It was open to him to change his opinion, or confess his weakness, but to act behind our backs and imagine that he was being very clever — this is more than I could have expected of any man I call a friend or comrade. One false step leads to another and slippery slope becomes steeper.

What will people outside think? Can anyone possibly conceive that he acted in this manner without reference to Maulana and me? Without, in fact, any mention of it to us? Some may even think that we partly approved of it, but certainly everyone will think that we knew about it.

What must he have told Bapu and others? Lies, lies, lies or what is even worse, an atom of truth with a mass of lies covering it. Not the youngest and most immature of our volunteers could have acted thus.

x x x x

I was reading today Plato—*The Last Days of Socrates — The Apology, Crito* &c.[563] I felt strangely comforted and my anger against Mahmud lessened.

23-10-1944

Darling Nan,[564]

I owe you three letters, that is to say I have received three letters from you since I wrote to you last on Oct. 5th. Your three letters are dated 4th Oct., 8th Oct., (from Sevagram), and 14th Oct. which came last evening. With my last letter I returned Chand's and Tara's letters. The snapshots of the girls reached me some time back. I am keeping them unless you want them. Rita's photograph is also with me.

563. The trial and condemnation of Socrates on charges of heresy and corrupting the minds of the young and Plato's defence of him are conveyed in these books.

564. File No: 3590/H/II-2, Maharashtra Government Records, Police Commissioner's Office.

This continuing search of a name for the babe is becoming rather pointless. We seem to be losing ourselves in a sea of suggestions and there is no end to the attractive names that can be found in our old literature. If this kind of thing goes on much longer we shall have to call the babe the Nameless or the one with innumerable names. I think it is time we pitched our tent somewhere and fixed on a name or names. Otherwise fresh suggestions will continue to pour in. Rajiva Ratna is a good name and the more I repeat it the better it sounds. As Indu and you and Betty like it, why not fix upon it? As for a second name, if Indu approves, Brijees may be chosen.

I am not particularly anxious to see the babe soon. I feel rather uncomfortable with tiny babes; they seem so soft and delicate, and I am a little afraid of hurting them with my uncouth ways. After the first six months they become more solid, can sit properly and it is possible to treat them as human beings.

Your excitement about a possible interview with me was premature. When I first heard of interviews being allowed it was all very vague then and no official intimation had reached us—my immediate emotional reaction to it was not to take them. This had little to do with any reasons or with any particular conditions attached to them, though reasons subsequently confirmed that first reaction. I wrote immediately to Betty and asked her to let you know. Why did I react in this way? After all I have taken interviews in prison previously and it is just possible that if interviews had been permitted from the time of our arrest and confinement on this occasion, we might have accepted them and adapted ourselves to them though I must say that I have never liked the idea of jail interviews. Somehow it brings home the idea of enforced confinement and being subjected to others' wills even more than the confinement itself. That idea is a constant irritant. What one might have done more than two years ago I do not know. But after being deprived of even this abnormal and strictly limited human intercourse for nearly two years and a quarter, a period during which much has happened and layer upon layer of thought and passion and painful sensation have accumulated in memory's chambers, it is very different with me. It may be I have hardened; certainly I have changed, as we all change with the passing of years. So it is not a question of any particular condition attached to an interview but a reaction to everything as a whole. I do not fancy being treated like a wild beast in a cage with occasional rope allowed so that I can move a few feet if I behave myself. I dislike being the plaything of others and to have my movements and my emotional life regulated by others. Where force prevents me from acting as I wish, I have to accept it, but I prefer to

retain such freedom of mind and action as I possess. If it has been thought fit and proper to prevent us from seeing even those we care for during these 2¼ years or so, well and good; anyway perforce I had to adapt myself to it. But I see no reason why I should adapt myself to all the new vagaries of those who keep us in prison or to stabilise myself in new positions. It pleases me to reject crumbs of relief, if relief they can be called. Thus I have a sensation of not only being the ruler of my mind but, up to some extent, even my actions.

Perhaps all this is mere emotion or pride. I do not deny it; nor do I think this a failing of which I should rid myself. Anyway, whether it is a virtue or failing, it is part of me and governs my life.

I would love to see you all but I would rather do so in the normal conditions of life and not in the narrow, constrained, prying atmosphere of a jail office. I have so much to see, so much to feel, so much to say — how could I do this in a jail interview? I wondered how I would feel if I saw those I cared for and heard dear and remembered voices again. Normally, outside we would adapt ourselves to each other soon enough, even though we might discover many changes and new aspects and features. But here or in any prison, I would hardly be able to say what I had in mind for I would be overwhelmed with the things I had to say and at the same time trying to find out what the other was like, what would be appropriate and what not so. Would then, I wondered, all that I had to say remain unsaid and I sit dumbly and confused? Probably not for I do not function that way, but there would be a fever of excitement and feverish ways of talking which would cover up and hide what lay in the mind.

Yet do not imagine that I am unhappy for that is not so, and I find many ways and many by-lanes where peace and mental delight are to be found. Necessarily I live often in dreamland, almost forgetting the reality of things here. Not so much an ivory tower business for I am too much connected with life and activity to look at my own pale reflection. Yet it is curious how thin is the line that divides happiness from unhappiness, like that faint line which divides life from death.

You will go to America and be far away for some months. My mind of course will picture you on the other side of the world. And yet for all practical purposes you have been as far away, as unapproachable and unattainable, during these past two years and more. If you lived in Ahmadnagar itself you would still be as far. And yet very near wherever you might be. For this sensation of nearness and farness is of the mind and the feelings. If we do not know each other well, we are strangers however often we may meet; even if we know each other in many ways and yet do not fit into each other, even then we continue

as strangers unable to see and understand each other. Here I have been for this long while living in the enforced intimacy of prison life with others. Some I have grown to know better, others seem further away and far more difficult for me to understand, or perhaps more understanding has revealed greater differences in our outlook on life. Prison has a way of magnifying our traits and suppressed habits of thought and living; sometimes it strengthens our virtues, more often it magnifies our failings and our spirit of intolerance. For over a year Mahmud and I shared a room here. There are not enough rooms for each one to have a separate one and so some of us had to share rooms. At first I had a room to myself. Then we had a fresh shuffle and I decided to share with Mahmud as he was unwell and I thought I might be of some service to him. Our room was a big one but it does make a difference whether one has a room of one's own or not.

How little we know of each other and even a lifetime may fail to give us insight into another. And yet a word, an act, a gesture suddenly enlightens us like a flash of lightning. I had known Mahmud as well as one can usually know another. Yet I was continually discovering how different we were from each other mentally, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually. In spite of our liking for each other there was so little in common. What interested me produced no response in him, what interested him bored me or even irritated me. So it came to this that we had little to talk about apart from the necessities of daily life. For many months we hardly had a conversation. And so he was really further removed from me even though we shared a room, than many persons whom I had not seen for years. He must have told you, if you have met him, of our superficial daily life here, but of the things that count, so far as I am concerned, probably you could tell him far more than he could tell you. For though you may not see me you can understand me from letters, while he and I live far apart in private universes of our own.

It will be a pity if you do not see Malabar. You have never been there so far as I know. Not from the point of view of relief work but of seeing a lovely corner of India which so few of us in the North know. We talk and think of India so much and yet how little we know even her physical appearance, much less her spirit and her memoried past, so full of dreams and many sided activity, of adventures of the mind and body. I am sorry I have not been able to go to Malabar oftener. But I carry with me the memory of the beauty of its backwaters, those tongues of the sea that creep and wind far inland with their wooded banks and green and thickly covered little islands. I remember journeying with Kamala and Indu over their still waters as the

evening deepened to night and the moonlight shimmered over the surface, with the silence broken only by the soft sound of the oars dipping into the waters. Does Indu remember, I wonder? Tell her of these lines:

Un soir, t'en souvient-il? Nous voguions en silence;
On n'entendait au loin, sur l'onde et sous les cieux,
Que le bruit des rameurs qui frappaient en cadence
Tes flots harmonieux.[565]

Will you tell Indu to send me, when she sends another packet, Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina?* She will find it in Anand Bhawan. I want to read it again.

And so all my love to you whether you are in Allahabad or far America.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

October 26, Thursday

So the Mahmud mystery is solved. His (secretly-sent) letter to the Viceroy has been published together with a statement by him & a characteristic note[566] by Gandhiji.

What astonishing stupidity it reveals — lack of the most ordinary intelligence & sense. And servility & whining & suppression of truth and at least two falsehoods — though possibly, in his excited state of mind, he might have imagined much.

I felt humiliated & ashamed that one whom I had considered a friend & a colleague should have behaved thus. And yet in spite of the tragedy of it all, it was so comic, so utterly ridiculous.

Anyway it is over and there is some feeling of relief that we have not been dragged into it.

x x x x

Bapu again contemplating a fast!

565. One evening, do you remember?, we were sailing noiselessly; we only heard far off, on the water and beneath the skies, the sound of rowers rhythmically striking the melodious waves.

566. In a statement Mahatma Gandhi asked Congressmen to read without passion Syed Mahmud's letter to the Government. "For me in spite of his indiscretion, he remains the same dear friend he has been since the Khilafat days."

Oct. 28, 1944

Darling Indu,

I received your letter of the 20th Oct. (No. 84) yesterday after a rather long letterless interval. I realized how fully occupied you must have been with baby and the house after your return home. Baby must of course prove a hand-full and a mind-full. That is the way of babies. He is already nine weeks old and I suppose in another month or two he will begin to behave a little more reasonably.

As for the name, I think you should stick to Rajiva Ratna राजीव रत्न. It is a good name. As a second name you can have Birjees बिर्जीस, if you like it. So that the names would be राजीव रत्न बिर्जीस though normally only the first name will be used. It is desirable, I think, to have a Persian name and the one Maulana suggested sounds well and has a good meaning and old associations.

There is one other suggestion regarding names that I am making though I am not myself sure about its desirability. What about adding 'Nehru' as an additional name? I do not mean that he should have a double-barrelled name — Nehru-Gandhi. That sounds silly and is in fact a little absurd. But just as a separate name which is not used normally but is there. It is really a matter of sentiment. On the other hand, if this is added, the full name becomes long & pompous — राजीव रत्न बिर्जीस नेहरू गांधी. Perhaps it is worthwhile having it thus in a formal kind of way but not for use of course — But do as you & Feroze think fit.

'Nehru' has no meaning and is derived, as family names often are, from some place name. Hence it is not tied up with any particular spelling. In Urdu there is no difficulty because Urdu writing is vague and rather unscientific and can be read in a variety of ways. Thus it is written نہرو. In Hindi, which is more precise, a difficulty arises and the exact sound of the name cannot be reproduced as there is no such sound in the script. That sound is somewhere in between नेहरू and नैहरू[567] — Dadu, who seldom wrote his name in Hindi, used the नैहरू form. I came to the conclusion that नेहरू was a nearer approach and therefore more correct. I have therefore been using this form. You are however cussed enough to write नैहरू. Last evening I had a discussion with Narendra Deva and he agreed that नैहरू was not suitable as it sounds like Naihru, and that नेहरू was better. In Latin script we have got used to Nehru though it is not very correct and

567. Nehru and Naihru

leads foreigners to pronounce it in all manner of ways. But we have to stick to it. I have recently been reading a book by an American scholar in the Persian language. With a scholar's perversity he insists on writing names as he thinks they should be written and not as in fact they are being written now. He even changes people's personal names using diacritical marks to indicate the correct pronunciations. (If you do not know the word 'diacritical' you should look it up in the dictionary. You should know it.) I suppose owing to the insufficiency of the Latin alphabet some such marks are necessary for accurate representations of sounds. But they are rather irritating, especially in names. They cannot be avoided in transliterating Sanskrit or Arabic &c. This American writes Makkah for Mecca, and wants to write al-Qahira for Cairo though his courage fails him. The Maulana's name is written by him as Abū-l Kalām Āzād. My name he insists on writing as Jawāhar Lāl Nāhru, well-knowing of course how I write it. In dealing with Indian names he gets into a difficulty in his index, which is not surprising as most of these names have no fixed family designations. In some despair he exclaims: 'Forms such as Rahim, Sir Abdur and S.A. Lateef must make anyone shudder who has a reverence for either God or grammar.'

As a matter of fact 'Nahrū' is not right. It is just an attempt to transliterate in Latin characters the Urdu نہرو . The nearest approach seems to me to be Neharu. But we need not worry about scholars' ways and perversities. 'Nehrū' is there and will remain there.

So much for names — The books you have sent — or Betty — have not yet come but are expected in a day or two.

I have already written to you that we do not propose to take interviews. I wrote to Betty also and to *Puphi*. Betty had apparently applied for an interview before she got my letter and yesterday I was formally informed that the interview had been allowed. But of course it is not going to take place now as I do not choose to allow it or any other interview.

There appears to be some misunderstanding as to the reason for our not taking interviews. There was even a comment in a Bombay paper suggesting that this might be due to some condition relating to searches of those who came to interview. This is not correct. Jail interviews are always somewhat humiliating, or, at any rate, I have found them so. But apart from the inevitable accompaniments and atmosphere surrounding them, there is, so far as we know, no special conditions attached to them here. There is no question of personal searches. Nevertheless we have decided not to have interviews. The reason? Well, to put it briefly, all that has happened during the past twenty-

six & a half months. If during this long and dreary period the normal human accompaniments of even jail life were not considered suitable for us, in spite of tragedy and other painful happenings, we can do without them now and for the future.

I am enclosing a few seeds of a creeper which has flourished exceedingly here. It came accidentally as a seedling and we pushed it into the ground. It has since spread out to about 40 feet and is a perennial. It gives clusters of small pink flowers. I do not know the name but Asaf Ali says it is called in Hindustani—*Qumquma* कुमकुमा. I am not at all sure that these seeds will yield any results. But try them. They take time.

I wrote to you a week or fortnight ago that the rains had ended. I was premature. They have continued and are still continuing. October is evidently the most rainy month here, after June.

Love

Your loving
Papu

I have just received the books from Bombay as well as the *Persian Grammar* &c. I shall send a list next week.
This is my letter No. 86.

31-10-1944

Darling Betty,
How fortunate you are to feel on your eleventh wedding anniversary fresh and friendly with life. The feeling has grown in me that life for all its vagaries offers us ultimately what we seek from it, or rather what we are capable of receiving from its inexhaustible storehouse. In a sense it mirrors our capacity and our temperaments. If our interests are sufficiently varied we can find in it all the variety we can appreciate and absorb. If we live in a narrow shell, life for us assumes that shape and context. It can be superficial or deep as we choose to see it and sense it; it can be full of adventure or dull and conventional and narrow in scope, fitting in with our own mental horizon. Life ultimately is a series of mental perceptions and sensations; it enters and fills us to the extent we have open windows to our minds and spirits. External factors, which we cannot control, affect it of course greatly, but there is always this possibility of rising above them and not allowing them to suppress us; and indeed of making them the means of giving us further insight and experience of life.

the principal reason apparently being that Govt. wanted to close this camp. This may happen — And yet I rather doubt it. The Supdt. says we would have been transferred but for our decision not to take interviews.

Hardly anyone of us looks forward to a transfer. Living in a jail, as we are bound to do if we are transferred, will be a change for the worse in every way. The only advantage might have been in interviews and as we have rejected these, even that advantage goes. Anyway, it really does not matter much either way, whether we are transferred or not —

x x x x

Mahmud has done one good thing at least. He has released to the press *Maulana's letter to Linlithgow sent in February 1943.*

x x x x

I have started Persian with the help of Maulana and Otto's *Grammar.* I wonder how long I shall continue. I do not take kindly to languages. Still it will help in various ways —

x x x x

Today is the American presidential election & the anniversary of the Soviet Revolution.

November 11, Saturday

Yesterday there was an unusual occurrence. Sendak, the Supdt., came with a parcel, unopened and sealed, and said he had instructions to deliver it to me without opening it. Further that the censor of the Bombay Secretariat had also not opened it. I opened the parcel in Sendak's presence — There were three books in it and a letter. Two of the books were by Edward Thompson and the third was Wavell's anthology of poetry.[569] Sendak was suitably impressed with Thompson's importance — that books sent by him for me should be treated in this superior way. He did not see the letter, or rather did not know who it was from. I did not tell him.

The letter was from Wavell. He said that Thompson had sent two books for me which he was forwarding — also a message about his illness. Edward had been very ill and was still in a bad way. A big operation yielding no results. Then a special treatment had done him

569. *Other Men's Flowers* (1944).

November 11, 1944

Darling Indu,

November is well on its way and it is pleasant. There is a nip in the air and the sun is losing its ferocity and becoming a mild and soothing companion. New birds appear. What a delightful month it is in India or rather in North India. Allahabad must be having its गुलाबी सर्दी[571] as they call it, that mild cold weather, which is neither really cold nor warm and yet is exhilarating and freshening. Ahmadnagar, though situated in the South, is on some kind of a plateau — its altitude is I think about 2000 ft. — and is therefore cooler than the surrounding country. It is never really cold here as in the North, but it is not so hot either and on the whole it has an agreeable climate. I rather miss the cold of the North. Anyway this is a pleasant and cheerful month here and I react to it accordingly. I hope the little one is enjoying this month and adapting himself to the cooler climate. I am sure this cold weather in Allahabad will do him a lot of good. Some of us were wise enough to be born in November.

I have received two books sent by Edward Thompson — *Burmese Silver* and *100 Poems* — and a message about his ill-health. He has been very ill, had a severe operation in March last for the removal of some kind of a growth, and was supposed to have been cured. But the trouble recurred and was found to be inoperable. The radio-therapists told him that there was no help for it. But then a new technique was tried on him and this treatment, although very painful and weakening, has produced a marked change and he hopes to recover. But it seems as if he was likely to be a permanent invalid. There was some news also about his sons on the battlefronts.

I am very sorry to learn about Thompson's illness. I should like you to write to him and tell him that I have received his two books and am happy to have them. I hope that his recovery to health will continue and that he will be well again.

Could you send me two tubes of Bengue's Balsam (I am not sure about the name). You should find at least 4 tubes in the cupboard in my bathroom. This is good for pains and sometimes my hand gives me trouble. Send me 2 tubes only. This Balsam is often useful and you should keep it by you.

I see that *Puphi* has got her passport and her visa. So now she has only to wait for her passage and this may be fixed up at any time. Tell

571. *Gulabi Sardi.*

her to let me know the address to which letters for her should be sent. I hope she realizes that America will be very cold indeed in December and subsequent months.

This is my letter No. 88.

Love

Your loving
Papu

14-11-1944

Darling Betty,

Your letter of the 6th came yesterday. Also the books. Thank you. Both of them are very welcome and will interest me, especially *Pre-Buddhist India*.[572] It seems to be a scholarly treatment of a period we know little about. I do not fancy the title of Munshi's book[573] but that of course is not a criticism of the book. Yet it indicates a pompous approach to a historical subject which should be dealt with in a lesser key. Munshi has a habit of using ornate and rather flamboyant language which sounds well at times but does not seem to possess too much meaning. I am referring chiefly to some of his reported speeches which have been a source of some amusement to us. Perhaps he controls himself a little more in his written work.

Some ten days ago or more I sent you my Shaeffer fountain pen for repairs. This is my favourite pen and I think I have used it now almost continuously for ten years or so. The nib just suits me. I possess two other pens but they are not suitable and it is something of a trial to use them for any length of time. So I would like the Shaeffer to be repaired and sent back to me, if that can be done. The nib itself is in good condition. It is the pumping apparatus that has gone wrong. For some time past this was not functioning properly. Now it is broken — that is the rod inside has become detached from the end rubber piece or whatever it is. I suppose it can be repaired.

Yesterday I received the dainty box containing 12 handkerchiefs.

572 By Rahlal N Mehta, the book presents a connected idea of ancient Indian life as portrayed in the Jataka stories.

573 *Akhand Hindustan* (1942), a collection of articles and speeches dealing with the unity of India which, in the author's words, "is not only to be felt, but visualised, worked for, if need be, fought for"

Will you thank Bul, Naju[574] and the G.S.S.? Whatever else I may lack here, there is no chance of my being short of handkerchiefs. All my old clothes have gone to pieces, have had to be renewed, and then again have been reduced to tatters. The process of renewal is a constant one. This rapid wearing away and tearing is I suppose partly due to the bad quality of the khadi as well as to the extreme vigour of the dhobi who deals with them. Perhaps also to the presence of fairly large quantities of chlorine in the water. But the handkerchiefs last. I do not trust them to the professional dhobis. They are washed here and they continue to give good service. The stuff is stronger too. So I have an ample supply of them.

I am writing this on my birthday. Why this particular day should have a greater importance than any other I do not know. And yet inevitably one treats it as a landmark in life's journey — a halting place from which one looks back and forward.

Give my love and thanks to all our friends who have remembered me on this occasion and sent me their greetings.

Love,

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

November 17, Friday

Another birthday has come and gone and I am 55. It was my fifth consecutive birthday in prison.

Sendak brought a cake and our Marwari friend in Ahmadnagar, Ferodia, who sometimes sends fruits, also sent a cake and a big pie — a mixed chicken & vegetable affair with a most appetising smell. So we had a feast and invited Sendak & the Jailer to it.

Pantji as usual arranged for garlands and bouquets. Rukwa, the convict who helps in the pantry, fixed up a kind of छाता[575] of paper with flowers tacked on to it — rather an effective piece of work. He did this entirely of his own accord—

x x x x

574. Naju Dastur, a full-time worker for the promotion of khadi.
575. *Chhata*—Canopy.

Mahtab signalised my birthday by breaking the little finger of his left hand — a fracture — in playing volleyball! He had to be taken to the military hospital the next morning for an X-ray and plastering up.

x x x x

Reading the various messages in the papers on the occasion of my birthday I was greatly moved by some, especially by Edward Thompson's.[576] What an affection he has developed for me! Why, I have often wondered. What has he discovered in me to attract him so much? Do I deserve all this love and faith that so many pour on me?

x x x x

Today's papers bring the news of the death of Edward's son — It is reported that he was shot by the Germans in Bulgaria in June last. He was working with the Bulgarian partisans, a dangerous job for which he had volunteered. Only a week ago I had news of him in Edward's message which Wavell forwarded. He had "apparently disappeared into the blue on some secret mission and is unable to write." He had a more conclusive reason for not writing for he was dead. He died in June and Edward's letter to Wavell was dated Sept. 19th.

How proud Edward was of this son of his — I remember his telling me of his brilliance, his linguistic attainments and his lovable qualities. He was a boy who had just gone to Oxford with a scholarship. Edward added then — all for cannon fodder! He proved right.

The second and younger son is serving in the army in Italy.

What a terrible blow it must be for Edward. My heart goes out to him and I feel very depressed.

I have taken my measurements today — Nov. 17, 1944. Compare them with previous figures on p. 44, 230, & p. 311 of journal (4) A.F. dates 20/12/42, 10/8/43, & 21/11/43 — Blood pressure on p. 330 & at end of this book.

On 17/11/44	Weight	— 127 pounds
	Chest	— 32–35½ (normal) —
		— 36½ expanded
	Waist	— 28–30
	Hips	— 34¾

576 It read "It is very hard to know what to say about my dear friend Jawaharlal. As my message, I send you, Jawaharlal, the assurance given to a Hebrew prophet 'O man greatly beloved, peace be unto thee, be strong; yes, be strong. Go thou the way till the end be, for thou shalt rest in thy lot at the end of the day'."

Thigh	20—(at mark 18)
Calf	12¼
Upperarm	stretched 11¼, bent 12
Forearm	9¾
Wrist	6⅜
Neck	14

No marked changes since last November.

Nov. 18, 1944

Darling Indu,

It is a little over three weeks since I had a letter from you. I suppose Rajiva keeps you pretty well occupied and the multifarious new duties following motherhood fill the day and tire you. That is inevitable at this stage and so I do not expect you to be very regular in your letter writing. I should, however, like to have news of Rajiva. *Puphi* mentioned in a letter she sent from Lucknow that he had been vaccinated and his arm had swollen up. He must have been unwell and very restless and requiring constant attention. I hope he has got over this completely and is now well and prospering. In another two days he will be three months old. More and more he will resemble a human being. Can he sit up now without support? I should like to have a good picture of him to find out how he is growing and what he looks like now.

I have received two books, apparently under your instructions: *Gandhiji*—the anniversary volume—and Laski's *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*.[577] Have you purchased Laski's book or has it been borrowed from someone? I ask this as I have found some passages in it marked in pencil.

Last week I wrote to you that I had received some books from Edward Thompson and also a message about his illness. There was some brief information about his sons also. The younger one was serving in the army in Italy, the elder one was, it was stated, on

577. Laski's argument in this book was "if we have failed by armistice to lay the foundation of a revolution by consent, we shall pass rapidly to a position where, because men no longer hold the great ends of life in common, they will be unable to agree upon the methods of social change. In that event, the reorganisation of our basic principles will not be capable of accomplishment by peaceful means and the final disposition of force will be determined, not by discussions but by violence".

some secret mission and no letter had come from him for some time. Yesterday I read in the papers of the death in June last of this elder son. He was working then with the partisans in Bulgaria — a dangerous job. There was thus a sufficient reason for his not writing to his father for he had been dead for many months. The news has distressed me greatly though such things must happen in war. He was a very bright boy — his school & college record had been thus far brilliant — and his father was tremendously proud of him. And yet, even in 1938, Thompson was obsessed with the thought of the coming war and used to say that all their bright young men were destined to die in them — just cannon fodder they were. The death must be a great blow to him. The younger son was at school in 1938. He wrote me a letter once from school.

Is it possible to write or cable to France now? If so I should like to have news of Louise Morin and Jean Jacques — also of Nanu. How people disappear from our lives behind the black curtain of war!

Puphi is, I understand, busy with her passages and her priorities. I was astounded to learn from her letter that an air passage from India to New York in an American plane costs $900. If that is the kind of price one has to pay for air travel in the future, then I am afraid there is little chance of my indulging in it, much as I prefer it to other methods of transport.

This is my letter No. 89.

Love

From your loving
Papu

November 25, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of the 14th Nov — No. 85. *I am glad to learn that* Rajiva is progressing and keeping well. *Give the old boy my love.*

A few days ago I wrote to Amma to Lahore. The very next day I read in the papers that Kailas had reached Bombay and was proceeding to Allahabad. There was no mention of *Sheila or the children but I* presume they were all together. *They must have changed considerably* during these past five and a half years. *I suppose Kailas is settling* down in Lucknow.

As usual, I received a dozen fine handkerchiefs from Bul and the G.S.S. for my birthday. In acknowledging them to Betty I mentioned that only my handkerchiefs lasted here and the other clothes went to pieces at short intervals and had to be replaced. The dhobi who washes our clothes has a way with him and few things survive his onslaughts. Perhaps this wearing away and tearing are also due to the presence of a good deal of chlorine in the water. Also the khadi I have been getting has been definitely bad. But the handkerchiefs last as I do not trust the dhobi with them and have them washed here. Betty immediately threatened to send me some *kurtas* &c. I do not want these for the simple reason that I do not wear them. About two years ago I took to wearing shorts and shirts with open collars and half-sleeves. I find these much more comfortable and lighter. All my *kurtas* and pyjamas lie in my boxes unused. Once or twice I tried to go back to them but I did not like the change and reverted to the more abbreviated attire. Partly also because the old clothes do not fit me now; they hang and pull. They were not well made to begin with and now I have grown somewhat thinner. The pyjamas (I use buttons on them) stay up with difficulty. I have a good mind to send you back a boxful of these old clothes. It is a nuisance to keep unnecessary articles here and have to air and sun them frequently to get rid of crickets and cockroaches.

I think I shall send a sample pair of my shorts and shirts to Betty so that she can have more made after that pattern.

Puphi and Rita must have sailed for America though I have not seen any mention of this in the papers. Perhaps they are still in Bombay. The cost of travelling — at any rate long distance journeys — seems to have gone up so much that it seems to have become a luxury for the rich. Even when I have the chance to do so, I fear I shall have to restrain and limit my wanderlust. The idea of spending weeks and months on the sea bores me, and air journeys are frightfully expensive. Anyway there are the Himalayas always waiting to receive me.

You wrote to me that you had arranged to pay Feroze 100/- a month from my account for relief work. But you did not say anything about the additional sum of Rs. 1000/- which I asked you to give him for this purpose — Have you fixed this up? Besides this do not hesitate to draw upon my account whenever Feroze thinks it necessary for his work. I am anxious about this.

Here are the names of three books — two of them quite recent — which you might note down. When available, if at all, they might be sent. But do not go out of your way for them. Perhaps I have already mentioned one of them in a previous letter:

Somerset Maugham : *The Razor's Edge*
Gerald Heard : *Man the Master*
Olaf Stapledon : *Sirius*
Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 90.

28-11-1944

Darling Bets,

Thank you — or rather thank Raja — for sending me his Shaeffer pen. This is good, though perhaps just a tiny bit too fine for much writing. But that is a small matter. I am using it now.

Yes, some time or other we shall also go to America and to many other places. But I dislike the idea of spending weeks and weeks on the sea, and it appears that air travelling is frightfully expensive. Anyway I can always go to the Himalayas or even across to Mansarovari

I am glad to learn of Spark's[578] offspring. They must be lovely. I cannot think of suitable names for them but Anthony and Cleopatra seem rather uncalled for. Surely there is no lack of good Indian names, even though I cannot suggest them. There was a famous pair of lovers in Gujrat (or was it Malwa?) — Baz Bahadur and Rupmati. For love of each other they let their kingdom go to pieces and many popular songs and legends still remind us of them. What about Baz and Rup? I do not particularly fancy the names but as they have just struck me I am suggesting them to you and Raja.

Love to you and Raja and all our friends.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

578. Krishna Hutheesing's retriever.

Dec. 2, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of the 24th Nov. Raja has sent me his Shaeffer fountain pen and so I can write to you a less messy letter than my last one. The pen writes well and smoothly though it is rather small and lady-like. I have got used to thicker varieties, something I can grasp firmly. Betty suggested sending me a gold or silver-tipped new Parker —the only ones available in the market—but I have asked her not to send it. A shining and aggressive top would probably distract my mind when writing. I am adequately provided with pens now to carry on my normal work.

I do not know yet what has happened to *Puphi* and Rita—whether they have sailed and are on the high seas or are still waiting patiently in Bombay for something to happen.

It was rather foolish of Kailas and Sheila to go to Allahabad without informing you beforehand and then to spend the night at the station. I can well understand how they must have changed during these past five years and a half—We have all changed a good bit. For them the conditions were in some respects harder and the environment was quite new, especially in wartime. Is Kailas going to live in the little house in Lucknow which he used to occupy previously? I suppose Amma will stay with him.

I was surprised to learn that Pyare Kathju had started, along with some others, a Hindi daily in Rajputana. That is hardly in line with his special training. Perhaps that is a side show for him and he will also do some other work.

I am glad Rajiva is getting on well. As for his resembling an early picture of Betty's, my own recollection is that these early photographs of Nan, Betty and you were remarkably alike. In fact it was difficult to distinguish them.

I have been looking through the fat commemoration volume—*Gandhiji*. Usually such volumes are just odd collections of tributes, a mixture of good and bad writing, most of it rather poor. I have found this particular volume singularly well edited and intelligently arranged. The pictures are good, so is the general get-up. Even the articles are above the average and bring out various aspects of the man and his work. I think the editors have done a good job of work and deserve to be congratulated. The price of the book, considering everything, seems to me to be too low—It should have been Rs. 50 at least. Later a cheaper edition could have been brought out.

The cigarette holder you have sent has not come yet. It will be helpful—You say that the other one (of the kind I have been using) is broken. If the top part of it, that is mouthpiece end, is not broken then this will come in useful here. I can fit it in my other holder.

Is Anna living with you now and helping to look after Rajiva?

Love

Your loving
Papu

December 5. Tuesday

I have another cold and possibly I handed it on to Maulana also. I am recovering. Maulana has had a worse experience and got a touch of 'flu. He is still in its clutches.

So my Persian lessons have been suspended. I have had over a month of these. Progress not quite as good as I had hoped—still something done.

Another bit of work suspended has been my reading out my manuscript (*Discovery of India*) to Maulana. For nearly three weeks I have been doing this. Previously Asaf Ali read through it and made a vast number of suggestions—some good, some not so good. Maulana's suggestions are fewer and almost always in keeping with the general scheme. Asaf's often were really a criticism of the whole background. Anyway all is mass of suggestions and criticism compels me to revise the stuff. Also many new ideas have struck me independently. This process of revision will therefore be more thorough than previously and is likely to take some time—perhaps a month—So far I have only gone through half the MSS with Maulana.

This thought of going back to this work, of after all not having finished it as I had thought I had done, is slightly disconcerting. I do not want release or transfer or any other development to come with any such work unfinished and hanging over. Outside—when I go out—the past should not pull me.

Well there is no reason why I should worry about this. Release seems as distant as ever. Somehow, nearly a year ago, I suggested to Mahmud that we might be released early in 1945—February or so I said. I had no particular reason for it except that on February 8th we shall have been here just 2½ years That is no reason at all. Yet because I said so

then the approximate date stuck in my mind. I still think it likely that we might be discharged next spring.

x x x x

Nan has reached the U.S. or so I think for she left by air 3 or 4 days ago and it is just a 72-hour journey. Rita has gone by sea under the care of Shiva Rao. I am very glad Nan is there. She will make good. I suppose some news about her will dribble through the cables. She has personality and makes news. I wonder if she will meet Mayling. I suppose she is bound to. But even if she does, she will say little about her. Little can be said. I have thought so often about her and worried. Her strange and distressing stay in America during these terrible months in China is somehow symbolical of China's distress & agony. A tremendously vital person like her to be bottled up in seclusion can only mean a complete nervous breakdown, or a feeling that to remain in China under existing conditions is unbearable or both. As long ago as February 1942 there were marked traces of this nervous tension. She overcame them then and carried on, with a break in the U.S. for two years.

How terribly difficult is the situation in China! Indeed everywhere—Problem, problem, almost insoluble problem everywhere. Perhaps there is no solution in the existing framework anywhere. In Europe as the Allied armies advance trouble breaks out in the liberated countries. Poland[579]—Italy[580]—Belgium[581]—Greece[582]—all on the eve of civil war—Spain[583] probably indulging in it already, conflict about future arrangements (air &c.) between England & U.S.A. An inherent conflict and abundant suspicions between the U.S.S.R.-England & the U.S. France a doubtful factor. And then the major problem of Germany! What a mess! It seems that the only thing men understand and can organize well today is war—the problems of peace are still beyond their comprehension.

579. A Polish Committee of National Liberation had been set up at Lublin m opposition to the Polish government in exile in London.
580. The Communists in Italy had won influence in the struggle against the Germans after the Italian surrender in September 1943. While working to establish a united front government with the socialists they were opposed to the liberals, who tried to revive the republican nationalism of the Mazzini tradition.
581. The resisters of the German occupation of Belgium were bitter about those who had collaborated with the enemy. They were opposed to their own armed forces being merged in the regular army.
582. There was division as to whether the monarchy should be restored after liberation.
583. Popular opposition to the dictatorship of General Franco was mounting, with periodic riots by students and strikes by workers.

Is it so surprising then that we in India find it difficult to solve our problems? Gandhiji issues statements from time to time and often they are good and even inspiring. And yet somehow they lack some basic reality. Then he begins to talk of another fast, and everybody is worked up emotionally. Rajaji goes on talking, talking imagining that he is the only possessor of a clear head. Yet a clear head can function in a very limited environment and be unable to see beyond. Now the Sapru Committee of jurists and wise men has been formed—What a collection of notables of a bygone age to tackle the problems of this revolutionary epoch! I criticize others. But what would I do myself if I was out? I do not know. Certainly I would not and could not remain passive and silent. Nor could I just repeat old slogans and phrases. What then?

x x x x

Certain answers[584] given in the Central Assembly about us here have irritated us and led Maulana to write to the Viceroy. Prafulla Babu's condition is deteriorating and the lack of proper treatment is annoying. Yesterday a minor operation was performed on him here without proper equipment—He ought to be in hospital.

x x x x

Today my weight showed a sudden and rather unexpected drop of over 2 pounds in a week. Sendak rather frightened—came and tapped me all over and then pronounced me sound.

x x x x

Kailas and Sheila have at last returned together with two British-born additions to the family aged 3½ years and 7 months. They have had a hard time during these five war years in London and, Indu writes, that they bear obvious mark of it.

584 On 21 November 1944, the Home Member stated that as the members of the Congress Working Committee had been deprived of interviews with their relatives for so long they did not at all want this facility. He had further said that Prafulla Ghose and Acharya Narendra Deva were under the care of a competent Government doctor and they were not allowed to have doctors and medicines of their own choice.

Dec. 9, 1944

Darling Indu,

Two or three days ago we received a parcel of fruit which, we were told, you had sent, apparently through Mridula. This contained grape fruit, मुज़म्बी[585], oranges and apples. They were all good and have been much appreciated. The grape fruit and the oranges, it was stated, were the produce of Anand Bhawan. I was surprised and pleased to find that you were producing such good fruit. I knew that you had many orange trees but I had no idea that they produced मुज़म्बी. Most people think that this kind of orange cannot be easily grown in North India.

I have had a kind of joint letter from Amma and Bappi. They write about their visit to Anand Bhawan and how they were charmed by Rajiva, who appeared to them to be the image of you, as you were at that age — Bappi was impressed by your ayah, but for some reason or other she was afraid that the ayah might leave you. Why should she leave Rajiva? Pyare, I understand, wants to add business to his journalistic ventures and for this purpose intends going to America. It is curious how America is drawing people like a magnet.

Puphi must have reached New York. And yet there has been no news thus far of her arrival there. This is surprising.

I asked you to send me some pictures of Rajiva. Send me also a good one of yourself. A new one, for I want to know what you look like now. I must keep pace with your changing self. Pictures do not take one far but they help slightly.

Some months ago *Puphi* wrote to me that the Ramakrishna people in Calcutta had given her a huge pot of Coorg honey for me. I asked her not to send it just then. Well, I do not want it sent at all for it is a difficult business to send honey. But I hope the honey is being used. If you have not got it already try to find out where it is and get hold of it. It will do you good.

What has happened to my yarn that I sent you many months ago? I hope something has been made out of it.

It is pleasant and cool here. This is the best time of the year in Ahmadnagar, as it is in Allahabad.

This is my letter No. 92.

Love

Your loving
Papu

585. *Musambi*—Sweet lime.

Dec. 16, 1944

Darling Indu,

I have received two letters from you dated 29th Nov. and 3rd December — Nos. 87 and 88. The latter has just come. Somehow they seem to take longer on the journey than they used to. I suppose they have to pass two barriers, two censorships, one in Allahabad and the other in Bombay.

I have received the cigarette holder you sent me. It is a good one and suits me as I can push some cotton wool in it and this serves as an absorber of the nicotine — So you need not send me another.

As for my clothes I have sent Betty particulars of what I want together with samples — She is having them made.

I am glad our garden is flourishing and looking bright with flowers. Here there has been a marked deterioration chiefly because of my lack of interest in it. What a lot of personal care a garden requires. I have been busy with other work and rather neglected our little garden. I got no fresh seeds and relied on some old ones which failed us at the last moment. Now it is too late to begin as the season is far advanced. Of course there are many odd flowers and plants, some perennials, and they more or less fill the place. When we came here nearly two and a half years ago our yard was just a blank barren area. In the centre of this yard there is a moderate-sized flagstaff supported by four wires. Creepers were trained to go up these wires — the railway creeper which is not attractive but which grows and spreads with amazing rapidity. Soon the whole flagstaff was covered up and for a while it looked remarkably like a miniature Eiffel Tower.

Puphi, I see from the papers, is in New York and is staying at the posh Waldorf Astoria Hotel. It must be very cold there now and she is not too fond of the cold. Hot Springs, where she will go for the Pacific Relations Conference, ought to be warm

Mehr Taj has finally got married, so I read in some newspaper. It struck me then that some present ought to have been sent to her on my behalf. I am sorry I forgot. Still, it is not too late to send it. Will you please choose something that you consider suitable and that she might like? Something say worth Rs. 150/- or Rs. 200/-. The choice is very limited I suppose. If you cannot get anything else you might get Benares saris. Send them with my love and good wishes.

A couple of days ago I was asked in what way Kishan *chacha* was related to me — This inquiry was made presumably because he had sent

a letter to me and the intricate and difficult question of whether the letter should be delivered to me or not had to be decided by competent authority. Did he come within the prescribed list of near relations who were authorised to write? I do not know and I doubt if anybody else knows exactly. Anyway I have not received the letter and I want you to inform Kishan *chacha* of this. During the past two years two brief letters from Birju *chacha* were delivered to me. He and Kishan *chacha* stand exactly in the same relationship to me—first cousins. And yet it appears that first cousins belong to a doubtful category, though brothers-in-law are allowed to write. It is all very odd and peculiar.

A firm of booksellers in Calcutta—Rupa & Co.—with a branch in Allahabad, have sent me books from time to time. They have been good books as a rule and new English publications. Yesterday I received from them Bernard Shaw's new book—*Everybody's Political What's What*.[586] I mention this so that you might not send this book.

Do not trouble yourself about Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*—I have plenty of reading material. I have just received two large bundles of foreign periodicals, presumably sent by you.

I have noted what you say about giving the money to Feroze for relief work. He can keep this sum apart for emergencies if he likes.

It is desirable that Feroze should engage himself in some regular work —what this work should be, it is for him to decide. I hope what he has chosen suits him.

I am glad Rajiva is putting on weight and is otherwise well.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is letter No. 93.

19-12-1944

Darling Betty,

I received your letter of the 2nd Dec.—also the electric shaver and diary for 1945. The shaver is functioning well now. A book has also come presumably sent through you but bearing Rajan's inscriptions—Shaukat

586. This is a volume of Bernard Shaw's thoughts on war, peace, medicine, law, government, science, socialism, capitalism and religion.

Ansari's *Pakistan*.[587] Could you send me some kind of a wall calendar for 1945. It need not be anything fancy. An advertisement sheet will do which, if necessary, I can cut out and hang up. The sense of time becomes rather feeble in the unchanging environment of prison as there are few distinguishing marks to indicate the passing of days. Hence a calendar is useful.

Some one has sent me Bernard Shaw's new book *Everybody's Political What's What*. I mention this so that you might not send it. It is the kind of book you might feel inclined to send me. Also I might mention that I do not want you to send me Beverley Nichols's book *Verdict on India*[588] which I find advertised and which some people are trying to boom up. Ever since I read one of Nichols's books long ago, I have had no desire to read another by him. More especially I do not want to waste my time on his latest effort. It surprises me that some people, who ought to know better, are excited about this kind of stuff. I do not suppose you would have sent it anyhow, but I want to make sure. It appears Thacker's of Bombay have brought out an Indian edition of this as well as some other recent English books. How badly they do their job. You sent me one of the books published by them—*For Whom the Bell Tolls*—and it was full of mistakes and bad type and printing, and at the same time priced very high. Evidently they are out to make money easily. Some time back I got Gunther's *D-Day*[589] —English edition—then I noticed in a paper that Thacker's have brought out an Indian edition full of mistakes. Why do they indulge in this kind of sloppy work? No decent publisher would tolerate such shoddy work.

It is difficult for me to judge of book prices in India now but I have an impression that they are much too high compared to English and even American prices Even your book seems to me to be highly priced. This kind of thing limits circulation.

Narendra Deva has received news that his younger brother[590] is on the verge of death. He had been ill for some time. Probably he is

587 Shaukat Ansari, general secretary of the All India Nationalist Muslims Conference. His book, *Pakistan*, argued that Muslim interests could be protected not through partition of authority and resources but by educational, social and economic progress.

588 In this book, Beverley Nichols denounces Mahatma Gandhi as a "deceiver", the Congress as a "Brahmin" organisation and Hinduism as "debased and discreditable". Jinnah seemed to him the only Indian with a constructive outlook.

589. *D Day* (1944) by John Gunther is a personal record of his eleven weeks' tour of North Africa and the Near East at the time of war.

590 Dr Yogendra Deva.

dead by this time. This has been a great shock for him and he is considerably upset.

I suppose the children will be coming home for Christmas, looking bright and cheerful, and your flat will be full of their cries and movements. Give my love to them. Are you going away anywhere for the holidays? I seem to remember your mentioning that you intended going South.

The New Year will soon be with us. All my love and good wishes to you and Raja.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

Dec. 23, 1944

Darling Indu,

Yesterday I read in the papers that when Sarojini was passing through Allahabad you went with Rajiva to the station to meet her. Rajiva was described as eight months old. This was of course just double his age, but I wondered if he was big enough looking to delude people. I suppose he is growing fast. For another three months or a little more, Allahabad will be just right for him, but then the warmer weather will not be so suitable. I am not a great believer in children being protected too much from our normal climate. They should get used to it or else they become misfits and physically somewhat unstable. But still I think that it will be better for him to spend his first hot weather in a better & cooler climate. I wonder if you have thought of it. The average hill station is always a nuisance and expensive, but since the war began, it has become even more unattractive and difficult of access. I think it would be good for both Rajiva and you if you took him to Khali. Except for the fact that it is somewhat out of the way and not easy to reach, everything is in its favour. The climate is delightful and the pine-clad hills are full of health. Personally, from a psychological point of view also, I fancy the mountain air and atmosphere for a growing child. It broadens his vision and gives him new perspectives. Khali will also require very little in the way of special arrangement for you. Only the journey will be a little trying. From the point of view of Khali also it will be good for someone to live there for a while. It is far too much neglected.

If you go to Khali, it would be desirable to ask Sheila and her children to join you there. Their kids may also find their first hot weather a little trying and the change from London in wartime to the open air of the Indian mountains will be very good for them.

It seems a bit odd for me to think and write about the summer when we are still in the early stages of our winter season. All manner of fresh developments may take place in this little world of ours during these coming months and it is not always wise to make plans too far ahead. Yet it is better to accept things as they are and plan for them, rather than to wait for something to happen. Plans can always be changed to fit in with changing circumstances. Very little planning indeed is necessary. All you have to do is to inform the Khali people well in advance so that they can keep the house clean and ready. This will anyway keep them up to the mark. I do not know who is running Khali now. *Puphi* wrote to me that she had asked Krishnaji[591] of Lucknow to look after it in some way or other. Probably this had more to do with the garden produce and the cottage industries that are or were carried on there. You can write to Krishnaji and tell him of your intention to visit Khali in the summer. Upadhyaya should also write to Chandra Singh at Khali—I hope I have got the name right. If you go to Khali you should take Upadhyaya with you. He will be useful there and knows the people in Almora. Also it will do him good.

Sheila has had a hard time during the past five and a half years. I should like her to have some rest and a holiday. She and her children should of course be wholly our guests at Khali and no burden of expense should fall on her. Do not mind the expense of your or her going there. You should draw on my account for it. I suppose about mid-April will be the right time to go there. It is still spring there then and very delightful. On your way to Khali you could break journey at Bareilly for a little rest. Anyway you have to change at Bareilly. Our friends, the Dwarka Prasad family, will be happy to have you in Bareilly. Where Dwarka Prasad is now I do not know—in prison or out. But he has a huge family.

I wrote to you about the letter Kishan *chacha* wrote to me. After the necessary inquiries and proper investigation it was decided that I was not entitled to receive his letter. So I have not seen it and do not know what it contained. He should be informed of this.

How is Madan Bhai getting on? Have you any fresh news of him?

Betty writes to me that she intends going to Allahabad at the end of January and to spend a month there. I am glad.

591 Krishna Narayan, a businessman of Lucknow.

You should get this letter on the eve of the New Year. So again all my love and good wishes to you and Rajiva.

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 94.

Dec. 30, 1944

Darling Indu,

This is my last letter to you written in 1944. What a year it has been all over the world and in India, and what a contrast between the wars and tumults outside and our quiet unchanging life here. Every new year brings the promise of youth and yet it ages soon and the bloom fades off. So we shall enter 1945, inevitably affected by some psychological process of change and with our minds stretching out into the future. How one clings to the future in spite of repeated experience that this future is often enough just a continuation of the stale past.

After a long interval I have returned to you some books. These are:

1 R. Mehta's *Pre-Buddhist India*
2 Munshi's *The Glory that was Gurjardesh* Parts I and III
3 Dr. Sarma: *The Renaissance of Hinduism*
4 *Reshaping Man's Heritage*
5 *Prayers, Praises & Psalms*
6 Masani's *Socialism Reconsidered*

There are many other books that I have to return. I must get rid of my accumulations. I shall send them to you in small batches next month by post.

Some newspapers have come out with a story of the many books I have been reading recently. You must have seen the long list given. As a matter of fact out of that long and varied list I have only received three books, the others you could not obtain for me. The list represents many of the books I have asked for during the last year or more, not the books I received. I wonder how the newspapermen got hold of these titles. Probably Betty keeps a list and someone saw this and made a foolish and incorrect use of it. But it is a trivial matter and does not make any difference.

As you keep a list of books wanted, you might add to it Aldous Huxley's new novel: *Time Must Have a Stop.*[592] Huxley is one of the authors one does not like to miss. I suppose it will be some time before this book appears in India.

Betty has sent me a number of shirts and shorts made according to samples sent by me. She sent them in a small suitcase and I propose to return this to her. I shall send in it some of my old *kurtas* and pyjamas which I do not require. Later, when Betty goes to Allahabad, she can take them along with her. It is difficult to send railway parcels direct to Allahabad.

I have received several bundles of foreign periodicals recently. I suppose they all go to Anand Bhawan first and are then forwarded by you via the Bombay Secretariat.

I have had no letter from you for two weeks. I hope all is well with you and Rajiva.

Love to you and Feroze and the little one.

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 95.

December 31. Sunday

I have been very busy revising for a second time my MSS. of *The Discovery of India.* Having finished reading it out to Maulana I was anxious to have done with this and so I stopped all other work. During the last nine days I stopped my Persian lessons also—took Christmas holidays! I have just succeeded in finishing the job. Maulana's & Asaf's suggestions would not have taken so much time. Most of the changes made were due to fresh ideas. I am thoroughly tired of the job. I was anxious to finish it this year and not to carry it on to the next year. Well, I have just managed it and am putting away the MSS. —not to open it or look at it again, I hope, till I go out and get it typed. Of that no present indication.

x x x x

592. A novel in which Aldous Huxley presents his own plan for world betterment. "World reform must begin in the individual soul and men may enter the Divine Ground of eternity only by a regime of selflessness and contemplation."

My cold has not wholly left me—it clings on slightly—Meanwhile, I have developed a pain in my left shoulder & back—rheumatic, neuralgic or some kind of neuritis. I do not know what it is; but it is a great nuisance. I have had it now for about a week. What worries me even more than this pain is the frequent occurrence of petty troubles and pain. During the last few months I have had some pain or trouble with my calf, my forearm, my hand—also my eyes and teeth need attending to—Age, age, advancing steadily and weakening the whole system, in spite of all my exercises and other efforts!

x x x x

Yesterday Bhulabhai Desai & B. G. Kher came here to interview Vallabhbhai on some legal matter. No one else amongst us met them. This was the first breach from outside into our yard during the last 29 months.

x x x x

Prafulla Ghose is still bed-ridden & badly shaken up. The letters he writes to his sister,[593] (and which appear in the papers), are extraordinarily pessimistic and read badly. I fear he has little stamina for bearing physical pain or facing illness. Maulana has written to the Viceroy about his illness and yet surprisingly nothing has so far come out of it.

x x x x

I have recently learnt with surprise and some dismay that Kripalani writes very detailed letters to Sucheta regularly giving an account of the most trivial matters relating to us. Indeed he has written much that he should never have written. He lacks all sense of proportion and responsibility. Every letter of his is of course read by three or four batches of censors. It is not surprising that the A.I.C.C. office went to pieces under him.

x x x x

No letter from Indu for over two weeks.

2.1.45

Darling Betty,

...I am delighted to learn of Harsha's and Ajit's progress in school. It is a little surprising to learn that Harsha has done better at sports than Ajit. I should have thought it would be the other way. This shows

593. Jamuna Ghose.

how a proper school develops children and brings out their inherent capacities which otherwise may not have sufficient scope. You will appreciate now how wise Raja and you were in sending the boys to school in Gwalior.

Yes, the New Year has begun and this is the first letter I am writing in 1945. It is well to look hopefully to the future and send one's good wishes. And yet it is also desirable not to hope too much or expect more than is likely to happen. It is easier thus to avoid disappointment.

My love and good wishes to you and Raja and the children.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

Jan. 5. 1945

Darling Indu,

Today, probably for the first time since we came here, the temperature registered a sudden fall and reached 38 or possibly lower. Having got rather used to long spells of warm and equable weather this change has a sting in it, or may be my bones are getting older. My hands are quite cold. I am almost regretting having sent back some *kurtas* and pyjamas, though I have enough to carry on with and the cold will not last many days.

I received two letters from you on the 31st Dec.—dated 14/12 and 20/12. Why there should have been this delay in my getting the earlier letter I do not understand, especially as it bears a pencil endorsement — probably made in the Bombay Secretariat — that it was received there on 28/12. It seems to have taken 2 weeks to go from Allahabad to Bombay.

Rajiva's pictures are good. He looks quite human. He is attractive and has got a good humour look. In some of them he resembles you, in one there is a marked resemblance to Feroze. Don't forget to send me a good picture of yourself. The idea of your getting fat amuses me. It will take a long time before your tummy becomes visible.

After all you have written in praise of Rajiva's ayah, I do not think you are wise in risking losing her for an additional 5/- a month. I do not know what you pay her but in any event the comfort and convenience of having a first-rate ayah cannot be measured in terms of an extra five rupees. After all you are not making a permanent endowment. A few extra months or a year at the higher rate will not make much difference so far as money is concerned.

From Betty's letter I learnt that Vidya was getting married soon in Lucknow. Probably it was about this that Kishan *chacha* wrote to me. I am glad Betty is going to attend her wedding and hope that you can manage to do so also. These courtesies count and are appreciated. Both Kishan *chacha* and Shona *chachi* are sensitive about them and Vidya of course should be made to feel that she has all our good wishes. I have asked Betty to take a present for Vidya on my behalf. Please convey to Vidya my love and good wishes.

I am interested to learn that Yunus has got engaged. I suppose he is still in prison — I do not remember the girl — The marriage will no doubt create a rumpus at both ends. What kind of ceremony are they going to have? — a civil marriage? News of yet another mixed marriage, as they are called, comes from Betty. It appears that Raja's brother, Surottambhai, has got engaged to Beryl Shamshere Singh, Amrit Kaur's niece. I do not think I have met Beryl. I am told she is a very nice girl.

I have received the cigarette-holder you sent. It is just right. Do not trouble to send the honey. Eat it up yourself. Honey has gone up in people's estimation, I suppose, ever since sugar was rationed. Is your sugar rationed in Allahabad? We have been getting here an ounce a day per person (or to be accurate 16 oz. for half a month of 15 or 16 days). This does not go very far with some people. For me it is ample as I use it with tea & coffee only — and a pinch in my dal. Is this habit of putting a little sugar in dal a Kashmiri habit or just a Nehru vagary? Other people are amused at it. I take *gur* with my *dalia*. *Gur* is quite good provided it is clean, but then it is not clean and the thought of the many hands through which it has passed rather puts me off. What we usually do here is to heat it and stain it off. This process removes much of the undesirable matter in it.

Peshawar *chappals* are always welcome, especially as one cannot get the right kind anywhere else. But I do not require them here. I brought two with me here. One pair was worn out and discarded. The other is carefully preserved in a practically new condition. I managed to get something like it here and have been using it instead. As a matter of fact all my walking and running is done in canvas shoes and so the *chappals* are used more or less as bedroom slippers. The mortality in canvas shoes has been heavy; I think I must have used about 20 pairs since I came here. They seem to be made of some ersatz stuff which does not last at all. Most of them come from Batas. They ought to be ashamed of the stuff they supply. If Yunus has got a pair of *chappals* made for me, they might be sent to you and you can keep them for me.

I have returned some clothes (5 *kurtas*, 6 pyjamas, 1 *dhoti*, 1 black *malida* waistcoat, 1 pair stockings, 1 doz. handkerchiefs) to Betty. Also some books: *Gandhiji—Commemoration Volume*; 2 volumes of cyclostyled correspondence between Gandhiji & Govt. &c.; 3 volumes of National Planning Committee's reports. All these I should like to keep for reference.

I have received a letter (No. D.O.G./9549 of Allahabad Dec. 9, 1944) from W.G.P. Wall, Director of Public Instructions, U.P. together with a copy of a scheme he has drawn up, 'Kamala Nehru Scholarship Endowment Trust Fund.' I do not know if this came through you or direct. Anyway I do not propose to write to him directly as this might involve special requests to Govt. Will you, therefore, please write to him and give him my message? Tell him that I have received his letter and scheme and I am grateful to him for all the trouble he has taken in this matter. As for the scheme, he is in the best position to judge and to fit it in with Govt. rules and regulations. So he can go ahead and do what he thinks best. There is, however, one basic suggestion which I am making for his consideration, but it should be understood that this is just a suggestion. He can decide as he thinks best under the circumstances. The suggestion is this: It seems to me that it might be better to use the income as it comes in rather than to accumulate it and only use the interest. This will yield a much larger sum for use immediately. From his letter it appears that a sum of Rs. 3904/14/- has so far been collected in the course of the last 4 or 5 years. That means an annual income of between Rs. 780 and Rs. 975 —say Rs. 800/-. Whether this is likely to be a regular income or not I do not know. Even if we put it at Rs. 600 per annum, this means Rs. 50 per month. If it is possible to use this sum immediately it could be divided up into scholarships of Rs. 10/- each. Rs. 5/- a month seems rather a small sum to give. If most of the income is being used up as it comes in, then of course there is no chance for a permanent fund to grow up. But immediate results are obtained. As I have said above, he can decide as he thinks best.

Chandrashankar Shukla[594] can publish my old article in reply to Soumyendranath Tagore.[593]

594. (b. 1901); Mahatma Gandhi's Secretary, 1933-34, editor of the Gujarati edition of *Harijan*, 1933-40; his works include 40 books in Gujarati.

593. Chandrashankar Shukla brought out a book of tributes to Mahatma Gandhi entitled *Gandhiji—As we Know him*. He printed in it an article of Jawaharlal, published in 1936, written in reply to attacks on Mahatma Gandhi which Soumyendranath Tagore had published in France. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 75-78.

The National Publishing Co. of Madras can also reproduce the birthday letter.[596] This is really the first one in *Glimpses* and normally the publishers have to be consulted. But in present conditions this might be dispensed with. It will be desirable however for some token payment to be made. I suggested that they pay Rs. 25/- to the Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital.

I think you had better send me *Anna Karenina* in English. Betty has not sent this book in French to me. Anyway there are others who would like to read it in English. There is another book that I would like you send — W. Macneill Dixon's *The Human Situation*. This was with me here a year and a half ago — I sent it to you to Panchgani in July 1943. I find now that Maulana would like to see it. If you can trace it easily, have it sent. Otherwise do not bother.

Could you ask Feroze or someone else to find out from the Professor of Physics, Allahabad University, some names of, more or less, recent books on modern developments in physics, especially the Theory of Relativity and the Quantum Theory. If he can supply the books all the better — They will be returned to him. There is another way also of finding out about these books. You can ask Betty — she will probably be in Allahabad soon — to write to Homi Bhabha[597] at the Bangalore institute of science to get the information.

I am glad you have become joint secretary of the local hospital committee.

I am not surprised to learn that Sheila's children are not keeping well. That is an additional reason why they should have a spell of Khali with you in the summer.

I am enclosing the dividend warrant signed — Send it to the Punjab National Bank for my account.

This is my letter No. 96.

Love

Your loving
Papu

596. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 417-420.
597. Homi Jehangir Bhabha (1909-1966); atomic physicist; Fellow of the Royal Society; Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy; President, International Conference on Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, Geneva, 1955; died in an air accident in Switzerland in January 1966.

January 12 — Friday

The New Year has brought irritation to me — or rather a continuation of the past year's irritation. The pain in my left shoulder continued, sometimes became worse, and extended to the left arm. Nothing very much but just annoying and coming in the way of work and sleep. The nights were bad and I developed a technique of sitting up in bed and reading in the middle of the night. What annoyed me especially was not the pain itself which could be easily borne, but the fact of such a pain. Were all my exercises and efforts to keep fit and in good health just waste of time? Was age tightening its grip on me?

However, the pain is very much less now and does not interfere much with my sleep or most other activities. I sit bare-bodied in the sun. For two or three days it grew cold & the temperature fell to 37° or 38° F.

x x x x

For some time past there has been, amongst some of us, some kind of anticipation & expectation of developments on or before January 14. On that date the last six-monthly notice served on us by Govt. expires. Why anything unusual should happen then I failed to see but Vallabhbhai was confident of something happening — probably a transfer. Of course we have long been expecting a transfer or release of Prafulla Ghose because of his illness. But why should others be affected?

Today brought new notices for all of us except Prafulla Babu. Presumably he is going to be released in a day or two. For the rest we carry on. I would much rather not have a transfer—We are running our thirtieth month — a long period in retrospect. On January 26th — Independence Day — we complete and celebrate 900 days here.

Jan. 12/13, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter written on New Year's Day — No. 91.

I am glad you like the idea of going to Khali. Of course your plans and movements will largely be governed now and for some years to come by that young tyrant Rajiva. It was thought of him chiefly that led me to suggest Khali. I should like him to become acquainted as

early as possible with the Himalayas, have sight of the snow-covered peaks, look down into the deep valleys, and breathe the fragrant and health-giving air of the pine-clad hillsides. The more I think of it, the more I like the idea. Your fear that Khali is perhaps too out of the way and isolated is not really justified. We have got into the habit of thinking of places at some distance from a railway station as out of the way. Khali is for all practical purposes a suburb of Almora and can be reached from there within an hour or less. The motor road now almost touches the Khali estate. You can reach Khali from Allahabad within 36 hours, though it is preferable to proceed in a more leisurely fashion. As for medical facilities, Almora is as well provided as any average Indian city — apart from the big cities like Calcutta, Bombay &c. There is a hospital there, a civil surgeon, an assistant civil surgeon and a number of private practitioners. The doctor I would recommend is Dr. Khazan Chand[598] who is fairly competent and who would no doubt go out of his way to be of service to you. He has a car and can easily run up to Khali whenever wanted or at regular intervals. He is not a children's specialist of course but as a general practitioner he is as good as any in Allahabad.

In these days of rationing you will probably be better off in Khali than in most other places. There will be an abundance of fruit, vegetables, eggs, good milk, and most other necessaries can be obtained in Almora.

The journey to Khali seems troublesome and a little alarming but it is not really so. Indeed it is probably easier and more comfortable now than a long railway journey to the South. Both from the health point of view and that of accessibility, Ooty is not a patch on Khali. In a sense you would be more cut off there than in Khali, certainly further removed from Allahabad. It will also be much more expensive.

The normal method of going to Almora is to go by motor bus or private car. Motor buses run regularly but obviously they are not indicated for Rajiva or you — I do not think there will be the least difficulty in getting a private car. Indeed Pantji says that a letter from him from here can fix this up, though this is not necessary.

I would, however, suggest to you not to go by the motor road but to take to the bridle path instead. This suggestion, no doubt, surprises you for all of us are so used to travelling and even thinking in terms of the automobile. I am all for the automobile as a rule but its virtues are not so overwhelming in the mountains. The last time I went to Almora I decided that on the next occasion I would travel in a more

598. (1897-1977); Chairman of Almora Municipal Board, 1938-45.

leisurely way by the bridle path, either on foot or on horseback. Old memories came back to me and I remembered faintly how I had enjoyed that journey long ago, before the automobile had descended on these mountain roads. I was only 8 or 9 then, and at that age one can enjoy almost everything new. The whole family trekked—and it was a large family—and there used to be a long procession of ponies, dandies, luggage porters &c. That was *Dadu's* way of doing things. From Almora we had gone to the Pindari glacier—again that tremendous procession, with additions for we had to carry some tents also and food for the journey. When the family returned to Allahabad at the end of the summer they left me behind in charge of the headmaster of the local high school—a man named Thomas. I lived with his family for many months.

My next visit to Almora took place a long long time afterwards—It was in 1934 when I was taken to the Almora Jail! During the intervening years I had often been to Naini Tal and even beyond but I never managed to reach Almora. Once I almost got there. I was on my way to it when I got a telegram at Ramkhet that Mummy was very ill and I hurried back. This was I think in 1929 when Mummy and you were at Mussoorie.

But I had occasion to travel by the bridle path from Kathgodam to Ramgarh (on the way to Almora) in 1921 to see *Dadu* who was resting there.

The distance from Kathgodam to Almora by motor road is over 80 miles. By bridle path it is 38 miles with three resting places on the way—Bhim Tal, Ramgarh and Piura—where there are good dak bungalows or rest houses. Each stage is about 10 miles or less and it is pleasant going, shady as a rule, with ups and downs. Starting after a good breakfast one can easily reach the next stage by lunch time and spend the rest of the day there. Or, one can carry lunch and have it *en route* whenever one feels like it. The dak bungalows have cooks.

Some people, unused to this kind of travelling, may be a little frightened at the prospect. As a matter of fact it is very easy going and comfortable—probably far more so than the tedious and crowded railway journeys nowadays. One need not of course travel in the sumptuous and complicated way which *Dadu* favoured. Besides there are many facilities now which were unobtainable in the old days. For instance, all the heavy luggage can be sent on by lorry from Kathgodam to Almora. Only beddings, some clothes and warm things & a few other necessaries need be taken with one. Each stage of the journey is an easy walk but naturally for you and Rajiva and the ayah dandies

would be necessary. If I had to go that way I would walk, keeping a pony for emergencies.

It is usually possible to arrange for dandies and ponies at almost a moment's notice at Kathgodam. But it is safer to fix them up a day or two ahead. It is quite easy to do so by writing or by sending someone (say Upadhyaya) a day before. A line to Pantji's family in Naini Tal (Chandra Dat) would facilitate matters.

This kind of journeying appeals to me but it is quite possible that it may not appeal to others who have less of the savage in them than I have. It depends really on a mental approach — even, you might say, a philosophy of life. Most of our journeys nowadays are looked upon as troublesome but inevitable affairs leading to the desired goal. So we put up with all manner of inconveniences on the way and arrive exhausted at journey's end. The goal and the journey's end are there of course but why not make the journey itself a part of the goal, giving health and pleasure, even apart from the more distant goal? The holiday, if one can call it that, should begin the moment we set off and not when we arrive at the other end. Life becomes fuller this way, the process of living consciously and actively is a continuous one and not a thing of fits and starts. There is also a sense of freedom about it, a lessening of dependence on others, apart from the communion with nature that it gives. All this trouble about petrol rationing vanishes. For Rajiva, who will be about 8 months old by that time and able to sit up and take an intelligent interest in his surroundings, it should be a stimulating experience. He will have to go in a dandy, which is unfortunate. A year or two later he could have done a little walking or riding. I remember carrying about Betty in the front of my saddle in Naini Tal when she was about 10 months old.

Thus the journey from Kathgodam to Khali becomes a delightful excursion with the minimum of worry. From Almora it would be desirable to go by car to Khali. It is only 6 or 7 miles.

In Almora of course there are hosts of people who will be eager to help you in every way. Upadhyaya knows a lot of them. Probably the most useful person is Rudra Dat Bhat,[599] a merchant. Then there is Badri Dat Pande. And of course Gertrude[600] and Boshi Sen.[601] The best time to go up is the middle of April. It will not be

599. (1890-1969); a leading Congressman of Almora.
600. Gertrude Emerson Sen, one of the founder editors of *Asia* in 1917; later its advisory editor from India for 25 years; wife of Basiwar Sen and director of Uday Shankar's Indian Cultural Centre at Almora; author of *Voiceless India*.
601. Basiwar Sen (b. 1887); botanist; well-known for his research in cellular structure of plants; founder director, Vivekananda Laboratory, Almora.

cold then and travelling by bridle path will be pleasant. Later it may become rather warm.

Of course if you prefer going by car, a private one can easily be fixed up. An advantage of Khali over Ooty will be that Feroze will be able to pay you frequent visits.

It is possible that Madan Bhai may be out and available by the time you go up. You should invite him to join you there. His health must be pretty well shattered up and rest at Khali will be good for him.

Have you heard about the Brewsters[602] again? Thinking of Almora, they came to my mind. I have had no news of them for many years.

From the American papers I find that the Ramkrishna Centre of New York has issued a new translation of the Gita by Swami Nikhilananda.[603] This is very highly spoken of. I wonder if it is possible to obtain this from our friends at Belur Math. They ought to have it. You might write and inquire.

I am sending you back some books :

1 Gandhi : *Nonviolence in Peace & War*
2 Smith : *Modern Islam in India*
3 Gunther : *D-Day*
4 Thompson : *Burmese Silver*
5 Sampurnanand : *The Individual & the State*
6 De Silva : *The Four Essential Doctrines of Buddhism*
7 Ajwani : *Introducing India*

Yesterday we received a parcel of guavas which I suppose you had sent. They are excellent and maintain worthily the reputation of Allahabad. Also I received with them a bottle of guava jelly and a tin of guava cheese.

I have received a letter (dated 2/1/45) from the manager of the Allahabad Law Journal Press informing me that the period of the sole agency for the sale of *Letters from a Father to his Daughter*, which was given to the Oxford University Press, expired on 31.12.1944, and the Oxford Univ. Press want the agency renewed till 31.3.1949. Will you please tell the A.L.J. people that before I can send a proper reply or make any suggestions for the future I must have full particulars and information. I have no idea of what the terms of agency were or are. These were fixed up by Kitabistan without any previous reference to me and I was only informed of them later and then only, so far as I remember, partially. It is odd that a reference has now been made to

602 Earl H Brewster and his wife Achsah Barlow, American artists who visited India twice and lived in Almora for some time

603 Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre in New York and co-translator of many Sanskrit classics

me only after the expiry of the period of agency. This should have been done well in advance of it to enable me to consider the matter. Situated as I am, delay in consultation is inevitable. I do not, however, wish that existing arrangements should be upset suddenly because of this delay. The Oxford Univ. Press should be informed that I am waiting for some relevant information before coming to a decision; as soon as I receive this I shall communicate with the A.L.J. Press about future arrangements. Meanwhile, to avoid any confusion or gap period, I am agreeable to the Oxford Univ. Press continuing the old agency on the old terms for another year, that is to the end of December 1945.

The A.L.J. Press to be requested to supply me with the following particulars:

1 Copy of agreement with Oxford Univ. Press.

2 Statement about royalties received by them on my behalf during the past three years. What part of them have been paid over to me or to someone on my behalf?—and to whom? Any balances standing to my credit to be sent to Bachhraj & Co. Ltd., Bombay.

3 Are the A.L.J. Press functioning both as printers & publishers of the book? Have Kitabistan any further interest in it?

4 Is the book being issued in one uniform edition or in different formats—for students & the general public? What is the sale price of the book for both these categories of people?

5 Is the book sold solely through the Oxford Univ. Press? Do the A.L.J. Press not sell it directly to any booksellers?

6 What institutions, so far as is known, have adopted it as a textbook? I understand that the Calcutta Univ. adopted it for the matriculation exam. Has any other university or education dept. also done so—I am referring of course only to the English edition.

7 Is there any continuing general sale of the book, apart from the sale as a prescribed textbook, and is this general sale specially catered for?

8 Any other relevant information might be added.

Further the A.L.J. Press might be asked if they have now any dealings with any of the translations of the book—apart from the Hindi & Urdu ones which they print for the U.P. Education Department. Do they issue any Hindi or Urdu edition for general public sale (apart from students)?

This is my letter No. 97—I am getting on to the century!

Love

Your loving
Papu

Later.

I have just got your letter of Jan. 7th in which you mention the guavas &c., Jinarajadasa[604] & the cold. The guavas I have received, not the two books so far. I have not met Jinarajadasa but I have known of him ever since the days when I joined the Theosophical Society at the age of 12 or 13. *He should really have been the President of the Theosophical Society after Mrs. Besant if Arundale*[605] *had not cut him out.*

As for the cold we all seem to have felt that way. The news Pantji has received from Naini Tal is quite exciting—houses snowed up &c.

I have also got today a letter from *Puphi* from New York sent soon after her arrival there. She complains of the cold also and at the same time of the over-heated rooms. But her biggest grouse is the expensiveness of everything. She has not fallen in love with New York and dislikes its skyscrapers.

P

January 20th—Saturday

We are ten here now for Prafulla Ghosh has gone. On the 13th evening Sendak informed Prafulla Babu that he had received instructions to release him first thing on the 15th Jan. It was rather odd but that very night 13th–14th—Prafulla had a relapse and Sendak had to be sent for from his bungalow soon after midnight. He recovered slightly the next day but was still feeble on the 15th. He left that day at 3 p.m. accompanied by the Jailer who went with him to Bombay. Prafulla was released just 100 days after Mahmud.

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Prafulla was anxious to give vivid details of our physical conditions to the public. Both Maulana & I tried hard to dissuade him from giving any ornate accounts. We succeeded, I think, to some extent. Still he had had some say and I have been described as aging rapidly—true, I suppose, though it is not pleasant to contemplate. The person who really requires competent treatment is Pantji, who has been

604 C Jinarajadasa (1875-1953); President of the Theosophical Society, 1946-52; author of over 40 books.

605 G. S. Arundale (d. 1945); President of the Theosophical Society, 1934-45.

on the downgrade almost since we came here. His is a hospital case — an operation &c.— but he does not like the idea of being sent to the military hospital here and deliberately minimizes his ailments, which are many and serious. So far as Sendak is concerned he has left him to his own resources more or less. Pantji has a regular battery of medicines in his room and is constantly dosing himself. At night he has some of them, including sleeping pills, next to him. He can walk only with care because of his hernia. His spine pains him — His teeth give him continuous trouble.

x x x x

The pain in my back has almost disappeared, but just a bit of it hangs on in my left arm. I am gradually reverting to my normal routine.

x x x x

The cold spell here was brief and it is already warming up. But in the North it was something unique — the hill stations all snow-bound, houses blocked up with snow — houses collapsed &c. Even Dehra Dun had a good fall of snow.

Surprisingly *Vasanta Panchami* was early this year — day before yesterday on Jan. 18th. Vidya's marriage was to have taken place at Lucknow on *Vasanta Panchami*.

x x x x

Feel rather dull and low in spirits.

Jan. 20, 1945

Indu darling,

Accounts in the newspapers of the snow and cold in the North have exhilarated and excited me. Mussoorie and Simla and Naini Tal all snow-bound — people having to dig their way out of their houses — the roof of Hakman's Hotel collapsing from the weight of the snow — even Dehra Dun becoming all white with snow. Khali must have become one mass of snow and the house must have been half buried in it. I remember how I enjoyed a light snowfall in Almora in 1934-35 and

hoped for more. In Dehra Dun I could only look wistfully at the snow on the neighbouring hills and hope that a favourable wind might bring some snow to my little yard also. Well, I suppose, this brief spell is past and is already a memory. Here after a few days of cold weather, there was a rather sudden and marked change and now it is definitely warmish. I was surprised to discover that *Vasanta Panchami* had arrived — Usually it comes off early in February. I remembered Vidya's marriage and connected it with this day — a favourite one for weddings. I hope the wedding went off well and Vidya is happy about it.

We are ten now for Dr. Prafulla Ghosh has left us, exactly 100 days after Mahmud went. A century of days has become a useful unit for us to note the passing of time. Months are over too soon and a year passes slowly. That reminds me that in another 6 days — on the 26th January — we shall complete 900 days here.

Dr. Ghosh has, I read from the papers, said something about our respective physical conditions and has pointed out that I am getting older. True, none of us grows younger with the passing of time and all our efforts to delude ourselves or others are childish and vain. But I think Prafulla Babu has rather exaggerated, so far as I am concerned. A person's activities or the lack of them depend so much on the passing mood, which indeed is affected by the physical condition, but depends also on many other factors. Generally speaking, I keep very well and I propose to continue doing so. It is difficult to take an objective view of oneself, though I try to do so. Compared to my companions here I am a shining example of good health. Prafulla Babu has mentioned Pantji also. That is more to the point and I have long been concerned about him. These two years and a half have pulled him down in a variety of ways and he is continually suffering from a number of ailments. Being made that way, he tries to make light of them and would like others to ignore them or at any rate not to worry about them. But that is not good enough and I worry about him.

I have sent you the following books :

1 *China Handbook* 1943
2 *Global War*
3 Recent *Judgements in India*
4 *Pantopia*
5 Tendulkar : 30 *Months in Russia*
6 *Grain-Standard Labour Money*
7 Radhakrishnan : *Education, Politics & War*
8 Shah : *Principles of Planning*
9 *Ethics of Buddhism*
10 *Beautiful Valleys of Kashmir*

I have just received the two books which Jinarajadasa gave you: Citrine's *In Russia Now*[606] and George Sava's *Russia Triumphant.* Am I to return these to you when I have finished with them? Or is there a way of my returning them direct to him?

More than a year ago Betty wrote to me that Mrs. Robeson had sent her a letter in which she had mentioned sending me books from time to time. I told Betty that I had received none — Now Chand mentions this again in a letter to me — This is odd for I do not remember ever having received a book from Essie Robeson. When I was in Dehra in 1941 I received packets of newspaper cuttings from her. Indeed I wrote and asked her then for a number of books. I suppose the books she sent were lost in transit or were suppressed by the censors. You have not, by any chance, received any book sent by her?

Betty must be with you — I wonder how she liked the cold. A long stay in Bombay is not a suitable preparation for facing real cold weather. How she and Raja used to shiver in Dehra Dun! Give my love to her, and to Rajiva and Feroze.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 98.

January 22 — Monday

We have all been rather upset by a speech[607] delivered by Sarojini at a press conference in Madras. An excessively foolish speech. Also by Bhulabhai's repeated visits to the Viceroy.[608] Apparently he is hatching some scheme — some proposal for a settlement. Anything coming from Bhulabhai — anything of this type — is suspect —

606. It is a report on conditions in Russia as observed by Sir Walter Citrine, who led the British Trade Union delegation to Moscow in October 1941.
607. On 18 January 1945, Sarojini Naidu described Jinnah as the one incorruptible person in the whole of India. "I may not agree with him; but if there is one who cannot be bought by title, honour or position, it is Mr. Mahomed Ali Jinnah."
608. Bhulabhai Desai, after consulting Mahatma Gandhi and Liaquat Ali Khan, was attempting to arrange a basis on which a coalition government could be formed at the centre. Known as the Desai-Liaquat formula, it envisaged an interim national government in which the Hindus and Muslims would have 40 per cent representation each, and the scheduled castes and other groups 20 per cent representation.

January 27. Saturday

Another Independence Day yesterday — our third here — We observed it as during previous years by meeting in the afternoon at 3 and silently repeating the pledge. Maulana said a few words, so did Vallabhbhai. I was asked by Maulana to say something also but I did not take advantage of his invitation. I had nothing to say.

To read in the papers of all the orders, obstructions & arrangements of Govt., to prevent any celebration of the day is most irritating. Surely if I was out I would not put up with this kind of continuing insult. I would soon get into trouble. And yet how nervous Govt. is after all its repression & oppression.

x x x x

For some days I have been taking sunbaths and as I expected they have done me good. I feel fitter and in better mood. The pain in the back and the left arm has gone — only a slight dull feeling thus occasionally remains. I am continuing massage.

x x x x

Two years ago, and even a year ago, Asaf Ali was in a bad way — physically rather broken up with various ailments and mentally even more so. He has pulled himself up and has been very much better during the past few months. He keeps better health and has been writing rather good Urdu verse. He is a pleasant companion with wider interests than many of us.

x x x x

Pantji has at last agreed to ask for an operation for his hernia. This has been growing worse and he is practically bed-ridden. Apart from this he has numerous other troubles — spine, teeth, insomnia &c. And yet he has patiently borne all these without complaining or even saying much to Sendak. He keeps a cupboard full of medicines and doses himself. It has been obvious that he was deteriorating physically rather fast but his idea of self-respect & dignity kept him from taking any step. 'Carrying on' somehow till better times has been his motto.

At last there was a joint attack on him by Maulana, Vallabhbhai, Narendra Deva and me and we all pressed upon him to demand proper treatment and operation Reluctantly he agreed and spoke to Sendak. A surgeon was called in for consultation and he said, as he was bound to, that an operation was indicated. Further that in view of Pantji's

general condition and his large size, the operation might be rather serious. And so I suppose some kind of a report has been sent to Govt. Such an operation cannot possibly take place here. It must be done in a good hospital in Poona or preferably Bombay. Pant would greatly prefer to have a surgeon of his choice. If the operation is to take place, it is unlikely that Govt. will keep him on as a detenu or prisoner in hospital.

It is a pity that Pant has allowed his condition to deteriorate by his policy of 'carrying on'. He ought to have taken himself in hand and had an operation at least a year ago. The hernia trouble began here. Some of his ways rather irritate me, but he is one of the most likable men I know — a perfect gentleman and straight as an arrow. Indeed his neglect of his health here has been due to his good qualities. I do hope he recovers for we have few men so intelligent and honourable as he is.

x x x x

A virulent outbreak of plague has taken place in Ahmadnagar city — six deaths 24 hours after seizure. Sendak was terribly alarmed and suggested inoculation. Most of us rather hesitated, though I suppose if we were certain of the danger we would immediately agree to inoculation. Personally I have a distaste for it and would like to avoid it. Meanwhile, the situation in the city has improved. After 8 deaths no further cases have been reported.

x x x x

Yesterday — 26th January — we also completed 900 days here in Ahmadnagar Fort!

January 27. 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of the 13th but the enclosure which you mentioned (a cutting from *The Hindusthan Standard* sent by Gaganvehari Mehta)[609] was not there.

I suppose the cold has moderated now — it usually does soon after *Vasanta Panchami.* How the poor must have suffered for lack of warm

609. (1900-1974); President, Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries, 1942-43; Member, Planning Commission, 1950-52; Ambassador to the U.S.A., 1952-58; Chairman, National Shipping Board, 1959-63; publications include *Conscience of a Nation, From Wrong Angles* and *Understanding India.*

things — I am glad you tried to help our servants, especially the women and children. But this help seldom goes far enough. For my part I like this kind of cold spell and immediately it drives me to the sun. Sunbaths can only be taken with comfort and profit if it is cold enough otherwise, or else the sun becomes too hot. A combination of a low temperature and sun's heat is really delightful, or so I find it. It exhilarates me and fills me with a sense of physical well-being. Unfortunately one can only take them with comfort for a few weeks even in Allahabad, and for a lesser period here. In Almora Prison during the winter (when there were no clouds) and during the spring I had a long spell of sun-bathing; and then later in Khali during the spring. Outside, apart from the suitability of the weather, the leisure to indulge in them is usually lacking.

Do not send me any clothes or foodstuffs. I have been able to purchase some warm coverings here. As for clothes, a warm *sherwani* would be welcome occasionally as I dislike being wrapped up in shawls & rugs. But it would be useful here probably for no more than two weeks or so at the most. That period has passed now and it is no more required. We need not therefore think about it till next winter.

I shall send you back some books, including the two belonging to Jinarajadasa, early next week. I think it is better for you to deal with these two books and return them to him. I read them as they had been especially sent to me but I must say that they were not up to much. Sava's *Russia Triumphant* was fairly interesting as a survey of past Russian history, but rather superficial. As for Citrine's *In Russia Now*, it is trivial in the extreme, which is not surprising as Citrine himself is a very pedestrian kind of person. The book is full of details about Citrine's adventures in shaving, having baths (or not having them), in food &c.[610] He tells us of his surprise that his bath towel had not been heated. All this from a Labour leader is odd enough, but with the background of Russia in October 1941, with a fierce war raging and Moscow itself seriously threatened by the invader and every man and woman in Russia strained to the utmost in connection with the war effort, with all this terrible crisis surrounding him when he was in Russia, Citrine is chiefly concerned with his personal comforts. This is truly amazing. I have long disliked the person but this little book of his has made me dislike him even more — a result which Jinarajadasa had probably not foreseen!

610. Citrine mentions the absence of hot water in his Kuibyshev hotel and difficulties in finding running water in three consecutive chapters in his book.

It struck me as curious that Jinarajadasa should send me these particular books. They are not a brilliant choice anyway. Probably he wanted me to know something about Russia. A worthy ambition, but what exactly does he take me for? Obviously as a person who is singularly ignorant of world affairs and especially of Russia. If he thinks so of me, even though I am supposed to have a reputation of possessing some knowledge of these affairs, what does he think of the average intelligent Indian? I fear he has lost touch with Indian currents of thought. This was evident to some extent from some press interviews of his. As a matter of fact developments in Russia are known and appreciated in India probably more than in most countries. I am sorry that Jinarajadasa should move in such a narrow groove of ideas, for he is able and intelligent. But all of us become prisoners of our own set of thoughts and can seldom look out of that framework. I do not want you, of course, to convey these opinions of mine to Jinarajadasa. It was good of him to send me the books and he should be thanked for them.

I have received *Anna Karenina*—2 volumes. I wonder if you can get for me a Persian-English and English-Persian dictionary — not a big tome but a small students' dictionary if this is available. Ask Kitabistan to get it for me.

I have been getting the foreign periodicals you send more regularly now and in larger numbers though even now odd numbers are missing. I keep returning them to you in batches. I hope you get them.

The guavas reached us in good condition and were appreciated.

Rajiva will be six months old in another three weeks. That is a landmark for him. Usually the *anna-prasana* ceremony or the खीरचटाई[611] takes place about then. Are you going to have this soon? So far as I know you have not had a formal naming ceremony so far. Why not combine the two? I hope he is flourishing.

I do not know that Anna was with you, or I had forgotten — If you feel that she is not helpful, there is no particular point in keeping her on. You are the best judge. If you decide to part with her, give her sufficient time to make other arrangements.

You might have seen in the papers that plague has broken out in Ahmadnagar city. We learnt that it was of a peculiarly virulent type, but so far it has only affected a few persons. Possibly it may not spread. We are naturally rather cut off from the city and there is not much chance of infection. Still the question of plague inoculation arose. If I feel that it is necessary I shall take it, but I have a certain instinctive aversion to these inoculations. Indeed this aversion extends even to drugs

611. *Khirchatai*—Formal feeding ceremony of a child.

and I should like to avoid them as far as possible. The idea of filling my body with undesirable concoctions puts me out, and yet sometimes I have to do it. Intellectually I have to appreciate the value of medicine and inoculations, though I do think that this is overdone. On the whole I have had singularly little to do with drugs and medicines. Bernard Shaw, in his latest book, attacks vaccinations and inoculations etc. with passion, and a part of me reacts favourably to his denunciation. But then another part of me—how split up we are into different personalities!—accepts the drugs and the sera & vaccines. So if I come to the conclusion that inoculation against plague is necessary, I shall submit to it. The latest reports are that there have been no further plague cases in the city. So perhaps it may not be necessary to get inoculated.

Give my love to Madan Bhai. I hope he is keeping well.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 99.

Feb. 3, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of the 26th Jan.—also Betty's of that date. I read both your accounts of Vidya's wedding and the people you met there with interest, especially Betty's references to children growing up. How the world is changing while I remain here!

Some of us decided to take the inoculation for plague and so day before yesterday I had an injection. This was only half the dose, the other half will follow a week later. It is better to take it this way, unless the emergency is great. I have had a more or less normal reaction, slight rise in temperature &c. The next injection will bring about another reaction, possibly slightly greater, and I shall not return to my normal existence here for another week or ten days.

Betty writes that the Anand Bhawan garden was looking very attractive, especially the front lawn with its bright winter flowers. What interested me more was her description of you and Rajiva—how lovely and fit you looked and how the babe was flourishing. I suppose the little tyrant not only determines most of your activities but also is the principal factor in the functioning of the household. I think of him and you often and I wonder how motherhood has changed you. Indu,

the mother, is almost a stranger to me and I have to gather scraps of information, as well as occasionally some deeper insight, from words and phrases in your letters. A mother is represented, quite rightly, as an embodiment of love and tenderness and care. With all this goes a protective pugnacity, an offensiveness so far as the care of the child is concerned, something of the relation of the tigress to her cub. Do you feel a bit like the tigress? I can hardly imagine it and yet I suppose there must be that element present in you; indeed we all have some part of the tiger or tigress about us.

Khali seems to be fading off as a prospective resort for you next summer. The chief disadvantage seems to me the lack of suitable companions. A longish stay there, more or less alone, is likely to be dull. If Sheila cannot go, as you write, then I cannot think of others who might be able to join you there — But probably you can raise others from your circle of friends and acquaintances. Apart from the question of companionship, I am sure the place is ideal for a stay both for you and for Rajiva. The journey itself is a very easy and delightful one and need cause no worry, whether you go by bridle path or motor road. We have got so used to railway trains and the like that a reversion to older methods of transport appears odd and uncomfortable. It is not always so, especially in the hills. It is too early to decide and ultimately much will depend on how Rajiva is faring three months hence. Anyway your mother-instinct will guide you aright and you should trust it. One advantage about Khali is that no elaborate and previous arrangements are necessary. The place is there and can be fitted up in a day or two. Whether you go there or not, it would be desirable to inform the people there that you are likely to come. This will keep them up to the mark and the house and garden will be better looked after. Just at present they must be buried in snow.

If one is to trust the newspapers Rajiva is growing so fast that he is likely to catch you up before long. About two months ago or less he was described as eight months old and now he is said to have attained the status of one-year-old.

I have long been worried about the servants' quarters attached to Anand Bhawan. They are disreputable, or at any rate, those on the lower level. The lavatory arrangements are very undesirable, and generally the roofs are in a state of disrepair. I should like some radical improvements to be made but I suppose this will be difficult just at present. Anyway I suggest that you ask Ladli Bhai to have them repaired and renovated in so far as possible, and if necessary to add constructionally to them in a small way. Generally some patchwork repairs are undertaken hurriedly just before the rains. This is not good

enough. If the matter is taken in hand now there will be plenty of time and a good job can be done.

I should have liked to allot small pieces of land in a corner of the garden to some of our older servants for growing vegetables for their own use. This would not only add to their normal food but also be good employment for their children. Even a tiny patch grows good vegetables and quite a quantity — like tomatoes. But I do not see where the land for this to be found. It should be near their quarters. Perhaps something could be done to the patch — the lowland between their quarters and the rise leading to the main house. It is difficult for me to make any definite suggestion without examining the layout. But you and Feroze can consider this & see if anything can be done. Perhaps you are already using this bit of land for vegetables. Anyway it would be desirable to have proper hedges to separate the servants quarters as well as to mark the path leading to the hospital. Feroze, expert gardener as he has proved to be, can make the best use of this patch both for productive and decorative purposes.

Dadu's old law books were badly treated and for many years have been neglected. The old law library was divided up, or rather it disintegrated. I think a considerable number of *American Reports* were sent to the Hindu University. Many books were sold. The rest he gave to Ranjit. I felt sorry later that any books were sold as I hate the idea of any of his old books knocking about from place to place. I was myself guilty of this partly — so far as his medical books were concerned — and I repented soon after. At that time the main incentive was to get rid of everything that seemed unnecessary and thus to lighten our burden. There was not enough room in the new Anand Bhawan for all our books. Well that has been done — Now the only question is what to do with the remains of that law library which are rapidly deteriorating in a godown. I am quite clear that they should not be auctioned or sold in any other way. As a matter of fact they would not fetch any considerable sum of money, as all the best books were previously picked out. But apart from the money question they should not be sold. To give them over to the Hindu University Law Library would be the right thing to do. It is not much of a gift either in quantity or quality but still it may be of some use there. To it might be added the series of *State Trials*, which you will find in our library — eastern side. Books should be kept where they are most appreciated and used.

I am sure *Puphi* will agree to this proposal. Still it is perhaps better to get her direct approval. I have written to her about it and asked her to let you know. Meanwhile, you should get the old books cleaned, arranged and listed. That is some job which should keep Upadhyaya

busy for a while. You mention that the key of the place is with *Puphi*. She could not have taken the key with her — Perhaps it is with Nadir Gazder — If you cannot find the key you might as well have the lock forced open.

Among the books, probably there are a number of non-legal books. These should be separated. There used to be also a large number of copies of the *River of Kings* — the *Rajatarangini* — where are these?

I have already read *Best Stories from Modern Bengal*. *Puphi* sent it to me.

As for Nilima's suggestion that I should get any future book of mine published at her Signet Press, it is much too early for me to think of any publication. When the time comes I shall bear this in mind. I have no doubt that this press can do a good job so far as printing &c. are concerned. But even more important factors are the business ability and experience of publishing behind a concern — I have had a large experience of Indian publishing houses and they are quite remarkably lacking in these qualities. Their unbusiness-like methods have been a constant source of irritation to me. Modern publishing is not so much concerned with producing a limited artistic product but with widespread sales of low-priced and well-produced books. But all this is not meant for Nilima.

Do not trouble yourself about Bengue's Balsam or Thermogene — I wanted some such stuff for Pantji especially. He has managed to get various creams and ointments, including Thermogene, Huxley's Wintogene or Schering's Balsam &c. So far as I am concerned I seldom need these. Sometimes I develop a sprain in the wrist or ankle or a slight pain in the arm.

I wonder if you could send some American periodicals (after I have returned them to you) to Sucheta Kripalani, Central Prison, Lucknow. She is all alone there now and would be cheered up by these magazines &c. Send those you consider suitable for her — You need not send her all but an occasional packet will be welcomed.

Some days ago I sent you the following books :

1 Citrine's *In Russia Now* } Jinarajadasa's
2 George Sava's *Russia Triumphant* }
3 Thoreau : *Walden*
4 Radhakrishnan : *India and China*
5 Childe : *What Happened in History*
6 Horace Alexander — *India since Cripps*
7 Shah : *India's Place in Post-War Reconstruction*
8 *The Call to Badrinath*

Last week we received some dry fruit, *laddus*, *halva* (गाजर का हलवा)[612] &c. I was told later that you had sent it for me. Did you send it?

Betty writes that Shirodkar refused to charge his fees for your confinement. She suggests that some present should be given to him instead on your behalf. You had better arrange this. Personally I prefer to pay fees than to be worried about presents.

About subscriptions to American periodicals, you need not write to any — Anyway, one cannot send money to America from India without all manner of permits. I have written to Chand to ask Walsh to arrange to continue all the periodicals.

Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* which you sent me belongs to Lakshmi and Sushila, Kapil Deva's daughters. What are these girls doing now? Are they in college? I heard some time ago that the Malaviya clan did not approve of them because they had not stuck to all the old practices and customs.

I am enclosing the dividend warrant, duly endorsed.

This letter is No. 100 — I complete the century.

Love

Your loving
Papu

6.2.45

Darling Bets,

I have your letter of January 26th. I was looking forward to it as I expected you to give me some news of the people you had met at Vidya's wedding. I have lost touch with so many of them, not only during the two and a half years of my stay in Ahmadnagar Fort but even previously. When I have met them occasionally in the past there have been two dominant and rather contradictory sensations. The older generation seemed to have remained where it was, more or less unchanged in a changing world, static and moving in the same old groove, only growing older and more wrinkled, like some old picture which is slowly fading off and developing cracks and is covered with film and dust. The growing generation changing rapidly in appearance, as growing children do, and almost unrecognizable, rather attractive, some of the girls particularly so, and apparently full of promise. Yet, somehow as they grow

612. *Gajar ka halva*—A sweet made of carrots.

injection. On the whole mild reaction — slight rise in temperature, pain & swelling &c., except in Maulana's case. He had fairly high fever for a day or so.

Two days ago, on Feb. 8th, we had the second injection. Sendak warned us that the reaction after this would be worse. As a matter of fact it has been even milder.

Feb. 10, 1945

Darling Indu,

Two days ago I — and some others here — took our second injection of the plague stuff. This completes the inoculation. We have been told that the reaction to this would be more marked but as a matter of fact it has been milder than the previous one. In another two or three days' time I expect to be quite normal The inoculation is supposed to be effective — so we are told — for six months only. Rather a short time. Anyway you can rest assured now that those of us who have been inoculated will not get the bubonic plague — whatever other plagues might infect us — for at least six months.

In my last letter I asked you if you had sent me some dried fruit, *halva, laddus* &c.— Since then I have received a letter from Amma from Lahore in which she mentions sending me some eatables — What they are she does not say. I suppose this lot came from her.

The additional books from Jinarajadasa, as well as the other books you mention having sent, have not reached me yet. I think I have already read Nilima's *When the Moon Died.*

You might put down in your list of desirable books, to be obtained when available, the following three:

1	Rosamond Lehmann	:	*The Ballad and the Source*
2	Penderel Moon	:	*Strangers in India*
3	Do Do	:	*The Future of India*

All the three were published in London — the first two last year and the third only recently. This third will certainly not be available here for some time. Perhaps the other two have reached India.

I am not surprised to learn that Madan Bhai looked dazed and aged on his emergence from jail. But I hope he will recover. He looked pretty feeble after his hard life and starvation diet during the Civil War in Spain and later in China. But this has been a new and probably more trying experience for him.

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The cigarette-holder you sent me has come to grief. It fell on a stone floor and cracked up. However I am using its broken-up pieces.

This is my letter No. 101.

Your loving
Papu

February 17, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of Feb. 9th. Now that I know that both you and Rajiva are keeping well, it does not matter much if your letters do not come regularly. So do not trouble about this. Write only when you feel in the mood for it. It is seldom worthwhile to write when there is no particular urge to do so. I write fairly regularly as there are only a limited number of activities here and inevitably one develops a routine.

I have read in the papers the answer which Mudie, the Home Member gave in the Central Assembly about the health of the internees in Ahmadnagar Fort.[613] He said that I had had an attack of lumbago but had recovered from it. We are used to odd and novel statements made on behalf of the Government and try not to be surprised. But it was something of a surprise for me to associate lumbago with myself. I looked up the word in the dictionary for I was not clear about its precise significance — I found that it was a 'rheumatic affection in loins'. Certainly I have not had, recently or at any other time, any such 'affection', and so I conclude that I have never had lumbago. There appears to be something wrong about the sources or channels of the information that reaches Govt. Normally this error is the outcome of a desire to tone down something or make it appear, as far as language can help, to be something other than it is. But there was no particular reason for saying that I had lumbago when I had suffered from no such malady. I imagine that the lapse was due to carelessness or inefficiency somewhere, or mixing me up with another person here who did have lumbago. It is true that I had a slight pain in my left shoulder

613. He had stated on 10 February 1945 that all members of the Congress Working Committee were well, except Govind Ballabh Pant, who might have to be operated on for hernia. Jawaharlal had an attack of lumbago but had recovered and Vallabhbhai Patel, who had for years suffered from a spastic colon, was well.

and round about it for some days. It was not much but it interfered with my sleep and exercises. What annoyed me was that I should have had it at all for any bodily weakness or disability irritates me. I got over it by massage and fomentation and especially sunbaths. I have been completely free from it and have been indulging in my exercises as usual. The plague inoculation came in the way but that too is over with all its after effects.

I have received the books and a pamphlet which Jinarajadasa sent you — They are:

1 Sean O'Faolain : *The Great O'Neill*
2 H. Fortes Anderson : *Borderline Russia*
3 Jinarajadasa . *Economics and Theosophy*

The Human Situation, which you mentioned, was not in this lot.

I might mention that I have also received the two new books from Rupa & Co. who sometimes send me books. These are: Wavell's *Allenby in Egypt* and A. L. Rowse: *The English Spirit.*[614] Wavell's book was in a list of books required that I sent you last year. You can strike it off from it.

I have returned the following books to you:

1 Julian Huxley : *On Living in a Revolution*
2 Shaukat Ansari . *Pakistan*
3 Borodin : *Soviet & Tsarist Siberia*
4 Nym Wales : *New China*
5 Tikhov Semushkin . *Children of the Soviet Arctic*
6 *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*
7 Alexei Tolstoy . *My Country*
8 Dean of Canterbury . *The Socialist Sixth of the World*
9 Do . *Soviet Strength*
10 *Correspondence with Mr. Gandhi* (Government publication)

Semushkin's *Children of the Soviet Arctic* I found rather fascinating reading. It is simply written, but the account of change creeping in, or rather sweeping in, into those remote areas is very interesting. Apart from this, the Arctic and wide stretches of snow and ice have always attracted me.

I have read in the newspapers that Rafi has been transferred to Naini Prison. Why he should have been transferred to a place where special medical attention is not easily available is difficult to understand, more especially at this time of the year with the summer looming ahead. I wonder if you could arrange to send him fresh fruit regularly. What

614. It is a collection of reviews and essays in which Rowse presents a series of portraits of great Englishmen

the jail rules are about this I do not know but you can easily find out if you do not know them already. You can put Upadhyaya in charge of it and either he or Khaliq can carry the parcel, say once a week.

Probably Rafi will appreciate books even more than fruit. Books are apt to get waylaid or lost when sent to prison. I have lost many that way, including a parcel of them sent to Rafi to Bareilly in 1942. But that was not his fault as the books apparently never reached him. There is less danger of loss or disappearance if they are sent and recovered by messengers. Anyway the risk has to be taken for I should like Rafi to have good reading matter — You can pick out such books as you think suitable. A packet of three or four at a time can be sent and recovered when the next packet goes.

Also foreign periodicals, even though they are pretty old. I asked you in my last letter to send some of these to Sucheta Kripalani. Some might be sent to her, but I would like a more regular supply to go to Rafi. *Life* & *Time* and other magazines are likely to interest him.

I suppose Hari airs my old clothes from time to time. There are, I believe, still some of *Dadu's*, Dol Amma's and Mummy's clothes and belongings lying about in boxes and trunks. Ask Hari to look after them properly and air them &c.

Betty must have left Allahabad — I am very glad she spent two or three weeks in Anand Bhawan. I wish Harsha and Ajit had been there also to run about the garden.

Betty writes that when *Nani* and Bappi were in Anand Bhawan they messed about with your old presents, clothes, jewellery &c. and even took some away for disposal or exchange on your behalf. I was rather amused to read this and yet I realised how all this must have upset you — I am sure they meant well and anyway it does not matter much. But what does matter is your reaction to such happenings. Life is full of petty and unimportant events which for the moment loom large, upset our composure and thus unnecessarily hurt us and add to our difficulties. We have to treat them in proper perspective and not allow them to interfere with the path of our choice. *Nani* is a dear and would hate to hurt you in any way and yet it is obvious that her way of looking at things is entirely different from yours or mine, and unconsciously she may do much, imagining that she is doing it for your good, when actually she is rubbing you up all the wrong way. Probably there is far less difference between your outlook and mine than between yours and *Nani's*. Yet even between you and me there is bound to be a difference in approach to many things. We accommodate ourselves to these differences, adjust them from day to day easily enough because over a vast

area there is a common outlook, and because we realize that an appreciation of each other's differences is not only the salt of life but actually helps in bringing about closer understanding. Apart from other factors, age itself is a dividing factor. For age to impose itself on youth—how frequently that happens!— is one of the major misfortunes.

To submit to others against one's own decided inclinations leads to a sense of frustration and unhappiness; to be always on the offensive and coming into conflict with others leads to unhappiness all round. One has to find a middle way which can hardly be defined, but which may be said to be a gentle considerate approach and yet a firm adherence to one's own ways. Stick to what you want to do, and do it, but in doing so be as considerate to others as possible. Do not allow yourself to be pushed about too much by other people's opinions. We cannot be too hard on others but we cannot also be too soft or else we become just a flabby mass.

So if *Nani* wanted you to do something which you did not approve of or want to do, you should have made it perfectly clear to her that this should not be done. It seems absurd to me for you, at her instance, to worry about your old presents &c. or agree to dispose of them—Why should you?

As I have said above, this is a very trivial matter and hardly deserves a moment's thought. But I have doled out to you good advice so that you may apply it, if you approve of it, to other circumstances and other people also. And that includes me! I have a way of throwing out suggestions as they come into my mind. Do not attach too much importance to them. Consider them, certainly and then do what you think best — That would please me far more than the thought that you were just carrying out my wishes and not your own — This would apply at any time, even when I am with you but it applies much more now when I am far away and we cannot discuss any matter. Listen to others but trust your own instinct and your own thought.

I do not know what a normal person is, but whatever normality may be I do not fit in with it, and as I grow older I fit in less and less with it. That of course does not mean that I am very peculiar. But I grow less suited to the normal domestic and social life in India. I enjoy it in bits and with some people I enjoy it more than with others. Nevertheless a distaste for it grows in me and I do not see why I should waste my time in inane activities and in meeting third-rate people. Obviously this background is not a normal one and it is hardly a social one, in a narrow sense of the word. Also I have only a vague sense of money and property and refuse to worry myself about either. I cannot understand why people get excited about them. All this makes me peculiarly

unsuited to advise others, and even you, for there is no reason whatever why you should live, mentally or physically, in the rather confined or isolated world which fills my mind. I am terrified occasionally at the thought that I might be imposing my peculiar ways on you. I want you to be perfectly free and not allow even your love for me to limit that freedom. The bondage of affection can sometimes be a heavy one.

As I was writing this letter I received a packet of books from you.

1 *The Human Situation*
2 Swami Nikhilananda's *Bhagavad Gita*
3 Vivekananda's *Lectures from Colombo to Almora*
4 Do *Letters*
5 Do *Karma Yoga*
6 Nilima's *When the Moon Died*

and some pamphlets, including a reprint of some old speech of mine—Also Thermogene—Thank you—

Betty seems to have decided to go to Kashmir—She suggests that you might accompany her. If you could manage it, it would be excellent. You know that for me there is no place like Kashmir. But you have to take Rajiva into consideration. There is no obvious reason why he should not benefit by a visit to Kashmir, in spite of the long journey. Anyway you will be the best person to decide—Khali just by yourself and Rajiva is not an attractive proposition.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 102.

Feb. 24, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have just received your letter of the 17 Feb.—No. 96. I read something about the Hospital Week in the papers. This collection business is always very troublesome, in India more so than elsewhere for here people expect personal visits. I have an extreme dislike for doing such work. However it has to be done, I suppose, and it helps us to gain an insight into other peoples' minds and habits—not always a pleasant sight to see. We cannot expect much financial help from other parts of India for after all the hospital can only cater for local needs. So it

is as well that the people of Allahabad should feel that it is their responsibility.

I am glad you have decided to go to Kashmir with *Choti Puphi*—Kashmir must always remain first choice for a holiday. Your going there means that a bit of myself also goes and I feel a sense of exhilaration at the prospect. Ramlal's[615] house is good. But do you propose to spend most of your time in Srinagar? Probably Betty would prefer that and anyway Srinagar is pleasant enough and many small excursions can be arranged from there—I don't think a house boat is particularly healthy for a small child, though many children live there. A tent is much better. Perhaps later on you might move to a higher valley for a while. That depends on how Rajiva fares with his teething. Normally I should not worry about any very special arrangements for him.

Is Anna going to stay on with you and will she accompany you to Kashmir? Anyway you had better take *Tulsi* and *Hari*.

There are rumours again about our possible transfer to a U.P. prison—I have always attached little importance to these but perhaps there may be some slight basis for them this time as, in any event, Pantji is in need of an operation. An operation of course does not necessitate a transfer to the U.P. It means Pantji's transfer to a good hospital where a good surgeon is available. Some people in the Central Assembly and elsewhere seem to be anxious to get us transferred though why they should feel that way I do not know. For my part a prison is a prison anywhere and minor changes make little difference. It is the prison that counts, not the place where the prison is situated, except to some extent in regard to the climate. The prospect of summer in the U.P. plains is not exactly alluring—that is in a prison. Still it really does not make much difference, and if one day we are told that we are being sent elsewhere, like some commodities who have no choice in the matter, we shall gather up our belongings and march out, in due secrecy, from one enclosure to another. There will be a break in our routine here, a bustling and an unusual activity, and then quiet will again reign here, and elsewhere we shall settle down to another routine.

The only possible advantage of a transfer to one's province is to facilitate interviews. That advantage does not apply to us and I do not propose to take interviews elsewhere. So it makes not the slightest difference whether you are a hundred miles or a thousand miles away from me for in either event the barriers remain.

As for interviews the reasons which actuated us not to take them remain, but, apart from them, there is a personal reason which counts

615 Dewan Ramlal, brother of Dewan Chamanlal.

with me. Jail interviews are seldom satisfactory and often disturbing. There is no normality about them and a sense of tension persists. The conditions under which they are usually held are irritating. Emotionally they are rather upsetting; feelings long restrained and dammed up have a glimpse of a narrow outlet and yet are unable to adapt themselves to it, and the half-hour or so passes rapidly without any adjustment and leaving a hollowness and hunger behind. All this normally in prison even when interviews have been a regular event. We have of course often taken these interviews.

But it is a very different matter to be isolated for two and a half years and then to have this brief, restricted and uncomfortable interview under the grim shadow of jail walls and under the supervision of jail officials. When I meet you again, wherever that may be, I might remain silent for some time, just looking at you and trying to find out what you are now, how you have changed, what private universe you inhabit; or I might break out in unmeaning talk as a reaction from the long silence, a torrent of words trying to cover my own shyness and uneasiness, reaching out and seeking for something which eludes me. Gradually, as we see more of each other, we shall adjust ourselves as we understand each other afresh. But this cannot and will not happen in a jail interview, and though even sight, after the long absence of it, fills a vacuum somewhere, a heartache remains and is accentuated, and the gnawing feeling of emptiness continues. And so I feel that it is better for me to avoid these jail interviews. When I see you, I want to see much of you, quietly, normally and with a feeling of freedom and leisure. Till that is possible, I had rather not meet you.

It is odd to think that for over two and a half years I have not seen women or children. Even the men we have seen have been strictly limited in number and quality — and so our conception of Homo sapiens must undergo some change—It will not be particularly easy to adapt oneself to the wider world after this experience and always there will be a sense of unreality about it or of a double life —

Yet of course we shall adapt ourselves though we may carry that mark on our foreheads and in our eyes. I think I am peculiarly adaptable for I have gradually reduced the mental luggage I have to carry. That is why, I think, I can go off to a distant country at a moment's notice without much inconvenience. Betty, in her last letter, said something of the many arrangements necessary for the proposed visit to Kashmir. I suppose all that is necessary — And yet I would be prepared to go to the Arctic region or to any other far away spot without much mental or other preparation.

I have sent you the following:

1 Katrak	:	*Oriental Treasures*
2 Pandya	:	*The Holy Gita*
3 Nilima	:	*When the Moon Died*
4		*Hungry Bengal*

and *periodicals.*

The pamphlet of the Hindustan Hamara people which you sent me — containing a speech of *mine — has reached me. For a moment I* could not place it. Yet I realized soon enough that it was a speech of mine, though when and where delivered I do not know. Obviously it was an extempore speech and the text has been taken from a newspaper report, and like all such reports it is faulty. I have no objection to the *Hindustan Hamara people issuing it, but they should have sent previous* intimation. What is more important is that they should have stated the occasion, place and date of the speech and the fact that it was taken from a newspaper report. A careful revision by a competent person would have removed some of its obvious errors and redundancies.

Among the books which you are noting down for me, please put down Toynbee's *A Study of History*[616] — I have an idea it is in my room but I am by no means sure. If you cannot find it, then you will have to purchase it. There is no hurry. I have plenty of reading matter with me. Toynbee's book is big — more than one volume I think.

Only three days ago I wrote to Betty not to send me any honey as there was always danger of breakage. Yesterday four big bottles full of *honey were delivered to me — sent* by her. Now that it has come, we shall of course consume it with pleasure.

Once you wrote to me that you proposed to fix up a Chinese room, and an especially Indian room, in Anand Bhawan. Did you give shape to your ideas?

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter *No. 103.*

616. By 1939 Toynbee had published six volumes of *A Study of History*—the first three deal with his claim that civilizations, not nations, are the determining factors in history and that the life of a civilization is the story of its challenges and responses to environmental conditions and the second three with the breakdown and disintegration of civilizations.

March 2. Friday

It seems settled that all of us are going to be transferred to our respective provinces. For some time past there have been rumours of this and references in the newspapers. I discounted them. It was clear, however, that Pantji would go somewhere for his operation. That an operation is necessary for him has been admitted by Govt. Some official answers in the Central Assembly have indicated that others are also likely to be sent.

I am not at all anxious to be sent to another prison, especially on the eve of summer. It will certainly be hotter in the U.P. and living conditions in any U.P. jail will be worse than here. However, it really does not matter much and we shall gradually develop new routines.

How long have we been here? On Jan. 26th we completed 900 days here. So now we have been 934 days (up to today) — a big chunk out of one's life. It has been a curious experience for us all I suppose and whatever the future may bring, we twelve, or ten now, will not be thrown together in this way again.

We have been told nothing definite about our transfer. Sendak's ideas of secrecy are curious and primitive. I imagine that we shall be sent away by the middle of this month.

March 3, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have been sending you lately rather longish letters and I think you need some relief from them. Anyway a short one for a change ought to be welcome — Or, perhaps, the real reason is that my mind today is rather a blank so far as letter writing is concerned. It is not quite a blank of course for there is much that fills its odd corners and leads me to muse and travel leisurely along its corridors. Sometimes these wanderings lead to what appear to be blind alleys, and sometimes there are distant and alluring vistas. So we build up, each one of us, private and individual worlds of our own, touching and overlapping other people's worlds, and yet remaining always our very own, different from the others. And these worlds become a refuge and a shelter, and sometimes also a prison through whose invisible, and yet nonetheless effective, iron bars we peep out at others and the wide world outside us. Those strong bars of the spirit rather isolate us and we feel incapable of crossing over to the

other side, but occasionally they seem to melt away and we become one with others and sense a feeling of communion with nature and the world.

Holi has come and gone, the spring festival, which has already the promise, or is it in India the threat, of the coming summer. It is I think the most delightful of our festivals, or should be such if we had not got so tied up in our minds and activities, not knowing exactly what to do and what not to do, pulled in different directions and constrained by circumstance, doubtful of each other and ourselves and what we stand for. *Holi* is the essence of spontaneity, of exuberant joy and merry-making, of a breaking of bonds that separate and a meeting together of all on an equal and democratic footing. How far it is from what it should be and probably used to be for we lack spontaneity and the spirit of merry-making, and joy is a scarce-known visitor.

Holi was Dol Amma's birthday. Most of these festivals of ours are associated in my mind with some event, some happening in my life. *Vasanta Panchami* was my wedding day; *Raksha-bandhan* and the *Dasehra* bring numerous memories; so also *Divali*.

I have been receiving letters occasionally from *Puphi* from America—They are interesting and fill in somewhat the brief accounts of her activities that appear in the papers—I write to her sometimes but the long delay in receiving letters—the average period for an airmail letter is about five weeks—rather puts me off writing. I am asking her to bring me a gift—a new Parker pen of the latest type—No. '51' I think it is called.

When do you propose to go to Lahore on your way to Kashmir? I suppose you will remain in Allahabad for the whole of this month—

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 104.

March 8—Thursday

Since I wrote last in this journal our impending transfer has filled our minds and interfered with the normal routine of our lives here. So far as we know, no definite instructions have come yet. But several answers to questions in the Central Assembly make it clear that a transfer has been definitely decided and that we are likely to be separated and

sent to our respective provinces. Everyday the papers contain rumours of this transfer—of where we are to be sent. It has been said that Pantji, Kripalani & I, and presumably Narendra Deva also, would be sent to the U.P. The Bareilly jail (District or Central?) has been mentioned for us. Again it has been said that I am likely to be sent to Dehra Dun. Vallabhbhai to be sent to Yeravda or Sabarmati. Shanker Rao to Yeravda. Pattabhi to Vellore, Mahtab to Cuttack or Berhampore, Maulana to Alipur prison and Asaf Ali presumably to Delhi. Pantji's release for his operation has also been hinted at. So we live in a state of indecision about the future but with this conviction that we are all going to be sent away soon. This is taken for granted and though we do not pack or otherwise get ready for the journey, a kind of mental preparation goes on. Also something more than that. A large number of packing cases appeared yesterday meant for our books, for we have collected a considerable number of them.

x x x x

This thought of transfer, of our going different ways, naturally led us to meet together and have some talks about the future. During these two & a half years we have avoided these joint talks about political developments, though there have been occasional talks and discussions between smaller groups. Maulana called us together on the 3rd and referring to the report of the transfer and especially to the impression abroad that we were anxious for such a transfer, suggested that we might write to Govt. and tell them that this impression was wrong. Of course Govt. could send us where they chose and it was not very material to us whether we stayed here or were kept in a different prison. Maulana's suggestion was not approved. Nearly all of us said that on the whole we would prefer to stay on here together to being sent to other jails separately. But everyone (apart from Maulana) felt that we should not write to Govt. on this question. Govt. have a way of exploiting anything that we may write to them—usually phrases torn out of their context. So it was decided that no letter be sent to Govt.

I then suggested that we might consider various future problems so that we might at least know each other's mind before we separated. This was agreed to and we have been meeting every afternoon for two hours, from 2 to 4 p.m., taking up each matter separately. So far we have had five such sittings and they are continuing.

The first question we considered was our attitude to interviews &c. in other jails. Should we continue to refuse interviews? After some discussion it was agreed that we should not have interviews unless

some extraordinary need arose—such as Pantji's operation which necessitated interviews and instructions. Also Narendra Deva's old mother aged 80 was anxious to see him and it would be a grievous blow to her to be told that he would not have an interview with her even though she was on the eve of death. Similar contingencies might arise for others also but, generally speaking, interviews were not to be taken. Each individual would have to judge for himself.

x x x x

We then went on to discuss a matter which is apparently agitating Congress minds outside—the attitude that Congress should take up towards Communists. This had nothing to do with the basic principles of communism or social change but with the political, anti Congress attitude taken up during the past 2½ years or more by the Communist Party in India. How was it possible to have Communists in the Congress, especially in Congress executives, when they were diametrically opposed to Congress policy and attacked Congress? It was obvious that Congressmen outside, most of whom had spent years in prison and had just been released, were bitter against the Communists, and in the ad hoc committees they had formed since their release, they had excluded Communists.

We had a long two-day discussion and the usual arguments were put forth. Shanker Rao, Kripalani and to some extent Pattabhi and Mahtab were for their exclusion in future. Others were opposed to it, or rather wanted to deal with individual cases of lapse and indiscipline and not with the group as such. Also there was the feeling that it was impossible to forecast the future which would be different from the past & the present and no hard & fast attitude could be laid down at present. Apart from national considerations, international factors would also have to be considered.

This led to a consideration of the larger question of other organised groups within the Congress—for instance the Socialists. Did not such groups with their separate mandates weaken Congress in action? No clear decision emerged but the general opinion was that we must not push out any group. We had to widen & strengthen the Congress and not to make it a narrower body.

About the Communists, it was agreed that the action taken by the ad hoc committees of representative Congressmen outside in not admitting Communists was thoroughly justified.[617] These committees were

617 In January February 1945, the organisers of the Punjab Provincial Workers' Conference and Bihar Constructive Workers' Conference did not allow the Communists to participate in their conferences.

formed to carry on the constructive programme of the Congress—the Congress itself being illegal at present—and it would be absurd to include people in them who disagreed with that very programme.

This had nothing to do with the inclusion or exclusion of Communists from the Congress proper later on when the Congress could function normally.

Also it was agreed that later, when the occasion for it arose, disciplinary action could and should be taken against those, Communists & others, who had deliberately gone against Congress policy & attacked Congress during a period of action. This would be an individual matter—As for the larger question of groups, this could only be considered much later and its decision would depend on a number of national & international factors.

x x x x

Our talks continue. We are going to consider the picture of the future as we envisage it—of the Congress, the country, & the world; the communal problem; the Congress constructive programme &c., &c.

x x x x

The probability of transfer led me to look through my manuscript of *The Discovery of India*. Since my last revision in December, some small matters requiring change or addition had occurred to me and I had noted them down. I wanted to be finished with these before I left Ahmadnagar Fort. So I have spent a few hours with this MSS and added a few footnotes &c. Again I have finished with it and put it away—finally so far as I can judge at present, but then one never knows.

x x x x

Two days ago there was a small incident when I spoke rather harshly to Sendak the Supt. The fault was partly Shanker Rao's. My words hurt Sendak greatly. I felt sorry for him and the next morning I told him that I was sorry for having lost my temper and spoken rather roughly to him. He was greatly pleased at this and his face lighted up.

x x x x

Indu writes that poor Rajiva is having trouble with his ears, or rather one ear, and his throat. I have been anxious and waiting for further

news. People tell me here that this kind of thing is not uncommon and is not serious. Still I am worried. The idea of a child's suffering is more distressing than an adult's.

x x x x

As I was writing this I was given a sealed letter from Wavell dt. 1/3 —A brief letter enclosing a letter to him from Edward Thompson dt. Feb. 22. Edward has written a moving account of his son Frank's death in Bulgaria. How proud he is of Frank's abilities and heroism—and very rightly. I feel rather upset and terribly sad—I shall never meet Edward again—he is slowly dying.

I have read Edward's letter again—with tears in my eyes—The story of Frank's death and his courage will haunt me for a long time.

March 9, Friday

I wrote to Edward Thompson today and sent it with a covering letter to Wavell—sealed.

x x x x

Indu's letter came today—Rajiva is better but apparently Indu has not been too well.

x x x x

Last night I had again a nightmare accompanied by shouting but there was a difference from similar occurrences. I shouted or groaned as usual under some compulsion or fright or both. Pantji thereupon started coughing to distract my attention—he always does that. I heard his cough & voice, vaguely realised that he was near and trying to help, also knew that I was in bed—and yet I did not quite wake up and continued to some extent in the grip of that nightmare. The bedding itself seemed to be pressing me at the sides, crushing me almost, and a vague terror continued. So I tried to call out to Pantji asking him to come and help me. My voice must have sounded strained and not at all clear. Pantji made out that I was trying to say something in Hindustani to him. Previously, that is at an earlier stage of the nightmare, I have an idea that I was saying or shouting in English—get away! go away!

When Pantji came over to my bed I woke up slowly. I felt very exhausted as after some struggle. In rather a weak voice I thanked him & apologised for having troubled him.

What is all this business? What frightens me during these nightmares and compels me to shout 'go away'? I have no clear recollections. Immediately on waking up after a nightmare some pictures remain in the mind but they fade away very soon. Only a feeling of pressure & compulsion remains—something that strangles & throttles and crushes the body.

Is this just a reaction to jail? Or to events in India? Or to some inner personal disorder? Certainly it is not a healthy sign and I am beginning to get a little worried.

March 9, 1945[618]

My dear Edward,

Through Lord Wavell's courtesy I have seen your letter to him of February 22 in which you give an account of Frank's death. Again, through his courtesy, I am sending you this letter.[619]

You write with a father's pride and a father's sorrow, and you have reason for both, but many others will share that pride and sorrow. I have thought that if I had a son I would like him to die in some such way before life had stained him and added burdens which are sometimes heavier than death itself. It would be a grievous blow, but somehow a splendid death gives a deeper meaning to life and I am a little weary of the dull and meaningless round of life's normal activities. The story of Frank's heroic death will, as you say, haunt those who hear of it. There is so much to haunt us, so many memories, some vital and brief, others deadening and long-enduring, that we have become a haunted race. To seek some relief from these ghosts of our former selves we try to cultivate a measure of detachment. Sometimes I feel that I grow more detached, perhaps because of my Hindu inheritance, or perhaps it is the temper of the age which values life so cheaply. Death has become so common that it is no unexpected visitor. And yet the pull of life is strong and we continue to plan and build our dream castles for the future.

618. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

619. After his release Jawaharlal learnt from Wavell that he had mislaid this letter. On 12 August 1945 Jawaharlal sent a copy of it to Edward Thompson.

I remember Frank. He was almost a school boy when I saw him last. How these six and a half years must have changed and developed him; we age rapidly in these days. Often I thought of him and Palmer and wondered when I would meet them and what they would be like after their play with life and death. For long periods during my life I have not seen my friends and dear ones, and to fill that vacuum I build up a dream world of my own which is pleasanter in many ways than the factual world that surrounds us. Sometimes, vaguely, I wonder which is the real and which is the unreal—(Hindu inheritance again?). Not being religious, in the ordinary sense of the word, and having no particular views about the hereafter, yet having got used to being cut off from the world for long intervals, death itself seems just a longer interval.

No, I do not think death frightens me much. What terrifies me is the fearful load of hatred and bitterness that we accumulate all over the world and leave as a legacy to those who come after us. And so the old cycle goes on. In this barren desert the oases of friendship and understanding are few but very precious, and more and more I have come to realise how much they mean to me and to others. The books that you sent me have been my companions here and your occasional messages have brought you near to me. Often I have felt that physical companionship is only just one way, and not always the closest, of meeting together. We can overcome the lack of it and understand each other even more sometimes from a distance.[620]

You are ill and I am here and perhaps we may not meet again. And yet I do not know, for I have grown used to the unexpected happening. Whether we meet or not, I shall often think of you with affection and treasure the memory of our friendship. And so, whatever happens, may it be well with you.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal

620 Edward Thompson replied on 11 September 1945: ". .there is not much of value in these earth-days. But more and more I am sure that memory, and especially friendship, are of worth. I feel that you and I are in close sympathy over all things."

TO LORD WAVELL[621]

Ahmadnagar Fort
9.3.45

Dear Lord Wavell,
Yesterday I received your note of March 1st with Edward Thompson's letter to you dated Feb. 22. I am grateful to you for enabling me to read Thompson's letter and for your offer to forward to him any letter that I might write. I am taking advantage of this offer and enclosing a letter for him. Presuming on your permission, I am keeping Thompson's letter to you.

In November last I received your letter of Oct. 31st 1944 and the three books that you sent—two of Thompson's and your anthology of poetry. As it was your desire, with which I wholly agreed, that your communication should be treated as entirely private, I refrained from writing to you directly then. I saw no way of writing to you and yet preventing others, in the chain through which my letters would have to pass, from knowing of it. I asked therefore the Home Dept. of the Bombay Govt. to inform your Private Secretary that I had received the message and the books and that I appreciated and was grateful for the courtesy.

Other Men's Flowers has brought to me many old favourites and reminded me of others that I had almost forgotten. It has also introduced me to a number of poems that were new to me. The book would have been welcome at any time and at any place, but it has been doubly so here.

Thanking you again,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

March 10, 1945

Darling Indu,
Two letters from you have reached me dated 25/2 and 1/3 — Nos. 97 and 98. The first one with news of Rajiva's ear-trouble rather worried me. I imagine that some infection had affected his throat and this had

621. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

spread to his ear. It is very difficult to prevent these infections for innumerable microbes infest the air. It depends ultimately on the individual's power of resistance. A baby can hardly be expected to have much of this. I gathered from people here that children often have some kind of ear-trouble and, though painful, it is not considered serious. Serious or not, it is very distressing to see a child suffer. I can never forget your face and your plaintive cry when you had your tonsils removed at Juhu when you were five years old.

Your second letter mentions that your temperature is also down. This is the first indication I have had that it was up. I hope this was due to some passing and minor trouble. It is clear anyway that both you and Rajiva have to go away for the hot weather. Kashmir will put you two right.

There seems to be quite a lot of talk about our transfer to other jails though no official intimation has come yet. The papers contain all manner of contradictory reports and Naini, Bareilly and Dehra Dun are mentioned so far as I am concerned. Having some considerable experience of U.P. jails I am not likely to be sent to a jail which has not been previously haunted by my presence and thoughts. So wherever I may be sent I shall soon fit into our accustomed groove. And yet there is always some trouble and jail people have a way of making themselves disagreeable over little things. You mention the trouble you have had at Naini about some things sent there for Rafi—Naini and the larger prisons are usually more disagreeable in such matters. Still I would continue sending books &c. to Rafi. Let the jail people refuse them if they want to do so.

My transfer will make no difference to interviews, that is to say I shall continue not to take them. I think I have already written to you about this. So the transfer, if and when it comes, should make no difference to your programme. All that you will have to do will be to address your letters to me differently. Even about that I do not know what the proper address then will be—direct to the jail or through the Provincial Govt. You can find out after you learn of our transfer.

I am afraid, therefore, that I cannot agree to an interview with Bijju *chachi*, here or elsewhere. There is no point in her writing to Govt. about it. As for her writing a letter to me that is a matter for the Govt. to decide. I propose to make no requests. Perhaps she had better wait till our transfer and then find out.

I have not received so far a fresh batch of books from the C.P. people. It may come later and add to my luggage. A few out of the books they send are good, most are mediocre, and some are no good and are just propaganda sheets or pamphlets. As for their weekly *The*

People's War I am certainly not going to make any request to Govt. Normally I do not do so and more particularly I have no intention of singling this out as an exception.

I have sent you a parcel containing the following books & pamphlets:

1 Davies	:	*Mission to Moscow*	
2 Anderson	:	*Borderline Russia*	Belonging to
3 Jinarajadasa	:	*Economics & Theosophy* (pamphlet)	Jinarajadasa
4 *Bushido*	:		
5 Aronson	:	*Rabindranath through Western Eyes*	
6 Vakil	:	*To Europa*	
7 H. Kabir	:	*Mahatma & other Poems*	
8 Gertrude Murray	:	*Verdict on Beverley Nichols*	
9-10 Agarwal	:	*Gandhian Plan of Economic Development for India*—2 Parts	

11 *Kadambari*
12 *Finland Unmasked*
13 *Vishva-Bharati* &c Krishnamurti

I have still with me one of Jinarajadasa's books—*The Great O'Neill*[622] —I have finished with it but some others are looking through it. I shall return it later and then you can send it back to Jinarajadasa.

I have received an account of Frank's (Edward Thompson's son's) death in Bulgaria. As you must have met Frank, and the story is a moving one and must interest you, I am giving it to you here. The original account is from an eyewitness of the incident.

Frank had a very exceptional gift for languages. He knew the European classics (Greek & Latin) well and a large number of modern European languages. He was 18 or so when the war started. He joined up and served later in Libya, the Sicilian landing &c. Apparently he added to his stock of languages during these war years and learnt or improved his knowledge of Persian, Arabic, Russian, Polish, Czech, modern Greek, Serbo-Croatian and Bulgarian. A very remarkable achievement for a boy who died at the age of 23. He was also, I understand, a poet of some distinction. He was attached to an important intelligence unit of G.H.Q. Cairo and held a very responsible post in it. But he felt ashamed of the easy life of headquarters in Cairo and was deeply stirred by the courage and sufferings of the Yugoslav patriots. So he volunteered for the dangerous work of assisting Bulgarian partisans

622. *The Great O'Neill* by Sean O'Faolain. This is a study of Hugh O'Neill, second Earl of Tyrone (1550-1616), and his times.

and in January 1944 was parachuted into Yugoslavia. His work there was very good and much appreciated. In March his colleague was surprised and killed but Frank just escaped and wandered about for 10 days in the forests and hills. He joined another unit and then, although he had a safer alternative, deliberately courted danger by marching off with a band of Bulgarian patriots. He felt that not to go with them would be unfair and would lead them to think that he was afraid of sharing their risks. There were running battles and he just escaped being killed—a dictionary stopped a bullet. He refused to leave his wounded wireless operator. They were nearly starving when they were rushed and captured on May 31. They were not allowed to sleep & were repeatedly interrogated. He claimed that as a liaison officer, captured in uniform with all his papers in order, he & his colleague were protected by the laws of war. He refused to give away his wireless code or military secrets.

On June 10 he was sent to Litikovo, a village some 30 miles from Sofia, where 13 of them were tried—five officers (Frank, one American, a Serb and 2 Bulgarians) and 8 others. 57 partisans had already been shot out of hand. Frank sat in the village public hall where the trial was taking place, smoking his pipe. The hall was packed, and it is said that the intention of the authorities was to rouse the crowd to a fury, to lynch them, so that it could be claimed afterwards that their deaths were the result of a spontaneous outburst of public indignation. But the people were on their side. When summoned, Frank, to everyone's amazement, spoke in fluent and correct Bulgarian. He was asked why he, an Englishman, fought against them & entered their country. He replied: "To me this war is something far deeper than a struggle of nation against nation. The biggest thing today is the fight of Fascism against anti-Fascism." "Do you not know that we shoot men who hold those opinions?" "I am ready to die for freedom and I am proud to die with Bulgarian patriots." The crowd burst into weeping and an old woman flung herself forward: "I am only an old woman, it does not matter what you do to me. But you are all wrong. We are not on your side, we are with these brave men." She was struck down to the ground. The judges hastened the trial and finished it in 20 minutes. Major Thompson took command, led his comrades to the place where they had to stand and raised his hand in the clenched-fist salute of the Fatherland Front. It was struck down, but he called to the people: "I give you the Salute of Liberty." At the castle all of them, as they died, died lifting this salute, with the spectators weeping.

Frank, it is said, has already become a Bulgarian national hero. The story of the Thirteen Partisans of Litikovo has become part of Bulga-

rian legend and history and above all the courage of the young English officers' leader (Frank) is admired there. Later, in November, the Bulgarian Govt. gave the partisans of Litikovo a great ceremonious funeral; there were 50000 spectators as the coffins were carried shoulder-high. Bulgaria is raising a memorial over their common grave.

That is the story as it has reached me. It is sad that young men of such promise should be snuffed out almost in boyhood. But heroism for the sake of an ideal is always inspiring and a splendid death surely is better than a long life, without purpose and meaning.

Your visit to Kashmir will mean considerable additional expenses. Draw on my account at Bachhraj's for them.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 105.

10.3.45[623]

Darling Betty,

The air is thick with rumours of our transfer and everyday the papers are full of some new story as to where we are going to be sent. Probably all these stories have little basis, and yet it does seem that some time or other we shall be sent away from here and I shall find myself in another jail — Naini or Lucknow or Bareilly or Dehra Dun or some other prison in the U.P. I shall return to some old haunt of mine for I have a varied acquaintance with the U.P. jails. It really does not matter where I am sent. So far we have received no official intimation and so we continue our old routine more or less and see no reason to change it till definite news of the transfer is conveyed to us. The mind adjusts itself of course to the coming change. It is a long time since we came here and had our horizon limited by the walls that surround us — just 31 months yesterday. New walls do not make much difference, for walls are much the same everywhere.

623. File No. 3590/H/II-2: Maharashtra Government Records, Police Commissioner's Office.

The transfer, when it comes, will not mean that I shall start taking interviews. I do not propose to do so. Letters, of course, will have to be sent to a different address — whether to the jail direct or through the Provincial Government concerned, I do not know. You will be able to find out.

I had asked you not to send me any honey. But soon after I received 4 large bottles of it. Of course they were welcome and we are consuming them.

Summer has very definitely established itself here. When do you propose to go to Kashmir? I suppose this depends on the children's holidays. Indu writes to me that she would precede you to Lahore, from where you will go together to Srinagar.

Love to you and Raja.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

March 15, 1945 Wednesday

Today is the beginning of new *Samvat* year 2002 according to the lunar reckoning. Our *Nauroz* will come later.

Our afternoon talks continue and yet there is no indication of our transfer, though there are frequent references to it in the papers. So from day to day we wait for some kind of formal information. Probably we shall be sent away in separate groups, or individuals, on different days, to each province concerned.

Meanwhile, we have our discussions and I think most of us have appreciated them and profited by them, though Maulana hinted yesterday that we might wind them up as his personal work was suffering. So far we have had 12 days of these talks—today will be the 13th. We have considered the communal question and the future of the Congress. We shall now go on to the constructive & economic programme, & then, if we have time, to the future national & international shape of things —

x x x x

Raja Narendra Nath's[624] death three days ago came hardly as a shock, in the normal sense, for he was over 81. Yet it was a break with the

624. (1864-1945); Hindu Mahasabha leader of Punjab and father of Rameshwari Nehru.

past and therefore painful. He was a lovable man, perfectly straight and honourable and rather childlike in some ways — In these days these qualities are precious enough.

x x x x

My blood pressure taken today — systolic 120; diastolic 78 — difference (pulse pressure) — 42, which is healthy.

March 16. Friday

At our afternoon sitting yesterday Maulana spoke for nearly an hour and a half. He dealt with the developments in 1942 after the Cripps affair — Gandhiji's articles & the situation in the country then — culminating in the A.I.C.C. meeting. He praised Bapu for his wise leadership and his many great qualities but on this occasion, he said, Bapu had erred and we should recognise it. As for himself, he had felt this way even then and argued at length. Eventually he had agreed because he could not keep away from a step of this kind once taken — Still he felt now that he should have resisted Bapu's argument still more. Then he referred to subsequent happenings in the country — the position today and future possibilities.

Then he dealt with the communal situation — how he had been pained at the C.R. formula[625] fathered by Gandhiji and how, in his opinion, this had done great harm. For the future, he was clear that we should not approach Jinnah or the Muslim League in any way (unless the League itself changed completely).

Maulana's analysis was clear and clothed in brilliant but rather overrich language — How keen his mind is. I agreed with nearly everything he said and yet not entirely. He has not quite finished yet and will continue today.

x x x x

625. The Rajagopalachari formula contained six points: (1) the Muslim League to endorse the demand for Indian independence and cooperate with the Congress in forming an interim government; (2) at the end of the war, a commission to mark out the boundaries of areas where a plebiscite of all the inhabitants will decide the issue of separation from Hindustan; (3) all parties will be free to organise propaganda before the plebiscite; (4) questions of defence and joint services will be decided by mutual agreement; (5) all transfers of population must be voluntary; and (6) these terms will depend on Britain passing over full responsibility to the Government of India.

Yesterday I sent a note[626] to Sendak about Pantji. I am annoyed & troubled at the delay in his operation and the general casualness shown in regard to it. Today I have written to the Secretary, Home Dept., Bombay Govt., on this subject. In this letter I have referred to another matter also. An A.P. message from Ahmadnagar appeared in the newspapers some days ago, saying on 'reliable' authority that we had all sent a representation to the Govt. expressing our reluctance at the proposed transfer to other jails. Further that Kripalani and Pattabhi were in favour of the transfer but had submitted to the majority view. Of course we had sent no such communication, though Maulana had once mentioned to Sendak that he was not keen on the transfer & would prefer to remain here.

Obviously Sendak is at least partly responsible for this message of the A.P. The odd thing is that no contradiction has appeared.

March 17, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter No. 99 of March 4th. I can well understand your difficulty in deciding where to address your letters to me. There are so many rumours about our transfer and every day some new story crops up in the newspapers.[627] Yet here we are still in Ahmadnagar Fort. The local correspondent of the Associated Press is responsible for some of these stories and there are the newspapermen in New Delhi and elsewhere who pick up scraps of news and conversations and then give vent to their imaginations. It is an interesting game though it must confuse many people. The latest story is that aeroplanes are kept ready for our transfer and we shall be carried through the air in a day or two. This appeared in yesterday's papers. Also that we are all ready and packed. The fact of the matter is that we know nothing definite and no information has been supplied to us. All we know is from the newspapers. I have given no thought to my packing. Why should I till I know definitely? It is rather absurd for me to pack up and upset my day's routine and then wait from day to day for something to happen. Packing really consists of putting my numerous books in boxes. So, in

626. Not available.

627. A news report of 15 March 1945 stated that "all bag and baggage of the Working Committee members, who are detained, has been packed for despatch. It is likely that all the members will be transferred to their respective provinces within a day or two by aeroplanes."

spite of some inevitable mental disturbance, we carry on as before — And I think you had better do so also till you have clear information about a change in our place of habitation.

I wrote to you that I was asking *Puphi* to bring for me, on her return from America, a Parker '51' pen. Somehow I managed to forget writing about this to her. So if and when you are writing to her you might mention this. Also I want her to get for me a Schick Colonel dry electric shaver. I am not sure if she can get either of these in wartime. The style of nib I use is more or less medium fine — that is rather a poor description and individual tastes vary greatly. But that is all I can say about it.

According to the lunar way of reckoning the new *Samvat* year — 2002 — started with the new moon two days ago. Our *Nauroz* usually comes a fortnight or so later. But I am not sure this time as this year an extra month is added for purposes of adjustment to fit in with the solar year. If you know the date for *Nauroz* let me know.

I am glad you have news of Yunus looking well. But I do not approve of his newly acquired beard. I suppose he will be coming out very soon and then the beard will go.

For many months past I have not been receiving any English periodicals — *New Statesman, Time & Tide, Tribune* etc. I wonder if this means that my subscription has expired. The American periodicals come in more or less regularly — Sometimes with a slip attached that the subscription has expired. I wrote to Chand two or three months ago asking her to get Walsh to renew these subscriptions.

Love to you and Rajiva and Feroze.

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 106.

March 19. Monday

There has been a burst-up at our afternoon talks and, as might be expected, I have become involved in it. It is doubtful if these talks will continue. Yesterday was our 16th day of these discussions.

On Friday afternoon Maulana continued and spoke for another hour and a half. He was not so good as on the day before. He spoke too

डाला और मामला कुछ संभाल लिया![628] Maulana interrupted and said : یہ نہ کرتا تو کیا کرتا ؟[629] and then I proceeded with my narrative.

Obviously I had used the word नाजाएज़ in a friendly, semi-humorous way, meaning that he had exercised rather too much pressure. I would not have used that word seriously for fear of offending him. Maulana took it in the same spirit but he misunderstood my reference. I was thinking of his repeated appeals to those who wanted Bapu's resolution as it was and who would not countenance any change in it. He thought that I had referred to his pressure on me when I suggested then that I should resign from the W.C. and was reluctant to speak on the resolution (as it emerged from the W.C.) before the A.I.C.C. However, even this difference in interpretation had no importance and neither Maulana nor I attached importance to the incident. I was trying to explain as calmly and objectively as possible the effect on my mind of various incidents, so that I could understand myself and show to others the changes I underwent in the course of those months preceding August 1942.

After I had finished that narrative, I added that though Bapu's approach during those months (as seen in his articles in *Harijan* &c.) was, to my thinking, wrong and confusing, I have no doubt that he was representing the mind of thinking and unthinking India then. This general thought & unconscious reaction was given a direction by his articles and this fact created a new situation full of dynamic possibilities. Indeed the push having been given, no one (except to some extent Bapu himself, and even for him it was difficult) could check it or direct it effectively. In fact I looked upon the scene as the development of powerful elemental forces which were proceeding by their own momentum, as it were, to some inevitable end. Later Bapu himself varied his attitude and approach though holding fast and passionately to the main line of action. In fact this variation of his brought him much nearer my own viewpoint and removed some of the obstacles in my path. Some, not all, for the final difficulty of large-scale action just then remained, with all its far-reaching consequences. When, however, I saw that this was inevitable, that Bapu's mind was fixed and determined, then further argument was not useful. I had to make my choice. There was no difficulty about that choice. It was inconceivable to me to remain aloof from such a movement. Facts as well as all the urges of my own nature were too strong for me. Having so decided, then it followed that whatever action was to be taken must be whole-hearted.

628. By exerting undue pressure you salvaged the situation a little.
629. What else could I have done?

Looking back, I said, I am not very sorry for what I did or for what happened. I do think it could have been done better if the approach had been different, if, in fact, our approach of August had been consistently followed in previous months. But facts are seldom in our control and things took their own course. And in this course, though much harm resulted, much good also is visible. It is difficult to find a just balance—Only the future would show. So much had happened and was happening in the world that was full of sorrow and tragedy that we could not complain or feel dispirited at our own experiences. So I was not worried at all about the past.

After I had finished, Vallabhbhai spoke. His tone was full of suppressed anger, pain and bitterness. He said that he had long suspected that Maulana and others had felt the way they had spoken about events prior to August 1942. Because of this he (or 'they' meaning those who thought with him) had avoided speaking on this subject during these last 2½ years. Now unfortunately the initiative had been taken by Maulana. He wanted to avoid an argument but he wished to say with all emphasis that he did not agree with Maulana's analysis and he was firmly convinced that the attitude and steps taken by Bapu had been correct and inevitable. Any other course would have meant the gradual annihilation of the Congress with all its evil effects on the country.

In particular, he said, he had resented what I had said about the events in Allahabad (W.C. meeting April 1942). (Kripalani interrupted: It is not what Jawaharlal said but what Maulana had interjected that was objectionable.) So Vallabhbhai went on referring to the 'two parties' in the Congress ('which 2 parties', I said, 'to which party do I belong—so far as I know I form a party of one'.) There had always been trouble between them. He resented this attempt to show that he and his colleagues had not only been wrong but also that what they proposed then was dangerous for the country. They had put up with much they did not like, they had swallowed many a bitter pill, and now to be referred to and run down in this way was most objectionable. Further, he added, that because of references to guerilla warfare in a speech[630] in Assam in April 1942, he had sent his resignation from the W.C. to the Maulana.[631]

I was amazed at this outburst—both at the words used and the bitter tone that accompanied them. I had not intended to, nor, to my knowledge, had I used any language that might hurt. I was thinking,

630. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 262-263.
631. It was said that Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Kripalani and Prafulla Ghose wrote to the Congress President offering to resign because for them nonviolence was a creed and even more important than Indian independence.

all the time I was speaking, in terms of self-analysis and trying to give an objective account of happenings. Obviously there had been a conflict of views, as there often is. It was all past now, done with, and a part of history. Why should we get excited over it? My reference to the Allahabad W.C. had been of the briefest and Maulana's interjection very casual, natural, and totally harmless. Yet these inoffensive remarks had upset Vallabhbhai and Kripalani and uncovered some deep feeling of resentment. This glimpse into the depths was very disturbing. I had hoped that all this was over.

I was a little annoyed and yet not much so. It all seemed due to some misunderstanding which could be removed. That could be done, but what about this glimpse into the depths of suspicions and bitterness?

Maulana said he would say a few words the next day (for time was nearly up) to remove misunderstandings.

The next day (that is, yesterday Sunday) Maulana expressed briefly that neither he nor I had said anything meant to hurt and there evidently had been a misunderstanding. He was indeed very sorry that anything he had said should hurt. He explained his interjection which, in fact, referred to me and not to others. Maulana spoke in a very friendly and reasonable way.

Then I spoke — I had previously thought over the matter and realizing its dangerous potentialities had firmly resolved to be brief and sweetly reasonable — to go out of my way to soothe. But things happened differently. In spite of Maulana's explanation and mine and our assurance, the response was wholly lacking, and the bitter tone and some kind of charges and justifications continued. This attitude amazed me still further for, whatever the previous misunderstanding, surely there was no room for further argument after our explanations. Questions and answers became more heated — these were between Vallabhbhai and Kripalani on the one hand and Maulana and me on the other. Maulana kept cool. Not I or Vallabhbhai or Kripalani.

Ultimately I said that it was direct insult to me that my explanation (and Maulana's) should not be accepted in the spirit it was given. Also if every word uttered was liable to be misunderstood and distorted, then it was exceedingly difficult to discuss any subject, and the only course left open to me was to avoid talk with such persons.

Thus the meeting broke up, and I am at present hardly on speaking terms with Vallabhbhai and Kripalani! I suppose this will pass, but the whole background of bitterness and suspicion will not pass so easily.

Our afternoon talks seem to have been effectively ended by this incident. Even if they continue for a day or two, they will be constrained and unreal.

I think I was less wrong than usual in this affair—yet why can I not keep my temper?

x x x x

Last night I shouted again in my sleep—my usual agonized cry. Pattabhi, who sleeps some distance away in the verandah, got out of bed and came to wake me. Was my shouting a result of the disturbed nervous state due to yesterday's incident?

March 20 — Tuesday

Last evening I told Vallabhbhai & Kripalani that I felt sorry for my having lost my temper the day before and I apologised for it. I felt better afterwards.

x x x x

A letter from Nan from New York dt. 8/2. Quite casually she mentions that she proposes to tour in the U.S.A. in March, April, May and then in October, November, December! Which means a much longer stay there than anyone had anticipated.

x x x x

I seem to be losing weight again slowly. Today my weight was just under 126 lbs.

March 21, Wednesday

Yesterday afternoon we met again for our talks and discussed some aspects of the minority problem. The 19th had been a gap day.

Today we are not meeting for this purpose as both Vallabhbhai and Narendra Deva have caught chill & have some temperature.

March 22. Thursday

Last night I shouted in my sleep again and disturbed others. Where will this land me one day — or night?

Vallabhbhai & Narendra Deva are still unwell, though better. There has been almost a kind of epidemic of mild influenza. Sendak, the Jailer, several warders have had it.

March 24, 1945

Indu darling,

So here we are still! And yet the talk of our transfer continues and every other day brings a fresh rumour or surmise. The wheels of Government move very very slowly.

I have your letter — No. 100 — of the 14th March. I am sorry to learn that both you and Rajiva have been unwell. I suppose it is inevitable that Rajiva should suffer occasionally from infantile complaints. And then this changing season brings distempers and derangements in its train. Here quite a number of people have had colds or mild attacks of influenza. I have thus far escaped them.

I see from the papers that after a brief cool spell the temperature in Allahabad has shot up to 103°F. That means an early hot weather and by April probably neither the babe nor you will approve of the weather. When do you intend going to Lahore on your way to Kashmir? As I have already written to you, you should not vary your programme in any way because of rumours of my transfer. That should make no difference.

It is rather silly of you to go on worrying about money matters. Waste should of course always be avoided, more particularly in these days. But otherwise one should carry on one's life without thinking too much of money. It is true that a stage arrives when money scarcity comes in the way of one's normal life. That stage has not come to us yet, so why bother? When the time comes it is not difficult to adapt oneself to changing circumstances, or at any rate it should not be difficult to do so. It is far more a question of the mind than of external circumstances. Worrying about the future in terms of capital invested is foolish and, what is more, is not in keeping with the changing world. Our real capital is not money or goods but our capacity and ability and our mental outlook which can always adjust itself. No one can take these

away. Even from the narrower point of view of material goods and conveniences, we have little to worry for we have the ability to add to them whenever necessary. For my part, the idea of hoarded capital is none too pleasant. It is almost a burden and a nuisance.

Certainly, it should not be necessary for any of us to have to go to a hill station to escape the hot weather. The old Indian idea was that the dry hot weather cleansed our system by making us perspire thoroughly. I think there is something in that, provided we can stand it. But it does reduce our working capacity and enervates, and if we can recharge our internal batteries by a change we should certainly do so. The idea of going up to a hill station regularly is more or less recent, and yet the idea of going to the mountains in summer is a very old one in India. Naturally this was not easy when communications were scarce and limited. And yet it is surprising how many people went as pilgrims or in some other guise. They did not settle down anywhere and preferred wandering, which was probably a much more delightful way of spending the summer in the hills. The cost of such trips then or even now need not be considerable, unless we deliberately follow expensive or wasteful ways. You know how it is possible — or rather was possible in the pre-war days — to go about Europe without spending too much. And yet many tourists, partly from ignorance, partly from a desire to show off, spent a lot. An enjoyable trip anywhere has less to do with money than most people imagine. True, standards and ways of enjoyment differ and, in any event, a certain minimum amount is essential. Babies also make a difference for they are helpless and require especial care — It is folly to take risks with them which ultimately involve us not only in additional trouble but in extra expense.

So please do not be so foolish as to worry yourself about money matters. I have told you to draw upon my account at Bachhraj's and surely I have not got to repeat this on every new occasion.

I am sending you today a bunch of books — They are:

1 Shaw: *Everybody's Political What's What*
2 de Madariaga: *The Heart of Jade*
3 Agnes Smedley: *Battle Hymn of China*
4 Wavell: *Allenby in Egypt*
5 Wasilewska: *The Rainbow*
6 Sarat Chatterji: *The Deliverance*
7 *All Parties Conference Report — 1928*
and a number of the *Adelphi*

There are several good books in this lot which will interest you. Madariaga, which you had sent me, takes one to the Aztec civilization of Yucatan in Mexico at the time of the Spanish conquest. Yucatan

Though we go from here to yet another prison, and life will be much the same for us though in different environments, still it means a big break for us. For 961 days today, two years seven months and eighteen days, we have existed here like some plant or vegetable rooted to the ground. And now we are going to be uprooted, transferred and transplanted in some other barren and stony soil. But there and elsewhere later in life, the memory of these years spent in Ahmadnagar Fort will endure and colour our vision. The days have passed and the months and the years, but each day, each moment, has left its impress, and layer upon layer of these impressions and experiences lie embedded in the recesses of our minds.

It will be a change to go out and see the trees and broad fields and human beings moving about as we travel across India. Everything changes and yet everything continues to be much the same as it was. The change is really within us, each one of us, and the world and nature continue ever young, though generations of living beings are born, grow up and fade away. Yes, it will be a change to go out because we shall see everything with different eyes. And when others see us what changes will they find in us? We cannot say or even know.

Some time, when I have the chance, I should like to see high mountains, snow-covered, with rivers of ice flowing down their sides, and wide spaces and deep ravines. So I would try to adjust my mind and vision to distance and depth again, and breathe the invigorating air that comes from those snowtops. Too long I have lived and moved in a narrow quadrangle and looked at its cheerless and hard walls. Only the sky offered distance and depth and mystery.

Enough of this. You will of course make the necessary adjustments consequent on my transfer. Letters and periodicals to be sent to a new address — (I am sending you today a packet of periodicals — *Life, Time, Asia, Commonsense* &c.) I have been receiving here, addressed to me, two daily papers — *The Hindu* of Madras and the Allahabad *Patrika*. Please ask Upadhyaya to inform them both of my new address.

I have still with me one of Jinarajadasa's books — *The Great O'Neill* by Sean O'Faolain. I am having this returned to him direct to the Theosophical Society, Adyar, Madras. I hope you have returned his other two which I sent you. Inform him that I have sent the *O'Neill* direct to him.

Some time back I asked you to try to get for me a Persian dictionary through Kitabistan. I wonder if this is available. Anyway please ask Upadhyaya to get for me from Ramnarain Lal, bookseller of Katra, Allahabad, his *Students' Practical Hindustani-English Dictionary*. The

10th edition came out in 1940. There should be no difficulty m getting this. Tell Upadhyaya to send it on to me to my new jail address wherever that might be.

Yesterday I received a huge parcel of khadi stuff sent by Mridula—She chose rather an odd time to add to our luggage—There were six full *thans*, three bedsheets, six towels. Obviously they were not meant just for me and I have succeeded in distributing the lot except for 2 *thans* which are still with me. They are good khadi and are bound to come in useful, though I do not require them at present. In these days of cloth scarcity in most parts of India, it seems rather selfish for me to hang on to them. Will you thank Mridu?

I follow the temperature of Allahabad in the weather reports in the papers. It grows warmer with unusual rapidity. You had better fix up your departure for the north and escape before the full heat descends upon you and the little one.

Love

Your loving
Papu

March 28, Wednesday

Last night was bad—restless, disturbed—and I shouted in my sleep. Pattabhi came over & woke me after Pant had failed to do so by his coughs which were meant to attract my attention.

x x x x

March 28 (night)—Railway train—On way to Bareilly—

So we are out of Ahmadnagar Fort at last and going north across India.

The day was spent in packing and moving restlessly about from one room to another. Yet there was not much to talk about or the mind was not in the mood to talk. We carried out our usual routine and in the afternoon I almost forced myself to sleep a little for I had had a bad night and the next one was also likely to be disturbed. It was a brief restless sleep full of dreams and vague fancies as I lay half awake and half asleep.

I insisted on playing our usual game of badminton in the evening—our last one in A.F.—had a bath and an early dinner—and at 7.25 p.m. (8.25 outside time) we left the fort which we had entered so long ago

Long argument between Pantji & Coxhill the D.M. about former's release. The U.P. Govt.'s order confusingly drafted & Coxhill made a mess of it. Pantji very angry. In his own quiet way crushed the wits out of Coxhill and made him feel a nervous wreck—At last Pant was discharged at about 6.30 p.m. and we were marched to our barrack, where Rafi had lived for a long time. Only we two here.

April 3, 1945

Darling Indu,

We are settling down—gradually. The process is slow, requiring not only physical arrangements but mental adjustments. After two years and nearly eight months of Ahmadnagar Fort changes followed rapidly. The mere coming out of the Fort was an event for us, though it was dark and we could not see much. It was the night of the full moon. We had reached Ahmadnagar on August 9th 1942 just when the new moon was beginning its brief life of light and growth, and it was appropriate in a way that our stay there should end with the full moon, though many a moon had waxed and waned in between—was the number of these thirty-three or thirty-four?

It was exciting to have movement by car and train, to see crowds and hear them shout, to watch the morning steal over the fields, recently harvested, to remember the stations as they came one after another. And then Naini, on the threshold of Allahabad, and the old prison I knew so well. The meeting with old friends there with all the excitement that this involved.

And when I came out of the Naini Prison gate, to see you and Feroze standing by—and you looking just as you looked three years ago, a dainty and lovely slip of a girl, apparently unchanged by the passage of years or by motherhood. More friends at Phaphamow, and another journey by train. Again distant horizons and the familiar Oudh landscape. And so to a little station near Bareilly where we were taken off the train and motored (part of the road was villainous) to Bareilly C.P. There we bade goodbye to Pantji. And so here we are.

We are settling down slowly. Conditions here are different for this is a proper, or rather regular, jail with all that this means. And there are swarms of flies and mosquitoes and above all dust. Even as I write the paper I write on gets covered with a layer of dust. But we get used to these minor inconveniences soon enough. It will take a little longer to adjust oneself emotionally, for the three days of our journey from

Ahmadnagar to Bareilly were very full of experiences to which we had become so unused.

It was good to see you even for a brief while. I feel refreshed and vitalized by this outing and the sight of friends' faces and the sound of their voices.

From Naini I sent you one or two odd articles. Arriving here I discovered many more unnecessary things with me and so, rather hurriedly, I sent a suitcase, my box charkha, and a small packing case to Upadhyaya. These contain some odd books, clothes, warm coverings &c. Also an ivory Nataraja which Betty had sent me and which I hope will reach you intact. There are also two boxes full of small stones picked up in our yard at Ahmadnagar Fort. Some of these are rather attractive, though they are valueless, and I was wondering if you could not have a few set properly in the form of a brooch. That would be a souvenir of my stay in Ahmadnagar!

I have still far too many things with me and I have little or no use for them here. Indeed they are a bit of a nuisance for there is no proper place to keep them. In Ahmadnagar there were cupboards and chests of drawers &c. and there was little dust. Here things have to be kept in boxes and even of these I have not enough. So I am thinking of sending you, in the course of a few days, a packing case containing old clothes, books & various oddments. I suppose this can be easily sent as a railway parcel. The clothes I might return are of little use to me here or elsewhere, they are worn out and can be given away.

I am told that, as at Ahmadnagar, I can write two letters a week and receive four. So there need be no change in regard to this. I shall write to you once a week. Letters to me have to be addressed to Bareilly Central Prison.

I do not like the idea of your delaying your departure for Kashmir and waiting for developments. This living in a state of uncertainty is unpleasant. Personally I do not think that anything is going to happen soon enough to upset your programme. I suggest that now you should provisionally fix up your programme so as to meet Betty in Lahore when she gets there. That will be about the 26th, if I remember rightly.

Love to you and to babe.

Your loving
Papu

Bareilly Central Prison—Izatnagar

April 4—

After 2 years & 8 months suddenly a crowd of sensations and impressions. The railway journey, the distant vistas, crowds & shouting, arrival at Naini, meeting Rafi & others—

To meet these vital young men full of beans was a joy. To learn from some of them of what occurred in August-Sept.-Oct. 1942 was to revise our previous impressions and to realize how much bigger the movement was than what we had imagined it to be.

Rafi looked fairly well, though thinner. I was glad to find him so, for I was afraid he might have deteriorated physically much more.

And then as I came out of the Naini Gate there was Indu clad in a *shalwar* & ओढ़नी[638] standing some distance away! Vaguely I had hoped to see her at the station but I refused to allow myself to expect it lest the disappointment be great. I went to her—was with her for a few seconds—and then had to enter the police car.

I saw her again at Phaphamow for some minutes—There were others also—Tandon &c. And then the rail journey.

I could not sleep for a long time for I was too excited after all these extraordinary happenings.

x x x x

The reaction to all this has been slowly creeping upon me here in Bareilly C.P. Or partly it is due to the environment of a regular prison and the high walls that surround our yard. It is frightfully dull here and I have been unable to do any real work. Even physically I feel poor. The arrangements for food &c. are primitive.

April 7, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have received your letter of March 31st—No. 101. You just completed the century while I was in Ahmadnagar Fort. This is my letter No. 110 to you.

638. *Orhani*—A long scarf worn over the *kurta* by women.

Did I look thin and shrunken when you saw me? You and others who see me after a long interval are better judges than I can be. Changes creep in slowly and are hardly noticeable from day to day, and we get used to them. In the aggregate they must amount to a good deal. To be thin is not always a disadvantage. It may even be a change for the better, as I think it is, within limits, in my case. But to present a shrunk-up appearance is not advantageous as age is not by itself a welcome factor. Yet both have to be accepted. I do think, however, that I am pretty fit and healthy. But neither I nor anyone else can write off 2¾ years at a time of life when physically at least one must be on the decline. As for milk &c., which you suggest, I have been taking some regularly for many months. Not too much for I am not used to it.

I had not allowed myself to hope that I would see you on my passage through Allahabad, though somewhere at the back of my mind there was that expectation. It is better not to expect too much from life and take it as it comes. About Rajiva I had definitely not expected to see him, so it was no disappointment. In view of the uncertainty of our meeting and the late hour, when he must have been asleep, it was not worthwhile carting him about from place to place and upsetting him. Of course I would have loved to see him. And yet I am not sure that I would have been glad to have my first glimpse of him when he was upset and possibly grumpy. Anyway all that is over now and I hope that I shall see him some time or other in a more suitable environment and in the bright light of day. That will be much better than a prison gate at night.

About Kashmir, you will fix up your programme as you think best. After all you are in a better position to judge than I am. What I do not like is for anyone to hang on to rumour and uncertainty, and it seems to me there is far too much of this rumour business and wishful thinking.

Yes, I would like to go to Kashmir more especially if you are there—to go there as soon as I can, even if I can only stay there for a few days. The combination of you and Kashmir will be just the right tonic for me. I do not think it will make much difference to anything or anybody if I am away for ten days or a fortnight. Yet life is so much like an octopus and its tentacles grip and hold me to activities which may have little essential importance. I sometimes wonder how much of what we do has much basic importance!

I see from the papers that Padma is getting married in about three weeks' time. I should like you to send her some kind of a gift on my behalf. If you have difficulty in fixing this up, send a cheque for

Rs. 250/-. This should be sent to her direct and not to her parents. Also you will convey to her and her parents my love and good wishes.

Some time back I asked you to get Rs. 500/- transferred from my account with Bachhraj to my account at the Punjab National Bank, Allahabad branch. I wonder if you had this done. If not please take the necessary steps now. While at Ahmadnagar Fort I used to issue cheques on Bachhraj to the Bombay Govt. for cash. That was convenient there, but it will no longer be convenient here. The Punjab National Bank is more suitable here. So I want some money there to draw upon whenever needed.

I have been receiving various newspapers here—All those that I wanted, except *The Leader*. I had not mentioned *The Leader* to you previously as I expected to be able to get it here. Curiously enough a copy of it came here by post addressed to me but then it stopped. You might therefore ask the *Leader* people to send their paper to me—It will keep me informed of local happenings.

You will send your letters direct, addressed to me. The proper address of this jail appears to be: Central Prison, Izatnagar, O. & T. Ry., Bareilly. At least I hope this is correct. The O. & T. Railway rather intrigued me. What was this new name? I have found out now that it stands for Oudh and Tirhut Ry. and it includes the old R.K. Ry. and the B.N.W. Ry. I shall have so much to learn, so much to get used to. I suppose Prayag is still in E.I. Ry.

In the course of next week I hope to send you a packing case containing some books and old clothes and new, which I do not need here.

Will you send me a copy of the pamphlet containing the marriage service which we had prepared at the time of your wedding? There used to be a bundle of these in my dressing room. I want to give it to Narendra Deva.

And that reminds me. My last day in Ahmadnagar Fort was March 28th. I remembered that it was the anniversary of your wedding — the third — was I right about the date? — Three years.

Love to you and Rajiva & Feroze.

Your loving
Papu

I was sorry to learn that Radhe[639] was suffering from typhoid. I like him very much and am rather anxious about him. I hope he is getting better.

639. Radhey Shyam Pathak, a Congress leader of Allahabad.

April 13, 1945 Baisakhi Day

Darling Indu,

Two of your letters, which you had sent to Bombay, have been forwarded to me here. They are dated March 20th/23rd and 26th.

I am glad to know that Rajiva's first tooth is out and that he is keeping well. His efforts to talk are most interesting and they must fascinate you. Does he not sit up yet? Surely it is time he did so. It is an extraordinary thing, as old as humanity and yet ever new, how a child develops his consciousness of the outer world. There is all the sense of unending adventure, of continuous inquiry, of a peering into new phenomena, and everything is new, as it must have been for those remote ancestors of ours who came into being at the dawn of human existence. Rapidly, so very rapidly, the child passes through millennia of human history, and subconsciously, or partly even consciously, lives through the history of the race. If we grown-ups could only retain in some measure that spirit of adventure and inquiry and delight at ever-renewed discovery that is a child's heritage, and add to it the knowledge and wisdom that the ages have accumulated for us, how excellent it would be! But unhappily we grow too soon out of that wonder of childhood and yet do not reach mature manhood with all its compensations. Somehow we manage to miss both, and though we grow in years we remain babes and sucklings in mind but without the vitality and the spirit of growth of the child.

Please thank Dr. Krishnan[640] for the books he has sent you — They were originally required for the Maulana but to send them to him now is out of the question. Nor would I like you to send them all here — they are too many and I do not want to burden myself unnecessarily. I am not a fast reader. If I think a book is worthwhile, I like to take my time over it. The following books out of the list, however, are likely to interest me:

1 Ogden : *The A.B.C. of Psychology*
2 Van den Bergh : *The Universe in Space and Time*
3 Darrow : *The Renaissance of Physics*
4 C.T. Chase : *The Frontiers of Science*
5 *Science in Progress*
6 Thompson : *Growth and Form*

If you like, you can send me these, or two or three of them.

640. K. S Krishnan (1898-1961); Fellow of the Royal Society; Professor of Physics, Allahabad University, 1942-47, Director, National Physical Laboratory, 1947-61.

I remember W.M. Benton very well. He paid a visit to me in Anand Bhawan some years ago. He first introduced me to *Time* which he arranged to send me for a year or two. He was at the time the head of a big advertising firm in America and was probably also connected with *Time*. It is odd how these business people suddenly develop into heads of universities in America. Probably he looks after the business side of the university — and this is a very big job there.

It is good of him to send me *Fortune* & *Foreign Affairs* — the latter I have been getting already through Walsh, but that does not matter — As for *Fortune*, do you or Feroze not get it? It was included in the list I sent Walsh. Please write to Benton to thank him and tell him I have pleasant recollections of him. It produces a warm feeling in me to know how friends remember me — As for his inquiry — what he can do for me 'to assist me in lessening the ardours of confinement'— that thought itself and the goodwill that prompted it goes a long way to help. For after all this is largely a matter of psychology, a question of the mind and its reactions, of waves of thought, important always and everywhere but more so in confinement. If he will occasionally send me a new book which he thinks might interest me — I have fairly extensive interests—this will be welcome to me not merely for the book's sake but more so for his sake, and will make me think of him and of America. Write to Frances also and send her my love.

No, I have not read Beverley Nichols's book — nor am I particularly anxious to do so.

I have sent you a railway parcel containing clothes and books. This has been booked to Prayag — Probably you will have received the railway receipt for it. If not, inquire at Prayag station. The clothes sent are some old and tattered ones, some new or more or less new. Give away the old ones. You will find in the lot 3 coloured shirts which Betty sent me — These are quite new and unusual. I did not require them and I prefer white ones, in prison especially. A full list of clothes, books &c. has been placed inside the box at the top. A number of old foreign periodicals have also been returned in this box. You can deal with them by sending them on to others, as previously.

Now that I have sent you in this parcel and through Upadhyaya quite a number of articles which I had accumulated, I feel lighter. How things accumulate even in prison! Even now I have far too many clothes and books about me. But I like to be prepared for all contingencies and for the moment I have enough to carry me on through the summer and the rainy season. Of course when winter comes — and it is cold here — I shall require some warm things. But that is still far off and much may happen in between.

It would be a help to me if you could manage to get a suitable cigarette-holder for me. The one you sent has gone to pieces. I have got used to smoking denicotinised cigarettes, that is, making the smoke pass through a pad of cotton wool. This is good for the throat also. Smoking a cigarette by itself gives me a sore throat. So a 'suitable' holder is one which permits the introduction of some cotton wool in the tube somewhere between the mouthpiece and cigarette end. It need not be of any particular kind or especially made for the purpose. Some ordinary holders have some space in between which can be used in this way. Ask Feroze to keep an eye open for this kind of a holder and if he finds it anywhere, to snap it up. If such a thing is not available, then the matter ends there.

Has Upadhyaya returned or is he still with Pantji?

Love

Your loving
Papu

April 14. Saturday

We have been two weeks here and still I feel restless and unsettled. Partly because the new living conditions are not to my liking, partly I suppose it was inevitable that the uprooting from Ahmadnagar Fort and transplanting here should shake up the system. I have wondered how I would have fared if I had had to stay in these surroundings ever since my arrest in August 1942—as indeed most of my friends and colleagues have done. I would have got used to them but the feeling of oppression would have been greater.

I have had a short-lived but severe attack of indigestion. I do not remember having anything like it for many years. I got over it by fasting.

A possible reason for restlessness & uncertainty is the continuous talk about our impending release. The papers are full of it and even an approximate date has been mentioned—April 20th. I think all this is greatly exaggerated and is somewhat premature. Yet I believe that our release cannot long be delayed. There are all manner of factors working in its favour. I would put it at early in May. That, incidentally, would mean our just completing 1000 days of internment this time!

These rumours of our release have upset Indu's programme for going to Kashmir. She is hanging on in Allahabad as long as she can.

Maulana is still in Ahmadnagar Fort! And so are Vallabhbhai and Shanker Rao, much to their annoyance. There appears to have been some hitch about Maulana's transfer to Bengal, though why I cannot imagine for Bengal is a Sec. 93 Province[641] now completely under the Governor Casey.[642] Maulana, I suppose, does not mind. Possibly he even prefers remaining on in Ahmadnagar, though it is annoying to live in a state of uncertainty. But Vallabhbhai must dislike this state of affairs exceedingly for he was really keen on a transfer. The Fort must be rather a lonely place since most of us were sent away. Vallabhbhai & Shanker Rao have to remain there simply because of the Maulana. They have to keep him company. Otherwise Yeravda awaits them.

This delay in Maulana's transfer also leads me to think that the possibility of a near release has something to do with it.

x x x x

Last evening the Deputy Superintendent informed us that President Roosevelt was dead — so the radio had announced. This news came as a great shock. Somehow no one expected him to pass away so soon. We get used to people as part of the scheme of things — and so with Roosevelt. He was only 68 or thereabout — not much of an age.

I was greatly upset and at night I was restless and dreamed of him. I had long wanted to meet him. My mind was full of the far-reaching consequences of his death — in the U.S. as well as in the world. It would make a big difference. But what would this difference be?

Somehow I felt old. I am getting on in years. Roosevelt was only 13 or 14 years older than me. So the old generation passes and no one knows what the new will do.

April 19, Thursday

Maulana has at last left Ahmadnagar Fort for Calcutta, and presumably Vallabhbhai & Shanker Rao have gone to Yeravda.

641. Section 93 of the Act of 1935 enabled the Governor of a Province, if he was "satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the Government of the Province cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Act", to assume, with the concurrence of the Governor-General, all the powers of the Provincial Government. It came into force in Bengal on 31 March 1945.

642. R G. later baron Casey (1890-1976); Australian politician; Governor of Bengal, 1944-46; Minister for External Affairs, 1951-60 and Governor General of Australia, 1965-69.

The newspapers deluded me also with their constant announcements about our impending release. I ought to have been more sensible. I suppose release will come before very long but I do not expect it till June or later. Probably not for another 2 months. I am glad Indu has decided not to wait and is going to Lahore and Kashmir in a day or two.

April 19, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter of April 8th. This was your No. 104 — I am continuing the old numbering. This letter of mine is No. 112.

I am glad you have decided to go soon to Lahore and Kashmir — There was no point in your delaying your departure. Perhaps by the time this letter reaches Allahabad you will have already left. I might have sent this to Lahore to catch you there but on second thoughts I have decided to address it to Anand Bhawan. That appears to be the safest address and it will I hope be forwarded to you wherever you might be. Please let me know your future address for letters — or addresses on given dates, so that I can send my letters to the proper place. I hope you have arranged to have the foreign periodicals sent on to me here regularly. Also where am I to return them and to whose address? That applies to books also. Shall I send these from time to time to Feroze — Anand Bhawan, or Upadhyaya?

I wrote to you from Ahmadnagar Fort and asked you to arrange to send me Ram Narain Lal's Hindustani-English dictionary. I should like to have this and Upadhyaya ought to be able to get it easily — There are two other books, or one book in two volumes (I am not sure) which is somewhere in the library. This is Romain Rolland's book on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. If it is not found in the library, ask Upadhyaya to get it for me. *The Indian edition has been* published by the Ramakrishna Centre near Almora — the Advaita Ashram in Mayavati.

Talking about books, I am rather keen on reading Aldous Huxley's and Somerset Maugham's new novels — Huxley's *Time Must have a Stop* and Maugham's *The Razor's Edge*.[643] I wrote about them to you previously. Perhaps they are not easily available yet. It is just possible

643. It is the story of a young American, who had served as a pilot in the first World War and who found personal tranquillity in India.

that you might be able to get them in a Lahore bookshop. I am looking forward to a parcel of books which *Puphi* sent me from New York two or three months ago. But if letters take six weeks by air, parcels must take many months. I do not know where she has addressed it to me — perhaps care of the Bombay Govt.

The packing case I sent you was despatched over a week ago, by passenger train and should have reached you — Yes, steel trunks are useful in prison. I managed to get one in Ahmadnagar and I am trying to get another here. Books and papers have some protection inside them. You need not trouble to send a trunk to me.

I have had a small note from Kishan Bhai informing me of Padma's marriage — I am not writing to him myself as this would come in the way of my other letters. But you will have, I hope, sent the wedding present or cheque on my behalf to Padma with my love and good wishes.

That reminds me that something has to be done about Yunus's marriage which you say is coming off towards the end of this month. I really can't suggest what you should give him as a wedding gift. The choice nowadays is limited. You cannot send him a cheque as in Padma's case. That would not be appreciated. Try to get something in Lahore or later in Srinagar, although that will be after the event. You can spend anything up to Rs. 200/- or 250/- for it. And also of course you will convey to him and his bride my love.

I have not written to Amma (*Nani*) for over three months, and meanwhile, I have received two letters from her. You will apologise to her on my behalf and tell her I am well. After all that is about all I can write to her. I find it hard to fit in extra letters as my usual correspondents — you, *Puphi* and Betty and occasionally Chand or Tara — exhaust the number of letters allowed me. I have been writing fairly regularly, once a fortnight, to *Puphi* in America. As she is far away I felt she ought to have some news of us. But so far she has not received any of my letters. They take a mighty long time to get through the various hurdles on the way.

Soon you will be in Kashmir — What a delightful prospect for you and Rajiva. He ought to flourish there and imbibe not only health and strength but some of the fascinating and mysterious beauty of the place. I shall be with you often in mind and enjoy this charm and beauty through you, vicariously and yet intimately enough.

I am very sorry to learn that Shri Handoo is not well and has developed patches of leucoderma. This is peculiarly distressing and it is surprising that there is no cure for it.

Give my love to *Nani*, Chand, Rup and children in Lahore, and to other friends there.

It is still not too warm here and the nights are definitely cool.

Love

Your loving
Papu

19-4-1945

Darling Betty,

I have not written to you since I came here. It is just three weeks since we left Ahmadnagar Fort, and spending a day in Naini Prison en route, reached here. This uprooting and transplanting business, after having been fixtures for so long in Chand Bibi's old domain, has naturally an unsettling effect. But we gradually settle down again and throw out fresh roots and tendrils. Now we two here — Narendra Deva and I — have got used to our new routine in the new environment of a regular jail, which is not somewhat different from the military barracks of Ahmadnagar. We have developed the capacity to adapt ourselves and that is a useful accomplishment.

I am sending this letter to Bombay but I do not know if it will reach you there for you and Raja must be preparing for your journey north. By the time you reach Kashmir, May will be well advanced. May is a delightful month there, though I do wonder if April with the fresh breath of spring is not better. But April is certainly colder and probably you will prefer May and June. The boys will thoroughly enjoy themselves and I hope they have riding and swimming and a taste of mountain hiking. You must show them a glacier. That is always a red letter day in a child's mind, when he sees this river of ice. My first glacier was the Pindari in the Almora hills and I was about 9 when I visited it with the family. I have still vivid recollections of it.

I see that some of you, deluded by our wishful newspapers, have been expecting our early release. Do not do so. The release will come, early or late, when the time is ripe for it. To live in expectation of it, either for those inside prison or outside, is folly. Wherever we are we have to carry on our jobs, and when any change comes we accept it and adapt ourselves to it immediately. So, as I have said, we have learnt the art of adaptation, and that is one of the secrets of life.

I read in some paper that your book will soon be out both in England and America. That is good. I had a copy of your book with me when I was passing through Naini. Rafi wanted to read it and so I left it with him there.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

April 27, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have been wondering where you are likely to be now and where I should send my letters. Your last letter came two weeks ago and you mentioned in it that you intended going to Lahore on or about the 21st April. So I suppose you are there now. Betty wrote that she is going to be in Lahore on the 30th and 1st for Yunus's wedding. Presumably you will also stay on for this although you have not said so in your letters. So I am sending this letter to Lahore C/o Chand, where I suppose you are staying. Chand and family, from the address, live in a flat. Your party will probably rather crowd them up. Not you, for you take little room, but the babe and his companions spread out a lot.

As you travel north to Lahore and Kashmir, I manage to accompany you in my mind and visit these places and see old friends again. I wonder how they look like now and to what extent they have changed. Your journey becomes almost (it is an odd comparison!) like a silent film with one picture succeeding another. Have you any plans about the length of your stay in Kashmir? I suppose not and there is no need to plan far ahead at this stage. Betty apparently intends to return early in July when the boys' holidays end. July, though the rains have begun then, is not a healthy or comfortable month in Allahabad. So you might as well stay on in Kashmir, though Srinagar then is not too pleasant. Is Feroze going to visit Kashmir during your stay there?

You will give my love to Amma and Rup and Chand and tell them all about me—how well I am keeping &c. Chand's and Rup's children must have grown up—Where are they now?

I have had another letter from *Puphi* from America. She is evidently feeling more and more at home there and fitting into a life of continuous travelling about. Her stay is being prolonged for she has entered into a year's lecturing contract with a firm arranging these lecture tours. That has somewhat taken me aback for it means that she will

not be back for another year, or at any rate till early in 1946. In spite of all my past practice in public speaking, the prospect of such a contract and having to speak day after day for months rather terrifies me. I would soon get bored with the audiences, with myself and with what I went on saying and repeating, for repetition there was bound to be. Fortunately I have to put up with no such thing and do not propose to let myself in for it at any future time. I feel I have had enough of public speaking, though no doubt when I have the chance I shall shout again.

From the point of view of Chand, Tara and Rita it is good that *Puphi* is staying on longer. Chand will graduate soon and may get temporary jobs there in newspapers &c. Occasionally I get letters from her. They please me for they show how well she is shaping in mind and spirit. There is something rather fine about Chand. She is straight and frank, sensitive and yet not very self-conscious, determined and inquiring, naturally troubled by many things and events but always trying to find out and get on her feet. Her visit to and training in America have undoubtedly done her good and she ought to make something worthwhile of her life. It is inevitable that she and others in her position, with mixed and conflicting backgrounds, should have to face difficulties in the future. To some extent all of us have to in these days of change and transition. And yet perhaps the conflicting elements are greater between the Indian and American background. The two countries are in many ways as the poles apart. America and Soviet Russia, for all their many differences, are much nearer to one another in spirit. I am convinced that we in India have to develop to a great extent that spirit, not losing our own backgrounds of course. And so it is well that young people should go to America for training, though how they react to it is another matter. There is always that risk when one ventures out of harbour into the open seas. The risk has to be taken and must be taken for we have been anchored for too long and our minds have become clogged and fixed in grooves of thought. It is a continuous source of astonishment to me how mentally and spiritually our people have starved and isolated themselves—and none are so narrow and isolated as some of those who have changed superficially and imagine themselves to be very modern and in tune with the changing world.

The change will come in India—it is obviously coming. It will be rapid enough and yet gradual so far as large numbers of people are concerned. It is a struggle in the spirit and soul of India. Individuals who change more rapidly than their environment have a tendency to get stranded and cut off, and they must suffer for that. Yet they are very necessary.

I have been reading Swami Vivekananda's *Lectures and Letters.* Many of these letters are from America where he lived for over a year and toured about a lot. That was over 50 years ago and yet his letters have a good deal of topical interest. He was a remarkable and fascinating man with enormous energy and a fire and passion which drove him on and eventually consumed him when he was barely forty. He was born about the same time as *Dadu* and Gurudev, and yet he seems now as belonging to a distant past age. It was odd to discover that he had never spoken at a public meeting anywhere, either in Bengali or English, before he appeared at the Congress of Religions in Chicago in 1893. He was totally unknown then and more or less starving and shivering in his inadequate attire—the yellow *sanyasin's* robe. He spoke extempore and created a sensation. That sensation was a continuing one, wherever he went, and he came to be known in the U.S. as the 'Cyclonic Hindu'. Later he travelled over Europe and went as far as Constantinople & Cairo. Halide Edib, the well-known Turkish woman writer, once said that Vivekananda visited her school in Constantinople when she was a little girl. She had forgotten what he had said, but she remembered still how impressed she had been by his presence.

We have been having unusual rains here. That has cooled the air. This reminds me—Are you now liable to colds? I have long had that failing, and though it does not amount to much, it is certainly a nuisance. For the last four months—and that is a long period for me—I have been entirely free from them. There may be many reasons for this, but I have told myself that one of these is a new habit I have developed: to gargle every morning with warm water with a good pinch of common salt dissolved in it, also to sniff this up through each nostril. Rock salt—लाहौरी नमक—is good for this purpose. It is clear and pure and can be ground into powder. It is also stronger than sea salt.

I find that, almost unthinkingly and unawares, I am often giving you grandmotherly advice—I suppose this habit comes from advancing years. After all I am a grandfather.

Love

Your loving
Papu

April 30, Monday

So the great European War is already past history after five years and eight months—an interminable period it has seemed. The end—I suppose it is the end though not officially confirmed yet—came suddenly and dramatically although many indications had pointed to it.

What stark horror Europe has passed through during these years—more especially Poland, Russia and Germany! 'Berlin dies in the ashes of desolation' is a headline today in the newspaper. In this heap of ashes lie the remains of Hitlerism & Nazism—the proud challenge for world dominion.

The story of the past 12 years in Europe since the rise of Hitler—the triumphant advance, the fiendish cruelty, the proud contempt for world opinion, the amazing growth in power, the persistent crushing out of all contrary opinion and especially the Jews, the Saar, Austria, Sudetenland, Munich, Prague & Czecho-Slovakia—the Polish Corridor—and then War! And what a war! Almost a hundred per cent triumph for some years and then complete defeat, extinctions and exterminations, what a story teeming with drama and horror and changing fortunes.

My mind goes back to these years and picture after picture come up before it. And then it stops at the final scene—the terrible present desolation of large parts of Germany. This is the end of all the pomp & glory and proud boasting And yet Nazi Germany has died hard, very hard. It did not lack courage. Which other nation could have survived so long against the overwhelming odds and deepening horror of the past many months? Only Russia, I imagine.

What now?

May 1, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have received your letter of April 24th—No. 105—sent from Allahabad on the eve of your departure for Kashmir. Four days ago I wrote to you to Lahore. I wonder if this letter of mine managed to catch you there. You must be on your way to Srinagar, if you have not already reached there. I read in the papers of your misadventure at Delhi station. This kind of thing is very irritating and I imagine the journey must have been a trying one both for you and Rajiva. Well, I

hope you will soon recover from it in Kashmir. From weather reports I find that Srinagar is still pretty cold.

I am returning the dividend warrant. Please send it to the Punjab National Bank, Allahabad, for credit to my account.

The books & magazines you have sent have not yet arrived. I suppose they will come in a day or two. Do not trouble yourself about the Persian dictionary—Anyway I do not want a Persian-Urdu one. Nor do I want the *Students' Hindi-English Dictionary.*

Romain Rolland's books on Ramakrishna & Vivekananda in the original French will be welcome. I would prefer them to a translation.

I am sending you a few foreign magazines which might interest you and Betty—*Time, Reader's Digest* &c. The others I shall return to Feroze in Allahabad.

So the European war is over or almost over. The end was long expected and yet it came with some dramatic suddenness. War is not over yet and will continue for yet a while in other parts of the world, and even in Europe real peace is still a long way off. Nevertheless a long and terribly bloody and horrible chapter closes. In the years to come we shall gradually think of it as past history, something over and done with, and the passions of the day will fade off to some extent. It is well that the war, or rather this part of it, is over. We have had a super-abundance of horror and cruelty and inhumanity and stark suffering which pass comprehension. Our minds and feelings get numbed and incapable of normal responses. For the present this feeling of horror and numbness remains. Except for China, many parts of Europe have experienced this extremity of war and destruction more than any part of the world, more even than China in several respects. What a shambles eastern and central Europe have become, a vast pit of destruction and ruin and ashes. From Stalingrad and the Caucasus in the east this trail of fire and death stretches right across Germany to Holland and Belgium. Of the great cities of continental Europe how many have been reduced to dust and rubble. Paris and Rome and Prague are still there, externally not greatly altered, and yet I wonder how far the spirit and soul of these cities is the same as before. It cannot be the same again, but it may recover some of the old atmosphere. But Warsaw and Kiev and Stalingrad and Budapest and Dresden and Leningrad and Berlin have ceased to be as they were, and they will have to rise again and anew from their ashes.

Five years and eight months! My mind goes back to the day in Chungking when I first learnt of the German invasion of Poland and the outbreak of the war in Europe. For all its horror, what an extraordinarily dramatic period this has been with its sudden ups and downs,

and uprooting of humanity, and strange turns of fortune! But to go back still further—the last twelve years since Hitler came to power—what astonishing changes and developments, what brilliant successes and down and out failures these have witnessed. To go back still further—the end of the last war and the tortured years that followed. So two dramas of history have been played before our eyes and the story goes on. The war has not actually ended in Europe, it appears, but it must end soon. It cannot go on. And then the war in the East. This may continue for some time to come, but that too will end. And then? Other kinds of conflicts, a piling up of problems and difficulties, realism and idealism, a search for a real peace that is so elusive and difficult to attain.

It is well that you are in Kashmir and can have some peace of mind and body in that enchanting country. Give my love to Binu *chacha* and others and remember me to Sheikh Saheb.

Love to you and the little one.

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 114.

May 5, Saturday

Today we complete 1000 days in prison—this time since August 9, 1942!

x x x x

The war in Europe is still not formally over. It drags on in a way and yet it is in effect over. Germany is reduced to the uttermost depths —Hitler dead[644]—Mussolini shot & killed.[645]

In the East also Japan shrinking. Rangoon partly occupied by British & Americans. It seems unlikely that the Japanese war will last very long as at first imagined.

644. On 1 May 1945, the death of Hitler was announced by the German radio. On 7 May 1945, an unconditional surrender of all German armed forces was signed at General Eisenhower's headquarters at Rheims.
645. On 28 April 1945, Mussolini was executed by Italian partisans in Como town on the Swiss border.

Some days ago the I.C. (Shaikh) came to visit us. He asked me if I played badminton. Who was I to play with? So later on his return to Lucknow he telephoned to say that the other political detenus here A & B Class or some of them can come over to play badminton with me in our enclosure. Some of them have been coming over in the evenings by turns and it is good to see them again after a long while. Among those who have come are: Jiva Ram Palliwal,[646] Ram Saran,[647] Mahabir Tyagi, Damodar Swarup Seth,[648] Rajendra Pal Singh,[649] Lall Singh,[650] Har Sahai & Puran Chand.[651]

May 11, Friday

My weight today 120-121 pounds, nearer 120 lbs. On the 19th April it was 123-lbs. On the 22nd April it was 124-. Thus I have lost 4 lbs since I came here 5½ weeks ago.

My last weight in Ahmadnagar was 126 lbs. Probably a difference between the two machines. The Supt. (Abdul Chaffar) is rather worried over my loss in weight. Wants to feed me up—But how? I feel well.

May 11, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have your letter from Lahore—undated but probably written on May 3. It is your No. 106. I hope you have now settled down in Srinagar after all the long and troublesome journeys. Yes, travelling in India must be pretty bad in these days. These early experiences of Rajiva will not dispose him favourably to it, and at the back of his baby mind he will store up resentment against this moving about and being shaken up and out of his normal comfortable routine. Modern civilization

646. A freedom-fighter of Ferozabad in Agra district.
647. A political leader of Meerut district.
648. (1889-1960); one of the accused in the Banaras and Kakori Conspiracy cases; later a leading Congressman in U.P.
649. (b. 1907); a Congress worker of Meerut; imprisoned several times during the freedom struggle.
650. (b. 1891); a Congressman of Bulandshahr.
651. A political leader of Meerut district; imprisoned for five years in 1943.

aims at and has achieved comfort to an amazing degree. But when it breaks down, it becomes an ugly ramshackle affair, worse than the hard and simple ways that preceded it. Just as you see the astonishing difference between the uptodate houses of today and the slums of today. The mud hut surrounded by the fields, bad and uncomfortable as it is, is better than the city slum. So in travelling also, if we have the wherewithal and opportunity, in luxury airlines or air-conditioned coaches or, on the other hand, in tightly jammed 3rd class carriages where it is difficult to breathe or even move your little toe or finger. The stagecoach and the bullock cart are almost wholly extinct now for purposes of travelling—not quite in parts of India. They were bad enough in retrospect. Yet they were more comfortable than the present-day 3rd class in our Indian railways. Nobody wants to go back to the stagecoach or the bullock cart and anyway that is not possible. But it is pretty rotten to have to put up with something which is even worse and which, in addition, somehow lacks the human touch. It is nauseating to see 3rd class carriages packed with human flesh and blood, all individuality sinking almost in one pulsating and panting mass. Travelling conditions are after all a reflection of life in general in India and what applies to travelling applies in an equal degree to the way the masses live or rather exist.

It was this distaste of travelling in these conditions that had led me some months ago to write to you on the delights of trekking in the mountains. Our city dwellers, unused to this kind of thing, are frightened at the prospect of being far from a railway line or a motor road. Yet the disadvantages of trekking are far less, and the advantages in the mountains are obvious. Of course that does not apply to the plains and it is impossible to walk or ride or drive from Allahabad to Kashmir, unless one has the facilities which the Grand Moghal's imperial train provided in the old days.

So you are in Kashmir now. What does it look like at this season? What flowers are blooming, what fruits hang from the over-burdened branches? I suppose the peach blossoms are over now, so also the rhododendrons. The lotus must be still in bud or even in an earlier stage. It blossoms on the Dal Lake in July, if I remember rightly. Cherries will soon be out and apricots and apples and peaches. I am getting rather mixed up about their respective seasons—they vary somewhat in different parts of the country.

Where is Ramlall's house where you are staying? Is it in Gupkar or thereabouts—I suppose I have spelt this name wrongly. Somewhere between the city proper and the Chashme Shahi? I heard some time ago that the Chashme Shahi had been practically enclosed by the

Maharajah's private gardens and was hardly open to the public. That indeed would be a misfortune. Even in 1940 these private gardens had spread out to the Chashme Shahi building and had cut off a road leading from the lake to the other side. How extraordinary is this desire to wall up and isolate large tracts of nature for one's private pleasure and deprive others from sharing in the abundance provided, which grows no lesser by the sharing. And the Nishat and Shalimar *Baghs*—what do they look like now? Is the Dal Lake much the same as ever or have the fancy boulevards made much difference? What birds chirp and sing in the trees?

I think of all these scenes treasured in memory's chambers, but even more I visualize the higher valleys leading up to the snows and glaciers, with their ice-cold brooks gurgling and rushing down to the vale below where they join the Vitastha.

I suppose, in spite of difficulties in travelling, Kashmir attracts still crowds of visitors, chiefly from the Punjab. Many of our friends may be there now or might come up later. How is Siddhartha doing—Nikku's[652] son? He must be a grown up boy now.

I like going to Lahore, chiefly because there are so many old and young friends there. The city also is developing in a way the air of a great city, though this is still rather superficial. The mixture of old historical tradition and modernity is rather appealing in its contrasts, though they clash frequently enough. Probably what I like is a certain vitality about the place. It is like a growing child, very immature in many ways and yet with an air of sophistication. But of course grown up people, that is grown up in years, who are still very ungrown up and immature in mental outlook, are not always attractive. They may become very tiresome. Gaiety is always to be welcomed. In Lahore however there is an atmosphere of a fake and superficial gaiety which is not so welcome. Yet for all that I like Lahore. Do you know that some of my earliest years, that is before I was ten, were spent in Lahore? Dol Amma was in a sense a Punjabi. She was born there and till her marriage lived there. Often she used to go on long visits to her mother, brother and others, and of course I accompanied her.

What has happened to the lovely pony which was presented to you by a friend—I forget his name—in Lahore in 1942 summer?

I am glad you consulted Dr. Bharucha about baby. I do not know much about such matters—deficiency of calcium &c. Why should there be this deficiency? Can it be made good pretty soon with right feeding etc.? It denotes a certain weakness of the bodily structure and we do

652. Kanwarlal Katju.

not want Rajiva to be weak in any way. He will be 9 months old soon and I suppose he is taking some other food now besides milk, though *milk is the best stuff for providing calcium. Have you had his* क्षीरचटाई? And did you ever have a formal name-giving ceremony? How does his weight compare with a normal 9-month-old? The main thing is that he should keep generally healthy & cheerful and he will himself supply any deficiencies.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 115. Should I go on sending letters C/o the Postmaster or to your proper address?

P

May 13, Sunday

Day before yesterday (May 11th) Narendra Deva & I received notices *from the Govt. of India & the Bombay Govt.* The latter has given up charge or responsibility for us. We are now, formally, the prisoners of the Govt. of India—Some promotion!

May 17, 1945

Darling Indu,

Yesterday I got your letter of the 9th May from Srinagar—your No. 107. You do not tell me what the motor journey was like. Are the so-called super buses comfortable? And how did Rajiva fare during the journey?

Kashmir continues of course much the same as it used to be. Nobody, and not even gross mismanagement *on man's part*, can take away the beauty of the place. Yet how much more agreeable and desirable it could be made if the mass of human beings there were put on the road to betterment. Every year bigger crowds of visitors *go there* from other parts of India and this I think is to be welcomed. Many of them are decent *people going in* search of rest and health and beauty. Still I do not take kindly to the class that flourishes so well in these days—

the high dignitaries extravagantly paid without much reference to their brain capacity, the war contractors and profiteers, and the hordes of others of high and low degree who seem to sprout up in wartime like weeds in a badly kept garden and eat up the soil to the vast detriment of the more legitimate plants and flowers. It is this variety of people who are most in evidence, I suppose, at all the holiday resorts, and especially in Kashmir. That is why I prefer the quieter higher valleys where there is less flaunting of ill-gotten monies. Not that I do not like pleasant and intelligent society—I am no recluse—but the contrasts in India are so marked and painful.

There is no need for you to fix up your programme in Kashmir definitely or to decide on the length of your stay there. Enjoy your holiday and do not bind yourself down to anything. There is no particular point in your returning to the plains when the rains have started. That is not a healthy season. Now that you have gone so far, you might as well stay on there as long as possible. Your last visit in 1942 was, I am afraid, cut short chiefly because of me. This should not happen this time. Srinagar may not be an ideal place to stay in from July onwards. You can then pitch your tent elsewhere. There is no lack of places to choose from.

I am looking forward to Rajiva's new photographs. Even more so I am thinking of the time when he will begin to toddle.

As for colds, do try the salt water method. It is simple and probably more effective than most of the patent medicines. I read an article in an American magazine some time ago in which an eminent doctor who had specialized in studying the origin and treatment of colds said that very little was yet known about these common and widely prevalent ailments. He was dead against the various nostrums offered in the market; in fact he said that they were often harmful. Apart from rest and some dieting, he strongly recommended the saline gargle and sniffing. Normally, when you are well, this need be done only once a day. If, however, you have a cold, it should be done two or three times a day—a fairly strong solution of salt in tepid water. Salt water is good for the teeth also.

It is pretty warm here now, yet not so hot, I imagine, as at Allahabad. The nights are pleasant. It is not the heat I mind so much as the dust when the *loo* blows. Within a month the rains ought to commence—the *chhota barsat* to begin with. So there is not long to wait. It is surprising how rapidly the days and weeks go by. Only occasionally they stick.

What is Nikku doing now? Is he working in Watal's factory?

A few days ago I received a cigarette-holder from Bombay, sent by Rai Amarnath Agrawal.[653] This is satisfactory.

Puphi seems to have been having a rather hectic time in San Francisco. Her stay there must be ending as she was going to Chand's graduation at Wellesley.

This is my letter No. 116.

Love

Your loving
Papu

May 21, Monday

Two days ago the Supt. (Abdul Ghaffar) came and told us that he had received a telephone message from the I.G. saying that in case we wanted to be transferred to a prison in a better climate he would arrange this. Also if we had a preference as to what jail we might be sent to. The fact that I had lost 4 lbs. in weight since coming to Bareilly and the heat was now increasing had evidently worried the authorities.

Narendra Deva and I told him that we would not like to make any suggestion on this matter. It was good of them to suggest a change but any proposal on our behalf was, in a sense, some kind of cooperation in our imprisonment—It almost became a put-up job. So formally we had no answer to give. But informally I told the Suptd. that in spite of the increasing heat we were keeping fairly well and there appeared to be no particular reason why we should be transferred. It was desirable to leave us alone. So far as I was concerned I was keeping fit and the heat did not affect me much except for a general lowering of vitality. Narendra Deva's condition was a more important consideration for we did not want to risk another attack of asthma. He had fortunately been free from any severe attack now for eight months, although he had some breathing difficulty in the mornings. He had kept well since we came to Bareilly and had put on weight. So it seemed unnecessary to make a change.

The Supt. asked me about possible places where we might be sent to Dehra Dun and Almora were the only two likely jails in the U.P. Of

653. (b. 1904); businessman of Allahabad, member, U.P. Legislative Council, 1936-52, and Council of States, 1952-60.

these he was of opinion that Almora was definitely better from a climatic point of view.

I further told the Supt. that as the medical officer in charge he was in the best position to judge about the necessity for a transfer. If our condition deteriorated in the coming weeks, and I did not expect this to happen, then he could consider this question.

Yesterday he came to us again and told us that he had conveyed our answer to the I.G. For the present therefore, according to our wishes, we would remain here, but at any time this was thought desirable, we might be transferred. In case of transfer he asked me who I would like to accompany me (this apparently, apart from Narendra Deva)—some people to play games with me, for Narendra Deva cannot do so. I was asked to choose any either from the political detenus here or in other U.P. jails.

I told him I was wholly unable to pick and choose in this way. I knew that many of my colleagues in various prisons were keeping bad health and required a change. How could I pick out two or three of them? And then presumably I was supposed to pick out the healthier ones who could play badminton &c. and not those who really required a change. In any event I could not ask for a transfer of any other people without consulting them. It may or may not suit them. There the matter rested.

The Supt. is terribly anxious to add to our comfort &c. somehow. He is continually asking me what more he can do—add to our furniture &c. As if furniture makes much difference! He has now ordered *tatties* for our windows.

As a matter of fact I am keeping fairly well—as well as I could be expected to. There is nothing obviously wrong with me. It is true that the process of losing weight has been continuous during the last 2¾ years and I have grown rather thin with various bones sticking out. I have reverted now to my weight in the early twenties or is it earlier still?

May 25, Friday

Changes in England—the break-up of the 'National Govt.'[654]—the coming general election &c. are likely to lead to some minor changes in

654. On 23 May 1945 the British coalition government resigned and Churchill formed a caretaker government. General elections were to be held on 8 July.

India—Wavell still in England[655] but Amery ceases to be Secretary for India—for the moment at least, though he may come back in a day or two in Churchill's 'caretaker' Govt.

x x x x

I took my measurements today—not very accurately in the absence of a tape measure. Compare with page 36 *ante*, dt. 17th Nov. 1944 & previous ones.

Weight (on 11/5) 120 lbs. Chest 31¾—34½—36¾ Waist 26½—29½ Hips 34½ Thigh at mark 17½—18 Calf 12½ Upper arm—bent 11¾, straight 10¾ Forearm 9¾ Neck 13¾.

A slight thinning though not marked—possibly differences due to imperfect measurements.

May 25, 1945

Darling Indu,

The summer advances and brings with it the hot winds and sultry weather. But far at the back of those winds those sea-changes are taking place which precede the monsoon—water being sucked up into the clouds and then to be borne away across the seas to far lands which crack with the heat and pant and thirst. Have you ever crossed the Arabian Sea during or just before the monsoon? I do not think so. Twice I had this experience in the old days of the small P. & O. ships which tossed up and down and from side to side, as if one was sitting on an electric rocking-horse, and it was quite impossible to stand or sit or even lie down without a firm grasp on some immovable fixture. Most people on board collapsed and groaned in their misery but I survived this exhausting ordeal and kept well, and I loved to watch this rolling and pitching and to see the huge waves advance on our ship and shake it up, breaking all over the top-most decks.

So the seasons follow one another and after the bad comes the good and the better. 'O wind if winter comes, can spring be far behind?' But even if there is winter in one place, or hot summer, there is spring elsewhere and cool breezes blow. I do not mind the heat much here

655 In March 1945, Wavell had gone to England for consultation with the British Government on the Indian political issue.

anyway and I am continually surprised at my adaptability to it. Besides this fortunate circumstance which helps me to keep tolerably well, I am not wholly here all the time. For I am often with you, not only in mind but almost it seems to me as if it were a physical transference, and I experience the climate of the Kashmir valley and look out through your window in the attic at the snows and the green hills and lakes and the Vitastha winding slowly on its leisurely and restful journey before it enters the gorges again. So I live a double life, or why double only? For it is a succession of many different and overlapping lives in many places far away from each other.

I received the other day Romain Rolland's Vivekananda and Ramakrishna—two volumes in English. They were sent to me from Ranikhet. I suppose Upadhyaya had gone there and sent them.

Since I have come here to Bareilly Central Prison I have received some odd letters apart from my usual ones. The rules here permit correspondence with others besides the list of near relations which functioned for this purpose at Ahmadnagar Fort. Some of these letters are from strangers or near-strangers. Bul has also written to me and Sri Prakasa but I have not sent any answers to them. During these 2¾ years I have got unused to writing miscellaneous letters even to friends. After a long gap it is not easy to pick up old threads again. Of course if I was out I would do so easily enough but here I cannot develop the mood to throw off letters apart from those which I have got used to writing. And then again there is the limitation of two letters a week (though I can receive four letters a week). Regularly I write these two letters to the small number of my correspondents and then there is no room left for more. Today I am writing, besides this letter to you, to Amma in Lahore.

Some months ago, soon after the liberation of Paris, I suggested to you to try to get news, by letter or cable, of Louise Morin, Jean-Jacques and Nanu and others in France &c. I wonder if you did so—I wish you would write and find out how our friends are and what has happened to them. Apart from our own desire to know about them, a letter from you will cheer them up. These messages across the seas, after long silences and painful experiences, are very pleasing to the recipients. They bring the perfume of friendship and comradeship in this hard and often unfeeling world.

And Edward Thompson also—He is carrying on, I suppose, as best he can in his lingering and painful illness. Despite appearances, he is emotional and very friendly and he would welcome a few lines from you.

One war is over and another is continuing, and Europe is dazed and starving, with many of its cities a mass of rubble, and in England they are going to have a general election and there will be a lot of shouting and ballyhoo and make-believe, and all the old puppet shows will continue and yet change in the process. So we also continue and yet change—

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 117.

May 26—Saturday

Today is the Buddhist New Year's Day—the full moon of the month of *Vaisakh*—the anniversary, according to tradition, of Buddha's birth, buddhahood, & death. The Buddhist era begins with the date of the death—So today the year 2489 begins.

We have so many holidays & festivals in India and yet this day, connected with the greatest of India's sons, is not celebrated except in a very small way—

May 31, 1945

Indu darling,

I have received two letters from you dated 19th and 23rd May—Nos. 108 and 109. The latter of these came this morning.

I love your descriptions of Srinagar and the neighbourhood, of the dawn touching the snowy peaks and gradually creeping down and spreading over the lowlands. Some time ago I read an airman's account of the dawn. He was flying high up and was enveloped in the early morning sunlight, but the earth was still a dark shadow and gradually it emerged from the gloom. So it must feel also if one is on a high mountain top.

I remember the Gupkar area fairly well. In 1940 I spent some days there and much earlier, over a year before you were born, the whole family lived in a large house almost at the foot of Shankaracharya.

Gupkar was not built over then as now and there were few houses. Nor had the Maharajah's palace spread out in all directions enclosing the land round about Chashme Shahi. We went frequently to Chashme Shahi and up Shankaracharya. Janki *chacha*—do you remember him?—He was one of *Dadu's* closest friends—was staying with us and he was a great walker. Every morning, before most of us were up, he had his little constitutional which usually meant going up Shankaracharya by one route and coming down on the other side.

The guest house near Chashme Shahi I remember very well. What a lovely situation. The view from its balcony over the Dal Lake and towards the mountains is hard to beat—In those days in 1916 Swamiji (Swami Sant Deo) used to live there. He was in high favour with the old Maharaja Partap Singh[656] (the uncle of the present one), and a crowd of Punjabis, especially women, was always to be found round about him. Dol Amma and Bibi Amma thought no end of him and we used to go to him frequently and consume the lovely fruits of his garden which he gave us in abundance. I lost sight of the Swami for many years and then, in 1940, on my way back *via* the Jammu route, I met him somewhere half-way in the mountains. I used to like him. He was (and I hope still is) a jolly, cheerful person with plenty of commonsense. I wonder if he is still flourishing. Nikku should know for his family was greatly attached to the old Swami.

Whenever Tej Bahadurji goes up to Srinagar he stays as the Maharaja's guest in the Chashme Shahi guest house. I visited him then in the summer of 1940. It brought back old memories to me and I gazed for long at the magnificent view spread out before me. And now even 1940 is an old memory.

If Bijju *chacha* wants you to shift over to his house, it would be well to agree to his proposal when it is convenient for you to do so. Perhaps so long as Betty and Raja and their children are staying on in Srinagar you had better continue where you are. Bijju *chacha's* house will be quite comfortable for you. You are likely to have much more company there for he likes to have his friends round about him.

There are ever so many places in Kashmir which invited one to trek. Pahalgam, itself a lovely spot, is a fairly good spot. There is a lake, rather high up, but just one day's good trekking, which is worth a visit. A place I liked is on the way to Kolahai, also one day's easy trek from Pahalgam. I forget the name of the place but there were beautiful meadows skirted by pinewoods. There is a fairly decent rest house there with two good rooms. You could easily go there and even take

656. The third Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir who ruled from 1887 to 1927.

Rajiva with you. It is always desirable to have a pony with you when trekking. Pahalgam has that disadvantage you mention—too many visitors go there during the summer months, many of them invalids, and a small place easily gets crowded.

Last Saturday—the 27th—was rather a special day, but very few people in India took notice of it, although we have a vast number of festivals and holidays and a passion for anniversaries. It was the *Vaisakhi Purnima*, the full moon of the month of *Vaisakha*, the last day of that month, leading on to the *Jyestha* or more simply जेठ—Tradition says that Buddha was born on this day, attained enlightenment on the anniversary of that day, and finally died also on the *Vaisakhi Purnima*. The Buddhist era begins from the date of his death, thus this day is the Buddhist New Year's Day and is celebrated as such in the Buddhist countries. I remember the celebrations in Ceylon when we were there in May 1931. Last Saturday began the 2489th year of this era. Historically speaking, Buddha was the biggest person born in India and it is right that we should remember this day.

We are right in the middle of the hot weather here and it is pretty hot—Sometimes, though not frequently, the nights are bad. But then there is one peculiarity of Bareilly, due to its nearness to the hills—suddenly a cool wind comes at night and makes a difference. We have been having very hot and sticky nights. But last night turned cool rather suddenly and some warm covering was required in the early morning. We sleep in the open—It is as hot as ever today.

What an extraordinary story of misadventure and good luck you have written about—the exploits of the Tweedy family. Kishtwar is one of the most out of the way provinces of Kashmir, very seldom visited by tourists or others. In my mind it is connected with an old legend that the women of Kishtwar are very beautiful!

I don't think you need worry at all about Rajiva's health. He is doing well, his weight is good and he keeps cheerful—that in itself is a sign of health. It does not matter if there is slight delay in his sitting up or walking. That will all come in good time—I think you should have a simple ceremony soon now both for the name giving and the खीर चटाई. It should not be delayed much longer. Kashmir is a suitable place for it and there is Birju *chacha* to help you fix it up. He is sure to be interested. So ask him about it.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my letter No. 118.

June 1. Friday

So June begins and we have nearly completed 34 months of imprisonment—Asaf Ali was released a few days ago owing to illness. He is completely broken down in health and is now in a nursing home.

About a fortnight ago or less I decided to revise my MSS again completely. There were some fresh ideas also which necessitated some additions and more or less minor changes. So I worked at this and finished it two days ago. This was my second full revision. Is it the last?

June 3 Sunday

I was priding myself that for nearly six months I had not had a cold. This morning there were the slight beginnings of one.

x x x x

The Supt. came today and said that it was getting hotter and hotter —which was perfectly true—and that he had come to the conclusion that we should be transferred to a cooler place—Almora. Had we any objection? I told him I had nothing to add to what I had said previously.

Well, so we are going to have another change soon—and just when Wavell is on his way back to India, and over-optimistic people are expecting our early release.

7-6-1945

Darling Betty,

I have your letter of the 18th May, together with the boys' notes. I have got a bit of a cold and am not in a mood to write but I wanted to send a few lines for the kids. Also to thank you for the lovely mangoes which have come from Bombay. There were 4 dozen *alphonsos*. I am glad you are enjoying your visit to Kashmir. I was sure you would.

Below is a joint letter for Harsha and Ajit.

Darlings Harsha and Ajit, It made me happy to get your letters and to learn what you are doing in Kashmir. Riding and walking

and hiking are all very pleasant there. But have you had swims in the Dal Lake? And when you went to Gulmarg, you must have gone up higher still and reached the snowline. There is no end to the games one can play on the snow. You will see plenty of snow and ice at other places also—at Kolahoi, Amarnath and perhaps at Sonemarg.

Yes, it is a long time since I came away and both of you must have grown a lot since then. Still I think I shall recognize you when we meet again. When that will take place I do not know. But whenever we meet both of you will have to tell me so much of your life at school at Gwalior and your adventures in Kashmir. I am glad to learn that you are growing up bright and strong and healthy and enjoy your work and games. Love to you both from your *Mamu*. And love to you also, little sister.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

June 7, 1945

Darling Indu,

Was it last week that I wrote you about my recently acquired freedom from colds? Well, I was a little premature, for, soon after, a tiny wee bit of a cold, hardly noticeable, crept in somewhere within my system, and like the camel nosing itself into the tent, began to spread. An odd moment to choose for we are at the apex of the hot weather. So for some days now I have had a cold, nothing much, but there it is, and a cold is a cold and a bit of a nuisance.

The heat here has revived old memories. For some years I had had no such experience. Ahmadnagar was after all a plateau of nearly 2000 ft. altitude and the hottest day there was mild compared to the northern variety. Besides conditions there were different. There is a certain ferocity about the loo in northern India which is comparable to nature's wilder outbursts. It does not last very long for it heralds the monsoon. Here too I suppose the rain will come soon—It is possible, however, that we may be transferred to a cooler jail from here.

Feroze has sent me a parcel of mangoes—*dasehris* grown in Anand Bhawan. There were just 100 of them, all in a raw state. They are being preserved in the right way so that they may ripen. Tell Feroze that I have got this parcel. Along with it came another from Bombay

—*alphonsos* sent on Betty's instructions, 4 dozens of them. On the whole they were in good condition. What a gorgeous thing is the mango—surely the king of fruits.

I enclose a letter which came to me here from Maria Lorenzini, a lady living in San Francisco. Her book of poems—*Seeding Democracy* —also reached me here. I want you to send her a proper appreciative reply. The poems were interesting though rather beyond me occasionally. Most of them were reactions to musical pieces, and as I was ignorant of the music which inspired them, it was not easy for me to react in the same way. But of course you are not going to say all this to her. You will write a proper, nice, agreeable letter to her which should give her a moment's pleasure. It was good of her to send her book to me.

The lady has sent me a cutting containing her picture (I enclose this also). It is a powerful face and I feel like wilting before its pleasant but stern gaze—perhaps this feeling is more due to the Bareilly weather.

One of the advantages of being in jail evidently is that other people have to answer your letters.

Love

Your loving
Papu

This is my 119th letter.

June 8th Friday

The cold has persisted and has brought some fever in its train which continues. The Supt. has been very attentive and has done his best to treat me. (The Supt.'s name is Dr. Abdul Ghaffar—He is not now in the I.M.S.). I have felt depressed—a natural consequence of the cold &c. on the one side and the terrific heat on the other.

This morning Coxhill the bright D.M. here came to see us & told us that we were going to be transferred to Almora either tomorrow or the day after. Bolam the S.P. will accompany us & he is due back this afternoon from Naini Tal when final arrangements will be fixed up.

So ten weeks of Bareilly C.P. and 34 months of internment—and now Almora.

June 9, Saturday

Well—we did not go today and there is still (5.30 p.m.) no news about tomorrow.

My fever, the little there is, continues and my face appears to have grown thinner—so people say—Yesterday we were weighed—I was 118 lbs.—a weight which takes me right back thirty years or so. That must have been my weight then and since then I suppose there was a gradual but continuous increase—There was no looking back except for short periods in prison. So I gained in the course of these many years about 25 lbs. Now having lost these I go back—But probably under normal health-giving conditions I shall soon recover ten pounds or so.

But the question troubles me—why I have lost this weight, especially here in Bareilly. The heat? May be, but I am not wholly satisfied. Even if that is so it means a considerable lowering down of resistance. So far as personal attention is concerned the Supt. here is continually thinking of some new way to make our life here easier—within the rules of course—He has been given a wide discretion in regard to us and he exercises it freely, often to my embarrassment.

Fortunately Narendra Deva has flourished here and has put on 5 lbs. or so.

Later. A bunch of letters—from Indu, Betty, Yunus & Bul—also two books. Isherwood's[657] translation of the Gita which I have been wanting to see ever since I read about it—and a book by Nan—*Prison Days*[658]—her prison diary—I did not know of the latter book and had no idea it was being published.

We are told that we are leaving tomorrow morning at 5.30—which is really 4.30 a.m. So tomorrow the mountains again and the long familiar road to Almora.

Today we completed 34 months—we begin the new month with Almora.

The Supt. here has done everything he conceivably could, & more, to add to our comfort during the journey—He has behaved almost like a fussy grandmother—Anyway he has been very decent

657 Christopher Isherwood (b. 1904), novelist and playwright, his interest in Indian mysticism allied him with the Vedantic Society in Los Angeles and his later writings include *An Approach to the Vedanta* and *Ramakrishna and His Disciples*

658 This contains an account of the author's life in jail from August 1942 to June 1943.

June 10th Sunday

1945 From Bareilly C.P. to Almora D.J.

An early start. I got up at 4 a.m. (which meant really 3 a.m.)—By six we were off in a comfortable car with Bolam the S.P. as our companion and a young man in the army who was going to Ranikhet. A police lorry followed with a guard and our luggage.

The morning hours were pleasant, though warm. It became cooler after Kathgodam but still it was warm enough to be slightly unpleasant. We reached Almora a little before 2 p.m. and Bolam, handing over charge to the jailer and taking a receipt for us two, departed. I felt very tired and the unpacking & arranging &c. tired me still further—as I had a temperature throughout.

Almora District Jail

June 11—Monday—

Back again to the old place after nearly ten years. It is considerably changed but there are many familiar landmarks—My old stone—the huge thing that I had dug out of the centre of the yard and then, with the help of a dozen or more convicts, made to stand up there is no more—It was broken up & used for building operations.

It is surprisingly warm here yet, for all that, the change from Bareilly is most marked. Probably it represents 20°F of temperature—Here the maximum now is 90° which is bad enough. In Bareilly it used to be 112° or over. Sleeping indoors last night I required no warm covering, or any covering at all.

On the whole it is pleasant here after the fantastic heat and *loo* of Bareilly. A delightful sound, bringing old memories, the rustling of the wind through the deodars—how like it is to the sea slowly advancing & retreating on the beach.

x x x x

I am intrigued by the fever I have been having. I see no reason for it. The heat? Possibly, but I am not sure. Anyhow I am resting a lot. If it does not disappear in two or three days, I shall worry a little.

x x x x

The Supt. here is the Civil Surgeon—Dr. H.H. Khan. The Jailor—a Sharma.

June 12, 1945

Darling Indu,

I am writing to you from a new address—though not so new. I have come back to the old place almost exactly ten years after I left it so suddenly to fly to Europe. It has changed somewhat but many of the old landmarks are still there, well-remembered nooks and corners and tops of trees peeping over the walls. We cannot see the mountains at all as the jail is situated over a ridge and the walls prevent a distant view. In winter and during the rains, I remember, this sometimes produced a strange and rather pleasant sensation of being in the clouds or near them, cut off from the rest of the world.

As I was looking round this old-new environment, faint memories began to stir within me, memories not so much of the material objects surrounding me but of the vague intangible past with all its associations, and gradually more vivid pictures took their place. This train of thought was started by a gentle soothing sound, of which I was hardly consciously aware for some little time but which seemed to envelop me and whisper in my ears. There was a dream quality about this sound, something that distinguished it from the more obvious noises of the waking day. Or perhaps it was rather like that middle state which lies between waking and sleeping when vague ideas float through the mind and pass away leaving no trail behind. It had a slightly hypnotic effect on me, and then I realised that I was listening to the rustle of the breeze through the deodars. There are no deodars within the jail enclosure, but just outside there are a few of them in a clump, and I can just see the tops of two or three of them quivering as a slight wind passes through them. What a lovely sound it is, arising as it were out of nothing and passing off into nothingness, and then rising again with its slow rhythmic motion, emblem of nature's basic harmony. Sometimes it reminded me of the advancing and retreating tides on a distant beach.

After a little gap I got a sheaf of letters, among them three from you. Two of the letters were actually given to me as we were leaving Bareilly and I read them in the car. Rajiva's snaps also came. The old boy looks bright and healthy and energetic. I think you are right in saying that it is not desirable for infants to sit up or walk too soon. This premature growth looks attractive and pleases the fond parents but I

have an idea that one has to pay for it in some way or other in later life. I think a slower and more solid growth, both physical and mental, yields better results. I do not want particularly to hold myself up as an example but I have an idea that my own growth was by no means too fast. In some ways it was perhaps even retarded. Anyway I am still growing!

I wrote to you in my last letter that I had developed a cold. It was not much of a cold but taken with the heat—what a combination!—I felt poorly. There was some loss in weight also in Bareilly. The Superintendent there was anxious to feed me up and produced all manner of things which, during the course of a fairly long life, I had so far managed to avoid—Ovaltine and Horlicks &c. Well, I swallowed them—Horlicks for the first time in my life! There was nothing much the matter with me—What intrigued me was that I could not quite find out what was the matter with me. I was examined and found to be sound in the obvious places. Probably it was just an odd combination of various circumstances—my getting a cold whilst it was so hot and some other minor factors, not important in themselves but helping each other to produce a derangement of the bodily functions. What a delicate thing is the body. It is a matter for continuous surprise to me how this intricate structure functions so satisfactorily in spite of persistent misuse and unfavourable environments. Has it ever struck you as odd how the body maintains a more or less even temperature even when it is far hotter or colder all round it? If there was not some delicate apparatus to maintain this even temperature imagine the result—with the atmosphere temperature at 112° F or more we would all develop terribly high fever and pass out, or when the temperature is below zero, we would freeze to death.

I am sorry you have lost weight. What is your present weight and what has been your maximum? The gradual reduction in my weight at Ahmadnagar and Bareilly has brought my weight back to what it was when I was in my middle twenties—a slim lad who had once coxed a boat. This going back to the past has its advantages in many ways and I am not sure that I would not like to go back. But there is one very serious drawback—there would be no Indu then—she would just be a hope and an aspiration.

It is unusually warm here in Almora but still there is a world of difference between Bareilly and Almora—Measured in Fahrenheit degrees I suppose the difference is about 25°. It is pleasanter here and my old body is approving of the change. It is important of course that the body should approve independently of the mind. The body, though intimately connected with the mind (and indeed the mind is

part of the body), has a way of going its own way despite the advice and the reasoning of the mind. The mind is of course much more highly developed and perhaps because of that its natural functions have been covered up or directed by thoughts and urges. But the body is comparatively more primitive and still reacts more naturally. As somebody said—a mind can and often does lie, a body can hardly do so.

So I expect to be quite fit again within a few days. The mere feel of the mountains has a tonic effect on me. And though you are still far from me, it is pleasant to think that we are both in the Himalayas and, as the crow flies, not so far after all.

I have received *Puphi's* little book: *Prison Days*. It is rather thin. In fact it is hardly a book. What there is of it is well written and is easy reading. This business of keeping a diary in jail is a tricky affair. What must one or can one write? The trivial happenings which fill the days? Yes sometimes for even the apparently trivial has sometimes a deep significance for us. Who do we write for? For ourselves or others? It is very difficult for the average human being to be absolutely frank about himself or others. So even in our personal diaries we tend to be circumspect, thinking of the future when other eyes may read them. And this leads to triviality and artificiality.

Isherwood's translation of the Gita (which Bharati sent) has also reached me. This was welcome as I had been reading reviews of the book in American papers and stories of Isherwood becoming a Hindu mystic. From what I have seen of it, I like the translation.

If Edward Thompson has recovered this is certainly something on the verge of the miraculous. I do not think anyone, and certainly not Edward himself, expected recovery.

I am deeply distressed to learn of Rup's brain troubles. It is horrible to think of her attacking her father.

Tell Yunus that I have received his letter. He wants me to send him word, through you, if I want anything from Peshawar. What am I likely to want here, except good news of him and his bride?

Perhaps you have moved to Bijju *chacha's* house already. Anyway this letter is going to the old address.

We have been here in Almora just two days—We came all the way from Bareilly by car—We started at 6 a.m. (and that meant my getting up at 4 which is really 3) and reached here at about 2 p.m. It was not a very strenuous journey but I felt tired at the end of it, partly because of the heat & partly because I had not been feeling well—Here, for the present, I am resting mostly.

The Anand Bhawan *dasehri* mangoes have been slowly ripening and are quite good. We have brought them along with us here. Here we found fairly good apricots and the tiny variety of pear which is rather delicious. What do you call this kind of baby pear?

This is my letter No. 120 to you. The three letters which I have received from you are dated 2/6, 3/6 and 5/6—Nos. 110 to 112.

Love

Your loving
Papu

June 14 Thursday

I am improving slowly & feeling generally better. A slight temperature still persists but daily it is at a lower level.

x x x x

One rather surprising thing. For the first time during these three years of detention we have had a more or less decent Indian cook—He turns out to be a Congress prisoner from the well-known Salt area of Almora Dist. convicted for activities in 1942 &c. Later he went to Bombay & other places & was eventually arrested in Lahore. His name is Mangal Singh & he appears to be a decent person. He cooks after the Indian fashion well and even knows how to deal with eggs. And this is Almora D.J.!

x x x x

I am told that people come daily to the jail gate expecting my release. On the 12th there was quite a crowd because of a news item emanating from Naini Tal. Yesterday & today also.

I am not anxious to go out just yet—at any rate for a week or two. I want to recuperate a little here before other work calls me. Even if I was suddenly released I would probably stay here for three or four days more—visit Khali &c. The prospect of descending to the plains after this small but persistent indisposition—before the rains—is rather terrifying. However there is no need to worry—nobody is releasing us just yet!

The long expected statement[659] by Wavell must have been issued today or even yesterday. We get our news late here & so we have not seen it yet or heard about it.

Later 10 p.m.

The Jailer came at about 9 p.m. and said he had just heard a part of Wavell's broadcast. He did not seem to have understood the political aspect of it, except that Gandhiji, Jinnah &c. were being invited to meet the Viceroy on the 25th—He was interested in the question of our release. Apparently it was stated that the W.C. members would be released soon or almost immediately.

x x x x

So perhaps we might be discharged tomorrow June 15—after 2 years, 10 months and 6 days or 1041 days. And we are expected to rush about immediately—to Panchgani or Bombay—later perhaps to Delhi—I am greatly put out at this prospect. I did so much want to have at least three weeks to myself—to rest—visit Indu in Kashmir & generally to meet old friends quietly.

June 15, Friday 8 a m

Ten minutes ago we were informed that we were unconditionally released.

659. On 14 June 1945, Wavell, in a broadcast, explaining the proposals of the British Government which reiterated the Cripps offer, proposed the formation of an interim national government consisting of representatives of the main communities and equal proportions of 'Caste Hindus' and Muslims along with the Viceroy and the Commander in Chief. He called a conference of the Indian leaders at Simla to consider the formation of such a government and to choose their nominees for it. He also ordered the release of the members of the Congress Working Committee.

APPENDIX

1. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
30.4.1936

Bebee,
I have just arrived and I am told that both my letter to you and the parcel of books have come back from Bhopal with some inscription—'addressee left' or 'addressee not found'. I have not seen them yet. Tomorrow they will be sent again.

I was happy to see you. I wanted to do so and yet almost wished you would not come. It was cruel to make you journey in this weather and spend the night in a station waiting room I have been thinking how very selfish and self-centred I am.

I enclose the circulars I spoke to you about.

As far as I remember I asked my publishers in London to send you a copy of the *Autobiography* to your Calcutta address. It is doubtful if the book will reach anyone in India, but still you might make sure that if it does come, it might be forwarded to you from Calcutta.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Akola
23.5.36

Bebee,
You will let me know, will you not?, what the doctors decide. And if there is to be an operation, send me a word. A foolish way of troubling you, for what can I do? But we function in foolish ways—even a hardened and tough person like me. Meanwhile, I shall talk and talk

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

till I exhaust myself and others. But physical weariness is preferable to the other variety, and incessant talk and even vain repetitions produce a sensation of action and, at any rate, keep in check the mind's disorders and emptiness.

My love to you, my dear, and keep a stout heart for the ordeals you have to face.

Yours,
Jawahar

3. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
25.5.1936

My dear,
I slept most of the time in the train yesterday. The night before I had hardly slept for I started from Akola in the small hours and had to change at Bhusaval soon after, and in between there were *jais* and crowds making the night unbearable with their interruptions and noises. And so I slept during the day. But during the intervals I read Toller's *Letters From Prison* and I almost lost myself in them and prison seemed to surround me. And yet, strangely enough, you were always hovering about, whether it was Toller's prison or mine. My mind wandered to you and thought of you and how you were faring.

I am going day after tomorrow to Delhi for a day and then to the Punjab for a week. I don't want to go, but life is hard.

Shall I send you Toller's *Letters?* I think I will without waiting for your answer.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

4. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
5.6.36

My dear,

Last night I returned, just for a day. Vaguely I had hoped to hear from you even during my wanderings in the Punjab. It was a foolish notion for you could have hardly caught me there. But I was anxious and I thought of you and the want of news preyed upon my mind. Fortunately for me the mind was kept pretty well occupied and so was the tongue and the legs and most parts of the body—too occupied indeed, for soon there was a revolt and the body gave notice of a prolonged strike. I capitulated rather ignominiously but wisely. There was nothing much the matter with me—only 'flu and various pains and a villainous throat. I suppressed the lot within two days, though the throat is still misbehaving. It must be taught a lesson. The general strike having collapsed, I can deal more harshly with individual members. So for the next three days I propose to make the throat do some hard work at Unao, and then it may have a chance to rest. Khali is off now, unfortunately, as Ranjit is lying ill at Mussoorie. To Mussoorie I shall therefore go about the 10th for ten days.

The Punjab visit was of the nature of a cyclone. Bombay faded off into suburban respectability before the elemental crowds of the Punjab towns and villages. I go back to the Punjab as soon as I have the chance.

Do not write to me so dismally and hopelessly It is so unlike you. Or write to me as you will but do not feel that way. Defeatism does not become you. I feel strong today in spite of physical weariness, and the difficulties that surround me seem to fade and shrink away. Perhaps it is the intoxication of the shouting crowds—half-mad they were and some of their madness entered my veins. Be strong with me!

It is very late—I have had a heavy day and the night is far spent. In another four hours I am supposed to be up to go to the station.

And so good night, lotus-born,[2] and may you be sleeping well and dreaming pleasantly.

Yours,
Jawahar

Toller was sent to you long ago.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Literal meaning of the word 'Padmaja.'

5. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Mussoorie
16.6.36

Bebee, your telegram. Perhaps it is as well. Get rid of this perpetual trouble and pain. I have no great faith in doctors as a whole, but surgery I believe in and I have a definite feeling that this operation will do you good. Out with the appendix therefore and look at life without pain. Your mother will keep us informed, I hope. We are here till the 23rd when we shall all go to Allahabad. I shall be touring in some rural areas for three or four days but every night I shall return to Anand Bhawan. And on the 28th morning I shall go to Wardha. How long I shall stay there I do not know. The capacity for argument is almost unlimited. Perhaps I might run down to Bombay from there for a day to have a glimpse of you.

Ranjit will probably go down with me as this high altitude does not suit him. Later he may go to Bombay. He is slightly better but I think he should consult some specialists and the like in Bombay.

There are no flowers here now, or hardly any, except for some in private gardens. The lovely hank of violets that you saw long long ago is a memory like so much else. But Ranjit tells me that his garden at Khali is one mass of bloom and the fruit trees are laden with peaches and apricots. He had worked hard, hoping to surprise me pleasantly, when I came to visit him, with a bit of Kashmir. He had even grown typical Kashmiri vegetables which are not found elsewhere. And now I am here and he cannot go back, and the monkeys eat the fruits and pull out the flowers.

We live very far from Mussoorie. We are quite a mile away even from Woodstock, on the Tehri Road. I like this. I have some quiet and, so far as I am concerned, Mussoorie does not exist. But Woodstock does and you seem to inhabit it, and sometimes you steal up quietly to pay us a visit—to Snowdon was it? I do not connect you at all with illness then. You deceived me of course as you have frequently done.

How foolish trifles remain in the pigeon-holes of memory! I remember sending some servants to meet you when you first came to Snowdon. They were to show you the way. And so that you might recognize

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

them I wrote to you that they had claret-coloured liveries! And then I gave you a book—do you remember it?—Gilbert Frankau's[2] *One of Us*. My literary taste ran in that direction then.

Surely I was never pink and white pretty. I must protest. I thought I was a sufficiently agreeable youth and, if necessary, I can produce evidence to this effect. But your idea of masculine beauty must have been even then of the strong and silent type, hard-faced, stern and purposeful, or is it soulful? Well, well, I am not silent anyway now, though I was in those days.

When I come to Bombay I shall find you convalescing, dreaming, and getting well, dreaming of the many things you are going to do now that you have got rid of your pains. How delightful it must be to lie still and dream through the long hours and build fairy castles and try to mould this world into something better and more desirable. I have always envied this stage of convalescence, perhaps because I have never really had it, being so aggressively and vulgarly healthy. I want a little more time to dream but instead I have to be thinking of all manner of unlovely people and their doings, and I rush out to smite them with tongue and pen. A fatiguing process resulting chiefly in a bad throat and in indifferent articles. But I seem to be useful to the press at least. What a lot of copy they get out of me.

What a lot of people and groups are after my blood—they will end by making me even more conceited than I am, and that, as you know, is saying a great deal. Liberals, Responsivists, Communalists, Big Business, and of course my own dear colleagues of the Congress, do not love me, I am afraid. It amuses me, irritates at times, pleases me at other times, but my chief grievance is that it all takes up so much time, and I suppose it makes me more hard faced than ever. But behind all that there is something to soften me—the vast and overwhelming crowds that come with affection and hope. It is a strange medley.

Tagore (the Poet of course) has sent me a short but very generous and beautiful appreciation of my *Autobiography*. More conceit!

And so, brave and smiling one, smile away through your operation and continue for long to be a joy to your friends. I am destined to live for a frightfully long time, I am told. An expert astrologer has

2 Gilbert Frankau (1884-1952); English writer; his works include *One of Us* (1912); *The City of Fear* (1917); *Farewell Romance* (1936); *World Without End* (1943); and *Oliver Trenton, K.D.* (1951).

fixed the date of my death even. It is still a quarter of a century hence. And I don't want to be lonelier than ever during this arid waste of years.

All my love,

Jawahar

6. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Mussoorie
17.6.36

My dear, I have been thinking of you so much as I sit here and look at the distant Dun valley and Sivaliks and the great plain beyond. It is a beautiful view fading off in the far distance. But often the clouds creep up and blot out the prospect and assume fantastic shapes, and my thoughts wander far away to Bombay. How are you, I wonder, what are you doing, what thoughts course through your fertile brain?

For two days I have not been out of the house. I have no special urge to go out. I like to sit, my body prefers it after having been knocked about a lot recently. In the Punjab, when they made me travel by car over 250 miles of dusty roads in the course of a day (which included four or five big meetings, some smaller ones, and, worst of all, processions) I swore that I preferred a bullock cart to a motor car. I have not quite recovered psychologically from that feeling. And so I sit, not idly, for numerous files and papers surround me. Usually I go out in the evening as a matter of duty more than pleasure. Last evening it rained and so I made that an excuse, although as a matter of fact I love walking in the rain. Instead I faced bravely my correspondence files, and between Upadhyaya and me we got through 70 or 80 letters. Not bad for an afternoon and evening.

And then of course there are the children. I have hardly had the chance of being with them for many years and they have grown up so much since then. It is almost like making friends afresh. But it did not take much time. Their language is terribly Americanised—their accent, words and phrases. Things are usually swell or slick or yummy (whatever that may be). Lousy is a favourite word. Everybody seems to be 'trading' at Woodstock, that is exchanging sweets or other articles.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Did you develop this terrible commercial instinct when you were here? Or the American accent, which I must confess I do not like, although I like American words.

Half my brief holiday is over today. As soon as I return I shall be up to my neck in work, controversy, argument and conflict. What would happen to me, I wonder, if this atmosphere of tension and conflict left me? Probably I would shrivel up and give up the ghost. I mentioned to you yesterday, I think, that a worthy astrologer of repute had fixed my death somewhere in the early sixties. But I did not tell you that according to him I shall get fed up with the world long before that and turn sannyasi! It is hard to believe it, though a person who is sufficiently fed up is capable of much.

Upadhyaya waits for the post. It is a long way off and he has to make daily pilgrimage of it. So I must cease my aimless writing and leave you in peace.

My love to you,

Yours,
Jawahar

7. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Mussoorie
20.6.36

Bebee,

So you have gone through the ordeal and are all the better for it, I hope. Ordeals do improve one. I was sure you would win through. It is the hefty and outwardly strong that collapse.

But you must not be bothered with letters now. You must rest and dream of the health that will be yours in the days to come.

I shall try to pay you a little visit early next month.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

8. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
16.7.36

My dear,

I have not written to you these many days and I have had little news of you. On my return from Bombay I found your little notes, which you had sent from the clinic, waiting for me. I pondered over the advice you had sent me so emphatically. The immediate occasion for it was past. I had survived it though in the process I suppose I had got a few more grey hairs. It is a tiring business altogether. What will happen in future I don't know. It seems all so topsy-turvy. After all, does it matter? Anyway why should you worry? That is the height of absurdity.

Are you getting stronger and stronger? You may have slight setbacks—such things happen frequently. Do not attach too much importance to them. You have got over the real thing. The smaller obstacles do not matter. I do not know if you will be in Bombay next month when I come there. The idea of Lahore seems silly to me. I am going there but I am not looking forward to it.

I did not follow very closely the German doctor's advice, so far as speaking was concerned. The throat is better but I cough a lot which is a nuisance. But that of course will not interfere with my long speeches. I don't know Sind. I don't feel attracted to it.

It is late at night. After a few hours of sleep I start off for the wilds of Sind. I shall sleep a lot in the train for I have been encroaching on the night for some time past in an attempt to get rid of arrears of work. And as a little gift to my friends I have just sent off an article[2] which will not fill them with joy and enthusiasm.

When will I see you next? Whenever that is I am looking forward to finding you full of health.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. "Congress and Socialism"; see *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 317-325.

9. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Nawabshah, Sind
26.7.36

My dear, how are you and where are you? I have had no news from you and of you. That I hope means that you are doing well and marching to health and fitness.

I am nearing the end of this Sind tour. Another day and a half and I shall be speeding away to the Punjab. I am a little tired but my voice holds and the throat is functioning more or less properly. I have taken some care of it but on the whole I believe that it likes a little shouting from time to time. Returning from Bombay I tried to give it rest as advised by the doctor. The attempt failed after two or three days. Except for a troublesome cough I have no trouble. The Punjab is likely to be a severer trial. As usual they have drawn up a mad programme for me there.

The Sindhi people have their good qualities and I rather like them. But they are a curious mixture of the Muslim feudal classes and the Hindu *bania* class—neither very admirable as classes go. Still they have push and energy and that is something to be thankful for. They seem to be singularly devoid of any artistic sense. And the colour they sport in their striped pyjamas are a trial.

I have been to the hottest parts of Sind—including Jacobabad—and yet curiously I have had good weather. The night at Jacobabad was cool and pleasant. This kind of weather is a rare phenomenon at this time of the year.

Today I had a ride on a camel—my first longish experience of the kind. I liked it, except for the smell of the camel. I think I could manage easily a few hours on camel-back.

Probably I shall reach Bombay on the 18th.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

10. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Madras
9.10.36

Bebee,
Your note. The arrangements for my tour are remarkably vague and inefficient and I cannot know for certain what is going to happen. I have however told the bosses here that I should like to spend a little time with you. Possibly I might be in Pondicherry at about tea-time on the 17th.

I am dead tired. My body is limp because of the struggles to get out of crowds and my hands are swollen on account of too much hand-shaking. The crowds have been astounding and they have often worked themselves up to a state of frenzy. The big voices here, both in the Congress and outside, are suitably impressed. But I am myself impressed. Why does this happen? I can't make out and all my vanity does not help me to understand.

It is 1.30 a.m. now and I shall have to get up soon after 5 to start off by car for the southern tour. So to bed.

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

11. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Tinnevelly
13.10.36

Bebee,
With my grey hair and advancing age I might be forgiven perhaps if I took to the habits of age. But what on earth do you mean by fussing about in this manner. I can put up with much, even female tyranny, but I draw the line at being put to bed at 6 p.m. I shall certainly rebel if you make any such ridiculous attempt.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

I am rather glad this Aurobindo Ashram affair has fizzled out.[2] I can now get a better measure of these long-haired inmates. Though I must say that I am disappointed at not seeing the glamorous lady.[3]

I have reached my southernmost point of this tour and within a few minutes we go north again. We are only 60 miles from Cape Comorin and I had an insane desire to visit the place again. I was even prepared to cut out an odd meeting or two. But reason triumphed in the end. It was not possible to go 120 miles of indifferent road within two hours.

Do not be too sure of seeing me at the appointed hour at the meeting at Pondicherry. It has been impossible for me to stick to a timetable and inevitably as the day advances there is a lag and this goes on increasing. Better come to the meeting after you have learnt of my arrival.

Yours,
Jawahar

2. The French Government had issued orders banning Jawaharlal's meeting Sri Aurobindo during the former's visit to Pondicherry. See also *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 674.
3 Madame Mirra Richard (1878-1973), known as the Mother, was of French origin and settled in Pondicherry Ashram set up by Sri Aurobindo in 1926; became the spiritual head of the Ashram after the death of Sri Aurobindo in 1950, set up an international township called Auroville to serve as a meeting place for the followers of the ideals of Sri Aurobindo

12. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

In Train
20.10.1936

My dear,
The tour is over at last and I am speeding away to the north. I am passing through the exalted territories and even here crowds gather at the stations, including officials. The night will not be as peaceful as I hoped. But probably I shall sleep through the noise.

I forgot my weariness when I saw you and for a while at least I was not the President of the Congress How good it was to forget that fact and to see you radiant and looking well. But when you left me and the train rolled away the presidentship descended upon me, though

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, N M.M L.

not wholly for the mind wandered and thought of pleasanter subjects. Satyamurti insisted on my writing a farewell message for the Tamil Nad. I tried hard but the eyes would not remain open and the mind was beyond control. After half an hour's vain effort I succeeded in sleeping. Not for long, however, for at every station there was a noisy crowd. And so to Madras and after a brief stay the train again.

I tried to write the Tamil Nad message[2] but in the middle of a sentence I would doze away. The effort to keep awake became a torture. I managed to write something. It was not very bright.

During these three days there have been 'incidents' of course and I have misbehaved. Yesterday at Guntur there was even a petty scuffle in the crowd at the meeting and, as is my foolish habit, I tried to throw myself from the platform on to the heaving mass. Poor dear old Konda Venkatappayya[3] and some others in their endeavours to protect me clung on to me and I had to handle them rather roughly in order to free myself. The dear old man was frightened at my vehemence and the way I flung about my arms and legs. Nothing need have happened if I had not shown temper at a previous stage when someone made a foolish interruption.

I agree with you. The Telugu women are handsomer than the Tamils. They have fine eyes and more charm.

And so good night,

Yours,
Jawahar

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 530-531.
3. (1886-1949); a leading Congressman of Andhra Pradesh; joined noncooperation movement in 1920 and went to prison several times.

13. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
23.10.36

How are you, my dear? In my crowded life my thoughts go to quiet and restful Pondicherry with the sound of the sea and you listening to it, all alone. From the crowds of the South I have transported myself to the crowds of the North and after a brief two days here I go to

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Benares tomorrow morning—processions, meetings &c. In between there was some rest and sleep in the train. When I arrived here I found the house full of guests and a committee meeting in progress and the verandahs full of hungry looking persons—prospective candidates for the elections. Abdul Ghaffar has been here. We go together to Benares tomorrow.

Did I tell you that during one of my spells of sleepiness in the car Sambamoorty offered his pneumatic thigh to me for a pillow? A generous offer, but it put an end to my sleep.

I am not sure when I shall go to Calcutta. I shall decide in a day or two in Benares.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

14. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

In train
Cuttack to Bhuvaneshwar
10.11.36

Dear eighteen-year-old—why should you be angry at your age? Hold on to it, nineteen comes too soon, and twenty and more. I suppose we might consider you nineteen in another week's time. I am afraid I do not feel paternally inclined towards you, but I am old, immeasurably old, and all the past ages oppress me and fill me. So old am I that often I love the sense of age, and agelessly I look at the passing show. "Very old are we men"[2] and echoes of the songs of Eve's nightingales rise in our hearts. And you are young, so young, though the wisdom of Eve looks through your eyes sometimes.

Foolishly I had hoped to meet you in Calcutta. Instead your letters reached me there.

Bidhan knew nothing of your programme, but said he would write to you to come to Calcutta. Will you go? And afterwards why not come to Allahabad, that very dull and unexciting place. December is your month there. I won't be there to trouble you too much, at any

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. This line occurs in the poem *All that's Past* by Walter de la Mare. See *Selected Works*, Vol 7, p. 8.

rate, for long. Probably I shall return there on December 2nd and stay a few days and then go away and come back for two or three days.

Last night I left Calcutta and to break the long night I stopped at Kharagpur for an hour and addressed the railway workers. And then the train, reaching a wayside station in Orissa at 4.45 a.m. . I have put in 160 miles by car since then and addressed six or seven meetings. Now I am going to Bhuvaneshwar where I hold forth again late at night.

Do not be alarmed. I feel singularly fresh and have been congratulated on my looks. Only a sleepiness creeps over me occasionally and my throat has become rather like the clergyman's, and a hoarse heavy voice emerges from it. It is very unlovely I am afraid and I think rather wistfully when a shy and almost girlish voice was mine. My hands too are limp and I cannot lean on them. Too much handshaking in the South has taken the stiffness out of them. They will recover.

Puri 11/11

This could not be continued last night. I send it as it is—I shall not have any time today.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

15. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

In train to Vizagapatnam
12.11.36

My dear,

Last night I wanted to write to you, partly to show off for I had had a heavy day of 20 hours and I wanted to make an exhibition of my vitality. But not that only, for I thought that writing to you after the mad whirl of the day would soothe me. But I was wiser and decided not to break into the four hours of sleep that yet remained.

My last letter came to a sudden end—We reached Bhuvaneshwar at night and there was the inevitable procession by torchlight. I was too weary to argue and object and so I mounted a small country pony, a sweet little thing, and accompanied by music of a sort and dancing, I rode along the village streets. Flutes and tom-toms were being played

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

and very effective and athletic dancing, which I liked. It was rather like a village wedding procession, and suddenly the absurdity of the whole thing struck me and I laughed aloud. The dancing became more furious, they were bent on pleasing me.

After the meeting, although it was late and dark as pitch, I went to see the old ruined temples which are of great interest to archaeologists, a primitive arch specially. There I saw a beautiful image of Parvati in black granite.

At Puri also I went to the old temple and was taken to the sanctum where I was struck dumb with horror at the ugliness and frightfulness of the image. The whole place made me feel sick and I could hardly restrain myself from expressing my indignation and anger. Why this extreme reaction, I wondered. Was it at the crudeness of the whole thing, or the religious background, or my modernism, whatever that might be, or the Aryan reaction against Dravidian forms? Whatever it was due to, the Lord Jagannath did not find favour in my eyes, as Kali does not. Why should religion appear in such repulsive guise? It is bad enough without it.

I wanted to see the famous erotic sculptures in the temple but I had to hurry and what can one do with a multitude following one about? This crowd business is becoming a curse. Still I saw from some distance two of these sculptures and anything less suggestive I have seldom seen. Compared to the horror of the Jagannath image, it was purity itself.

Have you heard the Oriya women, or any other women, ululate (I believe that is the right word)? A strange eerie noise which sounded to me more like a wailing than anything else, and the way the tongue is made to roll and quiver and shake is quite extraordinary. Everywhere I went to in Orissa this sound greeted me. It is supposed to be very pleasing. I did not like it.

In your letter you expressed concern and horror at my getting wet during my last Andhra tour. Do you know that wetting was quite delightful and it woke up a drowsy person. But it had a more far-reaching result. For a month or more the district had suffered from a drought and in some parts water was even being sold. So the rain was exceedingly welcome and as it synchronised with my visit, my reputation is secure. All over the place I am sure to have brought the rain.

Calcutta after these long years was cordial. The procession was prodigious and excited Bengalis and others shouted and danced with excitement while I adopted the pose of the strong silent man, standing

at the back of the car, statuesque, immobile, almost expressionless. I loved to feel the contrast—how terribly vain I am!—and then the humour of it would make me laugh and suddenly thousands would laugh with me, and later grow more excited still. I am never tired of watching a crowd and playing upon its moods and a strange sense of kinship with it comes over me.

A greater triumph was the settlement we came to.[2] You who accuse me of temper will hardly believe the unbelievable patience and smiling tolerance I showed to all kinds of stupidity. Yet it was not that really worked in my favour. I bought that settlement and the price was the last two years of prison.[3] It was worth it. What the future will bring I do not know but for the present Bengal is in a better frame of mind than it has been for ten years. The provincial groups have joined together and there is cooperation with All India.

I must say that I am myself astonished at the vitality I am showing in spite of my great age. I go on and on and the slight weariness passes soon enough. Almost it was as if some force was pushing me on, not Aurobindo, I am afraid. Like an arrow from the bow I shoot on and I do not know who the holder of the bow was. And the arrow has a bit of flame about it and while it lights others, it consumes itself. But it will last a while still and then one day it will end suddenly. That is the way I should like it to end—a snap and the light goes out. No slow fading out for me I hope. I think I am indifferent as to when this occurs. Life interests me greatly but it has ceased to hold me and so I can venture to play about with it, and when this occurs the burden seems to grow less. How foolishly people talk of sacrifice and suffering—Here I am a bundle of temper, pride and a great deal of carelessness, and I am held up as a model of the virtue of self-sacrifice. I really do not care what happens and yet, curiously enough, when I am doing a job I give all my thought to it, concentrate on it, and thus achieve results which would be denied to better and stronger men. Even the passage through a crowd makes me put all my concentrated thought and strength to it, and thus I succeed. How self-centred I am and I go on talking about myself, but you set me to it. Do not worry about me. I shall carry on for a long time yet—That is my fate, and then I shall snap and go on my last procession.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 554.
3. On 16 February 1934, Jawaharlal was sentenced to two years' simple imprisonment for three speeches delivered by him in Calcutta on 17-18 January 1934. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 227-238.

I shall be on the 18th at Allahabad and shall leave again on the 20th for north U.P.

Yours,
Jawahar

16. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

In train to Raipur
14.11.36

My dear,
How to spend birth anniversaries. Here is a way of doing it. After a brief night at Tuni get up at 4.45 a.m. Congratulations from the household—photograph—leave Tuni soon after six by car. Nakkapali—meeting—local lacquer toys presented. Then on to Penugolanu Agraharam where Brahmin priests recite vedic verses in welcome—meeting, speech, etc. Yellamanchilli—Anakapalle—Chodavaram—Tummalapalli—Reddipalli—Agraharam—Vizianagaram. Meetings and speeches everywhere—addresses and sometimes odd presents. In one place I was informed that a local hall is being named "Jawahar Hall" in honour of the occasion. Short halts by the roadside where crowds waiting, apart from official meetings. Did 100 miles to Vizianagaram where food taken. Off again at 2 p.m. Gajapatinagaram—Salur—Bobbili. Crowds everywhere, meetings, etc.

At Bobbili an interesting incident. As our brief meeting was in progress two bands strike up with drum &c. within fifty yards. Impossible to speak. I get excited, jump down from the platform and rush up to the bands which have purposely performed to interfere with us. A crowd of Bobbili estate officials in evidence accompanied by a horde of ruffians. Two elephants approaching. I tell the bands to shut up and as they delay, I seize a drumstick and throw it away. The hooligans in the crowd with the estate officials surround me and look threatening—display fists. My temper goes up and we swear at each other, fortunately neither party understanding the other. The police appear and beg me to desist as they would deal with the situation. After a while I desist. The police stop the two bands, also prevent the elephants from disturbing our meeting. I return in triumph to the meeting and we

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

carry on. End of meeting—the whole affair lasting about 20 minutes. Motor on to Baljipeth. Road very bad but every village *en route* excited at our approach. Hordes of men and women lining the route. Within five miles of Baljipeth decide that it is too risky to go on as the time for my train approaching. We are told that a hundred thousand people waiting at Baljipeth. An exaggeration and doubt. Still ten or twenty thousand might have been there. Still can't afford to go on—Return *via* Bobbili. As we pass through Bobbili a sheaf of telegrams handed to us—one from Bebee. We go on to Parvatipuram. Meeting near station. Carry on till 8 p.m. when train comes in and meeting is ended and we hurry to station. Take train, wave good-bye to Andhra, and here I am.

A brief outline of a crowded day which included 200 miles by car.

The Andhra people grow upon me. I like their sturdy looking peasants. They are not of the mild and weak variety. The women are often attractive and graceful and have laughing eyes. I was surprised to find women and boys of 7 or 8 going about with long cheroots. Tobacco is grown here and these cheroots cost almost nothing. The leaves are gathered and rolled by each smoker. Black villainous looking cheroots they are.

One little incident rather touching. It had grown dark. A group of villagers were standing so we stopped. A girl lifted up a hurricane lantern to see inside our car. I stood up and saluted. Hurriedly she put down the lantern to return the salute. Our car started and then an old woman who was standing near this girl stretched out her arms and cried out (in Telugu, of course) : "My son, my son, let me see your face again!"

The birthday is not quite over yet. As I was waiting a crowd at a station demanded a 'message', and my tired throat performed again.

Today I sent you a telegram from Vizianagaram. It was a pretty useless message asking when you were leaving Pondicherry. I presume you have received two letters I sent to the Pondicherry address. Probably Bidhan Roy wrote to you to Pondicherry. He took your address from me and said he wanted you to go to Calcutta. Nellie Sen Gupta also took your address—the wrong one of course as it turns out.

What are your plans? Do you go to Calcutta?

Yours,
Jawahar

I hope this letter will improve your geography.

17. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
13.12.36

My dear,
I have just been listening on the Berlin wireless to Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata[2] and it has cooled my brain a little and brightened me up. I needed it. For latterly I have been growing duller and duller, heavy of body, dull of mind, slow of movement. I do not know if this has been a reaction to the last few months' intensive activity, or to other and less easily ascertainable causes. I dislike the idea of having to write the presidential address and I go on putting it off. It is going to be a flat thing this year. My mind is flat so how can I produce anything else. I suppose a holiday would do me good. And yet I wonder. Anyway there is no chance of it. I thought at one time that after the elections were over I would have a little free time but now we have fixed up another two months of heavy work and this carries us to April.

I think the elections must be responsible partly at least for my malaise, although I am only distantly connected with them. They coarsen everybody.

Perhaps I would cheer up and feel livelier if I saw you, but you are in far Hyderabad posing as the Buddha and I feel very unlike the Buddha. Because of that vast dissimilarity, I suppose, he draws me. Some time back I read a sonnet[3] addressed to a Buddha statue—It was in a review—and some lines in it began to haunt me—

Nay, do not mock me with those carven eyes:
    I too might grow, beneath that gaze of thine,
Desireless, immortal, unerringly wise,
    Disdaining human dreams. Lo, by thy shrine
A multitude slow-worshipping still goes
    Unsandalled, bearing perfumed offerings,
While down the avenues of time still flows
    The splendid pageant of all timeless things.

Nay, do not mock me with that ecstasy,
    Born of a peace abstracted from life's pain:

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N M M L.
2. Beethoven's sonata for piano and violin The last movement was composed by 1802, and was published in 1805.
3 Written by E H d'Alwis, a Sinhalese Buddhist.

Love and its futile dream shall trouble me
Too briefly—I shall find myself again;
And look on thee unpassioned, mute, alone,
An agelessness invincible in stone.

Desireless, immortal, unerringly wise, disdaining human dreams—how the words gripped my mind, and while I disliked them—I was drawn to them. No, I had no desire to be desireless, immortality seemed an infinity of sorrow and trouble and labour without purpose or end, and the wisdom that never erred rather frightened me; and what would life be without dreams? And yet I gazed at my Buddha picture, fascinated, held by the power of that desirelessness. But I must not weary you. You will come to Faizpur. Will you not? This Congress, I feel certain, is going to be a terribly dull affair. It is overwhelmed by the elections.

Nan is away electioneering in Cawnpore. Ranjit spends the day in some remote villages. I have insisted on having this week here with only a few odd engagements in the neighbourhood. In January I shall spin about from place to place asking people to vote for a curious assortment of people—damnable job this asking for votes. But January is far off. There is December still, and Faizpur and the sight of you then!

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

I have been trying to get that photograph of Tagore's and mine but Calcutta people are so frightfully inefficient.

18. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Chhindwara
Dec. 31st, 1936

Bebee,

Eight meetings—a train journey—and 130 miles by car, that is the record for today. The last 80 miles by car were through a thick forest, a winding road with innumerable turns and twists and ups and downs. It must be a beautiful drive by day but we passed through the forest in the

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

darkness and could only sense the beauty of it. Mostly I was dozing. It was cold.

The Faizpur Congress was a novel experience for me. It was almost a holiday in spite of occasional hard work. I had no feeling of tension and little of worry. How far were you responsible for it, I wonder! Certainly to some extent. But circumstances favoured the mood. Also I feel that I am gradually losing that intensity which I once possessed. Through sheer habit I can work with concentration but my mind is not consumed quite so much as it used to be with a single purpose obsession. Is that due to age or a wider outlook or a growing habit of introspection? I told you of it. It worries me a little.

My mind wanders from the day's work and I begin to think of the time when I shall meet you again. When will it be? Already I look forward to the day when this election business is over and I have a rest from incessant touring. And yet, it is quite possible that I might feel bored if I stayed too long in one place.

You are not irritated with me? I feel that you are not really but a little doubt sometimes creeps into my mind. What curious bits of humanity we are, with a thousand aspects like Krishna! Being, as you know, enormously egotistical, I am always trying to understand and analyse some of these various aspects of myself. I suppose the realisation of this egotism itself tones down the offence. Certain aspects of my nature have inevitably been starved these many years in prison. At the same time others have no doubt developed. And so the starved ones call for food, the others do not deliberately interfere but they create inevitably those bars of the spint which are solider than iron. And even when I peep through these bars, I can never forget them or myself, howsoever I try to do so. That is my fate. And perhaps it is as well. Even my fits of temper are immediately followed by a tightening of the reins.

How odd we all are. I am getting more and more interested in understanding this oddness of individuals, including myself. But as you wisely and truly informed me, I am an ignoramus where women are concerned.

It is getting on to midnight. The old year is passing and my mind goes back to twelve months ago, New Year's eve. Did I not write to you then?[2] It was a dismal eve for me and the snow that covered the hillsides that I loved so well, reminded me of death, cold death, fair to see but distant, far away, incomprehensible, hateful.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 692-693.

The New Year is coming in. May happiness and good fortune attend you, my dear, and me also (why should I not wish these good things to myself?).

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

19. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
2-1-37

So I must not be weak-minded. And you dare to tell me so when your eyes betray you and your written word gives a different and contrary message. And what are the dear little poems that you send but an invitation to stray from the cold and chilly path along which the strong in mind walk in lonely grandeur? Am I strong-minded? I do not know. But I do know that behind the mask of a pale set face, all manner of desires and fantasies and urges disturb the surface of my mind, sometimes clear and definite, oftener vague and elusive and strange; that the strength I show is not far removed from weakness, as laughter is so near akin to tears; that my courage might well turn to cowardice; that even my pride is often a cloak for an inner humility. You do not believe that, do you? But then I am a stranger to you as you are to me and as all of us are to each other, and the nearer we grow to each other, the more we discover strangeness and unfathomed depths. We only know our acquaintances, for there knowledge is but superficial; we never get to know our friends and those who are dear to us.

To demonstrate my weak-mindedness I sit down to write to you when mountains of papers await my consideration, and I am supposed to rush off an article for a new weekly in London, and a preface for a book which is held up in London because of me. But I knew it would be little use my trying to do other work for my mind would wander and probably you would creep unconsciously into the article and the preface. And so to be rid of you for a while I am writing.

What shall I write to you about Ajanta? It seems almost vulgar and profane to use foolish words of praise which have been so cheapened

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

in the market place. The joy of seeing these pictures of long ago almost becomes a pain, to see beauty of form and beauty of life that are unattainable, unrealisable. What manner of people were they who created this dream world out of a few colours and lines? What was the texture of their lives—how rich it must have been! How can one forget the Bodhisattva even after seeing a picture—and the lovely women of Ajanta. I wish one did forget for they disturb.

During all my recent wanderings one fact has impressed me. The beauty of Indian women, especially in the villages, has surprised me. In spite of all the poverty and squalor, they stand out and one cannot pass them without looking again.

I loved the sight of the envelope that brought your letter. I read it and then a feeling of loneliness took possession of me and I have found it difficult to get rid of it. Weak-mindedness.

A strange thing happened this evening. My mother casually mentioned, but with suppressed rage, that my name was being coupled with that of Devika Rani's[2]! She had never heard of her but somebody told her that a newspaper contained this item of news. I was rather tickled and I thought at first that this was the usual pleasant Indian way of making insinuations. Probably because the incident of her garlanding me had been shown on the screen here recently. Soon I discovered that it was not Devika Rani—A telegram came from an Urdu rag in Lahore: "Our Allahabad correspondent wires you likely marry some socialist girl. Marriage to be performed under Civil Marriage Act. May I release the news?"

I was irritated. Someone came to see me from the city and on enquiry I found that the news was being talked about. A new Hindi paper—less than a week old—had given currency to it in the confident expectation that it would help in its circulation!

I have just received another telegram from Lahore—from *The Tribune*—asking for confirmation. So probably many newspapers must have received it and some are bound to publish it. Perhaps you may read it even before you get this.

I feel tired and sleepy. My mind is disturbed and I can't do any work tonight. It is as well that I am going off to Behar day after tomorrow morning. For six weeks I shall only have weariness of body to contend

2. (b 1914), film producer and actress, now retired, grand niece of Rabindranath Tagore and wife of the well known producer, Himansu Rai, after his death in 1940 she married the distinguished Russian artist, Svetoslav Roerich.

against and the ceaseless round from early morning to late night will prevent the mind from straying.

My love to you,

Yours,
Jawahar

20. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Meerut District
In running car
22-1-37

My dear, I am reduced to such straits, I have to write in a car racing along. Time has become such a precious commodity that one must seize it where one can. Whether you will be able to read this I do not know. But it can't be much more illegible than your writing is occasionally!

Yesterday I received your letter in Agra and I read it as I was rushing past Fatehabad where Aurangzeb defeated Dara Shikoh. I felt like writing to you last night but I was strong-minded—or was it weak-mindedness? I succumbed to the Taj and went there late at night and tried to forget politics and election in the pale moonlight. But you followed me there and distracted my mind and got rather mixed up with the moonlight and the Taj. I hurried back at midnight to catch a train.

Do not worry about the foolish tears that came to my eyes at Faizpur. Tears are not so rare for me as most people, including you, seem to imagine. You may yet discover me as I might you, but I imagine that the more we discover each other, the more strange depths and unknown regions we shall find. Not in you and me only but in all of us. Human personality has fascinated me and I took to the study of psychology and psycho-analysis because of this fascination. What devils and angels we all are, hopelessly mixed up together. And the knowledge of this fact makes one a little more tolerant, a little humbler (a quality, you will tell me, I sadly lack), and there again you will be wrong as in so many things about me. You have built up an idealized picture of me and you are surprised when it does not fit in with reality. And then you rush to the other extreme and suffer pain and are distressed. I am

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

not that idealized picture and I am not as bad as you might sometimes have thought me. I have enough of the devil in me, and it is that perhaps that drives me on, but the angel is there also to curb it and subdue it.

I told you once that sometimes faintly I felt almost capable of murder. Perhaps that was exaggerated for I can't quite conceive myself doing it whatever the provocation. But that faint subconscious feeling makes me understand the murderer. I have no horror of him as I have of the worm like species of human beings.

And so we swing about from one extreme to another, innumerable personalities tied up together, showing each other at different times and surprising our friends and lovers. Others do not see these changing facets for the mask is on. Be warned therefore and do not be unduly alarmed if you see the devil in me, or even the beast. On the whole I think (conceit) I possess rather less of the beast than most people. But there is enough of the devil. A fortunate chance yoked that devilry to public action which has brought me credit, and yet a little twist and I would have had a mountain of discredit.

What do I know about myself? Little enough. I am, as I suppose others are, a helpless vehicle of strange forces and urges which push us along the road of destiny. Yet I would master that destiny. And in my endeavour to do that, I am unthinkingly hard and cruel to others for they pass from my mind and I forget them utterly for a while. Those I love have to suffer most for they attribute all manner of motives to this sudden forgetfulness. It is not my love that wavers but another overmastering passion or obsession that.....

(I had to stop suddenly as I arrived at my destination. It was a big meeting and I held forth—felt frightfully sleepy—could hardly keep my eyes open even though my lips were moving. Now I am writing on.)

So the earthly paradise fades away and even while I hold the loved one in my arms my mind wanders away and forgets the present and I become a stranger from another land. I return but it is difficult to capture the old mood—the charm is broken and I look on detached, as through iron bars, on two beings, one being myself. I try to be friendly but friendship is a distant affair. Sometimes the mood returns.

And you, stranger, who are you? I do not know, but I know that I like to see you and be near you and hear your voice, and touch you and to look at your radiant smile. Is that not enough for me? Must I go deeper still? Whether I will or not, unknown depths reveal themselves, and sometimes they please and sometimes they trouble.

I do not know if I have written any sense. The car moves along at 50 miles an hour. The road is fairly good and so I have written. My mind lingers on you and I feel refreshed at the thought — But also I long to see you.

Do not play tricks in your bath or elsewhere. Have some consideration at least for the young doctors that have to attend on you. And remember that you have to produce a Buddha.

Jawahar

Roorkee — 12.45 a.m.

I am tired — the day's work is over. It begins afresh at 4.30 a.m. for I have to catch a train at 5. What a life I lead! This evening my thoughts suddenly went to the rest and quiet of a prison cell. Yesterday an Englishman at Agra remarked that if I could exert myself to this extent for a cause which did not appeal to me much (elections) what would I do for something I was keen about.

Here is the latest *bon mot*[2] from Paris? *On ne baldwine*[3] *pas avec l'amour* — a parody of Moliere's title '*On ne badine pas avee l'amour.*'[4]

Love to you my dear

J.

2. Epigram.
3. Pun on the word badine meaning 'jest'; Stanley Baldwin was Prime Minister of England at this time.
4. One does not jest with love.

21. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

In Train
7-2-37

Why have you not written to me, my dear? For days I was thinking of my return to Allahabad and of a letter from you bringing me news of you. But when I came nothing from you awaited me and I looked again and again through the piles of letters. How are you now? The question is a silly one for I do not know how your answer can reach me, at any rate, during the next ten or twelve days when I shall be

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

moving about continuously. I do not even know where I am going except vaguely — Maharashtra and the Karnatak. On the 10th morning I take plane to Cannanore from Bombay.

I am very tired and my body aches and my eyes smart and yet there is no escape from this mad round and you are far far away and I seek solace in vain. But I grow impatient. Elections end like other things and ever your dear self may be visible and approachable some time or other. Meanwhile, I shall think of the Bodhisattva of Ajanta.

Yours,
Jawahar

22. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Kumptu
Karnatak
12-2-37
1 a.m.

My dear, how you fill my mind! When I ought to be thinking of something else your image creeps in unawares through some window and upsets the train of my thought. Bad, is it not? I am getting terribly weak-minded and the desire to see you grows strong. As you are not likely to come my way for some time I might have to journey to Calcutta. How or when I do not quite know. Being a Political Personage, my movements have a certain political significance whatever the intention might be. And so often enough I have to submit to this tyranny of public life. Still I might turn up. For the next week I am touring about Karnatak and Maharashtra. The staff work here is bad, thoroughly bad, and the strain is correspondingly great. I was due to arrive here at 6 p.m. People gathered at 3 p.m. to be in good time to have a look at me. They were in better time than they imagined for I turned up exactly at midnight. The day's programme included my crossing the Ghats this evening—a long journey—but that has had to be postponed to tomorrow. The living arrangements are also peculiar. Last night we stayed in a protected monument, an interesting and picturesque place, but hardly suitable for human habitation.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, *N.M.M.L*

I met your mother in Bombay for a short while. I was surprised & pleased to find how well she had borne her long journeys during her tour.

I return to Allahabad on the 18th morning to record my vote for the Council (Upper Chamber) election. For the other election (Provincial Assembly), I failed to perform my civic duty being away from Allahabad on the crucial day.

I am frightfully sleepy — and so to bed —

Yours,
Jawahar

23. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
Feb. 19, 1937

My dear, You are right — I should not go to Bengal. I would do no good to anybody and I would get entangled in the web of Bengal intrigues. I would see you of course—a fleeting glimpse—and would regret having to dash away. Nor should you come to Allahabad unless you feel much better. I was selfish in suggesting it. Being myself unused to illness I forget it in others. Your job is to get well and you must choose the best place for that. Come to Delhi if you want to see a big *tamasha*[2] and if you are fitter. I am not somehow looking forward to it. Or perhaps it is just a reaction after continuous strain. But I think it is something more — this crowd of indifferent legislators does not attract me. I saw enough of them in the hatching stage and they were not good to look at, barring a few.

Vasant Panchami has always been a special day for me — it has so many memories and associations. And though spring may come in all its rich glory, it is tinged with sadness. Almost it taunts. I spent the day in a car of course but I remembered it. I was in the Karnatak with its semi-tropical forests and I almost felt inclined to play the truant, rush away from my car and meetings, and lose myself in the

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. The reference is to the All India Convention of Congress Legislators held in Delhi on 19 March 1937. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 59-71.

forest. But discipline prevailed. Not quite though for later in the day I behaved quite abominably, to a greatly respected but very foolish person.

Karnatak tried me hard. As a grand finale of my tour there, it kept me on the move for 24 hours continuously from 7 a.m. the next day! All day and all night we had meetings, huge concourses of people, and I reached Maharashtra just in time to start the next day. Don't be alarmed and don't send me too much good advice as to what I should do and should not do. I have felt remarkably fresh during this tour and my weariness has been a passing one only. Why this should be so is amazing but it is so. A friend who knows me well attended a meeting late in the evening after a heavy day. He came to dole out sympathy expecting to find me in the last stages of collapse. Instead I tired him out by a fairly vigorous speech lasting nearly one hour, and he confessed that I looked as if I had just come from a rest cure. I have felt far more tired in the past after a week's tour than I do now after three months. Whether this vitality is due to Aurobindo's astral messages or you I do not know.

My eyes seem weary and are weary. But they show this far more when I am more or less passive and resting. That weariness has nothing to do with physical effort. It is old, very old, and it creeps into the eyes when the fever of action passes. It is the burden of thought and fantasy and regret and the might have beens. Will I get rid of it if I go to Khali? We are old friends—what would I do without it? Perhaps in the old days, long long ago, when I had a soft girlish face and rather shy ways, I did not have it. But that person died long ago and another took its place, hard and set and ever growing harder. I have escaped cynicism so far and so the hardness has not become unbearable, and, fortunately for me, others have given me a halo which hides much they would not admire. Have you not done so yourself, you silly girl who are apparently so wise? You are a nineteen-year old, and do not forget it, and you have the delightful illusions of that age. And I? A hundred or more. Will I ever know how much you love me? No I shall not, nor will you. Nobody knows, nobody can know, for it is changing, variable stuff, mocking us and eluding us, self-willed and vagrant. How can one know it or measure it? Was it turn of head, touch of hand? Strange this very way love began, I as little understand love's decay. How foolish it is to talk of it even. Where the apple reddens, never pry.

I shall go to Wardha on the 25th and expect to be back on the 1st or 2nd March. On the 6th or 7th I have to be in Lucknow. For the rest I expect to remain in Allahabad till I go to Delhi. The dates for

the A.I.C.C. and the Convention have not been fixed yet finally. Probably the various shows will begin about the 18th.

Indu is likely to be back here in the second week of April.

Yours,
Jawahar

24. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

In running train
Bombay-Calcutta Mail
March 2, 1937

My dear, Yesterday the air was thick with rumours of my arrest and internment or trial. Even Reuters telephoned up from Bombay to Wardha to Jamnalalji to enquire if I was still there. My mind told me that this was highly unlikely at the present juncture, and yet my instincts worked differently and seemed to accept such a happening, and instincts are stronger than the logic of the mind. So I started thinking of all the odd jobs that remained undone, of the many strings that I held in my hand, of the loose threads that had to be tied up. What would happen to all these? And then, rather suddenly, I seemed to drift away from these thoughts and present-day tasks; an unusual detachment came upon me and I became an onlooker on this Indian scene where others were functioning; distantly I saw them and behind them great impersonal forces at work. The walls of the prison house seemed to close in around me and my life and activities were confined by them. What books shall I read, what shall I write? How I had neglected these books during this past year and they looked at me with reproachful eyes from my shelves. I must have poetry for it brings me peace ..... So my thoughts wandered while Jamnalalji and others were talking to me somewhat excitedly. My answers to them were hardly to the point for I had almost forgotten them and my immediate surroundings.

I do not know what will happen, which will prove correct — my mind or my instincts. I do not very much care. I have had a long rope and within a few days it will be just a year since I came back. In any

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

event I shall have to go, whether it is a day or a week or a month or more. So why should I trouble myself?

I do not know when or where I shall meet you again. Probably we shall meet soon at Delhi. But whether we meet or not soon I shall think of you. I am so happy that you are out of the wood and are marching along the straight road to health.

My love to you,

Yours,
Jawahar

25. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Harijan Colony
Delhi
16-3-37

Bebee, Your note induces me to send this letter in reply. Otherwise I would not have dared to write in contravention of my promise, however much I might have wanted to do so. I want to hold to that promise. I do not blame myself and of course there can never be any question of blaming you. It is little good thinking in terms of blame. Things happen despite us. Only I am sorry, dreadfully sorry, that I should have been the cause of pain and sorrow to you. And for that I cannot forgive myself. Life has such a damnable way of playing tricks with us, and those whose happiness counts most for us, we manage to cause the greatest sorrow.

Perhaps I may see you during the next few days. Of course if we meet we shall do so as friends, and if we part we shall still I hope be friends. But the weather is a difficult subject for me to talk about to anyone, least of all to you. Gradually I have shed the social graces, such as I possessed, and I realise painfully that I am not fit company for anyone. This has long been so, as you know, but latterly my nerves are always on edge and it is only with a strong effort that I keep myself together — not always — I am afraid my attempt at friendly conversation may not be a success. Just at present I would not quite trust myself in your company. Once you saw tears in my eyes. I do not want to repeat that experience and cause you pain again. Perhaps in another

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

day or two I might be able to pull myself together. Today it was difficult for me to carry on with the Working Committee meeting for your picture filled my mind and your sad eyes disturbed me and I forgot what was happening around me.

The gods have been good to me — why should I complain? And yet the tricks they play, and in the midst of plenty they starve, and in the middle of a crowd, they make one feel desolatingly lonely.

I have written more than I intended. Forgive me. That is why I do not want to see you or write to you. But whether I write to you or not, you will always have my good wishes. May good fortune and happiness attend you.

Jawahar

It is just a year ago, almost to a day, that I met you in Shankarlal's[2] house in New Delhi on my return from Europe.

A card is being sent to you for the A.I.C.C. and Convention.

2. (1901-1951); a leading industrialist and prominent citizen of Delhi, and a patron of art and music; was president of the Punjab Chamber of Commerce and vice-president of the Delhi Municipal Committee.

26. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
26-3-37

Bebee, I have spent the greater part of the day in sorting and arranging the mountain of letters that have been waiting for me here. They have been neatly and methodically arranged (being a foolish woman, you cannot of course appreciate this kind of thing) in different files A.B. &c. in a descending scale of importance. Having done so, and felt virtuous thereat, for method had triumphed and strong-mindedness prevailed, I felt that answering them might well be left to a future occasion — And so the files have been put away and I sit down to write this least important of my letters. It finds no place in a file and it is not in response to another. If it is a pointless letter you will not mind, for there is too much pointedness about me already to your task and mine. What am I to write to you, I do not quite know, and why should

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

I write if I have nothing pertinent to say? But the desire to write has been strong within me and I have played with it for these last two or three days, and questioned it, and even (horrible thought!) analysed it! The strong and silent man (alas! not so very silent) was at work and he wanted to know what all this potter was about. He knew the answer well enough but he has a role to play, and he cannot forget it even in the privacy of his thought. What an awful companion he is, and how often I have felt like rebelling against his tyranny. But, to be truthful, the poor chap is not so tyrannous after all, and the strength oozes out of him often enough and only an outer shell, hardened by wind and weather, remains to delude the ignorant and the shortsighted. To give in to a temptation is after all the best way of overcoming it and, I am afraid, I am getting less and less used to resisting temptations. Spoilt, you will say of course. Nothing of the kind. But I am in danger of being spoilt and I am in the mood to allow myself to be spoilt.

I have seldom felt quite so unpolitical as I did after return from Delhi. Even the desire to read the daily papers was not strong. After a year's messing about, suddenly I felt as if I had nothing particular or very important to do. Others were shouldering the burden, such as it was, and I was almost out of the picture. That brought relief and detachment but also a measure of *ennui*. I did not quite know what to do with myself. Of course there were crowds of things to do — letters, visitors, enquiries, business, trunk telephone calls every few minutes — but nothing seemed very important. I was a looker-on.

Tired, you will say. Perhaps. But it is something more than that. I think I am growing and growth at 47 is a curiously disturbing affair. But I am certainly tired mentally and if I was wise I would take your advice and run away. If I do not do so deliberately soon I may have to do it at the wrong moment and forcibly. I think I shall go somewhere in April. If Indu had not been coming I might have gone sooner, but now I suppose I must hold on for another three or four weeks. And then? Few days or a fortnight — I feel in the mood for disappearing for a year.

Fantasies. How can one get rid of the coils that bind, and there is no peace here or elsewhere, only conflict and struggle. I told you that Gerald Heard & Aldous Huxley had decided to leave England & Europe and go to America because Europe was too full of war & the psychology of war. As if they will get peace in America.

It seems that conflict will grow here. All the king's horses and all the king's men cannot stop it, nor the high minded seekers after conversion.

How are you getting on, my dear, and do you grow in strength from day to day? The picture of you fills my mind and I wonder when it will materialise again, and I wonder also if, in spite of all my conceit and seeming hardness, you are not the stronger of the two. Or is it that we are all weaklings, tossed hither and thither by a blind fate?

Did you get the snake charmer? I impressed on Indra[2] to produce one and he promised faithfully to do so. Did he keep his promise?

When will you leave Delhi and where will you go from there? Idle questions, and you need not answer them, for I suppose you do not know yourself.

My love to you, my dear,

Yours,
Jawahar

2. Indra Vidyavachaspati of Delhi.

27. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
28-3-37

How you love me, Bebee! I am astonished at the depth of your affection for me. Not that I doubted it, but still I am touched, moved, impressed and elated at this final testimony. These thoughts come to me when I see the evidence of the enormous labour you have spent on revising my *Glimpses of World History*. I had seen your copious notes and corrections previously, but it is only recently that I have looked at them with a critical eye and realised what you must have gone through in reading or re-reading that enormous pile. Since yesterday I have spent three hours over the wretched thing, these hateful and exhausting hours, and all I have succeeded in doing is to revise indifferently and unsatisfactorily 30 pages. At this rate I should mortgage a few months to this terrible business.

Is there anything more hateful than this revising business? And yet my task is lightened tremendously by what you have done. How carefully you have gone through the book. Surely you deserve part of the royalties, that is if any are forthcoming. For months and months I

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

have avoided this revision partly for lack of time but chiefly because of an aversion for it. But now I must do it for the publisher waits for it and conceit of an author to see his book again in print in a new garb urges me on. It is proposed to issue the book in the Penguin series in 4 volumes — maps and illustrations by Horrabin I like the idea of a really cheap edition although authors don't make much out of these 6d. editions.

Your corrections have drawn my attention to so many of my lapses and errors that you have shaken my confidence in my own writing. I am adopting most of them — not all. Of course your way is the more polished way but sometimes I feel that the polish is at the expense of vividness and a certain simplicity and strength.

Sometimes I think with amused surprise of the way I have developed, almost incidentally and casually, into an author. Having experienced some of the joys and successes of authorship, I am now having my full share of the worries. Just think of it — I have to deal with a score of publishers, including those who are bringing out translations in India. And the complications that are continually arising are damnable. It is a full time job to keep pace with them. Surely an author should not have to put up with this clerkly drudgery. Leaving out the slow and incompetent Indian publishers of translations, I have to deal with John Lane, Allen and Unwin, the Penguin Book Co, the Receiver and Liquidators of John Lane, the purchasers of John Lane's business, and now solicitors! Krishna Menon seems to be bent on dragging me to a law court in the vain hope of realising my lost royalties on the *Auto* and there is nothing I hate so much as figuring as a litigant in a law court. And against whom? My own publisher. Then there are complicated questions of royalties and the rights of my Indian publishers to be adjusted with those of the Penguin Book Co. What a complex world this is. I like coming to quick decisions and generally I do so, but when others and third parties are concerned I become helpless. Each party wants a little more than his pound of flesh. I have just been writing long air mail letters and I am full of this business and so I have unburdened myself on you.

I am supposed to be a busy politician but this sideline grows and I do not know where it will land me.

What charm have you got that works on me and makes me think of you so much? And the thought of you pleases me greatly and yet it produces a sense of emptiness. You are so far and distant. Are you frightened of me? Or is it that you are frightened of yourself as I am often enough of myself? I wonder. Anyway you are a darling.

Jawahar

Indra writes to me that in spite of every effort he failed to discover a snake charmer.

28. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
April 1st 1937
Hartal Day

My dear one, For two days I have had the unusual experience, for me, of having fever and I have been forced to lie down and keep to bed and yet the fever continues. A few days back I was almost wishing that some touch of bodily ill-health should drive me to bed and rest. My wish found rapid fulfilment and now I am bored and irritated. This is not a fit condition for me to be in to welcome Indu. She must be somewhere in the Grecian Isles and soon enough she will alight at Bamrauli, the airport of Allahabad. If she does not see me there she is bound to think with a shock that I have been arrested. This fear has haunted her and, although she will be enlightened soon enough, I should like to prevent that initial shock. I suppose I shall manage to go to the aerodrome. I am just returning from an outing — I could not keep away. It was the Hartal Day meeting and it seemed a gross submission to the weakness of the physical frame for me to be absent. So I went and spoke for a few minutes — only a few minutes! — and returned immediately — When I went my temperature was nearly 103°F. On my return it was under 102°F. So you see that normality for me is a public meeting and not rest in bed —

What shall I write to you about your letters, my darling? Three of them have come, all enlighteningly dated March 1937. The first one brought about an immediate reaction of 'how dare you'? Why should you grow morbid and self-effacing and so apologetic? And yet that was a foolish reaction. For you had to write it and I had to read it. Even if you had not written it so, I would have sensed that feeling somewhere, for we are too fond of each other not to realise instinctively what ails the other. It is true that I am extraordinarily dense sometimes and my self-centredness comes in the way of my understanding others. But not you — Here something else comes in the way, something which is the opposite of self-centredness. I may not and cannot be objective where you are concerned — You move me too much.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Do you realise that, in spite of my conceit, I feel sometimes in the same way towards you? What gifts do I bring to a laughing eighteen-year old? I grow harder as the days go by and laughter is a rare companion. I am frightened by this and by my loneliness. And yet I have a curious and abiding sense of growth within me and this, I suppose, gives me a flair of youth in spite of my physical appearance.

Of course you are shy of me and I am a little shy of you — Why should I be surprised at something which seems to be inevitable. Are we not mysteries to each other, even though we know each other pretty well?

Nothing that comes from your heart or mind will anger me or irritate me. And so you must not think in terms of words of yours having that effect on me. Am I so very reticent or inclined to understatement? Others do not think so — Nor does the pagan in me think so or behave so. But perhaps it is true that in the matter of personal relations I am a little reticent, till the barriers go, and even then perhaps. But I love you to write to me freely and spontaneously, forgetting what effect it will have on me. It will have the best of effect.

There is one other small matter which perhaps makes me reticent in my letters and that is the certainty that prying eyes see all my letters. I have nothing to hide but there are some things which are not meant for strangers. You write to me that you received my last two letters within a few hours of each other. As a matter of fact they were written with an interval of two days.

I feel a little tired. Not at writing this curious jumble of a letter, for the thought of you vitalizes me. But the outing and the meeting were an effort and I suppose I had better sleep this out. My love to you, *carissima* —

Jawahar

29. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Ekma
6-5-37

And so the train rolled away taking your dear self with it and the station seemed lonely and desolate. The evening was a long one, partly broken

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

into by my carrying out one of your behests. I bought a new pair of *Peshawari chappals.* I do not like them nearly as much as my old ones, but that is the way of persons approaching fifty! We get used to old things, old ways, old persons. I have made one great exception to this in favour of one particular person. Is that not enough and more than enough?

It was good that I had to leave Allahabad the next day. I busied myself with all manner of jobs in the office and at home—pretty useless, come to think of it, but they filled my time and that was something. The journey began badly. At Howrah an enthusiastic youth fell between the train and the platform and had his foot cut off. It was a ghastly sight, and yet in spite of his pain he clung to me, pleased to see me, and wanted to put his head on my feet. I liked his face and this face of his and his foot blurred the sight of Calcutta all day. The next day soon after our ship started a man jumped overboard and the ship had to turn round and go back part of the way to Calcutta to search for him in the Hooghly. We did not find him. They say that he was a Russian suspect—probably a man dealing in cocaine or some other dope—and he had been refused entry into India. So he was being taken back to Rangoon. People who saw him say that he appeared to be doped himself and was in a kind of daze. And that was the end of him.

Apart from these distressing incidents the voyage has been good. I have slept a good deal and fed and indulged in deck games with the officers—there are very few passengers. We have the honour of sitting at the Captain's table and this means that a great deal of time is taken up by him. I have hardly read, though I have written a large number of official and semi-official letters. Deck games, at the instance of the Captain, have absorbed a great deal of time and all my body, and Indu's, are aching by this unwanted exercise. This morning we spent a long time on the bridge with the Captain explaining the mysteries of his craft.

There are few passengers I said. Not so on deck for there is a host of deck passengers sprawling in a narrow, evil-looking space. And yet I am told that this is a light load. I felt almost sick at seeing all these people closely huddled up together in unhealthy and insanitary conditions.

We approach Rangoon. Within a few hours we shall be there. It came to me almost as a shock the other day to realise that I had never been east of Calcutta. All the great eastern world was unknown to me and I had wrapped myself up in India & Europe. A kind of mental adjustment took place within me and Indian politics and even European affairs receded into the background. Subconsciously I became receptive

to the new world that I was entering. Not that Burma is much of a new world but it came to represent the Far East and all it stands for. I think I shall go to Singapore. This East calls me and the nearer I can approach it the better. I am glad I came out of India. No hill station could have given me the psychological relief that foreign countries give.

It is getting on to midnight. Soon after four I have to be up to be ready for a very early landing. My love to you, my darling one.

Yours,
Jawahar

30. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

s.s. Karos
May 22, 1937

Darling, It is so long since I have had news of you. Where are you? How are you? I feel so terribly cut off from almost everything and everybody. Even the newspapers in Burma conspired to this end for they were utterly bad. You will remember asking me to send you cuttings from them about my tour. I did not think this worthwhile. But on second thoughts I have collected, with Indu's help, some such cuttings and one or two bundles will be sent to you by ordinary post from Penang. Rangoon possesses three dailies in English—two Anglo-Indian and one more or less loyalist Indian—and a paper (Indian) which comes out three times a week. I am sending you cuttings chiefly from the two Indian papers as their reports were longer. From the Anglo-Indian papers there are some editorial notes. One from the *Rangoon Times* you might find interesting, or at any rate it should convince you, if you have any lingering doubts on this subject, about my inherent greatness. Which reminds me that on my last day in Rangoon I delivered, according to my own thinking, a very good address on socialism and the world situation.[2] I wish it was better reported.

What a time we had in Burma rushing about all over the country! Most of this journeying was done by air, by sea planes. They have regular services of these as the numerous waterways make journeys by road or train long and tedious. We covered a good part of Burma but

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 652-654.

inevitably it was all a succession of crowds and processions and big functions. Individual contacts could hardly be made with success under these conditions. Yet I made some good contacts. I saw a good deal of the Burmese but I would have liked to see them more. I was always trying to get out of purely Indian surroundings, usually with little success. These Indians (and it is extraordinary how many there are in Burma) grew quite excited over me. I suppose when people live away from their country the sense of their own country grows. Latterly there has been friction between Indians and Burmans and this has disheartened the Indians and given them ever more the sense of alienness. My visit suddenly gave them strength and self-reliance. Because of the glory and greatness that they imagined in me, they felt bigger in stature. Was not this man, almost like unto a god (don't laugh—This is no conceit. I am trying to give expression to their feelings) one of their own kind—very far and above them certainly and yet very near, one of themselves? And if one of them could be so great, why surely they themselves were not so low after all. And so I became a symbol to them of themselves, of what they might be, and in honouring me, they honoured themselves. They, the Indians, grew hysterical over it, not only the workers but the middle class folk. The Burmese welcomed me more sedately but often they were influenced and swept away a little by the Indians' enthusiasm.

What a curious and lovable people are the Burmese. I like them and yet I suppose I would tire of them if I had to stay long. They are not mature enough and one cannot always live with children, delightful as they are. Unfortunately their contacts with Indians have not been happy. They have come across the 'coolie' class, which has a lower standard of life than they have, and they have despised him. They have also come into contact with the money-lending class and they have disliked him and been afraid of him. The Indians in Burma, culturally speaking, are a poor lot. They do not make good ambassadors. Marwaris, Chettiyars, Gujratis, all very estimable people no doubt, but they do not impress, and they are much too busy money making to think of the other aspects of life. The Burman, on the other hand, is full of these other aspects, or at any rate of some of the more superficial of them. He is rather superficial. He looks down somewhat on the Indian and calls him by unsavoury names. But even this has something of an inferiority complex about it.

Indira & I left Rangoon thoroughly exhausted by our labours. I had a cold, bad throat and cough and you might have spotted the dark nngs round my eyes. Indu had trouble with her tonsils and ran a slight temperature. We have both improved by three days' rest on board.

I was forgetting to tell you that I have tasted the *durian* fruit. I was thoroughly prepared for its evil smell and determined to taste it in spite of it. I had however expected an agreeable taste. I was thoroughly disappointed and it was as much as I could do not to make a face at it. I desisted after the first spoonful. Indu had even less and decided she had had enough of it. Upadhyaya felt almost sick and could not get over it the whole day. I was told that the *durian* I had tasted was not of the best quality. So I determined to have another try and some days later at Moulmein, which is known for its *durians*, I had another taste of it. This time it was slightly better but I doubt if I shall ever try it again. Indu and Upadhyaya refused to taste it again. So we have another of our illusions shattered.

I visited a monastery in Rangoon and had a talk, through an interpreter, with the abbot. He asked me a curious question—how far was Allahabad from Gaya? He told us that according to the scriptures only those could attain Buddhahood who were born within 300 *yojanas* (which I am told approximate to miles) of Gaya. Apparently he was calculating my chances of attaining Buddhahood! Fortunately for me Allahabad is within the prescribed limit.

Another Buddhist monk made strenuous attempts to convert me to Buddhism and flooded me with essays and long letters. In one of them he congratulated me on my determination to stop manufacturing children (I do not know that I had made any such announcement) and called people who produced children 'murderers', for must not the child grow up and die? A curious outlook on life.

We saw plenty of Chinese people in Burma and visited a Chinese school. I was greatly impressed by the smart children and the way they sang a national Chinese song to the accompaniment of a children's band. They gave me the impression of a vinle race determined to make good. How charming Chinese children are.

Burmese parties always seem to have an entertainment thrown in—usually professional dancing and singing, sometimes some kind of juggling or balancing feats. I liked the dancing for a while and then it grew monotonous. The dancers were the very pictures of Burmese dolls and sculptured figures we had seen previously.

We met the daughter of King Thibaw[2]—she had lived the greater part of her life at Ratnagiri in exile and spoke Marathi far better than

2 (1858-1916), last king of Burma, his protection of anti British refugees from India and his resistance to British commercial infiltration led to the Third Burmese War (1885 86) and his deportation to India where he died.

Burmese, also Hindustani. A curious figure, full of her grievances over the jewels &c. which the British took away.

And now to bed. When will I see you next, my dear? I miss you so much.

Love

Yours,
Jawahar

I sent you my programme. This will have to be altered somewhat. We leave Malaya on June 5th—reach Rangoon June 8th—leave immediately for Calcutta stopping *en route* at Akyab and Chittagong. Reach Calcutta probably on June 12th. I want Indu examined there by some doctors, so we might stay in Calcutta for a day or two.

31. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

s.s. Karagola
7-6-37

My dear, Within a few hours, early tomorrow, we shall reach Rangoon. Our month of wandering is over and we are hurrying back. It will take another week before we reach Calcutta for we are going *via* Akyab and Chittagong. From Chittagong, I have recently learnt to my surprise, that we shall have to go by train to Calcutta, reaching there on the 13th evening.

I want news of you but there is none, and when I shall get it I do not know. I feel a little tired after all this travelling about though I am much fitter than I was. Our travelling was done in style—no third class or rickety old Ford cars. Expensive motors or aeroplanes or air-conditioned railway cars. The air-conditioned car presented me with a new cold. For at every station I had to leave it and go out into the hot sun and the change was not pleasant. I sneezed almost every time and by the end of the day was in the grip of a violent cold.

Soon I shall be back to my own level in travelling &c. and this pleasant trip has already become a memory. A memory which has had a marked effect on my mind for it has turned it eastwards more. The Far East has become a vivid patch although I hardly crossed the threshold to it.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Write to me to Allahabad. Do not carry out your threat not to write. My love to you,

Yours,
Jawahar

32. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

30-6-37

My dear one, your letter came three or four days ago and, need I say that it was very welcome? No, I was not at all angry with you, if I may use the ugly word which you have written, for not writing to me for so long. Vaguely I hoped to get a letter from you somewhere during my travels and when I came back the hope grew stronger. And yet at the back of my mind I seemed to feel that you would not write to me soon. I resigned myself to this regretfully, perhaps with a slight feeling of irritation occasionally, but it was nothing much. Why did I feel so, I mean why did I expect you not to write? I do not quite know. Perhaps I am beginning to have a faint understanding of a woman's mind. I am so dull in this respect, so frightfully ignorant, as you, my dear, know so well. But even the dull in mind sometimes have a glimpse as through a glass darkly. And so the realisation came to me that you might find it a little difficult to write to me. I saw the horror in your eyes when you realised how my correspondence was dealt with by others. As a rule your letters reach me unopened, but of course the censors at the post office cannot be denied their peeps into my correspondence. It is irritating to be spied upon, though I have grown used to it and do not very much care. But, apart from this, it is often difficult to write, difficult to put down many things that one might say, as it is difficult to say all that one thinks. I write a large number of letters every day, business letters or semi-personal letters. But the letters I care about often remain unwritten for days. They hang about in my mind and I wait for a particular mood or leisure to write unhurriedly. To write to you sometimes seems so difficult, sometimes so easy. For you are the easiest and yet the most difficult person to write to. I love to think of you and often I yearn for your presence, and then my mind plays about with the idea of writing to you and phrases troupe through

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

my mind and add words and notions and just mere nothings which yet have a significance for me and may have some meaning for you. The letters that I have written to you on the tablet of my mind and not transcribed on paper!

And so I grow slowly, too slowly, in patience and understanding, and though I know nothing, or next to nothing, about women, East or West, the individual human being interests me even as an individual and always there is an attempt to find out what lies behind that mask of his. But I cannot apply that objective method, try as I will, to persons who move me greatly. I would not dare to do so with you for the very attempt would confound me and confuse my mind and trouble me. Your dear smiling eyes would look down upon me with amused affection and a slightly contemptuous tolerance at my stupidity.

So write to me or not as it pleases you. Do not force yourself to write because you feel I demand it. I wait for your letters and the sight of one gives me a thrill, but if they do not come, I shall not wholly fail to understand.

Do not worry about me. I am keeping pretty well in mind and body. I am physically fitter than I was two months ago and mentally refreshed to some extent. But how can I rid myself of the tangle that life is, of the unceasing complications that surround me? As I grow older, the vastness and complexity of these problems, the stupidity and inertness of human material, the purposelessness of life as a whole, the cruelty and hatred of man for man, fill my mind more. They do not suppress me but they do take away a great deal from the fresh and optimistic approach of growth. But I am hardened to this and it does not affect my activity much, or so I think. When I compare myself, hard and weather-beaten, to your dear self, soft and delicate and over-sensitive, I wonder at the difference. It is true that I feel weary at times and lonely often, but that is nothing new. I am not likely to cry out because of all this, I hardly permit myself to think of it much. So do not worry.

Ever since my return I have had to face an accumulation of work and I have worked hard. When evening comes I am tired and my brain is jaded. After a brief respite I start again, always trying to catch up. What a race it is! I have got rid of the arrears more or less but there are so many things that I want to do which hover about in my mind and find no escape. I should have liked to write about Burma & Malaya and other subjects. I doubt if I shall do so.

Thank you for the *Glimpses* — What an enormous lot of trouble you have taken over it. I took the first volume with me but had little time for it. So far I have gone through just under 300 pages.

I shared your surprise when I saw Magnus Hirschfield's book[2]. This was in a Rangoon bookshop and as I opened it the first thing that I saw was my picture. Of course my vanity induced me to buy it.

I am off tomorrow to Wardha. After that I do not quite know what I shall do. I am not fixing up anything. Probably early in August I shall accompany Indu to Calcutta to have her tonsils removed.

Goodbye, my darling

Jawahar

2. *Women—East and West.*

33. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

6-8-37

My dear, My dear, I have been wanting to write to you for so long, yet somehow it does not come off. I feel more distracted and worried than I usually do. The burdens of the President grow heavy and so many additional responsibilities of a novel kind have been thrust upon me that I gasp for breath. It is not just the heaviness of the work, although it is heavy, but the new problems which distract. So I have not written for I did not wish to write unless the mood was better.

But now I write these few lines hurriedly from time stolen in office, to inform you that I have at the last moment almost decided to take Indu to Bombay for her operation. Partly this is your doing, partly the fact that Betty will be there to look after her in case I have to go away. We reach Bombay on Monday morning the 9th August. I imagine the operation will take place on Wednesday. I shall be in Bombay for six or seven days and shall go to Wardha for the Working Committee from there. If Indu is still in Bombay I shall return to take her back to Allahabad.

Indu is likely to sail from Bombay on Sept. 11th.

Thank you for the two books. *The Story of Burma* I nearly bought in Rangoon — I had previously purchased its companion volume. After some thought I decided that the book was too expensive. The other book had already reached me from your friends, the artists, direct.

As for the Ajanta frescoes, if you insist on spoiling me, do so by all means. But I have ascetic moods when I want to get rid of the paraphernalia around me. But then there are pagan moods too. Anyway

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

you are the best judge of a suitable picture. Perhaps I have enough of Bodhisattvas around me and an Ajanta beauty might be presented to my pagan self.

My love to you, darling one.

Jawahar

34. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
Sept. 29, 1937

Bebee — Have you only now realised what a fearful handicap it is to be well brought up? To do what you do not want to do, not to do what you long to do; to hear one's own voice unendingly till one is aweary of it and almost begins to hate it, and yet not to say what one has to say, to repress oneself till one is fit to burst; to meet almost all the dull and uninteresting people of the world and to dream of others who are far away, beyond reach; to look pale and detached when fire rages inside one; to want to kiss soft lips but yet to keep away from them; to yearn to embrace and yet to keep your arms away till they ache. Or, there are so many things which good breeding brings in its train. You know them, you who are so well-bred. But who told you that I had been well brought up? You presume to know me a little and yet mislead yourself. Neither the governess, nor Harrow, nor Cambridge, nor anything else has taught me good breeding and I am a savage at heart caught and made a prisoner in the mesh of circumstance. From my exalted perch I envy others who are freer.

You dare to accuse me of not writing to you! Yet I would have written if I had not been continuously on the move. I returned yesterday, very tired, more so mentally than physically. When I came back from the office and had my solitary tea, I could not do anything and my mind was ill at ease. At last I got hold of Blum's book on marriage and started reading it. But interesting as it was, it could not hold me and I fell asleep and slept till dinner time.

Today I felt a little better. But I am stale, flat, and I carry on just like a machine. I read your letter again this evening and suddenly I felt like writing that long promised article on the 'Rashtrapati,[2] for I

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 520-523.

wanted to find out how much of good or bad breeding there was in him. As I sat at dinner, words and phrases passed through my mind. But breeding, or whatever it is, came in the way, and I wrote instead a note on power alcohol and other ways of utilizing molasses — 15 foolscap pages for the proper education of our Prime Ministers. And then another note on the price of sugarcane. It was 1 a.m. when I finished and the 'Rashtrapati' could not be analysed at that hour. But I had to write to you — have I not been told that letters must be answered the same day?

I expect to be here for about 10 days, except for a brief visit to Lucknow in between. Then I go to the Punjab for 3 days and Peshawar &c. 3 days. A brief stay in Allahabad and later Calcutta for the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. I might go to Assam from Calcutta.

When will I see you, my dear? It is ages and ages since we met And you have become so damned well-bred and yet you dare to accuse me of it.

Love,

Jawahar

Put 'Personal' on the envelope when you write to me. This might save it from the office.

35. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
24-10-37

My dear, I am just passing through Allahabad — soon I have to go to the station. But I cannot go without writing a few lines to you. Your letter of the 17th met me here. It is bad enough to mess up one's own life occasionally but it is terrible to mess up other lives. Yet such is life and we are helpless victims of circumstances. You know well how lacking in understanding and perception I am so far as individuals are concerned, and the nearer the individual is to me the more I fail in this. Your letter has made me realise this more than ever for it has

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, *N.M.M.L.*

shown how little I realised what was passing in your mind. I wondered greatly at the time at many things. I could not understand them. I suppose I am too self-centred to get the proper perspective. Forgive me. But even forgiveness does not help much. Help me to understand. Need I tell you that I would do anything to prevent sorrow crossing your path and yet, as you see, I become the instrument of causing you great suffering and anguish. You do not think that I do so with deliberate intent? Tell me what to do to avoid hurting you. Shall I stop writing to you and keep away from seeing you? You realise, do you not?, what a slave I am to circumstance. As I said in the article, those who ride a tiger cannot dismount. Perhaps I shall end up inside the tiger. Forgive me, my dear, I am so unhappy at the thought of your unhappiness. If I could erase myself from your memory I would gladly do so, though it would not be pleasant. That might perhaps give you peace of mind. Why not think of me as I am — full of conceit and full of myself, callously unaware of what I do to others. It is not a lovely picture but it is nearer the truth than the imaginary picture in most minds.

My love to you,

Jawahar

36. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
5-11-37

Dear, I am writing to you without your express permission. But then you have not told me not to and a letter of yours awaits reply. Not that I am replying to it. I just feel like writing to you a few lines before I leave Allahabad again. The Assam tour was suddenly postponed for no sufficient reason and I am rather sorry for it. Cawnpore labour troubles grow serious and I was supposed to charm them away. The desire to jump into trouble and the conceit that I might make a difference drew me to them. And so tomorrow I am going there for three days. I shall be pottering about the U.P. for the rest of the month, partly in Allahabad. The first half of December I intend spending in Assam.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

The *Modern Review* article appeared just the day before I left Calcutta. It was interesting to watch people's reactions and I felt like a guilty person. I am not used to this kind of subterfuge and I feel uncomfortable. Bapu was keen on finding out who wrote it. Bidhan was sure it was a manoeuvre to get Subhas in. He said he would know who the author was soon. One wise criticism was that I could not be a dictator because I was too much of a humanist. Is it so? I think it is true, however, that I am not made for dictatorship. Temperamentally I am not fitted for the job. But reading the article again I felt it was rather good and really true, in so far as it went. But partly untrue because it did not go far enough. The mere fact that I wrote it militates against the argument running through it. Do you not think so?

As I was leaving Calcutta I was asked when I was going to Assam. I said next month if I am still alive. It was a casual remark without any meaning but when protest was made, I began to think about it. I was a little surprised to realise how little I cared whether I lived or died. I was almost totally indifferent to life or death. And yet I live intensely enough so far as my activities are concerned.

You need not have written about Syed Hossain[2] as I would have had no objection to meeting him. I had an hour's talk with him.

Love,

Jawahar

2. (1887-1949), editor of *The Independent*, Chairman, Committee for India's Freedom, Washington, taught for many years at the University of Southern California, India's Ambassador to Egypt, 1947-49

37. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
8-11-37

My darling, Your letter, forwarded from Calcutta, reached me today on my return from Cawnpore. How we succeed in hurting each other and in doing or saying the wrong thing—at least I do. Do you not know how I long to see you? And I shall take every opportunity to see you and I shall write to you, so long as you do not tell me not to.

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

But that letter that you wrote to me suddenly made me realise, as I had not realised before, how I had become a terrible nuisance to you and how I was interfering with your life. The account that you gave of the period last year when we met in Bombay and Pondicherry, and how you had avoided me, and yet fate had thrown us together and upset your plans, hit me hard. I felt guilty and unhappy at the sorrow I had caused you and my own lack of perception appalled me. I dared not trust to my own judgement and I put it to you, who are so much wiser than I am in such matters, to tell me what to do. I may not be strong enough to act contrary to my own inclinations and urges, but if issued a mandate I would obey. Hence my letter to you. How many months it is since we met — it seems an age. And always I have been thinking when I shall see you again and hoping that perhaps I might suddenly and unexpectedly find you with a welcome in your eyes. We are frank enough to each other at times, and yet we are curiously reticent and succeed in giving wrong impressions. And then our imaginations build great structures on this frail foundation. When we meet next time — we will meet many times? — let us do away with this imaginary basis and see each other as we are. Is that too difficult? Perhaps it is not easy, but it is worth a trial. Write to me, my dear.

The Bijnor election and the tremendous victory of the Congress has let loose the most violent and unseemly language and behaviour on the part of some of the Muslim Leaguers.[2] In their anger they are saying things which are incredible and are openly inciting to violence and even murder in the name of Islam. Jinnah seems to have gone to pieces and what he said at Bijnor would have been surprising even in Shaukat Ali. Others, like Zafar Ali Khan, behave like dangerous lunatics. But what has pained me most is the recent incident at Aligarh University where the great majority of the students forgot all decency and responded to Zafar Ali's appeal after his own fashion[3] — I am afraid we are in for a lot of trouble.

I came back today from Cawnpore. The trouble there is kept in check. My visit did some good.

My love to you, darling one.

Yours,
Jawahar

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 20 and 191.
3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 196.

38. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
Nov. 18, 1937

My dear, So you are determined to be strong-willed and hard hearted. It is very unlike you, and anyway why should you? Life is difficult and tragic enough, why should we make it harder by adopting tragic roles? I do not want to and I am sure you do not want to. How terribly near you are all the time to me since the Ajanta Princess has come and taken possession of my room. Why is it that I think of you whenever I look at it?

I have come back to Allahabad for two days. First news on arrival: Zohra Ansari has given birth to a baby, Rup's husband Hanhamath Vanchoo (Rup is Mohan Lal Nehru's daughter) died last night, strikes in 3 schools and colleges, great communal tension in the city because a number of *goondas* have fallen out and are fighting each other for purely personal reasons. And so leaving all my work I have to wander about the city, and then I accompany the funeral procession and walk miles in the hot sun. I am tired and have a headache and all the day's work remains undone. But it is beyond my capacity anyway to tackle it and my sense of responsibility is decreasing It is far pleasanter to write to you.

How old are you now? Twenty? Oh, my dear, how infantile we are even though the years steal over us How I long to see your dear face.

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

39. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Assam-Bengal Rly.
Tinsukhia to Lumding
Dec. 4, 1937

My dear, I have finished my tour of the Valley of the Brahmaputra — eight hectic days — and now I am going to the Surma Valley. I am travelling in pomp and splendour in a first class compartment reserved

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

all for myself. Why so? Because the railway authorities think this is more fitting for a President of the Congress. The Agent of the railway has issued directions that whatever the class of the ticket I hold, I must be accommodated in a first class. (I might mention that this railway has no second class. It has only first, inter and third.) Loving comfort and the soft and pleasant things of life as I do, I succumbed to the temptation. It came rather unexpectedly the first time, as I was getting into a train with an inter class ticket. I was tired and the journey was not a long one. So I rolled myself up on the 1st class berth and fell asleep. Today I had sufficient notice and the journey was a long one. I disliked the idea of being beholden to the railway company and so I have had to buy a first class ticket. What petty excuses we find to avoid the strait and narrow path of virtue!

I have liked this visit and liked Assam. I have gone up and down it pretty thoroughly and yet, curiously enough, I have not visited Shillong, which is supposed to be the jewel of Assam. Going there meant giving up some outlying places and I preferred the latter. Also I wanted to stress the fact that my real business lay with the peasants and workers and tribal folk and not with the big people who live on the mountain top. Subconsciously I was put off by a railway advertisement which described Shillong as the Scotland of the East. I am not frightfully keen on the real Scotland and certainly an imported article does not attract me. Conceit, of course.

But I have mixed in high society also, been invited to the European planters' club, met them at their homes, fed with the bosses of the Assam Oil Co. and tried hard to be pleasant and sociable to European women. The desire to impress and be well thought of by all and sundry, I suppose.

Three days now in the Surma Valley and then a long long journey to Saharanpur where a Muslim by-election demands my presence. It will take another nine days before I reach Allahabad.

How are you, my dear? I famish for news of you and how I long to see you, to hold you and to look into your eyes.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

This first class reserved compartment is not as conducive to rest as it might be. At every wayside station there is a shouting crowd of tea garden employees and others.

40. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Lucknow
2-3-1938

My dear, Your telegram has reached me. How foolish and womanlike and extravagant. Or was it a kind of *prayashchitta* or atonement for having made love to Subhas? Do you expect a tough person like me, overflowing with energy and vitality, more than is becoming at my age, to fade off because of a cold? The length of years that lie before me frighten me at times. I weary at the prospect of them.

You made me promise to write to you. Foolish one, as if a promise was needed, or as if a promise means anything. Would you have me write to you just to keep that promise even though the desire was lacking? And could you prevent me from writing, short of commanding me to do so and my believing in your command, if the desire to write to you moved me? I shall write to you, as I have written in the past, even when you have not replied. For I write, selfish and self centred as I am, to please myself, though in my vanity I imagine that I might be giving you some pleasure also. You will not write to me, you tell me, lest you say something which might hurt. A word of yours has power to hurt, but have you thought of the pain of having no word from you? Have you thought of the loneliness that is my life, of the shell in which I live, encompassed and cut off, and from which I seek escape in activity?

You know me better perhaps than I do myself, yet I have some knowledge of myself also. I know well how true it was when you said that I never give anyone what I receive. It was not perhaps the whole truth but it was certainly the truth. I am too self-centred, too individualistic to give much, the bars of my temperament keep me prisoner. And so I can never enter the gates of the earthly paradise which open only to those who can give unreservedly.

Perhaps that very failing has become a virtue in me in the public sense. For so I can go through life more unattached than I might otherwise be. This sense of unattachment grows within me, though life often beckons to me and I have no wish to say no to it. I touch it and I like its touch, and I think of it and the memory pleases me, yet somehow I remain an outsider. It may be that what capacity I had to give, I gave intensively, not to individuals but in other ways, and I am bankrupt now, or perhaps a debtor mortgaged up to the hilt. I shall never get rid of that burden of debt.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Yesterday fifty thousand kisans marched up to Lucknow. I was tired and resting but I went off to them and spoke to them for a while, and then walked about among them. I think I did manage to forget myself while I was with them. They were a miserable lot with sorrow-laden eyes, many with bent backs, old and decrepit, and I wondered what force had made them drag their wretched bodies through many miles of dusty roads. I returned tired in body but vitalised. Did I draw this vitality from these sinking specimens of humanity?

Please do not worry about me. I really am getting on quite well and I expect to be normal in another two days. I shall be in Lucknow for another day or possibly two. There is no point in my staying here longer. The longer I stay here, the more I delay going to Khali. I want to leave for Khali on the 9th and to stay there nearly a fortnight. If I delay going there my stay will be shortened. I have had myself examined by a doctor here and he has passed me as fit except for the remains of a cold.

Nan has read to me a part of your letter to her relating to Subhas. I think it is disgraceful how you turn people's heads. Do you propose to collect the scalps of Congress Presidents? But no. Be kind to him and loving. Soften him and make him more human. I like him very much and I think that most people judge him harshly because of certain mannerisms and affectations.

Did you ask me to send for you when I wanted you? How penetrating you are. My dear, do you expect me to be sending you daily telegrams? If I gave free play to my desire to see you that would be the inevitable result.

My love to you,

Yours,
Jawahar

The flowers are aflame and send you greetings.

41. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Khali
Almora
25-3-38

My dear, There is no news of you or from you. Of course you warned me. But I shall continue to grouse. My time here is almost up and

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

soon I shall be going down. The two weeks have done me a deal of good and I am feeling very fit and full of vitality. I would have felt better still if news from outside had not come to trouble my peace of mind. There was the Austrian affair.[2] I had hardly reconciled myself to it when news of the communal rioting at Allahabad came and upset me. A colleague was almost fatally stabbed there and the whole affair was very distressing. A few deaths or broken heads do not matter much but the whole background is terribly painful.

Mridula & Bharati have been here a week. Mridula is quite an exceptional girl with enormous capacities for work. She has been wearing herself down by over-work in an atmosphere which does not suit her. She cannot fall in line completely with the Gujarat bosses and friction results. She has benefited greatly by her stay here. Bharati is an interesting girl and her naivete and frankness and preoccupations with personal problems are very refreshing. They are staying on here for three weeks after my departure.

I have at last managed to send a revised copy of Vol. 1 of the *Glimpses* to London. Your corrections were of the greatest help. But one series of corrections which you made I have not adopted. Usually I describe past events in the present tense—You have invariably changed this to the past tense. I think the present is preferable as it makes history more vital for the reader and writer. As a matter of fact whenever I have written about past events I have tried to think of them as the present and imagined myself witnessing them.

I shall be going to Calcutta *via* Lucknow and Allahabad.

Love

Yours,
Jawahar

2. Germany annexed Austria in March 1938.

42. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
7-4-38

My dear, I returned from Calcutta and found your letter. The accusation in it was entirely unwarranted for I have been keeping you informed of my plans, such as they are. Do you still get your facts from the

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Urdu press? But for once I must be thankful to this press for it has induced you to write to me. I am still thinking in terms of sailing for Europe in mid-June. I shall probably decide finally by the end of this month. Unless some extraordinary development takes place in India or Europe I shall stick to this date. There is a very faint possibility of my going earlier if I am suddenly wanted at the other end. But this is difficult anyhow as passages are not usually available prior to the monsoon.

I am sending these few lines to you in some haste in order to catch you in Hyderabad before you leave. You have given me no address. I am so sorry that the 'Golden Threshold'[2] is changing hands.

I am physically fit and well. But more and more, I feel a misfit in the political scene. I carry on through sheer habit and habit is strong enough to carry me through with a measure of success. But I have lost my self-assurance. I have developed a strong distaste for conferences and public gatherings, not that I dislike them but because I really do not know what to say. Or to be more accurate there is a conflict in my mind between what I want to say and what I ought to say. Do you know the lines[3] of Alfred de Musset on sadness:

J'ai perdu ma force et ma vie,
Et mes amis et ma gaiete,
J'ai perdu jusqu'a la fierte
Qui faisait croire a mon genie.

Quand j'ai connu la Verite,
J'ai cru que c'etait une amic,
Quand je l'ai comprise et sentic,
J'en etais deja degoute.[3]

Sometimes my mood turns that way. And yet not always. But I have become more of an enquirer, a searcher for I know not what. An American publisher wants me to write an essay on my philosophy of life. For financial and other reasons I am attracted by this proposal. But then I wonder—have I any philosophy at all?

2. Name of Sarojini Naidu's house in Hyderabad.
3. I have lost my strength and my life,
And my friends and my gaiety,
I have lost even the pride
That made me believe in my genius.
When I knew Truth,
I thought it was a friend,
When I understood and felt it,
I was already disgusted by it.

I must now go off to some remote corner of the city to address a meeting to promote communal unity. There is still much fear and trouble under the surface. What a bad lot we are.

I shall be in Allahabad throughout April unless I go to Lucknow or somewhere else for a day or two.

Love,

Jawahar

43. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
11-4-38[2]
8 p.m.

My dear, You are unhappy and I feel greatly distressed. I wish I could come to Lucknow but I am completely tied up here. There was a bust-up today again and the position is bad. All day I have been wandering about, being cheered occasionally, cursed at sometimes, and everywhere being overwhelmed with complaints. It will pass as everything in life passes but it is an exhausting and depressing business nonetheless. I propose to go to Lucknow on the 23rd night. I have to be back in the city for an evening round. In haste.

Love

Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. The date 11.8.38 given in the source is evidently a slip for 11.4.38.

44. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Gloucester
25.6.38

Bebee dear, I have spent eleven days in Europe—five in Spain, three in Paris, nearly two in London. I am now on a week-end visit with Indu

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

to Sir Stafford Cripps in his country home. We return tomorrow night to London.

These days have been terribly busy days and I have been quite unable to write to anyone in India. Nor have I had any news from India except a letter from Nan. A letter from you also came but this had been originally sent to Bombay and forwarded from there.

The visit to Spain—Barcelona—was full of interest and the most vivid impressions. Every night we woke up to the sound of bombing from the air and anti-aircraft guns in action. We rushed out to our balcony on the sixth floor of the hotel and watched this spectacle of modern civilisation. It was impressive enough if one could forget the tragedy underlying it. We could not see the enemy planes as they flew at a tremendous height, about 20000 ft., but we could hear the noise of their engines. The searchlights played all over the sky and the anti-aircraft guns seemed to hurl coloured lights in the sky. Next morning we enquired about the damage done—casualties, houses smashed to bits &c. Still the city carried on its normal life and crowds filled its streets. The shops functioned, the theatres and cinemas were full, high class musical concerts were being given. A book fair was being held and the streets were full of stalls. It was astounding to see this normality and the calmness and order that prevailed everywhere. Perhaps human beings can get accustomed to almost anything. But probably it was not just *insouciance*, it was also sheer courage and pride for the Spaniard is a proud animal. Anyway it was most impressive. I cannot conceive how a people like this can be crushed ultimately even if they cannot hold out in a military sense.

I met many people—cabinet ministers, military officers, trade union officials, civil servants and the rank & file of the army. I met also Passionaria, the remarkable Spanish woman who has become the idol of the people. She was the most overwhelming woman I have met. Middle-aged, homely-looking, with a large family, she was full of suppressed passion and vitality which simply oozed out of her.

There were privations and food was scarce though the stage of actual starvation had not been reached. There was no milk or butter except for children. We had limited rations even in our hotel. Cigarettes were not to be had and this was perhaps the severest strain on many. An anti-aircraft gun officer told me that he had hardly slept for four days and nights and begged me for a cigarette. The tragedy was that I had none.

We saw a lovely children's home where refugees were kept. There were scores of such homes and children's restaurants where free meals

were provided. Everywhere we found an indomitable will to persevere and not to give in.

I expect to be in England till July 17th and then to go to Paris for a week. After that possibly Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Vienna, and may be Turkey. Returning to Geneva and England. If all goes well I take the return journey to India *via* Russia & Central Asia.

I am afraid I could not enclose in my last letter to you from on board a copy of my note to Kripalani as I said I would.[2] I find that I had no copy left. I sent a copy to Nan. Perhaps you could get one from her.

I must go now to the village trade union committee who are meeting to have a talk with me.

Love

Yours,
Jawahar

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol 9, pp 78

45. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

London
5-7-38

Bebee, It is three weeks now since I landed in Europe—or is it more? It seems ages and I have compressed quite a lot in these days. They have been terribly full. The Spanish experience was exhilarating and depressing. I wanted to write to Indu at length about it while yet it was fresh in my mind. But I have had no time at all and even personal letters remain unwritten. The other letters have a better fate for an efficient secretary—a Somerville girl knowing typing, shorthand and French—deals with them. I am writing these few lines at 2.15 a.m. when I am dog tired.

But I had to write to you, however briefly, for your long letter has just come. I have read it hurriedly, I shall read it again. It is not easy to answer it. Indeed I doubt if I can answer it fully. I am not used to discussing my personal feelings or emotions in letters. Some things might be said perhaps. It is more difficult to write about them. But anyway

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

I cannot understand what has upset you so much and made imagine all manner of things which are hidden from me. I may not come up to your mark or to your expectations. Nobody does and certainly I know very well how grossly I am over-rated by those who have a partiality for me. Perhaps you have not understood me aright in spite of your deep insight into me. I have human feelings and emotions certainly and they move me, but not for very long, for other and impersonal feelings overwhelm them.

But I cannot write to you more now as it is very late. I shall write later. Meanwhile, do not give free rein to your imagination.

Love

Jawahar

46. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Hotel Ambassador
Prague
11.8.1938

Bebee dear, I have not written to you for an age. Indeed except for the last few days I have hardly written letters since I reached Europe. I have led a hard life since I landed in Genoa and a day full of engagements has ended late at night when I felt too tired to write. Some days in Spain, about 10 days in Paris and four weeks in London were spent thus. And then I forced myself to take a week by the sea-side in France where Indu accompanied me. There was not too much rest there as I was busy writing some reports. Still I slept sufficiently and had sea bathing. I started off from there going east, visited Munich & am now at Prague—with Indu. This business of travelling on the Continent is terrible. Hours and hours are spent in getting tickets & reservations, visas &c. Then packing & unpacking. I find this very trying. In England & France I know my way about more or less, the language is within control and there are many friends to help. Not so elsewhere.

I expect to be here for a week or so—not at Prague but in Czechoslovakia. Then we go to Vienna & Budapest and possibly Istanbul, returning to Switzerland nearly in September. What I shall do after that I do not know yet.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Day after tomorrow we visit the Bata factory. It is far from here and we shall go there by one of Bata's private planes. Then we visit the great Skoda munitions works. But the main object of our visit is to study the Sudeten minority problem.

Nan wrote to me that you had not been well. I hope you have recovered. I do not know where you are but I suppose this letter will reach you *via* Hyderabad.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

47. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Budapest
1.9.38

Bebee dear, For nearly two weeks I have been here, tied down because of Indu's illness. Nan also got stuck up here. Now that Indu is much better, we are leaving today by air for London. Nan went yesterday as she is stopping for a day in Prague. She will join us there on our way to London.

Central Europe is a seething cauldron, especially Czechoslovakia. As I look at these beautiful cities I wonder how long they will survive. Almost their doom seems to be written in the skies.

I have no idea about my future programme. The proposed visit to Russia seems to be off. Indu's illness will also affect my movements. For the present I go to London and perhaps a week later to Geneva

I hope you are well.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1 Padmaja Naidu *Papers*, N.M.M.L.

48. To Pierre Cot[1]

Paris
September 21, 1938

Dear Monsieur Cot,[2]
I have just reached Paris, coming by air from Geneva. The international crisis and the threats of war have distressed me greatly as, no doubt, they are distressing you. But howsoever great our distress might be, we cannot remain passive spectators of the tragedy that is being enacted before our eyes. As a great organisation devoted to peace and collective security, the R.U.P.[3] has a special duty to stand by its principles when they are brutally attacked. Not to do so means almost the extinction of the R.U.P.

I went to Geneva in the hope that a meeting of the International Executive of the R.U.P. would be held then and I would have the opportunity of attending it and discussing the critical problems that face us with our colleagues of the R.U.P. My colleague, Mr. Krishna Menon, had already suggested such a meeting. Unfortunately no such meeting could be held. It is for this reason that I am writing to you, for I fear that if the R.U.P. cannot function when the need for this is greatest, it will never function at all and most of us will cease to take interest in it. During the past three months and a half, that I have been in Europe, no meeting of the Executive has been held and there have been no opportunities for full consultation amongst ourselves.

The present grave crisis involving terrible danger of war forces us to act in accordance with our basic programme and principles. The exact attitude which we should take is not easy of decision and requires the most careful thought. But to take no decision at all is itself a betrayal of our principles.

It is perfectly clear that the proposals of the British and French Govemments regarding Czechoslovakia[4]—proposals made without even consulting the country and people most concerned—are a death-blow to the ideals we have proclaimed. They are not proposals to avoid war,

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Pierre Cot (1895-1977); French politician; before the Second World War was a leader of the Radical Socialist Party and helped to organise Leon Blum's Popular Front Regime in 1936; Minister of Aviation, 1933-34 and 1936-37 and Minister of Commerce and Industry in 1938; headed a small leftist progressive party after the Second World War.
3. *Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix* (World Peace Congress).
4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 143.

but to create a situation in which war will always be on the doorstep and gangsterism will reign supreme in Europe. Perhaps there are few examples in history of a greater betrayal of a friendly people and an allied nation. Public immorality, force and threat of force are now acknowledged to be the foundations of national and public policy. This can only lead to the most terrible of disasters.

It seems to me that the R.U.P. must clearly condemn this policy and the Franco-British proposals. It must demand that settlements must not be made under threats of force. It must insist that the Czechoslovakian Government be fully consulted and its agreement obtained. The present position taken up by the Czech Government asking for arbitration under treaty terms is an eminently reasonable one. This attitude involves our condemning the French and British Governments and demanding a change. Further that if there is any aggression in Czechoslovakia, the aggressor nations must be declared as such and treated as such.

May I add also that the banning of public meetings and demonstrations at this juncture is a dangerous and unwarranted interference with civil liberty and democratic procedure. It is not for an outsider to suggest any action, but it is obvious that our activities can be very greatly obstructed by this official banning of meetings, etc.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

49. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

London
20-10-1938

Bebee dear, I have had no news of you, or hardly any news for a long time. And now I am packing up and collecting together all my little bits that have gone to pieces, to return to India. This visit to Europe has not been a vitalizing experience. Apart from the worry due to Indu's & Nan's ill health, events in Europe have shaken me up completely. This continent is going to the Devil with extreme rapidity.

Indu is returning with me. She is fairly well now but she cannot go back to Oxford this winter and so she might as well come to India for a few months. She can return in spring.

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, N M M L.

We are leaving London on the 24th Oct. After brief halts in Paris & the Riviera we sail from Marseilles on Nov. I reaching Alexandria on the 6th. On the 9th Nov. we sail from Port Said by the P.& O.S.S. *Strathnaver* reaching Bombay on Nov. 17th.

Nan has been ill again but I hope she will recover soon. She is now leaving by air on Nov. 9th & reaching Allahabad on the 13th.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

50. To Stafford Cripps[1]

Khali
Jan. 21, 1939

My dear Cripps,

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter. I have carried it about with me for the last three weeks during my wanderings hoping to find time to write to you at some leisure. It is astonishing how much time one has to spend in travelling in this country. A committee meeting might mean a journey of anything from five hundred to a thousand miles and thus back again.

I have now escaped for a week and have come to the mountains where my daughter has been staying. Your last letter was written in unusual surroundings—from the Court of Justice. My reply is being written in a far more unusual way. I am at present having a sunbath in full view of the Himalayan snows, and some of the highest peaks of the Himalayas look down upon me from a distance of a few miles, as the crow flies.

I have been reading *The Tribune* regularly except when I am in too remote a place for it to reach me. I think it has improved greatly and become very readable. I am glad it is going up in circulation.

The idea of having a pamphlet club attached to the Left Book Club is attractive. I wish we could do something of the kind here but for the present we seem to lack both the business capacity and effective writers. Most of our ardent politicians are no good at business and most of our writers have a tendency to sectarianism which prevents them from getting a wide enough audience. For the present the daily paper with which

1. British Cabinet Papers, CAB 127/57, Public Record Office, London

I am connected is enough (or more than enough!) of a burden on me and it worries me.

The real difficulty however in pushing any series of books and pamphlets lies deeper. What line are we to take up which is sound and yet which carries the mass of nationalist opinion or Congress opinion here? Conflicts and cleavages are developing in our ranks, though they are not so deep yet as to cause a vital split. I do not quite know where I stand myself. Being a member of the Congress Executive at the top I have to keep in line with my colleagues, though I pull them often enough in my own direction. On some matters I disagree with them entirely. Ever since my return to India I have been more or less feeling my way and I cannot yet say how things will develop. There are some disturbing signs but on the whole I have felt better here than I did in Europe.

My effort all along has been to make the politically left elements to pull together. The Congress as a whole is definitely left politically including the old guard. But on the social issue it is not quite so clear although its sympathies are certainly towards the left. The emergence of the social issue endangers its political unity to some extent, and left elements have a way of behaving in a remarkably irresponsible manner which frightens and irritates the mass of Congressmen. There is no vital conflict on a real issue, although there are divergences. The real conflict is a psychological one—distrust and suspicion of each other. Neither side can do without the other. If the left was in charge of the Congress organisation, it could not possibly carry on or do anything effective. (I use the left in the social sense). The Centre group with the old leaders can certainly carry on without the help of the left but their effectiveness will decline. The Right group is small and does not count except when it gets the support of the Centre and Gandhi.

Thus on a political issue it is not difficult to have a strong united front of the Centre & Left. I think it is possible to have such a united opposition on the Federation issue. It might have been possible, if the British Government had gone far enough, to weaken this opposition and perhaps turn down the Centre. But as things are developing it seems much more likely that Federation, if imposed, will be opposed by the Congress as a whole. Personally I still doubt that Federation will be imposed under these circumstances.

The three major questions before us are: 1 The social issue relating to the peasants & workers. Both these groups have become very much alive and under present conditions it is not possible for the Congress or the Congress ministries to meet all their demands. Much has been

done, especially in the United Provinces, but the problems are too deep-seated to be solved by superficial reforms. They require an overhaul of the social structure. The efforts of the Congress ministries to raise the standards of the workers & peasants have already begun to frighten the middle classes. There is much grumbling beneath the surface and complaints that their interests are not looked after. This is not important so far but it is out of this that fascist elements take shape. Fascism as such will not develop in India at this stage. What is more likely to happen is for these middle class elements to try to gain control of various local Congress committees and thus influence the people at the top and Congress policy generally.

The second problem before us is the Hindu-Moslem tension. This is certainly an obstruction in our path. The Muslim League is not organisationally strong. It cannot do anything positive or constructive. But it can be destructive and its entire policy consists of inciting Moslems against the Congress. The most fantastic lies are circulated and full advantage is taken of the civil liberties established by the Congress governments. It is difficult to get at the root of the matter—what the basic objection is. It almost seems that Jinnah and the other leaders of the Muslim League object to democracy itself in India for democracy means the dominance of the majority. They object to the people of the Indian states being enfranchised as this means more Hindus voting. Jinnah is really an impossible person to deal with. He has a certain lawyer's ability and enormous conceit, but otherwise he is extraordinarily ignorant.

There are tendencies in the Muslim League for a left wing to develop and to insist on a positive programme.

The third problem is that of the Indian states. As you know this has developed suddenly and on a wide scale and there is hardly a state which is not affected. This development has, I think, justified the Congress policy towards the states—This was essentially to make the states people organise and rely upon themselves rather than to expect others to carry their burdens. No mass movement could be organised from outside and without an awakening of the masses within the states little could be done. As soon as this was realised the people of the states woke up, and the Congress was inevitably dragged into the fray.

There are at present four aspects of this struggle. In some small states the rulers surrendered almost without any struggle, or were intelligent enough to read the signs of the times and to fall in line with the national movement before any effective pressure could be organised. They are only small states but their example counts. Of these states, Aundh in the Bombay Presidency has set the best example and done

so with grace.[2] The ruler has just inaugurated a new constitution which in effect is a kind of federation of village republics.

Then there are a few states where the struggle has been under the direction of leading Congressmen, as in Rajkot, and where a measure of success has come. Mysore last year partly came to terms under Congress pressure but it has tried to wriggle out of them since. Rajkot was a clear and definite victory but the ruler is misbehaving again and it is possible that the struggle might be resumed. Rajkot was a good instance of how the imperial Govt. interferes both directly & indirectly. When the struggle began the ruler engaged a retired British Officer as his prime minister. Soon after the ruler became frightened and wanted to come to terms with the people. Taxes were not being paid, all business was at a standstill and civil disobedience was going strong. The state treasury was empty and debts were piling up. This was the result of the repressive policy of the British minister. When the ruler wanted to come to terms, the British minister refused to permit him to do so and even threatened to get him deposed by the imperial Govt. The ruler was helpless. He tried to dismiss the minister (whom he had himself appointed a few months earlier) but the minister refused to be dismissed and had the backing of the Agent of the Govt. of India. Ultimately the ruler was forced, by the pressure of the popular upheaval, to come to terms and to dismiss the minister. Even then the minister stuck on! He left ultimately. I am sure that the Agent to the Gov. General is now trying to create fresh trouble in Rajkot.

In the Orissa states there has been open and repeated interference on the part of the Govt. of India. Troops have been sent and firing on the people has been repeatedly resorted to.[3] In one state, as you must know, the British Agent fired at a crowd which therefore killed him. Since then troops from distant parts of India have been concentrated in Orissa and Ranpur (where the murder took place) has become a wilderness, almost every inhabitant of this small & backward state having run away on the approach of troops.

In Jaipur a big conflict is impending which is likely to drag in the Congress as the leader of the Jaipur movement is a very prominent Congressman, Jamnalal Bajaj.[4] The conflict has come because the Jaipur Govt. refused to permit the popular organisation to do famine work

2 See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 412.
3. See *Selected Works*, Vol 9, pp. 410-411.
4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 413.

in the state, although famine is ravaging large areas. The People's Association has been banned, the president of it who is a resident of Jaipur (Jamnalal Bajaj) is forbidden entry into the state and every vestige of civil liberty crushed. The challenge has been accepted by Bajaj and he has given notice that he will enter Jaipur on a certain date early in February. His arrest will start the civil disobedience movement.

Who is doing this in Jaipur? Not the Maharaja who is a youth more interested in taking fresh wives unto himself than in the task of governing. He has just, I believe, married for the third time. He did so in Bombay and when a deputation of Jaipur merchants in Bombay wanted to wait on him to protest against the steps taken by his govt. he replied that he was not interested, or something to that effect. The man in command in Jaipur is an Englishman who is prime minister and he has declared that he will stand no nonsense and will crush with violence every attempt to disobey his orders, howsoever peaceful this disobedience might be.

It is extraordinary how many British officers are in charge of the Indian States as the rulers' ministers. Then there are of course the Residents and the Agents of the Gov. General and behind them all the Political Dept. of the Govt. of India. It is absolutely clear that the real struggle of the people is with the British Govt. of India and hardly with the rulers who count for little.

I have written at too great length already and I must end this letter. But I should like to mention the two major states Hyderabad and Kashmir. In both of these popular movements have developed and in both attempts are being made to crush them on the ground that they are communal movements. As it happens Hyderabad has a Muslim ruler & a Muslim bureaucracy while the population of the state is 85% Hindu. Kashmir has a Hindu ruler and mostly Hindu officials while the population of the state is 85% Muslim.

This struggle in the states is bound to have far-reaching repercussions. It will affect the question of federation and it might put an end to the Congress ministries, if the Congress as a whole gets deeply involved.

I wonder if you have given any further thought to the constitutional aspect of the states question. If so I shall be grateful if you will let me have your views. I am presiding next month over the States' People's Conference.[5]

Apologies for the length of this letter. I have not written to you about other matters which distress me greatly—the Spanish situation

5. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 418-431.

more particularly. What can I write? I suppose that in spite of appearances, Chamberlain is not likely to continue for long

I must apologise to you for not having written yet to Manley[6] in Jamaica. I would have done so from here but unfortunately I left the address in Allahabad. I shall write to him on my return

All good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6 Norman Manley (1893 1969), Chief Minister, 1955 59, and Prime Minister, 1959 62, of Jamaica

51. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Wardha
22.2.39

My dear Krishna,

I enclose a copy of a statement I have issued to the press this evening.[2] Perhaps some truncated form of it might reach you by cable. The statement might surprise you and even distress you But after very full consideration I came to the conclusion that there was no other course left open to me. The statement is a long one and yet inevitably it cannot contain many important matters which have influenced me. Subhas has gone off the rails and has been behaving badly in many ways. His principal supporters are very irresponsible and unreliable people and it is quite impossible for me to join this motley group with whose viewpoints on national and international politics I do not agree. Yet if I happened to join his Committee, all the burden would fall on me. I would be coming in continuous conflict with his policies, such as they are. Apart from principles and policies, Subhas's methods of work are difficult to put up with. He has paralysed the A.I.C.C. office and passes orders over its head in all manner of election matters and local disputes — these orders being flagrantly partial and against our rules or procedure. The Working Committee, which was to have met here,

1 J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2 See *Selected Works*, Vol 9, pp. 485-487.

could not meet because he was unable to attend owing to illness and he directed us not to transact even routine business.

For me this new development has far-reaching significance. I do not propose to join any Working Committee whoever forms it — subject to a crisis overtaking us. It is quite likely that Subhas might not be able to carry on. If so the old guard might slip in. Even so I shall not join the Working Committee. I have had enough of this kind of thing. Anyway the Congress will clear up matters somewhat.

The I.P.C.[3] from London has just cabled to me that the 25th February should be observed as a Spain Day for demonstrations, etc. I am afraid it is far too late to take any steps of this kind now. It takes some time to organise. Besides I do not think such demonstrations would be successful just now.

What about sending food ships to Spain? I suppose this is off for the present. We are cabling some money to the *Comite de l' Enfance* of Paris.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

3. International Peace Campaign.

52. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Lucknow
17.5.39

My dear Krishna,

I have been sending you letters from time to time dealing with various matters that arose. I shall continue to do so, for the mind goes on functioning through sheer habit. So also I shall carry on with my usual activities, though I realise more and more how I am losing in efficiency. But I want to tell you briefly the state of my mind. It is bad. I have lost all pep and feel devitalised, and my interest in life itself seems to be fading away. Don't be alarmed. I can still function fairly effectively and it may be that I shall recover some of my vitality. For the moment however the outlook is not encouraging. Most of the things

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

that I value and for which I have worked seem to be going to pieces, and it is not surprising that I should also disintegrate in the process Nearly all the conceit I possessed in such ample measure has been knocked out of me. I suppose this is a gradual process and many things contribute to it. Events in India, events elsewhere. What has happened in Spain has affected me greatly as a deep personal sorrow. What has happened and is happening in India, being near to me, affects me continuously. The kind of human material that I see about me, the all-pervading pettiness and vulgarity, the mutual suspicion and back-biting and so many other things distress me beyond measure. Everywhere the wrong type of person is pushing himself to the front, everywhere disruptive forces are growing. Perhaps I exaggerate, perhaps all this is inevitable and is not peculiar to India in the present phase of the world.

It is possible that I might not have been affected by all this quite so much if I had retained my own peace of mind. Having lost that in a large measure, the shield that protected me has gone. The heat and my indifferent health make matters worse.

I wrote to you two and a half months ago that I was very ill mentally. I had received a sudden shock which upset me more than almost anything else had ever done. I was afraid of a breakdown but I avoided it and during those days of mental agony I sat down and forced myself to write those articles, *Where Are We?*[2] I adjusted myself gradually and became more normal. But I was too much shaken up and the after-effects continue.

I am sorry to write to you all this and to distress you. I do so to enable you to realise somewhat how I am functioning at present. Partly also to relieve myself. There is hardly anyone here to whom I can speak with frankness about myself here. But please do not worry. It is a phase which will pass perhaps.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

2. The reference is to the eight articles printed in the *National Herald* between 28 February and 6 March 1939. They were later reprinted as a pamphlet, and included in *The Unity of India* (London, 1941), pp. 86-132. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 488-520.

53. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
August 15, 1939

My dear Krishna,
I am having some little difficulty about my passage but I suppose something will be fixed up. At the most I shall have to go by Air France from here and not by K.L.M.

I had a long cable from the Chinese Ambassador in London relayed to me by the Consul in Calcutta. In this cable he sent me his good wishes and greetings. It ended up by a curious and unexpected sentence as follows:

> "Winston Churchill requests me send his
> good wishes for success of your mission"

What is the world coming to?

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

54. To David Gronfoll[1]

Allahabad
Sept. 18, 1939

My dear Mr. Grenfell,
I have just received your cable on return to Allahabad. Three days ago I sent a long cable to India League giving a summary of the Congress Executive's statement on the war situation.[2] This must have crossed your cable. This statement must have given you a fair idea of our position. I am now enclosing a full copy of the statement.

You will notice that the statement makes it quite clear that we stand for democracy and freedom and are against fascist and Nazi aggression. We are prepared to cooperate in every way in the building up of a

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 139-140.

new world order. But the whole attitude and policy of the British Government in India in the past, and more specially in the recent past, has been such as to irritate Indian opinion and make it disbelieve vague professions made by the British Government. Repeatedly we have drawn their attention to our attitude in regard to a war. We have been ignored completely and action has been taken affecting India without any reference to us. In the feudal and autocratic Indian states the whole policy of the British Government has been to encourage this autocracy and misrule. Several ordinances have been passed without our consultation and India has been declared a belligerent country. In the present state of Indian opinion this has been a very great irritation. The Working Committee's statement has been worded mildly but it does give expression to some extent to this feeling in India. A strong body of Indian opinion held that in view of the attitude of the British Government the only possible course for us was to refrain from any cooperation. But we have decided not to take any hasty step and to give an opportunity to the British Government to take immediate steps to meet this difficult situation. You will observe that what we have said applies of course to India but the whole problem is viewed in a larger context of world freedom. It is thus of concern to everyone in England or in India who is interested that this War should not be allowed to become an imperialist war.

In the event of the British Government not meeting the Indian demand satisfactorily, the only possible course open to India is to withdraw all cooperation. I would regret that exceedingly. But I cannot advise any other course which is in consonance with Indian dignity as well as the cause of world freedom.

It is important that the British Government should recognise clearly India as a free and independent nation. In giving effect to this declaration certain difficulties will arise, but it is necessary that, in as large a measure as possible, immediate effect should be given to it. I am sure that we shall have the goodwill and support of all liberty-loving people in England in the course we have taken. We have all, whether we live in England or in India, a terribly difficult time to face and the future is likely to grow more and more burdensome. The only right course for all of us is to be clear as to what that future is going to be and to give effect to it in the present. For if the present is ignored the future will take revenge.

Our larger Executive, the All India Congress Committee, is meeting on the 7th October and it is important that the position should be cleared up before then, otherwise steps may be taken which it may be difficult to retrace.

I am sending the following cable to you today:—
Have already cabled a summary of Congress decision. Our policy against fascism and wholly favouring democracy but India must have democracy to defend. Important for British Government recognize India as free nation and give immediate effect to greatest possible extent.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

55. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
Sept. 19, 1939

My dear Krishna,
Your letter of the 9th September has just reached me. I am cabling to you as follows: "Your letter 9th agree generally outlook suggestions."

I find myself in very great agreement with what you have written. I think that you will find that agreement reflected in the Working Committee's statement also, though that statement does not go into as much detail as your letter. I might even go so far as to say that my colleagues in the Working Committee are also looking at the problem more or less from the point of view that you have suggested, though I cannot say how far they would agree with the details. In view of this common outlook, I think you should work on this basis.

Nothing has happened here since the Working Committee's resolution. But I take it that developments will take place before very long. Presumably references are being made at the other end. It will be very unfortunate if the British Government cannot get rid of its old mentality. Time is an important factor. It would also be unfortunate if the British Government hedged and hesitated as this will inevitably lead to all manner of suspicion.

The news from Poland about Russo-German contacts is disturbing and confusing.[2] The first reaction is against the manifest opportunism of Russian foreign politics. Yet one cannot form a definite opinion without fuller knowledge.

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 146.

Here in India a great deal of realisation of the issues at stake is dawning on our people. But the process is slow and on either side, the right and the left, people continue to think and to talk in terms divorced from reality. Generally speaking no attempt has been made on the part of the Government of India to take advantage of the provisions of the new Government of India Act Amending Act.[3] Very drastic ordinances have been passed no doubt, but the discretion of the provincial governments has not been interfered with to any appreciable extent. In the Congress provinces therefore the ordinances are not being enforced in any large measure. Such enforcement as is taking place is chiefly in regard to profiteering. In Bengal and Punjab there has been more application of these ordinance. In Assam the Digboi oilfield has been declared a protected area, thus removing it from the provincial government's orbit. This is obviously being done with a view to conserve oil supplies. However, it is objectionable from the provincial government's point of view. There has been, as you know, a strike in Digboi which has continued for many months. The application of the ordinances to Digboi is hitting the strikers hard. The oil company has misbehaved in many ways during the past few months and the Congress has expressed its sympathy with the strikers and even gone so far as to say that in view of the oil company's attitude the lease should not be renewed. This resolution was passed two or three months back. At the same time the strikers have often taken up a foolish attitude and not taken the advice tendered to them both by us and the provincial government. Their present demand is that they should all be taken back without any victimisation. No other demand is being pressed. But the company refused to accept this.

In Cawnpore, labour troubles are brewing.[4] Generally speaking the situation has been quiet except for a strike in one mill, the Victoria Mills. There is talk however of the strike spreading. It is possible that the government might intervene as the present demand of the workers is reasonable. They are prepared to abide by the arbitration of the Government Commissioner. The employer however (Sir J.P. Srivastava)[5] is not agreeable to this as he apparently thinks that he has broken the strike by engaging new hands

It is inevitable that difficult questions should arise from day to day in the working of the provincial governments under existing circumstances.

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol 10, pp 147 and 323
4 See *Selected Works*, Vol 8, p. 394
5 (1889 1954), leading industrialist of Kanpur.

But generally speaking the attitude of the Governors and the Government of India is not to irritate the provincial governments or the Congress organisation. They behaved foolishly enough in pushing through the Government of India Act Amending Bill as well as other legislations and ordinances without any attempt to approach or gain the consent of the Congress or the provincial governments. This inevitably has put up the backs of the Congress and the people generally.

I hope you will keep in touch with me by cable and letter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

56. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Bombay
July 1, 1940

Bebee dear, This is to introduce to you Dwarka Nath Kachru, who has been associated with the office of the States People's Conference at Allahabad for a year. I am sending him to Hyderabad to collect as much material as he can about the state—official papers, administration reports, budgets, historical background, land system, education, political movements &c. It is not his business to interfere in any way with any activity there or to advise anyone. He goes merely to gather facts with the State's Congress people. He is likely to stay in Hyderabad for ten days to a fortnight. He has already studied the subject to some extent—not much.

I hope you are well now. I was distressed to learn that the sun had proved too strong for you.

I am off to Delhi on a fool's errand.

Love,

Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

57. To Sir Akbar Hydari[1]

Allahabad
October 25, 1940

My dear Sir Akbar,

A distinguished member of the Chinese Government, Mr. Tai Chi Tao, is visiting India soon. He is likely to arrive about the end of this month by air in Calcutta and he intends spending a month in India touring in various places. Mr. Tai is a Minister and is the President of the Examination Yuan, which is one of the important departments of the Chinese Executive Government. I understand that it is his intention to visit, among other places, Ellora and Ajanta. He is a well-known Buddhist scholar. His visit is partly due to his desire to see various places in India connected historically and culturally with the Buddhist faith.

I would be very grateful to you if the Hyderabad Government accords to President Tai Chi Tao every facility and help during his visit to Ellora and Ajanta. He is likely to be accompanied by some members of his staff as well as Professor Tan Yun-Shan of the Cheena Bhawan, Visva-Bharati. He does not himself know English but he will have interpreters.

If I may suggest it without impropriety, a letter of invitation on your part might be sent to President Tai Chi Tao or, preferably, to the Chinese Consul-General in Calcutta, Mr. C. C Huang, whose address is the Consulate General of the Republic of China, Calcutta

Of course no such letter need be sent if you think otherwise.

I do not know the exact programme of President Tai Chi Tao's tour As soon as this is decided, the Chinese Consul General can inform you.

With all good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L

58. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

15-12-40

Bebee, I have written long notes of instructions. Please go through them and see that Upadhyaya carries out the directions given

1 Padmaja Naidu Papers, N M M L This letter was written from Dehra Dun Jail

There is a letter for Nan which should be given to her.

Please ask Upadhyaya to send me by money order Rs. 25/-. Also to send me another Rs. 25 in the first week of January—by the 10th or so.

Among the books that might be sent to me some time later are some travel books—Peter Fleming's and on Siam & Cambodia & which are at the bottom of the northern shelves in my room. Also Edward Thompson's poems. Also Dewey's books (the American philosopher). They are spread out somewhere. I had specially asked for *I Believe*, a symposium. This has not come.

It was good to see you. Keep growing younger & thus make up for those who grow older.

Love,

Jawahar

GLOSSARY

Alphonsos	variety of mangoes
Apbhransh	corrupted form of a word
Ata	flour
Bagh	garden
Bhadon	sixth month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to August-September
Chota	younger
Darvesh	dervish
Durian	fruit grown in South East Asia
Elachi	cardamom
Gulmohar	a large tree with red flowers
Id-ul-Fitr	Muslim festival on the second day of the new moon after Ramzan, a month during which Muslims fast
Janmapatra	horoscope
Jyestha	third month of the Hindu calendar corresponding to June
Ka'ba	a place of Muslim pilgrimage in Mecca
Laddu	a sweet shaped like a ball
Laung	clove
Maktab	Urdu school
Malida	a variety of woollen cloth made in Kashmir
Mamu	mother's brother
Masi	mother's sister
Math	Hindu monastery
Murti	idol
Mushaira	symposium of Urdu poets
Nani	mother's mother
Nyaya	Hindu system of logic
Pandal	a big tent for temporary use
Pashmina	cloth made of soft fine wool
Pera	a kind of sweetmeat made of milk
Ram Naumi	birthday of Rama
Samosa	a triangular shaped stuffed fried snack
Saqi	one who serves wine
Shalwar	a pair of loose trousers worn by women
Tai	wife of father's elder brother
Yojana	a measure of distance, roughly five to nine miles

INDEX

(Biographical footnotes are italicized)

Abbas, Khwaja Ahmad, 415, 438, 460, 477
Abbottabad, 85, 95
A B.C. *of Psychology* (Charles Kay Ogden), 605
Abdullah, Sheikh Muhammad, 330, 617
Abhayanandji, Swami, 241
Abrahams, Peter, 125
Abul Hasan, 437–438, 479
Abyssinia—*see* Ethiopia
Achimota College (Ghana), 389
Adams, James Truslow, 155 & fn
Adelphi, 589
Adil Shah, Ali, 183 fn
Administrative Reforms Commission, 5 fn
Advaita Ashram (Mayavati), 609
A E—*see* Russell, George William
Aeneid (Virgil), 79
Aeschylus, 79
African campaign, 146, 148
Aga Khan Palace (Pune), 6 fn, 7 fn, 12 fn, 214 fn, 360, 381 fn, 434 fn
Agarwal, Shriman Narayan, 576
Agarwala, Ratish Mohan, 453
Agnes (*nurse*), 451
Agra, 319, 451, 618 fn, 666, 668
Agraharam, 659
Agrawal, Rai Amarnath, 623 & *fn*
Ahalya Bai of Indore, 139 & *fn*
Ahmadnagar, 7, 8, 214, 394, 397–398, 502, 512, 514, 524, 548, 550, 581, 598, 601, 631
Ahmadnagar Fort, 1 & fn, 4 fn, 7–8, 9 fn, 28, 39, 50, 56, 93, 143, 175, 183 fn, 212, 297, 366–367, 370 fn, 371, 376, 380–382, 410, 417, 422, 426, 468, 470, 480, 487 fn, 493, 495–496, 548, 555–556, 558, 570, 581, 591, 593–594, 598–602, 604, 607–611, 618, 626, 636
Ahmedabad, 12 & fn
Air France, 714
Ajanta, 664–665, 669, 687–688, 693, 719
Ajwani, L H., 305, 508, 541
Akbar, (emperor), 78, 104, 122 fn, 224, 441
Akhand Hindustan (K M Munshi), 513 & fn
Akola, 644
Akyab, 684
A la recherche du temps perdu (*Remembrance of Things Past* by Marcel Proust), 9 fn, 14
Alaska, 323 fn
Alcestis (Euripides), 31
Alcott, Louisa May, 55 & *fn*
A Leaf in the Storm (Lin Yutang), 77, 79
Alexander, Horace, 137, 554
Alexandra, 706
Algiers, 41 fn
Ali, Ahmad, 287, 415 fn
——, Asghar, 437, 479
——, Sadiq, 599 & fn
——, Salim, 359 & *fn*, 364, 373, 383, 403, 408
——, Shaukat, 692
Aligarh Jail, 197
Aligarh Muslim University, 692
Alipur Jail, 68, 100–101, 568
Allahabad, 10–11, 13, 20, 25, 28, 31, 34, 46, 55, 72, 80, 82–83, 86, 91, 94–96, 113–114, 125, 151, 153, 155, 158–159, 163, 167–168, 170, 176–177,

181, 196, 204, 212, 221, 223, 226–230, 235–236, 238, 240–241, 246, 257, 261–262, 265 fn, 267–268, 270, 272, 274–275, 287–288, 296, 299, 307, 316, 320–321, 330, 335, 339–341, 349, 354, 360, 365, 368–370, 373, 380, 383, 386, 394, 398, 406, 408, 496–497, 504, 509, 512, 517, 520, 449, 457–458, 471, 473, 474 fn, 478–479, 482–484, 487, 489–491, 496–497, 504, 509, 512, 517, 520, 524–526, 528–529, 531, 533–534, 536, 538–539, 541, 549, 560, 563, 567, 583, 585–586, 588, 590–592, 594, 596–600, 603, 604 fn, 607, 609, 612, 615–616, 619, 622, 623 fn, 646, 655, 659, 665, 668, 670–671, 678, 680, 683, 685, 687, 689–690, 693–694, 697, 699, 706, 711, 714, 718

Allahabad Khadi Bhandar, 317

Allahabad Law Journal Press, 395, 471, 541–542

Allahabad Medical Association, 265 fn

Allahabad Municipality, 321 & fn

Allahabad resolution of Congress, 91 fn, 276, 278

Allahabad Roerich Centre, 295

Allahabad University, 320 fn, 536, 605 fn

Allah Bakhsh, 133, 142

Allama Mashriqi—*see* Khan, Inayatullah

Allen and Unwin Ltd. (London), 168, 677

Allenby: A Study in Greatness (A.P. Wavell), 185 fn, 304

Allenby in Egypt (A.P. Wavell), 185 fn, 304, 559, 589

Allenby, Lord, 364

Allied powers, 3 fn, 41 fn, 91 fn, 115 fn, 161 fn, 186, 408 fn, 445 fn

All India Congress Committee, 2–3, 6 fn, 58, 91, 108, 147 fn, 194 fn, 215 fn, 457, 532, 580, 583–584, 672, 674, 689, 711, 715

All India Convention of Congress Legislators (Delhi), 670 fn, 672, 674

All India Muslim League—*see* Muslim League

All India Nationalist Muslims Conference, 527 fn.

All India Spinners Association (Srinagar), 316

All India States' People's Conference, 285 fn

All India Trade Union Congress, 216 fn

All India Women's Conference, 200 fn, 241 & fn, 326

All Men Are Brothers (Shui hu Chuan by Shih Nai-an), 22 & fn, 77, 79

All Our Tomorrows (Douglas Reed), 79

All Parties Committee's Report—*see* Nehru Report

All Party Leaders Conference, 70 fn

All Souls College (Oxford), 203

Almora, 142 fn, 529, 538–541 & fn, 544, 611, 630, 634, 636, 638

Almora Jail, 137, 539, 549, 623–624, 632–634, 637–638

Almora Municipal Board, 538 fn

Alsace–Lorraine, 29 fn

Alum, Begam, 328

Alva, Joachim, 180

Amarnath (Kashmir), 631

Ambalal Library, 336

Ambassador Dodd's Diary (William E. Dodd Jr. and Martha Dodd, ed.), 194, 230

Amber Fort, 304

Amerasia, 188, 229, 330, 388, 441

American Leviathan: The Republic in the Machine Age (Charles & Mary Beard), 300 & fn

American Relief India Inc. (U.S.A.), 313 fn

American Reports, 553

America Speaks (Sir Philip Hamilton Gibbs), 230

Amery, L. S., 12 fn, 60, 89 fn, 98 fn, 136, 146, 203, 218, 313 & fn, 456 fn, 487 fn, 625

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 161, 370, 394, 406, 495, 497–498, 596

Anakapalle, 659

Anand Bhawan (Allahabad), 9–10, 12, 15, 21, 24, 28, 31–33, 35 fn, 43, 45–46, 51, 64, 73, 75–76, 80, 82–83, 94, 96–97, 102, 105, 108–109, 126, 142, 144–145, 147, 149, 152–153, 161 fn, 164–165, 181, 188, 221, 236, 240 fn,

246 fn, 253, 261, 265 & fn, 269–270, 272–274, 278, 287–288, 294–295, 301, *310*, *317*, *333–335*, *346–347*, *363*, 368 fn–369, *371*, *380*, *386*, *388*, *390*, 393, 398, 414, 422, 430, 440, 445, 454, 478, 489–492, 504, 524, 531, 551–553, *556*, *560*, *565*, *590*, *606*, 609, 631, 638, 646
Anderson, H. Fortes, 559, 576
Andhra Pradesh, 654 fn, 657, 660
Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, 12, 60
And One Did Not Come Back (K. A. Abbas), 438, *460*, *474*
Aney, M.S., 29 & fn
Anis, Babar Ali, 163 & *fn*, 164 fn
Anna Karenina (Leo Tolstoy), 504, 508, 526, 536, 550, 555
Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan (James Tod), 344 & fn, 346, 385, 403
Ansari, Shaukat, 526–527 & fn, 559
——, Zohra, 693
Anthology of Modern Verse (Sir A. Methuen), 111
Anushilan Party, 354 fn
Apology (Plato), 500
Approach to Vedanta (Christopher Isherwood), 633 fn
Arabian Sea, *625*
Arctic region, *564*
Ariel (Andre Maurois), 52
Arnstarchi, F E., 397
Aristotle, *23*, *416–417*
Arnold, Sir Edwin, 477
Aronson, Alexander, *576*
Arrival & Departure (Arthur Koestler), 363, 452
Arthur Road Prison (Bombay), 6 fn, 178
Art of Seeing (Aldous Huxley), 176
Arundale, G S., 543 & *fn*
Aryanayakam, E.W., 440 & fn
Asaf Ali, *1*, *5*, *15*, *29*, *41*, *49*, *68–69*, 89, 99, 101, 112, 115, 130, 142, 150, 155, 174–175, 179, 187, 261, 291–292, 364, 367, 373, 379, 399, 476, 507, 521, 531, 547, 556, 568, 593, 598, 630
——, Aruna, 6, 49 & fn, 68 & fn, 101, 111
Ashoka, (emperor), *476*
Ashvaghosa, *263–264*, *282*
Asia, 161, 172, 188, 316, 368, 386, 404, 441, 461, 540 fn, 596
Asi, Abdul Bari, *327 & fn*
Asia & Democracy (Pearl Buck), 323
Assam, 284 fn, 319–320, 382, 402, 423, 585, 689–691, 694, 717
Assam Oil Company (Digboi), *694*
Associated Press, 581
Atal, Madan, 172, 181, 327, 394, 414, *474*, *529*, *541*, *551*, *557*
Athenison, A., 463
Athens, 74 & fn, 159 fn
Atish, Haider Ali, 168 & *fn*, 169 fn, *264 fn*, 305 & *fn*, 317, 318 fn
Atlantic Charter, 202 & fn
Atlantic City, 314 fn
Attlee, Clement, *89 fn*, *98 fn*
August disturbances, 10 fn, 12 fn, 146
August movement, 11 fn, 12 fn, 25 fn, 87 fn, 134 fn, 216 fn
August Resolution, 2 fn–3, 9 fn, 60–61, 66, 81 fn, 91, 184–185 & fn, 194 & fn, 200, 213, 215 fn, 276, 278, 280, 341 fn, 382, 424 & fn, 434 fn, 494 fn
Aundh, 708
Aurangzeb, 666
Aurobindo Ashram (Pondicherry), 653 & fn
Aurobindo, Sri, 111, 130–131, 265, 385, *477*, *653 fn*, *658*, *671*
Auroville, 653 fn
Australia, *159*, *178*, *256*, *608 fn*
Austria, *615*, *697 fn*
Autobiography (Benjamin Franklin), 77, 79
Autobiography (Benvenuto Cellini), *79*
Autobiography (Jawaharlal Nehru), 168, 266, 359, 397, 400, 405, 411, 423, 427, 460, 464 & fn, 474, 643, 647, 677
Autocrat of the Breakfast Table (O.W. Holmes), *79*
A Week with Gandhi (Louis Fischer), 404, 408, 415, 453
Axis powers, *2*, *3 fn*, *195*, *323 fn*

Ayodhya, 264
Azad, Abul Kalam, 1, 5–9 & fn, 15, 18, 20, 22, 29, 38–40, 47, 50, 62, 81, 84, 89–92, 99, 101–102, 105–106, 112, 118–119, 122, 128, 131, 133, 138, 140, 145, 150, 184–185, 211-212, 262, 275–280, 290–292, 296–297, 306, 311, 316, 328, 367, 375, 382, 398, 402, 408, 445, 474, 476, 483, 486, 494, 496 & fn, 499–500, 505–506, 510–511, 521, 523, 531-532, 536, 543, 547, 556–557, 568, 579–586, 593, 595, 598, 605, 608
——, Mohamad Hussain, 122 *fn*
Aztec civilization, 589

Babar, 205
Bachhraj & Company (Bombay), 18, 30, 47, 167, 189, 192, 226, 286, 296, 322, 326, 351, 362, 369–370, 415, 422, 427, 435–436, 450, 469, 474, 480, 482, 509, 542, 578, 589, 604
Badakhshan, 260 fn
Badenweiler, 70, 119, 171, 464
Badshah Khan—*see* Khan, Abdul Ghaffar
Bagh-o-Bahar (Mir Amman), 180
Bahadur Shah, 52–54, 211
Bairam Khan, 224
Bajaj, Jamnalal, 285 fn, 422, 672, 709–710
——, Kamalnayan, 285 & *fn*, 415
Balak Ram, 487
Balasundar Amal, 87 & fn
Baldwin, Stanley, 668 & fn
Baljipeth, 660
Ballad and the Source (Rosamond Lehmann), 557
Balrampur Hospital (Lucknow), 189, 303
Bamrauli Airport, 678
Banabhatta, 43 & fn
Banaras Conspiracy Case, 618 fn
Banaras Hindu University, 553
Banerji, Pumima (Nora), 96, 98, 105, 137, 144, 147, 163, 192, 310
Bangalore, 536
Banking & Finance in China (Frank M. Tamagna), 230
Bansi, 479
Barcelona, 237, 700
Bardoli, 457
Bardoloi, Gopinath, 423
Bareilly, 529, 560, 597, 600–601, 629, 632
Bareilly Jail, 119, 125, 440 fn, 568, 575, 578, 594, 598–602, 604, 623, 626, 632–637
Batas, 534, 703
Battle Hymn of China (Agnes Smedley), 401, 438, 508, 589
Baz Bahadur, 519
Beard, Charles, 194 & fn, 300
——, Mary, 194 & fn, 300
Beatrice the Ballerina (Ivan Vassilovitch), 452–453
Beautiful Valleys of Kashmir, 545
Beethoven, Ludwig van, 95, 220, 661 & fn
Beggar my Neighbour (Lionel Fielden), 305
Behari, 437, 479
Belgaum Central Prison, 8 fn
Belgium, 522 & fn, 616
Belur Math, 241, 541
Benares (Banaras)—*see* Varanasi
Benares the Sacred City (E.B. Havell), 300 fn
Bengal, 201 & fn, 213, 226, 228, 234–235 & fn, 241–245, 248, 260–261, 264, 275–276, 283, 284 fn, 306, 311, 313 & fn, 314 fn, 322, 326, 333, 353, 449, 608 & fn, 658, 670, 717
B.N.W. Railway, 168, 604
Ben-Shalom, Avraham, 230
Benton, William, 474 & *fn*, 606
Bentwich, Norman De Mattos, 79
Bergh, George Van den, 605
Berhampur Jail, 344, 568
Berlin, 396, 401 fn, 615–616, 661
Bernal, J.D., 172 & fn
Besant, Annie, 543
Bessie, Alvah, 230
Best of All Possible Worlds (Voltaire), 125, 168
Best Stories of Modern Bengal (translated by Nilima Devi), 554
Betrayal of Freedom (Y.G. Krishna-

murti), 339 fn
Between the Acts (Virginia Woolf), 103
Between Two Worlds (Upton Sinclair), 79, 136 fn
Bex, 396
Bhabha, Homi J, 536 & *fn*
Bhagavad Gita (translated by Swami Nikhilananda), 541, 562
Bhandari, M G., 9–10, 145, 150, 388, 416
Bharatananda, Swami—see Friedman, Maurice
Bhargava, Gopi Chand, 200
Bharucha, Pheroze B., 171 & fn, 328, 385, 620
Bhasa, 263 & *fn*
Bhat, Rudra Dat, 540 & *fn*
Bhavabhuti, 105, 263 & fn
Bhim Tal, 539
Bhola, 437, 479
Bhopal, 328, 643
Bhowali, 70, 167, 440
Bhusaval, 644
Bhuvaneshwar, 656
Bibi Amma, 628
Bible, 331, 351
Bible for Today (John F. Stirling, ed.), 305
Bihar, 11, 48 fn, 68, 203 & *fn*, 213, 488, 665
Bihar Constructive Workers' Conference, 569 fn
Bijapur, 183 fn
Bijnor, 692
Binda, 479
Bird, Alice—*see* Smedley, Agnes
Birla, G.D., 336, 353, 419
Bjornson, B, 79
Blacks and Tans, 63 fn
Blum, Leon, 688, 704 fn
Blunt, W S, 291
Boan Hill (Oxford), 310
Bobbili, 659–660
Bodhisattva, 665, 669, 688
Bodmer, Frederick, 404 fn, 407, 480
Bolam (S P.), 632, 634
Bombay, 2–3, 4 fn–7 & fn, 9 fn–10, 25, 30–31, 34, 37, 42–44, 46, 54 & fn, 61, 71–73, 75–76, 82–83, 85–86, 94–96, 101–103, 105, 116, 118, 121–122, 126, 145, 157, 159, 167–168, 170–171 & fn, 174–175, 178, 189, 192, 195, 198–199 & fn, 203–205, 208–209, 211–212 & fn, 214 fn–215, 219, 223, 225, 227, 229, 241, 245, 248, 266, 274–275, 288, 293, 297, 299, 304, 310, 316, 322, 329, 331–332, 335–336, 339, 349, 354, 358, 360, 362–363, 365, 367, 370–371, 373, 378 & fn, 381 fn, 383–386, 391, 393–394, 396, 399, 402–404, 406–408, 411–412, 419, 428, 431, 435, 439–441, 444, 446, 448, 452–453, 457–458, 460–461, 462 fn, 465–468, 471–472, 478–479 & *fn*, 483–484, 486–488, 490, 492, 497, 506–507, 510–511, 517–518, 520, 525, 531, 533, 538, 543, 546, 548, 574, 581, 598, 604–605, 610–611, 621, 623, 630–631, 638–639, 645–648, 650–651, 669–670, 672, 687, 692, 700, 706, 708, 710
Bombay Chronicle, 9, 80, 132, 161
Bombay Legislative Assembly, 199 *fn*
Book of Russian Verse (C.M. Bowra, ed.), 408
Book on Indian Birds (Salim Ali), 364, 383, 403, 408
Book on Nature Cure (Morarji Desai), 5 fn
Borderline Russia (H Fortes Anderson), 559, 576
Borodin, George, 559
Bose, Subhas Chandra, 691, 695–696, 711–712
Bottomley, Gordon, 302 & *fn*
Bowra, C M., 408
Bradley, A C., 19 & fn
Brahmaputra Valley, 693
Brain of India (Aurobindo Ghose), 385 & fn
Brazil, 257
Breasted, J.H, 305
Brelvi, S.A., 44
Brewster, Achsah Barlow, 541 & fn
——, Earl H, 541 & fn
British Broadcasting Corporation, 364, 427

Broch, Theodor, 452
Broken Silence (Mirza Ahmad Sohrab), 79
Bromfield, Louis, 103, 111 & *fn*
Brook, Theodor, 298
Browden, Earl, 499
Brussels Conference—*see* International Congress against Imperialism
Buck, Pearl, 22, 55, 64, 230, 247, 298, 323 & fn, 334
Budapest, 616, 702
Buddha, Gautama, 96–97 fn, 137, 282 & fn, 338, 470, 476, 627, 629, 661–662, 668
Buddhacharita (Ashvaghosa), 282
Buddhi Lal, 95, 265 & fn
Bulandshahr, 618 fn
Bulgaria, 41 fn, 515, 517, 571, 576, 578
Bunyan, John, 79
Burchett, W.G., 452
Burma, 3 & fn, 146 & fn, 148, 162, 278, 382, 681–683 & fn, 686
Burmese Silver (Edward Thompson), 512, 541
Burmingham, 137
Bushido by Foreign Writers, 576
Buxar, 449
Byron (Andre Maurois), 52
Byron, George Gordon, 52

Cairo, 123, 506, 576, 614
Calcutta, 39 fn–40, 55, 101, 139 fn, 177, 201–202, 234 fn, 241, 243 & fn, 313 & fn, 349, 354 fn, 358, 370, 406, 433, 454, 462–463, 490, 524, 538, 608, 643, 655–657, 658 fn, 660, 662, 669, 680, 684, 687, 689, 691, 697, 714, 719
——, Congress session at, 456
Calcutta Corporation, 201 & fn
Calcutta University, 320 fn, 433, 542
Calcutta University College of Science, 320
Calicut, 423
Call No Man Happy (Andre Maurois), 334, 385
Call of Badrinath (G.P. Nautiyal), 554
Cambodia, 720
Cambridge, 14, 106, 126 fn, 231, 293, 355, 688
Campion, Sidney R., 334
Canada, 313
Cannanore, 669
Canterbury, Dean of, 559
Cape Comorin—*see* Kanyakumari
Captain, Goshiben (Psyche), 18–19, 29–30, 35, 45, 85, 173–174, 176 & fn, 178, 180, 189, 191–192, 257, 262–263, 265, 268, 270, 272, 299–301, 346, 376, 384, 412, 418, 433, 592
——, Maneckji Sorabji (Mac), 176 & fn
——, Nargis (Noorie), 176, 178 & fn, 183, 419, 425, 433
Carroll, Lewis, 45, 84, 103
Casey, R.G., baron, 608 & *fn*
Cassius, 438, 443
Caucasus, 195 fn, 616
Cawnpore—*see* Kanpur
Cellini, Benvenuto, 79
Central Legislative Assembly, 29 fn, 57, 70 fn, 89, 219 fn, 341, 370 fn, 379, 380 fn–381 & fn, 456 fn, 523, 558, 563, 566–567
Cervantes, Miguel de, 103 fn
Ceylon—*see* Sri Lanka
Chak, Janki Nath, 628
Chakravarti, Amiya, 170
Chalapathi Rau, M., 464 & fn
Chamanlal, Dewan, 200, 563 fn
Chamberlain, Neville, 61, 711
Chand Bibi, 183, 366, 611
Chandra Dat, 540
Chandragupta, 54 fn
Chandra, Ramesh, 197
Chapra, 102, 168, 295, 440
Chase, C.T., 605
Chashme Shahi (Srinagar), 619–620, 628
Chatterji, Sarat Chandra, 589
Chattopadhyaya, Jagadish Chandra, 452
——, Virendranath, 401 fn
Chaudhri, Kumar, 320 & *fn*
Chauri Chaura, 99
Cheena Bhawan (Vishva-Bharati), 719
Chekhov, A., 125

Chengiz Khan, 87, 97
Chengtu, 96
Chiang Kai shek, 31 *fn*, 37–38, 40 & *fn*, 66 *fn*, 87–88, 100, 457
——, Madame, 36, 37 fn, 40, 44, 87–88, 114–115 & fn, 314 fn, 457, 522
Chiang Yee, 125
Chicago, 401, 614
Childe, Vere Gordon, 554
Children of the Soviet Arctic (Tikhov Semushkin), 559
Chimur, 198 & fn
China, 2, 9 fn, 27, 32, 37, 40, 48, 66 fn, 77 fn, 84, 87, 91, 140, 143, 187, 207, 230 fn, 237, 249, 258–259, 263, 270, 300–301, 312, 314 & *fn*, 323 fn, 372, 377, 401 *fn*, 430 *fn*, 438, 450, 475–476, 522, 557, 616, 719
China Builds for Democracy (Nym Wales), 64 & fn, 116
China Handbook (Chinese Ministry of Information), 230, 545
Chinchwad, 7 fn
Chinese Destinies (Agnes Smedley), 401 *fn*
Chinese Educational Mission, 86, 96
Chinese Medical Mission, 474
Chitnis, S L., 409 & fn, 423
Chittagong, 684
Chittor, 344
Chodavaram, 659
Chopra, Prakash, 161 fn
Chota Nagpur, 295
Christa Seva Sangha, 137 fn
Chungking, 236–237, 249, 616
Chungking Diary (D F. Karaka), 452
Churchill, Sir Winston, 10 & fn, 29 & fn, 87, 186, 311, 323, 429 & fn, 432, 456 *fn*, 624 *fn*–625, 714
Citrine, Sir *Walter*, 546 & *fn*, 549 & *fn*, 554
City of Fear (Gilbert Frankau), 647 *fn*
Civil & Military Gazette, 218
Civil Hospital (Pune), 161
Cleanliness & Godliness (Reginald Reynolds), 305, 408
Clemens, Samuel Langhorne—*see* Mark Twain
Clyde, David, 97 & fn
Cochin, 201 fn
Collected Poems and Plays (Sri Aurobindo), 265–266
Colombo, 367, 482
Colour Bar (Peter Nielsen), 416, 452
Comite de l'Enfance (Paris), 712
Commission to Study Organization of Peace, 125
Committee for India's Freedom (Washington), 691 fn
Common Sense, 287, 596
Communist literature, 448
Communist Party of India, 70 *fn*, 216 fn, 569, 575, 590
Communists (Indian), 216 & fn, 569–570
Communists (Italian), 522 fn
Como, 617 *fn*
Complete Greek Drama (W J. Oates and E G. O'Neill, ed.), 79
Complete Works (Lewis Carroll), 103
Confessions and Impressions (Ethel Mannin), 421 & fn
Congress, Indian National, 3 & fn, 4 fn–5 & fn, 7 fn, 10 & fn, 12 fn, 25 fn, 29 fn, 48 & fn, 56–62, 66 fn, 70 fn, 81 fn, 89 fn, 90 fn, 91 fn–92, 98 & fn, 100 & fn, 133–134, 153, 161 fn, 184, 196, 198 *fn*–200, 202 fn, 213, 215–216, 252 fn, 273, 276–277, 279–280, 282, 284, 291, 324 & *fn*, 341 *fn*–342, 344, 379, 380 fn, 382, 434 fn, 444, 445 fn, 456, 478, 527 fn, 569–570, 579, 580 fn, 585, 604 *fn*, 638, 647, 652–653, 692, 694, 696, 707–710, 712, 716–718
——, session at Calcutta, 456
——, session at Faizpur, 662–663
——, session at Ramgarh, 457
——, session at Tripuri, 456
——, Allahabad resolution of, 91 fn, 276, 278
——, August (Quit India) resolution of, 2 *fn*–3, 9 *fn*, 60–61, 66, 81 fn, 91, 184–185 & *fn*, 194 & fn, 200, 213, 215 *fn*, 276, 278, 280, 341 fn, 382, 424 & *fn*, 434 *fn*, 494 *fn*
——, *Mysore resolution of*, 456
Congress ministries, 285, 707–708, 710
Congress of Religions (Chicago), 614

Congress Parliamentary Party (Organisation), 5 fn
Congress Working Committee, 1–3, 4 fn–6, 56, 58–59, 62, 64 fn, 68 fn, 90 fn, 115, 131, 280, 297, 342, 370 fn, 456–457, 487 fn, 495 fn, 499, 523 fn, 558 fn, 581 fn, 583–586, 639 & fn, 674, 687, 689, 711–712, 714–716
Conscience of a Nation (G.L. Mehta), 548 fn
Conservatives (British), 186
Constantinople—*see* Istanbul
Cooke and Kelvey (New Delhi), 55
Coorg, 524
Cordoba, 23 & fn
Correspondence with Mr. Gandhi, 452, 559
Cot, Pierre, 704 & *fn*
Council of States, 623 fn
Coxhill (District Magistrate), 600, 632
C.R. formula, 580
Cripps Mission, 40 fn
Cripps offer, 284 fn, 341 fn, 639 fn
Cripps, Sir Stafford, 29, 100, 174, 311 & fn, 429, 457, 580, 700, 706
Crito (Plato), 500
Croce, Benedetto, 379 & fn, 386, 452–453
Crow, Carl, 407, 452
Crusades, 104
Curie, Eve, 430 & *fn*, 434, 438, 440, 443, 453
——, Marie, 430 fn
Current, 416 fn
Current History, 128, 132
Cuttack, 568
Czechoslovakia, 615, 701–705
Czernin, Ferdinand, 103

Dacca Central Jail, 354
Dahlberg, Edward, 79
——, G., 79
Daily Chronicle, 91 fn
Dalal, A.R., 336
Dal Lake (Srinagar), 619–620, 628, 631
d'Alvis, E.H., 661 fn
Dandi March, 147 fn, 285 fn
Dara Shikoh, 666
Dard, Mir, 309 & *fn*, 384 & fn
Dark Testament (Peter Abrahams), 125
Darlan, Jean Francois, 41 & *fn*
Darrow, Karl Kelchner, 605
Dartington Hall (England), 420
Das, Bishwanath, 344
——, C.R., 268 fn
——, Swarupa (Buchi), 268 & fn
Das Gupta (publisher), 433
Dastur, Naju, 514 & fn
Datadin, 246, 479
Davies, Joseph E., 460 fn, 508, 576
Dawn of Conscience (J.H. Breasted), 305
Dayanand and the Indian Problem (C. Parameswaran), 499
Day of the Saxon (Homer Lea), 77, 79
D-Day (John Gunther), 527 & fn, 541
Death of the Moth (Virginia Woolf), 245
Deep Furrows (Avraham Ben-Shalom), 230
Defence of India Act, 372–373
Defence of India Rules, 4 & fn, 12 fn, 124 fn, 201, 213, 218 fn, 248, 354, 372–373, 435, 440 fn
Dehra Dun, 15, 21, 68, 82, 122, 231, 239, 301, 385, 544, 546, 568, 648
Dehra Dun Jail, 29, 62, 114, 128, 137, 174, 180, 252, 262, 266, 285, 290, 296, 300, 319, 336, 382, 384, 401–403, 405, 418, 462, 464, 545–546, 575, 578, 623
de la Mare, Walter, 448, 655 fn
De Lamartine, Alphonse, 308 fn
Delhi, 25 fn, 53 fn–54, 64, 133, 138, 147 fn, 174, 193, 196 & fn, 204, 207–208, 211, 221, 225, 234 fn, 237–238 & fn, 288, 309, 341, 373, 381, 399, 442–443, 568, 615, 639, 644, 670–671, 673, 674 fn–676 & fn, 718
Delhi Fort, 213
Delhi Municipal Committee, 674 fn
Deliverance (Sarat Chandra Chatterji), 589
de Mauny, Count, 482
de Musset, Alfred, 698
Deo, Shanker Rao, 1, 7–8, 41, 50, 90, 101, 291–292, 568–570, 593, 598, 608
——, Swami Sant, 628

Desai, Bhulabhai, 81 fn, 380 fn, 532, 546 & fn
——, Mahadeva, 5, 7 fn, 12 & fn, 400, 406
——, Morarji, 5 & fn
De St. Exupery, Antoine, 364 fn
De Silva, Charles Lambert Albert, 541
Destination Chungking (Han Suyin), 236, 257, 334
Dewey, John, 147 & fn, 720
Dhar, Avtar, 14 fn
Dial House (Surrey), 389
Dictionary of Dates (Joseph Hayden), 116
Diderot, Denis, 22
Digboi, 717
Din-e Ilahi, 104
Discovery of India (Jawaharlal Nehru), 401, 480, 521, 531, 570
Divide and Quit (Penderel Moon), 200 fn
Dodd, Martha, 194 fn
——, William Edward, 194 & fn
——, William E. Jr., 194 fn
Dohad, 477
Dominion Status, 590 fn
Donets basin, 195 fn
Don Quixote (Cervantes), 103
Doon School (Dehra Dun), 374–375, 392
Do These Bones Live (Edward Dahlberg), 79
Downfall (Douglas Reed), 307, 339
Dragon's Teeth (Upton Sinclair), 136–137
Dresden, 616
Dublin, 63 fn, 197 fn
Dum Dum (John Kendall), 302
Durbar i Akbari (Mohamad Hussain Azad), 122
Dutch Indies, 3 fn

East & West (R. Guenon), 79
Easter Rising (Ireland), 197
East India Company, 138, 181
E.I. Railway, 604
East Pakistan, 235 fn
Ecole International (Geneva), 396
Economic Development of the Netherland Indies (Jan Otto Marius Brock), 230
Economics and Theosophy (C. Jinarajadasa), 559, 576
Eddington, Sir A., 230
Edib, Halide, 614
Education, Politics & War (S Radha Krishnan), 545
Egypt, 691 fn
Ehrenburg, Ilya, 288 & fn, 299, 304, 408, 452
Eiffel Tower (Paris), 493, 525
Einstein, A., 449
Eisenhower, Dwight David, 617 fn
Ellora, 719
Elwin, Verrier, 137 & fn
England, 2–3, 25, 40 fn–41, 47, 59, 63 fn, 68, 81 fn, 137 fn, 168, 181, 186, 189, 195, 210, 239, 259, 275, 283, 301, 305, 311–314, 323 & fn, 356, 363, 374, 379, 389–390, 399, 405, 417, 429, 455 fn, 463 & fn, 469, 509 & fn, 522, 580 fn, 612, 624–625 & fn, 627, 668 fn, 675, 701–702, 715
English Spirit (A.L. Rowse), 559
Epic of America (James Truslow Adams), 155
Epstein, Sir Jacob, 79
Escape With Me! (Edith Sitwell), 302
Essays of Elia (Charles Lamb), 484
Essays on the Gita (Aurobindo Ghose), 111, 130
Etah, 205
Ethics of Buddhism (Shundo Tachibana), 545
Ethiopia, 237
Euripides, 19 & fn, 31 fn
European Association, 201
Europe Going, Going, Gone! (Ferdinand Czermin), 103
Everybody's Political What's What (Bernard Shaw), 526–527, 589
Everyday Gardening in India (E W Grindal), 336
Everyman's Library, 9, 15, 43, 155–156
Experimental Logic (John Dewey), 147 fn

Faizpur, 666
——, Congress session at, 662–663

Fall of Constantinople (John Nill), 79
Fall of Paris (Ilya Ehrenburg), 288 & fn, 299
Farewell Romance (Gilbert Frankau), 647 fn
Fatehabad, 666
Faust (Goethe), 231, 257
Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, 70 fn
Ferodia, 514
Ferozabad, 618 fn
Fielden, Lionel, 305
Fiery Stronghold (Nicholas Konstantin Roerich), 302
Finance Commission, 219 fn
Finland Unmasked (Otto Vilhelm Kuusinen), 576
Fischer, Louis, 161 & fn, 247, 401, 404 fn, 408, 415, 453
Five Dialogues (Plato), 125
Fleming, Peter, 720
Foot, A.E., 374
Foreign Affairs, 188, 388, 404, 441, 461, 606
Forest Research Institute (Dehra Dun), 231
Forster, E.M., 126 & fn
Fortune, 161, 188, 368, 386, 435, 441, 606
For Whom the Bell Tolls (Ernest Hemingway), 461, 477, 527
Fountain (Charles Morgan), 293 fn
Four Essential Doctrines of Buddhism (Charles Lambert Albert De Silva), 541
Four Freedoms, 202
France, 22, 29 fn, 41, 59, 255, 295, 372, 429, 431, 482, 517, 522, 535 fn, 626, 702
France Fights for Freedom, 499
Francklin, W., 138–139
Franco, General Francisco, 522 fn
Frankau, Gilbert, 647 & *fn*
Franklin, Benjamin, 77 & *fn*, 79
Fraser, A.G., 367, 385, 389, 400
Free German Committee (Moscow), 195 & fn
Free World, 388
French Committee of National Liberation, 429 fn
French Encyclopaedists, 22
French Revolution, 210
Friedman, Maurice (Swami Bharatananda), 3 & fn
Friends' Hospital (Itarsi), 449
From Peace Front to People's War, 499
From Wrong Angles (G.L. Mehta), 548 fn
Frontiers of Science (C.T. Chase), 605
Frontier Speaks (Mohammad Yunus), 159 & fn
Future of India (Penderel Moon), 557
Fyzabad, 105, 154, 190, 192
Fyzabad Jail, 190 fn

Gajapatinagaram, 659
Gandhi, Feroze, 4–5, 10 & fn, 16, 20, 26, 54, 73–76, 95–96, 105, 126 fn, 129, 135, 154, 157, 160, 188, 190–194, 204, 208, 212, 222, 228–229, 235–236 & fn, 240, 267, 272, 293, 304–305, 308, 310, 318, 329–332, 336, 350, 358, 362, 364, 367–368, 371, 373, 386, 389, 398, 413–414, 436, 438, 440–441, 445, 460–461, 463 & fn, 467, 471, 473–474, 476, 479, 489, 491, 505, 509, 518, 526, 531, 533, 536, 541, 546, 553, 582, 599–600, 604, 606–607, 609, 612, 616, 631
——, Indira, 4–6, 9–11, 13, 17, 20, 24–26, 29, 34, 42–43, 45–46, 48, 50, 56, 63–64 & fn, 69, 71, 75–76, 80–82, 85–86, 93–94, 97–98, 102, 106, 108, 113–114, 116, 121–122, 124–125, 129–130, 132, 134, 140–142, 144, 146, 149–150, 153–155, 158–159, 162, 165, 167, 170, 174–175, 178–179, 186–187, 191, 198, 203, 208, 212, 219, 223, 225, 228–229, 235–236, 239, 241, 244–245, 249, 252, 255, 257, 260–261, 265, 268–270, 272–274, 285–287, 292, 300, 303, 306–307, 310, 314, 319, 324, 329, 331–333, 335, 337, 339–340, 345, 349, 352, 356, 360–361, 365, 369, 373, 378, 380, 383, 388–389, 393, 397, 403, 407, 410–412, 415, 419, 425, 430–431, 435, 439, 442–444, 446, 448, 452, 456–457, 459, 462–463, 466, 468–472, 475, 478, 480–481, 483,

484, 487, 489–490, 496–497, 501, 503–505, 508, 512, 516–517, 520, 523–525, 528, 530, 532–533, 537, 544, 548, 551, 557–558, 562, 566, 570–571, 574, 579, 581, 588, 592, 594–595, 598–600, 602, 605, 607, 612, 615, 618, 621, 625, 627, 631, 633, 635–636, 639, 672, 675, 680–684, 687, 699, 701–703, 705
——, Kanu Narandas, 342 & *fn*
——, Kasturba, 6 & fn, 342, 360, 406
——, Mahatma, 2–3 & *fn*, 4 *fn*–7 & *fn*, 19, 39, 48, 56–58 & fn, 61–63, 65, 66 fn–71, 75, 81 & *fn*, 86, 89 fn–93, 98 fn, 100–101, 107 & fn, 115 & fn, 121, 122 fn, 131, 133, 137 fn, 154 & fn, 175, 183–185 & fn, 191, 194, 203, 213–214, 215 fn, 217, 275, 277–280, 282, 285, 297, 324 & fn, 341 fn-342 & fn, 360, 381 & fn, 388, 401–402, 404 fn, 406–407 & fn, 408 fn, 410–411, 424 & fn, 428–429, 434 & fn, 438–439, 440 fn, 442–446, 455–457, 462 & fn, 464 & fn, 472, 478–479, 486–487, 491, 494–495 & *fn*, 500, 504 & fn, 523, 527 fn, 535 & fn, 541, 546 fn, 580, 583–585, 639, 691, 707
——, Rajiva, 516–517, 520–521, 524, 526, 528, 530–531, 533, 537–540, 546, 550–552, 556, 558, 562–563, 570–571, 574–575, 582, 588, 603–605, 610, 615, 618, 621–622, 629, 635
Gandhi and Modern India (Penderel Moon), 200 *fn*
Gandhian Plan of Economic Development for India, (Shriman Narayan Agarwal), 576
Gandhi Ashram (Meerut), 226, 286
Gandhiji—As we Know him (Chandrashankar Shukla), 535 fn
Gandhiji Commemoration Volume, 520, 535
Gandhi Seva Sena, 176 & fn, 514, 518
Ganga, 479
Ganga river, 287
Ganjam, 242 fn
Garden Guide, 111
Gardens of Taprobane (Count de Mauny), 482
Garratt, G.T., 335, 363
Gautama the Enlightened and Other Verses (John Masefield), 302
Gaya, 139 fn, 683
Geneva, 237, 396, 701, 703–704
Genoa, 702
German Conversation and Grammar (Emil Otto), 119 fn
Germany, 119, 194 fn–195, 391, 522, 615–617, 697 fn
Gettysburg, 159
Ghaffar, Abdul, 618, 623, 632
Ghalib, Asadullah Khan, 17, 119 & *fn*, 120 & fn, 128 & fn, 129 fn, 139 & fn, 140 *fn*, 147, 148 *fn*, 152 & *fn*, 160 & fn, 164 & fn, 183 & fn, 190 & fn, 193 & *fn*, 209–210 & *fn*, 232–233 & fn, 246 & fn, 250 & fn, 254 & fn, 271 & *fn*, 289 & fn, 321 & fn, 330 & fn
Ghana, 389
Ghani, Abdul, 454
Ghose, Aurobindo—see Aurobindo, Sri
——, Jamuna, 532 & *fn*
——, Prafulla Chandra, 1 & *fn*, 19, 50, 89, 101, 214, 291–292, 378, 487 *fn*, 523 & fn, 532, 537, 543, 545, 585 fn
Gibbs, Sir Philip Hamilton, 230
Gibran, Khalil, 298, 302, 334, 388 & *fn*, 453
Gilder, M D D, 438
Gita (translated by Christopher Isherwood), 633, 637
Gladiators (Arthur Koestler), 363
Glimpses of World History (Jawaharlal Nehru), 32–33, 44, 55, 105, 128, 132, 170, 264, 301–302, 320, 359, 392, 394, 400, 404, 409 & *fn*, 423, 427, 465, 536, 676, 686, 697
Global War (Edgar Ansel Mowrer and Marthe Rajchman), 545
Glory that was Gurjardesh (K.M. Munshi), 530
Gobi, 263
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 257
Golaganj (Allahabad), 162
Gold Coast—see Ghana
Golden Threshold (Hyderabad), 698
Good Wives (Louisa May Alcott), 64 *fn*
Gorakhpur, 295, 319, 406
Gorakhpur District Congress Committee, 213

Gorakhpur Jail, 325, 382, 384
Government College (Lahore), 122 fn
Government of India Act of 1935, 608 fn
——, Amending Act, 717
——, Amending Bill, 718
Government School of Art (Calcutta), 300 fn
Grain-Standard Labour Money, 545
Grant Medical College (Bombay), 439 fn
Great O'Neill (Sean O'Faolain), 559, 576 & fn, 596
Grecian Isles, 678
Greece, 155, 263, 522
Greek Commonwealth (Sir Alfred Zimmern), 155, 159
Gregory, Lady, 232 fn
Grenfell, David, 714
Grindal, E.W., 336
Growth and Form (Sir D.W. Thompson), 605
Guehenna, 389, 477
Guenon, R., 79
Gujarat, 471, 519, 697
Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee, 6 fn
Gujarat (Punjab), 590
Gulliver's Travels (Jonathan Swift), 79
Gulmarg, 631
Gunther, Frances, 114, 143 & fn, 230, 275, 606
——, John, 527 & fn, 541
Guntur, 654
Gupkar (Srinagar), 619, 627–628
Gupta, Shiva Prasad, 403
Guzder, Nadir, 418 fn–419, 554
——, Mrs. Nadir, 418
Gwalior, 418, 450, 484, 533, 631

Hachett's (London), 256
Hakman's Hotel (Mussoorie), 544
Haldane, C., 79
——, J.B.S., 230
Hali, Altaf Hussain, 173 & *fn*, 222 & fn, 260 & fn, 348 fn
Hallett, M.G., 48 & *fn*
Hamilton's (New Delhi), 55
Handoo, Shrikrishna, 610
Han Suyin, 236, 257, 334
Hari, 14, 46, 160, 222, 240, 253, 286, 301, 370, 479, 560, 563
Harijan, 3 fn, 66 fn, 91, 457, 535 fn, 584
Harrison, Agatha, 168, 198, 203, 221, 245
Harrow, 52, 271, 308, 374, 399, 509, 688
Harsha, 43 fn, 490
Hartland, Barbara, 449
Havell, E.B., 300 & *fn*, 315, 334
Hawaii, 67 fn
Hazaribagh Jail, 252 & fn
Heard, Gerald, 519, 675
Heart of Jade (Salvador de Madariaga), 589
Hemingway, Ernest, 461 *fn*, 477
Heredity & Politics (J.B.S. Haldane), 230
Herring, Robert, 334 fn
Himalayas, 144, 156, 349, 518–519, 538, 637, 706
Hindi Mandir (Allahabad), 222
Hindu, 50, 161, 185 & fn, 203 & fn, 370–371, 394, 406, 596
Hindu Mahasabha, 216–217, 579 fn
Hindu-Muslim Riots (Ratish Mohan Agarwala), 453
Hindus, Maurice, 404 fn, 408
Hindustan Hamara (publishers), 168, 565
Hindustan Times, 248
Hindustani Talimi Sangh (Wardha), 440 fn
Hindusthan Quarterly, 453
Hindusthan Standard, 548
Hirschfield, Magnus, 687
History as the Story of Liberty (Benedetto Croce), 379 & fn, 386, 452
History of Charles XII (Voltaire), 77 & fn, 79
History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU(B), ed.), 559
History of the Reign of Shah Alum (W. Francklin), 138
History of Russia, 302
Hitler, Adolf, 154–155, 391, 615, 617 & fn
Hiuen-tsang, 183 & fn
Hodson, H.V., 203

——, Major, 53 & fn
Hodson's Horse, 53 & fn
Hogben, Lancelot, 22, 79, 128, 257, 368, 404 fn, 426 & fn, 440, 452, 480
Holkar State, 139 fn
Holland, 616
Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 79
Holy Gita (translated by J.J. Pandya), 565
Hong Kong, 67 fn
Hooghly river, 680
Horrabin, J.F., 22, 359, 405, 677
Hossain, Syed, 691 & *fn*
Hot Springs, 525
House of Commons, 10 fn, 60, 89, 98 fn, 136, 146, 198, 203, 429 *fn*, 456, 487 & fn
House of Representatives (U.S.A.), 247 fn
Howrah, 680
Hsiang, S.L., 508
Hsi Yu Chi (*Journey to the West* by Wu Ching-en), 183 fn
Huang, C.C., 719
Huckleberry Finn (Mark Twain), 180
Hugo, 316
Human Situation (W. Macneile Dixon), 180, 536, 559, 562
100 Poems (Edward Thompson), 512
Hungry Bengal (T.K. Dutt), 565
Huq, Fazlul, 235
Husain, Munshi Aijaz, 317
——, Muzaffar, 438, 599
——, Syed Akbar, 173 & *fn*, 264 & *fn*
Hutheesing, Apt, 5, 17, 33, 142, 356, 365, 374, 392, 396, 418, 425, 442, 445, 451, 461, 483–484, 532, 560, 592, 630
——, G.P., 3–5, 17–18, 35, 42, 55, 65, 82, 105, 113, 123, 142, 150–151, 161–162, 165, 170, 175, 179, 198–199, 229, 248, 255, 257, 268, 273, 288, 299, 307, 318, 326, 328, 331, 336, 340, 356, 364–365, 369–370, 372–375, 378, 389–390, 393–394, 412, 418–419, 425, 439, 442–443, 448, 450–452, 461–462, 469, 475, 479, 484–485, 493, 508, 519–520, 528, 533–534, 546, 579, 592–593, 611, 628
——, Harsha, 5, 17, 33, 142, 198, 356, 365, 374, 392, 396, 418, 425, 442, 445, 451, 461, 483–484, 532, 560, 592, 630
——, Krishna, 4, 9–10, 13–17, 19, 25–26, 28, 30, 33–35 & fn, 42–45, 54, 63, 69, 71–75, 80–83, 85–87, 94–96, 102, 105, 111, 113–114, 117–118, 120–121, 123–124, 126, 129–132, 134, 140, 144, 150–151, 159–161, 163–165, 168, 170, 176, 179–180, 188–189, 192, 198, 205, 208, 211, 223, 225–227, 229, 248, 251–252, 255, 257, 262, 268–269, 272–274, 286, 288–289, 295, 298, 300, 304, 306–307, 310, 316, 318, 326, 328, 331–332, 335–336, 339, 346–347, 349, 351–354, 360, 364–365, 369–371, 373–376, 378, 380, 384, 386, 390–392, 394, 396, 411, 417–419, 425, 433, 436, 438, 442, 445–448, 450, 453, 458, 461, 466–468, 470–471, 473–475, 477–479, 482–483, 491–492, 496, 498, 501, 506–509, 513, 518–520, 525–526, 530–532, 534–536, 540, 546, 551, 555, 560, 562–565, 578, 592, 594, 601, 606, 610–612, 616, 628, 630, 632–633, 687
——, Surottambhai, 534
Huxley, Aldous, 176–177, 531 & fn, 609, 675
——, Julian, 302, 497, 508, 559
Hydari, Sir Akbar, 719
Hyderabad, 63, 280, 661, 698 & *fn*, 703, 710, 718–719

Ibarruri, Dolores (La Passionaria), 700
I Believe (*John Dewey*), 720
Ideal & Progress (Aurobindo Ghose), 477
Ideals of Indian Art (E.B. Havell), 300, 334
Iftikharuddin, Mrs Ismet, 193, 288
——, Mian, 193 fn, 200 & fn, 288
Ilahi Baksh, 53
Immortal India (L.H. Ajwani), 305
Imperial Bank (Lahore), 149
Imphal, 382 & *fn*
Incas, 590
Independent, 253, 691 fn

India—an American View (Kate L. Mitchell), 305, 408 & fn, 438, 443, 453
India and the Awakening East (Eleanor Roosevelt), 275 fn
India and China (S. Radhakrishnan), 554
India and the Next War (Agnes Smedley), 401 fn
India League (London), 714
Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries, 548 fn
Indian Civil Service, 200 & fn, 203, 218
Indian Cultural Centre (Almora), 540 fn
Indian Economy during the War (L.C. Jain), 438, 443
Indian Journal of Social Work, 257
I.N.A. Defence Committee, 200 fn
Indian Philosophy (S. Radhakrishnan), 344 & fn
Indian P.E.N., 328 fn
Indian Science Congress, 19, 22
Indian Sculpture and Painting (E.B. Havell), 300 fn
India Office (London), 41
India since Cripps (Horace Alexander), 554
India's Place in Post-War Reconstruction (K.T. Shah), 554
Indigo (Christine Weston), 455, 508
Individual and the Group (B.K. Mullick), 452
Individual & the State (Sampurnanand), 541
Indo-China, 3 fn
Indonesia, 3
Indore, 139 & fn
Indu ne Patra (Letters from a Father to His Daughter by Jawaharlal Nehru), 471 & fn
In My View (Morarji Desai), 5 fn
In Russia Now (Sir Walter Citrine), 546, 549, 554
Insha, Insha-u-llah Khan, 226 & *fn*, 227 fn
Interglossa (L. Hogben), 426, 452, 480
International Book Depot (Pune), 363, 441
International Conference on Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy (Geneva), 536 fn
International Congress against Imperialism (Brussels), 390
International Labour Organisation, 453, 499
I.L.O. Review, 453
International Peace Campaign (London), 712 & fn
Interviewing Japan (Adrienne Moore), 230
Introducing India (L.H. Ajwani), 508, 541
Iqbal, Sir Mohammed, 156 & fn
Iran, 3 & fn, 160, 182, 205, 260, 377 & fn, 430 fn
Iraq, 3 fn
Ireland, 63 & fn, 197 & fn, 314 & fn
Irish Republican Army, 63 fn
Irish Republican Parliament, 63 fn
Irving, L.G., 385 fn
Isherwood, Christopher, 633 & *fn*, 637
Istanbul, 614, 702
Italy, 41 fn, 232 fn, 247 fn, 515–516, 522 & fn
Itarsi, 449, 594, 598
I.T. College (Lucknow), 233
I was a German (Ernst Toller), 391
Iyengar, Srinivas, 364, 385
Iyer, C.P. Ramaswami, 4 fn, 63–64 & fn
Izatnagar, 602, 604

Jacobabad, 651
Jacques, Jean, 41, 293, 517, 626
Jagannath, Lord, 657
Jahalo, 334
Jail Journey (Jim Phelan), 298, 385
Jain, L.C., 438, 443
Jaipur, 149, 204, 221, 225, 303–304, 307–308, 314, 319, 329, 709–710
——, Maharaja of, 710
Jairaj Behari, 265
Jamaica, 711 & fn
Jamia Millia Islamia (Delhi), 44, 320, 400, 427
Jammu, 628
Jammu & Kashmir, 628 fn
Janaki Amma, V.A., 288 & fn
Janata Party, 5 fn

Jan-e Janan, Mazhar, 224 & *fn*, 225 fn
Japan, 3 & fn, 25 fn, 67 fn, 91 fn, 195, 276, 617
Jataka, 513 fn
Java, 449
Jawaharlal Nehru: The Man and his Ideas (Y.G. Krishnamurti), 339 fn
Jawan Bakht, 53
Jayakar, M.R., 81 fn, 424 fn
Jahangir, 223–224
Jewish Frontier, 441
Jhaveri, Vithalbhai K., 464 fn
Jmarajadasa, C., 543 & *fn*, 546, 549–550, 554, 557, 559, 576, 596
Jinnah, M.A., 39, 43 fn, 68, 92, 122 & fn, 134 fn, 154–155, 195–196, 244, 280, 284, 323–324 & fn, 445, 456–457, 462 & fn, 472, 478, 486 & fn, 527 fn, 546 fn, 580, 639, 692, 708
Johar, 347
John Day & Company (New York), 30, 188
John Lane the Bodley Head Ltd. (London), 168, 307, 397, 677
Johnson, Louis, 247, 358, 509
Joshi, Puran Chand, 448, 479
——, Raghunath Ganesh, 359
Journal d'un homme de quarante ans (Guehenna), 351, 367, 389, 477
Journal to Stella (Jonathan Swift), 79
Journey among Warriors (Eve Curie), 430 & fn, 438, 443, 453
Judge's Story (Charles Morgan), 293 fn
Juhu (Bombay), 394, 412, 428, 575
Jumna river, 162
Jumna (*bhishti*), 437, 479
Jurat, Qalandar Bakhsh, 156 & *fn*, 157 fn

Kabir, H., 576
Kachru, Dwarka Nath, 330, 718
Kadambari (Banabhatta), 43, 112, 119, 128, 576
Kak, Jamath, 265 & *fn*
Kakori Conspiracy Case, 618 fn
Kalani, Hemu, 49 & fn
Kalidasa, 43, 46, 52 fn, 97 fn, 105, 116, 263, 266
Kali (deity), 657
Kalyan, 6
Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital (Allahabad), 165, 168, 286, 536
Kamala Nehru Scholarships, 395, 535
Kanishka, 263 fn
Kanpur, 202, 316, 662, 690–692, 717 & fn
Kant, E., 128
Kanyakumari, 653
Karachi, 197, 214 fn, 324, 593
Karachi Jail, 593
Karaka, D.F., 416 & *fn*, 452–453
Kar Gupta, Sachindranath, 354 & fn
Karma Yoga (Swami Vivekananda), 562
Karmayogin, 385 fn
Karnatak, 669–671
Kashmir, 85, 94, 137, 167–168, 176, 330, 349, 370, 386, 450–451, 497, 562–564, 567, 575, 578–579, 588, 590, 593, 601, 603, 607, 609–612, 615–617, 619–622, 626, 628–631, 639, 646, 710
Kasturba Memorial Fund, 396, 409
Kathgodam, 539–540, 634
Katju, Kanwarlal (Nikku), 620 & fn, 622, 628
——, Moti, 146 & *fn*, 148, 162, 453
——, Naresh, 316
——, Pyarelal, 149 & fn, 307–308, 520, 524
——, Siddhartha, 620
——, Swarup (Bappi), 226, 307–308, 319, 329, 431, 441, 460, 524, 560
Katrak, Jamshed Kavasji, 565
Katzin, Olga—*see* Sagittarius
Kaul, C.B., 95 fn
——, Mrs Chand, 95, 149, 236, 431, 611–612
——, Dipa, 431
——, Gautam, 245–246, 431
——, Kailas Nath, 43, 85, 204, 236, 239, 246, 329, 431, 463, 498, 517, 520, 523
——, Rajpati (Amma), 43, 75, 85, 135, 149, 176, 181, 191, 193, 204–205, 222–223, 226–227, 229, 236, 238–239, 245, 252, 261, 289, 304, 329, 335, 376, 428, 431, 438, 460, 466, 476, 498, 517, 520, 524, 557, 560–561, 610–612, 626
——, Sheila, 43, 85, 236, 239, 245–246,

329, 431, 463, 498, 517, 520, 523, 529, 536, 552
Kaur, Rajkumari Amrit, 199–200 & fn, 202, 203 fn, 534
Kavita Kaumudi (Ram Naresh Tripathi), 221 & fn, 249
Keightley, Bertram, 509
Keith, A.B., 263
Kendall, John, 298, 302
Khaksars, 195–196 & fn
Khali, 142 & fn, 144, 146–147, 153, 167, 264, 274–275, 349, 528–529, 536–538, 540–541, 544, 549, 552, 562, 638, 645–646, 671, 696
Khaliq, 240, 265, 294, 301, 413–414, 436, 479, 560
Khaliqbari (Amir Khusrau), 207
Khaliquzzaman, Choudhry, 133, 134 fn
Khan, Abdul Ghaffar, 16 fn, 159 fn, 452, 655
——, Ajmal, 6
——, H.H., 635
——, Inayatullah (Allama Mashriqi), 196 & fn
——, Liaquat Ali, 546 fn
——, Sikandar Hayat, 42, 43 fn, 200
——, Tahira, 42
——, Yahya, 454 fn
——, Yamin, 380 fn
——, Zafar Ali, 692
Khan Sahib, 215 fn, 217, 452
Kharagpur, 656
Kharkov, 195 fn
Kharkov, 499
Khazan Chand, 538 & *fn*
Kher, B.G., 5–6, 532
Khilafat movement, 504 fn
Khudai Khidmatgar movement, 159 fn
Khusru, Amir, 190 & fn, 205, 207, 223–224, 232–233 & fn, 267 fn
Khusru Bagh (Allahabad), 223
Kidwai, Rafi Ahmad, 163, 440 & fn, 458, 474, 559–560, 575, 594, 599–600, 602, 612
Kiev, 616
Kishan Ganj (Delhi), 196 fn
Kishtwar, 629
Kitabistan (Allahabad), 55, 295, 305, 316, 405, 465, 483, 541–542, 550, 596
K.L.M., 714
Koestler, Arthur, 363, 452
Kolahai, 628, 631
Kolhapur, 405, 409
Kotnis, Dwarkanath, 460 fn
Kraitchik, M., 452
Kreutzer Sonata, 661
Kripalani, J.B., 1, 9, 46, 49, 78, 86, 89–90 & fn, 93, 95, 99, 101, 106–107, 112, 118, 140, 214, 288, 291, 297, 301, 457, 532, 568–569, 581, 585–587, 593–594, 701
——, Krishna, 433
——, Nandita, 112
——, Sucheta, 78, 86, 95, 112, 532, 554, 560
Krishna, Lord, 663
Krishnamurti, Y.G., 339, 576
Krishnan, K.S., 605 & *fn*
Kuala Lumpur, 315
Kuibyshev, 549 fn
Kulkarni, Y.H., 8 & fn
Kulu, 144, 156, 399
Kumarajiva, 475
Kumbakonam, 302
Kunzru, Hirdayanath, 213, 215, 280
Kupton—*see* Iftikharuddin, Mian

Labour Party (British), 48 fn, 311
Lachhminie, 161, 479
Lady of the White House (Eleanor Roosevelt), 275 fn
Lady Precious Stream (S.I. Hsiang), 508
Lahore, 111, 126, 149, 181, 191, 193, 200 fn, 204–205, 221, 223, 226, 229, 252, 288, 428, 431, 438, 517, 557, 567, 579, 588, 590, 592, 601, 609–612, 615, 618, 620, 626, 638, 650, 665
Lahore Conspiracy Case, 599
Lalbhai, K., 592 & fn
Lal, Ramnarain, 596, 609
Lamb, Charles, 480–481, 484
Lancaster, Osbert, 452–453
Lao-tse, 157 & *fn*
Laski, H.J., 288–289, 363, 438, 497, 516 & fn
Last Days of Socrates (Plato), 500
Latif, Abdul, 280

Latur, 196 *fn*
Lausanne, 70, 340
Leader, 192, 253, 321 & *fn*, 373, 378, 406, 489, 495, 497–498, 604
Lea, Homer, 77 & *fn*, 79
Lectures and Letters (Swami Vivekananda), 614
Lectures from Colombo to Almora (Swami Vivekananda), 562
Leech, M K., 79
Left Book Club, 706
Lehmann, Rosamond, 557
Leningrad, 195 *fn*, 616
Leopardi, Giacomo, 421
Le Theatre Indien (*The Indian Theatre* by Sylvain Levi), 43 & *fn*, 76, 189, 263
Letters (Charles Lamb), 480
Letters (Swami Vivekananda), 562
Letters from a Father to His Daughter (Jawaharlal Nehru), 319–320, 395, 409, 423, 432, 460, 471, 541
Letters From Prison (Ernst Toller), 644–645
Let There Be Sculpture (Sir J. Epstein), 79
Levi, Sylvain, 43, 76, 189, 192, 263
——, Madam Sylvain, 189
Lewis, C.S., 237 & *fn*
——, Sinclair, 155
Leysin, 105, 418
Liberals (Indian), 280, 647
Libya, 576
Liddell Hart, B.H., 302
Life, 19, 80, 188–189, 208, 229, 247 *fn*, 330, 386, 408, 412, 441, 461, 560, 596
Life & Letters, 292, 302, 334
Life & Letters Today (Brazil), 257
Life of Charles Lord Metcalfe (E. Thompson), 309–310
Light of Asia (Sir Edwin Arnold), 477
Lin, Adet, 380 *fn*
——, Anor, 380 *fn*
——, Meimei, 380 *fn*
——, Yutang, 9, 14, 31 & *fn*, 77, 79, 247, 305, 368–369, 380, 386, 393
Lincoln, Abraham, 159
Linlithgow, 2nd marquis, 2 *fn*, 39, 56, 57 *fn*, 62, 66 & *fn*, 67 *fn*–69, 70 *fn*, 89 *fn*, 92, 98 & *fn*, 100 & *fn*, 107 *fn*, 121, 183–185 & *fn*, 194, 197 *fn*, 200, 203, 213, 218, 234, 434 & *fn*, 510
Li Po, 421
Listener, 287
Literature & Authorship in India (Srinivas Iyengar), 364, 385
Litikovo, 577–578
Little Men (Louisa May Alcott), 64 *fn*
Little Prince (Antoine de St. Exupery), 364
Little Women (Louisa May Alcott), 55 & *fn*, 64
Living and the Dead (Beverley Nichols), 452
Lohia, Ram Manohar, 5 & *fn*
Lok Sabha, 6 *fn*, 320 *fn*
London, 25 *fn*, 29, 85, 168, 171, 236, 237 *fn*, 245–246, 249, 252, 256, 399, 418, 427 *fn*, 463, 469, 509, 522 *fn*–523, 529, 557, 643, 664, 697, 699–700, 702–703, 706, 712, 714
London University, 246, 255
Loom of Language (Frederick Bodmer), 404, 407, 480
Lorenzini, Maria, 632
Los Angeles, 394, 633 *fn*
Lublin, 522 *fn*
Luce, Clare Boothe, 247 & *fn*, 275
——, Henry, 247 *fn*
Lucknow, 19, 22, 53–54, 97 *fn*, 146 *fn*, 172–174, 238, 259, 329–333, 516–517, 520, 529 & *fn*, 534, 544, 618, 671, 689, 696–697, 699
Lucknow Jail, 382, 554, 578, 599
Lynndale (Mussoorie), 356
Lyrical Dramas (Aeschylus), 79

MacDonald, Ramsay, 311 & *fn*
Machhuabazar Bomb Case, 354
Mackenzie Donald A., 180
Macneile Dixon, W., 180, 536
Madariaga, Salvador de, 589
Madgaonkar, Sir Govind, 419, 422
——, Usha, 419
Mad Man (Khalil Gibran), 302
Madras, 11, 60, 218 *fn*, 242–243, 302, 546, 596, 654
Mahabaleshwar, 45, 385, 394, 397–398,

406–407, 410, 412, 415, 419, 425–426, 434, 447, 592
Mahabharata, 499
Maharashtra, 669, 671
Mahatma & other Poems (H. Kabir), 576
Mahatma Gandhi: His Life and Works (D.G. Tendulkar *et al*, ed.), 464 fn
Mahmud, Habib, 168
——, Hamidah, 168, 288, 295, 440
——, Mrs., 295
——, Qudsia, 295
——, Said-ur-Rahman, 168, 295, 368, 440
——, Sarvar, 168, 288, 295
——, Syed, 1, 5, 14, 18–19, 24, 29, 49, 69, 89, 90, 97, 99, 102, 105, 112, 115, 119, 122, 126–127, 131, 145, 150, 154, 158, 166, 168, 174–175, 177–179, 187, 191, 208, 221, 229–230, 244, 288, 290–292, 295, 299, 307, 324, 331, 335, 356, 368, 402, 432, 440, 461, 488–490, 494–495, 497, 499–500, 503–504 & fn, 510, 521, 543, 545, 598
Mahtab, Harekrushna, 1 & fn, 4 & fn, 29, 50, 89, 154, 291, 515, 556, 568–569, 591, 593, 598
Main Street (Sinclair Lewis), 155
Making of the Indian Princes (Edward Thompson), 302, 308–309, 312, 408, 452
Malabar, 70, 201 fn, 256, 288, 503
Malaviya, K.D., 163, 555
——, Lakshmi, 555
——, Madan Mohan, 238
——, Sushila, 555
Malaya, 3 fn, 67 fn, 684, 686
Malwa, 519
Manchester Guardian, 456 fn
Mandlik, R.M., 199 fn
Manipur, 382 & fn
Mani Puthakasalai (Kumbakonam), 301
Manley, Norman, 711 & *fn*
Manmad, 599
Mannin, Ethel, 421
Man-power Mobilisation for Peace (I.L.O.), 499
Mansarovar, 519
Man the Master (Gerald Heard), 519
Mark Twain, 180 & *fn*
Marseilles, 366, 706
Marv, 260
Masani, M.R., 530
Masefield, John, 302
Mathematical Recreations (M. Kraitchik), 452
Mathematics for the Million (Lancelot Hogben), 22, 128, 257, 368, 404 fn, 440
Matheran, 373, 378, 384–385, 388–389, 393–394, 397, 403, 412
Mathrubhumi Press (Calicut), 423
Maugham, Somerset, 519, 609
Maurois, Andre, 52, 298, 334 & fn, 385
Mayling Soong Scholarship, 187
Mazzini, G., 522 fn
Mead, G.R.S., 452
Mecca, 267, 506
Mediterranean Sea, 498
Meerut, 138, 618 fn
Meghaduta (Kalidasa), 46
Meherally, Yusuf, 5, 299
Mehr Taj, 16, 233 & fn, 321, 454, 525
Mehta, Gaganvehari, 548 & *fn*
——, Jivraj, 419, 435, 438–439, 474
——, Ratilal N., 513 fn, 530
Melos, 74
Men & Supermen of Hindustan (Joachim Alva), 180
Men in Chains (Thomas Ryan), 305
Men of the Burma Road (Chiang Yee), 125
Menon, V.K. Krishna, 168, 172, 176, 189, 198, 221, 246, 401, 410, 426, 464, 677, 704, 711–712, 714, 716
Merchant Seamen and the War (I.L.O.), 453
Meredith, George, 33
Meri Kahani (Jawaharlal Nehru), 400
Methuen, Sir A., 111
Mewar, 344, 346
Mexico, 589
Milton, John, 271, 293, 308, 480
Ming Dynasty, 183 fn
Minister and His Responsibilities (Morarji Desai), 5 fn
Mirabehn, 5, 583
Mir Amman, 180
Mirror of the Past: Let it Reflect the

Future (K. Zilliacus), 455 & fn
Mir Taqi Mir, 147 & *fn*, 148 fn, 237–238 & fn, 240 & fn, 267 fn, 348 fn
Mission to Moscow (Joseph E. Davies), 460 & fn, 508, 576
Mississippi, 180 *fn*
Mitchell, Kate L., 305, 408 & fn, 438, 443, 453
Moderates, 213, 215
Modern Indian Culture—A Sociological Study (D.P. Mukerji), 266
Modern Islam in India—A Social Analysis (Wilfrid Cantwell Smith), 266, 541
Modern Plays (Everyman's Library), 155
Modern Review, 691
Mody, Sir Homi, 280
Moliere (J.B. Poquelin), 668
Moment in Peking (Lin Yutang), 31, 77
Momin Khan, 327 & *fn*
Monkey (Wu Ching en), 183
Mookerji, Shyama Prasad, 234 & fn, 244 & fn
Moon, Penderel, 200 & *fn*, 202–203 & *fn*, 557
Moore, Adrienne, 230
Moraes, Frank, 79
Morand, Paul, 351 & *fn*
More Pocket Cartoons (Osbert Lancaster), 452–453
Morgan, Charles, 293 & *fn*, 334
Morin, Louise, 41, 293, 517, 626
Moscow, 195 fn, 256, 448, 460 fn, 546 fn, 549
Mother (Pearl Buck), 334
Mother, The—*see* Richard, *Madame Mirra*
Mother Russia (Maurice Hindus), 404, 408
Moulmein, 683
Mountain Way (L.G. Irving), 385, 389
Mountains Wait (Theodor Broch), 452
Mountbatten, Louis (later 1st earl Mountbatten of Burma), 276 & *fn*
Mudie, Sir Robert Francis, 558
Mudrarakshasa (Vishakhadatta), 54, 408, 453
Mukerji, Dhan Gopal, 240
——, D.P., 266
——, Hiren, 266
Mulki, 395
Mullick, B.K., 445, 452
Munich, 615, 702
Munshi, K.M., 215, 513, 530
Munzenburg, Willie, 390–391
Murray, Gertrude, 576
——, Gilbert, 19 & *fn*, 31, 77, 417, 421
Murree, 236
Muslim League, 92, 122, 133–134 & fn, 154 fn, 201, 215–217 & fn, 244, 280, 283–284 & fn, 324, 379, 380 fn, 445 fn, 456 fn, 580 & fn, 708
Mussolini, Benito, 194 & fn, 438 fn, 617 & fn
Mussoorie, 167, 174, 189, 205, 208, 222, 315, 539, 544, 645–646
My Country (Alexei Tolstoy), 559
Myers, L.H., 441 & *fn*
My India, My America (Krishnalal Shridharani), 147, 302
Mysore, 709
Myths of China & Japan (Donald A. Mackenzie), 180

Nabha Jail, 99
Nagarjuna, 475
Naidu, Padmaja, 117, 181, 274, 300, 336, 398, 643–646, 648–653, 655–656, 659–662, 666, 669, 673–674, 676, 678, 681, 684–685, 687–691, 693, 695–697, 699, 701–703, 705, 718–719
——, Sarojini, 5, 7, 300, 341 & fn, 419, 528, 546 & fn, 698 fn
Naini Jail, 24, 34, 70–72, 74–75, 82, 85, 94, 96–97, 102, 105–106, 110–111, 114, 116, 118, 122, 124–125, 132, 142, 144, 146–147, 151, 153, 160, 162, 164–167, 169, 171, 236, 251, 262, 346, 361, 365, 559, 575, 578, 594, 598–602, 611–612
Naini Tal, 315, 355, 539–540, 543–544, 594, 632, 638
Nakkapali, 659
Nambiar, A.C.N., 41, 517, 626
Naoroji, Khorshed (Bul), 30, 450, 514, 518, 633
Narayan, Jayaprakash, 252 & fn
——, Krishna, 529 & fn
Narendra Deva, Acharya, 1 & fn, 49, 56,

84, 89, 112, 119, 128, 131, 154, 187, 190, 192, 249, 268, 291, 470–472, 474–476, 489, 505, 523 fn, 527, 547, 568–569, 587–588, 593, 594–595, 598–599, 604, 611, 621, 623–624, 633
Narendra Nath, Raja, 579 & *fn*, 590
Narielwala, P.A., 17, 35, 45–46, 257, 316, 441
Nation, 19, 188, 388, 441
National Herald, 286, 464, 713 fn
National Physical Laboratory (New Delhi), 605 fn
National Planning Committee, 64, 100, 266 & fn, 302, 535
National Publishing Co. (Madras), 536
National Shipping Board, 548 fn
Nature of the Physical World (Sir A. Eddington), 230
Nausherwan-e-Adil, 377 & fn
Navajivan Press (Ahmedabad), 400, 471
Navjivan Trust, 6 fn
Nayar, Sushila, 6 fn
Nazimuddin, Khwaja, 235 & *fn*, 284 fn
Near East, 430 fn
Nehru, Anand, 426
——, Balwant Kumar (Ballo), 271, 310–311, 333, 341, 345, 399
——, Brij Kumar, 193, 399
——, Brijlal, 481, 526, 590, 617, 628–629, 637
——, Jawaharlal, 7 fn, 25 fn, 40 fn, 44, 54 fn, 64 fn, 67 fn, 82 fn, 90 fn, 97 fn, 115 fn, 128 fn, 143 fn, 146 fn, 149 fn, 326 fn, 339 fn, 368 fn, 430 fn, 464 fn, 474 fn, 486 fn, 487 fn, 515 fn, 535 fn, 558 fn, 572 fn, 585, 653 fn, 658 fn
——, arrested and sent to Ahmadnagar Fort Jail (ninth imprisonment), 3–7; released unconditionally, 639
——,on Abdul Ghaffar, 632–633; on Abdul Rahim Khan Khana, 224; on abnormal happenings, 34, 51; on Ahmadnagar, 394, 397, 512, outbreak of plague in, 548, 550; on Ahmadnagar Fort Jail, arrangements relating to accommodation, food, and sanitation in, 7–8, 118, jail term in, 209, 212, 417–418, 445, 493, 497, 548, 556, 566, 591, transfer from 509–510, 537, 563, 566–568, 575, 578–579, 581–582, 588, 591–596, 611; on Ajanta frescoes, 664–665, 687–688; on Ajit Hutheesing, 451, 630–631; on Akbar, 78; on Aligarh Muslim University, incident at, 692; on Allahabad, communal rioting in, 693, 697, 699; on Allah Bakhsh's assassination, 133, 142; on Allama Mashriqi, 196; on All India Convention of Congress Legislators, 670; on *All Men are Brothers*, 22, 77; on Almora Jail, 634–635, 638, transfer to, 632–633; on American accent and words, 648–649; on Americans, 399–400; on Amery, L.S., 136, 146, 625; on Amir Khusru, 205–207, 223; on Amrita Shergil, 295–296, 299; on Amrit Kaur's treatment in jail and Penderel Moon's protest, 199–200, 202–203; on Anand Bhawan, 33, 44–46, 181, 253, 269–270, 294, 301, 310, 390, 454, 491, 556, 565, servants of, 15, 43, 160–161, 249, 257, 413–414, 436–438, 478–479, 491, 552–553; on Andhra people, 660; on Aney, M.S., 29; on *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, 346–347, 385; on Anupchand Shah, 479; on Arabian Sea, crossing of, 625; on Aristarchi, Princess, loan of money to, 397; on article written by him on himself, 688–689, 691; on *Art of Seeing*, 176–177; on Aruna Asaf Ali, 49; on Asaf Ali, 49, 68–69, 99, 130–131, 150, 155, 175, 179, 261, 291, 547, 630; on Ashvaghosa, 263–264; on *Asia & Democracy*, 323; on Assam Oil Company, strike in, 717; on asthma, 268; on August disturbances, 59–60, 63; on August movement, 11–12, 602, Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee circular relating to, 12, 60, celebration of anniversary of, 214, outcome of, 100–101, 283, repressive activities of Government during, 196–200, 202–203, 213, 218; on August movement and the Communist Party of India, 216; on the August resolution, 2–3, 60–61, proposal for its withdrawal, 276–281, 284, 290–292; on the August resolution and the Mode-

rates, 213; on Aurobindo Ghose (Sri Aurobindo), 111–112, 131; on *Autobiography*, a new abridged edition of, 411, American edition of, 464–465, correcting and revising it, 464–465, Hebrew translation of, 400–401, 460, Malayalam translation of, 423, publishing it in India, 168, Rabindranath Tagore's appreciation of, 647, realising lost royalties on, 677; on Axis powers' decline, 195; on babies, 501; on badness of the world, 88; on Balwant Kumar Nehru, 345, 399; on Barbara Hartland, 449, on Bareilly Jail, 600, 602, 607, proposal for transfer from, 623–624, 630, on *Battle Hymn of China*, 508; on Beatrice Webb, 127; on Beethoven's music, 95; on Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, 658; on Benton W M, 606, on Berhampur Jail, lathi charges in, 344; on Bernard Shaw, 105–106, 127; on Bertram Keightley, 509; on Beverley Nichols, 527; on Bharati Sarabhai, 697, her poetry, 223; on Bhulabhai Desai, 532, 546, on the Bible, 351; on birds, 178, 181–182, 250, 364, 373, on birth of a new member of the family, 469, on body and mind, 636–637; on Bombay, fire in, 403, 411, on books, prices in India of, 527, reading of 293, revision of, 179, success of, 170, on *Book on Indian Birds*, 359; on *Brain of India*, 385, on Britain's rulers and American leaders, 47–48; on the British, attitude of, 311; on British Government, 116, 216, 716, its policy towards India, 715, noncooperative attitude towards, 48, 67; on British Government and fascist and Japanese aggression, 61; on Buddha, 338, 661–662; on Buddhist New Year's Day, 627, 629, on building up individual mental worlds, 566–567, on Burma, Indians in, 682; on Burmese people, 682; on Byron, 52; on Chalapathi Rau, 464, on Chand Bibi, 183; on Chando Bibi (a cat), 366–367, 371, 375–376, 387–388, 398, 406–407, 409, 411–413, on Chandralekha Pandit, 115, 235, 246–247, 275, 613, her's and Nayantara Pandit's joining college in U.S.A, 114, 117, 121, 123, 135, 141, 150, 159, 175, 178, 187, 230, Krishna Hutheesing's objection to it, 121, 131–132; on changing world, 485; on *chappals* and shoes, 187–188, 534; on Chiang Kai shek, 37, 40, on Madame Chiang Kai shek, 37, 40–41, 522, her statements in America, 115, and *The Times of India's* comments, 115–116, writing to her, 36–37, 40, on children, development of consciousness of outer world in, 605, education of, 392–393, 425, 451, 592, growth of, 635–636, problem children, 420, reading books on them and bringing them up, 419–421; on China, 48, 300–301, her cause and India, 37, on Chinese people, 15, 683; on Chungking air raids, 236–237; on city life, 417, on classical and scientific training, 417; on collection of funds for hospital in Allahabad, 562–563, on common cold, 622; on Communist Party of India, 216, literature published by, 575–576; on conferences and public gatherings, 698; on Congress, 98, classes supporting, 216, conflicts and cleavages in, 707, foreign policy of, 61, its policy of non-embarrassment to the Government, 59, its policy towards peasants and workers, 707–708, and reactions of the middle classes, 708, its policy towards Indian states, 708, policy of Muslim League towards, 708, on Congress and Communists, 569–570, and Federation issue, 707, and minorities, 134, and nonviolence, 58–59, and other organised groups within it, 569; on Congress Working Committee, its statement on war situation, 714–716, members of, 297, on coping with unlikable happenings, 102–103; on Count de Mauny, 482; on C P. Ramaswami Iyer, 63–64, on crowds, 647, 658; on Czechoslovakia, Franco-British proposals regarding, 704–705, on daughter, 11, 14, 16, 20–21, 24, 34, 42, 50,

71–75, 86, 94–98, 102–106, 109–111, 117, 119–120, 122, 125–126, 132, 136–137, 140, 148, 150–151, 153, 155, 163, 165, 167, 170–171, 174–176, 180, 186, 191, 193, 204–205, 208, 219, 221–223, 225, 228, 235, 241, 253, 255, 259, 265, 269, 274, 287–288, 294, 307, 335, 340–341, 349–352, 357–358, 360–362, 367–368, 370, 373, 378, 385, 389–390, 394, 396–397, 407, 418–419, 422, 428, 431, 435–436, 439, 441, 446–447, 458–459, 461, 470–474, 478, 483–484, 487, 489, 505, 509, 524, 528–529, 533, 537–541, 551–552, 560–564, 575, 588–593, 600–603, 609, 612, 615–618, 621–622, 628–629, 636–637, 672, 678, 684, 687, 705, birth of her first son (Rajiva), 466–469, choosing a name for him, 470–471, 474–478, 481, 489–491, 501, 505; on death, 88; on debates in the Bengal Assembly, 244, in the House of Commons and Central Assembly, 89, 98; on Defence of India Act and Rules, getting copies of in jail, 372–373; on D.I.R. cases, 213; on diet, 208; on *Discovery of India*, writing & revising of, 266, 285, 331, 345, 358, 378–379, 401–404, 416, 424, 428, 444, 446, 462, 472, 477–478, 480–481, 521, 531, 570, 630; on Dolores Ibarruri (La Passionaria), 700; on domestic complications, 269; on Doon School, 374; on Edward Thompson, 41, 309–310, 312–313, 510–512, 515, 571, 573, 626, 637, his son's death, 515–517, 572–573, 576–578; on electioneering, 662; on electric razor, 35–36, 42, 54, 74, 192; on empires, 52; on England, changes in, 624–625, 627, friends in, 312, politicians of, 323; on *Epic of America*, 155–156; on *Essays on the Gita*, 130; on Europe, 300, problems in the liberated countries of, 522; on European War, 615–617; on eye exercises, 239; on Faizpur Congress, 662–663; on family system in ancient China & India, 258–259; on famine, 201, 207, 213, 228, 243, in Bengal, 201, 213, 228, 242–243, 245, 264, 283, 313, in Orissa, 213; on famine and the Government, 202, 218–219, 234–235, 243, and the Indian people, 202, and profiteering, 242; on famine relief work, 226, 306–307, 322, 326–327, and foreign countries, 313–314; on fate and individuals, 220–221; on Feroze Gandhi, 191–192, 228, 236, 463, 474, 491, 518, 526; on food-price rise, 202; on France, 41, friends in, 626; on Fraser, A.G., 389; on Free German Committee's formation, 195; on friendship, 373; on future, 27, 467; on future course of action, 281–283; on future developments, 92–93; on *Gandhiji—Commemoration Volume*, 520; on gardening, 20–21, 31, 270–271, 304; on German language, learning of, 119; on Germany, 615; on glacier, 611; on *Glimpses of World History*, 33, 105, 170, 465, publishing Malayalam translation of, 423, Marathi translation of, 359, 394–395, 404–405, 409, 427, Tamil translation of, 301–302, Urdu translation of, 400, 427, review of, 128, 132, revision of, 676–677, 697; on God, 32–33; on going back to the past and living it again, 237; on going out of India, 143; on good breeding, 688; on Government inquiry about money received by him from *Fortune* magazine, 435; on Sir Govind Madgaonkar, 419; on *Greek Commonwealth*, 159; on Greek plays, 77; on Guzdar, Mrs., 418–419; on happiness, 35, 420–421; on Hari, 301; on Harsha Hutheesing, 451, 630–631; on having a pamphlet club attached to Left Book Club, 706–707; on health, 439–440, and mind, 329; on a healthy person, 171; on *Heart of Jade*, 589–590; on Hemu Kalani's execution, 49; on hill stations, going to, 589; on Himalayas, 156; on himself, 14, 16–17, 25, 28, 30, 34, 36–38, 44, 50, 54, 68, 73–74, 78, 88, 90, 99, 106, 109–110, 112, 126–127, 130, 135, 141–142, 157, 166, 174, 182, 186, 212, 217, 220, 228, 241, 274–276, 298, 324,

331, 333, 335, 338, 389, 396, 429–430, 439, 444, 447, 451, 472–473, 478, 480, 487, 492–493, 515–516, 523, 532, 537, 544–545, 547, 558–559, 561–562, 571–573, 580, 583, 587–588, 595, 597, 603, 614, 618, 624–626, 630–634, 636, 638, 645, 647–649, 655–656, 658, 661, 663–664, 666–667, 671, 673, 675, 678–679, 686, 688–691, 695, 698, 701–702, 712–713; on Hindu Mahasabha, 216–217; *on Hindustan Hamara Publications, pamphlet published by*, 565; on his arrest and journey to Ahmadnagar Fort prison, 4–7; on his birthday in jail, 29–30, 289–290, 296, 514–515; on his election to the P.E.N. vice presidentship, 328; on his family tradition, 32; on his message to a Chinese journalist, 37; on his previous *experiences in jail*, 99–100; *on his speech at Bombay A.I.C.C. session*, 3, on *History as the Story of Liberty*, 453; on *Holi*, 567; on honey, 45; on human action and moods, 232; on human relationships, 258–259; on Hutheesing, G.P., 65, 150–151, 161–162, 268, 288, 299, 318, 328, 364–365, 393, 418, 425, 439–440, 442, 448, 484, 592, on Hyderabad state, collection of material about, 718, mass movement in, 710, on *Ideals of Indian Art*, 300; on Independence Day celebrations, 47, 547; on India, 49, 142, 144, coming of changes in, 613, need for economic and social changes in, 143, review of past political history of, 131, 133; on India and China, 27, 87, on India and U.S.A., 613; on Indian middle classes, 556; on Indian nationalism and British imperialism, 67, 91–92, *on* Indian officials, 218; on Indian people, 106, 466, habit of doing things slowly, 432–433, and political leaders, 107; on Indian *philosophy*, 351–352, on Indian political scene, 133, *on* Indian situation, 675, 713, *changes in*, 379–380, on Indian states, mass movements in, 708–710, on Indian women, 665, on India's history, 32; on *Indigo*, 508, on individualism in the West, 259, on industrialists' attitude to Congress policy, 215; *on inoculations and medicines*, 548, 550–551, 556–557, 592; on *In Russia Now*, 549, on intelligence, 132; on interest in humanity, 148–149; on intimate personal bonds, 258; on investing his money in Khadi production, 226; on Isherwood's translation of Gita, 637; on jail, coming out of, 162, discussions *on national affairs in*, 579–580, 582–587, effect on mind of long years in, 171–172, hunger strike in, 8, letters received in, 165–166, writing them from, 626, newspapers in, 35, 192, playing badminton in, 618, possibility of release from, 380, 462–463, 480, 521–522, 607, 609, 611, 638–639, sense of time in, 27, 383–384, spending time in, 15–16, total period spent in, 319, 382, *transfer from one to another*, 136, year ending in, 318, on jail companionship, 1, 20, 23–24, 38, 84, 90; on jail diary writing, 1, 23, 38, 637, on jail garden, 21, 24, 33, 41, 52, 73–74, 111, 149, 151, 181, 236, 271, 336, 450, 454–455, 525; on jail interviews, 248, 255, 493, 496, 498, 501–502, 506–508, 523, 563–564, 568–569, 575; on *Jail Journey*, 298–299, on jail life, 73, 159, 340, 459, 481, 485, 502, experiencing changes in, 383, its effect on body and mind, 108–109, 130, 182, 342–344, 347–348, 564; on jail rules and restrictions, 8–10, 13, 17, 20, 23, 25–26, 36, 44, 48, 56, 63–65, 72–73, 76, 80–81, 83, 95, 102, 114, 116, 118, 135–136, 140, 163, 198–199, 229, 236, 241, 244–245, 248, 257, 260, 304, 365–366, 409–410, 525–526, 529, 575; on jail timetable, 118–119, 127–128; on Jaipur state, mass movement in, 709–710, on Japan's invasion of India, 39–40, 382, and proposal for writing to the Viceroy, 382, 402; on Japanese War, 617; *on Jayaprakash Narayan*, 252; *on Jinarajadasa, C.*, 543, 550; *on Jinnah, M.A.*, 39, 68, 122, 154–155, 244, 323–324, 456, 708, *knife-attack* on him, 195–196; on *Journey Among*

Warriors, 430, 440, 453; on journey from, Ahmadnagar Fort to Bareilly Jail, 597–600, Allahabad to Rangoon, 680–681, Bareilly Jail to Almora Jail, 634, 637; on judging others by one's own standard, 453–454; on *Kadambari*, 112; on Kailas and Sheila Kaul, 239, 463, 517, 520, 523; on Kamala Nehru, 70; on Kamala Nehru Hospital, 253–254; on Kamala Nehru Scholarship, 535; on Kanpur, labour troubles in, 690, 692, 717; on Karaka, D.F., 453; on Kashmir, 611, 619–621, mass movement in, 710; on Kasturba Gandhi's death, 360; on Khali, 538, 552; on Khaliq, 265, 294, 301, 413–414, 436, 479; on Khusrau, 223; on kisans' march to Lucknow, 696; on Kripalani, J.B., 99, 532, 593, his indictment of Indian people, 106–107; on Krishna Hutheesing, 165, 273–274, 369–370, 417, educational arrangement for her children, 374–375, 392–393, 396, 425, 442, 450–451, 469, 484, 532–533, 592, her book (*With No Regrets*), 340, 351, 353–356, 390–391, 393, 412, 469, 612; on Labour Party (British), 311; on lack of sympathy and understanding, 172; on Lahore, 620; on later Moghals, 52–54; on lathi-charge incident at Pune station, 7; on Leaders Conferences' appeal to Congress and Government, 81; on *Le Theatre Indien*, 189, 263; on letter, its effect on one's mind, 86, writing of, 356–357; on *Letters from a Father to His Daughter*, giving its copyright free to public educational authorities, 320, 395, 460–461, including chapters of it in a book of selections, 395–396, 409, publishing Assamese translation of, 319–320, 395, 423, Bengali translation of, 395, 432–433, Gujarati translation of, 471, renewal of sale agency agreement regarding, 541–542; on *Letters From Prison*, 644; on Lewis Carroll's collected works, 84; on life, 75, 141–142, 507, adventures of, 338–339, difficult periods of, 42, 219–220, facing challenges of, 371–372, immortality of, 467, impact of, 78, normal and ordinary processes of, 459–460; on life and philosophy, 337–338; on Lin Yutang's visit to Allahabad, 368–369, 380, 386; on living in complete uncertainty, 164; on Lord Linlithgow's charges against Congress, 56–61, his reply to the deputation proposing to see him, 98; on Louis Fischer, 161; on Madan Atal, 557; on Madan Mohan Malaviya, 238–239; on Mahatma Gandhi, 6–7, 19, 48, 58, 67–68, 90–93, 100, 107–108, 121, 133, 154, 175, 191, 217, 285, 342, 381, 388, 401–402, 406, 410, 424, 429, 438, 456–457, 479, 504, 523, his correspondence with Government, Lord Linlithgow and Wavell, 66, 434, 443–444, his draft resolution at Allahabad W.C. meeting, 583–585, his fast, 62, 65, 67–71, 75, his release, 407, 411, his talks with Jinnah, 462, 478, 486, his two proposals to the Government, 445–446, 455–457, rumours that he had written to Viceroy about August resolution, 183–186, 194, 203, 213; on Mahtab Harekrushna, 591; on Malabar, 503–504; on *Mathematics for the Million*, 128; on Maulana Azad, 15, 20, 22–23, 38–39, 50, 81–82, 84, 89–90, 99, 101, 105–106, 118, 128, 297, 328, 595, 608, drafting his letter to Lord Linlithgow, 62, heated argument with him, 211–212, his analysis of developments after Cripps Mission, 580, 582–583, his proposal for withdrawal of August resolution, 276–281, 290–292, 296–297, his suggestion for writing to Government regarding transfer from Ahmadnagar Fort, 568, his wife's death, 101–102, 105, 113; on Mehr Taj, her engagement and marriage, 454, 525; on mental depression, 221; on mental passivity, 384; on Mir Taqi Mir, 237–238; on Mohammad Yunus, 85; on Mohanlal Nehru, 317; on money, 397, 588–589; on Moti Katju, 146, 148, 162; on Motilal Nehru, 109–110, 259, 422, his law library, 553–554; on mountains, 596;

on Mridula Sarabhai, 178, 181, 484, 697; on Mudie, Sir R.F., his statement in Central Assembly on internees in Ahmadnagar, 558; on Munshi, K.M., 513; on murderer, 667, on Muslim League, 92, 133–134, 216–217, 244, 283–284, 708, its reaction to Congress victory in Bijnor election, 692; on Mussolini's resignation, 194–195; on Narendra Deva, 187, 291, 527–528, 595, 623; on Raja Narendra Nath's death, 579–580, 590, on Naresh Katju, 316, on national movement, 216, on National Planning Committee's office, 64; on National Week, 98; on nature, 74, and human beings, 104; on nature-cure, 439, 442; on Nayantara Pandit, 32, 51–52, 235, 246–247, 275, on necessity of experience of jail life for judges and jail officials, 110–111, on neck exercises, 239–240; on 'Nehru', spelling of, 505–506, on new books, 15; on new century, 104, on newspaper report about his illness, 481, 484, 486–487; on new standard time, 16, on New Year, 321–322, 530, 533; on New Year's eve (1935), 663, on Nietzsche, 231; on nonviolence and violence, 92, on nonviolent satyagraha, 11; on North West Frontier Province, by-elections in, 217; on observing absolute silence, 426, on old and new generation, 52, 143, 555–556, on One World, 322–323, 364, on order of externment on Indira Gandhi and Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, 142, 144–147, 149, 166, on ordinances passed by the Government, 717, on organic connection with nature or life, 231–232, on Orissa states, mass movement in, 709, on Other Men's Flowers, 574; on Padmaja Naidu, 117, 181, 643–647, 649–650, 653, 655, 663–664, 666–669, 671, 673–674, 676–679, 685–686, 690–693, 695–696; on Padmavati Nehru's marriage, 603–604, 610, on Pakistan, 244; on Pant, G.B., 297, 382, 402, 543–545, 547–548, 581, 593–594, 598, 600, on Pattabhi Sitaramayya, 12; on Persian, learning of, 316, 483, 510, 521; on pets, 35, on philosophy, 231; on physical exercises, 117; on pictures and moods of a person, 180, on Plan for the Economic Development of India, 353, on Plato, 14, on playing about with earth, 21, 24; on political prisoners and the Government, 344; on political sufferers' distress relief, 463; on Prafulla Chandra Ghose, 291–292, 523, 532, 537, his release, 543; on Pre-Buddhist India, 513, on pregnancy, 362, 385; on price control, 458; on Prison Days, 637; on prisoners, 124; on proof reading, 179; on Proust, 14; on provincial governments, attitude of governors and Government of India towards, 717–718, on public speaking, 613, 643–644; on publishers of his books, 400, 677, on publishing houses in India, 554, on publishing Marathi translation of some of his articles, 423; on Punjab politics, 43, on Dr. Purandare, 439, 446, on Puri temple, 657; on Purnima Banerji (Nora), 144, 192, on Pyarelal Katju, 308, 520, 524; on Radhey Shyam Pathak, 604, on Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, 458, 559–560, 602; on Raghunandan Saran, 443; on rainbow, 233, on rainy season in India, 205, on Rajagopalachari, C., 457, 479, 523, his correspondence with Jinnah, 445, his statements, 81, 284–285, 456; on Rajiva Gandhi, 466–471, 474–478, 481, 489–491, 501, 505, 512, 516–517, 520, 528, 533, 537–538, 540, 550–552, 556, 570–571, 574–575, 588, 603, 605, 610, 618, 620–622, 629, 635, on Rajkot, mass movement in, 709; on Rajputana, 314–315, on Raksha Bandhan, 461, on Ranjit Pandit, 174–175, 247, 249, 264, 274–275, 303, 329–331, 646, his death, 332–333, 339–340, on Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix and international crisis, 704–705, on reading Shakuntala in Sanskrit, 84; on right balance between the extrovert and introvert aspects of nature, 590–591, on Robeson Eslanda, 252, 255–256, 546; on Robeson Paul, 256, on Roosevelt, Franklin, 323, his death,

608; on royalty account in London, 246; on rumours of, his arrest, 672–673, his marrying again, 665; on Russia, 300–301; on Russo-German Non-aggression Pact, 716; on rustle of breeze through the deodars, 635; on Sachindra Chandra Kar Gupta's release and re-arrest, 354; on Samroo Begam, 138–139; on *Samvats* 2000 and 2001, 97, 104, 113, 376, 381; on Sanskrit language and literature, 104–105, 112; on Sapru Committee, 523; on Sarojini Naidu, 341, 546; on Satyamurti's death, 87; on science, 19; on *Science for the Citizen*, 22, 77; on *Seeding Democracy*, 632; on selling of his goods, 192–193; on Sendak, M., 570; on sensitive and insensitive people, 78, 361–362; on Shankar (a convict), 28; on Shelley, 52; on Shelley Wang, 249; on Dr. Shirodkar, 555; on Shiva Prasad Gupta, 403; on Sikandar Hayat Khan, 42; on Sind, 650; on Sindhi people, 651; on snow and cold in the North, 544–545; on solar eclipse, 449–450, 458; on solitary living, 350; on sorrow, 26; on *Soviet Communism: A New Civilization*, 146, 149; on Spain Day, 712; on spinning, 31, 176, 187, 209, 228, 230, 235, 239, 262, 299, 301, 335, 378, 388; on *Stacheldrahtfieber* (barbed wire fever), 124; on Stafford Cripps, 311–312; on stars and constellations, 262–263, 293–294; on Subhas Chandra Bose, 696, not joining the C.W.C. of, 711–712; on Sucheta Kripalani, 554; on Suhrid Sarabhai's death, 26; on summer heat, 94, 631; on sunbath, 549; on Swami Sant Deo, 628; on Swami Vivekananda, 614; on Syed Mahmud, 19, 24, 90, 99, 115, 145, 154, 158, 166, 175, 178–179, 187, 299, 324, 432, 503, 510, his family, 168, 295, 440, his release, 488, 494–495, 499–500, 504, his statements about the inmates of Ahmadnagar Fort Jail, 495–498; on taboos, 458; on Tahira Khan, 42; on Tai Chi-tao, 96–97, his gifts, 86–87, visit to India, 719; on tailoring of his clothes, 95; on Tambimuttu, M.J., 427; on Tamil and Telugu women, 654; on Thacker's (publishers), 527; on theatre of Greece and India, 263; on Thibaw's daughter, 683–684; on thought and order of things in the world, 159; on time 325, passage of, 308–309, idea of time in ancient India, 325–326; on training of mind, 416–417; on travelling, 518–519, 540, 564, in India, 618–619; on *Tree, Fruit and Flower of India*, 137; on trekking in the mountains, 619; on ululation, 657; on understanding others, 502–503, 664, 666; on U.P., damage to the crops in, 394; on United States of America, 300–301, friends in, 312, training of young Indians in, 613; on U.S.A. and Russia, 613; on Upadhyaya, S.D., 491; on Urdu language, 223–224; on Urdu, learning of, 22, 45, 78, 84; on Urdu verses, 240, of Akbar, 264, Amir, 190, 233, 267, Anis, 163–164, anonymous poets, 303, 359, Asi, 327, Atish, 169, 305, 318, Ghalib, 120, 128–129, 139–140, 148, 152, 160, 164, 183, 190, 193–194, 209–211, 233, 246, 250–251, 254, 271, 289, 321, 330, Hali, 173, 222, 260, Insha, 226–227, 348, Iqbal, 156, Jurat, 156–157, Mazhar, 224–225, Mir, 148, 238, 240, 267, 348, Mir Dard, 309, 384, Momin, 327, Qaim Chandpuri, 391–392, Taba Tabai, 120, Wazir Lucknavi, 177–178, Zauq, 303, 317; on Vallabhbhai Patel, 145, 154, 175, 279, 291, 311, 402, his views on events prior to August 1942, 585–586; on Vatsala Samant, 320; on Viceroy's Executive Council's Indian members, 29, 89; on Vidyavati Nehru's marriage, 534, 545; on Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, 81–82, 85, 97–99, 120, 153, 165, 167, 205, 208, 240–241, 273–274, 333, 369, 381, 490–491, her decision to shift from Anand Bhawan, 257–258, 261, 269, 272–274, her visit to U.S.A., 487, 496, 512–513, 517–518, 520, 522, 524–525, 543, 567, 587, 612–613, 623, some domestic matters of, 386–387, 393, 414–415, 438; on

Vikramaditya, 376–377; on Virginia Woolf, 232; on visit to Almora, 538–539, Amber, 304, Assam, 693–694, Burma, 681–684, Calcutta, 657–658, Europe, 698–703, 705–706, Karnatak and Maharashtra, 669–671, Kashmir, 627–628, Kulu, 144, 156, London, 171, Orissa, 656–657, Punjab, 645, 648, Sind, 651, south India, 652–654, 657, 659–660, Spain, 700–701; on visiting, Bengal, 670, China, 312, England, 311, foreign countries, 312, Kashmir, 603, places in India, 315, U.S.A., 312; on Walter de la Mare, 448–449; on the War, 101, 130, 186, class of people flourishing during, 621–622, on war and peace, 458; on the War in Europe, 463, on Wavell, A.P., his broadcast about British Government's proposal, 639, his letter to him, 510–511, 574, on Wendell Willkie's death, 488–489, on Willie Munzenburg, 391; on will making, 285–287, 306, 422–423, 480; on Winston Churchill, 311, 429, his message of good wishes, 714, his speeches, 10, 29, 87, 186, on words, 357, on worries, 417; on writing autobiography, 165; on Yunus, Mohammad, 534, 582, 610; on zero, 326
——, Kamala, 69–70, 74, 95 fn, 99–100, 149 fn, 168, 174, 180, 226, 240, 245, 273–274, 340, 358, 396–397, 422, 429, 503, 539, 560
——, Krishanlal, 192–193, 525–526, 529, 534, 610
——, Mohanlal, 76, 192, 206, 317, 693
——, Motilal, 109–110, 250, 259, 273, 336, 396, 422, 505, 509, 539, 553, 560, 590, 614, 628
——, Padmavati, 603, 610
——, Rajan, 55, 174 & fn, 180, 399, 429, 526
——, Rameshwari, 200 & fn, 202, 333, 345, 575, 579 fn, 590
——, R.K., 174 & fn, 399
——, Shivrajvati (Shauna), 534
——, Swarup Rani (Dol Amma), 473, 560, 567, 620, 628
——, Uma, 288
——, Vidyavati, 534, 544–545, 551, 555
Nehru Report, 266, 292, 589–590 & fn
Neogi, Nagendra Nath, 320
Neogy, K.C., 219 & fn
Nepal, 252 fn
New Anthology of Modern Poetry (S. Rodman, ed.), 103
New Book Company, 103
New China (Nym Wales), 452, 477, 559
New Delhi, 161 fn, 275, 341, 450, 674
New Germany in Birth, 499
New Kashmir (All Jammu & Kashmir National Conference), 452, 477
New Recessional and Other Poems (E. Thompson), 41 fn, 79, 309
New Republic, 188, 441
New Statesman, 19, 189, 198, 330, 386 fn, 582
News Chronicle, 445
New York, 125, 178, 230, 235, 246–247, 251, 275, 464, 469, 517, 524–525, 543, 587, 610
Nichols, Beverley, 452, 527 & fn, 606
Nietzsche, F., 231 & fn
Night in Bombay (Louis Bromfield), 111 fn
Nikhilananda, Swami, 541, 562
Nilima Devi, 408 & fn, 554, 557, 562, 565
Nill, John, 79
Nishat Bagh (Srinagar), 620
Nonesuch Press, 84
Nonviolence in Peace & War (Mahatma Gandhi), 541
N.E.F.A., 137 fn
North West Frontier Province, 194, 204, 215 fn, 217 & fn, 284 fn
Nune, Mohamed Yasseen, 6 & fn

O'Faolain, Sean, 559, 576 fn, 596
Ogden, Charles Kay, 605
Oliver Trenton, K.D. (Gilbert Frankau), 647 fn
O'Neill, Eugene, 360 & fn
——, Hugh, 576 fn
One of Us (Gilbert Frankau), 647 & fn
One World (Wendell Willkie), 247 fn, 322, 364, 394, 408, 412, 488

On Living in a Revolution (Julian Huxley), 508, 559
Ooty, 370, 538, 541
Orel, 499
Oriental Treasures (J.K. Katrak), 565
Orissa, 201 & fn, 213, 226, 242–243, 326, 344, 656–657, 709
Ornsholt, Anna, 435–436, 521, 550, 563
Other Men's Flowers (A.P. Wavell, ed.), 510 & fn, 574
Otto, Emil, 119 & fn, 316, 483, 492, 510
Oudh, 600
Oudh and Tirhut Railway, 604
Our Family (Lin Adet *et al*), 380 fn
Outcast (Winwood Reade), 230
Outline of History (H.G. Wells), 128
Outlook on Homo Sapiens (H.G. Wells), 74 fn
Out of the People (J.B. Priestley), 79
Oxford, 416, 422, 515, 705
Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, 225–226, 229
Oxford University Press, 541–542

Pacific Affairs, 188, 229, 404, 441, 461
Pacific Relations Conference (Hot Springs), 525
Pacific War, 67
Padma (publishers), 415
Pahalgam, 628–629
Pakistan, 43 fn, 133 fn, 134 fn, 216 fn, 235 fn, 244, 324, 454 fn, 456 fn
Pakistan (Shaukat Ansari), 527 & fn, 559
Palestine, 460
Palliwal, Jiva Ram, 618
Panchgani, 167, 170, 180, 183, 190–192, 203–205, 208, 219, 263, 536, 639
Pande, Badri Dat, 540
——, Lohia, 270
Pandit, Chandralekha, 11–12, 16, 20, 22, 25–26, 54, 73, 75–78, 80, 83, 85, 96–98, 102, 105, 108, 114–117, 121, 123–124, 129–132, 136, 141, 147, 149–150, 159, 175, 178, 187, 229–230, 235, 246–247, 251, 273, 275, 303–304, 334–335, 369, 387, 401, 403, 411, 414–415, 445, 490, 500, 546, 555, 582, 610, 613, 623
——, Gokul, 369
——, Nayantara, 17, 24–25 & fn, 30, 32, 50–51, 54, 73, 80, 85, 114–115, 117, 121, 123–124, 131–132, 135, 141, 147, 149–150, 159, 175, 178, 181, 187, 230, 246–247, 251, 273, 275, 334–335, 369, 387, 401, 403, 411, 414–415, 445, 490, 500, 610, 613
——, Pratap, 85 & fn, 329, 331–332, 369, 386–387, 393, 414
——, Ranjit, 10 & fn, 12, 26, 28–29, 52, 54, 64, 73–76, 85 fn, 114, 116, 142 fn, 173–174, 189, 247, 249–250, 264, 266, 270, 273–275, 278, 285, 294, 302–304, 310, 317, 321, 326, 329–333, 335, 339, 352, 360, 369, 393, 408, 414, 478, 483, 553, 645–646, 662
——, Rita, 14, 17, 32–33, 51, 54, 80, 85, 369, 387, 415, 462–463, 466, 487, 500, 508, 518, 520, 522, 613
——, Saraswati, 332
——, Vasant, 369
——, Vijaya Lakshmi, 10 & fn, 12, 14 fn–16, 20, 25–26, 54, 64 fn, 73, 75–76, 78, 80–83, 85–86, 94–99, 102–103, 105, 111, 113–114, 116–117, 120, 122, 124, 129–130, 132, 135, 142, 144, 146–147, 149, 151, 153, 155, 158, 164–167, 172–175, 180, 189, 205, 208, 222, 231, 233, 235, 240–241 & fn, 250–251, 253, 257, 259, 261–262, 264–266, 269–270, 272–275, 278, 286, 288, 294, 303–304, 306, 321, 326, 328–334, 339–340, 349, 360, 369, 380–381, 386, 393, 408, 411, 414, 438, 445–448, 450, 454, 458–459, 462–463, 466, 469–470, 478, 483, 486–487, 489–491, 496, 498, 500, 506, 508, 512, 516–518, 520, 522, 524–525, 529, 543, 553–554, 567, 582, 587, 590, 610, 612–613, 623, 633, 637, 662, 696, 700–701, 703, 705–706, 720
Pandya, J.J., 565
——, Kamala Shankar, 477
Pant, G.B., 1, 4 & fn, 6, 29, 40–41, 49, 89, 105, 112, 290–291, 297, 299, 367,

382, 402, 462, 466, 472, 477, 487, 511, 514, 538, 540, 543–545, 547–548, 554, 558 fn, 563, 566, 568–569, 571–572, 581, 593–594, 597–600, 607
Pantopia (Frank Harris), 545
Paradise Lost (John Milton), 271, 480
Parasnath, 419 fn
Paris, 136, 189, 368, 391, 396, 401, 432 fn, 616, 626, 668, 699, 701–702, 704, 706, 712
Parvatipuram, 660
Passionaria—*see* Ibarruri, Dolores
Patel, Maniben, 6 & fn, 178
——, Vallabhbhai, 1, 5–6, 40–41, 47, 49, 89, 90 & fn, 101, 145, 150, 154, 158, 174–175, 229, 277–279, 290–292, 297, 311, 402, 443, 471, 511, 532, 537, 547, 558 fn, 568, 585–588, 593, 598, 608
Pathak, Radhey Shyam, 604 & fn
Patiala, 205
Patna, 316
Patna University, 438 fn
Pearl Harbour, 67 & fn, 255
P.E.N., 328
Penang, 315, 681
Penguin Book Company (Harmondsworth), 677
Penugolanu Agraharam, 659
People's Association (Jaipur), 710
People's War, 576
Pericles, 159
Persia—see Iran
Persian Conversation and Grammar (Emil Otto), 316, 334, 483, 492, 507–508, 510
Persian Self-Taught (Hugo), 316
Peru, 590
Peshawar, 55 fn, 204, 534, 637, 689
Petain, Marshal, 41 fn
Peter the Hermit, 104 & fn
Petroikos, Mrs—*see* Smedley, Agnes
Phaphamow, 340, 599–600, 602
Phelan, Jim, 298, 385
Philippines, 67 fn
Phillips, William, 247 & fn
Pilgrim's Progress (John Bunyan), 79
Pillai, M. Krishna, 396
Pindari glacier, 539, 611
Pioneer, 146 fn, 192
Piura, 539
Plan for the Economic Development of India (J.R.D. Tata *et al*), 336 & fn, 353
Planning Commission, 219 fn, 548 fn
Plato, 9, 14, 16 & fn, 22, 77, 79, 125, 231, 312, 351, 500 & fn
Plays & Stories (A. Chekhov), 125
Pocha's (Pune), 74, 111, 147
Poems (Ezra Pound), 302
Poems (Rabindranath Tagore), 408
Poetry, 427 fn
Poetry in Wartime (M.J. Tambimuttu, ed.), 407, 427 fn
Poet's Notebook (Edith Sitwell), 305, 407
Poland, 77 fn, 522, 615–616, 716
Polish Committee of National Liberation (Lublin), 522 fn
Polish Corridor, 615
Pondicherry, 652–654, 660, 692
Pool of Vishnu (L.H. Myers), 441 & fn
Poona—*see* Pune
Port Said, 706
Postgate, R.W., 79
Pound, Ezra, 302
Prague, 237, 615–616, 702–703
Prasad, Dwarka, 529
——, Mrs, 463
——, Narmada, 599
——, Rajendra, 488, 585 fn
Prayag, 604, 606
Prayers, Praises & Psalms (V. Raghavan), 530
Pre Buddhist India (Ratilal N. Mehta), 513, 530
Premchand (Indar Nath Madan), 477
Prescriber, 257, 270
Priestley, J.B., 79
Principles of Economic Planning (K.T. Shah), 64 fn, 545
Prison Days (Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit), 165 & fn, 633, 637
Problems of Men (John Dewey), 147 fn
Prophet (Khalil Gibran), 388, 453
Proust, Marcel, 9 & fn, 14, 116
Pulitzer Prize, 136
Pune, 7 & fn, 28, 150, 157, 174, 176, 178–179, 183, 199, 205, 223, 225, 304, 359, 363, 394–395, 397, 405,

409–412, 414, 423, 425, 427–429, 434–435, 441, 446–448, 452, 548
Punjab, 43 & fn, 200, 202, 242, 252 fn, 579 fn, 590, 620, 644–645, 648, 651, 689, 717
Punjab Chamber of Commerce, 674 fn
Punjab National Bank (Allahabad), 304, 509, 536, 604, 616
Punjab Provincial Workers' Conference, 569 fn
Puran Chand, 618
Purandare, N.A., 362 & fn, 373, 385, 428, 435, 439, 446
Puri, 657
Pushpa, 461
Pyarelal, 6 fn, 342

Qaim Chandpuri, 391 fn
Quantum Theory, 536
Quakers, 313, 449
Quest for Certainty (John Dewey), 147 fn
Quit India Movement—*see* August Movement
Quit India resolution—*see* August resolution

Rabindranath through Western Eyes (Alexander Aronson), 576
Race, Reason & Rubbish (G. Dahlberg), 79
Radhakrishnan, S., 344 & fn, 545, 554
Radical Socialist Party (France), 704 fn
Raghubir, 479
Rahim, Abdul, 224 & *fn*
Rai, Himansu, 665 fn
Rainbow (Wanda Wasilewska), 589
Rajagopalachari, C., 81 & fn, 98 fn, 200 fn, 284 & fn, 445 & fn, 456–457, 479, 481, 523, 580 fn
Raja Ram Motilal Guzder & Co. (Allahabad), 418 fn
Rajasthan, 346
Rajatarangini (Kalhana), 64, 554
Rajkot, 709
——, affair, 185, 456
——, Maharaja of, 185 fn
Rajpur, 356
Rajputana, 315, 520
Rajshahi Jail, 112
Rajya Sabha, 6 fn
Rama, 479
Ramakrishna and His Disciples (Christopher Isherwood), 633 fn
Ramakrishna Mission, 326, 524
Ramakrishna Paramahansa, 609, 616, 626
Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre (New York), 541 & fn
Ramgarh (U.P.), 539
Ramgarh, Congress session at, 457
Ramlal, Dewan, 193, 563 & fn, 619
Rangoon, 53, 211, 617, 680–684, 687
Rangoon Times, 681
Ranikhet, 539, 626, 634
Ranpur, 709
Rao, Raja, 287, 415 fn
——, Shiva B., 522
Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix (World Peace Congress), 704–705
Ratnagiri, 683
Ratnakar Press (Sangli), 395, 404 fn–405, 409
Razor's Edge (Somerset Maugham), 519, 609
Reader's Digest, 80, 125, 168, 180, 188, 266, 287, 386, 394, 404, 441, 616
Reade, Winwood, 230
Real and the Negative (B.K. Mullick), 452
Recent Judgements in India, 248 fn, 257, 292, 545
Reconstruction in Philosophy (John Dewey), 147 fn
Red Book (National Planning Committee), 266
Reddipalli, 659
Rede Lecture, 126 fn
Reed, Douglas, 79, 307, 339
Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time (Harold Laski), 363, 438, 516
Reichstag, 195 fn
Religion without Revelation (Julian Huxley), 302
Renaissance of Hinduism (D.S. Sarma), 530
Renaissance of Physics (Karl Kelchner Darrow), 605

Report No. 17 (Joseph Stalin), 499
Republic (Plato), 9, 14, 77, 79
Reshaping Man's Heritage (Julian Huxley *et al*), 508, 530
Reuter, 672
Reveille in Washington (M.K. Leech), 79
Reveille, Thomas, 103
Reynolds, Reginald, 305, 408
Rheims, 617 fn
Richard, Madame Mirra (The Mother), 653 & *fn*
Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India (Garratt and Thompson), 335, 363
Rise of American Civilization, (Charles and Mary Beard), 194 & fn, 300
Rtu samhara (Kalidasa), 52 & fn, 266, 274, 285
River of Kings—see *Rajatarangini*
Riviera, 706
R.K. Railway, 604
Robeson, Eslanda Goode, 247, 252, 255–256, 275, 546
——, Paul, 255–256, 275
——, Pauhe, 256
Roerich, Devika Rani, 144, 665 & *fn*
——, George, 271
——, Nicholas Konstantin, 302
——, Svetoslav, 144, 271, 398, 665 fn
Roget's Thesaurus, 116
Rolland, Romain, 351, 609, 616, 626
Rome, 616
Room of One's Own (Virginia Woolf), 432
Roosevelt, Eleanor, 275 & *fn*
——, F.D., 40 fn, 202 & fn, 247 fn, 275 *fn*, 323 & fn, 460 fn, 608
Root and the Flower (L.H. Myers), 441 & fn
Round Table Conference, 99
Rowse, A.L., 559 & fn
Royal Asiatic Society, 76, 189
Royal Society, 605 fn
Roy, B.C., 349, 406, 655, 660, 691
Rugby Hotel (Matheran), 403
Rukwa (a convict), 514
Rupa & Co. (Calcutta), 526, 559
Rupmati, 519
Russell, Bertrand, 420
——, George William, 336
Russia at War (Ilya Ehrenburg), 304, 408, 452
Russia, Soviet (*Soviet Union*), 2, 77 fn, 127 fn, 195 & fn, 216, 228, 256, 271, 300–301, 312, 404 fn, 420, 430 fn, 438 fn, 448, 453, 522, 546 fn, 549–550, 613, 615, 701, 703
Russia Triumphant (George Sava), 546, 549, 554
Russian Fables, 187
Russian Newsreel (C. Haldane), 79
Russian Primer with a Dictionary of About 1200 Words (Vladimir Shibayev), 398, 412
Russian Revolution, 210, 510
Ryan, Thomas, 305

Saar, 615
Sabarmati, 568
Sagittarius, 386 & fn, 477
Saha, Meghnad, 320 & *fn*
Sahai, Har, 618
Saharanpur, 694
Said ur Rahman, Syed, 368
Sakina Mansion (Bombay), 386, 397, 399, 403
Salur, 659
Samant, Vatsala, 165, 170, 254, 265, 317, 320, 367
Sambamoorty, B., 655
Sampurnanand, 541
Samroo, 138
——, Begam, 138–139
San Francisco, 623, 632
Sangli, 395, 404 fn–405, 409
Sanskrit Academy (Madras), 97
Sanskrit Drama (A.B. Keith), 263
Santiniketan, 40, 320, 395
Sapru, Anand, 317, 326 & fn
——, Sir Tej Bahadur, 81 fn, 326 fn, 628
Sapru Committee, 523
Sarabhai, Ambalal, 26 fn, 64
——, Bharati, 140, 223, 239, 245, 336, 637, 697
——, Mridula, 178, 181, 317, 350, 386, 411, 450, 464–465, 484, 524, 593, 597, 697

——, Suhrid, 26 & fn
Saran, Raghunandan, 440, 443
——, Ram, 618
Sardhana, 138
Sarkar, Nalini Ranjan, 280
Sarma, D.S., 530
Sasta Sahitya Mandal (Delhi), 400, 432
Satyamurti, S., 87 & fn, 654
Sava, George, 546, 549, 554
Scanlon, J., 79
School and Society (John Dewey), 147 fn
Science for the Citizen (Lancelot Hogben), 22, 77, 79
Science in Progress (George Alfred Baitsell, ed.), 605
Scindia School (Gwalior), 375, 425, 442, 451, 592
Scotland, 694
Sculpture Inspired by Kalidasa (C. Siwaramamurti), 97, 155
Sebastopol, 499
Seeding Democracy (Maria Lorenzini), 632
Semushkin, Tikhov, 559
Sen, Basiwar, 540 & *fn*
——, Ela, 230
——, Gertrude Emerson, 540 & fn
Sendak, M., 8, 50, 214, 290, 297, 324, 370, 402, 487–488, 494, 500, 510, 514, 523, 543–544, 547–548, 566, 570, 581, 588, 598
Sen Gupta, Nellie, 660
Sepoy Mutiny, 444
Seth, Damodar Swarup, 618 & *fn*
Sethna, Janaki, 288 & fn
Sevagram, 404 fn, 490–491, 500
Shabda Sagar, 239 fn
Shah, Anupchand, 479
——, K.T., 64, 353 & fn, 545, 554
——, Popatlal, 432 & fn
——, Ratanlal D., 404–405, 427
Shah Alam, 309
Shahjahanpur, 599
Shah Jehan, 223
Shaikh (I.G. of Police), 618
Shakespearean Tragedy (A.C. Bradley), 19 & fn
Shakespeare, William, 498
Shakuntala (Kalidasa), 43, 84, 116
Shalimar Bagh (Srinagar), 620
Shamshere Singh, Beryl, 534
Shanghai, 67 fn
Shankar (a convict), 28
Shankaracharya hill (Srinagar), 627–628
Shankarlal, 674 & *fn*
Sharma (?), 233
Sharma (jailor), 635
Shastri, Lal Bahadur, 594, 599
Shaw, George Bernard, 105, 110, 127, 526–527, 551, 589
Shelley, P.B., 52
Shergil, Amrita, 289, 295, 298–299
Shibayev, Vladimir, 398
Shih-hua Shen, 457
Shih Nai-an, 22 fn
Shikarpur, 133 fn
Shillong, 694
Shirodkar, V.N., 439 & *fn*, 446–448, 555
Shivaji Park (Bombay), 5, 6 fn
Shridharani, Krishnalal, 147 & *fn*, 187, 302, 398 & fn, 408
Shukla, Chandrashankar, 535 & fn
Siam, 720
Signet Press (Calcutta), 554
Simla, 315, 544, 639 fn
Simon Commission, 99
Sinclair, Upton, 79, 136 & *fn*
Sind, 49, 133 & fn, 194, 202, 215, 242, 284 fn, 593, 650–651
Singapore, 67 fn, 681
Singh, Chandra, 181, 529
——, Dulip, 200
——, Lall, 618 & *fn*
——, Maharaj, 200
——, Maharaja Partap, 628
——, Mangal, 638
——, Rajendra Pal, 618 & *fn*
——, Ranjit, 473
Sing Sing Prison (New York), 110
Sinn Fein, 63 & fn
Sirius (Olaf Stapledon), 519
Sitaramayya, Pattabhi, 1, 12, 49–50, 89, 174, 568–569, 581, 593, 597–598
Sitwell, Edith, 302, 305, 407
——, Osbert, 431 & *fn*
Sivaliks, 648
Siwaramamurti, C., 97
Skoda Munition Works (Czechoslovakia), 703
Smedley, Agnes, 401 & *fn*, 438, 505, 559

Smith, W. Cantwell, 266, 541
Smolensk, 195 fn
Snowdon, 646
Social Function of Science (J.D. Bernal), 172
Socialism Reconsidered (M.R. Masani), 530
Socialists (Indian), 569
Socialist Sixth of the World (Dean of Canterbury), 559
Socrates, 500 fn
Sofia, 577
Sohrab, Mirza Ahmad, 79
Sonemarg, 631
Soong, Mayling—*see* Chiang Kai shek, Madame
Sophocles' King Oedipus (W.B. Yeats), 408, 477
South Africa, 159
Southern California University, 691 fn
Soviet & Tsarist Siberia (George Borodin), 559
Soviet Communism: A New Civilization (Sydney & Beatrice Webb), 127 fn, 146, 149, 265
Soviet Strength (Dean of Canterbury), 559
Soviet Union News (Delhi), 398
Spain, 23, 237, 522, 699–700, 702, 712–713
Spanish Civil War, 461 fn, 557
Sparkenbroke (Charles Morgan), 293, 334
Special Courts Ordinance, 197 fn
Spoil of Europe (Thomas Reveille), 103
Spotlight on Yugoslavia, 499
Sri Lanka, 70, 440 fn, 482, 629
Srinagar, 317, 481, 563, 579, 590, 610, 612, 615–616, 618, 621–622, 627–628
Srinivasiini, U., 395
Sri Prakasa, 465, 626
Srivastava, Gopinath, 215
——, Sir J.P., 717 & *fn*
Stalingrad, 195 fn, 616
Stalin, Joseph, 499
Stapledon, Olaf, 519
State in Theory & Practice (Harold Laski), 288
State Trials, 553
Statesman, 124, 199–200, 243 & fn
States' People's Conference, 710, 718
Steed, W., 79
Stewart, Sir Thomas, 203 & fn
Stinnes, 125
Stolper, Gustav, 498
Stopler, Eustace, 298
Story of Burma, 687
Story of Confucius (Carl Crow), 407, 452
Story of India (Frank Moraes), 79
Story of Money (G.D. Birla and Parasnath), 419 fn
Story of My Life (Morarji Desai), 5 fn
Stowe, Leland, 438
Strangers in India (Penderel Moon), 200 fn, 557
Strategy of Indirect Approach (B.H. Liddell Hart), 302
Strathnaver, s s., 706
Stuart, Muriel, 182 fn
Students' Practical Hindustani—English Dictionary, 596, 609, 616
Study of History (Arnold J. Toynbee), 565 & fn
Subbarayan, P., 215
Sudetenland, 615, 703
Sukkur, 49 fn
Sulabha Rashtriya Granthimala (Pune), 359, 395
Sultanpur, 153
Sundaram, C.R. (Chinni), 4–5, 35, 63–64, 179, 356, 497
Sung Dynasty, 87, 97
Surat, 214 fn
Surma Valley, 693–694
Suvaranakshi, 264
Swami, Purohit, 336, 363
Swann's Way (Marcel Proust), 116
Swaraj Bhawan (Allahabad), 64, 253, 270, 304, 473
Swift, Jonathan, 79
Switzerland, 105, 250, 259, 396, 422, 536 fn, 701–702

Taba Tabai, Haider Ali Nazm, 120 & fn
Tagore, Rabindranath, 408, 440 fn, 614, 647, 662, 665 fn
——, Soumyendranath, 535 & fn
Tagore Town (Allahabad), 95, 126

Tai Chi-tao, 86–87, 96, 719
Taj Mahal (Agra), 666
Takru, Maharaj Bahadur, 326 & fn
Tales from Shakespeare (Charles Lamb), 484
Talking to India (George Orwell, ed.), 364
Talleyrand, 209 & *fn*
Tamagna, Frank M., 230
Tambimuttu, M.J., 407, 427 & fn
Tamil Nad, 654
Tandon, Purushottamdas, 114, 599, 602
Tan Yun-Shan, 719
Taoism, 157 fn
Taraporevala (Bombay), 18, 103
Targets (Sagittarius), 386, 477
Tartary, 260 fn
Tata, J.R.D., 336, 353 & fn
Tata's (firm), 336, 347
Tel Aviv, 400
Tendulkar, D.G., 172, 180, 438, 443, 453, 464–465, 545
Ten Principal Upanishads (W.B. Yeats & Purohit Swami), 336, 363
Thacker's (Bombay), 527
Thakurdas, Purushottamdas, 336, 353
That Bad Man (W. Steed), 79
Thein Pe, M., 230
Theory of Relativity, 536
Theosophical Society (Madras), 509 fn, 543 & fn, 596
They Shall Not Sleep (Leland Stowe), 438
Those Foreigners (R.W. Postgate and V. Aylmer), 79
Thoughts & Glimpses (Aurobindo Ghose), 477
Three Comedies (B. Bjornson), 79
Three Dramas (B. Bjornson), 79
Tibet, 264
Time, 19, 80, 188–189, 247 fn, 287, 322, 388, 399, 441, 560, 596, 606, 616
Time and Tide, 237 fn, 582
Time Must Have a Stop (Aldous Huxley), 531, 609
Times, 456 fn
Times Book Club (London), 189, 246
Times of India, 9, 11–12 & fn, 115, 161, 406
Timur, 52–53
Tisva, 599
Tod, James, 344 & fn, 346–347, 385, 403
To Europa (Raman Vakil), 576
Tokyo, 213
Toller, Ernst, 245, 390–391, 644
Tolstoy, Alexei, 559
——, Leo, 458, 504, 508, 526, 555
Tomorrow, 287, 298, 415 & fn, 477
Tomorrow is Ours (Khwaja Ahmad Abbas), 415, 477
Tom Sawyer (Mark Twain), 180
To the Lighthouse (Virginia Woolf), 232
Towards Angkor (H.G. Quaritch Wales), 305

Vienna, 701–702
View of the Gita (Morarji Desai), 5 fn
Vikramaditya, 376–377
Vilad, 598–599
Virgil, 79
Virginia Woolf (E.M. Forster), 126
Vishakhadatta, 54 fn
Vishva-Bharati, 432–433, 719
Vishva-Bharati, 453, 576
Vitastha, 620, 626
Vivekananda Laboratory (Almora), 540 fn
Vivekananda, Swami, 562, 609, 614, 616, 626
Vizianagaram, 659–660
Voiceless India (Gertrude E. Sen), 540 fn
Voltaire, 77, 79, 125, 168, 261
Vyas, Braj Mohan, 321 & *fn*

Wadhwani, Hemandas, 215 fn
Wadia, Sophia, 328 & *fn*
Wahid, 438
Walden (H.D. Thoreau), 554
Waldorf Astoria Hotel (New York), 525
Wales, H.G. Quaritch, 305
——, Nym, 64, 116, 452, 477, 559
Waley, Arthur, 183 & *fn*
Wall, W.G.P., 535
Walsh, Richard J., 124, 161, 163, 172, 188, 247, 316, 368, 386, 393, 411, 441, 464, 555, 582, 606
Wanderer Between Two Worlds (Norman De Mattos Bentwich), 79
Wang, Shelley, 249
War and Peace (Leo Tolstoy), 458
War of Liberation (Joseph Stalin), 499
War Prose (D.F. Karaka and G.N. Acharya), 477
Wardha, 4 fn, 90 fn, 449, 495, 646, 671–672, 687
Warning to the West (Krishnalal Shridharani), 398, 404, 408
Warsaw, 616
Washington, 195, 275
Wasilewska, Wanda, 589
Watal, Avtar Krishna, 622
Wavell, A.P. 1st earl, 185 & *fn*, 277, 279, 285, 304–305, 311, 341 & fn, 364, 382, 402, 434, 444, 445 fn, 456 fn–457, 494 fn, 504, 510–511, 515, 523, 532, 546, 559, 571–572 & fn, 574, 589, 625 & fn, 630, 639 & fn
Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal (Penderel Moon, ed.), 200 fn
Wazir, Khwaja Mohammed (of Lucknow), 177 & *fn*
Webb, Beatrice, 127 & *fn*, 146, 149, 265–266
——, Sydney, 127 & *fn*, 146, 149, 265–266
Wellesley College (U.S.A.), 114, 117, 230, 275, 303, 335, 401, 403, 623
Well of the People (Bharati Sarabhai), 140 & fn, 223
Wells, H.G., 74 & fn, 79, 128, 304, 317, 417
We Never Die (D.F. Karaka), 452
Wen Tien-hsaing, 87 & fn
Wen Yuan-ning, 27 & fn
West Bengal, 1 fn
Western Ghat, 167
Westminster, 63 fn
Weston, Christine, 455, 508
What Happened in Burma (M. Thein Pe), 230
What Happened in History (Vere Gordon Childe), 554
When the Moon Died (Nilima Devi), 557, 562, 565
Where Are We? (Jawaharlal Nehru), 713
Whitehall, 195
Wide India Co. (Assam), 423
Wilde, Oscar, 465
Wilkinson, Ellen, 401
Willingdon, Lady, 399
Willkie, Wendell, 247 & *fn*, 322–323 & fn, 364, 394, 408, 412, 488
Wingate, Orde, 146 fn
Wingate's Phantom Army (W.G. Burchett), 452–453
Wisdom of China and India (Liu Yutang), 305
With Love and Irony (Lin Yutang), 9, 14, 79
With No Regrets (Krishna Hutheesing), 35 & fn
Wives of Famous Men (Ela Sen), 230
Women—East and West (Magnus Hirschfield), 687 & fn

Women Writers in Sanskrit, 112
Woodstock (Mussoorie), 646, 648
Woolf, Virginia, 103, 126 & fn, 232 & fn, 245, 432
World of Yesterday (Stefan Zweig), 304
World's End (Upton Sinclair), 136 fn
World Without End (Gilbert Frankau), 647 fn
Wu Ching-en, 183 & fn

Yasovarman (of Kanauj), 263 fn
Yeats, W.B., 232 & fn, 356 fn, 363, 403, 477
Yellamanchilli, 659
Yeravda Jail, 4, 6–8, 76, 105, 175, 178, 568, 593, 598, 608
Yogendra Deva, 527 & fn
You Can't Be too Careful (H.G. Wells), 79, 304, 317
Yucatan, 589
Yu Chiaoli, 31 & fn
Yugoslavia, 577
Yunus, Mohammad, 55 & fn, 65, 95, 117, 135, 141, 159, 172, 238, 368, 452, 454, 534, 582, 610, 612, 633, 637

Zauq, Muhammad Ibrahim, 303 & fn, 317 & fn, 352
Zilliacus, K., 455
Zimmern, Sir Alfred, 45 & fn, 155, 159
Zinat Mahal, 53
Zuleikha Begum, 89 & fn, 99, 101, 105, 113
Zutshi, Laddo Ram, 317
——, Ladli Prasad, 15, 42–45, 51–52, 64, 181, 253, 270, 272, 286, 294, 413, 435–438, 445, 479, 552
——, Sham Kumari, 161 & fn, 163
Zweig, Stefan, 304

Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru

AT SIMLA, JULY 1945

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Volume Fourteen

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FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling — these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of the East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil

liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles, both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the 'third world' as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.

New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

EDITORIAL NOTE

This volume begins with the release of Jawaharlal on 15 June 1945. Though confident that the end of the raj was near, Jawaharlal did not, whatever the British proposals and assurances, envisage an immediate transfer of power. He justified the August movement, warned of upheavals throughout the country, applauded the role of the Indian National Army and sought to resist the forces which threatened Indian unity. He also raised his voice in support of all nations struggling for freedom and thought in terms of an Asian federation and a new world order.

The Simla Conference convened by the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, at the end of the war, was allowed by him to collapse because of his unwillingness to stand up to Jinnah. Thereafter came the elections to the Central and provincial assemblies. On 19 February 1946, the Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, announced that a Cabinet Mission would be going out to India.

Much of the material of this volume has been selected from the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru. The cooperation extended by the Nehru Memorial Library is acknowledged. J.N. Correspondence refers to his letters in 120 bound volumes; some other letters of his in the Nehru Memorial Library are referred to as belonging to the J.N. Papers. Shrimati Indira Gandhi has made available to us Jawaharlal's letters to her. The National Archives of India and the Maharashtra Government have authorised the utilisation of material in their possession. *The Bombay Chronicle*, *The Hindustan Times*, *The Tribune*, *The Leader*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *The Statesman*, *The Times of India* and *The Hindu* have allowed us to reprint the texts of speeches and statements first published by them. The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, has permitted the reprint of extracts from six items in *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Volume VI. The India Office Library has allowed us to reproduce two extracts from R.G. Casey's diary. One letter has been taken from the Palme Dutt Papers in the office of the Communist Party of Great Britain. The text of one interview has been reproduced with the permission of the Archives on Contemporary History in the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Some letters, written to Frances Gunther, which belong chronologically to earlier volumes, have been included in the appendix.

CONTENTS

1. Simla Conference and After

1	First Thoughts on Coming Out of Jail	15 June	1945	1
2	Objectives and Aims	15 June	1945	3
3	The Need for Drastic Changes	17 June	1945	4
4	Refusal to Comment on Wavell Plan	17 June	1945	5
5	The Martyrs of 1942	18 June	1945	7
6	Interview to the Press	19 June	1945	9
7	The Task of the Simla Conference	20 June	1945	10
8	The Nature of India's Problems	21 June	1945	12
9	Warning against False Moves	21 June	1945	13
10	A Stop Gap Plan	23 June	1945	15
11	Instructions to the Congress Delegation	25 June	1945	22
12	Responsibility for the August Disturbances	28 June	1945	23
13	The Chances of Success	30 June	1945	27
14	The Prospects for the Future	1 July	1945	29
15	The Will to be Free	1 July	1945	32
16	Wavell's Report of his Interview with Jawaharlal	2 July	1945	34
17	Progressive Socialism for India	8 July	1945	35
18	On Muslim League's Cooperation	11 July	1945	37
19	The End of Domination	13 July	1945	38
20	A Clash of Outlooks	14 July	1945	40
21	The Character of the Muslim League	14 July	1945	45
22	On his Talks with the Viceroy	14 July	1945	46
23	No Cause for Despondency	15 July	1945	47

24	On Excluded Areas	15 July	1945	48
25	Slums in Simla	16 July	1945	48
26	The Absurdity of Partition	17 July	1945	49
27	In Defence of the August Rising	17 July	1945	54
28	The Tasks Ahead	18 July	1945	57
29	Freedom the Real Issue	22 July	1945	60
30	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	26 July	1945	60
31	On the Labour Party's Victory	1 August	1945	62
32	To the Editor, The Hindu	10 August	1945	63
33	Self-determination without Compulsion	16 August	1945	65
34	On Mahendra Chowdhury's Execution	16 August	1945	66
35	His Work in India	17 August	1945	67

2. Congress and Elections
I. The Approach

1	Get Rid of the Fear Complex	17 August	1945	71
2	Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon	22 August	1945	74
3	To Mahatma Gandhi	27 August	1945	74
4	To Partap Singh Kairon	1 September	1945	75
5	To Mohamed Yasin	1 September	1945	78
6	To Abul Kalam Azad	1 September	1945	79
7	To V.K. Krishna Menon	3 September	1945	80
8	Cable to Pulin Seal	9 September	1945	84
9	The Struggle of 1942 and After	22 September	1945	84
10	The New Proposals	22 September	1945	87
11	Direct Approach to Muslim Masses	23 September	1945	88
12	The Nation's Party	24 September	1945	92
13	To V.K. Krishna Menon			95
14	To Mohammed Yunus	1 October	1945	99
15	To V.K. Krishna Menon	3 October	1945	100
16	To Ghanshyam Singh Gupta	5 October	1945	102

17	The Spontaneous Revolution	6 October	1945	103
18	To Vallabhbhai Patel	10 October	1945	104
19	Draft Manifesto For Central Assembly Elections	10 October	1945	105
20	To Cyril Modak	11 October	1945	109
21	To V.K. Krishna Menon	11 October	1945	110
22	To Jogendra Singh	16 October	1945	111
23	To E.G. Suchling	16 October	1945	112
24	To V.K. Krishna Menon	30 October	1945	113
25	To Vallabhbhai Patel	31 October	1945	114
26	To Abul Kalam Azad	31 October	1945	115
27	Wavell's Record of his Interview with Jawaharlal	3 November	1945	116
28	To Abul Kalam Azad	16 November	1945	117
29	To Vallabhbhai Patel	26 November	1945	121
30	To Abul Kalam Azad	27 November	1945	124
31	To Mohammed Yunus	30 November	1945	125
32	Jai Hind!	30 November	1945	125
33	Maurice Hallett	6 December	1945	128
34	Initiative on India	7 December	1945	130
35	To Gopichand Bhargava	29 December	1945	132
36	To Ghulam Ali	11 January	1946	133
37	To Frances Gunther	12 January	1946	134
38	To Fenner Brockway	14 January	1946	136
39	To V.K. Krishna Menon	17 January	1946	137
40	To Stafford Cripps	27 January	1946	138
41	To V.K. Krishna Menon	28 January	1946	147
42	To Ali Zaheer	30 January	1946	148
43	To Hansraj Muljee	4 February	1946	149
44	To V.K. Krishna Menon	5 February	1946	150
45	To Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee	9 February	1946	151

2. Congress and Elections
II. The Campaign in the Provinces

THE PUNJAB AND THE N.W.F.P.

1	Post-War Problems	21 August	1945	155
2	A New Awareness	24 August	1945	157

3	Challenge to the Punjab Government	24 August	1945	159
4	Pakistan an Outmoded Idea	25 August	1945	161
5	The Importance of the Coming Elections	26 August	1945	163
6	Time for Action, not for Slogans	27 August	1945	166
7	Strengthen the Congress	27 August	1945	167
8	Call for Removal of Ban Orders	27 August	1945	170
9	Parting Message to the Punjab	28 August	1945	172
10	Capture Power for the Masses	30 August	1945	172
11	Towards Freedom	18 November	1945	173
12	On the Brink of a Mighty Revolution	18 November	1945	175
13	On the Sikh Problem	18 November	1945	177
14	The Lahore Conspiracy Case Detenus	20 November	1945	178
15	On his Second Tour of the Punjab	20 November	1945	179
16	Planned Visit to the North West Frontier Province	20 November	1945	180
17	Message for Punjab Voters	29 December	1945	180
18	The Message of Swaraj	21 January	1946	181
19	The End of the Raj	21 January	1946	182
20	The Larger Perspective	22 January	1946	182
21	History in the Making	22 January	1946	183
22	Time for India to be Free	26 January	1946	184
23	No Going Back	26 January	1946	185

DELHI

1	On the Popularity of the Congress	28 August	1945	186
2	Danger of Pakistan Mentality	29 August	1945	187
3	Congress to Contest with Full Strength	29 August	1945	189

4	Subjection the Greatest Calamity	3 November	1945	194

THE UNITED PROVINCES

1	Errors in the Electoral Rolls	2 September	1945	197
2	Congress Candidates for Muslim Seats	8 September	1945	199
3	Call for Sacrifices	9 September	1945	199
4	Congress Strengthened by the 1942 Struggle	12 September	1945	201
5	Brutal Treatment of Undertrials	29 September	1945	203
6	The Muslim League and Violence	1 October	1945	204
7	Independence in Three Years	2 October	1945	205
8	The Case for the Congress	4 October	1945	209
9	Voting Facilities for Members of Armed Services	10 October	1945	212
10	Strengthen the Congress	11 October	1945	212
11	The Congress Represents the People	11 October	1945	214
12	Bravery and Determination	12 October	1945	217
13	Tribute to People of Ballia District	12 October	1945	218
14	Indictment of British Officers	13 October	1945	219
15	Swaraj for the People	14 October	1945	221
16	Appeal for Election Fund	15 October	1945	223
17	The Position of Women in India	29 October	1945	224
18	The Inevitability of Revolution	29 October	1945	225
19	Congress Strength and Popularity	24 November	1945	226
20	The Increasing Strength of the People	27 November	1945	227
21	Aim High at a Free India	26 January	1946	229
22	The Folly of Disorder and Violence	26 January	1946	229
23	Advice to Villagers	1 February	1946	232
24	The Martyrs of 1942	3 February	1946	232

25	No Alternative to the Congress	6 February	1946	234
26	Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee	6 February	1946	236
27	The Congress and Religious Freedom	7 February	1946	237
28	Revolt if Famine Comes	8 February	1946	238
29	Interference in Elections	8 February	1946	239
30	The Goal in Sight	8 February	1946	239
31	Message of Hope to Villagers	9 February	1946	240
32	An Old and Feeble Empire	10 February	1946	241
33	Freedom the Main Issue	11 February	1946	243
34	On the Threshold	13 February	1946	244
35	Resist Police Excesses	13 February	1946	246
36	Deaths from Hunger Will be Avenged	14 February	1946	247
37	Corruption in the Services	14 February	1946	248
38	Win or Perish	15 February	1946	248
39	Congress Refusal to Join Food Mission	17 February	1946	249

BENGAL

1	Message to Bengal	7 December	1945	251
2	Need for a United Front	7 December	1945	251
3	Pulsation of New Life	10 December	1945	252
4	The Unity of Purpose	11 December	1945	254
5	The Right to be Impatient	21 December	1945	256
6	Government by the Common People	22 December	1945	260

ASSAM

1	What the Congress Stands For	12 December	1945	260
2	The Pledge of the Congress	13 December	1945	261
3	Soldiers of Freedom	13 December	1945	262
4	A Bigger Storm Possible	14 December	1945	263
5	The Importance of Discipline	15 December	1945	264

6	Delhi Chalo	15 December	1945	265
7	Tests for Selection of Candidates	15 December	1945	267
8	The Result of the 1942 Movement	15 December	1945	267
9	Swaraj for the Oppressed	16 December	1945	268
10	The Feudal Demand for Pakistan	17 December	1945	269
11	The Need to be Strong	19 December	1945	275
12	The Muslim League Retarding Freedom	19 December	1945	276
13	An All-India Outlook	21 December	1945	277
14	Impressions of Assam Tour	21 December	1945	277

BHIAR

1	*Jayaprakash Narayan*	24 December	1945	278
2	Enough of Empty Promises	24 December	1945	282

BOMBAY

1	Viability of Pakistan	11 September	1945	285
2	The Elections and the Pakistan Issue	11 September	1945	287
3	Congress Reorganisation	14 September	1945	288
4	The Continuing Struggle	18 September	1945	288
5	Dangers of a Group Mentality	23 September	1945	290
6	Faith in a Forward March	24 September	1945	290
7	Need for a Specific Plan	24 September	1945	293
8	On Working Class Unity	25 September	1945	294
9	Quit India — The Main Issue	26 September	1945	295
10	A Blueprint for a New India	27 September	1945	302
11	Police Responsibility for Bombay Riots	27 September	1945	305
12	The Flame of Freedom in Asia	9 November	1945	306
13	The Passing of British Rule	11 November	1945	310
14	Impossibility of Accord with the League	11 November	1945	311

15 Fallacy of Jinnah's Pakistan 13 November 1945 313

SIND

1 Will to Achieve Freedom 3 January 1946 319
2 Ministries on Quit India Basis 5 January 1946 320
3 Muslim League's Reactionary Programme 5 January 1946 321
4 The Picture of Free India 6 January 1946 321
5 Hindu Communalism 6 January 1946 322
6 Independence and Interdependence 9 January 1946 323

3. The I.N.A. Trials

1 The Fate of the I.N.A. Prisoners 19 August 1945 331
2 The Shadow of the Gallows 19 August 1945 331
3 To Dalip Singh 19 August 1945 333
4 To Govind Ballabh Pant 19 August 1945 334
5 Tribute to Subhas Chandra Bose 24 August 1945 336
6 Warning against Harsh Treatment 28 August 1945 336
7 Discrimination against Indians 16 September 1945 338
8 Why Differential Treatment 23 September 1945 339
9 To Raghunandan Saran 30 September 1945 340
10 Firing on I.N.A. Prisoners 10 October 1945 340
11 The I.N.A. Defence Committee 26 October 1945 341
12 Demand for Facts 26 October 1945 342
13 To V.K. Krishna Menon 27 October 1945 342
14 To Krishna Kripalani 30 October 1945 345
15 The Unanimous Demand for Release 346

16	To J. Leon D'Souza	1 November	1945	347
17	Note on the I.N.A. Defence Committee	2 November	1945	348
18	To V.K. Krishna Menon	3 November	1945	352
19	Unauthorised Collection for the Defence Fund	16 November	1945	352
20	To Sarat Chandra Bose	16 November	1945	353
21	To Sri Prakasa	28 November	1945	354
22	To the Home Member, Government of India	30 November	1945	355
23	To the Chief Secretary, Government of U.P.	30 November	1945	356
24	To V.K. Krishna Menon	2 December	1945	357
25	The Army — Part of India	2 December	1945	362
26	Conditions in I.N.A. Prison Camps	4 December	1945	364
27	The Need for Unity and Discipline	9 December	1945	365
28	On the Release of the I.N.A. Officers	5 January	1946	368
29	To M.A. Raschid	11 January	1946	368
30	To Secretary, External Affairs Department, Government of India	12 January	1946	369
31	To Secretary, Home Department, Government of India	12 January	1946	370
32	To the Chief Secretary, U.P. Government	12 January	1946	371
33	The Example of Subhas Bose	17 January	1946	371
34	The Triumph of the Indian People	17 January	1946	371
35	The Achievements of Subhas Bose	23 January	1946	373
36	To V.K. Krishna Menon	29 January	1946	375
37	To Secretary, External Affairs Department, Government of India	31 January	1946	376
38	To Bhulabhai Desai	6 February	1946	378
39	Abandon the Trials	8 February	1946	379
40	To Vallabhbhai Patel	15 February	1946	380

4. States People's Movement

1	To Jainarain Vyas	26 June	1945	383
2	To V.K. Krishna Menon	31 July	1945	383
3	The Labour Victory in Britain	2 August	1945	387
4	The Kashmir National Conference	4 August	1945	388
5	The Pundits of Kashmir	7 August	1945	391
6	The Ninth of August	9 August	1945	392
7	The Vulgarity of Communal Demonstration	9 August	1945	393
8	To Khan Sahib	10 August	1945	394
9	High Ideals and an Honest Path	19 August	1945	395
10	Telegram to Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah	22 August	1945	396
11	To Mirza Beg	3 September	1945	396
12	Congress Support for States People's Demands	26 September	1945	397
13	The Princes and the People	22 October	1945	398
14	Responsible Government for the States	24 October	1945	400
15	On the Reforms in Rewa State	30 October	1945	401
16	The Danger of Belonging to the Past	14 November	1945	401
17	To the Maharaja of Tripura	9 December	1945	403
18	On the Situation in Rewa State	27 December	1945	404
19	The States People's and the National Movements	30 December	1945	406
20	Towards a New Destiny	30 December	1945	406
21	Adult Franchise for States People	1 January	1946	417
22	Divided India Unthinkable	1 January	1946	417
23	Big Changes in the Offing	4 January	1946	418
24	Police Firing in Gwalior	15 January	1946	421
25	To Madan Atal	15 January	1946	421
26	Repression in Bharatpur	19 January	1946	422

27	On the Princes' Declaration of Rights	19 January	1946	423
28	Appeal to Princes to Restore Civil Liberties	26 January	1946	426
29	On the Deposition of the Maharaja of Rewa	1 February	1946	427
30	Arrests in Alwar State	6 February	1946	428

5. External Problems

1	*Cable to Chiang Kai-shek*	*19 June*	*1945*	*433*
2	Message to the United States	19 June	1945	433
3	Message to Indians in South Africa	21 June	1945	434
4	Good Wishes to R. Palme Dutt	23 June	1945	434
5	The Individual and the State	24 June	1945	435
6	Message to China	25 June	1945	436
7	*To S.H. Shen*	*28 June*	*1945*	*437*
8	China's Struggle	8 July	1945	438
9	Continued Opposition to Nazism, Fascism and Militarism	11 July	1945	439
10	The Limits of Self-determination	2 August	1945	440
11	The Potsdam Conference	4 August	1945	442
12	*To Ali Motamedy*	7 August	1945	443
13	Cable to Chiang Kai-shek	16 August	1945	444
14	The End of the World War	16 August	1945	444
15	To Tan Yun-shan	29 September	1945	445
16	Rejoinder to Sarat Chandra Bose	29 September	1945	446
17	The Use of Indian Troops in Indonesia	30 September	1945	447
18	To Vallabhbhai Patel	1 October	1945	448
19	To N.A.F. Meemanage	1 October	1945	449

20	Second Rejoinder to Sarat Bose	1 October	1945	451
21	Help to Indonesia	9 October	1945	452
22	To Vallabhbhai Patel	9 October	1945	452
23	Japan's New Role in Asia	11 October	1945	453
24	Solidarity with Indonesia	15 October	1945	455
25	To Vallabhbhai Patel	16 October	1945	455
26	To Abul Kalam Azad	16 October	1945	456
27	The Obligation of the United States	28 October	1945	457
28	India's Lead in Asian Liberation	28 October	1945	459
29	A Test for the United Nations	17 November	1945	460
30	To Subrata Roy Chowdhury	3 December	1945	461
31	Civil War in China	23 December	1945	462
32	Bonds between India and China	23 December	1945	464
33	To H.P. Mody	14 January	1946	467
34	To H.M. Desai	16 January	1946	468
35	To D. Mitrany	16 January	1946	469
36	Common Policies for Asia	20 January	1946	470
37	Real Peace As Far Away As Ever	21 January	1946	471
38	The Concept of Asian Unity	21 January	1946	473
39	To Jafar Zainuddin	5 February	1946	476
40	India as a Unit of the World State	10 February	1946	476

6. Youth and the Future

1	Students and Politics	17 July	1945	483
2	Students and India's Future	15 September	1945	483
3	The Task Before Students	27 September	1945	485
4	Unity Among Students	8 October	1945	485
5	Quiet Study and Hard Work	13 November	1945	487

6	*On the Struggle Ahead*	15 November	1945	488
7	To the Youth of the Punjab	19 November	1945	490
8	On the System of Medical Education	28 November	1945	490
9	The Passion and the Vision	12 December	1945	491
10	India Like a Volcano	17 December	1945	494
11	The Need for Revolutionary Changes	22 December	1945	499
12	Nationalism and Internationalism	24 December	1945	505
13	Warning against Dogmas	24 December	1945	509
14	Fear Complex in India	10 January	1946	511
15	Vindictive Actions Against Students	13 January	1946	512
16	To D.P. Bhattacharya	2 February	1946	513
17	The Volunteer Movement of the Congress	3 February	1946	515
18	Grow Big to Do Big Things	7 February	1946	517
19	Real Life is in the Villages	14 February	1946	518
20	Keep Aloof from Party Politics	14 February	1946	519

7. The Congress and the Communists

1	A Self-Contradictory Role	28 June	1945	523
2	Anti-National Activity	17 July	1945	525
3	To R. Palme Dutt	12 August	1945	525
4	To Mohamed Yasin	18 August	1945	526
5	Internationalism versus Nationalism	27 August	1945	527
6	Charges Against Communist Members in the Congress	21 September	1945	528
7	Communists being Treated Leniently	23 October	1945	539
8	The Betrayal	2 November	1945	540
9	To Gerald Peel	3 December	1945	544

10	Report on Communist Members' Reply	9 December	1945	545
11	Violence in Public Activities	29 December	1945	547
12	Attacks on Communists	29 January	1946	548

8. Economic and Constitutional Problems

1	Freedom and Equality	9 July	1945	551
2	Need for Data on the Indian Economy	17 September	1945	552
3	National Planning	17 September	1945	553
4	To Mahatma Gandhi	4 October	1945	554
5	The Development of Scientific Research	21 November	1945	558
6	Arrangement for Transitional Period	21 November	1945	558
7	Interview with R.G. Casey	21 December	1945	561
8	The Common Man of India	24 January	1946	563

9. Miscellaneous

PERSONAL

1	To Padmaja Naidu	26 June	1945	567
2	To Indira Gandhi	30 June	1945	568
3	To Krishna Hutheesing	30 June	1945	568
4	To Indira Gandhi	1 July	1945	569
5	To Indira Gandhi	4 July	1945	570
6	To Indira Gandhi	5 July	1945	571

7	To Indira Gandhi	7 July	1945	572
8	To Indira Gandhi	8 July	1945	575
9	To Indira Gandhi	13 July	1945	576
10	To Edward Thompson	12 August	1945	576
11	To Indira Gandhi	22 August	1945	577
12	To Indira Gandhi	25/26 August	1945	578
13	To Richard Walsh	3 September	1945	580
14	To Frances Gunther	5 September	1945	582
15	To Major General H.R. Briggs	6 September	1945	584
16	To Martand Upadhyaya	8 September	1945	586
17	To Krishan Prasad Dar	3 October	1945	586
18	To V.K. Krishna Menon	11 October	1945	587
19	To Indira Gandhi	7 November	1945	588
20	To Indira Gandhi	7 November	1945	589
21	To Rameshwari Nehru	10 November	1945	589
22	To P.A. Narielwala	30 November	1945	590
23	To V.K. Krishna Menon	26 December	1945	591
24	To K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar	12 January	1946	592
25	To Richard Walsh	12 January	1946	593
26	To K.T. Shah	14 January	1946	593
27	To Albert Mayer	14 January	1946	594
28	To Mahatma Gandhi	14 January	1946	595
29	To Brooke L. Winkoop	20 January	1946	595
30	To Amrit Kaur	26 January	1946	596
31	To V.K. Krishna Menon	29 January	1946	597
32	To S. Govind Swaminadhan	17 February	1946	598

GENERAL

1	Janab Reejanal Food Controller Sahab	9 September	1945	599
2	Mahatma Gandhi	2 October	1945	600
3	Gandhi Jayanti	4 October	1945	602
4	Vallabhbhai Patel	18 October	1945	602
5	The Literatures of India	20 October	1945	603
6	Tej Bahadur Sapru		1945	610
7	Art and Life	17 November	1945	611
8	Demonetization	16 January	1946	612
9	On the Demands of Postal Employees	5 February	1946	612

10	The Newspapers and the Common Man	16 February	1946	613

10. Appendix

1	To Frances Gunther	29 April	1938	623
2	To Frances Gunther	5 May	1938	626
3	To Frances Gunther	4 February	1940	631
4	To Frances Gunther	7 April	1940	632
5	To Frances Gunther	10 September	1940	633
6	To Frances Gunther	12 June	1941	635
7	To Frances Gunther	14 June	1942	636

ILLUSTRATIONS

At Simla, July 1945 — *frontispiece*

Outside Mahatma Gandhi's residence at Juhu, June 1945

At Simla, July 1945 — *between pp.* 48—49

At Simla, July 1945

At Simla, July 1945 — 144—145

Addressing a meeting at Simla, July 1945

Talking to journalists, Bombay, 1945 — 256—257

I.N.A. Defence Committee: K.N. Katju, T.B. Sapru and Jawaharlal, 1945 — 336—337

Mahatma Gandhi talking to the men of the I.N.A., 1945

The first page of an editorial in the "National Herald", 30 November 1945 — 480—481

The last page of the editorial

With Indira Gandhi and Nawabzada Farid of N.W.F.P., Srinagar, August 1945 — 576—577

With his grandson, Pahalgam, August 1945

I

SIMLA CONFERENCE AND AFTER

1. First Thoughts on Coming Out of Jail[1]

I am coming out of jail after 1,041 days. During this period I have been cut off from the outside world, which is now bewildering to both the eye and the mind. You will be surprised to hear that till this moment I do not know what Lord Wavell has said in his broadcast last night. But even if I know its contents it is unfair to expect me to comment on it so soon.

My first thoughts on coming out of prison are with those who are still rotting in prison.[2] My colleagues and myself had been completely cut off from them so long as we were in Ahmadnagar. That is why we welcomed the idea of repatriation to our provinces. My long journey from Ahmadnagar to Bareilly, with a halt at Naini Central Prison on the way, enabled me to meet some of the old comrades and catch a few glimpses of what they have suffered and what the province has gone through during the last three gruesome years.

Against this grim background of suffering and humiliation it is not a matter for any rejoicing that eight members of the Congress Working Committee have come strutting out of prison It is a matter for shame and sorrow that so many of our comrades are still behind prison walls. Their sufferings, unlike mine, have not hit the headlines. The world tends to forget them. That is why I want to pay homage to those unknown Congress soldiers, who have borne the brunt of the struggle.

My anguished thoughts also go to the hunted men who are being chased from pillar to post. Recently, there has been a case in Almora court in which an Englishwoman[3] was punished for organising humanitarian relief for the distressed families of these men. I gave up legal

1. Speech at Almora at a reception given soon after his release, 15 June 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 17 June and *The Hindustan Times*, 17 June 1945.
2. When the Viceroy announced on 14 June 1945 the release of the members of the Congress Working Committee, he left those who were still in jail in consequence of the 1942 disturbances, to the consideration of the new Central Government and provincial governments. According to official sources 6,127 people were in detention as on 1 September 1945.
3. C.M. Heilmann, also known as Sarla Devi, came to India in January 1932 and worked in various educational institutions She was living in a Gandhi ashram in Almora district in 1942. For helping the families of certain absconders, she was jailed for one year in 1944.

practice long ago, so I cannot pronounce a court judgment on the case. But there are certain things which are bigger than law. One of them is the law of human sympathy. If any law prevents me from doing my human duty to the poor and the distressed, then I say, to hell with this law and its makers. If any of you are frightened by this law from doing this duty, then I say, to hell with you. If the British think that by keeping us in jail for three years they have broken our spirit, they are sadly mistaken. I say again they are sadly mistaken.

I am not concerned with what these men have done. Whatever they have done, it is a savage thing to seek to make their families suffer for their wrongs. There are all sorts of savages. There are savages who do not admit they are savages. There are those who make brazen-faced admission of their savagery, and those who are enforcing or promulgating this savagery, also fall in the latter category. It shows to what depths of human degradation they have fallen. It also shows to what they owe their position in this country.

I do not fully know what has happened during the last three years. But I have heard a little about it and have felt and thought about it. There are certain things I do not like and certain other things I do like. I am not prepared to give you this story at this moment, nor am I going to sit in judgment on its *dramatis personae*, but I am prepared to say this that those who acted for the love of their country, however much they may have erred, will always have a place in my heart. They will always have shelter in my house. They are welcome to Anand Bhawan.

I pay my homage to those who are playing with their lives and those who are now at the door of death. Among them, it is only in the fitness of things that I must take the name of one of India's brave women, Aruna Asaf Ali. If my voice can reach her, I want to send her my love and esteem. I want to tell her that whatever she has done shall not be wasted and will bear fruit. It will leave its impression on her countrymen.

In the revolutionary world in which we are living it will not help to lie in fear or to swerve to the other extreme of boasting and bullying. You must have yourselves seen during the last three years that our national struggle needed a new kind of technique than mere shouting of slogans and spectacular processions. I hope that after the experience of these gruesome years, more wisdom and more iron have entered India's soul.

2. Objectives and Aims[1]

After nearly three years of isolation, it is obviously difficult for me to issue a message or give my views on the national or international situation. During this period, vast and revolutionary changes have taken place all over the world and in India. Those changes are obvious enough, in the war situation as well as in the far-reaching effects of the war. Yet, perhaps, changes are the greatest in the minds of men everywhere. From these minds I have been cut off, and all I could do is to observe the reactions of my own mind to the events that have taken place. In India, in spite of seeming stagnation in the political field, I have no doubt that our people have been powerfully affected by what they have gone through during these gruesome years. I must come in contact with my own people and with co-workers before I can venture to say anything. But I know this that, whatever changes take place, internal or external, the fundamental objectives and principles remain the same.

For us in India, these objectives can be stated as Indian independence and freedom, within the large context of the freedom and cooperation of other nations and peoples. Neither of them can be isolated from the other. I do not think that Indian independence can function by itself in a world where domination of one nation by another continues. Nor do I think it conceivable that any stable world order can be evolved unless the 400 millions of India are really free. Freedom for India cannot, and should not, mean freedom of a few at the top, but must mean democratic and economic freedom and equality of our 400 millions.

For us, political and economic freedom are intertwined as they are in every other country. The terrible tragedy of the Bengal famine, as ghastly, if not more so, as anything that has happened in the war, is not only the final judgment on British rule in India, but is also the death warrant of the economic order which produces such tragedies.

We can never forget in India all that our people have suffered in the past, especially during these three years But at the same time, we may not allow our sentiments to run away with us and cloud our vision about the future. I remember the words of Mahatma Gandhi on that

1. Interview to the press, Almora, 15 June 1945. *The Hindu*, 17 June 1945.

fateful evening of August 8: "Though the eyes of the world are bloodshot, we must keep calm and clear-eyed."[2]

In the world of today, there appears to be much that fills one with despair, but there is also ground for hope that passion for freedom exists in every country. If we in India are passionately attached to our freedom, we are equally concerned that all other countries or classes, who have been exploited or deprived of their freedom, should achieve their freedom.

With all freedom-loving people of the world, we shall always cooperate for their good, as well as care for the larger good of the world as a whole.

2. In his address to the A.I.C.C. meeting after it had passed the August Resolution, Mahatma Gandhi had said: "You have to stand against the whole world although you have to stand alone. You have to stare the world in the face, although the world may look at you with blood shot eyes. Do not fear...."

3. The Need for Drastic Changes[1]

Five days ago I passed through Ranikhet as a prisoner escorted by policemen, and today I pass through the town, apparently a free man. The change is not very great and I do not rejoice in it. I cannot, of course, say that I am sorry to be out of prison. Birds cannot love their cages and free men want to live freely. That is why India herself is restless.

For three years we have had a terrible movement. I do not fully know what happened all this time and I am now slowly getting to know the story. Till I have known it I am not prepared to sit in judgment on the movement.

I am also not in a position to judge the Wavell offer. I have not yet read it and even if I have, it would be unfair to give my view without holding counsel with my colleagues.

But there are certain fundamentals of the national struggle to which I want to draw your attention. We are living in a time of war and revolution. One war has just finished and another is still going on. Bigger things are hidden behind the screen of this war. Vast and revolutionary changes are taking place and neither the victor nor the vanquished knows what will happen next. India, too, cannot escape these revolutionary times nor does she want to.

1. Speech at Ranikhet, 17 June 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 19 June 1945.

Whatever may be the apparent strength of other countries, the really great countries in the world are four, two, out of which, are India and China. Despite the intellectual and material wealth of the first two countries, what is the condition of India and China? What is the condition of India and her people?

You have only to remember the grim tragedy of the Bengal famine. No indictment will be too strong on a government which let this happen. But I am tired of repeating the crimes of the British raj. I am angry with the role of a section of our own people in this gruesome drama. While men were dying like flies on the streets of Calcutta, rich Europeans and Indians were feasting and dancing in restaurants, and while railway wagons were needed to carry food, they were being used to carry horses for races.

Many people have amassed fortunes during this war and I do not grudge them their prosperity. But I will certainly denounce the profits made at the cost of millions of human lives. What is the result? Besides the millions who have died, millions of children are going to have their growth stunted and millions of lives are going to be damaged irreparably.

Sending merely fifteen men to the Executive Council will not solve the problem. If that were enough we could have long ago secured these positions. However, I am not judging here the Wavell offer.

India needs a surgical operation. We have to get rid of our preoccupation with petty problems and concentrate on the fundamental problem of slavery and poverty. That is the touchstone on which every new offer has to be tested.

4. Refusal to Comment on Wavell Plan[1]

I remind you that many are still in jails, some for over 15 years, almost forgotten by the press and the public. They symbolise the nation. At this grave hour we can reasonably expect their release.

1. Speech at Nainital, 17 June 1945. Based on reports from *The Statesman*, 19 June and *The Hindu*, 20 June 1945.

I would ask you to have patience until the Working Committee has considered the Wavell proposals. Moreover, President Maulana Azad is the only competent person to express any opinion on behalf of the Congress and it is not fair for the members of the Working Committee to express their individual opinions. I read the Wavell proposals only last night and I have had no time to ponder over their implications. Besides, isolation in jail has kept me out of touch with the events of the outside world and I want to study things presently at first hand. When, however, the time comes I shall unhesitatingly express my opinion.

The moral fabric of the present Government has completely rotted. Unless the whole political, economic and administrative system is overhauled the evils of corruption and bribery cannot be fought. A few men at the top, however honest and good they may be, cannot remedy the evils which are eating into the vitals of the country. The good men are either in jail or sitting at home because they cannot toe the Government line.

The grim tragedy of the Bengal famine is the darkest spot in British rule in India. When the streets of Calcutta were littered with the dead, the favoured few danced and dined and lived a life of gaiety; while wagons were needed to bring food to Bengal, they were used to transport horses for the Calcutta races. The conduct of our countrymen who indulged in blackmarketing and profiteering at the time of this crisis is not less shameful. The remedy lies not merely in supplying food but also in rooting out the present economic and political system.

I refer to the conviction of Miss Heilmann, who has been given a jail sentence for helping the families of political sufferers. Even under the rules of warfare, the men, women and children of fighting forces are not victimised. But here a lady has been convicted for helping families of political sufferers. In this war human considerations have been thrown to the winds. I do not know how to condemn the Government, its laws and courts of justice, which victimised the families of political workers. Hitler revived the barbarous practice of having hostages to suit his ends.[2] What difference is there between Hitler and these men, who have prevented help to the families of political workers to coerce the politicals into submission? To help the suffering is a normal human desire. But the Government has stooped to the lowest depths in punishing those who rendered such help.

2. The sabotage activities of resisters in German-occupied countries provoked Hitler to reprisals including the shooting of hostages.

Though I have painted a dark picture, I am not a pessimist. Swaraj will bring peace and happiness and we shall have the pleasure of building this fine edifice with our own effort.

5. The Martyrs of 1942[1]

It was with pain that I learnt of the suffering of the people of Allahabad in those fateful days of August 1942. As a matter of fact, I was ashamed of myself being in prison. But there was no way out. I could not have jumped out of the walls of the Ahmadnagar Fort. Thousands of pictures then haunted me.

Today, when I am again in your midst, receiving your affectionate welcome, these dormant thoughts are revived. I do not know all the details of those incidents but whatever they may be, whether my countrymen were right or wrong, I bow my head in honour of the dauntless martyrs, who sacrificed their lives for the freedom of the country. I also salute those youngmen who fought and are still fighting for the same noble cause. I congratulate them. I pay my respect to them. Long live their valour. Long live their martyrdom.

I have heard of the glorious deeds and the many sufferings of the people of the districts of Ballia,[2] Azamgarh[3] and Gorakhpur.[4] I pay my warm tributes to them. Their sufferings, their sacrifices and bravery will constitute a chapter by itself in the history of our struggle.

While it is true that thousands have died, it is also true that many have shamefully kept themselves aloof from the cause. Such things, however, should not dampen our spirit.

1. Address to a gathering at Anand Bhawan, Allahabad, 18 June 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 19 June and *The Hindustan Times*, 20 June 1945.
2. In August 1942, the people of Ballia district destroyed many railway and police stations, and opened the district jail. One of the released prisoners took over the administration, and for a few days maintained panchayat raj This revolt was put down by the police and army with severe reprisals.
3. On 16 August 1942, the people of Azamgarh raided the police station, and the police resorted to firing killing 50 persons.
4. On 10 August 1942, about 15 persons were killed and 100 injured when a Congress procession in the village of Doberia in Gorakhpur district was dispersed by police firing The entire village was later burnt down by the army.

One fact to which I feel I must draw your attention is that the mere release of seven or eight members of the Congress Working Committee in itself does not actually smoothen the way to our cherished goal of freedom. The Working Committee and the Congress are the symbols of independence. It would have been infinitely more desirable if we were brought out of jails through the pressure of our people rather than by alien grace. However, let there be no mistake about the fact that behind our release, was the strong voice of our countrymen.

Some people may say that the Congress has been crushed or is dead; never believe it. I emphatically deny that during these three years, our spirit was ever crushed. The reception you have given me now or the one which I received at Lucknow, with so much joy and enthusiasm, confirms my belief.

I admit that one chapter in the history of the fight for independence has come to an end and with our release, a new chapter has begun. Much, however, still remains to be written.

Let us not forget that quite a large number of our comrades are still behind the bars.

I have heard today that the Working Committee is meeting on 21 June. I was shown the Wavell proposals only after my return from Khali, the day before yesterday, long after you knew them. I have formed my own views about them, but until I have conferred with other members of the Working Committee, it will not be desirable to express them. If there is anyone who can speak on behalf of the Congress, it is Maulana Azad, the President of the Congress. Of course, Gandhiji has always enjoyed a unique privilege to speak on behalf of the Congress.

Whatever may be the merits of the Wavell plan, it is evident that it does not herald the advent of Swaraj. I can only remind you of the pledge, taken by us under the national flag, not to rest till we reach our final goal.

I pay my tribute to the students in the national struggle.[5] I was moved by their courage and enthusiasm. I hope when they grow into manhood, they will witness the birth of a new India.

My relations with the citizens of Allahabad are not such that I should think of thanking you all formally for the great affection shown to me. When you have reposed so much of confidence in me, I shall try to prove worthy of it. Goodbye.

5. Students took a conspicuous part in the August movement. Large numbers of them left or were rusticated from schools or colleges.

6. Interview to the Press[1]

Question: What do you think of the Communists branding the Congress Socialist Party and some Congressmen as fifth columnists[2] *and what is going to be the attitude of the Congress towards* the Communists?

Jawaharlal Nehru. I shall have to study the whole situation to find *out the facts and also hear the Communists before I can form an* opinion.

Q: Had you any previous knowledge of the Desai-Liaquat formula?

JN: I did not know anything about it while I was in jail. Nor do I know anything about it now.

Q: What is your view of the Wavell plan?

JN. No comment.

Q: But Sardar Patel has commented on it?[3]

JN: Sardar is Sardar.

Q: Do you think that the August movement has failed?

JN: There is no question of failure. We have gained in experience and it is only by experience that a people learn to organise themselves for a struggle.

1. *Lucknow, 19 June 1945. From The Hindustan Times, 20 June 1945.*
2. For example, in a resolution dated 23 May 1943, the Communist Party of India stated that one of the groups which made up the fifth column in the country was the Congress Socialist Party.
3. Vallabhbhai Patel had said on 17 June 1945 that "parity between caste Hindus and Muslims can have no place at the conference...*I hope that no nationalist* will be a party to any arrangement which has as its basis a religious division. I express these sentiments not only on my own behalf but all those Congressmen who are with Gandhiji at the moment."

Q: Have you anything to say about the Hindi-Urdu controversy?

JN: Both are old languages and need rejuvenation. I recognise that the language issue is one of the most important problems before the country.

7. The Task of the Simla Conference[1]

Any plan to limit Congress representation on the Executive Council to caste Hindus is wholly unacceptable.[2] The Congress cannot send representatives to the Simla Conference[3] with such a restriction. However, this issue will not be allowed to defeat the more important purpose of the conference, namely, to get some form of a more representative government in office.

It is understandable that the Congress may want some Muslims on the Executive Council to represent those many Muslims who support the Congress. There are many Muslims who do not follow the League, although the League has grown in strength in recent years. Nevertheless, the League always seems to be stronger where the Muslim minority is smaller in number. Where the Muslim population is nearly equal to the Hindu population or exceeds it, such as in the North West Frontier, the League is least strong.

If only League Muslims were appointed on the council, all Muslims who have been voting Congress candidates in the years past will be unrepresented. This will be true of the many Muslims in the North West Frontier, in Bengal and in the Punjab, who do not follow the League.

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 20 June 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 23 June 1945.
2. The Wavell proposals had limited the Congress representation on the Viceroy's Executive Council to caste Hindus in equal proportion to the Muslim League representation though the Congress as a national organisation covered communities other than the Hindus while the League did not embrace even all the Muslims in the country.
3. All the present and ex-premiers of 11 provinces, the leaders of the parties in the Central Assembly and the Council of States, a leader each of the Sikhs and the depressed classes, Jinnah, Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Azad were invited for the Simla Conference held from 25 June to 14 July 1945.

But such issues can be dealt with at the Simla Conference without much difficulty. After all, the conference is designed only to set up an interim government, to operate until elections can be held. Elections will enable us to recast the arrangement according to the strength of the various groups shown up in voting. I predict that if elections are held now, the Congress majority in the provinces will be very large. At the same time, it is likely that more League candidates may be elected than were chosen in 1937.

Let it be recognised that the situation in India is a special situation which tends to emphasise communalism, because other types of activity have been suppressed. It must be remembered that India has been living under military and police rule ever since the outbreak of the 1942 rebellion. The situation should be viewed as similar to the situation in Europe where resistance groups had been functioning underground until only recently.

Now a rapid change in the country can be expected as economic and other factors have drawn public attention away from strictly communal conflicts.

New and younger groups are rising in India whose influence will be felt. Among these are the Communists who have solidified their position after the ban on their operations had been lifted.[4] It cannot be overlooked that many of the present leaders are growing old. Mahatma Gandhi, who is in his seventies, and Mr. Jinnah, who is in his sixties can be mentioned. I include myself in the generation that is going out.

It is likely that the Government is prompted, in part, to call the conference because of the problem facing it with the return to civil life, in the near future, of hundreds of thousands of Indian soldiers.

It is quite likely that a government, with as much popular backing as possible, is wanted to help meet this situation. The Indian army is not a national army, but, at least among the officers and non-commissioned officers, there is much nationalistic sentiment.

Ahmadnagar Fort was the best jail I ever have been kept in, although I was not enthusiastic about it. For the first time, there were electric lights. The rooms were fairly large. The food continued to be bad almost to the end, which perhaps explains my thinness. The main reason for the bad food was the cooking. No outside cook could be retained because whoever did the cooking had to become a prisoner along with the rest. The result was that a man who had never cooked before took over the job. Only before the end of the period a better cook was sent.

4. On 22 July 1942.

The Working Committee members ate their meals together and could meet when they wished, but had no visitors. I did not see a woman or even a child during my entire life at Ahmadnagar.

During my imprisonment I wrote a book on India, partly autobiographical, read much and exercised regularly. With the others I kept a garden.

After my release from Almora Jail high in the Himalayas, I could not resist the temptation to go still higher. So on my first day of freedom I set out for a family cabin at Khali where I spent a night and half a day sleeping, listening to the birds, the pines and deodars and thinking quietly. After that I made my way by slow stages to Allahabad where I remained for a night and then set out for Bombay.

8. The Nature of India's Problems[1]

During the last three years, the country has passed through very anxious and troublesome times and there is a lot of ill-temper on all sides. But it is the duty of the young people not to lose their equanimity. Most people seem to think that only India faces problems which are difficult to solve. But they are not correct in their view. Everywhere in the world, people are confronted with difficult problems which they are not able to solve easily. We have got to study our problems and we have got to solve them. Ours is a very difficult path, but we should not lose heart. We should show no relaxation in trying to solve our difficulties. The problems which confront us are big, but we should work together to solve them.

Our main problems are fundamental. At every step they either become easier or more difficult and unless we get at the root of the disease we cannot eradicate it.

The Bengal famine is the natural outcome of inefficiency and corruption. It should never have taken place if the Government were run by sound people. On the one hand people were dying and on the other, through profiteering, people were amassing wealth. The whole system is corrupt. There is a moral decay in the Government machinery.

1. Speech at Bombay, 21 June 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 22 June 1945.

The ovation I have received is spontaneous and natural, but it cannot help to cure the ills. Anything that has happened in the past three years, whether good or bad, has certainly done one thing, that is, it has inspired the people in every corner of the country to do something good for India.

In my province the Congress has been strengthened by the peasants. They might have faltered here and there, but my love for them has increased tenfold.

9. Warning against False Moves[1]

Any interpretation of my earlier remarks that I have expressed confidence in the outcome of the Simla Conference is unwarranted and unjustified.

I am wholly unable to say what the outcome of the Simla Conference will be. At present the preliminary question before us is whether it is worthwhile attending it. If the Wavell proposals had been anything of a semi permanent nature, it would not be looked at. The only reason why it can be considered is that it is a proposal for a brief interim arrangement which would lead the country rapidly to democratic freedom.

Even so, the interim proposals are full of difficulties and certain arrangements are suggested which would lead to complications. I cannot say what may be the outcome of our current Committee meeting or of any subsequent meetings.

Ultimately we have to judge everything from the point of view of the All India Congress Committee Resolution of August 8, 1942.[2] The last part of that resolution, dealing with possible mass movement, does not apply now, but the rest of that resolution lays down our fundamental policy and not even the Working Committee can change that. Only the All India Congress Committee or a full session of the Congress can do so.

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 21 June 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 22 June 1945.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol 12, pp 436-452.

Oddly enough, the All India Congress Committee is still an illegal organisation.[3] It is very strange that the people should think that the Congress is reviewing its policy when the main body of the Congress organisation is banned.

It has been said that 1945 is not 1942.[4] Much has happened in between in the world and in India. In India, in spite of terrific repression, which still continues in many ways, the spirit of the people has hardened and it is quite impossible to find a stable solution except on the basis of complete freedom which we have always envisaged in terms of world cooperation.

Thousands of our colleagues are still in prison. In a sense, the present position in India can be compared to the unstable and changing situation that has arisen in many European countries freed from Nazi rule, where resistance movements are coming to the surface. Any step taken at this stage may lead to new conflicts.

We are apt to think too much in terms of the minority or communal problem. That is important but other problems, political and economic, are still more important.

The question of future demobilization[5] can also be properly tackled only by a free Indian government. In 1919 and afterwards there were great difficulties, and it may be remembered that there were many flare-ups in the country then, which were ultimately canalized in the Congress noncooperation movement of 1920.

Obviously, the situation will be much more critical this time, because the numbers involved are greater and the resistance to foreign rule has acquired a new force.

For all these reasons and many others, temporary or interim arrangements have no real value except in so far as they lead rapidly to the creation of a free Indian democratic state. The fact that the Viceroy has said that it is a free conference which can be attended without commitments, is helpful.

3. *The ban on the A.I.C.C. imposed on 9 August 1942, was lifted only on 22* August 1945 after the announcement that general elections to the Central and Provincial legislatures would soon be held.
4. Mahatma Gandhi had said in a press interview on 4 July 1944: "I cannot take the country back to 1942; history can never be repeated... There is a difference between what I ask today and what was asked in 1942."
5. Nearly 6 million soldiers and non-combatants were due to be demobilised in India at the end of the war.

10. A Stop-Gap Plan[1]

I am happy to be in your midst after a long time. When I was told that the press desires to meet me, I became eager to see the faces of friends, old and new. I have no special statement to make today. I shall attempt to answer your questions to the best of my light. There may be some questions, to which I cannot reply off hand. I shall, however, tell you what I actually think and feel.

I find that most of the questions, placed before me, relate to the Wavell plan. But how could you forget that there are many more important problems facing us. All that I have to say about the Wavell plan at this stage, the Working Committee has already stated in its resolution.[2] So I do not want to say much on this subject. The whole conception of the plan is in the nature of a structure for an interim arrangement to work out a change. It is obviously an interlude and if I feel that a brief temporary arrangement helps me in any way to attain my goal, I shall accept it.

> Question : Would not the acceptance of the Wavell proposals be contrary to the spirit of the August Resolution, which had called for independence of Burma, Malaya and other Far Eastern territories?

Jawaharlal Nehru . You know more about the spirit than I do. The first thing that you should know is that it is barely eight days since we came out of prison. Out of this, three to four days have been spent in travelling. It is quite impossible to form any correct judgment of events relying only on the press reports, and without meeting people.

> Q: What is your reaction to the role of the Indian Communists during the last three years?

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 23 June 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindu*, 24 and 25 June and *The Bharat Jyoti* of Bombay, 24 June 1945.
2. The Congress Working Committee discussed on 21 and 22 June 1945 the Viceroy's proposals and agreed to parity as a temporary measure for the interim government only. Its resolution authorised the Congress President and other Congress invitees to attend the Simla Conference It also reiterated the policy and goal of the Congress laid down in the August Resolution.

JN: All my reactions are against the activities and the policy of the Communist Party during the last three years.[3] I have heard charges and counter-charges about the Communists. But when it is a question of constitutional or organisational action, it is necessary to find out facts. It is not fair for me to give any opinion in that respect without knowing the relevant facts. However, their general policy has not only been wrong but injurious, both to India's cause and to the larger cause of world freedom, which basically cannot be separated from that of India. It is true that national aspirations have to be judiciously set into a pattern consonant with an international order. Nevertheless, the fact remains that when a conflict between the two arises, international interest takes second place. This applies to free countries like the United States as well. I can cite instances of action taken by great countries when they faced national and international issues simultaneously. Soviet Russia had been fundamentally opposed to Nazi Germany. Nevertheless, for national reasons, as well as, may be, for certain international considerations, it entered into a non-aggression pact with Germany. It was only when Hitler attacked Russia that the latter declared war on Germany. Take the case of any other country for that matter. Britain went on appeasing Hitler and Mussolini, till it served its ends. No government had or has a foreign policy which, in its opinion, goes contrary to its national interests. I am not aware of any country which does not fit in its international policy with the national policy. Whenever there is a conflict between national and international policies, the national policy wins. May be, sometimes, the national approach is narrow.

It is a good sign that more and more people are of opinion that isolated nationalism, without due regard to international interests, is injurious. I personally agree with it. My point is that all nations, even great and powerful countries like the U.S.A., Soviet Russia and England, have to look after national interests, which are ultimately, of course, linked with larger international considerations. Now, if that is true for the great free countries it is more so for a dependent country like India. To hell with anybody who pushes the country this way and that way—is the natural reaction of the average Indian. Even in the most politically developed countries there is a very small fraction of people who will fit in ideologically their national policy with international issues.

3. The Communist Party opposed the August struggle and supported the British war effort. The All India Trade Union Congress, which was under the control of the Communists, called for intensified production and avoidance of strikes in the interests of the war. The Muslim League's Pakistan demand was considered by them as a just aspiration.

So far as the Indian leaders are concerned, they were probably more international-minded than the statesmen of big countries. They have tried to make the Indian issue a part of the international issue. That has been the objective of every country and of India especially during the last three years of war. You know the sympathy of India for China and its intense hatred of Nazism. Provided special barriers are not put in its way, it is quite possible to see these feelings translated into action.

It is in this context that you should see our stand of 1942. Many people seem to believe that something happened in 1942 out of nothing. The Communist Party is quite free to propagate communism in any part they wish. But notice this that even the Communist Parties in different countries have been having varying policies. It is not communism as such I am talking about. Fundamentally, the Indian Communist policy is not adopted from the standpoint of the country where it functions, but from the standpoint of the Russian foreign policy. I have every sympathy for Russia and the great advance Russia has made, but from any point of view, I do not think our nation's policy can be bound up by the Russian foreign policy. The general question is whether the policy of Indian Communists has been injurious to the cause of India.

I can understand, and am prepared to excuse the fact that their policy does not fall in line with Indian nationalism. They have a fine party machine and ardent workers, but they have built up a psychological *barrier between their party and Indian nationalism. Sometimes it be*comes difficult to overcome this barrier.

Q: Have not the Communists been pressing for a Congress-League understanding and the release of Congress leaders?

JN: The Communists missed the chance of a lifetime in India during the last two or three years. They could have made themselves an enormously powerful party if they had functioned somewhat differently. At a critical moment in India's history, it was difficult to be neutral, but they went to the other side. They may be right, but the approach was the question. Yet the industry and organising capacity of the Com munists are praiseworthy.

During the week that I have been out of prison, I spent three days in my province. These three days gave me greater insight into the happenings of August 1942, than those three years in Ahmadnagar. You must have read Gandhiji's correspondence with the Viceroy over this issue.

Q: What would you say now about the August disturbances?

JN: I do not approve of some of the things that have happened. Let me give an instance: In Ballia, a district in the U.P., the whole structure of the British Government collapsed from top to bottom. There was damage. There was shooting and oppression by the British authorities and also by the Indian authorities acting under them. Military planes and other firing squads were put into use and numerous villages were destroyed. But so far as I know in all the charges that have been brought against the villagers there is not a single charge of personal violence. They did not indulge in personal vendetta or injury. I do not defend the actions of the people involved in the disturbances, but the normal reaction of an Indian will be to say: To hell with anyone who tries to push us out of the way. Violence or nonviolence, it is more important for people to show courage than to be kicked about by any individual or authority. If the British Government again launches an attack on us, it will be met, and met by every man wherever he is attacked. It may be met by ten or a thousand. Many may take it lying down. A nation which submits to this kind of treatment is a dead nation, and I do not want my people to be a dead people, and therefore, if such a thing is done, it must be resisted.

I may say one or two things about the Indian army. On the one hand it is called mercenary, on the other hand, it is praised as a voluntary and magnificent fighting force. But when the word mercenary is used, it is only in a technical sense. None can call it a national army.

During the Cripps discussions, I told Sir Stafford Cripps: "If we are in charge of the Government, our first job would be to infuse national feeling in the Indian army and make India feel that it is our army, fighting for the freedom of our people and of other peoples. As so far the Indian army has been kept completely isolated from the Indian people, the Indian soldier is not like a British Tommy or an American soldier going home. I cannot meet any Indian armyman. They are told to keep away from us, and are allowed to read some selected newspapers passed by the military control.". Cripps replied: "I am afraid that cannot be done. In fact it is not an Indian army. It is the Indian sector of the British army."

I know that the whole army structure cannot be changed in wartime. The army and all military operations have to remain under a British Commander-in-Chief and the General Staff. I wanted to give only a national colouring to the army, so that I could go to the people asking for recruits. But Cripps's answer was a damper. So when we

use the word mercenary, it is not done in any disparaging sense of the army itself, but only in a technical sense.

Roughly speaking, the present Indian army can broadly be divided into two divisions: the old section of hereditary and professional who are magnificent soldiers — the Rajputs and the Jats and others of North India, and the new army that is being built from the east, west and the south of the country.

There is no doubt that the Indian army has proved a very magnificent fighting force. *Wherever they had a chance to fight, it had done* exceedingly well. But I am convinced that had a national colouring been given to it, it would have done infinitely better.

Q. What is your view of the demobilization problem?

JN: It will be a tremendous problem. Take it from me that in spite of its scheme, the Government is not capable of tackling this problem. At the end of this war the number of demobbed soldiers will be far more than at the end of the last war when the national awakening was restricted to a far smaller section of Indian soldiers.

Q: Your comment on Bombay Plan[4]....

JN: When I read the first part of the Bombay Plan at Ahmadnagar, I was agreeably surprised and pleased to read it. It is not because I liked everything in it. I felt that it did not deal sufficiently with agriculture and with the problem of distribution. The satisfaction was in finding that the first blueprint had been prepared by a group of hard-headed businessmen. In India, we have been accustomed to think and act in petty ways, whatever be the issue. Once Gopal Krishna Gokhale estimated that it would take exactly 362 years to remove illiteracy from India judging from the pace of government measures. So it pleased me to find that this particular plan put forward a picture of big changes in a relatively short time. The plan should be judged by the extent to which it will raise the standard of living and the health of the people.

But the fundamental question is, which authority is going to implement it? The very best plan, if run by wrong persons, will harm the country.

Q: Are you aware of the existence of a blackmarket in the country?

4 See *Selected Works*, Vol. 13, pp 336, 353.

JN: It is a very painful subject. I have only heard about it, but that is more than enough. There has been utter moral degradation among a number of officials and non-officials. It is true that a foreign government of authoritarian type usually does not attract capable and right type of men to its service. When the Government is in a crisis as in 1942, there is further separation between the Government and the people. The best man for the Government is then one who will damn his country and stand up against his own people. The war further relaxes every vestige of moral grip over the society. A catastrophe like the Bengal famine further aggravates the crisis. The entire social fabric goes to pieces. I am not referring to the deaths of a couple of million people nor to the stunting of many more lakhs of people. The tragedy is not that millions died of starvation, but they — the profiteers — survived. According to the Woodhead[5] Commission's report, blackmarketeers made a profit of 1,000 rupees for each of the 1,500,000 people who died during the Bengal famine. I do not kill even a small insect, but it will give me the greatest pleasure if all these profiteers were hung by the neck till they are dead.

Q: How do you justify the acceptance of war effort advertisements from the Government by the nationalist newspapers?

JN: I have myself conducted a newspaper, and I know newspapers badly need money. But our [*National Herald*] was the only paper not to accept government advertisements, because we did not agree with the Government policy.

Q: What about Subhas?

JN: I have no doubt that when Subhas Chandra Bose went out of India, his primary motive was to achieve freedom for India somehow, may be with Japanese help, where I think he erred.

Q: Would he be permitted to return to India as a free and honourable citizen by the Central Government in which Congress may be participating?

JN: I cannot say what may be possible for the contemplated Central Government under the Wavell Plan. I can, however, recall one thing.

5. John Woodhead (1881-1973); member of the Indian Civil Service, 1904-39; Adviser to the Secretary of State for India, 1939-44; Chairman of the Famine Inquiry Committee, 1944; President, India, Pakistan and Burma Association, 1948-62.

When I was in Calcutta in 1942, there were talks of Subhas Bose leading an army to India to liberate it, in cooperation with the Japanese. I was asked what would I do. I said that I would fight him for he was coming under Japanese auspices, under Japanese control and much to the benefit of the Japanese.[6] He was quite wrong in his methods when he thought that he could win the freedom of India with the help of the Japanese.

Q: What is your reaction to Sir Firoz Khan Noon's[7] statement that Gandhiji should retire in favour of you?[8]

JN: Gentlemen of the press, you should be knowing that Firoz Khan Noon is not taken seriously anywhere.

Q: Can you say whether retribution will be demanded of those who had perpetrated atrocities upon the people during 1942?

JN: A more important question ought to have been about the aid for those who have suffered during 1942. The question of meting justice to oppressors is different, but no doubt it will be our duty to help the victims and their dependents.

Q: What would be the future relation between Congressmen and Communists and Communist-dominated bodies?

JN: So long as the Congress remains an illegal body, the question of legal or constitutional relationship does not arise.

6. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 262 263
7 (1893 1970); Member of Defence, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1942-45; Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1955-57 and Prime Minister, 1957-58 of Pakistan.
8. On 3 May 1945, Firoz Khan Noon, a delegate to the San Francisco Conference, had denounced Mahatma Gandhi as pro-Japanese and demanded that he should yield his leadership to Jawaharlal.

11. Instructions to the Congress Delegation[1]

Confidential

1. It must be clearly understood that the suggested arrangements are being considered on an *interim* and *temporary basis only*, especially in regard to communal parity. This principle of such parity is not accepted. It applies only to the Centre and cannot be extended to the province.

2. While communal parity, in the limited and temporary sense as indicated above, is being agreed to, it must be clearly understood that this does not mean that all the Muslim members of the national government will be nominated by the Muslim League. The Congress cannot recognise the sole right of such nomination by a communal organisation, nor can it reduce itself as a consequence to a limited communal field. The Congress, therefore, is of opinion that names may be proposed for Hindus, Muslims, scheduled classes, etc., by all groups in the conference and to be adopted by the conference as a whole.

3. While the Working Committee is anxious to help in finding a way out of the present deadlock which leads to Indian freedom, and will work to that end, it must be remembered that any decision taken by it has to be confirmed and ratified by the A.I.C.C. The fact that the A.I.C.C. and other Congress committees are still banned is an obstacle in our way.

4. Further the fact of large number of detenus and Congress prisoners.

5. Clarification to be sought from the Viceroy or in the Conference in regard to:

i) External Affairs Department

ii) Financial implications of defence

iii) How far it is possible to give a nationalist character to the Indian army without, at present, changing its status or organisation in any way. The Indian army officers and men should have the same freedom of meeting people as the British army has in England. The present barriers isolating them to go.

iv) After the present war in South East Asia is over, it must be clearly understood that the Indian Government cannot support

1. Written on 25 June 1945. This was given by the Congress Working Committee to the Congress President who had been authorised to take whatever action was necessary in connection with the implementation of the results of the Simla Conference. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

any policy aimed at the continuation of imperialist control of any of the countries of South East Asia, nor can it allow the use of Indian resources for the deprivation of freedom of any of these countries.

v) In regard to the Indian States, while recognising that during the interim period, the powers of the Crown Representative continue, it is clear that the national government will have to deal with many matters which overlap and have concern with the States in regard to trade, industry, labour etc., etc. This Government may, when it considers this necessary, make suggestions and recommendations in regard to other State matters also to the Crown Representative. Further the barriers between the States peoples, the princes, and members of the national government and their associates should be removed, so as to help in mutual discussions and consultation and the consideration of common problems, thus leading to the solution of these problems.

vi) Provincial coalitions would depend on the particular conditions of parties and groups in each particular province.

vii) The question of recruitment for the higher services and the commitments made in regard to them must be considered. Commitments in regard to foreign recruitments cannot be accepted, though the national government will, whenever it considers it necessary, welcome and engage foreign experts.

The President will add to these matters requiring elucidation whenever he considers this necessary and give such other directions as may be required. He may also make such alterations as he considers necessary.

12. Responsibility for the August Disturbances[1]

Individually I do take the responsibility for all that happened in the country during the August disturbances. I do not want to shake off

1. Address to Journalists Association, Allahabad, 28 June 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 29 June and *The Hindu*, 30 June 1945. Jawaharlal wrote down the questions put to him by the journalists and made these comments in reply.

this responsibility and stand aside. But to say that the Congress organised any movement is fantastic and absolutely wrong. Whatever happened after the arrest of the leaders, was spontaneous. The truth is that the Congress had given no instruction for any movement. This is clear from the fact, and I do not hesitate to say it, that had the Congress given instructions, even just ten days before the arrest of the leaders, there would have been a far more tremendous upheaval in the country than what actually happened as a result of this spontaneous movement.

I do not blame the British Government for their repression of these disturbances. But what fills me with horror is to see the moral degradation which has crept into the ranks of Indian police and executive officers. The manner in which they behaved towards their own people and the corrupt practices which are prevalent among them are a shame to anyone who has a decent code of moral ethics. The result of this moral degradation has been that a new rich class of these people has sprung up in the country, and it will be a problem before the country now to remove this dirt from its surface.

From what I have heard, bribery and other corrupt practices have, to a large extent, got into almost every department of the Government. Perhaps a few subordinate judicial officers have tried to keep themselves aloof from it. Otherwise the whole system of the Government has been corrupt.

I do not complain about what the Government did. I would place the acts of the Government before the bar of public opinion. I would do it all the more because the British Government is in the habit of parading false ideologies.

Such questions as the communal problem and the language problem may be of paramount interest to politicians and journalists but they are hardly of any interest to the man in the street.

If a Gallup poll is taken on the language controversy, it will be found that the people who take any interest in the controversy are just a few drops in the ocean.

I am not worried about the communal problem in the country, not because it is not a big problem but because I view it in a different perspective. I view the problem from a historical, national and international perspective, and viewed in this light the problem, though a big one, cannot be called a fundamental problem. The fundamental problem is the betterment of the condition of the masses in the country.

The Congress has always tried to solve it. The Congress has for its objective the independence of the country, and any problem which hindered the attainment of that objective has to be removed.

I think that questions relating to unemployment, zamindars and kisans fundamentally affect the lives of the people. Even if India gets independence today, these questions cannot be solved all of a sudden.

Other problems like the industrialisation of the country and agricultural advancement are linked together and we cannot deal with one while ignoring the other. It is all right to say that there should be industrialisation. Big industries as well as cottage industries should develop side by side. But one thing you should bear in mind. Before we embark on industrialisation we should prepare an extensive market for the utilisation of the goods produced. Mass production and mass consumption always go together and it will be futile to embark on mass production unless the people are in a position to buy the goods that are produced. Ninety per cent of the people are not in a position to purchase their requirements. So the first and foremost task is that the economic level of the people must be raised.

In this connection, I would refer to the planning in various spheres. Some work was done by the National Planning Committee, but it has not been completed. At that time the Government paid no heed to planning for the future. For example, education imparted to the people had been unplanned and unsystematic. In the beginning, it was meant to provide clerks for Government offices. But when this need was met there was unemployment among the educated classes. Hundreds of graduates came out of various universities from year to year and remained mostly unemployed, because of the defective education they received. A result of this widespread unemployment is that there is not enough scope for talent among youngmen. I refer to the case of Ramanujam,[2] who was rotting as a mere clerk in the Madras Port Trust until his genius in mathematics was recognised by an English professor who secured him a scholarship in Cambridge University. Ramanujam then attained world recognition and he was the first Indian to be made a member of the Royal Society. His mathematical problems are even now discussed in English magazines.

I emphasise that planning must always have an objective before it and some authority behind it. Planning by the British Government, for instance, will be of little use to Indians. Planning by a truly democratic government will be welcomed by the people even though it may not be perfect in all respects.

2. Srinivasa Ramanujam (1887-1920) with whom Prof. G.H. Hardy collaborated in research in pure mathematics

this responsibility and stand aside. But to say that the Congress organised any movement is fantastic and absolutely wrong. Whatever happened after the arrest of the leaders, was spontaneous. The truth is that the Congress had given no instruction for any movement. This is clear from the fact, and I do not hesitate to say it, that had the Congress given instructions, even just ten days before the arrest of the leaders, there would have been a far more tremendous upheaval in the country than what actually happened as a result of this spontaneous movement.

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The Congress has always tried to solve it. The Congress has for its objective the independence of the country, and any problem which hindered the attainment of that objective has to be removed.

13. The Chances of Success[1]

We feel we must succeed at Simla. I have been expecting an S.O.S. I knew it would come sooner or later.[2] *But it has upset my programme.*

The Congress President and the Congress leaders *are trying their* best to find a solution, but that does not mean that the offer, or whatever it is, takes us any distance. We feel, however, that it may create a situation which might help in solving the problem and therefore, we must try to get it succeed.

I know nothing apart from what I have read in the newspapers these last few days. I think Mr. Jinnah *is certainly wrong in thinking that* every Muslim seat in the Executive Council will be captured by the Muslim League.[3]

This cannot be compared with the Cripps offer. Sir Stafford brought a *definite proposal. We have no proposal now. We have the opening* to a future proposal.

Question: Are you confident of a settlement at Simla?

Jawaharlal Nehru: This is a personal question. So far as I am concerned I have developed such a detached outlook that nothing can be without some hope. One gets used to so many things. I am very hopeful.

Q: You have been suggested in a London newspaper as the future minister of foreign affairs in independent India.[4]

JN: I have always been interested in foreign affairs but that is purely speculative.

1. Interview to the press, New Delhi, 30 June 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 1 July 1945.
2. *On 29 June 1945, Maulana Azad sent a message to Jawaharlal that he should* come up to Simla for consultation.
3. On 29 June 1945, Jinnah told a press conference that no other group but the League could name the Muslim members of the proposed Viceroy's Executive Council. He criticised the Wavell plan on the ground that the Muslims actually *would be in a permanent minority in the new Government* because representatives of the Sikhs and the scheduled castes would vote with the Hindus.
4. *The Daily Express* of London published a report on the Simla Conference on 29 June 1945 with the heading: "Nehru may be India's Foreign Minister".

There have been various post-war plans in India, namely the Bombay Plan, the Royist Plan[3] etc., and it is our duty to pick and choose plans from these and improve them.

I feel that for any economic planning to succeed in the country now, it will have to be considered on a large scale. I am satisfied with the Bombay Plan although I do not agree with some of its recommendations. I am pleased that the plan is on a big scale. The intention of the authors of the plan to improve the economic conditions of the people on a large scale and in a short time is commendable.

Question: Do you favour state ownership and control of key industries in the country?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The present circumstances require some form of ownership and control by the State. I feel that mother industries must be cent per cent controlled by the State. The ownership of key industries must be vested in the State if there were to be any improvement industrially.

I feel aggrieved that Indians in Burma, South Africa and Ceylon are being denied the natural and ordinary citizenship rights. I am, however, opposed to any special privileges being given to Indians abroad.

I condemn the ban on *The People's War*[4] and the Sind ban on the *Satyartha Prakash*.[5] I make it clear that it is not because I like or dislike them that I condemn the orders, but because the orders are wrong as they infringe the civil liberties of the people. In this light only I am condemning the orders.

I would urge the pressmen to go into the interior villages and tell the people of the conditions prevailing in the country.

3. M.N. Roy's *People's Plan* with an outlay of Rs. 15,000 crores in ten years aimed at the conversion of a "capitalist economy" into a "socialist economy" by nationalising all important "instruments of production".
4. In May 1945, the U.P. Government banned within the province the circulation of the Communist Party organ, *The People's War*, as it had published an article on the Peshawar incidents of 1930.
5. In December 1944, the Sind Government had prohibited the publication of *Satyartha Prakash* (Light of Truth) by Swami Dayananda Saraswati unless Chapter 14, which was considered offensive to the Muslims, was omitted.

I expect to be in Simla by noon tomorrow. I do not know who will meet me and who will want to see me first when I get there. I have met the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, only once before, very formally during the Cripps Mission in 1942. Lord Wavell was then the Commander-in-Chief.

I do not think any set of circumstances precipitated the present parleys. The continuous pressure of events ultimately has to lead to something.

I feel slightly below par because of the continuous concentrated political activity since my release. For the moment, my mind is more on Kashmir than on the Simla Conference. Kashmir gives me peace of mind, and, with its background of snow-capped ranges, it cheers me up.

Q: Now that Congressmen might join the Council, would you allow them to contest municipal elections?

JN: I cannot offhand reply to the all-India aspect of this question, but in the United Provinces we have made it a rule not to allow a Congressman to go within hundred miles of the municipal offices.

14. The Prospects for the Future[1]

Question: Would you be happy to accept a seat in the Viceroy's Executive Council if you are chosen?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The question of my happiness or otherwise does not arise. The real question is as to who will choose me. That is to say, if I am chosen by the Congress Working Committee or the Congress President and am directed by him to go and work in the Viceroy's Executive Council, it will be a different thing from the position if I were chosen by the Viceroy. If I am chosen by the Congress, I cannot at present say whether I would say "yes" or "no". It will all depend upon circumstances and my mood. I am a man of discipline and if the Congress decides to participate in the new Executive Council, and

1. Interview to the press, Simla, 1 July 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 2 July 1945.

Q: Mahatma Gandhi has declared "Nehru is my heir".[5]

JN: What does that mean?

Q: What are your views on the San Francisco declaration?

JN: It is a sad thing to confess that I have not had time to study all the details and implications of this huge charter.[6] I hope, some day, to go to America.

Q: What is your comment on the Levant situation?[7]

JN: Can there be two opinions about it? The French aggression is obviously objectionable and uncalled for. The difference in the attitude of the Allied powers towards the Germans seems rather extraordinary after the Montgomery[8]—Zhukov[9]—Eisenhower[10] meeting in Berlin. De Gaulle[11] seems quiet these days: What's he doing?

5. In his speech to the A.I.C.C. meeting at Wardha in January 1942, Mahatma Gandhi had said: "Somebody suggested that Pandit Jawaharlal and I were estranged....We have had differences from the moment we became co-workers, and yet I have said for some years and say now that not Rajaji but Jawaharlal will be my successor. He says that he does not understand my language, and that he speaks a language foreign to me. This may or may not be true. But language is no bar to a union of hearts. And I know this that when I am gone he will speak my language."
6. The objectives of the U.N. Charter, which was finalised on 22 June 1945, were: to prevent wars, settle disputes by peaceful means, promote worldwide progress and better standard of living and remove socio-economic conflicts. It provided four organs: General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council and International Court of Justice. The administration of the U.N. was to be handled by a Secretary General.
7. While negotiating in May 1945 with the Syrian and Lebanese Governments for special privileges by virtue of its mandate rule, France strengthened its garrison as a demonstration of force. This provoked the Arabs to resist, and to quell their resistance, the French bombed Damascus on 29 May 1945.
8. Bernard Law Montgomery (1887-1976); 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein; Commander-in-Chief, British occupation forces in Germany, 1945-46; Chief of the Imperial General Staff, 1946-48, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, 1951-58.
9. Georgi Konstaninovich Zhukov (1895-1975); Commander-in-Chief of Russian forces on western front, 1941-42; Soviet Military Administrator, Germany and member, Allied Control Committee, 1945-46; Soviet Minister of Defence, 1955-57.
10. Dwight David Eisenhower (1890-1969); Chief of the Allied Forces in Europe in World War II; President of the United States, 1952-60.
11. (1890-1970); President of the Government, Minister of National Defence and Head of the Armies, France, 1945-6; President of the Fifth Republic, 1958-69.

had left before the decision to attend the Round Table Conference had been taken by the Congress Working Committee.

Q: Should not the Congress demand the release of all political prisoners before proceeding with the negotiations?

JN: Obviously, no Congressman can function in any government if the last of his colleagues is in prison. I include among them all the political prisoners whether convicted for violence or nonviolence, except a few individual cases which require special examination.

Q: What is your attitude towards Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan?

JN: Though I would not like to go into individual cases, yet as far as Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan is concerned I want him to be released.

Q: Will the Simla Conference succeed?[2]

JN: The only competent person to answer any question on the Simla Conference is the Congress President, and if any question has to be asked, it should be addressed to him and to him alone.

Q: What is the position of those still in jail?

JN: I am continuously thinking of those who are still in prison and their dependents who are suffering outside, and the dependents of those who have been shot during the last three years. I may mention the case of an English lady in Almora who has been sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment because she helped the families of some who were stated to be absconders. In the opinion of the Government, any help to such families means helping the absconders themselves.

Q: What are your views on the international situation?

JN: After the last war many things have happened and many changes have taken place, but the end of this war will witness changes on a much larger scale, particularly in Europe and Russia. The end of the war in Europe has already raised many such problems in Asia. India's national movement assumed great strides after the last war. From the manner

2. On 29 June 1945, when the Conference met the Viceroy found that there was no agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League. He asked all the parties to send him lists of persons whom they would like to see included in the Executive Council. After seeing their lists and possibly considering further names of his own, he would form on paper an Executive Council and submit it to the Conference.

I am chosen by the Congress, then the Viceroy's choice will be merely formal. I would, therefore, have to consider the question from this angle but as I said before, my decision will depend upon circumstances and my mood. I will not be happy in joining a government which falls short of independent government.

Q: What is your attitude towards Subhas Chandra Bose today?

JN: I recall the statement which I made in reply to a similar question in early 1942 at Calcutta. I had then said that I would fight against Subhas Chandra Bose if he came to India under the auspices of the Japanese Government, because his coming to India then would have proved dangerous for the future of India. But, if he comes back to India after the Japanese war, it will be wrong to adopt a vindictive policy against him. It is a different matter, however, on what conditions he will be allowed to return to India. An Indian leader cannot ignore the major motive of another Indian and in the case of Subhas Bose, I have no doubt the major motive has been the independence of India.

Q: Would you broadcast to America?

JN: In Bombay, an offer was made to me. But it was too late as I was then leaving for Allahabad. If I were extended similar facilities here as exist in Bombay I will be willing to give a broadcast to America.

Q: Would you visit America in the near future?

JN: I will be extremely happy to do so, but at present things are fairly complicated in India and, therefore, it will not be possible to go out of the country, but I will be happy to visit America if I get a suitable opportunity.

Q: Have you received any invitation from the Viceroy to see him?

JN: No. Normally, Congressmen are not accustomed to meet the Viceroy, but if an invitation comes to me, I shall certainly meet him. Fourteen years ago I had come to Simla on almost a similar mission and met Lord Willingdon, the then Viceroy, in connection with Congress representation at the Second Round Table Conference. My present visit reminds me of those days when Mahatma Gandhi had to be virtually packed off from Simla in a special train in order to catch the last ship for England from Bombay, because the last train from Simla

leaders as Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, but let me tell you that leaders alone cannot bring us to our goal of freedom. It is only the iron will of the people, and the organised strength of the followers behind the leaders that can bring us freedom. If the followers are of the right type and are properly organised even lesser leaders than Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Azad can lead us nearer to our goal of freedom.

It is essential that we should all learn discipline. If India were to attain her freedom, her people must learn to discipline themselves. I have seen the behaviour of the Pathan crowds during my visit to the North West Frontier three years ago. They behaved as if they had been disciplined soldiers. Such discipline is highly necessary for the masses.

I also deprecate attempts to touch the feet of the leaders. This is a pernicious habit. It is a sign of slavery and we should effectively discourage it.

I came to Simla fourteen years ago, more or less for a similar work. I have come once again in response to the call from *Rashtrapati*, the Maulana Sahib. I do not know what has transpired at the Simla Conference.[2] I shall certainly get to know about this from the Maulana Sahib. But whatever might have happened, I want the people to understand one thing and that is this that we of the Congress have not come here for fun. We have come here to see if we can find a way out of the present difficulties.

We in India have to think not merely in terms of our own freedom, but the freedom of India against the background of world problems. During the last war we were content with passing academic resolutions and attending offices. Since then we have witnessed many changes, particularly in our national movement. The Congress with a revolutionary programme has brought about a radical change in the outlook of our people and has taught our people to look at our problems not only from the national point of view but against the background of international events. The Congress has also taught the people the efficacy of direct action for attaining freedom. Our national consciousness has been greatly roused. What we now require is a proper channelisation and regulation of the will to be free.

2. At this time the Simla Conference had come to a deadlock. Jinnah wrote to the Viceroy, proposing, first, that instead of the League submitting a panel, its representatives should be chosen in personal discussion between himself and the Viceroy, and secondly, that all the Muslims should be chosen from the League.

in which the movement has grown, one can very well imagine what the after-effects of the present war will be. Today the national movement is infinitely more powerful and there is greater political consciousness in the country and, therefore, it does not require a prophet to predict that far-reaching consequences will flow from the end of this. How these new forces, which are already showing signs of rising, can be channeled for the good of the country is the problem that the Congress will have to face in the near future.

15. The Will to be Free[1]

Since my release from jail a fortnight ago, I have done a good deal of travelling and wherever I went I have found great enthusiasm among the people. The events of the last three years and the sufferings the people have undergone as a result of the unprecedented repression have not produced any unfavourable effect on the people. I made it a point to ask the people I met whether they were nervous, and I always got the answer in the negative. Similarly, I asked them whether they felt strong enough and I always got the answer in the affirmative.

In my opinion, therefore, in spite of what has happened during the last three years — and the people have suffered much on account of the repression which can be compared only with the repression of the days of the great Indian Mutiny — the people have enough strength. The only difficulty is that their strength is not properly channelised and directed.

A destructive waterfall can by proper organisation be converted to produce hydro-electric power, useful for factories and human consumption. Similarly, if the vast energy and enthusiasm of the people of India were properly channelised and directed, India's national movement will develop such strength as will be impossible to resist. What is, therefore, wanted is proper organisation of the will of the people. There is no lack of will, but there is lack of organisation and marshalling of the forces. We are, indeed, fortunate in having such great

1. Address to a gathering outside his residence, Simla, 1 July 1945. From *The Tribune*, 2 July 1945.

leaders as Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, but let me tell you that leaders alone cannot bring us to our goal of freedom. It is only the iron will of the people, and the organised strength of the followers behind the leaders that can bring us freedom. If the followers are ot the right type and are properly organised even lesser leaders than Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Azad can lead us nearer to our goal of freedom.

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3. I then thought it necessary to bring him back to the question of the present political proposals. He said that although they fell far short of what India had a right to expect, and were insufficient and vague, Congress would do its best to make a success of them.

4. Finally, he came back to what I had said at the beginning of the talk, that law and order must be maintained and that I could not permit of any victimization of Government officials or police. This was the only part of the conversation in which Nehru showed any heat. He persisted that he knew of terrible scandals and oppression, conduct which he described as utterly inhuman; and asked how he could be expected to tolerate such. I said that if any instances of injustice or oppression could be brought up and proved, they would certainly be remedied; but that I was not going back into any inquiry about the events of 1942 or vague allegations against officials. I said that if his friends had the proofs of injustice and oppression in their hands, they ought to have brought them up before now and not waited till the release of the Congress supporters. He said that it was quite impossible for them to do so, they would merely have been put in confinement under the D.I.R. I refused to accept this, and said that the fact that they waited until now would certainly give some colour to the idea of political persecution; and that anyway I was quite determined that I would see that law and order was maintained, which rested largely on the confidence of the officials and police.

5. The interview, which had lasted just over an hour and a half, terminated on this. Nehru was very pleasant throughout the interview and showed little bitterness except on the question of my suggestion that he and his friends were resorting, or would resort, to victimization.

17. Progressive Socialism for India[1]

I advocate progressive socialism as a solution for India's multitudinous economic ills.

1. Interview to the press, Simla, 8 July 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 9 July 1945.

16. Wavell's Report of his Interview with Jawaharlal[1]

1. I spoke to Nehru on the new political proposals, generally on the lines of paragraph six of P.S.V.'s note,[2] but briefly.
2. We then entered on a long general conversation on India's problems and grievances. Nehru began by referring to the general hostility against Great Britain. I said it seemed to me to be largely confined to the educated class, and that the actual agriculturist and labourer certainly did not show any particular hostility to the British. He said that the hostility of the peasant was directed primarily against the landlord, the moneylender, and others who oppressed him; that he regarded the Government as responsible for this, and that therefore he felt hostile towards it. I said that this would then apply just as much to an Indian Government; and he agreed. He then went into a history of India's needs, for industrial development, for improved agriculture, for adequate social services, and so forth. He described India as suffering from industrial "arrested growth;" and said that there had been a time when India was industrially as far or further advanced than the rest of the world, but that the introduction of machines, and the refusal of machines to India had killed her industries and had caused a drift from the towns back to the land, which was in consequence over-populated. I suggested that the growth of the population had a good deal to do with the overcrowding, and rather questioned whether the drift from the towns back to the land had been a really serious factor. He then spoke of the Russian system, agreed as to the immense cost of life that had been caused by that system, and said that the Russian methods were not really applicable to India. He said that almost the first problem was to reform the system of land tenure, instancing particularly the Permanent Settlement in Bengal. He said it should be done peacefully and without revolution. He said that though he described himself as a socialist, he did not believe in pure socialism.

This conversation lasted for about an hour, during which we ranged over a great number of problems and a good deal of history. Nehru was very pleasant, not at all violent and quite reasonable and sensible.

1. Simla, 2 July 1945. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. V, pp. 1192-3.
2. The Private Secretary to the Viceroy had given to Wavell a note giving his suggestions for his conversation with Jawaharlal. "In talking with him I suggest you should cover much the same ground as in your talks with Gandhi and Jinnah, and should also tell him how much harm his recent speeches are likely to do."

18. On Muslim League's Cooperation[1]

The Congress is prepared to participate[2] in a new interim government under the terms of the Wavell plan to which it has already agreed, even though the Muslim League decides against entering such a government.[3] But the Congress would like the door left open for the League.

Of course, this matter is not entirely in our hands, because there are other parties involved, one of which is the British Government, but we hope that if the Muslim League decides not to come in, that decision will be only temporary and that it will change its mind and come in later.

Question: What is the Congress plan if the Simla Conference fails?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I am unable to answer such a question because such a possibility has not been considered at all. One should not enter into negotiations as these and work for their success and at the same time plan for the future step if they fail.

The Congress wants the Muslim League to participate in the proposed new government, because it feels that it must cooperate with all elements in the country in the present circumstances and that all must work together for the good of India.

Q: What is your reaction to the position of heir assigned to you recently by Mahatma Gandhi?

JN: I discount it. There is no question of any ownership or inheritance. Besides, in a democracy there are no heirs to political positions.

Q: What are your plans for the future?

1. Interview to the press, Simla, 11 July 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 12 July 1945
2. On 6 July 1945 the Congress submitted to the Viceroy a list of 15 names from which the representatives for the proposed reorganisation of the Government might be chosen They were: Maulana Azad, Jawaharlal, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Jinnah, Mohammed Ismail Khan, Asaf Ali, Liaquat Ali Khan, Amrit Kaur, S P. Mookerji, Munswami Pillai, Radhanath Das, G L. Mehta, Ardeshir Dalal and Master Tara Singh.
3. Following the Viceroy's refusal on 11 July 1945 to concede the Muslim League's claim that all Muslim seats of the proposed Executive Council should be filled by its nominees, Jinnah decided to stay out of the Simla talks. Immediately there were reports that the Viceroy would go ahead with the Congress in forming his Executive Council

I discount Soviet influence on India. Recent American comments that India will look more and more to Russia for inspiration and guidance is considerably wide of the mark.

While vague socialistic ideas are popularly admired in India and the Russian achievements — especially in Central Asia and in war — have greatly influenced Indian opinion, communism as such is not a great force in India at present.

The Communist Party in India is stronger and better organised than ever, since it has been able to function legally during the past three years, but even so, its numbers and influence are most limited. The Communists have done good work, both in the Bengal famine and elsewhere, but, having opposed the general trend of the national movement, they have created a barrier between themselves and Indian nationalism, which greatly lessens their influence outside their own fold.

While I envisage a progressive socialism for India I imagine that a great deal of individual freedom and initiative would still be left. In any large-scale planning by the state, which seems inevitable if progress is to be rapid, some measure of state control and direction is necessary and it is difficult to say how far this will go in the initial stages.

I emphasise, however, that State planning without a real national government will merely be a continuation of foreign domination. India is an outstanding example of long-arrested development due to many causes — chiefly the British economic and political control on industry, leading to progressive impoverishment of the people.

Since rapid progress of the new state requires capital and trained personnel, any national government will welcome the cooperation of advanced countries, especially America, in supplying capital goods and experts.

But because of long experience of economic domination, India is most sensitive on this subject and will resist anything leading to the creation of powerful foreign vested interests. Big business domination — even Indian — will be objected to by the national government. One of the first objectives of any national government must be the raising of the purchasing power and living standards of the masses which means far-reaching agrarian reforms to remove all feudal relics from the land which obstruct agricultural and industrial growth.

solved in an international setting. Soon after our release we have taken up a position from which there is no easy escape, but probably there may be an early escape. It is not a matter of pride that we should be waiting on the representative of a foreign power. We should ourselves settle our fate. Unfortunately, circumstances are not helping us. However, world forces are moving in the right direction and we shall soon win our independence.

Taking a perspective view of historical developments, one can find India in a highly evolved stage. I have been studying India and the Indian people. Two things strike me most. First, in spite of their differences in language and culture, an essential unity marks the Indians. No matter to what part of India they belong, they bear the same mark of oneness which has created in them an emotional loyalty for their country. Secondly, in spite of their poverty, the people, even from the villages, bear the stamp of the common Indian civilisation. This characteristic is found even among the labourers in Ceylon who have gone from Madras. When I once mentioned this fact to Mr. Rajagopalachari I was struck by his reply. He said: "Why should not those Madrasi labourers have that mark when they have behind them a 2000 years old civilization." While one notices a common hallmark of civilization, one also is amazed at the rich diversity in language and dress and even in culture, something which foreigners belonging to a much younger civilization can neither understand nor appreciate. Despite the material differences, the people have carried on, not only social but also trade relations among themselves and with the outside world.

I refuse to accept the contention of European historians that Europe has always ruled and dominated Asia. Alexander's back was broken by small Indian chiefs and he was the first European invader of India. It is wrong to say that Alexander swept over India. Alexander was not faced by any of the big rulers in India. The smaller chiefs caused his defeat. Of course, I am prepared to concede that Alexander had many disadvantages. The Roman Empire was never a world empire. It was only confined to the coastal regions of the Mediterranean; China and India were far greater than the Roman Empire when that empire was at its highest peak. England or Europe never dominated Asia before excepting, of course, during the last 200 years. We all want to end this domination, which has been the result of our own weakness.

One immediate and visible result of the present war has been that Europe is no longer a dominant power and there is no European country which now rules. Of course, when I say this I exclude Russia and America. These are the two real powers and every other European country is now basking in their favours. They depend on the power

JN: I hope to visit the United States of America, but my going depends entirely on the situation in India. I have hopes of at least a short visit to America which may be followed by another visit for a longer stay there. In foreign relations, if we are to have any, it is very important that we establish contact with popular opinion in America. There should be an exchange of knowledge as to the popular will in the two countries. The same is true of Russia. The international situation today is that there are two powers which really count and these two are America and Russia. Regardless of what happens in the next few weeks or months or even the next year or two, ultimately popular opinion will prevail and cause the decisions, and that is why it is important that we should know the popular will abroad.

19. The End of Domination[1]

I have a liking for Punjabis in spite of their weakness. The Punjab is a strange province with many peculiarities. It is sometimes said that I get annoyed with the Punjab and chide the Punjabis. That may be so, but I would add that every province and people have their own peculiarities. I would assure my Punjabi friends that chiding or rebuking for shortcomings can be given only when there exists intimacy and my rebukes to you are always a kind of affection for you. I feel myself closely connected with the Punjab, because my mother was a Punjabi and I used to come and stay in the Punjab in my younger days.

One thing, however, which I do not like is the way people or leaders of a province like the Punjab go about asking favours from the British rulers. It does not look nice to me that such distinguished leaders as Master Tara Singh should ask for favours from the Government.[2] We must unite and carve our own destiny.

What we are doing just at present has no vital bearing on the larger issues which are before the country and which have to be studied and

1. Speech at a reception given by Punjab legislators, Simla, 13 July 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 14 July, *The Hindustan Times*, 14 July and *The Statesman*, 14 July 1945.
2. On 24 July 1945, Master Tara Singh said that the Sikhs were inclined to accept the Wavell plan and were satisfied with the offer of one seat on the new Executive Council.

not terribly dejected about anything. What really distresses me is not just the result or want of result of this conference, but the background in which our problems are usually considered. They ultimately resolve themselves into some aspect of the communal problem.

Fundamentally, the communal problem as well as many other problems, if you analyse them, become a kind of conflict between medievalism and modernism, between the medieval outlook and the modern outlook. Obviously, it is not a question of a seat or a job here and there.

The Congress represents, more than any other group, the modern outlook, politically and economically, and if I may say so, nationally and internationally. The Muslim League, as any other communal organisation, inevitably represents not only the particular claims of a group, but represents them in a medieval context.

Politics considered in terms of religious communities is wholly inconsistent with both democracy and any modern conception of politics or economics. There lies the real rub. To give in to this medieval conception is to throw back the whole course of development in India, political and economic, and try to build a structure which does not fit in with the realities of today in any department of life. You can never ignore realities for long and if you try to do so, you do so at your peril.

This is the essence of the communal problem, so far as I am concerned, and not a question of services or jobs or anything else, and India will have to decide, if not today, either tomorrow or the day after, whether it is going to be a democratic modern country or an undemocratic medieval country. The latter choice is wholly ruled out because it just cannot be done by any country today.

The normal choice for countries today is not between medievalism and democracy, but what may be called just political democracy or something more, that is, economic democracy also, which means socialism in some form or other.

At the back of all these superficial conflicts, which are sometimes represented by individuals, are, of course, impersonal forces at work. Lord Wavell, for instance, occupies a leading position as the Viceroy and no doubt his personality counts. Gandhiji or the Congress President also occupies a leading position and what they may say or do, counts. So also Mr. Jinnah. But, behind all these individuals are those impersonal forces which both control and push on these individuals. Lord Wavell ultimately must function within the limits of the British policy. Congressmen must function within the limits of Indian nationalism and Indian independence. What Mr. Jinnah's urges and initiatives are, I am not competent to say. So, it is not a question really of individual *bona fides* in the matter, but the conflict of impersonal forces,

primarily the British power in India and Indian nationalism and, secondly, certain medieval urges in India in addition to various fear complexes and modern progressive tendencies.

Question: Is it your point that the basic British policy in India is to hang on to power at any cost, and that if there is a conflict, British policy must be in opposition to Indian nationalism?

Jawaharlal Nehru: There is a fundamental conflict between British imperialism and Indian nationalism, but circumstances and many new factors have changed this policy. I do think that the world situation, as it is today and as it will be tomorrow, is exercising a powerful pressure on British policy so that it might come to some terms with the Indian people. These terms the British would like to be as favourable as possible to British interests in India. This is natural, but I think they must realise that the old order in India cannot possibly continue, even though Mr. Churchill would like it to continue.

Q: Are all Muslims medieval?

JN: I do not mean that the average member of the Muslim League is medieval. I think there are many progressive people in the Muslim League who, once the lid of medievalism is removed, will become political radicals.

It happens in the circumstances of today that certain questions have been made to cover up and obscure all the really important political and economic issues in the country. That happens sometimes.

What are the important issues, after all? The first issue in India is the agrarian problem. Allied to it is the industrial problem. You cannot solve the land problem without solving the industrial problem. They are locked and interlocked into each other. These are fundamental questions which apply to the Hindu and the Muslim alike. The misfortune is that they get covered up by certain complexes and prejudices, which, however superficial they may be, become formidable obstacles at the moment.

The so-called communal problem in India has no deep roots. By this I do not deny its importance at the present stage. It is very important, but it has nevertheless no deep roots and, therefore, I do not think that a solution of it will take a long time once it gets going. When the medieval lid is removed, immediately the real problems of the day will come up, and they affect both the Hindus and Muslims.

In the Islamic countries of the Middle East, where the Indian National Congress has made no propaganda, there is a better appreciation of the standpoint of the Congress because it fits in with their political ideals in spite of the natural sympathy that the people of those countries may feel for their co-religionists in India. The Turks, for instance, detest the conversion of politics into a chequer board of religion.

I invite foreign correspondents, in particular, to think what will happen if America, for instance, is divided into electoral constituencies for Catholics, Protestants, Methodists, Jews and various other Christian sects. You cannot imagine any democratic system based on such a thing. Yet, that is what is happening in India today. Inevitably you will have a situation in which each community with its separate electorates thinks in terms of its special group interests. If you have separate electorates in any country under the sun, you will have problems worse than the communal problem of India.

Q: Are Muslims a separate nation?

JN: I admit that the present circumstances may produce not a separate nation, but a group which is very anti-national. It may be considered a separate nation. Such a thing may develop. But the real thing is that today it is beside the point to talk about nations as such. The modern tendency is for the idea of a nation not to be confused with the idea of a state. The biggest countries today are multi-national.

If it pleases Mr. Jinnah to consider himself as belonging to a separate nation, then the matter ends. He can call himself by that name. But it does not solve any problem. Even supposing there are two, three or four nations in India, the problem is how are they to get along together?

Q: Mr. Jinnah stated to me categorically that his Pakistan will be cent per cent a modern and democratic state and there will be no restriction on ground of caste or creed or religion and everyone in Pakistan will be enjoying full and unrestricted citizenship.

JN: That is also the ideal of the Congress. If the two have the same goal why should not there be joint efforts made jointly?

Q: The Muslims fear a Hindu majority; how are the fears to be disarmed?

JN: You cannot disarm fear. It is a complex which may require psycho-analytical treatment. It is an odd thing that it has been said, by

some prominent members of the Muslim League, including Mr. Jinnah, that the Muslims are warriors and heroes and if the British rule had not been there they could have dominated others. On the other hand, they talk of fear of being dominated by the majority. It is absurd to talk of anyone dominating eighty or ninety millions of people. The whole idea is fantastic. My way of thinking is entirely different from Mr. Jinnah's.

Q: Muslims do not fear Hindu might but Hindu votes.

JN: The vote is after all a feeble substitute for might. If eighty or ninety million Muslims do not fear Hindu might, could they fear Hindu votes? Can Pakistan solve the communal problem? According to the League every Muslim is a Pakistani. Consequently, if Pakistan is established, every Muslim in Hindustan will be a foreigner as will be every Hindu in Pakistan. Hindus and Muslims are living mixedly in India's seven lakh villages. If Pakistan is established, it will worsen the communal problem, far from solving it. The Congress takes a rational stand and makes it clear that territorial and not communal sovereignty can be envisaged when India is independent.

Q: What is your reaction to the news that Lord Wavell had told Jinnah that he would include four Muslim Leaguers and one Unionist on the Executive Council?

JN: It is for Mr. Jinnah and Lord Wavell to react to it. It is not my concern.

Q: What is the way out of the present deadlock?

JN: There may be many ways out of the present situation. Obviously one way out, which for the moment is not available, is for the third party to retire from the scene, either factually or theoretically. I mean there should be no question of the third party imposing its will, and other parties should realise that they have to face the issues themselves without that third party. Then they will face realities and the consequences of the absence of a solution for the deadlock. Or, in the alternative — obviously, a very desirable alternative — other parties should pull together.

The other possible course really depends on the growth of almost overwhelming strength of one or more groups which pull together so that their influence may be felt by all the remaining groups.

Lastly, there might well be a complete collapse, owing to the deterioration of the economic situation, and that might lead partly to chaos and partly to revolt and revolution in various parts of the country. In spite of much money having been made at the top, India is fairly on the verge of collapse.

Q: Will the Indian National Congress, after India has turned out to be a modern democratic state, continue to function?

JN: I do not visualise that in its present form the Congress would survive. Its function is likely to come to an end as soon as Indian independence is won.

Q: Would you advise the Congress to demand a general election?

JN: The Congress is always for the election, but you should know that the Congress is still an illegal body. A large number of its members are still in jail and in the United Provinces, even now five Congressmen cannot meet together without hitting the Defence of India Rules.[3] The election, if it comes when the normal situation is restored, will be always welcomed by the Congress.

3. The District Magistrate of Allahabad had issued a notification banning public processions and meetings in Allahabad district, from 9 to 15 August 1945, without his permission obtained 72 hours in advance

21. The Character of the Muslim League[1]

He was quite friendly. We talked for an hour and a quarter. His main theme was that Congress represented a modern nationalist tendency — the League a medieval and separatist one. He showed no special bitterness against Jinnah and the League, admitted that there was a psychological fear of Hindu domination, but claimed that it was unreal and

1. Three accounts by Wavell of his interview with Jawaharlal at Simla on 14 July 1945 are printed

unwarranted though he admitted that there was a section of Hindus out for complete Hindu domination. He did not put forward any special solution of the problem. He is more of a theorist than a practical politician but earnest and I am sure honest.[2]

xx xx xx

...I had a final interview with Nehru on the afternoon of 14th July after the conference had ended, and told him I thought that Jinnah's influence and obstinacy were due to a genuine fear among the ordinary Muslims of the Congress and its propaganda. Nehru said he thought the Muslims had not really been ill-treated by the Congress Governments during the years 1937-39, but he admitted that some of the Congress Hindus were anti-Muslim, and that the psychological factors were important. He said that the Congress was at least an attempt at a nationalist organisation of a modern kind, while the Muslim League stood for an almost medieval conception of communal interest. Nehru was friendly, but had no constructive suggestions to make.[3]

xx xx xx

...the theme of his discourse was that Congress represented a modern nationalistic point of view and the League a narrow medieval conception, and that the eventual cleavage when India's freedom was secured would be between poor and rich, between peasant and landlord, between labour and employer.[4]

2. Wavell's *note*, 14 July 1945. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. V, p. 1249.
3. Wavell to Amery, 16 July 1945. *The Transfer of Power* 1942-7, Vol. V, p. 1266.
4. *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, (London, 1973) p. 155.

22. On his Talks with the Viceroy[1]

In my talks with the Viceroy I hardly referred to the Simla Conference, though there were some allusions to it. We talked in terms of the background of the Indian situation. Even previously, when I met the

1. Interview to the press, Simla, 14 July 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 15 July 1945.

Viceroy about a week or more ago, there was no reference, or hardly any, to the conference. Naturally, I said that as far as the conference matters were concerned our President had discussed them. I discussed all manner of problems, including some subjects which are dear to me, like planning in India.

23. No Cause for Despondency[1]

I thank the Congressmen of Simla for the arrangements they have made for the leaders who have come to attend the Simla Conference.

This day, it is a month, since I have been released from the Almora jail. We have been naturally anxious to see that thousands of our comrades are also released like us. But we did not demand their release as a condition for attending the Simla Conference because we wanted to give a fair deal to the intentions of those who have invited us to the conference. We did not want to be accused of being a stumbling block. I am not at all worried over the failure of the conference. I am, however, glad that the Congress has done its duty. I am not prepared to apportion any responsibility anywhere but there is no cause for despondency because the conference has failed. The Wavell plan and the conference are just one of the many methods which the Congress sought to utilise for the ultimate attainment of independence. I advise you not to give way to despair on account of the failure of the conference, but to continue your efforts to achieve independence. The Congress leaders attended the conference in good faith and the Congress played its part very well to make the conference a success. But such conferences are not the end. Our goal is clear. Even if the conference had succeeded the result would have been comparatively very little. Now that the conference has failed I want my countrymen to be ready to traverse the path which any peace loving people have to traverse, which any country that wants to reach the goal of independence has to traverse. This goal of independence is near now. I ask you to be ready to achieve this goal.

1. Speech at Simla, 15 July 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 16 July and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 17 July 1945.

I don't know when I shall come again to Simla. I must say that the affection you have shown me is unforgettable, indeed. I can never forget the love you have shown me today.

24. On Excluded Areas[1]

We are in complete agreement with you.[2] We do not want any excluded area in our country.

I assure you that the Congress has always kept the question in view and you can safely rely on the Congress to look to the interest of everybody in the country.

1. Talk with a representative of Chittagong Hill Tracts, Simla, 15 July 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 17 July 1945.
2. A delegation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bengal represented to the Viceroy against a Government proposal of creating a north eastern frontier province of which the Chittagong Hill Tracts would form a part.

25. Slums in Simla[1]

Of my various engagements during these two eventful weeks in Simla, not the least in importance was my visit to the scavengers' quarters in the city. A city is not judged by its palaces and broad avenues. A truer measure is the condition of its humbler citizens, their houses and quarters, and their standard of living.

Scavengers, who perform the most essential tasks in our society, have by a perverse fate and an unjust social order, been placed at the bottom of the social scale. It is upto us to change this completely by raising

1. Statement to the press, Simla, 16 July 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 17 July 1945.

OUTSIDE MAHATMA GANDHI'S RESIDENCE AT JUHU, JUNE 1945

AT SIMLA, JULY 1945

them and bettering their conditions. I was shocked to see the quarters of the scavengers. The situation was bad, the tiny rooms were dark and damp and often I could not make out how so many people could possibly live in such a restricted space. In a little room of about ten feet by eight there was a family of ten. Cooking, bathing etc., have all to take place inside this room or cell.

The contrast between this and the noble mansions and gardens of the prosperous classes in Simla is startling, and most painful to comtemplate. The Simla Municipality, as being especially responsible for this state of affairs, ought to be ashamed. But all of us who live in palaces and mansions of Simla must share that shame. I hope the municipality and the citizens of Simla will endeavour to put an end to this iniquity.

26. The Absurdity of Partition[1]

I am opposed to the division of India not because I have some sentimental attachment to united India. It is my progressive and modern mind that makes me believe that united India can make us a powerful state. A division of India is likely to create weak satellite states which will depend on big adjoining states for existence. My idea is not to create a second Iran[2] and Iraq[3] in India, which could be overrun by a big power in a day. A divided India will be like Iraq and Iran, which, in fact, are not sovereign but just satellite powers, at the mercy of great nations.

Secondly, partition will not solve the communal problem. It may, instead, intensify it. In both the zones, minorities will remain. Mr

1. Address to press conference, Lahore, 17 July 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, *The Statesman*, *The Times of India*, *The Hindustan Times*, and *The Leader*, 18 July 1945.
2. In the Second World War, Iran proclaimed her neutrality, but in 1941 Britain and Russia requested rights of transit through Iranian territory. Permission having been refused, the two powers occupied Iran till 1946.
3. By a treaty with Britain, Iraq became independent in 1930, but the British retained rights to two airbases and freedom of transit for their armed forces. The British occupation force was responsible for foiling a pro-Axis coup in 1941. In January 1943, Iraq declared war on Germany.

Jinnah's fear of the Hindu majority in a centralised national government is based on his medieval trend of thought. No country can be divided on a religious basis. Nobody ever thought of the Catholic or Protestant majorities in western democratic countries. Yet Catholics and Protestants live together in the same nation. This is a point over which everyone should ponder seriously. This is a poser to the Muslim League also.

At the same time, I think that the Pakistan demand is being pressed by a majority of Muslims in north-west and east of India only. But the Punjab's problem will remain unsolved. The demand of the Muslim League logically presumes a division of the Punjab. But here Hindus and Sikhs, who form nearly half the population and are in a majority in the eastern districts, will never go over to Pakistan. The Punjab, moreover, is a cultural unit and even Punjab Muslims will resent the vivisection of their province. This objection also applies to Bengal. As far as I can see, the Punjabis or Bengalis, whether Muslims or Hindus, will never like their provinces, which are homogeneous linguistic units, to be divided.[4] This proposition will appear disagreeable to them. At the same time you cannot force them to go with Pakistan.

My fourth objection is that Pakistan is injurious to the best interests of the Muslims themselves. However, if those areas which have predominant Muslim majorities are utterly bent on separation no power on earth can stop them. But I shall try my best to convince all that separation is not in the interest of anyone, certainly not of the Muslims.

The Muslim League's approach itself is self-contradictory. You cannot cut the head with the idea of restoring it. Pakistan is an inconceivable proposition, but I am not compelling anyone to accept this view by a bludgeon.

Question: Can you suggest a remedy?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Separate electorates must go. All the present communal troubles in India are due to separate electorates. They can go only by our consent and not by force. In the present historical background, safeguards will have to be provided for the protection of minority interests. Such safeguards are essential features of every democratic system of government. But here, in India, the process is reversed. Here, landlords and capitalists want safeguards. This is absurd.

4. There were 12,000,000 non-Muslims out of a population of 28,000,000 in Punjab. In Bengal the Muslims were just over half the population and in Assam only about one third.

My solution to the communal problem is that there should be semi-independent autonomous provinces with all possible protection to the minorities — cultural, linguistic and religious. The Muslims should not forget that the Congress has conceded separation by its Bombay resolution of 1942 to any territorial unit provided it is sought by a clear and definite majority. I do not see any contradiction between that resolution and that of Jagat Narain which was considered earlier at Allahabad.[5]

Q: Now that the Simla Conference has failed would the Congress reform[6] ministries in the provinces?

JN: The resumption of ministries is not a question of opinion, but it depends on the conditions prevailing in the country. The Congress will not form governments in the provinces now, as suitable circumstances do not exist. If suitable circumstances existed, all could be done, but I do not think these circumstances exist at present.

Q: Do you think that communal unity is necessary before political freedom?

JN: Theoretically it is not essential. The removal of untouchability and a settlement between Hindus and Muslims will obviously make India's freedom battle end earlier. Unity and social equality are the foundation of a progressive and stable state. A country is strong if there is social equality and if good relations subsist among the various groups. Unity as embodied in the Muslim League's demands breaks the very meaning of unity. The League's approach is based on disunity and on a medieval conception of society.

Q: Can you define medievalism?

5. This had been a counter resolution to Rajagopalachari's resolution accepting Pakistan in principle. It declared any proposal to give liberty to any province to secede from India as detrimental to Indian interests and therefore unacceptable.

6 The Congress, which had resigned office in October 1939, could have returned to office as soon as the war was over. But the Muslim League had demanded that in no circumstances should the Congress be allowed to resume office before fresh elections Meanwhile, some Governors, as in Bihar, had dissolved the provincial legislatures, seven months before the election.

JN: By medievalism, I mean, a religious group functioning as a political party. The Muslim League is a religious party whose membership is confined to the group from which others are excluded.

Mr. Jinnah's latest proposition is that the Muslim League alone can represent the Muslims in India. But the Congress has a national foundation. Its political programme is to fight for the complete independence of all, irrespective of caste or creed. Its doors are open to all. It is now impossible for the Congress to shift from this foundation. If it does so it will die. This Congress — this old Congress for which we all have laboured — cannot do this. But if, even after giving the price for unity, that unity still remains far away, then that has no meaning. Obviously, the Hindu-Muslim question is an obstruction, but to say that freedom cannot come unless there is Hindu-Muslim unity is incorrect.

However, unless it is achieved there will be constant obstruction to the running of a government. So, if communal unity is achieved beforehand, nothing like that. But political freedom can come even before that unity is achieved.

Q: Is the *charkha* creed medieval or modern?

JN: As chairman of the National Planning Committee I can say that however fast the pace of industrialisation may be it has been decided that cottage industries should never be neglected.

Q: Was Lord Wavell sincere in making his proposals?

JN: Lord Wavell is sincere and even Mr. Churchill is sincere. I do not understand this talk about sincerity though I do not accept everybody's sincerity. Lord Wavell is not a free agent. He represents the policy of the British Government and there is no question of his sincerity or insincerity. Wavell obviously wanted the Simla Conference to succeed. But the policy of the British Government is guided by numerous other factors. Among them are reactionary civilians and Governors, foreign relations and the world situation. If the Simla Conference had succeeded it would have enhanced his prestige. His breaking up of the conference is in accordance with the British Government policy.

Q: Would you like the Congress in the Punjab to work with the Unionist Government against the Muslim League?

JN: My advice to the Congressmen here is that they should stand on their own legs and oppose everyone who stands in their way. The Congress will like to have general elections.

Q: Now that the Simla Conference has failed, what is the future programme of the Congress?

JN: The Congress will take stock of the whole situation as it has developed since 1942. It will lay emphasis on the work of reorganisation keeping in view the present day problems. The whole face of the country has changed and we have to reorganise the Congress in this light. We have also to study how these three years have affected public opinion and public temper. I find that the public mind has been powerfully affected and people's hearts have been steeled.

Q: Does reorganisation mean expulsion of such elements as are opposed to the official Congress policy?

JN: Although I did not have this in mind when discussing reorganisation, it obviously includes this question also.

Q: Is it true that you had suggested that everybody outside the Congress was a traitor?

JN: It is ridiculous to say that I had suggested that everybody outside the Congress was a traitor. I never made this statement. It is absurd. I said some days ago that when a war was on, and the Congress leaders were in jail, the Communists went over to the other side and created a gulf between themselves and the national sentiment.

I also draw your attention to the distressing fact that the long-term political prisoners who have in some cases completed their life terms are still in prison. It is scandalous that the *Komagatamaru* prisoners are still in jail after 31 years.[7] Either it is sheer forgetfulness on the part of the authorities or it is vengeance. I hope that now at any rate the Government will release forthwith these prisoners who have been detained for such a long time and also those who are sick in jails. I may also refer to the situation in Bikaner State, where, according to telegrams I have received, peasants and Praja Mandal workers are being put

7. In 1914 the ship, *Komagatamaru*, sailed from Hong Kong to Vancouver with 35 Sikhs and 21 Muslims. When it arrived at Vancouver a majority of emigrant passengers could not comply with Canadian laws and were not permitted to land. It remained in the harbour for two months and was finally driven out by force of arms. It sailed back to India and berthed at Budge Budge. The passengers were not allowed to enter Calcutta but were ordered to board a train bound for Punjab. They refused and in a clash with the police 18 persons were killed including some policemen. They were all then arrested.

to untold hardship due to repression by the Government.[8] I hope the authorities there will take immediate action to relieve the tension.

8. In July 1945, Praja Mandal workers and kisans of certain villages were arrested by the Bikaner State authorities following their agitation for responsible government and agrarian and economic reforms.

27. In Defence of the August Rising[1]

For a brief comparison of the great events of 1942, we shall have to go back 88 years to the time of the historic Indian rising of 1857. I am very proud of what happened in 1942. I would have been very sorry indeed if people had tamely submitted to the British Government. That would have been a sign of cowardice and would have undone the work of decades. It was a mighty and staggering phenomenon to see a helpless people spontaneously rise in despair without any leader or organisation or preparation or arms. They bravely suffered, endured and sacrificed many things. They could no longer tolerate the humiliation and misery heaped upon them by the ruling power.

It is easy for armchair critics to find fault with that rising. May be, there were things which cannot be approved or justified. But those who criticised the happenings and who tried to mislead the people are cowards. I make it plain that I cannot condemn those who took part in the 1942 movement.

The poor kisans, their hearts aglow with the desire for freedom, were oppressed and tortured by the police and the military. Nothing much happened in the Punjab, but in my own province, as in Bihar and Bengal and in most parts of the country, a series of black deeds were perpetrated. Hundreds of villages were destroyed and burnt, and the very patches of land which they tilled with ploughs were also destroyed.

The people made mistakes; they erred and faltered, but they moved on. They refused to be subdued despite the terrible repression. At thousands of places, the police and the military fired at them, but they

1. Speech at Lahore, 17 July 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 18 July 1945.

braved all this. No doubt the Nazis of Germany were very brutal, but to match their deeds one can find quite a good many in India.

In the Punjab, it was a different story. Nothing much happened here, but the seemingly popular Government behaved in a strange fashion towards Congressmen.[2] In a cold and calculating manner it did many things against human dignity. I pity it, but I pity all the more those Congressmen and Congress leaders who submitted to those things willingly. The dignity of the Congress requires that even its volunteers *should not bow before a Government official.*

The story of the Simla Conference is now ended. I cannot say what will happen in the future. But we have to judge the Simla episode from a correct perspective. If you lie around a little mound, it may well look a mountain.

I am sorry that the Simla Conference has failed. Do not worry because it has failed. But had it succeeded, the results would have been different. Of course, the conference did not propose to solve any of the big problems of India. It only opened a little window through which we could see some way of solving those problems. We thought we might make good use of that window. To the Executive Council, we could have sent the best men.

The conference did not fail because of the Congress. There might be several reasons for the failure. It may be the Viceroy. It may be the Muslim League. But it has failed despite the fact that we wanted it to succeed.

No country in the world has a government so corrupt and inefficient as we have in India. Nepotism and bribery are rampant everywhere. From top to bottom the Government seems to have no qualms of conscience about it. Indians and the British are all mixed up in it. And we are ashamed of the part of those Indians. They seem to have no moral responsibility towards their people.

The Congress, unlike the communal organisations, has to look upon the many problems in a thousand ways from both national and international viewpoints. They have to find out and judge the social or economic effects that the solutions of these problems would produce. But the Muslim League has only to think of Muslims, the Sikh organisation of only the Sikhs.

It may not be unreasonable to think in this manner, but the Congress has to think of all, not only of Indians but also of other subject

2. During the years from 1942 to 1945 the Unionist Government of the Punjab had detained many Congressmen without trial and prohibited several Congress legislators from attending the Assembly.

peoples who are groaning under the heels of imperialism. The communal organisations once in a while discuss international affairs but I wonder whether they really understand them. The Congress always keeps before it the big picture of the world.

I refer to the state of Burma, Java, Sumatra, Malaya, Indo-China, the Philippines and other countries overrun by Japan, and ask whether Dutch, British, French and American imperialism is not again to throttle the people of these lands after the Japanese have been driven out from there.

The Congress will not tolerate this. Mr. Amery's White Paper[3] on Burma is of no use. This is not the solution. Our struggle is but a part of the struggle of all the suppressed peoples, and we are not to lose sight of this fact.

Among the many immediate and pressing problems, one is that of settling twenty lakh soldiers returning from the war. The old-fashioned British Government is incompetent to solve this problem. They may praise the Indian army now, but it is impossible for them to solve the problem. Only a national government which understands their aspirations and desires can meet their needs.

Our present programme in connection with Congress reorganisation is to set our organisation in order. Organisation is a strong weapon. If it has blunted, we must sharpen it.

I severely criticise the disruption[4] in the Punjab Congress. Punjab Congressmen must end all party factions which are based on personalities rather than principles. Wipe out such men as those who create disruption and disorganisation with a broomstick.

A large number of political prisoners are likely to be released. The Lahore Conspiracy Case prisoners have been in jail for 17 years.[5] Some of them are being kept in the United Provinces as prisoners of the Punjab Government. I hope the Punjab Government will release them as early as possible.

3. Issued on 17 May 1945, it promised Burma self government within the Commonwealth. It would be effected by 1948 in three stages.
4. The Punjab Congress Workers Assembly, formed to implement the Congress constructive programme, and the official office holders of the Congress under Mian Iftikharuddin, had functioned as rival organisations and quarrelled over such issues as on the choice of a candidate for a by-election in Lahore. Their dissensions had led to the resignation of some leaders including Gopichand Bhargava from the party.
5. In Punjab, prisoners sentenced to transportation for life were released after they had undergone 11 years in jail including remission earned by them. But at least five of the accused of the Lahore conspiracy case who were arrested in 1929-30 were still in jail.

28. The Tasks Ahead[1]

Our programme is to win freedom for our country. That is our goal, our destination, our target and our objective. Our main issue is to eliminate poverty from our country as soon as possible. The Punjabis cannot possibly visualise a true picture of poverty prevailing in other parts of India and the pitiable condition of the masses, as the middle classes in the Punjab are reported to have reaped a good harvest during the war while this is not the case in other provinces, where, barring a few people at the top, others have been ruined by the war. Picture before you the condition of Bengal where 30 to 40 lakhs of people met their end following an unprecedented famine. That province suffered an unheard of disaster and it will take several years to return to its normal conditions Such things have not happened in any other part of the world.

I have passed the last few days in the Punjab. Simla is an integral part of the Punjab, but has assumed the role of a central town during the last fortnight or so. I am overwhelmed by the zeal and enthusiasm manifested by the people of the Punjab during the last two days when I have been actually in the Punjab. An enormous enthusiasm of the people has been witnessed during my brief sojourn at Lahore and at all wayside stations throughout the night where huge crowds had gathered at odd hours to accord welcome to their leaders. This clearly indicates that the people have real thirst and hunger for political freedom which they have not been able to secure in spite of their struggle during the last so many years.

It also appears that they have not been able, for long, to get an opportunity to show their real regard for the Congress for which they have now deep affection in their hearts.

During all this time, as the political life in the country has been practically at a standstill, the people have naturally become impatient. The events of the last three years when Congress leaders were behind the bars, are now before my eyes, although whatever I learned has been

1. Speech at Rawalpindi, 18 July 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 19 July 1945.

through papers or through friends who have been outside jail. Whatever has happened in 1942 in the United Provinces, Bihar, parts of Bengal and other parts of India, it has made a tremendous effect on the spirit of the general public. But the Punjab has gained no such experience. It is absolutely not possible for you to correctly weigh or measure the tremendous effect which those events have on the life of the average Indian.

One specific question which is being asked from us everywhere, ever since our release from jail, is what programme and policy the Congress has chalked out for the people to attain freedom. The Congress has one programme and one aim and that is the freedom of the country.

Settling the Congress policy and future programme has a direct bearing on the minds of the general masses and is not a commodity which can be purchased or discussed on paper. To answer the question correctly it is essential to gauge the true picture of India.

At the Simla Conference, the Congress played its part admirably well to end the stalemate as conditions in the country are most deplorable and require immediate and sympathetic handling. In spite of our sincere efforts, we have not succeeded, but there is no ground for despondency and despair. We should bear in mind that the Simla Conference is not such a panacea as can solve the entire problem of India's independence, although, if successful, it could have proved a long stride in our march towards our destination. The success of the Conference would certainly have removed an important hurdle in our path and made our journey to the goal a bit easier.

I emphasise that it is essential to understand harder international problems of the day with a view to having a clear grasp of the present day Indian politics. The Indian National Congress is the only body which has acquired the habit to think internationally and to link Indian affairs with world problems and issues. Other communal bodies in the country consider the problem only in a limited sphere taking into view the interests of a particular community they like to represent.

I stress that happenings in America, China and Russia have undoubtedly a profound effect on Indian problems. The war in Europe, which has just terminated, has brought revolutionary changes and new problems of peace in all countries freed from the Nazi yoke. Meagre press reports do not reveal the true picture of what has been happening in Europe. Similarly the end of the war with Japan will bring in its turn new problems for Asiatic countries which have hitherto been under Japanese domination.

29. Freedom the Real Issue[1]

On account of its geographical position and climatic condition, Kashmir is the crown of India and Asia.

The movement of August 1942 and the Bengal famine bear deep relation to the question of Indian freedom. After 1857, the movement of 1942 has been the second attempt on the part of the people to get freedom for the country.

Keeping in view only official figures of 15 lakhs of deaths, the earning of the profiteers during the Bengal famine amounts roughly to Rs. 1,000 for one death. The then Government was responsible for that shameful waste of human lives.

The real problem of India is freedom. I think that as Hitler could not suppress the spirit of freedom among the conquered peoples of Europe, so also Mr. Churchill's desire to crush the Congress and Gandhiji has not been fulfilled.

1. Speech at Pahalgam, 22 July 1945. *From The Bombay Chronicle*, 23 July 1945.

30. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit[1]

***[2] Simla was a strain. Partly because of the business in hand, but even more so because of the large numbers of friends and acquaintances whom I had not seen for years and was naturally anxious to meet. There were others, rajas and maharajas, whom I was not so anxious to meet who were continually pressing me to lunch or dine with them. From Simla I came straight to Kashmir, spending two sleepless nights on the way because of vast crowds at every railway station. It was extraordinary to see these people, emotionally wound up, deprived of outlets for three years, coming at all hours of the night and behaving almost hysterically. I was annoyed often enough but I was moved also

1. 26 July 1945. *The Voice of India (America)*, October 1945.
2. Omission in the source.

by this pouring out of affection in such abundant measure. And so to Kashmir***[3]

I can hardly discuss high politics in this letter. The subject is too long and intricate to be dealt with briefly. Still I might as well indicate to you (what you perhaps already know) that we decided to make every effort to make the Simla Conference a success. It was not an easy matter for us, for the past three years have affected our people very deeply, and, I think, changed them considerably. Intense passion has been aroused and the iron has entered the soul of large numbers of the Indian people. Something that happened *in Ireland in the early* twenties after the Black and Tan[4] episode is happening here, or rather, taking shape *in the minds of men. I am not referring to* the communal question here, though that is important enough in its own sphere. It is the purely *political aspect* I *am* dealing with here. Anyone who knows recent Irish history understands what I mean, and will be able to form some picture of what might happen in India in the future Most outsiders are of course entirely ignorant, as they are of most other aspects, and judge superficially some outstanding questions like the communal question.

With this background it is not possible to drive the people beyond a certain limit. Yet we went far, very far, considering our whole background and especially the last three years which stand out in every Indian's mind. We did so because we considered the *position today* in all its aspects, national and international, and decided on this course. We went so far that we surprised our *opponents* and rather knocked them off their balance. Finding that the Congress was anxious to come to a *temporary and interim settlement*, the big guns of the I.C.S. were frightened and made every effort to sabotage such a settlement. They succeeded with the help of other forces. The communal question came to their help There was, of course, no question of an odd seat here or an odd person there. The issues were deeper and involved, so far as we were concerned, a complete breaking of our national *organisation*. I think everyone, or almost everyone, recognised our *bona fides* in the matter and realised that we had made every *effort to arrive* at a settlement.

The situation is now fluid. *I do not know how* things will shape themselves. The Viceroy may take some further step, as he hinted, though *what this will be I cannot say*. Anyway, one thing is certain,

3. Omission in the source.
4. The British military irregulars who suppressed *the* Sinn Fein in Ireland.

that we cannot remain where we are. Changes in the situation this way or that are inevitable.

In such a situation it is obviously difficult for me to leave India. And yet it may be possible for me to do so. I am myself anxious to go abroad and especially to America. Whether the Government will come in the way of this or not, I do not know, but apart from that there are other hurdles. I have no illusions of so-called propaganda abroad, and even if I went abroad, I do not intend to plead for India's cause. I'm not going to sit on anybody's threshold and plead any cause. That just rubs me the wrong way. But I recognise the value of contacts and exchange of ideas in this changing world, and of ever keeping and thinking of India in the context of the world. If I go, therefore, it will be more to satisfy an inner psychological need than to influence others. And if I go, it can only be for a relatively short period. The pull of India and our people is too great for me to be absent for long, specially in these trying and changing times, when new problems and situations are continually arising.

You know that your work in the States has been very greatly appreciated here by all kinds of people.[5] You have done a splendid job, as no one else could have done in the circumstances. The immediate consequences may not be obvious, but I am sure the remoter ones will be considerable*****[6]

5. Vijayalakshmi toured the United States explaining the Congress viewpoint. She was at San Francisco at the time of the United Nations conference.
6. Omission in the source

31. On the Labour Party's Victory[1]

Obviously the tremendous victory[2] of the Labour Party in Britain in the general elections is an event of outstanding importance both in the domestic affairs of Britain and in international affairs.

I have greatly enjoyed this trek of ours in the higher valleys of Kashmir. This is not surprising, for I always enjoy such visits and had long looked

1. Interview to the press, Waniaram (Kashmir), 1 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindu*, 2 August and *The Tribune*, 2 August 1945.
2. On 26 July 1945 the Labour Party won the general election. A cabinet with Attlee as Prime Minister and Pethick Lawrence as Secretary of State for India took office.

forward to it. I feel much better now and fresher in mind in spite of the difficult climbing we have made. For the pleasure of this trip I am indebted, of course, to the mountains and valleys of Kashmir, its glaciers, lakes and streams, its noble trees and innumerable variety of flowers. But I am also indebted to the careful arrangements made by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, who, as usual, left nothing to chance, and to my companions than whom I could have none better—Mr. Ghulam Mohammed Bakshi and Mr. Shamlal Kaul, who busied themselves with innumerable details of such a trip and left me and my daughter, Indira, to have the pleasure alone without any worry.

During these days I have often felt how selfish I was to be enjoying myself in this lovely mountain land when work demanded my presence elsewhere. Especially my place is in the United Provinces to attend important meetings of Congressmen that are being held there and to be present next week at the Liberty Week[3] celebrations in my province. But I got entangled in many important engagements here during the next few days and I must ask my colleagues of the United Provinces to excuse me and to be indulgent towards me in this matter.

In connection with the Liberty Week I would like to offer my homage to all those who have suffered in the struggle for India's freedom, especially during the last three years. I have no doubt that their suffering has not been in vain.

3. The Allahabad Congress Committee had decided to observe a liberty week from 9 August 1945, during which portraits of persons who were killed in Allahabad in the 1942 disturbances were to be unveiled by Jawaharlal.

32. To the Editor, The Hindu[1]

Gulmarg
August 10, 1945

Sir,
Owing to my absence in the inner valleys of the Himalayas there has been delay in my dealing with the letter of Mr. Percy Macqueen which

1. This was published in *The Hindu* on 18 August 1945.

you were good enough to forward to me.[2] Mr. Macqueen is labouring under a misapprehension. I did not say anything about the British community in India or about Englishmen or Britishers generally. It is not my habit to raise racial issues. Indeed I have always laid stress on the fact that our quarrel was and is with the system of government and not with any particular race or nationality. I have further added that if that system of government continued even after the withdrawal of British dominance, that would give little freedom or relief to India.

What I said was that the British Government was ultimately responsible for the misdeeds of its officers, British and Indians, in the last quarter of 1942 and subsequently. In numbers, there were probably more Indian officers of the lower grades involved in this unsavoury business than Britishers. If Mr. Macqueen has any doubts about this I invite him to visit some eastern parts of my own Province or Behar, or for the matter of that many other parts of India, to investigate the matter.

I realise that every government considers it its first duty to maintain itself and to resist and suppress any attack upon it. Of that I made no complaint. But there are certain limits of decency and humanity which no government or its officers are supposed to transgress. All these limits were passed in those past years in India and numerous cases of the most inhuman and atrocious behaviour have come to light. A government which values its fair name should investigate all such charges and punish those who are found guilty. But our present Government is afraid of nothing more than of such an investigation and tries to prevent it.

For my part, what has happened in India, and whatever may happen, will not induce me to introduce racial issues into the argument. I came to the conclusion long ago that no race or people can be condemned wholesale, and I know too many decent and honourable Englishmen to cast the blame on them as a race or nationality. But that has nothing to do with my judgment on what happened in India from August 1942 onwards. None of us who experienced these years or have knowledge of the facts can ever forget what happened then.

Yours etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. In a letter to *The Hindu* on 21 July 1945 Percy Macqueen, who had been a member of the Indian Civil Service and who was returning to England to retire after a long period of service in the Madras Province, criticised Jawaharlal's speech of 17 July 1945 at Lahore, as "a gratuitous insult to the British community in India."

33. Self-determination without Compulsion[1]

Partition cannot solve the question of India's freedom. Those who want to divide India shall have to convince all Indians of their move. I feel that partition will create innumerable boils on the body-politic of India.

It is harmful to partition a country. The tendency of the whole world is to forge unity. Partition will prove more harmful to those who agitate for it.

All these years I have been thinking on this very problem. So far I have avoided the subject. This was because I did not like to add to the misunderstanding already in existence.

A large number of Congressmen are opposed to the proposal to divide India because they are firmly convinced that the good of India, as well as the good of all communities in India, including the Muslims, will be imperilled.

Nevertheless, the Congress has, as far back as 1942, clearly stated that if it is the declared will of the inhabitants of any area to cut themselves adrift, it will not think in terms of compelling them against their wishes, subject only to the condition that in giving effect to this no other major group will be compelled against its will. So in essence, the principle of self-determination has been accepted by the Congress *though, obviously,* in giving effect to it all other considerations are to be borne in mind, especially the one that no group is to be forced against its interests or wishes. But, while agreeing to this principle, the Congress will do its utmost, by friendly means, to maintain the unity of India. This unity can ultimately be preserved only by the goodwill of the communities concerned, and not by compulsion. In the modern context of the world this is even more important than ever before.

The end of the war has ended the carnage. Hence a great relief. The future is, however, dark and probably all kinds of new problems will arise all over the world.

1 Address to Sikhs at Srinagar, 16 August 1945. *Based on reports from The Tribune,* 17 August, *The Times of India,* 18 August and *The Bombay Chronicle,* 18 August 1945.

2

CONGRESS AND ELECTIONS

I. The Approach

1. Get Rid of the Fear Complex[1]

The war which has just ended led to the postponement of many urgent problems. In some cases this was inevitable as attention had to be concentrated on the prosecution of the war, in many other cases the war was made an excuse for such postponement. The final end of the great World War has suddenly brought all these problems to the forefront and war conditions can no longer be pleaded as an excuse. Both from the national and international points of view the question of India's freedom, political and economic, is now an urgent and vital issue on which depends not only the wellbeing of four hundred millions but also, to a large extent, the future peace of the world. This question, always vital and important, has now been precipitated to the very forefront and there can be no further delay in its solution. The solution has now to be a final and permanent one and not any temporary arrangement for a transitional period. Such a final settlement can only mean the establishment of a democratic government for a free and independent India cooperating in the international domain with the other free governments of the world. As a part of this final settlement, and for the brief period between now and the assumption of the government of free India under a constitution framed by the constituent assembly, interim governments both in the Centre and the provinces will be necessary in order to deal with the acute distress prevailing in the country and with post-war problems which may intensify it, as well as to arrange the preliminary processes of the constituent assembly. But such interim arrangements can only be possible as a part of the final settlement.

It is common ground that the future of India and the constitution of a free Indian state can only be decided by the people of India through their duly elected representatives. For this purpose a constituent assembly has to be formed and such an assembly will decide on the future relations between India and Great Britain, and will also nominate representatives to confer with representatives of Britain in regard to the many problems between the two countries which require consideration and settlement.

It has been stated on behalf of the British Government that a constituent assembly should be summoned at the conclusion of hostilities.

1. This statement of Maulana Azad dated Gulmarg, 17 August 1945, was drafted by Jawaharlal and released to the press on 20 August 1945 from Srinagar. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

Hostilities have now ceased. The only excuse that may be advanced for a possible delay in convening the constituent assembly is the lack of a solution of the communal problem. This should offer no difficulty as the Indian National Congress has gone a long way to find a solution. Even if, unhappily, a full solution satisfactory to all the main groups concerned is not reached previously, the constituent assembly, representing these main groups, will itself be in a favourable position to tackle and solve this problem with mutual consent. That assembly will meet in a new atmosphere and with the power and ability to decide without interference from outside and this will no doubt result in a mutually satisfactory settlement.

In regard to the Hindu-Muslim problem, as it has taken shape today with the demand on the part of the Muslim League for a partition of the country, the Congress has given the most earnest consideration to it, desiring as it does the wellbeing and freedom of the country as a whole and of each group or community in it. It has even recognised the right of self-determination of any area provided that this is the established and declared will of the inhabitants of that area, but subject to the exercise of such right not resulting in the compulsion of any other group or community, which is equally entitled to self-determination. The Congress is convinced that the free Indian state can only be based on the willing cooperation of its federating units and of its principal communities and cannot be founded on compulsion. Further the Congress has declared that the federating units should have the largest conceivable amount of freedom as they wish, subject only to certain essential bonds for their common welfare. Even independent countries adjoining each other have to develop these common bonds and links and can no longer live in isolation. Thus the Congress has gone to the farthest limit in recognising the right of self-determination even to the extent of separation under certain circumstances and with certain safeguards for the communities affected and for the country as a whole. It has done so in the earnest hope and belief that when the problems are viewed in proper perspective and without passion and prejudice, the facts of the situation will induce all concerned to cooperate together in building up a free and democratic Indian state, with every freedom to the constituent units to develop according to their needs and wishes. But if any such unit decides otherwise, it can take charge of its own destiny. It will be open to the representatives of such a unit in the constituent assembly to advance its claims and a decision on this should not rest on the majority vote of the assembly but on mutual consent and on the vote of the representatives in the assembly of the areas concerned.

While the Congress position is clear, doubts and suspicions have not wholly disappeared, and I feel that in order to remove these, some clarification is needed. I propose therefore to place this matter before the next meeting of the Working Committee, and if necessary before the A.I.C.C., and I am confident that the desired clarification will be forthcoming.

So far as I am concerned, after long and careful deliberation I have come to the conclusion that the division of India is wholly impracticable and opposed to the ultimate interests of Indian Muslims themselves. In the modern context of the world, with the vast and terrible potentialities of the new atomic bomb, all of us have to think in new terms and to discard many old and cherished notions. In this modern world it is not a division of a country that one can think of, but of ever larger federations of nations. Or else there is no freedom or independence or progress or self-defence. The world is changing before our eyes with something very different from what it was, and if we are to stand on our feet and march to our goal we can only do so effectively as a strong and united nation.

But though I am convinced of this, I realise also that the present political atmosphere of the country is surcharged with suspicion and doubt and a large section among Indian Muslims does not seem to be in a mood to view realities in their proper perspective. This section can be expected to do so only when it is assured that the determination of their destinies rests with Muslims themselves without external compulsions. When this is realised the suspicion and doubt will largely disappear and efforts to reach a desirable and mutually satisfactory solution of the communal problem will be fruitful. Such an assurance has in effect been given by the Congress and I am confident that it will be clarified and implemented in the future.

In the great tasks before us, all of us must get rid of the fear complex. I appeal therefore to my fellow Muslims to view the question in this perspective realising that their future lies in their own hands and there can be no compulsion on them. I appeal also to my Hindu and Sikh and other fellow citizens to appreciate this approach to a problem which has troubled us so much and has been a bar to our progress. With this approach on the part of Muslims and Hindus and Sikhs and others, I have no doubt that the atmosphere of distrust will undergo a change and give place to a climate of mutual trust. Even that section of Indian Muslims who are full of doubts today, will give up their suspicion when they realise that no decision will be imposed upon them and they will examine the problem dispassionately as Indians. Thus this approach, instead of encouraging fissiparous tendencies, will,

by removing the very cause of distrust, also put an end to the desire for separation, and will thus promote that real unity on which alone a free India can be based.

2. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Murree
22 August 1945

Your letters, cables reached me irregularly and very late owing my absence in mountains. Am returning Allahabad soon. Shall write fully from there. No intention of visiting England unless some very special occasion demands it. Changing situation[2] demands my presence here.

Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. It was announced on 21 August 1945 that general elections to the Central and provincial legislatures would be held at the earliest possible date and that the Viceroy was going to London for consultation with the British Government on the procedure for reaching a constitutional settlement

3. *To Mahatma Gandhi*[1]

Lahore
August 27, 1945

My dear Bapu,
I enclose a copy of a letter[2] received from Krishna Menon which may interest you. I wanted to send it to Vallabhbhai but I am not sure where he is. Perhaps you could share it with him.

I have been involved in Frontier and Punjab matters for some days and have hardly had time to glance through a newspaper for a considerable time. So I am much out of date. May I suggest to you to

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. This contained a design of an improved charkha which would give more output.

My visit did not bear immediate results in regard to the formation of a strong, representative, and generally approved provincial executive But I trust that it has made all people concerned to think along these lines and that such an executive will take shape soon Naturally the burden of forming this executive falls on the P C C but, technicalities apart, it depends on the choice of the principal Congressmen in the province. My function was solely to make suggestions and to report to the Congress President

I am quite convinced that the general sentiment of the mass of the population is strongly pro-Congress But advantage can only be taken of it if the principal representatives of the Congress in the province present a united front If the public thinks that the Congressmen are split up into different parties, quarrelling among themselves, then inevitably their enthusiasm for the Congress will wane This is important at any time but doubly so now when we have to face a critical situation requiring all our united strength

As I said repeatedly in Lahore, I think that the old executive of the P C C should resign and a new one should take its place immediately The legal way to do this is for the full P C C to meet and elect this new executive committee But it is important that the matter be not left to chance and the sway of party feelings Before the election suitable representative names should be agreed to, so that this list may be accepted by the P C C almost unanimously or by a large majority The point is that Congressmen in general, as well as the public, should feel that there is unity in the provincial Congress ranks and the best workers have been chosen The work we have to do is so vast that every possible worker has an important place in it, whether he is in the Committee or not Our whole attitude must be to invite all good workers, whatever their party affiliations, to join and help It is a wrong approach to think in terms of keeping out people because we do not happen to like them or their method of working Of course we have to exclude from our executive all those whose policy has been or is opposed to the declared policy of the Congress We cannot have anyone in the executive who gives his allegiance to some other organization or group

I should like to say that I was not favourably impressed by the account I had of the new so-called non party group that was in process of formation Essentially this was a party in the strictest sense, and a narrow exclusive party which sought to control the Congress organization The approach seemed to be wrong in many ways Instead of doing away with party faction it would tend to increase it. Instead of keeping the doors open to all good workers, new and old, it shut these doors to all who were not approved by the group In particular it would keep out

vital new elements which are so necessary to the life of a fighting organization. It would thus tend to petrify the organization and prevent all growth. The Punjab Congress, more than any other provincial Congress, requires expansion and growth, as it has been in the past a somewhat narrow organization without sufficient representation of important elements, especially rural. After the vital experience of the past three years it is all the more important to draw in new vital elements into the Congress.

These new elements should include especially young men and women who have played some part in the past three years. They must have a sufficient number of rural representatives to balance the overweighted city numbers. There must also be an adequate number of Nationalist Muslims and Sikhs who owe their political allegiance to the Congress and not to any sectional organization.

The coming Assembly elections are likely to upset our normal Congress work and may even influence the formation of our executive committee. This must be avoided. It should be made clear that the selection of candidates will not rest with the provincial executive but a provincial board to be formed subsequently after consultation with the central board. I would also suggest that normally members of Congress executives should not stand for election for Assembly, municipality or district board, except by special permission of the P.C.C. executive. This will prevent careerists from trying to enter our executives and would at the same time keep the door open for our capable men.

As regards Communists I have already stated that they should not be taken in any of our executive committees They will however remain four-anna members till such time as the supreme Congress executive decides otherwise. The reason for their exclusion from the executives is not that they are Communists but that they oppose Congress policy. This should apply to such Akalis also who oppose or have opposed Congress policy during the past three years.

Any arrangement made now will necessarily be temporary. As soon as Congress elections take place, new executive committees will be normally elected.

For the future I should like to suggest certain rules :—

1. No person to be president of any Congress committee for two years consecutively.

2. No person to be secretary of any Congress committee for more than two years at a time.

3. At every election of an executive committee, (provincial, district, city or village), a certain proportion should be new members. This proportion may be one-third or one-fourth.

4. There should be a convention for adequate representation in our executives of Muslims and Sikhs. So also for the depressed classes or Harijans.

In regard to the Sikhs I think it is right and fair that every encouragement should be given to those among them who are wholeheartedly for the Congress and are not affiliated to any other organization politically.

The Punjab Congress should enter into no pacts or agreements with any party or group outside the Congress without the express approval of the All India Congress.

These are some suggestions. I have many more in my mind but this letter is already too long. Your work at present lies in forming rapidly a good and representative provincial executive, and then to reorganize the district committees on a similar basis, including good workers, old or new, regardless of party. Also to start enrolling primary members on an extensive scale in preparation for the Congress elections. You should aim at a very high membership. Constructive work has of course always to be done. I should not bother just at this stage with the coming Assembly elections. There is time enough for them if you can build up the Congress organization on a strong basis.

I am sending copies of this letter to Maulana Azad and to Maulana Yasin.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. To Mohamed Yasin[1]

Allahabad
September 1, 1945

Dear Maulana Yasin,

I sent you a telegram yesterday which I hope you have received. I am sorry I was totally unable to write to Sardar Partap Singh from Delhi. I am now enclosing a copy of a letter I have sent him. I hope that it will still be possible to come to a satisfactory agreement about the Punjab executive. I would urge you and your colleagues to avoid any public controversy on this issue. This will do harm.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I must thank you again for all the courtesy and cooperation that I received from you during my visit to the Punjab.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Allahabad
September 1, 1945

My dear Maulana,
I sent you a long telegram yesterday about the Punjab. I am now enclosing a copy of a letter which I am sending to Sardar Partap Singh, Secretary of the Punjab P.C.C.

Punjab affairs are fairly complicated as you know and there is a great deal that I could write about, but this will take a little time and I am afraid it might miss you in Srinagar. I might mention, however, that there is still some hope of some satisfactory solution being found there, for the present at least. I felt that the new group founded under Dr. Gopichand's leadership was acting in a rather narrow way. I tried to impress upon them not to do so.

The coming Assembly elections are naturally casting their shadow over Congress work. In order to avoid this as far as possible I have suggested that election work should be separated, and should be put in charge of an election board to be appointed later in consultation with the all India board. This may make it easier to constitute a proper provincial executive.

One of the immediate issues is going to be the election to the Central Assembly, especially for the Sikh seat. As this election will precede others, some importance is attached to it. The question is whether a straightforward Congress Sikh candidate should be chosen, or whether someone who, though standing on the Congress ticket, has some affiliation with the Akalis. My own view favours the former course. It is probable that Master Tara Singh himself might stand for election. I think he should be opposed. As to who should oppose him it will be for your Central Parliamentary Board to consider. There is a strong

1 J.N Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

element among the Sikhs who are wholly for the Congress and who are opposed to Akali politics. Among these specially are Sardar Amar Singh Jhabbal and his brother Sardar Sarmukh Singh Jhabbal. Both of these brothers have long impressed me by their sincerity, but unfortunately the Akali group in the Congress executive does not approve of them. I shall speak about this to you more when we meet.

I am rather confused about the dates for the Working Committee meetings. If the meeting is on the 12th I shall try to reach Bombay on the 11th and then go to Poona.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
September 3, 1945

My dear Krishna,

I have sent you 2 or 3 letters[2] since my release and a number of cables. And now I am back home and I have to keep my promise to write to you fully. And yet there is so much to say that I do not know where to begin and where to end. I am overwhelmed with work. It is no easy matter to pick up old threads after a gap of three years, and then so many new things happen and accumulate and demand attention. The mind requires adjustment to new environments. My popularity with all kinds of people, which seems to have grown, has become a burden which I find difficult to carry. It is pleasant and exhilarating of course and deeply moving, but it means a continuous strain and prevents work. Travelling by train or car means sleepless nights and very tiring days. Demands for me come from every direction and the sense of nervous strain increases. I am glad I went to Kashmir. That has done me good. But the moment I returned from the mountains enormous crowds besieged me — such crowds as I had seldom seen in the past.

Meanwhile, huge piles of letters and telegrams await attention. The political situation grows more difficult. Elections loom ahead. I am

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Not available.

spending a week at home after three years and then I go to Poona and Bombay for the Working Committee and A.I.C.C. meetings. I cannot even trace all your letters and cables. They have all got mixed up with other papers. So this letter of mine is not going to be a very satisfactory one.

In one of your letters you mentioned that Stafford Cripps was rather hurt at my not acknowledging his cable of greeting. You were right in telling him that I had received so many hundreds of cables and telegrams that it became impossible to acknowledge them. So I fled to Kashmir. I am now sending him a brief reply[3] by air letter.

There is one thing I want you to know. I have not yet got over Stafford Cripps' behaviour just after his visit to Delhi in 1942. Even during the negotiations he behaved oddly and I was surprised. As soon as the negotiations broke down he made various statements in Delhi, Karachi and later in London which were full of attacks on the Congress. Some of the so-called facts he stated were absolute distortions and there were some complete inventions. Probably he was not personally responsible for all this and spoke from the Government of India's brief. But when these statements were categorically denied by various responsible persons — including me — he might have had the decency to withdraw what he had said. Instead of this, he repeated his previous statements, which meant of course that either he or I was a liar. I suppose he does not realise this for it is the way with Englishmen to look down upon us from their superior perch. All the time Cripps was in Delhi he sat on this perch — a member of the War Cabinet dealing with troublesome people. All this was doubly unfortunate because much was expected of Cripps. I think the person who was most responsible for what happened in Delhi in 1942 was Churchill, but I must say that Cripps proved that he was not capable of handling a difficult situation satisfactorily. He came with fixed ideas, fixed formulae and a closed mind. I thought as long ago as 1939-40 when he came to India, that he had developed these fixed ideas especially in regard to the communal situation. I do not doubt his sincerity and I have always stood for him whenever he has been criticised in India. But something more than self-righteousness is necessary to understand and deal with a difficult problem. For various reasons Cripps' visit in 1942 and all that happened then created a greater gulf between India and England than the action or inaction of any other individual in recent years. So much was expected from him.

3. Not available.

I cannot tell you adequately how the last three years have sunk deep into the mind and heart of India. The barbarities and inhumanities that have been perpetrated here are fresh in people's minds and colour their whole outlook. They are full of them. And then the colossal corruption and nepotism that are rampant everywhere, from the very top to the lowest strata of officialdom. Under the present system there are no checks to them. The contrast between this bribery and corruption and the huge incomes of various officials as well as black marketeers on the one hand and the misery, starvation and nakedness of the great mass of the population is terrible to see.

My visit abroad: As I have told you there is no chance of my going to England or the U.S. The situation here is such that I cannot leave India except for a very special reason. I do not see any such reason anywhere. I am just not going to England to have pleasant talks with pleasant people. If at any time I have to go abroad I shall of course send you the earliest intimation of it.

My books: As I have written to you, I have written a book in prison which I have called *The Discovery of India*, meaning thereby its discovery by me. I shall send you a typescript as soon as this is ready. I have been so busy that I have been unable to attend to this matter. I intend to have an Indian edition published here as soon as possible as foreign editions will take more time. I am having this done in Calcutta as Kitabistan have not behaved decently in our past transactions. I shall also send a copy of the typescript to Walsh for an American edition. This sending by post means delay because of the censors.

I have not written much (apart from the book mentioned above) during the past five years or more. You must keep in mind that I have spent exactly four years of these five in prison. So there is nothing to collect. I wrote an article[4] for *Fortune* (U.S.A.) in March 1942, which was sent by cable, for which they paid me the handsome sum of $1000. (This created quite a stir in C.I.D. circles in India. After our arrest they examined all our bank accounts and finding a credit entry for $1000.00 thought it meant one hundred thousand dollars. Obviously, they concluded, this must have come from some secret source for undesirable purposes.) I could send you this article and possibly some pieces but my papers are all mixed up and it is not easy to find them.

You can decide as you think best about the reprinting of any of my books.

As for the royalty money with you, you can keep it for the present. You might, however, let me know how much it is.

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 168-177.

Elections: As I have told you in my cable, the voters' registers are just a mass of errors and omissions.[5] Many are full of bogus entries. Congress people, spending their time in prison, seldom think of these registers till the eve of the elections. Muslim Leaguers and others of their kind have full leisure for this business and are more interested in it than in anything else. We are told that no changes can be made in the registers now.

Then there is the question of civil liberties. Most of the detenus are out though many still remain in prison. There are, however, a large number of convicted persons in prison — sentenced by special tribunals during 1943 and 1944. These tribunals functioned rapidly and summarily after the fashion of military tribunals. Within ten minutes they would sentence a person to ten years or more. Many fantastic sentences have been given, going up to 50 or 60 years. I know of two boys aged 14 years or so who have been sentenced to 45 years each. The treatment in prison has been and is still very bad. Quite a considerable number of persons have succumbed to this and died in prison, especially people from the Kumaun Hills, unaccustomed to the heat, who have been kept in the plains throughout the hottest part of the year. They have slowly faded away and died.

In many places there are still restrictions on meetings as well as other restrictions. The whole executive administration is of course hostile to the Congress. Many of the minor as well as major officials have a very black record and they have no intention of facilitating any change unless they are compelled by circumstances. Their favourite device is to frighten their superiors by saying that if something or other happened there would be rioting. I have no doubt that riots will be organised to signal any change not to their liking. I have also no doubt that there will be no riots if it is made clear that the officials in charge will be dismissed in case of rioting.

The position is unclear and it is obvious that Wavell and Pethick-Lawrence[6] etc. do not know what to do. Cripps clings to his old plan and to his old ideas. That is not the way to go ahead. The rank and file of Labour in England undoubtedly mean well but what they can

5. The electoral rolls prepared in 1936 and revised hastily in 1942, had not been brought up to date. The franchise to the Central Assembly extended only to 3 per cent of the people and that to the provincial Assemblies was 13 per cent. So there were in 1945 only 30 million voters as against a possible adult suffrage of 120 million.

6. (1871-1961); Liberal before the First World War; joined Labour Party, 1922; Labour MP, 1923-31, 1935-45; Secretary of State for India and Burma, 1945-7; Member of the Cabinet Mission to India, 1946.

do in the matter is doubtful. It was rather surprising and significant to notice how the great victory of Labour was welcomed in the bazars in India. There was a sense of jubilation, chiefly due, no doubt, to the defeat of Churchill and his party.

You can arrange to send me as many periodicals as you like. Also *The Times* air mail edition if this is possible.

About the *National Herald* I shall write to you later.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

8. Cable to Pulin Seal[1]

9-9-1945

Your cable[2] to Gandhiji. British friends always welcome here. But delegation hardly opportune now. It is for British Government to state clearly policy regarding Indian independence and not merely make vague statements or encourage goodwill mission.[3]

1. J N. *Correspondence*, N.M M.L.
2. Pulin B. Seal, Chairman of the Committee of Indian Congressmen in England, stated in his cable that British parliamentary circles viewed seriously the decision to hasten with elections in India despite protests about incomplete electoral rolls and proposed that a non-official parliamentary delegation should visit India.
3. Pulin Seal replied that his idea was not a goodwill mission, but personal efforts for mutual understanding of the situation. To this Jawaharlal again cabled: "British friends coming on their own initiative for mutual understanding are always welcome."

9. The Struggle of 1942 and After[1]

This resolution deals with the period that has just gone by. It is inevitable that we should cast our eyes at the years that are past. These

1. Speech while moving the resolution on the August movement at the A.I.C.C. meeting, Bombay, 22 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 23 September and *The Hindu*, 24 September 1945.

three years, as the Congress President remarked yesterday, constituted an age, which has witnessed deep and fundamental changes.

Three years ago the Congress resolved to do its utmost to arrive at a settlement with the British Government through the method of conciliation — if such a method would lead us to the freedom of India. But we were all arrested before we could do anything. The A.I.C.C. is a responsible organisation and as such it was bound to give the people a clear lead. We should have anticipated all the moves of the enemy, all the responsibilities that might possibly fall on us, all the false allegations that will be made against us, and we should have prepared our plans. But we were wholly denied the opportunity to take any such step or give any such lead.

The result was that all of a sudden, unheralded and unannounced, a great revolution burst upon India. There was a wave of strikes and hartals all over the country answered by widespread repression, arrests, shootings and bombings. Leaderless and without guidance from the quarters to which they were used to look for help, the people took the initiative into their own hands. They built up their strength and their capacity for organised action. The result was that they met the wave of repression with great courage and determination. The masses took in some places the reins of power in their own hands. It was a mighty and gigantic revolution and it would be futile to seek to examine and pronounce judgment on every small act, every flaw or every mistake committed in those days.

I really do not know how I would have myself reacted if I had been out of jail in those trying days. It would be difficult for me to say what I might or might not have done. How then can I sit in judgment on the people who have followed the dictates of their conscience. And, on the whole, what was done was nothing to be ashamed of. Men and women, peasants and workers took charge of the conduct of affairs with firm determination, and often disregarding the danger to their own lives, faced the might of the British power. It would have been a matter of shame if they had not acted as they did.

It is the duty of the leaders to direct the enthusiasm of the people into proper channels. Elections are not the things that ultimately matter. It is the strength and determination of the people to win freedom that matters and it is the duty of the leaders of the people to direct the enthusiasm and spirit of the people in the right channel.

What is the lesson of this period? The first and foremost lesson is that the people of India are awake. They are now conscious of their rights. Our efforts to teach them and educate them in their own rights have not been in vain. The Congress has played no small part in this

awakening of the people. The Congress is in no small measure responsible for that flash of valour, that determined courage which the people have shown in defence of their own rights. Such valour and spirit of resistance have not been seen in India since 1857. Never before have the people met such a powerful assault as had been made on them. During this whole period no meetings of any kind could be held. The press was gagged and the vast and ugly shadow of the Defence of India Rules lay on the land. Collective fines[2] were imposed on peaceful villages. In many cases the amounts actually collected were much bigger than the levy and the part, which was in excess, went into the pockets of officers.

While I was in jail, the newspapers brought me a picture of the people of India — a picture of a people weak, oppressed, cowed down and frightened, a people running away in terror and unable to stand up to suffering. Since my release I have gone up and down the country and found this to be a totally false picture. I find the people free and smiling, resolute and fearless.

The Government has done its worst to cow down the people. For a few months it did seem as if it had succeeded in creating the impression that the people had been beaten. But it soon became clear that it was far from the truth. I have found among the people a spirit, a flash, a consciousness of power, although that power is not properly organised or canalised and put to effective use. The people of India are alert, conscious, ready to strike a blow once again for their freedom.

Some people have called the Second World War a people's war. Where is the people's war and for what? I do not want to sit in judgment over those who hold this opinion. But to those who know the minds of the millions of India's masses — of the working of the mind of the workers and peasants of India — it is clear that there is only one war and that is the struggle that the people had waged against the repressive measures of the Government. The real people's war is the struggle of 1942.

A few years ago it was a favourite charge against the Congress that the Congress leadership beat a retreat whenever a revolutionary situation arose. A picture was presented of a revolutionary mass pushing forward to freedom, while a pusillanimous leadership tried to pull them back by the legs. Who was it that did the pulling back now? The Congress has committed many mistakes, but we have done nothing which would bring dishonour to the fair name of India. We have done

2. Collective fines (with exemption for Muslims) had been levied, where there was destruction to public property, and the collections, within a few months of the August movement, had amounted to Rs. 20 lakhs.

nothing which would in any way limit or diminish the power of the people.

How could you talk of internationalism until your own country finds a place in the free map of the world? I do not know of any nation which subordinates its own interest to international considerations. Even Russia, a socialist state, has its vision limited primarily by its own interests. Under such circumstances can this slave nation keep its national interest hidden behind a screen, forget its own freedom movement and talk of internationalism?

10. The New Proposals[1]

The All India Congress Committee has carefully studied Lord Wavell's and the British Prime Minister's broadcasts on the steps proposed to be taken by British authority in India.[2] These proposals repeat, with minor variations, the offer made in March 1942 by Sir Stafford Cripps on behalf of the British Government, an offer which was rejected by the Congress and by almost every group and party in India. To repeat that offer now is an affront to the Indian people, whose declared opinions have thus been completely ignored. Neither the end of the war, nor the change of Government in Great Britain appears to have resulted in any real change in British policy towards India, which seems to be based on delaying every advance and in attempting to postpone the solution of every problem. The proposals now made are, in the opinion of the A.I.C.C., incomplete, inadequate and unsatisfactory. It is significant that there is no mention in them of the independence of India, and nothing short of independence can be acceptable to the Congress.

The announcement that general elections will be held for the Central and Provincial Assemblies has been made in a manner and in circumstances which arouse suspicion. The sudden dissolution of the legislatures in some provinces has emphasized the hostility of the present

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal and passed at the A.I.C.C. meeting, Bombay, 22 September 1945. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. In his broadcast on 19 September 1945, Wavell said that he was authorized to find out whether Cripps' self government proposal was acceptable or whether an alternative scheme was preferred and to create an Executive Council with the support of the main Indian political parties immediately following the elections. Attlee in a broadcast amplified Wavell's statement and reaffirmed the Labour Government's pledge on self government.

governmental authorities to even the possibility of popular governments in the meantime, and is totally indefensible. The Central Assembly is still governed by the Act of 1919 and is, for all practical purposes, an advisory body, whose advice and recommendations are frequently rejected or overridden by the Governor-General. To continue such an ineffective and important Central legislature, and that too on a franchise limited to less than one per cent of the population, is a mockery of all claims to democracy. In spite of assurances, the electoral rolls for the Central and Provincial Assemblies are not being properly revised.

It has become notorious that the present Government in India is responsible for the widespread corruption that prevails in the country, for the gross mismanagement of the food and cloth problems, and for the supreme tragedy of the Bengal famine. Yet it is declared that, pending elections, and for many months at least, this incompetent, corrupt and most extravagant administration, which enjoys no confidence, save that of its foreign masters, shall continue its misrule and maladministration. The proposals of the British Government, wholly unsatisfactory as they are, become, in this context, significant indications of their desire to hold on to power in India as long as they possibly can and with all the means and methods at their disposal.

Nevertheless, in order to demonstrate the will of the people, and on the issue of the immediate transfer of power, the A.I.C.C. resolves that the forthcoming elections be contested, and directs the Working Committee to take all necessary steps in this behalf. The Committee is confident not only that the people will respond to the call of the Congress on this vital and urgent issue, but will also, with the added strength and assurance that the past years have given them, carry the struggle for the independence of India to a successful issue in the near future.

11. Direct Approach to Muslim Masses[1]

It would be useful to view this resolution[2] in its correct perspective. It starts with the broadcast speech of the Viceroy. This speech does not

1. Reply to the debate on the election policy resolution at the A.I.C.C. meeting, Bombay, 23 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 24 September, *The Hindustan Times*, 24 September and *The Hindu*, 25 September 1945.
2. See preceding item. The resolution was moved by Vallabhbhai Patel.

constitute a plan of any kind. It is just an indication of the way the mind of the Government is working. Some people have hoped that with the conclusion of the war and with the Labour Party in power the progress of India towards freedom will become easy. It is true that some of the backbenchers in Labour ranks take a keen interest in Indian affairs and are sympathetic to our aspirations.[3] But, by and large, there has been no change in the Government's policy.

There have been no two opinions in the country regarding the nature of the war which has just concluded. It was certainly not a people's war for Indians, yet the Communists went about calling it a people's war and misleading the public.

Considering the present state of affairs, the Congress is in no mood to get back to office in the provinces. Yet the assemblies are being dissolved in indecent haste in certain provinces, because of the fear that the Congress might come back to office. This is another straw in the wind. From what has been said on behalf of the British Government and even more from what remains unsaid, there is clear ground to be suspicious of British intentions. Yet it is necessary to occupy every position of vantage and exploit every loophole for furthering the cause of freedom.

The Congress Working Committee will frame an election manifesto in which task the points[4] raised during the debate on the resolution will be kept in mind by the Committee. I hope the All India Congress Committee will have an opportunity of approving this manifesto.

I do not think we should bind ourselves to definite promises in the manifesto as the British Government's proposals, on which the elections are to be held, are vague[5] and ambiguous and consequently we cannot be sure what we shall do after the elections.

A wise commander does not anticipate the possible moves of the enemy and does not think of a plan of campaign at the very outset. His first concern would be to build up his army and keep it in fighting trim. In the same way, for the present, we should capture all the seats.

3. On 6 September 1945, Reginald Sorensen and 50 other Labour members of Parliament called for the release of political prisoners and restoration of civil liberties in India.
4. It was suggested that the purpose of the Congress in contesting the elections should be clarified and the Congress should fight the elections on the issue of a constituent assembly.
5. The statements of both Attlee and Wavell made no mention of independence. They contained the usual phrases like "self government" and "dominion status" with "free and equal partnership". They offered no solution of the communal problem or extension of the franchise or the immediate return of the provincial Congress ministries to office.

It will not be good to disclose all our plans. I am not doubtful of success at the polls; but sometimes when I look at the vast pulsating life in the country I get frightened. This is because I fear that our energies might be frittered away in petty provincial and other conflicts. The Congress should utilise its strength in the right direction, and I am sure that the country will respond to the Congress wholeheartedly.

I do not think that it will be advisable to include anything specifically about the problem of minorities or the Indian States in this resolution. The amendments[6] moved by Dr. Ashraf and Mian Iftikharuddin seem logical. India can become a great nation only when all its people decide to work together for its welfare. It is quite desirable that there should be unity between the various communities and sections of the population, although complete unanimity is neither practicable nor possible. But the moment we leave the high plane of this logic and come to consider the operative part of the amendments, the position will change. As applied to practical realities, the amendments will not work.

I entirely agree that this principle of self-determination is correct. India will not be free until the people stand together. It is only with the cooperation of every section that we shall be able to free India. If any section has decided to follow a different line of action, nobody can prevent it from doing so. But in this context it is necessary to define the implications of the concept of self-determination. Self-determination has played a dominant role in Europe during the war years. But many nations of Europe now think in terms of defence—security and self-defence—rather than of self-determination. The situation must be made clear. What free India will do, only free India knows. None can prophesy at the moment. All that we can say and do say is to state clearly that we will not coerce any unit to go against its wishes. Such coercion, I think, is neither possible nor desirable.

It is unfortunate that some friends consider these issues through coloured glasses. When a tornado is blowing over the land they want to sit down and reckon the mistakes that the Congress has committed. The Congress has undoubtedly committed thousands of mistakes, and it is possible that it will commit thousands more, but the Congress has never been guilty of not trying to reach each and every section of the people. What intrigues me is the fact that these friends never find a single mistake in the Muslim League. Their arguments constitute a

6. Ashraf and Iftikharuddin had proposed amendments designed to give Muslims representing the Muslim majority provinces in the future constituent assembly the right to determine their own future. They had also complained that the Congress message had not reached the Muslim masses.

complete topsyturvydom. It is as if they were looking at the world from the wrong end of the telescope. They argue that the League is the representative body of the Muslims as the Congress is that of the Hindus and therefore the Congress must make terms with the League. I do not accept their premise and, even if I do, the conclusion I would arrive at is not the same.

I think that it is right and proper that the Congress should keep as far away from the Muslim League as possible. I have many contacts with the Muslims. I know the Muslim masses as well as anybody else. I intend very shortly to tour the Muslim districts of the United Provinces and I would challenge the sponsors of the amendments to come with me to the rural areas of my province. I can show them what the Muslim masses feel. It is one thing to suggest that we must win over the Muslim masses and that we should serve them and lead them to freedom. It is a quite another thing to ask us to make up with the Muslim League.

We have done our best to come to an understanding with the Muslim League in the past. We have now come to the conclusion that it is in the best interests of the country to keep away from the League leaders hereafter. Have Dr. Ashraf and Mian Iftikharuddin forgotten the way our President was humiliated by the League leaders?[7] Until and unless they make amends for this, we are not prepared to have any discussions or negotiations with the League. As far as I can see, it is better to be miles and miles away from the Muslim League. Again and again we went to it with folded hands only to receive kicks. Why do people who advocate Congress-League unity forget the words used by Mr. Jinnah against our revered President? Those who have put obstacles in the way of the country's freedom, those who have made us gulp many a bitter cup, with them we can have no truck. The time has therefore come to declare that there would be no more approaches to the League. We shall take the Muslim masses into our confidence. The Congress will be prepared to go to the peasants, the workers, the poor and the oppressed of the land—be they Hindus or Muslims. It will make their cause its own; it will serve them. We shall do everything to satisfy their demands and win them over completely to the Congress. We shall reassure them that every legitimate grievance will be redressed by appropriate means. But as for going to

7. On 1 August 1945, the Muslim Conference in Kashmir, which was a branch of the Muslim League, tried to break up a river procession in honour of Maulana Azad and Jawaharlal in Srinagar. On 11 August the students of Aligarh University harassed Maulana Azad at Aligarh railway station when he was travelling back from Simla to Calcutta.

the Muslim League, never. This is a challenge. We shall face the Muslim League and fight it. One thing only we shall never forget and that is the goal of freedom; with that goal steadily in our mind we shall march.

12. The Nation's Party[1]

Question: Will the Congress convert itself into a party with the slogan "Ein Fuhrer"?[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Congress is the nation's party and I warn against the idea of a single party or a single leader. Such ideas, no doubt, flourish in the countries where only one totalitarian party is ruling the whole country. I agree that Mahatma Gandhi, whose guidance the Congress seeks, exercises a dominant influence in the Congress, but it is not the type of dominating influence of the leaders of the totalitarian parties in pre-war Germany or Italy. The Congress is not a party but a movement for freedom in which there are people of different views. So the Congress must be a well-disciplined organisation which can enforce its discipline while implementing its decisions.

The Congress is not a political party like the Conservative or Labour Party in Great Britain and hence its election manifesto will be different from those of the Conservative or Labour Party. The Congress election manifesto will outline what the people should do.

Q: Is the Congress representative of the whole of India?

JN: Yes and no. Thus, for example, if there come about a lakh of people to the meeting tonight at Shivaji Park, there will be about 40,000 Congress members in the gathering. Besides there will be some sympathisers. But you should not doubt that the Congress stands for the country. It embodies the nation's will for freedom and is open to all who believe in its freedom and independence. The Congress represents its

1. Discussion with Congress workers, Bombay, 24 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Times of India*, 25 September, *The Hindustan Times*, 26 September 1945 and confidential police report to Maharashtra Government, File No. 3590/II/VI-6 (Police Commissioner's office records).
2. One Leader.

members and has the support of millions in this country, who look to it for guidance. While the communal bodies are thinking in terms of communities, the Congress considers every question as affecting the whole nation and not in terms of a particular community or section of the people. The Congress, being an organisation leading the nation to fight for freedom against British imperialism, has to tolerate differences of opinion within its ranks.

Q: Should the Congress allow organised parties to function within it?

JN: You cannot stop formation of parties inside the Congress. If you try to prevent such alignments, there will be groups. Formation of groups or parties prevents honest individuals from functioning properly. Look at me. I am respected not only in India but also abroad. But if I put any good proposal before the Allahabad Congress it will be rejected just because I do not belong to any group. Persons with a common political ideology may come together and form a group or party within the Congress, but all such groups or parties should follow the common line of action, as laid down by the Congress. If any such organised party within the Congress violates the Congress policy, then that party will have no place in the organisation. The Communist Party or the Congress Socialist Party represents a particular viewpoint and is an ideologically different party from the Congress. But organised parties within the Congress will ultimately become dangerous to the Congress when they oppose the Congress policy on the wider issue, namely, the freedom of the country. We are a democratic body and anyone, even Europeans, can become a member of our organisation. Of course, you can stop members becoming office-bearers. They become four-anna members as individuals and not as members of the Communist Party or any other party.

Q: What is your opinion about the Hindustan Mazdoor Sangh?[3]

JN: I have read its rules and they appear to be good. We should cooperate with the Sangh. But this does not mean that we should start rival unions or break the old unions. Nor does it mean that we should

3. In 1938, the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh was formed by the Congress to build the trade union movement on Gandhian lines. The Sangh became active with the release of Congress leaders in June 1945, who found it difficult to cooperate with the All India Trade Union Congress which was dominated by the Communists who were critical of Congress policy.

stop working through the All India Trade Union Congress. That would be very wrong. The Congress should work through all the existing unions. It should become a party of worker-leaders and not a body forming rival unions.

Q: Should there be secrecy in the Congress?

JN: Certain things e.g., the proceedings of the Working Committee, will have to remain secret. But secrecy leads to demoralisation of the masses. We will lose much of the confidence of the people if we adopt secret methods. Hence the Congress should not adopt any secret methods.

Q: Which is to be the Congress volunteer organisation in Bombay?[4]

JN: Until now the Rashtra Seva Dal in Bombay is working as an independent organisation, but under the direction of the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee. It is not necessary that organisations in other provinces should be under their P.C.C.s. We shall have to function according to the situation in various provinces. Once such organisations start in all the provinces, we shall have to coordinate them under an all-India organisation. Thus within two to four years we should be able to form a corps of about four lakhs. These volunteers should not be just decorations for use whenever leaders visit a province, but should be real leaders of the people in their villages. Many people have lost much when they were in jail. But now no one looks after them. They are wandering. In a short time they will be demoralised. They should be trained, organised and given positions.

An organisation on an all-India basis to aid the political sufferers should be started, though such a relief committee is functioning in the United Provinces. I want such committees to be started in other provinces also.

Q: Have you any suggestion for organising work among women?

JN: I think that every provincial Congress committee should open a women's department to facilitate women's participation in public life. A beginning should be made in different provinces to set up a central

4. The Maharashtra P.C.C. had proposed to organise a large cadre of full time workers.

organisation of volunteers' brigade to train volunteers who will be sent to villages to carry on the work of the Congress. A central organisation of such a volunteer brigade on an all-India basis is essential to coordinate the work of various provincial units, although it may not control or exercise executive authority over them. The All India Women's Council is an organisation which follows the Congress, but has grown independently of the Congress.

Q: How can Hindu-Muslim unity be achieved?

JN: This is going to be a very difficult task. Shouting, "unity, unity", is not going to help us. We must realise that the Muslims are in a medieval atmosphere still. Their customs are *Khandani*. Our attitude should be such that they should feel attracted towards us.

Q: What is the position of the Muslim Nationalists?

JN: If the Muslims elect them, then they will be their leaders, otherwise wherever they cannot win the confidence of the Muslims they are individual Congressmen.

13. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad

My dear Krishna,
I sent you a cable from Bombay and I am sending a longer cable from here. But it is difficult to say everything in cables and the Congress has got into the habit of passing terribly long resolutions. Besides I am so pressed for time and so full of work and engagements that my mind is continually in a state of flux. I must find some way out of this for otherwise I shall not be able to do any thinking or constructive work. Lack of sleep—not through insomnia but for want of sufficient time—is another upsetting factor. I have just come back from Bombay.

It is no good my giving you long texts of resolutions passed. I am having them sent separately. But the background was one of extreme irritation at various happenings in India and England and suspicion of the British Government. It was this background even more than the content of the new Wavell proposals that influenced people. Wavell's

1. This undated letter was obviously written at about this time. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

and Attlee's broadcasts were also rather irritating. Then there was a certain vagueness about these, which may be an advantage in certain circumstances but viewed in the present context, this made matters worse. Back of all this was the intense feeling which the past three years have roused. I do not think there is enough understanding of this at the other end. It must be remembered, however, that the Indian people have changed and hardened considerably during the past three years or more.

There was no rejection of the Wavell proposal as such because the time to accept or reject had not yet come. For the moment we go into the elections and much will depend on their result.

Apart from this general Congress reaction, there are also of course all manner of inner conflicts and trends within the Congress. I cannot go into that. You can guess some at least, but probably you cannot easily understand all of them. These inner conflicts will not break out in the open for we have learnt to carry on in spite of difficulties. But they do confuse and weaken.

Then there is an extraordinarily strong pro-Congress sentiment all over the country. We shall leave out the Muslims for the time being. The city and rural masses have never been so enthusiastic about the Congress. I have hardly ever seen such vast crowds everywhere as I see now. This sentiment has spread to non-Congress people also (again I am not considering the Muslims as a whole) who look up to the Congress for leadership. The Hindu Mahasabha and the Ambedkarites do not count for much in the long run. The Muslim League of course counts.

It is difficult to prophesy about Muslim seats in the elections. In the Central Assembly the League is bound to do well with the restricted electorate. Probably the present ratio will continue. In the provincial elections there is a great deal of uncertainty. In Madras, Bombay, and Central Provinces where there are few Muslim seats, the Muslim League will probably do well. Sind is rather doubtful as it is politically very backward and is swayed by personal and semi-feudal considerations. There is a possibility of the League being in a minority. In the U.P. Congress and pro-Congress candidates might win 25 Muslim seats at the most, that means I think over a third. In the Frontier there is likely to be balanced representation. In the Punjab, the League is not likely to win more than 35 seats, that is much less than half. The rest of the Muslim seats will go to the Congress or the Unionist Party, chiefly to the latter. In Bengal the League might do better. In Assam the League will not do well

This is a rough estimate which may have to be changed later. General non-Muslim seats will of course go in overwhelming numbers to the

Congress. This means that the League cannot in any event form a ministry in the Punjab without having a coalition with some other group, and at present both the major groups, the Congress and the Unionist Party are hostile to it. Probably no single group in the Punjab legislature will have an absolute majority. The Congress is likely to be the largest group. In Bengal also the League cannot have a majority in the legislature but with the help of the European group of 25 it might just have a majority, as it did last year. In Assam no League majority.

The League is getting rather frightened and is adopting its usual tactics of threatening riots etc. Probably you will hear of these riots. They seem to be taken for granted by the police and the authorities, and of course when there is widespread expectation, a riot does occur. Also it is extraordinary how League people in their meetings and papers openly advocate violence against individuals. Maulana Azad is their special target and everything upto murder has been suggested. I come second on the list. In all the League propaganda there is no mention of any policy or programme; there is only abuse of the Congress and of individual Congressmen.

There is no doubt that as a rule city Muslims are for the League, especially the rougher elements. But it is also clear, especially in the U.P. and Bihar, that the Momins (chiefly the weaver class) and the Muslim peasantry are far more for the Congress because they consider the League an upper class organisation of feudal landlords etc. An unknown factor, however, creeps in when God and the Koran are used for election purposes

The Communists in India appear to have decided to support League candidates. This of course will cut them off completely from the Congress, without giving them any place in the League. This is very unfortunate for them. As it is they are exceedingly unpopular. I am really surprised at their lack of sagacity and vision. The one man among them who has some vision is Dange and he is unfortunately away. Whatever the rights or wrongs of a particular attitude may be, there is obviously something wrong about opposing a widespread mass feeling. It is now no easy matter for the Communists to hold a meeting in the U.P. because of local opposition. They had to abandon their U.P. provincial conference at Jhansi. They have lost their hold on the students and the kisans and are weakening on the labour front. Their strongest centres are Andhra and the Punjab. Curiously enough the Communist Party of India has developed into a middle class (almost upper middle class) organisation with lessening contacts with the masses.

Iftikhar,[2] muddle-headed man that he is, thinks that he can reform the Muslim League from within — a foolish idea, but he is foolish enough to do anything. The League is so terribly poor in competent men that apart from Jinnah there is hardly any one who counts. The League ministries in Bengal and Sind and in the Frontier (before the change) were so terribly corrupt that they were the talk of the bazars as well as of the drawing rooms. Abdul Qayyum[3] is a very different sort of man from Iftikhar — Iftikhar is honest and straight though lacking in intelligence. Qayyum has long been known to be a careerist. He is not even a Frontier man, and is, I am sorry to say, a Kashmiri.

I do not know if all this helps you to form a picture of politics etc., here at present. But this will at least make you realise how difficult it is for me to leave India in this turmoil. It is not my habit to run away from a difficult situation. Just now, quite apart from the elections, there is almost a passionate demand for me everywhere, especially in the places which have suffered most during the past three years or more. I must visit these places and I propose to begin soon. I must go to Bengal. Then there is the National Planning Committee which is reviving, and the trial of the I.N.A. men in Delhi. These officers and men are the pick of the Indian army, a splendid lot, and it is worth remembering that not only is there widespread interest in them and in their fate among all classes of Indian civilians, but their old comrades of the Indian army are also intensely interested.

About your proposal to send a delegation, I consulted Gandhiji and cabled to you his reaction. I agree with that. We would welcome the deputation or mission and help it in every way in India. But it would be wrong tactics to ask publicly for money from India. That would make the deputation ineffective. You can if you like get some help directly from private sources in India. But in the main you will have to rely on money collected in England. You will not have to spend much in India. If you like you can draw upon such of my monies as you may have. I would like the deputation to come; more especially I would like you to come for it is necessary for you to have personal contacts here and view the situation at close quarters. It is ages since I saw you and

2. He resigned as president of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee on 24 August 1945 because his advocacy for Congress-League unity was not acceptable to two other party colleagues.
3. Abdul Qayyum Khan (b. 1901): Congress member, Central Legislative Assembly, 1937-42; Deputy leader of the Central Legislature, 1942-45; joined Muslim League, 1945; Chief Minister, N.W.F.P., 1947-53; President, Pakistan Muslim League, 1958, 1970; was in Z.A. Bhutto's Ministry, 1971-77.

I would love to have nice long talks. Lalji Mehrotra[4] passed through Allahabad today and showed me your letter to him.

Two or three weeks ago Pulin Seal cabled to Gandhiji about a proposed delegation (including Catlin).[5] He consulted me. As you know I am not enamoured of Seal and I did not encourage him. Finally Gandhiji asked me to tell him that if any Britishers wanted to come on their own initiative they could do so and would be welcome.

You have written to me about our having a small commission to go into the question of the constituent assembly. I placed your proposal before our colleagues. They felt that it was premature. They are much too busy with the elections and with Congress organisations.

I suppose there is much else that you have asked me about. But this letter is too long already.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

4. (b. 1901); Secretary, Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee, 1922; President, Indian Merchants Association, Karachi, 1939-42; after independence served for some time as ambassador in various countries.
5. Prof. George Catlin, an active member of the India League in London.

14. To Mohammed Yunus[1]

Allahabad
1-10-1945

My dear Yunus,
I have your letter. My visit to the Frontier has obviously borne some fruit. Witness the letters you have received from Dr. Khan Sahib and others. For the rest of course it is for you and other people there to make good. I shall of course always do what I can. Maulana Azad wanted to visit the Frontier from the Punjab but now that he is ill, I do not quite know what will happen.

We seem to be moving rapidly towards various big changes in India. What this will be I cannot say now. But the coming elections will no doubt influence them greatly. For this reason these elections have assumed an unusual importance. The Central Assembly elections are really not very important but coming before the other they might influence the other elections slightly, especially in the Frontier where

1 J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Abdul Qayyum's defection and challenge have to be met. Obviously it is not enough for us to condemn him. We have to defeat him and his nominees. So I hope that every effort will be made to this end.

You will of course be very welcome if you care to join me in any of my touring. So far I have made no arrangements for this, though I am continually visiting odd places. This is really not connected with the elections. I am just going to Lucknow for Provincial Congress Committee meetings. After that I shall visit some of our own districts which have suffered most during the last three years, for instance, Ballia, Ghazipur, Jaunpur, Azamgarh and Benares. Soon after I shall go to Jaipur reaching there on the 20th October for three days. On my way I shall spend a day at Delhi in connection with I.N.A. matters. In this way I shall be moving about and returning to Allahabad every few days. On the 6th of November I have to be in Bombay for National Planning Committee. You have to decide for yourself where you can be most useful — in the Frontier or elsewhere. Whenever you like to come here you will be welcome.

I am glad that both you and Taj are keeping well.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

15. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
October 3, 1945

My dear Krishna,

I have received your long cable of warning against various organizations and more especially the Pan African Federation. About the same time I received a cable from Manchester from a number of persons claiming to represent this organisation. In the latter cable nothing is said to which any of us here can object. Among these I know Padmore[2]

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, NMML.
2. George Padmore, active member of the International Africa Service Bureau, founded in 1937.

slightly; I do not know the others. It is not our practice to associate ourselves formally or otherwise with any organisation abroad. But when friendly messages are received they are acknowledged in a friendly manner without any commitment. Even in India I receive thousands of messages from individuals or groups unknown to me. Invariably an attempt is made to send a friendly reply although this involves a risk of the name being exploited for wrong ends. The risk is greater in foreign countries. But I just do not see how we can be discourteous in order to avoid that risk. Besides, the A.I.C.C. office functions as it chooses in reply to such communications and I cannot constitute myself as a censor.

I do not know the inner troubles between various groups in England, though sometimes I can guess them. Nor is it desirable for us to take sides definitely unless there is some special reason for it. I want to be careful but I am pointing to you the difficulties in our way.

I am sending you by ocean mail a part of the MSS of my new book. More will follow. As I have already written to you, the book is being printed in Calcutta and ought to be out in January. The address of the publishers is: The Signet Press, 10-2 Elgin Road, Calcutta. This is a new press which does good work. I am fed up with Kitabistan.

There is a persistent demand for my old books here — *Autobiography, Glimpses, Unity of India.* You told me, I think, that the first two are being reprinted. Some publishers here are anxious to bring out the *Unity of India* under arrangement with Lindsay Drummond. I am referring them to him. I have no objection.

There is a young Indian Christian, Cyril Modak, who was brought up in strictly missionary surroundings but subsequently drifted to the Congress, though he is not very political in his activities. He has been writing a number of small books. I have only seen one or two of these rather hurriedly and cannot give any final opinion. But on the whole I think he is capable of doing good work. He is earnest and enthusiastic. He is very anxious to get a book of his published in England. I told him I could do nothing in the matter and anyway publishers are a tough lot. But I suggested his writing to you and sending you his books.

Yours,
Jawahar

16. To Ghanshyam Singh Gupta[1]

Lucknow
5.10.45

Dear Ghanshyam Singhji,[2]
I have received yesterday your letter of the 24th September from Bombay.

I read about the ban on the *Satyartha Prakash* in Sind when I was in Ahmadnagar Fort prison. I was shocked and surprised that any government should impose this ban, more especially under the Defence of India Act and Rules. What this had to do with the Defence of India Act or with the war was a mystery which I was unable to solve. On the face of it this was a misuse of the Defence of India Rules. But the ban really raised larger issues of civil liberty and religious freedom, and as a firm believer in civil liberties I was inevitably opposed to it. To believe in or practise civil liberties does not mean that we accept and tolerate what we like and approve of, but that we tolerate what we do not like or approve of. We have to defend even the right of our opponent to criticise us, for otherwise our own right giving expression to our views may be attacked and suppressed.

So the question for me is not one of the merits or demerits of the *Satyartha Prakash* but the more fundamental one of not interfering with freedom of writing and expression. I am no authority on the *Satyartha Prakash*. I must say, however, that its polemical way of approach to religious and other problems does not appeal to me. But my views on this subject have little importance; what has far greater importance is my view on civil liberties. According to this latter view the ban on the *Satyartha Prakash* was wrong and unjustified. What is worse is that this may become a precedent for future invasions of civil rights and liberties.

I am convinced that the future government of free India must be secular, in the sense that Government will not associate itself directly with any religious faith, but will give freedom to all religions to function. This religious freedom presupposes the tolerance of other religions by the votaries of each religion. Any other approach is not only wrong in itself but will inevitably lead to friction and trouble. Any government in India which infringes this rule of religious freedom takes

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1885-1976); Arya Samajist; member, A.I.C.C., 1919-36; Speaker, C.P. Legislative Assembly, 1937, 1946; at this time president of the All India Satyartha Prakash Defence Committee.

upon itself a grave responsibility and sets a bad example for others. This I think correctly represents the Congress attitude in this matter.

As for what the Arya Samaj or others should do in regard to this ban it is not for me to say. I do not see eye to eye with the Arya Samaj in some matters though I have admired its social and educational work. In this particular matter I agree, as I have stated above, that the ban on the *Satyartha Prakash* is unjustified. I am, however, quite clear in my mind that at present any action in the nature of satyagraha would be wrong and might lead to undesirable consequences. I would therefore suggest, if I may, that no such direct action be undertaken. We are living in rapidly changing times and we must ever bear in mind the larger interests of the country, which ultimately include the interests of the various groups in the country. A wrong step now might well injure their interests and the very cause you are advocating now. On my part, I need not assure you that I shall always endeavour to have civil liberties in all forms maintained and protected in India, and to resist any encroachment on them.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17. The Spontaneous Revolution[1]

The United Provinces Pradesh Congress Committee meeting after more than three years of storm and stress of the World War and of a mass upheaval in India against alien and imperialist domination and its ruthless suppression desires to send its greetings to the people of the province and to extend its homage to all those who have suffered in the cause of India's freedom and independence. The Committee pledges and dedicates itself anew to this great and sacred cause which has inspired our people and for the realisation of which so many of our countrymen have laid down their lives and undergone life-long suffering[2]

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal and his speech made at the U.P. Provincial Committee meeting, Lucknow, 6 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 8 October 1945.
2. The resolution ends.

I am proud to recapitulate the part played by my countrymen in the last three eventful years. The uprising in August 1942 throughout the length and breadth of the country was spontaneous. It was a revolt of an oppressed people.

The strength of the Congress has immensely increased in the last three years. A new era has dawned and we have to move cautiously. The journey to Swaraj is hazardous for many obstacles are still to be negotiated.

It is imperative to have complete unanimity on all matters relating to the elections. We cannot afford to fritter away our energy in minor party squabbles. All ranks must be closed. We must accept the decisions of the Parliamentary Board.

18. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Allahabad
10 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

As promised in my yesterday's letter, I am sending you a draft manifesto[2] for the Central Assembly elections. This has turned out longer than I intended and it covers considerable ground, although I have avoided detail and the more controversial topics. I felt that it would be desirable to cover this ground for two reasons: 1. The manifesto is bound to attract attention in foreign countries and the avoidance of all other issues, apart from independence, will create a bad impression. People may say, as they have sometimes said in the past, that the Congress represents big business etc. 2. This will contrast well with any manifesto that the Muslim League will issue, for it is certain that they will avoid mentioning any of the country's problems and will harp on Pakistan. Of course, it is quite possible that they will not issue any manifesto at all.

I would suggest that when you issue the manifesto you might say something to the following effect: "In accordance with the directions contained in Resolution VII of the A.I.C.C. held in Bombay the Working Committee is issuing this manifesto for the elections to the Central

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See the following item.

Legislative Assembly. A more detailed manifesto will be issued later, after approval by the A.I.C.C. at its next meeting, for the provincial elections."[3]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. The manifesto for the provincial elections was issued on 11 December 1945.

19. Draft Manifesto For Central Assembly Elections[1]

For sixty years the National Congress has laboured for the freedom of India. During this long span of years its history has been the history of the Indian people, straining at the leash that has held them in bondage, ever trying to break the chains of subjection and alien rule. From small beginnings it has progressively grown and spread in this vast country, carrying the message of freedom to the masses of our people in the towns as well as the remotest villages. From these masses it has gained power and strength and developed into a mighty organisation, the living and vibrant symbol of India's will to freedom and independence. From generation to generation it has dedicated itself to this sacred cause, and in its name and under its banner, innumerable countrymen and countrywomen of ours have laid down their lives and undergone lifelong[2] suffering, in order to redeem the pledge they had taken. By service and sacrifice, it has enshrined itself in the hearts of our people; by its refusal to submit to any dishonour to our nation, it has built up a powerful movement of resistance to foreign imperialist[3] rule.

The career of the Congress has been one of both constructive effort for the good of the people and of unceasing struggle to gain freedom. In this struggle it has faced numerous crises and come repeatedly into direct conflict with the armed might of a great Empire. Following peaceful methods, it has not only survived these conflicts, but has gained

1. 10 October 1945. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. The differences between this draft and the final version which was printed in the newspapers on 27 October 1945 have been given as footnotes. The changes were made by Mahatma Gandhi.
2. "lifelong", omitted.
3. "imperialist", omitted

new strength from them. After the recent three years of an unprecedented mass upheaval and its cruel and ruthless suppression, involving terrible suffering for our people,[4] the Congress has risen again stronger than ever and more loved by the people by whom it has stood through storm and stress.

The Congress has stood for the independence of India and for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen of India. It has stood for the unity of all communities and religious groups in India and for tolerance and goodwill between them. It has stood for the right of the Indian people as a whole to have full opportunities for growth and self-development according to their own wishes and the genius of the nation; it has also stood for the freedom of each group and territorial area within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework. For those who suffer from social tyranny and injustice, it has stood for the removal of all barriers to equality, and special help from the State and society in order to raise them from their backward and depressed state.[5]

The Congress has envisaged a free, democratic State with the fundamental rights and civil liberties of all its citizens guaranteed in the Constitution. This Constitution, in its view, should be a federal one with a great deal of autonomy for its constituent units, and its legislative organs elected under[6] adult franchise. In regard to the franchise, as other matters, sex should be no bar and women should take a full part as citizens in national activities.[7]

A hundred and fifty years and more of foreign rule have arrested the growth of the country and produced numerous vital problems that demand immediate solution. Intensive exploitation of the country and the people during this period has reduced the masses to the depths of misery, starvation and beggary.[8] The country has not only been politically kept

4. "involving terrible suffering for our people", omitted.
5. This later read: The Congress has stood for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen of India, man or woman. It has stood for the unity of all communities and religious groups and for tolerance and goodwill between them. It has stood for full opportunities for the people as a whole to grow and develop according to their own wishes and genius; it has also stood for the freedom of each group and territorial area within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework; and for this purpose, such territorial areas or provinces should be constituted, as far as possible, on a linguistic and cultural basis. It has stood for the rights of all those who suffer from social tyranny and injustice and for the removal of all barriers to equality.
6. "universal," inserted.
7. This sentence omitted.
8. 'and beggary', omitted.

under subjection and humiliated, but has also suffered economic, social, cultural and spiritual degradation. During the years of war, and even now, this process of exploitation by irresponsible authority and complete ignoring of Indian interests and views has reached a new height of incompetence in the administration, leading to terrible famine and widespread misery among our people. There is no way to solve these urgent problems except through freedom and independence. But the content of political freedom must be economic and social freedom also.[9]

The most vital and urgent of India's problems is how to remove the curse of poverty and raise the standards of the masses. It is to the well-being and progress of these masses that the Congress has directed its special attention and its constructive activities. It is by their well-being and advancement that it has judged every proposal and every change, and it has declared that anything that comes in the way of the good of the masses of our country must be removed. Industry and agriculture, the social services and public utilities must be encouraged, modernised and rapidly extended in order to add to the wealth of the country and give it the capacity for self-growth, without dependence on others. But all this must be done with the primary object and paramount duty of benefiting the masses of our people and raising their economic, cultural and spiritual level, removing unemployment, and adding to the dignity of the individual. For this purpose, it will be necessary to plan and coordinate social advance in all its many fields, to prevent the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of individuals and groups, to prevent vested interests inimical to society from growing, and to have social control of the mineral resources, means of transport and the principal methods of production and[10] distribution, as well as of banking and exchange. Cooperation should be encouraged in land, industry and other departments of national activity so that free India may develop into a cooperative commonwealth.

In international affairs the Congress stands for the establishment of a world federation of free nations. Till such time as such a federation takes shape, India must develop friendly relations with all nations and particularly with her neighbours on the east and the west and the north. In the Far East, in South East Asia and in Western Asia, India has had trade and cultural relations for thousands of years, and it is inevitable that with freedom she should renew and develop these relations.

9 This sentence read: "The content of political freedom must be both economic and social".

10. From here this sentence read "distribution in land, industry and in other departments of national activity so that free India may develop into a cooperative commonwealth."

Reasons of security and future trends of trade also demand these closer contacts with these regions. India, which has conducted her own struggle for freedom on a nonviolent basis, will always throw her weight on the side of world peace and cooperation. She will also champion the freedom of all other subject nations and peoples, for only on the basis of this freedom and the elimination of imperialism everywhere can world peace be established.

On the 8th of August 1942, the All-India Congress Committee passed a resolution, since then famous in India's history, and in this resolution it gave the battle-cry 'Quit India'. By that demand and challenge, the Congress stands today,[11] and it has reaffirmed the national and international objectives of that August resolution. It is on the basis of this resolution and with this battle-cry that the Congress faces the elections for the Central and Provincial Assemblies.

The Central Legislative Assembly is a body with no power or authority and is practically an advisory body whose advice has been constantly flouted and ignored. It is completely out of date and is based on a very restricted franchise. The electoral registers for it are full of errors and omissions, and no opportunities for correcting or adding to them have been given. Large numbers of our countrymen are still in prison and many others who have been released are disqualified from standing for election. Obstructions in the way of holding public meetings still continue in many places. Yet, with all these and other handicaps and drawbacks, the Congress has decided to contest the elections[12] to it on the issue of independence and 'Quit India'. In this election petty issues do not count, nor do individuals, nor sectarian cries — only one thing counts: the freedom and independence of our motherland, from which all other freedoms will flow to our people.[13]

So the Congress appeals to the voters for the Central Assembly all over the country to support the Congress candidates in every way at the forthcoming elections, and to stand by the Congress at this critical juncture, which is so pregnant with future possibilities. Many a time the people of India have taken the pledge of independence; that pledge has yet to be redeemed, and the well-beloved cause for which it stands and which has summoned us so often, still beckons to us. But the time is coming when we shall redeem it in full, not by the election but by what

11. The rest of this sentence from here was omitted.
12. From here up to reference number 13 the following was the final version: to show that the inevitable results of elections, however restricted, must be to demonstrate the overwhelming solidarity of the opinion of the voters on the issue of Independence. Therefore, in this election, petty issues do not count, nor do individuals, nor sectarian cries.

comes after it. Meanwhile, this election is a small test for us, a preparation for the greater things to come. Let all those who care and long for freedom and the independence of India meet this test with strength and confidence, and march together to the free India of our dreams.

20. *To Cyril Modak*[1]

Allahabad
11.10.45

Dear Modak,
I have *read through parts of your book*[2]—*I could not manage to read* it all. It has indeed been an effort to find the time to read even this *much. I give below a note written after my reading.*

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Note

The last five years have been fateful in the history of the world and of India, and their deep impress lies in every mind and heart. Who can tell their story effectively and make the printed page a picture of the long agony of these years, with their moments of exaltation and noble endeavour and splendid courage, and then long hours of sorrow and doubt and frustration, and civilization with all its brilliant achievements intent on its own destruction, through some inner decay or lack of moral foundations? Perhaps in some age yet to come a future historian will draw that picture and wonder at the folly of this generation. And yet he will miss that experience which has given an unforgettable reality to these years. But we who have been the actors or onlookers and carry that experience on our deep-lined faces and our hardened hearts, how can we tell this story which has been the warp and woof of our individual lives, how can we lay bare the innermost recesses of our being?

1 J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. *India's Answer to the West* The book *expounds the* basic Indian attitude to almost everything of importance in the modern struggle for existence and *clarifies what India stands for* and strives after.

Yet some have dared to do so. It is of these years in India that Cyril Modak has written. I do not agree with much that he has written, but he has a vivid and arresting style and the subject is worthy of high tragedy. His book is interesting and brings out something of the deep anguish of these years and the problems that pursued us, and of surging masses of people and their cruel suppression. And so those who read this book will learn something of these years, and feel a little of what others have felt so much.

21. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
11.10.45

My dear Krishna,
This is a hasty note. I have your letter of Sept. 24th. I am glad you wrote to me though there is nothing very new in what you have written. I know Seal well enough. In a way I have already answered your letter last week. I can understand your position. I want you to understand the position here. Many people do not like my ways or opinions and deliberately want to checkmate me. Sarat Bose has just needlessly tried to pick a quarrel with me. I cannot impose my opinions on others and I do not wish to do so. Anyway I shall keep what you say in mind. I am just off on a tour.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

22. To Jogendra Singh[1]

Allahabad
16.10.1945

Dear Sardar Jogendra Singh,[2]
I have received your letter[3] of the 10th October. I do not know to which particular report you refer, and in what context it appeared in the papers. What I have said is that there is a lot of talk of war criminals in Europe and men of the Indian National Army are going to be tried. But a real list of war criminals should include men in the highest places in New Delhi. Further I have said that seldom, if ever, has there been so much bribery and corruption in India as during the past few years and today; that this is amazingly widespread and extends from the highest officials to the lowest and even some members of the Executive Council have not kept themselves untainted; that in any event the highest administrative and executive organs must bear the responsibility for this utter degradation of the administration. I have referred in particular to the Bengal famine and to the profits out of death made there.

There was no reference to you nor indeed were you meant in any way, except in the sense that the whole Executive Council must bear responsibility. Nor did I refer to the Indian Members of the Council.

I must say that I feel very strongly about the moral deterioration of the whole administrative system in India, which has naturally affected numerous departments of public activity. There is a great deal of talk of black markets. I do not think these could have spread out in the way they have done if the rot had not set in in the administration.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

23. To E.G. Suchling[1]

Allahabad
16.10.45

Dear Mr. Suchling,[2]
I received your letter of the 5th Oct. yesterday on my return to Allahabad.[3] I have read it with interest. A reasonable consideration of the points you have raised is hardly possible within the limits of a letter and you will appreciate that I am a fairly busy man — Also there is a feeling of tiredness at having to explain the Indian viewpoint to Englishmen who start with certain premises and cannot get rid of them or see the others' point of view. Perhaps that is the major difficulty in dealings between India and England. You refer to tricks of the trade, 'self-interest', power politics and 'insincerity'. You will not expect me to deal with such accusations and charges. And yet it does seem a little odd that an intelligent Englishman should think in this way, whatever he may think of the rightness and wrongness of our actions. A very large number of Indians have, from the English point of view, probably wasted their time in ineffective activity. That is not usually associated with self-interest or power politics or insincerity. It is obvious that there is a vast gulf between the Indian and English approaches and not even an English socialist has any conception of the passion that moves the Indian people. Your letter interests me as a significant example of the smugness and self-complacency of the average English liberal or socialist who calmly tells me and others like me that we are unpatriotic. That in itself should be proof of the fact that the Englishman's rule in India is finished, whatever good or evil it might have achieved in the past.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. An English army officer who had been in India for four years from 1942.
3. He wrote: "Your predominant emotion after so many years of *jail life* must be one of bitterest frustration; but is this not due to a certain extent to a national failure — a certain rigidity that has prevented the discovery of appropriate forms of struggle? India seems to have learnt much less in 200 years than Nazi-occupied Europe learnt in four. Mahatma is pretty responsible for this: he is a saint, not a politician, and his continued supervision of the Congress does India no good."

24. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
30.10.45

My dear Krishna,
Your air mail letter No. 12 of 20th Oct. about the long-term prisoners. *I am asking Feroze Gandhi to communicate with you. He has been* in charge of political sufferers' relief work in the U.P. the last 18 months and knows all about it. But his information will relate to the U.P. only. *As for other provinces I am asking Kripalani to help.* You had better keep in touch with Feroze directly. His address — Anand Bhawan.

Regarding the points dealt with in Henderson's letter[2] I am referring them to Vallabhbhai Patel who is in charge of all our election work.

I returned to Allahabad yesterday after an exhausting tour in Rajputana. I am off to Delhi on the 1st for the I.N.A. trial and from there I go by air to Bombay on the 7th Nov. for National Planning Committee meetings. Probably I shall be there for a week.

I have received a brief note from Stafford Cripps to which I am replying also briefly. It is just a friendly personal letter in answer to mine acknowledging his cable on my release. I wish there was some psychological understanding of the Indian problem. I can see little of this. Meanwhile, the gulf grows wider and deeper and the situation here develops at great speed. The next year is going to be a difficult year, full of crises. There is a complete absence of grasp, an impotence in the British Govt.'s dealings with India.

Separately I am sending you (by air) a press cutting containing the Congress election manifesto for the Central Assembly elections. It is proposed to have another and more detailed manifesto for the provincial elections.

Yours,
Jawahar

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Arthur Henderson, Under Secretary of State for India, in his letter of 16 October 1945 to Krishna Menon, promised to deal with complaints of refusal of voting facilities to Indian armymen and to relax the rule of disqualifications owing to imprisonment.

25. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Allahabad
31 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am writing to you about a matter which distresses me somewhat, although there is not much that you can do about it. Everywhere that I go, I see tremendous enthusiasm for the Congress and at the same time some kind of a hiatus between the local Congress group in control and the general public. In many places these old committees, which are still functioning, are out of touch with most of the people who functioned during the last three or four years. The recent rules asking them to coopt members to fill vacancies have, curiously enough, worsened the situation The people coopted have often been specially chosen to strengthen the old group. There are cases of persons being coopted who indirectly opposed the movement or apologised or indulged in black markets and the like. The result is great dissatisfaction with the ruling group.

I am speaking from personal knowledge of my own province which in many ways is better organised than several other provinces. I imagine conditions are much worse in some other provinces.

In the Punjab I am very dissatisfied with recent developments. I know a large number of enthusiastic young people who are simply not allowed to work. For my part I have no time and no inclination to enter into local squabbles.

I have been receiving many telegrams of protest against the nomination of candidates for election from various provinces. No doubt you have received far more and are in a better position to judge. I cannot, however, help feeling disturbed at some of the choices made or proposed in the Punjab, in Bengal and in Sind. I earnestly trust that people who have played us false in the past will not be encouraged now.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1 *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 66.

26. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Allahabad
October 31, 1945

My dear Maulana,
I am receiving demands from all over the country for election tours. I do not know what to do and where to go. I should like to go to the Frontier Province and to Bengal specially. Of course my own province has a prior claim on me. I have so far not even visited great cities such as Benares, Cawnpore, Agra and Meerut, or many of the afflicted areas. Much of my tune is being taken up by the I.N.A. work and the National Planning Committee.

There is a matter which distresses me. I find, almost everywhere that I go, small cliques controlling Congress committees and preventing enthusiastic workers from coming in or doing any work. There is a very big gulf between these committees and the public. The public is enthusiastic for the Congress, but often the committees are not popular. They are stale and old and often consist of people who have never worked.

From such reports as I get the situation in the Punjab is very unsatisfactory and the same old groups which have done so little in the past are again in control and new people are kept out.

Also reports in the papers of some nominations for the elections are surprising, specially from the Punjab, Sind and Bengal. I know that you are in a better position to judge and I should not interfere in any way. I do not propose to interfere but I wanted to tell you how distressed I was about all this If I go on an election tour it becomes very difficult for me to say anything in support of a candidate who seems to be undesirable. Questions are put to me and I do not know how to answer them, because my own previous statements are put before me.

I received your telegram last night about Rafi being in charge of the U.P. and Delhi. I do not quite know what this means but Rafi is on his way to Calcutta and you will no doubt explain it to him.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

27. Wavell's Record of his Interview with Jawaharlal[1]

I had an hour's conversation with Nehru. I spoke to him on the lines of P.S.V.'s brief, emphasizing that the present attitude of himself and other leaders was likely to make a settlement extremely difficult; that no Government could continue to tolerate indefinitely incitement to violence or threats to its officials; and that the future of India must depend on some compromise between Hindu and Muslim.

He replied to the last point first; and said that Congress could make no terms whatever with the Muslim League under its present leadership and policy, that it was a reactionary body with entirely unacceptable ideas, with which there could be no settlement. He said it was Hitlerian in its leadership and policy, and tried to bully everyone. He made the somewhat surprising claim that the general relationship between Hindu and Muslim was better than it has been for a long time and that the two communities had discovered that mob violence did not pay. I mentioned the Bombay riots, and he claimed that they had proved his point since they did not spread to the rest of Bombay. I suggested that a casualty list of 40 killed and many injured was some evidence of communal trouble, but he tried to claim it as merely the work of a few hooligans. Later on, when I argued that there must be some agreement between the main communities if we were to have a political settlement, he said that the Congress would never approach the Muslim League again, because of Jinnah's rudeness to their leaders, but if the Muslim League approached them they would be prepared to discuss matters.

On the issue of the victimization of officials, he admitted having named five officials of the Ballia district, and claimed that their actions had justified him in doing so. I pointed out that a general attempt to threaten police and officials was going on in many parts of India, and was creating a deplorable atmosphere. His only answer was to say that if officials behaved as those in Ballia district had done, he could not avoid preaching against them.

He practically admitted that he was preaching violence, and that while he deplored violence, he did not see how violence could be avoided if legitimate aims could not be attained otherwise. I warned him that the preaching of violence must eventually lead to violence, and

1. 3 November 1945. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VI, pp. 439-41.

that such violence would be likely to lead to violent counter measures. He talked in vague terms of the psychology of the masses, the evils of foreign rule, the general upraising of the people of Asia, and so forth. I left him in no doubt that the Government were bound to take the necessary measures to prevent violence.

Towards the end he indicated, though he did not actually say so, that Congress was likely to refuse to take office in the provinces, except under a Central Government which they controlled or approved. I said that it was the policy, as he knew, of H.M.G. and myself to form a Government at the Centre, but that the present attitude of political leaders was not going to make it easy.

He finished by asking what had been the result of my reference to the Supreme Commander of his request to be allowed to proceed to Java. I told him that the Supreme Commander had agreed with me that such a visit was inadmissible in present conditions, and that I thought a reply to this effect had already been sent him. He then asked what would be the attitude towards a request to visit Burma, for himself or for members of the defence committee of the I.N.A., to collect evidence. I said that this would be a matter for the Government of Burma.

Nehru's attitude was quiet and friendly throughout, and I cannot help liking him. But he seems to me to have reached the state of mind of a fanatic, and is quite incapable of considering any views which do not coincide with his own. I am afraid that his mood is dangerous to peace, and I think he realises this himself and regards a conflict as more or less inevitable. He did not mention the I.N.A., nor did I.

28. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Allahabad
November 16, 1945

My dear Maulana,

.... Repeated telegrams from Daud Ghaznavi[2] and others in the Punjab, supported by Vallabhbhai, have made me consent to go to the Punjab for three days. This is specially meant for the Sikh elections. So

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. (Extracts)
2. Maulana Daud Ghaznavi, president, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee.

I am leaving Lucknow tomorrow afternoon for the Punjab. On the 21st I shall spend a few hours in Delhi for the I.N.A. trial and then go on to Meerut. Pantji and Rafi want me to spend three days in the Meerut division specially for Kazmi.[3] All this takes me to the 25th November. I gather that you have agreed to have the Working Committee meeting in Calcutta about the 6th December. I have been feeling for some time that the Working Committee meeting is urgently needed, as many important questions have to be dealt with. The Indian situation is developing very rapidly, perhaps too rapidly, and the temperature of the country is rising. Perhaps the biggest cause of this is the I.N.A. trial. Then there is this Indonesian tragedy which I think requires some more urgent declarations on our part. Of course you can issue a statement about this but in addition it is desirable, I think, for the Working Committee to express itself formally and make some suggestions. I think we should clearly and definitely ask for the recognition of the Indonesian Republic. We should further press for a complete refusal on the part of all those concerned to load or help in any way the sending of war materials to Java. India is supplying a great deal of this. In Bombay Indian seamen have refused to load them. But this is only one instance.

Then there is this election business which requires some frequent consultation by the Parliamentary Board, if not by the Working Committee as a whole. The Parliamentary Board unfortunately hardly meets at all and quick decisions have to be taken. The absence of consultation leads to many misunderstandings.

I hope, therefore, that there will be as early a meeting of the Working Committee as possible.

When I was in Poona I suggested to Vallabhbhai that you might have a meeting of the Parliamentary Board at Bindhachal just before the Working Committee meeting in Calcutta. Indeed I suggested that the Working Committee itself might meet there but probably this will be inconvenient to Gandhiji and some others. For the Parliamentary Board, however, Bindhachal would be suitable. It is on the way to Calcutta for most members and it will be a quiet place. In Calcutta there is bound to be a great deal of rush and hurry and confusion. Vallabhbhai liked the idea and if you agree you could telegraph to him fixing a date for the Parliamentary Board meeting at Bindhachal, say three days before the Working Committee meeting in Calcutta. He will be in Poona till the 19th when he will go to Bombay.

3. Mohamed Ahmed Kazmi, a Nationalist Muslim who was contesting against Liaquat Ali Khan from Meerut.

I was hoping that the A.I.C.C. might meet about the middle of December to pass the election manifesto and for other important work. But this seems a little difficult now.

As I wrote to you I was a little distressed at various happenings, including some Congress nominations for elections. In the Punjab the old guard is still carrying on almost undisturbed and new persons have little chance. In Sind Vazirani[4] has appeared upon the Congress scene. I discussed some of these matters with Vallabhbhai. He told me that the Punjab nominations were brought to him by M. Daud Ghaznavi and Partap Singh, the Secretary, and were strongly supported by them. Gopichand also went then or later. As time was limited and quick decisions had to be taken, the only choice was either to accept the Provincial Board's recommendations or possibly to miss having a nomination in time. About Deshmukh[5] he said that it was essential for a Maharashtrian to be given a place in Bombay as the electorate is mostly Maharashtrian. The Maharashtrians available in Bombay were strictly limited. He tried to get some from Poona to stand but every important person refused as they wanted to go to the Provincial Assembly. Few people desire to go to the Central Assembly as they realise that it will hardly count. Gandhiji apparently was consulted and ultimately he said that in the circumstances Deshmukh should be accepted.

I noticed in Poona that frantic telegrams were being received from many provinces asking for a quick decision even in regard to provincial election, as work was suffering. I hope that when the Parliamentary Board meets soon all these matters will be decided.

You were good enough to issue a statement about the I.N.A. committees as suggested by me. This work has grown so big that the new committees should be appointed, I think more formally, and not left to us three as previously suggested by me. I discussed this matter with Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai also. I suggest, therefore, that you might formally appoint the two following committees:

I.N.A. Inquiry and Relief Committee:
Vallabhbhai Patel
Jawaharlal Nehru
J.B. Kripalani
M. Daud Ghaznavi
Sarat Chandra Bose
Sardar Partap Singh

4 Nihchaldas C. Vazirani, who was a minister in Allah Bux's cabinet, was a Congress candidate for the Sind Assembly elections in 1946

5. G.V. Deshmukh (1883-1963); a prominent surgeon of Bombay, member of the Central Legislative Assembly, 1945-46.

Raghunandan Saran (treasurer)
Khurshed Naoroji (convener)

with power to add to their number.

As Punjab is chiefly concerned, I have two names — the President and the Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee. Sarat Babu has been taking special interest in the I.N.A. and therefore he might be included. Vallabhbhai has agreed to serve on the committee. If you feel that instead of Daud Ghaznavi some other Punjab Congress Muslim would be better, you can put his name instead.

The funds committee might consist of:
Vallabhbhai Patel
Jawaharlal Nehru
Bhulabhai Desai
Bakshi Sir Tek Chand
Raghunandan Saran (treasurer)

with power to add to their number.

These are of course my suggestions and you will decide as you think right.

You have asked me about the proposal of the editor of *The Statesman* to have someone having the Congress outlook contributing a column. For my part I dislike having anything to do with *The Statesman* or *The Times of India*. I do not want to cooperate with them in any way even by suggesting names. I object strongly to be put on the same position as Shahed[6] who has been writing such poisonous stuff from time to time in *The Statesman*. By our suggesting a name we inevitably help *The Statesman* to appear as an impartial paper, which it is certainly not.

Some years back the editor of *The Statesman* asked me to contribute on foreign affairs weekly. This did not touch domestic politics but I was not prepared to write for *The Statesman*. I think *The Statesman* and *The Times of India* should be made to feel clearly that we resent their attitude to the national movement and are not prepared to deal with them in any way.

I am sending this letter through a messenger from the A.I.C.C. office. I am afraid I shall not be here to receive your reply. I have already given you my programme above. But should you wish to send any

6. A Muslim correspondent who contributed to *The Statesman* fortnightly articles on Indian affairs from the standpoint of the Muslim League.

instructions to the A.I.C.C office this person can be used for the purpose.

Yours affectionately,
Allahabad

29. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Allahabad
26 November, 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,
I have just returned from a tour of Meerut Division and received your letter[2] of 21 November.

For some time past I have been definitely of the opinion that we should set up a few demobilised officers from the Army as Congress candidates for elections, provided of course we can find suitable men. I mentioned this fact to the Punjab P.C.C. people and asked them to keep a lookout for such persons — Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. I wrote also to Pantji to the same effect. The Punjab of course is a province most concerned, and partly U P. also is concerned. I know as a fact that any such action on our part will have far-reaching and favourable consequences. Some time back the question arose of setting up Shah Nawaz[3] of the I.N.A. as a Congress candidate. I asked Shah Nawaz as well as Sehgal[4] and Dhillon[5] if they would be willing. All three were willing. Shah Nawaz's name is on the voters' list but I do not know if the other names are there. The I.N.A. people of course stand on a different footing from the regular armymen. I think that both the categories should be considered by us. There is at present a widespread and favourable feeling in the army towards the Congress. Large numbers of these people are going to be demobilised soon and I feel it would be right for

1 *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Vol 2, pp. 76 78.
2. Vallabhbhai Patel had mentioned that some army officers had offered to contest provincial elections
3. Shah Nawaz Khan (b. 1914), joined Indian Army, 1936, joined Indian National Army and rose to the rank of Major General, GOC, Congress Seva Dal, 1946, Member of Parliament, 1952 67; Minister of State, Government of India, 1971 77.
4 P K Sehgal (b 1914); Captain in Baluch Regiment.
5. G S. Dhillon (b 1914); joined as Lieutenant in Indian Army, joined I.N.A. as colonel and served for four years.

them to be given a place in the Congress and in the legislatures on our behalf.

About my Punjab impressions, I imagine that both the Congress Sikh candidates will win, but it is difficult for me to judge from a brief tour. Everywhere I was told that Baldev Singh[6] was using Government officials to bring pressure on voters for the Akali Dal candidates. Indeed, the contest was more against these officials than against the Akali Dal itself. I think the Sikh elections have served a good purpose, whatever the results. It has brought all the progressive Sikh forces together in line with the Congress.

About the Punjab generally, the position seems to me fairly good so far as the public reaction is concerned, but bad so far as the Congress organisation is concerned. The old party spirit is rampant and Congressmen work against each other. Daud Ghaznavi, the president (Punjab P.C.C.), is, I think, a good man and not connected with any party. Dr. Gopichand, while having a strong position among the Hindus, is especially disliked by the non-Hindu groups as well as by the opposite party in the Congress. In the choice of candidates there is a great deal of party feeling involved. For the present the Congress has done very little in the way of big propaganda. They simply cannot function in a big way. They plead lack of funds also. The main contest for the Muslim seats is between the Muslim League and the Unionist Party, both of whom are spending money on a lavish scale. In spite of this I am sure the Congress will do well in the elections provided a strong line is taken, suitable candidates chosen and financed.

I cannot say definitely in regard to the Muslim candidates whether it will be better in the Punjab to set up direct Congress candidates or allow the Muslim Nationalist Board to set them up on its behalf. But my general impression has been, more especially in the U.P., that the direct Congress appeal goes farthest. Especially in the rural areas in the U.P. the Congress is popular amongst the Muslims. They have hardly heard of the Jamiat or the Muslim Board. The contest Kazmi *versus* Liaquat Ali is a close one and on the whole there has been very good work done in it. It is possible that Kazmi might win. If he loses, he will do so by a small number of votes. I was told repeatedly that the Muslim League had got thoroughly frightened there and was distributing money to voters. What effect this will have I do not know.

6 Sardar Baldev Singh (1901-1961); Minister, Government of Punjab, June 1942-Sept. 1946; Member for Defence, *Interim Government*, 1946; Defence Minister, Government of India, 1947-52.

Whatever the results of these Muslim elections, they have had a very good effect on our workers and on the situation generally. We have discovered that there is a very good response among them to our appeal and we have certainly laid the foundations of a favourable drive for the provincial elections. I do hope that, as you said, we shall contest every Muslim seat.

This election tour has been very exhausting and my throat is on the point of giving way. Indira has been ill here but I only come to Allahabad for a day at a time. I am going to Lucknow tomorrow for a meeting of the executive council of the P.C.C. On 1 December I shall probably be in Delhi. When I was in Delhi last I received a letter from Sir Claude Auchinleck,[7] the Commander-in-Chief. It was a friendly letter saying that he desired to meet me and to have a talk with me. He mentioned various dates. In my reply I said I would be glad to meet him and I chose one of his dates — 1 December. Since then I have not heard from him again. But I expect I shall have to go. After that of course I shall go to Calcutta where I hope to reach by 5 December.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

P.S.

I might add that Colonel Loganathan[8] of the I.N.A. (now in Delhi Fort) is keen on standing on the Congress ticket for this provincial election. I do not know whether his name is on the Madras list or not. He is an excellent and highly competent man. I wish you would ask the Madras Congress people to find out about his name and if it is there, to put him up.

I want to repeat that the recent election work has been a revelation to Congress workers so far as the Muslim areas are concerned. It is astonishing how good the response has been. How we have neglected these areas! We must contest every seat.

7. Sir Claude Auchinleck (b. 1884), Deputy Chief of General Staff, Army Headquarters, India, 1936 38, C-in C in India, 1941 and 1943 47; War Member of Viceroy's Executive Council, 1943-46, Supreme Commander in India and Pakistan, 1947.

8. Lt Col. A. D. Loganathan, an officer of the Indian medical service, joined the I.N.A. and served as *Cabinet Minister and Chief Commissioner of the Provisional Government of Free India* in the Andamans, I.N.A. Commander at the surrender of Rangoon

30. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Allahabad
November 27, 1945

My dear Maulana,
I have just come back from touring the Meerut division. I feel tired and my throat is bad. But I have to go again immediately to Lucknow for a meeting of the P.C.C. Council. I wanted very much to pay you a visit but I do not see how I can do it. On my return from Lucknow I shall spend a day and half here and then go to Delhi for a day. When I was in Delhi last I received a letter from Sir Claude Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief, saying that he would be glad to meet me and have a talk. He mentioned several dates. In my reply I chose one of these dates — December 1st. So I presume I shall have to go to Delhi for this purpose. I hope to return by the 2nd afternoon.

I understand that you are going by air from Allahabad to Calcutta and that you are likely to come to Allahabad on the 2nd afternoon or evening. If so, I shall of course meet you here. I propose to go to Calcutta on the 4th December.

My brief visit to the Punjab has not produced very favourable impressions on my mind. Probably we shall win the two Sikh seats. But so far everything is vague about the provincial elections. Maulvi Daud Ghaznavi is a good man but the party spirit in the Punjab and the extremely narrow outlook of most people there prevents solid work being done. I have no doubt that the ground is favourable. I hope still that the Punjab Congress will shake itself up and do something.

In the Meerut division and elsewhere I have found an extraordinarily favourable response from the Muslim masses. Whether we win these seats or not on this occasion, I have no doubt in my mind that we can win quite a number of Muslim seats in the provincial elections in the U.P. specially in the rural areas. I was surprised to find how popular the Congress was among Muslim peasantry. In fact the Jamiat did not go far with them, it was the Congress that counted. In the cities, the Jamiat influenced people more. On the whole, however, it was obvious that the Congress counted. It is pretty clear that we have long neglected the Muslim masses. The fault lies with us not with them.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

I hope you will kindly let me know your programme by letter or telegram.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

31. To Mohamad Yunus[1]

Allahabad
November 30, 1945

My dear Yunus,
Your letter of the 22nd.[2] The Central Assembly elections are over here and we have lost Muslim seats in the Province. We have as a matter of fact done remarkably well considering everything. We took in hand this election only ten days before it took place. The response to us was really remarkable, specially among rural areas. But the electorate was so limited. We have plenty of information to the effect that the Muslim League simply showered money on the voters. I believe they have spent in these five or six elections in the U.P. over five lakhs of rupees. They are very worried about the provincial elections which will take place on a broader franchise. We are going to put up candidates for every seat and I think we shall do well.

Indu has been ill and isolated for the last two weeks. She got mumps and has been quarantined.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Papers, N M M L.
2. This letter dealt with the election situation in the North West Frontier Province.

32. Jai Hind[1]

Three years and three months ago we suspended publication. Not, as normally happens in this country, by imperial decree, but in obedience

1. A signed editorial by Jawaharlal in the *National Herald* when the paper resumed publication on 30 November 1945 after more than three years of closure *National Herald*, 30 November 1945.

to the mandate of the Congress, and because we felt that our honour as Indians and as newspapermen compelled us to refuse to submit to ignoble conditions. Three years have passed and we start afresh, but the memory of these years lies heavily in our minds and we are much older than this brief span of years might indicate.

Three years of war and tumult, and sorrow and death, of hope and despair, of the sudden and spontaneous rising of the common man in India and its brutal suppression. Years of solitude in prison cells, and of thousands driven underground, homeless and disinherited wanderers, keeping the flag of resistance high against tremendous odds. Years also of others of our blood and race, dreaming of India's freedom, adopting, unknown to us, methods different from ours to achieve it. Beyond our frontiers there was the tramp of armed men, and armed women, pledged to the independence of India, and new and stirring cries rent the air.

All this and much more the years have brought us. The World War has ended, appropriately with the atom bomb, not with a whimper but with a bang, and the United Nations glare at each other and, behind a cover of fine phrases, snatch at the seeming spoils of victory. Imperialism, although dying, yet raises its head in India and elsewhere; in Indonesia a gallant people, struggling for freedom, are bombed and shelled by British armies.

Six years ago the Congress Working Committee, apprehensive of the future, stated that "it will be infinite tragedy if even this terrible war is carried on in the spirit of imperialism and for the purpose of retaining this structure which is itself the cause of war and human degradation". The war is over and already it is possible to judge how far that apprehension was justified.

With this heavy burden of the past few years we start afresh. What do we stand for? What does the *National Herald* represent? Wherein does it differ from other newspapers? It is difficult to say. There are many newspapers in this country with a long and honourable record and it would be presumptuous for us to compare our young and somewhat wayward selves with these popular and well-established organs of solid respectability. Yet there has been, perhaps, something in the *Herald*, something which has brought us in the past the affection and goodwill of the public. We represent the Congress viewpoint of course, for we believe the Congress to be the voice of the nation and to reflect in its many-sided self the varied urges of the Indian people. In the struggle for India's freedom especially, it has been the flame that has lighted up people's hearts and the shining sword that has cut so many of our shackles. But it would be incorrect to say, as has sometimes been

said, that the *Herald* is an official organ of the Congress, for the Congress has had, and has no such official organs. And, therefore, what the *Herald* may write in no way commits the Congress.

Some people have referred to the *Herald* as representing my personal views. That also is not correct and much has appeared in the *Herald* in the past with which I did not wholly agree. It is true that I have been associated with it and I have valued that association. But the *Herald* is a joint concern and we have tried to work it in a spirit of co-operation and comradeship between directors and editors, leaving the editors freedom to do their work. My direct responsibility is only for the articles that I might myself contribute.

We start afresh and in doing so we have had innumerable difficulties to face, and those difficulties continue, for we cannot obtain the machinery and equipment that we desire, and we have naturally not prospered during these war years. Wartime, whatever misfortune or sorrow it may bring, is usually a time of prosperity for newspapers. But it has not been so for us, for it has been our proud privilege to share in the ups and downs of our people during these years of pain and suffering. It is not with apology that we face our readers, but as comrades-in arms and equals in the mighty struggle for India's freedom. And as comrades we claim their indulgence for our failings and for the many shortcomings which inevitably accompany the resumption of a newspaper in these abnormal times. We are determined to overcome them and to be worthy of our people and of the cause we represent.

Three years ago Governor Hallett publicly stated about the Congress: "We wish to destroy the organisation and render it impossible for the movement to grow and expand." Sir Maurice Hallett is soon leaving this province and India. What does he think now of that proud declaration, backed as it was with the armed legions of a mighty empire? Who flourishes today? Who will flourish tomorrow in India? Has he known at any time, during his long residence in India, the Congress to be so popular, so powerful, so representative of the people's passion for freedom as it is today? He goes, as others have gone before him, having failed utterly in his endeavour, having, indeed, by the very ruthlessness of his opposition, fed the flames of a nation's resistance to alien rule. Has the lesson been learnt or are there others still who presume to stop or check the onward march of India to independence?

We, on our part, have learnt many a lesson, for life for us has been a hard taskmaster and our people have repeatedly gone through the valley of suffering and the ordeal by fire. If we were determined previously, there is more of steel in us today and a measure of desperation, and a passion that drives us on and allows us no respite, and a feeling

of intolerable anguish that the four hundred millions of India should be the playthings of others who have reduced them to this state of poverty and famine and ignoble subservience.

What of our people? After these black years they are vital again and defiant as they have never been before. Even the memory of recent sorrows fades away in the exuberance of the moment and in the vision of the future that they see unfolding itself. They have to check that exuberance lest it waste their energy and lead them away from the highway we have to tread. But they have to guard and preserve that vitality, that refusal to submit to the degradation of alien rule, that firm and final resolve to which form was given three years ago in the words 'Quit India'.

We ended our last leading article, which appeared in the *Herald* on August 15, 1942, with the words: *Vande Mataram.* The motherland is *dear to us and it is right that we should pay our homage to her.* And yet even these words of hallowed memory enshrined in our country's history, are somewhat out of date today. We bow to no one today, for we are soldiers of India, and our little selves are bits of that dear motherland of ours, and her honour is in our keeping. Today our cry is of unity, of freedom, of victory. It is a cry which has resounded and reverberated in the valleys and mountains beyond India; and the old walls of the Red Fort in Delhi have echoed it, and today it is spreading far and wide to our remotest villages. It is our salute and greeting, our challenge and our battle cry, our token of fealty to each other, our pledge to be true to our cause. So to our readers and comrades we say: *Jai Hind!* May it be well with them in the difficult days to come. May it be well with India, and may freedom come to her soon and be equally shared by all her children. *Jai Hind! Jai Hind!*

33. Maurice Hallett[1]

The last five or six years in India have been extraordinary years in many ways. There was the war, of course, and continuous conflict and nationalist upheaval and its suppression.

1. On the day Maurice Hallett retired as Governor of the United Provinces, *The Leader* carried the opinions of the provincial leaders on his administration. The above represents Jawaharlal's views. *The Leader*, 6 December 1945.

During these years we have had what might be called the culmination of authoritarian rule by the permanent services in India.

War and other events facilitated this development and we had the curious spectacle of, on the one hand, India being on the verge of freedom, and at the same time having a government which was and is the complete denial of freedom, such as even India has not had for a long time past.

Perhaps a crisis brings these extremes together and all half-way houses are swept away. In this period of undiluted authoritarianism the old members of the Indian Civil Service have not only reverted to their old traditions but improve upon them.

In India certain personalities stand out as emblems of this auhoritarianism and Sir Maurice Hallett is one of them. It is not surprising, therefore, that he has become the symbol in Indian eyes of the worst type of British imperialism and colonialism. He declared that everyone who was not with his Government was to be treated as an enemy. He *announced his determination* to crush and kill the Congress and the nationalist movement. He did his best but, as he himself must realize now, he was up against a rock which could not be shattered. For Indian nationalism and the desire for freedom are too big and powerful to be crushed by anybody. Sir Maurice Hallett thus becomes the symbol of the failure of the British rule in India and of tho complete futility of that rule today.

Whatever virtue it might have possessed in the past it has none today. It has outlived itself completely and drags on a precarious existence. It has neither competence nor the ability to understand the Indian mind or Indian problems, much less can it tackle them with success. In the world of today that rule and its exponents are out of date relics of the past *that is gone. Whether Sir* Maurice Hallett *realizes this or not, I* do not know; but every intelligent observer must come to this conclusion. We discuss political and economic problems and it is right that we should do so; but behind them all lie many psychological and emotional factors which govern a nation's life and development. These have been ignored by the British or deliberately flouted but it is clear that it is these factors that will have their way. Only then, with a true understanding of India's problems, can there be a successful solution of them.

That solution depends entirely on the elimination of the British rule and that type of government which has been postponed far too long in India. We have to build a new and free India on a different basis, opening out the doors of opportunity to every single human being who lives in India.

34. Initiative on India[1]

***They started by adopting rather a gloomy and stolid silence, during which I developed my appreciation of the general position. In due course, Nehru joined in — and after that the conversation was very general, although, on their part, Nehru did most of the talking. My principal object was to make it quite clear to them that H.M.G. was determined that India should have independence without delay — and also that they were determined that Congress would gain nothing by resort to force. I believe I made this abundantly clear.

Patel was rather malignantly silent — except with regard to the political prisoners. I explained to him that this was not a properly descriptive word for them, as they were in reality all senior and important members of one or other of terrorist societies — men whose lives were devoted to violence and to organising and inciting others to violence. I explained the liberal policy that I had adopted and said that I saw that no useful purpose would be served in the release of this hard core of 288 terrorists before the elections.

I believe that such talks as I have had lately with Gandhi and the others are to the good. I believe that we do not meet these people enough. They brood and simmer amongst themselves, practically never meeting any British or Muslim League people of any consequence — and their minds build up grievances and imagined things. There is little doubt in my mind that Nehru, at any rate, is suffering (amongst other inhibitions) from an inferiority complex. I could see (or believed I could see) that it does them good to get their imaginings off their chests, even if they only bring denials and ordered discussion. It is a case of liaison again which always tends to breed suspicion and misunderstanding.

I believe, too, that there can be little doubt that such talks will take a *great deal of the sting out of recent inciting speeches made by* Nehru & Co.[2]

x x x x

1. Two accounts of R.G. Casey's interview with Maulana Azad, Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal at Calcutta on 7 December 1945 are printed.
2. Entry in Casey's Diary (Extract), 7 December 1945. India Office Library and Records, London.

I saw Azad, Patel and Nehru last night. The greater part of talk (which lasted nearly two hours) followed standard lines. Clearly Patel and Nehru are fire-brands of the outfit and are suffering from suppressed frustration, indignation and a rather hysterical impetuosity particularly on Nehru's part. Patel is coldly vindictive. Azad is more detached and theoretical. In course of talk they attributed the breakdown of Simla Conference to advice given to the Viceroy by "the I.C.S. who always bow the knee to Muslim League". They also attributed the "threat" in Secretary of State's recent speech to "the I.C.S." I told them in unmistakeable terms that this was wrong and that I myself and every Britisher in India welcomed what they wrongly described as a "threat". I said that I had no doubt that Congress could plunge India into chaos overnight if they wanted to but I said that they would get nothing out of such a frightful action and that it would not intimidate His Majesty's Government but would be coped with with all the many means at our command. I emphasised that just as Secretary of State meant precisely what he said about pursuing the course outlined towards self-government, so also he meant precisely what he said about not tolerating violence — and both these statements had been greatly welcomed by all of us.

As to prospective constituent assembly Nehru said that Congress would only participate if it was a body capable of coming to decisions which would be implemented and not if it were to be a body making "recommendations" to Government of India or His Majesty's Government, some of which might be adopted and some discarded.

They said that release of all political prisoners would be an evidence of goodwill on our part. I said that expression "political prisoners" was rather misleading so far as Bengal was concerned. The small number that we still had in detention were all top leaders of various terrorist organisations, men of violence — and that we had considerable evidence that they had not undergone any change of heart. I said I believed that peace and quiet in Bengal depended largely on this hard core being kept in detention at least until after election.[3]

3 Casey's letter to Wavell, 8 December 1945. From *The Transfer of Power* 1942-47, Vol. VI, pp. 623-624.

35. To Gopichand Bhargava[1]

Allahabad
December 29, 1945

My dear Dr. Gopichand,

I am glad that you are standing on behalf of the Congress for the university seat for the Punjab Assembly. In any event you would have my good wishes as a Congress candidate and otherwise and I would appeal to voters to vote for you. As this election draws near, it becomes ever clearer that vital principles are involved in it and every voter should consider the matter on this high plane. It may be difficult for the average voter to think in these terms and to release himself from his normal likes and dislikes. But a university constituency is another matter and it is expected that the voters from such a constituency will realise their responsibility even more than the average voter in a general constituency. They must realise that in this election, in the final analysis, they have to vote for the freedom and independence of India or for some other vague, narrow or personal objective. In a sense of course all of us talk of independence and grow eloquent about it. But the question is what comes first in our thoughts and actions and what is second and third. If the freedom of India is not the first thing for us, then it becomes a secondary issue. The Congress has stood and stands for India's independence first and foremost and everything else after that. I am not aware of any other organization running the elections or any individual standing on a personal ticket, who puts independence first and is prepared to act on his convictions. Personal tickets of course do not and should not count at this stage at any rate. Therefore the clear issue is for every voter: Does he stand for independence first or not? If he does so, then inevitably he must vote for the Congress candidate. It is for our intellectuals to appreciate this position and react to it, and not to wander aimlessly without anchorage.

I wish you well, therefore, in this election and I hope that the voters for the university constituency will vote for you and give you a thumping majority, thus demonstrating where they stand in the vital issues of today.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

36. To Ghulam Ali[1]

Allahabad
January 11, 1946

Dear Ghulam Ali,[2]
Sadik Ali has sent me your letter[3] of the 3rd January. I agree with much that you say in your analysis of the present communal situation. It is not a complete analysis but it is more or less true insofar as it goes. As you say, the crux of the question is economic and not religious or cultural. But it is also obviously, as you yourself indicate, psychological.

But all this only explains to some extent the present background of the Muslim and the Hindu mind. It does not offer a solution. It is clear to me that Pakistan does not and cannot protect the Muslims in the economic sphere. It will make their position worse for reasons I need not go into now. To say that the Muslims have lost faith in the good intentions of the Hindus and that the Hindus have shown little or no generosity or equity to the Muslims, does not help much, *just as it does not help to say that the Muslims by their political attitude* have driven a large number of Hindus almost to desperation. Groups, so long as they exist as separate entities, do not, as groups, think or act in terms of equity or generosity. They are moved by waves of sentiment. One thing leads to another. Every action has an interaction, and it is difficult to trace out the original offender. Communalism leads to communalism, as hatred usually leads to hatred. I think it is a fact that the economic position of the Muslims has deteriorated during the last 20 years. It has partly coincided with the growth of the communal tension. Hindus have undoubtedly misbehaved in this respect, but a growing separatist tendency among the Muslims encourages such misbehaviour. Thus if Muslim businessmen, who are relatively weaker, form a separate Muslim Chamber of Commerce, then inevitably the much stronger non-Muslim groups also function separately and tend to ignore Muslim interests.

Your suggestion that the Congress should decommunalise all communal institutions is good in principle, but in the way you propose it,

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. *A cousin of Sadik Ali, Permanent Secretary of the A.I.C.C.; he was an engineer* who took an interest in politics.
3. He wrote that the fear of economic domination by the Hindus had led the Muslims to demand partition. If communal institutions were "decommunalised" by the Congress by adopting a resolution, Hindu-Muslim unity could be promoted.

seems impracticable at the present moment because it would involve not merely the Hindu-Muslim problem, but the whole basis and fabric of life in India. That life was not communal in the new sense of the term, but rather compartmental and occupational. I want those compartments to disappear. But it is beyond my power or that of the Congress to ignore obvious facts of today, most of which do not affect the communal situation. Those facts are changing and we should speed up this change. Nevertheless it is desirable for the Congress to keep away from communal institutions.

I do not think there is much truth in your statement that we have passed pious resolutions regarding Muslims and have not backed them up by action. In the nature of things action cannot be so obvious in this sphere. Even today you will find in many areas, notably the peasantry of the U.P., that the Muslim peasants look up to the Congress because we have served them as peasants. Communalism is far more in evidence among the educated classes of Muslims as well as Hindus although they should have much more in common.

Your proposed resolution does not touch the economic question on which you have rightly laid stress. That must be tackled in a different way. If you read the Congress manifesto recently published, you will see that much has been said on this question. I am sorry I have no time to deal with this at greater length here.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

37. To Frances Gunther[1]

Allahabad
January 12, 1946

My dear F.G.,

On my return to Allahabad yesterday I received your letter of December 27th. I hasten to reply and to give you the information you require.

1. The dates of the provincial elections in India are spread out over three months or more. They have already begun in some provinces like Assam. Sind and the Punjab follow. Then N.W.F. Province.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Among the last provinces to vote will be the United Provinces and Madras. Again there are different dates in some Provinces for Muslim and non-Muslim elections, as well as for rural and urban elections.

2. Election returns will be announced normally a week or ten days after each election.

3. If by "real show" you mean any kind of conflict it is obviously impossible for me to indicate what will happen and when. There are too many indeterminate factors. No one wants a conflict if it can be avoided. Much depends on the attitude of the British Government. I do not think that a conflict will be precipitated by any party. Every attempt will be made to arrive at some suitable compromise. But no compromise will be suitable or acceptable unless it obviously leads to independence. Probably after the elections there will be a period of some kind of negotiations, an attempt to find an equilibrium so that a constituent assembly when properly elected might function. Another question that will arise immediately will be the temporary composition of a provisional central government. It is obvious that even during this temporary phase the present Government cannot continue. It is thoroughly discredited in its make-up and personnel. Jinnah is taking up a completely intransigent attitude.

4. I have already visited a number of provinces and I propose to go to the Frontier in about ten days. I do not think I shall do very much travelling after that for election purposes. Probably during February I shall visit a number of districts in the United Provinces and possibly Bihar. There has been no real contest so far as the general seats (non-Muslim) are concerned, and I have not undertaken any tour for them. The real contest is in regard to Muslim and certain special seats. Therefore I have not been to southern India at all this time and I do not propose to go there. In fact I am only visiting certain selected parts of the country. India is so big that it will take me many months to tour the whole country. Such touring is not confined to the big centres but involves visiting the interior.

5. I have not so far been accompanied by any representative of the foreign press. Usually there are some Indian correspondents with me, but the extraordinarily strenuous conditions of these tours in the interior are more than most correspondents can stand. Some of them have broken down under the strain. You must remember that travelling facilities are primitive in the interior and I move about rapidly with little rest. Then I come back home and take two or three days' rest.

6. Our publicity arrangements are very unsatisfactory and normally we rely upon the Indian press. I believe there is some kind of a press

bureau functioning but I doubt if it is doing much. I am sending your name and address to it.

7. I am afraid that it is rather late for you to think in terms of coming here for the elections, but of course the time after the elections will be equally important from many points of view. In India, as elsewhere, the scene is a changing one and is full of interest for any student of current affairs. At any time some kind of a crisis might develop. So it is difficult to suggest any particular time. Probably in April we shall have the annual session of the Congress. After April comes the hot weather when most foreign correspondents and others have a tendency to wilt.

8. It is obvious that the importance of the Indian question is great from the international point of view. What happens in India will make a difference to events elsewhere, just as what happens elsewhere must make a difference to the Indian scene. A proper interpretation of the forces at work in India is important in permitting good international relations. I should imagine that you would be peculiarly suited to do this work.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

38. To Fenner Brockway[1]

Allahabad
January 14, 1946

My dear Fenner,

I have received your two letters[2] and have carefully considered what you have written. I am not clear in my mind what good a sudden, short and rather dramatic visit to London might do. But apart from this, it is extraordinarily difficult for people like me to get passport and travel facilities. Some months back I tried to go to Java. I was refused permission. For the last six weeks I have been trying to get a passport for

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Fenner Brockway asked Jawaharlal to visit London for three purposes: 1. "To state India's case to the world as an ultimatum to Britain and as a challenge to all nations". 2. To deliver the "message of world order" which he would do if he were to speak at the United Nations Assembly as head of a free India delegation. 3. To inaugurate a conference of the British Centre Against Imperialism.

Burma and Malaya. I have received no final answer yet in spite of reminders. I do not think any private visit is going to be allowed by the Government of India but the real reason is that it is hardly possible for me to leave India during the next two months of electioneering. Immediately after that probably we shall have to take vital decisions. And again it will be difficult for me to go. My colleagues here do not like the idea at all. I fear therefore that there is little chance of my going during the next three months, or possibly more.

You suggest that I should send you in writing the speech which I would have delivered to the United Nations if I had been a delegate. I find it impossible to write a speech in the air, more especially when the situation changes from day to day. If I was actually a delegate I would probably make notes of my speech overnight. Anything that I said would naturally commit to a large extent the National Congress. I can hardly go about consulting people as to what I might have said if the occasion arose for it.

I have already met Sorensen,[3] Wyatt[4] and Mrs. Wallhead Nichol.[5] I hope to meet them and other members of the Parliamentary Delegation[6] again before the end of this month.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3 Reginald W. Sorensen (1891 1971), Labour M P., 1929-31, 1935 66, member, *Parliamentary Delegation to India, 1946, active in the India League.*

4 Woodrow Lyle Wyatt; Labour M.P.; member, Parliamentary Delegation to India, 1946, personal assistant to Sir Stafford Cripps on Cabinet Mission to India, 1946.

5 Muriel Edith Nichol, Labour M P; member, Parliamentary Delegation to India, *1946*

6 A Parliamentary Delegation of ten members, led by Prof. Robert Richards, arrived in India on 5 January 1946 It spent a month and met all the important political leaders. On its return it reported to the British Parliament that India was fit for independence.

39. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
January 17, 1946

My dear Krishna,
I received your cable about some members of the Parliamentary Delegation a few days ago. I have already met most of the Labour members

1. V.K Krishna Menon Papers, N M M L.

and the Liberals. I have not met the Conservative members so far. There is just a chance of my meeting some of them in Allahabad later. We have had interesting talks which might bear fruit. Sorensen has been helpful in telling me of the activity of the India League and other organisations.

I might mention that the press account stating that I had called the delegation a joke is not strictly accurate. It is difficult to correct all the misreporting of the press. Normally I speak in Hindustani and am reported in English, usually by a person who knows neither of the languages well. What I had said was that we would welcome any person who comes here in a friendly way and whether there were any other results or not personal contacts were always useful. But it was a joke that Parliament should try to find out facts about India after 150 years of British rule.

I think I have asked you once whether there was any truth in the press report that you were coming to India. I hope there is. I should very much like to meet you and I am sure it will do you good to renew your acquaintance with the Indian scene.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

40. To Stafford Cripps[1]

Allahabad
January 27, 1946

My dear Stafford,

I received your letter of December 12th some time back when I was at Karachi. I have been continually touring about and have not been keeping well. I have only just returned to Allahabad for a few days' rest.

There was another reason for some delay in answering your letter. You asked me to tell you how I pictured matters developing after the elections. Also what action I would lay down to be followed after the election, if I happened to be the Viceroy. These questions could not be answered casually and I wanted to return home and have a little leisure before I sent a reply to you.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Of course the obvious answer is that I would not be in the Viceroy's position, or rather that, even as Viceroy, I would not have followed the line of action which has landed the Viceroy and the British Government in their present position. But that is not a good enough answer. Am I then to trace past events and criticise them? That might help a little in developing an argument but not in suggesting a solution. Yet some reference to past events seems necessary, although you are sufficiently acquainted with them.

In every country there are a number of forces at work and they usually succeed in establishing some kind of equilibrium, stable or unstable. For the moment this equilibrium represents the balance of forces. It is a changing equilibrium. In India a certain dominant external force — the British power — prevented, for more than a century, the internal forces from establishing an equilibrium between themselves. Their growth and interaction were limited and arrested and an artificial facade was imposed upon the country. Because of this arrested growth, problems piled up and could find no solution. Many relics of past ages continued which would normally have been swept away. It is these relics that constitute some of our most important problems today.

British policy, in order to maintain British rule, was inevitably one of balance and counterpoise, one of preventing unity and encouraging fissiparous tendencies, and one of protecting and strengthening the reactionary elements in the country. Even when British policy spoke a different language, it functioned in much the same way, for its agents in India did not change or think differently. The final word in practice lay with these agents and they continued to represent the old style imperialist authoritarian tradition. Because of this, British policy could not really change, it wobbled occasionally, spoke in two voices, postponed and procrastinated, and meanwhile, carried on in the old way. This old way was essentially one opposed to the progressive and vital forces in the country and of encouragement to every tendency which was reactionary and obscurantist. Incapable of solving any of India's urgent problems, it relied more and more on persons and groups who were usually corrupt and chiefly interested in opposing change.

In pursuance of this policy, separate electorates were introduced, the seed of the poisonous tree that has grown now to poison all our national life and prevent progress. With the growth of the national movement, the British Government and its agents intensified their support of separatist tendencies. In particular they encouraged the growth of the Muslim League. All other organisations were more or less swept away by the Congress, only the League remained and so the League was helped in a variety of ways. Even today in the elections many government

officials are actively helping the League candidates. The voters' registers were prepared and manipulated in such a way as to favour the League and large numbers of bogus names were introduced. In Benares we have the remarkable instance of more names on the Muslim register than there are Muslim inhabitants in the city.

During recent years (war years) Linlithgow and Co., much as they disliked Jinnah, still did everything to help the League. Your proposals made in 1942 on behalf of the War Cabinet, acknowledging the right ot secession, gave a tremendous fillip to the League's demand for Pakistan and increased its prestige.[2] Last year's Simla Conference failing because the Viceroy accepted Jinnah's veto, also led Muslims to think that the League, supported by the British Government, was too powerful to be opposed by them.

As a whole Muslims are politically backward, with no sufficiently developed middle class and hardly any notable leaders, with the exception of Jinnah. They can be more easily moved by a religious cry than the Hindus. There has been scandalous corruption wherever Muslim League Ministries have functioned. There is no doubt that the League is at present the most powerful organisation amongst them but the way this has been built up is strikingly similar to the Nazi technique. It has no constructive approach or objectives and its leaders have openly said that they base their appeal on hatred. There has been and is plenty of hooliganism and violence against political opponents.[3] Pakistan as such is hardly understood or appreciated by most members of the League; it is a sentimental slogan which they have got used to. There is at the same time a definite revolt against it among Muslims and I believe this is growing. It is impossible to say how many think this way. Generally upper class Muslims are for the League with a mass following. The Shias are against it, so is the Jamiat, weaver and artisan class, which is

2. The draft declaration of 1942 proceeded on the assumption that partition would in the last resort provide a solution of the Hindu-Muslim question. "His Majesty's Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the constitution so framed subject only to the right of any province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new constitution to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so decides. With such non-acceding Provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new constitution, giving them the same full status as the Indian Union, and arrived at by a proceedure analogous to that here laid down."
3. About this time, at sevral places in the U.P., supporters of the Muslim League had behaved violently towards Nationalist Muslim leaders. For example, on 4 October 1945, Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, president of the Jamiat ul Ulema-e Hind, was attacked and insulted by Muslim Leaguers.

a kind of depressed class among the Muslims. Then Momins have definitely begun to think along class lines and resent the upper class leadership of the Muslim League.

During the past five years the League has had a clear field in India. The Congress was almost continually under ban and in prison. We have thus had no approach to the Muslim masses and they have been fed by lies both by the League and Government propagandists. I presume you know how the Congress has been slandered in England and America by British spokesmen and the most obviously false things said about it. During the last three months we have again started approaching the Muslim masses and the results have been remarkably encouraging. Probably they will not affect the elections much as we have not had enough time. But they are laying the foundations of solid work among the Muslim masses which will make a difference before very long.

I shall not prophesy the results of the provincial elections. We shall know them soon enough; the Assam results are just out. It is clear that so far as the general seats are concerned the Congress is in an unassailable position. No other organisation counts. That applies largely to the scheduled classes' seats also. Leaving out the Muslims for the present the Congress represents today practically all sections of the Indian people as it has never done previously. Among the Muslims it has a strong core and there are others who support it. But it is true that the Muslim League still commands the great majority of Muslim votes. In the elections the Congress will win some Muslim seats on the direct Congress ticket, other seats will be won by Nationalist Muslims cooperating with the Congress, but the majority will go to the Muslim League. Even in these last named, there will be a considerable minority voting against the League.

In the result there is likely to be a Congress majority in eight provinces, that is in all except Sind, the Punjab and Bengal. In none of these three will there be a clear Muslim League majority nor can there be a purely Muslim League government in any of them. Some kind of coalitions are likely to be formed in these three. The Muslim League has alienated all other groups and it may find it difficult to form a coalition. In Sind the Congress might join a coalition.

Elections and their results apart, there is extreme tension in the country, a sense of intolerable strain, and an overwhelming urge to change the present government in the Centre and the provinces. Elections have somewhat held people in check but as soon as these are over, events, of their own motion, will march swiftly. They can be controlled by definite policies being laid down and acted upon leading to swift change. Delay might well lead to disastrous consequences. What happened in Calcutta

two months ago and what is happening in Bombay now are significant signs of the fires below the surface. A spark lights them. In a sense the Congress represents these forces but they are stronger than any organisation and can be controlled only to a limited extent and provided conditions are favourable.

Jinnah appears to be wholly intransigent and threatens bloodshed and rioting it anything is done without his consent. It is impossible of course to hang up everything simply because Jinnah does not agree. (That is what the British Government has done so far with very unfortunate consequences. But this cannot be repeated). I do not think there is much in Jinnah's threat. The Muslim League leadership is far too reactionary (they are mostly landlords) and opposed to social change to dare to indulge in any form of direct action. They are incapable of it, having spent their lives in soft jobs. If it is once made clear that violence on their part will not help them at all, they will subside. But it is very likely there may be riots, especially in the U.P., probably encouraged by local officials and the police who want to discredit the Congress. There will be no real strength behind them. Even if there was some strength it is impossible to hold up everything for fear of them. The other consequences are of graver import.

The British Government has to decide once for all its policy in regard to this matter. It can no longer sit on the fence. It cannot force Pakistan on India, in the form demanded by Jinnah, for that certainly will lead to civil war. Jinnah's demand included Assam, Delhi, the whole of the Punjab and Bengal, the N.W.F. Province, Sind, Baluchistan. By no stretch of imagination can Assam, Delhi, and large parts of Punjab and Bengal, which have a non-Muslim majority, be included in Pakistan. Probably even in these elections the North West Frontier Province will declare against the League. Even if the Muslims as a whole support the League and Pakistan, that can only mean a division of both Punjab and Bengal. Jinnah has indignantly rejected this. What then? Compulsion of other areas to join Pakistan? That is inconceivable and impossible. Thus the crux of the Pakistan issue is this: A Pakistan consisting of only part of Punjab and part of Bengal, or no separation at all.

As a matter of fact the question of Pakistan or separation cannot be considered apart from the question of defence and allied subjects. At any time this could not be ignored. In today's context with trouble brewing in the Middle East, this becomes a paramount consideration, for without proper defence there is no security for either Pakistan or Hindustan. Even if there were two separate states they would have to

evolve a joint scheme of defence. Defence includes foreign affairs, communications etc.

From the point of view of defence there can be no real Pakistan, that is an independent state. Even if separated it could not continue independent. At the same time we have to consider a widely felt sentiment in favour of it and sentiments cannot always be ignored. I do not think it is deep and the consequences are not realised. Indeed no one knows what Pakistan is. It is worth remembering also that the Pakistan sentiment is stronger in provinces which can never form part of a Pakistan. It is weakest near the Frontier regions, and weak also in Punjab and Bengal. A vote for the Muslim League is no vote for Pakistan. It is only a vote for a popular organisation which represents a certain solidarity of Indian Muslims.

I suppose you know what the Congress has proposed from time to time to solve the communal problem. It has stated that there should be a federation of autonomous units with a certain minimum list of compulsory common subjects. These have not been enumerated but presumably they will be defence, foreign affairs, communications, currency etc. In addition there should be an optional list of common subjects which can be agreed to or not as the federating unit desires. This gives the maximum of freedom and self-reliance to the units and a sense of functioning as they wish. Further there can be any number of safeguards for minorities etc., and finally a supreme court should be empowered to protect minority rights. Finally if a definite area expresses its will clearly in favour of separatism and this is feasible, no compulsion will be exercised to force it to remain in the federation or union. But it cannot take other areas away with it against their will, and there must be a clear decision by plebiscite of all the adult voters of that area. I cannot imagine any more generous and far reaching offer. Yet Jinnah refuses both the plebiscite and the demarcation of the area according to the wishes of the inhabitants. It seems clear that he is not after Pakistan but something entirely different, or perhaps he is after nothing at all except to stop all change and progress. As a matter of fact it has become increasingly clear that Pakistan is just a fantasy which cannot be realised in the present context of India and the world.

This is the background. I fear I have written at length and yet not as I would like to have done. For the problem is not one so much of logical analysis as of psychological appreciation. Deep passions are at work and they *must be understood and appreciated* before that situation itself can be understood. What I have found wholly lacking in statements and speeches made in London is this psychological approach.

Apart from the long past history of India and England, the past six years of war have had a powerful effect on shaping the Indian mind and new forces are at work, which I can understand but not easily fathom. The astonishing reaction of the country to the I.N.A. trials was very significant. Perhaps I have a deeper understanding of Indian happenings than most people even in India, for I have made myself receptive to India's moods. And yet I feel sometimes that I am rather out of date. To ignore these deeply significant changes in India as well as the passionate fervour which underlies them is to misjudge everything. Any action based on this lack of judgment is likely to be wrong and to lead to unhappy results. It is not enough to wish well and to be conscious of one's own rectitude.

What then is to be done? The first thing is for the British Government to declare in the clearest terms possible that they accept the independence of India and the constitution of free India will be determined by India's elected representatives without any interference from the British Government or any other external authority. The constitution-making body will be constituted on a wide franchise and will have final authority. The future relations with England will also be determined by this constitution-making body and representatives of this body and of the British Government will meet to consider problems of mutual concern which arise when a transfer of power takes place. If in regard to any such matter there is no agreement this can be referred to an impartial tribunal. But the question of independence itself cannot be referred to any external authority and must be settled by the constituent assembly itself.

Further that the British Government should declare that it considers any division of India harmful in India's interest, as well as in the interest of any party or religious group. Also that it would weaken the defence of India at a time when defence is a paramount necessity. Without full security there can be no progress, or solution of India's urgent problems. The British Government cannot therefore encourage any division of India. This matter must be decided by the people of India themselves. It is desirable however that the fullest autonomy should be given to the constituent units of the Indian federation and every safeguard provided for the protection of minority interests. Defence and allied subjects would in any event be common subjects. There may be a further provision that if the inhabitants of any territorial area are clearly of opinion, as ascertained by a plebiscite on a specific and defined issue, that they wish to separate, then they should be allowed to do so, subject to feasibility and the avoidance of any compulsion on any group, within a well-defined area, which does not

AT SIMLA, JULY 1945

AT SIMLA, JULY 1945

want to separate. Also, even so, the problem of defence must be tackled together. Thus in the event of separation, defence should still be common, and the lines of demarcation should be such as to keep, as far as possible, those who want to separate and those who do not want to do so, apart from each other. This would particularly apply to Bengal and Punjab.

Obviously difficulties will arise if the N.W.F. Province does not want to separate and northern Punjab wants to do so. This would make Pakistan almost impossible. I am personally convinced that if it was once made clear that the British Government would in no way encourage Pakistan, this agitation would lose its force rapidly.

Apart from a general declaration by the British Government in favour of Indian independence and their readiness to hand over power to elected representatives of the Indian people, two immediate questions arise: the formation of a constitution-making body and the establishment of a provisional central national government. Both these are essential. In both these the less interference there is from the British Government the better. Probably the easiest and the fairest way to deal with the situation is to ask the newly formed provincial governments to confer together and make suggestions. This avoids dealing with parties as such. It is highly likely that all provincial governments will cooperate in this task. If, by any chance, any one of them does not wish to do so, it can stay out. Both the constituent assembly and the provisional Central Government should thus be formed in accordance with the suggestions of the elected provincial governments. This provisional Centre, though functioning more or less within the existing constitution, should in practice not be interfered with by the Viceroy or the British Government. It will be replaced by the new government of free India as soon as the constitution framed by the constituent assembly comes into effect. There is no reason why all this should take more than a year.

If these steps are taken new avenues open out for peaceful change and progress. But it is essential that no interference should take place on the part of the British Government or their agents in India, and there should be the conviction among the Indian people that they can at last work out their own destiny.

If such an approach is made I do not think there will be or can be any real trouble instigated by the Muslim League. There may be some petty riots in some cities. In effect even their demand for so-called self-determination is conceded, but not in the fantastic way demanded. Once it is realised that the people of India themselves have to decide finally, they will look to each other and not abroad and will try their

utmost to pull together and to come to agreed conclusions. The alternative to that is conflict and no one wants that.

I have not referred to the States. I am convinced that the States offer no great difficulty provided only Pakistan is not in the picture. If there is still Pakistan as a possibility this will frighten away some States from joining the Indian Union and enable some others to raise objections and make excuses. All of them, I think, (barring perhaps Hyderabad) realise now that there is no future for them except as autonomous units of the federation. Of course only the larger States—probably a dozen or at most twenty—can form such units. The others must be absorbed in the provinces or amalgamate together to form a big enough unit. The States must have the same or similar democratic liberties and forms of administration as the provinces. Only such States can be admitted into the constituent assembly and the new federation. Representatives from the States will have to be more or less on the same basis as from the provinces.

I have written at far greater length than I intended to and yet I have written under pressure of time. If I had some leisure I would have been more concise. But anyway what I have written will give you some idea of how my mind is working. All my colleagues do not think exactly like me but I think that our main conclusions are much the same. Indeed I would say that politically thinking India, Congress or non-Congress (apart from the Muslim League), thinks more or less on these lines, with one big exception. That exception consists of a considerable number of young men and women who are convinced that only out of a big struggle can something worthwhile be achieved. They have hardened and they represent the prevailing sentiment of the Indian people. And so if anything untoward happens there is immediately a flare-up. If a way out to independence in the near future, with recognition of it and an approach to it now, is opened, then it may be possible to control the situation in India and proceed peacefully and cooperatively. Otherwise events take the reins and go ahead leading to what I do not know.

It is this emotional and psychological aspect of the Indian problem that is so vitally important today. It can only be apprehended by outsiders imaginatively and with sympathy for a long-suffering people who have long endured frustration and repression. That imagination has been wholly absent in the past, and so much has been said and done that has hurt the Indian people and scars remain. Apart from happenings in India, Indonesia and Indo-China have created intense bitterness and a conviction that nothing can be expected from the British Government. The gulf has never been so wide and it will not be easy

to bridge it. Yet perhaps it can be bridged even now with a great effort.

At any rate I hope so and work to that end. But if conflict comes, obviously I shall be in the middle of it, for I stand with my people. I stand by them because I believe them to be right on this issue and because I cannot desert them when they are facing dangers and difficulties. But I want to avoid conflict for it is a terrible waste of national energy and it leaves a bad legacy. I have spent enough of my life in conflict and during the years that remain to me I want to build and not to destroy. Everything in India cries aloud for constructive effort, and yet the way to it is barred. Once it is opened, and it can only be opened by independence, then we shall jump ahead.

Forgive me for this infliction. I have hesitated to write to you on these issues, but, since you asked me, I felt I had to do so.

I have met some of the members of the Parliamentary Delegation and hope to meet them and others again before they return.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

41. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
January 28, 1946

My dear Krishna,

I have to write to you about several matters but I shall do that separately. I am enclosing with this letter[2] a copy of a letter I am sending to Stafford Cripps. This has been drafted in a hurry and is not very satisfactory. Nevertheless it gives my viewpoint and it might help you in understanding it. The letter, I need hardly add, is a personal one and should not be used in any other way. I should not like you to show it to others except perhaps to very special persons.

I am expecting some of the members of the Parliamentary Delegation here this week. Vijayalakshmi is due to arrive in a day or two.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, pp 138-147.

42. To Ali Zaheer[1]

Allahabad
January 30, 1946

My dear Ali Zaheer,
Thank you for your letter[2] of January 16th. I know well that the Shia community has in the past suffered in political representation and otherwise under the system at present prevailing in India. Separate electorates, which have done so much injury to India as a whole and I believe to the Muslims also, have particularly hit the Shias. Normally the Shias have few chances of getting elected by Muslim separate electorates. The argument that can be advanced for separate electorates for Mussalmans as a whole can equally be advanced for the Shias as a minority group among the Muslims of India. But it is clear that this kind of infinite division of the electorate into separate compartments is likely to do grave injury not only to the cause of India as a whole but more especially to the minority communities which are supposed to be protected. The only way out is to have common electorates for all. This matter naturally can only be settled by the goodwill of the parties concerned.

Every community, and indeed every individual, has a right to protection and opportunities for self-development. A free India must guarantee these human rights to everybody. We are apt to look at the problems in the context of today with the third party, that is the British Government, controlling our destinies, and a political and economic system which really ignores the interests of the vast majority of our people to whatever religion they might belong. We think in terms of future jobs or a future place in the legislature. That is important enough but it is only a small part of the problem of providing not for a few but for all in India. A free India will necessarily think in different terms. In providing protection and opportunities of growth to indi-

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Ali Zaheer, who was the president of the All Parties Shia Conference, wrote that "you should give an assurance that the Congress Party accepts the claim of the Shia community for special protection of its political and other rights.... at least so long as separate electorates continue in the country."

viduals and groups, it has to be borne in mind that any system based on unfair representation cannot be stable or just.

What the future constitution of India will be is more than I can say. Ultimately the people of India will decide as they choose. Whatever that decision may be, it should ensure the sense of freedom and growth to all groups and communities. I have an idea that that system will be very different from our present system. In such a system the legitimate claims of the Shias, as of others, should be borne in mind. But you will realise that the extension of the principle of separate electorates does not really protect and isolates the community concerned from others. Thus instead of each thinking of the good of the other we have each thinking and working in separate compartments and forgetting the whole. Obviously also we cannot think in terms of the majority overriding the minority wishes. Provisions have to be made to prevent this. All these questions and others will have to be carefully considered in the new context and I trust that the solution we find in cooperation with others will go a long way to remove the grievances of the Shia community, as of others.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

43. To Hansraj Muljee[1]

Allahabad
February 4, 1946

Dear Hansrajji,
Thank you for the cigarettes you have sent. As for the cigarette-holder, please do not trouble yourself as I have been able to obtain it.

Regarding what you say in your letter of the 12th Jan., the subject is too big to be discussed in a letter. Also the political situation is rather fluid at present and I think we should wait for two or three months at least before embarking on any big venture. I should like to discuss this matter with you personally. Perhaps when I come to Bombay next we could do so.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I like travelling by air and I think that a time will come when this will be desirable as a normal way of travelling. Just at present, however, I do not think it is worthwhile to get a special plane for the purpose. Much of my travelling has to be done by car, as I have to go short distances in remote villages. I suggest therefore that you need not purchase a plane for my use. Thank you all the same for your kind offer.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

44. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
February 5, 1946

My dear Krishna,
I have just received your air letter of the 28th January.

About Maulana Azad and the presidentship of the Congress, I should like him to be re-elected but I think this is unlikely. Normally we change presidents every year and it is very unusual for the same person to be elected for two consecutive years. I was elected in this way once but we were then in the midst of an election. The Maulana has been functioning as President for over five years now as there have been no elections during this period. So, except for very special reasons, a new person will be elected. I think the special reasons exist but I doubt very much if they will be considered sufficient to override the usual practice. The real difficulty is the Maulana himself who is not inclined to stand for election. He is keeping bad health and feels very tired. He is terribly sensitive and agrees to stand only if there is practically a unanimous demand for it and no counter proposal. That is, he does not like a contested election. Probably there will be no real contest and if Maulana's name is proposed, he will withdraw it.

So far we have not discussed this matter in Working Committee or even elsewhere though there is some speculation in the press. The names usually mentioned are: Maulana's, Vallabhbhai Patel's and mine. I am clear in my own mind that I should not stand. I do not want

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

to be bound down by office if I can help it and I can function much more satisfactorily if I have a certain freedom.

There are, as you no doubt realise, all manner of forces at play in the country and within the Congress. It is not possible to order things about from the top without paying full attention to these forces and currents.

About your second point I agree generally with your analysis of the situation and I think that is on the whole appreciated here. There is going to be no abandonment of independence whatever happens. On other matters there may be room for adjustment. What I wrote to Cripps — I sent you a copy of the letter — is the minimum. Once independence is admitted and a freely elected constituent assembly with unfettered powers, then other matters can be discussed within that framework. An immediate issue will be the formation of the transitional central government. There may be trouble over it. The real difficulty on our side has been of course the communal situation. This will be governed to some extent by the results of the elections.

I have written to you separately on other matters. I am going out on tour again today. During the next month or 5 weeks I shall be mostly touring with brief halts at Allahabad.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

45. To Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee[1]

Lucknow
9 February, 1946

Srijut C.B. Gupta has told me about his interview with you. We are naturally anxious that you should not endanger your life, and we are also convinced that the treatment towards many political prisoners is bad, and even ordinary facilities are denied to them. Personally, I think, and many others are of the same opinion, that at the present moment hunger strike on these issues is unfortunate.

1 This letter was published in the *Hindusthan Standard*, 11 February 1946. Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, accused in the Kakori conspiracy case, had spent 25 years in prison. He was on hunger strike in the Lucknow district jail in protest against the ill treatment by the authorities He broke his fast on 6 February 1946 when the wish of Jawaharlal that he should give up his fast was

Big changes are in the air, or in the alternative, a conflict will result. Naturally, it must be the function of any popular government to put an end to these questions by releasing political prisoners. Even if for temporary period some prisoners are kept in jails, they must have all facilities. This is the definite policy of the Congress, and our own people will see to its fulfilment.

About the present conditions Sj. Gupta and others are trying their best to get them changed for the better.

As for newspapers, I suggest that the Government be told that we will gladly pay for them, if they are willing to supply them. Other matters too should be and will be pressed. But at the present moment the decision does not rest with us. I hope that the Government authorities will see the reasonableness of the demands made, and will agree to suggestions made therein. And I hope that you will not persist in hunger-strike and such things, which may endanger your life, at any rate, ruin your health. We have to keep ourselves fit for future work. Therefore, I trust that you will give up the hunger-strike.

2

CONGRESS AND ELECTIONS

II. The Campaign in the Provinces

THE PUNJAB AND THE N.W.F.P.

1. Post-War Problems[1]

After remaining in the Kashmir Valley for one month I am going down. The recent contact with the Himalayan range, which has a glorious connection with ancient Indian history, culture and civilization, has produced a tremendous effect upon my mind which has now become fresh.

I have received invitations from several places in the Punjab, but I am sorry that, despite my keen desire to meet old friends and colleagues and renew acquaintances and discuss problems with them, I cannot in the present circumstances undertake a tour of the province.

It is high time that you should concentrate all your efforts in finding out a solution to the problems that are facing India and the world. Never in history have so many revolutions occurred as in our age. The atomic bomb, which has now been invented, has created new problems for humanity and has changed the history of the world. Yet, Indians are still engrossed with old worn-out controversies and have been least, it seems, affected by these revolutions. Neither prayers nor slogans are of any help to solve these problems.

The colossal poverty of India is disturbing me every moment and it is my first concern to find ways and means to eliminate it. India has a glorious past and her history is rich in culture and civilisation. What is the reason for the downfall of this country? The sole reason for the extreme deterioration is that our people are too much engrossed with insignificant matters such as the caste system, petty jealousies and party factions.

I may point out that Punjabis have more latent energy, more enthusiasm and a keen desire for freedom than the people of many other provinces. Although the Punjab is superior in many respects to several other provinces, its energy is being wasted in party bickerings and personal squabbles at the cost of the larger interests of the country.

1. Speech at Murree, 21 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 23 August, *The Bombay Chronicle*, 23 August, *The Tribune*, 23 August and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 24 August 1945.

Countries like Britain, Russia, America and China have made tremendous sacrifices in the present gigantic struggle. Similar sacrifices have not yet been made by India in the cause of her freedom. Sacrifices made by the Indians are quite insignificant. I have no intention of minimising the sacrifices of my countrymen during the last three years. You all know through what a regime of repression some provinces have passed and how efforts were made by authorities to crush the national movement in the country.

Ever since the first noncooperation movement was launched by Mahatma Gandhi, the country has made remarkable progress. During this time the people have gained an unprecedented mass consciousness, because of which there is an unusual awakening in this vast subcontinent. It is entirely due to this awakening that the Government miserably failed to crush the spirit of the country when it passed through a fiery ordeal during the last three years. Though the Congress was an unlawful organisation during all these years, the enthusiasm of the people has not abated in the least. During the short period after my release, I have clearly seen a new life among the masses who are in quest of freedom.

I exhort the Punjabis in particular to derive the maximum benefit from the latent energy and unbounded enthusiasm and to use them for securing freedom. The country has progressed despite several blunders. No power on earth can now stand in the way to freedom.

On the one hand, the Muslim League has raised the issue of Pakistan, while on the other hand, we are thinking of the economic, political, social and cultural problems affecting us and the world. India cannot stand detached as a unit unmindful of what is happening all over the world. Some people are clamouring for vivisection of our country while in the world there is a trend towards federation of several countries in the interest of future safety. At the same time, nobody can compel a unit to join a particular federation against its will.

The war has come to an end. Several intricate problems are awaiting solution. The question of eliminating India's poverty and unemployment following the cessation of hostilities must be tackled forthwith. The Government has been doing several things under the cover of war necessity. The Defence of India Rules should now go and a normal state must be restored. The present Government is absolutely incapable of handling successfully all these important problems.

Another problem which has been constantly disturbing my peace of mind for the last few days is the treatment that is and will be meted out to those Indians in Burma and Malaya who joined the so-called Indian National Army to fight the British from the side of Japan. I

was of the opinion three years ago and am still of the opinion that the leaders and others of this army have been misguided in many ways, and have failed to appreciate the larger consequence of their unfortunate association with Japan. But it would be a supreme tragedy if these officers and other men are liquidated by way of punishment by the British. Their action in joining the enemy was absolutely wrong and unfortunate. But they are brave men and they have been actuated by the love of their country. It would shock us deeply if their precious lives perish. Freedom cannot be secured by the help of any foreign nation. But the country would expect a lenient treatment towards them and would like to know what is happening behind the scenes to decide their fate. A free India can establish happy relations with Britain, but any hasty action against them might jeopardise that future relation.

I appeal to all of you to sink your personal and party differences and to work unitedly to solve the bigger issue of the country's freedom.

2. A New Awareness[1]

Question Can you say something about the talks you have been having with the Congress leaders since your arrival here?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The main purpose of my visit to the Frontier Province is to meet my old friends after a long period of three years and get their impression of the past events in order to fully grasp the present situation prevailing in the country. Within such a short time it is certainly not possible to have direct contacts with the public. But nevertheless I have availed myself of the opportunity in discussing numerous topics with Frontier leaders to enable me to study a good deal of Frontier affairs.

Q: What is the change you find in Indian politics after your release from prison?

JN: In consequence of both national and international events one gratifying point for me is that the masses have become more enlightened. Their reactions to the current affairs are quite mature. Relations

1. Interview to the press, Nathiagali, 24 August 1945 From *The Tribune*, 25 August 1945.

between Britain and India are better understood than before. The urge for freedom is potent in their hearts. What is needed is that they must be led in the right direction towards our national goal.

Q: Will it be worthwhile to grant the principle of Pakistan in the interest of India's independence?

JN: The recent statement of the Congress President, Maulana Azad, has made the Congress position abundantly clear.[2] So far as the right of self-determination is concerned, the Congress has acknowledged it much earlier and the provinces are given the right of secession if they desire. But the Pakistan scheme is still vague and has not been fully enunciated. Several complications are apt to arise when the scheme is given a practical shape. Leaving aside economic consequences on the body politic in India, enforcement of Pakistan is a sort of foreign element having religious and cultural affinities and will remain in force in both the so-called Pakistan and Hindustan areas for all time. For instance, Muslims living in the Hindustan area will have an extreme type of natural kinship with their co-religionists in the Pakistan area and *vice versa*. In this manner several complications will crop up frequently in both the areas which will be very difficult for both the governments to cope with.

Another point in this connection is worth mentioning. In the Punjab and Bengal, which might become Pakistan areas, neither the League nor non-League circles want partition. Now, in all fairness to every community in these provinces, how will it be possible to grant the right of self-determination to one community in defiance of the other? After all, Pakistan or any other scheme cannot be forced on an unwilling community in order to placate the other. Besides, the result will be calamitous for all, because the equilibrium of the country's life will be upset, which no patriotic Indian would like to happen.

2. *See ante, pp.* 71-74.

3. Challenge to the Punjab Government[1]

On stepping into the Punjab I would like to sound a note of warning to the Punjab Ministry. If any prohibitory order is served upon me by the Punjab Government, *I will tear it to pieces, kick it and defy it,* whatever the consequences. It touches my self respect and honour if any Deputy Commissioner or police officer issues such an order of restriction on my movement. The world has undergone a revolutionary and a tremendous change, but the Punjab Government is lying unmoved like a stone. Such orders are not obeyed in the twentieth century The Punjab Government is living in the sixteenth century. There is police and I.C.S. raj in this province.

The Punjab Government has shown its true colours in the Frontier Gandhi's *episode at Attock bridge.*[2] *Either the Khizr*[3] *Ministry had a* hand in the affair or else it was quite impotent before the police and the Deputy Commissioner.

Despite perfect tranquillity in the Punjab during the last three years, *the Punjab Government's attitude had been most reprehensible,* disgraceful and mean. The Punjab Congress leaders were also responsible *for submitting meekly to all such orders. Conditions in the Punjab* are bound to change in the near future.

I allude to the Pakistan demand[4] of the Muslim League and the recent speech[5] of Dr Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, President of the All India Hindu Mahasabha, and ask what sacrifices for the freedom of the country have been made by both these communal organisations put

1. Speech at Rawalpindi, 24 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune,* 26 August, *The Hindustan Times,* 26 August, *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 27 August 1945.
2. On 22 July 1945, Ghaffar Khan was arrested at Attock for violation of an order prohibiting him from entering or making speeches in the Punjab.
3. Malik Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana (b. 1900); Prime Minister of the Punjab, 1942-47.
4. *After the failure of the Simla Conference,* Jinnah declared that the Muslim League had offered cooperation in an interim government only because of the war. As the war was over the need now was to go ahead with plans for a permanent settlement necessarily on the basis of Pakistan, on which the League would never surrender.
5. S.P. Mookherjee said on 19 August 1945 that the Hindus had not only been deprived of their legitimate rights, but had also been crushed politically and economically by the Government. "In such conditions it is the duty of every Hindu to *fight for his rights and sacrifice everything to protect them.*"

together? Their record of work has been nil except for the mere criticism of the Congress and exploiting the masses in the name of religion. These organisations have never participated in actual fight, which would have demonstrated their real worth. I would like to know what campaigns were launched by the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League? They have never been put to test. They have never translated their sayings into action. All their work has been a paper business. Even the leadership is not practical at all. The Congress is the only political organisation that has come out with flying colours after every severe test.

Despite the victory in the war, the British empire will be quite incapable of shouldering its future responsibilities. It must grant to India the mastery of its own destiny.

The Indian National Congress is the only organisation which can deliver the goods. Its doors are open to every individual, irrespective of caste, creed or colour and it is the only competent body to lead the country to its destined goal of independence. I consider if a Himalayan blunder for any communal or religious organisation to dabble in politics. A communal organisation can never think for the good of the country as a whole. No other organisation except the Congress can successfully fight the battle for freedom. The Congress has a magnificent record of 60 years' service to its credit. If you drift towards communalism the consequences will be a disaster. I am unable to understand the principles of Pakistan. Even its sponsors have so far failed to give a practical shape or a concise and specific definition to Pakistan except by saying that it rested on the principle of self-determination.

I support the recent statement issued by the Congress President on this issue. No country can compel any unit to remain within it under compulsion and against its will. But the days of small countries have gone. It has become imperative for smaller nations to federate, not only in the interest of defence, but also for economic considerations.

The Congress will fight the coming general elections with full vigour, befitting the prestige and honour of a big national organisation.[6] The Congress will lift and throw overboard any organisation that blocks its way and march on crossing all the hurdles. I never bothered myself regarding individual candidates. But I want that the Congress should return such persons as have been true to the organisation in all sorts of stormy weather, unmindful of any other consideration. Merit alone will not be the only criterion for the selection of candidates.

6. On 21 August 1945, it was announced that elections for both the Centre and the provinces would be held as soon as possible.

The coming year or two will prove a landmark in the history of our movement and organisation. The latent energy and the force of an organisation is always tested at the time of a great crisis when its promoters are put to a crucial test. The Congress has proved itself as the most powerful organisation in the country after three years of repression. Party strifes and personal squabbles in the Punjab are always an eyesore to me and a hurdle to progress in the fight for freedom both inside and outside the Congress. Every individual and organisation is liable to err, but there is a deliberate attempt to lower the flag of the organisation by dishonest means.

I exhort the Punjab Congress workers to penetrate into villages where real India lives and to educate the masses on their right of vote. Thousands of workers are required to undertake this job.

I invite the attention of the Punjab's soldier premier in particular to concentrate his attention on the fate of the soldiers and the officers of the Indian National Army as most of them, who are behind the prison bars, are brave Punjabis. According to international law they are not rebels in the true legal term but are only prisoners of war.

4. Pakistan an Outmoded Idea[1]

I went to Kashmir to see the rapidly changing world from the high peaks of mountains and to compare it with the world of the past 25 years and to think of the past and future of India. There is no doubt that India, for whose freedom we are fighting today, is a great country. In ages gone by India ruled over various other countries of Asia, and its civilization and culture spread far and wide.

But why is it that India has gone down today, and is under foreign bondage? It is because of the narrowness of our vision. There is misuse of religion. When the world is experiencing rapid revolutions, it is a pity that Indians are sticking on to their old ideas. Mistrust and partisan spirit and communal bickerings are looming large in India.

1. Speech at Lahore, 25 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 26 August, *The Hindu*, 27 August and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 28 August 1945.

The two atomic bombs have destroyed five lakhs of people in two cities of Japan. Nippon has been compelled to surrender. In spite of their victory, the British have been reduced to a second-rate power as a result of the present war. America and Russia remain the first-rate powers. Revolutions are breaking out in the world and several countries are thinking whether they could save themselves from destruction by drawing themselves in a confederation. But in India we are still fighting among ourselves, not only for offices but for position and power. After the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, India is changing today and drifting rapidly towards a revolution. The Congress is the only organisation which is responsible for bringing about an awakening among the masses and for fighting for their freedom. The Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and other communal organisations oppose the Congress today, but the Congress is their mother. These organisations have so far confined themselves to copying the Congress resolutions and its structure. But in one thing they never try to imitate the Congress—in treading the path of danger, suffering and action. They want to achieve their objects by mere threats. They are not prepared to put themselves to test and danger as the Congress is doing. You must understand the changing world and avoid partisan spirit and strife.

I stress that the talk about Pakistan sounds empty and meaningless in this age of atomic bombs. It becomes ineffective and has no bearing in the context of fast developing changes and the international situation. The scheme of Pakistan aims at division of India into small parts. The Congress views the scheme as one that will endanger the smooth working of free India. We do not want freedom for keeping one part of India under the sword of the other, but we want economic development of India. If some part of India wants separation, the Congress will try to persuade it not to do so, but if it insists on going out of India, the Congress will allow it to do so. Maulana Azad, the Congress President, had made this clear in his statement.

This long story of Pakistan has no place in this fast changing world. The question of its acceptance or rejection does not arise because *nobody has yet defined Pakistan, not even Mr. Jinnah, the League President.* Pakistan is not in his or in anybody else's pocket to be made over at a moment's notice to anyone.

I advise the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs of the Punjab and Bengal to *think twice before embarking upon the division of* their province into two. They should bear in mind that, though their religions are different, their culture, civilization and language are the same. The Bengal famine took a toll of five million men. The problems of starvation and nakedness are the real problems in India and they can be

solved only by a national government. The Congress is the largest national organisation of India. The Congress alone can deliver the goods, no communal organisation can speak for India. Despite repression the Congress has come out successful and with double the force. It is the only weapon for India's freedom. I appeal to the people to strengthen the Congress — an organisation which is fighting with the British Government and will not rest until India's independence is achieved. I am not very much interested in elections as such, but at certain moments they assume particular importance. The coming elections might become a means of forming a constituent assembly. The Congress will plunge into them with full force and enthusiasm and will oppose all communal or reactionary organisations or groups.

5. The Importance of the Coming Elections[1]

I congratulate you for your unusual discipline at yesterday's meeting which was the biggest meeting I have ever addressed throughout my public career. As it was yesterday so it is today. What a pleasing sight to see the vast concourse ot people assembled here! Why is it so? It is because as a humble servant of the motherland I have become a symbol to you like the national flag. I belong to the nation and the nation possesses me. Despite the rigours of jail life I consider myself fortunate for the people of India take me into their confidence. My only anxiety is that I should not lower the prestige of India.

Thousands of people, whom you do not know and who are not heard of, have made great sacrifices for the cause of India's freedom. They have strengthened the Congress which has infused a new spirit among the people, especially during the past 25 years. It has driven out the fear complex from people and has changed the entire picture of India. Despite the severest repression and tyranny during the past three years, it has grown in strength. The people have gained a new spiritual power, not in the restricted religious sense, but in a broader fundamental way. It is amazing that, even though lashed hard by tyranny and repression,

1. Speech at Lahore, 26 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 27 August and *The Hindu*, 28 August 1945.

the people have got on their feet and are again ready for struggle, if necessary, and to face the British Government. This is a staggering phenomenon. Millions of people throughout the country are again rallying round the Congress banner. This is a heartening sight. The communal organisations whose main work is to oppose the Congress are its progeny. They are only creating division in the country. Do not get nervous on this account. The various problems which have cropped up have to be solved in this fast changing world. The Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi has infused strength in the soul of India and has brought them nearer their goal of freedom.

What happened during the past three years is nothing short of the happenings of the 1857 Mutiny. The Government quelled the movement and India seemed helpless. But you see today, India is rising with double the force. This is due to the spiritual force which the Congress has roused by its nonviolent struggle that cannot be crushed. The story in other countries has always been different. There the movements have been crushed and they have never been able to revive themselves because they are based on violence. Violence causing destruction all round is the order of the day in the world today.

A recent find is the atomic bomb. Two or three atomic bombs are enough to destroy the city of Lahore and lull its 8-lakh residents to eternal sleep. The atomic bomb is a great brute force and other countries also will find out soon what it is. The war has caused destruction in Europe, Russia and China. If atomic bombs are used, whole countries can be destroyed in days; huge armies and other weapons of war used at present will not be of any avail.

It is difficult to say for how long in the circumstances will the present world survive. In view of this state of the world, questions like that of Pakistan raised in India are meaningless.

The need of the hour is not to raise slogans of Pakistan and put forth schemes of division. Small countries should join in a federation to save themselves from destruction. India is a vast country, and instead of raising this issue of Pakistan, one should think of planning of and increasing the resources and the removal of unemployment. The Congress and myself have been suggesting a federation of free India with other countries, but these minor questions of Pakistan and the like divert our attention from the real issues. It is a pity that the communal organisations in India make the demand for freedom as conditional. They do not treat it as the first and foremost demand. It is so because of fear and mistrust of each other. The Sikhs and the Muslims are brave communities and they have nothing to fear from the Hindus. The Congress has declared that Pakistan is injurious both to India as

a whole and to those who demand it. However, if the Muslims insist on it they will have it. But Pakistan appears to me to be impractical. The Congress has conceded the right of self-determination to the Muslims, but the question is how the idea of Pakistan is to be enforced. You should consider it with a cool head. It is a very complicated problem and that is why the Muslim League has not so far defined it. If Pakistan is given, then parts of the Punjab and Bengal, where the Hindu population is in a majority, will join Hindustan and both the Punjab and Bengal will have to be divided. I cannot imagine for a moment that any sensible Punjabi or Bengali will like his province to be divided in two parts when his culture and language are the same. Pakistan is only a sentimental slogan and unless it is defined, who will give it and who will take it?

If the Punjab is divided into two parts the wealthy part with majority of Hindus and Sikhs will go to Hindustan and Pakistan will not be sound financially also.

This problem will not find a solution because of the efforts of the Congress or the British Government or anyone else. It will be solved of its own accord in accordance with the conditions prevailing in the world. I am sure that even if India is divided, the division will be temporary.

It is impossible to bear any insult to the flag of independence. Its bearers and those who laid down their lives for keeping up the prestige of India in 1942 are martyrs I appreciate their sacrifices.

Not only India but the whole world is passing through a critical phase. It is not India alone which is faced with complicated problems but such problems also arise in other countries. In this rapidly changing world you should not get nervous but should be ready to solve these problems with calmness. Such problems are bound to arise when India is marching fast towards freedom.

It is being stated that the British Government is going to make a new declaration about India. Probably the offer may be very much similar to what Sir Stafford Cripps brought to this country three years ago. There will be new elections in India and these may lead to a constituent assembly which will frame a constitution for the country. Hence the election has assumed a certain importance at present, and it is imperative that the Congress organisation should be strengthened.

Therefore, whatever our decision, I appeal to you to strengthen the Congress which is the only organisation working for the freedom of the country for the last 60 years. Communal organisations never trod this path. They always put conditions on their participation in the freedom movement. It is obvious therefore that they are not very much interested in the question of freedom. In spite of my differences now and then

with the Congress, I always have bowed to every decision of this mighty organisation because I do not like that the Congress which has been strengthened by your efforts for the last so many years should be weakened in the least. I ask Congressmen to be above a partisan spirit and work as a team and carry the message of the Congress to villages where real India lives. The work of the Congress is the work of the nation. It is not anybody's personal property. If your leaders do not behave well you should warn them. I appeal to the people to enlist themselves as members of the Congress during the coming three months and strengthen the Congress to achieve independence. Now, as the war is over, the British Government should see that the soldiers of the Indian National Army are given a fair and square deal. Any other decision on the part of the British Government is likely to cause unrest in India. Let the soldier premier, Malik Khizr Hyat Khan Tiwana, take up the case of the members of the Indian National Army, majority of whom happen to be Punjabis, and save their lives.

6. Time for Action, not for Slogans[1]

I am ashamed to see insanitary conditions, congested lanes, and ugly houses in Amritsar. I am surprised how you tolerate these conditions. I cannot blame only the municipality or the Government for such conditions. I feel if I have to live under such conditions I would either leave the place or commit suicide. I am sorry that at a place, where you have so many rich men, such conditions should be allowed to prevail. I want to know your conception of freedom. In free India you will have to build cleaner cities and provide ideal sanitation so that even poor people can live and breathe. I am sorry that I am so badly impressed by such conditions every time I visit Amritsar.

You should have no such desire as expressed in certain songs of yours about sacrifice of heads. But you should strive to march forward with courage and devotion. You have sufficiently aroused your enthusiasm. Now what is wanted is solid work as revolution or freedom will not be

1. Speech at Amritsar, 27 August 1945. From *The Tribune*, 28 August 1945.

achieved by shouts or sentimental expression of enthusiasm. The time for slogans is over. We want political work.

The atomic bomb works havoc under which there is no scope for survival of smaller countries. If it is not possible to have a federation of all the free countries of the world, I would favour a federation of Asiatic countries. Pakistan has not been defined so far and is unworkable. The demand itself is futile. The happenings of August 1942 have strengthened the faith of the people in freedom.

The strength and importance of the Congress must be understood as against communal organisations which pursue crude ideals of freedom and have recourse to opportunism. This is a short-sighted policy.

The Congress will fight the elections on the strength of its principles. I would not like to have your vote out of any compromise. The country is solidly behind us.

I urge the Central Government to accord better treatment to soldiers of the Indian National Army and ask the Punjab Government to release all the political prisoners, some of whom have been rotting in jail since the First Great World War.

7. Strengthen the Congress[1]

There is much talk of the coming elections for the Central and the Provincial Assemblies. But it must be remembered that elections by themselves have no great significance for the Congress. Like all other things, however, elections have to be judged in the larger context of independence. In this context we may take the elections in our stride, but always keeping in view the principal objective, that is independence.

Presumably the Congress will take full part in the elections and, if so, it will naturally do so with all its strength and prestige. I have no doubt that it will succeed all over India. We shall stand on our own feet for our principles, ideas and objectives and not tone them down for anyone else.

1. Address to press conference, Lahore, 27 August 1945. Based on reports from The Tribune, 28 August, The Hindustan Times, 29 August and The Times of India, 29 August 1945.

We shall no doubt cooperate with those who stand for these ideals and objectives, but there is going to be no effort to win a few seats here and there, at the cost of our ideals.

Elections often bring about confusing factors in the Congress organisation. I would suggest, therefore, that when and if election work comes, it should be done by special boards constituted for the purpose, and this should not interfere with the normal Congress activities carried on by the provincial and the district committees.

Normally, office-bearers of the Congress should refrain from offering themselves as candidates though some may be permitted to contest under special circumstances. This should apply to municipal and district board elections also.

Obviously, all Congress office-bearers must abide by the Congress policy and those who do not agree with it cannot accept office. The Congress policy was last defined by the resolution of the A.I.C.C. passed on August 8, 1942. That resolution stands except for the clause dealing with the possible civil disobedience, which has no application now.

It is for every Congressman to remember that first things come first and the first thing for us is India's freedom. Those who forget this and get entangled in other questions or mutual squabbles, hinder the cause.

The Wavell plan was only a temporary wartime expedient. Whatever be the British declaration, it will now be our aim to seek a permanent solution. It may be accepted or may not be accepted.

I go back from Lahore and the Punjab with vivid memories of the three-day visit. A visit to the Punjab always rather frightens me, because of the exuberance of its people, but it is also an exhilarating experience.

I have long been convinced that the people of the Punjab are magnificent material for the great task of building up a new India. The only difficulty has been that their energies are often diverted into mutually contradictory channels. But I have always found that all these disputes take place at the top, and the masses are not much interested in them, though they are often influenced by them.

So far as the Congress is concerned, it has an enormous, though a vague, hold on the people. The hold is not of the organisation as such, but rather an attraction to the ideals of the Congress. If it can be converted into organisational hold, the Congress will sweep all in front of it. This conversion can take place only with the help of the masses, especially those in the rural areas. The time seems to be ripe for doing this and I appeal to all Congressmen and to all those hundreds of thousands, who have honoured me and moved me by their affectionate welcome, to turn their minds to this vital task. They must all try to forget past

conflicts and differences among themselves and only remember that they are the proud standard bearers of the cause of India's freedom and nationalism, which the Congress has represented so worthily for such a long time.

We want workers, in as large numbers as possible, for this work, but it must be remembered also that, ultimately, it is the quality that always counts, and not mere quantity. Each Congressman must remember that by his acts he may bring honour or dishonour to the Congress. For he must be necessarily judged by higher standards than others. We have ourselves set the standard higher and we must try to live up to it.

I have noticed certain reports in the newspapers about my private conversations here with groups of Congressmen and individuals. I have found many errors in these reports which are likely to give a wrong impression to the readers. My object had been not to impose my wishes with regard to anything, but to guide and help, in so far as I can, in building up a new and strong Congress movement in this province which must not be the property of any group or section, but will represent the mass of Congressmen and will be true to the Congress ideals and objectives. Any attempt to narrow this basis will be undesirable, for Congress must always be a true reflection of the people's will. It is, therefore, on this basis that I want the Congress to develop in this province.

And so with full faith in the people of the province, I take their leave, thanking them again for their exceeding love and generosity for me. I pray that I may prove strong enough to bear the burden of this faith and love.

Question: What is the position of the Congress *vis-a-vis* the Communists? The Congress has no political difference with the Communists at present.

Jawaharlal Nehru: When we judge individuals in the Congress we judge by what they did at a particular time and the Communists should be judged by their action in the past. The August Resolution was the expression of the people's will and when the masses of India decided to take action, those who opposed that decision cut themselves adrift from the people. The Communists by their action had created a gulf between themselves and the people of India.

Q: But the Congress officially had not launched any movement in August 1942.

JN: If I were out of jail I would have myself launched it. The Indian people had launched that struggle. I would be with the Indian people, and not against them.

Q: The Communists merely opposed that section of the August Resolution which related to civil disobedience and when Mahatma Gandhi clarified the position the Communists gave up their opposition to that clause also.[2]

JN: When there is war between India and England, anyone who is for differentiation is on the other side.

Q: What is your opinion about sabotage in those days?

JN: Sabotage is a very vague word. There were certain acts which were bad and undesirable. But on the other hand it amazes me how little of sabotage was done. In places like Ballia the whole British administration had collapsed for some days. The people were in control, but there was not a charge made even by the Government that a single person was injured or tortured in this mass upheaval. It just surprises me. But terrible vengeance was taken on the people of Ballia. When the masses react they cannot be judged by ordinary peace-time standards.

Q: What is going to be the Congress stand on the Muslim League's demand?

JN: Let the Muslim League say, precisely, what it desires. The Congress has fully agreed to the principle of self-determination to units. But division of India is injurious. Surely it is not merely a matter of detail to know where the division is to take place.

2. At the A.I.C.C. meeting on 7 August 1942, some amendments to the August Resolution were moved mostly by the Communists. They were either withdrawn or defeated after Jawaharlal and Mahatma Gandhi spoke. When the original resolution was put to vote only 13 Communists voted against it.

8. Call for Removal of Ban Orders[1]

I feel overwhelmed by the love and affection shown to me by such vast numbers of people. Yet, I realise that this is not for me, but rather for

1. Exclusive interview to the Associated Press of India, Lahore, 27 August 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 28 August 1945.

some vague symbol in their hearts with which they have associated me. To that symbol and to the cause of freedom let us all devote ourselves, forgetting our petty squabbles and rising above party and personal rivalry.

It is not enough to come to meetings and to shout slogans. Let them all become active workers and members of the Congress, form committees in every village and in every town, and carry the Congress message of freedom — a message of both political and economic freedom — to every home, both in the village and city.

Congress membership rolls should immediately be opened in all provinces, now that the ban against the Congress has been or is being removed. To the provincial governments, I would request that all remaining bans be removed on organisations or individuals and all prisoners, detenus and others, be released.

The Punjab is a splendid province full of vitality and generous impulses. Unfortunately, much of this vitality has gone into wrong channels. Let it now be diverted into the straight course of national freedom and unity, rising above sectarian and party differences. All of us who have the honour and privilege of being Indians must keep that honour bright and untarnished, thinking ever of the larger issues before the country and the world and working with all might and main for a proud and free India where the curse of poverty will cease to exist.

So we shall realise the dream of our hearts, and the bright vision that has so long led us on will be well within our grasp.

I should like to thank the people of Lahore for the magnificent demonstrations at the two public meetings yesterday and the day before. I do not remember having seen such a vast gathering at any previous meeting anywhere as on the night of August 25. In spite of the breakdown of microphone and loudspeakers and although it was dark, the huge crowd, numbering lakhs, behaved with exemplary patience. It is very easy for such a crowd to go out of hand or to be reduced into a state of complete disorder. Nevertheless, it maintained order generally and I shall long remember the final stages of this meeting when I addressed them directly at midnight. Yesterday's meeting held at four or five hours' notice again attracted about a hundred thousand people. Arrangements were perfect and the behaviour of this vast gathering was exemplary.

the Congress to continue its existence as it will then have realised its objective. I have no doubt that the people of Ferozepore will stand by the Congress and its cause. They must meet with success in the election. The Congress has a slogan on which it appeals for support. It is the freedom of India.

The Quit India Resolution stands as it is, in spite of the demand for its withdrawal by some of the British politicians and even by Mr. Jinnah, who said that the release of the Congress Working Committee could be considered only after the August Resolution had been withdrawn. But here I stand before you after having been released from prison — and the August Resolution stands as before. The Congress has not obliged the Government.

Elections are being contested by the Congress not merely with the object of forming provincial governments, but also for deciding the issue as to who should be the rulers in Delhi — the people's own elected representatives or friends of the British bureaucracy. It is possible that the Congress might arrive at an agreement with the Government, but if the Government is not in a conciliatory mood for a political settlement, we shall be duty-bound to decide our course of action.

The Punjab Government has not changed during the last ten years. How the police ruled the province is known by the manner in which Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was arrested and treated.

I regret that the Akalis cannot rise against the British since they are all the time engaged in the political game and go from one door to another, not sticking to any party, for negotiations. The religious rights of all communities will be protected. But no one will be allowed to hinder India's march to freedom. When the Congressmen were in jail, Akalis were opposing the Congress movement and abusing Gandhiji. The contest between Sardar Mangal Singh and Sardar Kapoor Singh has become a contest between the Punjab Government's representative and the Congress, since Sardar Baldev Singh, the Unionist Sikh Minister, is influencing voters through *tehsildars*, *patwaris* and other officials. The Sikhs are a great people, a most patriotic people. I hope they will not be misled and that they will support the Congress. India's economic, political and other problems have become so big that the British Government cannot solve them. We cannot face the new world until we have organised our strength.

India's united strength will save the I.N.A. men whatever might be the decision of the court.

12. *On the Brink of a Mighty Revolution*[1]

India is on the brink of a mighty revolution. The year 1946 seems pregnant with possibilities that none dare foretell today. Therefore, to vote for the Congress is to vote for the freedom that is coming soon. By your vote you have to declare whether you stand for freedom or slavery. The elections will decide the fate of the Red Fort and the Viceregal Lodge.

I ask you to vote for the Congress candidates for the Central Assembly—Sardar Kapoor Singh, Lala Thakur Das Bhargava and Raizada Hans Raj. The individuality of Congress candidates does not matter. They are simply standard-bearers of the Congress which has been fighting for independence for many years.

Those who try to go against the great gushing torrent of Indian nationalism will be swept ashore, lifeless as a log of wood.

To vote against the Congress in the coming central and provincial elections will amount to raising the hopes of the British Government whose end in India is near and inevitable. It has become plainer day by day that their hopes cannot thus be raised sufficiently to perpetuate their stranglehold on this country. On the canvas of world convulsions and revolutions and upheavals their trace is being obliterated.

The British Government knows that it is the Congress that is to be taken into account as the most powerful force arrayed throughout the land against it. It simply does not care for the communal organisations which are only an obstacle in the path of freedom.

The British Government wants the success of any non-Congress candidate, be he a Muslim Leaguer, an Akali Dal nominee, a Hindu Sabhaite or any other in the elections. It wants the success of these men against the Congress. It will be very happy over such a result as it is afraid only of the Congress. There are many civilians in the United Provinces and elsewhere, who have booked their passage to leave by the first boat, if Congress ministries stepped in.

I warn the officials against influencing the elections in favour of non-Congress candidates. It has been brought to my notice that several officials are openly asking voters to support the Akali candidate, Sardar Mangal Singh, who is opposing the Congress candidate. This is absurd

1. Speech at Lahore, 18 November 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 19 November and *The Hindustan Times*, 20 November 1945.

and most improper. Do not bend under official pressure. To be influenced by official interference in the elections will mean that you do not want freedom. You must vote fearlessly and freely for the Congress which has been struggling against the alien power.

In the Punjab one sees more of the British Government than in the rest of India. Here, even a Government peon puts on a peculiar appearance. Deputy Commissioners of this province are even more powerful, or think themselves to be so, than Governors in other provinces.

The Unionist Ministry merely mirrors the image of the British Government. All over India it is hard to find a parallel to this ministry. It is a matter of deep shame that this ministry has suppressed the people and humiliated the Punjab youth when the country was involved in a life-and-death struggle with the British power. And this feeling of shame becomes all the more unbearable when one thinks that all this happened under a popularly elected ministry. This state of affairs in the Punjab has to be ended, and the people can do so by voting for freedom, and not for bureaucracy and its henchmen.

It seems obvious that the Congress will emerge as the largest single party in the Punjab Legislature. It is another question whether it alone, without coalition with other elements, can form a government. The future will find an answer to this, but this much is certain that the face of the Punjab is going to be changed. In the march to freedom the Punjab will not lag behind.

The communal organisations, particularly the Muslim League and the Akali Dal which stand only for narrow sectarian interests, always put up conditions for participating in the struggle for independence. They only pay lip sympathy to freedom but have never suffered or made sacrifices.

The Congress can never be cowed down or threatened by communal organisations. It will not bow to the threats of even the British Government. We shall oppose the Muslim League everywhere and we will certainly defeat it. The League wants to achieve Pakistan with the help of the British. Mr. Jinnah's latest statement has amply exposed this bogey of Pakistan.

Some Sikh leaders are misleading the members of their community. When the Congress was engaged, for three years, in a great struggle against the British might, they had been busy bargaining for minor gains, sometimes with the Unionists, sometimes with the Muslim League, sometimes with the Commander-in-Chief. During this period they opposed the Congress in the Peshawar election and it was just right that they suffered defeat in this dirty attempt.

However, the Sikhs are a brave people. There are many Akalis who have fought shoulder to shoulder with the Congress in the fight for

liberty. The Sikhs will only be harming their own interests, if they let themselves go into communal channels. It is against the dignity and honour of the brave Sikhs to oppose the Congress and thus help the British Government. It is the Congress alone that will win freedom. All other organisations simply cannot attain this great and noble objective.

Time and again, it has been proved that the Congress can accept the challenge of British imperialism. For 25 years, it has grappled with this monster and heroically resisted it. Yet it still retains its hold on India. This hold is bound to go. The Congress will see to it. There is no second body in the land to do this. The time for knocking at the doors of the British Government is long past. We have to settle the issue of freedom ourselves by one more mighty and final effort. We wish the British well in their own island, but they must clear out from India.

You must keep in mind the big fundamental issues before the country and not be lost in the maze of trivial and unimportant things.

In the free India to come there will be no Hindu raj as Hindu Mahasabha dreams, nor a Muslim raj, nor a Sikh raj. It will be a people's raj—a raj of all, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others with power resting in the hands of the people as a whole. It will not be the raj of a handful few, for this will make no more difference than will the replacement of a few white officials. This raj will be a combined rule of all the elements that make India.

13. On the Sikh Problem[1]

The Sikh problem is an important matter which is part of the all-India question. The Punjab cannot be separated from India. I have studied thoroughly what happened in the past 25 years. India's temper is rising daily as it cannot sit idle. It cannot wait for the Government to fulfil its promise. I am afraid our patience might burst any time, overwhelming the Government into the abyss.

The League says that the Congress opposes Pakistan. The Akali Party says that the Congress has sanctioned Pakistan. Neither party says what it will do for India's freedom which is the only important

1. Speech at Moga, 18 November 1945. From *The Tribune*, 21 November 1945.

problem. You know what these parties have done during the last five years. Akalis say we will defend Sikh rights and will not let Pakistan be granted. They oppose Pakistan but they have negotiated with the League through the back door so many times.[2] They have sought the help of the British Government also.

Mr. Jinnah told the English press in an interview about a year and a half ago that the British Government should give Pakistan. Whatever their strength may be they cannot make Pakistan here even with the help of the British Government. This problem can only be solved by a compromise.

What Mr. Jinnah says even a child knows is quite impossible to realise. Every unit will enjoy full freedom while India will work unitedly. India will see so many changes in the coming years.

The official interference in the elections is highly objectionable and unwarranted. I appeal to the voters not to vote for any candidate under official pressure which means an insult to us. The country will not forgive those who want to influence free voting.

The Sikhs are a brave freedom-loving people. They should strengthen the hands of all progressive forces and work for freedom with the Congress which is the only national body that can fight for it, and make all possible sacrifices for it. The doors of the Congress are open to all. Anybody can join the Congress and strengthen it.

2. In November 1942, the Sikh leaders had held talks with Jinnah on the implications and consequences of the demand of Pakistan for the Sikhs in the Punjab.

14. The Lahore Conspiracy Case Detenus[1]

The detention of the Lahore Conspiracy Case prisoners after more than 15 years of prison life is an astonishing and significant indication of what the present administration stands for. To say that it is a blot on any administration is to put it feebly.

1. *The Hindustan Times*, 21 November 1945. Jawaharlal gave this interview to the press at Lahore on 20 November 1945 soon after he met in the Lahore central jail five political prisoners who had then spent more than 18 years in jail though an ordinary prisoner sentenced for life was released after undergoing 12 years sentence including remission.

For years all manner of attempts have been made by Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and many others to get them released. No favour was asked for because in the ordinary course they would have been released.

The late Punjab Premier gave definite assurances of their release and yet, in spite of all this, these men, who were young boys when they came to prison, are still there. I hope that the changes that are bound to come soon will put an end to this amazing instance of ineptitude on the part of the police and C.I.D.

15. On his Second Tour of the Punjab[1]

It is obvious that the Congress with its all India power and strength and mass response, as well as its programme for the future, is the only organisation which can find answers to our problems and lead India to freedom.

If this is so, and I believe it, it becomes essential for every thinking person and voter to vote for and help the Congress in the elections.

I have only spent two days touring about in the Punjab, but these two days have been very full. I am exceedingly sorry that the third day's programme had to be given up. I have a fair capacity for work but the programmes that were drawn up were beyond that capacity and indeed it was hardly possible to fit them anyhow within the normal day. I hope the persons who were put out and disappointed by the change in my programme will forgive me. I had to choose between husbanding my physical resources and a possible complete collapse of my voice.

After only two days of campaigning it is not right for me to speak for the whole of the Punjab, but wherever I went I had the impression of a great mass response to the message of the Congress. I addressed very big gatherings and I shall long remember the last of these at Nankana Sahib.

Although I came for the elections, I was concerned with vaster issues and mostly I spoke about them connecting the elections with them. For obviously these elections will affect the future.

1. Interview to the press, Lahore, 20 November 1945 From *The Tribune*, 21 November 1945.

I hope that my words will make the people of the Punjab think of these issues and make them realise that the small conflicts of the day are utterly unimportant before these vital matters that count today and will count tomorrow still more.

I appeal to the Punjabis not to be influenced or coerced by official pressure during the elections. I realise that in the Punjab the Congress has to meet the challenge of enormous resources of the other side, as well as the official hierarchy. But I am confident that the people will be swayed neither by money considerations nor official pressure.

16. Planned Visit to the North West Frontier Province[1]

The Frontier has always attracted me because of its robust men and women and its love of Indian freedom and nationalism. The leaders of the Frontier are well capable of dealing with the situation they face and I am convinced that the Congress will triumph there in the elections.

I shall go there probably early next year, not so much because I think that the election requires my presence, but because I like meeting our comrades of the Frontier and drawing inspiration from their courage and discipline in the cause of Indian freedom.

In the Central Assembly election that is taking place soon, I have no doubt that the Congress candidate, Khan Abdul Ghani Khan, will win easily. Obviously, he must not only win but win with a large plurality of votes. I hope, therefore, that the voters will bestir themselves and help him in every way.

1. Statement to the press, Lahore, 20 November 1945. *The Tribune*, 21 November 1945.

17. Message for Punjab Voters[1]

I appeal to all the voters in the coming elections, whether they are Hindu, Muslim or Sikh or Christian, or whether they belong to any

1. Allahabad, 29 December 1945. *National Herald*, 31 December 1945.

special constituency, to vote for the Congress candidates set up by the Central Parliamentary Board of the Congress. We ask for their votes for no personal reasons but for the great cause of India's freedom which the Congress has represented for so long and for which so many have suffered during these many years. All those who stand for independence must inevitably vote for the Congress candidates. For the independence of India not only means the freedom of the whole country but the freedom of each part and group in it to develop along their own lines and according to their genius. There is no freedom for any group or part unless the whole is free. In free India, every citizen, man or woman, must have equal rights and equal liberties. It is for this ideal that the Congress stands and asks for public support. We are on the verge of great happenings and big changes and we cannot waste our energies at this critical moment in following smaller objectives or any personal preference. Therefore, I trust that all voters in the Punjab will vote for the Congress candidates, thus voting for the independence of India.

18. The Message of Swaraj[1]

I have come to convey to you the message of Swaraj and what it means. There is a psychological revolution in the country as a result of the Congress struggle for freedom. The fundamental problem of the people is their grinding poverty. It is absurd to talk of Hindu raj or Muslim raj. Even British imperialism will not be able to oppress you for long in the fast changing world.

One of the achievements of the Congress is that it has united the whole country in a common bond of sacrifice, despite the diversity of languages and other differences. The communal organisations are trying to sidetrack the main issue and are thus serving the purpose of British imperialism. By voting for the Congress, you demonstrate to the whole world that you are on the side of the forces fighting for freedom. People cannot remain neutral in this fight. They have to rally on one side or the other. We want strong men with strong nerves who will never bend before anyone.

1. Address to ex servicemen, Sikri, 21 January 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 22 January 1946.

19. The End of the Raj[1]

The British raj in India is going to end and big changes are impending. The election provides a test for the people to decide as to whether they are on the side of freedom or not. It is not a personal question so far as the Congress candidates are concerned. Swaraj is bound to come very soon. It might take two years or three years. I cannot fix a date. But one thing I want to make clear. Swaraj does not mean the replacement of British officers by Indian officers. True Swaraj implies the transfer of power to the representatives of the people. It would make little difference in itself if an Indian occupies the Viceroy's House in the place of a Briton.

The Congress is the only organisation that has fought against Britain for the freedom of India. I am proud of the manner in which the Congress has waged this fight. The Congress is not interested in minor issues. It is the panchayat of the people and to vote for the Congress is to vote for the self-respect and freedom of the 400 million people of India. The communal organisations — the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League — cannot play this role. I appeal to the people to vote for the Congress candidates.

1. Speech at Ballabhgarh, 21 January 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 22 January 1946.

20. The Larger Perspective[1]

Though the Jats are slow to think and take decisions, they have the will and the determination to carry out the decisions once they are made. I am interested in the people of this area for the reason that they have a martial tradition and are the backbone of the Indian Army.

1. Speech at Sonepat, 22 January 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 24 January 1946.

I am glad that recent events have compelled the members of the armed forces to realise that their place is with the rest of their countrymen. It is a pity that the Indian soldiers are still forced to do things which are against India's interests.

I want the people of Haryana to study their local problems in a larger perspective. The present Government is utterly incompetent to solve the problem of rehabilitation of demobilised soldiers or any other major problems of India. It only knows how to oppress people and extort taxes. Instead of making any bold attempt to end either poverty or unemployment the bureaucracy encourages corruption and black marketeering.

The August upheaval is the biggest mass upsurge in India after 1857. The kisans of the U.P., Bihar, Maharashtra and Bengal suffered terribly as a result of Government repression during that struggle. The Government has, however, miserably failed to crush the spirit of freedom which inspired the August revolt.

There is unrest throughout Asia. The peoples of Asia are struggling to free themselves from the clutches of western imperlialism. Against this background of general revolt it will be impossible for the British Government to keep the Indian people under its rule for long.

I am satisfied with the outcome of the first I.N.A. case, which I think is a victory for the people who have unanimously demanded the officers' release. For the first time, the voice of the people penetrated through the thick walls of the Red Fort.

The Unionist Party is a spurious organisation, not in the least interested in India's freedom. I remind you that the Congress is pledged to a policy of non-interference in religious and cultural matters. Rich people are trying to sidetrack the main economic issue by raising false communal slogans. The Congress functions in a democratic fashion. I do not personally like some of the decisions of the Congress, but once the Congress takes a decision, I consider it my duty to devote my entire energy in implementing that decision.

21. History in the Making[1]

The very name of this place is fascinating for it has rich historical associations. It was at Panipat that India's fate had been decided several

1. Speech at Panipat, 22 January 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 24 January 1

times. It was in the plains of Panipat and Kurukshetra that the epic battle of Mahabharata was fought and the three battles of Panipat dictated the pattern of India's history for centuries to come. Now that history is in the making again, it is necessary that the people of this area should make a contribution worthy of their historic past.

I am fed up with mere slogans. I sometimes wonder whether people flock to these meetings as to a *tamasha*. Crowds do not matter. What matters is whether we are ready to die for India's freedom. The Congress is an embodiment of the aspirations and sentiments of the people. It is a powerful organisation of the masses. Gandhiji and a handful of leaders are not the Congress. The people must prove themselves worthy of their glorious past. The Congress has given you the lead and you must strengthen the Congress.

I am optimistic about India's future. The Congress has emerged stronger from the life and death struggle it had to face in August 1942 and there is a more intense desire for freedom in the country than ever before.

The Congress follows the policy of nonviolence. You cannot make a revolution by mere catchwords. In an age of ever more destructive weapons you can fight an alien government only with aeroplanes and tanks. You can only fight with modern weapons. You cannot fight with lathis and a few guns and revolvers. India has no modern weapons.

22. Time For India to be Free[1]

The time has come for the final decision about India's freedom and the ending of colonialism and imperialism in Asia. Delay now is fraught with grave consequences for England, India, Asia and the world.

Other countries in the world celebrate their independence day as an achievement of liberation, but to Indians the day means a day of determination and affirmation of the call of independence not only for India but of the rest of the world.

1. Independence Day message read at a meeting in London on 26 January 1946 From *The Tribune*, 28 January 1946.

It is in the interest of world peace that India attains its independence through a constitutional convention rather than through a revolution.

It is, therefore, the responsibility of the United Nations Organisation to see to it that Britain does not continue to exploit India's internal dissensions and hold them as an excuse to postpone the constitutional convention. It is a challenge to constructive statesmanship not only in India and Britain, but also in the sessions of the United Nations.

23. *No Going Back*[1]

We are engrossed with elections today, but let us not forget the deeper and basic things. Six years of the war have changed the face of the world, and the war and our three years of heroic struggle against imperialism have changed India. New storms are blowing and nobody can say where they would carry our boat. But even through these uncertainties, this is definite that after 8 August 1942 we have taken out our boat from the safety of the harbour into the open sea and there is to be no going back now. Even if some want to tarry for a while there is no way. We must move on. Events compel us. The episode of the alien British rule is about to end, and a new chapter is going to begin. We have still to achieve our independence and we may have it at an early date, only if we grasp it firmly. The more difficult task is to build the India of our dreams and aspirations, in which every Indian is an equal and where poverty and unemployment are unknown. Possibly, 1946 is going to be a year of big and fateful decisions for us. We have to win the elections, but more important trials may follow. We have to hold ourselves in readiness for them.

1. *Message to the Pratap printed in the National Herald,* 26 January 1946.

DELHI

1. On the Popularity of the Congress[1]

The Congress has never been so popular since 1921 as now. In the last three years, the Congress is more strongly entrenched in the hearts of the people. There is a huge reservoir of goodwill for the Congress among the people. We should harness this goodwill and the immense popular enthusiasm for the Congress for the good of the country.

I am absolutely confident of the Congress sweeping the polls. We have not yet considered the question whether we should contest the elections. My personal opinion is that the Congress should contest these elections as a constituent assembly might be formed on the basis of the results of the elections.

We have, however, to see whether a constituent assembly based on the results of the elections would be a truly representative body. We should not, therefore, attach undue importance to elections. Our approach to every such question should be in terms of complete independence for India.

Though the strength of the Congress has grown, the elements opposed to it have also gathered strength. I am not unduly dismayed by the communal question. While I do not underrate its importance, I am against attaching too much importance to it.

After touring the Punjab, I am struck by the Punjabi's great vitality. If the Punjabi's enthusiasm can be properly harnessed, I am sure they can do wonders.

The Communists have differences with the Congress on fundamentals. There is, therefore, no question of their being allowed to join executive bodies of the Congress. No group or body of people who did not subscribe to the Congress policy of the last three years have had any place in the Congress.

I am against members of the executive bodies of the Congress seeking election to the Central and provincial legislatures.

1. Address to Congress workers, Delhi, 28 August 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 29 August 1945.

2. Danger of Pakistan Mentality[1]

To think in terms of Pakistan when the modern trend is towards the establishment of a world federation is like thinking in terms of bows and arrows as weapons of war in the age of the atom bomb. The whole mentality behind this conception of bows and arrows and Pakistan is most dangerous and if we cling to such anachronisms, we shall never solve our problems.

As in the case of the bow-and-arrow mentality, I cannot appreciate the mentality behind the demand for Pakistan. If a large body of people take it into their heads to divide the country, they cannot change the trend of the world, which is moving in a different direction. Such people will only drag the country and their community into an abyss.

In his latest statement on the right of self-determination for territorial units, Maulana Azad has not laid down any new principle of policy. What he has stated is embodied in Congress resolutions. The Congress has made its position clear that if any part of India wants to break away nobody can stop it forcibly. The Congress has been working during the last 60 years for the establishment of a strong independent state in India. All sections of people in the country are bound by historical associations and traditions. It is absurd to talk of balkanising the country in the age of the atom bomb. On the other hand, they should aim at establishing a federation of India with the neighbouring countries stretching from Iran to Siam.

No sensible person can think of coercing a large group into joining a union to which it cannot owe allegiance voluntarily. Such disruptionist elements will be a source of weakness rather than strength to any state and will sabotage any large-scale planning. They have to tackle the gigantic problems of poverty and unemployment and it is, therefore, all the more necessary that the state should be strong.

As we are opposed to coercing people into joining a union, we cannot coerce large minorities in the Punjab and Bengal into joining a state to which they cannot owe allegiance. It will be understandable if the demand is for the establishment of Pakistan in the North West Frontier Province or in Kashmir State where the Muslims are in a preponderant majority. The Punjab and Bengal are distinct cultural units

1. Speech at Delhi, 29 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 30 August and *The Tribune*, 30 August 1945.

and even the protagonists of Pakistan are not inclined to accept the partition of Bengal and the Punjab. There are thus practical difficulties in working out the right of self-determination.

The Muslim League's reticence on the question of the division of the Punjab and Bengal has convinced me that the League is not prepared to face the problem and is only interested in keeping up the quarrel.

A fear complex is behind the demand for Pakistan. No paper safeguards can give a complete guarantee of security to any minority. It is the inherent strength of any minority that can assure its future. The Sikhs are a very small minority, but that brave community has never worried too much about safeguards. There is no escape from unity from whatever angle the question is examined.

The war has ended, but there are still many conflicts to be resolved. The atom bomb, which has finished the war suddenly, is an indication of what the next war will be like. If two bombs can kill or injure 5,00,000 people, cities like Delhi, Calcutta and Bombay can be obliterated overnight.

I learnt in Ahmadnagar Fort of the happenings in Delhi during those fateful days of the August struggle. I am prepared to take all responsibility for what happened in those days, as I am one of those who helped in creating the psychological conditions for a mass movement.

It is true that the movement was not started by any Congress declaration but when all the leaders were arrested overnight, the masses could not tolerate it. The people took it to be an attack on the independence of the country. They had only two alternatives, either to submit to the Government or to take up the challenge. I am glad and proud of the movement which followed.

It is only proper that we should resist any attempt to curb our country's urge for freedom. If we had taken it lying down, we would have proved ourselves a demoralized people. We should always be ready to resist all such attempts to break our spirit. We should not judge the actions of those who participated in the August uprising in a legalistic manner. One of the lessons of history is that when a people raised the banner of revolt against an alien government, they cannot be expected to act within the framework of the law made by that government.

The Congress has not yet decided to fight the elections to the provincial and Central legislatures, but I think that at its next meeting the Congress will decide to fight the elections as it did in 1936. We shall plunge into the election arena with all our strength and sweep the polls. Like the communal organisations, we are not worried about ministry-making. Congressmen should stand united and speak with

one voice. In this manner alone can we make our full strength felt. I am not afraid of a conflict with communal organisations in the elections, although the Congress has done nothing to invite it.

As the ban on the Congress in Delhi has been removed the people of the city should join the national organisation in hundreds of thousands. Delhi Congressmen should start enrolment of primary members in the province immediately. I appeal to you to contribute liberally towards the political sufferers relief fund which is meant for the relief of the families of the political prisoners who participated in the Congress movement.

3. Congress to Contest with Full Strength[1]

Question: What is the Congress attitude to the elections?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Congress attitude to elections is not the same as that held by others. Elections by themselves might be important, but they have to be taken in their particular context. I cannot say what seats the Congress will contest, but if the Congress decides to contest *the elections, it will do so in full force on a platform of Indian independence.* I repudiate the report that the Congress would not contest any Muslim seat. That is not the Congress attitude.

Q: Would you explain your recent statement that men holding executive positions in the Congress should not normally be candidates in these elections?

JN: What I meant was that elections are a *disturbing factor and should* not be allowed to interfere with normal Congress work. The Congress executive should concern itself with Congress work and leave elections to separate election boards. For this purpose I feel that office-bearers of *the Congress should not normally stand for election, but I have made* it clear that in special cases permission can be given.

1 Interview to the press, Delhi, 29 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 30 August, *The Statesman*, 30 August and *The Hindu*, 31 August 1945.

Q: What would be the Congress assurances in the elections?

JN: The Congress position has already been made clear. The election programme will deal with political, economic, national and international problems. In the political field, our demand is for complete independence. Our attitude to international questions has been fully set down in the Congress resolution of August 1942. As regards economic policies there are a number of resolutions on the subject. The Congress is largely a peasant organisation in rural areas. Though its leadership comes from the middle classes, 80 per cent of Congressmen are peasants. There is general agreement that the present land tenure system should go. As regards industries the general view is that heavy and key industries should be controlled and owned by the state. It makes all the difference what you mean by the state. We are thinking of a democratically controlled state machinery, not a British-controlled state as it is now. Smaller industries might be left to private enterprise. On the question of planning, there must be a measure of state control, not day-to-day control, because that leads to complications, nepotism, corruption and so on.

Q: May I draw your attention to the resolution of the Bombay Provincial Muslim Congress opposing the formation of ministries in the provinces?

JN: The question of Congress assuming power in the provinces has not arisen. When it arises, I do not think the decision will affect us much. We decide what is best under the circumstances.

Q: Would you further elucidate your recent observation about the Congress attitude to the Communists?

JN: The Working Committee will consider the position of the Communist Party vis-a-vis the Congress. All this time the Congress has been a mixture of two elements. It is a movement and it is a party working in legislatures and elsewhere. Naturally, when there is some kind of a movement involved, men must go only in one direction, and difficulty arises when this action is opposed. One does not exclude a Communist as Communist, but as one who does not agree with the Congress policy. Our attitude to Indian Communists has nothing to do with communism or the Soviet State. It is essentially a question of internal politics. Difficulties have arisen because of differences of opinion between the Congress and Indian Communists. It is only right

that the Congress executives should consist of persons who agree with the Congress policy. I feel, therefore, that it will not be right to have Communists in the Congress executives if they differ with its policies.

Q: Would you clarify the Congress position on the issue of self-determination?

JN: The Congress position is and has been that India should retain national unity, but with large autonomous powers for the federating units. We have, however, made it clear that if any territorial unit wants to separate by a vote of its inhabitants, we are not going to compel it to stay in the federation provided it does not compel any other unit or units which do not want separation or self-determination.

My personal views on the question are different. It does not matter whether India is one nation or more than two nations. There is hardly any satisfactory definition of a nation. It can be argued from historical, cultural, racial and a hundred other angles. If hundred nations want to pull together, then they are one nation. If a particular community or group does not want to pull together with the rest of the country, then it does not matter whether it is one nation or two nations. I call it an alien element in the country. It cannot be absorbed and you cannot digest it. Some way has to be found to suit both parts.

Look at this whole theory of two nations. The theory is supposed to be based on religion. That is what I cannot understand in the modern context of the world. I have heard that it existed in the Middle Ages. Two nations of India based on religion are interlocked in every village. It will be a terribly difficult job to transfer population. There will be a tremendous upheaval. Suppose a division of India takes place on the basis of the two-nation theory. Obviously, in one part of the country, there will be tens of millions of people owing allegiance, according to this two-nation theory, to another part of the country, where one-tenth of the population will owe allegiance to the first part. We are not thinking of territorial loyalties here but religious loyalties. According to this theory, the Hindus in the Muslim parts will be aliens and Muslims in Hindu parts will be aliens. If you accept this theory, all manner of difficulties are bound to arise. Aliens cannot be wholly incorporated in a state and in case of war they would become very dangerous.

Q: Would you further elucidate the Congress President's statement on self-determination?

JN: The Congress President's statement correctly represents the Congress position. It recognises the right of separation or self-determination, though the Congress feels that it will be a reversal of the process of history to cut up India. It would be injurious to the defence and development of the country. It is our hope, however, that once the freedom for separation is recognised the urge for separation will disappear.

Q: Your views on the atomic bomb...

JN: I have a scientist's outlook. Long ago I took a degree in science and studied physics before the present invention of the atom. I am fascinated by the theory that almost anything can be made radio-active. In the spare moments of a politician's life, I have tried to study science and am greatly interested in the atomic bomb. The invention has released tremendous forces in the world, which can be used for good or evil. For the time being, it has been used only to destroy cities and kill people.

There is now a race in the world between the forces of construction and destruction. Since the last generation this race has become more and more frantic and with the coming of the atomic bomb, it looks as though one of them must win. Which would win, I cannot say. I am not interested in the destruction of men in the world, but there is no good making a fuss about it. The atomic bomb cannot be kept a secret for long and, in fact, most of the advanced countries are on the verge of making it. Undoubtedly, they will have it and use it if the war comes again. That means tremendous destruction.

From a humanitarian's point of view I would inquire into the basic cause. It is a very grave responsibility for any country that uses atom bombs. A very great responsibility rests with the United States. It justifies the use of the atomic bomb on the ground that it stopped war, but by unleashing such a weapon it has created a dangerous situation.

The atomic bomb brings a measure of hope also. Faced with such destructive weapon people might wake up.

Q: Would the future Government of India have atomic bombs in their armoury?

JN: So long as the world is constituted as it is, every country will have to devise and use the latest scientific methods for its protection. I have no doubt India will develop its scientific researches and hope Indian scientists will use the atomic force for constructive purposes. But if India is threatened, it will inevitably try to defend itself by all means at

its disposal. I hope India, in common with other countries, will prevent atomic bombs being used.

Q: (By an American journalist): Would you clarify your attitude to Subhas Bose who is not probably dead but alive in Saigon? Bose should be treated as a war criminal because his men fought and killed many Americans and he extorted money from the poor in Burma and Malaya.

JN: I resent the suggestion that Subhas Bose should be dealt with as a war criminal. Were he—in the event of his still being alive—to be tried as a war criminal, I would wish all persons considered war criminals to be brought to trial so that facts might come out.

It should not be a trial by British and American judges alone. There should be Indian judges also. It should be an impartial trial conducted against an Indian background. And in my list there will be many high officials sitting in Delhi who are bigger war criminals than Subhas Bose. That list will be very different.

I have known Subhas for over 20 years. He was once President of the Congress. A most unusual thing happened and an ex-President of the Congress was turned out of the organisation. That was before the war. He also formed a party against the Congress. Then came the war. He escaped from India, went to Germany and then to Japan. So far as I know, the Indian National Army had already been formed even before Bose went to Japan. I do not find anything unusual for a supposed legal government to levy taxes.[2]

As for extortion there has been enough in India. Free gifts were collected for war funds and millions had been extorted. Three million people had died of starvation in Bengal. As for Bose, I have never doubted his passion for freedom. Bose had no love for the Japanese but he was foolish to imagine that he could further Indian independence by allying himself with the Japanese and Germans who were not only aggressive powers, but dangerous powers.

Q: What are your views on the recent Chinese-Soviet Pact?[3]

2. The Provisional Government of Azad Hind with Subhas Bose as the Head of State was formed on 21 October 1943. In a few days, Burma, Germany, the Chinese National Government of Manchukuo, Italy and Thailand had extended their recognition to the Provisional Government.
3. The treaty between China and the Soviet Union provided for collaboration between the two countries to prevent a repetition of Japanese aggression.

India decide. The picture I have in my mind of a free India is that of a country where all people have equal opportunities for advancement, where no artificial barriers are raised against their progress, where communal controversies have vanished, where neither Hindu raj nor Muslim raj had sway, where civilisation, culture and language of every community are protected and where everyone gets employment, food, shelter, education and medical relief. That is why I am laying so much stress on the Planning Committee.

In the present world conditions no small state can exist. Pakistan cannot be free. It will mean a slave country where Muslims would not like to live even if it is granted. The Congress will not allow any division of India. The Congress wants a united free India.

5. Hindu Communalism[1]

Cries of Hinduism in danger or Islam in danger are foolish, meaningless cries. Both Hinduism and Islam are great institutions and cannot be destroyed by cries. It is strange that the Hindu Sabha is so loud in denouncing the Congress and accusing it of favouring the League. But it had once joined the League to form ministries. They both stand for India's slavery and perpetuation of the British raj. They knock at the door of the British Government. But the British Government will go out soon. At whose doors will they knock thereafter? The Hindu Mahasabha is a useless body, but more useless, more degenerate and more disgraceful than all other organisations is the Sind Hindu Sabha.

The Congress is not fighting the elections for capturing ministries, but for strengthening itself so that it should fight India's freedom struggle with greater force. I have not come merely to ask you to vote for the Congress. An election is a matter of passing interest. The Congress is keen on carrying out the fight for freedom. Hence I would ask everyone to get ready for the coming struggle and enlist himself as a soldier in India's war for freedom.

1. Speech at Sukkur, 6 January 1946. From *The Tribune*, 8 January 1946.

6. Independence and Inter-dependence[1]

There are in Sind as in any other parts of India, enormous crowds, great enthusiasm and an electric atmosphere. This is more in evidence all over India now than at any time before. Politically speaking, Sind politics is a little difficult for a visitor to analyse. There is no politics at all. It is partly tribal and clan loyalty and loyalty to certain backward elements, that is, big feudal magnates who exercise some control over others. So the various labels that people attach to themselves, as candidates in the election or members of parties, have seldom the same significance as elsewhere in India. Even the Congress which probably is the only true political organisation is necessarily influenced by these factors. The Muslim League is also very much influenced by this, and I doubt if the candidates put up on behalf of the League for the election are in any way real Muslim Leaguers. Probably they are just accepted because they might win. Again, the politics of this province has been in a curious tangle, with people shifting about from one group to another. It is also unfortunate that the Sind administration is notorious for its corruption. The war has brought much money into some pockets and it will, no doubt, flow out during the elections. Sind suffered a very grave loss in the death of Mr. Allah Baksh, who was peculiarly suited to unravel the tangle, and the manner of his death itself is significant of Sind politics. Sind has also gained notoriety for frequency of political murders. There is a certain nomadic character about a part of its population. All these factors show that there is a total lack of equilibrium in the public life and politics of Sind. The one stabilising factor can be the Congress.

In an ideal world, there can be perfect self-determination for everyone and every group. In practice, however, this is severely limited by certain dominating factors. We have arrived at a stage today in the world, when even complete national self-determination is limited in many ways by world factors. We demand independence for India, that is, complete self-determination for India as a whole, but we always make it clear that there can be no complete independence for any country in the sense of isolation. Therefore, we have always said that the solution of the world's problems is to be found by means of a world federation of free nations cooperating with each other.

1. Interview to the press, Karachi, 9 January 1946 Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 11 January and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 12 January 1946.

Independence and inter-dependence have to go together in this world. If this is applied even to a large country like India, much more does it apply to small countries. Indeed, the idea of self-determination for small countries in Asia or in Europe today is just a theory which cannot be put into practice. Such nations may be theoretically independent, but, practically, they will be dependent on some large nations of whom they will be client states. Therefore, to talk of self-determination by itself does not mean much, and in India it is specially liable to lead to a confusion of issues, because we are dealing with all parts of India. On the other hand, it is perfectly clear that any federation of free peoples can only be based on the willing cooperation of unions. Anything else means compulsion and coercion, may be by armed intervention. This kind of thing is undesirable in itself and, as a matter of fact, in the modern context of the world is practically impossible. Apart from this, any attempt to compel large groups would result in diversion of national energy and prevent the rapid progress we are aiming at as soon as we are free.

Question: Are you in favour of a united Indian federation or a division of India?

Jawaharlal Nehru: To ask me whether I am in favour of a united Indian federation or a division of India shows a certain lack of knowledge of what the Congress has been saying all along. We are intensely in favour of a federation of various parts of India as it consists today. We propose to work for it with all our energy, but we realise that the way to achieve it is not by shouting out that we shall compel everyone or every group, but rather to demonstrate, by facts and arguments, that there is no other way out, and show that, in such a federation, every province and every group will have the fullest freedom to develop according to its wishes and genius. This is to remove fears from the minds of those who may think that they will be oppressed. Most of our thinking on this issue is done in the context of the British Government in India. Once the British Government disappears from the picture, all these questions completely change their shape. One of the essential differences between the outlook of the Congress and that of the communal bodies is that the Congress thinks in terms of India without the British Government. The communal bodies can hardly imagine India without the British Government and so they go to the government to press their separate claims.

Q: Will the visit of the British Parliamentary delegation lead to important results?

JN: Nobody claims that the visit of the delegation is going to lead to important results. It is always good to have personal contacts even with opponents and, therefore, we would gladly meet the members of the delegation. But the idea of certain members of Parliament coming out to investigate conditions in India is rather odd. One would have thought that Parliament, which often lectures to us, knew all about us. But if they do not know about India, and if they are going to start learning now, I hope they will stop their sermonising. I have no doubt that the members of the delegation have friendly intentions towards India. Some of them are well known friends of ours, but this is not a personal question but a question of future relations of England and India. The question has to be dealt with on a higher plane.

Q: Tell us about your conception of an Asiatic bloc.

JN: India is likely to dominate politically and economically the Indian Ocean region. The strategic position of India is such that it is difficult to organise the defence of the countries to the right and to the left of India without India's cooperation. Therefore, in the natural order of events, these countries and India should come closer together for mutual protection, as well as mutual trade. What these countries are likely to be, one cannot say now, except that, normally speaking, they would include the neighbours of India on either side. China is an entirely separate problem and I hope that China will be on the closest terms of alliance with India. As regards the remaining countries of Asia, it is difficult to see how things will take shape. There is talk of an Asiatic federation, and such a federation has a certain appeal about it. It must be remembered, however, that a huge part of Asia belongs to the Soviet Union and necessarily much will depend on the action and interaction of Soviet policy with the policies of other Asiatic countries.

Q: Is independence for India coming soon?

JN: Some say that something big is going to happen. There are, however, so many factors unconnected with the immediate issues which lead one to think that nothing big is going to happen. The fact that large numbers of our people are in prison or under detention is significant in itself. The fact of British policy in Indonesia is very important. Even the speeches of prominent statesmen in England are singularly lacking in any content. If a really big move in establishing Indian independence is taken by England, obviously, we shall gladly respond to it. If it is not, it is equally obvious that we shall take the initiative in

our own hands, and take such steps as we think fit and proper. The whole Indian political situation is tense and India cannot brook delay.

Q: Would the Congress accept office?

JN: The Congress might accept office, not with the intention of implementing the economic programme, because this programme cannot be implemented as a whole in the present conditions, but more so because of the political consideration. The Congress has entered the elections, and will accept office if it so decides at the time, on the basis of Quit India. It will cooperate with those who subscribe to the Congress point of view.

Q: *What is going to be the future of the I.N.A. men?*

JN: The Congress proposes to absorb them in every possible way in the national activities which need not be political activity. It is a big problem. A number of them can be absorbed in industries and some of them in village work. We are also thinking in terms of getting them trained to form industrial cooperatives. A number of them may be absorbed in direct public works, but it is not our desire to make politicians out of them, individuals apart.

Q: What is now the work of the National Planning Committee?

JN: The committee might be able to finish the work in the course of the next summer. The Government of India is cooperating to the extent that it is sending some material and it has also deputed its representatives to attend the meetings of the committee.

Q: Why has not the Congress put up candidates in Muslim constituencies?

JN: Generally speaking, we are cooperating in this matter of the elections with the Nationalist Muslims, and we have put up Congress candidates to the provincial assembly in the United Provinces. We did not take the Central Assembly elections seriously, because of the very restricted electorate, and because the Congress influence is greater where the electorate is wider. Our programme itself is a mass programme. In provincial elections a very large number of Muslim candidates are being put up in various provinces. Roughly speaking, nearly half the number of Muslim candidates are contesting on the Congress ticket in the U.P.

The Muslim League deliberately and consciously spreads hatred towards the Congress, and holds the Congress responsible for all its ills. As for the Hindu Mahasabha, there is no doubt that the Congress is too strong for it. The Muslim League policy is deliberate, not because it really feels any hatred, but because it is sometimes easy to rouse the people by slogans of hatred and divert them from real issues. It is singularly a fascist slogan. The mass mind, which responds to the call of hatred, makes the hatred mainly responsible for all its ills.

Our national movement, especially in the last 25 years, owing to Mahatma Gandhi's influence, has been admirably free from hatred. No national movement anywhere in the world has been so free from hatred as ours. It is so due to the policy of the Congress. But the Muslim League, which has no constructive policy, deliberately keeps up a campaign of hatred towards the Congress. Today the demand for Pakistan is very much in the air. Personally, I do not think Pakistan will come, but the thing that will continue to remain is hatred and suspicion. I do not think this is now deep-rooted, but it is reflected in current politics. In the elections, if we think that hatred will not be caused if we put up certain candidates we should do that. In the U.P. our general policy has been to put up Congress candidates for rural areas and Nationalist Muslims for cities.

The Congress will not insist on the adoption of adult franchise for the constituent assembly. Enlargement of the franchise will cause delay in establishing a constituent assembly. We want to avoid delay. It is a bitter pill to swallow. I do not know how much wider the franchise can be made. The people will be represented by elected representatives.

The Hur situation in Sind calls for immediate investigation. There is no doubt that the Hurs are an aggressive, rather terroristically inclined, group. Normally, terrorists are small groups, but the Hurs are a large group. In fact, they seem to be a large group in active war against the British Government adopting methods which we may call terrorist, or we may call them resistance groups in modern parlance. It is obvious that no State can tolerate terrorism on a small or a big scale, but it is very extraordinary that this large group, consisting of about 100,000, has been consistently carrying on this war against the British Government. It is an amazing thing. We may condemn their acts, but it is no good to brand a huge group as scoundrels and criminals and dispose of them in this way. One must analyse the feeling and the strength behind them. They have shown amazing strength. Any group like this which has been treated like outlaws for six years and

which is still not submitting requires understanding and careful handling. I understand that there are a large number of Hurs kept in camps, including a large number of women and children, and their condition is very bad. They are not even properly fed. I cannot pass any final opinion upon the subject, but my mind is severely agitated by the treatment of tens of thousands of people, women and children, in this very inhuman way and the fact that these people have been carrying on this war against the huge State apparatus has impressed me. There must be an intense feeling behind the movement. Ordinary individuals, terrorists, anti-social elements, cannot survive like them. Whether they are semi-religious or political, I cannot say, but I think any government should, first of all, mitigate immediately the rather inhuman conditions in which they are kept. Secondly, they must investigate the problem from a larger viewpoint, and try to understand it. When a hundred thousand people are involved, it is just too silly to call them a criminal tribe. They can make all of them criminals by treating them like criminals, but their perseverance and courage show they deserve a great deal of consideration from the Government.

I pay tribute to Allah Baksh and suggest that some suitable memorial to perpetuate his memory be planned.

1. The Fate of the I.N.A. Prisoners[1]

I demand that the Government of India clarify the position of the prisoners of the Indian National Army, who fought against the British along with the Japanese.

About 25,000 Indian soldiers, mostly Sikhs and Muslims, joined the Japanese after the fall of Singapore and formed the Indian National Army to fight the British. I affirm that they were misguided, but whatever they did was done by them out of patriotic motive. Most of them have, however, been arrested and are reported to be in Indian jails. What treatment the Government of India will mete out to them is a matter of great concern for us. No doubt, these people committed a mistake, but, if they are treated harshly, it will create bad blood between England and India.

I advise the workers of the National Conference to avoid narrow grooves and petty squabbles. The problems of Kashmir will be solved when the problems of India as a whole are solved. Kashmir's vital problems cannot be solved in isolation. Keep your ideals high and choose the right path to gain your purpose. It is necessary you should guard yourselves against opportunism, for it may harm you ultimately.

1. Address to the workers of the Kashmir National Conference, Srinagar, 19 August 1945. *From The Tribune*, 20 August 1945.

2. The Shadow of the Gallows[1]

There is one matter which has been paining and troubling me for some time, but to which I have made no reference so far, because any mention of it might have been misunderstood. But now that the war has ended, there is no such reason to remain silent on this issue. This concerns the 20,000 or more prisoners of the Indian National Army, which was formed in Malaya and Burma. I was of the opinion three years ago, and am still of the opinion, that the leaders and others of

1. Interview to the press, Srinagar, 19 August 1945. *The Hindu*, 22 August 1945.

British Indian army, Sardar Mohan Singh[2], apparently got in touch with the Japanese Command and organised the remnants of the Indian troops there, which amounted to nearly 70,000. Although Mohan Singh, to some extent, cooperated with the Japanese, he resisted their encroachments and refused to be a mere tool in their hands. After many months, matters came to a crisis and Mohan Singh, who had proved a very efficient and brave organiser, was arrested by the Japanese. Probably, he was executed by the Japanese.[3] This, in itself, shows the curious and anomalous position of the Indian National Army. Its leaders tried to resist the exploitation of their men for Japanese imperialist purposes. How far they succeeded in this, I do not know. But the motive underlying their action comes out clearly, and it is important.

In view of all this, I earnestly trust that no injustice will be done in dealing with these prisoners of war, which will create an additional festering sore in India's mind and heart. With the end of war, the immediate exigency is past and larger considerations should prevail.

2. (b. 1909); in 1941 he was a major in the Punjab Regiment; member of the Rajya Sabha, 1960-66 and 1972-78.
3. In fact, at the end of the Second World War Mohan Singh escaped from jail and went into hiding in Sumatra. Later he surrendered to the British. He was brought to Delhi as a prisoner in November 1945 and was released in May 1946.

3. To Dalip Singh[1]

Gulmarg
August 19, 1945

My dear Dalip Singh,

Thank you for your note.[2] I am disappointed. I shall not ask for a note from you on the subject in view of what you have written. But you will permit me to suggest that in a matter of this kind, in regard to which you and I and many others feel keenly, all of us should do our best to try to save the lives of the gallant men *who can be of great* use to the country. You made it plain the other night how much you wanted that some thing should be done. So far as I am concerned I

1. JN. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. The note is not available.

this army had been misguided in many ways, and had failed to appreciate the larger consequences of their unfortunate association with the Japanese.

Three years ago, I was asked in Calcutta what I would do if Subhas Bose led an army into India on the plea of liberating India. I replied then that I would not hesitate to resist this invasion, even though I did not doubt that Subhas Bose and his Indian colleagues and followers were motivated by the desire to free India, and were in no way mere tools of the Japanese. Nevertheless, they had put themselves on the wrong side, and functioned under the auspices of the Japanese. No person could come to India in this manner or under such foreign auspices. Therefore, whatever the motive of these people, they had to be resisted in India or outside.

But the situation has completely changed with the end of the war. And now a very large number of officers and soldiers of this Indian National Army, as it is called, are prisoners. Some of them have been executed. Though information is inadequate, it is reliably stated that bad treatment is being given to them in the prisons and forts, where they are kept, and many of them live under the shadow of death. I do not wish to complain to the British about strict military rule. They can justify their treatment in any way they like. But as an Indian, and as one representing, in this respect, the views of almost all Indians, of whatever party or group, I would say that it would be a supreme tragedy if these officers and men were liquidated by way of punishment. Whatever their past mistakes, and these were serious, there can be no doubt that they are a fine body of young men — fine officers and fine rank-and-file members—and that their dominating motive was love for freedom.

At any time, it would have been wrong to treat them too harshly, but at this time, when it is said that big changes are impending in India, it would be a very grave mistake, leading to far-reaching consequences, if they were treated just as ordinary rebels. The punishment inflicted on them will, in effect, be a punishment for the whole of India, and a deep wound will remain in millions of hearts. In this matter, fortunately, there is no communal question, for these officers and men are Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs.

From such accounts as have come to me, it appears that the Indian National Army first took shape when Singapore was almost surrounded by the Japanese and most of the British officers had left by boats. The Indian army in Malaya was, therefore, left stranded and was completely at the mercy of the Japanese. At that time, a junior officer of the

after tomorrow. After various stops at Murree, Nathiagali, Lahore and Delhi I expect to reach Allahabad by the end of the month. At Delhi we are having a *Herald* directors' meeting.

I entirely agree with you about my going abroad. Press messages to this effect have no foundation in fact and I have contradicted them. Gagan Bihari's approach, like that of most businessmen, is very one-sided and concerns itself with meeting important persons and influencing them.

I have no intention whatever of going to England unless there is some very special reason. America is somewhat different, in spite of what Gagan Bihari says. It is different not because of the Government but because it is one of the biggest centres today of international activity and people from every country gather there. Nevertheless I have no intention of going to America either, unless something special happens.

I hope you are better. I am feeling quite fit.

A question that is troubling me and others at present is the fate of a very large number of prisoners of the Indian National Army captured in Burma. I understand that final decisions are likely to take place soon and the life of about three hundred persons, chiefly bright young officers, is involved. Now that the war is ended, the situation is different and I do feel that we must speak out on this subject. I have already said something, though I have seen no report of it yet, and I propose to say more. Probably the Maulana will issue a statement also. The question is an all-India one, though it affects the Punjab most and chiefly the Sikhs and the Muslims. Most well-known Punjabi families have some relationship or other connections with these men. The matter is urgent. Even constitutionally and legally the position is by no means clear. But, of course, the primary consideration is not legal but national and human. I think we should at least demand that the veil of secrecy should be lifted and full opportunities for defence be given. I am writing very briefly to you on this subject as I am in a hurry but I feel strongly and I am convinced the reaction in India will be far-reaching.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

shall endeavour to move in the matter in my own sphere of activity. But I am sure your opinion would influence both the public and the Government. There is no reason whatever why you should remain silent on this issue. I suggest, therefore, that you should express that opinion in public, either by a statement or a letter to the press. You need not enter into a legal disquisition on the subject. It is enough to say that the legal aspects are doubtful, to say the least of it, and to stress the human aspect of the problem. Not only you but others, who normally do not function on the political plane, should do this, provided they feel keenly enough on the subject. It is a pity that mere politicians should alone function in matters which are of a much wider interest. In other countries there are large numbers of people, who have no concern with politics, but who are greatly concerned with questions affecting the liberties of the people and vital questions of life and death as well as other public matters. Here unfortunately there is no such class, or the class is dumb. It is about time that it woke up. To some extent in Bengal it is not wholly dumb. I wish you would give a lead in the matter in the Punjab which is most concerned with this impending tragedy. I would like you to induce others to do likewise. A joint statement would certainly have effect. But whether there is a joint statement or not, there is nothing to prevent you from stating your opinion in public.

I am leaving for Srinagar today.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Govind Ballabh Pant[1]

Srinagar
August 19, 1945

My dear Pantji,

I have just returned from Gulmarg and received your letter of the 13th together with Gagan Bihari Mehta's.[2] I am leaving Kashmir finally day

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He had suggested that Jawaharlal should visit the U.S. and Britain to press the case of India's independence and to explain the dangers of partition.

I.N.A. DEFENCE COMMITTEE : K.N. KATJU, T.B. SAPRU AND JAWAHARLAL, 1945

5. Tribute to Subhas Chandra Bose[1]

While the news of the death[2] of Subhas Bose has shocked me, it has given me relief that in the struggle for the cause of India's independence he has given his life and has escaped all those troubles which brave soldiers like him have to face in the end. He was not only brave but had deep love for freedom. He believed, rightly or wrongly, that whatever he did was for the independence of India. The news of his death has again reminded me of my association with him since 1919 when we started working together. Although I personally did not agree with him in many respects, and he left us and formed the Forward Bloc, nobody can doubt his sincerity. He struggled throughout his life for the independence of India, though in his own way.

1. Speech at Abbottabad, 24 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 25 August and *The Hindu*, 26 August 1945.
2. On 16 August 1945, Subhas Bose left Singapore for Tokyo by air and after the plane had taken off from Taipei airport in Taiwan at 2 p.m. on 18 August, it crashed and caught fire. Subhas staggered out of the plane badly burnt and was removed to hospital where he died the same night.

6. Warning against Harsh Treatment[1]

I am glad that the Government of India has issued a communique in regard to the prisoners of the Indian National Army formed in Malaya in 1942.[2] The veil at last has been lifted, but facts are still hidden. I would suggest that those facts, or many of them, should be released to the public. What is the total number of officers and prisoners of

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 28 August 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 29 August 1945.
2. On 27 August 1945, the Government announced clemency to the rank and file of the Indian National Army, who had yielded to pressure, but said that it would court martial leaders "who consciously embraced the Japanese and German cause and those who were guilty of heinous crimes."

this army in the various forts, camps and prisons of India? What action has already been taken in regard to any of them? What were the original circumstances which led to the formation of this army in Malaya? For instance, it has been stated, with what authority I do not know, that they were left there to shift for themselves.[3]

Many points of constitutional law arise and these should be considered carefully by competent experts of this law. It may be maintained that any such army which was formed in the circumstances then existing and recognised by a foreign power as an independent army, gains the status of a combatant force and its prisoners should be treated as ordinary prisoners of war. I am not an expert in constitutional law to give a definite opinion, but I am sure this matter is worthy of earnest consideration.

The main point, however, is not one of law. It depends on the approach to the question. Is it a completely English and non-Indian approach or is it an Indian approach? I can understand and appreciate the English approach, but I can also understand and not only appreciate but deeply feel the Indian approach, which, I think, is adopted not only by the common man in India, but also by the members of the British Indian Army.

The war is over happily for all of us and so any problem must be viewed in terms of peace and not of war. There will be political consequences if any severe punishment is inflicted. There is no doubt that such political consequences will be deep and far-reaching.

In this connection a possible comparison, common though not wholly apposite, is that of the *Maquis*[4] in France. When the German army wanted to deal with the *Maquis* as rebels of the Petain[5] Government, General Eisenhower very rightly issued a stern warning to them and told them that the *Maquis* must be treated as combatant

3 After the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942, Col. Hunt, the Commander, on behalf of the British Government, handed over 40,000 Indian soldiers to the Japanese representative, who, addressing the Indian prisoners of war, said that they were no more prisoners from the Japanese point of view, as Japan had declared war on Britain and not on Indians.

4 The French resistance in World War II

5 Henri Phillippe Petain (1856-1951); in the First World War he halted the Germans at Verdun and became a national hero; in the Second World War he became the Premier and concluded an armistice with Germany after the French collapse in 1940, removing the seat of the Government to Vichy, he established a repressive regime on the fascist model; after the war he was sentenced to death for treason but the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

MAHATMA GANDHI TALKING TO THE MEN OF THE I.N.A., 1945

8. Why Differential Treatment?[1]

When the British evacuated Singapore, Burma and Malaya a part of the Indian army was left behind. These troops were instructed by the British to act in a manner which they thought would serve their best interests. With the entry of the Japanese into these territories some of the troops had joined the Indian National Army which was supported by the Japanese. Now the British are back in these territories and, according to the reports received in India, the fate of several officers and men of the army is hanging in the balance. It is rumoured that some of them are being brought before court-martial in Delhi. It is unfair to treat these people on a different footing from that of combatants and prisoners of war after the hostilities are concluded. There is no difference between the role played by the Burman National Army[2] and that of the Indian National Army. There can be no justification for any differential treatment. There are parallel cases in history. After the last war the Czechs who fought against the Germans were recognised as belligerents.[3] How are Indians who have joined the I.N.A. different from them?

The only crime of these young officers is their devotion to their motherland. Any vindictive punishment to them is bound to have repercussions in India. The men of the National Army have their kith and kin in the British Indian Army who cannot but feel keenly over their treatment. We demand that they shall not be prosecuted on charge of treason and punished vindictively. The Working Committee has already decided to have a defence committee so that these patriotic men are properly defended when tried. The committee invites applications from the accused or their relatives to make arrangements for their defence.

1. Speech at the A I C C meeting on 23 September 1945 while moving the resolution on the Indian National Army. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 24 September 1945.
2. The Patriotic Burmese Force, numbering about 14,000, was originally formed by the Japanese, but when it passed under the control of the Anti Fascist People's Freedom League of Burma, it fought to support the Allies against the Axis. This army was later incorporated into the Burmese Army.
3. The Czechs had raised separate armies to fight for their freedom in 1918, though they were the subjects of Austria and Germany which were at war with Britain, France, Italy and the United States. Britain and the U.S. recognised them as belligerents, and their National Council as a *de facto* belligerent government with authority to direct military and political affairs

forces and allowed the privileges of prisoners of war. There can be no doubt that this Indian National Army functioned as a regular, organised, *disciplined and uniformed combatant force. There can be no mistake in this.* It was unfortunate that many of them were misguided to support a wrong means, but it should never be forgotten that they had no desire or intention of supporting that method. They were moved by their passion for India's freedom.

I have no doubt in my mind that the vast majority of the Indian men and officers of the British Indian Army will appreciate a generous treatment of their old comrades-in-arms.

7. Discrimination against Indians[1]

The people of India have been and are concerned with the fate of the officers, men and women of the Indian National Army, who are at present in various prisons in India and in other countries. Probably, the All India Congress Committee will consider this matter.

It has to be remembered that this Indian National Army consisted not only of officers and men from the British Indian Army but also of large numbers of individuals recruited in Burma, Malaya and Siam. Some efforts, I am told, are being made to isolate the civilian elements from the army elements and to treat the former more harshly. This will be highly improper and will naturally be resented. All elements of this army deserve to be considered as combatants and discharged now as the war has ended.

There are also, I understand, a number of Indian soldier-prisoners from various western fronts in the war. They also stand on the same footing as others.

Then there are vast numbers of Indian civilians in South East Asia who joined the Indian Independence League. There must be no discriminatory treatment. Indeed any such treatment will involve punishing the whole people.

1. Interview to the press, Poona, 16 September 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 17 September 1945.

of the prisoners died on the spot and many were wounded. I would request the military authorities or others concerned to issue a full statement on this subject for the information of the public.

Firing on prisoners within the four walls of a prison is always a dreadful thing. I should like to know if any inquiry has been held into this occurrence and if so what have been the findings and results of this inquiry.

11. The I.N.A. Defence Committee[1]

The special purpose of the I.N.A. Defence Committee is to defend those who may be put up for trial, but we are naturally interested in the fate of all I.N.A. men, who may be discharged and left stranded. We are specially interested in those families, which have lost their bread-winners, who were in the I.N.A. and suffered death or disabilities. We wish to do our utmost to trace these people. This is a difficult task but it can be done with the cooperation of the public.

> Question: Would the I.N.A. Defence Committee take up the question of defending I.N.A. men in Burma and Malaya,[2] who may be tried?

Jawaharlal Nehru: This inquiry falls outside the scope of the present Defence Committee, and so arrangements will have to be made separately. We have not so far been able to contact them, but we hope to be able to make some arrangement there also.

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 26 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 27 October 1945
2. About 1000 I.N.A. men were then in custody in Rangoon completely cut off from their relatives or friends. In Malaya, a large number of prosecutions had been started by the British Military Administration against the members of the I.N.A. and the Indian Independence League.

9. To Raghunandan Saran[1]

Allahabad
30 September, 1945

My dear Nandan,
As I have to go to Jaipur for the P.E.N.[2] conference, I might pass through Delhi. I shall try to do so reaching there on the 19th morning and spending that day there. I want to see what arrangements have been made for the I.N.A. cases. If it is possible for me to interview the persons concerned I should like to do so. Could you please ask for the necessary permission on my behalf as a member of the Defence Committee?

I shall only be in Delhi for the day and expect to leave the same evening for Jaipur. You might reserve two second class berths for me to Jaipur on the 19th evening. I shall stay with you in Delhi as this will be most convenient for both of us.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Poets/Playwrights, Essayists/Editors, Novelists (P.E.N.) is an international organisation whose first two presidents were John Galsworthy and H.G. Wells. Its Indian centre, which was sponsoring the Writers' Conference, was started in 1933 by Sophia Wadia in cooperation with Rabindranath Tagore.

10. Firing on I.N.A. Prisoners[1]

It has been reported to me that at a camp prison situated at Nilganj near Calcutta, where over 1,000 Indian National Army prisoners are kept, firing[2] took place on or about September 25. It is stated that a large number of rounds were fired by the guards and as a result five

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 10 October 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 11 October 1945.
2. There was firing at an I.N.A. prisoners' camp at Nilganj on 25 September 1945. Five persons died and many were injured.

eye-opener. Even these backward States have developed political consciousness to a remarkable degree during the past few years and the crowds that welcomed me were tremendous. Even the ruling Princes, sensing perhaps the change as well as the future that was taking shape, behaved differently and went out of their way to be friendly to me.

In Delhi I learnt that a cousin of mine, B.K. Nehru, is soon going by air on some official mission to Paris. I do not yet know what this business is—probably he will function as a secretary of some delegation or commission. He is in the I.C.S. and has been functioning in the Government of India. Perhaps you may have met him. He was one of Laski's pupils about a dozen years ago. As he is going to London first I am taking advantage of his visit to send this letter to you.

As you perhaps know the Congress has appointed a defence committee for the trials by court-martial of I.N.A. officers and men. This consists of a number of eminent lawyers and ex-judges—Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Bhulabhai Desai, Dalip Singh, Tek Chand, Asaf Ali etc. I am a lay member of the committee and so is Raghunandan Saran. This trial commences on Nov. 5th in Delhi Red Fort of three officers: Shah Nawaz, Sehgal and Dhillon. Other trials may follow. Sehgal is the son of Achhut Ram at present judge of the Lahore High Court; the other two are members of well known Punjab military families.

I was the first person to raise this question of the I.N.A. Since then interest in it has grown and it is today one of the major issues before the country. The Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Sikh League have all lined up with the Congress in this matter because of the public interest and excitement. But the burden of doing anything, as usual, falls upon the Congress. It is a big job, obviously much more than a mere legal defence. I have seldom seen any question seizing the public imagination so rapidly and so deeply. Curiously enough the regular Indian army is as much exercised over it as any civilian. I have had numerous evidences of this.

I cannot enter into the details of the present case. I understand that Raghunandan Saran has sent you some papers already and he might send you some more. The I.N.A. men and officers are a fine lot. They are brave, stout-hearted and capable and very politically minded and do not much care what happens to them individually. They cut across all communal and religious boundaries. All manner of intricate questions of international law arise and behind all these questions of law lie the dramatic facts in India, Malaya and Burma which preceded the formation of the I.N.A. They remained a separate army and refused to be exploited by the Japanese. Their retirement from Assam to Bangkok—3000 miles—without food or equipment, is being

12. Demand for Facts[1]

I understand that a number of Indians[2] are at present in Delhi jail sentenced to death under the Enemy Agent's Ordinance[3] and waiting execution. Some have already been executed under this ordinance. No one is allowed to say, or publish, anything about these trials or sentences under pain of heavy penalties. So I do not know the facts and circumstances of these trials which have resulted in death sentences.

One might understand secrecy during wartime, but it is utterly improper to have this secret and hush-hush procedure when the enemies have ceased to exist. If the enemy ceases to exist, so must also the Enemy Agent's Ordinance. It is upto the Government to give all the facts in this case and to provide opportunities for such defence as may be possible even at this late stage.

From a legal point of view the validity of the Ordinance may itself be questionable, but, apart from this, where lives of young men are involved, it is objectionable to follow a casual and secret procedure, when there is absolutely no reason for it. I invite the Government to publish all the facts.

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 26 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 27 October 1945.
2. About 17,000 men of the I.N.A were brought to India from East Asia as prisoners of war and a large number of them were lodged in the Red Fort, Delhi, and the Kabul Lines in the New Delhi cantonment. It was reported that six of them were shot in the Red Fort.
3. During the war, civilian foreigners in India, mostly from Germany and Italy, were kept in detention for security reasons under the Enemy Agent's Ordinance.

13. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Moradabad
27.10.45

My dear Krishna,
Yesterday I spent a few hours in Delhi after a strenuous tour in some States of Rajputana. This visit of mine to these feudal States was an

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

Council. I think Polak is in charge. All this has been done very secretly and the relatives and counsel have been threatened with Section 16 of the Enemy Agent's Ordinance in case they talk about the case to others. There must be no communications except through Government.

Some of Chopra's group have already been executed. Yesterday I met Chopra's brother and suggested to him that he might engage you also for the Privy Council hearing. The poor boy knows nothing about these matters and is dazed by threats held out to him.

There is a possibility of a *habeas corpus* application being made in Chopra's case in Lahore, and the validity of the Enemy Agent's Ordinance being challenged.

About this matter also I do not know what you can do. But you should know the facts and judge for yourself. You can spend any money over this or the I.N.A. matter and it will be sent to you later. Meanwhile, you can utilise such monies as you hold on my behalf. You may have to send cables etc. The best man in regard to both these matters is Raghunandan Saran, 6 Metcalfe Road, Delhi.

In haste —

Yours,
Jawaharlal

14. To Krishna Kripalani[1]

Allahabad
October 30, 1945

My dear Krishna,

It struck me that if Gurudeva had been alive he would have given the lead in regard to the I.N.A. matter. Unfortunately we have not got him with us, but there is no reason why prominent intellectuals, educationists, scientists, literary men and others should not express themselves on the subject. We should try to do our best to get every section of the population to help in this matter. I wonder if you could

1. J N. Correspondence, N.M M L.

referred to by British officers as a masterpiece of military tactics and strategy. At the end they preferred sacrificing themselves to deserting the large Indian populations of Burma and Malaya whom they protected to the end. They handed over Rangoon to the British forces as a going peaceful concern and there was not the slightest untoward incident. Contrast this with the British withdrawal from Burma in 1942 when Rangoon was partly destroyed, left burning, and the lunatics and criminals let out. There is no doubt that the I.N.A. protected the large Indian populations in South East Asia. Even today they are full of spirit.

The Government of India is now regretting very much this step they have taken in having a public trial. This issue is becoming a dominant one and the demand everywhere is for their release. Whatever happens in the trial, the Government stands to lose heavily.

We do not know exactly how many people of the I.N.A. have been put in prison—probably 20,000 or 30,000. There are a large number of camps spread out all over the country. There was firing in one of them recently resulting in some deaths of the prisoners and other incidents are frequent.

I do not know what you can do in the matter, or whether you can do anything at all. But in view of the importance of the issue you should keep yourself informed and in touch with these developments which are likely to play an increasing part in the future. Of course the great majority of the I.N.A. prisoners will be discharged. What will happen to them? They are penniless, all their funds normally due to them have been withheld. These thousands spreading out all over the country will make a difference, perhaps a great difference, for they are hard as nails, very anti-British, and politically-minded. Generally they look to the Congress for leadership. We propose to give them relief but it is going to be a big job.

To some extent this applies to the soldiers going to be demobilized from the regular army. They will not easily fit in and they also look to the Congress.

There is another matter of some urgency. One man, S.N. Chopra[2], who used to belong to the Indian Independence League of Burma etc. came to India last year. He has been sentenced to death by a special tribunal sitting in Delhi Fort. An appeal to the Lahore High Court has been rejected. Now an appeal has been preferred to the Privy

2. (b. 1916); after independence joined the Indian Foreign Service and served for some time as high commissioner to New Zealand and ambassador to Norway and Iceland.

and, in any event, it would be improper for us to express any opinion in regard to these questions. We feel, however, that there are aspects of the trials, other than the legal, which are of even greater importance. There can be little doubt of the patriotic motives of the officers and men of the I.N.A. and their desire to protect their own people from the effects of Japanese occupation and the criminal elements which war lets loose. They were moved by the desire to free India. These motives must inevitably be appreciated by every Indian.

There is a striking parallel between the I.N.A. and the Burma National Army. As is well known the latter has been treated differently and allowed to retain its freedom. We see no reason why the I.N.A. should be treated otherwise. There are many other instances of a like kind which can be found in the recent history of other countries.

We feel that at any time harsh treatment of the I.N.A. would have had unfortunate results At the present time, when far-reaching constitutional changes are expected to take place in the near future, any action taken in opposition to the deeply felt wishes of all sections of the Indian people, can only lead to disastrous consequences, embittering the future relations of India and England.

We trust therefore that in the interest of present and future goodwill the officers and men of the I.N.A. will be released.

16. To J. Leon D'Souza[1]

1st November 1945

Dear Mr. D'Souza,[2]

I received your letter of October 22nd on my return to Allahabad. I am glad that the Mayor of Bombay has taken the initiative in opening a relief fund for the I.N.A. As you perhaps know a very large number of persons are involved, probably 20,000. Then there are the dependents of those who died. To support them, educate their children, find work etc. is a very big job which we cannot shirk.

1. Extracts from Maharashtra Govt. Records, Police Commissioner's Office, File No. 3590/II/II 2.
2. Leon D'Souza was joint secretary of a committee set up by the Mayor of Bombay on 17 October 1945 to arrange relief for members of the I.N.A. and their families and dependents.

take this up. I am enclosing a draft statement.[2] This of course can be changed.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Thank you for your book. I am afraid I just cannot find time to read books at present but I should like to read yours.

2. The following item.

15. The Unanimous Demand for Release[1]

The trial of some officers of the Indian National Army formed in Malaya and Burma and the fate of thousands of other officers and men of that army have aroused interest and anxiety all over India. The principal organizations and parties in India, such as the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Akali Dal, the All India Women's Conference, and the Unionist Party of the Punjab, have stated that, in the peculiar circumstances of the case, these officers and men should have been treated as prisoners of war and released at the end of the war. Seldom has there been such a unanimity of opinion in India over any important question as there exists today in regard to the demand for the release of the I.N.A. officers and men. That opinion is expressed not only in the cities but even in the villages and extends to both the civil and military population of the country. Behind that opinion lies a deep anxiety for the fate of those people.

We, who are signing this statement, do not normally function on the political plane and are occupied with other activities. But whether we are politicians or not, we inevitably share the deeply felt sentiments of our people, and, in this matter of the I.N.A., we wish to associate ourselves with the widespread demand for their release. We are not competent to consider and judge the intricate questions of international law which these trials involve

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. This undated statement, however, was not released to the press.

(i) Actual defence of Messrs Shah Nawaz, Sehgal and Dhillon and matters connected with it, including publicity.

(ii) Defence of other I.N.A. personnel who may subsequently be charged with *offences before a court-martial.*

(iii) Defence of Indian P.O.W s who functioned as an I.N.A. in Europe.

(iv) Defence or other assistance of I N.A. personnel or other civilians in the Indian Independence League in Malaya and Burma.

(v) Defence or other steps to be taken in regard to persons accused or sentenced under the Enemy Agent's Ordinance.

(vi) Answers to inquiries about I.N.A. personnel at present in various camps or prisons in India.

(vii) Help, including monetary assistance, to I.N.A. personnel who are being discharged from day-to-day from camps and prisons.

(viii) The maintenance of proper registers containing full information about I.N.A. personnel in prison and detention and those discharged.

(ix) Collection of information regarding I.N.A. officers and men who *have died during campaigns or otherwise; their home addresses, the* necessity of relief for their widows, children or other members of the family.

(x) Collection of funds for the various purposes named above.

(xi) General publicity.

(Note: The I.N.A. should be understood to include those who acted similarly in Europe.)

4. It is obvious that all this taken together is a huge undertaking and involves a great deal of organisation and funds and a number of competent workers. It is something much more than pure legal defence, though it indirectly affects it in various ways. The trials involve the lives of young men but, apart from that important personal aspect, they have a public aspect, and this latter affects the personal aspect also.

5. *It is desirable to divide all this work and to separate* the legal defence aspect from the others. The present defence should then con*fine itself to legal defence and connected matters. Thus in the list* given in paragraph *3 it should undertake to deal with (i) (ii) (iii)* (iv) and (v). Another committee or committees should be entrusted with the work coming under the other heads.

6. I suggest, therefore, that two other committees be formed: The Indian National Army Inquiry and Relief Committee and the Indian

In Delhi we have an I.N.A. Defence Committee. In addition we are now having a seperate I.N.A. Inquiry Committee which will gather particulars of all these people. Already we are giving relief to a number of people. Every day some are released. They are spread out all over India, though the majority come from the Punjab.

I have met the three officers who are going to be tried. I have also met a number of men who have been released. I have been especially struck by their fine bearing. They are men of whom any nation can be proud.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17. Note on the I.N.A. Defence Committee[1]

Delhi
November 2, 1945

1. The Indian National Army Defence Committee was formed by a resolution of the Working Committee of the A.I.C.C. passed in Bombay on September 21, 1945. It consisted originally of six members but they were given power to add to their numbers. Accordingly additional members were coopted.

2. The immediate work of the Defence Committee was to undertake the defence of these persons: Messrs Shah Nawaz, Sehgal and Dhillon who were to be tried by court-martial for various offences under military law. These three accused persons expressed their willingness to be defended by this committee and the work was immediately taken in hand. An office of the committee was opened at 82 Daryaganj, Delhi, staff was engaged, and interviews with the accused took place in the Red Fort. Messrs Asaf Ali (the convenor) and Raghunandan Saran were in charge of the arrangements in Delhi.

3. Almost from the very beginning, the work of the Defence Committee began to expand itself and inquiries of all kinds began to reach its office. This work can be divided under the following heads:

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

11. I have already written and suggested to friends in Malaya to *organize a* defence committee there. But conditions there are unstable; there is military rule and most people appear to be incapable of taking the initiative in anything. So, for the moment, I do not expect much of a response. But if a representative of ours went there, I am sure his presence would revive the spirit of the people.

12. Head(v) of paragraph 3 deals with persons accused or sentenced *under the Enemy Agent's Ordinance. We are informed* that there are some people in the Delhi jail now, sentenced to death under this ordinance. (Some have already been executed). Their appeals to the Lahore High Court were rejected and an attempt has been made to appeal to the Privy Council—hence the postponement of their execution. Under the Enemy Agent's Ordinance it is an offence for anyone, relative or counsel, to disclose anything about the case. Hence nothing can be known formally, though it is possible to get the main facts through other channels. I suggest that the Defence Committee write to the Government of India asking for information of these cases and facilities for defence. In view of the end of the war, there is no point in maintaining secrecy. It has also been proposed that a *habeas corpus* application be filed in the Lahore High Court challenging the validity of the Enemy Agent's Ordinance. The persons at present in Delhi District Jail under sentence of death, so far as is known, are S.N. Chopra, Shri Bhagwat, Kartar Singh, Kanwal Singh and Ram Dulare.

13. We have so far not appealed for funds. Shri Raghunandan Saran was good enough to agree to meet the initial expenses of the Defence Committee. Obviously large funds are necessary, not so much for the actual defence as for the inquiry and relief work. An appeal for funds has therefore to be made. On whose behalf this should be made, it is for the committee to consider. In Bombay the Mayor has opened a fund for I.N.A. relief. This fund has so far no connection with our committee. I have found that people are eager to subscribe and during my recent tour I have received over Rs. 10,000 for I.N.A. defence and relief.

14. We have appointed no treasurer yet though Shri Raghunandan Saran has been acting as such. I suggest that we appoint him the treasurer of the I.N.A. Defence Committee.

Jawaharlal Nehru

National Army Funds Committee. The work of the Funds Committee is indicated by its name; it will be the collection of funds and their allotment to the two other committees. The Inquiry and Relief Committee will deal with heads vi, vii, viii, ix, and xi of paragraph 3 above.

7. It will probably not be desirable for the present Defence Committee to appoint these two additional committees as sub-committees of itself. The Defence Committee was appointed chiefly for legal defence and the other questions are somewhat outside its purview. These other committees might well include names of some persons who are not at present members of the Defence Committee, as well as some of those who are such members. Perhaps the best course is for us to ask the Congress President to nominate these two additional committees. We may, if we so choose, recommend names, or some names.

8. The work of the Defence Committee and that of the Inquiry and Relief Committee will sometimes overlap to some extent, and in any event there will have to be close contact and cooperation between them. It is desirable, however, for them to have separate offices and separate staff. The offices should be situated close to each other.

9. Apart from the normal work of the Defence Committee, that is the organisation of the defence in the trial commencing on November 5, and subsequent trials in Delhi, I suggest that some steps be taken immediately in regard to heads (iv) and (v) of paragraph 3 above.

10. Head (iv) deals with Indians in Malaya and Burma. It is known that Raghavan and Goho and others are in prison and may be tried soon. It is also known that the Indian civilian population, or at any rate those connected with the I.I.L., are being harassed in many ways. Very little information is available and communications are difficult. I suggest that we ask the Government of India to:

(i) Supply us with information regarding members of the Indian National Army and the I.I.L. who may be in prison or *detention*, or who are going to be tried. Further that we should be given facilities to organize their defence.

(ii) Permit a representative of our committee to visit Burma and Malaya, to meet people there, especially those who are going to be tried or are being interrogated and are in prison or detention, and to collect all relevant information.

(iii) Enable us to communicate freely by cable and letter with persons in Burma and Malaya who are interested in the defence of these people.

defence fund. Money flows in unasked from all quarters, and reports reach me of numerous separate collections. There is some danger of unauthorised collections or unauthorised use of collections. It is desirable therefore that those who wish to contribute should send their donations to recognised organisations.

The central committees formed by the Congress for the purpose are situated in Delhi. There are three such committees, namely, the I.N.A. Defence Committee, the I.N.A. Inquiry and Relief Committee and the I.N.A. Funds Committee. The treasurer of all these committees is Shri Raghunandan Saran and the offices are situated at 82, Daryaganj, Delhi.

Then there is a Mayor's Fund for I.N.A. relief in Bombay and I understand that Shri Sarat Chandra Bose has organised a relief committee in Calcutta. All these are responsible organisations to whom money for I.N.A. defence and relief should be sent. In addition donations earmarked for the purpose may be sent to the A.I.C.C. office, Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad, or to any of the provincial Congress committee offices.

20. To Sarat Chandra Bose[1]

Allahabad
16-11-1945

My dear Sarat,

Thank you for your telegram of good wishes. It is not pleasant to get older but it is very pleasant to have the affection and goodwill of old friends.

I have just returned from Bombay. The train was 9 hours late and terribly crowded. Within a few hours I am going to Lucknow and from there to the Punjab.

I have been wanting to go to Bengal but fate has so far prevented this. Anyway I hope to go there early next month when we shall surely meet.

You might have noticed that apart from this I.N.A. Defence Committee, an I.N.A. inquiry and relief committee is being constituted. Maulana issued a statement about it some days ago but till now the

1. Maharashtra Government, *Home Department (Special), Intercepted letters*

18. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Delhi
3.11.45

My dear Krishna,
I am writing to you about an important matter relating to the I.N.A. trial beginning here on Nov. 5. Presumably you know that a "Provisional Government of Free India" was ormed at Singapore on October 21st 1943 with Subhas Chandra Bose as the Head of the State. The Government was recognised by Japan, Germany, Italy, Siam, Nanking, Manchukuo, Philippines etc. Diplomatic representatives were exchanged with Japan and messages of goodwill were received from the other States. Some time during the last week of October or in November 1943, we are reliably informed that de Valera also sent a congratulatory message, presumably through the radio or possibly by cable, to Subhas Bose.[2] We have been unable to get the text or other particulars of this message. We have asked the Government of India to find out for us.

I am writing to you to find out at the other end about this message sent by President de Valera. You can ask the Irish representative in London to be good enough to find this out for us or you can send someone to Dublin for this purpose. The matter is urgent.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Subhas Bose sent a communication through the Japanese consul in Dublin to the Irish Government which was acknowledged.

19. Unauthorised Collection for the Defence Fund[1]

The I.N.A. trials have gripped the public imagination to such an extraordinary degree that there is a widespread desire to contribute to the

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 16 November 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 17 November 1945.

a sense of satiety? I gather from your letter that they do not. We have at present very important and evergrowing work — the I.N.A. inquiry & relief — which is likely to assume big dimensions and have important political consequences. It requires just the qualities which you possess in such an eminent degree. I wish you would take it up. That work would mean your spending a good deal of time in Delhi. For the moment, I am thinking in terms of three months or so only. During this period, or soon after, many changes may take place and so it is not worthwhile planning further ahead. Even if you cannot remain in Delhi for all this time, I would like you to take it up. It is difficult to explain the nature and intricacy of the work in a letter. If I have the chance I should like to talk to you about it. I discussed this matter with Narendra Deva and Rafi and both liked the idea of your taking up this I.N.A. work. I might add that this has nothing to do with the defence proper. It relates to the gathering of full information and the giving of relief. Our office is functioning in Delhi but your presence there will make all the difference.

The council today selected you to represent them in I.N.A. relief work in Delhi. This does not cover what I have in mind.

I am going to Delhi on the 30th midday by the Toofan Express, reaching Delhi early on the 1st. I shall spend only one day there and return to Allahabad the same night. If it was possible for you to accompany me to Delhi then, it would give us a chance of a talk and you could yourself see things for yourself in Delhi. So try to come. If you go to Delhi you need not return with me the same day.

Love,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

22. To the Home Member, Government of India[1]

Allahabad
November 30, 1945

Dear Sir,

On October 9 last I sent you a telegram and a letter requesting that passport and travel facilities be granted to me for visiting Java. To

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L

committee has not been formed. Probably Maulana will announce it soon. I hope you will agree to be a member of it. Vallabhbhai is going to be a member.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

21. To Sri Prakasa[1]

28/11/45

My dear Prakasa,
I have your letter. I agree with much that you have written about the deterioration of our public life and our internal Congress organisation. Nothing has worried me so much in recent years as this. Always I have had to face this trouble. What to do? What is the lesser evil? To remain passive is impossible for me especially in present circumstances, and so always I have to choose some line of action.

About Paliwal's book[2] — I have only just seen the extracts — it is very bad form — that is Paliwal's way. He has explained and expressed his regret and said that he did not mean his general remarks to refer to you or Sampurnanand. He has further promised to clear this up. We have thereupon passed a resolution expressing our confidence in you and Sampurnanand and requesting you to withdraw your resignation. I think that you should agree to this in the larger interest. We have to put up with much we don't like. So do not stick to your resignation. We cannot afford to injure our cause because of personal considerations. You know that most of us have a great deal of affection for you and confidence in you even though we may disagree on some particular points. Ultimately it is this confidence and *bona fides* that count.

Reading your letter, it struck me that you should do some more worthwhile and solid work than you appear to be doing. I know you have plenty of things to do but are they so important as to give you

1. Sri Prakasa Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. In his book *Hamara Swadhinta Sangram* (Our Freedom Struggle), Pahwal charged Sri Prakasa and Sampurnanand of being on friendly terms with British officials in 1943.

24. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
December 2, 1945

My dear Krishna,

I have not written to you for some time. I have been so constantly on the move and so desperately busy with all manner of things that it is exceedingly difficult to write letters. I have just come back by air from Delhi and day after tomorrow I shall be going to Calcutta for Congress Working Committee and other meetings. I am not likely to be back for a fortnight or more as I might have to go to Assam. Then there is some talk of my going to the other end of India — Sind. On the 31st December and subsequent days I preside over the All India States People's Conference at Udaipur in Rajputana. After that I suppose the elections will take up a good deal of my time.

I am snatching a few moments to write to you briefly about some matters. I have your letters of the 12th and 26th November as well as the papers sent to you by the Irish High Commissioner. I met Amrit Kaur yesterday in Delhi and had a long talk with her.

(1) About the Irish papers our own information confirms what you have said and nothing more need be done about it.

(2) The Chopra matter is already more or less over so far as I know. Evidently you were under some slight misapprehension about this. The matter was brought to my and Saran's notice at a late stage, after a lawyer in Lahore, Jivanlal Kapoor[2], had already instructed Polak. It was then that I wrote to you about it. You need not tell me anything about Polak or Khambatta. I quite agree with your opinion and I would not entrust any matter to them. I told Jivanlal Kapoor as much. Raghunandan Saran is not a lawyer but a colleague in Delhi who is at present especially engaged in I.N.A. defence work as treasurer. He owns a big motor firm there and is one of our directors of the *National Herald*. He could not therefore instruct you in the matter. He passed on the information to Jivanlal Kapoor but before anything could be done the persons concerned were reprieved. There was no point then in pursuing the Privy Council appeal which was anyhow rather weak.

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. *(b. 1897); a leading advocate of Lahore*, arrested during the salt satyagraha; Vice-President, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, 1929-30, Judge, Punjab High Court, 1948, and of the Supreme Court, 1957, Chairman, Law Commission, 1961-67.

that I have had no reply so far. But I was told by H.E. the Viceroy that this would not be possible in present circumstances.

I am now writing to you to inquire if it is possible to extend these facilities to me for visiting Burma and Malaya. I have received many pressing invitations from friends in those countries who are in distress and I should like to respond to them and to help them if I can. I would therefore be grateful if a new passport is issued to me and travel facilities to visit Burma and Malaya granted. My old passport expired about a year ago but, in any event, I suppose old passports do not count.

I am also writing to the Chief Secretary of the U.P. Government on this subject and sending him my old passport for renewal.

I shall be grateful if you will be good enough to send me an early reply.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

23. To the Chief Secretary, Government of U.P.[1]

Allahabad
November 30, 1945

Dear Sir,

I am sending you separately under registered cover my old passport which expired on October 31, 1944. I shall be grateful if this is renewed. For the present or the near future I am likely to require it only for Burma and Malaya. But there is always a possiblity of my visiting other countries and so I shall be glad if the passport is renewed and made valid for all the countries mentioned in it. That validity, I take it, will be subject to such restrictions on travel or visiting particular countries as may still exist.

As a visit to Burma or Malaya probably requires special permission and facilities, I am also writing to the Home Member, Government of India, on the subject.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. JN Correspondence, NMML.

are affected by this, specially the rural masses. At the same time there is an inner weakening in the Congress and many of us are worried about this. I suppose this is a common feature of resistance movements in all countries. The future *vis-a-vis* the British is that there is intense resentment and anger against them and it should be remembered that this is shared by the regular army. I do not think any real conflict is going to take place till the provincial elections are over. At any rate we shall do our best to avoid it. After that much depends on the British Government's attitude. One thing is certain that people here are not just going to wait and see for long.

(7) The I.N.A. trial, as I have said, has excited enormous attention and sympathy from all kinds and classes of people. A little over three months ago I spoke first on this issue. Knowing something of my people I realised that this was going to become a major issue. And I said as much. But the way events developed rapidly surprised me. The Government here, as usual, completely misjudged the position and sought to make capital for themselves out of this trial. And now they are in a hopeless quandary for the result has been the exact opposite and even the regular army has in a very large number of instances expressed its sympathy with the I.N.A. Two days ago Government issued a communique on this subject which shows that they have retracted greatly from their original position. There is practically no question now of any charge of waging war against the King, against any of these people. This should naturally lead to the withdrawal of the case against Shah Nawaz, Sehgal and Dhillon, for they are not personally accused of any so-called atrocity. A number of other cases will be started on charges of "atrocities" against certain individuals. Meanwhile, rather gruesome stories of ill-treatment of I.N.A. people — officers and men in various camps—continue to reach us. Two officers in a camp near Delhi have recently committed suicide because of this treatment. One prominent officer, Ahsan Qadir, the son of Sir Abdur Qadir, is mentally deranged.

(8) All the evidence in the case as well as all other facts that have reached us make it quite clear that I.N.A. people were continually resisting Japanese interference and many of them got into trouble because of this. There is no doubt that they were moved as a whole by the desire to help in the freedom movement of India and were anxious at the same time not to help in any way Japanese ambition and designs. It was a difficult position of course and the two could not always be separated. There is also no doubt that the I.N.A. saved thousands of Indian lives and property both from the Japanese and from local hooligan elements in Burma and Malaya. They did their work very efficiently and were tremendously popular with the civil population including Bur-

(3) Amrit Kaur and Zakir Hussain are both, as you found them, unusual and interesting persons. Zakir Hussain's special job is of course education. He has kept away from politics.

(4) I have sent you the whole manuscript of my book in batches. Soon I hope to send you the book in proof forms. All I have to do now is to add a postscript of a few pages and a preface. It has been a hard task for me to revise the typescript or the proofs. *Ultimately* I gave it up and Indira has been largely responsible for this. I expect the book will be published by the Signet Press, Calcutta, in about six weeks time.

(5) You ask me to send you my article in *Fortune* as well as other material. I shall try to find that article though it is no easy matter. As for other material also there is really very little for I wrote nothing for three years. If I can lay my hand on anything I shall send it to you.

(6) You are perfectly right in saying that my various activities here are taking up all my time. But I still continue to be receptive to suggestions. You are best able to judge the position in England and elsewhere. Here matters have advanced at a very rapid pace during the last five months. This pace was rapid enough anyhow after the suppression of some years. It was given a push by the freshly organised *All* India Students Congress which has become by far the most important student organization in the country. Then came the I.N.A. trial which has caught the public imagination to an amazing degree. All these factors plus the stay-put attitude of the British Government in regard to India and the continuing repressive policy in regard to a large number of political prisoners have incensed public opinion. The Central and Provincial governments have become notorious for their incompetence and corruption. There is a feeling of desperation in the air and a spark may lead to a fire, as recently took place in Calcutta. There is a great deal of indiscipline about the younger people which is regrettable and yet which one can understand. It is the normal result of suppression and resistance movements, mostly underground in the recent past. It is also partly the result of the Congress organization having become rather stale and out of date and not giving opportunities to newer elements to function through it. Owing to various obvious reasons there have been no elections in the Congress for five years and till new elections take place, necessarily after the Assembly elections, there is likely to be this hiatus. Apart from this of course there are all manner of conflicting elements and ideologies within and near the Congress which produce a great deal of confusion. The Congress has in a sense never been so popular with the masses of people as it is today. To some extent even Muslim masses

officers if we can find suitable men. Unfortunately the names of most of these people are not to be found on the electoral rolls.

(13) As for the future, after the elections, it is difficult for me to say much. Obviously the two immediate issues that arise will be the reorganisation of the Central Government and the constitution of the constituent assembly. If both these are done in a satisfactory manner soon after the elections no immediate crisis need arise. But it is highly doubtful whether the British Government will even then take the right step. If there is delay or a wrong step is taken by them, a crisis arises and anything may happen. It is clear that the Provincial Governments are not going to function for long with an autocratic centre. I do not for a moment suggest how these two matters should be tackled, although the broad principles are clear enough. Anyhow we are giving some thought to the matter for we want to be ready to take the initiative if there is any delay on the other side.

(14) The Central Assembly elections have resulted as expected in an overwhelming victory for the Congress in the general seats and a substantial victory for the Muslim League in the Muslim seats. But there is something more to be said. We did not take the Muslim elections very seriously because of the restricted electorates and a very bad electoral roll. Also there was some confusion as to whether the Congress should run its candidates or the Nationalist Muslims. In fact we started our election campaign only a few days before the polling. We found a surprising response among rural masses to the Congress. The Muslim League spent vast sums of money and there are many reports of bribery as well as intimidation by petty Government officials. The effect of these elections has convinced us that we shall put up a good show in the provincial elections. The probability is that the Congress will have a clear majority in all the provinces except three—Punjab, Bengal and Sind. In none of these three provinces is the Muslim League likely to have the majority. So there cannot be a clear Muslim League government in any province. At the most there can be coalition governments in these three provinces.

(15) I had a letter from Sir Stafford Cripps the other day in answer to a note of mine. In this he pleaded for faith till the elections were over. There is no faith but, as I have said above, we expect no major developments till after the elections. For my part I agree with your analysis of the situation in England. I also agree with you about our necessity for further international contacts and work in England. But for the moment I cannot suggest any definite steps. I am rather suspect in regard to these matters. Amrit Kaur might be able to help a little, or so I gather from her talk.

mese and Malayans. They succeeded in solving, within their own ranks, the communal problem completely which is an object lesson of what can be done if external interference is removed. Yesterday in Delhi I had a long talk with Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief, who had expressed a desire to see me. In the main he talked to me about a scheme of army re-organization. But in the course of our talk he said that he could well understand the difficulty of the position of the Indian army after the surrender in Singapore. In a way he seemed to understand, if not wholly to appreciate, the subsequent developments there.

(9) There is no doubt now that Subhas Bose died in an aeroplane crash in Formosa in August last. We have an eyewitness of the accident here—Col. Habibur Rahman who was with Subhas Bose in the plane at the time and managed to escape with minor burns and injuries. Habibur Rahman is at present in one of the internment camps under interrogation. He has sent us one or two personal effects of Subhas Bose, especially a wristwatch, which shows signs of burning.

(10) Obviously a large force like the I.N.A. contains all kinds of men. But taking it as a whole it was a fine body of men and women, capable, intensely patriotic and politically conscious. The real problem before us is what to do with these tens of thousands of young men, many of them technicians. It is a big problem and we are trying to tackle it by finding out avenues of employment for them. That is no easy matter just now when the army is being demobilized and many wartime industries are being closed. Nevertheless there is a tremendous desire on the part of many people to help.

(11) Apart from the trials, the I.N.A. problems before us are the proper treatment of the men in prison or internment in India and the fate of thousands of Indians in Malaya and Burma. Reports continually reach us about large numbers of Indians being arrested and imprisoned in these countries, most of them civilians who belonged to the Indian Independence League there. We are trying to organise their defence, but unless we send men there it is not an easy matter. We have asked Government for permission to send our representatives to Burma and Malaya. I have personally also asked for permission for myself. You know that I was refused permission to go to Java.

(12) Recent months have brought about a rather remarkable change in the feeling of the civilian population towards the regular Indian army as well as of the army towards the others. This is rather an odd consequence of the I.N.A. trial. After long years of isolation and separation and suspicion there is an increasing friendliness between the two. Obviously this is an important development which should be welcomed. It is our desire to put up for election in the provinces some demobilized

a government at the Centre representing the democratic forces within the country as shown by the elections. The next step will be the setting up of a constituent assembly which will frame the constitution that India wants. I do not say that a wholly independent government can be expected at once, but early action is what I have in mind. If the Government does not act, it will be for other people to take the initiative.

Question: What effect does the I.N.A. have on the Indian people?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The history of the I.N.A. and the current trials have brought the army closer to the people. Another contributing factor to this is the wide base of the enrolment in the army during the war. Whereas at one time most Indians considered the army as something not connected with them and almost foreign to them, now it is being brought home to them that the army is part of India.

Q: Do you think that failure to punish the I.N.A. officers might result in a weakening of the morale of the members of the Indian Army who did not join the I.N.A.?

JN: On the contrary, I feel that the army is keenly interested in seeing that the I.N.A. people are not punished. Contributions are coming from within the ranks of the army to support the defence of the I.N.A. members. These amounts have come from soldiers and young officers in sums of Re. 1 to Rs. 20 and an occasional contribution of Rs. 50.

Q: Will there not be any opposition at all from the services to the pardoning of the I.N.A. officers?

JN: I agree that there is perhaps a small number of Indians in the army who feel that the I.N.A. personnel should be punished.

I feel that the stories of heroism of the I.N.A. men have led many young Indians to question the value of nonviolence. Many of them are now thinking about the possibility of force as against the method of nonviolence as a means of gaining independence. This is a subject of considerable thought and discussion on the part of the Congress leaders also who believe that force is in direct conflict with Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence.

I regret that Indians are unable to lend more help to the Indonesians than merely to refuse to load ships carrying supplies to be used against them. I have sent several telegrams to Indonesian leaders, but since I have received no replies, I am not certain whether the telegrams have ever reached them.

(16) It is exceedingly unfortunate that the Communist Party in India has drifted further away from the nationalist movement. Their position today is one of absolute hostility to the Congress and of practical alliance with the Muslim League. Quite apart from the merits of any question it is obvious that it is entirely wrong to oppose the entire trend of the national movement which represents the most vital urge of the Indian people. The result has been the growth of an intense opposition to the Communist Party in India which often takes undesirable forms and helps the wrong people. Communists here have become terribly isolated and have developed the complexes of narrowness of outlook and isolationism. They take one wrong step after another in trying to justify themselves. It is a great pity and I do not know what to do about it.

(17) The *National Herald* at last came out two days ago. We have to face very great difficulties specially the lack of trained operators for whom there is a great demand all over the country. We have ordered additional machinery etc. from America. The next four months are likely to be difficult. The competition is severe and our resources are limited. All newspapers in India, good or bad, made large sums of money during the war. Not we of course. *The Statesman's* reserves, I am told, run into crores. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, in order to forestall the *Herald*, arranged for a special aeroplane service to carry the *Patrika* to Cawnpore and Lucknow every morning at a cost of Rs. 15,000 a month. If we had an extra fifteen thousand with us we could use it to much better purpose.

(18) There is talk of the Parliamentary Delegation coming to India. If such a thing materialises let me have some information of the personnel. I understand Brailsford is also coming soon.

This is a longer letter than I had intended. I may not be able to write to you again for some time.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

25. The Army—Part of India[1]

No great political development can be expected until after the elections. After the elections, however, the administration will be expected to form

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 2 December 1945. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 4 December and *The Hindu*, 4 December 1945.

Beyond India, in Burma[4] and especially in Malaya,[5] the plight of Indians connected with the Indian Independence League is very bad and hundreds of them are apparently in prison or detention.

Our representatives have so far not been allowed to go there and the Overseas Department of the Government of India has observed a discreet silence.[6] The Ceylonese Government took immediate steps to protect its nationals in Malaya and it was stated in the State Council of Ceylon that not a single Ceylonese was held in custody in Malaya. Not so our Government. Among those under detention or in prison are prominent Indians like Mr. Raghavan[7] and Mr. Goho[8] and Dr. Lakshmi Swaminathan.

Apart from this political aspect, the economic condition of the people in Malaya is bad. There is an urgent need for food, clothing and medicine. If the Government is incapable of taking effective action to protect our people in Burma and Malaya, they must at least allow our representatives to go there immediately to give all possible help.

4. A report of 3 December 1945 from Rangoon stated that there were about 1200 I.N.A men in the Rangoon jail, among whom were 90 civilians belonging to the Indian Independence League.
5. Thousands of Indians were prosecuted in Malaya for their activities in the Indian Independence League and for alleged collaboration during the Japanese occupation. Many Indians were living on starvation diet and thousands of women were dressed in sackcloth. Besides scarcity of goods and high prices, most of the people had no means of buying anything, as their money lost value when the Japanese currency ceased to be the legal tender.
6. A Congress medical mission under Dr. B. C. Roy was awaiting Government permission to visit Malaya. The Government later refused permission on the ground that it was itself sending enough medical aid to Malaya.
7. N. Raghavan (1900-1978); Revenue Minister in the Provisional Government of Free India during the war; President, Central Indian Association of Malaya; after independence served as ambassador in several countries.
8. S C Goho, president of the Indian Association of Singapore, was in jail on a charge of collaboration with the Japanese.

27. The Need for Unity and Discipline[1]

I am a little ashamed that I have taken such a long time since my release from prison to come to Bengal. The cry of Bengal reached us

1. Speech inaugurating the I.N.A. Week at Calcutta, 9 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 10 December 1945.

Q: What did you discuss with General Sir Claude Auchinleck?

JN: We discussed Indianisation of the army in which the Commander-in-Chief is interested. I am also interested in it but in a different sense.

26. Conditions in I.N.A. Prison Camps[1]

In the stress of elections and an ever-changing situation bringing new excitements in its train, some of us are apt to overlook the continuing tragedy of so many of our comrades being kept in prison. It is not prison that we protest against, for prison to our people is a common enough occurrence today. It is the ill-treatment accorded to "C" class prisoners that hurts us and is a challenge to us all.[2]

In the United Provinces especially, the prison administration has been shown up even by court decisions to be callous and inhuman. We continue to receive reports, necessarily fragmentary, about the ill-treatment. Sometimes there are hunger strikes to protest against this. When there is so much talk of a new order in India this persistence in treating political prisoners so badly is significant and shocking.

Recently reports of extraordinary occurrences in I.N.A. prison camps culminating in the suicide of two I.N.A. officers have reached us.[3] We have avoided giving full publicity to them without inquiry and reference to the Government, but it is clear that this kind of thing cannot be easily tolerated. It is necessary that the Government should give full facilities for interviewing I.N.A. prisoners in the various camps, so that the real facts may be known.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 4 December 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 5 December 1945.
2. Political prisoners in all provinces, particularly in the U.P., were being treated brutally and more harshly than ordinary convicts. They were beaten up on minor pretexts, their food was of poor quality, their work was heavy and they were denied reading and writing facilities. The detenus in Agra, Varanasi, Bareilly, Lucknow, Fatehgarh and Farrukhabad jails were on hunger strike in protest against the ill treatment.
3. It was reported that in September 1944, two I.N.A. officers, detained in the Delhi Red Fort, snatched the rifle from a guard and committed suicide because they could not bear the ill treatment.

The Indian National Army fought bravely for the freedom of India and large numbers of them died in that struggle. We honour them for their fight for freedom and for their sacrifices. Yet the main lesson they teach us is not only the love for the country and of freedom, but discipline and organisation and the unity they forged among themselves. The communal problem that troubles us so much was solved by them in their ranks. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs lived together as Indians, and struggled unitedly for the common cause. We honour them for this specially, and we honour their great leader, Subhas Chandra Bose. Even when we differed from him in the past we respected him as a great fighter for India's freedom. In recent years he showed himself a great organiser and, above all, a welder of different communities of India into a single body. The facts that have come out in the recent trial establish that he consistently resisted the Japanese encroachment on the freedom of the Provisional Government, which he had set up, and on the Indian National Army.[3] This Government and this army were no puppets of the Japanese, but were moved by the passion for freedom. Repeatedly they declared that they would not serve Japanese imperialism. The situation then was difficult and required a careful handling. Subhas Bose and his colleagues proved themselves as able leaders in those moments of great crisis and difficulty. Therefore we have to learn from the Indian National Army how to build up our unity and how to organise and discipline ourselves.

In the days ahead we shall have many crises to face. If we have unity and discipline and a common objective we can surely overcome them.

I have much to say to the people of Bengal, for much has happened in these three and a half years since I was here last. I hope to avail myself of this opportunity to meet personally our younger and vital groups on whom the burden of tomorrow will fall. Yesterday is a past event though we cannot forget it. Today consumes our energies, but it is ultimately the tomorow that we must think about and prepare ourselves, for it is the tomorrow which has a promise of freedom.

3. During the I.N.A. trial a Japanese witness testified that Subhas Bose had resented Japanese hesitation in providing him with effective assistance and the Japanese attempts to impose restrictions on the sovereignty of the Andamans. He secured the stationing of a Japanese diplomatic mission in Rangoon to deal officially with the Provisional Government of Free India.

in Ahmadnagar Fort, and Bengal was ever present in our mind there and since our release. The day I came out of prison I thought of Bengal and wanted to come here, but events had been too powerful for me and had kept me away. At that time I thought of all the occurrences in 1942 and onwards and also of the great famine. And now recently we have had another and a very unfortunate happening in Calcutta city.[2]

The terrible suffering of Bengal has pained us. It has been a tragedy for this province. But there has also been recently a feeling of elation at the spirit of the people, specially of the young, who endured it. Calcutta recently afforded a very remarkable spectacle of revolutionary significance. It grieves me that some young men lost their lives. But I cannot forget their fervour and courage at the time of the crisis. It is during these times of crises that people are judged. It may be said that the people of Calcutta rose to the occasion during this crisis.

Wrong acts might have been committed in 1942 or afterwards or in recent days, but in judging a mighty event, one must look at the spirit and courage of the people and the motive behind it. No doubt, today there is a new life in Bengal and in India. There is an amazing enthusiasm among the youth. This shows that we are a living and vibrant nation intent on freedom and resolved to achieve it whatever be the cost. This shows also that we are bound to win it.

But mere enthusiasm is not enough. Even self-sacrifices are not enough. We must have discipline and organised effort at the right time. Otherwise, our enthusiasm will be frittered away in small individual acts. Therefore, our young men must learn this great lesson of curbing and directing their enthusiasm in right channels and at the right time.

Today India faces a critical period. Vital decisions will be taken in a year or two. These decisions will depend ultimately on our unity and discipline and strength. Sporadic violence will not pay. It will fritter away our energies. If we have to adopt violence as the method of our fight it is for the nation to do it deliberately and not casually. It should not be forgotten that there are new and mighty weapons of violence in the possession of the Government. When India becomes free it will have to decide the question of violence or nonviolence for itself. But today we have to adopt organised and peaceful methods which the Congress has so far followed, and which brought much success and strength to us.

2. On 21 November 1945, a procession of 500 students demonstrated peacefully in Calcutta in observance of the I.N.A. Day. When the procession entered a prohibited area, it clashed with the police, and a student was killed. The consequent rioting in Calcutta for two days resulted in 37 deaths with 200 injured.

Burma. As you know I have myself applied for a passport and travel facilities to Burma and Malaya and these have not been forthcoming so far. Probably you will find it easier to go there. Anyway you are more likely to think of a suitable method than I am. If anything strikes me I shall let you know. Try to go as soon as you can and see me before you go.

I am glad you, Dadachanjee and others are thinking of starting a new organisation of Burma Indians, laying stress on cooperation with the Burmese. I am convinced that there is no other way even from the narrowest nationalist viewpoint. It surprises me how short-sighted our business interests are when they demand political and economic safeguards from the British against the Burmese. The British will not and cannot give them, and they are likely to fade away from the picture before long.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

30. To Secretary, External Affairs Department, Govt. of India[1]

January 12, 1946

Dear *Sir*,
On November 30th I wrote to the Home Member of the Government of India as well as to the Chief Secretary to the Government of the United Provinces requesting that passport and travel facilities be granted to me for visiting Burma and Malaya as early as possible. Subsequently on December 27, I sent a reminder to both the governments. I understand that this request of mine has been transferred to your department.

I have received many pressing invitations from friends in Burma and Malaya who are in distress and I should like to respond to them and to help them if I can. I have also been directed by the Working Committee of the Congress to visit Burma and Malaya on their behalf

1. J.N. Correspondence, N M.M L.

28. On the Release of the I.N.A. Officers[1]

I am happy to learn of the release of the three I.N.A. officers whose trial had moved India very deeply. In the circumstances, this was the only thing to do and I am glad the Commander-in-Chief has done it.[2] The fact of their being expelled from the army has no significance, as they themselves had left that army long ago. I trust that this policy will be pursued in the cases of other I.N.A. officers and men also.[3] They should be released. The senior counsel, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, conducted the trial with his usual ability and eloquence. He deserves congratulations. The people of India were united as never before and, therefore, it is their triumph also. We welcome back our comrades, Shah Nawaz, Dhillon and Sehgal and trust that their patriotism, courage and ability, which had faced severe tests, will be diverted to the work of India's emancipation.

1. Interview to the press, Larkana, 5 January 1946. *The Hindu*, 6 January 1946
2. On 4 January 1946, the Commander in-Chief remitted the sentences of transportation for life passed by the Court-Martial on Shah Nawaz, Sehgal and Dhillon and confirmed the sentence of cashiering and forfeiture of arrears of pay and allowances
3. The I N.A. prisoners were brought back to India from 1944 and graded in three categories — "white" consisting of those who helped the Allied forces, "grey" those who went over under duress and "black" those who had actively helped the enemy. The "white" were reinstated, the "grey" dismissed and the "black" kept in detention camps before being brought to trial.

29. To M.A. Raschid[1]

Allahabad
January 11, 1946

My dear Raschid,
I have just received your letter[2] of the 8th. I understand your position. It is difficult for me to suggest any ways and means for your return to

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He had sought Jawaharlal's help to return to Burma where he intended to work for the welfare of Indians.

32. To the Chief Secretary, U.P. Government[1]

Allahabad
January 12, 1946

Dear Sir,
I am in receipt of your letter of January 4th. This matter[2] has been pending now for six weeks and I would request an early decision. In any event my old passport, renewed for a further period, should be sent to me.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Home Department (police), F. No. 2192/1945, U.P. Government.
2. Application for the renewal of the passport.

33. The Example of Subhas Bose[1]

Netaji Subhas has set an example of courage and passionate devotion to the cause of Indian freedom, which will live long in India's history. Equally important is the way in which he has demonstrated how to weld the different communities in a common unity.

1. Message sent for Subhas Bose's birthday meeting held in Bombay. From *The Hindu*, 17 January 1946.

34. The Triumph of the Indian People[1]

It is right that the record of the trial by General Court Martial of the three officers of the Indian National Army should be published in book

1. 17 January 1946 Foreword to *Two Historic Trials in Red Fort*, by Moti Ram.

to help in relieving the distress of Indians there. I am aware that the Government of India have made some arrangements for giving help and relief to Indians in Burma and Malaya.[2] These arrangements will no doubt be of assistance to our people. But the problem is a big one and official help should be supplemented through private and non-official agencies. It is with a view to this that the Working Committee directed me to visit these countries and further requested Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy of Calcutta to organise medical missions in this behalf. Doctors, nurses, and the necessary equipment are all ready to proceed immediately and are awaiting Government's permission. I shall be grateful to you if you will kindly expedite this matter and inform me as soon as possible of your decision.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Government of India had provided Rs. 1 lakh for relief of Indians in Malaya.

31. To Secretary, Home Department, Government of India[1]

Allahabad
January 12, 1946

Dear Sir,
I am in receipt of your letter of the 31st December 1945. I am surprised that my previous letter dated November 30th addressed to the Home Member did not reach the Home Department. I now enclose a copy of that letter. You will notice that I desire to have travelling facilities for visiting Burma and Malaya as early as possible. For this purpose I want my passport renewed and such permits and priorities as may be necessary to travel by air to Burma and Malaya. Will you be good enough to expedite this matter and to let me have the decision of the Government of India as early as possible?

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

retenues to report to their sovereign. There was a hum of life and activity, for this was the hub of a vast and rich empire.

Eighty-eight years ago another trial was held in this Red Fort of Delhi, the trial of the last of a great line. That trial put a final end to a chapter of India's history. Was this second trial, held in the final weeks of 1945, to mark the end of another chapter? Surely, it is a presage of that end, and those who watched it from day-to-day, or those who will read about it in the printed page will sense how that end draws near and the page is being turned for us to begin the new chapter. But it is not necessary to go to the trial for this. The very air of India is full of that change and turning over into something bright and new, where history can be written by us in a different fashion.

35. The Achievements of Subhas Bose[1]

I am gratified that this meeting is being held at a place which links the two cities of Old Delhi and New Delhi. There is a conflict between old and new ideas everywhere in the world. I congratulate Mr. Prem Sehgal for his resolve to dedicate his life for the cause of India's freedom. The I.N.A. has become a legend and the slogan of *Jai Hind* has spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. The three officers of the I.N.A. who were accused in the first trial are merely the symbol of India's struggle for freedom. The release of the three officers is not so much due to the able advocacy of the lawyers who appeared on their behalf, but the result of the force of public opinion. In my opinion it is a good sign.

Some people ask me why I am now praising Subhas Bose when I had opposed him while he was in India. I want to give a frank reply to this question. Subhas Bose and I were co-workers in the struggle for freedom for 25 years. He was younger to me by two or four or perhaps more years. Our relations with each other were marked by great affection. I used to treat him as my younger brother. It is an open

1. Speech at Subhas Bose's birthday meeting, Delhi, 23 January 1946. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 24 January and *National Herald*, 25 January 1946.

form and made easily accessible to the public. No trial in India either by Court Martial or in the civil courts has attracted so much public attention or has dealt with issues of such fundamental national importance. The legal issues were important enough, involving as they did questions of that rather vague and flexible body of doctrine known as international law. But behind the law there was something deeper and more vital, something that stirred the subconscious depths of the Indian mind. Those three officers and the Indian National Army became symbols of India fighting for her independence. All minor issues faded away, even the personalities of the three men being tried for an offence involving a death sentence became blurred in that larger picture of India. The trial dramatised and gave visible form to the old contest: England *versus* India. It became in reality not merely a question of law or of forensic eloquence and ability—though there was plenty of ability and eloquence—but rather a trial of strength between the will of the Indian people and the will of those who hold power in India. And it was that will of the Indian people that triumphed in the end. Therein lies significance, therein lies the promise of the future. Able lawyers conducted the case on either side, and the defence was fortunate in having some of the best legal talents in India: the Judges of the Court Martial played a worthy part and the Judge Advocate delivered a notable summing-up. And, finally, the Commander-in-Chief put the final touches to a historic episode by a decision which showed vision and true judgment. But the triumph was that of the Indian people as a whole, civil and military, who had pronounced judgment already and their verdict was too powerful to be ignored.

Lawyers will study and analyse the many aspects of this trial. Another precedent will burden their shelves. But lovers of freedom everywhere will rejoice that even the law, strait-laced as it is by convention and precedent, was compelled to recognise the right of a people to fight for their freedom.

The story behind this trial was strange enough. A few months ago very few persons in India knew anything about it. Gradually, it unfolded itself as the trial proceeded and it gripped the public imagination. No more suitable venue for it than the Red Fort of Delhi could have been found. Every stone in that historic setting tells a story and revives a memory of long ago. Ghosts of the past, ghosts of the Moghuls, of Shah Jahan, of Bahadur Shah, proud cavaliers pass by on prancing horses, processions wend their way. You hear the tramp of armed men, and the tinkling of silver bells on women's feet. Ambassadors came from far countries to pay court to the splendid court of the Moghul emperors; viceroys and governors and the great Amirs came with their

to our self-respect.[2] Nobody has any doubt about the bravery, high-mindedness and patriotism of Jayaprakash Narayan. The Home Member's reply should kindle a fire of resentment in your hearts. The British Government should find it impossible to maintain its domination over this country.

I have heard of Subhas Day celebrations by certain people who call themselves as members of the Congress leftist group. There is no left group in the Congress. If the leftists were there to disrupt the work of the Congress, then the sooner leftism dies the better it will be. All talk of leftism and Pakistan is meaningless until we have driven out the foreign Government from this country.

2. On 23 January 1946, the Home Member said that he had met Jayaprakash in jail a few days before. As he still believed in violence as a political method the Government saw no reason to release him.

36. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
January 29, 1946

My dear Krishna,
I have sent you separately by air mail a copy of a letter[2] I have addressed to Stafford Cripps.

I have received your letter of the 16th. My own information about A.C. Nambiar is (but this is vague and not definite) that he is going to be taken to London and that some proceedings are going to be started against him. In fact I was told that the matter was rather serious. His name appeared in the course of the I.N.A. trial here and he appears to have functioned as Subhas Bose's deputy in some places in Europe. Exactly what he did I do not know and I find it difficult to believe that a mild and inoffensive person like him could adopt an aggressive role anywhere. You know that he was hunted from place to place by the Nazis. Imprisoned and then driven out from Berlin, he sought refuge in Prague. Driven out again when the Nazis occupied Prague he came to France. Here also the Nazis gave him trouble but what happened afterwards I do not know. I heard he had gone to reside in France then. I should like you to keep on the lookout for any

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. *See ante*, pp. 138-147.

secret that at times there were differences between us on political questions. But I never for a moment doubted that he was a brave soldier in the struggle for freedom.

I do not expect that there would be unanimity on every issue when we have achieved freedom. There will be always differences in the outlook of the people who belong to a healthy race. Such differences are welcome. A people who behave like sheep cannot make any progress. At the same time we should also guard against indiscipline. In the Congress forum we discuss every question and arrive at a decision by following a democratic procedure. There are differences among us on certain aspects of international questions. Even now my approach to these questions is fundamentally the same.

I am not carried away by the public sentiment which found expression in supporting the cause of the I.N.A. men. When the complete picture of the movement came before me I formed my opinion. I do not know even today what I would have myself done at a time of crisis like that. For that reason I cannot judge anybody else. One thing however is clear. No Indian can withhold his praise for his countrymen who fight bravely. The manner in which Netaji faced the crisis inspires admiration. Perhaps I might have done the same thing if I were in his position. But I have always believed, and I still cling to this belief, that it is dangerous to take the help of another country for gaining freedom. Every country in the world today places its own national interests in the forefront. It is futile to expect that any country will help us in our struggle out of an altruistic motive. India's history furnishes several instances of how such help proved disastrous to its integrity and unity. The people whose help we sought established their domination over us.

The story of the I.N.A., as revealed during the trial of the three officers, has shown how Subhas Bose stoutly resisted Japanese attempts at overlordship and maintained an independent status. He never allowed himself to be handled by the Japanese as they pleased.

Another achievement of the I.N.A. is that it was able to forge a complete communal unity and harmony in its ranks. The standard of their fighting is admittedly very high. It is possible they will be acceptable to the future army of free India. It does not mean that the prospects of those already in the Indian army will be affected.

It is the duty of the country to see that all those who served in the I.N.A. get proper work. The country should also make use of some of the 20 to 25 lakhs of Indian soldiers who will soon be demobilised.

The impudence of the Home Member, seen in his reply to a question in the Assembly urging the release of Jayaprakash Narayan, is a challenge

1. I note that the Burma Government have indicated their unwillingness to agree to my visit to Burma at the present juncture.

2. The conditions under which the British Military Administration have permitted my visit to Malaya are not clear to me. They may be interpreted so as to enable my visit to lose its utility and value. It is desirable that there should be no misunderstanding about this matter on either side. The question before me is not what the British authorities in Malaya expect me to do, but what I intend to do myself. Normally I do not take orders or directions from British authorities, civil or military, in India or elsewhere. Nor am I intending to go to Malaya in order to function as a cog in the administrative machinery, as appears to be indicated in your letter. At the same time I have no desire to interfere in any way with the working of the administration or the measures taken by it for relief of distress.

3. My visit would not be political in the sense of being agitational. But inevitably I shall have to discuss with Indians their political conditions, their disabilities and their present difficulties, and how to surmount them. I shall have to help them in organising defence of such persons as are being proceeded against in courts of law and court-martial, as well as those who have been arrested, detained or are in prison. As Indians they will naturally be interested in the present and future of India and I shall have to speak to them about it.

4. The actual relief work to remove distress from lack of food, medicine, clothing and other necessaries can hardly be done by me. I can only report about conditions to my committee in India which will be in a position to organise relief if the necessary facilities are afforded to it. Medical relief, as you are aware, has been entrusted to the mission organised on my behalf by Dr. B.C. Roy, which is still awaiting Government's permission.

5. From many reports received by us from Indians in Malaya it is clear that there is acute distress and a sense of fear among them. The material assistance afforded to them is important and it would appear that this is by no means sufficient. To that we want to add to the best of our ability. But even more important is the psychological background and an approach which removes this sense of fear and oppression, and enables the community to stand up on its own feet and help itself. This approach is always difficult for a military administration, however well-intentioned it might be. But for me this would be easy and I believe I could make a difference. The fact that so many of my countrymen desire my visit and urge me to go there is itself a significant indication of what is needed.

news of him and to help him as far as possible. If any funds are required they will be sent to you.

Thank you for Bee Batlivala's[3] address. I am writing to her directly.

I wonder if you have been associated with K.B. Menon's case which is before the Privy Council.[4] People at this end have a way of getting entangled with the wrong kind of solicitors and counsel. I do not know who the solicitors are. I hope Polak is not in it. The appeal was sent from Madras some time ago and admitted by the Privy Council. I am very much interested in Menon and want to help him to the best of my ability. Indeed I have just transferred money for the appeal and sent it on to the Madras people. K.B. Menon, as you probably know, was associated with me in the Civil Liberties Union and subsequently in the All India States' People's Conference. He is an excellent worker, very quiet and unostentatious, and the mildest of men. I just cannot imagine him guilty of any of the offences charged against him. He was in fact acquitted by the first court but sentenced for ten years on appeal to the high court. He should have an excellent case.

About my money, I am in no hurry for it and you can use it whenever you require it. I only wanted to know how much it was.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

3. Later Mrs. Mansall; belonged to a well known Parsi family of Bombay; for some time she practised as a barrister in London; she is now settled in England.
4. K.B. Menon, who was acquitted in the trial court, was convicted on 5 January 1945 of criminal conspiracy by the Madras High Court and was sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment. His appeal to the Privy Council had been admitted.

37. To Secretary, External Affairs Department, Govt. of India[1]

Allahabad
31.1.1946

Dear Sir,
I am in receipt of your D.O. No. D 506-G(P)/46.[2]

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Jawaharlal was informed that the Burmese Government could not agree to his visit, while the Military Administration in Malaya had no objection to his visit to that country for relief of distress.

You will forgive me, I hope. Somehow, I felt later that it would be rather redundant and too late for me to write. But I was and am greatly impressed by your admirable conduct of the case.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

39. Abandon the Trials[1]

Being on tour in the interior, I could not keep up with news. But I must say that the sentence passed on Capt. Rashid[2] of the I.N.A. seems to be very unjust and wrong. I do not admire or appreciate in the least the stand taken or the statement made by Capt. Rashid in the course of his trial.[3] That was something not in keeping with the dignity of an individual or group or the I.N.A. or the nation. Nor can we have any sympathy with any acts of cruelty indulged in by anyone against officers and soldiers of the Indian army.

I do not know the facts of individual cases and am unable to judge. But it must be borne in mind that the circumstances were very special and extraordinary and normal standards cannot be applied to these cases.

The Commander-in-Chief acted wisely and with far-sighted statesmanship in the first I.N.A. trial. That wisdom and far sight are needed for other cases also. Indeed the right thing to do is to abandon these cases. In Capt. Rashid's case the heavy sentence passed must be revised.

1. Statement to the press, Bahraich, 8 February 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 10 February 1946.
2. Abdul Rashid, formerly a captain in the Punjab Regiment of the Indian Army, was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment on a charge of brutality to fellow Indians.
3. On 22 January 1946, he stated that he had joined the Indian National Army to safeguard the interests of his community against the non-Muslims, "who were to invade India with the Japanese and establish a Ram raj."

6. That psychological approach will be largely nullified if I go to Malaya under constraint and limitations. Indeed I would not like to go in these conditions. It is surprising that nearly six months after the end of the war, there should be so many barriers and difficulties in the way of travel, even for the urgent necessity of giving material and psychological relief.

7. I am prepared to go to Malaya at fairly short notice. I should like to take a secretary with me. My stay there should not exceed ten days if normal facilities for transport are available. If not, then it is a little difficult for me to fix the limit of my stay. I should like to visit Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and perhaps two or three centres. I note that the authorities will be unable to provide me with a car. I shall try to do without it but I would expect that other facilities, such as petrol etc., will be available.

8. I shall be glad if you will kindly let me know if what I have written above is acceptable to the British Military Administration in Malaya, and if so, what approximate date would be feasible for my journey to Malaya.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

38. To Bhulabhai Desai[1]

Lucknow
6.2.46

My dear Bhulabhai,

Nandan met me today and told me that he had seen you in Bombay and that you had expressed your disappointment at my not having written or telephoned to you at the conclusion of the first I.N.A. trial. You were right and I am to blame. Still, as a matter of fact, I was full of admiration for your conduct of the case and especially for your final address. I referred to this at the time in a number of speeches and in a press statement. I was rushing about from place to place and had little time to write. Subsequently, I was unfortunate enough to develop dysentery right in the middle of a tour.

1. Bhulabhai Desai Papers, N.M.M.L.

4

STATES PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

40. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Allahabad
15 February 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,
In Gorakhpur I found 100 Gurkhas who had served in the I.N.A. and had been discharged. They are a special problem and have to be dealt with specially for various reasons. Partly because the Gurkhas stood apart in the past and they require some encouragement. Partly, on the other hand, because they are generally illiterate and the only work they can do is watch and ward or something of that type. I imagine that room could be found for them in Bombay for this kind of work. We could get some of them engaged here but the salaries are low. Could you kindly look into this matter or ask somebody to look into it A direct communication on the subject might be sent to:
Thakur Singhasan Singh
C/o The District Congress Committee
Gorakhpur

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. 3, p. 203.

1. To Jainarain Vyas[1]

Allahabad
26-6-1945

My dear Jainarainji,
Your letter and telegram. I have already sent a telegram in reply. I am definitely of opinion that a meeting of the States People's Standing Committee should not be held at this stage. We cannot decide anything though, of course, if we meet, there will be much to talk about—past occurrences etc. As you say it would be unwise to raise the States question in the Simla talks. That would only lead to confusion and unfortunate consequences. So I suggest that we should await developments.

My programme is so uncertain that I am reluctant to fix any engagement which might have to be given up. I may have to go to Simla suddenly. But the main thing is that we cannot profitably discuss anything till the situation is clearer. I hope you will make this position clear to our friends who have asked for a meeting of the Standing Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Sind Valley, Kashmir
July 31, 1945

My dear Krishna,
I wrote to you a few days ago from an out-of-the way place in the Kashmir mountains. I hope the letter, which was sent by air mail, reached you. I would have preferred sending an air letter but I could not get suitable forms. Our trekking expedition has ended and tomorrow we go to Srinagar to be accorded a formal reception there—a river procession etc. Both Indira and I have enjoyed this twelve-day trip and pro-

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

no means hostile to him. My visit to Kashmir, therefore, serves a purpose also — apart from health reasons — for it helps the Kashmiri Pundits to come out of their middle class shells and join the wider movement. They are amazingly intelligent and wherever they have gone in other parts of India they have made their mark.

You will be interested to know the kind of songs Kashmiri women sang to welcome us as we passed through their villages — One of them ran thus (in Kashmiri of course):

> You are the golden earring in our ears.
> Where are you going far away from us?
> The way is long and perilous.
> Come back, come back to us soon.

Kashmir and Kashmir politics have a certain importance in Indian affairs. Although Jinnah keeps the States out of his speeches and plans, it is obvious that if there is to be Pakistan or anything like it, Kashmir must be a part of it just as the N.W.F. Province must belong to it. The fact that both the N.W.F.P. and Kashmir (both with overwhelming Muslim populations) are opposed to Pakistan has thus considerable significance.

Jinnah has never defined Pakistan and refuses to do so. It is pretty clear now that he has overshot his mark and Pakistan is further off than ever. Pakistan, when analysed, leads to two principal conclusions: (1) It is inconceivable that Pakistan can be imposed on the southern districts of the Punjab (which are predominantly Hindu and Sikh) or on the western districts of Bengal (which are predominantly Hindu). Thus if ever Pakistan comes into existence it must lead to the partition of Punjab and Bengal, the richer and more developed districts of both being cut off from Pakistan and joining Hindustan. (2) Both in the Punjab and Bengal there is a strong feeling, among Hindus and Muslims alike, against partition of the province. Nowhere in India is there such a strong culturally united area as Bengal. To a somewhat lesser extent but still quite sufficiently this applies to the Punjab also. So there is the riddle: the Pakistanis, if they are keen enough and strong enough, can only have Pakistan after the division of Bengal and the Punjab, and this they do not want because they get economically backward areas which will remain backward, and also because of the strong sentiment among Punjabis and Bengalis (even those who are in favour of Pakistan) against a division of their provinces. This is the rub and because of this Jinnah refuses to define what he wants.

Pakistan would probably have been a much feebler affair today but for the encouragement given to it by British officialdom and some diehards

fited by it. I feel physically fitter and mentally much refreshed. But owing to exposure to alternation of cold and the hot sun my skin in many places threatens to peel off.

I shall be a week in Srinagar where inevitably there are many engagements. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, the President of the Kashmir National Conference, is a remarkable man in his own way and he has proved himself to be an effective mass leader. Starting 15 years ago more or less as a communal leader he veered round quickly and changed his Kashmir Muslim Conference into the Kashmir National Conference. You must remember that Kashmir proper (apart from Jammu, Ladakh etc.) has a 95% Muslim population. Sheikh Abdullah has not formally allied himself to the Indian National Congress but generally he follows the Congress lead. He has been connected also with the All India States People's Conference of which I am president. In 1942 Kashmir, under Sheikh Abdullah's leadership, reacted in much the same way as the rest of India. The Muslim League, representing the out-and-out communally-minded Muslims, opposes him; but it is very weak in Kashmir. It just feebly exists in two or three towns and has no influence whatsoever in the rural areas. Sheikh Abdullah is amazingly popular among the masses who call him the *Sher-e-Kashmir* — the Lion of Kashmir — and many songs have been written and are sung about him. Going through these inner valleys I have been surprised to find how deep and far-reaching is his influence. These terribly poor, dirty and unkempt, half-clad people, living in a land which is amazingly rich, look up to him as their deliverer. I have been greatly moved by the demonstrations of welcome and affection for him and for me from these simple folks, often half-nomads moving up and down the valleys with the changing seasons. They take me to their heart as a Kashmiri, one of themselves, though I live far away and the fact that I am a Kashmiri Brahmin, welcomed alike by Muslims or Hindus, helps to make people feel that there is no communal question in Kashmir. Of course there is a bit of that question here — reversed compared to India as a whole. The Kashmiri Pundits here form a small minority — 5% or so and chiefly belonging to the middle classes — lower and middle — with few contacts with the masses. Any mass movement therefore frightens them. They look to the state services which in the past they largely monopolised, together with Punjabis, and the Muslims were very backward in education etc. Now there is an inevitable tendency for Muslims to demand their share and more of these services. So the question, which is really an economic and class one, assumes sometimes a communal aspect. Still many bright young men among the Kashmiri Pundits have joined Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference and even others are by

no means hostile to him. My visit to Kashmir, therefore, serves a purpose also — apart from health reasons — for it helps the Kashmiri Pundits to come out of their middle class shells and join the wider movement. They are amazingly intelligent and wherever they have gone in other parts of India they have made their mark.

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Pakistan would probably have been a much feebler affair today but for the encouragement given to it by British officialdom and some diehards

in Britain. But the final impetus was given to it by the Cripps proposals. Cripps has somehow got it into his head that something of this sort is inevitable or at any rate must be acknowledged and put to vote. The Communist Party of India has been doing raging and tearing propaganda in favour of Pakistan — not just the right of self-determination but a complete surrender to Jinnah's unspecified claims. I think they have acted very foolishly indeed. Their leading men are not first rate in any sense and P.C. Joshi, their No. 1, is an earnest, hardworking and likable person but certainly not up to the mark intellectually or from the point of view of any larger vision. Dange, I think, is the ablest among them but I doubt if he has much influence in the upper ranks of the Indian Communist Party. At present there is terrible prejudice among Congressmen and others against the Communist Party in India but it is important to remember that this prejudice has nothing to do with *communism or socialism or Russia. Russia is admired and liked* generally and a vague sentiment in favour of socialism is very widely held. The prejudice is against the Indian political policy of the Communist Party here — what they did in August 1942 and subsequently and especially their pro-Pakistan and pro-Jinnah policy. It is a pity that this barrier has been erected and it will take time for it to disappear or to be lowered, especially as the Communist Party here is still continuing its old policy more or less. The fact of the barrier must be recognised.

M.N. Roy and his satellites of course do not count at all in any real sense of the word. Such local influence as they possessed in a very few places was due to the large funds placed at their disposal by Government and because they had a clear field to work during these 3 years. They are thoroughly discredited and can hardly appear in public. When funds dry up they will almost totally disappear from public life. I notice, however, that their agents tried to put up a brave show in London and elsewhere and won over Citrine and some others. Dange did a useful job in exposing them.

I began this letter with the intention of writing to you about your *spinning wheel scheme but I have drifted to other subjects.* First of all I must repeat that I have thus far received only your air letters dated 8th July and 12th July (two of the latter) and not the earlier one you mention. Also I have not received any plans or specifications of the proposed spinning wheel. I am sending today a copy of your letter about the wheel to Gandhiji and requesting him to communicate direct with you in order to save time. I do not know what his reaction will be to your proposal. Probably he will require further particulars. Anyway he will welcome the attempt to evolve a simple and efficient wheel.

It seems obvious to me that however rapid the pace of industrialisation (by the big machine) in India a vast field will remain for small-scale and cottage industries both of the whole-time and auxiliary variety. The supposed conflict between the big machine and the small or cottage machine is thus largely imaginary provided there is an attempt to fit them into each other in a system of planning. Of course there is a certain conflict in the two philosophies or views of life. In practice however, as I found in the National Planning Committee, the conflict can be reduced to very small proportions, especially if it is agreed that large-scale industry should be socialised or state-owned.

The answers to your queries will, I hope, be supplied by someone on Gandhiji's staff conversant with such affairs. From my very limited layman's knowledge I might, however, inform you that most village and cottage spinning is done between 15 and 20 counts. There has been a progressive tendency to spin finer counts. In special areas, where good long staple cotton is available, counts upto 50 and above are produced. When I spin I usually produce counts 25 to 30. At my fastest, and when I am in the right mood, I have spun 400 yards of 30 counts yarn an hour. I have spun upto 43 counts. My usual speed is 350 yards of 27 counts yarn an hour. My yarn is good and strong. Experts spin much faster.

I am sleepy now after a long day's trek — our last day of this trip.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

3. *The Labour Victory in Britain*[1]

The Labour victory in the British general election is pleasing, because it is symptomatic of a great social and progressive change in British politics, which will inevitably affect both domestic and international affairs.

1 Interview to the press, Srinagar, 2 August 1945. From *The Hindu*, 5 August 1945.

As such I welcome it. So far as India is concerned, it is too early to form an opinion about the effect of such a change. If, as is siad,[2] the Labour policy is much the same as the previous policy, then obviously India is not much affected. We shall have to wait and see if this is so. In any event, the fact of a progressive upsurge in Britain is undeniable, and must be welcomed by all progressive opinion in the world.

Since I have come to Kashmir, I have been trekking in the mountains. I have greatly enjoyed this and have profited by it. I have to stay in Srinagar to fulfil several engagements during this week. I have also to visit the Congress President at Gulmarg and I shall make up my final programme after that. Probably I shall rest for a few days at Pahalgam with my daughter who is returning from Kashmir.

2. Amery declared soon after his defeat at the elections that the coming to office of the Labour Party would not make the slightest difference to the tone and temper of British rule in India. Ernest Bevin, the new Foreign Secretary, said that British foreign policy would continue to be in line with that of the Coalition Government.

4. The Kashmir National Conference[1]

For many years past I have been interested in the Kashmir National Conference. On many occasions I have had the privilege of meeting the president and the leader of this conference, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, and of discussing its affairs with him. In my wanderings in Kashmir, specially in the remoter higher valleys, I have seen its influence among the people and the faith and affection they bear to it. But this is the first time that I have had the honour of attending the annual session of this conference and addressing it. I welcome this privilege, a privilege of addressing my brother and sister Kashmiris, people of the same blood and kith and kin.

1. Speech at the annual session of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, Sopore, 4 August 1945. A text of the speech in Jawaharlal's handwriting in the J.N. Papers is printed. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

I have been attracted to this conference for various reasons, among them being the fact that it is a mass organisation, reaching down to and affecting the lives of the common people. Also because it is not a sectarian or communal organisation which shuts its doors to people of other religions or sects. Its doors are open to all Kashmiris who accept its objectives and its basic programme. I am also attracted to the objectives it holds out to the people of Kashmir — the goal of political freedom and of economic emancipation, so that the people should determine their own destiny and get rid of the curse of poverty.

A mass organisation has a certain reality about it because it tends to express the urges and wishes of the masses, and even if those urges happen to be wrong, that reality remains and cannot be ignored. If they go wrong, they will learn through bitter experience and turn to the right path. But a narrow organisation, confined to a small group or a class, has no such reality and tends to move in a confined sphere. It loses sight of the larger and more fundamental problems and gets entangled in the meshes of petty questions which have no vital importance.

In politics, as in life itself, it is of the greatest importance that we should realise what comes first and what comes afterwards. First things must be considered first or else we lose ourselves in secondary matters, forgetting the primary problems. People may agree about a number of matters, and yet it makes all the difference in the world as to what they put first and what second. Is truth our first objective or is it just a secondary affair? Is freedom our first objective or is it dependent on some condition or pre-requisite? Sectarian organisations must inevitably lay greater emphasis on their sectarian claims than on any more important objective. Hence they are narrow and limited, and though they may occasionally give expression to some aspects of the truth, or may talk of freedom, yet they miss the essence of the truth and have no real incentive for freedom. Further, they can never think in terms of the masses or of the fundamental economic problems of the day because they are too much entangled in their own sectarian claims.

Because the Kashmir National Conference has avoided these errors and pitfalls, it has been a national conference as opposed to a communal organisation, and has kept its doors wide open to all because it has looked to the masses and sought to relieve them of their many burdens and drawn its strength from them because it has aimed high. I have looked upon its growth with pleasure and hope. Inevitably it consists of a great majority of Muslim representatives because Muslims form the largest population in Kashmir. But the Hindus and the Sikhs and other Kashmiris have a place in it and I am glad to say that many of them have joined it, and function through it. I would urge upon them that

it is their duty to strengthen this mass organisation not only for wider nationalistic reasons but also for the good of their own community. It is patent that no small minority can have any place in the future scheme of things unless it lines up with the majority. At present some minorities look to a third party for their sustenance and protection. That is a sure way of doing disservice to their own community, for the third party, whatever it is, cannot long remain and ultimately the minority will have to face the majority and come to terms with it. This does not mean that the minority should surrender its legitimate rights to the majority. Anything that is right should never be surrendered and any individual or group who surrenders the right for fear of consequences does injury to itself and is not honoured by others. But while in fundamental matters of principle there can or should be no surrender, in regard to other and special claims there should be no insistence. No community gains strength by petty squabbles or by being spoon-fed. Strength comes not from outside protection or petty demands, but from self-reliance. All that a minority, and especially the highly enlightened minority of Kashmir, should demand are full citizenship rights and free field and full opportunity for progress in common with others. To ask for special rights and protection, limits the field of opportunity and growth and results in the minority putting itself in a cage of its own making. I trust, therefore, that Kashmiri Pundits and Sikhs and others will throw their full weight on the side of the National Conference.

We live in a dynamic and changing world which is changing from day to day at a remarkable speed. We have, therefore, to keep wide awake and not allow old practices and modes of thought to imprison us. Our political policies may vary from day to day but our fundamental objectives and methods must remain. We must remember always that a noble objective requires noble means. If we play an opportunist game, seeking some advantage in the present without regard to the future, then we sell that future for a very doubtful present. A great task nobly undertaken is lowered and discredited because the means to be adopted is low. We must, therefore, stick to our objective through noble means, even though this may mean some disadvantage in the present.

Kashmir is a beautiful land and those who live here are fortunate. But real good fortune will only come on the day freedom comes to the people. That freedom cannot be an isolated affair for Kashmir; it depends wholly on the freedom of the whole of India. Freedom, it has been said, is indivisible. And so the problems of Kashmir as well as the freedom of Kashmir must be viewed in this perspective as integral parts of the vaster Indian problem.

I wish good fortune and success to the efforts of this conference. I

trust that it will become more and more representative of all groups in Kashmir and I hope that under the wise and far seeing leadership of the *Sher-e-Kashmir*, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, it will succeed in achieving its objective.

5. The Pundits of Kashmir[1]

Kashmiri Pundits must not be led by narrow sectional interests. In this revolutionary period you must take a long range view and not develop an isolationist attitude. You must know that you are a small minority of five per cent in Kashmir and that the remaining 95 per cent are Muslims. You will be wise and far-sighted if you maintain good relations with the Muslims who form the bulk of the population in this land. Take a very realistic view of the situation, otherwise you will be swept off the board.

I know well Sheikh Abdullah and his lieutenants and workers of the Kashmir National Conference. I am happy to observe that the foundation[2] of the conference is right, though I may not agree with all its decisions. The doors of the National Conference are open to all. Even if there are no Hindus in it, its character will remain national because it is a mass organisation. I am, however, glad that there are Hindus and Sikhs in the National Conference. I advise others to join it in much larger numbers and thereby influence its decisions. They must not remain passive spectators and critics. It is obvious, and even a child should know, that the Maharaja and the British will always keep you slaves if you do not line up with the masses in the land. You should not think in terms of temporary advantages or Government jobs. You should not rely on official patronage or recommendation.

1. *Address to Kashmiri Pundits, Srinagar, 7 August 1945. From The Hindu,* 10 August 1945.
2. Over 77 per cent of the State's population was Muslim — 61 5 per cent in Jammu and 95 per cent in the Kashmir province. The Kashmir National Conference, which was formed in 1932, brought the Muslims and Hindus in a common movement for independence.

6. The Ninth of August[1]

We are proud of the August 1942 events. August has become a symbol of India's urge for freedom. Although the leaders were arrested on 9 August, the people took up the challenge of the British Government and gave a valiant answer. In anger and indignation at the arrest of their leaders, they bravely faced the bombing, machine-gun firing and lathis. Their passionate craving for freedom found expression in brave and heroic deeds.

People should judge the August events in the right perspective of history. I am not afraid of using the word "rebellion" for the August movement. There had never been a greater revolt in India since 1857. There were good and bad aspects in that movement with which I may not agree, but I cannot withhold my praise for those who, guided by the urge for freedom, made great sacrifices. If our people had tamely submitted to the British Government, the country would have lost its honour. We are the stronger for what has happened during the past three years.

According to the Government's statement some one thousand people were killed in firing on 565 occasions. Accoring to the people's estimate the number of killed is placed at ten, twenty or fifty times as much, but the exact numbers of the dead and the wounded are not known. But for their blood India would have been a carcass.

The Quit India Resolution was merely a pretext for the Government to arrest Mahatma Gandhi and the members of the Working Committee. Warrants for our arrest had been prepared on 4 August, four days before the resolution was actually passed. When we were in jail it was stated time and again on behalf of the Government that if the August Resolution was withdrawn the position would be reconsidered. Still the resolution could not be withdrawn. It will not be withdrawn neither today nor tomorrow nor the day after.

Today, the Ninth August, our minds should not have thoughts of retaliation against those who are guilty of tyrannical acts. We should dedicate our lives to that noble cause for which our brave men and women laid down their lives. We are proud of those martyrs, known and unknown.

1. Speech at Srinagar, 9 August 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 11 August 1945.

7. The Vulgarity of Communal Demonstration[1]

I am leaving Srinagar today after eight strenuous days. I have had the privilege of meeting many old friends and making new ones, of coming into contact with many groups and with friendly crowds. Everywhere I have been overwhelmed with kindness. The memory of this will endure for long. This lovely city, superbly situated in the valley of beauty, with immemorial mountains around it, speaks always to my heart and arouses thoughts of long connections

The combination of natural beauty and human friendship and of exceeding courtesy and mass enthusiasm is a potent attraction to the mind and heart. As I have been affected I cannot express my gratitude sufficiently to the people of Kashmir who have caused these deeply moving experiences. May it be well with them now and in future and may they scale rapidly the mountains to reach the land of freedom and progress.

I have tried to avoid, as far as I could, incursions into the domestic politics of Kashmir. But I must express my sorrow at the regrettable incident which occurred on 1 August during the river procession.[2] That procession was a triumphant success and a hundred thousand and more Kashmiris showered their love and affection on the favoured guests. But a small number of persons demonstrated against them. For my part, I have no objection to a hostile demonstration, especially when it is lost in an overwhelming friendly welcome from the masses of people. But what pained me most was the utter vulgarity and the absolute obscenity of the people's behaviour.

I was also surprised to notice that this and the violence that accompanied it had apparently been tolerated by the police authorities. I imagine that it would have been easy enough to prevent or control it by taking effective steps.

What has pained me ever more has been the commendation of this unseemly behaviour by some persons in a language which sinks to the lowest level of vulgarity and is an open invitation to extreme forms of violence and to a repetition of what occurred. Politics have their ups

1. Statement to the press, Srinagar, 9 August 1945. From *The Tribune*, 11 August 1945.
2. On 1 August 1945, adherents of the Muslim Conference, a branch of the Muslim League in Kashmir, tried to break up the river procession in Srinagar, taken out in honour of Jawaharlal and Maulana Azad The police quietly looked on. One member of the National Conference who was injured later died

and downs and sometimes they are unsavoury. But there is a limit to vulgarity and meanness. This limit has been passed by a few people at least in Kashmir. I trust, however, that the vast majority of people will not allow this degradation to affect their own standards of action and behaviour.

8. To Khan Sahib[1]

Gulmarg
August 10, 1945

My dear Khan,

My stay in Kashmir has been somewhat more prolonged than I had intended. Partly this is due to the Maulana's wishes. I have had to change my programme repeatedly. I did not write to you before I knew for certain what my programme was. In answer to a letter from Mehar Chand I wrote to him my provisional programme and requested him to inform you of it. This provisional programme has now been more or less confirmed, subject always to any emergency arising. It is as follows:

I leave Srinagar on the 21st morning reaching Murree about 4 p.m. I spend that night at Murree and on the forenoon of the 22nd I leave by car for Dungargali and Nathiagali, reaching either place about noon. I propose to stay there the rest of that day as well as the whole of next day and night. Whether I should spend more time at Dungargali or at Nathiagali, and where I should spend the two nights, it is for you to decide. I understand the two places are quite near to each other. My main purpose of going there is to meet you and so it is for you to decide and fix up how I should divide my time there.

I am sorry I cannot spend more time in the Frontier Province at this stage. I have already kept away far too long from my own province and an urgent work calls me. Besides, the month of *Ramzan* is not a suitable month for visiting the Frontier. If possible I shall come again later. But in these changed times no one can look too far ahead. For the present, therefore, my visit to the Frontier will be confined to Dungargali and Nathiagali and to meeting you and such other friends as are available there. I do not want to go to Peshawar and, though I might have to pass Abbottabad on the way, I do not consider this a visit to Abbottabad.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I propose to leave Nathiagali on the 24th morning for Rawalpindi. If it is possible, I should like to visit Taxila on the way. But in any event I want to reach Rawalpindi by 5 p.m or a little later on the 24th. I leave the same night for Lahore.

I hope you will be free to have a long talk with me. It seems pretty certain that new developments will take place in the political situation before long, and possibly within the next fortnight or so. We have to be prepared for them and I wish to discuss these possibilities with you.

I hope Mary[2] is well. I have had occasion to meet Badshah Khan two or three times in Srinagar. I understand he is going back today or tomorrow.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

2. Mrs Khan Sahib.

9. *High Ideals and an Honest Path*[1]

Mere enthusiasm is of little avail. One must toil hard, understand his job and thus march on the path of progress. In political, social and economic affairs the interests of lakhs of people are involved. These are complicated matters and enthusiasm alone will not help in solving the problems confronting our country.

If you would concentrate on the big and the basic questions, your outlook also will widen individually and collectively. If you become involved in petty questions and quarrels, you lose both your present and your future. Be on your guard against opportunism as it may do harm to your cause. If small groups in an organisation take care of their group interests only, it brings about their disintegration. It is essential for every organisation like yours to keep high its ideals and choose the right and the honest path for achieving its purpose. As you will do, so shall your followers. Therefore, move forward in the honourable way with your heads erect.

1. Address to the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference workers, Srinagar, 19 August 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 22 August 1945.

Nobody can say what will happen and when that will happen. The struggle for our country's freedom will continue unabated till we reach our goal. In the Simla Conference an interim arrangement to solve the Indian deadlock was sought. That phase is over. The question of our country's freedom is before us demanding permanent solution. Great political wisdom is required to find out the solution.

The Government of India should clarify matters regarding the personnel of the Indian National Army in Burma. These people were misguided people but their patriotism cannot be doubted.

10. Telegram to Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah[1]

On leaving Kashmir after a month of vivid experiences in the mountains and in the valley my mind is full of the overwhelming kindness and hospitality of all kinds of people. My warm thanks go to you, to your colleagues and to all others who honoured me by their friendship and comradeship. Kashmir and its people will always remain in my mind and heart and I trust that they will move unitedly to the goal of prosperity and freedom. I hope you are better now.

1. Sent from Murree on 22 August 1945. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

11. To Mirza Beg[1]

Allahabad
September 3, 1945

My dear Mr. Beg,[2]
Thank you for your letter. I am glad to know that Sheikh Saheb is recovering. What a lot of trouble was caused to him by an unfortunate

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Mirza Mohamad Afzal Beg (b. 1908); arrested for Quit Kashmir agitation, 1946; Minister in Sheikh Abdullah's Cabinet, 1948; founded Jammu and Kashmir Plebiscite Front, 1955; accused in Kashmir Conspiracy Case, 1964; arrested with Sheikh Abdullah and detained at Ootacamund, 1965; released, 1967; externed from Kashmir, 1971; allowed to re-enter, 1972; Minister for Revenue, Industry and Commerce, 1975-77; Deputy Chief Minister, 1977-78.

accident and yet perhaps we ought to be thankful for both he and I *might easily have lost our eyesight.*[3]

I must thank you for all the courtesy and friendship you showed me during my stay in Srinagar. I have brought back with me vivid memories of this visit, of the many friends I met there.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. On 19 August 1945, when Jawaharlal and Sheikh Abdullah were driving together to the office of the National Conference in Srinagar, where Jawaharlal was to address the Conference workers, the crowd cheered them and exploded crackers A cracker hit the face of Sheikh Abdullah and injured him

12. Congress Support for States People's Demands[1]

The broad policy of the Congress is to satisfy the aspirations of the people of the Indian States. It strives for the establishment of a full democratic self-government in the States within a united federated India. The Congress is concerned with the future of the States people. The Congress insists that power should be transferred to the people of the States so that they may decide their own future. The rulers will remain as long as they serve their subjects and respect their wishes.

I fail to understand the charge, often made against the Congress, that it is indifferent to the States people. It is a strange notion. One of the *two main points on which the Congress took strong objection to the* Cripps proposals related to the absence of any policy to deal with the question of the States people. It is not clear in Lord Wavell's new plan either.[2]

Question: It may be suggested that the Congress should officially *affiliate or recognise the States people's organisations.*

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Congress will certainly help them, as it has been doing all along and the more so, as the issue of Indian States forms an

1. Address to a meeting of States people's workers, Bombay, 26 September 1945. From *The Hindu*, 27 September 1945.
2. Lord Wavell's proposals were limited to British India and did not extend to the Indian States

integral part of the question of Indian independence. The Congress derives its strength from the masses and it is, therefore, necessary that the peoples of the States should become organisationally strong and get themselves involved in the national cause. The Congress does not believe in merely passing resolutions unless they have the national sanction behind them. It is an extraordinary misconception to think that the Congress Working Committee or the All India Congress Committee is the foundation of the Congress. The real strength of the Congress is in the villages where the village Congress committees are functioning with the full support of the peasants. I, therefore, ask you to strengthen your organisations to obtain popular sanction behind your demands.

13. The Princes and the People[1]

One day, even on Delhi's Red Fort, the Indian national flag will fly. This major fact will influence the whole country, including the States.

The demand of the States people's movement is for responsible government which will allow the Princes to remain, provided they agree to hand over the reins of administration to the people's representatives. So far as the smaller States are concerned, their existence as independent entities is impossible in the future. They have either to cooperate with each other, and evolve bigger units, or merge themselves with the neighbouring provinces. In this way alone can these States obtain a status equal to that of the provinces.

The Princes must ask themselves how the States will remain in their present position when the whole map of India is changed. They have been repeatedly requested, in resolutions and speeches, to understand the significance of the changing times. Their reply has been to refer to their treaties, engagements and *sanads*. What significance have they now after 150 years? Even granting their significance, nothing whatsoever will be allowed to stand in the way of people's rights.

While formerly the Princes refused to understand the changing times, they now say that they understand their implications. But when it is a

1. Speech at Jaipur, 22 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 24 October 1945.

question of doing something, they have always failed. *This is the last* opportunity for me to warn that the situation in India is soon going to take a turn, whether anyone wants it or not.

None knows what lies ahead, but there is no doubt that this time India is bent on complete independence. *The rulers of the States will* do well to effect the required changes themselves. It is better they do it themselves than be forced by others.

The criticism that the Congress has forgotten the people of the States is wrong because the *States' boundaries intermix with those of British* India, and it is not possible to forget or leave out the States. Ultimately, the States people have to rely on themselves for winning their objective, and no amount of outside help can bring them the desired result.

The question of *Congress relationship with the States people's move*ment is again agitating the minds of the Congress leaders, and the Congress constitution might even be amended[2] to suit whatever policy is eventually decided upon.

I am of the view that the time has come for closer association of the States with British India. The old demand of the Congress for a constituent assembly can be acceptable only if room is found in it for representatives of the States. Nominees of the Princes will only make the assembly useless.

The moneyed men of Rajputana made more money out of people's distress in Bengal and elsewhere. Small fractions of the huge profit, distributed in charity, will not solve the basic problem of disparity between the rich and the poor. A change of officers, from white to black, will not also do the trick. Traditional rights should not be allowed to stand in the way of people's rights. It is the people's right to have the panchayat raj.

I very much appreciate the purse presented by the Harijans of the State. But I am ashamed of accepting any money from those who are victims of the evils of society. I call upon the country to remove the blot of untouchability before it can prove its fitness for independence.

2. At the Haripura Congress of 1938, the organisation of Congress committees in the Indian States was sanctioned provided that they undertook neither parliamentary activity nor direct action in the name of the Congress

14. Responsible Government for the States[1]

In view of the proposals for changes in the constitution of India broadcast by the British Prime Minister and the Viceroy and Crown Representative in India in September last,[2] the Standing Committee wishes to declare afresh that such changes can only be acceptable if they are based on full responsible government in the States as integral parts of a free India. Further that any constitution-making body should have as its members from the States representatives of the people elected on a wide franchise, which should at least approximate to the franchise at present prevailing for the Legislative Assemblies in the Provinces. Such representatives will represent the people's wishes and will have the same status and representative character as the members from the Provinces. Any other method of representation in the constituent assembly will necessarily mean a lower status for the members from the States and a joining together of democratic representatives and autocratic nominees, which will be a travesty of democratic procedure and is likely to lead to deadlock. It is essential therefore that the States' people should be represented on a fully democratic basis.

The Standing Committee has noted the statements made by, or on behalf of, some ruling Princes to the effect that they are desirous of enlarging the liberties of their people and do not wish to come in the way of India's freedom. While appreciating these sentiments, the Committee would point out that vague statements are not helpful at present when final decisions are impending. The States' People's Conference would willingly cooperate with the rulers and Governments of the States on the basis indicated above with a view to the establishment of responsible government in the States in line with the democratic governments in the provinces. In particular, any change in the policy of the States' Governments must begin with the full recognition of civil liberties without which it is impossible to have free elections or to make any substantial progress in the direction of freedom and representative institutions.

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal and passed by the Standing Committee of the States People's Conference at Jaipur on 24 October 1945. A.I.C.C. File No. 118/1945-48, p. 467, N.M.M.L.
2. In his statement of 19 September 1945 the Viceroy had said that he would discuss with the representatives of the Indian States on how best they could play their part in setting up a constitution making body.

15. On the Reforms in Rewa State[1]

During my tour in Rajputana I read a brief report of the announcement made by the Maharaja of Rewa granting full responsible government to his people.[2] On my return to Allahabad, I have read this statement in full. I am not fully acquainted with recent developments in the domestic politics of Rewa, but even apart from these, the Dusserha proclamation of the Maharaja of Rewa is significant and of far-reaching importance. I welcome it both for Rewa and as an instance of what should be done in other States.

All other questions in Rewa take a second place before this primary issue and they can be considered later I should like to congratulate the Maharaja on the lead he has given and the people of Rewa on this achievement which should lead soon to their goal of responsible government in Rewa as an integral part of free India. I should also like to congratulate our Congress colleagues in Rewa who have laboured so long for the cause of freedom and responsible government. But the people of Rewa must remember that there may still be many hitches and obstructions in their way and freedom is not easily obtained and has to be vigilantly guarded. Also that freedom involves responsibility and obligations I hope the people of Rewa will rise to the occasion and prove themselves worthy of the new opportunities opening out before them.

1 Statement to the press, Allahabad, 30 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 31 October 1945.
2 On 19 October 1945, Gulab Singh, the Maharaja of Rewa, conferred on his State full responsible government, adult franchise and a common electorate

16. The Danger of Belonging to the Past[1]

When I came to Rajputana, I tried to find a link between the past and the present and to look to the future. I consider it dangerous to belong

1. Speech at Mayo College, Ajmer, 14 November 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 15 November 1945

to the past for, although the past belongs to us, we are not actually in the past.

Most of the ruling families in Rajputana run into the past. I would ask the boys studying in the college to value their traditions, which are not the personal heritage of any one family, but are the common heritage of India as a whole and are a matter for pride. The Rajputs have many excellent qualities — courage, chivalry, sticking to their word even at the cost of their life — but all these have become static, so that, in the course of the last few centuries, the Rajputs have not been able to play their part so well on the chess-board of Indian history.

Europe, Asia and India have during the last 150 years witnessed the greatest changes since the world began. But there have been astoundingly few changes in India and it is surprising how we have survived.

I feel proud as an inheritor of the great past of India about which we must talk in terms of reverence. But reverence is one thing and to become a slave of the past is another. We have the look of age in our eyes and something of the wisdom of an ancient race on our faces. Our racial consciousness is like a palimpsest in as much as layers and layers of past traditions lay hidden in our sub-conscious minds. They, no doubt, produce mental equipoise but at the same time retard progress on account of the dust that has accumulated over them.

When I come to Rajputana I experience very strange feelings. I like this place. Every stone speaks of India's history. I like these relics of old India that are not found elsewhere. But at the same time I feel suffocated by a sense of fear, misery and oppression pervading the atmosphere. A sense of stagnation creeps gradually upon me. I do not like it.

On speaking about the duties of the Princes towards their people, I cite Shaw's definition of a gentleman. I agree with Shaw that a gentleman is a person who gives more than he receives from society. Most people are only receptacles for others' offerings while others give, and give from childhood till death. A true gentleman is one who gives without receiving anything. This giving is reckoned not in gold and silver but in terms of work and service. The Princes should ask themselves what they are receiving from their people and what they are giving in return.

People are talking today of this vested right or that, or of preserving this interest or that. This whole conception implies stability and someone standing as a *chowkidar* for safeguarding it. But there is no safeguard other, and better, than mutual goodwill which goes a long way in taking a nation forward.

Polo is a fine game. I would like to have a chance of playing polo. Unfortunately, I do not get a chance. But polo cannot take one far in life.

It is obvious that India is going to be independent and the Indian States are going to be part of this India. We cannot have two standards of living and civil liberties. The Indian States have to consider how they are going to fit in with these changes which are coming with extreme rapidity. Obviously, it involves a democratic form of government in the States.

I am a rebel in the sense that I refuse to accept any dogma, whether political or religious. There should be nothing dogmatic even about socialism. It must fit in with the conditions in a particular country. Marx had failed to look ahead. Socialism to be successful must be in accordance with the fundamental genius of a country. I foresee India as a great and powerful nation with something to give to all without receiving anything, in the spirit of the true gentleman.

17. To the Maharaja of Tripura[1]

Calcutta
December 9, 1945

Dear Maharaja Saheb,

I am informed that many members of Tripura Rajya Gana Parishad and the Tripura State Congress have for a long time been imprisoned without trial.[2] At the beginning of the war apparently a number of them were imprisoned without trial. Whether they are prisoners of the Bengal Government or Tripura State I don't know. Further information has reached me that the treatment of these prisoners is exceedingly bad and some of them have been suffering from serious diseases.

Further I understand that since the beginning of 1940, all meetings and processions and other demonstrations have been banned in the State and that civil liberty of any kind does not exist. I am surprised that such a state of affairs exists in any State in India today. I shall be grateful to you if you will correct me if my facts are wrong. If they are not

1. *The Tripura Chronicle* published this letter in its issue marking the 25th anniversary of independence, 15 August 1972.
2. Some political prisoners who had been transferred from Bengal jails to the Tripura State jail had their status undefined and were not entitled to the family pension given to security prisoners

wrong I trust that you will kindly remove this blot on the State administration.

I shall appreciate if an answer is sent to my home address — Anand Bhawan, Allahabad.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. On the Situation in Rewa State[1]

The present situation in Rewa requires careful handling. The Maharaja's declaration in favour of responsible government was welcomed by all Congressmen as pointing the right path, quite apart from the internal complications and problems of Rewa State. That proclamation has been and should be in future accepted fully, and the Political Department should be asked to implement it. The Maharaja's action in regard to this proclamation should be appreciated and he should be encouraged to pursue the matter further.

Other questions, however, arise which somewhat complicate the issue. There is the question of the Maharaj Kumar being sent abroad, probably Egypt, and there are other internal questions.[2] I am not competent to express an opinion about these internal matters without much greater knowledge than I possess. It seems to me, however, that there is a danger of the main issue of responsible government being pushed into the background by other and minor questions, if these latter are emphasised at this stage. Whatever the importance of these internal questions, they are obviously secondary to the main issue. Any emphasis on internal conflicts will not only divert attention but might enable the Political Department to take advantage of the new situation that might arise and take action which may injure our cause, as well as the objective

1. Note written for Congressmen, 27 December 1945. A.I.C.C. File No 101/1945-48, N.M.M.L.
2. On 18 December 1945, students and businessmen of Rewa State observed a hartal as a protest against the action contemplated by the Government to send away the Maharaj Kumar from the State with a view to preventing him from helping his father, the ruler of Rewa State, in effecting constitutional reforms.

which the Maharaja has laid down. Congressmen should, therefore, concentrate on the issue of responsible government and offer to cooperate fully with the Maharaja in realising this. They should call upon the *Political Department to implement the declaration. They should* not entangle themselves in internal conflicts which have no bearing on this issue.

As regards the Maharaj Kumar being sent abroad it is clear that any compulsion in this matter is most objectionable. Normally any such *arrangement should be made with the consent of the Maharaj Kumar* and his parents. The Maharaj Kumar is no minor and his wishes must have precedence over others. If the Maharaj Kumar does not wish to go, it is up to him to say so clearly and openly and if he is sent even then, it is right and proper for the strongest exception to be taken to this. He cannot be allowed to be treated as a prisoner.

I understand that considerable agitation has been going on in Rewa to prevent the Maharaj Kumar's visit abroad. I can understand this agitation only if the Maharaj Kumar himself is unwilling to go. Till that point is cleared up the agitation loses much of its force. In any event it seems to me that any big action in this matter is likely to interfere with the major issue referred to above. We must do nothing to allow the Political Department to sidetrack the major issue.

I have received an application from a newly formed Praja Parishad in Rewa. It is usually undesirable for overlapping organisations to be started in one place. As the Congress committee is functioning there it is not clear why the Praja Parishad has been started. Not knowing all the facts, I cannot give an opinion. The Praja Parishad as a new organisation *cannot be affiliated to the States People's Conference without full* enquiry.

Congressmen in Rewa should therefore follow the line suggested above, and should avoid controversy and conflict with other organisations or entanglement in local disputes. They must build up popular strength *to support the declaration of the Maharaja in favour of responsible gov*ernment.

This note is not meant for publication but for private information of Congressmen concerned.

19. The States People's and the National Movements[1]

We are now on the threshold of big happenings all over India, and the States will inevitably be influenced and drawn into the new scheme of things likely to emerge.

The National Conference is already wellknown all over India for its gallant struggle for freedom and responsible government. It is desirable, however, that closer contacts are established between the movement in Kashmir and that in the other States and in India as a whole.

Kashmir should know more of what is happening in the rest of India, and the rest of India should know more of what is happening in Kashmir. For, after all, we stand or fall together. Without understanding each other there can be no full and efficient cooperation.

This edition of the *Khidmat* will help in this understanding and in widening our respective horizons. Under the able leadership of Sheikh Abdullah, the Kashmir National Conference has grown on a democratic and nationalistic basis. I feel sure the *Khidmat* will be a good worker, carrying the message of freedom and unity to all. I send it all my good wishes in this noble task.

1. Message on the occasion of the publication of the first issue in English of *Khidmat*, which was the official organ of the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. From *The Hindustan Times*, 30 December 1945.

20. Towards a New Destiny[1]

We meet at this conference after nearly seven years — a long period, made longer by the tremendous events of these years and the experiences we have gone through. These experiences have taught us many lessons,

1. Presidential address to the All India States People's Conference, Udaipur, 30 December 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 31 December 1945.

but though we may be wiser, that wisdom has not brought us comfort or joy or an assurance of that new world order of peace and freedom for which we and hundreds of millions all over the world craved. The tragedy of the two great wars is over but the tragedy of the seeming peace pursues us and darkens the horizon. Lives were squandered by the million in the name of democracy and peace and freedom, yet those who held the reins of power thought and worked only for retaining what they had, of preserving the old order, and of denying what they themselves proclaimed so loudly. And because they saw no new world order, they now prepare for a new war. Again, as of old, the people were being betrayed and the real fight for freedom has yet to take place.

We in this conference are especially concerned with the ninety million people of the Indian States, but their fate is linked up with the three hundred millions of the rest of India and with the vaster numbers of the world as a whole. And so even to understand the problems of the States we must understand the problem of India and see it in the wider context of the world situation.

The war has shaken up Asia and Europe, broken down old frontiers, upset in many ways the old economic foundations, let loose new forces, and out of this turmoil new patterns are arising. The resistance movements to which the war gave birth find it difficult to fit into the existing framework. Three dominant powers seem to control the destinies of the world but of these three, Great Britain already occupies a secondary position and is destined to play a subsidiary role. Two remain — the United States of America and the Soviet Union — and both are powerfully expansionist in their different ways. Their ideals differ, their economies are entirely opposed to each other, and each is trying to consolidate its position and extend its influence. The Soviet Union has built up a number of client states and in this process has put an end to many relics of feudalism in Eastern Europe. That process has now been directed to the Middle East and Iran is at present experiencing both internal conflict and external pressure. In the Far East the great country of China has recently had the misfortune to revert to civil conflict, and behind the scenes other forces are at play. It would appear that the only satisfactory solution is for a united China to be built up on a fully democratic basis.

In South East Asia, Indonesia and Indo-China are carrying on a heroic struggle against imperialism, and in both, Britain has stepped in to help in crushing the people. There is a perilous semblance between these wars of intervention carried on by Britain and that other war of intervention, which fascist Italy and Nazi Germany waged in Spain, and which was the prelude to World War II. For us in India these strug-

gles in Indonesia and Indo-China are of peculiar interest and importance and affect us intimately. We have watched British intervention there with growing anger and shame and helplessness that Indian troops should thus be used for doing Britain's dirty work against our friends who are fighting the same fight as we. Recently we have had revealing glimpses, through the thick veil of the censorship, of the way British, French and Dutch imperialisms have been functioning in South East Asia. Those glimpses have made us sick with horror and disgust, for they have equalled the atrocity stories from Germany.

This is the way imperialism still functions in Asia. It is the way of revolting cruelty and brutality and frightfulness and a complete denial of the right to freedom. In Siam, Britain wants to extend her imperial influence. In Malaya, she is consolidating her economic hold and extending it. In Burma and Ceylon she intends to hold on as long as she can. In India we know from recent experience how she is trying to delay and obstruct any real change.

These are not the obvious signs of a decaying imperialism and yet it becomes increasingly clear that Britain is fighting a losing battle and the sources of her old imperial strength are drying up. Though her interests conflict in many ways with those of America, still circumstances are compelling her to seek American aid and to play a secondary role to America's in the major struggle for a dominant position in the world.

The United States, intent also on that major struggle and the diplomatic and economic preparation for it, and anxious to have others line up with it, appears to favour the continuation in some form of the British empire. Recent developments would seem to indicate that America is underwriting this empire, possibly with suitable minor changes. That is a big decision to take, fraught with the gravest consequences for all concerned. For it is certain, as anything can be certain in this uncertain world, that the countries of Asia will not submit willingly to any empire or any domination and will revolt against it. It will be a continuing revolt of millions with a passion behind it which even the atom bomb will not suppress. And from that revolt will develop that terrible thing, the third world war.

It has been suggested that Asian nations should hold together to meet the menace of imperialism. That is an inevitable development and these nations will naturally look to those who favour their freedom.

In India we stand on the verge of big developments, which will probably be initiated more by the people than by the British Government. The attempt of this Government to crush the national movement during the past three and a half years, with all the horror and brutality that accompanied it, has failed, and the Indian people are stronger

and more determined to achieve their freedom than ever. I have noticed, wherever I have gone, a tension and a fever of impatience, a fierce desire to be rid of foreign rule, a resolve not to submit whatever the consequence. With this temper in the country it is not possible to carry on in the old way or to delay and procrastinate. If a change — a radical change from top to bottom — does not come soon, a great crisis will come in its place.

The people of the Indian States have moved with the rest of India. They played a notable part in 1942 and after and today they are astir as they have never been before. The fact that we are meeting in the ancient and historic city of Udaipur is evidence of the growth of the States people's movement.

But while the people have advanced, their autocratic governments remain where they were, or if there has been a change it is so small as to be imperceptible. They are relics of a bygone age, dependent completely on the British power, which created many of them and has deliberately kept them unchanged so as to use them as its instruments for maintaining its supremacy in India. Lord Canning, the Viceroy, wrote in 1860: "It was long ago said by Sir John Malcolm that if we made all India into *zillahs* (that is districts in British India) it was not in the nature of things that our empire should last fifty years; but that if we could keep up a number of native states without political power, but as royal instruments, we should exist in India as long as our naval supremacy was maintained. Of the substantial truth of this opinion I have no doubt; and the recent events have made it more deserving of our attention than ever."

A writer has called the Indian States 'Britain's fifth column in India'. The history of the last hundred and fifty years justifies this nomenclature. Rushbrook Williams, a representative and advocate of the States, wrote in 1930: "The situations of these feudatory states, checkerboarding all India as they do, are a great safeguard. It is like establishing a vast network of friendly fortresses in debatable territory. It would be difficult for a general rebellion against the British to sweep India because of this network of powerful, loyal native states."

Frequently we criticise and blame the rulers of the States, and often they are deserving of censure. But it is well to remember that they are mere shadows cast by the imperial power and the responsibility for the backward condition of the States rests with that power which has deliberately kept them as they are and prevented their progress. It is well known that Princes with advanced or independent views are not favoured by the Political Department of the Government of India. Many of them are saddled with ministers imposed by this Political Department.

In dealing with the States, therefore, we deal with the British Government in another guise. As soon as that Government goes from India, the problem changes completely. This fact has been stressed recently by a British authority, Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency, in his book *The Indian States and Indian Federation* (1942). "The States," he says, "are still so numerous in India that they offer a grave conundrum in evolution to which no solution is at present forthcoming. Their disappearance and absorption would, of course, be inevitable if Britain ever ceased to be the supreme power as regards India." It is interesting to note that the Nizam of Hyderabad, who now claims independence,[2] echoed these sentiments in a statement issued by him about a year ago.

De Montmorency says that no solution of the problem is forthcoming, and yet he himself suggests the obvious solution: by the elimination of the British Power from India many of our problems, including the communal problem, would be solved. When does this happy consummation take place? Hence the demand: Quit India.

When this is the position it becomes irrelevant and absurd to talk of treaty rights or so-called independence. Indeed no responsible person can take shelter behind those treaties of over a hundred years ago.[3] It is well to remember also that out of 600 States only about 40 have such treaties. The relations of the other States with the British paramount power are regulated by engagements, *sanads*, usages, sufferance, political practices and conventions. The States vary enormously in size, importance and resources, the great majority of them not being States at all but estates with some especial privileges attached to their rulers. In the Government of India Act of 1935 only 143 are considered important enough to be mentioned, and of these only 52 are given separate representations in the proposed federal legislature, the remaining 91 being grouped together for that purpose.

Thus it is absurd to group all these so-called States together as if their problems were similar. The first step to be taken is to separate those which can function effectively as units from those that cannot. What is to be the test? The Ludhiana conference laid this down in terms of population and revenue and it was a test that could be easily

2. The Nizam was at this time thinking of cutting off Hyderabad State from the rest of India and maintaining it under the suzerainty or paramountcy of Britain.
3. On 17 March 1942, the Chamber of Princes welcomed the Cripps proposals on condition that their treaty rights were protected. In fact the Standing Committee of the Chamber withdrew its resignation announced in December 1944 after what they held to be an unsatisfactory reply from the Crown Representative about the position of the treaties.

applied.[4] Probably it will be better to tighten this test still further. But the real test is: Can a State as constituted afford modern standards of social and economic welfare? If it cannot, then it must be absorbed in a larger unit. If it can live up to these standards then it will form an autonomous unit in the Indian federation. Probably according to any reckoning there will be less than twenty such States.

The way of approach to this problem is to make the people's welfare and progress the primary consideration. All other matters are secondary and must yield place to them. This involves political freedom, a democratic structure, fundamental liberties and rights guaranteed and an independent judiciary. It involves equally economic freedom and the removal of all fetters, feudal or other, on the growth of the individual. In some of the States in Rajputana there are still shameful relics which no modern state should tolerate. There is a kind of slavery under the Daroga system under which women suffer even more than men. There is begar or forced labour. There is the jagiri system of feudatories with important judicial, revenue, police and other powers, which makes these jagirs even more feudal and backward than other areas. Then there are backward classes and aboriginals who are kept down by law and custom and have no scope for growth.

It is patent that all these ancient and harmful relics will have to go if the people as a whole are to raise themselves out of the morass of poverty and degradation in which they have remained for so long. For the future that we envisage must provide for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen, man or woman, and legal as well as social tyranny and injustice must be removed.

What of the Princes? Whatever their individual virtues or failings may be, it is really the system with which we are concerned. For that system the British Government has been and is responsible. Our approach to the Princes should be a friendly one, an invitation to them to join hands in the great tasks ahead. They must realise that these tasks have to be undertaken, that great changes must come, that they cannot rely for long on the protection of an alien power. At no time was such reliance becoming or patriotic; in today's context there is no place for it and even self interest should point in another direction. The direction is towards the people. No man can say what the future will be in India for the world changes rapidly and we have to keep pace with it. And so no man can say what the future of the Princes will be.

4. In 1939, the All India States People's Conference, at its Ludhiana session, demanded the integration of the States with the rest of India.

Only those of us who fit in with changing conditions can find a suitable place in that future. Ultimately it will be for the people of India to decide this as other problems. But in the near future it may be given to us to mould events and we should try to make the transition rapid but smooth for all concerned.

As I have said, it is inevitable that the vast majority of States which cannot possibly form economic units should be absorbed into neighbouring areas. It seems to me important that this absorption should be with the provinces and not with other existing States, as has recently been done in Western India.[5] It is also not desirable that a number of small States should be grouped together to form a larger state unit.[6] There will be no history or tradition or unity about this; only an artificial joining together of backward areas with no leaven to pull them up. Therefore the union should be with provinces. The rulers of such small states may be given some kind of pension and may be further encouraged to serve in a different capacity if they are fit enough for this.

Of the other States, which may be fifteen to twenty in number and which will form autonomous units in the federation, the rulers can remain as constitutional heads under a democratic system of government. Some of these Princes and rulers belong to ancient houses intimately connected with history and tradition. Who can forget the brave deeds of the Rajputs of old, or the proud role that the Suryavanshis of Mewar have played in India's story?

But democracy cannot tolerate any form of autocracy; the two are incompatible. At present, with possibly only one solitary exception, there is autocracy in all States, in spite of certain reforms. This autocracy has even been given a metaphysical theory to support it in that premier State of India, Hyderabad, which is first not only in size but also in the denial of all civil and democratic liberty. In the proposed Hyderabad reforms it is stated: "The head of the State represents the people directly in his own person, and his connection with them, therefore, is more natural and abiding than that of any passing elected representatives. He is both the supreme head of the State and embodiment of the "people's sovereignty". Hence it is that, in such policy the Head of the State not merely retains the power to confirm or veto any piece of legislation, but also enjoys a special prerogative to make or unmake

5. In 1943, the smaller states in Kathiawar and Gujarat were attached to larger neighbouring states for the purpose of administration.
6. In 1944 the states in Central India and Eastern States Agency, which were too small to support an efficient administration, had been combined into groups.

will give the maximum of freedom to the constituent units and allow them to develop according to their own wishes. The major States should be able to fit in easily in such a constitution.

How will the constitution-making body or constituent assembly be formed and what powers will it possess? It will make a great deal of difference as to whether it is merely an advisory body or has final authority to give shape to the constitution. As an advisory body it will have little value and the people will not look to it for a solution but elsewhere, as they have done in the past. It is important therefore that the constituent assembly should have full power and no external authority should interfere with its decisions.

It has long been the demand of the National Congress that the constituent assembly should consist of representatives elected by adult franchise. In existing circumstances it might be difficult, without undue delay, to arrange for an election on this basis. But it is essential that the assembly should be elected and based on a wide franchise. Proposals that a small group of representative men and women should form such an assembly, because it is easier for a small group to consider such matters than for a large assembly, are dangerous and should not be countenanced. A small group, however, would contain a proportionately larger number of conservative and reactionary individuals who might resist every important change. They will continue to think along old grooves and come up again and again against the same difficulties which they have failed to surmount in the past. But a large assembly, elected on a wide franchise, will function in a different environment and will attach more importance to the vital economic issues of the day. The principal decisions must be taken by this general assembly and then the working out of detail can be left to smaller committees.

You will remember that the Cripps proposals of 1942 proposed a constituent assembly of elected representatives from the provinces and nominees of rulers from the States. The ninety million people of the States were ignored and this was deeply resented by them. This indeed was one of the reasons why the National Congress rejected those proposals. No constituent assembly, or any other assembly, formed in this way, can function properly or be accepted. That applies to the federation also. Even before the Cripps proposals, just after the Government of India Act of 1935 had been passed, the late Professor Berriedale Keith, the eminent authority on the British Commonwealth and Indian constitution, wrote: "It is impossible for the Crown's advisers to contend that the people of the States shall be denied the rights of Indians in the provinces, and it is their clear duty to advise the King-Emperor to use his authority to secure that the Princes shall enter into

constitutional reforms which will result at no distant date in securing responsible government therein. No federation can be deemed in the interest of India, if in it the representatives of the people of the provinces are compelled to sit with the nominees of irresponsible rulers. There is, in fact, no answer to Mr. Gandhi's claim that the Princes are bound to follow the Crown in its transfer of authority to the people."

Keith's last sentence refers to the recent claim, put forward by some Princes, that they were somehow apart from the rest of India and had direct relations with the Crown of England. This claim has no basis in fact or history, and still less is it likely to have any substance in any future arrangement. But the British Government was interested in it as it gave them a pretext for putting up a barrier between the States and the rest of India, and the Viceroy became the Crown Representative in relation to the States.

The Standing Committee of the States People's Conference has throughout made it clear that States' representatives in the constituent assembly must be elected. Recently at Jaipur it stated "that any constitution-making body should have as its members from the States representatives of the people elected on a wide franchise, which should at least approximate to the franchise at present prevailing for the legislative assemblies in the provinces. Such representatives will represent the people's wishes and will have the same status and representative character as the members from the provinces. Any other method of representation in the constituent assembly will necessarily mean a lower status for the members from the States and a joining together of democratic representatives and autocratic nominees, which will be a travesty of democratic procedure and is likely to lead to deadlock. It is essential therefore that the States people should be represented on a fully democratic basis."

It is to be remembered that the legislatures that exist at present in a few of the States have not only no real power but are constituted in such a way as to contain a large nominated element.

Proper democratic representations in the constituent assembly necessarily implies the introduction of democracy in the internal affairs of the State. Otherwise there would be conflict between these representatives and the state government. A state which does not come up to the level of the rest of India in regard to elected legislatures and responsible government, fundamental liberties, and independence of the judiciary, will be an anachronism in the federation. Membership of the federal union will be a privilege and it will be for the people of India to decide whether such a state is worthy of being admitted to the federation or not.

It is our basic policy that there should be full responsible government in the states as integral parts of a free India. In such a free India there may be variations as between the various federating units, but there must be some common background of free institutions and standards of social and economic welfare. India cannot be free and unfree in parts.

Our future ultimately depends on the strength, cohesion and unity of our people. It is the purpose of this conference and the organisation behind it to help in building these up. We have done good work in the past but it was limited in extent. We have had to face formidable obstacles which have often prevented us from reaching our people. But those obstacles gradually fade away and our united strength grows. We have to remember always that our work and our organization must be for all, and more especially for those at the bottom of the social scale who require help and encouragement most. We cannot work for one group or community, nor permit communalism, which has done so much injury to India, to influence our activity. In this, as in some other matters, we must learn the lesson of unity which the Indian National Army has so well demonstrated.

In order to work more efficiently and on a more extensive scale we have made many changes in our constitution, which will come up before this conference for confirmation. These changes will make the organization more representative of the people of the States and the various people's organizations in the different States. But we have to remember that even now there are some States so backward and reactionary as to prevent the functioning of the people's organizations. Among these is Hyderabad where for many years past the State Congress has been under a ban. It is a little absurd to think of major changes when these primary rights are denied to our people. Also reports reach us continually of oppression and suppression in many States. Bikaner has recently achieved an unenviable notoriety in this respect. Conditions in State prisons are particularly bad and the lot of political prisoners deplorable. Of the many martyrs to our cause I should like to mention especially the name of Shri Deva Suman of Tehri State. Many of us will remember this brave and earnest youth who worked for the freedom of the people of the States. He was practically done to death by the treatment given to him in prison by the State authorities.

We have big work ahead. Let us set about it with all the strength and earnestness we possess.

21. Adult Franchise for States People[1]

Adult franchise is a worthy ideal. The goal of the Congress is also adult franchise. But it is not practical politics at the present juncture to demand representation to the constituent assembly based on adult franchise. Between now and the next 12 months the standing committee should have a positive mandate from the conference to act upon and negotiate with the rulers. At present adult franchise is not practicable even in British provinces. It will be inadvisable to demand adult franchise just now from the rulers. Nobody can say what problems will come up during 1946, and the standing committee cannot be fettered in dealing with these problems.

1. Speech at the States People's Conference on a resolution which suggested that state representatives to the Central Assembly should be elected on a franchise approximate to that of provincial assemblies, Udaipur, 1 January 1946. From *National Herald*, 3 January 1946.

22. Divided India Unthinkable[1]

I reiterate the Congress stand *vis-a vis* Pakistan. A free Indian government can never function if the federating units refuse to owe allegiance to the Centre. The Congress does not want to compel any unit to join the federation against its will. At the same time, the Congress is not prepared to make concessions to fissiparous tendencies and to demands which will disintegrate and ruin the country.

It is comparatively easy to unmake things, but difficult to construct them. Judged in the context of the world situation, Pakistan and similar slogans appear very petty.

Once the Congress concedes Pakistan, other reactionary and disintegrating forces, supported by certain vested interests, will crop up. Economic betterment and raising the standard of living will be impossible

1. Speech at the States People's Conference on a resolution welcoming the Congress election manifesto, Udaipur, 1 January 1946. From *National Herald*, 3 January 1946.

in a divided India. If certain units want to vote for separation, it will then be a different proposition. If a Bengali, whether he is a Hindu or a Muslim, wants separation, none can compel him to remain in the Indian union. I concede the right of separation to individual units in the sense that I would not compel or force unwilling units to federate. I am against the granting of an unrestricted right to separate. With freedom for a unit to secede, it will be impossible for a federal or unitary government to function. The constant threat of separation will demoralise the atmosphere, and no planning will be possible. The claim for Pakistan has no parallel in history. The problem is no doubt complicated, but as I have said, it is a very petty one, especially when one visualises the future of free India.

The Soviet example of complete autonomy for its units — even to separate — is often cited.[2] But the Soviet Union has given only complete cultural independence to its units, and politically they are not separated, and in fact it will be impossible for any unit, for instance Bukhara or Kazakastan, to lead an independent life. But what is demanded in India is quite different. If an unrestricted right of separation is granted neither the separated units nor the rest of India will be strong. All will be weaklings. Reactionarism will hold the ground. I would not oppose Muslims in the Punjab or Bengal if they vote for separation. But no one will allow them to drag the members of other communities with them. Certain interests, ever interested in spreading confusion, are sowing the seeds of disintegration. All progressive forces must oppose them.

2. In February 1944, Stalin promulgated a constitutional amendment permitting each of the 16 Soviet republics to have independent international relations and sign treaties with foreign powers.

23. Big Changes in the Offing[1]

I visualise big changes coming over India. I do not know what these changes are, but I expect trouble coming in their wake. I do not expect

1. Closing speech at the States People's Conference, Udaipur, 4 January 1946 From *National Herald*, 5 January 1946.

that quick solutions could be found for India's problems. There is no doubt that the present governments of States will have to change, whether they like it or not. And there will have to be very close approximation between Indian India and British India — an appellation which I do not like. It is no good arousing people's feelings, because the effects may be felt later.

It is notable that over 435 delegates from the States spread all over India have attended the conference. Several resolutions have been passed, the keynote of which is the demand for self-government. In one such resolution reference has been made to certain major States like Hyderabad, Travancore and Mysore. One could have mentioned scores of other States as well. Bigger States have been mentioned specially because what happens there affects other States.

It is unfortunate that even bigger States have not gone ahead of British India. In fact, they are far behind the provinces, though in certain matters as education, Travancore and Mysore are in advance of British India. Politically they are very backward. In all these States, there are certain representative assemblies which are, in fact, governed in a completely autocratic way. It strikes me as very odd that autocracies should persist in States which are educationally and industrially advanced.

The fault for the existence of autocracy, however, lies with the people. Everyone gets the kind of government he deserves, whether in the States or in British India. But the moment one feels that he deserves something better and has grown strong enough to push out the government, then autocracy will cease to exist.

Despite educational and industrial development in the southern States, the people are politically at a low ebb. I know the difficulties that face the people's movements in the States and the forces that are behind the States. Nevertheless, it is primarily the responsibility of the people of the States to find a solution for their problem and the solution lies in developing one's strength and not in submitting to evil.

As for myself, I am a disciplined soldier of the Indian National Congress and I do not wish to do anything that will undermine the discipline. But I would make it perfectly clear to my colleagues that there are certain matters which have nothing to do, so far as I am concerned, with the discipline of the Congress. They concern my personal feelings and my conception of national honour and if they are affected, I will react in my own way regardless of what the Congress thinks or does. One should develop the capacity to think as a free man.

The attitude of Hyderabad, Travancore and Mysore States towards the State Congress distresses, pains and angers me. It does not augur

well for these States to treat the States people's movement in a contemptuous manner. Notably the situation in Travancore pains me more.[2]

I am not going into the right or the wrong. I have become perhaps a little cautious in arriving at a judgment without listening to the various sides of the case. Listening to only one side gives a lopsided picture. Without passing any judgment as to what is happening in Travancore, I am prepared to say that what is happening is definitely objectionable, wrong and contemptuous of the people's movement. I have received telegrams about a ban in Travancore State on the hoisting of the national flag, processions and meetings for three months in certain towns. I am not prepared to tolerate anything that is done deliberately to dishonour the national flag.

From Mysore State I have heard alarming reports about famine. Famine conditions, as those that overtook Bengal, where 35 lakhs of people died, do not suddenly occur. They are the culmination of a series of processes of governmental policy. It appears that the various suggestions made by the people's representatives have been ignored by the Mysore State. In dealing with problems of food and the like, the Government should have the confidence and goodwill of the people. Goodwill, of course, it never has, because the States follow a policy of irritating the public.

Deplorable conditions prevail in certain States as Tonk and Bikaner where civil liberties have been totally denied.[3] Since my release, I have received numerous complaints about Bikaner. When the Standing Committee met in Kashmir, it was asked to pass a resolution on the subject. As a responsible body, we did not like to pass any resolution without investigation, and I enquired of the Bikaner State authorities. After my inquiries, I found that Bikaner State was responsible for the numerous complaints.

I deplore the conditions under which the political prisoners are kept in Indian State prisons. In certain States, political prisoners are made to live under insanitary and inhuman conditions.

2. The Government of Travancore, because of popular agitation against its educational policy, prohibited for three months from 29 December 1945 all processions and hoisting of the national flag.
3. The Praja Parishads in the States of Tonk and Bikaner demanded a new legislative assembly elected on adult franchise and a responsible government. Fearing popular agitation, the authorities curbed civil liberties and banned meetings and processions. The people of the two States then launched satyagraha in January 1946.

24. Police Firing in Gwalior[1]

The charges contained in the telegram[2] are exceedingly serious and they are made by a responsible and popular organisation which has already built for itself a strong position in the Gwalior State, and which is affiliated to the All India States People's Conference. I have no means of verifying them at present, but I am greatly disturbed and distressed, and I invite the Gwalior Government and the authorities of the Birla Mills immediately to inquire and answer these charges. It is intolerable that anything even approaching the allegations made should happen. No government and no industrial organisation can escape grave discredit unless it clears itself completely when such charges are made by responsible persons. Why should the police function like an army on a battlefield during industrial disputes?

Why should any director or manager of a factory or mill summon police aid during peaceful strikes? An immediate, impartial and searching inquiry is necessary and punishment of those found guilty.

As president of the States People's Conference, I am requesting Dr. M. Atal to proceed to Gwalior immediately and inquire into this matter.

1 Statement to the press, Allahabad, 15 January 1946 From *National Herald*, 16 January 1946.

2. The telegram sent by the Sarvajanik Sabha of Gwalior stated that the police opened fire for "three hours indiscriminately" and made *lathi charges on workers* on the eleventh day of a peaceful labour strike at the Birla Mills in Gwalior.

25. To Madan Atal[1]

15-1-1946

My dear Madan,

I have received a telegram from Shri Kushvan, General Secretary, Sarvajanik Sabha, and on the basis of this I have issued a statement to the press, a copy of which I enclose. In this statement, I have quoted the telegram. I have no further information about the events referred to. But they are of so serious a nature that I think we should immediately

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 76/1945–47, p. 56; N.M.M.L.

have some inquiry. I shall be grateful to you if you could go to Gwalior and inquire into this matter on my behalf. The inquiry should of course be conducted impartially and the versions of all the parties concerned taken. These parties are: the State authorities, the mill management, the workers and the people generally. The Gwalior Rajya Sarvajanik Sabha is a popular organisation of standing and repute, affiliated to the All India States People's organisation. It should prove particularly helpful to you in your task.

I shall expect a report from you. It is not desirable for you to make any press statement till I have seen the report, unless some development makes this necessary.

I am enclosing a letter of authority, as well as a letter addressed to the President of the Gwalior Rajya Sarvajanik Sabha, Lashkar. You had better send a telegram to the President of the Sarvajanik Sabha (Lashkar, Gwalior) intimating the time of your arrival there.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

26. Repression in Bharatpur[1]

I have met some members of the Bharatpur Rajya Praja Parishad and they have informed me of the recent development in the State involving the arrest and imprisonment of Shri Raj Bahadur, advocate, a prominent member of the Praja Parishad. I have seen also some of the statements and orders of the State authorities. I feel that the State authorities have not been following a wise policy and in particular, the imprisonment of Shri Raj Bahadur is extraordinary. Such arrests do not bring any credit to the administration.

However, in view of the declaration[2] made by the Chancellor in the Chamber of Princes yesterday on behalf of all the Princes there, I do

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 19 January 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 21 January 1946.
2. Made on 17 December 1945, it stated that "there shall be popular institutions with elected majorities to ensure close and effective association of the people with the governance of the States." The rights of civil liberty, property, equality before law, freedom of conscience, rights of free association, of free speech, etc., should be granted to the people of the States.

not wish to raise any controversial issues at present, and I would advise the Praja Parishad not to start any satyagraha. That declaration, if it means anything at all, means the fullest freedom of speech, association and action as well as a representative government. We have been told that it will be implemented immediately. If so, the first thing to be done in Bharatpur is to release Shri Raj Bahadur and any others who may have been imprisoned for political offences. Also the State authorities should cooperate with the Praja Parishad in dealing with the urgent economic and other problems, as well as the curse of corruption, which demand attention. I suggest to the Praja Parishad, therefore, to approach the ruler and request him to implement the declaration made in the Chamber of Princes immediately in the manner suggested above. Other steps in giving a really representative character to the administration should follow soon after. The Praja Parishad thus offers its cooperation in view of the declaration and on its basis provided its terms are implemented. Of course, it should be borne in mind that the Praja Parishad stands for full responsible government.

27. On the Princes' Declaration of Rights[1]

I welcome the declaration made by the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes on behalf of the Princes in the Chamber. In some matters it is vague, and I should have liked it to go further. Also, declarations by themselves do not go far. But I do not wish to lessen the significance of the declaration. It is a definite sign of the times and realisation of the big changes that are coming to India in the near future. The fact is that all over India the real balance of power is shifting to the people because the dominant power, that is the British Government, cannot function for long here. And India must find its equilibrium without the dominant power. The pending removal of this constraining force has immediately let loose new forces which had been arrested for so long, and which are trying to find a new equilibrium.

1. Statement to the press, New Delhi, 19 January 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 20 January 1946

There will be many difficulties in finding this equilibrium, but given goodwill and earnestness on all sides, we shall undoubtedly reach it and give a mighty push to the onward march of free India. It is obvious that this equilibrium can only be based on the goodwill and cooperation of the people of India, both in the States and provinces. There can be no reliance on assurances and guarantees from outside. The future government of India, as well as the government of constituent units of India, will inevitably depend on the wishes of the people. It is out of place, therefore, to think in terms of any external authority guaranteeing anything. Nor is it dignified or becoming for the rulers to depend upon such external authority. As Indians their pride should be India, and their hope the future greatness of India. I wish that the Chamber had clearly accepted the principle of responsible government for the States, that is the major States which can stand by themselves as progressive and more or less self-sufficient units of the federation.

The smaller States would also have the same freedom but would have to be joined together with larger units in the federation or should form such a large unit themselves in order to play an effective and progressive part in future India. As I stated in my address at Udaipur, it is desirable for these small States to join the provinces and not larger States. But it is conceivable that some of these smaller States may themselves form a large unit, and if there is any real desire to introduce a free and progressive system of administration in such small States joined together, no barrier should be put in their way. But it must be realised, of course, that small States cannot function by themselves. We may indicate tests for deciding as to whether a State is big enough to remain a separate entity in the federation.

Such tests would concern themselves with population and revenue but the real test is whether an administration allowing freedom to the people and the same standards of efficiency and well-being and progress as in the rest of India can be maintained. There should be no difficulty in adjusting these matters because in any event the level of efficiency, well-being, progress and free institutions should be similar in all parts of India. It is clear that in India, as a whole, in the federation as in the constituent units, there should not be two standards.

It is admitted and recognised that we must have full responsible government in India as a whole and in the provinces. It follows inevitably that responsible government should also flourish in the States. There may be minor variations in different units, but the fundamental principles must necessarily be the same everywhere. The position of rulers thus becomes one of constitutional heads. A clear recognition of this fact will make it easier to go ahead.

In regard to the elected assemblies that are envisaged, it is desirable that they are wholly elected, and not partly elected and partly nominated, even though the elected element may be in a majority. These halfway houses do not and will not help. They sometimes produce conflict and inevitably they lead to the elimination of nominated elements. It is best to recognise this and go ahead as far as possible.

I have stated my views in regard to one or two matters which deserve attention. But I repeat that I welcome the step which the Chamber of Princes has taken and I congratulate them and the people of the States on it. This step represents the growing consciousness and strength of the people of the States as well as an attempt on the part of the Princes to break away from the leading strings of the paramount power and to look to their people in the States. That is a happy augury and if it is followed up in good faith and earnestness it will be a great service to India.

The goodwill of one leads to the goodwill and cooperation of the other. I hope that the rulers will realise that free institutions depend on the growth of popular organisations and will, therefore, remove immediately all barriers to the formation and working of Praja Mandals and other States People's organisations.

If that is done, I have no doubt that these Praja Mandals will function with sobriety and with the single aim of the good of the people. In these conditions there is no reason why the existing conflict between Princes and popular organisations should not lessen very greatly and a large measure of cooperation develop between them.

I do not know how far the declaration of the Chamber of Princes affects some of the larger States which are not represented in the Chamber. These States, in spite of their size and resources, are backward, and fundamental rights, elected assemblies and the rest envisaged in the declaration are not found in some of these States.

I hope that these big States will also come in line so that we may all cooperate together for the good and wellbeing and rapid advancement of all the people of India and the rebirth of a free and great Indian nation which can look at the world in the face and work for peace, freedom, and cooperation among the nations of the world.

I have read with interest the new scheme put forward in Travancore which is said to be on the American model. I am glad of the many progressive features in this scheme but it is not clear to me how far it is really on the American model for that model is based on individual liberty and power rests with the people. Travancore, although a progressive State in many ways, has suppressed individual liberty. I hope it will truly follow the American model and base itself on the will of the

people. As an immediate step, all constraints on the public activities of the individuals and of popular organisations should be removed.

28. Appeal to Princes to Restore Civil Liberties[1]

Soon after the publication of the declaration made by the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes on behalf of his brother princes, I expressed my appreciation of the new outlook and approach. It did not go far enough, according to my thinking, as the situation today demands a clear acceptance of the principle of responsible government. The real test remains how far the people are to exercise power and shape their own destiny. Nevertheless, I felt that the Princes had taken a notable step in laying down the fundamental rights of the people.

It is well known that in nearly all the States these rights are totally or largely lacking. Therefore, the first obvious step should be to give effect to them. Constitutional changes may take some little time, though even these should be hastened in view of the rapidly developing situation, but surely there is no excuse for delay in removing all obstructions in the way of the exercise of normal civil liberties.

Persons arrested and imprisoned for political reasons should be discharged, externment and internment orders withdrawn, full liberty of meeting in public or private and expression of opinion ensured and the right of association guaranteed.

In some States there is what is called a Registration of Societies Act,[2] which is used to prevent the formation or functioning of Praja Mandals and their association with other like organisations. This is obviously a gross infringement of the right of association. Again, in some States even printing was not permitted without permission. All these and many other restrictions are in direct conflict with the Chancellor's declaration and should be forthwith removed. I invite the rulers to take this action immediately. That will lay the foundation for cooperation. If there is delay, this will naturally lead people to think that the declaration is not seriously meant.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 26 January 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 27 January 1946.
2. It called for the sources of income of the Praja Mandals.

29. On the Deposition of the Maharaja of Rewa[1]

The deposition[2] of the Maharaja of Rewa by the Viceroy, in his capacity as the Crown Representative, is a significant development which throws light on the working of the Political Department.

It is stated that the Maharaja has recently committed several gross breaches of his undertaking to the Crown Representative. These are enumerated as follows: his declaration at the Dussehra darbar of his intention to confer responsible government on his people, his protest against the proposed departure of the Maharaj Kumar on a tour abroad, and his interference in this connection with the State administration by stirring up students and sending threatening communications to members of the council.

It is clear that the major offence is the Dussehra proclamation; everything else is a minor development. The Political Department usually functions in secret, and no one knows what pressure it brings on the rulers. There have been numerous cases of rulers who have misused their office and oppressed their people, and yet the Political Department has not intervened, or even when it intervened it was usually against the people. But when a ruler shows any progressive tendency, then the Political Department is eager enough to interfere. That appears to be the present case.

We are not concerned so much with individuals, but with the fundamental rights and progress of the people. Nobody seems to know as to who is responsible for basic constitutional changes in a State, the ruler or the Political Department. Where one ruler wants to move ahead the Political Department comes in the way. In Rewa, obviously, the Political Department alone is responsible and the Maharaja by his declaration has done a service to his people by making it clear that he aims at responsible government. The Political Department must now make good this declaration with all speed and thoroughness. Committees may achieve this or may delay or may produce some truncated scheme. In the circumstances that have been produced in Rewa no delay or partial scheme can be accepted.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 1 February 1946 *National Herald*, 2 February 1946.
2. On 30 January 1946, the Maharaja of Rewa was deposed as a sequel to alleged breaches of the conditions on which he had been allowed to return to the State after the enquiry against him in 1942. The conditions included an undertaking by the ruler that all State business would be initiated in the State Council.

If responsible government is coming to the State soon, then it is a curious beginning for the Political Department to function autocratically and without reference to the people. Further, I understand that meetings have been prohibited for a month. This is contrary to the recent declaration in favour of freedom of speech etc. made in the Chamber of Princes. That is a bad start for the people's freedom, and it leads one to suspect that the real freedom is not aimed at. However, the next few days or weeks will show the true picture of happenings in Rewa. The Political Department is on trial there, and the fact that the Maharaja has been deposed to satisfy the pique of that Department adds to its responsibility.

30. Arrests in Alwar State[1]

Two days ago news came of the sudden arrest of a number of prominent citizens and members of the Praja Mandal of Alwar State. On further enquiry I have received the following telegram:

> Six office-bearers of the Alwar Praja Mandal including the President of the Municipality had been arrested previously. Seven more have now been arrested. Four of them are from the Alwar city, Shri Ram Avtar, advocate, and a nominated member of the State Law-Making Committee, Badri Prasad, advocate, Kunj Behari, editor of a local weekly and Inder Singh, two from Tejara town, Kripa Dayal, advocate and member of the Praja Mandal Working Committee and Shri Ghasiram, a municipal councillor; and one from Rajgarh town. In all 13 persons have so far been arrested.
>
> The city observed two days' hartal and there were strikes and hartals in Rajgarh, Khadali, Khairthal, Harsauli, Mandhar and Laxmangarh. School boys and girls also took out *prabhat pheris* and processions and there were students' strikes. Mass meetings were held in towns and

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 6 February 1946. *National Herald*, 7 February 1946. Early in 1946, the Praja Mandal workers of Alwar State submitted to the State a scheme of constitutional reforms, which provided for a legislative assembly elected on adult franchise with full powers of legislation. The State authorities arrested the workers on 2 February 1946 for pressing their demand.

villages, protesting against the Government's action. This repression is despite the recent declaration of the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes.

I do not yet know why these developments have taken place, and I do not wish to express any final opinion without full knowledge. But this kind of thing is very disturbing and is bound to be resented. Coming as it does after the brave declaration made in the Chamber of Princes, it throws a warning light on the real state of affairs in some of the States. Will the Alwar Government explain?

5

EXTERNAL PROBLEMS

1. Cable to Chiang Kai-shek[1]

I am greatly cheered by your cordial message which I have received with gratitude and happiness. During these years my thoughts have constantly been with China and you and Madame Chiang. I have sorrowed over China's trials and rejoiced at her courage and success. Earnestly trust that future will bring greater successes, unity and strength to China under your leadership. Reports of Madame Chiang's ill-health have distressed me. Hope she is in good health now. Sincere regards.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. This undated cable was sent in reply to Chiang's cable of 19 June 1945 in which he greeted Jawaharlal's release and stated· "My deep concern for you during the last few years has at last been eased." J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Message to the United States[1]

I have received a large number of messages of greetings and good wishes from friends in India as well as America and England. I am sorry that owing to my constant travelling since release I am unable to acknowledge them. I have only been able to stop at my home, after nearly three years, for a night. I wish, therefore, to convey my deep gratitude to all friends and well-wishers for their messages which have moved me greatly.

Many friends in America have cabled to me suggesting that I should visit their country immediately and even to reach San Francisco before the United Nations conference ends.[2] I should love to go to America to meet friends and the many leading representatives of other

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 19 June 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 20 June 1945.
2. Delegates of 50 nations were in session at this time at San Francisco to draw up a charter for a world organisation. The three Indian official delegates were the nominees of the Government of India

countries who are assembled there, but for the present, it is impossible to leave India. Also it is physically impossible to reach San Francisco before the conference ends.

I realise fully that the hope of the future lies in international understanding between free nations and in their mutual cooperation. I shall gladly do whatever I can and wherever I may be to further this. But for the present my duty lies in India and with my own people who have suffered much during these years and who are not yet out of this valley of shadows. I hope friends in America will understand and appreciate this. But whenever I can respond to their invitation, I shall gladly do so.

3. Message to Indians In South Africa[1]

My greetings and good wishes to Indians in South Africa. I have followed with deep anxiety the troubles and racial barriers and disabilities imposed upon them.[2] Not knowing all the facts, I am unable to say much at this stage. But one can never accept anywhere in the world a status of inferiority. No Indian worthy of his country can thus demean himself and his motherland.

1. Given at Bombay, 21 June 1945. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 22 June 1945.
2. Nearly 60 different laws had been enacted in South Africa restricting the liberty and the economic and social development of the 2,50,000 Indian settlers. The Pegging Act established separate areas for Indians, outside which they might neither reside nor occupy nor acquire ownership of landed property.

4. Good Wishes to R. Palme Dutt[1]

Having just come out of prison after nearly three years and being hustled and harassed, I am hardly in a position to issue a message, but I

1. *The Leader*, 23 June 1945.

certainly wish Mr. Palme Dutt[2] *every* success in his election. I have known him for many years and have admired his ability. Apart from *the personal factor, his success will obviously be of a certain symbolic* value in the circumstances.

2. Rajani Palme Dutt (1896-1974); leader of Communist Party of Great Britain and editor of *Labour Monthly*; his publications include *World Politics* and *India Today*. He was contesting against Amery in the Sparkbrook constituency of Birmingham.

5. The Individual and the State[1]

I believe that an Indian national government would have averted such *tragedies as the Bengal famine.*

If some kind of a settlement had been reached following the Cripps *talks, the people would have had not only a greater sensitiveness* to the problems affecting them, especially the food problem, but also a greater efficiency and coordination in dealing with them. It is quite inconceivable that any other Government could have failed in 1943 so miserably as did the Bengal provincial Government and the Central Government. No big problem can be solved without full cooperation between the people and the Government. In 1943, instead of this cooperation there had been hostility and conflict.

Obviously, if a national government had been formed in 1942, there would have been a great deal of cooperation from the people and a constant desire to remove the cause of distress. I am quite convinced that under such circumstances the Bengal famine would have been either averted or greatly minimized.

One of the fundamental problems of the day everywhere is how to coordinate the two conceptions of the socialised organisation of society *and state with the greatest amount of individual freedom.*

I have no doubt that the new order will have very large elements of socialism as its basis. I hope, however, that individual freedom will be preserved to a large extent. I should like India to keep this in view

1. Interview to the Globe News Agency, Bombay, 24 June 1945; from *The Statesman*, 26 June 1945.

and to cooperate with all other nations to achieve such a world order. While developing international activities on an ever wider scale, India should not interfere with the individual genius and freedom of other people and countries.

Question: Can you suggest a formula for preserving peace after the war?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It will need the elimination, as far as possible, of political and economic conflicts between countries and an equitable rational order to organise international relations. It is essential that such an order should be based on the national freedom of the countries involved which should have no feeling of foreign domination and suppression.

Some kind of an international police force also seems to be necessary, but there is a grave danger of such a force being exploited by the dominant powers to their own advantage.

I think it would have been better, from every point of view, if a bigger status had been given to the small powers in any international settlement. Otherwise the small powers, in fear and self-defence, will align themselves with big powers and hostile blocs will emerge and face each other.

Since the British Labour Party represents various progressive groups, I wish it success in the election. Under its present leadership, however, the party means little to India.

It surprises me how the leaders of this party make references to India which show not only a colossal ignorance of this country but also an amazing insensitiveness to its dominant feelings. While I know that many individual leaders in Britain are sympathetic to India's hopes, the British people as a whole pay no attention to India except to give expression occasionally to platitudes. This applies to all the major political parties.

6. Message to China[1]

I followed from prison, as far as I could, the happenings in China during the dark days of 1943-44. We were all very unhappy and concerned

1. Interview given at Allahabad to the correspondent of the Central News Agency of China, 25 June 1945. From *The Leader*, 27 June 1945.

when the Japanese were advancing. But at that time I did not have the least doubt that China would beat back the invasion and be triumphant in the end. I am happy that this process is going on.

During those three years of enforced isolation, my mind was full of Indian problems in relation to those of the world. But not a day passed when I did not think of China and her very gallant struggle. Now that I am out of prison, I should like to send my greetings and good wishes to the Chinese and express my firm conviction that the friendship and cooperation of China and India are not only necessary for us but also for peace and freedom of the rest of the world.

I earnestly trust that the long agony of the Chinese, which began so many years ago, will soon end in victory, freedom and unity.

But I see nothing too bright for the immediate future of Asia though ultimately freedom and independence for the Asians are bound to come. The future of Asia will not obviously be a very unmixed affair for some time. The whole of South East Asia — that is, the parts occupied by Japan — will not settle down till the question of colonial domination is settled once for all. What happens to India will obviously have a big effect not only on South East Asia but also on western Asia.

I predict the gradual decline of British political influence in Asia and the growth of American economic influence. For a long time, Japan cannot play an effective role because of its defeat, but I don't see how it can be eliminated in the economic field.

San Francisco has not been a source of inspiration and optimism, though, undoubtedly, some effort has been made in the right direction. There is far too much covering up of essential problems of the day in the interest of this great power or that. The real question is not so much what conferences have done or not done, but the spirit behind them.

Only a world organisation, which fully recognises the need to stabilise the future on the basis of interdependence of free nations, of an economic order free from exploitation and of racial equality, will give the world peace and peaceful progress.

7. To S.H. Shen[1]

June 28, 1945

Dear Mr. Shen,

Thank you for your letter of June 26th. On my return from Bombay on the 25th I received a cable from the Generalissimo. I was very happy to receive his cordial and friendly message and I sent a reply to it

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

the next morning. Copies of these cables have been given by me to Mr. P.C. Chen for your information. For the present I am not thinking of sending any further message to the Generalissimo. In case I wish to do so I shall certainly take advantage of your kind offer.

In December 1942 I wrote a letter to Madame Chiang Kai-shek from Ahmadnagar Fort.[2] This letter was sent to the Government of India with the request that it might be forwarded to you, so that you might send it on to Madame Chiang. The Government, however, withheld the letter and informed me that it could not be sent. The original was kept by Government but I had a copy in my file. I am now enclosing a copy of this for your information. The letter is of course completely out-of-date but if you think it feasible, you might send it on.

My programme is entirely uncertain. It may be that I have to visit Delhi in the near future. If so, I shall be happy to meet you there.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 13, pp. 36-38.

8. China's Struggle[1]

Double seventh: What memories of eight terrible years of war and devastation, of horror and vast suffering of scores of millions and, at the same time, of magnificent courage and endurance of the people of China and of keeping alight the bright flame of resistance against all odds! I offer my homage to the people of China on this anniversary and express my firm faith in China's great destiny and my earnest hope and belief in the abiding friendship and cooperation of China and India in the future that is unfolding in Asia and the world.

1. Message given on the anniversary of Japanese aggression against China. *The Statesman*, 8 July 1945.

9. Continued Opposition to Nazism, Fascism and Militarism[1]

My opposition to Nazism and fascism has not undergone any change during the three years of my prison life.

Nazism and fascism are immensely dangerous to any country and to the world at large. I am as firmly opposed to them as ever before. The mere fact that the Nazis have disappeared from Germany does not affect one's reactions. Nazism may crop up again in any country, other than Germany, under some other name.

> Question: What is your comment on Russian neutrality in the war against Japan?[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru: Fascism and Nazism have nothing to do with the war against Japan in the technical sense of the word. Japan is a militarist and aggressive nation. Her militarism and aggression have got to be checked.

As for the policies of various countries, they are no doubt the result of numerous factors. There is no question of one country entering a war of crusade for the sake of high principles, ignoring many other factors. It is presumptuous for me to judge Russia's or any other country's attitude. It is for them to decide. In spite of every sympathy for the so-called democratic countries, that is for England and France, when the war broke out America did not join it because of various internal factors till she was compelled to do so by the Japanese attack.

> Q: If you want to check aggression and militarism you must launch super-aggression and super-militarism, and who is there to check the latter?

JN: Of course there is always the danger of a new militarism growing up in the act of suppressing an existing militarism. The only possible way of eliminating this is by the creation of an effective world organisation. It is difficult to say how far these efforts in this direction will succeed in the future.

1. Interview to the press, Simla, 11 July 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 12 July 1945.
2. The Soviet Union declared war on Japan only on 8 August 1945.

10. The Limits of Self-determination[1]

The Congress is strongly of the opinion that India should not be divided into units. The need of the hour, both for economic and defensive reasons, is that India should remain a united country. Small states in the world of tomorrow have no future as the present war shows. They are sure to be reduced to the status of satellite states like Iraq and Iran. The tendency of the big powers today is to form federations or confederations. India will be finished if it is divided. I stand for a south Asia federation of India, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Burma.

The main problem before us is the freedom of India. As soon as this problem is solved, the solution of other problems will follow. The Congress has acceded the right of self-determination for different nationalities. I do not want to force any unit to remain in a bigger India, but if any unit wants to remain aloof, then, within itself this unit shall have to give the same right of self-determination to other units which like to have it for themselves. The Congress has tried for a communal settlement during the last ten years, but each time the door has been banged against the Congress. Vested interests appear to stand for the *status quo*. If the other side does not want a communal settlement, what can the Congress do? I regret that under the cloak of religion, disruptive tendencies are being encouraged which will retard India's progress. The time has come when those who stand in our way and retard our progress towards the goal of freedom shall have to be removed.

If India were cut into parts its plight will be worse than even that of Iran and Iraq which are free in name only and are the happy hunting grounds for the great powers. Egypt[2] too is free in a strange fashion, that belligerents can fight on her soil while she looks on and is still called free. A divided India will face tremendous difficulties to develop and to exploit its great mineral and other resources.

We in India do not want freedom in name. In the world of tomorrow, smaller countries will have to federate into three or four big confederations, otherwise big countries will absorb them as satellites. There

1. Speech at Srinagar, 2 August 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindu*, 4 August and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 5 August 1945.
2. Egypt became an independent kingdom in 1922 but the British retained the responsibility for defence. The Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936 ended the military occupation, but Britain retained the right to maintain military forces in the Suez Canal zone. During the Second World War, Egypt was the principal Allied base in West Asia and an Allied supply centre was located there.

will be no other course left open to the mother countries, who singly will not count for much. Barring Russia, there is no country in Europe which can call itself truly free. Not even England can call itself completely free. Although England fought bravely, its victory would have been impossible without the help of Russia and America. Men with foresight hope to find a solution to world problems by forging a world federation of free nations. As long as this is not established, wars will plague the world.

I would examine the question of self-determination in the light of big problems. Small countries do not have any independent status today. The old balance of power has been rudely disturbed and even Britain can become a satellite country and be reduced to the status of a client of some big country. If we honestly apply the principle of self-determination, we can find that India will become weak because of vivisection. Its development will be arrested.

The principle of self-determination looks very simple, but it creates hundreds of vastly intricate questions. It has caused a lot of ill feeling, but if we try to look behind the veil, we find different sentiments which have no relation to self-determination. Many Hindus and Muslims are involved in it. Not a few among the upper and middle classes want to maintain the present conditions So they give this question a communal or religious shape. There are many such people, both among Hindus and Muslims, who arouse communal feelings. They are not all angels living in India. But I am perfectly sure if India is divided, its fate will be worse than that of Iraq and Iran. Our country's development will be checkmated.

The man who places first things first and is not lost in the confusion of a hundred questions is a wise man. The first question for India is freedom with which is involved the vital problem of its stark poverty and hunger. We must solve this question of India's freedom first. The Congress during the last 25 years has waged a mighty struggle against the British Government. It fought and struggled and braved untold hardships and sufferings and it shook the Government at times. India is not yet free. But I am sure India is stronger for what has happened during the past three years, and its prestige in the world has gone higher.

Germany has been defeated, but there is no peace in Europe. Warfare is smouldering. Resistance movements are raising their heads. Nobody knows whether revolutions are likely to overtake the reoccupied countries as soon as the military administrations are withdrawn.

In the world of today there are two big powers, Russia and America. In the world of tomorrow, there will be two more, India and China —

there will be no fifth. Though our country is rich it makes one indignant to see the people terribly poor and naked. This state of affairs must end. The freedom of Kashmir, both political and economic, is bound up with that of India.

11. The Potsdam Conference[1]

The Potsdam decisions[2] in regard to Germany, though intended to ensure peace in Europe, are not likely to yield the desired result. German militarism had to be destroyed and the possibility of future aggression prevented. But it seems to me that the methods adopted will only lead to temporary and enforced peace behind which remain motives of revenge, and continuous attempts to break through the agricultural shell which is being made to encase Germany.

I will not expect a highly developed industrial people like the Germans to exist for long as a backward agricultural community, nor do I imagine that an economic equilibrium can be established in Europe on this basis.

Revenge and hatred can never be the foundation of a stable peace. I am afraid these proposals will be as temporary in their applications as the Treaty of Versailles. If militarism is to be destroyed, it is not enough to end it in Germany. This will simply mean a transfer of militarism and the aggressive spirit to other countries. Any partial and enforced solution can be no solution and will only lead to future conflicts.

At this moment the Big Three are deciding these vital issues. But it must be remembered that other countries are not necessarily in agreement with their decisions. Certainly India has neither been consulted nor has agreed to them. Though India's voice may be powerless today it will not be so in the future. I hope whatever influence India comes to possess will be used to evolve more stable conditions of world peace and freedom.

1. Interview to the press, Sopore, 4 August 1945. From *The Tribune*, 6 August 1945.
2. The U.S., Britain and the Soviet Union, meeting at Potsdam on 17 July-2 August 1945, decreed the extirpation of Nazism, the abolition of Nazi organisation and laws, the disbandment of German armed forces, the trial of war criminals, and democratization and decentralisation of government.

It has been my long-held opinion that in Indian States there must be full responsible government. And of all the States, Kashmir is entitled to it at the earliest.

I pay tribute to the work of the Kashmir National Conference and its leader, Sheikh Abdullah. Its foundation is sound as its doors are open to all communities, for then alone can the Kashmiris build the edifice they aspire for. Unfortunately there are enough barriers which they face. Any organisation which creates new barriers and accentuates bitterness weakens the people.

Only selfish men, guided by the thought of temporary advantages, offer conditions for joining the freedom movement. This is merely a pretext for keeping themselves away from the hard path. Essentially they have no interest in freedom.

12. To Ali Motamedy[1]

Srinagar
August 7, 1945

Dear Mr. Motamedy[2],

I have received your letter[3] of the 26th July on my return to Srinagar. I am grateful for what you say about my books. As for your complaint, I am rather sorry that you should have come to any conclusion in regard to me on the basis of a very brief newspaper report of a long speech. I have been and am an admirer of Iran. What I pointed out was that small countries in Europe, America or Asia today have a very subordinate position in the international sphere and in the final sense of the word cannot be considered independent. Both politically and economically they tend to become satellites of big powers. I mentioned various countries of Europe. In fact I said that almost every country of Europe at present, barring two or three, was inevitably a satellite country. Similarly I said that various countries in Asia were in a like position and I mentioned among them Iran and Iraq. All this I thought was an objective description of the existing world situation. I

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. At this time Consul General for Iran in India.
3. He objected to Jawaharlal's references to his country in his speech of 2 August 1945 at Srinagar as "desultory and degrading remarks"

even went a step further and said that England, great power as she was, was gradually likely to be a satellite of America or a large group. India of course is not even a satellite but a dependent country, although potentially she has great resources.

I am writing to you in a hurry and cannot deal with the subject at length. But I hope even these few lines will correct your misapprehension and make you realise that I could not possibly say anything derogatory of Iran.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

13. Cable to Chiang Kai-shek[1]

16.8.45

I send you and the people of China my warmest congratulations on victory and the ending of war's eight years agony. May the unconquerable spirit of China which has triumphantly survived these terrible years rise in the future to endless greater heights and lend its great influence and weight to peace and freedom all over the world.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

14. The End of the World War[1]

Everybody must experience a feeling of relief at the end of war, and I am also happy that this carnage has ended. It is good that Nazism, fascism and Japanese militarism have suffered a defeat, but my happiness

1. Interview to the press, Srinagar, 16 August 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 17 August 1945.

would have been far greater if I could see militarism also eliminated from the world.

There are many ominous signs, not the least being the atomic bomb, which indicate the disastrous way that modern civilization is following. No sensitive individual can view this prospect without dismay.

My heart goes out specially to the people of China, who have suffered the longest agony of this war. I hope that, after eight and a quarter of years of struggle, they will find peace and unity and that their unconquerable spirit which kept them going, in spite of every terror and horror, will rise to even greater heights in the days to come.

15. To Tan Yun-shan[1]

September 29, 1945

Dear Prof. Tan Yun-shan,

I must apologise to you for the delay in acknowledging your previous letter with which you sent me a message from His Holiness Tai hsu. I have been moving about most of the time and heavily occupied. I returned to Allahabad from Bombay only last night.

I appreciated greatly Abbot Tai-hsu's message and it brought to my mind his visit many years ago when we met in Benares. I hope you will convey to him, and through him to the China Buddhists' Association, our greetings and our earnest wish that friendly contacts between India and China should increase.

As you are going to China, I am glad to avail myself of the opportunity to send through you to the Chinese people our message of admiration for the fortitude and courage with which they faced terrible privations and trials during the past eight years and more. We are happy the war is over and success has crowned their efforts and we earnestly trust that the future will mean for them peace, unity and progress, as well as a close comradeship with the Indian people in the common tasks that face the world, and especially Asia.

To the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang I would beg you to convey my greeting and homage and my faith in China's future Yesterday I read in the newspapers a report of a short speech delivered somewhere in Bombay by Mr. Sarat Bose. I was surprised and deeply pained at the attack he made on the Generalissimo. I can speak with authority in saying that this does not represent, and indeed is entirely opposed to,

1. J.N. Correspondence, NMML.

the Congress viewpoint as well as the feelings of the people in India generally. I am issuing a press statement on the subject.[2] You have no doubt seen the resolution passed by the A.I.C.C. in Bombay on China. I trust that friends in China will not be misled by Mr. Sarat Bose's remarks into thinking that he represents in this matter any considerable body of opinion.

With warm regards and good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. See next item.

16. Rejoinder to Sarat Chandra Bose[1]

I have read with deep regret Mr. Sarat Bose's remarks about Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang.[2] Mr. Bose is perfectly entitled to his opinion about persons and things. But no one who occupies a responsible position in public life should make statements or accusations without full knowledge of facts. This applies all the more to expressions of opinion in regard to the internal affairs of other countries about whom our knowledge must necessarily be limited. Sarat Babu can hardly have had special sources of information during his long term in prison or detention. The last few years have brought China and India nearer to one another and there can be no doubt that this is largely due to the Generalissimo's and Madame Chiang's efforts in this direction. But, even apart from this, statesmen do not normally go out of their way to criticise and condemn the heads of friendly States. In this matter, I can say with confidence that Sarat Babu does not represent the Congress viewpoint. Only a few days ago, the A.I.C.C. passed a resolution[3] of greetings to the Chinese people and the Congress Presi-

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 29 September 1945. *The Hindu*, 1 October 1945.
2. In a speech on 26 September 1945, Sarat Bose criticised Chiang Kai-shek for not coming to terms with Mao Tse-tung and described him as the "grand fascist of the East."
3. On 21 September 1945, the Congress Working Committee declared that "the people of China, who have faced unflinchingly and with heroic steadfastness and courage over eight years of horrible war and disaster, would rise to even greater heights in the years of peace."

dent, and I have, since our release, conveyed to the Generalissimo messages of goodwill on behalf of the Congress. To these he has responded in cordial terms.

Any person who has some knowledge of events knows that during the past three and a half years, the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang have gone out of their way to help[4] India's cause even at the cost of some temporary injury to their own national interests, or rather, it would be more correct to say, because they considered India's freedom to be in the interests of Chinese and Asiatic freedom. When India knows all the facts, she will, I am sure, be grateful to China, and especially to the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang. To call the Generalissimo a fascist is a manifest absurdity in view of all that has happened during the past eight years or more.

When foreigners criticise us in India, we resent their criticism because it is usually ill-informed and sometimes it just flows from dislike. We must not fall into this error ourselves, not only because it is wrong in itself but also because it has unfortunate consequences and sows the seeds of illwill between nations and peoples. The future of Asia depends on the goodwill and neighbourly relations between Asiatic countries and, of these, China and India must obviously play a dominant role. I am not competent enough, nor is it my business to discuss China's internal problems which are as difficult and intricate as India's are, but from my general knowledge of the situation, I am convinced that these problems will be solved and China will make rapid progress as a united democratic State.

4. Chiang Kai shek had protested against the arrest of Congress leaders and asked President Roosevelt to intervene.

17. The Use of Indian Troops in Indonesia[1]

Only a few days ago, the All India Congress Committee declared that Indian troops must not be used for keeping down the peoples of colonial

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 30 September 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 1 October 1945.

territories in Indonesia and elsewhere.[2] And now, almost immediately after, has come the news of the independence movements taking active and aggressive shape in Indo-China and Java and of Indian troops being employed to suppress them.

The use of Indian troops is being greatly resented in India and the British Government should know that it is likely to lead to grave and far-reaching consequences.

Thhe Indian national movement as represented by the Congress has had friendly contacts in the past, long before the last war began, with the national independence movements of Java and Indo-China. We are intensely interested in the freedom of these as well as other subject countries of Asia and Africa and we would like to help them in so far as we can to achieve this.

It is monstrous that our people and our armed forces should be employed to suppress those for whom we have the fullest sympathy.

2. In Indo-China, the British were keeping down the agitation of the Annamite nationals with the help of a contingent of 12,000 Indian troops and in Indonesia they were employing the Indian army to help the Dutch restore their control.

18. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Allahabad
1 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

···You would have noticed in the press a totally unnecessary controversy between Sarat Bose and me. I am afraid Sarat has for some reason or other got a grievance against me, though why it should persist I do not know. He is making a dead set against Chiang Kai-shek, which seems to me bad and harmful and likely to create unnecessary trouble all round. None of us admires all that Chiang Kai-shek has done. But it does seem to me wrong for us to attack him in this way. He happens to be the head of the Chinese State and so far as India is concerned his attitude has always been very friendly. For my part I have kept up friendly relations not only with Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Government but with many of his critics in China. I do not want this controversy with Sarat, but to remain silent became impossible for me.

1. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. 2. p. 3. Extracts.

I am going to Lucknow on the 3rd for our provincial Congress meetings which will keep me there for 5 days. From 12 to 17 October I tour some districts in the U.P.—Ballia, Ghazipur, Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Benares which suffered most during the past three years. I come back on the 17th and on the 18th I leave for Delhi, spending a day there in connection with I.N.A. work and proceed to Jaipur for three days. I expect to return to Allahabad on the 25th. I have to be in Bombay on 6 November for the National Planning Committee. Before I go there I should like to pay a brief visit to Calcutta and Midnapore if I can manage it.

I hope Bapu and you are keeping well.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

19. To N.A.F. Meemanage[1]

1.10.45

Dear friend,[2]

I have your letter and your telegram.[3] I gladly write to you what my ideas are about the future of Lanka and India. During the last fourteen years or so, ever since my visit to Lanka in the summer of 1931, I have often thought of this subject. That visit and a subsequent visit, as well as my reading of history and current events, brought home to me the fact that Lanka and India are so closely connected that they must inevitably be associated with each other politically and otherwise in the future. For India, perhaps, this is not such an important matter, as India minus Lanka will yet be a great power. But for Lanka, this connection is vital. This has been my faith all these years, but I have always made it clear that this question of closer association must be decided by Lanka herself and she must feel perfectly free to choose.

Culturally, racially and linguistically Lanka is as much part of India as any province. But all these considerations might be overridden by political and economic considerations that point inevitably to a closer union. Lanka's trade must of necessity be largely with India; any attempt to look elsewhere will produce instability and insecurity.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. President at this time of the Ceylonese Union in Mysore State.
3. He had asked Jawaharlal for a message to the youth of Sri Lanka

Politically, India is certain to be a free and independent country soon, and will thereafter rapidly develop industrially and otherwise. She is likely to become the centre for defence purposes and trade for Southern and South East Asia. It is my hope that regional agreements, within the four corners of a world agreement, will bind together all these countries of South and South East Asia.

If some such development takes place, Lanka must hold on to this grouping, presumably as an autonomous unit of the Indian federation. In any event, the country cannot remain isolated and stand by herself in the modern world. She must be associated with some larger group. What group can that be except the Indian federation? Association with England is not likely to be profitable, feasible or desirable. Besides, the British empire is a fading institution.

Admission into the Indian federation should not limit Lanka's freedom except in regard to certain minimum federal subjects, such as defence. I am in favour of having a compulsory minimum of federal subjects, as well as, in addition, optional federal subjects. This would enable some of the federating units to have a closer hand and a more centralised government, and at the same time give greater freedom to some units. The choice should be that of the unit.

While I regret the existing tension between India and Lanka I do not attach great importance to it and consider it rather superficial. It is due to faults on both sides and a narrowness of outlook which forgets tomorrow and concentrates on today. I think Indians in Lanka, or some of them, have shown little wisdom in demanding special safeguards for their interests and special representation.[4] They had no business to make any reservations or qualifications to their support of full freedom for Lanka. I think also that certain leaders in Lanka have not acted wisely in denying Indian residents certain fundamental rights and in treating them as less than citizens.[5] It is obvious that India can never accept any position for her children anywhere which is not that of perfect equality. At the same time I am opposed to any kind of exploitation of Lanka and her people by Indian business. The first consideration must always be the good of the people.

4. The leaders of the Indian community in Ceylon at this time supported a scheme of "balanced representation" which would establish parity in the legislature and the executive between the Sinhalese who formed two-thirds of the population and the minority communities.
5. The Village Tribunals Ordinance of 1942 sought to bring the Indian estate labourers under the jurisdiction of village tribunals, although they were denied the village committee franchise in village areas.

It is for the younger generation in India and Lanka to get over these petty squabbles and view the future in proper perspective. The only picture that the future can show is that of a closer union between the two, and the people of the two countries cooperating together in the great tasks ahead.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. Second Rejoinder to Sarat Bose[1]

I regret that Mr. Sarat Bose has started a controversy. It is none of my seeking. Evidently, he is displeased with me for such part as I may have played in formulating Congress policy in the past, and thinks that I should be prevented from further misleading the country. That is a perfectly legitimate ambition and I have nothing to say about it. Indeed, as an individual I can well be left out of the picture. What is important is the present policy of the Congress, and I would suggest to Sarat Babu to consult the Congress President or the Working Committee in regard to it.

It is not my business to defend the policies or the activities of the Chinese Government. Nor do I think myself competent to judge a situation which, after many years of horrible and devastating war, created vast and intricate problems. But Sarat Babu attacked the head of that Government and made him responsible for the ills China suffers from. That surely was extraordinarily unfair and unwise and totally uncalled for. Sarat Babu's references to the closed door conversations with men like Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek or Colonel Louis Johnson and his further mention of the Asiatic federation leave me somewhat bewildered. What exactly does he object to, unless it is just my humble self? That is attaching too much importance to an individual in considering national policies. May I inform Sarat Babu that I have the honour and privilege of considering Madame Sun Yat sen as one of my esteemed friends? May I also suggest to him that phrases like cheap and false international claptrap do not help in any argument or in elucidating any problem.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 1 October 1945. *The Hindu*, 3 October 1945.

21. Help to Indonesia[1]

I should like to tell Dr. Sukarno[2] that if I can be of any service to the cause of Indonesian freedom, I shall gladly visit Java in spite of urgent and important work in India.[3]

I believe that our freedom in India or Java or elsewhere hangs together and if I can serve the cause of freedom in Java now better than in India, I shall certainly go there. But that depends not so much on my wishes, but on the facilities for leaving India and travelling to Batavia by air. If these facilities are available, I shall set aside all other work and go there. Meanwhile, I send my greetings to Dr. Sukarno and to my old comrades, Dr. Mohammad Hatta and Dr. Sharir[4], and wish them all success in achieving the independence of Indonesia.

1. Interview to the press, Lucknow, 9 October 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 10 October 1945.
2. (1901-1970); founded the 'Partai Nasional Indonesia' in 1927; was imprisoned for four years in 1929; became the leader of the intellectual faction on the split of the party in 1932; banished from Java by the government, but returned from exile after the Japanese invasion in 1942 and took part in the formation of the nationalist organisation, the Central People's Power. On 17 August 1945, with Japanese cooperation, established the Republic of Indonesia, became its first President, and continued in that office until 1967.
3. On 7 October 1945, Dr. Sukarno invited the "four leaders of freedom" namely, Madame Chiang Kai-shek, Jawaharlal, Dr. Evatt, the Foreign Minister of Australia, and Brigadier-General Romulo, of the Phillippines, to visit Indonesia and see for themselves the conditions prevailing there.
4. Dr. Sultan Sharir, then Prime Minister of Indonesia.

22. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Allahabad
9 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have just received your letter of 6 October.[2] I am sorry for the delay in sending the election manifesto for the Central Assembly. I could not

1. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. 2, pp. 5-6.
2. In this letter, Vallabhbhai Patel had suggested that Jawaharlal draft an election manifesto. He also referred to the controversy between Sarat Bose and Jawaharlal and to Communist propaganda against the Congress.

possibly find time in Lucknow. I hope to send you something tomorrow.

I quite agree with you as to Dharam Yash Dev.[3]

I am really at a loss to understand why Sarat Bose suddenly launched an attack on me unless this is due to some old grievance which I have forgotten. It seems obvious to me that his anger is directed more against me than Chiang Kai-shek.

You may have seen in the papers the invitation issued by Dr. Sukarno, the President of the Provisional Indonesian Republic. Among others, this has been issued to me to visit Java immediately to see things there. The situation there is odd and rather critical. It will have its repercussion elsewhere. I felt that some immediate response was desirable, and so I replied that if there is need for me there in the interest of Indonesian freedom I shall come there, even though this means leaving urgent and important work here; of course this depends on passport and travelling facilities. By air Batavia can be reached in two days from Allahabad. There is hardly any chance of my getting facilities from Government here. Nevertheless I am applying for them.

There is just a chance of my going to Calcutta and Midnapore towards the end of this month for four days or so. Someone told me that you might be there then with Bapu.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

3. Dharam Yash Dev was the publicity secretary of the Congress election board. Vallabhbhai Patel had written that he had an expensive style of living and an ordinary salary would not suit him.

23. Japan's New Role in Asia[1]

I am asked by Japanese newspapers to give plain advice to Japan, especially as to what I think Japan should do to regain the respect and confidence of other nations. That is not easy for me for it is always difficult and often presumptuous to advise other nations and peoples and it becomes still more difficult to advise a people who are stricken down

1. Undated message to Japanese newspapers. *The Hindu*, 11 October 1945.

by defeat and misfortune, howsoever deserved these might be. Also I cannot speak for the United Nations as a whole or for the four Big Powers who dominate the counsels of these nations. Perhaps I can have some insight into the mind of India and to a lesser extent into the mind of Asia and so I shall say a few words as an Indian.

There was a time when Indians looked up to the Japanese and admired their great achievements. Then there came a time when the Japanese began to resemble too closely the aggressive imperialist powers of the West and instead of being champions of Asiatic freedom, their lust for domination and imperialist expansion led them to the conquest of Asiatic countries. Korea was deprived of her freedom and China, in the birth pangs of new freedom, was continually harassed and threatened and later attacked. All this changed India's attitude to Japan and the old admiration gave place to resentment. Our sympathies flowed to China and other countries attacked by Japan.

Now Japan has met with disaster in her imperialist adventures, a fate which will befall every nation today which aims at world dominion. Both world considerations and narrow national interests must induce Japan to give up her old dreams of conquest and expansion. Nor should she think in terms of revenge, for there is no end to the cycle of hatred and revenge. The Japanese have shown extraordinary qualities which were turned in the wrong direction. They must now use them to build anew on a sounder foundation; they must reject militarism and imperialism and make Japan a country of free democratic institutions which theatens none and is feared by none. They must build their economic order on the basis of equality and equal opportunities for all their people and not aim at economic domination of any other country. Thus they will create afresh a prosperous and progressive Japan on friendly terms with her neighbours, and as a member of the Asiatic family as well as the world brotherhood of nations. Japan has caused deep injury to China, both material and spiritual, and therefore Japan's special task must be to gain the goodwill of the Chinese people. Ultimately the peace of the Far East depends on the cooperation of the Chinese and the Japanese and such cooperation can only be based on freedom. If this policy is followed by Japan she will not only gradually heal the deep scar of war, but will also cure the deeper spiritual injuries caused to herself and to others and bridge the gulf which now separates her from other nations. India and other countries of Asia will outlive yesterday's anger and resentment and join hands with Japan in furtherance of Asiatic freedom and cooperation within the larger framework of world peace.

24. Solidarity with Indonesia[1]

On my return from my brief, but very full and exhilarating, tour of some of the eastern districts of the United Provinces, my first thought is of the gallant struggle for freedom that is being waged in Indonesia that has reached a critical stage.[2] All of us in India have expressed our wholehearted sympathy with the Indonesian peoples and the new government they have formed. That is a welcome sign of our solidarity, but I hope we shall not leave it at that, for big issues are involved in this Indonesian struggle. We must watch and help wherever we can; especially we must insist that no Indian troops be used against the Indonesian Republican Government, and that no material for war should be sent from India to help the Dutch Government. Australian, Chinese and other seamen have refused to load war material meant for the suppression of the Indonesian Republic.[3] That example of solidarity and effective action should be followed in India. It is for the Congress committees and the trade union movement to take steps in this direction, for it must always be remembered that Indonesian freedom is vitally important to India and Asia.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 15 October 1945. *The Hindu*, 17 October 1945.
2. On 12 October 1945, the Annamites suffered a large number of casualties in Saigon in an engagement with a detachment of Gurkhas.
3. On 25 September 1945, there were large scale dockyard strikes in Australia in sympathy with the Indonesian nationalist movement.

25. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Allahabad
16 October 1945

My dear Vallabhbhai,
Thank you for your letter[2] of the 12th. I returned yesterday from my visit to Ballia etc. very tired. On the 18th I am off again. I shall be visiting Ajmer from Jaipur.

1. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. 2, p. 13.
2. Vallabhbhai Patel had commended Jawaharlal's proposal to visit Indonesia and opposed a suggestion for a settlement with the Hindu Mahasabha.

Prafulla Babu has telegraphed to me to postpone my visit to Calcutta. So this is not fixed yet. I still want to go there, especially to Midnapore, if Prafulla Babu agrees. He wants me to go on a longer visit later. But no one knows what will happen later.

The Indonesian struggle is becoming more intense and critical and I feel that we ought to give it greater prominence. It would be a good thing if there were meetings etc. But the most dramatic thing would be for our dock workers and seamen to refuse to load war material for Java, as the Australians did.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

26. To Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Allahabad
16.10.45

My dear Maulana,
I enclose a letter from Asaf Ali. Yesterday I sent a telegram to you suggesting that you might issue a further statement about Indonesia. In Australia and elsewhere dock workers and seamen have refused to load arms and war material which was intended for use by the Dutch in Indonesia. It would be a good thing if our workers and seamen did likewise. The situation is critical and we should help in every way we can. I think meetings should also be held.

There is one other aspect of the question. It appears from the reports that Gurkha troops have been used against Indonesians. Would it not be desirable for an appeal to be made to the Nepal Government to prevent this improper use of their people?

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

27. The Obligation of the United States[1]

While welcoming President Truman's declaration[2] of United States foreign policy, I may state that unless some effective solution to the Indian problem is found within the next few months, a new crisis will develop in India, which cannot be solved by parleys at the high level. This crisis will affect the world situation.

It is well known that America has been looked up to for many years as a country which stands for freedom. There are undoubtedly other powerful forces at work in America also but, as compared with other great powers, America is free from the burden of an imperialist past. This is a great asset to America in its dealings with other countries. Mr. Wendell Wilkie mentioned this after his world tour.

Everywhere in Asia and Africa people looked up to America, but even then certain doubts were beginning to arise because of American policy. Subsequently, these doubts gained strength. President Truman's announcement will help to some extent in lessening these doubts, but obviously mere announcements do not go far at a time when active interpretation of policy is needed everywhere.

There is no doubt that, during the last few years, there has been some disillusionment in India in regard to American championship of freedom. At San Francisco, the Soviet Union took the lead in championing independence for subject countries, but other powers fought shy of this and tried their utmost to tone it down.[3]

The Soviet Union has been usually silent about all such matters, but whenever they have said anything it has been in favour of freedom of subject countries.

At the present moment we are right in the midst of the aftermath of the war and inevitably all the assurances given and the promises

1. Interview to the press, Lucknow, 28 October 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, October 29 1945.
2. President Truman's statement of 27 October 1945 insisted on the right of all peoples to self government, territorial changes only in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned, and the advantages of equal access to trade and raw materials and international economic collaboration.
3. Speaking at the San Francisco Conference on 30 April 1945, M. Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, said: "We have here among us an Indian delegation, although we know India is not an independent country. But the time will come when the voice of independent India will be heard too. We complied, however, with the request by the British Government that India should be invited to this conference, imperfect though her status is."

made during the war demand fulfilment. Yet we see the attempt to crush with armed forces the freedom movements of Indonesia and Indo-China, and in this British forces are taking an effective part. Indeed, even the Japanese have been employed for this purpose. The American Government has declared that lend-lease[4] goods used against the Indonesians should have their labels torn off. That is poor consolation, indeed, for the Indonesians. They will be shot down by guns whether the guns bear this label or that.

In India, the United States has kept itself clear from all entanglements. We cannot blame it for this attitude, specially in wartime, but there has been something much more than this during the past few years—a passive and sometimes even an active support of British policy and British propaganda. We realise fully that Indian freedom will be won by India's strength and that we cannot rely on any foreign power. Nevertheless, it is obvious that India's reactions to other powers will be governed by their policy to India. It should be clear to anyone that India will function independently before very long and that an independent India will make rapid progress and play an important role in world events. That role will be influenced by the attitude of other powers to Indian freedom.

So far as one can judge, American policy in regard to India has been strangely subservient to British policy. That British policy, whatever the professions behind it, continues to be one of authoritarian rule in India without the least trace of democratic functioning. I trust that President Truman's announcement indicates something more than an expression of vague goodwill. Today, effective action is necessary if we are to save ourselves from the rapid deterioration leading ultimately to conflicts on a vast scale.

In India, besides various problems, a possible new constitution is being discussed, but the reality is not this legal consideration or even the elections that are to come, but an intense and passionate desire to be rid of British rule and to establish a free and democratic state. During the four months I have been out of prison, I have been astonished at the depth of this sentiment and the rising national feeling of the people.

In effect the problem of freedom is indivisible. It crops up separately whether in Java or whether in Indo-China or India or elsewhere. But basically it is the same. There must be, therefore, a common approach to a common solution before all peaceful solutions are ruled out.

4. The system under which essential war materials were made available to the Allied countries by the U.S. in the Second World War.

28. India's Lead in Asian Liberation[1]

The fight for India's freedom is interlocked with the liberation movement of other Asiatic countries, which are determined to achieve independence.

I am proud to declare that India is the torch-bearer in the liberation movement of Asiatic countries, which look up to India for assistance and guidance. I regret that India is not strong enough to prevent Indian troops from crushing the spirit of independence of the people of Indonesia and Indo-China.

However, I warn the British Government of the growing feeling of resentment in the country against the use of Indian troops in Indonesia. The British Government's intervention in the internal affairs of Indonesia is not justified. In my opinion, the British Government is afraid that if the liberation movement succeeds in Indonesia, it will have repercussions in India also.

I urge the King of Nepal to force the British Government not to use Gurkha troops against Indonesians. The United States Government, which is always professing to be the champion of freedom and democracy, has failed to take active interest in Indonesian affairs.

Three years of ruthless repression by an alien and irresponsible government has sown seeds of distrust, frustration and anger. The country's temperature is rising every day and I feel that if an early solution is not found, people's energy might be directed into dangerous channels.

Surrounded by "yesmen", a handful of officers in London and Delhi, who profess to be masters of India's destiny, are living in the realm of fantasy. They refuse to face the realities of the situation. I ask, what good has the present Government done and what good is it capable of doing? Time has come when we cannot be treated like dumb-driven cattle.

I am not prepared to hear oft-repeated sermons from Delhi and London that we are not united. They have not felt the pulse of the people. They only know how to execute unreal plans and schemes. Sometimes they hear an angry voice and say that they do not like it, not knowing that the voice is that of millions of Indians joining to shatter the chains of slavery. The day is not far off when our voice will be heard in every nook and corner of the world.

1. Address at South East Asia Day meeting, Lucknow, 28 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 29 October 1945.

India is reeling under an authoritarian government, both at the Centre and in the provinces. The present Labour Government in Britain, while professing to sympathise with our aspirations, argue that our demand is not the real issue. They, in effect, do not understand the importance of the Indian problem. India is the key to the solution of the question of freedom of all dependent countries.

Some have complained that Congress leaders are saying some harsh things which the Government do not like, for instance, about conditions in Delhi and Lahore forts. It is not for me to compare these forts to the notorious Belsen Camp, once run by the Nazis. But let the Government hold a sifting inquiry into the allegation against British officers for what they did in Ballia and Azamgarh in the past three years.

I warn the British Government that if it does not pay heed to the legitimate aspirations of the Indian people, a day may come when Asia will rise against Britain and America. Henceforth, Indians will refuse to lead a life of slavery and disgrace.

29. A Test for the United Nations[1]

The Indonesian struggle is today the most vital aspect of the Asian problem and is, therefore, a world problem. It is the symbol of revolt against imperialist domination. It is the acid test of the professions made by the United Nations in the course of the war, of the four freedoms of the San Francisco Charter and of so much that has been said in regard to democracy and freedom.

I appreciate Dr. Mohamed Hatta's friendly reference to me.[2] We are very old friends and on my part it will be a great pleasure to meet him and his colleagues again. What part I can play in Indonesia at

1. Interview to the press, Lucknow, 17 November 1945. From *The Leader*, 18 November 1945.
2. Mohamed Hatta said on 16 November 1945: "I met Pandit Nehru in 1927 at a conference of the anti-colonial league in Brussels. We have been good friends through the years, and we, who have been fighting for Indonesian independence, know him as the doughty champion and are well aware of his work on the Executive Committee of the League against Imperialism and the fight for national independence."

present I cannot say, but certainly I would do my best to get the problem solved in a peaceful way on the basis of Indonesian independence. At present, in India I am heavily occupied with important engagements, but, as I said before, I am prepared to forego all these engagements if I am permitted to go to Java.

India is deeply moved by the horrors that are being perpetrated in Indonesia and our own freedom struggle is being powerfully influenced.

For my part, I am prepared to go to Java at any time and at a moment's notice. For the present, permission has been refused to me and I cannot go. But my mind and heart are full of what is happening there and I believe that a time will come when the people of India will play a more effective role in ensuring the independence of Indonesia, as well as of other countries in Asia.

Many of us were doubtful of the professions of the United Nations when they were made, but few realised how they would be belied and betrayed so soon after the war. A more flagrant example can hardly be imagined. Here is a nation undoubtedly united in its demand for independence, undoubtedly capable of not only holding its own but of gaining freedom from the Dutch alone, and now we have British armies using all their armed might to suppress Indonesia in order to reestablish the Dutch empire. Even their erstwhile enemies, the Japanese, are utilised against the Indonesians. Most shameful of all for us is the use of Indian troops.

I am glad that the workers and seamen in India are beginning to realise their responsibility and refusing to load ships carrying war material from India to Java.

It is time that the people of Europe and America realise the vital significance of the Indonesian struggle for independence and the far-reaching consequences involved. Not even the atom bomb is going to stop these consequences.

30. To Subrata Roy Chowdhury[1]

Allahabad
December 3, 1945

Dear Mr. Chowdhury,[2]

Thank you for your letter of the 25th October. To read through the programme of the Cambridge Majlis reminds me of the old times when

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Subrata Roy Chowdhury, at that time president of the Cambridge University Majlis, wrote that the Majlis had planned to demand India's independence.

I was a member of the Majlis. We have progressed since then both in India and abroad where Indians foregather. I am glad to learn that you are trying to enlighten public opinion in England. It is a big task.

I hope the Majlis keep up contacts with other Asian students in Cambridge. (You know I use the word "Asian" not "Asiatic".) It is very necessary that Indian students especially should develop these contacts with people not only from Asia but countries like Egypt and North Africa etc.

With all good wishes to you and to the Majlis.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

31. Civil War in China[1]

Question: What is your reaction to the present situation in China?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is an extremely unfortunate and unhappy situation that there should be any kind of civil conflict in China which will come in the way of China's development after the stress of war. China has been recognised as one of the major powers of the world, but if China's attention and energy are spent in internal conflicts then its influence in Asian and world affairs will necessarily be less, and more particularly in its own development which is very necessary for it. Possibly every person who has an attraction for China or interest in its people must desire an end of all such conflicts.

Q: Can you suggest some way for unity in China?

JN: It is difficult for me to suggest ways and means in detail, but it will obviously be exceedingly unfortunate if there is any division in China. China must retain unity, and that unity should necessarily be built on a democratic basis. That is the main thing. The details are difficult for me, myself being outside the country, to suggest.

1. Interview to the press, Santiniketan, 23 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26 December 1945.

Q: Do you think that China is emerging as a democratic country after the war?

JN: It is a question which does not concern China alone. In all such situations international developments and other great powers influence the events.

Q: Are you likely to visit China?

JN: I should certainly like to go to China, but not in the near future. After all a visit to China does not take a long time. When there will be a free India, I should very much like the development of closer contacts with China, cultural and political, besides contacts of every kind of trade and commerce. I should also like closer contacts to be developed among Asians.

Q: In what ways would you like to develop closer contacts with China?

JN: After India is free, enormous avenues will open out for all manner of contacts, political, economic, trade, cultural etc. At the present moment such contacts, to a large extent, are limited because they are controlled by the two Governments. On this side the Government of India is not very keen on contacts. When the Government changes, obviously India should have close contacts and understanding and possibly alliances for various purposes.

Q: Do you think that the present visit of the M.P.s delegation to India will in any way help India towards attaining Swaraj?

JN: We are always willing to discuss things with everyone who may like to come here. I do not know what the delegation intends to do. I do not know many of the members of this delegation. Obviously, the issue of Swaraj is not to be settled by a delegation of this type. There is, however, always one aspect of it, that is, it is always desirable to have personal contacts. It thaws a situation. In this sense it is good. But I do not know whether it will lead to one thing or the other. We shall certainly meet the members of the delegation.

Q: What about your proposed visit to Java?

JN: I want to go, but I can only go when I get travel facilities. I have applied to the Government of India, but I have not yet got any reply.

Q: Will the Congress participation in the election in any way help in attaining Swaraj?

JN: Election by itself does not give it. But the election affords an opportunity to go to the masses and helps us to consult their opinion. There are other factors that are essential to achieve independence.

32. Bonds between India and China[1]

It was, I think, eight and a half years ago that Prof. Tan Yun-shan asked me to come here to open the China Bhavan. I agreed gladly, but a very unusual thing happened on the day of my starting. I was unable to come and I sent a message. Later I came to Santiniketan and visited the China Bhavan with the illustrious leader of China, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. I am happy here today to participate in the meeting of the Sino-Indian Cultural Society. I have listened with attention and pleasure to the reports and activities of the society, and yet I feel that much more can be done in this respect if we take into consideration not only the numerous bonds of contact between India and China, but also the vastness of the two countries. I am anxious to develop all manner of contacts, cultural and others, between the two countries. And we, the people of India and China, should like to develop this intensively and extensively. I should like to see branches of this society in other places in India and in China, so that it may not be confined to a few specialists who take interest in the relations of the two countries, but to a large number of Indians and Chinese. Perhaps the conditions created by the war during the last five or six years have come in the way of developing the branches of the society in India. Yet the great war recently brought India and China nearer and closer — physically nearer as the centre of activities of China has come nearer to India by the development of communication of road and of air. Today it is possible to be in China after a brief day's journey. All these factors, which may have taken place in due course, but which

1. Address to the Sino-Indian Cultural Society, Santiniketan, 23 December 1945. Based on reports from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 25 December and *National Herald*, 25 December 1945.

have been expedited by the war, have led to a closer association and approximation between China and India. Possibly they have far greater effect in the public mind — even as the activities of our small society of experts, who do real service by canalising these feelings and by providing data for others.

It seems to me that in the future, India and China will necessarily come nearer to each other. I am not for a moment thinking of a mere continuation of the ancient bonds though, of course, they will be there, but perhaps of a more objective view not coloured by sentiments and desires. Viewing the world situation as it seems to develop in spite of its many contradictions it seems to me inevitable that China, India and probably some other countries of Asia, evidently of South East Asia, will have to stand together, and cooperate together in matters not only cultural but economic as well. They will have easy access to each other and they will look to each other to resist Western aggression by mutual contact and agreement. Possibly this may take some time though the tempo of the world structure is greatly rising and the world is changing very rapidly in these days.

The great war has just ended, but now we see signs of trouble and conflict all over the world even among the victorious nations. There are already dark hints of another war on a more extensive scale. I cannot say whether it is likely to break out but nobody can ignore the threat of such a war. We should put our own house in order before it materialises. India and China, which might have played a different part in world affairs, are in some kind of a turmoil today. In China, it has taken the obvious course of a civil war. In India the trouble is more deep-seated though it is not obvious. In either country deep differences among people weaken the power of influencing the affairs of the world. This is unfortunate.

We in India should have the privilege of playing an important part in the development of the world situation. Instead, we have to watch things happening, which are not only injurious to our interests but are hateful sometimes, as the events in South East Asia are today. All manner of developments are taking place, sometimes in the name of India, which have no relation to Indian interests.

China today is undoubtedly one of the principal powers of the world. Many eastern countries look with hope to China for a lead in Asian affairs. Many western countries look to China to play a vital and tremendous part in peace as she has done during the last eight years in war. That is why it is a matter of deep anguish to many of us to see the internal trouble and conflict in China at the present moment.

You have rightly passed a resolution congratulating China on her victorious emergence after passing through an ordeal during these eight years, which is something difficult for us even to imagine. The sufferings which the Chinese underwent and the heroic courage which they showed are unparalleled. It is right we should congratulate them, and it is right that we should send our good wishes to the great leaders of the Chinese people, especially to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. I do not think that even in the midst of civil war there is any person who challenges the right of the Generalissimo to be the leader of China. Even his critics have to acknowledge that he is the only possible leader in the present circumstances who can lead China out of chaos. It is most fitting, therefore, that you have passed a resolution congratulating him.

We hope that the present state of affairs in India and China will end and both countries will come closer in their friendship, not only for their mutual advantage, but also for the good of the world at large.

It may be that the various countries succeed in producing a more harmonious whole, a better equilibrium in the world. However that may be, I am dead certain that there is going to be no equilibrium in this world unless there is equilibrium in Asia, India, China and in South East Asia. There is not going to be any harmony or peace in this world even for a short time, much less for a long time, unless the problems of Asia are settled satisfactorily, unless the aggression and interference of western countries in Asian affairs end. It may be that the tremendous power that has been unleashed by the discovery of the atomic bomb may increase the physical might of some nations. It may be that success in the last war has made some nations feel that they face no obstacle to do what they choose with the rest of the world. But if they feel like that they will soon find that they are under a delusion. It is difficult to imagine what the atom bomb or other applications of the atomic energy will do in future. I should say that it may change the shape of the world. But whatever the atomic energy might or might not do, even this mighty source of power is not going to enable the countries who possess it to impose their will on the countries of Asia. Obviously those who desire world peace should know once for all that there can be no world peace, no equilibrium or stability in the East and in the West, unless aggression, domination, imperialism, and interference in the affairs of other countries end completely. This is the lesson which the East still has to teach to the West, which India and China, which have played no aggressive role for the last 200 or 300 years, have to teach and which the Sino-Indian Cultural Society has to teach so that it might live upto to its lofty ideals.

33. To H.P. Mody[1]

Allahabad
January 14, 1946

Dear Mody,

Thank you for your letter[2] of the 28th December. As a matter of fact I have repeatedly referred to what is happening in Iran. I have further referred to the expansionist tendency of the Soviet Union in Europe and Asia. It is true, however, that I have laid greater stress on what is happening in Indonesia. This for two principal reasons. Firstly Indonesia is a very clear case of a united people struggling for their freedom and Dutch and British forces suppressing them. Secondly because Indian troops are being used there. Also some of the accounts of atrocities committed against the Indonesians are astonishingly bad.

While I have criticized Soviet expansionist policy in the West and the East and think that this is a dangerous element in the world situation, there are some aspects of this problem which are not quite clear to me. In eastern Europe, that is, in Poland and the Balkans, social conditions were very backward and big feudal states dominated the scene. In all these countries there was a strong movement against these feudal relics. Soviet Russia has taken advantage of these movements, encouraged them and supported them and has helped them in a large measure to get rid of feudalism. The land has gone to the peasant. In so far as this has happened, it was a progressive step. But the manner of doing it appears to me to have been wrong and in the result a number of subservient States have been created. Some thing of this kind appears to be happening in Iran also. The present Iran Government, you will remember, was imposed on the country by the British Government when Reza Shah was forcibly removed. It has been a Government not only reactionary but subservient to Britain. Against it some progressive forces in the country have risen. Taking advantage of this situation Russia has brought undue pressure on the Iranian Government and is apparently trying to make it completely subservient to its policy. Apart from internal aspects of this question, it is very likely to lead to increasing trouble in the Middle East and possibly to war.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. H.P. Mody Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Mody wrote, "It has perplexed me to find that you have not raised your voice against the policy of cynical, brutal aggression which Russia is pursuing in Iran."

34. To H.M. Desai[1]

Allahabad
January 16, 1946

My dear Desai,
I have your letter of the 8th January. I know very well that some members of the Board of Ministers in Ceylon have been pursuing an anti-Indian policy in the past. I think that this is injurious both to India and to Ceylon. So far as we are concerned we must not be influenced by other people's policy too much. We must take up the correct line and stick to it. I have tried to indicate that line in my note[2] on Lanka which was published some time back. That policy, briefly put, must be;

1. Full support of the demand for Ceylon's independence without any reservations or qualifications on behalf of Indians.
2. Full citizenship rights for Indians in Ceylon.
3. No appeal from Indians to the British Government for special safeguards as against the Sinhalese or in any other matter.
4. Indians should get citizenship rights in Ceylon and should consider themselves for political purposes as Ceylonese and should be treated as such. There should be no double citizenship though inevitably Indians, as to some extent Sinhalese also, will have the closest cultural ties with India.
5. The future of Ceylon to be determined by the people of *Ceylon* as a whole. This will include closer relations with India.

Whatever the attitude of some Sinhalese politicians might be, it is clear that in existing circumstances Indians are going to get no protection from the British Government. An appeal for such protection thus is not only undignified but fruitless and merely raises barriers between the Indians and the Sinhalese. We have to rely ultimately on the goodwill of the Sinhalese as well as on the united strength of the Indian elements there. On no account must Indians agree to any *position* derogatory to their individual and national dignity. At the same time they can claim no special rights or privileges and they must always remember that the interests of the people of Ceylon must come first. There is no other policy even from the point of view of the narrowest self interest. It is no good thinking in old terms. All old standards are disappearing, among them dependence on the British power. In the

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, pp. 449-451. The letter to N.A.T. Meemanage embodies this note

future only strength and goodwill count. Naturally a free India will make a tremendous difference. I have not a shadow of a doubt that a free India and a free Ceylon must hang together. Specially Ceylon cannot remain by itself. *It is possible* that when India becomes free, Ceylon may well continue for a while as a part of the British empire. Anyhow these questions are for the future. For the present we must not take up any attitude which on the one hand lessens goodwill between Indians and Ceylonese, and on the other which is injurious to the natural rights and dignity of the Indian people.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

35. To D. Mitrany[1]

Allahabad
January 16, 1946

Dear Mr. Mitrany,[2]
Agatha Harrison gave me your letter[3] *of the 5th December 1945.* I appreciate what you say about the difficulties that face us all over the world today. In a sense the world is always turning a new corner but I do *share your opinion that* the present is a big turning-point in history. I feel that way and yet I am by no means sure which way it will turn. I feel a little hesitant in writing on a *subject which eludes my* grasp, though I have thought much about it and have certain ideas on the subject. Inevitably when a long-distance vision is somewhat clouded, one seeks relief in some *activity which seems* to be right for the moment at least. You mention in your letter the names of some very eminent thinkers and philosophers. How far I will *fit in with that* group I do not know.

There is a practical difficulty also, the difficulty of finding leisure for this kind of writing. I immerse *myself in so many* activities that events

1. *J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.*
2. b. 1888; professor, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, 1933-53; his publications include *Marx Against the Peasant.*
3. He asked Jawaharlal to contribute an article on the "deeper problems of the time" for a new periodical, *Contact, which he was editing.*

rush past me. I try to keep as detached as I can but it is difficult. Anyway I should like to try to write some thing for you because the idea appeals to me though I doubt my capacity for writing anything really worthwhile. I shall not definitely promise. Could you let me know by what date you would like to have my article?

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

36. Common Policies for Asia[1]

The news from China that the civil war has ended and a basis of agreement[2] arrived at to ensure the unity and the peaceful development of China has been received with the liveliest satisfaction in India. We do not know the details of this agreement and in any event it is not for us to consider these details. The major fact is that China has had the wisdom to compose its internal quarrel. This is a matter of major significance to India, to Asia and to the world. We all look to China to take a lead in the regeneration of Asia. We hope in India also to do our best for this great task. If China and India hold together the future of Asia is assured. Even now Asia does not play her full part in international affairs and her interests are often ignored. This state of affairs must be ended.

There is much talk now of some kind of an Asian federation. The immediate need is, however, for a drawing together of the countries of Asia so that they can consider their common problems together. India and China will have to confer together some time or other. India, situated as she is, is the dominant factor in the defence of South East Asia as well as of the Middle East. Indeed all the countries of the Indian Ocean, from Australia to Egypt, have common problems of defence and will also have ultimately intimate trade contacts. A time is

1. Statement given to Paul Feng, correspondent of the Central News Agency of China, Delhi, 20 January 1946. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. The differences between Chiang Kai shek and the Communists had been settled for the time being following their agreement on steps to be taken to unify the administration, control the army and widen the scope of democratic government.

coming when their representatives should meet together to draw up common policies in so far as this is possible. I trust that a fully representative Asian conference will be able to meet before very long. Probably India will be the best place for such a conference to meet.

37. Real Peace As Far Away As Ever[1]

Question: If Britain had lost the war, would India have obtained freedom from the victorious Axis?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is rather futile to guess what would have happened if history had taken a different course. Undoubtedly, the victory of the Axis powers would have been disastrous for freedom and democracy throughout the world. However, the present victory of the United Nations has thus far been a victory in war only, and not in peace. It remains to be seen what it makes of peace. While there are some elements of hope, there are obvious reasons for grave misgivings. What is happening, not only in the higher councils of the big powers but also in Indonesia and Indo-China, is not conducive to peace and freedom.

The people, who have waged war and ultimately won the war, thought too little of the real aims and objects which they loudly proclaimed. Many of them wanted the *status quo* to continue. But this, of course, never happened, and so we have a conflict that still goes on Big problems await solution, and real peace is as far away as ever.

I believe that if the leaders of the United Nations had pursued a different course, the duration of the last war would have been lessened considerably, and the consequences today would have been infinitely better for the whole world. That chance was lost at a cost of millions of lives and infinite suffering. Other chances are appearing now, and the big question is whether they will be seized or not, and whether they will be considered with vision and judgment, or in the discredited terms of power politics.

The age of atomic energy is upon us, and there is no escape from the two alternatives — a solution of world problems and the establishment

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 21 January 1946 From *The Tribune*, 22 January 1946.

of a world order based on freedom everywhere, or world conflict and destruction on a colossal scale. To put it in another way, there will be either a free association of nations in the world, or the domination by one power of a shattered world.

Q: Do you believe in coordinated action of eastern countries—Arabs and non-Arabs—in matters of common interest against the political aggression of western countries?

JN: I am convinced that coordination of various countries in the Middle East, India and South East Asia is not only possible but undoubtedly certain in the future. The question of an Asiatic federation is perhaps premature, but some kind of closer association between these countries is necessary, both for defence and trade purposes.

In Egypt in the west, and in Indonesia in the east, there is today a common feeling which is bringing them nearer to each other. For the moment the feeling has to do chiefly with the attainment of freedom, but other questions are looming up in the present context of the world, which affect both the nations intimately, and to some extent jointly. Everyone from the Middle East to South East Asia knows that India is the crux of these questions, by virtue of both its intrinsic importance and its strategic position. As Wendell Willkie pointed out the question of Indian freedom exercised the minds of statesmen from Egypt to China. The closer union of a number of Asian countries will be in no way anti-European or anti-anything else.

European aggression, as such, is fast fading out. All of us stand for an international order, and, if proper international order is established, involving free nations, there will be no need for any smaller federations. Until such a time arrives, the long-oppressed nations of Asia will inevitably seek to protect themselves by holding together as far as possible, and presenting a joint front in the councils of the world. Even now Asia is rather ignored in the United Nations although it is apparent that Asia is going to play a big part in the future.

I have suggested that a conference of various Asian countries including Egypt be held to consider common problems. The best place for this conference will be India, which is centrally situated, and which in future is bound to play an important role.

The recent happenings in Indonesia have greatly agitated not only the people of India but people all over Asia. What is happening in the Middle East also fills us with disquiet. The problems before the countries of Asia are more or less similar—defence, getting rid of feudal

structures, establishment of democratic institutions, development of industry and agriculture, and raising rapidly of the standard of living of the masses.

In the solution of these problems we should gladly cooperate with the rest of the world, and take its help, but that help cannot be accepted if there is any element of domination.

38. The Concept of Asian Unity[1]

Question: *Do you think that a federation of Asian countries is practicable as the next step?*

Jawaharlal Nehru: That is a possibility in the near future. But much depends on the development on right lines of the United Nations Organisation. If the U.N. is really based on the elimination of imperialism and colonialism, I see some hope for it as the beginning of a world order. Otherwise, and inevitably, various large groups will be formed for self-defence and mutual help.

There is at present a considerable feeling in the countries of Asia in favour of holding together and cooperating for their own protection against outside aggression. If, unfortunately, future conflicts should arise leading to a disastrous war, Asia is almost certain to be one of the main centres. Apart from war, there is economic penetration which is bound to produce resistance. These considerations, as also old cultural bonds, are drawing India and her neighbours close to one another.

Q: *Your statement does not quite answer my question whether an Asian federation is immediately capable of realisation.*

JN: I cannot be definite beyond a point. A close union of the countries bordering on the Indian Ocean, both for defence and trade purposes, is almost certain to emerge. In any such closer union India is bound to play a very significant part, both because of her intrinsic importance and her strategic position. No system of defence of these areas, from the Middle East to South East Asia, can be effective without

1. Interview to B Shiva Rao, correspondent of *The Hindu* in Delhi, given on 21 January 1946. Printed in his book, *India's Freedom Movement* (New Delhi, 1972) pp. 134 138.

India's intimate participation. In all matters of trade policy too, India, which is likely to be industrialised rapidly, must develop contacts on either side.

Looking back to the past, one of the principal results of the British occupation of India was to cut her off almost completely from the rest of Asia. Our land routes were closed and almost our sole contact with the outside world for a long time was by sea with Britain. A great change is now taking place, partly because of new alignments and partly because of the development of air communications. The last war has helped bring China, South East Asia and the Middle East right near India.

A new consciousness has arisen in South Asia, and old memories of past contacts have revived. But the main incentive at present is to hold together. Whatever the future development of the United Nations Organisation might be, these Asian countries will look to one another more and more. Some form of a common organisation dealing with defence, trade and possibly other subjects seems to be an inevitable development.

Q: What other subjects have you in mind?

JN: A certain cooperation in foreign policy. The time has come when the representatives of all these Asian countries should meet and confer.

Q: The Indian delegation has not even claimed a place for India in the Security Council. What do you think of it?

JN: There is a strong feeling in Asia that the interests of Asian countries are being overlooked. Recent events in Indonesia and Indo-China have been bitterly resented in India and elsewhere in Asia. What is happening in Iran has also been viewed with great disquiet. I realise that in many of these countries there are reactionary and semi-feudal regimes which must change. But the way of changing is not to convert these countries into colonies or puppet states.

There is the likelihood of a conference or representatives of these Asian countries meeting to discuss their common problems. No definite and precise conclusions, I think, can be reached in the first conference and, in any event, not as long as India cannot freely function. But I prefer India as the most suitable venue for the conference.

Q: What could be its effect on India's internal problems? Both in the countries of the Middle East and in Indonesia there are large Muslim populations. On the aggregate the Hindus of India

would be a minority in comparison with the Muslim populations of South Asia.

JN: I do not believe in the bogey of a Pan-Islamic movement sweeping over South Asia. On the other hand, any form of closer association or union of these countries of the Middle East, India and South East Asia would go a long way towards removing the fears and suspicions of the Indian Muslims.

Such a union, of course, must be based on the complete freedom of each country. India has nothing to fear from any other country in Asia and these countries should not fear any intervention or dominance by India, whether in the political or in the economic sphere.

Q: Supposing India develops her industries rapidly, is there not a danger of an economic domination?

JN: No. India's future policy will be opposed to any exploitation of the markets or resources of the people in other countries. Both my party and the National Planning Committee have made it perfectly clear that we are not going to encourage Indian capitalist elements in Burma, Ceylon, East Africa or elsewhere at the expense of the people of these countries.

Q: Will not such a movement develop an Asian racial outlook?

JN: This I regard as almost impossible. It will not and cannot have any aggressive or racial character; nor will it be opposed in any way to America or the Soviet Union or any other power or group of powers. Towards the two main powers of the world it will cultivate the most friendly relations. The Soviet Union will touch it right across Asia, and America has already many and growing contacts. Don't you see the fact that such a union of different kinds of people and races will prevent it from developing a narrow racial or aggressive outlook? When imperialism and colonialism have been liquidated, the feeling against Europe or America will naturally disappear.

It is admitted now that the governments in all these countries should be democratic, with an increasing tendency towards socialisation. Naturally, a closer union of these democratic countries must be in itself democratic. In the matter of development of trade or industry we have to avoid the kind of colonial exploitation that we have had in the past. There will, of course, be growing international trade but each country would, as far as possible, aim at a measure of self sufficiency.

39. To Jafar Zainuddin[1]

Allahabad
February 5, 1946

Dear friend,[2]
I have received your letter of January 1st. I thank you for it. The cause of the Indonesians' fight for the independence of their Republic is our cause. The freedom of Indonesia is essential and so is the freedom and independence of India. We must cooperate as far as possible in the present and in the future.

It was my desire to visit Indonesia and to meet Dr. Sukarno and his comrades, but the Government of India and the British South East Command have not given me permission or the facilities to go there. And so I have been prevented from going. I hope, however, to visit Indonesia as soon as I am able to do so.

I have forwarded your letters addressed to Dr. Sukarno and the President of the Indonesian Republic, to the Committee of Indonesians in India and requested them to forward them to Java.

Merdeka.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. The addressee was from Mecca.

40. India as a Unit of the World State[1]

The days of national isolation have gone forever. The question of India's freedom is an international issue. We can exist and prosper only as a unit of the world state.

It is clear from the point of defence and the future progress of industry, trade and communications that the mutual good relations of the

1. Interview to the correspondent of *Reynold's News*, Allahabad, 10 February 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 11 February 1946.

countries of the Middle East, as well as of South East Asia, will largely depend on India. In this I include Australia and New Zealand.

Geographically, India is so situated that any proper system of defence of this entire area or region must be based on India. Apart from this there are many cultural and sentimental bonds between us and our neighbours in the west and the east. It is inevitable that in future these bonds *should develop in mutual cooperation and goodwill.*

I firmly believe that China will in the near future be a strong and powerful state, closely associated with India, and playing an important role in the Pacific region.

I also believe that India will inevitably have special relations with the two big powers of the modern world — the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union. The latter being a neighbour, we shall presumably have a closer contact with it. The United States can play a great part in India's industrial development.

Question: How do you envisage India's future relations with Great Britain?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Of course, I expect a peaceful and friendly settlement with Britain. If such a settlement is reached, India's relations with Britain will naturally be closer, as there are so many ties already developed between our two peoples — some good, many bad. I must point out, however, that such friendly relations can only grow between independent countries *which can cooperate with each other. Otherwise the* past will pursue us and poison our relations.

Q: Will you accept Dominion Status with the right to secede from the Commonwealth?

JN: No. From no point of view can India fit into a Dominion Status pattern which was meant to be, and has developed as, a combination of sister countries belonging more or less to the same stock. One must not forget also that India has itself been, for ages past, a mother country to many other countries in Asia. Apart from this, the past history of relations between India and England rules out Dominion Status. Finally, the present sentiment of everybody in India is opposed to it.

This does not mean that we should not have close relations and alliances with Britain and its Dominions. Indeed, we are more likely to have them as a free country without any compulsion. In any event, I will be the first man to recognise the existence of many ties and bonds which have arisen between India and England as a result of long association, but they will have to be adjusted.

The proper course is for the constituent assembly to nominate representatives of India who will meet the representatives of the British Government to consider these matters, and thus facilitate the process of adjustment.

Britain wants to transfer power to India but it does not know to whom to give it. Let me say this. A clear declaration of the recognition of India's independence is vital for any constitutional solution of Indian problems. Peaceful transfer of power is possible. It should be made to Indian representatives, or the constitution-making body which will come into existence after the provincial elections. The constitution, which this body will frame, must be accepted as final.

Of course, there will have to be some interim arrangement for the Central Government, while the constitution is being made. After the provincial elections, I envisage democratic governments in the provinces. It should be possible to reconstitute the Centre, as responsible as possible, to carry on the administration, with the help of democratic conventions and without the Viceroy's veto. I do not see any necessity for the exercise of the Viceroy's veto and special powers when such a democratic Centre is formed.

Pakistan cannot be discussed in the present atmosphere. Mr. Jinnah's demand for partition is completely impossible. For predominantly Muslim areas, we have accepted the principle that these areas will not be forced to remain in the Indian Union or federation. But there are overriding considerations:

(1) A majority of the entire population of any area that wants to separate from India must express their wish on a specific issue;
(2) No area should be compelled against its will to go out of India, for instance, southern Punjab, western Bengal and the city of Calcutta;
(3) Defence of India must be regarded as the first consideration. Defence includes foreign affairs, communications, currency and such allied subjects.

In any event, in view of the strategic position of India and the developing world situation, the defence of India is of supreme importance. One must bear in mind that without security no real freedom for India — whether for Pakistan or for Hindustan — is possible.

In the present elections there is no specific issue of Pakistan. In fact, Pakistan is not defined at all. It is a vague sentiment which appeals to a section of Muslims who have not considered its implications and consequences. It may be said that all votes cast against the Muslim League are against Pakistan. But votes cast for the Muslim League may or may not be for Pakistan.

On the other hand, it is admitted and declared by the Congress that there should be the largest amount of autonomy given to the constituting units of the Indian federation for the so-called Pakistan areas which can be semi-independent subject to the question of defence. In addition, of course, cultural, judicial and other safeguards for the protection of minorities and groups and areas, which might be considered as backward, will be provided in the new constitution.

6

YOUTH AND THE FUTURE

1. Students and Politics[1]

Previously, my opinion about Indian students was that they behaved irresponsibly while tackling serious problems, but this opinion has undergone a complete change since August 1942, when the students acted in a manner so bold and responsible.

The question whether students should take part in politics is the creation of the mischievous brain of foreigners who do not want them to participate in political activities. I think any student who is politically conscious can participate in politics. It is your duty to make students politically, physically and mentally sound and strong. The students must study every problem thoroughly and impartially before they can pronounce a correct judgment. They should not develop the idea that it is only the students who have to give the country a lead. Yet it is their duty even to correct their leaders when they are wrong.

Do not care about the opposition from the camp of the Communists. March forward with confidence, and no one can check your progress. Do not waste your time, for the very idea of it is repulsive to me. Your work in the villages is the real service to the people.

1. Address to Congress student workers, Lahore, 17 July 1945 From *The Tribune*, 18 July 1945.

2. Students and India's Future[1]

There are many big and difficult questions awaiting solution. These have been accumulated as a legacy of British rule for the last 150 years. The present Government is incapable of solving these problems. The heavy burden of solving them will have to be shouldered by the young men and women of India.

1. Address to students, Poona, 15 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindu*, 17 September and *The Hindustan Times*, 17 September 1945.

The British Government has been pursuing a policy of placating the reactionary elements and crushing the national spirit in the country. It is hopelessly incompetent; corruption is rampant, and a new rich class of profiteers and black marketeers has grown in the country. The Bengal famine has demonstrated the utter lack of control and inefficiency of the Government. The future government will have to face these and many other temporary, but difficult, problems. If these problems are not solved by that government, the government itself will be dissolved by the problems.

The nation has developed a strength of resistance and has grown bold and courageous. In the earlier stages of the political struggle, the problem was how to awaken the common people from their traditional helplessness and make them free from fear. Not only the kisan but even the educated had a very low morale and were terribly afraid of fighting injustice. The last 25 years, which form a glorious chapter of India's history, have seen the awakening of the masses as a result of the Congress movement of civil disobedience and satyagraha.

The movement of the last three years reveals the supreme courage and power of endurance of the people. I am proud and happy to say that the nation has successfully passed this test. In the absence of any special direction from the accredited leaders, who were spirited away to gaols, there was a spontaneous movement of the common people. This was the real revolution in the country. The Government crushed this rising. Many mistakes might have been committed, but the people, and particularly the students, showed remarkable enthusiasm and organising capacity and courage. I am particularly happy over the part played by women in the country, who encountered comparatively greater hardship than men.

I feel confident that India is bound to be free, though I cannot say when. I am not saying this because of the advent of the Labour Government in England which I do not expect will be very helpful to us, but any student of politics can see the new tendency towards freedom in all the subject countries. This freedom cannot, however, be attained without discipline and the development of a cooperative spirit. India with her rich culture and a glorious past is bound to have a bright future, but we must shake off the dirt and dust of the past and develop a scientific approach to the problems of the future. The world is changing terribly fast. We must shed our exclusiveness and fossilized shell and keep in touch with the growing tide of freedom in the world.

I advise the young and old alike to be proud and ambitious — proud of their country and culture, and ambitious, not for small success in life, but to play a big part in attaining the higher goals of life.

3. The Task Before Students[1]

Students should try to understand the world problems in their political context, instead of raising slogans whose meaning they do not understand.

They cannot generate a leadership for the people merely by raising slogans or discussing world politics in their debates. A country might have many politicians, but few statesmen. The leadership of a country is provided by an organisation which maintains discipline in its ranks and keeps a cherished goal.

Our country is passing through a crisis. Asia itself is in the throes of a turmoil. A new India will emerge out of our struggle for freedom, and the youth of India will have to play an important part in shaping it. The students of this country will have to mobilise all their resources and strength so as to be in the forefront of our struggle for the liberation of India. I urge you to end all your factional disputes and march ahead as one united students' body.

1. Address to a students meeting, Bombay, 27 September 1945. From *The Hindu*, 28 September 1945.

4. Unity Among Students[1]

I appeal to the student community to close its ranks and work as a disciplined body, dedicated to securing the independence of the country under the leadership and guidance of the Congress.

The Communists, consistent in their creed and conviction, may withhold their support to the fight for freedom, but no such ideological gulf separates the main body of students from the cause which the Congress has made its own. There might be differences on other issues, but no right-thinking person should have any hesitation in rallying under the Congress, as far as the main objective is concerned.

1. Address to students, Lucknow, 8 October 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 10 October, *The Hindustan Times*, 10 October and *The Hindu*, 11 October 1945.

If there is no basic difference, there is no necessity for having parallel organisations. I advocate solidarity and unity in the students organisation, allowing groups with different shades of opinion to function in a healthy manner in the parent body. I deplore the existence of students' organisations based on religious or communal factions. I want to educate the people on the problems of life and seek solutions by adopting a scientific approach. But with preconceived dogmas we will not be able to view the problems dispassionately. We get more and more narrow-minded. Communalism among politicians is bad enough. It is worse when it gets into the ranks of our students.

Your organisation should be a federation whose doors should be kept open to all sections. The various units in it may not agree on all questions, cultural, economic and social, but so long as they subscribe to the fundamental policy of the Congress on national independence, they have a right to be affiliated to that organisation. Office-hunters and self-seekers must not have any place in it. If you set up such a body you will be laying the foundation of a true student movement in the country.

You should desist from passing pompous resolutions on matters which do not concern you. Leave that job to the politicians. By passing such irresponsible resolutions you make yourselves a laughing stock in the world.

I counter the prevailing notion that the profession of a politician does not require any training. If you want to be a statesman, mere oratory or a theoretical study of politics is not enough. You must take part in political movements, too. I do not mean, thereby, that you should necessarily participate in satyagraha, for a revolution is a different thing altogether. All theories and dogmas, either of religion or Marxism, must be closely related to the course of life, because if they get out of touch with life they will be lost. The Communist Party of India can be cited as an example of this dogmatic mentality. The trouble with Indian Communists is that they have abandoned the path of rational and scientific approach to all problems, with the result that they are completely out of touch with the country's living currents. They are undoing whatever good work they have done in the past. They are not harming the country so much as themselves. But what hurts me most is that so many honest and sincere workers are being lost to the country because of having been misled.

I am confident that India will win freedom in the near future. But freedom is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. In a free India, every man, woman and child must be assured at least of adequate food, housing and clothing. Such an India cannot be built with brick and mortar alone, but with human material. There is no dearth of talent

in the country, and given an opportunity, India's men and women will play their part well.

5. Quiet Study and Hard Work[1]

I thank you for the purse you have given me for the Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital. My relationship with this institution is such that I feel reluctant to seek donations for it. Yet when it is given, I cannot but thank you. The money value of the amount may not be much. A millionaire could have perhaps signed a cheque for the whole of it in a moment. The real value of the purse, collected in the manner of this one, is certainly greater.

Eulogistic remarks have been made about me. It may be all right to praise a man like Gandhiji on occasions, but to speak in a similar strain about every minor personality is to display a lack of sense of proportion. As for the references to my birthday, I like them even less. The meeting has nothing to do with my birthday and if it had, I would not have attended it.

If you want your words to be respected, don't make them high-sounding. Do not indulge in adjectives and heap superlatives on individuals. Keep your eyes steadily on ideas, causes and ideals.

When I was a student like you, I saw the dream of freedom which I now pursue. A large part of my life has been spent in this pursuit. Sometimes freedom seemed within my grasp, but so often it has receded. In this connection, I refer to the habit of people promising to sacrifice their very lives in the cause of freedom. I am not at all eager to die. I want to work, to accomplish certain tasks, to achieve certain objectives. If in this endeavour death comes to me, I would face it cheerfully. But fighting and dying cannot be an end by itself. The real end for which we are working is to change the present evil order and establish a new and better one. It can only be done by quiet study and hard work. I ask you to study your past, the glorious cultural heritage of India which has spread from the Philippines to Sinkiang and Rome. I also ask you to ponder over the causes of the country's fall.

1. Speech at a students meeting, Bombay, 13 November 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 14 November 1945.

I strongly disapprove of such slogans as 'Lalquila tore do' because who will be so foolish as to break this historical monument.

7. To the Youth of the Punjab[1]

To the youth of the Punjab, who are so full of generous enthusiasm but at the same time often lacking in discipline, I want to say that the time will come soon when disciplined service will count for more than mere enthusiasm. I know you are capable of this if you turn your minds to it. Great changes are coming over India and great responsibilities will await those who are capable of shouldering them. So prepare for them, and forget the petty questions and squabbles of the day. The Punjab must play a brave part in the days to come. This part ultimately depends on the youth.

At present I would call upon you to help in every way the Congress candidates in the Assembly elections. This support is not meant so much for individuals as for principles — the principles and objectives for which the Congress stands. Each Congress candidate is the standard-bearer of the cause of freedom and independence. The measure of success of Congress candidates will be the measure of the country's progress to the goal of independence. That will determine the next great step forward. So it becomes essential for us to do our utmost for the success of the Congress in the elections.

1 Lahore, 19 November 1945. Message given to the Punjab Youth Congress. *The Hindustan Times*, 19 November 1945.

8. On the System of Medical Education[1]

The root cause of all diseases in India is the low standard of living. Unless this problem is satisfactorily solved, India cannot make any progress.

1. Address to medical students, Lucknow, 28 November 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 30 November 1945.

The building up of a proper and efficient medical service in the country is a gigantic task indeed. The present system of training in medical colleges, which gives opportunities to only a few students of the upper classes, has encouraged nepotism and has closed the door to the entry of students from the lower classes.

The government in the country is a most incompetent and inefficient government. The death of 35 lakhs of people in Bengal is a calamity of the first magnitude. It has demonstrated the callousness of the bureaucratic government.

I am surprised how the starving people of Bengal could have died by calmly submitting to death. Why did they not retaliate against those responsible for this disaster? If I were there, I would not have kept quiet.

The U.S.S.R. has become one of the best medically organised countries in the world by socialising the medical service and offering equal opportunities to all. Unless the doors of educational institutions are open to all countrymen the present system will not help in providing relief to the people of all classes.

9. The Passion and the Vision[1]

India is now on the verge of freedom, after the turmoil of many years of struggle. Freedom will come to us mainly because of our struggle, and partly because of the world conditions. But I emphasise that it will be chiefly because of us. No freedom is worthwhile if it comes because of extraneous reasons.

Our country has been, if I may use a stock expression, all a barren waste during the past 150 years of foreign rule in spite of a few big cities, and some superficial improvement here and there. Our country consists of hundreds and thousands of villages, and you have simply to go to these villages to know the depth of poverty, misery and degradation in which the people live. When freedom comes we shall have to build up our country from scratch. This will require a very large number of trained young men with a crusading spirit and an ability to work together.

1. Address to students of Calcutta University, Calcutta, 12 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 13 December 1945.

From what I know and sense, a large number of our youth are afire with enthusiasm. Sometimes in excitement they may act wrongly. But there is life, vitality and a desire to do something. The only thing that is lacking is the opportunity to do it. This opportunity will ultimately come when India achieves freedom and the shackles that tie us down are removed.

During the last 25 years we have tried to touch and influence the spirit, the mind and the heart of the people of India. It has been a big job to deal with some 400 million oppressed people, but their imprisoned spirit is not altogether dead. We challenged the authority that rules over us, and in 1942 this challenge became bigger and took a larger shape. The world saw the extraordinary sight of an unarmed people rising against the might of the great British empire.

In this way we tried to get rid of the psychological fear which obsessed the common people as well as the so-called educated class. Our young men of today hardly realise the change that has come over India during the last 25 or 30 years. You take many things for granted. But what you see around you today is very different from what it was a quarter of a century ago. You are really the products of the struggle that was carried on during this quarter of a century.

Now the future beckons us. And we are eager, perhaps too eager, to go forward. Eagerness is good, but we have to learn to march in line. We have to do great things, and we must march in line with discipline, with order, with a clear objective and with a well-thought-out plan before us. Otherwise our vitality and energy will be wasted. We have to be aware, whether we are engineers, doctors or scientists or shopkeepers or peasants, that we are all soldiers of India's freedom and we all have to possess qualities which soldiers possess — discipline, courage, united action, capacity for sacrificing one's self for the common good. We have to adopt peaceful means. We must remember that peaceful means does require all the qualities of a soldier.

During the firing at Calcutta, the students behaved not only with amazing discipline and courage but with amazing peacefulness and non-violence. They behaved in a way that is admirable. I do not know in detail what happened afterwards. But one fundamental thing stood out from the later events. Besides the students, other people emerged suddenly from their shell and acted. They might have acted wrongly here and there but they did act. This spontaneous upheaval is amazing. With such a kind of upheaval, hundreds and thousands of people were moved and created a truly revolutionary atmosphere. At that time academic discussion about what was wrong and what was right did not matter. These upheavals occur just as an earthquake occurs. These

human earthquakes, or these human floods, moved large masses of humanity. What happened in Calcutta a fortnight ago is very revealing, not only about Calcutta but about India also. Suddenly one can see what lies behind the thin veil that covers the mind of India.

Truly, it has been said that India is full of explosives. We may like an explosion or we may not like it. But if we are wise to see, it is there and it is likely to be there. That is India of today. No amount of persuasion or compulsion or threat can take away the fact that India is resolved to go ahead. There is a passion in the Indian mind today, the passion for freedom. There is a feeling of intolerable irritation that things should continue as they are today.

But various factors may hold us back. We must not indulge in any wrong action simply because we are excited or because we are impatient for freedom. If we act, we shall act in a proper manner and peacefully, even though our hearts may be afire. Young men must not lose control over themselves too often. They must remember that great things are achieved only by a determined and unified step in a big way, and not by a sporadic action, not by frittering away their energies in petty actions. So while keeping up that revolutionary spirit let not the fire in them extinguish.

Who is to tell them when to utilise it? Sometimes there is nobody to tell them. One is to decide for oneself. But normally speaking it is not right and safe for students or young men to take suddenly the reins of the nation in their own hands and run away. For they are simply not trained to judge a situation, the aspects of a complex phenomenon before them. Their action might vitally affect not only them but the whole province and the country. Therefore, they have to take counsel, indeed, leave political leadership to those who are considered by them qualified to lead.

Apart from all this, they have to think of the future. The question today is not how to push out the British Government from India. In the context of history the British empire is a past event. It is already something that is extinct although imperialism might cling desperately to its life.

The real problems before the youth of the country are: How to build up the future India? What relations should free India have with other countries? How should it fit in with the world structure? How should India help to shape the world? Any action that might be taken today must relate to the problems of tomorrow.

India is a very ancient land and we are the inheritors of its tradition. It is a proud inheritance but there are disadvantages also. Long inheritance brings dust and cobwebs of the past with it. It is a terrible bur-

den, the burden of tradition which weighs us down. Sometimes, I feel that we must build up a new society without any entanglement of the past. But that would upset the equilibrium. When the British Government leave this country, the changeover would be a big event. There will be a tremendous release of energy, hundreds of doors will be thrown open through which we will be able to act. The old system has got to change, but we shall have to keep a balanced equilibrium if we are to function properly, and not waste our energy.

You have a very sad example before you. China achieved her freedom 30 to 40 years ago. But there is an internal conflict even though the Chinese are free. Today one looks at China with sadness. I hope that this internal trouble will end soon, and a new, united and prosperous China will rise. So if such a situation can arise in the great ancient country of China it is not naturally impossible that we may get involved in this kind of trouble in our country. Therefore, when we take any action today we have to bear tomorrow in our mind.

India is not something outside us. When we sing *Bande Mataram* whom do we honour? We honour none except ourselves, not the mountains, the trees and the rocks of India. We are Mother India, and we have to raise ourselves. Live upto that. Do not lower the flag of India in any way. Every great deed you do, raises India in the estimation of the world. The burden of tomorrow will fall on you. It will require a lot of preparation, a lot of training and action and a lot of discipline. The India of tomorrow will not be one of shouting slogans. It will be an India of trained men working to build up a nation. We shall have tremendous opportunities of work.' If you cannot work, you will become a burden, a drag on India. A magnificent opportunity is coming for a life of adventure, and hard work. Do not lead a dull life, and do not seek security, but work hard in a spirit of adventure. What does it matter what happens afterwards? Work hard and do not mind what the consequences would be. If you have this outlook you will experience the real joy of life.

10. India Like a Volcano[1]

Young men and women of Shillong, I do not know what to speak to you this morning. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that I have

1. Address to students, Shillong, 17 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 20 December 1945.

tradition in many forms. India is not merely a country within its own boundary, but India has gone far into Asia. India has been a mother country to a great part of Asia and even today there are many who look upon India as a mother country to some extent. A student from Thailand wrote a letter to me in which he used the curious expression that India was looked upon by him as a grandfather country.

India today is like a volcano. It may erupt any moment. If a proper approach leading to independence is made by the British Government, we shall agree to it. Nobody likes a conflict. Certainly we do not want a conflict unnecessarily. It involves enormous sufferings. But it is equally certain that if there is a delay or postponement of the issue of independence, or if any other obstacle is put in the way, we shall take the initiative and we shall go ahead, whatever the consequences.

Free India will be a federation of willing units which will possess absolute autonomy to develop and grow according to their own cultures and ways of life.

We are on the verge of independence. But I cannot fix a date when it will come. I can only say that India is bound to be independent and that too very soon. We shall have to face problems not only of making a constitution for free India, but also we shall have to decide—and it is the most important problem—our outlook in respect of world problems.

You cannot isolate a country and live apart from other countries of the world. We talk in terms of independence and democracy. We want independence but independence does not mean isolation. Today not even the biggest countries can afford to live in isolation. We are to be one of the members of the world community, but that must be on equal terms with others. On no other terms are we going to submit to any other nation. As an independent nation we shall join the world community and also seek a solution of world problems in cooperation with other nations.

At the same time we have got to solve our own problems—the problems that have cropped up during these 150 years or more of British rule. During these long years the development of India has been arrested and our economic condition has deteriorated.

The most urgent and immediate problem that faces us today, whether we get independence or not, is that of food, clothing and housing for our people. The constitution of free India may be good or bad. That is a lawyer's angle of viewing an issue. The fundamental problem of India is poverty. It is shameful and disgraceful that a country should be so poor and have such a low standard of life as there is in India. We should get rid of that poverty and get rid of it quickly.

We must draw up our constitution and set up our government from the point of view of raising the standard of living to a higher level. The problem is not one of giving jobs here and there, as most people thought in the past. We have to get rid of poverty and unemployment on a very big scale, because we are living on the verge of a catastrophe and we might sometime be toppled down.

Only two and a half years ago there was a terrible famine in Bengal, a famine which killed three and a half million people and crushed many millions of others in that province. Just think of it. What are you going to say about the Government under which such a thing happened? Must not that Government be publicly tried? Today they are trying the war criminals. Let them try them. But what about a government under which three and a half million helpless people died of starvation? I would like to know if such a government is not criminal and guilty a thousand times more than those who are being tried as war criminals. But strangely enough such a government continues to exist in India today.

So we are living on the verge of a catastrophe and if we do not look up we will be toppled down and will have the worst famines, not one but many. Now the war is over and there will be unemployment in the country. Nobody in India cares for those who are unemployed. The jobless simply languish and eventually die. But no national government can afford to ignore them. This grave problem has to be faced in the immediate future.

If we continue to base the government on the same structure as built up by the British Government then, though the British might go away from here, we shall not be able to solve our problems. We shall have to change the whole structure, otherwise most of us will die of sheer starvation.

This is just one of the many problems and you—the young men and women of India—will have to think of them and understand them, because the burden of shouldering them and solving them will soon be yours. Tomorrow or day after tomorrow you will be entering the wide world and what India in the future will be depends ultimately on you. So when you think of the freedom of India—this is a good thing to do—it is good that you get excited about it, and that you feel a passionate urge to it. It is good that you are prepared to make sacrifices for this great cause. At the same time, think of it in the larger context of raising the common man and of removing the many evils that persist in the country today.

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Calcutta three or four weeks ago. When a small procession of students — I do not know if it was small or big — was marching along it was stopped in a certain part of the city. The students sat down. They saw no reason why they should be stopped. At once there was firing, not once but many times, and 30 or 40 students died and hundreds of others were wounded. The students showed astounding courage. They withstood the firing and lathi charges and did not budge an inch. The point whether they were right in taking out a procession is a small matter. The point is that it requires tremendous courage to face a firing and remain unmoved.

I would also draw your particular attention to another fact. When the people of Calcutta heard about the firing there was a tremendous excitement. The whole city came out in the streets. All shops were closed, transport services stopped, buses and tramcars and railways, in fact the whole life of the great city, was dislocated. It was an extraordinary sight, an amazing happening. What does this indicate to you? It indicates — not because this thing happened in Calcutta as this kind of thing may happen anywhere in India — the intolerance in the common man. It shows how the mind of the common man is working.

We are sitting on the top of a volcano and it is right that it should be so, because one thing that is intolerable to me is that we should tamely succumb to the present conditions. I do not want violence or big upheavals, or conflicts, but if this kind of thing continues, I would wish the people to rise against them rather than submit to humiliation.

In Assam we find all kinds of distinctive people. Some of them are here in this meeting — our Naga friends. Shillong itself is a city of Khasis and other tribes. I do not know how many of you who have come here from outside look upon these tribal people. But I want to tell you how I have felt about them ever since I came to know of them. They attract me greatly and I feel that when the country becomes free we must take a very special interest in them and help them to develop themselves in their own way. I do not believe in drawing them out of their way of life, and forcing them into another way of life. We who have got some advantages should help them in every possible way to grow in their own way.

In the election manifesto there is a special reference to the tribal people — that the tribal areas should develop democratically according to their own culture and tradition. I want to make friends with them, to help them without any feeling of superiority because we are not superior to them in many ways. I have seen age-old customs prevailing here which are worth copying throughout India. I should like the life of

India to be one of unity. But, of course, that does not mean that the variety and diversity in the lives of the people of India should cease to continue. I do not want to standardise the whole of India. I want India to be rich and variegated in culture with common links of friendship, unity and cooperation and not compulsion. Free India is bound to be a federation of willing units, not of unwilling units. The large number of units of autonomous areas should develop their respective cultures according to their own likings.

11. The Need for Revolutionary Changes[1]

I came to Calcutta about three weeks ago and in between went away to Assam for a few days. Tonight I am leaving Calcutta and I do not know when I shall come back again. Some days back I had addressed one or two student meetings in Calcutta. I addressed the young budding engineers and technicians and I addressed young scientists and lawyers. You I take it are all those who are not lawyers, technicians or scientists.

I was told that I should address you in English for a change, and should give you something hot. I am afraid I am not used to spicy food, and though sometimes I might indulge in a language which perhaps is not very cool, normally I do not become heated while speaking. Indeed I find it difficult to deliver an oration. I have, through long practice, got over stage-fright when addressing a public meeting. I take the audience into my confidence and address them as though I have a nice chat with a group of friends.

It is curious that for some reason or other I attract large crowds. It just amazes me how during the last two or three weeks wherever I went enormous crowds gathered for no real reason. What they or you expect from me, I do not know, unless it is this that however unworthy an individual I may be, I am a symbol of something in your mind and heart and you honour that symbol, and not the individual. This may be the case. But even then I want to warn you against expecting excitement from my speeches. You are not likely to get it because my

1. Address to students, Calcutta, 22 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 24 December 1945.

own mind is very different from that of a student, possibly yours. It is a mind which is continuously grappling with all kinds of problems, trying to understand them and often getting confused. You ought to know that it is not exactly the desire of a leadership to grapple with problems which are really difficult to understand. Therefore, I do not want to appear before you under any false pretence. At the same time, I do not think that a clear and undeviating leadership that you should have can be expected from a person who is a student. May be in crises I do not get excited. I rather like them.

I have been speaking so far about myself. I was telling you that I cannot get rid of, or I do not want to get rid of, the habit of looking at things from the point of view of students. Therefore, I feel akin to you in possibly many ways, though I believe that I am more experienced than many of you. I like to meet students and find how they feel about the India of tomorrow. It will be the students who will have to shoulder the heavy burden and what the India of tomorrow is going to be depends upon you and young men like you all over India.

Everywhere the young men are aflame with the desire to do something. But do you feel strong enough to shoulder heavy responsibilities when the door of opportunities opens out?

You have a big job before you — the job of winning independence. Naturally this is the first job. Yet somehow in the context of history this has been almost accomplished because in the present day world the British empire has ceased to exist. It may drag on a miserable existence for a little while, but you can take it from me that if it attempts to hold on, as it seems to be attempting, for a little while longer than a year or two, it will not redound to the good name or to the profit of the holders-on. They will suffer a miserable existence. And it is up to you to make this existence unbearably miserable if they seek to hold on.

We talk and think too much on legal and constitutional problems, because we have somewhat got into the habit of a legal mind. This is true of our middle classes, more specially in Calcutta, because in the old days the only profession open to an Indian was the legal profession in which many an Indian attained eminence. On account of this, the profession itself became popular. Many of us developed a constitutional outlook. Yet during the last 25 years we have tried to get rid of the legal approach. We have succeeded to a great extent. Even then people think too much of constitutional formulae to solve the problem of India. They tell us how complex and how difficult the problem is and that if you do something here you must do something there.

Of course the problem of India is complicated and complex. Any problem that concerns 400 millions of people is bound to be a complex and delicate one and yet I think there is no important problem in the whole world which is more straight and simple than the problem of India's freedom.

What is this problem? The details of its solution may be the job of the solicitors or politicians. But what is the dispute between India and England? It is very simple. The problem is that the people of India — leave out the past, although we cannot really leave out the past because our minds and hearts are full of the past, still leave it out and think of the present — want to get rid of British rule, and they are definitely going to get rid of British rule. Obstruction may, here and there, delay the process, but there is going to be no peace in India so long as India is not rid of British rule. It is an obvious fact. It is a patent fact. And once you accept it, everything else becomes quite simple.

Suppose England for once accepts the Quit India Resolution of the Congress. You can take it from me that all the present difficulties and problems will end. They tell us: Oh we are prepared to give India freedom. As a matter of fact we are not asking for freedom, we are asking them to go away. No nation has ever got its freedom from another person. And India is not going to get freedom from the British. If there is any real stuff in her, India will get her freedom herself. If not, all the gifts of the world will not help her in getting freedom. I do believe that we have that stuff or human material with which we can raise the fine structure of India's freedom. But whether we have it or not, I am not prepared to submit to the infinite degradation of British rule. It is not upto the British or the American to ask me the stupid question whether India has the capacity of self-rule. It is sheer impertinence for anybody to try to measure my competence of self-rule. The presumption of any person who tells me whether India or any other country is fit for self rule is to me tremendously impertinent and improper. Once you put that question, it is easy to put the other question whether that quarrelsome continent of Europe is fit for self-rule or for a slaughter-house. Every few years they have waged wars. These are not signs of wisdom.

But I am not criticising. Europe has shown very fine and great qualities and there is much to learn from Europe and America. It is foolish to run down any country and it is also foolish on the part of other countries to run down our country.

Look at another aspect of the Indian problem — the scarcity of every necessary thing of life — food, clothing, education, housing etc. You can consider it in the governmental way by looking into files for the reasons,

or you can consider it from the point of view of money you have to spend. There are many ways of considering this matter. You may conclude, as the Government of India invariably does, that the Government does not have the finances or something else to meet the crisis. Therefore, a few millions of people can starve and die as they did in Bengal, therefore, tens of millions of Indians can go naked, therefore, for 100 years or more 90 per cent of India may remain illiterate, and therefore, most of the villages may remain in insanitary conditions.

The other day a fine education report, called popularly the Sargent report,[2] was produced. It was based, as you may remember, largely on the scheme of education which the Congress ministries started eight years ago. Now this report for a long time, for a year or more, has been lying with the Government and from what I hear the Government has come to the conclusion that it is too expensive to educate Indian children. As it costs much money the report is going to be shelved. This is the reply that is given to everything in India. The only thing which is not expensive apart from wars — for war you will have to find money anyhow — is the Indian Civil Service, the Viceroy, the Governors and other high officials who live in India. Though some of them may do some good some time or other, they are mostly sponging on India. It is an astounding and scandalous thing to see the difference, not merely between high English and Indian officers, but also between the people at the top and those at the bottom of the scale. It is tremendously astounding, fantastic and amazing.

There are, indeed, many ways of considering the question of Indian poverty, education, etc. On the way a war is waged. When war comes, nobody goes about saying that you have not got the money. It does come. May be the future generations will suffer for it. The war is a process of destruction and of construction. Yet when the question of reconstruction comes up which is an investment for the future, the money is not found.

I did not have a chance, as I was a student of science, to study Indian economics. When I came back to India I learnt the first lesson in Indian economics during my visit to the villages. The more I went to them and saw the famished people the more I was filled with anger. I got a picture of Indian economics which no book could give me. The sight of stark hunger, tremendously low standard of life, pretty little girls and boys unkempt and hungry, filled me with fierce rage. When 100 millions of people are suffering something must be done. It is not

2. Sir John Sargent, Educational Adviser to the Government of India, formulated a plan to make India literate in 40 years at the cost of Rs. 312 crores.

a matter which can be solved by merely shouting slogans. It is an intolerable situation. No man has a right to draw high salaries or heavy dividends and live in palaces in Calcutta or Bombay, if he does not do his utmost to raise the poor.

I may confess what has been my one moving urge in politics. I am not a politician as you perhaps know. Politics irritates me. Normally speaking the ways of politics do not appeal to me. But the Indian politics of today at any rate — I do not know what the future will be like — has still an idealistic element which appeals to me. Therefore I have entered politics in spite of the fact that I am not a politician in the professional or the literal sense of the word. Politics in India, fundamentally considered, is not getting elected to the council. It is a question, first of all, of the freedom of India, and secondly, of ending poverty by rapid economic advancement. It is a politics of revolutionary changes. It does not mean necessarily violent changes, the throwing of bombs or the shooting of men. Throwing of bombs sometimes is a counter-revolutionary act. A revolutionary change is that which brings about a revolution in the conditions of life and not shooting a person down, although the shooting down of a person may bring about a revolution occasionally.

But that is a different matter. We want revolutionary changes that will produce this condition. Politically, of course, we want a revolutionary change in India. But we want it more in the social and economic life of India. We want all these and unless we effect them, I believe, we shall have fearful catastrophes such as the Bengal famine.

There is a time element in it as well. All these changes have to be brought about rapidly. You cannot wait. Sometimes the people talk to me about the complexities of our problems. Let us wait, they say, for a few years when perhaps passion may come down, and we may settle down. Perhaps even Mr. Jinnah may come down and take a more reasonable attitude. This is a hope which few people may share. All these talks come from people who are comfortable in society, whether it is the English or the Indian. Unfortunately it is either an intellectual or an emotional feeling and it is not related to the daily life of those who suffer continuous misery. When you get down to these downtrodden classes, who are in continuous misery, their desire to better their conditions is not intellectual or just emotional but a passionate striving to get out of the pit in which they are sunk. Are you going to tell the starving to wait for another month or year to give them food? It is absurd. Your approach is from the angle of the upper class — persons who are comfortably well-to-do, who eat well, sleep well and generally do well in life and who may have some humanitarian sympathy.

The poor can hardly have this urge. Even I cannot have this urge although I am talking in this fashion. We cannot have the urge which the poor really have, men who do not know what tomorrow will bring to them, whether starvation, death, illness or some other form of insecurity which always dogs them. Life is a burden to them. I do not know how they live or die in the process. You who call yourselves revolutionary cannot understand that urge which comes from hunger because if hunger comes too near, then you become lifeless individuals or have life in you just to carry on a routine existence. As regards the Bengal famine, the question which amazes me is how a vast number of people could die without rebelling, without doing something and without hitting out. Why should a man die like a rat in a hole? How many millions of people in Bengal — I am not blaming those poor wretches who had been reduced by starvation for not days but years, and by semi-starvation sapping their energies and vitalities — are there dragging on a miserable existence?

So I want you to understand your politics and economics with a sense of reality, not as vague theories from books. Of course, you have to learn from books without which you cannot appreciate many values of life. But you have to learn other things from day to day happenings in your factories and fields. There have been occasions when some students came to me and asked silly questions about students and politics. Well, obviously as students, their job is to study, as otherwise they are not students. A student is to study and train himself for the future. If he does not study all the enthusiasm in him will not bring him that specialised knowledge — that can be acquired only by being a student. You will have to build a bridge between enthusiasm and specialised knowledge. Does it strike you that the job of politics also requires some study?

Remember while you are thinking, as you must think, of today's struggle and of the question of freedom. You will have to face several other problems tomorrow. You will have to shoulder the burden of a free India. Free India will not merely require men for odd jobs here and there, but will require large numbers of trained people. Apart from other purposes, we shall require thousands of trained people for diplomatic assignments. When India is free we will have ambassadors, ministers and consuls in other countries. While you participate in the activity of the day, you are to be prepared for tomorrow, when you will have more serious activities of different types. Do not lose sight of that, otherwise you will prove a misfit when that time comes. Meanwhile, cultivate discipline as much as you can.

12. Nationalism and Internationalism[1]

It does not require any insistence on your part to bring me here for the pull of Santiniketan and Viswa Bharati is strong, and whether I come here frequently or not, often my thoughts come here.

During the last six months I have been thinking of coming here. But various happenings prevented me. Curiously enough there was a feeling of hesitancy in me when I was specially invited to preside over the gathering. For I did not know whether I was entitled in any way to speak on the ideals which Santiniketan and Viswa Bharati embody. But in any way this is not reason enough for me to fail to come. The other pull — the pull of your affection — is very strong and so I have come here.

Three weeks ago I came to Bengal and in between I went to Assam. During these three weeks I had a strenuous time and I may tell you that the first time when I have had a little rest and peace of mind was since 10 o'clock this morning. The brief night rest has refreshed me. This in itself is a reminder to me of what Santiniketan was and is. As I lay in my bed this morning thinking of the stress and the memory of Gurudeva and my previous visits here, of all that Santiniketan and Viswa Bharati stand for, it seemed to me that in so many ways it is not an answer to any of my problems, because answers do not come this way but through an attempt at the solution of some of the major problems, not of India but of our age. There may be differences of opinion, I suppose, on what these major problems are, but many of them are there on which most of us will agree.

One of them is the relative importance of nationalism and internationalism. Now it is obvious that nationalism by itself, unconnected with some wider concept, is a narrow creed. It is also obvious that without nationalism we are rootless. We just have no deep roots anywhere. On the other hand internationalism is not only good but essential in the world today. And yet some kind of vague internationalism, without definite contacts and bonds with nationalism, is almost an airy nothing. How to combine the two? What are the essential features of the two? And what are the conflicts between the two? Apparently there are, though possibly in reality there are not. You know in the past many years internationalism has grown as life's activities have tended that way with the increase not only of

1. Convocation address at Viswa Bharati University, Santiniketan, 24 December 1945. From Amrita Bazar Patrika, 25 December 1945.

rapid communication, but with the growth of almost everything that we see around us today.

So people think that nationalism is something fading off and giving place to internationalism. We see internationalism in many aspects, even in the activities of what I might call proletarian elements of the world. On the other side of the scale we see internationalism developing perhaps more concretely, though with less shouts in the realm of finance, trade and commerce and cartels, and in between we see this internationalism in the development of science, in the new commerce of ideas, in so many ordinary things which meet us at every turn of the road, the radio, cinema etc.

People think that internationalism is obviously the thing of the future, and nationalism must fade away. And there is a great deal of truth, I suppose, in this and yet whenever a country or the world faces a crisis, nationalism becomes immediately dominant. We have had a very big crisis during the last five or six years of the world war. One of the lessons of this crisis is how, when deeply stirred, the people turn to nationalism immediately. Every country that was involved in this war became tremendously nationalistic. It forgot its internationalism. Even in cases of countries with proletarian bias, which thought and believed in terms of internationalism and workers of the world holding together against other elements oppressing them, nationalism is intensely a dominant passion.

In spite of this development of internationalism all over the world, which is an inevitable development influencing human life, man's mind continues to function to a very large extent, especially in times of crisis, on a nationalistic basis. So, I suppose, one of the problems of today and tomorrow is how to fit in these two conceptions — nationalism and internationalism. Nationalism obviously is something deep down in human nature. We cannot uproot it and there is no reason why we should try to uproot it, because nationalism ultimately depends on all that is best in us.

How can we get rid of it without cutting off ourselves from our deep moorings? If we do it we would probably become superficial. But why should nationalism come into conflict with internationalism? I find attempts are being made at Santiniketan and Viswa Bharati to combine the two. Your attempts may not find a perfect solution, but even groping towards a proper answer and succeeding in some measure in this attempt to my mind is a great achievement.

Then again there is another aspect, the proper integration of the old and the new. Here again we belong to the old, each one of us wedded to the old, or rather it would be more correct to say, we would prefer

to say, we do not belong to the old but rather the past belongs to us. To belong to the old means that we are old but the old belongs to us means that we have it in us and yet we are in the present looking forward to tomorrow. This integration of the past and the present and the future is again a difficult problem. It is extraordinary that many of us who live in the present are hardly conscious of it, but wrapped up in the past. Now the past is not enough, although the past is an absolutely essential thing for the present. Man's life changes as everything changes in this world from day to day, from hour to hour. But, curiously enough, man's mind does not change. Always there is a lag, the mind remains tied up in the face of changes all round. It may be that it is one of the causes of lack of integration and of many of the conflicts of today. So while holding on to the past we have to hold on and keep changing and understanding the changes of the present and so fit in ourselves for the future. In ancient countries like India and China, where we have a tremendous cultural tradition which inspires and sometimes pulls us back, the need for a proper integration of the past with the present and the future becomes even more important.

There is perhaps today, more so than in the past, the necessity for greater integration between the outer life and the inner life of man. The absence of integration leads to all problems and upsets. Seldom, I suppose, has life all over the world lacked in poise as it is today. We may develop extraordinary equilibrium and poise but persons, more especially in the highly industrialised countries of the world, have no inner equilibrium. Now, this may or may not be the necessary consequence of industrialisation as such, but it has been a consequence of the kind of life that has resulted from it. In our own case in India, there is also this want of integration, not because of industrialisation but because of many other reasons. Obviously unless there is harmony between the outer life and the inner life, man is a battle ground most of the time.

It seems to me that Santiniketan and Viswa Bharati tackle all these problems and try to solve them in some way. As I said, perfect solution is perhaps difficult or almost impossible of achievement in this world of ours, but it is something that fills one with hope that there should be a place which at any rate thinks of these problems, considers them and tries to solve them to the best of its ability. But the fact that you have become symbols and emblems of those who try to solve these problems is in itself a measure of the achievement of Santiniketan and Viswa Bharati. It is not for me to say anything of the inspiration of Gurudeva here because the whole place is full of him. Since I came here last, three and a half years ago, you have grown and you will now con- [illegible] You will add many buildings, you have built a new

hospital and your activities have extended in every direction. It is pleasing. But the real question you have to ask yourselves does not concern constructing more buildings or hospitals but it concerns how far you have been able to imbibe and translate in your activities the ideals and spirit of Gurudeva in vibrant reality. They flourish here of course, but it is always a little difficult, when a towering and dominant personality has been removed from us, to keep close to the ideals which he represented. Other factors come in. Nevertheless it is a measure of the greatness of the individual that his influence continues for ages and I have no doubt that that influence will continue here in Santiniketan and Viswa Bharati for ages to come.

You will pardon me if I say that to me this place is not a mere replica of great educational institutions in this country or elsewhere in the world. There are far finer buildings and far greater resources elesewhere, but this place has a character. I hope that you will never lose its character. You sit here in this mango grove. I would rather wish that you think of the simple and artistic ways which have been introduced here under Gurudeva's guidance and with the help of his colleagues. The future generations should not forget these and ape some of the pompous methods of bigger institutions.

It is good to have come here even for a short while. It is good especially for me who leads a curious and abnormal life which is not much to my liking, but somehow or other some kind of faith pulls me in this and that direction and I have to submit to it. But perhaps when I am rushing about, when I am speaking when silence might be golden, the memory of Santiniketan is like a fresh breeze that cools the mind and a visit to this place especially is something that stands out as an oasis in the desert of political existence. So I thank you for this opportunity.

To those many students who have received their degrees today, I would only say that you have just now participated in a very beautiful way and I hope you will remember the ideals inculcated in you and the pledge you have taken in apt language. Wherever you may go you will, in some measure, carry the message and represent the spirit and the ideals of Santiniketan.

13. Warning against Dogmas[1]

There was something elemental in the 1942 movement in which Bihar and its students played an important part. The movement was the spontaneous manifestation of a spiritual urge. It was like a storm that blew over the face of the country and was just as much a natural force, like the flood which cannot be checked any more than a storm can be checked. Just after passing the Quit India Resolution, the Government arrested all the leaders. The news of their arrests spread like wild fire and it was thought to be an onslaught on national dignity. The urge to rebel spontaneously came from within. Out of this rebellion, people came out stronger and victorious.

Possibly, if the leaders had not been imprisoned the movement would have taken a different shape. But in the absence of their leaders what can the people do but be guided by their own judgment. They assumed the leadership and acted according to the circumstances. In the aftermath of such a movement certain events were bound to occur, which would not be wholly approved of. It shows, nevertheless, that the masses had grown much less tolerant of foreign rule and that they would not see their country humiliated if they could at all prevent it.

The mass upheaval had some meaning behind it. It could not have taken place unless there was something wrong with the Government. In fact, the movement was the result of collective injustices and malpractices. The repressive measures adopted by the Government were just as singular as the movement itself. There was no parallel to it in history after 1857. The Government was faced with a people who were determined to sacrifice their all to uphold the honour of their country. The people were perfectly justified in their rebellion, and if they had faltered they would have lowered India's name. Had the people then submitted to the British outrage our hearts would have bled. I am glad that the people revolted. But the British Government was a mighty force and could not be brushed aside.

However, it was a hundred per cent popular movement although many individuals showed no mature judgment. Therefore it cannot be judged by ordinary standards. It cannot be weighed in the scale of legal

1. Address to the Bihar Provincial Students' Conference, Patna, 24 December 1945. Based on reports from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26 December and *The Hindu*, 26 December 1945.

jurisprudence, but must be judged at the bar of public opinion. The court cannot be the judge of our freedom struggle which spontaneously came forth from the masses. The masses only can judge the rightness of such a struggle. The movement could not have succeeded without inner strength. Here is food for thought for the students. The day is not far off when the strength of the Congress will make the British leave India. Swaraj must come by virtue of our strength. What you require is organisational strength. This the Congress has achieved for you to a great extent. Its policy during the last 25 years has surely strengthened the moral fibre of the people. The Congress has received many knocks and blows and suffered many setbacks in the course of its chequered career, but it has always emerged stronger after withering all opponents.

While the plans, the programmes and the activities of the Congress are all open, straightforward and above board, political strategy sometimes justifies even conspiratorial or underground activities. But what the students should guard against is devoting their energies to anything which does not promote the interests of the masses.

I want you to learn from the 1942 movement and to benefit by the mistakes that you might have made. You must carefully ponder over the issues that face you before plunging into action, though mature deliberation is not quite natural to you. I encourage you to have academic discussions on political matters, but warn you against taking the initiative in the political field. You must look for guidance from the accepted political party which is the Congress. Meanwhile, you will have to prepare yourselves for taking your due part in the India of tomorrow. In the next few years you will be expected to make momentous decisions involving the future of the country.

Today the air is filled with "isms", mostly imported from other countries, and young people are easily carried away by one or the other slogan without understanding its significance properly or caring to find out how far it suited the needs of their country. There are the Socialists and the Communists who talk a great deal about the masses. I warn the students against being doctrinaire and dogmatic about anything. Various concepts and ideals have been imported from other countries and grafted on to the Indian soil without adjusting them to Indian conditions. Trade unionism is one such ideal and Marxism another. The Communist slogan, "Workers of the world unite", is meaningless. What is required is to adapt it to the conditions prevailing in our country. It is difficult to catch up with events which move faster than their theoretical bases. The industrial revolution upset many accepted doctrines,

but in its turn it could influence the French Revolution which dominated the mind of many countries in the 19th century. It gave a fatal blow to the feudal system. Similarly Marxism has also its appeal and attraction but *it is not adopted by the entire* world. Fascism, vitally opposed to other creeds, held complete sway in certain countries.

Political and economic doctrines have to be adjusted to suit the local conditions of a country; also they have to be viewed against an international background, for many countries of the world are now tending towards a closely *knit relationship*. The atomic bomb is the biggest development in the world and is capable of changing the entire shape of the world. Students should ponder over these developments and fit their ideas and actions to a larger framework.

Shouting slogans will lead you nowhere. While I approve of revolutionary ardour, you must control your emotions by strict discipline. India is going through a crucial period and the future is full of dynamic possibilities. You should not lose sight of your ideal.

14. Fear Complex in India[1]

The problem in India is that the people are seized with a fear complex, *the fear of continuation of British rule*, the fear of Hindu-Muslim disunity, the fear of domination and oppression of the minority by the majority communities.

Students should not mix themselves with party *politics*. *External* party politics should not reflect on their activities as students. India needs thousands of engineers, doctors and scientists for the reconstruction work and in this specialised world of today the country cannot afford to ignore this aspect. Students must equip themselves for the task ahead. Politics *is also a specialised subject and it needs* training on the part of the participants. World affairs are not conducted by mere passing of resolutions and making speeches, but by action. The student movement must work with the broad ideology of *independence and* of uplifting the masses. There should be no narrow ideological grouping.

1. Address to students, Karachi, 10 January 1946. From *The Hindu*, 11 January 1946.

If students identify themselves with various parties, the student movement will cease to be a movement.

15. Vindictive Actions Against Students[1]

There has been continuing trouble and conflict in some colleges in the U.P. resulting in student strikes and subsequent punishment to them. I have refrained from expressing any opinion about these occurrences as I did not know all the facts and much of my time was spent outside the province. But recently there has been victimisation and extraordinarily heavy and wholesale punishments have been given to a large number of students. In particular, the action taken against the students of Bareilly College can only be described as vindictive and fantastic. The students of the Agriculture College of Cawnpore have also been victimised and punished although at one stage the principal had previously agreed to their request.[2]

Now apart from the merits of the case, an educational authority which imposes such punishments on large numbers of students has little real authority or moral sanctions left. It is absurd to carry on education in this way and the sooner this absurdity is righted the better.

One of the frequent causes of the dispute appears to be the functioning of the students' unions. For these unions a compulsory levy is made on the students. Strangely enough, this levy continues to be made for years, as is the case of the Agricultural College, even when the union was suppressed and not allowed to function. I am decidedly of opinion that instead of these compulsory unions there should be voluntary unions of students, where they can function as they will. This will avoid the raising of many controversial issues.

The immediate issue affecting large numbers of students is, however, the punishment awarded, including expulsion and fines. These should immediately be withdrawn, and a proper atmosphere created for the functioning of the institutions. The question of the unions can then be considered on the basis I have suggested.

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 13 January 1946. From The Hindustan Times, 14 January 1946
2. Students of the Bareilly College and the Kanpur Agricultural College went on strike following the refusal of the authorities to revive the college unions. This resulted in the expulsion of student leaders.

16. To D.P. Bhattacharya[1]

Allahabad
February 2, 1946

Dear Mr. Bhattacharya,[2]

I am in receipt of your letter of the 24th January. I have also read the other papers that you have sent me. I do not propose to go into the numerous abnormal occurrences[3] which have taken place in Bareilly College during the last few months. I have received many reports of them and, as I have said above, I have also read the papers you have sent me. It is not my function to act as a judge of all these occurrences apportioning blame or credit to the various parties. Nor have I the time to go into these matters in detail. But there are some broad factors of the situation which have pained me. I have no doubt that many of the students of the Bareilly College acted irresponsibly and occasionally showed a lack of discipline. But the way the Board of Control and some of the officers of the college have dealt with the situation seems to me not only deplorable but to demonstrate an unfitness for the charge of dealing with and training young people. It is manifestly absurd to punish large numbers of students, amounting to hundreds, by fines and in some cases by rustication, which in itself shows that the management is incapable of controlling the students body or inspiring any confidence in them. It is no excuse to say that there are certain ancient rules according to which these fines and expulsions have been inflicted.

Every teacher knows or should know that the student world today is in a highly excitable state and is influenced greatly by the political ferment in the country. I have tried my best, in common with others, to lead them away from sporadic action which interferes with their studies and produces psychological ferment in their minds. But my way has been of sympathetic approach and of understanding their troubles and their grievances. Even when they go wrong the approach has to be sympathetic. In other countries students often get excited and even misbehave, but their misbehaviour is condoned because much has to be forgiven to youth. The way of punishment and of treating students as a hostile body is recognised to be fundamentally wrong. It is totally immaterial as to what rules are broken when the relationship between

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Principal, Bareilly College, Bareilly.
3. Bareilly College was closed on 15 January 1946 following the agitation of students for three months against the principal.

the teachers and professors and their students has become completely abnormal and is based on threats and punishment. Education cannot be organised on these lines and any attempt to do so means a complete failure of the educational authorities. The series of occurrences in Bareilly College have been extraordinary and reflect no credit on the Board of Control or some of the teachers. They show how things should not be done. A small incident mismanaged grows to major proportions and upsets not only the students but the public generally. Courts intervene. A notable citizen of Bareilly, Pandit Dwarka Prasad, who is unfortunately no more, takes a prominent part. The Commissioner of the Division, who both by virtue of his office and his past unsavoury record as an official is very unpopular, plays a leading role. All this is about as far removed from the education of the young as anything can be.

It may happen that by sheer compulsion and threats of punishment a number of students may be cowed down while a number continue to maintain a rebellious attitude. Usually the more vital and promising students are the more aggressive in such matters and the submissive ones are the second-rate ones. It is the object of education to inculcate self-reliance and vitality. But in education as it is organised in India generally, and more specially in Bareilly College at present, submissiveness in the name of discipline is supposed to be the highest virtue. Obviously any popular authority would reverse this process and, while maintaining discipline, encourage in every way the vital elements in the student world. Today the authorities are as far removed from popular control as they can be, but a time may come when this is not so and a different approach will have to be made.

It must be remembered that students are generally immature and are swept away by sentiment. When this sentiment is in line with national sentiment it becomes powerful and only some one in sympathy with that national sentiment can deal with those students effectively and without injury to them. After all the young men and women in our colleges and schools are the real wealth of the nation. We have to look after them with affection and sympathy, to tend them carefully, to allow them to grow into mature citizens, as a plant grows, without too much compulsion. So far as I can see there has been no realisation of this by the authorities of the Bareilly College, with the result that public sentiment in this province is almost unanimously opposed to those authorities and to the methods they have adopted. The sooner, therefore, these methods are changed and a new approach is made the better for all concerned.

I am prepared to use such influence as I possess with students to bring them round to a disciplined and orderly development of the individual

and the group. But my influence can only be exercised through affection and a friendly approach. It can only have effect when the hostile approach from the other side ceases, and an atmosphere is created which soothes and not irritates. I can be no party to anything which, in the name of discipline, tries to humiliate the pride and spirit of our young people. I like that pride and spirit for out of that only we can build up a self-reliant India.

I suggest to you that it is up to the college authorities immediately to retrace their steps and to withdraw all orders of rustication, expulsion, fine and other forms of punishment. Having done so a new atmosphere may be created in which other questions can be considered in a more amicable and friendly manner.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17. *The Volunteer Movement of the Congress*[1]

There have been considerable obstacles in the development of the volunteering movement of the Congress.[2] During the early stages of the war, some restrictions on drill, parade etc., were imposed to avoid volunteers being mistaken for the military. There was some justification for such a course. The principle behind such restrictions might be right, but the manner in which orders are now being executed is wrong. In Europe, during the war, people had to receive training in drill, discipline etc., but in India, boys and students cannot receive training even in drill. This is a very bad policy. It demonstrates the difference between the administration in Europe and the administration in India. It is surprising that objection is taken to Congress volunteers going even in files.

1. Address to Congress volunteers, Allahabad, 3 February 1946. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 4 February, *National Herald*, 6 February and *The Hindustan Times*, 6 February 1946.
2. Volunteer training was banned in Allahabad under the Central Government Camp and Parade Order. In Amritsar, 45 Congress volunteers were arrested on 30 December 1945 for marching in military formation in violation of the Defence of India Rules

It means that preference is given to their going in a disorderly fashion over their marching in an orderly manner. Whatever the Congress does makes the bureaucracy nervous and suspicious. But there should be a limit to official narrow-mindedness. On the one hand, we hear tall talk of their doing this thing and that thing in connection with our demand for independence; on the other, they cannot tolerate even volunteer training for the people.

About fifty to sixty thousand volunteers have been trained in the country by the Hindustani Seva Dal. We wished to train lakhs of volunteers, as we wanted to have trained men in every village to discipline others, but due to war the movement could not make the desired progress.

The present policy of the Congress is not to launch civil disobedience. We do not want to do, from our side, anything of the nature of satyagraha. But we can make ourselves helpless by not going even in files. If such is the nature of the order it must be ended soon. It should be made clear that worthless orders, which cannot be accepted by any people with self-respect, cannot be accepted by us.

We need volunteers, not to raise an army, but for the service of the people. Secondly, the movement can improve discipline and morale, which in turn will improve the capacity of the people to work. We have seen in the past few years that young men do not lack in enthusiasm. What is wanted is discipline. The lack of discipline eclipses many a virtue. Discipline is therefore very essential. If I have my way, I would like every man, woman, girl and child of India, to be trained in discipline and taught volunteering. This will increase their fitness for work in any line.

Volunteering is, therefore, a very important part of the Congress programme of work but much progress in this direction has not been possible due to the obstacles. It is not enough if we have 100, 200 or 300 volunteers. There should be thousands of volunteers. Every *muhalla* should have volunteers.

A revolution is bound to take place in India. We should be prepared for controlling the situation when the expected change comes. The foundation of the present system has become hollow. When the old system shakes, many other things will receive a shock. It will then be time to see that we act with wisdom so that we may not also be shaken.

The system of our work and that of the British Government are quite different. The Government wants to control us by means of the police and the armed forces. If we are to manage our affairs, we would do so with the cooperation of the people. Therefore, we have to strengthen

our sangathan with the cooperation of the people and should not involve ourselves in quarrels with our own people. In a free India, all will be living together happily and peacefully.

What method the people of a free India will consider best, I cannot say. But considering the present situation in India, the peaceful and nonviolent method of the Congress is the best.

The next few months are very important. The question of the formation of ministries and many other important problems may come up before us. The present conditions may undergo considerable changes. We should be prepared to face these problems peacefully. The Azad Hind Volunteers' Organisation[3] should follow its parent organisation, the Congress. The Congress has grown much in power, but with its growth, some weakness has also crept into the organisation. There are internal petty factions, which are most dangerous when the country is faced with a revolution. Congressmen should, therefore, keep themselves aloof from petty politics.

3. The Congress had formed, under Shah Nawaz Khan, an All India Azad Hind Volunteer Corps, one of whose aims was to prevent communal disturbances

18. Grow Big to Do Big Things[1]

My good wishes to the provincial session of the Students' Congress to be held at Dehra Dun. Seldom have the students of India faced such problems as they face today. They will require all their courage, wisdom and sobriety to deal with them. Above all, discipline and restraint are necessary, lest we waste our energy over trivial matters. Big things are ahead and we have to grow big in order to meet them and mould them according to our wishes.

1. Message to Students Congress. *National Herald*, 7 February 1946

19. Real Life is in the Villages[1]

The present prizes are nothing in comparison to the future prizes in store for you. Many opportunities will be available to get the real prizes. There should not be empty enthusiasm and empty slogans, but there should be a substantial real life among you.

Real life is to be found in villages where the people are half-naked and get very little food to sustain themselves. I emphasise the need of learning and developing a technique in everything. The victory of the Allies was due merely to their superior technique of war and the inventions of American scientists. I appeal to you to develop a technique in everything.

We should always think about the welfare of the forty crores of Indians. We should get rid of slavery and march to our cherished goal. Our problems are numerous and they have been further increased by the foreign government. They have to be solved.

I request the university authorities to open the door of learning to all irrespective of caste, creed and sex. Poverty and social restrictions have been the cause for many people to have remained uneducated. Many great lives have been lost in frustration, unhonoured and unsung. Had everyone got ample opportunities to study from childhood, he would have contributed much more to the country. I recall the will made by Rabindranath Tagore some months before his death. He had stated that the British would leave India bankrupt for our children.[2] I stress the need for the abolition of the zamindari and the capitalist systems. They have hindered the progress of our struggle. The university should impart education which will help the country to develop as a first class nation.

1. Address to the students of Science College of Benares Hindu University after prize distribution, Varanasi, 14 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 16 February 1946.
2. The last public declaration of Rabindranath Tagore on 14 April 1941, three months before his death, has been considered his last testament. He said: "The wheels of Fate will some day compel the English to give up their Indian empire. But what kind of India will they leave behind, what stark misery? When the stream of their centuries' administration runs dry at last, what a waste of mud and filth will they leave behind them. I had at one time believed that the springs of civilization would issue out of the heart of Europe. And today when I am about to quit the world that stubborn faith has gone bankrupt altogether."

You should adopt the constructive programme of Gandhiji in order to develop discipline. I congratulate the people who participated in the 1942 movement, specially the university students, for they rebuffed the attack on the self-respect of their nation. It mattered little if they acted wrongly.

20. Keep Aloof from Party Politics[1]

The student movement in Western countries is non-political whereas in India it is linked with politics. This is the main defect of the student movement in India. Students should learn things with reference to reality. It will be better if they go to villages during their holidays and gain experience in field work.

Political leadership requires great experience and sober thinking. You should keep yourselves aloof from party politics, but nobody will prevent you from leading the people in extraordinary circumstances in the absence of the leaders. I discourage the adoption of a conspiratorial attitude, but under compulsion people might fall back on it.

I emphasise the need of improving the technique of doing a certain thing. Independence is quite near, for the progressive forces of the world are supporting our cause and the British Government's hold on us is declining. Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League are a hindrance in our march, but the days are not far off when they too will be defeated.

Violence will not bring Swaraj to us. No doubt, the course of our movement will be quite different in the future. The release of Shah Nawaz and other I.N.A. men was mainly due to the pressure of the Indian army and the Indian public. We have to bring the Indian army to our side. The Indian National Army trials have changed the outlook of the Indian soldiers and most of them have started thinking in our terms. It is improper to run down the demobilized soldiers and treat them scornfully. Swaraj can be wrested from the British Government

1. Address to workers of Benares Students Congress, Varanasi, 14 February 1946. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 15 February and *The Leader*, 15 February 1946.

when the country is determined. The immediate need of the hour is that the country has to be rehabilitated and made self-supporting.

Question: Why did the country fail in the 1942 rebellion?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Obviously, except, of course, with the help of an army any such movement is bound to be defeated.

The basis of Mahatma Gandhi's constructive programme is to make villages self-supporting. I advise the student workers to work for the improvement of conditions in rural areas.

I warn you not to judge the average Englishmen by your knowledge of the British civilians in India. The British civilians are unscrupulous persons with a narrow outlook.

7

THE CONGRESS AND THE COMMUNISTS

1. A Self-Contradictory Role[1]

Z.A. Ahmed: ... I shall take up your Bombay press statement.[2] Frankly speaking, I was much disappointed and hurt by what you said about the Communists in that statement. We could understand it if anyone else had said those things about us. You have known us for a long time. You also know the international Communist movement. And therefore when you say that we were "on the other side" and that we were virtually Soviet agents, we have a right to feel terribly aggrieved. I do not know what you had in mind when you said this, but the Communist-baiters are taking full advantage of your statement. They say that you have denounced us as an unpatriotic party. Excuse me if I say that you have been very unfair to us.

Jawaharlal Nehru: I did not mean that you identified yourself with the Government. What I meant was that at a critical time when there was a clash between the Government and the national movement, you were not on the side of the national movement. It is a difficult question whether at that time the course taken by the national movement was right or wrong. The fact, however, remains that you were not giving your support to the national forces in whatever they were doing. I did not mean to convey the impression that your were helping or supporting the Government in its repressive policy.

Ahmed: You said that our policy was determined by the Soviet foreign policy. This is virtually calling us Soviet agents in the country, which I am sure you will agree is not correct. This has also given a handle to those who have made anti-communism their main job in life.

JN: I did not in the least mean that you are agents of the Soviet Union here. My point was that consideration of defence, safety and

1. On 28 June 1945, Z.A. Ahmed discussed with Jawaharlal the relations between Congressmen and Communists. An unsigned copy of the report of the talks, submitted to the Communist Party of India by Ahmed on 4 July 1945, is available in the Archives on Contemporary History of India, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. Extracts from it are printed here.
2. See *ante*, pp. 15-21.

development of the Soviet Union exercises a great influence on Communist policies in all countries.

Ahmed: It is true that we attach tremendous importance to the safety, defence and development of the Soviet Union, much more than an average nationalist does. But we do so because we consider the Soviet Union as the most powerful bulwark against imperialism and in that sense its safety and defence are directly related to our national interests. But this is quite different from saying that our national policies are determined by Soviet foreign policy.

JN: My contention is that due to their attachment to the Soviet Union and other considerations of an international character, the political thought process of the Communists is different from that of an average nationalist. There are occasions when a purely nationalist attitude comes into conflict with the Communist attitude. The primary thing with the nationalist mind is immediate national interests, while with the Communists other considerations, one of the most important of which is the safety and defence of the Soviet Union, carry a great deal of weight.

Ahmed: But does our attitude strengthen the national interest or weaken it?

JN: Perhaps in the long run your attitude may prove to be more correct, but the fact remains that on certain immediate issues a conflict between the Communists and the national movement does come into existence. In 1942, the powerful hatred of the British swayed our people and moved them forward into a countrywide struggle. Your policy, on the other hand, influenced comparatively a very small section. You could not move millions. Inevitably there arose a sharp conflict between you and the national movement which has now raised huge barriers between the two.

Ahmed: But if we bend before backward forms of nationalism it would not take us anywhere.

JN: There is no question of bending before it. The fact has to be recognised that the national sentiment is extremely powerful. You cannot just ride roughshod over it. It has to be changed as a process and this takes time.

2. Anti-National Activity[1]

I am collecting facts about the happenings which took place after my arrest. I am also trying to know the reaction of the people. Conditions both in our country and abroad have changed considerably.

The Communists in the country have widened the gulf between the Congress and their own party. The need of the time is to organise and strengthen the Congress organisation and give up power politics.

In the U.P., the Executive has got all powers and acts in an impersonal manner. The office bearers hold office only for one year. The members of the Congress Working Committee feel concerned over Punjab politics. The Punjab Congressmen should act according to my advice.

1. Address to Congress workers, Lahore, 17 July 1945. From *The Tribune*, 18 July 1945.

3. To R. Palme Dutt[1]

Gulmarg
12 August 1945

My dear Palme Dutt,

... You must realise that it pains me to see the gulf that has arisen between the Congress and Communists in India. That gulf at present is wide and deep and has all the passions of three years behind it. That has nothing to do with communism and socialism, in favour of which there is considerable though rather vague sentiment. Still less has it to do with Russia for which there is great admiration, though no doubt tempered in many places by certain fears of present and future Soviet policy. The gulf has arisen because of internal policy in India and the fact that the Communists ran down popular leaders in India and, at a time when there was bitter conflict between nationalism and the imperialist structure, they appeared before the people as acting on the side

1. Palme Dutt Papers, London. Extracts.

of the latter. Whatever the inner motives and reasons, this public reaction is easy to understand. Politically the fact that has gone most against them and aroused the greatest resentment is their attitude on the communal question. They have become full-blooded supporters of Jinnah's demands (unspecified and vague as they are) and in the name of Congress-League unity they demand a complete surrender by Congress to Jinnah. I have no doubt that they have worsened the communal problem by their attitude. Communists who have joined the Muslim League appear to be more rabid Leaguers than others. All this has been greatly resented. I hope that changed circumstances will gradually tone down these differences.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Mohamed Yasin[1]

Gulmarg
August 18, 1945

Dear Maulana Yasin,
I trust that all the arrangements for my visit to Lahore have been satisfactorily made. My programme stands as previously fixed. As I am anxious to have plenty of time at my disposal for talks with groups and individuals, I should like the 26th and 27th as free of other engagements as possible.

I have noticed in a *Tribune* report[2] that Akalis, Communists and Royists[3] as groups have been debarred from participation in the workers' meeting in Lahore. Royists of course have no place in the Congress at all as they have themselves left it and attacked it. As regards

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Those who opposed the Congress policy in 1942 and who did not go to jail in the August movement were not allowed to attend a meeting of the Congress workers arranged by the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee. Of 270 members of the Punjab P.C.C., 90 either belonged to the Communist Party or to the Akali Party.
3. The Royists were the members of the Radical Democratic Party started by M.N. Roy in 1940. This party supported the war effort unconditionally "out of political conviction."

the other two groups the question will no doubt be considered by the Congress Working Committee soon. I know perfectly well the strong feelings in Congress ranks against them for the part they played during the last three years. I have myself expressed my opinion in regard to this in public. Nevertheless it might raise difficulties at this stage if we treat them as excluded groups. I think I explained this to you when we met. I have consulted the Maulana also on this point and he agrees that it would be wiser not to exclude any group as such at this stage and before any final decision has been taken on this issue. The workers' meeting is likely to be a large inchoate body where any serious discussion will be difficult. But it will perform a useful function in giving me an idea of the position in the province and the feelings of the Congressmen in general. It will have to be followed by more concise talk with people. It will not matter much if certain persons, against whom Congressmen have grievances, form part of the large number invited to the main workers' meeting. On the other hand, to exclude a group as such may well lead to considerable waste of my time and the meeting's time in considering complaints and in discussing these very issues. I suggest, therefore, with Maulana Azad's approval, that no group as such should be excluded at this stage.

As for the future, we shall discuss this later and Maulana Saheb himself intends to visit Lahore on his return from Kashmir.

As I have to leave by the night train on the 27th for Delhi I want two second class berths reserved for me.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Sardar Pratap Singh, the General Secretary of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Internationalism versus Nationalism[1]

I thank you for giving me an opportunity to meet you. I deplore the gulf created between the Communists and Congressmen. I know that the Communist Party included active sincere workers who have made

1. Address to communist workers, Lahore, 27 August 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 29 August 1945.

great sacrifices. The difference between the Communists and the Congressmen is of a vital nature which may be characterised as a conflict between internationalism and nationalism. I hope that efforts will be made to bridge the gulf that exists between them.

6. Charges Against Communist Members In the Congress[1]

Bombay
Sept. 21, 1945

The A.I.C.C. office having received a large number of complaints and accusations against the activities of Communist members of the Congress and of the Communist Party in India generally in relation to the Congress, the Working Committee have referred this matter to us for examination and if the facts so warrant, to frame charges to which the persons concerned might be invited to reply. There is a vast mass of papers and reports in the files before us. For the most part they are vague and sometimes irrelevant. Some of the charges, relating to individual or group activity, are serious, but they would require fuller examination and proof before any action could be based on them. We do not propose to take into consideration any of these vague and unproved assertions, or to initiate further inquiries in regard to them at this stage. As we understand the reference made to us, the Working Committee are concerned with the larger issues involved and not so much with individual misdemeanours. Under the Congress constitution and rules, it is open to provincial Congress committees or their executives to take disciplinary action against any individual Congressman or Congresswoman who has acted contrary to Congress policy. Such action, we are informed, has already been taken or recommended in certain cases by some provincial Congress committees. We propose, therefore, to consider only the broader aspects of the question in this report. It is not without significance, however, that complaints and accusations against Communist activity in India have been received from a very large number of Congressmen all over India. There is also no doubt that the attitude of the Communist Party towards the communal problem and their unqualified support of the Muslim League's claim for Pakistan have added to the prevailing estrangement. It is manifest that there is at present a widespread and deep sentiment against members of the Communist

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-23 (Part-1) 1945-46, pp 79-97, N.M.M.L.

Party in India, and the Congress rank and file are powerfully influenced by it. We do not propose to allow ourselves to be guided by this sentiment in considering any action which might have to be taken.

The Congress has in the past kept its membership open to all individuals, classes, and religious and political groups in India, provided only that the objective of Indian independence was accepted, as well as the method of peaceful and legitimate action. Within that broad framework various ideologies have found their place even when they were not wholly in line with the governing ideology of the Congress. Even foreigners who accepted the objective and methods of the Congress could join it. Thus the Congress has been more of a movement than a narrow political party. It has, however, functioned as a party also, especially in the legislatures. Being an organisation which has indulged in militant action from time to time on an extensive scale, it has inevitably tended to function as a strictly disciplined organisation, even though it consisted of people with differing views on many political and economic matters. These two somewhat differing approaches — as a broad movement and as a disciplined party — have usually been reconciled by allowing full freedom of expression of views and opinions and at the same time insisting on uniformity in action, especially when that action meant a conflict with the British Government in India. In practice this meant freedom in discussing the policy to be laid down, and when that policy had been determined, to adhere to it as closely as possible, and certainly not to oppose it in any way. Without that strictness of uniformity in the field of action, the Congress would have faded away as a militant organisation and become an ineffective motley crowd pulling in different directions and wholly incapable of acting. Thus while different groups continued in the Congress, if any member of the Congress clearly acted against Congress policy, disciplinary action could be, and sometimes actually was, taken against him. This applied particularly to such Congressmen as were members of executive bodies within the organisation. It was manifestly absurd for a person to be a member of an executive committee when he or she did not accept the policy which that committee was supposed to further, or even opposed it.

Owing to the conflicts that have arisen between the viewpoints and policies of the Congress and various communal organisations in India, it was laid down in the Congress constitution some years ago that "no person who is a member of a communal organisation, the object or programme of which involves political activities which are, in the opinion of the Working Committee, anti-national and in conflict with those of the Congress, shall be eligible for election to any office or membership

of any elective Congress committee". Even in this case, it should be noted, members of communal organisations were not barred from joining the Congress as ordinary primary members; they were prevented from seeking office or membership of any executive.

The Communist Party in India came into existence in a very small way early in the twenties. It was for long an illegal organisation. A few of its members joined the Congress but the general attitude and policy of the party were to criticise, ridicule and condemn the Congress policy. The Congress, which had spread to the masses of the people and especially among the peasantry, and was in fact carrying on mass struggles on an unprecedented scale, was characterised as a bourgeoisie reactionary body trying to prevent mass urges from following their natural courses. In particular the Congress leadership was blamed for coming in the way of the masses. Official Congress policy was often held up to ridicule. In spite of this no action was ever taken against the Communists in India by the Congress, partly because they were so few in number and in influence that they did not count at all, and partly because they belonged to an illegal organisation which was being harassed and suppressed by the governmental authorities. The sympathy of Congressmen always went to all who suffered from Government's repressive policy. In 1929, when the Meerut trial took place, and many prominent Communists were involved in it, leading Congressmen helped in the defence.

Even in the early thirties the general attitude of the Communist Party of India towards the Congress did not change and was one of strong criticism and ridicule. In 1935-36, however, there was a change in the wider policies of the Communist parties all over the world and attempts were made in various countries to form 'Joint Fronts' and 'Popular Fronts'. It took some time for the Communist Party of India to be affected by this, and, indeed, it was resisted for a while, as it directly opposed the policy they had so far been pursuing. However, in 1936, the Communists in India became more friendly to the Congress, exhorted the people to join it, and tried to enter its local executives. From then onwards till the middle of 1939, that is for a little over three years, there was often much friction between the Communists and other elements in the Congress, but on the whole they functioned together and no major crisis arose. It should be noted that even this friction was in regard to internal and domestic policies in India, and seldom had anything to do with communism as such or with reactions to events in the Soviet Union. In the Congress there was a considerable body of opinion which was favourably inclined towards many of the aspects of

communism and socialism, as there were also many who did not approve of the philosophy underlying communism. In particular, the stress by Communists on violent methods was in conflict with the Congress policy of peaceful action. But in practice this did not usually lead to conflict in action, except occasionally in local areas. Usually this resulted in long and sometimes heated argument in A.I.C.C. meetings. A few Communists, not exceeding 2 or 3 per cent of the total membership of A.I.C.C., were elected to that body chiefly because of the system of voting by means of proportional representation (single transferable vote) which enabled small minority groups to be represented.

It should also be noted that within the Congress ranks there was widespread admiration for many of the achievements of the Soviet Union, though some of the policies pursued there were not uniformly admired.

This was the background when the war broke out early in September 1939. The Congress policy before and after this turning-point in world history is wellknown. It was defined at some length in a statement[2] issued by the Working Committee on September 14, 1939, and subsequently this led to the resignation of the Congress Governments in the provinces. The Communist Party of India, characterising the war as an imperialist war, bitterly attacked the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi for not launching a mass struggle immediately after the war began for the emancipation of India. The following extracts from *A Review on Gandhism* published by G. Adhikari[3] at the time of the Ramgarh Congress in March 1940, may be read with interest in the connection:

1. Once Gandhism held the fate of British rule in its hand.... Today it pursues the logic of "unconditional cooperation" with the same Government and that at a time when an unjust, imperialist and predatory war is raging in the world. Gandhism has entered into its decadent phase. At the most critical time of our national history it is acting as a fetter on the national struggle.
2. Immediately on the outbreak of the present war Gandhiji declared that his sympathies were with England and France. He responded to the call of the Viceroy and interviewed him. To the angry demonstrators and correspondents, who resented his action, he replied: "I have come to the conclusion that it is Hitler who is

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 122-138
3. (b. 1898); active member of the Communist Party of India; convicted in Meerut conspiracy case; arrested in 1934 for political activities; remained underground, 1939-42, editor for some time of *People's War* and later *People's Age*; member of the Central Committee of the C.P.I. for many years after 1948.

responsible for the war. If Hitler thought his claim to Danzig and the Corridor was just he should have submitted it to an impartial tribunal. *Britain is fighting a just war.* A satyagrahi must support a just cause even when it is espoused by an enemy." This is how nonviolence is invoked in support of an *imperialist* war. Gandhiji would not bargain with imperialism at this critical hour. He would not use England's difficulty to win India's freedom.... The popular feeling of 1939 on the other hand was violently against his stand and demanded the immediate resumption of the national struggle for freedom.

3. The results of the strategy of stalemate which has been adopted during the last six months are clear enough. Firstly, it will mean that the revolutionary vanguard is decimated in isolation through *imperialist repression.* Secondly, demoralisation would spread among the centre elements in the Congress and bring them to accept the *position that no struggle is possible,* Gandhiji's line is the best.... Shorn of its moral embellishment it is the line of the cowardly and compromising bourgeoisie....*Gandhism* still retains its leadership in the national movement. It is seeking to use its position to overtake and imprison the rapidly growing forces of revolution. to isolate and eliminate them. It is paving the way for the most ignoble compromise and defeat at a time when all the factors are favourable for decisive victory over imperialism.

In the summer of 1940, the collapse of France and the *blitzkrieg over* England (*sic*) produced powerful reactions in India, and it was not considered desirable to start then the civil disobedience movement which had been envisaged in the Ramgarh Congress Resolution. In the autumn, however, the situation in the West was more stable, while in India conditions were rapidly deteriorating. In October 1940, the Congress initiated the individual satyagraha movement, controlled and conditioned by Gandhiji. Referring to this, the *Communist* of November 1940 wrote as follows:

"Human wit could not have drawn up any better rules for sabotaging all struggle and for dashing the national movement to pieces.... Every Congressman must be made to realise that this satyagraha can only lead to our prostration before the enemy.... That we have a national leadership that can offer such a plan is the supreme tragedy of the situation."

Again the *Communist* of February 1941 wrote:

"The national movement under bourgeois leadership has entered into a blind alley. They feared the masses and trusted imperial-

ism... They put their class above the nation.... They hand over the national organisers to imperialism for safe custody. They dissolve the Congress organisation lest the people might use it as the instrument of a mass struggle."

And in March 1941, the Communist wrote:

"The struggle is a jolly merry-go-round. Shut up you irrelevant scoffer! It is a nation's solemn. .. nonviolent. ..suicide. In the phase of its decay Gandhism can only pursue an anti-struggle and compromising policy.... The future under Gandhism is to lose all that the Congress has built up so far."

When in the summer of 1941 Nazi Germany attacked Russia there was widespread sympathy and anxiety for the Soviet Union all over India. The Communist Party of India naturally felt this all the more keenly but, in view of their past policy, it was not easy for them suddenly to change their whole attitude to the war. It took them many months to do so, but when the change came, it was a complete swing-over to the other extreme. The slogan of the "Imperialist War" gave place to one of the "People's War" and cooperation with Britain was urged. This was directly opposed to the Congress policy then and later and friction resulted from it. Soon after the Cripps negotiations the old ban on the Communist Party of India was removed by the Government and the Communist Party became a legal organisation in India. As such it carried on intensive propaganda for its new point of view, which brought it into direct conflict with Congress activities and propaganda. The Communist Party of India started a weekly, the *People's War*, to carry on this propaganda aggressively. Individual Communists who were members of Congress executives were thus placed in a very invidious position, and as they adhered to the Communist line, complaints against them began to mount up There were some actual conflicts in public meetings, in Andhra especially, where it was alleged that Communists used violence. In some provinces, as in the U.P., disciplinary action was taken locally against Congress members of executives who were adopting the Communist line. All this was in June and July 1942, prior to August. Thus the position had already become difficult before the August Resolution was passed, and it was becoming increasingly clear that no person could or should be simultaneously a member of two executives with differing and hostile policies. In view of the vastness of the Congress organisation and the relative smallness of the Communist Party of India the problem was not, in a sense, of great importance, but it created a great deal of bitterness.

The resolution of the A.I.C.C., passed on August 8, 1942, was followed

by the arrest of a large number of Congressmen and other events which are well-known. Owing to governmental repression, spontaneous upheavals took place all over the country, hartals, strikes etc. and there was also a good deal of violence in some places. While it was clear that no movement had been officially started by the A.I.C.C. or Gandhiji, it was equally clear that this mass upheaval of unprecedented proportion was the direct consequence of the chain of events that preceded it. Undoubtedly it was a direct manifestation of the people's will, which the Congress had claimed to represent.

In this vast conflict between the forces of Indian nationalism and British imperialism, when people were being shot down by the thousand, and many of the horrors of war were being perpetrated on unarmed people in the towns and countryside alike, the Communist Party of India appeared to be lined up with the British Government in India. It is true that they mildly criticised British policy occasionally and asked for the release of the leaders, but they also condemned as traitors many Congressmen and Congress groups and carried on a virulent campaign against the people's movement. Whether the Communist Party's policy was right or wrong it is not for us to consider here. But there can be no doubt whatever that it was opposed to Congress policy and to that policy which had arisen spontaneously as a result of the people's movement. The two could not possibly be reconciled then or now. The *People's War*, in its various editions in different languages, carried out ceaseless propaganda against this people's movement in which nearly all Congressmen were involved in some form or other.

The *People's War* dated August 23, 1942, had the following:

"The call upon workers to go on political strike is not to exert pressure upon the British Government but to disrupt the country's advance and starve the workers for nothing. Continued production is a vital war necessity whatever the Government might be".

Again in the same issue we find the following:

"We Communists know that to keep production going is the workers' contribution to national defence and to keep transport running is to help to hit the fascist. We realise more seriously than others that there is no short cut to Indian freedom except the unity of our nation which will bring us national government; and not satyagraha nor sabotage, which can only destroy our national defence and open the gates to fascist invaders."

The following extract from Joshi's letter is significant:

"We gave up our strike policy because we consider it anti national in the conditions of today, aiding the Jap aggressors on the one hand

and intensifying the economic crisis for our own people on the other. That we successfully prevented the Indian working class from resorting to strike even in a period of their worsening material condition is the measure not only of our influence over it but its capacity to understand national interests as its own." Further: "If you enquire into the *bona fides* of the persons who have written to you, you will find that they are those who organised or supported the post-9th August sabotage campaign or have been intensely prejudiced against us by these people. They are bitter against us because we oppose sabotage and exposed them not only in words but in practice."

The first meeting of the Communist Party was held in September 1942. Joshi and Adhikari wrote in the report submitted by them to their party that there were two groups in the Congress Working Committee:

"One, the anti-fascist group of Pandit Jawaharlal, Azad etc., and other, the group of Gandhiji, Patel, Rajendra Prasad and others, who wanted to bring British imperialism on its knees by creating a standstill in centres of war production and in all means of communications. This group dominated in the Working Committee and so the cutting of wires and removal of rails etc., that took place in the disturbances were according to the ideals contemplated by Gandhiji's group."

Thus the responsibility for the August disturbances was placed by the Communists on the Congress Working Committee directly and positively in September 1942, long before the publication of Tottenham's pamphlet on the subject.

The following extracts are taken from the resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India passed at the same meeting:

"The path along which the present national upsurge is directed is one of national suicide, not of national salvation and freedom. It destroys the nation's indispensable defences, inevitably leading to conditions of civil commotion and disorder, anarchy, and even loot and arson. It makes the national movement the prey of bureaucratic provocation in the name of struggle. Finally, it creates a mass basis for fifth column activity in the name of patriotism.... It is leading the nation to a state of moral and political disruption and paralysis which, far from helping the people to get their freedom, can only clear the path of the invader. Such is the disastrous culmination of policies of not relying upon the strength of the people, that is, on national unity, and leaving the initiative in the hands of the imperialist bureaucracy."

Still more emphatic is the following:

"The central tasks to which the party must address itself today are threefold.... (b) carry on persistent political explanations among workers, kisans, student militants and Congressmen, how the present struggle leads to destruction and anarchy and is suicide."

Again:

"Our first and foremost task must be to re-establish firmly the leadership of the unions and the party in the industrial centres and stamp out the efforts of provocateurs and of misguided patriots to drag the working class into the suicidal campaign of sabotage and anarchy. Among the kisans we must conduct a sharp political campaign against these saboteurs and promoters of anarchy.

Among the students you must carry on a political explanatory campaign. We must explain to them that to pursue the policy of permanent strikes, to go in for destruction and anarchy is not to play their part in the freedom movement."

That the party faithfully carried out these decisions is borne out by a circular of the Government of India issued just a year later on 20 September 1943, from which the following extracts are given:

1. The party has as a whole exercised a restraining effect on students and its influence over the student community, though not great has, such as it is, been used in the direction of preventing student strikes and disorderly demonstrations.
2. Such influence as the party has with labour appears generally to have been exercised in the direction of opposing or minimising the effect of strikes.
3. In the party congress held in Bombay from 23 May to 1 June, 1943, there was an attack on the negative policy of the Congress and the resolution openly identified for the first time the Congress Socialist Party and Forward Bloc with the fifth column agents who are accused of taking advantage of the Congress resolution of August 1942, to lead the country to the brink of disaster.
4. Not only are the Communists almost the only party, which fought for victory .... they alone, however hesitantly, have criticised the Congress defeatism from a political point of view as opposed, for instance, to the fundamentally communal criticisms of Congress policy by the Muslim League etc., and have openly attacked as traitors the off-shoots of the Congress, the Forward Bloc and the Congress Socialist Party.

There are numerous reports from Congress committees alleging that the Communists had consistently condemned the August Resolution of the

Congress and Congressmen as responsible for all the disturbances which followed the August Resolution. They had similarly thrown their full weight on the side of the Government advocating unconditional support of the war effort and dissuading all classes whether peasants, workers or students from countenancing anything that might hinder the war effort or actually embarrass the administration. There are also many reports, made apparently after local investigation, showing that the Communists had been violently abusing and vilifying prominent Congressmen, and sometimes cooperating with the police in their activities against some Congressmen in the post-August 9th period. Numerous cases of rowdyism and hooliganism on the part of Communists in connection with meetings organised by or under the auspices of local Congress committees, especially in Andhra, are also mentioned in detail. Some of these cases are still the subject of inquiry and trial in some of the Madras courts. On the other hand, there are charges made by Communists against Congressmen. We have not gone into these charges and counter-charges. It would be difficult to arrive at exact and definite findings without elaborate inquiries, and, in any event, even if some local charge was proved, it will not follow that this was the result of the official policy of the Communist Party of India. There can, however, be no doubt that the Communists in the Congress, as well as those outside it, have ceaselessly opposed both in letter and spirit the Congress policy from early in 1942 onwards and especially since the Resolution of August 8, 1942.

There has been a prolonged correspondence between Gandhiji and Shri P.C. Joshi in regard to the activities of the Communists in the Congress and this has been recently published. At the suggestion of Mr. Joshi, the matter was referred to Shri Bhulabhai Desai for opinion: "You place your whole anti-communist file", wrote Joshi, "before any patriot of eminence who inspires mutual trust, for example, Mrs. Naidu, Rajaji or Bhulabhai. These are your old colleagues and known to us not to be prejudiced against us. Let me have a copy of the file and let them ask me for explanations on any point. I am sure after reading their report you will consign the anti-communist file to the flames." Mr. Desai tendered his opinion on the 20th of August last. In the course of his written opinion Mr. Desai states that "it is candidly admitted by Mr. Joshi that they regarded the European war which has just now ended as the People's War for the reasons he had given." Evidently there was no room for prevarication in this matter. With the propaganda that was being carried on day in and day out in the columns of the People's War it did not require much candour to make

this admission. Mr. Desai further says: "It does appear that the views and attitude of the Communist Party after the 9th August have been to carry on propaganda contrary to the views and policy of the Congress.' A copy of Shri Bhulabhai's note was sent to Mr. Joshi. Mr. Joshi, while complaining that Shri Bhulabhai's decision was *ex parte*, did not seriously contest his findings. In fact in most other matters Shri Bhulabhai had virtually exonerated the Communists. His conclusion that the Communist Party had been carrying on propaganda contrary to the views and policy of the Congress ever since 9th August 1942, is of considerable significance. At a time when the country was passing through a reign of terror and the Congress was involved in a life and death struggle, no organisation allied with the Congress could, without committing a serious outrage to the ordinary tenets of discipline, indulge in such hostile activities.

Although we have had to consider largely the past, we might add that even in the present, the policy of the Communist Party of India, as represented by the writings in the *People's War*, is very far removed from and often opposed to the Congress policy.

We are, therefore, of opinion that there is ample evidence on the record before us to establish a strong *prima facie* case against the members of the Communist Party in the Congress and they should be asked to justify their position and policy and to show cause why action should not be taken against them. We have not dealt with individuals in this report but we can only ask individuals to show cause. We suggest that such Communists as are members of the A.I.C.C. should be asked to do so, as presumably they have a leading position in their party. If any other important member of their party desires to put forward his explanation or justification, he should be allowed an opportunity to do so. We understand that it is the desire of the President, as well as the Working Committee, that full opportunities for explanation and justification be afforded to Communist members of the Congress. We entirely concur in this opinion. As a matter of fact, as we have mentioned above, there has already been a great deal of inquiry and explanation, and, at the instance of Shri P.C. Joshi, Secretary of the Communist Party of India, Shri Bhulabhai Desai has given his opinion.

In the event of the explanations given not being satisfactory, the question will arise as to what further steps should be taken. This is premature at this stage. But we should like to make it clear that the issue before us at present, is not to shut the door of the Congress completely to the Communists but to consider how far it is desirable to allow persons who are opposed to the basic Congress policies to be elected or

to remain on Congress executive bodies which are charged with carrying out those policies.

Jawaharlal Nehru
Vallabhbhai Patel
Govind Ballabh Pant

7. Communists being Treated Leniently[1]

The cause of communism and the name of Russia have suffered most in the hands of the Communist Party of India.

When the World War started, the Congress agreed to join hands with the anti-fascist forces, provided freedom for the country was assurred. This demand was not a bargain because, as the situation stood then, neither the Congress nor its leaders could have organised the national forces against fascism without the assurance of national independence. The Communist Party was the one party that tried to do what the Congress could not do, namely, organise the national forces without the assurance of independence, and it failed.

I am not against communism or Russia. I have myself popularised socialist and communist views in the past. But the role of the Communist Party of India has made nationalist India its opponent. Opposition to the Indian Communists is not merely political. The whole nation is angry with them.

When lakhs of Indians staked everything for the country's cause, the Communists were in the opposite camp. This cannot be forgotten. The common man associates the Communist Party with Russia and communism. But the policy and deeds of the Communist Party of India have prejudiced the people both against Russia and communism. We do not want to spoil our relations with Russia, as we are looking forward to a closer association with it when India becomes free.

From its inception till 1935, the C.P.I. had been doing propaganda against the Congress from underground. In 1936, the party changed its policy to one of united front with the Congress. It worked within the Congress for three years. When the Congress offered individual civil disobedience, the Communists criticised the Congress for not taking a

1. Speech at Beawar, 23 October 1945. *From The Hindustan Times, 27 October 1945.*

stronger course of action against the British power. But when Russia joined the war against Germany, the imperialist war became a people's war, and the Congress became an object of attack. The Congress organisation began to be disturbed from within. The Communists defied the Congress policy. But the Congress is even now following the least offensive policy towards the Communists. After receiving the charges, we have asked explanations only from members holding executive posts.

No other political organisation would deal so leniently with its opponents as the Congress. For the Congress national independence is the prime objective while the Communists give greater importance to other issues.

The last three years have been a clear indication as to where a particular person or organisation stands in relation to the struggle for independence. It is no use fighting a battle of words when the issues have been clearly decided in action. The Communist Party is itself responsible for its present position. No one should be misguided by the names of Russia and communism.

8. The Betrayal[1]

The question of the betterment of your lot is linked up with the struggle for freedom. The growth of the trade union movement in England shows that the workers there had to undergo several hardships in order to win the right of forming their unions. The one lesson that the growth of trade unionism during the last 100 years revealed to us is that our strength lies in our unity.

I also want you to know that the right to strike is your last and the most potent weapon, but this weapon is not to be dangled always. In order to make effective use of it, strikes should not be resorted to for small causes. They should only be resorted to when all peaceful methods to arrive at a settlement have failed.

I strongly disapprove of the attitude of the mill-owners towards their workers in general and in particular of those who victimised their men for participation in the August movement. I admire the part played by the workers during the 1942 movement.

1. Address to millworkers, Delhi, 2 November 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 3 November and *The Tribune*, 4 November 1945.

I advise you to join the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh.[2] I compliment Mr. Gulzari Lal Nanda, the moving spirit behind the Sangh, who has built up a strong labour movement in Ahmedabad.

I warn the workers against Communist machinations. I rather think that they will try to engineer strikes in the mills after the formation of Congress ministries in the provinces, in order to regain their lost prestige.

The part played by the Communists in breaking[3] strikes in August 1942 has led me to doubt if the Communist Party of India really wants communism or if the Indian Communists are sincere about communism itself. It seems to me that they are moving into oblivion. When the whole country was in revolt against British imperialism, the Communists cut themselves away from the main current of national life. They were playing with fire by arraying against the voice of the people. It was a dangerous thing for them to call the war a people's war, when the Indian people to a man knew that it was an imperialist war.

I have a lot of sympathy with communism and socialism, although I shall not countenance the slavish imitation of any country. I am positively of the opinion that the Indian Communists have given up all their fundamental principles and do not take into account objective conditions in framing their policies. In raising the slogan of the people's war, they have merely deceived themselves.

There has never been any love lost between Indian Communists and the British Government. As the Communists supported the alien government in August 1942, when the country had risen against it, a temporary alliance has come about between them.

The Communists, therefore, cannot take shelter behind technicalities, when their betrayal is sought to be condemned. I was not altogether without hope, when I was released about three or four months ago, that the Communist Party would retrace the wrong step they had taken and join hands with the forces of progress. They have, however, gone still further in the wrong direction and adopted a wrong policy on the communal question which is fundamentally opposed to the Congress policy. When the Communists have fundamental differences with the Congress, how can we allow them to hold elective offices in the Congress? We have not prohibited their enrolment as primary members of the Congress.

2 The Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh was set up by the labour sub committee of the Gandhi Seva Sangh in 1937 to organise workers on Gandhian principles.

3. In a resolution dated 23 May 1943, the Communist Party of India called upon the Communists to "take a bold and open stand against strikes as they injure the defence of the country by holding up production."

Is there any organisation in the world that has treated its open rebels like this? I am absolutely convinced that the Indian Communists are doing a positive disservice to the cause of communism and socialism and are bringing a bad name to Russia. A question naturally arises: Are the Indian Communists, Communists at all?

What followed the arrest of the leaders in August 1942 was a spontaneous revolt. Human floods and earthquakes that moved the country in 1942 have proved that all the people in India, from one end to the other, could no longer tolerate British rule. The people demonstrated that they could not be cowed down. We shall not submit to the British either today or tomorrow. What happened in August 1942 is the real index of the people's strength. The Government's version is that 1,500 persons were killed as a result of police and military firings in different parts of the country, but my estimate of the killed is between ten and twenty thousand. I do not complain today why these people were killed or why one lakh of people were sent to jail.

The regular oppression of the people, particularly the realisation of punitive fines amounting to lakhs of rupees from the poor villagers, is a heart-rending story. The police and military excesses had reached the climax. I have toured certain districts which participated in the movement with full strength. I am glad that the people, who were thus oppressed, are able to stand erect today with their heads high although they might have been subdued temporarily. I am proud of the fact that the people of my province put an end to the British rule at some places, although the duration ranged from five to ten days, and the British army was used to reconquer the liberated areas. Our unarmed people are not to be blamed for their inability to stand against modern weapons. They could not fight the British army of reconquest with lathis.

We have plunged into the elections with the determination to fight with all our strength. I, or Mr. Asaf Ali, who is our candidate from Delhi, do not want to beg for votes. Mr. Asaf Ali stands for certain principles. If you feel you must support these principles, you should vote for him. I predict that in most of the provinces, if not in all, the Congress will come to power.

The rank and file in the Congress can bring pressure on the leaders to implement the slogan of Quit India. They will not be satisfied with forming ministries in the provinces. In a few months they will have to capture power at the Centre also.

There is no party or group in the country that has not supported the demand for the release of the I.N.A. men. Even the personnel of the

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There is no party or group in the country that has not supported the demand for the release of the I.N.A. men. Even the personnel of the

British Indian army have asked for withdrawal of the cases against them.[4] Yet the Government has flouted this unanimous demand of the people and it is holding the trial of the I.N.A. officers. The Indian members of the Viceroy's Executive Council are supporting the British Government's policy, despite the unanimous voice in the country on this question.

The Indian Civil Service is the most inefficient service in the world. Their glorification has been carried on to an absurd length. Their only qualification is their ability to put down the people by brute force. They are all good policemen. There are, of course, good individuals among them. I can only make a general indictment, not of every member of the service. They will have to change their outlook, if they want to serve a national government.

Thirty to forty lakhs of people died of starvation in Bengal when a government stated to be responsible was in power. The present Government has ruined the people, by misrule and maladministration. The whole Government, from top to bottom, is corrupt and irresponsible. If there had been such a Government in any other country, it would have been hounded and thrown out in a few hours.

We want a rule of the masses, the panchayat raj, in which all would be treated alike. The people would have enough to eat and clothe themselves. However imperfect might be our own government in the beginning, it would be hundred times better than the administration of any foreign government. The problems of poverty and national planning cannot be tackled unless there is a national government. A country cannot make any progress unless it is free. So it is our foremost duty to work for the independence of the country.

The parts of the country where the British set their foot first are the most impoverished. I make it clear that we are not fighting merely for replacing British officers by Indian officers, but we want to change the whole system of the government. The mere changing of hands at a mill does not change the process of grinding.

I also want to drive home the fact that we shall not let one religious group dominate the other. Every group will have perfect freedom to develop its life in accordance with its particular religion and culture. We might make mistakes, but the very conception of freedom presupposes the possibility of mistakes.

4. The Royal Indian Air Force stationed in Calcutta opposed the court martial of the I.N.A. officers During the I.N.A. trials it sent its subscription to the I.N.A. defence fund raised by the Bengal Provincial Congress with the words: "for the defence of the brave and patriotic sons of India."

I am for nationalisation of not only heavy industries but also of the land. However, there should be independence before we can have state-owned industries. Under the present government we cannot think of nationalisation of industries, for it will strengthen the foreign domination.

I am overwhelmed with grief over the death of Shrimati Satyavati.[5] She was a fearless worker and one of the bravest servants of the country. I recall how when I saw her in the T.B. Hospital a few days before her death I found her reduced to a skeleton. I give my whole-hearted support to a proposal to raise a memorial to commemorate the memory of Shrimati Satyavati. This memorial, in my opinion, should take the form of a welfare project for women workers and kisans. I support the appeal for a fund of one lakh of rupees for this purpose.

5. (1907-1945); Congress Socialist leader of Delhi; had been jailed 11 times during the freedom struggle. Arrested in 1942, she was released in 1945 on medical grounds but prohibited from entering Delhi. She defied the order and was arrested. She was released only when her health further deteriorated. From prison she went to hospital where she died. When Jawaharlal called on her during her last days she was reported to have said: "My only wish is for India's freedom."

9. To Gerald Peel[1]

Allahabad
December 3, 1945

Dear Mr. Peel,[2]

I have your letter[3] of November 8th. I am desperately busy but I want to send you at least a brief reply.

It is difficult for me to discuss briefly the big issues that you have mentioned. You know I have been very friendly to communism and to the Communists in India and elsewhere. I feel that the Communist Party of India has taken a wrong step and in justifying it they have been led to further wrong-doing. I had hoped that with the end of the War they would come nearer to the National Congress but, as it happens, they

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. A leader of the Australian Communist Party. He had met Jawaharlal in 1936 during the Faizpur Congress session.
3. In which he was concerned at Jawaharlal "having serious differences with the Indian Communists."

are much further away and definitely ranged against it. All agree that there should be some kind of unity between the Hindus, Muslims and others in India. I am convinced, however, that the Communist Party of India has hindered this unity by its complete support of the Muslim League which undoubtedly represents some of the most reactionary tendencies in India.

There is no doubt that the Communist Party of India has isolated itself completely from the main current of national life. For the Communist Party to do so should lead one to seek the cause for it. The Communist Party after all bases its diagnosis of the situation on objective factors; wherein did it go wrong in this evaluation?

You must remember that there has been no question of communism or Russia in this estrangement between the National Congress and the Communist Party. It is purely on domestic political issues. It is surely rather odd to say that on these domestic political issues not only the National Congress but nearly all others are wrong and only the Communist Party is right. My chief regret is that indirectly this attitude of the Communist Party in India has done some harm in India to the cause of communism as well as what the Soviet Union stands for; because the Communist Party is so intimately connected with both these. The Communist Party has fallen into a deep rut of its own making and finds it difficult to get out of it. It may be that I am wrong in some of my judgements. But the fact remains that the Communist Party in India is very unpopular today with large masses of people. That in itself should give them food for thought.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. Report on Communist Members' Reply[1]

A large number of complaints against the activities of the Communist Party and its individual members were received by the A.I.C.C. office from subordinate Congress committees and also from some prominent Congressmen. The Working Committee appointed a sub-committee to examine

1. This was given to the Congress Working Committee and printed in the *Congress Bulletin* No. 2, 24 January 1946.

the material and to take such action as might be necessary. We framed certain charges after carefully and dispassionately weighing the evidence.

The charge sheet was delivered to the Communist members of the A.I.C.C. on the 21st of September. They were asked to send their reply in writing within two weeks. They were also told that they could, if they so desired, see the members of the sub-committee and explain their position personally. On their request a copy of the report on which the charges were based was given to them on the 24th of September. A letter dated 28th September was subsequently received from Shri Sardesai[2] on their behalf asking for a week's extension to enable them to prepare a reply. Before the expiry of the period of three weeks, another communication was received from Shri Sardesai stating that it had not been possible for them to prepare the reply within even the extended period. He definitely promised to send the same by the end of October, but again failed to do so. Their reply[3] was despatched from Bombay about a month later on the 27th of November. It is a bulky volume meant primarily for propaganda. Hardly any attempt has been made in it to meet the specific charges nor is there a word of regret in it. The evidence on which the charges are based is not impugned. The authenticity of the document cited in the report is accepted. The signatories have throughout pleaded justification and attacked the fundamental policy of the Congress in unmistakable terms. Their explanation amounts to a tirade against the Congress. Its tone throughout is one of self-righteous arrogance. It leaves no doubt whatsoever about the validity of the charges framed against them. It is clear from their reply that they have been actively opposing and obstructing the policy and the programme of the Congress for a considerable time. They are still acting in a hostile manner so as to undermine and injure the prestige and position of the Congress organisation.

They have altogether forfeited the confidence of the Congress and are unworthy to occupy any responsible or elective place in the Congress. They seem to have already realised their position. Conscious of their guilt, their members have already resigned from all subordinate Congress

2. S.G. Sardesai (b. 1907); leading trade unionist of Bombay; member of the C.P.I. Central Committee for several years; participated in the agitation for the liberation of Goa.
3. A 200 page reply of the Communist members of the A.I.C.C. to charges made against them was delivered at the A.I.C.C. office on 3 December 1945. In this they made counter-charges and justified their line as in complete accord with India's national interests.

committees and also from the primary membership of the Congress. We recommend that Shri S.G. Sardesai, V.G. Bhagat, V.D. Chitale,[4] K.M. Ashraf, S. Sajjad Zaheer, Sohan Singh Josh, Karyanand Sharma,[5] R.D. Bharadwaj should be expelled from the A.I.C.C. and necessary directions should be sent to all provincial Congress committees so that they may take appropriate steps wherever necessary to remove members of the Communist Party from all elective offices.

Jawaharlal Nehru
Vallabhbhai Patel
Govind Ballabh Pant

Calcutta,
December 9, 1945.

4. (1906-1961); organised youth leagues and civil liberties unions in the Bombay province, 1928-34; participated in Salt and Forest satyagrahas, 1930-31; took part in the Goa liberation movement.
5. (b. 1900); a militant peasant leader of Bihar; jailed several times during the freedom struggle.

11. Violence in Public Activities[1]

I have read a statement in the press given by the President of the Mahila Atmaraksha Samity[2] of Calcutta. In this statement she refers to certain attacks made on some workers of the Samiti by some unknown persons who were wearing Gandhi caps and carrying Congress flags. The reason for their attacks is stated to be a feeling against Communists.

I have no other information about this, but I must say that this intrusion of violent methods in public activities is most painful and deplorable. It is even more objectionable to interfere with women workers in any way. The Samity is a non-party organisation, but even if it was not so, nobody had any business to interfere with its work.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 29 December 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 30 December 1945.
2. The Mahila Atmaraksha Samity was a non party organisation of women engaged in social service. On 15 December 1945, the workers of the Samity were alleged to have been assaulted by a group of men claiming to belong to the Congress.

The fact that there is a great deal of resentment in the public against Communist policy and method is no excuse whatever for any person to misbehave in this way. For those who claim to be Congressmen this is totally unbecoming and unworthy of their claim.

Communists or any other group opposed to us in policy or method should be allowed to function peacefully. On no account must any Congressman lower the standard of the Congress by indulging in such activities.

12. Attacks on Communists[1]

I have already expressed my strong condemnation of the recent attacks on the Communist headquarters in Bombay and the injuries caused to a number of persons there. I cannot believe that any Congressmen can be responsible for these attacks, but whoever they are, they have done an ill-service to our cause. No cause, least of all the cause we stand for, ultimately prospers by hooliganism. I should like to add that instances have been brought to my notice when hooliganism was indulged in by Communists and their sympathisers. As I have been travelling about a great deal I had not read about them at the time.

In Cawnpore, especially, there have been several attacks on Congress men and interference in Congress meetings by Communists. On one occasion, my colleague, Shri Ganga Sahai Chaubey, a respected Congressman of Cawnpore, was badly injured. This kind of thing, from whatever group it may proceed, is a disgrace to our public life and it is time that it was ended. In particular, all Congressmen must beware of it and must not retaliate in kind even if provoked.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 29 January 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 30 January 1946.

8

ECONOMIC AND CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS

1. Freedom and Equality[1]

The part India will play in the post-war settlement depends on the status of India in international affairs at the time. An independent India or an India on the verge of independence with full control over her foreign and international affairs will obviously play an important part.

Both in South East Asia and Western Asia, India will have an important role by virtue of her size, enormous resources, great potential capacity and strategic position. Her general outlook has been one in favour of independence of the Asian countries both in South East and Western Asia, as well as freedom for all oppressed people anywhere.

Further, India must stand for racial equality and the elimination of the causes that lead to war and conflict. Together with China, India has a long record of non-aggression, and in future both these countries will throw their weight on the side of world peace.

India seeks independence, both political and economic, but she realises fully that there is no such thing as isolated national independence today. In the world of today, nations have to depend on each other in most spheres of activities. Through India's independence is viewed the context of interdependence of nations and the rapid development of international order to ensure this interdependence as well as national freedom.

In the economic sphere, India is to rapidly industrialise, but I hope that this industrialisation will not be based on the exploitation of foreign markets to the detriment of other people. We would neither be exploited ourselves in this way nor exploit others but would rather base our economy and the economy of the world on the mutual good of all people and the raising of standards of living everywhere.

This will mean a great deal of national and world planning. Nevertheless, a great deal of individual initiative will also be left within limits, provided it does not result, in furtherance of equality, in some kind of inequality between nations and groups and individuals. But efforts should be made to minimise them so far as possible and for a balanced structure of society within our country and in the world.

Culturally, international cooperation will eventually tend towards common features being introduced all over the world. But it is desirable for India to develop her culture according to her natural genius. There

1. *Interview to All India Radio, Delhi, 9 July 1945. From The Hindustan Times,* 10 July 1945.

must be coordination between this national culture and the inevitable international culture whch is a product of modern life.

If the proposed interim Government comes off in the manner we envisage it, it can only be considered as a step towards our object. It can hardly be called a national government in the real sense of the word. At the most it is a door leading to the future national government. If properly constituted, it is to be welcomed as a step enabling India to reach her object of independence and at the same time in furthering the policies I have indicated. To some extent it may be able to do both in the national and international fields.

It is completely a wrong approach to them if the major problems of India must wait solution till the end of the war with Japan. Naturally war absorbs a lot of energy, but war itself requires an approach to those big problems. If these problems are left in a static condition till the end of the war, they will become more difficult to solve.

2. Need for Data on the Indian Economy[1]

Ever since we began the work of the Planning Committee we have been hampered by the lack of reliable data and statistics and other material relating to various subjects under consideration. To begin with, much of the required data is not in existence and such as existed is not made available to the public. These difficulties have grown during wartime when, for alleged reasons of security and economy, reports have not been published for a number of years. Even when such reports were published, it had been difficult to obtain copies. The material collected by various panels appointed by the Planning Department of the Government of India is wholly inaccessible.

It is obvious that no effective planning can take place without sufficient data. It is urgently necessary for the Government to publish or release all such reports and statistics as are with them and have not so far been published. Among these are the reports and statistics relating

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 17 September 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 18 September 1945.

to the trade and industry of the country such as the report of the American Grady Mission which came in 1942.[2] Whatever reasons there might have been for the suppression of this report during wartime, these reasons do not hold good now. The Government should release the report. To suppress reports made by independent experts would only lead to the conclusion that the reports contain matter which is not to the credit of the Government or that they may be recommendations for the industrial development of the country which the Government is anxious to suppress.

In any event this report of the Grady Mission must be published now as well as other reports and material in the possession of the Government. This is not merely necessary for the National Planning Committee, but in order to interest the public in the planning of the various schemes that are being put forward.[3] Only an intelligent public appreciation of these matters can lead to public cooperation.

2. At the invitation of the Viceroy, a U.S. Technical Mission, headed by Dr. Henry F. Grady, visited India and reported in August 1942 on India's war production. It dealt specifically with the expansion and rationalisation of industry, mass production methods, training of skilled labour and utilisation of resources. The report had not been published.
3. In August 1945, the Government of India announced that it would develop the basic industries in India, if private capital was not forthcoming. Some existing basic industries of national importance, such as aircraft, automobiles, tractors, chemicals, iron and steel products might be nationalised. The Government established a Department of Planning and Development.

3. National Planning[1]

The Chairman commenced proceedings by welcoming members after a break of five years, and referred to the immense changes that had taken place in the course of the war in this country as well as all over the world. These changes, he remarked, had their inevitable reaction upon the task of the Planning Committee. The moment he was free to attend to the work of the Planning Committee, he had thought fit to

1. Jawaharlal's minutes of the National Planning Committee meeting held at Bombay on 17 September 1945. National Planning Committee Papers, 1945, N.M.M.L.

convene an informal meeting. He had had some discussion on the subject on the 11th September with some members and Chairmen and Secretaries of Sub-Committees, who could be got together at a very short notice. There was a general consensus in favour of resuming the work of the Planning Committee. This informal meeting was called to consider whether the work should be resumed, and if so, the ways and means of most expeditiously dealing with the task of the Committee.

The Chairman invited all present to offer their views on the main question before the meeting.

4. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Allahabad
October 4, 1945

My dear Bapu,

I have received today, on return from Lucknow, your letter[2] of the 2nd October. I am glad you have written to me fully and I shall try to reply at some length but I hope you will forgive me if there is some delay in this, as I am at present tied up with close-fitting engagements. I am only here now for a day and a half. It is really better to have informal talks but just at present I do not know when to fit this in. I shall try.

Briefly put my view is that the question before us is not one of truth *versus* untruth or nonviolence *versus* violence.[3] One assumes as one must that true cooperation and peaceful methods must be aimed at and a society which encourages these must be our objective. The whole question is how to achieve this society and what its content should be. I do not understand why a village should necessarily embody truth and nonviolence. A village, normally speaking, is backward intellectually and culturally and no progress can be made from a backward environment. Narrow-minded people are much more likely to be untruthful and violent.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Following a discussion in September 1945 in the Congress Working Committee on social and economic objectives after independence, Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Jawaharlal that there appeared to be a fundamental difference between them and the public should be made aware of it. He was an old man and "I have, therefore, named you as my heir. I must, however, understand my heir and my heir should understand me. Then alone shall I be content."
3. Mahatma Gandhi had said that for him, "without truth and nonviolence there can be nothing but destruction for humanity. We can realise truth and nonviolence only in the simplicity of village life."

Then again we have to put down certain objectives like a sufficiency of food, clothing, housing, education, sanitation etc., which should be the minimum requirement for the country and for everyone. It is with these objectives in view that we must find out specifically how to attain them speedily. Again it seems to me inevitable that modern means of transport as well as many other modern developments must continue and be developed. There is no way out of it except to have them. If that is so inevitably a measure of heavy industry exists. How far will that fit in with a *purely village society? Personally I hope that heavy or light* industries should all be decentralised as far as possible and this is feasible now because of the development of electric power. If two types of economy exist in the country either there should be conflict between the two or one will overwhelm the other.

The question of independence and protection from foreign aggression, both political and economic, has also to be considered in this context. I do not think it is possible for India to be really independent unless she is a technically advanced country. I am not thinking for the moment in terms of just armies but rather of scientific growth. In the present context of the world we cannot even advance culturally without a strong *background of scientific research in every department. There is today* in the world a tremendous acquisitive tendency both in individuals and groups and nations, which leads to conflicts and wars. Our entire society is based on this more or less. That basis must go and be transformed into one of cooperation, not of isolation which is impossible. If this is admitted and is found feasible then attempts should be made to realise it not in terms of an economy which is cut off from the rest of the world but rather one which cooperates. From the economic or political point of view an isolated India may well be a kind of vacuum which increases the acquisitive tendencies of others and thus creates conflicts.

There is no question of palaces for millions of people.[4] But there *seems to be no reasons why millions should not have* comfortable up-to-date homes where they can lead a cultured existence. Many of the present overgrown cities have developed evils which are deplorable. Probably we have to discourage this overgrowth and at the same time encourage the village to approximate more *to the culture of the town.*

4. Mahatma Gandhi had written "...If India is to attain true freedom and through India the world also, then sooner or later the fact must be recognised that people will have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts, not in palaces. Crores of people will never be able to live at peace with each other in towns and palaces."

It is many years ago since I read *Hind Swaraj*[5] and I have only a vague picture in my mind. But even when I read it 20 or more years ago it seemed to me completely unreal. In your writings and speeches since then I have found much that seemed to me an advance on that old position and an appreciation of modern trends. I was therefore surprised when you told us that the old picture still remains intact in your mind.[6] As you know, the Congress has never considered that picture, much less adopted it. You yourself have never asked it to adopt it except for certain relatively minor aspects of it. How far it is desirable for the Congress to consider these fundamental questions, involving varying philosophies of life, it is for you to judge. I would imagine that a body like the Congress should not lose itself in arguments over such matters which can only produce great confusion in people's minds resulting in inability to act in the present. This may also result in creating barriers between the Congress and others in the country. Ultimately of course this and other questions will have to be decided by representatives of free India. I have a feeling that most of these questions are thought of and discussed in terms of long ago, ignoring the vast changes that have taken place all over the world during the last generation or more. It is 38 years since *Hind Swaraj* was written. The world has completely changed since then, possibly in a wrong direction. In any event any consideration of these questions must keep present facts, forces and the human material we have today in view, otherwise it will be divorced from reality. You are right in saying that the world, or a large part of it, appears to be bent on committing suicide.[7] That may be an inevitable development of an evil seed in civilisation that has grown. I think it is so. How to get rid of this evil, and yet how to keep the good in the present as in the past is our problem. Obviously there is good, too, in the present.

These are some random thoughts hurriedly written down and I fear they do injustice to the grave import of the questions raised. You will

5. *Hind Swaraj* was written in 1908 in answer to those Indians who preached violence as a remedy for their country's ills. Mahatma Gandhi sought to save India from 'modern civilization' by calling upon the people to a life of simplicity and renunciation.
6. Mahatma Gandhi had written; "I have said that I still stand by the system of Government envisaged in *Hind Swaraj*. These are not mere words. All the experience gained by me since 1908 when I wrote the booklet has confirmed the truth of my belief."
7. "I must not fear if the world today is going the wrong way and like the proverbial moth burns itself eventually in the flame round which it dances more and more fiercely."

forgive me, I hope, for this jumbled presentation. Later I shall try to write more clearly on the subject.[8]

About the Hindustani Prachar Sabha and about the Kasturba Fund, it is obvious that both of them have my sympathy and I think they are doing good work. But I am not quite sure about the manner of their working and I have a feeling that this is not always to my liking. I really do not know enough about them to be definite. But at present I have developed a distaste for adding to my burden of responsibilities when I feel that I cannot probably undertake them for lack of time. These next few months and more are likely to be fevered ones for me and others. It seems hardly desirable to me, therefore, to join any responsible committee for form's sake only.

About Sarat Bose, I am completely in the dark as to why he should grow so angry with me, unless it is some past grievance about my general attitude in regard to foreign relations. Whether I was right or wrong it does seem to me that Sarat has acted in a childish and an irresponsible manner. You will remember perhaps that Subhas did not favour in the old days the Congress attitude towards Spain, Czechoslovakia, Munich and China. Perhaps this is a reflection of that old divergence of views. I know of nothing else that has happened.

I see that you are going to Bengal early in November. Perhaps I may visit Calcutta for three or four days just then. If so, I hope to meet you.

You may have seen in the papers an invitation of the President of the newly formed Indonesian Republic to me and some others to visit Java. In view of the special circumstances of the case I decided immediately to accept this invitation subject of course to my getting the necessary facilities for going there. It is extremely doubtful if I shall get these facilities, and so probably I shall not go. Java is just two days by air from India, or even one day from Calcutta. The Vice-President of this Indonesian Republic, Mohammad Hatta, is a very old friend of mine. I suppose you know that the Javanese population is almost entirely Muslim.

I hope you are keeping well and have completely recovered from the attack of influenza.

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

8. After a further discussion in November 1945, Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Jawaharlal that there was not much difference in their outlook, because they were agreed upon the goal of bringing about "man's highest intellectual economic, political and moral development" and "an equal right and opportunity for all".

5. The Development of Scientific Research[1]

I am convinced that of all the big problems that face India today nothing is more important than the development of scientific research, both pure and applied, and scientific method. This is indeed the basis and foundation of all other work.

In the world of today, though many pay lip homage to science and use it for purposes both good and evil, there are few who adopt the scientific method in dealing with life's many problems. The extensive use of that method can only come through a properly directed education and a large number of research institutions which deal with pure science as well as the innumerable applications of it.

Probably there are few countries, claiming to be civilised, which are so lacking in the scientific method as well as research as India. We have to fill this lack rapidly and on an extensive scale, and at the same time efficiently. Any research institute which has done pioneering work in this direction is, therefore, deserving of support.

1. Message to the Royal Institute of Science in Bombay on the occasion of its silver jubilee, 21 November 1945. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 22 November 1945.

6. Arrangements for Transitional Period[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru: I am in favour of the reconstitution of the Central Government for the transitional period, while the permanent constitution was being framed. This should take place only after the results of all the elections, Central and provincial, are announced by the end of the year, as otherwise there would be confusion of issues and no satisfactory reconstitution would be possible.

On the procedure for the reconstitution of the Centre, I am apprehensive that the provincial representatives, if consulted, will only complicate the situation; but I have no objection to the Central legislature

1. On the Viceroy's instructions, B.N. Rau, who was at that time on special duty in the Governor-General's Secretariat, met Jawaharlal on 21 November 1945 to ascertain his views on the constitutional problem. This note on the discussion by Rau was printed in his *India's Constitution in the Making*.

being asked for a panel of names for a final choice by the Governor-General.

The original Cripps' plan of 1942 has visualised a membership for the constituent assembly of 200. I do not consider it adequate. On the other hand, I think that it might with advantage consist of 300 or even 400 members. The actual drafting will be done by a committee appointed by the constitution-making body, which will probably lay down certain general principles, leaving the details to the committee. Having laid down the general principles and appointed the drafting committee, the constitution-making body would disperse for the time being and meet again to discuss the draft after it has been prepared by the committee. I do not think that this would lead to any delay. The disadvantage of a small body would be that the same members must necessarily participate in the discussion of all matters; and if there should be a deadlock, no fresh light would be forthcoming. A large body necessarily means more ideas thrown into the common pool and extreme views are not likely to prevail.

B.N. Rau:[2] Will the binding character of the decisions of the constituent assembly not deter some of the provinces from joining in deliberations? For example, if you tell the Punjab and Sind that by coming into the constitution-making body, they would be bound by its decisions even when they themselves dissent from those decisions, are they not likely to stand out from the very beginning? If, on the other hand, you tell every province that it is free to come in, contribute to the discussion and accept or reject the resulting constitution as it thinks fit, is there not a greater chance of its coming into the constitution-making body and of accepting the constitution framed, either immediately or possibly at a later date? Of course, if this plan is adopted, the decisions of the constitution-making body must not be held to bind even the dissentient units; these must be given a chance of accepting or rejecting the constitution as they think fit. The Congress has accepted the position that no unit can be coerced into a constitution of which it does not itself approve.

J.N.:Yes; I think it would be better to give an option of adherence or accession to every unit, after the deliberations of the constitution-making

2. (1887-1953); member of the Indian Civil Service, judge, Calcutta High Court, 1935; chairman, Hindu Law Committee, 1941; Prime Minister, Jammu and Kashmir, 1945; Constitutional Adviser to the Constituent Assembly, 1946-49, India's representative and later leader of India's delegation to the U.N., 1949-52, judge, International Court of Justice at The Hague, 1952-53.

body are over. Undoubtedly, there can be no coercion in the matter. I recognise that the psychological effect of telling a province that even if it comes into the discussions, the door will still be open for it to go out, may be that it will elect to stay in.

Rau: From another point of view also, would it not be unreasonable to ask a province to join the constitution-making body and compel it to accept a constitution which has not yet been framed and is only to be framed by that body? The province may very well say that without knowing what safeguards for minorities the proposed constitution is to contain, it cannot be expected to take a leap in the dark.

J.N.: That is so. At the same time, I cannot help thinking that the question of safeguards has not hitherto been discussed in the context of existing conditions. For example, take the question of recruitment to the services; it is quite possible that under a national government there will be such an expansion of governmental activities in planning, industrial development, etc., that there will be room in the services for everybody with certain minimum qualifications and the question of communal ratios will not arise at all. Everybody capable of making a contribution will have a job. Similarly, in the defence forces our plan may be to have a standing force of small dimensions, but extremely efficient and well-equipped, with a large reserve consisting of all able-bodied citizens, with perhaps compulsory military training for a certain period. On this plan, again, all communal questions would recede into the background. I should also like the new constitution to lay the greatest emphasis on State activities such as planning industrial development, relief of unemployment, nationalisation of key industries, etc., which will cut across communal divisions. Another safeguard that I have in mind would be to give the Upper House of the Central legislature specific functions for the protection of minorities, the Upper House being constituted on a province-basis or otherwise, so as to produce a balance of the various interests concerned.

Rau: Even assuming that some or all of these safeguards are to be put into the constitution, don't you think that a province might very well say: 'Let us see exactly what safeguards go into the constitution before you ask us to accept it'?

J.N.: I agree that it should have the option of accepting or rejecting the constitution after it has been made.

Rau: Should the proceedings of the constituent assembly be public or private? In Canada the Constitutional Convention sits behind closed doors; in Australia, the sittings are public, in South

Africa they meet in secret, following the Canadian rather than the Australian precedent. The results are that the Canadian Convention takes 18 days to arrive at a draft of the constitution and South Africa takes about three months, while Australia takes nearly a year. The great advantage of private sittings is that there will be no playing to the gallery and members can, therefore, without any embarrassment, abandon a position as soon as discussion shows it to be untenable, whereas if the proceedings are public, there are likely to be long speeches, with the press joining in on one side or the other with the result that members will find it difficult to retreat from extreme positions, and agreed solutions will be retarded, if not prevented.

J.N.: Tentatively I favour the proceeding being in secret, at any rate initially.

Rau: What shall be the proportion of representation of the Indian States in the constituent assembly?

J.N.: In the course of my discussions on this subject, the suggestion was made to me that the States' representatives might be on a fifty-fifty basis, that is to say, half the number to be elected by the elected members of the State legislatures and the other half nominated by the Ruler.

Rau: If the Swiss idea of half-cantons was adopted a possible solution for the problem of partition of the country raised by Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League could be formed. Would it be possible to have half-provinces in what is now the Punjab or Bengal, with a certain degree of autonomy in cultural and other matters for each half?

J.N.: I am attracted by the suggestion as it will go a great way towards safeguarding territorial minorities.

7. Interview with R. G. Casey[1]

Pandit Nehru came in to see me late this evening, on return from an electioneering tour in Bengal and Assam. He was quieter and less belligerent than when he saw me before with Azad and Patel.

1. Lord Casey's Diary, entry for 21 December 1945. India Office Library and Records, London.

I asked him the straight question — "What is it that you think we should do?" He did not (of course) give any direct answer — but it started him talking about the problem — and he gradually loosened up.

He repeated again what he had said before when we met — that the constituent assembly must have powers to implement its decisions and not merely be an advisory body. I said that I was beginning to wonder what would be achieved by holding a constituent assembly if the Muslim League was not going to play. I said that it was beginning to look to me as if we would have to impose a temporary constitution on India — and let them amend it later to suit themselves. I used the words "a loose federation", with which he agreed. I said that possibly the present constitution suitably amended and with substantial safeguards for the Muslims might well do. He said that he would be in favour of making it possible for certain areas to contract out of the constitution after, say, 10 years.

However, he kept on reverting to the constituent assembly idea and said that if it could not agree on the terms on which a Muslim majority area could contract out (i.e. the terms of the plebiscite etc.), then the Muslims might have the right to determine this. I said that I thought that we could not avoid the unwelcome responsibility of imposing the terms in this regard.

I said — and he agreed — that I believed that Jinnah would not want the sort of Pakistan that would arise out of a fair plebiscite. The Muslim League did not want a "sylvan retreat". They would not want only two-thirds of Bengal and a third of Assam. He added that the truncated Punjab that would emerge from a plebiscite would be no good to Jinnah.

He spoke a good deal about the necessity for the constituent assembly to be elected on adult franchise and for the voting to be on a different basis (practically, as he admitted, the Soviet system of each village electing someone to the next higher body — and then these next higher bodies electing people to the next higher — and so on — so as to give the people at least the feeling that they had a real hand in affairs — and not the remote business of a wide range of people directly electing one man).

He also said that they would have to get away from communal constituencies — although he admitted that constituencies should be arranged so that a predominantly Muslim or Hindu area should have a proper opportunity of electing its own people.

I said that such fundamental changes as he envisaged would take a long time — and a tremendous lot of argument. I said I did not believe that the big changes that he envisaged would have any appreciable effect on the final representation — and he rather grudgingly admitted this.

At one stage, he suggested that the whole problem of India should be submitted to international arbitration.

8. The Common Man of India[1]

I thank you for your small gift. You cannot take very much credit for your gift as you are only discharging a part of the debt which you owe to the nation. It is, however, no small consolation inasmuch as people do not easily repay their debts.

It is good to hear from you, the residents of India's capital, talk about the common man of India. We have neglected him for a long time. You, who have assembled here, do not represent a true picture of India. The people in Britain are faced with difficult problems. It is becoming increasingly difficult for them to maintain the pre-war standard of living. The reason is that their standard of living is dependent on the economic exploitation of other countries. It is no longer possible to continue such exploitation. I do not wish ill of any country, but I am not prepared to tolerate that India should be exploited by any other country for maintaining the standard of living of its people. The world is passing through a critical period. We in India have to ensure equal opportunities for all and remove the obstacles that prevent our people from going ahead. In doing so, we cannot allow any class or group to thwart the national economy.

A lot of tall talk is going on about economic planning. So far as our country is concerned the most fundamental problem is that of raising the standard of living of the peasantry and on that depends the prosperity and economic wellbeing of our country. The whole economic edifice will topple down if a sense of security is not assured to them. Then there is also the question of industrial progress of the country which raises many important issues. The industrial progress cannot be achieved without an all-round improvement in communication, transport, and public health standards. We have to fill the whole picture and avoid pitfalls. The time when we can think of gradual progress has passed

1. Address to a meeting of merchants in Delhi, 24 January 1946. *From The Hindustan Times*, 25 January 1946.

and we have to run fast and even take the risk of falling over. Events will not wait for us.

I think that we are in a revolutionary age. A revolution in my view does not mean anarchy or disorder. We cannot bring about a revolution through terrorism. It is childish to think that any big changes can be brought about by terrorism. The atom bomb has completely revolutionised the whole outlook on life all over the world. The world has now to choose between total destruction or some new method of solving human problems. The atomic energy can be used for good or for evil.

I am confident that India will attain freedom soon. I am all the time visualising a picture of free India and thinking how we will construct it. I think that free India will not be the work of a handful of people, but will be built by the 400 million people of India. Each one of us must play his or her part in building it.

9

MISCELLANEOUS

PERSONAL

1. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Allahabad
June 26, 1945

Bebee dear,
This is the first letter I have written, or rather am writing, since my release from jail at Almora eleven days ago. I have been constantly on the move—Khali, Almora, Ranikhet, Naini Tal, Lucknow—a night in Allahabad and then Bombay. I returned home late last night and have been looking round since then trying to pick up old threads and fit in to the old-new scheme of things. It is surprising how quickly one falls into line and resumes the old routine—not quite of course for something is always lacking or some new addition makes a difference. The environment is much the same—the changes and differences are within. I have not quite got over a feeling of strangeness which is not surprising as I have been back only some hours.

Indu met me here on my arrival from Almora. That was a pleasant surprise for I did not expect her to make the journey from Kashmir so quickly. She went with me to Bombay and we returned together. She is of course eager to be back to her babe in Kashmir. I want to go with her for two weeks if I can manage it. For the moment I am at a loose end not knowing how things will fashion themselves. Perhaps the next three or four days will indicate future possibilities. Betty and children are arriving here tomorrow night.

During all these three years I have had little news of you—just sometimes a line or two in Indu's letters or Nan's. You are keeping well I hope. I had hoped that perhaps I might see you in Bombay but of course you could not come when Papi was so ill.

It is an odd world—it changes and yet it does not change—or rather while it changes and we change, we still imagine it (and ourselves) to be what it was and we were. How difficult it is for us to adjust ourselves to a changing environment. For the moment I am living in the excitement of my coming back and meeting old friends again. When this wears off, I shall have to find my own level—always a difficult process.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

When will I meet you, I wonder! I hope it will be fairly—I have not quite recovered yet my sense of time. Time in prison is very different from normal times.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

2. To Indira Gandhi[1]

Running train
30-6-45

Indu darling,

I was sorry to leave you in bed and my thoughts are with you. Take care of yourself and you will be well in three or four days. Don't be in too much of a hurry to move about. This will only delay recovery.

I hope to go with you to Kashmir but I do not know how things will shape. Anyway I shall join you there. I shall keep you informed of my programme. Perhaps I might have to stay in Simla two weeks. If so you need not wait for me, provided you are well enough to travel. There is also the possibility of your joining me in Simla to recuperate for a few days before you undertake a longer journey.

The last 11 days with you have been lovely though I am afraid I have spent most of my time away from you. I wish I had not to go away so soon. But I hope to be with you soon.

Love,

Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

3. To Krishna Hutheesing[1]

Running train
30.6.45

Darling Betty,

Harsha and Ajit are delightful children and they are shaping very well indeed. I was happy to see them. And the story you told me about

1. *Nehru's Letters to His Sister* (Faber and Faber, London, 1963).

them is very revealing and creditable. I wish I could have seen more of them. But even this brief glimpse has been heartening.

I suppose I shall see you and Raja in any event—either in Delhi or Simla. I shall keep you informed of developments and my future programme. I fear I shall have to stay there [Simla] for a fortnight.

Love to you and Raja and the children.

Your loving brother,
Jawahar

4. To Indira Gandhi[1]

Simla
1.7.45

Darling Indu,

Feroze's telegram about you reached me this afternoon. I am glad you are improving but I am afraid your recovery will take a few days. This must put you out but such untoward happenings have to be accepted and put up with. I am anxious that you should not start on a long journey before the doctor agrees to it.

I am afraid I shall have to stay here for a fortnight or so. I see no escape from it. Maulana wanted me to stay with him so here I am. That was as well as Amrit Kaur is almost crowded out of her little house. This house (Armesdell) is government property and used to be occupied by a member of the Viceroy's staff. It is well-appointed and I suppose we are in a sense the Viceroy's guests. Red-liveried *chaprasis* are in evidence, and both the soap and the notepaper are embossed 'Viceregal Lodge'! I find it quite impossible to use this Viceregal notepaper though I have succumbed to the soap. Rather odd this atmosphere for me. I do not feel too happy about it. The Viceregal chef, or at any rate the person who functions here, is not too good.

Maulana, Pantji and I are here with our respective secretaries, but some other people also feed here. I have a double room with 2 bathrooms and a dressing room. So if you happened to come here for a couple of days, you could be easily accommodated.

The journey from Allahabad to Simla was a sore trial. I had hardly any rest during the day or the night and the vast crowds at some of the

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

stations exhausted me. My voice is very hoarse. I can't make out why I attract these crowds. Very gratifying no doubt but also very trying and often irritating. Here in Simla I have had to go out to the balcony and verandah frequently to give *darshan*. I doubt if I shall ever be able to go out for a walk because of crowds following, except at dead of night.

Tell Betty that though Simla is overfull and people are complaining of being pushed out of their houses or rooms, still I am assured that something can always be fixed up for her and Raja. What this might be is not clear for suggestions vary. Anyway she and Raja can always put up with their friends in east Simla though that is very far — I am investigating further.

I am dead tired and so I am going to sleep now. The bed is soft and comfortable.

Love,

Papu

5. To Indira Gandhi[1]

Simla
4.7.45

Darling Indu,

I hope you have recovered sufficiently and are not taking any risks about travelling. I suggested to you to come up here for a couple of days but then I thought this would mean additional fatigue. It was hardly worthwhile though I would love to see you. Therefore do as you please about it. Keep me informed of your movements. I am wholly uncertain about my programme. It looks as if I shall have to stay here till the 17th or thereabouts.

I wired to you to send me with Raja and Betty a new copy of Ranjit's translation of the *Rajatarangini*. I wonder if you found it. If not in Allahabad, it is just possible that you may find it at a bookseller's in Delhi.

I am writing this in some haste. My thoughts are with you. I hope you will be quite fit soon and will find Rajiva thriving.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, NMML.

I shall make every effort to go to Kashmir and I think I shall succeed some time or other. It has become almost an obsession with me!

Love,

Papu

6. To Indira Gandhi[1]

Simla
5-7-45

Darling Indu,

You must be in Delhi today if your old programme holds. I am glad you decided to rest there for a day or two *en route* to Kashmir.

Your letter of the 2nd reached me yesterday. No, I don't worry about you. I think you can look after yourself and also that your health is generally sound enough. Of course some care has to be taken.

I suppose you will move away from Srinagar immediately to a cooler place. Somebody the other day offered his Gulmarg hut to me and I was thinking of informing you of it. But I have completely forgotten now who he was.

I have received a telegram from Yunus from Gulmarg saying that he wants to see me and proposing to come here if my stay here is prolonged. I have wired to him in reply that my stay here is of uncertain duration and it would be better for us to meet later in Kashmir. It is not worthwhile for him to come all the way here. I am kept pretty busy here from morning till late at night—committee meetings, delegations from innumerable groups, meeting people from all over India after three years or more &c. As I wrote to you, it is likely that I shall have to stay here till the 16th or so. As soon as I am free here, I shall go straight to Kashmir—so I intend—At first I shall go inevitably to Srinagar and then to whatever place you and Rajiva may be in.

Bijju Bhabhi has written to me inviting me to stay with her and suggesting that I shall have a quiet time there. Well, of course I shall stay with her in Srinagar but I was under the impression that her house with its crowds of guests and visitors was hardly a quiet retreat. Anyway I do not intend to remain in Srinagar more than a day or two to

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

begin with. I should like to get away to a quieter place as soon as possible. Later, on the eve of my return, I might spend another 2 or 3 days in Srinagar. I should like to have no public or semi-public engagements to begin with. These should be reserved for the end of my visit and should only be fixed up after consultation with me. Please tell Sheikh Sahab of this and also that I am looking forward to meeting him. After I meet him and have a talk, we shall fix up things.

The Gurez Valley trip attracts me greatly. If you can fix it up it would be a good thing. But I am not going anywhere without you. I have no idea how long I shall be staying in Kashmir. Or put it at a fortnight. If I can pull it out to 3 weeks I shall be happy, but the difficulties in my way are obvious.

I do not know Betty's and Raja's programme and how long they will stay in Kashmir. It would be good if they came. I shall see to it in any event that I have as much of you as possible.

I wish I had left more money for you. These long journeys must cost a lot. I am now enclosing a cheque for 400/- in your favour. You can cash it through Braj Kumar in Delhi or in Srinagar.

In spite of the rush and hustle here I am feeling a little better. The improvement would be more marked if I did not keep very late nights. That is really my fault. Finding no time to meet old friends in the day time I ask them at night and then talk on.

I hope Hari is going with you with my extra clothes.

Love,

Papu

7. To Indira Gandhi[1]

Simla
July 7, 1945

Darling Indu,

I suppose you are somewhere on the way to Kashmir — probably round about Pindi. I hope you have not been silly enough to send Hari here. Not only do I not require him here but he is likely to be rather a burden. Keep him with you till I come. And come I will in spite of the obstacles and impediments in the way. My repeated statements about going to Kashmir, often reported in the press, have convinced not only

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

me but others also that I shall ultimately go there. Everyone asks me when I am going. Even Lady Wavell put me this question when I went to have tea with her. But what is alarming is that people intend to follow me to Kashmir — all manner of odd people whom I hardly know. I am just coming back from dinner with Dr. Khan Sahib at the Cecil. There I met a young ruler of a small State who informed me that he had prepared a 15-year plan to socialize his State and eliminate himself, more or less! He wanted to consult me about it and as I was busy here he would come to Kashmir where he imagined that I would have plenty of time to devote to the affairs of his State.

I have received your letter from New Delhi. Unless the unforeseen occurs I should be free to leave Simla within ten days — say the 17th. Add a day or two more if you like to provide for contingencies — I intend going straight to Kashmir from here, without stopping anywhere en route. I might reach Srinagar on the 22nd or 23rd according to this. I cannot be sure of the date but I just do not see how it can go beyond the 25th at the latest. This has nothing to do with the outcome of the conference here. In either or any event I shall try to get away for two or three weeks. More time I cannot find for I shall have to come back for the A.I.C.C. If I stay on for the A.I.C.C. then I shall get caught in a round of activities and all ideas of going to Kashmir will have to be given up. So I shall have to go direct from Simla. No date has so far been fixed for the A.I.C.C.

In Kashmir I am in your hands. I want to be with you all the time or nearly all the time. If it suits you, you can arrange an excursion into the Gurez Valley. I have heard so much about it that the desire to go there is strong. I understand it is a week's trip. I have a growing fear that wherever we may go, many people will want to accompany us. How to deal with them is a problem. Sheikh Sahab, I suppose, will insist on making the arrangements and it is difficult to refuse him. He will do everything on a sumptuous scale and we shall move about in state with crowds of companions and camp-followers. In so far as this can be reduced, an attempt might be made to do so. But I fear it cannot be wholly avoided and we shall have to reconcile ourselves to it.

I am told that there has been a major governmental upset in Kashmir and many high officials have resigned. I do not know much about it but I imagine that Bijju Chacha will also be involved. I do not know how this might affect his plans. Anyway I do not want to come in the way of these plans.

I sent you a letter to New Delhi enclosing a cheque for Rs. 400. I hope you received it.

Ram Ratan Gupta of Cawnpore turned up today and presented me with a Parker '51' pen and a Parker pencil to match. It is embarrassing to receive these gifts but it is even more difficult to refuse them. I am writing this letter with this pen — my first use of it. It is not completely satisfactory being on the hard side. Still it is near enough to my style of writing to be of use.

I had a letter from Betty from Delhi. As usual she has warned me against the activities and machinations of various people. Well, it is always useful to be warned but it does amuse me to find how Betty takes me to be a simple kind of person who can be misled by any odd person. Betty also possesses the very feminine trait of believing everything she hears and then repeating it to others. The kind of life I have led, often restricted and isolated as it has been, has brought me in contact with all kinds of people and if I have not yet developed some capacity to measure them up, I never will. I have found it a good rule to look for the better side of every person — and there is always a better side — and to avoid being influenced by vague rumours. I have sometimes been mistaken but the mistake has not troubled me for long. But the other kind of mistake — to condemn a person on insufficient data — hurts for a long time. We Indians are a terribly censorious people, or perhaps most people everywhere are made that way.

Tonight, dining with Dr. Khan Sahib and others at the Cecil, I watched the dancing for a while. It was a kind of spectacle I had not seen for some years. I found it thoroughly depressing. There was hardly a single Englishman or Englishwoman who could be called distinguished looking or possessing good looks. Poor dresses, poor looks, poor dancing. Some Indians — men and girls danced. The girls in their saris were more graceful and a few were good looking. But their dancing was even more stilted and unnatural. I have seldom witnessed a more boring and less inspiring sight than this dancing at the Cecil. I suppose it gives some kind of psychological satisfaction to those who indulge in it, or at any rate the feeling that they are in the swim and behaving as society folks are supposed to behave. What a terribly dull life!

I am being constantly invited to meals by people I know and do not know. So far I have successfully avoided these invitations.

I am feeling sleepy now. It is 1.20 a.m. on the 8th and I have still to read the day's papers. I cannot find time for this in the course of the day.

Love,

Papu

8. To Indira Gandhi[1]

Simla
8-7-45

Darling Indu,
Your letter of the 6th from Delhi. You must now be in Srinagar. It surprises me that you should almost have decided in your mind that I was not going to Kashmir. Nothing that I have written or said was meant to give this impression. I usually stick to my programmes unless something in the nature of an act of God — as legal contracts say — intervenes. I certainly intend going to Kashmir and I shall be mightily surprised if I do not get there. Raja and Betty being used to changing their programme probably do not realise my constancy in this respect. So the question of your sending Hari back does not arise as I shall require him there.

As for my suitcase containing warm clothes it will have to be sent by messenger to Simla. Probably that will be most convenient. I hope it is ready packed otherwise it will be almost impossible to get the necessary things together. I am writing to Feroze accordingly.

I hope you have had no difficulty in fixing up arrangements at Pahalgam or elsewhere.

Love,

Your loving
Papu

Today being Sunday Naresh[2] came to see me — Upadhyaya fetched him. The younger brother could not come as he was under quarantine. There had been a case of measles in his home. I made Naresh ride with me to Manor Villa where Bapu is staying. This was his first ride on horseback. I like the boy.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Naresh Katju.

9. To Indira Gandhi[1]

Simla
13.7.45

Darling Indu,
The Simla business is drawing to a close and I should be free to depart within a few days. I cannot yet fix a date. It may be the 16th or 17th. Iftikhar has promised to make arrangements for me and he will probably fix up a car from Pindi to Srinagar. I shall go straight from here to Lahore, spend the day there and then proceed by the night train to Pindi. I ought to be with you by the 19th or latest 20th. I shall of course wire to you. My programme after arrival in Srinagar depends entirely on you. The length of my stay is uncertain. Bidhan Roy has examined me and insists on my spending a month there, or at least 3 weeks. I shall try to put in 3 weeks but I am not wholly the master of my time.

Love,

Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M L.

10. To Edward Thompson[1]

Gulmarg
12.8.45

My dear Edward,
Your air letter has reached me here in Kashmir. I have been spending much of my time during the last 3 weeks in trekking in the mountains, rather cut off from the world of newspapers, radio, post & telegraph offices. I felt I must get away somewhere where crowds and our usual problems did not pursue me. I feel much better for the change. Indira is with me.

I am happy to learn that you are much better and that you will probably be coming to India soon. Of course you must come to Allahabad and stay with us — if for no other reason than in your capacity as a P.E.N. delegate. I am one of the vice-presidents of the Indian P.E.N.!

1. Edward Thompson Papers, N.M.M.L.

WITH INDIRA GANDHI AND NAWABZADA FARID OF N.W.F.P.,
SRINAGAR, AUGUST 1945

WITH HIS GRANDSON, PAHALGAM, AUGUST 1945

Wavell told me that my letter[2] to you, which I sent through him, had been mislaid. He showed me what you had written to him. Suspecting that letters from prison often go astray I had kept a copy and, fortunately, I have just found it in my papers. I am having it typed and this will be sent to you by air mail separately. The letter, as you will notice, exhibits the mood which one usually develops in prison. It takes one some time after release to adjust oneself to the new life. I have been trying to do so.

I am writing this in somewhat of a hurry (I am going down from Gulmarg soon) as I want to catch you before you leave England. If there is delay in your leaving I shall write more fully. I expect to leave Kashmir on the 21st and, after brief halts on the way, to reach Allahabad about the end of the month.

Get well soon.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 13, pp. 572-3.

11. To Indira Gandhi[1]

Nathiagalli
22.8.45

Darling Indu,

After an uneventful journey down the Jhelum Valley I reached Murree soon after 5 p.m. yesterday. The usual crowds and the usual Punjab indiscipline — a kind of public sea where people were jammed in and large numbers of others tried to get in. Then a public meeting with a heavy mist surrounding us. Dinner at Mehr Chands[2] — a buffet affair — with about 50 or 80 guests. And then coffee at the Cecil Hotel, where I was staying, with Chaman Lal and Helen and some others including 2 Polish officers and an R.A.F. man — also a young woman who apparently sings for the troops and sings rather well. She came and offered to sing for me. And so to bed, after reading the papers, at 2 a.m.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Mehr Chand Khanna (1897-1970); Finance Minister, N.W.F.P., 1946-47; migrated to India after partition; adviser, Ministry of Rehabilitation, 1948-54, Minister of Rehabilitation, 1954-62; Minister for Works, Housing and Rehabilitation, 1962-64.

This morning some other engagements. We—Badshah Khan, Khan Sahib and I and others—started at 11.30 by car. The road is supposed to pass through very beautiful scenery but a heavy fog, of the thick London variety, prevented our seeing anything. We passed various *gallis* and some dak bungalows beautifully situated—Reached Nathiagalli at 2 p.m. met Dr. Khan's family & Wali[3] & Tajo—Lalli is not here.

We leave on the 24th morning for Abbottabad—Taxila—Pindi.

I spoke to Badshah Khan about the young man who called himself Mahesh Babu and who saw us in Srinagar day before yesterday. You will remember I asked you to introduce him to Yunus. Badshah Khan said that he would like to help and to see what he can do in regard to various cottage industries. Of course, I told him that I could not say anything about his work from personal experience. He was however prepared to try him for a while on the understanding that if he did not prove useful or otherwise did not fit in, he would have to go.

So will you give this information to Yunus as well as to Mahesh. If Mahesh wants to come to the Frontier to work here experimentally he can do so. Yunus can then give him directions as to where to go to get in touch with Badshah Khan. Also a note for Badshah Khan.

I propose to be in Lahore on the 25th to 27th, in Delhi on the 28th and 29th. In Delhi I shall stay with Ratan & Rajan. I ought to reach Allahabad on the 30th or at the latest on 31st.

Love to Rajiva,

Your loving
Papu

3. Abdul Wali, second son of Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

12. To Indira Gandhi[1]

Lahore
Aug. 25/26, 1945

Darling Indu,

I have just returned from an odd and exciting experience and I am a little tired. Yet because of the excitement I have gone through I am wide awake and am therefore writing to you.

The frontier visit was pleasant in spite of certain rather depressing factors. It was good to meet old friends. As one grows older oneself

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

one appreciates all the more the friends of one's youth. The depressing factor was really nothing new. It was the realization once again how immature human beings are and how they fall out on the most trivial of matters. Temperament is usually more powerful than logic. Yet my visit I think did good all round. Whether temporary or fairly permanent I do not know.

From Nathiagalli we went to Abbottabad, Havehan and Haripur. And then to Taxila. Badshah Khan and Dr. Khan and several others accompanied us. Near Taxila, at Wah there is an old Moghul garden with a spring and a small pool of wonderfully clear water. I had intended having a dip there but as no one else was prepared for this, I had to refrain also. We fed there, our host being Sikandar Hyat's brother who owns the place. Chaman Lal, Helen and some others joined us there. Then we visited Taxila and I spent over two hours there and yet did not see some of the excavations.

And so to Pindi where a vast meeting of about 100000 was waiting for us. The night journey to Lahore was a troubled one but not so bad as it might have been. On arrival at Lahore the first news I heard was of Iftikhar's resignation and the statement he had issued.[2] This was not unexpected and yet the time and the manner of doing it hurt me and rather upset me. As happens with me, my face developed a tired look and a sense of weariness stole over me. However the day's programme kept me busy. I paid a short visit to Chand's flat and found that Nani had been, and was still, rather ill. She is suffering from anaemia, which in her case is a bad sign. I am going there again tomorrow.

Tonight there was a public meeting—and what a meeting! Among my vast experience of large crowds, I do not think I have ever seen anything like it. I imagine there were 200000 people there, and there might well have been 250000. The loudspeakers of course broke down and even the platform partly collapsed. Fear invaded the people round about the platform on it and this is an infectious affair. I stood on a table on the collapsing platform and surveyed the seething mass of humanity. Many people urged me to go but I refused to budge and said that I would not leave the crowd and would make a speech even if I had to stay all night. Men & women & children fainted and I was told that two children had died (this is probably not true). But I was in

2. On 24 August 1945, Iftikharuddin resigned from the presidentship of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee because his concern for Congress-League unity was not shared by his party colleagues. In his statement he said: "I resign from the presidentship with the belief that I shall be able to serve as an ordinary worker more effectively than as an office-holder."

a savage mood and said I did not care what happened; I would stick on. Piteous appeals were made to me to go but I was harsh in my replies and was especially hard on poor Ifty. Something of my morning's irritation, I think, induced me to behave in this manner. Yet I was perfectly cool and laughing at the fear and discomfiture of others. How hard and cruel I was! I was myself surprised at this savage aspect which revealed itself unawares. Ultimately I jumped into the crowd and was pushed and tossed about by it. I carried a large part of the crowd away and delivered several short speeches at various places in the midst of the crowd. I saw that the women — there were many of them — went away. Then I returned to the platform — again went down and returned. These excursions led to a thinning of the crowd and at last only about 50000 remained. Then I addressed these people from the platform (without a loudspeaker). I spoke for a good while and have grown rather hoarse.

Having a sense of the crowd and being popular with it, I had no great difficulty in dealing with it, though it was a terribly tiring business. Anyway my staying on and speaking at the end at some length (and briefly at various places) pleased the crowd and lessened its irritation. How easily such a crowd can become a savage & aggressive mob! But, being expert at the job, I managed to add to my popularity with it.

And so we finished after midnight and we returned with thousands of frenzied people escorting us.

The experience and excitement of all this worked away my irritation and I feel better.

And now I must go to bed.

Your loving
Papu

A lady in Nathiagalli gave me a rather pretty gold bangle on *Raksha bandhan* day.

13. To Richard Walsh[1]

3/9/45

Dear Mr. Walsh,

Thank you for your cable and letter of July 3rd. This letter has only just reached me. I have been wanting to write to you ever since my

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

release from prison. But all manner of work and engagements have overwhelmed me till I sought refuge in a retreat to the mountains in Kashmir. That did one good but, meanwhile, work accumulated and I am rather frightened at the prospect of dealing with vast numbers of letters.

First of all I must tell you that there is no immediate prospect of my going to America or anywhere abroad. There is far too much work to be done here and I simply cannot run away from it. Of course if any special occasion demanded it, I would make an attempt to go. In the present, however, I see no urgent need for it. I am in no mood to go just to tour about and speak at public or semi-public meetings. The great inducement could of course be to meet old friends. I want very much to go to the U.S. but I have to balance this with the pull of work in India. We are passing through fairly critical times and I would hate to leave the main scene of activity.

Even if later I go to the U.S. I would rather not have a previously arranged fixed programme. I would not like to be tied up. And in no event would I agree to be handed over to a lecture bureau to be displayed in various parts of the country. Having been in prison for long periods I have developed a distaste for anything that binds and constrains me.

About my new book—yes I have written one in prison. I call it *The Discovery of India*, an odd and perhaps misleading name, and yet, I think, an attractive one. What I mean by it of course is the discovery of India by me—my quest for India and what I found. It is an ambitious theme and I fear that I have failed to do justice to it. The book is only in a small part autobiographical; for the rest it is a survey of India's past and present.

I wrote it all out in longhand in prison. I wanted to revise it and get it typed on my discharge but I have been so terribly busy that I have been unable to do so. As soon as a typed copy is ready I shall send it to you. I imagine, however, that the censors will delay it, as is their way.

Presumably the book will be published in England also. In order to avoid delay in publication I am arranging to get an Indian edition published here. This may come out by the end of the year or in January. If this can be arranged, I shall send you the proof copies of this book.

With my warm regards to you and Mrs. Walsh,

Very sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To Frances Gunther[1]

Allahabad
Sept. 5, 1945

My dear Frances,
It is good to see your handwriting again and to feel — for your writing makes me feel that way — that you are right near me and having a talk. I got your other notes and of course I knew who they were from and I replied accordingly. You should have given me enough credit for that. But those typewritten cards or sheets were necessarily constrained and cramped your style. This is better. I wrote to you from somewhere in the mountains when I was trekking in Kashmir. Did you get that letter?[2]

I am back now trying hard to adjust myself to the new environment. Not succeeding very well. These sudden changes are trying on the nerves. Crowds pursue me and surround me wherever I go and it becomes frightfully difficult to lead any kind of organised & systematic life. It is heartening to have all the affection but also terribly exhausting.

When will I go to the U.S.? I do not know. But I see no near chance of my doing so. Do you remember writing to me once that I should not go there to join the troupe of exiles. I agreed with you entirely. Does it not follow from this that I should not go there just as an itinerant agitator or propagandist? I would love to go there privately as a private person just to meet friends and wander about the country. But that is impossible. I simply cannot get rid of my non-private capacity. That follows me about in India and it will pursue me abroad. The mere fact of my going abroad is given significance however much I may deny it. And so I am a prisoner, though the bars may not be visible, but bound hand and foot all the same. In India, as elsewhere, urgent and vital problems face us and it is very difficult to run away from them even if I wanted to do so. All this means that there must be an obvious and sufficient reason for me to leave India. After all in a sense I have been away for three years from the Indian scene. I cannot escape my fate.

How I would love to send you that telephone message from La Guardia Air Field. But that, my dear, as so many other things for which we hunger, must wait till the stars are more propitious. Meanwhile, it is sad to think that time passes and we grow older. So many things happen too late.

1. Frances Gunther Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Not available.

I have not seen your little book[3] on India though I have tried hard to get it. I read several reviews of it. So do send it. I have come across a few American air force and army men, chiefly in Kashmir, since my release. Also in Delhi.

Your letter is a sad one and I must confess that I do not feel very cheerful myself. The war and all its consequences were bad; the after-effects are likely to be no better though for the present there is some relief from the strain. How immature human beings are and how little capable of controlling events. And yet you talk of one's control of events by one's will, of creating events that one has willed into being. I am no believer in determinism and I do think man can control and create events, though naturally he is limited by many factors. But before man does so with any effectiveness he must become a grown up man and not an immature child who can only think of the toy in front of him.

Yes, each people has to win its own fight in its own fashion and in following this fashion it goes on blundering and stumbling along. So, I suppose, we in India will stumble and fall and get up again and go ahead. But I do not know why I am writing to you in this strain. I had not intended to, but somehow your letter turned my mind in this direction. What I wanted to write to you was intended to be cheerful. I wanted to tell you how happy I felt to get your letter. I am afraid I have been a poor correspondent, though the fault has not been entirely mine. During the last 58 months I have spent 48 in prison. Yet even during the intervals I could have written to you oftener. You have been often enough in my thoughts. But I do not want to write to you unless I can develop the mood for leisurely writing. That mood seldom finds a chance and I wait and wait for it. You will understand and forgive me. Perhaps I might behave better in future.

I have written a book in prison, an odd book, a melange of subjective fancies and objective analysis. The theme was ambitious and I have not done justice to it. Still there it is and I suppose it will be eventually published; probably it will appear in India first and I shall send you a copy when it comes out. I shall also send a copy of the typescript to Walsh for an American edition. I am dissatisfied with the book as a whole though I think bits of it are good. But then it is really impossible to judge one's own production. I have always an odd feeling about the writing I have done in prison. There is a strangeness

3. *Revolution in India*; it argued that the psychological aspect of the conflict between India and Britain had become the crux of the situation by 1944.

about it, as of something not entirely my own. I recognize it and yet feel that someone else, whom I know fairly well, has done it.

Perhaps one day I shall really turn up at La Guardia Air Field and telephone to you. I shall look forward to the celebration.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

15. To Major General H. R. Briggs[1]

Allahabad
6.9.1945

Dear Major-General Briggs,

I thank you for your letter of August 28th 1945 and the questionnaire.[2] I have come back to my home after more than three years and I am over-burdened with work and the many intricate problems that face us. It is difficult therefore to find time to answer your questionnaire.

But, apart from this, I have a more basic difficulty. All major problems in India are inter-connected and the solution of one depends a great deal on the solution of the other. This applies to the entire political, economic and other fields of national activity. The proper approach thus is to view the whole problem in all its complexity, to lay down certain objectives and then to plan an advance all along the line. Each particular problem will of course have to be studied separately and in detail but it makes a great deal of difference whether it is considered in isolation or in relation to others. I have been interested in national planning for many years and this has helped me to view all our problems in this perspective.

Because of this approach it is not easy for me to consider any question, even that of defence, by itself and without having in my mind some picture of the political and social organization of the future state, as well as its objectives. Because of this also it has not been usually

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Maj. Gen. Briggs was president of a committee that was enquiring into the future status of the Viceroy's Commissioned Officers in the Indian army. He set his problems in the form of questions and sought Jawaharlal's views.

possible, for us to associate ourselves with official committees. Inevitably such committees function within the present framework and think in terms of it, and also ignore to a large extent other related problems.

The question of defence is obviously one of great importance. It is not merely a question of the reorganization of the army but much more so of looking at the problem having in view the latest technical, scientific and international developments. It seems obvious that the whole conception of warfare has changed and is changing rapidly. It is quite possible that armies after the old model may become obsolete and useless in the future, or useful only for certain secondary purposes. The essential part of a defence force may well be a highly trained mechanised force, chiefly relying on the air arm, with subsidiary forces attached to it.

These considerations require a totally different approach from the old one. A mechanised force or an efficient air force can only be built up and maintained on a self-sufficient basis with a background of industrial development and scientific research. Thus the encouragement of scientific research on the widest possible scale and the rapid building up of all the vital and necessary industries (and these cover almost the entire field) become essential preliminaries.

I imagine that, subject to international considerations, the objective to be aimed at in defence is to build up highly efficient mechanised forces, probably limited in numbers, and also to have a well-trained militia, or something like it, on as wide a basis as possible, both for home defence and to serve as a reservoir and a feeder for the mechanised forces.

I do not approve of two grades of officers.[3] This anomaly leads both to resentment and inefficiency. Whatever the future of the Indian army, it should not be based on any discrimination among the officers or in the ranks, and it should attain as high a standard of efficiency as is possible. Two grades of officers are bad for both.

What the Indian army may have to do in the future depends on international developments and the policy of the national state. In any event such an army must be trained and ready for all eventualities.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. One suggestion in the questionnaire was the creation of two grades of officers, i.e., the King's Commissioned Officers type and the subordinate type, the latter with somewhat less pay and responsibilities but otherwise the privileges of an officer.

16. To Martand Upadhyaya[1]

Allahabad
8-9-1945

Dear Martandji,
I have your letter of the 5th September. Also cheque for Rs. 1000/-. Thank you for this.

As for my next book, I call it *The Discovery of India*. I cannot describe it easily. You will see it when it comes to you. The first essential for a translation is that the translator must be thoroughly acquainted with both languages. I found in some of your past translations that my meaning was not always understood and the translation was quick journalese missing the essence. Naturally I would like the language to be, as far as possible, simple Hindustani. But this should not be an artificial product and should read easily.

The book will be about 500 pages, that is, it will be somewhat smaller than my *Autobiography*.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Sasta Sahitya Mandal Papers, N.M.M.L.

17. To Krishan Prasad Dar[1]

3.10.45

My dear Krishanji,[2]
There appears to have been some forgetfulness, from the publisher's point of view, in regards to my *Letters from a Father* in English. A book which is in constant demand is not to be obtained by the general public. I want this matter to be taken in hand immediately. I take it that you are full publishers and no one else shares this job with you regarding my book. Please confirm this. If so then you must function as publishers and not as mere printers. Unfortunately you have no publishing business

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Manager, Allahabad Law Journal Press.

and have no contacts with booksellers etc. It is for you to consider how to get over this. You may, if you like, settle with some well known bookseller or publisher to handle the publishing side of my book. Not Kitabistan. There has been enough trouble there already. The International Book Depot of Poona is a good concern run by reliable people and they would gladly take charge of this business. Please think over this matter and let me know what you propose to do. A publisher cannot sit tight over a book. He has to advertise it, push it and make it easily available to the public.

Please let me have a copy of the contract with the Oxford University Press about this book. I take it this is confined to sale in certain educational areas only.

Have Kitabistan any interest whatever in the book now? I understand that they have continued to sell old copies of the book, but they have not given me any royalty on them.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad

My dear Krishna,

...I have your cable enquiring about Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Dr. Zakir Hussain. I have sent a reply. I learnt of their impending departure for London only two days ago through the newspapers. More I do not know. It appears that they are going on some education committee of which Sargant is chairman. It is objectionable for any Indian committee to have an English chairman. But, apart from this, Sargant is a good man and the report for which he is chiefly responsible is a good report and largely based on the basic education scheme which the Congress governments produced. Both Amrit Kaur and Zakir Hussain are friends of Sargant.

Presumably official arrangements for their stay etc. in London will be made by Government. You should certainly see both of them.

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts. Undated letter. Written after 11.10.1945.

They are able and worthwhile people. Both of them are intimately associated with Gandhiji and are friends of mine. Zakir Hussain is an eminent educationist and not very much of a politician. Amrit Kaur had a very bad time in prison and internment during the last three years. It was because of the treatment she received that Penderel Moon, who has written some books recently, resigned from the Civil Service. Her brother, Kunwar Dalip Singh, the Senior Judge of the Punjab High Court, retired also partly because of this. Another brother of hers is Raja Sir Maharaj Singh. She belongs to a branch of the Kapurthala family which adopted Christianity. Her name was included in the list sent on behalf of the Congress to the Viceroy at Simla for the Executive Council. I am sure you will like to meet her and she will be able to tell you much about conditions here. Her point of view approximates to Gandhiji's with whom she has been intimately associated.

I sent you yesterday two more packets of manuscript of my new book: *The Discovery of India.*

Yours,
Jawaharlal

19. To Indira Gandhi[1]

Delhi
7.11.45

20. To Indira Gandhi[1]

Bombay
7.11.45

Darling Indu,
I had a good flight — 5 hours from Delhi to Bombay. We passed over Udaipur and so I can say now that I have seen it, though the vision was a distant one — from 8000 feet or more — Ahmedabad proved a trial for 5000 or 6000 persons collected at the aerodrome and upset all the normal arrangements there. It was an exhausting process, having to deal with them, and the plane was slightly delayed.

I have yet no clear idea of how long I shall have to stay here. As far as I can see I cannot leave before the 13th night and then Betty & others are making a fuss about my not leaving then but staying on for the 14th. Probably I shall leave on the 14th by the night train. That is almost the last train I can take for I have to be in Lucknow on the 17th. I shall spend the 16th in Allahabad. Future programme uncertain. Hope to fix it up before I leave Bombay.

I shall probably go to Poona to meet Bapu & Vallabhbhai on the 12th.
Love,

Your loving
Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N M M.L.

21. To Rameshwari Nehru[1]

Allahabad
10.11.1945

My dear Bijju Bhabi,
Your letter has just come and I hasten to reply to it for if I do not do so now it will get overwhelmed in other papers. I am here for 2 days.

I met S.N. Dhar but did not read his book. I took him for granted because of your recommendation. I did not write a special preface for

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M M L. Only an incomplete text is available.

him — I allowed him to reprint what I had written about Kashmir four years or more ago.

Newspaper work, often dull work, often requiring initiative. No one can be a newspaperman unless he has gone through the mill. A new-comer however able must go through it in order to learn the ABC of the business. The *Herald* is being restarted soon and we do not have new-comers to begin with. They clog the machine. I am, however, sending Dhar's application to the Editor and letting him decide. I imagine the most he can do is to keep Dhar's name on his list for future use when the *Herald* has settled down.

22. To P. A. Narielwala[1]

30 November 1945

My dear Pan,

Your letter of the 22nd November. Both Karanjia and Pocha spoke to me about this matter in Poona and because of my being an accommodating person, I agreed to their proposal that they might use the money for a village clinic near Poona. I agree with you in what you say but one cannot always be vocal in such matters and local sentiment has to be considered. Pocha told me that if they had this local clinic they would be able to raise more money for it. So you see that in a sense I have committed myself to this commitment subject to your committee's decision.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

Tell the Princess[2] that I appreciate her message. But fairy princesses should not always remain invisible. It is their function to appear on earth occasionally so that ordinary mortals may see them.

Jawahar

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Princess Nilofer, of Turkish origin, was for some time married to Prince Moazzam Jah, second son of the Nizam of Hyderabad.

23. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
December 26, 1945

My dear Krishna,

I am not writing to you a political letter. Our politics are too complicated and confused to be compressed in a brief letter. My life becomes increasingly rather tempestuous. I rush about and wherever I go I attract vast crowds. This is exhilarating in its own way but it is also very fatiguing. I get no rest or time to deal with my letters, or private affairs. Indeed I am wholly unable to deal with all my public commitments which seem to increase.

After three weeks of touring I have just come back and three days later I am going to Udaipur for the States People's Conference.

I am anxious to help you in any way I can to enable you to work effectively for India. In this matter, as in some others, I have not got much of a free hand and I hate making suggestions to people which they might not approve of. Nevertheless, I hope that something will shape itself. You have suitably impressed Amrit Kaur, as of course you would, and she is a good advocate. If you stand in need of any money for your public activities I can easily send you some. Do not hesitate to ask for it. That reminds me that I have no idea at all yet of how my royalty account stands. This does not mean that you should send me the balance if any. Hold on to it.

My new book. The complete manuscript has already been sent to you except for the postscript which has not yet been written but which I hope to write within a few days. Some time in January the printed proof formes of the book will be sent to you. I expect the book will be issued from Calcutta about the third week of January. It will run into over 700 pages, though the page is just slightly smaller than the page of my Autobiography. It is being priced at Rs. 11/- which, considering everything and war prices, is not too much. An edition of ten thousand is being printed but already there are so many orders that a second edition of ten thousand is being arranged for. In India, as you perhaps know, they do not make plates and this makes it difficult for repeated impressions to be taken.

Walsh will bring out the American edition probably in the spring. He wanted to include Canada in his domain but I told him that I could not agree to this unless you agree. He also wanted to know about trans-

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

lation rights. I am inclined to let him go ahead with this especially with regard to Spanish, because there is little chance of any translation appearing in Europe as it is constituted today.

I might mention that the typescript I have sent you has a number of errors and omissions.

Could you let me know the address of Bee Batlivala (Mrs. Guy Mansell)?

Have you any information about A.C.N. Nambiar who used to be in Prague and later in Paris? I have had no news of him or about him for the last four or five years.

With all good wishes for the New Year.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

24. To K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar[1]

Allahabad
January 12, 1946

Dear Dr. Srinivasa Iyengar,[2]

Thank you for your letter of the 1st and for your book.[3] Also your article[4] about me in the *Social Welfare*. One of my misfortunes is that I cannot find time to read all the books I want to. I put them by for a more favourable occasion and this collection grows till I have some leisure in prison to read it! To some extent I do steal an hour now and then for reading, especially when travelling. Your book specially I should like to read. I have glanced through it and I find it full of information that I would like to have.

In your article about me you have been extraordinarily generous and rather partial.

With all good wishes for the New Year.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

25. To Richard Walsh[1]

Allahabad
January 12, 1946

Dear Mr. Walsh,
About two weeks ago I sent you a postscript and preface for my new book. I understand that proof copies have also been sent to you.

You asked me in your letter whether you could replace "Ganga" by "Ganges". As I told you you are at liberty to do so. But I would suggest to you that Ganga really fits in better with the context and sounds better. Ganges is too exotic for my ears and somehow it sounds odd in that context. Would it not be possible to put a small footnote explaining that Ganga was Ganges? But this is not an important matter and I leave the decision to you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

26. To K. T. Shah[1]

14.1.46

My dear Shah,
I enclose a copy of an interesting letter from an American.[2] He is an engineer and a planning expert who was in the American army in India and was in charge of building up their camps. I was impressed by him and his ideas. Knowing and understanding the latest technique, he had some conception of Indian conditions also and wanted to adapt that technique to those conditions. India attracted him and he was thinking of leaving his business in America and coming over to do something worthwhile here. He was not thinking in terms of money.

1. J.N. Papers, N M M.L.
2. Albert Mayer (1897-1972); architect and town planner, *Planning Adviser, Government of U P*, 1946 60, his designs included New Delhi regional plan and master plans for Greater Bombay and Chandigarh; author of *Pilot Project India* and *Social Analysis and National Economic Planning in India*.

He felt that we should have specific projects for the development of groups of villages in which we could experiment in different localities. His letter and suggestions might be endorsed by your sub-committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Please send him such literature of N.P.C. as you can spare.

27. To Albert Mayer[1]

14.1.46

Dear Mr. Mayer,
Thank you for your letter of Dec. 19, 1945. The talk we had in October last interested me greatly as it was in line with my own thinking. We have been too long vague and idealistic in our approach to our problems and it is time that we had specific projects, especially for our village reconstruction — one of the major problems of India. Your letter now, with further definite suggestions, is equally helpful. I agree with what you say and, in so far as I can, I shall try to induce people to function in this way. For the moment we are full of this Provincial elections and probably immediately afterwards other important political problems will absorb our attention. There may be a shift over in government which may enable us to take up some of these schemes. If we can really function in a big way, we should like to have further and detailed help and advice from you. Meanwhile I shall welcome suggestions from you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

28. To Mahatma Gandhi[1]

14.1.46

My dear Bapu,
I enclose a copy of a letter from an American who was in the American army as an engineer and planning expert. He was in charge of building up a number of camps. He advised the Shriniketan people also and was put in a committee by the Bengal Government. I was considerably impressed by him. He has the knowledge and training for his job, knows the latest technique, and at the same time understands the background of village India. He is attracted to India in many ways (even philosophically) and has got the urge to do something here without thinking in terms of monetary recompense. Because of this urge he may come back to India.

His idea was to experiment in a number of typical localities with village reconstruction and development keeping Indian conditions in view. This was not to consist of just building but of helping in providing a corporate life for the people.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

29. To Brooke L. Winkoop[1]

New Delhi
January 20, 1946

Dear Mr. Winkoop,[2]
It was exceedingly good of you to send me the cigarettes and the lighter. I am grateful to you for them as also for the very friendly words accompanying them. It has been a pleasure to me to meet many Americans here and I am only sorry that I did not have greater opportunities

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Lieutenant Colonel; served at the U.S. forces headquarters in Delhi, which Jawaharlal visited on 17 January 1946.

of meeting them. I live in the hope of visiting America one day and if I do so I trust I shall meet you there.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

30. To Amrit Kaur[1]

Allahabad
January 26, 1946

My dear Amrit,

I have received two or three letters from you. As for Mayer's letter, I sent it merely for Bapu's information. There is nothing to be done about it.

I quite agree with you about this business of using blood for writing and *tilak* marks.[2] I have protested repeatedly.

Nan is now due to arrive here early next week. But I shall not be certain till she actually comes.

You will have read about the violent attack on the Communists in Bombay. This is producing an intolerable situation. I have said something about it. I hope Bapu will take this matter in hand.

About the gentleman named Rai Sahib Sonadhar Das Senapati at Shillong and the report of the conversation between him and me, I am not aware of the name of the person but someone did meet me and irritated me exceedingly by his stupidity. The report as given is very incorrect. He asked me why the Congress should not go to Ambedkar and make it up with him. I told him that we are going to do nothing of the kind. Ambedkar had repeatedly insulted the Congress and Congress leaders and unless he apologised we would have nothing to do with him. I certainly did not say that the scheduled castes would not get the political privileges given to them under the Poona Pact. My whole stress was on the fact that Ambedkar had allied himself with the British Government and against the Congress and we could not deal with him

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. In her letter of 17 January 1946, Amrit Kaur stated that "I see you had a sketch given to you which had been drawn in blood. I saw too in the papers that some girls had put the *tilak* mark on your forehead with blood."

because of this. I think I expressed myself forcibly on this issue. I send back to you the report that the gentleman most probably gave you.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

31. To V. K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
January 29, 1946

My dear Krishna,
This deals with my book. Publication here has been delayed owing to repeated strikes in printing presses in Calcutta. But I hope it will come out in February. The first edition of ten thousand has been completely sold prior to publication. The second edition is likely to meet the same fate.

Walsh wants to bring out the American edition in spring. As you know, I rely upon your advice in regard to the English edition and I shall abide by your decision. I am not quite clear about your new suggestions except that you propose to bring the book out fairly quickly through a new firm. I leave the matter to you. You will remember of course that the Indian market is covered by the edition here. This presumably includes Ceylon. I have not given the copyright of the book to the Indian publishers. The only permission I have given so far is for the two editions, amounting to 20 thousand copies in all, which are being issued. In case, however, a further impression is necessary for India, as it is likely to be, it is obviously desirable for the present Indian publishers to carry on.

About translations, I do not quite understand what you say. Of course I should like the translation to be from the original and not from an expurgated or abridged edition. As a matter of fact, however, no translation in any European language of my *Autobiography* has so far appeared. Evidently there is little chance of this being done at the London end, and the European market after the War is very limited. Probably the market in America, even for other European languages, is wider today. In regard to Spanish, undoubtedly New York is in a better position to deal with it than London. It seems to me, therefore, that the only way to get things done is to allow Walsh to deal with

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

Spanish rights at least.

My *Autobiography* has so far been translated into every important Indian language as well as in Chinese and Hebrew. The Hebrew edition came out at Tel Aviv some two or three years ago. Unless you have something definite in view about European languages, is it worthwhile delaying publication of any possible translations?

Yours,
Jawaharlal

32. To S. Govind Swaminadhan[1]

February 17, 1946

Dear Govind,[2]

Your letter of the 5th February. It seems to me that on the whole it is desirable to proceed with K.B. Menon's case[3] in the Privy Council. It is true that people convicted for political offences are likely to be released within the next few months. If it had been a question of applying for leave to appeal to the Privy Council, I would probably have advised that this should not be done now. But as leave has been granted, and when leave is granted there is a strong probability of success, I think we should proceed with the case. You have already spent a good deal of money over it. I do not like leaving a colleague in the lurch and K.B. Menon is a man for whom I have considerable respect.

But one thing in your letter upsets me and this is the fact that Polak is your solicitor. That any person in India should choose Polak for any work at all is beyond me. My own personal reaction is to have nothing to do with any case which Polak is conducting and if it had not been for K.B. Menon I would not have touched this case because

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1914); started legal practice at the Madras High Court in 1940; served for a time as Advocate General.
3. K.B. Menon, who was acquitted in the trial court, was convicted on 5 January 1945 of criminal conspiracy against the state by the Madras High Court and was sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment. His appeal to the Privy Council had been admitted. Govind Swaminadhan suggested in his letter that as Menon would be released in any case because of the prospect of national government it was better to drop the case in the Privy Council.

of Polak. It is not usual or desirable for personalities to be discussed in such matters. But I must let you have my frank opinion about Polak. Politically he has functioned as the agent of the India Office and has run down India in England and America. That itself is sufficient for any honourable Indian to have no dealings with him. As a solicitor I have no high opinion of him. He is extravagant, engages wrong counsel and generally his approach is pro-India Office. Surely it is rather absurd to engage such a man in a political case. It is as if the defence asked the prosecution to supply a counsel.

I do not know what you can do about it now. But if it is at all possible I would change the solicitor. Probably this is not possible at this stage. So we shall have to put up with Polak. In such an event I should make it perfectly clear to Polak that he must consult and abide by V.K. Krishna Menon's advice in regard to the case and especially in regard to any senior counsel that might be engaged. I do not trust Polak in this matter and I do trust Krishna Menon about whom I have a high opinion, both in regard to capacity and general outlook. I suggest to you therefore to write both to Polak and to Krishna Menon on these lines. It may be possible to reduce the estimated expenditure. About this you can consult Krishna Menon. Polak charges for everything. It may be possible for me to help you a little more in regard to funds though I am afraid I cannot send you the balance you seem to require.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

GENERAL

1. Janab Reejanal Food Controller Sahab[1]

I have heard much of the doings of the Food Controller's Department. A significant aspect of how this department functions in the U.P. came

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 9 September 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 11 September 1945.

before me tonight when I attended a meeting of the directors of the *National Herald*. Except for a room or two the whole building is in the possession of the Regional Food Controller, Lucknow region. This gentleman, and I do not know who this august personality is, has put up a huge board of about twenty feet on which is inscribed the following legend in Urdu and Hindi besides English: *Janab Reejanal Food Controller Sahab* and over the board flies the Union Jack. What the *Janab Sahab* does in the Food Department I do not know, but it is evident that he considers himself a pillar of British authority whose chief function is to impress and overawe people by his high position and authority. For the present he is displaying that authority by holding on to the premises of the *National Herald* under the Defence of India Rules.

There is a comic aspect to all this pompous and ridiculous phraseology. It is just too absurd that men who are appointed to do important jobs pose and function in this ridiculous way before the public. No man who thinks of himself as *Janab Reejanal Food Controller Sahab* is fit for that job.

2. Mahatma Gandhi[1]

Nearly twelve months ago, in Ahmadnagar Fort prison, we received a heavy, sumptuous volume with an attractive cover, bearing the inscription: *Gandhiji*. Books are doubly welcome in prison, partly because of their scarcity and partly because they have to pass through the formidable barriers of censorship before they can reach us. So we welcomed this book and eagerly looked through its unique collection of good pictures. But I was not very eager to read the various articles and essays it contained, for I had found that birthday volumes usually contained an odd assortment of miscellaneous articles with little to bind them together. Still I read it and, surprisingly, I read it through, for my interest increased with the reading. This was no odd jumble but a well-planned scheme, telling us something worthwhile about the man whom we had known so long and loved and quarrelled with and admired. It gave us a glimpse

1. Introduction written on 2 October 1945 to the second edition of *Gandhiji: His Life and Work*, edited by D.G. Tendulkar, M. Chalapathi Rau, Mridula Sarabhai and Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri.

of the astonishing variety of his interests and the many-sidedness of his activities, and of that vital touch of his that transformed everything he took up and made it spring to life.

But how can a book tell us about him and his strange and wonderful personality that has gripped the millions of India? How can we find out from the printed page wherein lies that elusive and rarest of qualities which makes a man tower above his fellows and leaves its impress on the ages to come? This little man has been and is a colossus before whom others, big in their own way and in their own space and time, are small of stature. In this world of hatred and uttermost violence and the atom bomb, this man of peace and goodwill stands out, a contrast and a challenge. In an acquisitive society madly searching for new gadgets and new luxuries, he takes to his loin-cloth and his mud hut. In man's race for wealth and authority and power, he seems to be a non-starter, looking the other way; and yet that authority looks out of his gentle but hard eyes, that power seems to fill his slight and emaciated frame, and flows out to others. Wherein does his strength lie, wherein his power and authority? Has he drunk somewhere from the secret spring of life which has given strength to India through the ages?

He was seventy-five when this book was prepared and he is seventy-six today as I write this. During this span of years he has done the work of a score or more of vital and energetic persons, adding to it his own particular contribution which none else could give. He is weaker today than he used to be, for nature must have its way, but the old fire is still there, the old charm still works, and those soft eyes of his still remain a strange mixture of flame and cooling water.

We who have known him for these many years in all his moods and activities and tried to fathom what lay behind them, what distant horizon held his eyes, are still far from the end of our search. As ever he eludes us, though outwardly none can be more obvious than he is. Often we do not understand him; we argue with him and get angry sometimes. But the anger passes leaving us rather ashamed of our lack of balance and restraint. Only that pervasive influence remains and he seems to become the vehicle and embodiment of some greater force of which even he is perhaps only dimly conscious. Is that the spirit of India, the accumulated experience of the millennia that lie behind our race, the memory of a thousand tortured lives?

While we have laboured and grown older, a new generation has grown up, also under his spell, but differently. For already to most of them he is a legend, a far-away mysterious figure, whom they have not seen or heard. They have not come into that intimate contact with him and

seen him work those miracles on Indian humanity which we saw a quarter of a century ago. They take these changes for granted, and Gandhi's greatness also for granted.

How will later generations think of him or feel about him? I do not know. But I do know that his name and the stories that will cling to him will inspire our people for long ages to come. The truth is wonderful enough, but inevitably it will be embroidered and added to till something emerges which we would hardly recognize.

But why should we trouble ourselves about the distant future? The present is enough for us, and in the present we still have Gandhiji with us, and it is our privilege to march with him to the free India of our dreams.

3. Gandhi Jayanti[1]

The 2nd October has become a significant date in India, for that day was Gandhiji's birthday, 76 years ago. Whatever the day of the month or year, Gandhiji is ever present in our minds, for he has dominated the Indian scene, moulded our national life and intimately affected innumerable private lives. What we are today, nationally or individually, we are largely because of him, whether we realise this or not.

So, today on his 76th birthday we offer our homage to him and the love and affection which flow to one who has not only been a very great leader, but, at the same time, much more than a leader — a friend, a comrade, a guide — and a sure haven in time of trouble and distress.

1. Message given on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday and published in the newspapers on 4 October 1945.

4. Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

On the occasion of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's seventieth birthday I should like to send my greetings and pay my tribute to him. For more

1. Allahabad, 18 October 1945. *The Hindu*, 31 October 1945.

than a quarter of a century now we have been associated with each other and we have had to face all manner of crises and difficulties. These years have been years of trial for all of us in India. Some have shrunk, or faded away, or just remain where they were. A few, a very few, have grown in stature with the years and have left their mark on events, which formed the fabric of history. Among these latter chosen ones, stands Vallabhbhai Patel. Strong of will and purpose, a great organiser, wholly devoted to the cause of India's freedom, he has inevitably roused powerful reactions. Some have disliked him because they could not fall in line with him. But far greater numbers of people have found in him the leader of their choice, and, working with him and under him, have laid the foundations of Indian freedom. To those who have had the privilege of working with him, he has always been a tower of strength, on whose advice they could confidently rely and whose comradeship they valued greatly. So, on this occasion, I pay my affectionate tribute to him and trust that the cause of Indian freedom will long profit by his passionate devotion to it and his outstanding qualities of leadership and organisation.

5. The Literatures of India[1]

Friends,

I am a little embarrassed in having to address you, and I feel like an outsider who has strayed into distinguished company. You have done me the honour of making me a Vice President of the Indian Centre of the P.E.N., and I deem it a privilege. But you know very well that my work has been in another direction, and that other activities have absorbed my attention far too much. I am not untouched by, as Sir Mirza put it, "the spiritual paralysis of politics." And yet I have sometimes strayed into other fields by accident, queer and incidental. By accident I became a writer, and so found my way into the P.E.N.

So far as this subject is concerned, I am quite sure that many of you who are present here know much more about it than I do, and could do more justice to it. All I can say is of a very general nature, and

1. Speech at the first All India Writers Conference, Jaipur, 20 October 1945. Printed in *Indian Writers in Council*, published by P.E.N. Centre, Bombay.

perhaps that will be an advantage, because that will mean that I will not inflict myself for too long a time on you. The subject is: "The Development of the Indian Literatures as a Uniting Force." It is a fascinating subject, and I wish I knew more about it except that there is so much to know if one really is to deal with it in any proper style, which is truly beyond me.

The questions that strike me in this connection are these: Are Indian literatures a uniting force or not? Do we take it for granted that they are a uniting force or that they are going to be a uniting force? A superficial survey would, I am afraid, tend to show that they create or might create greater provincialism and erect new barriers to unity. As you know, one of the questions to which frequent reference is made nowadays is the so-called "language question" of India. When we talk about the "language question," we do not refer to the dozen or so languages — the principal languages — of India, but rather to Hindi and Urdu, which are one language with different literary forms drawing inspiration from the same fountain-head. That is the language question! There is hardly any cause, so far as I know, for any conflict between the different languages in their different spheres; but conflict appears sometimes with regard to Hindi or Urdu, though they are but one language with different literary forms.

However, it is interesting to trace the development of Indian languages. For long centuries, they formed a happy joint family, very much dependent on their parent language, Sanskrit — so dependent indeed that they did not grow at all. Later, Persian came into the field, superficially on the top. Persian also affected our languages, but it was a restraining force which would not allow them to grow, since learned people then thought it beneath their dignity to write or speak at select assemblies like this in any language but Sanskrit or Persian. If anything worthwhile was to be written, surely it must be written in Sanskrit, not in Hindi or Bengali or some other dialect; and to some extent that happened later with regard to Persian. People talked or wrote in Sanskrit or Persian. Of course, only a very small circle could talk in those languages, and that is why, I suppose, this divorce between that small circle at the top talking or writing in Sanskrit or Persian and the vast numbers talking in other languages, more living languages, prevented the growth of these latter, and the growth also of our modern literatures.

Now when I say that Sanskrit and Persian were a restraining influence, please do not imagine that I am condemning Sanskrit or Persian at all. Sanskrit is of course something of which every Indian is infinitely and rightly proud. Sanskrit really has performed a great unify-

ing task throughout the ages, and as a unifying force it has obviously been the greatest instrument of the continuity of our culture for thousands of years. There is therefore no question whatever of my condemning Sanskrit.

Persian came late in the field of development of the Indian languages, and yet it played a fairly important part in later centuries, affecting almost all our provincial languages considerably — and thus Persian too became a part of our national heritage. In this way Persian also became a unifying force, at any rate for the upper classes, though not so much for the masses.

Sanskrit, then, pre-eminently, and Persian to some extent, have played a great part in Indian literary life. For my part, I would like large numbers of persons all over India to study Sanskrit, and also Persian, because it is a very beautiful language and is intimately associated, not only with our modern languages but with Sanskrit, which, as you know, is its sister language. Hindi, in fact, is nearer to Persian in some respects than to classical Sanskrit.

However that may be, the fact we should remember is that our provincial languages were controlled by these two aristocratic languages, by Sanskrit especially; and it took a tremendous lot of time for the provincial languages to grow. Gradually, by force of circumstances, out of the hundreds of original dialects, Hindi developed, Bengali developed, Marathi and Gujarati and other languages developed. In the South, of course, there was a different family of languages, which, though different, became through Sanskrit intimately associated with the other languages of India,— and so we have now about a dozen principal languages of India.

One of the remarkable instances of the development of languages in India is provided by Urdu, which grew up and exhibited the interplay of these various forces that flowed in India during the last two hundred years, and became essentially an Indian language, with probably 80 per cent of words that are common to it and Hindi, but of course with a number of Persian words as well. The main difference between Hindi and Urdu is not so much in the vocabulary but in their respective literary forms. The Hindi literary form has been, I suppose, derived directly from Sanskrit — I speak with diffidence in this matter — and all the metaphors and similes and ways of thought and expression have been likewise derived from Sanskrit, and also from the common background of life in India. Thus the literary and other forms of Hindi are Indian no doubt, for no outside influence has permeated them, but they are

very old, and long after they have ceased to have any meaning, some of them are still being used.

Urdu, the same language as Hindi with almost the same vocabulary, with a few words thrown in from outside, developed as an entirely different literary form. Its ways of expression were not derived from Indian life as a rule; its similes and metaphors were derived from Central Asia, or the Caucasus or Iran, and today in our colloquial Hindustani or Hindi so many of these expressions, similes and metaphors, which are not really Indian in origin, have become very common.

As I have said already, the language question mainly deals with Hindi and Urdu. Why there should be so much argument and so much heat and passion, I do not know. But, of course, it is now hardly a question of language. It has become a question of selection of a common language for India, and that is why, perhaps, there is so much heat and passion. It has become a political question in a way, or rather, in a way politics affects the question very much.

The result is obvious. In Hindi and Urdu we have formed certain literary devices, or have certain sophisticated patterns, which attract those who are orthodox. But these devices and patterns have lost their vitality or popular appeal, and must progressively grow more and more stale in spite of a certain beauty in them, because those forms are wholly unconnected with the life of the common people. They remain the same, oblivious to the changing environment. That, of course, applies not only to Hindi and Urdu but to so many aspects of our life. We are sticking to ancient forms so much in our social life, sometimes without any perceptible sense in those forms, that some of our activities are a puzzle even to people just outside our province in our own country. And language, after all, is something which reflects the life of the people. If the life of the people is confined to a narrow circle of old-fashioned forms, then inevitably their language also is bound to be like that. And it is no use blaming the standard of this or that language, if that language became isolated from the life of the people. I refer only to the literary language, because the popular languages of this time revealed their vitality in popular songs, folk songs, and the rest. Though these popular songs were quite vital in their own way, they had no chance of gaining importance in the centres of learned people for, say, a hundred years. In our popular languages we find folk songs, ballads, poems, etc., while the prose works were limited to Sanskrit or Persian. Every serious work was, in fact, written in Sanskrit or Persian. But the popular languages flourished among the common people and in the households. So this divorce between the language of the common

people and the language of the learned persons has had, I suppose, a very harmful effect on the growth of our languages. That divorce, in a sense, has had its harmful effect, not only on those languages, but on life itself. Many of our ills in India, I think, are probably the result of that. Well, anyhow these popular languages grew, in spite of all the obstructions and the various influences restricting their growth, because life has to grow. But they grew so slowly, and in fact much of their growth has taken place in poetry, in which some of our languages are very rich. Almost all the growth of these our Indian languages has taken place during the last two hundred years or less — here, again, I am subject to correction — and especially their literatures are of recent growth.

Now the growth of these provincial languages has not, so far as I know, tended at all towards disunity. To some extent, no doubt, it may have accentuated a certain provincialism, or given a little push to provincial culture. A Bengali is very rightly proud of his Bengali language, Gujaratis of their Gujarati, Maharashtrians of Marathi, and so on. They have their legitimate prides, but I do not think that there is any conflict between this feeling and the larger feeling of national identity, because the whole basis of India's thought, as I know it, has been never a mere regimentation of people's ideas, but of unity plus diversity, plus variety. Therefore the two do not conflict, because each province, each linguistic area, taking pride in its own past cultural achievements, realises that it is but part of a larger whole. In the past, the cultural unity of India was maintained, not only by one language, Sanskrit, but also by a special philosophy which was common to the whole of India. The old philosophical outlook was later on superseded to some extent at least, and therefore I feel that it is not now strong enough to be a unifying force to the extent, to the degree, it was in the past. Other things have happened. Possibly, the unifying force today would be, not so much national but something more international, something which is common to all nations,— which, again, would not mean the submergence of the national identity in its entirety, but rather the two existing together.

I do not personally see any need to answer the questions which I put at the beginning. I do not see anything tending towards disunity or towards real essential separatism in the growth of provincial languages in India. There is also another factor to consider. In fact, if I may quote the instance of Rabindranath Tagore, it is extraordinary how a man like Tagore who wrote in the Bengali language influenced every other language in India, Hindi certainly, and also the other languages. It shows how these cultural giants grow across provincial barriers. If

one language grows, it surely helps others to grow. It does not hinder the others. It does not come into conflict with them. That is my chief grievance with those people who fight and argue about Hindi and Urdu. I have no doubt in my mind that if Hindi grows rich it will help Urdu, and if Urdu grows rich it will help Hindi.

I am quite sure at the same time that Hindi and Urdu are bound to grow nearer to each other, not because you and I may like it or not like it, but because circumstances are forcing us to develop them as a common language. It seems to me a sheer waste of energy that these champions of Urdu should so strongly object to Hindi influence, and *vice versa*.

Therefore, I do feel that this renaissance of our provincial languages that has taken place is a thing which helps towards unification, and can never be a destructive factor in India. But apart from the language question, it depends again on the background of politics as they develop in India, because languages will be affected by them. For example, there is the Pakistan controversy. Suppose, for a moment, that Urdu becomes the official language in Pakistan and Hindi in the rest of India. If that leads to the destruction of Indian unity, it is not the fault of the language but of certain arguments on the political front that are taking place in India. Languages by themselves, I am convinced, are not a destructive factor, not at all a factor leading to disunity, partly because the languages are akin to each other and the growth of one helps to build up the others, and anyhow they are not going to hinder each other's growth.

Apart from this question of politics behind them, ultimately it all depends mainly on whether we have some kind of a common philosophy, common ethical standards, common artistic standards. If they differ greatly, then those divergences may show themselves in our languages and may lead to unfortunate consequences. If there are vital differences or fundamental differences in our philosophy of life, then the barriers between nations will remain high. If we have certain standards of conduct in common, we can get along amicably, even if we may differ physically, spiritually and artistically. If not, I can only guess what the future is going to be. I am not quite competent to know for certain which will triumph, the good in life or the evil in life.

One thing more before I finish my half hour, and that is this: in literature everything depends on how much freedom there is to function. Freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of occupation, and freedom generally to function as we believe, are all essential for the growth of literature. The slowness in the development of many of our

languages is largely due to the absence of political freedom. Lack of political freedom comes in the way of all progress. But even in a politically free India, if there is no freedom of speech and expression, then it can only be an obstruction in the way of the growth of our languages and it may even lead to unhealthy and disuniting forces growing up. Restrictions on freedom of speech and expression will prevent the languages from affecting the minds of the people at large. That means that you are creating barriers to their self-expression, that you are separating some people at the top from the vast masses at the bottom and thereby creating a select coterie which functions in an artificial atmosphere. There is nothing more dangerous than this idea of authority. Personally, I rebel against that idea in all its phases. In this connection, I was surprised at the whole body of the P.E.N. standing up when a princely message was read this morning, even though it may be in accordance with the traditions of the State.

So it seems to me that the very essence of our growth is this essential freedom, political freedom, because the other types of freedom depend on this. Along with political freedom, there must of course be freedom of speech and expression. Also, the words that we use, the language that we use, should keep in touch with changing conditions. We are a conservative people and we still stick to false values. This sticking to outmoded values obstructs the growth of one's culture. It has already done us immense harm. Sanskrit lost its popularity because it did not keep in touch with the life of the people. One reason why provincial languages and literatures are more vital today than they were before is because they went back to the life of the people and drew inspiration from it. That, again, is another reason why they should develop as a uniting force, because the life of the people in India, taken as a whole, does not differ greatly. The difference — such as it is — is at the top. If you once go down to the large masses, you come to something that is common,— whether you express it in this language or in that language does not matter.

Well, now I leave it to more learned persons to continue this discussion.

6. Tej Bahadur Sapru[1]

From my childhood onwards I have known Tej Bahadurji. Sometimes we were closely associated, at other times our contacts were infrequent and our respective paths took us in different directions. I remember him in my boyhood as a rising star both in law and public life. I remember him also as a senior ever indulgent and helpful to a junior lawyer. But though law claimed some of my attention then, my mind wandered frequently to other fields, and to Tej Bahadurji I looked, in common with many a young man of my generation, for help and guidance in both law and public activity. How often we used to go to his house in the long summer evenings to talk to him and to listen to him, for he has always been a good conversationalist and a charming host. And in my eagerness for action in the political field we used to urge him to take the lead of the youth who were bubbling over with new ideas and rather contemptuous of conservative and static age.

The still waters of our political life began to flow again with a new speed. We passed through rapids and whirlpools and rushing torrents and our individual rafts parted company for a long while. But from time to time they again drew near to each other and though there had been marked differences in our political approach and activities, there was always the same friendly look in his eyes, the same warmth of affection, the same generosity and hospitality.

Both of us grew older, and with the passage of years and the accumulation of layer upon layer of experience in the hard school of life, we changed. Politically and in many other ways our thinking and action were still apart from each other, but we drew nearer and old bonds were renewed and new bonds were added to them. More and more I began to realise that while politics and economics were important, the essential and basic foundations of a man's character were still more important. In the men and women I knew I began to search for these basic characteristics, for uprightness and straightness, for sincerity and certain nobility of bearing in life's tortuous journey.

Tej Bahadurji was and is a very eminent lawyer and jurist; he was a scholar taking delight in the literatures of the past and present, himself an embodiment of that synthesis of cultures which India is always

1. *Tej Bahadur Sapru: Profiles and Tributes*, edited by K.N. Raina and K.V. Gopala Ratnam. This tribute was given for a collection made in 1945 to honour Tej Bahadur Sapru on his seventieth birthday. The book was not published till 1971, in deference to his wishes.

aiming at; he was an elder statesman with a certain ripeness of judgment. But more than all this he was a good friend on whom one could always rely, and a man straight and true, when so many about us are neither straight nor true. Even though he had grown older, there was always the freshness of youth about him, and on his face there was a welcoming smile for every comer. People admired him for his success in many fields of activity, but it was not admiration that counted so much as the affection he evoked in others. To young or old he has always been a comrade, and, because of this, young and old have gone to him and been refreshed by his company.

And so today on the eve of the seventieth anniversary of his birth, I pay my tribute of homage and affection to him.

7. Art and Life[1]

Art, if it does not spring up from the strength of our nation, is a lifeless art. If it has no connection with the problems and realities of life, it is useless and dead like the pictures of women in the Ajanta caves.

An artist with a living mind can produce art full of life. An artist with a dead mind will produce only lifeless art. Art, which cannot grapple with and face the great problems of our age, cannot be helpful in our life. The main function of art is not only to please the eyes, but to guide men in the struggle for existence.

I am bitterly against the present system of teaching art in schools. I have seen my pictures hanging on the walls in schools. If my face had been as ugly as depicted in those pictures, I would have committed suicide.

Our people are living in the most wretched conditions. They have been brought up in an atmosphere in which aestheticism is unknown. Leaving aside the question of poor labourers, the people of the middle class are living a most contemptible life.

The houses of the taluqdars of Lucknow make me feel most disgusted. These people have a knack of doing things wrongly which can be done in a right way. The cities in this country are in a most miserable condition. It is no fault of the members of the municipalities. They know nothing about aestheticism.

1. Inaugural speech at an art exhibition, Lucknow, 17 November 1945. From *The Leader*, 19 November 1945.

the countryside during the last ten days, that my mind is benumbed by the overwhelming experience. I have addressed huge gatherings at many places and this experience has been terrifying. I have come in communion with large numbers of people and seen at close quarters the problem of Indian poverty as it exists. I have moved about in the areas where the influence of newspapers is not felt because no newspapers are read except occasionally, and that too, only Hindi and Urdu newspapers. You sometimes forget the fact that what you print in newspapers do not reach the large numbers of people in the country and the reverse fact is also true that you seldom publish anything about these large numbers. You give publicity to the news about cities, about prominent politicians and their speeches. You are much too generous in giving publicity to persons like me. There is really precious little in the newspapers about the masses of India, their economic and social conditions and their poverty.

Rural India is really forgotten and not thought of at all. There are casually some editorial articles on the poverty of India. Even in cities the chief function of news agencies or reporters appears to be to go to half a dozen prominent individuals, get statements from them and send them for publication. It is necessary that you should have trained people who can go to the countryside, to the slums, and study social conditions as big newspapers do in other countries.

I do not say that you wish to ignore the rural areas, but there is nobody to report them. You have one or two news services and a few correspondents scattered about chiefly in big towns. Thus the picture that you draw is not a picture of the whole of India. When one goes to rural areas and sees signs of utter poverty and degradation, one is shocked, and then one realises that the problems of the day are essentially the problems of these vast masses of human beings and not those about whom you write leading articles.

I have watched the beginning of the conference from a distance. I was much interested in it. I think that the conference is a good and right move and an inevitable development in the life of newspapers in India. Many of the things that you did or decided to do are not to my liking. I think that you sometimes wobbled when a stricter course might have been more befitting to the dignity of the press and the dignity of India. Nevertheless, I realise that you have had your own difficulties, and you have them still.

Generally speaking, a newspaper carries weight. It carries weight if it has an individuality and some kind of a crusading spirit. If it has not got these, it merely expresses the views of some individuals which

have some effect of course, but not the type of effect which a newspaper ought to have. Perhaps this is also largely due to the fact that newspapers progressively become huge industries — not only individual industries but soon they reach the next stage of development, perhaps an inevitable stage, although an undesirable one. That is, they become big combines starting a chain of newspapers and dictating policies often detrimental to the interests of the country. Because of these big chains, a newspaper loses its individuality and sanctity which every paper so zealously guards. It tries to preserve some vested interest and presents some particular viewpoint only.

I do not know how it is possible to avoid all this. Nevertheless, it does seem to me a dangerous trend and a harmful development, because a newspaper must, whatever its views might be, maintain a certain integrity about the news. It must give all the news, which are worthy of being given, and it must give them without any distortion.

Your conference can do some good by avoiding any distortion or suppression of news. It seems to me far more dangerous to suppress news than to do anything else in a newspaper.

Unfortunately in India you have to face a great deal of suppression of news by the authorities — a deliberate and definite suppression — and a ban on the publicity of big events. But what is almost equally bad is the sense of fear pervading a newspaper office that if you tell the truth you might get into trouble.

The present atmosphere is not suited for the press which seeks the truth or tries to tell the truth. If you have to function properly you have to contend against it, and you might have to contend against it in future also. One result of the suppression of news is that whenever it comes out it appears in a distorted form — either exaggerated or minimised — and becomes difficult to be believed by people. When people tend to believe that what a newspaper says is only a part of the truth and not the whole truth, that paper is bound to fall in the estimation of the public.

One of the most tragic things that happened because of the suppression of news was the way you dealt with the Bengal famine. In the beginning no news about the famine appeared at all in the newspapers. People died by thousands daily, but there was no mention of it. It was a most astonishing thing. Ultimately one newspaper of Calcutta broke through the cordon and then the news gradually came through. It is impossible for any newspaper to function properly or to serve the public if this kind of practice is followed.

In England, America and elsewhere newspapers have vast circulations,

but not much direct influence. Sometimes people vote exactly in opposition to what newspapers tell them to do, because they feel that newspapers are not a proper guide. To some extent it is true that a newspaper is influenced by external factors; it may be influenced by its advertising revenue, or even by political parties. But the lesser it is the better.

Ultimately it does not pay to suppress news, because suppression of news inevitably makes people get a false idea of the situation. Suppression of news does not alter facts and when facts come to be known they upset people. Once an impression is created that news is suppressed, people do not believe even the news that is not suppressed and thus even a true report does not carry much weight. So the first essential for this conference is to insist upon complete freedom of news. The Government on its part should give complete freedom to the press and should not impede the growth of a free, fearless and powerful press.

You have to face this problem. It is inevitable in the existing conditions to have to suffer the continuous interference of governmental authority, the desire of this authority to suppress news. I exhort the editors not to be carried away, in giving true and nothing but true news to the public, by any outside influence or governmental authority.

As a politician I am in continuous difficulty. I speak too often and I am sometimes misreported. I do not know what to do about it. I cannot go on issuing contradictions every time. Almost always I speak in Hindustani and they are translated into English by reporters. The odd thing is that reports of my speeches in Urdu and Hindi newspapers are retranslations of these English translations and therefore they lack originality. Sometimes there are terrible distortions and people often draw my attention to them. I am referring specially to absolute misrepresentations and complete fabrications in certain Urdu and Hindi newspapers from which I have sometimes personally suffered. I urge that such a practice should be stopped.

I do think that it is important that a more efficient system of news service should be organised in India. If transmission of news takes place in Hindustani, as it is done now in English, it will increase the efficiency of the Indian language newspapers tremendously. First of all you will not have to sit down and translate everything into English and then retranslate them into Hindi or Urdu. You will get more or less the original report. It will save time and increase efficiency. After all, you must realise that, important as the English newspapers are in India, and no doubt they will play an important part for a considerable time to come, the future of journalism in India lies with the language newspapers. For this reason especially, there is the need for improving these

papers even more than the English newspapers. You have to improve them through such services as I have suggested and through a better type of personnel.

You have been trying to raise the emoluments, allowances, wages and salaries of newspapermen. There is some complaint specially from the language newspapers that the pay scales have not been fixed high enough. With such little experience as I have, I can say that newspapermen are paid badly and in a large number of cases their pay scales are very low.

Personally I think it is always wrong that there should be a big difference between the pay scales of the highest and the lowest employee in any organisation. One of the tests of efficiency should be how little is the difference of income between the man at the top and the man at the bottom. All other differences fade away before this big difference of income. When I look at India I try to compare the difference between the Viceroy's salary and allowances and the income of the peasant. This difference gives me some idea of the Indian social system. I am not prepared to accept that any person is a thousand times better than any other person. Whatever the difference might be in the work the difference in the pay scales should be lessened.

I do appeal to you to consider this — the raising of the standard of the journalists not only in regard to payment, but also in regard to their efficiency. The two should really go together and it is difficult to say which comes first.

Large numbers of workers in newspaper offices, especially in language newspaper offices, are not competent. They are inefficient and do not know their job. This is so because they are not given proper wages. It is a vicious circle which you must break and get competent people by paying adequate wages.

I also feel that the news services in India are not well organised. I remember in my boyhood days I was reading *The Pioneer*, published from Allahabad, from the beginning to the end without ever realising that an Indian lived in India. Now, of course, there is a tremendous difference in the entire presentation of news, but the social scene in India is still not depicted correctly. A great difference exists between the newspapers owned by the Englishmen and those owned by the Indians. I feel that even the latter, as regards the coverage of news, are not rightly balanced. While they devote too much space to national and anti-governmental news they ignore the various social, cultural and economic problems of the masses.

India is fed in respect of foreign news partly by Reuter, which is a news agency, and partly by a few special correspondents and to a slight

extent by some American news agencies. Some years ago when I went to Malaya, there was a new world of news opened out before me. In Singapore I found a flood of American agencies. In Chungking there was a variety of news supplied by an American agency and by Reuter, Tass, Habas, etc. There were all kinds of news from which I could pick and choose. In India one particular agency has the monopoly of news which is unfortunate.

I should like news to come from all sources, but above all I should like your conference and the owners of all newspapers present here to think of starting your own foreign news service. Of course, some of you have correspondents abroad. If a foreign news service is started by you it must be absolutely A-one and quite efficient. An Indian foreign news service should pay particular attention to those aspects which are of interest to India, both from the world standpoint and from our national point of view. It would be difficult for one or two newspapers to organise such a big foreign news service. The burden would be considerable. A number of newspapers could combine for the purpose and appoint their agents. I would like these agents to be posted in some of the important world centres like Washington, London, Paris and Moscow. But I would particularly like them to go to places which are not sufficiently covered by other news agencies.

Whatever the future of India, we are going to have trade, cultural and political contacts with countries in Asia and it is quite likely that questions of common defence may also arise. There is also a possibility of some kind of Asiatic federation. So from every point of view it becomes important that you should develop contacts with Asian countries. There can be no difficulty about funds, if a number of newspapers join together. It would be convenient to start with 20 or 30 centres. But you should have competent men for this job. So I would request you to consider this suggestion and push it through quickly.

We live in such rapidly changing times that it becomes very important for us to keep in touch with the varying aspects of news in South East Asia, the Middle East and the rest of the world.

The quality of advertisements appearing in some newspapers sometimes pains me. I appeal to the editors that they should exercise a stricter censorship over advertisements so that undesirable advertisements are not accepted. Personally I hope that when there is a popular government it will come down with a heavy hand on such advertisements and prohibit them without giving the press any choice in the matter.

You have to decide what you are running a newspaper for. Is it an industry for profit? No newspaper can of course be run unless it is

sound financially. It can suffer loss for some time, it cannot suffer loss for ever. It must be self-supporting at least. Owing to technical developments the cost of running a newspaper efficiently has become great.

In running a newspaper you should think in terms of the freedom of news and the freedom of man. The freedom of India, of course, comes in inevitably for every Indian. I want you especially to think in terms of the common man in India, because this common man in India, with whom I have been hobnobbing so much for the last ten days, has been neglected very much. I feel a sense of shame that it should be so. We have neglected him continuously in our political arguments and squabbles. So I take leave of you with this appeal that you should think about the common man in India.

APPENDIX

1. To Frances Gunther[1]

Allahabad
April 29, 1938

My dear Frances,
What delightful letters you write — vivid, vital, impertinent, aggressive and intimate. Don't spoil them by excuses and apologies, and don't try to reform. I like them as they are. Having adopted the restrained and sober English university version of the English language as a kind of step-mother tongue, I appreciate all the more the raciness and vitality of your language and feel rather sorry that I am not capable of using it. I suppose you consider my mid-Victorian periods and phrases as just drivel and something B.C. and hopelessly out of date. Probably they are. I might perhaps accustom myself to the use of more racy language. I might learn American slang. I suppose I could get into it soon enough if I spent a few weeks in America or even if I had the good fortune to be with you for a while. But how in hell (observe the progress I am making) am I to get rid of my background of tradition and the thousands of years that cling to me and make me prisoner? What do you, upstarts from a tradition-less country, know of this damnable burden? It is well that you don't. And yet the matter is not so easily disposed of. There is some virtue in tradition even though it may impose upon us loose pyjamas and diaper-like dresses. You talk of artists. Do they grow up to order on any soil? Do not be too hard on the past, bad as it often is. It is for me and the likes of me to curse the past and try to get rid of it for we are its slaves. But you who are more or less free from its evils perhaps miss something that is worthwhile. Have you ever the feeling of age about you — almost of agelessness? Of course not — you are so damned young, living in the present, oblivious of the past, but sometimes dreaming of the future. You are lucky, for that is the only way to live intensively, though perhaps the past gives a certain richness and fullness. But it takes away from absorption in the present, invisible but nonetheless effective bars come in between one and the earthly paradise. One can merely look on.

Very old are we men;
Our dreams are tales
Told in dim Eden
By Eve's nightingales.

1. Frances Gunther Papers, N.M.M.L.

Curious this sense of age that comes upon me. People talk of being as old as you feel. What when this body feels young but the mind is old? Ultimately I suppose the body prevails and has its way but the mind can make a nuisance of itself.

There is much truth in your criticisms though some of them are extremely silly. Of course we are incompetent and slow and we waste time over trivialities. And yet it is not so obvious that ceaseless action leads to good results, and efficiency itself might be turned to wrong ends. The efficient nations today are not bright examples of what should be done. Almost one feels that a slowing down of their activity might be good for humanity. Personally I am all for activity and efficiency (even though I sometimes address my envelopes myself) and as an Indian I prefer even wrong action to inaction because we are naturally prone to inertia. But if I was an American I think I would talk less of activity or efficiency and more of the ends in view.

You criticise us for not having supplied you with all manner of facts and figures here as the Government of India did. Perhaps we might have done better. But has it struck you that you might be accused of inefficiency also? Or at any rate a deliberate carelessness in this matter. What did you and John do in India? Apart from a few days in Bombay, you rushed about interviewing Viceroys, Governors, officials, States people and the like. Of course if a wellknown Congressman was sitting on the doorstep, you nodded to him also. If you did not have a measure of sense and a capacity to see under the surface of things, you would have formed an entirely wrong picture of India. As it is I suppose your picture is distorted enough but being friendly and partial to us, you do not allow this to affect your judgment on the important issues. It is curious how you successfully avoided every important Congress function and did not even meet people who were worth meeting. I met you and John casually in Bombay. I had not gone there to meet you but to have tea with Sarojini Naidu & Bebe. It was delightful meeting you both of course but then I did not consider it a business meeting at all. I was looking forward to a real talk some time later in Allahabad or elsewhere. That never came off. You did not come to Haripura which was a great piece of organisation and which would have given you a greater insight into Indian Congress politics than anything else. Evidently you were under the impression that Bombay and Calcutta were the principal centres of Congress activity. Well they are not. They are backwaters.

And so you go away having seen mostly the Indians who surround the Viceregal courts. You would have found a different type elsewhere.

The only real chance you had was in the Frontier Province where you spent a few hours with (me). And that was almost an accidental meeting—a delightful accident which I shall treasure.

You might be interested to know that your friend whom you admire so much, Sir Mirza Ismail of Mysore, has just been indulging in a little wild shooting. *Two days ago a crowd of ten thousand villagers who* wanted to put up a National Flag were told not to do so and to disperse in five minutes. They refused and therefore they were fired upon and 32 were killed and a large number wounded.

I am pointing out some of your failings just out of spite because you indulge in so much criticism. And yet fundamentally you are right. I was astonished to read John's article in *The Nation*. It was remarkably good. The surprising part was that he had written it soon after arrival in India.

I have written more than I intended to and it is late at night. I am not sure of your address and the prospect of my taking the trouble to write and the letter not reaching you irritates me. I am sending this to Shanghai. Probably you will have left by the time this gets there. I hope it will follow.

I am sailing on June 2nd for Europe. I shall be wandering about there for three months or so—perhaps more. I want to return overland via Russia and Central Asia. Certainly I ought to see more of Asia. The continent fascinates me and I love to look at the map of it. Crowds of memories fill my mind and then—*the future!* Last summer I went upto Singapore but unfortunately could not go further.

April is here also—not the lovely April afternoon full of golden laughter but an April when the temperature in the shade is 113°F—as it was today. But I am going off for a week to the Himalayas again and I have fixed up a little flying trip over the snows. From there I shall have a glimpse of Tibet on the other side and I shall fill my mind with visions and dreams of what might have been and what yet might be.

Do write to me. I love reading your letters.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

My address in England:
C/o India League
165 Strand
London W.C. 2

2. To Frances Gunther[1]

Srinagar (Garhwal)
(Not Kashmir)
May 5, 1938

Dear Frances,

I do not quite know why I am writing to you tonight as I have no idea where to send this letter. Probably I shall hang on to it till I return to Allahabad and some bright idea strikes me or some further news of your movements reaches me. The desire to write seized me and I had a little leisure and I have decided to succumb to the temptation.

I am in a mountain valley, not far as the map goes, but effectively cut off from the outside world for lack of communications. We are only 80 miles from the rail head — of this 60 miles can be done by car and 20 on horseback. It is extraordinary how this 20 miles of bridle path comes in the way of outside contacts. For a generation past, the people here have been shouting for a motor road but no heed has been paid to them as a road here has no military significance and officials and their like seldom come this way.

This is a beautiful valley in the upper reaches of the Ganges. A little town — in the old days a big town — nestles at the bottom on the banks of the gurgling mountain river. The people are very poor and there are no industries and precious little trade. The world seems to have forged ahead, forgetting it and leaving it to dry up as a backwater. Yet the whole place simply shouts for development. From the mountain rivers and waterfalls any amount of electric power could be produced. Such a place in Europe or America would be bright with charming villas and gardens and would attract hordes of visitors. Here hardly anyone comes and the place has a deserted look and the people, inevitably, are a dull unprogressive lot, though they are sturdy and often good to look at, as mountain people often are. I had a meeting today in the open and as I started the heavens opened their portals and rain came down in torrents. But we carried on merrily although everybody, including a large number of women, were thoroughly soaked.

Why am I writing to you? Because many sentences in your letters provoke me to thought and to reply. And yet your provocation often enough fits in with my own trend of thought. How I envy you the lack of thousands of years of tradition. It is a terrible and crushing burden. I do not think it is all bad but such a lot of it is just decadent putrid

1. Frances Gunther Papers, N.M.M.L.

matter. A clean slate to write on — what a joy that would be — And yet nobody has a clean slate — *not even you. And when one does have* a clean slate after a big and real revolution, curious things get written *almost of their* own accord. Must revolutions always swallow up their children? With all my admiration for what has been done in Russia, I feel *sick and* nauseated at recent events there — the numerous trials and executions. You make fun of *nonviolence* and *talk of meeting* knavery with greater knavery. Do you really feel that way? I am no *pacifist* in the ordinary sense of the word and I do think that violence is still necessary in our attempts to re-fashion the world. But violence and knavery are dangerous midwives and they give birth often enough to strange monsters. If violence is, sometimes, not to be avoided, surely knavery must be sat upon at all costs. The means do govern the end and the latest and most painful example is that of Russia. I can't bring myself to believe, now even less than before, that we are entitled to indulge in every objectionable and evil act provided only that our objective is good. By doing so the leadership passes rapidly to those who care little for the objective and are interested only in the evil *methods to be pursued.*

Logic and reasoning apart, I suppose, each individual's reaction depends far more on his temperament and psychological background. I am too much of an individualist, taking pride in a certain standard of behaviour, to be a success in other types of behaviour even if I indulged in them. *So I had better stick to my last and retain a measure of self-*respect. But of course this means that I have not the stuff of real leadership (in) me — no man of destiny business. Men of destiny do not try to look at themselves from outside as this is a disconcerting business and it shakes up their faith in the stars! Yet it always surprises me how I, constituted as I am, have succeeded in moving multitudes. You have given me good advice as to how I should behave in public *in order to keep it in good humour and develop a legend of greatness* for myself. That advice, from all accepted standards, is absolutely right. And yet I have almost always acted contrary *to it and by doing so I* have actually won their goodwill and affection all the more. I should like you to ponder over that. Without the slightest attempt to do so, or any tricks of the trade, I have attained to an enormous popularity and I gaze at crowds of faces upturned to me with something like the love-light looking out of their shining eyes. Probably I would have failed to achieve this in a western country. I might have achieved a certain emin*ence but certainly not this popularity. Why is this so?* Presumably because I fit in here. And yet this is just what I do not do. I do not fit in,

I am a misfit. And I am horribly conscious of this fact. Because of this I have cared little for the crowd's favours but they have been showered on me against my will. I hide myself and they come to me. I show temper and they take me to their heart. It is true that my temper has never been that of a superior to an inferior; it has never had any contempt in it, only impertinence and irritation at incompetence—My approach to a crowd has always been a friendly one and one of confidence in it. Because of that they have forgiven me much. Do you know what I am often called? *Bharat ka hriday samrat*—Lord of India's heart—a fascinating and pleasing phrase.

You object to Gandhi calling me in a preface to a book just simply 'Jawaharlal'. Well as a matter of fact he always used to address me in public as Pandit so and so. I took strong exception to this—I dislike appellations. It is customary in India, as I think it was in Russia, to refer to people by their personal names and not by their family names. All over India I am known to the peasantry as Jawaharlal or just simply as Jawahar. One of the popular songs is about the brave deeds of Jawahar. Jawaharlal is a fairly common name in India, yet it signifies in popular parlance only me. Nehru is an uncommon name and there are probably not more than three or four scores of Nehrus about, most of them in some way related to me distantly or nearly. Nehru would probably mean me but it might mean some cousin or relative of mine.

I have been writing to you about these trivial matters because I want you to appreciate how backgrounds count and how it is difficult to judge without knowing a particular background. I have somehow developed, unconsciously and unawares, into a person who has a certain intimacy with the crowd. I hate pomposity and because most prominent politicians are pompous in some measure, I was a change to the crowd. They liked this and my very vagaries and odd behaviour attracted them all the more to me. You talk of my pushing through a crowd in Peshawar. That was nothing. My experiences with a crowd would put in the shade the fieriest football scrimmage. I have an uncontrollable habit of going into the thick of a crowd and trying to control it and drill it to some extent. I can't look on when something goes wrong. I must be in it. So innumerable stories of my escapades have grown up and all add to the glamour in the public mind and I must perforce be taken to be as a romantic hero and a bright young man; although as you rightly point out, it is about time that I gave up thinking of myself as such. I do not think of myself as such, I do not act as such. I am not romantic or hero in that sense of the word, and certainly I am sadly conscious of the fact that my bright youth is a thing of the past. But despite me

the Indian people will put me in a line with their heroes of ancient tradition and refuse to take me as I am. What the hell am I to do. I am an iconoclast in many ways but India has a terrible way of taming her wild children.

It is late and I must go to bed now. I have to be up early tomorrow for a long mountain ride to another little town which sits perched up on a hill top.

But I must tell you that two days ago I had a delightful air trip over the mountains right up to the snow barrier between India and Tibet (Tibet is not far from here). We saw some of the sources of the Ganges from the air. And so goodnight to you. You provoke me into talking about myself and so you must put up with it to some extent.

Allahabad — May 9th

I have come back from the mountains to the heat of Allahabad and piles of work await me. Tomorrow I go off to Bombay. There are so many things in your letter which provoke me into writing but I dare not steal the time for it. But one general observation might perhaps help to understand India. India is a feminine country — I do not quite know if that is the correct way to say it. Anyway she has certain feminine virtues and certainly the feminine vices. All such generalisations are of course too vague and sweeping but there is a core of truth in them. And that is why I like India and am bound to her and yet feel intensely irritated at so many things I see. Is that a man's reaction to woman? Our dress and speech and habits generally are inclined to be feminine. Or is it just the climate? But something greater than climate and tradition now attacks India and it is science and industrialisation and the other applications of science and these will undoubtedly win. Why do I wear this absurd and inefficient diaper-like costume? One gets used to anything and I am sufficiently used to it now. But the real reason was and is that it brings me nearer to our masses. Any other dress would set up a barrier. More important things than dress reform have to be achieved first. Perhaps by changing the headgear — as Kamal Pasha did — the stuff inside the head is also changed to some extent. But it is an unstable and risky business and may delay matters in the long run. Remember Amanullah and Afghanistan. Turkey and Persia are tiny countries compared to India and size does make a difference in the approach to a problem. It is a devil of a job to discipline and standardise 350 millions. I think it is remarkable what we have done. True the mud-hut is there. But we have to get rid of the mud-hut

mentality before we build better huts and houses — and we must have the power to do so.

I am surprised at your intense dislike of the Muslims. I think you are unjust to them, though there is some truth in what you say. They have produced many worthwhile things in the past but it does seem to be true that they have exhausted their vital energy and capacity for creative activity. Where they are showing this energy and capacity it is really apart from Islam. They are turning them to pre-Islamic times and partly to modern Europe & America. In India because they are in a minority and are backward educationally and economically they suffer from a terrible inferiority complex. Fear of the future envelopes them. This fear is essentially not of the Hindus, though they may think so, but of modernity and all that this implies to a religion and tradition based on dogma and bigotry. To some extent this fear is present among the Hindus also but it is far less for the Hindu is essentially a pagan in outlook and so inevitably capable of adjusting himself to changing conditions. A leading and highly intelligent Socialist who is a Hindu is a firm believer in a well-known system of Hindu philosophy whose founder lived somewhere in the 8th century. He (the Socialist — Communist) has actually written a book on imperialism in which he has tried to show how the two fit in completely. Personally I am not interested in metaphysics and do not claim to understand even the intricacies of ancient philosophy.

What a problem we have got in India. And yet it will solve itself I have no doubt. If violence comes in, well we shall put up with it. But what is the good of dreaming about violence and bombs and machine guns when we see the bloody hell that they have created in Europe. Is it sensible to expect peace and progress and real communism to emerge out of gangsterism and murder? You cannot get out of it. Men and communities and nations are powerfully affected by the methods they adopt.

But I must stop. I am sending this to Tokyo. I wonder if you will get it. My last letter was sent to Shanghai. Did it reach you?

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To Frances Gunther[1]

Feb. 4, 1940

Dear Frances,

How delightful you are as a friend, so full of surprises, of welcome gifts, and just the right messages sent at the right moment! Your cable came the other day when I was feeling weary and depressed, and I felt better and happier for it. The two books you sent me were just the books I would have liked. Thurber's[2] *The Last Flower* was a joy and so many have shared that joy with me — including the Mahatma. *I Believe*[3] reminded me of the frantic attempts a year and a half ago of some American publishers to get something of this kind out of me. I was tempted to give in and nearly did so. But the more I thought over it, the more difficult I found the task. What exactly did I believe in? Was I sure I believed in it? Perhaps four or five years ago I would have been more certain and more assured. But that certainty and assurance were no longer there and I wandered in a forest of doubt and hesitation with all manner of new questions and problems assailing me. It was not courage, I think, that was lacking, but sureness of vision. Perhaps that itself is a result of lack of courage. Anyway your message of courage and love was most cheering.

I saw your article[4] in *Life*. As a result of this article I am getting many letters from America which I find difficult to answer. Why do you boom me up so and try to force greatness upon me? And who told you that I go for a periodical sacrificial dip in the Ganges? I do not remember having done so except in my childhood when my mother sometimes took me there. The picture you give was taken at the time of my mother's funeral. But forgive me for being critical about small matters. It was good of you to write that article.

A few days ago I had a visit from Kline, the American A P. man, and he told me that you had been ill and that John had to hurry back from Europe because of this. I was very sorry to learn of your relapse from health. I hope you have fully recovered.

For the last few days I have been watching the women of India, or

1. Frances Gunther Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. James Thurber (1894-1961); American writer and cartoonist.
3. It contained essays by twenty three thinkers, including E.M. Forster, H J. Laski, Lin Yutang, Pearl Buck and Ludwig and Thomas Mann, on their personal philosophies.
4. The title of the article was "Nehru, Hope of India".

some of them, in session from a distance. The All India Women's Conference was meeting in Allahabad and the city became quite colourful with their gay attire. They quarrelled a lot among themselves about relatively trivial matters, but on the whole they did remarkably well. They are becoming aggressive. There is a chance of their sending a women's delegation to visit China.

This is written in some haste — forgive the scribble. I hope I shall have good news of you soon —

Yours,
Jawahar

Just as I had finished writing
this your letter of Dec. 1st reached me.

4. To Frances Gunther[1]

Allahabad
April 7, 1940

A good morning to you also, my dear, and many of them. The mornings are good anyhow, the sun comes out with irritating regularity, the rivers flow on, the fields ripen, flowers bloom, and nature, fascinating and delightful, wicked and callous, carries on regardless of what happens to the innumerable midgets that crawl about the earth's surface. We go our daily rounds till exhaustion seizes us and we fade out, and sometimes the morning is good to us, more often not. But it is good to have messages which cheer and bring pleasant pictures to our minds, and the morning then changes its hue and smiles at us.

Do you know some lines of A.E. Housman:

Yonder see the morning blink:
    The sun is up, and so must I,
To wash and dress and eat and drink
and look at things and talk and think
    and work, and God knows why.
Oh often have I washed and dressed
    and what's to show for all my pain?
Let me lie abed and rest:
Ten thousand times I've done my best
    and all's to do again.

1. Frances Gunther Papers, N.M.M.L.

I have spent a few days in a volunteers' camp on the other side of the river Jumna. I used to get up in the early dawn, long before the sun was up, and watch this silver crescent emerge from the darkness and shimmer in the morning light. I have known the Jumna all my life but suddenly I was struck by her attraction and beauty and became her devoted admirer. I like the rivers of India, more especially those of northern India which I know best. I have seen them rushing through deep gorges in the mountains and crossed them by rope bridge which swung up and down over the roaring torrent. I have watched them emerge into the plains below and become majestic streams which give life to those arid plains. The physical beauty impresses me but even more so the song and legend and history that are intertwined with them. The Ganges is Indian history and culture. The Indus is, as its name itself implies, the river of India.

But I am writing to you nonsense, you will say, or at any rate something that is not worth writing about. Perhaps. What exactly is worthwhile? Something that one craves for and cannot reach? Anyway it is good to hear from you, and pleasant to think and write about the thousand and one things that are not so frightfully important, politically or economically. There is our friend the censor, remember, and probably he will think that rivers are a safe subject for American consumption. But even the placid surface of the waters sometimes covers strange currents and unplumbed depths.

So *au revoir* —

Yours,
Jawahar

5. To Frances Gunther[1]

Allahabad
Sept. 10, 1940

My dear Frances,

It is good to hear from you, even though sometimes you are far from cheerful. I feel younger and some of your abundant vitality flows into me. Two years, you say, have made you feel a thousand years old. But you will carry the weight of these thousand years lightly and cast it off. What of me who have these centuries in my blood and cannot get rid of

1. Frances Gunther Papers, N.M.M.L.

them? The Harrovian in me, whom you dislike, has perhaps helped in preventing me from becoming submerged in these past ages. But they will not be denied, more especially now when death and destruction dominate the world.

I grow curiously detached from life, and yet at the same time life attracts me. The desire to achieve, or perhaps belief in achievement, is far less than it used to be—it is still there of course. Repeated shocks have dulled my sensitiveness and I am prepared to expect almost anything. Life does not seem to be such a valuable thing after all. Most of us make a mess of it anyhow, and even if we try to behave others make the mess. I do not think that death, if it came suddenly, would put me out greatly. The desire of a methodical person to tie up some loose ends before I left for good would be there, little more.

But do not imagine that I am morbid, because I am not. Like you, and possibly much more than you, I have grown rapidly, and the changing of many of the values in life, which seemed so unchangeable, makes a difference.

I am writing about myself, when I ought to write about you. And yet I wrote about myself with a purpose, and not through sheer egotism. Our reactions to events have not been essentially different and I wanted you to feel that. But I am harder than you and so almost unconsciously I take refuge in detachment. Not to do so would lead to madness or worse. Have you heard of King Janaka, a mythical Indian ruler, who is supposed to have (been) the ideal combination of a philosopher and a king? He sought no escape from life and went through its joys and sorrows, but he kept himself above them. It is said of him that he could sit with one hand in a fire and the other on a woman's breast, and neither affected his composure. I am afraid I am very far from being like Janaka, and I am not sure that I would care to be like him. And yet there is something attractive about this detachment in life. It does help when everything seems to go wrong.

Possibly I shall have soon further opportunities to cultivate 'detachment', for we have reached a real crisis. Long before this letter reaches you, I ought to be in prison again. It is five years now since I came out and a fresh discipline is needed. Meanwhile, we grow old and life passes on, which is sad.

Thank you for the picture of Johnny. He is a jolly and attractive boy.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

6. To Frances Gunther[1]

June 12, 1941

My dear Frances,

When did I write to you last? It seems as if ages have gone by and the earth has grown in size and thrown up new barriers which separate and make even communications by letters or otherwise a difficult undertaking. I did not write to you during all these long months for obvious reasons. Letter writing from jail is not an easy task. But now that I have a chance, I am taking it and sending you these few lines. Write to me sometimes and perhaps the letter might reach me.

Your birthday greetings came to me and the books—or rather two of them. I do not know what happened to Hemingway's new novel, whether it got lost on the high seas or the wide Indian plains. Books take a long time in coming through, if they come at all. The American edition of my book took four and a half months to reach me. I got it only ten days ago.

So far I have only seen two reviews of the book. These are so fulsome that I felt quite puffed up and at the same time rather uncomfortable. I have always the sensation that people mistake me for some one else, or rather they imagine me to be an imaginary creature very different from what I am. What do you take me for? Some astral wraith floating about, even though confined in prison, or a creature of flesh and blood?

No, I have not read a single one of Mahan's[2] books, though I think I dipped into one when I was at Cambridge. Shameful confession. In those far off days of long ago I was attracted by Mahan and I read a good deal about him, but somehow I never came to grips with his books. Now that you recommend him so stoutly, I am making an attempt to get some of his books. Indu has just gone to Calcutta and I have asked her to find them.

My reading just at present is of ancient stuff—Greek plays and old Indian plays. I suppose you do not know much about the latter. There are four good translations. Ranjit Pandit, who is my stable companion here, is translating one[3] now. This was written in the 4th century

1. Frances Gunther Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914); naval officer and historian; his works include *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660 1783*, and *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future*.
3. *Mudrarakshas*.

A.D. and deals with a period soon after Alexander's visit to India — about the 3rd century B.C. Unlike most old and new plays, which deal with the eternal problem of man and woman, this one is a purely political play, dealing with statecraft, war, fifth column activities and the like. One begins to feel that the world has not changed so much after all.

You who have read so much about India and come to very definite (often possibly erroneous!) conclusions, probably give little thought to the past of India. And yet when you deal with countries like China and India you cannot ignore this terribly long cultural continuity which is embedded in the racial consciousness of the peoples of these countries. Modern though you call me, I am fascinated by China's and India's past — culturally speaking — just as I admire old Greece. It is surprising how much there was in common between that Greece and contemporary India. We are supposed to be a religious, philosophical, metaphysical and esoteric people. Perhaps there is some truth in all that but only a fraction of truth. The India of old did not deny life but accepted it and enjoyed it and loved beauty in all its forms in the true pagan fashion. I grow more and more of a pagan.

But jail letters must not be long and must not deal with forbidden topics.

Yes, I wonder when I shall spend a birthday in America and have the advantage of being reminded of it by the American Telephone Service. I shall do it one day. And whether it is my birthday or yours, or no birthday at all, we shall celebrate it anyhow!

Love

Yours,
Jawahar

7. To Frances Gunther[1]

Wardha
14.6.42

My dear Frances,

You are perfectly justified in using strong language. There are no extenuating circumstances and I plead guilty to the charge. But have you

1. Frances Gunther Papers, N.M.M.L.

not often wondered why it is that the letters we want to write are not written and those that have no significance fill our days. For a letter, in order to be worthwhile, must be a bit of oneself, and how can you draw this self out in the storm and hurry of these days? One waits for leisure and the right mood, and one waits in vain. For though moods may vary, and may be good or bad, they are overshadowed by strain and tension and the future that creeps inexorably on and swallows up the present and then itself fades away into the realm of things forgotten.

But the real reason is the outbreak of the war in the Pacific. As this naturally affected communications, America seemed to be further away than ever and sending a letter was an adventure which might or might *not succeed. Perhaps I was wrong but the idea of writing to any one* in America faded out of my mind. It was bad enough to go through a battery of censors but to wait for months and months for a letter to reach or a reply to come was a sufficient deterrent.

Other things happened eating up my time and preying upon my mind. Life lost such little gaiety as it once possessed and there seemed little chance of its returning, at any rate for a long while. Meanwhile, the burden of years grew upon us.

Recently, since so many Americans descended upon us, I believe a fairly speedy air service functions between India and the U.S.A. But I am not sure if private individuals can take advantage of it.

From *time to time little slips of paper*, bearing a word or two from you, or pictures or cartoons sent by you, have reached me. I liked them and liked even more the thought of the sender behind them. Yet I would have preferred a letter from you.

What am I to write? There is in a sense a hell of a lot to say and to write. But it must all get so stale by the time this reaches you. And much of it may not reach you at all.

The years just before the war in Europe had a strange effect on me. The whole political stage of Europe seemed trivial — just a puppet show — with badly brought up children quarrelling with and *killing each* other. This war has confirmed that impression and it amazes me how intelligent people refuse to deal with fundamentals and real causes. Of course the war has to be won and so each party goes on making bigger and noisier bombs and tanks and planes etc. If killing there must be, let us kill by all means, but is that the end of it? It is an odd mad world and I can't get the hang of it. And so, how can I be an effective politician or leader?

When I was in prison and had time to think, I pondered over all this and over India and China and Europe and America. India and

China, with all their innumerable failings and backwardness, went up in my estimation, while Europe seemed all played out and lost in interminable blood feuds. I do not know what the future of Europe or any other part of the world will be but I feel convinced that it will play second fiddle. In spite of its great and undoubted achievements, it has been weighed and tested and found wanting. Even after nearly three years of war it can only think in terms of bombs and the like and little else.

Last month after the Cripps affair and some other distressing business I felt suddenly very weary in mind. The body is well enough and functions satisfactorily but the mind develops more and more the habits of a vagabond. So I ran away to the mountains and spent a few days under the snow-covered Himalayas not far from the Tibetan border. I felt at peace there and recovered somewhat from my mental weariness. Memories of the pagan days of our race came back to me and the mountains were filled with figures of long ago. You see I am a pagan still and these dogmatic creeds of today — religious, political and economic — do not suit me.

I was in the mountains for a week only and now I have come back to reality which somehow seems so artificial. Perhaps out of all this some new reality will emerge, though there are no signs of it yet and *the great ones of the earth continue to talk the dead language of yesterday.* Is there a tomorrow after all? Or must we live through a long succession of yesterdays?

You cabled to me to come to America. I hope you got my reply. I would love to go there and meet you again. I am sure it would do me good. But I am not a propagandist and I hate this idea of going anywhere as such. Anyway I cannot leave India at present except for a specific job. I cannot go away from India when danger hovers over all of us. I must face that with my people. The fate of India is not going to be decided in London or Washington but here over our wide plains and valleys and mountains. Of course if a real call comes and there is something behind it, I might think of going over. But not for vague talk. I have had too much of this.

All good wishes to you and love

Yours,
Jawahar

GLOSSARY

Darogas (Rajasthan)	personal attendants of ruling families
Navjiban	new life

INDEX

(Biographical footnotes are italicized)

Abbottabad, 394, 578, 579
Abdullah, Sheikh Muhammad, 63, 384–385, 388, 391, 396, 405, 443, 572–573
Adhikari, G., 531 & *fn*, 535
Afghanistan, 440, 629
Africa, 209, 448
Agra, 364 fn
Ahmadnagar Fort, 7, 11, 17, *19*, *102*, 188, 206, 212, 252, 282, 366, 438, 600
Ahmed, Z.A., 523 fn–524
Ahmedabad, 589
Ahom Sabha (Assam), 266 & fn
Ahrars, 246, *275*
Ajmer, 455
Akali Dal, 122, 175–177, 194, 346
Akalis, 77, 79, 176, 178 fn, 526
Alexander, 39, 636
Ali, Ghulam, 133 & fn
——, Maulana Mohamed, 281 fn
Allahabad, 12, 30, 45 fn, 63, 74, 112–113, 124, 134, 138, 151, 198, 206, 232, 335, 347, 355, 401, 445, 449, 453, 569, 576–578, 588, 617, 624, 626, 629
Allah Baksh, 119 fn, 323, 328
Allied Powers, 518
All India Conference of Indian Christians, 237
All India Congress Committee, 199–200, 290, 292, 338, 353, 419, 446–447, 544, 546
All India Muslim League *see* Muslim League
All India States People's Conference, 357, 376, 397, 405, 410, 421; Standing Committee of, 383, 400, 415, 420
All India Students Congress, 358, 488, 517
All India Trade Union Congress, 94
All India Women's Conference, 224, 346, 632
All India Women's Council, 95
All Jammu & Kashmir National Conference *see* Kashmir National Conference
Almora, 567
Almora jail, 47
Ambedkar, B.R., 596; followers of, 96
American Telephone Service, 636
Amrita Bazar Patrika, 362
Amritsar, 166
Andaman Islands, 123 fn
Andhra, 533, 537
Arabia, 40, 227
Arya Samaj, 103
Asaf Ali, 37, 343, 348, 456, 542
——, Aruna, 2, 195, *230 fn*
Ashraf, K.M., 90 & fn, 91, 547
Ashti, 66 & fn
Assam, 134, 256, 258, 260–261, 268 & fn, 271, 277–278, 343, 495, 498, 505
Atal, Madan, 421 & fn
Attlee, Clement Richard, 62 fn, 87 & fn, 89 fn, 95, 283, 293–294, 316 & fn, 400, 489 fn
Auchinleck, General Sir Claude John Eyre, 123 & *fn*, 124, 176, 360, 364, 368 & fn, 372, 379
August Resolution, 168–170, 174, 190, 215, 226–227, 244, 265, 283, 288, 291 & fn, 295, 314 & *fn*, 392, 501, 509, 533, 536–537, 542
Aundh, 413

Australia, 455 & fn–456, 470, 477, 560
Autobiography (J. Nehru), 101, 586, 591, 597–598
Avtar, Shriram, 428
Axis Powers, 471
Azad Hind Fauj *see* Indian National Army
Azad Hind Volunteers' Organisation, 517 & fn
Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam, 6, 8, 10 fn, 22 fn, 27 & fn, 31, 33, 37 fn, 41, 75–76, 78–79, 84, 97, 99, 115, 117, 124, 131, 150, 158 & fn, 162, 179, 187, 191–192, 204, 254 fn, 335, 353–354, 393 fn–394, 451, 456, 527, 534, 538, 561, 569
Azamgarh, 7 & fn, 214, 256, 449, 460

Bahadur Shah, 372
Bairia, 218 & fn
Ballia, 7 & fn, 18, 100, 116, 170, 218–219, 225, 256, 449, 455, 460
Bangkok, 343
Bareilly, 1, 364 fn
Bareilly College, 512 & fn, 513–514
Bareilly district jail, 237 & fn
Batavia, 453
Batlivala, Bee (Mrs. Mansell Guy), 376, 592
Beg, Mirza Mohamad Afzal, 396 & *fn*
Belsen Camp, 460
Benares *see* Varanasi
Bengal, 54, 114, 131, 173, 183, 242, 258–259, 334, 353, 365–367, 505, 557
Berlin, 40, 375
Bevin, Ernest, 388 fn, 489 fn
Bhagalpur, 291
Bhagat, V.G., 547
Bhagwat, 351
Bharadwaj, R.D., 547
Bharatpur, 423
Bhargava, Gopi Chand, 79, 122, 132
——, Lala Thakur Das, 175
Bhattacharya, D.P., 513 & *fn*
Bhutto, Z.A., 98 fn
Bihar, 54, 58, 64, 135, 173, 183, 281–282, 509
Bikaner, 416, 420 & fn
Bindhachal, 118
Black and Tan, 61
Bombay, 30, 80–81, 95, 113, 118–119, 203, 253, 353, 380, 445, 449, 503, 567, 588, 624, 629
Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee, 94 & fn
Bose, Sarat Chandra, 110, 119, 353, 445–446 fn, 448, 451, 453, 557
——, Subhas Chandra, 20, 193, 203 & fn, 332, 336 & fn, 352 & fn, 360, 367, 371, 373–375, 557
Bracken, Brendan, 257 & fn
Brailsford, H.N., 362
Briggs, Major General, 584 & *fn*
Britain *see* England
British Military Administration (Malaya), 341 fn, 377–378
Brockway, Fenner, 136 & fn
Buck, Pearl S., 581, 631 fn
Bukhara, 418
Burma, 56, 117, 137, 156, 193 & fn, 236, 250, 255, 331, 335, 339, 341, 343–344, 346, 350, 356, 359, 365, 369–370, 377, 408, 440, 475
Burma National Army, 339 fn, 347

Calcutta, 5–6, 82, 91, 101, 115, 118, 123, 227, 247, 252, 254, 257, 366, 449, 453, 499, 503, 557, 624; riots in, 492–493, 497–498
Canada, 560, 591
Canning, Lord, 409
Casey, R.G., 254 fn
Catlin, George, 99 & *fn*
Caucasus, 606
Ceylon *see* Sri Lanka
Chaman Lal, Dewan, 577, 579
——, Helen, 577, 579
Chamberlain, Neville, 250
Chatterjee, Jogesh Chandra, 151 fn, 233, 236–237
Chaubey, Ganga Sahai, 548
Chen, P.C., 438
Chiang Kai shek, 433, 437–438, 445–447 & fn, 448, 451, 453, 464, 466, 470 fn
——, Madame, 433, 445–447, 452 fn

Chimur, 66 & fn
China, 39–40, 58, 156, 164, 197, 278, 325, 407, 433, 436–438, 441, 444, 447, 451, 454–455, 463–466, 470, 474, 494, 551, 557, 632, 636–637
China Bhavan (Santiniketan), 464
China Buddhists' Association, 445
Chitale, V.D., 547 & *fn*
Chopra, S.N., 344 & fn–345, 357
Chowdhury, Mahendra, 66 & fn
Chungking, 618
Churchill, Winston, 42, 52, 60, 81, 84, 250
Citrine, Walter, 386
Committee of Indonesians in India, 476
Communist, 532–533
Communist Party of India, 9 fn, 17, 26 fn, 36, 93, 190, 253, 259, 269, 276, 284, 301, 362, 386, 486, 523 fn, 527–528, 530–531 & fn, 533–535, 537–541 & fn, 544–545
Congress, Indian National, 4 fn, 6, 8–10 & fn, 11, 13–14 & fn, 15 fn, 17, 20–22 & fn, 24, 27, 28 fn, 29–31 & fn, 32–33 & fn, 41, 43–48, 51 & fn, 52–53, 55–56 & fn, 57–61, 65, 72–73, 75–81, 85–86, 87 & fn, 88 & fn, 89 & fn, 90 & fn, 91–93 & fn, 94–98 & fn, 99, 101, 103–106 & fn, 107–108, 112 fn, 113–117, 119–124, 126–127, 129–133 & fn, 134, 136–137, 139, 141–143, 146, 148 fn, 150–152, 156, 158, 160–170 & fn, 171, 173–184, 186–199 & fn, 200–202 & fn, 203, 206–209 & fn, 210–230, 232, 234–235, 237–244, 246–249, 253–254, 258–262 & fn, 263–271, 273–278, 281, 283–296, 298–301 & fn, 302–304, 308–309, 311–314 & fn, 315–324, 326–327, 338, 339 fn, 342 fn, 343–344, 346, 348, 350, 353–354, 357–359, 361–363, 365 fn, 366, 369 fn, 370, 374–375, 384, 388, 392, 397–399, 401, 413–414, 417 & fn, 419, 440–441, 446–447, 451, 455, 460–461, 479, 483 fn, 484–486, 488–490, 510, 515–517 & fn, 525–526 & fn, 527–534, 536–542, 544–546 & fn, 547–548, 556–557, 579 fn, 596, 624
Congress Parliamentary Board, 118–119, 181, 224, 233
Congress Socialist Party, 9, 95, 536
Congress Volunteer Organisation, 94
Congress Working Committee, 1 & fn, 5, 7, 22, 31, 73, 80, 88–89, 118, 150, 198–200, 230 & fn, 254–255, 262 & fn, 265, 285, 288, 292, 299, 301, 348, 369, 392, 451, 525, 527–529, 531, 535, 544
Conservative Party (British), 92
Contact, 469 fn
Cripps, Sir Stafford, 18, 27, 81, 83, 87 & fn, 113, 138, 147, 151, 165, 291 fn–293, 361, 375, 383, 414, 435, 533, 638
Czechoslovakia, 557

Dadachanji, B.A., 369
Daily Express, 27 fn
Dalal, Ardeshir Rustomji, 37 fn, 208 fn
Dange, S.A., 386
Danzig, 532
Dar, Krishan Prasad, 586 & fn
Das, A. Dharam, 237–238
——, C.R., 281 & fn
——, Radhanath, 37 fn
——, Senapati Sonadhar, 596
Dawn, 195 fn, 204–205 & fn
Dayal, Kripa, 428
Dayananda, Swami, 26 fn
De Gaulle, General Charles Andre Joseph Marede, 28 & *fn*
De Montmorency, Geoffrey, 410
De Valera, Eamon, 352 & fn
Defence of India Act, 66, 102
Defence of India Rules, 45, 86, 102, 156, 172, 226, 308, 600
Dehra Dun, 517
Delhi, 75, 98, 113, 115, 123–124, 188, 193, 198, 201, 203, 233, 242, 265, 340, 355, 357, 360, 373, 459–460, 527, 569, 573, 578, 583
Desai, Bhulabhai, 120, 194 fn, 343, 368, 378, 537–538
——, H.M., 468
Desai Liaquat formula, 9
Deshmukh, G.V., 119 & *fn*, 309
Deva, Acharya Narendra, 223 fn, 355
——, Suman, 416

Dhar, S.N., 589–590
Dhillon, Captain Gurbaksh Singh, 121 & *fn*, 343, 348–349, 359, 368 & fn
The Discovery of India (J. Nehru), 82, 358, 581, 583, 586, 588, 591, 597
Doheria, 7 fn
Draft declaration of 1942, 140 fn
D'Souza, J. Leon, 347 & fn
Dungargali, 394
Dutt, R. Palme, 435 & *fn*, 525

East Africa, 475
Egypt, 227, 404, 440 & fn, 462, 470, 472
Eisenhower, Dwight David, 28 & *fn*, 337
Enemy Agent's Ordinance, 342 & fn, 345, 349, 351
England, 16, 22, 30, 34, 39–40, 49 fn, 64 fn, 67 & fn, 71, 74, 81–83, 98, 112, 141, 144, 156, 170, 184–185, 243–244, 250, 257, 283, 289, 292–294, 298, 325, 331, 335, 337, 347, 407, 430, 433, 436, 439, 441, 444, 460, 477, 501, 531, 540, 581, 615
Evatt, Dr. H.V., 452 fn

Far East, 407, 454
Farrukhabad, 364 fn
Fascism, 439, 444, 511
Fatehgarh, 364 fn
Federation of Postal and Telegraph Unions, 613 fn
Foreign Ministers' Conference (London), Council of, 297 & fn
Forster, E.M., 631 fn
Fortune (U.S.A.), 82, 358
Forward Bloc, 336, 536
France, 375, 439, 531
French Revolution, 511

Galsworthy, John, 340 fn
Gandhi, Feroze, 113, 569, 575
——, Indira, 358, 383, 567–572, 575–578, 589, 635
——, Mahatma, 3–4 & fn, 9 fn, 10 fn, 11, 14 fn, 17, 28 & fn, 30, 33–34 fn, 37, 41, 60, 74, 84, 92, 98, 105, 112 fn, 118, 130, 156, 164, 179, 184, 205, 214, 217–218, 225, 230 fn, 254 & fn, 258, 265–266, 291 fn, 327, 363, 386–387, 392, 415, 449, 487, 519–520, 531–532, 534, 554 & fn, 555 fn–557 fn, 575, 588, 595–596, 600–602, 628
——, Rajiva, 570–571, 578, 588
Gandhiji: His Life and Work, 600 & fn
Ganga river, 626, 629, 631, 633
Germany, 49 fn, 94, 193, 265, 342 fn, 352, 407, 439, 441–442 & fn, 540
Ghazipur, 100, 214, 449
Ghaznavi, Maulana Daud, 117 & fn, 119–120, 122, 124
Ghosh, Prafulla C., 456
Glimpses of World History (J. Nehru), 101
Goho, S.C., 365 & fn
Gokhale, Gopal Krishna, 19
Gopala Ratnam, K.V., 610 fn
Gorakhpur, 7 & fn, 380
Government of India Act of 1935, 303 fn, 410, 414
Greece, 636
Gulmarg, 388, 571, 577
Gunther, Frances, 134, 582, 623, 626, 631, 635–636
——, John, 624, 631 fn
——, Johnny, 634
Gupta, Chandra Bhanu, 151–152
——, Ghanshyam Singh, 102 & *fn*
——, Ram Ratan, 574
Gurez Valley, 572–573
Gurkhas, 360, 455 fn–456
Guy, Mansell *see* Batlivala, Bee
Gwalior Rajya Sarvajanik Sabha (Lashkar), 422

Habas, 618
Hallett, Maurice Garnier, 127–128 & fn, 129, 210, 215, 220, 256 fn
Handia, 213
Hans Raj, Raizada, 175
Hari, 572, 575
Harijans, 78
Haripur, 579
Haripura, 624
Harrison, Agatha, 469

Harsauli, 428
Haryana, 173, 183
Hatta, Mohammad, 452, 460 fn, 557
Havelian, 579
Heilmann, C.M. *see* Sarla Devi
Henderson, Arthur, 113 & fn, 313 & fn
Hind Swaraj (M.K Gandhi), 556 & fn
Hindu, The, 64 fn
Hindu Mahasabha, 96, 159–160, 162, 175, 177, 182, 194, 196, 221–222, 227, 235, 245, 249, 259 & fn, 263, 266, 268, 277, 284, 301, 308, 322, 343, 346, 455
Hindu Students Federation, 195
Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh, 93 & fn, 541 & fn
Hindustani Prachar Sabha, 557
Hindustani Seva Dal, 206, 516
Hitler, Adolf, 6, 16, 40, 60, 531–532
Hong Kong, 286 & fn
Housman, A E, 632
Hunt, Col., 337 fn
Hussain, Zakir, 358, 587–588
Hutheesing, Ajit, 568
——, G.P., 569–570, 572, 575
——, Harsha, 568
——, Krishna, 568, 570, 572, 574–575
Hyderabad, 412, 416, 419–420; Nizam of, 40

I Believe, 631
Iftikharuddin, Mian, 90–91, 98 & fn, 576, 579 fn, 580
India Office, 599
India Today (R. Palme Dutt), 435 fn
India's Answer to the West (Cyril Modak), 109
India's Constitution in the Making (B.N. Rau), 558 fn
India's Freedom Movement (B. Shiva Rao), 473
Indian Christian Association of U.P., 237
Indian Civil Service, 61, 129, 131, 158, 200, 226, 243, 310 & fn, 343, 502, 543
Indian Contribution to English Literature (K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar), 592 & fn
Indian Independence League of Burma and Malaya, 338, 344, 349, 350, 360
Indian National Army, 66, 98, 100, 111, 113, 115, 117–121 & fn, 123 & fn, 144, 156, 166–167, 173–174, 183, 193–195, 197, 208, 211, 220, 226 & fn, 227 fn, 232, 240, 255, 257, 262, 268, 276, 279–280, 285, 306 & fn, 307, 310, 321, 326, 331–333, 335–336, 338–340 & fn, 341 & fn, 343–347 & fn, 348–353, 355, 357–360, 363–364 & fn, 365 & fn, 366–367 & fn, 371–375, 378, 380, 396, 416, 449, 519, 542–543 & fn, 588 fn
Indian Ocean, 470
The Indian States and Indian Federation (Geoffrey de Montmorency), 410
Indian Writers in Council (P.E.N.), 603
Indo-China, 40, 56, 146, 265, 291 fn, 407–408, 448 & fn, 458–459, 461, 471, 474, 495
Indonesia, 146, 235, 257, 275, 283, 291 fn, 325, 408, 448 & fn, 453, 455, 459, 461, 471–472, 474, 476, 557
Indus, 633
The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783 (Alfred Thayer Mahan), 635 fn
The Interest of America in Sea Power (Alfred Thayer Mahan), 635 fn
Iran, 40, 49 & fn, 187, 244, 246, 257 fn, 272, 440–441, 443, 467, 474, 606, 629
Iraq, 49 & fn, 440–441, 443
Ireland, 61 & fn, 187, 352
Ismail, Sir Mirza, 603, 625
Italy, 94, 193 fn, 265, 342 fn, 352, 407
Iyengar, K.R. Srinivasa, 592 & fn

Jaipur, 100, 340, 415, 455
Jallianwala Bagh, 162
Jamiat ul-Ulema e-Hind, 122, 140 & fn, 246, 268, 275–276
Jamuna river, 633
Janak, King, 634
Japan, 56, 66, 156–157, 162, 193, 265, 352, 359, 437, 453–454, 552
Jaunpur, 66 & fn, 100, 214, 449

Java, 56, 117, 136, 211, 227, 236, 265, 307, 355, 360, 448, 452, 458, 461, 463, 495, 557
Jhabbal, Sardar Amar Singh, 80
——, Sardar Sarmukh Singh, 80
Jhansi, 97
Jhaveri, K. Vithalbhai, 600 fn
Jinnah, M.A., 10 fn–11, 27 & fn, 33 fn, 40 fn–41, 43–45, 50, 52, 91, 98, 116, 135, 140, 142, 159 fn, 162, 174, 176, 178 & fn, 208 fn, 243–244, 249, 263, 272–273, 275–276, 284, 286–287, 309 & fn, 311 fn, 313–315, 385–386, 478, 503, 519, 561–562
Johnson, Colonel Louis, 451
Josh, Sohan Singh, 547
Joshi, P.C., 386, 534–535, 537–538

Kabul Lines (New Delhi cantonment), 342 fn
Kairon, Sardar Partap Singh, 75 & *fn*, 78–79, 119, 527
Kakori Conspiracy Case, 151
Kalaw, 306 fn
Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital (Allahabad), 487
Kanpur, 548
Kanpur Agricultural College, 512 & fn
Kapoor, Jivanlal, 356 & *fn*
Karachi, 81, 138
Karanjia, R.K., 590
Karokhota (Assamese girl), 268 & fn
Kashmir, 60–62, 80–81, 155, 161, 331, 390, 393, 396, 405, 495, 567–568, 571, 576–577; Maharaja of, 391
Kashmir National Conference, 331, 384, 388–389, 391
Kasturba Gandhi Memorial Fund, 557
Katju, Naresh, 575
Kaul, G.B., 579
——, Rajpati (Nani), 579
——, Shamlal, 63
Kaur, Amrit, 37 fn, 257, 356, 361, 569, 587–588, 591, 596 & fn
Kazakastan, 418
Kazmi, Mohamed Ahmed, 118 & fn, 122
Keith, A. Berriedale, 414–415
Khairthal, 428
Khali, 8, 12, 567
Khambatta, S.P., 357
Khan, Abdul Ghaffar, 75, 159 & fn, 174, 180, 395, 578–579
——, Abdul Ghani, 180
——, Abdul Lali, 578
——, Abdul Qayyum, 98 & *fn*, 100
——, Abdul Wali, 578 & *fn*
——, Amanullah, 629
——, Khizr Hayat Tiwana, 159 & *fn*, 161, 166, 179
——, Liaquat Ali, 37 fn, 122
——, Mohammad Ismail, 37 fn
——, Capt. Shah Nawaz, 121 & *fn*, 208 fn, 343, 348–349, 359, 368 & fn, 517
——, Sikandar Hayat, 579
Khan Sahib, 99, 394, 573–574, 578–579
——, Mary, 395
Khanna, Mehar Chand, 394, 577 & *fn*
Khasi Hills, 495
Khidmat, 406 & fn
Kidwai, Rafi Ahmed, 115, 118, 223 fn, 239, 355
Kitabistan (Allahabad), 82, 101, 587
Kline (A.P. correspondent), 631
Komagatamaru prisoners, 53 & fn
Korea, 454
Kripalani, J.B., 113, 119
——, Krishna, 345
Kuala Lumpur, 378
Kumaun Hills, 83
Kunj Behari, 428
Kurukshetra, 184
Kushvan, 421

Labour Monthly, 435 fn
Labour Party (British), 83–84, 92, 98, 137, 250, 292, 436
La Guardia airfield (New York), 582, 584
Lahore, 57, 75–76, 164, 168, 171, 207, 301, 335, 345, 394, 460, 526–527, 576, 578–579
Laski, Harold, 343, 631 fn
The Last Flower (James Thurber), 631
Laxmangarh, 428
Letters from a Father to His Daughter (J. Nehru), 586

Liberal Party (British), 138
Liberty Week, 63 & fn
Life, 631 & fn
Linlithgow, 2nd marquis, 207 fn
Lin Yutang, 631 fn
Loganathan, Lt. Col. A.D., 123 & *fn*
London, 74 fn, 81, 83, 136, 201, 242, 247 fn, 459, 578, 618, 638
Lucknow, 8, 100, 118, 123–124, 202, 233, 353, 364 fn, 554, 567
Ludwig, Emil, 631 fn

Macqueen, Percy, 63–64 & fn
Madras, 39, 64 fn, 123, 135
Mahan, Alfred Thayer, 635
Maharashtra, 183
Mahesh, 578
Mahila Atmaraksha Samity (Calcutta), 547 & fn
Majlis (Cambridge University), 462
Malaysia, 56, 137, 156, 193, 236, 255, 286 & fn, 331, 336–337, 339, 341 & fn, 343–344, 346, 351, 356, 359–360, 365 & *fn*, 369–370, 377–378, 408, 495
Malcolm, Sir John, 409
Manchester, 100
Manchukuo, 352
Mandhar, 428
Mann, Thomas, 631 fn
Mao Tse tung, 446 fn
Maquis, 337 & fn
Marx, Karl, 403
Marx Against the Peasant (D. Mitrany), 469
Masani, M.R., 309
Mayer, Albert, 593 *fn*, 594
Mayor's Fund for I.N.A. Relief (Bombay), 353
Meemanage, N.A.F., 449 & fn, 468 *fn*
Meerut, 118, 121, 124, 172
Mehr Taj, 100, 578
Mehrotra, Lalji, 99 & *fn*
Mehta, G.L., 37 fn, 334 & fn–335
Menon, V.K. Krishna, 74, 80, 95, 100, 110, 113 & fn, 137, 147, 150, 342, 352, 357, 375, 383, 587, 591, 597, 599
Mewar, Suryavanshis of, 412
Middle East, 142, 407, 467, 470, 472, 474–475, 477, 618
Midnapore, 252, 256, 449, 453, 456
Mitrany, D., 469 & *fn*
Moazzam Jah, Prince, 590 fn
Modak, Cyril, 101, 109–110
Mody, H.P., 467 fn
Molotov, M., 457 & fn
Momins, 97, 141, 246
Monghyr, 291
Montgomery, General Bernard Law, 28 & *fn*
Mookerji, Shyama Prasad, 37 fn, 159 & fn
Moon, Penderel, 588
Moscow, 618
Motamedy, Ali, 443 & fn
Mudrarakshasa (Vishakhadatta), 635
Muljee, Hansraj, 149
Munich, 557
Murree, 335, 394, 577
Muslim League, 10 & fn, 16 fn, 17, 22, 27 & fn, 31 fn, 37 & fn, 41–42, 44–46, 50–51 & fn, 52, 55, 72, 91 & fn, 92, 96–98 & fn, 104, 116, 120 fn, 122, 124, 130–131, 139–140 & fn, 141–143, 145–146, 158–159 & fn, 160, 162, 165, 170, 176, 178, 182, 188, 194, 196, 199 fn, 204–205, 207, 210–211 & fn, 213, 217, 220–222, 227–229, 234–235, 243–245, 249, 257, 259, 263–264, 266, 268, 273–277, 284, 286–287, 299–301, 311–312, 314, 316, 320–323, 327, 346, 361–362, 384, 393 fn, 396, 526, 545, 561–562, 579 fn
Muslim Nationalist Board, 122
Mussolini, Benito, 16
Mysore, 419–420

Nadia, 291 fn
Nagas, 269
Naidu, Padmaja, 567, 624
——, Sarojini, 624
Naini Central Prison, 1, 233
Naini Tal, 567
Nambiar, A.C.N., 375, 592
Nanakana Sahib, 179
Nanda, Gulzari Lal, 541

Nanking, 352
Naoroji, Khurshed, 120
Narayan, Jayaprakash, 31, 278–281, 374–375 & fn
Narielwala, P.A., 590
Nathiagali, 335, 394, 579–580
Nation, The, 625
National Herald, 20, 84, 125 fn, 127, 335, 357, 362, 590, 600
National Planning Committee, 25, 52, 98, 100, 113, 115, 221, 317, 322, 326, 387, 449, 475, 551–554
Nationalist Muslims, 77, 141, 199 fn, 216, 276, 321, 326, 360
Nazism, 439, 444
Nehru, B.K., 343, 572
——, Jawaharlal, 23 fn, 27 fn–28 & fn, 34–35, 37 fn, 45–46, 63 fn, 64 fn, 67 fn, 71 fn, 74 fn, 84 fn, 87 fn, 91 fn, 103 fn, 105 fn, 116–117, 119–120, 125 fn, 128 fn, 130 & fn–131, 136 fn, 178 fn, 179 fn, 219 fn, 223 fn, 254–255, 256 fn, 287 fn, 301, 313 fn, 334 fn, 351, 368 fn, 376 fn, 393 fn, 400 fn, 433, 443 fn, 449 fn, 452 fn, 455 fn, 460 fn, 469 fn, 488 fn, 523 fn, 535 fn, 557 fn
——, on acceptance of office, 50, 117, 185, 190, 198, 247, 285, 289, 296, 320–321, 326; on American comment on Soviet influence, 36; on Amery's White Paper, 56; on Anglo-American bid for anti Russian bloc, 297; on art and life, 611–612; on Asia, India's role in liberation movements of, 459–460, 465, Japan's new role in, 453–454, unity of, 40, 60, 167, 183, 462, 470–474, 618; on atom bomb, 162, 164, 167, 192, 199, 231, 318, 320, 408, 461, 466, 471, 511; on August movement, 1, 18, 24, 72, 84–86, 96, 126, 165, 183–185, 199, 202, 212, 214, 217, 219, 222, 230, 253, 261, 263, 281, 310–311, 319, aftermath of, 32, 104, 205–206, 213, 223, 227, 245, 256, 484, and 1857 revolt, 11, 54, and resistance movements in Europe, 163–164, justification of, 3, 7, 13, 23–24, 54, 188, 283, mill-owners and, 540, officials' behaviour during, 24, 42, 64, 201, 205, 210, 218–220, 265, 321, 408, part of students and women in, 484, 509–510, praise for countrymen for their participation in, 2, 54, 218, 232–233, role of Bihar in, 282, of Midnapore, 252, 256, 449, 453, 456, of Punjab, 54–55, of Satara, 297–298, of U.P., 7, 18, 100, 116, 170, 218–219, 221, 225, 256, 449, 460, victimisation of officials for role in, 21, 35, 116, and his disapproval, 392; on autonomy, federation and right of self-determination, 65, 72, 90, 144, 158, 160, 164, 170, 187, 191–192, 235, 270–272, 275–277, 287, 299–300, 314–315, 324, 413, 418, 440, 479; on Axis Powers, 471; on Azad Hind, recognition of provisional government of, 193, 352, on ban on *Satyartha Prakash* and *The People's War*, 26; on being accused of preaching violence, 116; on Bengal famine, 3, 5–6, 12, 20, 36–37, 60, 88, 111, 193, 209, 215, 226, 228, 238, 242, 247–248, 250–252, 262, 277, 284, 295 & fn, 435, 491, 497–498, 502–504, 543, 615; on black market and black marketeers, 19–20, 268; on Bombay plan, 16, 19, 24–26, 42, 52, 84–85, 87, 139, 207, 241–242, 244, 256, 269–270; on British bureaucracy, 174, 176, 207; on British Parliamentary Delegation, 137, 147, 149, 255, 257–258, 324–325, 362–363; on British policy and rule in India, 89, 95, 113, 135, 139, 144–145, 147, 164–166, 174–178, 196, 209–210, 216, 223, 229, 235, 238, 243, 245, 252, 255, 263, 283–284, 286, 291, 294, 297–299, 307, 314–315, 359, 388, 392, 411, 413, 458–460, 467–468, 474, 478, 484, 489, 492, 494, 496–497, 509, 519, 529, 534, 541, 596, and U.S. support to, 408; on British press comments on India, 304–305; on China, and India, 5, 40, 445, 464–466, civil war in, 318–319, 462–463, 494, concern and sympathy for, 17, courage, fortitude and struggle of, 433,

436–437, 444–446, his desire to visit, 463, its role in Asia, 465–470; on Chinese Soviet Pact, 193; on civil liberties, 83, 102, 198, on cloth situation, 88, 214, 217; on collective fines, 86, 210, 214, 542; on common man, and newspapers, 613–614, 619, exploitation of, 563–564; on communal bodies, 264, 284, attitude to and role in freedom movement of, 40, 50–52, 148, 165–166, 181, 207, 222, 227, 249, 303, Congress differences with, 41, 50, 162, 266; on communalism, 24, 133–134, 160, 176, 322; on Communists, anti national activity and opposition to August resolution and movement by, 15–17, 362, 525–528, 540–542, attempt to capture student bodies by, 202, their bid for Congress-League unity, 17, and support to demand for Pakistan, 97, 196, 259, 276, 386, Bombay riots and, 116, Congress charges against their party, 528–539, and its reply, 545, 547, their differences with Congress, 169–170, 186, 190, 253–254, 259, 284, disciplinary action against, 300–301; Congress, Indian National, 10, 55–56, 92–93, 160, 175, 214–216, aims and principles of, 2–3, 24, 214, 216–217, 243, 248–249, 276, and direct action, 33, and nonviolence, 184, appreciation in Middle East for, 43, ban on, 14, 189, character of, 52, charge against leaders of, 315–316, its concept of Swaraj and government, 166, 168–169, 173, 215, 221–223, 250, 263, 268, 270, 297, 310, 321–322, 390, 552, 609, constitution of, 301, contacts with Muslims by, 140–141, discipline in, 32–33, 213, enrolment for, 206, its failure to win Muslim seats in elections, 125, future of, 45, 266, 288–289, groups and groupism in, 93, 115, 144, 264, 395, guidance and leadership of, 86, 211, Muslims and, 358–359, pledge of, 183, 224, 261–262, popularity of, 124, 168, 186, 200, 226–227, 266, 358, presidentship of, 150, its refusal to join food missions, 249–250, removal of poverty and, 239–240, 441, 448, reorganization of, 53, 288, secrecy and, 94, its stand on communal party, 22, and elections, 132, 167–168, 189–190, 213, 234, world outlook of, 58; on discipline, 264–265, 366, on Discovery of India, 358, 583–584, 591–592; on disorder and violence, 229–232, 254, 547–548, on district magistrate of Moradabad, order of, 225; on Dominion Status, 477; on elections, Indian, 45, 83, 86, 97, announcement of, 74, 79, 160, approach and attitude of Congress to, 77, 96, 202, 213, 239, 251, 262, 289, his canvassing for, 135, 200, 223, 250, 277–278, 552, choice of Congress candidates for, 79, 132, 197, 199, 264, 267, 308, 317, 326, Congress manifesto for, 89, 105, 109, 113, 134, 246, 258, 260–261, 263, 452, 498, Congress resolution on British proposal for, 87–88, 168, and his reply to debate on it, 88, 92, 140, 209, 327, 361, Government's attitude to, 308, importance of, 99, 163–164, his interest in, 206, issues for, 206, 223, 243–244, 287, 295–296, 312, official interference and pressure in, 180, 211, 239, 242, prospects and results of, 138–139, 213, 316, 361, voting facilities for armymen in, 212, on excluded areas, 46, on fascism, militarism and Nazism, 439, 442, 444; on fear of civil war in India, 301–302, 312, on firing in Mysore, 625; on food situation, 88, on foreign capital, control of, 36, 317; on formation of transitional government, 151; on freedom of press and speech, 102, 608–609, 616; on future of small countries, 443; on Ganga, 593, on gentleman, 488, on Government of India, corruption in, 55, 111, 156, 172, 208, 210, 217, 243, 358–359, its incapacity to solve problems, 59, 174, 200, 207, 215, 228, 244–245, 628, its planning, 270, on Government of India Act 1919, 88; on Grady Mission, 553; on Greater India, 495–496; on Hallett's Governorship,

127; on himself, 220, 419, 495, 623, 629; on Hindi-Urdu controversy, 10, 24; on hunger strikes in jail, 152, 231, 233. 236; on Hurs in Sind, 327–328; on India, problems of, 148, 155, unity of, 39, 288–289, world state and, 476–477; on Indian Army, 11, 18–19, demand for withdrawal of, 257, discrimination in, 293, Indianisation of, 310, 364, national consciousness in, 182, 318, 362–364, ratio of Indians in, 286, recruitment in, 15, reorganisation of, 360; on Indian economy, need for data on, 552–553; on Indian literatures, 603–608; on Indian National Army, absence of communal feeling in, 208, 332, 374, 416, and Burma National Army, 339, 347, and Czech belligerents, 339, and *Maquis*, 337, and Indian Army, 339, 343, 359–360, 363, 543, and Indian situation, 118, and national sentiments, 194, and nonviolence, 363, approach to issue of, 337, its association with Japanese, 157, 332–333, Bhulabhai Desai's handling of cases of, 378–379, Calcutta demonstrations for release of prisoners of, 227, 231, charges against leaders of, 359, and their court martial, 343, 371–372, composition and formation of, 66, 220, 331, 337–338, 343, concern at treatment of and demand for release of prisoners of, 186, 194, 208, 331–333, 335–338, 342, 344, 346–347, 364, conditions in prison camps of, 364, firing on prisoners of, 340–342, functions of I.N.A. Defence Committee, 194–195, 208, 340–341, 348–351, Funds Committee, 350, and Inquiry and Relief Committee, 119, 349–350, future of and relief to I.N.A. men, 326, 344, 347, 354–355, 360, 380, gradation of prisoners of, 368, heroism and patriotism of, 194, 331, 334, 338, 346–347, 363, 367, historical importance of the trial of the three officers of, 194, its leaders' resistance of exploitation by Japanese, 333, 343, 359, 367, 374, legal, human and national aspects of cases of, 334–335, 360, release of officers of, 368, and its results, 371–373, slogans of, 211, suicides in prison camps of, 364, trials of prisoners of, 343, 349, political parties' interest in them, 339–341, 343, 348, 352–353, and popular reaction to them, 144, unauthorised collection of relief funds for, 352–353; on Indians abroad, 26, 377, 437; on individual freedom and state, 435–436; on Indonesia and Indo-China, 146–147, 209, 307, 453, 458, 460–461, 474, his desire to visit, 117–118, 313, 335, 365, 369, 461, 463, and refusal of permission, 365, 470, India's solidarity with and willingness to help, 118, 307, 452, 455–456, use of Indian troops in, 307, 318, 447–448, 455–456, 459, 489; on industries, advancement of, 25, 34, 42, 544, 551, conflict between large-scale and small-scale, 387, control of key, 24; on interdependence of nations, 323–325, 551, and their federation, 441, 465, 470, 472; on journalists, better wages for, 617; on Kashmiri Pundits, 384, 390–391; on khadi and constructive programme, 231; on Khasi community, 270; on Khilafat movement, 273–274; on Labour Party's victory in England, 62, 387–389; on land reforms and Permanent Settlement, 34, 219, 304, 317; on leftists, 375; on lend lease arrangements, 458; on letter-writing, 637; on Levant situation, 27; on Malaya, medical mission to, 365, 370; on mass awakening, 157–158, 160, 163, 241, 256, 319–320, 409; on means and ends, 627; on medical education, 490–491; on Menon, K.B., his case in Privy Council, 376, 598; on Muslim League, 41, 52, and violence, 97, 142, 205, 244, its charge of suppression of Muslims, 195, its claim for sole representation on Executive Council, 10, Congress efforts for accord with, 220–221, 311–313, its demand for partition, 65, 73, 140–144, 191, 207, 210, 222, 228, 235, 263, 269–275, 286,

309, 313–317, 320, 385, 417–418, and Assam, 142, 272, 309, 313, 562, and Baluchistan, 142, 500, and Bengal 50, 142–143, 145, 158, 162, 165, 187–188, 222, 244, 272–273, 276, 300, 309, 313, 385, 418, 478, 561–562, and Bombay, 309, and Delhi, 142, 272, 309, 313, and Kashmir, 187, 300, 385, and N.W.F.P., 142–143, 145, 187, 272, 385, and Punjab, 142–143, 145, 158, 162, 165, 187–188, 211, 222, 244, 272–273, 276, 300, 309, 313, 418, 478, 561–562, and Sind, 142, and States, 146, and U.P., 211, 222, demonstration in Srinagar by, 393–394, its election prospects in Assam, 96–97, 141, in Bengal, 96–97, 141, 361, in Bombay, 96, in Central Provinces, 96, in Madras, 96, in N.W.F.P., 96, in Punjab, 96–97, 141, 361, in Sind, 96, 361, and in U.P., 96–97, fear complex of, 71–74, insult to Maulana Azad by, 91–92, 204, leadership of, 116, 263, medieval outlook of, 41–42, 140, 275, official support to it in elections, 140, reactionary programme of, 321, its relations with Hindus, 95, 207, two-nation theory of, 191, 314; on *National Herald*, policy of, 126–127, requisition of the building of, 599–600; on nationalism versus internationalism, 505–506; on Nationalist Muslims, 95; on need for all-India outlook, 260; on news, suppression and distortion of, 615–616; on nonviolence, 264, 267, 319, on outer life and inner life, harmony between, 507; on Paliwal's book, 354, on Pan-Islamic movement, 475; on past and present, integration of, 506–507; on planning and development, 26–27, 36; on police excesses, 240; on political prisoners, concern for, 2, 5–6, 8, 14, 31, 56, 151–152, 156, 178, 234, 236–237, 325, 530, release of, 1, 69, 130–131; on Potsdam Conference, 442; on poverty and unemployment, 181, 242, 244, 245, 254, 260, 502, on proposal to visit U.S., 433–434, on Punjab, Congress affairs in, 59, 75–79, 122, 155, 159, 167, 171, 176, 180, elections in, 77–79, 122, 155, 169, 171, 176, 180, government of, 159, 160, on his release from jail, 4; on religious freedom, 102, 237–238, 246, 269, 543; on revolution, inevitability of, 225–226; on right to revolt by subject countries, 240, 242, 248, 258, on Royal Indian Air Force, 543; on Russian system, 341; on Santiniketan and Visva Bharati, 507–508; on scientific research, 192, 558; on separate electorates, 43, 50, 139, 141–145; on Shia community's claims, 148–149, on Simla Conference, 10, aims and objectives of, 11, chances of success of, 13, 27, 31, failure of, 40–41, 47, 55, 61, instructions to Congress delegation to, 22–23, Jinnah's veto and, 140; on Sino-Indian Cultural Society, 466; on slogans, 246, 265; on socialism, 34–36, 41, 258–259; on spinning wheel, Krishna Menon's suggestions on, 386–387; on Sri Lanka, advice to Indians in, 468–469, Board of Ministers of, 468, India's relations with, 447–451; on Sri Prakasa's resignation from U.P. Congress, 354; on States, 90, absence of fundamental rights in, 425, absorption of smaller States into provinces, 410–412, 424, advice to people of, 379, Alwar, constitutional reforms in, 428, appeal to princes to restore civil liberties in, 426, August movement and, 205, balance of power shifting to people of, 423, call to end princely system and introduce democracy in, 411, 413, civil liberties in, 400, conditions in prisons of, 403, 420, Congress manifesto and, 417, Congress support to people of, 397–399, constitution of Aundh, 413, declaration by Chamber of Princes, 422–426, 428–429, deposition of Maharaja of Rewa, 427, elected assemblies in, 415–416, 423, famine conditions in Mysore, 423, federation and, 302, Gwalior Raja Sarvagna Sabha, 421–422, Haripura Congress resolution on, 379, Kathiawar National

Conference, 388–391, 399, 406, Ludhiana Conference resolution on, 410–411, national movement and, 406, need for self government in, 419, Nizam's claim for independence and his proposed reforms, 410, 412, nominees of rulers in constituent assembly, 414–415, people's representation in States' legislatures, 400, and in federal legislature, 410, 414, police firing in Gwalior, 421–422, political consciousness in southern States, 419, position of rulers under responsible governments in, 400, 424, 443, his presidential address to All India States People's Conference, 406–416, princes' declaration of rights, 423–426, princes and their traditional rights and treaties with Government, 398–399, Ramgarh Congress resolution on, 532, reforms and situation in Rewa, 401, 404–405, 413, relations between princes and people in, 398–399, repression in Bharatpur, 422, in Bikaner, 53–54, suppression of civil liberties in, 420, 425, Tripura Rajya Gana Parishad, 403; on sterling balances, 255, 292–293, 295, 299; on students and youth, 487, and violence, 201, 511, 519–520, Bareilly College incident, 513–515, call for quiet study and hard work by, 487, communalism among, 486, discipline and unity among, 146, 485, 492–493, educational opportunities for, 518, firing in Calcutta on, 497–498, friction among, 202, government restriction on volunteering by, 515–517, healthy participation in politics by, 483, 489, need for workers from ranks of, 491–492, 496, passion and revolutionary spirit of, 493, responsibilities of and tasks for, 483, 485, 488, 490, 494, 500, 504, 517, their role in August movement, 509–510, vindictive action in U.P. against, 512; on taluqdars and zamindars, 216, 240, 304; on Tottenham's pamphlet, 535; on touching feet, 267, 302; on translation of his books, 626–627; on tribals, 271–272, 498; on Truman's foreign policy, 457–458; on undertrials, 203–204, 210; on Viceroy's Executive Council, 5, 44, 210, 213, 543; on Victory Fund and celebrations, 215, 220, 226; on villages, advice and message to people of, 232, 240, life in, 518; on War criminals and anti-national criminals, 210; on Wavell's proposals, 1, 4–5, 8, 13, 15, 20, 35, 47; on women, 94–95, 224–225; on working class unity, 289, 294–295; on world peace, 255, 436, 466; on World War II, 65, 71, 444, 455

——, Rajan, 578

——, Rameshwari, 571, 589

——, Ratan, 578

Nepal, 308; King of, 307, 459

New Zealand, 477

Nichol, Muriel Edith, 137 & fn

Nilganj, 340

Niloufer, Princess, 590 & fn

Nippon see Japan

Noon, Firoz Khan, 21 & fn

North West Frontier Province, 74, 99, 124, 134–135, 157, 195, 266, 394, 625

Oudh, 245, 248

Padmore, George, 100 & fn

Pahalgam, 388

Palestine, 227

Paliwal, S.K.D., 223 fn, 354

Pan African Federation, 100

Pan Islamic Movement, 475

Pandit, R.S., 635

——, Vijaya Lakshmi, 62 fn, 147, 567

Panipat, 183

Pant, Govind Ballabh, 223 fn–224, 301, 334, 539, 547, 569

Paris, 247, 343, 618

Pasha, Kemal, 629

Patel, Sardar Vallabhbhai, 9 & fn, 37 fn, 74, 88 fn, 104, 113–114, 117, 119–121 & fn, 130–131, 150, 254 fn, 301, 354, 448, 452 fn, 455 fn, 535, 539, 547, 561, 589, 602–603

Patna, 291

Patwardhan, Achyut, 230 fn
Peel, Gerald, 544 & fn
P.E.N., 340 & fn, 574, 603, 609
Penang, 378
People's Age, 231
People's War, 533–534, 537–538
Persia *see* Iran
Peshawar, 176
Petain, Marshal Henri Phillippe, 337 & fn
Pethick Lawrence, 1st baron, 62 fn, 83 & *fn*, 254 fn–255, 257
Philippines, 56, 352, 487
Pillai, Muniswami, 37 fn
Pilot Project India (Albert Mayer), 593 fn
Pioneer, The, 617
Pirpur Report, 228
Pocha, 590
Polak, H.S.L., 344, 357, 376, 598–599
Political Department (Government of India), 404–405, 409, 413, 427
Posts and Telegraphs Department, 613 fn
Poona, 80–81, 118–119, 206, 253, 256, 590
Poona Pact, 596
Prague, 375
Prasad, Badri, 428
——, Dwarka, 514
——, Rajendra, 37 fn, 535
Present and Future (Alfred Thayer Mahan), 635 fn
Prior, Sir Charles Geoffery, 297 & *fn*
Privy Council, 344–345, 357, 376
Punjab, 38, 57–59, 74–75, 78–79, 99, 114, 117–118, 120–122, 124, 134, 155–156, 159, 161, 168, 176, 179, 181, 186, 260, 334, 343, 353, 490, 577
Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, 121, 527

Qadir, Sir Abdur, 359
——, Ahsan, 359

Raghavan, N., 365 & *fn*
Rahman, Col. Habibur, 360
Raina, K.N., 610 fn
Rajagopalachari, C., 39, 51 fn
Rajatarangini (Kalhan), 570
Rajgarh, 428
Rajputana, 113, 253, 256, 401, 410
Raj Bahadur, 422–423
Ram, Achhut, 343
Rameswaram, 266
Rangoon, 123 fn, 306 fn, 341 fn, 343
Ranikhet, 4, 567
Raschid, M.A., 368
Rashid, Abdul, 379 & fn
Rashtra Seva Dal, 94 & fn
Rasra, 217
Rau, B.N., 558 fn, 559 *fn*
——, M. Chalapathi, 600 fn
Rawalpindi, 395, 572, 576, 579
Red Fort (Delhi), 342 fn, 344, 373
Registration of Societies Act, 426 & fn
Reuter's News Agency, 617, 680
A Review on Gandhism (G. Adhikari), 531
Revolution in India (Frances Gunther), 583 & fn
Rewa, 401, 413; Maharaja of, 401 & fn, 404, 427–428; Maharaj Kumar of, 404–405, 427
Rohtak, 172
Roman Empire, 39
Romulo, Brigadier General, 452 fn
Roosevelt, Franklin D., 447 fn
Round Table Conference (Second), 30–31
Roy, B.C., 365, 370, 377, 576
——, M.N., 257, 386, 526
Roy Chowdhury, Subrata, 461 & fn

Saidabad, 214
Saigon, 193, 455 fn
San Francisco Conference, 28 & fn, 62 fn, 437, 457 & fn, 460
Santiniketan, 505–507
Sapru, Sir Tej Bahadur, 343, 610–611
Sarla Devi (C.M. Heilmann), 1 & *fn*, 6, 31
Saran, Raghunandan, 120, 340, 343, 345, 348, 351, 353, 357, 378
Sardesai, S.G., 546 & *fn*

Sargent, Sir John, 502 & fn, 587
Satyartha Prakash (Swami Dayananda), 102–103
Satyavati, 195, 544 & *fn*
Seal, Pulin B., 84 fn, 99, 110
Security Council, 474
Sehgal, P.K., 121 & *fn*, 208 fn, 348–349, 359, 368 & fn, 373
Seth, Damodar Swarup, 226
Shah Jahan, 372
Shahed, 120 & fn
Shah, K.T., 593
——, Reza, 467
Shanghai, 625, 630
Sharif, Dr. Sultan, 452
Sharma, Karyanand, 547 & *fn*
Shaw, George Bernard, 402
Shen, S.H., 437
Shias, 149
Shillong, 494, 498
Siam *see* Thailand
Sikh League, 343
Simla, 57, 60, 91, 568–569, 573, 575
Simla Conference, 11, 13, 22 & fn, 27 & fn, 29, 31 & fn, 33 & fn, 37 & fn, 40 fn, 46–47, 51–53, 55, 58, 60–61, 131, 159 fn, 197 fn, 396
Simon, G.A., 237–238
Sind, 115, 134, 357
Sind Hindu Sabha, 322
Sino-Indian Cultural Society, 464, 466
Singh, Sardar Baldev, 122 & *fn*, 174
——, Dalip, 333, 343, 588
——, Inder, 428
——, Sardar Jogendra, 111 & *fn*
——, Kanwal, 351
——, Sardar Kapoor, 174–175
——, Sardar Kartar, 351
——, Maharaj, 588
——, Sardar Mangal, 174–175
——, Sardar Mohan, 333 & *fn*
——, Thakur Singhasan, 380
——, Master Tara, 37 fn–38 & fn, 79
Singapore, 331, 339, 625
Sinkiang, 487
Sinn Fein, 61 fn
Social Analysis and National Economic Planning in India (Albert Mayer), 593 fn
Social Welfare, 592
Sorensen, Reginald W., 89 fn, 137 & *fn*
South Africa, 560
Soviet Russia *see* Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Spain, 407, 557
Sri Lanka, 39, 365, 408, 449–451, 468–469, 475, 597
Srinagar, 79, 383, 388, 394, 571–573, 576
Sri Prakasa, 354
Srivastava, Jwala Prasad, 247 & fn
Stalin, Joseph, 418
Statesman, The, 120, 362
Suchling, E.G., 112 & fn
Sukarno, Dr. A. 209 & fn, 452–453, 476, 557
Sumatra, 56, 211
Sun Yat sen, Madame, 451
Surma Valley, 277–278, 495
Swaminadhan, S. Govind, 598 & *fn*
Swaminathan, Captain Lakshmi, 306 & fn, 365
Switzerland, 561

Tagore, Rabindranath, 340 fn, 345, 505, 508, 518 & fn, 607
Tai hsu, 445
Taipei, 336 fn
Taiwan, 336
Talchar, 291
Tandon, P.D., 223 fn
Tan Yun shan, 445, 464
Tass press agency, 618
Taxila, 578–579
Tej Bahadur Sapru: Profiles and Tributes (Ed. by R.N. Raina and K.V. Gopala Ratnam), 610 fn
Tek Chand Bakshi, 120, 343
Tel Aviv, 598
Tendulkar, D.G., 600 *fn*
Thailand, 40, 193 fn, 352, 408
Thompson, Edward, 576
Thurber, James, 631 & *fn*
Tibet, 629
Times, The, 84
Times of India, The, 120
Tokyo, 336, 630

Tonk, 420 fn
Travancore, 419–420
Tribune, The, 526
Tripura Rajya Gana Parishad, 403
Truman, Harry S., 457–458
Turkey, 629
Turks, 43

Udaipur, 409, 591
United Nations Charter, 28 & fn
United Nations Conference (San Francisco), 62 fn, 433 & fn
United Nations Organization, 126, 137, 185, 454, 471–474
United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, 298 & fn
United Provinces, 29, 45, 56, 58, 63–64, 91, 94, 115, 125, 135, 175, 183, 213, 288, 303, 316, 326, 364 & fn, 369, 455
United Provinces Congress Committee, 103, 200, 202 & fn
U P. Women's Conference, 224 fn
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 16–17, 31, 38–40, 58, 87, 156, 164, 190, 253, 257, 259, 276, 326, 407, 418, 439 fn, 441, 467, 475, 477, 491, 523–525, 530, 533, 539–540, 544, 625–627
Unionist Party (Punjab), 96–97, 122, 183, 194, 346
United States of America, 16, 30, 38–40, 58, 62 & fn, 141, 156, 192, 203, 247 fn, 253–254, 257, 259, 275, 335, 407–408, 433, 441, 444, 458–461, 475, 477, 581–582, 615, 626, 630–631, 637–638
Unity of India (J. Nehru), 101
Upadhyaya, Martand, 586
——, S D., 575, 588

Varanasi, 100, 140, 203, 210, 364 fn, 449
Varanasi Congress Committee, 210
Vazirani, Nihchaldas C., 119 & fn
Versailles, Treaty of, 442
Vyas, Jainarain, 383

Wadia, Sophia, 340
Wah, 579
Walsh, Richard J., 82, 580, 583, 593, 597
War Cabinet, 81
Washington, 618, 638
Wavell, A P, 1st earl, 1, 29, 38 fn, 41, 44, 52, 87 & fn, 93, 96, 168, 254 fn, 287–288 & fn, 291 fn, 293, 305, 397 & fn, 400 & fn, 415, 577
——, Lady, 573
Wells, H G., 340 fn
Williams, Rushbrook, 409
Willkie, Wendell, 457, 471–472
Willingdon, 1st marquis, 30
Winkoop, Brooke L., 595 & *fn*
Woodhead, John, 20 & *fn*, 250
World Politics (R. Palme Dutt), 435 fn
Wyatt, Woodrow Lyle, 137 & *fn*

Yash, Dharam Dev, 453 & fn
Yasin, Maulana Mohamed, 75 & fn, 78, 526
Yunus, Mohammad, 91, 125, 571, 578

Zaheer, Ali, 148 & *fn*
——, S. Sajjad, 547
Zainuddin, Jafar, 476 *fn*
Zhukov, Georgi Konstaninovich, 28 & *fn*

JN: Any pact promoting goodwill is good. India is anxious to have the closest friendly relations with both the countries.

4. Subjection the Greatest Calamity[1]

Political subjection is the greatest calamity that can befall a country. The Congress is the only organisation that struggles hard to make India free. The idea of begging votes is distasteful to me, but I will ask, for whom else can one vote except the Congress that stands for freedom and for economic and social justice?

The trial of the three INA officers will be of historical importance, not only because three brave young men are involved in it, but also because intricate questions of international law are involved.[2] It is not merely a question of legal defence. There is the fundamental question of the love of freedom, which has created affection among millions of peoples for these young men. Thousands of men and women members of the Indian National Army fought for freedom. As a member of the Defence Committee, I cannot enter into a discussion of the legal aspect of these cases. It is after many years that I am appearing in a case as a lawyer. I do not know how far I fit in this position. Broadly speaking, it is not merely a trial involving legal issues. It is something more than that. It touches the sentiments of the whole nation. The motive of the I.N.A. was freedom of India and to that end it reflected the sentiments and aspirations of 400 millions in the country.

Crores of people have expressed their opinion on this question. There has not been even a single discordant note anywhere. Of course, the Congress has given a lead in the matter, but the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Unionist Party and the Akali Dal have also raised their voice in support of the I.N.A. Whatever the legal arguments, the fundamental question remains that there is a higher tribunal than the

1. Speech at Delhi, 3 November 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 4 November, *The Leader*, 4 November and *The Tribune*, 6 November 1945.
2. Bhulabhai Desai argued that every nation had the right to be free and, if under foreign domination, had the right to make every legitimate effort to achieve freedom. He also claimed that violence was a legitimate means for the purpose.

court that will try these officers. Their tribunal is the bar of public opinion. The people of India should be the final court and arbiter of the case.

I emphasise the necessity of maintaining a peaceful atmosphere in the country while this trial lasts. I strongly disapprove of the idea of holding a demonstration in front of the Red Fort on November 5 when the trial starts. I warn the sponsors of the move that issues of a far-reaching character are involved and that where the question of the lives of young men is to be decided, it will be highly improper to hold a demonstration. The I.N.A. Defence Committee will do its best to secure their release. I would have no objection to people holding meetings elsewhere in the city, but they should not attempt to have any demonstration in front of the Red Fort.

With feeling I refer to the death of Shrimati Satyavati. Her image is before my eyes. I had despaired of her life, when I saw her in the hospital. I want the people of Delhi to erect a befitting memorial in her honour. I am not in favour of a memorial of stone. I am in favour of earmarking a good amount out of the purse presented to me for Shrimati Satyavati's memorial. The rest of the money I want to be devoted to the I.N.A. defence fund and the Congress election fund in the North West Frontier Province.

Certain questions have been addressed to me by the Hindu Students' Federation. A scurrilous attack has been made on Mr. and Mrs. Asaf Ali in a local Urdu paper. It is sheer impudence to make a personal attack on Mrs. Asaf Ali, whose bravery is a matter of pride for all our countrymen.

Charges of suppression of the Muslim minority are utterly untrue.[3] If I were a Muslim I would be ashamed of the idea that 90 million Muslims could be suppressed. It is a false scare. Those who may be afraid of the alleged majority tyranny can take a lesson from the Sikhs. They are hardly four millions in the 400 millions. They have no apprehensions whatsoever and are fearless. Even if one wants to oppress a big minority, such as the Muslims, he will get more trouble than any gain out of it.

The Congress has made its position abundantly clear. I do not complain against the League for demanding Pakistan. My complaint is that they do not clarify the issue of Pakistan, despite our repeated demands. They are demanding the establishment of Pakistan even in the provinces where the Muslims are not in a majority. They do not

3. The *Dawn* at this time revived the charges of communal atrocities against the Congress ministries of 1937-39.

say anything about a plebiscite. Such questions can only be decided by a free India. The Congress, as the most powerful organisation in the country, can only indicate the way the solution of such a question lies. Those who think in terms of Pakistan think in terms of the existence of the third party. Once we are clear in our mind that our destiny lies in our own hands, no power can impose a solution on us and such difficulties will disappear.

We don't want to fight our countrymen, but we do want to fight for the freedom of the country. At a most critical phase in the history of the country, the Muslim League, the Communists and the rest sided with the rulers and did their worst to crush the legitimate struggle for freedom.

Where were these parties, who seek the electorate's confidence today, in 1942 and after? For three years and more, the Muslim League bargained with the British Government at the expense of the freedom of India. They now ask for Pakistan. I have no complaint against the demand, but the ambiguity in which Pakistan is wrapped up and the fantastic claims made thereunder make it absolutely futile even to discuss the question. The future of India can only be decided by those who will break her shackles of slavery. The claims of the Muslim League and those of the Hindu Mahasabha, which we openly discuss today, will not exist in a free India. The yardstick to measure the *bona fides* of the political parties is to find out their contribution to the common struggle for freedom. The League, the Mahasabha and the Communists betrayed the cause of freedom. There is no question of holding down and forcing the people of a province to a general scheme. If the people of a territory want to keep out, they may do so. But the conception of Pakistan, as preached today, is not only dangerous to the unity of India, but it is dangerous to the Muslims themselves. Despite the provincial and linguistic differences in the country, there always exists a fundamental unity in India which dates back to thousands of years.

Great tasks lie ahead. The main task is the achievement of freedom. Economic and social reconstruction should be undertaken. It is a big task to provide employment for two million Indians, who will be demobbed from the army. Whatever might be their reason for joining the armed forces, they belong to this country. They have no separate existence apart from the people of the land. The training the two million men have received is an asset to the country. They should be looked after and their talents channelised for the progress of the country. It is a great task which only a truly Indian Government can undertake. I refer to the resolution passed on this subject by the

A.I.C.C.[4] The problem of finding employment for lakhs of demobilised soldiers and other questions of reconstruction can only be tackled when we are a united people.

The proposal of parity[5] was made for an interim solution. No democratic solution can work, which is not based on the principle of one man, one vote. We cannot make two equal to one. I do not think in terms of separate electorates in a free India. I am prepared to devise effective safeguards to ensure that the majority do not impose their will on the minority. We, in the Congress, do not select people because they belong to any religion, but because they are fit for a certain job. The Indian National Army has completely solved the communal problem.

I plead for framing policies in the light of objective conditions in the country. I emphasise the necessity of a peaceful solution of our internal difficulties so that we may not face the difficulties China is facing. When the people capture power, they will not quarrel among themselves.

4. On 24 September 1945, the Congress Working Committee recommended that demobilised soldiers and workers released from war should be resettled so as to fit in with other schemes of national development.
5. A formula of parity between "caste" Hindus and Muslims was suggested by Wavell for the reconstitution of the Viceroy's Executive Council and on this basis the Simla Conference was convened.

THE UNITED PROVINCES

1. Errors in the Electoral Rolls[1]

Question: What is your comment on the reports that the Government intends to base the forthcoming general elections to the provincial legislatures on the old electoral rolls prepared in 1942 and, in the case of the Central Assembly, on rolls just prepared under

1. *Interview to the press, Allahabad, 2 September 1945.* From *The Hindustan Times*, 3 September 1945.

circumstances in which there is little possibility of their being accurate and exhaustive?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Travelling down to Allahabad from the north, I heard complaints everywhere about the electoral rolls both of the Central and the Provincial Assemblies. A large number of people brought instances to my notice of the partly bogus character of these rolls. Where, on the face of it, there should be a large number of voters, only an insignificant few have been included in the list. This is particularly noticeable in the rolls for Delhi. I am told that only a handful of women in New Delhi are included in the voting registers.

It is rather absurd to hold elections on electoral rolls which are full of errors, omissions and bogus entries. And yet, I am told that no changes can be made in them now. It is obvious that so far as Congressmen are concerned, they have been either in prison or engaged in more important activities during the last three years to think of electoral rolls. They had no chance or opportunity to try to correct the rolls; when this chance has now come their way, it is denied to them.

Other groups and parties, who have no other function but to think of elections, of course, are always busy with this work. But parties and slogans apart, it is obviously necessary that if elections are held, they should be held on correct and up-to-date rolls, and the fullest civil liberty should prevail to enable people to be approached at the time of elections. Now the election registers are thoroughly bad and there are still many restrictions in many places on freedom of speech and meeting. A large number of Congressmen are still in prison. All this is a curious approach to the elections.

Q: Would the Congress Working Committee consider at its forthcoming meeting the question of forming ministries in the provinces before the general election?

JN: Every question will be discussed.

Q: Does the decision of the Bihar Governor to dissolve the legislature imply that the Government does not want ministries before the general election?

JN: That is possible, but I do not want to say much on the point as I have not given thought to it.

2. Congress Candidates for Muslim Seats[1]

We are not interested in electioneering work till the final decision is made by the Congress Working Committee or the All-India Congress Committee. When this decision is made, and if it is in favour of contesting elections, we shall certainly do so with all our strength and contest both general and Muslim seats. In regard to the Muslim seats we shall probably have candidates on the straight Congress ticket as well as candidates run in cooperation between the Congress and allied organisations. There is going to be no secrecy about our activities of work. It is entirely wrong for any Congressman or other person to imagine that in the so-called Muslim minority provinces the Congress is not going to run Muslim candidates. But this question of elections, as I have said, depends on the larger issue before the country, which the British Government may put.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 8 September 1945. *The Leader*, 9 September 1945. Jawaharlal issued this statement in response to a suggestion that the Congress should not contest Muslim seats but should enable Nationalist Muslims to contest the Muslim League for these seats.

3. Call for Sacrifices[1]

I recall the events of 1942 and congratulate the youth of the country on the prominent part played by them.

The road to freedom is strewn with insurmountable obstacles and happy would be the day when our efforts will be crowned with success. I warn you that although the nation has ungrudgingly given tremendous sacrifices for achieving freedom it may have to give many more, and it should be fully prepared. The present world is agog with scientific inventions like the atomic bomb. It is an era of transition and nobody

1. Speech at Lucknow, 9 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 10 September, *The Hindustan Times*, 10 September and *The Hindu*, 12 September 1945.

knows what may happen. There is turmoil everywhere. Grave issues face the word. But in India what we have aimed to achieve has not been achieved. We want to free India. We want to create a new India. During the last 100 years, India has been faced with scores of difficult problems, which have been solved in one way or the other, although the solution has been slow. Alien influences always retard our progress and make solution of pressing problems difficult.

The day has come when all our demands have burst forth. The formation of a new constituent assembly for India will not meet the legitimate demands of the nation. The arrested growth of the Indian people cannot be further arrested. The British Government, the present Government of India and the Indian Civil Service cannot solve our difficulties. The crux of the matter is that the Indian Government, as at present constituted, is unable to appreciate our genuine aspirations for freedom and advancement. They little realise that national problems are far bigger issues than the minor day-to-day routine.

The Government functioning in India comprises both competent and incompetent officers. Some of them, who believe in the creed of shooting, have practised this art well and have made good progress.

The Central and Provincial Governments have been encouraging corruption, nepotism, jobbery and black marketing. The Government encourages such persons who are after titles and attractive salaries. In the last two years the moral structure of the Government has crashed.

The Congress point of view of a national government is that it should be representative of all communities, who should work together for the common good of the country when Swaraj dawns on India. We should be able to face our problems boldly and squarely. The times are delicate and we shall have to oppose any settlement imposed on us by the British Government, and not acceptable to us.

The Congress has still to decide whether it should fight the elections or not. I would ask the U.P. Congress Committee and the district Congress committees not to start preparations for elections till the Congress Working Committee and the All India Congress Committee have given their decision on this question.

If we decided to contest the elections, we shall come fully prepared and smash anybody who opposes us. We will not be concerned with one seat here and one seat there. We cannot compromise on our fundamentals. The Congress knows how to fight. We have fought the British Government which claimed to have crushed us. The Congress is, however, still alive and has survived the all-powerful British Government's challenge. The reason is that it has the backing of the Indian people.

I appeal to you to strengthen our organisation and unity. I make a special appeal to student organisations to give up their party differences and desire for offices, and merge themselves into one fighting unit. Students are the torch-bearers of the nation and its future leaders.

I thank the public of Lucknow for offering me a rousing reception. I am fully conscious of the heavy debt I owe to the Indian people in terms of their affection and gratitude.

4. Congress Strengthened by the 1942 Struggle[1]

During the last three years tremendous and far-reaching changes have taken place in our country. Three years ago the mighty Government unleashed its worst repression. After clapping the leaders in jail they launched raids against unarmed, innocent and nonviolent people to suppress and crush them decisively and completely. Word went round from New Delhi to London that the Congress had been crushed, was dead and was buried deep beyond resurrection. But the world witnessed a most glorious and wonderful sight in history. The nation, instead of taking the Government's challenge meekly, accepted it bravely and gave a stunning, crushing and befitting reply. Had there been no 1942 movement in India, it would have conclusively proved that India is a land of 40 crores of corpses and does not possess any manhood, but today we stand with our heads and spirit high as undefeated and unconquered people.

As a result of the 1942 struggle the Congress is far stronger today with its faith in the final victory considerably strengthened. The mighty imperialist power has also taken a lesson. It now realises that, faced with national annihilation, the unarmed people not only rise in protest but also hit back.

Though we gave a befitting reply to the Government in 1942, our final reply is yet to be delivered. This will be done only when we turn the Congress into a most powerful, dynamic and representative body.

1. Speech from a platform of Jhansi railway station, 12 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 13 September and *The Hindustan Times*, 13 September 1945.

At this stage I intend to administer a note of warning to Congressmen who indulge in party intrigues and cliques. The Congress is wedded to the goal of independence and cannot afford to have in its fold unbecoming tendencies. I warn Congressmen that we are going to deal severely and ruthlessly with all those, however high-placed they may be, who indulge in such dirty devices.

Though the coming elections seem very important, yet the Congress has not officially indicated a wish to fight them. On the contrary the U.P. Congress has recommended to the Congress High Command not to fight the elections until vital preliminaries had been clarified.[2] Therefore, I appeal to every Congressman to stay back from the election business unless he gets the final word from the Congress. Our approach to the election has changed. Now we do not approach the individual voter and beg for his vote. We appeal to the electorate in the name of the Congress. Consequently, in the final analysis, it is the Congress and not the individual which enters the election arena. Therefore, we must strengthen the Congress so that even at a moment's notice, we may be able to mobilise the entire electorate in favour of the Congress. In the coming few months we shall have an important programme to work out. I cannot say what that programme will be. I hope it will not be satyagraha but, whatever it may be, we should get ready and meet every eventuality and crisis.

I am sometimes shocked to see frictions[3] inside the ranks of students which have not cropped up as a result of differences on principles, but simply on account of a desire to capture power. You forget that we have to fight a mighty opponent, and we cannot afford the luxury of taking cudgels against our own men.

Question: Can you say what should be the relation of student organisations with the Communists?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I publicly condemned the Communists for their part in the 1942 struggle. Though student organisations are not political in character the Communists attempted to capture them. I do not

2. The United Provinces Pradesh Congress Committee had decided on 6 September 1945 not to consider names of any candidates for the general election until the Congresss officially decided to take part in the election.
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Q: Do you believe in the reported death of Subhas Bose?

JN: Like many other people I also do not believe the story of the death of Subhas Bose.

Q: Have you received any fresh reports[4] after your recent press conference in Delhi where an American correspondent doubted the truth of the story?

JN: Yes, I have received a number of reports which have raised grave doubts in me, and I disbelieve the authenticity of the news.

4 About the survival of Subhas Bose

5. Brutal Treatment of Under-trials[1]

On my return to my province I must take the first opportunity to express my horror and disgust at a recent occurrence in Benares, news of which reached me in Bombay.

It was reported that three under-trial political prisoners in a Benares jail were to be taken for trial to a court, which was situated about a mile away. They were in fetters and had handcuffs and yet they were asked to walk this distance. They said that it was not possible for them to walk with fetters on and that they should be taken in a conveyance. This was refused and they were knocked down and dragged by the legs and arms all the way to the court, just as a dead animal might be dragged. Their clothes were torn, their skins scraped off, and they arrived at their destination with their backs and buttocks torn and bleeding. On the way a request for water was met with insults.

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1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 29 September 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 30 September 1945.

I find it difficult to believe that such sadistic horrors can be perpetrated even by those who, by long practice in them, have ceased to function as normal human beings. But everything was done in public in a great city like Benares; the evidence is there and the local Bar Association has protested. What amazes me still further is that anyone who saw this horror could have tolerated it for an instant. There are some things which cannot be tolerated whatever the consequences.

It is reported that the person chiefly responsible was a police inspector by name[2].... That man should be tried in open court for an offence which surely exceeds in its enormity and inhumanity almost anything that the Penal Code contains. But responsibility must rest also on the Police Superintendent and the District Magistrate and the whole administration under which sadism and frightfulness and inhumanity in such extreme forms flourish.

2. Name omitted.

6. The Muslim League and Violence[1]

I am not a regular reader of the *Dawn* newspaper and only rarely see it. The *Dawn* of September 27 contains the following sentence in its leading article: "As regards the treatment alleged to have been meted out to the Maulana by League leaders, we can only say that brickbats, rather than bouquets, are always and in all places in store for puppets and showboys." (This refers to the Congress President, Maulana Azad).

Similar and even stronger incitements to violence, often directed to persons who are named, are frequently made in public speeches by prominent members of the Muslim League. Only a few days ago, at a public meeting held in Allahabad, vulgar abuse of individuals and threats of violence reached a new height.

One can deplore this vulgarity and ignore threats. But *Dawn* is supposed to be the official organ of the Muslim League, and it is pertinent to inquire if brickbats, violence and riots are the official policy of

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 1 October 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 2 October 1945.

the Muslim League. Is this going to be their method of approach to the elections and their attempt to justify the desirability of Pakistan? Indeed, even Pakistan seems to have receded into the background so far as the speeches of Muslim Leaguers are concerned; only abuse and threats of violence remain.

This is a poor argument and not likely to impress anybody. But it is not my business to impose my code of morals or decency or peaceful political action, based on reason and argument, on others, who wish to function differently. The Muslim League is perfectly free to indulge in its own variety of polemics supported by brickbats. My only concern is to know if *Dawn's* statements represent the official and carefully considered policy of the League.[2]

2. The *Dawn* in reply said that it had been indulging in metaphor.

7. Independence in Three Years[1]

Circumstances prevented me from addressing you earlier, although I was released three and a half months ago, and I feel that it is a very auspicious occasion, today being Gandhi Jayanti, that I have an opportunity of appearing before you after a long interval. It is also appropriate that we recall today the vision of India, in the making of which Gandhiji has a great hand. During the last 25 years Gandhiji has rekindled a torpid generation. It now remains for the leaders to utilise this new consciousness for the achievement of independence.

When I was in jail and read the news, whatever reached us, of the happenings of August 1942 and afterwards, I could not correctly assess the strength which the nation had gained from that movement. But we read the accounts with a feeling of great pride, for they demonstrated that the people could rise, if the occasion demanded, against any power. And, it should be remembered that those were the times when the country was full of British and American troops. Repression was carried out all over the country; still, common people, including in many cases, people from the Indian states, though without leaders, rose

1. Speech at Allahabad, 2 October 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 3 October, *The Hindu*, 4 October, *The Tribune*, 4 October and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 6 October 1945.

to the occasion. The movement was a mass and spontaneous movement. It completely changed the shape of India. In the Ahmadnagar Fort, we used to ask ourselves what effect the 1942 movement would have on the country. We all concluded that we could not answer this question until we came into contact with the people. Now that I have been out of jail and have visited a few places in the country and seen huge crowds of men and women attracted by Congress leaders, I am convinced that the strength, which the nation has gathered, is tremendous. The atmosphere of enthusiasm which I notice is quite different from what it was before 1942. There is no more need now of creating fervour and enthusiasm in the nation. The enthusiasm and strength are now there. The question before us, and before all of you, is that we have to see that this strength is not frittered away, but usefully employed to achieve the goal of independence for which we have been striving for the last so many years.

What is necessary is discipline and *sangathan*. We are passing through a very delicate period and we have to tackle important national and international questions. The first duty of the people is to strengthen the *sangathan* of the Congress, which is the only organisation that can free the country. We should not involve ourselves in sectional or communal quarrels or petty matters that weaken our strength. We should increase the Congress membership and carry the Congress message to every home. We should have active members. The organisation should not be considered as the property of a handful of people. The enrolment should be started in Allahabad from tomorrow and I will ascertain the position by the end of this month. I also call for the enrolment of larger numbers of volunteers. I do not know if the wartime restriction on this is still in force. I have no anxiety on this score. We do not need volunteers for any movement. There is a need to instil discipline in the volunteer organisation. I was surprised to see the efficiency of the volunteers at Poona. Even little children have joined the Seva Dal at Poona. There is much work to be done for which I want the volunteer organisation to play a role. One of the fields of this work is the coming elections. I do not have much interest in elections, for we cannot achieve much from them. But the results of the elections have a great effect on our movement. If we win the elections our movement will get greater force. It is, therefore, necessary that we should fight the elections with enthusiasm and dignity and we must fight them successfully. I am sure of the Congress success in general non-Muslim constituencies and I feel that there may be no opposition against the Congress candidates in many of the constituencies. I am also confident of the success of the candidates who stand on Congress tickets for Harijan seats. But, as far as Muslim

seats are concerned, it will not be an easy fight for the Congress. There will be strong opposition to the Congress candidates from the Muslim League and certain other Muslim organisations. The Congress will put up a strong fight. In this connection, I warn the Congress workers not to slacken their enthusiasm. They should not do anything that may bring down the dignity of our organisation. Several threats are being given to us by the opposite parties in statements and public speeches, but we must neither be intimidated by them nor should we retaliate to them. We must maintain the dignity of our organisation, and conduct the fight by legitimate and dignified means.

A pamphlet, issued by the Muslim League, was handed over to me. In it, I have been quoted to have stated that I threatened to use an atom bomb in Pakistan. I never said anything of this kind. In my speeches at Lahore and elsewhere, I referred to the invention of the atom bomb and said that it would be difficult for small countries to protect themselves from big powers which may possess the atom bomb. Therefore, I pleaded against the division of India, which would considerably weaken its power, and make it difficult to protect itself in the world of atom bombs. On the basis of such a statement I have been represented to have said that I would use an atom bomb in Pakistan.

It will be a very false step, if we do anything which will cause communal bitterness. We shall only delay the dawn of independence. I, therefore, urge that no such step should be taken from the Congress side. The British are packing up. Let the Hindus and Muslims realise that they will have to settle their differences among themselves after the exit of the third party.

Talking to a friend[2] in 1938, I predicted that foreign rule in India would end within 10 years. Seven years have passed since. It is not possible to say that in three years India will be completely free, but it will not be surprising if the question of independence is solved within this period. So the independence of the country is coming. It may take one year, two years or even longer, but it is inevitable. The question is only of time. You should conserve your strength and wrest your freedom from foreign hands.

Though the questions that are engaging the attention of various countries in the world are different, all these questions relate to the shaping of a new world. It is a pity that in India the old bureaucratic conditions still prevail. The British empire has lost much of its past glory because the war has reduced its power. It does not now have the strength to shoulder the burden of the empire. But the big officials in the country still behave in the same old fashion. We do not find

2. It was in fact the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow.

any change in the pomp and show of its representatives in the country —Governors and others. They have not changed with the changing conditions. This is a strange phenomenon.

I deprecate the present administration for its low standards and corruption. It is surprising that though the authorities admit the existence of corruption, the corruption still continues. But in India, no one thinks of trying these culprits who are worse than any war criminals, who have become millionaires and multimillionaires on the lives of so many millions who died in the Bengal famine. There are other types of criminals who took advantage of the disturbed conditions in India during the last three years. If you want to search for these real criminals you will find them in Delhi. But no trial will be ordered to try them.

The Indian National Army was formed of picked people who demonstrated great capacity. Indians in the army seldom rise above the ranks of jamadars and subedars. The war has proved that every part of India can produce people who can be the most capable soldiers and officers. The distinction of martial and non-martial races is gone. The war has also proved the capacity of Indians in technical warfare. The Indian National Army included young men, who acted as generals because of their capacity. The I.N.A. provided opportunities to Indians to prove their capacity for leadership and generalship. The country unanimously thinks that these men should be treated as war prisoners and should not be tried. If the wish of the country is ignored and if any harm is done to them there will be a great stir and a tremendous repercussion in the country.

The Indian National Army has also taught us the lesson of communal amity. Of the three persons facing the trial,[3] one is a Muslim, the other is a Hindu and the third is a Sikh. The I.N.A. itself was composed, in equal proportions of these communities. They all ate together and lived together. They had thereby no communal problem, though in India this problem persists. They have refused any defence for them on communal lines.[4] They want their defence on a national level, and to be undertaken by the Defence Committee set up by the Congress.

3. A public trial of Shah Nawaz Khan, P.K. Sehgal and G.S. Dhillon was to open on 5 November 1945 at the Red Fort in Delhi on charges of "waging war against the King" and "gross brutality" in trying to induce their fellow-prisoners to join them.

4. Jinnah had sent word to Shah Nawaz Khan that he would defend him if he dissociated himself from the other accused. Shah Nawaz Khan refused. "We have stood shoulder to shoulder in the struggle for freedom. Many comrades have died on the field of battle inspired by our leadership. We stand or fall together."

On India's independence depends the independence of all enslaved people of the Pacific, namely the Javanese and the Indo-Chinese. The Java movement leader has declared that he is fighting for freedom on the Congress lines.[5] I have also received a letter from Africa in which it is stated that the Africans are watching India's struggle for freedom, which they wish to follow. Their fight for their independence on the lines of the Congress indicates that the question of the independence of India has got more significance. It implies that the Congress, in fighting for independence, is also fighting for the independence of other slave countries. Therefore, India will have to persist in fighting, not only for the freedom of its own, but for the greater responsibility of taking up the struggle of other countries. The world will not be rid of war unless the domination of one country over another is done away with. This control of one country over the other is one of the fundamental reasons for wars. This thing will have to go.

The day when India will have its freedom is not far off, and when it comes, the British Government will no more interfere in our problems. We will then sit together and settle our problems. We must, therefore, be prepared for this situation, and keeping this fact in view that we have to solve our problems ourselves, we must fight the coming elections. I request the Hindus, the Muslims and others to go to the city Congress Committee office and verify whether their names are correctly entered in the electoral rolls. If there are any mistakes, the office should be informed so that it may rectify the mistakes.

5. Dr. Sukarno had said on 29 September 1945: "I have drunk deeply of the principles which guide the Indian National Congress and am anxious to achieve Indonesian ideals nonviolently."

8. The Case for the Congress[1]

I condemn the Government for its deeds during the last three years. I charge the Government with the responsibility for the Bengal famine,

1. Speech at Lucknow, 4 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 6 October 1945 and from Home Dept. File No. 33/26/45-Poll. (1), National Archives of India.

with perpetrating atrocities on innocent villagers, with imposing excessive collective fines[2] and realising war subscriptions, and with encouraging bribery and corruption among its officials.

Some of the atrocities have been listed in the report of the sub-committee appointed by the Benares Congress Committee to enquire into police excesses committed during the August movement in Benares. The report cited an instance in which the police in their zeal to realise a fine suspended a child with his head downwards in the presence of his parents and lighted a fire below his head.

I also refer to the recent occurrence in Benares when three under-trial political prisoners with fetters on them were dragged on a public highway for about a mile. It is a great shame for the people of Benares to have tolerated such a scene. I hold Sir Maurice Hallett and his Government responsible for such incidents.

There is much talk about war criminals. The time is not far off when we shall prepare our list of anti-national criminals, those who mercilessly crushed the spirit of our patriots, who opened fire on them, and who accepted bribes and sucked the blood of the poor. We shall never forget them. We have a long memory. Such things cannot continue for long. Was it for fun that we for so long faced bullets, or that on our return from jails we found our houses quite empty?

Some of the members of the Viceroy's Executive Council have enriched themselves and worked against national interests. I charge the members of the Executive Council of corruption and bribery. Shameful stories of corruption were always heard but at this time English and Indians, Hindus and Muslims were all indulging in money-making business, as has never been before. We are angry for it but what can we do when we have no power at our disposal? They occupied high posts and advised the Government to carry out such malpractices but we cannot turn them out. But the time for throwing them out is coming. It may take a year, two or even more but come it must when all such elements will be swept away by one broomstick.

Pakistan is an impracticable proposition. I accuse the British Government and the Muslim League of creating obstacles in the path of the Congress. I solemnly declare that in spite of them, the Congress is determined to march forward towards its cherished goal of independence. The Congress has made innumerable sacrifices in the last 25 years and they have not gone in vain. What has the Muslim League done to ameliorate the condition of the Muslim masses?

2. Within a few months of August 1942 the total of punitive tax amounted to nearly Rs. 20 lakhs.

9. Voting Facilities for Members of Armed Services[1]

For some time past I have been receiving complaints from persons serving in the army and allied defence services to the effect that facilities for voting at the coming elections were not being given to them. I understand that the Viceroy gave an assurance sometime ago that these facilities would be given. But complaints continue and servicemen demand for themselves in India and overseas the same facilities as were given to British servicemen for enrolment as voters, for free propaganda and approach to political parties and for voting. They complain that military authorities are ignoring their representations for enrolment on voters' lists. The Congress fully supports this demand.

It is improper and unfair to deprive our men in the Army, the Navy and the Air Force of their right of citizenship. Much has been said about their courage and ability on the field of battle and of the necessity of making some provision for them. It is odd that all this should lead to a practical deprivation of the right to vote. I trust that full effect will be given to the Viceroy's assurance in this matter and every facility will be given to our servicemen to vote and to attend election meetings.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 10 October 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 11 October 1945.

10. Strengthen the Congress[1]

I have to congratulate you, students and people, on your splendid response to the challenge thrown by the Government during the August struggle. Your deeds have been remarkable. By your courage and chivalry you not only upheld the honour and glory of India, but also enhanced its prestige in the world. Reports of some of your deeds reached us while we were in Ahmadnagar. But everything you did might

1. Speech at Varanasi, 11 October 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 12 and 14 October 1945.

not be correct. I am proud that the students and the people proved to the world that Indians will not be submissive to foreign subjugation.

I have noticed tremendous awakening and enthusiasm in the people, wherever I have gone after my release from detention. I hope that the people will maintain their spirit and strengthen the Congress by remaining united so that the country can soon reach its goal of complete independence. Mere shouting of slogans will not serve the purpose. To achieve our aim, it is most necessary to properly organise the masses and direct their enormous strength in the right channel.

I warn you that the coming few months are the most critical in the history of the nation. It is essential that you remain cautious and vigilant. The first task before you is to strengthen the Congress by making it a disciplined and organised body and also by enrolling four-anna members. You should check whether the names of those who are entitled to vote are found in the electoral rolls.

The Congress has decided to take part in the forthcoming elections. It is not very difficult to win the elections if we run a well-organised electioneering campaign. The volunteers must convey the message of the Congress to every house and to every man, and thus make the Congress organisation more powerful.

There is no organisation in India which can be considered a rival to the Congress, except the Muslim League. I warn the people against treating lightly the League's challenge. Hard work is needed for a successful response to the challenge, but we should give no ground for any unpleasantness with the League. This has to be avoided, otherwise the Government may exploit such unpleasantness for its own ends.

Great men always think great things, so also great organisations. The Congress will not be satisfied merely with occupying all seats in the assemblies and the councils. It will feel satisfied only by getting full control of the administration.

Congressmen cannot be over-confident of winning the elections in Muslim constituencies. But, by proper and fair means, the Congress will surely achieve success there too.

The present Government is corrupt and is demoralised. It is most necessary and urgent to do away with such a Government by winning the elections. The six years of advisory regime in the United Provinces has been responsible for unprecedented official corruption and nepotism. This is horrible. It is impossible to imagine what more misfortune and horror the few more months will entail. By accepting high positions in the Viceroy's Executive Council the Indian members have put themselves to shame. We contest the elections not to occupy the same chairs at Delhi. At the same time the Congress does not mean to

perform any miracle. The immediate aim of the Congress is to drive away the British Government out of India. I feel that we are marching with speed towards this goal.

11. The Congress Represents the People[1]

I have heard of the distressing stories of repression and suffering you have undergone. While on my way to Saidabad I was shown a culvert which was the scene of a police firing, in which some lives were lost.

When there is a war shocking incidents are bound to occur and I am prepared to understand them, but incidents of torture cannot be forgiven. The incidents of Handia tehsil during the last three years are known to all. But the district to which I am going, namely, Ballia, is the scene of the greatest repression in the province. Ghazipur, Jaunpur, Azamgarh, and many other places in the province and in the country in general, provide woeful tales. There was a wave of revolution and people rose through their inner strength, though they were without a leader or guide. In such a situation, mistakes, big or small, were committed. But the greatest mistake would have been if, when the occasion demanded, the people had failed to rise to save the country's honour. Such a time came three years ago, when Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders were shut behind prison bars. People then rose, though without a leader, and caused enough stir. But if they had kept quiet, the country would have lost much power. The Government did not give us time for negotiations, but took steps to crush the people. But the people kept the honour of the country high, and their strength has increased immensely after the 1942 movement. This demonstrates that there is so much inner power in the people that will find release when they are faced with a challenge. All this is the gain from the 25 years of struggle on the lines laid down by Mahatma Gandhi.

During the last three years, many kisans have been ejected from their tenancies. They also suffered due to cloth shortage and punitive tax collections. Perhaps the greatest hardship they had to undergo was

1. *Speech at Saidabad in Allahabad district*, 11 October 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 12 October and *The Hindustan Times*, 12 October 1945.

at the time when contributions to the war fund were exacted. Even after the war, such collections are being made for victory celebrations.

But the question before you is not of cloth scarcity etc., but *it is of* changing the entire administrative machinery. Corrupt people have to *be swept away by a broomstick.*

I am confident that the present administration cannot last long. The famine in Bengal, where lakhs of people were ruined or died of starvation, indicates that the Government has neither the guts nor the brain to solve the big problems of the country. The only thing that the Government knows is the use of lathi by the police on a few people. It cannot tackle the major economic and other problems. When the Government cannot solve such problems, it has no right to exist.

It is, therefore, necessary that we should soon achieve Swaraj, which *will give a people's government. Since the resignation of the Provin*cial Congress Governments there have been no representatives of the people in the administration, and the Governor has been doing what he likes.

The U.P. Governor has attained the greatest distinction in adopting measures to crush the people. Whether his three years' labours, in that direction, succeeded or not, he alone can know.

Only a Swaraj government can help the country in the present circumstances. The A.I.C.C. resolution of August 1942 has said this very *thing, and the Congress still adheres to this stand. Our problems can* be solved only when we have our own government.

The Government wanted this resolution to be withdrawn, but the resolution was passed, not by a few persons, but by the nation. It was not only not withdrawn, but has been reiterated at the last session of the All India Congress Committee. The struggle for Swaraj must continue.

In a Swaraj *government*, you will have people's government in which all communities, Hindus, Muslims, Christians etc., will share equally the power *and the responsibility.*

It will be the government of the people and for the people. In such a state the chosen representatives of the people, not a handful of capitalists or zamindars, will be in charge of the government machinery. Any man can approach them and express his grievances. If these representatives do not look to their interests the people can remove them from office.

Under the present rule, the people do not have power to turn out even a police constable. If the people have real control over the admi*nistration, high officers* or *even* governors can be removed by them. Instead of serving the people these public servants tyrannise them. A

people's raj is, therefore, necessary. They may profess different religions but in administrative matters, religious considerations do not have a place. An essential requisite for a good administration is that there should be no interference with anybody's religion.

Many people are of the view that the zamindari system is not a good system. The owner of the land should be the kisan who toils, and not the person who enjoys rent sitting at home. This is also my view, and that of many others in the Congress. There is no communalism in the question of abolishing the zamindari system. It will benefit Hindu and Muslim kisans alike.

Similarly there are other mojor problems, like the question of poverty, which affect everybody. Any problem affecting the country affects Hindus, Muslims and Christians alike. The Congress has in its fold all the communities. It is true that Hindus are in a majority among its members, but that is because Hindus are in a majority in the country. The Congress, therefore, aims at tackling the country's problems with due regard to the interests of all classes. I therefore warn the people against falling victims to the communalist propaganda. I would ask the Muslims present here to vote for the Congress candidates, or for those nationalist Muslim organisations whose aims are akin to those of the Congress.

. I have no doubt that the Congress is so strong that there may not be contests in many constituencies, but it does not mean that we must slacken our efforts. I advise the kisans to strengthen the Congress *sangathan* by joining it in large numbers, whether Hindus or Muslims, and also to join the Congress volunteer organisation which serves their own brethren in the village. I would ask the kisans to make sure that their names are entered in the voting register and, when the time comes for polling, to vote for the Congress candidates.

You should remember that there are only two contesting parties in the freedom struggle, the Congress and the British Government, and if any other party comes for the vote, you should ask what part it had played in the freedom fight these three years.

The Congress is the only organisation which represents, without distinction, Hindus and Muslims and all other communities and is fighting for the independence of the country. It is wrong to say that the Congress wants to crush any community. You should not be led away by such a propaganda, which is resorted to merely to perpetuate foreign rule.

12. *Bravery and Determination*[1]

I have heard all that had happened here.[2] The officials had indulged in the most brutal acts. I am not in the habit of complaining against anybody. I want to set men right. I want to create that strength in our people which may enable them to face criminals like them.

During the last 15 years Mahatma Gandhi has given us unique guidance. He has removed fear from the hearts of the people. We are gaining that strength which will lead us to our goal. People in this country have learnt not to bow before injustice since the day Gandhiji appeared before us.

The Muslim League has also been talking of bringing redress to people and fighting for independence. What have they done during these 25 years to justify their existence? The League has gone so far as to describe the August rebellion as a fight against the Muslims. It is an amazing and staggering statement to make. The August rebellion was a people's movement for freedom, and Hindus and Muslims and others participated in it.

I congratulate you for your brave stand in the August rebellion. It would have been disgraceful if you had tolerated all that and had not risen to the occasion. You fought well, but you fell. It does not matter. Now you are rising again with greater vigour and vitality to stand against the power that ruthlessly and shamelessly exploits you and tries to humiliate you. I assure you that the Congress wants *praja* raj. In such a system people will be allowed to manage their own affairs and the permanent settlement will have no place. It is a dead weight on people.

You often ask me to help in easing the cloth shortage. How can I and how can you? An alien bureaucracy which is steeped in bribery and corruption and incompetence is managing our affairs. We must wipe out this bureaucracy. We have all to work more unitedly and with greater determination to get power in our hands.

1. Speech at Rasra in Balia district, 12 October 1945. From *The Leader*, 14 October 1945.
2. During the 1942 movement in Rasra tehsil, a man was kicked by an elephant and dragged on the road, women were forced out of their houses; houses were looted and burnt; wearing of the Gandhi cap was made a crime.

13. Tribute to People of Ballia District[1]

Brave men and women of Ballia, I congratulate you. The story of your brave deeds has spread throughout the length and breadth of the country, and I have come to you, attracted by your fame. No amount of repression, let loose upon you by the bureaucracy, has been able to cow you down. The capture of power by nonviolent means and the people's raj established by you for a week in 1942 is the forerunner of what is going to happen in this country very soon. India can never forget the brave people of Ballia, its kisans and youths.

The entire country will praise you for your sacrifices. Sacrifices have been made by the country for the last 25 years and in the test, the country has come out so far successful, under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders. Nineteen forty-two was a big test for you. Your sacrifices have brought much more strength to the Congress than it ever possessed before. As you have attained so much strength, it is difficult for any power to rule over you. You must be independent soon. Though I cannot predict the time, I can say that your independence cannot now be withheld for a long time.

The days of August 1942 cannot be forgotten. We have no feeling of revenge, but those who acted inhumanly towards the people cannot be excused. Be they big officers or small, British or Indian, they are to be brought to book and tried to demonstrate to the world how bureaucracy behaved during those memorable days. If they were tried today, they would be in places worse than jails.

The inhuman way in which the people of Ballia were terrorised is scandalous. I recall the incident when a boy gave his life to keep the honour of the national flag. During the August disturbances the boy went to the Bairia police station to hoist the national flag. The police threat, that any attempt at hoisting the national flag would meet with grave consequences, had no effect on the boy. He went straight with the flag and faced the police who shot him dead. India can never forget that boy. This shows that people have realised the meaning of the flag and the significance of independence and unity for which it stands.

I stress the need of harnessing your strength which you have gained during the last three years of suffering and distress. You must organise

1. Speech at Bairia in Ballia district on 12 October 1945, where 21 persons were killed in a police firing in the August movement. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 14 October and *The Hindu*, 15 October 1945.

yourselves and enrol more active members and volunteers in the Congress and represent your organisation in every part of the country and in every hearth and home.

We have to solve big problems, problems which concern all, irrespective of caste and creed or religion, and we must get ready with work.

We resolved in 1942 that the British Government should go out of the country, and we still adhere to this resolution. The terrible police repression of the last three years had no effect on the people of this country who are determined to win Swaraj. During the movement, though we had to fight against arms we remained nonviolent. This shows how we organised ourselves according to Gandhiji's ideals. I exhort you to strengthen the Congress organisation. I assure you that Swaraj will be won in the near future. Swaraj means people's raj where all Indians will have an equal share in the administration of the country.

The permanent settlement will be abolished. It can stay no longer. *I ask everyone to vote for the Congress. The Muslims should not vote* for any organisation which is communal, because such an organisation always makes the question of independence a secondary one. The Congress, which is fighting for independence, is representative of all the communities in the country.

14. Indictment of British Officers[1]

I accuse them[2] of ruthless barbarity and tyranny of which they were guilty at Ballia. I said so at Ballia and I say it again before you.

I do not accuse these men because they resorted to firing. When a nation rises to fight, what is there to bewail, if the opposite side fires on us? But I do certainly condemn and accuse these people of ruthless barbarity which cannot be excused in any sense or by any code of argument.

The people are being harassed by the authorities and are forced to contribute to Victory funds and other such collections. It is amazing

1. Speech at Azamgarh, 13 October 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 16 October and *The Hindustan Times*, 16 October 1945.
2. The newspapers did not list the names of officials mentioned by Jawaharlal.

that officials want to sit tight on people's chests to realise money and then celebrate victory. This is indecent, but the fact is that bureaucracy is vulgar and inhuman from top to bottom.

I am not condemning a few subordinate officials. I accuse everybody from the Governor down to the *patwari* of oppressing helpless people. These things have got to end. People come to me and complain against these officials. Do not pay a single pie for these funds, if you do not wish to. Come what may. I don't want people to tell me that they are terrified, and if they really are, I have nothing to do with them. If they have not yet learnt to get rid of fear what else have they learnt? I know that to be fearless and to oppose tyranny is to invite trouble and torture on many occasions. But is that enough reason to submit to injustice? We are out to get our freedom. If we don't learn to be fearless, what use can we be to our country. Remember, the country's freedom can be purchased at only one price. It is the price of our lives. We cannot hesitate to suffer and to lay down our lives if the country's freedom demands it.

People often talk of laying down their lives for this or for that. I want to make it clear that I want to die in doing my duty. I have no desire to give life ordinarily and easily. In the course of this duty and struggle, if one is shot dead and killed, it does not matter at all. Friends, strengthen yourselves, a great struggle still lies ahead. We are getting impatient with this administration, and we must sweep it away, and we will. I have no doubt that within a few years we will have the charge of our country. We will look to the needs of our people.

The poor kisans and labourers of the country joined the army for money. The present army of two million soldiers will be the soldiers of India's freedom fight.

The Indian National Army consists of the soldiers of independence and their lives must be saved. Their question is a matter of concern for the whole country as it is a question of life and death for these brave men. I do not say they did not make mistakes, but their aim was to free India. The whole country should view the trial of these men from this light. The brave people of a country are its wealth.

All who have fought and suffered for the ideal of freedom are my friends and comrades. It does not matter if they committed some mistakes. I want to make it clear that if anything happens to them the whole country from one end to the other will be affected. They are our brave men.

The Congress had realised the need for cooperation with the League and worked for it, but the League refused to listen unless the Congress

accepted the League claim that it represented all Muslims. Such acceptance would have meant the Congress signing its death warrant because the Congress sought to represent all. In view of this attitude of the League, the Congress has no alternative but to leave the League alone.

India's fight for independence cannot wait. We will march on our way and any one who does not want to join us can remain behind.

The Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha are communal organisations which regard the question of independence as a secondary matter. They would rather deal with other matters before fighting for independence. The problems that face the country today are not religious but economic problems which concern all, irrespective of caste, creed or religion and communal organisations cannot solve them.

You probably know that the National Planning Committee has been set up to keep in readiness plans to ameliorate suffering and improve the conditions of the famished millions of India who have been groaning under the British yoke. The day is to come when we will enjoy the sunshine of freedom and this freedom will be achieved by no other organisation except the Congress.

You have been sitting here since long and now you must be tired, and I too, have some more work, therefore I beg leave of you.

15. Swaraj for the People[1]

I do not like grumbling and complaining very frequently against all that happened to you during 1942. I would ask you to stop grumbling and try to get power as soon as possible and drive out those who exploit and ruin you. The Government itself is realising that it cannot stay in India much longer.

Power and freedom, when they are wrested from the alien government, will not be the monopoly of Congressmen alone. Swaraj will be for the people. There will be opportunities for every one to grow and develop. People will get proper education, food, clothing and all other amenities of life.

1. Speech at Ghazipur, 14 October 1945. Based on reports from *The Leader*, 16 October, *The Hindustan Times*, 16 October and *The Hindu*, 17 October 1945.

I ask only one question from the leaders of communal organisations. What part have they taken during the last twenty five years, particularly during the last three years, in the struggle for the freedom of India? I tell you, they have taken no part specially in the last struggle when the entire nation had stood up against the British raj. The leaders of the Muslim League, instead of taking any part in the struggle, said that it was a Congress move to hurt the interests of the Muslims of India.

In that struggle of the nation, Hindus and Muslims suffered alike. It was a big event in the history of the country when the entire nation spontaneously rose like a flood in the river. The only thought which pervaded the nation then was the freedom of the country, and none other.

Communal organisations, be they the Hindu Mahasabha or the Muslim League, put the question of independence of the country as a secondary question. Of course, no one would say that he does not like Swaraj, but these communal organisations make the question of Swaraj dependent on certain other conditions They put 'ifs' and 'buts' in the way of the freedom of the country. The Muslim League, for example, puts the condition of Pakistan first before the question of the independence of the country. And the result is that they stand in the way of the Congress, which is the only national organisation that is fighting for the independence of the country.

No one knows what will be the shape and position of the Congress after it has achieved the independence of the country.

Pakistan would mean the partition of Bengal and the Punjab. I ask as to what will happen to the Muslims of the United Provinces if Pakistan is established. Will they go and live in Pakistan? If so, what will happen to their landed property and other interests in the province? They can certainly not lift these things up and take with them to Pakistan.

The question of Pakistan, and any other such question, does not arise at present. The first question which should be in every Indian's heart at present is the question of the independence of the country. Pakistan and such other questions can only be decided after independence is achieved and the government restored to the people of the country.

I deprecate the spirit of lamentation over what had happened to you during the August movement. The nation had challenged the British Government and the Government in its turn had tried to suppress the nation's challenge. What is there to lament over it? The only thing which the nation can complain of is the vandalism which big officers and their subordinates, be they British or Indian, practised upon you. But even for this vandalism you had not to complain in the courts of

the present administration. There is no justice given in them. You have only to complain of these things to yourselves.

The strength, which the country has achieved during the last 25 years, since the struggle for freedom had started, has increased fifty times during the last three years. This struggle has removed the fear of the British raj from the minds of even ordinary masses of the country and this raj cannot now live long. The British Government does not have the power to crush the movement for freedom.

I, however, advise the people not to waste this strength. We have to harness this strength. After independence is achieved—and independence cannot be delayed long now—we have to face many big problems which will concern the common man, problems which will be of importance to Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians or any other community alike. We have to be prepared to meet these problems now, and we should, therefore, organise ourselves so that this strength which we have gained is not frittered away.

16. Appeal for Election Fund[1]

The Congress has decided to contest the elections to the Central and Provincial Assemblies, in spite of the many handicaps and obstructions placed in its way. It will enter this contest on the issue of the immediate independence of India and equal rights and opportunities for every citizen of free India. It will have for its battle-cry 'Quit India', famous in India's story since the 8th August 1942, and firmly embedded in the minds of our people. After three years of storm and stress, of mass upheaval in India against alien and imperialist domination and its ruthless suppression, we have dedicated ourselves anew to the great and sacred cause of India's freedom, which has inspired our countrymen and country-women who have laid down their lives and undergone lifelong suffering. A chance comes to you now, our brothers and sisters in this province, to show your adherence to the National Congress, which

1. Allahabad, 15 October 1945. A joint statement issued by Jawaharlal, Govind Ballabh Pant, S.K.D. Paliwal, Purushottam Das Tandon, Acharya Narendra Deva, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and Sampurnanand. *The Leader*, 20 October 1945.

has become the living and vibrant symbol of India's unconquerable will to freedom and independence, to the principles and objectives of the Congress, and to that well-beloved cause to which we have pledged ourselves so often. That adherence must now be shown by full support in every way to Congress candidates at the forthcoming elections, and by carrying the Congress message of freedom and equality to every town and village and home in the province.

We appeal to our people in this province to be true to this old and ever-new pledge which yet has to be redeemed, and to remember that in the elections that are to come, individuals do not count, sectarian cries do not count, petty issues do not count, small groupings do not count,—only one thing counts: the freedom and independence of our motherland, from which all other freedoms will flow to our people. So, we make appeal to our comrades, old and new, to all those millions in our province who care and long for freedom, to stand by the Congress at this juncture and to give it all their help.

We appeal to our people for funds for the election campaign and connected activities. Large funds are needed for these purposes and we trust that all those who have the freedom of India at heart and sympathise with the Congress policy, whether they are rich or poor, will contribute to this fund and thus not only be partners in the success at the elections, but also be fellow-travellers in the onward march which will lead to the final stage of Swaraj and freedom.

All contributions to, and collections made for, this fund should be sent to the treasurer of the Provincial Congress Election Board, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Nainital, or to such banks as he may indicate.

17. The Position of Women in India[1]

I send my greetings to the U.P. Conference of the All India Women's Conference. I have long been of opinion that a nation's progress depends on the position of women there. The fall of India from her high status was partly at least due to the deterioration of the status and position of women in India. In a subject country men and women both

1. 29 October 1945. Message to U.P. Women's Conference held at Kanpur, 1 November 1945. *The Hindustan Times*, 2 November 1945.

suffer the indignity of subjection to foreign rule and the numerous disabilities that flow from it. So the first and primary duty of every one is to do his or her utmost to free the country. Indeed it is in the performance of this duty that a person or a group gets rid also in some measure of other disabilities. We have seen during the past quarter of a century how the participation of women in the great national struggle in India has in effect raised their status in many ways and opened out opportunities to them.

Now we are on the verge of great changes but before these take place great efforts and sacrifices will be needed. In these I hope women will take a leading part and thus fit themselves for the responsibilities ahead. They will have the further task of getting rid of the many disabilities, legal, social and other, which today attach to their sex, so that they may play an equal part with their menfolk in the building up of a free India.

18. The Inevitability of Revolution[1]

The British and Indian officials who wanted to write off the Congress, and employed every means to crush it during the last three years, will live to see their wish entombed with an imperialism which is now taking its last few breaths.

I challenge these officers to go to Ballia and see for themselves the futility of their attempts. The people there, despite terrible repression, walk with straight backs and erect heads.

During Mahatma Gandhi's fast in February 1943, the District Magistrate of Moradabad ordered that no public demonstrations would be allowed in the event of Gandhiji's death. It is tragic to see the extent to which high Indian and British officials have fallen. What I am unable to understand is how people can tolerate such perfidious injunctions. The people have no right to freedom if they do not have the courage to feel for Mahatma Gandhi.

I do not want your plaudits. I want you to realise your pathetically insipid condition. Repression of kisans is still continuing. This has

1. Speech at Moradabad, 29 October 1945. From The Hindustan Times, 31 October 1945.

got to stop now. I can pardon shooting, I can pardon assaults, but I am unable to pardon atrocities perpetrated in cold blood.

A revolution is inevitable. It is only a question of time when it comes. Then we will be tested again.

The members of the Indian Civil Service are incapable of grasping the problems of the country. After the resignation of Congress Ministries, these men fully exploited the mischievous provisions of the D.I.R. All caution was thrown off and the government of the country was handed over to the police almost on a plate. For all practical purposes, it was a police raj in the country. Even now when the war is over, the people are being forced to contribute towards Victory Fund.

I resent the U.P. Governor's remarks against the Indian National Army.[2] If this had happened in a free country, the author of these remarks would have been hauled up for contempt of court.

The Government will extend its helping hand to any one except the Congress. Congressmen must therefore be prepared for every sacrifice. I exhort you to vote for the Congress candidate, Mr. Damodar Swarup Seth, for the Central Assembly.

2. Sir Maurice Hallett said on 12 October 1945 that "the so-called Indian National Army will fully deserve whatever punishment may be inflicted on them by court-martial and that they should certainly not be regarded as national heroes."

19. Congress Strength and Popularity[1]

The Congress is fighting elections on the Quit India resolution and a Congress victory in the elections will be of great benefit to India.

British rule over the country has become weak, inefficient and useless. I accuse the present Government and its big officers of being responsible for the Bengal famine. Such inefficiency would never have been tolerated in a free country. The only way to remedy this is to overthrow this Government.

1. Speech at Saharanpur, 24 November 1945. *From The Hindustan Times*, 26 November 1945.

But mere slogans and processions will not drive the British out of India. These have to be backed up by solid work.

The Government has been trying to crush the Congress for the last three years. The Congress, however, has come out of the ordeal stronger. I am proud that while leaders were in jail, the masses had upheld the honour of the country.

I express my indignation and grief at the police firings[2] in Calcutta, but I urge upon the students the necessity of maintaining discipline.

The Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha are mere tools of the British raj and do not want freedom for the country. They went *to the length of proposing to the Government that the Congress leaders* should not be released from prison unless they disavowed the August resolution.

Though the Congress stands for communal unity there can be no compromise with the League under its present leadership. The Government wants a League victory because it feels that the League is friendly to it.

As an instance of Congress popularity, I can point out that the people of Java, Arabia, Egypt and Palestine, though they are mostly Muslims, put more confidence in the Congress than in the League. They always appealed to the Congress for help.

It is the age of the atom bomb. A terrible force has been found that will either create a new world or destroy the old.

2. Student demonstrations in Calcutta against the I.N.A. trials led, for three days from 21 November 1945, to clashes with the police and troops in which 37 died and 200 were injured.

20. *The Increasing Strength of the People*[1]

The world is passing through a revolution and has undergone a great change during the last three years. The movement, which we started in 1942, did not abate our strength, but increased it.

India is connected with the rest of the world. We were broad-minded with a broader vision in the past but since we narrowed down

1. Speech at Meerut, 27 November 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 28 November and *The Leader*, 30 November 1945.

our vision we considered that it was against religion to go outside India. We should now change with the world as it is changing. India is rich, but now because of the worthlessness of the Government we are forced to starve. In one of our provinces 35 lakhs died of starvation. But we are determined to end the worthlessness of the administration.

When we started a life of comfort, we became slaves, but now we are gaining strength and instilling a spirit of sacrifice and suffering. My belief is that India has vitality and is ready to shoulder its own responsibilities.

The main question before the country is of our independence which alone will ensure everyone bread, cloth and shelter. Where lies the Hindu-Muslim question in it? That every child should get education admits of no difference. But even in such matters obstacles are being placed.

We wish that the foundation of independent India should be based on such a firm footing that we may not only be free but we must be the greatest power in the world.

I strongly criticise the papers which exaggerate the events mentioned in the Pirpur report and try to fan bitter feelings among the Hindus and the Muslims. The Congress is so strong today that it can successfully face as mighty an empire as the British. It is all due to the power of the people. This power you should all increase.

Hindu freedom and Muslim freedom are absurd ideas which mislead the nation. We should remember that the foundation of India's freedom will be laid on mutual unity. We are so much enchained that we think like the British. People say that I am more of an Englishman but those who hate the English and wish India's freedom may not have those plans in their minds which I have for India's problems — food, cloth, work, cottage industries, and industrial concerns.

To divide India and establish Pakistan means nothing. The Meerut Muslim League secretary says that I shall finish their Pakistan by an atom bomb but where have I got it? The use of the atom bomb, if properly made, will lead to world peace, otherwise the world will be ruined.

During the last three years many a storm came, disturbances took place, repression was launched and every attempt was made to crush the Congress, but still you find the Congress more powerful today than ever before. This is the only body which can face the British Government. Other organisations have neither power nor willingness to take this path.

The Government has the capacity not of saving the people from hunger, but that of firing and using military force. Corruption and dishonesty

are rampant from top to bottom. I have no faith in the Labour Government. We must have *faith in our own strength.*

We should not elect the wrong kind of persons. The League has always put obstacles in the way of India's freedom. The League can also tolerate the present condition of India, but the Congress cannot. I cannot tolerate the interference of the British in the affairs of my country. I have no more patience. I want British rule to go. Whatever I am saying, it merely reflects the Indian mind.

21. Aim High at a Free India[1]

Independence Day! What memories it revives, of pledges taken, of storm and strife, of the vision of freedom which has drawn us all irresistibly during these many years. Again we meet to take that pledge, again to find ourselves dedicated to the service of India's freedom. When will one redeem that pledge? The day may come sooner than any of us anticipates. But it will not come without the utmost effort from us. So let us forget our little squabbles and aim high at a free India when the doors of opportunity will open out to every one.

1. *The Hindustan Times, 26 January 1946.*

22. The Folly of Disorder and Violence[1]

Independence is not far off now. We have assembled here today to renew our pledge demanding independence, but soon we will be assembling to pledge ourselves to maintain the independence that we will

1. Speech at Allahabad, 26 January 1946 From the *National Herald*, 28 January 1946.

have won. I would therefore stress this day that we must be careful in the methods that we adopt to win our independence. The methods should be such that when we have won our independence they must also help us to maintain it. And nonviolence, which the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress has suggested for the present as the method to achieve independence, is the only rightful way.[2]

If the Congress has to change its method of achieving independence, it will not do it quietly. The Congress will declare the change if ever made in its policy and then only adopt it.

The advantage of the policy of nonviolence adopted by the Congress at the present juncture is that it is the only instrument which can give a slave country like India, as it stands at present, the strength of mass activity or strength of morale.

Armed violence by a few in an age of heavy armaments can only have a success when this is the strength of an entire nation or a country. A few limited people, not backed by the whole country and with light arms like guns, swords and lathis, cannot match the countries possessed with heavy armaments. In India too, as long as it is dependent, there can be no heavy armament as is possessed by a big nation. So if a few people try to achieve independence by the use of light arms they will only be injuring the cause of the country to achieve its independence.

Personally, I mean by nonviolence, the nonviolence of the brave and not of the coward. People should not take shelter behind the policy of nonviolence and become cowards at the moment of a crisis. They should face the crisis in a brave nonviolent spirit.

Criticism has been made in some quarters that the policy of nonviolence of the Congress and the August 1942 disturbances are incompatible.[3] Those were the days of a crisis. In a crisis the people of an organisation cannot be judged by their emotional acts. The policy of the organisation is judged only by its actions in a peaceful atmosphere. So, if during August 1942 some people deviated from the policy of nonviolence, it was because under a crisis their emotions misled them. The Congress as an organisation has never deviated from the policy of non-

2. On 11 December 1945 the Working Committee, in a resolution drafted by Mahatma Gandhi, reiterated the Congress creed of nonviolence and emphasised the need for Congressmen to adhere strictly to the nonviolent method in the struggle for independence.
3. Aruna Asaf Ali and Achyut Patwardhan in a letter dated 17 January 1946 asked the Congress President for a clarification of the nonviolence resolution in relation to the 1942 movement and the part played by them in it.

violence, which it adopted after a mature consideration to be the policy to attain the independence of the country.

The adoption of the constructive programme and the use of khadi as embodied in the Independence Pledge are essential for the country to help achieve its independence. The constructive programme and charkha always draw attention towards the ordinary people and the masses. They help everyone to be self-sufficient and to stand on his own legs.

Kisans and labourers who form the backbone of the country have been suffering since long. It is our duty to give them relief as early as possible.

There is plenty of hidden talent in the country and, whenever the people get a chance, they will be able to prove their merit. Everyone should have a chance to develop and grow in coming days. We will concentrate on villages, and do our best for those who have been suffering since long.

It is not enough to turn out the British from the country. It is more important to be able to manage our affairs well after we have got rid of them. Therefore, it is necessary that we should have some idea of the things that we are going to do in the future rebuilding of India. It is a difficult and important task and we should start planning from now, so that we might not be found wanting when the occasion comes.

I do not agree with those who go on hunger strikes in jail for this thing and that. There might be occasions when a hunger strike is preferable to humiliation and suffering, but ordinarily it is improper to resort to a hunger strike. The U.P. Government does not have enough intelligence to realise that it is pursuing a very wrong policy. It ought to have known that times are fast changing and soon the power will pass to the hands of those who enjoy the confidence of the people.

The recent disturbances in Bombay[4] and Calcutta show that even the slightest spark in these days is enough to kindle a big fire in the country. I will not sit in judgment as to who is at fault for these unfortunate happenings, but deprecate the use of teargas, bombs and firing by the police.

If the atomic energy behind the atom bomb is utilised for constructive power, it will very much develop the entire structure of the world. The world is bound to change within the coming few years and I hope that atomic energy will be used in constructive power to uplift mankind.

4. On 23 January 1945, the printing press of the *People's Age* was badly damaged and 40 Communists were injured in an attack on their headquarters.

I appeal to you to help in getting suitable employment for the released men of the Indian National Army.

23. Advice to Villagers[1]

Brother peasants,
It is always a pleasure to meet you. I greatly admire your affection and enthusiasm. You complain to me of bribery, corruption, mismanagement and other things. I fully understand your difficulties and know that these things exist. But these things cannot go unless we have got power in our hands. I want to tell you that 1946 is a year of big events for India. Many things are going to happen. Vast changes are in sight. You must be ready to face the problems as they come. You must join the Congress in large numbers and strengthen it to carry on the struggle for freedom.

The Congress is trying its best to ameliorate your sufferings and hopes that things will soon change and many facilities will be available to you in the days to come.

1. Address to peasants who had gathered in the compound of Anand Bhawan, Allahabad, 1 February 1946. From the *National Herald*, 2 February 1946.

24. The Martyrs of 1942[1]

I honour the dead of 1942. I am proud of them. I am not at all sorry, as some incline to be, about their death. What is there if 25 persons died in Allahabad if it is for a noble cause? Even if 2,000 men

1. Speech at the Martyrs' Day meeting, Allahabad, 3 February 1946. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 5 February and *The Hindusthan Standard*, 6 February 1946.

had died, and died with honour, I would not be sorry. It is better to have a short life full of honour and courage, rather than have a long life of shame and humiliation. It is not dignifying to complain against anyone or of our sufferings

The year 1942 laid the deep foundation for freedom. This rebellion was the result of long suffering and humiliation. The common man showed great courage, fought bravely and defended India's honour which was in his keeping.

The movement of 1942 was a period of crisis. British imperialism, after clapping the leaders of the people inside jails, wanted to end once for all our freedom struggle. Alas! the bureaucracy had no idea of the pulse of the country. Men, women and children, all rose as one to resist the attempt at ending the freedom fight for ever. It was a great thing that the people revolted and saved India's honour. This will go down in history as a great event.

The world must know — as the 1942 movement has shown — that if any attempt is made by British imperialism to crush the people in their fight for independence, the whole nation will rise to challenge it.

The world is on the threshold of a revolution and the coming years will be epochmaking. You must be prepared to face the responsibilities and march with revolutionary times. You have to increase your strength and remove all differences and disruptions among you to prepare yourselves, not only to achieve freedom, but also to shoulder the responsibilities which will fall on you when independence is achieved.

I get angry when I feel that one man rules from Delhi the whole of India, or that one man from Lucknow dominates over the entire people of this province. Whenever I see the Union Jack flying over the buildings in India I become enraged. It bitterly reminds me that even now we are slaves. Such things should spur us to greater action, better *organisation, more discipline and a deathless determination to put an* end to foreign rule.

Though I regret hunger strikes by political prisoners in U.P. jails, par*ticularly by Jogesh Chatterjee, I strongly condemn the action of the* Government in not granting even the ordinary facilities, which are given to more culpable prisoners all over the world.

*Yet I do not approve of the idea of political prisoners going on hun*ger strikes. I particularly dislike the kind of hunger strike as is resorted to by one of the political prisoners in the Naini Central Jail in protest against the selection of candidates by the Congress Central Parliamentary Board to the United Provinces Assembly elections. This man has fallen in my estimation.

I am also amazed that beastly treatment is being meted out to the prisoners in jails. I remind you that this happens simply because we are too weak to put an end to it. It is strange that when the present atmosphere indicates the coming of independence, horrible conditions in jail and detention of hundreds of political prisoners should continue. I, however, assure you that the time is not far off when independence will come to India, and you will yourself have the opportunity to look into these things.

25. No Alternative to the Congress[1]

The Congress is the only organisation which can break the bonds of slavery. It has behind it the power which comes from the masses and from twenty-five years' revolutionary activity. It is pledged to the single goal of winning the country's freedom.

The Congress envisages a panchayat of the people without any distinction of caste or creed. The Congress is fighting the elections not to form ministries, but to win Swaraj. It is our aim to prevent unworthy people, who by getting into the legislatures, may do things that ultimately go against the interest of India. And we are going to the legislatures to add a weapon to our armoury.

For India, today, the main issue is the winning of freedom. Until Swaraj is won all minor issues have to recede to the background. The present bureaucratic administration governing India's destiny has proved utterly incompetent to tackle the major problems facing the country and, instead of remedying the evils, is adding to complexities. The Government has not even touched the fringe of the two main problems, namely, poverty and unemployment. The creation of a post here and a post there cannot solve these problems.

The Muslim League's demand for Pakistan is an impossible proposition. All parties are unanimous in their view that Pakistan is injurious to the country. A divided India can never remain free.

1. Speech at Malihabad near Lucknow, 6 February 1946. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 8 February and *The Leader*, 8 February 1946.

The Congress is willing to concede the right of self-determinaton to the provinces on the border areas, provided the people of those particular areas so desire. But the Muslim League will not agree to a plebiscite. The leaders of the League will not agree to give the people the right to express their will. They want the British Government to partition India so that the country might remain in bondage for ever. The question of Pakistan can arise only when the country is free. The raising of the Pakistan slogan in a slave country means strengthening the bonds of its slavery. I remind the protagonists of Pakistan that even if Pakistan is established, the British will not quit India and will put forth other excuses to prolong their domination.

The elections will be over within a month, but the fight for freedom will continue. Either India makes a tremendous progress towards freedom in the next two or three months or there will be a terrible blood bath all over the country. If India's freedom is delayed or if any attempt is made to postpone or sidetrack the issues, a big upheaval is bound to come. It is the duty of every Indian to follow the Congress in the fight.

While the Congress has been fighting for freedom other parties have done nothing. They pass resolutions and sit quiet. They have no power behind them. At their best they are capable of creating a few minor disturbances here and there.

The League and the Mahasabha have all these years raised the cry of Islam in danger and *sanatan dharma* in danger, but the fear of both is meaningless. Cowards die many deaths and see danger at every step. Cowards have no place in the struggle for independence. Only the brave and the fearless can carry it forward. Only those who can muster up courage to defend themselves have the right to exist, and if India cannot defend itself, it is bound to fall. The allegation of the Muslim League that if the Congress comes to power it will demolish all mosques is ridiculous. There is nothing in the history of the Congress to warrant such an idea.

It is because of its twenty-five years of struggle that the Congress is today known all over the world. This is the reason why Indonesia, which has a predominantly Muslim population, looks to the Congress, not to the Muslim League, for guidance and help.

The fight of the Congress has won for India the admiration of all Asiatic countries.

India, as it is situated, holds a key position on the map of Asia and this is the main reason why the countries in Asia look towards India for their freedom and for the freedom of the whole of Asia. The British Government does not even relish the idea of my proposed visit to

Burma, Malaya and Java. All my attempts to obtain a passport have failed.

The Congress is fighting for a principle, and not for positions. Whoever is for the freedom of the country should vote for the Congress. There is no other alternative for any Indian.

26. Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee[1]

I am glad to hear that Srijut Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee has ended his hunger strike. As I have often said I dislike hunger strikes except perhaps on very special occasions. When there is no other remedy left, a hunger strike may be justifiable.

But this weapon is too mighty to be used except for these very special occasions. A tendency to indulge in it otherwise is unfortunate. I realise however that the lot of political prisoners and more specially long-term prisoners has been a terribly hard one. Some of them have spent the greater part of their lives in prison. Jogesh Chatterjee has, I believe, spent 25 years already in prison. Manifestly from any human standard the normal conveniences for a sane physical and mental life should be provided to them. It is bad enough for vital young men to be kept in prison for all their young lives and any system of government which has to function in this way is a failure. But in any event they should be treated as human beings in bodies and minds which require care and nourishment. Mental nourishment is even more important than physical. None of us dare judge the actions of a person who had had to undergo the agony of long years in prison with all physical and mental consequences that it brings. There is so much talk now of changes in the government and of independence being near. Surely the present Governmental authorities might show some appreciation of the changes that are bound to come soon. They should at least provide healthy quarters for the prisoners to live in, books and newspapers and writing materials and frequent interviews. If they grudge the money for books and newspapers, we shall provide the funds. In particular there are many complaints of living conditions of 'C' class

1. Interview to the press, 6 February 1946. From *The Leader*, 7 February 1946.

political prisoners in Bareilly district jail.[2] It is a small matter which can easily be remedied without any expense or trouble.

2. Fifteen political prisoners in Bareilly district jail were on a hunger strike from the third week of January 1946 in protest against ill treatment and denial of reading and writing facilities.

27. The Congress and Religious Freedom[1]

I send my good wishes to Mr. A. Dharam Das and Mr. G.A. Simon, the Congress candidates for election to the U.P. Assembly from the special Christian constituency of the United Provinces. They are also the nominees of the Indian Christian Association of the U.P. and of the All India Conference of Indian Christians. With all these credentials behind them, they should have been assured of a unanimous election and it is surprising that anyone should have ventured to oppose them.

The larger issues involved in these elections demand that people should vote for the Congress candidates, for that vote is a vote for the freedom and independence of India. Every vote cast against them can only result in encouraging the forces of reaction and India's subjection. The contest is a clear one: for freedom or for foreign rule. Every voter has to answer this question.

From the point of view of the Indian Christian community, it is equally important to line up with the progressive forces for freedom and with the powerful currents of nationalism. Otherwise this community will isolate itself and play no effective part in the new India that is taking shape before our eyes.

I am astonished to read some of the propaganda that is being issued by or on behalf of the opponents of the Congress candidates. This is either due to colossal ignorance or deliberate misrepresentation. The cry of "religion in danger" is used when everybody knows that the fundamental creed of the Congress is freedom of religion, and all that goes with it. Christians form the third largest religious group in the

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 7 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 8 February 1946

country and it is absurd for anyone to imagine that their religion or their rights can be suppressed or ignored.

This cry of "religion in danger" is the cry of the reactionary everywhere, who seeks to hide his reaction and his opposition to freedom under the cloak of a false and pseudo-religion. If religion is ever endangered, it is done by these exploiters of religion for narrow and low purposes.

I am told that one of the opponents of the Congress candidates applied for a Congress ticket and on his not getting it is now breaking his pledge by standing against the Congress. This is a strange way of holding the banner of truth and religion. One of the opponents is also a former policeman.

The time has come when every Indian, whether he is Christian, Muslim, Sikh or Hindu, has to choose where he stands — for freedom or for continued slavery. Freedom will come anyhow for no one can stop it now. Those who oppose it will not advance the interest of their group or community, but will injure it.

I trust that all Indian Christian voters in the U.P. will vote for Mr. A. Dharam Das and Mr. G.A. Simon and give them an overwhelming majority.

28. Revolt If Famine Comes[1]

Let the British Government understand that if there is a famine in this country, the people will not tolerate it. I ask the people to revolt against the Government, if there is a famine in the provinces. The people must refuse to accept the fate which overtook Bengal two years ago, resulting in 35,00,000 deaths. Our countrymen must not die like flies — submitting calmly to death. Let the Government be prepared to face a rebellion.

1. Speech at Bahraich, 8 February 1946. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 10 February and *Hindusthan Standard*, 11 February 1946.

29. Interference in Elections[1]

I warn the Government servants not to interfere in elections as popular ministries will soon come to power. I advise the people to resist any attack on their civil liberties.

The foreign administration in the country knows that the victory of the Congress means the victory of the people. It also knows that the victory of the people means the end of British imperialism in India. It is, therefore, making frantic efforts to defeat the Congress at the polls. But the Congress is confident of sweeping the polls in spite of all obstructions. The Congress election programme is part of a gigantic struggle to achieve freedom. It has entered the elections with the slogan of "Quit India." Its aim is not to form ministries, but to win Swaraj.

To win freedom and to abolish poverty are the main issues before the country. Unless Swaraj is achieved, there can be no solution of other problems. Elections will be over within a month, but the Congress struggle for independence will continue. The Congress is determined not to allow the enemies of freedom to enter the legislatures.

The district should be proud of sending one of the valiant fighters for freedom, Mr. Kidwai, from its constituency. Mr. Kidwai was responsible for enacting the Tenancy Bill for the benefit of kisans.

1. Speech at Kaiserganj in Bahraich district, 8 February 1946. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 10 February and *The Leader*, 11 February 1946.

30. The Goal in Sight[1]

We are nearing our goal of independence, but we still have to organise our forces for its achievement and bring about a revolution in the country. We have to work for the amelioration of the poor and the downtrodden. We have to work for the uplift of the masses, provide food and clothing, medical aid and educational facilities in order to enable them to lead a decent life.

1. Speech at Zaidpur in Bara Banki district, 8 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 9 February 1946.

Poverty is the main problem facing the country. It is curious that in India the most hard working people get the least comfort while those who do the least amount of work lead luxurious lives. That has led to the present deplorable state of the country. It is for this reason that the Congress has decided to take over the reins of office.

We have to work for the unity of the people, unity between all communities, Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others. It is impossible to achieve anything without unity. There are forces trying to destroy the unity of the country to serve their own selfish ends, but it will be the greatest folly if people fall into their trap.

It is wrong to say that the Congress is fighting for the benefit of any particular community. The history of the past 60 years will show that the Congress has fought for the freedom of the country as a whole. Whatever laws the popular ministries in India had made were equally to the benefit of the Muslims and the Hindus. If the ministry has abolished the zamindari system, it is as beneficial to the Muslim kisan as to the Hindu kisan.

The year 1946 is a year of destiny for India. It began well for the country. The voice of the people makes itself felt and even the mighty British empire has to bow to the wishes of the people and has to set free the three I.N.A. officers. The country takes the stand on the plea that it is the right of a slave nation to revolt. That is the stand the country had taken 25 years ago when the first struggle for the freedom of the motherland was launched. It is so because the spirit of India has changed and a new spirit is being born. Be it so, the people of India are neither dead nor alive and a new life has to be infused in them. All doors to progress are closed to them. This barrier has to be removed and all possible avenues to progress have to be opened if the country is to make any progress at all.

31. Message of Hope to Villagers[1]

Taluqdars and landlords are the creations of the British Government. They did not exist before in this form. During the last hundred years or so, the British have strengthened the roots of these landlords in order

1. Speech at Nanpora, near Bahraich, 9 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 10 February 1946.

to weaken the country and perpetuate their rule over India. The times, *however, are changing. The days of feudalism* are now over. India can no longer have a king, crowned or otherwise.

What have the taluqdars done to deserve the vote of the people? *Have they done anything to raise their tenants from their present low* level? On the other hand, the Congress, while in office, made laws giving tenants hereditary rights over their land. The Congress did everything in its power to improve their lot and it is, therefore, the duty of everyone to give his vote to the Congress.

India is passing through a revolution. A new chapter is being written in the country's history. The people have decided to overthrow the present corrupt regime, which has not only failed in its primary duty to feed and clothe the people, but has also shown a callous disregard for the people's welfare. Freedom of the country is round the corner, and *it cannot be much delayed even if the British so desire. Any such* attempt on the part of the bureaucracy will be strongly resisted.

India is in no mood to be trifled with. Any attempt to sabotage India's freedom, either from within or without, is bound to fail. The continued miseries of the people, their hardships in obtaining even the most elementary things of life and the oppression by the rich of the poor have convinced the people that they must oust this Government.

32. An Old and Feeble Empire[1]

The Congress will have no relations with those who sow the seeds of dissension among the people of our country. They help nobody and prove harmful both to the Hindus and the Muslims. India's poverty is unsurpassed. Where else in the world are the people so helpless and their conditions so deplorable as in *this country? At the root of* all this misery are the British and their henchmen—taluqdars, rajas and maharajas. It is a shame for the people of India to tolerate such a corrupt and inefficient system.

1. Speech at Balrampur, 10 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 11 February 1946.

The British empire has grown old and feeble and it cannot hold India in bondage any longer, however much the British Government might desire. All these 150 years or so, the British sucked the blood of Indians and robbed them of their wealth to enrich their own treasuries.

Strengthen yourself and strengthen the Congress by voting for it. The Congress will see to it that the corrupt and inefficient administration which was responsible for the death of so many millions of people in Bengal and which is responsible for creating a similar situation here now, dies and dies quick. The British Government is undoubtedly dying, but it is being kept up by its henchmen by artificial means. The people have to take the final step boldly and throw off the yoke.

The Government spokesmen in London and in New Delhi have been talking of an imminent famine befalling India.[2] But have they ever heard of a famine stalking into the homes of the taluqdars, rajas or maharajas? Have they ever seen or heard of a landlord's house without lights? Have they ever seen any landlord going about without clothes? These problems do not exist for them. They are well clothed, and well fed. It is the peasant who suffers. It is the peasant who suffers and dies. It is, therefore, the peasants' outlook and essential duty to throw away their burden and establish a government of their own and steer their destinies as they think fit.

Our patience has reached the limit and it is our determination to wrench completely the reins of the government from the hands of the rulers. The whole situation in the country is highly explosive and it may burst any moment. Hungry India is a danger to the peace of the entire world, and sooner or later the country is bound to revolt against the present unsatisfactory state of affairs.

I warn the officials who degrade the canons of justice and interfere in the elections on behalf of a certain political party. They should not forget that action against them will be taken, when the time comes, for their misdeeds.

2. Newspapers reported on 1 February 1946 that Government officials were of the view that famine was imminent in Bengal and Madras provinces, affecting 110 million people. On 5 February 1946 the British Food Minister told the House of Commons that India faced the threat of a famine.

33. Freedom the Main Issue[1]

The edifice of India's freedom has to be built, corruption and bribery, which are at present rampant, have to be ended, the problems of hunger and starvation have to be solved, the poverty of the masses has to be overcome, the administration of the country has to be brought into line with the needs of the people; and all this can be done only when we become masters of our own fate.

Several forces are at work misleading the people and diverting their energies into wrong channels. We have to use our discretion to distinguish between right and wrong. The Muslim League, which clamours for a partition of India, wants only to weaken the country. Mr. Jinnah openly demands British supervision both for Pakistan and for Hindustan, or in the alternative, continuation of the British regime in the country.[2]

Immediately after the elections, the country will be faced with major issues, and if the British Government fails to rise to the occasion, the people will take over its affairs in their own hands. Solid constructive work must be undertaken to reach the goal. Rule of the people, by the people and for the people, has to be set up. You should not, therefore, waste your energies on petty quarrels, but should canalise them in the right direction. But if we fail to solve our problems we will ourselves die out.

The I.C.S. officers, who claim to be expert administrators, have proved themselves to be a most inefficient and worthless lot. They have played a mean part in bringing about the sad plight of the people. They resorted to repression in 1942, the like of which has not been seen or heard since 1857.

The British Government thought that it would keep the Congress crushed so that the people of the country might remain at their disposal. But Britain today stands disillusioned. The Congress has emerged far stronger from the ordeal than ever before.

1. Speech at Basti, 11 February 1946 From *National Herald*, 11 and 12 February 1946.
2. On 29 February 1944, Jinnah said, " ...there would be under the new constitution a transitional period for settlement and adjustment during which time the British authority, so far as armed forces and foreign affairs are concerned, would remain paramount."

The foundations of India's freedom lie deep. But our dissensions render us weak. The British, who came as traders, became our rulers. The old game of divide and rule is still on. Mutual hatred is being created by the interested parties. All possible means are being employed to widen the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims. Critical times are ahead of us and we must beware of mischief-mongers.

Pakistan as envisaged by Mr. Jinnah cannot and will not come into being. Several questions of far-reaching importance have to be considered. What will happen to the minorities in the Punjab and Bengal if they do not agree to live in Pakistan areas? Will the Punjab and Bengal be cut physically into two? Over and above it, while the Muslim League wants the division of India, it also wants the presence of the British troops for its protection. The case will be like that of Iran where foreign troops are stationed, with the result that the country's very existence is threatened. Unless, therefore, our defence is in our hands freedom of the country will be meaningless and we will continue to be too weak to resist foreign aggression. It is for this reason that the Congress passed the Quit India Resolution.

The Muslim League stands for hooliganism and creating trouble. It is knocking at the doors of the British Government and fighting for personal gains. It entirely overlooks the main issue—the freedom of the country.

It is therefore the duty of every Indian, irrespective of caste, colour, creed or community, to vote for the Congress, and every such vote will be a nail in the coffin of the British power which knows only to tax the people and open fire on them according to its whims and fancies.

34. On the Threshold[1]

India is on the threshold of tremendous changes. It is restless and fully prepared to wrest power from unwilling hands. On the one hand, India is gaining in strength and, on the other, Britain is growing weaker. When Britain is confronted with its own difficult problems, how can it be expected to solve the mighty problems facing the people of our country—the problems of hunger and unemployment?

1. Speech at Gorakhpur, 13 February 1946. From *The Hindu*, 17 February 1946

The British administration today is unfit even to maintain its police raj, which knows one duty, that is, of firing on the people in India. The tehsildars, the deputy collectors, *patwaris* and all the relics of the vanishing order, cannot be expected to solve the problems of poverty and unemployment, and the dozens of other problems, without the active cooperation of the teeming millions of our country. The truth of the matter is that the British Government, as it is today, is utterly unfit to rule India, and there can be no peace in our country unless we achieve freedom.

Where, in the context of the problems of hunger, want and sickness, does the communal problem fit in? When we are involved in rebuilding our devastated country, shall we sit down to consider what the proportion of Hindu and Muslim engineers should be, or should we entrust the work to those who will work with efficiency, be they Muslims or Hindus or Christians or members of any other community of India? We have to look at the Indian problems from this angle. Today our major problems have to do with achieving independence and building the country anew. Can the Muslim League or the Hindu Mahasabha tackle these problems? I stagger to think that these problems do not even figure in their programmes. They have not given any serious consideration to them. I ask what they have done during the last 30 years towards solving these problems, except to raise a hue and cry. It is easy for them to sow seeds of discord, but I warn them that the results will be disastrous for the whole of India. Can Hindus or Muslims rule the country on communal lines?

The problem is not a Hindu or Muslim problem as the Leaguers and the Mahasabhaites proclaim. For them the problem is of protecting the zamindari and the taluqdari. In Oudh I found a Hindu taluqdar helping a Muslim taluqdar. These taluqdars and zamindars, who are creations of the British Government, are afraid of a people's government. Today I was shown a handbill which was circulated by Muslim Leaguers, in which some sentences, said to have been uttered or written by me, have been quoted. I am pained to think of the degradation of politics to such a standard that sentences torn out of context are used to exploit the sentiments of the masses. What will it matter if one seat or two are captured by these means? How will it help in solving the gigantic problems that stare us in the face?

Though there has been no important change in the constitutional framework of the country, yet there is a world of difference between what India was three to four years ago and what it is today. We have imbibed inner strength of heart and head, which cannot be suppressed by repression. The problems that demand not only immediate but speedy solution are of poverty and unemployment. Either we solve

them or we perish. The country can no longer tolerate the present state of affairs. We are fed up. The cry of Pakistan at this juncture is a vain cry. If Iran cannot guard its freedom, how can one expect Pakistan or Hindustan to stand alone? I am told some provinces on the frontier may ask for secession. I do not believe in this, but if they are all keen to do so, they may part with pleasure, but I tell them they will have soon to come back to a united India.

All those who have indulged in atrocities against the masses will have to leave this country. There is no place for them in India.

35. Resist Police Excesses[1]

Let there be no doubt in the mind of anybody that the Congress will soon be returning to power and police and other officials, against whom allegations of excesses and *zulum* are proved after due trial, will be severely dealt with.

I advise you not to take everything lying down, but to resist police excesses boldly without creating any disturbance.

The police excesses in 1942 are fresh in my memory. Events in the country are moving fast and I cannot guarantee that the police *zulum* of 1942 will not be repeated. But whatever course the future events take, unlawful and corrupt activities of officials will not be tolerated and sternest actions against those responsible will be taken.

I deprecate such slogans as अंग्रेजों का नाश हो।[2] It is foolish to raise such slogans. First of all you must have power to oust them. You cannot succeed by cursing others like old women. You have to achieve a big goal and do big things. You should, therefore, think in a big way and should not use such phrases even for your enemy.

Religious freedom under a Congress regime has been made clear beyond doubt in the Congress election manifesto. Momins, Ahrars, and Jamiat-ul Ulema are with the Congress, because they know that the Congress alone stands for freedom and brotherhood of all the communities in the

1. Speech at Padrauna, 13 February 1946. From National Herald, 15 February 1946.
2. "May the English be wiped out."

country. It is a new India that the Congress wants to build, an India in which the amenities of life will be freely available to all, Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, town dwellers and villagers alike.

36. Deaths from Hunger Will be Avenged[1]

The Congress has refused to join the food delegation[2] proceeding abroad to secure food for India. How can the Congress agree to join a delegation which will be headed by an utterly incapable person like Sir J.P. Srivastava who, by his actions, has dishonoured the country?

If Congress ministries are formed in the provinces, then with the full cooperation of the people some of our present day problems may be tackled. But no one can forget that formation of ministries is not our only aim. We have to see that the progress of our quit India demand and march to independence is steadily maintained. We can cooperate with the Government in the setting up of a constituent assembly, provided such an assembly is invested with sufficient power to enforce its decisions.

My heart breaks when I remember lean and thin, starved and ill-clothed villagers. In Bengal, while roads were full of bodies of people who died of starvation, Englishmen and some Indians were enjoying dances and feasts in big hotels. There could be no wagons for grains, but special wagons were available to take race horses to Calcutta and other places. Imagine how 35 lakhs of our countrymen died of hunger within so short a time. The famine danger is facing the whole country today, but this time we will not tolerate feasts and dances while millions of hungry people face death. If people die of hunger, their deaths will be avenged.

1. Speech at Varanasi, 14 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 16 February 1946.
2. The Congress refused to join the delegation led by J.P. Srivastava to Washington and London to ask for more imports, as "the responsibility for providing food was the Government's. The British had taken upon themselves the responsibility for defending India, and in the course of doing so had reduced it to famine. The Congress could never associate with the officials who were responsible for the Bengal famine."

37. *Corruption in the Services*[1]

In a recent speech in Oudh, I referred to the extreme poverty of the peasantry. I have seen their lack of food and clothing, their miserable mud huts and the sad condition of their children. They live on the verge of life, with death ever hovering over them. If any misfortune occurs, they will have no power to resist and will die in large numbers. I referred also to the Bengal famine which caused during a few months three and a half million deaths. I told the peasantry not to submit to this misery. If starvation stared them in the face, I called upon them to rebel against the political and social conditions which had brought it about. If we have to die, let us die like men and not like rats in a hole. On no account should we submit to dying by starvation. We would also not submit to the condition of some people feasting and racing and flaunting their luxury while the masses suffer the agony of starvation. We would not submit to the incompetence and corruption of highly-placed officers and to the selfishness of profiteers and black-marketeers. If the heavy burden of suffering has to be borne owing to circumstances beyond our control, it will have to be shared equally by all, and the Government responsible for mismanagement will have to go.

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 14 February 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 15 February 1946.

38. *Win or Perish*[1]

There is no other organisation, party or body, other than the Congress which can solve the acute problems of the country, and it is this national institution alone, now 60 years old, which can eradicate, when it comes to power, all evils and corruption rampant in the present administration.

All the people who believe in the ideals of the Congress must vote

1. Speech at Allahabad, 15 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 17 February 1946.

for its candidates in the election. For every vote cast for the Congress means voting for the independence of the country. I warn that the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, and similar bodies are constantly standing in the way of the Congress, and their canvassing to win votes aims indirectly at the continuance of the British domination.

I lay emphasis on discipline, unity and a spirit of cooperation among Hindus and Muslims. Then alone can the Indians achieve freedom. There is no intermediary way between Swaraj and foreign domination: either this alien Government of Britain should quit India, or we shall perish. I am not sure whether the British would give independence to India because they have neither the willingness nor the wisdom to do it. It is the common people who will have to snatch power from British hands

From my extensive election tour in the eastern districts, I have found that the Muslim League is dominated by the upper classes, taluqdars and zamindars. The Muslim League or the Hindu Mahasabha can never be appealing to the poor masses of the country with their feudatory objects. The Congress represents the people of the country and, by its martyrs and its sacrifices, has won their hearts.

I regret that the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League are sowing seeds of enmity and destruction by preaching communalism and abusing each other. I, therefore, request all, Hindus and Muslims, to unite and increase your strength as early as possible. Hindus and Muslims have lived together for thousands of years and they will continue to live so. Therefore, the task of strengthening their brotherly bonds is the most essential thing.

Pakistan can never be feasible. The demand for it stands in the way of India's freedom. According to Mr. Jinnah, Pakistan presupposes protection by the British troops. Is it not opposed to the ideal of the Congress and the achievement of independence?

39. Congress Refusal to Join Food Mission[1]

The food situation obviously requires the fullest cooperation of all in order to avert a disaster, as well as to spread out the burden on all equally. In particular, the cooperation of the public at large is essential.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 17 February 1946. *National Herald*, 18 February 1946.

The question should be tackled without politics, but it is obvious that the tremendous political tension in the country affects that situation and comes in the way of cooperation between the Government and the people.

At no time has the British Government in India been so thoroughly disliked and distrusted by the people as at present. Their handling of the food situation since the war began, and more specially previous to and during the Bengal famine, has been astonishingly bad. Even after the fall of Burma, when the supply of rice to Bengal was cut off, nothing was done. There was no control or rationing in Calcutta or Bengal right up to the time of the famine. Those who are responsible for this, both in the Central Government and in Bengal, have been severely condemned by an official commission of inquiry appointed by the Government of India. Feeling against them is much stronger in the public mind and no one trusts them or considers them capable of dealing adequately with the situation. Yet some of these very men are participating in the food delegation which is going abroad.

It is not possible for responsible Indians to join a delegation which consists predominantly of such people. That would be to flout public opinion and irritate it still more. The only proper way to organise such a delegation is to give it a really national character.

In Britain, in 1940, the Labour Party refused to cooperate in the Chamberlain Government in spite of the stress of war and their earnest desire to help in that war. They felt that they could not accept that leadership and insisted on a change. When that change came and Mr. Winston Churchill became the Prime Minister, Labour joined him.

In India, the situation is far more difficult and unless a change—and a vital change—takes place, effective cooperation is impossible. Even if some individuals were prepared to give this cooperation, they could not carry the people with them and the necessary psychological atmosphere for a combined effort could not be produced.

BENGAL

1. Message to Bengal[1]

On coming to Bengal after three and a half years my first feeling is to offer my salute and homage to Bengal's dead — dead due to famine and starvation, man's incompetence and inhumanity, and done to death by police and military; also my salute and greeting to the living Bengal, especially the youth, vibrant and full of passion for India's freedom. *Jai Hind.*

1. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 7 December 1945.

2. Need for a United Front[1]

It is not the proper time to make a speech. We all attended the prayer meeting and after prayer there is no room for any speech. I am late in reaching the place, otherwise I would have been one of you in the congregation.

I am glad to meet many old friends and contact many new friends in Bengal. I know what happened in Bengal and what should have been done for Bengal and what had not been done for Bengal. Bengal had to make great sacrifices and suffer terrible agony. I feel ashamed that I could not come to Bengal earlier. Nevertheless, Bengal has extended me a welcome.

The time has come when we should forget our squabbles and turn our attention to the fundamentals and prepare ourselves to tackle the big problems awaiting solution. Elections are always a tough work, but they pale into insignificance in the presence of the fundamental issue, namely, the freedom of India. We have to put up a united front for the

1. Speech at a prayer meeting, Sodepur, 7 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 8 December 1945.

realisation of freedom and so there ought to be no room for petty issues in our midst.

We plan to build a new India, a new Bengal, for our children to enjoy all the amenities of life. Let them not be dragged into the mire of party squabbles and thereby frustrate this ideal.

3. Pulsation of New Life[1]

The meeting began in a well disciplined way. The salvation of India will not come by your mere asking. It will have to be won by disciplined effort. Therefore, if you cannot maintain discipline in this gathering how can you expect to achieve independence. I hope you will disperse quietly after the meeting is over and will not jostle.

I have been in Calcutta only for a few days. I understand that there was a very big gathering along the Harrison Road on the day of my arrival. I did not know that. There was a very heavy crowd at the Howrah Station and I had to detour. So I was unable to come along the Harrison Road and could not meet those who had waited. For this I beg to be excused.

It is three and a half years since I came here last. During this period many things have happened. The world has undergone tremendous changes, so also India. Bengal specially has suffered heavily. When we were in Ahmadnagar Fort we heard of the deaths of lakhs of people due to famine. Other things also happened here. I was very anxious to come to Bengal and desired to tour the province and see with my own eyes how the people had suffered. But circumstances were too strong against my desire. I shall have to leave Bengal in a few days. I want to go to Midnapore at least, but even this would not be possible this time.

If in two or three months, when the elections are over, the Labour Government does not offer anything concrete India will have to take a very big step. But the question before India is no longer how to win Swaraj. Swaraj is not very far. The question is how we fare today.

1. Speech at Calcutta, 10 December 1945. Based on reports from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 12 December, and *National Herald*, 12 December 1945

We will have to be prepared for tomorrow. You would have heard and read in history the rise and fall of a country. Every country moves forward in the light of its own experience. During the last three years India has learnt the lessons which would not have been possible for it to learn from the pages of history.

During the last six months, I have toured different parts of India. I have been to Bombay, to Poona, to Rajputana. I have witnessed a tremendous political awakening among the people everywhere. I have never seen such consciousness among the people during the last 25 years. Having seen all these I am in a position to say that India is pulsating with a new life and vigour. What happened in the recent Calcutta firing is not an isolated instance. Nobody was aware that there was a ban on processions to Dalhousie Square. When the students were stopped they simply squatted on the ground. They were peaceful all through. I did not know the details of what happened until I came here. Bullets were showered upon them again and again. The students faced the bullets quietly. They did not move a single pace and demonstrated admirable courage and patience. Then the whole city was ablaze in indignation and various incidents followed. The students of Calcutta gave a lead to the entire people. Those who took part in this uprising are great.

Propaganda against India is being carried on in America. An American magazine reported that a hand grenade was thrown at a Thanksgiving dinner.[2] We all know that this is a tissue of falsehood. So long as India is not free we will not be free to check such false propaganda. But one day India will be free and we will welcome the friendship of other countries. India will not forget then how to check such malicious propaganda.

The Congress never desired to have a house divided against itself. There is certainly a difference between the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party. The Congress is pledged to socialism. We also want to have friendship with Russia. But the Communist Party took a different attitude so far as India's struggle was concerned and they leaned on the other side.

No doubt, in Bengal the Communist Party did some good work during the famine. But this is not the crux of the whole matter. The Communist Party members who were in the Congress were given time

2. It was alleged that during the disturbances in Calcutta in November 1945, three U.S. army officers were killed. Subsequently, the U.S. authorities contradicted this report.

to explain their position. The simple question before them was whether they accepted the Congress principle. Instead of answering this simple question they replied that the Congress itself is not abiding by its principle. The Working Committee will have to reply to this point.

Do not attach importance to threats[3] by British Ministers or high-placed officers, but go on building up your strength peacefully. Such threats will not provoke us to resort to violence, nor will they be able to deter us from winning Swaraj by nonviolent means. The days when people were frightened by threats from high quarters are over. India is ours, so our voice must prevail, if not today then tomorrow. I can understand Gandhiji talking of nonviolence, but how could the British Government talk of nonviolence? British history shows that Britain built up her empire by violence and maintained it by violence. India is entitled to resort to violence for the attainment of freedom if she so desires. But the people should remember that India cannot throw away its century-old traditions. Throughout its history India has never been an aggressor. It has not robbed any of its neighbours of their freedom. I urge young men to build up strength and organisation. Sporadic violence only fritters away their energy.

Swaraj is meant for every person. I am convinced that we shall be able to give food, clothes, shelter and work to everybody in a free India.

3. On 4 December 1945, Pethick Lawrence warned that the Government of India would resist any attempt to resolve the constitutional issue by force. On 10 December 1945, Wavell said that India's political freedom was not a simple problem to be resolved by slogans, such as Quit India, and "it cannot and will not be resolved by violence."

4. The Unity of Purpose[1]

I am surprised at the importance being placed on these talks.[2] Nothing of importance can be expected to develop until the elections are over.

The talks are more of an exploratory nature in which Congress leaders have presented their views on the political situation. Soon after

1. Interview to the press, Calcutta, 11 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 12 December 1945.
2. Mahatma Gandhi had talks with R.G. Casey, Governor of Bengal, for four days in December. Later Maulana Azad, Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal had interviews with the Governor.

the elections a constituent assembly must be convened to outline the framework of an Indian government. I feel that the people of India will not countenance delay. The thermometer of Indian spirit is rising rapidly, and it is difficult to keep it from breaking.

In my election tour, I have been impressed by the spirit which has caught the people, not only in the large cities like Calcutta, but in backward parts of the country. It indicates that the unity of purpose has reached a high pitch.

My trip to Calcutta has been most revealing. I have never seen such crowds at meetings as the one on Saturday at Deshpriya Park where a crowd estimated at between five and seven lakhs had gathered for an inaugural meeting of the Indian National Army Week. It had been proposed to hold two meetings in widely separated sections of the city in order to avoid the large gathering at one place.

I believe that the British Government will be leaving India soon, but one cannot attempt to set a definite or approximate date.

Question: What is your reaction to the statement made in London by Pethick-Lawrence to send a Parliamentary delegation to India to study the political situation?

Jawaharlal Nehru: What is there that they do not already know about India?

I have been deputed by the Congress Working Committee to visit Burma and Malaya to inquire into conditions of Indians there. I am ready to go as soon as the Government permits me. Despite the elections, I am ready to visit America too and I have presented my passport for renewal. A trip to America will not be possible for several months because of pressing problems here which need my attention. India is on the verge of a great industrial expansion. The country will be looking to the United States for technical advice and financial assistance. The unshackling of sterling balances, for example, is important to the economic growth of India.

In the wake of independence, political, social and economic upheavals might take place during the formative stages, but it is my belief that they can be settled peacefully. I have my own ideas about India's economic and social development which I would present at the proper time.

As America is interested in world peace, it will turn to India for support. India will become an important power in world politics. America is a realistic country and will take a realistic attitude towards India.

5. The Right to be Impatient[1]

I apologise to you for having kept you waiting for so long. The train was delayed owing to crowds at every wayside station. I could not sleep in the train and I feel now very tired. If in the course of my speech I fall asleep you should forgive me.

During my Assam tour and on my way back to Bengal, thousands of people had gathered to hear me. I have seen the same scenes in Bombay, Poona and at other places, even in remote Rajputana. I wonder what it is due to. It seems to me to be an elemental phenomenon. If this mass awakening can be focussed to politics, then the independence of India cannot be far off.

There have been questions in Parliament and reports in the press that I am creating trouble by exciting speeches. It has been even suggested in some quarters that I should be arrested.[2] But, as a matter of fact, I move from place to place and stay at a particular place only for a short while. When the people are already excited it is not possible for anyone to create excitement in them.

The war that has ended had lasted six years. The British, the Germans, the French and other people who were participants in it underwent untold miseries. But this was only for six years. In India, the people have been undergoing the same suffering for some 150 years because of subjection to the British. Now let me not refer to the 150 years of British rule or even to the last 25 years. If you take into account what had happened during the last three years in Midnapore, Ballia and Azamgarh, you will get an idea of the rampant repression and the people's resentment. The suffering and patience of the people had reached the maximum limit. It was said that the British lost control of themselves. If so, then we too, certainly, have the right to be impatient. We have the right to be furious. We cannot tolerate foreign rule any longer. That is why we have taken to the Quit India slogan.

1. Speech at Calcutta, 21 December 1945. Based on reports in *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 23 December, *National Herald*, 23 December, and *The Hindu*, 23 December 1945.
2. There was a rumour at this time that the Governor of U.P. had threatened to resign if his Government was not permitted to arrest Jawaharlal. On 15 November 1945 the Under-Secretary for India denied in the House of Commons that the arrest of Jawaharlal was contemplated.

ADDRESSING A MEETING AT SIMLA, JULY 1945

TALKING TO JOURNALISTS, BOMBAY, 1945

Mr. Brendan Bracken once said that the subject of India had been placed in cold storage.[3] Our duty is to make things so hot that our demands cannot be left unfulfilled any longer. The seething discontent all over the country cannot be kept in check.

We have been pressing for the withdrawal of Indian troops from Indonesia — a demand in which the Muslim League has also joined. But overriding the demands of the 40 crores of Indians, Indian troops are still there. India has been openly insulted. In the case of the members of the Indian National Army the whole country is demanding their release and even the armed forces do not like their trial. Such disregard of public opinion is not possible in any free land.

Look at Iran. The question of Iran is now a world question.[4] I do not know exactly how things are going on there. But the developments have become so serious that people all over the world are talking of Iran. Our duty is to act in such a way that the whole world will be forced to think of us. I want to be frank and to say straight to you and to the British Government that the bureaucracy should not create such a situation as may not be tolerated by our countrymen.

When the British Parliamentary delegation comes to India, what will it do? The members of the delegation will visit hospitals, schools and villages. They will go about meeting high officials, some of the Congress leaders, Mr. Jinnah, Dr. Ambedkar and even Mr. M.N. Roy. It is true that when people meet, things are made clear and intimacy increases. There are one or two members in the delegation who used to speak for India. If the delegation wants to meet the Congress leaders we would be prepared to meet the visitors in a friendly spirit. But I doubt whether any good will come out of it as the members of the delegation are coming with a fixed idea that India is a country of people holding divergent views and ideologies.

The British Parliament has been ruling over India for the last 150 years, and if it has not been possible for it to understand the Indian mind till now, how can a delegation sent by it do so within a week? I fail to understand how a delegation sent by it could serve any useful purpose. It makes us angry. It is derogatory to my own self-respect as

3. Brendan Bracken, who was Minister of Information in Churchill's Cabinet, said at a press conference in New York on 27 August 1943 that the Indian political issue had been put in cold storage until after the war, but "Britain stands solemnly pledged to India, and these pledges will be fulfilled in every respect".

4 The Iranian Government had asked Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States to withdraw their troops which had entered Iran in August 1941. The U.S. Government immediately recalled its troops but Britain and the Soviet Union were not keen on doing so.

well as the self-respect of the Indian nation that a delegation of this kind should be sent out to India to study the situation. The proposal is a huge joke and a device for shelving the Indian question.

I am just coming from Assam where I saw people suffering from want of food and clothing and children with swollen bellies. When I think of these things I feel that discussions about the constitution — federal or otherwise — are questions of secondary importance. I only think how millions are dying of hunger. We discuss Pakistan when our people are dying. Is this politics? My blood boils when I see such things occur. Why don't the people of Bengal rise up and revolt instead of dying of hunger? Do we think of the real problem? But this much however can be said that if any party has given thought to this question, it is the Congress. For the last 25 years, Mahatma Gandhi, whether right or wrong, has been building up his politics around this question.

The Congress is a national body. It is not a socialist body. Nor can a national body be merely socialist. If you read the Congress election manifesto, you will realise that the way is open for the country to become socialist when it attains freedom. If the manifesto could be successfully put through the people of India will be marching with certain and rapid steps towards socialism. The manifesto has dealt with the questions of land and industry. It says that there should be no middle man between the kisans and the State. This means the end of the zamindari system in Bengal. There is also the plan for cooperative farming. The manifesto says that everyone will be fully compensated. If the country proceeds along this path the result will be a great revolution.

The manifesto also states that industries will be controlled by the State. The key industries, defence activities, public utilities, mineral resources and transport should be under State control. There are other questions such as currency, exchange etc, all of which the state must control for the benefit of all people.

So I appeal to you to read the manifesto carefully. It gives a picture of free India which the Congress has in its view. It indicates how poverty should be removed and how the exploited should get rid of exploitation. Though I do not like elections, I have been moving about the country for the purpose of the election campaign. You should support the Congress candidates. Among the Congress candidates many might not be good men and might not be liked by all. But if one does not like any particular person, he cannot sit down petulantly. I follow and I support him who marches under the Congress flag.

The Hindu Mahasabha is hardly a force to be counted, as has been seen in the Central Assembly elections.[5] There can be no truck with the Muslim League, which is a reactionary body, and which has always opposed the Congress struggle for freedom. Have you ever heard of any manifesto of the Muslim League? It has only one thing to say—Pakistan. It is impossible for it to issue any other manifesto. It can only frighten our Muslim countrymen by raising the false cry of danger to Islam. It never talks of industrial labour, food or agricultural distress. The leadership of the League is dominated by landlords and aristocrats. I regret that when the world is in the midst of a great crisis, and complex problems face us in our own country, we have been talking and quarrelling on such unreal issues as Pakistan.

The Congress has not turned out the Communists. When they have openly opposed the Congress and even set up candidates against the Congress how can we take them into executive positions? Their leader has replied to the Congress statement in an insulting way. Every week their papers abuse the Congress. There are many fine young men in this party. But they do not think for themselves. When the Congress leaders were arrested and the people rose in revolt, the Communists acted in a manner which was anti-national. The Communists now support the Muslim League and their Pakistan demand. The leadership of the League is a reactionary one. How can a revolutionary party attach itself to the reactionary Muslim League? It passes my comprehension. The League is openly opposing India's freedom, yet the Communists associate themselves with it. I urge the kisans and the *mazdoors* to realise the harm the Communist Party is doing to the country. I do not say that if the Communist Party of India is on the wrong path, socialism is wrong. It is not so. Nor have the Communists anything to do with Russia. I believe in socialism. Russia has gone this way, the world might go the same way. We have much to learn from Russia.

India has to take an important position in Asia. Asia cannot remain under Europe for long. We do not want any war between Asia and Europe. But if America and Europe want to keep Asia under them there is no help—war there must be.

On Saturday I shall be leaving Bengal. I am sorry I could not visit all the places in Bengal specially those places which took a great part in the 1942 movement. But I have no option. I ask forgiveness from the people of these areas. I, however, promise to come again.

5. 18 candidates set up by the Hindu Mahasabha for the Central Assembly elections were all defeated, most of them losing their deposits.

well as the self-respect of the Indian nation that a delegation of this kind should be sent out to India to study the situation. The proposal is a huge joke and a device for shelving the Indian question.

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Those years have passed, with horror and suffering of which Assam has had its full share. The war is over, but our struggle for freedom continues and must continue till India is independent.

I like coming to Assam, because the people there are sturdy and courageous, and because the combination of mountain, forest and river attracts me greatly. So I am looking forward to this visit, though I regret that it is going to be a very hurried one.

For the present, I am coming on account of the election. What the Congress stands for in this election and after, has been made clear in its manifesto. It stands for freedom, unity and democracy, specially for the common man, whether he is a worker in the field or factory. More specially, Congress stands for the vast number of our village folks and for those who have been oppressed.

The manifesto makes special mention of the tribal areas. Often enough we had forgotten these brave men and women of India, but it is time now that we should remember them and help them in every way to raise them to a higher level.

We are on the eve of taking great decisions, and we must take the decisions unitedly, and with strength and courage. Only the Congress can do this, and, therefore, it is upto everyone to support the Congress.

2. The Pledge of the Congress[1]

Swaraj is not far off and the Congress alone can bring it. The Congress is pledged to develop the resources of the country and to increase the people's standard of living by widespread industrialisation and by solving the problems of unemployment, education, sanitation and agriculture.

After passing through an ordeal of oppression, suppression, death, misery and starvation since August 1942, India has made great advances in its fight for freedom. It is the duty of the people to strengthen the Congress which, unlike other communal organisations, stands for the establishment of a people's raj. It is not unlikely that the Congress will be again faced with a struggle against the British Government.

1. Speech at Barpeta, 13 December 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 17 December 1945.

6. Government by the Common People[1]

The Congress unequivocally has declared in its election manifesto that India will have a full-fledged, free and democratic government of the common people, and that we shall sweep away all obstructions in the way of attaining our objective.

I do not like that people of different provinces should remain in isolation. Wherever I went I found these people working for their respective organisations only and confining their activities to them only. Even in humanitarian work, such as giving relief to the needy, they make no exception. Big cities are to a certain extent the epitome of India, and those who live in them should cultivate an all-India outlook. For instance, if you make a miniature Punjab here, it is a sad phenomenon when our objective is to build on a broader base a strong and democratic India.

I understand that the number of people likely to become unemployed is about 10 million. We have got to face the post-war reconstruction problems and we must face them boldly and squarely.

1. Speech at a reception by the Punjab Seva Samiti, Calcutta, 22 December 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 23 December 1945.

ASSAM

1. What the Congress Stands For[1]

I am going to Assam after three and a half years. On the last occasion when I visited Assam, India was on the verge of a possible invasion, and the position of Assam was specially critical.

1. Message to the people of Assam issued from the Assam Mail, 12 December 1945. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 14 December 1945.

4. A Bigger Storm Possible[1]

I have been able to sense the pulse of the entire country during my tours, and I can say that no repression by the Government can extinguish the flame that has been kindled in India today. India saw a spontaneous movement in 1942, and the people have gathered much momentum during the past three years. It is possible that a bigger storm may pass over India within the next few years, if India's question of independence is not settled. You have to prepare yourselves for this. I plead for a strong sense of discipline and the strengthening of the Congress organisation as the nation's energy will have to be properly utilised for the freedom movement.

I deplore the policy of the British Government. No national policy has yet been adopted by it with reference to India. I admit that there are good men in the Labour Party, but there has been no change in its policy.

I may explain to you the implication of Swaraj for which the Congress has stood and fought. Swaraj does not mean that with the leaving of the British there will be Indian viceroys and governors, and distribution of loaves and fishes. The Congress wants to establish a democratic government with complete power to the masses to solve their own problems.

The election manifesto presents before the country a picture of the government according to the Congress conception. I hope that the country will entirely be changed during the next 20 years under a national government. The elections also, I may caution you, will not solve India's problem of freedom. Though comparatively unimportant they are significant having a bearing on India's issue of independence. Therefore, voters, irrespective of caste and creed, should vote for the Congress nominees.

Mr. Jinnah is raising the cry of Pakistan while India's main problem of freedom remains unsolved. Pakistan is a catchword of the Muslim League leadership which is in the hands of some higher strata of the Muslim community. The talk of independence by the Muslim League,

1. Speech at Gauhati, 14 December 1945. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 16 December and *The Hindustan Times*, 17 December 1945.

The Indian National Army has captured the Indian heart. The communal unity in the I.N.A. cemented its members into a brotherhood which is a noble example for Indians to follow.

3. Soldiers of Freedom[1]

I am going to Assam. I have a great desire to tour some districts of Bengal, and I hope to do so in the near future.

The Congress Working Committee at its Calcutta session has passed many resolutions.[2] You must have read the election manifesto. This manifesto gives the Congress plan for a free India.

During the last three years or so, the people of India suffered greatly. Lakhs of people in Bengal died of starvation. A government which allows so many lives to be lost for want of food has no right to function any longer.

During the last quarter of this century we have been making efforts to win Swaraj. We have grown in strength as years passed. You show great enthusiasm. But enthusiasm is not enough. We must be soldiers of freedom, and possess all the qualities of a soldier. We must be prepared to act unitedly in a disciplined way. We must not fritter away our energies in small things. India will take very big decisions in the coming year, and we must conserve our energy and be ready for united action when the time comes.

The election is coming and my appeal to you all—Hindus and Muslims—is that you should support the Congress in every possible way. For the Congress is the only organisation that can deliver the goods. Only the Congress has the strength to fight the might of the British raj and nobody else can give you the Swaraj that you love and aspire for so much.

1. Speech at a wayside station from the train in which he was travelling to Assam, 13 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 14 December 1945.
2. On 11 December 1945 the Working Committee passed resolutions reiterating the Congress creed of nonviolence, explaining the Congress attitude towards the Indian National Army, condemning Anglo-American policy in South East Asia and deciding to send medical missions to Burma and Malaya.

4. A Bigger Storm Possible[1]

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the Hindu Mahasabha and other communal organisations is meaningless because they never contributed anything to the freedom struggle, nor have they fought for the interests of the masses.

The League leaders retard India's progress towards freedom by raising the question of Pakistan. The League sometimes rebukes the British Government, and the Government also now and then utters hard words against the League. But they both stand in the way of independence.

Independence must be obtained through the nonviolent way. It might take a little longer time to win freedom if we adopt the nonviolent method but this will make us stronger.

I appeal to all — Muslims, Hindus, tribals, Sikhs and Christians — to cast your votes in favour of Congress candidates in the ensuing elections.

5. The Importance of Discipline[1]

The Government has totally failed in its attempt to crush the Congress. This is evident from the people's response to the Congress call. The elections will clearly show the strength of the Congress. The nation has been gathering strength for years past through the different *sangathans* and all these—the *navajavan*, the kisan and the worker—are today merging themselves in the bigger *sangathan* of the Congress.

It was a shock to me to learn that a Congressman defying the decision of the Congress is seeking election. This gentleman is describing himself as the Congress candidate. This is a bluff. I wonder how a person, who was once a Congressman, can indulge in such an act to further his personal interests. The Congress is fighting this election on the issue of independence. Individuals do not count here. Why has disciplinary action not yet been taken against him? Within 24 hours he should have been driven out of the Congress.

If I had the power I would have adopted a new policy and given nominations in other ways. I would have prohibited the submission of applications for nomination by individual Congressmen. The entire selection should be done by committees selecting candidates on the basis

1. Speech at Jorhat, 15 December 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 17 December and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 19 December 1945.

of their past work and on their ability to carry on the Congress work in the legislature. If any Congressman submits an independent application, he should immediately be turned out. The Congress is an organisation where sacrifices are the only qualification for a person to be a Congressman. We need proper organisation and discipline to win Swaraj and establish the people's raj.

6. Delhi Chalo[1]

Delhi Chalo means that we shall make Delhi respond to the popular will. The world has changed with the passage of time. In August 1942 the Quit India Resolution was passed. It enraged the British Government, which arrested Gandhiji, the members of the Working Committee and thousands of Congressmen. The people rebelled and the Government resorted to unthinkable repression. We talk of the repression by fascists in Germany and Italy and Japan, but nobody knows yet the full measure of suffering of the people in India due to severe repression. The British imperialists thought that by arresting the leaders and showering bullets on the people, they could crush the Congress. In fact they had declared that they would not release the Congress leaders till the Quit India Resolution was withdrawn. What was the result? The Congress did not withdraw the resolution, and yet the leaders had to be released. Instead of the Congress being crushed it has grown in strength and is now fighting the elections on the same Quit India slogan. The Congress will stick to it till independence is won.

The question remains as to how freedom is to be achieved. India today is a vast storehouse of explosives. The temperature is rising. We are anxious to have freedom, if it is possible to get it by peaceful negotiations. If, however, no step is taken in the right direction there will be an explosion. Asia today is in a conflagration. Java, Indo-China and other oppressed countries of Asia are fighting for their freedom. Can India remain idle? The Government repression is still going on.

1. Speech at Sibsagar, 15 December 1945. Based on reports from *The Hindu*, 17 December and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 19 December 1945.

The British Government does not want that the Congress should win in the elections. It would be glad if victory goes to the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Communist Party. Those who fight the Congress, fight against independence. The Congress belongs to the people, and not to any community or interest. It is a big panchayat for all classes, creeds, and communities aspiring for independence. It is the rallying ground for all so that complete independence might come for all. Two or three years hence, there will be no British raj here. Nor will there be any Hindu or Muslim raj, but a raj for all. I cannot visualise the structure of the Congress after the attainment of Swaraj. That will be for the people to decide. The Congress stands like a rock to fight imperialism and establish Swaraj. After the attainment of Swaraj, there will be a total change of outlook. Flattery and corruption will cease, and rajas or maharajas or other men now at the top will have no place in the administration of the country. The country will be ruled by representatives of the people. It will be then possible to solve the communal problem without the aid of a third party. Where will the people, who now depend on the agents of British imperialism for favour and position, go? Will they go to the Congress for privileges?

Communal organisations like the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Ahom Sabha[2] of Assam do not speak in the name of democracy. They want to cut away from the mainstream of nationalism and are weakened thereby.

I am convinced that, when India becomes free, it will not require much effort to solve the communal problem. I am sure the Congress will not seek the help of a third party to solve the problem.

From the North West Frontier Province to Rameswaram, from the farthest end of Assam to the other end of India, the Congress has a permanent place in the hearts of the people of all classes and religions. Why is the Congress so strong? It is strong because it belongs to the people and does not move at the will or desire of a few leaders. It is the people, not even the Mahatma, who run the Congress. India will change after Swaraj is won. The need for discipline and organisation is of great importance.

2. Ahoms belong to the Shan branch of the Tai family, who came to Assam from Burma in 1228 and ruled in Assam till 1826. They sought special treatment and safeguards in a new constitution.

7. Tests for Selection of Candidates[1]

While we witness a complete breakdown of the morale of the Japanese, the Germans and the Italians after their defeat, the strength of the people of India has not broken down in spite of oppression. The reason lies in the fact that they are fighting peacefully and nonviolently. In spite of 150 years of British rule the British have not been able to understand the character of the Indian people. This is so because they live completely isolated from the people.

The Government in this country must be changed lock, stock and barrel. A new India is to be built on the foundation of democracy.

I give two tests by which you should select candidates and vote for them in the coming election. They are: first, is he on the side of the people and second, is he in the organisation which fights for freedom and people's raj. There is no organisation other than the Congress which can satisfy these two tests. We do not want any fresh bloodshed if the British Government wants to settle the question of independence by negotiations. But if it does not take right steps immediately after the elections are over, India will take a very big step.

1. Speech at Dibrugarh, 15 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 17 December 1945.

8. The Result of the 1942 Movement[1]

I deprecate the time-worn Indian custom of touching one's feet in expression of love and respect. India now wants her sons to stand erect and become soldiers of freedom. India has had enough of stooping low.

1. Speech at Nowgong, 15 December 1945. From *The Hindustan Times*, 17 December 1945.

Indians should not lament over the loss and suffering experienced during the 1942 movement. Thousands of young men in other nations died for their own countries. The 1942 movement has advanced the cause of India. In the province of Assam, even a girl preferred to face bullets to making over the national flag she was carrying.[2]

The importance of the Indian National Army lies in the fact that it could unite the Indians, though it is far away from the British grip, outside India. If the British leave India, it will be easy for Indians to unite.

I appeal to the people of Assam to cast their votes in favour of the Congress and Jamiat Ulema candidates in the ensuing elections.

2. On 20 September 1942, at Gohpur in Darrang district, Karokhota, a young girl leading a procession in an effort to hoist the national flag on the police station was killed.

9. Swaraj for the Oppressed[1]

Swaraj is most needed for those who are oppressed by society as well as by alien rule. The Congress will not accept any policy which will affect in any way the interests of the oppressed people. The Congress stands for the *mazdoor*, the poor and the depressed. Our aim is to win Swaraj so that everyone of you gets food, cloth, shelter and all other opportunities to play a part in raising the status of India in the world.

So long as Swaraj is not won poverty and misery will continue. The Congress which is going to win Swaraj is strong today because the poor, the suppressed, and the fallen lend their support to it.

Swaraj will not be a Hindu or Muslim raj, but will be a raj for all without distinction of caste, creed or community. Black marketeers and profiteers have reaped a rich harvest when thirty five lakhs of people died of starvation. The condition of the workers is also the worst. This happens because we are not free.

The British Government wants to rule by dividing the people. We must unite to frustrate this game. The Hindu Mahasabha or the Muslim League is not for the poor.

1. Speech at Nazira, 16 December 1945. Based on reports from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 17 December and *National Herald*, 19 December 1945.

Everybody has the liberty to follow his religion, but when people starve and die, religion does not come into the picture at all. The whole question is a question of economics.

The Communist Party indulges in tall talk that it will do this or that. Nobody can do anything to raise the standard of the people until freedom is won. Moreover, the Communists have left the Congress and are fighting the Congress, which is the only organisation capable of fighting the British raj.

I exhort the Nagas to support the Congress in every way and also to vote for the Congress candidates in the election.

10. The Feudal Demand for Pakistan[1]

I am interested in the references in the addresses given to me to the coming changes in India. I have been asked to give some kind of assurance, some kind of a picture of things to come. I am not in a position to give you any assurance. I can tell you how I feel about a particular matter, and I do so without any restraint. As for giving assurance the idea proceeds from some wrong analysis of the present and the future.

It is true that there is going to be a big change in India which will not stop with the British power withdrawing and Indians ruling themselves by their elected representatives. This change will profoundly affect the entire economic and social structure of the country.

The present structure of the Government is not meant for democracy. It has been built up to suit a certain form of bureaucratic rule. It was originally meant for what is called a police state, that is to say, a state in which the government's functions are directed entirely to the raising of taxes and to running civil and military establishments. It is not so much concerned with the social development of the people. When I say social development I use the expression in a large sense.

The police state is an institution of the past which continues still in India. Of course, during recent years, the Government of India and

1. Speech at Shillong, 17 December 1945. Based on reports from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 21 December and *The Hindu*, 21 December 1945.

the provincial governments have occasionally dabbled in schemes of social development. But these are so small that it requires some kind of microscope to find them out. They have been partially worked out or not worked out at all.

The Government of India is really a police state because it acts most efficiently when it takes police action. It does not function satisfactorily in other departments such as agriculture, industry and social services. The civilian part of the Government, though called civilian, is essentially a department of the police state.

We hear about planning for industrial and agricultural development. I am told that the Assam Government has also a five-year plan. I do not know the plan and therefore I do not criticise it.

From my long experience with the Government in India, I have come to two conclusions. One is that the Government knows nothing about planning and another is that its planning has nothing to do with execution. What is really planning? In planning for national development, one must consider interrelated factors and set before one some objective and some goal. But most of the plans drawn up by the Government are not at all really planning.

A national government cannot function as a police state. It will inevitably be interested in the social development of the people. Therefore, it will be completely different from the present government. It will certainly be different in its personnel and also with regard to its very structure.

The future structure of India will obviously be purely democratic and not autocratic. I am interested in creating conditions that will provide employment for everybody. I want India to plan for this and I am personally convinced that it could be done with a fair measure of rapidity, given the people's cooperation.

After all, if India is going to be a democratic state the people themselves will decide what is to be done. I may not be there, or they may not like my planning. But I would like to say something about one or two matters.

You have mentioned about the Khasi community. It is a small community. But the fact that it is a small community does not mean that it should be ignored. It becomes rather more important that the smaller a community is, the more should be the interest taken for its protection. It is important from many points of view. One of them obviously is that it adds to the richness and variety of the country's culture.

The Congress has long ago very clearly stated its policy on the question of minorities. The meaning of minorities is not to be understood

here in the religious sense. The Congress position is that the smaller communities should be protected in every possible way.

Of course, the ultimate protection is to leave them to protect themselves. I am quite sure that the largest amount of autonomy will be given to every distinctive group. It is difficult for me to say beforehand what that quantum of autonomy will be. At the same time, it should be understood that smaller communities cannot by themselves undertake larger economic development. They must be tagged on to larger groups in these matters. But there is no reason whatsoever why they should not enjoy complete autonomy in the matter of cultural development. The Congress thinks of the future of India in terms of a federation — a democratically elected federation consisting of autonomous provinces. The greatest possible amount of autonomy will be given to the federating units. Within this unit there will be smaller areas. Some subjects like defence, tariffs, currency and communications will be drawn up as minimum federal subjects for units to agree to if they were to federate. Then there will be a second list which will be an optional list of subjects for each unit to accept or to reject. It will be left to them to choose.

Besides this, it is obvious that if a certain part of the country, especially the part which is so situated near the frontier and which can be separated really and ultimately, wants to go out of the federation, nobody is going to stop it with force of arms. A progressive and strong India can only be built up, not with conflicting and warring units, but with units willing to act in cooperation with one another.

It is also expected that within the provincial units, autonomous units, composed of people of distinctive groups, will be set up. These smaller units will be given autonomy to shape their lives as they like. The whole point is that we want to give the fullest measure of freedom to the individual and to every distinctive group of people within the large framework of the nation.

But it should be remembered that, in these days, nothing can be done on a small scale. Indeed one of the objections to the proposal for Pakistan is that it reduces the capacity of India for large-scale operation of economic development. If we want national planning, all units of the country will have to work together, and we shall have to go together.

There are tribal areas in Assam and in other parts of India which are backward and which need a great deal of assistance from the Government. The Khasis are a people quite capable of looking after themselves culturally, but not in the economic sphere. Their community is too small. Naturally they will have to be given the largest protection, so that other people may not come from outside and exploit them. But

I would like to emphasise again that it may not be possible for them to have the same type of growth which may be possible in India as a whole because they are small in number. This is the reason why the Government should make special efforts to raise the standard of life of these tribal people. I would however add this that I would not like to impose upon them the same type of growth which may perhaps be adopted by the rest of India. My point is that the Government should and must have a special department to deal with the tribal people to protect them and help them to grow.

If a particular part ultimately and deliberately, and not at a moment of excitement, wants to cut itself away from India and if the secession is practical, it will be allowed to do so. I say practical because, if suddenly a province situated in the heart of India, say the United Provinces, wants to go out of the federation then it becomes an absurd proposition. But at the same time, I believe that it is frightfully dangerous to cut up India. In the present world conditions small nations have no place. There is Iran, but she is completely dependent on other nations. After all, India wants to be independent and not to depend on any other nation. India will be prepared to cooperate with other nations on an equal footing. By the splitting up of India there is no shadow of doubt that Pakistan cannot retain any real freedom. The rest of India might yet be strong.

Therefore, I have been resisting this talk of Pakistan, and propose to go on resisting. It is harmful from all points of view.

Mr. Jinnah has talked of Pakistan in terms of the whole of the Punjab, Delhi, the Frontier Province, Assam and Bengal. That of course is just fantastic. It has no meaning at all. Mr. Jinnah also talks of self-determination. Self-determination is not as easy a thing as it looked at one time. If the people of a territorial area really want self-determination, let them have it. I do not know if the majority of the Muslim population in India really want Pakistan although at moments of excitement they may shout for Pakistan and even vote for it. I am convinced that in cooler moments they will vote against Pakistan. Pakistan inevitably means cutting up of Bengal and the Punjab into two parts.

Obviously, Sikhs and Hindus, at least, do not want Pakistan. The Muslims, if they want it, can only have it in those areas where they are in absolute majority. Both Bengal and the Punjab are compact and culturally united provinces. It will be a tragedy if these two provinces are cut into two parts. I am convinced that there is hardly a single Muslim Leaguer in Bengal who wants the division of his province. So also is the case in the Punjab. So by raising the slogan of Pakistan you put the people into a dilemma. When the time comes for taking the

final decision, the Muslims may well vote against it. I am again convinced that even if they take a wrong decision now, they will return later to the fold of Indian federation.

There has not been the slightest attempt on the part of Mr. Jinnah or the Muslim League to explain anything or discuss anything. It is astonishing that such a prominent organisation should refuse to explain what it means and to discuss what it wants. It just amazes me. Obviously, there must be something wrong about this organisation. I heard from a leading Muslim Leaguer that if they defined Pakistan, it would create division among their own ranks. Secondly, as soon as you try to define Pakistan, you are faced with the difficulties I have mentioned earlier. Are you going to accept Pakistan and set up independent states where Muslims are in a majority and cut up Bengal and the Punjab? Are you going to compel a large number of non-Muslims to join you and live in that Pakistan against their will?

Even before the question of Pakistan cropped up—it was only seven years ago when I was President of the Indian National Congress—I repeatedly asked Mr. Jinnah to explain and hold discussions with us on what he wanted. Mr. Jinnah did not succeed in telling us what he wanted although half a dozen letters were written. We tried to meet his point of view. He demanded a certificate from us that he represented solely the Muslims of India. We insisted that instead of asking for a certificate, let us have discussions on what he wanted. But Mr. Jinnah was adamant. "No, you must recognise me to be the sole representative of Muslims of India", he would say. It was just impossible to talk with him. The Congress could not agree to this standpoint because if it agreed, it would at once become a communal organisation. The Congress is for the interests of all people, irrespective of caste, creed and religion. The Congress tries to think in terms of politics and economics and not in terms of a religion, although the Congress is prepared to provide ample safeguards for the protection of religions.

All these lead me to believe that the fundamental reason for Mr. Jinnah's refusal to explain is that Pakistan is some kind of a bogey or a fiction. The real thing is the fear of a democratically elected government in India. If you analyse the leadership of the Muslim League, you will find that it consists almost entirely of feudal elements and of gentlemen who hold titles and prosper under the British Government. It does not consist of crusaders, or rebels or fighters for freedom. You will find that almost all the leaders of the Muslim League barring Mr. Jinnah have opposed the freedom movement, long before Pakistan was brought into the arena. They opposed the Khilafat movement when

the Muslim masses were fighting alongside the Congress. They considered themselves the pillars of the British Government in India.

These very gentlemen have now strangely become leaders of the Muslim community. They have found it impossible to say any such thing as they used to say during the Khilafat movement. What do they say now? Independence will of course come, they say, but before independence there must be a Pakistan. They know that it is absolutely impossible to get Pakistan in the manner things are in progress. But they must create barriers in the way to free India. So this Pakistan. They know they cannot rally the people on any other slogan. They, therefore, exploit the old sentiments of the people. "Come", they say to the Muslim people, "Islam is in danger. We must have Pakistan."

The fundamental point to be borne in mind is that these feudal elements do not want a change. They are happy today. They have no passion for freedom. They sit on their chairs and continue obstructing India's independence. Pakistan is not really a communal problem, in the ultimate analysis, although it becomes, unfortunately, a Hindu-Muslim problem, as the cry of religion is involved in it. Do you think that the leaders of the Muslim League can go round and say to the Muslims that they must support them for a feudal system? So they have found out a way. The old tactics of exploiting people's religious sentiments is adopted. The cry that Islam is in danger is raised. They succeed in this way by keeping in the background, political and economic questions that affect the people.

So in the last analysis, Pakistan is an attempt of certain feudal elements in the country to stop the progress of India towards a free democratic form of government. There can be no compromise between nationalist India and this type of reaction. Feudal elements exist among the Hindus also. But the Hindu elements have been successfully suppressed.

What happens in this election will affect us, although not fundamentally, because Pakistan cannot come as a result of the election. It can only come, if at all, when Indian nationalism agrees to it. Indian nationalism which is represented in the main by the Indian National Congress will never agree to accept Pakistan in the negative form. In this event, Pakistan will include the areas where Hindus or Sikhs are in a majority.

These feudal elements are a nuisance. It appears the Muslim League leadership and British Government have cooperated to obstruct India's freedom. Things have reached such a stage that delay in the

establishment of India's independence might lead to disastrous consequences, not because some individuals are going to create trouble, but because the people of India are in a terrific mood.

11. The Need to be Strong[1]

After the great war, the map of Europe has changed; so also that of Asia whose condition has now deteriorated greatly.

He alone counts in society who has iron nerves and a strong body, and those who lack them are not recognised. The weak and the poor have no place in the world. Big countries like America are recognised everywhere in the world. No one speaks of India anywhere because we are poor and weak though our population is four hundred million. It is only the Congress which has made the country strong and powerful. So you should join the Congress.

Mr. Jinnah is saying that India should be divided into two — Pakistan and Hindustan. Whether Pakistan is a great or a small thing, is a different question. First, let all Indians, Muslims and Hindus, join together in the fight for liberation. When freedom is attained no one will be retained by force in the land. In its resolution of self-determination, the Congress has given the option to any community either to remain or secede. As soon as the British leave India there will be no communal differences. In Indonesia there are Hindus and Muslims. But the authorities are shooting down both of them and burning their houses without discrimination.

The Muslim League is not the sole representative of all Muslims. In the Muslim community there are the Ahrars, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the Majlis and the kisans. The League consists only of nawabs, zamindars and knights.

When the Congress Ministers kicked office the Muslim League took over power. But what have they done? Millions died of starvation while the ministers filled their pockets and secured jobs for their favourites. When Swaraj is attained it will be neither for the Hindus nor for the Muslims, but for all Indians including the *mazdoors* and the kisans.

1. Speech at Silchar, 19 December 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 21 December 1945.

The British want to crush the Congress. But during the last six months wherever I had gone I found the people stronger than before, displaying the kind of spirit found in free nations. You are to vote for the Congress policy and aims, and not for persons whom you may not like even. If you do not agree that the Congress can solve India's problems, do not vote for it.

When British rulers imprisoned about a lakh and killed thousands by bullets the Communists did not join the struggle, but supported the rulers, with the cry that it was a people's war. I ask you to emulate the chivalry of the Indian National Army in which there were neither the Congress, nor the League, nor the Communists but only Indians without communal differences. Our one aim is to liberate the country from foreign yoke. So we should all be Indians with one aim — the liberation of India.

12. The Muslim League Retarding Freedom[1]

The Muslim League is retarding India's fight for freedom by raising the Pakistan demand which is so unreal that the Congress cannot accept it. If the League demand is accepted, Bengal and the Punjab will have to be divided into two. The inhabitants of Bengal and the Punjab will not accept such a proposition.

Mr. Jinnah's claim that the Muslim League is the sole representative of Muslims is not supported by facts as there are several Muslim organisations which are opposed to the League.

Though the Communist Party is working for freedom its present policy is to oppose the Congress and support the League and its Pakistan demand, which is against the interest of the masses.

Our opposition to the Communist Party of India has nothing to do with communism or with Soviet Russia, as communism is good, and I have great admiration for Soviet Russia.

I exhort all to support the Congress candidates and request the Muslims to support Jamiat and Nationalist Muslim candidates in the coming elections.

1. Speech at Sylhet, 19 December 1945. From *National Herald*, 20 December 1945.

13. An All India Outlook[1]

Swaraj will come within a year or two, and this will be neither Hindu nor Muslim nor Christian Swaraj, but a democratic government in which the right of everybody will be protected. In the light of the Bengal famine, I would ask my countrymen to drive out any government which could not protect its people.

The Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League are communal organisations dominated by aristocrats and neither of these organisations has contributed anything towards the political movement in the country. The Pakistan cry of the League is an impossible theory. I declare that self-determination must be applicable to all.

I appeal to you to support the candidates set up by the Congress, which is an organisation of the poor, the *mazdoors* and the kisans.

1. Speech at Serajganj, 21 December 1945. From *The Hindu*, 24 December 1945.

14. Impressions of Assam Tour[1]

Assam and Surma Valley, like all other places I have visited since my release from prison, are afire with enthusiasm and excitement and a mighty stir moves the masses. There were vast crowds at the meetings and on the wayside, but even more impressive than these crowds was the light in the eyes of the people and a ringing confidence in their voices. There was no spirit of defeatism in them, but a tone of challenge and hope as at the dawn of a new day after the long night was over. I had the same experience everywhere — in the towns and villages, among the workers of factories and tea gardens. Sometimes they complained of their burdens and sorrows, of their lack of food and clothing. But in the main there was an eager questioning look in their eyes, as of someone athirst searching for water to cool his parched throat. When will Swaraj come? When will freedom be ours so that we may breathe again and be rid of our misery? Bright-eyed young men and

1. Written on the train on way to Calcutta, 21 December 1945. From *National Herald*, 23 December 1945.

women and boys and girls were more definite and insistent and demanded to know what they should do, what next step to take for freedom's sake. There was a brave challenge about it all and an unspoken pledge which warmed the heart and made the blood quicken in the veins.

Assam has the look of great reserves of strength and potential power. It is still an undeveloped province and the future beckons to her. I have no doubt that great highways by road, air and rail, will go across her, connecting China with India, and ultimately connecting East Asia with Europe. Assam will then no longer be an isolated far away province but an important link between the East and the West.

While returning from Assam and the Surma Valley, through north Bengal, vast crowds met me everywhere en route. They had not been asked to come. It was an entirely spontaneous effort of theirs. Their excitement and enthusiasm are astonishing. Here and in Assam and elsewhere, as I have watched these mighty gatherings, almost overcome with emotion, I have wondered what all this signifies. There is little personal about it, though the affection they showed me is precious beyond words. There is something impersonal about it, something elemental as of a force of nature moving these multitudes of human beings. What is this mighty force and where is it leading them to? There is a faith in the Congress but above all there is faith in the coming freedom and a hunger and thirst to achieve it soon. For me who have been privileged to witness this, it has been an inspiring sight and a vision of things to come, and I have felt very humble before these masses who have suffered so much and for so long and yet are so buoyant and full of life, vitality and hope.

BIHAR

1. Jayaprakash Narayan[1]

India will continue to be in prison so long as a single patriot remains encaged in a British prison. Those who still remain behind the bars also

1. Speech at "Release Jayaprakash Rally," Patna, 24 December 1945. Based on reports from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26 December and *The Hindu*, 26 December 1945.

continue to serve the country through their speechless messages which are sure to resound through every nook and corner of India. They re-invigorate the people for the still greater fight ahead.

The justification brought forward by a section of the people for the release of Jayaprakash and other leaders is that the war is over and that peace and amity have returned.[2] I express my strong disagreement with this justification as this amounts to begging the authorities for the release. The war might have ended, but our struggle against the British Government will not be over until we win full freedom. Then only we can be sure that valiant fighters who are in jails will not be clapped back into them again. It looks incongruous that on one side we are begging for the release of Jayaprakash and on the other we claim that we are fighting for freedom.

We want Jayaprakash amidst us but with full honour and dignity. The idea of getting his release by begging, neither I nor Jayaprakash, will like. His release depends entirely on you. If the British show reluctance then we shall take the initiative and courage in both hands and see that Jayaprakash and others are in our midst. The situation as it is today, clearly indicates that the release of our patriots is India's concern alone and not of the British. The time is ripe now to create such conditions as to force British hands to open the Indian Bastilles. To achieve this end, it is not only desirable but proper that we have mass power and strength in our rank and file. This will expose the British greed and lust to continue the machine of repression and exploitation of India.

We have every right to demand the release of Jayaprakash and others but it does not fit in with our dignity to say that as peace has been restored, they should be released. We must continue our battle for freedom, and must not cry halt till it is brought home to the British Government in India that it is risky and hazardous to keep Jayaprakash any longer in prison.

Our struggle goes on unabated until our victory is achieved. The release of patriots alone will not give us rest, as India's battle knows no truce. The release is only a healing of one of our national injuries. Our miseries and sorrows will vanish only with the dawn of freedom.

The British have brought three men in open court-martial and the facts about those who have already been court-martialed and hanged are still a hidden story to us. The I.N.A. trial has created a mass upheaval. Wherever I went, even in the remotest villages, there have been anxious

2. Jayaprakash Narayan was released on 12 April 1946, after the arrival of the Cabinet Mission.

enquiries about the I.N.A. men. There are profuse sympathies for these brave men and all, irrespective of caste, colour and creed, have liberally contributed to their defence.

The supreme court for the trial should not be the Privy Council. The deeds of the I.N.A. patriots should have been tried and judged at the bar of public opinion. The verdict will be overwhelmingly in favour of the I.N.A. men. The continuance of the trial is sheer madness undermining the position of the British in this country. The trial has taken us many steps forward on our path to freedom. Never before in Indian history had such unified sentiments and feelings been manifested by various divergent sections of the Indian population as it has been done with regard to the question of the Azad Hind Fauz.

This is not the only and solitary contribution of the I.N.A. trial, but there is also another formidable one and it is that it has broken the impenetrable barriers that separated earlier the Government-controlled Indian Army and public opinion. Before the I.N.A. question came, the Indian people and the Government army lived in watertight compartments. The trial has brought the two closer. It is transparently clear that the Government army also shares the feelings and aspirations of the country. There is not a single soldier in it who does not want the complete severance of British connections and their immediate exit from this country.

Even the prosecuting counsel of the Indian Government has admitted before the Court Martial that these I.N.A. men were actuated by the best motives of patriotism, and were not prompted by any base design.[3] Therefore, he mentioned with all force that they merited less punishment and urged the Court Martial to add a rider to this effect in its judgment.

This is not the main question at issue. The real issue is that the proper court should have been the public opinion, and not the Court Martial or the Privy Council. That the trial however is being continued, despite public agitation, indicates that the masses have not yet gathered as much strength as is required to bring down on its knees the mighty force of imperialism.

I draw your attention to the reprehensible conduct of the Bihar Governor during his recent visit to the Bhagalpur Jail. From the Governor's

3. The counsel for the prosecution said on 22 December 1945: "There is a good deal of evidence to the effect that what the accused did was done by them not with any mercenary motive, but out of what the accused *bona fide* considered to be patriotic motives and impelled by a sense, whether wise or misguided, of doing service to India."

attitude it is clear that imperialism still reigns in its full fury. I deprecate the action of the Governor in meting out humiliating treatment to political prisoners while he had been there to review their cases.

It is obvious that British rulers are at war with their Indian subjects though the world war has ended. There are two warring camps in India now. One of them is the British and the other is those fighting for freedom. Our relation therefore with British imperialism under present circumstances is definitely of armies arrayed in two groups in the battlefield.

There have been different phases in our national struggle, but British onslaughts against our fronts have always been launched in all their fury and vengeance. The tempo of the struggle at times gets fast or slow. But there is no respite, no truce, and our war of independence goes on until we achieve freedom.

By begging, you may secure the release of Jayaprakash but it will be of no use to you as he will again be arrested on some pretext or other. So long as British imperialism is not thrashed into submission there will be no improvement in our situation. In this connection I would recall the dictum of the late Deshbandhu C.R. Das, who said 28 years ago that all the Indian population was in prison suppressed with heavy irons if any of its patriots was incarcerated.[4] I myself feel as if in prison when I find that Jayaprakash and other patriots are pining in jails.

Jayaprakash is a great patriot. Whether in jail or outside a patriot like Jayaprakash always gives forth inspiration and strength capable of shaking the very basis of British imperialism. When the government arrested the leaders on 8 August 1942, it was under the delusion that a sense of defeatism had enveloped the Congress organisation. But to its amazement it found mass upheaval and upsurge. After the repression some misconstrued the silence as a sign of demoralisation and here the Bihar people showed that their spirit remained unflagged and redoubled. The result is that Bihar today is agog with excitement and passion to sacrifice the best at the altar of freedom's fight. Your spirit, instead of being curbed, has increased in magnitude. In modern times the sword alone does not count. It is the force of ideas and of freedom that matters much. Difference in ideologies inside the Congress organisation is immaterial. Every member of the organisation is a fighter of freedom. If he is in jail we are all in prison. We are all brothers in spite of our differences; we

4. In a speech on 31 December 1917 protesting against the internment of Mohamed Ali, C.R. Das said: "Let the whole country be considered as a prison and let us with folded hands tell the Government, in case of every internment, if you intern that man, you have got to intern the whole of India."

must secure the release of imprisoned patriots but with due honour and dignity.

2. Enough of Empty Promises[1]

This is my first visit to Bihar after 1940. At the outset I should apologise to you for my inability to come to Bihar much earlier, partly due to my own preoccupations and partly due to the force of circumstances. But, during the intervening period, Bihar always remained in my mind. While I was in Ahmadnagar Fort I did not forget Bihar, and very meagre and isolated pieces of news about Bihar used to reach me through the newspapers. By collating and interlinking these bits of news I could visualise a picture of the events in Bihar. After my release I heard everything of what happened in Bihar and felt the urge to come here, not to express sorrow over the death of martyrs, but to extend felicitations.

Of all the provinces of India, Bihar is on the highest pedestal. I pay my tribute to the Biharis for their participation in the 1942 movement. Those who sacrificed their all and became martyrs in the battle for freedom deserve all honour. The people of Bihar showed conspicuous courage in those fateful days. They did not hesitate to weigh the consequences of what they did, whether their actions would be harmful to them or not. This is most encouraging. It shows that there are people who are prepared to stake their all to uphold the honour of their country. The country, where people know how to kiss the gallows for the cause of liberty, can only claim freedom as the price of sacrifices. A country which possesses such men is sure to be free.

In freedom's march, we have to surmount obstacles and impediments which beset the path. When freedom is achieved we have to keep a strict vigilance against foreign and native tyranny. I am pleased to notice that our people have this ability and are wide awake and fully conscious of lapses. This should guide us all through. Law gives protection only when people enjoy stability and security. Freedom cannot

1. Speech at Patna, 24 December 1945. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 25 December and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26 December 1945.

come through either a bargain or through a legal document nor can it descend like manna from heaven. Freedom is a surge of the human soul and one has to pay heavily to attain or to maintain it. So in the battle of freedom vigilance is an inevitable requisite. If vigilance vanishes from the mind at any step of the struggle, the fighting nation is embroiled in something which, in spite of taking it ahead, gets it receded far back. So I warn the nation to remain alert and active, not only now when the struggle for freedom is on, but even after freedom is attained, so that nobody will ever again wrest it from us.

I do not bemoan the events of the August revolution. I am enthusiastic over the fact that the country has emerged victorious and stronger out of the baptism of fire and sacrifices. I find that people have now *got an urge to establish their own government.*

I have before me the glorious past, but the question of the present should now be the foremost concern. How are we to face the immediate issues which concern the greatest good of the greatest number? Now comes the task left incomplete. How should we act and what should we do for the good of the people? These are the questions looming large over the horizon.

Elections are on and the Congress, having undertaken to fight it, must fight it to the finish. I know well that Congress victory in the elections will never bring Swaraj. I am sure that it will only be a step forward to our goal. Our war of independence will continue unabated till freedom is secured.

In the Commons, Mr. Attlee boasted and bragged that freedom was there for the taking. This is a mere platitude. No reliance can be placed on the assurances given by the British Government. In fact the question of reliance does not arise between a subject nation and the ruling race. The British Government has given the assurance, no doubt, that it is willing to grant independence to India, but it can be taken at its word only if it is supported by action. Indians have had enough of empty promises.

The change of government in Britain has brought no change in its outlook either in reference to India or to the world. The British attitude still betrays the same woodenness and diehardism. This is the old game of British imperialism. Whoever might be at the helm of affairs in England, its only object is to maintain its stranglehold over India and its colonies. This is not the case with India alone, but the same motive is manifested in its behaviour towards Indonesia. To keep up Dutch imperialism the British army is fighting against Indonesian patriots. What else can one expect from such imperialists in the case of India?

Imperialism cannot disappear without force and compulsion. No imperialist nation has ever quit willingly. It parts with power when its position is imperilled and its existence has become impossible.

Though Britain won in the last war it lost its former strength and position in the world. It can no longer aspire to hold back its empire. This is an opportune time for us. If we relax our efforts and show signs of weakness, the British rule in this country will be prolonged.

The Congress is the only organisation which tries to establish panchayat raj for which it often encounters imperialism in all its nakedness. Freedom is at the forefront of the Congress programme. There are other parties too, but none of them is capable of opposing British imperialism. The Hindu Mahasabha or the Muslim League, which thrives on the canker of communalism, stirs communal passion and creates a wide gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims. They encourage the British to prolong their rule in India. Also in their own interest, the British support one or the other of these parties. The goal of freedom is not to be found in their programme. They have no economic programme which aims at the liquidation of poverty. Nor do they have a plan for the spread of education. They help in the perpetuation of India's slavery. They are being used by rich landlords and industrialists to maintain their personal power and prestige. Leaders of these organisations, barring Mr. Jinnah, are the main pillars of British administration in India.

There could be no agreement between the Congress and the League so long as the League clings to its demand for Pakistan which, however, it has never defined. Obviously, a party that places sectarian interests above the independence of the country will not come to terms with the Congress. Moreover, the Pakistan of Mr. Jinnah's conception is impossible of achievement. In spite of the support of the British Government to the Pakistan demand, it remains a smoke-screen raised to conceal the real issue facing the country. It is calculated to widen the differences among the communities and to perpetuate British rule. The bogey of "Islam in danger" is only a camouflage and an obstacle in the way to freedom.

At a stormy period of the national struggle the Communist Party went over to the enemy camp and spared no pains to discredit the Congress. This amounted to an unequivocal support to the British domination. It is only the Congress which puts before the country concrete economic and social planning. It has given a blueprint of free India wherein power will be transferred to the hands of the people at large. It has not thought of a handful of the rich. The resources for good living will equally be shared by the people irrespective of colour, caste or religion. Hindus, Muslims and Christians will share equally all the rights and

privileges. Administration will be run according to the will of the people of free India.

The main question confronting the country is not religious, but purely economic. I feel bitter at the prevailing poverty of peasants and workers and am impatient to raise their standard of living. In the last famine lakhs of people died. British bureaucracy and Indian profiteers and contractors and such unsocial elements combined in creating such a situation.

The Congress, however, does not claim to be a perfect organisation. It has occasional lapses and has some members of questionable conduct. But it is for its members to eliminate such unwanted people and thereby make it gloriously strong and active. It is for the people to reorganise it properly and carry on their struggle for freedom.

The question of resumption of Congress ministries in the provinces when the elections are over will come up. But the question as to who will capture power at the Centre will decide the earlier question. There is unity in the I.N.A. because the I.N.A. organisation is beyond the orbit of British domination and influence. The I.N.A. men who are noted for their integrity and solidarity are a valuable asset in our fight for freedom.

BOMBAY

1. Viability of Pakistan[1]

Central and provincial elections, if held, will go some way towards clearing the air, provided they are held on a wide franchise based on proper registers. The election would not be fair unless civil liberties are restored first.

There is as yet no indication that the Congress Working Committee or the All India Congress Committee will sanction elections as a full

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 11 September 1945. From *The Hindu*, 13 September 1945.

picture of the future is not available. If they were held, they will constitute one way of knowing the spirit of the country.

Question: What is your comment on Mr. Jinnah's claim that the Muslim League represents all Muslims in India?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Pakistan has not been defined, and nobody knows what exactly it is. I am personally against the idea of division of the country, but if a representative election of the areas in question is held, and the people in those areas wish to separate themselves from India, then I shall agree to their going. However, I wish to have it made clear that the decision must come from all the people in those areas.

The Quit India Resolution still holds good except for the section relating to civil disobedience and other minor issues. I shall not comment upon the speculation that the Congress will make another show of force, such as the one precipitated in August 1942, should the present deadlock continue.

I would not hazard any guess as to the future, although I think there is a fifty-fifty chance of some sort of Indian Government emerging from the present state of flux. Till now, the British Labour Government has not been of any help, and from the policy it is following in Hong Kong and Malaya it seems that not much can be hoped for India.[2]

The job of returning demobilised soldiers to civilian life will be a big problem even for a national government, and an impossible problem for the present Government. I do not know the extent of political consciousness among the rank and file of the Indian Army, but I believe that even among the rank and file and especially among officers, there is considerable national feeling. I admit that their dissatisfaction comes largely from the differential treatment accorded to them in relation to British officers and men.[3] I may point out that there are serious grievances due to different rates of pay and treatment for doing the same job.

There are reports that I might go to America. While I would like to go there very much, there is still much work to be done in India

2. Britain had imposed military administration in Hong Kong and Malaya following reoccupation in early September 1945 and suppressed the demand for independence.
3. The proportion of the British and Indian officers in the army was 10:1. In January 1945, there were 596 Indian officers in the combatant section and the ratio was 12:1. An Indian soldier's monthly salary was Rs. 25 and that of a British soldier thrice as much. An Indian lieutenant got Rs. 350 and a British lieutenant was drawing double that amount. In the clubs and messes racial discrimination was noticeable.

and I cannot leave. If there is any work to be done in the United States, I would most certainly welcome going there.

2. The Elections and the Pakistan Issue[1]

Question: The Congress is for self-determination. Does it mean that the question of Pakistan is acceptable?

Jawaharlal Nehru: No one knows exactly what Pakistan means as it has not been defined by the Muslim League or by Mr. Jinnah. No one can accept something that is not defined. But the principle of self-determination for an area has been accepted by the Congress subject to other groups of people not being dragged in against their will.

Q: Will the present election decide the question of Pakistan if the League secures a majority of seats?

JN: Not necessarily, because in the election there are so many influences. A Muslim voting for the Muslim League may not be a supporter of Pakistan. The proper way is to take a vote on this specific issue.

Q: It is reported that Lord Wavell is returning empty-handed. What is the Congress going to do? Is it going to launch another movement?

JN: Well, I cannot tell you what is going to happen after six months. Let us see what we are going to do now. It is a premature question.

Q: What about the question of demobilisation?

JN: I am sure the present Government cannot tackle it. It is only a national Government which can tackle the question of demobbed soldiers and their re-employment.

1. This represents a conversation between a press correspondent and Jawaharlal when they travelled from Kalyan to Bombay in the same train on 11 September 1945. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 14 September 1945.

3. Congress Reorganisation[1]

Formation of a government for India is not the only problem facing the Congress Working Committee. Elections to posts within the Congress have not been held for over three years. In the United Provinces alone there are 20,000 elections to be held, ranging all the way from Congress offices in the villages to the provincial committees and to the All India Congress Committee. No elections had been permitted after the Congress was outlawed in August 1942. Moreover there is the question of disciplinary action against the Communists and others who have not followed the Congress policy after 1942. The United Provinces Congress Committee has voted for disciplinary action against the Communists in the Congress who supported the war despite the Quit India Resolution. This purge may take the form of barring the Communists from holding office in the party for a term of months or years. Such a decision will result in the expulsion of a dozen Communist members from the All India Congress Committee.

The Congress Working Committee may also be faced with a new problem if Lord Wavell should announce any new plan on his arrival in India.[2] The current meeting may have to be adjourned till that time, but it will be possible for the Working Committee to meet even on the eve of the A.I.C.C. meeting on September 21 if the announcement makes it necessary that a meeting should be held.

1. *Interview to the press, Poona, 14 September 1945. From The Hindu,* 15 September 1945.
2. Wavell returned and announced his proposals on 19 September 1945.

4. The Continuing Struggle[1]

After having seen and addressed crores of people in all parts of India, I feel the fundamental unity of the people amidst the diverse customs, manners, dresses and languages. I always try to read the thought,

1. Speech at Poona, 18 September 1945. From *The Hindu,* 20 September 1945.

aspirations and hopes of my audience, and realise that they always show great enthusiasm. But mere superficial enthusiasm is not enough or useful. We are passing through a crisis. In fact, the whole world is passing through a critical period. Even after six years of war, no one knows the future of Europe. Many feel that the world is again heading towards another war, because the causes of war are not yet removed. It appears that even the statesmen in other countries have not yet realised this. But one thing is certain, that no country which is ruled by a foreign power will ever be willing to remain under domination. Such a country will be considered as dead. India is not dead. She has shown during the last 150 years that the struggle for freedom will always continue till she is free. We have been hungry for our freedom for a long time, and will not wait more. But we must also realise that our freedom cannot be attained merely by discussions or compromises. We shall have to develop our strength, and build it up through organisation and discipline. It would be childish to think that a few arms could give us freedom. This is the age of the atomic bomb. I would not hesitate to advise you to take up arms, but our real strength lies not in arms, but in fearless and strong hearts and organisation.

The Congress has decided to contest the coming elections, not because the elections will give us freedom, but to demonstrate the will of the people. Elections are merely a temporary phase of our fight. The Congress is the only organisation in the country which is fighting for the freedom of India, and a thumping victory for the Congress will be a notice by itself to Great Britain and the world that India is on her way to freedom and will not wait any longer. Other organisations, particularly the communal ones, can never fight with the British Government because they grow under the shadow of the Government and draw their strength from the Government support. They may give threats, but will never carry them out. All that these communal bodies can do is that they can create internal troubles.

The question of forming Central or provincial governments after the election does not interest me. Even at the time of the Simla Conference, we agreed to do so only with the object of carrying on our fight. But how could we take part in forming such Governments in the present scheme of things when no real power *is transferred to us?*

While the tendency in other nations is towards a world federation, it is to be regretted that some of our countrymen *should think of* dividing the country. A free India has a great part to play in a federation of Asiatic nations. Such a federation will form a bulwark of the world federation which alone will be an effective means of guaranteeing world peace.

5. Dangers of a Group Mentality[1]

India has a big part to play in the future of South-East Asia and South-West Asia and it can only do so if it is strong and united.

There are very many classes and groups in this country and all of them face different problems. They are very important groups and their problems cannot be ignored. Many of the spokesmen of such groups are worried over the future of their groups. But we cannot think of these problems merely in terms of a particular group.

During the war the country was very badly hit. Now the Government is not capable of handling the problems created by war because of incompetence and because of the existing economic structure.

It is difficult to forecast the exact future structure of India. It may be that there will be a transitional stage, but there is not going to be any halfway house between independence and dependence.

Many countries are passing through a transitional stage and in Europe some of them are passing through the same turmoil as in Asia. The problems that face us are not peculiar to India. These problems are common to the whole world.

1. Speech at Bombay, 23 September 1945. From *The Hindu*, 25 September 1945.

6. Faith in a Forward March[1]

The eyes of the entire world are, for the last three days, focussed on the momentous All India Congress Committee session here. People have flocked to the session from remote parts of the country. There is evidence of unprecedented national enthusiasm in the activities of the Congress. During the past three years, the country has passed through travails and tribulations. Famines have laid waste entire provinces and killed hundreds of thousands of people. Under the Ordinance rule of the Government, thousands were thrown into

1. Speech at Bombay, 24 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 25 September, *The Times of India*, 25 September and *The Hindustan Times*, 26 September 1945.

prisons and beaten up. Many places were even bombed, as though we were an enemy country.[2] But the common people have not been cowed down by these acts of repression and terrorism, and they have emerged with a stronger faith and newer hope in the Congress.

The Government, which refused[3] to deal with the Congress till it apologised and retracted from the Quit India Resolution, has changed its mind and now attempts to negotiate with us. The Quit India Resolution still holds the field, and the Congress will never go back on it, as it will mean acceptance of defeat and national degradation. The resolution has the sanction of the people behind it. It shows the resolve of the people to be a free nation. There have been many mistakes on the part of some Congressmen, but there is no instance of any Congressman having staked the honour of the Congress and the country. Sometimes we were slow, and sometimes more dynamic. But we have never condoned repression or lost our faith. The All India Congress Committee in its reiteration of the Quit India Resolution has expressed our resentment unequivocally against Government repression and also our sense of happiness at the fortitude and courage of the people.

When the Quit India Resolution was being passed, the country faced the Japanese menace on its frontiers. At that time the Congress asked the British Government to lay the foundation of lasting world security by declaring India free. But the Government replied by wholesale arrests. It wanted to break the spirit of the nation, but the people took up the challenge.

My initial hope that the advent of the Labour Government in Britain heralded the dawn of a new policy has proved futile.[4] I am afraid

2. During the August movement, there was aerial machine gunning of crowds at Patna, Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Nadia and Talchar
3. The Viceroy, in his letters to Mahatma Gandhi and in his public utterances in January April 1944, had held that the Government was not prepared to talk to the Congress leaders as long as the August Resolution was not disowned by the Congress.
4. The statement of 19 September 1945 that the Cripps proposal "stands in all its fullness and purpose" meant that there was no change in policy. Indian troops had been employed by the Labour Government in Indo-China and Indonesia in the same way as the Conservative Government had done. It had also refused to reduce export prices for India when India sought it as a control for purchases during the war.

that the common people of England, who have brought Labour to power, have no influence on the foreign policy of their Government. We ourselves cannot exercise such an influence unless India takes up the initiative and continues the struggle. I am of the opinion that it is a wrong policy to pin one's faith on any type of government which comes to power in Britain. The release of the leaders does not mean anything. We would have been released anyhow when the war ended. Under such circumstances it is unwise to relax. For the British Government now knows that the Indian problem cannot be solved without the Congress.

The resolutions of the Working Committee passed at Poona and the latest resolutions of the All India Congress Committee define the Congress attitude to national and international questions. We have reiterated the Quit India resolution and resolved anew to strengthen the Congress as a militant and dynamic organisation. While so many patriots are still in jails, there is no time to relax or to cry halt. Whether the Labour Government is sincere or not in its offer to India, the Congress, as the voice of the nation, has to assess, from time to time, the strength it derives from the people and assess also how far the voice of the leaders has reached the people. But from what I have seen in the course of my tour of the various parts of the country I have no doubt that the strength of the Congress has enormously increased. The presence of people in such large numbers at this meeting is an index.

What India demands is not self-government within the empire, but complete independence, which means not only the freedom of a few top men or a few favoured communities, but the freedom of everybody including the workers and the peasants. We want to establish a freedom in which the workers and the peasants have a voice. To those who harbour any doubt about the Congress policy, I would say that the moment India wins its freedom, the Congress would have fulfilled its mission for which it has been striving for 60 years. The gigantic task of educating the people, reconstructing the country socially, economically and industrially, in different ways will commence. So long as the stamp of a foreign government continues this cannot be undertaken. Independence will open the door for individual and national progress by which alone can India march forward.

The attitude of the British Government towards Indian interests is callous. This is very much in evidence with regard to the sterling

balances of India which have accumulated in England. These balances represent the blood and sweat of the workers of India.[5]

The British form their own committees and include some Indians as figureheads and try to impress the world that the Indians are one with them in all their actions. Millions of soldiers who have enlisted for a salary are coming home demobilised. The Government, which is fully aware of the discontent among these fighting men, on account of invidious discrimination against them in army life, is talking of distributing free lands to them in a feeble attempt to appease them. Many more millions, who work in essential war factories, also will face unemployment. I cannot believe that anybody except a national government can tackle such problems.

The coming elections are not of great consequence by themselves, but they are a test and that is why we are contesting them. The question as to what we intend to do after winning the elections does not arise. Our main object is to consolidate the strength of the Congress. We do not propose now to fritter away our strength in minor disputes.

5. The sterling debts due to India amounted to £1000 million. Some British experts suggested that this debt might be reduced by half as, according to them, the war time purchases had been made at high rates. The fact was all government purchases, which led to the accumulation of sterling balances, had been made at controlled rates, below the then prevailing market rates.

7. Need for a Specific Plan[1]

What India wants from the British is a specific plan for the establishment of independence in the very near future, not vague proposals and "next steps". Neither the offer embodied in the recent speeches by Prime Minister Clement Attlee and Lord Wavell, nor that in the earlier Cripps proposals represents such a plan.

Question: Is the Congress Party in favour of a constituent assembly on the basis of the Cripps proposals?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Congress will favour such a plan only if the assembly is vested with real power to make final decisions and determine its own course of action. We must meet with the British on

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 24 September 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 25 September 1945.

an equal footing and our demands must not be subjected to their veto. If the British resort to a "take it or leave it" offer we shall do as we have always done with such offers in the past — we shall leave it.

Mr. Attlee is a well-intentioned liberal and although I welcome the change of Government in Britain, as far as India is concerned, I have not expected more from the Labour Government than from Mr. Churchill's Government.

Mr. Attlee and his Government will only go as far as the people push them. While the elections indicate a certain growth of liberal and socialist ideas in Britain and a reaction against Tory policies, the majority of the British people are concerned with domestic matters and know very little about India or its problems. They are willing to leave it to the experts, and hence exert very little real pressure on the Government.

8. On Working Class Unity[1]

I appeal to the Bombay workers to close up their ranks and strengthen their trade unions, so that the voice of the unions will be weighty in deciding their future in a free India. The present order of society is full of disparity — one man accumulates all powers in his hands or a few people possess all wealth. This extreme state of affairs has to be ended and a sound social order established if the real workers and peasants of the soil are to live a life of peace and happiness. We have tried to do enormous work in the political field. But as a national organisation deriving strength from the people of the land it looks to the workers for support to its programmes and activities. The ideal of Swaraj which the Congress has placed before you means real power in the hands of the people and its exercise by them to their benefit. Hence the Congress demands complete freedom from foreign domination. This can be achieved only by the strength of the people.

The Congress has decided to participate in the elections. By this it wants to show that it has the real backing and support of the workers in its activities. The day when the country attains complete freedom,

1. Address to a workers' rally at Bombay, 25 September 1945. From *The Hindu*, 27 September 1945.

the Congress will cease to exist, as power over the affairs of the country will naturally be in the hands of the peasants, who form the bulk of the people, and the workers.

We have an absurd situation in the country. A few foreigners control the destinies of the people. The Government, fearful of the fact that the Congress may decide to form ministries in the provinces, had hastily dissolved some of the legislatures. And thus the absolute rule of the few foreigners continues.

In Bengal thirty to thirty-five lakhs of people died in what the Famine Commission called a 'could have been prevented' famine.[2] To our great shame and anger, the same officials are still ensconced in the seats of power.

This state of affairs must be ended as soon as possible. Those who are wholly unrepresentative of the people have acted as the country's spokesmen in the councils of the world. The sterling balances are now being sought to be exploited to further British trade. The great need of the moment is to drive the British away. "Quit India" is still our slogan.

I appeal to the workers to organise themselves on proper lines; they should never be influenced by communal considerations.

2. The official enquiry committee concluded that the Bengal famine was essentially man made which timely action, by the provincial and Central governments, could have averted

9. Quit India—The Main Issue[1]

Question: On what lines do you propose to conduct the election campaign?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Quit India — It obviously means complete recognition of Indian freedom and not just the physical departure of the British.

Q: What was meant when you said that the Congress would crush all opposition?

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 26 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 27 September, *The Hindustan Times*, 27 September and *The Hindu*, 28 September 1945.

JN: I was referring to the elections. It is silly for a non-Congress candidate to hope to win any seat in the general constituencies. He will lose his deposit. This does not mean that the Congress will go about with a sledge hammer.

As regards Muslim constituencies, the Congress will contest the elections wherever possible. But it will not split votes by entering into a three-cornered fight to benefit any Muslim League candidate. Wherever a non-Muslim League candidate has chances, the Congress will lend him all support to defeat the League candidate. The Congress stands for a United India and any Muslim who stands for the ideal of United India will get the support of the Congress. The League will fight the election on the issue of Pakistan or division of India, which in my opinion is impossible to achieve.

Q: What steps will the Congress take to secure franchise for demobilised soldiers?

JN: The only step the Congress can take is to insist that the soldier be given his right, but it is not a question of only demobilised soldiers, but of all members of the armed forces.

Q: What propaganda will the Congress carry on among the members of the armed forces?

JN: Normally, the Government does not like any propaganda among its armed forces. In fact, the Government dislikes it intensely. At the same time I have come into contact with the brothers and sisters and other members of the families of the soldiers in the course of my general and agrarian work. My relations with them are good.

Q: Will the Congress take office after the election?

JN: I cannot answer this question. After the elections, all manner of difficult questions are bound to arise. One of these is the constituent assembly. And even more, the immediate question is that of the Centre. Unless these questions are satisfactorily solved, they will give rise to conflicts. When the Congress talks of 'Quit India', it does not do so in merely idealistic terms. I realise that it is not enough to pass resolutions for independence. But if the fact of the transfer of power is recognised in its totality, the method of such transfer itself will become a matter of arrangement. If this is denied there will be a conflict, although I cannot foresee what will be the shape of the conflict.

Q: Will the Viceroy or any representative of the British Government have a place in the constituent assembly?

JN: Normally speaking, no representative of the British Government will come into the constituent assembly. They have no place even according to their own showing, but when the question of British interests are being considered they may have a place. But whether we will actually object to the presence of a particular representative of the British Government at any stage, is a matter to be decided when it arises.

Q: What is your attitude to the Anglo-American attempt to set up an anti-Russian bloc in Asia?[2]

JN: All questions of foreign policy depend upon many factors, some idealistic, many realistic. Ultimately, the foreign policy of a nation will be guided by what it thinks is its national interest. Like all other countries India too will naturally think of its foreign policy in terms of its national interest. In doing so, India's likes and dislikes will no doubt play some part in shaping this policy. India's reaction to anything that America or Russia may do will largely depend on American or Russian policy towards India.

Q: Has there been any change at all in regard to Britain's approach to Indian matters?

JN: So far as I can see, there is no change whatsover in Britain's policy. It is just scandalous impertinence on the part of the British Government to appoint Sir Geoffery Prior[3] to represent the views of the Government of India at the Council of Foreign Ministers in London. We feel strongly about it. If the Labour Government is responsible, as presumably it is responsible, for this decision, it shows that it is entirely incompetent to handle the Indian question. Simply because we are silent, it should not be assumed that we acquiesce in such acts.

Q: What is your reaction to the situation in Satara?[4]

2. At the Foreign Ministers Conference in London, Britain and the U.S. were opposing the Soviet Union's territonal demands The Soviet Government feared the formation of an Anglo-American bloc.
3 b. 1896; I.C.S; Prime Minister, Alwar State, 1936-38, Political Resident, the Persian Gulf, 1939-46; Governor, Baluchistan, 1946.
4. Congress workers established a parallel government in Satara district in Bombay Presidency in 1943-44.

JN: So far as I have been able to find, the common people of Satara have shown an extraordinary ability for effectively organising themselves against heavy odds. They really built up an effective system of village government. It is doubtful if at any previous time these areas have been free from normal crimes as in this period. The village governments suppressed local crimes. The main lesson of Satara is that the common people of the villages can organise themselves, even against heavy odds, if given a chance to do so. It is an extraordinarily promising thing. In other parts of the country also village people have shown extraordinary powers of initiative and organisation. But they had a brief career because they had to face huge armies. These people, however, functioned for a couple of years. They are fairly well tested and they came out of the test remarkably well.

This is the general aspect of the question. It is true that some acts are really reprehensible. But they were individual acts. How can we judge a revolutionary movement from individual acts when the people as a whole have stood up to a test?

Q: Are you visiting England in the near future?

JN: I do not think there is the psychological need at the moment. Besides there is more urgent work to be done in the country now. My reaction to the proposal to go to England is strong. I do not want to go and will not go unless a vital necessity arises. In the past I have often wanted to go to England because I have many friends there. But I have developed a distaste to the idea of going to England now. I think it is but fair to the well-meaning friends of the Labour Party to inform them how we feel about this matter. They do not realise that the people of India are not satisfied with their pious platitudes about freedom. There is going to be no approach from us to the Labour Government, either as individuals or as a group, in England or India. Therefore, there can be no point in my going to England.

Q: Will you be in favour of sending a delegation if the Labour Government invites one?

JN: In that case I would view the suggestion from a different angle. If there is a job to be done I would go to England or anywhere for that matter.

Q: Will the Congress make any representation to the U.N.R.R.A.?[5]

5 A mission of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration was then in India for procuring supplies, against India's contribution of Rs. 5 crores, for the relief of Europeans who had suffered because of the war.

JN: It is unlikely, although undoubtedly the situation in India could become very critical. Yet famine might come quite easily, perhaps on a poignant and large scale. So too unemployment.

Q: Will you advise a boycott of foreign goods?

JN: There is an amazing lack of goods of all descriptions in India. The country is short of such goods and it is difficult to expect it to continue to suffer. But the British attempt at dumping goods is objectionable and must be resisted. We are likely to have not only normal dumping of normal goods but abnormal dumping of abnormal goods such as war scrap which nobody wants. There is an attempt to use up the sterling balances and reduce India's credit in Britain.[6] I do not know if it is the Government of India or the Labour Government or the city of London that is responsible for it, but the indications are that attempts are being made to extort as much as possible in the shortest possible time before there is any change of Government.

Q: You said that you refuse to talk to the Muslim League. Is this not inconsistent with the resolution of the Working Committee on the question of self-determination?

JN: Where is the inconsistency? The Congress Working Committee has declared that it believes in a united India with the largest measure of autonomy for the provinces. At the same time it has declared that it is not going to compel any territory or area to join the Indian Union against the declared will of the people. There is, therefore, no question of talking to the League. It is for the population of a particular area to decide its own destiny — It is not for the Muslim League or the Congress to decide it.

During the last two years all our attempts to talk to the League have been one-sided. The Congress has made approaches, proposals and suggestions. The other side just goes on saying 'no'. It is somewhat odd that every time an attempt is made to talk to the League, it wants a testimonial or a chit from the Congress that it represents all the Muslims of India. But the Congress approach to the League by itself is a big enough testimonial. So the Congress cannot give a further testimonial which is inconsistent with the national character it has maintained for the last 60 years. Nobody will refuse to recognise the other

6. If Britain had repaid the sterling debt to India in goods which were in short supply it would have removed bottlenecks in the transition from a war to a peace economy. But Britain was trying at this time to use this balance to develop a high export trade, designed to secure a permanent gain by way of assured markets for British goods.

person, if the other person is prepared to talk sense and talk sense decently. It is impossible to open a discussion if the other party refuses to talk. It is a somewhat curious case. The League is making big claims before the world. But in this case the plaintiff does not define his claim but calls upon the defendant to do so.

The Muslim League is very strong in the Muslim minority provinces. It is not so strong in North-West India which is presumably included in the Pakistan demand. If we go to Baluchistan and Kashmir, the strength of the Muslim League becomes even less pronounced. Even in the Punjab, it is the urban influence that gives the League its strength and not the rural. It is quite clear that in the Punjab the Muslim League cannot form a Ministry without a coalition with other groups, because every group is opposed to the League. It is quite possible the League may win 25 per cent of the seats in the Punjab in the election, but it is probable it will get even less.

Q: How do you now face the Pakistan demand?

JN: Let me explain what I regard as the crux of the Pakistan issue, if it is to be faced at any time. If we presume that a large number of Muslims want Pakistan and further that they should be allowed to have their way, it will mean that in the areas they are in a majority they will be given the right to vote on this decision and if necessary to vote themselves out. But there are areas in southern Punjab and western Bengal which are predominantly Sikh or Hindu. It is absurd to talk of self-determination for one community and at the same time to coerce large numbers of people who do not believe in Pakistan to become part of it. Therefore, Pakistan cannot even be considered without the possibility of the division of the Punjab and Bengal. Such a Pakistan will be very poor in resources and in its economic position. Further no Bengali or Punjabi, whether he is a Hindu or a Muslim or a Sikh, wants a division of the Punjab or Bengal. Of all provinces in India, Bengal is the most strongly-knit cultural unit and both Bengalis and Punjabis have stronger provincial feelings than the people of other provinces. Even Muslim Leaguers in the Punjab and Bengal are opposed to a division. So it comes to this, that the Muslim League must decide either on coercing people, who do not want Pakistan, to stay in Pakistan or agree to cut up the provinces to make Pakistan a more feasible proposition. The former alternative is impossible and the latter is difficult because they do not want it. Perhaps it is this difficulty that has come in the way of the League defining Pakistan.

Q: What action does the Congress intend to take against the Communists?

JN: There can be no question of taking action against the Communist Party, even if such a thing is possible. The Congress cannot take action against a specified or unspecified group which is not a part of it. We have, therefore, to look at the question to the extent it affects some Congressmen who also happen to be members of the Communist Party. Secondly, under the Congress constitution nobody can be prevented from becoming a primary member of the Congress. Anybody, whether an Indian or a Britisher or an American, can become a member of the Congress as long as he subscribes to Articles I of the Congress constitution.[7] But it stands to reason that the Congress should insist that persons who are not in agreement with the Congress policy should not be members of the Congress executive.

Certain members of the All India Congress Committee who have been served with notices, demanding why disciplinary action should not be taken against them for acting against the policy of the Congress, have been given a fortnight's time to put their case in writing and if necessary to explain in person to the sub-committee appointed to go into the question. The personnel of this committee, which was appointed by the Working Committee at Poona, is: Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and myself. The committee has reported to the Working Committee that there is a strong *prima facie* case against the Communists and that the Communist members should be asked to explain. In this connection, the Communist Party as such is not being accused, but only those Communist members who, having occupied important executive positions in the Congress, have failed to abide by the Congress policy.

This position applies to communal organisations also. The Congress has never said that members of the Hindu Mahasabha or of the Muslim League cannot become members of the Congress. But it has made a rule that members of a communal organisation whose policy is opposed to that of the Congress cannot hold executive positions in it. Some time ago it has been decided that the policies of the League and the Sabha are opposed to the policy of the Congress. In this connection I also deprecate the talk of purges. Under the Congress constitution nobody can be deprived of his primary membership except for misconduct or misdemeanour.

Q: Do you think that there will be a civil war in India on the withdrawal of British power?

7. Article I of the Congress constitution stated the objective to be "the attainment of complete independence by all legitimate and peaceful means."

JN: There is less likelihood of a civil war in India than it is in some countries of Asia and Europe. A large number of countries outside India are faced with the threat of internal troubles in the coming years. India will have its own troubles, but I personally do not think of a civil war because of communal trouble which many people seem to be thinking. India's troubles will arise inevitably following the transfer of power. Thus, for example, when a foreign government refuses to meet the wishes of the people there is one kind of reaction whereas if a government of the people delays to redress their grievances, the reaction is of a different kind. But these troubles will not be in the nature of a civil war.

Q: You once said at Lahore that the habit of touching feet is inconsistent with human dignity; but you have auctioned your kerchief. Is this consistent with your dignity?

JN: Do you think my dignity is tied up in my kerchief?

10. A Blueprint for a New India[1]

It is quite possible that the Congress might reject the new British proposals for settlement of the Indian question, if it finds as they develop, that they are not satisfactory.

Question: What did the Congress mean when it said that the latest proposals were unsatisfactory and vague? Does it indicate a rejection of the proposals?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Our attitude to the new proposals will depend on circumstances. Obviously, one does not know what these circumstances will be. For example, no one knows what type of constitutional convention is to be chosen or what would be the method of choosing delegates or what would be the position of princely states with relation to the rest of India in formulating the general constitution. In this whole position

1. Talk with editors, Bombay, 27 September 1945. Based on reports from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 28 September and *The Hindu*, 29 September 1945.

or rather problem, there are so many factors outside the control of the British Government. It is rather premature to reject, but that does not preclude rejection of the proposals at a time when full facts are known. The position at the moment is under study and you can interpret the Congress resolution as you like, but I have explained the circumstances governing it. It could be said that the Cripps offer was fairly definite, but naturally conditions have changed and the proposal is consequently much less definite. I emphasise that any solution must involve the Centre.[2]

The Viceroy might say arbitrarily that there is a common measure on which agreement might be reached, and seek to establish conditions at that level. A common measure is usually a very low measure. The question whether the proposed procedure of starting with the elections would lead to settlement, depends on many factors that push towards a settlement, factors that would bring a settlement even if the British opposed it.

My preference is to settle the Indian problem by the people elected on the basis of a wider electorate than the one permitted by the present franchise. We want these questions settled by the people who are not so close to the communal problem. A settlement on an economic basis is needed. The communal problem is not one that the British created, but I think it is equally obvious that the communal problem has become immeasurably worse because of British policy. I can see no signs of British efforts to mitigate the problem. If it is not solved through the ordinary channels of the constituent assembly it must be settled by other ways. There are four obvious courses that can provide a solution: (1) an imposed decision (2) through agreement at convention (3) through civil war and (4) through an impartial tribunal.

No one can say that the Muslim League does not have a strong hold over the Muslims in India, but I insist that its hold is largely among city Muslims. Communal feeling is found only in cities, not in agrarian areas. The Muslims in the United Provinces have welcomed Congress assistance in easing tenancy troubles.

The world is divided into rival groups, possessed with, what I shall content myself with describing as, destructive power. It is right to say that we Indians will sympathise with those, whose sympathy will be on the side which helps India to attain its rights. The settlement of the Indian problem is of greater importance to Britain than any other problem. I think the British Government is wise enough to realise this and

2. The Federal part of the Government of India Act of 1935 was not in operation.

be impressed by the factors governing the problem today, quite irrespective of any personal sentiment in the matter.

If you look realistically at the world scene—and everyone sooner or later has to look realistically at the world scene—you will see that India is undoubtedly in a strong bargaining position. It is important for the world to know which way India goes, and I have stated that it will go with those who give it help towards the attainment of freedom.

We want rapid progress in India. I do not know what will happen to India unless there is rapid progress in her economic development. There must be a planned development. I have come to the conclusion that there must be, and there will be, socialistic planning. It seems to me that there will be a socialistic tendency in any programme.

Heavy industries together with mineral resources have been referred to as the key industries and should be owned by the state. It is likely that other industries will be left to private enterprise, but there should be a measure of control over them so that they would not interfere with state planning. The only problem of conflict will be between heavy industries and cottage industries. It is true to say that there is a difference in the philosophical attitude between the viewpoints of the cottage and the heavy industries. I do not see how we can raise the standard of life on a big scale without rapid industrialisation and without control to avoid overlapping and conflict of these two industries.

I think, for exmple, that the textile industry should be controlled by the state to prevent it from coming into conflict with the policy of the state in relation to cottage spinning industries. I should certainly have the textile industry controlled for that purpose.

The landlord system, in which small parcels of land are farmed under ownership of wealthy zamindars, must be ended. The abolition of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal and the zamindari system is necessary. Compensation in some form and on some basis will have to be settled. It is going to be difficult for us in one sense to have cooperative farms all over India. They are necessary, but the problem is very different from that of the establishment of such farms in Russia, as the conditions are absolutely different. We shall naturally have to use a great deal of persuasion to establish such farms. Remember that one-third of India's land is not cultivated and while some of it cannot be cultivated a great deal of it can be. We can have cooperative farms and cultivation of such land that is at present remaining a waste, with a little effort.

Q: What is your comment on reports that the British press and the public feel that the Congress resolution has been unfair to India?

JN: The British people do not realise the true feeling of India in regard to the constitutional problem. They have no comprehension whatever of its effect on Indians.

Q: What specifically would you have liked Lord Wavell to do?

JN: It should be made perfectly clear that the British Government *proposes to walk out of the scene and that it is determined to do so.* If such a policy is made perfectly clear there is no doubt that other things can be made easier of solution.

11. Police Responsibility for Bombay Riots[1]

In any big city, if the inevitable hooligan element is permitted to have free play, it is easy to start a riot.[2] It is easy too to create a certain psychological atmosphere that is favourable to rioting. It is so easy to start a riot. But normally people do not go about stabbing each other, *and it is the innocent passers-by who suffer because of these hooligans* and the handful of experts in stabbing. They are the cause of the trouble. They work in a suitable atmosphere. By 'suitable' I mean an atmosphere where there is a degree of sympathy for them. That is how they manage to operate.

The police and the city toughs should share the blame for religious excitement as a contributing cause.

There would be no riots if the Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police were told that they would be dismissed if a communal riot broke out in the city. The general view of the police is that a little riot is a good thing. It is really up to the police to prevent excessive bloodshed. Normal persons don't go about stabbing people. It is the job of a few experts as most of the stabbings in the previous communal *riots are traceable to five or six hooligans.*

1. Address to press conference, Bombay, 27 September 1945. From *The Hindu*, 29 September 1945.
2. For three days, from 27 September 1945, Hindu-Muslim riots, described as the worst in five years, occurred in Bombay. Twenty three people were killed and 85 injured during the rioting.

No foreign Government can solve the problems that face us, for it can get no cooperation but only hostility and resistance. Those people, who do not resist, are a dead people. Those who cut themselves away from the rest of the country are restricting their growth.

While the urban population of all countries is growing up, it is the rural population that is growing in India. The progressive ruralisation of the country is a measure of its poverty.

We cannot improve agriculture if we do not improve social services, educational facilities, sanitation and like things.

A foreign Government cannot plan an economy for the country and it cannot think on proper lines and if it does, it cannot function except only in a vacuum. To solve all these problems it is necessary to have a government which reflects the desire of the people and which protects their rights.

12. The Flame of Freedom in Asia[1]

Although the purpose of this meeting is to inaugurate the election campaign, elections as such are not exercising my mind as much as certain other issues of burning importance. One of these is the trial of the members of the Indian National Army, which has made me don the robes of a barrister and appear in court. Being a counsel in the case, I would not like to speak of the trial itself, but I would like to draw your attention to the conditions which made possible the emergence of the I.N.A., the conditions in which it was born, and its brief but heroic career.

I have heard, for instance, that Captain Lakshmi[2], officer commanding the Jhansi Regiment of the I.N.A., has been arrested again in Rangoon.

1. Speech at Bombay, 9 November 1945. Based on reports from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 11 November, *The Bharat Jyoti*, 10 November and *The Hindustan Times*, 11 November 1945.
2. Capt. Lakshmi was the commander of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment of the Indian National Army. She was arrested in March 1945 and interned in Rangoon where she took charge of a hospital to help poor Indian patients. But she was removed after a few months to Kalaw, a village 400 miles away from Rangoon, under orders restricting her movements.

I do not know if she will be brought to trial, or if the arrest is merely meant as further harassment. But one thing I know very definitely, and it is that the I.N.A. has given the country a new slogan, a new battle-cry, a slogan which will remind the people of a brave chapter in the nation's history.

Another event of importance which calls for immediate attention is the ultimatum of the British Government to the Indonesians to lay down their arms.[3] In the context of Java's heroic struggle for freedom, the forthcoming elections seem but a tame affair. Indonesians are fighting for freedom. So are Indians. There are some Indonesians at this meeting and on seeing them, I feel both happy and ashamed. Their country is fighting the battle for freedom with desperate courage. We are proud of the people of Indonesia. We are proud that though ill-equipped in weapons of warfare, they are fighting desperately and with courage. They have not yielded nor bent their knees. We are told that the war is being fought for the freedom of all subject peoples. It is a matter of utter shame that the British Empire should be using all its armed might to restore Dutch domination over Indonesia.

It is a matter of shame, too, that the people of India are unable to give the Indonesians anything more than sympathy. The destinies of all Asiatic nations are bound together. We are partners in the struggle against European imperialism. Therefore, it is not enough merely to offer sympathy. India should give them active and constructive help. I admit that at present we are not prepared to do much, but I wish to sound a clear warning to the imperialist powers of Europe that if they do not quit Asia quickly and without any obstruction, it is clearly inevitable that there will be a gigantic conflict involving the whole world. The freedom movement in Java and other Asiatic countries is not something which can be suppressed by force. They may drop a few bombs, kill a few thousand people and destroy a few cities. But the urge for freedom will survive. And the flame of freedom which has been lit in Asia can result only in one thing, namely, the burning of imperialism the world over.

The Maharaja of Nepal must be told that the use of his troops in resisting the freedom movement of the people of Indonesia is against our national respect and heritage, and that it is fraught with serious consequences. Nepal, which is said to be a free state, should be ashamed that its ruler, claiming to be independent, has obliged the British Government by sending his troops to Indonesia. It is amazing that the Government of Nepal has not spoken out in this respect.

3. On 9 November 1945, the British ordered Indonesian leaders to surrender unconditionally, failing which there would be open warfare.

I want to speak clearly. I want to tell Nepal that this is a matter which will affect adversely the reputation of Nepal. It will also affect adversely the friendly relations between Nepal and the rest of India.

I commend the lead of the Indonesian seamen in refusing to load munitions or supplies on Dutch ships. I appeal to the Indian dockers as well as the trade interests concerned to take prompt steps to follow up this right and courageous lead. We should use all the resources at our disposal to oppose and obstruct the British in their war against Indonesia. If on this account action is taken against us under the Defence of India Rules or any other statute, we should be prepared to face it.

We have been in the field of battle for three years. Wherever I went, I have found a new awakening and a robust sense of resistance on the part of the people. I think we must now perfect our machinery and prepare for the next struggle. But the elections have come in the way, and we shall not show any weakness.

The individual candidates do not matter. But the organisation behind them and the policies for which the organisation stands matter. For my part I regard the elections as but a part of the preparation for the coming struggle. If Congress candidates are returned to the legislatures, no matter what we do after entering the legislatures, it will mean that we have taken one step forward in the march to our goal of freedom. For all we know the British Government may be interested in seeing that whoever opposes the Congress candidate wins the election, and may be hoping for the success of even Communist or Hindu Mahasabha or League candidates, because every such success of a non-Congress candidate means that the day of settlement of accounts with the Congress is postponed. The British Government knows full well that the Congress is an organisation which enjoys the confidence and support of the largest number of the people of this country.

But it is a foregone conclusion that the Congress will capture a majority of seats in most of the provinces, and in these there would be no government except of the Congress. I do not undervalue the work of provincial administration; but I feel that the Congress should not tie itself up in the red-tape of provincial administration on the 1937 pattern. Provincial administrations are important, but they are secondary. The capture of power at the Centre is primary and the achievement of complete freedom is fundamental. The work in the provinces should be pitched to this tempo. We are seeking the suffrage of the people on the Quit India slogan, and if the Congress legislators and ministers tend to forget this slogan, the people should remind them in a thousand voices. We should think of the initiative we

should take after the elections. We should not wait with folded hands for the British Government to make the move.

Those who talk much about Pakistan, should not forget that Pakistan cannot be established in Bombay, and if it comes into being at all, it will not be in those areas where the people are most vociferous about it. I am glad Mr. Jinnah has for the first time thrown some light on this big question.[4] But on an analysis of his definition I find that inherently the scheme of Pakistan will work against the interests of India as a whole and especially against Muslims in the so-called Pakistan provinces. Everyone is aware that the Muslims in Assam are in a minority. In southern Punjab, there is a majority of Hindus and in Ambala alone there are 80 per cent of them. The same figures obtain in eastern Bengal and in Delhi. One would like to know as to how Mr. Jinnah is going to solve the problem if the Hindus of these areas oppose his scheme and demand the right of self-determination. Will they be driven away from these areas or forced to live in them against their wishes? But Mr. Jinnah claims that there is cultural unity in these provinces. This explodes his two-nation theory. How can there be cultural unity if the Hindus and the Muslims are two different nations? Pakistan in the light of Mr. Jinnah's theory means breaking up the Punjab and Bengal into *Chota* Pakistan and *Chota* Hindustan. I am sure nobody would like this. Events alone will solve this problem.

I call on you to vindicate the Quit India slogan in the coming elections. Fifty per cent of the Congress candidates have already been declared elected. I know that Dr. Deshmukh and Mr. Masani will win. What I want you to do is to demonstrate your loyalty to the Congress by giving them the maximum number of votes.

4. On 8 November 1945 Jinnah outlined the details of an independent and sovereign Pakistan. It would include the N.W.F. Province, Baluchistan, Sind, Punjab, Bengal including Calcutta and Assam Component provinces would have autonomy, but certain powers would be vested in the central government.

13. The Passing of British Rule[1]

We must not wait for the next move of the Wavell Government, but we must look at our own people and prepare ourselves for the last battle for freedom, which may come sooner than we anticipate.

The British Government wants to introduce Indianisation of the army and the Indian Civil Service after 150 years of its rule.[2] It is not a question of Indianisation of the army or the civil service in India, but the liquidation of British rule in this country.

Swaraj does not mean merely Indianisation of the army or the Indian Civil Service or the appointment of Indian governors in some provinces. Swaraj means the complete liquidation of British rule in India and the establishment of people's rule at Delhi and in all provinces. Our conception of Swaraj is a people's raj in which the Indian people will have sovereign and absolute power in their hands. The civil servants and the police will be the servants of the people, and not tyrants. It will be neither Hindu raj nor Muslim raj, but Hindustan raj, where all the people of India, irrespective of caste or creed, will exercise their absolute rights and sovereignty.

When we win Swaraj the first task which will face us is the task of wiping out poverty in India, so that every man in our country may have enough food, enough clothing and comfortable living accommodation. We must see to it that every man in our country is usefully employed.

The 1942 struggle shows clearly, if any proof is needed, that the Indian people have awakened. We have shown a true revolutionary spirit and urge for freedom when we revolted against the British Government all over the country and when all our leaders were clamped behind prison bars. We have, therefore, realised our strength in that struggle for freedom. But we must also cultivate a sense of discipline among ourselves. I have met some of the I.N.A. men, and I am deeply impressed by their remarkable sense of discipline and determination. If

1. Address to fishermen at Versova beach in Bombay, 11 November 1945. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 13 November 1945.
2. In 1945, the ratio of British to Indian recruits in the I.C.S. and the Indian police was on the basis of an equality of numbers in each of the services. The ratio of the British and Indian officers in the army was 10 : 1. On 22 October 1945, the Commander-in-Chief announced that the government was planning complete Indianisation of India's armed forces.

we have to fight our last battle of freedom, we must organise ourselves with such a sense of discipline and determination.

14. Impossibility of Accord with the League[1]

Whether we are successful in the election or not, the Congress cannot go in for any compromise with the Muslim League until it changes its present policy and its leadership and joins hands with the forces in the country which are fighting for independence. Let me make it clear that the League does not want any settlement with the Congress even if the demand for Pakistan is conceded. What will happen to the future of India is a different question. When the whole world order is cracking and the very existence of small nations is threatened, and when flames of revolt and rebellion are aglow in every subject nation, it is meaningless and futile to talk of Pakistan and an isolated existence. It is easy to talk glibly of Pakistan, but when viewed in the world perspective the issue becomes difficult to appreciate. The only yardstick of sincerity and patriotism of any political party in this country and in every subject country should be the ideal it has before it. It should give other issues a secondary place. Instead of giving any indication of this ideal as its main and immediate issue, the League during the last three years opposed the Quit India resolution. It is even said on behalf of the League that those who participated in the national struggle for freedom, those who went to jail and those who died as a result of the Government policy of repression, are all against the Muslim League ideal of Pakistan and against the interests of Muslims.[2]

I ask these misguided persons to read again the August Resolution and understand its implications. But I am convinced that even if you grant Pakistan the League is not interested in an agreement with the Congress on the issue of national independence.

1. Speech at Bombay, 11 November 1945. Based on reports from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 12 November and *The Hindustan Times*, 12 November 1945.
2. On 24 April 1943, Jinnah claimed that the movement started by the Congress was taken by Muslims to be against their vital interests and the Hindu leadership should call it off.

I am constrained to say, if you want Pakistan, you can surely take it. Fight for it, sacrifice for this cause if it is sacred, and work for its attainment. In the three years that have passed, the League, except for thundering speeches and threats, veiled and open, has done nothing towards this end. When Congressmen were arrested, jailed and chased by the police, the League leaders passed resolutions and gave threats of dire consequences if Pakistan was not granted.

The history of the last 25 years of the Congress fight for freedom will show that the Congress was the only political party in this country which has been working for the complete independence of India and for the happiness and wellbeing of its 40 crores of people. Swaraj, for which the Congress has been struggling, is for the whole country, and not for a particular community or party. The Congress seeks freedom for all the people of India. It is impossible to believe that Hindus will dominate and tyrannise the Muslims or, as a matter of fact, one community will dominate another. We tried our utmost to approach the Muslim League and reach an understanding. But whenever we went to the leaders of the League we were not only slighted, but our friendly gestures were taken as signs of weakness and impossible demands were made. We have, therefore, come to the conclusion that the League is not anxious to work for the freedom of India. But the Congress is convinced that the moment the British quit the land a solution will be found for all our ills, national and communal.

What would happen if the British quit the country? When the foreign power withdraws its domination the way will be clear for us to solve our problems. If we are not able to find a solution, some say there will be a civil war. If a civil war comes, we shall then devise means to face it.

At any rate, it is impossible for any understanding to be reached either today or tomorrow. And I will make it clear that an understanding can never be reached with the League. But the League should not be understood to be an organisation representing all the Muslims of India. We shall go to the Muslims, approach them and hear their grievances and try to redress them.

The League, by its intransigence and obstructionist tactics, has lowered the political standard of our country. The League is consequently far from our sphere of political activity. But I will lend my ears to the League if it gives a call to fight for our freedom.

After the elections, the Congress will have to find a solution for the major problems of the country, such as economic maladjustment, the growing poverty of the people and illiteracy. They can be solved only with the support of the people in the coming elections.

I ask you not to judge the individual candidates set up by the Congress to contest the elections, but to judge the organisation they represent and the sacrifices it has made in the cause of freedom.

15. Fallacy of Jinnah's Pakistan[1]

Jai Hind! There is a host of questions before me and I do not know where to begin. There are all kinds of questions from the latest reply of Henderson[2] in the Commons to possibilities of the atomic bomb.

With regard to Mr. Arthur Henderson's reply, stating that my visit to Java is undesirable, I may say that conditions in Java are undoubtedly critical. It is because conditions are critical, I want to go. Obviously, the object he has in view is different from what I have in view. I am not going on a pleasure trip.

> Question: Would you give your views on Mr. Jinnah's exposition recently made on the Pakistan blueprint?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is now a hackneyed subject. It seems to me obvious that, according to Mr. Jinnah's own premises, the definition of Pakistan is completely wrong. That is to say, Mr. Jinnah includes the whole of the Punjab, Bengal, Assam and the Delhi province in Pakistan.

Now, everybody knows that southern Punjab, western Bengal and the Delhi province are predominantly non-Muslim. This means that either the non-Muslim population agrees to Pakistan or is compelled to accept it. Obviously, whatever we may think of the Muslim population, everybody knows that Hindus and Sikhs are entirely opposed to Pakistan. Therefore, the only alternative for Mr. Jinnah, if he wishes to have his Pakistan, is to compel them to accept it either with the

1. Address to press conference, Bombay, 13 November 1945. Based on reports from *The Bombay Chronicle*, 14 November, *The Times of India*, 14 November and *The Hindustan Times*, 14 November 1945.
2. On 12 November 1945, Arthur Henderson, Under Secretary for India, said that the decision to refuse facilities for Jawaharlal to visit Indonesia was "taken with the agreement of the Supreme Allied Commander in view of the present disturbed conditions in Java which render it undesirable for such a visit to be made."

help of the British Government or by the League itself. In either case, Pakistan, in the form stated by Mr. Jinnah, is an unthinkable proposition, impossible for realisation, whatever happens.

Pakistan can be conceived, if at all, only in terms of those areas where there is a dominant Muslim population. Of course, even in such areas, it will mean that the entire population, and not Muslims alone, should have the final voice.

It is obvious, therefore, that this question, like most other questions, will not be decided by the Muslim League or by the Congress. It will have to be decided ultimately by the people of India as a whole. And it is equally obvious that in any such decision, large-scale compulsion cannot be, and must not be, applied.

The Congress feels that Pakistan will not solve any issue, but will create many new problems. At the same time, it does realise that every unit, every province or community in India must have the fullest opportunities of living its own life and self-growth, without compulsion *from outside. That is why the Congress has suggested that the* largest amount of freedom should be given to every area in India and that only a certain limited number of federal subjects be reserved as common subjects.[3] Even if there is separation, you will have common subjects like defence, communications, etc., to be considered.

Mr. Jinnah refers to safeguards. Safeguards will of course apply to the whole of India too, by the same argument. The conception of *Pakistan, as put forward by the League, is not really a territorial con*ception, but one based on what is called the two-nation theory. According to this theory, bits of Pakistan exist all over India, and in case of a division of India, we would have a large alien population in each of the divided parts. No state can have stability on this basis. Inevitably, there must be common bonds, however small and limited they may be, between the various parts of India.

It may be possible to have what might be called a compulsory minimum of common or federal subjects and an optional list which each *unit could choose to accept, at its pleasure. This would give a great* deal of freedom to a unit to go as far as it likes, subject to its associating itself with the centre. No question can possibly arise of ultimate compulsion of huge provinces.

3. *The resolution of August 1942 had stated:* "The provisional government will evolve a scheme for a constituent assembly which will prepare a constitution for the governance of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units."

Q: Mr. Jinnah has favoured the idea of opposition parties functioning in Pakistan, and not one party rule.

JN: I suppose he will get plenty of opposition. The parties in India as they function today are not really parties at all. The Congress, for instance, is not a party at all, except in the legislature. It is a movement. It is a joint platform of numerous parties and groups for the achievement of one essential thing, namely, national freedom. As soon as this issue is solved, there will be many parties formed on economic and other bases. It simply means that we must have a democratic system.

I completely agree with the view that there should be parties, and I am opposed to all authoritarianism.

The idea of religious groups does not fit in with territorial arrangements. I don't understand how a Muslim in Madras or a Hindu in Peshawar can exercise the right of self-determination. I don't understand either how any religious group can exercise it, because the idea of a religious group does not fit in with territory. You may choose a territory to exercise its opinion, but not a religious group. I have the strongest objection to it because it does not solve a single problem and it creates new problems. I can perfectly understand the desire of a territorial unit or a group to have this freedom, but it is limited by certain factors.

Semi-independent provinces within a federal structure can have a sense of security. If you divide India, you lose this sense of security. There will be friction. You will need separate armies. Suspicion and difficulties will arise. *Development of internal resources in smaller areas is* very difficult. The main problem of India is poverty. India has to make up some 150 years of arrested growth. Our energies cannot be diverted to sentimental problems.

We have got into a mental rut, not only in regard to communal questions and various minor affairs, but in regard to the whole question of the constitution. We are so deeply in the rut that we would think more or less on the lines laid by the British Government — the assemblies, the Governors, high courts, chief courts, and what not. We ought to think on other lines. We can take parallels from Russia in the solution of national and other problems, and consider them afresh. We are so tied with the old arguments, separate electorates, joint electorates, etc., that the vicious circle presents itself everywhere. The Pakistan issue has simply made it still more difficult to get away from this vicious circle.

Q: Can you comment on the feeling prevalent in official and non-official circles that recent speeches of Congress leaders including yourself tend to incite people to rebellion?

JN: I cannot help these feelings. If my speeches lead people to think that the Indian problem cannot be static, and that they have revolutionary implications, then my speeches have served a good purpose.

Q: What are the prospects of Congress success at the polls, specially in the Muslim constituencies?

JN: Obviously, the question does not arise about general seats. The Congress will capture them. As for the Muslim seats the position is different. I think Congress or pro-Congress candidates are likely to gain a considerable number of Muslim seats in the United Provinces. I would expect 25 to 30 out of 66 seats will be captured by the Congress. I think this estimate is likely to be correct, not only in respect of the number of seats, but also the number of votes. In the Central elections, I think the League may do better than in the provincial elections, because the franchise to the Central legislature is restricted. The Congress appeals to the wider electorate than to a limited electorate. But one thing seems to be obvious. In no province is the Muslim League likely to have an absolute majority. This applies to the Muslim majority provinces also. Therefore, the need may arise for coalition with other groups. By itself the League will not be in a position to form a government in any province, as far as I can see.

Q: What is your reaction to Mr. Attlee's assertion[4] in a recent speech that freedom for India has been there for the taking and that communal differences alone stand in the way of the realisation of this freedom?

JN: It is a terminological inexactitude. Communal differences might be an obstacle, but it does not lie in the mouth of Mr. Attlee to say this. What is the use of saying that India's freedom is there for the taking when freedom is not there, but there are so many provisos for agreement from parties and interests and from the British Government. The question of India's freedom will really arise only when the British Government announces its decision to eliminate itself leaving us to settle our differences. This, in my opinion, is the only fair position the British Government in India can take. It is quite obvious that in such circumstances, taking the major groups in India, neither group is going to crush

4. On 9 November 1945, Attlee said: "Ever since the Cripps offer in 1942 India's complete freedom has been there for the taking. The only obstacle so far—a very grave obstacle—has been the failure of Indian communities to agree among themselves."

or remove the other from the scene. Then there would be a compulsion of events which would force them to come to an agreement.

Q: Will the Congress contest Muslim seats in the provinces?

JN: We propose to contest every Muslim seat in all the provinces, either directly or indirectly through nationalist Muslim organisations. We are not going to leave any seat uncontested.

Q: How is nationalisation of industries possible?

JN: There is always a great difficulty in answering such a question, because the answer depends on who owns the state—an oligarchy or the British or the people of India. Nationalisation of industries in India with the British Government in control is not real nationalisation. It will be controlled by the British. In our view, nationalisation of industries means control by a people's national government.

The National Planning Committee has repeatedly made it clear that the state should own and control its own key and heavy industries and has defined the terms for such control. For purposes of planning, some sort of control is required even on other industries. First of all there is a general agreement that we should keep out foreign economic control and that control and development of Indian industries should be in Indian hands. Foreign capital brings in a certain amount of foreign interference and it should be zealously watched. It may be necessary, in order to develop India rapidly, to have foreign capital. But if this is to be accepted, it can be accepted only on the express condition of Indian control.

I think the percentage of investment or share of control is irrelevant. In every exceptional case, involving secret processes, the country will have to make the choice as to whether it will develop the industry or not, and whether it will use the secret process on these conditions, but generally control by foreign capital should not be allowed. And national government that comes into being should examine these questions and should not allow present agreements, involving foreign participation, to continue. The future Government of India is going to be strong enough to take such a decision.

Q: What is your view on the question of land settlement?

JN: I stand for the abolition of the permanent settlement in Bengal and the big zamindari system in other provinces. As regards compensations, it is desirable to give some kind of compensation, the quantum

of which is to be decided by the national government. But it would at no stage prove a burden on the cultivator. In my opinion, it is always better to pay such compensation or some such payment at the commencement than face trouble later.

Q: What attitude should the Indian army officers, having nationalist leanings, adopt, on dispatch of Indian troops to colonial territories and Japan and on help to Indonesians?

JN: I think that Indian army officers should feel and think as Indians and, when occasions arise, express their opinion in favour of Indian freedom. We should like the officers of the Indian army to develop national sentiments and to come more in touch with the people, even under the present conditions when they are part and parcel of the British army.

No Indian army should be sent to any territory, not even to Japan, to humiliate anybody. If the Japanese are humiliated by Allied arms, as alleged, Indian armies should not be a party to it. I agree with the suggestion that seamen and dock workers engaged in transport of war materials to Java should refuse to load and unload cargo for Java and that a general strike should be organised all over India. I wish I could help the Indonesian Republic more effectively than the Congress is able to do at present.

Q: How can the menace of the atom bomb be checked?

JN: It cannot be checked effectively unless the fundamental causes which create friction and war among nations are removed. So long as these causes exist, there will be the use of the atom bomb, or something worse than that. Therefore the question really is one of trying to remove the causes of inequality and friction. At present, there is imperialist control of various countries. There is financial imperialism as well as racial inequality. All these things must go and then some kind of an effective world order which can use, not the atom bomb, but the forces released by the destruction of the atom for beneficial purposes should be set up. Probably, in another 10 or 15 years, practical applications of atomic energy will be made. This would mean a great revolution upsetting economic theories and structures. This revolution caused by atomic energy can either destroy human civilisation or take it up to higher levels.

Q: What is your reaction to the civil war in China?

JN: It is obviously very distressing that there should be something in the nature of a civil war in China. And if I can presume to give advice

to anybody, it should be that effective steps should be taken to end it. But this is all talking in the air, of course.

Q: Do you think that American and Russian troops should be withdrawn from China?

JN: Foreign intervention is always dangerous.

SIND

1. Will to Achieve Freedom[1]

The nation has only one immediate issue—that is India of tomorrow and its freedom. The world has changed and the situation in India has changed during the last nine years. The nation might have made some mistakes. It has to profit from the lessons of these mistakes. In the last three years particularly, India passed through many troubles, hundreds were shot dead, thousands were jailed and millions died in famine. The peasants suffered untold miseries which had not been made known by newspapers. In spite of all these India is not weak today. Its spirit remains high. It has emerged stronger, vigorous and determined to sweep away any road blocks on its path to liberty.

In this age, nations make total war for the principle they stand for, right or wrong. They sacrifice everything to maintain their integrity. Even small nations like Indonesia are defying the combination of Dutch and British imperialism. India too has grown strong during the past 25 years and has demonstrated to the world that it will no longer tolerate foreign rule.

When Congress leaders were arrested, the people spontaneously rose against the Government. For the Congress, nonviolence is not only a weapon of expediency but an article of faith. If, however, assurances are demanded from us by the British that violence will not be adopted, I will say that it is none of their business. They should get out of India. Violence or nonviolence, India will soon be free.

1. Speech at Karachi, 3 January 1946. From *The Tribune*, 5 January 1946.

The main problem before India is freedom, that is, to get the British out. Other issues are of minor importance at the moment. The Congress has been struggling for freedom and on every occasion of its struggle it has grown stronger and become more and more powerful.

The British empire is only seemingly strong. The British people are a valorous nation, steadfast and courageous, but they have now lost the strength which enabled them to hold an empire.

Old ideas and thoughts have gone. The atom bomb has revolutionised the outlook of the people. No country can be strong unless it is large and powerful and has resources to make itself self-dependent. The withdrawal of foreign rule by itself will not make India a strong nation. It has to develop its resources after becoming free. It may take years before India will be powerful in the modern sense of the term.

Division of India is neither economically nor politically a sound proposition. The Muslim League has mentioned Pakistan as its goal. It has not defined its economic or social objectives. Pakistan has no meaning for the present. It cannot be established till the British goes. This means that Pakistan can come about only after India has become free. The Muslim League is not a fighting organisation. It is an electioneering body with Pakistan as its election cry. If India should be strong, it should prevent internal conflicts within its units. The Communist support for Pakistan has nothing to do with Marxism or socialism. They carry on a propaganda to break India into 13 pieces.

The Congress has favoured a federation of willing units. But it would not force or coerce any unit into a federation. If Muslims, after freedom has been won, want separation, no one will deny it. If Pakistan breaks away from India it will face the danger of being seized by reactionaries and vested interests for exploitation. How can anyone allow this to happen?

All political organisations desire the end of British rule. Yet it is only the Congress that challenges its authority and fights against it.

2. Ministries on Quit India Basis[1]

If the Congress accepts ministries, it will be on the Quit India basis. After the elections, the Congress will take up its programme from where

1. Speech at Jacobabad, 5 January 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 7 January 1946.

it had been left in August 1942, and prepare the country for the final struggle. Do not be carried away by the propaganda of communal organisations. Do not fight among yourselves. Look at the Azad Hind Fauj. It is composed of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and they are all united. India's problems will be easier after the British quit India. The Congress is the only powerful organisation which has carried on the struggle. We shall fight on and the victory is sure to come.

I also appeal to the Muslims of the Upper Sind Frontier district to vote for the Nationalist Muslim candidates.

3. Muslim League's Reactionary Programme[1]

The Muslim League is an organisation with a reactionary programme. This kind of interruption[2] is typical of the Muslim League which is afraid of hearing the truth Nobody wants to force you to act against your conviction I, for my part, want everyone in India to understand the problems facing him and come to independent decisions. I want no blind sheep. Why are the Muslim Leaguers afraid of hearing criticism of the League policy? This shows that the Muslim League has done nothing for freedom or for the poor masses and has no programme. But the Congress has a programme which is partly found in the election manifesto. Nobody is going to be afraid because of such interruptions or the repetitions of the bogey of Pakistan.

1. Speech at Larkana, 5 January 1946. From *The Hindu*, 6 January 1946
2. Supporters of the League were disturbing the meeting.

4. The Picture of Free India[1]

The country's future is not decided by resolutions, but by the people's will and determination. India's future will be what the people of free

1. Speech at Rohri, 6 January 1946. From *The Tribune*, 8 January 1946.

India decide. The picture I have in my mind of a free India is that of a country where all people have equal opportunities for advancement, where no artificial barriers are raised against their progress, where communal controversies have vanished, where neither Hindu raj nor Muslim raj had sway, where civilisation, culture and language of every community are protected and where everyone gets employment, food, shelter, education and medical relief. That is why I am laying so much stress on the Planning Committee.

In the present world conditions no small state can exist. Pakistan cannot be free. It will mean a slave country where Muslims would not like to live even if it is granted. The Congress will not allow any division of India. The Congress wants a united free India.

5. Hindu Communalism[1]

Cries of Hinduism in danger or Islam in danger are foolish, meaningless cries. Both Hinduism and Islam are great institutions and cannot be destroyed by cries. It is strange that the Hindu Sabha is so loud in denouncing the Congress and accusing it of favouring the League. But it had once joined the League to form ministries. They both stand for India's slavery and perpetuation of the British raj. They knock at the door of the British Government. But the British Government will go out soon. At whose doors will they knock thereafter? The Hindu Mahasabha is a useless body, but more useless, more degenerate and more disgraceful than all other organisations is the Sind Hindu Sabha.

The Congress is not fighting the elections for capturing ministries, but for strengthening itself so that it should fight India's freedom struggle with greater force. I have not come merely to ask you to vote for the Congress. An election is a matter of passing interest. The Congress is keen on carrying out the fight for freedom. Hence I would ask everyone to get ready for the coming struggle and enlist himself as a soldier in India's war for freedom.

1. Speech at Sukkur, 6 January 1946. From *The Tribune*, 8 January 1946.

6. Independence and Inter-dependence[1]

There are in Sind as in any other parts of India, enormous crowds, great enthusiasm and an electric atmosphere. This is more in evidence all over India now than at any time before. Politically speaking, Sind politics is a little difficult for a visitor to analyse. There is no politics at all. It is partly tribal and clan loyalty and loyalty to certain backward elements, that is, big feudal magnates who exercise some control over others. So the various labels that people attach to themselves, as candidates in the election or members of parties, have seldom the same significance as elsewhere in India. Even the Congress which probably is the only true political organisation is necessarily influenced by these factors. The Muslim League is also very much influenced by this, and I doubt if the candidates put up on behalf of the League for the election are in any way real Muslim Leaguers. Probably they are just accepted because they might win. Again, the politics of this province has been in a curious tangle, with people shifting about from one group to another. It is also unfortunate that the Sind administration is notorious for its corruption. The war has brought much money into some pockets and it will, no doubt, flow out during the elections. Sind suffered a very grave loss in the death of Mr. Allah Baksh, who was peculiarly suited to unravel the tangle, and the manner of his death itself is significant of Sind politics. Sind has also gained notoriety for frequency of political murders. There is a certain nomadic character about a part of its population. All these factors show that there is a total lack of equilibrium in the public life and politics of Sind. The one stabilising factor can be the Congress.

In an ideal world, there can be perfect self-determination for everyone and every group. In practice, however, this is severely limited by certain dominating factors. We have arrived at a stage today in the world, when even complete national self-determination is limited in many ways by world factors. We demand independence for India, that is, complete self-determination for India as a whole, but we always make it clear that there can be no complete independence for any country in the sense of isolation. Therefore, we have always said that the solution of the world's problems is to be found by means of a world federation of free nations cooperating with each other.

1. *Interview to the press, Karachi, 9 January* 1946 Based on reports from *The Tribune*, 11 January and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 12 January 1946.

Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Malayans, the Chinese and the Indians closer together; it has probably toned down any political action that might be taken against Indians; and it may result in a slight bettering of economic conditions for Indians. It has also helped in developing a feeling of self-reliance in them and the relief committee that has been formed will help in this process. I have also suggested the formation or the revival of a strong central Indian association which would look after Indian interests in Malaya. What further help can we give them? First of all they want visits from Indian leaders. How far this is possible I do not know; but it would be desirable for some prominent Indians to go there from time to time. Many of them want to be repatriated. I think we should urge that fuller facilities be given at any rate for those who have their homes and relatives in India. They want immediate relief in the shape of clothing and medicines. We are doing something in this behalf. If we can do more it should be given especially regarding clothing. For the present no monetary contribution is necessary; but as a token of goodwill and personal interest a small sum may be sent now or later.

(8) The question of the ex-I.N.A. is in a sense related to the ex-I.N.A. in India though it must be remembered that in India we have members of the old Indian Army while in Malaya it has been the civilian element. I pointed out in Malaya that we could not keep it going as an army there or in India, and certainly not in a foreign country anyhow whatever happens in India when India is free. The I.N.A. has given good training and discipline to large numbers of our people. That is valuable and it has made them more efficient. How to utilize this for national service is a big problem here as elsewhere. The relief committee there is thinking of starting land settlements as well as cottage industries and the like. They would like the ex-I.N.A. personnel to hold together and I myself think this is desirable.

During my return journey bad weather resulted in delay and I had to spend a night in Rangoon. I sent for General Aung San[7] and some Indian leaders to meet me in my hotel there. Aung San came to see me and we had a long talk lasting far into the night. It was an interesting talk and I managed to get some picture from it of conditions in Burma. Aung San is undoubtedly the most popular leader in Burma

7. (1914?-1947); Commander, Burma Independence Army, 1942; President, Anti-fascist People's Freedom League, 1945-47; appointed Deputy Chairman of the Executive Council that ruled Burma in 1946, he negotiated with the British Government for independence; was premier-designate of the soon-to-be independent Government when he was assassinated along with six of his colleagues in July 1947.

Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru

migration of labour, and certainly no such labour should be allowed to go abroad without the most explicit guarantees of fair treatment.

One major tragedy of the war was the building of the Burma-Siam railway by compulsory labour. The Japanese carried away, often forcibly, very large number of workers, chiefly from Malaya and most of them were Indians. Over a hundred thousand were thus employed. Labour conditions were primitive, medical arrangements were very few and the climate was malarial and bad. A very large number of them, estimated between 40,000 and 60,000, died. Those who survived were in a fearful condition. They had gradually drifted back, often dying in their villages after return. The British Military Administration had opened relief camps for them. I visited one such camp at Jitra, not far from the Siamese border. The time when I went, there were 400 destitutes, women and children included, although previously there had been several thousand. The camp appeared to me to be very well run. As soon as the workers recovered, they were sent back to their homes or to other estates.

I was especially interested in finding out the relations existing between Indians, Malayans and Chinese. I was gratified to find that the Indians were uniformly on good terms with both the Malayans and the Chinese. This was not only evident from joint welcomes organised for me by all the communities, including Malayans, Indonesians, Indians, Ceylonese and Chinese, but also I found a growing cooperation in various activities, such as labour unions. I was assured by both the Chinese and Malayans that they were getting on well with the Indians. One rather surprising feature was that during the Japanese occupation, when the Indian National Army was functioning and, at the same time, there was a Chinese resistance movement against the Japanese, there was no conflict between the I.N.A. and the Chinese resistance movement, although they were functioning in entirely different spheres, which could not be coordinated easily. Indeed, there was some kind of underground contact between the two.

This showed how the Chinese appreciated the fact that Indians were working for the freedom of India and were not anxious to cooperate with the Japanese occupation as such. My visit, I hope, will lead to even greater cooperation and harmony between Indians and the other communities in Malaya.

The immediate and urgent need of Indians in Malaya, is, apart from food, clothing and medical supplies. The British Military Administration and the Government of India have done something to give relief, but the problem is too great to be tackled effectively in a piecemeal way.

The Congress medical mission has not yet arrived there, though two of the doctors attached to the mission reached Singapore while I was in

SINGAPORE, MARCH 1946

Those, however, who have lived in other countries all their life or for generations, might well adopt the nationality of their country. That, of course, does not mean breaking natural contacts with India. It merely leads to a different political status.

For my part, I hope that some time in future we shall develop some kind of common nationality for all these regions of South East Asia and India. But that does not relate to the present. Whatever I spoke, I laid stress on Asian unity and cooperation between different Asian countries, specially from the point of view of defence and trade and, of course, cultural matters. This applies to South East Asia as well as to the whole Indian Ocean region. My suggestions were warmly welcomed by all communities.

Indonesia lies just off Singapore and naturally the Indonesian struggle excited interest, sympathy and admiration in Malaya. There were many Indonesians there, and they were anxiously eager to have me visit Java. I told them that I could not do so in the present circumstances.

I left Malaya with regret for I had made many friends and the affectionate welcome given there had affected me. All of them had made me feel perfectly at home with them, whether they were Indians, Chinese or Malayans.

On my return journey, due to bad weather, I had to spend a night in Rangoon. It was a short night, but I was fortunate enough to meet some Indian friends there, as well as General Aung San who came to visit me. We had an interesting talk, and I was happy to find how much in common we have in our outlook about the future. General Aung San was specially anxious to cultivate friendly relations with India. Some time back, he reminded me, he had proposed that a conference[2] of the representatives of the Asian countries should meet in India. I welcome this proposal warmly and I hope effect will be given to it in the not distant future. We shall gladly invite representatives from all over Asia to such a conference in India.

General Aung San is well acquainted with the Indian political freedom movement and attended as a visitor the Ramgarh Congress session.

The overall effect of my visit to Malaya and my brief passage through Burma, have enabled me to see the Indian problem in the wider perspective of Asia and to some extent of the world, for India is obviously going to make a difference to the world situation whichever way she goes. There

2. Aung San said on 1 March 1946 that he was interested in an Asian "Potsdam" conference to formulate a joint programme for the freedom of subject countries in Asia and would shortly visit India to discuss the matter with Indian leaders.

Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Volume Fifteen

A Project of the
Jawaharlal Nehru
Memorial Fund

Sapru and Nariman, had really had no work to do. Bhashyam has already come back to Madras and others are likely to come back soon.

I do not know what legal developments there might be in the future, but I imagine that they will be limited in scope and affecting only a few persons. For these it should be possible to make arrangements for defence in Malaya itself.

While in Malaya I received cablegrams from Borneo and other places informing me of heavy sentences on Indians who had been associated with the I.I.L. I did not know the facts of those cases and it was not easy to find out. As Borneo and various other places in South East Asia are under the S.E.A. Command I decided to make some arrangements for dealing with them in Malaya itself at the Headquarters of S.E.A.C. I have asked Mr. R. Ramani to make inquiries regarding all such cases outside Malaya but within the S.E.A. Command and to take such other steps as may be necessary, such as pointing out that the policy in regard to collaboration which had been adopted in Delhi and Malaya should be followed elsewhere also. I informed the S.E.A. Command also of this arrangement of mine.

It should be remembered that this does not include the Andaman Islands which are directly under the Government of India and any arrangement for the Andaman Islands will have to be made separately.

Thus so far as Malaya is concerned the legal aspect is not very important. I imagine that most of the remaining I.N.A. or I.I.L. personnel will be discharged soon. Indeed some like Goho and Abid Hassan[4] have been discharged already.

The general political aspect has also improved greatly and any direct persecution or repression is not likely to take place. One thing will take place and that is the Administration will avoid employing men prominently connected with the I.N.A. and I.I.L. I found it difficult to urge any claims for re-employment as this somehow did not fit in with our general policy and the aggressive spirit of the I.N.A. Still I think that gradually there will be a measure of re-employment. I found many I.N.A. sepoys had already drifted back to the rubber estates. Altogether the political position is more or less satisfactory but requires vigilant care.

The economic position is certainly not good. I shall not deal here with the great difficulties being experienced by Indians generally, especially by Indian labour owing to lack of food, clothing, low wages and

4. A.H. Safrani (b. 1911); a close associate of Subhas Bose and accompanied him on his submarine voyage from Germany to Japan; joined the Indian Foreign Service, 1949; ambassador to Syria, 1963; ambassador to Senegal, 1965; ambassador to Denmark, 1965-69.

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FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling—these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of the East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles, both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming

It is proposed to have two secretaries for the committee; for the present Brahmachari Kylasam has been appointed as one of these joint secretaries. The office of the committee will be situated at Kuala Lumpur.

The immediate activities of this committee will be:—

(1) To contact existing I.N.A. relief committees and other Indian organizations and to find out what they are doing.

(2) To give immediate relief where necessary.

(3) To draw up schemes of assistance including settlement schemes; also to consider and help in repatriation where feasible.

The committee was to utilize fully all existing Indian organizations in the work for relief.

I expect this committee to get to work immediately, even before the addition of further names. As soon as I have a report from Hutheesing I shall send further instructions and nominations.

I received about 85,000 dollars in the form of purses in Malaya. I handed this over to the relief committee. In addition we got some bars of gold which belonged to the I.I.L. These too, when converted into money, will be handed over to the relief committee. Probably they will amount to $ 60,000. Inquiries are being made about other monies or gold or jewellery in private hands which belonged to the Provisional Government or to the I.I.L. If any of these can be traced and taken possession of they will also be handed over to the relief committee.

You have already sent 100 bales of cloth for free distribution in Malaya. This work will be done by the relief committee.

I have just learned that the Congress Medical Mission has at last sailed from Calcutta for Malaya.

Our friends in Malaya were anxious that Indian leaders should visit them from time to time. How far this is possible, I do not know, but it would be desirable to send someone from time to time. Attempts should also be made, I think, to send more cloth.

Although the relief committee in Malaya has for the present enough money at its disposal, I think it would be desirable and a fitting gesture on our part to send them about $ 10,000 for purposes of relief.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

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Subhas Chandra Bose there was a tendency for every organisation to go to pieces just before the coming of the British. Shri Bose, before his departure, had directed that all funds should be used in two ways, first in giving immediate relief to the I.N.A. or I.I.L. personnel, secondly to create a trust fund for the purpose of giving relief to Indians. An attempt to do so was made. A good deal of money was distributed to the I.N.A. and I.I.L. personnel and medical supplies and other goods were distributed to charitable organisations and some kind of a provisional board of trustees was appointed to look after the funds which were placed in charge of a firm of solicitors. These funds were subsequently taken possession of by the B.M.G. I shall not go further into this matter as it is fully dealt with in Hutheesing's report. It seems to me that considering everything a considerable measure of order and discipline was observed in very trying circumstances by responsible Indians in Malaya and it is not fair to judge them by normal standards when the fortunes of war were driving out one occupying force and bringing in another. The various allegations and charges made were very vague and one is inclined to think that they were often based on personal dislikes. It is also evident that there was some conflict between those Indians who had left Malaya just before the Japanese occupation and returned after the British reoccupation and those Indians who stayed throughout in Malaya and functioned in the Provisional Government and the I.I.L. I need hardly say that it is these latter Indians who command the confidence of the great majority of the Indian population of Malaya. I might mention, however, one incident which was unfortunate and discreditable not to any prominent Indian there but rather to the rank and file. This was the looting of the Singapore Headquarters by the personnel of the I.N.A., I.I.L., and the general public, and yet one cannot attach even to this too much importance because of the extraordinary circumstances.

It appears that it is not possible to trace or recover any substantial funds other than those which are already known. Among these was the gold to which reference was made in my last report. This has at last been recovered from Sardar Hardayal Singh and has been credited to the account I opened in Singapore. Further there are some sums of money, notably 1,000,000 piastas ($ 500,000) which was seized by the B.M.G. The B.M.G. also seized a large quantity of medical stores which had been given to the Ramkrishna Mission. There are also some blocked accounts of the I.I.L. in Japanese currency which probably have no value now.

In my previous report I mentioned that I had requested Lord Louis Mountbatten to hand over to the trust fund we were creating the monies they had seized from the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the I.I.L. so that these might be used for relief work among Indians.

contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the 'third world' as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.

New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

cases. Or they might have one or two more. In any event I shall be grateful to you if you could go to Delhi not only for an individual case but generally to supervise what is being done and help with your advice. Arrangements will be made for your stay and comfort there. Kindly inform Raghunandan Saran, 6 Metcalfe Road, Delhi, about the date and time of your arrival so that he can make the necessary arrangements.

I should have liked to meet you myself but I have to go to Malaya soon on a brief visit. I hope to be in Delhi for a few hours on the 15th March just prior to my leaving for Malaya.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

17.3.46

My dear Vallabhbhai,

This is being written in some haste as I have soon to go off to the airport.

It is probable that in three weeks or so a new I.N.A. trial may start. This is going to be an important one and important persons will be involved — General Bhonsle,[2] Stracey,[3] the Anglo-Indian, and several others including high Muslim officers. We all think special attention should be paid to this for a variety of reasons. It is also the request of the I.N.A. officers in detention still that leading Congress lawyers should be engaged for it. So we would like you to get either Setalvad[4] or Munshi to come for it. Some of the accused suggested Setalvad.

1. File No. 3590/H/II-2, Records of the Police Commissioner's Office, Maharashtra Government.
2. J.R. Bhonsle (1905-1963); trained at Sandhurst and commissioned in the Indian Army. During the war he was sent to Malaya and was captured by the Japanese in Singapore. While in Singapore he met Subhas Bose and joined the Indian National Army of which he became the chief. In 1946, he was taken a prisoner and tried but released. He was elected to Parliament in the first general election and was appointed Deputy Minister for Rehabilitation; later he served as Director of the National Discipline Scheme.
3. C.J. Stracey (b. 1915); joined the Indian army, 1938; served the Indian National Army as a colonel, 1942-44; executive secretary, I.N.A. Relief Committee, 1947; joined the Indian Foreign Service, 1948; served as ambassador in Madagascar and Finland before retiring in 1973.
4. M.C. Setalvad (1884-1974); Advocate-General, Bombay, 1937-42; principal representative of India for Kashmir question at the U.N. Security Council, 1952; Chairman, Law Commission, 1955-58; Attorney-General of India, 1950-62; Member, Rajya Sabha, 1966-72.

EDITORIAL NOTE

During the period from 19 February to 2 September 1946, which this volume covers, some advance was made towards the transfer of power. With popularly elected ministries in the provinces and in the face of growing anti-imperialist feeling, the British Government sent out to India in March 1946 three Cabinet Ministers, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Stafford Cripps and A.V. Alexander, to negotiate a political settlement. After discussions with Indian leaders, the Mission proposed a constitution with a three-tier structure — a Union Centre, to which the princely States would later accede, limited to defence, foreign affairs and communications; autonomous provincial governments vested with the residuary powers; and the formation of three groups of provinces, of which two would consist of Muslim-majority provinces and one of Hindu-majority provinces, for joint administration. The groups would draft their own regional constitutions. The scheme, designed to avoid partition, also provided for a constituent assembly and an interim government representative of the main Indian parties.

Jawaharlal guided and conducted the Congress case during these negotiations with the Cabinet Mission and, after its departure in June 1946, with the Viceroy. His emphasis was on the indivisibility of the country with full safeguards for the minorities. He insisted on the withdrawal of British troops from India and on a strong interim government free from British interference and responsible to the elected legislature. The freedom of the constituent assembly could not be bound by any commitments to the Cabinet Mission Plan.

Eventually the Congress accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan as the best possible scheme under the circumstances. But the Muslim League, claiming that the Congress had not really accepted the grouping clause in the plan, withdrew its earlier acceptance and inflamed communal feelings. Jawaharlal, who had been elected President of the Congress on 9 July 1946, was invited to form the interim government and assumed office on 2 September 1946.

These constitutional activities did not absorb all his attention. Jawaharlal was also drawn into the people's movement in the princely States. With the prospect of independence in the near future he saw the need to tone up the Congress organisation. Beyond India, he envisaged a federation of Asian peoples.

Much of the material of this volume has been selected from the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru. Shrimati Indira Gandhi has made available to us

5. To Claude Auchinleck[1]

New Delhi
30 April 1946

Dear Sir Claude,

I am writing to you about the proposed trials of I.N.A. officers which have been provisionally fixed for May 6th and 10th. I have been distressed about this matter. I mentioned this to a mutual friend and he suggested that I should see you about it. You must be busy and I have to go to Simla tomorrow. I do not, therefore, propose to take up any of your time, but I feel I must write to you and place before you certain considerations in regard to these trials. There is nothing new in what I am going to write to you and I have no doubt that other people have mentioned these aspects to you. Nevertheless I am venturing to mention them again.

The announcement of these trials came as a shock to most of us because we had felt that this unfortunate chapter was closing and that there would be no prolongation of it with all the consequences that this entails. Already these officers have been in prison and detention for a long time. Some of them, as you are no doubt aware, had to undergo very humiliating and painful experiences in Malaya soon after the surrender of the I.N.A. to the British authorities. When you took the action that you did in regard to the first I.N.A. trial, the wisdom of that action was very much appreciated and it was felt that there would be no going back upon it in any way. Gradually, it was hoped that this episode would become history and normality would return. It is obvious that if these fresh trials of prominent officers of the I.N.A. take place there would be a great deal of public interest in these occurrences and the whole story would be revived. Probably the treatment which some of these I.N.A. officers suffered after their surrender would also come out. The result of all this will not be desirable from any point of view for it will create public excitement when no one desires a revival of such excitement on this issue.

I have gone through the papers in connection with these trials and I give my opinion for what it is worth. I feel that there is no real case and certain occurrences have been grossly exaggerated. The charges made are denied by the parties concerned. In the special circumstances then prevailing it is difficult to be certain of what exactly took place and it is still more difficult to judge from normal standards. Such a

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

a large number of documents in her possession, and these papers have been referred to in the footnotes as the J.N. Collection. The letters in 120 bound volumes in the Nehru Memorial Library are cited as J.N. Correspondence. In some cases, only the replies written by Jawaharlal are available and not the letters received. Some other letters and notes, kept separately, are referred to as J.N. Papers. The cooperation extended by the Nehru Memorial Library in granting access to other collections in its custody is acknowledged. With the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London, we have reprinted some letters and memoranda in volumes VII and VIII of *The Transfer of Power 1942-47*. The Public Record Office, London, has permitted us to publish a letter to Stafford Cripps and the India Office Library, London, a report of an interview with Lord Wavell. The National Archives of India and the Maharashtra Government have authorised us to reproduce some material in their possession. *The Hindustan Times, The Tribune, Amrita Bazar Patrika, Hindusthan Standard, The Statesman, The Times of India, National Herald, The Hindu, Indian Daily, India Daily Mail, Malaya Tribune, The Straits Times, The New York Times* and *The Nation* have allowed us to reprint the texts of speeches and statements first published by them. Some material has also been taken from *The Bombay Chronicle* and *The Bombay Sentinel*, which have ceased publication.

Five items, traced recently, which could not be included in the relevant places in the text, have been printed in the appendix.

There is one thing I should particularly like you to bear in mind. I do not want any publicity to be given to the fact that I wrote to the Commander-in-Chief. I am afraid my letter[4] was seen by a few persons and is probably in some file of the I.N.A. office. I do not mind it remaining in some confidential file there but perhaps it will be better to take it out altogether. Those who have seen this letter should be told not to talk about it. My point is that it would be rather ungracious for anyone to say that as a result of my writing to the Commander-in-Chief certain action followed. So I particularly do not want this to be said anywhere by anyone and more especially not in the press or to pressmen. When the fact is known publicly that the trials have been withdrawn we should briefly express our appreciation of the Commander-in-Chief's action. We need not go into any details or motives.

I am staying here with the Maulana at the "Retreat". Our telephone number is 793. The house is a big one and centrally situated and near the Cecil Hotel. I expect that Mrs. Naidu and Padmaja will also stay here, also Chand.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

4. See the preceding item.

7. To Claude Auchinleck[1]

Simla
4 May, 1946

Dear Sir Claude,

I want to thank you for your decision to withdraw all trials of I.N.A. personnel. I am sure this decision will be widely welcomed and will help in producing an atmosphere which we all desire.

It has been said sometimes that the regular Indian army has been largely ignored while the members of the I.N.A. have been lionised. To some extent this may be true, but I do not think it is fundamentally true. All Indians are proud of the courage and capacity of the Indian army. They are splendid material, but inevitably they have been looked

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. Also printed in A[illegible] ndon, 1959), pp. 817-819, by John Connell.

CONTENTS

1. The R.I.N. Mutiny

1	Unrest in the Navy	24 February	1946	1
2	The Armed Forces and National Freedom	26 February	1946	1
3	No Room for Victimisation	27 February	1946	5
4	Portents	February	1946	16
5	The Strike of Army Signalmen	3 March	1946	17

2. The Election Campaign

1	A Mood of Revolt	2 March	1946	21
2	To V.K. Krishna Menon	3 March	1946	24
3	The Errors of the Communist Party	8 March	1946	25
4	Sitting on a Volcano	8 March	1946	26
5	The Dawn of Great Things	9 March	1946	28
6	At the Door of Swaraj	10 March	1946	29
7	Why Congress?	10 March	1946	32
8	The Passing of the Raj	10 March	1946	33
9	Pakistan the Reverse of Self-determination	11 March	1946	36

3. Visit to Malaya

1	To N. Raghavan	26 January	1946	39
2	To S.C. Goho	26 January	1946	40

large batches of I.N.A. men into the police.[2] I said that I was sure that this would upset the morale of the police and might bring the Governor, with his special responsibilities, into conflict with his ministry in one or more provinces. I asked that the Congress High Command should use their influence to stop any such proposal, if possible, in the interests of India as a whole, and of maintaining friendly relations between the governors and ministries. I said that he already knew my views about the I.N.A., and that while there was no desire whatever to persecute them, I was sure it was entirely wrong to give them preferential treatment in the matter of government service, more especially in the police.

Nehru began by saying that I had referred to the Congress High Command, that I should realise that it was a body with many different tendencies and stresses, including a very strong element of extremists which had lately been gaining ground. He said that while the Working Committee had been up at Simla there had been elections going on in the Congress organisation, and the results were showing a very distinct tendency towards the extremists. It was by no means certain that the present Working Committee would retain their influence over the more extreme elements.

I said that if this were so, it was all the more necessary that we should not disturb the morale of the police; and that I thought the proposal to introduce the I.N.A. element into the police probably came from the extremists.

We then had a longish talk about the I.N.A. He said that while most people now realised that they had gone too far in their glorification of the I.N.A., and the tendency was now swinging the other way, they were an element which had to be considered, since all parties were now angling to use them; and it was important to provide employment for them and thus keep them out of the hands of the more extreme elements. I said that I appreciated this, but that mass enlistment into the police was not a move which could be justified.

We had some discussion about the police, how they were regarded as the instruments of oppression, and how it was necessary to put something more "popular" in their place. I said that if Nehru meant by that introducing politics into the police, it would be as fatal to do so as to introduce it into the army; that the whole essence of government service was loyalty to the existing constitutional government; and that I was quite certain that all the services, including the police, would loyally serve a newly established government, and conform to new rules they

2. The Bombay Government had decided to recruit ex-I.N.A. men for the police service but were persuaded by the Governor not to do so.

6	To Raghunandan Saran	2 May	1946	89
7	To Claude Auchinleck	4 May	1946	90
8	Bhulabhai Desai	6 May	1946	93
9	To P.C. Bhandari	8 May	1946	93
10	To Claude Auchinleck	9 May	1946	94
11	To G.P. Hutheesing	11 May	1946	95
12	Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal	13 May	1946	95
13	To Mohan Singh	14 May	1946	97
14	Need for Relief	23 July	1946	99
15	To J.R.D. Tata	21 August	1946	100

5. The Cabinet Mission and After

I. The Congress Stand and Objective

1	To Stafford Cripps	5 March	1946	105
2	Guidelines for Negotiation	15 March	1946	105
3	A Welcome Change in Tone	16 March	1946	109
4	The Congress and other Parties	3 April	1946	113
5	The Economic Problem in India	4 April	1946	117
6	Independence the Immediate Issue	5 April	1946	120
7	The Weakness of the Demand for Pakistan	6 April	1946	125
8	The Proposal for a Plebiscite	6 April	1946	129
9	The Basic Problem of Defence	9 April	1946	132
10	A New Page in History	15 April	1946	133
11	Note on Talks with the Cabinet Mission	10 April	1946	134
12	To S. Zainulabedin	19 April	1946	135
13	The Congress Reply to the Cabinet Mission's Invitation	27 April	1946	137
14	Acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's Invitation	28 April	1946	138

committee was appointed in order to advise and help the central relief committee. A number of these officers have been put in direct charge of relief operations in various parts of the country.

We have still to carry on this work for a fairly long period and to bring it to a successful conclusion. Apart from the immediate demands for help the main problem is the absorption of these men in productive undertakings. In particular, we want to engage them in small scale industrial and cooperative enterprises. This will be beneficial both to them and to the nation. It will enable them to help themselves, and will also be a form of national service.

But this will require considerable sums of money, and there is also the need for helping the dependants of those who are dead or are permanently disabled. Their children have to be educated. For all these purposes, considerable funds are needed and our resources are nearly exhausted.

Committee and individual I.N.A. offices have been placed in charge of various provinces and areas. They are also authorised to collect subscriptions and to send these collections to the chairman of the I.N.A. Inquiry and Relief Committee at its head office, Congress House, Bombay....[2]

We appeal to the public to generously subscribe funds in order to enable the committee to finish its work.

2. A list of these committees and I.N.A. officers so authorised is omitted.

15. To J.R.D. Tata[1]

New Delhi
21 August 1946

My dear Jehangir,[2]

It was good of you to take all the trouble to come here yesterday. I am sorry I couldn't meet your wishes, but I am quite sure in my own mind not only that I was right but that you will yourself feel that this is a right decision. It is right, of course, from the point of view of the

1. J.N. Collection.
2. (b. 1904); leading industrialist of India; chairman of the various concerns of Tata's; Chairman, Air India, 1953-78.

3	To R.N. Banerjee	3 March	1946	41
4	To Sri Prakasa	4 March	1946	42
5	To N. Raghavan	4 March	1946	43
6	Problems of Indians in South East Asia	16 March	1946	44
7	Appeal for Clothes for Malaya	17 March	1946	45
8	Broadcast on Arrival in Singapore	18 March	1946	45
9	The Unity of Asian Peoples	18 March	1946	45
10	India's Concern for her Children Abroad	18 March	1946	46
11	Need for a Union of Asian Countries	18 March	1946	47
12	Adjustment to Present Needs	20 March	1946	47
13	Problems of India and Asia	20 March	1946	48
14	Indian Relief Committee	20 March	1946	51
15	India's Destiny	18 March	1946	52
16	The Pivot of Asia's Freedom	21 March	1946	53
17	The Resurgence of Asia	21 March	1946	54
18	Effete Administration and Popular Enthusiasm	22 March	1946	55
19	The Responsibility of Indians in Malaya	23 March	1946	55
20	India's Role in Asia	26 March	1946	56
21	First Report on his Visit to Malaya	28 March	1946	56
22	Impressions of Malaya	30 March	1946	70
23	Second Report on Visit to Malaya	4 April	1946	75
24	Third Report on Visit to Malaya	16 April	1946	79

4. The I.N.A. Trials

1	To Vallabhbhai Patel	4 March	1946	85
2	To R.F. Bahadur	5 March	1946	85
3	To Vallabhbhai Patel	17 March	1946	86
4	Warning Against New Trials	24 April	1946	87
5	To Claude Auchinleck	30 April	1946	88

Government to recognise this independence and then to proceed to discuss further steps to implement it. This recognition does not necessarily determine the form of relationship or alliance between free India and Britain. This question will have to be settled later between representatives of the two parties. If such a declaration or public recognition is not made to begin with by the British Government, even so it must be clearly understood that we can only talk on this basis and on no other.

2. Our talks are not a continuation of April 1942 nor are we going back in any way to the Cripps' offer.

3. We do not accept the proposition that for the present we have Dominion Status with power to secede later. What our exact relationship may be later need not be settled now, but it must be clear that it is on the present basis of independence that we consider future problems.

4. While we are prepared to enter into friendly talks about future relations, we are not agreeable to any treaty or alliance which binds us to join a bloc or a nation for war or like purposes. Nor are we agreeable to India being made the base of war operations against any country. This matter must be left to be determined by the future government of free India. We do not want to inherit old feuds or to entangle ourselves in the power politics or imperialist adventures of the great powers. We are prepared, however, to play our full part as a free and cooperating nation in the United Nations Organization.

5. It has also to be made perfectly clear that the constituent assembly should be the final authority to determine the constitution. It must not be a consultative or advisory body. What it finally decides may or may not be passed by the British Parliament (that is Britain's affair) but for us it should be the final decision. In effect the British Government should pass some kind of an act of abdication.

6. In present circumstances we cannot afford to delay matters by asking for a new electoral roll for the constituent assembly. We have to accept the newly elected provincial assemblies as electoral colleges for the purpose. They can elect delegates by proportional representation. The number can be settled later but it is preferable to have a fairly large number.

7. The procedure etc., in regard to the constituent assembly should be determined by representatives of the provincial governments. If any provincial government refuses to participate, it can be bypassed and

6	To Raghunandan Saran	2 May	1946	89
7	To Claude Auchinleck	4 May	1946	90
8	Bhulabhai Desai	6 May	1946	93
9	To P.C. Bhandari	8 May	1946	93
10	To Claude Auchinleck	9 May	1946	94
11	To G.P. Hutheesing	11 May	1946	95
12	Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal	13 May	1946	95
13	To Mohan Singh	14 May	1946	97
14	Need for Relief	23 July	1946	99
15	To J.R.D. Tata	21 August	1946	100

5. The Cabinet Mission and After

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1	To Stafford Cripps	5 March	1946	105
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5	The Economic Problem in India	4 April	1946	117
6	Independence the Immediate Issue	5 April	1946	120
7	The Weakness of the Demand for Pakistan	6 April	1946	125
8	The Proposal for a Plebiscite	6 April	1946	129
9	The Basic Problem of Defence	9 April	1946	132
10	A New Page in History	15 April	1946	133
11	Note on Talks with the Cabinet Mission	10 April	1946	134
12	To S. Zainulabedin	19 April	1946	135
13	The Congress Reply to the Cabinet Mission's Invitation	27 April	1946	137
14	Acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's Invitation	28 April	1946	138

inherits the power and authority of the present Government of India or the Crown Representative in regard to the States. However, we need not settle this matter finally at this stage if some States object. We can allow matters to drift for a while, and allow the constituent assembly to begin functioning when it will inevitably draw the States. The new Government of India will of course be a joint affair of all constituent units — provinces and States. If any States are left out to begin with, we shall have to deal with them later.

15. We cannot, however, recognise the independence of the States though we may recognize their autonomy (if they are big enough) within the federation. Nor can we accept the stationing of foreign troops there.

16. It is possible that the Muslim League may suggest Dominion Status, with defence in British hands, for their Pakistani areas. This might be considered an inducement to the British Government. Such a development is likely to be advantageous to us and is bound to weaken the League position.

17. These are brief notes very hurriedly written. The main points are:

    (i) Discussion on basis of independence
    (ii) Constituent assembly to have final authority
    (iii) No compulsion of a province or a State to join constituent assembly but if any wants to keep out at the beginning, it can be bypassed.
    (iv) There should be no delay. Time is the essence of the matter and we must not get entangled in long discussion about details.
    (v) The main principles having been accepted we go ahead with the constituent assembly and then representatives elected by the constituent assembly discuss with British representatives our future contacts, relations.
    (vi) No entanglements in war or joining of imperialist blocs against another group.
    (vii) Cooperation in U.N.O.

18. The formation of a provisional Central Government is essential. This also should proceed on the basis of provincial governments as far as possible. This government must in practice act freely as a cabinet with no obstruction from the Viceroy or any other outside authority. The India Office should not function.

5. The Cabinet Mission and After
II. The Simla Conference

1	Record of First Meeting	5 May	1946	143
2	Record of Second Meeting	5 May	1946	145
3	A.K. Azad's Letter to Pethick-Lawrence	6 May	1946	147
4	Record of Third Meeting	6 May	1946	149
5	Record of Fourth Meeting	6 May	1946	150
6	Notes on the Conference	7 May	1946	153
7	To Lord Wavell	8 May	1946	156
8	A.K. Azad's Letter to Pethick-Lawrence	9 May	1946	156
9	Record of Fifth Meeting	9 May	1946	161
10	To M.A. Jinnah	10 May	1946	162
11	To Stafford Cripps	11 May	1946	162
12	To M.A. Jinnah	11 May	1946	163
13	Record of Sixth Meeting	11 May	1946	164
14	A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Pethick-Lawrence	12 May	1946	167
15	Points Suggested by Congress as Basis of Agreement	12 May	1946	167
16	Note by the Congress on the Muslim League's Suggestions	12 May	1946	168
17	Appeal for Communal Unity	13 May	1946	171
18	Assurance to Indian Christians	12 May	1946	171
19	Wavell's Note on Interview with Jawaharlal	14 May	1946	172
20	Note on Meeting of Wavell with Jawaharlal and A.K. Azad	16 May	1946	172
21	A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Pethick-Lawrence	20 May	1946	174
22	To Lord Wavell	21 May	1946	178
23	Congress Resolution on the Cabinet Mission Statement	24 May	1946	179
24	To Lord Wavell	25 May	1946	182
25	A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell	25 May	1946	187
26	The Powers of an Interim Government	25 May	1946	189

have to arrange a plebiscite in a defined area on the specific issue whether the inhabitants of that area want to leave the union.

Q: What is the main purpose of your forthcoming visit to Malaya?

JN: I wish to study the problems connected with the relief work for the Indian residents in Malaya. While I am going only to Malaya, we are at present concerned with the Indians who are in trouble in other parts of South East Asia. I have received a letter that a prominent Indian, named Puran Singh, has been court martialled and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment in Borneo, presumably because of his membership in the Indian Independence League.

I will not stop in Burma. I have received plenty of complaints from Indians in the Andamans and Bangkok about cases being started against Indians.

Q: Would you meet Lord Louis Mountbatten?

JN: I expect to meet Lord Louis after my arrival in Singapore, day after tomorrow. So far there has been no correspondence between Lord Louis and myself. My main purpose in going to Malaya is to give psychological relief to our countrymen there and to find out what we can do to relieve their troubles.

The problem of Indians in South East Asia is political as well as economic. On the political side, are such questions as the position of the members of the I.N.A. and the Indian Independence League. On the economic side, there are the shortages of food and cloth.

I have received reports that Indian women in Malaya are going about wearing gunny bags as their dress. Urgent demands have been made for saris. Millowners in Bombay are prepared to gift immediately a hundred bales of cloth. I wrote to the Government of India a month ago for an export licence and transport facilities to despatch the cloth to Malaya, but the matter has not yet been decided.

Q: What do you propose to do in Malaya?

JN: I want that Malayan Indians themselves should effectively organise relief. I have asked the Indian leaders in Malaya to organise public meetings so that I can speak directly to the people. I have made it clear that I am not going to Malaya in the same way as I would go about in India on election tours. I am going there primarily to meet

27	To Lord Pethick-Lawrence	26 May	1946	191
28	Quit Quibbling	29 May	1946	191
29	At the Threshold of a New Era	8 June	1946	192
30	Record of Interview of Cabinet Mission and Wavell with Jawaharlal and A.K. Azad	10 June	1946	193
31	A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell	11 June	1946	198
32	To Lord Wavell	12 June	1946	200
33	Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal	12 June	1946	200
34	A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell	13 June	1946	201
35	A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell	14 June	1946	203
36	A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell	14 June	1946	206
37	A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell	16 June	1946	207
38	To Lord Wavell	16 June	1946	208

5. The Cabinet Mission and After

III. The Interim Government and Constituent Assembly

1	To Frank Anthony	18 June	1946	211
2	Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal and A.K. Azad	18 June	1946	211
3	A.K. Azad's Letter to Wavell	21 June	1946	213
4	Interview of the Cabinet Mission and Wavell with Representatives of the Congress	23 June	1946	214
5	A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell	24 June	1946	220
6	A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell	25 June	1946	221

India, consisting of various groups and communities, must come to terms, or unfortunately fight before they come to terms, then reality prevails.

> Q: What would follow if Britain grants immediate independence and leaves the Indian people to decide all issues including the demand for Pakistan?

JN: So far as the Congress is concerned, its decision is not going to involve compulsion of the minority by the majority. We have made this perfectly clear.[2] A situation has to be created where every party would feel that the decision-making lies with it and not with an external party.

I envisage as the first stage, after the recognition of independence, the creation of a constitution-making body with sovereign authority. This will be quite easy and it can be framed from the recently elected provincial assemblies. I think that it is important that the constitution-making body should have final authority, but, in order to avoid a feeling of compulsion, it should be made clear that any area not willing to come into the constituent assembly will not be compelled, though the door would always be open.

Thus it is possible that one or two areas might carry on autonomously for the time being and the matter could subsequently be decided by a plebiscite on this specific issue, all inhabitants participating in the voting.

It is obvious, for instance, that the North West Frontier Province is against the idea of Pakistan and it is certain that the southern and central parts of the Punjab are also in the same position. There is no question of their being pushed out of the constitution-making body and the future constitution against their wishes, but if parts of the Punjab or Sind do not cooperate in the constitution-making body, they are perfectly entitled to their stand until the matter is decided by the vote of the inhabitants.

It must be remembered that we envisage the new constitution as a federation of willing units with the largest amount of autonomy to each unit—in fact, enjoying semi-independence leaving a minimum of common subjects for the Centre. These subjects include defence, external affairs, communications, currency. Each unit can have the maximum freedom to develop itself as it chooses. It is proposed to have an optional list of common subjects, which the units may accept or reject.

2. The Congress Working Committee, in its resolution of September 1945, laid down that the Congress had no intention of coercing the people of any particular area, if they desired, by a vote of the overwhelming majority, to keep out of the Indian Union.

7	To Niranjan Singh Gill	25 June	1946	225
8	Interpretation of Disputed Points	25 June	1946	226
9	Interview of the Cabinet Mission and Wavell with Congress Leaders	26 June	1946	228
10	To Rana Brahma Shamsher Jung	1 July	1946	231
11	Full Powers for Interim Government	3 July	1946	231
12	The Acceptance of the Plan for a Constituent Assembly	4 July	1946	234
13	Continued Commitment to the Quit India Resolution	7 July	1946	236
14	The Rationale of Congress Policy	7 July	1946	236
15	A.K. Azad's Letter to Wavell	9 July	1946	239
16	Warning against Complacency	10 July	1946	240
17	The Nature of the Congress Commitment	10 July	1946	241
18	Preparation for the Constituent Assembly	10 July	1946	248
19	To Niranjan Singh Gill	13 July	1946	250
20	Telegram to Partap Singh Kairon	13 July	1946	251
21	To P. Subbarayan	14 July	1946	252
22	Intrigues of the Governor of Sind	16 July	1946	253
23	Appeal to Caesar	16 July	1946	255
24	The Congress and the Sikhs	17 July	1946	257
25	Telegram to Vallabhbhai Patel	17 July	1946	257
26	Misunderstanding Over Sikh Representation	18 July	1946	258
27	To Lord Wavell	20 July	1946	259
28	Status of the Constituent Assembly	20 July	1946	260
29	Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal	22 July	1946	264
30	To Gopinath Bardoloi	22 July	1946	267
31	To Congress Prime Ministers of Provinces	22 July	1946	267
32	To Lord Wavell	23 July	1946	268

the continuance of the *status quo*. It is content with the British raj. It cannot openly take this stand. Therefore, it covers its view in the vague slogan for Pakistan.

The League has fought the elections on religious slogans. The kind of Pakistan that Mr. Jinnah has put forward is utterly inconceivable. It cannot be achieved even by coercion. The areas of Pakistan include the North West Frontier Province, Assam, south and central Punjab, West Bengal and the city of Calcutta.[2]

So the demand for Pakistan, in effect, serves the purpose, not for bringing about any change even in the form of Pakistan as asked for, but for really blocking all changes. It serves the League's desire to maintain the *status quo*.

It is true, I think, that the Muslim masses do not want the present situation to continue. They want political and economic changes, but they are misled by religious slogans and vague dreams of an undefined empire. That is why the League deliberately avoids economic issues, and concentrates chiefly on the religious issue, "Islam in danger". Everybody knows that religious or cultural beliefs are not going to be endangered.

We have to resolve the basic issue of economic conflict. In this conflict the Congress stands for political, social and revolutionary changes for people, as well as for democracy. We also realise that many Muslims have the fear of economic domination by non-Muslims and, therefore, we want to do our utmost to remove this fear and suspicion.

It is true that the Indian community is, really speaking, rather backward. To remedy this, we want to ensure in our constitution that no exploitation of one group by another or of the masses by the moneyed classes will be possible. We want an evenly balanced development to prevent the concentration of wealth in the hands of one class of people or in one area of the land. The National Planning Committee has made this its chief objective in planning.

This is desirable for reasons of development and defence. If industries and wealth are concentrated in one or a few places it will be an invitation to the enemy. The Congress policy today is to solve the agrarian question and landlordism and develop rapidly the resources to raise the standard of living throughout the country.

2. On 2 April 1946, Jinnah told a British correspondent, who doubted whether Calcutta, three-fourths Hindu in population, could be included in Pakistan: "I am not counting heads. This is a question of carving out an independent sovereign state, and other factors besides the number of Muslim and Hindu inhabitants enter into it."

33	To A.K. Azad	22 July	1946	270
34	To Vallabhbhai Patel	22 July	1946	271
35	Sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly	29 July	1946	273
36	Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal	30 July	1946	274
37	The Wave of Revolution	1 August	1946	275
38	To Govind Ballabh Pant	4 August	1946	277
39	The Future of the Nagas	4 August	1946	278
40	The Sikhs and the Constituent Assembly	9 August	1946	280
41	Freedom in a Year	9 August	1946	281
42	To Lord Wavell	10 August	1946	282
43	To Henry Twynam	10 August	1946	283
44	Telegram to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy	13 August	1946	284
45	Desire for Muslim League's Cooperation	13 August	1946	284
46	To M.A. Jinnah	13 August	1946	285
47	Telegram to the Prime Minister of Bengal	13 August	1946	285
48	To M.A. Jinnah	15 August	1946	286
49	Muslim League's Refusal of Cooperation	16 August	1946	287
50	The Great Calcutta Killing	17 August	1946	292
51	Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal	17 August	1946	293
52	To Stafford Cripps	18 August	1946	298
53	Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal	18 August	1946	298
54	To Lord Wavell	19 August	1946	300
55	To Lord Wavell	20 August	1946	301
56	Reply to Jinnah's Charges	20 August	1946	302
57	Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal	22 August	1946	303
58	To Lord Wavell	22 August	1946	306
59	To Lord Wavell	22 August	1946	308
60	An Emergency Meeting of the Congress Working Committee	22 August	1946	309
61	Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal	24 August	1946	309
62	To Tej Bahadur Sapru	25 August	1946	311

nation have to go through the worst period in its history? The answer will soon be forthcoming.

6. Independence the Immediate Issue[1]

The difficult problems in India are not so much those about which people talk and become heated, such as Pakistan, although such problems exist. The primary problem for India is the economic problem—to solve, as far as we can, the problem of poverty, and raise the standard of living.

But when I say the economic problem is the primary problem, that does not mean that it is the first problem, because the economic problem cannot be tackled before the political problem is solved.

I should like every leader and every political party to put forward views and demands in relation to the economic problem of India, because, if they are not so related, then what is demanded is unreal and superficial.

I should like to consider the problem of Pakistan from the point of view of economic issues, from the point of view of defence and of international affairs.

My feeling is that a discussion of internal questions without first having independence is like a lawyer's wrangle. People with the livery of authority under foreign rule cannot determine the fate of the masses. Only when foreign rule is withdrawn would a proper equilibrium be established. I am quite convinced that once independence is recognised and brought into being, we shall solve the problems that face us today, such as Pakistan or the question of the Indian States.

Question: What is the position of the provinces which might not want to join the constituent assembly?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I hope that the force of circumstances will bring them into the constituent assembly. But during the intervening period,

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 5 April 1946. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 6 April, *National Herald*, 6 April and *The Hindu*, 6 April 1946.

63	To C.J. Pao	25 August	1946	312
64	To A.J. Anbian	25 August	1946	312
65	To Jiwan Das Rai	25 August	1946	313
66	Wavell's Record of Interview with Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal	27 August	1946	313
67	The Terrible Lesson of the Calcutta Killing	26 August	1946	315
68	To Lord Wavell	28 August	1946	317
69	To Lord Wavell	29 August	1946	319
70	To C. Rajagopalachari	30 August	1946	321
71	To G.E.B. Abell	30 August	1946	322
72	To Lord Wavell	1 September	1946	322
73	Portfolios of the Members of the Interim Government			323
74	Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal	1 September	1946	325
75	The Call of Destiny	1 September	1946	327

6. The States People's Movement

I. The Approach to the Problem

1	Bad Start for a Big Change	5 March	1946	331
2	Future of the States People	29 March	1946	332
3	The States and the Constituent Assembly	11 April	1946	334
4	The States in the Future Constitution	20-21 April	1946	337
5	The Need for a Unified Policy	28 April	1946	351
6	The Rights of the States People	8 June	1946	353
7	To T. Vijayaraghavachari	13 June	1946	358
8	Congress and the States People's Movement	7 July	1946	360
9	The People of the States and Constitutional Changes	9 July	1946	361

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6. The States People's Movement
II. The Struggle in the States

KASHMIR

1	Attack on the People's Movement	21 May	1946	365
2	Grim Events in Kashmir	26 May	1946	366
3	Solidarity with the People of Kashmir	28 May	1946	371
4	Demand for an Inquiry	28 May	1946	372
5	Telegram to the Prime Minister of Kashmir	28 May	1946	374
6	The Futility of Repression	11 June	1946	374
7	A Government Hostile to the People	12 June	1946	375
8	Telegram to the Maharaja of Kashmir	14 June	1946	378
9	To the Maharaja of Kashmir	16 June	1946	379
10	Telegram to the Maharaja of Kashmir	17 June	1946	381
11	The Purpose of the Visit	19 June	1946	381
12	At the Border of the State	19 June	1946	382
13	To Kishan Dar	20 June	1946	383
14	To Padmaja Naidu	20 June	1946	385
15	Telegram to Abul Kalam Azad	21 June	1946	388
16	Telegram to Abul Kalam Azad	22 June	1946	388
17	To the Maharaja of Kashmir	22 June	1946	389
18	On the Decision to Return	22 June	1946	390
19	An Account of the Episode	23 June	1946	391
20	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	25 June	1946	393
21	To Dewan Chaman Lal	27 June	1946	394
22	To Lord Wavell	13 July	1946	395
23	To the Nawab of Bhopal	14 July	1946	396
24	To Asaf Ali	16 July	1946	397
25	To Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad	16 July	1946	399
26	To the Maharaja of Kashmir	20 July	1946	400
27	Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi	20 July	1946	401

Large areas, which Mr. Jinnah claims as Pakistan,[4] are so fundamentally and determinedly opposed to the idea of Pakistan that you cannot compel them to agree to the demand, whatever the Muslim League or others intend to do in the matter.

Particular areas, which want to part company with the rest of India, will not be compelled to remain within it. As a matter of fact, if you examine Pakistan in this diluted and restricted angle, it becomes so difficult of constitution as a state that it is almost inconceivable.

Redistribution of provincial boundaries on a linguistic and cultural basis is essential and inevitable, because the Congress wants provinces to be autonomous units culturally and linguistically, as far as possible. I want such cultural and linguistic units to grow up with a sense of freedom and without a sense of compulsion.

I want not only provincial autonomy, but, if necessary, within the provinces, smaller semi-autonomous areas. Take the Sikhs for instance. If they desire to function as a separate unit, I should like them to have a semi-autonomous area within the province, so that they may have a sense of freedom. Economically they will be a part of the province.

Q: Don't you think that the present negotiations with the Cabinet Mission ought not to cover any other subject, except the immediate transfer of power, and that all other issues like Pakistan, Sikhistan and the rest are not germane to the discussions?

JN: I think, however, that there is nothing improper in discussing anything, but such discussions should be on the basis of transfer of power.

Q: What is your comment on the attitude of the Indian Princes?

JN: I am glad that some of the Indian Princes have taken up more or less an attitude which might be summed up as follows: Let there be independence immediately, including withdrawal of the British army, and we shall solve our problems among ourselves. This is a dignified attitude for any Indian to take, whatever his party or views may be, and this is the only real attitude, because ultimately there can be no doubt that problems will be solved by the Indian people themselves and by no outside authority.

4. Jinnah said on 31 March 1946 that "the north-west and north-east zones of India, where no less than 70 per cent of the population is Muslim, should be separated and constituted into independent sovereign states." This statement contemplated a redrawing of the provincial boundaries of the Punjab and Bengal where the Muslims were a little more than a bare majority.

28	Telegram to the Maharaja of Kashmir	20 July	1946	401
29	Telegram to the Nawab of Bhopal	20 July	1946	401
30	To Vallabhbhai Patel	20 July	1946	402
31	Telegram to Abul Kalam Azad	22 July	1946	403
32	Sheikh Abdullah's Statement in Court	7 August	1946	403
33	The Ordeals of the Kashmir People	29 July	1946	410
34	To Norman Cliff	6 August	1946	412
35	Note on Second Visit to Kashmir	12 August	1946	412

ALWAR

1	To Seremal Bapna	17 April	1946	419
2	Firing on Meos	18 April	1946	421
3	To the Maharaja of Alwar	23 April	1946	422
4	To Seremal Bapna	24 April	1946	424
5	Telegram to the Maharaja of Alwar	31 August	1946	425

FARIDKOT

1	Last Chance for the Smaller States	8 May	1946	426
2	The Faridkot Incidents	10 May	1946	427
3	The High Winds of Freedom	12 May	1946	428
4	The Need for Popular Goodwill	27 May	1946	430
5	The Role of the Praja Mandals	27 May	1946	431
6	To the Raja of Faridkot	27 June	1946	431

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HYDERABAD

1	India on the Move	15 May	1946	432
2	To the Nawab of Chhatari	26 June	1946	433
3	Protest Against the Reforms in Hyderabad	11 August	1946	434
4	The Inadequacy of the Reforms	12 August	1946	436
5	Resolution on Hyderabad	13 August	1946	437

COCHIN

1	To the Maharaja of Cochin	16 August	1946	438
2	No Half-Way Houses to Popular Sovereignty	17 August	1946	439

BIKANER

1	To the Maharaja of Bikaner	23 July	1946	440
2	To the Maharaja of Bikaner	15 August	1946	440

KALAT

1	To the Khan of Kalat	16 June	1946	442
2	To Khan Abdus Samad Khan	10 July	1946	443

I have suggested and some others have done likewise[5] that we should convene in India a conference of representatives from Asian countries to consider common problems. This suggestion has met with approval, to my knowledge, in many countries. But at present there are so many difficulties in the way of travel that it is not easy to organise such a conference. I hope it will be possible to do so before very long.

Q: What is your comment on the affairs in South Africa?

JN: The policy pursued by General Smuts[6] is hundred per cent Nazism. What the future is going to be in South Africa I cannot say, but I can say with the utmost conviction that we are not going to tolerate the policy being carried on there,[7] and we are going to face all the consequences of opposing this policy, not only in South Africa, but in Asia as a whole, and in the world, because it raises a fundamental racial issue which involves all Asians and Africans, and the so-called coloured races. As long as this issue is not solved satisfactorily, it is going to be a menace to the peace of the world.

It might have been possible to postpone a decision for a little while, but General Smuts has seen fit to bring it to the forefront now. Well, I, for one, am not sorry. It is best to deal with these ugly questions as early as possible.

To me the U.N.O. will be an absurdity if it tolerates racialism of this type. I do not expect the U.N.O. to go along with South Africa on this issue, but I do expect the U.N.O. and the rest of the British empire, if they are earnest about it, to dissociate themselves from South Africa, and cut it away from the family of nations, if it follows this Nazi doctrine. If the U.N.O., Europe, or America do not do that, a time will soon come when entire Asia may do it and so might Africa, where South Africa is situated.

I am more interested in the economic background of Indian and world problems than in normal political developments. I have studied the problems in the National Planning Committee and have come to

5. Prominent leaders in Syria, Indonesia, Burma and Ceylon had expressed themselves in favour of their countries participating in an inter-Asian relations conference. Aung San said that "subject nations of Asia will unite to achieve their freedom."

6. Jan Christian Smuts (1870-1950); fought the British in the Boer War, 1899-1902; thereafter worked for the formation of the Union of South Africa as a self-governing part of the British empire; Prime Minister of South Africa, 1919-24 and 1939-48.

7. Smuts had taken the stand that the European minority in South Africa should dominate the African majority and the large Indian and coloured minorities. He argued that Western civilization was being menaced by the Indians.

7. President of the Congress

1	Distress at Wrong Inferences	27 April	1946	455
2	Odd Happenings in the Punjab	7 June	1946	456
3	Only One More Push	6 July	1946	457
4	To N.G. Ranga	8 July	1946	459
5	To Mridula Sarabhai	8 July	1946	459
6	The New Congress Executive	9 July	1946	460
7	To Rajendra Prasad	9 July	1946	462
8	Telegram to Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya	18 July	1946	462
9	Reorganisation of the A.I.C.C. Office	18 July	1946	462
10	To Presidents and Secretaries of the P.C.C.s	18 July	1946	465
11	The A.I.C.C. and the Press	19 July	1946	466
12	The Observance of Ninth August	19 July	1946	467
13	Goa's Struggle for Freedom	20 July	1946	468
14	To the Prime Ministers of Congress Provinces	22 July	1946	469
15	Need for Unity of Action	1 August	1946	471
16	Telegram to B.V. Keskar and Mridula Sarabhai	1 August	1946	472
17	Note on Economic and Research Section	3 August	1946	472
18	On A.I.C.C. Library	3 August	1946	473
19	To Kailas Nath Katju	3 August	1946	474
20	To Govind Ballabh Pant	3 August	1946	475
21	Soldiers of Freedom	4 August	1946	477
22	To Raja S. Sajid Hussain	4 August	1946	477
23	To K. Gokul Sing	4 August	1946	478
24	Congress Elections in Andhra	5 August	1946	478
25	To the Prime Ministers of Congress Provinces	5 August	1946	479
26	The Congress Budget for 1945-1946	5 August	1946	480
27	The Congress Budget for 1946-47	6 August	1946	481
28	To L.N. Renu	5 August	1946	483

that Pakistan should have added to it other huge areas to make it a viable state — areas which do not want to be part of a separate state.

In Mr. Jinnah's proposal for Pakistan, about a third of the population would be non-Muslim. How could they rely on the loyalty of these enormous alien populations in case of defence against a foreign attack?

Question: What about the Muslim minorities in the Hindu areas? What plans do you have for them?

Jawaharlal Nehru: We shall do our utmost to remove all fears from the minds of the Muslim minority. Their economic position has been safeguarded in the plans drawn up by the National Planning Committee of the Congress Party. We are committed to the protection of all minorities.

I am convinced that Muslims and Hindus can live together with goodwill in a free united India. I am sorry that Mr. Jinnah's gospel has been a gospel of hatred based on religious differences and medieval nationalism. This is not the way by which goodwill can be created. The Hindus and the Muslims live together in almost every village. You cannot separate them. Mr. Jinnah, for the last nine years, has refused to discuss any proposal with us until we recognise him as the sole representative of the Muslims in India. Nobody is the sole representative of anybody on earth.

Q: Would you say something about your economic plans for India?

JN: Yes. The real problems of India are economic. We have plans to get rid of the appalling poverty and to raise the standard of living. We intend to end the present feudal landlord system. We shall experiment with cooperative and collective farms, at the same time leaving peasant proprietorship in large areas. We want the goodwill of the peasantry and their consent.

As to industries we want to develop this sector in a very big way all over the country. Mineral resources, communications, waterways, defence and key industries will be state-owned or state-controlled. Small industries will remain free, but subject to a measure of state-control.

Q: Would India use foreign capital?

JN: Yes. For the sake of rapid industrialisation we would welcome foreign capital, but definitely on the understanding that it does not involve foreign control. We would rather do without foreign capital if

29	The Inner Weakness of the Congress	6 August	1946	483
30	The Creation of a Minorities Department	6 August	1946	488
31	To Yogendra B. Sinha	6 August	1946	489
32	The Need for a Labour Department	8 August	1946	490
33	The Freedom of Goa	11 August	1946	491
34	To Jayaprakash Narayan	10 August	1946	493
35	To Abdul Bari	11 August	1946	494
36	To Damodar Swarup Seth	12 August	1946	495
37	To Sheodas Daga	14 August	1946	496
38	To Kailas Nath Katju	19 August	1946	496
39	To T. Prakasam	19 August	1946	497
40	To Secretary, Jammu Congress Committee	21 August	1946	499
41	To Mridula Sarabhai	22 August	1946	499
42	The Significance of the August Movement	25 August	1946	500
43	To Kailas Nath Katju	25 August	1946	501
44	To Thakur Sinhasan Singh	25 August	1946	501
45	To Lala Duni Chand	26 August	1946	502
46	To Damodar Swarup Seth	30 August	1946	503
47	The Nomination of Jayaprakash Narayan	31 August	1946	503
48	The Importance of Propagating Congress Objectives	September	1946	505

8. Beyond India

1	Colonialism Must Go	3 March	1946	509
2	Indo-Czech Friendship	7 March	1946	514
3	The Tragedy of the Jewish People	7 March	1946	514
4	The Vision of a New Transformation	9 March	1946	515
5	The Palestine Problem	11 March	1946	522
6	Free India's Foreign Policy	15 March	1946	524

are forces at work trying to limit freedom. Any limitation would lead to continued hostility. Half-measures will only irritate. The future of India lies in a federation of willing units with full autonomy. I hope all of us will share the widespread desire to solve the Indian problem, not merely of getting over the present difficulty for the time being but for the future.

9. The Basic Problem of Defence[1]

Question: The New Delhi correspondent of *The Times* of London has reported[2] that the Congress would allow the Muslims to have their own way in areas where they are in a majority as it was not possible to hold a united India. Can you clarify this?

Jawaharlal Nehru: What the correspondent of the London *Times* says is misleading and does not present correctly the Congress position.

One of the fundamental problems of India is the need of defence both from the national and the international point of view. This is not a point which depends on the Congress liking this or the Muslim League liking that. This is a basic problem, regardless of our wishes. Therefore, in any arrangement, defence, with its allied subjects, must be common. This calls for a strong centre holding charge of defence. Other subjects can be handed over to the provinces. It is with a view to getting over this difficulty that the Congress has suggested a minimum compulsory list of common subjects and an optional list. We cannot afford to have a weak centre for the essential common subjects. What *The Times* correspondent says therefore is misleading. It is true that we desire no coercion of any group, as far as it can be avoided, so that each area and group in India should have the feeling of freedom, and work out its own destiny within the large group. The question of destiny itself will be hedged and circumscribed and at the mercy of others, if defence is weak.

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 9 April 1946. From *The Hindu*, 10 April 1946.
2. "Influential members of the Congress are beginning to think that it is perhaps better to let the Muslims go their own way in areas, where they are in a majority, rather than keep them within a united India at the cost of having a centre that perhaps could not hold even Hindu India together." Despatch from Delhi, 4 April 1946.

7	Cable to Sultan Shahrir	20 April	1946	526
8	To B.R. Sen	20 April	1946	526
9	Dutch Apathy to India's Food Scarcity	26 April	1946	527
10	To Milo H. Fritz	4 May	1946	528
11	The Withdrawal of the British Army from Egypt	8 May	1946	529
12	To Lolong	10 May	1946	529
13	To Charles Onyeama	14 May	1946	530
14	To B.R. Sen	17 May	1946	531
15	The Plight of Indians in Sri Lanka	19 May	1946	532
16	To R.H. Hutchings	19 May	1946	532
17	Cable to Sultan Shahrir	19 May	1946	533
18	Telegram to B.G. Kher	19 May	1946	534
19	Telegram to B.G. Kher	20 May	1946	534
20	To Vijayasinh Govindji	22 May	1946	534
21	To R.N. Banerjee	22 May	1946	535
22	Burma's Appeal for Fruit	23 May	1946	535
23	To B.G. Kher	23 May	1946	536
24	To Aung San	23 May	1946	537
25	Indonesia's Offer of Rice	23 May	1946	538
26	To Aung San	25 May	1946	539
27	To Aung San	7 June	1946	540
28	To R.N. Banerjee	16 June	1946	540
29	To P.R.S. Mani	17 June	1946	541
30	Racial Arrogance of South Africa	3 June	1946	542
31	Food for Indians in Mauritius	17 June	1946	542
32	The Death Dealer	1 July	1946	543
33	Message to the People of the Philippines	5 July	1946	544
34	Cable to Manuel Roxas	9 July	1946	545
35	Indians in Sri Lanka	10 July	1946	546
36	The Need for Cultural Centres Abroad	12 July	1946	548
37	To E.W. Aryanayakam	14 July	1946	549
38	The Struggle of Indians in Natal	18 July	1946	551
39	Request for Financial Support for Inter-Asian Relations Conference	30 July	1946	552
40	Cable to Maharaj Singh	1 August	1946	553

Congress election manifesto. It lays down that it is a fundamental right of every citizen to have freedom of conscience and freedom to profess and practise his religion subject to public order and morality. I have no doubt that this includes, and must include, the rights of propagating one's religion and of conversion. In any country, and more especially in India, where almost all the well-known religions flourish, it is essential that there should be this freedom of religion and inevitably this includes the right to bring others to one's own viewpoint. As you know in the past objection has been taken to children and minors being unduly influenced before they are ripe to consider vital matters of this kind, but apart from this and apart from public order and morality there seems to me to be no other difficulty in dealing with this matter. The freedom to practise one's religion and to propagate it necessarily includes the freedom not to practise a religion and to propagate such views also. Sometimes even when a right is recognised and acknowledged two such rights may come into conflict and lead to a possibility of a disturbance of the public order. The situation has then to be dealt with in a way so as to avoid conflict and disorder and yet to maintain the rights so far as possible. I do not see how any modern state can follow a different policy. All religious communities are entitled to the fullest freedom to practise and profess their beliefs. The Congress has always stood for this, and what is more, modern conditions necessitate it. I do not see any necessity for the Congress to issue any further declaration on the subject. I am not aware of any constitution which goes beyond the declarations already made by the Congress in regard to freedom of conscience and freedom to profess and practise one's religion. In any event no individual Congressman can vary or add to the resolutions of the Congress. Only the Congress itself can do so when it meets in full session. In the present case, as I have said, I do not myself have any doubt and the declaration already made seems to me adequate.

Yours truly,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6	To G.P. Hutheesing	23 May	1946	585
7	To M. Chalapathi Rau	26 May	1946	585
8	To M. Chalapathi Rau	14 June	1946	586
9	To M. Chalapathi Rau	25 August	1946	587

PERSONAL

1	To Indira Gandhi	4 April	1946	588
2	To Feroze Gandhi	4 April	1946	589
3	To E.P. Thompson	10 April	1946	590
4	To Edward Thompson	10 April	1946	591
5	To Tej Bahadur Sapru	13 April	1946	593
6	To Rammanohar Lohia	17 April	1946	593
7	To Pitambar Pant	17 April	1946	594
8	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	2 May	1946	595
9	To Indira Gandhi	2 May	1946	596
10	To Claire Boothe Lucc	4 May	1946	597
11	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	7 May	1946	599
12	To Vijayalakshmi Pandit	23 May	1946	599
13	To E.P. Thompson	23 May	1946	600
14	To Krishna Hutheesing	26 June	1946	601
15	To Padmaja Naidu	8 August	1946	601

GENERAL

1	To Derek Lawson	3 March	1946	602
2	To Horace Alexander	3 March	1946	603
3	To Mirza Ismail	6 March	1946	604
4	To J. Alvarez del Vayo	6 March	1946	604
5	The Women's Movement in India	7 March	1946	605
6	To Choithram Gidwani	4 April	1946	606
7	To J.B. Kripalani	8 April	1946	607
8	To D.N. Wadia	9 April	1946	608
9	To Bhakt Darshan	9 April	1946	609
10	To Julian Huxley	17 April	1946	609
11	To Julian Huxley	20 April	1946	610
12	To G.E.B. Abell	25 April	1946	610

If these two small verbal changes are made, I shall place the proposal before the Congress Working Committee and have every hope that the invitation will be accepted.

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

14. Acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's Invitation[1]

New Delhi
28 April 1946

Dear Lord Pethick-Lawrence,
I thank you for your letter[2] of April 27. I have consulted my colleagues of the Congress Working Committee in regard to the suggestion made by you, and they desire me to inform you that they have always been willing to discuss fully any matters concerning the future of India with representatives of the Muslim League or any other organisation. I must point out, however, that the "fundamental principles" which you mention require amplification and elucidation in order to avoid any misunderstanding.

As you are aware, we have envisaged a federal union of autonomous units. Such a federal union must of necessity deal with certain essential subjects of which defence and its allied subjects are the most important. It must be organic and must have both an executive and legislative machinery as well as the finance relating to these subjects and the power to raise revenues for these purposes in its own right. Without these functions and powers it would be weak and disjointed and defence and progress in general would suffer. Thus among the common subjects, in addition to foreign affairs, defence and communications, there should be currency, customs, tariffs and such other subjects as may be found on closer scrutiny to be intimately allied to them.

Your reference to two groups of provinces, the one of the predominantly Hindu provinces and the other of the predominantly Muslim

1. Letter, drafted by Jawaharlal, of A.K. Azad to Lord Pethick-Lawrence. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 357-358.
2. "... My letter to you was in identical terms with one sent to Mr. Jinnah... It is not possible for me to make any textual alterations... These terms are our proposed basis... What we are asking the Congress Working Committee to do is to agree to send its representatives to the Conference..."

10. Appendix

1	Jayaprakash Narayan	2 August	1938	645
2	The Future of Heavy and Cottage Industries	April	1940	646
3	India's Passage to Freedom	18 January	1946	650
4	To H.R. Hone	27 April	1946	653
5	To E.N. Taylor	6 August	1946	653

10. To M. A. Jinnah[1]

10 May 1946

Dear Mr. Jinnah,

In accordance with our decision yesterday at the conference, my colleagues have given a good deal of thought to the choice of a suitable umpire. We have felt that it would probably be desirable to exclude Englishmen, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. The field is thus limited. Nevertheless, we have drawn up a considerable list from which a choice can be made. I presume that you have also, in consultation with your executive, prepared a list of possible umpires. Would you like these two lists to be considered by us, that is, by you and me? If so, we can fix up a meeting for the purpose. After we have met, our recommendation can be considered by the eight of us, that is the four representatives of the Congress and the four representatives of the Muslim League, and a final choice can be made, which we can place before the conference when it meets tomorrow.[2]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J. N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Jinnah replied the same day that "we would further examine your proposal with all its implications after your and my consulting our respective colleagues."

11. To Stafford Cripps[1]

Simla
11.5.46

My dear Stafford,[2]

Last night, at 10 p.m., I received Jinnah's reply, a copy of which I enclose. I am writing to him again and shall see him at 10.30.

1. C.A.B. 127/106, Public Record Office, London.
2. Jawaharlal had written a letter also on 10 May 1946 to Stafford Cripps, which is not available in J.N. Papers. In his letter of 10 May 1946 to Attlee, Pethick-Lawrence referred to this letter: "This morning Stafford has had a private letter from Nehru indicating that he fears the scheme will break down if not over the selection of umpire then over the personal squabble between Jinnah and Azad ... Nehru also mentioned the matter of the powers of the new Executive Council of the Viceroy in the interim government."

ILLUSTRATIONS

Singapore, March 1946 — *frontispiece*

Mutiny in the Navy, Bombay, February 1946
In Malaya, March 1946 — *between pp.* 16—17

With Lord Mountbatten, Singapore, March 1946
With Stafford Cripps and Maulana Azad in Delhi, April 1946 — 64—65

Notes taken at the Simla Conference, 5 May 1946
Notes taken at the Simla Conference, 6 May 1946 — 144—145

With Pethick-Lawrence and A.V. Alexander in Simla, May 1946
With Jinnah in Simla, May 1946 — 192—193

A page of Maulana Azad's letter to Pethick-Lawrence, 9 May 1946
First page of C.W.C. resolution on Cabinet Mission Plan, 24 May 1946 — 256—257

Possibilities for interim government, 13 June 1946
Possibilities for interim government, 13 June 1946 — 272—273

Addressing a press conference, Bombay, July 1946
After taking office as members of the interim government, Delhi, 2 September 1946 — 320—321

4. There is no necessity for opting out of a province from its group as the previous consent of the provinces is necessary for joining the group.

5. We consider it essential that the federal union should have a legislature. We also consider it essential that the union should have power to raise its own revenue.

6 and 7. We are entirely opposed to parity of representation as between groups of provinces in the union executive or legislature. We think that the provision to the effect that no major communal issue in the union constitution shall be deemed to be passed by the constituent assembly unless a majority of the members of the community or communities concerned present and voting in the constituent assembly are separately in its favour, is a sufficient and ample safeguard of all minorities. We have suggested something wider and including all communities than has been proposed elsewhere. This may give rise to some difficulties in regard to small communities, but all such difficulties can be got over by reference to arbitration. We are prepared to consider the method of giving effect to this principle so as to make it more feasible.

8. This proposal[4] is so sweeping in its nature that no government or legislature can function at all. Once we have safeguarded major communal issues other matters, whether controversial or not, require no safeguard. This will simply mean safeguarding vested interests of all kinds and preventing progress, or indeed any movement in any direction. We, therefore, entirely disapprove of it.

9. We are entirely agreeable to the inclusion of fundamental rights and safeguards concerning religion, culture and like matters in the constitution. We suggest that the proper place for this is the all-India federal union constitution. There should be uniformity in regard to these fundamental rights all over India.

10. The constitution of the union will inevitably contain provisions for its revision. It may also contain a provision for its full reconsideration at the end of ten years. The matter will be open then for a complete reconsideration. Though it is implied, we would avoid reference to secession as we do not wish to encourage this idea.

4. See point iii of footnote 3 above.

17. Appeal for Communal Unity[1]

The present political situation has reached a critical juncture.[2] Everyone has to be prepared to shoulder his responsibility bravely. People should develop a balanced and unbiased outlook and do their utmost to establish complete communal unity. They should take care to see that they do not allow their emotions to get the better of their reason.

The freedom that is coming is not going to be the swaraj of the Hindus or of the Muslims, but it will be the freedom of the 400 million people of India. The Congress has always been inspired by high ideals, and, in all its struggles against British imperialism, it has never shown any malice or bitterness. If only the people can remember this, they will find no difficulty in facing the situation.

I deplore the raising of petty issues, or putting obstacles in the way of India's freedom, but in spite of all obstacles, India will soon be free.

1. Speech at Simla, 13 May 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 14 May 1946.
2. At the seventh meeting of the Simla Conference on 12 May 1946, with the Congress and the Muslim League remaining opposed to each other, Pethick-Lawrence announced the breakdown of the conference. The Cabinet Mission returned to Delhi promising to issue a statement defining the next steps to be taken.

18. Assurance to Indian Christians[1]

Indian Christians need have no qualms about their religious freedom in an independent India. Although our ultimate aim is to establish a secular state not identified with any particular religion, freedom of conscience and recognition of the religious rights of all citizens must be the starting point. Indian Christians are part and parcel of the Indian people. Their traditions go back to 1,500 years and more, and they form one of the many enriching elements in the country's cultural and spiritual life. In a country where there are so many creeds we must learn to be tolerant.

1. Interview to a representative of the *Catholic Herald* of London, given some time before 12 May 1946. From *The Hindu*, 14 May 1946.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Singapore, March 1946 — *frontispiece*

Mutiny in the Navy, Bombay, February 1946
In Malaya, March 1946 — *between pp.* 16–17

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Notes taken at the Simla Conference, 5 May 1946
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A page of Maulana Azad's letter to Pethick-Lawrence, 9 May 1946
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Possibilities for interim government, 13 June 1946
Possibilities for interim government, 13 June 1946 — 272–273

19. Wavell's Note on Interview with Jawaharlal[1]

I saw Nehru for 1½ hours (8.30 a.m. — 10 a.m.) about the Executive Council but did no more, I fear, than discourage the hopes the S. of S. had obviously given him yesterday[2] that we would give in on the parity issue and make a convention depriving the Viceroy of his powers and handing over supreme control to the interim government. I am sure we should have been all right on both these questions if we had been firm and definite from the start, but the S. of S.'s vagueness and Cripps' continuous courting, flattery and appeasement of Congress have led them to believe they can get what they want. Nehru talked of "vital forces" at work in the country which must be taken into account; I said it was the business of a government to control and direct "vital forces" and "mass sentiment" and "fundamental issues" (which were the sort of phrases he used) and not to follow them blindly, they were usually ignorant and often misleading. I told him my father's favourite story of a French mob rushing on to some foolishness which was obviously wrong, and a spectator stopping a man who was following the mob and asking him why he did so: his reply was: *mais il faut que je les suive, je suis leur chef.*[3] I don't know whether I moved Nehru at all but I made it quite clear that I was quite definite and not proposing to compromise.

1. Delhi, 14 May 1946. *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, (Lindon, 1973), pp. 268-269. There is no note of this interview in the India Office records.
2. No record of Jawaharlal's interview with Pethick-Lawrence is available.
3. "But I have to follow them, for I am their leader."

20. Note on Meeting of Wavell with Jawaharlal and A.K. Azad[1]

His Excellency started the proceedings by saying that this was the last chance of securing a unified India by agreement. His Majesty's

1. Delhi, 16 May 1946. Extracts. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 581-582.

likely to include Baluchistan within the scope of the advisory committee's[4] work.

In your recommendations for the basic form of the constitution (page 3 of the printed draft, No. 5) you state that provinces should be free to form groups with executives and legislatures and each group could determine the provincial subjects to be taken in common. Just previous to this you state that all subjects other than the union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the provinces. Later on in the statement, however, on page 5 you state that the provincial representatives[5] to the constituent assembly will divide up into three sections and "these sections shall proceed to settle the provincial constitutions for the provinces in each section and shall also decide whether any group constitution shall be set up for these provinces." There appears to us to be a marked discrepancy in these two separate provisions. The basic provision gives full autonomy to a province to do what it likes and subsequently there appears to be a certain compulsion in the matter which clearly infringes that autonomy. It is true that at a later stage the provinces can opt out of any group. In any event it is not clear how a province or its representatives can be compelled to do something which they do not want to do. A provincial assembly may give a mandate to its representatives not to enter any group or a particular group or section. As Sections B and C have been formed it is obvious that one province will play a dominating role in the section — the Punjab in Section B and Bengal in Section C. It is conceivable that this dominating province may frame a provincial constitution entirely against the wishes of Sind or the North-West Frontier Province or Assam. It may even conceivably lay down rules, for elections and otherwise, thereby nullifying the provision for a province to opt out of a group. Such could never be the intention as it would be repugnant to the basic principles and policy of the scheme itself.

4. Under the Cabinet Mission plan special arrangements were proposed for the smaller minorities, which, on a population basis, would have no representation. They would be represented on an advisory committee which would be set up to advise the constituent assembly on all matters affecting the rights of the minorities.

5. Each province was to be allocated representatives proportionate to its population in the ratio of one to one million. This allocation was to be divided between the main communities in proportion to their population. For this purpose only three main communities were recognised—Muslim, Sikh and General; the General was to include all people who were not Muslims or Sikhs. The proposal contemplated a constituent assembly of 292 members from British India and 93 from the States. The British India members would be divided into 210 General, 78 Muslims and 4 Sikhs.

THE R.I.N. MUTINY

22. To Lord Wavell[1]

21 May 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

During our talks[2] yesterday I referred to a statement made by Mr. L.S. Amery. I find now that this was in the course of a letter to the London Times. I am enclosing a press cutting giving this letter.

You will notice that after referring to the Viceroy's discretionary power, he says:

"Still less is there any obligation on the Government or Parliament of the country to interfere in the exercise of the discretion. Nothing, I believe, would be of greater help in bringing an Interim Government together and enabling it to discharge its great responsibilities with authority than that the British Government should make that point perfectly clear.

I see no reason why we should not declare here and now that we shall regard our relations to such a Government as in no way differing from our relations with the Government of any other partner member of the Commonwealth or for that matter with any other nation outside the Commonwealth."

Mr. Amery's views in regard to India and other matters are not mine and our approach has been very different. Yet from his own approach he has arrived at a conclusion which, in regard to this particular matter, is not very different from ours. It would be surprising indeed that the present Labour Government in Britain is more conservative in its Indian policy than Mr. Amery would like it to be.[3]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 650-651.
2. In his diary entry for 20 May 1946 Wavell wrote: "I had 1½ hours with Nehru about the interim government. He kept on about the necessity for immediate independence and the impossibility of parity; and I kept steadily on our determination (mine really) not to give way on these issues. I don't know whether I made any effect; I did in the end get him down to reluctant discussion of names. He kept talking of vital forces and I insisted on jobs to be done and men to do them."
3. Wavell replied on 22 May 1946 that "I have never been ready to accept his [Amery's] suggestion that the Viceroy should be placed in the position of an irresponsible ruler entirely free from control by the British Government. Nor do I think that Parliament would ever accept any such proposal."

1. Unrest in the Navy[1]

For two days I was in Garhwal cut off from newspapers. I returned last night and learnt of the serious developments in Bombay.[2] I feel I must go there to be of such service as I can. All other engagements and election tours will have to be cancelled accordingly. I regret greatly upsetting programmes that have already been made, but I feel that friends and colleagues will understand and excuse me. In particular, I have to apologise to my comrades in Jharia, Jamshedpur, Chota Nagpur, Cawnpore, Jhansi, Orai, Agra, Shikohabad, Tundla, Etawah and other places where meetings might have been fixed up for me to speak.

I hope they will appreciate my difficulty and forgive me for not sticking to my programme. I hope, when I have a chance, to visit these places in the future.

Meanwhile, I trust that in the elections that are coming all voters will vote for Congress candidates and thus demonstrate their will to freedom and independence, which is the main issue. All else is secondary.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 24 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 25 February 1946.
2. The ratings of the Royal Indian Navy on HMIS *Talwar* Signal Training School in Bombay struck work on 18 February 1946 in protest against low pay and poor living conditions. They were joined the next day by 20,000 ratings from the shore establishments. The strike continued for three days and on 21 February it developed into a pitched battle between them and British troops, which had been called in as Indian soldiers refused to fire. On 23 February they surrendered on the advice of the Congress with a declaration: "We surrender to India and not to Britain."

2. The Armed Forces and National Freedom[1]

On my return to Lucknow from my election tour of the interior districts of Garhwal, I learnt about the strike here of the Royal Indian Navy

1. Speech at Bombay, 26 February 1946. Based on reports from *The Hindu*, 27 February and *National Herald*, 28 February 1946.

the All India States People's Conference and as a Kashmiri I am intensely interested in what is happening in Kashmir and my mind is full of anxiety. My first impulse was to rush off to Kashmir, for a large number of my colleagues and friends have been arrested and a state of frightfulness prevails in the valley. I do not like to desert my colleagues when they are in trouble or are being tyrannised over. I have, however, held myself back for the present as I was not clear in my mind as to how I could help. My object in going would naturally be to help end this state of frightfulness and to allow the people to return to more normal conditions. So far as I can gather the State authorities are bent on breaking and crushing the spirit of the people and are using their army as if they were occupying recently conquered enemy territory. Indeed some of the accounts I have had are worse. In this state of mind they are not likely to listen to reason. If I went my first business would be to see some of my friends and colleagues in prison, notably Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, who is also the vice-president of the All India States People's Conference. I do not know how the State authorities would react to this or to any further steps that I might take. If they pass any unreasonable orders restricting my movement I might have to disobey them.

This problem of Kashmir has been causing me a lot of trouble and anxiety for I do not wish to do anything which might worsen an already bad situation. I have decided therefore to mention this to you, to find out how far the Political Department is involved in it, and what it proposes to do in dealing with the situation. Obviously the Resident in Kashmir cannot be a neutral observer.

I shall not add to the length of this letter by giving details of what is happening in Kashmir. But some information just received from a reliable source will give you some idea of this. People walking along the streets are forced sometimes to take off their turbans to clean the streets or pavements. In some places crawling orders have been promulgated. The shouting of loyalty slogans is enforced by the military almost at the point of the bayonet. The inner shrines of the mosques have been occupied by the military. The wall of the Juma Masjid has been demolished to make a passage way for military lorries. Dead bodies, usually of Muslims, are not handed to relatives for proper religious burial but are burnt with petrol. These are very grave provocations to human feeling and religious sentiment and must lead to extreme bitterness and resentment as well as to increasing communal antagonism.

I have decided, for the present, to defer my visit to Kashmir, so that any suggestion you might make in regard to it might help me to decide as to how I should proceed. I am eager and anxious to do something for my colleagues and for my old homeland, and if things continue in

ratings and the disturbances[2] in the city. My heart bled when I read reports of the mounting death roll. I could not resist the temptation of coming to Bombay despite my preoccupations. The R.I.N. strike and the city disturbances are interrelated. I shall take up the R.I.N. strike first.

The R.I.N. episode has opened an altogether new chapter in the history of the armed forces of India. I am very much concerned with it because it has been my conviction that our armed forces should be closely connected with the civilian population. So far there has been a big gulf between the armed forces and the civilian population. These armed forces have worked as a part of the army of occupation and have been freely used as instruments of repression by our foreign rulers.

During the Second World War, nearly 20 to 25 lakhs of our boys enlisted themselves in the army, the navy and the air force. Of these, many were politically conscious and some of them had actually been active political workers. During the war they submitted to discriminations and humiliations to which they were subjected. When the war was over, the spirit of some of these boys revolted against such treatment and resulted in protests and demonstrations.

Our armed forces have every right to revolt against the foreign ruler in order to achieve the freedom of our country. The Commander-in-Chief in his broadcast[3] said that he would not countenance any political intrigue in the armed forces and that discipline was the one thing most essential. I do agree with what he has said. But that army should be a free army of a free country. If the Commander-in-Chief meant that the services should take no interest in the country's fight for freedom, which is also politics of a high order, I cannot agree with him.

Our boys cannot forget politics and work as mere mercenary automatons of the foreign government. Our army in my opinion should be fully conscious politically because, besides being soldiers, they have to be citizens and must know that as citizens of the country they have to discharge certain responsibilities to their people. I agree that there should be absolute discipline in the ranks of the services, but in a country like

2. In sympathy with the naval strike, hartals were organised in Bombay. Police opened fire several times and the army had to be called in. Over 200 persons were killed and property worth Rs. 7 lakhs was destroyed in the disturbances from 22 to 25 February 1946

3. In his broadcast on 25 February 1946 General Auchinleck said: "In my position as Commander-in-Chief I have nothing whatever to do with politics, and I will not countenance political intrigue in the armed forces in India. To do so would be a great disservice to India."

the provincial governments were putting in people who were neither competent nor honest. They had an entirely different outlook to the Congress and did not care for nationalist ideals.

Azad said that 12 portfolios were not enough and this figure was obviously chosen to conciliate Mr. Jinnah. The Viceroy said that the parties must enter the government with a desire to pull together. If they came in in any other spirit the government obviously would not work.

Pandit Nehru said that he was a strong partisan. He had certain ideas he wanted to put through. His difficulty was that other people in the proposed government would only want inertia. The Viceroy said we had to deal with a practical position. Either a coalition government must be formed or there would be a split-up and chaos. In the interim period it would not be possible to carry on through sweeping reforms but there was much that could be done.

Pandit Nehru said that the interim government would have its effect on the work of the constitution-making body. The Congress were going to work for a strong Centre and to break the group system and they would succeed. They did not think that Mr. Jinnah had any real place in the country. The Muslim League and the Congress each represented entirely different outlooks on the work of the constitution-making body and they were bound to have strong differences in the interim government.

The First Lord suggested that Mr. Jinnah had had to swallow a bitter pill in accepting the delegation's proposals. If the problem of India were to be solved the best way was to work together now and rub off the corners which caused friction between the major communities. There was no other way ultimately of their being able to assimilate into a united India nearly 100 million Muslims the majority of whom supported the Muslim League in the elections.

Pandit Nehru said that there might be in the interim government some arrangement as in the union constitution-making body. If the Viceroy considered that any matter raised a major communal issue that matter mght require a majority of both communities for its decision. It was very difficult for Congress even to consider this matter of parity because of the strong feeling in the country among their followers. Their own organisation might split up and go to pieces.

The Secretary of State said that he had hoped from the Maulana's letter to Lord Wavell of the 25th May[5] that Congress would accept parity. This letter had said that if the two major matters of the constitution of the interim government and responsibility to the legislature

5. See *ante*, item 24.

India to talk of discipline to a soldier, whose awakening has been real after the war, would be anomalous.

Responsible and thinking people among the services in India feel themselves standing on two stools. In the name of discipline the Indian soldier is asked to quell civil disturbances and riots, but his own inclinations are certainly against such action. What is he to do? It is certainly not a case of indiscipline if an Indian soldier refused to shoot his own countrymen fighting for his country's freedom. The word discipline has full meaning only in the army of a free country.

The Indian soldier today is different from the Indian soldier of the last war. He has seen many theatres of war and his contacts with the soldiers of free countries have opened his eyes to the forces of freedom operating in other countries. The wall of isolation which hitherto kept him away from the people of the country has disappeared. He has seen many changes in foreign countries and these changes have profoundly affected and influenced his outlook. Though he is still a member of the fighting services under the aegis of the British Government in India, his patriotism has been aroused. This has been fully demonstrated in the Indian National Army episode.

In the larger context of Indian freedom the time has come for Indians to approach the armed forces to fall in line with the fighters for the freedom of India. The present unrest among the defence services has a direct bearing on the Indian body politic. This shows the great awakening among them. The demands of the servicemen cannot be met by this Government and can be adequately and properly met by only a free national government.

The demands of the Indian naval ratings are nothing new. During the last three years there have been strikes and refusal to work by servicemen in England, but in India conditions are different. The War Secretary said the other day that the country's finances would not permit immediate increase in the pay of the ratings and men in other fighting services.[4] When conditions in India improve and a free government is established their demands will be dealt with.

I have all sympathy for the boys. The only thing that is not correct is that they were not fighting against heavy odds. They had no provisions and very little of ammunition, as against the well-manned and heavily armed forces against whom they were fighting. But the spirit of

4. On 22 February 1946, Philip Mason, Joint Secretary to the War Department, said that "it is impossible in the present state of India's finances to accept the proposal that the wages of the Indian servicemen should be raised to the levels of the British service, which are related to the wage levels in the United Kingdom."

entirely opposed. In the composition of the cabinet suggested by you there is parity between the Hindus including the scheduled castes and the Muslim League, that is the number of caste Hindus is actually less than the nominees of the Muslim League. The position thus is worse than it was in June 1945 at Simla where, according to your declaration then, there was to be parity between caste Hindus and Muslims, leaving additional seats for the scheduled caste Hindus. The Muslim seats then were not reserved for the Muslim League only but could include non-League Muslims. The present proposal thus puts the Hindus in a very unfair position and at the same time eliminates the non-League Muslims. My Committee are not prepared to accept any such proposal. Indeed we have stated repeatedly we are opposed to parity in any shape or form.

In addition to this parity we are told that there should be a convention requiring that major communal issues should be decided by separate group voting. While we have accepted this principle for long-term arrangements we did so as an effective substitute for other safeguards. In your present proposal, however, both parity and this convention are suggested. This would make the working of the provisional government almost impossible and deadlock a certainty.

As I have often pointed out to you we are strongly of opinion that the provisional government should consist of fifteen members. This is necessary to carry out the administration of the country efficiently as well as to give adequate representation to the smaller minorities. We are anxious that the various minorities should have scope in such a government. The work before the provisional government is likely to be much heavier and more exacting. In your proposals communications include railways, transport, posts, telegraphs and air. It is difficult for us to conoeive how all these can be joined together in one portfolio. This would be highly undesirable at any time. With industrial troubles and the possibility of railway strikes this arrangement would be wholly wrong. We think also that planning is an essential department for the Centre. We think, therefore, that the provisional government must consist of fifteen members.

The suggested division of portfolios appears to us to be undesirable and unfair.

My Committee would also like to point out that a coalition government in order to be successful must have some common outlook and programme for the time being. The manner of approach in forming such a government has been such as to leave this out of consideration and my Committee do not feel any confidence that such a coalition can function successfully.

revolt led these youths to provoke the pickets and thus walk into the enemy's trap.

The I.N.A. episode and the recent Royal Indian Air Force and Royal Indian Navy strikes have rendered the country a very great service.[5] The gulf that separated the people from the armed forces has once for all been bridged. The people and the soldier have come very close to each other. They have now come to realise that they both have one common aim — the freeing of their country from foreign yoke.

In the recent R.I.N. strike, the brave youths did commit a mistake. But we have to forgive them and do all in our power to prevent any victimisation. In a certain section of the press it was said that Sardar Patel had guaranteed that there would not be any victimisation; and that Maulana Azad had also given a similar guarantee.[6] Neither the Sardar nor the Maulana is in a position to give any guarantee in the present state of our slavery. It is the Government alone which can do so.

But I deprecate the mass violence in Bombay during the past four days. I have not been convinced that there is a need to employ violence for winning the freedom of India. If I am satisfied that violence is necessary to win freedom I shall be the first to give the call, and I will come out openly with such a call. But I am at present satisfied that nonviolence can still help India to march rapidly on to freedom. The attacks on the public were of an extraordinary character, the authorities having used neither tear gas nor lathis, but straightway resorted to shooting and machinegun fire. In England and America such situations are dealt with differently. In England only the day before yesterday army mutineers were merely treated to a shower bath by turning the hose on them.

You must remember that any lapse on our part will wipe off the tremendous sacrifices we have made during the last 25 years in our struggle for freedom. The valuable work of the Indian National Congress will certainly be wasted if people give expression to the urge for freedom in terms of violence.

5. Some Indian airmen went on a hunger-strike in Karachi in January 1946, seeking redressal of their grievances, which included slow demobilisation, bad residential accommodation, unhygienic environment, longer hours of work though the war was over, and poor food.
6. On 23 February 1946, the Commander-in-Chief had assured Maulana Azad that there would be no victimisation or vindictive action against the R.I.N. men and that all legitimate grievances would be sympathetically examined and redressed. On 27 February 1946 Vallabhbhai Patel said that the Government should not be harsh and vindictive.

letter and our desire to find some way out led us to accept your assurance in these matters.[4] We came to the conclusion also that, unsatisfactory as were many of the provisions of your statement of May 16th, we would try to work them according to our own interpretation and with a view to achieve our objective.

You are no doubt aware of the strong feeling of resentment which exists among large sections of the people against some of the proposals in the statement, notably the idea of grouping. The Frontier Province and Assam have expressed themselves with considerable force against any compulsory grouping. The Sikhs have felt hurt and isolated by these proposals and are considerably agitated. Being a minority in the Punjab, they become still more helpless, as far as numbers go, in Section B. We appreciated all these objections especially as we ourselves shared them. Nevertheless, we hoped that according to our interpretation of the clauses relating to grouping, which we still hold is the correct interpretation, for any other interpretation would endanger the basic principle of provincial autonomy, we might be able to get over some of the obvious difficulties.

But two insuperable obstacles remained and we had hoped that you would be able to remove them. One of these related to the part that European members of the provincial assemblies might play in the election to the constituent assembly. We have no objection to Englishmen or Europeans as such, but we do have a strong objection to persons, who are foreigners and non-nationals and who claim to belong to the ruling race, participating in and influencing the elections to the constituent assembly. The Cabinet delegation's statement lays down clearly that the future constitution of India has to be decided by Indians. The basic principle of the statement of May 16th was the election of a member of the constituent assembly to represent one million inhabitants. On this basis, the representatives of 146,000 Muslims in Orissa and 180,000 Hindus and 58,000 Sikhs in the North West Frontier Province have not been given the right to elect any member to the constituent assembly. The European population of Bengal and Assam number only 21,000, but their representatives can return to the constituent assembly by their own vote 7 out of 34 members, thus appropriating to themselves the right to represent 7 millions. They are returned to the provincial assemblies by a separate electorate of their own and have been given fan-

4. In his letter of 30 May 1946 to Maulana Azad, Wavell offered "to cooperate in a manner which will give India a sense of freedom from external control and will prepare for complete freedom as soon as the new constitution is made."

We should be careful about the unsocial elements which are only too ready to exploit any situation to their advantage. The fight for freedom has to be carried on nonviolently as I do not want that British troops should be called to shoot down innocent citizens. The pulling down of the Union Jack or the burning of the American flag, in the belief that you were insulting those countries, is childish. You have no right to pull down a foreign flag from a private premises. I can sympathise with you if you have been compelled to hoist the Union Jack on your own buildings.

The authorities must hold an open enquiry into the cases of all R.I.N. boys, not only from Bombay but from all over India. They must be given full opportunities to defend themselves on the same lines as in the case of the officers of the Indian National Army. Our responsibility does not stop here. When things settle down and we are in power the grievances of the servicemen will have to be inquired into.

Why are the armed forces doing all this? The answer to this question is that the times have changed altogether and the rulers should be aware that India cannot be any longer governed in the way these people have been governing in the past: by playing one party against the other — the civilian against the armed forces. The armed forces have come to realise their own responsibilities towards their country and the people.

3. No Room for Victimisation[1]

Question: Do you think that the forthcoming visit of the British Cabinet delegation[2] would deliver the goods?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Congress will agree to the talks in the hope and belief that they would lead to a satisfactory solution of the Indian

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 27 February 1946. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 28 February and *The Times of India*, 28 February 1946.
2. On 19 February 1946, Attlee stated in the House of Commons that "in view of the paramount importance, not only to India and the British Commonwealth but to the peace of the world, of a successful outcome of discussions with the leaders of Indian opinion on problems arising out of the early realisation by India of self-government, the British Government has decided to send out to India a special mission of Cabinet Ministers (Secretary of State—Pethick-Lawrence, President of the Board of Trade—Cripps, and First Lord of the Admiralty—A.V. Alexander) to act in association with the Viceroy in this matter."

Muslim League. We are unable to agree to this proposal and we are still convinced that the provisional government must consist of 15 members and that there should be no kind of parity in their selection.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

36. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
14 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,
In the course of our talk[2] today you mentioned that among the Muslim League nominees suggested for the provisional government was one[3] from the North West Frontier Province who had recently been defeated at the provincial elections. This was said by you confidentially and we shall of course treat it as such. But I feel I must inform you, to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding, that any such name will be considered objectionable by us. This objection is not personal, but we feel that the name is suggested for entirely political reasons and we cannot agree to any such course.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, p. 941.
2. In his diary entry for 14 June 1946 Wavell wrote: "At noon I had an hour with Azad and Nehru. All the old ground was gone over again without much result....They went away finally saying they would recommend the proposal to the Working Committee without much hope." See *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 293.
3. Sardar Abdur Rab Khan Nishtar.

problem on the basis of Indian independence. It is neither good policy nor statesmanship to enter into any talks with a foreign power or authority after deciding or declaring that the talks are likely to be fruitless.

Q: What do you think of the prospects of success of the proposed British Cabinet delegation to India?

JN: We are apt to consider such a question too much in the personal context. I am so often asked what is so-and-so like and what is your reaction to such and such a person. As a matter of fact, while the personal equation counts and does make a difference, in larger problems one has to consider other impersonal questions.

A Lenin probably made all the difference to the Russian Revolution. Nevertheless, behind and round about Lenin were mighty factors working for the revolution.

Now, therefore, in considering this question of India and England, we should consider it in the context of the world today. We must realise that each country, in the final analysis, works for its own interests. On the international plane, every country works only for what might be considered international interests when they are in harmony with its own interests. So you can take it that the British delegation will work for the interests of Britain and the Indians who meet them will work for the interests of India. But this is only part of the question. What do British interests require today? And what do Indian interests from our point of view require?

In the final analysis, Britain has to choose between two possible developments. It is inevitable that in the course of the next few years India will be independent, even if Britain opposes it. If India gains its independence in spite of Britain, India, for a long time, is likely to be a country hostile to Britain, ranged in a camp hostile to Britain in the world context.

On the other hand, if India attains independence, more or less immediately by cooperating with the British, it might be possible for Britain to salvage some goodwill, as well as other interests in India. Therefore, from the British point of view, it may well be to their interests even in the near future and much more so in the distant future, to recognise Indian independence now rather than be forced to recognise it some years after having lost everything.

Similarly, India would naturally prefer a peaceful solution to one that entails a great deal of loss and suffering, which might delay India's progress later in the economic field. The costs of conflict are always great and the heaviest of these costs is [illegible] of hatred and bitterness that

4. Interview of the Cabinet Mission and Wavell with Representatives of the Congress[1]

The Congress were represented by Maulana Azad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

The Secretary of State in an opening statement said that before the Congress reached final decisions the delegation were anxious to be sure that there was no misunderstanding of their position. They quite appreciated the importance which Congress attached to the recognition of their national character, but they did hope that in this particular instance Congress would see their way not to make a demand for the inclusion of a Muslim among the Congress representatives in the interim government, though without in any way creating a precedent or approving a principle.

The delegation wished to make it quite clear that they had not given any assurance to Mr. Jinnah or the Muslim League that they accepted the view, which Mr. Jinnah had advanced, that the Muslim League represents all Muslim political opinion and that no other party except the Muslim League has any right to nominate a Muslim for a political post.

It had been made clear to Mr. Jinnah that the delegation did not accept this point of view. For the purpose, however, of forming this particular coalition government the delegation had taken into account all the arguments that had been advanced to them by both parties up to the date on which they made their statement of the 16th June. In the light of those arguments they had produced a list of persons whom they thought most likely to form the basis of a sound coalition which would be acceptable to both parties.

The Secretary of State thought that the Congress representatives were entitled to know that the delegation were not asking them to forgo their principles or to abandon their status as a national party, but nevertheless they did hope that the Congress would not press this claim in this particular instance. He thought that if the Congress did so they would thereby jeopardise the whole future of India.

Maulana Azad said that the particular matter the Secretary of State referred to was one of the other important matters which have now come up. The whole thing, however, had to be seen together. This matter of the appointment of a Nationalist Muslim was one on which

1. Delhi, 23 June 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 1012-1018.

follows. We should like to avoid all this and, therefore, we should like to do our utmost to have a peaceful settlement of India's problem. But it is dead clear that the settlement can only be reached on the basis of independence, and on no other.

There is a desire and a strong urge on both sides to come to a peaceful settlement, and it may well be that success comes to us. On the other hand, there are powerful factors working in the opposite direction. The most powerful factor is the 150-year-old tradition in British minds which has petrified British thinking in regard to India. The British, even today, including Cabinet Ministers and the Prime Minister of England, cannot get rid of this tradition which has entered into their minds, and they still talk of India, often enough, in a language reminiscent of a generation or two ago. They forget that they are addressing a sensitive, proud and virile people, who will not put up with any patronage or anything smacking of superiority.

It is obvious that India today is a volcano of four hundred million human beings. There are fair chances of some agreement based on independence emerging out of the talks that are to take place; and even if the chances were less, it would be the right policy for us to work for such an agreement to the utmost, provided we always stuck to our anchor.

Q: What is a mutiny?

JN: I understand in military parlance there is no such thing as a strike.[3] Everything is a mutiny. If two persons sign a letter together, it is a mutiny. A letter of protest or any kind of joint letter, I believe, is officially considered a mutiny. It is a matter for the people who know the English language to determine what is the right word. I do not see why we should worry ourselves as to what a particular word means or does not mean.

But it is obvious that where rules are so rigid even a simple joint protest, however respectfully worded, might be considered a mutiny. It becomes impossible for any kind of constitutional or semi-constitutional or any other action to be indulged in which is not a mutiny. Either one does nothing at all or one, in the official language, mutinies.

I understand that, even apart from what the Commander-in-Chief said in his broadcast, instructions have been issued, which can only be interpreted to mean that there is going to be a great deal of victimisation,

3. The Commander-in-Chief had, in a broadcast on 25 February 1946, said "the word 'strike' has been largely used. The correct word is 'mutiny' and this refers to any collective act of a few or many persons, subject to naval, military or air force law, against the legal authority of the service."

was different. Where there was a communal basis, every day there would be obstruction on communal grounds.

His Excellency the Viceroy said that he would like to be sure there was no misunderstanding on this point. He had discussed it three times with the Congress representatives. On the first occasion he had explained that he did not see how the government could be responsible to the legislature. He had understood then that the Congress were prepared to agree to the communal majority provision. On the second occasion the Congress representatives had, as he understood it, accepted this proposition in connection with a council of 15. On the third occasion he understood them to agree that in fact no major matter could be passed without the assent of the two major parties. He thought it was a great exaggeration to say this provision would be used every day. Of the issues that had come before his council in recent months he could hardly think of any which in fact raised a major communal issue. He thought that the Congress were assuming too readily that the other party was going to behave unreasonably. If everyone behaved unreasonably the coalition would break up, and something else would have to be tried. It seemed to him that it was well worth trying a coalition government and seeing how it worked.

Sir Stafford Cripps said that the fact that Congress Muslims were included in Provincial Governments of itself demonstrated the national character of Congress, and the fact that a Congress Muslim was not included at the Centre would not therefore destroy that conception. Pandit Nehru said that as far as the Muslim League was concerned a Nationalist Muslim was regarded as an outcaste.

Maulana Azad said that at the 1945 conference at Simla Jinnah had agreed that the Congress could appoint who it liked provided that it did not touch upon his quota. Now he was making a further demand that no Muslim should be included even among the Congress quota, without his approval. Sardar Patel said that Congress Muslims would say that they had better leave the Congress if, because of their membership of it, they were excluded from political positions. Sir Stafford Cripps said that the delegation were not suggesting that Congress Muslims should be so excluded, but merely asking whether under the peculiar circumstances the Congress could not refrain from pressing for the inclusion of a Congress Muslim in the interim government. Sardar Patel said that, put shortly, this meant that the proposed coalition government could not be formed because Jinnah objected to the appointment of a Congress Muslim. If this was to prevail, then Jinnah still had a veto in spite of

in every sense of the word, not in any technical sense of the word, and not only victimisation but a measure of terrorisation. That is, ratings and others in the navy are being first of all picked out for some kind of action against them. Secondly, where there is not even a single evidence for that, it is suggested something should still be done so as to have an opportunity of punishing the people against whom there is no evidence, with the object, of course, of frightening and terrorising others. Now, that kind of action is obviously in direct conflict, both in spirit and letter, with the assurances given in the Assembly.

Such a course of action is bound to have repercussions not only on public opinion but on the armed forces in the country. It shows quite an extraordinary lack of foresight from even the narrowest point of view.

Q: What has the Congress proposed to do in case of such victimisation?

JN: As I suggested yesterday, we shall ask for a public trial. If there is to be a trial, it should be public. Secondly, the Congress proposes to organise the defence of those who are being tried. This is as far as I can see for the moment in regard to these matters. I do not quite know how things will shape themselves and what the Defence Consultative Committee will do.[4] But this question, like any other question, cannot be just isolated from both the larger question of the army and its grievances, and the still larger question of the political future of India.

Most of our difficulties arise from the fact that we are in a period of intense transition. It is absurd for high army authorities to continue to think in terms of some past years — in pre-war terms — when the army was isolated from the people and was a relatively small force — a small professional force. They will have to revise their outlook completely and realise that the present army, navy and air force are of a different calibre, and further that the Indian public is greatly interested in them.

Q: Do you approve of underground movements?

JN: In the larger sense of functioning effectively, especially when the way is clear for effective functioning in the open, any other kind of functioning becomes ineffective and just useless.

During the last two or three years when effective functioning was difficult, one could understand other kinds of functioning. One may agree

4. The Defence Secretary stated in the Central Assembly on 23 February 1946 that a consultative machinery, with which the political parties would be associated, would be set up to inquire into the causes of the naval mutiny.

was different. Where there was a communal basis, every day there would be obstruction on communal grounds.

His Excellency the Viceroy said that he would like to be sure there was no misunderstanding on this point. He had discussed it three times with the Congress representatives. On the first occasion he had explained that he did not see how the government could be responsible to the legislature. He had understood then that the Congress were prepared to agree to the communal majority provision. On the second occasion the Congress representatives had, as he understood it, accepted this proposition in connection with a council of 15. On the third occasion he understood them to agree that in fact no major matter could be passed without the assent of the two major parties. He thought it was a great exaggeration to say this provision would be used every day. Of the issues that had come before his council in recent months he could hardly think of any which in fact raised a major communal issue. He thought that the Congress were assuming too readily that the other party was going to behave unreasonably. If everyone behaved unreasonably the coalition would break up, and something else would have to be tried. It seemed to him that it was well worth trying a coalition government and seeing how it worked.

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or disagree. But when there are numerous avenues of functioning in the open, it is absurd to function in secret or otherwise, because it really means you are not functioning in secret from governmental authority. You are functioning in secret from your people and no mass movements are built up by underground methods.

Generally speaking, I do not approve of underground movements at all, except when they offer the only way of action. Underground movements strike at the root of mass action.

Q: Do you approve of Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali's actions during the past two or three years?

JN: I do not approve of all she did.

Q: What is your comment on Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali's appeal to the country to boycott British goods?[5]

JN: For the moment I cannot give you a straight answer as to how far it is a feasible proposition in the present context. At present there is a vacuum of goods in India. A vacuum tends to be filled. The vacuum of scarcity of goods in India will be filled by either goods manufactured in India or foreign ones.

But foreign goods can come in limited quantities and probably more goods from Britain will come than from other sources. By a vague appeal if you think you can prevent that vacuum from being filled, I am not sure of that. One has to see how things develop in future. Generally Congressmen do not buy foreign goods.

Q: What is your view in the controversy about violent and nonviolent techniques?

JN: Since there is considerable confusion in the country about violence and nonviolence, I would like to say a few words.

I can only express my opinion for the moment, but it may represent many other people's opinion also. I think in our fight for freedom today as yesterday, nonviolence, the general nonviolent technique, is the desirable technique, and is the only desirable technique, both in regard to internal conditions in India and in regard to world conditions.

5. On 13 February 1946, Aruna Asaf Ali said that a large quantity of British-made cloth had flooded the Bombay markets. As boycott of foreign goods was a part of the Congress programme, the Congress should not allow the import of foreign cloth into India.

that these names should be kept entirely confidential, and he had therefore not disclosed them to his colleagues on the delegation. He had told Pandit Nehru that the list he had put in would be totally unacceptable to Mr. Jinnah, and that Zakir Husain could certainly not be included in the Muslim quota. There had at one stage been the possibility of including him, balanced by a non-Congress Hindu. He was very sorry if any misunderstanding had arisen over this. If it had, it was no doubt his fault. Pandit Nehru said that he had raised the question with the Viceroy of the inclusion of a Muslim in the Congress quota. The Viceroy had asked him who he had in mind. He had given a hint that it might be a Congress Muslim. The Viceroy said that his recollection was that he had asked Pandit Nehru whether the person in question was Zakir Husain. Pandit Nehru did not commit himself, but indicated that that was possible. Consequently he had, when seeing Mr. Jinnah later that day, mentioned this possibility to him. Mr. Jinnah had reacted very strongly against it.

The First Lord said that the delegation had every right to stand on their *bona fides* in the matter of the list of names included in the statement of June 16th. Up to that point they had no indication at all that the Congress would ask for the inclusion of a Nationalist Muslim, and on the correspondence and the fact available to them they were entitled to put in six recognised Congress Hindu names. It seemed to them that it would be an absolute tragedy in the eyes of the world if these prolonged negotiations came to a break on this matter in this way.

Pandit Nehru said that they were discussing the formation of a government which was to be a very different thing from the existing Executive Council. In practice it would have to resign if it did not have the support of the legislature and the Viceroy would have to be in a formal position as head of the government. The government must therefore be formed in a new way in consonance with its character. The Congress claimed that all the appointments to it should be made in consultation with them, except the places to be given to the Muslim League. The Viceroy said that he had never accepted the position that he handed over a block of seats in the government to Congress for them to fill as they pleased. He would be the responsible head of the government. Sir Stafford Cripps said that the point was that an attempt to form a government by agreement had failed, and they had therefore drawn up this list as something which they thought might be acceptable to both sides.

The Secretary of State said that he had come out to India with the intention of transferring power from his country to India, but he did not think that the moment had come for a complete and instantaneous

It seems to me obvious that if one thinks in terms of violence, one must think in terms of superior violence. It is folly to put up inferior violence to oppose superior violence. No general of an armed force does that. Of course, in moments of crisis, people act as they feel at the moment.

When you are considering these problems, you think not in terms of a particular crisis, but in terms of a general policy. I have not a shadow of doubt that for us in India today the right policy is the nonviolent policy.

Q: Why do you praise the I.N.A. if you feel nonviolent action is best suited to India at present?

JN: One of the potent reasons why I say nonviolence is best suited to India is because of the I.N.A. It is one thing to praise those who have fought gallantly, violently or nonviolently, for the freedom of India, and it is a totally different thing to consider the problem of India in its present context. The I.N.A. used violence and it failed. But if it had succeeded, the questioner might have advanced the argument that violence had paid.

The I.N.A. failed, not because of its violence or nonviolence, but because of external forces. The I.N.A. was arrayed against greater forces in the world situation.

You cannot compare the I.N.A. to the situation in India, because the I.N.A. was an external situation and the question of nonviolent action in that particular context hardly arose outside India.

It seems to me — friends will forgive me for saying so — this question of violence and nonviolence is often thought and considered in some infantile context, in some 18th century context. People forget that we are in the middle of the 20th century. When you think in terms of internal revolutionary violence to free a country, then you must remember always the violence at the disposal of the state to crush this internal violence. During the last 150 years, state violence has completely changed. It is so immensely superior to any public violence that there is no comparison between them. When people talk of barricades, people think in terms of the French Revolution. Roughly speaking, 157 or 155 years ago, there was not too much — I emphasise the words too much — difference between armed or semi-armed groups and the military forces of the state.

The only people who can offer effective violence today are the armed forces, with possession of weapons. Even the armed forces cannot effectively make use of violence, unless supplies to them are fairly con-

transfer. For the moment the Viceroy must remain the head of the government. Pandit Nehru said that the Congress accepted that. The Congress could moderate its demands provided that what was done was moving in the direction of creating a strong Indian nation, but if something were introduced which got in the way of that objective, they could not accept it. The Secretary of State said that it seemed to him that the greatest obstacle to India going forward towards independence was the inability to get started. The value of getting a start made was so great as to be worth not the sacrifice of a principle but abstinence from enforcing it for the time being. Suppose that the Congress representatives persuaded the delegation to agree to the inclusion of a Congress Muslim. If that occurred he did not believe that Mr. Jinnah would accept it, and there would be no coalition government. He believed it was really in the best interests of Congress and of India to act courageously and to begin by accepting the conditions under which a coalition would be possible. A solution of the communal problem in India had to be found, and for the parties to work together on practical problems provided the best hope.

Pandit Nehru said that the leaders of Congress had been working for that objective for thirty years, but always they were faced with this same obstacle to a strong and united India. That objective was undermined most of all by the communal attack on Muslims who supported the national ideal, and the Congress could not desert those Muslims who had done so. The Viceroy said that the Congress had itself admitted that the Muslims could not be coerced. The Secretary of State said that the delegation in their statement of May 16th had gone a considerable way to support the Congress in their objective of a united India, and they had given cogent reasons against a sovereign Pakistan.[3] Moreover, they had not accepted the principle of parity, either in their long-term proposals or in the interim period. It might seem to Congress that the delegation were not sufficiently sympathetic to their standpoint, but to the delegation itself it seemed that they were holding the balance. This they only did because Indians were unable to settle these matters themselves. He personally felt that he had been trying to get a united India for Indians, but he could only hope to do it if he was not prevented from making the concessions which he was convinced were necessary.

3. The statement had rejected the idea of "a separate and fully independent sovereign state of Pakistan." It was pointed out that a Pakistan of six provinces, as demanded by the Muslim League, would not solve the problem of communal minorities since twenty million Muslims would still remain in India and there would be non-Muslim minorities in Pakistan to the extent of 38 per cent of the population in the western part and 48 per cent in the eastern part.

tinuous. Even the armed forces are pretty helpless before the new inventions of war such as planes, tanks and bombs.

For a moment, we should forget this ethical argument about violence and nonviolence and consider it on pure merits of expediency if you like. Unless it is the violence of the armies, any other violence is infantile.

Violence, just petty insurrectionary type of action, may frighten occasionally or may create difficult situations occasionally, but in the final analysis, must go down before superior violence. Further it may create situations of such instability that it may take a long time to establish any kind of equilibrium.

Political freedom has got to be seen, not merely in the context of suddenly capturing the so-called citadel occupied by the enemy. That will be a symbolic act of political freedom. Political freedom is to be seen in the context of that freedom not only surviving but establishing itself as a well-recognised authority, and then our being able to carry through vast measures of social change which we envisage. If political changes take place suddenly and only in a symbolic way, then social changes become difficult or delayed or the equilibrium is so upset that it takes a long time for us even to think in terms of social changes. Then obviously we will have lost many valuable years and probably these very years will be the testing time to decide whether we are to survive or not as a political entity. Therefore, we cannot take too narrow a view of the immediate result, without thinking of the rest. Indeed, you can think of nothing at all today unless you think of more or less the whole world context.

Therefore, I suggest to you that the sporadic insurrectionary type of action is ruled out today from the point of view of pure expediency. To think of insurrectionary methods, small insurrectionary methods of the early 19th century type in the 20th century is, I think, to misunderstand entirely the present situation in India and the world. The insurrectionary type of action is always the action of a small and weak minority which tries to capture power by some sudden action.

We in India are neither a weak nor a small minority. Ours is a powerful movement. For us to indulge in any small-scale sporadic violent action is just to ignore, and not to utilise, that powerful movement of the great majority in India and to hinder its functioning. You have mighty weapons in your hands and, instead of using them to the best advantage, you go about with a small pair of nail scissors and think you can do a great deal as opposed to a big gun. It is absurd.

What I see in many places in India today is the vague thought that, by rushing into some kind of sporadic action, people are speeding the

If the Congress did not give him the easements necessary to enable him to get Mr. Jinnah to come in, they defeated not his purpose but their own. He emphasised again that no assurance had been given to Mr. Jinnah on this matter of the inclusion of a Congress Muslim, but he was convinced that if the Congress wanted a coalition the way to get it was to abstain from pressing this point. Sardar Patel said that to do so would force all the Muslims out of the Congress. The Secretary of State said that the Viceroy had set himself against this principle and would use all his authority to see that it was not established as a principle. The First Lord said that the Congress would be completely justified on paragraph 5[4] of the statement of the 16th June, in saying that they had not conceded in such a principle. It was specifically stated in that paragraph that the composition of the Government provided no precedent for the future. It had been said that there would be a strong reaction among the supporters of Congress if no Congress Muslim were included. He ventured to think that there would be a much bigger and more far-reaching reaction from a breakdown, while if there were a settlement of these matters there would be immense and widespread relief. Pandit Nehru said that the four representatives of Congress there present were old campaigners and thought that collectively they had some influence with their followers, but they did not think that even all of them together would be able to get the Congress to agree to what the delegation desired.

4. It stated: "The composition of the interim government is in no way to be taken as a precedent for the solution of any other communal question. It is an expedient put forward to solve the present difficulty only, and to obtain the best available coalition government."

5. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
24 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

I have just received the telephone message sent on your behalf asking me to communicate immediately the decision of the Congress Working Committee in regard to the proposals for the provisional government.

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 1025-1026.

revolution in India. They are doing nothing of the kind. They are just hindering it.

If there is going to be violence, it should be on the biggest scale possible at the right time with the right preparation. Small scale violence comes in the way, not only of nonviolence, but of big scale violence. It is not a preparation for violent struggle. It is a hindrance to it, and it is only a notice to the opposite party to prevent in every way the revolutionary movement from developing.

Q: Do you brand everybody who indulges in violence as a rowdy or a hooligan?

JN: I do not brand everybody who indulges in violence as a rowdy or a hooligan. There are obviously two types of people, some who are the reverse of rowdies or hooligans. There are a number of people who indulge in violence, or under the cover of violence they do things which have nothing to do with the political outlook. Where there is sporadic action, it facilitates anti-social elements to function.

Q: If the people had been armed with rifles would they not have fought as brave soldiers?

JN: This is again an 18th century type of question. You do not fight machineguns with rifles. As between two violent opposing forces the big gun tells. If the people had rifles, probably they would have shot down some people and there would have been more casualties. In this connection, I may refer to the Easter Week rising in Ireland in Dublin in 1916. When you match a gun with a gun, the big gun always succeeds.

Obviously there was tremendous sympathy in the city of Bombay for the naval ratings. I think a great deal of excitement had been caused by the gunfire, which was more or less harmless, but still which made the people think that a pitched battle was being fought in the Bombay harbour, which it was not.[6]

When there is excitement, it is very easy to put a spark to that excitement. There are all manner of groups in the city, who immediately rush in to exploit such a situation to the advantage of their own respective groups which call themselves revolutionary, but which cannot

6. This refers to the firing incident at the Castle Barracks in Bombay on 21 February 1946 when the Indian soldiers under the command of British officers were ordered to shoot at the ratings. The ratings who did not want to fire back at them addressed the soldiers over the loudspeaker in Hindi: "Brothers! We are not fighting to fill our stomachs with better food and for a softer life. We are fighting for the country's freedom." The firing ceased and then a soldier signalled that they were firing blanks.

change introducing independence immediately, but we did expect a *de facto* change in the character of the government making for independence in action. The status and powers of the provisional government were thus important. In our view this was going to be something entirely different from the Viceroy's Executive Council. It was to represent a new outlook, new methods of work and a new psychological approach by India to both domestic and external problems. Your letter dated 30th May 1946 gave us certain assurances about the status and powers of the provisional government. These did not go far enough, according to our thinking, but we appreciated the friendly tone of that letter and decided to accept the assurances and not to press this particular matter any further.

The important question of the composition of the provisional government remained. In this connection we emphasised that we could not accept anything in the nature of "parity" even as a temporary expedient and pointed out that the provisional government should consist of fifteen members to enable the administration of the country to be carried on efficiently and the smaller minorities to be represented in it. Some mention of names was made and on our part suggestions were put before you informally, including the name of a non-League Muslim.

In your statement of June 16th, some of the names suggested came as a surprise to us. Several changes had been made from the provisional list prepared by the Congress. The manner of preparing your list and presenting it as an accomplished fact seemed to us to indicate a wrong approach to the problem. One of the names included had not been previously mentioned at all and was that of a person holding an official position and not known to be associated with any public activity. We have no personal objection to him, but we think that the inclusion of such a name particularly without any previous reference or consultation, was undesirable and indicated a wrong approach to the problem.

Then again a name from our list was excluded and in his place another of our colleagues was put in, but as you have said that this can be rectified, I need not say more about it.

One outstanding feature of this list was the non-inclusion of any Nationalist Muslim. We felt that this was a grave omission. We wanted to suggest the name of a Muslim to take the place of one of the Congress names on the list. We felt that no one could possibly object to our changing the name of one of our own men. Indeed when I had drawn your attention to the fact that among the Muslim League nominees was included the name of a person, who had actually lost in the recent elections in the Frontier Province and whose name we felt had been placed there for political reasons, you wrote to me as follows: "I

function normally in public, because their revolution is of the eighteenth century variety.

The Communists consider themselves very revolutionary, but I consider them counter-revolutionary. Far from being revolutionary, they are actually conservative.

Q: Should not the city of Bombay observe a hartal in response to the Royal Indian Naval ratings' appeal?[7]

JN: The R.I.N. Central Strike Committee had no business to issue such an appeal. I will not tolerate this kind of thing. Fifteen men, however much I may like them, knowing nothing about the situation in Bombay, in India or the world, having gone over the heads of everyone in Bombay and all recognised political parties, have issued an appeal that there should be a hartal. The obvious course open to the Strike Committee was not to issue such an appeal to the three million citizens of Bombay over the heads of everyone in Bombay, but to meet the recognised leaders, and put before them their case and ask whether a hartal was feasible. It was for the political leaders — be they of the Congress or of the League — to decide after taking various factors into consideration.

Q: In view of the grievances in the army, navy and air force, which often lead to strikes and mutiny, should not the Congress leadership think of canalising these grievances in a constitutional manner and give an effective substitute, as an alternative to mutiny, and should not the Congress leadership give a clear line of policy anticipating and providing for incidents of the type which happened in Bombay, instead of leaving the interpretation of violence and nonviolence according to the discretion of individuals?

JN: It would be desirable if we could do that. But I wish you to realise that we are not in a static position. It is an extraordinary change which takes place from day to day and hour to hour. So far as this can be done by the Congress and other public organisations, it should be done.

But in trying to do it, it assumes a certain static character of the present Government apparatus which we do not recognise in the sense that

7. On 22 February 1946, the Central Naval Strike Committee appealed to Indian political leaders to support the striking seamen, saying that "they have been suffering untold hardships regarding pay and food, and most outrageous social discrimination."

case not agreeable to the leader of a party, which claims to represent a community which is a minority, interfering with the selection of names from either the scheduled castes, whose representation you counted as falling within the Congress quota, or with the selection of representatives of the minorities mentioned.

In Question 4 the scheduled castes are again referred to as a minority and it is asked whether the proportion of members of the government community-wise as provided in the proposals will be maintained. Your answer is that the proportion will not be changed without agreement of the two major parties. Here again one communal group functioning admittedly as such is given a power to veto changes in other groups with which it has no concern. We may desire, if opportunity offers itself, to increase the representation of the scheduled castes, or to give representation, when it is possible, to another minority, for example the Anglo-Indians. All this would depend on the consent of the Muslim League. We cannot agree to this. We may add that your answers restrict the Congress representation to caste Hindus and make it equal to that of the League.

Finally, you state in answer to Question 5 that "no decision of a major communal issue could be taken by the interim government if the majority of either of the main parties were opposed to it." You further say that you had pointed this out to the Congress President and he had agreed that the Congress appreciated this point. In this connection I desire to point out that we had accepted this principle for the long-term arrangement in the union legislature and it could possibly be applied to the provisional government if it was responsible to the legislature and was composed of representatives on the population basis of major communities. It could not be applied to the provisional government formed on a different basis altogether. It was pointed out by us in my letter of the 15th June 1946, that it would make administration impossible and deadlocks a certainty. Even in the question as framed by Mr. Jinnah it is stated that "in view of the substitution of 14 now proposed for the original 12", no major communal issues should be decided if the majority of the Muslim members are opposed to it. Thus this question arose after the substitution of 14 for 12, i.e., after your statement of June 16th. In this statement no mention is made of this rule. This very important change has been introduced, almost casually and certainly without our consent. This again gives the power of veto or obstruction to the Muslim League in the provisional government.

We have stated above our objections to your proposals of June 16th, as well as to your answers to the questions framed by Mr. Jinnah. These

we want to change it immediately. Therein lies the difficulty about canalising and organising things. To some extent it should be done. To the fullest extent it means recognising and perpetuating the present arrangment whereby the armed forces are ultimately under the control of the India Office.

We want to change it rapidly so that the army should be completely under Indian control. Then, of course, the question becomes completely different. In so far as these grievances can be canalised and presented properly and effectively it should be done. But I am not quite clear how it can be done. Presumably it can be done officially publicly and non-officially privately.

Q: Is the Government of India justified in awarding seven years' imprisonment to Capt. Burhanuddin of the I.N.A.?[8]

JN: The sentences on Capt. Burhanuddin and on Capt. Rashid are more or less of the same variety. I do not know much about the facts of the case, but I feel that the Government, having adopted one policy in regard to the I.N.A., should not have diverged from it, especially when it is only a question of time when a people's government would release them.

If the Government's argument that these men indulged in acts of cruelty is to be accepted, I may ask why action has not been taken against those who indulged in much worse acts of cruelty against political prisoners and others in internment camps. Proofs have been adduced about the grossest forms of cruelty indulged in, in prison camps, and yet the Government has done nothing to punish those offenders.

Even if a person in the I.N.A. in a moment of excitement or through force of circumstances had indulged wrongly in acts of cruelty, in the new situation that has been created now in India, it is surely very unwise to pass these sentences which are going to be set aside at the earliest possible moment.

Q: Is it not necessary to adopt a revolutionary programme of significance in India now?

8. An officer of the I.N.A. who was formerly of the Baluch regiment was alleged to have ordered two men, who had been caught trying to desert, to be hung up by their arms and flogged by a whole battalion. When the two men were taken down one of them was dead. Burhanuddin was sentenced for "culpable homicide amounting to murder".

and I propose to return to Kashmir within a week or so. What will happen then I do not know. But I would be surprised if any further obstruction is placed in my way. I am sure that if any necessity arises the Sikhs will help in every way.

I have read your letter to the Maulana Sahab and your resolutions.[2] As you perhaps know, we have rejected the proposals for a provisional government. So far as the long-term proposals are concerned we are accepting them subject to our own interpretations. It is possible that further attempts might be made in the near future for the establishment of a provisional government.

Whatever happens, I entirely agree with you that the Congress and the Sikhs should cooperate fully. We appreciate the feelings of the Sikhs in this matter and we would like to go as far as we can to protect their interests. The best way to insure this is to remain in touch with each other, and to confer frequently about matters of common concern. If this contact is maintained, as I hope it will be, then there is no chance of misunderstanding. Obviously it is to the interest of the Sikhs to have the powerful cooperation and support of the Congress. Obviously also the Congress must pay full attention to the needs and desires of the Sikhs. If you have any fresh idea on the subject or when any new difficulty arises, I hope you will immediately inform us so that we can try to meet it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The United Sikh Panthic Board decided on 22 June 1946 that Baldev Singh, who had been invited by Wavell to join the interim government, should not do so.

8. Interpretation of Disputed Points[1]

On May 24, the Working Committee passed a resolution[2] on the statement dated May 16 issued by the British Cabinet delegation and the

1. Resolution of the Congress Working Committee drafted by Jawaharlal, 25 June 1946 and passed the next day. *The Hindustan Times*, 27 June 1946.
2. See *ante*, pp. 179-182.

JN: A revolutionary programme of significance does not mean the breaking of heads occasionally and the destruction of property. My conception of a revolutionary programme of significance is one aimed at increasing the standard of living of the people of India within a space of five or ten years.

If a programme towards this end is drawn up, and practical methods are suggested to implement it, I would call it a revolutionary programme of significance. But if some people think that a revolutionary programme of significance means merely the breaking of heads, I would emphatically say that the breaking of heads does not necessarily mean that a new social or economic order will follow.

The background of the whole European revolutionary movement is one of underground activity. But in India conditions are different, chiefly because our whole method of action is different. The method of action involved here may be good or bad. But it does permit of an activity of a type which will not be tolerated in Europe by governmental authorities. On the whole, underground activity in Europe has not achieved any remarkable success. In the case of Russia, it is completely different. Very extraordinary circumstances preceded the Russian Revolution. But we cannot duplicate such circumstances anywhere else.

Q: What is your plan to combat communalism in the country?

JN: I think that the best way of combating communalism is to place greater stress on economic issues. I cannot, for the present, say what the results of the elections in the provinces are going to be. About the United Provinces, I can say the real conflict in the rural areas is between the peasant and the landlord. The election campaign has shown that the Congress in the U.P. stands for the peasants and the Muslim League, in collaboration in some constituencies with the Hindu Mahasabha, for the landlords.

One argument that was put forward by the supporters of the candidates of the League was that if the Congress came to power, it would demolish mosques and take away the copies of the Quran. Such an argument is really unfortunate. In the towns, the issues are not clear. They are very much mixed.

Q: Have you not exhibited indiscipline in the Congress ranks by coming over to Bombay when you were asked by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel not to do so?

JN: I do not think so. I may have shown a certain lack of wisdom, but that must be always excused. In any case, it is not indiscipline.

in fact if not in law, as a *de facto* independent government leading to the full independence to come. The members of such a government can only hold themselves responsible to the people and not to any external authority. In the formation of a provisional or other government, Congress can never give up the national character of Congress or accept an artificial and unjust parity, or agree to a veto of a communal group. The Committee are unable to accept the proposals for the formation of an interim government as contained in the statement of June 16.

The Committee have, however, decided that the Congress should join the proposed constituent assembly with a view to framing the constitution of a free, united and democratic India.

While the Committee have agreed to Congress participation in the constituent assembly, it is, in their opinion, essential that a representative and responsible provisional national government be formed at the earliest possible date. The continuation of an authoritarian and unrepresentative government can only add to the suffering of the famishing masses and increase discontent. It will also put in jeopardy the work of the constituent assembly, which can only function in a free environment.

The Working Committee recommend accordingly to the All India Congress Committee, and for the purpose of considering and ratifying this recommendation they convene an emergency meeting of the All India Congress Committee in Bombay on July 6 and 7.[3]

3. Treating the Congress decision as acceptance, the Cabinet Mission in a statement on 26 June 1946 expressed its happiness that "constitution-making can now proceed with the consent of the two major parties." The failure to form an interim government was regrettable but, after a short interval, renewed efforts would be made by the Viceroy to bring such a government into being. The Mission itself would leave India on 29 June 1946.

9. Interview of the Cabinet Mission and Wavell with Congress Leaders[1]

The Congress were represented by Maulana Azad, Pandit Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

1. Delhi, 26 June 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 1050-1052. Extracts.

4. Portents[1]

"The sky is black with chickens coming home to roost" said the Chinese Ambassador in London soon after Pearl Harbour and the early Japanese victories in South East Asia. The war has been won and the Axis powers lie prostrate and helpless. But the sky is darker than ever and the victors flounder helplessly in the morass of their past deeds. Problems arise everywhere which they are unable to solve, and only dimly they are beginning to realise that new forces are at work which are beyond their control. Asia was ignored for two hundred years and little Europe occupied the world's stage. World politics were the politics of Europe's scramble for colonies and seaways. When America came of age she too thought in terms of Europe; the other countries were just colonies or dependencies or spheres of influence of European powers.

But suddenly Asia is standing up and history is taking a new turn. The nerve centres of politics and economics are shifting and Europe is gradually reverting to its geographical position as an extension of Asia. This process may take some time to complete itself, but undoubtedly it has begun and the pace of events is such now that the track of centuries may be covered in a few years.

India, we were told, was to be put in cold storage till the duration of the war. So outwardly it was, but under the surface of events mighty changes were taking place, and now we see the new India emerging from its shell with all the accumulated passion and anger of long suppression. The chickens are coming home to roost and the sky is dark for those who had thought that they could play about with the people of India. British policy has at last come up against a wall it cannot surmount. And if American policy, for its own ends, chooses to support British imperial policy, it will find also that the wall cannot be scaled.

The recent occurrences in Bombay, the strike of naval ratings and all that followed, have removed the veil of our superficial politics and given us a glimpse of the real mind of India. We have had many glimpses of this during the past few years. What happened in August 1942 and afterwards, what those of us, who have travelled about India....

1. Undated and incomplete draft article clearly written towards the end of February 1946. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

in fact if not in law, as a *de facto* independent government leading to the full independence to come. The members of such a government can only hold themselves responsible to the people and not to any external authority. In the formation of a provisional or other government, Congress can never give up the national character of Congress or accept an artificial and unjust parity, or agree to a veto of a communal group. The Committee are unable to accept the proposals for the formation of an interim government as contained in the statement of June 16.

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MUTINY IN THE NAVY, BOMBAY, FEBRUARY 1946

after many months of a quieter though nonetheless eventful existence, it is meeting again in the city of Bombay. What will be its message to the country, what call will it give to the expectant multitudes? It is generally admitted that it will ratify the decisions recently taken by the Working Committee in Delhi. That we think is right and inevitable, and yet much depends on the manner of doing it.

Some voices[2] have been raised in criticism of these decisions, or rather one of them, and it has been objected also that the A.I.C.C. has been presented with a *fait accompli*. We appreciate the feeling behind these criticisms, and it is good that there are sentinels in the ranks of the Congress who challenge the pilgrims when they appear to deviate from the straight path. But these criticisms seem to us to be based on an inherent sense of weakness rather than of revolutionary strength and to ignore the realities of today and the position that the Congress has attained. We have not passed the stage of revolutionary agitation and activity, for that can only take place when the revolution has achieved its purpose, and yet we have reached a stage when the Congress must of necessity deal across the conference table with its opponents and those outside its fold. While we must continue to be revolutionaries, we have to be statesmen also. It is a difficult combination. The revolutionary, without the leaven of statesmanship, may become a negative shouter of slogans with no contact with the reality of the changing world; the politician, without idealism and revolutionary ardour, is likely to sink to sheer opportunism and unworthy compromises.

How is the Congress to deal with others who are opposed to it and yet who seek to approach it with the professed desire of finding a solution of their conflicts? How does the government of one country deal with another government? Not by mass meetings, but by the meeting of accredited representatives of either party who must shoulder the responsibility and the risk of representing their cause to the best of their ability. They cannot refer every point raised in the course of negotiations to their people or even to their parliament. No negotiations can be carried on in this way. It is only the final result that can be and must be referred for ratification or rejection.

2. The left wing of the Congress headed by Jayaprakash Narayan and Ram Manohar Lohia had been insisting on the immediate declaration of independence and the withdrawal of British troops as preliminary to the setting up of a constitution-making body for the establishment of a government. They described the Cabinet Mission plan as one aimed at perpetuating vested British interests through backdoor methods such as the compulsory grouping of provinces and veto powers.

IN MALAYA, MARCH 1946

5. The Strike of Army Signalmen[1]

Friends and colleagues in Jubbulpore have pressed me to visit the city in view of the situation that has arisen there owing to the strike of the signalmen and others belonging to the Indian army. Such facts as are known have been supplied to me.

I gather that the men on strike have remained completely peaceful. Further that, on 28 February, a considerable number of them were injured, some seriously, by some kind of a bayonet charge made upon them in their barracks. The strikers' demands were for better treatment in regard to rations, amenities, etc., and equality of treatment between Indian and British soldiers. There were also some political demands. These latter demands have been made by national organisations and it is natural that Indian soldiers should also feel that way.

Nevertheless, such demands should not normally be made the basis of a strike. They involve large issues and indeed, in the last analysis, the issue of India's freedom. What steps should be taken and when in regard to this fundamental issue in India, it should be for the nation to decide through its leaders and representatives. It is undesirable for any group to force the issue.

Every Indian must inevitably sympathise with their demands for better treatment. It must be remembered also that most of these Indian soldiers, as the soldiers of other countries, have been through many years of gruelling wartime experience. There is among them a feeling of weariness and a desire to go home. We have seen recently strikes by American and British servicemen.

In India, there is an ever present feeling of resentment at the differential treatment accorded to Indian officers and other ranks. What was meekly submitted to in the past can no longer be borne, for the Indian people today are proud and virile and determined to be free. This urge for freedom runs through us all, whether we are civilians or armymen.

It is in the light of the new context that every situation has to be judged. We all want discipline in the army, for an army without discipline is no army. But discipline today must be considered in the context of the problem of India's freedom and not as a slave discipline of former times.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 3 March 1946. *National Herald*, 6 March 1946.

Our problems are those of achieving freedom, and refashioning our civil and military structure in the light of that freedom. It is not possible to suppress the urge for freedom in the old way, for it makes the urge more acute. It solves nothing, for it is impossible to suppress and punish a whole nation. I trust that the military authorities in India will bear this in mind and function accordingly. To the Indian soldiers, I would assure that their cause is also our cause; it is the cause of the nation. That cause ultimately is the freedom and independence of India. We are happy that the old barriers between armymen and civilians are breaking down. This new situation brings new responsibilities on all of us, and we must not function light-heartedly and without thought, or else we waste the opportunity that awaits us.

Soldiers and civilians should not indulge in violence, for the obvious reason, apart from other reasons, that it will only benefit our opponents who have superior violence on their side.

So our struggle should be carried on peacefully and in a disciplined manner. It is right that civilians should express their sympathy for legitimate demands. But they must realise that adoption of violence is not the method.

We want no victimisation of our men in the Navy, the Army or the Air Force. They are brave young men, and even if a few go astray in a moment of excitement, they should be dealt with leniently and in a friendly manner. In any event, so far as we are concerned, we will do our best to prevent victimisation. But it is obvious that we can make no promises and give no guarantees, for only a free India can do so. One promise we can give and we will give. Struggle till we achieve full freedom and independence.

2

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

1. A Mood of Revolt[1]

If the British Cabinet Mission fails to solve the pressing and urgent problems which are clamouring for solution, a political earthquake of devastating intensity will sweep the entire country.

We have for long put a severe restraint on ourselves, but now no one can say how long this self-imposed restraint will continue, or continue at all.

The whole country is in the throes of a serious discontent and in a mood of revolt. We are sitting on the edge of a volcano which may erupt at any moment. A spark may set it ablaze. You have seen what happened in Bombay, Calcutta and Karachi. These pre-storm conditions are not limited to big cities only, but are found even in remote villages.

The truth is that the people, who are tired and fed up, want to end foreign domination immediately.

We will talk to the Cabinet Mission as a free people of one country would talk to the free people of another country. The Congress will try to settle the pressing fundamental issues by negotiation and compromise, because we do not want to plunge the country into fiery ordeals every now and then, if that can be avoided. But what I wish to make abundantly clear is that the Congress is not prepared to withdraw even an inch from its demand for complete independence.

Another warning that I would like to give is that we cannot afford to wait any longer, because the nation is on its feet and clamouring to resume its onward march. Therefore, if the British Cabinet Mission fails to resolve the deadlock, a serious political earthquake, whose tremors will be felt far beyond the boundaries of this country, will follow. India will rise in revolt, not because I, or the Congress, wants it, but because it has lost all patience and is full of anger against the British.

The naval strike in Bombay is of great political importance. Our boys in their zeal might have done a few things with which we may disagree, but no one can minimise its importance or wash away the powerful reaction, which has been created in the country. It has demonstrated how the mind of the Indian army is working. It has also

1. Speech at Jhansi, 2 March 1946. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 5 March and *The Hindustan Times*, 4 March 1946.

shown that the iron wall which the British created between the Indian army and the Indian people has collapsed and broken to pieces, and that Indian soldiers, who mostly hail from the peasant class, are as sensitive to political and economic exploitation as their brethren in fields and factories.

The three I.N.A. officers, Shah Nawaz, Sehgal and Dhillon, have not been released owing to popular agitation, as is generally believed, but they were released because the Indian army had demanded their release and expressed sympathy with them in unmistakable terms.

The year 1946 will be a most eventful and decisive year because far-reaching issues will be settled, or will be on their way to settlement. In other words, it means that the 150-year-old British rule in this country has almost come to an end. If it has not ended already we will end it within two or three years. But one thing is clear from the point of view of history. Foreign rule in India is now a thing of the past. The British also realise it and, therefore, they no longer talk in terms of political reservations for themselves. They want to know from us if we would give them trade facilities in a free India.[2] Well, I tell them frankly: it all depends on how you quit our country. If you leave a trail of bitterness behind, we cannot have any truck with you.

I accuse the British Government of evading many vital issues which demand solution. The Government, which cannot solve these problems, will be swept away when these issues take violent forms. This is precisely what is happening in the country. The problems of poverty, starvation and illiteracy can be solved only with the concerted effort and cooperation of the people, which a foreign government can never have.

The Congress has decided not to cooperate with the Indian food delegation because, in the first place, it is being sent under the auspices of a government which does not enjoy the confidence of the people, and in the second place, we cannot cooperate with a government which does nothing to remove corruption, bribery, famine and a score of other evils rampant in the country.

One fundamental difference between the outlook of the Congress and that of the Muslim League is that while the Muslim League is incapable of tackling any issue without the help of the foreign government, the Congress does just the opposite. The League is seeking the Government's support to get Pakistan. But suppose British rule is out of the picture, at whose door will the League knock? They will have to directly negotiate with their own countrymen, and reach a settlement with them, or,

2. British private investment in India at this time exceeded £ 200 million.

alternatively, they will have to fight them. But as long as the foreign element remains in India, the League will depend on it for help, and consequently, a solution of any problem by compromise will become impossible.

When someone asked Mr. Jinnah recently how he would protect the independence of Pakistan, he promptly replied: "We would keep British troops there. We would allow Britain to control our foreign relations." Similarly, Sir Nazimuddin, the former premier of Bengal, also said: "If Pakistan is not granted, we would like the British Government to remain here at least for 20 years."

This is a most degrading stand. It is a stumbling-block to independence. The Muslim League can demand Pakistan, but any attempt to retain the country under foreign control is a most disgraceful bargain. If Pakistan wants to remain under British rule, it is so even today, and I ask Mr. Jinnah what is all this clamouring for.

Pakistan in its present form, as envisaged by the League, will never be acceptable to the Congress. It is definitely not in the interests of Muslims. It will retard the progress of the country. Pakistan, whether accepted or rejected, is a positive danger to the country. The League should learn from what is happening in Iran[3] and other small European countries which, though technically independent, are ruled and dictated to by the big powers. Besides, Pakistan still remains unspecified. Then the Frontier Province has positively rejected it.[4] Assam is predominantly a non-Muslim province.[5] In the Punjab the Muslim League can claim the majority of the Muslims behind the demand for Pakistan, but there, too, it cannot compel the powerful minorities — Sikhs and Hindus — to accept Pakistan.[6]

The Muslim League is an organisation of nawabs and taluqdars. It raises the Pakistan slogan mainly to sidetrack the problems of poverty

3. There were disturbances in north Iran which was under Soviet control. The Russian army prevented Iranian troops from entering Azerbaijan to deal with the rebellion.
4. The elections in the North West Frontier Province were fought on the basis of Pakistan. Out of the 36 Muslim seats the Congress contested 28, and won 19 as against 15 of the Muslim League. The Congress polled 207,134 votes as against 145,420 votes polled by the Muslim league.
5. In Assam, which Jinnah claimed for Pakistan, the Congress won an absolute majority in the provincial elections.
6. In the Punjab, the Muslim League, having captured 75 out of 86 Muslim seats in a house of 175 and being thus the largest single party, could not form a ministry. A coalition ministry of the Congress, the Akalis and the Unionists was formed in March 1946 on the basis of an agreed economic programme.

and starvation and to safeguard feudalism and capitalism for the benefit of a handful of persons. It does not want abolition of the zamindari system or nationalisation of industries, because such steps will affect their interests. As a matter of fact, the Pakistan slogan is meant to cover up their position. Otherwise there is nothing common between a nawab and a Muslim peasant in Oudh, where the Muslim taluqdars are seeking the help of the Hindu taluqdars to defeat the Congress candidate in the election. The Hindu taluqdars are heartily extending cooperation.

The League, the Akali Dal, the Unionist Party, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Communist Party are allies of Britain in the present situation. The Communists, who talk about the abolition of capitalism and the zamindari system, are helping the Muslim League nawabs to win the elections. The Communists have no principles and have become a counter-revolutionary force. In 1942 they opposed the independence movement and opposed strikes by factory workers. But now they are brave. They have organised demonstrations at Bombay and Karachi. I know the Government is helping the Communists in some places to defeat the Congress. I appeal to you to organise yourselves under the Congress banner to achieve independence, which is in sight, and to maintain it as a brave people.

2. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Allahabad
3 March 1946

My dear Krishna,

I have just received your letter of the 20th February.[2] On the whole I agree with your analysis but, as you know, few people here think in terms of the world situation. You must also remember that often what we say here is torn from its context and flashed across, giving a totally wrong impression.

I wish I had some leisure. But this election business and other matters have overwhelmed me. There is a possibility of my going to Malaya for ten days or so about the middle of the month. Of course I do not want this to clash with the visit of Pethick-Lawrence, Cripps and Co.

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Krishna Menon had written that Britain would make India once more a pawn in her imperial design.

I think I wrote to you once about K.B. Menon's case in the Privy Council. I now learn that Polak was engaged after all. It is extraordinary how blind to obvious things our people are. Anyway I have informed Govind Swaminadhan that he should inform Polak that you must be consulted about arrangements. I feel we must proceed with the appeal and do our best for K.B. Menon. He is a man whom I like and respect. So I hope you will take especial interest in the matter.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

3. The Errors of the Communist Party[1]

Although the number of the working class in India is very small, its importance is great and it is increasing every day. When the British first came to this country, they ruined its industry and reduced the masses to poverty and starvation. Our task, when we come into power, would be to reduce the pressure on land and to build up our industries — large-scale as well as cottage industries — and wipe off poverty and unemployment of the masses. Barring a handful of well-to-do people, the vast majority of the populace are poor. This state of affairs can be changed only when we win freedom.

Frivolous issues have been raised by reactionary elements at the time of the election like 'religion is in danger' and Pakistan. These questions have nothing to do with the issue of freedom, and these questions are raised to throw the real issue into the background and thereby deceive the masses. I want you to understand the real problem that we face.

I appreciate the sentiments of the Muslims, but the way in which the issue of Pakistan has been raised is utterly wrong. Even if Pakistan can be realised, it is possible only after the country wins freedom. One fails to understand the logic of the clamour that there ought to be no freedom unless the question of Pakistan is decided. This amounts to strengthening the hands of the foreign government to stave off the independence of the country. But it is natural for the leaders of the Muslim League to raise this false issue as they are a set of big landlords who will be benefited by keeping India in bondage.

1. Address to mill workers, Kanpur, 8 March 1946. From *National Herald*, 9 March 1946.

I am surprised at the attitude of the Indian Communists who want to create a dozen or perhaps more divisions in India.[2] The part that the Communist Party has played during recent years has no relation to Russia and communism, and if there is any party which has done the maximum harm to the cause of communism, it is the Communist Party of India which, by its policy, has isolated itself from the masses. The Communists, who are today siding with the Muslim League and opposing the Congress in the elections, are demonstrating that their party is far from being revolutionary and is utterly reactionary. I am glad that the masses have seen the party in its true colours with the result that not a single Communist has been elected to the Asembly in any province.

There is no organisation other than the Congress which can tackle the large issues that face this country. Other organisations like the Muslim League and the Communist Party can only create obstructions and obstacles in the way of the Congress in it efforts to solve the problems of the country.

The Communist Party in order to regain its lost position is talking of strikes. The Congress has never avoided strikes or struggles. But sporadic actions are bound to fritter away our energies, which have to be stored up for use at the right moment. I, therefore, warn the people from being misled by false slogan-mongering indulged in by the Communist Party.

Remember, this is the most critical period that we are passing through. The structure of imperialism in India is shaking and freedom is fast approaching. The demand — rather our declaration — today is that the British should quit India.

I appeal to the workers to vote for the Congress candidates. Every vote cast against the Congress and for the Communists will be a vote to perpetuate slavery.

2. In its election manifesto, the Communist Party of India had demanded seventeen sovereign states based on linguistic entities.

4. Sitting on a Volcano[1]

I have come to Calcutta specially to attend the university convocation and a meeting of the Indian Science Congress Association Committee.

1. Statement to the press, Calcutta, 8 March 1946. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 10 March 1946.

Electioneering was not my purpose in coming here. I would be glad to visit some of the Bengal districts, and I have long wanted to do so quite apart from elections. But the meeting of the Working Committee and my proposed visit to Malaya prevent me from touring Bengal.

On arrival here, however, friends have asked me to visit some of the labour areas in and around Calcutta on the 9th afternoon and pay brief visits by air on the 10th to Chittagong and Dacca. I accepted these invitations chiefly because I am eager to meet the industrial workers round about Calcutta and also because I should like anyhow to go to Chittagong and Dacca. Dacca I have never visited before, and I am sorry that on this occasion my visit will be brief. But even a glimpse is better than no visit at all.

The election work is only a very minor item in my programme, that too of temporary importance. Wherever I go, I make it a point to convey the message of the Congress to the people, that is the message of freedom, and to tell them to be ready to face whatever may come off in the fateful months of this year.

Obviously, the only organisation in India that can meet the challenge of the time is the Congress. Other organisations may help a little or hinder a little, but they cannot solve any problems or shoulder any big responsibility. It is in this context, and the still larger context of the modern world, that we have to view our problems. We must not get lost in petty squabbles or arguments. The contrast today between public feeling on the one hand and petty issues, which worry politicians as a rule, on the other is extraordinarily marked.

We see all over India an astonishing degree of enthusiasm for freedom and independence, almost a reckless mood in pursuit of the ideal, and in this all people, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others join, whenever any little spark touches them. On the other hand, we see even in the election campaign arguments about issues which do not matter at all, or which arise incidentally.

Religion comes into the picture with the slogan that religion is in danger, though everybody knows that there is bound to be complete freedom of religion in free India with all that it implies.

Even Pakistan, of which so much is heard, cannot be considered an immediate issue in any real sense. Pakistan becomes a parody of freedom even within its own boundaries when it is said, as it has been said by the leaders of the Muslim League, that British troops will defend it. It is thus only a continuation of British domination for an indefinite period. So this conflict between a real and united feeling on the one hand and the irrelevant issue of Pakistan on the other continues.

What happened in Delhi yesterday is again an evidence of many things, good and bad.[2] It is a warning to us that all of us today sit on a volcano. Elections and petty issues are not likely to make much difference to this volcano, for Indian feeling to be volcanic in its ardent desire for independence is good. But it is definitely bad for volcanoes to erupt without regard to consequences. They bury both the good and the bad in the lava that flows out of them.

It is definitely a bad sign for people to indulge in violence and burning of public buildings. This can do no good to anybody. The public property that is destroyed belongs after all to the nation. So the lesson we have to learn is to keep our fire burning in our mind and heart and at the same time we should control and direct this mighty energy into right channels.

2. The first week of March 1946 was observed as victory week to celebrate the victory of the Allies in the Second World War. On 7 March 1946, six persons were killed, 20 injured and property worth Rs. 10 lakhs was destroyed in Delhi during demonstrations against the 'victory week' celebrations.

5. The Dawn of Great Things[1]

We are on the threshold of independence. It is true that the gates of independence have not yet been opened, but it only rests with us to throw the gates open.

The millions of India, workers and peasants, villagers and citizens have by their sacrifice paved the way for this independence. The independence that we are striving for does not mean power for a handful of men. Our swaraj will secure the rule of the people. We should aim at attaining such a swaraj which will enable every Hindu and Muslim to work for the betterment of the country. Our swaraj aims at ending poverty, disease and illiteracy which beset us today.

The year 1946 will see the dawn of great things. The 150-year-old British rule in India is fast approaching its end. Whatever we do we should direct our activities in such a way as to benefit the 400 million

1. Address to a workers' rally at Jagaddal, 9 March 1946. From *Hindusthan Standard*, 11 March 1946.

people of India, and not a few men at the top. If we cannot improve the condition of the poor and the oppressed, how can we expect to improve the condition of the country as a whole?

There is a great organisation in the country, and that organisation is the Congress. It is an organisation of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and other communities. Its gates are open to members of every community. It has the strength to fight the British Government.

All of you should remember how the masses are ready to suffer for the cause of the country. You have seen how the masses had withstood all attempts of suppression and faced bullets and other atrocities. It is impossible to suppress a mass upsurge. Now that you are on the threshold of freedom you must act judiciously.

The election is a minor issue though it has its importance. It will be over in the next 15 or 20 days. After the elections, great events are going to befall the country. The British Government does not want the Congress to win in the elections, because our slogan has been "Quit India" and nothing else.

If anybody wants Pakistan you cannot deny it to him. The Congress will never impose anything on anybody. But the first question before you is the question of independence.

The Communists have done great harm to the country. They have weakened the country. They have raised the slogan "Congress-League Unite." But they have never worked for unity. All their slogans have ended in mere talks.

It is time for us to organise and prepare ourselves for the great things that are going to take place in the country in the near future. If you want the present state of affairs to end and usher in a glorious era of swaraj, you should vote for the Congress nominee, Shri Niharendu Dutta Majumdar.

6. At the Door of Swaraj[1]

I express my regret for my brief stay at Dacca. I have been touring different parts of the country and addressing the people since my release nine months ago. I have never seen such big gatherings of men and

1. Speech at Dacca, 10 March 1946. Based on reports from *Hindusthan Standard*, 12 March and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 12 March 1946.

women as have been witnessed in recent months. In 1942 it was said that the Congress had been crushed, and that it could never again be powerful. But what is the position today? The Congress has never been so powerful as it is today. The strength of the people has increased manifold, to an extent never seen before. The spirit of restlessness is widespread as never experienced before. I know why this is so. Today an extraordinary situation has arisen in the country. After years of struggle, India has reached the door of swaraj. The door is still closed. We will have to open it.

The 150-year-old British rule in this country is fast approaching its end. When an old structure comes down its foundations shake. A Government, which allowed 30 lakhs of people to die in the great Bengal famine, cannot continue. The old order is changing, yielding place to a new one. What will happen nobody knows.

Today the country has to find solution for great questions. Take for instance, the question of demobilisation. Lakhs and lakhs of Indian soldiers will be demobilised.[2] Where will they go? Who will provide for them? The present administration will not be able to solve this problem.

You must realise that the country today stands on the verge of great changes. There is no doubt that the year 1946 is going to be very important for us. Swaraj is not our main problem. It is bound to come sooner than many people imagine. One of the problems about which everyone should seriously think is how after the attainment of swaraj we are going to build a new social and economic structure in which there will not be unemployment, want of food and exploitation of the masses. We must seriously ponder over the question as to how we can properly feed, clothe and house the forty crores of people — Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and others — inhabiting this great land.

The Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Communist Party are not in a position to deliver the goods. It is the Congress alone, of all the political organisations in India, that can fight the British Government and fight effectively.

We want a united democratic government of the people. We want a people's raj. We do not want to provide only for a handful of people who live in towns. So long as the villagers cannot be raised from their present condition, India cannot be raised up. I believe that it is possible

2. The releases from 1 October 1945 to the end of January 1946 from the Indian armed services totalled more than 300,000 and represented 34.4 per cent of the total of 850,000 releases for the period between 1 October 1945 and 31 May 1946.

to provide the necessities of life for the 40 crores of people fairly rapidly when we attain independence.

The Congress has been fighting for swaraj for the last 60 years. Its doors are open to all, irrespective of caste or creed. The Congress is a big democratic organisation, a panchayat of the Indian people. It has maintained its strength though it had to fight the Government several times. Whatever strength you see with the people today has grown out of the struggle of the Congress.

I have been in the Congress for the last 30 years. Its decisions might not, on occasion, be to my liking or to some people. But a democratic organisation cannot function if the people do not abide by its discipline. It is therefore necessary that we should work unitedly. In Bengal it appears to me that the Congress is not well organised. When I came here I heard the names of so many groups and parties within the party that I simply felt bewildered. This does not help us to build up the strength of our organisation. Unless we have a united and strong organisation we cannot hope to fight our enemy. If every group fights the enemy separately, it is likely that all groups will suffer defeat.

The source of strength for the Congress is the people. Unless you move and act in a united and disciplined way you cannot hope to fight the British Government.

A great fire is raging today in the hearts of all Indians. There is also the spirit of strength and enthusiasm of the people, which might dry up because of indiscipline.

I would ask you to consider how, apart from an ethical point of view, violence could further the cause of the country. Some people say that violence will bring revolution. But what is revolutionary today might be considered counter-revolutionary tomorrow. Violence, if it is to succeed, can succeed only if it is undertaken in an organised way. Even so, organised violence might have to yield before greater organised violence in the modern world. This is not difficult to understand in the atomic age. A school boy can succeed in preparing a bomb in a school laboratory. But of what avail would that bomb be before an atom bomb which can destroy a whole city?

The Congress has always stood for an open movement. It has asked the people not to be afraid. Sporadic violence has no value. Some people might go underground but millions of people cannot go underground. The Congress has, therefore, always been for an open fight. The point here is how can we strengthen the people and how can we raise the kisans and *mazdoors?*

The year 1946 will be a year of great decisions for India. Disciplined

and united we should prepare for this. And it is only the Congress which can face the challenge. No other organisation, good or bad, can face it. The Muslim League is talking of Pakistan. But what has it done even for Pakistan? Its leadership consists of nawabs, *khan bahadurs* and *khan sahebs*. It sometimes even gives a threat to the Government, but it has not the guts to fight the Government. The Muslim League does not even talk of independence. It wants the British to stay here and oblige it. And as far as the Communist Party is concerned, it is a great *tamasha*. It is not a revolutionary party. It has nothing to do with revolution. It claims to be a Communist Party, but it has nothing to do with communism. If it has got anything to do it is with the Muslim League, which is a reactionary party. It wants six or seven constituent assemblies for 16 or 17 Pakistans. If anybody wants to vivisect the country, it means that he wants to weaken the country. I fail to see what connection there is between communism and Pakistan.

Electioneering is a minor item in my programme, though elections have their temporary importance. The voice of the people is expressed through elections. The elections will show how many people want independence. It is for these reasons that I would like to ask you to vote for the Congress in the elections.

7. Why Congress?[1]

We have reached the door of swaraj. But the door is still closed and has to be opened. Within a few days the elections will be held and you all must vote for the Congress candidate.

Swaraj, according to the Congress conception, does not mean a mere change of rulers, but freedom for the 40 crores of people and betterment of their living conditions. Bengal lost 30 lakhs of people during the last famine which was caused by the incompetence and wilful neglect of the Government. Corruption is rampant in the country and the present form of government, whether managed by Hindus or Muslims, is faulty. It has enabled unscrupulous profiteers and bribe-takers to make money. Therefore the door to swaraj must be opened by all means.

The Muslim League is demanding Pakistan and the Communist Party and the Hindu Mahasabha are making their own demands. But the

1. Speech at Chittagong, 10 March 1946. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 12 March 1946.

Congress is demanding freedom for all. The Communists and the Hindu Mahasabha are quarrelling with the Congress and are trying to make it weaker. However, I would say that the Government and the Congress are the two powerful parties in the country today. The Communists are supporting the Pakistan demand which means vivisection of the country. I deplore it. The Communists espouse socialism. Personally, I hope that one day it will come to stay in India. But the methods adopted by the Communists are a discredit to socialism.

You must all support the Congress nominee, Mrs. Nellie Sen Gupta. I have heard about the Communist candidate, Mrs. Kalpana Dutta.[2] I have no quarrel with her, but her party is seriously injuring the country's cause.

2. (b. 1914); joined Hindusthan Republican Army, 1931; arrested for national activities, 1935, 1939; joined the Communist Party of India, 1940; married to P.C. Joshi, 1943; contested and lost the election for the Legislative Assembly, 1946.

8. The Passing of the Raj[1]

A 150-year-old tree once uprooted cannot be re-planted, nor can it draw succour from the soil even if put back. Today foreign rule stands uprooted from the soil of India. It can no more strike roots of resettlement.

The country is in the midst of a convulsive movement. It is faced with questions of tremendous implications. The old regime is nearing its end and a new one is in sight. But the difficult phase is the transitional period. What should be the type of national government will, no doubt, rest with the people to decide, but, in the meantime, the gap to be made up is to be reduced. A thorough change is necessary. But the vacuum that will be left by the British has to be filled. Though the old order is fast dying, a new order is yet to be born in its place. This is the time when we should act with unity and discipline of an army and not fritter away our strength in sporadic actions.

The swaraj, which India will win, will be of no avail if it is to be a mere transfer of power from British to Indian hands. Swaraj means

the rule of the masses, a rule in which the 40 crores of people — Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others — will get equal opportunities in life and will be fully provided with the necessities of life. Everyone of us will get enough food and education, shelter and medicine and all the necessities of life. There will be no exploitation in the new India. We must realise that so long as the machine of exploitation is there, workers will suffer, whether the Government is British or Indian.

Since my coming out of jail I have been touring the whole country for the last seven or eight months. I have seen the fire that is burning in the hearts of the 400 million people. It is our duty to direct this fire to the right purpose and in the right direction; otherwise the fire will end in smoke.

I am sure that the fire that is burning within us will be able to lead us to our coveted goal of freedom, but for that we must forget all quarrels, organise ourselves and act unitedly.

The problem of the workers is betterment of their condition and the problem of the peasants is abolition of the zamindari system. I do not know how the question of religion crops up in so far as these problems of the workers and peasants are concerned.

Before lending your support to any of the organisations, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Communist Party or any other party, you must consider which of these bodies is best organised and strong enough to fight for swaraj, which will be a real raj of the people.

There might be some good people in the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha or the Communist Party, but they do not have the strength for the crusading task of winning freedom.

I fail to undesrtand how religion can figure in the fight for freedom. The Muslim League says that if the Congress wins the election, Islam will be in danger. Evidently it has no ardent desire for freedom as it prefers Pakistan to freedom. The Hindu Mahasabha is up with the cry of *sanatan dharma*. It says that if the Congress wins in the election Hindu religion will be in danger.

In fact, they all create divisions and factions among us. The advocates of Pakistan want division first, and freedom next. But they do not think that it is impossible for small states to stand, without help, the onslaughts of foreign aggression. They are taking a risk. They will learn a lesson ultimately. They will be compelled to reunite what they have broken. It will be like tearing apart the limbs of a body and stitching them together afterwards.

The Congress is the only organisation which has the strength to fight the British Government. Its message has inspired everyone, from the

land of the Pathans down to Rameshwaram, the southern most part of the vast country. Its door is open to everybody and the branches of the Congress are to be found in every corner of the country.

The Government is afraid of the Congress hold on the people. So it wants any organisation but the Congress to win in the elections. It is the duty of every Indian to add to the strength of the Congress and thus pave the way for swaraj.

I understand that the Communists too want freedom, but unfortunately, they have forsaken the straight path. In their support for the Muslim League they are out to create 16 or 17 Pakistans in India.

Meanwhile, the Congress has stated that if the Muslims wish to have Pakistan, it will not deny it to them. But the view of the League that independence should be deferred till Pakistan is gained is incomprehensible to me. It is a matter of regret that there are Indians who want Pakistan before independence. If the country is divided into Pakistan, *Hindustan and other small 'stans', they will all be weakened.*

In the present world situation, small nations cannot retain their independence. The protagonists of the demand for Pakistan have said that they will retain their independent status with the help of the British army. What will freedom mean if a British army remains to safeguard their rights as it is today?

India is a great country and in the course of the next 10 or 15 years it will be still greater. I appeal to you to vote for the Congress, because it aims at the abolition of the zamindari system and the vesting of the ownership of factories with the workers. Support and strengthen the Congress, because then alone will it be possible for the Congress to fight the British Government as it has done in the past.

The year 1946 will be a momentous year for India. In the course of the next few months great changes are going to take place which will involve every Indian. The times are changing fast and the country is changing too. You must be on the alert and in a state of preparedness.

A Cabinet Mission is coming to India. I am sure that the present Government is going to cease and a people's raj will take over. For the establishment of this raj all of us should try to organise and strengthen the greatest organisation, the Congress.

It is a matter of pleasure that in the labour constituencies we have a joint electorate. There are no artificial barriers to separate the Hindus and the Muslims. For the last 1,000 years Hindus and Muslims have been living together in India. They must live and work together in the future. If India is independent the fruits thereof will be reaped by both the communities.

9. Pakistan the Reverse of Self-determination[1]

The Congress proposals as contained in the recent resolutions, and in particular in the election manifesto, are such as to give 95 per cent self-determination to the constituent units in the federation. We have said that we want willing partners in the federation and that the common subjects for such units would be very minimum in number such as defence and foreign affairs. There would be a list of common subjects which the constituent units might, or might not, accept as they wish.

This gives the fullest freedom subject only to the vital question of defence and allied subjects which cannot be ignored in any context. Weak defence means instability, insecurity and reliance on external powers. In that case there will be no freedom for India or any part of it. The Congress has gone to the farthest limit in accepting the principle of self-determination, and it gives a real sensation of freedom to the constituent units of the proposed Indian federation. Further, it has said that it does not wish to compel any part against its will, provided no compulsion is exercised on others against their will.

Mr. Jinnah's scheme of Pakistan, apart from its other features, is the very reverse of self-determination, because it envisages compulsion for large areas in the Punjab, in Bengal, in Assam, in Delhi, not to mention the whole of the North West Frontier Province. The Congress proposal does not involve compulsion. It gives the greatest freedom to provinces or units of the federation and yet preserves unity in defence and allied subjects, like foreign affairs, communication and currency. For the rest, the units can choose whether they will have common subjects or not. This, I say, gives 95 per cent of self-determination and freedom to the units as well as a joint working of the remaining five per cent.

Question: It is reported that the British and Indian troops are being withdrawn from Indonesia.[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru: The only comment I have to make is that the troops should have been withdrawn long ago.

1. Interview to the press, Calcutta, 11 March 1946. *National Herald*, 12 March 1946.
2. On 28 February 1946, the Commander-in-Chief said that Indian troops in Indonesia would be withdrawn in five months starting from March 1946.

3

VISIT TO MALAYA

1. To N. Raghavan[1]

January 26, 1946

My dear Raghavan,
I was very glad to learn of your release and I am sure that this will make a difference to the position of Indians in Malaya. I am taking this opportunity of sending these few lines to you as S.K. Das[2] will soon be going to Singapore.

Probably you know that for the last two months I have been trying to get a passport and travel facilities to visit Malaya. I am anxious to go there even for a brief period and even though this will seriously interfere with heavy engagements here. I feel, however, that the claims of Indians in Malaya are far more important at present than my engagements here. So far I have had no final reply from Government. I am told that the matter has been referred to the Malayan administration. The moment I receive my passport and travel facilities are accorded to me, I shall proceed to Malaya, probably *via* Burma where I might spend a few days. I suppose about ten days in Malaya would suffice. I shall come by air of course as I cannot afford the time to go by sea. All this of course depends on facilities available.

You must know also that the Congress has organised a Medical Mission which has been ready to go to Malaya as soon as permission is given. I imagine that this permission will be forthcoming after a while.

It seems to me important that Indians in Malaya should organise themselves into a committee to help themselves. Individuals cannot do much by themselves. A committee immediately becomes representative to some extent and can speak on behalf of the community. It also produces a sense of cohesion and thus changes the situation psychologically. Such a committee should look after the defence of people who are being proceeded against as well as give relief to those who stand in need of it. Naturally we shall try to help you in both matters and your committee should deal directly with I.N.A. Relief and Inquiry Committee, 82 Daryaganj, Delhi, of which Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is Chairman and Shri Sri Prakasa, M.L.A. (Central), is the General Secretary. P.K. Sehgal is the Joint Secretary. It is possible that it may not be easy for your committee or you to communicate with us here owing to censorship difficulties. Anyway you should try and approach the Government formally

1. J.N. Collection.
2. Major S.K. Das of the I.N.A.; he had come to India from Singapore to give evidence before the I.N.A. court martial trying Captain Abdur Rashid.

on the subject, as we have done at this end. It is important that we should have full facts and figures about the situation in Malaya for publicity here. If you can arrange to have this sent it will be useful and helpful to you.

The situation in India is a very fluid one. This has its advantages and disadvantages. For the moment the disadvantages are more obvious. But in the course of the next five or six months the advantages might well prevail. Our countrymen in Malaya are faced with great difficulties. Nevertheless there is absolutely no reason why they should allow themselves to be overcome by these difficulties. We must produce a background of self-help and hopefulness.

Your son came to see me some time ago.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To S.C. Goho[1]

January 26, 1946

My dear Goho,

Just before I had heard of your arrest I wrote a letter[2] to you. This must have reached Malaya some days after your arrest. I do not know if you got it in the end. I am now sending these few lines through S.K. Das who is returning to Malaya soon. I want you to realise that we are all very much interested in your case as well as that of other Indians in Malaya and we want to help in every way we can. But thus far it is not open to us to do much. I am myself waiting for permission from Government to go to Malaya and the moment I get it I shall proceed there. Our Medical Mission is also ready to proceed to Malaya as soon as it is allowed to do so. Meanwhile Indians in Malaya should hold together and, as I suggested in my previous letter to you, form a committee both for defence and relief. This committee should put itself in touch with the I.N.A. Defence and Inquiry Committee, 82 Daryaganj, Delhi.

1. J.N. Collection.
2. Not available.

You must know the general line adopted by us in defence in the first I.N.A. trial in Delhi. Conditions in Malaya are obviously different from those prevailing in India and this fact has to be borne in mind. Nevertheless it is clear that no line of defence can or should be taken up in Malaya which is in any way contrary to the line adopted by us in Delhi. The Delhi case, though by no means binding on Malaya, is a precedent which might help our people there.

I hope that you will come out soon and that I shall have an opportunity to meet you in Malaya.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To R.N. Banerjee[1]

Allahabad
March 3, 1946

Dear Sir,[2]

I have received your letter of the 28th February on my return to Allahabad. Previously Mr. Sri Prakasa informed me by telegram and I have sent him two or three messages, which, no doubt, he has communicated to you.

The position is this. I am prepared to leave India, as suggested, on the 15th of this month for Malaya. But I am anxious that I should not be away from India when the British Cabinet Ministers arrive here. Thus I do not want my Malayan visit to clash with their arrival, and so I cannot be definite about the dates. If I go on the 15th and can return within ten days or so, say by the 26th, I might be able to get back by the time they arrive. A day or two later would not matter much but a longer interval would be undesirable. Presumably you can find out when they are likely to arrive. You could then let me know by telegram about final arrangements for my visit to Malaya.

As I have informed you through Mr. Sri Prakasa, Mr. G.P. Hutheesing of 20 Carmichael Road, Bombay, will accompany me as secretary. He

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary, Commonwealth Relations Department, Delhi.

has got an ordinary passport but this has got no visa for Malaya. As you wrote to me, no passport or visa is necessary.

There is one other matter I should like to mention. Mr. Kodanda Rao,[3] who has recently returned from Malaya, informed me that a need for clothing, and especially for saris, was very acute among Indians in Malaya. From enquiries made in Bombay I gathered that the various mills could supply immediately, free of charge for distribution without payment, about a hundred bales. This of course could only be done if Government gave an export permit as well as facilities for despatch to Malaya. Presumably the normal controls would not apply as this cloth would not be for sale. If you could arrange with the various Governmental authorities for permission to be granted, I could immediately issue an appeal to the various mills for this cloth.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. P. Kodanda Rao (1896-1975); joined Servants of India Society, 1922; editor of the *Servant of India* for many years; author of *East versus West, A Denial of Contrast* and a biography of Srinivasa Sastri; he had visited Malaya as a member of an official delegation to enquire into the conditions of Indians there.

4. To Sri Prakasa[1]

Allahabad
4 March 1946

My dear Prakasa,

As I have telegraphed to you, I have finally decided to go to Malaya starting from Delhi on the 15th or 16th. I shall let you know the exact date soon. I shall try to reach Delhi a day before I leave. It is understood that my visit will be a short one and that I shall be back within ten days or so.

I want to know how and in what form I can take money with me. I do not want to take any large sums but obviously I must carry some cash and have some draft on a bank in Singapore. I suggest that I take the equivalent of Rs. 500 with me and a draft of Rs. 2000 on Singapore.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

For this I presume Government permission will be necessary. I shall be grateful if you will arrange for this. I can give you a cheque when I meet you in Delhi.

I do not quite understand the nature of the arrangements made for my travelling or stay in Malaya. Naturally I am prepared to pay for any expenses incurred on my behalf. In Malaya arrangements for my stay and moving about will naturally be in the hands of my Indian friends there with whom I shall be communicating.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

5. To N. Raghavan[1]

Allahabad
March 4, 1946

My dear Raghavan,
Your letter of the 24th February. I am very anxious to go to Malaya even for a brief period. But the situation in India is such that it is extraordinarily difficult to leave the country. As you know, British Cabinet Ministers are coming here soon and naturally I want to be here then. After much thought I have decided to go to Malaya for a week, arriving at Singapore on the 16th or 17th.

Government have informed me that they have arranged for my air journey. I have not definitely decided about the exact date of departure but it will either be the 15th or 16th from Delhi. I shall be accompanied by G.P. Hutheesing who will function as my secretary.

I am told that soon after my arrival in Singapore, Lord Mountbatten desires to see me. I shall of course meet him. I want, however, the arrangements for my stay as well as my programme in Malaya to be fixed up by you and other friends. Naturally I cannot do much within a week and I cannot stay longer. It is for you people to decide how best I should spend this week. I hope that I might be able to make a longer visit at a later stage. This present visit is only intended to meet our old friends and to discuss various matters and to cheer them up. Big changes

are coming in India and elsewhere and we must see everything in proper perspective and in the right context.

I want to make it perfectly clear that my stay and programme in Malaya should be in Indian hands. *Jai Hind.*

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. Problems of Indians in South East Asia[1]

While I am going only to Malaya, we are at present concerned with Indians in trouble in a big part of South East Asia. A short while ago I got a cable from Borneo that a prominent Indian named Puran Singh[2] had been sentenced by a court martial, I presume, to seven years' imprisonment. The charge against him might be membership of the Indian Independence League or some such thing; no other offence was mentioned. We have also had plenty of complaints from the Andamans and from Bangkok about cases being started against Indians.

In addition to the political trouble in Malaya involving the I.N.A. and Independence League personnel, there is the very big economic problem — lack of food and clothing.

About a month ago I heard that Indian women in Malaya had been reduced, in many cases, to wearing tattered gunny bags. Millowners in Bombay have offered a gift of one hundred bales of saris, but the question of granting export licences and transport facilities for despatching these bales to Malaya is still pending.

I am told that a large number of Indians in Malaya, running into many thousands, are being pushed back into India. If this is so, I doubt the wisdom of such a move. If, for instance, 20,000 Indians are sent to Madras, it will worsen the bad food situation in that province.

I have asked Malayan Indian leaders to organise public meetings so that I can meet the Indian masses.

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 16 March 1946. From *National Herald,* 17 March 1946.
2. Before joining the I.N.A., Puran Singh was a jamadar in the Gurkha Rifles. He was charged with attempted murder of Gurkha prisoners of war.

7. Appeal for Clothes for Malaya[1]

The need for clothing in Malaya is very great. Indian women are said to be using gunny bags to wrap themselves up. A number of millowners in Bombay have offered to supply bales free for distribution among Indians in Malaya. I asked the Government for a permit and for despatch facilities and it has agreed to give them. It is more convenient to despatch them from Calcutta. I hope owners of textile mills round about Calcutta will also contribute cloth, and especially saris, for use in Malaya. These can then be despatched very soon there. The need is urgent. Dr. B.C. Roy has kindly agreed to arrange this.

1. This statement was issued by Jawaharlal before he left for Singapore on 17 March 1946. From *The Hindu*, 19 March 1946.

8. Broadcast on Arrival in Singapore[1]

I am very happy to be here. I was here nine years ago and I have been trying to come here for some time. Now that I am here I am sorry I can stay only for a few days. I hope my visit will be of help to my countrymen, and also to other Asian people who must pull together for the good of all.

1. On his arrival in Singapore Jawaharlal gave this broadcast over All India Radio and Singapore Radio, 18 March 1946. From *India Daily Mail*, 19 March 1946.

9. The Unity of Asian Peoples[1]

I should like to thank the people of Singapore for the warm and hearty welcome they have given me although, by arriving late, I put them to the trouble of waiting for many hours.

1. Speech on arrival at Singapore, 18 March 1946. Based on reports from *The Straits Times*, 19 March and *Malaya Tribune*, 19 March 1946.

I have come at the call of the Indians here, but Singapore has attracted me for long as a great cosmopolitan city, where the various peoples of Asia are represented.

Apart from the Malayans, the Chinese people form a part of the population, and with the Chinese people we have had evergrowing bonds of friendship.

Singapore will become the centre where Asian unity can be forged. In the future, the peoples of Asia must hold together for their own good and for the good and freedom of the world.

I am looking forward to meeting the various representatives of the Chinese people, the Malayans, the Indonesians, the Arabs and others here. I hope that my visit will help in furthering this Asian unity.

I should also like to thank the authorities here, notably Lord Louis Mountbatten, for the facilities they have kindly offered for my tour of Malaya.

10. India's Concern for her Children Abroad[1]

I am very glad to be with you after nine long years. In India events of great importance for the future of the country are either taking place or about to take place. My presence back in India is urgently needed. Yet the Indian National Congress felt that it owed a duty to the Indians abroad during their days of trial and I have come as the Congress representative to cheer them up and bring them India's message of sympathy and offer of help. India itself is beset by many grave problems. There is a hope that India's aspiration for freedom will soon be successfully realised. I have another hope that India, when free, will be able to contribute its share to unite Asia and preserve peace in the world. When that day comes, India's arms will be long enough to protect its children abroad, but till then, Indians abroad must be content with such aid as India can give. India will give willingly and unstintingly any help and safeguard to its people in foreign lands.

I advise Indians in Malaya to live in harmony with Malays, Indonesians and Chinese, who live in this country. Indians abroad must remain united and guard their rights. They must hold up their heads proudly as the people of a country with a great past and a great future.

1. Address to the people who collected near his hotel in Singapore, 18 March 1946. From *The Hindu*, 19 March 1946.

11. Need for a Union of Asian Countries[1]

The gathering before me reminds me of a dream, a dream of a united Asia. I sense the return of Asia to its past glory. Nations that have vitality cannot be put down. I call for a union of Asian countries. This move is not for aggression, but for forging freedom throughout Asia.

In the history of Asia, India and China have never fought each other—a striking contrast to the warring nations of Europe. One day, every Indian's arm will be a strong arm and these arms will fight for Asian freedom.

The independence India wants is not merely for herself. You cannot have the world half-free and half-slave. If India aspires for freedom, it is for a free world, and when India is free, every ounce of its energy shall be used for the freedom of all subject countries. This is true of Indonesia, Malaya or any other country in the world.

1. Speech at Singapore, 18 March 1946. Based on reports from *Malaya Tribune*, 19 March and *The Hindu*, 20 March 1946.

12. Adjustment to Present Needs[1]

Although my visit has been a hurried one, I feel as if I have stayed here for a long time. It may be easy to see things and tell the people what to do, but each and everyone must do something for the benefit of mankind. No one can escape from this duty.

You may be depressed by the troubles caused by the Japanese occupation of this country, and by the abnormal situation that prevailed then, but all these must be overcome by a solid unity among Indians.

This unity will compel you to look after the distressed and the destitutes among the labour class and the dependents of those who passed

1. Farewell message to the Indians of Singapore, 20 March 1946. *Daily* (Singapore), 21 March 1946.

away as the result of working on the Japanese death railway. These people need all the help you can give them.

I call for a large-scale relief to the needy Indians. If anybody cares to see me at Penang I will give him a plan as to how to carry out this programme. This relief should not savour of charity, and should be given with dignity and honour.

I have seen many things here and I expect to see many more during my up-country tour. I promise that, on my return, I will give the people of India a full report of the conditions prevailing in Malaya with particular reference to Indians. I promise to give the people at home a true picture of the situation here.

I am definitely against the formation of separate organisations. You should have only one solid Indian organisation. We are in an era of great changes and we must not therefore attach much importance to religious ties and traditions. Find out the best means and methods relevant to the present time and act accordingly. Everybody can, however, take lessons from old customs and traditions, but we must adjust ourselves to the present needs.

13. Problems of India and Asia[1]

India is no longer concerned with whether Britain is willing to recognise India's independence. Independence for India is a certainty; it will come either very shortly or in two or three years. The Congress is determined to achieve independence. It will be no gift from Britain. By its sacrifice the country has earned the right to freedom. The conditions in the world now are such that freedom for India can be denied only at Britain's peril. Nor can progress in the country be held up indefinitely, because of the intransigence of one man or one party. If the British can free themselves from the state of mind that tends to look on India as if it were an estate, which they are being forced to give up, then the transition to freedom can be accomplished gracefully.The fundamental factor for success in the coming Cabinet Mission negotiations, therefore, is a clear

1. Address to press conference, Singapore, 20 March 1946. Based on reports from *The Hindu*, 21 March and *Indian Daily*, 21 March 1946.

recognition of Indian independence, after which, as between equals, with certain common interests, the representatives of India and Britain can proceed to negotiate the terms. The imperial mind, however much it may desire to throw off thoughts of imperialism, still tends to proceed on the assumption that it can concede only Dominion Status with a right to break away later. This is not the right frame of mind to approach the problem. Independence should first be conferred. In that position, India will have the freedom to choose its friends and associates in the world.

What India wants now is the acceptance by Britain of the fact of Indian independence, secondly, the convening of a constituent assembly to frame the constitution and thirdly, the establishment, immediately, of a popular government at the Centre, without the Viceroy's veto, until the constitution comes into force.

> Question: Can you explain what you meant by asking the people to revolt in the event of a famine?[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru: I have not been correctly quoted in the press. What I meant was that people have a right to revolt against conditions that inevitably bring on them a famine. They should fight with all their strength against social and economic conditions that permit a famine to descend on them while a privileged few feast and make fortunes out of the misery and death of their own fellowmen. Unintelligent revolt for the sake of revolt will not stave off famines.

> Q: What would be the Congress policy if Mr. Jinnah carries out his threat of a revolution if the Cabinet Mission does not give due consideration to the demand for Pakistan?

JN: As far as I am concerned, I have no objection to anyone calling for a revolt. I would like to see a revolution in India called by Mr. Jinnah. It is one thing to call for a revolution and another to carry out a revolution. Mr. Jinnah has many qualities, but he has never been a revolutionary nor does he possess anything out of which he can summon a revolt. What is there to revolt against? The Congress stands for the same self-determination for which Mr. Jinnah is supposed to be fighting. The Congress is prepared to agree to the greatest amount of autonomy for the federating units, reserving the minimum essential powers for the Centre. Further it does not want to compel any unit to stay in the

2. Jawaharlal said this in a speech at Bahraich on 8 February 1946. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 238.

federation, if by a free and definite vote any unit decides to break away. But, at the same time, no well-defined area of a unit can be compelled to join a seceding unit against the desire of the people in that area. Mr. Jinnah is not prepared to face the logical consequences of his own demands. It is an indefinable position that Mr. Jinnah has taken up and he does not believe that if the question of secession is clearly put to vote, no clear-cut case for secession will be made out by the electorate. If any party, which has been asked to participate in a conference, refuses to do so, we will carry on without it.

Q: What is the Congress attitude to the Indian States?

JN: The Congress is prepared to admit them to the federation if they would conform to democratic standards of government prevalent in other units of the federation and also if the rulers become merely titular and constitutional heads without interfering with the democratic apparatus of the State.

I would like to urge for consideration a suggestion that the governments of Burma and Siam, through whose territories the new Burma-Siam railway runs, should pay the price for the assets they have obtained at no cost to themselves, but which took away the lives of several thousands of Indians. Tens of thousands of men, who had been killed while building that railway, have left behind them thousands of widows and orphans who need to be looked after. Funds obtained this way can be utilised to sustain them. This was the suggestion put forward some time ago by a correspondent and I strongly supported it. That is how many hundreds of women in Malaya, who lost their husbands in Siam, feel.

Q: What is your comment on the situation in China?

JN: I appeal for unity in China. I am sure unity will help China in regeneration as its progress had been arrested because its energy has been wasted in other directions. China's social and economic development will influence the countries of Asia.

A free Indian government, I have no doubt, will forge contacts with China. These contacts are even now being developed, somehow in a big way, but mainly it is of a psychological nature.

I have appealed to Indian universities to teach the Chinese language. I favour the exchange of students and professors between India and China. I expect an increase in road, rail and air traffic between these two great countries, thanks especially to the recent war developments, which have hastened the process.

Q: What is your attitude to the Iranian crisis?

JN: About ten days ago the Working Committee of the National Congress discussed the situation in Iran, Malaya, Indonesia and Indo-China. I do not like Iran being compelled to become anybody's satellite country. I do not blame any power for the conflict either.

The use of Indian troops in Indonesia is very much resented by us. India has full sympathy with the Indonesian people.

Q: Are you optimistic about the outcome of the Cabinet Mission to India?

JN: There are strong forces which are compelling England to recognise the need for granting freedom to India. Intelligent people realise that freedom cannot be held back. The possession of India is gradually ceasing to be of gain. It is becoming a burden. As freedom is going to come, farsighted people would like it to come in a smooth way. Therefore, there is a tendency to resist any development that might create rancour.

This attitude will help something satisfactory to emerge from the forthcoming Cabinet Mission talks. At the same time, there are two other problems — the feeling of the people of Britain that they possess India as though it were a landlord's estate, and the inertia of the administration in India towards economic issues. The administration collects money and keeps law and order, but knows nothing of what goes on in the country or what gives rise to famine.[2]

2. One comment Jawaharlal made on Jinnah at this press conference which did not find its way into the newspapers was: "Jinnah rather reminds me of the man who was charged with the murder of his mother and father and begged the clemency of the court on the ground that he was an orphan". This was contained in an official report on Jawaharlal's visit to Malaya. *See The Transfer of Power 1942–7*, Vol. VII, pp. 134–136.

14. Indian Relief Committee[1]

I am leaving G.P. Hutheesing in Malaya to make further enquiries and to consult people in regard to the relief work here. I have asked him to report to me on his return to India.

1. Statement to the press, Singapore, 20 March 1946. *Indian Daily*, 21 March 1946.

The funds that have been received by me in the shape of purses are being handed over to a board of trustees. I have asked Mr. R. Ramani[2] to draw up a trust deed.

I find it a little difficult in the short time at my disposal to nominate the trustees or a full committee. I shall do so after further enquiries and consultations. At the same time the work of the committee should not be delayed.

With a view to taking immediate steps for relief I have formed the following committee temporarily: Jawaharlal Nehru (Chairman), N. Raghavan (Vice-Chairman), R. Ramani, J. Thivy,[3] Dr. Lakshmaya,[4] R. Jumabhoy,[5] Mrs. Chidambaram,[6] Makhanlal,[7] Sucha Singh,[8] Miss J. Thevar,[9] Brahmachari Kylasam.[10]

2. Of the Indian Independence League; he took a prominent part in relief work; later served as ambassador of Malaya at the United Nations and elsewhere.
3. John Aloysius Thivy (1904-1959); Vice-President, Indian Independence League, 1942-46; first president, Malayan Indian Congress, 1946; Indian representative in Malaya, 1947-50; Commissioner in Mauritius, 1950-51; ambassador to Syria, 1953-55; ambassador to Italy, 1955-57; ambassador to The Hague, 1957-59.
4. N.K. Lakshmaya; president of the Indian Independence League in Penang.
5. Ragabah Jumabhoy (b. 1898); founder-member, Indian Association and numerous other organizations in Malaysia; President, Indian Chamber of Commerce for 7 years.
6. Mrs. M. Chidambaram; head of the women's section of the Indian Independence League.
7. Seth Makhanlal; merchant.
8. A teacher in St. Paul's School in Seramban.
9. Janaki Thevar; second in command in the Rani Jhansi Regiment of the I.N.A.
10. Of the Ramakrishna Mission in Kuala Lumpur.

15. India's Destiny[1]

The kind of nationalism Indians believe in is of an enlightened type. If we believe in independence for India, we also believe in independence

1. Speech at Kuala Lumpur, 18 March 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 21 March 1946.

for other countries. In future strong ties of friendship will bring India closer to the other countries of East Asia.

Apart from sentimental and historical reasons there is the compulsion of geography. Whatever scheme of defence or strategy you may evolve, India is the pivot of the Indian Ocean area, just as India is the pivot of the British empire. India is going to be the pivot of the freedom struggle of Asia. The spirit that has enveloped India cannot be cowed down by inflicting material sufferings. We are confident of the coming of independence, and also confident of our ability to raise 400 millions of our people from poverty.

16. The Pivot of Asia's Freedom[1]

India is going to be the pivot of the structure of freedom in Asia instead of being the pivot of the structure of imperialism. Indians, Chinese and Malays have suffered from a number of ills because of imperialism, colonialism and mismanaged governments. But in India, people are not despondent. In spite of their suffering, they have developed a resolute spirit which will not allow them to bow down to any threats. India is bound to win freedom and the freedom is not for a few, but for all, a freedom in which people will not only share, but will themselves participate. We are intensely nationalistic, and our nationalism stands for the freedom of all people everywhere. The future is going to test our mettle. We will have to solve all the problems which have been bothering us so long. We have to get out of the habit of looking elsewhere for help. We are prepared to face the enormous tasks of our future, but we need discipline and earnest effort. The face of Asia has changed and is changing. We have to raise 400 million Indian people to the level equal to that of any other people of the world. They can undertake these tremendous tasks only if they become arbiters of their destiny.

I realise that enough relief is not being given to the Indians in Malaya. But this is so because India is not yet free. When India becomes an independent country, it will more effectively protect its brethren overseas. Meanwhile, however, the Congress is sending soon a fully equipped medical mission, drugs, clothing and some money. I again stress the

1. The above is a report in *The Hindu* dated 24 March 1946 giving the gist of three speeches made on 21 March 1946 at Batri Pahat, Muar and Malacca.

need for cooperation between Indians in Malaya and the Chinese and Malays. You must not do anything that will strain relations among yourselves. For if you do, you will be harming India. Malaya should be an example where Indians live peacefully with the people of different nationalities.

17. The Resurgence of Asia[1]

It is nine years since I came here. Malaya was then a peaceful country, rather cut off from world currents and hardly touched by world politics. It was a pleasant and rich country where people could easily make a living. But during the last few years Malaya has passed through many ordeals and so I think that all of you have grown mature and more experienced. Today you have to face many problems, just as we have to face ours in India, where, for years, we have been struggling for independence. Now we have come to the very door of freedom. It remains only to push the door open.

Remember, when we talk of independence, we do not think of India alone, but of an India working in close cooperation with other countries of Asia for common aims. The Malayans naturally are eager to be on friendly terms with India. They look to the safety of their own interests and rights. If they are endangered or disregarded they will be compelled to act in self-defence. The whole of Malaya is united to meet the threat to its legitimate rights. Yet the desire for close relations between India and Malaya has been repeatedly emphasised by both the Congress and Malayan leaders.

For the last 150 years, India has been the focal point of the colonial struggle. When India attains freedom, it will be the focal centre of freedom for the subject countries. India and China are countries with ancient civilisations and culture. For thousands of years, they have had very close relations. They have never had an aggressive tendency. Here you find two great countries in peace and friendship. You will not find such an example in history. In future India and China will have much to say in world affairs.

1. Speech at Seramban in Malacca, 21 March 1946. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 23 March and *The Hindu*, 24 March 1946.

In Malaya, people from different countries live together peacefully. When I see this, I think of the future. Asia will gradually free itself completely from colonialism and reassert its former position. We are witnessing the end of an epoch in history, the end of colonialism and imperialism. I do not know what the future would be, but I can say that nineteenth century colonialism is on its last legs.

18. Effete Administration and Popular Enthusiasm[1]

I accuse the present Indian Government of being utterly incapable, primarily because it does not possess the support of the masses. Though no experts in economics need tell you, it is enough for me to see starving people in India and realise that something is very wrong with the economics of the Indian administration. The Bengal famine was the result of an inefficient administration, for in these modern times a famine is comparatively easier to avert than it had been centuries ago. The Government of India is still unchanged and the constitution remains the same. In fact, for the past seven years, the Government of India has become more autocratic than ever, but the people of India have gained full vitality and are full of life bubbling over with enthusiasm.

1. Speech at Kuala Lumpur, 22 March 1946. From *The Hindu*, 26 March 1946.

19. The Responsibility of Indians in Malaya[1]

I appeal to you to maintain and strengthen the relations of the people of Malaya, both Malays and Chinese. To the Indians, I stress the necessity of dignity of behaviour and discipline. It is the responsibility of well-placed Indians to help their countrymen who need food, clothing and money. The Congress at the moment cannot extend much help

1. Speech at Ipoh, 23 March 1946. From *The Hindu*, 26 March 1946.

save in the form of a medical mission coming out soon with a small quantity of relief. All cheques and purses presented to me here will be used to meet the needs of people here.

20. India's Role in Asia[1]

We are in a new era of history. We require mutual cooperation to face the mighty problems ahead. We want peace, but not the peace of subjugation. We want peace where we can express our will.

India is a powerful factor in Asia. Whoever controls India, will have influence over Asia. Whoever helps India, helps Asia.

India has been used as a base for subjecting Asia. India is being closely watched by Egypt and Palestine, Iraq and Persia. Free India is going to wake up these countries. For example, Indonesia will be inspired by a free India to fight for liberation.

Tomorrow, I will be in India where the British Cabinet Mission is deliberating. Many problems will have to be solved. Many difficulties will have to be overcome. Many questions will have to be answered. Whatever the difficulties, problems or questions, we will tackle them with patience.

1. Address to ex-I.N.A. personnel, Alor Star, 26 March 1946. From *The Straits Times*, 27 March 1946.

21. First Report on his Visit to Malaya[1]

Confidential

Allahabad
28 March 1946

Dear Mr. President,

In accordance with the directions of the Working Committee of the Congress I paid a brief visit to Malaya. It took me a long time to get the necessary permission from the Government of India and there were many hitches to be overcome both at this end and at the other end, i.e., South East Asia Command. Ultimately, however, permission was given

1. Given to Maulana Azad. J.N. Collection.

to me and arrangements for air travel made by the Government of India. I took with me as secretary G.P. Hutheesing.

We left Delhi on the 17th March by air and reached Singapore the next day in the afternoon. I returned yesterday leaving Penang on the 26th morning. I left Hutheesing behind to make some enquiries on my behalf. He will return about the 6th of April.

My stay in Malaya was thus a brief one lasting about eight days, but was full of activities and I gathered numerous impressions. Any full account of my visit would mean writing at considerable length. For the present I am sending you this brief account so that you and the Working Committee may be informed of the situation there.

The British Military Administration in Malaya, known as the B.M.A. and functioning under the Supreme South East Asia Commander, Lord Louis Mountbatten, gave me every facility and indeed went out of their way to help me during my visit. I believe this was largely due to Lord Louis Mountbatten's initiative. Immediately after my arrival in Singapore I was asked to see him and I did so. There were one or two items in the programme proposed for me which he did not wholly like, and he put it to me that he would be glad if they could be varied. One of these was a public function at which I was supposed to place a wreath on the memorial to dead I.N.A. soldiers. This memorial, as is well known, was destroyed by British authorities soon after the reoccupation of Singapore. Since then it has been repeatedly repaired by unknown persons and then again demolished. There have always been wreaths and flowers there. Lord Louis felt that a big function which would attract large crowds might give rise to a certain resentment among the Chinese and others.

I did not personally think that the Chinese would necessarily object, but I agreed that I would avoid a public function of that type. What I did later was to visit the place quietly and without announcement and placed some flowers there. His other point was that there should be no regular parade in uniform and badges of rank of ex-I.N.A. personnel. He had already agreed to my addressing a meeting of this personnel and this amounted to about 3,000. The difference was a minor one and practically amounted to excluding the general public from this particular meeting as also that the officers should not wear their badges of rank. They had to wear their uniforms because often enough they had no clothes to wear. I told him that as far as possible this would be kept a private function though it was impossible to prevent wholly others from coming; also that generally badges will not be worn, though in some cases if people put them on this could not be objected to. His

whole point was that the ex-I.N.A. people should not appear to function as a regular army. I agreed with this. Later on I addressed these I.N.A. people gathered together. As a matter of fact quite considerable numbers of the public also crept in. The function was an impressive one and I tried to explain to the ex-I.N.A. personnel the changed conditions in which they were functioning now as well as the policy of the Congress in regard to nonviolence. It might be added that all these people were the civilian element in the I.N.A. as all the old Indian Army men in the I.N.A. had been sent back to India.

Apart from these two matters there was no other difficulty placed before me and I readily agreed to adjust my programme slightly to avoid any misunderstanding. I did not want to do anything which might go against the wishes of the other elements in the population.

As I have said the administration helped me in every way. Although we had our own automobiles, they placed two staff cars at my disposal as well as a jeep, and an aeroplane was kept handy in case of need. Further Lord Louis detailed the Chief of Staff of the Malaya Command, Brigadier Choudhuri,[2] as well as a young officer, Major Sawhney, to remain with me in case of need. I was not particularly anxious to have them with me, but I agreed as otherwise it might have appeared discourteous on my part. The chief object of sending these two officers with me was to avoid any incident during the tour. The whole administration was military and it was feared by Lord Louis that some petty local official might not behave exactly as he should. Brigadier Choudhuri and Major Sawhney were in fact helpful in many ways and they did not come in the way of my programme or other activities.

Lord Louis informed me that he had issued directions that no one, including members of the Indian Army, should be stopped from coming to my meetings or visiting me personally. As a matter of fact large numbers of Indian soldiers of the regular army did attend my meetings and I had occasion to meet several groups of British and Indian officers and to answer their many questions in regard to the future of India. This gave me an additional insight into the mind of the Indian Army.

During my tour which began in Singapore I visited almost all the chief towns in Malaya from the south to the north with the exception of two or three places on the east coast. Thus I visited Johore Bahru, Malacca, Seramban, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Taiping, Butterworth, Penang

2. J.N. Chaudhuri (b. 1908-; commissioned in the Indian army, 1928; served in Middle East and Burma, 1939-46; Commander, police action in Hyderabad State and later Military Governor, 1948-49; Overall Commander, Goa Operations, 1961; Chief of Army Staff, 1962-66; High Commissioner to Canada, 1966-69.

and Alor Star. Everywhere I was welcomed not only by the Indian population but by the Chinese and Malayans. The Chinese particularly played an important part in all these welcomes and gatherings. Others who took part were Indonesians, Eurasians, Ceylonese, etc. To give some idea of the universality of the welcome I might mention that in Ipoh 123 organizations joined in welcoming me. At one of my meetings one of the Sultans of the State, where I was having the meetings, attended. In another State, that of Keddah, I paid a short visit to the Sultan whom I found very interesting, and subsequently a formal Malayan feast was organized in my honour by the Sultan's brother. This was attended by people of all communities including British officers. Everywhere goodwill was expressed for India and for Indian freedom and it was emphasized that the whole of South East Asia looked up to the coming independence of India. Much interest was taken in the forthcoming negotiations with the members of the British Cabinet Mission.

I was interested and pleased to find that there was no conflict of any kind between the Indians and the Chinese or the Indians and the Malayans. It must be remembered that the Chinese form a very considerable part of the population. Indeed they number more than the Malayans themselves. While the Indians got on well with both the Chinese and the Malayans, there was a sense of conflict between the Chinese and the Malayans. Some people think that this conflict is likely to come to a head in the course of a year and there might even be big-scale trouble between them. There have already been a number of riots between these two communities. The Malayans are largely agricultural folk, simple in their ways and habits; the Chinese on the other hand are more concentrated in the cities and dominate the business and economic situation. Many of these Chinese people have lived there for generations. They don't mix easily with the Malayans. Owing to the recent development of the Indonesian struggle for freedom Malayans are increasingly looking toward Indonesia with which they have very much in common, in race, language and religion. Their language is almost the same; their religion is Islam toned down to some extent with many Indian survivals and generally non-aggressive. It is interesting to find many of these Indian survivals in the Sultan's courts. These Sultans used to be called Rajas till some time back. Even now one of them is called Raja — Raja of Perlis. The Chief Minister of some Sultans is called the *mantri*. The chief wife of one of the Sultans has the title Rajparmeshwari.

I was interested in finding out how the activities of the I.N.A. affected the relations of Indians with the Chinese and the Malayans. I was assured by all three communities that this had no bad effect. This was

surprising because the Chinese, or some of them, had organized a regular resistance movement against the Japanese occupation while the I.N.A. was obviously in many ways cooperating with the Japanese. Nevertheless there was no sense of conflict between the I.N.A. and the Chinese resistance movement and they even had a number of secret contacts. The Chinese evidently realized that the I.N.A. was not so much cooperating with the Japanese as working for the freedom of India with which they sympathized. The position was undoubtedly a difficult one for all concerned, but the fact remains that it did not lead to any bad blood between the Indians and the Chinese and at present their relations are definitely good. My visit has undoubtedly led to an even greater improvement in all these inter-racial relations in Malaya. I laid great stress on this factor wherever I spoke and I especially appealed to the Indians to remember that they were in essence guests in a foreign country and that they must cultivate the goodwill of the people of that country.

It must be remembered that during the Japanese occupation the Indians were more of a favoured community than any other except, of course, the Japanese themselves. This could easily have led to conflict and ill-feeling. The fact that it did not result in this is surprising and gratifying, but undoubtedly it led to bitterness among the Europeans and especially English people. These English people, some army men but mostly planters and others, were Japanese prisoners or internees and they were treated very badly by the Japanese. There appeared to have been some cases of real torture in order to extract information. They were made to work hard on public works like roads etc., and generally they were degraded in many ways. One significant fact that was brought to my notice was the general and the very marked decline of the morale of these British prisoners and internees. Many of them broke up completely and behaved in a manner which is distressing to think of. People working on the roads would bow down and *salam* everybody passing and beg for favours. Generally they behave in a very slavish way. Many of these persons are now officials of the B.M.A. and it is natural that they should feel vengeful not only against the Japanese but also to some extent against Indians who held superior positions in those days.

Probably this feeling will be toned down gradually because of the pressure of events. Already a marked improvement has been noticeable. From the 1st of April the Military Administration is giving way to the [illegible] administration, but more or less the same people are going to continue in a new garb i.e., the old British civilians or planters. Many Indians thought that this change will not be too good for them. They prefer the soldiers [illegible] and planters. More

especially Lord Louis Mountbatten was looked upon as a person who could function in a fairly generous way.

The object of my visit to Malaya was especially to find out about the ex-I.N.A. and the Indian Independence League people as well as to investigate, in so far as I could, the general conditions and living standards of the Indian workers. At my very first meeting with Lord Louis Mountbatten he told me that he was following the policy laid down in Delhi in regard to I.N.A. — i.e., he was not going to proceed against anyone for collaboration alone with the Japanese. Only in cases of cruelty and the like would cases be started. This meant that practically speaking all those in prison still would be discharged. There might be just a few cases involving cruelty. This cruelty in the case of Indians was incidental. That is to say the real people concerned were the Japanese officials, but some Indians were supposed to have given them information or to have otherwise assisted.

About two months back the Government of India sent a number of Indian lawyers to defend Indians accused of collaboration with the enemy in Malaya. Messrs. Bhashyam, K.F. Nariman and P.N. Sapru[3] with two junior lawyers were sent to Malaya for this purpose from India. As a matter of fact these lawyers have had practically no work to do because there have been no cases of collaboration, and they are all coming back soon to India. I do not think there is going to be much trouble about further legal proceedings against Indians in Malaya. One peculiar aspect with some of these proceedings was this: some Indians have been or are being proceeded against for cruelty etc. The Indian community generally objects to any public defence being organized for them as they are looked upon as people who in a sense played false even to the Indian cause during the Japanese occupation. So they have no sympathy for them.

One other matter to which Lord Louis referred in his conversation with me was the tracing of the funds of the Indian Independence League or the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. About this I shall write later.

Apart from my initial interview with Lord Louis Mountbatten I met him again the same evening at dinner at his place when we had further talks about various matters. These talks were more or less satisfactory so far as I was concerned.

3. Prakash Narain Sapru (1894-1969); member, Council of States, 1934-47; Judge, Allahabad High Court, 1947-54; member, Rajya Sabha, 1956-1962.

My dominant sensation during this visit to Malaya was one of exuberant vitality of the people there. Nine years ago I went to Malaya and found it politically speaking a placid place with practically no public life. The Malayans were rather backward and undeveloped, the Chinese and the Indians on the whole kept away from politics. The country was rich and fertile and it was easy to make a living or to prosper in business. The taxes were light. Even in the days of the great depression of the early thirties Malaya produced surplus budgets chiefly because of tin and rubber. Indeed it went so far as to make voluntary contributions of large sums to the British exchequer. Now all this was changed. Malaya has not suffered so much from the war so far as destruction of buildings is concerned or war casualties, but of course the life of the people has been completely upset and they have gone through a very difficult and harrowing experience. After the Japanese surrender Japanese currency became worthless and this hit a large number of people although even previously it had lost much of its value by inflation. I found now that the Malayans were wide awake and afraid of the Chinese; the Chinese were very active and especially the labour movement had grown exceedingly and was largely dominated by the Chinese, usually Communists. The labour movement was a joint affair of the Chinese and the Indians though some unions were almost entirely of Indians or Chinese. So far as the Indian population is concerned generally it has changed considerably during this ordeal and it was psychologically different. There was an element of fear in the top ranks which was natural because of the changed circumstances, but even this fear was gradually disappearing; but the dominant note everywhere was one of confidence and in a sense aggression. They remembered the days when in a vague kind of way they functioned as members of a free government and they were proud of them. Even the half-clad and naked labourers held themselves up straighter than they used to. The I.N.A. and the I.I.L. had taught them discipline and everywhere groups of Indian men and women in tattered uniforms tried to function as disciplined soldiers and indeed functioned fairly satisfactorily. There were also the *Balsena*[4] and the *Balikasena*.[5] It surprised me to see these Tamil workers of the rubber plantations transformed into these military groups. It surprised me still more to see the new spirit among the timid and gentle-faced Tamil women some of whom went about in uniform.

The I.N.A. national anthem was heard everywhere and at every function. If there was a labour union it would probably begin its proceed-

4. Boys' brigade.
5. Girls' brigade.

ings with the Chinese national song and the I.N.A. song. The Indian national flag was very much in evidence everywhere and *Jai Hind* was a universal greeting, sometimes even used by non-Indians to Indians. Indeed members of the regular army used it frequently and I was told they even used it to their own officers. When I visited the Pearl Hill prison in Singapore in the company of the Inspector General of Prisons and the Superintendent of the Prison, both Englishmen, all the warders of the prison greeted me loudly with *Jai Hind.* Indeed *Jai Hind* had attained a degree of popularity which was surprising and it was being used by officials and non-officials alike.

While the Indian workers had developed this spirit, in an economic sense they were very badly off. It was painful to see their lack of clothing and their general standards were terribly low; especially in Central and Northern Malaya there was a general labour strike when I was there and it had already lasted ten weeks. It is presumably still continuing. Railway workers are almost entirely Indian. Their demands or most of them appeared to me fairly reasonable. I did not actually interfere in this strike except to express general sympathy for labour and privately to put in a good word for them to the authorities. Publicly I suggested an arbitration or the appointment by the Government of some kind of conciliation board, but nothing of this kind was done so long as I was there. The Government were running the railways with the help of military personnel.

All these Indian railway workers as well as other workers were anxious to return to India if they could not get better conditions there. Indeed this desire to return to India was widespread among Indians of all classes. This was partly due to their lack of contact with India during the past six or seven years and partly to the expectation that India was going to gain her independence soon. Also they did not like the new conditions under which they had to live. During the last few years their economic condition was bad, but they had experienced a certain elation of spirit which kept them going. Now that elation was gone and they felt depressed. Everywhere I was asked to help in their repatriation. I said that in so far as we could help we would do so but we could not do much. There were shipping difficulties and the B.M.A. was not going to divert its shipping for Indian purposes. I warned them that if they came to India now they might get into greater difficulties because of famine conditions prevailing in some parts of the country, especially in Madras where most of them came from. I did not encourage them to come back in any large numbers at any rate during the next six months or so.

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One major problem arising out of the days of Japanese occupation was that of the workers who had been sent to build the Burma-Siam railway. Over 100,000 workers had been sent by the Japanese and by far the greater number of these were Indians from the rubber plantations or elsewhere. They were forcibly taken and often they were not even allowed time to bid goodbye to their own people. Young men suddenly disappeared leaving no trace behind. The area where the Burma-Siam railway was being built was peculiarly unhealthy and there were no proper arrangements for medical attention. Wages were low and not always paid and work was hard. The result was that a large number, variously estimated at from 40,000 to 60,000, died. The Burma-Siam railway became a death-trap. Many of these returned only to die in the streets of their home towns. Even after the conclusion of hostilities there were large numbers still working away; they were gradually sent back. The British Military Administration opened relief camps. I visited one of these big relief camps at Jitra in the north-east of Malaya not far from the Siamese border. At the time I went there there were about 400 men, women and children, but it had accommodated several thousands at a time. The camp was well run and the man in charge, a British officer, seemed to me to be intelligent and sensitive. The chief lack was that of cloth there and elsewhere. After some stay in the camp these workers were sent back to their homes or to their estates where they worked. A number died.

Probably there will be a progressive improvement in conditions in Malaya as things go back to normal. Prices are slowly going down and cloth, food and other necessaries will slowly flow in. The work in the plantations and elsewhere will begin again, but this intervening period is a hard one for the poor and the workers and unless proper relief is given some may not survive and others may suffer irreparable damage. One cannot blame the administration solely for all that is happening for it is the inevitable consequence of war. Nevertheless a policy which thinks more in terms of the worker and less in terms of the people at the top would bring better results. In any event it is clear that the workers, Indian or other, are no longer going to submit to the old conditions.

These are some of my impressions jotted down in a somewhat disjointed way. The main problems that arise are as follows :

(1) The political aspect of the I.N.A. and the I.I.L.: As far as I could make out there will not be much prosecution or persecution and a lenient policy is going to be pursued. There may be a few cases of a minor kind. One difficulty, however, is bound to remain. The Administration will not re-engage those of its servants who have parti-

WITH LORD MOUNTBATTEN, SINGAPORE, MARCH 1946

WITH STAFFORD CRIPPS AND MAULANA AZAD IN DELHI, APRIL 1946

cipated in I.N.A. or I.I.L. This was one of the complaints put forward before me on behalf of the Indians; but I told them that I considered it absurd for us to ask for this reinstatement. One cannot have it both ways — to fight the British authority and ask for service under them. It is possible, however, that a few of them may go back to some kind of service.

(2) The general economic condition of the Indians and especially of the workers must be improved. This means better wages to fit in with the higher cost of living as well as other amenities. This depends almost entirely on the B.M.A. or the planters, but workers can be helped by a general public support of their demands.

(3) Lack of clothing, medical supplies and food: Malaya produces very little food and it used to import most of it. The B.M.A. is trying to get food from outside as well as to grow some. Clothing is, for the moment, even more important. Again the B.M.A. is trying to get some kind of cotton cloth from outside chiefly from India. We are sending on behalf of the Congress 100 bales as a token gesture. I wish we could send more especially saris for women. Our medical mission has been hung up here waiting for transport. This must be expedited.

(4) The general question of relief in Malaya involves relief of the ex-I.N.A. and I.I.L. personnel as well as of the estate workers. There were a number of relief organizations at work, but they had so far done little. There was a great deal of personal rivalry among them. Just before leaving Malaya I consulted a number of people and appointed a relief committee which should organize and supervise all relief operations among Indians with the help of existing organizations. This relief committee has not been fully constituted yet and a number of names may have to be added. At the desire of the people there I made myself the chairman of this relief committee though I was going to be an absentee chairman. It was felt that this would enable me to keep in touch with the work and might also help in dealings with the local administration. The vice-chairman and the acting chairman is N. Raghavan of Penang; the other members so far are:—

J. Thivy	Brahmachari Kylasam
Dr. Lakshmaya	Miss J. Thevar
R. Jumabhoy	Sucha Singh
Mrs. Chidambaram	Makhanlal

Probably we shall add another five or six names to this list to make it representative of various States and regions in Malaya.

I proposed to give to this committee all the monies received by me in the shape of purses in Malaya. This amounted to about $ 85,000. In addition we might be able to get some of the monies which previously belonged to the I.I.L. or the Provisional Government. It has been decided to create a trust which would control all these monies which would be utilized for relief purposes only. The trust deed is being drafted.

(5) In regard to the monies that belonged to the I.I.L. or the Provisional Government some further inquiry was necessary in order to trace it. It was chiefly for this reason that I left Hutheesing behind with instructions to find out and report to me. The British Security Service, of course, has carried out its own inquiries in the matter and probably gathered considerable information in regard to it. They have also seized some funds. I spoke to Lord Louis Mountbatten about this matter and suggested to him that all such funds might be handed over for relief purposes. He seemed to approve the idea, but he could not easily commit himself at that stage. I asked him for information on the subject from his officers. He promised to have this sent, but it did not reach me before I left.

It is obvious that owing to the sudden surrender of the Japanese considerable funds belonging to the Provisional Government or the I.I.L. must have been in the hands of various parties. A large sum amounting to about Rs. 3,000,000 was, I believe, seized by the British Government from the Rangoon branch of the Azad Hind Bank. Some other sums in Japanese or Indonesian currency have also been so seized by them. It must be remembered that though these sums can be counted in millions, in fact they are far smaller as these currencies have depreciated greatly. For instance a million would be under one hundred thousand. In the case of Japanese currency it has ceased to have any value, and I saw scores of Japanese currency notes in dollars lying about in the streets of Singapore. So much of the money belonging to the Provisional Government or I.I.L. has simply ceased to have any value. There was some, however, in Indian currency and some in gold and jewellery. Some gold bars were traced and were in possession of an Indian merchant in Singapore in value amounting to approximately $ 60,000. I was told about this and the B.M.A. knew about it too and in fact had demanded it from him. He had so far refused to part with it. I spoke to Lord Louis Mountbatten about this particular gold and suggested that I might take possession of it in my name and then transfer it to the relief fund. He agreed. Before leaving Singapore I interviewed the merchant in question and he

agreed to hand them over to me. I instructed a bank to take possession. I do not yet know whether the transfer was actually effected. As soon as this is done and all legal difficulties have been removed the gold will be sold and the money incorporated into the trust fund. If it is possible for us to get hold of any other monies belonging to the I.I.L. or the Provisional Government I shall try to treat it in a similar fashion. I hope to have a full report in regard to all these monies, bullion and jewellery when Hutheesing returns to India. This would apply to the monies etc., in Malaya and would not include those in Burma or in Bangkok or Indo-China. It may be possible however to trace some of these also later.

I might add that there is considerable ill-feeling among Indians in regard to these funds and accusations against one another are being made. This is perhaps natural under the circumstances. I hope that after a full inquiry some light will be thrown on this matter. Of course it may be possible to trace all the monies.

(6) A question was frequently put to me in Malaya about the new Malayan Union which is coming into existence from the 1st April.[6] It affects Indians chiefly in regard to nationality as they might have to choose some time or other as to whether they continue to be Indian nationals or adopt Malayan nationality. I did not express an opinion about the scheme of Malayan Union as such as I had not studied it in any detail; in any event I did not want to enter into Malayan politics. The scheme is agitating Malayans and Chinese alike. To the Indians I said that I had no doubt that some time or other they would have to choose their nationality in Malaya, in Burma and in Ceylon; they could not have the privileges and obligations of two nationalities at the same time; that even if they remained Indian nationals, as they had every right to do if they so chose, they should have fair dealing in Malaya and open opportunities. The choice really was an individual matter. Indians who had been born in Malaya and have sometimes lived there for generations might well choose Malayan nationality. That did not mean, of course, a break with India in the cultural sense, but it did mean a certain political status; in any event Indians must cultivate the goodwill of the other people of Malaya.

(7) My visit to Malaya has, I think, had a good effect in many ways. It has cheered up the Indian population there; it has brought the

6. The British plan for Malaysia, incorporated in the Straits Settlement Act passed in January 1946, envisaged a Malayan Union with two different administrations and Singapore as a separate colony. There was a protest in Malaya against the undemocratic character of the Act and the indefiniteness of many of its important provisions.

today and if there was an election he would undoubtedly have a great majority behind him. It is fortunate that he has friendly feelings towards India and the Indian national movement. He attended the Ramgarh Congress. So while there is a good deal of anti-Indian feeling in Burma the leaders at the top do not encourage it and in fact take up a very reasonable attitude. Burma, like India though in a different way, is seething today with political unrest. Probably nothing will happen for some months to come, may be till the end of the year; but it is obvious that conditions cannot go on as they are. If there are elections then a new situation will arise as it has arisen in India. These elections are not likely to be held before the next winter. In any event the next year or even earlier will see big developments in Burma and if the British Government does not take the initiative in the matter there may be an upheaval there. Burma, it should be remembered, has no background of the nonviolent technique of action and any upheaval there is bound to be violent. Aung San himself wants to avoid this as far as possible and is working for peaceful ends, but the material is too inflammable.

I might mention that a number of prominent Indians in Burma are taking the initiative in forming a new organization which definitely declares that it wants no special privileges for Indians in Burma from the British Government, that it wants the friendship of the Burmese people and desires to support them in every way in their struggle for freedom. Naturally they want full opportunities for living there as full citizens whether as Burmese nationals or as Indian nationals. Apart from this they don't want any special favour more especially from a foreign authority like the British. I think this is a very good move and should be encouraged. The Indians in Burma have suffered greatly in the past because of the attitude of certain Indian vested interests there who were always craving special protection from the British as against the Burmese. It is clear that the British are not going to give such protection to Indians, and indeed cannot do so even if they wished. The future of Indians in Burma, in Malaya, and in Ceylon lies in their cooperation with the people there and in the strength of a free Indian Government behind them.

I have ventured to draw up this note for you immediately upon my return from Malaya while impressions are fresh in my mind. I think this note is far from exhaustive. I hope it will give you and the Working Committee some picture of the conditions prevailing there. Should you desire any further information which I am in a position to give I would gladly do so.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

22. Impressions of Malaya[1]

I spent eight days in Malaya and visited nearly all the important towns, except a few on the east coast. From Singapore I went to Johore Malacca, Seramban, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Butterworth and Penang. This continuous touring involved a heavy strain, but I felt exhilarated by the response I found everywhere.

Nine years ago, when I visited Malaya last, I had found a warm welcome, but the country was hardly awakened politically. This time there was a complete difference and the war years had shaken up the people completely. All of them had gone through harrowing experiences and some of them had functioned in new capacities in entirely new environments. Malayans, who have been politically backward, were now wide awake and rather apprehensive of the future.

They were even more interested than others in the struggle for independence in Indonesia, for Malayans and Indonesians are very nearly akin to one another. The Chinese were well organised, and largely controlled the growing and powerful labour movement.

The Indians had a lot of experience and had been associated in some way or other with the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and in the Indian National Army. Apart from these, the sufferings involved in wartime, repeated changes of fortunes, the depreciation of money and the soaring prices of commodities had affected the life of the entire population, more especially of the poor. Indian workers were particularly hard hit by these changes. I found the curious combination of exhilaration and depression among these Indians, depression naturally due to the economic conditions leading to low wages and to the shortage of food and clothing which was in the latter case very acute.

Yet, the overriding impression upon me of the people was not one of depression, but of a new vitality and even, to some extent, of an aggressive spirit, which was not prepared to tolerate a meek submission to external events. Altogether, I found in Malaya a spirit of bubbling vitality.

It is astonishing how the tenant labourers of both the States, who had joined the I.N.A. or the I.I.L., had gained in stature and developed a certain discipline. Everywhere, I found these disciplined men and women, just as everywhere I also found semi-naked and destitute Indian

1. Address to press conference, Allahabad, 30 March 1946. From *National Herald*, 31 March 1946.

workers. The economic position of the workers will slowly improve as conditions go back to normal, and the work in plantation is renewed. Nevertheless, the gap between prices and their earnings and pay was very big and, in many events, it would take considerable time before they all got back to work. This period is a dangerous period unless very effective steps are taken to lessen the gap and for relief otherwise.

There was a big railway strike during my visit and this had already lasted seven weeks. I do not know if it has ended now. Railway workers are almost entirely Indians. Their old wages obviously had no relation with the rise in prices and there was great discontent. Something was done by the administration to raise their wages by 20 per cent or so and to give them a rise at a reasonable rate, but this was not considered nearly enough, and the strike was continued. Railways were largely run by military personnel during the strike.

The crux of the feelings of the Indian workers, both in railways and estates was that they must be repatriated to India unless their conditions were quickly improved. They felt that they could not continue to live in existing conditions with all hardships and humiliations involved. Probably, in previous years, they might have put up with all this, but the new sense of freedom and vitality and the experience had made them yearn for some change, though it was not known where that change would lead to. Also there was a widespread consciousness that India was on the verge of independence and all the Indians abroad wanted to share in that freedom that was coming.

So far as the personnel of the ex-I.N.A. is concerned, all the old Indian army personnel had been sent back to India. Only the civilian element remained. I must have come across at least 5,000 or more of the latter, usually in tattered uniform. These people were previously employed as workers or shopkeepers in Malaya. Many of them probably had no training in the army. Obviously they could not function as an organised army group. Still to some extent they felt together and there was a spirit of comradeship. Some of them had gone back to their old occupations while others still remained unemployed. Malaya is fairly thinly populated and the need for labour is great. So it is possible that nearly all of them might be absorbed in some occupation, but this will take some time and the Government's policy was not to give employment to those who had prominently figured in the I.N.A. Whether its policy will or can continue, I do not know.

This raises an important question in regard to future labour outside India. It is obvious that no Indian wanted to serve abroad in any humiliating capacity or with low wages and unsatisfactory conditions of life. It may be desirable for any Indian government to prevent all future

Malaya. The rest of the mission is still held up in Calcutta for want of transport. It is urgently necessary that this mission should be sent soon.

As regards clothing, the British Military Administration had ordered large supplies of clothes, probably worth ten million dollars, from India, but they did not know when they will get it. I have just heard that Sardar Vallabhbhai, on behalf of the Congress, has despatched 100 bales of cloth, especially saris for women, from Bombay to Singapore. This is not much, but it will be very welcome there. These bales are gifts of a number of mills in Bombay and are meant for free distribution. I trust similar gifts will continue to be made by the textile mills in India so that we can supply in some measure the need of our people in Malaya, especially our womenfolk there.

There were a number of relief organisations, recently founded by Indians there. I felt that none of these was firm enough to cope effectively with the situation. Just before my return, therefore, I consulted various friends and nominated a central Indian relief committee, which could take charge of all relief work. At the request of friends there I accepted the chairmanship of this committee, though obviously I was going to be an absentee chairman. It was felt that this committee will be helpful in many ways and keep us in India in touch with the Malayan situation. The vice-chairman and the acting chairman of this committee is Mr. N. Raghavan of Penang. So far there are ten other members, but it is proposed to add to this number. I took with me Mr. G.F. Hutheesing, as my secretary, and I have left him there for some further enquiries. On his return after a week, I hope to add fresh names to the relief committee.

During my tour, I received some purses amounting to 85,000 dollars; in addition to this probably another sum of about 60,000 dollars has been promised. It is proposed to create a trust fund of all this and other monies received for the relief of the Indians in Malaya.

Indian in Malaya, having been cut off from India completely for six years, are passionately desirous of renewing contacts with the motherland. Many of these wanted to come back, but shipping facilities are few. Everywhere I was asked to help them in repatriation. I was also asked to induce Indian leaders to visit Malaya from time to time.

In Malaya, one of the issues which is disturbing the public mind greatly is the proposed Malayan Union which, I believe, would come into existence very soon. I do not like to express any opinion about the internal Malayan politics nor indeed have I studied it closely. But inevitably Indians will have to choose in future, whether they are in Malaya, China or Ceylon, if they prefer to remain in the Indian nation or to acquire a nationality of the country they inhabit. Probably, most of them will prefer to retain Indian nationality as they are proud of India.

was realisation of this everywhere. People felt that the independence of India was the key to the freedom of other Asian countries.

23. Second Report on Visit to Malaya[1]

New Delhi
4 April 1946

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I went to Malaya last month and spent about eight days there. I went under the directions of the Congress Working Committee and I have already submitted a report on my visit to the Congress President.[2] I am sending this brief report to you in regard to matters chiefly relating to the I.N.A. and the I.I.L. personnel in Malaya.

I had occasion to meet nearly every important Indian who was out of prison in Malaya. I also met some Indian leaders and others in Pearl Hill prison and in the hospital in Singapore. I was unfortunately unable to visit Major Swamy[3] and a few others who were in a prison which I could not find time to visit, but I sent a friend to visit Major Swamy and he informed me that he was quite well.

There is no doubt that the conditions of the I.N.A. and I.I.L. personnel were bad soon after the British reoccupation and this continued for some time. When I went there, there had already been some improvement and I imagine that my visit has led to greater improvement. I was told by Lord Louis Mountbatten that the Malayan Administration would not proceed with any case of collaboration alone with the Japanese. But in cases involving cruelty and torture proceedings would be started. I cannot say how many such cases there are going to be, but I imagine there are not many. One case that was brought to my notice was that in which the Bishop of Singapore was concerned. I was informed that the Japanese had tortured him and treated him with considerable brutality. The real offenders were the Japanese, but it was stated that some Indians were indirectly involved.

Because there have been no cases of collaboration the Indian lawyers sent by the Government of India for defence purposes, namely Bhashyam,

1. Given to Vallabhbhai Patel, Chairman, I.N.A. Enquiry and Relief Committee. J.N. Collection.
2. See *ante*, item 21.
3. Major N.G. Swamy of the I.N.A.; confidential secretary to Subhas Bose and in charge of the secret service of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind.

very high prices which are totally out of relation with wages. The problem in relation to I.N.A. and I.I.L. was more limited though big enough. We have to think of providing employment for them probably in some productive sphere, giving relief where needed and of repatriation to India. There was a very strong desire throughout the Indian community to get back to India. There were shipping difficulties in the way and also, I believe, a certain reluctance of the Government of India to encourage any large-scale repatriation for fear that these people might be centres of trouble for them in India. In the case of some important persons and those having families or contacts with India repatriation should certainly be urged by us, but in the case of large numbers of labourers and like folk it hardly seems desirable to encourage their return to India during the next few months owing to famine and food scarcity here. It must be remembered that most of them come from Madras where food conditions are worst. Anyway there is little chance of shipping or other facilities being offered by Government. Labour is scarce in Malaya and as the rubber estates get going the demand for labour will increase. This raises an important question as to Indian policy towards Indian labour abroad. Obviously we must sternly discourage accepting any inferior or degrading position abroad. It may even be necessary to stop all emigration.

During my brief eight days in Malaya I must have come across at least 5,000 I.N.A. personnel including the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, the *Balsena* and the *Balikasena*. They struck me as a fine lot of persons politically conscious and eager to do something worthwhile for their country. Naturally there is not much scope in a foreign country for them to do this. It was different in war time when the Provisional Government and the I.I.L. were functioning. The immediate problem is that they should look after themselves or be looked after and should hold together. There were a number of relief organizations working in local areas but they had little resources or influence. I decided, therefore, to form a new relief committee which would organize and supervise all relief work. This would include immediate relief, finding employment, settlement schemes and the like. At the request of friends there I accepted the chairmanship of the committee as this would facilitate their work in some respects and at the same time keep us in India in touch with them. The other members of the committee so far appointed were: N. Raghavan (Vice-Chairman & Acting Chairman), R. Ramani, J. Thivy, Dr. Lakshmaya, R. Jumabhoy, Mrs. Chidambaram, Makhanlal, Sucha, Miss J. Thevar, Brahmachari Kylasam.

More names will be added by me to this committee after I receive a further report from Hutheesing who is due back within a few days.

Sapru and Nariman, had really had no work to do. Bhashyam has already come back to Madras and others are likely to come back soon.

I do not know what legal developments there might be in the future, but I imagine that they will be limited in scope and affecting only a few persons. For these it should be possible to make arrangements for defence in Malaya itself.

While in Malaya I received cablegrams from Borneo and other places informing me of heavy sentences on Indians who had been associated with the I.I.L. I did not know the facts of those cases and it was not easy to find out. As Borneo and various other places in South East Asia are under the S.E.A. Command I decided to make some arrangements for dealing with them in Malaya itself at the Headquarters of S.E.A.C. I have asked Mr. R. Ramani to make inquiries regarding all such cases outside Malaya but within the S.E.A. Command and to take such other steps as may be necessary, such as pointing out that the policy in regard to collaboration which had been adopted in Delhi and Malaya should be followed elsewhere also. I informed the S.E.A. Command also of this arrangement of mine.

It should be remembered that this does not include the Andaman Islands which are directly under the Government of India and any arrangement for the Andaman Islands will have to be made separately.

Thus so far as Malaya is concerned the legal aspect is not very important. I imagine that most of the remaining I.N.A. or I.I.L. personnel will be discharged soon. Indeed some like Goho and Abid Hassan[4] have been discharged already.

The general political aspect has also improved greatly and any direct persecution or repression is not likely to take place. One thing will take place and that is the Administration will avoid employing men prominently connected with the I.N.A. and I.I.L. I found it difficult to urge any claims for re-employment as this somehow did not fit in with our general policy and the aggressive spirit of the I.N.A. Still I think that gradually there will be a measure of re-employment. I found many I.N.A. sepoys had already drifted back to the rubber estates. Altogether the political position is more or less satisfactory but requires vigilant care.

The economic position is certainly not good. I shall not deal here with the great difficulties being experienced by Indians generally, especially by Indian labour owing to lack of food, clothing, low wages and

4. A.H. Safrani (b. 1911); a close associate of Subhas Bose and accompanied him on his submarine voyage from Germany to Japan; joined the Indian Foreign Service, 1949; ambassador to Syria, 1963; ambassador to Senegal, 1965; ambassador to Denmark, 1965-69.

very high prices which are totally out of relation with wages. The problem in relation to I.N.A. and I.I.L. was more limited though big enough. We have to think of providing employment for them probably in some productive sphere, giving relief where needed and of repatriation to India. There was a very strong desire throughout the Indian community to get back to India. There were shipping difficulties in the way and also, I believe, a certain reluctance of the Government of India to encourage any large-scale repatriation for fear that these people might be centres of trouble for them in India. In the case of some important persons and those having families or contacts with India repatriation should certainly be urged by us, but in the case of large numbers of labourers and like folk it hardly seems desirable to encourage their return to India during the next few months owing to famine and food scarcity here. It must be remembered that most of them come from Madras where food conditions are worst. Anyway there is little chance of shipping or other facilities being offered by Government. Labour is scarce in Malaya and as the rubber estates get going the demand for labour will increase. This raises an important question as to Indian policy towards Indian labour abroad. Obviously we must sternly discourage accepting any inferior or degrading position abroad. It may even be necessary to stop all emigration.

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More names will be added by me to this committee after I receive a further report from Hutheesing who is due back within a few days.

24. Third Report on Visit to Malaya[1]

Confidential

New Delhi
16 April 1946

Dear Mr. President,

This is in continuation of the report on my visit to Malaya which I sent you on the 28th March 1946. Since then Shri Hutheesing has returned from Malaya and has given me further information about the various matters which I had entrusted to him. He has presented to me two reports; one dealing with the enquiry in regard to the funds of the Indian Independence League and the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, and another dealing with other matters chiefly the railway strike and the formation of the Central Indian Association. Many of the matters dealt with in these reports are of a confidential nature to which publicity should not be given. I am giving the originals of these reports to the General Secretary of the A.I.C.C. for record in his office. Should you or any member of the Working Committee desire to see them they will, of course, be available there. Hutheesing has also given me certain appendices to his reports which are also being given to the General Secretary of the A.I.C.C. I am dealing with these matters briefly below to enable you and the Working Committee to know exactly where matters stand in Malaya.

Funds:— Hutheesing carried out a careful and fairly detailed inquiry into these and interviewed practically all the persons intimately concerned with them. He also saw those who were making charges against others and where such a charge was made he tried to trace it and gave every opportunity for proof being produced. His conclusions are, and I entirely agree with them, that there is no evidence of malfeasance though there was a good deal of slackness and inefficiency at the end. It must be remembered that the state of affairs in Malaya at that time was extraordinary. The Japanese had surrendered and were retiring, the British were taking possession in a day or two. There was thus a kind of interregnum when no constituted authority existed. Even before this constituted authority had been gradually vanishing. Members of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the I.I.L. were placed in a very peculiar and difficult position and did not know what their fate was going to be. In such circumstances one can hardly expect normal efficiency, discipline and ordered life. Especially after the departure of Shri

1. Given to Maulana Azad. J.N. Collection.

Lord Louis Mountbatten could not commit himself to this but promised to recommend it to the civilian administration that was going to take office on the 1st of April. I have received a letter from Major General H.R. Hone, Chief of the Malaya Command, in which he tells me that full information in regard to such funds will be sent to me later. I am continuing my efforts to get these funds transferred for relief work, but I am not by any means sure that this will be done.

In conclusion I wish to say that as far as I can make out no blame attaches to the leading members of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the I.I.L. in regard to these funds though undoubtedly there was some inefficiency towards the end. Certain allegations were made specially against Mr. N. Raghavan, the Finance Minister of the Azad Hind Government. None of these were substantiated and indeed a document produced in support of these allegations was found by Huthees-ing to be forged. Both Hutheesing and I are clearly of the opinion that Raghavan is completely free of any taint in this matter or in any other. He is undoubtedly one of the leading and most popular Indians in Malaya though he has a number of enemies especially among those who have recently returned from India. It was because I had full faith in Raghavan and his capacity that I appointed him the vice-chairman and acting chairman of the relief committee I have formed there. I might add that all the I.N.A. officers here whom I have consulted have also expressed their full faith in Raghavan.

I have received drafts of the trust deed from Ramani and Raghavan for the creation of a trust for the relief of Indians. I am considering these and shall let you know what further steps have been taken in the matter later.

Railway Strike: I mentioned in my last report that a railway strike chiefly involving Indian workers had been going on in Malaya for seven weeks when I was there. Soon after my departure this strike was on the point of collapsing. Hutheesing has been approached by the workers and he got in touch with the authorities also. As a result of his efforts he was successful in getting what must be considered in the circumstances very good terms for the strikers. Both parties having agreed to these terms the strike ended. I should like to say that this was a remarkable piece of work done by Hutheesing and the results he achieved were such that I could hardly have considered them possible. I myself had talks with some of the authorities there in regard to the railway strike and I had found them completely deaf to any other approach than their own. The fact that when the strike was actually collapsing they were induced to agree to relatively favourable terms for the strikers was a very creditable achievement indeed. From a message received by me subsequently from

4

THE I.N.A. TRIALS

the railway workers it is clear that they have greatly appreciated and are thankful for the part that Hutheesing took in resolving the strike to their advantage.

Relief Committee: The Indian Relief Committee I formed in Malaya has started its work and held a meeting in Kuala Lumpur at which Hutheesing and Prakash Narain Sapru were present and R. Ramani had been elected treasurer and J. Thivy, recently released from prison, had been appointed joint secretary. I think Thivy's choice as secretary is a very good one as he commands the confidence of most people.

I am adding five names to the relief committee. These five names are:—

Mr. O.A.R. Arunachalam Chettiar (Malacca)
Mr. S. Seenikkatti (Chulea Muslim representative from Ipoh)
Mr. Chidambaram Chettiar (East coast representative from Kunten)
Dr. Muttatambi (Johore Baru)
Mr. Swami Atmaram (Kuala Lumpur)

I am also empowering the relief committee as now constituted to add two additional names to their number if they so choose.

Central Indian Association: Efforts are being made, as suggested by me, to reconstitute the Central Indian Association for Malaya which might represent Indian interests there. Hutheesing took part in the meeting organised for this purpose.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

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Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Allahabad
March 4, 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,
I have to inform you that during my Garhwal tour I received purses amounting to about Rs. 30,000/- (to be exact Rs. 29503/4/, but this may be added to later). These were chiefly for I.N.A. relief work in Garhwal and partly for Congress work there. The money has been deposited in my name in the Bharat Bank Limited at Kotdwar in Garhwal. I suggest that this money should be credited in the I.N.A. account and then debited for Garhwal. I have made various suggestions as to how this should be utilised directly or indirectly for I.N.A. relief in Garhwal. Apart from immediate relief to those discharged and to dependants of those dead, we are trying to start some productive centres for wool spinning and weaving. Garhwal has already got 800 I.N.A. men and it is likely to have another two thousand or more soon. There is a local I.N.A. committee functioning there.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. To R.F. Bahadur[1]

Allahabad
March 5, 1946

Dear Bahadurji,[2]
Thank you for your letter which I received rather late as I had been touring. I am glad that you have agreed to go to Delhi for the I.N.A. cases. We do not know exactly what policy Government will pursue in this matter. It is quite possible that they might have many more

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1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
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Nandan has exhausted his money for defence work. I suggest that you send him Rs. 5000/- more.

I was informed yesterday that the Government of India have agreed to issue permits for sending about 100 bales of cloth (especially saris) to Malaya. I have suggested that these be issued in your name. Could you kindly ask the Bombay or Ahmedabad mills to supply these free for free distribution to Indians in Malaya? There is some difficulty about despatching them from Bombay. It is easy to do so by Government from Calcutta or Madras. Perhaps a Scindia boat could take them to Madras and then Government will send them on. They will be sent to the Government Agent in Singapore but he will hand them over to representatives there. Probably the Government will write to you.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

4. Warning Against New Trials[1]

On my return from Bhopal, I learnt that two new trials of I.N.A. officers are going to begin early next month. We hoped and expected that this unfortunate chapter of trials and long detention was over. Recent releases, which had long been overdue, had confirmed this hope, and now comes this news. The civil and military authorities of the Government of India function in a mysterious way. This, I suppose, is their method of preparing India for the freedom to come. Whatever they may have in their minds, they succeed remarkably well in irritating public opinion and making a difficult situation even worse.

Obviously, if trials are held, the challenge will be accepted in every way. But all this fits in ill with the Cabinet Mission and its activities, as well as the many other declarations that have been made by the British Government.

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 24 April 1946. *National Herald*, 25 April 1946.

case would probably not be started on the merits alone. Much less I would venture to say it is desirable to start it at present.

There are many other considerations, but I shall not trouble you with them. I trust that you will reconsider this matter and come to the conclusion that I have suggested.

There are at present a number of I.N.A. officers who come from Indian States, notably from Kapurthala and Bahawalpur. While others have been released, these officers are still detained. I do not know what special reasons apply to these officers from the Indian States and why they should be treated differently. You suggested at one time that all releases would be effected by the first of May. Today is the last day of April. I was hoping that we could start with a clean sheet from tomorrow.

You will excuse me for writing this letter to you, but I felt that I should make this appeal to you and I was encouraged in doing this by the suggestion of the mutual friend mentioned above.[2]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. In his reply dated 3 May 1946 General Auchinleck denied that differential treatment had been accorded to officers of the Indian States Forces. He assured Jawaharlal that all I.N.A. prisoners would be released by 15 May 1946.

6. To Raghunandan Saran[1]

Personal and confidential

Simla
May 2, 1946

My dear Nandan,

I have just learned that the new I.N.A. trials are not going to take place.[2] Probably the Commander-in-Chief will issue some statement or orders for the withdrawal of these cases. So far so good. That, I take it, ends the chapter of I.N.A. trials. Munshi and Ali Zaheer,[3] if they have come, can now go back.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On 2 May 1946, the Government announced that no more men of the I.N.A. would be tried.
3. Syed Ali Zaheer (b. 1896); member, U.P. Legislative Council, 1930-37; left the Muslim League in 1937 and organised the Shia community; President, All India Shia Political Conference, 1941, 1945; Member, Interim Government, September-October 1946; ambassador to Iran, 1947-51; Minister, U.P. Cabinet, 1951, 1952-60, 1963-67; author of *The Dead Past*.

upon in the past as agents of foreign authority and so long as political conditions in India do not change completely, this approach will remain. As a matter of fact various factors during the past few months have gone towards breaking down, or at any rate lessening, the barriers between the army and the civil population. This is all to the good. Nevertheless the final barrier will remain till the army can consider itself, and is in fact, a real national army. I hope the day is not distant when this will happen. You must know that most of us have friends and relatives in the Army, the Navy and the Air Force and so, apart from wider national considerations, even personal factors make us interested in the future of the defence services.

We know that large numbers of officers and men of the Indian army, who were taken prisoners by the Japanese in Malaya, suffered terribly.[2] Thousands did not survive this ordeal. Those who underwent this suffering certainly deserve our full sympathy. We know also that every person who joined the I.N.A. did not necessarily do so for patriotic motives, but, having personally come across a fairly large number of I.N.A. officers and men, I must say that I have been struck by the high calibre of many of them. I have no doubt that the basic motive for many of them was patriotic and the desire to help in achieving India's freedom.

It is sometimes said that we have exploited this I.N.A. situation for political purposes. Almost everything in India fits in somewhere into the political picture because the fact of India's subjection dominates life here. But I can say with some confidence that there was no desire or even thought of exploiting the I.N.A. issue for political purposes when this matter first came before the public. I believe I was the first person to mention it in public. The sole thought before me was that thousands of my countrymen, whom I believed to be patriotic, were in grave danger. I did not then know the full story of the I.N.A., but knowing my countrymen fairly well I could understand how they must have felt in a difficult situation. I realised also the repercussions on them of events in India. I had not appreciated the political and international approach of some of the leaders of the Indian independence movement in South East Asia. I had differed from them in the past on international and national issues. Nevertheless I felt kinship and sympathy for these people and I knew well what the reaction of the public mind in India would be. The possibility that some swift action by courts martial might be taken against large

2. Of the 60,000 men of the Indian Army, who were taken prisoner in the Second World War, some 40,000 stood firm to their oath of allegiance, resisting throughout their captivity the propaganda to which they were subjected and, in some cases, also facing starvation and torture.

numbers of them filled me with apprehension not only because of the persons involved, but also because of the inevitable consequences in India. Sensing all this I made my first public reference to the I.N.A. and followed this up with subsequent references. It did not strike me at all at the time that political advantage could be taken of this affair. Then a strange and surprising thing happened, not strange in itself but very surprising because of its depth and extent. Though I had sensed the mood of the Indian people, I had not fully realised how far it went in this direction. Within a few weeks the story of the I.N.A. had percolated to the remotest villages in India and everywhere there was admiration for them and apprehension as to their possible fate. No political organisation, however strong and efficient, could have produced this enormous reaction in India. It was one of those rare things which just fit into the mood of the people, reflect, as it were, and provide an opportunity for the public to give expression to that mood. The reason for this was obvious. Individuals were not known nor were many facts known to the public. The story as it developed seemed to the people just another aspect of India's struggle for independence and the individuals concerned became symbols in the public mind. Whether one agrees with this or not, one should at least understand how things happen and what forces lie behind them. The widespread popular enthusiasm was surprising enough, but even more surprising was a similar reaction of a very large number of regular Indian army officers and men. Something had touched them deeply. This kind of thing is not done and cannot be done by politicians or agitators or the like. It is this fundamental aspect of the I.N.A. question that has to be borne in mind. All other aspects, however important, are secondary.

I suppose everyone who has given thought to the matter realises fully that it is a dangerous and risky business to break the discipline of an army. It would obviously be harmful to do any injury to a fine instrument like the Indian army, and yet at every step, till major changes take place converting it into a real national army, we have to face the political issue which governs every aspect of Indian life today. Risks have to be taken sometimes, more especially when existing conditions are felt to be intolerable. You will forgive me for writing this rather long letter. It was my intention only to thank you; but then I felt that I should say something also on [illegible] subject, [illegible] ing that might give you a glimpse into my own [illegible]

8. Bhulabhai Desai[1]

After many months of travail and immense agony, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai has passed away.[2] His agony is over, but the shock and the grief of his death will remain. A big personality has gone, overworking himself to death. His finest memorial will be the brilliant and most memorable speech he delivered at the I.N.A. trial, a speech in which he defended the right of a subject people to freedom and their right to rebel for freedom.

1. Statement to the press, Simla, 6 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 7 May 1946.
2. Bhulabhai Desai died in Bombay on 6 May 1946 after being ill for four months.

9. To P.C. Bhandari[1]

Allahabad
8 May 1946

My dear Bhandari,[2]
I haven't written to you for a long time. Sometimes Krishna Menon has sent me news of you. Three days ago Chandralekha arrived here and I was glad to have further news of you from her.

I am now writing to you about one special matter. You know that we have concerned ourselves greatly with the officers and personnel of the Indian National Army which was formed in Malaya and Burma. We have been giving them such help as possible. One of the officers, Colonel Irshad Ali Sahabzada, is suffering from cancer. He has been advised to go to England immediately for an operation by some well-known expert there, who, I think, is named Gabriel, but I am not sure of the name. The cancer hospitals in India did not like to undertake this operation. I suppose anyhow there is not much hope in such cases, but it was the patient's ardent wish that he should go to England and have this operation. We have made this a special case and our Relief Commitee is giving him considerable financial assistance. Even so probably this will only cover about one-third of his expenses. He has necessarily to go by air and to be accompanied by a doctor.

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. A physician in London who was associated with the India League.

At present he is trying hard to get an air priority and probably the Government of India will give it to him within ten days. I should like you, both as a friend and a doctor, to give him all possible assistance in the matter. Perhaps it may be necessary to receive him when he arrives, to make some arrangement for him to stay somewhere and then to get into touch with the surgeon also to try to have all this done with as little expenditure as possible. How far this can be done, you know best. Colonel Sahabzada will be accompanied by Dr. Ayub (may be Captain Ayub). I have asked the I.N.A. office in Delhi to write to you full particulars about him and to cable you the time and date of his arrival in London. They will also write to Krishna Menon.

I should be grateful to you if you could help this poor man.

The I.N.A. office address is: I.N.A. Inquiry & Relief Committee, 82 Daryaganj, Delhi.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

I might add that Irshad Ali Sahabzada is himself a doctor. This might help in reducing fees.

10. To Claude Auchinleck[1]

Simla
9 May, 1946

Dear Sir Claude,

I have just received a telegram informing me that Subedar Jhanduram, who is awaiting the result of a court martial in an I.N.A. trial and who is now in the Indian Military Hospital in Delhi, lost his wife four days ago. His son is on his death bed and his mother is unconscious. I understand that he has applied for release on parole. In view of the calamities that have befallen him I trust that it will be considered a fit case for clemency by you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

11. To G. P. Hutheesing[1]

Simla
11 May 1946

My dear Raja,
I have just received enclosed in Betty's letter six drafts which apparently you brought from Malaya. The drafts are as follows:

For Indian National Army Relief Fund	Rs. 301-0-0
" " " " " " "	501-0-0
For Indian Famine Relief Fund	501-0-0
For Jawaharlal Nehru	333-5-3
" " "	333-5-3
" " "	333-5-3

What are all these about, who gave them to you, to whom should receipts be sent? The I.N.A. Relief Fund is there, but so far as I know there is no Indian Famine Relief Fund. As for the three drafts in my name, surely there must be some indication of what they are for. Please send me particulars soon as the drafts are already nearly three months old.

I shall try to send you some letters for China though it is very difficult for me to find time for this kind of thing at present. They will have to be brief letters. I have received a letter from Harim J. Shah who says that he is going to China as a correspondent of the *Free Press*. He is apparently going to be a resident correspondent in China. I do not quite understand why the *Free Press* should send two persons, namely you and Shah to China.

I do not know what my programme is likely to be and how long we stay here. Please keep me informed of your address so that I can send the letters to you there.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

12. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal[1]

...I then went on to say that I had been rather disturbed by indications that some provincial governments were contemplating the enlistment of

1. Simla, 13 May 1946. From *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 538-40.

might wish to make, provided that their morale was not upset by purges or witch-hunts. I said that if men were wanted for the police, surely it would be better to use men from the army who had shown unswerving loyalty to the Government, rather than men who, whatever their motives might have been, had once broken their faith. He said that he agreed with a great deal of what I said but that the loyal men were provided for by Government, whereas these I.N.A. men were left comparatively destitute and might get into bad hands.

We left it at that, his attitude was quite reasonable, but obviously the Congress consider it their duty to provide for the I.N.A. men as far as possible, and government service naturally seems to them the easiest way to do so.

I then turned to the connected point of enquiries into the 1942 rebellion, and victimization of Government servants. I said that it would be most unfortunate and have a most unsteadying effect on all the services if enquiries were held and the unhappy past raked up. We had met the ministries in this matter by agreeing to the release of the Ashti-Chimur murderers for instance, and those convicted of murdering British officers; the ministries on their part ought not to provoke a conflict by trying to make enquiries.

Nehru did not say a great deal about this, and branched off into the matter of corruption among Government services. I agreed that it was a great evil which would have to be stamped out. We somehow diverged from this into the long delays of the law in India, and the necessity for reform of both civil and criminal procedure.

I then mentioned the negotiations for the formation of a new Executive Council, and agreed to meet him at 8-30 a.m. tomorrow.

13. To Mohan Singh[1]

Simla
14 May, 1946

My dear Mohan Singhji,
Ever since your release I have been anxious to get into touch with you and to meet you. So I was glad to receive your letter. We are all,

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

or nearly all, leaving Simla today. I have to go to Lucknow for a few hours. I hope to be back in Delhi on the 26th afternoon. After that I shall remain in Delhi at least for a week or so. From the 17th onwards we have got meetings of our Congress Working Committee, and of course there may be meetings with members of the Cabinet delegation.

You must have been informed of the meeting of senior I.N.A. officers that we have convened for the 21st May in Delhi. As you know we have had no opportunity of consulting them so far, except for casual talk with some of them. Most of our I.N.A. work had to be organised without any such consultation. Important problems now confront us and it is essential, not only in the interest of I.N.A. relief work but also in regard to the general situation in the country, that we consult these senior I.N.A. officers. I hope that you and Colonel Niranjan Singh Gill[2] will both come to these meetings.

On the next day, i.e., 22nd May, we intend having a meeting of the I.N.A. Relief and Inquiry Committee.

I suggest that you might come to Delhi on the 19th i.e. two days before these meetings. This would enable us to meet together and have a private talk about various matters including the important matter you suggest, i.e., our work among the Sikhs generally.

I have received the letter addressed to the Secretary of State which Colonel Gill has sent me. I have looked through this. It is not possible to give it to the Secretary of State here as I believe they have already left for Delhi. Apart from this, I am not quite clear in my mind as to whether we should give this exact communication to the Secretary of State. I should like to consider it more fully and then to discuss it with you and Colonel Gill.

Looking forward to meeting you in Delhi and with all good wishes and *Jai Hind*,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Niranjan Singh Gill (1906-1969); commissioned in the Indian Army, 1925; fought in the Malayan campaign; after the fall of Singapore adviser, Indian National Army, 1942; prisoner, Red Fort, Delhi, 1945-46; served for some time as ambassador of India to Ethiopia and to Thailand.

14. Need for Relief[1]

In December last the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress, at its meeting held in Calcutta, constituted a committee known as the I.N.A. Inquiry and Relief Committee for the purpose of gathering information and giving immediate relief, wherever needed, to the I.N.A. personnel and families in distress.

In response to the appeal made by this committee, the public gave generous contributions and provincial and other local committees were also formed for this purpose.

This central committee, with its affiliated committees, has been organizing relief work ever since that time. Nearly 25,000 men were brought back to India from various parts of East Asia and ultimately released from prison or detention.

Our immediate objective was to give to all of them who needed it some relief to enable them to reach their homes, and to provide them with their immediate requirements. Their families and the families of those who had not returned from East Asia were also in need of urgent help in many cases.

This was a huge task, as almost all of these I.N.A. men had returned to India after five to seven years of absence in a helpless condition, in many cases, in broken health.

The I.N.A. Defence Committee, which had been organized before by the Congress Working Committee, also needed considerable financial resources. This committee has done its work admirably and its remaining functions have been transferred to the I.N.A. Inquiry and Relief Committee.

A large number of I.N.A. men have still to be given immediate relief where it is found necessary, but the main problem before the relief committee is the rehabilitation of these men and of finding suitable employment for them.

It has been the policy of this committee to give relief, as far as possible, through productive work and employment.

As release of officers and men has taken place, many of them have helped in the work of organising relief. A conference of senior I.N.A. officers was held in Delhi recently and at that conference an advisory

1. A joint appeal by Jawaharlal and Vallabhbhai Patel for funds for I.N.A. relief work, Bombay, 23 July 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 24 July 1946.

country as a whole and that must necessarily be the most important consideration. But I think it is right also from the point of view of the Tatas not only in the long run, when all of us may be dead, but in the short run. I am grateful to you and Matthai[3] for falling in with our wishes in this matter. We shall try our best to accommodate you.

There is one small matter to which I should like to draw your attention. We have opened an I.N.A. office at Jamshedpur to help in finding employment for ex-I.N.A. men. I hope your people will keep in touch with this office and give them such help as they can.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. John Matthai (1886-1959); Professor of Economics, Madras University; member, Madras Legislative Council, 1922-25; Minister of Railways and Transport, Government of India, August 1947-September 1948; Finance Minister, 1948-50; publications include *Village Government in British India, Agriculture and Co-operation in India* etc.

5

THE CABINET MISSION AND AFTER

I. The Congress Stand and Objective

1. To Stafford Cripps[1]

Allahabad
5 March 1946

Dear Stafford,
Thank you for your letter of February 10th which reached me rather late as I was touring. As you will be coming here soon there is no particular point in my writing to you. I suppose we shall meet before the end of the month. I do not know yet exactly when you are arriving. I am going to Malaya on the 16th on a brief visit but I am anxious to be back by the time you come.

I might mention, however, that I am troubled at some indications of the British Government's policy. They are vague no doubt and I believe that the Government wants to get a move on and come to a settlement. But what is the basis of this settlement? I find a strange reluctance to use the word "independence" with all that it conveys. "Self-government" is used in the old way and this is something that rubs people up in the wrong way. This is not a minor matter of wording. It is basic. I want you to appreciate that there is intense feeling here on the subject.

Again, there are references to our going back to 1942, whatever that might mean. There can be no going back for too much has happened since then, and India has changed vastly during this interval of four years. We have to deal with a new situation, an urgent situation, and to deal with it finally.

With all good wishes,

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. This letter was sent to Pethick-Lawrence by Cripps' Private Secretary and marked 'Confidential'. *The Transfer of Power 1942–7*, Vol. VI, pp. 1107-8.

2. Guidelines for Negotiation[1]

1. It is essential that the basis of these conversations should be the independence of India. The proper course would be for the British

1. Confidential note drafted by Jawaharlal on the discussions to be held with the Cabinet Mission, 15 March 1946. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

left out for the present. So also if any provincial assembly refuses to elect delegates, there should be no compulsion.

8. It should be made clear that the question of Pakistan (whatever precisely it might signify) will not be decided by a mere majority of votes in the constituent assembly. Questions of this kind will have to be settled either by consent of the parties or ultimately by plebiscite of all the inhabitants of an area on a precise and defined issue. The constituent assembly will, however, prepare a single constitution for India, with two lists of central subjects, one minimum and compulsory, and the other optional.

9. The question of defence and allied questions (foreign affairs, communications, as well as currency) are obviously central and common subjects which cannot be given up. Even if some kind of separation is envisaged some common arrangements for these will be necessary.

10. There may be a demand or suggestion for new demarcation of provincial boundaries resulting in division of the Punjab and Bengal, so that parts of these provinces should be predominantly Muslim. We should agree to any demarcation which creates cultural and linguistic areas which satisfy the majority of the people concerned.

11. In regard to the States we should follow more or less the same policy, *mutatis mutandis*, as in regard to the provinces. That is, it should be open to States to join the constituent assembly or not. There should be no compulsion. Provided of course that the States are represented predominantly by elected representatives (we may allow, in view of special circumstances, the ruler to have a representative or so), and provided also that the States agree to have the same or similar democratic forms of government and administrative and judicial efficiency as the provinces. It should be a privilege to be admitted to the constituent assembly, a privilege which will not be extended to States which fall below the standard.

12. There will be some difficulty in arranging for the representation of States as many of them have no proper democratic machinery. Also most of them are too small. But these matters can be considered more fully later. A full analysis of States, their elective assemblies where such exist, and other facts concerning them, is being prepared.

13. It is clear that only the big States (say from 15 to 20) can become units of the federation. The others have either to be absorbed in provinces or can form a large enough group to form a unit.

14. Our claim must be that the new Central Government of India

3. A Welcome Change in Tone[1]

Any kind of consideration of Mr. Attlee's[2] speech should obviously be done by the Congress President. I can only point out certain aspects that struck me. One is that there is certainly a change in tone and approach in Mr. Attlee's speech — a pleasant change if I may say so — and I welcome it. I should like to add that mere expressions of goodwill, even when couched in friendly terms, do not take one very far by themselves. They will, of course, help in the consideration of the subject, but the main question is what is to be considered and how.

Obviously, we have arrived at a stage when no half-measures can be considered at all. Discussions based on the acceptance of India's independence can alone bear fruit. Looking at the problem in a wider international context, it must be borne in mind that India is not willing to be bound down to any commitments.

We have enough experience of having been dragged to support policies which we do not approve. It will be for the free India to determine what its foreign policy and foreign commitments should be. Naturally, India stands, and will stand, for world peace and for ending aggression. But what we have seen often enough is that in the name of democracy and of preventing aggression, imperialist countries try to retain their old possessions or to expand them. The present international situation is the result of the failure of the countries which have not acted up to the professions made during the war.

The problems of subject countries have not been solved. There is still talk of holding on to the empires and protecting the lifelines of the empires. Each country finds fault with the other and each of the great powers continues to be attracted by the smell of oil. It is difficult for me to know all that is happening outside this country. But one feels that this oily game is a dirty game.

So we do not want to be forced into any commitment which might be against our future interests. But we shall certainly play our part in

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 16 March 1946. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 17 March and *The Hindu*, 17 March 1946.
2. C.R. Attlee (1883-1967); leader of the British Labour Party, 1935-55; Deputy Prime Minister, 1943-45; Prime Minister, 1945-51. Attlee said on 15 March 1946: "Is it any wonder that today India claims — as a nation of 400 million people that has twice sent her sons to die for freedom — that she should herself have freedom to decide."

the international organisations like the U.N.O. to prevent war. One of the necessary steps is to remove the principal cause of war, namely the desire of one country to dominate other countries. If this goes, other problems are easy of solution.

Question: Would you clarify the reasons for the rejection of the Viceroy's invitation to Mahatma Gandhi to join the proposed four-man food committee?[3]

Jawaharlal Nehru: Honestly, I do not know much about it. The matter did not come at all before the Working Committee.

Q: A report has been circulated that a sub-committee, consisting of the Congress President, yourself and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, has been formed to negotiate with the Cabinet Mission?

JN: I do not know of any committee having been formed. No members of the Working Committee have been appointed to negotiate with the Cabinet Mission. Naturally we expect to meet the Cabinet Mission, but we have made no programme of any kind except that we may have to come up. The Congress President would meet the Cabinet Mission in his official capacity and other members of the Committee would meet the Mission in their individual capacity.

Q: Will Mahatma Gandhi be coming to Delhi to meet the Cabinet Mission and, if he comes, would his role in the forthcoming talks be similar to that of his role during the Simla Conference?

JN: If he is summoned by us, he will certainly come. Mahatma Gandhi's role at Simla was the same which he had always played in Congress affairs. I have no idea as to how the Cabinet Mission will function. We have made no plans ourselves. The Mission may meet the officials in Delhi during the first week. The Congress leaders have received invitations from the Government to meet the Cabinet Mission. I myself have received no invitation to meet the Mission.

Q: Will the developments in the Middle East have any bearing on the forthcoming talks between the Congress leaders and the Cabinet Mission?

3. To Wavell's attempt to set up a central food advisory body consisting of Mahatma Gandhi, Jinnah and the Nawab of Bhopal with himself as the chairman, the Congress replied that a settlement on the political level would achieve the object sooner.

prominent Indians. I would visit Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Ipoh and other places *en route*.

Q: Have you heard the complaints of Indian evacuees not being able to return to Malaya?

JN: I have heard reports to the contrary. I have been informed that a large number of Indians in Malaya are being pushed back into India. Many of them have no homes here having been born and brought up in Malaya. I doubt the wisdom of sending all these people back to Madras which is just now in the grip of a famine.

4. The Congress and other Parties[1]

If the people of India are suddenly confronted with the prospect of independence not coming by agreement, there will inevitably be an enormous upheaval in India, whether we like it or not. It is not a question of the Congress desiring it, but the conditions in the country demand it.

Question: It is said that if the Muslim League does not get Pakistan there might be trouble.

Jawaharlal Nehru: I agree. There might be minor troubles, but if we avoid compelling any party against its will, I do not see why there should be major troubles.

I think that the best way of dealing with the present situation is to clearly recognise the need for independence and leave the Indians free to compose their differences and find a way out. It is always difficult to consider these differences in relation to the presence of a third party which controls the situation. For then, the main parties do not come to grips with the reality and they try to manoeuvre their position *vis-a-vis* the third party. When once it is clearly and definitely realised that India is going to function as an independent entity and that the people of

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 3 April 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 4 April 1946.

It must be seen that the real political and social elements in the country, desiring independence as well as social change, are lined up with the Congress. The Muslim League undoubtedly represents, in a general way, large numbers of Muslims, but it is politically and socially a reactionary body, largely representing the landlords and being afraid of any democratic change. Yet the Muslim masses are not reactionary, though they may be led away by religious pulls.

We are undoubtedly in favour of independence and of the British authority quitting India. I do not think, therefore, that if this is our aim, there is likely to be any major trouble for us. But today there is an unfortunate tendency to violence and arson in various parts of the country, partly as a result of the after-effects of the war, and partly because of the encouragement of the Muslim League, which has been talking in terms of civil war and bloodshed, and carrying on a propaganda of hatred.[3] We shall have to face this situation. But I do not think if people are given a definite and clear lead and approach, there will be a major conflict.

One should not forget that while the Muslim League has won a large number of seats in the recent elections, the number of Muslim votes cast for the Congress and the Nationalist Muslim candidates had been considerable. It is clear that a very substantial number of Muslims do not follow the League in spite of its religious propaganda.

The fundamental issue during the elections has been whether we should consider the country's problems in their political and economic context, or in the medieval and religious aspect. The Congress and the Nationalist Muslims represent the former approach while the Muslim League represents the latter approach, ignoring all economic issues.

I cannot envisage a Pakistan from the point of view of defence or planned development. I cannot see it, but, in order to make the people feel that they are not being compelled against their will, we are prepared to allow those in the predominantly Muslim areas to vote themselves out. I don't see where they will get to, but let them have a sense of freedom. I hope, when they look at Pakistan in this specific limited context, they will realise the absurdity of it. So far it is just a vague conception without a geographical definition.

I want the people to vote on this very definite issue so that they can realise the consequences. I can very well understand the fear of the Muslims, who are industrially and economically backward, that some kind of economic domination by others might come into existence. We are

3. Jinnah had warned on 16 March 1940 that, driven to desperation, the Muslim League might bring about a civil war in India.

prepared to do everything in our power to dispel this apprehension, and to help the backward areas develop industrially, and otherwise.

Q: How do you view the challenge[4] of the Communists to the policy of the Congress?

JN: The Communist Party in India has been very small for many years, and it is still relatively small though energetic. Since the war, the Communists have adopted a more definite attitude in support of the Muslim League.

In the recent elections they opposed the Congress, and naturally, this has led to a tremendous widening of the gulf between Congress and the Communists, but almost everywhere the Communists have been severely defeated.

The Communist Party is weak in India. But even a weak, but active party, can take advantage of worsening economic conditions and of the food situation.They may give a lot of trouble to Congress Ministries because they feel they must justify their existence now.

Q: What would be the position of a new India in the world context?

JN: A free India will be concerned with its defence and security. It will build up its defence and industries for that purpose as rapidly as possible. It will like to play a role in international affairs in favour of peace, in cooperation with any organisation such as the U.N.O. The new India will not, however, like to inherit old feuds or commit itself to the offensive or defensive policy of any group of nations.

But inevitably, India will sympathise and cooperate with those who have been interested in its freedom struggle. It is difficult to say in which way our freedom might be threatened, but whoever threatens it will inevitably come up against the overwhelming sentiment determined to preserve the hard-earned freedom. This aspect is one of the major considerations in our attitude to the Pakistan question.

4. The Communists contended that every linguistic group in India had a distinct nationality and was therefore entitled, as was the case in the U.S.S.R., to the right of self-determination. The *People's War* of 9 August 1942 in an editorial stated: "A minority must be given the right to secession, the right to form an independent state... To look upon the right of secession as the special fad of Jinnah, as the conspiracy of a few Communists to divide India in the interests of British imperialism, is to ignore the new Muslim awakening, as also of other nationalities, e.g., Andhras, Karnatakis, Maharashtrians etc., the awakening of a distinct nationality to a new life, individual national consciousness".

Curiously enough, the Communist Party in India has suggested a division of India into over 15 parts—each having a separate constitution-making body—that subsequently might join together if they desire. If there is to be such a division, all manner of vested interests will be there, which will weaken the country and make its defence utterly impossible.

I endorse the statement[5] made by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru that an interim government composed of accredited Indian leaders must be set up at once to provide proper cooperation with the popularly elected provincial governments now taking office. I would support it with a story. In the year before the war when the Congress Ministry was functioning in the United Provinces, an effort was made to start the manufacture of industrial alcohol from molasses. The effort was blocked by the Central Government on the ground that it would reduce the revenue from the duty on petrol. The move was obviously aimed at protecting the interests of the oil industry. But when the war came, the manufacture of alcohol was undertaken by the Government then under pressure, but four years behind time.

5. Sapru said on 3 April 1946 that there was the necessity of an interim government being formed "almost immediately" even without waiting for a settlement of the Pakistan question.

5. The Economic Problem in India[1]

What is Pakistan? To understand this and similar issues, one must try to get behind the surface of events and slogans. The League leadership represents mostly the landlord element in India. It talks a lot about Hindu capitalists while it tries to preserve the landlord element in the country and all that goes with it. It avoids the problem of the Indian States altogether. Most of its candidates, at least in my province, in the recent elections were the biggest landlords.

One must bear in mind the social aspect of the Muslim League. The League is opposed to social, political and economic changes. It favours

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 4 April 1946. From *The Free Press Journal*, 5 April 1946.

We aim at a greater production and at a more equitable distribution. We have, therefore, laid down that monopolies should be sternly discouraged. Mineral resources, waterways, transport and communications must be state-controlled; defence and other key industries must either be state-owned or controlled.

This approach is essential for a planned economy and for preventing the accumulation of power in a few hands. If there is a Pakistan, it will be backward socially, industrially and economically. Thus we have to warn the Muslims and other communities against such a situation.

The Congress envisages the fullest autonomy for federated units which will give free scope to all people to develop their way of life in any manner they choose. There is no question of the compulsion by a majority of a minority. Further, the Congress has gone so far as to declare that if any specific area wants to go out of the union, it can do so by means of a referendum, provided it does not drag others against their will.

The present world situation compels us to think in terms of India as one unit. Any division would terribly weaken the defence of the nation. The Indian problem cannot be solved by going round in the old way. We must get out of the rut, and the essential thing for India is to realise that it is going to be independent and will have to decide for itself what its future is going to be. That is why the first step has to be the establishment of independence.

Britain must make it clear here and now that Indians will be left to decide all their issues and that the British Army will be withdrawn at a specified date in the not-too-distant future. This attitude will lend a sense of reality to the Indian situation. All parties and groups will then resolve their differences. An agreement is bound to emerge on this basis.

There is too much passion and, if the situation is allowed to drift further, it will lead to a violent upheaval. The Congress is not afraid of facing such dangers, but it will endeavour to avoid them because they leave a trail of bitterness and retard the all-important work of national reconstruction.

There is no time to waste. I am determined to see the country on the road to recovery and greatness and, therefore, the sooner the question of freedom is settled, the better.

I am of opinion that once people realise that the method of negotiations has failed, no power on earth can stop the tremendous resurgence of violent action. The crucial period has now arrived. Are we going to have sovereignty without further suffering, or will this long tormented

if India functions as an independent entity, those provinces would be autonomous units under the suzerainty of a central authority.

Q: Suppose those provinces declare their independence and start building up an armed force...

JN: If any party starts arming against us, superior arms will prevail. Warfare in modern times assumes industrial development of a high order. Tomorrow's army may consist largely of technicians with scientists at their back. Those who want can play about with guns and revolvers. But the atom bomb will decide wars in the future.

Q: Master Tara Singh has expressed doubts about the Congress attitude to the Pakistan issue...[2]

JN: Master Tara Singh enjoys the unique privilege of sitting on about fifteen stools at the same time, which is a ridiculous and fantastic position. Any person trying to do that will have a bad fall one day. If he wants to go into the League camp, he can do so.

Q: What worries Master Tara Singh is whether the Congress will under any circumstances agree to the League demand for Pakistan?[3]

JN: I have reiterated the Congress stand on many occasions. I assert once again that under no circumstances will the Congress agree to the creation of Pakistan. That is dead clear. Is it not? I hope you will convey it to Master Tara Singh.

The Congress is not going to agree to the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan under any circumstances whatsoever — even if the British Government agrees to it, it is not a question of the Congress agreeing or not. I know something of the Indian people. If the Congress agrees to the demand even then it will not come off. Nothing on earth, not even the United Nations Organisation, is going to bring about the Pakistan which Mr. Jinnah wants.

2. On 4 April 1946, Jinnah conferred with Master Tara Singh at the latter's New Delhi residence. When asked by journalists about his talks, Master Tara Singh said that Jinnah had conceded the principle of Sikhistan and wanted the Akalis to give him their scheme. Master Tara Singh in reply had asked Jinnah to state in writing the safeguards which the League would extend to the Sikhs.
3. Master Tara Singh, who presented his views to the Cabinet Mission on 5 April 1946, feared that either as a result of an understanding between the Congress and the League or in terms of an imposed settlement, Pakistan might come into being. In that case, he demanded that the area in which the Sikhs predominated should be formed into a separate Sikh state.

An Indian State wishing to join the federation, we envisage, will have equal status within the federation, having the same responsibilities, privileges and obligations as any other unit.

Every state will, of course, have to maintain the same level of administration and democratic liberty as the rest of India. The exact form might vary slightly, but it is impossible to conceive of varying levels of feudalism and democracy in the States, forming part of the federation.

The issue of independence cannot be left to the constituent assembly, because then it means really nothing is decided and everything is left in a chaotic condition.

Q: Who will decide India's foreign relations?

JN: The constituent assembly will decide India's relations with Britain and other nations. Inevitably, we have a large number of matters to consider in conjunction with our relations with Britain, and they should be considered by representatives of the constituent assembly and those of the British Government eventually in the context of independence.

It will be possible for us to have close and friendly relations, economic and otherwise, with Britain. Such relations will depend mostly on the national interests of the parties concerned. Obviously, an independent India will make its own friends wherever it likes. Obviously also, every country thinks primarily of its own interests, and its foreign policy is determined by those interests, though I hope that in an independent India the ideals, which have been governing our national movement, will govern our international relations.

I disapprove of Great Britain's foreign policy, particularly in relation to Indonesia. This reminds me to refer to India's relations with its neighbour countries. Whatever be our relations with other countries in the world, and I hope they will all be friendly, it is inevitable that we will draw closer to Asian countries, east of India, southeast and west. Indeed, you can say we are already joined together.

All over Asia there is not merely a revival of old memories and historical connections, although that is important, but much more important, there is the compulsion of geography and of developing events.

Whether it is trade or defence, either of the Middle East, West Asia or South East Asia or East Asia, the pivot and fulcrum is India, and when I say South East Asia in these matters, I include Australia and New Zealand in the Indian Ocean region.

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the conclusion that these problems cannot be tackled in a piecemeal way, more so because India has put up with arrested growth under British rule for more than 150 years. Agriculture is the main field of development. It cannot be promoted unless feudal relics are swept away, modern methods of agriculture are introduced and cooperative farming is encouraged.

I am glad that the Congress has definitely and finally decided to end landlordism, by giving compensation to the landlords. In dealing with agriculture, the burden on the land has to be reduced by drawing off a large number of people to industry, both large-scale and cottage. If agriculture and industry are developed, it means the development of social services for the four hundred million people of India.

Lots of people are overwhelmed by the population figure of 400 million. I am not. First, I do not think there are 400 millions. The last census is hopelessly wrong. Separate electorates — the father and mother of Pakistan — have led to a complete falsification of the census. For separate electorates offer a strong inducement to the average person to tell a lie.

The Statistical Society, which is an authoritative body, and which conducted a survey of the population of Bengal four years after the last census, found that the population was six million less than that of the census figure in 1941. Normally population shows an increase in four years.

Thus the figure of 400 millions is all wrong. Apart from this, even assuming this figure is correct, India is less densely populated than most of Europe, and there are in India large areas which can be cultivated and populated with state assistance. Further, a population might be too great for an agricultural country, but might not be great at all if the country is industrialised. It depends on what the country, is and what avenues of production exist. If every man is a worker he is an asset. Nevertheless, planned society is essential for India and so it is desirable to control the increase of population.

7. The Weakness of the Demand for Pakistan[1]

Question: Are you optimistic about the outcome of the present negotiations?

1. Interview to R.P. Dutt who visited India to cover the Cabinet Mission negotiations for the *Daily Worker* London). From *The Hindustan Times*, 6 April 1946.

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1. Interview to R.P. Dutt who visited India to cover the Cabinet Mission negotiations for the *Daily Worker* London). From *The Hindustan Times*, 6 April 1946.

Jawaharlal Nehru: I really don't know. I would put the chances at 50-50.

Q: Are you sure that Britain intends to quit India?

JN: Imperialism never intends to give up what it has got, but conditions and forces may arise which force the pace. I do think that such conditions have arisen or are rapidly arising in India.

Q: Is independence compatible with the continuance of British military forces in India?

JN: No. All British armed forces must be withdrawn from India.

Q: How should the transfer of power take place? What should be the character of the interim national government?

JN: First there must be a recognition and declaration of independence. Then steps must be taken for a proper constitution to be drafted by an elected constituent assembly which has sovereign authority. During the intervening period a provisional national government should be formed which will function partly by convention and partly on the basis of some legal changes, but exercising powers of a national government. In the present circumstances it will probably be desirable to form this national government on the basis of elected provincial governments.

Q: What should be the basis of the constituent assembly?

JN: We have always urged that the constituent assembly should be elected by adult franchise, but at present this might involve delay and to avoid this we might accept the elected provincial assemblies as electoral colleges for the constituent assembly.

Q: Does the Congress recognise the right of self-determination of any territorial unit within India?

JN: The Congress is convinced that any division would be injurious to India as a whole and to the separate areas or groups concerned, and, therefore, we work for the unity of India. But realising the diversity of India and wishing to preserve it and to give a just measure of freedom to each group it stands for a great deal of autonomy to each unit within a federation so that the people of that unit can live their own lives as they wish. In spite of this desire for unity the Congress feels that any unity

based on compulsion would be a false unity and it wants to have willing units. It hopes that ultimately it will have the willing cooperation of all the groups and areas in a federation of this kind. But if any particular area still wants to break away, it does not wish to compel it to remain within the federation provided this is geographically possible and no other areas are compelled against their will to go out.

The scheme of Pakistan as proposed by the Muslim League involves compulsion of large areas to join Pakistan against their will. That is impossible to achieve without conflicts. If any area still wants to break away, the result is going to be, in the present circumstances, the creation of a state which is weak and backward and which cannot defend itself. We hope, therefore, that when these inevitable consequences are seen in a proper perspective the people of these areas will themselves agree to remain in a federation. In any case, the question of defence cannot be ignored and there would have to be common defence.

Q: Does the official policy of the Congress stand for the abolition of landlordism and State ownership of key resources?

JN: The Congress election manifesto[2] is explicit on this. The official policy of the Congress is the abolition of landlordism with equitable compensation; state ownership of mineral resources, communications, transport and waterways; state control of insurance and banking; state ownership and control of defence industries and key industries and some kind of planned control in other fields of the economy.

Q: What is your view of the present international situation, especially of the proposals being put forward for an Anglo-American military alliance?[3]

JN: Any Anglo-American alliance would immediately lead to two results: (1) the progressive elimination of the U.N.O. as an international organisation; (2) the development of other alliances against this special alliance. This again might lead to future wars. Some such tendencies are already at work. If any international order is to be built up there must not be any such military alliances and nations will have to function within the international organisation and not outside it. Of course as long as the basic causes of war are not dealt with and removed, there will be tendencies leading to conflicts. Among the basic causes is the

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 14, pp. 105-109.
3. Churchill, at this time in the United States, had proposed an Anglo-American union as a balance of power to thwart Russian designs.

continuance of imperialist control and colonialism. Another cause is the monopolist control of important raw materials. It is obvious today that a conflict might be caused by the desire of powers to control colonial positions called the lifelines of an empire and to grab regions which may have important raw materials.

Q: What do you think of Mr. Bevin's foreign policy?[4]

JN: While we realise that the temper of the British people has changed greatly in recent years and that this had been reflected in the great Labour victory at the general election, the external policy of the British Government has been singularly like that of the previous Government, both in Europe and in South East Asia. This has led us to consider their Indian policy in this context. Indian public opinion has been definitely opposed to this foreign policy and has bitterly resented the Indonesia policy. Again, the measures taken by the South African Government against Indians[5] have not only angered India but have also made it perfectly clear that India can have no place in the association of nations which encourages racial policy similar to that of the Nazism.

Q: Would you wish to give any message for friends on the left in Britain as to the way in which they can best help India today?

JN: An important suggestion for friends in Britain is that they must see the need for the transfer of power from British authority to a representative Indian government. Once this is clearly decided all other questions can and will be settled by Indians themselves. We want freedom to deal with all our problems, which are merely complicated and aggravated by outside interference. I should like friends abroad to realise this basic nature of the problem and not be confused by secondary issues, however important they may appear to be.

4. On 13 April 1946, Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, said that the empire would survive and he was sure that it had an extraordinary mission to fulfil. The empire, according to him, was a strange phenomenon — it was an institution.
5. The Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Bill restricted the franchise of Indians, provided 'representation' of Indians in the Assembly by three Europeans and in the Senate by two Europeans and restricted land tenure by Indians to prescribed areas.

8. The Proposal for a Plebiscite[1]

My own view is that a separate Muslim nation, to be created out of north-east and north-west India, is an absurd and fantastic idea. However, it is for the people themselves to decide. I do not want to compel these people to be part of a united India if they do not want it. I suggest that a plebiscite should be held after the removal of British troops and the British authority from India. I am convinced that, when they know the full facts, the Muslims will not want to leave us. If they decide to go out, I will let them function as they want. But they will soon realise that they cannot function separately for long, and they will return.

In the North West Frontier Province, the people, though predominantly Muslim, have voted for the Congress Party.[2] They have shown by a huge majority that they are opposed to a separate Pakistan state. Any suggestion[3] that the recent elections there were unfair to the Muslim League is just fantastic. It is in fact, the other way. Assam also is obviously opposed to Pakistan. The whole of the southern Punjab, which is predominantly non-Muslim, is opposed to it. The whole of western Bengal, that is, the industrial area including Calcutta, is predominantly non-Muslim. Every non-Muslim is opposed to the division of India. Thus, even on the principle of self-determination to which the Muslim League appeals, four important areas, which Mr. Jinnah claims — the Frontier Province, Assam, west Bengal and southern Punjab — cannot form part of Pakistan.[4]

Mr. Jinnah's attitude is peculiar. On the one hand, he claims self-determination and then says the result of self-determination would give him too small and weak a state; therefore, on the other hand, he demands

1. Interview to the B.B.C.'s special correspondent who sought Jawaharlal's views on a proposal for a plebiscite in north-east and north-west India, Delhi, 6 April 1946. From *The Hindu*, 10 April 1946.
2. The provincial elections in the North West Frontier Province had been fought specifically on the issue of partition and the electorate had given its clear verdict against it.
3. On 3 April 1946, Jinnah said: "The elections were not free. The caretaker government in power in the North West Frontier Province abused its powers, and was helped by the fact that so many of the voters are illiterate."
4. There were non-Muslim majorities both in the Punjab and Bengal, and in Assam the populations of the respective communities were 6,762,254 non-Muslims and 3,442,479 Muslims.

any foreign control is to be imposed. I am sure a mutually satisfactory arrangement will be possible.

Q: What is your opinion on the problem of India's rapid growth of population?

JN: It is desirable to limit the growth of population and I favour suitable birth control methods. But it should be remembered that this population bogey has been overdone. India's population is still less dense than that of great parts of Europe, and there are large areas in India still uncultivated and unoccupied. The population which is not big for a purely agricultural country like India will not be big if that becomes partly industrialised. We think we can find productive work for all of India's millions. In the meantime, some birth control clinics have to be established in various industrial centres.

Q: What are your plans for India's defence?

JN: A free India will be intensely interested in defending its freedom. While working for peace on the international plane, we shall, until there is an international order, use normal means of armed defence. The armed forces must be of the latest type. India will defend itself to the utmost of its capacity against aggression. India desires to co-operate fully with the United Nations Organisation. We are convinced that the world must be treated more and more as one unified area. We shall gladly surrender to a world organisation, in common with other nations, any special rights which normally belong to an independent nation.

India will draw closer to her neighbours in Asia — have friendly relations with Russia, of course,— but I mean particularly China, South East Asia and West Asia.

As to our relationship with Britain, the last 200 years have naturally caused bitterness, but when India is free we shall try to forget the past and develop friendship with Britain.

It is too early to say much about the present conversations with the British Cabinet Mission.[5] They are eager to find a solution, but there

Q: What is your comment on the suggestion that there may be two federations in India joined together with a confederation at the top?[3]

JN: It is full of dangerous implications. Confederations never had any stability and they resulted in either leading to a closer federation or in a break leading to a civil war. The confederal centre is usually weak and has always to suffer pulls from different directions. Defence, etc., under such a centre will inevitably be weak. Thus both from security and other points of view, the suggestion is no solution, but merely an attempt to postpone the finding of a solution.

3. This proposal was reported to have emanated from official sources as a solution for the political deadlock.

10. A New Page in History[1]

I am distressed that there are some people in the country who raise threats of civil war at this critical juncture when crores of other people are about to turn a new page in their history. It is not that I am afraid of these threats. If there is any disorder or unrest, we have to face it. If we do not face it with resoluteness, it will result in the rule of the hooligans. Who can say that there will be no suffering and travail which we have to pass through to reach our cherished goal of freedom? I only wish that the people, who think in terms of bloodshed and civil war, will get out of the mental rut in which they have got, and broaden their outlook.

Big questions are facing us at present. Revolutionary changes are in the offing. Nobody can say what will be India's future in two months. One thing, however, is certain. The old chapter of India's history is now closed and we have to turn a new page. In the shaping of the new India, not only the leaders, but millions of common people will also make their contributions.

Issues of secondary importance are being raised by some people at the moment, when the main question of independence is to be settled. Such attempts are meant to sidetrack the main issue. People who raise these

1. Address to Namdhari Sikhs, Delhi, 15 April 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 16 April 1946.

questions are not advancing the cause of freedom. They have first to end foreign rule. The British Government cannot solve any of our problems.[2]

2. At this meeting a resolution was passed that the Namdhari Sikhs would support the Congress to win freedom for a united India.

11. Note on Talks with the Cabinet Mission[1]

I had dinner with all three and afterwards a talk lasting two hours. The talk was informal and yet, because all three were present, there was a touch of restraint and formality about it which might have been absent if only one of them had been present. No specific scheme was put forward, only various suggestions were thrown out. Yet it seemed to me that some kind of a scheme had taken shape in their minds. This appeared to me something as follows:

1. Defence and allied subjects (the minimum compulsory common subjects proposed by the Congress) must be dealt with by a central authority in India.
2. Subject to the above, everything should be done to "save the face" of Jinnah. The scheme should be a reasonable one, that is a workable one, and it is not desirable to drive Jinnah & Co. into an impossible corner from which there is no easy escape. Thus to say that Bengal and Punjab should be divided on the communal basis, and only the Muslim majority areas should be allowed to vote themselves out is not a reasonable proposition — because this leaves a truncated area which cannot easily function and at the same time it may result in their cutting away completely and endangering defence &c. As far as possible the Punjab and Bengal should be kept intact. A kind of Pakistan should be conceded or at least made possible, subject to the minimum subjects under the central authority.
3. The minimum compulsory subjects for the Centre should be determined, as well as the optional central subjects. Each province to be asked to accept the former — indeed it will be expected to do so anyhow. Then each province to declare with which area it wants to cooperate for the optional subjects. Thus two areas might develop —

1. Delhi, 10 April 1946. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

the Hindustan area and the Pakistan area. In each of these the provinces concerned would form a kind of sub-federation, if they so choose, for the optional common subjects. It is not necessary for the provinces (or States) so adhering together to be contiguous.

4. The Centre will be a kind of super federation dealing only with the compulsory common subjects. It might deal directly with the two sub-federations or with the provinces. Probably the former will be preferable.

5. The Centre might only be an executive by all the provinces. Or it might be also some kind of a legislative assembly elected indirectly by the provincial assembly. Any direct election would be far too cumbrous and difficult.

6. The States must also accept the compulsory common subjects. They may join either of the two sub-federations regardless of their geographical position.

7. In dealing with the States, normally only the present State governments can be formally consulted. It may be possible however to make some other arrangements also in regard to making the voice of the States peoples heard. This is worthy of consideration but for the present the State governments only count. The question of the internal government of the States need not be decided now though emphasis should be laid on required reforms. This question does not rise now and it is not possible for the Cabinet trio to go further into it. Circumstances will compel the rulers to change. Some time should be allowed for this change and adaptation to take place. The British Government's paramountcy &c. will disappear anyhow and the States will have to fit into the new picture.

Most of the talking was done by Stafford Cripps.

12. To S. Zainulabedin[1]

New Delhi
19 April 1946

Dear Mr. Zainulabedin,[2]

I have your letter of the 18th April. As I told you the Congress resolution on fundamental rights is perfectly clear on the point. This resolution has been repeated many times and was recently incorporated in the

1. A copy of this letter is in the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund.
2. A Congressman of Delhi.

13. The Congress Reply to the Cabinet Mission's Invitation[1]

New Delhi
27 April 1946

Dear Lord Pethick-Lawrence,
I have just received your letter[2] of date for which thanks.

On behalf of the Congress, I have two comments to make. In your letter you say: "A Union Government dealing with the following subjects:- foreign affairs, defence and communications. There will be two groups of provinces, the one of the predominantly Hindu provinces and the other of the predominantly Muslim provinces, dealing with all other subjects which the provinces in the respective groups desire to be dealt with in common. The provincial governments will deal with all other subjects and will have all the residuary sovereign rights."

The Congress has never accepted the division of India into predominantly Hindu and predominantly Muslim provinces. It however recognises that there may be provinces which are willing to delegate to the Central Government subjects in the optional list, while others may agree to delegate only compulsory subjects like foreign affairs, defence and communications.

The Congress has agreed that residuary powers are to vest in the provinces, but the use of the term "sovereign" in that connection would tend to cause misunderstanding. I would, therefore, request that the word may be taken out.

1. Letter, drafted by Jawaharlal, of A.K. Azad to Lord Pethick-Lawrence. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, p. 353.
2. Pethick-Lawrence invited to a conference at Simla Maulana Azad and three other Congress representatives saying that the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy had realised that "it would be useless to ask the two parties to meet unless they were able to place before them a basis of negotiation" which could lead to an agreement. The Simla Conference was to consider whether agreement was possible on the basis of the following principles: (i) Establishment of Indian union with three Central subjects—defence, foreign affairs and communications; (ii) all other subjects and residuary sovereign rights vested in provincial units; (iii) Creation of two groups of provincial units, one group consisting of predominantly Hindu provinces and the other group consisting of predominantly Muslim provinces; (iv) These two groups of provinces to decide by agreement among themselves what other subjects may be placed under the Indian union; (v) Indian States to be given the option of fitting themselves into this scheme in any manner they liked. The Congress was represented by A.K. Azad, Jawaharlal, Vallabhbhai Patel and Abdul Ghaffar Khan. The Muslim League was represented by Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan, Nawab Ismail and Abdur Rab Nishtar.

provinces, is not clear. The only predominantly Muslim provinces are the North West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan. Bengal and Punjab have a bare Muslim majority. We consider it wrong to form groups of provinces under the federal union and more so on a religious or communal basis. It also appears that you leave no choice to a province in the matter of joining or not joining a group. It is by no means certain that a province as constituted would like to join any particular group. In any event it would be wholly wrong to compel a province to function against its own wish. While we agree to the provinces having full powers in regard to all remaining subjects as well as the residuary powers, we have also stated that it should be open to any province to exercise its option to have more common subjects with the federal union. Any sub-federation within the federal union would weaken the federal centre and would be otherwise wrong. We do not, therefore, favour any such development.

Regarding the Indian States we should like to make it clear that we consider it essential that they should be parts of the federal union in regard to the common subjects mentioned above. The manner of their coming into the union can be considered fully later.

You have referred to certain "fundamental principles" but there is no mention of the basic issue before us, that is, Indian independence and the consequent withdrawal of the British army from India. It is only on this basis that we can discuss the future of India, or any interim arrangement.

While we are ready to carry on negotiations with any party as to the future of India, we must state our convictions that reality will be absent from any negotiations whilst an outside ruling power still exists in India.

I have asked three of my colleagues of the Congress Working Committee, namely Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan to accompany me in any negotiations that may take place as a result of your suggestion.[3]

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

3. In his reply dated 29 April 1946, Pethick-Lawrence stated that "we have never contemplated the acceptance by the Congress and the Muslim League of our invitation would mean a preliminary condition of full approval by them of the terms set out in my letter."

5

THE CABINET MISSION AND AFTER

II. The Simla Conference

1. Record of First Meeting[1]

The Secretary of State after welcoming the party representatives said that the purpose of the conference was to make a final attempt to reach agreement between the parties. The basis of discussion was the form of solution given in his letter of invitation and the object was to clothe these bare bones with flesh and to see whether the result could be made acceptable. In the light of the discussions the delegation had had with all parties this seemed to them the most hopeful approach.

The delegation considered that there must be some form of central union for India to deal with certain compulsory subjects, but they thought that some system of grouping of provinces provided the best hope of solving the communal problem. They had examined the alternative[2] put forward by the Congress of one federal Centre with compulsory and optional subjects, but it seemed to them impracticable. He thought that it might be taken for granted that everyone present was fully acquainted with one another's views and with the difference between them. If the parties were not satisfied as to the sincerity of the delegation's purpose no words would now convince them and the importance of reaching an agreement was so self-evident that there was no need to enlarge upon it. He proposed that the discussions should centre round the basis put forward in his letter of invitation and that the Conference should work as far as possible to a time table and upon a definite agenda which would be laid before the meeting....

Maulana Azad said that before the matters on the agenda were discussed the basic position of the Congress must be made clear, which was that they were proceeding on the basis of complete independence for India. The Secretary of State said that the delegation were here to set up constitution-making machinery to create a constitution under which India would be independent if that was the wish of the Indian people...

Discussion then took place on the union subjects. The Viceroy explained that it was proposed that these should be defence, foreign affairs and communications as a minimum. The Congress representatives

1. The second Simla Conference, as it came to be known, met from 5 May to 12 May 1946. Extracts of the official report of the first meeting held on 5 May 1946 (forenoon). From *The Transfer of Power 1942-47*, Vol. VII, pp. 425-428. Only such portions as show or are relevant to, Jawaharlal's contributions to the discussions have been printed.
2. See *ante*, pp. 138-139.

said that in their view certain ancillary subjects must necessarily go with these and that the Centre must be self-sufficient in its own right in regard to finance and have under its control the ancillary subjects essential for this purpose. It would require close analysis to work out which of the existing subjects this would cover, but there might be subjects in the present list which were not necessary. They thought that direct sources of revenue were essential and that it would not be satisfactory for the Centre to be financed by contributions from the units...

Sir S. Cripps pointed out that there would be a third party to the union, namely, the Indian States, and the Secretary of State said that the union government would be dependent on and formed by the groups unless there was direct election to the union legislature. If it was indirectly based in this way it did not seem to be necessary to give the federations the power which Mr. Jinnah thought they should have. Mr. Jinnah said that his conception was that a minimum defence budget would be fixed by agreement between the groups after a review of defence expenditure for a past period of years. If more was required the union would prepare a budget of the additional amount and would have to request the groups for additional contributions...[3]

Pandit Nehru said that the discussion seemed to him to be proceeding on the basis of mistaken assumptions. Was there only to be an executive at the union level? If so, who was going to discuss defence or foreign affairs. If the groups could discuss and decide these matters they were not central subjects.

The Secretary of State said that all the topics on the agenda were inevitably interlocked and it seemed now desirable to turn to the question of the union constitution. This raised very large issues, for example, there was room for differences of opinion as to whether there should be a legislature and how it should be chosen...

The Secretary of State pointed out that in each of the three subjects contemplated for the union, policy questions would arise continuously from day to day ....

Pandit Nehru said that the Congress considered that there was obvious difficulty in having a vague and airy Centre with no effective powers. Suppose that there were war or threat of war, it was inconceivable that there should be two or three separate forums for deciding what should be done. It was essential there should be a legislative forum at the

3. In fact the Congress was in favour of the power to levy taxes being given to the union. The Muslim League, on the other hand, had expressed itself in favour of levying contributions from the units.

NOTES TAKEN AT THE SIMLA CONFERENCE, 6 MAY 1946

Centre and the necessary financial apparatus. It was true there must be checks all round but if it was all checks there would be no motive power. The Centre must be strong and efficient though it might be limited. There was otherwise a danger that foreign powers might intrigue with the groups. Naturally, if the Centre adopted policies which offended the groups there would be trouble and that would be contrary to the interest of the Centre. Pandit Nehru's personal view was that there should be a directly elected central legislature but to meet the anxieties of certain people there might be a second chamber indirectly elected. This would provide the check to which Mr. Jinnah and Sir S. Cripps had referred. ...

The Viceroy said that the executive would presumably be small. It might be reasonable for it to be appointed for a term of years as in the Swiss system and not responsible from day to day.

Pandit Nehru said that India was accustomed to the parliamentary system but a permanent executive of this sort might be considered. He thought there was danger of it being inactive as a result of internal disagreement. The central executive might not be so small as was expected.

The Secretary of State pointed out that if there were direct election there would be enormous constituencies unless the legislature were very large. The subject-matter of the Centre would not be appropriate for electioneering and indirect election from the groups would seem a more manageable arrangement.

Pandit Nehru said that the Congress had not reached any definite conclusion about this. There might be indirect election at some lower stage, e.g., in the village...

2. Record of Second Meeting[1]

The Secretary of State said the discussion might be resumed on the point about the relationship between the groups and the union in the absence of a union legislature...

1. 5 May 1946 (afternoon). Extracts. From *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 429-431.

The Secretary of State said that the Centre would be functioning in a very limited field, but in the case, for instance, of defence, there must be someone responsible for the common army and he must have a popular mandate. How could he be responsible to two different legislatures that might have different policies?

Mr. Jinnah said the executive could settle all these matters and he was definitely against a union legislature.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad said that this was a matter for the constitution-making body. If any abnormal provisions were required, they should be suggested by those who wanted them. The Centre must be capable of functioning...

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that the Congress did not want the States to be a separate group. They should be dealt with like the provinces. A large State might come straight into the union; others might form their own groups and join the union as such. Others would be absorbed in larger States or in provinces. In any case there must inevitably be States representatives in the union. The Congress did not want a "rajasthan" because the States units must be associated together in groups on administrative grounds and not simply on political grounds. The problem of the States was really that of the dozen or score of big States...

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that the proportions in which the groups were represented would need careful consideration. Everyone should be treated alike.

His Excellency pointed out, however, that some allowance must be made for the abnormal features of the Indian position.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that the Congress hoped that the States would approximate internally as well as externally to the character of the provinces.

His Excellency pointed out that this would take time.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru agreed and said that if it took too long, there might be a lot of trouble.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru agreed with the Viceroy that a union court would be necessary. It would deal with disputes between the units, and might also deal with the fundamental rights as included in the constitution.

Mr. Jinnah said that on the assumption which seemed to be made that there would be no communal trouble once the union was set up, there was no need of a court.

Sir Stafford Cripps said that since the constitution would be a written one, there must be a tribunal to decide, for instance, disputes about the jurisdiction of the Centre and the groups.

3. A.K. Azad's Letter to Pethick-Lawrence[1]

Simla
6 May 1946

Dear Lord Pethick-Lawrence,
My colleagues and I followed with care the proceedings of the conference yesterday and tried to understand what our conversations were leading up to. I confess to feeling somewhat mystified and disturbed at the vagueness of our talks and some of the assumptions underlying them. While we would like to associate ourselves with every effort to explore ways and means of finding a basis for agreement, we must not deceive ourselves, the Cabinet Mission or the representatives of the Muslim League into the belief that the way the conference has so far proceeded furnishes hope of success. Our general approach to the questions before us was stated briefly in my letter to you of April 28th.[2] We find that this approach has been largely ignored and a contrary method has been followed. We realise that some assumptions have to be made in the early stages as otherwise there can be no progress. But assumptions which ignore or run contrary to fundamental issues are likely to lead to misunderstandings during the later stages.

In my letter of April 28th, I stated that the basic issue before us was that of Indian independence and the consequent withdrawal of the British army from India, for there can be no independence so long as there is a foreign army on Indian soil. We stand for the independence of the whole of India now and not in the distant or near future. Other matters are subsidiary to this and can be fitly discussed and decided by the constituent assembly.

At the conference yesterday I referred to this again and we were glad to find that you and your colleagues, as well as the other members of the conference, accepted Indian independence as the basis of our talks. It was stated by you that the constituent assembly would finally decide about the nexus or other relationship that might be established between a free India and England. While this is perfectly true, it does not affect the position now, and that is the acceptance of Indian independence now.

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 433-434.
2. See *ante*, pp. 138-139.

The Secretary of State said that the Centre would be functioning in a very limited field, but in the case, for instance, of defence, there must be someone responsible for the common army and he must have a popular mandate. How could he be responsible to two different legislatures that might have different policies?

Mr. Jinnah said the executive could settle all these matters and he was definitely against a union legislature.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad said that this was a matter for the constitution-making body. If any abnormal provision were required, they should be suggested by those who wanted them. The Centre must be capable of functioning...

4. Record of Third Meeting[1]

...In reply to Sir Stafford Cripps, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that there was a clear distinction between the Congress plan of optional subjects and the proposal for the grouping of provinces. As soon as the executive machinery for the groups was set up, an unnecessary intermediate body was placed between the Centre and the provincial governments. The grouping scheme would not be efficient from the administrative point of view.

His Excellency said that the scheme was designed to get over a psychological difficulty. It was not claimed to be ideal from the administrative point of view.

The Secretary of State pointed out that there were certain difficulties in the Congress scheme of optional subjects. Part of the Central organization would deal with subjects for the whole of India; another part would deal with subjects entrusted to the Centre by certain provinces only. Part of the legislature would have loyalty to the whole of India; another part would be thinking only of certain provinces. The Government might be supported by the legislature on the compulsory subjects, but not on the optional subjects. The confusion in procedure would be so great that on practical grounds it seemed necessary for optional subjects to be dealt with elsewhere than in the union legislature.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that the provinces tended to hold on to power. One could not be sure that they would cede any authority to the groups until they had been consulted. Possibly an arrangement like that by which Scottish Bills in the British Parliament are referred to the Scottish members might be introduced. Industrialisation and progress were only possible on an all-India basis.

His Excellency said that one must face the fact that the main reason for the groups was to get over the communal difficulty and make it possible to call together a constitution-making body.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that in the view of the Congress the first thing was to dispose in practice of the problem of the Indo-British relationship. The communal problem could be dealt with afterwards. The constitution-making body would not bring compulsion on any unit.

In reply to Sir Stafford Cripps, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that

1. 6 May 1946 (forenoon). Extracts. From *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 436-438.

though most points in the constitution-making body must be settled by the normal procedure, certain fundamental matters would not be decided by a majority. The Congress would not only exercise no compulsion on units to stay in the all-India federation. They would in addition see that the minorities were suitably safeguarded in the constitution. The Congress did not wish to encourage any tendencies towards splitting up India. The union of India, even if the list of subjects was short, must be strong and organic. Provinces would not be prevented from cooperating among themselves over such subjects as education and health; but they would not need a group executive. He appealed to the League to come into the constitution-making body on the assurance that there would be no compulsion.

Mr. Jinnah replied that he could not accept that invitation. But if the Congress and the Muslim League agreed that the Muslim provinces should group together and have their own legislature and executive, he had no doubt that there would be no difficulty at all. If the Congress would accept the groups, the Muslim League would accept the union subject to argument about the machinery of it.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru pointed out that Mr. Jinnah had accepted no feature of the union. The union without a legislature would be futile and entirely unacceptable. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that his position came near to that of Mr. Jinnah, but it was difficult for him to accept grouping because the decision must be made by the provinces.

Mr. Jinnah said that he would be very glad to sit together with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for whom he had a great regard. He had no desire to ask the British to stay in India.

5. Record of Fourth Meeting[1]

The meeting considered item 3 on the agenda,[2] the constitution-making body.

1. 6 May 1946 (afternoon). Extracts. From *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 440-442.
2. Composition and functions in respect of union, groups and provinces of the constitution-making machinery.

Pandit Nehru said that the Congress recognised that their original proposal for a constitution-making body based on adult suffrage would cause delay and that therefore existing machinery must in some way be the basis. The Congress were not able to commit themselves definitely on the details but they envisaged some form of election by provincial legislatures. The States must come in on the same basis as British India, i.e., they must be represented by elected representatives of the people. The Congress could not assent to their being represented by nominees of the rulers. In the majority of States there was electoral machinery already in operation which could be utilised. On this assumption the States' representatives could participate on equal terms with those from British India and could sit even when provincial constitutions were being considered.

As regards functions, the Congress contemplated that the all-India constitution-making body would decide the union constitution and would also decide the main lines of provincial constitutions. They would prefer the maximum possible uniformity in provincial constitutions but details would have to be filled in by some provincial authority. They thought that provincial legislatures as at present constituted might undertake this. For example, the Congress as a matter of principle were opposed to two chambers and desired joint electorates. But these matters should be decided by the constitution-making body which might leave a latitude to provinces in regard to them where uniformity was not possible. It was not contemplated that the all-India constitution-making body should frame constitutions for the States.

Sir S. Cripps asked whether the Congress contemplated the representatives of a group of provinces in the all-India constitution-making body meeting separately for group purposes. Pandit Nehru said that the question of grouping would arise after the constitution had been formed. The first question to decide was the character of the union. After that provinces might exercise their autonomy subject to the union constitution and provincial representatives might bring up in the all-India constitution-making body proposals for grouping. It was not possible to say how the all-India constitution-making body would decide these matters. New forces would be operating when India received its independence and even the old political parties could not guarantee what action it would take. Sir S. Cripps said that the only way to secure that there was a grouping arrangement if that were desired would be to allow provinces to meet as a section of the constitution-making body and form a group. They might decide to do so either by vote of the provincial legislature or by vote of their representatives in the constitution-making body.

Pandit Nehru said that while the Congress contemplated autonomy for the provinces that meant internal autonomy, it was quite another thing for autonomy to be used to create the new piece of constitutional machinery going beyond the boundaries of the province. Some provinces might wish to group themselves and others might not. Others might be divided almost equally on the subject. But Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab who were a large minority might be adverse to the Punjab being grouped with the north-western provinces.

The Viceroy said that it looked as if a constitution-making body with all parties cooperating in it would be impossible unless there were agreement beforehand that provinces should be accorded the right to group themselves. It was a choice of difficulties and unless grouping were agreed to there might be no constitution-making machinery based on agreement and the consequences would be grave.

Pandit Nehru said that if any province declined to come into the constitution-making body, the constitution-making body should proceed without it. He thought this was unlikely to happen but provinces and States which did stay out would be under great pressure to come in. The same applied to the States who would have to come in subject to considerable internal changes.

The Viceroy pointed out that if provinces stayed out the union of India would be lost.

Pandit Nehru said that the Congress would pay a big price to avoid that happening but there were limits. They believed that if the British Government decided to quit India not merely at some future date but now, a constituent assembly could be formed and would meet in a realistic situation in which the parties would come to terms. They would then have to face the consequences of their actions.

The Viceroy said that the psychologies of the situation were realities and it seemed the path of prudence to make some compromise in advance of the constitution-making body which would avoid the risk of a disastrous conflict.

Maulana Azad said that there could be no guarantee that the recommendations of the Congress would be accepted by the constitution-making body, but Pandit Nehru accepted the suggestion of Sir S. Cripps that an agreement between the two main parties to use their influence to procure certain decisions by the constitution-making body would be of real value...

6. Notes on the Conference[1]

The recent talks in Viceregal Lodge disclose certain trends of thought in the minds of the parties concerned. It is desirable that these should be carefully analysed and considered. We have taken up a definite attitude in regard to certain fundamental problems, but we have seldom considered the various implications and consequences or the details of the problems that face us. The proper and logical course for us to take up would have been to insist on a decision on fundamentals before proceeding to discuss any details. In theory we have taken this up but in practice we have often been led to the discussion of what might be considered details though they are important enough. Indeed this is inevitable when any discussions take place, whether formal or informal. The only way to avoid it is to avoid the discussion itself. This difficulty has faced us especially during these similar parleys when we often proceeded on certain assumptions which we had not previously considered in all their bearings. Even apart from these assumptions we have not so far given much thought to the working out of constitutional arrangements in line with our own approach.

What is our present attitude? Firstly and basically that the British must hand over power and withdraw completely. Hand over power to whom? To our national government. That government should be really representative and preferably should be set up with the cooperation of other groups also. If that is not possible, power should be handed over to the Congress or, in the alternative, to the Muslim League. This national government will then see to the formation and working of a constituent assembly which will consider and decide all problems.

Even this attitude has not been clearly set down and worked out. There should have been a full discussion in the Working Committee and a blue-print drawn up, so that we knew exactly where we were in theory. In practice, owing to various opposing forces, something different might well emerge, but it would be enormously helpful to us to have that blue-print and to test every new proposal by it. Obviously the problems before us are of enormous complexity and a formal approach based on some principles does not go far enough. We are too much absorbed by the communal issue and ignore much else, yet both these act and react on each other.

1. Dated 7 May 1946. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

Thus the creation of a provisional government or interim government should be worked out fully in all its implications; so also the constituent assembly. How is the constituent assembly to be formed and should it function? How do States come in? Will the constituent assembly draw up only this all-India constitution or the details of the provincial constitution also — and States? We have no clear answers to these questions. A further complexity is introduced by the reference to 'grouping' of provinces.

During the period of the provisional government where do States stand?

These and many other questions arise and it is difficult to answer them authoritatively unlesss the Working Committee has considered them and laid down its policy in regard to them.

The present Simla Conference has assumed a certain importance in the eyes of India and the world. In a sense it is a turning-point in recent Indo-British discussions. As there is likely to be no kind of a settlement at this Conference, the obvious result is going to be that the British Government will proceed to give an imposed decision. One can vaguely see the outline of this already. The attitude we take up in the Conference in regard not only to fundamentals but also other matters is important as it may have some bearing on results. And yet we have little guidance from the Working Committee on these matters. Subsequent developments are likely to be rapid.

1. The picture as in the mind of the Cabinet Delegation:

(i) An all-India union comprising all the provinces and States dealing with certain minimum common subjects, such as, foreign affairs, defence, communications. Also the power directly to raise moneys for these subjects. Presumably this will include currency and customs & no more. A union executive & legislature. The latter to be chosen by the provincial legislature (States?). Probably parity in the legislative and executive as between the two groups. If there is the third group, the States, then the proportion to be 5:5:3.

(ii) Provincial autonomy in regard to all other subjects — residuary powers. In a sense provinces & States sovereign, subject to the States powers of the Centre.

(iii) Provinces (and States) to be given the option of grouping themselves together for such subjects as they may choose. Such a group to have an executive (and probably also a legislature, though this is not clear).

(iv) Not clear whether the union will deal only with the groups or also with the units. Probably with both. It is quite possible that some provinces may not choose to group themselves.

(v) The constituent assembly to be formed by indirect election through present provincial legislatures, either by single transferable vote or some other form of proportional representation or communal groups voting separately.

This constituent assembly, after discussing common problems, to split up into groups to consider & decide group structures. Thus the C.A. functions both as a single assembly and as two or more C.A.s.

Question of States — Probably to be left out. Subsequent treaties or arrangements.

2. Picture as in the mind of Muslim League:

(i) All India union of all provinces (States not considered) dealing with foreign affairs, defence & communications. Only an executive—no legislature. (Who appoints executive? The group executives?) No power to raise money. Money to be voted for it by group executives & legislatures. Essentially the union executive will be agents of the groups.

(ii) Groups—executive & legislature question: optional or compulsory?

(iii) Provinces

Evidently groups are the most important part of this structure and the union will be weak & ineffective.

States — Where do they come in

(i) Provisional or interim government
(ii) Constituent assembly
(iii) Grouping to form units for federation
(iv) Merger
(v) Internal structure
(vi) Basic qualifications to join constituent assembly & union
(vii) Pol. Dept. & Pol. Adviser

Change of constitution——method
Question of secession later
Supreme Court

Questions for us:

1. If Centre real, strong, organic with Ex. & Leg.—can we permit grouping of Prov. Say without Legs. &c.

Centre: Organic with full authority in regard to subjects given to it—also with power to remedial action in case of breakdown of constitution, gross maladministration, or grave public emergencies—famine, epidemic &c.
Sovereign democratic legislature & responsible executive.

7. To Lord Wavell[1]

Simla
8 May 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,
I am sending you a small pamphlet[2] giving the results of the recent elections in the North West Frontier Province. At page 9 you will find the voting figures given. Out of the total Muslim votes cast the Congress and Nationalist Muslim candidates got 208,896 votes, and the Muslim League candidates got 147,880 votes.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.
2. Not printed.

8. A.K. Azad's Letter to Pethick-Lawrence[1]

Simla
9 May 1946

Dear Lord Pethick-Lawrence,
My colleagues and I have given the most careful consideration to the memorandum[2] sent by you yesterday suggesting various points of agreement. On the 28th April I sent you a letter in which I explained briefly the Congress viewpoint in regard to certain "fundamental principles" mentioned in your letter of 27th April. After the first day of the conference, on May 6th, I wrote to you again to avoid any possible misunderstanding regarding the issues being discussed in the conference.

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 476-479. This is the final draft containing changes made by Mahatma Gandhi. The first draft in Jawaharlal's hand is available in J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. The differences between the two drafts are indicated in footnotes.
2. After the Simla Conference had sat for two days the Cabinet Mission sent the parties a document containing suggested points for agreement. This elaborated the constitutional structure in three tiers — union, groups and provinces — envisaged in the letter of invitation sent by Pethick-Lawrence to Azad and Jinnah on 27 April 1946.

I now find from your memorandum that some of your suggestions are entirely opposed to our views and to the views repeatedly declared by the Congress. We are thus placed in a difficult position. It has been and is our desire to explore every avenue for a settlement and a changeover in India by consent, and for this purpose we are prepared to go far. But there are obvious limits beyond which we cannot go if we are convinced that this would be injurious to the people of India and to India's progress as a free nation.[3]

In my previous letters I have laid stress on the necessity of having a strong and organic federal union. I have also stated that we do not approve of sub-federations or grouping of provinces in the manner suggested, and are wholly opposed to parity in executives or legislatures as between wholly unequal groups. We do not wish to come in the way of provinces or other units cooperating together, if they so choose, but this must be entirely optional.

The proposals you have put forward are meant, we presume, to limit the free discretion of the constituent assembly. We do not see how this can be done. We are at present concerned with one important aspect of a larger problem. Any decision on this aspect taken now might well conflict with the decisions we, or the constituent assembly, might want to take on other aspects. The only reasonable course it appears to us is to have a constituent assembly with perfect freedom to draw up its constitution, with certain reservations to protect the rights of minorities. Thus we may agree that any major communal issue must be settled by consent of the parties concerned, or, where such consent is not obtained, by arbitration.[4]

3. One paragraph is omitted; Nor can we, as representatives of the Congress, ignore or override the clear directions of the Congress. It is certainly open to us to make any recommendations to the All India Congress Committee. But we can only do so if we are ourselves convinced of the desirability of these recommendations in the present circumstances and the possibility of their acceptance. We have also to bear in mind the interests of other minorities and groups, notably the Sikhs, who are not represented in the conference.

4. Two paragraphs are omitted: We are prepared to extend the principle of arbitration further to avoid any semblance of compulsion of a minority on particular issues affecting it. But while we have to avoid the compulsion of a minority, we must necessarily also avoid the compulsion of a majority by a minority.

There should be a final safeguard. When the constitution has been framed by the constituent assembly it should be sent for notification to each provincial assembly. It will be open to the province not to ratify and thus to opt itself out of it. If it does so then the problems in relation to the province will have to be considered anew. This gives the largest freedom and self-determination to each province and at the same time enables a balanced constitution to be drawn up with the consent of all parties concerned.

From the proposals you have sent us (8-D.E.F.G.)[5] it would appear that two or three separate constitutions might emerge for separate groups, joined together by a flimsy common superstructure left to the mercy of the three disjointed groups.[6]

There is also compulsion in the early stages for a province to join a particular group whether it wants to or not.[7] Thus why should the Frontier Province, which is clearly a Congress province, be compelled to join any group hostile to the Congress?

We realise that in dealing with human beings, as individuals or groups, many considerations have to be borne in mind besides logic and reason. But logic and reason cannot be ignored altogether, and unreason and injustice are dangerous companions at any time and, more especially, when we are building for the future of hundreds of millions of human beings.

I shall now deal with some of the points in your memorandum and make some suggestions in regard to them.

No. 1.[8] — We note that you have provided for the finance it requires for the subjects it deals with. We think it should be clearly stated that the federal union must have power to raise revenue in its own right. Further that currency and customs must in any event be included in the union subjects, as well as such other subjects as on closer scrutiny may be found to be intimately allied to them. One other subject is an essential and inevitable union subject and that is planning. Planning can

5. These clauses of Point 8 of the list of points of agreement set out the constitution-making procedure. After preliminary business the constituent assembly would divide into three sections, representing respectively the Hindu-majority and Muslim-majority provinces and the States. Each of the first two sections would decide on provincial constitutions, and, if they wished, a group constitution. Provinces might theu opt out of groups. Thereafter the three sections would join to frame a union constitution, provided that any major point affecting the communal issue must be voted by a separate majority of each of the two major communities.
6. Here one paragraph is deleted: The process of constitution-making begins from below and might well proceed in conflicting directions without any uniformity. It might even be difficult, during the later stages, to erect an organic, workable structure for the union centre. This procedure is bound to lead to all manner of difficulties and conflicts, and to a disjointed constitution.
7. This sentence replaced the following sentence in the first draft: At a later stage it may opt out of that group but the previous compulsion can have no justification.
8. Point 1 of the list was that there should be an all-India union government and legislature dealing with foreign affairs, defence, communication, fundamental rights and having necessary powers of finance. All remaining powers should vest in the provinces (Point 2).

only be done effectively at the Centre, though the provinces or units will give effect to it in their respective areas.

The union must also have power to take remedial action in cases of breakdown of the constitution and in grave public emergencies.

Nos. 5 and 6[9]— We are entirely opposed to the proposed parity, both in the executive and legislature, as between wholly unequal groups. This is unfair and will lead to trouble. Such a provision contains in itself the seed of conflict and the destruction of free growth. If there is no agreement on this or any similar matter, we are prepared to leave it to arbitration.

No 7[10] — We are prepared to accept the suggestion that provision be made for a reconsideration of the constitution after ten years. Indeed the constitution will necessarily provide the machinery for its revision at any time.

The second clause lays down that reconsideration should be done by a body constituted on the same basis as the constituent assembly. This present provision is intended to meet an emergency. We expect that the constitution for India will be based on adult suffrage. Ten years hence India is not likely to be satisfied with anything less than adult suffrage to express its mind on all grave issues.[11]

No. 8-A[12] — We would suggest that the just and proper method of elections, fair to all parties, is the method of proportional representation by single transferable vote.[13] It might be remembered that the present basis of election for the provincial assemblies is strongly weighted in favour of the minorities.

The proportion of 1/10th appears to be too small and will limit the numbers of the constituent assembly too much. Probably the number

9. Point 5 was that the legislature of the union should have parity of representation between the Muslim-majority and the Hindu-majority provinces, whether grouped or not, together with representatives (unspecified) of the States. Point 6 stipulated that the union government would be constituted in the same proportion.
10. Point 7 allowed reconsideration of the constitution at ten-yearly intervals.
11. This paragraph in the first draft read: The second clause to the effect that reconsideration should be done by a body constituted on the same basis as the constituent assembly, and with the same provisions as to voting, may create difficulties as it may not fit in with the constitution. We are, however, agreeable to the principle underlying this, but in any event we would like to have adult suffrage.
12. According to this clause of Point 8 the constituent assembly should mirror the party strengths in the provincial assemblies, with representatives of States by ratio of their populations.
13. "As suggested in the memorandum, it will be difficult to fit in every group of independents"—deleted from the first draft.

From the proposals you have sent us (8-D.E.F.G.)[5] it would appear that two or three separate constitutions might emerge for separate groups, joined together by a flimsy common superstructure left to the mercy of the three disjointed groups.[6]

There is also compulsion in the early stages for a province to join a particular group whether it wants to or not.[7] Thus why should the Frontier Province, which is clearly a Congress province, be compelled to join any group hostile to the Congress?

We realise that in dealing with human beings, as individuals or groups, many considerations have to be borne in mind besides logic and reason. But logic and reason cannot be ignored altogether, and unreason and injustice are dangerous companions at any time and, more especially, when we are building for the future of hundreds of millions of human beings.

I shall now deal with some of the points in your memorandum and make some suggestions in regard to them.

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No 7[10]—We are prepared to accept the suggestion that provision be made for a reconsideration of the constitution after ten years. Indeed the constitution will necessarily provide the machinery for its revision at any time.

The second clause lays down that reconsideration should be done by a body constituted on the same basis as the constituent assembly. This present provision is intended to meet an emergency. We expect that the constitution for India will be based on adult suffrage. Ten years hence India is not likely to be satisfied with anything less than adult suffrage to express its mind on all grave issues.[11]

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13. "As suggested in the memorandum, it will be difficult to fit in every group of independents"—deleted from the first draft.

would not exceed 200. In the vitally important tasks the assembly will have to face, it should have larger numbers. We suggest that at least one-fifth of the total membership of the provincial assemblies should be elected for the constituent assembly.

No. 8-B.[14] — This clause is vague and requires elucidation. But for the present we are not going into further details.

No. 8-D.E.F.G. — I have already referred to these clauses. We think that both the formation of these groups and the procedure suggested are wrong and undesirable. We do not wish to rule out the formation of groups if the provinces so desire. But this subject must be left open for decision by the constituent assembly. The drafting and settling of the constitution should begin with the federal union. This should contain common and uniform provisions for the provinces and other units. The provinces may then add to these.

No. 8-H.[15] — In the circumstances existing today we are prepared to accept some such clause. In case of disagreement the matter should be referred to arbitration.

I have pointed out above some of the obvious defects, as we see them, in the proposals contained in your memorandum. If these are remedied, as suggested by us, we might be in a position to recommend their acceptance by the Congress. But as drafted in the memorandum sent to us, I regret that we are unable to accept them.

On the whole, therefore, if the suggestions are intended to have a binding effect, with all the will in the world to have an agreement with the League, we must repudiate most of them. Let us not run into any evil greater than the one all of us three parties should seek to avoid.

If an agreement honourable to both the parties and favourable to the growth of free and united India cannot be achieved, we would suggest that an interim provisional government responsible to the elected members of the Central Assembly be formed at once and the matters in dispute concerning the constituent assembly between the Congress and the League be referred to an independent tribunal.[16]

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

14. "Representatives shall be invited from the States on the basis of their population in proportion to the representation from British India."
15. "No major point in the union constitution which affects the communal issue shall be deemed to be passed by the assembly unless a majority of both the two major communities vote in its favour."
16. The last two paragraphs were drafted by Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Record of Fifth Meeting[1]

The Secretary of State said that the document circulated had been intended to focus the result of the previous conversations in Simla. As a result of the reactions in the conference and informal contacts, the delegation understood that there were the following points of agreement. The delegation fully appreciated, however, that such agreement was provisional and that the picture as a whole, when it had been completed, must be acceptable ....

As regards the groups, it was agreed—

(a) that it was open to provinces to form themselves into groups with their own executive and legislature;

(b) that no province should be compelled to remain in a group against its will ....

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad said that the Congress had not definitely agreed that there should be executives and legislatures in the groups. This was a point that had only been discussed, not agreed.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that all of those present desired an agreement as soon as possible. He suggested that the League and the Congress might sit together and try to find a way out; but as that might not yield results, there should be an agreed umpire. Perhaps one representative on each side might sit with an umpire, and in case of disagreement, the umpire's decision would be accepted as final. The umpire would of course have to be a person accepted by both parties.

After some discussion Mr. Jinnah said that he would be very glad to sit with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and consider whether this proposal could be accepted, and if so, who the umpire should be.

There was then a short interval for discussion between Mr. Jinnah and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

After the interval the conference reassembled. Mr. Jinnah said that, as was inevitable, a decision could not be reached immediately. He and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru suggested that there should be an adjournment till Saturday afternoon at 3 p.m. when he and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru would report progress.[2]

1. 9 May 1946. Extracts. From *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, 489-490.
2. The conference adjourned till 11 May 1946 for two days so that Jawaharlal and Jinnah could have talks.

It is clear that he is not going to commit himself about the umpire and will not suggest names. It is the old well-established technique. When we meet he will insist that Congress representatives should be such and such and no other. I shall have to tell him that we cannot agree to any limitation of this kind.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

12. To M. A. Jinnah[1]

11 May 1946

Dear Mr. Jinnah,
Your letter of May 10th reached me at ten last night.

During the talk we had at Viceregal Lodge, you referred to various matters besides the choice of an umpire, and I gave you my reactions in regard to them. But I was under the impression that the proposal to have an umpire had been agreed to and our next business was to suggest names. Indeed it was when some such agreement was reached in the conference that we had our talk. My colleagues have proceeded on this basis and prepared a list of suitable names. The conference will expect us to tell them this afternoon the name of the umpire we fix upon, or at any rate to place before them suggestions in this behalf.

The chief implication in having an umpire is to agree to accept his final decision. We agree to this. We suggest that we might start with this and report accordingly to the conference.

As suggested by you, I shall come over to your place of residence at about 10.30 this morning.[2]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Jinnah replied the same day that he had agreed only to sit with Jawaharlal and "consider whether this proposal could be accepted, and if so, who the umpire should be".

there might be some question of arbitration. Until the Muslim League knew that there would be groups of provinces and what provinces would be in them, they could not consider arbitration. The Secretary of State said that he understood it to be complementarily agreed on the one hand that there should be groups and on the other that there should be a union. Mr. Jinnah said that he could not agree to an arbitrator deciding on the question of the sovereignty of Pakistan. Subject to the whole picture, he was willing to agree to the sovereignty of Pakistan being delegated to a union for the three subjects providing a sovereign Pakistan was recognised in the form of a group. He was prepared to consider arbitration on other points when he knew what they were.

Pandit Nehru said that this meant coming to an agreement on fundamentals. Congress and the Muslim League were completely opposed on the question of partition or otherwise. For Mr. Jinnah the groups were the essence of the proposal. Congress thought that a strong centre was essential and that it should have subjects additional to the three, including currency, customs and planning. They had not agreed to the imposition of groups or to their having legislatures or executives. They were prepared to have arbitration on these issues.

Mr. Jinnah said that the Muslim League conception was that there would be two groups of provinces. These would be federations which would confederate. If there were no executives or legislatures in the groups the union would be formed of provinces and of States and the whole conception was destroyed....

Pandit Nehru said that the least the Congress could agree to was a union centre with the three subjects and having the right to raise its own revenue by direct taxation. Currency and planning must also be central although the latter was in a large sense advisory. Congress were agreeable to provinces exercising their autonomy to form groups with the right to opt out of a group.

Mr. Jinnah said that he could not agree to more than three subjects at the Centre and the method of financing the union must be left open to the constituent assembly. The character of the groups could not go to arbitration. The arbitrator might decide that there would be no executives or legislatures and in effect there would then be no groups.

Pandit Nehru said that the real point was whether the group should function as a government with an executive or as a more informal association. Congress considered that three layers of governments would not be a workable arrangement but they could not prevent provinces having the right to come together.

Sir Stafford Cripps suggested that named provinces might form a constitution-making body for the group, subject to option out after the

constitution had been framed. Mr. Jinnah agreed that there could be option out....

Pandit Nehru said that a constitution-making body could not be bound to decisions by arbitration. If it was a large enough body it was likely to reach a decision. He asked whether arbitration had been ruled out by Mr. Jinnah at the present stage.

Mr. Jinnah said that the first thing was that the provinces must be grouped. This was not to be the subject of arbitration. The two-group constitution-making bodies would then meet, of course, on the basis of parity. They would not decide as one body....

Pandit Nehru said on Mr. Jinnah's proposal no constitution for the union would ever be framed. He wished to make it clear that the Congress would not accept the States being represented in the constitution-making body or in the legislature by the Princes' nominees, nor would they accept the States as a third group. The Congress did not agree to parity in the Central legislature. Provision could be made to safeguard the rights of a community without parity which would give rise to trouble. If the constitution did not reflect realities of the situation it would be unstable and produce a state of bitterness and frustration. The Congress were entirely opposed to the groups being sovereign bodies. They were prepared however for the question of legislatures and exceutives for the groups to be put to arbitration. They would agree to safeguards on the lines of Clause (H)[2] in the union constitution.

The Muslim League representatives said that they would require parity of representatation in the union constitution. There were many important issues besides communal issues and there were precedents for equal representation of unequal parts in a federation.

The Secretary of State said that parity had grave disadvantages. Clause (H) would give real protection. He thought that Mr. Jinnah would agree that on communal issues one-third of the population could not expect to be able to vote down the other two-thirds. In doubtful cases there must be some arbitral machinery.

The conference then discussed whether there was anything further that could be done in the hope of securing agreement. It was agreed that Mr. Jinnah would put down in writing the precise conditions on which the Muslim League would be prepared to negotiate further. The Congress representatives agreed to prepare proposals of their own m an endeavour to find common ground....

2. See *ante*, p. 160, footnote 15.

14. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Pethick-Lawrence[1]

Simla
12 May 1946

Dear Lord Pethick-Lawrence,
As decided yesterday, I am sending you a note on behalf of the Congress regarding the proposals which might form the basis of an agreement. I am also sending you another note in regard to the Muslim League's proposals.[2]

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7* Vol. VII, p. 518.
2. See succeeding items.

15. Points Suggested by Congress as Basis of Agreement[1]

1. The constituent assembly to be formed as follows:
   (i) Representatives shall be elected by each provincial assembly by proportional representation on (single transferable vote). The number so elected should be one-fifth of the number of members of the assembly and they may be members of the assembly or others.
   (ii) Representatives from the States on the basis of their population in proportion to the representation from British India. How these representatives are to be chosen is to be considered later.

2. The constituent assembly shall draw up a constitution for the federal union. This shall consist of an all-India federal government and legislature dealing with foreign affairs, defence, communications, fundamental rights, currency, customs and planning, as well as such other subjects as, on closer scrutiny, may be found to be intimately allied to

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal, 12 May 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 518-519.

them. The federal union will have necessary powers to obtain for itself the finances it requires for these subjects and the power to raise revenues in its own right. The union must also have power to take remedial action in cases of breakdown of the constitution and in grave public emergencies.

3. All the remaining powers shall vest in the provinces or units.

4. Groups of provinces may be formed and such groups may determine the provincial subjects which they desire to take in common.

5. After the constituent assembly has decided the constitution for the all-India federal union as laid down in paragraph two above, the representatives of the provinces may form groups to decide the provincial constitutions for their group and, if they wish, a group constitution.

6. No major point in the all-India federal constitution which affects the communal issue shall be deemed to be passed by the constituent assembly unless a majority of the members of the community or communities concerned present in assembly and voting are separately in its favour. Provided that in case there is no agreement on any such issue, it will be referred to arbitration. In case of doubt as to whether any point is a major communal issue, the Speaker will decide, or, if so desired, it may be referred to the Federal Court.

7. In the event of a dispute arising in the process of constitution-making the specific issue shall be referred to arbitration.

8. The constitution should provide machinery for its revision at any time subject to such checks as may be desired. If so desired, it may be specifically stated that this whole constitution may be reconsidered after ten years.

16. Note by the Congress on the Muslim League's Suggestions[1]

The approach of the Muslim League is so different from that of the Congress in regard to these matters that it is a little difficult to deal

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal, 12 May 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 519-521.

with each point separately without reference to the rest. The picture as envisaged by the Congress is briefly given in a separate note.[2] From consideration of this note and the Muslim League's proposals the difficulties and the possible agreement will become obvious.

The Muslim League's proposals[3] are dealt with below briefly:

1. We suggest that the proper procedure is for one constitution-making body or constituent assembly to meet for the whole of India and later for groups to be formed if so desired by the provinces concerned. The matter should be left to the provinces and if they wish to function as a group they are at liberty to do so and to frame their own constitution for the purpose.

In any event Assam has obviously no place in the group mentioned, and the North West Frontier Province, as the elections show, is not in favour of this proposal.

2. We have agreed to residuary powers, apart from the Central subjects, vesting in the provinces. They can make such use of them as they like and, as has been stated above, function as a group. What the ultimate nature of such a group may be cannot be determined at this stage and should be left to the representatives of the provinces concerned.

3. We have suggested that the most suitable method of election would be by single transferable vote. This would give proper representation to the various communities in proportion to their present representation in the legislatures. If the population proportion is taken, we have no particular objection, but this would lead to difficulties in all the provinces where there is weightage in favour of certain communities. The principle approved of would necessarily apply to all the provinces.

2. See the previous item.
3. The Muslim League proposed: (i) the six Muslim-majority provinces should have their own constitution-making body, which should decide which powers, other than defence, foreign affairs and communications necessary for defence, should be provincial and which should be central to what was called Pakistan federation; (ii) in a joint constitution-making body with the non-Muslim group it should be open to discussions whether the union should have a legislature and how it should be financed, but in any event not by means of taxation; (iii) no decision of the union on any controversial matter should be taken by a majority of less than three-fourths. There were also proposals about opting out, parity in the union, fundamental rights and other matters of detail.

4. There is no necessity for opting out of a province from its group as the previous consent of the provinces is necessary for joining the group.

5. We consider it essential that the federal union should have a legislature. We also consider it essential that the union should have power to raise its own revenue.

6 and 7. We are entirely opposed to parity of representation as between groups of provinces in the union executive or legislature. We think that the provision to the effect that no major communal issue in the union constitution shall be deemed to be passed by the constituent assembly unless a majority of the members of the community or communities concerned present and voting in the constituent assembly are separately in its favour, is a sufficient and ample safeguard of all minorities. We have suggested something wider and including all communities than has been proposed elsewhere. This may give rise to some difficulties in regard to small communities, but all such difficulties can be got over by reference to arbitration. We are prepared to consider the method of giving effect to this principle so as to make it more feasible.

8. This proposal[4] is so sweeping in its nature that no government or legislature can function at all. Once we have safeguarded major communal issues other matters, whether controversial or not, require no safeguard. This will simply mean safeguarding vested interests of all kinds and preventing progress, or indeed any movement in any direction. We, therefore, entirely disapprove of it.

9. We are entirely agreeable to the inclusion of fundamental rights and safeguards concerning religion, culture and like matters in the constitution. We suggest that the proper place for this is the all-India federal union constitution. There should be uniformity in regard to these fundamental rights all over India.

10. The constitution of the union will inevitably contain provisions for its revision. It may also contain a provision for its full reconsideration at the end of ten years. The matter will be open then for a complete reconsideration. Though it is implied, we would avoid reference to seeession as we do not wish to encourage this idea.

4. See point iii of footnote 3 above.

17. Appeal for Communal Unity[1]

The present political situation has reached a critical juncture.[2] Everyone has to be prepared to shoulder his responsibility bravely. People should develop a balanced and unbiased outlook and do their utmost to establish complete communal unity. They should take care to see that they do not allow their emotions to get the better of their reason.

The freedom that is coming is not going to be the swaraj of the Hindus or of the Muslims, but it will be the freedom of the 400 million people of India. The Congress has always been inspired by high ideals, and, in all its struggles against British imperialism, it has never shown any malice or bitterness. If only the people can remember this, they will find no difficulty in facing the situation.

I deplore the raising of petty issues, or putting obstacles in the way of India's freedom, but in spite of all obstacles, India will soon be free.

1. Speech at Simla, 13 May 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 14 May 1946.
2. At the seventh meeting of the Simla Conference on 12 May 1946, with the Congress and the Muslim League remaining opposed to each other, Pethick-Lawrence announced the breakdown of the conference. The Cabinet Mission returned to Delhi promising to issue a statement defining the next steps to be taken.

18. Assurance to Indian Christians[1]

Indian Christians need have no qualms about their religious freedom in an independent India. Although our ultimate aim is to establish a secular state not identified with any particular religion, freedom of conscience and recognition of the religious rights of all citizens must be the starting point. Indian Christians are part and parcel of the Indian people. Their traditions go back to 1,500 years and more, and they form one of the many enriching elements in the country's cultural and spiritual life. In a country where there are so many creeds we must learn to be tolerant.

1. Interview to a representative of the *Catholic Herald* of London, given some time before 12 May 1946. From *The Hindu*, 14 May 1946.

4. There is no necessity for opting out of a province from its group as the previous consent of the provinces is necessary for joining the group.

5. We consider it essential that the federal union should have a legislature. We also consider it essential that the union should have power to raise its own revenue.

6 and 7. We are entirely opposed to parity of representation as between groups of provinces in the union executive or legislature. We think that the provision to the effect that no major communal issue in the union constitution shall be deemed to be passed by the constituent assembly unless a majority of the members of the community or communities concerned present and voting in the constituent assembly are separately in its favour, is a sufficient and ample safeguard of all minorities. We have suggested something wider and including all communities than has been proposed elsewhere. This may give rise to some difficulties in regard to small communities, but all such difficulties can be got over by reference to arbitration. We are prepared to consider the method of giving effect to this principle so as to make it more feasible.

8. This proposal[4] is so sweeping in its nature that no government or legislature can function at all. Once we have safeguarded major communal issues other matters, whether controversial or not, require no safeguard. This will simply mean safeguarding vested interests of all kinds and preventing progress, or indeed any movement in any direction. We, therefore, entirely disapprove of it.

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10. The constitution of the union will inevitably contain provisions for its revision. It may also contain a provision for its full reconsideration at the end of ten years. The matter will be open then for a complete reconsideration. Though it is implied, we would avoid reference to secession as we do not wish to encourage this idea.

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Government had allowed no requirements for interests of others to stand in the way. So far as His Majesty's Government were concerned, they regarded this statement[2] as final, and changes could only be made by agreement between the parties....

As to the negotiating committee for the States [paragraph 19 (ii)][3] Pandit Nehru foresaw difficulty in its members enjoying a representative capacity in the early stages of the constituent assembly. He pointed out that the members would represent only the Princes and not their peoples, and he did not see how it would fit in with the assembly.

On paragraph 12,[4] Pandit Nehru questioned the sentence beginning "To meet this the Congress have put forward a scheme", as not correctly representing the Congress view.

Referring to 19 (vii),[5] Pandit Nehru asked what would happen in the event of a deadlock arising in the constituent assembly. He was told

2. The Cabinet Mission's statement of 16 May 1946 proposed an interim government which would carry on the administration of India until a new constitution-making body based on a three-tiered constitutional structure to work out the details could be formed. The proposal for a three-tiered constitution—provinces, groups of provinces and a union—ensured for the provinces claimed for Pakistan a large measure of autonomy. They would be joined with the rest of India in a union confined to the control of defence, foreign affairs and communications. It was indicated that in the all-India union the Hindu-majority and the Muslim-majority groups of provinces might have equal representation, and there might be a provision for a province to have the right to secede from the union after a period of years.
3. "...the States would be given in the final constituent assembly appropriate representation which would not, on the basis of the calculations adopted for British India, exceed 93, but the method of selection will have to be determined by consultation. The States would in the preliminary stage be represented by a negotiating committee."
4. Paragraph 12 of the Cabinet Mission's statement read: "This decision does not however blind us to the very real Muslim apprehensions that their culture and political and social life might become submerged in a purely unitary India, in which the Hindus with their greatly superior numbers must be a dominating element. To meet this the Congress have put forward a scheme under which provinces would have full autonomy subject only to a minimum of central subjects such as foreign affairs, defence and communications."
5. It read: "In the Union constituent assembly resolution varying the provisions of paragraph 15 or raising any major communal issue shall require a majority of the representatives present and voting of each of the two major communities. The chairman of the assembly shall decide which (if any) of the resolutions raise major communal issues and shall, if so requested by a majority of the representatives of either of the major communities, consult the Federal Court before giving his decision."

that the Mission had discussed the possibility of recommending provisions for arbitration, but had thought it best not to make a recommendation on this point. It was, however, open to the parties to agree to arbitration if they were so disposed.

In answer to a question from Pandit Nehru as to what would happen if the parties were unwilling to cooperate on the basis of the plan set out in the statement, the Viceroy said that if one party came in and the other did not, we should have to deal with the one that did.

Pandit Nehru thought that the introduction of independence should not be delayed until the constitution-making was complete, but that progress towards it should be made during the period of the interim government. His Excellency said that the interim government must be under the existing constitution.

Asking as to the status of the constituent assembly, he was told that it might be regarded as a sovereign body, for the purpose of constitution-making, and that when agreement had been reached it would remain for Parliament to repeal the Government of India Act, 1935, and for formal steps of recognition to be taken.

Finally, Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru made it clear that their object had been at this meeting to ascertain more exactly what the provisions of the statement meant, rather than to offer any criticisms of it. The Congress would consider the statement in the course of the next few days and would communicate their views to the Mission. They were informed that if further explanations were desired, the members of the Mission would be at their disposal.

21. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Pethick-Lawrence[1]

New Delhi
20th May 1946

Dear Lord Pethick-Lawrence,

My Committee have carefully considered the statement issued by the Cabinet delegation on May 16th, and they have seen Gandhiji after the interviews[2] he has had with you and Sir Stafford Cripps. There are certain matters about which I have been asked to write to you.

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 639-641.
2. At which Mahatma Gandhi had objected to the grouping of provinces and to parity in the interim executive.

As we understand the statement, it contains certain recommendations and procedure for the election and functioning of the constituent assembly.[3] The assembly itself, when formed, will, in my Committee's opinion, be a sovereign body for the purpose of drafting the constitution unhindered by any external authority, as well as for entering into a treaty. Further that it will be open to the assembly to vary in any way it likes the recommendations and the procedure suggested by the Cabinet delegation. The constituent assembly being a sovereign body for the purposes of the constitution, its final decisions will automatically take effect.

As you were aware some recommendations have been made in your statement which are contrary to the Congress stand as it was taken at the Simla Conference and elsewhere. Naturally we shall try to get the assembly to remove what we consider defects in the recommendations. For this purpose we shall endeavour to educate the country and the constituent assembly.

There is one matter in which my Committee were pleased to hear Gandhiji say that you were trying to see that the European members in the various provincial assemblies, particularly Bengal and Assam, would neither offer themselves as candidates nor vote for the election of delegates to the constituent assembly.

No provision has been made for the election of a representative from British Baluchistan. So far as we know, there is no elected assembly or any other kind of chamber which might select such a representative. One individual may not make much of a difference in the constituent assembly, but it would make a difference if such an individual speaks for a whole province which he really does not represent in any way. It is far better not to have representation at all than to have this kind of representation which will mislead and which may decide the fate of Baluchistan contrary to the wishes of its inhabitants. If any kind of popular representation can be arranged, we would welcome it. My Committee were pleased, therefore, to hear Gandhiji say that you are

3. The procedure in the constituent assembly would be that after a preliminary meeting of the entire body, the provincial representatives would divide up into sections—Section A consisting of Madras, Bombay, United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa; Section B of the Punjab, the North West Frontier Province, Sind and British Baluchistan; Section C of Bengal and Assam. These sections would settle the constitutions of the provinces of their sections, and would also decide whether a group should be formed and, if so, with what subjects it should deal. Finally all the members of the constituent assembly would reassemble to settle the union constitution.

The question of the Indian States has been left vague and, therefore, I need not say much about it at this stage.[6] But it is clear that State representatives who come into the constituent assembly must do so more or less in the same way as the representatives of the provinces. The constituent assembly cannot be formed of entirely disparate elements.

I have dealt above with some points arising out of your statement. Possibly some of them can be cleared up by you and the defects removed. The principal point, however, is, as stated above, that we look upon this constituent assembly as a sovereign body which can decide as it chooses in regard to any matter before it can give effect to its decision. The only limitation we recognise is that in regard to certain major communal issues the decision should be by a majority of each of the two major communities. We shall try to approach the public and the members of the constituent assembly with our own proposals for removing any defects in the recommendations made by you.

Gandhiji has informed my Committee that you contemplate that British troops will remain in India till after the establishment of the Government in accordance with the instrument produced by the constituent assembly. My Committee feel that the presence of foreign troops in India will be a negation of India's independence. India should be considered to be independent in fact from the moment that the national provisional government is established.

I shall be grateful to have an early reply so that my Committee may come to a decision in regard to your statement.[7]

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

6. The Indian States were to have 93 representatives in the constituent assembly, but the method of selecting them would be left to consultation between the assembly and the States rulers.
7. The objections raised in this letter and those in the Congress resolution on the Cabinet Mission plan adopted on 24 May 1946 were considered by Pethick-Lawrence in his reply to Maulana Azad dated 22 May 1946 and in a statement of the Mission on 25 May 1946. See *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 659-660, 688-689.

23. Congress Resolution on the Cabinet Mission Statement[1]

The Working Committee have given careful consideration to the statement dated May 16, 1946 issued by the delegation of the British Cabinet and the Viceroy on behalf of the British Government, as well as the correspondence[2] relating to it that has passed between the Congress President and the members of the delegation. They have examined it with every desire to find a way for a peaceful and cooperative transfer of power and the establishment of a free and independent India. Such an India must necessarily have a strong central authority capable of representing the nation with power and dignity in the counsels of the world. In considering the statement, the Working Committee have kept in view the picture of the future, in so far as this was available to them from the proposals made for the formation of a provisional government and the clarification given by members of the delegation. This picture is still incomplete and vague. It is only on the basis of the full picture that they can judge and come to a decision as to how far this is in conformity with the objectives they aim at. These objectives are: independence for India, a strong, though limited, central authority, full autonomy for the provinces, the establishment of a democratic structure in the Centre and in the units, the guarantee of the fundamental rights of each individual so that he may have full and equal opportunities of growth, and further that each community should have opportunity to live the life of its choice within the larger framework.

The Committee regret to find a divergence between these objectives and the various proposals that have been made on behalf of the British Government, and, in particular, there is no vital change envisaged during the interim period when the provisional government will function in spite of the assurance given in paragraph 23 of the statement.[3] If the independence of India is aimed at, then the functioning of the provisional government must approximate closely in fact, even though not in law, to that independence and all obstructions and hindrances to it should be remov-

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. The Congress Working Committee passed the resolution on 24 May 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 679-682.
2. The letters exchanged by the Congress, the Muslim League and the Cabinet Mission during the Simla Conference were published in the newspapers on 18 May 1946.
3. This stated: "The British Government...will give the fullest measure of cooperation to the government so formed in the accomplishment of its tasks of administration and in bringing about as rapid and smooth a transition as possible."

22. To Lord Wavell[1]

21 May 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

During our talks[2] yesterday I referred to a statement made by Mr. L.S. Amery. I find now that this was in the course of a letter to the London *Times*. I am enclosing a press cutting giving this letter.

You will notice that after referring to the Viceroy's discretionary power, he says:

> "Still less is there any obligation on the Government or Parliament of the country to interfere in the exercise of the discretion. Nothing, I believe, would be of greater help in bringing an Interim Government together and enabling it to discharge its great responsibilities with authority than that the British Government should make that point perfectly clear.
>
> I see no reason why we should not declare here and now that we shall regard our relations to such a Government as in no way differing from our relations with the Government of any other partner member of the Commonwealth or for that matter with any other nation outside the Commonwealth."

Mr. Amery's views in regard to India and other matters are not mine and our approach has been very different. Yet from his own approach he has arrived at a conclusion which, in regard to this particular matter, is not very different from ours. It would be surprising indeed that the present Labour Government in Britain is more conservative in its Indian policy than Mr. Amery would like it to be.[3]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 650-651.
2. In his diary entry for 20 May 1946 Wavell wrote: "I had 1½ hours with Nehru about the interim government. He kept on about the necessity for immediate independence and the impossibility of parity; and I kept steadily on our determination (mine really) not to give way on these issues. I don't know whether I made any effect; I did in the end get him down to reluctant discussion of names. He kept talking of vital forces and I insisted on jobs to be done and men to do them."
3. Wavell replied on 22 May 1946 that "I have never been ready to accept his [Amery's] suggestion that the Viceroy should be placed in the position of an irresponsible ruler entirely free from control by the British Government. Nor do I think that Parliament would ever accept any such proposal."

23. Congress Resolution on the Cabinet Mission Statement[1]

The Working Committee have given careful consideration to the statement dated May 16, 1946 issued by the delegation of the British Cabinet and the Viceroy on behalf of the British Government, as well as the correspondence[2] relating to it that has passed between the Congress President and the members of the delegation. They have examined it with every desire to find a way for a peaceful and cooperative transfer of power and the establishment of a free and independent India. Such an India must necessarily have a strong central authority capable of representing the nation with power and dignity in the counsels of the world. In considering the statement, the Working Committee have kept in view the picture of the future, in so far as this was available to them from the proposals made for the formation of a provisional government and the clarification given by members of the delegation. This picture is still incomplete and vague. It is only on the basis of the full picture that they can judge and come to a decision as to how far this is in conformity with the objectives they aim at. These objectives are: independence for India, a strong, though limited, central authority, full autonomy for the provinces, the establishment of a democratic structure in the Centre and in the units, the guarantee of the fundamental rights of each individual so that he may have full and equal opportunities of growth, and further that each community should have opportunity to live the life of its choice within the larger framework.

The Committee regret to find a divergence between these objectives and the various proposals that have been made on behalf of the British Government, and, in particular, there is no vital change envisaged during the interim period when the provisional government will function in spite of the assurance given in paragraph 23 of the statement.[3] If the independence of India is aimed at, then the functioning of the provisional government must approximate closely in fact, even though not in law, to that independence and all obstructions and hindrances to it should be remov-

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. The Congress Working Committee passed the resolution on 24 May 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 679-682.
2. The letters exchanged by the Congress, the Muslim League and the Cabinet Mission during the Simla Conference were published in the newspapers on 18 May 1946.
3. This stated: "The British Government...will give the fullest measure of co-operation to the government so formed in the accomplishment of its tasks of administration and in bringing about as rapid and smooth a transition as possible."

ed. The continued presence of a foreign army of occupation is a negation of independence.[4]

The statement issued by the Cabinet delegation and the Viceroy contains certain recommendations and suggests a procedure for the building up of a constituent assembly, which is sovereign in so far as the framing of the constitution is concerned. The Committee do not agree with some of these recommendations. In their view it will be open to the constituent assembly itself at any stage to make changes and variations, with the proviso that in regard to certain major communal matters a majority decision of both the major communities will be necessary.[5]

The procedure for the election of the constituent assembly is based on representation in the ratio of one to a million, but the application of this principle appears to have been overlooked in the case of European members of assemblies, particularly in Assam and Bengal.[6] Therefore, the Committee expect that this oversight will be corrected.[7]

The constituent assembly is meant to be a fully elected body, chosen by the elected members of the provincial legislatures. In Baluchistan there is no elected assembly or any other kind of chamber which might elect a representative for the constituent assembly. It would be improper for any kind of nominated individual to speak for the whole province of Baluchistan, which he really does not represent in any way.

In Coorg the Legislative Council contains some nominated members as well as Europeans elected from a special constituency of less than a hundred electors. Only the elected members from the general constituencies should participate in the election.

4. It was explained in the reply of the Cabinet Mission that during the interim period the British Parliament had, under the existing constitution, the ultimate responsibility for the security of India, and it was therefore necessary that British troops should remain.
5. In its reply on 25 May 1946, the Cabinet Mission assured the Congress that the projected constituent assembly would be free from interference, and when it had completed its labours the British Government would recommend to Parliament the action necessary to cede sovereignty to the Indian people, provided there was adequate provision for the protection of minorities and willingness to conclude a treaty for matters arising out of the transfer of power.
6. In the assemblies of Bengal and Assam (Section C) the Europeans had, under the Government of India Act of 1935, representation out of all proportion to their population. On this basis they would be in a position to elect seven representatives to the constituent assembly out of a total of 34 from Section C as a whole. Although their community numbered only 21,000 in the two provinces, they would have representation equivalent to seven millions.
7. The Cabinet Mission replied that this question was one for the Europeans to decide.

The statement of the Cabinet delegation affirms the basic principle of provincial autonomy and residuary powers vesting in the provinces. It is further said that provinces should be free to form groups. Subsequently, however, it is recommended that provincial representatives will divide up into sections which "shall proceed to settle the provincial constitutions for the provinces in each section and shall also decide whether any group constitution shall be set up for those provinces." There is a marked discrepancy in these two separate provisions, and it would appear that a measure of compulsion is introduced which clearly infringes the basic principle of provincial autonomy. In order to retain the recommendatory character of the statement, and in order to make the clauses consistent with each other, the Committee read paragraph 15 to mean that, in the first instance, the respective provinces will make their choice whether or not to belong to the section in which they are placed. Thus the constituent assembly must be considered as a sovereign body with final authority for the purpose of drawing up a constitution and giving effect to it.[8]

The provisions[9] in the statement in regard to the Indian States are vague and much has been left for future decision. The Working Committee would, however, like to make it clear that the constituent assembly cannot be formed of entirely disparate elements, and the manner of appointing State representatives for the constituent assembly must approximate, in so far as is possible, to the method adopted in the provinces. The Committee are gravely concerned to learn that even at this present moment some State governments are attempting to crush the spirit of their people with the help of armed forces. These recent developments in the States are of great significance in the present and for the future of India, as they indicate that there is no real change of policy on the part of some of the State governments and of those who exercise paramountcy.

A provisional national government must have a new basis and must be a precursor of the full independence that will emerge from the

8. The constituent assembly did not have sovereign rights. The powers and functions of the constituent assembly were to be recommendatory and not mandatory. But the Cabinet Mission was content to reply that the Congress interpretation of the paragraphs relating to the sections did not accord with its intentions. The grouping of provinces was an essential feature of the scheme and could be modified only by an agreement between the parties.
9. The Cabinet Mission had stated that the British Government could not and would not, in any circumstances, transfer paramountcy to an Indian government. Paramountcy would cease when an independent government came into being in British India. States would then be free to enter into federal relationship or political arrangements with the new government or among themselves.

constituent assembly. It must function in recognition of that fact, though changes in law need not be made at this stage. The Governor-General may continue as the head of that government during the interim period, but the government should function as a cabinet responsible to the Central Legislature. The status, powers and composition of the provisional government should be fully defined in order to enable the Committee to come to a decision.[10] Major communal issues shall be decided in the manner referred to above in order to remove any possible fear or suspicion from the minds of a minority.

The Working Committee consider that the connected problems involved in the establishment of a provisional government and a constituent assembly should be viewed together so that they may appear as parts of the same picture, and there may be coordination between the two, as well as an acceptance of the independence that is now recognised as India's right and due. It is only with the conviction that they are engaged in building up a free, great and independent India, that the Working Committee can approach this task and invite the cooperation of all the people of India. In the absence of a full picture, the Committee are unable to give a final opinion at this stage.[11]

10. The Congress was assured in reply that the interim government which would be entirely Indian would have the greatest possible freedom in the day-to-day administration and treated "with the same close consultation and consideration as a Dominion Government". Yet it would work under the existing constitution and therefore could not be responsible to the Central Legislature. It was open to its members to resign if they were in conflict with the legislature.
11. On 25 June 1946, the Congress announced its acceptance of the statement of 16 May subject to its own interpretation of the compulsory grouping of provinces.

24. To Lord Wavell[1]

25 May 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

You must have received the copy of the resolution[2] which the Congress Working Committee passed yesterday. The Committee is dispersing now and I am also leaving Delhi tomorrow evening. Before I go away I feel that I owe it to you and to myself to let you have a glimpse of

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 692-696.
2. See the preceding item.

what I have in my mind. We have met on several occasions during the past seven weeks and discussed various matters and, I suppose, we have got to know each other to some extent. I am grateful to you for your courtesy and your frank and friendly talks.

And yet I feel profoundly depressed and disappointed at the turn events have taken. We came to Delhi two months ago with some hope that at long last a way might be found for a peaceful settlement of the Indian problem on the basis of independence. You know that the independence of India has been our sheet-anchor for many years, independence, that is, not in the future but now. It was only on that basis that we could discuss any future or present arrangements in India. Mr. Attlee's statement[3] in the British Parliament encouraged us. Then came the Cabinet delegation and we began these long and interminable discussions. Repeatedly we were held up, as we are today, because someone wanted more time. This was sometimes, I suppose, unavoidable, but it has been nevertheless an odd procedure where vital and urgent problems are concerned. Gradually people's enthusiasm waned and they began to think of other matters.

I have no doubt about the earnest desire of the members of the Cabinet delegation to find a satisfactory solution of India's problems. But the impression has been growing upon me that there are certain limitations under which they are working and which somehow came in our way. What these limitations are I do not know, but occasionally the glimpses we have had are very far from reassuring and we have felt that, despite everything, the old spirit and the old approach have not changed so much.

This has been particularly so in regard to the proposals for the formation of the provisional government. Much has happened during the past few years which has changed India and the world. And yet these proposals do not indicate as if anything remarkable had happened. We are still told of the responsibility of the British Parliament and the Governor-General's prerogatives and discretionary powers. It is surely not on this basis that it is sought to usher in Indian independence. Over four years ago, when Sir Stafford Cripps came to India in March 1942, we put forward certain proposals for a provisional government. There was no agreement then and subsequently there was conflict on a big scale. Our people have hardened since then and their expectations have risen,

3. On 15 March 1946, Attlee assured Indians that the Cabinet Mission's intention was to help India to attain freedom as speedily and completely as possible. He also stated that the British Government would not allow the minority to place a veto on the advance of the majority.

especially as the war had ended. We took some risk in presenting proposals now more or less in line with our proposals in April 1942. We knew that many of our people would be grievously disappointed, and yet taking a larger view of national and international problems we decided to stick to what we had said four years ago. For this we were criticised and to some extent condemned.

Even so there remained a big gap between what we said and what the British Government proposed. That gap remains and behind it appear to be incompatible assumptions and premises. Whatever structure we may build now or for the future must have sure foundations and should lead rapidly to the objectives we aim at. More and more we have begun to fear that the British proposals for a provisional government are, from our point of view, based on wrong foundations and there are dangers ahead. Compared even with the talks in Simla in July 1945, when the war was still going on, there is a comedown. It amazes us that the British Government should expect us to accept this position.

None of us want to join any government or council which is more or less a continuation of the present Governor-General's Executive Council. We could have done that years ago if we had been inclined that way. We can only think in terms of a provisional national government functioning as a free government, responsible to a legislature. That government or cabinet must be cohesive and capable of working as a team. The manner in which it is proposed to make it is just to collect odd individuals, who however able (and some of them might well lack even ability) do not form any kind of team. Then the idea of parity is one which repels and will be deeply resented. Curiously enough the kind of parity proposed now is even worse than the kind suggested at Simla last year.[4]

In spite of my long conversations with you I have been wholly unable to understand why the British Government still talks as it did many years ago. That talk does not fit in with its professions. Everybody knows that technical and legal difficulties cannot stand in the way of solving vital national problems. Everybody also knows that we do not consider the British Parliament as our guardian and trustee. When it is acknowledged that India is going to be independent soon and the

4. The Congress was not willing to accept parity of representation in the interim government to carry on the administration until the new constitution came into being, because the position had been altered from what it had been a year earlier when it conceded the principle at the Simla Conference; for it now controlled eight of the eleven provincial governments and representation on a numerical basis had been recognised as the foundation of the constitution-making body.

authority of the British Parliament over India will be ended, where is the difficulty in recognising this as a fact now? There appears to be some snag somewhere which I am unable to understand. Or is it that old habits of mind do not change even with changing conditions? What surprises me greatly is the apparent belief in some people's minds that we do not mean what we say. If that had been so our lives during the last quarter of a century or more would have been very different from what they have actually been. I should have thought that we had sufficiently demonstrated that we were in deadly earnest.

These long-drawn-out conversations have been very exhausting even more mentally than physically. But during the past month I have been greatly troubled over various developments in the States. If this kind of thing can happen even now in the States, there is something very wrong somewhere, and the whole picture of the immediate future is affected. I cannot imagine that these developments could have taken place without the active or passive concurrence of the Political Department or its agents.

I wrote to you about Faridkot some days ago. It is now nearly a month since this affair started and there has been, and is still, a state of chaos there.[5] It shames me to read accounts of what is happening there. I understand that the Resident of the Punjab States has to bear a measure of responsibility for all this, and in fact that he is stoutly resisting the demand for an impartial inquiry. After all that has happened there and is still happening, an inquiry is essential and I cannot understand how anyone can object to it. After waiting for some weeks I have decided to go to Faridkot. I shall leave Delhi tomorrow night and reach Faridkot on Monday morning.

A far more serious matter than that of Faridkot is that of Kashmir where martial law prevails all over the valley.[6] Both as the President of

5. On 28 April 1946 a clash occurred at Faridkot station when a party of members of the Praja Mandal from outside Faridkot attempted to enter the State to hold a meeting. This incident was followed by almost daily arrivals of groups of Praja Mandal members. The State authorities reacted by arresting some citizens of Faridkot and dispersing those from outside. Under a settlement reached between the Raja and Jawaharlal on 27 May it was agreed that the ban on entry into the State would be cancelled and full liberty granted for the formation of bodies like the Praja Mandal. A public enquiry by the Chief Justice of Faridkot was also to be held.
6. In Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah, and Mirza Mohamad Afzal Beg, an ex-Minister, had been arrested following an agitation to repudiate the allegiance of the people to the Maharaja of Kashmir. More than 450 arrests had been made and soldiers were patrolling Srinagar. The Prime Minister of Kashmir said that the authorities feared large-scale sabotage.

their present shape I shall not be able to keep away whatever my other engagements might be.

These developments in the States affect the overall States situation in India vitally and their whole future is involved. Only a very foolish person will think that by using the military and declaring martial law, he can solve the State's problem. This is the surest way of aggravating it.

Please forgive me for this very long letter.[7]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. Wavell did not reply to this letter but discussed it with Jawaharlal the same day. No official record of this interview is available. In his diary entry for 26 May 1946 Wavell wrote: "I had over an hour with Nehru, to reply to his letter. It went much as usual, and was quite friendly but I don't know whether either of us persuades the other much, though we get on quite well. The more I see of Nehru, the better I like him." *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 278.

25. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
May 25th, 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Your Excellency will remember that the demand of the Congress from the very beginning of the present discussions regarding the interim government has been that there must be a legal and constitutional change in order to give it the status of a truly national government. The Working Committee has felt that this is necessary in the interest of a peaceful settlement of the Indian problem. Without such status. the interim government would not be in a position to infuse in the Indian people a

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 690-691.

would request you to reply to my letter there.

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

26. The Powers of an Interim Government[1]

The central government to be formed during the interim period should be a real provisional government with freedom to act internally and externally as it chooses. We want it to be responsible to the Central Legislature because that is the only body at present to which it can be made responsible.

We have agreed, in view of the existing circumstances. that the Governor-General should be the head of the Government, but we expect him to be only a constitutional head. In order to avoid any dispute about major communal issues, we are prepared to accept the convention that such issues should be decided by agreement of all parties concerned, or if necessary by convention to that effect and without any changes in statute. It would not be difficult to have some legal changes passed through the British Parliament, but we do not ask for such changes.

In effect, the provisional government should function as an independent authority with some commitments from the previous stage, which we accept. Such a government can only function satisfactorily if there is coordination and teamwork within.

As regards the methods of choice of the Members of the Executive Council and the limitations inevitable in such a procedure, I may say that a number of odd individuals collected together may pull in different directions and come in the way of any joint efforts. At present the Viceroy's Executive Council consists of heads of departments who may have nothing in common with each other.[2] The new government

1. Interview to *The Hindu*, Delhi, 25 May 1946. From *The Hindu*, 26 May 1946.
2. On 9 May 1946, the Viceroy's Executive Council resigned to help the arrangements which the Cabinet Mission was making. On 29 June 1946, the Viceroy formed a caretaker government of officials to carry on in the interim period until a national government took over. This government functioned upto 25 August 1946.

consciousness of freedom which is today essential. Both Lord Pethick-Lawrence and you have, however, pointed out the difficulties in the way of effecting such constitutional changes, while at the same time assuring us that the interim government would have in fact, if not in law, the status of a truly national government. The Working Committee feel that after the British Government's declaration that the constituent assembly will be the final authority for framing the constitution and any constitution framed by it will be binding, the recognition of Indian independence is imminent. It is inevitable that the interim government which is to function during the period of the constituent assembly must reflect this recognition. In my last conversation with you, you stated that it was your intention to function as a constitutional head of the government and that in practice the interim government would have the same powers as that of a Cabinet in the Dominions. This is, however, a matter which is so important that it would not be fair either to you or to the Congress Working Committee to let it rest upon what transpired in informal conversations. Even without any change in the law there could be some formal understanding by which the Congress Working Committee may be assured that the interim government would in practice function like a Dominion Cabinet.[2]

The question of the responsibility of the interim government to the Central Assembly may also be treated in the same way. The existing law permits an executive independent of the Central Legislature, but a convention could be created by which its tenure of office would depend on its enjoyment of such confidence.

The other details regarding the composition[3] of the interim cabinet which came up in my discussions with you would all depend upon the satisfactory solution of the two basic questions enumerated above. If the questions of status and responsibility of the interim government are satisfactorily solved[4] I am confident that the other questions would present no difficulty at all. As I have already written to you, the Working Committee has been adjourned and will be summoned again when occasion demands. I would request you to let me have an indication of your decision and programme, so that the Working Committee may be summoned accordingly. I am leaving for Mussoorie on Monday and

2. Wavell, in reply, denied that he had promised what was claimed though he had said he was sure the new government would be treated by the British Government with the same close consultation and consideration as a Dominion Government.
3. "and magnitude," omitted in the final version.
4. The rest of this sentence in the draft read: "I hope we would be able to decide other questions without any delay."

27. To Lord Pethick-Lawrence[1]

New Delhi
26 May 1946

My dear Lord Pethick-Lawrence,
Thank you for your letter.[2] I am just going to the station to catch a train for Faridkot. I return probably day after tomorrow morning and leave the same evening. I am not yet sure where I shall go then—perhaps to Kashmir or to my own province — Kashmir of course does not mean a holiday.

I am not likely to lose heart in the future of India. The moment I did so I would have no purpose left in life. But I must confess that the last two months' conversations and activities have not cheered me or made me conscious of any major change in the British outlook. There is far too much of the old way of speaking and acting. I do not see anything very attractive emerging out of all this. Perhaps I am wrong.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, p. 708.
2. Pethick-Lawrence had written: "Don't lose heart in the independent India to come out of the constituent assembly. I feel so much depends on your courage in helping to bring it to birth and in guiding its destiny when it is born."

28. Quit Quibbling[1]

Why don't they quit quibbling? Why go on issuing these statements? What is the good of their presuming to tell us that independence is subject to two newly stated conditions?[2] I will not serve on the Viceroy's Executive after fighting the Government of India for years. And if our

1. This was Jawaharlal's reply to the correspondent of the *News Chronicle* of London who told him that according to the Cabinet Mission there would be no change for the interim period in the structure of the Government at the Centre except in personnel. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 29 May 1946.
2. These were mentioned in the statement of 16 May 1946 of the Cabinet Mission: (i) The responsibilities of the constituent assembly included the protection of minorities. (ii) The constituent assembly would conclude a treaty with the British Government to cover matters arising out of the transfer of power.

must be essentially different. It must function as a cabinet and have all the attributes of a national government. Its main function should be to prepare the country as rapidly as possible for complete changeover to independence.

During this interim period, the provisional government will have to deal not only with many common subjects between provinces and States but also with the question of the States joining the federal union. For the interim period, it might be desirable to have a joint committee representing the provisional government and States for all such questions. The present Political Department may continue for this period, but it should be brought into line with the provisional government and act in consultation with it.

The question of the presence of the British army is of particular importance. If it is agreed, as it apparently is on all sides, that our objective is to transfer sovereignty to the people of India and make the country fully independent as rapidly as possible then all our present steps should further this object and mirror it. That is why the provisional government should, in effect though not in law, function as an independent government which is responsible for the summoning and functioning of the constituent assembly. This constituent assembly must be presumed to be a sovereign body for drawing up a constitution and giving effect to it without any external interference. Obviously also, an independent India cannot have foreign troops on its soil, for these are in the nature of an army of occupation. Therefore, the principle of early withdrawal of British troops from India must be accepted, though the actual process may take some time.

I have not agreed with Mr. Amery in many matters in the past, but I am in complete agreement with his recent statement, where he says "I see no reason why we should not declare here and now that we shall regard our relations to such government, the interim government in India, as in no way differing from our relations with the government of any other partner of the British Commonwealth or for that matter with many other nations outside the Commonwealth". That is the correct approach. It would be surprising indeed if the Labour Government, committed to the independence of India, hesitated to adopt it. Either there is this final decision in favour of Indian independence or there isn't. There can be no halfway house. If a decision has been made, it should be given effect in practice.

WITH PETHICK-LAWRENCE AND A.V. ALEXANDER IN SIMLA,

MAY 1946

provinces do not want to join the groups, who is going to make them join?

Some public declaration that the provincial governments will be masters in their own house seems necessary. The present bureaucratic machinery in India has never been designed to function through democratic process and, while it remains, Indian ministers must have powers to overrule whatever official obstruction they may encounter.

29. At the Threshold of a New Era[1]

I have come to Naini Tal to do something, and an injustice has been done to me by making me speak. I have spoken for long now. I am tired of speech-making.

The talks that have been proceeding for the last three months have been tiring. I do not know what the result of all these long consultations will be. Neither do I know the trend of this nor can I disclose anything about it.

However, every now and then problems take a new shape. Still these talks have a bearing on the future of this country.

Revolutionary changes are taking place. The British have ruled over this country for over 150 years. However, that story is now finished.

Now we are at the threshold of a new era. Our hearts are overwhelmed with the joy of the coming freedom, but this does not mean that we are to rest contented. Responsibilities are heavy. We are living in historic times. The old order is dying and a new one is to take its place. There are difficulties, but we have to face them. Whether we take a right or a wrong decision, British rule is to end for good. Nations rise by their own efforts and unity. The future will alone show how far we are competent in shouldering responsibilities that are lying ahead of us. It is unfortunate that there are groups in the country which are demanding concessions for themselves and are indulging in petty squabbles. If India is alive, all of us are alive. So I lay emphasis on national unity and discipline and appeal to the people to be liberal in their dealings with others.

1. Speech at Naini Tal, 8 June 1946. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 10 June and *The Hindu*, 11 June 1946.

WITH PETHICK-LAWRENCE AND A.V. ALEXANDER IN SIMLA, MAY 1946

WITH JINNAH IN SIMLA, MAY 1946

The crux of the matter is how far the people have the stre control this great country. I have confidence in the people's str to overcome difficulties that are facing the nation.

We have dreamt of an independent India that will contribute to world peace. Probably the time is not far off when our dreams will be fulfilled. Be prepared for that. Soon we will respond to the call of *Jai Hind* with open hearts.

30. Record of Interview of Cabinet Mission and Wavell with Jawaharlal and A.K. Azad[1]

Maulana Azad said that now that the Congress had to decide finally within a few days what their attitude to the Cabinet delegation's statement should be, there were some points that they would like to mention.

The first of these was the position of European voters in the constituent assembly, more particularly in Bengal and Assam. The Working Committee had been distressed to read the reference to this in the last letter of the Secretary of State. This was a matter of vital importance to the Congress and was a tremendous stumbling-block. The Secretary of State said that the delegation did not see how they could change the position which they felt must stand.

Pandit Nehru said that this meant that the delegation were depriving the Hindu minority in Bengal of six seats; that is to say, six million people would, in effect, be deprived of representation. Sir Stafford Cripps said that whether this situation arose or not would depend on what the Europeans decided to do.

Pandit Nehru said that of course if the European vote was eliminated voluntarily the matter would be satisfactorily settled. The experience of Congress, however, was that the Europeans always supported the Muslim League. Sir Stafford Cripps said that he thought that this was not correct. The attitude of the Europeans had been that, generally speaking, they supported the Government.

His Excellency the Viceroy said that the matter must be left to the Europeans. He felt sure that they could be trusted not to take a partisan attitude. Sir S. Cripps commented that they would be very ill-advised to do anything which would earn them the hostility of either of the two major communities.

1. Delhi, 10 June 1946. *The Transfer of Power* 1942-7, Vol. VII, pp. 853-856.

Pandit Nehru said that if the Europeans decided to vote, but not to elect European representatives, this would not meet the case. It was reported that a prominent European commercial magnate had openly said that the Europeans in Bengal would not elect anyone who was not pro-Muslim League.

Sir Stafford Cripps pointed out that it was not possible for the Europeans to vote for anyone who was not a candidate from the general community.

Azad said that the Congress could hardly take a decision trusting to the goodwill of the Europeans.[2] They must know what the position was going to be. The First Lord said that the Statement of the 16th May could not be altered without arousing all sorts of other claims for alterations. The Sikhs[3] in particular and the Ambedkar Depressed Class[4] were claiming modifications.

Maulana Azad said that the second point which he wished to raise was the question of the provisional government. One very important matter was not referred to in the Viceroy's letter to him of the 30th May, that was the composition of the government. This was a vital matter. Numerous statements had been made in Muslim League circles to the effect that parity was essential. Congress were entirely opposed to parity. Any interim government must be a homogeneous government. The outlook of the Muslim League was to seek to create a deadlock in order to bring about Pakistan. This was the first and most important matter. The question of the distribution of portfolios and the filling of the minority seats were also important, though subsidiary.

2. On behalf of the Europeans of Bengal it had been announced that they would not vote for themselves but would vote for the members of other communities preferably in accordance with any agreement reached between the major political parties. But a fear was expressed that instead of six or seven Europeans being elected for the constituent assembly there might be six or seven Indians who would act according to the dictates of the European Party.
3. The Sikhs feared that the future of the Punjab homeland would be determined in Section B of the constituent assembly, where they would have only four seats, by the Muslim majority. On 10 June 1946, the Sikh Panthic Conference appointed a Council of Action to fight the Cabinet Mission's proposals if they were not modified according to their demands.
4. Ambedkar's Scheduled Castes Federation protested that there was not a single mention of the scheduled castes in the Cabinet Mission plan. It condemned the provisions in the plan for safeguarding the interests of the community as "absolutely illusory and unworthy of serious consideration." Ambedkar cabled to Churchill that the plan was a "shameful betrayal" of the cause of 60 million untouchables and affirmed his dependence on Churchill for safeguarding their interests.

His Excellency the Viceroy said that, as the Maulana knew, this interim government had got to meet an abnormal situation. The great difficulty was the conflict between the two main parties. The government would have to be a coalition of these two parties and it must work in harmony. He felt sure that when it got down to practical work for India it would be possible for it to work harmoniously. He had an assurance from Mr. Jinnah that he would not use his position in the government for partisan ends but to get the government formed it was necessary to make certain concessions to minorities. He had therefore always worked on the basis of 5:5:2 proportions. He would not regard this as in any way a precedent establishing a claim to parity but simply as an expedient for the interim period. He thought that this would be the only way to get an interim government of both parties together. He realised that it was a considerable concession from the Congress point of view but he hoped that they would accept it for the common good of India. On the question of portfolios he was not committed in any way. He thought that it was essential that the key portfolios should be evenly distributed getting the best people in the right places. It might be possible when the government had worked for some little time to make further adjustments. He would take the advice of the two principal parties on the allocation of portfolios though he himself had some ideas on this subject.

The Secretary of State said that the experience of coalitions in the United Kingdom was that whatever the ratio of numbers might be decisions could not be taken against a strong element in one party. If they were, the coalition would not survive. Cabinets did not decide by majority voting. He very much hoped that Congress might be able to accept parity as a temporary expedient. He would like to point out that there was nothing in the delegation's statement that established parity as a principle for the future. He thought that the question of parity was mainly one of prestige. If the Congress took it as a matter of prestige there might be a deadlock which would be very regrettable. Sir S. Cripps said that it was important in setting up a coalition government that both sides should start with a feeling of satisfaction. He thought that the best way of getting a homogeneous government which would pull together would be for the Congress to make a gesture by offering parity.

Pandit Nehru said that if that were the spirit they would be prepared to say let the Muslims run the government, but that did not mean that you would get the best government either on ability or honesty. What was proposed now was not Hindu-Muslim parity, but Muslim League and Congress parity. This cut out all the non-League Muslims who were a considerable element in the country. The Muslim League in

were settled, he was confident that the question of composition would give no rise to difficulty. Maulana Azad said that he had repeatedly discussed this question with the Viceroy and had made the position of Congress clear.

Pandit Nehru said that it was frankly beyond the power of Congress to agree to parity. Their supporters would not accept it.

Maulana Azad said that the Congress had to come to a decision. They had met yesterday and thought before doing so they would like to have the delegation's replies on these two matters. Now they must put the position before their Committee and decide.

Pandit Nehru said that he understood that they must report to their Committee as regards the Europeans. The delegation thought it possible that the Europeans might themselves decide not to take any part in the elections and that, as regards parity, they must report that the delegation consider parity essential.

The Viceroy said that this was so. He did not see his way to getting a coalition government without it. In reply to a question from Pandit Nehru he said that he had not made any commitment in regard to parity to Mr. Jinnah. What he had said was based on his estimate of the political probabilities. Maulana Azad said that the other matters they wished to refer to were, firstly, that it was quite essential that the interim government should be considered a provisional national government and not just a continuance of the old Executive Council. Secondly, that in connection with parity it was unjust that the scheduled caste representation should be included in the Congress quota. This would mean that the caste Hindus who were the largest and most important element in the population of India would get a very small share of representation. They would like a larger council of, say, 15 including Nationalist Muslims, a Sikh, a Parsee and an Indian Christian.

The Viceroy said that possibly provision could be made for these communities through the appointment of parliamentary under-secretaries. He realised that this position was very difficult for the Congress but he hoped that they would help him. He believed a national government could be formed and if it worked together it would get rid of some of the communal feeling. Sacrifices would have to be made, however, in order to get it started.

Pandit Nehru said that these two matters seemed to him insuperable.

The Viceroy asked whether Pandit Nehru felt there would be any advantage in his discussing the composition of the interim government with Pandit Nehru and Mr. Jinnah together.

Pandit Nehru said that past discussions with Mr. Jinnah had not been profitable.

the provincial governments were putting in people who were neither competent nor honest. They had an entirely different outlook to the Congress and did not care for nationalist ideals.

Azad said that 12 portfolios were not enough and this figure was obviously chosen to conciliate Mr. Jinnah. The Viceroy said that the parties must enter the government with a desire to pull together. If they came in in any other spirit the government obviously would not work.

Pandit Nehru said that he was a strong partisan. He had certain ideas he wanted to put through. His difficulty was that other people in the proposed government would only want inertia. The Viceroy said we had to deal with a practical position. Either a coalition government must be formed or there would be a split-up and chaos. In the interim period it would not be possible to carry on through sweeping reforms but there was much that could

judge this by every standard. It is obvious that your approach has been far removed from this. We suggested that even though....[2] We are assured that this is a temporary provision and need not be treated as a precedent, but no such assurance can prevent an evil step from having consequences.

In so far as a community may be afraid of a majority overriding it in matters of major communal concern we have suggested a way out which you have adopted in your proposals relating to the federal union. This is that in a major communal matter the decision should be by each community separately. This surely should get over any such fear or suspicion.

We should also like to point out to you that in our opinion the provisional government should consist of at least fifteen members which has been normally the strength of the Executive Council and not twelve as suggested. This will give scope for the representation of various small minorities. We are anxious that every consideration should be paid to these minorities.

The provisional national government will have great difficulties to face and whoever is in charge of it will have a great responsibility to discharge. There is the food crisis which affects the primary necessity of the dumb millions. There is general discontent and unrest in the country. All these problems cannot be faced effectively by a heterogeneous provisional government full of inner conflicts. But we realise that in the existing situation a coalition is desirable and a coalition inevitably means a certain lack of homogeneity. Nevertheless it should be our endeavour to have as homogeneous a national government as possible, composed of able and incorruptible men and women with more or less common objectives in regard to major matters. Unless this is done the ship of state cannot run smoothly nor can it command public confidence. My Committee would not mind a government composed of all Muslims, or all Sikhs, or all Parsees, or all Christians, or Hindus, even though every one of them is outside the fold of the Congress, provided it consists of men and women of the type referred to above. But communal parity as suggested we are totally unable to accept.

If the position about the European vote and parity remains my Committee are reluctantly compelled to inform you that they are unable to assist in the different tasks before us.

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

2. At this place one page is missing in the source.

The Secretary of State said that he realised that Congress were being asked to make a great sacrifice. He believed, however, that generous acts in the field of statecraft usually redounded to the benefit and advantage of those who made them in the long run.

31. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
11 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

The Cabinet delegation and you were good enough to give Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and me yesterday nearly an hour and a quarter during which we discussed some vital questions of the moment. Both of us felt the friendliness that lay behind our talk and the desire to find some way out of the difficulties that face us. But we gathered from that talk that though you recognised the justice of what we said on behalf of the Congress, you were unable to agree to it. The two questions that we discussed yesterday were the right and the desirability of the European members of the respective provincial assemblies to take part in the elections for the constituent assembly, and the question of parity in the proposed provisional national government. In both these matters we are unable to come to an agreement. I have now consulted my Working Committee and discussed with them fully all the aspects of the problem, and more particularly those two matters which have become insuperable obstacles for us.

On May 24th the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution which I conveyed to you. In this resolution we gave our reactions to the statement dated May 16th 1946, which the British Cabinet delegation and you issued on behalf of the British Government. We pointed out what we considered some of the omissions and defects in that statement and we also gave our interpretation of some of its provisions. In a subsequent statement issued by you and the Cabinet delegation our interpretation was not accepted and the oversight was not corrected.

You know, and we have repeatedly emphasised this, that our immediate objective has been and is the independence of India. We have to

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. On the advice of Mahatma Gandhi this letter was withheld.

judge this by every standard. It is obvious that your approach has been far removed from this. We suggested that even though....[2] We are assured that this is a temporary provision and need not be treated as a precedent, but no such assurance can prevent an evil step from having consequences.

In so far as a community may be afraid of a majority overriding it in matters of major communal concern we have suggested a way out which you have adopted in your proposals relating to the federal union. This is that in a major communal matter the decision should be by each community separately. This surely should get over any such fear or suspicion.

We should also like to point out to you that in our opinion the provisional government should consist of at least fifteen members which has been normally the strength of the Executive Council and not twelve as suggested. This will give scope for the representation of various small minorities. We are anxious that every consideration should be paid to these minorities.

The provisional national government will have great difficulties to face and whoever is in charge of it will have a great responsibility to discharge. There is the food crisis which affects the primary necessity of the dumb millions. There is general discontent and unrest in the country. All these problems cannot be faced effectively by a heterogeneous provisional government full of inner conflicts. But we realise that in the existing situation a coalition is desirable and a coalition inevitably means a certain lack of homogeneity. Nevertheless it should be our endeavour to have as homogeneous a national government as possible, composed of able and incorruptible men and women with more or less common objectives in regard to major matters. Unless this is done the ship of state cannot run smoothly nor can it command public confidence. My Committee would not mind a government composed of all Muslims, or all Sikhs, or all Parsees, or all Christians, or Hindus, even though every one of them is outside the fold of the Congress, provided it consists of men and women of the type referred to above. But communal parity as suggested we are totally unable to accept.

If the position about the European vote and parity remains my Committee are reluctantly compelled to inform you that they are unable to assist in the different tasks before us.

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

2. At this place one page is missing in the source.

32. To Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
12 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,
I am sorry for the slight delay in answering your letter of today's date. Your invitation to me to see you today at 5 p.m. in order to confer with you and Mr. Jinnah about the interim government placed me in a somewhat difficult position. I would gladly meet you at any time, but our official spokesman in regard to such matters is naturally our President, Maulana Azad. He can speak and confer authoritatively, which I cannot do. It is, therefore, proper that he should be in charge on our behalf of any authoritative conversations that might take place. But since you have asked me to come I shall do so. I hope, however, that you will appreciate my position and that I can only talk without authority, which vests in our President and the Working Committee.[2]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, p. 886.
2. In fact, there was no joint meeting as Jinnah declined the invitation.

33. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal[1]

The talk lasted for an hour and three quarters. Nehru was very friendly throughout and we made some progress on everything except the parity issue.

I showed him a list of proposed portfolios and spoke of certain matters, e.g., why I thought it would be better to omit the Planning and Development Department, what would be the best way to deal with the Information and Arts Department, and one or two other matters.

1. Delhi, 12 June 1946. From *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 886-887.

Nehru said that the choice of portfolios ought not to present any difficulty at all if we could get the persons chosen.

We then had a considerable amount of general talk on the number of portfolios, the objectives of the interim government, the representation of minorities in the government, and so on.

He finally produced a list of 15 names: 5 Congress, (all Hindus), 4 Muslim League, one non-League Muslim, one non-Congress Hindu, one Congress scheduled caste, one Indian Christian, one Sikh, one Congress woman. I said that this list would be quite unacceptable to Mr. Jinnah, and I did not see how I could put it across to him. I promised to keep his list of names entirely to myself since, as he said, he was in a difficult position as he was not President of the Congress and Azad ought to have been in his place. He indicated to me the portfolios which certain of his nominees would like to hold.

He told me that they had had a letter ready to send me yesterday, more or less turning down the whole proposal, I gather; but Gandhi had intervened and it had not been sent. I asked him to see that no letters were sent to me for a day or two, while I saw how we could settle this business.

34. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
13 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Thank you for your letter[2] of the 12th June, which I have just received enquiring after my health. I have now more or less recovered.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has reported to my Committee and me the gist of the conversations[3] between Your Excellency and him. My Committee regret that they are unable to accept your suggestions for the formation of the provisional national government. These tentative suggestions emphasise the principle of parity to which we have been and are

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 914-915.
2. On 12 May 1946, Wavell had written to Maulana Azad that "I am so sorry to hear that you have been unwell and have had to take medical advice. I do hope that you will soon recover your health."
3. See the preceding item.

It was our intention to write to you about certain other matters also, but for reasons known to you our letter has been delayed. I shall write to you about these other matters later. My purpose in writing to you now is to convey to you without any delay our reactions on the tentative proposals that you put forward today.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

35. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
14 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,
In my letter[2] to you sent yesterday I promised to send you another letter. I am now doing so.

On May 24th the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution[3] which I conveyed to you. In this resolution we gave our reactions to the statement dated May 16, 1946, which the British Cabinet delegation and you issued on behalf of the British Government. We pointed out what were in our opinion some of the omissions and defects in that statement, and we also gave our interpretation of some of its provisions. In a subsequent statement issued by you and the Cabinet delegation our viewpoint was not accepted.

You know, and we have repeatedly emphasised this, that our immediate objective has been and is the independence of India. We have to judge everything by this standard. We suggested that even though no legal change might be made at this stage, independence in practice might be recognised. This has not been agreed to.

In your letter, May 30, 1946, addressed to me, you explained what in your view the status and powers of the interim government would be. This too falls short of what we aim at. Yet the friendly tone of your

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 939-941.
2. See the preceding item.
3. See *ante*, item 23.

Muslim League. We are unable to agree to this proposal and we are still convinced that the provisional government must consist of 15 members and that there should be no kind of parity in their selection.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

36. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
14 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,
In the course of our talk[2] today you mentioned that among the Muslim League nominees suggested for the provisional government was one[3] from the North West Frontier Province who had recently been defeated at the provincial elections. This was said by you confidentially and we shall of course treat it as such. But I feel I must inform you, to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding, that any such name will be considered objectionable by us. This objection is not personal, but we feel that the name is suggested for entirely political reasons and we cannot agree to any such course.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, p. 941.
2. In his diary entry for 14 June 1946 Wavell wrote: "At noon I had an hour with Azad and Nehru. All the old ground was gone over again without much result....They went away finally saying they would recommend the proposal to the Working Committee without much hope." See *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 293.
3. Sardar Abdur Rab Khan Nishtar.

tastic weightage. This representation of Europeans in the constituent assembly will be at the cost of non-Muslims, that is mainly Hindus, who are already a minority in Bengal. To make a minority suffer in this way is surely utterly wrong. Apart from the question of principle, it is a matter of the utmost importance in practice and may well affect the future both of Bengal and Assam. The Congress Working Committee attach the greatest importance to this. We would like to add that even if the Europeans themselves do not stand for election, but merely vote, the results will be equally bad. The Cabinet delegation have informed us that beyond promising to use their persuasive powers they could not hold out any assurance to us that these European members would not exercise the right which, we are advised, they do not possess under the statement of May 16th. But if the delegation hold otherwise, as evidently they do, we cannot contemplate a legal fight for their exclusion at the threshold of the constituent assembly. Therefore, a clear announcement is necessary that they will not take part as voters or candidates in the election to the constituent assembly. We cannot depend on grace or goodwill where rights are concerned.

Equally important, in our view, is the question of parity in the proposed provisional national government. I have already written to you on this subject. This parity, or by whatever other name it may be called, has been opposed by us throughout and we consider it a dangerous innovation which, instead of working for harmony, will be a source of continuous conflict and trouble. It may well poison our future as other separatist steps in the past have poisoned our public life. We are told that this is a temporary provision and need not be treated as a precedent, but no such assurance can prevent an evil step from having evil consequences. We are convinced that even the immediate results of any such provision will be harmful.

If the position about the European vote and parity remains, my Committee are reluctantly compelled to inform you that they will not be able to assist you in the difficult tasks ahead.

The talk we had with you today has not made any substantial difference to the fundamental position. We have noted that, according to your new suggestions, the proposed woman member[5] might be replaced by a Hindu, thus increasing the Hindu members, including scheduled caste representatives, to six. We would be sorry not to have a woman member, but apart from this, the new proposal maintains the old Simla (1945) formula of parity between caste Hindus and Muslims, with this important qualification that now Muslims are supposed to mean members of the

5. Amrit Kaur.

37. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
16 June 1946

I have received your two letters[2] of June 15th.

I note what you say about grouping. We abide by the interpretation we have put upon it.

As regards Europeans, we are clear that even on a legal interpretation of the statement of May 16th, apart from other considerations, they have not the right to participate in the elections to the constituent assembly. I am glad you expect a satisfactory solution of this problem.

We have endeavoured in our letter[3] and in the course of our talks to state clearly what our position is in regard to any kind of parity. You will remember that parity was mentioned and considered at the first Simla Conference. That parity was exactly the same as is now suggested by you, that is, parity between caste Hindus and Muslims. Owing to the stress of war and other conditions then existing, we were prepared to accept this only for that occasion. It was not to be used as precedent. Moreover it was subject to the inclusion of at least one Nationalist Muslim. Now conditions have entirely changed and we have to consider the question in another context, that of approaching independence and constituent assembly. As we have written to you, in this context and in present circumstances we consider this kind of parity unfair and likely to lead to difficulties. The whole scheme proposed by you in the statement of May 16th is based on absence of weightage. And yet, in the proposed provisional government, there is this weightage, in addition to other far-reaching communal safeguards.

We have tried our utmost to arrive at a satisfactory settlement and we shall not despair of it. But such a settlement, in order to be endur-

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 949-950.
2. On 15 June 1946, Wavell wrote two letters in reply. In the first letter he had stated: "I must assume from the last paragraph of your letter that my attempt to negotiate an agreement between the two major parties on the composition of the interim government has failed. The Cabinet delegation and I have therefore decided to issue tomorrow a statement on the action we propose to take." In the second letter Wavell wrote to say that grouping was not compulsory and the only provision made was that representatives of certain provinces should meet in sections so that they could decide whether or not they wished to form groups. Furthermore, individual provinces would still have liberty to opt out of their group if they so decided.
3. See *ante*, item 35.

37. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
16 June 1946

I have received your two letters[2] of June 15th.

I note what you say about grouping. We abide by the interpretation we have put upon it.

As regards Europeans, we are clear that even on a legal interpretation of the statement of May 16th, apart from other considerations, they have not the right to participate in the elections to the constituent assembly. I am glad you expect a satisfactory solution of this problem.

We have endeavoured in our letter[3] and in the course of our talks to state clearly what our position is in regard to any kind of parity. You will remember that parity was mentioned and considered at the first Simla Conference. That parity was exactly the same as is now suggested by you, that is, parity between caste Hindus and Muslims. Owing to the stress of war and other conditions then existing, we were prepared to accept this only for that occasion. It was not to be used as precedent. Moreover it was subject to the inclusion of at least one Nationalist Muslim. Now conditions have entirely changed and we have to consider the question in another context, that of approaching independence and constituent assembly. As we have written to you, in this context and in present circumstances we consider this kind of parity unfair and likely to lead to difficulties. The whole scheme proposed by you in the statement of May 16th is based on absence of weightage. And yet, in the proposed provisional government, there is this weightage, in addition to other far-reaching communal safeguards.

We have tried our utmost to arrive at a satisfactory settlement and we shall not despair of it. But such a settlement, in order to be endur-

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 949-950.
2. On 15 June 1946, Wavell wrote two letters in reply. In the first letter he had stated: "I must assume from the last paragraph of your letter that my attempt to negotiate an agreement between the two major parties on the composition of the interim government has failed. The Cabinet delegation and I have therefore decided to issue tomorrow a statement on the action we propose to take." In the second letter Wavell wrote to say that grouping was not compulsory and the only provision made was that representatives of certain provinces should meet in sections so that they could decide whether or not they wished to form groups. Furthermore, individual provinces would still have liberty to opt out of their group if they so decided.
3. See *ante*, item 35.

ing, must be based on strong foundations. So far as the statement of May 16th is concerned our main difficulty, as we wrote to you, was the European vote. If this matter is settled, as now appears likely, then this difficulty also goes.

The second and remaining difficulty relates to the proposals for the provisional government which have to be considered together with the statement. The two cannot be separated. These proposals have thus far been unacceptable to us, but if a satisfactory settlement in regard to them is arrived at, we would be in a position to shoulder the burden.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

38. To Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
16 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,
I have received your letter of today's date inviting me to join the proposed interim government.[2] I thank you for this invitation. The matter is being considered by the Congress Working Committee and I shall write after they reach a decision.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power* 1942-7, Vol. VII, p. 955.
2. The Cabinet Mission's plan to see the interim government established and the process of constitution-making expedited was contained in an announcement of 16 June 1946 providing for a representative team of 14 of whom six would be Congressmen and five Muslim Leaguers. Invitations were issued by the Viceroy to six Congressmen—Jawaharlal, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, Hare Krushna Mehtab, (all five caste-Hindus) and Jagjivan Ram, President, Depressed Classes League, and five Muslim Leaguers—Jinnah, Liaquat Ali, Nazimuddin, Mohamad Ismail and Abdur Rab Nishtar; the remaining three were Baldev Singh, John Matthai and N.P. Engineer. The Viceroy in issuing the invitations had stated that the constitution-making would proceed in accordance with the statement of May 16—the setting up of a union centre with grouping of provinces i.e. Assam with Bengal, and North West Frontier with Punjab, Sind and Baluchistan.

5

THE CABINET MISSION AND AFTER

III. The Interim Government and the Constituent Assembly

1. To Frank Anthony[1]

New Delhi
June 18, 1946

Dear Mr. Anthony,[2]
I have received your letter of the 18th June together with the copy ot your letter to Mahatma Gandhi. I am wholly at one with you in your desire that justice should be done to your community. In the matter of the proposed interim government, however, you will realise that we have not got much say in the matter at the present stage. I do not yet know what our final decision will be in regard to it. But obviously no major changes can be made now. We either accept or reject, may be with some minor changes.

While I agree with you that your community has as much right as any other of the smaller minorities in India, you will no doubt appreciate that no places can be reserved for any particular community in every central government.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.
2. R. Frank Anthony (b. 1908); President-in-Chief, All India Anglo-Indian Association since 1942; member, Central Legislative Assembly, 1942, of Constituent Assembly, 1946, and of Lok Sabha, 1952-77.

2. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal and A.K. Azad[1]

They began by saying that there were several things that they did not like about the latest statement. They said that while one more member had been added he was an official; I said that Engineer[2] was not an official,

1. Delhi, 18 June 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 969-970.
2. N.P. Engineer (1883-1980); Advocate-General of Bombay, 1942-45; Advocate-General of India, 1945-50; counsel for the prosecution in the I.N.A. trials.

i.e. that he had never belonged to any of the services, though he was at the moment holding an official position. They then complained about not having any non-League Muslim in the government, also that I had nominated Nishtar[3] in spite of their known objections to him. Nehru also said that the new national government must have an entirely different outlook to the old Executive Council, and so forth.

When a certain amount of steam had been blown off in this way, it all came down to the following:

They want to substitute Sarat Bose for Mehtab.[4] After some discussion, in which I gave my reasons for preferring Mehtab, I agreed to accept this.

They indicated that they might wish to substitute a Muslim non-Leaguer for one of the Congress Hindus. I asked if this would be Zakir Husain; and while they said they could not give me the name until after the meeting this evening, I gathered that this was so. I said that I thought it would raise great difficulties if they did this, but that if they were determined to put it forward, I would consider it.

They were awaiting the arrival of Abdul Ghaffar Khan to decide whether they would object to Nishtar; but indicated that they thought there would be no difficulty about this. I said that I hoped not, as I could not accept the exclusion of Nishtar.

Nehru then told me that he was proposing to leave by air tomorrow morning for Kashmir; he was flying to Pindi and thence going by car with some lawyers for the defence of Sheikh Abdullah. I said that I thought that this would be most unwise, and that it was not the period when he should absent himself from Delhi. He seemed however set on going, unless the Kashmir Government could be induced to postpone the trial.[5]

They both seemed quite friendly, but a little worried.

3. Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar (1899-1958); member, Legislative Assembly, N.W.F.P. from 1937; Finance Minister, N.W.F.P., 1943-45; defeated by a Congress candidate in the 1945 provincial elections; Minister in the Government of Pakistan, 1947-49 and 1951-53; President, Pakistan Muslim League, 1956.
4. The Congress favoured the inclusion of Sarat Chandra Bose in place of Hare Krushna Mehtab, who, it was said, could not be spared from his post of Prime Minister of Orissa.
5. The Kashmir Government had banned Jawaharlal's entry into the State and when he crossed the frontier on 20 June 1946 at Domel he was arrested.

3. A.K. Azad's Letter to Wavell[1]

New Delhi
21 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,
I have your Excellency's letter[2] of 20th June 1946. I appreciate your anxiety to come to an early decision regarding the formation of an interim government and I can assure you that my Working Committee fully share your anxiety. A new difficulty, in addition to the old ones, has however been created by the publication in the press of the alleged contents of Mr. Jinnah's letter[3] to you in which he raises objection to the Congress nominations in the interim cabinet. It will be of great assistance to the Working Committee in coming to a decision if they could have copies of these alleged letters and your reply thereto as they deal with vital matters which we have to consider.[4]

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, p. 999.
2. Wavell wrote that as the Cabinet Mission could not prolong its stay in India he would ask "your Working Committee to let us have a final answer as soon as possible to the proposals made in our statement on June 16th."
3. Jinnah wrote to Wavell on 19 June 1946 declining to commit the Muslim League to acceptance or rejection of the union interim government scheme until the Congress had come to a decision on the whole subject of the long-term constitutional proposals as well as the interim scheme. Jinnah insisted that he had received an assurance from Wavell at Simla in May 1946 that the principle of parity between the Muslim League and the Congress would be maintained. This principle, he contended, had since been unilaterally modified by the inclusion of a member of the Congress party representing the scheduled castes to the proposed cabinet. He sought an assurance that no changes to the representation of minorities in the interim government would be made without the consent of the Muslim League.
4. In his reply Wavell stated that the operative part of his reply dated 20 June 1946 to Jinnah was that "until I have received acceptances from those invited to take office in the interim government, the names in the statement cannot be regarded as final. But no change in principle will be made in the statement without the consent of the two major parties."

i.e. that he had never belonged to any of the services, though he was at the moment holding an official position. They then complained about not having any non-League Muslim in the government, also that I had nominated Nishtar[3] in spite of their known objections to him. Nehru also said that the new national government must have an entirely different outlook to the old Executive Council, and so forth.

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the Congress had expressed themselves clearly throughout. It was not a temporary matter but one which dealt with the whole conception of the future. Any weakening on the Congress Party's conception of a strong India by any interim parity would create conditions which would not only make administrative difficulties but would formulate conditions in certain matters which they could not get rid of in the future, and there was no immediate gain to be obtained which would be adequate to set against that. It was stated in answer to certain objections the Congress had raised that Congress had no right to interfere with Muslim League selections, yet now exactly the same thing has been done about selections which the Congress might make. So the Muslim League could interfere with the Congress selections while Congress were told that they cannot interfere with the Muslim League selections, although the Muslim League are not a political party in the full sense of the word. That is to say, they are definitely a limited communal party. The Congress protested against parity but this was something more than that. It was just a veto on future work of a kind which made honourable coalition or cooperation quite impossible.

The Secretary of State said that no objection had been raised when the Congress had wished to substitute Mr. Sarat Bose for Mr. Mehtab, and there was no question of the Muslim League being asked to agree to that. But the change they now wanted to make was something which altered the basis of the delegation's proposals and was likely, in the delegation's opinion, to prevent the formation of a coalition government.

Pandit Nehru said that the delegation appeared to start with the presumption that progress could only be made with the cooperation of the Muslim League. The Congress disagreed with that view. They thought that under what was proposed the Muslim League would secure a vantage point from which they could veto anything that really mattered and bring the whole government into a state of frustration. The Secretary of State said that he was present when Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru had themselves suggested that there should be a communal majority for important communal decisions. He certainly understood them to go as far, if not farther, in agreeing to that as the delegation had gone. Pandit Nehru said that their agreement was linked with the proposal that the interim government should be responsible to the Legislative Assembly. Now it was linked to parity. He was unable to see how a government on this basis could function. Sir Stafford Cripps suggested that it was in practice a principle in all coalitions that in fact you must get the consent of both major parties to all major matters which were decided. If not, the coalition broke down. Pandit Nehru said that this

what the Prime Minister had said before the Mission came out.[2] His Excellency the Viceroy said that Mr. Jinnah had constantly complained to him that the delegation had made too many concessions to Congress. It was a mistake to think that the delegation had yielded to Mr. Jinnah on all points. But on occasions of this sort, the stronger party was in a position to make a concession, and it might very well pay them to do so.

Sir Stafford Cripps said that the delegation had made their statement of the 16th June as a compromise after negotiations for agreement between the parties had failed. They had taken into account the position of the two parties as put before them up to the date of the statement. Up to that time the Congress had been pressing for a council of 15, and for the inclusion of an additional caste Hindu. They had said that they could not agree to parity, either between caste Hindus and Muslims or between the Muslim League and Congress. In support of this Sir Stafford read an extract from the Congress President's letter of the 14th June. In drawing up the list of names in the statement of the 16th June, the delegation had gone as far as they could to meet what they thought the Congress wanted at that time. The Congress had made no reference to their desire that a Congress Muslim should be appointed, and, though the point may have been dormant in their minds, it was not brought to the delegation's attention. Pandit Nehru said that one reason for this was that in informal talks with His Excellency the Viceroy there had been discussion of the inclusion of Zakir Husain. Indeed, his name had first been suggested by the Viceroy. This would have met sufficiently the point of principle that the Muslim League should not have the exclusive right to nominate Muslims, and the Congress did not wish to make the position more difficult by pressing for a Congress Muslim.

The First Lord said that the delegation were entitled to make certain deductions from the position of the two parties as stated to them up to the time when they drew up the statement. The Congress were then pressing for a council of 15 with 6 caste Hindus and one Congress scheduled caste included. When the delegation included in their list 5 Congress caste Hindus and one Congress scheduled caste in a total of 14, it naturally came as a surprise to them when this entirely new point about the inclusion of Congress Muslims was raised. Pandit Nehru said that the delegation had perhaps been in ignorance of what had passed in the informal talks between the Congress and His Excellency the Viceroy. He had given the Viceroy a list of names which included Zakir Husain. The Viceroy said that Pandit Nehru had specially asked

2. Attlee had stated that the British Government would not allow the minority to place a veto on the advance of the majority.

transfer. For the moment the Viceroy must remain the head of the government. Pandit Nehru said that the Congress accepted that. The Congress could moderate its demands provided that what was done was moving in the direction of creating a strong Indian nation, but if something were introduced which got in the way of that objective, they could not accept it. The Secretary of State said that it seemed to him that the greatest obstacle to India going forward towards independence was the inability to get started. The value of getting a start made was so great as to be worth not the sacrifice of a principle but abstinence from enforcing it for the time being. Suppose that the Congress representatives persuaded the delegation to agree to the inclusion of a Congress Muslim. If that occurred he did not believe that Mr. Jinnah would accept it, and there would be no coalition government. He believed it was really in the best interests of Congress and of India to act courageously and to begin by accepting the conditions under which a coalition would be possible. A solution of the communal problem in India had to be found, and for the parties to work together on practical problems provided the best hope.

Pandit Nehru said that the leaders of Congress had been working for that objective for thirty years, but always they were faced with this same obstacle to a strong and united India. That objective was undermined most of all by the communal attack on Muslims who supported the national ideal, and the Congress could not desert those Muslims who had done so. The Viceroy said that the Congress had itself admitted that the Muslims could not be coerced. The Secretary of State said that the delegation in their statement of May 16th had gone a considerable way to support the Congress in their objective of a united India, and they had given cogent reasons against a sovereign Pakistan.[3] Moreover, they had not accepted the principle of parity, either in their long-term proposals or in the interim period. It might seem to Congress that the delegation were not sufficiently sympathetic to their standpoint, but to the delegation itself it seemed that they were holding the balance. This they only did because Indians were unable to settle these matters themselves. He personally felt that he had been trying to get a united India for Indians, but he could only hope to do it if he was not prevented from making the concessions which he was convinced were necessary.

3. The statement had rejected the idea of "a separate and fully independent sovereign state of Pakistan." It was pointed out that a Pakistan of six provinces, as demanded by the Muslim League, would not solve the problem of communal minorities since twenty million Muslims would still remain in India and there would be non-Muslim minorities in Pakistan to the extent of 38 per cent of the population in the western part and 48 per cent in the eastern part.

The decision was in fact taken yesterday but we felt that it would be better if we wrote to you fully on all aspects of the proposals made by you and the Cabinet delegation. The Working Committee have been sitting almost continuously and will be meeting at 2 p.m. again today. After full consideration and deliberation they have been reluctantly obliged to decide against the acceptance of the interim government proposals as framed by you. A detailed and reasoned reply will follow later.

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

6. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
25 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Ever since the receipt of your statement of June 16th, my Committee have been considering it from day to day and have given long and anxious thought to your proposals and to the invitations you have issued to individuals to form the provisional national government. Because of our desire to find some way out of the present most unsatisfactory situation, we have tried our utmost to appreciate your approach and viewpoint. In the course of our conversations we have already pointed out to you our difficulties. Unfortunately these difficulties have been increased by the recent correspondence.

The Congress, as you are aware, is a national organisation including in its fold the members of all religions and communities in India. For more than half a century it has laboured for the freedom of India and for equal rights for all Indians. The link that has brought all these various groups and communities together within the fold of the Congress is the passionate desire for national independence, economic advance, and social equality. It is from this point of view that we have to judge every proposal. We hoped that a provisional national government would be formed which would give effect in practice to this independence. Appreciating some of your difficulties, we did not press for any statutory

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 1032-1036.

am afraid that I cannot accept the right of the Congress to object to the names put forward by the Muslim League, any more than I would accept similar objections from the other side. The test must be that of ability." But before we could make our suggestion I received your letter of the 22nd June which surprised us greatly.[2] You had written this letter on the basis of some press reports. You told us that the Cabinet Mission and you were not prepared to accept a request for the inclusion of a Muslim chosen by the Congress among the representatives of the Congress in the interim government. This seemed to us an extraordinary decision. It was in direct opposition to your own statement quoted above. It meant that the Congress could not freely choose even its own nominees. The fact that this was not to be taken as a precedent made hardly any difference. Even a temporary departure from such a vital principle could not be accepted by us at any time or place and in any circumstances.

In your letter of the 21st June, you gave certain questions framed by Mr. Jinnah in his letter, dated 19th June, and your replies to them. We have not seen Mr. Jinnah's full letter. In Question 3 reference is made to "representation of the four minorities, viz., the scheduled castes, the Sikhs, the Indian Christians and the Parsees", and it is asked as to "who will fill in vacancies caused in these groups, and whether in filling up the vacancies the leader of the Muslim League will be consulted and his consent obtained".

In your answer you say: *"If any vacancy occurs among the seats at* present allotted to representatives of the minorities, I shall naturally consult both the main parties before filling it." Mr. Jinnah has thus included the scheduled castes among the minorities and presumably you have agreed with this view. So far as we are concerned, we repudiate this view and consider the scheduled castes as integral parts of Hindu society. You also, in your letter of June 15th, treated the scheduled castes as Hindus. You pointed out that in your proposal there was no "parity" either between Hindus and Muslims or between the Congress and the Muslim League inasmuch as there were to be six Hindus belonging to the Congress, as against five Muslims belonging to the League. One of the six Hindus belonged to the scheduled castes. We are in any

2. Wavell wrote on 22 June 1946: "I understand from press reports that there is strong feeling in Congress circles that the party should insist on their right to include a Muslim of their own choice among the representatives of the Congress in the interim government." The Cabinet Mission and he would be unable to accept a Congress Muslim in the interim government but claimed no precedent would be thereby established.

defects are grave and would render the working of the provisional government difficult and deadlocks a certainty. In the circumstances your proposals cannot fulfil the immediate requirements of the situation or further the cause we hold dear.

My Committee have, therefore, reluctantly come to the conclusion that they are unable to assist you in forming a provisional government as proposed in your statement of June 16th, 1946.

With regard to the proposals made in the statement of May 16th, 1946, relating to the formation and functioning of the constitution-making body, the Working Committee of the Congress passed a resolution on the 24th May 1946, and conversations and correspondence have taken place between Your Excellency and the Cabinet Mission on the one side and myself and some of my colleagues on the other. In these we have pointed out what in our opinion were the defects in the proposals. We also gave our interpretation of some of the provisions of the statement. While adhering to our views, we accept your proposals and are prepared to work them with a view to achieve our objective. We would add, however, that the successful working of the constituent assembly will largely depend on the formation of a satisfactory provisional government.[3]

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

3. Soon after receiving this letter Wavell informed Jinnah that the Congress had rejected the proposal for an interim government. Immediately Jinnah got the Muslim League to accept it and claimed that the Viceroy was bound by the statement of 16 June 1946 to ignore the Congress and form a government with such parties as were willing to join. When the Cabinet Mission rejected his demand he charged the Viceroy and the Cabinet Mission with breach of faith. "Statesmen should not eat their words".

7. To Niranjan Singh Gill[1]

New Delhi
25 June 1946

My dear Colonel Gill,

Thank you for your letter of the 23rd. The Kashmir incident has had good results so far as I am concerned. The matter is not done with yet

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

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Viceroy. In this resolution, they pointed out some defects in the statement and gave their own interpretation of certain parts of it.

Since then, the Committee have been continuously engaged in giving earnest consideration to the proposals made on behalf of the British Government in the statements of May 16 and June 16, and have considered the correspondence in regard to them between the Congress President and members of the Cabinet delegation and the Viceroy. The Committee have examined both these sets of proposals from the point of view of the Congress objective of immediate independence and the opening out of avenues leading to the rapid advance of the masses economically and socially, so that their material standards may be raised and poverty, malnutrition, famine and lack of the necessaries in life may be ended, and all the people of the country may have freedom and the opportunity to grow and develop according to their genius.

These proposals fall short of these objectives. Yet the Committee have considered them earnestly in all their aspects because of their desire to find some way for the peaceful settlement of India's problem and the ending of the conflict between India and England.

The kind of independence which Congress has aimed at is the establishment of a united democratic Indian federation with a central authority which would command respect from the nations of the world, maximum provincial autonomy, and equal rights for all men and women in the country. The limitation of the central authority, as contained in the proposals as well as the system of grouping of provinces, weakened the whole structure and was unfair to some provinces, such as the North West Frontier Province, and Assam, and to some of the minorities, notably the Sikhs.

The Committee disapproved of this. They felt, however, taking the proposals as a whole, that there was sufficient scope for enlarging and strengthening the central authority and for fully ensuring the right of a province to act according to its choice in regard to grouping, and to give protection to such minorities as might otherwise be placed at a disadvantage. Certain other objections were also raised on their behalf, notably the possibility of non-nationals taking any part in the constitution-making. It is clear that it would be a breach both of the letter and the spirit of the statement of May 16 if any non-Indian participated in voting or standing for election to the constituent assembly.

In the proposals for an interim government contained in the statement of June 16, the defects related to matters of vital concern to the Congress. Some of these have been pointed out in a letter of June 25, from the Congress President to the Viceroy. The provisional government must have power and authority and responsibility and should function,

The Secretary of State said the delegation has received Maulana Azad's letter of the 25th June and had noted what was said in it in the earlier paragraphs as to the reasons why Congress could not accept the statement of the 16th June. They were glad to observe however that the last paragraph of the letter contained an acceptance by Congress of the statement of May 16th. They had noted that in this paragraph the Congress President said that the Congress Working Committee adhered to the views and the interpretation of the statement which they had put forward in their resolution of the 24th May and in correspondence and conversation with the delegation.

The delegation wanted to make it perfectly clear that they did not depart from their view that their interpretation as set out in their statement of the 25th May was the correct one and that any departure from it by resolution required the agreement of both parties. They asked the Congress representatives to note that this was the delegation's position.

Pandit Nehru asked to what particular part of the statement of the 16th May the Secretary of State was referring. The Secretary of State said that he was referring in particular to the provisions about the constituent assembly dividing up into Sections.

Maulana Azad said that the Congress had considered the statement of the 25th May. They considered that they could function in the constituent assembly in a particular way. Obviously the Congress were opposed to the grouping proposal. They thought it would weaken India and they would try to induce the constituent assembly to decide against it by reason and argument and by every means at their disposal. Obviously anyone going into the constituent assembly goes there to achieve results and not to break it up. Whatever the interpretation of the statement, it would have to reconcile itself with the facts of the situation. Mr. Alexander said that naturally the constituent assembly could not prevent the provinces opting out of a group after the constitution had been formed and a decision on this point could be reached by the people themselves after the election on the new register....

The Secretary of State said that the statement of June 16th had contained definite proposals for an interim government. It was a great regret to the delegation that the Congress had turned these proposals down. The alternatives now were to go straight on to a new attempt to form an interim government of both parties or to have a short interval before conversations for that purpose were resumed. They suggested strongly that a short interval was desirable. The delegation must go home to report to His Majesty's Government after an absence of three months.

The Viceroy said that it was still his aim to get a coalition of the two main parties as he was convinced that this was the best solution....

The Secretary of State said the delegation has received Maulana Azad's letter of the 25th June and had noted what was said in it in the earlier paragraphs as to the reasons why Congress could not accept the statement of the 16th June. They were glad to observe however that the last paragraph of the letter contained an acceptance by Congress of the statement of May 16th. They had noted that in this paragraph the Congress President said that the Congress Working Committee adhered to the views and the interpretation of the statement which they had put forward in their resolution of the 24th May and in correspondence and conversation with the delegation.

The delegation wanted to make it perfectly clear that they did not depart from their view that their interpretation as set out in their statement of the 25th May was the correct one and that any departure from it by resolution required the agreement of both parties. They asked the Congress representatives to note that this was the delegation's position.

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Maulana Azad said it was obviously for the Viceroy to decide what to do at the present moment. From the point of view of Congress it was unfortunate that the interim government should not be formed at once. They wanted a new government as much or more than the Viceroy did....

The Congress representatives said that they might have to place some correspondence, notably their last letter, before their All India Committee. They would like to know the intention with regard to publication of the correspondence. The delegation said that they would have to consider this and the Congress representatives said that they would go through the correspondence and refer to the Viceroy about any letters which they wished to publish.

Pandit Nehru said that many of the Congress provincial governments were troubled with friction with Governors on petty matters. The Governors had certain powers under the existing law which were obsolete. The position of Congress was that these matters should be dealt with on the advice of ministers. The Viceroy said that Governors had done all they could to establish good relations with their ministries. They had however certain statutory responsibilities in matters such as the services and the minorities. One matter over which there had been disagreement had been nominations of minority representatives to legislatures. Sardar Patel said that in Madras the nominations had all gone to anti-Congress people and Dr. Prasad said that in Bihar the Governor had nominated one scheduled caste recommended by Congress but had also nominated an Ambedkarite, though the Ambedkarites had been defeated even in the primary elections. The Viceroy said that he had in fact instructed Governors not to press certain matters in which they had power to disregard ministerial advice but that he could not agree that all the powers of Governors should be exercised on the advice of ministers....

Pandit Nehru said that there was one small matter which they wished to mention. The payments proposed for members of the constituent assembly were far too high and upset all the standards which Congress regarded as appropriate for official payments. They understood that an allowance of Rs. 75 a day had been fixed by the Sind Government. The Viceroy said that he was not aware of this and would look into it. He agreed that Rs. 75 appeared much too high. Pandit Nehru said that their accommodation in Delhi should be provided free and the allowance fixed on that foundation.

10. To Rana Brahma Shamsher Jung[1]

1 July 1946

My dear Rana Sahab,[2]
Your letter of the 14th May was handed to me today by Mr. S.P. Upadhyaya. Thank you for it. He also showed me photographs you took in Bombay some years ago and I remembered with pleasure our meeting then.

As you know, we are still in the middle of negotiations with the British Government. I cannot yet say what the outcome of all this will be, but I am sure that ultimately it will result in the full independence of India. An independent India inevitably must have the closest contact with Nepal. I think often of Nepal with its great resources and its splendid human material. I hope that steps will be taken soon to bring up Nepal in line with progressive nations. When an opportunity offers itself I would very much like to meet you and other friends in Nepal to discuss matters of common concern. The next few years are going to be difficult ones for us, but that is the case for the whole world. We need not be afraid of these difficulties and I am convinced that we shall survive them and that India will go ahead at a rapid pace. In this process, Nepal, of course, has a prominent part to play.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.
2. General in the Nepal Army; later member of the Upper House of the Nepal Parliament; author of *Nepal Ka Mahabhukamp* and *Bhanubhakta Acharya* (in Nepali).

11. Full Powers for Interim Government[1]

After three years of storm and stress and rebellion, the A.I.C.C. met last year and it repeated the brave challenge of August 9, 1942. And now

1. Jawaharlal's editorial in the *National Herald*, printed on 3 July 1946.

The decision of the Working Committee regarding the so-called short-term plan, that is, the rejection of the proposals for a provisional government, offers no difficulty whatever to Congressmen. There is complete unanimity about it. But with this approach there is also the conviction that there can be no successful tackling of the long-term issues unless there is an atmosphere of freedom which only a *de facto* independent national government can ensure. We trust that no time will be wasted in future over relatively minor issues so long as the major issue of independence in practice is not decided.

What is called the long-term plan raises more difficult questions of interpretation and approach and our decision may well depend on our answers to these questions. If what is intended is merely a constitution-making body, a drafting committee with no power to give final shape to our constitution without outside interference, then clearly we have no place in it. If, on the other hand, we have a real constituent assembly, with sovereign authority, then there is certainly scope for work and advance and even, if necessary, for struggle. The constituent assembly that will presumably meet next month obviously cannot be compared with the revolutionary assemblies of France or the United States. Its origin and formation are dubious and not to our liking, and some attempt has been made to limit its sovereignty.

Yet the Congress approach to it has been made perfectly clear. Without ignoring the difficulties before us, we are determined to treat it as a sovereign body representing the will of the Indian people, which cannot be over-ridden by any other authority, external or internal. If we can follow up this approach we can convert a pale constitution-making body into a real organ of power which can bend all those who challenge it to its will. Out of this sovereign authority can emerge not only a real constitution of free and united India, but, if necessary, a provisional government representing the will of the people.

If there is scope and possibility for this, as we believe there are, then we must take full advantage of the occasion, and not allow it to pass untested because we would prefer to function in a more favourable environment. If we are stout of heart and clear of purpose no harm can come to us and much good may result. If it so happens that India's independence cannot come without more conflict and struggle, for that too we shall be better prepared if we follow this path.

This is the major issue before the A.I.C.C. There are others also apparently not connected with it, and yet bearing the most intimate relationship. In South Africa our countrymen are gallantly fighting not

only for the rights of Indians but of all peoples and races under subjection.[3] In South Africa today Asia and Africa face Europe and America, and the issue affects the world.

Kashmir has also become the symbol of larger things—the whole affects the States system of India. It is perhaps fortunate that South Africa and Kashmir are there to remind us of these vital problems and of the reality behind the courteous talks of the British Cabinet Ministers and the Viceroy.

3. The Indian community in South Africa organised passive resistance on 13 June 1946 in protest against the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Bill which became law from 3 June 1946. There were about 200,000 Indians in South Africa.

12. The Acceptance of the Plan for a Constituent Assembly[1]

The Congress has agreed to participate in the deliberations of the constituent assembly with its own interpretation of the Cabinet Mission's long-range proposals. We will try to evolve the constitution of a sovereign India in the light of our own interpretation.

The Congress is not going to the constituent assembly to bid goodbye to its long-cherished principles. Our immediate objective is complete independence for our country and we examine everything and reach decisions with this perspective. We examined the Cabinet Mission's proposals also in the context of Indian independence and we discovered that they contained some refreshing and good aspects and some reactionary and bad ones. Therefore we chose the best part of it and rejected the worthless ones. We rejected the interim proposals because the Congress after weeks of deliberation came to the conclusion that the acceptance of the interim arrangement as proposed by the Cabinet Mission would give a fatal blow to some of our cherished principles and to the very foundations on which the edifice of the powerful national organisation, that represents the urges and aspirations of the vast multitude, irrespective of caste and religion, has been raised.

Now the position is that according to the latest statement of the Cabinet Mission, fresh attempts will be made within a few weeks to

1. Speech at Jhansi, 4 July 1946. From the *National Herald*, 5 July 1946.

instal a truly national government at the centre. But I can assure you that, whatever be the new proposals, our standard of judging them will be the same, and we will not touch anything, even with the tips of our fingers, if it is incompatible with the dignity of our organisation and its principles.

The long-range arrangement of the mission's plan also contained some defects, in some respects very vital ones, yet we accepted it because one good element in that scheme is that the representatives of the people have been given full powers and complete freedom to make and mould the destiny of our country. But there, too, we are not bound by the interpretations which the mission or other reactionary elements give to the plan. We will be guided in the constituent assembly by our own interpretation, and will try to evolve a constitution according to our standards of judging things. We examine everything in the context of Indian independence.

To be frank I am not at all sorry about my visit to Kashmir and the upheaval that it created. As a matter of fact it helped to some extent to focus the attention of the entire country on the autocratic ways and vagaries of the princes and the repression, suppression and oppression to which the state's people are subjected in the hands of the miniature dictators who enjoy unlimited authority and power.

Imperialism, fascism and militarism are crumbling and disappearing from the world scene, while the autocracy of the medieval age is still going on in full blast in the Indian States. But this autocracy and the law of the jungle must end and I am sure it will end once the power passes to the representatives of the people. The mainstay of the autocracy of the Indian princes is the British power and with the British off the scene, the edifice of the autocratic princely structure will also crumble and the princes will have to come to some arrangement with revolutionary and progressive forces.

To me India is one and undivided. Whether it be a British Indian province or an Indian State, every bit of this vast country is my home, where I will assert my elementary civic rights. It is inconceivable for me to think that in one part of this country I can enjoy all freedom while in another I cannot. These elementary civic rights must be found everywhere in the country and no artificial or man-made rules can be allowed to strangle them. This was not there and hence the conflict in Kashmir over my presence. Due to the urgent work in Delhi I had to leave Kashmir. I want to return to Kashmir after the Cabinet Mission negotiations, but still more urgent problems demand my presence in Bombay. But Kashmir is always in my mind, and as soon as I am free, it will engage my full attention.

13. Continued Commitment to the Quit India Resolution[1]

The Congress continues to adhere to the policy of the Quit India resolution of August 1942, and whatever decisions it takes will be based on this policy. It will follow the same path until the object for which we have been fighting all these years has been achieved. When we take any decision, we will always think of all problems in the context of the Quit India resolution and the fundamental demand of the people of India, namely, complete independence.

As regards the long-term plan the question is not one of accepting an offer made by the British Government or rejecting it, but of bringing the goal of our freedom nearer by accepting the responsibility to shape our own future. We are on the threshold of freedom, and therefore, our responsibility is great. We have to build up a strong and united India, which will take its rightful place in the orbit of nations of the world.

1. Speech at Bombay, 7 July 1946. From *The Hindu*, 8 July 1946.

14. The Rationale of Congress Policy[1]

We have been talking of independence for a long time. Different interpretations are given of what that independence means. The Viceroy and the Muslim League also speak of the independence of India. But the Congress idea of independence is certainly different from what the Muslim League or the Viceroy thinks. Our idea of independence is that there must be absolutely no foreign domination in India, and that India may even break its connections with the British. We want to establish a republic of India.

1. By 204 votes against 51, the All India Congress Committee ratified the Congress Working Committee's resolution passed in Delhi on 26 June 1946, accepting the British Government's proposal to summon a constituent assembly to frame a constitution for a free and independent India and rejecting the interim government proposal. This account of Jawaharlal's concluding remarks in the debate at Bombay on 7 July 1946 is based on the report in *The Hindu*, 8 July 1946.

Mr. Achyut Patwardhan expressed surprise how foreign affairs could be carried on without foreign trade. The surprise was perfectly legitimate. Why should foreign affairs be carried on without foreign trade, surprises me. It is astonishing, as the Maulana stated, how inferences are drawn and conclusions are reached on that basis.

There is no doubt that in so far as the resolution, which we have discussed yesterday and today, is concerned, a great deal can be said in favour or against. A great deal can be said about the difficulties and complications in which we may get caught. The whole question is ultimately of balancing and coming to a conclusion without loss. It is obvious, so far as I am concerned, that foreign affairs includes foreign trade. It is quite absurd to talk of foreign affairs without foreign trade, foreign economic policy and foreign exchange.

When India is free, India will do just what it likes. It is quite absurd and foolish to lay down now what it is going to do a few years hence.

I do think that some time or other in the future, we may have to summon our own proper revolutionary constituent assembly. That does not mean we should not take advantage of the present offer and work it out for our own advantage. If we do not succeed in the constituent assembly, we can change our tactics in any manner to suit whatever form we desire.

There is a good deal of talk of the Cabinet Mission's long-term plan and short-term plan. So far as I can see, it is not a question of our accepting any plan—long or short. It is only a question of our agreeing to go into the constituent assembly. That is all, and there is nothing more than that. We will remain in the assembly so long as we think it is good for India, and we will come out when we think it is endangering our cause, and then offer our battle. We are not bound by a single thing except that we have decided for the moment to go to the constituent assembly, not certainly to deliver fine speeches, but to build something, to overcome some of our problems.

As regards defence and communications, obviously they include all manner of things connected with defence. Defence must include a large number of industries. Apart from foreign affairs, defence and communications, the union centre will have power to raise funds. This means the union centre will control certain revenue-producing subjects. I cannot say offhand what these revenue-producing subjects will be. It is inevitable that a decision will have to be made as to what revenue-producing subjects should go to the Centre. Presumably, the obvious subjects are customs, including tariffs, and may be, income-tax also.

Arguments have been advanced on the one side that there could exist a very satisfactory constituent assembly—something we have been

asking for and now we have got it. On the other hand, it has been stated that such a constituent assembly is futile and is being imposed on us, to which we should not attach much importance. If I am asked to give my own view, I would say that it is not, obviously, something which we have desired and worked for. There are many difficulties and snags and the scales are weighted against us. On the other hand, it is obvious also that it is not so bad. What will be the outcome of this assembly? It may be that it does not function for long, it breaks up. It may be we may get something out of it, and we go ahead, and it solves some of our problems. And we produce some kind of a constitution which is desirable and workable.

All these things are possible. But it seems to me rather fantastic for the Cabinet Mission to tell us that, after ten years, we are going to do this or that. It is fantastic and I cannot imagine anybody laying down any rule for India ten years hence. When India is free, India will do just what it likes.

As the discussions in the House are about the proposed constituent assembly, I am reminded of other constituent assemblies. Perhaps the comparison is not justified. About 157 years ago a constituent assembly called the "States General" was convened in France. It was convened by the King of France himself. He was an autocratic and foolish King, and he soon got into trouble with that assembly and ultimately, within a few years, the head of that King was cut off. India, of course, would not cut off other people's heads. Again, there was the case of the American colonies. Do you remember that even after the declaration of war against England, there were colonies which continued to send humble petitions of loyalty to the English King? It is only after a hard war that things changed.

Now in regard to criticisms[2] against the resolution, it is strange that one should be afraid of a thing because at the beginning it is not exactly to one's liking. It seems to me that we have begun to attach far too much importance to gestures, words and slogans and generally to a certain heroic attitude. It is a dangerous thing. Remember, we are a great nation. We are no longer a tiny people begging for freedom at the hands of the British. We are on the verge of freedom.

Of course, we have to fight those who come in our way. But we should not forget the fact that while we have to be revolutionary, we also have to think in terms of statesmanship, not in terms of careerists

2. Jayaprakash Narayan, Achyut Patwardhan and Ram Manohar Lohia urged upon the Congress not to have anything to do with the Muslim League and to develop the revolutionary urge for a final overthrow of the British power in India.

merely shouting slogans and escaping responsibility, but in terms of facing big problems. I beg of you to look upon all these problems in a spirit of revolutionary statesmanship and not in a spirit of submission to opportunism, which is so rampant all over India today.

There is always a tendency, if we enter these legislatures, for us to get entangled in minor problems and forget big things. Although there is that danger, yet it is quite impossible after we have arrived at a certain stage to say that you cannot escape responsibility for solving your own problems. The world looks to you and to the Congress for great decisions and it is no use sitting, cursing, fuming and fretting.

I am glad that two women members participated in the debate, one of whom made a fiery speech.[3] This is indicative of the temper of Indian womanhood. I urge that more and more opportunities should be given to Indian women to participate in our public life.

It is customary to announce the names of the members of the new Working Committee as soon as a new President assumes office. I did not have enough time to think over it. It may be necessary to consult and take advice in this connection. The Committee must, of course, consist of old and experienced men. At the same time, new blood must also be infused. In the past, conditions had been such that the question of new blood had been postponed. I hope I will be able to announce the names of the members of the new Working Committee in two or three days before I leave Bombay.

3. "We have listened to you and obeyed you all these years," said Aruna Asaf Ali, addressing Mahatma Gandhi at this debate. "You must now listen to us and it is your duty to obey us."

15. A. K. Azad's Letter to Wavell[1]

Bombay
9 July 1946

My dear Lord Wavell,

I received your private and personal letter[2] just on the eve of the A.I.C.C. As you have no doubt seen from the papers, the A.I.C.C.

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, p. 24.
2. On 3 July 1946, Wavell wrote to Maulana Azad: "I am anxious that the forthcoming meeting of the A.I.C.C. should not result in that body giving to the President a mandate such as would make fresh negotiations for a coalition government almost impossible."

have ratified the resolution[3] of the Working Committee of the 25th June. This has been unconditional and unqualified, so that the Working Committee will not in any way be hampered in negotiating with you for the interim government.

I agree with you that in the existing circumstances of the country, our best interests can be served by a coalition government composed of both the Congress and the League. You know the stand I have taken on this question. You perhaps also know that I brought round the Working Committee to my point of view in spite of sharp differences and opposition by a majority of my colleagues. I may also tell you that there has been a strong attempt to bind down the Working Committee by a resolution of the A.I.C.C., but I did not permit any restriction on the discretion of the Working Committee.

I must at the same time tell you that the Congress will maintain its national character in all circumstances. You know the complications that arose both in Simla in June 1945 and in Delhi in June 1946, and I strongly hope that you will from the very outset adopt a course which will prevent the repetition of such complications and deadlock.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

3. See *ante*, item 8.

16. Warning against Complacency[1]

The Congress decision to enter the constituent assembly does not mean the dawn of a new era of freedom and sovereignty for India. So I warn the people not to labour under the delusion that the Congress participation in the proposed constituent assembly means the end of their national struggle to wrest freedom for India. The Congress has decided to give a fair trial to the proposal of a constituent assembly. The Congress will send its representatives to the constituent assembly with a definite purpose to frame a constitution of a free and independent India

1. Speech at Bombay, 10 July 1946. From *The Hindu*, 11 July 1946.

based on democracy and complete sovereignty of the people. But it does not mean that the formation of a constituent assembly will immediately lead to freedom.

The Congress President has asked us to be ready to face bullets and bayonets if we have to launch a fight to wrest freedom from the British. I do not want that the people should get a feeling of complacency and lethargy as the result of a false confidence that we have already won freedom. I stress the need for unity and strength among us so that we may prepare ourselves for a struggle if that is the only alternative in case the proposed constituent assembly fails to bring us freedom.

But, at the same time, we will also have to prepare ourselves to take over the administration of the country in our own hands to run the government. We have, therefore, to be prepared for both the situations—for a struggle to wrest freedom, and for the responsibility of running the government of a free and independent India.

I see the threat of a global war and a world conflict between the white population and the black, as the result of the inhuman and uncivilized racial discrimination. I declare that a free and independent India will not tolerate racial discrimination, but, on the contrary, will allow the whites to settle down in India provided they consider themselves as Indians first and last.

17. The Nature of the Congress Commitment[1]

Question: Can you amplify your statement[2] in the All India Congress Committee that the Congress had made no commitment in regard either to the long-term or to the short-term plan of the Cabinet Mission except to go into the constituent assembly?

Jawaharlal Nehru: As a matter of fact, if you read the correspondence that has passed between the Congress President and the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy, you will see in what conditions and circumstances we agreed to go into this constituent assembly. The first thing

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 10 July 1946. From *The Hindu*, 11 July 1946.
2. See *ante*, item 14.

have ratified the resolution[3] of the Working Committee of the 25th June. This has been unconditional and unqualified, so that the Working Committee will not in any way be hampered in negotiating with you for the interim government.

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1. Speech at Bombay, 10 July 1946. From *The Hindu*, 11 July 1946.

of the North West Frontier Province deciding against grouping. Then Group B collapses. It is highly likely that Assam will decide against grouping with Bengal, although I would not like to say what the initial decision may be, since it is evenly balanced. But I can say, with every assurance and conviction, that there is going to be, finally, no grouping there, because Assam will not tolerate it under any circumstances whatever. Thus you see this grouping business, approached from any point of view, does not get on at all.

Q: How would the provincial jealousies work against grouping?

JN: First, but for the Muslim League, the entire country is opposed to the grouping of provinces. The Muslim League thus stands by itself isolated on this question.

Applying this principle, one will find in the north-west zone that there is a kind of balance, anti-grouping more or less even with pro-grouping.

Secondly, entirely for other reasons—non-political, non-Congress, non-League—there is a good deal of feeling against grouping with the Punjab, both in the North West Frontier Province and Sind, for economic and other reasons. That is to say, even the Muslims in Sind dislike the idea of grouping with the Punjab, for fear of domination by the Punjab which is the dominant party in that group, and more aggressive and advanced in some ways.

Apart from the imposed discipline from the Muslim League, both in the Frontier and in Sind, the people are unanimously against grouping, because both these provinces are afraid of being swamped by the Punjab.

Q: When will the provisional national government be formed at the Centre?

JN: I cannot just peep into the future and say what is going to happen. For the moment, we are somewhat engaged in the constituent assembly elections.

But remember this, that the constituent assembly is not going to put up easily for long with the kind of caretaker government that is in office today. There is bound to be conflict. In fact, the caretaker government has no stability, nor is there any possibility of its long continuance. How and when and what shape the new government will take, I cannot say. It will be just entering into a speculation.

Q: What do you expect from the forthcoming meeting of the All-India Muslim League Council at Bombay?

is we have agreed to nothing else. It is true that in going into the constituent assembly we have inevitably to agree to a certain procedure in advance, that is, the election of the candidates to the constituent assembly. What we do there, we are entirely and absolutely free to determine. We have not committed ourselves on any single matter to anybody. Naturally, even though one might not agree to commit oneself, there is a certain compulsion of facts which makes one accept this thing or that thing. I do not know what that might be in this particular context. But the nature of compulsion of the facts would be not of the British Government's desires or intents, but how to make the assembly a success, and how to avoid its breaking up. That will certainly be a very important consideration. But the British Government does not appear there at all.

When the Congress stated that the constituent assembly was to be a sovereign body, the Cabinet Mission's reply was more or less 'yes', subject to two considerations: first, a proper arrangement for the minorities, and secondly, a treaty between India and England. I wish the Mission had stated that both these matters were not controversial. It is obvious that the minorities question has to be settled satisfactorily. It is also obvious that if there is any kind of peaceful changeover in India, it is bound to result in some kind of a treaty with Britain.

What exactly that treaty will be I cannot say. But if the British Government presume to tell us that they are going to hold anything in India, because they do not agree either in regard to the minorities or in regard to the treaty, we shall not accept that position. It will become a *casus belli.*

We shall have no treaty if they seek to impose anything on us, and we shall tear up any treaty they try to impose. If they treat us as equals and come to terms, there will be a treaty. But if there is the slightest attempt at imposition, we shall have no treaty.

In regard to the minorities, it is our problem, and we shall, no doubt, succeed in solving it. We accept no outsiders' interference in it—certainly not the British Government's—and, therefore, these two limiting factors to the sovereignty of the constituent assembly are not accepted by us.

The only limitation on the party's action would be its anxiety to carry the work of the constituent assembly to a successful conclusion. It does not make the slightest difference what the Cabinet Mission thinks or does in the matter.

The big probability is that, from any approach to the grouping question, there will be no grouping. Obviously, Section A will decide against grouping. Speaking in betting language, there is a four-to-one chance

each unit or province to carry on a separate type of credit and foreign policy.

Suppose there is trouble between the provinces or States, or an economic breakdown due to famine conditions. Inevitably the Centre comes in again. However limited the Centre might be, you cannot help the Centre having wide powers, because the past few years have seen that the absence of central authority had created conditions far worse in the country. However, the fact that there has been a central authority has not done much good to the country, because the authority is incompetent.

It is obvious that without a central authority, you cannot deal with the problems I have mentioned. There must be some overall power to intervene in a grave crisis, such as a breakdown of the administration, or an economic breakdown or a famine.

The scope of the Centre, even though limited, inevitably grows, because it cannot exist otherwise. Though some people might oppose this broadening of the scope of the Centre, the constituent assembly will have to decide on the point.

Q: Should not the Congress launch direct action against the Portuguese administration in Goa?[4]

JN: I do not think it will be necessary to start any kind of direct action there, because the Portuguese administration will disappear automatically when the British power departs from India.

I welcome the recent statement[5] of the French Governor of Pondicherry that it would be open to the people of Pondicherry to join the proposed Indian union. In fact, the Governor stated that if the people of Pondicherry joined the Indian union, he himself would become an Indian citizen.

The existence of foreign administrations other than the British in India is only a small trouble for the moment. You cannot expect the Congress to lead agitations against little pimples. It is for the local

4. The Portuguese authorities had taken suppressive measures against the people in Goa struggling for civil liberties. Ram Manohar Lohia was expelled from Goa for five years. The founder and the secretary of the Goa Congress were arrested and court-martialled although no martial law was in force in Goa. Public meetings were banned and those who took part in them, in spite of the ban, were beaten up.
5. On 3 June 1946, the Governor of French India said at Pondicherry that the question whether French India was to join the Indian union as sponsored in the British Cabinet declaration had been left to the will of the people of French India.

JN: Whatever the Congress does, it is always intended to create new situations. We do not follow other people's situations. I am glad that the Muslim League has realised that we have created a new situation. We propose to create many further new situations. We are sometimes asked what we would do if the League decides to do this or that. We shall see what the conditions then are and decide accordingly.

Q: What would be the powers of the proposed Union Centre?

JN: According to the Cabinet Mission's proposals, there are three or four basic subjects in the Union Centre—defence, foreign affairs, communications and the power to raise finances for these. Obviously, defence and communications have a large number of industries behind them. So these industries inevitably come under the Union Government, and they are likely to grow. Defence is such a wide subject that it tends to expand its scope and activities more and more. All that comes under the union government.

Similarly, external affairs, inevitably, include foreign trade policy. You cannot have a foreign policy if you divorce foreign trade from it. Foreign affairs include all manner of things which are not put down there, but which can be brought in.

Q: How can finances for the union be raised?

JN: It has to be done by taxation. If anyone suggests that some kind of contributions or doles are going to be given by the provinces or states, it is bunkum. No central government can be run on doles.

An attempt to carry on the administration with contributions ended in a failure in the United States in the early days of the American confederation. Inevitably, therefore, any central government must raise its finance by taxation.[3] I cannot make a list now, but obviously customs, including tariffs, is bound to be one source of taxation. In fact, tariffs are connected with foreign trade policy. It may be that income tax is another. I do not know what else.

The central government must be responsible for foreign market loans and such other subjects. It also must obviously control currency and credit. Who is going to do it, if not the Centre? You cannot allow

3. A controversy arose over the financial powers of the Union Centre, the Congress wishing it to have powers of direct taxation and to be self-supporting, while Jinnah advocated that it should be given a lump sum and should have to seek contributions from the groups if it wanted more.

Q: Do you believe that the recent agitation in Kashmir was inspired by Russia?

JN: It is not a question of belief. It is fantastic nonsense. The frontier is full of bazaar rumours. There one meets men of various nationalities, from Tibet, from China and from Central Asia. One enters a new atmosphere. I have no doubt at all that in such places there are, possibly, a number of spies of various foreign powers. There might also be British spies on the other side of the Indian border.

It is quite absurd for any intelligent person to talk of any Russian bogey in Kashmir, or the possibility of a Russian advent into Kashmir, now or in the near future. It might happen fifteen or twenty years hence.

Q: What is the Congress stand in respect of the participation of the Indian States in the constituent assembly?[7]

JN: Our position has been, and is, that elected representatives of the States' people must go there. The rulers say that they should nominate the representatives. What their stand today is I do not know, but obviously we cannot accept that position. The real difficulty is that, apart from the rulers' position, the governments in the Indian States are so unrepresentative that a proper procedure must be adopted to make them representative and representatives of such governments only should go to the constituent assembly.

Q: What is your comment on the bigger States, like Hyderabad, which have not demobilised their wartime armies?

JN: It is highly undesirable for all these small separate armies to continue. They are not bound to continue under the Union Government of India. There will be only one central army. May be, during the intervening period of transition, some of these may carry on.

7. The method of selecting the 93 representatives of the States for the constituent assembly was left to consultation between the assembly and the States' rulers. On 17 May 1946, the Nawab of Bhopal wrote to Wavell that the repesentatives of the States to the constituent assembly should be nominated by the State Governments and entered a *caveat* against the clause in the Cabinet Mission plan that "the method of selection will have to be determined by consultation." Meanwhile, the States People's Conference reiterated its determination not to recognise any decision which did not ensure representation of the States people by means of election.

people to do what they like, and the Congress will deal with the question, normally speaking, when the British power has vanished—as it is vanishing—through diplomatic and other channels and, no doubt, settle it.

Q: What is going to be your next move in Kashmir affairs?

JN: It is my intention to go to Kashmir, but I have not fixed any date, partly because I have some other important work to do, and partly, also, because I have been watching certain developments there. The Kashmir State affair has been formally taken over by the Congress Working Committee as was revealed by the telegram[6] which Maulana Azad sent me asking me to return from there. Therefore any action I should now take has to be in consultation with the Working Committee.

It has ceased to be, if it ever was, just a personal adventure. Although I may like adventures, the matter has to be treated on a more serious level. It has really become one of the first-class issues in India. It affects the future of the Indian States. It also affects the position of the Political Department of the Government of India that has been dragged into the picture. The parties concerned are not merely Jawaharlal Nehru on one side, and the Kashmir State on the other, but the Indian National Congress and the States People's Conference on one side, and the Political Department of the Government of India and the Kashmir Government on the other.

Whatever happens now is likely to affect other matters, including the whole question of the Indian States in the constituent assembly. Because it has such far-reaching consequences, we have tried, as far as we can, to restrain our ardour, and to go ahead only after full thought. Normally speaking, I might go to Kashmir in time for the case against Sheikh Abdullah, whose arrest was the immediate cause of the trouble.

The Kashmir Prime Minister has, during his recent visit to Bombay, met not only Maulana Azad and Sardar Patel, but also Mahatma Gandhi. He has gone back to Kashmir to consult the Maharaja and, may be, the Political Department.

6. Maulana Azad's telegram of 21 June 1946 read: "I and all are of opinion that your presence here essential above everything else. Remember you are under an organisation which you have adorned so long. Its needs must be paramount for you and me. Remember also that your honour is ours and your obedience to Congress call automatically transfers to it duty of guarding your honour. Committee also solicitous equally with you about Sheikh Abdullah's case and welfare of Kashmir people. Therefore I expect you to return in answer to this. You will tell Maharaja Saheb that as soon as you are freed by Congress you will return to Kashmir to retrieve your honour and fulfil your mission." See *post*, section 6, sub-section "Kashmir State."

Q: Do you believe that the recent agitation in Kashmir was inspired by Russia?

JN: It is not a question of belief. It is fantastic nonsense. The frontier is full of bazaar rumours. There one meets men of various nationalities, from Tibet, from China and from Central Asia. One enters a new atmosphere. I have no doubt at all that in such places there are, possibly, a number of spies of various foreign powers. There might also be British spies on the other side of the Indian border.

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19. To Niranjan Singh Gill[1]

Allahabad
July 13, 1946

My dear Niranjan Singh,

...Your telegram reached me last night on arrival here. I must confess that I have been greatly distressed at the developments among the Sikhs.[2] This is not merely a matter of the constituent assembly but of our politics generally. Over a question like the constituent assembly obviously there cannot be more than one policy, not contradictory and conflicting policies. It is a political issue though naturally other questions are involved in it. I cannot understand how anyone, Mr. Sachar or Prof. Mota Singh,[3] could have thought that we approved of the Sikhs adopting a different policy than that of the Congress regarding entry to the constituent assembly. If so, the Muslims in the Congress have every right to adopt their own policy, so also any other group, and political joint action becomes impossible. There is no divergence of opinion between the Congress and the Sikhs in regard to the main approach to the constituent assembly, that is to say, we object to grouping and the way the Centre is to be narrowed down and some other matters. The question is of strategy and tactics as to how to get what we want and, if we are unable to get it, when to leave this show and adopt different methods. No higher strategy can be successful if different sections go their own way. While we are trying to achieve something through the constituent assembly, the Akali Sikhs try to do something entirely different outside.

Another serious question arises. Are Congress Sikhs to follow Congress discipline in vital matters or not? It is an impossible situation for a

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40/1946, pp. 265-67, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. Sikh leaders, besides approaching the Congress Working Committee to redeem their pledge to stand by the Sikhs, met in a conference at Amritsar and demanded withdrawal of the Cabinet Mission scheme, which, it was feared, would lead to the establishment of Pakistan. Several thousands of Sikhs took a pledge on 23 June 1946 to work unitedly against the acceptance of the scheme. They insisted on veto rights being conceded to them in all matters concerning their community in the Punjab Assembly and in the Union Centre. Meanwhile, the Sikh Panthic Board decided to boycott the election to the constituent assembly in spite of the fact that Partap Singh Kairon was appointed a member of the Congress Working Committee.
3. One of the founder members of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee; was a staunch Akali and a left-wing nationalist. Later member, Punjab Assembly.

member of the Congress Working Committee to pursue a different line of action from that of the Congress.

The effect of recent developments has been, as far as I can see, that instead of winning over other elements to the Congress, Congress Sikhs have been compelled by circumstances to go against Congress decisions. Thus the joint front is not in line with the Congress but against it. It is true that we have repeatedly said that in purely Sikh affairs all Sikhs should have freedom of action. That surely does not mean a different political line. It refers to cultural and other matters. A different political line means the isolation of the Sikhs politically which surely is not desirable from any point of view, least of all that of the Sikhs. You will realise that any effective action has to be taken jointly. The constitution of India will not be framed by the Sikhs alone and any division at this stage is most unfortunate. The right thing to do was for people to be elected now and then for all of us together to meet prior to the constituent assembly to formulate our line of action. I would still suggest this. This does not in any way weaken the Sikhs or mean a going back on their fundamental position. It seems to me that some of the Akali Sikhs are taking a very narrow view and are more concerned with opposing the Congress than with the ultimate interest of the Sikhs.

As circumstances have taken shape, it is exceedingly difficult for me from this distance to issue mandates and the like. I can only advise and leave the matter to your decision and the decision of the Congress Sikhs in the Punjab. The question raises such fundamental issues that the Working Committee at its next meeting will have to consider it as a whole. The position of Sardar Partap Singh as a member of the Congress Working Committee is peculiarly delicate.

This letter will not reach you in time for your tomorrow's meeting. Anyway I shall have it sent and, separately, I shall send you a telegram.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. Telegram to Partap Singh Kairon[1]

13 July 46

Received Gill's telegram, letter. Am greatly distressed at developments evidently owing to complete misunderstanding among Congress Sikhs

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

about Congress attitude. Their position and especially yours delicate if policy opposed to Congress followed. Right course evidently joint effective action after mutual consultation meanwhile accepting election. In view complicated situation do not wish to issue mandate or impose decision from here and leave you and Congress Sikhs to take final decision keeping larger interests of Sikhs Congress and country in view. Matter will have to be considered by Congress Working Committee later.

Jawaharlal Nehru

21. To P. Subbarayan[1]

Lucknow
July 14, 1946

My dear Subbarayan,
Two or three days ago I read a brief report of a speech you delivered somewhere in which you said that Rajaji's policy of 1942 had triumphed now. I do not exactly know what you meant by this and of course you have every right to hold and express any opinion. But it struck me that perhaps you had in mind the fact that I had included Rajaji in the Working Committee.

I should like to make it perfectly clear to you that I hold today, as I held in 1942, that Rajaji's policy then was completely wrong, divorced from the great mass of public opinion, and injurious to our cause. In fact that opinion has been greatly strengthened by subsequent events. About Rajaji's ability there can be no doubt, as well as his earnestness. Often enough one wants to have the benefit of his clear analysis and his opinion on a current topic or development. In the peculiar circumstances of today his keen intelligence is likely to be of considerable help. But the big gap between his political outlook and the outlook of most Congressmen continues and it is well to realise this. We function today in continuation of the Congress policy of 1942. Nothing can be clearer than that and it surprises me that one should think otherwise. If the Congress gave up their policy I would not be in the executive. If in the future a conflict arises between this policy and what used to be Rajaji's policy in 1942, it will be difficult for Rajaji and me to be in the same executive.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I hold rather strong views on the subject and, as you must know, there are large numbers of others who do so also. It is no service to Rajaji or to others to minimise this difference or to say that Rajaji's old viewpoint has triumphed. It has done nothing of the kind and I am sure that should that viewpoint find expression again it will be strenuously combated.

I do not wish to enter into any public controversy on this subject, but I thought it only fair to you to let you know how I feel about this matter. I am sending a copy of this letter to Rajaji.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

22. Intrigues of the Governor of Sind[1]

Panditji believes that the Governor must have acted in consultation with the Viceroy and both are therefore responsible for doings in Sind.[2] He is not prepared to write, much less to speak, to the Viceroy for the recall of the Governor. Panditji's attitude from the beginning has been that all those who have since 1942 acted vindictively or brutally or illegally or despite public opinion must be removed as soon as a Provincial Government is set up. On this he will have no compromise. He is of the opinion that as soon as the constituent assembly is set up, and gets going, the question of setting up the provisional interim government is bound to arise. It is now a matter of only 4 more weeks when important decisions are bound to be made. It will be time then to demand the recall of the Governor. Meanwhile, a brief statement should be prepared about all the acts of omission and commission of the Governor and forwarded to the All India Congress Committee office. It will be used when necessary.

1. N.R. Malkani's report of his interview with Jawaharlal on 16 July 1946 at Allahabad. N.R. Malkani Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Defections among the supporters of the Muslim League Ministry in Sind had been sufficient to overthrow it, but the Governor, Francis Mudie, treating the session of the Assembly as more a meeting of an electoral college for election to the constituent assembly, prorogued the Assembly without allowing the coalition of opposition parties to prove their majority.

As for the holding of a session of the Sind Assembly Panditji is of opinion that this is entirely a matter left to the discretion of the Governor. It is a serious deficiency in the constitution that members have no power of requisition. This will be remedied in the future constitution. But Panditji believes that the Governor is bound to call an early session to transact much official business. The Coalition Party must go to its constituents and expose the thoroughly undemocratic action of the Governor in proroguing the session so abruptly. Public opinion must be aroused and organised so that an early session should become inevitable.

When asked whether prorogation without admission of adjournment and no-confidence motions was justifiable Panditji confessed that he could give no opinion on matters of constitutional law. Sir Tej should be consulted as soon as his health improved. A brief note on the breach of assembly rules should be prepared and submitted to Sir Tej for his opinion.

Panditji is very sore about Mr. Bundeh Ali[3]. He believes all that was done by the Coalition Party was done without consulting the Sardar or the Maulana. Considering that the Coalition Party has a very narrow majority, he believes that if a new ministry is formed that too will have an insecure existence, more so as the Governor and the services will be hostile to it and may tip the balance. Under the present circumstances far more attention must be paid to the consolidation of the Coalition Party so as to be able to withstand any attacks by the League Party. New members must not be secured, much less offered a consideration. Instead they should be warned of the hurdles ahead, the difficulties of administration, the possible harassments by the existing ministry, so that they may join the Coalition Party after deliberate decision. In no case should any hullabaloo be raised about demolishing the League Ministry. If we fail it will be demoralising. If we succeed it will not be a success to talk much of. But if we have a majority and the Coalition Party wins in due course, it should take its victory as the beginning of a serious responsibility.

3. Bundeh Ali Khan, Prime Minister of Sind, 1940-41.

23. Appeal to Caesar[1]

Mr. Jinnah has appealed to Caesar.[2] But Caesar prefers to remain silent for the present and is waiting and watching developments in India. It is interesting to observe how Caesar functions in relation to his satrapy of India. The two faces of Caesar, so unlike each other and often glaring at each other fiercely and shouting battle-cries, suddenly coalesce and become one when they look at the Indian scene. Mr. Winston Churchill, that emblem of empire on which the sun never sets and the Labourites and Socialists, talking of democracy and freedom and the end of the era of imperialism, foregather together and, while disagreeing on many things, agree about India. Has Mr. Churchill been converted? Or have the Labourites and Socialists succumbed to the weight of British imperial tradition? Or is all this but a game played by Caesar, with his two faces, smiling or frowning alternately, but functioning more or less in the same groove whatever superficial changes might take place?

Mr. Jinnah has appealed to this double-faced Caesar and declaimed at some length at the enormity perpetrated by the Congress, and more especially by the Congress President, in interpreting in their own way the scheme for the constituent assembly.

Caesar has often smiled at Mr. Jinnah in the past and may show his imperial favour again. But the time for dealing with any problem with smiles and frowns is past, and a more positive attitude has to be taken followed by appropriate action.

Why is Mr. Jinnah perturbed and angry? Had he any doubt at any time about the Congress attitude in regard to this or any other matter? Surely in the forest of letters and talks during the past three or four months this Congress attitude has emerged clearly enough. The Congress stands for a sovereign constituent assembly with no external limitations whatever. The Cabinet Mission points out only two limitations—

1. Editorial written by Jawaharlal, *National Herald*, 16 July 1946.
2. Jinnah said on 13 July 1946: "It is understood that there is going to be a debate in the British Parliament very soon on the report of the Cabinet delegation and it is for the British Parliament and His Majesty's Government to make it clear beyond doubt and remove the impression that the Congress has accepted the long-term scheme which is sought to be conveyed abroad by the timid efforts of the Cabinet delegation and the Viceroy, who throughout these negotiations suffered from a fear complex and constant threats of the Congress of resorting to civil disobedience, which is now represented by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru..."

the minority problem and the Indo-British treaty. These two questions have no doubt to be faced by us but they have nothing to do with British intervention. The Indo-British treaty cannot in the nature of things be imposed by one party or another. It has to be negotiated by free and independent nations desirous of maintaining friendly relations with each other. It is the consequence of independence, not the price of it. For if it is the price in any way, it is an imposition, something forced down upon us against our will and interests, something representing Caesar's continuing dominion over India. That would be the negation of independence.

The minority problem is with us certainly and no one can just wish it away. That is the real limitation in the way of our progress, and it might give trouble in the constituent assembly. We shall have to face it and solve it with goodwill and good sense. But we are not going to appeal to Caesar over this or any other matter and we shall not welcome or indeed tolerate Caesar's interference.

What are the basic features of the proposals for the constituent assembly? Provincial autonomy, certain procedures, certain proposals. Even these can all be set aside by agreement and even as they are, they have been interpreted by the Congress in a way to give the fullest latitude to the basic assumption of the proposals, that is, provincial autonomy. What then is the grievance? It is odd that today the Congress stands for provincial autonomy and the League, which laid stress for so long on residual powers for the provinces, stands for compulsion of the provinces.

The constituent assembly is certainly to some extent a creation of the British power. But even more so it is a creation of circumstances which none can ignore. Taking birth out of the womb of these circumstances, it may well grow of itself and function as it chooses. Who is going to put an end to it or dissolve it? Lawyers and constitutionalists may ponder over these problems, but there is something beyond the lawyer's textbook and precedent in these happenings, and vital forces are at play and sometimes in conflict.

When this happens reality lies elsewhere than in Caesar's trappings. So we suggest to Mr. Jinnah not to look at or appeal to Caesar as of old. For the old order changeth yielding place to new and Caesar too passes into the story of things that have happened and ceased to be.

A PAGE OF MAULANA AZAD'S LETTER TO PETHICK-LAWRENCE, 9 MAY 1946

FIRST PAGE OF C.W.C. RESOLUTION ON CABINET MISSION PLAN, 24 MAY 1946

24. The Congress and the Sikhs[1]

There appears to be considerable misunderstanding about the recent Sikh developments in the Punjab in connection with the election of representatives to the constituent assembly.[2] This is understandable as I have myself been puzzled and perplexed. The postal strike and the partial telegraph strike have helped in adding to the obscurity. Long distance telephone conversations, which were only partially heard, have not helped much in keeping me informed of what was happening. Ultimately it became impossible for me to disentangle the separate threads and I told the Congress Sikhs in the Punjab that they must understand the Congress position clearly and keeping this in view act as they thought best. The matter would have to be considered by the Working Committee as soon as it meets.

An error and a misunderstanding right at the beginning, made without any reference to us, led to these complications. Congress Sikhs, of course, have to follow the Congress policy which is obviously also in the interest of the Sikhs as well as the country generally. The question was how to do it most effectively and as I was unable to understand the situation fully from here, I left them to decide. I have every hope that this knot will be disentangled soon in accordance with Congress policy.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 17 July 1946. *The Hindu*, 18 July 1946.
2. The Sikhs had refused to join the interim government proposed in the statement of 16 June 1946 because of opposition to compulsory grouping. They did not at first nominate candidates for election to the constituent assembly, but were persuaded to do so at a later date. Meanwhile, both the Congress Sikhs and the Akalis filed their nominations for the same seats and withdrew them later.

25. Telegram to Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

Allahabad
17 July 1946

Your message. It has been difficult for me to follow recent Sikh developments in Punjab. Was informed that at most one Congress Sikh

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-64/1946, N.M.M.L.

could get in now others resigning after election but if all withdrew now extremely probable that in subsequent election all four would get in. I told them decide for themselves keeping in view furtherance Congress policy. Now too late withdrawal but certainly Congress Sikhs must stand in new election for constituent assembly. You know Punjab position better please advise them directly on my behalf.

26. Misunderstanding Over Sikh Representation[1]

I am reluctant to say anything now which might add to the confusion created in regard to Congress Sikhs in the Punjab. Therefore I issued a brief statement yesterday. But there appears to be a great deal of misunderstanding and I am amazed at the extraordinary conclusions drawn by some people. It is obvious that every Congressman, whoever he might be, must follow Congress policy. I have no authority, even as Congress President, to vary that policy or to issue mandates or exemptions.

In regard to election matters, I have kept entirely aloof for all these years, even when I was President on the last occasion. Such matters have been dealt with by Maulana Azad and Sardar Patel. My involuntary intrusion on this occasion, when I was overwhelmed with work and had no time or opportunity to consult my colleagues, has evidently not been happy and has added to the mess. This mess began when, owing to some misunderstanding, Congress Sikhs in the Punjab committed themselves to a policy opposed to the obvious Congress policy in regard to the constituent assembly elections. I learnt of this with amazement in Bombay and immediately communicated with Sardar Partap Singh and Colonel Gill. Later I was informed that these commitments had put the Congress Sikhs in a very difficult situation and they were being accused of dishonourable conduct. I could not get all the facts owing to difficulties in the way of communication. Nor had I the time to get full information or to consult my colleagues. I was told that the Congress Sikhs and, indeed, others also would be able to line up with Congress policy completely if they were given a certain latitude in the way of approach so that they could get over the charge levelled against them.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 18 July 1946. *The Hindu*, 19 July 1946.

In the circumstances I felt, perhaps wrongly, that I should explain Congress policy fully to them, impress upon them to follow it, but at the same time leave them to do it in the manner they thought best. I further said that the matter was not one for me to issue mandates. That could only be done by the Working Committee. I could only explain the Congress position. I felt that this friendly approach would be understood and appreciated. From subsequent events, it appears that I was wrong and what I said led to grave misunderstanding. For this I am to blame and I must apologise to all my colleagues. So far as I am concerned, there is no question of Congress policy being overridden by communal considerations or for any Congressman to go against Congress policy.

In future all matters relating to elections will be dealt with by Maulana Azad and Sardar Patel who are more competent to deal with them than I am.

27. To Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
20 July 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Thank you for your letter of the 19th July informing me in advance of the arrangements you propose to make for the representation of India at the Peace Conference. You will appreciate that I can say nothing about such arrangements in the present state of affairs, except to express my regret that on such an important occasion India should be "represented" in this way.[2] I would have imagined that it was almost better for no one to go on behalf of India rather than some persons who can in no way truly represent India. The absence of representation would in itself have conveyed a truer picture of the situation in India.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J. N. Collection.
2. Sir Samuel Runganadhan, who was India's High Commissioner in London, was selected to lead the Indian delegation to the Peace Conference at Paris.

absurd to suggest, as has been done in certain sections of the press, that I am carried away by emotions and make statements which create fresh complications. What I had said there was said deliberately, and my experience of the last 35 years of public work is behind it. What I had said at Bombay is still my view and I am not prepared to withdraw a jot from it.

It is true that the constituent assembly is not the result of a revolution although there were good many revolutionary influences at work for years, and there is a new outlook in the world, England and India. The constituent assembly into which we are going is not a revolutionary body. It is obvious that a revolutionary body cannot be brought into existence by the Viceroy or come as a gift from the Cabinet Mission. There are people who have criticised our decision to enter the constituent assembly on the ground that the assembly that has been offered is not the type of constituent assembly which we want.

On the other hand, there is another set of people who think that the constituent assembly is in the nature of a drafting committee where people who have knowledge of constitutional law will draft a constitution which will ultimately be presented before the British Government.

In my view both the groups are wrong in their approach. I am for a middle course.

The constituent assembly can be a useless body, as well as it can be a powerful instrument for achieving freedom. Its greatest merit is that, although it will be brought into existence by the British Government, we will have nothing to do with them after it has been set into motion. The constituent assembly will then be completely sovereign and will be able to do anything. Nobody can interfere in its work. The foreign rulers may be angry with the manner in which the constituent assembly conducts its business but they cannot dissolve it. Of course, it can commit suicide, but nobody else can kill it. The ruling power cannot directly influence its proceedings although it can do mischief from behind the *purdah*. It is a fallacy to think that the constitution drawn by the constituent assembly will be sent to London for ratification so that the British Government may put its seal on it.

So far as we are concerned our work will be over when the constitution is finally drawn up. We shall start on the basis that the constitution drawn by us has become effective. New elections will be held under the new constitution. We may have a provisional temporary government during the transition period between the drawing of the constitution and bringing it into operation. We may have our freedom through peaceful methods or after a conflict with the British Government.

28. Status of the Constituent Assembly[1]

Mr. Gupta's remarks[2] about my connection with Delhi strike a personal note. I do not know which place I can call my own. Everywhere the people shower love and affection on me. It is, however, strange that I found iron gates and bayonets obstructing my way to a place to which I feel attracted because of my connection with it.[3]

I may or may not be a resident of Delhi, but I have recently been in New Delhi continuously for three months. This period of three months has hardly ended when another period of negotiations will soon begin. I am not enamoured of a prolonged stay in Delhi.

I am just coming from the meeting of the Expert Committee which is engaged in preparing a draft constitution. The problems with which we are faced are very intricate. Firstly, there is the question of the organisation of the Congress work. The question of the constituent assembly is not half as important as the first task.

The work, which the Congress representatives will be called upon to undertake in the constituent assembly, is not merely a question of a legal argument. If we have no sanction behind us we cannot achieve anything by our participation in the constituent assembly. Similarly, we cannot solve other problems facing us in Kashmir, South Africa and Ceylon. The Congress is a mighty organisation today and the world looks towards Congress leaders as the builders, to a very great extent, of the destinies of India. We are naturally weighed down by heavy responsibility.

We will have to establish relations with other countries and send our ambassadors there. It will not be enough if the Viceroy's House is occupied by the president of the Indian Republic or is put to use as a hospital. We need vast human material to build up a strong and independent India. We will have to find several hundred people for undertaking diplomatic work in other countries. They cannot be produced overnight.

I want to make it clear beyond a shadow of doubt that what I had said at the Bombay press conference about the Congress attitude towards the constituent assembly was not an emotional outburst. It is

1. Speech at Delhi, 20 July 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 21 July 1946.
2. Lala Desh Bandhu Gupta recalled Jawaharlal's connection with Delhi and said that the people of Delhi were glad and proud of having Jawaharlal in their midst.
3. This is a reference to Jawaharlal's arrest on 20 June 1946 for defying the ban of the Maharaja of Kashmir on his entry into the State. See also *post*, section 6, sub-section, "Kashmir State."

when you have to say 'yes' even though in saying so you may have to face a risk. There are bound to be stages between complete irresponsibility and undiluted freedom. Even if the British Government is defeated as a result of a conflict we cannot divest ourselves of our responsibility to frame a constitution. We have to change our strategy as the whole character of our movement has changed. It is all right when we have to fight the enemy and weaken him.

Now it is the question of preparing the country psychologically for undertaking the onerous responsibilities of running a government. We have to take into account the vast enthusiasm and the strength of the people in a free India.

I deplore careerism and opportunism in the Congress ranks which is a dangerous tendency. It is much more dangerous for us than the might of the British army. I want to purge the Congress organisation of all internal weaknesses.

There is much talk of leftism. The word 'leftism' does not mean anything clearly. I make it clear that there is scope in the Congress for the existence of all elements—the right, the left and the centre. But certain people who style themselves as leftists know nothing about leftism. I am strongly opposed to people in the Congress having labels of right and left. The door of the Congress is open to all. I emphasise the necessity of maintaining unity of action in the Congress.

We have proposed changes in the Congress constitution with a view to strengthening the organisation. We are contemplating the abolition of the four-anna membership. We want to enrol every adult man or woman who is willing to subscribe to the Congress creed. We want to make the Congress the mirror of the opinion, aspirations and ideals of the 400 million people of this country.

I stress the importance of setting up an efficient volunteer organisation under the command of Shah Nawaz. It is not enough for young people to take to uniforms. We want to have a network of volunteer organisations in every city and village. It is essential to inculcate the spirit of self-help among the people in the villages. Our aim is to have two crores of volunteers. The volunteers under their charge will have to follow the path of nonviolence.

I warn against being inactive. If after 300 Congress representatives have entered the constituent assembly the rest of us remain idle the Congress will become a useless organisation.

I deplore the attitude of the Sikhs. The Congress fully sympathise with them in their objection to the grouping of provinces. By abstaining from the constituent assembly, the Sikhs in my view have played into the hands of their opponents and weakened the position of their friends.

As regards the question of safeguarding the rights of the minorities, we all recognise its importance. No constitution can work unless the minorities are satisfied. We shall not, however, brook any interference on the part of the ruling power on that score if they arrogate to themselves the functions of an arbitrator.

The other condition lays down that we shall have to enter into a treaty with the British Government. I want to make it clear that we shall not accept any dictation. The treaty between the two countries must be on the basis of absolute equality. If the British Government says that it will not accept any constitution unless certain conditions are accepted as part of a treaty we will resist such a stipulation which will be an imposition and also an attempt to blackmail us. In my opinion the two conditions are unworkable.

The statement of 16 May is cleverly worded, and parts of it are capable of several interpretations. Probably it is inevitable because the delegation wants to please all parties. There are some features in that statement which we intensely dislike. We have interpreted that statement in a particular way and the Cabinet delegation interprets it in a different manner. It must, however, be clearly understood that the Cabinet delegation's interpretation cannot be final. It has no more right than ourselves to interpret a State document after it has been issued. Only a court of law or the president of the constituent assembly is the competent authority to give interpretations at the appropriate time.

We have made our position abundantly clear in our statements and resolutions and we have clearly stated why we are going there. The Congress Working Committee is not bound by any conditions beyond their authoritative statements and letters and the members of the constituent assembly who are the elected representatives of the people will not be bound even to that extent. The constituent assembly as such is not bound by any conditions. The members of the assembly can change anything and everything by mutual agreement in the statement of May 16.

So far as we are concerned we shall act as a sovereign body. We are going to the constituent assembly in a constructive spirit, and not to create trouble or to wreck it. As long as we feel that the constituent assembly is drawing the charter of India's freedom we shall work in it. The moment we feel that it is not serving that purpose we shall end it. It is not our purpose to tear the statement of May 16 to pieces. We have our own interpretations on it and will stick to them.

Those who are opposed to participation in the constituent assembly have criticised that it will sidetrack the main issue of freedom. There are stages even in a revolution. We cannot say 'no' every time. There are stages in the history of the movement for freedom in every country

to elect representatives, and found some difficulty in taking any action without a request. I asked Nehru whether he had any suggestions about the procedure. He said that the Sikhs had been stupid about it, and that he himself had also acted foolishly in leaving it to their good sense, instead of giving them direct instructions what to do. He agreed with the importance of getting Sikhs elected if possible. I said I was examining what could be done.

I then spoke about his visit to Kashmir and hoped that he would not cause any trouble at this critical time. He said that he had no intention of causing trouble, but that he felt it would be difficult to prevent crowds gathering to see him. I said that I hoped that the presence of crowds, if they did gather, would not excite him as they usually appeared to do. He said that it was never the crowds that excited him, but the lack of common sense in other people. I told him that I had obligations towards the Kashmir Government, and very much hoped that he would be very careful to create no incident.

I think he genuinely does not intend to cause trouble of any kind, but his tendency to go off the deep end must make his visit an anxiety. I hope that the State authorities will act with all circumspection.

I then went on to the question of the services and the demand for a general enquiry in the United Provinces, Bihar, and Central Provinces, into the 1942 disturbances.[3] Nehru was very reasonable about this, said that he did not wish any general enquiry, and that his advice was against it. Public feeling was, however, strong, especially against certain individuals. Would it not be possible to retire these individuals? I said that if he would advise premiers against any general enquiry, Governors would be prepared to discuss with them individual cases where there was well substantiated evidence that the bounds of duty had been exceeded in any way. Nehru was very quiet and sensible about this, and I hope that he may succeed in preventing any general enquiries.

I mentioned to him that Khizr had been invited to attend the Peace Conference as a representative of India, and he merely remarked that he would be a picturesque addition. He said that he had no feeling about whether Jayakar went one way or the other.

He then spoke about the prorogation of the Sind Assembly by the Governor, which he described as most extraordinary and unfortunate, especially since the opposition wished to discuss a motion about Sind's participation in Group B in the constituent assembly. I told him that

3. Resolutions and questions directed against Government officials and demanding inquiries into incidents in 1942 had been tabled in the U.P. and the C.P. legislatures in June 1946.

I want all groups to place the interest of the country before their sectional interest, as no progress is possible without independence. I remind the Sikhs that they cannot cut themselves away from the rest of their country.

I hope that the Pakistan issue will be buried once for all. I do not want to use compulsion. The Muslims themselves are beginning to realise that Pakistan is not in their interest. Pakistan is only possible as a feudatory state under British domination.

I have been elected President of the Congress at a critical juncture. The sense of loyalty to the organisation has prompted me to accept the heavy responsibilities of the office. I think that the responsibilities of the Congress President are in no way lighter than the responsibilities attached to the highest offices in the world. I have derived strength from the confidence that you place in me and the support that you extend to me and I shall be able to carry on the responsibilities of my office as long as you continue to support me.

The transfer of power may be peaceful or may be the result of another struggle. We should be ready for every contingency. The transition from British rule to freedom is a difficult one. The British Government has been forced by the circumstances to start negotiations for a settlement. It is sincerely anxious to agree to our demand. At the same time, it is making preparations for crushing any movement that might be launched by us if the negotiations fail. It is always haunted by the fear of another struggle. We must also be prepared for a fight, if a fight comes.

29. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal[1]

I spoke first of all about the Sikhs and said that I recognised the importance of their filling their four seats for the constituent assembly if possible.[2] I was considering what could be done about it, but I had up to the present received no request from the Sikhs for a fresh opportunity

1. Delhi, 22 July 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 104-106.
2. The Sikhs, entitled to four seats in the constituent assembly, had decided to boycott the election for these seats because of their opposition to compulsory grouping. At one stage, on Jawaharlal's advice, the Congress Sikhs filed nominations but a rift between them and the Akalis, who also nominated their candidates, led to the withdrawal of all Sikh candidates.

30. To Gopinath Bardoloi[1]

New Delhi
22 July 1946

My dear Bardoloi,
I have read in the papers a brief summary of the resolution your Assembly has passed at your instance in regard to grouping.[2] I have not seen the full text but I think I have seen enough of it to be able to form some opinion. I feel that you have rather mixed up section with grouping. It does not necessarily follow that you should boycott a section. The two are entirely apart. A section may definitely decide not to form a group and yet may continue as a section to consider a provincial constitution. Again it may be argued that within the section, both for the purpose of grouping or for any other purpose, a province cannot be overridden by others. Thus in making provincial constitutions the representatives of one province need not be outvoted by others. These and many other questions arise and will have to be determined by us and ultimately by the constituent assembly or the chairman thereof.

In view of this it seems rather premature to direct your representatives not to go even to a section meeting. Possibly that might be desirable, but certainly it cannot be said so definitely now, however much you might be opposed to grouping. I wanted to point this out to you immediately so that you may consider the situation and not find yourself suddenly faced by a difficulty of your own making. I feel that to decide against the Group was right and proper, but to bring in the Section was unnecessary.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 71/1946-47, p. 99, N.M.M.L.
2. A resolution passed in the Assam Legislative Assembly made it mandatory for the representatives of Assam in the constituent assembly not to participate in section or group.

31. To Congress Prime Ministers of Provinces[1]

New Delhi
22 July 1946

Dear Friend,
In regard to the constituent assembly, it seems to me desirable that persons elected to it should bring their credentials with them for presenta-

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 25/1946, N.M.M.L. This letter was seen in the mail by the Government. Printed in *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. VIII, pp. 131-132.

the Governor was considering calling a further meeting of the assembly at an early date, but that I rather doubted whether the Sind assembly was the right place to discuss the grouping question, which was a matter for the constituent assembly.

He then asked how the summonses to the constituent assembly would be issued. I said that I presumed that I should issue them. He thought that they should be issued through Speakers of the assemblies. I rather suspect this may be a move towards strengthening the claim of the constituent assembly to be a sovereign body elected by the representatives of the people, with which the Viceroy has therefore nothing whatever to do; and it may be in this way an attempt to get away from the authority of the declaration of May 16th. I should like advice on this.

He then spoke about the secretariat to the constituent assembly, and asked what arrangements were being made. He indicated that he was apprehensive that the procedure of the constituent assembly might be too much crystallised before the assembly ever met. I told him that we were arranging a secretariat, but there was no intention to lay down any detailed procedure. I suspect that this again is a move towards getting away from the Groups, since he specially mentioned that it seemed premature to arrange a secretariat for the Groups.

He then mentioned that the Europeans in the United Provinces had voted, apparently in order to secure the election of Sir J.P. Srivastava; and indicated that legal action might be taken to object to the European votes.

He finally mentioned the recent appointment of a High Court judge at Allahabad, I think the name was Mansur Ali, who he said was completely unfitted for the appointment, and that his selection had caused much feeling. I said that I supposed I must have approved the appointment, but that I did not know any of the particulars, and presumed that the appointment was made on the recommendation of the Chief Justice. He agreed that this was so, but implied that the selection was an act of gross favouritism.

This ended the interview which lasted about 40 minutes. Nehru's attitude was very friendly throughout. At the end I gave him the letter about the formation of an interim government, which he took away with him unopened.[4]

4. The Viceroy, on 22 July 1946, wrote identical letters to Jawaharlal and Jinnah asking whether their respective parties would be willing to enter an interim government consisting of 14 members, six (including a scheduled caste representative) to be nominated by the Congress, five by the Muslim League and three, representing the minorities, by the Viceroy.

tion before the assembly or some proper authority appointed by the constituent assembly. These credentials can take the shape of letters of delegation issued by the Speaker of the Provincial Assembly. This is not a mere matter of form.

We want this assembly to function as much as possible as an independent sovereign authority and the less it has to do with the Government of India apparatus the better. The bringing of the letters of delegation by the members of the constituent assembly and their proper presentation to the chairman would add to the solemnity of the procedure and would emphasise the independence of the constituent assembly.

The Viceroy may, of course, issue a summons to the members. If this is done we can treat it as a mere formality, attaching far more importance to our letters of delegation from the Speaker of our Legislative Assembly.

I would request you to pass on this suggestion to the Speaker of your Legislative Assembly. Such letters of delegation should be issued not only to the members of the Provincial Assembly who have been elected but also to non-members who have been elected.[2]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Viceroy minuted on the intercepted copy on 29 July 1946: "This shows the way the wind is blowing. We should let S. of S. know about it."

32. To Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
23 July 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

I have given careful consideration to your letter of 22nd July which you gave me yesterday. I agree with you that publicity in the press or otherwise does not do any good when delicate negotiations have to be carried on. So far as I am concerned, I shall see to it that the press has no knowledge of it. But it is not possible for me, even as Congress President, to function by myself in such matters without any reference to my colleagues. Inevitably I shall have to consult my colleagues.

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 112-113.

This becomes even more necessary because the situation itself has changed in many ways since we discussed these matters and much has happened which has to be taken into consideration in arriving at a decision. You will remember our telling you at our last meeting that it would not be possible to pick up again the old threads where they had been left off. That chapter had come to an end and an entirely new approach would have to be made. Since then a meeting of the All India Congress Committee has been held and the whole subject reviewed. A new Working Committee (though it has many of the old members in it) has been formed.

Apart from this, our experience of the previous talks has demonstrated that there is little hope of a successful issue along the old line of approach. And even if there was some temporary arrangement, this could not last or be capable of dealing with the urgent problems of the day. The all-India strikes that are taking place are evidence of the tension in the country and the accumulation of many problems whose solution has been postponed for so long. Only a strong government with clear objectives can deal with this situation effectively. Such a government cannot be formed in the manner suggested.

You have referred to the letter you wrote to Maulana Azad on 30th May regarding the status of the interim government. The assurances[3] you gave then were very far from satisfying us, but in our urgent desire to find a way out, we did not raise any further objections on this score. You will remember that we have all along attached the greatest importance to what we have called the 'independence in action' of the provisional government. This meant that the government should have perfect freedom and that the Governor General should function as a constitutional head only. Anything else would be more or less a copy of the Executive Council with, of course, some obvious differences.

It is on the basis of this 'independence in action', and on this basis only, that a satisfactory approach to the problem can be made. Once this is acknowledged and admitted you will find, I think, that other relatively minor issues do not offer much difficulty. That acknowledgment would affect even the formation of the government. It would not be proper then for the Governor General to select representatives of the minorities, as you have suggested in your letter.

This question of the status and powers of the provisional interim government has, therefore, to be decided first in unambiguous language.

3. The Viceroy promised that he would give the greatest possible freedom to the interim government within the constitution in the exercise of the day-to-day administration of the country.

That status does not mean some kind of vague international status but internally — the functioning at home as an independent government though with certain inevitable drawbacks due to the existing circumstances.

I am not writing to you about the other matters[4] mentioned in your letter as those can only be considered after the status and powers have been finally and satisfactorily decided. But I shall have much to say about other matters also at a later stage.

In view of what I have written above, I am wholly unable to cooperate in the formation of a government as suggested by you. So far as I know the mind of the Congress they would want the political independence issue settled before they can enter any government.

I am going to Kashmir tomorrow morning. On the 29th I shall be passing through Delhi on my way to Allahabad. On the 8th August and subsequent days we are having a meeting of the Congress Working Committee at Wardha.[5]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. One important matter was that the Viceroy would welcome a convention, as offered by the Congress, that major communal issues could be decided only by the assent of both major parties.
5. Wavell did not reply to this letter but proposed to discuss matters with Jawaharlal. Pethick-Lawrence agreed that Wavell should see Jawaharlal, but suggested that if agreement could not be reached the Congress and the Muslim League might be asked to send representatives to London to discuss the position. Wavell also would participate in the talks.

33. To A. K. Azad[1]

New Delhi
22 July 1946

My dear Maulana,

I enclose some papers. There are two letters[2] I have addressed to the Congress premiers and correspondence with the Viceroy. These papers will speak for themselves.

1. J.N. Collection.
2. See letters of 22 July 1946, *ante*, item 31 and *post*, section 7.

I mentioned the Sind muddle to the Viceroy and he said that many mistakes have been committed there partly by the Governor, chiefly by the Speaker. He was trying to have an early session of the assembly there, but the month of *Ramzan* came in the way. Jairamdas asked my opinion as to what they should do and I have telegraphed to him that the 31 members who are against grouping should say so in writing and demand an early session of the legislature, also a chance for a vote of no-confidence.

About the Sikhs, the Viceroy said that he would gladly give them a chance by having another election. He was waiting for them to ask him for it.

It is important that we have a meeting of the Working Committee soon. The earliest date suitable to Gandhiji is the 8th August at Wardha. I have wired to you accordingly.

I drew the Viceroy's attention to the Europeans voting in the U.P. and told him this might lead to the election being challenged and invalidated.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

34. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

New Delhi
22 July 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,
I am sending you a sheaf of papers. Copy of two letters which I have addressed to the Congress Premiers. Copies of letter from Viceroy and my answer. Letter with its enclosure from Colonel Gill (of the I.N.A.). Copy of a letter to Gopinath Bardoloi.

About the Sikh position, I have definitely told Gill to approach you and he has agreed to do so. The kind of assurances he wants from the Congress have partly been given by you and me, and for the rest I do not think, especially at the present moment, that it will be desirable for us to make any public statements. However, it is for you to judge. I have met Partap Singh Kairon also and heard his tale of woe. He showed me

1. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence 1945-50*, Vol. 3, pp. 258-260.

the telegram you have sent him. About Gill, I am afraid that he is totally inexperienced in political matters and he is thinking only of Panthic unity. He is very able and he created a good impression upon me, but he has a reputation for unreliability.

I saw the Viceroy today and we talked about a variety of subjects. About Sikhs, he was perfectly prepared to give them another chance of election, but somebody must approach him and ask him for it. I asked him as to who was to approach him. He wasn't quite clear as he said there were so many groups among the Sikhs. Anyway, he is quite willing to fix another election up and I believe he has written to the Governor about it. I am likely to see some people in Lahore on my way to Kashmir. I shall mention this fact to them. You can also take such steps as you consider proper.

I spoke to the Viceroy about Sind also. He agreed that many mistakes have been made, but he cast the blame more on the Speaker than on Mudie. However, he said that he would try to have an early session of the Sind Assembly arranged. His only difficulty was, he said, the month of *Ramzan*.

I had a telegram from Jairamdas today asking what they should do. He said that a majority of the members of the Assembly were prepared to declare themselves in writing against grouping. I have suggested to him that these members should so declare themselves and ask for an early session of the assembly for this purpose as well as for a no-confidence motion against the provincial government.

You will see what I have written to the Congress Premiers. I need not add anything to it.

The Viceroy's letter and my reply to it will speak for themselves. I think we should have an early meeting of the Working Committee to consider all these vital problems before us. I wired to Bapu inquiring what date and place would suit him. He has said Wardha after 7 August. So I am thinking of fixing 8 August at Wardha.

The Expert Committee has done some good preliminary work here. Munshi will tell you about it. I am thinking of calling the next meeting of this committee in Bombay on 12 August immediately after the Working Committee.

My provisional programme is: Kashmir 24th to 27th or 28th, then back to Allahabad *via* Delhi reaching Allahabad on the 30th. I shall remain there for a few days and then go to Wardha.

I am writing to Maulana Azad also in regard to some of the subjects mentioned above and sending him copies of my correspondence with the Viceroy. I am not sending these or mentioning anything about them

POSSIBILITIES FOR INTERIM GOVERNMENT, 13 JUNE 1946

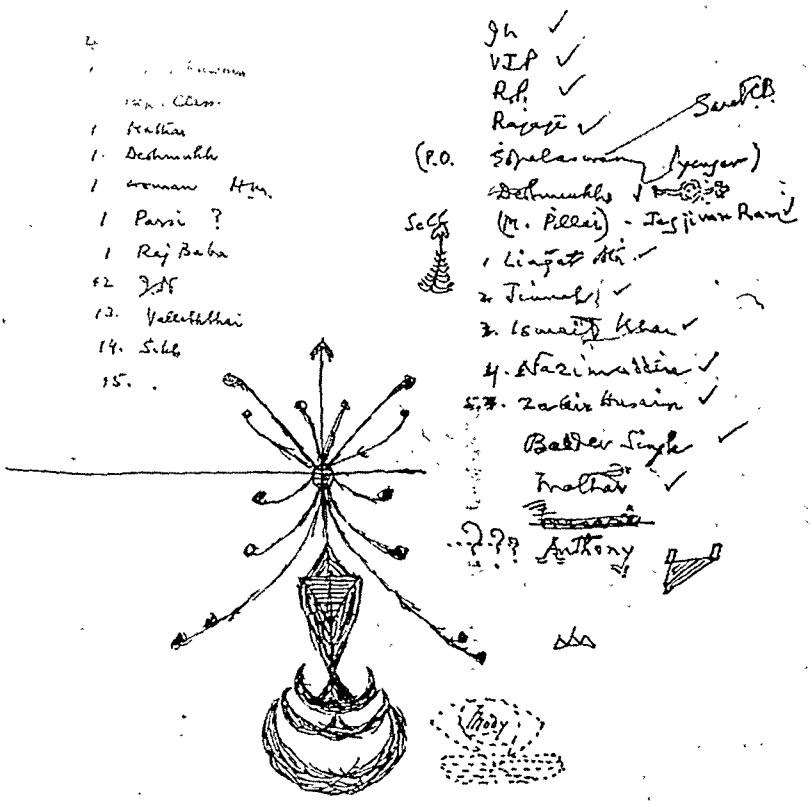

POSSIBILITIES FOR INTERIM GOVERNMENT, 13 JUNE 1946

to anyone else. You will, of course, when you have the chance, show them to Bapu.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

35. Sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly[1]

Question: What is your reaction to the Muslim League's resolution[2] to withdraw its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's proposals?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The full resolution would have to be studied before any comment could be made. I reiterate the sovereign nature of the constituent assembly — a view which has been challenged by the Muslim League. The constituent assembly would not be sovereign in the sense of an established power. A regiment could be sent to put it down. What is meant by a sovereign constituent assembly is that no outside authority can interfere with its decisions. It will be a body with which the British Government cannot interfere.

When this question was put to the Cabinet Mission in our correspondence with it, the Cabinet Mission agreed to our interpretation on two conditions — firstly the protection of the minorities and a treaty between England and India. As regards the solution of the minority problem, that is our lookout and not of Britain. As regards a treaty, the very idea is based on the conception that there shall be a free and independent India and we cannot admit that a treaty shall be dictated to India rather than being freely entered into by a sovereign India. That is where the sovereignty of the constituent assembly counts.

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 29 July 1946. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 30 July and *The Hindu*, 31 July 1946.
2. In a resolution on 29 July 1946, the Muslim League Council complained of a breach of faith with it by Wavell in respect of the negotiations for the setting up of an interim government and noted that the speeches of the Congress leaders, especially Jawaharlal's press conference on 10 July 1946, signified Congress non-acceptance of "any of the terms of the fundamentals of the scheme". The council, therefore, resolved to withdraw "its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's proposals". In a second resolution, the League council alleged that "the Congress is bent upon setting up caste Hindu Raj.... with the connivance of the British", and stated its conviction "that now the time has come for the Muslim nation to resort to direct action to achieve Pakistan."

Q: Does the State Paper support the interpretation of sovereignty?

JN: In certain places the document itself is self-contradictory, but there are in it certain basic provisions. If certain secondary provisions contradict the primary provisions then the primary provisions should have first place. Ultimately the interpretation of any such point is not that of the Congress or of the League, but what the document itself says.

Q: Who, do you think, will be the final arbitrator of this?

JN: I think it will be the chairman of the constituent assembly and the Federal Court.

36. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal[1]

I saw Nehru today. He was friendly but subdued. I then said the resolution of the Muslim League had changed the situation since we last met. I said that it was most unfortunate, but I thought that Nehru must recognise that what the League had done was partly reaction from the rather intemperate statements made by some of the Congress leaders since the meeting of the A.I.C.C. in Bombay; I referred in particular to his own unguarded language in his interview with the press after that meeting. I said that it would be most unfortunate if we did not succeed in getting the Muslim League to join in the constituent assembly, since obviously it would be impossible to frame a complete constitution without the Muslims. I said that Congress now had a chance of showing real statesmanship and of giving the Muslim League assurances that would bring them into the constituent assembly. Nehru said that he agreed that it would be most unfortunate if the Muslim League did not enter the constituent assembly, but he did not quite see what assurances could be given to them; they certainly could not be given an assurance of Pakistan. I said that the principal grievance of the League against the Congress leaders made them believe that it was not intended to give the Group system, on the basis of which the Muslim League had agreed to join, a fair chance. I referred specially to the Congress reservations in their acceptance of the statement of May 16. Nehru said that the Muslim League had also made reservations. I pointed out that these were

1. Delhi, 30 July 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 144-146.

long-term reservations, on a possible Pakistan a number of years ahead; whereas the Congress reservations were short-term ones and affected the immediate issue.

Nehru then began on the legal interpretation of various articles and sentences in the statement of May 16, such as have already been well ventilated. I said that I was neither a lawyer nor a politician but a plain man and I knew what the intentions were of the people who drew up this document, and it seemed to me to be pure casuistry to try and force different interpretations out of it. Nehru merely said that there were points in the document which would have to be interpreted, and that the Congress had intended to refer these to the Federal Court, not just to force them through by weight of votes.

He then asked what was going to be done about the constituent assembly now that the Muslim League had declined to participate. I said that obviously it was impossible to make a constitution for India without the participation of the Muslims. We were pledged to go ahead as far as possible with any party that accepted the statement of May 16, but that I did not see how, without the Muslims, we could get much farther than a constitution for the "A" Group provinces. Nehru then said that the intention of Congress had been to form a committee of all parties at the first meeting of the constituent assembly, to discuss the implications of the central subjects, not to extend them, in order to give the groups some sort of basis on which to work. He instanced the matter of foreign loans, i.e., would provinces be entitled to raise their own loans abroad independently, or would there be some general policy based on the credit of India as a whole.

Nehru went on to refer to the making of the American constitution. He said that if the British went there would be a vacuum which would have to be filled. We discussed the framing of the American constitution for a little, and he said that his point was that if it was clear that things were going to go ahead the Muslim League would be forced to come in and take part; the fatal thing would be if they were given to believe that they could hold matters up indefinitely by intransigence.

37. The Wave of Revolution[1]

I am sorry about the Muslim League's decision to withdraw its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's statement of May 16, as also the method in

1. Address to students of Allahabad University, 1 August 1946. From the *National Herald*, 2 August 1946.

which it has expressed it. But I am not worried about the decision and I assure you that you need not be worried. The country cannot remain where it is today; it has to march towards independence.

India is bound to attain its independence. No one can stop it. The decision of the League, or such other matters, may delay the dawn of independence, but it cannot stop it.

When we ask the British to go we hope to solve our problems ourselves, together with the League, in the constituent assembly, without their intervention. Instead of coming into the assembly for the mutual settlement, the League asks the British to stay.

The Congress has undoubtedly a majority in the constituent assembly.[2] But it does not mean that it will overlook the interests of the minorities. It cannot act in a selfish way. But even supposing that it does, we could have fought, we could have quarrelled together and solved these problems.

I congratulate the elder statesmen in the Muslim League on their decision to renounce British titles. I will not make any detailed comments on the League's reversal of its Delhi decision as the Congress Working Committee, at its meeting in Wardha, will consider the matter.

I reiterate my assertion that we cannot solve our problems unless the constituent assembly has sovereign status. I make it clear that by the sovereignty of the assembly I mean that there is to be no interference by the British Government in the assembly's work or its decisions. It will not be the sovereignty of one party inside the assembly over the other.

The Congress could never have decided to go into the constituent assembly if the assembly had not this sovereign status. The Cabinet Mission has accepted the sovereignty of the assembly subject to settlement on two matters — treaty between India and Britain and the question of minorities. Of course, there will have to be a treaty between India and Britain for the transfer of power, and the minorities question will have to be suitably settled.

The current wave of strikes and hartals in the country is an indication of the rottenness of the British administration. The strikes are like boils and ulcers in the administration of the British Government which have been here always, but are now ripe and are bursting out. It is beyond the power of the British Government to cure them. The wave of *inquilab* has touched everything now and it is for Indians themselves to solve their problems.

2. In the elections to the constituent assembly held between 11 and 22 July 1946, the Congress got 201 of the 210 general seats while the Muslim League obtained all but 5 of the 78 seats reserved for Muslims.

But if the British Government thinks that it can put clauses or dictate how this subject of a treaty or how the question of minorities should be settled, the Congress will not accept it, for that will affect the sovereign status of the assembly.

We cannot solve our problems unless the constituent assembly has a sovereign status. By the sovereign status, we remove the third party which is coming in the way of solving our problems. My idea of the sovereign status of the constituent assembly is that there will be no interference by the British Government. We will sit together without this intervention in the assembly, and mutually settle our problems.

I feel that a few isolated measures cannot solve the present strike wave. The whole economic standard of the country has to be raised and a balance to be maintained between the lowest and the highest. This can only be done when the country becomes independent and it has its own means of raising money and balancing the standards of different sections of the community.

I disapprove the policy of those who are criticising the Congress decision to go into the constituent assembly.[3] I feel that a time comes when every man or organisation has to shoulder responsibility. The only thing to be considered at this time is that none should be wrongly caught in it.

The Congress, after mature thinking and in accordance with the wishes of the country, has decided to go into the constituent assembly. The step has been taken. It is useless, therefore, now to criticise this step. Everyone in the country should now strengthen the Congress and see that it treads on the right path and is not misled.

3. The left wing of the Congress, led by Jayaprakash Narayan, refused to stand for the constituent assembly, which they denounced as a British fabrication.

38. To Govind Ballabh Pant[1]

Allahabad
4 August 1946

My dear Pantji,

Swarup has given me your letter of the 3rd. The Central Provinces Speaker has sent me a copy of the letter of delegation he is issuing to the members elected for the constituent assembly. I enclose a copy of this for your information as well as Tandonji's.

1. J.N. Collection. Extracts.

I think it is not very proper for Damodar Swarup and others of the C.S.P. to resign from the constituent assembly after election. However, that is for them to decide. For the present there is no method of filling a vacancy. This will be one of the first items to be tackled by the constituent assembly itself.

You say that the conduct of Srivastava and the European Group cannot be overlooked. I agree, but exactly what can be done in the matter? I suppose the election can be challenged in the constituent assembly itself. Will that challenge upset the whole of the U.P. election or can it be confined? Can the Speaker here take any steps? I do not know that all this is worth inquiry.

I am sorry the Working Committee meeting has overlapped your Assembly session. The way to Wardha is difficult and takes a lot of time. I do not know how you are going....

The Working Committee has a tremendous deal of work to do, and being a new Committee it may take a little more time than usual. I shall try my best to proceed in a business-like manner. But the questions before us are deep and intricate.

I have written separately to you and you will receive several other letters from me in an envelope.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

39. The Future of the Nagas[1]

It is obvious that the Naga territory in eastern Assam is much too small to stand by itself, politically or economically. It lies between two huge countries, India and China, and part of it consists of rather backward people, who require considerable help. When India is independent, as it is bound to be soon, it is not possible for the British Government to hold the Naga territory or any part of it. They would be isolated there between India and China.

1. Jawaharlal's letter to Sashi Sier, President of the Naga Hills National Council, who met him in Allahabad on 4 August 1946 and discussed the future of the Naga Hills territory in eastern Assam. Printed in the *National Herald*, 6 August 1946.

Inevitably, therefore, this Naga territory must form part of India and of Assam with which it has developed such close association.

At the same time, it is our policy that tribal areas should have as much freedom and autonomy as possible so that they can live their own lives according to their own customs and desires. Thus, the solution would be that the Naga territory should be an integral part of India and of Assam with a measure of autonomy for its own purposes. How this should be worked out is a matter for further consideration between the peoples concerned. So far as I can see, there is no reason why there should be any excluded area apart from the rest of India.

The whole Naga territory should go together and should be controlled, in a large measure, by an elected Naga national council. At the same time, the Nagas should have representation in the Assam provincial assembly and should participate fully in the life of the province.

I am glad that the Naga National Council stands for the solidarity of all the Naga tribes, including those who live in the so-called unadministered territory. I agree entirely with your decision that the Naga Hills should constitutionally be included in an autonomous Assam in a free India with local autonomy and due safeguards for the interests of the Nagas. As for separate electorates for the Nagas, I am not clear in my mind as to how this will work. Generally speaking, we are against separate electorates as these limit and injure a small group by keeping it separated from the rest of the nation. But, if the Naga territory is given a measure of autonomy, some arrangement will have to be made for their proper representation.

As you know, the Congress is opposed to any forcible grouping of Assam with Bengal. We are of the opinion that this is a matter for each province to decide. Assam has already expressed its opinion on the subject. What the future will be I cannot say. I cannot conceive of Assam being compelled against its will to form a group with Bengal.

An advisory committee will be elected by the constituent assembly. It should have representatives of the tribal areas, and I hope that the tribal territories of Assam will be directly represented on it. The findings and decisions of the advisory committee will probably not be finally binding upon the constituent assembly, but they are bound to carry great weight. I imagine the findings will be accepted almost in their entirety unless they go against some direct provision in the constitution.

As I have said above, the excluded areas should be incorporated with the other areas. It may be that certain special provisions for their protection and development are made. I should like them to be treated as part of the entire Naga territory. I see no reason whatever why an extraneous judicial system should be enforced upon the Naga Hills. They

should have perfect freedom to continue their village panchayats, tribal courts etc., according to their own wishes. Indeed, it is our wish that the judicial system of India should be revised, giving a great deal of power to village panchayats.

About the unadministered territory which still contains, according to you, a number of head-hunters, I cannot definitely say when and in what manner it should be brought into the province. That is to be decided in consultation with the people concerned. Naturally, some special provision will have to be made to develop these people.

The question of common language must also be finally decided by the Nagas themselves. The only two possible languages which would be helpful to them are Assamese or Hindustani. Most of them know Assamese already. I think it would be desirable to encourage Hindustani as this will bring them in touch with the various changes and developments taking place in India.

Assam is still largely undeveloped, and there is plenty of room for agricultural, horticultural and industrial development. This development should be so organised as to benefit the people of the soil. Certainly, the people of the Naga Hills should not be exploited by others, and their right to own and work on the soil should remain with them. We would be entirely against the development of large estates owned by outsiders there. What form the land ownership should take, whether it should be communal, cooperative or a kind of a peasant proprietorship, should be determined in consultation with the people concerned.

I might add that I am specially interested in these tribal areas not only in the north-east of India but in the north-west as well as the centre. They present different problems. I hope that in an independent India there will be a special department, both in the Centre and in the provinces concerned, for the protection and advancement of tribal areas. I do not want them to be swamped by people from other parts of the country, who might go there to exploit them to their own advantage.

40. The Sikhs and the Constituent Assembly[1]

The Working Committee have learnt with regret of the decision of the Sikhs not to seek election to the constituent assembly. The Committee

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal and passed by the Working Committee at Wardha on 9 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 25/1946, p. 151, N.M.M.L.

are aware that injustice has been done to the Sikhs and they have drawn the attention of the Cabinet delegation to it. They are however strongly of opinion that the Sikhs would serve their cause and the cause of the country's freedom better by participation in the constituent assembly than by keeping out of it. The Committee therefore appeal to the Sikhs to reconsider their decision and express their willingness to take part in the constituent assembly. The Working Committee assure the Sikhs that the Congress will give them all possible support in removing their legitimate grievances and in securing adequate safeguards for the protection of their just interests in the Punjab.[2]

2. In response to this resolution, the Sikh Panthic Board decided on 14 August 1946 to accept the Cabinet Mission's statement of 16 May 1946 and advised the Sikh M.L.A.s to elect their representatives to the constituent assembly. But as there was no provision in the Cabinet Mission plan for by-elections, these elections did not take place until much later.

41. Freedom in a Year[1]

In another year, we will be free. The Quit India Resolution adopted four years ago remains to be fulfilled, but I am sure that within a short time, India will achieve its independence, because of its inherent strength and the force of world circumstances.

The next two years will be most critical and, to meet the situation, whatever it might be, there should be a united effort. Despite differing individual views, or the views of groups, all should pull together and carry out the decisions of the Congress. That way lies salvation. Without the strength of the people, their cooperation and coordinated efforts, Swaraj cannot be won, and even if freedom comes, it cannot be maintained.

Many problems await solution, economic, social, and communal. I deplore the claims made by various communities for their own welfare and benefit, thus forgetting the larger interests of the country as a whole.

I do not think that the decision of the Muslim League reveals a correct attitude. The League has now adopted the same policy which the

1. Address to a meeting held in observance of August Nine, Wardha, 9 August 1946. From *The Hindu*, 11 August 1946.

Congress adopted 26 years ago. But the League is not following the Congress policy in its fundamentals, but merely copying it in certain respects. We shall not be disturbed by threats of violence or frightening speeches.

We may have to face the threat. It is possible the League might change its approach. Whether it is the League or the British, we must be prepared to face the situation.

I pay my tribute to those who died in the August movement in 1942.

42. To Lord Wavell[1]

Personal and Secret

Wardha
August 10, 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Thank you for your letter of August 6th which reached me on the evening of August 8th.

I have consulted my Committee and Mr. Gandhi in regard to the proposal[2] you have made, with the concurrence of the British Government, to entrust the formation of the provisional national government to me as President of the Congress. I have accepted the advice of my colleagues to undertake this responsibility, and I am, therefore, in a position to place before you our proposals for the formation of this government. I may say at once that my Committee and myself have in mind a government which will consist of good representatives of the main elements in India.

We would have welcomed the formation of a coalition government with the Muslim League. But, in view of the resolution adopted by and the statement[3] recently made on behalf of the Muslim League it

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 218-219.
2. Wavell invited Jawaharlal to make proposals for the immediate formation of an interim government on the basis of the assurances given in his letter of 30 May 1946 to Maulana Azad. He sent a copy of his letter to Mahatma Gandhi with the hope that he would use his "great influence to secure the acceptance by the Congress Working Committee of my proposal."

is not possible to expect that they will agree to cooperate at this stage. Any premature attempt to induce them to do so might produce a contrary result. Such an attempt will inevitably become public and result in communal controversy and further delay which you rightly deprecate.

It seems to us that the best course is for you to make a public announcement to the effect that you have invited the President of the Congress to form the provisional government and that he has accepted your invitation. It will then be possible for us to approach the Muslim League and invite its cooperation. We shall welcome that cooperation but, if this is denied us, we shall be prepared to go ahead without it.

I shall gladly meet you to discuss this matter further. I expect to be in Wardha so long as our Working Committee lasts. Probably I shall go to Bombay for some important engagements on the 14th evening and spend some days there. My address in Bombay is 20 Carmichael Road.

I am sending this letter through the Governor of the Central Provinces.[4]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Wavell replied on 12 August 1946 that he would announce: "The Viceroy with the approval of His Majesty's Government has invited the President of the Congress to make proposals for the immediate formation of an interim government and the President of the Congress has accepted the invitation. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru will shortly visit New Delhi to discuss his proposals with the Viceroy". He added, "I have no doubt that when my announcement is made you will wish to indicate publicly your desire to secure in the interests of the country a fully representative coalition government."

43. To Henry Twynam[1]

Wardha
August 10, 1946

Dear Sir Henry,[2]

I am sending you, enclosed with this letter, a cover addressed to H.E. Lord Wavell, New Delhi. I shall be grateful to you if you could kindly

1. J.N. Collection.
2. Henry Twynam (1887-1966); entered Indian Civil Service, 1909; Governor of the Central Provinces and Berar, 1940-46.

Congress adopted 26 years ago. But the League is not following the Congress policy in its fundamentals, but merely copying it in certain respects. We shall not be disturbed by threats of violence or frightening speeches.

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3. On 29 July 1946, after the Muslim League resolved to launch direct action on 16 August 1946, Jinnah declared: "Never have we in the whole history of the League done anything except by constitutional means and by constitutionalism. But now...we bid goodbye to constitutional methods." In negotiations with the Cabinet Mission the British Government and the Congress had each held a pistol in its hand, the one of authority and arms, the other of mass struggle and noncooperation. "Today we have also forged a pistol and are in a position to use it."

is not possible to expect that they will agree to cooperate at this stage. Any premature attempt to induce them to do so might produce a contrary result. Such an attempt will inevitably become public and result in communal controversy and further delay which you rightly deprecate.

It seems to us that the best course is for you to make a public announcement to the effect that you have invited the President of the Congress to form the provisional government and that he has accepted your invitation. It will then be possible for us to approach the Muslim League and invite its cooperation. We shall welcome that cooperation but, if this is denied us, we shall be prepared to go ahead without it.

I shall gladly meet you to discuss this matter further. I expect to be in Wardha so long as our Working Committee lasts. Probably I shall go to Bombay for some important engagements on the 14th evening and spend some days there. My address in Bombay is 20 Carmichael Road.

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have this sent to the Viceroy as speedily as possible. This letter is in answer to a communication received by me here from Lord Wavell. It was his desire that our correspondence should be kept secret. I have therefore taken the liberty to trouble you in this matter as no doubt you can make the necessary arrangements for both secrecy and expeditious despatch.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

44. Telegram to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy[1]

13 August 1946

I have received two messages from the Viceroy for which I thank him. I am agreeable to his making announcement suggested. I am afraid it is difficult for me to go to Delhi straight from Wardha. I have to be here till the evening of August 14th. After that I should like to go to Bombay at least for a day or two. I can try to fly to Delhi from Bombay at the earliest on the August 16th but preferably on August 17th.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, p. 225.

45. Desire for Muslim League's Cooperation[1]

As has been announced by the Viceroy, I have been invited by him, in my capacity as President of the Congress, to make proposals for the immediate formation of an interim government. In consultation with my colleagues, I have accepted this invitation.

It is our desire to have as representative a provisional national government as possible so that we may unitedly face the great problems that confront the country and lead India rapidly to full independence.

We would welcome the cooperation of the Muslim League in forming

1. Statement to the press, Wardha, 13 August 1946. From *National Herald*, 14 August 1946.

a coalition government, and I am, therefore, writing to Mr. Jinnah on this subject.

46. To M.A. Jinnah[1]

August 13, 1946

Dear Mr. Jinnah,

As you know, the Viceroy has invited me, in my capacity as President of the Congress, to make proposals for the immediate formation of the interim government. I have accepted the invitation. I feel that my first step should be to approach you and seek your cooperation in the formation of a coalition provisional government. It is naturally our desire to have as representative a government as possible. Should you wish to discuss this matter further with me, before coming to a decision, I shall gladly see you in Bombay or wherever you may be. I am leaving Wardha on August 14 and will reach Bombay in the forenoon of August 15. Probably I shall leave Bombay for Delhi on the morning of August 17.[2]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. The *Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 237-238.
2. Jinnah replied on 15 August 1946 that if the proposal meant that the Viceroy had commissioned Jawaharlal to form the Executive Council and he had already agreed to accept and act upon the Viceroy's advice it was not possible for him (Jinnah) to accept such a position on that basis. He added: "If you have to meet me on behalf of the Congress to settle the Hindu-Muslim question and resolve the serious deadlock, I shall be glad to see you today at 6 p.m."

47. Telegram to the Prime Minister of Bengal[1]

Wardha
13.8.46

Have received trade union reports that Muslim League workers organizing Labour strike sixteenth August and intimidating others to join. Sug-

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

gest your making clear that any strike purely voluntary and there must be no compulsion or intimidation.[2]

Jawaharlal Nehru

2. In fact, Suhrawardy had declared 16 August a public holiday, a dangerous step to take when communal passions were inflamed. He had said that "if the Congress were put into power, the result would be the declaration of complete independence by Bengal and the setting up of a parallel government."

48. To M. A. Jinnah[1]

August 15, 1946

Dear Mr. Jinnah,

Thank you for your letter of today's date which was delivered to me at about 1 p.m.

Nothing has transpired between me and the Viceroy except what has already been published. There is no arrangement other than what is contained in his brief offer and our acceptance. That offer, made by the Viceroy with the concurrence of the British Government, is for us to make proposals for the immediate formation of an interim government. The Executive Council of the Governor-General has not been mentioned as such. It is understood, as stated in the published correspondence between the Congress President and the Viceroy, that the interim government will have the greatest possible freedom in the exercise of the day-to-day administration of this country.

Since this brief offer was made, and we accepted it, I have had no opportunity to meet the Viceroy, or discuss the matter with him more fully. I hope to do so within the next two or three days. It was our wish, however, that I might approach you first and invite your cooperation. We are naturally anxious to form a government which will be as representative as possible in order to deal with the urgent problems facing this country.

In your letter you state that you are unable to accept the position as it appears to you. I regret this. Perhaps, on fuller consideration of the position, you would be agreeable to reconsider your decision. If

1. *The Transfer of Power* 1942-7, Vol. VIII, pp. 237-238.

so, we would welcome it. For this purpose I shall gladly see you, if you so desire.

As regards the general Hindu-Muslim question, we are always prepared to discuss this and try to find a way out. Just at present we are immediately concerned with the formation of the provisional government, and circumstances demand that early steps should be taken in regard to it. We hope that a coalition provisional government will itself help in the reconsideration and solution of our problems. While I am willing to discuss the larger question with you, I have no new suggestions to make. Perhaps you may be able to suggest a new approach.

I am prepared to come to your place at 6 p.m. this evening, or if it is more convenient to you, some time tomorrow. I am leaving Bombay on the morning of August 17.

My letter to you was not sent to the press. I made a brief statement to the press, however, in view of repeated questions put to me by newspapermen, and in order to prevent misconceptions, if you so desire, you can release all this correspondence to the press.[2]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Jinnah replied on the same day: "I have already made my position clear in my letter dated 15th August. But as you have given certain explanations, with some of which I must not be taken to agree, and as you desire to meet me, I shall be glad to see you today at 6 p.m."

49. Muslim League's Refusal of Cooperation[1]

The Muslim League President, Mr Jinnah, has declined to offer his party's cooperation to the Congress in the formation of an immediate provisional national government.[2]

The Congress will go ahead with the formation of the provisional government, subject, of course, to other conditions being satisfactory after my interview with the Viceroy tomorrow.

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 16 August 1946. From *The Hindu*, 17 August 1946.
2. Jawaharlal and Jinnah had a fruitless discussion in Bombay on 15 August 1946. After the meeting Jinnah said: "There will be no more meetings between me and Pandit Nehru."

I shall not go into all the details of the present position, but would frankly take the public into my confidence as far as events have progressed so far.

A few days ago, I received a communication from the Viceroy, when I was at Wardha, which stated that, in concurrence with the decision of the British Government, he proposed to ask me, as President of the Congress, to make proposals for the formation of an interim government. It is a fairly simple communication and there is nothing more or less than what I have stated. What that communication implies, it is for you to draw your own conclusions.

The Congress Working Committee decided to inform the Viceroy that I would be prepared to make proposals for the formation of the interim government. I had no other communication with the Viceroy in regard to this matter, apart from the one mentioned just now.

The position, today, is somewhat vague, though undoubtedly, the announcements made on behalf of the Viceroy and on our behalf do make a considerable advance. When I saw the Viceroy[3] last, at Delhi, there was no talk nor mention of this interim government. Some people imagine that there was some kind of secret understanding between the Congress and the Viceroy in regard to this matter, but I say there is nothing of the kind.

The present offer to the Congress to form the interim government does make a difference. The Viceroy has made a new kind of approach. There is a psychological difference. Unlike the previous occasions, we are now asked to form the entire government, no doubt with the cooperation of others, but taking the responsibility for it. Now it is not a question of individuals being picked and chosen by an external authority. May be, all this ends in our being caught in a trap, may be, that it leads us much further in the direction we want to go. We should eliminate all the obstructions in our way. But, in any case, we have to be very wary.

Meanwhile, the Working Committee thought it desirable that we should do our utmost to gain the cooperation of all, and, more especially the League, in forming the government.[4] There are obviously considerable differences in outlook, approach and objectives between the

3. See *ante*, item 36.
4. On 8 August 1946, the Congress Working Committee decided to accept the invitation to Jawaharlal to form the interim government. The Committee also appealed to the Muslim League to join in the task of constitution-making and reiterated that the Congress had accepted the British scheme "in its entirety" and had reserved all questions of interpretation to be decided according to the procedure laid down in the statement of 16 May 1946.

Congress and the Muslim League. It would have been rather futile to imagine that all those differences would suddenly vanish. Nevertheless, we did hope that, our differences apart, we might still be able to co-operate and, possibly, the process of cooperation might help in resolving those differences.

We had, as usual, a friendly talk. Mr. Jinnah put forward the Muslim League's case which everyone is well acquainted with. In brief, he criticised both the so-called long-term and short-term plans. Mr. Jinnah felt that the latest resolution of the Congress Working Committee did not differ much from the previous stand taken by the Congress. Perhaps he was right.

I regret that my meeting with Mr. Jinnah yesterday did not bring the Congress and the Muslim League politically nearer to one another. For the present, I can say nothing more except that I am going to Delhi tomorrow. I shall meet the Viceroy and we shall discuss the question of the formation of the interim government further. The fact that we have agreed to make proposals does obviously put certain responsibilities on us. It takes us many steps further. We have taken this decision with a full sense of the responsibility and not in any light-hearted manner because, obviously, all manner of consequences may follow.

I would like you to realise that there are possibly many hurdles still and not to imagine, as some do, that there is no further difficulty left about the formation of the provisional government. It may well be formed or there may still be some obstruction or difficulty.

Question : Will the interim government be a free government?

Jawaharlal Nehru : I make it clear that the Congress has accepted the Viceroy's offer to form the interim government which will not be merely the Executive Council, but a free government.

In a strict legal sense, there will be no change as regards the Viceroy's position, but, in practice, I trust, he will be a kind of constitutional head. If unfortunately the Viceroy exercised his veto, it would lead to trouble. In fact, it cannot be exercised. If he does, it would have major consequences.

Q : Will there arise a conflict between the interim government and the constituent assembly?

JN: The question of certification of any bill by the Viceroy will not arise inasmuch as there cannot be a conflict between the government and the assembly. I cannot conceive of such a conflict because any provisional government must carry the central assembly with it. If it does not, that government must go.

In fact the provisional government should function as though it is responsible to the Central Assembly, such as it is. It is obvious that the whole provisional government will be a different set-up, psychologically, and will approach both domestic and international problems from a different point of view. While so doing, it is conceivable that it may come into conflict with British authority in England or elsewhere. At present, one cannot say anything specific in regard to this matter.

Q: If the Congress formed the interim government without the Muslim League's cooperation and the League started some kind of direct action, would it not lead to the Congress being used to put down the League?

JN: If the League starts some kind of direct action, obviously the government will face that direct action—either come to terms with it or oppose it. There is no other course. If the government is strong, direct action goes under, but if the government is weak, the government will go under.

Q: What would be the attitude of the provisional government towards the Indian States?

JN: The States, as such, do not come within the scope of the provisional government except in regard to many common problems between the States and the rest of India. But obviously such a government, apart from the common problems, will be intensely interested in the formation of democratic governments in the States and it will try to further that end.

The decision of the Congress Working Committee to form the interim government was a vital decision and yet, perhaps, an inevitable decision in the sense that it follows a certain chain of happenings. From the Congress point of view, it was certainly a novel step. That step could not be taken normally without previous reference to the All India Congress Committee and in any event that reference will have to be made and the final decision will rest with that committee. At the same time, we felt that it would not be right for us to postpone action, in the light of happenings both in this country and abroad.

The Congress decision to agree to form the interim government involves many other consequences, internally, for the Congress. We have given some thought to this but we have not decided upon any definite line of action, since we are not sure whether the acceptance of the Viceroy's offer would lead to something final or not. I might tell you that, even now, we have not finally decided about the details of the proposals we have to make to the Viceroy. Since the Congress joining the provisional government is something entirely new, both for the

Congress and the country, we have to consider what relations our executive should bear to that government and whether any member of the executive could belong to that government. The Working Committee has come to certain conclusions in regard to these matters.

The Working Committee attaches the greatest importance to the internal organisation of the Congress, because it feels that whatever the future may hold for us, the real sanction behind us is the Congress organisation. Therefore, we do our utmost not only to keep it going, but to strengthen it, widen it, make it more disciplined and ready for action, when action may be necessary. Therefore, in considering all these governmental affairs, we have to think all the time of the effect of each such development on the Congress organisation and how we should adapt that organisation to these changing circumstances, so that it may not come into conflict, and yet, the most important thing of all, it should retain its revolutionary outlook. Obviously, some kind of change at the top by itself does not mean much. It may be the precursor of other changes, big and small. It is because we look upon the Viceroy's offer from that point of view that we thought in terms of accepting the Viceroy's offer to form the interim government. Big changes have to come later. The formation of the provisional government and the convening of the constituent assembly are by themselves only initial steps in a certain process. If we think that these steps lead in the right direction, then we take them. But if we think that they may come in our way we must avoid them. We have now come to the conclusion that these two steps, namely the convening of the constituent assembly and the formation of the interim government, will lead us and help us to proceed in the right direction, which will bring about fundamental changes in India. It is because of this that we have decided to go into the constituent assembly as well as, if other things are satisfactory, to form the provisional government.

Naturally when one takes such a step, one wishes for the largest measure of cooperation possible. In spite of all that had happened during the last three or four weeks—many statements, some of them violent and threatening violent action against the Congress—we felt it our duty to make an earnest effort to get that cooperation, not only from the Muslim League, but from others too. That cooperation is being offered to us by almost every group or community in India except, I regret, for the moment, the Muslim League. In the circumstances, however, it is obvious that we cannot stand still because of this unfortunate refusal of cooperation by the Muslim League. So far as we are concerned that door of cooperation will always be open. We shall, what-

ever we may do, always be keeping in view this larger viewpoint and proceed with the largest measure of cooperation.

The country-wide strikes signified a new kind of upheaval in India's economic life. There are other matters, too, which go to show that we must move swiftly or we may have to face greater disasters.

The sending of Indian troops to Iraq is ostensibly for the protection of oil interests there. It is of serious consequence from every point of view, from both international and Indian national points of view. All these developments are happening rapidly and may lead to a more critical crisis and the Congress has naturally to decide how to deal with the situation.

Considering all this, we have, for the present, come to the conclusion that it is desirable for us, subject to further clarification, to accept the Viceroy's offer and make proposals for the formation of the provisional government. We shall do that and what will happen subsequently, I do not know.

Q: Are you likely to go on a foreign visit?

JN: There is no possibility of my going anywhere outside India in the near future, in view of important developments in the country necessitating my presence here.

Q: Are you aware that the Government of India have not recognised the Indonesian Republic in their negotiations for obtaining rice for India?

JN: The present Government of India mean the British Government on the international plane. If they are to recognise the Indonesian Republic it means the British Government will have to break with the Dutch Government. With the incoming provisional government, it will be a different matter.

50. The Great Calcutta Killing[1]

I should not like to say much about the Calcutta disturbances[2] before full facts are available. But this is obvious that what has happened in

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 17 August 1946. *The Hindu*, 19 August 1946.
2. Riot, murder, arson and pillage began on the morning of 16 August and lasted until 20 August 1946. About 5,000 were killed and 15,000 injured. A statement issued by the Government of Bengal on 23 February 1947, six months after the occurrence, stated: "What was not foreseen and what took everybody by surprise including the participants was the intensity of the hatred let loose and the savagery with which both sides killed."

Calcutta can only take place when there is an organised effort to do so. The Provincial Government has no high reputation for competence or anything. Now one is inclined to doubt if it is any government at all. The kind of speeches which have been delivered by the Provincial Ministers in Bengal and Sind exhibit a sense of irresponsibility which is amazing. Obviously, such events as have taken place in Calcutta, deplorable as they are, do not make any major difference to the course of events. What they do is to degrade our public life completely. The future of India or that of any community is not going to be decided by gangster methods. Unfortunately, even a small number of persons can for a while upset the life of the city if proper precautions are not taken. I am sure that the vast majority of Hindus and Muslims in Calcutta must deplore what has happened and must have kept away from it.

51. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal[1]

I asked Nehru about his interview with Jinnah. He said he had had a long and quite amicable discussion but that it did not lead to any result. Jinnah began with a long review of the past negotiations, largely, I gather, on the lines of the letter[2] he wrote me, i.e. that he had been persuaded to accept on the basis of 5: 5: 2, and so on. Nehru said that whatever had happened in the past, it would surely be better for the Muslim League now to come in and cooperate both in the constituent assembly and in the interim government. I gather that Nehru offered him assurances about the conduct of the constituent assembly, that no major communal issue would be settled without a majority of both parties; that Congress would be prepared to refer any disputed points to the decision of the Federal Court; and that while Congress did not like the idea of grouping and preferred autonomous provinces under the Centre, they would not oppose grouping by provinces, if the provinces wished it. Jinnah's attitude appears to have been that nothing should be done for six months, till it was seen how matters developed.

Nehru made him an offer of five seats in an interim government of 14, on the same lines that I had proposed, and said that any names pro-

1. Delhi, 17 August 1946. File No. R/3/1/117, India Office Library and Records, London. This has not been printed in *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII.
2. On 8 June 1946, Jinnah wrote to Wavell: "...you were good enough to give me the assurance that there will be only 12 portfolios, five on behalf of the League, five Congress, one Sikh and one Christian or Anglo-Indian...."

ever we may do, always be keeping in view this larger viewpoint and proceed with the largest measure of cooperation.

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Prasad; Patel and Prasad were already in Delhi, and Azad was expected to arrive this evening. He raised the point that if he gave me names, they would soon become public. I said that I hoped not and that in any event nothing could be final until the names were approved by the King.

He then gave me the following names: Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Rajagopalachari, Nehru himself, Sarat Chandra Bose; but said that if he came in himself (which I think he intends to do), Rajendra Prasad would probably be elected the President instead of him, and he would have to submit a name in his place. I said that I thought Sarat Bose was not up to the calibre of the remainder; but he indicated that for certain reasons it was desirable to have him in.

The Congress scheduled caste representative would be Jagjivan Ram[4].

The names of the minority representatives were: Baldev Singh, Matthai, and Bhabha.[5] The last named is a Parsee, apparently a bank manager in Bombay.

Nehru said that if the Muslim League were not coming in, Congress would prefer 15 members to 14, in which event he would like to add an Anglo-Indian: Anthony.

I then asked him about the Muslims. He gave me a list of about ten names, all of whom, except Asaf Ali, were unknown to me, and, I should judge, nonentities. He told me that he would have proposed Zakir Husain, but that he had sent a message asking that his name should not be submitted. Nehru's names were as follows (I am not sure that I have got the spelling of some of them right): Asaf Ali, Mohammed Yunus[6], a lawyer from Bihar, Saiyadain[7], a Shia, Education

4. (b. 1908); president, All India Depressed Classes League, 1936-46; imprisoned during freedom struggle, 1940-41 and 1942-43; Member for Labour, Interim Government, 1946-47; Union Minister for Labour, 1947-52, for Communications, 1952-56, for Railways, 1956-62, for Communications, 1962-63; resigned, 1963; Union Minister for Labour, 1966, for Food and Agriculture, 1967-70, for Defence, 1970-74, for Agriculture and Irrigation, 1974-77; resigned from Congress, 1977; Minister for Defence in Janata Government, 1977-79; Deputy Prime Minister, 1979.
5. C.H. Bhabha (b. 1910); lecturer, Sydenham College, Bombay, 1932-33; director of many business concerns before joining the Interim Government; Member for Commerce, September-October 1946, for Works, Mines and Power, November 1946, Union Minister for Commerce, 1947-48.
6. Leader of the Independent Muslim Party in Bihar; member, Bihar Provincial Assembly, 1937-39.
7. K.G. Saiyadain (1904-1971); Director of Education, Kashmir, 1938-45; Joint Educational Adviser, Government of India, 1950-54, Additional Secretary, 1954-56, Secretary, 1956-60; author of several books including *Principles of Education, Education for International Understanding,* and *Humanist Tradition in Indian Educational Thought.*

posed by the League would be accepted by Congress. Jinnah asked how the minorities would be nominated; and Nehru said that as he had been asked to make proposals, he would naturally suggest names of minority representatives for the Viceroy's consideration. Jinnah then complained that under the proposed arrangement, it would be open to Congress to nominate a non-League Muslim. Nehru replied that he did not see how the League could object if it came out of the Congress quota. He said that Jinnah then embarked on a long historical review to show that all Muslims must belong to the League.

The discussion seems to have ended by Nehru saying that Congress would always welcome cooperation by the League in the government and constituent assembly, as soon as the League felt disposed to come in.

Nehru said that his impression was that Jinnah had gone rather farther than he had intended and was at a loss how to get out. He says that Jinnah is still in Bombay, and so far as he knows has no intention of coming to Delhi.

I then asked him what his proposals were about the formation of an interim government. He said that the idea was to propose to me the names of six Congress nominees and three minority representatives, and to fill the five Muslim seats with neutral Muslims. I suggested the possibility of leaving them open for a time for acceptance by the Muslim League, but he said that he did not like this idea, as it would give the government the appearance of instability.

I then asked him if he was prepared to submit names to me. He said at first that he could hardly do so until certain matters were settled. I asked him whether he meant the powers of the Government, because H.M.G. could not go any further than the undertaking to Azad.[3] He said that this was not the reason, but that they had not had time to discuss the matter fully, since his interview with Jinnah, and that he was not, therefore, ready with a complete proposal. There was also the difficulty that if he himself came in he could not remain President.

I asked him whether he could give me names provisionally, and he said he was prepared to do so on the understanding that they were not final. He said that after the meeting of the Working Committee at Wardha, they had formed a sub-committee to consider the formation of the interim government, which consisted of Vallabhbhai Patel, Azad and Rajendra

3. In his letter to Maulana Azad on 30 May 1946, Wavell dealt with the demand of the Congress that there must be a legal and constitutional change to give the interim government the status of a truly national government. Wavell stated that there could be no change in the constitution until a new one was formed but assured him of every possible help and freedom to the new government and promised to refrain from interference in the day-to-day administration.

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Minister in Rampur State, Fakhruddin Ahmed,[8] member of the Congress Working Committee, Ismail,[9] judge or ex-judge of the High Court of Allahabad, Mohammed Jan,[10] a Calcutta merchant, Prof. Habib of Aligarh University, Dr. Abdul Rauf[11] of Allahabad, formerly a Magistrate in Burma, Ali Zaheer, a Shia. He said that a representative of the Momins was desirable if possible but he had no name to suggest.

Generally, I got the impression that Nehru had given very little real thought to it and had just put down the names of any Muslims he knew who were not Leaguers.

I suggested that it might be very difficult for some of these men to accept, as they might be subjected to boycott or worse by the League; and that to put in a lot of rather unrepresentative Muslims might antagonise the League and prevent their coming in at all. I said I would think the matter over.

I then asked him whether he had considered the portfolios. He said not; they could be settled after the names were accepted. I said that the portfolio of the War Member was most important at this time, as it was absolutely essential to keep the army steady. Nehru agreed but said they had not considered who should be War Member. He said that during previous discussions I had mentioned the possibility of giving it to the Sikh representative. I asked whether he had considered some neutral person who would obviously be acceptable, such as the Nawab of Chhatari. He said that he was an honest gentleman with very good manners but had no ability at all. I found it a little difficult to refute this.

I then said that I would consider the names he had put forward for

8. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed (1905-1977); Minister of Finance and Revenue, Assam, 1938-39; imprisoned during freedom struggle, 1940, 1942-45; Advocate-General, Assam, 1946-52; member, Rajya Sabha, 1954-57; Minister of Finance, Law and Community Development, Assam, 1957-66; Minister for Irrigation and Power, Government of India, 1966, for Education, 1966-67, for Industrial Development and Company Affairs, 1969-70, and for Food and Agriculture, 1970-74; President of India, 1974-77.
9. Mohammad Ismail (b. 1884); Judge, Allahabad High Court, 1937-44; Chief Justice, Eastern States High Court, 1944-47; High Commissioner for Pakistan in India, 1948-51; thereafter settled in India till his death.
10. Founder-secretary, All India Muslim Majlis, 1944; opposed Muslim League's demand for partition; member, Bengal Legislative Council, 1952-57 and 1962-67.
11. M.A. Rauf (1904-1964); representative of India in Burma, 1946-47; High Commissioner in Burma, 1947-48; ambassador to Burma, 1948-52 and to Japan, 1952-54; High Commissioner in Canada, 1954-58; ambassador to Belgium, 1958-61 and Switzerland, 1962.

the interim government, and would discuss the matter with him again as soon as possible. He asked how long I thought he would have to remain in Delhi, and I said that I wished to get the matter settled as soon as possible, and hoped that we could arrive at something within the next three days or so.

I then asked him what his views were about the summoning of the constituent assembly. He thought that it should be summoned for about the middle of September. He thought it desirable that the Sikhs should elect their representatives as soon as possible. I said that I had the matter under consideration.

He then asked what arrangement I had in mind for a temporary chairman of the constituent assembly until one could be elected. He said he thought that possibly for the oldest member to act might be a solution. I said that this had also occurred to me, but that it might be rather difficult to find out from several hundred members, an unchallengeable oldest member. He said that S. Sinha[12] of Patna, Vice-Chancellor of the University, who is 77, must surely be the oldest member. An alternative might be the senior High Court Judge who had been elected to the assembly. I said I would consider the matter.

I then asked what views he had about the U.N.O. delegation which had to be settled very shortly. He had not considered the matter, and did not seem to have any ideas. I asked him to think it over and let me know if he had any suggestions to make.

Finally, he asked me whether any effort had been made to get food from Russia, since he had heard that they had had a record harvest. I said that my impression was that Hoover[13] had tried and failed, and that we had asked the Combined Food Board and that they had said that there was no prospect of getting food from there.

The conversation lasted for an hour and a quarter. Nehru was very friendly and reasonable, but looked rather worn and tired. He told me that he was very much upset by his car having knocked down and killed a child a little while back.

12. Sachchidananda Sinha (1871-1950); president, Bihar P.C.C., 1916-20; Editor, *Hindustan Review*, 1901-21, and 1926-50; founded the newspaper *The Searchlight*, 1918; president, Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council, 1921-22; Vice-chancellor, Patna University, 1936-44; member, Constituent Assembly, 1946-50; presided over the inaugural session of the Constituent Assembly.
13. Herbert Hoover (1874-1964); President of the United States, 1929-33; at the request of President Truman Hoover undertook in 1946 the coordination of world food supplies of 28 countries.

52. To Stafford Cripps[1]

New Delhi
18 August 1946

My dear Stafford,
I have delayed in writing to you although I received your brief note two or three weeks ago. Thank you for that letter. I have now received your two books *Democracy Alive* and *Towards Christian Democracy*. Looking at the various chapters in the books I see that there is much in them that will interest me greatly. I shall, therefore, read them with pleasure and profit.

I came to Delhi yesterday and saw the Viceroy. By the time you get this letter possibly some new developments might have taken place here. We have taken our recent steps with full deliberation and in the hope that they may lead to some real settlement. There may be some trouble in the country, but I don't think that need come in the way.

I hope your daughter is better now and that you will have also recuperated during your brief stay in Switzerland.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Collection.

53. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal[1]

The greater part of the interview was taken up with discussion about the possibility of making a further approach to Jinnah. I put forward the arguments, that it was just possible that Jinnah might feel more inclined to accept in view of the latest happenings; that a very grave responsibility would lie on us if we had not made every possible effort to secure his cooperation; and that Nehru himself had said that he thought Jinnah was looking for a way out. Nehru said that the events of the

1. Delhi, 18 August 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 253-254.

past 48 hours had made it even more difficult to approach Jinnah, that he saw no chance of his agreeing, that Congress would certainly not give up the nomination of a non-League Muslim, and that it would mean further delay. We discussed the matter for some time; and it was finally agreed that Nehru would consult the other members of the Committee in Delhi and would write me a letter tomorrow. I pressed him as strongly as possible but do not think I made much impression. I especially stressed the danger of the army breaking up.

Nehru said that they had discussed further the Muslim names; and I gathered that the list had been somewhat narrowed down. He told me that they had almost persuaded Azad to come in. The other four names he mentioned were Asaf Ali, Maula Bux of Sind,[2] Ali Zaheer, and Zaheer Uddin, the President of the Momin Conference. This sounds to me a really dreadful list, and I said I thought it would be very provocative to the Muslim League.

He said that the full name of the Parsee he had mentioned was Cooverji Hormusji Bhabha. I asked him why he had included a Parsee, as they were a comparatively small community. He said that he thought there generally had been a Parsee in the Executive Council, and that they were a progressive community.

I asked him whether he had a name instead of himself or Rajendra Prasad, if one of them was unable to become a Member by being President. He said that he was not yet prepared to submit a name.

He then said that he saw that J.P. Srivastava was going on a food delegation, and made a violent attack on him. I said I knew that Srivastava had made enemies, but that he had done very good work for India and had considerable qualities, and that I was not prepared to listen to vague allegations.

I then told him of the Foreign Secretary's telegram[3] about Mudaliar's[4] attendance at the Economic Council of U.N.O., and said that I proposed to pass the Foreign Secretary's telegram on to Mudaliar. He raised no objection, though he made some disparaging remarks about Mudaliar.

2. Brother of Allah Bux, Chief Minister of Sind, 1941-2, who was murdered in May 1943.
3. It was stated that the Foreign Secretary was disturbed to hear that Ramaswamy Mudaliar was unable to attend the meeting of the U.N. Economic and Social Council beginning on 11 September 1946 and hoped that the Viceroy might still reverse the decision which might have been taken for political reasons.
4. A. Ramaswami Mudaliar (1887-1976); Member for Commerce, 1939-42, and for Supply, 1943-46 in the Viceroy's Executive Council; Dewan of Mysore, 1946-49; member, Rajya Sabha, 1952-62; Vice-Chancellor, Kerala University, 1953-57; prominent after 1947 as chairman of several industrial concerns.

54. To Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
19 August 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,
As suggested by you,[2] I have consulted my colleagues, and their reaction to your proposal is identical with mine.

When you wrote[3] to me that you had decided, with the concurrence of the British Government, to invite me, as President of the Congress, to make proposals for the formation of an interim government, we accepted this invitation on the understanding that the responsibility would be ours. We have since proceeded on that basis. I suggested to you that the best course would be to make this clear by a public announcement and you were good enough to agree to this, and an announcement was made. Immediately after this I approached Mr. M.A. Jinnah and sought the cooperation of the Muslim League. Mr. Jinnah was not willing to cooperate with us, as he made clear in his letters to me (which have been published) and subsequently in the course of our interview. We had then to proceed without him and the League. We have tried to get as good and representative a team as possible, and have already approached some persons on the new basis.

Your new proposal would change the whole approach to the problem and put an end to the responsibility which, at your suggestion, we had undertaken. We are now asked to revert to the previous stage which, we had thought, had finally ended after months of fruitless effort. It puts us in an embarrassing and unenviable position, and the difficulties inherent in the situation are likely to be considerably increased. In view of recent happenings, especially in Calcutta, such a step, far from leading to harmony, will be misconstrued and lead to a contrary result.

We feel, therefore, that we are quite unable to agree to your new proposal. We have come to Delhi for a specific purpose and on an urgent errand. If that purpose does not hold, then there appears to be no necessity for us to stay on here.[4]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 258-259.
2. See the preceding item.
3. On 6 August 1946.
4. Wavell replied the same day agreeing that it would be no use sending for Jinnah in the existing circumstances.

55. To Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
20 August 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

In consultation with my colleagues I am suggesting the names given below for membership of the interim government. We should very much like to have fifteen members of this government, both because we consider this number suitable and because this will enable us to include an Anglo-Indian representative. If the list is to contain fourteen names only then I am afraid there will be no room in it at present for an Anglo-Indian. We have not decided yet in regard to one Muslim name for the list. I hope to supply this later. I might add that we have secured the consent of all those mentioned in the list except one, Mr. Asaf Ali, whom we have not been able to contact. He has been in Kashmir and is on his way back. Apparently he has been held up somewhere owing to a stoppage of the air service. We hope to be in touch with him soon.

I have decided to join the provisional government myself. In addition to my name, therefore, there will be the following:

1. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
2. Dr. Rajendra Prasad
3. Mr. M. Asaf Ali
4. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
5. Mr. Fazlul Huq
6. Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose
7. Dr. John Matthai
8. Sardar Baldev Singh
9. Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan
10. Mr. Jagjivan Ram (President, All India Depressed Classes League)
11. Syed Ali Zaheer (President, All India Shia Conference)
12. Mr. Cooverji Hormusji Bhabha
13. A Muslim name to be supplied later
14. Mr. Frank Anthony (President, Anglo-Indian Association)

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 269-270.

56. Reply to Jinnah's Charges[1]

In the course of a statement[2] to the press Mr. Jinnah has referred to my interview with him and to my subsequent press conference[3] in Bombay. I am reluctant to enter into any controversy and I would rather have not said anything further on this subject. But some misapprehension has arisen because of certain remarks made by Mr. Jinnah and I feel that I should say something to clear it. Mr. Jinnah is perfectly entitled to draw his inferences from what I may have said though I think some of his inferences are not justified. It is possible also that subsequent recollection of a long talk may not be strictly accurate even as to facts. The Congress position has been fully clarified in the Working Committee's recent resolution and I cannot add to it or vary it in any way. The brief correspondence that Mr. Jinnah and I exchanged with each other in Bombay soon after the Working Committee resolution is also there explaining both our respective positions. I would suggest to anyone interested to refer to the language of these documents for clarification if that is needed.

Mr. Jinnah says that I declined to discuss with him the long-term settlement. This statement has surprised me and I can only say that Mr. Jinnah's memory is at fault. I could not and would not decline to discuss anything with him. As a matter of fact I remember to have discussed the long-term settlement and the constituent assembly with him during our talk. This inevitably followed with reference to the Working Committee resolution.

As for the interim government being responsible to the Central Legislative Assembly, I stated that in effect it could not go against the wishes of that Assembly. I was asked a question in the press conference about

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 20 August 1946. From *The Hindu*, 21 August 1946.
2. Jinnah stated on 18 August 1946: "Pandit Nehru declined to discuss the long-term settlement. He made it clear to me that they were invited by the Viceroy to make their proposals for the interim government and he thought that he would like to see me. The proposals which he made were that the Congress would form the cabinet and they were prepared to give five seats out of 14 to the Muslim Leaguers of their choice.... He considers that the swift limb of the Congress should not be shackled...why, does the swift limb want to make alliance with the British imperialism and depend upon British bayonets? Is it to enable them to crush the Muslim League."
3. See *ante*, item 49.

certification. I replied that I could not imagine that such a contingency could arise because the Government would have to function in harmony with the Central Assembly.

I said nothing about crushing the Muslim League or anyone else. Our policy has not been and will not be to threaten or crush anyone but rather to win him over if we can. I was asked what would happen if there was direct action against the Government. I replied that wherever there is such direct action there can be only two results: either the success or partial success of that action which means the Government being swept away or coming to terms with it, or the direct action fails.

Mr. Jinnah refers to the use of British bayonets. May I repeat again what we have said frequently that we want the British armed forces to be removed from India as soon as possible. The sooner they go the happier we shall be, because we do not wish to think in terms of bayonets and certainly not in terms of British bayonets. I am sure that when British armed might is removed from India, it will be easier for all of us to face the realities in India and arrive at mutually advantageous agreements. Whatever conflict or discord there might unfortunately be today, it is certain that it will end some time or other and all the Indian people pull together to our destined goal of a free, independent and prosperous India.

57. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal[1]

I began by saying that our whole object must be directed towards an eventual coalition with the Muslim League, and that in considering the present proposals we must bear that in mind. For this reason I was averse to increasing the numbers to 15, though I recognised the advantage of having an Anglo-Indian representative.

I said that I could recommend to H.M.G. the six Congress names he had given me, viz: Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Rajagopalachari, Bose, Jagjivan Ram and Nehru himself. I asked whether he and Rajendra Prasad were still alternatives, i.e. that the President of Congress could not be a member, and that one of them might be unable to join. He said that this

1. Delhi, 22 August 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 281-284.

was not yet decided, and would depend on a meeting of the Congress Working Committee and the A.I.C.C., which might be held in a few weeks time. I rather gathered that the intention was that both should remain if possible.

I agreed to the three minority representatives: Baldev Singh, Matthai, and Bhabha, and asked whether I could assume that they had all accepted. He confirmed this, but said that Matthai had asked that he should not be called upon for a short time, as he was engaged in settling an industrial dispute at Tatas and wanted to complete this work.

We then turned to the Muslim representatives. I said that surely Fazlul Huq would let down the side badly with his reputation and instability; and that I advised Congress strongly not to include him. After a little discussion, Nehru agreed to withdraw his name.

I again suggested the possibility of leaving the Muslim seats vacant, but Nehru said the Congress were not willing to agree to this. I then said that I was prepared to recommend Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, Sayed Ali Zaheer, and Asaf Ali. I gathered that the last named had accepted provisionally on the telephone, though I think from what Nehru said that he may have done so with some reluctance. The other two Muslim names were to be left over for the present. Azad had decided not to come in.

Nehru then pressed again for a council of 15 and the inclusion of Anthony as Anglo-Indian representative. I said I should be very reluctant indeed to increase the size of the council, since I thought it would increase the suspicions of the Muslim League and make their joining more difficult. Nehru said that he was quite willing for an announcement that the government would be cut down to 14, if necessary, when the League came in. I said at once that the words "if necessary" would not suffice to allay the suspicions of the Muslim League; and he said that they could be omitted if I wished. I asked whether it would not be possible to include Anthony in one of the vacant Muslim seats, but he said that he thought it was desirable that all five Muslim seats should be filled. I said I would consider the matter of the Anglo-Indian representative, but that I did not think I could agree to the increase of the council to 15.

I then asked whether he had considered the matter of portfolios. Obviously he had not. He said that he thought portfolios could be left until the government got together. I said that they were of very great importance, particularly that of the War Member, since it was essential to keep the army steady. He said that he thought that the Sikh Member might be appropriate. He himself would like to have

External Affairs. For Finance, the choice seemed to lie between Rajagopalachari and Matthai; and he seemed to prefer Matthai. I said that I thought it might be unfortunate to have a representative of Big Business like Tatas in the Finance Department, and that I should prefer Rajagopalachari. I did not think it worthwhile to discuss portfolios further, but asked him to have a talk with his colleagues about it. I pointed out that when the Muslim League came in they would have to have a fair share of the principal portfolios, and that it would be a pity to have to change over people from portfolios they had already held.

He then went back to the question of Anthony, and pointed out the advantages of having an Anglo-Indian representative, in view of their position in the Railways and Posts & Telegraphs, etc. I said that once we got him in and increased the council to 15 it would create a lot of feeling if we had to omit him on reconstruction. He said that it might be possible to omit instead some other Member; and said that there were, for instance, several important posts abroad which had to be filled. I agreed that there were several important posts, at Washington, in Ceylon, in Burma, and in London, which would require good men. He said that Aney in Ceylon, whom I had mentioned as having served his time, was a good man but had been completely out of place in Ceylon.

I then went on to the question of the date of announcement, and said that I thought he should take into account the matter of the *Id* holiday on the 28th or 29th, and the danger of disturbances on that date if the composition of the interim government had been announced immediately before. He said he would consult his colleagues on this point and let me know; there might certainly be some danger in the announcement of a government before the *Id*, on the other hand there was also danger in the further delay. He asked me how soon after announcement the government would start functioning; I said as soon as possible; that my intention was that the government should be sworn in immediately and should start work at once. I said that all departments were prepared for their new Members, with a list of the most important and urgent cases. I told him that I proposed to make a broadcast when the announcement of the new government was made.

I spoke to him about Azad's suggestion[2] to me that I should get into indirect touch with Jinnah, and said that I could easily do so, but that I felt that I must mention it to him first of all. He said that Cong-

2. In his interview with Wavell on 19 August 1946, Maulana Azad had suggested that though it would not be advisable for Wavell to approach Jinnah direct, it might be possible by indirect contact to give Jinnah some reassurance and persuade him to join the interim government.

ress was always in touch with the League through mutual friends, and that he did not think an indirect approach by me would be suitable but that he would consult his colleagues. He said that they could have got several Muslim Leaguers to join the government, but that they had not wished to break up the League.

We then spoke of certain other matters outside the formation of the government. I said that I had taken advice on his suggestion that the oldest member should be temporary chairman of the constituent assembly, and that this seemed quite suitable and was the practice in France. I mentioned the Central Provinces resolution about the 1942 disturbances, which was being brought up on September 2nd, and said that I believed he had prevented such a resolution being pressed in the U.P. and should be grateful if he could do the same in the C.P. He said that he had written to the Premier of the C.P. at the same time as he wrote to the Premier of the U.P.

Nehru seemed reluctant to go, though we had completed business, and we had a general talk about methods of physical exercises in the morning, sport in India, and one or two other topics. He told me that Congress proposed to hold a full session in November, possibly in Meerut. He was quite friendly. We agreed to meet tomorrow, provisionally at 11 a.m., when he would tell me the views of his colleagues about the date of announcement and the distribution of portfolios, and I would tell him what my decision was about the proposal to include Anthony. After this he proposes to go away to Allahabad for a few days.

The discussion lasted just over an hour.

58. To Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
22 August 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Thank you for your letter[2] which I received this evening. I am sorry to learn of your decision, because I was anxious to have Frank Anthony

1. *The Transfer of Power* 1942-7, Vol. VIII, pp. 285-286.
2. Wavell stated: "I have no objection to Anthony's inclusion if in spite of including him you can keep the total number down to 14. I do however feel that the matter of paramount importance is to leave no stone unturned to get the Muslim League to join the Executive Council, and I am afraid therefore that we must limit the Council to 14."

in the interim government. I want the Anglo-Indians to be represented in it, but I do not see how this can be done now unless we have 15 members. I do not see why this number should come in the way subsequently of an arrangement with the Muslim League when we are prepared to make it clear that we shall then accept fourteen. It is quite usual for cabinets to be reformed from time to time.

We have been anxious to have a coalition with the Muslim League and we shall continue to work to that end. But I want to make it clear that our idea of a coalition does not mean a submission to the demands or peculiar ways which the League has adopted. A coalition can only come into existence on the clear understanding that the League can nominate its five representatives and not interfere in any way with our choice of our representatives, including a Nationalist Muslim. When the League accepts this, then a coalition will come into the picture.

I do not know what your conception is of the proposed provisional government. Is it going to be just another kind of Caretaker Government waiting and hoping for the Muslim League to walk in when it feels inclined to do so? That would simply mean an ineffective unstable government which cannot undertake anything worthwhile and which exists more or less on sufferance. That surely will not be the way to tackle any of the urgent problems that face our country, and certainly not the communal problem. That might well lead to a worsening of the situation and possibly even to a repetition of the horror of Calcutta. It is not for this that we would care to join the provisional government.

The country needs a strong, virile, active and stable government which knows its mind and has the courage to go ahead, not a weak, disjointed, apologetic government which can be easily bullied or frightened and which dare not take any step for fear of possible consequences. To give an impression to the country and our people that we are merely a casual and temporary government waiting for the favour of the Muslim League is to undermine the prestige and authority of the government. That way will not even lead to the coalition we hope for. It will lead to renewed attempts to bully and coerce, which again produce like reactions on the other side, as we have seen in Calcutta. The only proper approach is to make clear that while we shall always welcome cooperation, we propose to carry on firmly even if this is denied.

Calcutta has been a terrible shock to you and to all of us. And yet may I say that it has a personal significance for us which it cannot have even for you? Our friends and relatives are involved in these bloody murders, and our children and dear ones may have to face the assassin's knife at any time. It is this grim reality that we face. We shall face it, of course, without shouting, but we are not going to shake hands

with murder or allow it to determine the country's policy. We shall still continue to reason with Hindu and Muslim and Sikh and others and try to win them over to the path of friendly cooperation, for there is no other way for the advancement of India. But we do not believe that cooperation will come out of appeasement of wrong-doing. Hence my dislike of approaches, direct or indirect, which have an appearance of this type of appeasement and are always likely to be misunderstood. The time will surely come when all of us, or most of us, will cooperate together. It will be retarded by wrong tactics and approaches. We must have a strong and stable ship if we are to face it with confidence.

I have written this personal letter to you soon after receiving your letter. We may have much to do with each other in the future and you should know how I feel about the present situation.

I intend going to Allahabad day after tomorrow, Saturday morning, by air. I shall return for the meeting of our Working Committee on the 27 August.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

59. To Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
22 August 1946

60. An Emergency Meeting of the Congress Working Committee[1]

An emergency meeting of the Congress Working Committee will be held in Delhi on the 27th August to consider the developments in the political situation, the recent happenings in Calcutta and the convening of a meeting of the All India Congress Committee. In view of short notice members may not get separate information and are requested to treat this as sufficient notice. All the invitees to the Working Committee on the last occasion are again invited to attend the next meeting to be held in Delhi on the 27th.

1. Statement to the press, 22 August 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 23 August 1946.

61. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal[1]

I began by referring to Nehru's letter[2] of the 22nd; I said that I had decided that the numbers of the government must be restricted to 14, so that a place could not be found for Anthony, but I suggested that he might perhaps be found a place as under-secretary in some department, as I thought that some of the heavily worked departments might need partiamentary under-secretaries.

I said that I agreed with him that a resolute and decisive government was required which would go ahead. Law and order must certainly be kept, but the policy towards the Muslims must not be provocative. I would certainly not be a party to any attempt to break up the Muslim League by force. I said that I was quite convinced that without the cooperation of the Muslim League there would be no chance of a united India or of a peaceful transfer of power. Nor would the States be likely to negotiate freely with a one-party government.

1. Delhi, 23 August 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 290-292.
2. See *ante*, item 58.

Nehru made little comment on this and appeared to accept it.

We then agreed that the names of the new government should be announced tomorrow (Saturday); and I told Nehru that I proposed to broadcast on Saturday evening.[3] I showed him the rough draft of my broadcast, he read it and said that he had no comments to make.

Nehru agreed on September 2nd as a suitable date for the new government to be sworn in, and that this date should be announced tomorrow.

He then asked me a number of questions about the working of council, especially as regards planning. He laid down some rather obvious foundations for planning as a whole, and talked about the scientific rather than the bureaucratic approach. I explained as far as possible the machinery for planning, and said that it was naturally most desirable that all development should be on an ordered plan; but that in actual practice it was difficult to carry out everything exactly according to programme, especially with so much to be done.

We had a little talk about portfolios, but he obviously was not prepared for any final discussion. I suggested that Rajagopalachari would be the best Member for Finance, especially as he was accustomed to work with Sir C. Jones,[4] the Secretary. I suggested that Matthai might be valuable in Works, Mines and Power, where there were so many important electro-hydro schemes. I also suggested that Bhabha would be a suitable Commerce Member, and that Rajendra Prasad or Patel might take the Home portfolio. Nehru noted these suggestions but made no comment.

I then spoke about representation at the U.N.O. Assembly meeting. He said he had thought of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, but was doubtful whether her health would permit her to go. I also mentioned the meeting of the Asiatic section of the I.L.O., due to be held at Delhi in January, and the difficulties that might arise about accommodation.

We also spoke of one or two other matters, the date of the next meeting of the Legislative Assembly, for which I said we had in mind November the 11th, &c.

He asked me when the constituent assembly would meet. I said that he had suggested the middle of September, but would he like to

3. On 24 August 1946, a communique announcing the establishment of the interim government was published. The same day Wavell in a broadcast welcomed its formation and reaffirmed the invitation to the Muslim League to take the seats allotted to it.

4. Cyril Jones; Finance Secretary to Government of India, 1939-47. He was a Secretary in the Madras Government when Rajagopalachari was Prime Minister of the Madras Province during 1937-39.

wait till the government was formed before finally deciding? He seemed to agree to this. I asked him what he had in mind as the programme for the constituent assembly if the Muslim League did not attend. He seemed to think that they would draw up a model constitution for a province, but agreed that it would not be possible for the constituent assembly to lay down any constitution for a Muslim province without the Muslims.

He is going away tomorrow, and will be back on Monday evening, the 26th. There will be a meeting of the Working Committee on the 27th. I told him that I was going to Calcutta on Sunday and would be back on the evening of Monday the 26th.

He was friendly, but seemed rather quiet and depressed.

62. To Tej Bahadur Sapru[1]

Allahabad
25-8-1946

My dear Tejbahadurji,

Thank you for your affectionate letter[2] which has moved me greatly and made me think of old times. I have had the good fortune to have the affection and good wishes of many persons, but your affection and good opinion mean much to me and I have treasured them.

I know we are going to have rough weather. But do not worry at all about me. I am tough myself and I know how to look after myself. I shall certainly do so.

I have just been speaking on the long distance telephone to Shafaat Ahmad Khan's wife at Simla. He has been badly wounded but is out of danger.[3]

I shall try to visit you about 3 p.m. tomorrow on my way to the aerodrome.

Thank you again,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. Tej Bahadur Sapru Correspondence (microfilm), N.M.M.L.
2. Sapru congratulated Jawaharlal on the eve of his forming the provisional government. "I also congratulate you in your personal capacity as the one man who has deserved this by reason of his unbending character, unsurpassed patriotism and unrivalled gifts."
3. Shafaat Ahmed Khan, a member-designate of the interim government, was stabbed in Simla on 25 August 1946. As a protest against the reversal of the policy of the Muslim League, he had resigned from the League a month earlier.

63. To C.J. Pao[1]

Allahabad
August 25, 1946

My dear Mr. Pao[2],
I hope you will forgive me for the delay in answering your letter of June 21st. It was very good of you to write to me and to enquire about the report of injury to me. As a matter of fact I was not actually wounded.

As you will no doubt learn, changes are taking place in the Government of India and we shall have to face great responsibilities in the future. As in China, we have tremendous problems to face but we hope to do so successfully though we shall have many difficulties.

Please convey my regards to Madame Pao.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Had been Chinese Consul-General in India.

64. To A.J. Anbian[1]

Allahabad
August 25, 1946

Dear Prof. Anbian[2],
I have your letter of 17th August. I am afraid it is impossible to build up a united India if each group and community desires separate representation. Our purpose is to put an end to all such separate representation as exists and not to add to it. The work before us is so vast that it offers opportunities for every patriotic Indian to take part in it.

I shall gladly meet you but I cannot fix a time or day as my programme remains uncertain.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. President of the All India Kashatriya Nadar Association, Arumuganeri, Tirunelveli district.

65. To Jiwan Das Rai[1]

Allahabad
August 25, 1946

Dear Mr. Jiwan Das Rai[2],
I have received your letter of the 5th August and I read it with interest. I am aware that there are large numbers of Nepalese in India outside Nepal and that many of them have taken part in our national movement. So far as I am concerned there is no reason why the Nepalese should be treated as other than Indian with all the privileges of Indian citizenship. But it is obviously not possible to give them separate representation in various assemblies. We want to put an end to all separate representation and not to add to it.

Another question bound to arise in the future will be the exact status of the Nepalese in India. If they accept Indian citizenship with all its privileges and obligations then there is no difficulty. Otherwise certain difficulties will certainly arise. The question will have to be decided by them and will also depend of course on the relationship between Nepal and the Government of India.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Secretary, India Domiciled Nepalese Congress, Kalimpong.

66. Wavell's Record of Interview with Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal[1]

I said that I had asked them to come and see me because I had just returned from Calcutta. I gave a description of what I had seen in Calcutta; and said that the only way to avoid similar trouble all over India on an even larger scale was by some lessening of communal tension and settlement between Hindu and Muslim. I stressed the importance of

1. Delhi, 27 August 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 312-313.

coalition governments, both in Bengal and at the Centre.

I said that while I recognised the difficulty in reopening negotiations with the Muslim League, I felt sure that the country expected it as a result of what had happened in Calcutta. The crux of the whole matter lay in the doubt about the Congress interpretation of the grouping in the constituent assembly. I said that I thought I had been quite clear in my mind that Congress had now agreed to abide by the statement of May the 16th, and to me this had meant the acceptance of the grouping arrangements. When I made my broadcast a few nights ago, the draft of which I had shown to Nehru, I had been quite convinced that this was the intention and that it was on this understanding that I had said what I did in my broadcast. I said that I thought the only chance of a peaceful transfer of power in India was if the Congress made a categorical statement that they would accept the position that the provinces must remain in their sections, as intended by the Mission, until after the first elections under the new constitution. I said that I could not undertake the responsibility of calling together the constituent assembly until this point was settled. I handed to Gandhi and Nehru the draft of a statement which I asked them to make, as follows:

> "The Congress are prepared in the interests of communal harmony to accept the intention of the statement of May 16th that provinces cannot exercise any option affecting their membership of the Section or of the Groups if formed until the decision contemplated in paragraph 19(viii) of the statement of the 16th May is taken by the new legislature after the new constitutional arrangements have come into operation and the first general elections have been held".

Gandhi began by saying that he thought it was a matter for the interim government. I said that it was a matter for Congress who had challenged the interpretation of the Mission. He then went off into long legalistic arguments about the interpretation of the Mission's statement. I said that I was a plain man and not a lawyer, and that I knew perfectly well what the Mission meant, and that the compulsory grouping was the whole crux of the plan.

The argument went on for some time, and we did not make much progress. Nehru at one time got very heated and said that this was simply "bullying" by the Muslim League. Gandhi said that if a blood-bath was necessary, it would come about in spite of non-violence. I said that I was very shocked to hear such words from him. In the end they took away the formula, but I do not think there is much hope of their accepting it.

The interview lasted about forty minutes.[2]

2. Immediately after this interview Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Wavell to say that Wavell's language and manner had been minatory, he could not afford to ignore "the law" and suggested that he should be assisted by a legal mind if necessary. If his intentions were really those expressed in the interview he should not have asked the Congress to form the interim government. The Congress could not adopt a wrong course because of the brutality in Bengal. He asked that his letter be sent to the British Cabinet.

67. The Terrible Lesson of the Calcutta Killing[1]

Calcutta has been a terrible lesson and the horror and fearful tragedy of the killing and inhuman atrocities there have shaken up all of us.

The new development of violence, involving stabbing, arson and looting, chiefly in cities, obviously cannot be tolerated, or else all organised life would become impossible. This has ceased to be merely communal or political. It is a challenge to every decent instinct of humanity and it should be treated as such.

The most effective method to check these degrading conflicts is the organisation of average citizens for the protection of their *mohallas* and not the peace committees usually formed during communal riots of the very elements that have caused the trouble.

What has led up to this — the incitement to violence, the direct invitations to the shedding of blood is worthy of inquiry so that effective action may be taken. For the present, we are concerned with the immediate steps to be taken.

It is well to remember, however, that during the past 26 years of repeated conflict on an intensive and mass scale between the nationalist movement and the British power in India, nothing of this kind has happened. A very few regrettable incidents have occurred, but in spite of high passion and deep feeling, our movement has been carried on at a high level of peaceful and decent behaviour, even towards our opponents. It is well to compare this with recent events.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 26 August 1946. *National Herald*, 27 August 1946.

In the present then, what are we to do? The responsibility for maintaining peace and order must necessarily fall on the Government and its police forces. But every citizen has also a certain responsibility and in a crisis like this it is an obligation for every citizen to discharge this responsibility. For the conflict is between ordinary decency and bestial behaviour.

When such conflicts occur, there is always danger of even decent persons being swept away by passions, and sinking to low levels. We cannot permit this, or else there would be no hope for India. Inevitably when one is attacked there has to be self-defence and organised defence by the police as well as by the people. Anti-social and gangster elements can never be allowed to dominate a situation. This requires cooperation between the people and the police and a spirit of accommodation between them so that such anti-social elements might be isolated and dealt with adequately.

It has been the usual practice when a communal riot occurs for a peace committee to be formed, consisting often of some of the very elements that have caused the trouble. Such peace committees may be useful but their utility is not enhanced by the presence of these elements. Trouble-makers do not easily transform themselves into messengers of peace and goodwill. It is more necessary for the average citizens to organise themselves so as to prevent trouble or nip it in the bud as soon as it begins.

No resident of a *mohalla* or ward wants trouble at home. The residents of each *mohalla* should, therefore, organise themselves for self-protection, that is for the protection of that *mohalla*. Their primary concern should be to look after that particular area and the people who live there. Being neighbours, they know each other and can rely on each other. If trouble arises in some other part of the city, the people should stick to their *mohalla* and keep it immune from it. If all or most of the *mohallas* are so organised no trouble can spread and even if it occurs somewhere, it can easliy be isolated and ended.

Such *mohalla* self-protection committees should be open to all the residents of the *mohalla*, without any question of religion or party or profession. No formal organisation is necessary either in the *mohalla* or the city. The more informal all this is, the better. With further experience the idea can be developed. Any such attempt at organising self-protection in small areas should lead to self-reliance and cooperation between the people living there. It should be based also on cooperation with the police and the authorities who have a very difficult task in these critical times. Just as the *mohalla* is organised for self-defence so also villages can be organised.

68. To Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
28 August 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

I have received your letter of today's date suggesting that I might consult the Working Committee about the proposal that you made to Mr. Gandhi and me yesterday evening. As a matter of fact I placed this proposal before our Committee this afternoon. They were considerably surprised that this should be made, more especially at the present moment when we are supposed to be on the eve of the provisional government. There appeared to be a rather sudden change in your approach to the question.

We have repeatedly made our position clear in regard to the constituent assembly and the question of grouping. I would like you to refer to the resolution we passed at our Wardha meeting about two weeks ago. In this resolution it was stated that they accepted the scheme contained in the Cabinet Mission's statement of May 16th in its entirety. "They interpreted it so as to resolve the inconsistencies contained in it and fill the omissions in accordance with the principles laid down in that statement. They hold that provincial autonomy is a basic provision and each province has the right to decide whether to form or join a group or not". But, they further added, that "questions of interpretation will be decided by the procedure laid down in the statement itself, and the Congress will advise its representatives in the constituent assembly to function accordingly". This resolution, so far as I know, was not misunderstood by any one, and even in your broadcast of August 24th it was correctly interpreted.

In our public statements and in our private talks with you we made it clear that any dispute as to the interpretations of the clauses relating to grouping might be referred to the Federal Court and we would abide by its decision. I can imagine nothing fairer than this and it does away with the fear of a majority overriding a minority in a matter of interpretation to which so much importance has been attached.

In your broadcast on August 24th you refer to the constituent assembly and the question of grouping as follows: "It is desirable also that the work of the constituent assembly should begin as early as possible. I can assure the Muslim League that the procedure laid down in the statement of May 16th regarding the framing of provincial and group

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 326-327.

constitutions will be faithfully adhered to; that there can be no question of any change in the fundamental principles proposed for the constituent assembly in paragraph 15 of the Cabinet Mission's statement of 16th May or of a decision on a main communal issue, without a majority of both major communities; and that the Congress are ready to agree that any dispute of interpretation may be referred to the Federal Court".

Thus what you said in your broadcast in this respect was in conformity with what we have ourselves said. What you now suggest is at variance with both and means that there should be no reference to the Federal Court of this particular matter, and that we should accept the interpretation put upon it by the Cabinet Mission and you as distinguished from the legal interpretation which may be put upon it by the Federal Court. You stressed this and the need for communal harmony presumably because of what has happened in Calcutta. This approach is new. The Calcutta occurrences had taken place before your broadcast in which you have referred to the Federal Court deciding questions of interpretation.

All of us are extremely anxious to do everything in our power to promote communal harmony, but the way you suggest seems to us to lead to a contrary result. To change our declared policy, which is generally acknowledged to be fair, because of intimidation is surely not the way to peace but is an encouragement of further intimidation and violence. We are therefore unable to accept your proposal.

I should like to add that we have been considerably perturbed at this new approach and its implications. If we are to form the provisional government, we must necessarily shoulder great responsibilities for the peace and progress of our people. No government can function if it is treated as if responsibility lay elsewhere and it had to submit in vital matters to proposals with which it was in disagreement.

Your reference to the non-summoning of the constituent assembly, unless the course suggested by you was adopted by us, seemed to us extraordinary and this produced a feeling of resentment in my colleagues. If this is your view and is going to be acted upon by you then the whole structure built up during recent months falls to the ground. We are clearly of opinion that it is both a legal and moral obligation now to go on with the constituent assembly. It has already been elected and though it has not met, it exists already and must start functioning at an early date. It cannot be held up because some people do not choose to join it and disturbances take place in the country. We agree that it would be desirable for all concerned to join it and we shall make

every effort to win the cooperation of others. But if they refuse to join, then the constituent assembly must proceed without them.[2]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Wavell replied on 29 August 1946 that the problem of grouping was a practical and not a legal one. Even if the Federal Court accepted the Congress interpretation, the Muslim League would remain alienated. It was unwise to convene the constituent assembly until an agreement on grouping had been reached.

69. To Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
29 August 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,
Thank you for your letter of today. I agree with you that the problem is not merely a legal one but a practical one. We have considered it in all its practical aspects. These aspects include all manner of considerations other than our own views on the subject. For instance it is obvious that any change made at the present stage would seriously affect the Sikh position. It would be very unfair of us to go back on the assurances[2] we have given to them on this matter. As it is, you know that they are not at all satisfied with things as they are. If a further change to their disadvantage is made, it would produce great resentment amongst them as well as amongst others. The Congress has tried its best to keep in view the interests of the various minorities in the country. If the Congress acted up to your present suggestion many minorities would feel that we were ready to betray them and their interests because of pressure from some source. That would be an unfortunate position for all of us. Any change also would produce a feeling of uncertainty and lack of finality in the picture and if any change has to be made it should be through a recognised process, such as the

one referred to by us, and not casually and over the heads of many people concerned.

I have referred above to various consequences that might follow from an attempt at change. I am not again going into the merits of the question though these are, of course, of importance. I would also remind you that the matter has been considered in all its aspects by the All India Congress Committee which has issued its directions to us in the resolution it has passed. As a subordinate body we cannot go against the spirit and letter of the resolution.

If the point at issue was referred to the Federal Court, I do not know what its decision would be. For our part we have agreed to abide by it even if it goes against us. It is premature to say what the Muslim League would do then. That would depend not only on the decision itself but on many other factors.

As regards the constituent assembly, I feel sure that an indefinite postponement of it would not only be wrong in principle but would have harmful practical results even from the point of view of our gaining the cooperation of the Muslim League which we desire. As I said in my letter of yesterday, the initial processes relating to the constituent assembly having been started, it would be a grave step to impede them in any way. That might well lead to unfortunate consequences.

We have asked our colleagues, who are going to be members of the provisional government, to reach Delhi on the 31st of this month to discuss with us the distribution of portfolios. I suggest that I might meet you after that, preferably on the 1st afternoon. Tomorrow the Congress Working Committee will be meeting both in the morning and in the afternoon.

I understand that Mr. Rajagopalachari is unable to come here for some time because of ill-health. Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan has been, as you know, badly injured by murderous attacks on him. I am glad to say that he is progressing well, but I am not sure when he will be able to come to Delhi. Sardar Baldev Singh is rather tied up with his Punjab Ministry work and wants to keep away for a few days in September till the Punjab Premier returns. Dr. John Matthai has also intimated to me that he would like to take charge in the second week of September or thereabout owing to important work to which he has long been committed. I trust all this will not matter and some arrangements

ADDRESSING A PRESS CONFERENCE, BOMBAY, JULY 1946

AFTER TAKING OFFICE AS MEMBERS OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT, DELHI,
2 SEPTEMBER 1946

could be made for the intervening period which is not likely to exceed a week or so.[3]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Pethick-Lawrence attached greater importance than Wavell to retaining the cooperation of the Congress and allowing Jawaharlal to take over the interim government. So Wavell was advised that he should not take any steps which were likely to result in a breach with the Congress. The interim government, the formation of which had already been publicly announced, should take office at once. It was necessary to play for time in order that the effect of responsibility might make its impressions on the members of the interim government. The Congress could be persuaded to agree to a postponement of the summoning of the constituent assembly until October 1946.

70. To C. Rajagopalachari[1]

New Delhi
30 August 1946

My dear Rajaji,
The Viceroy's Secretary informed me yesterday about your message to him. I am sorry about your illness but, as I have informed the Viceroy, there should be no difficulty about your coming here a week or so later when you are in a position to do so. It is better to take charge here than by telegram.

There is one matter to which I should like to draw your attention. As this government is being formed on a cabinet basis and the Viceroy has asked me as Congress President to undertake this business of forming a government, it is desirable that we should act as a group and not individually, that is to say that dealings with the Viceroy should be through me and not directly. The Viceroy has, in fact, referred every matter to me.

Please look after your health and don't leave the hospital till you are well enough to do so. Meanwhile some temporary arrangements will be made for the intervening period.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.

71. To G.E.B. Abell[1]

New Delhi
30 August 1946

Dear Mr. Abell,[2]
Your letter of the 29th August has just reached me. I should imagine that it was much better for Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan to take charge on his arrival here on or about the 8th September. That applies to Mr. Rajagopalachari also. There appears to be no particular advantage in taking over charge by telegram. As for Sardar Baldev Singh, the difficulty is not due to his illness or inability to come but his desire not to take over charge till the Punjab premier has returned from Europe. It is only then that he will give up his Punjab ministership and can come here immediately.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.
2. (b. 1904); joined I.C.S., 1928; Private Secretary to Viceroy, 1945-47.

72. To Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
1 September 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,
I enclose a list[2] indicating how portfolios should be allotted to the members of the provisional government. This list has been prepared in consultation with our colleagues, except two who were not present owing to illness. As I have stated in the note attached to the list, this allotment should be considered provisional and we might suggest changes after we have had some experience of the working of the various departments.

For the next week or so some of our colleagues will be absent and temporary arrangements have to be made for this period. I suggest

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 380-381.
2. See the following item.

that I might take formal charge of these portfolios for this week or ten days.

As we have made it clear, we shall welcome the cooperation of the Muslim League in the provisional government. If they so choose they can nominate five members of the government. When they decide to do so five of our members will retire in their favour. and a reshuffling of the portfolios will take place so as to give them an equitable share of them.

As you know the new government, though formed within the terms of the existing law, is in nature and formation different from its predecessors. This difference has been noted and emphasised by observers in India, England and elsewhere and it has been referred to by most people as the interim government. We would prefer to call it the provisional national government, but if you think that interim government is more suitable at present we have no objection. But in any event it would be undesirable to refer to it as the Governor General's Executive Council. In any official announcements or references to be made to it, it should be called either the provisional government or the interim government. You have yourself referred to it as such and in the intimation conveyed to us of the King's approval of our appointment it is stated that we are members of the interim government.

This government will function as a cabinet and will be jointly responsible for its decisions.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

73. Portfolios of the Members of the Interim Government[1]

1. External Affairs and Commonwealth Affairs	Jawaharlal Nehru
2. Defence (or War)	Sardar Baldev Singh
3. Home including Information and Broadcasting	Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 381-382.

4. Finance	Dr. John Matthai
5. Communications (War Transport and Railways)	Mr. M. Asaf Ali
6. Agriculture and Food	Dr. Rajendra Prasad
7. Labour	Mr. Jagjivan Ram
8. Health	Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan
9. Education and Arts	
10. Legislative	Syed Ali Zaheer
11. Posts and Air	
12. Industries and Supplies	Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
13. Works, Mines and Power	Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose
14. Commerce	Mr. C. H. Bhabha

Note: The above arrangement is to be considered provisional and after some experience there may be a reshuffling of portfolios and a rearrangement of subjects under each portfolio.

As at present there are only twelve members available out of a total of fourteen, some portfolios have been temporarily grouped together. As soon as the two additional members are appointed, these portfolios may be separated or such other arrangements made as are considered suitable.

It has not been possible to consult Mr. C. Rajagopalachari and Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan about the allotment of portfolios but, so far as our information goes, the suggestions made will be agreeable to them. A suggestion was made that Mr. Rajagopalachari might take Finance and Dr. John Matthai should take Industries and Supplies. The choice might be made by those two themselves. We are informed, however, that Mr. Rajagopalachari is very much averse to taking charge of Finance, and so the arrangement given in the list above should stand.

Some of the members namely Messrs. Rajagopalachari, John Matthai, Sardar Baldev Singh, Shafaat Ahmad Khan and C. H. Bhabha, are unable to take charge owing to ill-health or other reasons for a week or so. Some temporary arrangements have to be made for these portfolios for this week or ten days, as the case may be.

Jawaharlal Nehru

74. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal[1]

Nehru handed me a letter[2] containing the list of portfolios; and I agreed that they were acceptable. I asked why Matthai had been preferred to Rajagopalachari for the Finance portfolio, and he said that Rajagopalachari had telephoned to say that he would rather not take the Finance portfolio.

I said that the Government should be known as the interim government, not the provisional national government.

We agreed that the portfolio of the War Member should be known as the Defence portfolio, provided there was no legal difficulty.

The matter of Members holding directorships came up, and Nehru said that any Members of his who were directors were busy divesting themselves of them. He himself held the directorship of a newspaper, and asked whether that came under the ban. I said that I imagined that it did.

I told Nehru that I should have to appoint a Vice-president to act when I was absent. I gathered he would expect to be nominated himself. He also intended, apparently, to act as leader in the Assembly. He raised the point whether those who were already elected members of the assembly (Asaf Ali and Sarat Bose) would have to resign and be nominated. I said that this point had been raised before by Mr. Jinnah, and I understood that it would be necessary. He said that he believed it could be done without an amendment of the 1935 Act by passing a resolution in the Assembly. I said I would look into the matter.

He raised the question of empty portfolios : Defence, Finance, Health, Industries & Supplies, and Commerce. I said that the normal convention was for the Governor General to make himself responsible for empty portfolios for a short period; and I thought that it would be better to follow this in the present instance.

I then mentioned the matter of interviews with Members, and told him that I intended to discontinue the practice of Secretaries having access to the Viceroy, but that I wished to continue seeing all Members at regular intervals. He agreed.

He then raised the question of arrangements for tomorrow, and I told him what was proposed. This seemed all satisfactory.

1. Delhi, 1 September 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 382-384.
2. See the preceding two items.

He mentioned some International Trade Conference in October, in London, and asked whether it could not be postponed. I said I had not got this one in my head.

He then spoke about the U.N.O. conference, and said that if the idea that he was not *persona grata* to Congress was standing in the way of Mudaliar going to the conference, would I let him know that the Congress would be quite agreeable for him to go, in fact Nehru seemed to be anxious that he should. I said that I thought it was his duties in Mysore that were the obstacle, but that I would consider sending a message to Mudaliar in the sense he had given me.

He then suggested that K.P.S. Menon[3] should go to the conference as an Adviser instead of returning to China. I asked whether he had any idea of going himself, but he said that he had never been to America and was "afraid of getting entangled."

I said that I noticed that Jaya Prakash Narayan had become a member of the Congress Working Committee; did this mean that J.P.N. was going to become constitutional or that the Working Committee was going to be revolutionary? Nehru laughed and said: "Both, I hope". He then said that Jaya Prakash Narayan was a very fine fellow, and really not at all inclined to violence. I said that his speeches in the Punjab lately could be called nothing else except incitements to revolution and violence, and that they had certainly been understood as such by those who heard them. He said that he thought J.P.N. had been badly reported. He said he would like me to meet him.

I then raised the matter of public speaking generally by Members of the Government, and how embarrassing it might be. I said that I thought the less public speaking there was at present, the better; there was a convention in England that the speeches of Members of Government might be held to represent Government policy. He said that he had noticed that Members of the present Labour Government often made rather embarrassing speeches. I said that that might be so, but I thought that they probably regretted it afterwards.

I then went on to the summoning of the constituent assembly. I said that I did not propose to discuss the matter at present in any detail, but that I was sure it should not be summoned until we had settled the point about grouping. Nehru said that he agreed that it would be better that it should be settled, but that there must not be an

3. (1898-1982); joined I.C.S., 1921; Agent of Government of India in Sri Lanka, 1929-32; Agent-General in China, 1943-47; ambassador to China, 1947-48; Foreign Secretary, 1948-52; ambassador to Russia, Hungary and Poland, 1952-61.

indefinite postponement. I said that I would take an early opportunity of discussing the matter with him further.

I asked finally whether the Congress ban on accepting hospitality in the Viceroy's House was going to be raised, as I should like to be able to invite my Ministers. He said that he would consult the Committee and let me know, but that he himself anyway would have no difficulty in accepting an invitation. I then asked him and his sister, who is in Delhi, to dine on Tuesday night, and he agreed.

Nehru was quiet and friendly throughout, and seemed anxious to make no difficulties. As he left I congratulated him on his courage and statesmanship in coming into the Government, but said that it would never really be satisfactory until we got the Muslim League in.

75. The Call of Destiny[1]

During the last few days I have received a thousand telegrams of greeting and good wishes on the formation of the provisional government. They have come from old friends and comrades and from many whom I do not know. They have come not only from every corner of India but also from various countries of Asia and Europe and America and Africa. They have come from Indians scattered all over the world, often in distant lands, very far from the motherland and yet joined to her by invisible bonds that cannot break. They have come from foreign comrades and friends who look upon India's freedom as a mighty step towards Asia's freedom and world peace.

I am deeply grateful for all these good wishes and I am sorry I cannot acknowledge them separately. I feel in no mood to congratulate myself or others for we have yet to reach our goal and the path is still difficult. Though I am not used to prayer, it is in a prayerful mood that I approach this task, fervently hoping for the cooperation of all my countrymen in facing the difficulties ahead. I regret deeply that the Muslim League has for the moment chosen a different path. I shall continue to hope for their cooperation and the door for it will always be open.

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 1 September 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 2 September 1946.

For this business concerns us all and we would be unworthy of the people's confidence if we functioned in a narrow way seeking the good of particular groups or parties and forgetting the larger good of the nation. My colleagues and I go forward as Indians thinking of India, working for India's freedom and the emancipation of her masses. If we forget this at any time then we shall have failed in our endeavour.

Destiny has conspired to test us in new ways and we have answered this call of destiny with courage and faith in India's future. The dream of her freedom that has inspired us for so long beckons to us again and seems nearer of realisation. May we prove worthy servants of India and her people. *Jai Hind.*[2]

2. The interim government was sworn in on 2 September 1946. Jawaharlal added a *Jai Hind* at the end of his oath. Mahatma Gandhi said that "the door to Purna Swaraj has at last been opened." The supporters of the Muslim League held black flag demonstrations.

6

THE STATES PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

I The Approach to the Problem

1. Bad Start for a Big Change[1]

In January last the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes made a declaration in the chamber, on behalf of himself and his brother princes, guaranteeing civil liberties and recognising the immediate need for representative institutions and efficient administration and judiciary.

I welcomed this, though I pointed out at the time that the proposals for constitutional change did not go far enough and should be based on a recognition of responsible government. I welcomed it chiefly because it represented a new approach and also because of the assurance in regard to civil liberties which had been wholly or largely absent in most of the States.

I believe some slight improvement did take place in regard to civil liberties in a few States but, on the whole, there has been no considerable change. I am constantly receiving reports of how civil liberties are being suppressed in many ways. This is distressing as it means that many of the Princes are not keeping to their pledged word.

All faith in what they said will vanish if action is at variance with assurance. This is a bad beginning for the big change that will inevitably come in the near future. I trust that all rulers of States will appreciate this and demonstrate to their people and to India that they mean what they say and are acting up to it.

Civil liberties are important and are an essential prerequisite for any form of democratic government. Indeed they can only be secure in a free and responsible government. Therefore, it must be remembered that the objective of the States' people is and must remain full responsible government. The same measure of democratic freedom must prevail in the States as in the rest of India. You cannot yoke together a bullock with a swift horse. There is no difference between the people of the States and the people of the provinces. Their future is one.

The Hyderabad State was not affected by the Chancellor's declaration and continues in most ways its medieval existence.[2] The State Congress is still banned and generally speaking it is an astonishing example of the middle ages having strayed into the twentieth century.

2. Future of the States People[1]

Before I went to Malaya and since my return, I have been flooded with letters and telegrams from praja mandals and States people's organisations in regard to the States in the coming scheme of things. They are naturally interested in this vital question.

Obviously any major change in India, and certainly the recognition of India's independence, must take into consideration the States' problem. So far, however, there has been little mention of this problem. Partly this is, no doubt, due to the fact that some of the other major problems are supposed to have priority. The States' problem can be considered properly only when the other matters have been decided.

It is not helpful always to deal with a number of complicated issues all together. It is obvious that the States' problem, like the other problems, has to be viewed in an entirely different context on the basis of an independent India. It is this independence that comes first and colours everything else. Nevertheless, it is true that one cannot isolate one problem from another, and each one of them is inter-linked.

The independence we seek is not confined to a particular part or group and, inevitably, it is based on a democratic machinery of the State. That democratic machinery must exist not only at the top but also in the constituent units including such States as are big enough to function as constituent units. The smaller States will also necessarily have to be democratised though they will have to be absorbed in larger units.

The declaration made by the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, in January last, was welcomed by me[2] not because it accepted the fundamentals of democracy and responsible government, which are essential, but because it was a new and fresh approach to the problem, and certainly was satisfactory in regard to civil liberties. In practice, it has not been fully given effect to and complaints have reached me from many States of its violation. The permier State of India, Hyderabad, is, of course, in this, as in other matters, a class apart and it still does not allow the normal civil liberties and freedom of organisation.

All this is strange preparation for the big changes envisaged all over India. These changes must come, if we are to avoid disaster. It is clear that such changes even in the States cannot be half-hearted measures, which merely disturb the old without establishing the new.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 29 March 1946. *National Herald*, 30 March 1946.
2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 14, pp. 423-426.

Some States have attempted, rather feebly, to introduce a measure of dyarchy. This has not been successful and, in the context of today, has still less chances of success. Recently, it has failed in Kashmir where one of the popular ministers had to resign because he was given no opportunity to function effectively.[3] Obviously, no organisation or a self-respecting individual can undertake responsibility for the sake of form only without proper authority and opportunity.

It is true that in many States conditions are so backward, owing to the policy of the States and the British Government pursued for a large number of years, that it may be difficult to organise immediately a developed public opinion. In other States there is this developed opinion and it should not be at all difficult to take advantage of it and give it responsibility. These matters are capable of adjustment, if a proper approach is made. That approach can only be on the recognition of a democratic structure and responsible government.

It is clear that any constituent assembly, which frames the constitution of India, cannot ignore the States. It is equally clear that only a democratic representation of the States can fit in with the character of such an assembly. It should be remembered, however, that representation in such an assembly is a privilege which can be exercised only by those who accept its fundamentals and are prepared for a democratic form of government.

The All India States People's Conference, at its recent session at Udaipur, clearly stated the position[4] and the demands of the ninety million people of the States. That conference is today well organised and certainly represents a vast majority of the States people all over India. It has stated that it wants to deal with the Princes in as friendly a manner as possible so that we can evolve a new order for the States peacefully and cooperatively. It has also stated that such an order can only be based on the democratic freedom of the States' people and responsible government for them. That position holds good and nothing has happened since then to change it in any way.

3. Mirza Afzal Baig joined the Council of Ministers in 1944 and was in charge of public works and municipalities. But he had limited powers and faced opposition in the execution of his welfare schemes. Many important decisions of the State were taken by the council without his consent or knowledge. He resigned on 17 March 1946.
4. The Udaipur resolution stated that any political advance in India should go along with the establishment of full responsible government in the States, and in any future constitution for India the States should be represented by their elected representatives.

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4. The Udaipur resolution stated that any political advance in India should go along with the establishment of full responsible government in the States, and in any future constitution for India the States should be represented by their elected representatives.

In view of the developing situation, however, it is the desire of many members of the standing committee of the All India States People's Conference to have a meeting of the committee soon. I think it is right that we should meet and consider all our problems in the new context as well as strengthen our organisation which covers practically all the States in India.

I have, therefore, convened a meeting of the standing committee on 7 April 1946, in Delhi, and I hope that all members will attend this meeting.

3. The States and the Constituent Assembly[1]

I emphasise the need for giving due representation to the people of the Indian States in the constituent assembly.

It is dead certain that if the people are not properly represented in the constituent assembly, they will not only not like it, but will create trouble about it. The real question that arises today is how the people of the States should be represented in the constituent assembly.

It is unfortunate that the Cabinet Mission has not met representatives of the people of the Indian States.

I suppose they know well enough what the people stand for. Nevertheless, it is rather odd that vast numbers of the people of India, living in the States, should be more or less ignored in this way. Of course, in a strictly legalistic sense, the British Government has to deal with the rulers of the States, but when the whole structure of the government is going to change, it is obviously not only important, but essential. that the views of the people of the States should be known, and should prevail. Otherwise, there is going to be no peace in the States.

I visualise that there will be 15 or 20 States, which could join the Indian federation as units. The others, which are not big enough to be units. might be absorbed in the British Indian provinces, or they might group themselves together to form a unit of the federation, wherever

1. Press conference at Delhi, 11 April 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 14 April 1946.

feasible. These units would have exactly the same status as any other unit. The Indian States system will cease to exist completely in its present form.

We want to avoid any conflict with the rulers if we can. The rulers of the big States can continue to be constitutional heads of the States concerned, but the question will have to be ultimately decided by their own people. The rulers of small States, which are to be absorbed, cannot function at all. We are prepared to pension them off.

Question: Why should Indian States put up with kings when kings are being removed in Europe?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is not a question of some desire, it is a question of taking a very big step and of avoiding unnecessary conflicts. It depends ultimately on the strength of the people and various other circumstances. The main thing is to have responsible government in the States through democratic institutions.

I can conceive that the people in some States may like to have the rulers for historical or other reasons as a kind of formal head. In other States, they may not want them, in which case the ruler obviously has to go. But for the moment the States People's Conference does not think it a wise policy to lay down that all rulers must be immediately deprived of their palaces.

The Indian States system, as we see it today, is entirely a British creation. The problem for the States is how to get rid of the autocracy that has existed there and bring themselves to the same democratic level that will prevail in the rest of India.

Obviously, you cannot have democracy in one part and autocracy in the other. It will be a difficult problem to pull up the States to a common level with the rest of India, but it has to be done and to be done speedily. Whatever shape the future constitution might take, the Indian States will necessarily come under it.

I welcome the declaration[2] made by the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes on the civil liberties of the people of the States, but regret that it has not been given effect to in the manner we have expected.

2. The Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes had said that the Indian States, as a body, did not wish to hinder autonomous development of British India but desired to make every contribution towards the attainment of this objective. He assured that the people in the States would be permitted to have the freest and fullest enjoyment of civil liberties.

In the Indian federation, the States will have the same status as any other unit. The question of paramountcy might arise during the interim period, which I hope will not be long, say a year. British power should quit completely from all parts of India, including the States.

Q: What would be done if some States refuse to enter the Indian union?[3]

JN: To begin with, I would ignore their refusal. Obviously, it is very difficult to conceive of any State in the heart of India saying that we are independent and do not want to have anything to do with the rest of India. But I would not like to force a unit to enter the union. I should like circumstances to force the unit. The idea of a federal union has the support of the Indian National Congress, the States People's Conference and the ruling princes.

Q: What is your reaction to the discussions between the Princes and the Cabinet Mission?[4]

JN: Judging from press reports, they have taken up an attitude which is considerably in advance of any previous attitude taken up by them. I understand that they have supported fully the demand for the independence of India and for the removal of British power completely from all parts of India, including the States. They have also, as a body, supported the principle of the unity of India in a federation of autonomous units.[5]

So far as this goes, it is satisfactory. But the people of the States are intensely interested to know how the internal structure of the States will be developed.

3. The Nawab of Chhatari, Prime Minister of Hyderabad, was reported to have told the Cabinet Mission that Hyderabad was in permanent alliance with the British Government and that this relationship could not be abrogated without mutual consent.
4. The Nawab of Bhopal, the Maharaja of Patiala, the Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, the Maharaja of Bikaner and the Maharaja of Gwalior met the Cabinet Mission on 2 April 1946 and were understood to have favoured the demand for complete independence and pleaded for a monarchical form of government in the States.
5. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar and Mirza Ismail, who were spokesmen for the bigger States, advocated a union of India in which States should be an integral part.

4. The States in the Future Constitution[1]

Note I

It was stated that references to the merger of the small States to larger units of the federation had alarmed some of the rulers of these smaller States.[2] While some such merger might ultimately take place, it was desirable not to raise this issue at this stage as it would lead to unncessary complications. The present issue was the attitude of the States as a whole towards the independence of India. Other matters were secondary and should be dealt with later as occasion arises.

It is perfectly true that the fundamental issue today was one of the independence of India and the withdrawal of every form of British authority from India as a whole, including the States. This would include inevitably the withdrawal of British armed forces from India, including the States. Once this primary objective was attained the other issues could be viewed in an entirely different context and would be easier of solution with a larger measure of consent of the parties concerned. It is desirable, therefore, to lay emphasis on this primary and fundamental issue of independence.

Nevertheless it is difficult to avoid references occasionally to other important aspects of our problems, more especially when these are raised and we have to express our views in regard to them. Broadly speaking the problems can be divided into two parts—national and local. The former means our problem *vis-a-vis* Great Britain that is to say the independence of India. Another aspect of this national problem is the

1. The Nawab of Bhopal in his capacity as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes invited Jawaharlal, who was president of the States People's Conference, to Chikold (Bhopal State) for talks on the future relation of the States' people with the rulers and their position in the constitution-making body. They discussed the subject on 20 and 21 April 1946. Jawaharlal wrote two notes on the same days of his discussions. The notes are available in the J.N. Papers.
2. In 1936-38 the Government of India felt that in the event of the formation of a federation, integration of smaller States under cooperative grouping schemes for administrative and judicial matters was necessary. A scheme to attach very small States to larger neighbours was proposed in 1942. In 1944 an act for the attachment of small States to the larger States was passed. This was adopted only in regard to the Kathiawar States and the State of Baroda.

kind of federation that might be built up in India. The local aspect of the States problem especially would include the changes that are necessitated within the States in order to fit them into the national structure on an equal basis. This local aspect, important as it is, can be considered after the national aspect, though to a large extent the two are intertwined.

The changes that are envisaged in India lead up to a new situation, to an independent India, which is to consist of autonomous units federating together. While this new situation is being hammered out, given shape and given effect to, some kind of interim arrangement is necessary. This is necessary for two reasons: (1) The present system, from the Government of India downwards, is completely out of date and incapable of dealing with any of our problems. (2) If a big change is to come in the near future we have to prepare for it from now onwards and make the necessary adjustments during this interim period so that the change-over might be smooth.

The interim period thus has great importance, for out of it will arise the structure of independent India. It may be said with perfect justification that it is not necessary for us to consider internal problems at this stage in any detail because these matters will have to be considered and decided by the constituent assembly. The only fact on the basis of which we need proceed is the objective of independence, a federation of autonomous units of equal status and equal standards of democratic organisation. The rest can be left to be decided by the constituent assembly or such other processes which might accompany it. Nevertheless, many other matters do arise for consideration even though we might leave their decision to a later stage. Also we must have some blueprint of the future before us so that we might mould the interim period accordingly. It is difficult to fix the exact limit of the interim period. Usually a year is suggested for it. It may be a little less or a little more. But in view of the inevitability of rapid changes in the world situation as well as in India, it is highly unlikely that this period will be much longer than a year unless catastrophes overtake us in the world or in India. Such catastrophes may hasten the end of the period or lengthen it. It is desirable in any event for this interim period also to be in effect, if not in law, a period of real transfer of power to India from England. Probably it is not desirable to fix the nature of this changing period in terms of law, though some legal changes might be made easily and these might help, but generally speaking it will be a flexible and continually changing period when the law remains much the same as it is but the practice is entirely different, leading up to independence. During this interim period not only will the constituent assembly be

drawing up a constitution for India but at the same time the whole Indian States problem in its national and local aspects will have to be considered carefully by all the parties concerned so that the Indian States and their people should have a fitting and equal place in India.

It has been said that the Indian federation will consist of autonomous units. A very large measure of autonomy has been promised to the units, but the federation, if it is to function effectively, cannot be a weak or disjointed federation. It may be a limited one so far as the number of subjects are concerned but it must be a strong one more especially in regard to defence and allied subjects, such as external affairs, communications, tariffs, customs and currency. The federation, in other words, must be an organic federation and not a loosely-joined structure which threatens to fall apart. This is necessitated both by the international situation and by the urgent need of economic, industrial and social advance in India on all fronts. Considerations of defence are paramount in the world situation today and ignoring of them may lead to Indian freedom and independence being lost.

Just as the federation must be organic, so also each federating unit must be organic and not a loosely-connected grouping. This is necessary even more than the other, for if a unit is not organic it is not a unit in the real sense of the word and its administrative and economic machinery cannot function effectively. What must a unit of the federation be? It must have sufficient resources in terms of size, population, revenue and otherwise, to be able to maintain modern standards of social and economic welfare. If it is to have an equal status with other units, as it must, it must have a political and economic structure which is in harmony with the structure of other units, for obviously if it conflicts there will be continuous pulls in different directions within the federation. It is recognised today that the structure throughout India should be democratic and must aim at the well-being of the people. There may be minor variations between the internal structure of one unit and another, but in essentials there will have to be a large measure of uniformity. This will be necessary also from the point of view of large-scale planning which is so essential if India is to make rapid progress in raising standards of living.

It is difficult to say how many of the existing States are capable of forming units of the federation as they are. It is, however, clear that only a very few of them can be considered, in their present form, suited to become units of the federation. Various estimates have been made varying from a dozen to about twenty. Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar has stated that the number of such States should not in any case exceed

fifteen or twenty.[3] The number is not important at present. What is important is the qualification of such States and that is the ability to pull together with the other units and to have the resources to progress rapidly with the rest of India. To join the federation as a unit is not merely an obligation; it should be a privilege to which certain qualifications and obligations in regard to standards and methods of administration attach.

In any event it is perfectly clear that a very large number of States cannot, as they are, form units of the federation. They cannot, it is admitted, remain attached to British authority and paramountcy. Obviously also they cannot remain in the air. What then is to happen to them?

They may form groups amongst themselves so that each group might be big enough and strong enough, in the manner mentioned above, to form an effective unit of the federation. This is certainly possible in many parts of the country, more especially in Rajputana, Central India, and the Maharatta States, possibly also in Kathiawar and elsewhere. It must be remembered, however, as has been mentioned above, that such grouping has to be an organic grouping, otherwise it is not a real unit.

Even after such grouping to form units has been made, it is possible for a number of smaller States to be left out. Obviously, these small States cannot function for themselves in any way at all. There appears to be no way out other than absorption in some neighbouring unit. Grouping of States can only be effected when such States are contiguous.

Some eight years ago the All India States People's Conference passed a resolution in regard to the States and the proposed federation of India. This has been called the Ludhiana Resolution and it laid down a test m population and revenue.[4] Since then many changes have occurred and the matter was considered afresh last January at Udaipur. The following resolution was then passed:

3. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar said on 29 March 1946 that he favoured the idea of grouping together small States which were economically unable to maintain a modern administration. Only an annual revenue of Rs. 50 lakhs could justify the existence of States or groups of States.
4. According to the Ludhiana resolution, major States should form democratic autonomous units in a free and federated India. Any such unit "must of necessity be large enough and capable enough of functioning as a unit of the federation, and all such States as are not large enough or are incapable of functioning as proper political and economic units must necessarily be absorbed in the provincial units or be grouped together, where feasible and practicable, to form a unit of the federation."

This conference is of opinion that only such States as have a sufficient population and revenue to be able to maintain modern standards of social and economic welfare should continue as units which can join as such in the proposed federation of India. The primary consideration must be the people's welfare and progress. The Ludhiana resolution which laid down that only those States which have a population of 20 lakhs of people and over, or a revenue exceeding Rs. 50 lakhs, should be examined from this point of view so that the States forming autonomous units in the federation fulfil these fundamental considerations. The smaller States which are unable to come up to these standards should generally be absorbed in the neighbouring provinces. Where this is considered feasible and necessary for cultural and other reasons, a measure of autonomy may be granted to them within the province. In States so absorbed in, or attached to, provinces suitable provisions should be made for the present rulers and their personal dignity and position safeguarded.

It is to be noted that stress is laid in this resolution not on population or revenue but on the ability to maintain modern standards of social and economic welfare. Another notable feature of this resolution is the suggestion that a measure of autonomy might be granted to a small State within a larger unit where this is considered feasible and necessary for cultural and other reasons. The States People's Conference was anxious to work out a solution as far as possible with the concurrence and goodwill of the rulers and the people and, therefore, suggested this autonomy so as to enable the State with a cultural or other background to maintain a certain individuality. This autonomy would, of course, be a limited one and for economic and administrative purposes the autonomous area would be a part of the larger unit. The desire of the States People's Conference to proceed in a manner friendly to the Princes, as far as possible, is evidenced by a statement that in States absorbed to a larger unit suitable provisions should be made for the present rulers and their personal dignity and position safeguarded.

That is the present policy of the States People's Conference in regard to this matter. It would appear to be the policy of almost everyone who has given thought to this subject. There is no other way out. It is not a question of doing anything which may be disagreeable to the rulers concerned but of following the inevitable logic of events which no one can ignore.

As has been said above, this question should be considered in its details at a later stage. No stress need be laid on it at present when larger issues are at stake. But when and where the question arises, it

would be unfair to all parties concerned not to face it in its obvious implications. It would be unfair because this would lead to misapprehension and subsequent charges of having been misled. It is clear that very great changes are coming over India and these changes will affect the States equally with the rest of India. It is clear also that India as a whole has to hang together and develop a certain uniformity, though it may preserve in many ways its rich variety and distinctiveness. Some of the States have long traditions and a historical background behind them and they might well preserve that identity and tradition but even those can only be preserved if they are in harmony with the dynamic and progressive tendencies of the country. To come into conflict with these tendencies or to obstruct them is more likely to injure them and to shorten their life. Democratic institutions are bound to come all over India and ultimately the shape that India takes, and that will include the States, will depend on the will of the people. There is no essential difference between the people of a State and those of an adjoining area, whether it is a province or a State, though there are differences between the people of some provinces and others in regard to language and other matters. Common movements have affected and will still more affect in the future the people of the States and the rest of India. There is no escape from this and wisdom leads to only one conclusion: to line up with these movements and indeed to lead them. Obstruction is likely to be harmful both to the large cause and to the individual concerned. It is possible, and in some cases probable, that particular States with their special cultural background may have a distinctive role to fulfil in the India of the future. But that role itself will only come in evidence if it is a harmonious part of the larger movement of the Indian people for national development. The future of India is potentially one of a great power advancing all along the line. That greatness and progress will be the heritage of all who help in bringing it about. The rulers of the States, whether big or small, cannot only be sharers in that heritage but can play a notable part in the India that is going to take shape. Their position can in reality be greater and more honourable if they have the capacity and the will for it than their present position.

This note has rather strayed from the narrower issue for which it was intended. But it is difficult to separate entirely one aspect of a large problem from the others. The broad framework of the problem has to be kept in view even if we are to understand a small part of it. It is desirable to proceed in the solution of this as of other problems in a cooperative and friendly way. Certainly nothing should be said or done which creates ill will and distrust, but at the same time one cannot forget the realities of the situation. This reality includes many factors,

among them being the great awakening of the people of the States and the growing and insistent demand on their part to be full and equal sharers in India's freedom to come. To make the people think that they are going to be ignored or bypassed is obviously a policy full of dangerous implications. This factor has always to be borne in mind. Indeed it has been sufficiently recognised by many Princes and many of their Ministers.

Though there are 560 or 561 States in India the problem is essentially one of the bigger States.[5] The smaller States will have to fall in line with others and, therefore, their problem can well be considered at a somewhat later stage when the compulsion of events makes people think more in terms of reality. Among these events is the major one of the inevitability in the near future of the withdrawal of the British power from India and the growth of democratic institutions and some form of responsible government.

The position taken up on behalf of the Princes before the British Cabinet delegation in regard to Indian independence and the withdrawal of British power and authority as well as paramountcy has been welcomed generally in so far as that goes.[6] On some other matters there may be and there is some difference of opinion. But it is fully recognised and appreciated that the primary issue has been put first and dealt with firmly. On that there can and must be unity of opinion and demand. As and when other issues arise they should be dealt with in a friendly and cooperative manner as between the Princes and the people's representatives, and it is highly likely that a great deal of agreement will emerge. The approach can only be one of serving the cause of India as a whole, of the States and their people. With that common objective it should be possible to find a common path.

5. Of the 562 States, only 143 were considered important enough to be mentioned in the Government of India Act of 1935. The rest were not really States but estates and the rulers did not enjoy sovereign rights. Even of these 143, only 52 were considered big enough to deserve separate representation in the federal legislature, while the remaining 91 were grouped together for that purpose.
6. At the annual session of the Chamber of Princes on 17 January 1946 it was affirmed that the States fully shared the general desire of the country for the immediate attainment of political freedom and intended to make every possible contribution to the settlement of the constitutional problem.

Note II

THE BUILDING UP OF A NATION

Yesterday and today I have had lengthy conversations with the ruler of Bhopal in regard to the problem of the Indian States in the future constitution of India. He spoke to me, as a rule, as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes and as such he was a little afraid of committing himself to anything specific. Sometimes he would add that in his personal capacity he was prepared to go much further but he wanted to carry others with him and this required tactful handling. He emphasised on several occasions, and I agreed with him, that the major issue was Indian independence and the rest would follow. On that issue he said that the Princes have put up a straight front. I appreciated this, whatever the reasons behind this attitude might have been.

When we discussed other matters there was a great deal of reluctance to agree to anything which seemed to limit the rights and privileges of the Princes. Of course a federation with common subjects had already been agreed to. Apart from this everything was rather vague. It was admitted that the federal centre would be the supreme authority regarding the common subjects. But the rest was supposed to be almost entirely in the domain of the States, or at any rate no commitment at this stage was liked. The reason for this was partly the fact that there was doubt as to the nature of this federation. Was there going to be one federation or two, one constituent assembly or two? So far as I was concerned I made it clear that I was proceeding on the basis of one constituent assembly and one federation.

One rather surprising suggestion was thrown out: that the States should join the federation in a body, may be through the Chamber of Princes. This in effect was some kind of a Rajasthan, though this word was not used. I pointed out that any such conception appeared to me to be wholly wrong and rather fantastic. Apart from many other defects that it suffered from, it would be a kind of loose sub-federation not even geographically connected together and varying in quality as between its different parts to an enormous extent. As such it could not become a unit, much less an equal unit, in the central federation. The point was not pressed and was only casually mentioned.

Another system casually mentioned was that there should be regional grouping of States, each region becoming a unit of the federation. For this too I expressed my dislike for more or less the same reasons.

Ultimately it seemed that the only feasible way for the States to join the federation was as suggested in my first note, i.e., for major States to join as units, for smaller States to group themselves together if geographically so situated and then form a unit or units, and for the remaining States to be absorbed in some existing unit.

We discussed various other matters, such as the preparatory period during which the States could come up to the common level of democratic, representative and responsible government which might prevail in the rest of India, the interim period from now till the framing of the federal constitution by the constituent assembly; fundamental rights etc. On most of these points there was considerable divergence of opinion and approach between us, and yet I was repeatedly assured that there was no great difference in regard to the final objective, i.e., the building up of a great Indian nation, or, as it was termed, a greater India.

Preparatory Period: This refers to the period that might be necessary to bring up the administrative structure of the States on a par with the rest of India. It was pointed out to me that the States, or many of them, were so backward and so lacking in trained human material that any attempt to establish full-fledged responsible government would end in failure and would delay progress. It was necessary, therefore, to have a preparatory period during which representatives institutions could be progressively introduced and the people trained in their use. It was suggested that during this period the ruler should have considerable authority. The period may vary in the case of different States and some might hardly require it. Vaguely a time limit of fifteen years was suggested.

I agreed that many of the States were terribly backward and there might be difficulty in the way of finding suitable human material within the States to start with. That indeed was a reason why there should be a closer union with the federation which would help in many ways. That was also a reason for avoiding backward areas from remaining isolated from the rest of India. A backward area attached to a progressive area would be pulled up. Several backward areas grouped together would simply remain where they were.

Also it was not really possible to train people for responsible government without casting responsibility upon them even at some risk. Without responsibility they develop only the agitational aspect and this will give rise to continuous conflict and difficulty. It might be possible for a brief period to give full responsibility, but at the same time to have some checks to prevent misuse. A very important factor in the present situation was the awakening of the States people. It would be almost impossible to maintain institutions in the States which compare very

unfavourably with those of the rest of India. Besides it is highly probable that in some of the major States responsible government in some shape or form might be established in the near future. If this is done in some States the people of the other States would become even more restive and would refuse to submit to any form of autocratic rule. It must be remembered that the tempo of change in India, whatever the future might hold for us, was going to be rapid and inevitably the States would have to fit into this tempo.

The result of this talk was that the ruler of Bhopal expressed every sympathy for change in the States and for a rapid association of the people with the government. But he added that we must take things as they are and a preparatory period was essential. In his opinion full responsible government was not possible in most of the States today and would not even be in the interest of the people because it would be exploited for the advantage of some small group. Meanwhile, however, steps should be taken towards that end.

Interim Period: This refers to the period from now onwards to the establishment of the new federal constitution, a period during which it is presumed an interim national government would be functioning. Speaking as Chancellor, Bhopal wanted to have no constitutional relations with the interim government though he hoped that there would be friendly relations. As there were certain common interests he suggested the formation of an advisory committee consisting of, say, three representatives of the rulers, presumably nominated by the Chamber of Princes, and three of the interim government. This advisory committee would consider matters of common concern and would advise the Viceroy who will still function during this interim period as Crown Representative. The States, however, had made it perfectly clear that even during this period British paramountcy must go. This did not mean, according to him, that paramountcy should vest in the interim national government. Bhopal suggested, however, that he was prepared that a decision in regard to common interests may be left for the time being to the interim government and its legislature provided that there was full consultation with the Princes prior to any such decision especially in regard to policy. It might be mentioned that the common subjects at present are:

1. Customs tariff
2. Salt tax
3. Any other form of central taxation affecting Indian States
4. Railway policy
5. Air communications
6. Trunk roads

7. Posts and telegraphs
8. Wireless
9. Currency and coinage
10. Commerce, banking and insurance, so far as the matters affect both the States and British India
11. Opium policy
12. Indians overseas
13. League of Nations, presumably now the U.N.O., and its ancillary bodies

I suggested that it would be highly desirable to associate the people of the States with this advisory committee during the interim period. To this Bhopal would not agree though he expressed sympathy with the idea underlying it. He said that only governments could be represented in such a committee. Indeed it would be no easy matter to represent State governments because of the conflicting interests of some States, such as maritime States and others.

The Crown Representative would in form continue but this advisory committee for joint subjects was not supposed to advise the Crown Representative. Indeed the Crown Representative should be eliminated from any consideration of these common subjects.

Political Department: Presumably this department[7] would continue during the interim period though some of its functions might be transferred to the advisory committee. At present the Crown Representative can demand any sum he likes from the Indian revenues for this Political Department. This, I am told, is a non-votable item in the Central Legislature. I said that the interim national government must have a say about this sum. Bhopal did not know anything about it and said the matter did not concern him or the other Princes. So far as he was concerned the interim government could do what it chose in regard to it.

I suggested that it would be desirable for the Political Adviser during this interim period to be appointed by the Crown Representative in consultation with the interim government. Bhopal said that the interim government did not come into the picture and the Political Adviser should be appointed in consultation with the Princes or their representatives. He would, of course, want someone who was also *persona grata* with the interim government. The question really was one of informal consultation between various parties concerned. It would be difficult and undesirable for any fixed arrangement during the brief interim

7. The Political Department was directly under the Crown Representative and wholly beyond the control of the Government of India and generally functioned in a way opposed to the wishes of the people of the States.

period. After this period both the Political Department and the Political Adviser would presumably go, at any rate, in so far as the States adhering to the federation were concerned.

The objection to the interim government having nothing to do with the appointment of the Political Adviser to the Crown Representative was resisted by Bhopal as establishing an undesirable precedent of interference by "British India" in matters peculiarly relating to the States, such as dynastic matters, question of deposition of a ruler, etc. Few such matters would probably arise during the brief period and in case there was a serious complaint against a ruler's conduct Bhopal suggested that the matter should be formally placed before a judicial tribunal. The question had little intrinsic importance except that it brought out the fear of the Princes of intervention from what they call "outside" and the development of a kind of paramountcy by the interim government.

Constituent assembly: When this matter was raised immediately the question was put: Is there going to be one such assembly or two? It was difficult to decide till the picture of the constituent assembly emerged. Would there be treaties or instruments of accession? I said I was discussing the whole problem on the basis of one constituent assembly which would draft the federal constitution. It would not presumably go into the matter of the constitution of the federating units, but it might well lay down certain fundamental aspects of these local constitutions. No federal constitution could be framed without a certain uniformity in the internal structure of the units. That uniformity would mean a democratic basis, fundamental rights etc. The question of fundamental rights (which it must be remembered has been formally agreed to by the Chamber of Princes) gave rise to another query: Does this mean that the federal government would interfere with or intervene in matters of local concern like law and order etc.? I said that the proper course seemed to me when the federation objected to any infringement of fundamental rights or provisions of the constitution, the matter be referred to the Supreme Court for its decision. That seemed the proper method to deal with any such conflict. This was not interference with the unit's powers.

As for treaties or instruments of accession I could not quite make out where they came into the picture at all. States joining the federation came in on the basis of the federal constitution and ceased to have any distinctive feature as the State as opposed to a province.

Bhopal said that the Princes have taken no decision yet about joining the constituent assembly except that they have said that they might join it when they saw the full picture. He himself was not sure whether it was desirable for them to join it to begin with or to wait till a later

stage. He asked me what I would prefer in the matter. I said that I would not like any compulsion to be exercised on a State in regard to joining the constituent assembly. I would like the States to join provided, of course, it was in a position to function as a unit and provided also that it was prepared to bring up its administrative and other machinery to the common level.

The question of representation on the constituent assembly was considered. I pointed out that there was a strong feeling on the subject and if the people of the States were not directly represented there would be trouble.

Bhopal said that the prevailing idea among the Princes was that only governments could be represented but no definite decision had been taken. They were waiting still for the picture of the constituent assembly before they decided. It was quite possible that a measure of representation from elected members of States legislatures could be arranged for. Indeed there was a definite trend in this direction. This would apply to such States as had such legislatures. But most of the major States had them. The course even then will be for the State Government either to appoint the leader of the elected majority party or to allow the elected members to choose one person who would then be nominated by the government, or for a panel to be chosen by the elected members out of which the State government might choose one person. This kind of representation could only come in where a State had more than one representative in the constituent assembly.

If there was only one representative, then some government official would be that one; if two, then there would be one government official and one chosen from the elected members. There was no means of providing for elected representation, according to Bhopal, from the smaller States.

I pointed out that ever since the idea of a constituent assembly had been placed before the country stress had always been laid on the States being represented by their elected representatives. In 1942 the National Congress had rejected the Cripps proposals *inter alia* on this ground.[8] There was no doubt at all that the Congress would adhere to that position. Today the States' people, of course, were very anxious about it and I could not imagine their submitting to being represented purely by

8. According to the Cripps proposals the States were to be represented on the constitution-making body by a delegation in proportion to their population. But there was no indication in those proposals or in any subsequent pronouncements by responsible British statesmen as to how this representation was to be secured, that is, whether through the nominees of the Princes or delegates chosen by the States' people or by a mixed procedure.

the ruler's nominees. Bhopal said that the situation today was different from what it was in 1942. In 1942 the rulers had opposed Indian independence and more or less lined up with the British power asking it to preserve their interests. Now the States stood for Indian independence. They wanted to give up their association with the British Crown completely. They relied on their own people and their fate in future would be linked with them. Therefore the previous divergence had largely gone now. Then again, he added, the constituent assembly would deal with the federal constitution only and not with internal matters affecting the States. Because of this he thought the interest of the States people would not be so great. He was afraid also that States people's representatives might put up a very poor show, through lack of competence, in the constituent assembly.

Bhopal added, however, that as he hoped the Princes would consider the principle of some representation of the elected element, in the manner indicated above, no great difficulty would remain. I said that it might be possible to bring in the elected element with mutual consent but I was quite clear that on this issue there would be much heart-burning and trouble if any attempt was made to bypass it in any way. It had become a vital test for all of us.

Bhopal added finally that he had been speaking to me as Chancellor and he was unable to commit himself more because of that in regard to the many matters that we had discussed. He wanted to assure me, however, that all the States were fully aware of the vastness of the issues at stake and of the inevitability of change. In fact they were taking steps towards that end even now. They had already done a big thing by lining up with the demand for India's independence and the elimination of the British. He hoped that we would all avoid argument about details and bickering over relatively small matters and concentrate on the bigger issues which would lead to the greater India of our dream.[9]

9. Jawaharlal sent copies of these two notes to Maulana Azad and Vallabhbhai Patel.

5. The Need for a Unified Policy[1]

The standing committee of the All India States People's Conference met in Delhi early in April to consider the situation in the States generally and more particularly in regard to future developments in the whole of India. The committee was anxious to offer its full cooperation in the solution of the vital problems which were facing the country, believing as it did that no effective solution was possible which ignored the States and the people there. The committee appointed a sub-committee which was to continue sitting in Delhi and to watch the interests of the States people and to cooperate wherever possible in the consideration of various problems affecting them. The sub-committee regrets, however, that its offer[2] of cooperation was ignored and those at present in authority have proceeded to consider the problems both of India as a whole and of the States without taking into consideration the views and wishes of the representatives of the people of the States. Such an attitude is entirely contrary to any democratic approach to a problem affecting 93,000,000 people, and no approach which ignores these people can be effective or can have any permanence.

At the moment the sub-committee has no knowledge of what developments are likely to take place in the Indian situation, but the fact that the States people's representatives have been given no place even in consultation is a sufficiently important development for it to take notice of and to fashion its future work accordingly. It should be remembered that in a vast number of States there is no semblance of even semi-democratic institutions and there is, therefore, no possibility of any true representation of the people. In a few major States legislative assemblies have been created, but they are mostly of an advisory character and have been elected on a very restricted franchise. Where elections have taken place for these legislative assemblies the States people's organisations have secured notable victories demonstrating their

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal on 28 April 1946 for the sub-committee of the All India States People's Conference and issued as a statement to the press.
2. The Cabinet Mission had invited only the representatives of the Princes for the negotiations on the future constitutional arrangement. A resolution of the Congress Working Committee dated 7 April 1946 stated: "The State means not the ruler, but the people. Hence the demand is that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, President of the All India States People's Conference, should be called upon to open negotiations with the Mission on behalf of the States' subjects".

representative character. Even these semi-democratic assemblies have been ignored.

The sub-committee is well aware of the fact that conditions in the States are politically and economically backward with the exception of a very few States. This very backwardness which demands urgent change and reform is treated as a reason for delaying change. It is patent that in an independent India the people of the States must have an equal place and must also have the same civil and democratic liberties as the people of the rest of India. India cannot be half-democratic and half-autocratic, nor indeed can any organic federal union be built up on this basis. In the circumstances at present existing it is, therefore, urgently necessary both from the point of view of the people of the States and of India as a whole that immediate and far-reaching changes should take place in the States to bring them to the same level of administrative and democratic organisation as the rest of India. Otherwise the two will not be able to pull together. Indeed the changes in the States are more urgently required than elsewhere. The fact that this obvious point is being ignored by those at present in authority in England or in India is in itself a significant indication that true Indian independence is not aimed at.

The States People's Conference has offered its friendly cooperation to the Princes and has welcomed certain indications on their part of a change in attitude. The declaration of the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes assuring civil liberty to the people of the States was welcomed by the president both in itself and as a possible indication of a new approach. Subsequent happenings, however, have not justified this hope and recent events in Delhi and in particular the attitude of the British Cabinet Mission towards the representatives of the States' people have made it clear that the States people's movement must rely upon its own strength if it is to achieve its objective. The States People's Conference will continue to offer its cooperation to those in authority but that co-operation can only be on the basis of rapid change in the condition of the people and the structure of government which prevails in the States. The tempo of change in the world is dynamic and both international and national situations change rapidly from day to day. The States and their people cannot continue to remain static and unchanging or even slowly changing in this context and if normal avenues of change and progress are not open, other avenues will have to be explored.

With a view to consider the full situation as it is evolving today the sub-committee recommends that a meeting of the general council of the All India States People's Conference be held at an early date at a suitable place. The president should fix both the venue and the date of

the conference. It is suggested that, if otherwise convenient, Delhi might be the venue and that this meeting be held in the last week of May. Notice of this meeting should be issued as far as possible two weeks previously. Members of the general council, however, should be informed now of this approaching meeting so that they might keep in readiness for it.

It was decided some time back, at the invitation of the Indore Rajya Praja Mandal, to hold a convention of representatives and elected members of States legislatures at Indore. In view of the proposed meeting of the general council this convention should be postponed for the present and the question of holding it and fixing a suitable date for it be considered hereafter.

6. The Rights of the States People[1]

This meeting was fixed up about a month ago when it was hoped that the negotiations with the British Cabinet Mission would have ended. The general council was to meet then to take stock of the situation and decide on future action. As it happens, those negotiations have not ended although they may be in the last stages. Meanwhile, other problems also have arisen demonstrating the explosive nature of the situation in the Indian States.

In Udaipur, last January, we met in full conference and laid down the general policy governing our organisation. That conference was a remarkably representative one, and it may, therefore, be said that our decisions were the decisions of the people of the States in India. While firmly expressing our objective and our policy we made it clear then that we sought no quarrel with the rulers unless this was forced upon us. I said that our approach to the Princes must be a friendly one because the time had come when every Indian, whether he is a prince or a pauper, must realise that India must be a free and independent nation with democratic institutions. We appealed to the princes to put themselves in line with this overpowering urge of the Indian people. It appeared soon after that there was some response to this appeal when the

1. Speech at the general council, All India States People's Conference, Delhi, 8 June 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 9 June 1946.

Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes made a declaration on civil liberties and the like. That declaration did not go far and no mention was made of our fundamental objective of responsible government. Nevertheless we welcomed it as a sign of change.

Unfortunately, that change was more in speech than in action though there was some action also in some States. But the past few months had brought out instances of gross deprivation of civil liberties and encroachment on the privileges of the people. Recently in Kashmir there has been a flare-up and the situation there is still tense.

I do not at present wish to go into the details of these occurrences. What is much more important is to understand this explosive background in the Indian States. Because we of the States People's Conference have deliberately avoided conflict, some people have thought that the position in the States is serene and quiet and the people there can be almost ignored. As a matter of fact the people of the States have changed vastly during the last few years and participate in equal measure with their fellow countrymen in other parts of India in the passion for freedom. They hunger for change and if a big change does not come speedily enough there are bound to be explosions. When a people, long suffering and long repressed, get this passionate urge, legal formulas are of no avail.

During the last two and a half months a delegation of the British Cabinet has been in India trying to find ways and means to settle the Indian problem. They have, no doubt, worked hard and tried their best, though no one knows yet what the result of their labours will be. But the most astonishing part of this long-drawn-out performance has been the absence of the representatives of the States people from any of these deliberations. In effect, the 93 million men and women of the States have been ignored and there has been deep feeling on this subject. It is inconceivable that any constitution for India can be made effectively or can be stable unless the feelings of these States people are fully taken into account. It is true that the representatives of the National Congress have spoken for the people of the States. We appreciate that and are grateful for it, but we think that the time has come when vicarious representation even of the best is not good enough. The States people claim to speak for themselves and they will see to it that they are heard. No one else, and certainly not their rulers, can speak for them.

Again in the statement issued by the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy last month, the States problem is left entirely vague. Perhaps vagueness has sometimes advantages. It is certainly better than a wrong decision. But it does seem odd that this great problem affecting a quarter of the

Indian population should be left in this nebulous state. British paramountcy, we are told, will go when the new constitution functions. What then? Nobody knows exactly. Of course, British paramountcy must go not only from the States but from every aspect of life in India and the sooner it goes the better. That paramountcy has been largely exercised in the past for the strengthening of the British rule and against the people's movements in the States. But what does take its place? Does the autocratic ruler become even more than at present a law unto himself?

The rulers, with one exception[2], do not say so and yet they want to be left in complete freedom to decide for themselves. That is that a group of individuals, however good or bad they may be, with special vested interests and privileges, are to decide by themselves about the future of those vested interests and privileges. It is true the elemental forces that are shaping India's destiny are much too powerful to be controlled or diverted by the rulers or by anyone else. Nevertheless it is odd that it should be argued that the rulers by themselves should decide the fate of nearly a 100 million people.

I referred above to an exception. That exception is Hyderabad State, that remarkable State which is called the premier State of India, and which also in many ways is the most feudal and backward. Alone among the big States of India it has not yet even evolved any kind of elected or semi-elected assembly. Alone also it has yet not removed the long-existing ban on the State Congress. This backward State claims independence for itself when the British go. How long this fictitious independence can last is another matter. We remember a statement made by the Nizam about two years ago—that he depended on the British for protection and, therefore, British overlordship should continue. It was a frank admission. Well, it is certain enough now that the British will quit India. What then of this protection and what of independence in the State?

These are fantastic assertions unrelated to facts or reality. That reality is that none of the States can be independent or can go out of a federal India. If that is so, as it is, then everything that we do now must take us to that end of a federal union of India of autonomous units with a democratic structure of government everywhere responsible to the people.

2. The Nizam of Hyderabad had said that the Hyderabad State would not join any constituent assembly, and "shall become entitled to resume the status of an independent sovereign after the lapse of paramountcy."

Many rulers recognise, however regretfully, that this is inevitable. But they imagine that it will take a considerable time and that there will be many stages, but the march of events in India and the world does not permit of any tarrying during this journey. We have lingered already much too long and those who want to take things leisurely even now will be pushed by events.

Our objective is responsible government in the States under the aegis of the ruler as a constitutional head. That objective continues till it is changed. I wish to make this clear because of recent events in Kashmir. Those events have not changed our objective, though there is a growing feeling for change. Ultimately, of course, it will be for the people of the State to decide about the future of the head of their State. There is much talk about dynastic rights and the like. While we have accepted the continuance of the ruler as a constitutional head, it must be made perfectly clear that the only ultimate rights we recognise are the rights of the people. Everything else must give way to them. Sovereignty must reside in the people and not in any individual.

The immediate problems before us are: making of an Indian constitution, arrangements for the interim period, and democratisation of the States to bring them up to a common level of the rest of India.

It has been one of the fundamental policies of the States people that in the constitution-making body their elected representatives must take part. They will not submit to their fate being decided by their rulers or by the rulers' nominees. We hold by that.

It is clear that when a federal union is established each unit will have equal rights. There will be no paramountcy of one part over another. This presumes, of course, equal development and democracy in all the parts. There will be no paramountcy as it exists today, or it may be said that paramountcy for the whole of India will vest in the federal union government.

During the interim period, some kind of *ad hoc* arrangement will have to be made. Whatever this arrangement is going to be, the States people should not be left out of it. It is essential that there should be a unified policy even during this interim period between the provisional government and the States, and that in the formation of this policy the States people should have a considerable voice. It is not possible even during this period to continue the present arrangements. Even if to some extent the old form prevails the content must undergo a complete change. There has been nothing so reactionary in India as the Political Department. It might be possible to have a joint committee, with representatives of the provisional government and of the States, to consider all common problems and to develop a unified policy.

In this committee, the principle of the representation of the Indian States must be accepted. How this should be done is a matter for consideration. The object should be to avoid two kinds of deadlock: a deadlock between the interim government and the States, and a deadlock between the people of the States and their rulers.

The difficulty as it faces us today is largely due to the autocratic character of the States governments. If there had been democracy there, no difficulty would have arisen. Therefore, for this reason, as well as others, it is exceedingly important that urgent steps should be taken to introduce democratic and responsible government in the States. As soon as the government and the people are one, most problems vanish. That should be the immediate objective.

In regard to many matters which normally come under paramountcy, such as succession, maladministration etc., they may well be referred to a tribunal or to the Federal Court for decision.

I have referred to Kashmir. Many alarming reports have come to us about recent events there. Some of them have been contradicted. I have been trying to find out the truth of what happened and if I find that I have been responsible for any wrong statement, I shall certainly correct it. In such matters, there is both exaggeration on the one side, and an attempt to hide and distort what is happening on the other. It is difficult to find the golden mean. Obviously it is necessary even in the interest of the State administration to have an impartial inquiry into these events.

But an inquiry is not enough when day-to-day conflicts take place. Our colleague and comrade, the Vice-President of the All India States People's Conference, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, is in prison with a large number of his co-workers, and it is stated that there are going to be trials. Obviously, there will be no peace in Kashmir if trials and convictions of popular leaders continue. The British Government has repeatedly played that game and failed. The Kashmir Government is hardly likely to succeed. To Sheikh Abdullah and the people of Kashmir, we send our greetings.

One aspect of the Kashmir troubles demands our attention. That is the tendency, often encouraged by those in authority in all the States, to support faction or communalism. The policy of divide and rule has always been a favourite one of rulers all over the world. We must be aware of that and we of the States People's Conference should specially avoid anything that savours of communalism. We stand for freedom of the people, irrespective of any religion or creed, and equal rights for all. To give as examples two major States in India, we stand for exactly

the same thing in Hyderabad and Kashmir or in any other State and that is the people's rule and sovereignty.

Big developments are going to take place in India, though what exactly they will be, I do not know. But it is clear that ultimately what counts is the strength of the organisation of the people. Therefore we must concentrate on spreading and strengthening the All India States People's Conference which has already grown so rapidly and so well. Let us make it not only a powerful voice of the people, but also a weapon to achieve our objective.

I have not discussed deliberately what the immediate future may decide — as to the acceptance and working out, or the rejection, of the proposals for a constituent assembly and a provisional government. The major decision in regard to that will have to be made soon by the National Congress, and that decision is bound to affect us in all the States. Whatever that decision may be, its consequences will be far-reaching. It may lead to some kind of equilibrium or instability or conflict. We must be prepared for all these consequences.

7. To T. Vijayaraghavachari[1]

New Delhi
13 June 1946

Dear Sir T. Vijayaraghavachari[2],

I received your letter of the 5th June a few days ago. It so happened that a number of prominent Praja Mandal workers from Udaipur were here to take part in the meetings of the General Council of the All India States People's Conference. I referred your letter to them and as an answer to it they have given me a long note. I have also discussed this matter with them. I am not going to trouble you with the note they have given me as probably you are acquainted with most of the facts. Their approach is, of course, entirely different from yours and various charges of inefficient handling of the food situation as well as other matters are made in it. What I am concerned with is something more fundamental.

All over India, including the Indian States, there is something entirely new functioning, a tremendous urge and push towards political and economic change, and this is in evidence in many aspects of life there.

1. J.N. Collection.
2. (1875-1953); earlier dewan of Cochin, at this time dewan of Udaipur.

The Praja Mandals have rapidly grown in strength and influence and undoubtedly they represent mass feeling. They are becoming the counterpart of the National Congress in the States. I have no doubt that occasionally Praja Mandal workers may commit errors or use intemperate language. We try to avoid this, but in a large popular movement it is not possible wholly to do so. After all our common people have had no occasion to be trained in the niceties of drawing-room etiquette. Their training has been in the hard school of hunger, poverty and suffering and it is not surprising if they react sometimes in undesirable ways. The Indian National Congress is an old and mature organisation with a very high standard of leadership, both from the moral and other points of view. And yet inevitably in the vast organisation that the Congress represents many things happen that we regret and deplore. The very conditions created by British rule in India lead to such consequences. So also the conditions existing in the Indian States lead to similar consequences. Indeed in the States there is less maturity or experience of public life while there is a tremendous urge for change and freedom. On the whole I think that the national movement in India and the new urge for freedom in the States have been conducted on a high level which can compare very favourably with any like movements anywhere in the world. It is easy to pick holes in them but the real thing to do is to understand their inner significance and the fact that they represent a new and growing power which must have its way. Old standards do not apply to them because those old standards of administration and thought are completely out of place in the present conditions.

All the talk of independence for India and responsible government in the States, which is so common now and almost universally accepted, and which has led to the visit of the British Cabinet delegation and the approaching termination of British authority and rule in India, is significant indication of this changing scene. It is a pity that the States have not fully appreciated what is happening and what is bound to happen, although there are indications that some rulers and their ministers are vaguely conscious of all this and are trying to adapt themselves to it.

The major fact in Udaipur, as in many States, is the continuance of an administration which is completely out of date and divorced from public opinion or influence. Where such an administration exists today there is bound to be continuous friction. It does not help much to consider small incidents or petty attempts at cooperation in regard to say the explanation of the forest reservation policy or the destruction of the pig population. The main consideration is the condition of the human population and what that population feels and thinks and wants.

During my visit to Udaipur in December/January last I came into

contact with many of the Praja Mandal workers there. I was struck by their high standard of service and capacity. Mr. Maneklal Verma in particular impressed me considerably. I came to the conclusion that the Mewar Praja Mandal was in good hands.

I suggest to you, therefore, that the root of the trouble in Udaipur, as in some other States, is the continuation of a system of administration which has no relation to facts today and, therefore, the immediate need of the moment is to popularise that administration and make it responsible to the people's wishes. Even during any interim period before a major change takes effect, it is desirable to have cooperation between the administration and the Praja Mandal, for the Praja Mandal represents as nearly as possible the wishes of the people of Mewar. Such cooperation must necessarily be on terms of some equality and consideration for each other. It is not cooperation to expect others to carry out decisions made without any reference to them. That is the type of cooperation which the British Government in India has often sought from us and which we have consistently refused.

As you are well aware, we are on the verge of change in India and the States and the next few weeks or months may well witness some of these major changes. Every State will necessarily have to fall in line with these changes. Udaipur and Mewar have a magnificent history and tradition and I should like very much for Udaipur to give a lead in these political and economic changes just as it gave a lead in the past in courage and chivalry.

I am sure that the Mewar Praja Mandal people will give you every cooperation and help in this great task.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. Congress and the States People's Movement[1]

A number of non-official resolutions have been given notice of, but as this session of the Committee is a special emergency meeting there is no time to consider them.

1. Remarks at the A.I.C.C. meeting at Bombay on a non-official resolution relating to the States, 7 July 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 8 July 1946.

One non-official resolution relates to the Indian States. The resolution[2] passed at the Haripura Congress with regard to the Indian States will have to be changed as that resolution hinders the work of the Congress in the Indian States. There has been a great awakening in the Indian States and there are different political organisations such as the National Conference, the State Congress, Prathinidhi Sabha and the Praja Mandal. The All India States People's Conference has representatives from all the States. Sooner or later, the constitution of the Congress will have to be amended or some other step taken to associate the States' people with the Indian National Congress.

Another non-official resolution asks the Congress governments not to resort to the use of the Defence of India Rules. I am not aware whether the Congress Ministries are using the Defence of India Rules. But I am aware that if those rules are not made use of, the question of procurement of foodstuffs in the various provinces might suffer.

2. According to the Haripura Congress resolution the States people's movement should be left in the hands of the local organisations.

9. The People of the States and Constitutional Changes[1]

The standing committee have noted with displeasure that the British Government in India as well as the rulers of the States are continuing to ignore the people of the States in regard to the steps being taken in connection with the constituent assembly. The people of the States will not recognise any decision taken without their approval and consent and representation from the States must come from the people by way of election.

Resolved that the following committee be appointed to prepare material and draft proposals on behalf of the people of the States for the coming constitutional changes in India as a whole and internally in the States. The committee will take such steps as may be necessitated by the meeting of the constituent assembly and by the States Negotiating Committee so as to ensure that the rights of the people of the States are safe-

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal for the standing committee of the All India States People's Conference, which met in Bombay on 9 July 1946. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 10 July 1946.

guarded and the aims and objects of the All India States People's Conference are advanced. The committee will consider questions arising out of the incorporation of the States in an All India Federal Union, Fundamental Rights, and the establishment of responsible Government internally in the States. The committee will confer whenever necessary with the Expert Committee appointed by the Congress to prepare material for the Constituent Assembly:

1. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya
2. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah
3. Shri Bhashyam
4. Swami Ramananda Tirth
5. Shri Balwant Rai Mehta (Convenor)

With power to add two further members.

The standing committee of the All India States People's Conference congratulate the brave Indians in South Africa on the campaign of civil disobedience started by them for the repeal of the barbarous measure known as the Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act and for the vindication of their national honour and individual self-respect. The committee condemn the brutal and inhuman conduct of the Europeans in violently assaulting the peaceful and inoffensive satyagrahis and assure their South African brethren of their full sympathy and support in respect of their great movement.

6

THE STATES PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

II The Struggle in the States

KASHMIR

1. Attack on the People's Movement[1]

I have just learnt that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference and Vice-President of the All India States People's Conference, was arrested yesterday afternoon by the Kashmir State authorities. At my request he was coming to Delhi for consultation. He was arrested *en route* at Ghari, 100 miles from Srinagar. I do not know the circumstances or ostensible reasons for his arrest, but it is obvious that this is a very serious matter both for the Kashmir State and for the States people's movement all over India. It is becoming increasingly evident that there is a general tendency in many States to attack the people's movement. Whether this is due to a desire to queer the pitch at the critical moment, or whether it is just the normal functioning of the State authorities, I do not know. I am convinced that this kind of thing cannot take place without the support and countenance of the Political Department and its agents. We know very well that in such matters it is the Resident who plays a dominant role. What has happened in Faridkot,[2] I am told, has been done with the advice of the Resident or whatever he is called. It is perhaps as well that this question of the States' people and their rulers and the Political Department is thus brought to the forefront when we are discussing the future of India. A decision has to be made as to whose will prevails ultimately in the States. Is the Political Department to continue as of old? Is the ruler also to continue in his old ways of irresponsible autocracy? What has happened to all the brave declarations made in the Chamber of Princes? What of the future when we are told India will be independent and the people's will will be supreme? Does anyone imagine that the States will continue as they have done with just minor changes in the facade? So far as the States' people are concerned and their organisation which I have the

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 21 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 22 May 1946.
2. For three weeks a complete hartal was being observed in Faridkot. Arrest of satyagrahis was continuing and leaders of the movement were being cruelly tortured. The Secretary of the Praja Mandal Jatha had been so severely beaten up at the police station that he became unconscious. See *post*, sub section "Faridkot".

honour to represent, they will never agree to this. All talk of political changes based on the continuation of the States system in its old form is just empty and fruitless. In order to consider all these vital developments in the States a meeting of the general council of the All India States People's Conference has been convened for June 8, 9 and 10 in Delhi. That council, which represents all the major and minor States of India, will take full cognizance of these developments and will, no doubt, lay down its policy as to how to meet them.

2. Grim Events in Kashmir[1]

Both as the president of the All India States People's Conference and as a Kashmiri, I have been greatly troubled by the recent developments in Kashmir. I have said little about them so far, because I wanted more facts. My first impulse was to go to Kashmir, but I refrained from doing so till I had more information. I know that the kind of messages that we have been getting through press agencies are completely one-sided and unreliable. These press agencies only send out messages approved by the State authorities. I have now had a vivid account of the happenings in Kashmir from Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and Mr. Dwarka Nath Kachru who have recently arrived here. They will be issuing statements[2] themselves, and so I need not repeat what they are going to say.

Many questions have been put to me about the new orientation[3] given to the popular agitation in Kashmir with the demand for "Quit Kashmir" based on the Amritsar Treaty.[4] It has been, and is, the policy of the All India States People's Conference to demand full res-

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 26 May 1946. *National Herald*, 27 May 1946.
2. In his statement on 29 May 1946, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad said that the Prime Minister of Kashmir "still believes in force and repression... The people of Kashmir will not cow down before his administration."
3. While the States People's Conference demanded full responsible government under the ruler, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, on 17 January 1946, declared that the treaties and engagements were made without the consent of the people, and proclaimed its "faith that nothing short of full responsible government without the ruler's participation will satisfy the freedom urge of the States' people".
4. The treaty in 1846 concluding the first Anglo-Sikh war granted Kashmir to Gulab Singh, a sardar of the Lahore Darbar, in return for 10 lakhs of rupees, which he paid to the English.

ponsible government in all the States under the aegis of the ruler who is to act as a constitutional head of the State. That has also been the policy of the Kashmir National Conference of which Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah is the president and leader.

During the last few months, however, the State authorities have been pursuing a policy of direct hostility to the popular movement in Kashmir and trying to disrupt it by various undesirable methods, including encouragement of the communal issue.

The position of the popular Minister there, Mirza Afzal Baig, became impossible and he had to resign. Subsequently, in defiance of their own rules, they appointed another person, who was till then also a member of the Kashmir National Conference, as Minister. This was the result of a secret intrigue about which no one knew.[5]

There was considerable resentment at these tactics of the State authorities and feeling against them grew. Evidently, they were bent upon creating trouble and many weeks ago they started bringing in the State army to the valley and distributing it at various strategic points.

Some weeks ago a committee of the National Conference sent a memorandum[6] to the Cabinet delegation raising the question of the Amritsar Treaty and demanding that this treaty be abrogated and Kashmir be ruled by the people of the State. This new policy reflected the growing tension in the State and the rising temper of the people against the State administration. There were many charges also of corruption and nepotism in the State administration. The new policy had not been endorsed by the National Conference or its executive. Normally it would have been considered by that executive on the 26th of this month.

But, meanwhile, events marched ahead. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah spoke publicly about this new policy.[7] Personally, I think that it was

5. While Sheikh Abdullah was away in Delhi in connection with the Cabinet Mission, the Kashmir Government sought to create a rift in the National Conference. It won over a leader of the National Conference and appointed him a minister. The Prime Minister later admitted that he had been planning against the popular movement for the past eleven months.
6. The memorandum stated that as "the sale deed confers no privileges equivalent to those claimed by States governed by treaty rights .... the people of Kashmir press on the mission their unchallengeable claim to freedom on the withdrawal of British power from India".
7. Sheikh Abdullah had launched a mass campaign under the slogan "Quit Kashmir". In his speeches in May 1946, he suggested that with the grant of independence to British India, the people of Indian States, who were also Indians, should enjoy similar independence. The treaties and engagements between the Princes and the British should be set aside and a new basis of relations established.

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During the last few months, however, the State authorities have been pursuing a policy of direct hostility to the popular movement in Kashmir and trying to disrupt it by various undesirable methods, including encouragement of the communal issue.

The position of the popular Minister there, Mirza Afzal Baig, became impossible and he had to resign. Subsequently, in defiance of their own rules, they appointed another person, who was till then also a member of the Kashmir National Conference, as Minister. This was the result of a secret intrigue about which no one knew.[5]

There was considerable resentment at these tactics of the State authorities and feeling against them grew. Evidently, they were bent upon creating trouble and many weeks ago they started bringing in the State army to the valley and distributing it at various strategic points.

Some weeks ago a committee of the National Conference sent a memorandum[6] to the Cabinet delegation raising the question of the Amritsar Treaty and demanding that this treaty be abrogated and Kashmir be ruled by the people of the State. This new policy reflected the growing tension in the State and the rising temper of the people against the State administration. There were many charges also of corruption and nepotism in the State administration. The new policy had not been endorsed by the National Conference or its executive. Normally it would have been considered by that executive on the 26th of this month.

But, meanwhile, events marched ahead. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah spoke publicly about this new policy.[7] Personally, I think that it was

5. While Sheikh Abdullah was away in Delhi in connection with the Cabinet Mission, the Kashmir Government sought to create a rift in the National Conference. It won over a leader of the National Conference and appointed him a minister. The Prime Minister later admitted that he had been planning against the popular movement for the past eleven months.
6. The memorandum stated that as "the sale deed confers no privileges equivalent to those claimed by States governed by treaty rights .... the people of Kashmir press on the mission their unchallengeable claim to freedom on the withdrawal of British power from India".
7. Sheikh Abdullah had launched a mass campaign under the slogan "Quit Kashmir". In his speeches in May 1946, he suggested that with the grant of independence to British India, the people of Indian States, who were also Indians, should enjoy similar independence. The treaties and engagements between the Princes and the British should be set aside and a new basis of relations established.

unfortunate that a marked variation in the policy both of the All India States People's Conference as well as of the Kashmir National Conference should have been made without the full consideration of the respective bodies. But I recognise the feeling which gave rise to this policy in Kashmir and the total ineptitude of the State authorities which gave rise to that feeling.

I should like to make it clear that the policy of the All India States People's Conference remains what it was — that of responsible government under the aegis of the rulers. Indeed no one can change it except the Conference itself.

But events in Kashmir, as also happenings elsewhere in the States, are repeatedly bringing this issue before the people of the States and it is possible that unless quick changes towards responsible government take place in the States, the rulers may no longer be welcome even as constitutional heads. There is a great deal of talk of dynastic rights and privileges, but no dynasty or individual can claim to override the fundamental rights of the people. If the rulers remain, they can only do so by the goodwill and desire of their own people, and not by compulsion of external or any other authority. Sovereignty will have to reside in the people and what follows will thus necessarily be according to the wishes of the people.

I am not interested in the legal implications of the Amritsar Treaty or any other treaty. I am interested primarily in the good of the people and their right to decide for themselves what their government should be.

While, therefore, I think it regrettable that the issue of the ruler continuing or not was raised in Kashmir at this stage without reference to the organisation concerned, I must make it clear that it is open to any individual or group to raise that issue, if it chooses to do so on its own responsibility. If this is done in a peaceful way, no State has a right to suppress it.

What happened in Kashmir clearly demonstrates the desire of the State authorities to avail themselves of any pretext to crush the popular movement. I have requested Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to come to Delhi for consultation. At a public meeting in Srinagar he announced this fact and said that he was going to Delhi within a few days. He further directed that no public meeting or agitation should take place during his absence from Kashmir. It was clear that he wished to discuss the whole situation with me before taking any other step.

Three days later he was on his way from Srinagar to Rawalpindi when he was arrested and about the same time a large number of his colleagues, both Muslim and Hindu, were arrested at various places in Kashmir.

responsibility and they will have to answer for this before not only the people of Kashmir, but public opinion in India. What again is the part of the Resident and the Political Department in this business? They too will have to make it clear where they stand in this matter.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of any policy, there are certain limits beyond which no government dare go, except at its peril. The Kashmir Government has gone beyond these limits in its desire to crush a popular movement which is firmly established in the hearts of the Kashmiris.

Everyone who knows Kashmir knows also the position of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah there. He is the *Sher-e-Kashmir*, beloved of the remotest valleys of Kashmir. Numerous legends and popular songs have grown around his personality. He has been, and is, one of my most valued colleagues in the States people's movement, whose advice has been sought in all important matters.

Does anybody think that we are going to desert him or his comrades in Kashmir because the Kashmir State authorities have got a few guns at their disposal? We shall stand by the people of Kashmir and their leaders in this heavy trial that they are going through.

If they have erred in any matter, we shall tell them so frankly, but for the moment their blood is being shed in that lovely and fertile valley and all talk of legal niceties is quibbling. The fate of nations, when passions are aroused, is not decided by lawyers' arguments.

Kashmir by itself is important, but this issue obviously affects all the States in India and it is for all of them to consider its significance, more specially at this time when we are supposed to be hammering out the future of India. It is a bad sign at this particular moment for the blood of a people to be shed and for State authorities to display their military might in repressing their own people. The talks that we are having about India's future become pale and shadowy before this grim reality. Things have gone far in Kashmir, perhaps too far already. Yet they might grow worse. It is up to everyone concerned with Kashmir or with the States generally to try his utmost to cry halt to this. The Kashmir State authorities should also give thought to the inevitable consequences of their actions.

I have postponed my visit to Kashmir for the present, because I was not quite sure that I could render effective help at this stage. I want to help, as far as I can, in ending this terribly bitter conflict and the moment I feel that I can be of such help I shall go.

Meanwhile, I would appeal to all concerned, especially the newspapers, to avoid giving a communal turn to what is happening in Kashmir. I have noticed with deep regret some highly intemperate articles in the

Lahore press. It has been the policy of the State authorities to encourage communal troubles. We must not fall into this trap.

To the State authorities I would say that their actions are bringing grave discredit on their name and no government can live with that disgrace attached to it. The world still remembers Amritsar and Jallianwala Bagh. Are we to have yet another gruesome memory to pursue us in the days to come?

Let there be an end of all this and a calm consideration of the issues at stake. They will require all the wisdom and forbearance that we may possess.

3. Solidarity with the People of Kashmir[1]

In view of the serious situation in Kashmir and all that is happening there I call upon the States people's organisation, its regional councils, praja mandals, lok parishads, State Congress and the like to express their sympathy with the people of Kashmir and to offer to help them in such ways as they can. I suggest that meetings might be held to this end on Sunday next, June 2nd. If it is more convenient for any local organisation, another suitable date might be chosen. At these meetings not only should a full expression of solidarity with the people of Kashmir be made, but the demand for full responsible government in every State should be reiterated. The time has gone by for half-measures. Collections should be made for the relief of sufferers in Kashmir and these collections should be sent to Shri Kamalnayan Bajaj, Treasurer, All India States People's Conference, C/o Bajaj and Company, 51 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay. It may be necessary later to enroll volunteers for special service in connection with Kashmir. For the moment we must watch developments but we must be ready for all emergencies.

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1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 28 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 29 May 1946.

4. Demand for an Inquiry[1]

Kashmir affords a notable illustration of how things must not be done. So long as there was some attempt at cooperation between the State administration and the National Conference, unsatisfactory as this was, there was no possibility of trouble. The moment this policy was reversed on the part of the State the situation underwent a progressive change for the worse.

When and how this occurred, Prime Minister Kak,[2] in a press interview, has stated: "We have been preparing for it for 11 months and now we are ready to meet the challenge. There will be no more vacillation and no weak-kneed policy. We shall be ruthlessly firm and we make no apology about it".

It is interesting to remember that Mr. Kak became Prime Minister just about 11 months ago. Previously there had been a succession of other Prime Ministers. Gradually each was pushed out from the picture till Mr. Kak emerged as Prime Minister and supported this new policy.

I was in Kashmir in July-August last, soon after Mr. Kak had become Prime Minister. Already one noticed the beginnings of this new policy although the National Conference was still cooperating with the Government and one of its men was a Minister. The poor Minister had a hard time of it and ultimately resigned. One can understand easily enough, after Mr. Kak's statement, why that Minister should have had this difficult time, for the new Prime Minister was deliberately preparing to fight and crush ruthlessly, and without apology, the Kashmir National Conference.

Obviously, a Minister from that Conference could not fit in with this policy and had to go. In fact, the conditions that were created made it impossible for any honourable person to remain as Minister as they made it impossible for any popular organisation, like the National Conference, to continue to offer its cooperation to the State authorities.

Every recent development is explained by this frank admission of the Kashmir Prime Minister. He was out for trouble and he has got it,

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 28 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 29 May 1946.
2. Ramachandra Kak, an archaeologist who was librarian in a Government college in Kashmir before being appointed minister in waiting to Maharaja Hari Singh, became Prime Minister of the State in 1945.

relying on his army and making careful military preparations for his grand coup. These included the transport of Kashmir troops by air from the Middle East.

During my stay in Kashmir last year, I found that the National Conference went more towards cooperation with the authorities than most other popular organisations in the States. In spite of this, they were treated in a shabby manner and I do charge the Prime Minister with deliberately encouraging factionalism and communalism so as to weaken the National Conference. Later, when the question of Mirza Afzal Baig's resignation arose, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah refused to take any precipitate action.

Twice in the course of a month. he consulted me showing me all the correspondence on the subject. I agreed with him ultimately that there was no other course open but for Mirza Sahib to resign. While we pondered and considered and hesitated, Prime Minister Kak went ahead with his military and other preparations.

I am astonished that with this knowledge anyone should have the effrontery to say that Sheikh Abdullah or the National Conference precipitated a crisis. The big mistake they made was not to realise what the State policy was and continue to offer their cooperation for so long. It was only during the last few days that this realisation fully dawned upon them and they began to think in terms of self-defence.

I have seen reports of one of the last speeches delivered by Sheikh Abdullah in Srinagar before his arrest. Even at that stage he said that he would accept responsible government under the aegis of the ruler provided that the ruler was only a constitutional head. The fact of the matter is that the Kashmir State organisation from the Prime Minister downwards has irritated the people of Kashmir beyond measure.

Nothing moves in Kashmir and it is heart-breaking to see that paradise on earth running to waste because of incompetence. Serious charges are made against the administration. The Maharaja, who, to begin with, kept above local politics, has apparently given a blank cheque to the present Prime Minister, and inevitably the feeling against the Prime Minister and others extends itself now to the Maharaja also, for ultimately he is responsible.

He has not only kept aloof from his people completely, but even his Ministers could not approach him easily. Apparently his sole contact with the outside world is Prime Minister Kak.

Mr. Kak has stated that he would welcome my visit to Kashmir. Certainly I shall go there when the time comes, but when I go there my first object must be to see and consult Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and other leaders of the National Conference. Is Mr. Kak going to

give me full facilities for this purpose? Is he going also to agree to a full and impartial inquiry into all the matters that have happened during the last few weeks, including, of course, the ruthless policy of which he is so enamoured?

If he is so pleased with his own activities he should not be afraid of an inquiry into them. Mr. Kak has taken full responsibility for his policy. Let him justify it, therefore, before an impartial tribunal. It is no small matter to prepare for eleven long months for an attack on a popular organisation and then to hand over the State to a military administration with all the consequences that this entails.

Mr. Kak, when he talks about being ruthlessly firm, talks a language which no statesman or one responsible for the fate of human beings can indulge in. His very language condemns him and his policy. Blimps have ceased to exercise control in most countries. It is the unfortunate fate of Kashmir today to be in charge of Blimps.

Mr. Kak has raised issues in Kashmir of the most vital importance to all those interested in the States. In a sense, I welcome the enunciation of his policy, for that will mean a clearer decision when the time comes for a final decision, and that cannot be long delayed in Kashmir or in any other State. There has been too much talk of long periods of preparation for the States to bring them up to the common level. People will have to hurry up now, for events are marching swiftly to their pre-destined end.

5. Telegram to the Prime Minister of Kashmir[1]

Press reports indicate trial of Sheikh Abdullah and others. I desire to organise proper defence. I request I may be given full facilities for this.[2]

1. 28 May 1946. *National Herald*, 4 June 1946.
2. The Prime Minister of Kashmir replied: "....the court will grant facilities for defence....on application from the accused."

6. The Futility of Repression[1]

The situation in Kashmir should improve, and it is possible only if the State authorities withdraw their repressive policy. The people

1. Speech at the closing session of the All India States People's Conference, Delhi, 11 June 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 12 June 1946.

should control themselves, and suspend the movement but not under the repression of the State administration.

I feel that there are some tactical mistakes in the Kashmir movement which gave a chance to the State authorities to blame the people. In my opinion, movements in the States should not be started unless the people are sufficiently strong. States movements have not reached a mature stage. At the same time, the people should not tolerate for a single moment any attack on their liberty. If we want to get rid of the rulers, we have to oppose them with full force. We should be prepared fully to launch a movement.

The 1942 movement is one of the biggest movements, which shook the whole of India, from one end of the country to the other. Even such a powerful movement, which had the backing of the entire people, was curbed by ruthless repression. Yet the people emerged much stronger.

The map of new India is being redrawn. We are on the verge of big changes and the States also have to change. I am not sorry for issuing two statements on Kashmir about a fortnight ago.

7. A Government Hostile to the People[1]

I have refrained from saying much about the Kashmir situation since I issued my last statement.[2] The matter is much too serious and grave for an argument to be carried on in the press. It was my desire not to say anything which might worsen the situation. My mind and thoughts, however, have been occupied with this situation, and I have tried to think of what should be done to improve it. I waited for the meeting of the general council of the States People's Conference, and I also gathered as much information about the events there as I could.

The general council has passed a comprehensive resolution which I commend[3] to the public. This resolution was carefully drafted and represents our joint opinion on this subject.

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 12 June 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 13 June 1946.
2. See *ante*, item 2.
3. See *ante*, pp. 351-353.

I find that my concluding remarks at the general council meeting have not been correctly reported or understood. This is an additional reason why I should make myself clear in regard to Kashmir.

The Kashmir authorities denied almost totally many of the statements of events that I had made previously. I have now considered carefully a large number of reports coming in the press, as well as from individuals and eyewitnesses in Kashmir. I have also met deputations, some officially inspired and putting out the official viewpoint, and others representing another viewpoint. Entirely contradictory reports have been given to me about the events that had happened. Obviously, a searching inquiry is necessary to know the truth.

For my part, I believe that, during the first few days following the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah, the military behaved very badly, and many of the allegations against them are true, or have a strong basis of fact. Later, much of this was stopped by the Government. It is clear that one cannot hold the Government directly responsible for every act of the soldiery. What the Government is directly responsible for is the use of the military on this scale, and when this is done other consequences normally follow.

I should like to correct the two incidents I mentioned. I have enough information which can substantiate them, and I regret that I gave publicity to them without sufficient proof. These two allegations are the burning of bodies of persons killed and the breaking down of a compound wall of the Jama Masjid. Very probably, the deaths due to firing were much more than those admitted in the official communique.

How all these bodies were disposed of, I cannot say without much greater proof than I possess. As regards the allegation about the wall of the Jama Masjid, it appears that there is a wooden gate and a military lorry passing through accidentally dislodged some bricks of a column. This may have given rise to the story. Anyhow I am sorry that I stated something which was not correct.

These are relatively minor matters. The major thing is the nature of the action taken by the Kashmir Government from the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah onwards. I have no doubt that the arrest was wholly uncalled for and unwise, and the subsequent action taken through the military was extraordinarily provocative. It has amazed me how anyone placed in a responsible position can make the statements made by the Prime Minister of Kashmir. Those statements threw more light on the background of the situation than anything else that I know. He had charged me with being a partisan. He is perfectly right in doing so, for I am a partisan of the people of Kashmir, and I intend to stand by them, whatever the future may unfold.

The question is, on whose side is the Government of Kashmir, on the people's side, or against them? Recent events would indicate that it considers the people of Kashmir as enemies. If a government functions in this way, it forfeits all confidence and lays the seeds of trouble.

I do not wish to enter into any argument because it is my earnest desire to help in solving this complex situation. Obviously, this is important not only from the point of view of Kashmir, but of all the States as well as the whole of India.

Events today act and react on each other. The people of the States everywhere are closely watching, with the deepest sympathy, the happenings in Kashmir. As our resolution has shown, we must and will stand by the people there, and yet we would much prefer ending the present trouble. If, unfortunately, the authorities continue in the course of repressive action, the natural consequence will be for the people to oppose and resist this action.

I find that all kinds of stories are prevalent about Communist action in Kashmir, and the example of Azerbaijan is cited. A few Communists have undoubtedly functioned in Kashmir, but it is absurd to think that this movement is due to them. It is still more absurd to bring in Azerbaijan. So far as I am concerned, I do not agree with many aspects of the Communist policy in India, and it is for this reason that in the National Congress we have parted company with them. I should imagine that the policy of the Kashmir Government is more likely to encourage Communist activity than any other policy.

The fact is that Kashmir, which is not only beautiful, but wealthy in the real sense of the term, with enormous resources, potential power, and with some of the finest artisans and craftsmen in the world, is a country of appalling poverty. The fact is that nothing happens in Kashmir to redeem this poverty, and raise the level of the masses. Out of this degradation and suffering, a powerful people's movement has grown. This movement is essentially national in its outlook, though sometimes communal elements have played a part in it. It is not anti-Hindu, anti-Sikh, or anti-anything. The only way to deal with this movement is with friendship and cooperation, and with active steps to relieve the burden of poverty. It cannot be suppressed.

I have, unfortunately, been tied up here with important consultations, and have been unable to go to Kashmir. But Kashmir fills my mind, and I shall go there as soon as I can. To the Government of Kashmir, I would say: "You have erred grievously in many things, but there is yet time to remedy at least some of the errors. It is never wrong for a government to retrace a step, which has brought trouble in its train. To persist in error is not strength." To the people of Kashmir I would,

first of all, extend my deepest sympathy for all they have suffered, and are at present suffering, and my assurance that I shall do my utmost for their peace and advancement.

To the minorities there, I should like to say that their future must inevitably lie in cooperation with the majority. They do a disservice to themselves and to Kashmir by isolating themselves. They have every right to live the life of their choice within the structure of freedom which Kashmir must necessarily evolve. They have every reason to stand by their legitimate rights. But it is not a legitimate right to come in the way of the advance of the people as a whole or to claim special privileges which are at the expense of others. So far as I can see, these minorities will have an honourable position in Kashmir, but that position will never be gained by hostility to others, and the propagation of communal hatred.

Let everyone in Kashmir look at the problem in relation to what is happening in India and the world. That is the only true perspective. Governments come and go, but the people remain. It is the people who should count in the end and who make and unmake governments. Therefore it is only from the people's point of view that any real solution can be sought.

Sheikh Abdullah is at present in prison with many of his colleagues. This fact alone is a continuous provocation to many. If that provocation is removed, I am sure peace will come soon enough. For my part, I am not in the habit of giving up a cause I have espoused, or a comrade when he is in trouble. I shall stand by the cause of the people of Kashmir and of Sheikh Abdullah, who is their acknowledged leader, and I shall do everything to advance that cause. That means no hostility to any other group, rather it means the good of all who are connected with Kashmir.

8. Telegram to the Maharaja of Kashmir[1]

I am reaching Srinagar on June 19 with lawyers for Sheikh Abdullah's trial. I still hope that in the interests of all concerned the trials will be given up and Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues released. Such a

1. 14 June 1946. *National Herald*, 24 June 1946.

step will lead to peaceful consideration of the grave problems confronting Kashmir. I would gladly help in the task and can meet you for the purpose, if you so desire.[2]

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2. On 16 June 1946, the Maharaja of Kashmir replied: "...any outside lawyer whom the accused may engage will have to approach the Chief Justice for permission. Your coming here is inadvisable as it will only create complications."

9. To the Maharaja of Kashmir[1]

16 June 1946

My dear Maharaja Saheb,

The day before yesterday I sent you a telegram to the following effect ...[2] I hope to reach Srinagar together with Mr. Asaf Ali, Dewan Chaman Lal and Mr. Baldev Sahai, ex-Advocate General of Bihar, in the evening of June 19 by car from Rawalpindi. The immediate object of our going there is to arrange for Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's defence in the trial that has been fixed for June 21.

I am much more concerned, however, as I have no doubt you are also, with the general situation in Kashmir of which this trial is only a part. I should very much like to be of some help in the solution of problems that have arisen there. My main object in coming is to endeavour to do so. I want, as you must also desire, peace and development in Kashmir State. I feel, however, that it will not be possible to return to normality and peace unless these trials are withdrawn and Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues are released. Naturally, the present agitation that is still continuing in some form or other in Kashmir should also be stopped at the same time. This action will result in a proper and peaceful consideration of the various problems which those interested in Kashmir have to face.

I have, therefore, requested you in my telegram, and I would like to repeat the request here, that Sheikh Abdullah and others be released. As you are no doubt aware, Sheikh Abdullah was on his way to consult

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2. For text of telegram see preceding item.

me here in Delhi, when he was arrested. As soon as he is released, we can confer together and endeavour to devise means, which would lead to a proper settlement.

The problem of Kashmir is important enough by itself, and some of us are intensely interested in it. In the present moment, however, it has an additional importance in the whole context of the Indian States. The constituent assembly is likely to come into being soon, and each State and, more especially, the major States will have to consider their representation in this assembly. You are, I presume, aware of the popular demand put forward both by the Indian National Congress and the All India States People's Conference that representation in the constituent assembly should be by means of representatives elected by the people. All these and similar problems have to be faced very soon. It is obvious that the difficulty inherent in these problems will be greatly increased if the situation in Kashmir is abnormal, and the State is in conflict with the popular organisation there. Therefore, in the interest of the State authorities as well as of the people, a rapid return to normality is eminently desirable.

It is very difficult for me at this delicate stage of negotiations with the British Cabinet delegation to leave Delhi even for a day. But I am so greatly interested in doing something for Kashmir that I have decided to leave Delhi and to try my best to help in finding a solution. The solution would be easy enough, if you and your Government also desire it. I have suggested, in my telegram, that I would gladly meet you to discuss these matters if you so desire. My visit to Srinagar on this occasion will necessarily be brief, as I have to come back as soon as possible to Delhi for talks with the Cabinet delegation and the Viceroy. But even during this visit, it may be possible to lay the foundations of a settlement. If necessary, I can return to Srinagar a little later for further conversations.

I am asking my colleague, Mr. Dwarka Nath Kachru, to take this letter so that you may get it before my arrival in Srinagar, and be acquainted more fully with my approach to this problem. I hope that my impending brief visit to Kashmir will yield results, which will be satisfactory to all parties concerned.[3]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. A note of the Kashmir State Government stated that this letter was delivered on 19 June 1946 and before a reply could be sent, Jawaharlal had defied the ban on his entry into the State.

10. Telegram to the Maharaja of Kashmir[1]

17 June 1946

Received your telegram.[2] I am surprised to learn that you consider my visit will lead to complications. I am going to Kashmir to help in putting an end to complications already existing and easing the unfortunate situation which has already lasted too long. As such, the State authorities should welcome my visit and give all facilities. Isolation and avoidance of personal contacts lead to unnecessary difficulties; hence my desire to study the situation for myself and meet you. I have sent a letter to you by messenger.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *National Herald*, 24 June 1946.
2. The Maharaja of Kashmir had telegraphed on 17 June 1946: "...your coming ...at this juncture will entail unfortunate consequences..."

11. The Purpose of the Visit[1]

The purpose of my visit to Kashmir is three-fold: I am going to Kashmir to arrange for the defence of Sheikh Abdullah, secondly, to see things for myself, although my visit to Srinagar will be a brief one, and thirdly, to do all I can to put an end to the complications arising from the policy of the Kashmir Government.

Question: How would you react if the Kashmir State bans your entry?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Let me have a little rest. There can be no peace in Kashmir unless Sheikh Abdullah is released.

Q: Would you comment on the report that there are two groups in the Working Committee — one in favour of accepting the Cabinet

1. Interview to the press at Lahore airport *en route* to Kashmir, 19 June 1946. Based on reports in *National Herald*, 20 June, and *The Hindustan Times*, 20 June 1946.

me here in Delhi, when he was arrested. As soon as he is released, we can confer together and endeavour to devise means, which would lead to a proper settlement.

The problem of Kashmir is important enough by itself, and some of us are intensely interested in it. In the present moment, however, it has an additional importance in the whole context of the Indian States. The constituent assembly is likely to come into being soon, and each State and, more especially, the major States will have to consider their representation in this assembly. You are, I presume, aware of the popular demand put forward both by the Indian National Congress and the All India States People's Conference that representation in the constituent assembly should be by means of representatives elected by the people. All these and similar problems have to be faced very soon. It is obvious that the difficulty inherent in these problems will be greatly increased if the situation in Kashmir is abnormal, and the State is in conflict with the popular organisation there. Therefore, in the interest of the State authorities as well as of the people, a rapid return to normality is eminently desirable.

It is very difficult for me at this delicate stage of negotiations with the British Cabinet delegation to leave Delhi even for a day. But I am so greatly interested in doing something for Kashmir that I have decided to leave Delhi and to try my best to help in finding a solution. The solution would be easy enough, if you and your Government also desire it. I have suggested, in my telegram, that I would gladly meet you to discuss these matters if you so desire. My visit to Srinagar on this occasion will necessarily be brief, as I have to come back as soon as possible to Delhi for talks with the Cabinet delegation and the Viceroy. But even during this visit, it may be possible to lay the foundations of a settlement. If necessary, I can return to Srinagar a little later for further conversations.

I am asking my colleague, Mr. Dwarka Nath Kachru, to take this letter so that you may get it before my arrival in Srinagar, and be acquainted more fully with my approach to this problem. I hope that my impending brief visit to Kashmir will yield results, which will be satisfactory to all parties concerned.[3]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. A note of the Kashmir State Government stated that this letter was delivered on 19 June 1946 and before a reply could be sent, Jawaharlal had defied the ban on his entry into the State.

Mission's proposals in a spirit of trial and the other standing out for amendments?

JN: Such a speculation is absurd as there is bound to be some diversity of opinion when 12 persons are having important discussions.

Q: What is your comment on the press report that Gandhiji who holds certain views regarding the Cabinet Mission's proposals might cease to act as adviser to the Congress?

JN: Your question deserves no reply.

12. At the Border of the State[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru: My patience has been exhausted by waiting at the customs house for three hours. I have torn down such orders before, and will ignore it now. Nobody has ever dared to check my movements. I will enter Srinagar, though it may take me weeks. I will not go back. I do not recognise the authority issuing such an order and I am not bound by it. I am already in Kashmir territory and have actually defied your orders. The only course open to you is to remove me forcibly by arresting me. I do not recognise your Government and will not obey the State's orders.

District Magistrate: How would you like your order being disobeyed when you join the Government?

JN: That will be a popular government depending on the nation, quite different from the Government you represent. Yours is a tyrannical government. It is mibehaving.

1. This was the passage-at-arms that took place between Jawaharlal and the District Magistrate who met him at Kohala bridge and served an order prohibiting his entry into Kashmir territory on 19 June 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 21 June 1946.

DM: I might have to resort to firing, if the situation gets out of hand.

JN: I do not mind a few people being killed as it would only give further impetus to my mission in Kashmir. My duty is in Kashmir. The Viceroy and my colleagues in the Congress Working Committee urged me to remain in Delhi where important negotiations are being held. I plainly told them that my place was in Kashmir. The Kashmir State authorities probably do not realise that they are dealing with the President-elect of the Indian National Congress. I know no going back.[2]

2. With these words Jawaharlal dashed forward, defying the military cordon.

13. To Kishan Dar[1]

20 June 1946

Dear Mr. Dar,[2]

As you are aware our party was proceeding to Srinagar in connection with the trial of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah which is fixed for tomorrow there. Mr. Asaf Ali and Dewan Chaman Lal were to appear as counsel for the defence. Several days ago an application was presented to the Chief Justice of Kashmir for permission for them to appear in this case. I was proceeding to Srinagar with a view to advising my colleagues in regard to the conduct of the case.

Yesterday afternoon at Kohala you served an order on me under the Defence of Kashmir Rules, which I considered wholly unjustifiable, asking me to leave Kashmir territory immediately and not to return to it without written permission. I told you then that I was unable to carry out these directions. I had come to help in the defence of Sheikh Abdullah's case and I did not propose to go back without going to Srinagar for this purpose. It was open to you forcibly to prevent me from proceeding further or to take me out of Kashmir State territory. As a matter of fact my remaining in that territory was in itself a disobedience of the order served upon me.

I had no desire to put additional difficulties in your way and hence I waited at Kohala for five hours in order to give you time to communicate with your superior authorities. As, however, no special directions

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16, 1946-48, pp. 18-19. N.M.M.L.
2. District Magistrate and Governor of Kashmir.

14. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Domel
June 20, 1946
9 p.m.

Bebee dear,

I am resting by the side of the river Jhelum. It is an agreeable enough spot, though I wish it was not quite so warm in the day time. The night was cool and pleasant. Domel — the junction of two rivers, the Jhelum and the Kishanganga. The Jhelum is the bigger and full of muddy water. This morning it was dark red, probably because of heavy rain above and the nature of the rocks through which it passes. The Kishanganga is crystal clear. Unfortunately we cannot reach the Kishanganga as it is on the other side. There is a legend that when Noor Jahan arrived here once with Jahangir, she was tired and her eyes were full of dust and smarting. She washed them in the waters of the Kishanganga and she felt so refreshed that she called the river Nainsukh — the delight of the eyes.

So here I am. I have passed this place many times, stopping here for a meal, but ever since the advent of the motor age I have not spent a night here. Now perhaps we may have to spend many nights for we are supposed to be detenus (or is it detenues?). Asaf Ali and Chaman Lal were with me till this afternoon. They managed to get permission as lawyers to proceed to Srinagar. Now there is Mohamad Yunus, an I.N.A. officer, Mathai,[2] Hari, and a newspaper correspondent. Apparently we are all detenus for the moment.

I am told that there are vague rumours to the effect that I was injured last evening. This is not true. No one was injured, though Chaman Lal complained today of pains in the body. And yet it is easy enough to get injured when bayonets are at hand. One particular bayonet, held by an excited and panic-stricken soldier, was very near me. The armed police also loaded their guns for emergencies and when people are panicky, loaded guns might well go off. As a matter of fact no such accident happened and we are all safe and sound of limb and body, rather the better for the adventure. Anyway I am, for I was feeling oppressed and unhappy at recent developments in Delhi—the gradual, inexorable closing in of a net — a sense of being tied hand and foot

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. M.O. Mathai (1909-1981); member of Jawaharlal's personal staff, 1946-59.

and strangled. I feel that at least I have put my head out of the net for a while and breathed more freely. That is something gained.

I fear that many of my colleagues as well as others will not be too pleased with me for creating complications. I did not deliberately do so, but I think it is true that at the back of my mind there was a faint hope that the Government will be stupid enough to create a situation to my liking. That hope was realised. Also that this business would give a touch of reality to our long-drawn out talks. It is not the Maharaja of Kashmir alone who would profit by it, but all rulers of States, and the Viceroy, and many others.

Yet it is odd enough. Here people are talking in terms of a provisional government of which they expect me to be a member. And here I am behaving as a reckless agitator of old needlessly, so they will say, upsetting everybody's apple cart. Sometimes such an upset is good, so I think.

As I was writing this the District Magistrate (who is also Governor of Kashmir) came and told me that the head of the Kashmir army, a fellow named General Scott, has visited him here and is very worried and panicky. He expects numerous *jathas* from the Punjab to invade this place. He is also not sure about me — I might run away. So he suggests that I might be moved further up the valley. I have told him that I have no objection at all to this. The nearer I am taken to Srinagar the better, for Srinagar is my present goal and I do not propose to go back till I have reached it. So I await further orders.

The District Magistrate happens to be distantly related to me. His son has married the daughter of a first cousin of mine — rather a nice girl. He, the D.M., has had a bad time at this job. And yet perhaps he saved the situation from deteriorating. A slight error in judgment might well have led to a minor disaster.

We were stopped at Kohala yesterday afternoon. That is where the State boundary begins. For five hours we waited there patiently for further instructions from Srinagar. A number of people had been brought on 3 lorries from Srinagar & neighbourhood with black flags to shout 'Go Back Jawaharlal'. There were Muslims (of the Muslim Conference) some Kashmiri Pandits & others. They were obviously brought by the State people and some of them confessed to having been paid a rupee or 2 rupees for the day. They stopped shouting at a gesture from a police officer. They shouted on one side — on the other, a small crowd collected, reinforced by a lorry load of stout Punjabis from Murree, and these people outshouted the others. Give me the Punjabi any day in a competition of shouting slogans. He has a perfect genius for inventing new slogans on the spot. So for many hours we had shouting and

singing of national songs. Of course there were plenty of offensive epithets for the black flaggers. "Bhare ke tattu, hai, hai."[2] Some school boys from a neighbouring national school enlivened the proceedings by their singing.

After five hours of waiting I got rather fed up and decided to do something. So after due notice we started walking in the direction of Srinagar. We were stopped by the armed police (or soldiers?). Some had bayonets, some had lathis, some guns. We slowly pushed through them. They tried of course to stop us — we were about two or three dozen. But most of them were not inclined to use their lathis. But they pushed their bayonets threateningly and it was just chance that no one was hurt. The order to load guns was given by a police officer. But the D.M. kept cool, though he was agitated enough. Gradually it all became a kind of procession with the police marching along ahead of us and surrounding us. We went about 200 or 300 yards and then stopped for a parley.

Meanwhile, the black-flaggers seeing us on the march fled precipitately stumbling in the process. Later some of them came to us and apologised privately.

It was 9 p.m. Somebody had arranged for food for us. We spread a durree in the middle of the road and had a good feed. The D.M. came to the conclusion that it was no good for him and for us to spend the night on the road. He hinted that we could go to the next dak bungalow, 21 miles further up towards Srinagar. He removed his police and we motored up to Domel where we spent the night. And here we are still. I am waiting for further developments. Can we go further up or not?

Love

Jawahar

The sound of running water is very pleasant and soothing. The Jhelum is just below the dak bungalow.

3. "Hired men, down, down."

15. Telegram to Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Your message[2] conveyed to me, also news postponement Sheikh Abdullah's trial to July 1. In view grave discourtesy offered to me by Kashmir Government in spite my friendly approaches, deeply regret wholly unable return until full liberty of movement, including visit to Srinagar, accorded to me. Request Working Committee proceed without me.

Jawaharlal

1. 21 June 1946. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his telegram sent on 21 June, Maulana Azad said: "The Working Committee advises you to return to Delhi, as promised, tomorrow. The Working Committee's fixed discussion awaits your return. I have asked H.H. the Maharaja of Kashmir to adjourn Sheikh Abdullah's case."

16. Telegram to Abul Kalam Azad[1]

Received your message[2] at one afternoon. In obedience directions Working Committee am prepared return immediately on understanding come back Kashmir later. Early return only possible by aeroplane from Srinagar. No service planes available Srinagar or Pindi. Am under detention and can make no arrangements. Shall await facilities for return.

Jawaharlal

1. 22 June 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16, 1946-48, p. 10, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, page 246, footnote 6.

17. To the Maharaja of Kashmir[1]

Dak bungalow,
Uri, Kashmir
22 June 1946

Dear Maharaja Saheb,

My last letter to you, which was taken personally by Shri Dwarkanath Kachru, was followed by various activities on the part of the Kashmir Government resulting in my arrest and detention as well as the arrest and detention of a number of my colleagues. In these circumstances perhaps another letter from me would hardly be called for. But I feel that I owe it to you and to myself to send you this letter.

In my telegrams and letter to you sent from Delhi I made every effort to approach you in a courteous and friendly manner. I wanted to avoid any undesirable development and to help in solving, or at any rate easing, a situation which could not be welcomed by anyone concerned with the welfare of Kashmir. I regret that you did not appreciate my approach to this question and instead permitted your Government to take the action it did. I consider this action not only a grave discourtesy personally, which would not matter very much, but to the organisations I have the honour to represent. I am not agreeable at any time or at any place to my freedom of movement being interfered with, whether it is an Indian State or the rest of India. Inevitably I could not agree to obey the order served on me at Kohala. I am convinced that it was a major error on the part of your Government to arrest Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as he was going to Delhi to meet me. It was the second major error of your Government to stop me from going to Srinagar in connection with Sheikh Abdullah's case. The consequences of these actions are patent, and I can hardly conceive that the Kashmir Government is pleased with its own activities or with the consequences these activities have led to.

In view of the direction of the Congress Working Committee, conveyed to me by the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, I have decided to return immediately to Delhi provided facilities are available for the purpose. I have done so, however, on the distinct understanding that I shall return to Kashmir as soon as the urgent work in Delhi permits me to do so. The fact that Sheikh Abdullah's case has been adjourned has facilitated my present return. As soon as the date of my return to Kashmir is fixed up I shall inform you of

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16, 1946-48, pp. 8-9, N.M.M.L.

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2. See *ante*, page 246, footnote 6.

19. An Account of the Episode[1]

For the last four days, I have been rather cut off from outside newspapers and news. I find now that, as is usual, rather exaggerated accounts of various occurrences have appeared in the press. So I shall give a brief account of the happenings as I see them.

Our party reached Kohala on 19 June in the afternoon and, after lunching at the dak bungalow, as we crossed the bridge into Kashmir territory about 2.30 p.m., I was served with an order under the Defence of Kashmir Rules asking me to leave Kashmir. I said that I was unable to obey that order as I saw no justification for it, and I proposed to remain there. The road further on was blocked by a wooden barrier and by the police and the military. Our party sat on the roadside, or in the small customs hut, for a long time. The District Magistrate had said that he would communicate with the higher authorities and asked me to wait for an answer. I agreed to do so.

We grew rather impatient as hour after hour went by and no answer came. Ultimately, at about 7.45 p.m., I told the District Magistrate that I could not remain like that on the wayside any longer, and I proposed to march on foot towards Domel on Srinagar Road. Obviously, I could not go very far on foot and Srinagar was 132 miles further on.

While we were waiting, some residents of Kohala, chiefly young men and schoolboys, had gathered at the spot. They sang national songs and raised our usual slogans. On the police side three lorries had brought a number of people from Srinagar or the neighbourhood with black flags. They were shouting 'Jawaharlal, go back'. They were, however, quite disciplined about it and when a police officer raised his hand, they stopped shouting immediately. Later, in the evening, some of these black flag demonstrators came to us and apologised privately and said that they had been paid for the occasion.

When the news of my being stopped reached Murree, about 25 Congressmen from there came over in a bus to Kohala. References in the papers to *jathas* gathering there are entirely wrong. Apart from one lorry-load of Congressmen, who came to enquire as to what had happened, and some of the residents of Kohala who had gathered, nobody else came so far as I know. Kohala is a very small place with only a few inhabitants.

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 23 June 1946. From *National Herald*, 24 June 1946.

it. I do not know how your Government will view my return and whether it will again attempt to stop it or not. If any such order is passed with a view to stopping me, I shall be unable to obey it. I see no justification whatever for any Government, least of all the Kashmir Government at present, to try to stop the entry of an individual like me, and I cannot submit to any such restriction on my freedom of movement. I trust, however, that no obstruction will be placed in my way in carrying out my programme.

One of my colleagues, Shri Dwarkanath Kachru, was arrested at Kohala apparently for doing just what most of us did on the occasion. The reason for differentiating his case from others is not clear to me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. On the Decision to Return[1]

I received an urgent summons from the Congress President this afternoon at Uri in which I was told that the Working Committee desired my presence immediately as various important matters were awaiting decision. I was told I could return to Kashmir later. In view of this direction of the Congress President and the Working Committee. I decided to return to Delhi.

The fact that Sheikh Abdullah's case has been postponed also facilitated my return. We left Uri at about 4 p.m.

At Uri, for the last two days, we were kept as detenus in the dak bungalow which was converted into some kind of a prison for this purpose, guarded by the military. I have been rather out of touch with the happenings in the country since I entered Kashmir.

1. Interview to the press, Rawalpindi, 22 June 1946. From *The Hindu*, 23 June 1946.

far as I am concerned, I have the strongest objection to my being ordered to restrict my movements. I am not prepared to obey any order that I consider unreasonable anywhere and at any place, whether in a State, or in the rest of India. Nor do I consider myself an outsider in any State. The whole of India is my home, and I claim the right to go to any part of it.

I am not sorry for what has happened, if it makes the rulers and others think hard of the new conditions in India and the temper of its people. Today highnesses and excellencies do not count in people's eyes as such. The worth of a man is not judged by how much he takes, but how much he gives to the public in the shape of labour and service. Each one of us consumes the labour of other people. The question is how much we give to the common pool. If we take more than we can give, we are a burden and strain on society. Therefore, every ruler, as everyone else in India, must ask himself this question. Does he give more than he takes either in service or otherwise? Those who take more than they give cannot obviously be honoured members of society.

In the past for many of them it had all been a question of taking. In the future, a new balance has to be set in our social structure. So it is not merely a question of treaty rights, which are dead as a doornail, or dynastic rights, which have no value in people's eyes, but only a question of human rights. It is by that standard alone that all problems have to be considered and decided.

20. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit[1]

New Delhi
June 25, 1946

Dear Nan,

I hope you are resting in Khali and getting fit again. I am quite well in spite of reports to the contrary. As a matter of fact this little outing in Kashmir has cheered me up and my two days' stay in Uri was much occupied in making up for arrears of sleep.

My programme is uncertain still. But I imagine that we shall leave Delhi by the end of this week. I have to go to Kashmir again round about the 1st July. If I can manage it, I shall go to Allahabad a couple

1. J. N. Papers, NMML

At about 7.45, I started marching along the Srinagar Road. Others followed me, and when we came up to the police and the military, I pushed ahead in between them. So did others. Some of the soldiers had bayonets, some had rifles while the police had lathis. The police refrained from using their lathis except in trying to stop us. The bayonets were very near us sometimes, but actually there was no injury from them. In fact, when one bayonet was within a few inches of me Mr. Dwarkanath Kachru, who was next to me, diverted it. He was arrested soon after.

On the whole, I have no complaint against the police or the military, who were placed in a difficult position. But when there are bayonets and loaded rifles, accidents can easily take place. The order to load rifles was given in our presence. I was not injured in any way, nor was anyone else, except as a result of pushing about and hustling. Altogether we must have gone about 250 yards, the later part of the journey being more or less of a procession with the police and the military joining in.

We then stopped again and had a talk with the District Magistrate. Right at the beginning we had asked him if we had been arrested. He said "no". We said that if we were not arrested, then we claimed the right to march on. Ultimately, the Magistrate took away the police and the military to Domel, 21 miles ahead. We had some kind of meal in the middle of the road and we motored to Domel, where we spent the night.

The next morning we were told that we were technically under arrest. Mr. Asaf Ali and Dewan Chaman Lal wanted to go to Srinagar, but they could do so only when special permission came from Srinagar late in the afternoon. At night, we were removed from Domel to Uri, 50 miles towards Srinagar. A military convoy accompanied us.

The Uri dak bungalow was converted into a kind of prison and was guarded by the military. There I remained for two days, when I received Maulana Sahib's telegram, demanding my presence here. I had no alternative but to obey. But, of course, it was understood that I would go back to Kashmir later. The fact that Sheikh Abdullah's trial had been postponed also made it easy for me to return.

It has been stated that a large number of *jathas* came. So far as I I know, only a few odd people trickled in. As a matter of fact, I had discouraged *jathas* from coming. The whole traffic on the Jhelum

Bombay. It is probable that after the meetings Maulana Azad and I might go there together.

I should very much like you and Asaf to go to Kashmir for this trial. It is, of course, not merely for the trial but for other obvious reasons also. If nobody goes people there will feel that we have deserted them. They are rather down and out at the present time and require to be helped psychologically. So I hope you will go even for a short period; also Asaf. He is not likely to go to Bombay for the A.I.C.C. I imagine that this matter will be cleared up before very long in view of the various forces at work to this end. It is from this point of view also that I would like you and Asaf to go now, because your visit itself will help. You will tell Sheikh Abdullah that I am very sorry I could not be present there now, but I have refrained from going there because better hands are dealing with the matter and I couldn't easily go just at present because of the A.I.C.C. My mind is, however, full of Kashmir and we shall do our utmost.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

22. To Lord Wavell[1]

Allahabad
13 July 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Over two weeks ago, just before I left Delhi, you were good enough to send for me to discuss recent happenings in Kashmir. I told you then that I had promised to return to Kashmir and I intended to keep my promise. But I had no desire to precipitate matters and, therefore, I had postponed my visit for ten or twelve days. Meanwhile, I hope that the difficulties in the way of my going to Kashmir would be removed.

I have now waited for over two weeks. I do not know what the exact position is there now. Meanwhile, this question has assumed a larger significance and the Congress Working Committee is seized of it. You will appreciate that it is not merely a personal matter so far as I am concerned but affects our entire relation with the States. I am wholly

1. J. N. Collection.

24. To Asaf Ali[1]

Allahabad
16 July 1946

My dear Asaf,
The postal and telegraph strike has rather isolated us and made it difficult to communicate with each other. I am sending this letter by messenger, that is through Krishna Kripalani who is going to take charge of the A.I.C.C. office in New Delhi. This. I believe, is situated opposite your house in Windsor Place.

I do not know if you have received the notice of the meeting of the Expert Committee we have appointed for the constituent assembly. This committee consists of you, Gopalaswami Ayyangar, K.T. Shah, D.R. Gadgil of Poona, Humayun Kabir, K.M. Munshi and me. We have fixed the 20th July for its first meeting. It will meet at 19 Windsor Place. New Delhi, at 2 p.m. Naturally I want you to be present at it and I have asked all members to come prepared with notes.

In spite of my desire to have you in Delhi for this meeting, I sent you a telegram suggesting that you might stay on in Srinagar for Sheikh Abdullah's case. I did this in consultation with Maulana because for the moment we saw no other way out. The telegram you sent me was not clear except that Baldev Sahay was going away. I do not know how matters stand now. It is exceedingly difficult now to get hold of any senior counsel. We cannot even get into touch with other persons by telegram. The time at our disposal is limited. Ultimately, seeing no other way out for the present, I have asked a young barrister here, whom you might perhaps know—Shanti Dhawan, to go to Srinagar. He is good in his own way, but obviously this is a stop-gap arrangement and he cannot take the place of a senior. I decided to send him as I could find no one else just at present and it was better to send him than no one at all. So far as the work is concerned, he will do it fairly well, both from the legal and political points of view. But he does not carry a big name and a reputation. I do not even know whether the case will be proceeded with or adjourned again. Anyway Dhawan can hold the fort till further developments or till other arrangements are made.

Of course if you had remained there or if you could go there that would be the ideal arrangement. But I can't press you to go backwards

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16 July 1946

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Of course if you had remained there or if you could go there that would be the ideal arrangement. But I can't press you to go backwards

1. J.N. Collection.

As I shall reach Delhi on the 19th evening I should like to meet you and Dhawan that same night before Dhawan leaves the next morning. I expect to stay with Ratan and Rajan at 18 Hardinge Avenue.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

25. To Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad[1]

Allahabad
16 July 1946

My dear Bakshi,
We have not yet had any definite answer from the Kashmir authorities, but the Maharaja sent a telegram to Sardar Patel three days ago to say that he had written to me directly. I have not received this letter yet, possibly because of the postal strike.

I have received a telegram from Jailal Kilam[2] stating that Baldev Sahay is away and he wants further instructions. It is exceedingly difficult to make any suitable arrangements in this short time, especially as the post and telegraph system is not working properly. I had hoped that Asaf Ali would stay in Srinagar, but apparently he has come back to Delhi. I do not know whether the case will be adjourned again or not. I can't get a senior lawyer from Bombay or elsewhere to come suddenly at a day's notice. I have, therefore, decided to send from here an able and smart young man, whom perhaps you remember as he was associated with the States People's Conference some years ago—Shanti Dhawan. Dhawan is a capable barrister and is Reader of Law here at the university. Both from the legal and political points of view he will be good. The only thing lacking is a famous name. I think he is good enough to carry on and hold the fort for the present till we make other and additional arrangements if necessary. So Dhawan will go from here via Delhi. He expects to reach Delhi on the 19th early morning by train. I have asked him to meet Asaf Ali and you so that both of you might post him up. I shall show him the papers I have here. I want him to leave by air for Pindi on the 20th morning and by car from Pindi to

1. J.N. Collection.
2. An advocate who later became a judge of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court.

and forwards at the cost of your other work. That is for you to decide.

I do not know yet what the answer of the Kashmir Government is to the proposals put before them in Bombay by Gandhiji, Maulana and Patel. These proposals were in brief immediate unconditional removal of the ban on my entry, Sheikh Abdullah's release, and then consideration of constitutional issues on the basis of responsible government under the aegis of the Maharaja. For the present only the first two count. I think an alternative suggestion was also made that in any event Sheikh Abdullah should be released indefinitely on some kind of bail on his own recognizance so that he might be able to go about and consult his colleagues in Kashmir and outside. Kak said that he would place these matters before the Maharaja and then let us have his reply. It appeared that probably there would be a removal of the ban on my entry, but there was little chance of Abdullah being released before the trial.

Since then we have been waiting for an answer. I did not meet Kak and had no say in these talks. A suggestion was made that I might meet him, but I said that I better not do so.

Vallabhbhai wrote to the Viceroy also and sent a telegram to the Maharaja. The answer to this telegram was to the effect that the Maharaja had written to me. I have so far received no such letter. It is possible, of course, that it has been held up by the postal strike. So I do not know at all where matters stand. Provisionally I have intended going to Kashmir about the 24th of this month from Delhi. I informed the Viceroy and the Nawab of Bhopal of this, but I should like to know before I go what the Maharaja has written. I should like also to communicate with Maulana and Vallabhbhai. That is difficult so long as the postal strike continues.

My present programme is to go to Delhi by air on the 19th reaching there at about 7 p.m. that day. On the 20th, as I have said above, we hold our Expert Committee meeting. I shall stay there till I go to Kashmir unless something unforeseen occurs.

I have mentioned above that Shanti Dhawan is being sent by me to Srinagar. I am asking him to spend a day in Delhi to meet you and be posted up. He will reach Delhi on the 19th morning by train. I want him to proceed by air on the 20th morning to Pindi and thence by car to Srinagar. I am writing a letter to Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad to make arrangements for his air journey as well as car journey from Pindi. Will you please see that Bakshi gets this letter and makes the necessary arrangements? His usual address is: C/o Pandit Brothers, Connaught Circus, New Delhi.

27. Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi[1]

New Delhi
20.7.1946

Received letter from Viceroy today about Kashmir. Thereupon decided go there twentyfourth on brief visit as Abdullah's trial beginning twenty-second. Informed Viceroy, Maharaja others my visit. Received your letter later. Consider change in programme not desirable now. Would early August suit you for Working Committee? Please wire suitable date place.

Jawaharlal

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16, 1946-48, p. 83, N.M.M.L.

28. Telegram to the Maharaja of Kashmir[1]

New Delhi
20 July 1946

Am informed you sent me letter week ago but no letter yet received. Viceroy conveyed brief purport of letter to me today. I hope reach Srinagar on 24th evening on short visit.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16, 1946-48, p. 73, N.M.M.L.

29. Telegram to the Nawab of Bhopal[1]

New Delhi
20.7.46

Thank you for telegram. Am grateful for your sentiments and would certainly follow your advice if arrangements not already made and Sheikh

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16, 1946-48, p. 81, N.M.M.L.

Srinagar the same day. This will give him a clear day in Srinagar before the date fixed for the case. I have wired Jailal Kilam accordingly. Will you please make arrangements for him to go from Delhi by air to Pindi on the 20th morning and from Pindi to Srinagar? It will be desirable for someone to accompany him from Pindi, but this is for you to judge.

I intend reaching Delhi by air on the 19th evening at about 7 p.m. I shall probably stay at 18 Hardinge Avenue. I want to meet you and Asaf Ali and Dhawan the same night. Please fix the place between you three. We can then give final instructions to Dhawan. It is my present intention to go to Kashmir after a few days in Delhi, but this will apparently depend on the Maharaja's letter and other developments. I have written on this subject to the Viceroy also.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

26. To the Maharaja of Kashmir[1]

New Delhi
20 July 1946

Dear Maharaja Saheb,

I understand from Lord Wavell that you sent me a letter. I have not received this letter yet.

I write to inform you that I intend going to Srinagar on the 24th of this month. The immediate object of my visit is to advise my colleague, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, and his counsel in regard to his case. Further it is my desire, as it was last month on the occasion of my visit to Kashmir, to help in such ways as I can in lessening the tension which has existed in Kashmir for some time past, and if possible, to find a way out of the unfortunate situation that exists there. That, I take it, is the desire of all who are interested in the well-being of Kashmir and its people.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J. N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

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1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16, 1946-48, p. 81, N.M.M.L.

Abdullah's trial not beginning. Finally decided about going after receiving Viceroy's letter on subject. Have no intention creating any difficulty. Shall endeavour to relieve tension with view to satisfactory solution.

Jawaharlal

30. To Vallabhbhai Patel[1]

New Delhi
20 July 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,
Thank you for your letter of the 19th which K.M. Munshi gave me. On arrival here this morning I received a letter from the Viceroy which was in answer to one[2] I had written to him about my proposed visit to Kashmir. He mentioned that the Maharaja had written to me. As a matter of fact I have not yet received the Maharaja's letter. It is only from the copy you have sent me that I have been able to read it.

The Viceroy wrote that if I was anxious to go to Kashmir I could go there and there would be no ban. He hoped that I would observe the laws of the State, etc. On receipt of this letter I finally decided to go to Kashmir on the 24th. I informed the Viceroy accordingly and have written and telegraphed to the Maharaja.

After making these arrangements I got a long telegram from the Nawab of Bhopal this evening pressing me not to go to Kashmir at present. I have sent him an equally long reply appreciating his sentiments but pointing out that in view of what the Viceroy had written to me and the arrangements had been made it was difficult for me to cancel my trip; further that I was going there on a peaceful mission and not for trouble. So I propose to go on the 24th morning. I expect to be there about four days. Then I shall hurry back to Allahabad, where I have some important work.

It is not my intention to raise any major issues in Kashmir at this stage. I shall also see Sheikh Abdullah and join in consultation about his defence. I shall also visit parts of the city and meet some people.

1. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. 1, pp. 10-11.
2. See *ante*, item 22.

I do not propose to hold public meetings and the like, though it may happen, of course, that crowds gather occasionally where I go.

I think we should fix a date for the meeting of the Working Committee. Bapu has suggested that a meeting should be held soon to consider the Kashmir matter. I have sent a telegram to him asking him what date and place would suit him early in August.

There is no question of Maulana going to Kashmir at present. I know nothing about it.

About Sikhs and the Punjab I am absolutely and thoroughly fed up. Colonel Gill has sent me a telegram asking me to meet their delegation. As a matter of fact, my Committee here meets all day and I have no time left for any other work. I have told him so and have suggested that he might send his representatives to you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

31. Telegram to Abul Kalam Azad[1]

22 July 1946

Kashmir visit fixed after reference Gandhiji, Viceroy.

Jawaharlal

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16, 1946-48, p. 71, N.M.M.L.

32. Sheikh Abdullah's Statement in Court[1]

I have pleaded not guilty to the charge of "sedition", which, according to jurists, is a crime against society, and I stand by whatever I have said or written in regard to the fundamental rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The reports of my speeches, though neither verbatim nor strictly accurate, are fairly correct. But when reliance is placed in the complaint

1. Jointly drafted by Jawaharlal and Asaf Ali. *The Tribune*, 7 August 1946.

and the charge on certain sentences, torn out of their context and not free from distortion, a wrong impression is likely to be produced. I owe it to yourself and the decencies of civilized controversy to state that I have maintained a clear and strict distinction between persons and politics, between individuals and the system of government which they operate, and I would not allow any undignified or indecent reference to or vulgar abuse of anyone anywhere. I have, however, all along sought the alteration of policies and measures and vital change in the system of government by legitimate and civilized means, for it is the birthright of man to shape and mould the law by which he must live.

I must also repudiate the charge that the violence to which the people are alleged to have resorted after my arrest resulted from my speeches, for realism alone would not permit me to contemplate a violent clash between the unarmed people and the armed might of the state. I called a total halt even to speeches after 16 May, and was proceeding to Delhi on 20 May for consultation with the responsible leaders of the All India States People's Conference. I was not allowed to proceed far and was arrested at Ghari. The news of my arrest naturally called forth a public protest, which was met with violent repression, and the bullet holes in Khanqah-i-Maulla bear silent testimony to it. Subsequently a chain of happenings took place, the bitter memory of which is fresh in everyone's mind. Even up to now fresh links are being forged in that dreadful chain of ruthless suppression and suffering. An elaborate attempt has been made by the prosecution to connect the events that happened after and in consequence of my arrest, which I am advised are irrelevant to the case, with my speeches. Thus, oddly enough, is sought to be justified the precipitate and uncalled for action of the Government in suddenly arresting me and hundreds of our colleagues, and letting the military loose on our people, in pursuance of a policy of frightfulness, resulting in death, injury, humiliation and harassment of many innocent men and women.

I am not interested in a personal defence and I would not have undertaken it if I had not felt that my trial for "sedition" is something far more than a personal charge against me. It is, in effect, a trial of the entire population of Jammu and Kashmir, even though some of them, being content with their transient personal interests or out of fear, may not be prepared to recognise or openly declare this. Moved by the extreme poverty, misery and lack of freedom and opportunity of the people of Jammu and Kashmir State, I and my colleagues of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, many of whom are behind prison bars or in exile today, have humbly sought to serve them during the past sixteen years. We have endeavoured to give faithful expression to

the growing consciousness among the people of their rights, aspirations and desire for freedom. This has attracted the penal and preventive provisions of law. Where law is not based on the will of the people, it can lend itself to the suppression of their aspirations. Such law has no moral validity even though it may be enforced for a while. There is a law higher than that, the law that represents the people's will and secures their wellbeing, and there is the tribunal of human conscience, which judges the rulers and the ruled alike by standards which do not change by the arbitrary will of the most powerful. To that law I gladly submit and that tribunal I shall face with confidence and without fear, leaving it to history and posterity to pronounce their verdict on the claims I and my colleagues have made not merely on behalf of the four million people of Jammu and Kashmir but also of the 93 million people of all the States in India. That claim has not been confined to the people of a particular race or religion or colour. It applies to all, for I hold that humanity as a whole is indivisible by such barriers and human rights must always prevail. The fundamental rights of all men and women to live and act as free human beings, to make laws and fashion their political, social and economic fabric, so that they may advance the cause of human freedom and progress, are inherent and cannot be denied though they may be suppressed for a while.

I hold that sovereignty resides in the people, and all relationships, political, social and economic, derive from the collective will of the people. The State and its head represent the constitutional centre of this sovereignty, the head of the State being the symbol of the authority with which the people may invest him for the realisation of their aspirations and the maintenance of their rights. The people, who constitute the state, must be the first charge on the resources and the primary concern of the State. In promoting the good of the people there must be no discrimination between one group and another, and all of them should have equal rights, obligations and opportunities. No artificial disability should be permitted to operate to the prejudice of any individual or group or community.

Through ages past Kashmir has been famed throughout the world for its entrancing beauty, the peaceful and intellectual pursuits of its people and the skill of its craftsmen. Nature has bountifully endowed this land and placed it as a lovely crown on the brow of India. If people from far off countries are attracted to it, what must be the feelings of those whose homeland it is and who have been nurtured in its bosom and who have drunk deep of its beauty and exhilarating air? And yet this land of fable and romance and abounding resources continues to suffer in the grip of appalling squalor, poverty and misery and, through

starvation and want, the bright eyes of its people have lost their lustre and their faces have become dull and lifeless. When we who are of Kashmir look at this strange paradox, we are moved to our innermost depths and an overwhelming desire seizes us to do our utmost to change this unhappy scene and make of Kashmir what nature designed it to be. It is this urge that has carried us forward, even though dangers and difficulties have faced us, and it is this urge that has gradually brought hope to our people and somewhat lightened their burden. Moved by this grim reality the National Conference of Jammu and Kashmir drew up a plan for the future government of Kashmir, in which it embodied a charter of the people's rights and obligations, a plan of democratically organised responsible government with a constitutional head, and an economic structure of society, and called it a "New Kashmir". It represents the fundamental rights and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and is in full consonance with the demands and policies of the rest of India and the All India States People's Conference, of which I have the honour to be Vice-President. I have participated in the formulation of the policy of that conference and I agree with it now as I have done in the past.

This conference has clearly laid down that the old treaties between the States and the British Government or its representatives are obsolete, and must end. That applies to all treaties including the Treaty of Amritsar, which has some special and unhappy features which make it a kind of sale deed of the territory and people of Kashmir. This treatment of a people as a commodity which can be transferred for hard cash has all along been deeply resented by the Kashmiris, whether Hindu, Sikh or Muslim. It hurts their national dignity. In practice, the peculiar nature of the Treaty of Amritsar has led to all kinds of discrimination against the Kashmiris, resulting in their treatment as some kind of a lower class.

The March announcement of the British Prime Minister affected the Indian States as well as the rest of India, and the people of the States felt that just as the people of India as a whole would decide their future, both internally and internationally, so also they must have the right to determine their own future within the States and in relation to the larger framework of a free India. That was not only a logical, reasonable and long-standing demand, but also it seemed to be the inevitable consequence of what the British Government had stated. The All India States People's Conference gave clear expression to this demand and looked forward to sharing, on behalf of the people of the States, in fashioning the future in cooperation with others.

It was clear that the old treaties with the States had to go. They represented something that had no relation to the modern world or to the India of today. They could not be reconciled with the inevitable changes in India and in the States. If this was clear to begin with, it became an accepted fact by the statement issued by the Cabinet delegation on 16 May last. That statement declared that paramountcy would end when the new constitution of free India came into being. It was an inevitable consequence that the old treaties and *sanads* and other engagements would go the way of paramountcy, and, the British Government being out of the picture, a new relationship would have to be negotiated between what is now known as British India and the States. The demand for the abrogation of the Amritsar Treaty was, in effect, disposed of by this clear decision of the Cabinet delegation. The future constitutional set-up in the State of Jammu and Kashmir cannot derive from the old source of relationship which was expiring and was bound to end soon. That set-up could only rest on the active will of the people of the State, conferring on the head of the State the title and authority drawn from the true and abiding source of sovereignty, that is, the people. The "Quit Kashmir" cry symbolised and gave concrete shape to this demand for the termination of a system of government which was in the process of dissolution all over India. That cry had nothing personal about it.

Meanwhile, developments in Kashmir had led to a crisis. A brief reference to the circumstances preceding the crisis is necessary here. Certain constitutional changes were introduced in 1944 which were glaringly inadequate and fell far short of the demand of the situation. Yet we agreed to work them in order to expedite and facilitate further change and, in particular, because we hoped that this would lead to contacts with the ruler and cooperation in bringing about essential changes. But our efforts ended in failure and these constitutional changes were reduced in practice to a futile shadow. The intolerable privations and grievances of the people of Jammu and Kashmir found no relief or remedy. A microscopic minority of variously graded *jagirdars* was, and is, allowed to exercise indefensible rights over large sections of the people who live in appalling poverty.

In Jammu province, especially in Chinani and Poonch, the *jagirdari* system presents a pathetic spectacle of degrading poverty and heartless exploitation. In recent years, Kashmir province has been, and is still being, parcelled out in *jagirs* which are granted to a small group of favourites. Thus, when land reform is considered everywhere an essential preliminary to progress, in this State a semi-feudal land system is actually being extended with all its attendant evils. As one goes up the higher valleys of the State, one is enchanted by the loveliness of moun-

the stress and strain of war conditions. And yet they could not do anything to change what they could not tolerate for the door of change was barred and bolted.

The present Prime Minister came to occupy the seat of authority and a new and disastrous policy of alienating the people was inaugurated. The position of the popular Minister was made intolerable and he found himself compelled to resign. Soon after, as a result of a secret intrigue, a member of the National Conference was won over by the State authorities and made a Minister overnight in contravention of the rules and procedure laid down by His Highness. This sudden development came as a great shock to the people and they began to feel that His Highness had been influenced by the small coterie that surrounded him to act in a manner which was not expected of the impartial head of the State.

The sole object of the Premier's policy was to crush the popular movement as represented by the National Conference presumably because this great organisation was the strongest and the loudest in viewing the people's demand for political and economic changes. We have the authority of the Premier himself for the statement that he started this policy immediately after taking office. To a newspaper correspondent he stated soon after the 20th May: "We have been preparing for it for eleven months and now we are ready to meet the challenge. There will be no more vacillation and no weak-kneed policy. We shall be ruthlessly firm and we make no apology about it." Strangely enough, the Premier had the clairvoyance to prepare for the effect of my speeches eleven months before they were delivered or "Quit Kashmir" was heard as a slogan. Even before those speeches, elaborate military preparations were made all over the valley and again on the Premier's authority three units of the army were flown to Kashmir. There was much planning ahead. The Governor of Kashmir has stated: "We planned ahead with the help of the police and military. The combined operation of the two alone, we knew, could help us to face the situation. The fusion has worked well and yielded good results. My faith in stern measures before the trouble spread has been justified."

It is this eleven months' preparation, and all that went with it, that is the direct cause of the happenings since the 20th May, not a few speeches delivered by anybody or some slogans shouted by a crowd. It is an ironical irrelevance to discuss the merits or demerits of a speech and to ignore the patent and admitted actions of the Kashmir State Administration which inevitably led, and were meant to lead, to recent events. The climax of the Prime Minister's "ruthlessness" was reached after the 20th May when men and women were dishonoured, human beings were made to crawl or hop on one leg along roads and sweep

them with their turbans, places of worship were desecrated, and an attempt was made to terrorise our whole people by methods of frightfulness. Eleven months preparation for the Premier's "ruthlessness", and all the careful thought that had gone towards the coordination ot the military and the police, had borne fruit.

Some allegations have been made that "Quit Kashmir" and the demand for the abrogation of the Treaty of Amritsar had communal or Communist inspiration. This is a travesty of fact and I deny and repudiate these allegations. The National Conference is essentially a national organisation including in its fold all people who agree with its objective, and cooperating with the All India States People's Conference, with which it is affiliated. It stands in the all-India context for the independence and freedom of India. It stands also for social and economic changes to end privileges and to raise the masses.

It is a small matter whether I am imprisoned and tried and convicted. But it is no small matter that the people of Jammu and Kashmir suffer poverty, humiliation and degradation. It has been no small matter what they have endured during the violent repression and horror of the past two months and more, and what they are enduring now. These very events have demonstrated the justice of our demand and of our cry "Quit Kashmir". For a system of government that can subsist only by pursuing such methods stands condemned. If my imprisonment and that of my colleagues serves the cause to which we have dedicated ourselves, then it will be well with us and we shall take pride in thus serving our people and the land of our forefathers.

Kashmir is dear to us because of its beauty and its past traditions which are common to all who inhabit this land. But it is the future that calls to us and for which we labour, a future that will be common heritage of all, and in which we as free men and women, linked organically with the rest of India, will build the new Kashmir of our dreams. Then only shall we be worthy of the land we dwell in.

33. The Ordeals of the Kashmir People[1]

After four brief days in Kashmir, my mind is full of impressions, painful and otherwise. I shall not say much about them now. To the authorities I have nothing to say, but I have a claim on the people, just as they have a claim on me.

1. Statement to the press on return from Kashmir on 29 July 1946. *The Hindu*, 30 July 1946.

I want to tell them that the ordeal they have gone through, hard and bitter as it has been, is often a necessary training for a people. The masses are trained not so much by books and speeches as by experience of life's hardships. So I hope, and indeed I am sure, that all that has happened will ultimately benefit the freedom movement in Kashmir and strengthen the people. It will strengthen them the more they adhere to right courses and high standards of conduct. During all that has happened, the people, as was inevitable, have acted sometimes rightly, sometimes wrongly. When mass action is involved, this mixture cannot be avoided, but a continuous effort should be made to emphasise right action and to avoid anything that is wrong. Our movement aims high and therefore it should maintain a strict standard of conduct and discipline. The more it does so the greater will be the strength of the people and the sooner their ultimate triumph. In particular, I should like them to remember that they should not indulge in personal or condemnatory slogans. Strength does not come from condemning others, even though they might err. That is a sign of weakness. Our thoughts and our actions should look to the future which we are trying to fashion, and our slogans should also be affirmative and strength-giving. Also I should like to emphasise that violence in a movement of this kind does little good. The more peaceful and disciplined they are the more they will raise themselves and influence others. I know well of the violence and the inhumanities that have been perpetrated on the people here but, as I have said above, I do not wish to say anything about it now. I am more concerned with what our own people do than what others do to them, because ultimately it is what we do that counts.

I was happy to meet Sheikh Abdullah, the gallant leader of Kashmir, again. I am going away, and I shall be burdened with many responsibilities, but my mind will often turn to this beautiful land of Kashmir, which is as much mine as it is yours, and whatever I can do to help the people of Kashmir I shall do.

In two and a half month's time elections for the State Assembly or the Praja Sabha are going to be held. I hope that full advantage will be taken of these elections and that the National Conference will contest them all over the State and demonstrate that the people are with it in its fight for freedom. They should prepare for these elections from now, and I am sure they will succeed. I suggest that first place be given to this activity from now onwards.

May it be well with Kashmir and its people in the days to come and may we all in Kashmir and the rest of India achieve our hearts' desire—freedom for the people in a free and independent India.

34. To Norman Cliff[1]

Allahabad
6 August 1946

Dear Cliff,[2]
Thank you for your letter of the 24th July. I am sorry I missed seeing you before you left India. But as you are coming back here again we are likely to meet. I went to Kashmir again and spent a few days there. Nothing very new has happened there and the trials of both Sheikh Abdullah and Kachru are going on. I am afraid that this Kashmir affair is not likely to be settled soon. Behind it, of course, lie not only the Political Department but also the Chamber of Princes. As you probably know, the Political Department of the Government of India was exceedingly annoyed with my visit to Faridkot.[3]

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Foreign editor of the *News Chronicle*.
3. Jawaharlal had visited Faridkot to study the situation created by the repressive policy of the State Government.

35. Note on Second Visit to Kashmir[1]

When I returned from Uri in Kashmir in June last I promised to go back. The message received by me from the Congress President also indicated that I would have to go back. I was anxious, therefore, to return as early as I could.

In the third week of July I wrote to the Viceroy and to the Nawab of Bhopal saying that I would probably pay a brief visit to Kashmir towards the end of the month. A few days later, when I reached

1. Submitted to the Congress Working Committee at Wardha on 12 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16, 1946-48, pp. 89-97, N.M.M.L.

Delhi, I received a letter from the Viceroy informing me that the ban on my visit had been removed and I could go to Kashmir if I wanted to do so. Subsequently I received a letter from the Maharaja of Kashmir also to the same effect. Thereupon I wrote to the Viceroy as well as to the Maharaja that I would go to Srinagar on the 24th on a brief visit.

On the 24th I went from Delhi reaching Srinagar the same evening. I was accompanied by Major-General Shah Nawaz, who was anxious to see Kashmir for the first time, and Col. Habibur Rahman,[2] who is himself a Kashmiri and who met me at Pindi. There was no untoward occurrence during the journey.

When I reached Srinagar, our car stopped at the Transport Company's office in the city square. Immediately it was surrounded by an excited crowd. I came out and was almost mobbed by friendly people who tried to embrace me. The police drove most of them away. I then proceeded standing on the footboard of the car. A few dozen persons followed the car shouting slogans. Repeatedly the police drove them away with lathis. Twice I got down from the footboard and tried to intervene when I saw this lathi display and people being arrested. On one occasion when I got down, a few persons surrounded me and a policeman and one member of the crowd slapped the policeman. I remonstrated with him and pulled him away. This incident was given considerable publicity in some Kashmir newspapers which are said to be subsidised by the Government, which stated that I had attacked the policeman. It was further stated that a complaint had been lodged against me, though I received no further intimation of it. There was no other incident of this type during my four days' stay in Srinagar which passed off peacefully.

The next day I attended Sheikh Abdullah's trial and later had a long interview with him. I had four such interviews with him, that is, one daily during my stay. No one was present during our interviews except occasionally one of our lawyers. I had long talks with Sheikh Abdullah and discussed the whole situation as well as the defence. He gave me a background of all that had happened and how all their repeated efforts to reach the Maharaja had been foiled by the Prime Minister, and how the Prime Minister had deliberately and openly worked to crush the national movement by encouraging the Muslim Conference and other sectional bodies. A year previously the National Conference had organised a magnificent welcome for the Maharaja on his return from the

2. Member of the I.N.A.; was with Subhas Bose at the time of his death. After partition he settled in Pakistan.

Middle East. In many other ways they had tried to win the goodwill of the Maharaja. But they could not reach him. Ultimately their Minister had also to resign and a sense of slow strangulation took hold of the people leading to a mood of despair. This again led to other events and the cry of "Quit Kashmir". He made it clear that at no time had there been any personal reference to the Maharaja. It referred to the autocratic rule in Kashmir. There is no doubt that there has been and is strong feeling among Kashmiris, both Hindus and Muslims, against what is called Dogra raj and the Dogra ruling class which has all manner of special privileges. Thus Kashmiris cannot enter the State army or keep arms. In the matter of grants of State land too the people of Kashmir proper suffer at the expense of others.

Sheikh Abdullah while making it clear that no personal affront was ever meant for the Maharaja was strongly against the whole system of Government prevailing there and more especially the Prime Minister and his clique.

During my stay in Srinagar I paid visits to certain places in the city where firing had taken place as also some mosques which had suffered injury. My visits were unannounced to avoid crowds. I also paid a visit to Anant Nag where also people had died owing to firing and it was said that there had been a great deal of repression and looting by the military. Two cases of rape were brought to my notice and I was told that recently some other cases had occurred in the neighbouring village. Wherever I went people were very excited and at the same time rather cowed down.

I met many neutral observers unconnected with politics. And the general impression I got from them was that the Kak regime was thoroughly corrupt and crooked and that there would be little peace in Kashmir so long as this continued. I avoided all public functions and did not make any statement to the press or otherwise except a brief statement[2] at the end of my stay. This statement was in the main an appeal to the people to stick to peaceful methods and avoid objectionable slogans. I do not remember hearing any personal slogans regarding the Maharaja or anyone else. The usual slogans I heard were those denouncing the Amritsar Treaty. Sometimes I heard "Dogra raj murdabad".[3]

I made no attempt to meet any of the high State officials but wherever I went minor State officials, magistrates and the police followed me. The police and military were also encamped near our house boat.

An old friend, Swami Sant Dev, was staying in the Maharaja's guest

2. See *ante*, pp. 410-411.
3. "Down with Dogra rule".

house. I went to see him. Later he sent word to me that he would like me to meet the Maharaja at his palace. I expressed my willingness to do so. But the meeting did not take place as, it was stated, the Maharaja was unwell.

Sheikh Abdullah's trial went on from day to day. I did not attend it after the first day. Asaf Ali was the senior counsel for the defence. It was obvious that a conviction was aimed at. In the course of the trial an interesting fact came out. According to the prosecution the damage done by the people in the city of Srinagar during the disturbances after Sheikh Abdullah's arrest amounted to a little over Rs. 7000/-. This was a trivial sum and consisted of a large number of small items. Some time afterwards, I believe, an official building was burnt down.

Dwarka Nath Kachru, who was arrested in June at the time of my first visit, was still an under-trial prisoner. I did not see him as he was kept far from Srinagar. When there was a chance of my seeing him on my way back, he was suddenly removed hand-cuffed. So far as I know his trial has not begun yet.

The National Conference people were carrying on some kind of token civil disobedience. This amounted to a weekly defiance of the ban on meetings when a few selected persons offered themselves for arrest after Friday prayers at the mosque. At the time of these arrests there were sometimes conflicts between the crowds in the mosque and the police. While I was in Srinagar on a Friday there was a biggish conflict of this kind which resulted in injury to a number of policemen as well as members of the public and a large number of arrests. I was of course not present when this took place.

There were various groups in the National Conference. Some were anxious to intensify the civil disobedience, others were inclined to stop it. The general feeling was that it should be carried on in this weekly manner, at any rate, till the end of Sheikh Abdullah's trial which was likely to take place within a fortnight. A complicated factor was the approach to elections for the State Assembly. After some discussion Sheikh Saheb and his colleagues decided to contest these elections which are going to take place in October next. They had no doubt whatever that if they were given the chance they would sweep the polls. Recent events have considerably reduced the influence of the Muslim Conference and added to the prestige of the National Conference. The difficulty, however, was that almost every one of their workers was in prison, either convicted or in detention. However, they decided to contest the elections anyhow. This led them to think that it would be desirable to call off the partial civil disobedience that was going on, so that they might prepare for the elections. On my way back I met Bakshi Ghulam

Mohammad, the acting president of the Kashmir National Conference, who had been out of Kashmir during this entire period since before Sheikh Abdullah's arrest. He told me that he had decided to call off, as president, civil disobedience as soon as Sheikh Sahib's trial was over. I agreed with him.

It is interesting to note that quite a number of Kashmiri Hindus have been arrested, convicted or detained, during these last two and a half months or more. As a rule every Hindu who has been convicted has received a heavier sentence than the Muslims, presumably to deter the Hindus to take part in the movement.

Just before my return I nominated a relief committee for the purpose of helping the sufferers from these disturbances and their dependents. I made it quite clear that this was entirely non-political and I tried to get into it some people who had no connection with politics. It was not easy to do so as people confessed to me that though they had every sympathy they were afraid of the Prime Minister's revenge. Still a committee was nominated. I have recently heard that the president of this committee has been arrested.

I have also been informed that Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, Shamlal Kaul and some other Kashmiris, who have been doing publicity work for the National Conference from Lahore, are wanted by the Kashmir Government which has asked the Punjab Government for extradition. They have asked me for directions as to what they should do. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad is perfectly prepared to return to Kashmir. His only fear is that if he is arrested, immediately on return, he might not have the chance to call off civil disobedience formally and the wrong people may then control the situation. Before I returned from Srinagar I participated in the drawing up of a long statement which Sheikh Abdullah was presenting to the court. I did not see the final draft of the statement. But the general lines had been settled. In this he made it clear that he stood by the policy of the States People's Conference which meant responsible government under the aegis of the ruler. But he emphasized that sovereignty must reside in the people and they must have power to decide about the future of the State. He further said that Kashmir should be an autonomous part of the free Indian unit. About the Amritsar Treaty he said that the question had been settled officially by the Cabinet Mission's statement of May 16th which stated that paramountcy should end under the new constitution. With paramountcy must necessarily go the old treaties.

In his statement he deprecated personal and condemnatory slogans and cries. Indeed he pointed out that in one of his reported speeches

before his arrest he had said so. At that time the slogans were directed against Kak.

Sheikh Saheb's trial is likely to end within a week or so, though it is difficult to judge from here.

It is generally thought that British policy in Kashmir is aiming at the possession of some of the frontier areas. The British Government would not of course like a popular upheaval upsetting the present government there. At the same time they do not mind the Maharaja being frightened so that he might seek shelter with them and agree to their terms. The present Prime Minister has been known in the past to be a Residency man. He has completely isolated the Maharaja and is probably the most unpopular and hated man in Kashmir today. I did not come across a single person who had a good word for him. He has so managed things that it is difficult to bring about a change for the better. Most people told me that there would be no peace in Kashmir so long as Kak remains, and yet there was no obvious way of removing him, chiefly because hardly anyone was prepared to take his job. The only obvious alternative appeared to be some Muslim Leaguer from outside. Such a person would of course make matters worse. Yet it is clear that Kak cannot continue for very long.

I have never met the Maharaja. His reputation is of being a fairly decent man, sometimes moved by liberal impulses, but really not interested in public affairs at all. His chief interests: cooking, racing and building and demolishing houses. He is rather timid and keeps more aloof from people than most Indian rulers. Kak has apparently rather frightened him by his account of events and made him believe that it was only he, Kak, that saved the Maharaja from disaster. Probably the fact that has greatly irritated the Maharaja has been the report that personal and offensive slogans were shouted against him and the Maharani. Probably some such slogans were shouted by people in the crowd in the excitement of the disturbances. I do not think that any charge is made

I could judge how his mind must have been poisoned by false and tendentious reports. As a matter of fact I did not say anything offensive against him at any time, though when I was arrested I did say that he was a very foolish person and he would have to repent of what he had done. At the present moment I believe the Maharaja is a very unhappy person, trusting nobody, fearing everybody including Kak. Kak's policy has undoubtedly injured the Maharaja and his dynasty very greatly. It has encouraged all manner of wrong elements in Kashmir. Among those whom he has specially encouraged are the people of the Muslim Conference which is affiliated to the Muslim League and a kisan sabha started by some followers of M.N. Roy. These latter people, I was told, behaved like perfect goondas and hooligans in neighbouring villages. The last ten weeks have naturally put a great deal of powers in the hands of the military and the police and they have behaved as military and police behaved in many parts of India in August and September 1942. There has been corruption on a grand scale and the State has spent vast sums of money. Kashmir has suffered greatly also because one of its main sources of revenue, the tourist traffic, has dwindled down this year. The people generally are in a very bad state.

The Kashmiris are a very excitable people, timid and at the same time inclined to occasional violence, and politically rather immature. Having no proper press of their own they are influenced greatly by the Punjab Urdu press which, as is well known, is of the lowest type. The Muslim Urdu papers are all League papers and they have been carrying on, for some years past, a barrage against Sheikh Abdullah and the National Conference. The Frontier Province has a certain steadying effect, but the district of the N.W.F. Province which joins Kashmir is Hazara which is least influenced by the Khudai Khidmatgar movement. It is really the extension of the Punjab and suffers from Punjab's communalism. Thus Kashmir has continuously to face Muslim League propaganda and there is no doubt that during the last four years this has had some effect. Sheikh Abdullah has fought against this with a fair measure of success, but the influence of the League has grown. This was helped by the State policy also. This was one of the reasons which drove the National Conference people to extreme courses.

On the whole my four-day stay in Kashmir was quiet and uneventful. I purposely avoided saying or doing anything which might cause complications. Even after my return I said very little about conditions in Kashmir. The reason for this was because I felt that the Working Committee having in a way assumed responsibility, I must not create any further difficulty. During my stay no actual discourtesy was offered to me but I was surrounded by a kind of hostili[illegible]

ports, from mutual acquaintances, of the Prime Minister's reaction to my visit indicated that he was very far from friendly. Accounts in some Kashmir papers about my visit were highly offensive. These papers are supposed to be in close touch with the Prime Minister. The editor of one of these papers is the Associated Press correspondent and most of the news from Kashmir comes through him.

I have referred above to the coming election in Kashmir. It is believed there that the Prime Minister wants to prevent anyhow the success of the National Conference at these elections, and he will therefore carry on an intensive policy of repression so as to prevent the National Conference from succeeding at the elections.

My return journey from Kashmir was uneventful. Shah Nawaz Khan returned with me. Asaf Ali naturally stayed on because of the trial. He will remain there so long as this trial lasts.

ALWAR

1. To Seremal Bapna[1]

17 April 1946

Dear Sir Seremal,[2]

Yesterday I sent you a telegram in regard to the recent happenings[3] in Alwar State. I did so on receipt of a report from Khan Abdus Samad Khan[4] and Pandit Jainarain Vyas who, as you know, had paid a visit to Alwar and the Meo villages. I sent a similar telegram to His Highness the Maharaja of Alwar.

It is not our purpose or our custom to interfere in internal happenings in the States or elsewhere unless they are of a nature which demand urgent

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 151, 1945-48, pp. 567-571, N.M.M.L.
2. Prime Minister of Alwar State.
3. People of the villages of Rata Kalan, Rata Khurd and Basi Balan, who refused to pay arrears of tobacco excise duty, came into clash with the police on 2 April 1946. The District Magastrate called in the army to control the situation. According to an official statement two men died and a few were injured in the firing by the soldiers.
4. A leader of Baluchistan.

attention or unless they involve wider issues. The recent firing incident and what followed in Alwar State have drawn a great deal of attention and we decided to depute two of our senior-most and most responsible members to visit the places concerned and report. They saw you in this connection also. It is a matter of great surprise to me that many of the facts that you mentioned to them, especially in regard to the under-trial prisoners, were found by them to be incorrect. I can only come to the conclusion that you were yourself misinformed. The fact that under-trial prisoners are kept with heavy fetters on is disquieting and very abnormal. But what is really shocking is that such prisoners, even when being operated upon under chloroform or when their legs have been shattered, have to keep handcuffs on. You will, I am sure, agree with me that this kind of thing brings into discredit any administration. Further I understand that facilities for legal defence as well as for interviews are not forthcoming.

Before the question of trial and legal defence arises another question has priority and that is this: the whole background of the firing and how far this was justified. Obviously if the firing was unjustified the people who suffered from it, far from being proceeded against, should be treated entirely differently. The report that has been presented to me indicates that there was not sufficient justification for firing by the police. Further it shows clearly that present conditions in the Meo villages are highly unsatisfactory and the villagers are being terrorised by the police. Even Pandit Vyas and his colleagues who visited the villages were surrounded and threatened by the police. It seems to me that urgent steps should be taken to remedy this state of affairs. Further as I have suggested in my telegram an impartial inquiry is obviously indicated.

I am reluctant to give publicity to the report that has been presented to me till I find out what steps the State is taking in the matter. In view, however, of the public interest and enquiries I have to say something and I am issuing a brief press statement.[4]

You will, no doubt, realise that in view of the big changes that are impending in India, including the States, any incident that creates ill-will between the administration and the people is to be deprecated. We shall all have to face these big changes and to refashion the old order. This necessitates a large measure of cooperation if it is to be done peacefully and rapidly. So far as we are concerned we are prepared to do our utmost to induce the people of the States to give their cooperation in order to facilitate these changes peacefully. But obviously cooperation is

4. See the following item.

not one-sided, and if the State authorities carry on in the old authoritarian and repressive way the result is an increasing hostility on the part of the people.

There is another matter to which I should like to draw your attention. I have read with considerable surprise the correspondence relating to the removal from office of Lala Kashi Ram, president of the Municipal Board, Alwar. The reasons given for this in the letter of the Army Minister dated 11th April are trivial. Some of these reasons even do not stand scrutiny after the reply given by Lala Kashi Ram. I cannot conceive of any elected president of the municipal board being addressed in this way by any authority. The matter might have had no intrinsic importance by itself, but it is deeply significant of the way the Alwar administration has been carried on. I trust, therefore, that you will consider this matter afresh.

I am sending a copy of this letter to His Highness the Maharaja of Alwar who, I understand, is at Kasauli.[5]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Seremal Bapna replied on 20 April that firing took place as a last resort "only when the mob became violent and attacked the police"; the undertrial prisoners were "fettered or handcuffed purely as a temporary measure"; interviews had been permitted "except for the period when an attack by Meos was feared"; Lala Kashi Ram had been removed from the presidentship of the Alwar Municipal Board because he had stirred up feelings against the government.

2. Firing on Meos[1]

Early in April there was some trouble in Alwar State resulting in firing by the armed police on a large number of Meo inhabitants of the State. This firing and subsequent happenings there created consternation in the State and drew public attention outside. The All India States People's Conference deputed two of their leading members, Khan Abdus Samad Khan and Pandit Jainarain Vyas, to visit and inquire into the matter. They have now returned and presented their report to me.

For the present I do not intend publishing this report, but I wish to say that it displays a disquieting state of affairs both in regard to the

1. Statement to the press, 18 April 1956. *The Hindustan Times*, 19 April 1946.

firing and subsequent developments. During their visit they saw the Prime Minister and other officials. It seems to me that an impartial inquiry is necessary, also that some urgent steps should be taken to improve the woeful condition not only of the under-trials but also of large numbers of Meos who are being harassed by the police.

Under-trials undergoing operation under chloroform were still kept in handcuffs; other under-trials had heavy fetters on. Facilities for defence and interviews were demanded. I do not wish at this stage to go deeply into the matter except to say that I have appealed to the Maharaja and the Prime Minister to have an impartial inquiry and give the necessary facilities.

3. To the Maharaja of Alwar[1]

New Delhi
23 April 1946

Dear Maharaja Saheb,

I have just received your letter of the 21st April on my return from Bhopal.[2] I went to Bhopal on the invitation of the ruler to discuss with him in his capacity as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes certain matters connected with the States and the future constitution of India.

I welcome your writing to me on a subject which not only interests you but interests me also very much. I cannot say much in the course of this reply, but there are some points I should like to clear up. There is no question in my mind of treating the rulers of the States as superfluous and negligible or, as you say, with anything approaching contempt. I am fully aware of the part many of their ancestors have played in Indian history. Those traditions are a part of our national heritage. The present, however, is different from the past. Unless we fit in with the present we remain a backward nation. You will agree with me, I am sure, that the position of the Princes in India, in spite of the pomp and pageantry which have accompanied them, has not been

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 151, 1945-48, pp. 557-559, N.M.M.L.
2. Alluding to a remark made by Jawaharlal in a press interview on 13 April 1946, the Maharaja of Alwar wrote: "I cannot see how rulers of the States, except 15 or 20, can be regarded as superfluous and negligible in the Indian body politic so as to be pensioned off or otherwise treated with contempt... The princes have still to play a worthy part."

at all a dignified one under British rule. They have not only bowed to alien authority and sought favours from it but have relied upon its protection. I should imagine that any sensitive Indian would resent this treatment.

It is clear that India is going to be an independent nation. It is also clear that the basic structure of India will have to fit in with the tempo of the modern age, i.e., will have to be democratic. It is most unlikely that any marked difference can continue in political and economic matters between the people of the States and the people of the rest of India. It is agreed that India will be a federation of autonomous units. Obviously the units must have a certain uniformity and must be big enough to support a progressive administration. The States today vary enormously in size and quality and no general rule can be laid down for them. Some of them have dynasties, many of them are creations of the British, and many of them are not States at all but just estates given certain additional privileges.

Of these a certain number can become full units of the federation, many others can group themselves together to form a unit. Those small ones that remain over will have to attach themselves in some way or other to a unit. This general principle is accepted by most people. The working out of it will have to be done carefully.

No class or order can long survive on its past merits only, nor can it have importance if it relies on others for support. The Princes today and even more so tomorrow will have the doors of opportunities thrown open to them to play such part as they are capable of in the new India. If they can fit in with modern conditions, many of them may well become not only the leaders of their own people but leaders of India. If they have not got that capacity, then they will play no important part.

My reference during the course of my press interview was to a large number of very small States which cannot exist as units in the future because of their smallness. This has nothing to do with individual rulers who may be good or bad. In fact our approach has been a friendly one to all rulers as such, but we have to consider this question dispassionately apart from individuals. India, I believe, is at the threshold of big changes. I hope that the Princes will play an effective part in these changes, but they can only do it by lining themselves with the forward march of the country.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Seremal Bapna[1]

New Delhi
24 April 1946

Dear Sir Seremal,

I thank you for your letter of the 20th April which I have just received. It is true that I have relied mainly on the report of Khan Abdus Samad Khan and Pandit Jainarain Vyas in regard to the recent happenings in Alwar State. Their visit was a brief one and, no doubt, a longer investigation would have brought out additional facts. But experienced observers, as they are, are competent to judge of a situation even during a relatively brief visit. You visited the place yourself soon after you learned of the firing. Presumably your visit was even briefer. As head of the Alwar administration you have to rely largely on reports received from your subordinates. That is the way with governments in most places and more particularly where there is no popular element in the administration. From considerable experience I know that these reports from subordinate police officials and others are often entirely erroneous. Inevitably they are the reports of one party to an occurrence trying to shield itself from the consequences of its actions. It is not a question of a government as such functioning and trying to avoid all extreme measures. It is usually a question of incompetent men dealing with the situation which they neither understand nor try to understand. Therefore it is seldom, if ever, possible to rely on such reports. Repeated departmental reports of this kind have been disbelieved by judicial authority. If this is so in what is called unfortunately British India, it is even more so in the more backward conditions prevailing in the Indian States.

I am not aware of any modern government which keeps under-trial prisoners in handcuffs and fetters even as a temporary measure. Under some sections of the criminal code fetters are allowed though not handcuffs, but it is usually considered that it is highly improper to put either handcuffs or fetters on any under-trial prisoner or even a convicted person except in very special cases involving breaches of jail discipline. If an officer were to tell me that he considered it advisable to keep fetters and handcuffs on a prisoner, I would tell him that I consider him unfit for his post. A man in prison is in close confinement and to put either handcuffs or fetters on him is to punish him severely before he has been

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 151, 1945-48, pp. 561-563, N.M.M.L.

convicted. These are primitive ways of dealing with prisoners which no modern prison administration can approve of. In cases like the one under consideration, which are obviously not of a criminal type, this is still more undesirable. Maulvi Abdul Qaddus[2] is a man who is looked upon as a leader by large numbers of people in the area concerned. His approach has mainly been a religious approach. It may have also been partly political. In either event to treat him as a dangerous criminal is to bring certain amount of discredit on the administration. It is not for me to suggest to you that trials of such persons are seldom profitable from the Government's point of view, but in any event it does seem to me very wrong to treat a man like him in the manner he has been treated.

The explanation given about the removal of Lala Kashi Ram from the office of the Municipal Board, Alwar, seems to me to be extraordinary. This explanation amounts to this: that Lala Kashi Ram was, in the opinion of the Government, trying to stir up feeling and create trouble. In other words Government did not like him or his activities. The instances mentioned in the official letter sent to Lala Kashi Ram were trivial in the extreme. I do not know how this kind of thing fits in with the declaration of the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes in regard to civil liberties and the like. If elected members or office bearers of the municipality or of an assembly can be removed by a government at its own sweet will, then surely there is no value in any election and in any representative assembly.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Maulvi Abdul Qaddus, who was not a resident in Alwar State, was arrested on 31 March 1944 for persuading the villagers not to pay the arrears of tobacco excise duty.

5. Telegram to the Maharaja of Alwar[1]

New Delhi
31.8.1946

Reports from reliable sources of torture and inhuman treatment of stayagrahis and other people in Alwar State have pained me deeply. Would

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 2, 1945-48, p. 46, N.M.M.L.

invite your urgent attention to this matter. At my request Pandit Hiralal Shastri[2] has gone to Alwar.

Jawaharlal Nehru

2. (1899-1974); President, Jaipur Rajya Praja Mandal, 1941-43; General Secretary, Rajputana Regional Council of All India States People's Conference, 1945-46; member, Constituent Assembly; Chief Minister, Jaipur State, 1948-49; Chief Minister, Rajasthan, 1949-51; member, Lok Sabha, 1957-62.

FARIDKOT

1. Last Chance for the Smaller States[1]

We of the Indian States People's Conference, representing a vast number of the States people, have deliberately followed a policy of friendly approach to the rulers wherever this was possible. Our aim has been and must be full responsible government for the people of the States in a free, integrated India. We have said that we mean no ill to the rulers as such, and so far as we are concerned, they may continue as constitutional heads.

Ultimately, it is obvious, the people of the States themselves will decide. Our friendly approach and policy have evoked no practical response so far, though there have been expressions of goodwill about the future. Goodwill is not enough. We stand on the threshold of changes, and they will come whether anybody wants them or not. It does make a difference, however, to our future as to whether they come peacefully and cooperatively or otherwise. The next few months may well decide this question in the States as well as in India as a whole.

We are told that though changes may come, we shall have to proceed slowly in the States. The States are so numerous and so various in India that it is difficult to lay down a hard and fast rule for all of them. But it is manifest that we cannot have stagnant pools all over India cut off from the rushing torrent of India's national life. Particular circumstances may well be considered and provided for, but there

1. Message to a meeting on "Faridkot Day", Simla, 8 May 1946. *National Herald*, 9 May 1946.

has to be a measure of uniformity and democratic basis and progress all over India.

So far as the smaller States are concerned, they are on their trial, and this is the last chance they are going to get. Unless they move rapidly and suffer a sea-change into something better, their day is ended. They have a chance immediately to group themselves where possible into efficient units of the Indian federation to come. It will be a privilege to join that federation for which certain essential qualifications will be necessary — qualifications of democracy and progressive government.

I do not wish to go into the details of what has happened and is happening in Faridkot,[2] but I do know that there has been a continuous hartal there for many days, and this itself shows the extreme resentment of the people of Faridkot with its doings. I offered to send the secretary of the States People's Conference, Dwarkanath Kachru, to inquire into the happenings in Faridkot. The chief minister informed me that he considered this unnecessary. I told him that if there was nothing to conceal, there was no reason why he should be afraid of this visit. Thereupon, he wired to me that if Dwarkanath Kachru came, he would be prevented from entering the State. Everyone can draw his own conclusions from this. My own conclusion is that the Faridkot State administration is thoroughly incompetent and out of date, and the sooner it goes the better. I do not know where the Maharaja is now and what he is doing when his so-called subjects are in turmoil, and are suffering under this administration. But whatever the Maharaja may or may not be doing, and whatever his chief minister may intend doing, events will march on, and we propose to march with them.

2. In April 1946, the Faridkot authorities beat up the people who had hoisted the national flag. Satyagrahis from neighbouring States carrying the national flag went to Faridkot. They were arrested at the border and tortured in jail. A hartal in protest against the repression was being observed in the State from 29 April 1946.

2. The Faridkot Incidents[1]

I have already issued public statements about recent events in Faridkot State. Further reports disclose shameful barbarities perpetrated by

1. Statement to the press, Simla, 10 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 11 May 1946.

State authorities. Mr. Dwarkanath Kachru, who was deputed by me for inquiry, was refused entry by State authorities. This state of affairs is intolerable and the All India States People's Conference will take up this matter and pursue it to its logical end. We cannot remain silent or distant when our people are treated in this way. I have sent the following telegram to the Chief Secretary of Faridkot State:

> Have received reports of scandalous and barbarous behaviour of the authorities of Faridkot State. Your preventing Kachru's entry for inquiry into these circumstances cannot be tolerated. Full and impartial inquiry into recent events and State excesses must be held and those responsible for excesses must be punished. Unless orders restricting entry and civil liberties are withdrawn we shall have to defy them. If necessary, I shall personally visit Faridkot. Please send reply immediately.

Every person in the State, however highly placed he may be, must be brought to account and punished, if he is found guilty. Faridkot State has become a symbol of the degradation of some of the Indian States and their administrations. They will have to be purged completely, or wiped off, if they cannot behave better. We are living in an India on the verge of independence with a mighty people's movement everywhere, including the States, which will tolerate no suppression of or insult to human rights. The medieval ages are past and those who still think that they continue will have to be swept away.

3. The High Winds of Freedom[1]

Four days ago a meeting was held in Simla on Faridkot Day and I sent a message on the occasion. Since then, events have marched forward and the situation is much graver. Faridkot, from being just a backward State, where the authorities have misbehaved, as they often do in such places, has suddenly become a symbol of misrule and incompetence in the States.

It is truly significant that this should have happened in Faridkot at a time when the Cabinet Mission is sitting in Simla trying to hammer

1. Message to a meeting at Simla, 12 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 13 May 1946.

out the shape of independent India. We are told that the States, too, are going to change rapidly and fit into this picture. Is what is happening in Faridkot a prelude to the changes to come?

What has happened is bad enough, and will have to be fully investigated. But the fact that independent observers are not permitted to go there even to report on happenings shows the nature of administration that prevails there. Who is responsible for this—the Maharaja or his Chief Minister, or the Political Agent, or the Political Department of the Government of India? Somebody has got to be brought to book for this business.

I am rather glad that this matter has advanced so far, and has now become a symbol of the Indian States and what they are today. Let all of them know that they are going to be judged by this, and if they have any desire to save their reputation, they will have to act. Whether they act or not, others will act.

For on no account is this business going to be slurred over. It is not now just a question of stopping the daily attacks on individuals, or the release of a few persons in jail, or even the permission for people to go there. This, of course, will have to be done. It is a question now of a public inquiry and punishment to whomsoever it is due and reparations to those who have suffered.

The Chief Minister has informed me, in answer to my telegram, that I shall not be welcomed in Faridkot if I go there. I can quite believe that, so far as the State authorities are concerned. I do not seek their hospitality or their welcome. But when I consider it necessary, I shall go to Faridkot despite any order to the contrary.

For the moment, I am delaying this visit partly because of important work in Simla and partly because I wish to give a final chance, not only to Faridkot authorities and the Political Department, but also to the rulers generally to realise the gravity of the situation.

I am not going to the meeting in Simla today because I am occupied in other important work, but I am sending a person who is most fitted to carry the message of freedom anywhere, a gallant soldier of India, Major-General Shah Nawaz Khan. He will take this message from me and place it before the people of Simla.

Simla has long been the headquarters of the British Government in India and as such it has represented all the backward tendencies in India. The people who come here normally, whether Europeans or Indians, whether rulers or ruled, have been and are to a large extent still emblems of a disappearing age. But in Simla, as elsewhere in

India, the breath of new life can be felt, and behind that breath one can sense the high winds of freedom. Who will stop them when they blow and scatter away the cobwebs that have confined our minds and limbs so long?

4. The Need for Popular Goodwill[1]

I have not come to Faridkot to create any trouble, but as a messenger of peace.[2] Small States like Faridkot cannot embark on such a repressive policy without the approval of the Resident and the Political Department. The main prop of the Indian States is the British. Once the British power is withdrawn, autocracy in the States will collapse. The future of the princely order depends entirely on the goodwill of the people.

In Delhi, which is so close to Faridkot and other Punjab States, negotiations are going on for the independence of India and for the transfer of power to the people. It is, therefore, strange that in the States there is such repression and utter lack of human rights. I cannot for a moment believe that the administrations in the States have so much power as to flout the wishes of the people but for the backing of the British.

In this connection, I refer to the declaration of the Nawab of Bhopal, Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, on behalf of the rulers, promising reforms and democratisation. I think it was a mere routine gesture and made without any intention to give effect to the declaration.

The British are going most definitely. If Indian States, who depend for their existence on the British, do not move with the times then they will also go. If the people do not want them, they cannot exist. What happens in Indian States also affects those outside the States.

1. Speech at Faridkot, 27 May 1946. From *National Herald*, 28 May 1946.
2. On 27 May 1946, Jawaharlal visited Faridkot and talked for two hours with the Raja of Faridkot. As a result of his talks the State withdrew all restrictive orders and instituted an inquiry into the excesses committed against the satyagrahis.

5. The Role of the Praja Mandals[1]

I have just returned from Faridkot where, fortunately for all concerned, a satisfactory settlement was arrived at. I congratulate both the ruler and the Praja Mandal on this settlement, and I hope that it will be carried out in the spirit in which it was made. The time has gone by when State officials can indulge in autocratic and repressive behaviour.

During this interim period that we are passing through, the only way to carry on is through a large measure of cooperation between the rulers and the Praja Mandals, or other State people's organisations.

The Faridkot affair would never have assumed the importance and significance that it did but for the extreme incompetence of some of the State officials. The ruler was away at the time in Malaya. One wrong step leads to another and so there was a succession of wrong steps on the part of the State authorities. Fortunately, these have been remedied in so far as they could be remedied now, and the future should be faced in a different manner.

Where there are no properly elected assemblies to give expression to the people's wishes, it is only the Praja Mandals and the like that can do so. It becomes important, therefore, that the ruler should look upon these Praja Mandals as the representatives of the people and deal with them in a cooperative manner. On the part of the Praja Mandals, every effort will be made to meet the ruler half-way.

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 27 May 1946. *National Herald*, 29 May 1946.

6. To the Raja of Faridkot[1]

Allahabad
27 June 1946

Dear Raja Saheb,

You will remember that when we met you promised to have a public and impartial inquiry into the complaints against some of the police and other officials of your administration. You were good enough to assure me that this inquiry would be impartial and every facility would

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 53, 1946-48, p. 501, N.M.M.L.

be given. During the last few days I have received several reports about the course of this inquiry. I shall not go into this matter in any detail at present. I shall only say that from the various documents and papers which have been sent to me it appears that the inquiry is not a serious one at all and that the various complaints put in have been dismissed. In going through these papers a strong impression has been produced on my mind that it is not proposed to have a real inquiry. I am very sorry to feel this way after your assurance. I do hope that you will personally interest yourself in this matter and make the public feel that any person who misbehaves in your State has to suffer for it even though he might be a State official. Some of the complaints made have been very serious. I am sure that the reputation of your administration will be enhanced if a real inquiry takes place. Otherwise there will be little faith left in promises made.[2]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Raja of Faridkot replied on 3 July 1946 that the Chief Justice of the State had completed his enquiry into the acts of officials. The Raja also enclosed a copy of the proceedings.

HYDERABAD

1. India on the Move[1]

India is on the move and will soon be independent. The British power is going. Hyderabad must wake up quickly and march ahead to keep pace with the rest of India. The thought of Hyderabad always reminds me of the fact that the State Congress is still banned there. I hope that this ban will go soon and the people of Hyderabad will be able to carry on normal political life.

1. Message on the occasion of the Hyderabad State Maharashtra Congress, Poona, 15 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 18 May 1946.

2. To the Nawab of Chhatari[1]

New Delhi
26 June 1946

My dear Nawab Sahab,
Over two weeks ago I was misled by a press announcement which stated that Sir Mirza Ismail was taking charge from you of the Prime Ministership of Hyderabad State. So instead of writing to you, as I had intended, I wrote to him. The letter was really meant for the Prime Minister.

I am now repeating more or less what I said in my previous letter. This was written soon after the meeting of the general council of the All India States People's Conference in Delhi, and I wrote it in my capacity as president of this conference. The general council passed, among other resolutions, a resolution on Hyderabad. We expressed our great surprise and regret that even now, when the independence of India is in the air and everybody realises that the Indian States must undergo a far-reaching transformation, Hyderabad State should remain so terribly backward in regard to forms of administration and more particularly civil liberties.[2] You will remember that in January last the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes made a declaration in the Chamber affirming far-reaching civil liberties in the States. That declaration has had no effect whatever on the premier State of India. Indeed for many years past even the State Congress has been under ban. Inevitably this does not redound to the credit of Hyderabad State. I understand that there have been many conversations between the authorities of Hyderabad and some representatives of the State Congress in regard to this matter. But in spite of these conversations the ban continues.

I hope you will agree with me in realising that the continuation of the ban is not only an insult to the people of Hyderabad, but also a matter for grave discredit to the administration. Many big questions are going to arise soon, such as the election of delegates to the constituent assembly. Hyderabad is not going to jump out of India, nor can it remain a backward, feudal and autocratic island in the rest of India. Changes must come. If they are delayed, they come with bad grace and fail to produce the effect they should produce.

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 66, 1945-46, pp. 153-155, N.M.M.L.
2. In 1921 political meetings were banned, in 1929 they were allowed with previous permission, and in 1938 freedom of speech and association was further curtailed. The State Congress was declared an unlawful body from the time of its formation in 1938. The Hyderabad Assembly functioned with an official majority and with no powers of legislation.

You know that there has been a tremendous awakening of the people of the States all over India and they are no longer tolerant of many of the restrictions that have been placed upon them. No self-respecting organisation can submit to the stoppage of all activities because of a ban placed upon it. Were such a ban to continue, conflicts are likely to arise leading to complications and unfortunate consequences.

I trust, therefore, that you will be good enough to get the ban on the State Congress removed at a very early date and to permit the State Congress to function normally and fully. Such a gesture has been too long delayed already.[3]

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. On 3 July 1946, the ban on the State Congress was lifted.

3. Protest Against the Reforms in Hyderabad[1]

I and Sjt. K.A. Vaidya saw Panditji on 10 August at 1-0 p.m. at Bajajwadi. We told him that the Hyderabad Government had decided to introduce the reforms,[2] the synopsis of which had been sent to him earlier. He said that he had gone through the reforms scheme carefully and read all the papers sent by us, and expressed his opinion that

1. An account written on 28 August 1946 by Swami Ramananda Tirth, of the interview he and K.A. Vaidya, Secretary of the Central India States People's Conference had with Jawaharlal on 10 and 11 August 1946. A copy of this note is in Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund.
2. The Nizam's Government discarded territorial constituencies and extended representation to special interests, both economic and communal, which overweighed the legislature with vested interests. The Muslim minority of 12 per cent got an effective majority. A theory of monarchical domination was propounded. "The head of the state represents the people directly in his own person and his connection with them, therefore, is more natural and abiding than that of any passing elected representatives. He is both the supreme head of the state and the embodiment of the people's sovereignty." On 2 August 1946, the Standing Committee of the Hyderabad State Congress Conference rejected the reforms scheme and called upon the people to "make necessary sacrifices in the realisation of their cause."

the reforms were quite useless and in no case were acceptable. He said that there were two methods of protesting against them. First to boycott them and second to enter the council and then break them. But looking to all circumstances, the latter course did not seem to be advisable in our case. We told him that all the provincial conferences had passed resolutions boycotting the reforms. Other political bodies had also done the same. The Ittehad-ul-Mussalmeen had passed a resolution declaring that the reforms were not acceptable, but it had decided to fight the elections and enter the Assembly and then to break it. The ground of its non-acceptance was that the assurances given to the Ittehad-ul-Mussalmeen were not fulfilled. We then showed him the draft resolution prepared by the provisional executive committee of the States Congress to be placed for the consideration of the standing council which was meeting on 16 and 17 August. He made certain corrections and suggested that a couple of sentences might be added emphasising the point that the issue was non-communal and that our stand was wholly national and purely political in the interest of all the communities in the State. He then told us that we should see him after our interview with Mahatmaji. This interview lasted for about half an hour.

We again met him on 11 August at 1-00 p.m. as we had seen Mahatmaji that morning. We told him that we had seen Mahatmaji and that he had expressed his view that the reforms should be resisted and all necessary action must be taken to implement our resolution of boycotting the reforms. Panditji said that he had a cursory talk with Mahatmaji in the afternoon of 10 August and asked us to see him in the evening as he would like to have a detailed talk with us.

We saw him again at 7-30 p.m. when he told us that he had a talk with Mahatmaji and referred to our talk with him, and said that we should take necessary action in the matter. He expressed his view that all such methods should be adopted by which the Government would be compelled to withdraw the reforms scheme. He said there was nothing wrong if we took up the larger issue of responsible government when we told him that our negative demand was that the reforms should be scrapped and the positive side was that nothing short of responsible government was acceptable to the people. We showed him our plan of action which he approved generally. He advised us that we should make a definite demand of the withdrawal of reforms in our resolution. He dropped a hint that the language should not unnecessarily be strong and too many adjectives should not be used. He was quite cheerful when we left him and wished us success in our efforts.

4. The Inadequacy of the Reforms[1]

The Congress policy towards the States is that they are to be an integral part of India. There being hundreds of States of all sizes, it is impossible to treat them all alike. Obviously, only the major States are big enough to form units of a federation or union. The others must either form units or be absorbed in some existing unit like a province. A State which forms a unit will have exactly the same measure of autonomy as a province. There should be no difference in their status.

We have deliberately tried to make a friendly approach to the rulers so as to find a way out by peaceful and cooperative methods. It is obvious that there can be no autocracy in the future anywhere in India and the people of the States, as the people of the rest of India, must have the final authority. There has been some response from a few of the rulers but, on the whole, this has been feeble. In some notable cases, attempts have even been made to put the clock back.

In the premier state of India, namely Hyderabad, a new scheme of so-called reforms is being introduced. This is fantastic and absurd and is evidently meant to perpetuate the backward and feudal character of the regime. Hyderabad is the most feudal and reactionary of the States in India. These reforms have already been rejected by the people's organisation and the sooner they are withdrawn the better, because they will only create trouble. The only correct line of approach there and elsewhere is towards a responsible government and democracy.

In another major State — Kashmir — there is at present a struggle going on between the people and the Government, and the people's movement has been sought to be repressed by fierce repression.

In an important southern State,[2] however, the Maharaja has recently made a statement, which it is so pleasant to read after so many assertions elsewhere of autocracy and the ruler's privileges. The Maharaja has accepted the objective of responsible government for the State and I hope he will soon give effect to it.

Nowhere else in the world is there anything like this system of Indian States. Even now, they are largely dependent upon the Political Department of the Government of India. With the removal of the British authority from India, the whole basis of the present system goes

1. Interview to the press, Wardha, 12 August 1946. From *The Hindu*, 15 August 1946.
2. Cochin; see *post* page 438, footnote 2.

and, inevitably, the people of the States will have their say as to their future. The people's organisation has already made it clear that they want full democratic government within the union of India. It is also evident that the same measure of democratic liberty must prevail in both princely States and the provinces and fundamental rights will be common to all the federating units of the Indian union. There may be minor differences in regard to the internal administrative arrangements, but there is bound to be a tendency towards uniformity and the same standards of administration and personal liberty.

The Congress as well as the States people's organisation have said that the rulers may remain as constitutional heads, but that their people must have full responsible government. That is to say that sovereignty must rest with the people. It is for the people to decide the inner constitution of the State and the form of administration. In the proposed constituent assembly, which is going to draw up the constitution of the Indian union, the States, like the provinces, should be represented by elected persons and not by nominees of the rulers.

5. Resolution on Hyderabad[1]

and in regard to essential civil liberties, and averse to progressive change when all the States in India are expected to advance rapidly towards responsible government as autonomous parts of independent India. The Committee are therefore of opinion that these proposed changes will, if given effect to, retard progress towards freedom, and the new reforms should be withdrawn and replaced by a constitution drawn up with the consent and approval of the people.

The Committee approve of the decision of the executive of the State Congress to reject this new scheme and not to participate in it.

COCHIN

1. To the Maharaja of Cochin[1]

August 16, 1946

Dear Maharaja Saheb,

I wish to convey to you my greetings and congratulations on the declaration you made recently about responsible government and other matters connected with your State.[2] It was a brave declaration which, I am sure, will be a lead for many other States.

I notice that it has been criticised by some people. That criticism is of no account and represents only the lack of foresight in others. I hope that you will implement your declaration as soon as possible so that you and your people can march together cooperatively to freedom.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 40/1941-48, p. 119. N.M.M.L.
2. On 29 July 1946, the Maharaja of Cochin, retaining for himself no status other than what might be granted by the free vote of the adult population, transferred over 90 per cent of the departments to ministerial control and introduced the system of cabinet discussion.

2. No Half-Way Houses to Popular Sovereignty[1]

Some days ago I read a declaration made by the Maharaja of Cochin on responsible government in his State. The whole outlook and approach of this declaration was in pleasant contrast to what one usually gets from the rulers and authorities in the States and I should like to congratulate the Maharaja on it. I hope that he will give full effect to it as early as possible and thus give Cochin the pride of place in the Indian States. In that work, I am sure, he will have the full co-operation of the State people's organisation. Cochin is eminently suited for this changeover to a democratic form of government because of the high standard of education there.

It surprises me that even in these dynamic times so many rulers of States are still probing about cautiously and wondering what they should do. Events are marching to their pre-destined end and no one can stop that march. We may put ourselves in line with it or try to hinder it for a while. It is time that the rulers of Indian States realised fully this situation and the pace of events, both from the point of view of their State and the country, and also from their own point of view. Details of constitutions are for lawyers to make but the fundamental basis of a constitution for a State or for the whole of India can only be one; that power and responsibility and ultimate sovereignty must rest with the people. If this is recognised the rest offers little difficulty. There are no half-way houses to this recognition.

In sharp contrast to this declaration of the Cochin Maharaja is the recent announcement of what are called reforms in Hyderabad State. The Congress Working Committee has passed a resolution on this subject and approved of the rejection of this scheme which is a denial of freedom and a perpetuation of the autocratic government. Hyderabad State unfortunately still lives in a world of make-believe, cut off from the reality of today. It was right, therefore, that the Working Committee gave forcible utterance to its views on this subject. The whole of India is our home and India is on the eve of freedom. Indian freedom is indivisible. We cannot have freedom in one part and lack of freedom in another.

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 17 August 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 18 August 1946.

BIKANER

1. To the Maharaja of Bikaner[1]

New Delhi
23 July 1946

Dear Maharaja Saheb,
Thank you for your letter of 22nd July which has just been handed to me. I would gladly avail myself of your kind invitation to visit Bikaner, but I am afraid I am wholly unable to find the time for such a visit during the next month or so. I am grateful to you for your suggestion that Mr. Bhatt[2] and Pandit Hiralal Shastri might visit Bikaner early in August. I shall communicate with them and inform them of this.

Your second letter of the same date raises important issues about which I should like to write to you at some leisure. The question does not rest with me. I should also like to consult some of my colleagues so that I can convey to you their views also.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 24, 1946-48, p. 406, N.M.M.L.
2. Gokulbhai Bhatt (b. 1898); president, Rajasthan Lok Parishad, 1946-48; Chief Minister, Sirohi State, 1947-49; president, Rajasthan Pradesh Congress, 1949-50; member, Constituent Assembly.

2. To the Maharaja of Bikaner[1]

Bombay
August 15, 1946

Dear Maharaja Saheb,
Some time ago you sent me a note on the flag question in the States. I sent a brief reply then. I have now consulted some of my colleagues and I hasten to write to you what their reactions are. I have not got

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

with me at present the various papers relating to this matter, including the previous resolutions of the Congress Working Committee dealing with the Mysore settlement.[2] If necessary, I shall write to you again after reference to these papers. But in order to avoid delay I have thought it desirable to write immediately.

Since the Mysore settlement in regard to the flag was arrived at much has happened in the country and the position today has advanced considerably. So far as I know there has been no trouble over the national flag in any State recently, apart from Bikaner. Such matters usually adjust themselves in a changing situation with mutual tact and forbearance. We have to deal today with a popular awakening all over India, including the States. This awakening is a welcome sign as it denotes a new vitality in the Indian people. Sometimes that vitality functions in a wrong way and, if so, we should try to check it. But in checking it, it will be a pity if we try to smother that vitality itself which carries with it the promise of a new India in the near future.

So far as we are concerned, we want to avoid every conflict over the flag question. Indeed we would like the flag to be considered as above controversy and conflict and, where it is not welcome, it should not be imposed. That has been our attitude throughout, but in moments of popular excitement complications often occur. We have made it repeatedly clear that the national flag must not come into conflict with any State flag and in any use of the national flag no affront is intended for a State flag. As stated in the note that you have sent the national flag is in a sense opposed to the use of the Union Jack in India, because the latter represents British domination over Indians. Even with the Union Jack we have no quarrel in other places where it does not represent the suppression of any people. As a symbol of Great Britain and the British people, we respect the Union Jack as we respect other national symbols. But as a symbol of colonial domination we object to it. In India, inevitably, it is a symbol of our subjection and hence we object to it.

The use of a flag may be decided by a superior authority but ultimately it is something bound up with the urges and desires of a people. The difficulty at present is that the people of many of the States have no responsibility or power in their States and hence the State flag does not represent to them that freedom which they cherish. Once the State itself becomes a free State within the larger freedom of India,

2. The settlement, dated 15 September 1939, stated that "care will be taken not to do anything that might imply any disrespect to the state flag by the State Congress or to the national flag by the state authorities."

the reactions of the people of the State towards that State flag will immediately undergo a change. It will become a symbol of their own freedom and individuality as a State. Ultimately a people's sentiments cannot be created by compulsion from above but rather by producing circumstances and an environment which leads to the growth of these sentiments.

I have indicated to you above the viewpoint with which we approached this question and I feel sure that you appreciate it. Coming more to the point, I want to tell you that in order to avoid any misunderstanding or conflict, we are prepared to abide by the Mysore settlement in regard to the flag. This settlement stated that on ceremonial occasions the national flag and the flag of the State should be flown together, but on party occasions the national flag alone need be flown. It might be a little difficult occasionally to determine what is a ceremonial occasion. But on the whole it gives a clear enough direction and, with goodwill on both sides and a desire to accommodate each other, there is no reason that there should be any misunderstanding or conflict on this issue.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

KALAT

1. To the Khan of Kalat[1]

New Delhi
16 June 1946

Dear Sir Mir Ahmad Yar Khan,[2]

When I had the pleasure of meeting you in Delhi some months back, you were good enough to discuss various matters concerning the future of Kalat State. These questions are likely to assume some prominence in view of developments in India as a whole and in the States in particular in connection with the proposed Constituent Assembly. Some

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1904); ruler of Kalat, the third largest State in India.

aspects of this question were considered by the General Council of the All India States People's Conference which met recently in Delhi. We passed a resolution disapproving of the reported move of the British Government to separate Kalat from India. This can only mean the retention of a British imperialist foothold on the frontiers of India. It cannot lead to any greater freedom or development of Kalat State, as you and all of us desire.

I am writing to you, however, more particularly in regard to the ban which was imposed on the Kalat State National Party in 1939 and which continues today. I understand also that public meetings are not allowed and the normal civil liberties are very restricted. You will agree with me, I am sure, that in view of developments in India such a ban is very much out of date and draws unfavourable attention to the internal administration of Kalat State. In January last the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes declared in the Chamber on behalf of the Princes in India that fundamental rights and civil liberties would be fully honoured in all the States. Since this declaration some change has taken place in various States. Now with big developments impending all over India, including the States, it becomes even more necessary than before that restrictions on civil liberties be removed. Any such action would bring the ruler more in line with his people and the two together can then cooperatively consider future changes. I trust, therefore, that you will be good enough to remove this ban on the Kalat State National Party and allow it to function normally; also that restrictions on public meetings etc., will be removed.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To Khan Abdus Samad Khan[1]

Bombay
10 July 1946

My dear Khan Saheb,
I have your letter of July 10th. In regard to your question about the leased lands in Baluchistan I should like to make the position of the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-15/1946 (Part I), pp. 3-5, N.M.M.L.

Congress quite clear.[2] There can be no question of the transfer of these lands to the Kalat State in existing circumstances or, as far as I can see, in the future. We are not going to accept on any account any attempt to bring about such a deal. Ultimately the decision about these areas must rest with the people of those areas, and it is highly improper for the British Government or any of their representatives to suggest a deal of this kind as if the people there were commodities which could be transferred without any reference to them. Because these areas are frontier areas their importance is heightened from many additional points of view, including that of defence. Thus I cannot conceive of such a transfer being made without raising a major issue and rousing resistance from us.

So far as Kalat or any other State is concerned we do not accept, nor are we going to agree to, any kind of independence for that State. The British Government have announced that, when the constitution has been framed and given effect to, paramountcy will cease to exist.[3] That does not mean that Kalat or any State will become independent. It simply means that during this intervening period of a year or so new arrangements have to be devised for the inclusion of Kalat and other States within the Indian union as units of the federation. It is inconceivable to me that any State will become independent and outside the limits of the union. The fact that Kalat is a border State adds to its importance from our point of view as frontier areas are always strategic areas. An independent India cannot permit foreign forces and foreign footholds, such as Kalat might afford, near its own territories.

Whatever the constitution we adopt finally might be, there is going to be a strong though limited union government and certain fundamental rights and common features of administration in all the component units such as provinces or States. Having regard to all these facts, there is absolutely no need for any apprehension on the part of anyone that the leased lands will be transferred to Kalat which will become independent.

2. The Khan of Kalat had requested the Government to restore the leased areas of Quetta and other districts in Baluchistan to the Kalat State in view of the intended withdrawal of British power from India.
3. The Cabinet Mission had pointed out that the British Government could not and would not, in any circumstances, transfer paramountcy to an Indian Government. The British Government would cease to exercise powers of paramountcy when an independent government came into being in British India. The States would then be free to enter into a federal relationship or make political arrangements with the new government or among themselves.

I am glad to learn that you intend standing for election to the constituent assembly from Baluchistan. I can imagine of no better representative of Baluchistan and I hope that the electors, both the Sardars and the members of the Quetta municipal committee, will give you their full support.

I might add that the constituent assembly will elect an advisory committee to deal with minority problems, tribal areas, etc. We should like to have a representative of the tribal areas of Baluchistan in this committee, and we shall see to it that he is elected. In the choice of this representative we shall naturally be guided by your recommendation from among those Sardars and others who support you.

Wishing you all success,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

OTHER STATES

1. Need for Popular Governments[1]

I send my greetings and good wishes to the annual conference of the Gwalior Rajya Sarvajanik Sabha. I am sorry I cannot attend it as I am heavily occupied elsewhere with important issues affecting the whole country. We are on the eve of big and vital changes which will influence the future of India including the States. We have, therefore, to be clear about our future policy and objective and to build up our strength, for without strength based on the people, every policy is ineffective.

Our objective in the States is responsible government in the State as an integral part of a free India. There can be no variation or change

1. Message to the annual conference of the Gwalior Rajya Sarvajanik Sabha, Gwalior, [illegible] 1946 *National Herald*, 13 March 1946.

in that objective. That responsible government must be based on the people so that it may reflect the people's wishes.

In view of the fact that important discussions are likely to take place soon regarding the future of India, it is not desirable to start satyagraha or civil disobedience at this stage. But it must be remembered that unless there is sanction of the people's organised strength behind a movement it cannot control these changes. It must also be remembered that we may have to face a great struggle for the freedom of India in the future. For this, and for all developments in the future, we must be prepared and be ready, by strengthening our organisation and keeping it in touch with this all-India movement.

Some time back the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes declared in the Chamber on behalf of the princes that they were going to guarantee fundamental rights and an important and efficient judiciary. That declaration did not go far enough as regards the establishment of a people's responsible government and we have made it clear that the only proper solution is full responsible government. Nevertheless we welcomed the declaration in regard to the guarantee of fundamental rights.

I am sorry to learn that this declaration has not yet been given effect to in many of the States. This has resulted in resentment in many places and a belief that the princes' declarations have no reality behind them. We must have the declaration acted upon in its entirety.

2. Rise Above Petty Squabbles[1]

I appeal to the people of India to rise above petty squabbles and internal bickerings, which do not benefit us, but our enemies, and focus their entire attention on higher and more vital issues which are at stake. The Indian people are advancing towards independence, and nothing can stop them.

The curtain is very soon likely to go up on the final act of the great drama of our struggle for independence. We are approaching the end of a long story, and complications are bound to arise. But we must all

1. Speech at Bhopal, 23 April 1946. From *National Herald*, 24 April 1946.

realise that a new chapter is about to begin soon, and we must understand and be prepared for the new India.

Vital negotiations are now in progress in Delhi and no one can predict what new developments might take place in the next few days or weeks.

In whatever part of India we may live, whether in the States or elsewhere, the change is bound to affect every one of us. Ultimately our fortunes are closely interwoven. An important aspect of the present situation relates to the Indian States which cannot be kept out of the general picture.

In the past India's prestige had been very high among the front-rank nations. In the period of slavery which followed, India's stock went down, but now its stature is rising and the eyes of the world are on us. We are on the threshold of independence. Once independence is achieved our country is bound to make progress in all directions, for we will then be able to tackle properly our first and foremost task of removing the poverty and misery of the masses and of throwing open the door of development to every Indian. We cannot tackle these vital tasks so long as we are in fetters.

What is now going on in Delhi should not be considered the affair of a few top-ranking individuals. It is the result of the national upsurge. The people are advancing towards independence and nothing can stop them. Truly speaking, this new spirit of national awakening pervades not only India, but all Asiatic countries.

3. Death in Prison at Jaisalmer[1]

It is clear that Sagarmal was burned to death on April 3. It is exceedingly doubtful that this was self-inflicted. Even if it was so, it indicates the torture he had undergone which left him no choice but to end his life in this horrible manner.

Sagarmal was arrested in May 1941 and tried and convicted under Section 124/A. It is not yet known what the period of his imprisonment was. He was confined in a solitary cell for a year and made to work as a sweeper for another year.

Jaisalmer is one of the most backward and out-of-the-way States of Rajputana and news from it travels slowly. Still news of his ill-treatment appeared in the press. Thereupon a statement was issued by the authorities, under the signature of Sagarmal himself, denying ill-treatment.

Mr. Jainarain Vyas inquired into this matter and managed to get letters from Sagarmal himself which indicated that he had been forced under extreme pressure to issue the statement, and that in fact he was being subjected to all manner of atrocities.

He pointed out that the Political Agent of Western Rajputana States, Maj. N.S. Alighton, had written to him as follows on March 16, 1941: "The Dewan has informed me that the State has no case against you and you need not anticipate ill-treatment from the Darbar if you visit Jaisalmer. I have already informed you verbally of this".

Nevertheless, he was arrested and sentenced and later he said he was tortured into writing a contradiction of the statement about his ill-treatment. He was so afraid that he added to his letter: "Kindly do not publish the statement in this letter; otherwise I will again be tortured." Throughout his stay in prison he had bar fetters.

Early this year, Mr. Jainarain Vyas wrote to the Political Agent about the ill-treatment of Sagarmal and asked for an interview as well as a copy of the judgment in the case. He was unable to get either. On January 24, Mr. Vyas wrote to the Prime Minister of Jaisalmer making the same request and also drawing his attention to the declaration made by the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes in regard to civil liberty etc. He asked for Sagarmal's release in view of the many years of imprisonment he had undergone accompanied by all manner of ill-treatment. No reply was received to this letter, nor has anyone, including his relatives, yet been able to get copies of the judgment delivered in Sagarmal's case.

On March 8, Mr. Vyas again wrote to the Political Agent to which he received a reply that he would look into this matter before long. Before, however, the Political Agent could visit Jaisalmer for this purpose. Sagarmal was dead, or, what is much more likely, done to death

so that he might not be able to tell the Political Agent and others of the tortures that had been inflicted upon him.

Even after the burning, Sagarmal was not taken to hospital for about 10 hours. His fetters were not removed even then. His wife was not allowed to see her husband even on his death. Some relatives were allowed to see him, but no conversation was permitted.

These are some of the facts relating to this tragedy. It is a horrible and scandalous story that anyone and more especially a well-known public worker should be treated in this way. The Jaisalmer State authorities have not even taken the trouble to have any kind of inquiry into the matter. The inference is obvious.

It is a matter which should shame not only the Jaisalmer authorities but other Indian Princes also, who value their good name and who have recently spoken about civil liberties.

4. Telegram to Hare Krushna Mehtab[1]

I agree with you that small States, particularly the Orissa States, should be amalgamated with the province.

1. *The Hindu*, 15 June 1946. This was in reply to the addressee's telegram: "When you speak of responsible government under the rulers, you obviously refer to big States; but an unqualified statement creates confusion. I request you to make it clear that small States, particularly the Orissa States, should be amalgamated with the province."

5. Firing in Central India States[1]

There has rather suddenly and almost simultaneously been conflict and trouble in a number of Indian States in Central India States of Bagod, Sarila and Maihar. Arrests of office-bearers of Praja Mandals have

1. Statement to the press, *Allahabad, 19 July 1946. National Herald, 20 July* 1946.

taken place and though Praja Mandals are legal, any person enrolling as a member is likely to be harassed.

I do not know if this is the result of a uniform policy suggested from above, but, in any event, it is not becoming, and is bound to lead to tension and conflict.

In Rewa, the ruler's promise of responsible government, which was accepted by his successor in the government, yet remains to be fulfilled and conditions in that State are bad.

But the gravest news[2] comes from Ratlam where, as a result of extensive police firing, many persons are dead and a large number wounded. These include women and children. There has been complete hartal for many days. I do not have the facts yet except that there has been some labour trouble there.

In any event, such an occurrence demands full and impartial inquiry, and I trust that the State authorities will immediately announce this.

The president of the States People's Regional Council, Shri Vijai Vargiya, is proceeding to Ratlam and I hope that the authorities will give him all necessary facilities.

To the people I would urge that they should remain calm and peaceful and hold together without fear and without indulging in any wrong action. They should help the wounded and those in trouble.

2. On 16 July 1946, six persons died and 27 were injured in firing at Ratlam where a hartal from 13 July was being observed because the ration of food was reduced and prices of grains increased by the State authorities.

6. A Note on Pataudi[1]

For some time past I have been following in papers reports on happenings[2] in Pataudi. Someone sent me a telegram on the subject but otherwise no reference has been made to me and I do not know exactly what the facts are.

Pataudi is a very small State and normally it should be easy to settle any dispute there. There is no reason why these disputes should linger

1. Delhi, 20 July 1946. J.N. Collection.
2. Fifty Pataudi Praja Mandal workers were arrested in March 1946 following attempts to hold a regional States conference.

on indefinitely. The ruler[2] of the State is at present away in England captaining the Indian cricket team and the State's affairs are in charge of the Diwan. I understand that the Diwan has expressed his willingness to agree to almost all the demands put forward on behalf of the people. He has said, however, that in the absence of the ruler he has no authority to release prisoners unconditionally. Only the ruler can do so. Meanwhile, he has no objection to their release on bail pending the ruler's orders.

If this is the position, there should not be any difficulty in effecting a temporary settlement. I cannot definitely advise about anything without greater knowledge of the facts. I am, therefore, requesting Shri Jainarain Vyas, General Secretary of the All India States People's Conference, and Shri Jugal Kishore Khanna to visit Pataudi and find out what the facts are. They will meet the Diwan there as well as the people leading the popular movement. They have full authority to give such advice as they think proper.

I am told that large numbers of people are performing some kind of satyagraha in front of the Diwan's house. This seems to me very improper. Private houses should not be beseiged in this way. This kind of thing should therefore stop.

I am also told that among those arrested one person has some kind of a non-political charge against him. Whether there is any substance in this charge or not I do not know. But we must distinguish between political and non-political cases.

I do not know who is in charge of this popular movement in Pataudi. Normally reference should be made to the States People's Conference and their directions taken. This is not being done.

I hope that the people of Pataudi will take advantage of Shri Jainarain Vyas's and Shri Jugal Kishore Khanna's visit and abide by their advice.

2. Iftikhar Ali (1910-1952).

7. Telegram to the Maharaja of Bharatpur[1]

I have been grieved to learn that in contravention of Chancellor's declaration in Chamber of Princes Bharatpur government is continuing to

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 17/1946-47, p. 201, N.M.M.L.

suppress civil liberties.[2] That many public workers have been arrested and political prisoners are being treated harshly. I trust you will enquire into this matter and prevent repudiation of assurances given in princes chamber.

Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Bharatpur State Government had arrested 18 workers of the Rajya Praja Parishad including the president of the Parishad and the leader of the opposition in the State Assembly for speeches on the food problem.

7

PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS

1. Distress at Wrong Inferences[1]

The recent statement[2] issued by the Congress President in regard to the coming election of the next President of the Congress has put me in an embarrassing position.

Normally, I would have remained silent and given anxious thought to the matter, for the decision is going to be no easy one for me. All my instincts drive me to keep away from an office whose responsibilities might well overwhelm any person. And yet, there is the direction of my friend and chief, that scholar-statesman, who has borne this heavy burden so wisely and so worthily and steered the ship of our national movement during six long years of storm and stress and fateful history.

It was only one day before he issued the statement that Maulana Azad mentioned the matter to me for the first time. Till then no one had mentioned it and, indeed, I had given no thought to it, for I had taken it almost for granted that someone else should be President. I begged him then to give me some time to think.

One thing certainly I can say now. I am deeply grateful to the Congress President and my colleagues for the high honour they have proposed for me.

But I am issuing this statement for another reason. I have been surprised and distressed by some news services and journalists giving currency to fantastic and utterly wrong speculations and inferences which have no basis in fact.[3] Foreign newspapermen may not know our ways, but Indians have no such excuse.

Our normal election technique, which requires a certain time-table and procedure, has been forgotten by many of them, and they have jumped to strange conclusions.

The election that is to come has nothing to do with the political conversations now going on. It will not take effect for many weeks to come, possibly months, and even when it takes effect in the formal sense, it will mean no change in the general direction of our policy in regard to matters which have come up for discussion during recent weeks in Delhi.

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 27 April 1946. *National Herald*, 29 April 1946.
2. Maulana Azad said on 26 April 1946 that "under the present circumstances, Pandit Nehru is the best choice" for the Congress presidentship.
3. One such report stated that the selection of Jawaharlal as President of the Congress was meant to eliminate the friction between the Muslim League and the Congress and to placate Jinnah.

That direction must remain, whoever happens to be elected, with our chief, who has played so notable a part and whose supreme fitness for it no one else can approach.

We do not change horses in midstream, especially when the horse is a tried one and high-spirited and sure-footed.

2. Odd Happenings in the Punjab[1]

Odd things happen in India, but the Punjab must surely hold the record for the oddest of these. In the Punjab, ministers exist somewhere at the top, but as of old, it is the district magistrate who really functions and rules. District magistrates of the Punjab are also of a special variety, and their authoritarian decrees dare not be touched by any minister. Then, of course, there is the C.I.D., which flourishes like a green bay tree and is a law unto itself. What the ministers do in the Punjab is not very clear to the uninitiated.

Recently, we have had a remarkable instance in Gujranwala, which is significant of the mentality of the real rulers of the province. The British Labour Party and the Government, which claim to be Socialist, should ponder over it. The Punjab Congress Socialist Party intended to hold a workers' training camp there. This was not a military camp, nor was there any parade, or drilling about it. It was merely a summer study camp, so often held in England or elsewhere. Various objections were taken to this by the authorities and all manner of obstructions were placed in the way of the organisers. To avoid trouble, they shifted to a private house, where they intended to hold study circles. But the C.I.D. did not approve of even this, and the district magistrate passed the following order: "On a careful examination of the entire position, it is not possible for me to accord permission to a series of study circles being held at Gujranwala by the Punjab Congress Socialist Party."

This means that even private study groups cannot be held in private houses. It must be remembered that the Punjab Congress Socialist Party is a legal party. Greater interference with the most elementary human rights can hardly be imagined. Obviously, this kind of interference cannot be tolerated for long. It is for the Punjab Government

1. Statement to the press, Naini Tal, 7 June 1946. *National Herald*, 8 June 1946.

to consider whither it is heading and what kind of credit it is going to have in the eyes of the world.

3. Only One More Push[1]

I recall the storm on the day of the Ramgarh Congress session and compare the past six years of Maulana Azad's presidentship to a storm. These years were most momentous in the history of the Congress and of India, as they were years of a great revolution in the country.

Who is there among us who can follow in his footsteps and carry the burden with the same ability and courage as he did? As for myself, I was for a long time unable to make up my mind whether to accept the responsibility of presidentship now or not. But the day before yesterday, I persuaded myself to shoulder the responsibility on the advice[2] of Mahatma Gandhi and also that of my colleagues in the Working Committee.

We now stand on the doorstep of our freedom. Only one more push and we shall reach our cherished goal. In every country, great changes are taking place. The presidentship of the Congress is as heavy and arduous as any high office in the world. It may not be possible for one single individual to conscientiously shoulder the duties of the President of the Congress. But with the help of my colleagues, I feel confident that I will be able to carry the great burden which the Maulana Saheb has placed on me.

The question before us is not merely whether we should accept or reject any particular resolution. It is not merely a question of the merits or demerits of the proposed constituent assembly. It is the vital question of the freedom of India. During the last 25 years, millions of people have faithfully followed the Congress in the hope and belief of achieving national independence. Today, the Congress is more powerful than ever before. But I must also admit that there is much internal weakness in the organisation. The Congress is a platform for all

1. Speech at the A.I.C.C. meeting on taking over the presidentship of the Congress, Bombay, 6 July 1946. From *The Hindu*, 7 July 1946.
2. Jawaharlal was elected President of the Congress for the fourth time on 9 May 1946. On 6 July 1946, Mahatma Gandhi said: "I told Jawaharlal that he must wear the crown of thorns for the sake of the nation and he has agreed."

That direction must remain, whoever happens to be elected, with our chief, who has played so notable a part and whose supreme fitness for it no one else can approach.

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shades of groups and parties to work for the common goal of freedom. We must see that our internal weaknesses do not come in the way of achieving our main objective, namely, the independence of India. We must eliminate these weaknesses, as we are engaged in the most difficult task of ending British imperialism in India. In this task, we require complete unity and the strength of the people behind us.

The British regime in India is beginning to end. The curtain is now being rung down. This is the most delicate moment in India's history when we should muster all our strength and show no weakness. We have, therefore, to shake off all symptoms of weakness. We must be prepared to face new problems that may arise. We can do this only if we are united and strong.

In India we are faced with famine and grave economic problems. In South Africa, our honour is assailed. There is rampant racial discrimination against Indian nationals. Even in Ceylon, which is really part of India, though constitutionally it may not be so, we are having a difficult situation.

The world today is being torn asunder. Whatever is happening today has nothing to do with the war that is already over. The question is, "when will the next war be?" India has always stood for the ideal of freedom. We are against all kinds of imperialism, whether British or any other. We are against fascism and Nazism. We cannot, therefore, be a willing ally with any country which deprives the freedom of another country, big or small. We shall uphold the right to freedom of every country. The Indian National Congress today has attained a status, not only in the eyes of our own people, but in the eyes of the people of the world.

When we attain our own freedom, which is not far off, and establish friendly relations with other countries, we shall have to consider not only our own problems, but those of other countries, for they will affect us vitally.

This session of the A.I.C.C. could not be summoned earlier, as the Working Committee had been carrying on negotiations with the Cabinet Mission. It was not possible to call a meeting of the A.I.C.C. in the middle of the negotiations. The Working Committee has lost no time in seeking the sanction of the A.I.C.C. to whatever we have done and it is for the A.I.C.C. to endorse or reject the decisions of the Working Committee.

4. To N.G. Ranga[1]

8.7.46

My dear Ranga,
The enclosed letter makes serious allegations.[2] I can hardly believe that they are all true. If they are then the elections may be challenged later and possibly set aside. So I hope you will look into the matter and set things right. If necessary postpone the elections in this district so as to make the necessary changes. The Congress cannot function as an adjunct of the Kisan Sabha or any other organisation.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-28(I)-1946, p. 119, N.M.M.L.
2. Allegations of partisanship and irregularities because of favouritism towards certain candidates in district Congress elections in Guntur district had been made.

5. To Mridula Sarabhai[1]

Bombay
8 July 1946

My dear Mridula,
Kripalani has shown me your letter addressed to him about the selection of women candidates for the constituent assembly. It seems to me that there has been some misunderstanding about this matter. There was never a question before us preferring women recommended by the All India Women's Conference to Congresswomen. In our main resolution we specially asked that women should be included and we presumed that normally these women would be Congresswomen, some from provincial assemblies and some from outside. In addition to this we sent a list received from the Women's Conference for favourable consideration of the provincial parties in the assemblies. It was our desire not to impose people from above as far as possible, either men or women. A few names were certainly mentioned by us because we wanted them particularly there.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

7. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Bombay
9.7.46

My dear Rajendra Babu,

You will have seen the list of the new Working Committee. It was made after sleepless nights and in continuous consultation with Bapu and others. I hope you approve of it.

We all missed you here. I hope you are better now.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.

8. Telegram to Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya[1]

Allahabad
18.7.46

Have received numerous complaints about district Congress elections in Andhra especially Guntur district grave irregularities alleged. Would like you proceed there meet Ranga and others report and make arrangements for functioning election tribunal informing us of position and steps taken.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P. 28(II)-1946, p. 451, N.M.M.L.

9. Reorganisation of the A.I.C.C. Office[1]

it is expected that he will find a place in the A.I.C.C. in the near future.

I have found considerable difficulty in selecting names for the Working Committee, because I was loath to keep out the names of many old and valued colleagues who had shouldered the burden of Congress work in the Committee and the A.I.C.C. office for so long. At the same time, it was highly desirable for new elements to be taken into the Committee. I consulted my colleagues and notably Gandhiji in this matter and I have been largely guided by their advice though of course the responsibility for the final selection must remain with me.

We felt that our old colleagues, who have long been considered as the elder statesmen of the Congress, should in any event be there to give us the benefit of their advice and experience. They should normally be invited to our Working Committee sessions. I should like also to invite as frequently as possible leading representatives of the Harijans, the Indian Christians and some of the smaller minorities to assist us in our labours. The work before us is not only heavy but of the most vital importance and we want the utmost cooperation from all Congressmen and from the country at large. It will be my endeavour to seek this cooperation.

To Shri J.B. Kripalani, who has shouldered the burden of the Congress secretaryship for many years, I should especially like to express my sense of gratitude and appreciation. I have every confidence that he will allow us to profit by his long experience of running the A.I.C.C. office.

Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, though not now formally a member of the Working Committee, is as much a part of us and our work as anyone can be and she remains for us the pillar of strength and hope that she has always been. It is difficult to imagine a Working Committee without her. But, in effect, the Committee will not be without her help and cooperation.

To all old members and new, I send my greetings at the outset of these new changes. May we all prove true and faithful servants of India and our great national organisation in the trying days ahead. *Jai Hind.*

It appears that those in charge of selecting candidates in the provinces have considered the few names we have sent or the All India Women's Conference list as something exclusive, that is that no other women should be taken in. That was not our intention, and I am sorry that this has been done.

It was because we were not suggesting any names barring some special ones that we did not think it worthwhile to consult Sucheta Kripalani or anyone else either for men or women. We left that to the provincial parties or their executives.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. The New Congress Executive[1]

Under Article 20 of the Congress constitution, I nominate the following members of the Working Committee:

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan
Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant
Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai
Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose (Bengal)
Srimati Kamaladevi (Karnataka)
Rao Saheb Patwardhan (Maharashtra)
Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmed (Assam)
Sardar Partap Singh (Punjab)
Shrimati Mridula Sarabhai and
Dr. Balakrishna V. Keskar

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel will continue to act as treasurer and Shrimati Mridula Sarabhai and Dr. Balakrishna Keskar will be the general secretaries. Dr. Keskar is not at present a member of the A.I.C.C., but

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 9 July 1946. *The Hindu*, 10 July 1946.

it is expected that he will find a place in the A.I.C.C. in the near future.

I have found considerable difficulty in selecting names for the Working Committee, because I was loath to keep out the names of many old and valued colleagues who had shouldered the burden of Congress work in the Committee and the A.I.C.C. office for so long. At the same time, it was highly desirable for new elements to be taken into the Committee. I consulted my colleagues and notably Gandhiji in this matter and I have been largely guided by their advice though of course the responsibility for the final selection must remain with me.

We felt that our old colleagues, who have long been considered as the elder statesmen of the Congress, should in any event be there to give us the benefit of their advice and experience. They should normally be invited to our Working Committee sessions. I should like also to invite as frequently as possible leading representatives of the Harijans, the Indian Christians and some of the smaller minorities to assist us in our labours. The work before us is not only heavy but of the most vital importance and we want the utmost cooperation from all Congressmen and from the country at large. It will be my endeavour to seek this cooperation.

To Shri J.B. Kripalani, who has shouldered the burden of the Congress secretaryship for many years, I should especially like to express my sense of gratitude and appreciation. I have every confidence that he will allow us to profit by his long experience of running the A.I.C.C. office.

Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, though not now formally a member of the Working Committee, is as much a part of us and our work as anyone can be and she remains for us the pillar of strength and hope that she has always been. It is difficult to imagine a Working Committee without her. But, in effect, the Committee will not be without her help and cooperation.

To all old members and new, I send my greetings at the outset of these new changes. May we all prove true and faithful servants of India and our great national organisation in the trying days ahead. *Jai Hind.*

7. To Rajendra Prasad[1]

Bombay
9.7.46

My dear Rajendra Babu,
You will have seen the list of the new Working Committee. It was made after sleepless nights and in continuous consultation with Bapu and others. I hope you approve of it.

We all missed you here. I hope you are better now.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.

8. Telegram to Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya[1]

Allahabad
18.7.46

Have received numerous complaints about district Congress elections in Andhra especially Guntur district grave irregularities alleged. Would like you proceed there meet Ranga and others report and make arrangements for functioning election tribunal informing us of position and steps taken.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P. 28(II)-1946, p. 451, N.M.M.L.

9. Reorganisation of the A.I.C.C. Office[1]

It is desirable that the Working Committee should consider the reorganisation of the A.I.C.C. office, opening of new departments, employment of new personnel etc. The general secretaries should prepare a

1. Note for the Working Committee, Allahabad, 18 July 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 69 (part I)-1946, pp. 143-147, N.M.M.L.

note on this subject for presentation before the Working Commmittee. Before that I should like to see this note and make my own suggestions.

The proper procedure in the future for every item on the Working Committee agenda should be that every item should have a brief note attached and a draft resolution recommended by the office. This will facilitate consideration.

No permanent arrangements can be made till the general secretaries have acquired a full knowledge of the working of the office and till the Working Committee have considered their proposals. Meanwhile, we should have the following departments :

1. Administration of office
2. Accounts
3. Library and records
4. Congress organisation
5. Volunteers
6. Women
7. Foreign
8. Indians overseas
9. Constituent assembly
10. Congress Provincial Governments
11. Economic and political research
12. Labour
13. States people
14. Publicity and publications

Some of these departments do not exist at present and have to be created. Each department should have some person in charge and the general secretaries should assume responsibility for some particular departments, that is apart from the actual person in charge.

It is presumed that both the general secretaries will spend much of their time at headquarters. Keskar especially should remain at headquarters unless some very special business takes him elsewhere.

Sadiq Ali is at present in charge of administrative and other general office work. Ramsevak Pande is the accountant. M.L. Bhushan Singh is in charge of the library and Ramcharan Pande of records. Maitra is in charge of the economic and political research department. The constituent assembly department, which will have its office in Delhi, will be in the charge of Krishna Kripalani. The women's department is in the charge of Smt. Sucheta Kripalani, and the new volunteers' department has been put under General Shah Nawaz Khan. Indians overseas is under Satiacharan Sastri and the foreign department was being conducted by Ameer Raza, but it is likely that his services will be lent to the U.P. Government.

As a branch of the A.I.C.C. office has been opened in New Delhi for the constituent assembly, this work will be carried on separately under Krishna Kripalani's supervision.

Of the other suggested departments, General Secretary Mridula Sarabhai will be in general charge of :

1. Congress organisation
2. Volunteers
3. Women
4. Labour
5. States

General Secretary Keskar will look after the administrative work of the office and be in general charge of the following departments :

1. Foreign
2. Indians overseas
3. Congress Provincial Governments
4. Publicity and publications
5. Economic and political research

At present there are two accounts with banks, one operated upon by the General Secretary and the other by the Office Secretary, Sadiq Ali. The latter will continue to be operated upon at present, and normally all expenditure will be incurred through that office account. The General Secretary's account will be operated upon by either of the General Secretaries. Normally payments will be made out of this account to the office account from time to time.

The arrangements suggested above are provisional and will be reconsidered after the next meeting of the Working Committee when the views of the Committee are known and the general secretaries have made their proposals about office reorganisation and work generally. In making these proposals a revised budget has also to be prepared.

Though each General Secretary will be specially responsible for the particular departments in his or her charge, there should be an attempt at complete coordination of work. This will be facilitated by frequent mutual consultation not only between the General Secretaries but also between them and the heads of departments. It is suggested that every morning or every other day all these people might meet together for a short while to consider any new problems or points that have arisen. This will keep all of them in touch with each other's work and department and produce a sense of coordination and cooperative effort.

Shri V.K. Krishna Menon has made a proposal about foreign publicity to be conducted through the India League in London. This proposal should be carefully thought out for the consideration of the Working Committee.

AT THE A.I.C.C. SESSION IN BOMBAY, JULY 1946

Perhaps the most important department of our activity relates to Congress organisation. This will require careful, continuous and tactful handling because such organisational matters have ultimately to be carried through by provincial and local organisations. The A.I.C.C. office can only make suggestions, give advice and collect data. At present the Congress organisation is not in a good state and requires complete overhaul in most places. This can only be done with the full cooperation of provincial and local organisations. The provincial committees should be addressed immediately on this subject and apart from such suggestions as might be made by us, they should be asked to make their own suggestions. It will probably be necessary to engage several persons for continuous touring and inspection work.

Another important work for our office is to develop continuous contacts with the Congress provincial governments. We must know exactly what they are doing and what they propose to do. It will be desirable to prepare a brief fortnightly report of their activities which might be sent to all the Congress provincial governments as well as to P.C.C.s. This material should also be utilised for our foreign service.

In considering the reorganisation of the office or the opening of new departments, full advantage should be taken of Acharya Kripalani's advice and suggestions.

Smt. Sucheta Kripalani has been in charge of the women's department. I hope that she will continue this work.

I am being associated with the A.I.C.C. office after many years and I am rather out of touch with its working. I hope to regain touch soon and to have the full cooperation of my old colleagues there and the staff as well as new colleagues who may join us.

10. To Presidents and Secretaries of the P.C.C.s[1]

Dear Comrade,

On taking charge of the Congress presidentship, I wish to send you my greetings and to convey to you my earnest desire that during the critical months ahead, we shall all cooperate together in the great tasks ahead.

1. Allahabad, 18 July 1946. From *National Herald*, 19 July 1946.

We have many problems to face, many questions to answer, many knots to unravel, and yet the basic problem is the strengthening and reorganisation of the Congress so as to make it more than ever before the embodiment and organised expression of the people's will and the way to disciplined service in the cause of the country's freedom. While our strength and popular backing have grown greatly, organisationally we have become weaker and inner conflicts and narrow party issues have often diverted us from the straight path.

I trust that you will immediately address yourself to this situation and, avoiding party rivalry, work for the consolidation of the Congress organisation. We must make it reach every village, and it would be desirable to have a Congress representative in each village, apart from the members we may have there. Our office will address you further on this subject.

As you know the General Secretaries of the Congress now are Mridula Sarabhai and Dr. Balkrishna Keskar. They have a hard task before them following as they do Acharya Kripalani, who has shouldered this heavy burden for many years. But they will have, I am sure, the advice and guidance of Acharya Kripalani and the full cooperation of the members of the A.I.C.C. staff. Even more so your cooperation is needed and I hope this will be forthcoming in full measure.

Maj. General Shah Nawaz Khan has consented to take charge of the volunteers department and he will open his office in Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad. We are fortunate in having a man of his experience and calibre for this important work. He will communicate with you directly and you will no doubt cooperate with him in every way to build up a Congress volunteer organisation in your province. *Jai Hind.*

11. The A.I.C.C. and the Press[1]

The A.I.C.C. office welcomes the cooperation of the press and representatives of the press are free to come there when they choose. In taking advantage of this freedom they have a certain responsibility also. It would be improper for them to give publicity to any paper which they

1. Note for representatives of the press, 19 July 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. G-45-1946, p. 299, N.M.M.L.

might see or any conversation they might overhear. If such instances of publication of what should not be published occur, the office is placed in a false position. Any such unauthorised publicity is a breach of the confidence which the A.I.C.C. office wishes to place on representatives of the press.

It is requested therefore that every item of news relating to the A.I.C.C. office, or the President and Secretaries or other staff, should be first passed by some responsible authority in the office, and only then issued to the press. This will ensure accuracy and authenticity and will be to the advantage of all parties concerned.

Jawaharlal Nehru

This note is not meant for publication. It should be given to individual representatives of the press, news agencies etc.

J.N.

12. The Observance of Ninth August[1]

I want to remind you of a date which has become memorable in the history of our struggle for freedom — August 9. That date is still three weeks distant from today, but it is desirable for provincial Congress committees to issue suitable instructions to district and local organisations for the proper observance of this day. In this matter I shall only make some general observations leaving the details to the P.C.C.s.

The main item on the programme should be a public meeting where a resolution confirming in dignified language our demand for full independence and "Quit India" should be passed. Before this resolution two minutes' silence should be observed standing in memory of those who died or otherwise suffered in the cause of freedom. There should be no hartal. People generally should be requested to put up national flags on their houses, shops, etc., but there must be no compulsion in the matter.

1. Circular letter to Provincial Congress Committees, Allahabad, 19 July 1946. *National Herald*, 20 July 1946.

The day is a solemn day for us and it should be observed with all dignity and solemnity. Items of constructive work should be especially taken up.

There has been a tendency for some time past for bombastic and truculent speeches to be delivered and often violence is preached. This is not in keeping with the policy, strength and dignity of the Congress. The language of strength does not end in a shriek or in hysterical outbursts. Also so long as our policy is one of nonviolence, as it undoubtedly is today, it is improper to go against this policy in any way.

It is desirable on this day especially not to indulge in any vituperation or conflict but rather to demonstrate to the world our unshakable resolve to free ourselves.

13. Goa's Struggle for Freedom[1]

In the midst of formidable problems which face India, little Goa offers its own problem. But because Goa is an enclave on the west coast of India, we may not ignore or forget it.

Wherever human liberty and human suffering are involved, the problem is not a small one. Wherever people struggle for freedom and against repression, they enact a drama which is always full of vital interest to lovers of liberty all over the world. Goa also raises international issues, which are bound to come to the forefront in the near future.

Eighteen years ago, a Congress committee was started in Goa by Mr. Tristao Braganza Cunha[2] and for some years he was a member of the All India Congress Committee. Later, under the constitution of the Congress, such foreign committees were not affiliated.

I remember those days of association with Mr. Cunha. Now he lies in some Portuguese prison waiting to be tried by court martial, although no martial law has been proclaimed in Goa and Mr. Cunha is not a soldier.

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 20 July 1946. *National Herald*, 21 July 1946.
2. (1891-1958); Goan freedom fighter who was kept in jail in Portuguese East Africa from 1946 to 1950; Chairman of the Goan Action Committee in Bombay; fought for the liberation of Portuguese districts of Nagar Haveli and Dadra in 1954.

In Goa, for a vast span of years, there has been no shadow of liberty. No meetings can be held and nothing can be printed, even a wedding card, without police permission.

A month ago, Dr. Lohia broke this ban and addressed a meeting. Since then the people of Goa have woken up from their slumber and have repeatedly tried to hold peaceful meetings. The Portuguese Administration is trying to suppress this popular movement with methods of cruelty after the fascist pattern. The present struggle is one for civil liberties.

I should like to tell the people of Goa how we all sympathise with them in this struggle and how we are following it with anxious interest. For us, Goa is as much a part of India as any other part, and the freedom of India inevitably includes the freedom of the people of Goa. Goa cannot be separated from India. So any struggle for freedom there becomes part of our own struggle.

But whatever struggle there may be, it is wholly unbecoming for the Portuguese authorities in Goa to use the methods they have adopted.

In particular, the trial by court martial of a well-known citizen and public worker of Goa for his standing for civil liberties is something that is peculiarly bad. I understand that he was not even given sufficient time to prepare for his defence.

There are plenty of Goans in Bombay, and I hope that not only they, but the Congress organisation in Bombay, will give such assistance as they can in helping by way of defence or otherwise those who are carrying on the struggle in Goa.

To the people of Goa I send my greetings and good wishes.

14. To the Prime Ministers of Congress Provinces[1]

New Delhi
22 July 1946

Dear friend,

As you know, there has been considerable feeling in Congress circles in regard to the events that took place in August 1942 and subsequently the official repression that followed. There has been and is a strong popular demand for an inquiry and punishment of officials and others who are found guilty of inhuman acts or any activity which normally

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 72-1946-47, pp. 101-103, N.M.M.L.

The day is a solemn day for us and it should be observed with all dignity and solemnity. Items of constructive work should be especially taken up.

There has been a tendency for some time past for bombastic and truculent speeches to be delivered and often violence is preached. This is not in keeping with the policy, strength and dignity of the Congress. The language of strength does not end in a shriek or in hysterical outbursts. Also so long as our policy is one of nonviolence, as it undoubtedly is today, it is improper to go against this policy in any way.

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I remember those days of association with Mr. Cunha. Now he lies in some Portuguese prison waiting to be tried by court martial, although no martial law has been proclaimed in Goa and Mr. Cunha is not a soldier.

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 20 July 1946. *National Herald*, 21 July 1946.
2. (1891-1955); Goan freedom fighter who was kept in jail in Portuguese East Africa from 1946 to 1950; Chairman of the Goan Action Committee in Bombay; fought for the liberation of Portuguese districts of Nagar Haveli and Dadra in 1954.

In view of what I have said above, I suggest to you that you might approach this question in the following manner. There need not be any large-scale or public inquiry, but your Government might inquire into specific and flagrant cases which are well known. Such an inquiry can be private. Where your Government is satisfied that there is a *prima facie* case of extreme misconduct or corruption, you might take up this case with the Governor and arrange for the retirement from service of such a person. It is obvious that a person against whom there is a great deal of popular ill-will should not continue in service. If this method is adopted, it should lead to the purification of the services as well as to soothing public sentiment which has been rightly excited over such matters.

I need not go into any greater detail as you will, no doubt, know best how to proceed. I think that there should be no delay about this.

Of course, if you find that there is a very flagrant case of corruption, it is certainly open to you to take such other steps as you like. I am in no way suggesting a limitation of your discretion in such matters. What I have suggested is a quick, smooth, and relatively easy way of dealing with a matter which has long troubled us all.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

15. Need for Unity of Action[1]

I am glad that Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan has made it clear that there should be no hartal on August 9.[2] His original statement had been issued simultaneously with mine, and he was not then aware of the directions I was giving for the observance of that day.

This incident, however, raises an important issue, which deserves careful thought by all Congressmen and calls for clear decision. The Congress has allowed the largest latitude for the holding and expression of opinion within its fold. But, at the same time, it has demanded unity

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 1 August 1946. *National Herald*, 2 August 1946.
2. Earlier, Jayaprakash Narayan had called for a hartal.

civilised governments do not indulge in. This matter is continually being raised in provincial Congress committees and among Congressmen and the public. Letters are appearing in the press and recently discussions have taken place in some provincial assemblies. I have no doubt that you have had to face this problem from day to day and have given it serious thought. I have been unhappy over the lack of action thus far. Yet I realised the many difficulties in the way and the undesirability of doing something which might distract us for the moment from other vital problems.

During the last year I had occasion to discuss this problem several times with the Viceroy. This was always at his instance. We expressed our opposing viewpoints to each other. My own viewpoint was that it was not our desire to punish as such any individual even though such punishment might have been richly deserved. Nor was it my desire to have roving inquiries into past events; but I told him that I had no doubt in my own mind from the facts placed before me that there have been numerous cases of inhuman conduct and extreme corruption on the part of many members of the services. Also it was undoubted that there was strong popular feeling on the subject. Because of this it was inevitable that our popular assemblies should reflect this feeling and our governments be influenced by it. Quite apart from the question of punishment, it was impossible for us to cooperate in governmental or other work with persons who had been guilty of what we considered inhuman conduct or corruption. We did not desire to discredit any service as a whole or to break up the morale of a service. Nevertheless, even in the interest of morale both of the services and the public it was necessary that people against whom there was such evidence and so much popular ill will should be removed from service. This was the general attitude I took up.

I have now had occasion to have another talk with the Viceroy on this subject.[3] I repeated what I have previously said. The Viceroy was anxious, for reasons which will be obvious to you, that he should protect his services. He said that any roving inquiry would be very undesirable and would lead to a great deal of bitterness. He admitted that much that was very wrong had been done by certain government officials, just as, he added, the people had misbehaved greatly on their part. He appreciated, however, that there was popular feeling on this subject and it was difficult for an officer to continue in his place if there was some evidence of grave misconduct against him and popular ill will. Such an officer, he was of the opinion, might resign.

3. See *ante*, pp. 264-266.

economic situation in India, as well as the activities of the Congress governments should be prepared. This should be placed before the Working Committee and be used (not verbatim) for bulletins and newsletters.

The preparation of plans and monographs is too difficult and intricate a piece of work for this section. At most it can collect information about existing plans. Generally speaking monographs on special subjects should be prepared by competent experts. We can request such experts to undertake this work usually on topical subjects. Prof. Gyan Chand[2] might be asked to prepare a monograph on the proposal to abolish the zamindari system — the possible alternatives and consequences.

It is not worthwhile increasing the staff till each new person has been completely absorbed and has made himself useful.

I do not see any special necessity for travelling for this section.

2. (b. 1893); an eminent economist; taught in Banaras Hindu University and Patna College; took part in the Quit India movement; economic adviser to the central cabinet, 1949-51; author of several books including *Fiscal Reconstruction in India* (1931) and *The New Economy of China* (1958).

18. On A.I.C.C. Library[1]

The librarian's note contains some good suggestions. But to suggest that it would take a year to classify 6000 books is just absurd. Something must be wrong with the method. With a relatively small number of books no very intricate system is necessary.

Obviously the books must be easily available for reference. A proper catalogue is necessary. Books may be lent provided deposits are received to protect against loss etc.

A temporary assistant might be engaged to help for three months as suggested.

1. Note, Allahabad, 3 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 69 (part 1)-1946, p. 77, N.M.M.L.

of action, and it has developed its strength because of the discipline in corporate action.

It seems to me highly undesirable to encourage any tendency which weakens this unity of action. This is especially important in the present state of the continuing and developing crisis in our political and economic life. Hartals have become a recognised method of expressing and organising public feeling. It is the Congress which initiated them on the political front, and the first great hartal of this kind took place on 6 April 1919. But hartals can be cheapened by too frequent use, and they can be called for trivial or even wrong ends.

In any event, it seems to me essential that there should be discipline and unity of action among Congressmen in this and other matters. We stand at the threshold of grave and far-reaching developments, and we have to prepare for them with all the strength and wisdom that we possess.

16. Telegram to B.V. Keskar and Mridula Sarabhai[1]

Please inform provincial committees and press Congress President's directions about August ninth should be carried out. Hartals inadvisable. Request Jayaprakash to say likewise.

Jawaharlal

1. 1 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. G 51-1946, p. 32, N.M.M.L.

17. Note on Economic and Research Section[1]

The work of this section should not merely be to collect and file economic data but to present it in suitable form. A monthly report on the

1. Allahabad, 3 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 69 (part I)-1946, p. 87, N.M.M.L.

operatives and use these trained men for developing them. If you like you could even have some more of our trained men from the Punjab because they are not being used there. If you appoint any such committee, it would be desirable to get an expert from Bombay to be a member of it and to guide it. He could stay for a while and then leave matters in charge of your committee and the trained organisers. My point is that this question of industrial cooperatives has to be looked at from a special point of view which has little to do with our normal working of cooperative organisations. For my part I am quite convinced that industrial cooperatives are especially suited to India today and once they start going they will spread rapidly to the great advantage of our people.

I understand that our I.N.A. office in Delhi has repeatedly written to you about these trained organisers but without any result....

As I have said above we can supply more, chiefly from the Punjab. But in any event you should utilise the U.P. men and not allow them to drift away to other activities. Please let me know if you require further names for this purpose; also if I can communicate on your behalf with the Bombay committee. I shall be in Bombay from the 15th August onwards for some days when I am likely to meet Renu there.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. To Govind Ballabh Pant[1]

Allahabad
3 August 1946

My dear Pantji,
I hope to meet you in Wardha. I understand that Rafi will not be able to go there because of his Assembly activities.

I do not know what arrangements you have for publicity of your Government's work and who is in charge of them. I think there is plenty of room for improvement in them. For instance, all your schemes for the abolition of the zamindari system is first-class news both for India and abroad; so also your schemes for development of electrical power and

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 71-1946-47, pp. 95-97, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

19. To Kailas Nath Katju[1]

Allahabad
3 August 1946

My dear Kailas Nath,

I am glad you are encouraging cooperatives in the province and hope to have a network of them. I feel, however, that the old methods of cooperative organisation which presumably we are following here do not go far enough. There is a possibility of their not succeeding because of lack of trained human material and other reasons.

A totally new development in cooperative organisation was the industrial cooperatives of China. These produced through small-scale industries. They succeeded to a remarkable degree within a short period and drew the attention of the rest of the world. It is true that part of their success was due to wartime scarcity; also to the man at the head of the organisation who was very able. Since then there has been a lot of talk of industrial cooperatives and even in India we have toyed with this idea.

So far as I know all our cooperative schemes have nothing to do with this modern approach which combines the cooperative method with production. Some years back an industrial cooperative society was formed in Bombay and it has done very good work, though so far on a somewhat limited scale. It proposes to extend its activities. The real man in charge is Renu,[2] an enthusiastic and able man. Recently a number of others have joined this group, including, I think, J.R.D. Tata.

When the I.N.A. people came back to India I was anxious to have some of them trained for industrial cooperatives. We arranged to send a first batch of 20 to Bombay for this training. In this batch there were, I think, five men from the U.P. They have come back after training as qualified organisers of industrial cooperatives and yet they have been hanging about doing nothing. When I was in Lucknow sometime back I put two of them in touch with C.B. Gupta who said he would find work for them. I do not know what happened to them afterwards. But it is not a question of just finding work for them. Their special training has to be utilised. It is a pity at any time to waste such training, more so when that training is peculiarly suited to the kind of development you are thinking of. I suggest to you that you must consider this problem somewhat apart from your general cooperative schemes. You might appoint a special committee for industrial co-

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 71-1946-47, pp. 87-89, N.M.M.L. Extracts.
2. L.N. Renu, Hon. Secretary, Provincial Industrial Cooperative Association, Bombay.

21. Soldiers of Freedom[1]

I want every boy and girl of India to become a soldier in the cause of the independence of the country. By soldier I mean a disciplined and honest worker who will serve the country and maintain the honour and prestige of the motherland.

I welcome the formation of the brigades and emphasise that they should be guided by a sense of service and discipline. Discipline is necessary, and especially so when the struggle for the independence of our motherland is essentially nonviolent.

A few disciplined soldiers are far more useful to the country and to the struggle than a crowd of a thousand indisciplined men.

I advise the members of the Rani of Jhansi Brigade to convey this message of discipline and service to all their fellow countrywomen and men. Discipline and service raise your strength and with such strength the stature and strength of the entire country is raised.

1. Address to a rally of the Rani of Jhansi Brigade and the Balika Sena Dal, which were formed in Allahabad by the Mahila Congress Committee, Allahabad, 4 August 1946. From *National Herald*, 5 August 1946.

22. To Raja S. Sajid Hussain[1]

Allahabad
4 August 1946

Dear Raja Saheb,[2]
I am sorry for the delay in acknowledging your letter of May 25th which I appreciated. I am interested in your ideas about the development of hydroelectricity and school education through the medium of sound films. I am afraid we are backward in both these matters and few people know about the use of films for this purpose.

Your suggestion for using a modified Roman script is ingenious, but I fear that the time is not ripe for any such proposal.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1910); ruler of Kotwara; founder of the Hindustani League which advocated the use of modified Roman script as a solution of the Urdu-Hindi controversy; believer in films as a medium of instruction.

consequently industries; also cooperatives. If these could be briefly written up they will go a long way to show people what we are doing or thinking of doing. This is especially important for foreign purposes.

About cooperatives I have written to Katju separately, but I should like to draw your attention to this matter also. Katju has talked about a wide network of cooperatives in the province, but all this appears to be on old lines. They are good so far as they go. What is urgently needed, however, is a new approach to the problem and that is the industrial cooperative approach which succeeded so well in China. We have taken the trouble to train some of our young men from the I.N.A. as industrial cooperative organisers. Among these five are from the U.P. and they have been hanging around for a long time doing nothing. They might be absorbed in the present cooperative scheme, but that is not good enough and their special training will be lost. I suggest that a special branch department be started for industrial cooperatives and a small committee appointed for this purpose. If you so desire, and I think it would be desirable, I could arrange to send you from Bombay a competent industrial cooperatives organiser who could help in the initial stages. I do hope you will give early thought to this matter, for I believe it can take us very far...

Another matter: Publicity naturally includes educational and health publicity as well as an attempt to improve communal relations etc. It is a wide subject which can be dealt with both by speech, in writing, by films and otherwise. The Government of India's Publicity Department, which is on its last legs, has certainly got a certain technical competence. I was approached by one man in it who had some bright ideas which he wanted to be conveyed to the provincial governments. I think it will be a good thing if someone, who is in charge of publicity on your behalf, could go to Delhi and meet people there. If you feel that something of this kind can be done, I could make the necessary arrangements and contacts.

I am writing to you separately about our provincial governments taking special steps to help minorities, backward classes etc. I know you are thinking of this and have arranged something for the Momins. Still I wanted to draw the attention of all our Prime Ministers. The obvious and basic method of help to any backward group is through educational scholarships. I hope you will extend this method to various minority groups, scheduled classes and others in a like situation.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

by the new Andhra P.C.C. This decision must be given effect and other parties informed accordingly. All pending disputes should be referred to the tribunal.

There is no necessity for the matter to be put up now before the Working Committee but as it has been included in the agenda and Shri Kamaladevi has been asked to inquire into it, all relevant papers should be taken to Wardha for the Working Committee.

25. To the Prime Ministers of Congress Provinces[1]

Allahabad
5 August 1946

Dear friend,

I wish to draw your attention to a matter which, no doubt, must be in your mind. Indeed I know that various Congress Governments are taking steps in this direction.

The communal question as well as the general minority question have to be dealt with on an all-India level. But there is another and a more basic way of tackling all these problems, a way which will not only give real help to those who are in need but will also produce a feeling among those concerned that our Governments are anxious to help them. This is by way of arranging scholarships and other educational facilities for minority groups, scheduled and backward classes, etc. The more this is done the better because thus we are not only helping a backward group but at the same time raising the level of the nation. I think much can be done and it is desirable to do it in a big way. Just a few odd scholarships or other help does not impress anyone.

In this connection as well as otherwise I would urge you to encourage the formation of industrial cooperatives. If you are interested in this, we shall try to help you in getting organisers. Please realise that this is something different from ordinary cooperatives because this involves the organisation of various types of producers. In this way small industries can be developed in a cooperative and democratic way. The example of China has proved how successful this can be on a very large scale.

I should like to know what arrangements your Government has made or is making for proper publicity. Publicity means both reaching our

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 71-1946-47, pp. 91-93, N.M.M.L.

23. To K. Gokul Sing[1]

Allahabad
4 August 1946

Dear friend,[2]

I have read with pleasure your letter of May 27th in which you tell us about the island of Mauritius and of the Indians there. As you point out Mauritius has practically become an Indian island as the majority of the population is now Indian. I am glad that all Indians there, whether they are Hindus or Muslims, pull together. In particular I hope that the intelligentsia will interest themselves in raising the working classes and others who may suffer disabilities.

Although we are full of our own problems in India, we think often of our countrymen abroad and we want to develop ever-closer relations with them. An independent India will, no doubt, try to help her children abroad in every way. The status of Indians anywhere in the world will ultimately depend upon the status of their motherland in the world.

I hope that you will keep in touch with the foreign department of the All India Congress Committee in Allahabad. In this way we shall know more about you and you will know something abont our activities here.

With all good wishes to you, and *Jai Hind.*

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Of the India League of Mauritius.

24. Congress Elections in Andhra[1]

Shrimati Kamaladevi was requested to inquire and report to us. When this was done by me I did not know that the previous General Secretary had asked Shri Konda Venkatappayya to inquire especially in regard to the functioning of the election tribunals. His report has now come and his decision is clearly in favour of the new election tribunal appointed

1. Note for Congress General Secretary, 5 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. P128(II)-1946, p. 281, N.M.M.L.

On the other hand there has been a saving under some heads like library, Swaraj Bhawan repairs. The present estimate for expenditure for the year ending 30th September 1946 is Rs. 71,000. This is less than the budgeted amount by Rs. 6,800.

The Working Committee's sanction is not necessary for any additional amount for this year. But it is necessary for additional expenditure under some heads, especially travelling and miscellaneous.

If expenditure had not suddenly gone up in July, especially in regard to establishment charges and house rent, a much greater saving would have been made.

It must be noted that the saving in Swaraj Bhawan repairs is temporary only. These will involve us in greater expenditures during next year. I suggest that the Swaraj Bhawan budget be kept separately.

27. The Congress Budget for 1946-47[1]

The budget estimate for the year 1945-46 totalled Rs. 77,800. The budget for the next year will exceed this figure considerably. This will be due to several factors: (1) Increments in salaries (2) Increase of staff (3) Additional departments (4) House rent for houses taken on hire for staff or office work (5) Foreign publicity (6) Travelling.

The General Secretaries and the Permanent Secretary have prepared estimates for expenditures for the year 1946-47. These totalled up to Rs. 168,820. They do not include repairs to Swaraj Bhawan or purchase of additional furniture which will be necessary. These estimates depend on the engagement of new staff, specially the higher staff, and it is probable that it will take some time for new appointments to be made, even when sanctioned. The estimates require checking, though they have been carefully made. But before these estimates are finally framed or passed it is necessary for the Working Committee to approve of the policy underlying them, i.e. the enlargement of the office by opening new departments etc. Once this policy is laid down suitable estimates can immediately be made.

1. Note, 6 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 69 (Part 2)-1946, pp. 53-55. N.M.M.L.

people in your provinces as well as others in the rest of India or abroad. It includes an attempt to make our own people understand what your economic, industrial, educational, and health schemes are so that they can cooperate with them. Much of this publicity can be done effectively within the province by means of documentary films. Then there is the question of publicity outside India. The A.I.C.C. office would gladly take charge of this if full material is supplied regularly. This does not mean just sending Government reports, but intelligently written memoranda of the work being done.

In the months to come this kind of propaganda, which is really just giving facts properly arranged, is likely to have a considerable effect on public opinion in India as well as abroad, and it is highly important that this should be undertaken in an organised and intelligent way. My own impression has been that Congress Governments are so busy with their own activities that they seldom take the trouble to let the world know what these activities are. All manner of false and malicious charges are made against them and they feel too superior to deal with them. This is hardly a wise policy. Occasionally some minister delivers a speech or issues a statement, but this is not good enough.

I would suggest also to your Publicity Department to send their material directly to the India League, 47 Strand, London, W.C. 2(England).

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

26. The Congress Budget for 1945-1946[1]

The budget estimates for the year ending 30th September 1946 amounted to Rs. 77,800 expenditure and a like income. During the nine months ending 30th June, 1946 actual expenditure has been Rs. 38,005-11-6. As a matter of fact this is rather a misleading figure as some pending accounts have not been included, especially travelling expenses and press bills. Salaries have now been increased and additional houses taken on rent. In several departments expenditure will go up during the next three months, that is, till the end of the present budget year.

1. Note, 5 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 69 (part 3)-1946, p. 47, N.M.M.L.

PRESIDENT OF TH

28. To L.N. Renu[1]

A
5 Augu

My dear Renu,
I have received your letter of the 16th July. I am dealing with the industrial cooperatives organisers you have trained, and have written to the various Congress Governments on this subject, more specially the U.P. Government. I fear that most of our people have yet to understand what industrial cooperatives are.

I am prepared to help you in spreading this movement, but I do not see what your proposed all-India association can do in this matter. A few persons in each province will not be able to do much without effective backing. I think the best way at present would be for some of our Provincial Governments to get moving. I shall try my best to do this. It may be necessary, however, for you or someone you can suggest for the purpose to travel about and interview the Ministers concerned.

I shall be in Bombay on the 15th of this month and shall stay four or five days there. Come and see me then.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

29. The Inner Weakness of the Congress[1]

The Committee have a heavy agenda before them—not only a long one full of difficult questions. They will naturally give first thought to the primary question before them—the political and economic situation in the country and the steps to be taken in regard to it. Many other important matters have to be considered.

1. Note written for the members of the Congress Working Committee, Allahabad, 6 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 69 (part 2)-1946, pp. 1-7, N.M.M.L.

It will therefore be desirable for the Working Committee at first to consider this general policy. Perhaps this may suitably be done by a sub-committee which will report to the Working Committee. This sub-committee will of course meet some time during the session of the next Working Committee.

The next step would be for that sub-committee or another to consider the various budget estimates and to approve of them as a whole or make their own suggestions. It would probably be desirable for the committee to leave the working out of the general policy which they lay down to the secretaries. It is difficult to lay down hard and fast rules in an expanding establishment.

I would suggest that for the next year beginning October 1, 1946 a provisional budget may be passed, which can be revised two or three months later when we are in a better position to do so. This provisional budget may be for Rs. 175,000. If this figure is accepted the actual budget estimates for various departments can be proportioned accordingly. Personally I do not think that in any event we shall reach this figure because it will take time to grow and probably Rs. 150,000 will be quite enough. But it is desirable, I think, to allow full scope for growth. It must be remembered that we have got an office in New Delhi now, which is likely to be expensive as all things in New Delhi are. Therefore I suggest that Rs. 175,000 be the figure provisionally fixed for expenditure during the coming year.

This should not include repairs or changes in Swaraj Bhawan which are likely to cost a considerable sum. We have asked for estimates from architects and engineers and this can be dealt with separately. I think that in any event the Swaraj Bhawan budget can be kept separate from our general budget. We have at present a sum of Rs. 9,382-8-0 earmarked for repairs to Swaraj Bhawan.

The budget for the volunteer department, though forming part of the general budget, might also be kept separately. We have at present Rs. 10,000 earmarked for this. This will certainly cover the year's expenditure.

So far I have dealt with the estimates for expenditure. The income side is always vague and indeterminate. Our normal income from delegates fees, provincial contributions and A.I.C.C. membership is Rs. 20,000. If an annual session is held, as it is bound to be normally within the year, this might add considerably to our income. For the rest we have to rely on donations and purses, as well as such capital as we may possess. We have now received back from the Government Rs. 73,000 which had been confiscated. I do not think we need worry very much about the income provided our work is good and produces results.

put them in practice. Shri Sadiq Ali, who has thus far be[illegible] Office Secretary but whose correct designation should be Perm[illegible]tary, has been a tower of strength with his long experience of [illegible] office. At my suggestion the General Secretaries have present[illegible] number of notes on various existing and proposed departments. I am not circulating all these notes to members but they are all available for reference, should any member desire to see them.

While I agree with the general trend of these notes and feel convinced that the time has come for the A.I.C.C. to develop its activities and expand its office, I realise that expansion should depend on the availability of good human material. It is no good adding second-rate men or women to our staff. I think, therefore, that the process of expansion will necessarily be slower than we at first imagined. But I would like to have the views of the Working Committee on the general policy of expansion. For my part I feel convinced that we must necessarily expand if we are to play our role effectively or be worthy of the high tasks before us.

Among the departments that need special development are:

1. Congress organisation: This is of primary importance and I think it should be separated from the general office. It should have a number of competent inspectors. At present we have only one and he has done good work. Apart from engaging additional inspectors we should tour continually and send reports. I should like some members of the Working Committee to take charge, on our behalf, of one or more provinces for this purpose. In addition to these, some ex-members of the Working Committee should also be requested to undertake this work. I should like also that Shri Sadiq Ali, who has too long been confined to office work, should devote at least half his time to touring, inspection, meeting provincial workers etc. My idea of inspection is something much more than mere inspection and reporting. Shri Sadiq Ali can be spared for this work now as the General Secretaries will spend most of their time at headquarters. They will of course also tour when necessary but it is better for them to remain at headquarters during the period of office reorganisation.

It is for the Working Committee to consider whether it is not desirable to have a small committee to help in Congress organisational work. This will certainly be worthwhile provided it can meet easily and visit Allahabad frequently.

2. Foreign department: This should include overseas Indians as a section. It is not necessary at present to have a separate department for overseas Indians. Certain proposals have been made in regard to

Perhaps basically the most important is the question of revitalising and disciplining the entire Congress organisation. All of us know that while on the one hand there is great enthusiasm in the country and the hold of the Congress on the public mind has never been so great as today, yet at the same time the inner weakness of the Congress is more obvious today than it has been at any time during the past quarter of a century. There is a big hiatus between its prestige and its working capacity. Faction grows and the time of most Congressmen is spent in elections or party faction. The organisation, big and powerful as it is, is not big enough or effective enough in the present context. It is amorphous and loose and looking in many directions and doubtful of itself. While there is a great deal of talk of constructive work of various kinds, precious little is done.

It would be an interesting and profitable task to analyse this situation and the inner weaknesses of the Congress to seek their causes and to suggest more remedies. It does little good to say that others are to blame. In any event we have to face the consequences and perhaps we are also partly responsible for these consequences. Those who have to shoulder the responsibility for guiding and directing the Congress cannot escape by casting the burden on others.

The purpose of this note is not to examine these causes or to enter into an intricate analysis. Its object is the much smaller one of how to deal with the Congress organisation so that it may be in a better position to deal with the internal and external problems that face it. Everything ultimately depends on the strength and efficiency of the organisation. Probably the only effective approach is to change the Congress constitution, which has become out of date and unwieldy. That has been on our agenda for a long time but it can only be finally tackled by the full session of the Congress.

The Congress organisation means many layers of committees. The top can make a difference, but direct work is done by local committees under the guidance of the provincial Congress committees. Any reform must therefore start from below though the initiative for it may and should come from the top.

The A.I.C.C. office cannot make a vital difference unless the provincial and local committees get moving. Yet the A.I.C.C. office can do something worthwhile if it is properly organised and has a good and efficient inspectorate.

During the last three weeks those in charge of the A.I.C.C. office have given much thought to this matter and have frequently conferred together to discuss various proposals and suggestions. The General Secretaries, new to the office, have moved cautiously but have been full of ideas and eager to

to me at present. We may put proposals before the Working Committee at a subsequent meeting.

A proposal has been made to me to start an Arabic section to deal with Egypt and the Middle East. This can be organised without much expense (the person in charge being an honorary worker) and I am in favour of it. But its success would necessarily depend on the interest and cooperation of Maulana Azad.

These are some of the proposals that we have been considering in the A.I.C.C. office. There are others also and new ones are continually being made. It is difficult, and perhaps not desirable, to lay down hard and fast lines which might limit the growth of a living and expanding organisation.

The expansion involves additional expenditure. I do not think it considerable considering the work before us or the high objective we aim at. Expenses have gone up inevitably because of the necessity of raising the salaries of the staff. We have already done so in regard to the lower paid staff but for some of the relatively higher-paid personnel we should like to have the sanction of the W.C. Provisional budget estimates have been prepared for the W.C.'s approval. The expansion of the office and the necessity for providing housing accommodation for the staff has compelled us to take on rent some additional small houses. Swaraj Bhawan, though big, is not big enough for our purposes.

Swaraj Bhawan itself requires extensive repairs and renovation. This is something apart from our normal budget and I think we should deal with it separately. It is proposed to build a small guest house in the Swaraj Bhawan garden. Since the death of Shri Jamnalal Bajaj there has been a vacancy in the Board of Trustees of Swaraj Bhawan. The Working Committee have to fill this. The trustees have, I am afraid, seldom met. I hope they will take their responsibilities more seriously in future. I would suggest that we might add two members to the managing committee from Allahabad. This will facilitate meetings and supervision. The General Secretaries will of course remain in general charge in accordance with our rules.

The Working Committee have heavy work before them at this meeting and I do not know if they will have the time or inclination to consider in any detail the various points raised in this memorandum. I suggest that a small committee might be formed for this purpose. This can meet at Wardha during the intervals of the Working Committee meetings and make its recommendations to the Working Committee.

I think it will be desirable to give some latitude to the General Secretaries and the Permanent Secretary in the matters. Most of us are busy with important work and can hardly spare the time to look into them.

foreign publicity which will come up separately before the Working Committee.

3. Labour: We have no such department at present but in view of the changing economic situation and the wave of strikes, it seems necessary for us to have one.

4. Congress Governments : The A.I.C.C. office must keep in intimate touch with the work, difficulties and achievements of the Congress Provincial Governments. Some such department is essential.

5. Constituent assembly : We have already opened an office in New Delhi in the charge of Shri Krishna Kripalani, and this will deal especially with work for the constituent assembly.

6. Volunteers: A volunteer department has also been started. This is in the charge of Major General Shah Nawaz Khan. It is proposed to have a women's section attached to it. The actual work of volunteering will of course be done locally and through provincial Congress committees. The A.I.C.C. volunteer department will guide, advise, direct, help in training, and inspect. Our policy will be to work through the P.C.C.s as we feel that Congress volunteers in any province should either be directly under the P.C.C. or recognised by them and in some way affiliated to them. Certain difficulties have occasionally arisen in regard to the organisation of I.N.A. volunteers. If these are under P.C.C.s then no difficulty arises. Otherwise they will have to be considered as outside organisation.

7. Women's department: This has been in existence. It should be expanded.

There are at present two other departments or sections—library and economic and research. The library has to be expanded and properly catalogued. I am asking the economic and research section to prepare a monthly note on the economic condition of India for circulation among members of the Working Committee.

I propose also to have a monthly report on the state of the Congress organisation.

We must have Urdu and Hindi sections and we propose to develop them.

Whether we should have a special minorities department dealing with minority problems as well as tribal problems and excluded areas is for the Working Committee to consider. I think it would be desirable provided we get good men or women to run it.

As regards foreign publicity and contacts the time has come when we have to think in a large way. How exactly we should deal with countries like the U.S.A., China and the Far East, Indonesia etc., is not clear

in solving them, especially the latter. Sometimes local disputes, unwisely handled, assume grave proportions.

5. To take up such other work as may be suggested by the minorities sub-committee proposed in my note on the Congress reorganisation of departments.

31. To Yogendra B. Sinha[1]

Allahabad
6 August 1946

Dear friend,[2]

I have read your letter[3] of the 6th August. I do not know all what transpired in Bihar in regard to the elections to the constituent assembly, and so I can express no opinion about them. There are always such unhappy contests during elections that good people are left out. That is our experience everywhere. In fact many good people do not choose to stand at all. You know that my views are that women should be encouraged in every way to take part in our public life. I was very favourably impressed by the very brave speech which Mrs. Ram Dulari Sinha[4] delivered at the A.I.C.C. session. I did not agree with all she said; but that makes little difference.[5] I am sure that she will make good if she persists and will be an acquisition to our national movement. It does not really matter very much who goes to the constituent assembly or who does not go. There is unfortunately a certain tendency all over India, and even in the Congress, to bypass women in politics. We shall have to get over this.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40-1946, p. 195, N.M.M.L.
2. Congress leader of Muzaffarpur district.
3. Yogendra B. Sinha wrote that the claims of women with records of sacrifice and qualifications had been ignored in the choice of candidates for elections to the constituent assembly.
4. (b. 1922); member, Bihar Assembly, 1952-57, 1969-77; member, Lok Sabha, 1962-67; Labour Minister, Bihar Government, 1971-77; State Minister of Labour, Government of India from 1980.
5. Yogendra Sinha thought that Ram Dulari Sinha had not been selected as a candidate for the constituent assembly because she had opposed the resolution in the A.I.C.C. session in Bombay in July 1946 to enter the constituent assembly.

The Working Committee should lay down the general principles and leave it to the A.I.C.C. office to work them out.

30. The Creation of a Minorities Department[1]

The question of minorities needs particularly delicate and careful handling. Any plans made by the Congress to promote understanding and cooperation among the various communities are liable in the present situation to be misunderstood, to lead to much unprofitable and misleading discussion in the press and to provoke, instead of allaying, suspicion. But there can be no doubt that a great deal of useful work has been done by such constructive programme organisations, as for instance the Harijan Sevak Sangh, and by a large number of Congress workers and that an organised and disciplined effort would give much bigger results. To a large extent, communal bitterness is merely a symptom of the economic and political backwardness of the country, and will tend to disappear with political freedom and economic security. This is, however, not a good reason for making no serious effort now. I feel that much useful and necessary work can and should be done. The problem has become urgent because of the alarming growth of communal and sectarian feeling among Congressmen themselves, to which I have referred in my note on the Congress reorganisation.

I would, therefore, suggest that a minorities department be opened in the A.I.C.C. office. Its functions would be:

1. To give publicity to the work done by constructive programme organisations, Congress workers, and Congress governments to promote goodwill and friendliness among communities, or for the uplift of backward communities such as the Harijans, the backward tribes etc.
2. To popularise such work among Congressmen and guide and coordinate their activities.
3. To suggest ways of preventing the growth of communal and sectarian feeling among Congressmen.
4. To study the problems of minority communities, both in their broad all-India aspects as well as specific local problems, and to help

1. Note, 6 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 69 (part 2)-1946, pp. 67-69, N.M.M.L.

in the A.I.C.C. office will come in each other's way and not do effective work. Also because we are not likely to have first-rate persons in charge and without them our work also will be second-rate; still something has to be done in developing this department.

I think we should express our approval of the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh.

33. The Freedom of Goa[1]

The Working Committee have not expressed their opinion previously in regard to Goa and other Portuguese possessions in India as they were convinced that the future of these enclaves would inevitably be determined by the future of India as a whole. Freedom for India would necessarily mean freedom for Goa, for it would be impossible for any administration in Goa to maintain an oppressive and dictatorial regime denying civil liberties and exploiting the people there when the people of India had tasted of independence and democratic liberty.

Recent events[2] in Goa, however, have compelled attention and brought to light the extremely backward state of these Portuguese possessions. Economically the people of these possessions have been reduced to poverty and degradation; politically they have practically no rights and even the most elementary civil liberties are denied. The fascist, authoritarian administration of Portugal functions in a peculiarly oppressive way in this very small colony, which once was rich and prosperous and a centre of commercial activity and now is deserted, with its people migrating elsewhere in search of a living.

The nature of the present administration of Goa is exhibited by the sentence of eight years' transportation to Africa passed by court martial on Mr. Tristao Braganza Cunha, a well-known citizen and public worker

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal for the Congress Working Committee, 11 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. G. 44-1946, pp. 1-3, N.M.M.L.
2. The people of Goa had been for some time agitating for civil liberties. In June 1946 Rammanohar Lohia who had gone to Goa to address meetings was arrested and deported. In protest hartals were held in Goa and the movement was gaining strength with the rise in repression. Meanwhile the Portuguese Government arrested and transported Braganza Cunha to Portuguese East Africa.

I do not know if there will be any vacancies in the constituent assembly and if so how they will be filled. There is no provision for it yet.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

32. The Need for a Labour Department[1]

I have read General Secretaries' Note.

I think it is certainly necessary for the Working Committee to lay down its general policy regarding labour, strikes, etc. But I doubt if anything very specific can be said or done. The subject is a very complicated one and varies in different provinces. It is being dealt with by provincial governments and I have some communique on the subject issued by the Bombay and U.P. governments.

Still I think that the Working Committee should issue some general statement of policy and some guidance for Congress workers. I have asked Shri Gulzari Lal Nanda to send me a draft statement for the Working Committee.

As regards strikes I have found it very difficult to frame any general rules which might apply to all. Obviously we have to discourage sudden and unauthorised strikes, also those which have no real basis. We must encourage in every way reference to arbitration and adjudication. Indeed there should be clear legislation to this effect.

The Congress is naturally inclined to sympathise with strikes. That is right. Yet it is obvious that sometimes strikes are premature or even ill-conceived and organised chiefly with the object of creating trouble. We have to distinguish.

I think Congressmen should be asked not to associate themselves or join fronts on such matters with non-Congressmen.

In strikes and other matters communal considerations have to be borne in mind. Allahabad has had communal trouble as a consequence of strikes.

I am not clear about our developing an elaborate labour department in the A.I.C.C. office. This is partly because too many new persons

1. Note, 8 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 69 (Part I)-1946, p. 93, N.M.M.L.

34. To Jayaprakash Narayan[1]

Wardha
August 10, 1946

My dear Jayaprakash,
Mukutdhari Singh has given me your letter and has also shown me some other papers. The story you unfold is almost incredible. Indeed if you had not written it I would have found some difficulty in believing it. I know Abul Bari of old. I know also that his methods are rough and tough. Still there is a limit even to roughness and what you write passes that limit. Jamshedpur has long been notorious for the violence and rough methods of labour workers. Homi excelled in this and then came Bari who opposed him and beat him at his own game. Certainly I shall look into this matter and do what I can. You are perfectly right in telling your people not to retaliate in kind. For the present I am writing to Bari and I shall pursue this matter further.

You had told me that you would visit me early this month in Allahabad. I was looking forward to meeting you and was disappointed, for there is a great deal I want to talk to you about. We are living in rather strange times which cannot easily be measured by normal methods. I hope you will give me an early opportunity of meeting you. I cannot tell you what my own programme is likely to be except that I go to Bombay on the 14th and stay there for four or five days. Then Delhi or Allahabad.

It is quite possible that there may be curious developments in the future and it is desirable that at least you and I should understand each other. I should have liked you to be present here at the Working Committee meeting, but I wanted to have a talk with you previously. That did not come off.

I have been reading your articles in the *Janata*. They are helpful in many ways but, to be frank with you, they seem rather vague and not definite enough.

I shall not write more now but I do hope that I shall meet you soon.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

of Goa, for the offence of challenging the ban on public meetings. The present movement in Goa is entirely confined to the peaceful assertion of the right to civil liberties and yet it is met by fierce repression and trials by courts martial and deportation to the Portuguese possessions in Africa.

In justification of this policy of the administration, the Portuguese Governor of Goa has issued a statement[3] which is unbecoming in tone and objectionable in regard to its pretensions. Goa has always been and must inevitably continue to be a part of India. It must share in the freedom of the Indian people. As to what its future position and status will be in free India, this can only be determined in consultation with the people of Goa and not by any external authority.

The Working Committee have noted the difference between the attitude of the Portuguese in regard to their Indian possessions and the policy enunciated by the Governor of French India, who stated recently that the people of French India are free to decide their own future and may, if they so choose, join an Indian Union. The Committee welcome and appreciate this statesmanlike expression of policy on behalf of the French Government.

The Working Committee understand that Portugal has applied for membership of the United Nations Organisation. The Committee are of opinion that it will be improper and against the basic principles of the U.N.O. to admit to their membership a country which has an authoritarian and reactionary administration and denies democracy and civil liberties and which, in its colonies, carries on the worst form of colonial rule. They trust, therefore, that Portugal will not be admitted to the U.N.O.

The Committee send their greetings to the people of Goa and express their sympathy in their struggle for the establishment of civil liberties.

3. On 30 July 1946, the Portuguese Governor in Goa stated that Portuguese India was not a part of the Indian continent but was "an undissociable cell of the Portuguese motherland", and that Portuguese rule in India was "an unmixed blessing".

name. I should like to meet you and discuss all these matters with you but I am uncertain of my programme. I might even try to go to Bihar. Anyway we shall meet before long.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

36. To Damodar Swarup Seth[1]

Wardha
August 12, 1946

My dear Damodar Swarup,
We have all rather been put out by your reported resignation from the constituent assembly. How that resignation can take effect now I do not know. But what I am more concerned with is the principle involved. You not only stood willingly for election but you were on the small committee which chose all the candidates for the province. And now because of some mandate from outside, you and some others suddenly resign. This is very unfair. Then again you are the president of the U.P.P.C.C. It was in that capacity that we put you in that small committee. As a member of the council and the P.C.C. I have a right to ask, can you resign without reference to that council and the P.C.C.? This matter raises an important question of principle and unless we decide this now we are likely to have a good deal of trouble in future.

There was another matter about which I wanted to write to you. You know that a branch office of the A.I.C.C. has been opened in Delhi. And this is at present located at 19 Windsor Place which has been allotted to you. We went there because Aruna Asaf Ali told us on your behalf that we could go there. We were under the impression that we had got your permission. I hope you will have no objection to our staying on there.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40-1946, p. 369, N.M.M.L.

35. To Abdul Bari[1]

Wardha
August 11, 1946

My dear Bari,

I have received a letter from Jayaprakash Narayan in which he gives an account of his own experiences during his recent visit to Jamshedpur. He also gives some account of recent happenings there involving violence, kidnapping and all manner of strange doings against his colleagues in Jamshedpur. These accounts are supported by other statements and by a notice circulated in your name on the occasion of his visit to Jamshedpur.

I shall not go into any detail of all this, but I want to tell you that the whole story has astonished me beyond measure. It is a matter of deep pain to me that you should be associated with these violent and vulgar happenings. I would not have believed all this but there is sufficient evidence and Jayaprakash is a person whose word has to be believed. It is immaterial whether one agrees with him or not in any political or other matter. His position in India, and in the Congress especially, is at the top and he is respected by friends and opponents alike. That such a person should be treated in the way he was in Jamshedpur by you is just too surprising and shows that there is something radically wrong about our politics and labour work. I am quite certain that our public life cannot continue if this kind of thing goes on. You hold a high position in public life and in the Congress and naturally large numbers of people will look up to you for guidance. If the guide fails what are the followers to do?

Jamshedpur, from the days of Homi onwards, has been notorious for the roughness and violence of its labour activities. I had hoped that with the elimination of Homi this would improve. But thus far that hope seems to have been in vain. What does it matter if we control a labour union or a Congress committee if the standards we set besmirch our work and our cause? I would beg of you to give earnest thought to this matter. I am deeply troubled about it. In the A.I.C.C. office we receive inspection reports from various provinces. The report from Bihar is one of the worst of all and it is very sad that a province which was in the forefront of our work and struggle should have fallen so low. You are an acting president of the Bihar P.C.C. It is up to you to try your best to improve conditions there, so that Bihar might recover its fair

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Probably the Bombay Government has to deal with this problem more than any other and they have the greatest experience. Gulzarilal Nanda is our best expert on this. He is introducing a new bill which is a considerable improvement on the last Bombay Act on the subject. It would be desirable for you to get hold of this bill and try to profit by the experience of the Bombay people.

It is obvious that we have to deal with a very difficult situation. It is not merely a question of employer and employee, but of economic factors like inflation and rise in prices which continually upset any equilibrium that you may seek to establish. The matter is thus to be viewed in all its aspects. In Madras also Giri is introducing some kind of legislation. All this should be coordinated.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

39. To T. Prakasam[1]

New Delhi
19 August 1946

My dear Prakasam,

I enclose a newspaper cutting.[2] I was surprised to read this for a variety of reasons. First of all the letters I send to Prime Ministers are personal and confidential and it is not proper that publicity should be given to them. Secondly the type of publicity that has been given is completely unwarranted. I sent identical letters to all the Congress Prime Ministers drawing their attention to various matters. This had nothing to do with the particular problems in a special province or with the way they had been handled by the Government. The other Prime Ministers took my circular letters in this light. None of them gave publicity to these letters or considered them as anything more than general directions and suggestions.

You will appreciate that it becomes difficult for me to send even personal letters to Prime Ministers or others if these are used publicly for other purposes. To say that my letter was one of appreciation or of compliment is surely very wide of the mark and such use of it must necessarily be objected to. I get inquiries from people as to what I

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. A news report dated 10 August 1946 stated that Jawaharlal had praised Prakasam on the various beneficial schemes sponsored by his ministry in Madras.

37. To Sheodas Daga[1]

Wardha
August 14, 1946

Dear friend,[2]
I have received your telegram. I do not know what clarification you require regarding foreign cloth distribution. Our general policy is to ask people not to use foreign cloth etc., but there is no question of picketing any shop at present. It is not clear as to who is distributing this foreign cloth. We should concentrate on constructive activities and the production of khadi as well as on general propaganda. There is at present a great lack of cloth in the market. The question of foreign cloth importation is one for Government to deal with.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. President, Raipur District Congress Committee.

38. To Kailas Nath Katju[1]

New Delhi
19 August 1946

My dear Kailas Nath,
I see from the papers that you are introducing some kind of a bill in regard to industrial disputes. I have not seen this. In Wardha we had a long discussion about labour matters. The Working Committee attach the greatest importance to a coordinated effort on the part of Congress governments to deal with this problem. It would be unfortunate if each province functioned separately and without considering what other provinces were doing. In fact we came to the conclusion that Ministers dealing with industries and labour matters should confer together soon and probably our Parliamentary Committee will write to the Ministers concerned on this subject.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

40. To Secretary, Jammu Congress Committee[1]

New Delhi
21 August 1946

Dear friend.
I should like to draw your attention to the recent resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee in regard to Congress committees in States. It has been made quite clear in this resolution that political and preliminary work should be carried on by Praja Mandals and local States people organisations and not by Congress committees. Therefore Congress committees should cooperate with local States people organisations in such matters, leaving the general direction to them.

I understand that in October next there will be elections in Kashmir State for the State Assembly. The Kashmir National Conference is going to run candidates for these elections. Your Congress committee should cooperate with the National Conference and help them and should not run separate candidates.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16-1946, p. 69, N.M.M.L.

41. To Mridula Sarabhai[1]

New Delhi
22 August 1946

Dear Comrade,
I enclose a telegram received from Guntur and my reply. I want you to communicate immediately with the various parties concerned, the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee, the Guntur District Congress Committee, and others, and inform them of the present position.

First of all the setting aside by the Working Committee of recent elections held in Guntur district does not mean a revival of the old committee or committees which existed prior to the elections. Those committees are dead and cannot be revived. Therefore the present committees recently elected might continue to function even though that

had written and the occasion for doing so. Am I to publish my personal letters in answer to these inquiries or to explain all the circumstances in which they were written? Surely it must have been obvious to you that the letter I sent you was a kind of circular letter to Prime Ministers. It is possible that I might send more letters of this kind. They have to be treated as confidential. If I write to you particularly on some matter affecting Madras, the contents of the letter will make it clear. I am not in a position to appreciate or criticise what your Government has done as I haven't got all the facts before me. I might mention, however, that a number of complaints have come to us which have been referred to our Parliamentary Committee. I am told that some letters sent to you by Sardar Patel have remained unanswered. The manner of nominations to the Upper House in Madras seemed to us rather extraordinary.[3] Your recent scheme for encouraging hand-spinning and khadi production, the giving of a contract for a very large number of charkhas to a single individual also seemed odd.

Madras Congress politics have, as you know, given us a lot of trouble and they have to be handled with great care. Also while each province has its particular problems, there should obviously be as large coordination as possible in policy and practice among the various provinces. It is for this purpose that the Parliamentary Committee has been constituted and it is desirable, therefore, for provincial governments to keep in constant touch with the Parliamentary Committee as well as the A.I.C.C. office.

One special matter I should like to mention to you. I understand that Giri is going to introduce some labour legislation. Giri is a good man at the job and I have no doubt that he will do it well. But in labour matters specially there should be a common line of approach because the problems are really all-India ones. It is, therefore, the opinion of the Working Committee that an early meeting of Labour Ministers in Congress Governments should take place to adopt a common line of policy. The Bombay Government has probably given more thought to labour questions than other governments and it would be desirable to keep in touch with Bombay's labour policy.[4]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. It was said that Prakasam had allowed, without effective protest, the Governor of Madras Province to make seven out of nine nominations to the Upper House to represent non Congress sections.
4. Prakasam replied on 27 August 1946 that the statement in the newspaper cutting was false and that Jawaharlal had been misled about the khadi scheme.

only, without constructive effort and discipline, that also means delay and superficiality.

I emphasise the importance of discipline, unity of effort, hard work and long perspectives. Thus we will justify 1942 and put finishing touches in the months to come.

The history of the Congress is the history of the freedom movement in India, beginning in a small way, gaining strength and tempo till ultimately it reached the heights of 1942. The 1942 movement was a fully matured freedom movement in which the masses showed their capacity for organised action and sacrifice even though bereft of their normal leadership.

43. To Kailas Nath Katju[1]

Allahabad
August 25, 1946

My dear Kailas Nath,
During my brief stay here various rumours about the appointment of the next Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court have reached me. I know nothing about this matter or about the merits of the persons concerned. But I do feel, agreeing with you, that all appointments of judges etc., should be considered by the Provincial Government. In this matter of the Chief Justice if you think that there is anything for me to do at the Delhi end you might let me know. Merits apart, it is obviously undesirable to push on English people here.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

44. To Thakur Sinhasan Singh[1]

Allahabad
August 25, 1946

Dear Thakur Sinhasan Singh,
Your letter of the 1st July. Regarding purses and money received by Congressmen, the Working Committee recently passed a resolution. This

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

election has been set aside. This will be so till new elections are held which should be done as soon as possible under the supervision of the A.I.C.C inspector and Shrimati Kamaladevi appointed by the Working Committee. It is open, however, to the Andhra P.C.C. to make temporary arrangements for the carrying on of district Congress work in succession of the present committees. It is not necessary to do so unless the P.C.C. thinks it desirable. It should be made clear, however, that the committees which have been set aside now cannot function in the municipal elections or in any other matter involving important commitments. They can merely carry on the day-to-day activities till they hand over to the newly elected committees.

In view of the new situation that has arisen owing to the setting aside of the Guntur district elections, I have advised that Congress committees in Guntur district should not officially run candidates for the local board elections. Congressmen may, however, stand for election as individuals without any party backing. It is obvious that the committee that has been set aside cannot run candidates and there is no other. Therefore the only course left is for elections to be contested on an individual basis.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

42. The Significance of the August Movement[1]

46. To Damodar Swarup Seth[1]

New Delhi
August 30, 1946

My dear Damodar Swarup,
Thank you for your letter in which you have explained about the constituent assembly. That matter has now been settled satisfactorily and nothing more need be said about it...

I am sorry to notice that party rivalry is again raising its head in the U.P. I hope you will meet the situation with tact and patience. I wish I was there but I cannot leave Delhi.

As regards the next Congress session, I am quite clear that it should be held in Meerut.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

47. The Nomination of Jayaprakash Narayan[1]

Mr. P.H. Patwardhan[2] has sent me his resignation from membership of the Congress Working Committee because he felt that he should devote himself more to Congress work in Maharashtra. In the vacancy so caused I am inviting Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan to fill it and he has accepted my invitation. Therefore I nominate Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan to be a member of the Working Committee.

I regret that Mr. P.H. Patwardhan has had to leave the Working Committee, though we both realise that this is in no way a parting and that we shall have his full cooperation in our work in future. During his brief period in the Working Committee he has impressed all his colleagues with his ability, earnestness and vision and the Committee and

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 31 August 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 1 September 1946.
2. Brother of Achyut Patwardhan and a Congress leader of Pune; left active politics after independence and worked in Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan movement.

was to the effect that all such purses publicly presented should not be treated as private property but should be handed over for some public purposes. Further that full account should be kept of public funds. Even when money is given at the discretion of the donee, this money must be utilised for a public purpose. It is open for a person to help his friends privately with money but this does not apply to purses publicly collected.

All money raised for I.N.A. must be sent to the I.N.A. Committee in the U.P. and all I.N.A. camps and activities must be carried on under the direction of the I.N.A. Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

45. To Lala Duni Chand[1]

Allahabad
August 26, 1946

My dear Lala Duni Chand,[2]

I received your long letter and read it carefully. There can be no doubt that the Congress in the Punjab has been in a sorry state all these years and during the last general elections there was much that was unsavoury that came out. I agree with many of your criticisms.

What you say about Dr. Satyapal surprises me. I am not concerned with his motives but by the fact that at a critical stage he deserted the Congress, went completely against our declared policy and joined the military when we were asking men not to do so. It is totally immaterial to me why he did so. If, as you say, it was pique, that is strange justification for a responsible Congressman. Many Congressmen have been put out of the Congress for much less indiscipline. I have no doubt that Dr. Satyapal has been guilty of gross indiscipline and violation of Congress policy and as such he has no place in any Congress elective body at present until such time as may be laid down by competent authority. In fact in the U.P. the question would not arise at all as he would be automatically debarred.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

I earnestly trust that the Congress organisation will rise to the occasion and show itself fully capable by its discipline, spirit of cooperation and capacity for service to meet the challenge of the time and thus take India rapidly to the goal of freedom and independence which has inspired us for all these years.

48. The Importance of Propagating Congress Objectives[1]

Till the interim government is set up and for the period of the constituent assembly, it is important that appropriate publicity should create a suitable atmosphere and provide a background which should inspire the people of India as a whole to continue to have confidence in the Congress; should help the constituent assembly to deal with the delegation of powers to the Indian union in a liberal spirit; and should keep the communal question in its proper place. If some Indians think in terms of sectional, provincial or communal politics, the task of the Congress, the constituent assembly and the interim government would become extremely difficult. It follows that a well organised and coordinated inter-provincial Congress publicity is an urgent necessity.

As to the aims of publicity I should like you to think over the matter, but generally speaking it seems to me that fissiparous and disintegrating forces (e.g. communal, party, feudal, class, caste, etc.) which weaken national unity and strength should be countered. Congress ideals need to be reiterated and the feeling against foreign rule maintained in order to prevent minor issues and petty rivalries from occupying the stage. In this context it would be helpful if the emergence of India as an independent country and its importance in South East Asia were stressed so as to shift the emphasis from smaller to larger problems. Then there is the communal problem. It seems necessary to publicize specific measures adopted or intended for the protection and amelioration of all minorities and particularly Muslims as a cardinal principle of Congress policy. In this connection what has been done in one province should be made known elsewhere. An attempt might be made to remove

1. Undated letter to the Prime Ministers of Congress provinces and Presidents of provincial Congress committees, written from Allahabad some time in the first days of September 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 25-1946, pp. 253-258. N.M.M.L.

the organization as a whole will undoubtedly take full advantage of these qualities of his.

At the time the Working Committee was being formed after the last A.I.C.C. meeting, it was my desire to have in the Committee Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia. They felt at that time, however, that they could do more useful work outside the Committee. I had, therefore, regretfully to leave them out. The Committee as formed, even during this brief period, has done a great deal of work and has faced many vital problems. The new secretaries, Mrs. Mridula Sarabhai and Mr. Balkrishna Keskar, have applied themselves with vigour to the great task of strengthening and tightening up the Congress organisation. The A.I.C.C. office is being expanded and many new departments are being created there. We are inviting the full cooperation of the provincial Congress committees in this important work and we are glad that this is forthcoming because Congress work ultimately has to be done by the provincial Congress and local committees. I should like to express my appreciation of the work done by the new General Secretaries and Mr. Sadiq Ali, the Permanent Secretary of the A.I.C.C.

It is manifest that the Congress has to face now not only many of its old problems but several entirely new problems. We have grown in strength and with this has come greater responsibility. The formation of the provisional government brings new questions before us which will have to be tackled with foresight and care. It is essential that during this tremendous period of transition to full independence the Congress organisation should function with solidarity and efficiency and should do its utmost to serve the cause of the people of India, including all classes and communities. It must be our especial endeavour to win over by our service those groups or communities who are apprehensive of the future that is taking shape. We must always remember that the Congress has stood for and stands today for the good of every one in India and it can never look at our problems from a narrow party point of view. In the unfortunate communal tension that exists today the responsibility that the Congress shoulders is all the greater. We have to show by our acts that we are not swept away by any passion or prejudice but that we act always for the good of the whole and with a broad vision including every one in India. In order to achieve this, it is essential that Congressmen and Congresswomen should put aside their party rivalries and function together. I welcome therefore particularly the inclusion in the Working Committee of Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, who represents a viewpoint held by a considerable number of Congressmen and whose ability and record of service in the cause of India's freedom has given him an outstanding position in our public life.

8

BEYOND INDIA

Muslim fears and counter atrocity stories made current by the League. It would be useful if publicity could be given to the harmful aspects of Pakistan ideology, partition of India, two-nation theory, compulsory grouping, weak centre, appeal to powers outside India, etc. In this connection emphasis might be laid according to conditions prevailing in your province on economic as against communal-cum-political issues as the real issues to be faced by all communities together.

In order to carry out coordinated publicity it would be necessary to have a publicity organisation. It may be possible to use the official machinery to a certain extent, and where that is not possible, the provincial Congress committee might engage a small staff. The importance of having publicity officers has already been mentioned to provincial committees and I hope that, if action has not already been taken, it would be taken now. Material specifically prepared by selected writers on the above lines might be usefully supplied to the press. Speakers may be provided with specially prepared talking points, background material and guidance notes. It has been suggested that we might hold an all-India exhibition of the Congress struggle of 1920-46. For this purpose provincial committees might consider collecting material by way of photographs, etc. I will see if I can get prepared pictorial posters which would be sent to provincial committees for being printed locally with captions in local languages and distributed throughout the provinces. Short films can be utilised as well because the Central Government have ceased to provide and distribute them. After September next all provinces except Bengal and Sind could by arrangement with the Central Cine Corporation of Bombay show compulsorily 1000 feet of short films and newsreels approved by them. This would require coordinated action by all the Congress provinces.

I shall be glad to have your views on the suggestions made and to know how you propose carrying them out. I shall be pleased to assist you in any way I can. I have mentioned this matter to the Working Committee and they are generally in agreement with me and feel that we should make a beginning as early as possible.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Colonialism Must Go[1]

The future of the colonies? The obvious answer is that there is no future for them as colonies, that the whole system known as colonialism has to go. It has to go for a variety of reasons. It is evident that the dependent peoples of the colonial empires are in a rebellious mood and cannot be suppressed for long, and every attempt to suppress them is a drain on the ruling country which weakens it.

It is even more evident that the old-style empires are decadent as empires and show signs of cracking up. In some instances, indeed, they have cracked up and the attempts that are being made to pin together the broken pieces show a lack of wisdom and statesmanship which is amazing. One decadent empire tries to help another still more ramshackle empire and in this process speeds up the process of its own dissolution.

All these are signs of an inevitable change and transition from an era of colonialism to another era which has yet to be given a shape, a form and a name. The fundamental fact behind all this is that colonialism is obsolete in the modern world and does not fit in with the political and economic structure that is gradually evolving.

The problem of the colonies and dependent countries thus is a vital part of the world problem, and an attempt to isolate it results in other problems becoming far more difficult of solution. Behind that problem today lie the passion and hunger for freedom, equality and better living conditions which consume hundreds of millions of people in Asia and Africa. That passion cannot be ignored, for anything that drives vast numbers of human beings is a powerful factor in the dynamics of today.

But essentially it is not the sentimental appeal to freedom that is so important as the lack of food, clothing, housing and of the barest necessities of life which lies behind that urge. This lack can no longer be made good even in part by continuation of colonial administration in any form.

The problem should therefore be considered apart from sentiment in the wider context of world problems, political and economic, because the peace and well-being of the world depend to a large extent on its solution. Colonies and dependencies have been fruitful sources of conflict in the past between acquisitive powers and expanding economics.

1. Article written by Jawaharlal and published in *The New York Times Magazine*, 3 March 1946.

We do not want any lowering of standards anywhere, even where they are higher than ours. We want to raise our own standards to the highest level. But it is obvious that high standards elsewhere based on an economy which results in low standards in Asian and African countries cannot be allowed. If the people of any country can maintain high standards by their own productive efforts they are welcome to do so, but such standards must not be at the expense of starvation and misery elsewhere.

Indeed low standards and the burden of poverty will tend to pull down standards in other places and will also disturb the economy and peace of the world. We have to aim at the raising of the level of the common man everywhere and for that purpose we have to pay special attention to Asia and Africa which have suffered most in the past. The world has to pull together or not at all.

India is inevitably the crux of the colonial problem by virtue of her size and population, her millennia of cultured life, her contribution to civilization, her capacity and vast resources, her potential power and her strategic position. Historically she has been during the last one hunlred and fifty years the classic land of colonial imperialism.

Because of her dependence other countries, notably those of the Middle East, have suffered subjection so that the routes to India might be protected and insured for imperialist purposes. The freedom of many other countries thus depends largely on the freedom of India. With India free the old imperialism ends and world politics refashion themselves in a new, stabler and more peaceful context. But it must be remembered that there are no halfway houses to freedom or independence and any attempt to limit freedom will result in conflict.

India has her internal problems largely owing to the arrested growth of a hundred years and more. They are difficult problems, essentially economic problems, and they are insistent and urgent. They cannot be dealt with by the British or any other authority at the top, cut off from the people. Nor can they be made excuses for the postponement of independence, for freedom is the prerequisite for their solution. Delay will lead to conflict and disaster and an intensification of those very problems and will affect the political and economic structure of the world.

In Indonesia we have been witnessing a clear case of a shattered imperialism trying to hold on with the help of another imperialist power. Here is a country well capable of looking after itself, with a functioning government which has obviously the support of the mass of the people, where there would certainly be peace and security if outsiders did not intervene.

They lead to an accentuation of power politics. If internal conditions in different countries are in a state of continuous tension and conflict they spread their contagions outside and affect world peace.

It may be difficult to do away with power politics entirely, for they represent to some extent the reality of today trying to find a new equilibrium. But it is certainly possible to lessen their importance and to reduce the area of potential conflict. The elimination of colonialism and imperialism would certainly have this effect and thus help in solving the other major problems of the age. Any variation of the old theme of a covering up of old processes under new names would have the reverse effect and add to the bitterness and conflict.

Effective war today means total war, drawing upon the entire resources of the nation. Effective peace and solution of national and international problems demand also a comprehensive and cooperative effort not only on the part of governments but also on the part of the people. Any lack of cooperation between the government and the people leads to failure. There can obviously be no cooperation between an alien and authoritarian government and the people, and hence no proper solution of any problem.

This has been evident in India for a long time past and problems have accumulated till they seem to be almost insoluble. The war accentuated this progress and the Bengal famine was a terribly tragic reminder of the chaos and incompetence that is called government in India today. We are now facing another crisis on an even bigger scale and the shadow of widespread famine darkens the land.

No alien government can deal with this situation satisfactorily, nor can it have the cooperation of the people which is so essential both from the psychological and practical points of view. This is not the game of politics, but something that deeply moves masses of our people. We have seen this government going from disaster to disaster and making a mess of everything.

It is not an easy matter to refashion the destiny of hundreds of millions of people. The uprooting of the British empire, as of other empires, which is happening before our eyes, is bound to lead to numerous upsets and it may take some time to establish a new equilibrium on a surer foundation. The problem of the future of colonies and dependencies is no doubt difficult, as is every major problem today. And yet it is essentially simple, or rather the first big step is a clear renunciation of colonialism and imperialism and recognition of the national independence of the dependent countries within the larger framework of the world order that is slowly evolving. It is only after that unequivocal declaration has been made and immediate steps taken to implement it that other questions can be discussed as between equals.

fence as well as trade and commerce. Her cultural contacts with all these countries date back thousands of years. Already there is considerable talk about a closer union between the countries in the Indian Ocean region, which would include Australia and New Zealand. It has been proposed that a conference of representatives of Asian countries should be held in India.

This is not immediately feasible owing to governmental travel restrictions, but it is likely to be held as soon as conditions permit. There has already been favourable response to the proposal.

The freedom of colonial and dependent countries will raise many new problems, internal to them as well as external. But there can be no doubt that this would be a powerful stabilizing factor in the world and would tend to reduce the conflicts inherent in power politics by removing some of the major causes. These countries, with their newly achieved freedom, will be intent on their progress for they will have to make up for lost time. Their weight will always be thrown on the side of world peace, for any war would be disastrous to them. India in particular is wedded to peace, and her powerful influence will make a difference.

If, however, freedom is delayed or circumscribed and colonies and dependencies are used as pawns in the game of the power politics of a few great powers, then these dependent or semi-dependent countries will also play their part in power politics to the extent they can, and side with this or that power as suits their convenience and advantage. They will add to the confusion and chaos of a distracted world and be victims, together with others, of the inevitable disaster.

The end of colonialism and imperialism will not mean the splitting up of the world into a host of additional national states intent on their isolated independence. It will lead to a new grouping together of all nations, a new outlook, to cooperation gradually replacing competition and conflict, to the utilisation of the wonders of modern techniques and the vast sources of energy at the disposal of man for the advancement of the human race as a whole. It will lead to that one world of which wise statesmen have dreamed and which seems to be the inevitable and only outcome of our present troubles, if we survive disaster.

It is only then that the foundation can be laid for friendly and co-operative relations between the opponents of yesterday. Everyone realises that independence today cannot and must not mean isolation or an absolute independence. Everyone knows, or should know, that the only hope for the world lies in cooperation and interdependence and the building up of a world order of free nations. It is in this context that the independence of the nations that are dependent today is sought.

It is also realised that there should be no monopolies in materials or markets or in the natural resources of the world. These should be shared equitably for the advantage of all. But it must be remembered that the peoples of Asia and Africa have been exploited and deprived of their natural riches and resources for many generations, and others have profited enormously by these one-sided transactions. It has to be remembered that this had resulted in terrible poverty and backward conditions. The balance has to be righted. The break-up of the old empires based on colonial economy may lead to harder conditions and life and to somewhat lower standards in the countries which have so far been dominant and have drawn upon the resources of their dependencies. In the long run this should not be so as new techniques are adding tremendously to the wealth of the world. But in the near future some falling back seems probable.

The story of Indonesia during the past few months has been fantastic and significant in the extreme and the part the British have played there has injured them more than they perhaps realize. The independence of Indonesia has to be accepted and the government recognised.

So also in Indo-China. This principle has to be applied to all Asian countries under subjection as well as to Egypt, which should be freed from external control.

The only limiting conditions should be those which apply to world peace and economy, for no country can be allowed to be a law unto itself so as to endanger world peace or to monopolise what is meant for the world. There would be little difficulty in discussing these conditions on the basis of national freedom and independence. But the discussion has to take place in a world context and in a world forum and not for the private advantage of this or that nation.

In certain parts of Africa it may perhaps not be immediately possible to establish independent states of the kind mentioned above. Even so, independence in the near future should be aimed at and a large measure of it granted immediately, with suitable provision for rapid advance in education, economic and allied fields.

A free India will link together the Middle East with China. India is so situated as to form the center of a group of Asian nations for de-

4. The Vision of a New Transformation[1]

It is usual, I believe, for those whom you invite to address this convocation to prepare a written address for the occasion, and it is right that they should do so, for it is no light responsibility to have to address chosen people who represent this oldest of the new universities of India. I have to crave your indulgence and to ask for your forgiveness for not having followed this prescribed routine. More or less, I am a slave of circumstances and ceaseless activities. I find it difficult to have time to sit down and prepare a written record of what I have to say. So I have come to you as I am, without the written words in my hands, and you should take me at that.

I must also ask your forgiveness as I am not able to address you in the beautiful language of your province which I should certainly have done if I have known it sufficiently.

Since I received your invitation I have wondered what I should say to you, for I am no expert in academic matters. In various subjects you have so many specialists and others who know a great deal about these matters, but who possibly know little about anything else. That, I believe, is the definition of specialists.

I cannot talk to you about academic matters, nor is it fitting that I should talk to you about matters which engage my day-to-day attention. I speak many times in a day about subjects which are rather superficial. They relate to passing problems and passing needs of the moment. It is fitting that on this occasion we at least should think of deeper matters and wider issues.

You all realise that we stand today all over the world—in Asia, in India—facing an extraordinary crisis in human affairs. You read about critical situations arising in political, economic and other domains. You read about wars, disasters and the possibility of coming wars. We know, of course, that we have been living on the verge of a precipice. Nevertheless, I wonder if you have the same feeling that I have about all these. It seems to me that there has hardly been any time in recorded history when humanity has to face such an enormous possibility of changes and conditions as we face today. My limited knowledge of history does not give me any parallel to it.

We are apt to attach no importance to what we see, hear and feel.

1. Convocation address at Calcutta University, 9 March 1946. Based on reports from *Hindusthan Standard*, 11 March and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 11 March 1946.

2. Indo-Czech Friendship[1]

I retain vivid memories of my visit to Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1938. Those were critical days and I had occasion to watch the Czech people facing a crisis. I admired them then for the calm and courageous way in which they behaved when disaster faced them. I admired them still further when, deserted by their allies, they actually met disaster with courage. Since then much has happened and the Czech people have passed through several years of agony. Now at last they are again a free people, but the burden of these years has been heavy. I have no doubt that they will make rapidly good again and play an important part in the rebuilding of the shattered world. I hope that there will be the friendliest of relations between the people of India and the people of Czechoslovakia. Most questions today go beyond national boundaries and are international in their context. In this international field also I hope that a free India will cooperate with a free Czechoslovakia.

1. Message given to a Czechoslovak press correspondent, Calcutta, 7 March 1946. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 10 March 1946.

3. The Tragedy of the Jewish People[1]

No man who is at all sensitive can fail to be deeply moved by the tragedy of the Jewish people. I earnestly hope that some status, fair to all concerned, will be found to give relief to a people who have suffered and are still suffering in such a terrible measure.

The long past of this race was itself a tragedy, but recent years have overshadowed everything else and language itself fails to express the sense of numbness one feels at the torture and extermination of vast masses of people. There is sympathy and goodwill of course, and at the same time, a sense of helplessness at not being able to do anything effective to solve the problems which have become terribly intricate.

1. Message given to S.S. Silverman, Chairman of the World Jewish Congress, who read it at a press conference in Bombay, 7 March 1946. From *National Herald*, 8 March 1946.

transformation of the human race, which seems to be overdue. This is a big question about which I have little competence to speak to you. It is for you to realise, specially those who are younger among you, that you stand on the verge of great happenings, which may even lead you either to disaster or to a new and brighter phase of human existence.

Let us come to narrower issues, to our own country, to Asia. If we look back to our history we will find that for some time, hundreds of years ago, a change took place in the historic scene, when Europe, which was an outgrowth of Asia, began to play an increasing role in the affairs of the world. Then it began to play an aggressive part in Asia. The centre of world events shifted to Europe during the last two hundred years or so. In the last two hundred years, Europe played a dominating part in world history, not merely by force of arms, but also by virtue of its thought, its science and many other qualities the people there possessed. Undoubtedly, Asia went down or ceased to play any effective part in history because of the lack of these qualities. It seems that Asia became utterly static, unchanging, unmoving, or at any rate, ceased thinking in terms of changes.

Now, what do you find happening today? You find a shifting over of the centre of events of the world from Europe to other parts of the world, to America certainly, there being a vital and young race in the new world, and partly to Asia, where the process of transformation is slower. Obviously, you will find that in future the seats of trouble, as well as seats of progress, are going to be more and more in Asia.

Europe today is a shattered continent with many valiant people in it. Most of the countries in Europe, due to fall in birth rate alone, are hardly likely to be aggressive in the future. There are certain fundamental urges and pushes which make a country and a people take to aggression.

One of the fundamental reasons for an aggressive tendency has been this rapid growth of population which has taken place in Europe during the last hundred years. During the last quarter of a century it has gone down. Whether there is a natural cycle for that I do not know. I simply mention this as a fact. Because of their falling birth rate, the European countries have lost one of the major urges of aggression. It would be difficult for them to keep up their standard of living.

It seems to me that Europe will, no doubt, continue to play an important part in world affairs because of its high culture and the high standard of living. Nevertheless, Europe is moving away from that stage. America is undoubtedly there.

On the other hand, Asia is gradually and fairly rapidly coming back to where it was some hundred years ago. I do not know what exact

Nevertheless, I do feel that we are living during a period of enormous transitions and vast changes when possibly the whole structure of human life will be changed, when the human mind itself may undergo transformation. This is a great event that we are living on the verge of such mighty changes. We see all around us dramas being enacted, which, however, often end in tragedies.

We are on the brink of a volcano and sometimes we may topple over. All these may be to the liking of some, and others may be afraid of them. Whether we like it or not, there is no escape for this generation, possibly for the next generation, from the changes that are coming.

I want you to consider our problems with this background. There are going to be enormous political and economic changes all over the world. If one thing is certain it is this that the political and economic structure of the world which has led to so many disasters during the last quarter of a century has failed, and, if it is not changed completely, it will fail again and again. The present structure has failed politically and economically for the modern world and modern problems.

If you think of attempting to face modern problems, of preventing war and having peace you will have to refashion the world. If that re-fashioning is to be still based on the old structure—political or economic—inevitably it is bound to fail again.

The history of the world between the periods of the two big wars is a record of such a failure. True, people tried and tried honestly to solve the problems of the age, but always on the basis of the political and economic structure which they thought should continue and could continue. They failed in spite of their earnestness because nothing could be built up on that perishable structure. We had another war and the strange aspect is that in spite of this tremendous disaster there is no sufficient realisation of the fact that their failure was due to a political and economic structure that is still carried on. I am wholly convinced that this can lead to a fresh disaster, unless there is a radical change in that structure.

When I speak to you about political and economic matters, I do feel that the crisis of today is something deeper than that—call it psychological, call it spiritual if you like, or something in the spirit of man himself—I cannot define it or tell you more about it. It seems to me that the world today is going through a deep spiritual crisis, not in the narrow religious meaning of the word—because you know I am not a man of religion—but in another sense, in a larger sense. All of us, whether individuals or groups, or as nations, or taking humanity as a whole, have to face the great crisis. What the outcome of that crisis will be, I do not know, but I believe out of that crisis will come a great

transformation of the human race, which seems to be overdue. This is a big question about which I have little competence to speak to you. It is for you to realise, specially those who are younger among you, that you stand on the verge of great happenings, which may even lead you either to disaster or to a new and brighter phase of human existence.

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shape it will take. I am not thinking in terms of military power. Military power alone cannot be responsible for the growth of a nation, because military power depends ultimately on the development of technical knowledge and science. I am not thinking so much in terms of military power, because we have arrived at a stage when if countries continue to think in terms of military power they are likely to destroy themselves completely. Some solution other than that of military might has got to be found.

So, I am thinking rather in terms of a vital energy which takes possession of people and pushes them on and on, and they begin to develop in all the various departments of human life and activity. I feel that in India, and in a large part of Asia, we have lost that vitality which we possessed long ago in an abundant measure.

We want to regain that lost vitality. I believe we are, however, regaining that vitality, because we are now becoming fundamentally more vital. I believe there is some kind of a cycle and Asia is going to play a big part in future in world affairs. I believe India will play a very big part too. Normally our wishes and desires largely influence our affairs so much. But let us look at the problems objectively.

There is a certain compulsion of geography about it. There are also many other compulsions. Do you realise that one of the principal results of the coming of the British to India was the cutting off of India almost completely from all its neighbours in Asia? We were isolated. But India, for thousands of years, had numerous contacts in East, South West, South East and North East Asia. Now, with the coming of the British the landways were completely closed and seaways were controlled by the British and such contact as we had with the outside world was through Britain mostly. We went away from Asian countries. We became nearer to some places in Europe than to our neighbours. That is an extraordinary thing to happen and it produced all manner of other results in the way of our thinking. Again, you find now a big change and a transformation happening, that is, we are developing our old contacts with Asian countries, whether in Western Asia, or China or South East Asia, which still resemble India in many respects. That shows you how a new situation is gradually developing and India, by virtue of its geographical position, is inevitably connected with the whole Indian Ocean region, with South East Asia, Australia, New Zealand and right up to the Persian Gulf and the countries on the western side.

If you look at this from the point of view of strategy, you will find that no defence system for the huge Indian Ocean area can be built up unless the centre of it is India. Without India you cannot properly defend South East Asia or without the cooperation of India you cannot defend

the western part of the Indian Ocean region. India is so strategically situated that every system of defence must be based on India. Trade in the Indian Ocean region must largely depend on India, which will surely become a great trade centre in Asia. Given certain assumptions that we have a policy to carry on in India all these necessarily follow.

All manner of arguments arises about the nature of our freedom, about Dominion Status, independence and the rest — they are words which may have a lot of meaning, or none at all.

The point is that India, which has influenced very greatly a large part of Asia, if not the whole of it, has been looked upon as the mother country by its neighbours. Even now the old memories survive in many parts. Many countries look up to India as their cultural mother country. So the position of India can never be that of one appended to any other country.

Now it is a subject country. As soon as it moves out of the orbit of subjection, it immediately comes to a new position of having not only independence, but in a sense to the former intimate relationship with all the countries round about it.

When India is free it is for India to choose its friends and colleagues. It is again for India to decide what its future outlook or foreign policy should be; and of course, internal policy.

India fortunately is a country which has stood more than any other country in the world for peace. Therefore, when we think of peace, it is not with a view to having an alliance with this group or that country as opposed to any other group or country, because every intelligent person realises that if there is going to be any real peace and progress in the world, it must be on the basis not of a military alliance of big groups facing each other but of some kind of a world order, some kind of world Commonwealth growing up, of which all the countries will be free members.

So I want you to think in terms of a renascent Asia and a new India playing a very important role, inevitably situated so as to form a connecting link between the various parts of Asia, Middle East, South East, with which we had so many contacts in the past. This does not mean that we shall not be bound to other countries, because India is bound to stand for peace.

Now, as I said at the beginning, we stand on the verge of a big transformation. Transformations take place because of many reasons, known or unknown. But, obviously, the human material behind the transformation counts. It is the function of big universities to train that human material. How far it is being trained I do not know. What we are thinking of is not so much a change which suddenly upsets the

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to consider the problems even more practically in terms of feeding, clothing and housing the 400 millions, giving them medical aid, education and all their necessities of life by a proper social and economic structure. It is a vast problem. Personally I believe these problems can be solved and will be solved, though not without difficulties. If you have got to solve all these problems you will require trained human material. How far are our universities training human beings in this context? I do not know. Probably, Calcutta University is doing more than other universities in this respect. But your approach, obviously, must be fundamentally an approach of science. Now, science is the god mother of the modern world as it is largely the outcome of the applications of science. No country can understand the modern world without coming closer to science. At the same time it is also true that with all its tremendous growth and change science does not follow a definite aim in life. It can be diverted to any course, good or bad. It is soulless and spiritless. It may be that science has developed no certain ethical standards or values.

Nevertheless, it is science on which the world is based. You cannot do without science. Therefore, it becomes necessary for every university, for every seat of learning, to pay greater attention to every department of science and to the latest developments of social science.

Therefore, it is necessary for every university to produce also trained men who can immediately be used in building up a new India. You have, of course, training classes for electrical, mechanical engineering etc., but I believe some other subjects have not yet engaged your attention. I may ask you, are you training planners and architects? We want them by hundreds and thousands. Engineers, technicians and other trained men are also required in large numbers.

In other words, I call upon you to think in terms of building up a structure of a free India of tomorrow under which the 400 millions can live. You must also remember that you have to think in terms of that now reviving relationship with other countries. Free India will want contacts with other nations of the world, more especially with those of Asia. What are you doing in producing men, who can be sent as our ambassadors of goodwill to other countries? They will have to be specially trained for such foreign assignments. They will have to know languages other than English, and other than our own languages. They will have to get some diplomatic training. If we have a sufficiently trained nucleus of men and women for all these various activities we can expand that nucleus rapidly, when time comes. If we have not any nucleus it will take many years and we shall have to start from scratch.

So I want you to think of these wider problems even when you are

government but changes in the fundamental structure of society. How far are you being trained for that? How far are you being trained to be capable of building a new India, not that of the distant future, but of tomorrow?

You know, in our country, specially in Bengal, how much attention is paid to professions like the legal profession, which has attracted young men and which is an absolutely unnecessary profession. You know also how little attention is paid to other branches of education. Probably, the Calcutta University is more advanced and has more varied curricula than other universities in India. Nevertheless, I wonder how far is your University thinking of the new India to be. We talk, of course, of Indian freedom and Indian independence, but do you visualise the kind of new India you want? Unless you have a certain picture, unless you have a certain philosophy of life, how can you train the people?

Therefore, it becomes necessary to be clear in mind as to what kind of social structure you are going to have and as to what kind of society you are aiming at in so far as you build on the distorted social structure of today.

The Bengal famine is a ghastly reminder of the fact—quite apart from governmental incompetence and other weaknesses—that the present social and economic structure has broken and it cannot last. The structure has been shattered to pieces. You cannot put it together simply by putting some ministers here and some others there. You have to build something entirely new. So think in these basic terms. Think of the new India which may be taking shape sooner than many of you imagine. You may not be able to have an exact picture of that, for nobody knows what is going to happen in India when 400 millions of people will suddenly experience the sensation of freedom. They can do what they like, no one knows. I have myself no idea. But we know the direction in which one has to go and one can prepare for that. Obviously, you will have to face the immediate problems of feeding, housing and clothing these 400 million people. Whatever the philosophy of your life you have to deal with these problems. Otherwise your own government will be swept away. A foreign government can continue for some time, not for a long time, but no Indian Government can continue even for a day after the occurrence of such a calamity as the Bengal famine. How to solve these problems? You will have to solve this problem by well-thought-out processes of production and distribution. May be, your plan is not perfect, but you must have the issues clear in your mind.

I consider myself a socialist and agree with the fundamental outlook of socialism. But leaving aside your 'isms' for the moment, I want you

the Arabs can be a fair or stable solution. Hence, with all our sympathy for the Jews, there has been a considerable unanimity of feeling in India that the Arabs of Palestine must not be coerced against their will, and that Palestine as a whole must inevitably remain predominantly an Arab country, as it has been for so long.

If the question is tackled by the Arabs and the Jews of Palestine without any foreign intervention a solution might have been found. I cannot venture to suggest a solution, nor can any outsider do so, but perhaps the development of the idea of autonomous regions within Palestine or a larger Arab federation might be a solution.

I have sympathised with the Jews in their tragedies of recent years, and have been a witness of some of them also. I know that the Jews in Palestine have a notable record of constructive effort which made many parts of the desert blossom. Their endeavours have raised the standard of living of the people of Palestine and attracted a large number of Arabs from neighbouring countries. All this is to their credit. But all this does not take away from the fact that the future of Palestine cannot be based on the coercion of Arabs in any way whatever. The Arabs and the Jews have lived for long peacefully together, and there is no reason why they should not do so in the future and cooperate in the development of Palestine and raise the level of the masses of the inhabitants.

Unfortunately extremist considerations, supported largely by British imperialist demands, have led to the intensification of the problem. I can understand the passionate desire of the Jewish race for a homeland. But surely there can be no homeland at the expense of the homeland of others. It is strange that while there is so much sympathy for the Jews all over the world, that sympathy is not translated into action.

At various conferences it was made clear that no country was prepared to give free access to the Jews. They all advised others to do so and many gave the Arabs the same advice, because it did not affect them at all. This kind of vicarious advice is significant. Why should the Arabs do something which no other country is prepared to do?

It must be remembered that while technical skill is necessary for the growth of a nation, even more so is the sense of freedom. And if the Arabs lose this sense of freedom material advantage would not be worthwhile. I see no reason why this freedom should not be joined to technical skill and material advantage for all concerned.

lost in the controversies of the moment. It is obvious that the period of history that we have passed through — these 150 years of British rule — is coming to an end. It is obvious that the British empire in India is fading away, more or less has faded away. India will have to function according to its own ability and strength. Prepare for the future, keeping this vision of a free India and Asia and a new world before you. I do not know how many of you will see the full realisation of this vision.

It is not that I am talking of a new India in terms of political independence alone, for that I take for granted. My vision of a free India is something bigger, more magnificent than just political freedom. It is a freedom in which 400 millions should live the life which man should live, in which every man and woman should have the door of opportunity open to him, in which every individual gets his necessaries of life. Then you will have leisure to explore other regions of science and the mind can start again on the great field of adventure of man, which started in this country so many thousand years ago. We will leave behind the past and, with hope, march in that adventure again which has no end. The process of marching onward will give us some satisfaction that we have functioned in our brief life as we should function. *Jai Hind.*

5. The Palestine Problem[1]

The question[2] of Palestine is one of the problems of the modern age, which seems to grow more difficult with time.

An outsider must be hesitant, and yet the broad facts are clear enough. The basic fact is that Palestine has long been an Arab country with a majority of Arab population. No solution which is not approved by

1. Interview to the press, Calcutta, 11 March 1946. From *The Bombay Sentinel*, 12 March 1946.
2. In Palestine, the Arabs were unwilling to give any portion of their land to the Jews on the basis that Arab Muslims had lived there for more than 1300 years and the Jews were immigrants who had settled later. In 25 years, the number of Jews in Palestine had increased from 50,000 to 600,000.

The recent United Nations Organisation Conference in London was a significant indication of the trend of events.[4] It is a task for statesmanship to stop the deterioration of relations, but this cannot be done just at the top level. The basic causes must be tackled. Today it is difficult for one power to criticise another, because its own hands are not clean, and it gets the obvious retort.

Every country, in the final analysis, puts its own interests first when it reviews an international situation. Obviously India will be attracted more to those countries which support its cause of independence and progress. Its general policy is sure to be one of promoting world peace, preventing aggression anywhere, and helping, in so far as possible, in the attainment of freedom by the subject countries of Asia and Africa. It will try to maintain friendly relations with all countries, and help in evolving a world order. More particularly, it will inevitably have closer contacts with its neighbour countries. The Indian Ocean region depends for its defence greatly on India, which is strategically situated in the centre. Thus any defence arrangement for both South East Asia and the Middle East will partly depend on India. It is difficult to speak about the international situation in the future, but these considerations will generally govern India's policy.

Q: Would an independent India seek military alliance with Britain or other countries?

JN: We want to be friendly with the three principal powers — America, Russia and England — but this is possible only when India attains full freedom. We shall choose our own friends, and resist any imposition. It is impossible for me to say what military or other alliances a free India may approve. Generally speaking, it would not like to entangle itself with other people's feuds and imperialist rivalries.

Q: What would be the future of India's armed forces and their possible size?

JN: Presumably, India will maintain defence forces and, obviously, it will try to keep them as efficient as possible. The whole question of defence in future warfare is so much in a fluid state, owing to scientific developments, that it is difficult to prophesy about the future.

4. From 10 January to 14 February 1946 the General Assembly of the U.N.O. met in London.

6. Free India's Foreign Policy[1]

Question: What position might independent India take in the event of a Russian military movement southward in Iran,[2] and if Russian demands on Turkey[3] were to be pressed?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Indian opinion, as a whole, will strongly resent any aggression against Iran or Turkey by any power. The big powers are still at the old imperialist game, which led to two world wars. They have not learned anything from the tragic history of the past and, if they do not learn soon, they will again plunge the world into disaster.

There are many seeds of conflict and war, but certainly the principal one is the subjection of one country by another. If one great power dominates another, the other follows suit immediately, for fear that the former may gain an advantage, and so the mad race will go on.

News from the Middle East and from Turkey has been confusing. There is a general impression in India that we have been getting one-sided news. It appears that in Iran the old contest for the possession of oil by rival powers continues. Iran has become the plaything of these rival powers, and there is much concern in India about Iran's fate.

On the one hand, there is Soviet aggression, on the other, there is the desire of Britain, not only to hold on to oil, but also to preserve the so-called lifelines of its empire. Rival Iranian groups are exploited by either party. The real solution of this problem must be preceded by a complete renunciation of imperialism, and of the domination of one country by another. Foreign armies must be withdrawn from subject countries. Then the United Nations Organisation should consider how the world's resources could be utilised equitably for the benefit of all countries, for there should be no monopoly of essential goods of common need.

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 15 March 1946. Based on reports in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16 March and *The Hindustan Times*, 16 March 1946.
2. It was reported on 12 March 1946 in the newspapers that Soviet armed forces and heavy military combat equipment were moving south from the Soviet frontiers towards Teheran and the western borders of Iran.
3. Turkey's pact of neutrality with the Soviet Union, concluded in 1925 and reaffirmed on 25 March 1941, expired at the end of 1945. In 1946 the Soviet Union demanded from Turkey strategic bases in the Dardanelles and the exclusion of all non-Black Sea powers from the administration of the Straits.

The recent United Nations Organisation Conference in London was a significant indication of the trend of events.[4] It is a task for statesmanship to stop the deterioration of relations, but this cannot be done just at the top level. The basic causes must be tackled. Today it is difficult for one power to criticise another, because its own hands are not clean, and it gets the obvious retort.

Every country, in the final analysis, puts its own interests first when it reviews an international situation. Obviously India will be attracted more to those countries which support its cause of independence and progress. Its general policy is sure to be one of promoting world peace, preventing aggression anywhere, and helping, in so far as possible, in the attainment of freedom by the subject countries of Asia and Africa. It will try to maintain friendly relations with all countries, and help in evolving a world order. More particularly, it will inevitably have closer contacts with its neighbour countries. The Indian Ocean region depends for its defence greatly on India, which is strategically situated in the centre. Thus any defence arrangement for both South East Asia and the Middle East will partly depend on India. It is difficult to speak about the international situation in the future, but these considerations will generally govern India's policy.

Q: Would an independent India seek military alliance with Britain or other countries?

JN: We want to be friendly with the three principal powers — America, Russia and England — but this is possible only when India attains full freedom. We shall choose our own friends, and resist any imposition. It is impossible for me to say what military or other alliances a free India may approve. Generally speaking, it would not like to entangle itself with other people's feuds and imperialist rivalries.

Q: What would be the future of India's armed forces and their possible size?

JN: Presumably, India will maintain defence forces and, obviously, it will try to keep them as efficient as possible. The whole question of defence in future warfare is so much in a fluid state, owing to scientific developments, that it is difficult to prophesy about the future.

4. From 10 January to 14 February 1946 the General Assembly of the U.N.O. met in London.

7. Cable to Sultan Shahrir[1]

I have learnt through the press that you have been good enough to offer to send half million tons of rice from Indonesia to India to relieve famine conditions here provided the necessary shipping is arranged for. I understand also that you are in great need of textiles from India. We are grateful for your offer. Half a million tons of rice or other foodgrains would make a great difference to India in the months to come. Could you kindly let us have further details of your offer so that we can make arrangements in regard to it. There is cloth scarcity here also but I am sure the Government here will do its utmost to provide textiles in exchange for foodgrains. I shall be grateful for an early reply.

1. New Delhi, 20 April 1946. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

8. To B.R. Sen[1]

New Delhi
April 20, 1946

Dear Mr. Sen,[2]
Ratan Nehru has shown me your D.O. 238/S-46 dated the 20th April addressed to him. I have received no direct communication from Dr. Shahrir. Indeed it is difficult to get such direct messages. In the past some messages from Dr. Sukarno and other leaders of the Indonesian Republic have been conveyed to me either through the radio or sometimes through the press. It is possible therefore that Dr. Shahrir made some such offer addressing it to me, though I did not receive it directly.

It might be worthwhile in the circumstances for me to send him a message about this reported offer and ask him exactly what he means. I presume that this has to be done through the S.E.A. Command. I can send such a message to Lord Mountbatten and ask him to forward it. I was told in Malaya that I could do so and that they would forward

any message of mine. But perhaps you know of a better and speedier way. I am giving below a message[3] which I should like to be sent to Dr. Shahrir. I shall be grateful if you would have this sent by cable. If there is no other way, then please send it to S.E.A. Command with the request that they might forward it to Dr. Shahrir. I shall gladly pay the expenses incurred in this cable.

I am leaving for Bhopal early tomorrow morning. I hope to return to Delhi on the 23rd.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. The preceding item.

9. Dutch Apathy to India's Food Scarcity[1]

The statement[2] issued by the Dutch authorities in Batavia regarding Dr. Sultan Shahrir's offer of rice for India is very unsatisfactory. It is obviously based not on information but on various inferences unsupported by any knowledge of facts. What these facts are, probably no one knows accurately because of the unsettled conditions in Indonesia, and the difficulty of obtaining proper statistics. But of the persons concerned, the Dutch authorities are probably in a more unfavourable position to judge of the food situation than the Indonesian Prime Minister. So far as is known, the greater part of Indonesia is controlled by the Indonesian Republican Government. This includes most of the food growing areas. The Dutch occupy some towns and surrounding areas. The statement of the Dutch authorities refers to the official statistics for 1944. I do not know from where they have got these, for Indonesia was under Japanese occupation then.

At the very least the offer made by Prime Minister Shahrir is deserving of fullest consideration and inquiry. He has definitely stated that there has been a very good crop, and he should know. It is possible that the figure of half a million tons exportable surplus is not correct, but still there might very well be a substantial surplus of rice which can be sent to India. The casual way in which the Dutch authorities have

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 26 April 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 27 April 1946.
2. It was said that as the rice crop in Indonesia had been declining from 1943 there could be no export surplus of food for India.

treated this matter indicates almost a desire that any such deal between the Indonesian Government and India is not looked upon with favour by them and they want to come in the way. This is not the way of dealing with a terrible world crisis which is likely to affect vast numbers of human beings not only in India but all over Asia and Europe. Evidently political considerations have overridden human considerations. The Dutch authorities should know that we in India look to the Indonesian Republican Government as representing the Indonesian people and not the Dutch authorities. We hope the day is not far distant when this fact will be recognised by the world.

10. To Milo H. Fritz[1]

Allahabad
4 May 1946

Dear Major Fritz,

Thank you for your letter of the 4th March which I have read with great interest. You will forgive me if I send you a brief reply.

Inevitably I have been changing and my views have been developing since I wrote *Glimpses* 14 years ago. To some extent my changed approach may be found in a new book that I have written called *The Discovery of India* which I hope will appear in America soon.

I have certainly been disillusioned to some extent by developments in Russia. I do not like much that has happened or is happening there. A great deal of good, I think, still remains, but there is far too much of pride of power and military might. In a sense that pride is equally evident in the United States of America. The world outlook is dreary. Perhaps all this is inevitable during this transitional period that we are passing through. It is a sad thought that we should go on repeating the same old mistakes in spite of past experiences of catastrophes.

Thank you very much for what you have written. It does cheer one to know that there are many people in all parts of the world with whom one can claim some kinship in spirit.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A copy of this letter is available in the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund. The identity of the addressee is not known.

11. The Withdrawal of the British Army from Egypt[1]

I am very glad to learn that the British Government have decided to withdraw unconditionally all their troops from Egypt.[2] From every point of view this is a wise decision. In times of peace the presence of such troops is a denial of independence and a constant irritant factor. In times of war a few troops here or there will make little difference, as everything is likely to be on a vaster scale.

Undoubtedly, the decision will have a good effect in India. So far as we are concerned, the final test of British withdrawal from India is the withdrawal of the British army. No country is free or independent so long as a single foreign soldier remains on its soil. That soldier is a symbol of foreign domination and certainly India is not in the mood to tolerate even symbols, much less the reality, of this.

Even from the point of view of defence, the presence of a relatively small British army in India makes no real difference. What will be essential in case of aggression is the organisation of a popular force to resist such an aggression. Without this, even a big army would fail. With this, a small army would go a long way. Again the presence of foreign troops would drag India into all manner of feuds with which it has no concern. So from every point of view, both India's and England's, the sooner British troops are withdrawn from India, the better.

1. Statement to the press, Simla, 8 May 1946. *The Hindu*, 9 May 1946.
2. As a prelude to the negotiations for a revision of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936, the British Government decided on 6 May 1946 to withdraw its naval, military and air forces from Egypt.

12. To Lolong[1]

Simla
10 May 1946

Dear friend,[2]
Thank you for your telegram of good wishes.

I have been receiving long letters about the difficulties of the Indonesian students and seamen and I have been asked to approach the Government

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. General Secretary of the Indonesian Youth Association of India in Bombay.

of India in regard to them. I am anxious to help, but it is very difficult for me in the present circumstances to deal with the Government of India in such a matter which concerns yet another government. Nor do I think it right or desirable to meet the Dutch Consul here. If I can do anything I shall certainly do it. Meanwhile, I may suggest to you and other Indonesian friends to keep in touch with Mr. Purushottamdas Tricamdas[2] of Bombay.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Secretary to Mahatma Gandhi, 1914; member, Congress Socialist Party, 1940-45; member, Bombay Legislative Assembly, 1941-52.

13. To Charles Onyeama[1]

Allahabad
14 May 1946

My dear Mr. Onyeama,[2]
I was glad to get your letter. You will forgive me if I write briefly as I am full up with work here. But I want to tell you that, engrossed as we are in the future of India, we do not forget the people of Africa. We shall help them and stand by them whenever occasion arises.

Your question about nonviolence may be answered in many ways. But perhaps the most effective way is to say that you can only use guns when you have them. Also that bigger guns prevail and so you must take care to have the biggest guns. Normally the biggest gun or the latest weapon of offence is not available to the people.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. The addressee was from Nigeria.

14. To B.R. Sen[1]

New Delhi
17 May 1946

Dear Mr. Sen,
I do not know how matters stand in regard to the question of rice or other foodgrains being received from Indonesia. You were good enough to send my telegram to Dr. Shahrir, the Prime Minister of the Indonesian Republic. To that I have had no direct reply from him. But I have seen a kind of a reply in the press in which he asserts again that he can supply the rice.

While you are no doubt taking official steps in this behalf directly or through S.E.A.C., it might be worthwhile for a non-official approach to be made to Dr. Shahrir. This could be done by someone going to Indonesia on our behalf. Instead of sending someone from India it would be easier and speedier to send a person from Malaya. I have just had a telegram from Singapore from Anand Mohan Sahai[2] offering to go to Java for this purpose if facilities are available. If there is any difficulty about him, somebody else could be selected for the purpose.

When Mr. Hoover[3] was here he mentioned that he had approached the Soviet Government and asked them to contribute to the food pool. I was wondering whether any direct approach of this kind had been made to Russia by the Government of India. I should think that such an approach would be worthwhile.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1898); leader of the Indian national movement in the Far East during the Second World War; Minister and Secretary-General in the Azad Hind Government; Indian Commissioner in British West Indies, 1950-53 and in Mauritius, 1953-54; Consul-General, Hanoi, 1954-56; Ambassador to Thailand, 1956.
3. Herbert Hoover was in India for a day on 24 April 1946 and discussed with Jawaharlal the food situation.

15. The Plight of Indians in Sri Lanka[1]

I have been informed that a serious situation is developing in Ceylon as a result of certain contemplated action by the Ceylon Government in regard to Indians there.[2] Indian residents resent this greatly, and there is a talk of a general strike in protest.

It would be very unfortunate if, at this critical moment, the relations of the Sinhalese and Indians in Ceylon became more strained. I would earnestly request the Government of Ceylon to defer action and allow full time for consultation in the matter. Any precipitate action may lead to very unfortunate consequences for both parties concerned.

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 19 May 1946. *The Hindu*, 20 May 1946.
2. A new constitution for Sri Lanka was announced on 17 May 1946 which denied the Indian community equal rights, franchise and citizenship with the Sinhalese. Also at this time the Village Expansion Ordinance, which prescribed a domicile test, displaced a large number of Indian labourers from estates.

16. To R.H. Hutchings[1]

New Delhi
May 19th, 1946

Dear Mr. Hutchings,[2]

I received your letter of the 18th last evening. I am happy to find in Dr. Shahrir's message confirmation of his offer of half a million tons of rice. I enclose a reply.[3] I shall be grateful if this is sent by cable to Dr. Shahrir.

You will notice that I have followed your advice and referred him to the Government of India and their representatives. I am also sending a telegram and an air mail letter to Mr. B.G. Kher, Prime Minister of the Bombay Government, suggesting that one of his colleagues in the Government might lead a delegation to Java for this purpose.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (1897-1976); joined the I.C.S., 1920; Secretary, Food Department, Government of India, 1943; Member for Food and Agriculture, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1946.
3. See the following item.

I trust that the Government of India will take urgent steps and make the necessary arrangements for the matters referred to in your letter. You will of course take full advantage of the offer of the Shree Ambica Steam Navigation Co., Bombay, to place ships and aircraft at our disposal. I am sure the Scindhia Steam Navigation Co. will also help. So also perhaps Tata's. If you think this necessary I can communicate with them.

In my cable to Dr. Shahrir you will notice that I have mentioned the possibility of my going to Java. It is not easy for me to go away just at present but perhaps I can manage it for a few days. I am sure this would help greatly. I suggest that preliminary arrangements might be made for this so that there might be no delay. This would involve I suppose various references and the permission of different authorities. Could you help me in this?

If the Food Member or you would like to see me to discuss the matter I shall gladly meet him or you. My days are rather full up with Congress Working Committee meetings and other matters but the mornings or evenings are usually more or less free.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17. Cable to Sultan Shahrir[1]

I am grateful to you for your message confirming offer of half million tons rice to Indian people. This splendid offer of help is greatly appreciated by our people and will further strengthen bonds between India and Indonesia. We shall try our utmost to supply you in exchange goods required by you. I am eager to visit Indonesia and shall do so as soon as possible. Meanwhile, in order to avoid delay suggest your dealing directly with Government of India and their representatives with whom I am in touch. I trust that one of my colleagues, a Minister of the Bombay Provincial Government, will lead Government delegation to Java for this purpose. All necessary steps will be taken speedily at this end. Our gratitude to you and your colleagues and assurances of our deep interest in the freedom and welfare of Indonesia.

1. New Delhi, 19 May 1946. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

18. Telegram to B.G. Kher[1]

New Delhi
19 May 1946

In view offer of Dr. Shahrir, Prime Minister Indonesian Republic, send half million tons rice India proposal send Government of India delegation to Java to make necessary arrangements. Suggest one of your Minister colleagues leading this delegation. Please wire your approval.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-55/1946, p. 17, N.M.M.L.

19. Telegram to B.G. Kher[1]

20 May 1946

Reference my yesterday's telegram. Java rice delegation postponed for present. Awaiting developments.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

20. To Vijayasinh Govindji[1]

New Delhi
May 22, 1946

Dear Mr. Vijayasinh Govindji,[2]
Thank you for your letter of the 17th May. I have already sent a telegram to you. I appreciate your offer of ships and planes very much. I have sent this on to the Food Department of the Government of India. I suggest that you might deal with them directly, in order to save time.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Of Shri Ambica Steam Navigation Company, Bombay.

21. To R.N. Banerjee[1]

New Delhi
22 May 1946

Dear Mr. Banerjee,[2]
I have received the following telegram from Maior General Aung San of Rangoon.

Our hospitals as well as other sufferers need fruits urgently. Kindly convey India Government allow fruits export if not at prewar level up to some extent.

I wonder if you or your Department can do anything in this matter. Any action by the Government will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1895); joined the I.C.S., 1920; Secretary, Department of Commonwealth Relations, Government of India, 1944-48; Chairman, Union Public Service Commission, 1949-55.

22. Burma's Appeal for Fruit[1]

I have received a telegram from Major-General Aung San from Rangoon. He tells me that owing to the great dearth of fruit in Burma the hospitals there as well as people elsewhere are suffering greatly. He suggests that fruit might be allowed to be exported from India if not at the pre-war level at least in some measure. I hope that the Government of India will consider this matter favourably and permit some export of fruit to Burma. Such action would not only be humanitarian but would also help in bringing the people of India and Burma nearer to one another.

1. Statement to the press, 23 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 24 May 1946.

23. To B.G. Kher[1]

New Delhi
23 May 1946

My dear Kher,

Thank you for your letter of the 20th May. Yesterday I had a talk with the Member and the Secretary of the Food Department of India. It appears that there is some certainty now of rice being available in Java for India. The Government of India people are fixing up the details now. They seem to be earnest about it, but I place little reliance on their ways. They have sent a representative of their Food Department, whose name is Panjabi,[2] to Java. Panjabi has sent a detailed report which is promising. Arrangements have now to be made for the transport of rice to various ports in India, for its distribution in India, and for goods and materials to be sent in exchange. I am told that possibly 20 million yards of textiles may be sent, also agricultural implements and consumable goods. Dr. Shahrir would have liked to have more textiles, but he has generously left the matter in our hands.

Probably in the course of the next week something more definite will be fixed up. It would be desirable then for a delegation on behalf of India to go to Java to give the final touches to these arrangements as well as to convey our gratitude and goodwill to the Indonesian Government. The Government of India intend sending this delegation very early in June. You will probably hear from them. It is proposed that your Civil Supplies Minister should lead this delegation and I welcomed this proposal. I am glad you agree.

Apart from the technical and other details to be settled promptly on the spot I should like the delegation to convey to Dr. Shahrir and to the President of the Indonesian Republic, Dr. Sukarno, and the Vice-President, Dr. Mohammad Hatta, our deep gratitude for the way they have come to India's help at this time of crisis. Also to convey our goodwill and sympathy to the Indonesian Republic. Dr. Shahrir has been good enough to make the offer almost personally to me. I hope that my personal thanks and gratitude will also be conveyed to him.

Perhaps you know that a problem has arisen in regard to a considerable number of Indonesian seamen and students stranded in Bombay. The Dutch Government wanted to send them back to Java on one of their own ships, but the Indonesian people concerned did not want to

1. B.G. Kher Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. K.L. Panjabi (1898-1978); joined I.C.S. in 1923; served in various administrative posts in the State of Bombay; Secretary, Food and Agriculture Department, Government of India, 1941; Chief Secretary, Government of Bombay, 1956-59.

go back under Dutch auspices unless they were assured that they would have perfect freedom to join their own people. They were afraid that the Dutch might use them for other purposes. As that assurance was not forthcoming, they refused to go. It would be worthwhile to deal with this matter also in Java and find out what can be done about it. Someone in your behalf might find out what the exact situation is in regard to these Indonesian seamen and students in Bombay. The Dutch Government is difficult to deal with. They are very obstinate and foolish. I mentioned this matter the other day to the Viceroy and Mountbatten who was here for a few hours.

There were some Indonesians in Australia and I think they were sent back to their home country accompanied by an Australian officer. This was done to prevent the Dutch ill-treating the Indonesians in any way. Some similar arrangement might be arrived at here also.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

24. To Aung San[1]

23 May 1946

My dear Aung San,

I have just received your telegram about fruit being exported from India to Burma. I have sent your message to the Government of India. I hope something will be done in the matter to afford you relief.

I find from newspaper reports as well as from other sources that the situation in Burma is not improving. I am happy to think, however, that you are at the head of the movement there and can direct it along right lines.

We are taking some definite steps at this end to invite a conference of delegates from various countries in Asia. This work is being undertaken by the Indian Council of World Affairs. We hope to issue a statement soon. We want to prepare for this conference rather fully and this will take some time. Probably the conference will meet sometime in winter early next year. I hope you will fully associate yourself with this move.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

25. Indonesia's Offer of Rice[1]

I have refrained from saying much about the Indonesian offer to send rice to India as I did not want to raise false hopes in the minds of people. The time has come, however, when we can say with some confidence that this offer will materialise. Dr. Shahrir, the Prime Minister in the Indonesian Republic, was good enough to send me the following cable:

> Dear Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, Will you kindly consider this letter as confirmation of news you read in papers about rice offer of Government of Indonesia to people of India. If you would not be able to grant Indonesian people honour of personal visit in order to discuss contemplated exchange agreement then we should be glad if you can send as quickly as possible authorised representatives to Indonesia.
>
> Indonesians will keep ready for shipment to India a quantity of rice amounting to half a million tons. Every section of Indonesian community gives enthusiastic adhesion to plan. Transportation to ports in Java is guaranteed. For the sake of mutual assistance between two nations we should like to receive in exchange goods most urgently needed by majority of population e.g. textiles, agricultural implements etc. In case you cannot dispense with goods mentioned above on account of Indian people's own needs we should call ourselves fortunate if we can secure some other exchange. Moreover the goods mentioned before are to be understood as falling in category of articles of preference. We are quite prepared to consider any other kind of goods that happen to be at your disposal. We assure you that our people have given enthusastic adhesion to plan mainly because we want to show our sympathy with your people by aid to prevent famine in your country. Sincerely yours, Shahrir.

Since then there has been further progress and arrangements are being made to take full advantage of Dr. Shahrir's offer and to send him instead textiles, agricultural implements and other goods. There is no doubt now that the rice is available and the only thing to be done is to expedite its despatch from Java to India and to distribute it properly. Also to send goods in exchange to Java which they so badly need.

I am sure everybody in India will appreciate and feel deeply grateful for the very generous offer that Dr. Shahrir has made on behalf of the

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 23 May 1946. *The Hindu*, 24 May 1946.

Indonesian people. That offer came from him unsolicited and he persisted in it in spite of all manner of discouragement. The terms of the offer and the language that Dr. Shahrir has used will go to the heart of the Indian people. It is the language of a friend and comrade, not out to bargain but to help in our time of need, even though he has to face a mountain of troubles in his own land. It is by such acts that nations and peoples are bound together. The Indian people will not only feel grateful but will remember this in the days to come. I hope and trust that it will be the precursor of a closer friendship between the two nations advantageous to both. I hope also that the Republic of Indonesia will emerge from its present difficulties free and triumphant.

I am afraid I cannot go to Indonesia for some time to come. But I hope to go there as soon as I can manage it and circumstances permit, so that I may convey personally to the leaders of the Indonesian people the gratitude and goodwill of the Indian people. Meanwhile I understand that the Government of India propose to send a delegation from India to Java at the beginning of June to settle finally all the details of this transaction. This delegation, I hope, will be led by Shri Desai, the Food Member of the Government of Bombay.

26. To Aung San[1]

25 May 1946

My dear Aung San,

I wrote to you two days ago in answer to your telegram about fruit. But as a friend is going back to Rangoon, I am giving this note to him for you.

About fruit I hope something may be done at this end. The Secretary of the Food Department of the Government of India told me yesterday that he was looking into this matter and he hoped to fix up something.

I wrote to you in my last letter about the proposed conference of representatives of Asian countries. I hope you and your organization will join this and will write to us about it. We want to make this conference really representative and to lay the foundations of some kind

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

of an Asian organisation. Preparations for it will take some time and we cannot meet earlier than next winter early next year.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

27. To Aung San[1]

7 June 1946

My dear Aung San,

On my return to Delhi I have just received your telegram informing me that you had sent me no telegram for export of fruit. I was surprised at this. I received the following telegram on the 22nd May:

> ...Our hospitals as well other sufferers need fruits urgently. Kindly convey India Government allow fruits export if not pre-war scale up to some extent. Aung San.

Immediately on receiving this I communicated with the Commonwealth Relations Department of the Government of India. Later the Food Secretary of the Government of India met me and spoke to me on the subject. He said that they were trying to remove the ban. I suppose no harm has been done, but it is worth inquiring how any telegram should come to me in your name which was not sent by you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

28. To R.N. Banerjee[1]

New Delhi
16 June 1946

Dear Mr. Banerjee,

I wrote to you on the 22nd May conveying a telegram I received from Rangoon about the lack of fruit there. To this you sent a reply on the

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

24th May. I have now received another message from Burma on the same subject suggesting that the ban on the export of fruit may be removed or at any rate partially removed. I spoke on this matter to Mr. Hutchings, the Food Secretary, and he seemed to think that this might be done without any detriment to the food situation in India. I hope that it will be possible to do something in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

29. To P.R.S. Mani[1]

New Delhi
17 June 1946

My dear Mani,[2]
I have received your letter of May 26th and have read it with interest. You are doing good work in Indonesia and I hope you will continue it. I wish we could send someone else to Java but at present I see no way to do it.

A few days ago a batch of Indonesian seamen left Madras for Java on the understanding that they would be allowed to go to the Republican areas.

I enclose a letter addressed to Dr. Mohammad Hatta which has been sent to me by his elder brother Mr. Darwish Arsjad, who is in Mecca. Will you please have this delivered to him? I enclose another letter making an inquiry about S.M.R. Manickam Pillai who apparently was lost somewhere in Sumatra. Could you find out about him?

I met Panjabi three days ago on the eve of his departure for Batavia.

Some of our friends in Bombay have offered 200 bales of cloth as a free gift to Indonesia. I have communicated this offer to the Government of India and asked them to make arrangements for despatch to Dr. Shahrir.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Special correspondent of the *Free Press Journal* in Batavia; after independence joined the Indian Foreign Service.

30. Racial Arrogance of South Africa[1]

India does not intend to recognise or submit to the theory and practice of racial arrogance and discrimination, and would not tolerate the subjection of Indians abroad to any indignity.

The time has come when the theory and practice of racial arrogance and discrimination must be challenged. It is true that at the present moment we are not strong enough as a nation, or as a people, to put an end to racial discrimination and national indignity. But the time is coming soon when we may be strong enough. Whether we are strong enough or not, one thing, however, should be certain — that we prefer any consequences to submission to this evil.

The issue of Indians in South Africa has become a world issue. It is up to the Indians there to realise this fact, and act worthily on the world stage, which they occupy in this matter. They have not only their own dignity and interest to safeguard, but have the honour of India in their keeping. That is not a light obligation. Let no man, woman or child, who claims to be Indian, forget this privilege and obligation at any time. Let him remember that the day is coming when the strong arm and stout heart of India will protect her children, wherever they might be.

South African Indians should not claim anything which might be against the rights and dignity of the African people, as claims should be based on the broader foundation of racial and international equality. We must remember in this matter we do not stand alone. The whole of Asia and Africa will stand with us, and we shall stand with them.

1. Message to a visiting South African Indian delegation. From *The Hindustan Times*, 3 June 1946.

31. Food for Indians in Mauritius[1]

Though there may be distress in India we cannot forget our countrymen abroad and any appeal from them to the mother country must always

1. Statement to the press, New Delhi, 17 June 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 18 June 1946.

have a hearing. Our people in Mauritius have especially suffered from the lack of the food they were used to. On their behalf, a request which is modest enough has been made for 2,000 tons of pulses.[2] They have avoided asking for rice and wheat which are so badly needed here. What the situation in India is as regards pulses I do not know. But if it is at all possible I hope this request of theirs will be agreed to and pulses sent to Mauritius.

2. An Indian member of the Mauritius Legislative Council came to India early in 1946 to urge the Government of India for 2000 tons of pulses to help restore a balanced diet for Indians in Mauritius.

32. The Death Dealer[1]

I was asked today what my reactions were to the atom bomb experiment.[2] For the moment I did not say anything, but my mind became more and more occupied with this latest "advance" of our civilization and numerous pictures of what might happen came before me.

First of all, it seemed very odd to me that this experiment should take place in the way it did, with all the fanfare of publicity for which America is famous. Normally war offices do not shout about their latest weapons and indeed try their utmost to keep them secret. It is true that probably such an experiment could not have been kept wholly secret. But still there was no obvious necessity for deliberate publicity unless some definite objective was being aimed at.

What could this be? Surely to announce to the world and to all to whom it may concern of this might of the United States of America and their readiness to blow up any people or country who came in the way of their policy. It was a challenge and a threat. It was a reminder of the stark reality behind all the talks of the foreign ministers and the U.N.O. It was the dark shadow of approaching war—World War III.

This is not the way to lay the foundations of peace or to remove the fear in people's minds which leads so often to war. Inevitably that fear would grow and grip nations and peoples and each would try frantically to get this new weapon or some adequate protection from it.

1. Editorial written by Jawaharlal, 1 July 1946. *National Herald*, 2 July 1946.
2. The U.S. tested an atomic bomb at Bikini Islands on 1 July 1946. It damaged more ships than were ever before damaged by a single explosion.

Peace seems far distant now, a dream that has faded, and mankind apparently marches ahead to its doom. For though the atom bomb has come to blast the world, no bomb has yet touched the minds of our statesmen and men of authority, who cannot get out of their old ruts, and still want to preserve their old world. We have heard much of the Four Freedoms[3] and of the brave new world to come, and yet the only freedom that the mass of humanity is likely to possess is the freedom to die and to be blown to bits; of course, to preserve democracy and liberty and the Four Freedoms.

Have words lost all their meaning and have men's minds lost all anchorage? For this surely is the way to madness, and the great men who control our destinies are dangerous self-centred lunatics, who are too full of their conceit and pride of power that they will rather rain death and destruction all over the world than give up their petty opinions and think and act aright.

It is an astonishing and shameful thing that people should put up with this madness, especially when the world seemed so near to achieving what it has desired and dreamt of for ages past. Peace and cooperation and wellbeing for all the peoples of the world were well within grasp. But the gods perhaps envied the lot of man and drove him mad.

Whether madness and death are the fate of man in the near future, or some thing better, no one can say. But it is certain that the way of the atom bomb is not the way of peace or freedom. The only useful purpose it can serve is to put an end to the power-mad people in authority, to those who wish to dominate over others, to the race-proud who deny equality to others, to the men of privilege who rest on others' labour and suffering, to those who prosper when others starve and die.

3. In a message to the U.S. Congress on 6 January 1941, Roosevelt had stated that Four Freedoms should prevail throughout the world—freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. These were substantially incorporated in the Atlantic Charter.

33. Message to the People of the Philippines[1]

FIRST PAGE OF AN EDITORIAL IN THE "NATIONAL HERALD" PRINTED ON 2 JULY 1946

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33. Message to the People of the Philippines[1]

Freedom and independence are the battle cries of every Asian country and people. Every advance of freedom, therefore, in any country of

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 5 July 1946. From *National Herald*, 6 July 1946.

Asia is welcome. The independence of the Philippines has been inaugurated on an auspicious day,[2] famous in the annals of freedom, when the American colonies started their career of independence which was to lead them to new heights in prosperity and power undreamt of in previous ages.

We send our greetings to the people of the Philippines on this opening of a new chapter in their history. We hope that this really signifies independence, for this word has become rather hackneyed and outworn and has been made to mean many things. Some countries that are called independent are far from free and are under the economic or military domination of some great power. Some so-called independent countries carry on with what might be termed "puppet" regimes and are in a way client countries of some great power. We hope that is not so with the Philippines.

With India in the past, the people of the Philippines, as of all other countries of South East Asia, have had closest contact. Not only history but present interests also demand that. Inevitably, whatever the future of the world organisation is, India and the countries of South East Asia must hang together and work together. This is necessary from the point of view of defence and strategy, for trade and commerce, and in cultural association. So, on this welcome and auspicious occasion—we send our good wishes to the people of the Philippines.

2. On 4 July 1946, the Republic of the Philippines was inaugurated. M. Manuel Roxas was sworn in as President.

34. Cable to Manuel Roxas[1]

9.7.46

On behalf of Indian people I send you[2] and people of Philippines greetings and good wishes. May your independence be the forerunner of the true freedom of all countries and peoples of Asia joined together in close comradeship.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. M. Manuel Roxas (1892-1948); Speaker, Philippine House of Representatives, 1922-34; member, National Assembly, 1935-38; Secretary of Finance, 1938-40; President of the Philippines, 1946-48.

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35. Indians in Sri Lanka[1]

There has long been trouble in regard to Indians in Ceylon on so many matters, such as franchise and other conditions of citizenship. The present trouble began with the eviction of some hundreds of Indian labourers from the Knavesmere estate.[2] We have been placed in a difficult position. As far as possible, we do not want to do anything to embitter the relations between Indians and the Sinhalese because we look upon the Sinhalese almost as people of another part of India. They are our stock culturally, racially, linguistically and geographically, and no doubt in future there will be the closest union between India and Ceylon.

Unfortunately, the recent policies of the Ceylon Government have been apparently almost deliberately designed to oust Indians from Ceylon or to make their existence very precarious. I can understand the Ceylon Government saying that only those Indians who choose to be Ceylon nationals should enjoy rights of Ceylon citizenship of full rank. I think Indians there, as Indians in Burma and elsewhere, will have to decide, sometime or other, whether they are nationals of the country they reside in or whether they retain their Indian nationality. These questions have not arisen so far because of the supposed common nationality. It is not very common as you see how the common nationality of the British empire is functioning at present in South Africa. But now these questions are bound to arise and each person will have to decide which nationality he chooses.

Most Indians in Ceylon are not people who have gone there for a short visit. They have lived there for generations as the Ceylonese or as anybody. They might as well decide to be Ceylon nationals, not, of course, cutting themselves away from India culturally. Some Indians in Ceylon might well choose to retain their Indian nationality, and not claim any special rights belonging to Ceylon nationals. Even they shall have rights which every person enjoys so long as it does not offend the laws of that country. This is a fundamental proposition we agreed to.

The next question is that those people, especially Indian workers in Ceylon, should be protected against unfair treatment. Not being given

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 10 July 1946. From *The Hindu*, 11 July 1946.
2. In April 1946, the Government of Sri Lanka served quit notices on 495 Indian labourers in the Knavesmere estate. As they refused the Government prosecuted them. This led to a strike by 130,000 Indian labourers from 12 June to 9 July 1946.

the franchise, they are voteless and nobody cares for them. Now there is a process of squeezing them out by simply evicting them from the land they have occupied, in some cases for 30 or 40 years as workers.

The scheme[3] of the Ceylon Government for the settlement of these lands is not a bad scheme. It is a good scheme. I do not know the details but, generally speaking, I have no objection to their scheme. But what I feel wrong is that they should exclude Indians living on that island from the operation of that scheme. Secondly, no Government can push out a large number of people from the land or anywhere without making some provision for them elsewhere in the shape of work.

There are, I believe, some 900,000 Indians in Ceylon and naturally a very large number of them belong to the labouring population in the tea and rubber estates. There are many business people too. At the moment, we need not trouble about businessmen's interests, because they can look after their own interests. The question, therefore, is the interests of the Indian labourers in Ceylon. Nearly a month ago, a kind of general hartal was started there. The mere fact that such a big-scale strike was carried on in a peaceful way for such a long time is a remarkable feature and a tribute to the organisation of Indian labour in Ceylon.

We do not want to increase the bitterness between the Indians and the Ceylonese, because ultimately our interests are alike, and we have to pull together. It is quite easy for India to bring enormous pressure on Ceylon apart from these strikes and hartals because, to a considerable extent, the economy of Ceylon must depend on India. Despite the many grievances of Indian nationals in Ceylon against the Ceylon Government's policy, India did send food to help Ceylon to tide over the recent crisis. We did this because we did not want our grievances to be a pretext not to help them. After all, we are very much a big brother to Ceylon — big in size and in economic position — and one does not like to use such pressure as might be normally used elsewhere in such a situation.

When I visited Ceylon six years ago, even then I took up an attitude not of threat and fighting, but rather of trying to settle it by goodwill. But the kind of thing that is happening in Ceylon today irritates one very much. It is a very small-minded policy, which might, for a moment, yield small results to a few, but it leads to grave consequences. I do hope the Ceylon Government will consider the broader aspects of this question and meet us at least half-way. We are prepared to go more than half-way.

3. The Sri Lanka Government acquired the Knavesmere estate under its land settlement and village improvement scheme.

I myself would like to go to Ceylon as soon as possible. Meanwhile, two of the members of the Committee appointed by the Congress Executive, Mr. Aryanayakam and Mr. Ramachandran,[4] would go immediately to Ceylon, more or less to investigate and report. I myself and Mr. Rajagopalachari might follow them later.

I appeal to the Indian press to take up the question of Indians in Ceylon and deal with it not in an aggressive and offensive manner, but rather in a firm, peaceful and friendly manner. The Ceylon press, as a whole, is giving very little publicity to the cause of Indian nationals in Ceylon.

4. G. Ramachandran (b. 1904); imprisoned seven times during freedom struggle; Minister, first Kerala Congress Ministry, 1947; founder-director, Gandhigram Rural University, Madurai; member, Rajya Sabha, 1964-70.

36. The Need for Cultural Centres Abroad[1]

As I was reading the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Indian Association and Institute Ltd., I wondered why some such thing had not been done previously. It is an obvious necessity. I know that some efforts to start cultural and similar centres abroad have been made in the past, but they have been on a small scale and have not gone far. It seems to me essential that social and cultural centres as well as student centres should be established for Indians in foreign countries where our people live or go for studies. Some such thing is particularly necessary in the United Kingdom where such large numbers of Indians still reside or study. Something had been done in the past for students by official agencies, but this has been entirely unsatisfactory as it was bound to be so long as the official agency was divorced from the living currents of Indian life. A free India would naturally remedy this defect. Nevertheless it is desirable for private efforts to be made in this connection.

I welcome, therefore, the formation of the Indian Association and Institute in England. It aims at an ambitious programme of activity. Even if it succeeds in part it would have done a good and worthwhile job from the point of view of Indians abroad as well as from the point of view of others who want to know something about India. The sub-

1. Message given at Allahabad on 12 July 1946 on the formation of the Indian Association and Institute in England. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

scribers and promoters of this Association are well-known Indian residents of England and I have faith in their capacity to make this scheme a success. The burden will partly fall on Indians in London, but obviously if this job is to be done it must be done well and in a manner worthy of India. Therefore it is necessary that people in India should help also. I hope this help will be forthcoming.

At present Indians going abroad to any country have no national centre there. The nationals of almost all other countries have such centres wherever they go. It is time that Indians also have social and cultural centres in the big cities of the world. London must have them, so also Paris, Washington, Moscow, Prague, Cairo and Nanking. This scheme deals more or less with England alone. Let us make a beginning there, and then we can start in other places also. It is obvious that any such scheme has enormous possibilities of development. It should be welcomed not only by Indians but by Britishers, for it will mean providing healthy contacts between the two. In the past relations between the two had been unhealthy because England's relation with India was unhealthy. A free India will function differently. It will be busy with vast schemes of internal developments. At the same time it is bound to take an important part in international affairs. It is desirable that opportunities should be provided for healthy contacts to develop between Indians and others so that a measure of mutual understanding follows.

I wish the scheme every success. I shall watch its unfolding and development with great interest.

N.B. Shri V.K. Krishna Menon has conveyed to me a resolution of this Association and Institute inviting me to be acting honorary president. Normally I hesitate to accept even honorary offices but in the present instance I gladly agree as I am desirous of giving such help as I can.

37. To E.W. Aryanayakam[1]

Lucknow
14 July 1946

My dear Aryanayakam,

Your telegram has just been telephoned to me from Allahabad. I am glad you are going to Ceylon soon. I hope you are taking Ramachandran with you. I suggested in a letter to you from Bombay that you

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

might break journey in Madras and see Rajagopalachari who is also a member of our Ceylon Committee.

I look upon your preliminary visit to Ceylon more as exploratory than as an attempt to settle anything finally. I should like you to meet the ministers, especially Senanayake, the Ceylon Indian Congress people and the Indian estate labourers. These last named must have suffered during the strike and will require soothing.

It is difficult to lay down any hard and fast line of approach. We are especially interested in the fate of large numbers of Indian labourers in the tea and rubber estates. The Indian merchants are well capable of looking after themselves though of course we should help them in every reasonable demand. I am entirely against our merchant classes there claiming any special privileges, such as the British claim in India. They have done that in the past and I am quite clear in my mind that they must not do so. Apart from this they must have fair treatment and an open field.

I agree with what Senanayake has said that Indians in Ceylon cannot have at the same time the privileges of both Ceylon and Indian nationalities. They have to choose and undertake the corresponding obligations. It is easy for merchant classes to make a choice and probably most of them would like to continue to remain Indian nationals.

With labour this position becomes difficult and in practice it has been made terribly difficult. The only right course is to fix a time limit and accept all those who have been there a certain number of years as Ceylon nationals, unless they choose to opt out. Even if a positive affirmation is necessary to become a Ceylon national this should be made quite easy so that the labour union or the Ceylon National Congress might thus get the proper forms filled in and forwarded to the proper authority. I understand that the procedure thus far has been one of vigorous cross-examination which confuses the poor labourer and usually his application is rejected.[2]

About the new scheme of village settlement, Indians should be allowed full chance to take advantage of it if they want to. Secondly in any event nobody should be dispossessed or ejected without some other provision being made for him or her. This would apply to the Indians ejected from the Knavesmere estate.

2. The new constitution of Sri Lanka left the question of franchise and citizenship for Indians at the mercy of the majority community of Sinhalese. Non-Indian foreigners could secure citizenship and franchise after six months of residence. But an Indian had to go through a humiliating procedure.

These are just odd suggestions. You should discuss the matter fully with the Ceylon Indian Congress people and get to know their view on it. We do not want any special privileges which go against the welfare of Ceylon or the people of Ceylon. But we want fair treatment for our people and full opportunity to them to become Ceylon nationals in law as in fact many of them have been. Also we want Indian nationals residing in Ceylon to have as honourable a place as that given to any other outsiders. There is no reason why an Englishman, who is obviously not a Ceylon national, should be favoured at the expense of an Indian.

Finally we want friendly relations between India and Ceylon because we are convinced that our future is linked together. Our approach is therefore entirely different from what it might be to aliens and foreigners. If the Ceylon Government reciprocated in this way I have no doubt that we can easily come to a settlement.

It is my desire to visit Ceylon though I cannot say just when this will be. After your return I hope to meet you and discuss the matter with you and then fix a date for my own visit. Meanwhile, I hope that everyone concerned in Ceylon will avoid doing anything which worsens the situation.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

38. The Struggle of Indians in Natal[1]

We are watching with anxious interest and deep admiration our countrymen's heroic struggle in South Africa.[2] We shall be with you to the end. *Jai Hind.*

1. Allahabad, 18 July 1946. Reply to a cable of the secretary of the Natal Indian Congress telling of the struggle in South Africa. *The Hindustan Times*, 19 July 1946.
2. In protest against the segregation law Indians in Durban started a satyagraha in June 1946 by establishing tented camps in the European residential zone. On 24 June 1946, 99 passive resisters were arrested.

39. Request for Financial Support for Inter-Asian Relations Conference[1]

Dear...,

The executive committee of the Indian Council of World Affairs has endorsed my suggestion of an inter-Asian relations conference, to be held early next year at Delhi or some other suitable place in India. The proposal has already had an encouraging response from prominent leaders in Syria, Indonesia, Burma and Ceylon.

The main object of the Conference will be to exchange ideas regarding the common problems which all Asian countries must face in the post-war era. The final agenda cannot be prepared in detail without previous consultation with the participating countries. Tentatively, however, the following topics have been approved by the executive committee of the Indian Council of World Affairs: (a) national movements for freedom in Asia; (b) racial problems, with special reference to the root-causes of racial conflicts; (c) transition from a colonial to national economy, dictated primarily by national interests, but with due regard to international cooperation; (d) inter-Asian emigration and the status and treatment of immigrants; (e) welfare problems, with special reference to public health and nutrition; (f) problems of industrial labour and industrial development; (g) cultural problems, with special reference to education, art and architecture, scientific research and literature; (h) the status of women and women's movements in Asia.

Each participating country will be invited to send a certain number of delegates and obesrvers, to be selected by organisations having objects similar to those of the Indian Council of World Affairs. Invitations will shortly go out to representative leaders in the different countries of Asia, so that we may have at the conference a full and satisfactory discussion of the problems on the agenda. It is hoped that one result of the conference may be the periodical summoning of similar gatherings at suitable intervals at different centres in Asia.

India, as the host, will have to arrange for the accommodation of the delegates who will attend the conference. Adequate preparations must be made for the reception of the delegates from other countries and facilities afforded to them (to the extent that funds permit) to see something of India during their stay in the country.

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I have accepted the invitation of the executive committee of the Indian Council of World Affairs to be chairman of the committee entrusted with the task of organising the conference. I would be grateful for a generous contribution from you to meet the expenses of the conference. Cheques may be drawn in my favour and sent to me at the above address.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

40. Cable to Maharaj Singh[1]

Greetings to *Searchlight*.[2] May it prove brave fighter in cause which is so gallantly represented today by our fellow countrymen in South Africa. Their passive resistance struggle is not for Indians only but against all racial dominance and inequality and for human dignity and progress. They will ultimately win as India will win her freedom because there is no other way to end world conflicts.

1. 1 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. G-8/1946-47, p. 718, N.M.M.L.
2. *The Searchlight Weekly* was started to support the cause of Indians in South Africa.

41. Aerial Battles over Java[1]

The newspapers tell us of aerial battles over Java, where the Dutch are trying to smother and crush the Indonesian Republic. It is stated that

1. Statement to the press, Wardha, 10 August 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 11 August 1946.

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India, as the host, will have to arrange for the accommodation of the delegates who will attend the conference. Adequate preparations must be made for the reception of the delegates from other countries and facilities afforded to them (to the extent that funds permit) to see something of India during their stay in the country. An approximate estimate of the expenses of the conference is two lakh rupees.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Jawaharlal wrote this letter from Delhi on 30 July 1946 to many prominent people.

some Allied fighter planes have also cooperated with the Dutch. It is well for us to remember that, while we are inevitably concerned with our own struggle for independence, our brothers and sisters in Indonesia are fighting to retain their independence and to protect their new-born Republic. The 17th of August is the Independence Day of Indonesia and I am sure that on that day large numbers of people in India would like to send their greetings and good wishes to the people of Indonesia and to express their solidarity in the cause of Asian freedom. I hope to join the celebrations in Bombay on that day. The unity of Asian freedom from the east, south-east and west of this great continent becomes ever more evident. In order to ensure this unity and to develop closer relations between the different countries of Asia it has been proposed to hold a conference of representatives from Asian countries in January or February next. Meanwhile, our thoughts go to Java and all other places in Asia where the struggle for freedom is going on today.

42. Restrictions on Immigration to East Africa[1]

The Working Committee having heard Mr. R.B. Pandya on behalf of the East African Indian National Congress and Mr. Harichand M. Shah on behalf of the Africa and Overseas Merchants Chamber, on the attempts made by the Governments of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika to introduce anti-Indian immigration legislation, express their deep concern over the situation developing in these territories.[2]

In view of the assurances given by the East African Governments to the Government of India that defence regulations restricting immigration were a temporary measure to meet certain wartime needs, the Working Committee take a very grave view of the refusal of these Governments

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal and passed by the Congress Working Committee, Wardha, 12 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 25/1946 p. 181, N.M.M.L.
2. The bill aimed at making permanent the immigration restrictions imposed under cover of shortage of food and housing as a temporary war measure. The bill also started that an immigration permit might be refused if it was sought for employment which a suitably qualified resident could take up. Permits required capital sums from the immigrants seeking to start business on their own account.

to withdraw these regulations as promised, and ask the Government of India to take appropriate measures to secure without delay the fulfilment of these promises by the Governments concerned.

The Working Committee can see no justification whatsoever for the introduction of the immigration restriction bill in the present state of the political, economic and social development of the East African territories and their inhabitants, and is emphatically of opinion that the British Colonial Office should restore pre-war conditions as regards immigration by withdrawing wartime regulations and should prevent the anti-Indian policy of the European inhabitants from being given sanction and legislative shape.

Indians were in East Africa long before any British set foot on that soil and they could point to as many generations of useful industry on the coast as well as inland as the white settlers could count years of residence. In consideration of this history of colonisation and opening up of East African territories, Mr. Winston Churchill came to the conclusion and wrote in his book many years ago that no government with a scrap of respect for honest dealing between man and man could introduce a policy of keeping Indians out of East Africa.

The Committee are also of opinion that any step to bring about the economic union of the three East African territories should include the provision for equal representation as proposed by the British Colonial Office and should not yield to the pressure of the European population to abandon this provision.

The Committee reiterate the protest against the reservation of the best part of the land, the Highlands, for white men, by excluding even the Africans to whom the soil of their own country must belong.

The Committee wish all success to the delegation[3] going to East Africa under the leadership of Rajah Sir Maharaj Singh to study the situation on the advisability of dropping their proposed anti-Indian immigation legislation which is now being precipitated, in view of developments in India, and hope that they will be able to convince the East African Governments that any anti-Indian policy encouraged in East Africa will be an intolerable addition to the insults and provocations which are aimed at India and which undoubtedly serve to postpone the day of realisation of true world peace and security.

The Working Committee have noted with pleasure that cordial relations prevail between the Africans and Indians, and trust that there will

3. The Government of India had deputed Maharaj Singh, K. Sarwar Hasan and C.S. Jha to East Africa to examine the extent to which Indian interests would be affected by the proposed Immigration Restriction Bill.

be continued cooperation between the two for their mutual advancement; and for the removal of the disabilities which are sought to be imposed upon both of them by the white settlers.

43. Goodwill to East Africa[1]

My good wishes to our countrymen and countrywomen in East Afrirca and through them to the Africans. The Congress Working Committee have already expressed their opinion on the position of Indians in East Africa and the attempts being made to prevent further immigration of Indians there and otherwise to discriminate against our people.[2]

Nowhere in the world can we accept a lower status for our people than the status of others. Nowhere will we approve of racialism or the suppression of one people or race by another. Indians abroad must always remember that they have the honour of India in their keeping. That is a great pivilege and responsibility. That honour involves fair and friendly dealings with the people of the country they go to. It involves also non-submission to wrong and injustice. *Jai Hind.*

1. Message to East African Indians, Bombay, 14 August 1946: *The Hindu*, 16 August 1946.
2. See preceding item.

44. To C.W.W. Kannangara[1]

3 August 1946
Allahabad

Dear Dr. Kannangara,[2]

Thank you for your letter of the 24th July. I have been wanting to visit Ceylon for some time past, but I am not yet sure if or when I shall go there. That depends partly on my work here and partly on my coming to the conclusion that my visit will be useful to all concerned. Certain comments in the Ceylon press would seem to indicate that my proposed

1. J.N. Collection.
2. At this time Minister of Education in the Sri Lanka Government.

visit was not welcomed by some members of the Ceylon Government. Naturally I do not wish to thrust myself where I am not wanted. My purpose in going to Ceylon was a friendly one of meeting Ceylonese leaders as well as Indians and trying to help in solving such problems as had arisen and putting an end to any friction that might exist. It was indeed with this viewpoint that our Congress Working Committee passed a resolution advising the Ceylon Indian Congress to withdraw the strike of estate labourers. We are eager and anxious to develop close and friendly relations with the people of Ceylon because we are convinced that we have to pull together in the future. We do not look upon Ceylon as a foreign country and, therefore, it pains us when some of our friends there do not reciprocate fully.

I would be happy to attend a meeting of the All-Ceylon Literary Association, but as the date of my visit is entirely uncertain it would not be desirable for the Association to upset their programme because of me. In case I am in Ceylon at the time, I shall deem it a privilege to address the Literary Association. As you must be aware, however, the situation in India is such that it is not easy for me to go abroad or to make any long-distance programme.

Allahabad
4 August 1946

45. To C.E. Jayewardene[1]

Allahabad
4 August 1946

Dear Mr. Jayewardene,[2]
Thank you for your letter[3] of the 20th July. My visit to Ceylon is still a doubtful and far away affair. It is difficult for me to fix any engagements from here. But certainly I shall bear your kind invitation in mind. If I go to Ceylon it will be on a short visit and I shall be busy with my main object.

1. J.N. Collection.
2. Brother of J.R. Jayewardene and a leader of the Ceylon National Congress.
3. In which Jayewardene invited Jawaharlal to be his guest during his proposed visit to Sri Lanka.

We are all desirous here of developing closer relations with Ceylon. It is with this object that I would go there. I regret greatly that petty-minded people on both sides should come in the way of those closer relations.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

46. To E. Celler[1]

Allahabad
4 August 1946

My dear Mr. Celler,[2]

Thank you for your letter of July 8th for the good wishes it contains. We were all pleased to learn of the passage of your bill to permit Indian immigration and naturalisation in the United States.[3] This does not make much difference so far as numbers are concerned, but undoubtedly it is a right gesture which should help in promoting better relations between India and the United States.

We in India know well of the interest you have taken in the cause of India's freedom. We have appreciated your efforts in this direction. India will undoubtedly be independent in the near future in spite of our present difficulties. What part she will play as an independent country, both domestically and internationally, is more difficult to say. Whatever that part may be, it will be an important one for she is too big a country to remain in the second rank. I hope that in this future India will have close relations with the United States to the mutual advantage of both countries.

With all good wishes to you,

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.
2. (1888-1966); as member of the U.S. House of Representatives Celler advocated liberalisation of the immigration and naturalisation laws and generally supported the cause of India.
3. The Indian Naturalisation Bill, passed by the U.S. Senate on 2 July 1946, provided for the naturalisation of 4000 Indians already living in the U.S., and an annual immigration of 100 Indians.

47. To Roger Baldwin[1]

Allahabad
6 August 1946

My dear Roger,
I received your letter[2] of April 14th a long time ago. I was happy to hear from you again not only because you are an old friend but also because of your irrepressible faith in the future of internationalism on a democratic basis. I wish I could share that optimism though certainly I do not despair, but the world is in a pretty bad way and there seems to be no end to human folly.

Looking at it from another point of view, it is exciting to be alive and to take part in what you say is the most significant struggle of our times.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.
2. Roger Baldwin wrote on 14 April 1946: "You are one of the architects of the new world far beyond the framers of the United Nations....I am, as ever, hopeful for the future of internationalism on a democratic basis."

48. Foundations of World Peace[1]

Through my young friend, Ram Krishna Bajaj,[2] and other delegates who are going to the World Students Congress from India, I send my greetings and good wishes to the Congress which is meeting in the historic city of Prague. The world is in a bad way and though the world war is over we live still in the tension of conflict and possible future wars. It is for the youth of the world to rescue humanity from this tragic round and to build anew on surer foundations. Those foundations must mean

1. Wardha, 9 August 1946. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. This message was sent to the World Students Congress held at Prague on 18-31 August 1946.
2. (b. 1923); younger son of Jamnalal Bajaj; imprisoned for participation in freedom struggle, 1941 and 1942-45; now an industrialist.

the elimination of fascism and imperialism and colonialism and racialism and the domination of one country or people or class over another. Only then will the true foundations of peace and progress be laid and the fear of war removed and the various peoples of the world cooperate together to build a new order of freedom for man. For freedom is indivisible, just as peace is today indivisible.

To this great task I hope the Students Congress will devote itself.

49. Telegram to Lord Wavell[1]

Congress Working Committee is deeply perturbed at news of despatch Indian troops to Iran.[2] For many years Congress has expressed strong objection to use Indian troops overseas without consent Indian people. This action appears more serious in altered circumstances of today. Committee has asked me refer matter to you for elucidation before further consideration. Would be grateful to have your reply here.[3]

1. Sent from Wardha, 10 August 1946. J.N. Collection.
2. On 3 August 1946, the Government of India announced that Indian troops had been sent to Basra in order that they might be at hand for the protection, should circumstances demand it, of Indians, British and Arabs and to safeguard Indian and British interests in south Iran.
3. Wavell replied that the troops had been sent to Iraq where they were welcomed, and not to Iran, that there were vital Indian interests in regard to oil supply, and that many Indian lives were threatened.

50. Inter-Asian Relations[1]

I remember when I was in Europe just twenty years ago, I attended a conference in Brussels, at which many Asian and European countries

1. Address to a meeting convened by the Bombay branch of the Indian Council of World Affairs, 22 August 1946. *India Quarterly*, (New Delhi), Vol. 11. 1946, pp. 323-326.

were represented. Then those who came from Asia met together, and we talked about developing some kind of contacts so that we could meet occasionally, somewhere in Asia, and develop political, economic and other relations, and, at any rate, get to know each other better. But though everybody agreed, and there were plenty of people from China, Indo-China, Indonesia, Ceylon, India, some from Syria, and I think one or two from Iran, an odd fact emerged: that this conference or meeting that we might have, of representatives from Asia, could not meet anywhere in Asia! It was easier to meet in Paris, Berlin, or Brussels, or London, than anywhere in Asia, partly because of political restrictions and partly because of travel difficulties which made it easier to reach European countries than any part of Asia. So the project dropped, and contacts dropped, except in so far as, for the following years, I remained in touch with many of these people from Syria to Indo-China. We used to correspond sometimes and it might interest you to know that some of the friends I made twenty years ago at the conference are running the Indonesian Republic today; and those old contacts have stood us well because, apart from knowing each other distantly, personal relationships made me personally more interested in Indonesia and to a small extent made them more interested in India. And if you have read any of the statements made by the Indonesian leaders you will find an amazing knowledge in them of Indian affairs, Indian political developments—even in some detail. As you know also, recently—some months back—they offered to send a great deal of rice here. That too, I think, was partly due to certain personal contacts that began nearly twenty years ago.

It is extraordinary really, when you come to think of it, that no one has previously sponsored a new organisation or group of individuals, such as an Asiatic—forgive me, I dislike using that word—Asian conference because it is so obviously a thing that should be done. Especially now, that is, since the last war, closer relations between Asian countries have become so absolutely essential that, whether you sponsor this conference or not, it is bound to come and as it is bound to come we may as well take a lead in it because, whichever way you look at it, India happens to be the centre of all this. Nowadays, one hears a great deal about regions. Well, whether one talks of the Middle East, or Middle West, or South East Asia, or China, they all impinge on India; all depend on India, economically, politically and for defence purposes. They cannot help looking at India and we cannot help looking at them. There has been a great deal of talk about southern Asia and south eastern Asia regions, in which of course India is included. Other people have talked about an Indian Ocean region and again India is included. India is also

the centre viewed in terms of the defence of the countries of western Asia. It is obvious that India has to be some kind of a base for defence. The other day I saw something about some kind of military memorandum, and it was said there, that if anything took place in the Middle East obviously defence must be organised from India. In any defence organisation from India, obviously the second base must be South India. So even South India comes into it. Nowadays you must think of these things in terms of 'depth' as they call it. So it seems that in the modern world it is inevitable for India to be the centre of things in Asia. (In that term, I would include Australia and New Zealand too, being in the Indian Ocean region. East Africa comes into it also.) If so, it is about time that we in India began to think of this conference not vaguely but concretely and to think of it in cooperation with the representatives of all these other countries. I wish many of our people could visit these countries more than they do, not merely as tourists, but in many other ways. I should like to have political contacts with those countries but so long as political contacts are not available, cultural contacts, economic contacts and other contacts can grow. This conference that is proposed might well begin this kind of development. A conference at an expert level, under the auspices of an unofficial and non-political body like the Indian Council of World Affairs, to review the position of Asia in the post-war world, exchange ideas on the problems which are common to all Asian countries and study the ways and means of promoting closer contacts between them will, I am sure, lead to fruitful results.

I was asked who was to send representatives. I have not the least notion, because that really depends on the type of organisations they have there and without knowledge of that how am I to reply to that question? I would suggest that your definition should be vague and not exclusive, so that you can adjust yourself to any type of organisation —provided it is not undesirable—that you find in those countries. It may be even that Governments might be unofficially represented. If some countries have no organisations of this type and want to send observers, they should be welcome. A type of organisation like the Pacific Relations Institute—something like that—should be peculiarly suitable. Probably in each country they have their own type of organisation and I think they should be permitted to send delegates. First try to find out what organisations there are and then pick and choose between them, without being too exclusive about it. When you have more than one organisation to choose from they may be asked to send a joint and agreed delegation. What is important is that we must have from each country the best men that it can send, men who are well conversant with the problems set for discussion, the needs of their countries

and their relations with those of the rest of Asia. In the choice of delegates, the need to represent different points of view at the conference will, I am sure, be borne in mind. Thus you may have delegates from Palestine to present both the Jewish and the Arab points of view. The delegates from China may put forward the points of view of both the Kuomintang and the Communists. At the same time care must be taken to avoid trespassing upon the domestic problems of particular states. The conference is an inter-Asian relations conference and every care must be taken to see that the subjects selected for discussion and the approach to them are strictly inter-Asian in character. We avoid, on the one hand, controversial issues relating to particular Asian states and, on the other, issues which have more than an Asian incidence and can be solved only at higher levels.

I remember, when this subject was being discussed at first, some people thought the conference might be confined to south eastern Asia. I don't see why only south eastern Asia should be invited although it does form a region somewhat, from the defence and economic points of view, more closely allied to India. Then some people were afraid that if we spread out too much we might get nowhere, but I think we should spread out. I do not suppose that at this conference any revolutionary changes would be made, or anything would happen politically that would create a marked change in any country. I do think, however, that the mere act of holding this conference is psychologically revolutionary, that is to say, in making the people of Asia think in terms of closer cooperation with each other.

You know that in China one of the marked effects of the last war, of the Japanese invasion, was to push their southern regions nearer to India and this led them to think more of India. The Burma Road development was a result of this. And their previous outlook, which was confined to the Treaty Ports,[2] was upset and reversed and they had to think of the mainland more than of the hinterland. To some extent this had also happened more in recent years as a result of air traffic.

I wonder if you have realised that one of the major effects of the British occupation of India was the isolation of India from the rest of Asia. Until the British came here India had many close contacts with her neighbouring countries, but the result of British rule, partly deliberately, and partly as a result of the development of sea routes, cut us off completely from these countries and our contacts with each other were boken

2. The five Chinese ports—Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningbo and Shanghai—that were opened to British consuls and merchants in 1842 at the end of the First Opium War.

except by way of sea routes controlled by Europe, more especially by England.

In the last twenty or thirty years great changes have been taking place for various reasons, but more especially because of the development of airlines, and again, inevitably, India is getting into contact more and more with those countries.

I referred earlier to the Middle East, the Middle West, to China and South East Asia. Then there is a huge chunk of a country to the north of us, that is, Soviet Russia including Siberia and Turkestan. Obviously it is desirable for India to have relations with it—close relations—and I should imagine that, as soon as India can do so, one of the first things we should do is to establish proper diplomatic relations with all these Asian countries, including all the Asian Republics of the Soviet Union—which are very important for us from the political point of view. As to where and how these Republics of the Soviet Union would participate and what place they would occupy in the conference, I am not clear in my own mind, because as far as I know that would depend entirely on the governments there and I do not know whether they have any private organisations of this type. It might be possible for some observers to come here from these regions. I should personally like to have them here because it would be to our mutual interest to get to know each other.

Talking of subjects for discussion, these include (a) national movements for freedom in Asia; (b) racial problems with special reference to the rootcauses of racial conflicts; (c) transition from a colonial to a national economy, dictated primarily by national interests, but with due regard to international cooperation; (d) inter-Asian emigration and the status and treatment of immigrants; (e) welfare problems with special reference to public health and nutrition; (f) problems of industrial labour and industrial development; (g) cultural problems with special reference to education, art and architecture, scientific research and literature; and (h) the status of women and women's movements in Asia. Every one of these problems raises issues of the first magnitude for the future of Asia. It is possible that you may call them non-political subjects; but they all impinge on politics, with a background of economics, if you like racial problems, which are terribly important and are likely to become more important in future; in fact these problems all impinge on politics. The conference will not be meeting politically in the sense to become more important in future; in fact these problems all impinge cannot ignore the political aspect, and I should imagine that there should be perfect freedom of discussion about these matters. If you want to

include politics you may do so. They will not be ruled out. All these things you have to deal with in a rather flexible manner, particularly as you have no precedent of any kind to guide you and you have to make rules while you are functioning. Probably there will be difficulties, conflicts, etc., but you should try to avoid conflicts on major issues of the day as far as possible. One of the major issues of the day is a certain conflict between the great powers and we are seeing daily reports of specimens of what is called 'open diplomacy' even in the Peace Conference that is being held. That conflict between the great powers really colours all politics of the world today and it may colour them even more in the future. Almost every country gradually has to take sides—not sides in the material sense but sides in the political sense—especially those countries which are involved in the happenings in Iran. What is happening in Iran today is a very serious problem. I do not know all the facts, but it is obvious that what is happening in Iran might lead to very big trouble. On the one hand, the British have sent troops there openly to protect their oil interest; on the other, Russia says that she will send Russian forces down from the north. Well, between the two, I don't quite know what happens to Iran. I think anyway that it would be better that we should not go too deeply into the political problems of the day. But apart from that, politics are bound to come in and you will have to face them. I do not see how you can ignore them. More especially, developments in Iran make one realise that the world is moving very fast. In what direction we are moving I don't know, but it is certainly not a pleasant direction and we are certainly not in a static condition. Anyway, we have to proceed as if nothing untoward will happen on a big scale. We have no doubt that, if we do meet, the conference will not put an end to the world's troubles. The conference will help to promote good relations with neighbouring countries. It will help to pool ideas and experience with a view to raising living standards. It will strengthen cultural, social and economic ties among the peoples of Asia. The data papers presented to the conference will constitute valuable documents and the discussions on them will, we hope, throw out concrete suggestions for practical policy.

I do not see why we in India or a group of Asian nations should be pushed this way or that way. Why shouldn't we stand on our own feet and not be just playthings of great powers? Naturally, we all have our sympathies but if we meet together and confer together, we may develop a sense of solidarity and strength which may help us to develop some kind of a real inter-Asian policy (I hope against nobody, against neither Europe, America nor Russia, nor any other power) primarily to preserve and develop ourselves and to help world peace so far as we can.

Just one word more. Apart from our immediate problems, people have some kind of distant view of the shape of things to come. Many persons think that, in the course of the next generation or so, a world federation will be established. Ultimately, I suppose it is bound to come it the world survives till then. But short of that it is inevitable that larger and larger federations will develop. I do not know when that will be. It may be in Asia; it may be in Europe. There may be two or three federations. In Asia it seems inevitable that two or three huge federations will develop. But whichever way you look at it, whether it is a kind of federation between South East Asia and India (and these countries are taken together, may be for economic and other reasons) or may be a big federation of West Asia up to India or including India, or East Asia and India leaving out China, and (it is quite conceivable that these federations might develop) India immediately becomes the centre again of everything. India is going to be the centre of a very big federation and, if you think in those terms, problems of today in India immediately take another shape. Take, for instance, the so-called communal problem in India today. It becomes completely different if you think of it in terms of a large federation consisting of India and other countries which are on the borders of India, to the right and to the left. And so, from the point of view of all these possible developments of the future, and not too distant future, it is very desirable for us to gain contacts and develop closer relations with countries all over Asia.

51. To Johanan Kaufmann[1]

Allahabad
August 25, 1946

Dear Comrade,[2]

Thank you for your letter of the 9th July. I am glad that you like my book *Glimpses of World History*.

I have been following events in Palestine with great attention and interest. I have every sympathy for the Jews but I feel that the only way for them to find a solution of the Palestine problem is through cooperation with the Arabs. Any attempt to coerce them is not going to succeed and will only lead to bitter memories.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. A lawyer in Tel Aviv.

52. To W. Rahula[1]

Allahabad
August 25, 1946

My dear Bhikkhu Rahula,

You will forgive me, I hope, for the delay in answering your letters[2] of the 28th July. I read these with great interest and Aryanayakam also told me much about the movement in which you are taking such an important part. We have given much thought to Ceylon and the future relations of Ceylon and India. I have no doubt in my mind that there is no other way except a federation of India, Ceylon and other countries of South East Asia. But obviously this can only be a matter to be decided by free will of those concerned. I realise that India being so big and potentially strong must rather frighten some people in Ceylon. Yet I do not think there is any reason to fear.

In the context of the world today a country like Ceylon cannot be isolated. It may perhaps hang on to England for a while but that too cannot last long. So the only way out is for a free and equal partnership with India. If that is so, then any step taken to keep the peoples of Ceylon and India estranged from one another is a wrong step and opposed to the natural course of historical development.

I want to visit Ceylon very much as early as possible but I fear this may not be easy in the near future. When I come there I shall certainly meet you and your colleagues.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He invited Jawaharlal to Sri Lanka to preside over a function of the Vidyalankara Praveena, a Buddhist university.

53 To Lord Wavell[1]

New Delhi
28 August 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

International Labour Organisation Conference: Thank you for your letter of 24th August about the International Labour Organisation Con-

1. J.N. Collection.

ference which begins in Montreal on the 19th September. As the delegates have to leave soon for some preliminary conferences, it is difficult to make any changes at this stage either in the delegates or in the advisers. But, as you have suggested, the new government may consider this matter and decide to send other delegates.

Peace Conference: Regarding the Peace Conference which is being held in Paris, it is difficult to know exactly what the position is and how matters will shape themselves. India is naturally interested not only in the problems of some of the African territories but in the wider and more vital problem of ensuring peace and security. An Indian delegate will have to express India's viewpoint on this more basic problem also. For the present, however, we feel that no steps need be taken regarding the choice of fresh delegates. The interim government can consider the situation then existing and decide this matter.

U.N.O. General Assembly: You told me that some provisional arrangements have been made for the representation of India at the forthcoming meeting of the U.N.O. General Assembly in America at which the South African Indian question is likely to come up for consideration. You suggested some names too which included Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai[2] and Mr. Deshmukh,[3] till lately the Agent General in South Africa. You, however, said that Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar might be induced to go more specially for a meeting of the section over which he has been presiding.

In view of the past work that Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar has done as president of this section and the desire of the British Foreign Secretary to have him to continue this work, we are agreeable to his doing so.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu is unfortunately not well enough to undertake this journey. We suggest that the following three delegates might be appointed for this meeting if the U.N.O. General Assembly: Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, and Syed Raza Ali[4] who was Agent General for India in South Africa some years ago. We have been unable to approach these three and get their consent for lack of time, but we think they would make a good team, more specially for-

2. (1891-1954); joined the I.C.S. in 1914; India's Agent-General to the U.S., 1941-47; Secretary-General, Ministry of External Affairs, 1947-52; Governor of Bombay, 1952-54.
3. R.M. Deshmukh (b. 1892-1981); High Commissioner for India in South Africa, 1945-47; Prime Minister and Adviser to the Rajpramukh of Vindhya Pradesh, 1947-48; member, Rajya Sabha, 1952-58.
4. (1882-1949); took part in Swaraj and Khilafat movements but then left the Congress; member, Council of States, 1921-26; member, Public Service Commission, 1926-31; Agent-General for India in South Africa, 1935-38.

the South African issue. We suggest that Mrs. Pandit might be the leader of the delegation. It is possible that she may not be able to remain out of India for a lengthy period, but she could go for two or three weeks.

If you so desire one or two other names can be added from your list to these three.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

54. Objectives of India's Foreign Policy[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru: India's new popular government will take a lively interest in international affairs, pursuing an independent policy compatible with her own national interests.

Question: Would not the new government, which takes office on Monday, become so engrossed in internal changes along nationalist lines that foreign affairs will be left in the background?

JN: It is impossible for me at this time to blueprint in detail India's foreign policy. I re-affirm, however, my interpretation of India's future foreign policy as I stated it in March.[2] I said that India would be attracted more to those countries which favoured her own independence and progress. Her general policy is sure to be one of promoting world peace, preventing aggression and helping, insofar as possible, in the attainment of freedom by subject countries of Asia and Africa. We want to be friendly with the three principal powers, but only on the basis of complete freedom. Generally speaking, India would not like to entangle herself with other people's feuds and imperialist rivalries.

Our desire is that India pull her full weight in world affairs. Her influence will be for peace and freedom and there is no doubt that despite internal preoccupations and changes, we will take a lively interest in foreign affairs — partly because we want to do so, and partly because no country can ignore them today.

Q: How can India promote world peace and yet avoid entanglement?

JN: With other people's feuds, I mean the latter phrase specifically in relation to India's role as a subject nation involved in British policies.

It doesn't mean a policy of isolating India. It means we are not allow-

1. Interview given to George E. Jones in Delhi on 30 August 1946 and published in *The New York Times*, 2 September 1946.
2. See *ante*, pp. 524-525.

ing ourselves to be exploited in international affairs.

Q: Do you think that the political turmoil of recent years will exercise an emotional effect on the association of Britain and India in foreign and Commonwealth affairs?

JN: It is inevitable that until India achieves complete freedom, there is bound to be latent friction, and the emotional aspect will be evident. Much will depend on how far the United Kingdom refrains from interfering in Indian affairs and leaves us free to act as we wish.

The new government will consider its association with British and Commonwealth policies on a basis of cooperation for our mutual advantage. This refers to a question which brought up such empire agreements as the dollar pool.[3]

There is presently no question of a pan-Asiatic federation, but it is India's desire to develop close cultural and economic relations with her neighbour countries. Of course we cannot interfere in internal developments of other countries. We would welcome China's unification on a democratic basis.

So far as we are concerned, we are entirely in favour of recognition of the Indonesian republic.

Q: Would you comment on future relations between India and the United States?

JN: I foresee development of economic and cultural intercourse with the U.S. to meet India's own needs in raising her standards of living. This development had been hampered in the past by intervention of British authority, which prevented direct contacts between India and other peoples.

Our aim is to develop India, industrially, educationally and otherwise, at a rapid pace. Our object is to raise the standard of living of the masses. For this purpose we shall have to train vast numbers of people.

We would like to send a number to the United States. From a cultural point of view, we would like to exchange students and professors. In the past, our foreign relations have been largely governed by British policy. They have not only been strictly limited but also unreal. They did not represent the relationship of people looking toward each other. A free democratic government in India would naturally expand these relations.

Q: Will your duties in the new government take you abroad, with particular reference to the United States?

JN: It is possible that my work may take me abroad, but for some time it will be difficult to leave India.

3. India accumulated during the war a credit balance in the United States. This dollar pool was liquidated under the Anglo-American loan agreement of 6 December 1945.

9

MISCELLANEOUS

The Discovery of India

1. To Nilima Devi[1]

Allahabad
March 28, 1946

My dear Nilima,
I received four copies of *The Discovery of India* today. I am afraid most of my friends have come out with criticism of its make-up and appearance. I do not know whether any material change can be made in the next impression. Certainly in the new edition that you will print there must be a number of important changes. About that I shall write to you when the time comes. Meanwhile, if it is possible to have some changes in the next impression of the second ten thousand, please have them made. I am enumerating below some of the matters requiring looking into and changing:

1. The most important is that the inner margin is not sufficient and it is difficult to read the book. I do not know why this mistake has been made. The width of the page is too small. This takes away from the attractiveness, but what is more important is this business of the inner margin. The book does not open sufficiently well for one to read it properly. Would it not be possible to have a wider page with the same printed formes which you have already got.
2. The back of the binding should be neater without the curving lines. I would prefer a different colour.
3. The dust cover also might be changed.
4. The paper of the book does not always appear to be uniform.

In a new edition the page should be definitely bigger, the type possibly somewhat smaller, the paper slightly thinner, and the index in much smaller type. The whole book will then be about 500 to 550 pages.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.

2. To Richard J. Walsh[1]

Allahabad
19 April 1946

Dear Mr. Walsh,

I suppose the American edition of my book *The Discovery of India* will be coming out soon. I find that a few copies have been sent to America by some U.S. office here. More could not be sent as they are not available in the market.

I should like you to send complimentary copies of the book on my behalf to a number of friends in America. For the moment I can't draw up a list of them and I suppose you could make a list more easily. I might, however, mention the following names:

President Truman
Mrs. Roosevelt
Henry Wallace
Sumner Welles
Congressman Cellar
Louis Fischer
Frances Gunther
Claire Boothe Luce
Roger N. Baldwin of the Civil Liberties Union
Anup Singh
My two nieces — Nayantara Pandit & Rita Pandit and Benton who used to be in Chicago University and who now, I believe, is an under-secretary of state or some such thing
Norman Thomas
Mrs. Paul Robeson

Of course you will give a copy on my behalf to Pearl Buck. Many other names will suggest themselves to you. Please send a copy to Kishna Menon in London.

How do matters stand in regard to translation of the book into European languages, especially Spanish?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.

3. To Nilima Devi[1]

New Delhi
April 25, 1946

My dear Nilima,
I have your telegram. I have no time to revise the book for the second edition. Two minor errors were pointed out to me by someone but I have lost trace of them. If any such errors come to my notice later I shall let you know.

I want to know exactly what the second edition is going to be like in size, shape, type, binding, cover, price etc. It should be possible for you to have dummy copies made previously for inspection. The price should be definitely lower.

I have just received the following telegram from Calcutta:

> Pray permit publication of ten thousand copies *Discovery of India* within three months at rupees five each. Royalty rupees ten thousand in advance. Letter follows — Book Emporium Limited.

No letter has come so far. Naturally I cannot give them permission over your head. But this telegram itself indicates how necessary it is to reduce the price of the book.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.

4. To Nilima Devi[1]

New Delhi
April 29, 1946

My dear Nilima,
I have sent a reply to your telegram. As a matter of fact I have already written to you fully. You can go ahead with arrangements for the second edition of twenty thousand. But I want full particulars about this edition and later on dummy copies. As I have said, the price must be definitely lower. I did not particularly like the paper of the last

1. J.N. Collection.

edition. It hardly seemed like the sample you had first sent me. I hope you will arrange for more suitable paper.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. To V.K. Krishna Menon[1]

Simla
5 May 1946

My dear Krishna,

Chandralekha arrived here today and gave me your letter of 27th April. I am sending a brief reply. Perhaps I might write more later. But it is not an easy matter to discuss the important issues that we are facing in a letter. I should love to have an opportunity of a talk with you so that I could tell you of the internal situation in India. It is always difficult to understand this from abroad. It is a complicated situation both within the Congress and outside it.

I appreciate all that you have written, but you must remember that we have to function within certain limitations due to that internal situation. I am writing this after the first meeting of the conference. We have viewed this Simla affair with considerable disfavour, but it was difficult to refuse the invitation. During the last five or six weeks since the Cabinet delegation has been here no progress has been made in any direction. Perhaps it might be better to say that there has been a marked deterioration. Anyway I suppose the next ten days or so will show some results, good or bad.

What you write about the international situation is helpful in understanding it. There is a general appreciation of that here, but I must tell you that there has come about a certain change not only in Congress circles but elsewhere also in the attitude to Russia. This is chiefly the result of the feeling against the Communist Party of India and their support of Pakistan and Jinnah. Because the Communist Party is intimately connected with Russia that prejudice has been transferred to some extent to Russia. Also events in the Middle East, especially in Iran, have produced this result. It would be incorrect to say that there is any definite anti-Russian feeling, but it is true that the previous enthusiasm for Russia has considerably lessened. The general opinion is that America as well as Russia are full of the pride of power and

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

military might and do not very much care for the high professions they have made. India should, therefore, keep clear of any commitments and, in so far as possible, refuse to be entangled.

I note what you say about my book. I have not seen the proof formes that you have sent yet. Of course there must be an index. I suppose you have received a copy of the book published in India. This contains an index. The publisher can arrange for this. It might help you to make your own index. Anyhow we must arrange for one.

I should like you to come here in June or whenever you can. I have long been of opinion that you should visit India and gain first hand acquaintance with conditions here. By June we should know more clearly where we stand. Perhaps there might be a meeting of the new All India Congress Committee in June.

I received your cable about the Congress presidentship. It is all very well for you to express your pleasure at it, but I am not pleased, and yet I see no way out. I shall write to you more later.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

P.S....

I read out your letter to Gandhiji, Maulana and Patel. Gandhiji said it was a good letter, by which, I suppose, he meant that he agreed with your analysis generally. But he added, much as he would like to follow your suggestions[2] about the interim period, the facts here did not permit him or others to go quite that far.

Jawaharlal

2. Krishna Menon had suggested that the Congress should insist for the interim period on a strong centre...: "in which neither the Viceroy nor any other limb of the old empire has a place... The British know that they cannot rely on the army."

6. To Nilima Devi[1]

Simla
10 May 1946

My dear Nilima,

Your letter of the 5th May. I note what you say about the proposed changes in the second edition. I shall be able to judge of them when I see the dummy.

1. J.N. Collection.

You suggested, I think, that the second edition should consist of 20,000 copies. Obviously if 20,000 copies are printed the price will be proportionately reduced. Also the bigger size of the page will reduce the price somewhat. I am anxious that the price of the second edition should be as low as possible. The larger the edition the lower the price. Modern publishing believes in big editions and low prices. However, we shall consider this when you write to me in more detail.

As for my royalties on the first impression I suggest that you might send them direct to the Punjab National Bank, Allahabad, and ask them to credit it to my account. You can send the account to me to Allahabad.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To Horace Alexander[1]

New Delhi
18 August 1946

Dear Horace,

Thank you for your attempt at appraisal. This is the kind of appraisal that I like.

You are quite right in saying that my book is really two books in one. Indeed I would say it is three or four books in one.

Our knowledge of the period of Indian expansion is so limited that it is difficult to have full political or economic information about it. I imagine that there was some kind of trade with India from the earliest times. Cultural influences followed and then political conquest. The political conquest may not have been directly organised from India. Probably adventurous cadets of royal families went over and took possession. It is evident, however, that they mixed with the people there and as a result a kind of joint governmental system was evolved. Contacts with India must necessarily have been infrequent. So India as such could not exercise any imperialist sway there. It is apparent, both on the political and cultural sides, that a kind of amalgam grew up, a mixture of India and local conditions. When powerful empires grew

1. J.N. Collection. Alexander's letter is not available.

up in South East Asia some of them were certainly imperialist and they tried to conquer and colonise neighbouring countries. India as such did not directly take part in this. Indeed those empires were probably more vital than India at that time. But in any event the religious, cultural and artistic impulse from India was very strong throughout that period and it was common both for the Buddhists and the Hindus.

I do not say anything about the other paragraphs of your letter which make one think so much.

I received another letter from you a few days ago in which a suggestion was made that American experts might be brought out here for our constitution-making. I consulted some of my colleagues and they were all of opinion that this would not be worthwhile.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. To Nilima Devi[1]

New Delhi
September 1, 1946

My dear Nilima,
Your letter of the 30th August. I have received 25 copies of the second edition that you sent.

Krishna Menon has spoken to me of his meeting you. I am glad you got on well together.

As regards your suggestion of bringing out an omnibus volume of my writings, I have no objection to it, but it is quite impossible for me to give any time to this matter. You will have to look elsewhere for this. I do not collect speeches which usually appear in distorted form in newspapers. As for articles, I usually keep a copy. Most of the important ones have appeared in some books. Some of the later ones I sent to Krishna Menon.

You must realise that I am desperately busy with other things.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.

National Herald

1. To M. Chalapathi Rau[1]

New Delhi
27 April 1946

My dear Chalapathi Rau,

I should like the *Herald* to pay special attention to the developments taking place in the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force. Some of these are rather remarkable and indicate an indefinitely long period of practically British control. Large numbers of British officers are being kept or imported. In the Navy it appears that since the R.I.N. strike large numbers of persons have been dismissed and British officers are being brought in. I enclose a note for you on the R.I.N. which will give you facts.

The future of the army as contemplated by Headquarters now is an army of 250,000 men with an officer personnel of 8,800 including 1,000 emergency commissioned officers plus 700 regulars. This number of 1,700 will be available by April 1947; another 1,000 will be available out of V.C.Os, I.O.Rs etc. This will mean roughtly 33% Indians. In addition to this, 2,400 regular British officers are said to be available. The proposed Military Academy is supposed to turn out 300 officers per year. This means that it will take from 20 to 30 years to nationalise the Indian army fully. The method of selection is such that it does not favour Indians.

In the Air Force, while fresh personnel is needed, demobilisation of the technical equipment and medical branches is taking place. This also leads to more British officers coming in, especially as it is proposed to add a number of squadrons to the Air Force.

In all the services there has been and is racial discrimination and differential pay. This is being brought out in the R.I.N. inquiry.

Our basic position is this: We are not concerned with percentages etc.; we want complete control of the Indian Army by an Indian national government and the complete withdrawal of the British army from India. The Government will then decide as to how many foreign experts it needs and what position they should occupy. All this talk of percentages is therefore beside the point except that it is creating vested interests in the defence forces.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

Again this policy obviously does not fit in with Indian independence. Independence, if it means anything at all, means that there is not a single foreign soldier on Indian soil. This policy is, therefore, to be considered in relation to political talks now. There is no reality in these talks if it is presumed that the British army or British control of the army will continue.

We have succeeded in getting newsprint allotment for the *Qaumi Awaz* for two months. I hope we shall be able to continue it after that period also. This paper is doing very good work and must continue. I suggest to you that you might have in the *Herald* a weekly column devoted to the Urdu press. It is extraordinary what these Urdu papers, chiefly Muslim League papers, are writing now. You might ask Hayatullah Ansari[2], editor of the *Qaumi Awaz*, to supply you with this column.

The position here is still very fluid and no one knows exactly what is going to happen.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. (b. 1911); editor of *Hindustan Weekly*, 1937-42 and since 1945 of *Qaumi Awaz*; member, U.P. Legislative Council, 1952-66; member, Rajya Sabha, 1966-72.

2. To Krishna Narain[1]

New Delhi
1 May 1946

My dear Krishnaji,[2]
I am writing to you about *Qaumi Awaz*. Hayatullah Ansari came here a few days ago and told us that the paper would have to stop unless Government permission for newsprint was forthcoming. Nandan had already done his best and failed. We tried again and Nandan took a great deal of trouble in the matter. We were anxious that the paper should continue for various obvious reasons. Ultimately Nandan succeeded in getting permission for newsprint for another two months. That really means that we shall be able to get newsprint after the two months are over also. You were informed of this by telegram.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1904); industrialist of Lucknow; managing director of the *National Herald*, 1938-42 and 1945-52.

Subsequently Nandan showed me your telegram asking for Rs. 100,000 immediately for this purpose. This rather took our breath away, for obviously this sum is not forthcoming anyway. No mention of this had been made at the *National Herald's* directors' meeting. I gather that the *Qaumi Awaz* is making a name for itself and is doing good work. There is a consensus of opinion on this point. On the other hand it appears that the management is bad and there is a lot of wastage. Obviously this must be remedied. I wish you would look into this matter and give your advice. The *National Herald* management should take charge of this directly or indirectly. Anyway it is entirely for you to decide what arrangements should be made. I think a considerable saving can be made in various ways. Probably it is desirable, in view of the shortage of newsprint, to reduce the size of the paper. Some foreign services which are not wholly necessary can also be limited. Other changes will suggest themselves to you. Hayatullah Ansari, the editor, is a very good man of undoubted ability and integrity but of no business experience or knowledge of management. If you could have a talk with him many matters could be cleared up.

I understand that Nandan is sending you Rs. 5,000. This will tide over present difficulties. I have no doubt that the *Qaumi Awaz* has a great future before it and we should carry on with it. If later you require some more money we should try to find this.

I do not know what has happened to Hawes[3]. Nandan was under the impression that he is joining the *Herald* on the terms offered by you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. An Indian citizen from Bangalore who worked for a few months in 1946 as the production manager of the *National Herald*.

3. To Rafi Ahmad Kidwai[1]

New Delhi
1 May 1946

My dear Rafi,

We have succeeded after great difficulty in getting permission for newsprint for the *Qaumi Awaz* for two months more. I hope that this

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

permission will be extended later. Meanwhile, it is urgently necessary that the management of the paper should be put on an efficient basis. I should like you to speak to Krishnaji and ask him to undertake this. Assure him that he will have a free hand in the matter. I think much money can be saved if proper arrangements are made. Nandan is sending some money to Krishnaji for the purpose. It is not much but it should help for the present.

I am going to Simla tonight. Everything is rather vague and I am tired of my long stay in Delhi. Pantji has just arrived and I hope to see him this afternoon. He will give you the latest news on his return.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Hayatullah Ansari[1]

New Delhi
1 May 1946

My dear Hayat,
We have managed to get permission for newsprint. Now you must concentrate on putting the venture on an efficient business basis. For this purpose you should consult Krishna Narainji and indeed leave matters largely in his hand. The *Qaumi Awaz* is bound to become a success provided only that its business side is looked after well. It is impossible to go on sinking money in it for long.

I suggested to you that you might reduce the size of the paper in order to conserve newsprint. Please consider this. Also you might consider saving some money on news services which are not wholly necessary. Advertisements can now be canvassed for on the assumption that the paper will continue. The whole business side should be under the supervision of the *Herald* management or as Krishna Narainji says.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

5. To Louise Morin[1]

4 May 1946

Dear Louise,

I have not written to you for an age and I owe you many apologies. The mere fact that I wanted to write to you a more or less satisfactory letter prevented me from beginning it. I asked Indira to write. Three or four days ago, however, I received your letter of the 20th April together with your article on the last days of the League of Nations at Geneva. I feel I must send you a brief acknowledgment of this. A longer letter will have to wait.

I have forwarded your article to the editor of the *Herald* and I have suggested Candide as your *nom de plume*. In future you can send your articles direct to him or through me or Indira. Perhaps it will be better to send them through Indira or me for some time. I have also asked the editor to send you a letter of authority.

The *Herald* will come to you regularly and I am asking Indira to arrange for a weekly in Hindi and possibly one or two other papers also. The Congress news-letter has started coming out and your address will be sent for it.

This is a business letter but I want to tell you that although I do not write often to you we think of you and Jean Jacques frequently. I hope you will send us news of yourself from time to time. I have just come up to Simla and I do not know how long I shall be here. Things are not shaping very well here or in any other country. Still I suppose something worthwhile may ultimately turn up out of this turmoil.

Indira is well and so is her baby-son. My sister Vijayalakshmi Pandit is again a Minister and is terribly busy.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.

6. To G.P. Hutheesing[1]

New Delhi
23 May 1946

My dear Raja,
I have your telegram and letter. This is just the kind of thing that Sadanand[2] would do.

Of course, the *National Herald* would gladly welcome your going to China on its behalf. But, as you know, the *Herald* cannot afford financially such luxuries at the present moment. If you go more or less on your own, it would be easy to fix up the matter and accredit you as a regular correspondent of the *Herald*. We are likely to have a meeting of the *Herald* directors in Naini Tal on the 4th of June. I am writing to the Editor of the *Herald* and if you like you can communicate with him directly.

We are stuck up here and don't know what future developments may be. We may go away for a few days in between.

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. Hutheesing's letter is not available.
2. S. Sadanand (b. 1900); assistant editor, *Independent*, 1921-22; founder and managing editor, Free Press Journal Publications.

7. To M. Chalapathi Rau[1]

New Delhi
26 May 1946

Dear Editor,
As you are aware the situation in Kashmir has taken a very serious turn. All the press messages coming from there are not only censored but are practically official messages. Both the A.P.I. and U.P.I. are completely under the influence of the State authorities. Some arrangements have been made, however, for news to be brought by messenger

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

daily to Rawalpindi and Lahore. I have asked that this news be sent on to you by telegram or letter. You will, therefore, get messages from Shamlal Kaul, Lahore, about the Kashmir situation. These may be considered authentic, but you should naturally exercise your own discretion in regard to them.

The latest reports indicate that a state of official terrorism and frightfulness prevails in Kashmir. The whole valley is under military administration. People are made to crawl in some streets or made to take off their turbans and clean the pavements with them. Far more deaths have occurred by firing than are admitted officially.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. To M. Chalapathi Rau[1]

New Delhi
14 June 1946

My dear Chalapathi Rau,

Raghunandan Saran brought a person to see me today who had been connected with the I.N.A. His name is M. Sivaram[2]. The enclosed paper will tell you what he has so far done and what his qualifications are. He seems to have had a varied experience of newspaper work. Exactly how good he is I cannot say. Normally such persons would make good correspondents in foreign countries, especially in East Asia. If we had the resources I would like to send him to Java, but that cannot be done at present. Saran is asking him to go to Lucknow and see you. You can form your own opinion of him and decide as you like. In any event it might be worth trying him. You need not fix any kind of salary, though presumably you will have to give him some allowance to keep him going. I have told him about our viewpoint about the salary business, that this need not necessarily depend on merit or on seniority or the like. We want to pay a proper salary but

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Sivaram was a journalist who worked in the publicity wing of the Azad Hind Government before coming to India. He was not employed in the *National Herald*. Later, he worked for the *Free Press Journal* and was its editor for some time.

we do not want and cannot compete in this matter with more prosperous concerns.

I enclose an article I have received from Madam Morin from Geneva. You will remember that she uses the pen-name of Candide.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. To M. Chalapathi Rau[1]

Allahabad
August 25, 1946

My dear Chalapathi Rau,

Chandralekha has given me your letter of the 24th. I should like to meet you here but I think you did well to stay on in Lucknow for the present. Come to Delhi when you can and then we shall have a talk.

It is obvious that we are going to have heavy weather. We have to face a vast number of intricate problems and vital issues. Yet for the moment the primary issue is the issue of the assassin's knife which the Muslim League has raised. Obviously nothing effective can be done till this matter is settled, one way or the other, and it can only be settled one way. Neither the Congress nor the Government can submit to this kind of gangsterism and cold-blooded murders. We have to be firm, clear in our minds and in our action and yet at the same time we must not lose our sense of proportion and become hysteric.

About Shankar, I agree with what you say and I leave it to you entirely as to how to deal with him. I shall of course meet him in Delhi and speak to him. I do not think Goenka[2] or anybody else is going to start a paper soon in Delhi. It would be a pity if Shankar tied himself again with some capitalist concern or with irresponsible people like those who run the *Free Press* of Bombay. Anyway I suppose you are better able to deal with him than I am.

I see that you have received one or two articles direct from Madam Morin. I am sending you two letters received from her. She wants to be guided a little as to what she should write and how often. I wish you would give her this guidance. She had better send her writings direct to you and not through me.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Ramnath Goenka (b. 1900); industrialist and proprietor of *The Indian Express*.

I do not know what you think of her articles. But on the whole they seem to me to be good. They vary of course but they are interesting reading rather different from the average journalist's account. If you can send her specific directions she would be able to improve and to fit in more with what you require. She is not of course a professional journalist.

So far the *Herald* has not paid her anything. But, knowing that she was in difficulties, I sent her 700 Swiss Francs (equal to Rs. 552/-) last February. I am now again sending her 750 Swiss Francs. That is, in all I have sent her about Rs. 1150. This works out at a little less than Rs. 100 a month. For some time now nothing more need be sent to her. But it would be desirable in future to formalise this payment and make it through the *Herald* office. This can be seen to later. I think she can be of considerable use to you because she is intelligent, hardworking, fairly well-acquainted and friendly with India and she is hundred per cent French woman. There is no side about her and hence she will gladly fall in with your wishes. I think that a little later you might pay her at the rate of roughly Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 or so a month.

I am going to Delhi tomorrow and I suppose I shall have to remain there most of the time now. Please make arrangements that I get the *Herald* regularly there.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Personal

1. To Indira Gandhi[1]

New Delhi
April 4, 1946

Darling Indu,

I have been thinking of you since my arrival here and I have wanted you to be here with me to cheer me up. At first I was rather worried

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

about accommodation as I did not want to put a strain on Ratan and Rajan. Shiva Rao immediately offered to have you. I find, however, that it is fairly easy for you to stop here. Upadhyaya has got a room but he can easily shift to a place not far from here.

I have no idea as to how long I shall have to stay here. But it seems to me that these Cabinet Mission negotiations will continue till the end of this month. Most of this time I shall have to be here. Probably things will warm up about the middle of this month.

It is fairly warm here though it is slightly better than in Allahabad. I think it will be a good change for you to come here and meet various types of persons. You can stay just as long as you like. Rajiva, I am afraid, cannot easily come as his coming involves much more preparation.

I have written a letter to Feroze which I am sending to Lucknow. I enclose a copy for you and in case he is in Allahabad you can give it to him. After a day or two I shall probably send you a telegram.

So far as I know there is going to be no move to Simla but this is not certain yet.

Love,

Papu

2. To Feroze Gandhi[1]

New Delhi
April 4, 1946

My dear Feroze,

In Allahabad I mentioned to you the possibility of your going for a while to the *Herald*. For the present I think this is not necessary.

I do not know what you are doing or going to do as soon as your election account business is over. I suppose you will be free in a day or two. If you have nothing particular to do you might be able to make yourself useful here in a rather odd kind of way. There are large numbers of foreign correspondents here, chiefly American and British. While every facility is offered to them on the part of Government and Muslim League practically nothing is done by the Congress and they

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

wander about helplessly. We are now trying to open a kind of a centre for them in New Delhi where they could come for information etc. and where press conferences could also be held if necessary. This is a temporary affair for a month or so. We have asked Dharam Yash Dev to take charge of this. He will do some of the routine work. It is necessary, however, to have one or two other men who can keep in touch with newspaper men here and give them information about the Congress and the general political background in India. Most of these men are woefully ignorant and do not know even simple facts about India. I was wondering if you could come over here for three weeks or so and help in this work. If and when you come you should bring some such publicity material (there is not much of it) as may be available in the A.I.C.C. office or elsewhere.

I should like Indu to come here very much. It will be a change for her. It is, however, not very easy to find suitable accommodation. But there are plenty of people who will gladly have her and you. Shiva Rao has expressed his great willingness. I think on the whole that she and you had better stay here with me as I would like to have both of you near me. This is possible if Upadhyaya stays elsewhere. I understand this can easily be arranged. I am writing to Indu also. Could you send me a telegram to say if you would like to come for the kind of work I have mentioned above. Of course the sooner you come the better.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

3. To E.P. Thompson[1]

New Delhi
10 April 1946

My dear Palmer,

I have just received your letter[2] of April 1st. Some days ago I learned from the cable from a friend in London about your father's condition.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. E.P. Thompson wrote: "It would give him (Edward Thompson) tremendous pleasure if you could find time to write to him a line. He has been so cut off from his friends — both here and in India — during the past two years that he sometimes becomes depressed with a sense of failure. I am writing to you as I feel you are one of the few people who could encourage him and persuade him of what he has achieved".

All those who know him here, and there are many such people, were greatly distressed at this news. I wish I could meet him and perhaps such a meeting would cheer him up a little. I feel rather helpless about it. Anyway I sent a cable[3] to him which I hope reached him in time for this birthday.

It is quite absurd for your father to feel depressed and have a sense of failure. I do believe that he has achieved a great deal and what he has achieved will live for a long time. Only it is always difficult to measure this type of achievement. He has been a link between England and India. He has influenced many people in India, and I suppose many people in England, and so he has been a real peace-maker between nations and peoples.

I do not know if I shall see him again. I hope I shall; but whether I do so or not, I think of him very often and think of him with great affection and respect for what he has done.

It must be hard for you and your mother, but you have gone through a lot and I suppose can face the ups and downs of the world. I shall be glad if you will write to me occasionally and let me have news of your father as well as of yourself. Write to me to Allahabad.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Not available.

4. To Edward Thompson[1]

New Delhi
10 April 1946

My dear Edward,

I have been thinking of writing to you for a long time past and yet somehow we do not do what we most think of doing. Suddenly a few days ago I was reminded of your birthday and I sent you a cable which I hope reached you in time. As you will see I am here in New Delhi again and the old drama of England and India is being played with some new actors, mostly old ones. It was difficult for the old ones to play

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

new roles but while we remain the same or more or less the same the world changes and perhaps the very compulsion of events may produce changes in us too. I do not know what will happen. I have trained myself, in so far as possible, neither to expect too much from life nor to despair of it. That, at any rate, is some kind of an ideal that I aim at realising it only in part. Whatever happens in India none of us is going to have an easy time. I suppose that rule applies to the greater part of the world today.

But I am not writing to you to discuss world events or happenings in India. Why should I worry you with them or indeed worry myself? What I wanted to tell was that you are often in my thoughts and strangely enough I have thought more of you than ever. Why this has been so I do not know. I have thought of our friendship and what a good influence it has had on me at particular moments of my existence. And then I have thought of how you have influenced considerable numbers of people in India and England not obviously so much as in a large deeper way. I believe you have been one of the very few persons who have made India understood by a number of English people and England understood by many Indians. In these difficult days that is a big thing to achieve, and what is more that achievement is a lasting one.

In my cable I said that I hope to meet you before very long. That was not just a vague wish although it does seem rather odd for me to talk of meeting you when there is no chance of your coming to India or my going to England. Yet I do not know and I have an idea that things will change and will move more rapidly in the future and perhaps I may even come your way. I should love to meet you again and talk about so many things. I wonder if there will be any time for the likes of me when we can be rid of the political questions that afflict us.

Nan and Krishna have been here and they joined me in my cable to you as also Indu. My little grandson is growing up into a stout little fellow completely spoilt by everyone.

I have asked Palmer to write to me from time to time and give me news of you and of himself.[2]

Yours ever,
Jawaharlal

2. Edward Thompson cabled in reply on 20 April 1946: "Warmest affection, grateful thanks to you all." E.P. Thompson has referred to this letter in his book, *Writing by Candlelight* (London, 1980); "My father read it...let the letter drop into the sheet and remarked—Oh Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace."

5. To Tej Bahadur Sapru[1]

New Delhi
13 April 1946

My dear Tej Bahadurji,
Thank you for your letter of the 9th April. I am very sorry to learn that you have not been keeping well since your return. I wish somebody could prevent people from coming and troubling you. You require absolute rest. I know you must inevitably worry about political developments. I wish you would not do so because anyhow it does not help. I suppose matters here will come to some kind of a head within the next few days. For the present we are all rather vague....

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Tej Bahadur Sapru Papers (Microfilm), N.M.M.L. Extracts.

6. To Rammanohar Lohia[1]

New Delhi
17 April 1946

My dear Rammanohar,
When was it I wrote to you last or met you? It seems long ages ago and I have been wondering how you must look now and how you must feel. After all, the inner changes are more important than external ones. I myself have a continuous sensation of changing. But it is really for others to judge what these changes are, good or bad.

I hoped that you might come here on your release, but of course you had to go to Calcutta. Meanwhile, I am stuck up here in the imperial capital which is trying very unsuccessfully to shape its own garb. I have no idea how long this business will last and what its outcome will be.

It was a delight to meet Jayaprakash and to find the same dear and delightful person, so little changed and yet perhaps changed in many ways. We had two brief talks, much too brief, and then he went away.

1. J.N. Collection.

Are you still your old self, bright and intelligent and a little erratic and vagrant? Has life hardened you? But these are questions that you cannot answer. And I shall have to meet you to find out. I hope when we meet you will not look at me as if through a shell.

I was in Assam when your father died and memories of his kindly self came to me. I realised what a grief it must have been to you.

As you must know I have written another book — very subjective as usual. I should like to send you a copy, but I have none here with me. I think the easiest way for me is to enclose a note for the publishers. Even the publisher has, I believe, no copy left. But if there is a copy it will be given to you.

Keep bright and cheerful and do not be over-burdened by the stress of events.

With love,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To Pitambar Pant[1]

New Delhi
17 April 1946

My dear Pitambar,[2]

I received your letter some days ago and read it with interest. I was particularly amused over your description of Professor Mahalanobis' talks about his leftist tendencies. He is fond of repeating this, though I have my doubts as to what exactly his conception of 'left' is. I did not want to cross-examine him on it. It might be interesting to ask him how far he considers, say, Jayaprakash Narayan a leftist.

I am glad you have gone to his laboratory and I think this will do you good. There is nothing special happening now which you could have profitably done. You are employing your time to much better advantage. I have no idea how long you are likely to stay there. That will be for you to judge. If any special need arises for you here or elsewhere I shall send for you. Not otherwise. For the present I do not

1. J.N. Collection.
2. (1920-1973); economist closely connected with the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta; member, Planning Commission, 1958-71.

see that need. We are all entirely uncertain about future developments and I do not know how long I shall have to stay in Delhi. I may go away for a few days but I shall come back again.

You must be rather isolated from Calcutta, though I suppose you can go there occasionally in a bus. That is both an advantage and a disadvantage Let me know if you require any money.

I suppose Professor Mahalanobis has left for England or is on the point of doing so. Remember you have gone to him and to his laboratory for special training in a particular job. It does not much matter what people's political and other opinions are so long as you have an opportunity to get this training.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit[1]

Simla
2 May 1946

My dear Nan,

I arrived here this morning and am staying with the Maulana at "The Retreat". Our telephone number is 793. I understand that Chand has reached Karachi and is due to reach Delhi either this evening or tomorrow morning. She will come up here with Sarojini and Padmaja on the 5th morning. They will all stay in this house which is big enough.

Sorabji Rustomji[2] gave me a note about your visiting America to present the case for Indians in South Africa before the U.N.O. I was rather taken aback. I do not think any such question arises now or can be considered. Everything depends on developments in India and we cannot even vaguely consider any such proposition at this stage. If there is a change in government here all our subsequent actions will be governed accordingly. If not anything may happen and the question of your or anyone else's going outside India may not arise. The U.N.O.

1. J.N. Collection. Extracts.
2. Leader of a delegation of South African Indians to India at this time seeking the support of the Government and the public against the anti-Indian legislation of the South African Government.

is supposed to meet early in September. During these four months both the national and international situation will change greatly.

I have no idea how long I shall have to stay here. I think I shall keep Chand with me for some length of time. If I can get two days off I shall go with her to Narkanda which is 50 miles from here and which leads to the Kulu Valley.

Indu is leaving for Allahabad on the 4th morning from Delhi. She will spend a week there and then will probably go to Naini Tal, her heavy luggage proceeding to Khali direct. From Naini Tal, after three or four days, she, Feroze and Rajiv will go to Khali. I have suggested to her to go by the bridle path trekking it in easy stages, but I doubt if she will want to do it. As I have written to you I shall try my best to go to Khali myself for a week *via* Naini Tal, but all this depends on developments. You might also go to Khali on a brief visit to form some idea of what the place is like now and how many things have disappeared from the house during these past few years.

Yours,
Jawahar

9. To Indira Gandhi[1]

Simla
2.5.46

Darling Indu,

I am glad you are spending another day in Delhi. This will enable you to see Chand.

As I have told you our house here is 'The Retreat'. Maulana is staying here and Asaf Ali. It is a big house and I am arranging that Padmaja and Sarojini and Chand should also stay here. Our telephone number is 793.

I hope you will go to Naini Tal before you go to Khali. This break in the journey will make it easier and more comfortable. There is no difficulty in reaching Naini Tal. The heavy luggage should go direct by bus from Kathgodam to Almora and Khali. I shall send you further particulars soon and shall also write some letters to Almora.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Remember to send me the name of the Jodhpur lady.

Please send a copy of *Discovery* to Mrs. Bulbul Khan, Kasauli, Simla Hills. I met her on the way today.

Love

Papu

10. To Claire Boothe Luce[1]

4 May 1946

Dear Claire Boothe Luce,

It was rather odd that I should suddenly make up my mind to write to you just when my mind is occupied with all manner of disturbing problems. The last time I wrote to you was at the end of July 1945 from a remote valley in Kashmir.[2] I had recently come out of prison and I took a fairly early opportunity of sending you a letter. I wrote it encircled by high mountains and glaciers and the mood of the mountains came to me. I still do not know if that letter reached you. Since then I have had several brief messages from you conveyed by other people and I have appreciated them greatly, but I had no acknowledgment of my letter and somehow I waited for this. One rather odd letter written by you came to me through devious routes. This was the note you had given to Wendell Willkie for me. It travelled round the world, went back to America with Wendell Willkie, and then he gave it to someone who ultimately brought it to India. It was very sad reading that note of yours and thinking of Wendell Willkie's death. His little book, *One World*, and various other writings and speeches of his had brought him very near to me and I looked forward to meeting him one day in America or elsewhere. I was in Ahmednagar prison when news of his death came and it was a shock to all of us there. We had made up our minds that he would play a big and brave part in coming events. Why is it that in this world of little men, so few of the big ones survive to make a difference to all of us?

I am sitting here in Simla with Stafford Cripps and others, again in India, my mind goes back to just four years ago when something similar was happening and you also formed part of that picture. Perhaps this is the reason why I suddenly decided to write to you. The picture came back to me, vivid and lively, and suddenly I felt a certain lack in it. I was unhappy in Delhi in 1942 and I suppose I am not too happy even now, not only about Indian events but the world in general. Yet these four years have made a tremendous difference to all of us and you have had more than your share of unhappiness. I believe I have grown somewhat more detached than I used to be and I am not so tossed about by events. Your decision to give up political activities shows how you must have changed also. I wonder when we are likely to meet and possibly exchange to some extent our experiences. I should like very much to do so, but most of us seem to be prisoners of circumstance and can seldom do exactly what we want to.

I wrote another book which I have called *The Discovery of India*. It has been published here in India, but it is difficult to send copies to America. An American edition will come out soon and I have asked my publishers to send a copy to you. I am afraid it is not very light reading, except may be in parts, but it does represent in some measure what I thought in those years in prison. No one, I suppose, can be completely frank with himself or with others, no one certainly who is tied up with public affairs. Yet I have tried to some extent to be frank with myself.

In this world of turmoil and conflict and hatred, it is not easy to look forward with confidence and optimism. I am afraid we are going to have a hard time in India as elsewhere. But I do believe that India will emerge not only as an independent nation but as something different and at the same time fundamentally same as she has been. I think she has a part to play in the world.

I wrote to you in my letter from Kashmir that just a few hours before my arrest in August 1942 your letter was handed to me. It was late in the evening and I could not read it then. Very early the next morning I was arrested and taken to Ahmednagar. Your un-read letter accompanied me. It was the only letter that came to me there for many months. I could not reply to it as I could not write to anyone for a long period and then only to two or three near relatives. So it happened your letter was a companion to me for several months and it served a more important purpose, because of this, than it might otherwise have been. I want to thank you for this.

I do not know what will happen in these Indo-British negotiations. They have already dragged on far too long and we are where we were.

Perhaps the next week or two might make a difference. At present the outlook is not good. One thing is certain: that India cannot remain where she is or go back. Changes and big changes must come. Whether those changes will be for the good or not I am still unable to say.

With all good wishes,

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit[1]

Simla
May 7, 1946

My dear Nan,

Chand arrived two days ago. She is looking fresh and charming and little changed from what she was four years ago, just a little maturer and more grown up and a little Americanised. I shall keep her here for the present. My own stay is entirely uncertain.

Sundar has not arrived yet but he is expected today. This business of sending Chand's clothes etc. with Sundar has not been too well organised.

I do not know where to write to Indu. I suppose she will be leaving soon for Naini Tal and then Khali. Much as I want to go to Khali myself I can make no plans at all and everything is uncertain.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

12. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit[1]

New Delhi
23 May 1946

My dear Nan,

Thank you for sending me the correspondence and particulars about the I.N.A. medical men.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

I just don't know what I am going to do during the next few days. I want to come up to Naini Tal and to go to Khali for at least a few days. We are going to have some kind of a gap period here. We have fixed June 4th for the *Herald* directors' meeting at Naini Tal and on June 5th probably the U.P. Council will meet there. But I am worried about Faridkot and Kashmir. My visit to Faridkot will take two days. It is just possible, however, that I might dash off to Kashmir.

I do not know where Indu is now. I enclose a letter for her. If she is gone to Khali send it on to her.

13. To E.P. Thompson[1]

Allahabad
23 May 1946

My dear Palmer,

Thank you for your letter of the 7th May which I was happy to receive. I am very glad that my letter to your father reached him in time and gave him some comfort.[2]

I do not know to what mis-statements in the press you refer associating your father with the Amery regime. So the question of correcting them hardly arises. Of course if your mother writes to me her letter will be welcome.

We are all rather worn out here in New Delhi after nearly two months of these talks. There is no end to them yet and the future is uncertain.

I hope you will keep in touch with me by writing to me from time to time.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Edward Thompson Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Edward Thompson died on 30 April 1946.

14. To Krishna Hutheesing[1]

New Delhi
June 26, 1946

My dear Krishna,
I have just received your letter of the 23rd and am very sorry to learn of Harsh's incident. It must be a painful business but I suppose it will not take him long to get over it.

I received your letter from Ooty. I wrote to Raja about that time and hope that he will share my letter with you.

As you will notice, the A.I.C.C. is meeting in Bombay on the 6th and 7th July. This is going to be a strictly business meeting—no visitors. The Working Committee will probably meet a day earlier. I am hard pressed for time but anyhow I shall try to reach there by the 5th morning at the latest. My programme is uncertain and there is still an odd chance of my going to Kashmir before the A.I.C.C. meeting.

Krishna Menon is here. I am likely to bring him with me to Bombay. Could you make some arrangements for his stay with some friends. I do not want him to go to a hotel.

Indu is still in Khali and is likely to remain there.

Yours,
Jawahar

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

15. To Padmaja Naidu[1]

Wardha
8.8.46

Bebee dear,
Thank you for sending me *The Times of India* review. I had not seen it.

On my way here I read your report about the atrocities in Hyderabad villages. I saw it in *The Bombay Chronicle*. Now I have got your full

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

report. It is ghastly reading and your moderate language makes it all the more powerful. What am I to do? What can one do about it? Everything is so rotten at the base and we try to apply some soothing ointment at the surface.

This journey of mine, from Allahabad to Wardha, has been a terrible one. There were any number of mishaps and towards the end we succeeded in killing a little boy of 5 or 6. It was a clean road with fields on either side. We were going (by car) about 35 miles an hour. Suddenly a child rushed forward from somewhere — the car swerved — brakes were applied. It was too late and there was a sickening thud as the mudguard or some part of the car hit the child. He lay groaning by the side of the road. His mother and father ran up. We were anxious to bring him to a hospital with all possible speed. It was difficult to get the parents to agree. At last we managed to take the little one. Probably he died soon enough but we dared not make sure — When the doctor saw him in Wardha, he was dead.

Thus we reached Wardha — very late — with the Working Committee waiting for me. I went there straight with a few drops of the child's blood on my sleeves.

So I am not in a happy mood. This has been a novel experience for me.

Love,

Jawahar

General

1. To Derek Lawson[1]

Allahabad
March 3, 1946

Dear Mr. Lawson,[2]

I have your letter[3] of the 26th. I entirely agree with much that you say. I have not been silent on the subject and recently in Bombay I spoke very strongly.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. An Anglo-Indian resident in Kanpur.
3. He wrote that the small Anglo-Indian community had been subjected to insults and malicious propaganda by politicians.

I might inform you, however, that the story of a woman being stripped of her uniform in Bombay is not true. Inquiries were made about this and I believe that the police came to the conclusion that it was a false rumour.

I want to do everything in my power to prevent mob violence of any kind, and more especially any kind of attack or assault on individuals, whoever they might be. As for Anglo-Indians, they are and should always be treated as full citizens of India who will share in the freedom to come.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To Horace Alexander[1]

Allahabad
March 3, 1946

Dear Alexander,
Thank you for your letter of the 22nd. I hope to be in Calcutta on the 8th and 9th and perhaps the 10th, though I am not sure. I shall certainly want to meet you then. But I fear I shall not be able to find too much time for a long talk.

I realise the futility of any effective action on the food front through the present Government apparatus. It may be possible to devise local and representative committees which might be of great help. I think your unit should certainly act as liaison between the administration and the voluntary efforts.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

3. To Mirza Ismail[1]

6.3.46

My dear Sir Mirza,
Thank you for your letter of March 1st which I have just received. I am interested to know of the formation of a society for the promotion of Indian culture and art. Every Indian must agree with this objective and so I welcome the step you have taken. I am only a little apprehensive about the actual work that is going to be done. So many of our desirable societies function ineffectively. But under your guidance it might achieve something worthwhile.

About a secretary, it is obvious that you should have a really first rate person with all manner of qualifications. I have no one in view at present and can make no suggestions. Tomorrow I am leaving Allahabad for various places, ending up in Singapore. So I am afraid I shall have little chance to help you in the selection.

As suggested by you, I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Arthur Lall,[2] New Delhi.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Arthur Samuel Lall (b. 1911); member of the Indian Civil Service; Permanent Representative to the U.N., 1954-59; Ambassador to Austria, 1959-63. His publications include *Modern International Negotiations, How Communist China Negotiates* and *The Emergence of Modern India.*

4. To J. Alvarez del Vayo[1]

6.3.46

My dear Del Vayo,[2]
I owe you many apologies for not writing to you or even acknowledging your cables. I had hoped to write for the *Nation* and so I postponed a reply. I would sooner write for the *Nation* than for almost any periodical. But events have been too much for me and I have been so hustled about both physically and mentally that it has been quite impossible

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Foreign Minister of the Republican Government in Spain; later on the staff of the American journal *Nation.*

to write. I would not like to send just anything to the *Nation*. One of your correspondents managed to get me in Delhi and had a long talk with me and I understand this has appeared in the *Nation*.[3] This kind of thing is easy enough. Perhaps later I might write for you but sometimes I feel a little overwhelmed by a variety of problems attacking me at the same time. That, I suppose, is a common experience for many people all over the world today. Anyway forgive me for the delay in answering your cable. Soon I shall go to Malaya on a brief visit. And then this British Cabinet Mission to India will naturally absorb much of my time. We are going to have no quiet time here or elsewhere.

I wonder if you (or the *Nation*) are interested in the Indian States problem. Few people outside India know anything about it, except that they have heard about our bejewelled maharajahs and nawabs. They imagine that these States are something apart from India proper, which of course they are not. If you are interested you might like to have some articles on them by a young colleague of mine, Dwarka Nath Kachru, who is one of the general secretaries of the All India States People's Conference, which represents the people of these States. I have suggested to him to send you one or two articles on the subject. You can pass them on to the appropriate editor of the *Nation*.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. See Appendix, item 3.

5. The Women's Movement in India[1]

I am glad that this selection of speeches and writings of Rajkumari Amrit Kaur is being published so as to reach a wider public. There is always a touch of distinction in what she says or writes, the mark of a sensitive person who has fought her way through many of life's problems. She is enraged at the ugliness and poverty and degradation that she sees, and yet is fortunate enough to have attained a certain poise and equilibrium which enable her to direct her energy and righteous

1. Allahabad, 7 March 1946. Foreword to *Challenge to Women* (Allahabad, 1946) by Amrit Kaur.

indignation into fruitful channels of constructive effort. She made the vast field of women's emancipation and progress her own and has been one of the builders of the women's movement in India. From this she drifted inevitably into the wider domain of India's freedom movement, for without that freedom there could be no emancipation for man or woman. Richer in experience, and with that mark of suffering which is the lot of so many in India today, she devotes herself to the great cause which is so dear to us. But, unlike many of us who perform frequently on the public platform, most of her work is done quietly and away from the public eye. Only occasionally she strays on to that platform, or a piece of good writing followed by her initials betrays the writer of distinction.

But Amrit Kaur's principal love continues to be the women's movement; and it is right that this should be so. For the women of India, for all their charm and intelligence and capacity for good work, have been too long neglected. I believe that India has a great future, but I also believe that real and rapid progress in India will only come when our womenfolk get really moving and rid themselves of everything that suppresses them and keeps them back. Because I see clear and definite signs of this movement, I am full of hope for India, and because our national movement has been largely instrumental in releasing women from many an old bond, that movement has demonstrated its essential soundness and vitality.

So I commend this little book to the reader, and may there be many who profit by reading it.

6. To Choithram Gidwani[1]

New Delhi
4 April 1946

My dear Choithram,

I have been asked about the funds presented to me as purses during my last visit to Sind. You will remember that I divided them up for various causes. Some money was set aside for election work. Some money was given to the Sind P.C.C. The former was left with you to be used at your discretion for the elections then pending in Sind. It

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

was not part of the Congress funds which had been given separately to the P.C.C. As such the responsibility for allocation and spending of this election fund money was entirely yours and those of you who were connected with this election work. It is not desirable to mix up election funds with Congress funds. We have set them apart in other provinces and the same policy should be followed in Sind. The responsibility for spending election fund money which I had allotted was entirely yours.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To J.B. Kripalani[1]

New Delhi
8 April 1946

Dear Comrade,

You are perhaps aware the Government of India have put forward a proposal for introducing the metric system in the coinage of India.[2] I presume this question will come up before the Central Assembly and the Congress party there will have to make up its mind as to what it should do in regard to it. A few days ago I noticed a statement by Mahatma Gandhi in the press asking the Congress members of the legislatures to throw out this measure. I do not know what particular reason Mahatmaji has for this advice.[3] I hope to discuss this matter with him.

I am writing to you to request you to put this matter on the agenda of the Working Committee so that we can consider it in consultation with Gandhiji. I might inform you that a few weeks ago I issued a statement in my capacity as President-elect of the Indian Science Congress supporting the principle underlying this measure and asking the

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. A bill to amend the Indian Coinage Act had been introduced in the Legislative Assembly on 18 February 1946. It aimed at converting the rupee to 100 cents from 64 pies.
3. Mahatma Gandhi had stated on 17 March 1946 that "even in the country of the rulers the decimal coinage has not been introduced....For some years to come the poor will be sacrificed as usual in the interests of the modern trade."

members of the legislatures to adopt it. Previously the National Planning Committee expressed itself strongly in favour of some steps in this direction. There is undoubtedly a feeling that the exact way in which the government has approached the question is not wholly satisfactory. Some people also think that the metric system should be extended to weights and not only to be confined to money. However this may be you will realise that I am put in a somewhat difficult position by Mahatmaji's statement and I shall be glad if the matter is considered by the Working Committee in consultation with Gandhiji.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. To D.N. Wadia[1]

New Delhi
9 April 1946

Dear Dr. Wadia[2],
I have received a cable from Huxley[3], London, a copy of which I enclose. I wonder if you could help me in suggesting names for the posts mentioned in this cable. Perhaps the National Institute of Sciences has such names on its rolls, or anyway you could consult your colleagues. I imagine that a bright young man would be preferable to a middle-aged person who has got rather lost in the ruts of academic work. If you have any suitable names in view I should like to discuss them with you before I go away from Delhi.[4]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. At this time President of the National Institute of Sciences, Delhi; eminent geologist.
3. On 4 April 1946, Julian Huxley on behalf of the preparatory commission engaged in planning possible future activities of the U.N.E.S.C.O. wrote that he was "anxious to obtain services of an Indian on our staff. Suggest names for me for following posts, counsellor, social science section in field of history or preferably human geography, counsellor, arts section preferably."
4. Similar letters written to P.C. Mahalanobis and K.T. Shah on 9 April and to Sir John Sargent on 17 April are not printed. They are available in J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

9. To Bhakt Darshan[1]

New Delhi
9 April 1946

Dear Bhakt Darshan[2],

I have received your letter of the 4th. We considered your report at the Central I.N.A. Committee meeting. You will be informed of our decision. Meanwhile, I am instructing the Bank at Kotdwara to the effect that you can draw upon my account. The balance there is Rs. 19,505-4-0. This totals to Rs. 20,000. You have got, according to your letter, Rs. 1,000 with you. You can now draw from time to time from my account at the Kotdwara branch of the Bharat Bank Ltd. This money should be enough for you for some time. I am anxious that you should concentrate on the constructive activities for I.N.A. personnel.

In future you must correspond and deal directly with the central office in Delhi and not with the U.P.P.C.C.

I enclose a copy of my letter to the Bank.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1912); Deputy Minister of Education, Government of India, 1963-67; Deputy Minister of Transport and Shipping, 1967-69; Minister of State for Education, 1969-72.

10. To Julian Huxley[1]

17 April 1946

Dear Mr. Huxley,

I have received your two cables and have sent you a reply[2] to them by cable. As you perhaps know I am at present engaged in difficult and arduous work in connection with the visit of the British Cabinet delegation to India. Apart from this I am not very competent to select the kind of persons indicated by you in your cablegrams. I have, therefore, referred the matter to a number of organisations as well as to some

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Not available.

individuals who may be in a position to know such persons. This kind of thing, no doubt, takes time and I do not know when I shall be in a position to suggest names to you. Your cables indicate that you expect an early reply. I doubt if I can send you an early reply. Even if I get a number of suggestions I would personally not be acquainted with the persons recommended. However, I shall try to do what I can in the matter. Meanwhile, perhaps, you could let me have fuller details which would help us in selecting persons.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To Julian Huxley[1]

20 April 1946

Dear Mr. Huxley,
It strikes me that the best person for you to consult in regard to a suitable student of philosophy who might be of use to you in the U.N.E.S.C.O. is Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. He is in America at present somewhere in California. I do not know his programme but he is likely to visit England on his way back. Being himself an eminent philosopher he is in touch with others in India and he has himself trained a number of people. If it is possible for you to get in touch with him he could, no doubt, make suggestions. Perhaps you could get his present address from the India Office in London.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

12. To G.E.B. Abell[1]

New Delhi
April 25, 1946

Dear Mr. Abell,
I have received the following telegram from Mr. Jairamdas Daulatram, Hyderabad (Sind):

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

Messrs. Ramchand and Jhamatmal of Messrs. N.G. Malwani & Sons, important Sind merchants doing business at Fort Dekock Hill station near Pudano, capital of Sumatra, been kidnapped about fifteen days ago by Indonesians of Fort DeKock. Their relatives here exceedingly anxious; have asked me request you approach Indonesian Government telegraphically take immediate steps recover both persons and wire your action taken. Their firm here prepared pay all expenses incurred. Kindly treat urgent, wire express Indonesian Prime Minister.

I presume that the External Affairs Department of the Government of India, which is directly under the Viceroy, would normally deal with such matters. I hope that it will take the necessary steps to inquire into this matter. Meanwhile, I shall be grateful if the following cable[2] addressed to Dr. Shahrir is sent on my behalf. I cannot send it directly as there is no cable service functioning between India and Indonesia. I suppose the usual way is for cables to be sent through SEAC. Probably you know better how to deal with such matters. Anyway I shall be grateful if this cable is sent and shall gladly pay any expenses incurred.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Not available.

13. To J.B. Kripalani[1]

New Delhi
27 April 1946

Dear Comrade,

I enclose a cheque for Rs. 208. This money has come to me in an odd way.

You will remember that in 1928 an Independence of India League was started. I was secretary of this and Shivaprasad Gupta was treasurer. The League faded away after a year or two. A few weeks ago I was informed that the Benares Bank (in liquidation) had an account of the Independence of India League which apparently Shivaprasad Gupta had

opened. I corresponded with the liquidator and he has agreed to pay me the sum as the sole living representative of the League. I have now received this sum of Rs. 208/- through Bhupendra Kumar Gupta, grandson of Shivaprasad Gupta. This represents four dividends paid by the liquidator. Presumably more dividends will follow.

Not knowing what to do with this money I have decided to hand it over to the A.I.C.C. which is carrying on the struggle for independence most effectively in India. Will you kindly send a receipt for this amount to Bhupendra Kumar Gupta whose letter I enclose?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To K.T. Shah[1]

29 April 1946

My dear Shah,

I have received your letter of the 25th April as well as your previous letters. I am afraid there is no chance of my being free for the Planning Committee for the next three weeks or more. Indeed it is quite impossible to fix up anything so long as the present very fluid situation does not take shape. I suggest that you may make your own programme according to your convenience. I should like to meet you of course but just at present I am distracted and distraught by the kind of life one has to live in Delhi. I shall write to you again.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. File No. 3490/H/II-2, Maharashtra Government Records, Police Commissioner's office.

15. To Julian Huxley[1]

27 April 1946

Dear Dr. Huxley,

As desired by you I am giving some names for the U.N.E.S.C.O. preparatory organisation. I have been so occupied with other matters here

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

that I could not give enough time to this selection business. I communicated with a number of people, among them being Sir John Sargent who informed me that he had also heard from you on the subject. I am unable to give full particulars about all the names mentioned below nor am I sure that all of them are in a position to go to England or wherever they might have to go. I know all of them personally. It is a little difficult for me to say whether anyone of them will fit in your organisation. You can judge for yourself from their qualifications.

(1) Humayun Kabir:- Age 40. Brilliant academic record in Calcutta and Oxford universities. Stood first in various examinations up to M.A. in Calcutta. First class in Modern Greats in Oxford. Various university prizes, scholarships and medals. He went abroad as a Government State scholar.

At Oxford he was secretary and librarian of the Oxford Union, President of the Jowett Society and the Indian Majlis. He was lecturer in philosophy, Andhra University, also lecturer in philosophy and English lecturer, Post-graduate Department, Calcutta University. He is a well-known Bengali writer and has also written a number of books in English. Knows German and some French. Has translated Kant's *Uber Philosophie Uberhaupt* into English. He is a member, at present, of the Bengal Legislative Council. He was charman of the ethics and politics section of the Indian Philosophical Congress.

His address is 26 Amir Ali Avenue, Calcutta.

(2) Dr. Nirmal Kumar Bose, M.A. Ph.D. :- Lecturer, Calcutta University. He has worked on Indian demography and has written several books. Age 45.

(3) Mohommad Mujeeb:- Age 43. Resident of Lucknow, U.P. Took honours from school of modern history at Oxford, 1922. Subsequently went to Germany for 3½ years. Knows German and Russian and some French. Has been professor of history and politics in the Jamia Millia Islamia (National Muslim University) for many years and is still there. Has published many books in Urdu, including *History of Political Thought, History of Russian Literature,* and *History of the World.* Is at present engaged in writing a history of Indian civilisation. He will not be free to leave India till November next.

(4) Dr. Shaheed Suhrawardy:- A good scholar, fine linguist and art critic with knowledge of both Indian asd modern art. He was till recently professor of fine arts in the Calcutta University. Spent many years with League of Nations and more especially with the Committee for Intellectual Cooperation which had its headquarters in Paris. His age is about 57. He is at present a member of the Public Service Commission, Bengal. Both from knowledge and experience he would

be particularly fitted for the counsellorship of the arts section, but I do not know what his own reactions to the offer might be.

(5) Dr. Puntambekar:- A historian. Professor of Political Science, Benares Hindu University. Age probably 46.

As I have said above, I am not sure about the ability of some of these persons to leave India at short notice. I would have picked out two names from this list, especially Humayun Kabir's and Shaheed Suhrawardy's, but again cannot say whether Suhrawardy would like to go. So Humayun Kabir's name remains. I think he would be a good choice if only one person is to be chosen. He is a young man of varied interests and likely to fit in into any organisation. Mujeeb's is also a good name, but he cannot leave till November.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Sir John Sargent.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

16. To Albert Mayer[1]

Allahabad
1 May 1946

Dear Mr. Mayer,

As you are perhaps aware, various conversations have been going on here in New Delhi between the representatives of the British Cabinet and Indian political leaders in regard to the future of India. I do not yet know what these will lead to. But in any event we are in charge of a number of Provincial Governments today and we are anxious to get things moving there. I am writing to you more especially on behalf of the United Provinces Government and at the request of my friend Mr. Govind Ballabh Pant who is the Prime Minister there at present. We would very much like to have your advice in regard to various matters relating to planning village reconstruction and the ordered development of community life more especially in our rural areas. You will remember your writing to me on this subject. I found that there was a great deal of agreement between your outlook and mine.

Will it be possible for you to come to India for a period of say six months or a year for this purpose? Of course if both parties so desire in the interest of the work you can stay on.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

I am not writing to you in any further detail at present as I should like to have your reactions to this proposal. We have an enormous task before us complicated at present by the food scarcity and famine conditions prevailing in some parts of India. The United Provinces have not been so badly affected by the food scarcity though there are considerable difficulties in providing towns and cities, which are rationed, with sufficient food. The real famine areas are in the south and the west, but no one seems to know, for lack of proper statistics, what the position will be a month or two hence. In any event it will be a very difficult period. We have been asking for foodgrains and foodstuffs from America and other countries. All help of this kind would be very welcome indeed, and yet probably the major difficulty in India is lack of proper distribution and the present Government is not competent enough to deal with this matter.

Could you kindly cable to me to my address at Allahabad as to whether it would be possible for you to come over to India to advise the United Provinces Government in regard to future plans of reconstruction and planning?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17. To D.G. Tendulkar[1]

New Delhi
1 May 1946

My dear Tendulkar,

I am sorry for the delay in acknowledging your letters of the 2nd and 11th April. I received the four copies of *Gandhiji*. I gave three of these to the members of the Cabinet delegation here, and the fourth was given to George Merrell,[2] the American Minister here. All of them appreciated the gift very much.

I do not know why you want me to sign these copies. The book is not mine and my autograph in it is not appropriate. Do not trouble

1. D.G. Tendulkar Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (1898-1962); Commissioner of the U.S. to India, 1945-46 and Charge d' Affaires, 1946-47; served for sometime as U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan.

yourself about sending copies to President Truman and others in America. But you might, if you like, write to Mr. George R. Merrell, American Commissioner, New Delhi, and ask him if he would care to have some copies for important American libraries. You may mention that you are writing at my instance.

As for Turkey, Persia, Egypt etc., it is difficult to send books there and I shall ask Maulana Azad.

I should like you to send two or three copies to Mr. Francis Brunel, 19 Prithviraj Road, New Delhi. You have already sent him three copies I think and he has presented them to the Bibliotheque Nationale, to Andre Gide etc. He can make good use of two or three more copies for big libraries in France. As a matter of fact he told me that he had bought some copies of your second edition for this purpose.

Do not send me any copies to Delhi because they are too heavy to be carried about. If I want any I shall write to you. Have you got a large supply with you still?

I am sending you a copy of my new book *Discovery of India*.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. On Destruction of War Material[1]

During my travels in various parts of India in connection with the elections and otherwise, I have heard repeated reports of the destruction of war material by the American or British authorities. In Assam graphic details were given to me of this mass destruction not only of the implements of war but also of many articles which are in great demand in civilian life. I myself saw heaps of destroyed material in many places. Brief reports occasionally appeared in the newspapers and were sometimes officially denied.

This morning as I reached Bakshi-ka-Talao, the aerodrome 14 miles from Lucknow, I saw a sight which fairly staggered me. I had seen it

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 16 May, *The Hindustan Times*, 17 May 1946.

before also, but perhaps my mind was otherwise occupied and I had not paid too much attention to it. I saw hundreds of aeroplanes in various stages of destruction, some were still whole and apparently airworthy, some had their wings clipped off, yet others were being smashed up in different ways. Hundreds of Rolls Royce engines were lying there, forlorn and forsaken, awaiting destruction. There were bombers and fighters and many other varieties of aircraft. I was told that at least 2,000 planes had been smashed up in this place which was appropriately named Aircraft Breakdown Centre.

Near Allahabad at Phaphamow, I am told that 2,000 bicycles were laid down on the ground and steam-rollers went over them.

These are just a few instances of the colossal destruction that is going on apparently all over India. What the reasons for this policy are, a layman's mind is unable to fathom. It is obvious that the Rolls Royce engines are not only valuable but can be of very great use in India in a variety of ways. Trucks, bicycles, radio sets, watches and numerous other articles can also be of great use. Instead of using all these, large sums are being spent in destroying them.

If the present structure of society demands such periodic destruction, the sooner that structure is changed the better.

19. An Erroneous Contradiction[1]

The G.H.Q. in India have denied my statement that war material was being destroyed in large quantities. In regard to the story of bicycles I was informed of it by people in Allahabad, and I had no personal knowledge. But I have myself seen what was being done at the Aircraft Breakdown Centre near Lucknow. Whether the aircraft or engines being destroyed there are serviceable or not I cannot judge, nor do I know what the cost of reconditioning might be, but I do know that there are people prepared to buy those Rolls Royce engines as well as some other material. And they are unable to do so.

I have sufficient reliable information also about the destruction of other material at various places. I cannot say whether this was British or American material. It is not good enough to issue denials of this

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 18 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 19 May 1946.

kind when there is certainly reliable evidence of destruction of serviceable material. The army authorities may only consider this matter from the army point of view. In India, it must be remembered, even an old kerosene oil tin is a useful commodity. In particular, American standards are so different from those of India that something that is not good enough for them may be of great use here.

20. To Julian Huxley[1]

Simla
May 8, 1946

Dear Dr. Huxley,
I have already sent you some names which you might consider for counsellorship in the U.N.E.S.C.O. preparatory organisation. There is another name which has been strongly recommended to me by the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University. This is Dr. Nihar Ranjan Ray[2], head of the department if fine arts in the University of Calcutta. I am told he has knowledge also of modern museum techniques. I am not personally acquainted with him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1904-1981); eminent scholar in Indian art and culture; Chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research at the time of his death.

21. To M.N. Saha[1]

Simla
May 8, 1946

My dear Saha,
Your letter of May 4th. I have sent some names to Julian Huxley. I have especially recommended Humayun Kabir's name. I understand that Huxley has been in touch with Sir John Sargent also.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I quite appreciate what you have written about the negotiations that are at present going on. I need not tell you that I agree with what you say about a strong centre. More I cannot discuss.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

22. To R.C. Majumdar[1]

Simla
12 May 1946

Dear Dr. Majumdar,[2]
Thank you for your letter. I was glad to hear from you because I have enjoyed reading some of your books about the ancient Indian colonies.

I am afraid it is a little late now to send names to Huxley. The suggested post is a temporary one for six months only beginning from June, but perhaps for the permanent appointment in December next other names might be considered.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1888-1980); historian.

23. To Paul Robeson[1]

May 16, 1946

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Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

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May 8, 1946

My dear Saha,
Your letter of May 4th. I have sent some names to Julian Huxley. I have especially recommended Humayun Kabir's name. I understand that Huxley has been in touch with Sir John Sargent also.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

25. To S.R. Qureshi[1]

New Delhi
25 May 1946

Dear Mr. Qureshi,
I have your letter. I am concerned to learn of your difficulties. But it does seem a little absurd for you and the young girl to want to commit suicide. That is a very feeble way of escape from a difficulty and it is not worthy of any worthwhile person. We are passing through a period of transition and always during such periods social misfits and maladjustments happen. Unfortunately individuals have to suffer for this.

I am afraid I cannot write to individuals whom I do not know, especially in personal matters. I would suggest to you and the girl to consider the matter carefully, come to a decision, whatever that may be, and carry it out. In no event is it advisable to think of taking one's life when every Indian owes a duty to serve his country.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A copy of this letter is available in Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund. The identity of the addressee is not known.

26. Fazl-i-Husain[1]

This is a personal memoir but it is something much more, for Mian Fazl-i-Husain's outstanding and dominating personality played an important role in Indian politics, and more especially Punjab politics, for fifteen years. Each of our major provinces has a certain personality of its own. The Punjab has been a peculiar mixture of vitality and progress in many directions and political backwardness. Its politics till

1. Foreword written on 31 May 1946 by Jawaharlal to a political biography of Fazl-i-Husain (1877-1936), founder of the Unionist Party in the Punjab and a member of the Governor-General's Executive Council, 1930-35, by his son, Azim Husain.

in the world and we shall inevitably drift to another world conflict and disaster. All those who want to avoid this catastrophe must therefore realise the imperative necessity of solving this problem. Nazism and fascism have been crushed in their homelands but their spirit still continues. In South Africa Indians and Africans are being treated in typically Nazi fashion. We in India stand for the elimination of colonialism everywhere and for racial equality and we join you in your demand.

My niece Chandralekha arrived here a few days ago and brought us news of you and your wife and your son. Is there any chance of your coming to India? I suppose it is difficult for anyone to make programmes too far ahead, for we move in rapidly changing times and no one knows what might happen.

With all good wishes to you and your cause,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

24. To D.D. Kosambi[1]

New Delhi
22 May 1946

Dear Kosambi,[2]

I have your letter of the 16th May. I agree with you that we should try to raise the general level of scientific papers at the Science Congress. It would be very desirable if eminent scientists from abroad, more specially from China, could come to our next meeting. Invitations should be sent to them in the normal way. I do not think it would be proper for me to send odd invitations directly. The question should be handled by the office of the Science Congress Association which should then issue proper invitations. I suggest that you get in touch with that office. You might tell it that I am in full agreement with this proposal.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.
2. (1907-1966); a mathematician and historian of great distinction.

28. Virtues Needed in a Period of Transition[1]

India is passing through a period of transition. Transition is always fraught with danger. It is the duty of every Indian, particularly the students, to face the future with courage, determination, dignity and unity of purpose. It is only with discipline that we will be able to shape the greater India of our dreams. Petty squabbles and bickerings should find no place in your organisation. Concentrate on wider issues.

1. Message to the annual session of All Assam Students Union, Dibrugarh, 1 June 1946. *National Herald*, 6 June 1946.

29. To Albert Mayer[1]

Allahabad
June 5, 1946

Dear Mr. Mayer,

Thank you for the cable you sent me. I am sorry for the delay in answering it. I have been busy in Delhi with negotiations with the members of the British Cabinet here. Apart from this, I wanted to refer to Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Prime Minister of the U.P. Government. I understand that he has sent you a cable enquiring from you your terms for coming here as well as some idea of the total expenses involved. He would naturally like to know exactly what this expenditure is likely to be.

As you must know, political and other conditions here at the present moment are in a state of flux and no one knows definitely what the immediate future is going to be. Inevitably our future activities will be conditioned by this future. Nevertheless we do not want merely to wait on events and we are anxious to get things moving as rapidly as possible.

Among our major problems is village housing and rehabilitation. This, as you yourself pointed out to me, is some thing much bigger than

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

recently have been largely clan politics mixed up with a triangular communal situation and a conflict between the interests of the urban and rural areas. This book helps us to some extent to understand this background and the role of the Punjab in Indian politics in recent years. Our present-day problems have their roots in these years and one who seeks to unravel them must therefore understand what took place then. I have profited by reading this book, and others who do so will also, I have no doubt, profit and gain understanding.

27. To Govind Ballabh Pant[1]

New Delhi
26 May 1946

My dear Pantji,

You will remember my telling you about an American engineer and architect who served some years in India with the American army. Subsequently he helped in drawing up plans for Shriniketan. He was also a member of a Government of Bengal committee. I felt that he would be a good man to advise us about rural planning and reconstruction as he had some good ideas on this subject. You asked me to get into touch with him. Thereupon I wrote to him and suggested his coming down to India for six months or so. I have just received a cable from him a copy of which I enclose.[2] The cable is not quite clear in some places, but you will understand what he means. Please let me know what I am to reply to him. If you like you can get someone to communicate with him directly. His address is: Albert Mayer, 31 Union Square West, New York City.

Yours,
Jawahar

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Albert Mayer stated in his cable dated 18 May 1946 that he would initially visit India for three months for exploratory work.

a cable to you. He has pointed out in this that the rainy season having begun in India, it will be difficult to start any major operations before this season is over. It is not easy to visit many parts of the rural areas during the rains. He has suggested that you might, therefore, come in October if that is convenient to you, and meanwhile you might communicate by correspondence with his Government. His idea is that you should send any suggestions previously or in case you want any particular type of information this could be sent to you.

I am inclined to agree with this conclusion. I do not know how far this postponement of your visit to October fits in with your plans. From every other point of view it is desirable to begin round about October when the weather is more or less agreeable and you can have a clear six months to push on any undertaking or experiment. Just at present also prospective political changes as well as the food situation are coming in the way of the consideration of other problems.

As you say rightly this is going to be more or less of a pioneering job. Of course many people have thought about it and prepared plans, but usually they have been isolated plans dealing with one aspect of the question only. The proper way to view it, as you mentioned to me, is to look at it as a whole with various aspects inter-linked. We want to raise living standards and to train people to utilise them to the full. We want, in other words, to build up community life on a higher scale without breaking up the old foundations. We want to utilise modern techniques and fit it into Indian resources and Indian conditions. This is not an easy matter for the resources are limited at present and the conditions are often very different from those in western countries. But that it can and should be done I have no doubt. Probably a number of experiments will have to be made before we hit upon the right method of tackling the problem. Or it may be that there are several methods which can be simultaneously pursued. It is a job which appeals to me strongly though I have no technical competence to draw up schemes etc. From the talks we had in Allahabad I feel that not only your technical knowledge and experience but even more so your psychological approach to these problems will be of great help. The average American might well feel disgusted with many things in India which are entirely new to him and which do not fit in with his scheme of life. I think you will not feel that way.

For the present you are not likely to get much help from the U.P. Government. This Government, in spite of change at the top, functions in the old grooves and is not used to thinking in a social way. But changes are in the air and more and more people want to bring about social improvement on a large scale. I feel that with your ideas and experience, if we once get going, there would be plenty of popular backing. Just at

merely construction of houses. It is an attempt to build up a connected life in harmony with the environment and social customs and at the same time to offer a higher standard of living and such modern conveniences as are practicable and within our means. The problem itself is a vast one and we may have to experiment before we can find an adequate solution. Any solution will have to consider and combine modern techniques with existing Indian conditions. These conditions include of course the extreme poverty of the people and all that follows from this poverty.

It is a little difficult for me to go into much detail at this stage. From time to time various plans have been made by our Provincial Governments. We wanted to consult you especially because you could bring to bear upon the problem not only a knowledge of modern techniques and developments but also some knowledge of Indian conditions and background. Your experience, I believe, has been chiefly based on Bengal. Conditions are somewhat different in the United Provinces. Indeed they differ in different parts of the province. If you come here, you will, I hope, be able easily to appreciate the conditions prevailing here and to advise accordingly. You would first of all consult with the Ministers in charge of these developments as well as the other officers concerned.

It will probably save time if you communicate directly with the Prime Minister of this Province. But if you write or cable to me I shall forward that on to the Prime Minister.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

30. To Albert Mayer[1]

17 June 1946

Dear Mr. Mayer,

I have received your letter of May 20th and, as I cabled to you, I sent it on to the U.P. Prime Minister, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant. Subsequently I had a talk with him also and I understand that he has sent

1. JN. Papers, N.M.M.L.

urgent engagements may have to be fixed up suddenly then. Subject to this, we would be glad to meet the members of the commission.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

32. To Aftab Iqbal[1]

New Delhi
18 June, 1946

Dear Mr. Aftab Iqbal,[2]
Thank you for your letter of the 14th June which I read with appreciation. It is comforting to know that others appreciate one's activities and views. The future is likely to be a troubled one for India, but out of it surely there will arise a strong prosperous and united India in which the communal question, which troubles us so much today, will be a thing of the past.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. An advocate of Lahore.

33. The Postal Strike[1]

Many people had heard of the coming of the postal strike, but this morning all India suddenly became conscious of it, and if no specific step is taken it is likely to be acutely conscious of it for a considerable time. A postal strike is always a calamity to the public and is to be avoided as far as possible. In labour disputes generally, and more particularly in regard to essential services, a civilized government and society provide other methods of settlement than that of the strike. Unfortunately our Government and social structure function differently.

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 11 July 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 12 July 1946.

the beginning some people, used to the old type of authoritarian British expert, who neither understood nor cared to understand Indian conditions, might view any foreign intrusion with some suspicion. Our people have naturally developed a number of complexes during these past generations of foreign rule and foreign exploitation. But we can get over them given the chance.

As regards the question of remuneration, what you suggest is certainly not much from the American standard. Indian standards are lower. Still this question need not worry us at this stage. When you come here we can discuss this matter personally and I feel sure there will be no difficulty.

I had a letter a few days ago from Frances Gunther in which she mentioned meeting you and discussing your proposed visit to India. She specially mentioned your concern for your children. I hope that you will write to me of any problem or difficulties in regard to your coming to India which might trouble you. We shall, of course, try to help.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

31. To Horace Alexander[1]

New Delhi
June 18, 1946

Dear Horace,

Arthur Lall gave me the enclosed letter addressed to you by B.R. Sen. I consulted the Congress President and other colleagues about it. They will be happy to meet the Food Commission from America.[3] But it is exceedingly difficult to fix any engagement definitely. We do not know how many of us will be here on the 25th June. Nor do we know what

postal strike causing great inconvenience to public and provincial governments. Considerable sympathy for postmen among labour circles and public generally. Continuation of strike may lead to deterioration of situation.

Jawaharlal Nehru

35. Floods in Bengal and Assam[1]

More than any other part of India, Bengal and especially East Bengal, has to face misfortune and calamity. Bengal and extensive areas in Assam are now submerged in flood and large numbers of people are homeless and on the verge of starvation. Mrs. Nellie Sen-Gupta has appealed to us for immediate financial help. I can only give all possible support to this urgent appeal and urge our people to give help financially and by personal service. Already many of our organisations, well-known for their beneficial help on such occasions, have taken steps to afford relief. The first and immediate responsibility rests with the Government but we cannot remain passive in the face of public calamity and everyone who can help should help.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad 20 July 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 21 July 1946.

36. The Problem of Postal Employees[1]

All of us have been troubled greatly by the development of the strike situation in the postal, telegraph and allied services. This is not merely a matter of inconvenience but of the closing up of the vital arteries of the nation's life. The whole community is affected, business suffers, Government work is held up, and generally every activity begins to dry up. Normally speaking, there should never be any need for such strikes

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 23 July 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 24 July

I am not in a position to express an opinion about the detailed demands of the postal employees, although during the last five or six months the matter has come up before me on several occasions. *Prima facie*, the lower-paid postal employees are badly paid and live a hard life. Their service is known for its honesty, integrity and hard work and inevitably one's sympathy goes to them.

One fact which is significant is that the Postal Inquiry Committee which functioned a year and half ago under the chairmanship of Mr. Krishna Prasad, the present Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs, presented a report in April 1945 which was suppressed. Why was it suppressed by the Government, although from all accounts it was an unanimous report? This suppression does not bring credit to the Government.

As I have said, I am unable to express any specific opinion about the demands, but I am quite convinced that this matter as a whole ought to have been referred to adjudication or arbitration. One very small aspect of the question relating to interim relief to men on new scales of pay has been referred to adjudication and the award is expected soon. But this does not cover the main points at issue.

I would strongly urge both the Government and the All-India Postal Union to accept a full adjudication or arbitration of the entire dispute. There can be a timelimit fixed for this and any recommendations or decisions may be made subject to the future findings of the Pay Commission which had begun considering the whole subject of official salaries, etc. If this step is taken it will be fair and honourable to all concerned and will bring relief to the public also who are suffering from this strike.

These same considerations also apply to the telegraph employees who have given notice of a strike. I would urge that their case also should be referred to adjudication or arbitration.

34. Telegram to Lord Wavell[1]

Would earnestly request you to refer postal dispute to adjudication on all points in issue. This course fair to all parties concerned. All India

1. Undated in the source, but clearly sent by 11 July 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. G 67/1946, p 10, N.M.M.L.

background in the country today. It shows that the old structure cannot last. Several major strikes have been going on, and now from today yet another strike has started, that of the employees of the Imperial Bank of India.

I have looked into the correspondence in regard to the strike of the employees of the Imperial Bank. The first thing that strikes me is the astonishingly low salaries of men who have to handle large sums of money.

Apart from any other argument, these figures themselves are eloquent proofs.

Then their hours of work are scandalously long. I am told that Imperial Bank employees in the Madras and Bombay circles are paid much more than in the Bengal circle. Indeed, nearly all the demands made in the Bengal circle are extended by conditions prevailing in the Madras and Bombay circles. If this is so, it seems to me very extraordinary that the employees in the Bengal circle should be treated differently.

In a letter dated June 10 on behalf of the Employees Association a suggestion was made that the matter be referred to adjudication. A strike notice was also issued. Later the bank directors made it known that they were considering the demands favourably and on this basis asked for a postponement of the strike. This was done. On July 15 the directors communicated their new proposals, which were considered wholly insufficient. In their letter they stated that if their proposals were not agreed to they were prepared for the matter to be adjudicated upon.

I cannot understand why there was no adjudication in spite of agreement of both parties to it. Evidently, the Government machinery has failed to function. Meanwhile, a new strike notice was given and from today the strike has begun. The issues are simple enough and should be decided in a businesslike way within a few hours. But if this cannot be done, the obvious course is to have adjudication.

38. To Jainarain Vyas[1]

Allahabad
1.8.1946

My dear Vyasji,

...I enclose a cheque for Rs. 150. This is for a lady who is apparently in the Agra Hotel, Daryaganj, Delhi. I enclose a telegram I have received. She is Savitri Devi, an Irish woman who has long been very ill

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 54, (Pt. II), p. 38, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

of essential services and some automatic method should exist for settling all disputes impartially, swiftly and efficiently. Such a strike affects the whole community directly in many ways. The demands of the strikers have another important effect for inevitably they produce their reactions on other services and on the national budget. The burden must fall on the community. So it is essential that the problem be viewed in its entirety and not isolated from this wider context.

Most of us sympathise with the desire of the lower-paid members of essential public services to raise their standard of living. They are hard worked and deserve well of the community. Indeed higher standards of pay and living will mean greater efficiency also. At the same time it has always to be remembered that one essential service should not hold up the nation or profit, by virtue of its strategic position, at the cost of other services or the people at large. If this happens there will be a reaction against that service and the sympathy that exists today will vanish.

I feel that there has been much mishandling of the situation by the governmental authorities during past months. Repeatedly they were asked to agree to arbitration or adjudication, but they did not agree or agreed only in part. The only right way of dealing with such matters is by adjudication and if this had been accepted right at the beginning much of the subsequent trouble would have been avoided. Now we are forced to consider the issues in a hurry and under threat of undesirable consequences. However, I trust that the efforts that are being made in New Delhi and in Poona to arrive at a settlement will meet with success. The Congress premiers have naturally a responsibility in this matter and I am glad that the Bombay Prime Minister has taken the initiative.

I would appeal to the employees of the postal, telegraph and allied services not to forget the country's interests in making or pressing their demands. A sectarian approach in such vital matters leads to wrong results in the end. The ultimate test must always be what benefits the masses of our people.

37. Strike by Employees of the Imperial Bank[1]

India is experiencing a wave of strikes. Whatever may be said about particular strikes, it is obvious that this is very significant of the economic

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 1 August 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 2 August 1946.

that you had sent. This intimation had unfortunately got mixed up with some other papers during my absence from Allahabad and had therefore not been forwarded to me. I am handing over this money for the training of orphan children rescued from the Bengal famine. I think you will like this use of the money. The All India Women's Conference is in charge of some of these training centres and my sister, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, has been specially interested in them. She was partly responsible for starting them as President of that Conference. £150 is roughly equivalent to Rs. 2000/-. I am giving this sum to the Women's Conference for this particular purpose.

I have read with interest the account of your son's activities in Nyasaland. I am sorry your old college Achimota has fallen on evil times.

You are right in thinking that Kashmir and Hyderabad are terribly mis-governed. I have recently returned from a second visit to Kashmir. The problems before us, political and even more so economic, are tremendous. Yet one has to face them and face them with confidence.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

41. To Inayattullah Khan[1]

7.8.46

Dear Sardar Saheb,[2]

I have received your letter of July 5th. As I wrote to you previously, it is not possible for us to take any steps in regard to your detention and maintenance allowances so long as there is no complete change in the Government of India and more especially the Political Department. We cannot influence the present Political Department in any way. From what you say in your letter, it appears that the treatment accorded to you is unjust and unworthy. The larger question of your detention raises some international issues as between India and Afghanistan. But

1. Extracts from Maharashtra Govt. Home Deptt. (Special) File No. 3/MA/42-II.
2. Inayattullah Khan and two others, who were tribal chiefs from Afghanistan, had been detained by the British government in Pune for six years because they had opposed the Afghan Government in 1939.

with cancer etc. She has been operated upon repeatedly with little success. I do not know what to do about her except to give her some help from time to time. She is not likely to survive for long. Could you kindly give this money personally to her if you can find her?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

39. To Manager, Ritz Cinema, Lahore[1]

Allahabad
1 August 1946

Dear Sir,
I have seen an advertisement of yours in the *Tribune* newspaper in which it is stated that a film known as "Veer Kunal" was highly appreciated by me. My picture is also given.

I have never seen or heard of this film, much less appreciated it. I should like to know why you have made a statement which has no foundation in fact. It is very objectionable to exploit individuals for the advance of your business. I shall await your reply and expect you to make a public correction of your wrong statement.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

40. To A.G. Fraser[1]

Allahabad
August 4, 1946

My dear Fraser,
Forgive me for the delay in answering your last letter. Soon after writing to you I received intimation from my bank of the receipt of £ 150

1. J.N. Collection.

43. To P.C. Mahalanobis[1]

Wardha
10 August 1946

My dear Mahalanobis,

Your letter[2] of the 7th August has just been handed to me today and soon after I received another copy by post. I should very much like to meet you before you return to Europe. My programme, even my immediate programme, is rather uncertain. But so far as I know at present, I shall reach Bombay on the 15th morning and stay there at least 3 days, possibly 4 or 5. As you are likely to leave India on the 20th, we might perhaps meet in Bombay on the 15th or 16th or even 17th. On all these days I shall be pretty busy with other activities but I shall certainly find time to meet you and Deshmukh.[3]

I like the idea of your inviting some scientists and technicians from abroad to visit India next winter. I would suggest that in the invitation Russian scientists might be included. I suppose this is a question involving funds, for the visiting scientists will presumably be the guests of the Indian Science Congress Association.

I am glad you developed contacts with people in the U.S.A. and U.K. in regard to planning and development. Certainly please continue to do this work.

I shall be glad to help you in any way I can to further the work of the Indian Statistical Institute. My difficulty is that I do not quite know what I shall be doing and where I shall be a few days or a few weeks hence. I lead a hand to mouth existence so far as time and engagements are concerned.

I have asked Pitambar to come to Bombay on the 15th.

Hoping to meet you in Bombay,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-8/1946-47, Pt. II, p. 487, N.M.M.L.
2. Mahalanobis wrote that during his tour of the U.S. and Britain he had met people engaged in planning and development and some scientists were willing to visit India.
3. C.D. Deshmukh (1896-1982); joined the I.C.S. in 1918; Governor of the Reserve Bank of India 1943-49; President, Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, 1945-64; Member, Planning Commission, 1950; Minister of Finance, Government of India, 1950-56; Chairman University Grants Commission, 1956-60; Vice-Chancellor, University of Delhi 1962-67.

the question of treatment is purely one for the Government of India to decide and there appears to be no reason why this treatment should be so niggardly.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

42. Mahadev Desai[1]

It is difficult to write about one who was a dear friend and comrade and with whom are associated so many intimate memories. As I think of him, these memories revive and the past rises up bringing a procession of pictures of days gone by.

There are so many things we take for granted, even friends. Mahadev had become some kind of an institution for many of us. Quiet, able, efficient, hard-working, forgetful of self, utterly devoted, the more one knew him, the more he grew in one's estimation and liking. For nearly a quarter of century we knew each other and often we worked together at common tasks. What he did, he did well and thoroughly. He had the scholar's outlook and at the same time the human touch which endears. So our affection and admiration for him grew, and when suddenly he was no more, there was a gulf and a vacuum and a feeling of desolation seized us. For one who formed so much a part of our lives and our work was no more, a dear comrade had gone, and there was no one to take his place.

Yet his memory endures and cheers and strengthens us. For the days of trial are not over and the future is full of difficulty. How we wish that Mahadev was with us now with his wise and friendly counsel.

1. 10 August 1946. Message on the fourth death anniversary of Mahadev Desai, *Harijan*, 18 August 1946.

institutions.[3] There are children as well as adults, trainees as well as trainers. Before such a gathering what shall I say? Shall I talk about the children or adults? If I say something concerning the children, the adults will not feel interested in it, and if I speak about the adults the children will not feel happy.

The people from four, five institutions who have gathered here have come to learn something or the other. When I came here four years ago Sevagram was too small a place. Only a cottage belonging to Bapu-ji was there. But it went on expanding and now it has become a hive of constructive activities. People from all over India come here either to learn or teach.

It is no small task to raise the level of forty crore people in this country. You must be noticing that the newspapers are full of political news. But politics cannot solve all the problems, it only opens the door and clears the way for doing the work ahead. The rule of the British is still continuing in the country. We will oust this rule. But after the end of this rule what will be the form of administration? If in the days to come, even after the departure of the British, the administrative machinery remains the same as today then it would be of no avail. Therefore we will have to change the present system of administration. We will have to remove the poverty of the country. Everyone should get food and clothing in an equal measure, and nobody should remain unemployed. The wealth of the country should increase. What is, after all, wealth? Are gold and silver wealth? If you are lost in a jungle or stranded in a lonely place or in a desert and if in your purse there are only currency notes and gold and silver, and if you feel hungry then they will not serve your purpose. When one is hungry, only foodgrains or fruit are required. Gold and silver are meant only for exchange and trade. Gold and silver facilitate exchange. What people produce by their labour is wealth. The greater the production the greater the wealth. The greater the number of producers in a country the richer that country. Therefore the real wealth of a country is the toiling masses —men and women. If they do not know how to work they are a burden on the country.

In our country there are also a large number of ascetics and mendicants. They are about 50 to 60 lakhs in number. They are mere beggars. They do not produce anything by their labour. They are simply a burden on the country.

2. The Sevagram institutions at Wardha, the Khadi Vidyalaya, the Hindustani Talim Sangh, the Go-Seva Sangh and the trainees under the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial scheme had invited Jawaharlal to meet them.

44. Organisation of Labour[1]

Whereas the Congress has to play an increasingly active role in helping the working class to organize itself on sound and healthy lines, to achieve its rightful place in industry and society and to make a progressive contribution towards raising the economic and social standards in this country, the Committee have come to the conclusion that a central agency should be provided to encourage, support and coordinate the efforts and activities of Congressmen in the field of labour organization and the service of the working class. The Committee note with satisfaction that the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh has been functioning in this field for a number of years, and has built up a policy, tradition and machinery well calculated to advance and fulfil the aims which the Congress has in view in relation to labour. The Committee recommend to Congressmen to make the fullest use of the facilities provided by the Sangh for the service of the working class, and to accept its guidance in dealing with labour questions.

In order to give effect to the above resolution a committee consisting of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Lala Gulzarilal Nanda and P.H. Patwardhan is appointed to confer with the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh and report to the Working Committee.

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal and passed at the meeting of the Congress Working Committee, Wardha, 12 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. G-45/1946, p. 145, N.M.M.L.

45. Basic Education and the Future of India[1]

All of you have been introduced to each other. Here there are people from the Talimi Sangh, Samagra Gramseva, Khadi Vidyalaya and other

1. Speech at Wardha, 14 August 1946. *Khadi Jagat*, September 1946. Original in Hindi.

alone is real wealth. Wealth does not increase by transferring money from someone's pocket to one's own pocket. The greater the number of workers in a country the greater the country progresses. The number of workers in a country should increase. Here in Sevagram everyone is inclined to do work.

Swaraj we will get but to work it is a difficult task, the reason being that we never got an opportunity to learn this work. There are colleges which have produced many B.A.s and M.A.s. Most of these people have become lawyers. Lawyers do not do all the work of a nation. If in a country everyone became a lawyer then the country would become lifeless. If all the lawyers of a country were driven out even then there would be no loss. But if instead of lawyers, farmers were driven out then the country would be shaken. When scavengers strike work, we cannot do without them. Those who perform menial work are looked down upon by the society. That is a great mistake. Rather we should show more respect to such persons. The various projects that have been undertaken at the Sevagram are the basic works.

Today we need a number of engineers to construct roads. We need lakhs of such engineers. Doctors are required in lakhs. Teachers are required in lakhs. Such trained workers are very much required by the country. Lawyers are there even now in large numbers but excepting law they do not know anything else. Many of our politicians, when they retire, do not know what to do because they do not know at all how to work. You are at least getting an opportunity to learn something. A country is big not because there are two or three big persons in it but because the common man is big and follows high ideals. All the organs of the society should be strong. Only such a country gets strong and stabilizes itself soon. Hence the necessity to do all these basic works. It is why Mahatmaji has given so much importance to these basic works and has introduced the system of imparting education to children through basic works.

Therefore we should think how our children should grow. After 10, 15, 20 years all these children will become adults. They will have to shoulder the responsibility of managing the affairs of the country. Therefore if our children receive proper education then the picture of future India that will emerge will also be good. If this kind of basic education is not possible, then Swaraj is of no use. All these basic works of this place are very significant. You please learn all these well and when you go back to your provinces teach them well. I am happy to see all this. *Jai Hind.*

Every man consumes some food and wears clothes. This is consumption. The thing that is consumed is, after all, produced by someone. But one who does not earn by one's own labour but goes on spending only commits a blunder. Those who do not earn are either unemployed or they do not get any opportunity to work. But even those who do not work have to eat food.

There is another category of people like that of zamindars in our country, who like to eat without doing any work. The kisan labours throughout the year and earns and the zamindar usurps the fruit of his labour free of charge. These zamindars only know how to spend but not to work. Such zamindars and idle people are a burden on the country. The greater the number of workers in a country the richer that country.

Look at the history of India. When the Englishmen had not come here there were all sorts of crafts and occupations. But now all those have ceased to exist. Unemployment increased and is still increasing. Famines took place which took a toll of millions of lives. Thus there are a large number of problems in our country. In order to resolve them we have to open the door of politics. Today the reins of the government of the country are in the hands of the British. We have to take them in our hands. Therefore our first requirement is Swaraj. All of us have to work for it. By 'all of us' I mean all the people of the country. By general agreement we should do some such work as may benefit the people of the country most. This work should be such that no one should remain unemployed. Children go on growing and add to the national wealth. Therefore we should plan our work in such a manner that everyone should get work and that too according to his ability and aptitude. There are all sorts of people in the country. Some are intelligent, some unintelligent, some know some art and some are quite ignorant. All kinds of people are there. All of them are not alike. If today we go to some village and compare the people of that village with the cultured people of some city, then we will find a lot of evils in the former. But doing so would not be proper. The question of ability or the lack of it arises when both are given an equal opportunity to progress and everyone gets food and clothing in an equal measure. Then we can talk about comparison. If someone does not get even food or clothing then how can the question of his education arise? If one gets proper food, clothing and has sound health, only then his efficiency increases and he is successful in increasing the wealth of the nation.

If someone makes a chair from wood we can call it as increasing the wealth. Increasing the amount of money by charging interest on it cannot be called increasing the wealth. The wealth produced by labour

48. To S. Radhakrishnan[1]

New Delhi
August 30, 1946

My dear Radhakrishnan,

Yesterday I glanced through a letter from you but unfortunately I cannot find it now. So I am answering from memory.

You were good enough to offer me, on behalf of the Benares University, an honorary doctor's degree. I remember many years ago when the Allahabad University made a similar offer to me. I was ungrateful enough then, for various reasons, chiefly political, not to accept it. Though those reasons do not apply now yet I rather hesitate. Still I do not quite see how I can refuse to accept the honour you are good enough to offer, more especially from the Benares University. So I accept the honour with gratitude. But I really do not know where I shall be on the date you mention and what I shall be doing then.[2]

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. After sending this letter, Jawaharlal wrote a second letter the same day. "I have got hold of your letter. In addition to what I said in my letter to you of today's date, I should like to say that it would be an additional honour to me to be associated on this occasion with Dr. Tai Chi tao, who is a good friend of mine."

46. To Gopinath Bardoloi[1]

Allahabad
26 August 1946

My dear Bardoloi,
Thank you for your letter of the 2nd August which you sent through Fakhruddin. I have got rather mixed up about the publication of translations of my book and cannot at present refer to my old register. I presume that I have not given the permission to any one else. Accordingly I am agreeable to Principal Hemkanta Baruah translating my book *Letters from a Father to His Daughter* into Assamese. Usually I deal with publishers and not with translators and I should like to know who is going to publish it. The usual terms are: 10% royalty to the author on books sold and 5% to the translator.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

47. To Sri Prakasa[1]

New Delhi
August 29, 1946

My dear Prakasa,
Thank you for your letter[2] which only reached me today. It is always pleasant to hear from you and to think of old times. But why will you think and write as if you were past your prime. You will have to do all manner of big things yet and nobody is going to excuse you, for after all our stock of efficient human material is very limited.
With love,

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Collection.
2. On 21 August 1946 Sri Prakasa wrote: "I almost feel my task is done with the vision of Swaraj that I had scarcely hoped to see...I feel least fit for any type of active work."

10

APPENDIX

1. To Jayaprakash Narayan[1]

Houlgate (France)
2-8-38

My dear Jayaprakash,

Your cable has been forwarded to me here but it does not say where you are at present. I am sending a reply to Patna suggesting that you might wait. I do not think it will be desirable for you to include my name among the foundation members of the proposed Socialist Book Club. I don't know what the idea is, except of course generally. It seems to me that any book club venture must be very carefully organised, especially on the business side. I have been going into this matter with Gollancz and others and I have found that without this preparation such ventures are likely to fail. It seems to me that we are too eager to start ventures without thinking out how they will get on. We are always in difficulties and a succession of failures cling to us. We started the Nationalist Publications Society with Shah & Narendra Deva & others and it is in a dormant state. There is the proposal to start a daily from Lucknow and this is also in a bad way. I would much rather concentrate on something we have already begun than start a new venture.

The Left Book Club has succeeded because of Gollancz's business ability and a certain wide appeal that he made outside socialist circles. I do not see any comparable ability on our side.

Besides I feel that all our politics are getting far too much in the ruts and we must get them going on the right lines. What I shall do on my return to India, I do not know but I want to keep myself detached at present so far as I can. We must see the whole problem and not lose ourselves in minor aspects of it. Therefore I would rather not associate myself with a new venture.

I have come here as much for some rest as for writing work. I hope, before returning to India, to visit Russia and Turkey but I am not sure of it yet.

I hope you are well.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

1. Brahmanand Papers, N.M.M.L.

1. To Jayaprakash Narayan[1]

Houlgate (France)
2-8-38

My dear Jayaprakash,

Your cable has been forwarded to me here but it does not say where you are at present. I am sending a reply to Patna suggesting that you might wait. I do not think it will be desirable for you to include my name among the foundation members of the proposed Socialist Book Club. I don't know what the idea is, except of course generally. It seems to me that any book club venture must be very carefully organised, especially on the business side. I have been going into this matter with Gollancz and others and I have found that without this preparation such ventures are likely to fail. It seems to me that we are too eager to start ventures without thinking out how they will get on. We are always in difficulties and a succession of failures cling to us. We started the Nationalist Publications Society with Shah & Narendra Deva & others and it is in a dormant state. There is the proposal to start a daily from Lucknow and this is also in a bad way. I would much rather concentrate on something we have already begun than start a new venture.

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I hope you are well.

Yours affly.,
Jawaharlal

1. Brahmanand Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. The Future of Heavy and Cottage Industries[1]

Mahatma Gandhi: Hand spinning is the only occupation that can be universalised. But there should be no coercion — to make people do what is good for them. The Congress is wedded to nonviolence. If you agree with me moral coercion is the only policy we can think of in a democracy.

Jawaharlal Nehru: Where does coercion come in? Is a tax a coercive process?

MG: My point is that unless you put planning in an attractive manner it won't catch on or cause a change. My remarks are only for Rao's note.[2] Hand spinning has been mentioned at the end of the note — I hold that hand spinning and allied cottage industries should be encouraged and subsidised.

V.K.R.V. Rao: The object of my note is to show that our methods may not solve the present problems. You do not envisage the economy on the development of cities. You envisage village communes — no radios, no motors — and they can exist without machinery, on cottage industries. But I would like a different standard for villages. With sufficient planning these are possible. But till that time comes cottage industries must be helped.

JN: The objective of planning must be to raise the standard of the masses by greater production, may be through cottage industries or anything else. Hand spinning and weaving should be encouraged by the State in the widest possible way. The basis cannot be on this plan, however. Therefore, it is a question of emphasis — details of how subsidies are to be given are immaterial.

1. Extracts of an undated note written by Amrit Kaur of a discussion at Wardha presumably held in April 1940. Portions of the note that are relevant to Jawaharlal's contribution to the discussion have been summarised. The note is available in Amrit Kaur Papers in N.M.M.L.
2. V.K.R.V. Rao argued that hand spinning, which provided employment to thousands, would not be able to face the competition of millcloth. Direct subsidy to hand spinning would not be a solution. Closure of mills would hamper national growth. So he suggested nationalization of the textile industry and adjustment of prices of millcloth with hand-spun cloth to ensure a balance in the sale.

You must consider — apart from what civilisation one aims at — that it is not possible for cottage industries to flourish so long as the State is not powerful enough. This power cannot come without industrialisation. You may sit on your large scale industries, but other countries will sit on you. Our energies will be frittered away.

However if we want to develop cottage industries we must have economic power. No country is independent today which is not industrially developed. The world is made in this way. Even defence has to be considered. Economically and politically what the future will be is difficult to say. World developments, scientific developments, must play an important part. You may not take a static view therefore. New discoveries may knock the bottom out of your industries — cottage or otherwise. All your conceptions may be upset. The development of certain types of large industries, barring textiles, is essential. Many consequences follow. Machines breed machines. But today we want employment for all. Go ahead with vigour. Let the State disallow mill industries to sit on cottage industries. The latter may be able to develop in such a way that we may say let us wind up cloth mills in such an event. But I cannot say so today. I want to push cottage industries to the extent we can. But I cannot conceive India coming into her own without industrialisation. These very industries will help cottage industries. I do not see where violence comes in. Economic coercion is a different thing.

MG: Therefore, I believe that emancipation of people from grinding poverty is possible only by hand spinning. Hand spinning has to be encouraged to the exclusion of mill industry. No quarrel with industrialisation of India or heavy industries. I subscribed to the Karachi Resolution of which I was a part-author. I can't allow myself to be carried away by the vision of future prosperity.

Rao: The present position can't be solved except by subsidy.

MG: The textile industry exists today. So does hand spinning — the former a giant, the latter a dwarf. The Congress decided, in the competition between the textile industry and hand spinning, to take the side of the latter.

JN: We have said that in the event of a competition with village industry if the State controlled it it can lock it up at once. Secondly you can limit, say, counts produced by textile mills. At the moment we are doing propaganda for khadi. But I am not willing to shut up textile mills today because I do not know what the future will be. But

2. The Future of Heavy and Cottage Industries[1]

Mahatma Gandhi: Hand spinning is the only occupation that can be universalised. But there should be no coercion — to make people do what is good for them. The Congress is wedded to nonviolence. If you agree with me moral coercion is the only policy we can think of in a democracy.

Jawaharlal Nehru: Where does coercion come in? Is a tax a coercive process?

MG: My point is that unless you put planning in an attractive manner it won't catch on or cause a change. My remarks are only for Rao's note.[2] Hand spinning has been mentioned at the end of the note — I hold that hand spinning and allied cottage industries should be encouraged and subsidised.

V.K.R.V. Rao: The object of my note is to show that our methods may not solve the present problems. You do not envisage the economy on the development of cities. You envisage village communes — no radios, no motors — and they can exist without machinery, on cottage industries. But I would like a different standard for villages. With sufficient planning these are possible. But till that time comes cottage industries must be helped.

JN: The objective of planning must be to raise the standard of the masses by greater production, may be through cottage industries or anything else. Hand spinning and weaving should be encouraged by the State in the widest possible way. The basis cannot be on this plan, however. Therefore, it is a question of emphasis — details of how subsidies are to be given are immaterial.

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MG: You will have to be cautious of foreign methods.

JN: What is foreign in science?

MG: Foreign methods mean draining India's wealth.

JN: It is a matter of means of production. Anything that adds to the wealth of the eountry can't be bad. Capitalism must go. Produce only what is wanted. Planning means that luxury goods are not in the picture. Here almost everything is wasted. The purchasing power may not be there. But things are needed.

MG: The millions of India are unshod. We must educate them to think they want shoes. It does not follow that they want everything.

JN: Supposing electric power were available cheaply, would you accept it for a village and utilise it for cottage industry?

MG: Yes I would, provided there is no unemployment created.

JN: The moment you talk of unemployment you talk in terms of capitalism. No man is really unemployed in a socialistic order. Take Russia. Every man is a producer — he is part and parcel of the nation's wealth. You must see that in theory a certain economic structure will give you ideal conditions. And we proceed towards it nonviolently. Bapu's approach as far as conversion is concerned is right. But you can't make a convert to give up his vested interests. I hate the idea of trusteeship on principle.

MG: Jawaharlal himself is a trustee for the Congress.

JN: But I can be pushed out.

MG: So can the millowners.

Rao: They won't agree to that.

JN: Behind your approach is a pressure which reduces conflict to a minimum. But the idea of trusteeship itself is illogical.

MG: Trustees are allowed to have a commission — a labourer is worthy of his hire.

JN: They are their own employees and therefore it is wrong.

MG: I discovered the nearest approach. Supposing millowners treat labourers as part-proprietors my ideal is fulfilled.

even if we concede that — and spinning has got to be there — and mills must be controlled, what about the purchasing power of the country? You may be producing in a better way but you may not be increasing the purchasing power. Planning cannot think in long distance terms — but we have to have some vision of the future. You must not have a conflict — and long distance planning, while it must think in terms of the present, has to have this vision. Can you change every three months? We can profit by our own and others' experience. Organised planning is essential. Every individual competes with another and the national energy is wasted. Even the textile industry is a powerful sector — it has great resources and may upset your apple cart. Vast numbers of people don't want total destruction and therefore you have all kinds of people lined up against you.

Rao : Poverty must be tackled at once. Therefore we want to give subsidies to hand spinning. All mills will be State-owned and the control will therefore be easy.

N.S. Varadachari:[3] Subsidies cannot solve the question. They are not possible for all time. The State ownership will not help khadi. There will have to be a rigorous exclusion.

Rao: The cottage industry cannot raise the national income to the extent that industrialisation can.

JN: If heavy industries barring textiles are admitted as being necessary India does become heavily industrialised.

I want handicrafts to increase. But villages as they are today are awful. I don't want them to exist. The cottage industry may involve hard work — drudgery and subsidy — not much human values left.

MG: There are very few cottage industries where people slave to eke out a living.

JN: Vague idealisation of the village is wrong. The present day village life is dead. I don't believe that it was full of life ever — even with industry — Oxenlike — Today we can give him some amenities of town life and cultural life can be developed.

3. (b. 1897); was closely associated with the All India Spinners Association; arrested three times during the freedom struggle; Congress Parliamentary Secretary, 1937-39; member, Madras Legislative Assembly, 1950-55.

Q: Would the Muslims agree to take part in such a conference?

JN: The Congress will spare no effort to assure them a fair voice in the proceedings. The delegates from the provincial legislatures can well be elected by the proportional system to allow minority groups full representation. Or, if they prefer the Muslim members of the legislatures can get together and elect their own delegates. It is very unlikely that any provincial legislature as a whole will refuse to cooperate. The Congress, either as the majority party or as the largest single party, expects to form ministries in eight of the provinces; there will probably be coalition governments in the other three. If a Muslim League ministry comes to power in one province and will not join with the others, it will be possible to go ahead without that province and see what will happen later on.

Q: Would you comment on the recent statement of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel that Pakistan can be achieved only through a civil War?

JN: No question arises of any civil conflict. It is already agreed that the largest possible autonomy should be given to the constituent units of the federation. Ultimately if any particular area wants to walk out, it can do so, provided it clearly expressed its decision on a specific proposal. But if any attempt is made to force areas to remain outside the federation against their will, as Mr. Jinnah suggests, then inevitably there will be conflict.

It must be remembered that there can be no absolute self-determination anywhere. There are some over-riding considerations, such as those of defence, which cannot be ignored. This is especially important in view of the situation developing in the Middle East.

I predict that when Muslims are faced with the actual economic and political problems involved in separating predominantly Muslim areas from the Indian state, they will lose their present enthusiasm for Pakistan.

Q: What would be your criterion of the good faith of Britain in the course of these preliminaries?

JN: The Labour Government, if it is at all sincere, should recognize the constituent assembly as having final authority. If it is treated merely as a consultative body, then nothing gets at all.

I am also anxious to make clear to American readers the importance of Asia in all world calculations and the key place of Indian independence in the stability of Asia.

3. India's Passage to Freedom[1]

Question: How does the Indian National Congress propose to achieve independence?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The issue in India today is no longer one of interim arrangements and war-time expedients. Indians want a final settlement that will put an end to British rule, and they want it now.

Q: What is your programme for the transfer of power?

JN: The Indian people are again on the move. In essence the Indian problem is simple. Britain must decide on the recognition of India as an independent country, and on a freely elected constituent assembly having full authority to frame her constitution. Once this is done, the rest becomes fairly easy, although, no doubt, many hurdles will have to be got over.

I am particularly concerned to avoid a repetition of the deadlock which wrecked the Simla Conference, when the Congress and the Muslim League were unable to agree on Muslim representation.

The easiest and fairest way to proceed is not to deal with parties as such, or with religious or other groupings, but with the provincial legislatures after they are elected. It is unfortunate that their franchise is a limited one. Nevertheless, we shall have something which does represent the people.

Q: What subjects should be referred to these provincial assemblies, and how can they be consulted?

JN: The first two questions that will arise immediately after the elections will be the convoking of a constituent assembly and the formation of a new central government to function as a "caretaker" until the new constitution comes into effect. In the solution of both of these problems the newly elected provincial legislatures should have the dominant voice.

The eleven legislatures can select delegates from among their members to form a preliminary conference. This may possibly develop into the constitution-making body, and will in any case lay the ground for it.

1. Interview given to Alice Thorner in Delhi on 18 January 1946 and published in the *Nation* (New York), 2 March 1946. Alice Thorner was an analyst of Indian affairs in the Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, Federal Communication Commission.

4. To H.R. Hone[1]

Allahabad,
27 April 1946

Dear General Hone[2],
I should like to draw your attention to a letter which has been sent by Lt. Col. A.C. Chatterji[3] at present under detention in the Kabul Lines of the Delhi Cantonment, to the authorities here. I enclose a copy of this letter. You will find that he refers in this to 110 pieces of gold which were taken from him by the British Mission at Hanoi at the time of his surrender on the 22nd of December 1945. I presume that this gold can be easily traced. The first thing to be done is that the gold is placed in proper custody and is not kept with any individual. If this is assured, then the question will arise of its proper utilisation. I would suggest that the money realised from this gold be also earmarked for relief work among Indians in Malaya, and for this purpose handed over to the Indian Relief Committee there.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. File No. 57-39/46-OS II, P. 2/Corr., Commonwealth Relations Department, National Archives of India.
2. Major General H.R. Hone; at this time at the Malayan Union Secretariat, Kuala Lumpur.
3. General Secretary of the Indian Independence League, was in charge of finance in the Provisional Government of Azad Hind.

5. To E. N. Taylor[1]

Allahabad,
6 August 1946

Dear Sir[2],
I have received a copy of a letter, No. C.P.167/46, dated 3rd June 1946, addressed by you to the Manager, Indian Overseas Bank Limited, Singapore, relating to fifteen packets of gold which Mr. Hardayal Singh[3] of

1. File No. 57-39/46-OS II, p. 2/Corr., Commonwealth Relations Department, National Archives of India.
2. Custodian of Property, Singapore.
3. An Indian merchant in Singapore.

Asia is likely to play a far greater role in the future than in the past few hundred years. If there should be, unfortunately, another world war, Asia is likely to be a bigger centre of it than Europe. In any consideration of war or peace in Asia, India is crucial both for the Middle East and for South East Asia. I have little doubt that if India had been given an opportunity to cooperate in the war as a free country, the struggle might have ended a year or two earlier and millions of lives might have been saved. If India gains its independence soon, far-reaching changes will follow in the Middle East and South East Asia, and new and peaceful groupings will develop in certain present day danger spots.

Although I contend that there is no final solution for the world except a federation of free nations, my attitude towards the U.N.O. is "wait and see." The recent policies of Britain and Russia have a warning for the United States.

The events in Indonesia have been bitterly resented all over Asia and especially in India because Indian troops have been used there. What is happening in Iran has also disturbed people here. I recently referred to the United States as to some extent underwriting the British Empire.[2] I did not mean that American policy as a whole was committed in that direction, but there were certainly some trends which I considered dangerous. I can well understand how in the world context today America wants to help Britain in many ways. That is necessary and desirable. But the point is that there must be a distinction between helping Britain and helping the British Empire. To do the latter is really to weaken Britain in the long run as well as those who support her. And the long run is likely to be a short run.

A strong, free India is indispensable to the peace of the world. I call upon Britain in its own best interests to hand over the reins of power to whomever the Indian people choose as their representatives. Once the principle of independence is granted, Muslim demands can be settled within the framework of the Congress programme. My formula hinges on British willingness to leave final decisions on all constitutional matters to an elected constituent assembly. I have stated the terms on which the Congress will undertake to ensure a peaceful transition period.

2. See presidential address to the All India States People's Conference, 30 December 1945; *Selected Works*, Vol. 14, pp. 406-416.

INDEX

(Biographical footnotes are italicized)

Abdullah, Sheikh Muhammad, 185 fn–186, 212, 246 & fn, 357, 362, 365, 367 & fn–368, 397–398, 400–402, 411–416
Abell, G.E.B., 321–322 & *fn*, 610
Achimota College, 633
Afghanistan, 633 & fn
Africa, 124, 234, 327, 491–492, 509, 511–512, 525, 530, 542, 554, 569
Africa and Overseas Merchants Chamber, 554
Agra, 1
Agriculture and Cooperation in India (John Matthai), 101 fn
Ahmed, Fakhruddin Ali, 296 & *fn*, 460, 640
Ahmedabad, 87
Ahmednagar Fort, 597–598
Air India, 100 fn
Aiyar, C.P. Ramaswami, 336 fn, 339–340 fn
Akalis, 23 fn, 121 fn, 257 fn, 264 fn
Akali Dal, 24
Alexander, A.V. (Earl Alexander of Hillsborough), 5 fn, 229
——, Horace, 578 & fn, 603, 626
Ali, Iftikhar, 451 & *fn*
——, Mansur, 266
——, Sadiq, 463–464, 485, 504
——, Syed Raza, 568 *fn*
Aligarh University, 296
Al[illegible]n, Major N.S., 448
[illegible]n Literary Association, 557
[illegible] Anglo-Indian Association, [illegible]
[illegible]ss Committee, 79, 157 fn, 236 fn, 239 & fn, 269, 274, 290, 304, [illegible] fn, 394–395, 397, 458, 460–462, 464–468, 478, 480, 482, 484–491, 494–496, 498, 500, 503–504, 577, 590, 601, 612
All India Depressed Classes League, 208 fn, 295 fn, 301
All India Federal Union, 362
All India Kshatriya Nadar Association, 312 fn
All India Muslim League—*see* Muslim League
All India Postal Union, 628
All India Shia Political Conference, 89 fn, 301
All India States People's conference, 186, 246–247 & fn, 333–336, 337 fn, 340–341, 351 & fn–354, 357–358, 361 & fn–362, 365–366, 368, 371, 374 fn–375, 380, 399, 404, 406, 410, 416, 421, 426–428, 433, 437, 443, 451, 605
——, Ludhiana resolution of, 340 & fn
——, session at Udaipur, 333 & fn, 340–341, 353, 652 fn
All India Women's Conference, 459–460, 633
Allahabad, 1 fn, 41, 266, 270, 272, 278, fn, 296, 306, 308, 393–394, 397, 402, 466, 477 fn, 478, 485, 487, 490, 493, 549, 578, 589, 591, 596, 602, 615, 617, 625, 633
Allahabad High Court, 501
Allahabad University, 641
Almora, 596
Alor Star (Malaysia), 59
Alwar, Municipal Board of, 421 & fn, 425
Alwar State, 419 & fn, 420–421, 424–426
——, Maharaja of, 419, 421–422 fn, 425

Singapore handed over to the Indian Overseas Bank at my request. I presume that the Colonial Secretary directed you to write this letter under some misapprehension. This matter was discussed by me with Lord Louis Mountbatten, the Supreme Commander, during my visit to Singapore in March last, and it was with his approval that I took the steps I did in regard to this gold. Subsequently there were further talks and correspondence between me and the authorities in Malaya in regard to this matter as well as other funds which used to belong to the Indian Independence League or its branches. It was understood and agreed by Lord Louis Mountbatten that this gold with Mr. Hardayal Singh should be made over to my account with the bank and should subsequently form part of a trust that I was creating for the relief of Indians in Malaya. In regard to other monies no decision was then arrived at.

In view of these facts I trust that there will be no difficulty in our utilising this gold or the equivalent thereof for the purposes mentioned above. I shall be grateful to you for a reply to my letter.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Bengal, 23, 27, 31–32, 36, 107, 111 fn, 118, 122 fn, 125, 129 & fn, 134, 139, 175 & fn–176, 180 & fn, 193–194 & fn, 204–205, 208 fn, 243, 279, 286 fn, 293, 314–315 fn, 460, 506, 520, 624, 629, 631
Bengal Government, 292 fn, 622
Bengal Legislative Council, 613
Bengal Public Service Commission, 613
Benton, William B., 574
Berlin, 561
Bevin, Ernest, 128 & fn, 568
Bhabha, C.H., 295 & *fn*, 299, 301, 304, 310, 324
Bhakt Darshan, 609 & *fn*
Bhandari, P.C., 93 & *fn*
Bhanubhakta Acharya (Rana Brahma Shamsher Jung), 231 fn
Bharat Bank Limited (Kotdwara), 609
Bharatpur State, 451–452 fn
Bhashyam, K., 61, 75–76, 362
Bhatt, Gokulbhai, 440 & *fn*
Bhave, Vinoba, 503 fn
Bhonsle, J.R., 86 & *fn*
Bhopal State, 87, 422, 527
——, Nawab of, 110 fn, 247 fn, 331–332, 335 & fn–336 fn, 337 fn, 344, 346–350, 352, 354, 396, 398, 401, 422, 425, 430, 433, 443, 446, 448, 451
Bibliotheque Nationale (France), 616
Bihar, 175 fn, 230, 265, 295, 379, 489, 494–495
Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, 494
Bikaner State, 440–442
——, Maharaja of, 336 fn, 440
Bikini Islands, 543 fn
Bilaspur State, 452
Boer War, 124 fn
Bombay, 2 & fn, 4–5, 9 fn, 12 & fn–13, 15–16, 21, 24, 41–42, 44–45, 73, 86 fn–87, 93 fn, 100, 111–112, 175 fn, 211 fn, 228, 231–232, 235–236 fn, 239, 243, 246, 248 fn, 258, 260–261, 272, 274, 283–285, 287 & fn, 294–295 & fn, 302, 360 fn–361 fn, 394–395, 398–399, 469, 474–476, 483, 489 fn–490, 493, 497, 529 fn-530, 533, 536–537, 541, 549, 554, 587, 601–603, 631, 635
The Bombay Chronicle, 601
Bombay Government, 96 fn, 497–498, 532–533, 539
Book Emporium Limited (Calcutta), 575
Borneo, 44, 76, 112
Bose, N.K., 613
——, Sarat Chandra, 212 & fn, 215, 295, 301, 303, 324–325, 460
——, Subhas Chandra, 75 fn–76 fn, 80, 86 fn
Britain—*see* England
British Army, 119, 122, 126, 129, 139, 147, 190, 232, 303, 337
British Baluchistan—*see* Baluchistan
British Broadcasting Corporation, 129 fn
British Cabinet, 179, 245 fn, 315 fn
British Cabinet Mission, 5 fn–6, 21, 35, 41, 43, 48–49, 51, 56, 59, 87, 98, 105 fn, 110, 121 fn, 122, 125 fn, 131 & fn, 134–135, 137 & fn–138, 147, 154, 156 fn, 161, 164, 171 fn, 173 fn, 174–175, 176 fn–177 fn, 179 & fn, 180 & fn, 181 & fn, 183 & fn, 189 fn, 191 fn, 193, 196–198, 203–205, 207 fn–208 fn, 213 fn, 215, 217, 221, 223 & fn, 225 & fn, 226–228 fn, 229–230, 232 fn, 234–235, 237–238, 241–242, 244, 247 fn, 250 fn, 255 fn, 261–262, 273 & fn, 275–276, 281 & fn–282 fn, 314, 317–318, 334, 336 & fn, 343, 351 fn–354, 359, 367 & fn, 380–382, 407, 416, 428, 444 fn, 458, 576, 589, 605, 609, 614–615, 623
British Colonial Office, 555
British Commonwealth of Nations, 5 fn, 178, 190, 570
British Government, 3, 22–23, 29–31, 34–35, 66, 68 fn–69, 87, 105–106, 108, 121, 123, 128, 134–135, 152, 154, 172–173, 178 & fn–179 & fn, 180 fn–181 fn, 183 fn–184, 188 & fn, 191 fn, 198, 203, 217 fn, 227, 229, 231, 236 & fn, 242, 255, 261–264, 273, 276–278, 282 & fn–283 fn, 286, 288, 292, 294, 300, 303, 333–334, 336 fn, 357, 360–361, 406–407, 417, 429, 443–444 & fn, 529 & fn, 633 fn
British Military Administration (Malaya), 57, 60, 63–66, 72–73, 80
British Security Service, 66

Ambedkar, B.R., 194 fn
Amery, L.S., 178 & fn, 190, 600
Amoy, 563 fn
Amritsar, 250 fn, 371
Amritsar Treaty, 366–368, 406–407, 410, 414, 416
Anant Nag, 414
Anbian, A.J., 312
Andaman Islands, 44, 76, 112
Andhra, 462, 478
Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, 479, 499–500
Andhra University, 613
Aney, M.S., 305
Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, 529 fn
Anglo-Sikh War (first), 366 fn
Ansari, Hayatullah, 581 & *fn*–583
Anthony, Frank, 211 & *fn*, 295, 301, 304–305, 306 & fn, 309
Anti-fascist People's Freedom League (Burma), 68 fn
Arsjad, Darwish, 541
Aryanayakam, E.W., 548–549, 567
Asaf Ali, 248, 294 & fn–295, 299, 301, 304, 324–325, 379, 383–385, 392, 395, 397, 399–400, 403 fn, 419
——, Aruna, 9 & fn, 239 fn, 495, 596
Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Bill, 128 fn, 234 fn, 362
Asian Relations Conference, 552–553, 562–565, 576
Assam, 23 & fn, 36, 118, 129 & fn, 169, 175 & fn–176, 180 & fn, 193, 204–205, 208 fn, 227, 243, 278–280, 460, 594, 616, 629
Assam Legislative Assembly, 267 & fn
Associated Press of India, 419, 585
Atlantic Charter, 544 fn
Atmaram, Swami, 82
Attlee, C.R., 5 fn, 7, 109 & *fn*, 183 & fn, 217 fn
Auchinleck, Sir C., 2 & fn, 4 fn, 7 & fn, 36 fn, 88–89 & fn, 90, 94
Auchinleck (J.K. Connell), 90 fn
August movement, 16, 97, 265, 282, 306, 375
Aung San, 68 & *fn*–69, 74 & fn, 124 fn, 535, 537, 539–540
Australia, 123, 513, 518, 537, 562
Axis powers, 16
Ayub, Doctor, 94
Ayyangar, N. Gopalaswami, 248 & *fn*, 397
Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam, 4 & fn, 56, 75, 79, 90, 109–110, 137 fn, 143, 146–147, 152, 156 & fn, 161–162 fn, 167, 172, 174, 177 fn, 179, 187, 193–201 & fn, 204 fn, 206 & fn–207, 211, 213–217, 220–221, 224, 226–230, 237, 239 & fn, 241, 246 & fn, 254–255, 258–259, 268–270, 272, 282 fn, 283 & fn–284, 286, 288, 294 & fn–295, 299–300, 303–304, 305 & fn, 321, 350 fn, 388 & fn–390, 392, 395, 397–398, 403, 412, 455 & fn, 457, 460, 472, 487, 577, 595, 616, 626
Azad Hind Bank (Rangoon), 66
Azad Hind Provisional Government, 61, 66–67, 70, 75 fn, 77–81, 586 & fn, 653 fn
Azerbaijan, 23 fn, 377

Bagod State, 449
Bahadur, R.F., 85 & *fn*
Bahawalpur State, 89
Bajaj, Jamnalal, 487, 559 fn
——, Kamalnayan, 371
——, Ram Krishna, 559 & *fn*
Bajaj and Company, 371
Bajpai, G.S., 568 & *fn*
Bakshi, G.M., 366 & fn, 398–399
Bakshi-ka-Talao (Lucknow), 616
Baldwin, Roger N., 559, 574
Baluchistan, 139, 175 & fn–176, 180, 208 fn, 443–444 fn
Baluch Regiment, 14 fn
Banerjee, R.N., 41 & fn, 535 & *fn*, 540
Bangkok, 44, 67, 112
Bapna, Seremal, 419 & fn, 421 fn, 424
Bardoloi, Gopinath, 267, 271, 640
Bari, Abdul, 493–494
Baroda State, 337 fn
Baruah, Hemkanta, 640
Basra, 560 fn
Batavia, 527, 541 & fn
Beg, Mirza Mohamad Afzal, 185 & fn, 333 fn, 367, 373
Belgium, 296 fn
Benares Hindu University, 614, 641

fn, 247, 250–252, 255 & fn–256, 257 & fn–258, 260, 263–264, 266 fn, 270 & fn–272, 273 fn–276 & fn, 277 & fn, 279, 281–282 & fn, 283, 285 & fn, 286 fn, 287–288 & fn, 289–293 & fn, 294 & fn–295, 299, 302 & fn–304, 306, 314–315 fn, 317–319 & fn, 321 fn, 326–327, 336, 349, 354, 358–359, 361, 377, 380, 382–383, 436–437, 444, 455 fn, 457 fn–459 & fn, 460–462, 465–466, 488–490, 494, 496, 501–506, 548, 560, 576–577 & fn, 584, 587, 589–590, 607, 636, 647, 649–652
——, Karachi resolution of, 249, 647
——, Parliamentary Committee of, 496, 498
——, session at Haripura, 361 & fn
——, session at Meerut, 306
——, session at Ramgarh, 69, 74, 457
Congress Socialist Party, 278
Congress Working Committee, 27, 51, 56–57, 69, 75, 79, 96, 98–99, 110, 114 fn, 138 & fn–139, 153–154, 174–175, 177, 179 & fn, 181–182, 187–188, 193, 197–203, 205–206 fn, 208, 213 & fn, 220–221, 225–226 & fn, 227–229, 232–233, 236 fn, 239–240, 246 & fn, 248, 249 fn–250 fn, 251–252, 257, 259, 262, 269–272, 276, 278, 280 & fn–282 & fn, 283, 288 & fn–291, 294, 296, 299, 302, 304, 308–309, 311, 317, 320, 326–327, 351 fn, 381, 388 & fn–390, 394–396, 401, 403, 412 fn, 418, 441, 457–464, 468, 473, 479, 481–483, 485–488, 490–493, 496, 498–501, 503–504, 506–507, 533, 554 & fn–557, 560, 601–602, 607–608, 636 & fn
Constituent Assembly, 49, 106–108, 120, 123, 126, 148, 154–155, 157 & fn, 158 fn, 159 & fn, 160, 168–169, 173 & fn, 174, 175 & fn, 176 & fn, 177 & fn, 180, & fn, 182, 188, 190, 191 fn, 193, 194 fn, 198, 204–205, 207, 211 fn, 225, 229–230, 233–235, 236 fn, 237–238, 240–243, 245–247 & fn, 248 & fn, 249–251, 253 & fn, 255–257, 260–263, 264 fn, 265–268, 273–275, 276 & fn, 277 & fn–278, 280–281 & fn, 291, 294, 306, 310–311, 314, 317–318, 319 & fn, 320, 321 fn, 325–326, 333–334, 338, 345, 348–350, 355 fn, 358, 361, 380, 397, 442, 445, 457, 459, 463–464, 486, 489 & fn, 490, 495, 503, 505, 650, 652
Coorg, 180
Council on African Affairs, 619
Cripps, Stafford, 105 & fn, 106, 135, 144, 146, 149, 151, 162 & fn, 165, 172, 174, 193, 194, 195, 215–218, 298, 349 & fn, 598
Cunha, T.B., 468 & *fn*, 491 & fn
Czechoslovakia, 514

Dacca, 27, 29 & fn
Daga, Sheodas, 496 & *fn*
Daily Worker (London), 125 fn
Dar, Kishan, 382 & fn–383 & fn, 386–387, 391–392, 409
Dardanelles, 524 fn
Das, Major S.K., 39 & fn, 40
Dead Past (Syed Ali Zaheer), 89 fn
Defence Consultative Committee, 8
Defence of India Rules, 361
Defence of Kashmir Rules, 383, 391
del Vayo, A.J., 604
Delhi, 28, 36, 40–43, 57, 61, 76, 85–86, 94, 98 & fn–99, 110, 121 fn, 131 fn–132, 171 fn, 182–183, 185, 212, 230, 232, 235–236 fn, 240, 248, 260 & fn, 270, 272, 276, 283 & fn, 284–285, 288–289, 294–295, 298–300, 309–310, 320, 327, 334, 351–353 & *fn*, 365–367, 380, 383, 388 fn, 389–390, 393, 395, 398, 400, 404, 413, 430, 433, 442–443, 447, 455, 463–464, 475–476, 482, 486, 493, 495, 501, 503, 527, 540, 552, 583, 587–588, 590–591, 595–596, 598, 600, 604–605, 608 & fn–609, 612, 614, 616, 623, 630–631
Democracy Alive (Stafford Cripps), 298
A Denial of Contrast (P. Kodanda Rao), 42 fn
Desai, Bhulabhai, 93 & fn
——, Mahadev, 634 & fn
——, Morarji, 539
Deshmukh, C.D., 635 & *fn*
——, R.M., 568 & *fn*
Dev, Swami Sant, 414
Deva, Narendra, 645

Devi, Nilima, 573, 575, 577, 579
——, Savitri, 631
Dhawan, S.S., 397–400
Dhillon, G.S., 22
The Discovery of India (Jawaharlal Nehru), 528, 573–575, 597–598, 616
Domel, 212 fn, 384–385, 387, 391–392
Dominion Status, 49, 106, 108, 182 fn, 188 & fn
Doulatram, Jairamdas, 271–272, 610
Dublin, 12
Durban, 551 fn
Dutch Government, 292, 536–537
Dutt, R.P., 125 fn
Dutta, Kalpana, 33

Fazl-i-Husain, 621 & *fn*
Federal Court, 168, 173 fn, 274–275, 293, 317–319 fn, 320, 348, 357
Fischer, Louis, 574
Foochow, 563 fn
Fort Dekock Hill (Indonesia), 611
Forum (Bombay), 500 fn
France, 233, 238, 306, 616
Fraser, A.G., 632
The Free Press Journal (Bombay), 95, 541 fn, 585 fn–587
French Government, 492
French India, 492
French Revolution, 10
Fritz, M.H., 528

East Africa, 555 & fn–556, 562
East African Indian National Congress, 554
East Asia, 53, 99, 123, 518, 566, 586
East versus West (P. Kodanda Rao), 42 fn
Easter Week Rising, 12
Education for International Understanding (K.G. Saiyidain), 295 fn
Egypt, 56, 487, 512, 529 & fn, 616
The Emergence of Modern India, (Arthur Samuel Lall), 604 fn
Engineer, N.P., 208 fn, 211 & *fn*
England, 1 fn, 3 fn, 4, 6–7, 9, 23–24 & fn, 48–49, 51, 93, 106, 114, 119, 123, 126, 128, 131, 178, 195, 224, 238, 242, 261, 273, 276, 290, 323, 326, 337–338, 352, 441, 451, 456, 524–525, 529, 548–549, 564, 567, 570, 591–592, 595, 610, 613, 635 & fn, 651–652
Etawah, 1
Ethiopia, 98 fn
Executive Council (Viceroy's), 184, 189 & fn, 197, 199, 212, 217–218, 222, 269, 285 fn–286, 289, 299 & fn, 306 fn, 323

Far East, 486
Faridkot State, 185 & fn, 191, 365 & fn, 427 & fn, 430 & fn–431, 600
——, Raja of, 429–430 fn, 431–432 fn

Gabriel, Doctor, 93 & fn
Gadgil, D.R., 248 & *fn*, 397
Gandhi, Feroze, 589, 596
——, Indira, 394, 584, 588, 590, 592, 596, 600
——, Mahatma, 110 & fn, 156 fn, 160 fn, 174 fn–175, 177, 198 fn, 201, 211, 239 fn, 246, 271–273, 282 & fn, 314–315 fn, 317, 328 fn, 382, 398, 401, 403, 435, 457 & fn, 461–462, 530 fn, 577, 607 & fn–608, 637, 639, 646–649
——, Rajiv, 589, 592, 596
Gandhiji: His Life and Work (D.G. Tendulkar *et al*, ed.), 615
Garhwal, 1, 85
Geneva, 584, 587
Ghari, 365, 404
Gide, A., 616
Gidwani, Choithram, 606
Gill, Niranjan Singh, 98 & *fn*, 225, 250–251, 256, 258, 271–272, 403
Giri, V.V., 497–498
Glimpses of World History (Jawaharlal Nehru), 528, 566
Goa, 245, 468–469, 491 & fn–492 & fn
Goa Congress, 245 fn
Goenka, Ramnath, 587 & *fn*
Goho, S.C., 40, 76
Gollancz, V., 645
Gopa, Sagarmal, 447 & fn–449
Go-Seva Sangh, 637 fn
Government of India Act of 1935, 174,

180 fn, 325, 343 fn
Govindji, V., 534 & fn
Great Britain—*see* England
Gujranwala, 456
Gunther, Frances, 574, 626
Guntur, 459 fn, 462, 499–500
Guntur District Congress Committee, 499–500
Gupta, B.K., 612
——, C.B., 474
——, Deshbandhu, 260 & fn
——, Shivaprasad, 611–612
Gurkha Rifles, 44 fn
Gwalior, Maharaja of, 336 fn
Gwalior Rajya Sarvajanik Sabha, 445 & fn

Hutchings, R.H., 532 & *fn*, 541
Hutheesing, G.P., 41, 43, 51, 57, 66, 67, 73, 77, 79–82, 95, 585, 601
——, Harsha, 601
——, Krishna, 95, 592, 601
Huxley, Julian, 608 & fn, 610, 612, 618–619
Hyderabad, 58 fn, 248, 331–332, 336 fn, 355 & fn, 358, 417, 432–433, 436–437, 439, 601, 633
——, Nizam of, 331 fn, 355 & fn, 434 fn
Hyderabad State Congress, 432–433 & fn, 434 & fn–435, 438
Hyderabad (Sind), 610

Habib, Mohammad, 296
The Hague, 52 fn
Harijan Savak Sangh, 488
Hasan, K.S., 555 fn
Hatta, Mohammad, 536, 541
Hawes, 582 & fn
Hindu Mahasabha, 15, 24, 30, 33–34
Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh, 491, 636
Hindustan Republican Army, 33 fn
Hindustani Talimi Sangh, 636, 637 fn
HMIS *Talwar* Signal Training School, 1 fn
History of Political Thought (Mohommad Mujeeb), 613
History of Russian Literature (Mohommad Mujeeb), 613
History of the World (Mohommad Mujeeb), 613
Homi, M., 493–494
Hone, Major General H.R., 81, 653 & fn
Hoover, Herbert, 297 & *fn*, 531 & fn
House of Commons, 5 fn, 109 fn
How Communist China Negotiates (Arthur Samuel Lall), 604 fn
Humanist Tradition in Indian Educational Thought (K.G. Saiyidain), 295 fn
Hungary, 326 fn
Huq, A.K. Fazlul, 301, 304
Husain, Azim, 621 fn
——, Zakir, 212, 217–218, 295
Hussain, S. Sajid, 477 & *fn*

India Domiciled Nepalese Congress (Kalimpong), 313 fn
India League (London), 93 fn, 464, 480
India Office (London), 14, 108, 172 fn, 610
Indian Army, 17, 21–22, 58 & fn, 68, 86 fn, 90–91 & fn, 92, 98 fn
Indian Association (Malaya), 52 fn
Indian Association and Institute Limited (England), 548 & fn–549
Indian Chamber of Commerce, 52 fn
Indian Coinage Act, 607 fn
Indian Council of World Affairs, 537, 552–553, 562
The Indian Express, 587 fn
Indian Independence League (Malaya), 44, 52 fn, 61–62, 64–67, 70, 75, 76–81, 112, 611, 654
Indian Majlis (England), 613
Indian Military Academy, 580
Indian National Army, 3–5, 10, 14 & fn, 22, 39 & fn, 41, 44 & fn, 52 fn, 57–65, 68, 70–72, 75–77, 80–81, 85–86 fn, 88–89 & fn, 90–95, 96 & fn, 97, 98 & fn, 100 fn–101, 112, 211 fn, 271, 385, 413 fn, 474–476, 486, 502, 586, 599, 609
I.N.A. *Defence and Inquiry Committee*, 40, 44 & fn, 99
I.N.A. Inquiry and Relief Committee, 39, 75 fn, 94, 98–99 & fn, 100, 609
I.N.A. Relief Fund, 95

Indian Naturalisation Bill (U.S.A.), 558 fn
Indian Ocean, 53, 74, 123, 513, 518–519, 525, 561, 562
Indian Overseas Bank Limited (Singapore), 653–654
Indian Philosophical Congress, 613
Indian Science Congress, 607, 620
Indian Science Congress Association Committee, 620, 635
Indian Statistical Institute, 125, 635 & fn
Indo-China, 51, 67, 512, 561
Indonesia, 36 & fn, 47, 51, 56, 59, 70, 74, 123–124 fn, 486, 511–512, 526–527 & fn, 531, 533, 538–539, 541, 552, 554, 561, 611, 652
Indonesian Republic, 292, 526–528, 531, 534, 536, 538–539, 553–554, 561, 570, 611
Indore, 353
Indore Rajya Praja Mandal, 353
Interim Government, 126, 148, 154–155, 162 fn, 172–173 fn, 174, 177–178 & fn, 179, 181, 182 fn, 183–184 & fn, 187–190, 194–203, 207 fn–208 & fn, 211, 213 fn–216, 220 fn–222, 223 & fn–224, 225 & fn, 226 & fn–228 & fn, 229–231, 233, 236 fn, 240, 253, 257 fn, 266, 269, 273 fn, 282 & fn, 283 & fn–287, 288 & fn–289, 291–294, 295 fn, 297, 300–301, 302 & fn, 305 & fn, 307–308, 310 fn–311 fn, 315 fn, 318, 320–321 fn, 322–323, 325, 327–328 fn, 346–348, 356–358, 505, 568
International Labour Organisation (Asiatic section), 310
International Labour Organisation Conference, 567, 568
International Trade Conference (London), 326
Ipoh, 55, 58–59, 70, 82, 113
Iqbal, Aftab, 627 & fn
Iran, 23 & fn, 51, 56, 524, 560 & fn, 561, 565, 577, 616, 652
Iraq, 56, 292, 560 fn
Ireland, 12
Ismail, Mirza, 336 fn, 433, 604
Ittehad-ul-Mussalmeen, 435

Jagaddal, 28
Jahangir, Emperor, 385
Jaisalmer State, 447–449
Jallianwala Bagh, 371
Jamia Millia Islamia, 613
Jamshedpur, 101, 493–494
Jan, Mohammed, 296 & *fn*
Janata (Bombay), 493
Java, 74, 531–534, 536–539, 541, 553–554, 586
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 135 fn, 621 fn
Jayakar, M.R., 265
Jayewardene, C.E., 557 & fn
——, J.R., 557 fn
Jha, C.S., 555 fn
Jhamatmal (N.G. Malwani & Sons), 611
Jhanduram, Subedar, 94
Jhansi, 1
Jharia, 1
Jhelum (river), 385, 387
Jinnah, M.A., 23 & fn, 36, 49–51 fn, 110 fn, 115 fn–116 fn, 118 & fn, 121 & fn–122 & fn, 129 & fn–130, 134, 137–138 fn, 144–146, 150, 156 fn, 161 & fn–162 & fn, 163 & fn–166, 195–197, 200 & fn–201, 208 fn, 213 & fn–214, 216–220, 223–224, 225 fn, 244 fn, 255 & fn–256, 266 fn, 282 fn, 285 & fn–287 & fn, 289, 293 & fn–294, 298–300 & fn, 302 & fn–303, 305 & fn, 325, 455 fn, 576, 651
Jitra (Malaysia), 64, 72
Jodhpur, 597
Johore Bahru (Malaysia), 58, 70, 82
Jones, Cyril, 310 & *fn*
——, George E., 569 fn
Joshi, P.C., 33 fn
Jowett Society, 613
Jubbulpore, 17
Jumabhoy, Ragabah, 52 & *fn*, 65, 77
Jung, Rana Brahma Shamsher, 231 & *fn*

Kabir, Humayun, 248 & *fn*, 397, 613–614, 618
Kachru, D.N., 366, 380, 384, 389–390, 392, 412, 415, 427–428, 605
Kairon, Partap Singh, 250 fn–251, 258, 271, 460
Kak, Ramachandra, 185 fn, 246, 366 fn–

367 fn, 372 & *fn*–373, 374 & fn, 376, 398, 409, 413–414, 416–419
Kalat State, 442 & fn–444 & fn
Kalat State National Party, 443
Kalimpong, 313 fn
Kannangara, C.W.W., 556 & fn
Kanpur, 1, 602 fn
Kapurthala State, 89
Karachi, 4 fn, 21, 24, 595
Karnataka, 460
Kasauli, 421
Kashmir, 131 fn, 185 & fn–186, 191, 212 & fn, 225–226, 234–235, 246 & fn–248 fn, 260, 264–265, 270, 272, 295 fn, 301, 333, 354, 356–358, 365–366 & fn, 367 & fn–369 & fn, 370–371, 372 & fn, 373–380 & fn, 381 & fn–382 fn, 383, 388–408, 411–414, 418–419, 499, 585–586, 597–598, 600–601, 633
——, Maharaja of, 185 fn, 246 & fn, 260 fn, 369, 372 fn–373, 378–379 fn, 381 & fn, 396, 398–402, 409, 413–415, 417–418, 436
Kashmir National Conference, 367 & fn–368, 372–373, 419, 499
Kathgodam, 596
Katju, K.N., 474, 476, 496, 501
Kaufmann, J., 566 & *fn*
Kaul, Shamlal, 416, 586
Kaur, Amrit, 205 fn, 605–606, 646 fn
Keddah State (Malaya), 59
Kenya, Government of, 554
Keskar, B.V., 460, 463–464, 466, 472, 504
Khadi Vidyalaya (Wardha), 636–637
Khali, 596, 599–601
Khan, Abdul Ghaffar, 137 fn, 139, 212, 460
——, Abdus Samad, 419, 421, 424, 443
——, Mrs. Bulbul, 597
——, Bundeh Ali, 254 & *fn*
——, Inayathullah, 633 & fn
——, Khizr Hayat, 265
——, Liaquat Ali, 137 fn, 208 fn
——, Mir Ahmad Yar, 442 & fn, 444 fn
——, Mohammad Ismail, 137 fn, 208 fn, 296 & fn
——, Shafaat Ahmad, 301, 304, 311 & fn, 320, 322, 324
——, Shah Nawaz, 22, 263, 413, 419, 429, 463, 466, 486
Khanna, Jugal Kishore, 451
Khanqah-i-Maulla (Kashmir), 404
Kher, B.G., 532, 534, 536
Khudai Khidmatgar, 418
Kidwai, Rafi Ahmad, 460, 475, 582
Kilam, Jailal, 399–400
Kisan Sabha, 459
Kishanganga (river), 385
Knavesmere estate (Sri Lanka), 546 & fn–547 fn, 550
Kohala, 382 fn–383, 386, 389–391
Kosambi, D.D., 620 & *fn*
Kotdwara (Garhwal), 85, 609
Kripalani, J.B., 459, 461, 465–466, 607
——, Krishna, 397, 463–465, 486
——, Sucheta, 460, 463, 465
Kuala Lumpur, 52 fn, 58, 70, 78, 82, 113
Kulu Valley, 596
Kunten (Malaysia), 82
Kunzru, H.N., 568
Kuomintang, 563
Kylasam, Brahmachari, 52 & fn, 65, 77–78

Labour Government (British), 178, 190, 326, 651
Labour Party (British), 109 fn, 128, 456
Lahore, 271–272, 366 fn, 371, 381 fn, 586
Lakshmaya, N.K., 52 & fn, 65, 77
Lall, A.S., 604 & *fn*, 626
Lawson, Derek, 602 & fn
League of Nations, 347, 584, 613
Left Book Club, 645
Lenin, V.I., 6
Letters from A Father to His Daughter (Jawaharlal Nehru), 640
Lohia, R.M., 232 fn, 238 fn, 245 fn, 469, 491 fn, 504, 593
Lolong, 529 & fn
London, 16, 93 fn, 94, 132, 259 fn, 261, 270 fn, 305, 326, 549, 561, 574, 590, 608
Luce, Claire Boothe, 574, 597
Lucknow, 1, 98, 394, 474, 556–557, 559, 613, 617

Madras, 44, 63, 76–77, 87, 113, 175 fn, 230, 497 & fn–498 & fn, 541, 550, 631
Madras Legislative Council, 101 fn
Madras University, 101 fn
Mahalanobis, P.C., 594–595, 608 fn, 635 & fn
Maharashtra, 460, 503–504
Maihar State, 449
Maitra, K., 463
Majumdar, N.D., 29
——, R.C., 619 & *fn*
Makhanlal, Seth, 52 & fn, 65, 77
Malacca, 53, 54, 58, 70, 82
Malaya—*see* Malaysia
Malayan Indian Congress, 52 fn
Malayan Union Secretariat (Kuala Lumpur), 653 fn
Malaysia, 24, 27, 39–47, 50–51, 52 fn, 54–58, 60–62, 64–66, 67 & fn–82, 86 & fn–88, 91, 93, 95, 105, 112–113, 332, 431, 526, 531, 605, 653–654
——, Provisional Government of, 66
Malkani, N.R., 253 fn
Mani, P.R.S., 541 & *fn*
Mason, Philip, 3 & fn
Mathai, M.O., 385 & *fn*
Matthai, John, 101 & *fn*, 208 fn, 295, 301, 304–305, 310, 320, 324–325
Mauritius, 478 & fn, 542–543 & fn
Mauritius Legislative Council, 543 fn
Mayer, Albert, 614, 623 & fn–624
Mecca, 541
Meerut, 306, 503
Mehta, B.R., 362
Mehtab, H.K., 208 fn, 211 & fn–212 fn, 215, 449
Menon, K.B., 24–25
——, K.P.S., 326 & *fn*
——, V.K. Krishna, 24 & fn, 93–94, 464, 549, 574, 576, 577 fn, 579
Merrell, George, 615 & *fn*–616
Mewar Praja Mandal, 360
Mewar State, 360
Middle East, 58 fn, 110–111, 123, 373, 437, 511–512, 519, 524, 525, 561, 562, 564, 576, 651, 652
Middle West, 561, 564
Modern International Negotiations (Arthur Samuel Lall), 604 fn
Moslem Conference, 299
Montreal, 563
Morin, Jean-Jacques, 584, 587
——, Louise, 584
Moscow, 549
Mountbatten, first earl, 43, 46, 57–58, 61, 66, 75, 80–81, 112, 526–527, 531, 537, 654
Mudaliar, A.R., 299 & *fn*, 326, 568
Mudie, Francis, 253 & fn–254, 272
Mujeeb, Mohammad, 613–614
Munshi, K.M., 86, 89, 248, 272, 397, 402
Murree, 386, 391
Muslim League, 13, 15, 22–23 & fn, 24–27, 30–32, 34–35, 89 fn, 108, 111 & fn, 113, 115 & fn, 116–118, 121 & fn–122, 127, 129, 131 fn–132, 137 fn–139 fn, 144 fn, 147, 150, 153, 155–156, 160, 162, 164–168, 169 & fn, 171 fn, 179 fn, 193–196, 201–202, 205–206, 208 fn, 213 fn, 214–219 fn, 222–224, 225 fn, 236, 238 fn, 240, 243–244, 254, 256, 266 fn, 270 fn, 273 & fn, 274–275, 276 & fn, 281–282 & fn, 283, 284, 288 & fn–291, 293 & fn–296 & fn, 299–300, 302 fn–306 & fn, 307, 309, 310 fn–311 & fn, 314, 317, 319 fn–320, 323, 327–328 fn, 455 fn, 506, 581–582, 587, 589, 650–651
——, Executive Council of, 243, 273 fn, 417–418
Mussoorie, 189
Muttatambi, Doctor, 82
Mysore, 326, 441

Naga Hills National Council, 278 fn–280
Naidu, Padmaja, 90, 385, 595–596, 601
——, Sarojini, 90, 310, 461, 568, 595–596
Naini Tal, 192, 585, 596, 599–600
Nanda, G.L., 490, 497, 636
Nanking, 549
Narain, Krishna, 581 & *fn*, 583
Narayan, Jayaprakash, 232 fn, 238 fn, 277 fn, 326, 471 & fn–472, 493–494, 503–504, 593–595, 645
Nariman, K.F., 61, 76
Narkanda, 596
Natal Indian Congress, 551 fn

Nation (America), 604–605, 650 fn
National Discipline Scheme, 86 fn
National Herald, 580–582 & fn, 583–586 fn, 588–589, 600
National Institute of Sciences, 608 & fn
National Planning Committee, 118, 124, 130, 608, 612
Nationalist Publications Society, 645
Nawanagar, Jam Saheb of, 336 fn
Nazimuddin, Khwaja, 23, 208 fn
Nehru, Jawaharlal, 5–10, 12, 14–15, 36, 45 fn, 49 & fn, 50–51 & fn, 52, 89 fn, 95–97, 99 fn, 105 fn, 110–114, 116, 120–124, 126–129 fn, 130–133, 137 fn–138 fn, 139 fn, 143 fn–147 fn, 149–151, 156 fn, 161 & fn–162 fn, 163 fn–167 fn, 168 fn, 172 & fn–174 & fn, 178 fn–179 fn, 183 fn, 185 fn, 187 fn, 191 fn, 193–198 & fn, 200–201 & fn, 203 fn, 206 fn–207 fn, 208 fn, 212 & fn–213 fn, 214–220 & fn, 221 fn, 226 fn, 228–231 fn, 236 fn, 239 fn, 241, 243–248 & fn, 253 & fn–255, 260 fn, 264 & fn–266 & fn, 268, 270 fn, 273 & fn–275, 278 fn, 280 fn, 282 fn–283 & fn, 284–285 & fn, 286–287 fn, 288 & fn–290, 292–299, 302 fn, 303–304, 306, 309–311 fn, 314, 321 & fn, 323, 325–328 fn, 335–337 fn, 350 fn–351 fn, 361 fn, 380 fn–382 & fn, 383 & fn, 386, 391, 403 fn, 412 fn, 422 fn, 430 fn, 434 & fn–435, 437 fn, 455 fn, 457 fn, 497 fn–498 fn, 509 fn, 524–525, 531 fn, 538, 543 fn, 552 fn, 557 fn, 567 fn, 569–570, 621 fn, 636 fn, 640 fn, 646 & fn, 647–651
——, arrested at Domel, 382; assumes presidentship of Congress, 264; visits Burma and Malaya, 56–82, 112–113, and Singapore, 45, 57; meets Mountbatten, 61; invited to form interim government, 290–291, 300, 327
——, on agriculture and industry, development of, 125; on All India States People's Conference, 333–335, 351–353; on American constitution, 275; on Amery's statement, 178–190; on Amrit Kaur, 605–606; on army signalmen's strike, 17–18; on Aruna Asaf Ali, 9; on Asia, awakening in, 16, 55, importance of, 651–652, role of Indians in, 53, 56, unity of, 46–47, 74; on Asian relations conference, 537, 539–540, 552–553, 560–566; on atom bomb test, 543–544; on August movement, conduct of officials in, 469–471; on August resolution, 231, 236, 265, 467–468, 471–472; on Aung San, 68–69, 74; on autonomy, 114, 119, 122, 126–127, 132, 138–139, 150, 152, 256, 651; on Bengal famine, 49, 55, 510; on book clubs, 645; on British foreign policy, 120; on British troops, withdrawal from India of, 119, 122, 126, 129, 139, 147, 177, 180, 190, 303, 343, 529, from Egypt, 529; on Burma, Indians in, 69, export of fruit to, 534–535, 537, 539–541; on Cabinet Mission, 5–7, 21, 51, 105–106, 109–110, 154, 157, 183, 215–220, 233–234, 242, 589, 609, 614, 623, Congress policy in negotiations with, 110, 134–135, 147–148, 182, 191–199, 215, 220, and role of Mahatma Gandhi, 110, 282, 317, on groups and sections proposed by, 137–139, 148–152, 158, 160, 168–169, 176, 181, 191–192, 204, 242–243, 267, 270–271, 279, 317, its statements of 16 May 1946 and 16 June 1946, 174–177, 179, 182, 191–192, 203–206, 221–229, 233–234, 236, 274–275, 317–318, 320; on constituent assembly, allowances to members of, 230, Congress approach to, 153, 231–242, 260, 262–263, 276–277, 290–291, 358, election to, 106, 126, 151, 159, 167, 169, 175–176, 180, 243, 257–259, 265, 271–272, 277–278, functions of, 107, 151, 167, 175, 231–239, 241–242, 248–249, 262–263, Muslim League in, 275–276, 318–320, participation of Europeans in, 175, 193–194, 197–198, 204–205, 207–208, 266, position of Sikhs in, 226, 250–252, 257–259, 263–265, 271–272, 280–281, 403, procedure for summoning of, 266, 268, secretariat for, 266, sovereignty and status of, 106, 114, 157, 175, 177, 180–181, 190, 233, 242, 255–256, 260–262, 268, 273–274, 276–277, 650–652, States in, 107, 151, 166, 177, 181, 247, 333–334, 336,

343, 349–350; on Calcutta killings, 292–293, 307–309, 318; on coalition government, 240; on coalition with Muslim League, 307–308; on communal issues, 160, 165, 170, proposal for an umpire to resolve, 161–165; on communal riots, 315–316; on confederation, 133; on Congress, and abolition of landlordism, 125–127, and choice of women candidates for constituent assembly, 459–460, and minorities, 276, 319, and provincial elections, 29, 33–36, 145, and reconstitution of Working Committee, 460–462, and R.I.N. mutiny, 8, budget estimates for expenses of, 480–482, constitution of, 263, its decision to form interim government, 290–291, economic policy of, 118–119, 124–125, 127, 130, extremists in, 96, 263, leftists in, 263, organisational elections of, 96, 455–456, 459, 462, 471–472, publicity of, 466–467, 476–477, 589–590, reorganisation of different departments of, 263, 462–466, 472–473, volunteer organisation of, 263; on cooperative schemes, 130, 474–476; on crisis in human affairs, 517–519; on Desai, B., 93; on Desai, M., 634; on destruction of war material, 616–618; on death in Jaisalmer prison, 447–448; on detention in Ahmednagar Fort, 597–598; on discipline and unity, 31, 33, 192, 241; on *The Discovery of India*, 573–579; on 'dollar pool', 570; on East Africa, restriction on emigration to, 554–556; on Fazl-i-Husain, 621–622; on federation, 36, 49–50, 111, 135, 139, 148, 334, 336, 339; on federal union, 167, 170; on flood relief for Assam and Bengal, 629; on food shortage, 22, 49, 55, 110, 615; on foreign investment in India, 130–131; on foreign trade, 237, 244; on freedom of colonial countries, 511–515; on French and Portuguese administrations in India, 245–246; on fundamental rights, 111, 116, 135–136, 170, 249; on Hindu-Muslim unity, 130, 171; on India, defence of, 131–132, future of, 520–522, relations with other countries of, 50, 54, 106, 116, 123–124, 131, 137, 231, 244, 313, 521, 525; on Indian army, 131, awakening in, 2–5, 17–18, 21–22, Indianisation of, 14, 580–581, relations with civilians of, 2–5, 18; on Indian cultural centres abroad, 548–549; on Indian National Army, 57–58, 60–61, 64–65, 68, 70–72, 75–77, 91, 101, 112, relief to and rehabilitation of men of, 75–78, 85, 93–95, 98–101, 609, trials of, 41, 85–94, tribute to, 57–58; on Indian troops abroad, 292, 560, 652; on Indonesia, freedom struggle of, 553–554, offer of foodgrains to India by, 526–528, 531–534, 536, 538–539, need for Indian cloth in, 541, students in Bombay from, 529–530, recognition of Government of, 652; on interim government, formation of, 108, 117, 126, 183–185, 190–198, 208, 282–291, 300, 327–328, homogeniety of, 199, 202, invitation to form, 282–289, Muslim League in, 287–289, 293–294, 298, 300, 302–303, names and portfolios for, 201–202, 206, 211–212, 215–220, 294–297, 299, 301, 303–306, 310, 322, 325, Nationalist Muslims in, 215–220, 222–223, powers and status of 178–182, 187–190, 221–222, 267–268, 289, 307, 323, scheduled castes in, 223–224, parity between Congress and Muslim League in, 159, 168, 170, 195–199, 201–202, 205, 206–208, 215–216, 222, 290–291; on Iran, political crisis in, 51, 565, 576–577; on Jinnah, 49–50, 255–256, 303, refusal to cooperate of, 287–289, 302–303, 305–306, talks with, 293–294; on Kalat State, proposal for its separation from India, 442–444; on kidnapping of merchants in Sumatra, 611; on labour, migrations of, 71–72, organisations of, 636, 640; on Mahatma Gandhi, 110, 211, trusteeship scheme of, 649; on Malaya, despatch of cloth to, 42, 44–45, 48, 53, 65, 72–73, 77–78, 82, 87, 112–113, Indians in, 39–41, 44, 48, 53–56, 61–63, 70, 73, 75–77, 81–82, 112–113, Indian medical mission to, 39–40, 55–56, railway strike in, 71, 81–82; on Mauritius, Indians in, 478, need for Indian

commodities in, 543; on military strength of U.S.A. and U.S.S.R., 528; on minorities, advisory committee on, 176; on Nagas, future of, 278–279; on national flag, 440–442; on *National Herald*, 584–585, 587–588; on Nepalese in India, 313; on Pakistan, demand for, 22–23, 27, 29 32–36, 49–50, 107–108, 111–112, 127, 129–130, 264, 274, Communist support for, 576; on Palestine problem and Jews, 516, 522–523, 566; on Paris peace conference, 565, 568, Indian representation to, 259, 265; on the Philippines, independence of, 544–545; on police, 96–97; on population, 125, 131; on provincial boundaries, demarcation of, 107 122; on Rajagopalachari's formula, 252–253; on relation between governors and provincial governments, 230; on religious freedom, 135–136, 171; on R.I.N. mutiny, 1–5, 13, 16, and mass violence, 4–5, and victimisation, 7–8, 18; on science, 521; on Sheikh Abdullah, arrest of, 376, 378, 289, defence of, 403, 410; on Simla conference, 154, 598; on Sind, coalition in, 254, prorogation of Assembly in, 254–255, 265–266, 271–272; on South Africa, satyagraha in, 124, 128, 232–233, 241, 530, 542, 551, 553, 567, 595; on Soviet intervention in Iran and Turkey, 524–525; on Sri Lanka, difficulties of Indians in, 532, 546–551, visit of Indian leaders to, 548–551, 556–558, 567; on States, and federation, 50, 107–108, 123, 135, 139, 146, 334–335, and new constitutional arrangement, 107, 151, 166, 177, 181, 247, 333–334, 336, 343, 349–350, and independence, 122, autonomy in, 341, dyarchy in, 333, movement against repression in, 331–332, 335, in Alwar, 419–422, in Faridkot, 185, 600, in Hyderabad, 248, 331–332, in Kashmir, 185–186, 246–247, 369–381, 389–391, 393, 415–418, 585–586; on underground movements, 8–9, 31; on union centre, its powers and relations with provinces, 107–108, 134–135, 144–145, 157–159, 165, 167, 170, 237, 244–245, 248; on U.N. General Assembly, Indian delegation to, 568–569; on United States, Indian emigration to, 558; on violence and nonviolence, 4, 9–12, 31, 530; on visit to Kashmir, 212, 265, 270, 272, 381–387, 391–396, 398, 401–403, 410–419; on war, 127–128; on World Students Congress (Prague), 559–560

——, Rajan, 399, 589

——, Ratan, 399, 526, 589

Nepal, 231, 313

Nepal Ka Mahabhukamp (Rana Brahma Shamsher Jung), 231 fn

New Delhi—*see* Delhi

New Zeland, 123, 513, 518, 562

News Chronicle (London), 191 fn

N.G. Malwani & Sons, 611

Nigeria, 530 fn

Ningbo, 563 fn

Nishtar, Abdur Rab, 137 fn, 206 fn, 208 fn, 212 & *fn*

Noor Jahan, 385

North East Asia, 518

North West Frontier Province, 23 & fn, 36, 114, 118, 129 & fn, 139, 156, 158, 169, 175 fn–176, 204, 206, 208 fn, 212 fn, 222, 227–228, 243, 418

Nyasaland, 633

One World (Wendell Willkie), 597

Onyeana, Charles, 530 & fn

Ooty—*see* Othakalmandapam

Opium War (first), 563 fn

Orai, 1

Orissa, 175 fn, 204, 212 fn, 449 & fn

Othakalmandapam, 601

Oudh, 24

Oxford Union, 613

Pacific Relations Institute, 562

Palestine, 56, 522 & fn–523, 563, 566

Pande, Ramcharan, 463

——, Ramsevak, 463

Pandit, Chandralekha, 90, 93, 516, 587, 595–596, 599, 620

——, Nayantara, 574
——, Rita, 574
——, Vijayalakshmi, 393, 568–569, 584, 592, 595, 599
Pandit Brothers (New Delhi), 398
Pandya, R.B., 554
Pant, G.B., 277, 460, 475, 583, 614, 622–624
——, Pitambar, 594 & *fn*, 635
Pao, C.J., 312
——, Madame, 312
Paris, 549, 561
Parliament (British), 106, 149, 180 fn, 183–185, 189, 255 fn
Pataudi State, 450–451
Patel, Vallabhbhai, 4 & fn, 15, 39, 73, 75 fn, 85–86, 99 fn–110, 137 fn, 139, 208 fn, 214, 216, 220, 228, 230, 246, 254, 258–259, 271, 294–295, 301, 303, 310, 323, 350 fn, 398–399, 402, 460, 498, 577, 636, 651
Patiala, Maharaja of, 336 fn
——, Praja Mandal of, 450 fn
Patna, 297, 645
Patwardhan, Achyut, 237–238 fn, 504 fn
——, P.H., 460, 503 & *fn*–504, 636
Peace Conference (Paris), 259 & fn, 265, 565, 568
Pearl Harbour, 16
Pearl Hill Prison (Singapore), 63, 75
Penang, 48, 52 fn, 57–58, 65, 70, 73, 113
People's War, 116 fn
Perlis, Raja of, 59
Persia—*see* Iran
Persian Gulf, 518
Pethick-Lawrence, first baron, 5 fn, 24, 98, 105 fn, 137 & fn, 138 & fn–139 fn, 143–147, 149, 156, 161–162 fn, 164–167, 171 fn–172 & fn, 174, 177 fn, 188, 191 & fn, 193, 195, 198, 214–215, 218–220, 229, 268, 270 fn, 321
Phaphamow, 617
Philippines, 544–545 & fn
Pillai, S.M.R. Manickam, 541
——, K. Shankar, 587
Polak, H.S.L., 25
Pondicherry, 245 & fn
Poona — *see* Pune
Poonch, 407
Portugal, 491–492
Portuguese Administration, 469, 491
Portuguese East Africa, 491 fn
Postal Inquiry Committee, 628
Potsdam Conference, 74 fn
Prague, 549
Prakasam, T., 497 & fn–498 fn
Prasad, Krishna, 628
——, Rajendra, 208 fn, 214, 228, 230, 295, 299, 301, 303, 310, 324 460, 462
Principles of Education (K.G. Saiyidain), 295 fn
Privy Council, 25
Pudano (Sumatra), 611
Pune, 248 fn, 397, 630
Punjab, 23 & fn, 36, 107, 111, 114, 118, 122 fn, 129 & fn, 134, 139, 152, 175 fn–176, 194 fn, 204, 208 fn, 243, 251, 257–258, 281, 320, 322, 326, 403, 418, 430, 455–456, 460, 475, 502 & fn, 621 & fn–622
Punjab Congress Socialist Party, 456
Punjab National Bank (Allahabad), 578
Punjabi, K.L., 536 & *fn*, 541
Puntambekar, S.V., 614

Qaddus, Maulvi Abdul, 425 & fn
Qaumi Awaz, 581–583
Quetta, 444 fn
Quetta Municipal Committee, 445
Quit India Resolution, 29, 236, 281
Quran, 15
Qureshi, S. R., 621

Radhakrishnan, S., 610, 641
Raghavan, N., 39, 43, 52, 65, 73, 77, 81
Rahman, Colonol Habibur, 413
Rahula, W., 567
Rai, Jiwan Das, 313 & *fn*
Rajagopalachari, C., 208 fn, 252–253, 295, 301, 303, 305, 310, 320–322, 324–325, 460, 548, 550
Rajputana, 340, 448
Ram, Jagjivan, 208 *fn*, 295 & fn, 301, 303, 324
——, Lala Kashi, 421 & fn, 425
Ramachandran, G., 548 & *fn*–549

Ramakrishna Mission (Kuala Lumpur), 52 fn, 80
Ramani, R., 52, 76–77, 81, 82
Ramchand (N.G. Malwani & Sons), 611
Rameshwaram, 35
Rampur State, 296
Ranga, N.G., 459, 462
Rangoon, 66, 68, 74, 535, 539–540
Rani of Jhansi Regiment, 52 fn, 77, 477 & fn
Rao, P. Kodanda, 42 & *fn*
——, B. Shiva, 589–590
——, V.K.R.V., 646 & fn–649
Rashid, Captain Abdur, 14, 39 fn
Ratlam State, 450 & fn
Rau, M. Chalapathi, 580, 585–587
Rauf, M.A., 296 & *fn*
Rawalpindi, 212, 368, 379, 388, 398–400, 413, 586
Ray, Nihar Ranjan, 618 & *fn*
Raza, Ameer, 463
Renu, L.N., 474 & *fn*, 475, 483
Rewa State, 450
Robeson, Paul, 619
——, Mrs. Paul, 574
Roosevelt, Eleanor, 574
——, Franklin D., 545 & fn
Roxas, M. Manuel, 545 & *fn*
Roy, B.C., 45
Royal Indian Air Force, 4
Royal Indian Navy, 1 & fn, 2–4 & fn, 5, 13, 16, 580
——, Central Strike Committee of, 13 & fn
Runganadhan, Samuel, 259 fn
Russia, Soviet (Soviet Union), 15, 26, 116 fn, 127 fn, 131, 247, 297, 326 fn, 524 fn–525, 528, 531, 564–565, 576–577, 645, 649, 652
Russian Revolution, 6, 15
Rustomji, Sorabji, 595

Sachar, Bhimsen, 250
Sadanand, S., 585 & *fn*
Safrani, A.H., 76 & *fn*
Saha, M.N., 618
Sahabzada, Colonel Irshad Ali, 93–94
Sahai, Anand Mohan, 531 & *fn*
——, Baldev, 379, 397, 399
Saiyidain, K.G., 295 & *fn*
Samagra Gramseva, 636
Santanam, K., 248–249
Sapru, P.N., 61 & *fn*, 82
——, T.B., 76, 117 & fn, 254, 311 & fn, 593
Sarabhai, Mridula, 459, 460, 464, 466, 472, 499, 504
Saran, Raghunandan, 86–87, 89, 581–583, 586
Sargent, John, 608 fn, 613–614, 618
Sarila State, 449
Sastri, Satiacharan, 463
——, Srinivasa, 42 fn
Satyapal, 502
Sawhney, Major, 58
Scheduled Castes Federation, 194 fn
Schulty, T.W., 626 fn
Scindhia Steam Navigation Company, 533
Scott, General, 386
The Searchlight Weekly, 553 & fn
Second World War, 28 fn, 91 fn
Seenikkatti, S., 82
Sehgal, P.K., 22, 39
Sen, B.R., 526 & *fn*, 531, 626
Sen Gupta, Nellie, 33, 629
Senanayake, Dudley S., 550
Seramban, 52 fn, 58, 70
Servant of India, 42 fn
Servants of India Society, 42 fn
Setalvad, M.C., 86 & *fn*
Seth, Damodar Swarup, 277–278, 495, 503
Sevagram, 637, 639
Shah, Harim J., 95
——, H.M., 554
——, K.T., 248–249, 397, 608 fn, 612, 645
Shahnir, Sultan, 526–527, 531–534, 536, 538–539, 541, 611
Shanghai, 563 fn
Shastri, Hiralal, 426 & *fn*, 442
Shikohabad, 1
Shree Ambica Steam Navigation Company, 533–534 fn
Siam — *see* Thailand
Siberia, 564
Sier, Sashi, 278 fn
Silverman, S.S., 514 fn
Simla, 88, 94–96, 98, 110, 154, 161,

——, E.P., 590 & fn, 592 & fn, 600
Thorner, Alice, 650 fn
Tibet, 247
The Times (London), 132, 178
The Times of India, 601
Tirth, Swami Ramananda, 362, 434 fn
Towards Christian Democracy (Stafford Cripps), 298
Tribune, 632
Tricumdas, Purushottamdas, 530 & *fn*
Truman, H.S., 297 *fn*, 574, 616
Tundla, 1
Turkestan, 564
Turkey, 524 & fn, 616, 645
Twynam, Henry, 283 & *fn*

Uber Philosophie Hberbaupt (I. Kant), 613
Udaipur, 333 & fn, 340, 353, 358 & fn-360, 652 fn
Uganda, Government of, 554
U.S.S.R.—*see* Russia, Soviet
Unionist Party, 23 fn–24, 621 fn
United Kingdom—*see* England
United Nations Organisation, 106, 108, 110, 116, 121, 124, 127, 131, 297, 310, 326, 347, 492, 524, 543, 595, 596, 652
——, General Assembly of, 525, 568
U.N. Economic and Social Council, 299 & fn
U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 608 fn, 610, 612, 618
United Press of India, 586
United Provinces, 5, 117, 175 fn, 265 & fn–266, 271, 278, 306, 463, 474–476, 483, 490, 502–503, 615, 624
——, Congress Ministry of, 117
United Provinces Government, 614–615, 623, 625
United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee, 495, 609
——, Executive Council of, 600
United Sikh Panthic Board, 226 fn, 250 fn, 281 fn
United States of America, 4, 16, 124, 127 fn, 233–234, 244, 297, 326, 486, 517, 519, 525, 528, 543 & fn, 558 & fn, 565, 568, 570 & fn, 574, 576, 577, 595, 597–598, 610, 615–616, 626, 635 & fn, 652
U.S. Congress, 544 fn
U.S.-India Famine Emergency Committee, 626 fn
U.S. Senate, 558 fn
Upadhyaya, S.P., 231, 589, 590
Uri, 390, 392–393, 412

Vaidya, K.A., 434 & fn
Varadachari, N.S., 648 & *fn*
Vargiya, Vijai, 450
Venkatappayya, Konda, 478
Verma, Maneklal, 360
The Viceroy's Journal (A.P. Wavell), 172 fn, 187 fn, 206 fn
Vidyalankara Praveena (university in Sri Lanka), 567 fn
Vijayaraghavachari, T., 358
Village Government in British India (John Matthai), 101 fn
Vyas, Jainarain, 419–421, 424, 447–448, 451, 631

Wadia, D.N., 608 & *fn*
Wallace, Henry, 574
Walsh, R.J., 574
Wardha, 270–272, 276, 278, 283–285, 288, 294, 317, 412 fn, 475, 479, 487, 496, 503–504, 602, 646 fn
Washington, 305, 549
Wavell, first earl, 5 fn, 49, 95, 108, 110 & fn, 137 fn, 143, 145–146, 149, 152, 156, 162 fn, 172, 174, 178 & fn–179, 187 & fn–188 fn, 189 fn, 193, 195–196, 198, 200–201 & fn, 203–204 fn, 206 & fn–207 & fn, 208 & fn, 213 & fn–214, 216–221, 223 fn, 225 fn–226 fn, 227–228 & fn, 229–230, 234, 236, 239 & fn, 241, 247 fn, 253, 255 fn, 258–261, 266 & fn, 268 & fn-269 fn, 270 & fn, 271–272, 273 fn, 282 & fn–283 & fn, 284–285 & fn, 286–287 fn, 288–293 & fn, 294 & fn, 298–299 fn, 300 & fn–301, 302 fn, 305 fn–306 & fn, 308, 310 fn, 315 fn, 317, 319 & fn, 321 & fn–322, 325, 346, 354, 380, 383, 386, 398, 400–403, 412–413, 470, 537, 560 & fn, 567,